

The National Fantasy Fan

Cras ad Stellae — Tomorrow to the Stars

Volume 77 Number 12

December 2018

Greetings from the End of the Year

Indeed, it is the end of the year, and your editor extends his holiday greetings. In good news, the long-awaited first issue of the revived *Mangaverse* has appeared. It was well worth the wait. We can all be grateful to Jessi Silver for her heroic reviewing effort, only a modest sample of which appears in her zine.

In more good news, the N3F is now up to eight zines, namely Eric Jambowsky's Film Bureau has given us *Films Fantastic*. The first two issues both appeared within the pages of *Tightbeam*. However, as your *Tightbeam* editor, I must report that the graphics challenges were a bit much, so future issues of *Films Fantastic* will appear as a separate zine, to be mailed with *Tightbeam*.

This is the Holiday Season. Food is clearly in order, so this issue of TNFF will include not one but two of Cedar Sanderson's wonderful recipes.

After some consideration, as Editor of both zines, I am rearranging article appearances between TNFF and *Tightbeam*. *Tightbeam* will get longer review articles. TNFF will be more focused on club news and short reviews. Both zines will run Letters to the Editor. This issue is short. I have a cold..

Facebook

As of this writing, we have three Facebook Groups and a Facebook Page. The groups are N3F (on the club), N3F Adult (material not suitable for teenagers and younger; mostly artistic material), and Non-Political SF Writers (on SF writing, no political discussion). The Page is TheN3F. These are a fine way to publicize our organization at least to an extent. If you are a Facebook user, please contribute regularly.

There have been two minor problems with the Facebook groups. The first problem is that a few people having been posting material that uses other people's intellectual property (for the most part, images) with no indication of source or permission. Solution: Posts to the N3F group must now be approved by the moderators. Image approval will be slow. Peo-

ple who send us plagiarized images, or who insult the moderators, will cease to be members of the group.

The second problem is that people are apparently being added to the group without their consent. This addition can annoy people, who direct their annoyance toward us and not the person who did the addition. Filters have been emplaced to control this behavior.

Zines

Since the start of November, the N3F has published one issue each of *The National Fantasy Fan*, *Tightbeam*, *N'APA*, *Origin*, *Ionisphere*, *Mangaverse*, *Eldritch Science*, and *Films Fantastic*. TNFF is distributed by papermail and electronically. The other zines are only circulated electronically. Back issues are put up on our web site, with an appreciable delay.. After all, if they were posted immediately there would be much less of a reason to join the N3F.

Club News

Writers Exchange Bureau

I would like to thank all the members who had an active part in the Writers Exchange this year - the writers who honored us by letting us read their work and the readers for devoting their time.

I am planning to make the Writers Exchange more active in 2019. If you have any suggestions please contact me.

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.

"Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before!
What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. What if Christmas...perhaps...means a little bit more!"

This issue is divided among Greetings, Facebook, Zines, Club News, Letters of Comment, Sercon, and Book Reviews



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Many New Volunteers are needed:Cosplay, Electronic Publication Support, Convention Hospitality, Outreach, Correspondence, Support the N3F. Volunteer Now!

–Dr. Seuss, How the Grinch Stole Christmas!

"Christmas, my child, is love in action. Every time we love, every time we give, it's Christmas."

--Dale Evans Rogers

"Christmas, children, is not a date, it is a state of mind."

-Mary Ellen Chase

"My idea of Christmas, whether old-fashioned or modern, is very simple: loving others. Come to think of it, why do we have to wait for Christmas to do that?"

–Bob Hope

The Writers Exchange is for anyone who has an interest in writing. If you are looking for someone to read your work, or if you would like to read the work of others, contact Judy Carroll. Autumnseas@yahoo.com

Welcommittee

I would like to apologize to any new members I may have missed welcoming to the N3F during 2018. I am so sorry if my errors have given you the wrong impression of the club. Please give the club a second chance. The N3F has some of the most loyal, hardworking and dedicated members you will ever encounter.

To help me better serve the new members joining in 2019, I am asking for someone to please assist me in greeting new members. It's not a hard job, but it can be time consuming. I have other responsibilities in the N3F, and I could really use some help!

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

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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.

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also sent attachments to the current TNFF and other publications the N3F has to offer.

