



The National Fantasy Fan

Cras ad Stellas— Tomorrow to the Stars

Volume 79 Number 6

June 2020



It's time to vote! — Your ballot is on page 11

As last time, votes will be 5-4-3-2-1.

Best Novel:

What the Wind Brings by Matthew Hughes
The Family Pride by Chris Nuttall
Monster Hunter Guardian by Larry Correia and Sarah A. Hoyt
Endgames by L. E. Modesitt, Jr.

Best Shorter Work:

Waterlines by Suzanne Palmer -- Asimov's SF
By the Warmth of their Calculus by T. S. Buckell -- Mission Critical
A Place to Stand On by Marie Vibbert -- Analog
The Menace from Farside by Ian McDonald -- Tor

Best book editor:

Toni Weisskopf

Best TV Show:

Supergirl
Batwoman

Best Cover Artist:

David Hardy
Brad Fraunfelter

Best Anime:

The Promised Neverland
Sarazanmai
Astra: Lost in Space

Best Manga, Comic, or Graphic Novel:

Monstress
Lady Mechanika
Hit-Girl in Hollywood
Books of Magic

Best Non-N3F Fanzine:

Opuntia
My Back Pages
Fadeaway
Event Horizon
Chunga
Spartacus

Best N3F Fanzine:

Ionisphere
The N3F Review of Books
Tightbeam

Best Fan Artist:

Jose Sanchez
Angela K. Walker

Best Fan Writer:

Will Mayo
Lloyd Penney

Happy Birthday, Bob Madle

Robert Madle is our last surviving Founding Member. This month, he turned 100. On behalf of all our members, past, present, and future:
Bob!

Thank you!

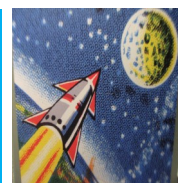
Happy birthday, and many more!

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In This Issue:

Neffy Ballot is on Page 11



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Continued Next Column

Publishing Schedule

For the curious, Tightbeam is routinely assembled the first weekend of the month. The N3F is routinely assembled the last weekend of the month. The National Fantasy Fan is assembled the 15th of the month or a bit later. Origin is monthly. Ionisphere and N'APA are currently semimonthly. Eldritch Science has recently come out once a year, depending on the availability of material. Films Fantastic has recently been a bit irregular because the Editor has had minor interesting issues with assembling material. Mangaverse is on hiatus at the moment, the Editrix having an interesting life, but her blog S1E1.com still appears.

All of these zines would appreciate your contributions and your Letters of Comment. Letters of comment can be the soul of a fanzine. Whether they argue details that would otherwise be uninteresting, perpetuate one of the great fan feuds of all time, or say something new and different about a prior letter, it is through letter columns that fans have traditionally interacted with each other and advanced fandom around the world.

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WANTED! Fanzine Review Editor

Join or Renew

We offer four different memberships. Memberships with TNFF via paper mail are \$18; memberships with TNFF via email are \$6. All other zines are email only. Additional memberships at the address of a current member are \$4. Public memberships are free. Send payments to N3F, POB 1925, Mountain View CA 94042. Pay online at N3F.org. Our PayPal contact is treasurer@n3f.org Send phillies@4liberty.net your email address for a public membership.

The National Fantasy Fan (originally Bonfire), Vol. LXXIX
 Number 6, June 2020, ISSN 2169-3595.
 Published monthly by The National Fantasy Fan Federation.

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Membership Roster

New, Renewed, & Reinstated Members & Info Updates

Renewed:

Gar Chen - Regular, Voting though Oct. 2023
 Lauren Clough - Regular, Voting through Jan. 2021
 Alan White - Electronic, Voting though Feb. 2021

New & Reinstated:

Michael "Orange Mike" Lowrey - Regular, Voting through May 2021- Reinstated

Kathryn Jankowski - Electronic, Voting though May 2021
 Interests: Books, Editing , Publishing, Reading and book clubs, Writing
 Fan since: "Forever"
 Cons: SCBWI
 Genres: Historical Fantasy
 Faves: Sharon Shinn, Patricia A. McKillip, Lloyd Alexander, Ursula K. LeGuin
 #285 - Samuel Lubell - Regular, Voting through May 2021
 IRL: Policy Communicator
 B-Day: Nov. 1
 Interests: APAs (amateur press associations), Blogging, Books, Comic books, Computers and technology, Conventions and clubs, Editing , Fanzines, Filk singing, Online activities, Reading and book clubs, Reviewing, Writing
 Fan since: "Since I could read"
 Fanac: "Over 30 years"
 Clubs: " I am a member of the Washington Science Fiction Association (currently secretary) and Baltimore Science Fiction Society (chair of the Compton Crook Award Committee) "
 Cons: Capclave (chaired twice, ran programming four times), Balticon, Philcon, Boskone, Lunacon, Heliosphere, Darkovercon/Chessiecon, Shore Leave, multiple Worldcons (ran newsletter twice, publicity once), multiple World Fantasy Cons
 Zines: Asimov's SF, Fantasy & Science Fiction, Clarkesworld, Uncanny.
 Zenres: Science fiction that makes me think. Large scale science fiction and fantasy.
 Fave Creators: Too many to mention. I especially like Alastair Reynolds, R. A. Lafferty, Nancy Kress, Tim Powers, and N. K. Jemisin
 Online interests; Facebook and blogs, online conventions.
 N3F interests: Writing for club publications , Organizing activities , Publishing

