

# PHANTASY PRESS



No. 50



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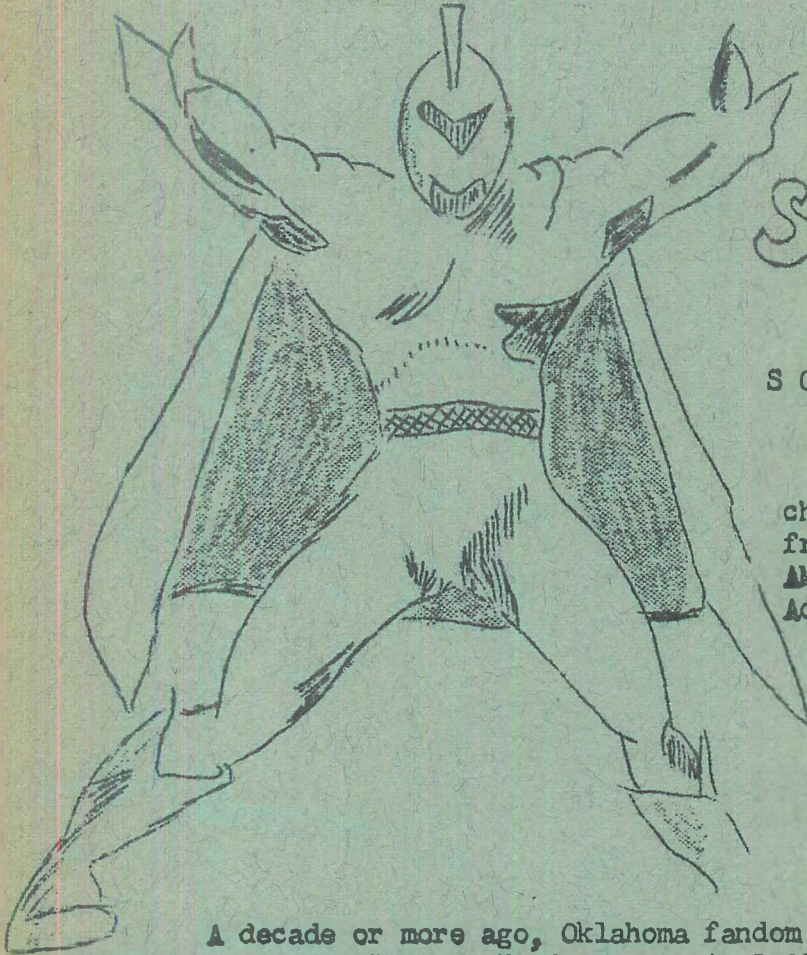
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## SHA-ZAM!

We Visit The  
SOUTHWESTERN CON

Illustration is that of the character "Iron Clad" and is taken from the March, 1965 issue of AMATEUR KOMIX, edited by Gary Acord, of Dallas, Texas.

A decade or more ago, Oklahoma fandom went through a second revival, following the original First Fandom surge in 1935-39. A group of new-era fans established a thriving science fiction fan club and created the first "Oklacon" in 1953. Attendance was good, interest was keen and as a result a series of annual conclaves followed - in Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Enid.

These cons were well-planned with good programs, well-advertised and were well-attended. Many prominent fans took the time to come to the Sooner State events, including Don Ford, Lyn Hickman, Ron Ellick and others. At the 1959 Oklacon-V in Enid, a large number of Texans attended and managed to swing the event to Dallas, where it was re-named the "Southwestercon-6".

This con was really gung-ho, and featured Marion Zimmer Bradley, pro-author, as guest of honor and Forrest J. Ackerman as toastmaster. A neat printed program and a rocket display by the U.S. Navy, newspaper & t-v coverage and a fine banquet and dance stand out in my memory. Other highlights were a most interesting masquerade ball, a display of beautiful oil paintings by Morris Scott Dollens and the world premiere of a s-f movie was brought to Dallas as a private showing to con members. Tom Reamy and Randy Brown were co-chairmen and "names" attending included Harry Moore, Kent Moomaw, Kent Corey, as well as the Honorary Chairman, old-time fan Dale Hart.



By contrast, the 1966 Southwestercon was something else. I attended it, but found it to be scientificfictional by association only. The whole thing was devoted to the comic book collectors, with fringe aspects of s-f. The Burroughs element was strong and a few s-f prozines and Weird Tales were to be seen on the sale tables, but most of the 50 or so who attended were comic magazine collectors.

The affair was held July 23rd and 24th at the Hotel Southland in downtown Dallas. Chairman was Larry Herndon, who is one of apparently a great host of comic fanzine editors. He puts out a 40-page photo-offset gine, titled "Star - Studded Comics", which is an acknowledged leader in this world of fandom. Larry is a real nice young man and did a fine job in getting up this con. I also enjoyed getting to meet Larry's dad - a very nice gentleman. Plans are underway to hold a repeat of this affair at Houston next summer.

