

# IONISPHERE 4



**Official Publication of the  
National Fantasy Fan  
Federation**

**Fan-Pro Coordinating Bureau**

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**News: vacant as yet**

**Conventions: vacant as yet**

(any takers?)

The Fan-Pro Coordinating Bureau, a newly re-established N3F activity, is devoted to bettering relations between fans and pros by means of introductions, news, locations on the net, profiles, and assistance with contacts. We also use this publication as a means of communication and contact, and appreciate letters of comment and suggestions, which should be sent to the editor at the given email address. Anyone having any news relevant to action in the science fiction amphitheater should send it here with the blessings of Ghu, and conventions may be announced within our pages as well. We also solicit convention reports by the membership so if you have attended a convention lately, why not send your report here? Photos of fan events are welcomed as well. It's

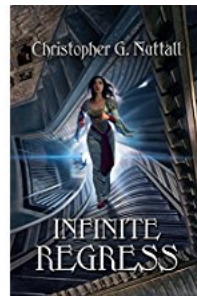
**your chance to be openly active in the NFFF. And if you have art that might fit in IO (called that for short) send it in.**

## **Editorial**    **Get A Leg On, Impress Your Friends**

I hope that title is offensive to no one; it's my way of introducing the topic of activity within the N3F. It's a wonder why with all the opportunities we have for activity here, the membership is not generally taking us up on it. Come on, if you would, we need your push. Do you see what I'm saying? A bureau needs activity, and perhaps the membership could profit from it as well. I know there are a lot of reasons why there is so little activity here—it has to do with the computer system, the many difficulties that are encountered in attempting to use the internet equipment. In addition to these difficulties, there is all that work being done by wielders of illegal equipment to interfere with what is going on upon the net, and then too, and due to all of this, there is a lack of introduction to the work and activities found on the net. We have to find out how to do things as well as what to do. There are so many makes of computers with so much different equipment that what one person can manage another cannot, and correlation of all the activity involved is frequently difficult. What we should try to do here is to see about getting things together, investigating all the possibilities. There should also be careful explanations of what the NFFF is all about, rather than expecting members to discover what's what for themselves. I've seen numerous complaints about working links not working, and if members have this problem they should ask around and find out why they are not working. First things first, getting anywhere. Email non-delivery is also a thing to complain about and ask questions about. What we're into doing here is getting out computers to work, catching on to what's going on at a site (this one, as an especially good example), and then experiment-

ing at getting into the activities and inter-relating successfully. If this happens we have begun to thrive as an online organization.

Meanwhile, as you have gotten here, read on and see what we're doing.



## PRO AUTHOR INTERVIEW: **CHRISTOPHER G. NUTTALL**

**Christopher Nuttall is an NFFF member who is fairly new in the science fiction field and yet has been prolific enough in the writing of science fiction to have done as many or more books than the long-timers. I had not been familiar with his books, being somewhat off the same book circuits as he is on, but was glad to make his acquaintance as a writer. My first notice of his name other than here was to see him proposed as an answer to a request for suggestions on what sf reading to start with on a Facebook science fiction discussion group. So my interview starts from scratch, though I now have access to more information by looking around the net. You can find further information about him from Googling—look for him by name. He also has a Facebook page. His website is <http://www.chrishanger.net> , and his email, also on our roster, is [Christopher\\_g\\_nuttall@hotmail.com](mailto:Christopher_g_nuttall@hotmail.com) . Now for our interview, N3F-style:**

**IO:** I haven't seen your writing, my informant being George Phillies, who said you were one of the writers we have in the National Fantasy Fan Federation. I'd like to ask you first, what are some of your writings?

**CHRIS:** I'm probably best known for the ARK ROYAL series (military science

fiction) and *SCHOOLED IN MAGIC* (light fantasy). The former currently stands at nine books (three sets of three) while the latter currently has eleven books. I also write *THE EMPIRE'S CORPS*, *BOOK WORM* and many others. There's a complete list on my site.

**IO:** Where may your writings be obtained?

**CHRIS:** Pretty much everything can be downloaded from Amazon Kindle. A handful can be downloaded from other sources, but I generally prefer to stick to Kindle.

