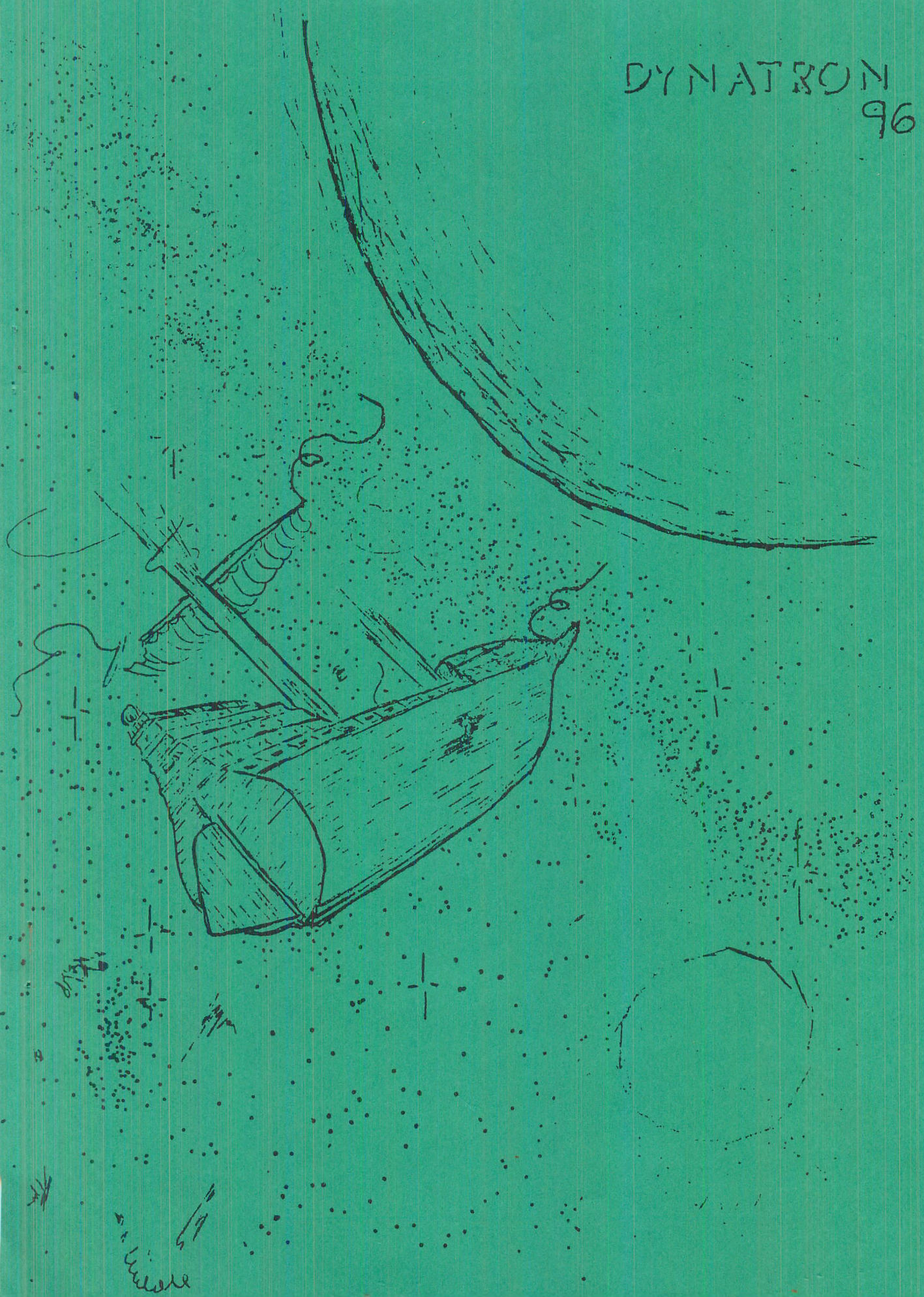


DYNATRON  
96







Drawing by Arthur Thomson

Indeed! This seems to be the 96th issue of DYNATRON, a fanzine of sorts. Usually ill sorts. This one is dated September 1991 which makes it the 31st Anniversary Issue.

Gosh-

wowboyoboy!

((You did that deliberately, didn't you, Roytac? What? Dated it September so it could be the 31st anniversary; you could have picked any date you wanted. Well, in that case I'll take that redhead over there... too late-Tucker is faster than I am.))

Where was I? Anyway this is DYNATRON #96 and it is the second issue of this zine I've put out this year. Astounding! (First issue of ASTOUNDING January 1930. Madle will sell you a copy for \$750.)

I did #95 in April because I wanted something to take to Corflu Ocho. It wasn't much and did not get universal distribution. Not in this universe anyway.

So I have been reading here and there that there is a problem in getting new "fanzine fans" because they can't find fanzines. Why, it is said, there are probably tens of them attending conventions and they are getting away. Do you believe this? I don't. But I thought I'd throw out some bait at Bubonicon and see what happens so this issue is aimed at Bubonicon 23. And also at FAPA, FLAP, CAPA, SLANapa and probably SAPS.

I called Ed Cox to ask him for permission to use "The Pulp Forest" in this issue (see page 4) and we got to talking about past issues and Ed mentioned Sam Umbrage. Have no idea what ever became of Sam but I dug one of his stories out of D#30, I think it is, and reprinted it. (see page 8) All of the artwork is recycled from earlier issues. The cover is by Dick Shultz and is from Dynatron 19 or thereabouts.

Anything else herein is

probably by Roy Tackett  
915 Green Valley Road NW  
Albuquerque, NM 87107

and if you picked this up somewhere and there is something that pushes one of your buttons and you want to comment you can send me a letter. I might even send you the next issue which will probably be out some time in 1992.

And this is, as always, a Marinated Publication X



## Writings In The Sand

This is the section, in case you have forgotten, wherein one finds an assortment of miscellaneous stuff. Things which I have found amusing, or not amusing. Things which happened to catch my eye. And, now and then just some ramblings about this and that. Or maybe the other. I usually try to stay away from the other, though, because that can get complicated and send me veering off to another place and I have enough trouble just trying to stay in this place. It used to be that one had to run as fast as one could just to stay in place but now it appears, here in the late 20th Century, that one must run twice as fast as one can just to stay in place. Which is why I quit running.

See, that paragraph makes no sense at all. But that's the sort of thing you get in this section.

