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putting this fanzine out every week
since early 1964. It has been going
as a free rider with SF WEEKLY for
a month or so, and is obtainable free
with that publication, which sells
at 14/\$1. Andy Porter handles that.
Anyone want to trade besides Ted
Pauls?

FIRST DRAFT #189

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'69 IN ST LOUIS WD BE GREAT!

THIS WEDNESDAY MORNING our female cat Sunny had three kittens by Mickey Mouse, our huge lovable black-and-white male. Sunny is a Ted White cat, Mickey a Lupoff cat with Silverberg Siamese blood. Now there is a Van Arnam breed of New York pussy cats. This may mean a great deal. There is also the possibility that it does not.

What does seem to mean a great deal is procreation vs book productivity.

Now I realize that doesn't make too much sense. But, consider. Two hours after I saw my daughter Wendy for the first time, I saw my first copy of my LOST IN SPACE novelization.

And about two hours after Cindy called me Wednesday morning to tell me the third kitten had been born, she called back and said Mike McInerney had gotten in my Belmont STAR GLADIATOR at Bookmasters.

At your leisure, insert here a pregnant pause. For effect.

This was especially effective in its impact on me because I had been assured that STAR GOODGIE's publication date was January 1968...hence I decided that it must have been the kittens. A little fertility is a wonderful thing.

The final crux is that ever since Ted White & I sold WHEN IN ROME to Pyramid in mid-'65, I have been making a career out of being a professional sf writer who had never had anything in print. By the time LOST IN SPACE came out, I had sold 3 novels and none had come out.

(Parenthesis: I had some words of mine in print, come to think of it. Four in FANTASTIC UNIVERSE, the title "Have Time, Will Travel" for Lin Carter's article there, and some eleven more as the first sentence in Ted White's SORCERESS OF QAR. Not precisely enough to build a solid reputation on...)

Anyway, from being an unknown sf fan I am now in the same month the author of two books. If you think this isn't causing tremendous seismic upheavals in my self-image, you are wrong. The trouble is, it's apt to take a while to take full effect. It took me quite a while to adjust to Lin, Ted, and Lee being published authors; and now that the Holy Lightning has strooken me twice between the eyeballs in two or three weeks, I've got a full-time job ahead of me just convincing myself that, after all these years of thinking of myself as being a Real Writer, I can finally prove it. Or at least that several publishers think I am. It's not that I'm suffering an Identity Crisis, don't get me wrong. I've always known I was the World's Greatest Poet, Critic, And Novelist. I just never had anything published before. (And of course they don't do much to prove my case, but that's another problem.)

Null-Q Press

Undecided Publication #287 (last issue wrongly numbered #282)

Rather stupidly, I failed to include a chapter-heading list with my ms of STAR GLADIATOR, tho I had delightedly titled all the chapters with what I considered phrases in the grand old manner. For the convenience and delectation, therefore, of those who might deign to read STAR GLADIATOR, here is its table of contents (Belmont pagination):

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I am, by the way, inordinately interested in people's opinion of my professional writing; if anybody knows of any reviews of any of my books, either in fan or pro press, I wd greatly appreciate hearing of same. Tho FD has a relatively wide distribution these days, I don't get all the fanzines by a long shot, and I'm not rich enough to afford a professional clipping service, just yet.

I might mention as a caution in passing that though my name is spelled correctly on the cover and within the covers of the book, the spine of STAR GLADIATOR credits it to one "Arnham." This takes away three of my very favorite letters and gives me an extra one I never wanted. My last name is Van Arnham, two independent words each title-capped (even if Dick Eney doesn't believe it...). The trouble with the spine error is that most people will continually see the misspelling as the book sits on their shelves (alphabetized incorrectly under "A"). This is something that doesn't so much irritate me (I've had, understandably, to put up with my name being butchered all my live; I'm used to that) as simply make me sad. So many thousands of people convinced my name is Arnham... *sigh*

Why cdn't I have a nice simple name like Carter or White?

IT WD BE INGENUOUS of me, I suppose, to pretend that I wasn't really aware that SF WEEKLY and, hence, FIRST DRAFT as of last month, is circulated to a couple of dozen pros in the field. My intent in making FD available to Andy's mailing list had nothing to do with the presence on his list of editors and other professional writers, but with the fact that SF WEEKLY mostly goes to fans. This is a fanzine; it shd go to fans. QED. It tickles me, of course, that some pros now will be reading this too, but (unless specifically stating otherwise in a particular case) I'm not writing to them. Still, it's difficult for me to write with my own relaxed, who-the-hell-cares style, when it is suddenly borne in on me that some of you people out there might think I'm Putting You On, or something. No, gang, FD has always been like this, whatever this is.

Did I hear somebody say, "Don't apologize"? (Or did they say, "Nebraska spinach"? Damned acoustics...) Hoping you are the sane...