

JED ARGASSY

№ 60



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JD-ARGASSY #60

THE PULP ERA

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Artfolio by Eddie Jones

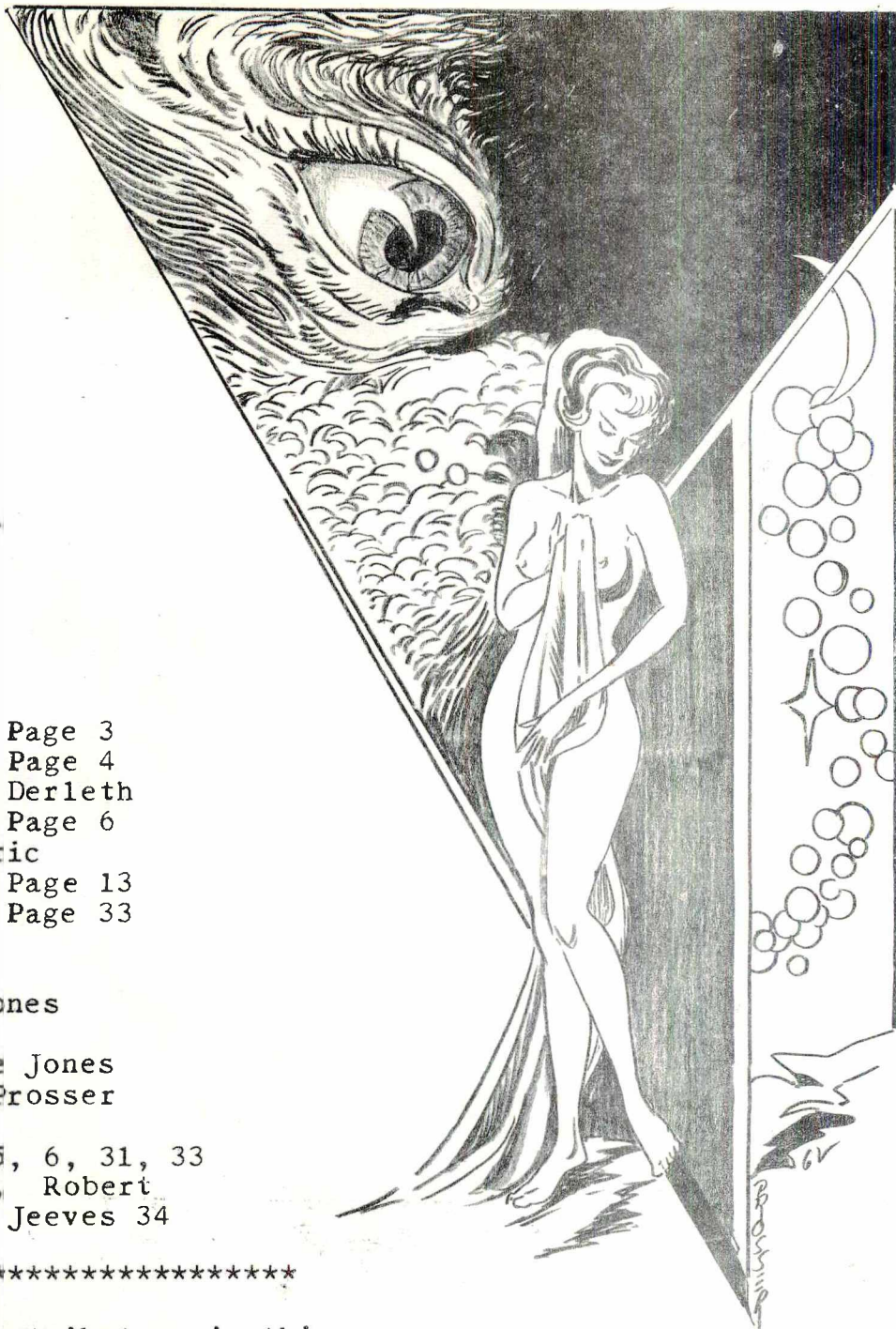
Cover (front) Eddie Jones
Cover (rear) Dave Prosser

Art: George Barr, 5, 6, 31, 33
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My apology to the contributors in this issue who waited so long and so patiently for their work to appear. As they read the issue I'm sure they will realize that it was not lethargy on my part, but a major change in my way of living that caused the delay.

Now that I'm settled in one spot and am home evenings I intend to publish the Pulp Era at least quarterly, and hopefully bi-monthly.

Issue #61 is already $\frac{1}{2}$ printed and will follow this issue within two months.



In the assessment of any magazine's importance to the totality of fantasy or science fiction there are always the twin perils of unmerited praise and unwarranted deprecation. The 31 year history of Weird Tales was a long and glorious period in American fantasy. It was a time filled with solid achievement. Yet toward the end, it had become the ghost of a magazine as it reached the final ignominy. For sheer brilliance, the 279 issues of Weird Tales never equalled Unknown Worlds in its short-lived but precocious 39 issues. But in its discovery and careful nurturing of authors and artists of importance to the field, it need yield to none. Even now, 8 years after its final issue, its longevity is exceeded by only two science fiction magazines, Amazing Stories and Analog Science Fact and Science Fiction.

It is with a sense of justifiable pride that this issue of JD-Argassy is dedicated to the memory of Weird Tales.

As was indicated last issue, the policy of JD-Argassy will change to one of honoring a specific author, magazine, or group of magazines with each issue. In line with this policy the name of this fan magazine is being changed to The Pulp Era. It is hoped that the readers will approve of the new policy and will help make it successful by sending in serious articles, bibliographical lists, and reviews of their favorite authors and magazines. Material about Argosy, Blue Book, Doc Savage, All Story, etc. is of course always welcome, but don't forget Dusty Ayres and his Battle Birds, Bill Barnes, Western Story, the horde of Munsey & Street and Smith magazines and so many others. The reader-contributor will determine the contents in "PULP ERA". Many of the plans for future issues are flexible and room will always be found for the good article. For those readers who cannot contribute long articles which require a great deal of research and/or access to large collections, short items of information, anecdotes, or just fond memories of a story or serial read long ago can still be used. If you feel the distortions in Charles Beaumont's article "The Bloody Pulps" (Playboy Sept. 1962) are an insult to every pulp reader, answer these distortions by facts, figures, and rational argument as opposed to Beaumont's smug contempt.

The Pulp Era will be an attempt to evaluate the pulps and to honor the best of them. To the new reader who knows little of the pulps it will attempt to bring understanding. To the old timer, it will attempt to rekindle the joys of youth. For the critic it will examine the faults of the pulps. Yet foremost, its purpose will be to allow all the readers to sample in some small measure, the entertainment of the "PULP ERA".

There is very little chance for the resurrection of Weird

Tales or for that matter, of any of the pulps of yesteryear. Their's was a world peculiar to itself. With all their faults, and they were many, there was an aura of romantic adventure, chilling terror, and heroic action that lives in the fading memories of the pulp fictioneer. It was a time of glory. It is sad that we shall not see its like again.

Ed Wood

ARGASSING

Since the last issue, I've done a lot of traveling on the job, in fact coast-to-coast but with the majority of the time spent in the northwest. I'm back home now and hope once again to get back on a bi-monthly or quarterly schedule.

As I mentioned in the last issue, JD-Argassy is changing and with the next issue the title will be "The Pulp Era". If you are a faaaanish fan and not interested in science fiction and the old pulp magazines, The Pulp Era will not be the zine for you. Any subscribers that do not wish The Pulp Era may write and recieve Conversation for the remainder of their subscription. All faaanish material that I publish will now be in Conversation.

The Pulp Era will be a serious fanzine devoted to the old pulp magazines and the new books of science fiction and fantasy. "Superfan" by John Berry will now appear in Conversation as will the faaanish-type news from this area. The Pulp Era will continue the artfolios and will attempt to bring the best of fanArt to its readers.