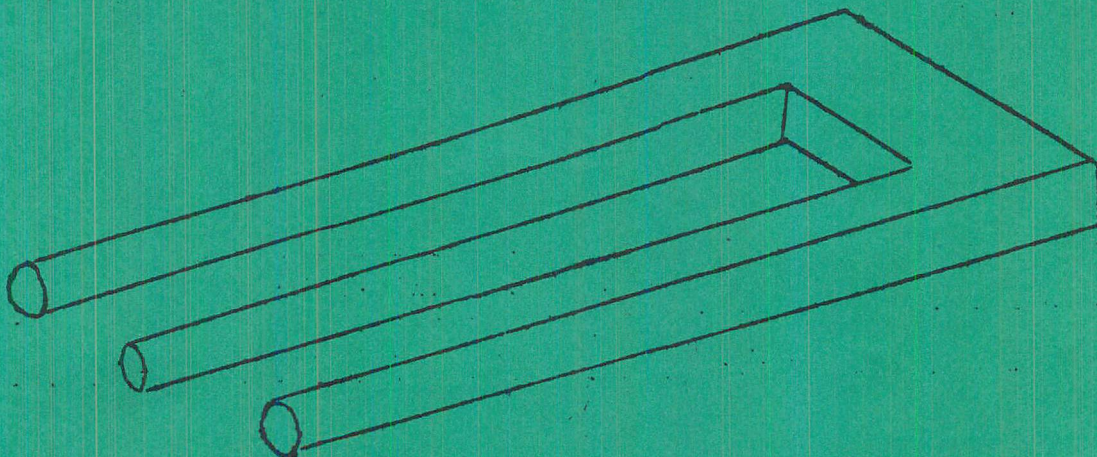
Here's a quote from Fletcher Knebel that I found amusing: "It is now proven, beyond a doubt, that smoking is a leading cause of statistics."

I found that in an Air Force newspaper at the start of an article about the hazards of smoking and how the Department of Defense has a goal of a smoke-free armed forces by the year 2000. What happened to "Smoke 'em if you got 'em"? What with all the other crap modern technology has put into the atmosphere I don't worry about tobacco smoke.

But I just don't understand it all. At Corflu Ocho Bill Bowers and I, being considerate of the tender nostrils of assorted non-smoking fen, sat around in the hallway outside the con suite where we could smoke and not bother the rest. And the first goddam thing you know the con suite is empty and everybody is sitting around the hallway in the middle of the tobacco smoke with Bowers and me. Go figure. Maybe they were fascinated by my rainbow colored cigarettes.

Now here's Patrick E. McGovern. He's an archaeological chemist at the University of Pennsylvania and has been analyzing the faint residue from some ancient clay bottles. The bottles come from Egypt and Iran and are dated at 3500 BCE. And what had they contained? Wine, my old and rare. Wine. You see this lends credence to the theory that the change from hunting and gathering to agriculture came about not so the people could have a reliable source of food but so they could have a reliable source of beer.

(continued on page 19)





## The Pulp Forest

This will be a sometime column appearing in FIVE BY FIVE, Official Organ of the CAPA. I will roam through the old forests of pulp magazines, selecting the unhonored, obscure, forgotten but interesting and bemusing, at least to me, for the amusement and possible edification of those who read this, few though they may be. End of Prologue.

### I

Leading off what might be a long series of this TPF column is a review of a magazine:

CAPT. HAZZARD, May 1938, Vol. 1, No. 1, First (and only) issue.

This was an Ace magazine, published "bi-monthly" by Magazine Publishers, Inc., A. A. Wynn, President. The same who later on became publisher of the Ace paperbacks, commencing with the "D" series, mostly "Double Novel" books, now so avidly sought by collectors, and, of course, bringing in many, many times the original 25 cent cover price.

DOC SAVAGE Magazine commenced with the March 1933 issue. By the mid-30s it was tremendously popular and, as one might imagine, led to attempts to cash in with imitations. Such was Capt. Hazzard. The cover, by Norman Saunders, showed a tall, ruggedly handsome man, in whipcords and boots, climbing a vine-covered wall, a blonde in one arm and a blazing .45 in the other (hand). The Blonde was the usual gorgeous type in short shorts showing a lot of leg, but her feet tapered down to a size that wouldn't span the width of her knees. This was the first clue as to the quality to be found in "Python Men of Lost City", by Chester Hawks.

Like Doc Savage, the story commences with a weirdly threatening scientific menace. "A fiery curtain of doom" projected from antennas on top of automobiles snuffed out the lives of those who got in the way or at whom it was aimed. Capt. Hazzard happens across this and from dock-side where it first happens, an adventure commences in which he and his crew of top scientists, and a professor's daughter (the Blonde), take to the air and travel to an obscure spot in central South America to do battle with the Python Men and their sinister leader, the Phoenix. Without going into tedious detail, suffice it to say, this was a pale imitation of the Doc Savage formula. Capt. Hazzard had no qualms about shooting people, if there was no other way around it. He was often tense with fear and trepidation. His band of science experts were pale shadows of Doc's loyal band of five, mere flunkies as their role. And one guy was kept around mainly because of his unerring aim with big bore rifles (shooting out of the sky, with rifle, a persuing



\*\*\*\*\*

airplane, on the flight to Lost City).

An attempt was made to ape the noble philosophy and scientific attainments of the Bronze Man, but it was pretty superficial and never gave the reader the same sense of being close to or witnessing real great stuff going on right before ones eyes (on the pulp page, of course).

Without going into boring detail concerning the plot (in case you read it some day...), suffice it to say. once again, that the good Capt. and his intrepid band find Lost City in the innards of a volcano. A "lost" expedition that the Blonde's Daddy had led, were all enslaved by the Python men, whose leader is the Phoenix, doing stuff in the innards of the volcano (the process of which wasted them away in terrible ways, almost like radiation sickness that we know of today...). Cap Hazzard frees them all, and by diverting a stream in the volcano (to simplify it muchly), blows the hell out of the whole thing. And the good guys all go back to New York to fight the next menace to Mankind. But there wan't no more. This was the only issue. But it was typical of the times.

Pages were filled with the usual ads from Charles Atlas to Lonesome? to the National Radio Insitute and all in between. There were three short stories, though if any by Hawks, I don't know. I don't know who "Hawks" was, if not actually Hawks. As in the first DOC SAVAGE Magazine, the lead was by "Kenneth Robeson" and one of the short stories was by Lester Dent. So, forgotten as a competitor to DS, the first CAPT. HAZZARD is remembered by sellers and collectors of the old pulps. A very fine condition copy, like mine, goes for fifty-five bucks, as I write this.

