

Beowulf

A fan publication of science fiction

Volume one

Number one

February 1944

A Vulcan Publication

Edward B

A fan publication of science fiction

Number one

Volume one

February 1944

A Wilson Publication

* * * * *

* FIRST ISSUE *	CONTENTS OF BEOWULF FOR	* FIRST ISSUE *
*****	FEBRUARY 1944	*****

* Volume one, Number one	5¢	Whole Number 1 *

FICTION:

"They Cut Out My Heart"	J. Edward Davis	Page	7
"The Road"	J. Edward Davis	Page	8
- - - - -	J. Edward Davis	Page	9

ARTICLES:

"Logic In Science Fiction"	Ralph Milne Farley	Page	5
"I Knew Stan Weinbaum"	Ralph Milne Farley	Page	6

DEPARTMENTS:

Table of Contents	- - - - -	Page	3
"Book and Fanzine Reviews"	N. E. Body	Page	4
"Words from <u>Beowulf</u> "--Editorial	The Editor	Page	10

* * * * *

BEOWULF is published at the present bi-monthly by the Solar Press at 9 Bogert Place, Westwood, N. J. Editor: Gerry de la Ree, Jr. All manuscripts, letters, exchange fanzines, subscriptions, and ads are welcome and should be sent to above address. Subscription rates: 5¢ per copy; 6 for 25¢. Ad rates: Full page \$1.00; half page \$.60; quarter page \$.35. Smaller ads upon request.

BEOWULF is a VULCAN publication. Other members of the VULCAN clan are: VULCAN, edited by Lionel Innman, Route 1, Ripley, Tenn.; APOLLO, edited by Joe Hensley, 411 S. Fess, Bloomington, Ind.; MARS, edited by Van H. Splawn, 5015 Shaw Ave., St. Louis 10, Mo.; THOTH, edited by William James, 10026 Aurora Ave., Detroit, Mich.; and SATURN-ALLIA, edited by Art R. Sehnert, 1414 Poplar, Memphis, Tenn.

* * *

The editorial policy of BEOWULF is in no way connected with organizations such as Claude Degler's Cosmic Circle, and the now defunct N.F.F.F. The editor of this magazine is against the possible future forming of any so-called national fan organizations that supposedly plan to "better" fandom. We are for a Post War science fiction convention that would bring together fans from all over the country.

* * *

IF THERE IS AN "X" HERE YOUR SUBSCRIPTION HAS EXPIRED--((.))..

* * * * *

BOOK AND FANZINE REVIEWS

By N. E. Body

BEYOND THE WALL OF SLEEP. By H. P. Lovecraft... Collected by August Derlth and Donald Wandrei... 458pp... Sauk City, Wis.: Arkham House \$5. ((As reviewed by Will Cuppy in New York Herald Tribune, Sunday, Jan. 2, 1944)).

Since the literature of horror and macabre fantasy belongs traditionally with mystery in its broader sense, we herewith recommend to fandom this oversized volume, stuffed and crammed with some of the weirdest material on record. Following up "The Outsider and Others," issued in 1939, "Beyond the Wall of Sleep" contains another huge helping of the works of the late Howard Phillips Lovecraft, who died in 1937 after what seems to have been an amazing career in writing fields largely unknown or overlooked by the average reader of published books. We confess that we were knocked silly by the mass of mania, nightmare and such in these Lovecraft collections, both of which should be possessed, or at least persued by any citizen who goes for hideous dream states, demons from the vast abyss, humans doomed and damned, things unnamable and so forth in truly astonishing variety.

Main part of this non-stop thriller starts with several prose poems, and goes on to pieces ranging from a few pages to novel length. One of the long ones, "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward" kept us awake until dawn with its early New England atrocities of the sort you seldom get in American. This has detectives in it, too, and all sorts of hideosities--hellish rites, charnel terrors, superhuman sins and all that. Among the shorts there's "The Other Gods," the story of Barzai the Wise, who dwelt in Ulthar, beyond the river Skai, and unwisely climbed to the summit of Hatheg-Kai, and "The Quest of Iranon," how a youth fared in the granite city of Teloth and elsewhere, very impressive. Included in the volume are in an informative short introduction, a brief autobiographical sketch, selected poems, an appreciation of Lovecraft by W. Paul Cook and other paraphernalia of interest to weird fans. As a whole, it's scarier than an armful of conventional fiction. Heartily recommended to all that way inclined.

