

# SAACYS



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 \* Filmore Street, Arleta, California 91331, for the AAug-\*  
 \* gust 1980 mailing of FAPA. This issue shall be know \*  
 \* forevermore, as the year-split messed-up issue. It is \*  
 \* also Asteriskized Publication Number 226. Yuggoth, etc\*  
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editorializings

Great plans aft gang ascrewed-up, as the poet never wrote. Any readers of the publication now before you will no doubt note that the running head would have you believe this is issue no. 29, dated August 1979.

It was supposed to have been.

The great Supplement was the Burbee item that did appear last August. All this, with the exception of this page, was supposed to have appeared as one issue. The cover, as you will note, is the same. It's a great cover and can certainly serve both times for the split-issue.

So, please disregard all the terribly dated stuff that appears in the editorial parts of this issue. The material by Cy Condra, Larry Shaw and Dean Grennell, can be read at any time and still be interesting, as a stand-alone item of history or comment, whatever year you read it. Too bad the Shaw item didn't get published last year. It would have been sort of a "scoop", but the sentiments remain the same.

For the curious, if there by any, the reason all this came about as it did, was because of problems with the Gestetner. I couldn't seem to get paper to run through it without crumpling all to hell. I barely got that one editorial sheet through for the prior issue. I thought it was a problem of paper-feed. But when telling Burbee about it, on the phone a few weeks ago, he said he thought it was the paper-stripper. I thought to run sheets through and adjust it. Bruce Pelz, on hearing of it, said that I ought to take the thing off entirely. Time went by, with some other personal events distracting me, and only at the last minute did I experiment with the thing. Sure as hell, it was as they said. I adjusted it, took it off, ran sheets through perfectly. Put it back on, adjusted it, and have run off 17 pages, 80 plus copies, in no time. Now all I have to do is get this typewriter into the shop to correct the "a's" repeating (sse?), the "u" not typing half the time, etc.

But here we have the same problem that kept me from taking the Gestetner into the nearby Gestetner shop all those months before I talked to Burbee. The typewriter place is only open while I'm at work!

At any rate, I've saved my membership and shall remain in FAPA another year. Even running for V-P as a write-in. No promises, but I don't intend to last-minute it next August.

Ed Cox

## CONAN IN THE GLOAMIN'

or,

They don't write 'em like they used to, anymore--

### CY CONDRA

Some fifty or perhaps a hundred years ago in a period chiefly given over to moper, loafing, and clandestine cigarettes, as I recall, I had a memorable experience. There fell into my hands a coverless and battered copy of the magazine *Weire Tales*. It was some months out of date and contained Robert E. Howard's short story "The Shadow Kingdom". And as I read it, I fell into such fixity of concentration as even Hindo Yogis staring at their novels (or even navels) rarely know--I fairly lived that story!

It was an episode in the life of Kull, an Atlantean barbarian and human tank with chassis better thewed than Tarzan's. He performed amidst such an atmosphere of sorcery, intrigue and swordplay as I had never met before. Apparently in a previous story, having won himself a throne, Kull now found himself being forced to hold it against a menace such as to make the hackles rise and--to coin a phrase--the very blood run cold. Members of an ancient race of Serpent Men, "The Snake that Speaks", had him marked for death. These were reptilian monsters, man-like save for serpent head, who could "fling a mask of sorcery about their faces as an actor dons a mask, so that they resemble anyone they wish to," thus posing a tactical problem of unique dimensions. They could only be detected by an inability to pronounce the test phrase "Ka nama kaa lajerama" on which occasionally one of them tripped up. Why they had trouble with that phrase, yet none with the same syllables arising in ordinary speech, was something not explained, which may be why I never have forgotten it.

Though few in numbers, these creatures were murderous, highly intelligent, and further, able to exercise a sorcerous control over the souls of those they slew. Apparently Kull's unexpected accession to the throne was to them merely a minor hindrance to be handled by the simple expedient of slaying him secretly at night and on the morrow have one of them assume his face and place to rule in his stead.

This simple plot unfolded in language that not only held me spell-bound but let me clearly grasp the basic formula for this kind of fiction: "Give the man a problem impossible to solve, then make him solve it violently--with style!" And Howard had style. When he wrote one saw the action, heard the conflict, felt the blows--his very words had muscles. He made one identify with the central character whether

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or no--suddenly one was Kull, fighting for life with barbarian strength and cunning, berserk in the lust for combat, living to the fullest on the brink of death! Heady stuff! Particularly since his mighty frame is directed by a brain that proves (when not berserker blind and pure cortex) capable of insight and surprising acumen in the realm of statecraft, an art that fascinated Howard to such degree that his so-called barbarians are actually surprisingly sophisticated.

The story closed with all the combat and conniving at an end, the power of the Serpent broken, and King Kull bleeding from the inevitable score of fatal wounds, yet, obviously, on the road to mend where lesser men had died... And I tossed the magazine aside for someone else to find and read. Nor, as I rose and stretched and strolled away, could I in that moment have told the author's name. Yet the impact and the memory of that story had become a part of me and I had become a Sword and Sorcery buff.

