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History and Research Bureau

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EDITORIAL



Looking Toward New Horizons

We have many reasons at the present time to begin looking forward into the future. Many eras have passed in recent time. The Age of Aquarius has dawned and settled into the culture. The "Atomic Age" has seen nearly a century since it commenced, and has now achieved a sort of rationale and formal status. The era of travel has come to its fulfilment. The various wars have become generalized warfare. This is indeed the time of the *fin de siècle*, as some have put it, the end times of an historical cycle. We are among the ashes of fallen empire, in some ways affluent and in some ways impoverished. We have a technology but we are somewhat lacking in having good clothing to wear. Does a Phoenix really rise from the ashes of disaster? Some have thought so.

That's a look at the world around us, gleaned from the news as it comes in. Comparing that news to what we experience, we find we experience a lot in common with those disasters. Our own viewpoint as we have it here is the world picture as viewed from the National Fantasy Fan Federation, and as readers of science fiction we have always been looking out at the world. Does our reading bring us anything? It brings us the ability to think things out, whether things are going well for us or not. We all have other viewing perspectives, but this, of course, is the viewing perspective we have here and now, as we read and write in our activities in the NFFF. The objective of this bureau is to research our past and understand our present—the past and present of our organization—and then perhaps find how we are to relate to that organization and to being in it, and what we may gain from being here. I would say that we gain the

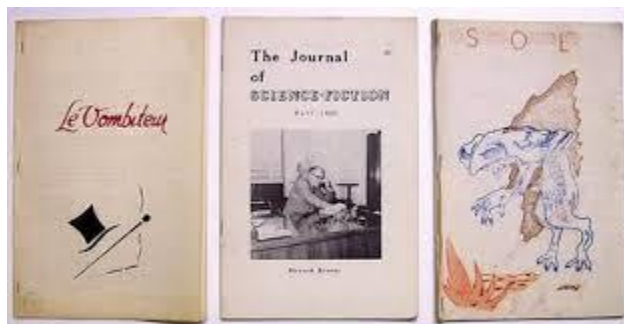
opportunity for a new formal perspective on things, and an opportunity to strive intelligently (we are a literary-related organization) for things that we consider it worthwhile to have, and consider ways of living that would be suitable for us. I think we in computerized fandom have been chiefly interacting by exchanging reactions to the world news, in short commentaries. This may be an aid to us in coming to terms with that news. We might evolve an existential outlook toward living in such a world that will enable us to make out our way in it—and I think many of us have found the way we like to live as the progressive way suggested by science fiction. The way to visualize the future is to do so, just as the way to visualize the past is to think over things of the past. I am suggesting attitudes here, now possibilities of employment. We want to keep our thinking as a valuable part of our existence. There is no reason to think that as N3F members, we are not in the proper place to do this. It's as good as any other place, if not better.

Find what's profitable for you in our reading and our activities.

