
JD-A
ROBERNEST
GIL

J D - A R G A S S Y # 5 9

March 1962
12th year of publication

Contents

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Front Cover by Robert E. Gilbert Rear Cover by Gene Duplantier

Interior Artwork by Joni Cornell (2), Les Nirenberg (3), Plato Jones (4, 9, 15), Atom (33), Eddie Jones (34, 36), Robert E. Gilbert (35, 41), RIP (39), and Pat Scott (40).

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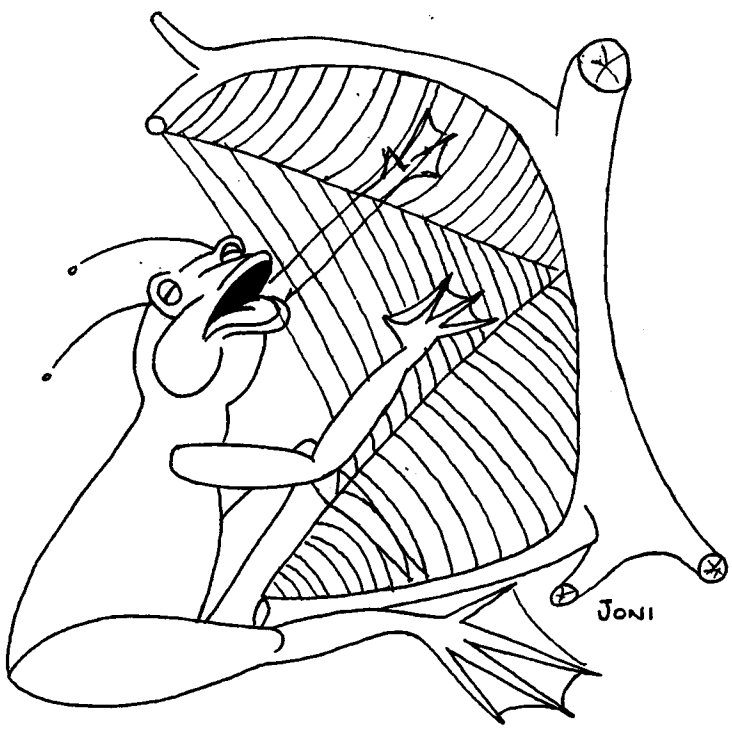

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Next issue will feature August Derleth, Robert A. Madle, Eddie Jones and others.

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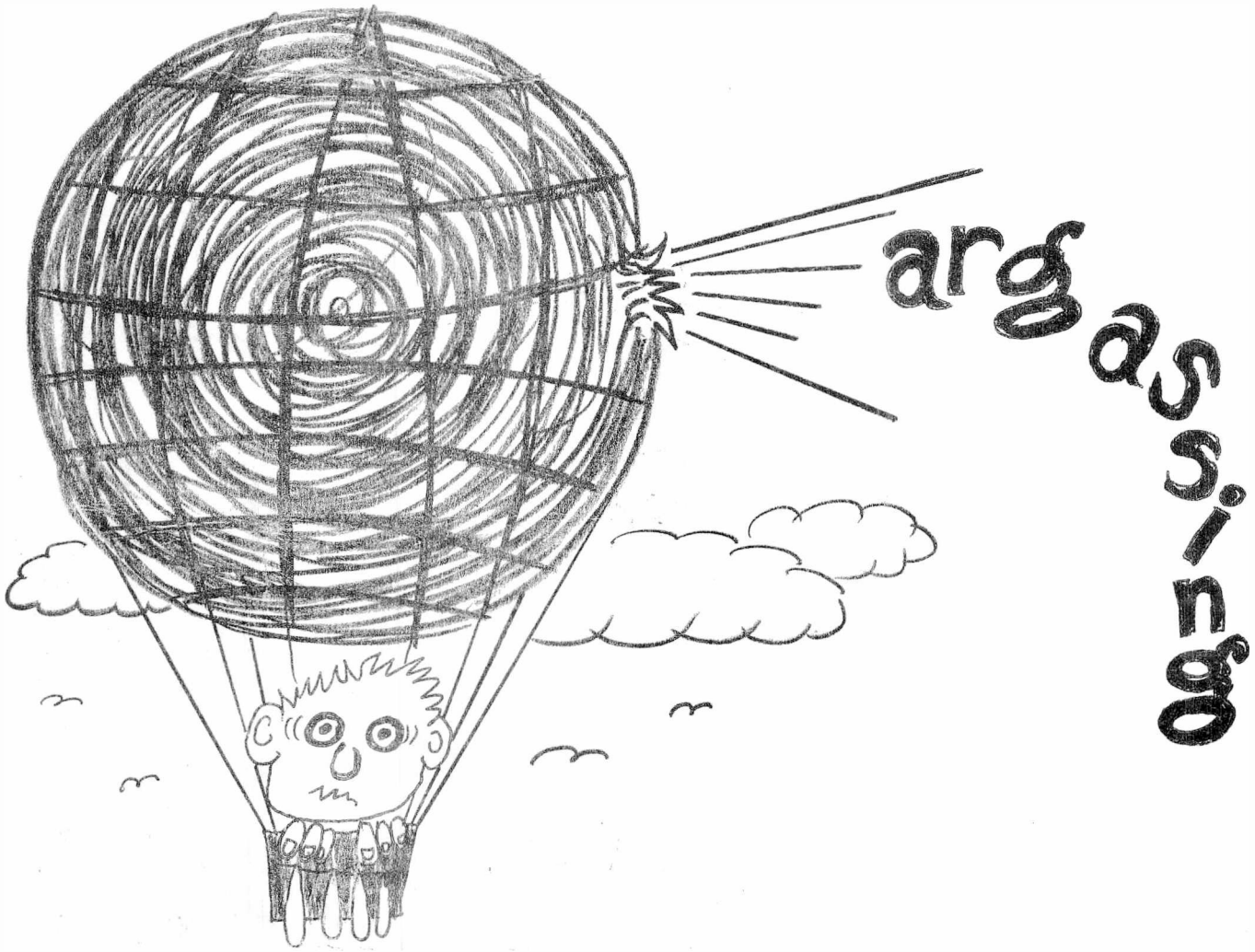
Eddie Jones for TAFF.

support

Eddie Jones for TAFF.

He's a ghood man.....



With this issue JD-Argassy starts its 12th year of publication. During this year there will be a number of changes in the zine. This issue is the first to show what some of those changes will be. I plan a greater emphasis on books, the old pulp magazines, and artwork. The publishing schedule will be, hopefully, bi-monthly. Naturally, I would appreciate your comments on this.

This issue is dedicated to Wilkie Conner who helped supply the push and the labor to get this zine started. To look back on it now, it seems sort of funny that two fellows would get together after all the years that we had been reading science fiction and in fandom and suddenly decide we should be publishing a fanzine, and funnier still that 12 years later I should still be publishing with my enthusiasm even higher. Who was that that said Fandom wasn't a Way of Life?

So this issue is dedicated to Wilkie Conner. A fine co-editor and even finer friend.

This issue, and I hope for many issues to come, Rosemary Hickey will be helping me write the book section of Argassing. Rosemary is a Podiatrist and a housewife from Chicago, Illinois

(continued on page 33)

I REMEMBER WILD WEST WEEKLY

by REDD BOGGS

1: How I Became a 3W Fan

Like De Quincey and his opium, I first made acquaintance with Street & Smith's Wild West Weekly so long ago that I might have forgotten the date and the circumstances if it had been a trifling incident in my life. But cardinal events are not to be forgotten, and by diligently searching my memorty for fading recollections and the attic for the withering copy of the first issue of the magazine I ever bought, I can pin down the time and place almost exactly. It must have been the second or third day of August 1933, and I lived in Breckenridge, Minnesota, at 229 Eighth Street South in the house known in family annals as the Ross House. My introduction to Wild West Weekly arose in the following way.

In those days of boyhood I was known to my schoolmates as "the kid who draws cowboy pictures." Drawing was my hobby and my passion in the early morning of my life, and all one summer when I was about ten or eleven I labored at creating an original sequel to Zane Grey's Riders of the Purple Sage drawn in crude comic-strip form in the mode of Ed Wheelan's "Minute Movies." The reason why I and my friends should have imagined that I possessed any skill with a pencil cannot be inferred from the few scraps of drawings that have survived. I shuffle through them looking vainly for the smallest glint of talent.

Why I chose to draw cowboys instead of cheesecake is slightly more comprehensible. I was reading vastly of Zane Grey and the X Bar X Boys at the library; "cowboy movies" were my favorite Saturday entertainment; and I was an eager fan of the short-lived comic strip called "Broncho Bill." Despite all these sources of inspiration, however, one day of the long summer vacation I found I required fresh inspiration. I decided that I needed to study the effects achieved by the illustrators of some western magazine that was filled with action drawings and stories I could try to illustrate.

Somehow I managed to coax 20¢ from my mother, and waving aside her offer of an armored truck to convoy me -- for of course 20¢ was a fortune in those depression days -- I sprinted down to Holichy's drugstore to select a suitable magazine from among the gaudy array on their newsstand. After thumbing all the western magazines and jingling the dimes in my pocket meditatively, I finally chose a copy of Street & Smith's Wild West Weekly. As I blow the dust off it and glance through the August 5, 1933 issue today, trying to imagine how it must have looked on the news-rack nearly three decades ago, I wonder why my eye was attracted to it even momentarily. It is of little merit in displaying wild west artwork. The front cover, by Kiemle, seems completely wooden and vague in outline. It is, indeed, unlike most pulp-magazine covers, very subdued in color and arranged as a fuzzy vignette rather than as a full picture. The interiors, by H. W. Scott, are botches even less attractive than most pulp-magazine art, and I soon realized that Scott was an abomination comparable with Kramer, who desecrated Astounding a few years later.

At any rate, Wild West Weekly happened to be the magazine I selected. I bought it -- the price was only 15¢, not 20¢ -- and took it home to read. I sat in a chair on the front porch and read till it grew dark. So far as I can remember I was not inspired to the drawing board that evening, or ever, by the magazine. Its effect was clearly opiate in character, and as pleasant as De Quincey's laudanum and a good deal more habit-forming. After more than a quarter of a century I can still remember parts of the stories I read that summer evening almost word for word. The lead novelette was "Smoky Clark -- Trail Boss" by Ben Conlon, and it was backed by two other novelettes, "Tangled Herds" by Cleve Endicott, and "The Desert Phantom's Showdown" by Walker Tompkins, plus four shorts: "The Whistlin' Kid Climbs a Cliff" by Emery Jackson, "Some Sand, Ranger!" by Frank J. Litchfield, "The Thunder Bird at Gray Horse Mine" by Lee Harrington, and "The Sonora Kid -- Not Guilty" by Allan R. Bosworth.

I enjoyed each of these stories outrageously, without exception. A few issues later I began to grow more particular and even picky in attacking the weekly feast of reading. Two of my favorites in the first issue were the Conlon and the Harrington, and I will never forget how, in the latter yarn, the arch-villain known as the Thunder Bird escaped from Jail in Thunderbolt City during a wild rainstorm, leaving a taunting note weighted under a bar he had hacked off with a smuggled blade: "Gone on a gray Horse!" Both these stories were skillfully written and reading them over today for purposes of writing this scholarly dissertation I find them superior examples of pulp-magazine art.

