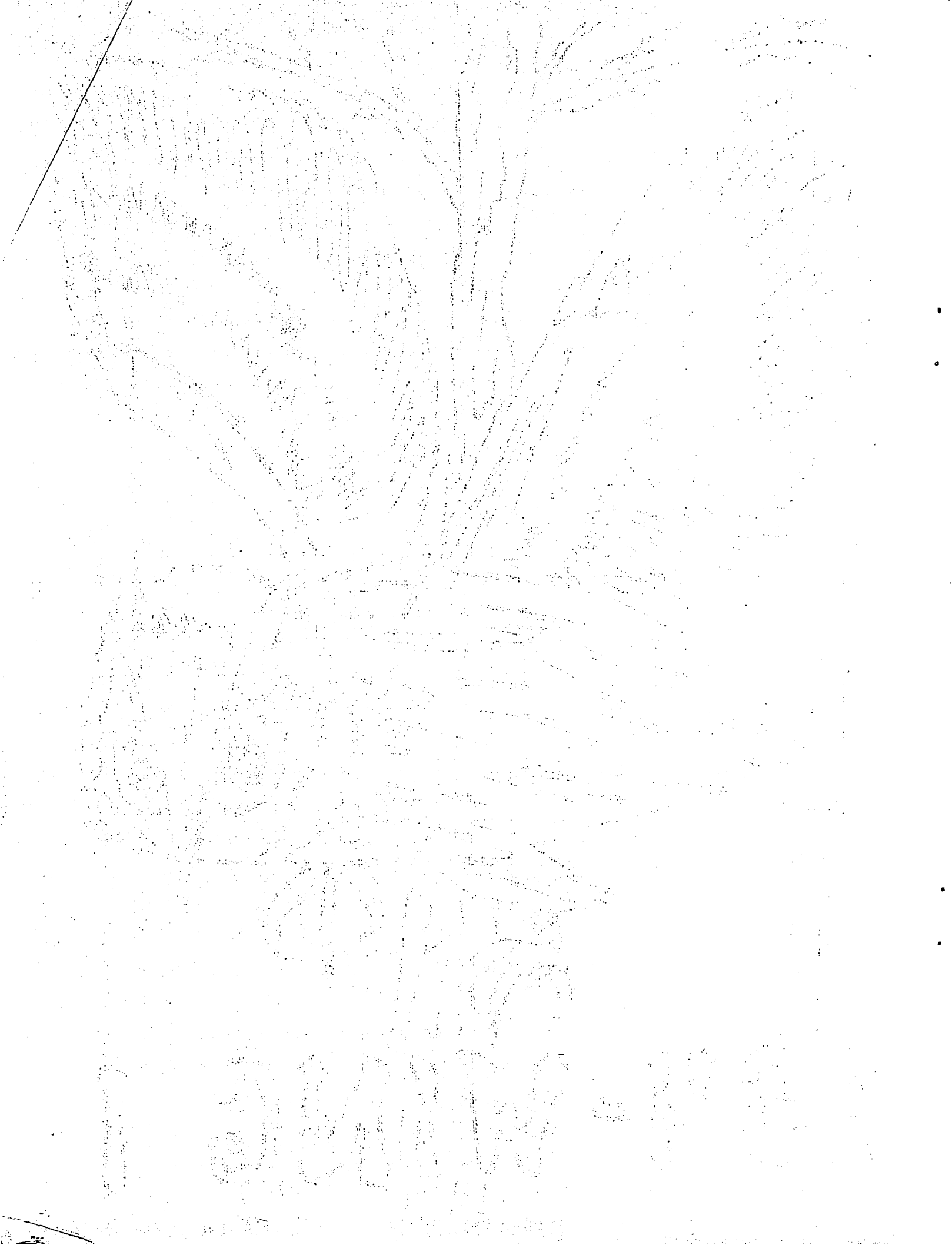




ASH-WING !



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Contributor:

PATRICK STRANG is a student at Orange Coast College in California. He is so well-read, not only in the field of fantasy and science-fiction, but in general literature, that he frightens me. We (that's editorial we) hope that this is only the first of many submissions by Pat.