As noted, I've spent the past nine months traveling with the majority of that time spent in Idaho. Of that time, I spent almost a month and a half in Idaho Falls. Naturally, Ed Wood, Chuck Ammon and myself spent considerable time together. Ed and I spent many evenings together talking over the field and bemoaning the fact that very few good, serious articles on the field were appearing in fanzines anymore. I explained to Ed the change I meant to take place in JD-Argassy and of the emphasis I intended to place on the pulp magazines (my great love and collection) and that I was planning a title change in the zine. We both thought on this for several days coming up with many titles. One night, Chuck Ammon, myself and Ed were sitting in "The Banjo String" (a local club) talking a little bit of evrything (we had just been to the community players) when Ed suddenly said "How about The Pulp Era, that should describe just what you have in mind." I agreed, I liked the title, and that is what it will be. Many thanks to Ed Wood who thought of it. This issue is dedicated to Ed Wood. Not only for his thoughts on my zine and coming up with the new title, but for actively working for the betterment of the science-fiction and fantasy field. Ed is not the type of person who wishes gain and BNF status for faaaanishness but is one that is really interested in the field and works for its betterment. A really wonderful person to know, to talk to, to work with. In my mind Ed Wood

along with Sam Moskowitz and Norm Metcalf, is probably one of the best authorities on the field that can be found anywhere.

Of course I visited many fans on my travels. Another one is what I would consider the top artist (along with Dave Prosser) in the fanzine field today. He has done considerable work for my zines along with work in Amra, Yandro, and several other of the top fanzines of today. Our next issue will feature an Artfolio by him. George Barr. George is a young fellow (early twenties), and one heck of a nice fellow to sit and talk with. I visited him at his home my first trip through Salt Lake (along with Joan and Gregg Calkins) and on my second trip through we got together for a dinner and then talked until the wee hours in my room at the Hotel Utah. You'll see considerable of George's work in The Pulp Era, and I don't see how he can miss in the professional field.

You will notice that subscription rates have once again changed. The single copy price is now 35¢. Subscriptions are as follows. 5 issues for \$1.50. 10 issues for \$2.75. This is due to the longer length of the zine and to the postal increases that will be coming up. Another reminder.....I've had a number of zines returned because the subscriber has not sent me a change of address. Under the new postal regulations a postman cannot find you even if you have only moved a few doors away and he lives in the same apartment with you. If it cost me 6¢ to send the zine to you, they charge me 8¢ for returning it. I cannot resend it to you under those conditions. So, if you are moving, send your new address to me at once or you will miss issues unless you send both the return and forwarding postage.

I have quite a stack here at the present time that I will not remail without additional postage being sent to me.

Another thing that this increase is causing is my chopping heavily on my trading list and to the number of old friends that I have been sending the zine to at no charge. Check the boxes on the contents page or this may well be the last issue you receive. I'm willing to lose money for the pleasure I get from publishing the zine, but if you want to receive it, you'll have to go along too. Just the postage and the envelopes average 10¢ per copy. Add the paper, masters, etc. and you come to a tidy sum each issue when you publish over 300 copies.

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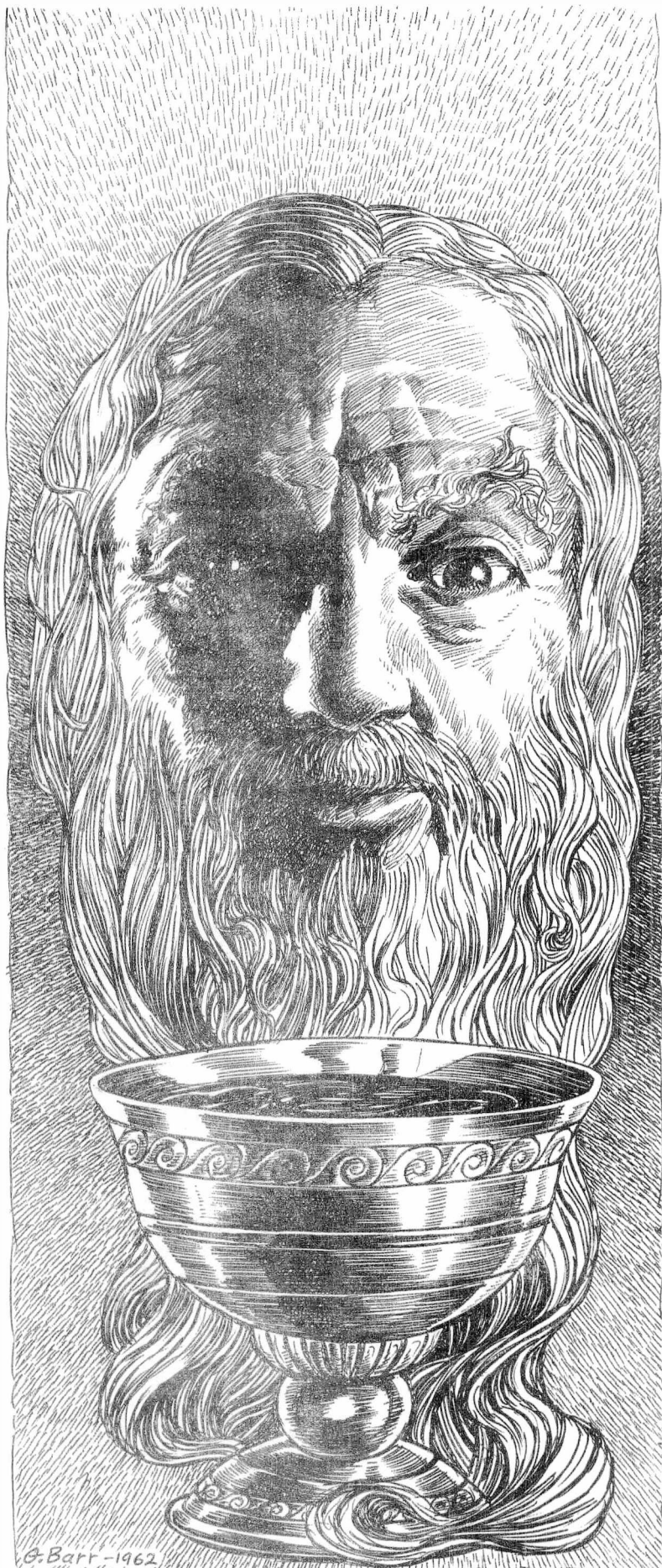
Weird Tales

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WEIRD TALES : A MEMOIR

by August Derleth

A west coast writer of some prominence in the western/detective field not long ago wrote about the stories in Weird Tales that they were "unhealthy," and that "Almost every story had a whipping scene in it. Perversion ran rampant through the stories." No reader of the magazine would recognize it from this completely fabricated description, yet this was given currency because the writer, careless of the truth, claimed that it was a true picture of the magazine at the time he studied it -- and actually wrote a few insignificant stories for it -- not more than half a dozen. It was an outrageous statement to make, and to make especially in print, and it was flatly untrue, not only of the period of the magazine to which the writer referred, but of any period in the 31-year history of Weird Tales.

"The Unique Magazine" was established early in 1923 in Indianapolis, under the editorial guidance of Edwin Baird. Baird was a writer of mystery and detective stories, with a journalistic background; he was the editor of a successful detective-mystery story magazine and as qualified to begin this new venture as any other, though the founding capital was actually not his, but J. C. Henneberger's. The magazine was published by Baird until mid-1924, beginning with the issue for March 1923, and ending with the Anniversary Number dated May-June-July 1924; then it was taken over by Farnsworth Wright, one of its contributors, who had been a newspaperman and music critic. Wright continued as owner until 1937, when Weird Tales was bought by William J. Delaney, an advertising salesman, who had previously bought Short Stories from Doubleday and Company, and as editor until January 1940, when the editor of Short Stories, Dorothy McIlwraith, assumed the editorship in the face of Wright's declining health (Wright died soon after), and continued in that position until the magazine was forced into bankruptcy by its printers. Its final issue was that for September 1954.

With its inauguration in 1923, Weird Tales had a modest success but this did not last. Wright, with William Sprenger, had a difficult time making a go of it when he took over, and the rates of payment to authors remained low -- and checks were often delayed many months after publication. This pattern, at first changed under the Delaney ownership, was shortly resumed until inflation and rising costs doomed Weird Tales, together with many other pulp magazines, and, indeed, more or less ended the period of pulp fiction magazines.

The issues under Edwin Baird's editorship brought into print in the fantasy field some established names -- Willard Hawkins, Anthony Rudd, Hamilton Craigie, Otis Adelbert Kline, Harold Ward -- all in Volume One, Number One, and all names familiar to pulp

magazine readers; in addition, there were such oldtimers as Artemus Calloway, Francis Grierson, H. I. Shumway, Vincent Starrett, Francis Stevens, Paul Annixter, Oscar Shisgall and a few others among established writers. But far more significant than these names were the names of newer and younger contributors, many of whom were to lend prestige to the magazine with the quality of their work and/or the brilliance of their imagination. Baird's new writers -- and in a sense, Baird's literary discoveries -- included many of the luminaries who were to develop into outstanding writers in fantasy -- H. P. Lovecraft, Henry S. Whitehead, Clark Ashton Smith, Paul Suter, Frank Owen, and Seabury Quinn.