* * *

Now to the latest fanzine arrivals:

VULCAN, Number five, from Lionell Innman, Route 1, Ripley, Tenn. This number, featuring a lithoed cover and printed contents page, is the best turned out by editor Innman to date. Contains 24 additional hecktoed pages with illustrations by Van Splawn and the editor. Article by Sehnert, and fiction by Wilimczyk and James. Recommended to everyone for only 10¢ a copy. Has been regular in appearance so far.

MARS, Number one, from Van Splawn, 5015 Shaw Ave., St. Louis 10, Mo. Has 18 nicely hectographed pages with good art work by Splawn, poems by "Joel", and an article by Haynes. Second issue now out, but will arrive too late to be reviewed. Also recommended at 5¢ per copy.

Sorry to Omit other fanzines. Will get to them next issue.

"LOGIC IN SCIENCE FICTION"

By

Ralph Milne Farley

The late Stanley G. Weinbaum used to say that the secret of introducing the impossible into the scientific factual background for a science fiction yarn, lies in camouflaging the step in which the author crosses the threshold of impossibility. Let us amplify that thought.

In a college course on formal logic, one learns that the Aristotelian *sorties* is a very convenient form of mediate inference in which to conceal an objectively untrue premise.

A *sorties* is a condensed form of a polysyllogism: i.e., a series of syllogisms in which the conclusion of each successive syllogism becomes one of the premises of the next. An example of a perfectly valid *sorties* is the following:

He who desponds ceases to labor.
He who ceases to labor makes no progress.
He who makes no progress does not reach the end.
Therefore he who desponds does not reach the end.

Now the advantage of this form of reasoning, as a means to slip over a false premise, lies in the fact that after two or three successive premises of obvious objective truth, the reader is lulled into a false sense of security and begins to take the premises for granted. Right at that point, you slip in an untrue premise. Then, from that point on, all the remaining premises are true; so that, as the reader wakes up on nearing the end of the argument, he finds nothing suspicious; and thus is led by easy stages to accept a wholly untenable conclusion.

My first science-fictional novel, and probably my best known ditto was "The Radio Man", which appeared in ARGOSY-ALL STORY in 1924 and was reprinted December, 1939, through February, 1940 in FANCY FANTASTIC MYSTERIES. At the outset of that story I led my Harvard Classmate, Tyles Standish Cabot, greatest scientist of two worlds, by easy stages from known scientific accomplishments to the transmission of human beings by radio. I quote:

"My chief line of work, since graduating from Harvard, was on the subject of television. By simultaneously using three sending sets and three receiving sets, each corresponding to one of the three dimensions, any object which I placed within the framework of my transmitter could be seen within the framework of my receiver, just as though I stood there myself.

"All that reverted the object from actually being made to stand there was the quite sufficient fact that no one had yet, so far as I was then aware, invented a means for dissolving matter into its wellknown radiations, and then converting these radiations back to matter again.

Concluded on next page

* * * * *

"But just at this time, by a remarkable coincidence, there came into my hands a copy of an unpublished paper on this subject by René Flambeau.

"The prior experiments of De Gersdorff are well known; he had succeeded by means of radio waves, in isolating and distinguishing the electro-magnetic constituents of all the different chemical elements. Flambeau went one step further, and was able to transmit small formless quantities of matter itself, although for some reason certain metals, but not their salts, appeared to absorb the electrical energy employed by him, and thus be immune to transportation.

"As I could already transmit a three dimensional picture of an object, and as Flambeau had been able to transmit formless matter, then by combining our devices in a single apparatus I found I could transmit physical objects unchanged in form."

See if you can detect at just what point in the otherwise absolutely logical development of Cabot's invention, the Radio Man crossed the threshold of impossibility.

The end

a-a

"I KNEW STAN WEINBAUM"

By Ralph Milne Farley

(Reprinted from The Science Fiction Fan, Dec., 1940)

In the December, 1939 issue of The Science Fiction Fan, Autolycus writes an appraisal of Stanley G. Weinbaum, in which he concludes that "The New Adam" is an expression of Weinbaum's personal philosophy, and that he was "obsessed with negation and futility, with a belief that the sum total of all knowledge is zero." This dictum should be salted with Autolycus' admission: "I never knew Weinbaum and never talked with anyone who knew him."

I did know Stan--and intimately. Together we belonged to the "Fictioneers of Milwaukee." We collaborated on "Smothered Seas", and one of my Jim Grant gangster series, and had "Revolution of 1950" in process at the date of his untimely death,

His personality was sunny, cheerful and optimistic, even when pain-racked by cancer and unable to speak above a whisper during his declining hours. I can assure you that he had no lack of faith in the future of the human race.

That such a genial hopeful soul was able to write fiction plunged in gloom is merely a mark of his great genius.

