



The National **85** Fantasy Fan **Years**

Fandom's Second Oldest Print Publication
Cras ad Stellas — Tomorrow to the Stars
Volume 85 Number 5
May 2026

Laureate Award Nominations

These are the final complete nominations for the 2026 N3F Laureate Awards. The list is slightly longer than last issue.

In categories with more than five nominees, these being best N3F Fan Publication, Best Novel, Best Book Editor, and Best Historical Work, there will be a preliminary ballot in our next issue

Please speak up in any N3F zine as to why you prefer a particular nominee.

Best Fan Writer:

Lloyd Penney
Niall Shapiro

Best Fan Artist:

Jose Sanchez
Tiffanie Gray

Best Fan Editor:

Bob Jennings - Fadeaway
Rob Carroll - Dark Matter Ink

Best Fan Poet:

Denise Dumars
Robert Frazier
Juan Manuel Pérez

Best Fan Website:

Ansible
Fanac
Galactic Journey

Best Non-N3F Fan Publication:

Ancillary Review of Books

Nerds of a Feather

The Obdurate Eye
Pablo Lennis
Unofficial Hugo Book Club

Best N3F Fan Publication:

Eldritch Science
N'APA
The N3F FanActivity Gazette
The National Fantasy Fan
Tightbeam
Origins
Ionisphere

Best Novel (over 100,000 words):

Heart of the Mountain by Larry Correia
A Kiss for Damocles by J. Kenton Pierce
All that We See or Seem by Ken Liu
The Book of Lost Hours by Hayley Gelfuso
Extinction by Michael Simon
First Command by Michael Simon
Katabasis by R. F. Kuang

Best Shorter Work (under 100,000 words) or Anthology

A Tide of Paper by Leah Cypess
The Chronolithographer's Assistant
by Suzanne Palmer:
Crystal Singer's Song by David Weber
The Dagger in Vichy by Alastair Reynolds
Disgraced Return of Kap's Needle
by Renan Bernardo

Best Poem or Collection:

Life During the Lazarus Age by Robert Frazier
Space Exploration: Strange New Worlds by John C. Mannone

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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 Kevin Trainor, PO Box 143, Tonopah NV 89049. 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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Entropocene by Jean-Paul L. Garnier

Best Book Editor:

Eric Fomley — Shacklebound Books

Cedar Sanderson — Raconteur Press Boys Books

Jenni Hill -- Orbit

Lindsey Hall -- Tor

Oliver Dougherty -- Tor

Toni Weisskopf — Baen Books

Best Pro Artist:

Bob Eggleton

Dante Luiz

Bruce Pennington

Cedar Sanderson

Best TV show, film or video:

Star Trek: Strange New Worlds -- Paramount

Superman -- Warner

Wicked: For Good -- Universal

Best Historical Work:

A Selection of Golden Age Science Fiction and

Fantasy Artists by Coker and Swartz

Dreaming of Autonomous Vehicles: Miloslav

(Miles) J. Breuer: Czech-American Writer and the

Birth of Science Fiction by Jaroslav Olša, Jr.

The Martians by David Barron

Women of the Fairy Tale Resistance by Jane Harrington

Best Literary-Critical Work

Playing at the World Volume 2 by Jon Peterson

Best None of the Above:

Story Hour (<https://www.storyhour2020.com>)

(vote will be Yes or No).

Director's Piece from Steve Condrey

It has been an eventful few months here at the clandestine offices of Eldritch Science, recently relocated to the deep wilderness of southwestern Iowa (like Lovecraft Country, but with more corn). Since January I have been recovering from a serious car accident that came close to costing me my life, and then my leg. The battle continues, but like a cyborg assassin with a pronounced Austrian accent and a penchant for sunglasses and leather motorcycle jackets, I remain in relentless pursuit of



Steve Condrey

good content for the fanzine!

(Yes, I have cosplayed The Terminator. I had everything Arnold had except for the muscles. I still pulled it off, for what it's worth!)