Art Work:

JOE ZALABAK is a high school student in Detroit, Michigan. Besides science-fiction and fantasy, he is a died-in-the-wool Detroit Tigers fan. He is convinced that the Tigers are going to win the pennant this year. This, in itself, makes him eligible for some kind of a Hugo for fantasy. Pages 5 and 10.

TIM DENTON is a close friend of mine. He lives in the same house as I do and the last time I looked I was his father. He also is a high school student, and besides Lord of the Rings and Zenna Henderson's books on The People, likes Hondas. His work is on page 9.

Poetry, letters, articles, art work and other items of interest should be submitted to Ash-Wing, % Frank Denton, 14654-8th Ave. S.W., Seattle, Washington. 98166

1. The first part of the report is a summary of the work done during the year.

2. The second part is a detailed account of the work done.

3. The third part is a summary of the results of the work done.

4. The fourth part is a summary of the conclusions drawn from the work done.

5. The fifth part is a summary of the recommendations made.

6. The sixth part is a summary of the work done during the year.

7. The seventh part is a summary of the conclusions drawn from the work done.

THE FREE COMMOTS

Editorial

F. Denton

This is the second editorial that I have written for Ash-Wing. I scrapped the first one because it didn't really say what I had on my mind, and "To thine own self be true." In Lloyd Alexander's Taran Wanderer, the Free Commots is a land on the edge of King Math's Kingdom of Don where the free people live, pursuing their own occupations, owing subservience to no one. They are wise, in their own ways, and consider things carefully before expressing an opinion. In a word, they are honest.

If a fanzine needs anything, it needs honesty. As a neo-fan, I was greatly excited to find that there were such things as the fanzines. I quickly wrote for some of them, and by now have looked through over a dozen of them. By and large, I have to say that I was disappointed in what I saw. And I began to think in terms of editing my own. Now, that's being a bit presumptuous, I know. In fact, it's being more than presumptuous; it smacks of egotism. But perhaps if I outline some of the reasons that I have decided to go ahead with this zine, you will understand my position a bit better.

Several of the zines which I have examined have been so general as to mention no fantasy or science-fiction books, authors or characters. What does one hang his hat on? It's difficult to tell. Some general talk about fandom, a few LOC's that don't really say anything, perhaps an article so short that there is no depth. Most fans read fantasy and science-fiction so avidly that they are familiar with writers and their characters. Surely an article with some mention of Conan, Tros of Samothrace, Dorian Hawkmoon, the Iffs, Gandalf or others would be read with interest by those who had read the stories and were familiar with them. Those who had not read them might be encouraged to do so by reading an interesting article or book review. I guess what I'm saying is that a person can read only so much about fandom in general before he wishes that there were something with meat in it. The TEFCON being held in Lower Teflon is of interest to a mighty few. I'm convinced that interesting LOC's only flow because interesting articles stimulated a response.

I believe also that an editor has the responsibility of editing. This means that there should be no compunction on an editor's part in his choice of materials. He should accept, reject or revise material which he receives

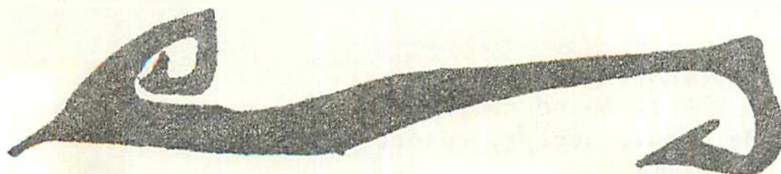
on the merits of that material. One doesn't make a good fanzine with poor material. Over the last couple of months I have read short stories in fanzines that were too short to be well developed, poorly characterized, and sometimes just plain pointless. I'm inclined to think that if I were not to receive enough good material which I thought worth using, I would either postpone the issue, or write the most of it myself. I may have to eat crow over this one.

What I am encouraging, fair readers and dark arch-agents, is the submission of interesting material. Many of you have never submitted anything to a fanzine. And yet, I am sure that you have some interesting things to say about favorites of yours. I want you to send good articles, good short stories of such a length that they can be decently developed. I think that this is one thing that I find wrong with the short stories which I find in the zines. Two pages is not enough length to adequately develop a decent plot or create a viable characterization. I request good poetry, both lyrical or narrative and ballad. I seek LOC's which have something to say; not, "well, here I am again, and I just sat down with a cup of coffee." And above all, I beg for good fan art. I promise that I will treat it with the greatest respect, for as the people of the Free Commots respected each others crafts, so I respect the craft of the artist. Principally, because I can't draw.