**IO:** What are some of the subjects for your writings? What are some of the points and purposes in what you have written?

**CHRIS:** I'm alternatively a military science-fiction and fantasy writer, depending on how the mood takes me. I tend to think of myself as a realistic—in SF, I concentrate more on the human element, while in fantasy I make it clear that fantasy worlds are not idyllic places to live for *everyone* (often not even for the people at the very top of the heap).

I'm a strong believer in personal freedom and, perhaps just as important, in taking responsibility for one's own actions. And also in the supremacy of democracy over every other system of government. That said, I'm also very interested in social change, and how new inventions and ideas can have negative as well as positive effects. *SCHOOLED IN MAGIC*, which has been described as a cross between *LEST DARKNESS FALL* and Harry Potter, has quite a few changes—both good and bad—caused by the heroine.

I try to shine a light on such matters.

**IO:** How long have you been doing science fiction writing? What were your first stories?

**CHRIS:** Perversely, the first manuscript I wrote—I hesitate to call it a novel,

because I made every mistake in the book and then some—was a conspiracy thriller, back in 2005. I'd read a really bad novel—it had great promise, but the author dropped the ball midway through—and decided it was worth trying to do something better. I probably failed, but by then I was writing. After that, I messed around with alien invasion, cross-cultural contact fantasy, alternate history and near-future war, making more and more mistakes—and learning from them.

I had my first real success in 2010, with *THE EMPIRE'S CORPS*. Shortly afterwards, Elsewhen Press picked up *THE ROYAL SORCERESS* (fantasy steampunk alternate history) and *BOOKWORM* (high fantasy). And then I was off...

**IO:** Have you been involved in science fiction fandom, other than the NFFF?

**CHRIS:** Not that much, oddly enough. I've been trying to attend a few conventions ever since 2014, when I attended my first convention, but I generally don't have time to go everywhere. I was a Guest of Honor at Honorcon last year, which was a good experience—I got to meet David Weber!

**IO:** What attracted you to the reading of fantasy and/or science fiction?

**CHRIS:** I think it started because I like adventure stories—I was five, I think, when I picked up my first science-fiction novel. I got into *DOCTOR WHO*, *STAR TREK*, and suchlike pretty quickly. *STAR WARS* took a bit longer. Fantasy was less interesting at first, until I started reading some more adult books. Even then, there were some famous stories that never really interested me.

Basically, good science fiction is about the human soul and reaching out to touch our destiny, overcoming immense challenges on the way. I've only read a handful of books that are focused on non-humans—realistically, only *DOCTOR WHO* manages to keep focused on a non-human and yet still touch the human soul. (That's probably why Star Trek will never have a non-human captain.) Good

fantasy is pretty much along the same lines—THE LORD OF THE RINGS, for example, is largely focused on a desperate fight for survival and the sheer grit the characters show to keep going.

**IO:** Are you presently doing any writing?

**CHRIS:** Right now, I've just started FISTS OF JUSTICE—book twelve in Schooled in Magic. Some of our heroine's innovations are about to come back to bite her. Hard.

**IO:** What gives you the drive to be a writer?

**CHRIS:** I'm not sure I can answer that question. I like writing. I like building universes and characters and putting them together. \*grin\* I know. That isn't a very helpful answer.

**IO:** Well, it makes me feel like expanding the interview. I'm sure the N3F members would like talking further about some of these statements.



## Science fiction and fantasy fan sites

### **FACEBOOK GROUPS**

SF FANDOM

FAN-EDS

Asimov's Science Fiction

F&SF Appreciation Society

FAANEDS

Society for the Perpetuation of Fannish Fandom

Analog Science Fiction and Fact Magazine Fan Club

Science Fiction

Ninth Fandom

N3F

Science Fiction Discussion Group

Science Fiction Book Club

Polar Borealis Magazine

Science Fiction Readers Club

Science Fiction Poetry Association

Weird Tales

Bewildering Stories

Fanhistory

To find the Facebook sites find Facebook and use Facebook Search to locate the groups by the names given above.