If you would like to help welcome new members to this wonderful club please contact Judy Carroll AutumnSeas8012@yahoo.com

Papermail Round Robins

We have had a very active Round Robin member have to drop out of the activity. The following Round Robins need additional members if they are to survive:

Star Trek
 Dreams
 SF&F in Films
 Star Wars Films
 Star Wars Rogue One
 Time Travel
 Vampires
 Mary Brown
 Mary Renault
 Mary Stewart
 Jim Butcher The Dresden Files
 The Hunger Games
 Terry Pratchett/Discworld
 High Tehcnology in the Ancient World
 Guardians of the Galaxy
 Anne McCaffrey/Pern
 Dragons
 The Maze Runners
 The Martian (Movie)

Patricia Williams-King offers a list of titles for possible use as future Round Robin topics:

Young Adult Books
 Comic Books
 Neil Gaiman
 LGBTQI in SF&F
 Feminism in SF
 The Fantastic Beasts Movies
 Solo, a Starwars Story
 Tad Williams books
 Laura Resnick books
 Chris Moore
 Ursula K. LeGuin
 Robert Heinlein
 Isaac Asimov
 Jack Chalker
 Erin Hunter's *Catclaw* cat clan series
 Andre Norton
 James Tiptree
 Popular science books by Sagan, Tyson, or Kaku
 Michael Moorcock's Behold the Man
 Poul Anderson
 Elizabeth Scarborough
 Arthur C. Clarke
 Charles Delint
 Patricia McKillip
 Ray Bradbury

Bujold
 World Building
 Nonfiction Reading
 Anne Rice
 New Writers
 James Blish
 Fred Hoyle
 Andy Offut
 Sheri Tepper
 Harlan Ellison
 Mercedes Lackey
 Bob Asprin

Electronic Round Robins

PLEASE NOTE: We have a new member in the club who wants to be involved in the ERR. All he needs is one member to sign up and make his team complete. If interested, please contact Judy Carroll AutumnSeas8012@yahoo.com

Greetings, Neffers!

We have important news for you about the Electronic Round Robins.

No longer do you have to wait for two other members to join the ERR of your choice. We have decided to change things around and bring more satisfaction and completion into your life. Starting right now all you need to start an ERR is one more member." One more member?", you say,

"I will still have to wait eons to get another member interested in the Sci-Fi topic I have been dying to discuss." Drop that thought from your mind. That kind of thinking is no more. Starting now, only two members are needed to correspond in an ERR - You and one other member.

Here's how it works. John contacts me telling me he wants to join an ERR. Ned also contacts me desiring to join an ERR. They don't have to chose which ERR to join, because there is no longer a choice. The only thing you need to join an ERR is an interest in Science Fiction. I partner John and Ned and they become one ERR. Together they decide what aspect of Science Fiction they wish to discuss. No longer do you have to decide between The Marvel Universe or DC Superheroes and Villains. You can have the best of both worlds. If you choose, you can jump back and forth between times, worlds, and dimensions. You can even venture into Fantasy and Horror, if you choose. It up to each ERR pair to decide what they discuss and when. It will be like having a pen pal.

If this appeals to you, and I hope it does, please contact me and I will partner you with another eager member waiting to discuss all things Sci-Fi.

If you want to be paired with more than one member, please let me know. Contact Judy Carroll AutumnSeas8012@yahoo.com

Membership Recruitment

Jeffrey Redmond thinks the N3F isn't getting bigger fast enough. He's been getting together with people and talking about it, but a lot of them are declining. He continues to post

N3F advertising on his sites, with variable pictures. His advertising is first class. Cheer up, Jeff, we're doing a lot better than we were. I might work up another ad for him explaining the benefits better than I did in the ad being used.—John Thiel

History and Research Bureau

As you can see from Origin, we're starting to get right into research and history and printing our results. You'll find out a lot about fandom from following things in Origin.— John Thiel

Fan-Pro Coordinating Bureau

Ionisphere is an intrinsic part of the bureau's operations, and I am encouraging more contacts with the membership and activity occurring right in the publication. Don't be afraid, folks, I know the ionosphere is a pretty fantastic altitude, but here's a chance to improve your piloting experience. You might be surprised what being active does for a person. I think you all found interest in the interview with our president which occurred in the December issue, and he has added something for the February issue. We'll be interviewing N3F member Will Mayo in the February issue.— John Thiel

Gourmet Bureau

Cedar Sanderson gives us Sticky Date Pudding as an accompaniment to David Freer's *Joy Comes with the Mourning*.