Overall, I have been very impressed with the quality of stories I've had access to for Eldritch Science. We have an excellent crop of writers in the N3F, so if you haven't read our fanzines yet, I highly encourage you to. I am contemplating submitting some of my own writing (but not to my own fanzine, since that would be pretty narcissistic on my part). Better yet, I encourage you to contribute! The great thing about fandom is that everyone can participate. Your age, your race, your gender, and your culture only matter insofar as they are an integral part of the plot. In fact, diversity is always a strength and I would love to see material from the wide range of backgrounds I know exist within this group. I've read excellent stories from perspectives I may never have been privy to before taking over this fanzine.

On another note, it's good to see our dues-paying membership on the rise (and in my capacity as Membership Secretary you will be hearing from me soon if you're up for renewal!) For less than the cost of a single issue of Asimov's or Analog you get access to four legacy fanzines with some of the best amateur fiction in existence every month. It's a great deal and I hope the dozens of bookmarks advertising N3F I've spread throughout the greater Omaha metropolitan area have helped boost our visibility with the public.

I've held a few back, partly because of my inability to get anywhere I can distribute them and partly because I like to send them out with books I give as gifts. I'm not sure if a certain Mr. John Fernandes, an elder at my church, noticed the inclusion in a book I gave him last Christmas but if you're out there, John, I hope you're enjoying what we've got! (Maybe you might catch the writing bug too--who knows?)

So aside from spreading the good news of fantasy fandom to all and sundry, and attempting to heal from the Stupidest Car Accident In History (wherein I totaled my own vehicle and wrecked another without being behind the wheel of either one and ran myself over in the process!) what have I been up to?

Well, first and foremost, recovering from said accident. I have at least managed to have a little fun with it and introduced another patient and some of the nursing staff to the joy of fantastic fiction (even if I didn't have my bookmarks with me). If you have to wear a portable wound vac, at least have some fun with it. It could be worse--I could have ended up being a pirate for Halloween this year. And every year.

I'm also working on some writing of my own, both original fiction and a research article. Which will get finished first? Place your bets!

Anyway, thank you all for making this organization great! I hope in these difficult times that our content provides you with a bit of an escape, no matter what your troubles may be.

Our Treasurer Reports

Paypal balance \$163.73
In: \$6 from registrations (less fees)

NSB balance: \$2540.34

4 life members
23 electronic + 14 regular = 41 voting members
8 archive members + 257 public members = 265 non-voting members

Thanks to Adrian Kresnak for renewing!

Expiring this month: Mick Taylor, Morbus Iff

Son of Silvercon IV

Neffers are reminded that preregistration for Son of Silvercon IV has begun! The \$5 discount for N3F membership is available again. Attending memberships are \$40 (through June 15), supporting memberships are \$20, vendor tables are \$50, and sponsorships \$100. Mail checks & money orders to Friends of Fission-chan, PO Box 143, Tonopah NV 89049; PayPal payments go to fission.chan@gmail.com

Art Bureau

Ok, so this is going to be a very brief report. I received some really, really exciting artwork from Steve Fox. Unfortunately, none of his works have any titles, and even though I asked him twice to please share them with me, he still hasn't responded, so I'm afraid that his awesome artworks will eventually be printed "namelessly". It's just how the cookie crumbles. In the meantime, if you've got some art you'd like to share with the N3F, please send it/them to me via email being the best way. Please try to send them as tiffs, jpegs or pdf files.
Send to : jose77sanchez@yahoo.com

Ionisphere

Jean-Paul Garnier writes: I'm nearly finished with the SFPA Grand Masters issue of Ionisphere. There's been a slightly delay but I hope to get the issue out in June. And after that I will be doing an issue focusing

on this year's winners of the Writers of the Future contest.

Kaymar Awards

No one has been nominated for the Kaymar Award this year. I therefore announce that there will be no award this year.

Jon D. Swartz
Kaymar Award Administrator

Tightbeam

Tightbeam continues on its regular monthly schedule. Your Editor continues to find enough material for a proper issue, but the range of topics sometimes fluctuates. Your reviews of anything STFnal are most welcome. phillies@4liberty.net Editor.

The N3F Review of Books

Our supply of book reviews has suffered, but we are attempting to continue with roughly bimonthly publication. We are getting quality reviews, just not nearly as many of them.