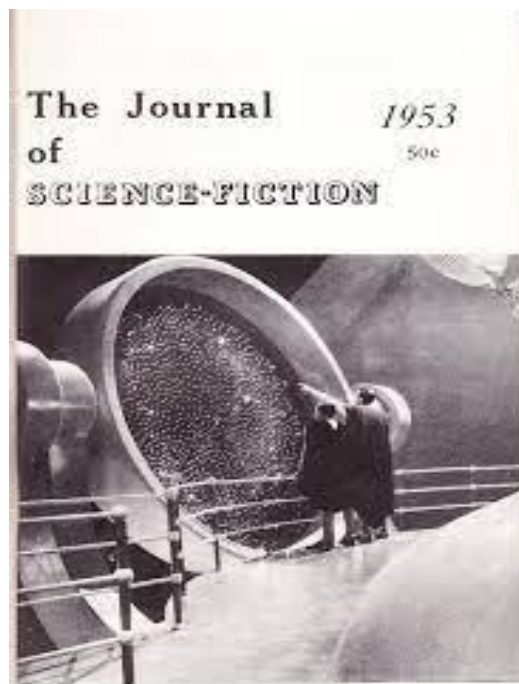


FANZINE RETROSPECTIVE 6

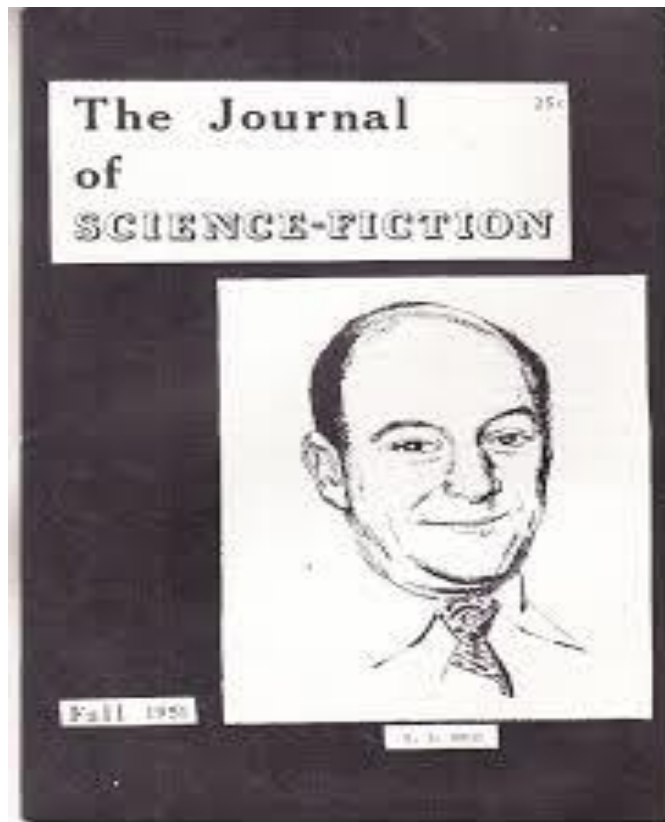
by Jon D. Swartz, N3F Historian



In this, the sixth (and final) Fanzine Retrospective, we stay in the 1950s to take a close look at another fanzine from that decade. The issue under review was the first of only four published with this title, all appearing during 1951-1953. The initial issue is particularly interesting for the quality and variety of its content—including both positive and negative evaluations of the work of Ray Bradbury.



THE JOURNAL OF SCIENCE FICTION for Fall 1951 (Volume 1, Number 1)



Format/Policies: Editors were Charles Freudenthal, Lester Fried, and Edward Wood. A sketch of H.L. Gold by David Stone graced the cover of this offset-lithoed, saddle-stapled zine. Consisting of 32 pages, counting covers, The Journal of Science Fiction (JOSF) was 7 by 8.5 inches in size. It was advertised as being published three times a year, but this was never the case. Copies sold for 25c each. Ostensibly the official organ of the University of Chicago SF Club, JOSF was not financed by the club and had to be reader-supported and pay its own way.

Contributors/Contributions: One of my all-time favorite writers, Martin Gardner, contributed the lead article on H.L. Gold, "The Golden Galaxy". Gardner's opening sentence was classic: "While John Campbell has been increasingly preoccupied with trying to remember his experiences as an embryo, H.L. Gold, editor of **Galaxy**, has been increasingly concerned with ways to improve the quality of his lively, attractive magazine." Such a statement by Gardner is not surprising since he was known for his debunking of the pseudo-sciences, as illustrated in his informative and amusing IN THE NAME OF SCIENCE (1952), a book I read and enjoyed enormously as a teenager. It was revised in 1957, and retitled FADS AND FALLACIES IN THE NAME OF SCIENCE. From 1956 until 1981 Gardner wrote the "Mathematical Games" column in **Scientific**

American. In addition, from the first issue of **Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine** in 1977, he had a mathematics column there as well. Gardner also contributed "Oom", a one-page end-of-the-world story, to this initial issue of JOSF.