But best of all the stories in that August 5, 1933 issue was "The Desert Phantom's Showdown" by Walker Tompkins. This was the last story in a series of six yarns, but it was complete in itself and capable of being enjoyed in splendid isolation, which I proceeded to do. It built up to a whacking climax, and the punchline -- the final line of the story and the whole series -- was "The courthouse clock was striking twelve." This yarn, colored with all the glories of the first impressions of a new delight, probably stands as my all-time favorite story from Wild West Weekly. One bumps into a "Desert Phantom" or a "Skylark of Space" only once in a lifetime, but the half-conscious aim of later reading is to discover another story in the same genre or by the same author that will produce as much pleasure. No story ever does, of course, and so there is always that little touch of sadness in the career of any fan.

On page 144, the last page of the issue, there was a large house-ad headed "Comin' Next Week!" which heralded the feature stories for the August 12th issue. The cover story was to be "Dead Man's Trail" by Samuel H. Nickels, blurbed as the latest adventures of "Hungry and Rusty, them two fightin' Rangers." For some reason I proved particularly susceptible to the allure of the Texas Rangers, and I soon decided that I must buy one more issue of the magazine in order to read this story. Of course I was already a slave to the habit and didn't realize it as yet.

Dated the Saturday of each week, Wild West Weekly, like the Saturday Evening Post, actually hit the newsstands in midweek. For

several weeks I bought the magazine each Thursday, which was the day of the week I had bought the first issue. Later, I discovered that the magazine appeared on the stands on Wednesday, and sometimes on Tuesday. Usually I bought my copy on Wednesday.

I read every issue of the magazine for exactly three months, but at the end of October 1933, with the darkest winter of the depression closing in, I couldn't even promote 15¢ a week for magazines any longer. I started to buy Wild West Weekly again in mid-January 1934, and thereafter bought it regularly for three years. By that time I had begun to read Astounding regularly, and my interest in science fiction had long since begun to outblaze my enthusiasm for westerns. But I kept buying WWW for old time's sake, and even after I ceased to read it regularly I occasionally bought copies or had them given to me, and so was able to follow its later career, which lasted another six years, almost seven.

2: The Golden Years, 1927-1939

In an earlier article on Wild West Weekly, which appeared in Grue #29, published by Dean A. Grennell for the spring 1958 FAPA mailing, I recounted the early history of Wild West Weekly in some detail. Briefly, WWW was founded in 1902 (a date enshrined on the masthead in later years) as a five-cent weekly, a stablemate of such boys magazines as Pluck and Luck, Work and Win, and Fame and Fortune Weekly, published under the imprint of Frank Tousey, 168 West 23rd Street, New York, N. Y. Later the imprint became that of Harry E. Wolff, either an affiliate or a successor. In those early days the magazine was a thin pamphlet whose closely-printed pages were devoted largely to the novel-length adventures of a pulp hero named Young Wild West. No fewer than 52 novels featuring this redoubtable character appeared each and every year for perhaps two decades. They were, of course, written by various hands, under the byline "An Old Scout". Although each and every one of these 1000 or more novels are probably virtually unreadable, I managed to read a couple of them and reported on Young Wild West in the Grue opus alluded to a moment ago.

In that same article I also reported that Street & Smith bought out Wild West Weekly from the former publisher "in the early 1920s." However, further investigation seems to indicate that Street & Smith did not become the publisher till 1927. Indeed, Quentin Reynolds' history of Street & Smith, The Fiction Factory (Random House, 1955), says the event took place as late as 1929, though the appendix, giving publishing data on all Street & Smith titles, says 1927, and elsewhere Reynolds says WWW "was a success for 16 years," which would validate the authenticity of 1927 as the takeover date. At any event, during the early 1920s the magazine continued as a slim "weekly," still featuring Young Wild West, but now only reprints of the old Tousey novels, printed from the old plates.

Street & Smith revamped the magazine in 1927, whether or not they had just taken over at that time. The old relic of the days of Buffalo Bill now appeared in regular pulp format, the first issue dated August 13, 1927 or thereabouts. It sold for 10¢, and

probably ran 112 shag-edged pages. It was edited by Ronald Oliphant, a Street & Smith veteran who had been connected with Thrill Book during its brief existence some years previously.

In the "new" Wild West Weekly Young Wild West metamorphosed into Billy West, young part-owner of the Circle J in Montana's Bitterroot mountains. His saddlemates, Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart, became Buck Foster and Joe Scott, and the two Chinese servants were lumped together into Sing Lo, Circle J's cook and handyman. Wild's "charming sweetheart," Arietta Murdock, became Ruth Dawe, part owner of the Circle J, but she soon disappeared from the series, since the magazine, aimed at younger readers, allowed very little "love interest" in its pages.

The original plan seems to have been to base the appeal of the magazine largely upon the exploits of Billy West, as the old Tousey magazine had been based largely on Young Wild West. For several years the "Billy West" Novelette led off each issue; later, the "Circle J" Novelette -- as they were later called -- appeared in perhaps eight out of ten issues, even though they seldom led the lineup. From around 1935 on, Circle J appeared in the magazine much less frequently.

Despite the desire to build the magazine on the popularity of Billy West/Circle J, the editor of Wild West Weekly was careful to provide Circle J with a strong supporting cast of "regular characters" who returned frequently, if not as frequently as Circle J. The earliest 3W heroes were created by the editor himself, though the authors assigned to them worked out the details and plots themselves. Perhaps the earliest of these regulars was Bud Jones of Texas, a Ranger put through his paces by J. Allan Dunn, a well-known pulp writer who, like Ned Buntline, had led a colorful and adventurous life and who looked, incidentally, like the old movie actor, Sir Guy Standing. Bud Jones of Texas appeared in the very first issue of the "new" WWW. Dunn also wrote about another regular character who began to appear with the first few issues: Pete Prentiss, the Wistlin' Kid, a Cattleman's Association range detective; these stories appeared under the pen name of Emery Jackson. Kenneth Gilbert, later a slick writer of note, wrote about Ted Marsh of the Mounted, and one Reginald C. Barker wrote about Jim Hazel -- Forest Ranger, under the pseudonym of Lee Harrington.

Other early regular characters included Lucius Carey, the Shootin' Fool, by Houston Irvine; Lum Yates, by Collins Hafford; Vincente the Yaqui, by Wilson Campbell; and Crosby Sheppard, the Ranny Kid, by Clee Woods. Most of these characters faded out of the picture by the mid-1930's, being replaced by newer and more popular characters, although both Bud Jones and the Whistlin' Kid survived till about 1940, when J. Allan Dunn Died.

According to Mr. Ronald Oliphant, who was the editor of the magazine from 1927 to 1939, "The magazine in its new form attracted favorable reader interest, and after perhaps three years (I can't remember exactly) the magazine was increased in size and the price upped to 15¢. The general appearance of the magazine was improved, the crude covers of the ten-cent edition were replaced by better artwork, and the magazine built up a fairly good circulation for itself -- considering that the country was getting well into the depression of the 1930s."

The magazine kept the 15¢ tag from about 1929 till August 10, 1935, when the price was reduced to 10¢. At the beginning, the 15¢ edition ran only 128 pages; later, at no increase in price, the magazine actually enlarged to 144 pages. The 10¢ edition of 1935 gave the reader 128 pages (or 130, counting the front cover, as was done later) till 1940, when the page count was cut to 114.

Undoubtedly among the chief factors in the popularity of the "new" WWW was the introduction of two new characters whose hard riding and straight shooting soon took the play away from the Circle J outfit. Kid Wolf and Sonny Tabor became by all odds the favorite characters of nearly all 3W readers, and they continued to appear with scarcely diminished popularity till the very end. Their original adventures (or an adaptation thereof) appeared in book form under the titles Kid Wolf of Texas and Wanted: Sonny Tabor in the Chelsea House series published by Street & Smith, and Kid Wolf, at least, was the hero of a Big Little Book published in the 1930s. Both the Kid and Sonny were presented on radio for a brief while.

Sonny Tabor was apparently a later invention than Kid Wolf, who was already winning a huge following as early as mid-1929; Sonny did not arrive till a year or two later. He soon outstripped his older brain-brother in popularity, however, and by 1933 he was already undisputed king of the 3W range. Both characters were created by the same author, Paul S. Powers, under the pen name of Ward M. Stevens. He also used this pen name for a third series, featuring Freckles Malone, a pony express rider, but Freckles seldom appeared, although he was popular enough when he did show up. Possibly it was difficult to work out fresh plots on the stereotyped pony express theme; at any rate, Freckles Malone was Powers' only qualified success.

As Andrew A. Griffin, Powers also created the cheerful and resourceful Johnny Forty-five, another regular character who always rated among the top ten with 3W readers, and under his own byline during the final year of WWW's existence, he created the Fightin' Three of the Rockin' T, who rated high although they had insufficient time to gather momentum before the magazine folded. As Griffin and under his own name, Powers also contributed numerous "independent" stories to WWW -- stories not connected with a regular character -- such as "The Legion of Wanted Men" and "Runt Madigan, Gun Lawyer." Powers was the Jack Williamson of Wild West Weekly. A prolific hack writer in the early days, he was able to grow with the magazine and holf his own among the somewhat more skillful scriveners who began to appear in the magazine in the 1940s. For the Christmas issue of 1941 Powers wrote a Sonny Tabor yarn, "Six-gun Santa," and added a touching little short, "Vigilante Christmas," that would make an excellent TV play for "Maverick." Fittingly enough, the very last issue of the magazine (November 1943) contained two Powers novelettes.

Sonny Tabor's popularity proves again the potency of the Billy the Kid legend, for Tabor was unabahedly a replica modeled on the New Mexican outlaw as popularly conceived. Unjustly accused of a murder, Sonny id forced to a life on the dodge, with a $6000 reward posted for his capture or demise. Of course he is actually a model of deportment and spends most of his time running down the actual criminals who committed the crimes he is accused of. Like Billy the Kid, Sonny would not be driven from his home range -- in his case Arizona rather than New Mexico -- and probably unlike the Kid, he wore the same clothes at all times, which made it easy for people to recognize him, possibly even at night when the wind was right. Sonny's extreme youth and innocense was accentuated by "a bullet scar on one bronzed cheek that had more than once been taken for a babyish dimple." Aside from this, and the conventional attributes of the fastest gun and the straightest aim in the west, Sonny hardly required gimmicks and eccentricities to make him famous.

In contrast, Kid Wolf ("Kid to mah friends, Wolf to mah enemies") was a more conventional pulp hero, artfully gimmicked up and fitted with a set of eccentricities to make him colorful and distinctive. Although he professed great longing for the "Rio" country of Texas, he was independently wealthy and spent his life seeking adventure in all parts of the west from the "snow country" to old Mexico. He proclaimed himself "a friend of the undah dawg" and was wont to remark, "Yo' see, down in Texas wheah I come from they call me the 'soldiah of Misfohtune.' I'm proud of that name, and only wished I deserved it mo'." As you will note, he always spoke in sort of an ersatz southern dialect. His garb was colorful if not usually utilitarian: he wore fringed buckskins like Kit Carson or Daniel Boone, a huge sombrero with the front of it pinned back to the crown, and two Colt Peacemaker .45s. In addition to these weapons he toted a hideout: a Bowie knife sheathed inside his shirt between his shoulder blades; he could reach back and grab his knife and hurl it with blinding speed before a gunman with a cold drop could squeeze a trigger.