---Ed Cox

\*\*\*\*\*

In the annals of the hero pulp magazines, there were a number of CAPT. types. In the science fiction pulps, CAPTAIN FUTURE was the only one and it enjoyed a certain noteriety and popularity during its life, depending in which camp of stfans you belonged. The series actually started in an earlier Standard magazine, and ended in STARTLING STORIES. This could be another, and long, installment of TPF. In other pulps, there is CAPT. COMBAT, CAPT. SATAN (of which I have none) and the last of them, CAPT. ZERO, which was a postwar Popular Pubs attempt to revive the series Hero pulps. It lasted three issues and died with the entire pulp field. Some of these may appear in future TPFs. \*\*\*



## THE PULP FOREST

### II

In the minds of probably most people who think of WEIRD TALES magazine, there comes a vision of weird, horror and terror type stuff, notably H. P. Lovecraft and other specialists of the horror genre. And they are no doubt correct as they probably don't have any kind of file of the magazine available. Or mainly the latter years, and I mean the last of the pulp-size issues. Since then, there have been several manifestations of the magazine in digest size of which there is, I believe, as I write this in October 1990, one currently in publication.

But WEIRD TALES enjoyed a "golden era" during which the weird and horror story shared the pages with great science-fantasy. This actually is no surprise to readers and collectors of paperbacks which reprinted a number of these works by better known writers. These include Jack Williamson, Edmond Hamilton and C. L. Moore.

C. L. Moore wrote two very popular series of stories in the WT of the late-thirties and forties. The "Jirel of Joiry" and "Northwest Smith" stories have always been popular. There was an air about them that suggested a reality within the context of that universe that Moore created. They explored an unknown universe, the shores of which were nearby. And as Man ventured to the near planets, strange and unknown, mortal dangers lurked which also threatened Man's immortal soul, as well. Northwest Smith stories especially featured this theme. He moved in a universe of instant peril from both human and other planetary races. But strays from that hostile universe were lurking in the shallows in which mankind was dabbling. One of the attractions her stories held was an underlying strain of forbidden sexual experience. "Scarlet Dream" is a good example. Man was forever slave to this drive and alien creatures, of an ostensibly female appearance, were forever luring men to strange fates. "Shambleau" is probably the best known of this theme among Moore's works.

Later on, after she had married Henry Kuttner and the two of them turned out a veritable torrent of great science fiction in the pages of ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION, it was apparent that she did a lot of collaborations, obviously. But it is probably not well known that one of the last NORTHWEST SMITH stories to appear in WEIRD TALES was also a collaboration.

In the December 1939 issue of WEIRD TALES, another Northwest Smith story appeared, in much the same vein as the above-mentioned stories. "Nymph of Darkness" (illustrated by Hannes Bok) found Northwest Smith on Venus. In the dark night, all manner of



instant and mortal danger lurked. He rescues a strange girl from some nameless type of horror chasing her in the dark. He finds that she is an invisible creature though definitely female. The story goes on to relate how NW Smith follows the girl through an adventure which finds him almost trapped by the lure of the real creature she really is. Without going into a lot of detail, it once again is a story in which a kiss (remember "The Black God's Kiss") almost takes Smith away from this mortal plane. But the reality of human love and what Smith had done to save "her" causes his release from a real fate worse than death as only the heroes in C. L. Moore's WT stories could potentially suffer.

It was one of the better efforts in that issue of the magazine and reading it, one could not really detect any difference from any of the others she had written. But the ostensible difference is that it was a collaboration. With one of the better known names outside the roster of science-fiction/fantasy writers. For the by-line for all to see, especially significant to the ranks of fandom, was: C. L. Moore and Forrest J. Ackerman.

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Afternote: I had intended to try to find some mention of this in the fan press of the time but getting at the stuff would take more effort than I want to make right now. It involves dragging out tons of stuff. Poring through FAPAmailings of the time, as I am sure that GLOM would certainly have some, probably a lot of, reference to that story. Some day when I have that luxury, time, I'll do a followup in some future edition of THE PULP FOREST.

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# THE RETURN OF MOV A TALE OF TERROR (or, if you prefer, a terrible tale)

by Sam UMBRAGE

((Editor's Note: Shortly after the publication of the last issue there arrived a note from old buddy and fellow CAPAn, LEN MOFFATT. Len said he thought he had one of Sam Umbrage's Sixth Fandom gems buried somewhere in his files and did I want it. I did. So Len Moffatt, good fan that he is, brushed the dust off various old boxes and eventually brought to light this Umbrage epic which appeared originally in Len's fanzine, MOONSHINE, way back in 19 and 54. Arrigato, Len Buddy. RT))

X

Mov was not dead. The Evil Mastermind was quite alive—just as alive as Layman Smythe, himself. Unfortunately, Smythe did not know this. He and his good friend and constant companion, Doctor Bunkin!, assumed (along with Scotland Yard, the FBI, the CIA, etc.) that Mov had perished when the Hungarian castle in which he had been hiding had been rendered asunder by a carelessly handled atomic bomb.\*

As a matter of fact the bomb had been carelessly handled on purpose! Mov's hideous henchman, Boo-Boo Blunderbat, acting on strict orders from the Evil Mastermind, had deliberately and with malice aforethought activated the bomb, ruining both the castle and himself. Having been slightly debilitated by Layman Smythe himself in that horrible battle in the mines of Mov, he did not mind suicide too terribly much.\*\* Anything was better than facing Smythe himself again. Besides, he had his orders, and was—if nothing else—loyal to Mov.

Deep in the dank dungeons beneath the castle, Mov survived the blast and the radiations, having previously lined the walls of his underground hideyhole with thick layers of lead, and thicker layers of peanut butter. He did nearly die of thirst until he discovered a long forgotten wine cellar. He had been a dire threat to the civilized world before—but now that he was a wino he was even more of a dire threat.

"Ah, yes!" he said to himself, as he licked the last of the peanut butter from his walls, and finished off the last bottle of wine. "I am ever so dire! And the time has come for me to make contact with my agents, still at work in the world above. I faunch for rrrrevenge on Smythe himself, and his idiot assistant!"

Tuning in his secret video set, he watched intently as the screen swirled and then cleared to show two lovely Oriental girls. They were none other than Ova and Nova, the twin daughters of Egg Sun, who had once been associated with Mov in one of

\*"The Hidden Caves of Mov". QUANDRY, May51.

\*\*"The Mysterious Mines of Mov". THE NATIONAL FANTASY FAN, Sep52.