A Gentle Stroll

A Gentle Stroll, our D&D APA, is an experiment. We have reached nine issues. The count of contributors has been falling. The material from my fellow contributors is, however, quite excellent. I expect that we will push ahead for a while and see if the situation improves.

Letters

Editors:

I was sorry to see the notification of the passing of Jeffrey Redmond. He was an interesting and interested fan, engaged in fandom to the hilt. His activities with the N3F were turbulent, even controversial, but his energy and his enthusiasm were boundless. For a time, he assisted me as the "face" of the Short Story Contest, and entries to the contest came to me

through him. He was a prolific writer, both of narrative-style science fiction and fantasy, and of well-researched non-fiction essays. His essays and explorations were thoughtful and deep, highly analytic, and based on detailed study. He was cheerful and friendly, and science fiction fandom is the poorer for his departure.

In memoriam,
Best wishes,
Jefferson Swycaffer

Members of the N3F:

Having made a few nominations, I shall say a few words in their support. For best novel I call your particular attention to Heart of the Mountain by Larry Correia and A Kiss for Damocles by J. Kenton Pierce.

Heart of the Mountain is the fifth and actually final volume of Correia's current fantasy series. It has been vigorously praised by actual readers as a brilliant piece of writing. Unlike many series novels, Heart of the Mountain actually brings the tale to an end.

A Kiss for Damocles was written by the nearly-new author J. Kenton Pierce. It gives us an actual heroine who succeeds by hard work and listening and looking closely rather than opening her mouth and ignoring the clues underfoot. Shai's world was thoroughly destroyed by warfare and catastrophic environmental events. Environmental? Yes, firing an asteroid or the like into a truly large caldera gives magnificent effects, not quite as disastrous as those created by the Deccan traps. We reach a humanity that is barely attempting to emerge from having been invaded, destroyed by weapons from the sky, and submerged in volcanic ash.

Among the shorter works, I would call your attention to Crystal Singer's Song by David Weber. There is no combat here except against nature. We are presented with a memorial to a person who lived and spent most of her life knowing that she would almost certainly never again see another human being. One might propose that the tale is somewhat like that of Robinson Crusoe, except that Defoe's

hero had some thought of the possibility that he might eventually be rescued. In the end, this is a moving tale of profound sadness, honoring unquarable determination against a hopeless situation.

George Phillies

Presidential Message

Yes, this message really is too long.

Greetings from your President. It is the start of summer, 2026. Our N3F is now 85 years old. I think the N3F is doing well, as witness the gradual increase in the number of dues-paying members, but sometimes a bit of introspection is desirable. We face the issue that several of our prominent members have become ill or advanced to the next plane of existence. I wish Mindy Hunt and Steve Condrey the best for early recoveries from their issues. Others of our members are not getting any younger. I am closing in on 80. Jon Swartz is in his 90s. We really need younger members who become active in the club.

Last year, we did a video conference to discuss what we might be doing that we are not doing. Many excellent ideas were proposed. Soon thereafter, all sorts of obstacles arose in our path. Let us recall some of those ideas in the hope that some of you will be interested in trying them.

Replacing long-time officers and editors with new blood comes to mind. I currently edit The National Fantasy Fan, Tightbeam, A Gentle Stroll, and The N3F Review of Books. I would be delighted to have at least three of these taken off my hands. Also, during our elections, I am starting to receive comments on the lines of Long Live President For Life Phillies! I am not even a life member, have been happy to do my bit for the N3F, but can see where new blood would do things not currently getting done.

A Welcoming Bureau would target putting the name of our organization in front of the fannish world. We occasionally receive notes from new members saying they had joined, but were surprised to learn that we were still in existence. We continue to need more members who belong to convention fandom who would be willing to carry to their cons copies of our

recruiting flyer or other material.

A Multimedia Bureau would attempt to move us out of the print and near-print world. For example our webpages are the hottest thing in 1995 web design. What could be better than a big block of text? Why, a bigger block of text. We do have volunteers who hope to work on this if life is not intervened. We could certainly use people to have more animation on the webpages splash pages, vigorous use of the blink icon, and all sorts of similar schemes.