Some years later when chance turned up another issue of Weird Tales out of someone's discard, I read Howard's "Valley of the Worm" with equal avidity and obtuseness. In this tale of ancestral memory, Niord, an even more prehistoric and muscular barbarian, battled in berserker fury to overcome and slay a monstrous and quasi-supernatural remnant from an elder age, though losing his own life as it weltered in its death-throes, and sentences of such hypnotic prose as left me half-dead likewise. That Niord was carbon-copy King Kull did not occur to me; I had forgotten Kull's name in the instant of tossing his magazine aside some four years before. Nor, as I abandoned this later saga in its turn, could I again have told you who wrote it, though nonetheless it too was now a part of me.

Other tales in those years also caught me up and made me wish that I could write like that, though up until December 1939 I had read only about a dozen science fiction and fantasy magazines in all my life. Such things were not often seen in my small Midwest home town and when they were I seldom had cash to buy. Basic needs came first.

Yet even so, across a ten year span, I had read such classics as Part Two of E. E. Smith's "Skylark Three" (I thought it was going to be about birds), Clark Ashton Smith's "Vaults of Yoh Vombis", "The Charnel God" and "The Treader of the Dust"--this latter an intoxicating plunge into delightfully byzantine english--H. P. Lovecraft's "Shadow Out of Time", A. Merritt's "Music of the Spheres", Stanley Weinbaum's "Adaptive Ultimate" and some few others equally good--surprising riches from small a sampling--and enough to hook me on science Fiction.

About 1940 money was getting easier to come by and the number of such magazines began to multiply prodigiously; from perhaps a scant half dozen they became nearly twenty. Another isolated faan showed up and the two of us shrewdly divided up the offering, each buying half

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and then exchanging so that we got to read them all, excepting Unknown Worlds which I never saw until later. Read them from cover to cover and threw them away.

Then World War II blew everything sky high. There was military service and wholesale dislocation, and by the time the dust had settled, it was late 1945 and I was living in a completely different world.

Now I was in California with a home, a family and a decent job, yet not completely satisfied. Nostalgic memories of those so casually discarded magazines of yesteryear troubled me. I wanted to reread them. Also there was the thought of all those magazines I never got to read or even see. Happily, Los Angeles had numerous second hand shops offering back issue pulps for nickels and dimes. It was easy and inexpensive to turn collector and keep an eye out for such places. One of them surprised me.

It was at the corner of Pico where Bond Street used to jog to become Sentous, or vice versa, but where now the Harbor Freeway roars and rumbles overhead. The place was a dingy trap with sun-faded magazines showing dimly through a dirty window. Entering was like time travel. Through that door one stepped back ten years to find himself surrounded by a stock of depression era pulps at depression prices. Two-for-five cents, five cents and a dime. Seemingly nothing had been disturbed for years and years.

I promptly started buying. Two trips sufficed to skim the cream of what I saw, but on the third, I got a shock.

The two-for-fives now were fifty cents; the nickel items marked a dollar; dime magazines a dollar and a half! I couldn't believe my eyes--it was insane! All over town such things could still be had for a quarter at the most (prices were beginning to nudge up) but this was madness! How could they stay in business? You'd think they didn't want to sell!

I didn't like the proprietor, a surly oaf who had taken my money as though visibly holding himself in check to keep from hitting me right in the mouth. So I asked no questions; just browsed around a bit to make certain I was seeing what I thought I saw, then walked out.

A week or so later I mentioned this baffling incident to another shop owner who promptly started laughing. "So you're the one! I heard about you," he said. "The guy that owns that shop came in the other day mad as a wet hen. He bought a load of junk--I gave him half of it--and swore he'd price it up to where Rockefeller couldn't touch it. Said some sonuvabitch had been stripping his cover. No disrespect intended, but I'm sure he meant you."

"Me? What do you mean?"

"You don't know? That's a bookie joint. The mags are just a blind!"

Good Grief! He really had wanted to hit me right in the mouth! But now I could understand how that stock of magazines had survived from Depression days, unchanged in price through all those years. The people who came in were interested only in bangtails; everyone else in the neighborhood knew what the place was and wouldn't be caught dead in it. No wonder that clod didn't know how to behave--I must have been the first bona fide customer since the day it opened.

This put my collecting off to a good start and in time I accumulated almost everything one would want excepting the pre-1928 Weird Tales. I read almost everything Howard wrote. His formula was simple and he stuck to it; every story complete in itself yet carrying over a central character and background so that later, it was possible to gather these up in book form with the various short stories in orderly progression as chapters. Among these foremost being the saga of Conan. While Howard wrote of Conan, Kull, Bran Mac Morn, Solomon Kane, Niord, Hunwulf the Wanderer and others, all of these were simply masks for the only character he ever set on paper--an idealized version of himself--and he told, however many times, one story only. But his cast of thought and imagery seemed ever fresh.

Still and all, enough is enough and in time I tired of Howard, of Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, E. E. Smith and of science fiction and sword and sorcery as well. There is a large field of writing outside of the imaginative, so having collected and read innumerable back issues of mags from cover to cover, I put them away. Not threw them away. Not this time. That was around 1954 or 1955 since when I have been browsing other pastures.