"Pure put-on, as we true fans say, my dear doctor. One would think he was more famous than I. But no matter. There are a few here who remember with respect the name of Layman Smythe, nemesis of Mov, as well as of Egg Sun. Did I tell you that the con chairman has asked us to be judges for the costume ball?

"Several times, Smythe, old chap. I say, that's tonight, isn't it? Shouldn't we be toddling along to the ball room?"

Which they did.

Smythe himself and Bunkini, along with the three other judges, were hard put to decide which costumes were really the best, for there were so many excellent ones. Finally, amid cheers and boos, the winners were announced.

The famous detective team were on their way back to the bar when they were stopped by one of the losers.

"Gentlemen," said the evil looking person standing in their way. "I wish to register a protest. I was certain that you two, at the very least, would call me up for a prize. After all, my costume is perfect and certainly the Most Authentic!"

"Oh, I don't know," said Bunkini. "We realized that you were attempting to costume yourself as the late Evil Mastermind, Mov, based on the descriptions in my famous books, but I'm afraid you just don't make it, old chap."

(By now the alert reader will have realized that the person making the protest in re the judging of the costumes was none other than Mov himself! But neither Smythe himself nor Bunkini, firm in their conviction that Mov was dead, realized this.

(Mov had assumed that he would win one of the prizes. Consequently he had armed the palm of his right hand with two tiny needles each smeared with the deadly poison that resulted in what he called the Happy Death. His plan was to receive the usual congratulatory handshake from the judges (having used his hypnotic powers to plant the suggestion to have Smythe himself and Bunkini as judges in the chairman's mind) and he would be sure to shake hands with the two famous detectives first. The poison took a few seconds to work and was not readily detectable, thus giving him time to flee before anyone realized that he was the dastardly culprit.

(Now that phase one of his plan had failed (i.e., he had not won a prize), he was endeavoring to get close enough to Smythe himself and Bunkini to apply the poison needles by some other manner or means.)

"I don't quite make it!" he cried. "Why not? I went to a great deal of trouble and time to make myself as Mov-like as possible. When I learned that you two famous gentlemen were to be judges I was certain you would influence the others in my favor. After all, without me—without Mov, that is—you two would never have become as famous as you are."

"True, perhaps," smiled Smythe himself. "But I'm afraid, dear fellow, that you overdid your costume a bit, and we must play fair, mustn't we? Mov never had a paunch that large, you see, nor was he fond of alcoholic beverages. You could have at least dispensed with the wine bottle before joining the costume parade. Little details like that can spoil the whole effect, you see...."

Mov began to shake with anger and frustration. "Details!" he cried. "You always get me on details! All that peanut butter...I should have dieted first...and the wine, the wine, the accursed wine...."

Without realizing what he was doing he clapped his hand to his brow, cursing in the several languages which he spoke fluently. It was his right hand. Both needles penetrated the skin over his skull and, of course, acted twice as fast as one would.



He fell writing to the floor, and his face contorted in an odd manner.

"By Jove, I think it really is Mov!" cried Layman Smythe himself. "Observe the tiny needles sticking out of his forehead. They must have been in his hand and were obviously meant for us. Now he has a double dose of his own poison. Note also the way his facial muscles are contorted...why, it is almost a grin, or closer to a silly smirk, wot?"

"Yes, Smythe," agreed Dr. Bunkini, as he leaned over the corpse. "And we thought he had died in that atomic blast. Well, this time, we know he has really died--- not with a bang, but a simper..."

SAM UMBRAGE

XXXXX

#### A POEM OR SO BY VARIOUS

gunch!

the characteristic  
sound  
of mechanized man  
scurrying in utter  
haste to nowhere  
in his metal, prickly-  
finned, internally studded  
protuberant impaleanted  
status-projectiles  
is that which is made  
in ever-ascending  
numbers  
as they impact among..  
one another..

gunch! gunch! gunch!

EDCO

#### FEAR PRAYER

a black cat crossed the path  
of a human-haunted ghost  
and with cool sweat of fear  
made a prayer to god in heaven  
that if black cat should look  
it couldn't see the eyes  
of every adam and eve  
that stalked the bridge of night

BILL WOLFENBARGER

#### Wanderer's Song

I dream:  
Of golden days and moonlit nights,  
And nameless joys unending.  
But far away,  
Stars away,  
The topaz sea lies glistening.  
And to the sea,  
That silver rimmed sea,  
Ruby lips do call me,  
And open arms beckon  
A-waiting for me.

MATHEW DRAHAN

#### THE NOBLEST WORKS

With his body's breath  
the glass blower forms  
his delicate dream  
which disappears  
in a crystal sigh  
at the lightest touch  
of his loving hands.

E. E. EVERS

cat, black

who yowls in agonized  
desire to pass  
the barrier,  
a screen of man-tech-  
nology excludes  
this black-furred  
being, who would come  
into the kitchen  
where his catfood  
is

EDCO

My name is Degler,  
Fan of Fans.  
Look on my works ye neos  
And despair.

ELARTY



his many attempts to conquer the civilized world. Egg Sun was assumed to be dead, frozen in an ice berg near the south pole.\* But his twin daughters were quite alive — just as alive as Mov, himself. They were now Mov's agents, and as was their custom, they reported in unison. Move had never quite gotten accustomed to hearing them speak as one, and even now wondered if the wine bottle was playing him tricks again.

"Greetings, Master," said Ova and Nova, simultaneously. "We bring tidings of great joy. It is now safe for you to come above ground—per the latest radiation check, and Layman Smythe himself and his friends. . . still believe you to be with your celestial ancestor."

"Most excellent news, as I am fresh out of wine and peanut butter!" replied Mov. "I shall ascend on the Secret Escalator at once, and meet you in your London Apartment. I assume Smythe himself still resides in that sunless city?"\*\*

"Yes, Master, but he and Doctor Bunkini are presently on their way to America, New York City, to be exact, to attend a science-fiction convention," chorused the girls, who were lovely enough to be chorus girls.\*\*\*

"Science-fiction convention?" muttered Mov. "Whot on earth is that?"

"You have been out of touch!" the twins ejaculated simultaneously. "Well, as you know, Smythe himself has always been a Great Reader—delving into all sorts of books, tomes, literature, etc.—thus his great knowledge, which he uses to combat.."

"I know all of that!" hissed Mov. "Please do not remind me of my past unfortunate encounters with that man! And I do think I know something of this science-fiction. That crazy Buck Rogers stuff, is it not? Who has these conventions...who attends...what do they DO at them?"