Roger Ley - Public, Non-voting
 IRL: Spec Fiction Writer
 Fan Since: "65 years"

Roger Caldwell - Public, Non-voting
 IRL: "I am a retired elementary school teacher"
 B-Day: Nov. 17
 Interests: APAs (amateur press associations), Art, Books, Cartooning, cartoons, and animation, Collecting, Comic books, Conventions and clubs, DVDs and videos, Fanzines, Reading and book clubs, Television
 Fan since: "Since forever"
 Fanac: "Late 60s when I began sending off for fanzines. Earlier there was Famous Monsters and comic books."
 Clubs: Several SF clubs, and a bunch off apas.
 Cons: "First one was 1980, and many since."
 Zines: "Don't see many current fanzines. Am not in any apas anymore. I see Locus and the SF digests and various magazines about comics & movies."
 Genres: "I read lots of stuff. SF, fantasy, S&S, collections from Weird Tales & Unknown, et al."
 Fave creators: "Asimov, Clarke, to start.... Lots of stuff..."
 N3F Interests: Artwork, Recruiting at conventions, Writing for club publications Sponsor: Eric Jamborsky

Expired in March

Michael Simon, Steve Fahnstalk , John T Erb

Expired in April

Diane Blackwood, Bob Blackwood, Barry Winkler, Mark Neff

Expiring in May

Tom Feller, Dorothy Kurtz, Allegra Gulino

Expiring in June

Jessica Silver

Expiring in July

none

Member Status Changes

#264 - Lynne Jambor - Electronic voting to Public, non-voting, Expired in Feb.

Bureaus

Membership Recruitment

Your President writes: Yes, all of our bureaus are important. Nonetheless, in a fundamental sense, membership recruitment is our most important activity. None of us are getting any younger. Some of us gaffiate. Others of us disappear. If there is no recruitment, the N3F will eventually wither and vanish. Please consider recruiting for the N3F. Please consider becoming more active in the N3F, so that we have more activities to offer.

John Thiel writes: I have indicated to the two other bureau

members that we should have contact with other bureaus, most notably the Welcommittee, and that we should build up more complex activity within the bureau, considering that there is now more than one of us. There has been some interchange about my bulletins, which is a success for the bulletins. I'd suggest having bulletins to the other bureaus too.

As I mentioned in TNFF, I'm starting a monthly bulletin for this bureau with the purpose of establishing communication among its members, as should be done in a bureau, and also for the purpose of letting one another know about what recruitment activity we have been doing. President Phillies should get a good scan of the bureau and will receive this bulletin. George has suggested to me that we should be escorting new members personally through the door, if I understood what he meant. He said he knew there's a lot of difficulty about that. In fact, I have done that with several members, including Will Mayo. John Polselli, and Steve Fahnstalk. I'll do that whenever I get the chance, but they have to be people I know who I think might fit well into the N3F. I keep an eye out for possibilities like this. I also advertise it in Surprising Stories, Full Moon Poetry, and have gotten mention of it into Bewildering Stories, and online Amazing Stories. I know Jeffrey Redmond keeps advertisements on his Facebook sites.... John Thiel

Birthday Card Bureau

Birthday cards—7
R-Lauraine Tutihasi

Correspondence Bureau

Are you seeking Intellectual Adventure into the Unknown? Would you like to find an Intellectual Companion? The Correspondence Bureau can help you with your quest.

You have two choices for seeking a pairing:

Choice #1 -You want to be paired with someone of like interest. Send an email or postal letter to the bureau head with your name and a list of your interests. When someone with similar interest requests a pairing both of you will be notified and given the email or postal address of the other member. Contact the other member and the rest is up to you.

Choice #2 - You want to be paired with the next person whose interests are unknown. Send an email or postal letter to the bureau head telling of your choice. Include your name, and email or postal address. You will be paired with the next person with unknown interests and both of you will be notified and given the email or postal mail address of the other member. The rest is up to you. Whichever way you choose will be an adventure.

The Correspondence Bureau is open to all members of the club, no matter whether they are paying or non-paying members or have an email or postal mail address. Members seeking to correspond through the Correspondence Bureau will be asked for permission to publish their name in the Monthly

article. If they do not wish to have their name published, only their Choice #1 or #2 will be published. No email or postal mail addresses will be published in the monthly article nor given to another member without that member's permission.