About fifteen years or so later, I saw Conan appearing in paperback and, surprisingly, in stories new to me. L. Sprague de Camp, Lin Carter and others were expanding certain of Howard's original notes and outlines into story form. There being nothing more starkly simple than Howard's formula, it's quite possible for a good writer with an ear for style to write as Howard did. To my mind, de Camp is the only one truly able to do so. Of the others, I put Carter some distance behind while Andy Offutt, who is resurrecting one Howard character after another, is off to one side. His liberal observance of Howard's style of phrase and terminology overlays so explicit a modernity of attitude that what he writes seems simply Howard-flavored Offutt.



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Neither reading this new stuff nor rereading the old stuff seemed to do much for me; the spark was gone. But the woods are full of uncurried barbarian swordsmen these days. Writers have been cloning Kull and Conan into a young army. Out of curiosity I made acquaintance with Carter's "Thongor", John Jakes' "Brak the Barbarian" and Gardner F. Fox's "Kothar". This last somewhat better than the others though too heavily laden with sorcery. But none of them had the spark.

I was about to give up when I ran across "The Yngling". It had the spark.

I suppose it was the cover that sold me.

It showed a lurid two-against-one axe and sword fight in a Northern forest in deep snow. A nearly naked girl is backed up against a tree and, oh God, it is cold! She was trying to keep warm under nothing much more than a pair of hefty, well--er--tits, which however ample were hardly suited for that purpose. Otherwise she hadn't enough on to comfort a brass monkey had any such been fool enough to winter there. In short, it was a thoroughly conventional cover, impossible to resist, and of which no trace whatever existed in the story.

Reading that story both with lively interest and glances at the cover, I was surprised to find both the formula and the standard character being transmuted into something new and strange. Even stranger than that cover. And I can see right now that I am going to have to write that cover out of my system. It had nothing to do with the story but somehow it's all I can think about.

Close scrutiny (which you can believe she got) shows the girl to be wearing some kind of flimsy, see-through, nautch-dancer's skirt from the hips down. Above, nothing else that hasn't been already mentioned. She is holding a belly-dancing stance against the bole of an ancient northern evergreen. Her protector (or ravisher, perhaps) is more warmly clad in long hair, viking mustache, wooly loincloth, battle-axe and cross-hatch leggings. His attention is on fending off two other would-be ravishers (or rescuers--perhaps her brothers?). These latter also wearing only swords and wooly loincloths, supply a final touch of madness to this outre scene by being apparently barefoot in the snow of a howling wilderness in what must be at least twenty below zero.

I can't account for it. As said before, of this scene no trace existed in the story. There must have been a mix-up. Surely Pyramid paperback No. T2466 mistakenly swapped covers with some other book which, on reflection, I think I'd like to read. I've had my share of cold. After weeks of twenty to fifty below zero, I was ready to chew blubber like the Eskimos. I'd like to see the writer who can sell me on the notion that anybody can sport loincloths in the arctic or sub-arctic--but enough of this. Enough! I got the real jolt in reading the story.

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Written by John Dalmas--a name new to me--"The Yngling" was a yarn I couldn't put down until the end, except for occasional glances at the cover. Fast moving, strikingly original, for the most part more than capably written, it is nonetheless faulty in construction.

That I read it just before Christmas was unfortunate. The ensuing two weeks of having to live with "Yngle Be&ls, Yngle Bells" yngling through my brain was maddening. If the author actually foresaw the possibility of such a side effect and then deliberately unleashed his brainchild on society, surely 'Dalmas' has got to be a nom de plume for one of the de Sades.

But the man can write. His story line had me up and plunging along with the central figure almost before I knew it. Obviously here was my old favorite Model M-1 Northern Barbarian, clone of Fafhrd, Conan or King Kull, though anomalously prancing around in a future some 800 years from now.

Still, it was good to see his kind again. That giant figure, enormous strength, matchless swordsmanship and fighting heart could cope with any kind of fictional menace an author can devise. Whether reanimate sorcerer ravaging from the tomb or eighty-foot serpent venomous enough to fell an elephant in its tracks and slithering from an evil temple--it made no difference. No doubt he had it in him to knock over a Panzer tank if need be. So, draining my flagon, I fling it down, buckle on the old swash (in which someone had abandoned an inexplicable pair of pantyhose), whip out my sword with many a rhetorical flourish and plunge into the fray. And also through the first four chapters of the book.

Believe me, they were so far from dull that 'lively' seems too tame a word for the kind of show that barbarian put on! For openers, he uncorked a bare-fisted blow that left a lippy fellow-tribesman dead of a broken neck, the tribal elders in a huff and himself an outlaw now yclept "Ironhand". He's then exiled from the trive. There followed travel, swordplay, crafty didos and then, when a horrible monster came out of the sea by night, to tear people into shreds just for the fun of it, shrieks and gore all over the place. This was living! Thought a lot of them, of course, were dying...