An article by Ray Bradbury, "Where DO I Get My Ideas?" (reprinted from **McClurg Book News**), and "The Case Against Bradbury" by Edward Wood formed a very entertaining pro-Bradbury/anti-Bradbury feature. Bradbury's brief autobiographical account credited many influences for his literary inspirations: authors cited by name included Poe, Hawthorne, and Hemingway. Wood, who was in his mid-twenties at the time, recounted the deficiencies he saw in Bradbury's work, and ended with the sentence: "Some day he may even write some science fiction". In 1951 Bradbury himself was in his early thirties.

A five-page article, "Decline of the Pulps" (written anonymously because "we write stories for the pulps and some of our remarks may not be looked upon too kindly by some editors and publishers"), presented statistics that purported to show that the pulp magazine publishers were in serious trouble at that time.

"The British Reaction" by Capt. K.F. Slater, a 2-page article, looked at current SF prozines from the perspective of a fan in Britain. Slater felt that *Galaxy* had received "a phenomenal welcome" in Britain, and also praised the series of **Galaxy Novels**. On the other hand, he felt that "for the rest (the other American prozines being published at the time), I think most of the fans in Britain would not be worried if they all folded tomorrow."

Ted Carnell contributed "'Doublegood' Report from Air Strip I", a report on the 1951 international gathering of SF professionals and fans during May 12-13 in London. More than 200 delegates from eight countries attended this convention. Forrest J Ackerman was the delegate from the United States, and attended with his wife Wendayne. *EARTH ABIDES* by George R. Stewart (fiction) and *CONQUEST OF SPACE* by Willy Ley and Chesley Bonestell (non-fiction) were announced as winners of the first International Fantasy Awards.

"Bill Hamling's **Imagination**" by Charles Recour completed the major articles in this issue. A portrait of Hamling holding a pipe, presumably taken in a photographer's studio, accompanied the article. Extremely positive, the short article was a plug for the "new" *Imagination*. (After resigning from Ziff-Davis, Hamling had purchased the magazine from Ray Palmer.) Owner-editor Hamling, an active fan in the late 1930s and

early 1940s, was described as "a seasoned and well-liked veteran in the trade" and great things were predicted for his version of the magazine.

Other Features/Contents: Two short reprint articles from the magazine **New Purposes** were also included in this issue. The first, "Hornbook for the Atomic Age", by Robert Bloch and Fritz Leiber, was an A through Z poetical salute to atomic power (*e.g.*, "A is for Atoms, those cute little things"), while "Immodest Proposal" by Bloch was a takeoff on Jonathan Swift's classic satire. Bloch ended his humorous article on cannibalism with the intriguing question: "Am I my brother's kipper?"

An editorial by the staff and some humorous correspondence completed the issue. The correspondence resulted from a "Progress Report" by a Dr. John H. Pomeroy in the December, 1950, issue of **Chemical and Engineering News** that had been taken from an article in the September, 1949 **ASF**, but with about one-third of the article left out.

Current and former members of First Fandom mentioned in this issue included Ackerman, Bloch, Bradbury, Hamlin, and Slater. SF author/editor Gold, who appeared on the cover and was also the subject of two different pieces, was inducted into First Fandom's Hall of Fame in 1984.

Conclusions

This was a remarkable first issue of an amateur publication, especially in the early 1950s. The contents were varied and quite entertaining, at least to this reader and reviewer; moreover, the topics touched upon should be of interest to many SF fans today.

Subsequent issues of JOSF also contained interesting material. For example, the third and fourth issues included story listings from the SF prozines of 1951 and 1952, respectively, a valuable aid to later researchers.

The final issue of JOSF sold for 50c, consisted of 80 pages, and was 5.5 by 8.5 inches in size. Freudenthal and Wood were editors throughout the four-issue run. Genre historian Mike Ashley later called *The Journal of Science Fiction* a critical success and "one of the most mature and important fanzines of the 1950s."

