



ORIGIN 38

APRIL 2021



**Official Organ of the National
Fantasy Fan Federation
History and Research Bureau**

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Origin is a monthly fanzine representing the History and Research Bureau of the N3f with the intention of giving members the opportunity to observe bureau activities and sample bureau output. Published for the National Fantasy Fan Federation. To join or renew, used the membership form at <http://n3f.org/join/membership-form/> to provide your name and whichever address you use to receive zines. Memberships with **The National Fantasy Fan** via paper mail are \$18; memberships with TNFF via email are \$6. Zines other than TNFF are email only. Additional memberships at the address of a current dues-paying member are \$4. Public memberships are free. Send payments to Kevin Trainor, PO Box 143, Tonopah, NV 89049. Pay online at N3f.org. Our PayPal contact is treasurer@n3f.org.

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Cover by Jose Sanchez



Editorial

Are Our SF Activities Significant?

This existential question, or perspective, may occur to many people in present day science fiction fandom. At one time it was all the talk in a science fiction and fantasy fan group called The Cult. There were references to Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus and inquiries as to what writers comprised the existential philosophical center. They were looking for something meaningful in their existence and in their writing and correspondence as well. What came of their inquiries I never found out, as I left fandom for a long period of time and when I returned there were different people in the Cult, who had not kept good records of the prior cult membership as it had existed. I had a talk about this at the Detroit Autoclave with Matthew Tepper and a few others, but Tepper seems to have forgotten the meeting. Fandom had gone in all directions and there was not a proper plane on which to study existence or the significance of things, things not being in a very good order any more. Perhaps the Age of Aquarius had put them all asunder. However, these questions seem to arise for me again in the N3F as it now exists, where more order is sought and where activity is recommencing.

Here we are in our own little microcosm, practicing the crafts of science fiction fandom, unheeded by the passing parade of other pursuits, literary and otherwise. Is there any way by which we can assume or ascribe significance for our interactive discussions and interests and doings?

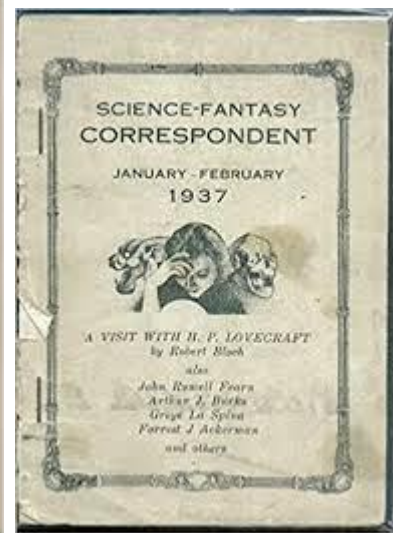
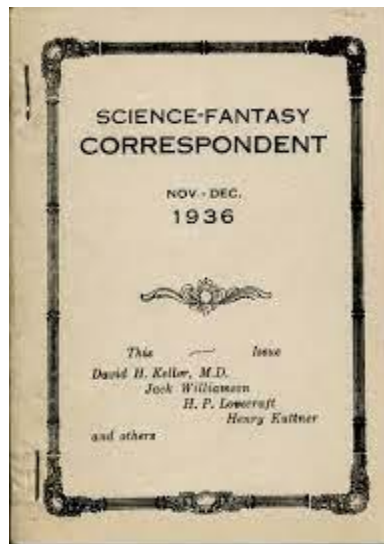
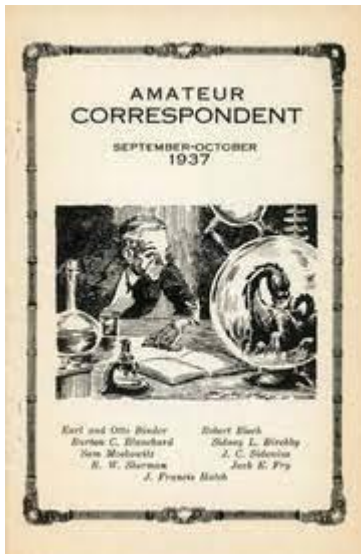
I think there is. In the situation in which I think we are now, there are ways to feel we are functioning significantly even though we are at a loss in many ways for continuities in fandom. Recalling that we do not have a very large system of relevant communication and that our online conferences and interchanges are not being heard very widely, we will want to make ourselves as significant to one another as may be done, recognizing