Johnny Forty-five wasn't merely eccentric; he was plain meshuggah. He habitually rolled a cigarette with his right hand, then another with his left, and then throw both away unsmoked. (He must have been followed by bums wherever he went, though this last was not specified.) His explanation for this practice is also characteristic of him. To his partner George Krumm he would say something like this:

"It keeps my fingers nimble, George,
And I'm surely not a-jokin';
My hands they roll the quirlies,
And my guns, they do the smokin'."

Johnny probably owed most of his popularity to Krumm. "Fearless" George Krumm, self-styled Terror of Evildoers, tipped the beam at 200+ pounds (fat, not muscle) and "always rode with all the fire, grace and abandon of a bag of sand." On one memorable occasion he chugalugged a bottle of Tabasco sauce under the impression it was a bottle of rare wine. On another occasion, receiving a letter from his superior containing secret orders and ending, "After memorizing the contents of this letter, be sure and incinerate it immediately," George mused, "The chief don't seem to realize how dangerous it would be if this here letter was found on me. I'm takin' my life in my hands, carryin' it around this way. I've got a good notion to burn it."

Powers fathered all these raffish characters and kept them going full-tilt for a decade and more, but other writers were more prolific. One of the leading 3W hacks was Lee Bond, though he seems to have died or given up his art sometime in the early 1940s. As Cleve Endicott he wrote most of the Circle J novelettes; as has been pointed out, Circle J appeared nearly every week for six or eight years, so this was a sizeable stint in itself. As Lee Bond he wrote countless "single" stories, nearly all of novelette length, such as"Feud Ranch" and "Bullet Brand," and contributed frequent stories about two regular characters. One of these was among the leading 3W heroes: Jack Reese, the Oklahoma Kid -- no relation to any other Oklahoma Kids anywhere -- an outlaw who defied 3W tradition by being as homely as sin rather than bronzed and handsome and who was perpetually pursued by a popeyed deputy sheriff named Ed Sparks, perpetually armed with a mighty doublebarrelled shotgun. Bond also wrote a series of short stories about Calamity Boggs, a chronic pessimist and hypochondriac -- no relation.

It should be pointed out that there existed a hierarchy of regular characters in WWW, with position based largely on popularity and signified by such things as frequency of appearance, place in the magazine, and above all by the length of the story. The titans, Kid Wolf, Sonny Tabor, Johnny Forty-five, the Oklahoma Kid, and various others were never allowed to appear except in novelette-length stories which were nearly always featured on the front cover. Lesser characters such as Calamity Boggs, Lum Yates, the Shootin' Fool, Shorty Masters, Jim Hazel, and others, appeared only in short stories. Between these extremes were a few characters who sometimes appeared in novelettes but most often in short stories: Hungry and Rusty, Bud Jones, the Whistlin' Kid, and Jimmy Quick, were some of them. Of course social mobility existed even in 3W and some char-

acters rose and fell as time went on. Shorty Masters, M.D. (Mule Driver), made his final 3W appearance in novelette form in the early 1940s, after appearing only in short stories for a decade, though possibly his rise was partly as a result of the growing prestige of his author, Allan R. Bosworth. (See Bosworth's amusing article "The Golden Age of Pulps" in The Atlantic, July, 1961; he mentions his authorship of 200 Shorty Masters stories during the 1930s.)

William F. Bragg, perhaps one of the most talented of WWW contributors, created two popular characters: Silver Jack Steele and Flash Moran, who got along without many gimmicks or eccentricities, although the former did flaunt a white lock of hair where once a charge of buckshot had nicked his scalp. Bragg later created a series of stories about a character named Highpockets Halligan, which was part of a sudden emphasis on humor in WWW during the late 1930s. Allan R. Bosworth, under pen names, wrote several humorous series, including one about Judge Roy Bean and another about a pair named Jeff and Bugeye. Another such series was Hinges hollister, by Phil Squires. But all these intentionally humorous series were a bit tiresome, and Bragg himself did much better with humorous touches in stories not presented as humor. He wrote a number of stories about a character named Andy Irons, including two that rank among the finest stories ever published in Wild West Weekly: "Trouble from Texas" and "Ridin' the Roarin' Chinook." The latter was tastefully spiced with a dash of wild humor involving Captain Andrew Jackson Irons, young Andy's hell-for-leather father.

Andy Irons, despite occasional appearances over at least eight or ten years, never made the pantheon as a bonifide regular character. There were others like him, including George C. Henderson's Bullwhip Adams, Hal Davenport's Banty Red Watkins, and William A. Todd's Risky McKee. A real 3W regular was indicated in at least one -- and usually all -- of three ways: (1) His next adventure was forecast in the "Comin' Next Week!" house ad in a notice like this one for "Murder Trail" by J. Allan Dunn: "Bud Jones of Texas rides ag'in an' shows by his special brand o' gun play thet he ain't fergot none o' the tricks of his dangerous trade -- Rangerin'." (2) At the end of his current adventure, there was an editorial note, promising another story about the character real soon now: "When a gent kin handle outlaws like thet, yuh kin bet your bottom dollar he's due back in Street & Smith's Wild West Weekly pronto... Don't miss the next Silver Jack Steele adventure." (3) And most important of all, the regular character always visited "The Wranglers Corner" each time he appeared in the magazine.

"The Wranglers Corner" began in the first issue of the "new" WWW and continued every week for a decade and more. It was the letter department of the magazine till about 1937, when it became an amateur writers' department. But more important, throughout these years it functioned as a sort of a wild west version of a Justice League of America meeting where the 3W regulars congregated, talked shop, and listened to the letters from "the readin' hombres." Evidently written by the editor, "The Wranglers Corner" usually boasted a little narrative to flavor it, sometimes a slight plot, and its characters were all the bonifide regulars whose adventures appeared in that particular issue of the magazine.

Once a character was invited to "The Wranglers Corner" he was indisputably in the pantheon -- although in later years the rules were occasionally relaxed to admit some riffraff. Various characters such as Frank J. Litchfield's Jimmy Quick appeared now and then for years before achieving membership in the "Corner." A few regulars "made" it on their very first appearance; however, these characters usually came to WWW from other places: Pete Rice, by Austin Gridley, became a 3W regular soon after his own magazine, Pete Rice Western, folded up. Hal Dunning's Jim-twin Allen, the White Wolf, had appeared in several Chelsea House books (and presumably in another Street & Smith magazine) before he arrived in WWW. All his 3W appearances were authored by Walker Tompkins under the Dunning byline, the creator of the character having died some years previously.

Walker Tompkins was one of Wild West Weekly's most prolific and popular writers from the early 1930s to mid-1942 when he was inducted into the service during World War II. He wrote under various pen names and house names, most notably Philip F. Deere, but under his own handle he created the perennial favorite, Tommy Rockford, he of the golden handcuffs, who was first a railroad detective, later a border patrolman. (In the former capacity he seldom went near a railroad; as soon as he switched to the latter trade he immediately became involved in a railroad robbery.) Early Rockford novelettes such as "The Navajo Avenger" and "Skulls in Wrist Canyon" were of particular merit and interest because they were primarily detective stories in a western setting. Later Rockford degenerated into a conventional shoot-'em-up lawman.

Despite Tommy Rockford's fame, Walker Tompkins' niche in the 3W Hall of Fame was won, not by his authorship of the Rockford stories, but by his status as the leading creator of six-story series. "All Stories Complete" was the cover slogan and editorial policy of Wild West Weekly for many years. Possibly it was inaugurated because younger readers, who constituted the bulk of the 3W readership, are deemed less likely than adults to read "long" stories of serial length. However, serials are traditionally a publisher's method of strengthening a reader's loyalty to his magazine, and presumably the front office declared in favor of "continued" stories. At any rate a happy compromise was achieved when in the early 1930s Editor Oliphant developed what was called the six-story series: a set of six novelettes, each complete in itself but with a close tie-in with the preceding yarns. Such series featured the same hero or heroes, the same villian or villians, and the same general setting and set of circumstances. Thus, taken together, the set of six stories constituted a serial comprised of six instalments each complete in itself.

Unlike most WWW stories, these six-story series often boasted "love interest," and often featured golden-haired heroines who could be kidnapped and rescued once in each story. Each of the six stories ended with the hero victorious in one phase of his struggle against the villains in much the same way that Kim Kinnison triumphed at the end of each "Lensman" novel. Usually the story climaxed with the death of a secondary villain or in the supposed death of the top villain, whose real identity might be a mystery. Only a very stupid reader, of course, could believe

that the top villain was actually dead for keeps when he beheld the editorial note at the end of the story promising further adventures of the hero in an upcoming issue, but at least the story was technically complete in itself.

The original six-story series formula was followed with apparent success down to around 1936 or 1937, after which decadence set in and the six-story series became merely a set of six stories about a particular hero who was pitted against six different villains in different settings and circumstances. Various heroes of six-story series won enough reader interest and support to return in two or more series, and sometimes came back, at last, as regular characters. Senor Red Mask, created by Guy L. Maynard, was one of these. He first appeared in a six-story series about 1932, came back for two or three encores, and finally became a permanent fixture. He owed most of his popularity to his colorful trappings -- the garb of a wealthy Mexican cabellero -- and the equally colorful border atmosphere of the tales.

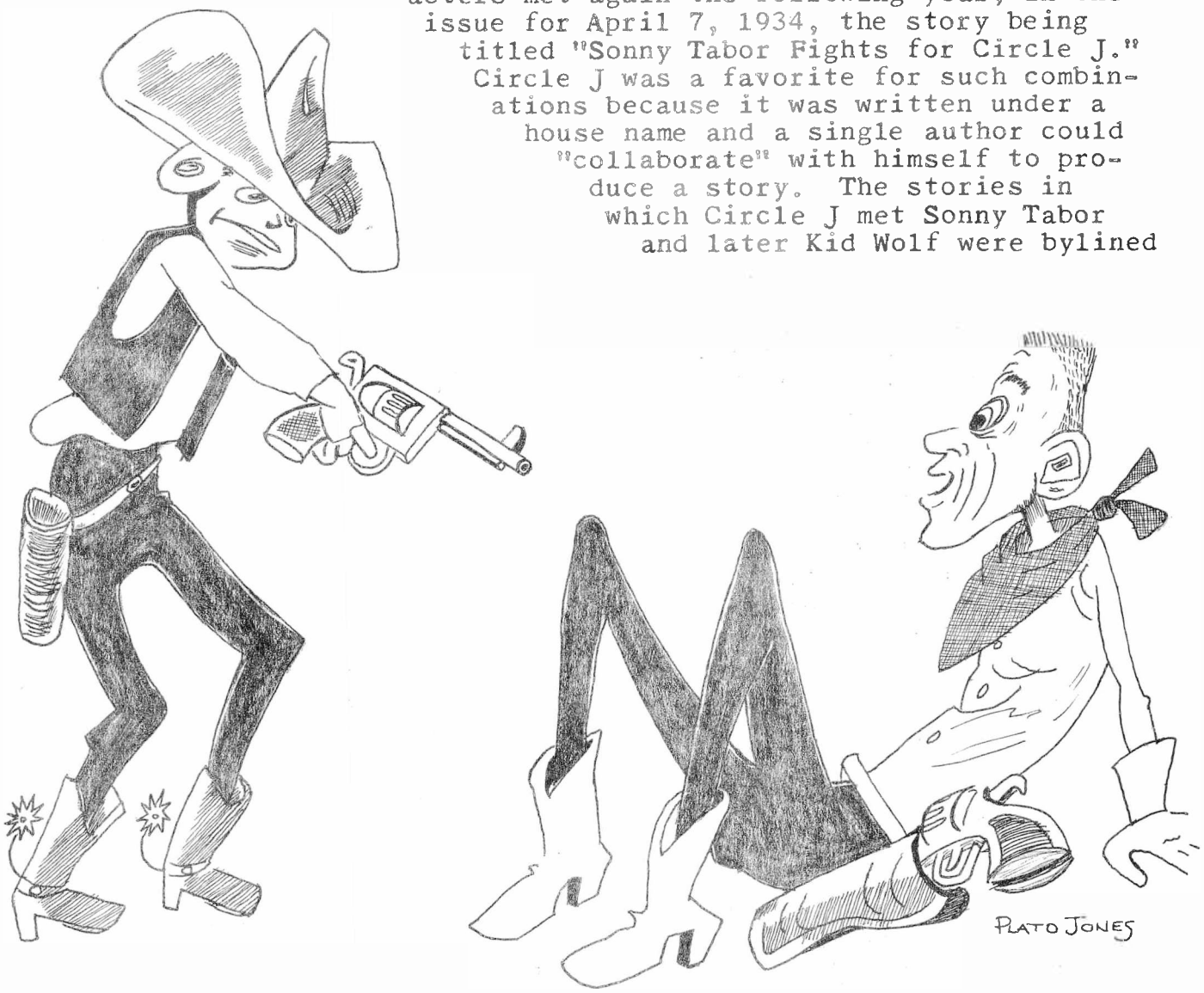
Another regular who was originally introduced in a six-story series was Trig Trenton, the Border Eagle, first introduced in 1933 and the hero of two further six-story series in 1935 and 1937 before becoming a regular. These stories were written by Walker Tompkins under the house name of Philip F. Deere, but while the Border Eagle was perhaps Tompkins' most successful character after Tommy Rockford in terms of longevity, these stories were by no means his major contributions to the six-story canon. Probably two such series qualify for that honor: "Terror Trail" and "The Desert Phantom," both written by Tompkins under his own name. The Phantom, alluded to above, first appeared in a six-story cycle in 1933, and was brought back for an encore in 1935. The original was an excellent and colorful saga of masked vengeance, but the sequal was very dull and ordinary, most of the magic having dissipated when the hero's face was unmasked.