"Fandom, Master. Fandom is the name the science-fiction fans use to identify their hobby, which consists of reading science-fiction, publishing amateur journals, having club meetings, attending conventions, and so on. It seems that Smythe himself read somewhere that All Knowledge is contained in fanzines (their amateur publications) so he began to follow the field quite closely. Now he feels that if he attends a convention he will meet these fans from whom all this knowledge comes..."

"I assume they convene to talk among themselves. Do their conventions compare to other conventions? You know what I mean. Drinking. Late night parties. Call girls. Just what do these fans do besides talk and write and publish?"

"All sorts of things," replied the girls, togethernessly. "The pros attend too..."

"Pros?" said Mov, eagerly, and slavering a little. (There were no limits to the Evil Mastermind's depravity.\*\*\*\*)

"That's short for Professional Writers of science-fiction, Master. Sorry to disappoint you, but most of the fans bring their wives or girlfriends, as do the pros, for that matter. They do drink a little, and have parties, and folk sings. The major events on the formal side of their program includes speakers, panel discussions, moving pictures, and of course a Banquet, and—oh yes, a Costume Ball. The latter is quite interesting. They disguise themselves as characters or creatures

\*"The Insidious Iceberg of Mov". THE OUTLANDER, May53.

\*\*See "The Sunless City of Mov". SLANT, Feb51.

\*\*\*See "The Chorus Girls of Mov". RHODOMAGNETIC DIGEST, Jun51.

\*\*\*\*See "The Evil Depravity of Mov". SHANGRI L'AFFAIRES, Nov52.



from science-fiction and fantasy stories, competing for prizes. The panel of judges selected in advance by the convention committee, and beside which costume is the most beautiful, which the most humorous, which the most authentic, and so on."

"Very interesting," mused Mov, maliciously. "And Smythe himself and Bunkini will be there, eh? My lightening quick brain is already forming a plan whereby I shall be in a position to destroy that dubious duo without detection. Ah, yes... And now, your orders: Book me a room—cheapest possible—at a hotel near where the convention will be held. I assume the convention will be at a hotel in New York, yes?"

"Yes, Master," quoth the twin beauties, in unison, "The Hotel Tucker."

"Never heard of it; must be a new one."

"The hotel itself is in New York just for the convention, master. It is a mobile hotel, financed by the fans. It goes from city to city, wherever the convention is to be. You are wise not to stay there as its rates are high. The bricks came cheaply enough, but they are still making time payments on the rest of it..."

"I see. But there is a less expensive one nearby?"

"Yes, Master. The Hotel Ackerman. Also a mobile one. You see, Ackerman and Tucker are still competing for the Number One Face position and..."

"I'm sure I don't know what you are talking about," interrupted Mov. "Nor do I care. Just book me a room at the Ackerman, under the name of Madame Stermon. I shall wear a black dress and a veil, and pretend to be a poor widow, interested in attending as much of the convention as I can afford. But I plan to show up only for the costume ball, at which time Smythe himself and Bunkini will meet their fate..."

He tuned out the twins, got together his wine bottle label collection, and stumbled merrily to the Secret Escalator, to return once more to the world that had oft-times shuddered at the mere mention of his name. Mov, the Mastermind of All Things Evil, smirked as he firmed up his insidious plans. "I shall give them the Happy Death," he chortled. "Ahhahahahahahaha! The Happy Death..."

Layman Smythe himself, the intellectual private investigator, and his good friend and constant companion, Doctor Bunkini, were having a ~~very~~ grand time at the World SF Convention. They had discovered that they were really faaans at heart, and each was planning to write a con report, publish numerous one shots, and form a club in London that would not be run by Scots.

"I only regret that Mr. Boucher is not here," said Smythe himself, as he puffed at his pipe, down in the bar. "I have come to the conclusion that he was exaggerating just a trifle when he stated that all knowledge could be found in fanzines. However, I'm having such a jolly good time, that it really matters not. After all, my dear doctor, our worst enemy is, shall we say—heh, heh—quite gafiated, and there never will be another villain as evil and as clever as Mov, wot?"

"Quite right, old boy," laughed Dr. Bunkini, as he puffed at his pipe. "Jolly bar here, wot? Why isn't that fellow over there puffing at his pipe, though? Keeps waving it about like a baton, and speaks incessantly."

"Filthy pro," said Smythe himself, sotto voiced. "Simple matter of deduction, doctor. Surprised you haven't learned the form by now. We've been fans for only a few weeks but already I can tell a pro from a fan."

"But the other fans seem to like him. He acts like fan."



Around this time last year I was enrolled in a sophomore English class at the University of New Mexico. It was called "Aliens: First Contact" and was, of course, a science fiction class. Can you really think of anything else that would get me into a class of sophomore English?

We read a number of sf books and watched some sf films all of which had to do with first contact with alien life forms of one type or another.

We all had to write a couple of papers and what follows here, "John Carter" and "Aliens Through the Years" were two I did. The instructor gave me a "B" on them. My writing was, she said, too informal.

Well, it was an English course and we were supposed to follow the rules for formal essays.

I think I have been writing for fanzines too long for that. RT

## JOHN CARTER

Over the years Edgar Rice Burroughs created a number of improbable characters in his fiction. None seems more unreal than the hero of Burroughs' first published nove, "A Princess of Mars." Even the mighty Tarzan of the Apes pales when compared to John Carter although there are many similarities between the two.

In those long ago days when the 19th Century was slowly fading into the 20th the influence of class conscious England was still strong in the officially egalitarian United States. The population was, unofficially, divided by class and at the top, the very best people, was a small aristocracy defined mostly by family lineage, place of residence and, although not necessarily, wealth.

John Carter, Captain Jack Carter of Virginia, was a Southern Aristocrat which placed him at the top of the social heap and he was supposed to embody all of the very best qualities of 19th Century civilized man. He was bold, fearless, had a strong sense of loyalty and duty, epitomized the old cliches of "Death Before Dishonor" and "A man must do what a man must do." Inasmuch as he was seemingly immortal, death did not seem to be too much of a problem for him.

He tells us that "the following of a sense of duty, wherever it may lead, has always been a kind of fetich (sp) with me throughout my life..." and we see this when his partner, Captain James Powell of Richmond, was captured and killed by Apaches. A more prudent man might have quietly left the scene but Carter, "subconsciously forced into the path of duty without recourse to tiresome mental processes," cannot leave Powell's body to be mutilated by the Indians. It just isn't done. Without thought he spurs he horse through the Apache encampment, scoops up Powell's body and carries it away, presumably with the intent of providing a decent Christian burial. It is, after all, a man's duty to do this.