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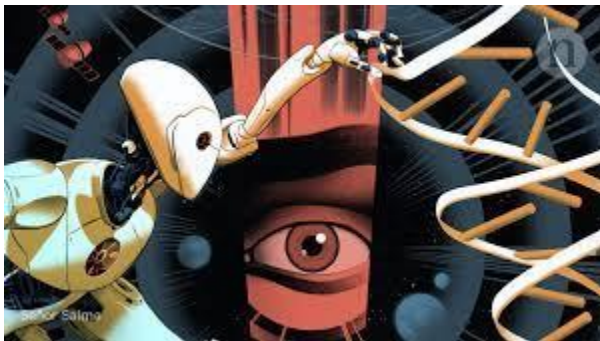
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Note. This article was published in First Fandom's **Scientifiction** many years ago. It has been revised somewhat for reprinting in Origin.



SOME IDEAS FOR SCIENCE FICTION WRITERS by Jeffrey Redmond

You have to know your science fiction



Science fiction has come a long way since its early days, when Isaac Asimov defined it as “that branch of literature which is concerned with the impact of scientific advance upon human beings” (MODERN SCIENCE FICTION, 1953). By the 70s, the genre of science based ideas had grown; it wasn’t just concerned with science, but with consequences. It asked “what if?” What if a world existed in which this or that were true? Pamela Sargent dubbed it “the literature of ideas”.

Fortunately, you don’t have to be a “techie”, or have a degree in quantum mechanics, to write for this genre. Good science fiction, like all other forms of fiction, is about people. It examines the human condition, perhaps in a whole new landscape, perhaps from an “alien” perspective. But it has to be about people, or readers will have no frame of reference, nothing to relate to. Even if there isn’t a human anywhere in your story, you’re human, and your readers are human. To create that all-important empathy between reader and character, you’ll be describing your aliens, or robots, or artificial intelligences, through human perceptions.

For the core of your idea, therefore, you draw on the world around you. Then you ask: What if? How would the world be different with the introduction or expansion of a particular technology? What if humanity encounters aliens? What if a particular event in history had turned out differently? What if a current social issue takes a particular direction? In science fiction, even the most controversial, contemporary topics can be examined under the guise of an alien culture or a distant future.

While science fiction often addresses contemporary issues, that doesn't mean you should scour today's headlines for ideas. Current events become old news very quickly. Instead, let ideas come to you by keeping your mind in "what if" mode as you experience the world around you. Be well-read but also widely read, in fiction and nonfiction, in news articles and magazine features covering a broad spectrum of topics. And not just those relating to science and technology. Use television news programs and documentaries as a springboard for "what if".

While much science fiction focuses on the future, history is also a great source of inspiration. Many science fiction writers are also history buffs. It's no coincidence that L. Sprague de Camp wrote the nonfiction *GREAT CITIES OF THE ANCIENT WORLD* and the time travel novel *LEST DARKNESS FALL*. Folklore and mythology also hold a trove of ideas for science fiction stories. Hard science fiction writer Larry Niven uses the unicorn myth in *THE FLIGHT OF THE HORSE*, while Alan Dean Foster utilizes Navajo sand paintings in his novel *CYBER WAY*.

Ideas can germinate from the smallest seeds. Become a people-watcher. Pay attention when someone asks, "I wonder what they'd do if...?" Keep weird facts into the back of your mind. Study pictures. Some of Earth's creatures are weirder than anything science fiction writers have dreamed up. Collect those ideas, and let them develop in the back of your mind. You may be surprised by what finally happens.

Researching SF: Blending Fact and Fancy

One of the most common questions would-be science fiction writers ask is "Do I have to know a lot about science?" The answer is, "not necessarily". If you're writing a "hard" science fiction novel about black holes, you'll need more than a high school grasp of math and physics to pull it off. Today, however, only a small percentage of science fiction is "hard". And the other subgenres offer infinite possibilities even for the least scientifically inclined writer.