The "Terror Trail" series was later rewritten as a novel and published in book form, but no sequal was possible because its setting, rather than its plot or characters, was its chief attraction. Most of the action took place in an authentic Spanish castle hidden in "a remote fastness of the Rocky Mountains." It had been built by Don Picadero, "a notorious buccaneer of the conquistador period...to be his hideout and the storing place of all his ill-gotten gains." The series ended with part of the treasure recovered and the Rio Torcido flooding the bottled-up canyon wherein the castle stood, forming "a lost lake pooled between windswept pines" and hiding the "grim secret" beneath its placid surface. "Only the wild ducks and moaning pines know about it, and they will never tell." The book version of "Terror Trail" did not include this passage, and I was mightily disappointed. Tompkins wrote many other excellent six-story series, including "Cougar Fang," "Deputy Death," and "The Arizona Thunderbolt," but none was as offtrail as these.

William F. Bragg was hardly less successful in selling six-story series than Tompkins himself. He wrote two or three series about Starr of Wyoming, the first especially fine, and many others

about other characters. One was called Trail Blazer, another Maverick -- no connection with the TV series of many years later -- to mention a few at random. Guy L. Maynard (with "Far-away Logan"), William A. Todd (with "Ronny Fellows"), Andrew A. Griffin (with "Senor Mystery"), and George C, Henderson (with "Whizz Fargo") were other six-story authors of note. There were many others.

During the golden years the usual formula for an issue of WWW was a table of contents composed of three novelettes and four (or occasionally five) short stories. Usually all the novelettes were devoted to the adventures of regular characters or six-story series characters, and two or three of the shorts also concerned regulars. This meant that in a given issue there were five to seven regulars on hand. The idea used later by the Justice League of America in which various heroes banded together within the bounds of a single story was used with caution in Wild West Weekly, though there were always readers' demands for more "combination" stories. Apparently the earliest experiment along this line took place shortly before I bought my first issue; it featured Circle J and Sonny Tabor in a single riproaring novelette. The same characters met again the following year, in the issue for April 7, 1934, the story being titled "Sonny Tabor Fights for Circle J." Circle J was a favorite for such combinations because it was written under a house name and a single author could "collaborate" with himself to produce a story. The stories in which Circle J met Sonny Tabor and later Kid Wolf were bylined



Cleve Endicott and Ward M. Stevens, but were written entirely by Paul S. Powers. Circle J also adventured with the Whistlin' Kid, the Bar U Twins, and probably others. Various other regulars joined forces on occasion, but probably the most famous occasion of all was in the September 7, 1935 issue which featured Ward M. Stevens' "Kid Wolf Rounds Up Sonny Tabor."

Despite the dominance of regular characters there were sometimes "independent" novelettes and quite often short stories not devoted to any regular character. Walker Tompkins, Lee Bond, and other prolific writers pounded them out between other assignments. Mention should be made of the immensely popular novelettes that appeared under the bylines of William A. Todd and of Ben Conlon. Todd's most famous yarns included "The Secret of Sundown Mesa," "The Shooting of Trigger Kane," and "The Gun Curse of Solo Dale," while Ben Conlon, who never wrote about a "regular", penned such outstanding "stray" novelettes as "Smoky Clark -- Trail Boss," already mentioned above, "The Gun Boss," and "A Deputy for Salamander." Whether Todd and Conlon were genuine, or only pen names or house names for other writers, I do not know. But I remember looking for their stories with the same interest that, in later years, I glanced over the contents page of Astounding for the stories of A. E. van Vogt and Anson MacDonald.

3: The Last Years, 1939-1943

Inevitably, according to the inexorable laws of economics, Wild West Weekly changed a little when the price was cut from 15¢ to 10¢ a copy with the issue of August 10, 1935. Sixteen shag-edged pages were lopped off; one of the three regular departments, "Western Pen Pals" conducted by Sam Wills, was dropped, and the two remaining departments, "Fiddlin' Joe's Song Corral" and "The Wranglers Corner", were reduced in size and set in smaller type. But the biggest change lay in the fact that one of the usual "Four Complete Western Stories" in each issue was now done in comic-strip form. These stories ran in "complete episodes" but, like six-story series, taken together told a more or less continued story. They ran for about 20 instalments before being dropped for a fresh "story in pictures," though some characters returned for an encore. For about four years these comic-strip yarns consisted of pictures with a brief text underneath, like the popular "Tarzan" feature in the daily newspapers, but during the final year of the feature the text was dropped and the story was told with handlettered captions and balloons in the panels themselves. When the latter format was adopted, a byline was added at last: Warren E. Carleton; previously no byline had been visible. However, William Timmins, later cover artist for Astounding, drew the strips throughout the entire five years, and quite competently, too, using several styles and techniques.

The first comic-strip character in WWW was Dogie Cantwell; the last, Omaha Hooker. In between came Brazos Bell, Fargo Neal, Slim Harkness, Sailor Anson, Dusty Radburn, and several other forgettable characters. The "story in pictures" feature was dropped forever early in 1940.

But the changes that took place in 1935 were minor compared with those that came a few years later. By the late 1930s, the magazine was beginning to feel the pinch. Radio, movies, and particularly the burgeoning comic books were beginning to kill off the pulps, and Street & Smith tried to meet the challenge by improving the physical appeal of the magazine. A new logo was designed and run superimposed on the cover-painting as was never done in earlier times. A year or two later the contents-page layout was revamped; the result looked more modern and streamlined, but it resulted in the disappearance of the familiar silhoutte drawing around the ToC logo that had appeared for many years. I never quite forgave them for that. Trimmed edges showed up about the end of 1939, only to halfway disappear again with the final issues of 1943, which boasted only the sides trimmed, top and bottom still shaggy.

Following the time-honored custom, a new editor was brought in to retool the magazine in 1939. He was John Burr, who also edited Western Story and probably other Street & Smith pulps. Though his regime proved to be in a minor way comparable with that of Sam Merwin Jr at TWS and Startling late in the 1940s, most 3W fans and probably many 3W authors lamented the departure of Ronald Oliphant, always deemed a fair and friendly editor.

Under Burr, WWW was allowed to "mature" somewhat, though it was still aimed at younger readers and not intended to compete with Western Story. The most welcome innovation of the new regime was the use of more nearly correct English in the magazine. In former times blurbs, editorial notes, departments, and even many story titles were rendered in a semi-literate western lingo calculated to drive any halfway intelligent reader away screaming in short order. This lingo was drastically toned down beginning in 1939, though it never quite disappeared entirely.

"The Wranglers Corner" had been turned into an amateur writer's department about 1937, but continued to serve as the meeting-place of 3W regular characters till 1939 when that gimmick was dropped. The department itself continued on into 1940, but thereafter was dropped for good. "Fiddlin' Joe's Song Corral" -- an early manifestation of an interst in folk music, a department dating back to the beginning of the Street & Smith WWW -- had been dropped shortly before. Editor Oliphant had instituted a brief editoral department called "A Chat With the Range Boss" late in 1938; this published comments on current and upcoming stories, as well as letters from authors and readers, and for a time was the only department in the magazine. In mid-1941, however, a new letter column, "Readers' Branding Irons," was instituted, and lasted as long as the magazine.

Better artwork had begun to appear in the late 1930s when H.W. Scott began to be squeezed out by Bjorklund, a superior western illustrator who did most of the interiors from about 1937 to 1940. In the same era WWW adopted the full-page "book-jacket" illustrations which became a standard feature in all Street & Smith pulps -- including Astounding and Unknown -- for a year or two. By 1940, WWW was an extremely attractive pulp, boasting trimmed edges, superior illustrations, and modern logo and titles. It remained an attractive pulp to the end, but in mid-1941 oldtime readers

could see that the magazine was falling on lean times. All the artwork in the magazine, cover and interiors, was now reprint material. The covers were all taken from the WWW files for the 1930s. The interiors presumably were selected from the files of Western Story, Cowboy Stories, and other Street & Smith western magazines of the past, since WWW itself had too many Scott illustrations and too few worthy drawings in its back files. Western fiction is stereotyped enough so that drawings in the files could be found to illustrate almost any story after a fashion. The final WWW issues in 1943 seem to have been specifically illustrated again, all drawings done by an artist named Smith.

Under John Burr, drastic experiments were undertaken in the fiction department. In 1939 serials were allowed for the first time, beginning with William F. Bragg's "Tiedown Johnny's Gunsmoke Trail," which read as though it had originally been conceived or written as a six-story series and converted to serial form. Though several notable serials were printed, including Alan R. Bosworth's "Steel to the Sunset" and Walker Tompkins' "Trail of the Iron Horse," serials managed only indifferent success, and the ancient "All Stories Complete" policy was reaffirmed about 1941.

"Independent" novelettes and short stories were allowed far more space than they had been given in the 1930s, and during 1939-1941 the cast of regulars was almost crowed out by serials and "stray" stories. Various new characters were introduced to replace old favorites who were losing popularity, and some of these remained to compete with the old regulars during the final years of the magazine. Perhaps the most important of these new regulars were Rowdy Lang and Blacky Solone, outlaw and manhunter respectively, who corresponded roughly with Sonny Tabor and Kid Wolf, and like those characters were the creations of a single writer, one James P. Webb.