But in Chapter Five, I began to get an eerie feeling that something wasn't right. Less and less this hulking giant seemed the familiar, primitive fighting machine and companion of my youth. He seemed more and more a changeling with built-in uncanny powers alien to the make-up of any Northern swashbuckler I ever heard of. King Kull? Man, this cat would scare King Knong!



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At first, and in the Robert E. Howard tradition, he faced progressively more troublesome opponents with conventional primitive strength and skill. Then, almost imperceptibly, he began to change.

As in a dream I watched psionic powers sprout and bud within him as he hacked his way over mounting piles of bodies, including Orcs, in the Tolkien tradition.

Then, with the aid of a lens-ish psionic tuner, he became a telepathic tactician commander a la Kimball Kinnison in the E. E. Smith tradition.

And at what should have been the climax, when overcoming the arch-enemy himself in hand-to-hand combat (said arch-enemy being currently in residence in the latest of a succession of virile bodies that he had been occupying in the tradition, and possibly since the time, of A. E. van Vogt), he displayed a mutant talent that Van himself would have been proud to call his baby. These implications move me even now to pace and mutter in the night.

Surely that climax resembles no other ever in Sword and Sorcery--almost no conflict. Up to that point Kazi, the arch-enemy, had been an aggressive sort in whom the ambitions of the insidious Dr. Fu Manchu, the modesty of Nero and the social graces of Attila the Hun were charmingly combined. But in the showdown he simply freaked out, rolled over like a dog and died almost without a struggle--leaving me in utter shock and Robert E. Howard doubtless spinning in his grave.

Not that I blame him--arch-enemy, that is. This barbarian oaf by now had turned into really something else--a telepath opposing telepaths with the ultimate weapon. And I do mean ultimate--against telepaths, that is.

He didn't think.

Because there was nothing in it, no one could read his mind.

He couldn't think. Nor for a while in shock, could I. And neither, I was certain, could the author. The evidence was indisputable.

At this point I ceased to live the story, much to my regret, and became simply a critical reader. Everything seemed wrong. With any kind of slam-bang conflict at the climax this would have been an excellent yarn, complete in itself, yet calling for a series follow-on. Instead, the final third of the book broadened in scope like a river emptying into the desert sand trying to express what could have made three or four excellent book-length novels. The way things were handled left me very unhappy.

But one thing made me happy indeed, that for a little while at

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 least I was picked up and carried along in a story without thought of self, just as in the days of long ago. It was wonderful, like having sex at the age of 103, I suppose. Never thought it would happen, you know....

But still I wish that these young fellows who are so taken with the Robert E. Howard of primitive character as to write him into impossible situations, would give serious thought to the Robert E. Howard formula--that's the important thing! What really counts is not the muscles, the swordplay, the lack of fine manners and slick city wazy, it's the way these things are put together. The Howard formula, properly handled, can make any protagonist look good. Even Ed Cox. Even me!

At the age of 103.

the end

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more editorializings . . .

Elsewhere in this mailing, namely in the OO, there should be the slate of candidates for office next term. Also, there should be among those running, in this case, for OE, one Bruce Pelz, assuming he got his bid in in time. Not without experience in this aarea, he does have somewhat of a faanish workload as you well know. However, there are a number of us FAPAns nearby aand not too far away (as in Burbee's caase) who can be counted upon to assist in the dog-work of assembling the mailing, stuffing envelopes, labels and all thaat sort of thing including drinking beer and ogling any young female type assistants that may be in the group (which, for instance, would include cover-artist Maureen Garrett and new-member Leigh Strother-Vien...who live so close to me that I can hardly stand it--they-relucky I'm not down there all the time talking about old fannish things--or something).

I even intimated, in fact I said so in real words, to Bruce that when I get things straightened around here, I'll run for OE next time.

Pursuant to my good faith and your trust in this, I am running for President this time. It's time I got back into FAPA more than an annual appearance of my FAPazine. So, here goes. Vote for BRUCE PELZ for OE. I'm on the Get-the-Mailing-Out Team (to continue Harry's good record for the past year) and vote for ME for PRESIDENT. After 31 years, it'll be great to be really involved in FAPA doings again. And we have some things to do in this coming year. Right? Right!

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Next issue will no doubt have mailing reviews. I doubt if I can catch up in the monumental style that some members have done recently, like Bob Pavlat did, but I'll get recent and current. And I need fillos!

I REMEMBER LEMURIA  
(and other unlikely things)

It's Grennell's  
Fault — don't  
blame Eney.

"Where's Dr. Grebley, the great robot engineer?"

"Out in the blacksmith shop, forging a head."

"I can remember anything, whether it happened or not." Mark Twain said that, I remember it well, whether he actually said it or not. The assigned topic for this particular go-'round is early memory recalls, as nearly as I remember. Well, so be it.