The guest of honor was Dave Keller and I learned he does the script for the pro "Capt. Atom" and other comics put out by Charlton. I also learned he created the Batman gum cards. He conducted a question & answer session on the "New York scene" and gave the lowdown on editors, authors, artists and publishers. It was obvious he was an authority on these matters. He was very pleasant and well-liked.

I took with me my only old comic - the first issue of Planet Comics, which was of interest to the fans, but the big thing that bugged them was my complete file of the five mimoed issues of Science Fiction, the fanzine put out in 1932 by Jerome Seigal with art by Joe Schuster - who, a few years later, was to gain lasting fame as the creator of Superman. A number of fans took pictures of me holding the mag open at a spread titled "Reign of the Superman", or borrowed it to have a pic taken of themselves holding it. And Dave Keller asked me to do a feature on the mag for him. So I had my small moment of glory!

The only person I knew there was Tom Reamy, who edits the pro-like fanzine Trumpet. Tom looked no different than he did eight years ago. Tom, like some others, had a table loaded with comic books & got a rush from the stream of fans, who were pricing, buying and trading mags like mad.

My big treat of the whole affair was getting to meet someone I greatly admire - the man who puts out the most attractive fanzine of all: Camille Cazedessus. "Caz" to hundreds of readers, is the creator and guiding light of ERB-dom, of course. I was able to buy the last four issues (no's 14 to 17) that I needed, and they are something indeed, with marvelous full-color covers by Larry Ivey, Neal McDonald and Reed Crandall. I told him that my daughter, Danaline, is a great admirer of his zine and, nice guy that he is, he autographed one issue to her and inscribed "Best wishes & down with the Green Hornet - Caz." I also got a picture of he and I together in front of a large movie poster of Flash Gordon. Caz has recently moved from Baton Rouge to Colorado and I told him I hope to get up his way & visit with him and Fapan Chuck Hansen & other Colorado fans. He brought a great amount of Edgar Rice Burroughs material and "sword & soccery" artwork which was of great interest to the crowd.

Another treat was the fact that the announced movie, King Kong, was not available and they substituted a far better film - the epic "Things to Come." Caz & I sat together and really enjoyed marvelling at the great Paul-like buildings and the fine photography of this 1935 masterpiece taken from H.G. Wells.

I enjoyed the Southwestercon, even if it was entirely different from the last one. And Zowie! Zap! Pow! Shades of the Green Lantern - it was fun!

#### ON THE COVER

The recent showing of H.G. Well's "Things to Come" film at the 1966 Southwestercon inspired the cover scene for this issue. The sketch was itself inspired by the motion picture and is the work of James Rogers - Oklahoma's great artist of the First Fandom era. James was the art editor for my pioneer fanzine, the SCIENCE FICTION NEWS, and drew this for me in 1936, but the magazine ceased publication before I could use it, and this marks its first appearance.





# Indian STOMP DANCE

You do not have to live long in Oklahoma to realize that Indians form a sizable portion of the population. Many of them hold prominent positions, as for example, being president of Phillips Petroleum Co. Redskins excel in sports and Jim Thorpe was the greatest athlete of all times. Two Cherokees - Sequoyah, one of only 12 men in all history to create an alphabet, and the immortal Will Rogers, are honored by statues in the National Hall of Fame in Washington.

The word Oklahoma means "Home of the Red Man" and is of Choctaw origin. And it is, what with over 120,000 Indians representing 63 tribes - more than all other states combined. Most of them live as anyone else these days, but the glory and excitement of the past can be seen in many pageants over the state. Best known of these is the American Indian Exposition each August at Anadarko. Also near by is "Indian City, USA" - seven authentic villages, populated by Plains Indians the year round, performing activities exactly as in the days before the white man came.

In Southwest Oklahoma where I live there are many Indians, it being the ancestral home of the Wichitas and stronghold of the fierce Comanches. There is a big Indian Bureau hospital here, many churches, and the old Ft. Sill Indian School, with students sent here from as far away as Arizona and New Mexico.

Only 20 miles south of Lawton is held one of the best shows, the Walters Pow-Wow. It takes place in a beautiful wooded park and redmen and their families come from near & far for four days of events dear to their hearts. By day, traditional Indian games take place and there is a constant visiting & greeting of friends not since for the year. This is all for the Indians themselves & not designed with the white man in mind. However, the whites do flock to it and are welcome, but for once they find themselves in the minority. It is interesting to stroll in the shade of giant trees & observe the many tents, trailer houses and, yes, teepees. Many smokes drift upward to the treetops as campfires herald beginning preparations for the evening meal. The park itself is filled with cars ranging from shiny new Cadillacs to rickety old Model A Fords and farm wagons. Darting about among the bronze-skinned adults are laughing, dark-eyed children, in the manner of all happy youngsters.