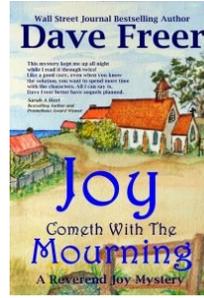
This series of articles featuring authors, their books, and a favorite recipe of their choice, was born from my love of cooking, reading, and taking pictures. Here's how it works: I get in touch with an author, ask for a dish, then I make it, taking pictures as I go, and finally it's featured along with links to the author's work. It's been a lot of fun so far, and if you want to find the beginning of the series you can look here.

I don't know about you, but I've been reading at the table since I was big enough to handle a book in one hand and a fork in the other. I've been cooking since Mom had to set up a milk crate for me to reach the counter, and I love the art and science of creating food. It's endlessly variable, usually delicious, and like doing chemistry in the kitchen every single time.

Today we're going to pick up Dave Freer's newest, *Joy Comes With the Mourning*, and take a trip Down Under with a very tasty dessert that's perfect for the cool weather we're having in my hemisphere. If you'd prefer a rollicking space opera, take a look at [Stardogs](#), instead.

Dave sent me a recipe with his usual humorous take on things, so I am reproducing it here with very little comment. It's not a difficult recipe, and well worth the effort. Keep in mind that an English pudding is an American cake, to begin with.

Sticky Date Pudding



Ok, I don't know how familiar Americans are with this but it's a common, old-fashioned Australian winter (and any other time you have the excuse) treat.

- 1 cup dates,
- 2 teaspoons of bi-carbonate of soda
- 1 cup of boiling water
- 2 tablespoons of butter
- 2 tablespoons of soft Brown Sugar
- 2 eggs
- ½ teaspoon of salt.
- 1 and ½ cups of self-raising flour (I use Spelt flour, and 1/2 tsp baking powder)
- ½ teaspoon vanilla essence



Chopped Dates: I cheated and used the food processor. Putting the baking soda in while I pulsed kept it from getting too sticky.

Rough-chop dates and add with bi-carb to the boiling water. Stand until cool – this means start this a couple of hours before.

Preheat your oven to 180 C. (moderate oven) (For the Americans in our audience, a 350 degF oven will do nicely)

Cream the butter and sugar, add eggs one at a time and beat well as you do so.

Add vanilla, then some flour, then some of date/bicarb/water mixture –repeat and stir it together as you go.

Line a square tin with baking paper (or use one of the new flexible rubber type stuff tins).

Pour your mix in, bake for 30-40 minutes (depends on your oven) – but until a skewer comes out clean.

Serve warm cut in squares, with the important part, the sauce.



Melting the brown sugar into the butter. Don't let it go too far, or you'll make candy.

- 1 cup soft brown sugar (the thick sticky brown stuff –I

hope America has it, is best).

- ¾ cup of cream (real cream, not some woosy low fat stuff)
- ½ teaspoon vanilla essence



2 tablespoons of butter

Stirring the cream in slowly. I wound up switching to a whisk to properly blend it together.

In a saucepan, melt the butter, add the sugar, stir and do your best to dissolve the sugar, add the cream and vanilla, and while stirring occasionally get it to a gentle bubble – take it off, taste it. Sit in the kitchen and lick the spoon. Have a little more. Try to resist sitting in the kitchen and eating it all, but pour warm and generously over the squares of the cake in individual bowls. It should soak in and leave a puddle in the bowl. Do not leave Sanford to pour his own sauce or you will regret not just eating it all in the kitchen. Serve with thick cream.



Pouring caramel sauce over the Sticky Date Pudding



Sticky Date Pudding verdict: Let's do that AGAIN!

Guilt-Free Salad Dressing ala Gannon

I had the pleasure of talking with Chuck Gannon in person a couple of years ago, we have some things in common, like having four children of approximately the same age, and we both love science fiction. But he is a man of powerful intellect, which leaves me in awe when I see it kick into action. And he's an excellent writer, which I can at least hope to learn. No kicking this old brain into higher gear if it hasn't happened already! So when I asked him if he would be willing to contribute a recipe/dish for this series, I wasn't sure what I would get from him.

I highly recommend you start with his first stand-alone science fiction novel, *Fire with Fire*.

"2105, September: Intelligence Analyst Caine Riordan uncovers a conspiracy on Earth's Moon—a history-making clandestine project—and ends up involuntarily cryocelled for his troubles. Twelve years later, Riordan awakens to a changed world. Humanity has achieved faster-than-light travel and is pioneering nearby star systems. And now, Riordan is compelled to become an inadvertent agent of conspiracy himself. Riordan's mission: travel to a newly settled world and investigate whether a primitive local species was once sentient—enough so to have built a lost civilization."