The other newcomers who managed to achieve major status in WWW were relatively few in number. Clay Starr introduced Dapper Donnelly, patent medicine salesman; Ed Earl Repp created Yuma Bill Storms and his partner, Beanpole Badger; J. F. Houghton wrote a series of "humorous" shorts about Cameron Claflin; and Chuck Martin chronicled the adventures of Rawhide Runyan ("his neighbors called him a cowboy's cowboy"!). As was mentioned many pages ago, Paul S. Powers added to his string of regulars in 1942 by introducing the Fightin' Three of the Rockin' T.

The requests in "Readers' Branding Irons" clamored for the old favorites, and the "range Boss" was forced to explain on several occasions that "we're bringing back the old favorites as often as we can." He pointed out that "some authors just aren't available" -- apparently he referred to writers who had died -- and that others had retired. Some writers such as Allan R. Bosworth had gone up to the slicks. Sonny Tabor, Kid Wolf, Johnny Forty-five, Circle J, Hungry and Rusty, the White Wolf, Tommy Rockford, the Border Eagle, Senor Red Mask, the Oklahoma Kid, Silver Jack Steele, and Flash Moran were the chief characters from the old days who survived to the last.

These old favorites were somewhat de-corned for the new era in which they ventured. Kid Wolf's "southern drawl" was toned down, and Sonny Tabor may even have changed his checkered shirt for the first time in history. Sonny spent several years acting as an undercover lawman, having won a pardon, a girl friend, and a saddle buddy, about 1939, but during the last year of the magazine, 1943, he became a bonafide man-on-the-dodge again. So far as I know, however, even under the "mature" influence of the new regime nobody was ever told the Christian names of "Kid" Wolf and "Sonny" Tabor -- or for that matter, of "Buck" Foster, "Hungry" Hawkins, "Rusty" Bolivar, "Trig" Trenton, or "Flash" Moran. I suspect that even their creators did not have this information available.

The evil day was put off longer than anyone should have confidently expected, but in the summer of 1943 WWW failed to appear on its weekly schedule for probably the first time in its 41-year history. The last word in its title was whacked off, and the magazine became a monthly publication, known as Wild West. About five monthly issues, priced at 15¢ and enlarged to 146 pages, later to only 130, appeared before the final blow fell without warning on page 29 of the November 1943 issue: "Because of the drastic necessity for the conservation of paper and because we are doing everything in our power to co-operate with our government in winning this war, we announce, with regrets, that with this issue Wild West will suspend publication for the duration...." This notice appeared in the middle of "Death Blots the Brands," a Fightin' Three novelette by Paul S. Powers. The only other regulars who made the final issue were the Oklahoma Kid and Johnny Forty-five. If Wild West hadn't died as a war casualty, of course TV would have killed it along with the rest of the pulps within another five or six years, but perhaps it is fitting that WWW (or WW) died, as it were, with its boots on.

To end this article I must briefly mention the 3W Club that grew up during the last years among the ardent letterhacks in "Readers' Branding Irons." Among the most fannish of these fans were David C. Sparks, Bill James Marion Henderson, Jack Powers (the son, I believe, of Paul S.), Bill Foster, and others. But the Number One 3W Fan by general acclaim was Bob Stratton of Seattle, Washington, who owned a vast collection -- many if not all of the 2118 issues published over 41 years -- and was a walking encyclopedia of 3W lore. Bob entered the armed services during World War II and was killed in action. Thus, ironically, Wild West Weekly and its most passionate admirer died almost at same time.

THE END

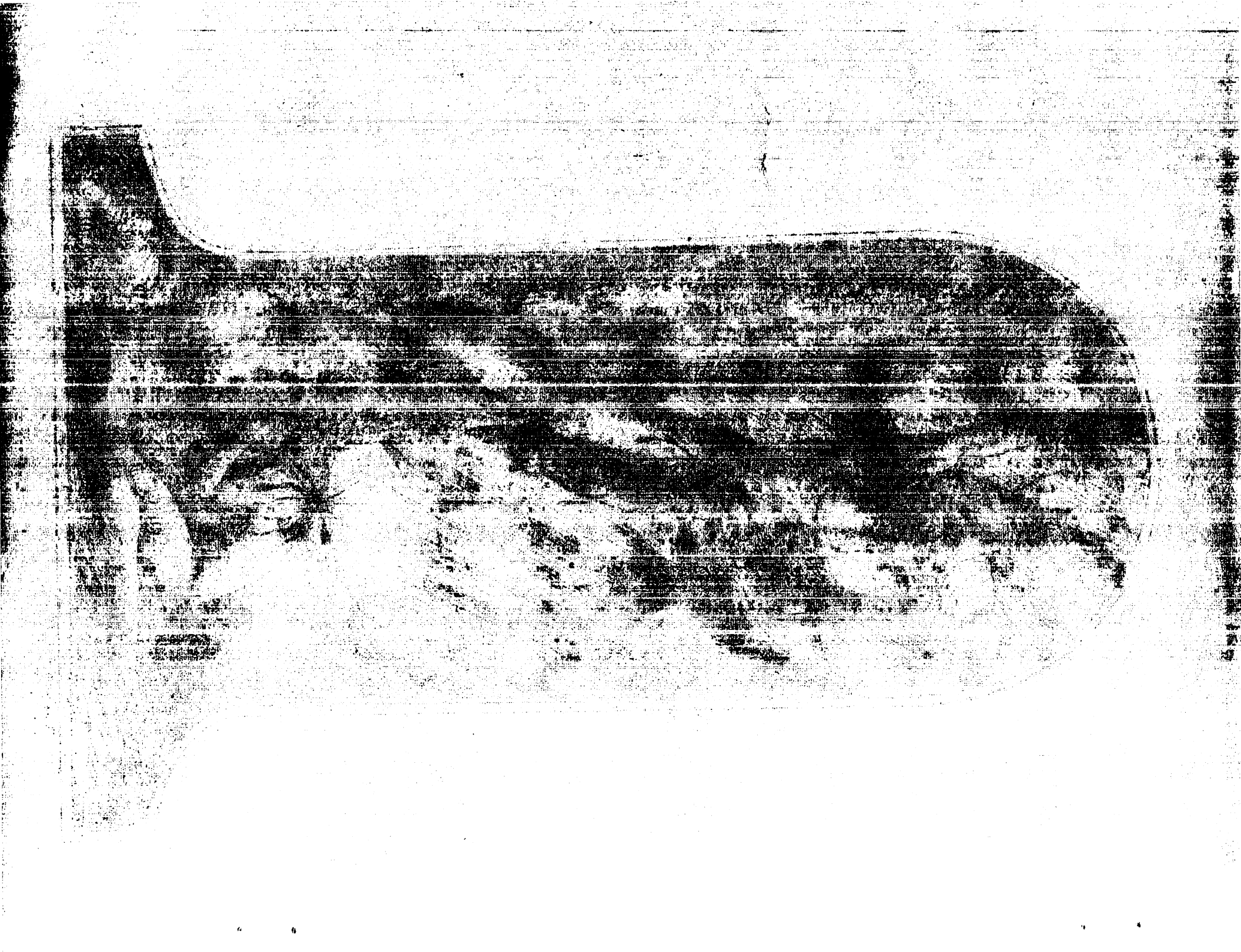
NOTE: As I did at the end of the Grue article about Young Wild West and Circle J, I must acknowledge the help I received in writing this article from Walker Tompkins, one of WWW's most famous contributors, and Ronald Oliphant, WWW editor from 1927 to 1939. Many thanks to both of them. -- Redd Boggs.

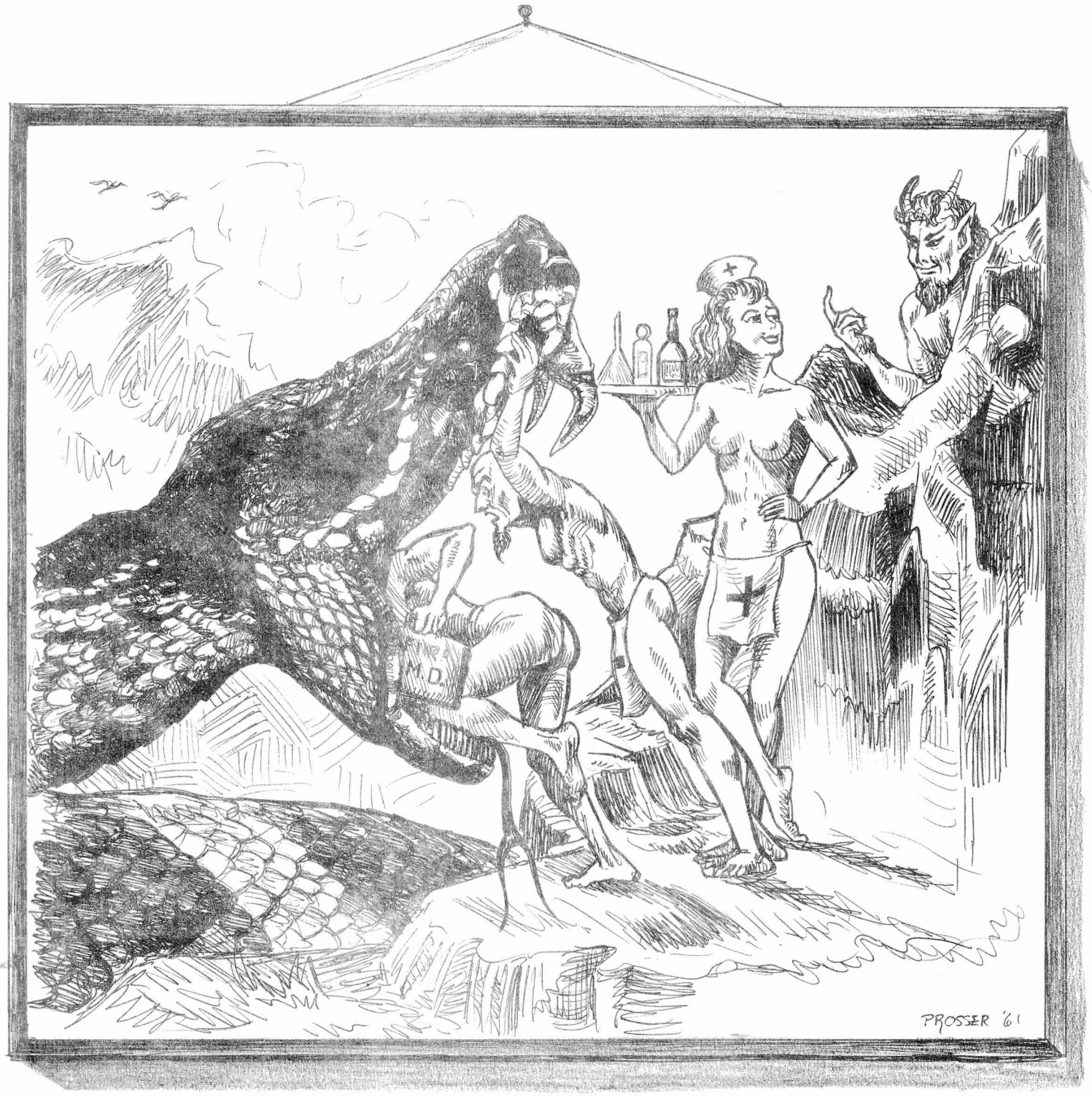
A N A R T F O L I O B Y D A V E P R O S S E R . . . . .

This is the first of a series of artfolios that will be published in JD-Argassy.

The next one will be by Eddie Jones and will appear in issue #60.