The objective of the Social Media Bureau was to make the N3F more visible on all manners of social media, including web pages, blogs, and all of the other ways people use the Internet. The number of social media pages, pages like Facebook, MeWe, Discord, and all the rest, continues to increase. Most of these pages have multiple locations in which active and creative fen at the cost of an hour or two months, could bring the existence of the N3F to the greater STFnal world.

We have an on-line convention. It's NefferCon, the convention that neffer ends, visible on MeWe.com. It's been closed inactive for a long time. It needs some leadership to reactivate.

The objective of the Professional Support Bureau is to put our budding writers and artists in touch with agents, markets, fanzines, critics, and sources of educational material on how to do STFnal art and write good science fiction. That project is underway, but until it approaches completion nothing will be particularly visible.

Nonetheless, we are certainly doing better than we were a decade ago. When I became President, we marginally had two magazines, this one and Tightbeam. TNFF aspired to bimonthly publication. Tightbeam came out on occasion. N'APA had been reduced to a few members sending each other letters. Thanks to the hard work of a significant number of our members, TNFF promptly became a monthly, Tightbeam within a few years became a monthly, and N'APA once again appeared as an orthodox APA. We have since revived several zines that had not been published in a long time. John Thiel, may he rest in peace, brought back Origin and Ionisphere. Several Neffers revived Mangaverse. Science fic-

tion is above all about books. The Review of Books Incorporating Prose Bono publishes reviews of new and old science fiction books and in addition publishes articles on how to write better fiction. I relaunched my old fiction zine Eldritch Science, and passed it on to a new editor. We gained a news zine, originally the Fanactivity Gazette. Several of these magazines have passed on to new editors all of whom are doing a better job of that task than I was.

Magazines are hardly our only activity. The N3F has operated a short story contest for close to sixty years. Under the leadership of Jefferson Swycaffer, it has reached new heights of excellence with large numbers of quality submissions all being reviewed and commented upon by Jefferson. In 1941, the N3F offered the first awards ever given in science fiction fandom, the Laureate Awards, for excellence and contributions to all of science fiction and fantasy.

We continue to offer those awards.

Our Other Zines

A Gentle Stroll

The latest issue is #9.

Articles and their page counts were
 Ronin Engineer... Jim Eckman ... 1
 A Rhodomontadulous Promenade ... George
 Phillies... 6
 The Fox's Den... N.C. Shapero ... 78

FrankinZine
 The new downloadable ZIP files cover January, February, March, and April 2026.

The N3F Fan Gazette

News of Fen of Interest to All Fen
 The numbers are page numbers.

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6 ... Rayguns & Rocketships ... Book Review by Cedar Sanderson

8 ... The Armchair General World War One: Can You Win The Great War? by John Buckley and Spencer Jones ... Review by Chris Nuttall

Motion Pictures

12 ... Project Hail Mary ... Review by Jason P. Hunt

SerCon

15... John Varley Bio-Bibliography by Jon D. Swartz, Ph.D.