To join the Correspondence Bureau or if you have questions, please contact: Judy Carroll - BlueShadows@gmail.com
OR
Judy Carroll, 975 E 120 S, Spanish Fork, Utah 84660

Fan-Pro Coordinating Bureau

I have started issuing bulletins to the other bureau members and have been getting some responses from them. This will result in better and closer relations within the bureau... John Thiel

History and Research Bureau

We encourage correspondence from other bureaus on matters of history and research, desiring inter-bureau communications. If you have history or research matters in mind, please write us formally and we will record having had the interchange. An example would be, "Eric Jamborsky writes from the Film Bureau, 'Where might I go for additional information on Boris Karloff?'" and we might be able to give him an answer. (This is not an actual message we have received from the head of the Film Bureau, but a conceivable message he might send.)

When one of us receives such correspondence, it will be mentioned in the bulletin I send around and we might discuss it, hence it would be receipted by the bureau. Thereafter it might be commented upon in Origin. Here we are engaged in getting together a more sophisticated bureau... John Thiel

Pro Bureau

We continue to generate issues of the N3F Review of Books on a regular monthly basis. Your extended reviews of novels, critical literary works on science fiction, and writing methods are all welcome.

Welcommittee

The purpose of the Welcommittee is to welcome new members to the club. A letter is sent, by email or postal mail, to new members informing them of club activities they may be interested in joining. Those members with email addresses are also sent attachments to the current TNFF and other publications the N3F has to offer. If you have questions about the club or are interested in helping, please contact Judy Carroll at BlueShadows2012@gmail.com

Writers Exchange Bureau

Welcome to the Writers Exchange!

I think it would be fun, exciting, and informative if our writers

would actively participate in the monthly Writers Exchange article. We could get to know one another and help with writing questions and problems.

In the April TNFF I asked our N3F writers, "Tell me what you do when the piece you are writing runs into a wall, hits a bump, cries for understanding, hops a train going in a direction opposite of where you are planning, or you're stymied..."

Jefferson Swycaffer responded in our May issue.

In this issue, Angela Parsons Myers, a new member to the N3F, responds to the same statement.

"I don't remember seeing this question when it was originally posted, but if you're still interested, I'd be glad to share my "method."

First, I'm a very slow writer. Not George R. R. Martin slow, but slow nonetheless. So I have plenty of time to daydream. And research sometimes gives me the little push I need, whether it's about a haunted bridge in Edinburg or how to do an autopsy.

But I've admitted often that many of my plots come from dreams. The entire first chapter of *When the Moon Is Gibbous and Waxing* is a nightmare. It wouldn't go away. What would it be like to discover you're something that people either don't believe exists or fear? Its sequel, *In the Dark of the Moon*, grew from a brief dream about someone who floated up to a second-story window. Now I have two more books planned for that series.

So often when I get stumped, I have a dream that gets me started again. My WIP stalled until I dreamed of a relatively minor character. I put Halfdog into the story pretty much as he appeared in my dream, and he solved the problem of what to do with Garcia. (Getting ready to start sending this one out to publishers. Wish me luck.)

I also have a little sweet romance novelette in my lineup. The dream that inspired it was a follow-up to a story my mom told me shortly before she died about an old boyfriend. Loved the idea, but couldn't even get started with it. I don't write romance. Tried to interest my daughter, Katriena Knights, who does, but she wouldn't bite. Finally, just as I woke up one morning, I dreamed the title, *The Will to Love*. Sat down and wrote it in a few months.

Queued up is a far future novel that came to me as a dream about a young man walking through a forest who sees smoke coming from a hole in the ground.

So there you have my method: dream it up, stretch it out, write it down, dream some more, rewrite, rewrite, edit, edit, edit.... I tell people I'll live to be 150 because I refuse to die until I get all my planned books written."

N3F Writers Ask

Jefferson Swycaffer has a writing question for our N3F writers.

"I just read a book where the protagonist is followed by a shadowy figure, and he can't tell if it is a man or a woman. So the author uses "they" for the indeterminate pronoun. Now to my mind this is ugly and awkward and clunky. "They followed him down the alley." Oh, did they? All of them at once or one at a time? The word "they" too strongly implies the plural. Plus, it's just awkward. It is distracting to the reader and disrupts the "reading trance." If it were up to me, I'd either use "he" or "he or she." Or even restructure the sentences to avoid the pronoun entirely. How do you feel?"

If you would like to address Jefferson's question, or share with us your writing method, please send your response to Judy Carroll BlueShadows2012@gmail.com

The Writers Exchange is for anyone interested in writing. If you have a story you would like read and commented on, or if you just want the excitement of reading unpublished work, then the Writers Exchange is here for you. Published or unpublished - all are welcome. You may join as a writer, a reader or both.

If interested, please contact: Judy Carroll. BlueShadows2012@gmail.com

Letters of Comment

Dear fellow N3F members,

The World Science Fiction Society rightly does not take stands regarding applications to host a World Convention. It is enough that the applicants follow all the rules and properly answer the prescribed questions for the application to become official. It is for the fans to make the final decision.