PROSSER '61

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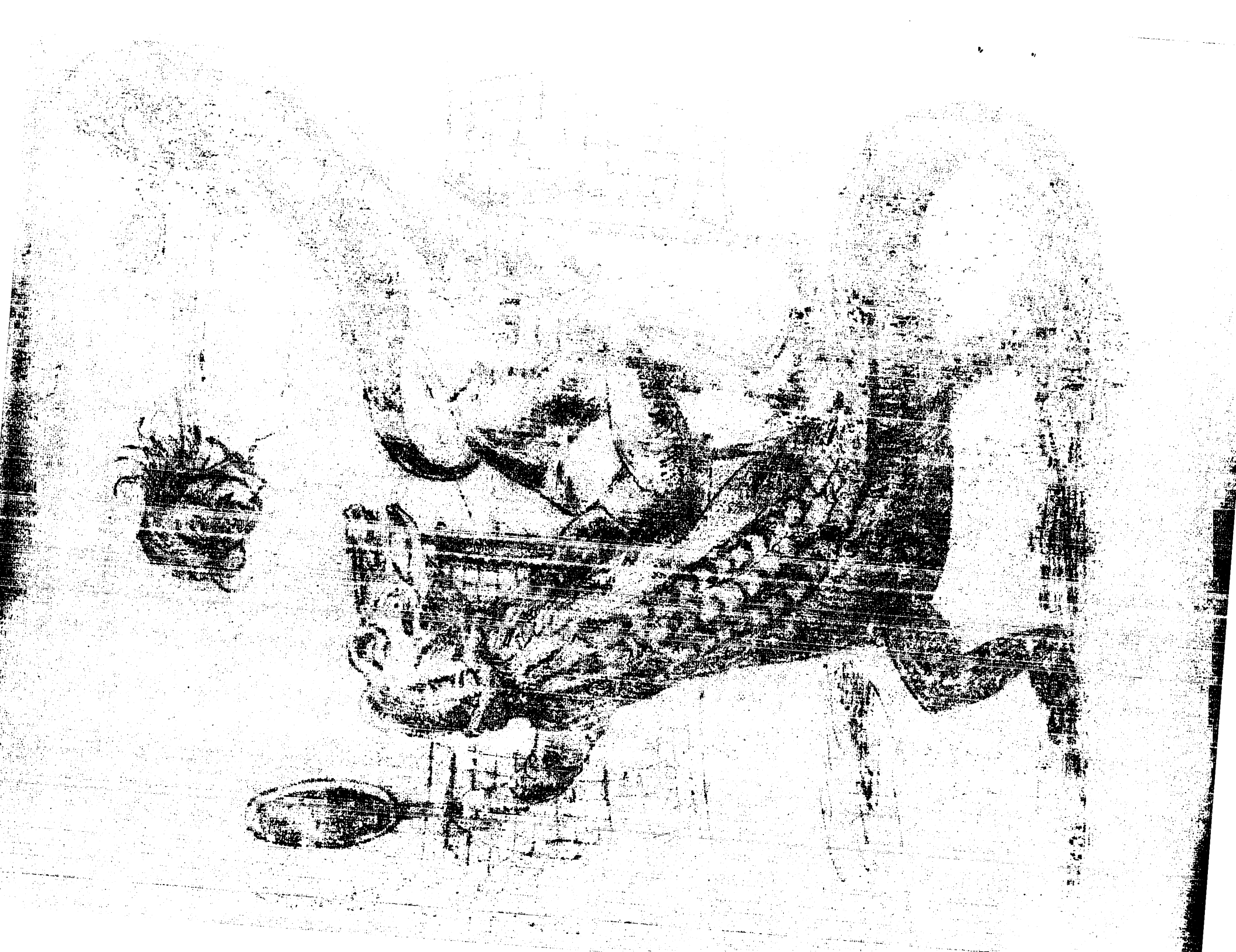


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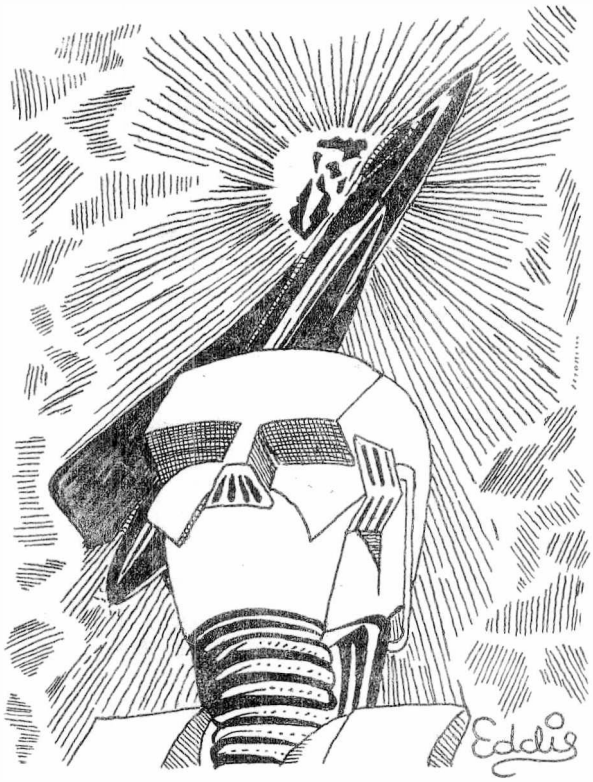
DON QUIXOTE
PROSSER '61

for those of you that don't know her. She and her husband Richard are both members of First Fandom and have had a great interest in the field for many years.

In the past year I've read in some other fanzines, put out by younger fans, some remarks about Avalon Books that rather griped me. They either passed them over very lightly or said that Avalon published very little that was good or worthwhile.

I feel differently, and I'm sure that many of the older fans feel as I do. While I admit that Avalon has had some clunkers on there list, I feel that they are doing fandom a great service in bringing back many of the fine old magazine novels of the "Sense of Wonder" period. Novels such as Otis Adelbert Kline's "The Swordsman of Mars", "The Outlaws of Mars", and "Planet of Peril". Manly Wade Wellman's "Twice in Time", "Giants From Eternity", "The Dark Destroyers", and "Island in the Sky". de Camp's "The Glory That Was" and "Wall of Serpents". And of late, Col. S. P. Meek's "The Drums of Tapajos" and "Troyana".

Twenty years ago we would have delighted in seeing these in hard covers. For myself, I'm doubly glad they are being published today. It not only gives the older fan a chance to reread many of the old stories without searching his magazine collection for them, but for many who for some reason or other had to get rid of their



magazine collections, this is a means of choosing some of those fine old novels for their hard bound collection.

Avalon is also giving the younger reader a chance to read some good science-fantasy adventure. Now with their arrangement with Ace Books, the young fan can read these on a budget and add only the ones he wants to his hard cover collection.

So don't pass over Avalon Books lightly. Lets give them a vote of thanks for publishing these stories and perhaps send them a list of some of the old "classics" we'd like to see them publish in the future.

I'd like to see them continue with more Kline novels, "Jan of the Jungle", etc. I'd like to see them publish many of Ralph Milne Farley's works as well as stories by England, Flint, Stilson, Worts, and many others.

B O O K S . . . . (Rosemary Hickey)

200 Years to Christmas, J. T. McIntosh
Rebels of the Red Planet, Charles L. Fontenay; Ace F-113, 40¢

200 Years to Christmas is a fictional mirroring of changing public opinion, attitude and action with no other justification than "the pendulum swings and having swung, will swing again." McIntosh apparently didn't want to delve into personality needs or conflicts....or social interaction....and left me feeling frequently that something was missing. For instance, a secondary character, Gil Cordiner, never really reaches the stature to warrant his "martyr" finish. Perhaps if that whole sequence had been handled with Cordiner as the central character, then his martyr finale might have had the impact necessary to augment and amplify the "growing tension" then described. But then None of the characters have depth.

With any substantiation of the five year pendulum swing, and, if McIntosh had given cultural depth to the "fad" mores, it might have been a powerful story.

Rebels of the Red Planet is a confusion of detective and adventure....only it never seemed quite clear who the bad guys (or the good guys) were. Except for "Dark Kensington", none of the characters came through with any recognizable consistency. There's a poor attempt to establish identity with titles.

The Blurb says such exciting things as "Rebels against the governmental tyranny," "Government's desperate hatred of their movement", but there was no evidence of these or any other emotions.

The Clock Strikes 12
H. R. Wakefield; Ballantine Books, 531, 35¢.

In his preface, Wakefield practically guarantees the reader bone-chilling, skin-crawling reactions to his stories. That threat was enough to scare me off before I started. I'm most imaginative and impressionable and managed to read the first four stories....but got too scared to finish the book. For those who like "Macabre Tales of the Supernatural".... please....read it. I don't dare. I want to sleep nights.

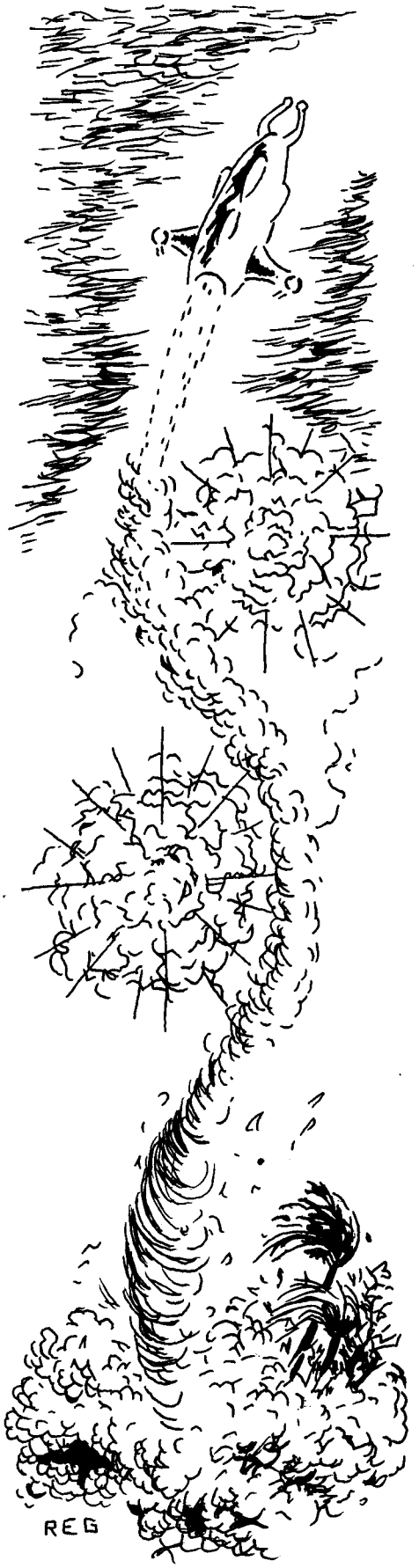
A Cupful of Space, Mildred Clingerman; Ballantine Books, 519, 35¢.