Indeed, a substantial number of Weird Tales' "classic" stories were published while Edwin Baird edited the magazine, stories like Paul Suter's Beyond the Door, H. P. Lovecraft's The Rats in the Walls, Seabury Quinn's The Phantom Farmhouse, Anthony Rudd's Ooze, Harold Ward's The Bodymaster, E. L. Hampton's The Old Burying Ground, The Loved Dead, a story by C. M. Eddy, with some assist by H. P. Lovecraft, which brought down the wrath of the censors on the magazine, H. S. Whitehead's Tea Leaves, and other stories by Lovecraft and Suter.

Weird Tales' covers were almost always eye-catching. I made the acquaintance of the magazine with its second issue, when the local druggist, from whom I was wont to buy Secret Service every week, suggested that I might be interested in this new magazine -- which, as soon as I had a quarter, I bought. Its cover illustrated The Whispering Thing, by Laurie McClintock and Culpeper Chunn, and it certainly drew the eye. Once I had read this and discovered that there had been an earlier one, I lost no more time than it took me to get another quarter to send for the March 1923 issue, and thereafter bought every issue, as well as every issue of the magazines that followed it to the stands -- Amazing Stories, Strange Tales, Astounding Stories, Tales of Magic & Mystery, etc.

The magazine drew a substantial body of faithful adherents. The Eyrie, a department for letters and editorial comment, was established in the first issue, and was carried on throughout the life of the magazine, though it was substantially cut in the McIlwraith period. In The Eyrie readers not only commended or attacked stories, but also threshed out issues, though in the main there were only two issues dividing the clientele. One was the covers drawn by Margaret Brundage, in which buxom women seemed to many readers to play far too prominent a role (no pun intended). Mrs. Brundage was a considerable artist; perhaps if she had not been, her cover illustrations would not have drawn so much criticism. Actually, this sort of illustration was editorial policy at that time, in the 1930's; it was a frank and shameless pandering to an audience that might be induced to buy the magazine in the hope of finding salacious reading between its covers. In that regard, unhappily for such buyers, the magazine was a disappointment; the cover illustrations, regardless of Mrs. Brundage's skill, did not faithfully represent the contents of the magazine or even of

any one issue, for all that they purported to reflect scenes from from stories illustrated. Protests notwithstanding, editorial policy on the Brundage covers did not waver, but the issue did divide the contributors and some of the readers, for most of the contributors understandably did not want to appear in a magazine, the covers of which suggested kinship rather with Breezy Stories than with the average staid run of pulps.

The other issue was an all too familiar one in the field of fantasy. That was the issue of science fiction -- whether it should be published more frequently, or not. There have always been a noisy few people in the domain of the fantastic who have held that science fiction is not a development of fantasy; such an attitude, of course, is nonsense, for the field of fantasy includes everything from imaginative whimsy to science fiction, whether that science fiction is of gadgetry and space opera or of electronics, of psionics, or of the various mind sciences. Actually, Weird Tales began publishing science fiction as apart from other fantasy almost from the beginning. The Faus/Wooding Extraordinary Experiment of Dr. Calgroni in the very first issue was science fiction of a sort, and A. G. Birch's The Moon Terror (later published in book form in a not very successful experiment in publishing inaugurated but not continued by the magazine) was typical science fiction of the period. This was serialized, beginning with the third issue of Weird Tales, that for May 1923, and thereafter there followed various other tales in this genre -- including Austin Hall's People of the Comet, Francis Steven's Sunfire, Farnsworth Wright's Adventure in the Fourth Dimension, J. M. Leahy's Draconda, J. Schlossel's Invaders from Outside, Nictzin Dyalhis' When the Green Star Waned, and others.

The controversy had, like other controversies, no perceptible effect on editorial policy. The pro-science fiction readers were led by an articulate youngster named F. J. Ackerman (Forrie to all you on the inside); he appeared in print frequently urging that more science fiction stories be run in the magazine, even after science fiction had two magazines devoted to it entirely in competition with Weird Tales. And perhaps the most effective arguments against more science fiction were set forth either directly or indirectly by H. P. Lovecraft. Despite the best efforts of both partisan groups, however, Weird Tales continued to publish more or less the same ratio of stories, a ratio which provided for only a minimum number of science fiction tales until the McIlwraith years, when science fiction all but disappeared from the pages of Weird Tales, as was eminently proper, since at this time there were over a dozen magazines devoted to science fiction alone, as against but two or three given over to non-science fiction fantasy.

There were not many stories in the magazine which aroused protest on the score of brutality or too much cold grue. There were minor protests about The Loved Dead, about George Fielding Eliot's The Copper Bowl, and one or two other tales as being too horrible; but there was far more irritated protest over humor in weird stories, which rose to a feverish pitch briefly after publication of J. U. Giesy's The Wicked Flea, in the issue for October 1925. And there were occasional, usually sarcastic, protests about

the gory battles in Robert E. Howard's tales. But Howard had a large and devoted following, and protests about his stories fell upon deaf ears, though it was significant that attempts at humor in the magazine after publication of the Giesy story were few and far between.

For all that the team of Henneberger and Baird conceived the magazine and breathed life into it, Weird Tales was principally Farnsworth Wright's baby. He nurtured it, struggled with it, made many wise and some unwise decisions -- among the latter, notably, two costly side ventures -- another magazine, Oriental Stories, and some paper-covered Shakespeare reprints with illustrations by Virgil Finlay, both of which ventures sadly depleted the slowly accumulated earnings of Weird Tales, and, I suspect, contributed as much as Wright's uncertain health to the ultimate sale of the magazine to Delaney. Wright had suffered throughout all his years at Weird Tales with Parkinson's Disease, which certainly did not make his lot as editor any easier.

Of Wright's bad decisions -- he turned down some first-rate stories, among them Lovecraft's The Colour out of Space, and At the Mountains of Madness, for instance, among others -- it ought always to be borne in mind that Wright was trying to please a singular variety of customers with every issue; that he endured a great many exceptions taken by his contributors; that he was not always at his best and most acute; for example, my records show that of the almost 150 stories of mine published in Weird Tales, Wright accepted some of them after initial rejection, unchanged save occasionally for retyping, on the third, fifth, thirteenth, tenth submissions -- some fifteen stories, or a tenth of the total, were so accepted, sometimes no doubt because Wright had need of a filler of just the story's length at the time it reached his desk, sometimes perhaps out of sheer exhaustion, but sometimes also because he had forgotten his previous rejection of it.

Wright abandoned none of the outstanding new authors turned up by Baird; he subsequently published the bulk of Lovecraft's work, as he did that of Smith and Whitehead; and he turned up new authors on his own, among them Robert E. Howard, myself (he bought my first story, Bat's Belfry - May 1925 - in the summer of 1924, when I was 15), E. Hoffman Price, Frank Belknap Long, Tennessee Williams, Arthur J. Burks, H. Warner Munn, Murray Leinster, Harry Harrison Kroll, Archie Binns, Mark Schorer, Everil Worrell, Edmond Hamilton, H. F. Arnold, Donald Wandrei, Henry Kuttner, C. L. Moore, Robert Bloch, Carl Jacobi, Ray Bradbury, Fritz Leiber, Manly Wade Wellman, and others. Abandoning, finally, the policy of publishing reprints of Poe, Bierce, Irving, and others in the public domain, Wright bought stories by eminent British writers in the domain of the weird -- E. F. Benson, Algernon Blackwood, G. G. Pendarves, and others -- and by Gaston Leroux, a famous French writer in the field of the detective mystery, and the author of a weird mystery classic, The Phantom of the Opera.

True, not many of the contributors to Weird Tales ever made much of a mark in the world of letters outside the pages of that

magazine; it was not expected that they ought to, though some of them did, perhaps the most famous of them all today being Tennessee Williams, who is certainly the foremost American dramatist of our time. But the overwhelming number of contributors were the authors of carefully wrought stories which vied for attention with some pretty bad writing and some of classic or near classic stature. The vast number of the stories were competent in plot and style, and a surprising number were outstanding.