(Editors note: Stanley G. Weinbaum, seemingly destined to be one of the great science fiction writers of all times, passed away on the night of December 13, 1935. His first story, "A Martian Odyssey" appeared in Wonder Stories, July, 1934...)

"They Cut Out My Heart..."

By J. Edward Davis

I am a dead man. I must be dead--by the God in Heaven and all that is real, I should be dead. I am a Greek; no, I am a Pole; a Dutchman, a Frenchman, a Norwegian, a Belgian...all of these, and more, I am. I lived quietly in my homeland--I worked and I worried, I suffered and I smiled, I laughed and I cried; but over all, I was happy. I was a man, not entirely satisfied with my environment, but still, content.

But then they came. Over the rugged mountains, across the rolling plains, down the fertile valleys, and through the peaceful clouds overhead. They came in a rush, like locusts, to devastate my homeland and my life, to blast assunder all that was dear and close to me. This they did so they might gorge their greedy bodies with the rich harvest of my little country.

They came and struck at me. I raised my arms to strike back, but they caught my wrists, even as I was about to smite the initial blow. They thrust me in chains and dragged me wearily through the dirt and mud of the streets. They beat and cursed me with all that was profane, but this was not enough.

They cut out my heart. Yes, they severed that vital organ from its body. Then, like hairy vampires they placed their callous lips against the flowing wound and sucked the life-blood from my veins--drank and gorged until they knew I had no more. They tossed me aside, a hopeless, heartless wreck. I say I should be dead--I must be dead, but yet, I live!

When they saw that I stirred they came again. They calmly and brutally cut my eyes from their sockets so I might see no more. But yet I see; I see their dastardly acts as no one else can see them. I know these fiends for what they are, and all this I know and see through the empty sockets they left me.

When they found I could still see, they ripped my tongue from my mouth so I might not tell of what I saw. They took away from me my speech and left a gaping bloodless hole inside my mouth. But still I spoke, and my voice was louder and clearer than ever before. It held in it a brilliance and venom that they found could pierce and poison even their impenetrable hides.

When they failed to still my words, they tried again to beat and flog me, but my skin, in shreds and ribbons gave forth not one drop of blood, and from my empty mouth came not one word, for they had taken all. Yes, they had taken all, but still somehow all remained. They could not, and will not, ever take from out my soul the longing hope for peace, the endless quest for love, and the eternal desire to rid my land of the merciless destruction wrought by the hardened hand of dictatorial rule. Never can they take from me these sacred rights and trusts and replace them with their brutal lies of hate and abomination.

My animosity towards their form of so-called life will go on into eternity and, so doing, will in time rid my world of all this which I so thoroughly and completely despise...

* * * * *

THE ROAD

By J. Edward Davis

At the beginning the road was empty, entirely devoid of anything at all. In ever sense of the word, there was--nothing. There was no wind, no sky, no stars--it has already been said--there was absolutely nothing. All was serene and still...

But then, of a sudden, there was a wind--oh, ever so faint, but for sure, it was there. It lasted a long time. Then, as if it had always been present, there appeared sky. Not beautiful blue sky, dotted with fleecy white clouds, mind you, but still in all, it was sky. Then came a star--only one at first--then another--and another--and still another. They came and came--and--are still coming.

Abruptly the road became solid--scorching hot--but solid. However, it cooled. To be sure, it took a long time, and much of the road had been traveled, but it did cool. And then, in the sky, there were clouds--small ones at first, but they grew--grew until they were monstrous, covering all with their dull forbidding blackness. And, like a bursting bomb, a drop of liquid hit the road. The hot, parched earth seemed to vibrate, but hardly had it done so when more drops fell. It rained, and rained, and rained. You have never seen such a rain.

When it stopped our road was flooded with water. But the road had to go on, so along the bottom of the surging sea it stretched. And small things began to sprout on the ocean floor. Insignificant at first, but they also grew. Finally something moved--ever so slightly, but as the road lengthened, it moved faster, grew larger, and crawled out from the water on to dry land--the road had a moving traveler, and as he traveled the good dry earth was hot beneath his webbed feet.

Trees there were now--thick and jungle-like they choked and clogged the road, and the travelers--there were many now--took to the trees so that the road might go on. They moved swiftly through the branches. Oh, the road became popular, and then more popular. Ice slowed the travelers once, but they survived--the more intelligent ones, that is. It became cold--bitter cold, but not for an instant did they stop. And they moved forward, ever forward. Suddenly, all at once, the road was crowded. All shape and form of things were moving on this still-widening, ever-lengthening highway of life.