our interchanges as important to ourselves and concerning ourselves with what we are accomplishing among ourselves. Accomplishment has no size or scope; it remains what it is whatever scale it may be on. If something is accomplished among two or three individuals, it is accomplishment nonetheless and significant within its own realm, which is our realm. Why impress faraway people? They are extraneous to the individuals within the organization. Our work is HERE, and what we are doing need not be extended. To use a comparative, if one individual is performing what he does satisfactorily to himself, he need not look elsewhere for his fulfillment. If what he does is intended to involve other people, he should perfect it for his own satisfaction and put it to its use when the other people are available to him. Doing well begins with doing well with oneself. Therefore if there are two people involved in what is being done, each should aim at satisfying him or herself with what is being accomplished, and thereafter it should be the endeavor of each to interact with the other so that it may be felt by both that something is accomplished. Then with three, they may exercise their group skills until they have achieved success, and they may consider themselves to have done something when all three are satisfied. Continue this with however many people are involved in the activity—get it done well, and then with onlooking people, as we have here in the N3F, look for ways to please the others who are not participating in the activity but who are observing it and have an interest in it. If we succeed with them, we are doing very well, not on a national scale, of course (can we measure up to the title given this organization?), but as I say, the pleasing ourselves with what we are doing is an essential of doing something, and if it becomes significant to others, we can then work to please them as well. As my own title for this zine may suggest, we should concentrate on origins in doing what we do, and not try for unknown things at a distance as a thing of major importance to ourselves. We need not look for valuations of our significance elsewhere; we should find significance to ourselves in what we are doing. And then what we are doing will be improved so that it might be viewed with interest and respect elsewhere. We know that the N3F is being criticized by fans elsewhere, but if we do things well here, we have what we want, and these criticisms may be ignored or may even cease. Who are other people elsewhere to be distracting to us?

If it is meaningful for us, that is what counts for us. And if it is not meaningful, what are we doing in it? But very possibly we have made the right choice in being here. The NFFF does have things of worth for our consideration. Let's be wise and happy Neffers.

FANZINE RETROSPECTIVE by Jon D. Swartz, N3F Historian

In this occasional column my plan is to look at selected issues of fanzines from the past, principally ones published 50+ years ago. In doing so I hope to introduce new readers to these classic zines and also provide some nostalgic memories for those who read them when they first appeared. Each column will look back at an issue in my collection, discuss its format and contents, describe the people who contributed to its production, and make a few critical comments about this particular issue and the title in general. Primarily, the criticisms will be in terms of the time when the fanzine first appeared; secondarily, and where appropriate, comparisons with some of today's zines will be made.



AMATEUR CORRESPONDENT (Volume Two, Number One)



The first fanzine to be examined in this manner is the May-June 1937 issue of **Amateur Correspondent**, formerly **Science Fantasy Correspondent**. Sub-titled “The Magazine for the Amateur Fantasy Writer”, this particular issue was the first to carry the new title, supposedly changing the zine from a general fan publication to one featuring amateur fiction. This particular issue was popular enough to have a facsimile edition of 525 numbered copies reprinted in 1977.

Edited by teenage fan Corwin F. Stickney, this issue of the Correspondent featured a cover of H.P. Lovecraft by Virgil Finlay. According to Sam Moskowitz, this portrait of Lovecraft was a remarkable likeness despite the fact that Finlay had never seen his subject. This portrait showed HPL in a powdered wig with a quill pen in his hand. In the background were hazy outlines of some of HPL’s horrors. In addition to the portrait, the cover carried the following dedication:

“This issue is respectfully dedicated to the memory of Howard Phillips Lovecraft, who

died March 15, 1937, at the age of forty-six. Called by many the dean of modern writers of weird fiction, he will be mourned by every reader of fantasy, not only for the excellence of his writings but also for the fine calibre of mind typified therein."

Format/Policies

This issue, the first in a somewhat larger size from previous issues, was approximately five by eight inches. A good quality paper was used throughout, with a heavier stock for the covers. Handprinted by editor Stickney himself, it consisted of thirty pages (counting covers). The publication schedule listed was bimonthly, but with plans to become monthly if finances permitted. The cost was ten cents per copy, or twenty-five cents per year by subscription. A new editorial policy was announced in this issue, one that stressed the publishing of fiction by amateurs ("talented unknowns") in the future.