I hope that I haven't frightened you with this long editorial. But I had to get it off my chest, and hopefully set the tone for this zine. I want it to be read by as many as I can reach. And I feel that I can only do this by making it as good as I know how. It may not be as lengthy as NIEKAS, but I hope that I can approach a like quality.

I hope that we can gather together, through this zine, the fen who are interested in the sword-and-sorcery type of literature; that which Fritz Leiber calls Epic Fantasy. A list of all of the authors and characters who fall within this category is beyond my ken. I know that I am not aware of all of them. But for starters I would like to suggest that Talbot Mundy, Robert E. Howard, Andre Norton, Michael Moorcock, Mervyn Peake and Lloyd Alexander write the kind of thing I'm talking about. You will note that J.R.R. Tolkien is conspicuous by his absence. There is a good reason. If you are a Middle-earth fan, please write to me for a copy of HOOM 1, a new zine edited by Bee Bowman of Waynesboro, Virginia and myself, and dedicated exclusively to Tolkien. We hope that it can take its place in the ranks of zines devoted to hobbitry.

The people of the Free Commots were proud of their crafts. They spent their lives quietly and respectfully developing their skills. When called upon, they could be depended upon to answer that call with all of the skills at their command. I hope that I can take a lesson from these humble folk. By Crom, I'll try.



C. L. MOORE

by

Patrick Strang

The other day, when I was bored with the collection of atrocities to the good name of Science-Fantasy adorning the racks of our local drugstore, when I despaired of seeing anything but Robot Rick the Rocket-Raider or books in a similar vein, I took a trip back into the past. I got out my rather dishonestly obtained copies of Shambleau and Others and Northwest of Earth by C.L. Moore, the estimable wife of the late Henry Kuttner. None other than H.P. Lovecraft declared her to be one of the best fantasy writers of our time.

Which may give you an idea of the age of these stories. The copyrights in the front of Shambleau read 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936. Northwest of Earth doesn't go much later. I could say something like, "Considering the time, these are great." I will not, for these stories need no "considering". They are great! The story that Lovecraft rated so highly was Shambleau, and if you can find it at all, it is a real chiller, and a must! I hear that Shambleau, at last, may be out in paperback, so there need be no reason for despair. Another chiller, Hellsgarde, is in Sprague de Camp's collection of Swords and Sorcery, which also contains some incidental facts about C.L. Moore. I am, (alas!) unable to supply this information because I have LOST my copy, and my search could be written into a saga of longing and despair.

I will now pass on some hearsay information. Expect to be disappointed by anything by C.L. Moore except stories dealing with Northwest Smith and his buddy, Yaral, or stories about the flame-eyed Jirel, Lady of Castle Joiry. I have not read any of her other stuff myself, but a close friend whose tastes closely parallel mine did, and found them wanting.

You now have two sets of names that mean absolutely nothing to you, so 'twere best I digress. Jirel of Joiry and Northwest Smith occupy separate universes, and never-the-twain-shall-meet, except in an unpublished-in-hard-back work called Quest of the Star Stone. (PLEA: If anyone has any knowledge of where this work may be acquired, would they please get in touch?) Northwest Smith occupies a shadowy future time when man has conquered space and come in contact with men on Venus and Mars and other places. (That was the way it was in 1933, however unlikely it may appear now that these planets support manlike forms.) Jirel of Joiry occupies a medieval land that may be France about the 13th or 14th Century, or may exist on another plane.

Afficianados of Andre Norton will not object to the shadowy nature of these settings, such shadowiness being part of the eerie spell that Mrs. Kuttner weaves. And it's perhaps understandable, since she is not interested in the everyday affairs of running a castle, or conducting the hundred-odd illegal businesses in which Smith is darkly hinted at being.