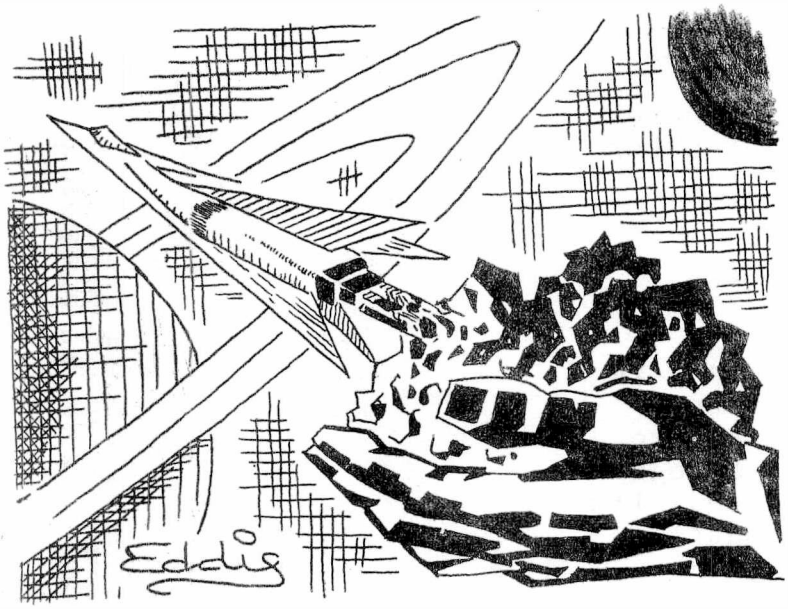
A collection of her short stories....most of them reprints from F & SF. They're just as entertaining on the second reading. These are all fantasies....from Voodoo to Mythology and each challenges the imagination differently. Some of the endings were a little shuddery but the book wasn't put down until I had finished it.

The Sun Saboteurs, Damon Knight
The Light of Lilith, G. McDonald Wallis; Ace Books, F-108, 40¢.

I'm always predisposed to enjoy a novel written by Damon Knight and The Sun Saboteurs wasn't a disappointment at all. Here he expends a good deal of imagination in projecting collapse of Earth's galactic empire and the resultant ghettos of Earthmen on various alien planets.

The Light of Lilith reads like a fairy story - with magical happenings which we must accept without question....lots of fore-shadowing





devices....some of which seem meaningless. Reporter Mason, a specialist on experimental stations, lands on Lilith, a planet with a fabulous visible spectrum....unrecognizable life form - and researchers.

This is an erratic tale which takes off at disconcerting angles every so often ....as if the author were unable to go deeper or further in any one plot line.

The Bird of Time, Wallace West; Ace Books, F-114, 40¢.

First Mars has planet-wide survivor problems, then earth.... which are aggravated by and then resolved by the aid of the other. There's lots of action, telepathy and machine teleportation.... with some romance. A fairly good recipe for fun reading.

Tales of Love and Horror, edited by Don Congden; Ballantine 522K, 35¢.

This is a kindly choice of disturbing tales. They're just horrific enough to titillate the hair roots but not so horrendous as to make your hair stand on end. The stories are all reprints ....and good stories are enjoyed the second time around. Still all were new to me except Ray Bradbury's "The Illustrated Woman."

The Challenge of the Spaceship, Arthur C. Clarke; Ballantine F-528, 50¢.

Arthur C. Clarke can make a straight scientific report as exciting as a short story and his extrapolations for tomorrow as real as a new article. All of these pieces have appeared in print before in sources not available to all readers....which gives this particular publication particular value.

A Hole in the Bottom of the Sea, Willard Bascom; Doubleday $4.95.

Here is a complete report on the Mohole project. Mr. Bascom fills in all possible gaps of knowledge involved in the project... from who first talked or wrote of exploring the center of the earth (science fiction and science) to the present fathers of this valuable research program. He describes and discusses the necessity for, pertinence of and the accomplishments already achieved in the fervent acquisition of knowledge for the success of the project.

In the well-planned continuity of this book, the related earth sciences are reviewed....with an accounting of historical "facts" and the evolution of currently accepted theories.

To be any more explicit on the contents would be to do your reading for you. It would be most unkind of me to deprive you of that pleasure. Know this....Mr. Bscom has the gift of presenting an exciting project in an informative and facinating style.

Mind Partner and 8 other novelets from Galaxy, edited by H. L. Gold; Doubleday, $3.95.

Anthologies must be created with the expectation that whether or not you've read the stories before, they still make good reading today. These novelets do....with varying levels of pleasure (as is usual in most anthologies.) And, I guess, it's more convenient to re-read the stories in a hard cover than going back into your mint collections. The other 7 are "The Lady Who Sailed the Soul", "The Stentorii Luggage", "Snuffles", "The Sly Bungerhop", "Blacksword", "The Civilization Game", "The Hardest Bargain", "With Redfern on Capella XII".

Destiny's Orbit, David Grinnell; Avalon Books, $2.95.

Either this is a first attempt to satirize space opera -or- the original script was planned for comic books. Without the assist of illustrations, our hero, Ajax Calkins goes from one episode to another in an effort to create for himself the nicest parts of early romantic adventure stories. With appropriate pictures, the characterizations might have become more believable....or at least, acceptable.

Canary in a Cat House, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.; Gold Medal Books s1153, 35¢.

Pure, unadulterated good reading from page 7 on which begins "Report on the Barnhouse Effect" to the middle of page 160 on which ends the last story "Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow" of this collection. There's a touch or two of pathos, a shaggy dog story, social commentary, a chess with lives at stake, a soupcon of sf. A good addition to one's collection.

The Infinite Moment, John Wyndham; Ballantine Books 546, 35¢.

To see John Wyndham's name on the cover is to be assured of good storytelling. Six switches in time....each a pleasure to read and re-read: "Consider Her Ways" - a future without men (horrible thought), "Odd" - profit before and after the fact, "How Do I Do?" - a glimpse into a personal future, "Stitch in Time" - a romance ruined by an experiment, "Random Quest" -a romance begun in an alternate time world, "Time Out" - time information service makes a 35 year error.

Out of the Deeps, John Wyndham; Ballantine Books 545, 35¢.

The master story-teller this time weaves a yarn with alien

(outer space) intelligence invading earth, creating millebrachiate tentacular pseudo coelenterates to catch their human fodder, establishing a more comfortable deep water habitat by melting the polar ice caps. What happens to the world (to the tight little island, in particular) and the final resolution....ah, there's a story!

This World is Taboo, Murray Leinster; Ace Books D-525, 35¢.

Calhoun of the Interstellar Medical Service and Murgatroyd, the tormal, and away we go! This trip mixes and resolves medical, military and color problems. Much reading enjoyment here.

The Door Through Space, Marion Zimmer Bradley;
Rendezvou on a Lost World, A. Bertram Chandler; Ace Books F-117, 40¢.

The Door Through Space is a streetshrine cum matter transmitter which is most important to Race Cargill of the Secret Service, Rahkal Sensar (ex-SS), Evarin (The Toymaker) and the beautiful Miellyn in this tale of adventure and romance.

Four seasoned space-tars and a gaussjammer with the Ehronhaft Drive enable A.B.C. to spin out adventure most skillfully.

Sardonicus and other stories, Ray Russell; Ballantine Books, 540, 35¢.

The blurb implies all inside is HORRIBLE. 'T'isn't so! This collatio of ghost cum horror stories interlarded with light whimsical tales....with various degrees of shivers or chuckles....is too much like a bedside reader with no index guide from which to select preferred moods. As a first between-cover sampling of Ray Russell, it serves a purpose.

An Eye For An Eye, Leigh Brackett; Bantam Books, 35¢.

Not sf! A lawyer's wife is abducted by a vengeful, violent psychopath. Emotion and tension kept at high pitch all through this suspense thriller.

Rosemary Hickey

B O O K S . . . . (Lynn Hickman)

Since most fans tastes in reading are catholic we aren't going to limit the book section to science fiction and fantasy and for that matter, not always to the new books. For example I picked up a title a few months ago that I had wanted for a number of years. I was driving down state through Mt. Vernon and stopped at a book fair some club or other was holding and while browsing through the volumes on display, came across an almost mint copy of The Green Mouse by Robert W. Chambers. This was published in 1910 by D. Appleton and Company. While it is written in an old fashioned style, it is still fun to read when you try to imagine yourself reading it in those days. The basic plot is similar to Brian Aldiss' The Primal Urge (Ballantine F555).

In The Green Mouse, an invention is manufactured that finds the psychical currents of male and female traveling through space and when collected ties the pyschic personalities together so that they seek each other out and are, of course, perfectly suited for each other.

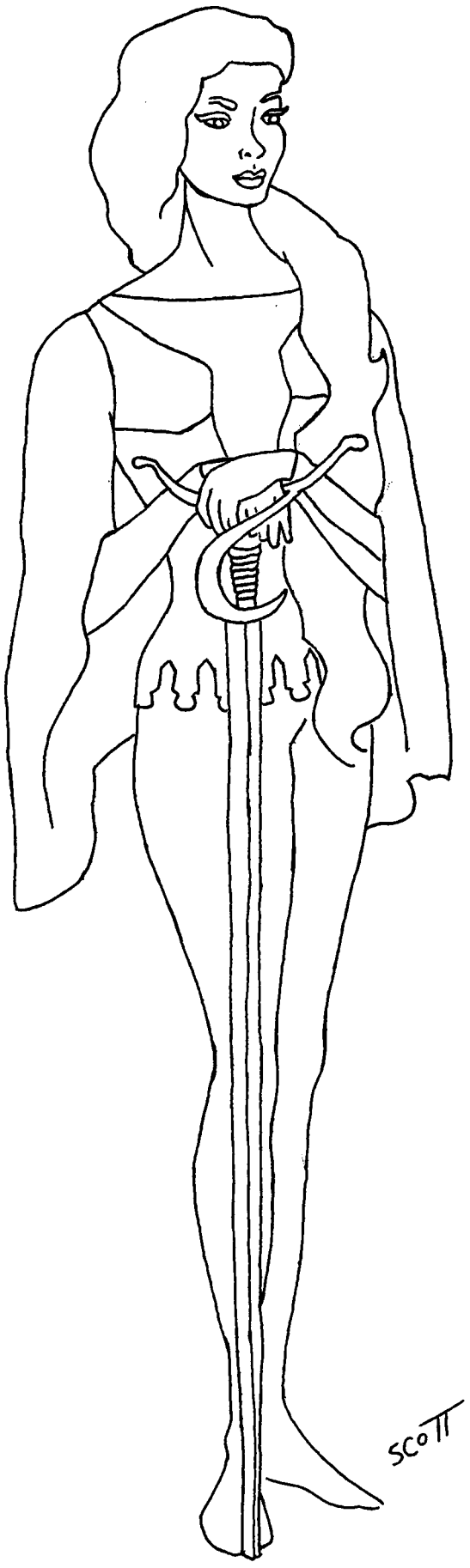
In The Primal Urge, the British Government passes a law that each citizenmust have an Emotional Register installed in their forehead. This E.R. would register the sexual attraction that one might feel for someone else. You can take the book from there. I had fun reading it.

The best western that I have read in quite some time is A Talent For Loving by Richard Condon (McGraw-Hill $4.95). Its a western to end all westerns and funny all the way through. It has a little of everything in it, The Curse of Montezuma that dooms the recipient to an excessive talent and craving for love, gambling, shooting, -- and even has the Indians saving the whites from the cavalry. This is recommended to anyone that likes a good spoof.

For any of you that are thinking of college or, like myself, have a son in high school, I recommend The New American Guide To Colleges (Signet KT373; 75¢). This is a comprehensive guide that lists over 2000 colleges and universities along with all the facts and figures on them, your chances of getting in, where to apply, scholarships, etc. A quite complete and valuable book for only 75¢.

From Avalon we have two titles that are excellent choices for the oldtimers and for any fan that loves a good entertaining fantasy adventure story. Of course, being a Munsey Publications collector, anything in hard cover form from those pages is especially welcomed by me. Planet of Peril by Otis Adelbert Kline ($2.95).