Contributors/Contributions:

CORWIN F. STICKNEY, the editor, was a teenager who was later threatened by August Derleth over Stickney's publishing of HPL's poems (in a booklet advertised in this issue). Stickney replied that only twenty-five copies of this booklet were published, and these were given away. The last mention of Stickney I was able to find is in THE IMMORTAL STORM when it was stated that he had suspended publication of the Correspondent. He is also mentioned by Robert Madle (in his chapter for Joe Sanders' SCIENCE FICTION FANDOM) as follows: "Despite the fact that its only activity was the publication of **Tesseract**, the SFAA brought into fandom many new enthusiasts, including Willis Conover, Jr., and Corwin Stickney. Together they planned a fan magazine that would rival the leader of them all, **Fantasy Magazine**...Corwin Stickney, who handprinted the magazine, dropped Conover as editor, changed the policy, and with its fourth issue, changed the name to Amateur Correspondent...the change in editorial policy of the Correspondent marked the complete demise of Fantasy Magazine and one of the greatest eras in SF fandom." Moskowitz reported that Stickney later went into the printing business.



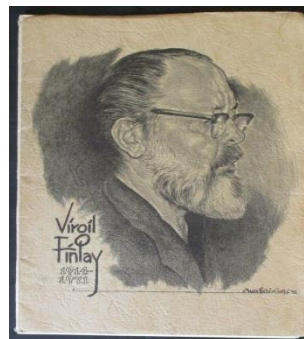
Willis Conover

WILLIS CONOVER, JR. [1921-1996], who had edited the first two issues of the fanzine (under its original title), later published LOVECRAFT AT LAST (1975), an autobiographical account of the fifteen-year-old Conover's correspondence with Lovecraft. The book included parts of HPL's famous essay "Supernatural Horror in Literature" that Conover had hoped to reprint in his fanzine. He contributed a poem, "The Spirits Mourn", to this issue. In ALL OUR YESTERDAYS Harry Warner reported that Conover was a publisher in the first bundle of FAPA mailings in 1937. In The Immortal Storm Moskowitz first mentioned Conover as a member of the SFAA; and he is last mentioned by Moskowitz (*op cit*) as helping with Madle's fanzine, **Fantascience Digest**. Conover later became a radio disc jockey, as well as a participant on VOICE OF AMERICA broadcasts.



E. Hoffmann Price

E(DGAR) HOFFMANN PRICE (1898-1988), graduate of West Point in 1923, became a full-time writer in 1932. He authored many stories in **Weird Tales**, and published stories in other genres. Price was a friend of Robert E. Howard, and a collaborator with both HPL and Otis Adelbert Kline. Price quit writing in 1952, after selling five hundred plus stories and writing biographical sketches of REH, HPL, OAK, and Clark Ashton Smith. He later became a technician/cameraman for San Mateo County in California. His contribution to this issue was the article, "The Sage of College Street", his brief biography of HPL, written "before H.P. Lovecraft's untimely death". According to Price, Lovecraft loved ice cream but hated seafood!



Virgil Finlay

VIRGIL FINLAY (1914-1971) was a prolific and popular SF/Fantasy illustrator, contributing cover and interior art to *Weird Tales* and other genre pulp magazines from 1935 to 1973. He also did dust jackets and covers for many SF/fantasy hardcover and paperback books. Finlay won a Hugo Award (Interior Illustrator) in 1953.



H.P. Lovecraft

H. P. LOVECRAFT (1890-1937) contributed the brief article, "Notes on Writing Weird Fiction". (This issue was the first to implement another of editor Stickney's new policies: including at least one article in each issue on "the how and why of fantasy writing".) In his article HPL presented some of his ideas on how to write weird fiction, and suggested the following steps: 1) Prepare synopsis or scenario of events in order of occurrence; 2) Prepare a second synopsis and scenario of events—this one in order of narration; 3) Write out the story following the narrative-order synopsis; 4) Revise the entire text; and 5) Prepare a neatly typed final copy. It has been reported that, upon hearing of HPL's death, Stickney decided to publish a memorial to his greatness.

FRANK S. BOGERT, the fanzine's business manager, was an older businessman who published the fanzine gratis, on the condition that he be put in charge of advertising. Apparently Bogert knew what he was doing because the zine was financially stable for its entire run of six issues (November-December 1936 to November-December 1937). In the classified ad department of this issue, there is an announcement that Bogert had back issues of **Argosy** for sale ("Have about 250 old Argosies, 1923-1927. Many fantastics"), suggesting that at one time he had had at least a reading interest in genre literature.