Undoubtedly, some, perhaps many, of you are members of ConZealand and thus eligible to vote for the 2022 WorldCon site. There are two candidates: Chicago and Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. I am writing this letter to ask that you consider your vote more carefully than may have been the case in recent years. In considering my own vote, I have posed the following questions. I encourage others voting to ask similar questions.

- 1) Israel has a thriving and active Science Fiction community. How will Jewish fans be treated? Will Israeli fans, should they wish to do so, be able to distribute copies of any fanzines they may choose to publish at the convention without censorship?
- 2) A substantial percentage of fans are women. How will female fans be treated? Will they be accorded rights identical with those expected by any and all other fans in attendance? Will they have the same access to any and all convention programs as any and every other attendee?

To the best of my knowledge, this is the first time the WorldCon proposal has come from a country with as egregious a record on fundamental human rights as Saudi Arabia. The

mere fact that the Jeddah proposal had to be approved by a Saudi government official before application could even begin is already worrisome. I urge my fellow fans who exercise the right to vote on the WorldCon site to do so with all due diligence (the relevant documents pertaining to the hosting application may be found at the World Science Fiction Society's website (wsfs.org) under Convention Bids.)

Justin E. A. Busch

Fellow Fen,

A short letter of comment on the Neffys. I shall speak up for the three novels that I read, these being *Monster Hunter Guardian*, *The Family Pride*, and *Endgames*. *Endgames* arguably actually does complete a series, and very well, too. *The Family Pride* is a character study, someone being put in a situation by their parents and needing to deal with matters. *Monster Hunter Guardian* is supernatural action, complete with the Portuguese navy and an outraged mother, all well written. We appear to have four good comics selections. *Fadeaway* seems to deserve the recognition it has not received in the past.

George Phillies

Dear Neffers:

Just when I was getting ready to respond to The National Fantasy Fan, Volume 79, no. 4, no. 5 came along, so I will get them both in this letter, the April and May issues. Nothing better to do in this year of pandemic, so let's get with it.

April, Vol. 79, no. 4... I think the Fandbooks do provide a vital service, and with this newest Fandbook, another way to remember our fannish forefathers. (Over the years, I have been given copies of Fandbooks Nos. 1 and 2, plus Ghu's Lexicon.) The list I generate for local fandom in Toronto, a list of all upcoming conventions, the one Heath Row subscribes to... well, of course, all of them are cancelled, but some are not announcing their cancellations through e-mail or messages on their websites, or advisories on social media. Some just shut down without notice. I have been trying to tell all our subscribers about the cancellations, and especially about the postponements, and what dates any particular convention has announced. If nothing else, there is valuable information for all subs.

My loc... I got some notification that another Amazing Selects book is coming up for my editing. Can't reveal much, but it should arrive in my IN box soon. That, plus other editorial and voicework projects are keeping me busy right now. Now, if only there was a pay cheque connected with all of that...

May, Vol. 79, no. 5, just out... I've been nominated for a Nefie? Thank you! A little egoboo in my later years is always welcome. I hope to win.

I hope someone is willing to step up to take on the treasury. It seems the age of the volunteer is mostly over, but that is when volunteers are needed the most. What do I do with writers'

block? I simply go away. I do chores at home, scan Facebook, watch a little TV or listen to the radio, work on some costume jewelry, or a little research for other projects online. There is plenty to do. Often, when I return to the writing at hand, I am in a different mindset, and that often lets me figure out whatever I couldn't figure out before. Simply redirect your thoughts.

It is a shame that the New Zealand Worldcon will be virtual, but it looks like they are attempting to take on and get done what they bidded for. On the other hand, the Columbus NAS-FiC has been outright cancelled, and refunds are not being offered at this time because they are not sure what their cancellation fees and other costs will be. An idea for a near-future article... what will be the effect of the COVID-19 on fandom as a whole.

As much as I need to have a look at File 770 more in its online incarnation, I should have a look at fanac.org more often, too. I got into fandom in 1977, in the later years of OSFIC, the Ontario SF Club. They had many fanzines out there, but none of them ever came my way, and I never did find a way to join the club, even as a local. I do know some of the originators of the club, and some of them mentioned the club, but I was never a member. My only souvenir from that time was a club pin for the DRACO Film Society. With the essay on Alley Oop, Dragon Lady Press is a much remembered and missed local press, run by the guys who ran Dragon Lady Comics and Collectibles in Toronto. I think the whole organization is now gone.

Just made it to page 2, and I am done. Thanks for these two issues, and the nomination. I look forward to the June issue.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

Editor:

Just wanted to drop you a note to tell you how much I enjoyed the story about Alley Oop in the most recent TNFF. I remember my dad reading this comic strip to my sister and me. Later I read it on my own. It's one of several I remember from my childhood, spent reading about anything I could get my hands on. I especially liked Prince Valiant and his wife, the Queen of the Misty Isles. An early feminist, I liked the idea that a man could have a lower position than his wife. :-)

Angela Parson Myers

Dear George,

It was good to see art back on the pages of TNFF, I particularly liked "Landing Spot B", which would not be out of place on the cover of an issue of Galaxy from the 1970s.