I was foaled in the state of Kansas, a natural-born Jayhawk, but left at an early age because I preferred to remain with my parents, who were migrating to Wisconsin. My earliest subjectively credible recollection is of going through Chicago on the train, right after 1925 had slid off the calendar and the stroke of midnight made it 1926. I've what seem like clear memories of looking out the window of the slowly moving train at all the lights and thinking to myself, It's 1926, out there. I find that a little hard to credulate, since remorseless math says I'd only turned up age 2 a couple months before. I had been born on a property known in family circles as The Holcomb Place, some short distance outside of Humboldt, Kansas; in Allen County, down in the southeast corner. We were headed for the Halley Hill Place, near Ladoga, Wisconsin and I have just a few memories of Ladoga. I recall being abjectly terrified of firecrackers and stuff at some 4th of July (1926 or maybe '27), the little Muggeridge boy from across the road, with whom I played on occasion, and the little Wilkinson boy from next door.

The Wilkinson boy, whose first name may have been Billy (not sure) came to an untimely demise. My mother went next door to visit his mother and Billy (?) and I got off by ourselves. Proudly, he demonstrated a new skill by shinnying up a corner of the kitchen cupboard to retrieve a bottle of pills from the top shelf. He shared them with me and they were delicious. I can taste them, even today. They were called Hinkle's pills, bright pink, about the size of a BB shot. When placed in the mouth, the candy coating provided several seconds of bliss, followed by sharp pangs when the coating dissolved down to the incredibly bitter active ingredient. They were a powerful cathartic. Being ever the practical sort, as I got down to the nitty-gritty on each of the Hinkle's pills, I spat it out. Not one to waste things, my companion would just gulp and reach for another one. We went through the entire bottle, between us.

Next day, my mother broke the sad news. My friend Billy had gone to Heaven during the night. No, he wouldn't be back, ever again. I have had trouble swallowing pills from that distant day to the one right now. Some few years later, during a winter when I was sick fairly frequently, Mom would bring me a Hinkle's pill to make me feel better and I would take it, suck off the pink sugar coating and discard the foul thing between the bed and the wall. The day of reckoning came next spring, during housecleaning, when she moved the bed and found all those decoated Hinkel's pills on the floor. Fortunately, she didn't make me take them en masse, or I might've joined Billy Wilkinson to reminisce about freedom from constipation.

I remember a lot of home-type folk remedies from that era. If I got a cold, Mom would chop up an onion, real fine and bind it to the inside of my wrists with strips of white cotton sheeting. If I got the croup (we'd call it bronchitis today, I guess) she'd administer a teaspoon of sugar with a drop of kerosene in it. It tasted foul beyond belief. Looking back, it seems a wonder I ever saw my sixth birthday, let alone the others since then. Ingesting kerosene is considered bloody rough on the kidneys these days.

That's about all the memories from the Halley Hill place I can dredge up. No, I recall one more. There was a little orphan girl that my parents considered adopting, about that time. They brought her home for a bit, nearly my age, perhaps just a wee tad younger. They had her sitting in my high chair, and I resented it, so I tipped the high chair over, decanting her across the floor to ear-splitting squawls. They took her back and I remained an only child for but a few more blissful years. Many years later, when I heard of Alexander's solution to the Gordian knot, I felt a sense of kinship with him.

During all my formative years, we rented farms from various owners, first for cash, later on shares as the Depression years got really depressing. Thus I can sort early recollections into bins labelled The Hill Place, The Moul Place, The Beske Place, The Miller Place, The (Matt) Flood Place, The Lloyd Place and the (Maurice) Flood Place.

Two of my mother's sisters got married in our house while we lived at the Moul Place, triggering memories of an institution that seems (mercifully) to've fallen into desuetude, anymore. It was called a shivaree. Later, I learned it was spelled charivari. It consisted of a lot of louts coming by and making furious tumult, until the newlyweds appeared and dispensed largesse for the purchase of peace and quietude (as nearly as dubious memory recalls). I suppose the modern cognate is the occasional custom of following the newlyweds' car in a procession with horns blaring clamorously.

I've quite a few memories from the Moul Place era, more than you'd care to read about; a few I wouldn't care to share. It was located near Atwater (all of these tiny places were in Wisconsin and still are). We lived there from maybe '28 through early '30. During that epoch, I saw the first Model A Ford, hailed as a bright new wonder, proudly on display at the dealers (Steltzell & Newcomb) in nearby Waupun. Our neighbors across the road got in the first radio, an Atwater Kent (no connection with Atwater, Wisconsin) and we'd go over to listen to Amos 'n Andy, The Clicquot Club Eskimos and other early wonders. Later, electric lines were strung and several of the neighbors made the conversion from the wan orange-brown glimmer of kerosene lamps. Our landlady, Ms. Edith Moul, did not. In those days, if you owned a farm and rented it, you didn't mollycoddle the tenant. The folks were still spending their nights by kerosene light when I hauled stakes in mid-November of 1941. We were at the Moul Place when the card game called Lindy took the world by brief storm. Up to that time, my parents' peer-group were partial to a card game called Rook. They had a Rook Club and attended regular meetings at the various members homes.