R(USSELL) R(OBERT) WINTERBOTHAM (1904-1971) had a LoC in this issue. At the time he had already published stories in **Astounding** and other SF magazines. He went on to write many other SF stories, by-lining his work "R.R.", "Russ", or "Russell" Winterbotham. He also used several pseudonyms, including J. Harvey Bond and Franklin

Hadley. Winterbotham wrote scores of BLBs, many with SF content (including three featuring "Maximo", a Superman-like hero). Probably his most famous SF work is the novel THE SPACE EGG (**Amazing Stories**, March 1958/Avalon, 1958).

Other Features/Contents:

Despite the fanzine's sub-title, only one piece of fiction was included in this issue: "The Jest of Tianne" by Robert F. Ennis. This story was advertised as being suggested by "Princess of the Stars", a story in the previous issue.

Regular features were an editorial ("Metamorphosis") and several departments: "Hobbyana" (articles on stamp and coin collecting), "Hit 'N' Run" (a LoC column), and "Odds and Ends". The last contained "various communications and acknowledgements which are either too late for insertion in Hit 'N' Run or which 'defy any classification' other than the above". This column included the communication from Winterbotham: "I find your mag quite interesting. Keep it up!"

Magazines received by the Correspondent during the month were listed. These included the May 1937 issue of **The Science Fiction Critic** (that included Moskowitz's article "Was Weinbaum Great?"), the first issue of **Fantasmagoria** (with Robert Bloch's "A Bard in the Hand" and illustrations by John V. Baltadonis), the May 1937 issue of the monthly mail order newspaper **Hollywood Trade News**, and the first issue of Moskowitz's **Helios** (that included a biography of James Blish and an article by Donald A. Wollheim). With the lone exception of *Fantasmagoria*, all of these publications had ads in this issue of the Correspondent, perhaps accounting in part for Stickney's unqualified praise of each.

Ads for other semi-professional and professional publications were featured: **The Greater Show World** (a circus publication), **The White Elephant** (a "journalette" on hobbies), **Christian Spiritualist Quarterly** ("George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, Spiritualists") and **Visions Magazine of Verse** ("Send your poems to its bimonthly contests"). Moreover, ads for the two SF fanzines previously mentioned were prominent. Moskowitz later wrote that he became friends with Stickney when he paid him to print *Helios* and heard his side of the argument with Conover, namely that Conover failed to contribute material on time. Moskowitz said his sympathies were with Stickney because, unlike other magazines, the Correspondent was supported by ads that needed to appear in a timely manner.

Many mundane advertisements were carried in this issue. These included printing,

insurance, and real estate establishments; groceries/delis; a notary; a novelty shop; a bakery; a realtor; personals; stamps/coins; mail-order professional degrees; Indian relics; a “beautiful motto” suitable for framing; and even an ad to “Learn fire eating, sword swallowing, and other acts by Professionals”!

Conclusions

At the time it was published, the Correspondent was viewed by critics of the day as a leader in the field, second only to Fantasy Magazine. Madle wrote: “In the fall of 1936, the fan world was stunned by the initial issue of **Science Fantasy Correspondent**, a beautifully printed magazine, featuring material by the greatest fantasy writers in the field”. Such a fanzine was an outstanding accomplishment for two teenagers. Even today, an objective reading of this particular issue shows it was ahead of its time. Why was this so? The outstanding printing and contributors, noted by Madle, certainly were factors. Stickney (and Conover before him) certainly knew some of the most influential people in the field. Related reasons were the business experience of Bogert (resulting in financial support from advertising) and the fact that Stickney was able to handprint the fanzine himself. Perhaps it was a combination of all these factors that accounted for the Correspondent’s instant popularity.

In conclusion, this fanzine—important in its time and remarkable even by today’s standards—was the product of two precociously talented SF fans. While neither of them went on to achieve much more in fandom (or in genre literature), they deserve to be remembered for their work on this excellent example of early amateur publishing.

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Note: This article was written years ago for **Scientifiction: The First Fandom Report**. It has been edited somewhat for reprinting in Origin.

Editor's note: It was surprising to find out that one of the early fan magazine producers was named Stickney. Years after that, there was a fantasy story called "Stickney and the Critic" by Idris Seabright. A very odd coincidence in names.