Often, the best place to begin your research is within your own areas of expertise. If

you're a history enthusiast, consider spinning a tale around one of your favorite historical events. If you're a folklore enthusiast, try incorporating your knowledge of a particular culture's beliefs into your story. Consider telling your tale from the perspective of someone who shares your background. If you're a teacher, for example, tell your story of planetary colonization from a teacher's perspective, rather than spending endless hours trying to find out what it would be like to be a starship pilot.

Other types of research can be as simple as looking up the answers to one or two basic questions. And for this the Internet is the perfect resource. Need to know the temperature on the dark side of the moon? Just type "lunar temperatures" into a search engine like Google (www.Google.com) and you'll soon learn that the moon's temperature ranges from -250o (F) in sunlight. Want to know the atmospheric pressure on Jupiter? Another search will reveal that it is about six times the atmospheric pressure on Earth at sea level. Such searches will also turn up scores of sites that can help you find additional details.

If you're looking for more in depth information, you'll find that as well. A search on "quantum mechanics", for example, quickly turns up "Quantum Mechanics Made Simple". Just what you need to get started. A search on "time travel" brings up sites from NOVA and PBS, as well as discussions of Dr. Who, a Time Travel Institute, and the catalog of an individual who purports to sell time machines. This might be worthy of a story on its own.

Another way to find information is to join an e-mail discussion group for writers, or one relating to your topic area. Bob Naylor, a member of the Internet Fantasy Writers Association, notes: "Where else could I find out all the possible ways a knife or gunshot wound bleeds? The speed of light and its possible ramifications? The bites of different creatures? How to handle a sword, gun, rifle, knife, or club? Addresses for sites on any subject, no matter how obscure? Where to submit manuscripts, and how? Plus a cyber pat on the back for an accomplishment?" Similarly, members of the record arts sf composition newsgroup have discussed such topics as the composition of Mecca's Ka'aba stone and whether you can hear a bone break.

Discussion lists give you access to writers with a vast range of non-writing expertise. The IFWA group includes police officers, paramedics, weapons experts, sword masters, physicists, and more. A question put to such a list will not only generate a wealth of personal responses, but a list of URLs where you can find more information. But don't expect members to do your homework for you; while most are happy to answer

questions and point you toward resources, you'll quickly get the "cold shoulder" if you simply pump the group for information you could easily find out on your own.

The Market

Once you've selected an idea and conducted your research, the next question is: Where should you submit the story? In our decade, changes in the audience for SF and Fantasy are stimulating a preference for certain themes, characters, settings, etc. When choosing markets for your work, here are some factors to think about.

Format: A few years ago, online publishing was an experiment. Today, you'll find just as many professional rate markets in electronic format as in print. About 40% of semi-pro magazines are in electronic format.

For writers, e-publishing means more markets. Susan Marie Groppi, fiction editor for **Strange Horizons** ezine, points out that "Publishing on the web keeps our overhead costs extremely low, allowing us to provide content to readers free of charge." Also, ezines can use color artwork and music at no additional production cost.

One limitation of offering content on a screen, however, is that "people's patience for reading long works is fairly low, so we're limited to shorter stories." Groppi adds that "We're interested in things like hypertext fiction, but so far haven't seen any of a high enough quality".

Diversity: Responding to cultural change and initiatives within the field, such as the Lambda Awards, science fiction has gone a long way toward throwing off the "straight, white male" label. Sharon Lee and Steve Miller, editors of the forthcoming anthology *Low Port*, say, "Writers are now more willing to deal with gay characters, or characters of ethnicity, as characters rather than using them for shock value, or as placeholders."

A glance through market guidelines finds many requests such as this one from **Realms of Fantasy**: "New settings, exotic mythologies". John O'Neill, editor of **Black Gate** magazine, complains, "Despite our stated desire for 'exotic' settings, I receive almost no fiction in foreign lands. And much of what we do get, as far as I can make out, takes place on the set of an old XENA episode."