And when Chuck got back to me with his recipe, I was a little surprised, and very pleased. So far we've had a run of authors who have a sweet tooth (like Dave Freer and Peter Grant) or love fried food (Howard Tayler and Sarah Hoyt) which was all delicious, but had us eyeing our waistlines with dismay. Chuck's suggestion is a very nice, light segment in this series (don't worry, there will be more sweet stuff next issue when I introduce you to my favorite publisher, Toni Weiskopf).



Baby spinach, carrots, radishes, and crumbled bacon
He tells me this is a pure cheat.

- Greek Salad Dressing *no sugar, no or little fat
- Italian Vinaigrette *no sugar, no or little fat
- Dijon Mustard to taste

Optional: Tabasco verde for added spiciness.

I went shopping, picked up two bottles of the suggested low-fat, low-sugar dressing, blended them in a one-to-one proportion in a bottle with about 2 tsp mustard, and a dollop of kalamata olive brine (because I had the bottle right there). The result was very good indeed, spicy even without the added tabasco sauce, and perfect on a light salad with olives (for me) and baby spinach (for the First Reader). A great way to kick off salad season and help slim me down for fitting into a special dress this summer.



Pouring it on!

The wonderful thing about salad is that it can be endlessly variable. I don't have tomatoes on ours only because I forgot it, but you can do anything, it's not all just lettuce. Which means less boredom, and with this tasty dressing, much more flavor than just 'green stuff' on the plate! No more boring salads this summer.



Book Review Bureau

Reports from elsewhere indicate that recent changes in Amazon display policies make it more important than ever for us to review books and publisher their reviews in universally accessible stable places. On one hand, Amazon is a commercial operation; it will by report be doing more to emphasize books that advertise with Amazon. On the other hand, there is a just sensitivity on the part of Amazon toward irregularities in reviews; reviewers are finding that their reviews are removed not always for obvious reasons. (Appeals are sometimes successful.) On a more positive note, Smashwords has reorganized their front page. Books will be sorted by topic; books with better covers will get more front face space. However, the classic Smashwords continuous stream of book titles will still be available.

Games Bureau

Rajahs of the Ganges a review by Wesley Kawato

Rajahs of the Ganges is a worker placement game set during the days of the mobile empire in India. Players use workers to get money, dice, and more workers. Dicer spent to build buildings and gain favors at the palace. Buildings provide money and fame. The unique feature of this game is the way victory is achieved. The money track runs around the board in one direction. The fame track runs around the board in the opposite direction victory is achieved when your markers on the two tracks cross each other.

Colonies Expansion Kit a review by Wesley Kawato

Stronghold Games recently released the Colonies expansion kit for Terraforming Mars. This expansion adds trade fleets to the game. This is a new way to fund your terraforming projects on Mars. Different colonies produce different resources. Most games will have 5 to 7 colonies available for players to visit. There are eleven colony tiles, so that that means every resource will not be available for trade each game. Using the Colonies expansion kit will lengthen the game, but I felt the extra time was worth it. This expansion gives the game a stronger science fiction field. In recent games, players got to fly trade fleets to Ganymede for plants or to try Thanh for titanium. That really made the game feel like science fiction.

Convention Report - OuterRimCon A report from Wesley Kawato

On October 13 and 14, I attended a new science fiction convention, OuterRimCon. It was held at the Columbia Memorial space center in Downey, California. I was a dealer, selling SF magazines, so I got to go to only a few of the panels. I went to one about the unmanned probes at JPL and found it to be very informative. There was some talk about the end of the Cassini mission to Saturn. A second panel dealt with life aboard the International Space Station. There was some talk about the then recent abort of the crew transformation to ISS. Our speaker let us know that the investigation was still in an early stage in the Russian Space Agency still didn't know what went wrong. There were also panels on how to write better science fiction stories, but I didn't get to go to any of them. Next year this convention will move to a larger location in Carson, California.