Twenty Interesting Facts About Science Fiction

More trivia about classic science fiction

by Jeffrey Redmond

A bit of sport about SF



In this post, we thought we'd share some of our favorite facts about science fiction, SF, sci-fi, call it what you will. Partly because the science fiction has given the world some truly visionary writers, but also some funny stories and curious facts.

- 1) Contrary to popular belief, Orson Welles' radio adaptation of H.G. Wells' *THE WAR OF THE WORLDS* didn't cause a nationwide panic.
- 2) In 2004, a group of science fiction authors wrote a novel, *ATLANTA NIGHTS*, designed to be unpublishable. Except that it was accepted for publication.
- 3) In 1939, Stanton A. Coblentz wrote a science fiction novel called *PLANET OF THE KNOB HEADS*.
- 4) In 1969, Jack Vance published a novel called *SERVANTS OF THE WANKH*. Because the last word was dangerously similar to a rude British word, later editions altered the name of the alien race to "Wannek".
- 5) A "feghoot" is an anecdote ending in a terrible pun. It is named after a series of science fiction stories featuring "Ferdinand Feghoot".
- 6) The term "genetic engineering" was invented by science-fiction author Jack Williamson in his 1951 novel, *DRAGON'S ISLAND*.
- 7) The first known use of the word "prequel" was in 1958 in reference to a novel by science fiction author James Blish.
- 8) The word "spaceship" dates back to 1880.
- 9) The phrase "science fiction" is first found in print in 1851.
- 10) The phrase "parallel universe" was first used in H.G. Wells' novel *MEN LIKE GODS*.

- 11) William Gibson popularized the term “cyberspace” in a short story of 1982—though contrary to a persistent rumor, he didn’t coin the word.
- 12) The word “robot” was invented by the brother of a Czech playwright in 1920.
- 13) There is a life-size android version of the SF writer Philip K. Dick, built in 2005 by David Hanson. It has been christened “Robo Dick”.
- 14) There are actually four, not three, laws of Robotics.
- 15) Jules Verne’s 1863 book PARIS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, set in Paris in 1960, correctly predicted cars, fax machines, and the internet.
- 16) In 1974, Arthur C. Clarke predicted the internet of the year 2001.
- 17) In the first chapter of his 1948 novel SPACE CADET, Robert Heinlein predicted mobile phone technology.
- 18) John Brunner’s 1969 novel STAND ON ZANZIBAR uncannily predicted many features of the 21st Century world, including overpopulation, Viagra, same-sex marriage, and even President Obama.
- 19) Edward Bellamy’s 1888 novel LOOKING BACKWARD: 2000-1887 predicted credit cards, garden cities, and electronic broadcasting.
- 20) Richard Matheson’s 1956 novel THE SHRINKING MAN was inspired by a comedy film.

And here’s

Twenty Things You Didn’t Know About Science Fiction

Even the biggest can’t know everything

- 1) Arguably the inspiration for much science fiction traces back to classical mythology. Think of it—Earthlings abducted by beings from the sky, humans morphing into strange creatures, and events that defy the laws of nature.
- 2) Birth of the (un)cool: In 1926 writer Hugo Gernsback founded Amazing Stories, the first true science fiction magazine.
- 3) Gernsback loved greenbacks. He tried to trademark the term science fiction, and he paid writers so little that H.P. Lovecraft later nicknamed him “Hugo the Rat”.
- 4) Rat’s revenge: The most famous sci fi writing award is called the Hugo.
- 5) Writers for the early pulp magazines would often write under multiple pseudonyms so they could have more than one article per issue. Ray Bradbury—taking this practice to another level—used six different pen names.