Genre Expansion: Speculative fiction is often described as the literature of ideas, yet characterization, prose style, and plot play a role in storytelling too. Groppi sees "an undercurrent of discussion in the community on the question of quality of ideas vs. quality of writing". Some writers complain that the *genre* is becoming indistinguishable from mainstream, emphasizing beautiful prose over startling ideas. *Strange Horizons*

embraces slipstream work that doesn't fit neatly under a genre label, and Groppi doesn't apologize for stretching the genre's bounds.

On the other hand, John O'Neill started Black Gate magazine as a retro concept "to hearken back to the days of the grand adventure tale". Black Gate features "the unapologetic, adventure oriented serial fiction that hooked an entire generation in the 1930s and 1940s."

Sharon Lee and Steve Miller report "a growing penetration of science fiction themes among romance readers". Lee and Miller see this as "a great time to push the envelope", writing a literature of emotions as well as ideas.

So should you write pulsating passion, pell mell plot, or pretty prose? Answer: write what's in your heart. The genre is expanding, and there's a definition for everyone.

The Timeline of Science Fiction Ideas

Space Travel is synonymous with SF. Spaceships and space travel go back even further than the 1950s, when most of us think stories containing those elements first appeared.

2nd Century BC: Lucian of Samasota describes voyages to the sun and moon while spoofing Greek romances.

1657/62: Cyrano de Bergerac describes the first space rocket in his VOYAGE DANS LA LUNE and L'HISTOIRE DES ETATS ET EMPIRES DU SOLEIL.

1835: Edgar Allen Poe sends a man to the moon in a hot air balloon in his hoax, "The Unparalleled Adventures of One Hans Pfall".

1865: Jules Verne sends them by cannon in FROM THE EARTH TO THE MOON.

1900: H.G. Wells' characters travel in a steel and glass sphere powered by "Cavorite" in THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON.

1926: Hugo Gernsback publishes "scientifiction" stories in **Amazing Stories** and launches the era of "pulp fiction" rocket ships.

1966: The TV Show STAR TREK offers "warp drive" to explain faster-than-light travel (FTL).

1969: SF becomes reality—Neil Armstrong walks on the moon.

1977: The movie STAR WARS calls its faster-than-light travel “jumping to hyperspace. Meanwhile, the movie CAPRICORN ONE (1977) postulates that contemporary space exploration is a hoax.

1995: Real space exploration has been around long enough to get historical in the movie APOLLO 13.

2012: The first manned flight to Mars is scheduled to launch.

Mars—The Space Traveler’s Planet-of-choice

Mars, for years the only planet in the solar system that could be viewed clearly from Earth, has always held a special fascination for writers.

1758: Emanuel Swedenborg, heavily influenced by reports of the New World here on earth, offers a fanciful description of Mars and its inhabitants, along with Venus and Jupiter, in DE TELLURIBUS (Concerning Other Worlds).

1895: Scientist Giovanni Schiaparelli reports seeing “canali”-channels, or grooves—while studying Mars through his telescope. He publishes his theories about life on the planet in MARS.

1897: H.G. Wells writes science fiction classic WAR OF THE WORLDS, describing the invasion of earth by Martians.

1906/08: Amateur astronomer Percival Lowell seizes on Schiaparelli’s reports and theorizes about life on Mars in “Mars and its Canals” and “Mars as the Abode of Life”. Pulp fiction magazines and newspapers elaborate his ideas into wondrous stories.

1912: Edgar Rice Burroughs writes a series of science fiction novels set on Mars, beginning with A PRINCESS OF MARS.

1938: C.S. Lewis writes the first of his trilogy of Mars novels, OUT OF THE SILENT PLANET

Orson Welles’ radio broadcast of H.G. Wells’ WAR OF THE WORLDS sends American listeners into a panic.