Yes, this is the road to eternity--and everything and everybody is on this road. There is no turning back...How much farther we have to go, how crowded the road shall become, we cannot say. But one thing seems certain--the end must be near, for like a river nearing a waterfall, the rapids become wilder and life becomes cheaper. From nothing our road began and to nothing it shall return. With each solemn tick of the man-made clock, with each hammering beat of the human heart, and with each single spin of our earthly globe the road grows more narrow, the end draws nearer, and the dream of infinite peace comes closer to its realization...

The end

* * * * *

By J. Edward Davis

Jesus Christ was crucified for man's sins. But that was many, many years ago....

The room was dimly lit. Through a crevice in the ceiling fell a ghostly shaft of silver moonlight. Its weird unearthly glow shrouded the kneeling figure of a man. His kind, almost saintly face uplifted, his hands clasped together, he raised his voice in earnest prayer--and his words were stronger and more fervent than mere words had ever been, for he was speaking truth, and pouring all his heart into each separate, solemn syllable...

"Oh Lord," he cried, "hear my words for they are truth and listen closely for they must be heeded. The inhabitants of earth are evil--and this evil has brought to their people and their planet ruin. All is not as you left it once before. The tribes of earth can no longer live together; they fight for existence and slay one another in thoughtless, bloody conflict. Never will these that stay learn to live as You meant them to. Leave them if You must, but take them I implore Thee. The earth shall be the better, as shall those who will no longer exist in human form."

And the Lord heard these simple phrases and He did look--He looked upon the face of the earth which He had created, and He saw His children whom He had made in His form,

And they saw Him, and in frightened awe they raised up their hands, but from their fingers fell drops of human blood and hidden in their hearts and minds were Satan's thoughts and Satan's words. The Lord saw, and was dissatisfied. For the second time His children had forsaken Him. And He sorrowed that He had created man, for He knew now that He must destroy him and all that man stood for.

The Lord was troubled and it was with heavy heart that He took from the Sustainer of Life, that majestic, glowing orb, the Sun, a flaming torch and threw it at the earth...And fire enveloped the fertile globe so that even the waters were seen to burn. Man perished and with him every form of beast and creeping thing, and the fowls in the air could not fly high enough to escape their destiny with death.

When all were gone, the flames subsided and the earth, a glowing red-hot sphere, continued its endless journey through the ebony seas of space. And the land cooled, the earth darkened into a black and desolate cinder, deserted by life and free from Satan's greedy grasp.

This then is the start of the Millennium--a thousand years of peace on earth. Peace, indeed! It must be, for what can now disrupt the tranquil flight of this barren globe around the blazing orb of the mother star?