Authors who appeared regularly in the magazine during Wright's editorial years rapidly built up a following, but it never seemed to me that any author's following was built up at the expense of any other author. Perhaps the most popular authors in the history of Weird Tales were H. P. Lovecraft, Seabury Quinn, and Robert E. Howard; close to them in popularity were certainly Edmond Hamilton, and Clark Ashton Smith and, in the later years, Ray Bradbury. I would be inclined to doubt that the rest of us had very much of a following among the vast majority of the readers. Occasional stories built up enthusiastic responses -- stories like Everil Worrell's The Canal, Grege La Spina's Invaders from the Dark, Robert E. Howard's Wolfshead, Lovecraft's The Outsider, Wandrei's The Red Brain, and others; and series characters, as they customarily do, had much support -- C. L. Moore's Northwest Smith and Jirel of Joiry, Seabury Quinn's Jules de Grandin, Howard's Conan and Solomon Kane, Manly Wellman's John Thunstone, and similar characters -- but in the main, the consistently good work of such writers as Lovecraft, Howard, and others was the magnet which held the audience.

It was inevitable, as Weird Tales aged, that readers would begin to mourn "the old days" -- at first of Baird, then of Wright; but, as a matter of fact, the overall quality of the magazine did not change nearly so much as the readers; for it never seems to occur to readers that their own tastes alter, and, even more important, that the more they read in any given field, by just so much more does their frame of reference widen, and their critical faculties sharpen. The young newcomer to Weird Tales in the 1920's, the 1930's, the 1940's, and the 1950's had the same thrill of discovery; it was the longtime reader who was blase' and who had undergone change, and he was not mourning so much that fancied change in the magazine as he was the days of his youth when his sense of wonder was more keen and his world was younger; he was mourning, in fact, the unhappy truth that he could not go home again -- i. e., back to his youthful pleasures with the same delight and wonder.

It is the experience of every reader that many of the books of his youth which gave him the keenest pleasure have lost their magic in middle age. As a case in point, let me cite Grege La Spina's Invaders from the Dark, which I thought second only to Dracula when first I read it at its appearance in Weird Tales, and which, thirty years later, I found hopelessly dated and virtually unreadable except as a period piece. It is this sort of experience which is at the root of mourning for "the good old days in the history of any magazine.

The audience for fantasy in the United States is not very large. While I have not had access to the circulation figures of Weird Tales, I would be very much surprised to learn that at any time its circulation surpassed 75,000. This figure, which was a respectable if modest circulation in the 1920-1940 period, was not enough in the 1950's in the face of rising costs and inflation. Delaney and Miss McIlwraith strove valiantly to keep Weird Tales alive, finally resorting to reprints from the files and to digest size for the magazine which had begun and remained for most of its life, save for a few issues in slick magazine format, the standard pulp magazine size.

Miss McIlwraith also strove to get new blood into the magazine; she brought to its pages such writers as Frank Gruber, H. Bedford-Jones, Nelson Bond, and others, but she by no means abandoned the old writers who had helped make Weird Tales pre-eminent in its field, even to the extent of buying Zealia Bishop's Lovecraft-revised novella, The Mound, and other stories of a like nature. The Trail of Cthulhu in its entirety was published while she was editor of the magazine, and she continued to feature Bloch, Bradbury, Kuttner, Smith, D. H. Keller, Quinn, Leiber and all the onetime contributors who chose to send in acceptable stories; for, truth to tell, while there have been enough hacks to turn out conventional pieces in the field, there have never been enough really good writers in the genre of fantasy to satisfy the compact body of readers devoted to the fantastic story.

But time and change could not be surmounted. It was evident by 1950 that a decline in the popularity of fantasy of all kinds was not to be avoided. I foresaw it in Arkham House sales, and retrenched, while one by one the competitors of Arkham House went out of business. But a magazine appearing on a regular schedule cannot retrench; it must continue to appear. Weird Tales did so; reprints appeared more often in its pages; payments to contributors and finally contributors fell behind, while the expenses of publication continued to mount inexorably, and when the end came for Weird Tales in Sept. 1954, it had actually been expected by many contributors and readers for years prior to that date.

Weird Tales suspended after a relatively long life, as magazines go, and its end took place when many other magazines, too, were gradually disappearing from the stands. The "boom" in fantasy was over; many a science fiction magazine was no loss, for the strongest remained; but the passing of Weird Tales left a void that could not be filled, even by that fine Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction which had come into being some years before. But by the time of its passing, many of its most favored and best writers had gone, too -- Lovecraft, Whitehead, Howard in particular -- and in a very real sense, its time had run out, it had come full circle.

August Derleth

Nostralgia.

SCENTS OF WONDER

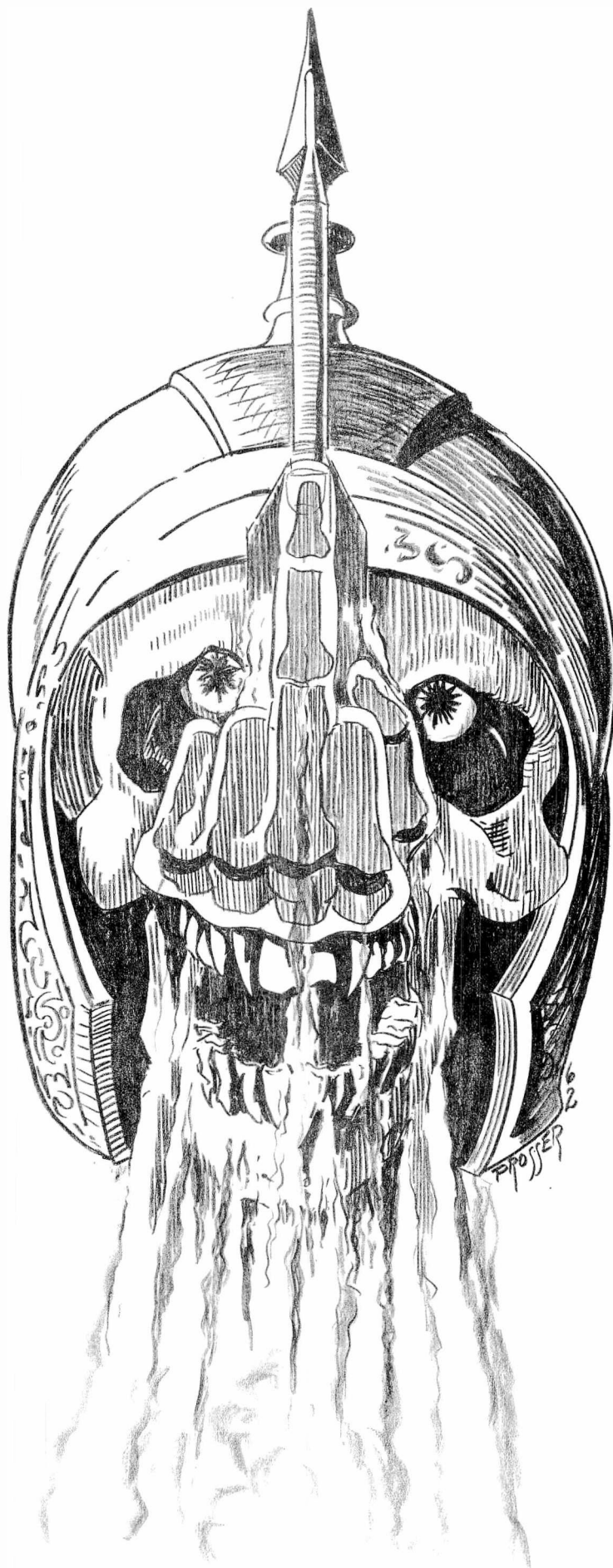
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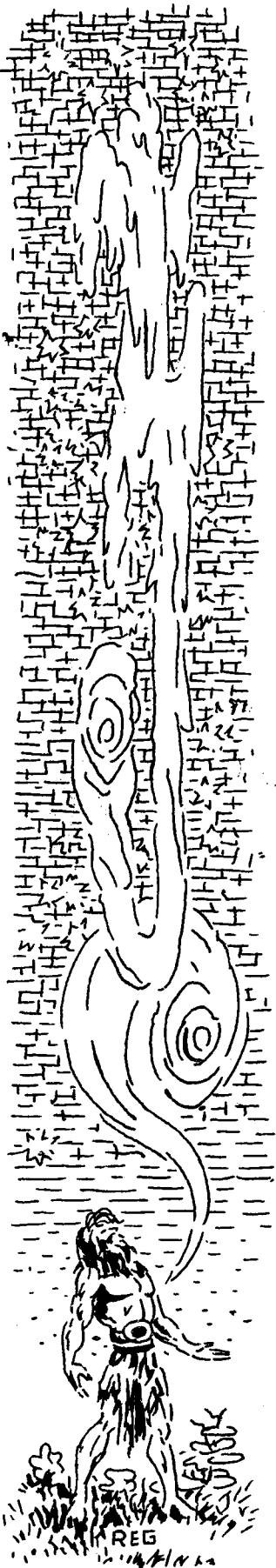
By

Eric Bentcliffe

I've been recalling some of my 'scents of wonder' recently, and the double-entendre is intentional for nothing evokes my sense of wonder as does that peculiar effluvium possessed by the pulp magazines of yesteryear. It's a pleasant scent, it brings to mind immediately memories of blasting-spaceships, Martian ruins beneath the twin moons, and of to-hell-with-science adventure midst the stars.