As always, Jon Swartz's SerCon column was interesting. Oddly enough, there was an actual Mandrake active in magic in the 1920s and for decades after. Leon Mandrake first performed publicly at the age of eleven (he was born in British Columbia in 1911), and was touring in Canada and the western US before he was seventeen. By the time Mandrake the Magician was running in newspapers, Leon Mandrake had a full-length tour-

ing show with seventeen assistants. Neither Lee Falk nor Phil Davis seems to have so much as heard of him at the time. Davis later tweaked the appearance of Falk's Mandrake to more closely resemble Leon's Mandrake after meeting the latter; Leon returned the favor by giving his wife/assistant the name Narda for the act. Leon's show lasted at least until 1946x, when he and his wife separated. He later remarried and had a TV show Alexander the Great, where he carried on the work of the mentalist Clark Alexander, whose props and name rights he purchased shortly before Clark Alexander's death in 1954. He retired in 1984.

I noticed a fair amount of repetition of material from recent issues of TNFF in the April issue. Given the TNFF is read mostly by people who are already N3F members, might I make a suggestion? If half the committee reports were presented each month, this would lessen the risk of repetition, and leave room for a feature I think most members would enjoy: two or three brief self introductions by N3F members, starting of course with the club's leaders and committee chairs. The entire suite of committee reports and invitations could be printed once a year, in the issue printed prior to the WorldCon (where I assume copies are available in the con suite). I'll sign off with a nomination for the best non-n3f fanzine: Spartacus from Guy Lillian III (whose total fanzine output is nearing 1300). Spartacus is a perzine that reads like a genzine, and has interesting things to say about all sorts of topics, SF and mundane. His address, given on the front cover, is Guy Lillian III, 1390 Holly Ave., Merritt Island, Florida, 32952. He doesn't say, but it seems likely that the usual conditions for getting a copy apply.

Yours,
Justin E. A. Busch

Hi George;

Thanks for reprinting the FANAC project newsletter. Lots of interesting information there, and I applaud their efforts to preserve fan history, even tho I am unsure how many of today's fans really care about fan history. All this enthusiastic volunteer work has sort of inspired me to dig around and pull out a few things I might be able to send along to them in the near future.

I was a bit puzzled by Jefferson Swycaffer's letter of comment this time, talking about comic strip heroes with seemingly extraordinary powers, and particularly the Lee Falk comic strip characters The Phantom and Mandrake the Magician.

The Phantom doesn't have super powers; he is one of those highly trained strong guy types like Batman trying to bring bad guys to justice. The appeal of the strip is the exotic background including the living legend history of the Phantom family members, and the very wide variety of story adventures Falk created in order to make the stories interesting. Saying he "has too many advantages" seems strange to me, since in most of the stories the criminals seem to have most

of the advantages, including heavy fire power, lots of cohorts and often have political influence as well. Generally The Phantom has to surmount incredibly odds to deal with the menace.

He is trying to stop bad people from committing crimes and protect innocent people. Claiming that he has "too many advantages" is like saying the police have too many advantages because they utilize a trained network of officers, crime labs, radio communications, a nationwide web of coordinating individuals along with a fully functioning court system, including jails, all dedicated to capturing and punishing people who break the law and hurt other people. Do the police have an unfair advantage? Putting the bad guys out of action is the goal, and it seems to me that The Phantom usually managed that with adventures that were involved and always interesting.

That's my own opinion of course, but it also seems to be the opinion held by a lot of other people as well, since The Phantom remains one of the most popular adventure comic strips being published in the world these days, and all his past adventures have been reprinted consistently around the world, most recently with an excellent series of large sized hardback books from Hermes Press.

In the early years Mandrake the Magician had genuine magical powers, and it was a struggle for Falk to come up with stories worth his involvement. Sometime around the 1940s Falk changed the format so that Mandrake's powers were illusionary, expert hypnotism as it were. Even then he doubled down on the stories coming up with bizarre and fantastic escapades to keep the series interesting. Flame people living inside an active volcano, invisible flying hi-jackers and the like required a lot more than magic, whether illusionary or real, to solve. Mandrake's real power was his ability to think thru situations and come up with solutions to complex problems that seemed insurmountable to the authorities or his friends.

(Like many another comic strip hero, being a friend of Mandrake meant that sooner or later you were going to be confronted by some fantastic and highly dangerous menace. Who needs friends like that? Stay away from those kinds of people, that's what I say. Science fiction fans may be eccentric, but at least their menaces are from the pages of books)

One of Mandrake's most unusual adventures that I can recall came in the early 1960s when aliens from another planet contacted the governments on planet earth, and announced they were sending a space ship on a good will mission. Everyone was excited, but then, someone or something managed to capture the alien space ship. The ship with its crew and cadre of ambassadors was completely trapped in some sort of gooey liquid, unable to escape. Some rogue nation on Earth, or perhaps some super criminal mastermind had captured the aliens and their ship for their own purposes. The world was horrified when the aliens threatened to unleash their powerful weapons and completely destroy the planet unless they were freed. It turned out that the alien space ship had been "captured" when it flew into Mandrake's eye, and had been caught in his salty eye fluid. The space ship was as small as a speck of dust! You

won't find stories that innovative in the average Marvel comic.