What C.L. Moore projects are the grotesque, bizarre, ghastly things that happen to them, the things out of the ordinary which is their one common denominator. In all other respects, they are opposite poles, greatly different. The reader may be irritated at the alternation of Smith, Jirel stories, and may be tempted to skip. Don't! These volumes are the sort to be

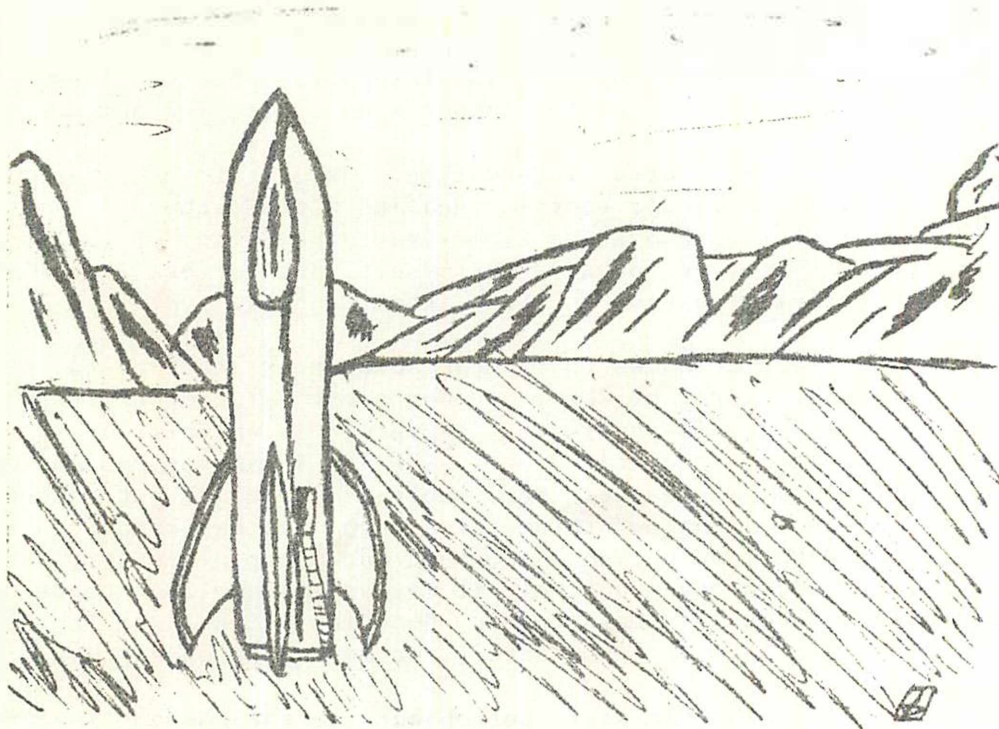
vored, to be read slowly, and preferably not too late at night.

Okay, that's a trite statement. But there is nothing trite about C.L. Moore. The potential reader need have no fear that he will encounter the usual devices of "horror stories". Here are no mincing vampires with slavonic lips, no walking mummies, no clinking chains, no mad scientists. Here (even after thirty-odd years) is only freshness, originality, and very good writing - none of the gee whiz! stuff of other writers of the Thirties.

Here, instead are stories that have one thing in common with a certain amount of Vodka. They will leave you breathless.

Editor's Note: Patrick's address is: P.O. Box 567
Balboa, California 92661

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** An article entitled "Truth About Fantasy" by Lloyd Alexander appeared in the January, 1968 issue of Top of the News, a publication of the American Library Association. Mr. Alexander is the very successful author of the much lauded "Chronicles of Prydain" which are comprised of The Book of Three, The Castle of Llyr, The Black Cauldron, Taran Wanderer, and The High King. Those of you who cannot obtain this article from the Children's Department of your local library may write to your friendly arch-editor for a photocopy.

INTER-GALACTIC CHESS

I visited Highline College the other evening to do a bit of research on academic freedom. While I was just leaving the campus, I ran into a young student who I had once had as a library assistant when I was a junior high school librarian. Knowing that he was an avid reader of science-fiction and that he might be intrigued by the proposition that I was beginning a fanzine, I invited him to stop by the house for a cup of coffee. We talked briefly about the zine and about books which we had been reading recently.

Then the conversation turned to chess, then chess-by-correspondence and the first thing I knew we were cooking up a story concerning inter-planetary chess games. Now, I don't know a great deal about chess beyond the basic concept of the moves. I was once beaten in three moves, and still remember how stunned I was.