I started school at Atwater Dist. No. 6 in September of 1929, a bit short of my sixth birthday. It wasn't entirely a smooth transition. My father had been teaching me in his spare time since about age 3 and I could read quite comfortably and write almost as well. This disconcerted hell out of my first grade teacher, Miss Remley, who was to come back next year calling herself Mrs. Green. When I got to the second grade, there were no other kids at that level, so she just bumped me on into the third grade, a fairly common procedure at that time. Through the rest of my brief years of education, I had little trouble in keeping up with studies. The troubles came from the fact that I spent the whole while competing with kids two or three or even four years older than I was. I was always big for my age, but I never had as much age on me as would have been handy. The mint hasn't printed enough money to make me do it again.

It was the fall of '29 that the Depression first came down. I recall my Dad buying me a candy bar at the local general store and breaking the news that, henceforth, we would not be buying the Sunday edition of the Milwaukee Journal, which cost a dime in those days.

By about early 1930, we had moved to the Beske Place and, near the end of that year, my brother and sister came along. After seven years as an only child, it was a bit traumatic to suddenly have to share billing with brand-new twins. Well, so it goes.

The Beske Place was a short sojourn. We bugged out of there in the fall of '32. Moved to the Miller Place, just up the road, after a sharp disagreement with the landlord. I remember the Miller Place chiefly for the trove of old pulpzines found in the upstairs rooms. Mostly westerns, but with a few detectives and three or four old copies of Weird Tales. I devoured them shamelessly, although my parents disapproved of anything that wasn't in hard covers. Today, those old mag's would be worth a modest fortune. Much of my early youth was happily spent reading stuff that's be a sensation on today's collectors' market. Eheu.

We were at the Miller Place when FDR got elected in the fall of '32, to the great distress of my devoutly Republican parents. We were still there when Prohibition was repealed the following March or so, to the disgust of my devoutly anti-booze parents. Some time after that, we lined up to move to the Matt Flood Place, several miles away, near Eden, getting back into the farming game. We never farmed the property at the Miller Place. It was no more than a pied a terre between stops.

We stayed at the Matt Flood Place while all sorts of things took place. Along the way, sparks came out of the chimney, settled upon the well-dried shingle roof and burned the house to a cellar full of ashes. So we moved down the road a mile or so to the Lloyd Place and kept on working the Flood Place. After a time, we moved to another farm, owned by Maurice Flood. To update it, I started high school (at Campbellsport) from the Maurice Flood Place. We were still there when I graduated, four years later, in the spring of 1940, terminating my formal education for all time.

Lovely. By then, I'd attained the lofty age of 16; would turn up 17 the following November 1st. Even then, you couldn't get a job until you were 18. I recall it an incredible hiatus. I recall packing peas for a canning factory, at 20 cents per hour. Work your ass off for 20 hours straight and earn a clear \$4. BFD. One could work for a canning factory, even if less than 18 years of age.

As an autobiography, this is brutally elided, perhaps mercifully so. Reams of paper could be used up on this or that random tangent. Breathe easy, they won't be. I wouldn't encounter FAPA until the late summer of 1953, many years later. Perhaps some time we'll speak of those untouched-upon years. For the nonce, however, I can tell, plain as day, by the glaze of your eyes, that you've had at least as much dope on the early years of this FAPA member as you'd really care to hear about.

Well, perhaps another day, we'll take it up again. Until then, I'm here, as I've been for the past quarter--century or so. BFD. Cheers, y'all, huh?

(A Fond Farewell to Scott Peacock)

by

Larry T. Shaw

Wilbur Scott Peacock died July 7th, 1979. I learned of his death on July 31st, when his widow, Gladys, telephoned me. She had just returned from taking his body back to Kansas for burial. While shocked and depressed, I was still to some extent pleased that I was one of the few people she knew that he would have wanted her to inform.

For background, let's proceed immediately to an article I wrote for Frank Wilimczyk, Jr.'s, fanzine Paradox in 1943. It is reprinted here exactly as I wrote it, except for a few minor corrections in punctuation:

## BEHIND PLANET STORIES' EDITORIAL DOOR

Well, it seems that after the January issue of Planet Stories came out, I wrote this fellow W. Scott Peacock a letter, telling him (again) what I thought of his efforts as an editor and just incidentally happening to mention that I was going to be in New York January 31, and would come on January 30 instead if there was a chance of seeing him, as I wanted to see for myself if editors were human; and he sent me a penny postal card asking what was I waiting for, he wanted to see if fans were human, and if he wasn't at his office, buzz him at the 23rd "Y".

So I went to New York on the 30th. I didn't go to Peacock's office immediately, as I didn't want to lug the heavy suitcase and briefcase I was lugging all over the map. Instead I went to the 23rd Street "Y", at which by some strange coincidence I had a reservation for a room. I stumbled over several dozen soldiers in the lobby, paid my money, signed a thing, took my key, followed a corridor to the elevator to the ninth floor, found my room, stumbled (fans never walk, they always stumble) in, dropped the suitcase (full of FFF's mostly) and the briefcase (full of Yearbooks), sat down, and rested. While resting, I thought a brilliant thunk. "Before I go to look for

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Peacock at his office, I will see if he is here, thus perhaps saving myself some trouble, yes?" The answer, arrived at after great cogitation, was yes. I went down to the desk and asked for Peacock. The fellow looked at me reather queerly and said that Peacock was in Room 703. Then the girl got 703 on the phone and handed it to me. I said "Peacock?" and "This is Shaw" and he said "Good Morning" and I said "Morning?" You mean afternoon" and he said he had been asleep and to come on up and he would get some pants on and we would go out to eat. Even on the phone he had a southern accent.