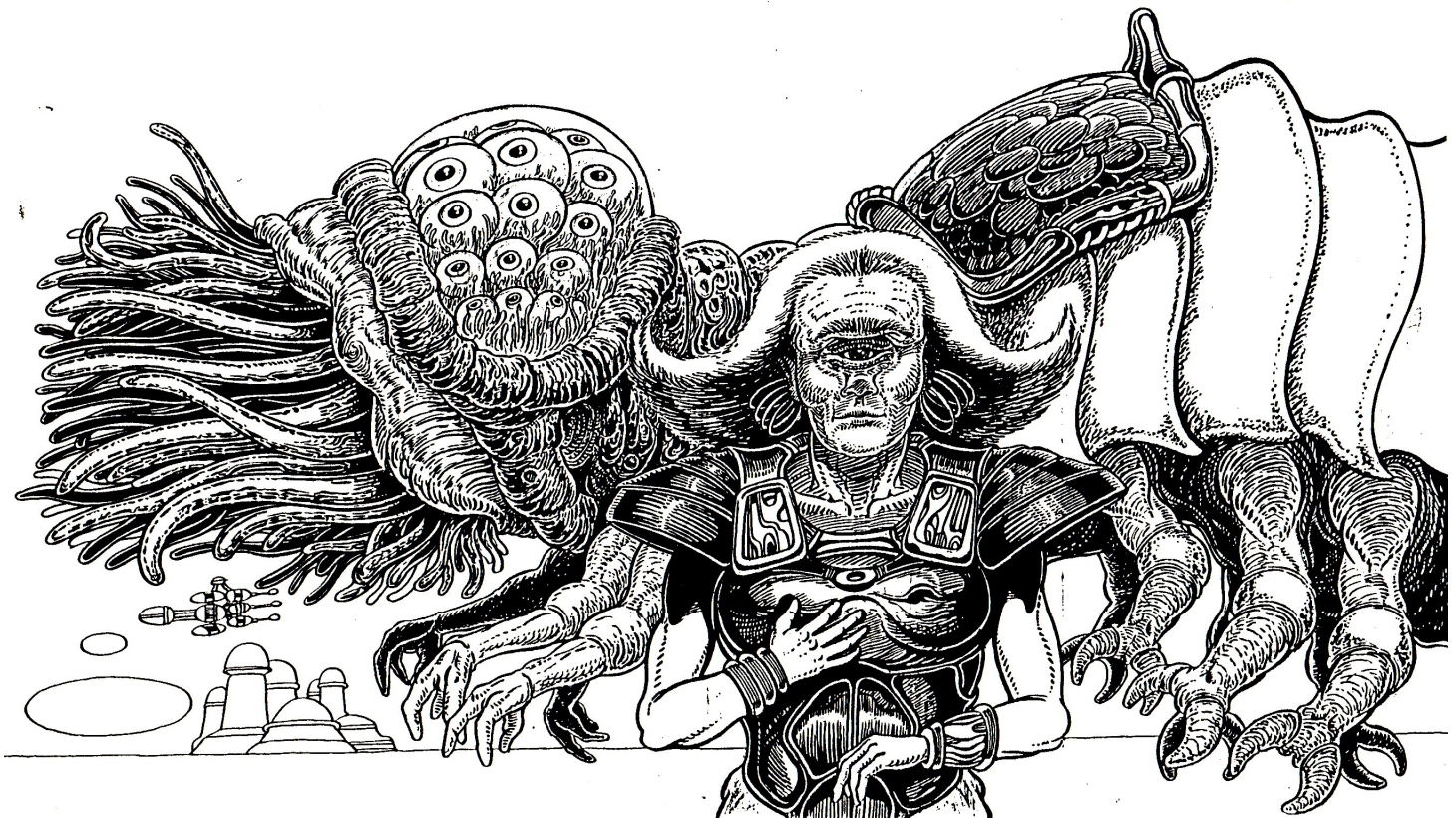
Video

16 ... Starfleet Academy on Paramount+ ... A TV Series Review by Jim McCoy

Food of Famous Authors

19 ... Oatmeal Cookies ... Cooking by Cedar Sanderson

19 ... Cooking with Cayenne Pepper ... Cooking by Cedar Sanderson



Aliens by Steve Fox

2026 N3F Amateur Short Story Contest
Story Contest Rules and Entry Blank

To enter a story, on a separate page, please supply the following information, followed by your story:

- 1) Title of story (for identification): Author's name and address: Author's email address:
- 2) Answer DO or DO NOT I do/do not wish to become a public (no dues, no vote) member of the N3F and receive for free all N3F magazines.

Testify: I have read the following rules for the 2026 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

We are here to encourage new writers, to reward the new kids on the block. 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. We want stories from guys and gals nobody's ever heard of...but, in the years ahead, we will.

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 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, 2025.
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.
11. 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. Winners will be notified as soon as the judging is completed. Announcements and notifications of winning entries will be made by March 2027. Please take your time and submit your best work. You can resubmit stories previously entered if they did not win previously. All entries will be kept confidential and will be judged fairly and anonymously. The deadline for all entries is Dec. 31, 2026. Good luck!



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Art Bureau—Ionisphere—Kaymar Awards
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SF/Fan Origins
Tightbeam
Aliens -- Art by our excellent new artist Steve Fox

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