Birthday Card Bureau

For November:
Birthday cards: 9 sent
Renewal notices sent: 18

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R-Laurraine Tutihasi

Letters of Comment

Editor:

Lloyd Penney raises the issue of N3F rooms at conventions. We have done this in the past, many years ago. The usual format is for a member to arrange for their room to be on a party floor, have hours announced in whatever scheme the convention uses, and be there to hand out publicity, show copies of zines, and talk up the benefits of N3F membership. The N3F some years ago voted a modest sum to provide, e.g., wrapped chocolates as refreshments. The net cost to the club is almost zero. The volunteer has to be willing to take a room on a party floor and be there during the hours when the event is scheduled. There's no extra cost at all for him.

George Phillies

Editor:

Referencing Lloyd Penney's letter in the November TNFF, which stated that an N3F room at a convention would be too expensive, I agree that it probably would be, but about that matter I have some fault to find with the way conventions are set up. A science fiction convention should be concerned with business and established fan organizations and the N3F is not a solicitor at a convention but is rather integral to the convention's purposes. The N3F has helped set up conventions. Therefore it should be part of a convention's outlay and part of its program, and an N3F room should not cost anything at all. The organization is part of what a convention is about. It seems to me that apas and organizations did not have to pay for their presentations in earlier years, and that the N3F is now set at a schism with established fandom, one which should be rectified. I'd like to know how good the N3F has been at dealing with conventions. Are the dealings secure and tight, or difficult?

—John Thiel

Editor:

On the N'APA cover: At my age, nothing much bothers me.

Jon Swartz

Editor:

You folks are amazing! Locus should do an article!!!
Jacqueline Lichtenberg

SerCon

N3F Founding Members:

John Millard

by

Jon D. Swartz, Ph. D.

N3F Historian

John L. Millard, born November 30, 1917, was an early science fiction (SF) fan who lived in West Toronto, Ontario, Canada. He died on November 28, 1998, nearly 81 years of age.

He chaired the 1941 Michiconference, was part of the "Toronto in 1948" Worldcon bid and the later, successful, "Toronto in 73" bid, that brought the 1973 Worldcon to Toronto. It was sponsored by The Ontario Science Fiction Club (OSFiC) and organized by Millard and his friend Peter Gill. This bid was done in place of a third Fan Fair convention, the first two of which had been held in Toronto.

The 1950 Fan Directory, sponsored by the N3F and The Fantasy Foundation, reported that he also was a member of DOT (The Derelicts of Toronto).

Millard was Fan GoH at RiverCon X in 1985. RiverCon X was held during July 26-28, 1985, with George R. R. Martin as GoH. Moreover, Millard had been one of the organizers of Secondary Universe IV that was held October 8-11, 1971, in Toronto. It was largely organized by the Spaced Out Library. The organizing committee, in addition to Millard, included Judith Merrill.

He also administered the Walter Gillings Fan Fund, created in 1978 to bring British fan Gillings to Noreascon Two, the 1980 Worldcon. The fund was sponsored by First Fandom, of which Millard was a member at the time. His 1994 photo appeared in the Spring, 1999, issue of *Scientifiction: The First Fandom Report*.

In addition, of course, he was one of the founding members of our club, The National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F), in 1941.

Sources: All Our Yesterdays, 1950 Fan Directory, ISFDB, Fancyclopedia 3, and other Internet sites.

N3F Founding Members:

Francis Paro

by

Jon D. Swartz, Ph.D.

N3F Historian

South Boston, Massachusetts science fiction (SF) fan Francis V. Paro was a member of The Stranger Club, and an editor of the club's fanzine *Fanfare*.

The Stranger Club (aka The Strangers) was the first SF club in Boston. It was active during the early 1940s and ran the First Series of Boskones. The club, consisting mostly of high school and college students, was formed February 18, 1940, but petered out during the later part of World War II -- as members volunteered for service, were drafted, or moved from Boston.

The Strangers was founded mainly due to the efforts of BNF Art Widner, and usually met at the home of member Robert D. Swisher. In addition to SF, club members were interested in playing chess. Member Louis Russell Chauvenet was a local chess champion, which may account for the members' interest in chess.

Fanfare was the official club zine of The Stranger Club. Ten issues were published in the early 1940s. Paro is credited with being the first editor of *Fanfare*.

In addition, of course, Paro was a charter member of The National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F) in 1941.

Under the leadership of Chauvenet (and inspired by Damon Knight's article "Unite Or Fie!" that had appeared in *Fanfare*), members of The Strangers started our club, the N3F. Chauvenet, in fact, served as the first N3F president.