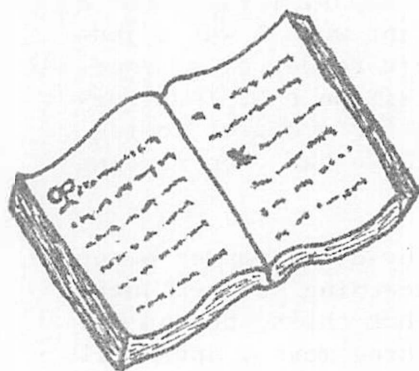
At any rate, it occurred to me that if life of an intelligent sort existed on a far distant planet in another galaxy, and if a method of communication were established, then inter-planetary or inter-galactic chess might be played. If this were the only common ground for communication, (for example) languages being different, but for some reason chess and its notation being the same), it might be reasonable for a game begun in one human's lifetime to be continued by another person or series of persons and many generations later finished. I began to evolve a hierarchy of monarchs, or perhaps an order of knights, charged with the responsibility of continuing this combat. Of course, the reversion to the medieval idea of training for knighthood through the preliminary educational steps of page and squire cropped up. Immediately one sees the page as a carrier of the board and chessmen and a student of opening and closing moves. The squire, then, is the person who sets up the board, moves the men after the Knight-Player has deliberated and determined the move, and is a student of the middle game, various gambits, etc. The knight, as a culmination of fourteen years of preparation, jousts with his fellow knights via chess-board, with tournaments held to determine which knight shall have the privilege of making perhaps only one move during his lifetime in the inter-galactic game.

Well, as I say, Dan and I spent a delightful hour in such ruminations. The theory is probably shot full of holes, so have at it via the LOC. I have already had my fun with it. By the way, I would be interested in knowing whether a story similar to this has ever been come across by any of you readers.

* * * * *

Readers of fantasy are often readers of other good books. I have just begun to read Iberia by James Michener. If the whole book of some 800 pages reads anything like the first thirty pages did, then I must recommend it as a rare treat. Michener has put his life-long love of Spain on paper. Beautiful photographs accompany the text. Read it.

THE RED BOOK OF WESTMARCH



Dedicated to the hope that all of the Red Book will be available to us some day, but more particularly to the paperbacks which are appearing currently on the market.

With a seeming re-birth in the appreciation of fantasy and science-fiction, there has come an attendant increase in the number of paperback issues of works in these fields. It almost seems as though one ought to retire (o, blessed day) and catch up on the books which he or she has purchased as they are come upon. The stack on my desk grows faster than I can read them. The amazing thing, however, is that if you don't grab them as they appear on the paperback stands, the next time you look for them they are gone. So you and I just keep putting them away for our rainy days, or the blizzards when we are snowed in (we in the Northwest, unfortunately or fortunately, don't have blizzards) or for our retirement. I'm not sure that I'll ever reach retirement, however.

So many of us are reading so many things that I'm sure that we miss some very good books. I thought I might devote a column each issue to one or two titles which I had read in the intervening months and which I had found particularly intriguing. I won't even honor this column with the label "book review column" because I'm not sure that that is what it will be. As a matter of fact, it may even tend to ramble a bit, but I'll try to curb any such inclinations.

And I would certainly solicit any such ramblings (rumblings) from you. It really is a kind of "share the wealth" column. When I read a book that really excites me (as The Lord of the Rings did) I want to tell others about it. I'm sure that you do also, and this column is really as much yours as it is mine. I suppose that the only criteria should be that the book is currently available in paperback. We all know that some mighty fine works, which originally appeared in the pulp magazines of the Thirties and the Forties, are now becoming available in paperback. And what great fun they are! A lot of us were too young then, but we'll grab at this second chance.

The Fantastic Swordsmen, edited by L. Sprague de Camp. Pyramid Book R-1621. \$.50

This collection of eight stories makes an excellent introduction to the sword-and-sorcery category of fantasy. Sprague de Camp has chosen fine stories, representative of the kinds of work done by the various authors. He has prefaced each story with a page or two of remarks about the author, his career and his work.

Robert Bloch's story "Black Lotus" upset me; mostly because I was forced to the dictionary nine times by a story written when he was only 16 years old. No 16 year old should have had a vocabulary like that.