In case you haven't gathered in the fact already, I'll admit here and now that I'm a sucker for space-opera. Good space-opera, that is. I enjoy most types of s-f, I like a 'cold' detailed technical story or a 'warm',





emotional appeal to the senses, but I get the biggest kick out of a swashbuckling, thundering, story of zwilniks rampaging through space. I like a story to be logical, but it doesn't have to be scientifically accurate to please me. I'm quite in favor of space-warps, time-travel, extrasensory-perception, and all the other well known gimmicks of the s-f writer. I'm not knowledgeable about science to know whether they are possible of achievement, and quite frankly, I don't really care! I like the robust tale of men and aliens amidst the stars, and I'm quite prepared to go along with any good authors depiction of what it's like out there -- and the more exotic he cares to make it, the better I like it.

It's not surprising then, that one of my favorite magazines when it comes to a spot of re-reading is Startling Stories. The other Better Publications magazines get unearthed quite frequently too, but Startling generally had the long novels, and that's the form I prefer my s-f in. Most fans have their own opinion of when the GOLDEN AGE of science-fiction was, and most fans will agree that not every s-f magazine had its particular GOLDEN AGE during the same period -- to a great extent it all depends on when the particular protagonist discovered s-f. As far as Startling is concerned I'd date the GOLDEN AGE from the September 1948 issue.

Personally, while ASF has been rated as my alltime favorite magazine over the years, I find that a great deal of my favorite s-f was published in SS from this date until its lamented demise in 1955. During this period, Startling published some of the most entertaining s-f novels to see print -- it also published some real clunkers, but the general standard was high enough for me to forgive these. Even Kendell Foster Crossen and Manning Draco....

Care to join me in a dive into the fragrant back-file for a spot of nostalgia?

Starting with that September 1948 issue, which featured that amusing, entertaining yarn, 'What Mad Universe', author Fredric Brown. This one had about everything including upcropping s-f fans, and I'm inclined to the view that it's still the best science-fiction novel that Fred Brown has penned to

date. I've read and re-read it quite a number of times and I still find it holds the interest and provides quite a few chuckles -- as literature it was something of a mixture, but it was fun.

In the next issue was one of my all-time favorite science-fiction novels, Arthur C. Clarke's evocative 'Against the Fall of Night'. Arthur has written some very fine s-f since this yarn appeared, but he's never quite achieved again the almost poetic mood created in this story. I recall meeting him not too long after this story appeared and he seemed rather ashamed of it, which is possibly the reason he saw fit to re-write it into 'City and the Stars', which, while it possibly has more literary merit lacks almost entirely the mood of the original. That, my friends, was a story. November 1948, was the issue, SS was bi-monthly at this time.

The next author to excell himself in the pages of Startling was Murray Leinster with one of his best pieces of sheer space-opera. 'The Black Galaxy', a novel which deservedly belongs alongside Doc Smith's epics and John W. Campbell's 'Mightiest Machine' and 'Incredible Planet'. Allright, so it was derivative, but who cares. This was in the March 1949 issue, and Leinster was back again in November of that year with an entertaining tale of parallel-worlds titled not particularly originally 'The Other World'. This issue is also worth taking note of in that it virtually began the Finlay Era in SS. Virgil Finlay was responsible for illustrating the greater number of lead novels from this issue on, and I associate him mentally with SS far more than with any of the other magazines he drew for, his style eminently 'fitted' this magazine of entertaining s-f.

1950 started off rather inauspiciously with van Vogts 'The Shadow Men', but made up for this rather poor vVogt by later publishing John D. MacDonald's 'Wine of the Dreamers' in the May issue, and -- better still -- what I consider to be Edmond Hamilton's best novel, 'The City at Worlds End'. To digress for a moment, I recall last fall driving through the Adirondacks and discussing with Ruth Kyle what a fine film this story would make if properly handled. That's a s-f film I would go to see.

Jack Vance finished the year off with a fair pot-boiler 'The Five Gold Bands', but the best of Vance was yet to come. 1951 started off, again, on a not very high note with Raymond Z. Gallun and 'Passport to Jupiter', but soon hit the highspots with three particularly enjoyable yarns; 'The Starmen of Llydris', by Leigh Brackett in the March issue -- 'House of Many Worlds' by Sam Merwin (who was more than somewhat responsible for SS high standard around this period) in the September issue -- and, 'The Star Watcher's' by Eric Frank Russell in November. Also worthy of mention is Fletcher Pratt's 'The Seed From Space' one of the strangest 'invasion' from space stories in a style which reminds me oddly of much of the material John Brunner is currently writing for Science-Fantasy. I can't quite decide whether the Brackett or the Merwin was the highspot of this Startling year, they both gave me a great deal of reading pleasure. Definitely a Vintage Year, I think.

With the January 1952 issue, Startling went monthly and Whereas there seems to have been an initial drop in the quality of the stories, when compared with 1950 anyway, things soon picked up. The April issue featured Sprague de Camp's fine 'The Glory That Was' with its excellently depicted background....this too, would make an excellent movie. George O. Smith came well into the running for the best (SS) Novel of the Year with 'Hellflower' a rollicking yarn of interstellar narcotics. Phillip Jose Farmer had published 'The Lovers', not one of my favorite stories but one which caused a greater furor in fandom (and the Startling lettercolumn) than just about any story preceding Heinlein's 'Starship Trooper'. An entertaining story, but I never could see what all the hoo-ha was about. This year also saw the publication of an abridged version of Jack Williamson's 'Dragon's Island', in the June issue; and Kuttner at his best with 'Well of the Worlds'. These stories were good, but without doubt I think, The novel of the Year was Jack Vance's 'The Big Planet'. This was Vance at his best, a story rich in exotic -- convincingly exotic detail, and one which I've read with undiminished pleasure several times.

1953 was the year Startling made an attempt to go slick and trimmed its pulp-page edges -- it was also the year of the Big Slump in the U. S. A. and SS reverted from monthly publication to bi-monthly about the middle of the year. It wasn't a particularly good year; authors were reluctant to write for a field which didn't appear (then) to have any future, and editors had to make do with what they could get. Startling didn't do too badly though, and ex-editor Sam Merwin wrote three pretty good novels which helped save the year from mediocrity. In the March issue he had 'Centaurus', in August came his sequel to 'House of Many Worlds', 'Journey to Misenum', followed by 'The White Widows', which has since been published by Galaxy-Beacon in a slightly souped up version....retitled 'The Sex War'. The story which I best recall from 1953 though, is the George O. Smith yarn 'Troubled Star', this may be because of my fondness for puns -- which the title is -- but I don't think so, it makes quite hilarious reading even the second or third time around. This is the story of Video-idol Dusty Britten of the TV space-patrol who suddenly finds himself mixed up with real (?) spacemen. This one has also been souped up by Galaxy-Beacon, but the pornographic insertions don't exactly help the story and I'd advise reading it in the original version, if you can. This one would also make an enjoyable movie.

This was the period when the vapid stories of Kendell Foster Crossen were appearing in every issue of SS's companion Thrilling Wonder Stories, and some of this authors prolific output also, alas, found its way into Startling. Reasonably amusing stuff, I suppose, but it lacked the occasional peal of thunder necessary even in an 'entertainment'.

Sadly, 1954 saw the beginning of the end for Startling, and its companion publications. The January issue was the last bi-monthly one, and the magazine saw only seven more quarterly issues. The year still had three quite memorable novels though, and I think the best of the bunch was Jack Vance's 'The Houses of Iszm', a finely depicted tale of the planet where spaceships literally grew on tree's

....and of the attempt to steal the closely guarded seed. George O. Smith had 'Spacemen Lost' in the Fall issue, and Poul Anderson made one of his rare appearances in SS in the Winter issue with 'The Snows Of Ganymede'.