Sources: All Our Yesterdays, Fancyclopedia 3, ISFDB, and other Internet sites

Reviews

First Fandom Annual, 2018

Remembering Jack Robins

Edited by John L. Coker, III, and Jon Swartz

Review by George Phillies

How may we honor and preserve the memories of the noble dead? Memories themselves are as fleeting as snowflakes

in a snowstorm. Few indeed are the people who actually survive in someone's memories, fifty years after they have passed to the next plane of existence.

Nonetheless, the finest of fen do pass on to the next plane, yet it is worthy that the good they did be remembered and honored, so that younger generations of fen may be inspired to follow their own paths of excellence.

Here we have a volume honoring the memories of Jack Robin, 1919-2015. He was a Life Member of the N3F. Some years ago, he donated a collection of his writings and photographs to the First Fandom Archive and Library. John L. Coker and Jon Swartz have selected from these the writings felt to be among the most important, and reprinted them in this 92 page volume. Included in the volume are two of Robins' plays, several of his poems notably a tribute to E. E. Smith, a bibliography of his sfnal writings, and a set of photographs of him, his family, and his descendants.

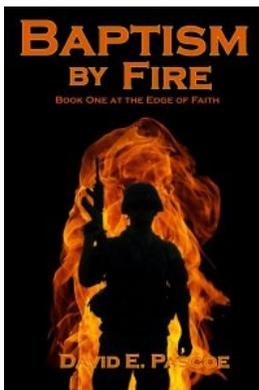
Most of the volume holds Robins' memories of the earliest days of science fiction fandom, fanzines, personalities, an early and vigorous fan feud, a convention, a shared apartment, and an image of the first two sfnal cosplayers, Morojo and Forry Ackerman. His wife gives us some of her memories of him.

Robins was one of the last surviving and least celebrated members of the Futurians. In a time when Gernsback hoped that scientifiction would encourage young people to take up a serious interest in science, Robins and Asimov were the two Futurians who ascended to the Ph.D. and did scientific research.

Robins was one of the last surviving ties to the first days of SF fandom. This beautifully produced and professionally printed volume, lavishly illustrated with period photographs of fen, is a fitting tribute to his life and works.

Baptism by Fire by David Pascoe

Reviewed by Cedar Sanderson



I'd been reading this book off and on for far too long. Part of what kept stopping me was the beginning. You're waiting for me to say it was slow, dry, info-dumpy, or awkward, right? Well, it was none of those things. What kept me from doing my usual read ten minutes here, fifteen there, was how well done the beginning is. There is a finely-crafted emotional tenseness to this scene, and I just couldn't read it casually. I needed to be able to sit down and sink into the story.

Oh... I got distracted! I'm talking about Baptism by

Fire, by David Pascoe. This is a debut novel, but it doesn't show. The plotting is tight, the action nicely paced, and the characters feel real. As you might guess, I highly recommend it. Also, if you have Kindle Unlimited you can lend it, so what are you waiting for? Once I had the time to sit down, I read this through in a sitting. It's compelling, and you most likely will be surprised at the villain(s) as I know I was, not what I was expecting at all.

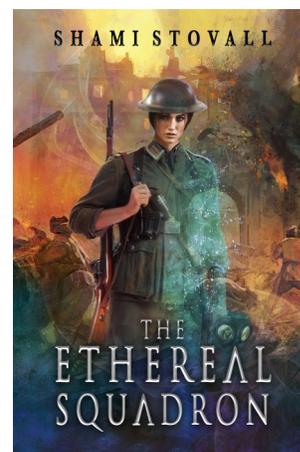
Now, I'm going to veer off on a diversion. As I was reading, it dredged up a deep, buried memory of a series of books by an author I would rather have forgotten. Have you ever read books that sent shivers up your spine? Well, I'm not a horror reader. I don't like it. But at some point, I read books by this author, and it was a sick fascination. Like a train wreck I couldn't look away from. I swore off the author close to twenty years ago because they made me – and I'm not sure how to phrase this – soul sick. Like an upset stomach, only psychically. Gah! That's awfully flaky sounding. Hard to convey a sense of *Wrongness* that those books gave me.

Pascoe's book didn't have that. It felt clean. I enjoyed the people, I watched with interest as they worked through the conflict, and cheered at the end. But it had some of the elements. Demonic activity, a religious theme that was lightly handled and worked without making the book preachy. The other series had a heavy-handed feeling, like it was smashing you in the face with sick nasty things and grinding them in. Looking back, I wonder why I ever read any of them, although I know the earlier ones were so over the top as to be ridiculous. It was the later ones that made my guts twist. I'm talking about Frank Peretti, who anyone who was trying to find decently written Christian fiction about twenty years ago may remember. For all that his topics were twisted and off, he at least could write, which is more than I can say about much of the "Christian Fiction" I have read over the years.