1950: Ray Bradbury writes THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES. Perhaps the best-known of an explosion of stories about Mars.

1960 to the present: space probes and orbiters are regularly sent to Mars, no doubt by those who gave close attention to sf novels as kids.

1992: Kim Stanley Robinson writes a trilogy of Mars novels beginning with RED MARS

1996: NASA announces the discovery of fossil life on Mars.

1998: Perhaps in a case of coming full circle, Robert Charles Wilson puts the canals back on Mars in his novel, DARWINIA.

1996 to present: Hollywood gets involved, with movies MARS ATTACKS! (1996) and MISSION TO MARS (2000).

Today many Hollywood productions are special effects, music, and obscenities. The loss of story and purpose, in attempt for profit, is unfortunate.

And what's SF without a robot/android/cyborg?

Our desire to create life by unconventional means goes back a long way.

Greek mythology: Cyprian King Pygmalion falls in love with the statue of an ideal woman, asks Aphrodite to bring the statue to life, and marries the woman.

1883: Carlo Collodi writes THE ADVENTURES OF PINOCCHIO, about a wooden boy who comes to life.

1976: Isaac Asimov writes THE BICENTENNIAL MAN, about a robot that so wants to be human, it does what sets humans apart from robots. It dies.

1984: In the movie THE TERMINATOR, robots disguise themselves as human beings to hunt their prey—humans.

1987: A mortally wounded policeman cheats death by becoming a cyborg –half man, half robot—in the movie ROBOCOP.

1989: STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION borrows on Asimov's theme with the episode "Measure of a Man". The android Data is put on trial to determine if he's property, or a free agent.

1999: In another case of coming full circle, Asimov's The Bicentennial Man is made into a movie. Hopefully, in all the quantity, this kind of quality in SF will be maintained.

Introduction to Judy Carroll: Reading SF

by Judy Carroll



I like science fiction. Well, actually, I love science fiction. But my journey to the world of science fiction took a while, and there were many stops along the way.

I was raised on Westerns. My dad was a big fan. Whenever a new western appeared on TV or in the movies my dad did his best to make sure my mother, sister and I were sharing this experience with him. After a few years of watching many TV westerns, I began to recognize the signs of where the story was going to take me, and I knew ahead of time whether I was going to like the ending or not. No matter what series we were watching, the stories seemed so much the same—shootings in the middle of the street, a rancher killed leaving his wife and son alone, a brawl in the saloon. The heroes always “got the girl”, but heroes didn’t get married, and in a few instances when they did get married, the wife always died, or for some reason disappeared from the show. The towns were always the same. The main street, general store, saloon, blacksmith, sheriff’s office, church, school, etc., were twins or first cousins. The scenery echoed the town. One week the bandits came around the hill to attack the stagecoach. The next week, in a different series, the posse came around the same hill to surprise the bank robbers. There was nothing new. Nothing unexpected. Nothing exciting.

My mother, I discovered, was a big fan of Superman. She would let my sister and me get DC comics. I guess Superman was her hero. But, being the hero, just like in my dad’s westerns, Superman “got the girl”, Lois Lane (and Lana Lang before meeting Lois), but they never married. (Yes, I know, now Superman is married to Lois in different timelines and TV series.) I liked Superman. He was a good person and always tried to help others. I don’t remember much about the countless stories I read in Superman and other DC comics. One story does, however, stand out in my mind. I don’t remember the details. It was a story that took us back to when Lois first got her job at The Daily Planet. As I remember it, in some roundabout way, Superman did something that—unbeknownst to him, Lois, or anyone else—was responsible for Lois getting

the reporting job. In other words, Lois wasn't capable of getting the job on her own merits. That was it. I had had it. The world couldn't survive without Superman. I switched my allegiance to Spiderman.