The Spring 1955 issue saw Startling combined with TWS and Fantastic Story Quarterly. The last issue was Fall of that year. I, at least, will now observe a few moments silence at the magazines passing.

Throughout this brief resume of what I consider to be the GOLDEN AGE of Startling Stories I've concentrated on the feature novels; SS also published some fine novelettes and short stories, but it was the long (by magazine standards) novels in which SS excelled. And in one other manner....

Whenever I pick up a copy of Startling, whether I read any of the stories or not, I can never resist turning to the letter-column. I think it's indicative that since the folding of SS and its companion magazines, the number of fanzine titles has risen considerably -- way back when they were still being published, a goodly number of fans were too busy writing for 'The Ether Vibrates' to put out a fanzine. This gusty, brawling letter-column was, over the years, probably fandoms best recruiting center and a glance at only one issue will bring back a host of memories. Those were The Days, indeed.

I doubt that the writing of this article will achieve anything other than the evoking of a few fond memories in kindred souls, and it just might tempt a few of the people who weren't around Then, into delving into some more fortunate fans back-file -- if it does, well, they may be disappointed for this GOLDEN AGE, like all other 'Golden Ages' had to be experienced in its flower rather than in retrospect.

The writing of this article has evoked a lot of pleasant memories for me, and I suppose that's my reason for writing it.

....Eric Bentcliffe.

Next issue: THE SHADOW by Dean Grennell, Thumbing the Munsey Files by Bill Evans, Artfolio by George Barr, the start of John Nitka's Argosy Index, plus some other features not yet decided.

Let me know what magazines and/or authors you would like featured in articles in upcoming issues. I'll try to find an authority to do them.

Lynn Hickman

A N A R T F O L I O B Y E D D I E J O N E S

This is the second of a series of artfolios that will be published in The Pulp Era.

The next one will be by George Barr and will appear in issue #61.