Robert E. Howard's story "Drums of Tombalku" is a fine introduction to the Conan tradition. Amalric's fight with Ollam-Onga, his flight from the city of Gazal with Lissa, and his rescue by Conan and the cavalry of the Tombalku are exciting fare. Even more so are the intrigue involved in a two king system and the direct action so indicative of the Cimmerian barbarian.

John Jakes' Brak is represented in "The Girl in the Gem", an Elak story of Henry Kuttner by "Dragon Moon". "The Other Gods" by H.P. Lovecraft, "The Singing Citadel" by Michael Moorcock, and Luigi de Pascalis' "The Tower" are included in the anthology. Finally, there is a story by Lord Dunsany to whom so many of the fantasy writers owe so much. It is "The Fortress Unvanquishable Save for Sacnoth". In this writer's opinion this is a fine investment of \$.50.

Ossian's Ride, by Fred Hoyle. Berkley Medallion Book X-1506. \$.60

I had grave misgivings about this book fitting the classification of science-fiction or fantasy, but became so fascinated by the plot and the fine writing of Fred Hoyle that it didn't make much difference and I completed the book anyway. And glad I am that I did finish, for it is a fine yarn. And indeed it did turn out to be science-fiction after all.

Thomas Sherwood is of good yeoman Devonshire stock, and just graduated in June, 1979 from Trinity College, Cambridge University in Mathematics. He is invited to Whitehall, London, where he is asked to take on the delicate task of finding out something about the Industrial Corporation of Eire. In a short ten years, the I.C.E. has built up a phenomenal industrial empire, shot to the tops of certain industries, and pretty well barricaded itself behind the so-called Erin Curtain in County Kerry.

Sherwood's best disguise is to be just what he is, a graduate just finished at the University and off on a walking jaunt through Ireland before settling into his profession. There will be much less chance of being tripped up in a lie if this pose is assumed. The Ireland he finds is a far different one than the one we read of today. Suspicion is the norm. Even before Sherwood is out of England strange things begin to happen. There even begins to be some doubt as to which side is causing them to happen.

This tale reads a great deal like many of the foreign intrigue stories being written today. And it sometimes hearkens back to the marvelous stories of John Buchan. At any rate, you must take my word that it is fine writing, an exciting story and, yes, it is science-fiction.



