



FADEAWAY #16 is a fanzine devoted to science fiction and related fields of interest, and is produced by **Robert Jennings, 29 Whiting Road, Oxford, MA 01540-2035** email fabficbks@aol.com Primary distribution is thru the Southern Fandom Press Alliance. Additional copies are sent to select individuals. Those individuals may receive the next issues by sending in an acceptable letter of comment on the issue they are now holding in their hands. Subscriptions are NOT accepted. Publication, hopefully, will be bi-monthly. This issue is the June-July 2010 issue, with primary distribution going thru SFPA Mailing #276.

I like to do these convention movie showings, helps me to relax. I just rejoined SFPA, so I thot I would take in a convention, get to see what fans are up to these days. Plus I enjoy watching some of these nostalgic old flicks from yesteryear. You're in the medical technology field, as I understand it? Must be interesting, new innovations happening all the time.

I suppose. Every new idea and innovation has the potential for great benefits, and, perhaps, misuse as well. But the Cold War is dead and gone now. Except for the religious lunatic terrorists, most of the world is busy melting down those guided missiles and hammering them into video games or the like.

I'd be surprised if you had. No, really. I'm pretty low profile because I'm in a pretty dull business. I sell books by mail order. I sell mostly science fiction and fantasy, fantasy war games, and comic books. I used do a few shows now and then, but I hardly do any at all these days.

Oh well, if you insist. I suppose we've got a few minutes or so to kill before the DVD disc can be extracted and we get to see the rest of the movie. These technical screw-ups can happen no matter how carefully you plan.

More cola? It always makes me thirsty, but that's just me, I guess.

I was born of poor but honest parents in a seventeen room plantation on the Wolf River basin in the semi-arid flats just west of Nashville, Tennessee. Kidnapped at the age of three, I was raised by wandering gypsies who took me to many parts of the world.

By age twelve I had become an accomplished pick-pocket and thief, and I'd seen the better parts of fifteen separate countries and some of the islands of Oceanina as well.

Having mastered my craft, I was sold into slavery to the Masters of the Illuminati Cult, whose aim, of course, is the world-wide domination of the human race and the subversion of all independent spirit.

I was under control of the dreaded Gnomes of Zurich, whose hidden cavern systems underlay the nation of Switzerland and parts of Northern Italy. Deep within these ancient labyrinths lay the relics and broken remains of the super scientific civilization which had colonized this planet before the development of Homo Sapiens or the rise of human civilization, back when the sun had blazed at near nova intensity millions of years in the past.

Of course I was fascinated by these majestic relics of a bygone age, and over the next seven years I learned how to manipulate many of these machines, which projected strange rays based on the destructive powers of our sun. Deep within the lead lined caverns of the Gnomes of Zurich, of course, the deadly and brain destroying rays of the sun were canceled out, and my intellect developed to unheard of levels.

Over the course of those seven years I learned many strange and mysterious things, including the power to cloud men's minds so they could not see me. With my friend and constant companion Margo, I decided to dedicate my life to aiding those in need, to righting wrongs, and punishing evildoers wherever I might encounter them, using my newfound powers to aid me.

Naturally, I never told the Lords of the Gnomes or other minions of the evil Society of the Illuminati of my new resolve. I dedicated myself to my lessons as they unfolded.

I learned how the world's chocolate production influences the financial empires of Europe and America. I learned how white sugar futures were the key to military strength in the Euro-Asian sphere of influence. I learned how barrels of molasses, not religious or tribal differences, were the root cause of the ceaseless wars and massacres on the African continent. Sugar, sugar derivatives, honey, chocolate, these were the keys of mystery and mastery by which the Illuminati manipulated and sought to control the destiny of humankind.

I secretly resolved never to rest until I destroyed their evil empire and restored Truth, Justice, and the Sanctity of the Home & Hearth to its rightful place which is humanity's true and just heritage.

Leaving the Gnomes on my first mission after graduation, ostensibly as their obedient agent, I accepted a job as a reporter on a great metropolitan newspaper. You may recall my work in breaking the "poisoned pop-cycle" case, and the other incident where I exposed and bested would-be crime czar "Daffy" Diabolik and his plan to move his nefarious protection racket to the candy stores and soda fountains of our fair city.

Those were good years for me. My work as a reporter gave me numerous opportunities whereby I could confront the world of crime and use my unique powers in the cause of justice. Many a kidnapper, counterfeiter, or hold-up artist felt the weight of my wrath. I was like a man drunk with power, turning all my ambitions into the battle to rid the city of crime and make the streets safe for decent God-fearing folk, and my successes were many indeed.

How blind can one be. Obsessed with the wrong doings to small time racketeers and petty criminals, I forgot the larger picture. While I was matching wits with smugglers and confidence men, the Illuminati were plotting world domination, and setting their plans into motion.