At some point, while growing up, I discovered Sasquatch (Bigfoot), Yeti, the Loch Ness Monster. I found the idea of these creatures fascinating. I began to wonder what other strange creatures this world held or was hiding. Not being much of a researcher back then, I went to my major source for everything—the TV Guide. I looked for anything that sounded strange in current series, or reruns or ancient TV shows. I discovered ONE STEP BEYOND hosted by John Newland. Every episode was said to be based on fact. I was hooked. (Now, you can see One Step Beyond episodes on YouTube.)

By the time I was in my mid-teens I had become a devoted fan of science fiction. I would watch any science fiction TV show or movie that was available. I loved hanging out in the science fiction section of the bookstore. (For some reason, in every bookstore I have ever been to, no matter in what state, the science fiction books are always displayed at the back of the store.) Also, at that time, I was the only female among several males perusing the science fiction books. I felt out of place. I would get looks from the other searchers like I had entered a sacred shrine for males only, and that they would gladly escort me to the proper section where I belonged—romance novels. I always stayed until I found a book I wanted to buy.

All of the above parts of my life lead me in some strange way to Science fiction. Science fiction showed me that imagination, characters, landscape and plot didn't have to have the same dullness that westerns held for me. Superman and other DC comics introduced me to interesting characters with special abilities and how they used them. Whether they used them to help or hinder others. Sasquatch, Yeti, the Loch Ness Monster and One Step Beyond showed me that the real world held strange things and abilities also. Time and my bookstore experiences taught me that things can change for the better.

Traveling through my life as an adult, many things have happened. As to all, the good and the bad have visited my door many times. Sometimes just a tap, or a pounding, and occasionally, the busting down of the door.

Several years ago, my life's door was thoroughly demolished. Things and people I believed in were challenged. I tried to carry on as if nothing had happened. As if nothing had changed. During this time a relative of mine told me about the N3F. I had never thought of fandom in any reference other than teenage girls screaming over the latest rock star or the new movie heart-throb.

Since science fiction was involved, I decided to join the N3F. I dove into many of the opportunities offered. I became a member of the Welcomittee and the Writers Exchange. I took over the Blind Services Bureau. I started putting together a special publication of work by our club writers. I joined the Correspondence Bureau. But the activity that made the most impact

on my life was joining the Round Robins Bureau.

The Round Robins were all distributed by postal mail. There were over eighty categories to choose from. Science fiction, fantasy, and horror, were each broken up into TV, movies, and writers. Each genre had subcategories, like aliens, wizards and vampires, etc. There were other categories that had nothing to do with the three main ones such as dreams, and William Butler Yeats.

I joined many of these Round Robins. It was wonderful to get so much mail. And it was all for me. I was the important one. I loved opening each envelope and slowly and sometimes excitedly, unfolding the letters to see how my friends were doing, and what they had to say about the topic. I listened to them. They listened to me. I shared dreams, laughs and wonders with many members. I told a little about my life, and I heard a little about theirs. It was a wonderful time. Sometimes the only happiness in my day came from the Round Robins.

I don't recall how long I was with the N3F and the Round Robins before I slowly and unintendedly faded away. But I will never forget what the N3F and especially the Round Robins did for me during one of my darkest times.

Around June, 2015, the N3F entered my mind, unexpectedly. Warm and soft memories lined up in front of me. All the time, fun and experience of the N3F came to the forefront. I wondered if the N3F was still around. I turned on my computer and looked up the National Fantasy Fan Federation. To my surprise, it was listed. I went to the website and discovered it was still active after all these years. I contacted the President of the N3F. I have been with the N3F for six years now. And I have no intention of leaving it again.

There are no strangers here; only friends you haven't yet met.—William Butler Yeats



Editorial comment on the above column: It seems to me the Round Robins (I don't know why they are called that) have had the effect of promoting correspondence, which is one of the basics of science fiction fandom. I do hope the round robins and the correspondence department will start picking up correspondence such as Judy describes happening in the earlier N3F experience she mentions. Fandom is lacking serious correspondence. We here in the N3F are concerned with that; it is our work in the N3F.—John Thiel