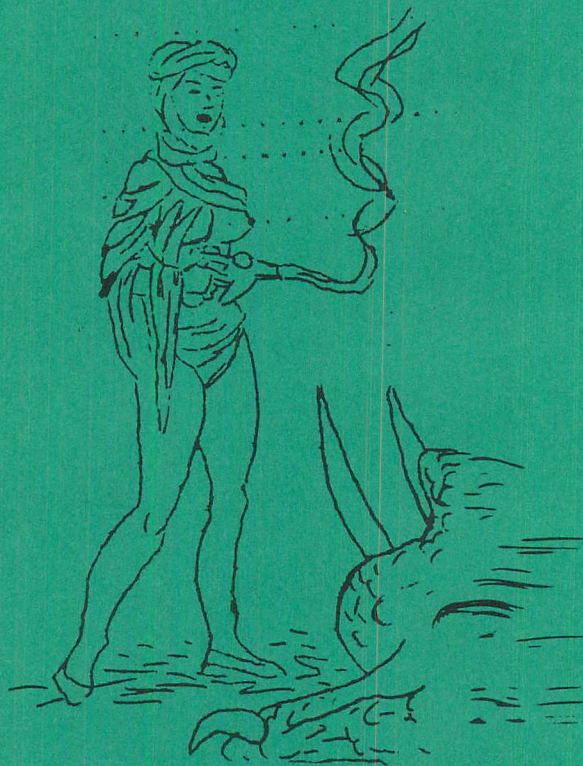
Despite his courage, Carter is not foolhardy. When, soon after his arrival on Mars, he finds himself surrounded by the armed and menacing green men he says, "Unarmed and naked as I was, the first law of nature manifested itself in the only possible solution of my immediate problem, and that was to get out of the vicinity of the point of charging spear. Consequently I gave a very earthly and at the same time superhuman leap to reach the top of the Martian incubator..." In other words when the odds appear to be too great, get out of there.



But Carter will not show cowardice and run away. Once out of the immediate danger of being skewered he stands to see what will happen next, an indication to those who confront him that he is not afraid, merely cautious.

Above all Carter is a warrior. Unthinking and unmindful of consequences he is always ready to do battle for a cause, if he has one, or for his own personal code if there is no cause to fight for. Carter will never refuse a challenge regardless of what the consequences might be and will, if he feels it necessary, go so far as to provoke a challenge to achieve his ends. The possibility of negotiation seldom enters his mind. If there is someone or something, man or beast, in the way of achieving the goal--whatever the goal may be--kill it. Except a woman, of course. Captain Jack Carter of Virginia would never think of harming a woman even if she presented an obvious danger to him; he would attempt to find a way to remove her from the scene without, if possible, causing her any physical harm. And then get back to the business of fighting.

John Carter is Edgar Rice Burroughs' version of the knight errant, always wandering, always seeking adventure, always willing, eager in fact, to fight for the cause of Righteousness and Good. Carter's code is a distortion of the medieval Code of Chivalry in which it is always Good vs. Evil and Carter is always on the side of Good. He doesn't have to think about it beyond making his decision as to what is good and what is not. Once he has done that the rest is easy: draw your sword and fight to the death for Good. The decision is pretty easy too. Good is always on the side of the pretty girl.



Drawing by Pat McLean



## ALIENS THROUGH THE YEARS

The idea that there are strange beings, aliens, out there somewhere is probably one that goes back as far as human beings have been telling stories. Over there in the next valley, across the river, in a far-away land there are beings who are not like us at all. There are people with the heads of dogs. There are people with only one leg. There are people without heads. I have this from a fellow I met who had travelled there and seen them and he barely got away with his life. The proposition that somewhere there are aliens is one that has fascinated, and frightened, mankind for thousands of years.

One of the very first written stories, the epic of Gilgamesh, authored in ancient Sumer more than four thousand years ago, concerns the travels of the king of Uruk and his meeting with assorted people and deities who were not like his own people. Later, of course, Odysseus wandered around the Mediterranean encountering a variety of aliens, monsters and other unhuman creatures.

Interestingly, author Wilson Tucker wrote a couple of books in the 1950s in which he presented Gilgamesh himself as an alien, an extremely long-lived space-farer whose ship crashed on Earth some 10,000 years ago and was waiting patiently for technology to catch up so he could go home.

Over the centuries as the world was explored and became better known the dog-headed men, the headless men, the one-legged men had to be moved farther and farther away. When the New World was discovered they all moved to the Americas and every explorer met an Indian who told him about the strange people who lived up the river or beyond the mountains. Eventually the Americas were explored and there was no place left on Earth for the dog-headed men to live except Antarctica and nobody lived there.

What a world. What a world. What a problem. Human beings had to have their aliens, their bogeymen, and there was no place left to put them.

In the latter part of the 19th Century science and science fiction came to the rescue. Science began to get a good look at the other worlds orbiting the sun and speculated that there was no reason that other stars could not have planets, too. The science fiction writers immediately populated all of these planets with an assortment of aliens. If the headless men were not "over there" then they must be "out there". Legend is saved and there is an infinite number of places to put the bogeymen who all want to come to Earth and eat us.

One of the first stories in this new era of extra-terrestrial aliens was H. G. Wells' "The War of the Worlds" in which vaguely octopoid inhabitants of Mars launch, for reasons never explained, a massive invasion of Earth where they did their best to destroy our civilization and exterminate humanity. Humanity was saved by earthly bacteria against which the Martians had no defense.

"The War of the Worlds" set the pattern for a while. For some years to come science fiction writers had Earth been invaded by a variety of aliens, usually from Mars. The superior intelligence and weaponry of these invaders caused wide-spread destruction on Earth but humanity and civilization were saved at the last moment by some improbable hero.



The popularity of Mars as the abode of life and the base for invasions of Earth can be attributed, in a large part, to the astronomer, Percival Lowell, who, early in the century, looked into his telescope and thought he saw a vast network of canals and other artificial constructions on the Red Planet. Lowell had a more vivid imagination than most of the science fiction writers.

The aliens often took the form of giant insects or other unlikely variations of Earthly life forms all of which went to prove that the highly-touted imaginations of the science fiction writers of the time tended to get bogged down when it came to imagining something really alien.