Lee Falk's primary interest thruout his whole life was the theater. Jon Swartz failed to mention a somewhat famous quote from Lee Falk: "I devoted 100% of my time to the theater. Any time left over I devote to my comic strips." He wrote many plays, produced and directed plays, ran theaters for his entire life, and yet for all of that, nobody remembers any of the plays that he wrote or produced, while almost everyone knows The Phantom and Mandrake the Magician.

Nice overview article on Ally Oop. Ally Oop has always been one of my favorite comic strips, due to strong characterization and the very human reactions of all the people in the stories, good or bad. It seems remarkable to me that this entire series has not been reprinted yet. Dragon Lady Press did a good job as part of their general saddle-stitched trade paperback comic strip reprint effort, but they ran out of steam. I really thot the Kitchen Sink hardback series was going to be a winner (I bought one of the limited edition hardback signed by V.T. Hamlin), but Denis Kitchen apparently ran out of money and the project only turned out that one volume. All the stats for the entire run of the comic strip are available. I hope some enterprising publisher will make the effort and put the comic strip into permanent hardback format. Soon.

Another interesting issue. Providing I don't catch COVID-19 and drop dead, I'll try to have some comments on the next issue when it comes out.

---Bob Jennings

Dear George,

I've heard good things about Fadeaway, but I've never seen a copy. I have seen Opuntia, though, and always enjoyed it (my two-months and counting Internet drought means I've missed about forty issues, which I may never catch up on). It's a very good perzine, making topics in which I would not expect to take much interest quite engaging. It certainly deserves a Neffy (though I find it hard to believe it's never won previously).

It is sad to see how few artists received nominations. Not, I stress, because I think either Angela Scott or José Sanchez is undeserving, but because it points to the overall dearth of artists in fanzines. Zines from the 40s and several decades after were crammed with art, some of it excellent, but nowadays there seems to be so very much less of it. This, I think, is fandom's loss.

Jefferson Swycaffer asks how readers feel about the singular use of "they". I've never had a problem with this; it requires a brief conceptual/linguistic shift, but, unless the writing itself is unclear the referent will be evident. Oddly enough, there's a theoretical side to this. I've been reading H. G. Wells for almost as long as I remember being able to read, and, consequently, have known of his idea of human person-

ality as "a collection of mutually replaceable individual systems held together in common habitation), with the ego actually being a "synthetic illusion of continuity". I won't develop the theory here (It's laid out in his essay collection 42' to '44 and his novel Babes in the Darkling Woods, among other places.), but it eliminates the need for a fixed core of individuality. Each of us is in fact several, equally valid, cohabiting behavioral systems. Every single person is, on this view, literally a collection of selves — and they are each of us is already, inescapably, a they.

Jefferson Swycaffer also comments intriguingly on overly super heroes. I can't say the fact ever bothered me much (perhaps mainly because I was never a fan of super heroes), but the point would go far to explain the increasingly bloated action sequences and superhero movies. The creators dimly feel the same reaction as he does, but compensate by making the villains ever more stupendously and earth-shatteringly powerful. The result is that the superhero, who is supposed to win, after all, must demonstrate their own gigantic abilities to command countervailing streams of pure power. The last person who could make this work was E. E. Smith. He, being dead, can no longer share his secret. Since this battle of supertitanic titans cannot be allowed to end too quickly, you get another forty minute battle during which you can step over to Theater Three to catch the preview of the next five special-effects extravaganzas before returning in time to say "I knew they would win."

The key question remaining is which bothers the reader more: my disrespectful description of superhero action bloat, or my use of 'their' and 'they' in presenting said description.

Justin E. A. Busch

SerCon

Gene Autry, His Accomplishments, and Science Fiction

by

Jon D. Swartz, Ph.D.
N3F Historian

Orvon Gene Autry (September 29, 1907 - October 2, 1998), known as Gene Autry, was a performer who gained fame as a singing cowboy on the radio, in movies, and on television for more than three decades, beginning in the early 1930s. Autry was also owner of a television station, several radio stations in Southern California, and the Los Angeles/California Angels major league baseball team from 1961 to 1997. He frequently said that his grandfather taught him to sing when he was a young boy, so he could be in the choir at the Baptist church where his grandfather preached.

During the 1930s and 1940s, Autry personified the straight-shooting hero and touched the lives of millions of Americans. He was also one of the most important figures in the history of

country music, considered the second major influential artist of the genre's development after Jimmie Rodgers. Autry's singing cowboy movies were the first vehicle to carry country and western music to a national audience. In addition to his signature song, "Back in the Saddle Again," Autry is still remembered for his Christmas holiday songs, "Here Comes Santa Claus" (which he wrote), "Frosty the Snowman," and his biggest hit, "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer."