"Well, someone was always saying that we should pickle him."



and Troyana by Colonel S. P. Meek ($2.95). Planet of Peril is another in Kline's series from the old Argosy magazine, only this time we have the adventure on Venus. This is a must for the fans that enjoy real fantasy-adventure of the ERB school. Troyana is the sequal to the Drums of Tapajos and was first printed in Amazing Stories in 1932. This is a hidden city story taking place in the jungles of South America. Again, very good fantasy- adventure. You keep reading of the "Sense of Wonder" and whether the old stories or the new stories are better -- actually there are fine now as then and clunkers in both periods. Avalon in their choice of the old stories have come up with good ones. While the novels of today may be judged as better from a literary standpoint, the good old novels had one purpose -- to entertain. Both of these do that. An A rating for the entertainment lover.

From Ace we have Storm Over Warlock by Andre Norton (F-109, 40¢), Delusion World & Spacial Delivery by Gordon Dickson (F-119, 40¢), The Forgotten Planet by Murray Leinster, (D-528, 35¢), The Day They H-Bombed Los Angeles by Robert Moore Williams (D-530, 35¢), and The Outlaws of Mars by Otis Adelbert Kline (D-531, 35¢).

Storm Over Warlock, while not one of Norton's best novels is better than the run-of-the-mill book. Miss Norton has the talent for writing a story that is interesting to all age groups. In this one, Shann Lantee is the only survivor of an attack by the Throgs (an insect type alien that is at war with the Terrans) on an Earth Survey Base. It is the story of his fight for survival on an alien planet and the final victory over the Throg. A B rating.

Gordon Dickson has both of the Double Novel selection. In Delusion World, Feliz Gebrod is sent to the

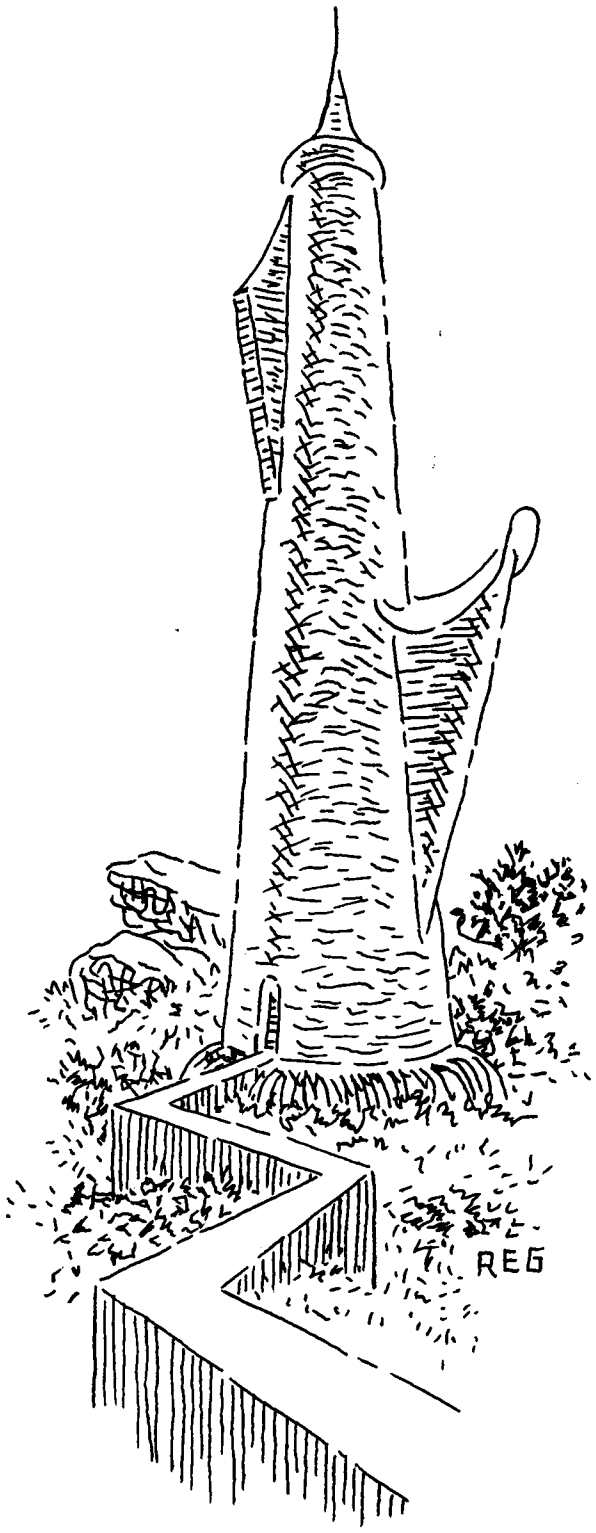
planet Dunroamin to see why this planet had been able to stay free in the middle of other planets that had been colonized and/or conquered by Earth's bitter enemy. He finds two separate cultures on the planet, unable to see or recognize that the other exists. You take it from there until he finally finds the reasons in the planets history, etc. for this. A mild book. Low C rating. Spacial Delivery was a little better. A Dilbian (9 foot humanoids) kidnaps an Earth girl because of an alledged insult. John Tardy is sent to get her back and chases the kidnapper around the planet, riding the while on the back of another Dilbian (a postman) because he been sent through the mail to the kidnapper. Sound screwy? It is, but fun reading. It all comes out fine in the end with the kidnapper going to Earth with John Tardy as the Ambassador from Dilbia. A C rating if your looking for some light reading in a humorous vein.

The Forgotten World is a combination of 3 short novels from (the book says - copyright Amazing Stories 1926, 1927, and Gernsback Publications 1953.) However, this just didn't seem correct to me and searching my collection I find The Mad Planet copyright 1920 by Munsey and The Red Dust copyright 1921 by Munsey. Nightmare Planet was correct. Again, this is the fantasy-adventure type story that I personally like so well. A B rating.

The Day They H-Bombed Los Angeles could have stayed in Williams typewriter without any loss. It is the story of the US bombing their own city and then quarantining it. Aliens taking over the bodies of earthlings, and of people trying to keep from being taken over. D rating.

The Outlaws of Mars was discussed in a previous JD-A when it was published by Avalon. An A rating for the lover of the swashbuckling adventure.

Ballantine has a good bargain in ...And Some Were Human by Lester del Rey (552, 35¢). A collection of 8 stories from the late thirties and



early forties from Unknown and Astounding. My favorites were Hereafter, Inc. and The Wings of Night. At 35¢, you shouldn't miss this one. A+ rating.

Getting away from the science-fiction books, There are a couple of westerns here from Signet Books. The Transgressors by Jim Thompson (S2034, 35¢) and Rodeo by Robert West Howard & Oren Arnold (D2024, 50¢). The Transgressors is a modern day western that I would swear had been written for a Gene Autry movie but for the fact that our hero Tom Lord ended up sleeping with the gal. Of course they could have him pat the hood of his car in the movie version. Miss this. On the other hand, Rodeo is a history of the Rodeo and for those that are interested in western history it is a very worthwhile book.

I've read through quite a number of mysteries. I won't attempt to go into the plots here as this issue is running well over the page limit I had set for it, but here is a list of the titles I've read and my reactions to them. Signet publishes two of my favorites, Ian Fleming and Don Von Elsner. On the stands now, you can find Casino Royale (D1997, 50¢) and Diamonds Are Forever (D2029, 50¢) by Ian Fleming. These are James Bond thrillers and are recommended for those that like a good tough spy story. One of the newer characters but fast rivaling James Bond in my affections is Colonel David Danning in Just Not Making Mayhem Like They Used To (S2040, 35¢). Colonel Danning is a business detective that hires out to some of the large corporations when they have problems they can't untangle with their own staff. This is the second in the series, and while it doesn't quite come up to the first book, it is well above the average detective you might pick up.

Signet advertises that Spillane is back and that Signet has him. While The Deep (D2044, 50¢) is overdone as all Mickey Spillane books are, in my opinion, it is the best mystery that he has done to date. You won't find as much sexing around in it if you are a Spillane fan, but you will find a better than average story. I enjoyed it.

I could never see what all the hoorah was about and why Carter Brown books sold so well, but after reading a few they sort of grow on you. I've just finished The Tigress (S1989, 35¢), The Sad-eyed Seductress (S2023, 35¢), and Zelda (S2033, 35¢). They do make for an enjoyable hour on the train or for just before you go to bed. OK for some light, fast, sexy reading, but if you are a real mystery fan they are just froth. Signet Books.

The Brothers Brannagan (based on the tv show) by Henry E. Helseth (S1973, 35¢) and Pandora's Box by Robert Dundee (S1980, 35¢) are below average with the former the best of the two. Signet Books.

And then we have Rockabilly by Harlan Ellison (Gold Medal S1161, 35¢). This will probably be popular with the teenagers, but it just didn't go over here. It could have been a good long short story for one of the men's mags like Rogue or Dude but as a book it is too wordy without need.

Editors Choice.....

Each issue we will have an editors choice of the best and/or most enjoyable hard cover books, paperback books and fanzines read since the last issue.

Hardcover Books. All from Doubleday this time. Mr. Laurel and Mr. Hardy by John McCabe ($4.50), All the Traps of Earth and other stories by Clifford D. Simak ($3.95), and Prologue to Analog edited by John W. Campbell ($3.95).

Mr. Laurel and Mr. Hardy while being a short biography of this most famous of funny teams lives, is more a history of the time they spent together in the movies and a history of the films that they made. To a Laurel and Hardy buff like myself, this book was a veritable goldmine of pleasant reading..

All the Traps of Earth and other stories is a good collection of Clifford Simak's stories, most of which appeared in Galaxy magazine. There are nine stories in all, all of them good. My own favorites were All the Traps of Earth, The Sitters, and Installment Plan.

Prologue to Analog is editor Campbell's selection of stories from Astounding Science Fiction during the period from 1950 to 1960, which he describes as the prologue to Analog. There are ten stories in the collection and while the quality varies a bit more than in the preceding collection by Simak, they run from excellent to fair. My favorites were Belief by Isaac Asimov, Omnilingual by H. Beam Piper, Business As Usual, During Alterations by Ralph Williams, and Minor Ingredient by Eric Frank Russell.

Paperback Books. Starship Troopers by Robert A. Heinlein, Signet Books (D1987, 50¢), and The Silver Eggheads by Fritz Leiber, Ballantine Books (F561, 50¢).

Starship Troopers doesn't really need a review, it won the Hugo at the Pittcon and was widely discussed in the fan press because of some of the political philosophies advanced by Heinlein. I read it with a mind open to the enjoyment the story would give, and it does just that. At 50¢, the best buy of the paperbacks.

The Silver Eggheads is a complete reversal from the above, but should give you laughs all the way through. This is a satire based on a future when all the books are turned out by Wordmills and the 'author' is just part of the 'atmosphere' and advertisement for the book. This is the story of a 'revolt' of these 'authors', and what takes place from there on will give your funnybone a workout.

Fanzines...No room for them this time, but I found the following three to be the best of the pile. Who's Who in Science Fiction, Lloyd Douglas Broyles, Rt. 6 Box 453P, Waco, Texas (50¢), Bane #6, Vic Ryan Box 92, 2305 Sheridan Road, Evanston, Illinois (25¢), and Hyphen #30, Walt Willis, 170 Upper N'Ards Rd., Belfast 4, N. Ireland.

JD·ARGASSY