A couple of the more memorable stories of the period are "The Human Pets of Mars" by Frances Stevens in which a Martian expedition to Earth returns home with an assortment of specimens for exhibition in zoos and to be bred and used as domestic animals, and Clark Aston Smith's "The Metamorphosis of Earth" in which invaders from Venus attempted to turn our planet into a replica of their own jungle world. I have never quite figured out how the inhabitants of Venus, under their eternal cloud cover, ever discovered the existence of other worlds in space. Still invaders from Venus were a change from the eternal Martians.

Fortunately invasion of Earth stories have pretty much lost their popularity with the science fiction writers in recent years. They lost their popularity with the readers long before that. One of the more recent stories in this line is Thomas M. Disch's "Genocide", published in 1965. In this one the aliens sow Earth with billions of spores which turn Earth into a gigantic farm and effectively wipe out all other forms of life. On the whole, though, the planet has been safe from alien invasion, particularly from Mars, for some time now.

In his 1950 book, "First Lensman", E. E. Smith presented an invasion of the Solar System by a race that was so alien it presented no danger at all to Earth. These invaders, explorers from the 7th planet of the star Palain, found the planet Pluto more to their liking and settled on it. Smith, most readers agree, was a terrible writer but his imagination was so vast and soaring that his lack of writing talent is quickly forgiven because of his fantastic ideas, concepts and story-telling ability. Science fiction is probably the one field of literature where writing ability takes a back seat to ideas and imagination. Smith's inhabitants of Palain VII, a frigid, poisonous atmosphere world, had "a metabolic extension into the hyper dimension, so that they cannot be adequately described to a three-dimensional mind." That is alien.

Aliens have been getting better treatment since the end of World War II as writers and readers have come to realize that maybe they aren't so alien after all and even if they are that doesn't automatically make them enemies.

Murray Leinster's classic "First Contact", published in 1945, tells the story of a human expedition doing a scientific study of the Crab Nebula which encounters an alien ship and a dilemma: what do we do now? The aliens turn out to be humanoid oxygen-breathers with a different body chemistry and a different way of talking, they use a form of telepathy, but psychologically they and the Earthmen are quite similar. So they don't trust each other. Both fear the other may be aggressive and there is fear of invasion and war although both admit that peaceful contact is preferable. Neither ship can leave for fear the other will follow and the only other answer seems to be mutual destruction which neither side wants. The human captain comes up with an answer that is agreeable to the aliens. They will both destroy anything on board



which might give a clue to their home world and then trade ships. They agree to meet at the same place in a year and both take off for home with their prizes. A good solution and Leinster's portrayal of the not so alien aliens is excellent. They are not monstrous and menacing but are ordinary people looking for a way out of a threatening situation and willing to accept a solution when one is offered.

On the lighter side H. B. Fyfe's "In Value Deceived" (1950) tells of the meeting of a pair of human traders with a pair of alien (complete with assorted tentacles, eyestalks, and other peculiar alien features) traders on a more-or-less uninhabited planet. The aliens' home planet had been the victim of a plague which poisoned the soil and wiped out most of its vegetation so they had developed an easy and cheap way of transmuting elements. They discovered, wonder of wonders, that the earthmen grew plants hydroponically in water and this process would be worth billions on their home planet. The humans know that the secret of transmuting elements will bring them wealth beyond their wildest imaginings. Both sides pretend indifference and disinterest but agree to exchange small gifts. The aliens take a hydroponic tank along with chemicals and instructions because it would be amusing to grow plants aboard ship--add a little greenery to the living quarters, so to speak. The Earthmen choose the transmutation machine because they could use it to make themselves a bit more comfortable on the planet. Both sides then take off for home on the run before the other gets the chance to realize how much it has been cheated. Aliens? They, like the humans, are just old-fashioned swindlers at heart.

Both James White in his Sector General series and Doc Smith in his saga of the Lens developed classification systems of aliens which range from warm-blooded, oxygen breathing humanoids like us (or close enough to be classified as human to nine nines) all the way to intelligent beings of pure energy. Consider Ross Rocklyn's "Darkness" series where intelligent energy creatures light years in size play among the stars.

On the whole the portrayal of aliens in science fiction has changed considerably over the years. They are no longer seen as bug-eyed monsters intent on conquering earth because they want our planet or our women (provided, of course, that the women are appropriately attired in brass bras). Aliens, regardless of form or classification, are presented as more-or-less understandable creatures be they our owners/overlords or simply tourists to whom we can sell the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge. If there is conflict or war it is not just because they are aliens. It is usually a conflict over economics or real estate and that we can understand; that's plain old power politics and we are used to that.

So in the space of 50 years or so we have gone from portraying aliens as ravening monsters to creatures with what are, we hope, more or less human values with whom we can get along, do a little business, and, maybe, attempt a little cross breeding.

ROY TACKETT



## BRIEFLY NOTED BOOKS

POODLE SPRINGS by Raymond Chandler and Robert B. Parker. (Berkley, 1990).

Being a child of the 1930s it is difficult for me to resist a book set in that period, particularly if the geographical setting is Los Angeles or New York. And since I also have a certain fondness for the adventures of Philip Marlowe I couldn't pass this new Marlowe thriller by. But the time is later and Marlowe is older and married and the flavor isn't quite the same. And maybe that is because I am also older. Nevertheless, this is a good thriller with Marlowe running into the usual assortment of tough cops and losers as he pursues his latest case. What starts out as a quest for a not-quite missing person ends up in murder with all sorts of complications. POODLE SPRINGS was a fast read which means that Parker kept me turning the pages which is about the most one can ask in one of these.

(When Chandler died in 1959 he was working on this one. Parker got permission to finish it and, presumably, continue the Marlowe character in other books. Something called PERCHANCE TO DREAM is forthcoming (or is most likely at the bookstores as you read this.)

THE TIGER AMONG US by Leigh Brackett (Simon & Schuster, London, 1989)

Leigh Brackett was (and is) one of my favorite authors and she, and husband Edmond Hamilton, were a couple of my favorite people. I saw this one advertised in a remaindered-books catalog and bought it simply because it was a Brackett yarn I didn't have on my shelves.

THE TIGER AMONG US is a thriller originally published in 1957 and re-released as part of the Blue Murder series in England in 1989. Walter Sherris left his place of work one night and decided to walk to a nearby diner for a cup of coffee. He was set upon by a gang of teenagers who beat him senseless just for the hell of it. After he recovers Sherris wants revenge. The police do not offer much help so he decides to attempt to track the gang down on his own. What follows is better than average suspense because Brackett was a better than average writer. Enjoyable.