Then I got twisted up and took the wrong elevator and ended up in the gym and decided I ought to give him time to get dressed anyway. (Gawsh--what a big place that was! The "Y" in Schenectady has two floors.) I went down again and asked questions and received very detailed directions on how to reach 703. When I finally arrived the door was open and I could see what looked like a human being stretched out on the bed, so I poked my head in and said "Hello" or some such silly thing. He did not leap up energetically to greet me, but he extended a hand (it had five fingers, anyway), and we shook. He said he was glad I woke him up, because he had overslept when he should be at his office working on a novel; and I said it wouldn't be any good anyway, and we were friends.

He told me I reminded him of himself when he was my age, and I told him how I told Harvey Marcy, a Schenectady Planet fan, how I was going to take his (Peacock's) job away from him, and he told me that was fine as there were only two fellows at his office, who has been there 15 years each, who wanted to do that too. We talked, and he showed me a novel in the series for which he had to finish one (the Ki-Gor" series in Jungle Stories), and finally we got ready to go out to eat.

Peacock is long and thin. He wears glasses and has sandy hair. He looks hungry. He even looks human. But he doesn't look like an editor.

We went down on the elevator and Peacock got his mail and we went out and across 23rd Street toward Eighth Avenue. Peacock read his mail as he walked, and I sprinted to keep up with him. He told me his mother was worried about him. The doctor had told him that there was nothing wrong with him except that he should have been buried six months ago. I could believe him.

We went in a lunch room and he had breakfast while I had lunch. We both had bacon and eggs. He didn't like his eggs. We ate and talked. We discussed the fan vs. the editor. He convinced me quite easily that the poor editor was mistreated by the fans. He also convinced me that the editor didn't give a damn what the fans thought about what the editor published. He brought up the point about maga-

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zines' having set policies which determined what was printed, and that the editor sometimes got very annoyed at the way the fans told him off. He told me the anecdote of the fan who wrote to him, ending his letter, "If you don't print this, I'll write to another magazine." He told me how laughable it was to have a fan write in praising a story by a "new" author and slamming a story by an old-timer in the same issue, when both were written by the same guy. I sympathized with him.

We also discussed science fiction. He was a fan for a long time. He likes science in his fiction. He thinks Astounding and Unknown are the best mags in the field. He thinks that Planet follows those two in quality. I told him those were the only three that I read every issue, which is true (except that I don't always read all of Planet). He doesn't like Cummings, either. However, he gets sick and tired of fans who continually slam Ray, who never even attempts to retaliate. I sympathized some more.

After a while we left the eatery and took the Eighth Avenue subway to 32nd Street. We went out onto Eighth Avenue. We went into a very handsome, modern building. We stood in an elevator for a few hours and finally an operator came and shot us up several dozen floors. A door said "Fiction House, Inc." We walked into an outer office. Then I was disillusioned.

I hadn't expected much. I hadn't expected Peacock's office to be very fancy. I hadn't expected an office like they show in the movies. I hadn't expected a super-modernistic chrome-plated palace with a built-in bar. I hadn't expected it to be large enough to contain a three ring circus, plus sideshow. However, I had rather expected that he would have an office.

He hasn't.

Fiction House is an Outer office and one big room filled with desks, tables, bookcases, cabinets, etc., with big windows filling one of the long sides and a smaller room filled with drawing boards and such (the art department) at one end. Peacock is the desk next to the door to the art department. Peacock is editor of five Fiction House magazines. Peacock does all the work on those five magazines-- editing, rewriting, copyreading, proofreading, more proofreading, dummyping--everything except the actual printing. What a lucky guy he is.

Peacock slumped in his chair (that "slumped" is important). I sat behind the desk next to his. There was one other fellow there. Nobody goes to the office on Saturday ordinarily. Except Peacock. I don't blame him for going there on Saturdays. The place has an even more wonderful atmosphere than a room full of printing presses.



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Anyway, Peacock was very grateful to me for waking him up so he could go to the office to write. He had to catch a train at six o'clock, and he also wanted to shave and stuff first.

So we talked some more. He showed me the cover of the next issue of Planet. He showed me manuscripts. He showed me his worksheets, on which he marked down the stories selected for each issue of each magazine, the layouts, lengths, and stuff. This, he said, was very confidential, and he shouldn't show it to anyone. He showed me the contents page of the next issue of Planet. He told me about some of the authors and stories. He told me some of the things that were wrong with the stories he had published in the past.

He told me about himself. He has been a lot of things. The thing I mainly remember is in jail. He has written a lot of stuff, under a lot of different names, in a lot of different magazines--over 400 stories and seven novels, I think he said. He then turned scientific, and gave me a problem concerning a coiled spring in a jar of acid to mull over, and also outlined a neat idea for getting into the fourth dimension.