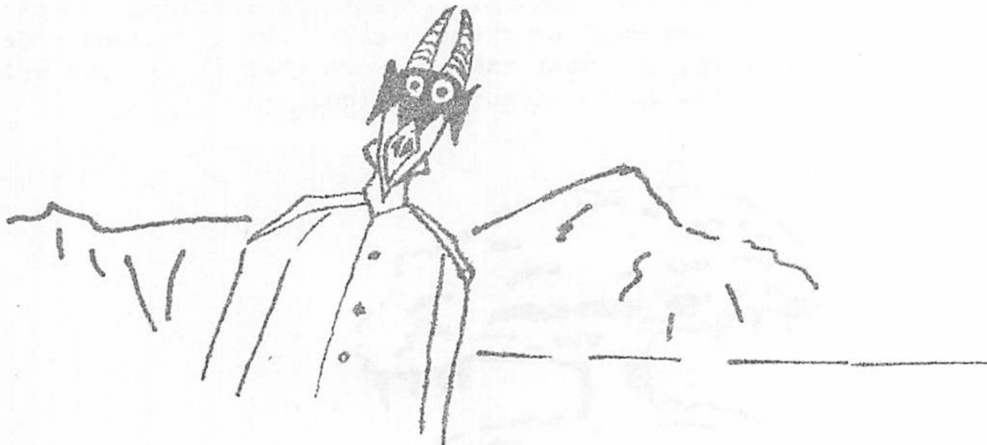
LETTERS OF COMMENT

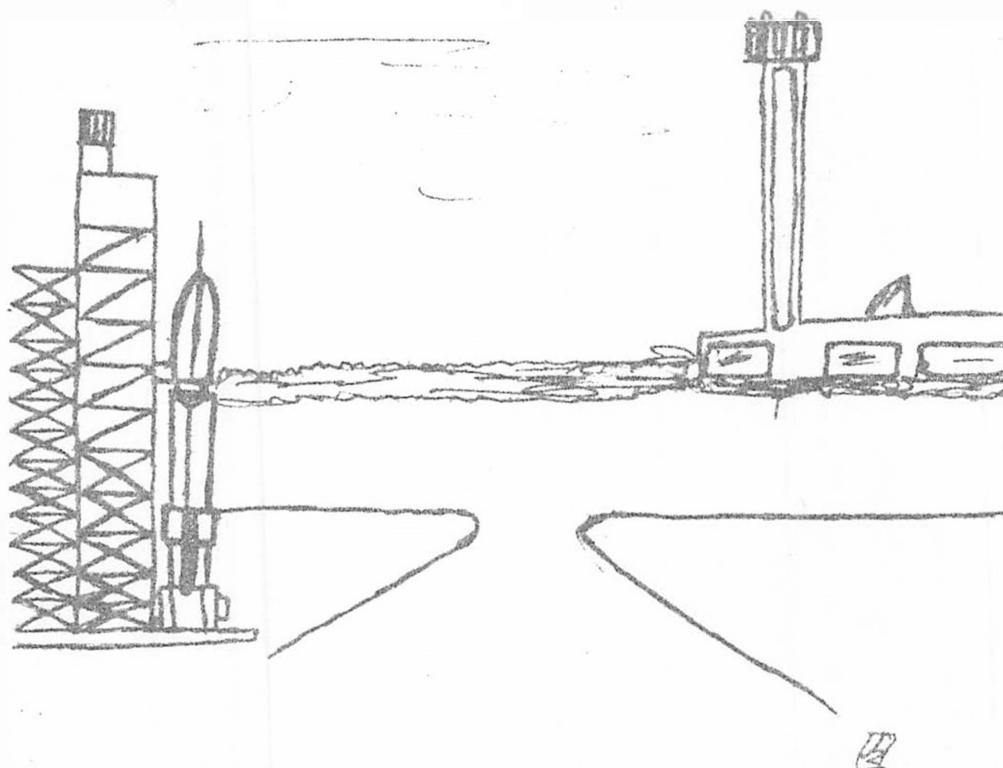
While I have written to a number of people regarding the birth of Ash-Wing, I can't say that I have been deluged by the returns. And speaking of deluges, I'm reminded of the story of the politician whose whole political life had revolved around the story of his experiences in the Johnstown Flood. When he died St. Peter told him that he had one last opportunity for a speech at the banquet welcoming him to Heaven. When the politician told Peter that he had chosen the Johnstown Flood for a topic, he was warned against it. However, he stuck to his guns to the last moment, vowing that his topic would be the Johnstown Flood. Just as he rose to begin, St. Peter leaned over to him. "You had better make it good," he said. "Just remember that Noah is out there in that audience." (Sorry, I know that is only very vaguely related to deluges.)

At any rate, I hope that the existence of this zine will find some readers out there who wish to comment; good or bad. I am most interested in hearing from you. I would like to receive, as my editorial states, good articles, poetry, fiction, art or what-have-you. But I will be happy if you just LOC me.

I'd like to toss out a topic for each LOC that might elicit a special response. Not that you have to write on that topic only, but it may serve as a focus for some commentary. My topic for this issue is the Gray Mouser and Fafhrd stories of Fritz Leiber. I have read several stories and the novel, The Swords of Lankhmar, and I still can't decide whether I like them or not. What have been your impressions? That should generate something.

Finally, I am at a loss for a name for this column. So I would like to propose a contest for the best name. (Of course, you won't agree with me.) And that will provide fodder for the LOC in the following issue. I'll even go so far as to offer a prize for what I think is the best entry. One hard-back copy of Smith of Wootton Major by J.R.R. Tolkien. Deadline for entries will be August 15, 1968. So let's hear from you.





GRAFFITI

The messages of people to the world at large left on walls, billboards, board fences and restroom walls have always fascinated me. Not many are associated with fandom. I would certainly like to hear from anyone who has seen such graffiti dealing with fandom.

We all know that "Frodo Lives" has been scrawled in innumerable places. Recently, while on a trip to Portland, Oregon, I discovered one interesting bit of graffiti which proclaimed "Lassie Kills Chickens." Poor, maligned collie.

A rather sophisticated restaurant, The Dublin House, provides chalkboard and chalk in the Men's Lounge. The last time I was there neatly lettered across the blackboard were these words: "Brian Boru was here." Another time an obvious allusion to Irish county loyalty appeared: the classic cry "Up Sligo!"