THE PAPER GRAIL by James P. Blaylock is an absolute delight. I started to pass it by but Danny told me that Blaylock's "The Last Coin" was good and I should try this one.

Howard Barton works for a museum in the Los Angeles area which has been offered what may be a woodcut by Hoku-sai by an old man in Mendocino. Howard drives to the north coast to collect the woodcut but finds that the old man is supposedly dead and his house is now occupied by another old man who may or may not have the drawing. Howard also wants to renew acquaintances with his cousin, with whom he is in love, and his uncle and aunt.

For about half the book I wondered if it really was a fantasy. The characters are all delightfully weird and enjoyable as are the descriptions of the north coast country. About midway through the book, though, the fantasy element comes in strong. Magic abounds. The woodcut isn't really a woodcut and nobody is really who or what they seem to be and Howards gets drawn deeper and deeper into magic and mystery

"The Paper Grail"  
would have been right at home in the old UNKNOWN and  
that's about the highest praise I can think of.



The Department of Defense has been doing much research and development on its missile guidance systems over the past three or four years. The system depicted below, developed during Operation Desert Storm, is considered to be the absolute ultimate in getting the bomb on the target.



Drawing by Robert E. Gilbert

My air force son-in-law will appreciate that.

I did get an actual postcard of comment on Dynatron 95. Bob Webber, 6 Walnut St., Arlington MA 02174 wrote:

"About cold fusion: the problem seems to be, as someone else put it, 'chemists find neutrons, physicists find heat,' and Fleischman and Pons got a lot of money, then disappeared. Even at the height of the controversy nobody was able to suggest a plausible mechanism for cold fusion, so in the absence of a stationary target of clearly reproducible results, cold fusion proponents find themselves in the position of inventors promoting a carburetor gizmo to get 200 mpg or pills to make your car run on water.

"The Japanese will presumably attack the problem on an Edionesque broad front and establish the liklihoods to their collective satisfactions: mower power to them for a pragmatic attitude. I don't think they'll have the output to power a car that soon, though, at least not in a car-sized and car-safe package. The F&P experiment has such low output, if any, that it was hard to distinguish the results from expected error. Scaling that up will take significant work. I hope that there is, or that muon-catalized fusion pays off, since the technology of full-bore high-temp fusion looks tricky and hag-ridden by waste disposal problems. "

Despite the disbelievers cold-fusion has not yet been counted out and experimentation goes on. Who knows? Thanks for the comments.

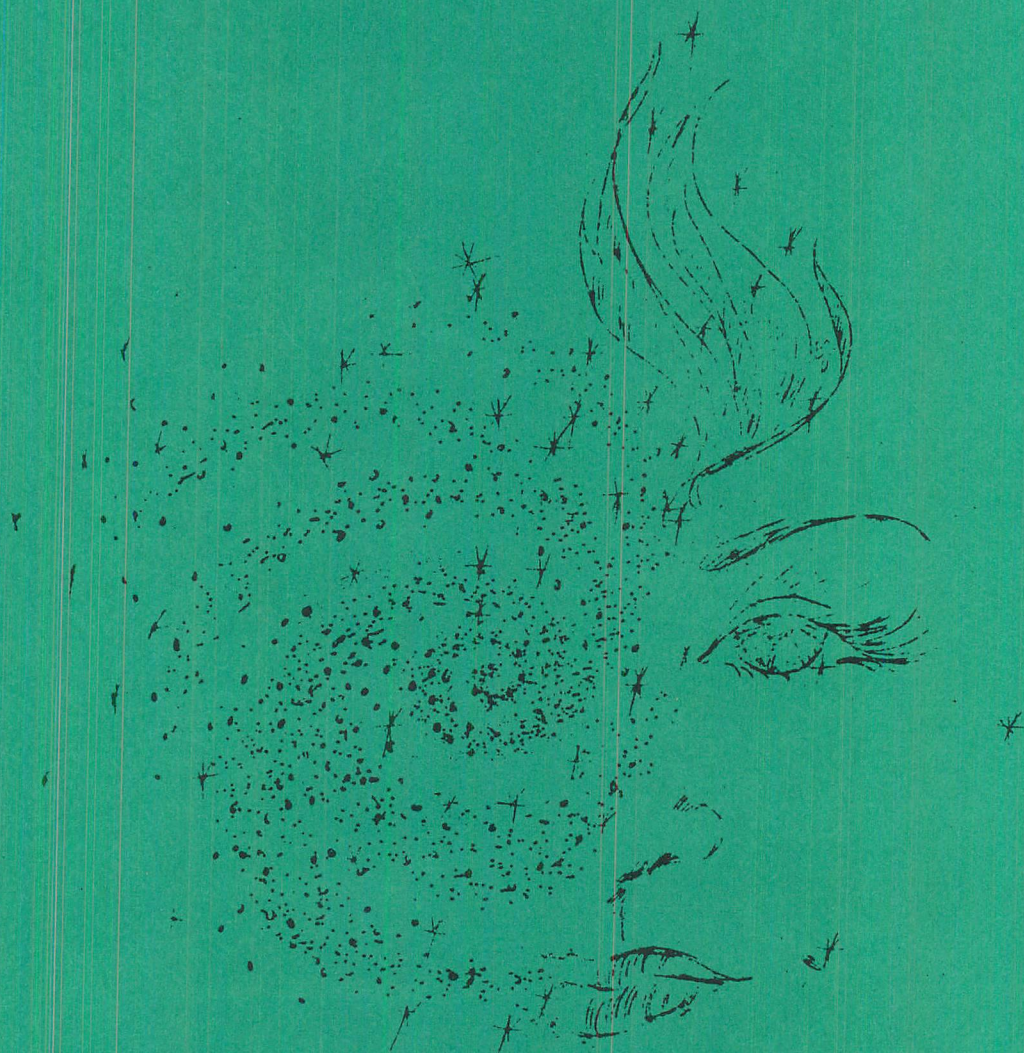


I think I have reached the end of Dynatron 96 which is an environmental zine in that a lot of the stuff herein is recycled. 20 pages. That's not too many but it is the largest zine I've produced in a while and I don't think it will happen again for a while. Still, it was sort of fun doing this and a change from the usual run of apazines I produce. If the postage drops back to 3¢ I might start doing it on a regular basis. But don't count on it. Still I am toying with the idea of getting #100 out at the end of the century so who knows?

Thanks to Ed Cox and Len Moffatt.

Be seeing you.

HORT



Drawing by Bjo