The end

* * * * *

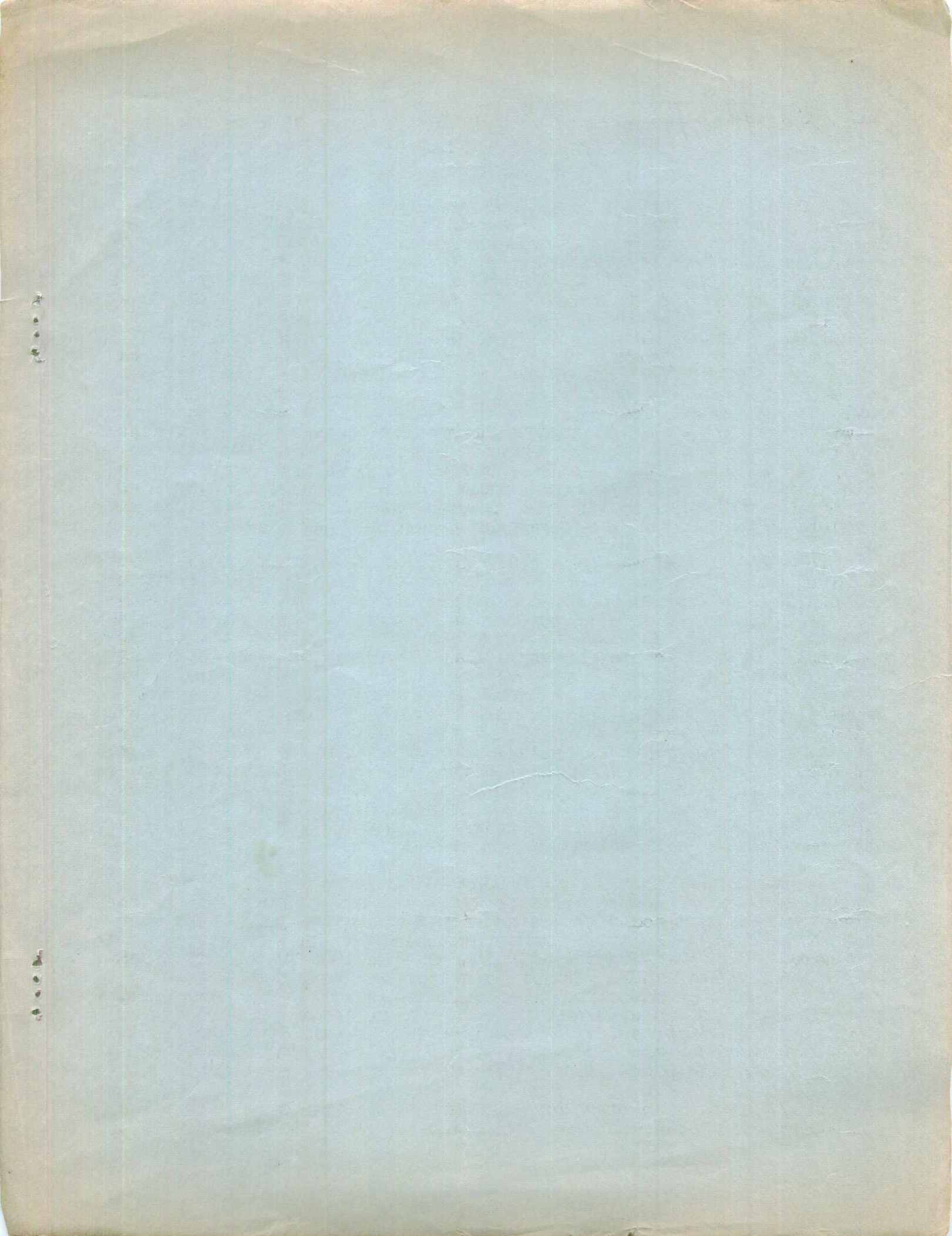
WORDS FROM BEOWULF
An Editorial

BEOWULF bids you welcome. And the first thing we wish to do is explain just what this issue is all about. This first number of our magazine is little more than an experiment. We asked for no outside material--the "Logic" article by Mr. Farley having been on hand from our previous fanzine, SUN SPOTS, which last saw light of day about 2 years ago after some 23 issues. The remaining material is all "local" in origin. What we wanted to do was try out several types of stencils, which we did with varying results as can be seen. Also, this is our first attempt at using 16 pound paper, for that appears to be the best you can get these days. We typed this issue without the use of correction fluid, so if you run across errors you'll know why. If, and when, there is a second issue, we can assure you that it will be better than this number in many ways--such as illustrations (there are none this month), outside material by fans and authors, and if it is wanted, poetry and fan fiction. What we want you who receive this issue to do is write us a letter and tell us whether or not you think it worth while continuing. Please drop us a line and give your opinions on both this issue, and the possibility of another.

To those of you who have never heard of Beowulf, we shall proceed to give a brief explanation: Beowulf was the hero of the first great Anglo-Saxon Epic poem, which told of his marvelous exploits and adventures. Beowulf was a semi-mythical character; the nephew of Hygelac, King of the Geats, a tribe that made its home in southern Sweden, or Jutland. Famous for his bravado, Beowulf was called upon by Hrothgar, King of Denmark, who was having no end of trouble with a monster by the name of Grendel. Beowulf proceeded to eliminate not only Grendel, but Grendel's mother also. Years later, Beowulf ascended the throne of Geatland upon the death of Hygelac, and he ruled for 50 years. During this time he has countless exciting adventures, but is finally mortally wounded in battle. He is given a hero's funeral on a burning pyre as a fitting climax to the tale. The poem was supposedly written about the year 700, but a copy now in the British Museum dates to the year 1,000. All in all, Beowulf was quite a chap, and fits right in where science fiction and fantasy are concerned.

We must admit that it feels good to be putting out a fanzine once again, even tho it doesn't compare with some of our previous efforts. There have been a good many changes in the past two years, but when you boil it all down, fandom is still here...And so are a good many of the pro-mags--AMAZING, FANTASTIC, F.F.M., ASTOUNDING, T.W.S., CAP FUTURE, PLANET, And WEIRD TALES. Their doing the best they can--a swell job when all is taken into consideration. The paper cut has done a lot to curtail both professional and fan activities, but it is certainly a good sign that despite all this we are still here. Once the war is over and the paper ban lifted, many new magazines will appear, and some of those now suspended, will again return. We all await that day.

Well, let's hear from you, and if all goes right we should see you again in the near future. Till then, good luck--from BEOWULF...



WES