But it is by night that the park really comes to life, as their beloved tribal dances are performed and all night long the steady thumping of tom toms can be heard and tall spectral-like shadows leap and dart among the trees of Bever Creek.

Let me take you on a visit to the Pow Wow. The long, hot summer day has ended as we drive up, and with darkness a cool breeze springs up; born perhaps of that towering thunderhead in the distance whose flickering tongues of lightning hold promise of showers later in the night. But to the east, a full yellow moon hangs majestically against the deep blue of the night sky; serving as a magnificent backdrop to this, one of the most colorful and exciting spectacles to be seen in America today.

We find seats in a small grandstand facing the dance arena, which is lighted by bulbs strung in a great circle from tree to tree. As the seats fill, late-comers find places on the grass. Scores of dancers sit on benches and their costumes of bead work, feathers and soft skins are creations of dazzling beauty. Patterns of intricate



design adorn jackets, dresses, trousers and loin cloths. Entire families are in native dress, from wrinkled old chieftians to the smallest of children; all grave & proud of bearing, dignified in manner. Many Indian girls of startling beauty are to be seen, and from their number will be chosen the official princess.

On a wooden platform sit the guests, many of the older men in blankets, their hair in long braids beneath black western style hats. The chairman, Edgar Monetatchi welcomes the many friends of the red man, then paid tribute to the Indian war dead of the area. This leader of the Comanches pointed out the Pow Wow was formed after World War II to raise funds for families of men who had given their lives for their country. Edgar, a combat Marine himself, then introduced the guests, a 11 principal chiefs & each gravely acknowledged the applause. They represented many tribes of the Great Plains, including Kiowa, Caddo, Comanche, Arapaho, Apache, Choctaw, Cherokee, Pottawatomie, Wichita, plus a group of desert Navahos with their distinctive hand-wrought silverwork and even a few members of the oil-rich Osages of northeast Okla.

A prayer was next offered in native tongue by an aged chief. It was quite long, but the chant-like dignity of the quavery old voice held everyone's rapt attention as the old warrior called on the Great Father of all men to watch over his people in the coming year & to look with favor upon the dances to follow. Monetatchi then declared the Pow-Wow officially underway.

Abruptly, one of the drummers began a high-pitched chant and set a cadence on the huge drum on the ground before him. Other drummers around its rim began to join in & the tempo and volume increased until a deep booming echoed among the trees. First one, then a few, then more and more dancers move out & began the wild stomp dancing, until the entire arena is a blur of movement and fantastic color; the entire mass of figures gyrating around the massive drums in the center.

All of the dancers are interesting and it is fascinating to watch various individuals improvising steps as they go; their feet flying over the grass. Then you become aware that people around you are talking and pointing toward a certain dancer. "Look, it's Watchtaker!" or "See, there's Weegee!" You learn they are referring to George Watchtaker, or Weegee as he is nicknamed by his tribe - perhaps the finest dancer anywhere and many times named World Champion Dancer. He has won competitions everywhere, appeared on Ed Sullivan and in Mike Todd's "Around the World in 80 Days." He is a huge man, of magnificent stature, with however the most fantastic grace and he leaped, whirled and spun through an amazing repertoire.

As you listen to the continuous, almost hypnotic rhythm of the skin drums, the present seems almost to fade away from reality & one can almost feel that the time is indeed far in the past and you are peering through trees into an Indian village at ancient ceremonial rites. You find yourself keeping time with the rhythm & you lean forward to catch the weird, barbaric chant of the old men who sit the seat of honor around the great drums & impassively pound out the songs & dances that were old before the whiteman ever dreamed of sailing west; songs handed down for generations. Scores of braves & maidens strut, stomp & whirl endlessly beneath the trees & head-dresses of unbelievable beauty and fantastic design pass before you. Families join in, including blanket-dancers who form a giant circle that moves in a distinctive one-step cadence. Small children, each with their tiny headress or headbands, plume clusters and beautiful beadwork are manfully trying to keep up with the adults. Now faster spin the dancers as the drummers step up the tempo, louder boom the drums, higher reach the voices of the singers and now from some of the dancers, including Watchtaker, who are weaving their intricate patterns at dazzling speed, comes the high, sweet, haunting notes of reed flutes, piped in exultation over the sheer joy of the dance. Then, with one abrupt crash, the dance ends, with every dancer frozen in position. For a few moments there is complete silence as the dancers move to the sidelines then, as if shaking loose from a spell, wild applause and shouts of approval pour forth from the audience.