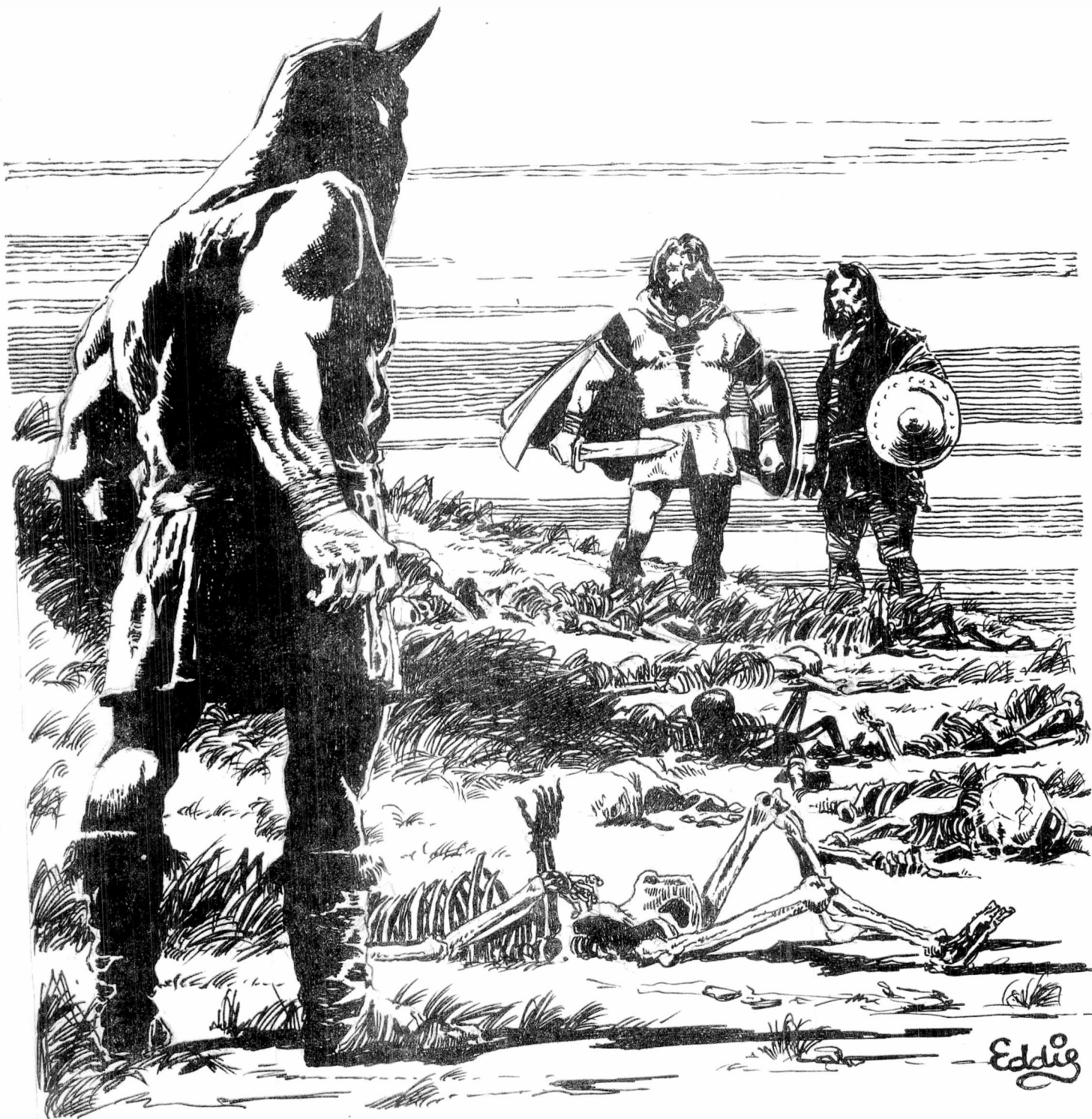
John Carter - Mars

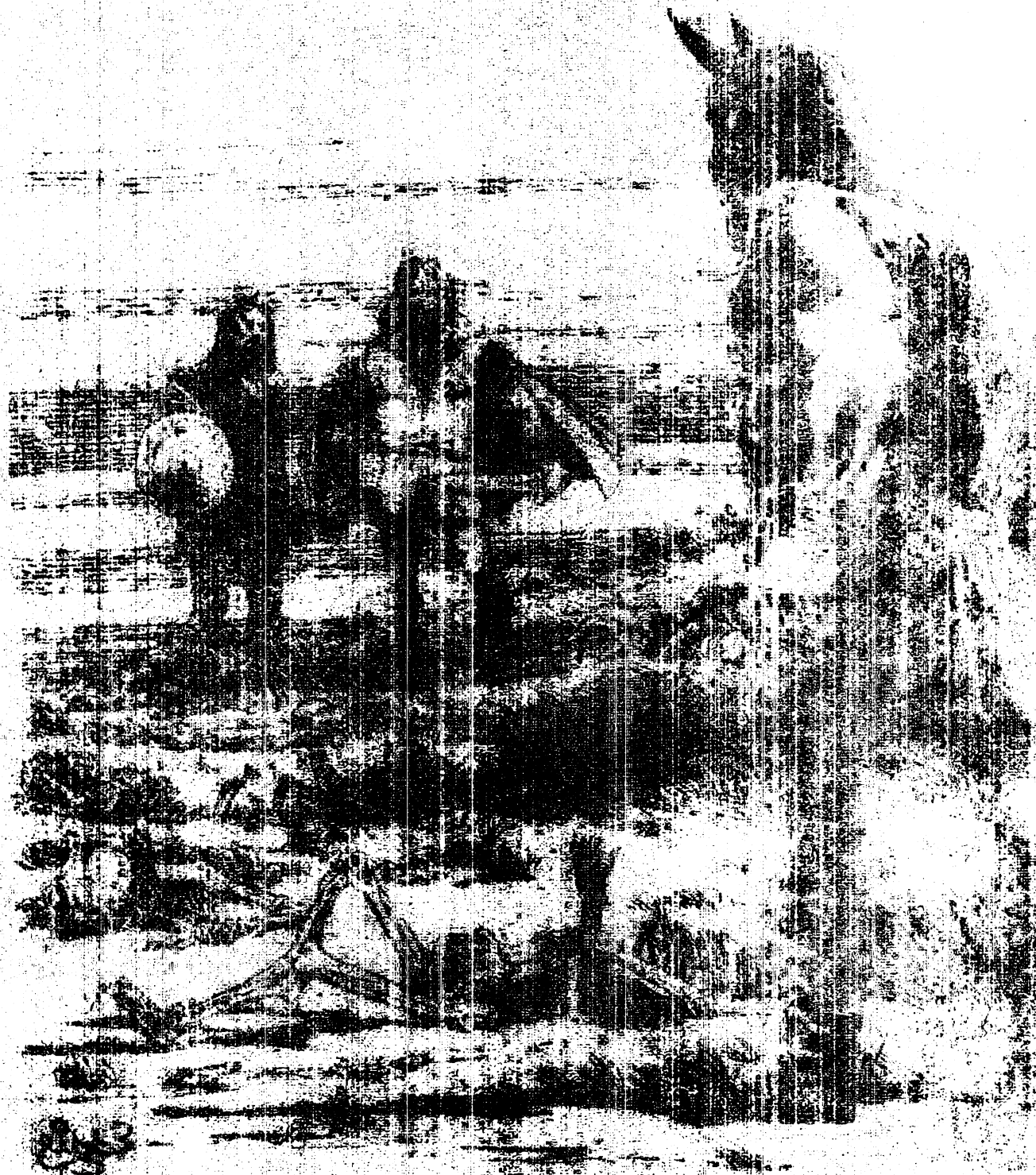


John Carter













The Curse-2962 A.D.







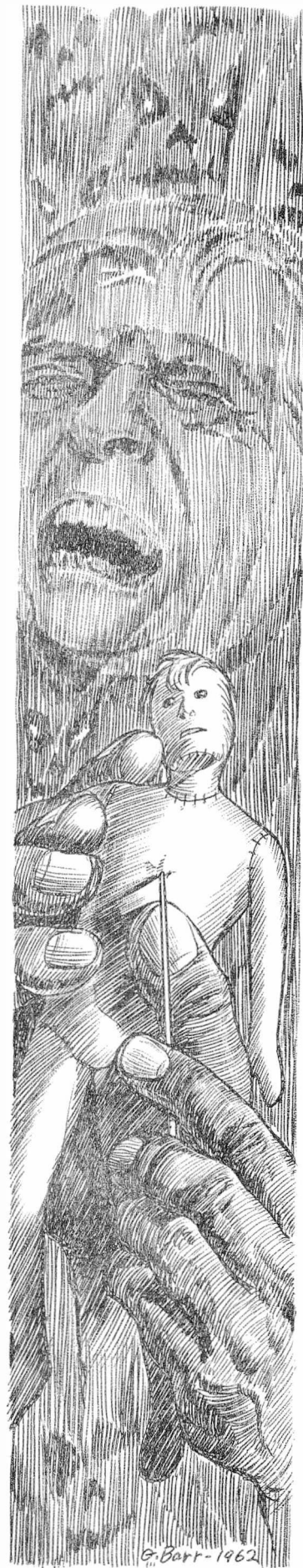


Many letters of comment have come in on issue #59, but space limitations will only allow the printing of a few. Redd Boggs article on Wild West Weekly was highly regarded as was the art folio by Dave Prosser.

LETTERS

Wilkie Conner: I was deeply touched that you dedicated JD-A #59 to me. Those were good times we had twelve years ago. I muchly enjoyed Redd Boggs' I Remember Wild West Weekly....the article was exceptionally well written and showed evidence of much research and hard work. I loved WWW and Redd's description of the stories brought back many memories of pleasant, sun-filled childhood days....lazing on the front porch....sitting in the pasture behind our house....sitting by the spring in the woods....lying in the bed at night with a flashlight to read by....selling Grit to get 3W money....borrowing the magazine from a friendly newsdealer when I didn't have nor couldn't get the dime. Did you ever borrow a magazine from a newsstand? These days and times newsdealers don't even want you to pick up a magazine to glance through it. They have signs such as "No Free Reading" (in one newsstand uptown) and "Leave Magazines Alone" "Don't pick up magazines unless buying..." etc. Of course when I see such signs, I leave quietly and don't read, pick up, nor buy! The hardest amount of money to come by though, was twenty-five cents with which to buy Spicy Western, Spicy Adventures, Spicy Detective, etc. These were the forerunners of todays outspoken paperback sex books. I read a story (by Walker Tompkins, I think) in Spicy Western I'll never forget: a cowboy ordered a guitar from a mail order house and received by mistake, a bra, size 38, B cup. His traveling around hunting someone who could wear the bra made exciting reading. When he found her, she, of course, was hunting someone who could play a guitar.

Harry Warner, Jr.: Redd Boggs' article was wonderful! The only trouble with me as a reader of it is that I never read westerns in the pulp magazines. This is a perplexing matter, because I liked the pulps for science fiction and sports stories and a little later for Argosy's assortment of all sorts of stories. I think that the movies caused this. Westerns were the only movies that I cared for from the time I was 10 or 11 years old. I also attended some of the first musicals after sound was added to the pictures, but mostly because my parents were inter-



ested. Ken Maynard, Buck Jones, and one other cowboy whose name escapes me for the moment were my prime favorites, although I also tolerated Tim McCoy. Remember, this was after the heyday of William Hart and Tom Mix, and I don't think I ever saw them in a new release. The advent of the singing cowboy was the thing that soured me on them. ((Do you remember Lefty Flynn, Harry? Always drew lefty and wore chaps. Can't even remember now if they were talkies or not. Actually Ken Maynard was the first of the singing cowboys, and he sang in most of his pictures that I saw. I'll always remember him singing the Strawberry Roan. LH)) Kissing women I could tolerate, not standing there and singing songs when adventure beckoned. If Gene Autry and all the other cowboys with guitars hadn't become popular, it's possible that I'd still attend every western I could locate and I might never have developed a real interest in the science fiction magazines. But even though I can't compare my own precise parallel to Redd's reading experiences, I found this of major interest. I can add one morsel of information that he overlooked. Western fandom is mentioned in Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men", of all places. There's one spot in the story where the characters talk about a western pulp and the note in the letter column that was written by a ranch hand they'd known a year or two before.

The Prosser pages are mostly excellent. They confirm my impression that he's first-rate when he doesn't take himself or his subject seriously. Most of these sardonic pictures remind me of the spirit that you find in the 19th century plates that are in old editions of Dickens.

I'm glad to see you devoting so much space to science fiction in book form.

Vernell Coriell: Just a line re Redd's WWW article -- enjoyed every nostalgic word of it. Thought some of the fans would like to know the names of various Saalfeld Little-Big Books that featured WWW characters.

Spook Riders on the Overland	(Freckles Malone)	Ward M. Stevens
The Ranger and the Cowboy	(Sonny Tabor)	" " "
Buckskin and Bullets	(Kid Wolf)	" " "
Desert Justice	(" ")	" " "
Bullets Across the Border	(Billy the Kid)	Guy L. Maynard
Johnny Forty-five		Andrew A. Griffin
The Crimson Cloak	(Circle J)	Cleve Endicott
The Masked Man of the Mesa	(" ")	" "

There are some more of these that I think are WWW characters, like Nevada Whalen and The Border Eagle but you'll have to check with Redd to be sure. These things have no Street & Smith copyright on them listed so they might just be originals. ((Redd?))