## **NET FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION SITES**

STRANGE FICTION SCI-FI & FANTASY ZINR

<http://strangefictionzine.com>

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY WORLD

<http://www.sffworld.com>



EFANZINES.COM

<http://efanzines.com>

ALL SCI-FI

<http://www.allsci-fi.us>

FANAC—IMZY

<https://www.imzy.com/fanac>

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY FORUMS—SFF CHRONICLES

<https://www.sfchronicles.com>

SCIENCE FICTION MESSAGE BOARD

<http://sciencefiction.yuku.com>

AMAZING STORIES

<http://amazingstoriesmag.com>

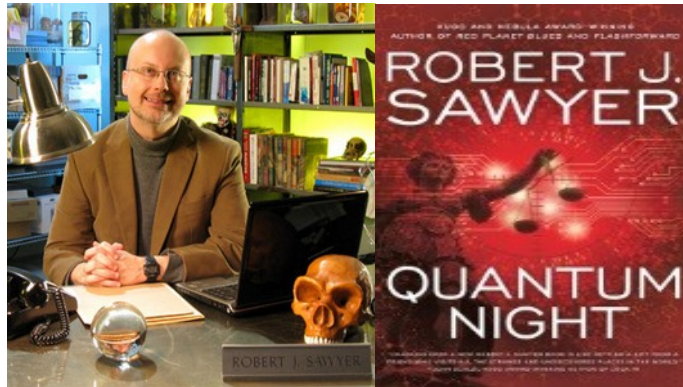
THE FANAC FAN HISTORY PROJECT

<http://fanac.org>



**LETTERS** To us

**No letters this time. I think maybe a lot of the membership is frozen in place.**



## PRO AUTHOR INTERVIEW: **ROBERT J. SAWYER**

**Robert J. Sawyer's big hit happened to all of us in 2009 when his novel FLASHFORWARD became a television series. The event was something like what had been described in the novel. Finding him on Facebook, I was pleased to get his agreement to do an interview for Ionisphere. Not everyone has gotten a clear glimpse of his comet-like passage over the science fiction scene. This interview should make a few of these unknown factors clear.**

**For a further look, his email address is [sawyer@sfwriter.com](mailto:sawyer@sfwriter.com) .**

**His site is found at <http://sfwriter.com> .**

**He also has a page at Facebook.**

**And now on to the interview:**

**IO:** Your novel FLASHFORWARD produced quite a sensation in the science fiction field, and was televised. News of this was found here and there, but I am wondering, as the people in the novel did, just what happened in regard to the televising. What network broadcast the film of Flashforward, and on what date or dates was it televised? Was it run just once, or has there been a repeat televising of the film? Was it ever shown in motion picture theaters?

**SAWYER:** My novel FLASHFORWARD was published in 1999 and it won

Canada's top science fiction award, the Aurora, for best novel of the year. It also got a starred review, denoting a work of exceptional merit, in the trade journal PUBLISHERS WEEKLY.

Ten years later, in 2009, it became a major network television series in the United States, airing Thursday nights at 8:00 p.m. on ABC. Twenty-two episodes were made, the first of which was nominated for a Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form.

This was a television series consisting of hour-long episodes; it wasn't a movie. The whole series is available still on DVD and on various video streaming series. I wrote one of the episodes and consulted on all of them; it was one of the greatest experiences of my life.

**IO:** How was the show received by critics? Was it considered a successful show?

**SAWYER:** The show mostly got rave reviews, but we'd hoped it would run for more than just one year. Sadly, it was a very expensive show to produce--\$4 million per episode—and by the end of the season we were only getting the same ratings as the remake of "V" was getting, but "V" only cost \$2.5 million per episode and so the network renewed it but cancelled us.

**IO:** Where was the filming done?

**SAWYER:** In Hollywood. Our sets were at the Disney Studios, and all of our action shoots were done in and around Los Angeles. We even had one episode set in Toronto, where I live, and ended up using Marina Del Rey in Los Angeles to masquerade as Toronto Harbor.