Autry is a member of both the Country Music Hall of Fame and the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame, and is the only person to be awarded stars in all five categories on the Hollywood Walk of Fame (for film, television, music, radio, and live performance). The town of Berwyn, Oklahoma, changed its name to Gene Autry, Oklahoma, in his honor.

Melody Ranch

Autry purchased the 110-acre Monogram Movie Ranch in 1953, located near Newhall, California, in the foothills of the northern San Gabriel Mountains. He renamed it the Melody Ranch after his movie *Melody Ranch*, made in 1940 and named after his radio program. Autry then sold 98 acres of the property, most of the original ranch. The town, adobes, and ranch cabin sets -- and open land for location shooting -- were retained as a movie ranch on 12 acres.

In 1990, after his favorite horse *Champion*, who lived in retirement there, died, Autry put the ranch up for sale. It is now known as the Melody Ranch Studios and covers twenty-two acres. The ranch has a Melody Ranch Museum open year-round; and one weekend a year the entire ranch is open to the public during the Cowboy Poetry & Music Festival, another legacy of Autry's. The Autry National Center in Griffith Park, originally the Gene Autry Museum of Western Heritage, was co-founded by Gene and Jackie Autry.

Radio and Television

In the 1930s, Autry was a regular on the National Barn Dance and the National Farm and Home Hour. Then, beginning in 1940, and lasting until 1956, Autry had a huge hit with his own weekly show on CBS Radio, *Gene Autry's Melody Ranch*, with sidekick Pat Buttram supplying comedy relief ("Mr. Artery!"). Autry's horse, *Champion*, also had a Mutual radio and then CBS - TV series, *The Adventures of Champion*. In response to his many young radio listeners aspiring to emulate him, Autry created the Cowboy Code, or Ten Cowboy Commandments. These tenets promoting an ethical, moral, and patriotic lifestyle appealed to youth organizations such as the Boy Scouts, which developed similar doctrines.

Beginning in 1950, Autry produced and starred in his own television show on CBS for 91 episodes; and he made several appearances on ABC-TV's *Jubilee USA* in the late 1950s. In 1995 Autry co-starred with Charlton Heston, Mickey Rooney, and Peter Graves in the docudrama, *America: A Call to Greatness*.

Autry's Flying A Productions produced several TV programs in addition to *The Gene Autry Show* (1950-1956), including *The Range Rider* (1951-1952), *Annie Oakley* (1952-1956), *Buffalo Bill, Jr.* (1955), and *The Adventures of Champion* (1955-1956).

Science Fiction Movie Serial

Autry appeared in a couple of Ken Maynard movies, but Autry's first starring role was in the 12-episode science fiction/western serial, *The Phantom Empire*, made by Mascot Pictures in 1935. His friend, comic actor Smiley Burnett, also acted in this serial.

The Phantom Empire was directed by Otto Brower and B. Reeves Eason. In addition to Autry and Burnett, it starred Frankie Darro and Betsy King Ross. This serial combined the western, musical, and science fiction genres. The first episode was 30 minutes, the rest about 20 minutes each. The serial is about a singing cowboy who stumbles upon an ancient subterranean civilization living beneath his own ranch that becomes corrupted by unscrupulous speculators from the surface.

In 1940, a 70-minute feature film edited from the serial was released under the titles *Radio Ranch* or *Men with Steel Faces*. This was Gene Autry's first starring role, playing himself as a singing cowboy. Autry went on to become one of the most popular movie personalities of the 1930s-1940s, leading the list of Top Ten Western Moneymakers for six straight years (1937-1942); and in 1940, he ranked fourth among all movie stars! He made nearly 100 films over the course of his long career. Smiley Burnett also appeared with him in many of these full-length movies, singing and supplying comic relief.

Comic Strip/Comic Books/Big Little Books (BLBs)

A Sunday Gene Autry comic strip from General Features Syndicate was begun in 1940 (*Gene Autry Rides!*), but it didn't last long. The strip was revived in 1952 (*Gene Autry*), and lasted until 1955.

There were Gene Autry comic books from Fawcett and Dell, beginning in the early 1940s, as well as giveaways from Tim Stores, Quaker Oats, Pillsbury, and the March of Comics. In addition, there were comic books about Autry's horse, *Champion*, from Dell in the 1950s. Artists included Till Goodan, Jesse Marsh, and Russ Manning.

Beginning in 1938, with Gene Autry in *Public Cowboy No. 1*, there were 14 Gene Autry big little books -- ending with *Gene Autry and the Range War* in 1950. One BLB was written by SF author R. R. Winterbotham, one was a *Fast-Action Story Book*, and three were illustrated by famous BLB artist Henry E. Vallely.