- 6) Serious science fiction heads say sci fi carries schlocky, B-movie connotations. Many prefer the abbreviation SF.
- 7) Prominent physicists and space travel pioneers have (often secretly) contributed to SF literature. German Nazi rocket genius Wernher Von Braun wrote space fiction, and was an adviser to sci fi movies such as CONQUEST OF SPACE.
- 8) During the 1960s, James Tiptree, Jr. penned sci fi classics like "Houston, Houston, Do You Read?" but was so secretive that people suspected he was a covert government operative.
- 9) At age 61, Tiptree was outed—not as a spy but as outspoken feminist Alice B. Sheldon.
- 10) One of the more famous works in the growing field of gay sci fi is Judith Katz's "Running Fiercely Toward a High Thin Sound", about a woman who bolts from her overbearing Jewish family to the mystical all lesbian city of New Chelm.
- 11) Irony alert: Ray Bradbury, one of the world's most influential SF writers, studiously avoids computers and ATMs and claims he has never driven a car.
- 12) Not to be outdone, sci fi legend Isaac Asimov wrote about interstellar spaceflight but refused to board an airplane.
- 13) Neal Stephenson's acclaimed 1992 novel SNOW CRASH has inspired two major online creations: Second Life (derived from Stephenson's virtual Metaverse) and Google Earth (from the panoptic Earth application).
- 14) Meanwhile, in the humble brick-and-mortar world: Sci fi author Gene Wolfe helped develop the machine that cooks Pringles, while Robert Heinlein conceived the first modern water bed.
- 15) Sexual liberation plays a big role in Heinlein's books, which really puts the water-bed thing into perspective.
- 16) In Arthur C. Clarke's 2001, the Hal 9000 computer discusses its feelings and Pan Am passenger shuttles to the moon. After the book's release, Pan Am announced a real life list of passengers waiting to go to the moon. Walter Cronkite, Ronald Reagan, and 80,000 others signed up.
- 17) Forty years later, computers can't discuss printer drivers, let alone emotions, and Pan Am has been dead for seventeen years.
- 18) When sci fi visionary Philip K. Dick inadvertently re-created a Bible scene in his book FLOW MY TEARS, THE POLICEMAN SAID, he became convinced that the

spirit of the prophet Elijah had overcome him, kicking off a long bout of schizophrenia.

19) After Dick's death, fans built an android likeness of him that mimicked his mannerisms and quoted his writings.

20) In 2005, the Dickbot was misplaced by a baggage handler. It remains at large...



What's To Be Found In Science Fiction?

by JUDY CARROLL



What's in it for us?

Recently, someone asked me, "...what exactly (does) science fiction hold for you, not just its entertainment value."

My mind moderately supplied the following:

Excitement, adventure, what if, why not, uncharted territory, belief in something better, belief in the impossible, fiction and science intertwined. But most of all, science fiction means to me IMAGINATION.

Imagination is one of the most powerful abilities a person can have. Through the use, and reality, of one's imagination, many things can happen or come into existence—such as, numerous modes of transportation, curing of some diseases, erasing poverty in some areas, multiple ways of entertainment, *etc.*

All of these examples have to do with reality. But what, you may ask, does this have to do with science fiction? I'm glad you asked. In many ways, science fiction is a look into the future. The following consists of ten inventions that first appeared in science fiction: voice control, automatic doors, smartwatches, chess-playing computers, mobile phones, the internet, the tablet computer, taser, and credit cards.* I wonder how many ideas appearing in current science fiction will move from the impossible to the possible and will soon become a reality.

The imaginations of science fiction writers are fascinating to me. I really admire how they can develop entire worlds and galaxies, peoples and cultures, customs and beliefs, many times very foreign from the customs and beliefs we hold today.

In science fiction you can have the excitement and adventure of riding in a first class

starship into unknown galactic territory. You can meet alien species that physically have nothing in common with any group of people on Earth. You can contemplate “what if” (his mental ability is greater than mine) and “why not” (be friends even though he has octagon-shaped eyes) of how people should act when meeting someone with different looks and abilities. And you can explore how you think you would act if you were to meet an alien different from yourself.

By reading books from various authors you can get a “peek” of what the future could hold for us, depending on our collective behavior. A wonderful future where humankind gets along with each other and aliens, or a depressing future where past mistakes were never recognized and therefore the dark ages have reappeared in a more terrifying form.

Science fiction offers such a diverse range of wonders and possibilities of excitement and humor, beliefs and knowledge, and insights into oneself and others. Science fiction is a great learning tool. It offers so much to those who embrace it.

I cannot imagine a world without science fiction. Okay, I can. I just don't want to.

I enjoy the unexpected.

*10 Inventions that Began Life as Science Fiction, **The New Economy**, Saturday, June 21, 2014. You should read this. It's very interesting.



art by Bill Van Dawson

AN IDEAL by Will Mayo



I have a vision of a field beyond all dreaming, filled with people of all classes, all creeds, talking to one another without any ill will towards one another and without a shred of clothing among them. Just standing there quietly talking to each other and passing the day in just that fashion. I suppose that's as close to paradise as anybody could get.

The world, properly speaking, belongs to the dreamers. It is easier to dream a thing into being than to live it.

Again, escapism is not necessarily a bad thing. There are lots of things in this world worth escaping from.





This is the last page, the end of the issue.