PHOTO: PATTI PERRET

adult) field, though at that time there were a good many taboos which narrowed the subject matter and the approaches one could use. I did not write SF or Fantasy then as there were no outlets for such books at all. My field was adventure and mystery, historical.

It was not until the 1950s that the general publishing field opened for SF—later for Fantasy.

I used the name Andre—without the accent which makes it masculine—because I was writing adventure stories which were mainly read by boys and which had to have masculine writers (or so it was believed then). In fact, after one adventure and one historical, I never even used woman characters until I wrote *Ordeal in Otherwhere*—and my publisher at that time was most dubious about the book thus appealing to the reading public, which was thought in those days to be almost all masculine.

The early writers in the SF field did disguise their sex—appearing under initials or names which could be either masculine or feminine. The

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pulps were largely looked down upon and one bought them carefully, not to be seen reading them because of their supposedly lurid covers. This was totally unfair as there were many excellent stories printed in them—such as those by Merritt, Harold Lamb and like writers.

When the book publishing companies were induced to take a chance on publishing full length novels I was able to enter the field as a writer and not just a reader.

JGB: Now that you've written as Andre Norton for so long, would you say Andre Norton and Alice Mary Norton are two people—different facets of *you*—or just the same person under different labels?

Norton: For a great many years (since I left my full-time library position in 1951) I have been Andre Norton—which I always was in writing. Andre is now my legal name, and has been for thirty years. I much prefer Andre and I certainly hope that I am not two people. Now only a very few people from my youth know me as Alice—and it seems strange to be called by that name.

JGB: Over the course of your writing career, you've started several series of books—the ones about the Witch World, the Time Traders, the Forerunners, and a few others. To what extent are they all in the same universe?

Norton: Witch World is another time-space place—a sort of catchall, as is the world in *Here Abide Monsters*, where various parties of people are caught or enter of their own free will from other planes of existence. The Sulcars, the Dalesmen, the villians of the invasion, the sled people in *Sorceress of the Witch World* are all non-native—as perhaps are also the Falconers. They were either fleeing some menace behind or else exploring. Simon Tregarth enters through the Seige Perilous, which is one of the keys.

The Time Traders is our own space in the future—the Forerunners and the Solar Queen stories, *Star Guard* etc. all belong to this.

The Stars Are Ours and some of the others are of an alternate of this world, as is *Star Man's Son.*

The Forerunners are of our space but very far in the past—come and gone before intelligent life developed here at all. There were various races of those and they commanded parts of the galaxy at different times but are lumped generally under the name of Forerunner by the average person of the future. The Zacathans have been studying and trying to sort them into various civilizations for years, but have not had too much success. Every time they think they have it all set up a new find is made to break their tenuous ladder of past history.

JGB: A year or so ago, your novel *Forerunner* came out—but that's the first book of that particular series I've seen in quite a while. Are you planning to write more books about the Solar Queen or the Time Traders?

Norton: I do not think that I could ever pick up the Solar Queen or Time Trader series again. Too much time has passed and I could not fit into the skins of my protagonists as I should be able to do for a good story. It is extremely difficult to go back that way, and I believe there has been a change in my own style of writing now which would be against the out-and-out adventure tale, should I attempt once more to write one.

I am working little by little on a sequel to *Forerunner*, constructed on the theory that the heroine is now really two people within the same body, and that these identities are struggling for command—also

she dreads the modern world which Thom has introduced her to since she had come across good reasons to believe that there are those who want to treat her as a laboratory animal or as a tool for private gain.

JGB: So many of your books seem to be Fantasy of late—have your interests in science fiction waned?

Norton: I have always been more interested in Fantasy. My favorite reading when very young were the Uncle Wiggly stories and from those I transferred quickly to the Oz books, which I still love to reread every once in a while—they are the only truly American fairy tales and should be recognized for the vast influence they had on several generations. I could never understand why they were not accepted by libraries until many years after they were written.

When I first started to read SF there was only Verne and Wells. The early science-oriented stories I read with dissatisfaction—there was too much accent on "science" and not enough on characterization.

At the arrival of the action pulps on the scene this changed, and to this day I can remember some of the plots and scenes from things written then, more than fifty years ago. C.L. Moore, Leigh Brackett and A.A. Merritt wrote the type of thing I really enjoyed.

Now the sword and sorcery tale has come into its own at last, and I feel myself most at home in it. It does require wide reading in history and folklore, but I have always enjoyed those subjects anyway.

I do think that fantasy gives a wider range to the writer, and more chance for characterization and subtle studies of reaction of such characters to plot changes.

JGB: Magic and the paranormal—ESP, telepathy, and so on—play an important part in many of your novels. Do you believe they exist to any degree in our world?

Norton: Whenever I use a definite occult measure (such as Tarot, psychometry, or the like) in a book, I get a demonstration worked out for me. I have seen psychometry work, and some very odd photographs which could not be faked. Yes, I believe that

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there are things about the human mind which can not now be explained (after all, it is common knowledge that we do not use all the brain at present), and that some people have made break-throughs. However, such arts can not be controlled as yet—if they ever will be. I know of incidents of deaths in the family being known from a distance away at the moment they happened and such matters. We really know very little about our own gifts, unless they are so close to the surface we use them automatically.

JGB: What is your reaction to winning the Nebula Grand Master Award?

Norton: I feel very much in debt to those who selected my work to honor—there are very few ways one can express one's deep appreciation for such recognition—even if one deals with words all the time.

JGB: Looking back over your career, what do you consider its highlights?

Norton: If you mean what was the greatest advance made in my profession—it was being accepted by Houghton-Mifflin and DAW Books as my publishers—after that my work received careful and flattering consideration.

If you mean awards—probably winning the Gandalf and the Nebula Grand Master—both of which have occurred only recently.

JGB: I believe you recently attended your first science fiction convention. What was it like? Did reality meet up with your expectation?

Norton: The Orocon was not my first con, but the first one in many years. It was a most pleasant experience. Everything was well managed and I enjoyed the whole affair. This was only a one-day con. I am planning in November to attend the regular one in Tampa—at least for a couple of days.

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John Betancourt is assistant editor of *Amazing Science* fiction stories, as well as a writer and a poet; his work has appeared in a number of magazines and anthologies. He has completed one science fiction novel, currently being considered by a major publisher, and is at work on another.**X**