Song Writing/Recordings

Autry wrote more than 250 songs and had nine that sold over a million records. When his "That Silver-Haired Daddy of Mine" sold its half-millionth record, the record company gave Autry a gold-plated copy of it. When sales reached a million,

they gave him another one. This was the start of the gold record tradition, now commonplace for singers with best-selling records.

Military Career

During World War II Autry enlisted in the United States Army in 1942, and became a tech sergeant in the Air Corps. Holding a private pilot's license, he was determined to become an Army aviator and eventually achieved his service pilot rating in June, 1944, serving as a C-109 transport pilot with the rank of flight officer. Assigned to a unit of the Air Transport Command, he flew as part of the airlift operation over the Himalayas between India and China, nicknamed "The Hump."

Marriages

In 1932 Autry married Ina May Spivey, the niece of songwriter Jimmy Long. Long was a friend and co-worker of Autry's when they worked for the railroad. Autry and Long, both enthusiastic fans of singer Jimmie Rodgers, performed and wrote songs together. After Ina May died in 1980, Autry married Jacqueline Ellam, who had been his banker. He had no children by either marriage.

Baseball

In the 1950s Autry had been a minority owner of the minor-league Hollywood Stars. In 1960, when Major League Baseball announced plans to add an expansion team in Los Angeles, Autry – who had once declined an opportunity to play in the minor leagues – expressed interest in acquiring the radio broadcast rights to the team's games. Baseball executives were so impressed by his approach that he was persuaded to become the owner of the franchise rather than simply its broadcast partner. The team, initially called the Los Angeles Angels upon its debut in 1961, moved to suburban Anaheim in 1966, and was renamed the California Angels, then the Anaheim Angels from 1997 until 2005, when it became the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim.

Autry served as vice-president of the American League from 1983 until his death. In 1995 he sold a quarter share of the team to the Walt Disney Company, and a controlling interest the following year, with the remaining share to be transferred after his death. Earlier, in 1982, he sold the Los Angeles television station KTLA for \$245 million. At the time he also sold several radio stations he owned, including KSFO in San Francisco, KMPC in Los Angeles, KOGO in San Diego, and other stations in his "Golden West" radio network.

Some Conclusions

There will probably never be another western personality like Gene Autry, both in terms of his popularity and his longevity. His was a true Horatio Alger success story, rising as he did from a shy little boy living in near-poverty to becoming a worldwide celebrity and near-billionaire at the time of

his death, solely on the basis of his own abilities and hard work.

When I was researching Texas history for some articles I was asked to write for the new edition of the Handbook of Texas, I learned that one of Gene Autry's ancestors, Private Micajah Autry, had died defending the Alamo in the war with Mexico for Texas independence. Even today, about the highest honor a Texan can have is to have had an ancestor who fought in that conflict. Gene Autry truly had it all!

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Note: In addition to the above, several Internet sites were consulted.



The 2020 Ballot

Instructions: In each category, vote for up to five choices. You may also vote for No Award. Give your top choice five points, your second choice four points, and so on. You do not need to vote for any or all choices. Please vote by July 15. Mail your votes to phillies@4liberty.net or send paper-mail to George Phillies, 48 Hancock Hill Drive, Worcester MA 01609.

Best Novel:

What the Wind Brings by Matthew Hughes

The Family Pride by Chris Nuttall

Monster Hunter Guardian by Larry Correia and Sarah A. Hoyt

Endgames by L. E. Modesitt, Jr.

No Award

Best Shorter Work:

Waterlines by Suzanne Palmer -- Asimov's SF

By the Warmth of their Calculus by T. S. Buckell -- Mission Critical

A Place to Stand On by Marie Vibbert -- Analog

The Menace from Farside by Ian McDonald -- Tor

No Award

Best Fan Writer:

Will Mayo

Lloyd Penney

No Award

Best TV Show:

Supergirl

Batwoman

No Award

Best Cover Artist:

David Hardy

Brad Fraunfelter

No Award

Best Anime:

The Promised Neverland

Sarazanmai

Astra: Lost in Space

No Award

Best Manga, Comic, or Graphic Novel:

Monstress

Lady Mechanika

Hit-Girl in Hollywood

Books of Magic

No Award

Best Non-N3F Fanzine:

Opuntia

My Back Pages

Fadeaway

Event Horizon

Chunga

Spartacus

No Award

Best N3F Fanzine:

Ionisphere

The N3F Review of Books

Tightbeam

No Award

Best Fan Artist:

Jose Sanchez

Angela K. Walker

No Award

Best Book Editor:

Toni Weiskopf



No Award

TNFF — June 2020

Neffy Awards — Happy Birthday, Bob Madle!
Publishing Schedule
Membership Roster

Bureaus

Membership Recruitment—Birthday Card Bureau—Correspondence Bureau
Fan-Pro Coordinating Bureau—History and Research Bureau
Pro Bureau—Welcommittee—Writers Exchange Bureau

Letters of Comment

Justin Busch—George Phillis—Lloyd Penney—Angela Myers
Justin Busch—Bob Jennings—Justin Busch

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