Bottom line, read Baptism by Fire. If you liked the MHI series, or my Pixie Noir, you'll enjoy it.

Member Ads

Check out THE ETHEREAL SQUADRON—a brand new fantasy alternate history of WWI where a special forces unit of sorcerers must infiltrate enemy occupied Belgium to steal magical research. Now available on Amazon! See it here: <http://geni.us/etherealsquadron>



2018 N3F Amateur Short Story Contest

Story Contest Rules and Entry Blank

Now and then, it has been suggested to open the N3F Amateur Short Story Contest to professional writers, writers who have had one or two sales. I've never favored this. It is my opinion that we want new blood. We want to reward the new kids on the block. To be blunt, we want writing that is not that good. We want stories from people who don't know their object from their subject, who don't know where commas go, and who use apostrophes to denote plurals -- but who have a story to tell. I want stories from guys nobody's ever heard of...but in the years ahead, we will. Those who are already successful don't need the encouragement of our little contest. If they were to enter the contest, the danger is that they'd win, every time, and crowd out the promising newcomer.

1. This contest is open to all amateur writers in the field, regardless of whether they're members of the National Fantasy Fan Federation. For the purposes of this contest, we define an amateur as someone who has sold no more than two (2) stories to professional science fiction or fantasy publications.
2. Stories entered in the contest must be original, unpublished, not longer than 8,500 words in length—and must be related to the science fiction, fantasy, or similar genres in the opinion of the judge.
3. Email attachments of Word documents are acceptable for submission. Manuscripts on paper should be typed, single sided on 8 1/2"-by- 11" white paper, double spaced, with pages numbered. The name of the author should not appear anywhere on the manuscript to ensure impartial judging. Photocopies are acceptable, if they are of good quality. Computer printouts must be legible.
4. Contestants can enter up to three stories. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) if you would like your story returned at the end of the contest. Stories will not be returned without an SASE. Do not send your only copy in case of accidental loss. We are not responsible for lost manuscripts.
5. Email entries will be accepted. Send to Jefferson P. Swycaffer at abontides@gmail.com. No guarantee can be made of email receipt. Privacy and property rights will be absolutely respected. No one other than the Short Story Judge will ever see the submission.
6. There are no entry fees.
7. Cash prizes totaling \$100 will be awarded as follows: First prize is \$50, second \$30, and third \$20. Honorable mentions and semi-finalists will receive a certificate of award.
8. Send all manuscripts to the contest manager: Jefferson Swycaffer, P. O. Box 15373, San Diego, CA 92175-5373; abontides@gmail.com. Emails with the story attached in word format are preferred. Paper manuscripts are acceptable. All entries must be received or postmarked no later than Dec. 31, 2018.
9. The Short Story Judge is a published science fiction professional, and also a loving fan of the sf and fantasy genres. All comments and critiques are solely the Short Story Judge's opinion, but he promises to be constructive and polite.
10. Stories will also be reviewed by the Editor of the N3F Fiction zine Eldritch Science; authors of suitable tales will be invited to submit their tales for publication in our zine. This review and invitation will only occur after contest winners have been announced, so it can have no effect on the contest outcome.

101 The NSF may want to publish an electronic book including top entries from one or more years of publication. You will not be contacted about this until after the contest is over and prizes have been awarded. If we want to publish your story, you will have to sign over to us first world serial rights. Your willingness to sign over rights cannot affect whether or not you win the contest. Royalties will be divided evenly among all contest writers once publishing costs are covered. Winners will be notified as soon as the judging is completed. Announcements and notifications of winning entries will be made, March 2018. Please take your time and submit your best work. You can resubmit stories previously entered. All entries will be kept confidential and will be judged fairly and anonymously. The deadline for all entries is Dec. 31, 2018. Good luck!

Please supply on a separate page the following information as your entry form.

Title of story (for identification):

Author's name and address:

Author's email address:

I have read the above rules for the 2018 N3F Amateur Short Story Contest, and I agree to them.

Signature:

Date: _____

Mail to: Jefferson Swycaffer, P. O. Box 15373, San Diego, CA 92175-5373 ; or email abontides@gmail.com

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