An intermission takes place and the crowds surge to several food stands,



# Smoke | Signals

-by-

DAN McPHAIL

The full majesty of the cold November night sky stretched its endless carpet of twinkling stars above the broad plains of western Oklahoma. The utter stillness of the night engulfed the lonely watcher as the ageless glory of the heavens looked down on earth.

Suddenly a star seemed to detach itself from its surroundings and plummeted earthward, and in its brief flight became a thing of breathless beauty - so much so the watcher felt a tug at his heart, a catch of his breath - as if he realized this was indeed a final fleeting glimpse of a lovely creation before it vanished from earthly eyes forever.

I have always felt I had the ability to express myself on paper. A great deal of my work is devoted to preparation of outlines, reports and articles. I have had some professional journalistic background and, in days past, I have been considered a pretty fair letter writer.

But I have found I simply cannot write something that I desire very much to do - a tribute to my Mother. I have made many efforts to put down in black and white the impressions I would like to convey to you, but failed. How I wish I had the magic touch of Harry Warner or Marion Bradley in order to properly say the things that are in my heart.

November 25th was Thanksgiving Day - a day when family clans traditionally gather and share a bountiful meal. In our family, such a meal, featuring ham or turkey, and great amounts of tasty accessories plus many kinds of pie beside pumpkin, was always a looked-forward-to event. All that could would be seated at Mother's old round dining table (with two extra leaves put in) while the youngest children would be seated at their own table in the kitchen. After the blessing, the round of food dishes would take place until everyone's plate was overflowing, and the air was thick with compliments for the cooks. And Mother and my sister and my wife would always brush them aside with mock-claims that everything did not come out quite as good as they had hoped for, but we knew they were pleased. Dad would always tell a favorite story about cowboy cooking in the old days; and we would all laugh as if we had never heard it before. Then, after the meal was cleared away, we would all talk over cups of coffee; and after awhile, my brother-in-law and my son and I would go outside in the crisp fall air and toss the football around with David, the young grandson. Some times other relatives would come by, or we would go out to Uncle Gate's place at the edge of Comanche; but usually we would take a drive out into the country for a last look at the sheer beauty of nature's fall display of leaves turned gold and brown, and



yellow and red. We always hated to see the day end and felt lonely as we drove away, with Mother and Dad standing in the yard waving at us as long as they could see us. But as we drove away, we knew that before long the even happier gathering for Christmas would make the old homestead rock with fun and happiness.

This year was different for us. Mom and Dad both died the day before Thanksgiving.

As a few of you know, my Mother was seriously ill and entered a hospital in January of 1964. But last June we all rejoiced when we were allowed to take her home & for awhile she was almost her old self and she and Dad were so happy being together again in the old home. But she took a turn for the worse and in September we had to take her back, where she became weaker each day.

In the quiet hours just before dawn on Thanksgiving eve, Mother closed her tired eyes for the last time, and the kind, gentle little soul that had been the real bulwark of strength and courage of our family for so long, had said her last goodbyes to those near her that she loved so much.

Some three hours later we told Dad the sad news. He was stricken with grief, of course, and cried quite a bit. He then walked slowly through the old garden and the orchard of the home place to my sister's house and comforted her for a few minutes and insisted on giving her a little money he had - "to help bring Minnie home." Then he went back home and lay across his bed and died without another word.

Events like these are so difficult to tell. They re-open wounds just beginning to heal, and sorrow returns like an all enveloping cloak of loneliness. A thousand times in recent months I have caught myself planning a trip home or reading something I would want to pass on to Mother and then have the cold fact stab your heart as you realize that never again could we share thoughts and dreams. How I miss the solace & the wise counsel of this wonderful, tiny woman and how I regret the unfinished discussions and the projects and plans and joys we can no longer share.

My mother! when I learn'd that thou wast dead,  
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?  
Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,  
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?  
Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unseen, a kiss;  
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss -  
Ah, that maternal smile! it answers - Yes.

(Cowper)

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"STOMP DANCE" (continued from page 4)

and during this time we talk with some of the dancers and learn that the head-dresses are symbolic of many things and usually represents a historical heritage or is of religious significance. Feathers, for example, are as the wings of the eagle: swift in flight, alert of eye and near to the Great Spirit Father. Side feathers & the ribbon or mink tail ornaments signify various individual traits, while bead work on the headband may be a reverent plea for personal betterment, a declaration of bravery or any of a host of other things. The number of feathers indicates personal achievements.

Finally, around midnight, we leave, although the dancing will continue on through the night. But we realize we have witnessed true Americana, a part of the life and lore of the original inhabitants of our continent, as perpetuated by their direct descendants.

So ends our trip. It is always a privilege to witness the great Watchtaker dance, and a pleasure to see the many other fine performers. You admire not only their crafts and dance skill but, even more, the pride and dignity they display. You feel glad that this beautiful art form is being preserved, with love and honor and pride, for the benefit of all of us.





Little Beaver