We also talked about me a little. I told him about the school paper and how some people, including P. Schuyler Miller, think I can write, and how I wanted to write but would rather be an editor. Even after seeing Peacock and Fiction House, I still want to be an editor. I mentioned my brother in the army. He told me he has a brother and sister; a "kid" brother and "kid" sister. Their ages proved that Tucker was a little off in his estimation of Peacock's age; they were both older than Tuck had him down for.

Suddenly Peacock remembered that he owed me an original, for my winning letter of a year or so ago. He hauled out a whole bunch of old and new ones. I told him I like Bok. I didn't think he'd have any left. He grinned, and found two. As I had waited so long, he said, I could have both of them. I gave him a big hug and kiss, almost. He said he remembered sending me one before, "but..." (He wasn't editor when I won. One of the originals he gave me was the one I had picked as my prize in case I did win that time. Oh well...)

He went back to his desk to get me an envelope to put the pics in. He sat down. He rose again. Some playful colleague of his had stuck a tack up through the cushion of his chair. My, what nice cuss-words. He had missed the tack before only because of his slump. I still want to be an editor.

After that we wandered into the art room. He showed me some cartoons of the boys at Fiction House. They were spread all over the wall. They were clever. I would have given a lot for the one of Peacock.

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We talked about a lot of other things in between here someplace. But not long after that I left. First though I got him to christen my autograph book. He asked if he had to be clever. I said no, why didn't he just list a lot of his pen-names. He did list some. I didn't recognize any of them as science fiction writers. Even if I did, I wouldn't tell you. Nyah!

He told me to keep writing to Planet; he wanted to keep the "Vizigraph" (he pronounces it with the first "i" long) going. He said to come again sometimes. He was starting to type as I left.

Gawsh, editors are almost as wonderful as fans.

::THE END::

I moved to New York to live in 1944, but Scott and I traveled in different orbits and I didn't see him very often. On one occasion he helped me get my first magazine job (on the trade journal, What Life) by writing me a letter of recommendation that said I had demonstrated "latent" writing ability." At the same time, he needled me because I wasn't writing. And then he left for California followed at intervals by other New York science-fiction editors like Jerry Bixby, Honace Gold, Sam Merwin and Sam Mines.

When Noreen and I decided to do the same, I went to work immediately for American Art Enterprises, Inc., Sam Merwin having introduced me to the right people there. I was further reminded that there are only thirty-nine people in the world when I was introduced to publisher Milt Luros, who remembered me from the days when he was art director at Columbia Publications and I was doing freelance proofreading for Bob Lowndes. And eventually I heard that a few other people I had known or heard of had worked there at various times. Yes, Scott Peacock was among them.

One day as I was passing the office of the advertising manager, I saw him talking to a rangy individual in a western shirt, who was doing most of the talking. It had been almost thirty years, but that thin, almost gaunt face, that high forehead... Could it be? I walked in, said "Don't I know you from somewhere?" and it was Scott Peacock. And in spite of my beard, it took him only a minute or two to identify me.

Scott returned to work for the magazine division, and our friendship bloomed, even though it was confined almost entirely to the boundaries of his office and mine. We shared our gripes about the company, and our mutual love of word games, strange and unusual names and such. We reminisced, naturally. We were kindred spirits in many ways.

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I left American Art in one of their periodic layoffs, and Scott left not long afterward because of failing health. After that, we talked on the phone occasionally, but I don't believe I saw him again until the 1978 Loscon. There I chaired a pulp editors panel starring Horace Gold, Sam Merwin, and Scott--who confessed that he really had loved the fans all along, and proved it with some fascinating memories.

Although time made us equals, I'll never lose my original respect for Scott Peacock, "godlike editor of Planet Stories," to quote myself. He was an exceptional pulp editor, who introduced an irreverent humor into science fiction. He was a prolific writer of fine stories, most of which remain sadly uncollected. And he was a great guy.

I think that says it. Except that now there's one more typewriter in the sky, and another editorial door closed forever.

--Larry T. Shaw

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(Ed Cox here:) It was with some shock and a terrible sense of loss that I received the news from Larry Shaw of the passing of Scott Peacock. I remember the golden days of Planet Stories, some great stories he wrote and the excitement at the news, some years ago, that he was here, in California, in the Valley. It was one of those things that kept getting planned but never happened. Getting to meet him. Now I never shall and I regret it now. And always will.

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Elsewhere in this mailing is a one-sheet BOUCHERCON Flyer I am franking in on behalf of Larry and Noreen Shaw, the latter being the secretary, Chairperson or doing-all-the-work person, this year. Please support it and, if possible, attend.

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Following this page, as you must already have observed, is a Special ESDACYOS SUPPLEMENT. A First in the 31 year history of this venerable publication (A couple more issues and Ill get up to an average of one-a-year! And considering aa few years of non-membership, I may have reaached that point of one-a-year of membership already.)

So, this is the last bit of editorial, and stenciling, for this isue. Apologies for all the errors that got through uncorrected. Aside from typist's errors, there are aa lot due to the typewriter. From here, it goes into the shop, to type no more til fixed! Adios!

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