**IO:** Backtracking from this book and its production, when did you enter the science fiction field? Was your first science fiction a magazine story or a novel?

**SAWYER:** My first sale was neither. In 1979, the Strasenburgh Planetarium in New York State had a contest for science-fiction short stories to be turned into a

planetarium starshow. Isaac Asimov was the judge, and one of my stories was selected to be produced. Throughout the 1980s, I sold short fiction at the blistering rate of about one story a year. My first novel, *GOLDEN FLEECE*, came out in 1990, and I've published twenty-two more since then, the most recent one being *QUANTUM NIGHT*.

**IO:** In what science fiction magazines have you had stories?

**SAWYER:** I've been published in twenty-six issues of *Analog*, as well as in *Amazing Stories*, and the Canadian SF magazine *ON SPEC*. Most of my short fiction first appeared in original anthologies, though.

**IO:** *WAKE, WATCH, and WONDER* concerned a developing computer intelligence. Was this just an idea for a story, or how would you relate it to actualities involving the computer system? Does the story contain anything you would consider a warning to the reader?

**SAWYER:** There have been many science-fiction works about the advent of artificial intelligence, but they almost always have it happen offstage, as in William Gibson's *NEUROMANCER*, or in a fashion that nobody who actually knows anything about computers could take seriously. I set out to actually tackle the question of what a nascent artificial intelligence might be like psychologically and proposed a model by which it might actually emerge. However, I make the case at great length in that trilogy that emergent AI, which wasn't a product of vicious Darwinian natural selection, might actually be a benevolent rather than a malevolent entity.

**IO:** Do you regard your writing as avant-garde?

**SAWYER:** Stylistically, no. In terms of advancing the notion that science-fiction is fundamentally a philosophical form, and that it can eschew aliens and spaceships be set in the present day, yes.

**IO:** Have you ever appeared at a science fiction convention?

**SAWYER:** Many hundreds since 1975, of which over ninety have been as guest of honor, special guest, or toastmaster. I've even helped run science fiction conventions.

**IO:** Have you done interviews prior to this one?

**SAWYER:** Oh my god, yes. Almost 400 radio ones, over 350 television ones, and probably a thousand for print.

**IO:** Are there writers you consider an associated interest in the science fiction field, apart from being science fiction writers? Others who have had themes and aims similar to your own?

**SAWYER:** I really think the closest parallel with my work is that of Kim Stanley Robinson. We're both on the left end of the political spectrum, we both take the science in our own science fiction extremely seriously, and we both often introduce politics into our work.

**IO:** Have you met with other writers and discussed the writing of science fiction?

**SAWYER:** Constantly. In fact, between 1984 and 1992, I coordinated a social group for science-fiction writers in Toronto. We met four times a year to talk shop. On a less formal scale, I still do that quite frequently.

**IO:** What do you think, on the whole, of being a science-fiction writer? Is it the kind of writing you like best to do? What are some of the satisfactions you get from the writing?

**SAWYER:** I love being a science fiction writer. If I didn't, I wouldn't've devoted my life to it. As it happens, I've made a good living—but nobody gets into this for the money. I can't imagine writing anything else, given that the canvas is so large in science-fiction. I've done science-fiction mystery (**RED PLANET BLUES**), science fiction romance (**ROLLBACK**), science fiction thriller (**TRIGGERS**), science-fiction

courtroom drama (ILLEGAL ALIEN), and more. And the best science fiction being written today is the best literature being written today; the quality of the prose is superlative, and the exploration of gender, race, politics, religion, the environment, and other themes is more creative, in-depth, and provocative than that being done in any other kind of fiction.



**Don't forget to enlarge the pages of Ionisphere if the copy is too small to read comfortably. Hit "view" for this, or "zoom" below, if you've got 'em, or find something you do have to get a comfortable viewing experience.**



**Editor regrets that the interview with William F. Nolan predicted for this issue did not come through.**



Quote from Robert E. Howard: "There's many a highway I want to travel before I walk the road Nabonidus walked this night."

**\* Enjoy \***



**10**

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