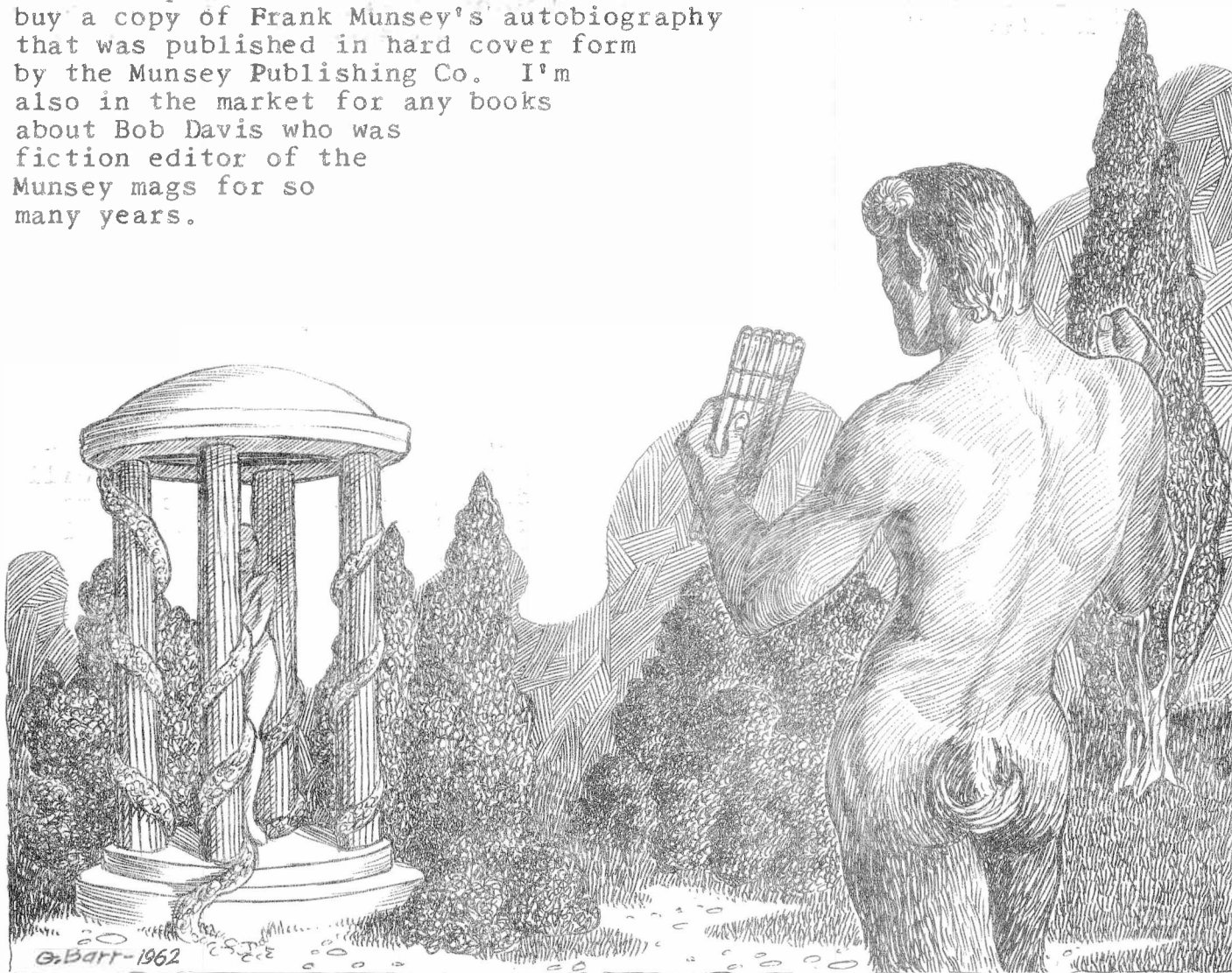
F O R S A L E Many issues of Wonder Stories, Strange Tales, Blue Book, The Popular Magazine, Complete Stories, Munsey's Magazine, Argosy, Argosy All Story, Railroad & Current Mechanics and many more. Send want list.

Lynn A. Hickman

BOOKS

Maurice Gardner was kind enough to loan me his copy of the book 'Forty Years--Forty Millions, The Career of Frank A. Munsey'. This book by George Britt was published by Farrar & Rinehart, Inc. in 1935.

Frank A. Munsey was a fabulous person, and while this book is more on his publishing career in the newspaper field rather than of his magazines on which he built his great fortune, it is very interesting and will help me on background material for future articles on the Munsey Publications. I would like a copy of this book for my own library, so if any one has a copy for sale please let me know. I would also like to buy a copy of Frank Munsey's autobiography that was published in hard cover form by the Munsey Publishing Co. I'm also in the market for any books about Bob Davis who was fiction editor of the Munsey mags for so many years.



I'm very happy to see Ace Books reprinting the Edgar Rice Burroughs books. At 40¢ they are quite a bargain. Kudos should go to Don Wollheim for having Krenkel do the covers. He has done a beautiful job. No need to mention the stories here. All fans young and old that like a good fantasy-adventure should read all the Burroughs books. Another Ace book that should be purchased is The House On The Borderland by William Hope Hodgson. A weird fantasy first published in 1907 it is a bargain at 35¢. An A rating for these.

Again, much has happened since writing the above. I've finally left the road and settled down after 19 years of traveling. I'm now living in Hannibal, Missouri where I hope to stay for some time. It seems strange to be to be able to be home every night. As soon as I'm settled properly and the Christmas rush is over at the store, I'll settle down to a regular publishing schedule again. Probably bi-monthly or quarterly. It will depend on the amount of time that I have and the material that I have to print.

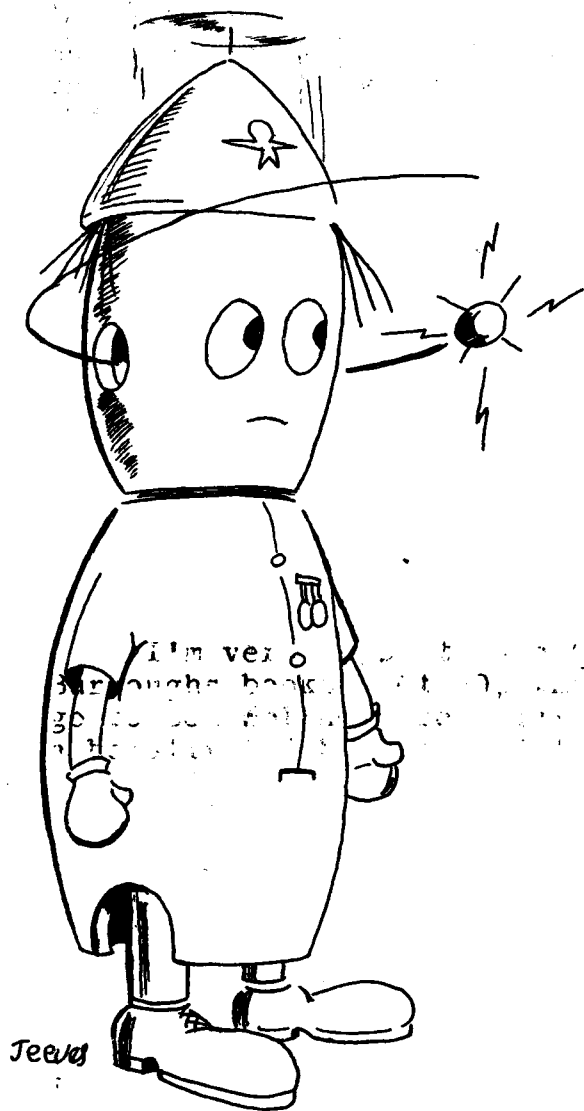
Most of the reviews that I had intended for this section are now dated, but the next issue will once again include a book section.

In case there are any of you that have wondered what has happened to me during the past year, it was wanting to leave the road after so many years, finding the type job I wanted and a company that I wanted to associate with. After laying off a couple of months and with quite a bit a searching I went with Sears, Roebuck & Co. in their C.S.O. division and am now managing the Sears Store here in Hannibal.

So far I've enjoyed it very much. I have a huge home here in Hannibal that allows me room for my fanning and my collection and I especially enjoy the pleasure of being home every night.

Of course, Hannibal is a sort of fannish wasteland. I'm going to have to look for a new paper supplier, and will have

34 monthly... will depend on the amount of time that I have and the material that I have to print



to get my Multilith supplies from St. Louis which is 125 miles to the south of Hannibal.

I've had a few fannish visitors stop by since I've moved. Vernell Coriell and his brother Ev. Jeremy Barry is here this weekend and was actually the sparkplug that got me to clean and crank up the Multilith and finish this issue.

There may be a deviation in the line-up for next issue that I announced on page 17. That was printed sometime ago and some of the material has not been sent, probably because of my inactivity this past year and a half.

Definate is THE SHADOW by Dean Grennell, DOWN MEMORY LANE by Terry Jeeves and an article by John Phillifent. I'm not yet sure the artfolio by George Barr will reach me in time, but there will be considerable artwork by George in the issue.

Hannibal has many points of interest, especially the Mark Twain museums, cave, etc. We have toured these but haven't as yet visited the new memorial at Florida, Mo., Twain's birthplace. As soon as the weather is nice enough for picnicing, we'll take a Sunday to drive over there.

Hannibal would be an ideal place for a regional convention except that during the tourist season accomidations are hard to find unless you arrive early or have your reservation in well ahead of time.

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