It became obvious that the plan for world domination needed two things to succeed. First, a lower population base was necessary for such a small group of conspirators as the Illuminati, no matter how well equipped, to gain or maintain absolute control. Secondly, more efficient means of communication and warfare would be needed. The twentieth century provided both. Radio, and the internal combustion engine opened up vast new areas for communication and for delivery of both people and weapons of destruction.

An agent of the Illuminati assassinated the Arch-Duke of Austria, nephew of the Emperor. Not only was Ferdinand well liked and respected throught the Austrian Empire, but he was also the only man with a workable plan to save the cumbersome and fragmenting imperial government from chaos when Franz Josef died. With one blow the Illuminati smashed the most respected monarchy in Europe and plunged three continents into a bloody war nobody wanted. Nobody, except, of course, the Gnomes of Zurich, whose keen brains had figured that only thru total warfare, and the waves of economic destruction that a world-wide war would bring, along with the depletion of the youth of the world, would they be able to wrest control from the various independent governments and bring the human race under their cruel sway.

World War One was perhaps the most destructive and brutal war ever fought. An entire generation of human life was exterminated in seven short years. The flower and the hope of the future was snuffed out completely.

Yet even this was not enough for the Gnomes of Zurich, who hit upon another plan to hasten the destruction of civilization and bring the human race to its knees. In 1918 they unleashed the first of a series of biological warfare elements. Within a few months the Influenza Epidemic was racing around the world, striking down millions in every land.

It was this final act which woke me from my self-satisfied stupor and turned my energies back to my true purpose. The ranks of the criminal world are filled daily. As fast as I could jail or kill them, ever more rushed in to take their places. Greed, lust, mad ambition for money and the things that money would buy made criminal activity a thriving enterprise.

These are the kind of people which local police and well meaning concerned citizens could, and indeed, should, deal with at a local level. It gives people a sense of dedication and pride to exert their flimsy morality and clean up their own local sewers of underworld activity.

I immediately readied special plans to counter the Illuminati plots. Thru my influence and the use of my mystic powers I was able to help arrange an end to the Great War, which had been scheduled to stretch out another fifteen years. I was able to break up the existing blocks of Europe into contiguous blocks of nations aligned by nationalistic and cultural background.

I reasoned that if Serbs had Serbian nations, and Slavs had Slavic nations, if the Checks had their own homeland and so on, that the world would be a more peaceful place. My supposition was wrong, of course, but in 1920 it seemed like a good idea.

The Illuminati were not finished. They launched twin agents in two separate parts of the globe, each with plans of government so preposterous that for several years I refused to believe they had any chance of success. How completely I underestimated the gullibility of the human animal. The Gnomes of Zurich were far more adept at manipulating and directing the tides of human emotion than I ever was.

So, a pip-squeak named Hitler, screaming about ludicrous racial and cultural difference between neighbors actually gained a large base of support in Germany during the late twenties. He solidified his power completely in the thirties.

Over in Russia I managed to assassinate Nicholai Lenin, one of the most dangerous and utterly ruthless Illuminati agents I have ever encountered, but I did not reckon with the backup agent, a man who took the name of Stalin. Stalin went on to become an even more dangerous threat than Lenin had been. In addition, he was almost insanely obsessive about his personal safety. I could never get near him to take him out of the picture the way I had done with Lenin.

Stalin was also very thorough and efficient in his own way. Lenin had destroyed thousands and set into motion plans for regulating and regimenting all human life within his sphere of influence. Stalin crushed the spirits of an entire people, and imposed his rule on others by simple military conquest. So far as extermination went, I stopped counting when he hit the fifteen million mark.

Then the Illuminati begin to doctor the sugar supply in the world's chocolate candies, and civilization went mad. Credit buying escalated, jazz music was unleashed, the stock market crashed, and world wide depression followed.

The world was ripe for Illuminati conquest, and to further their plans, the fiends introduced white chocolate, the single most destructive product ever encountered in human history. It was a triumph of Illuminati science. A single taste makes one a life-long addict. No one who has eaten white chocolate can go more than a few years without having it again, and each exposure weakens the brain, destroying large area having to do with decision making and self image.

White chocolate was the fad in Nazi Germany, and then in Russia. Soon it spread over the rest of Europe, and into China and Japan, then to the United States and Canada. It was everywhere, and there was nothing I could do to stop it.

And so it was at this point that I gave up the identity of The Shadow, leaving behind something of a legend which endured for some years to follow. I immediately took on the identity of a stage presence and performer, known in the west as Charles Chandler, but known in the orient and other parts of the globe as Chandu, The Magician. My mystical powers were at their height, and I determined to use them in my war against the Illuminati.

The world was on a collision course with another wave of mass destruction. Still, I did what I could. When I learned, thru various methods, that the Illuminati meant to reintroduce atomic weapons for the Nazis, using the super science of the ancients stored in the caverns beneath the earth, I was able to alert Albert Einstein and several other prominent scientists and provide them with the necessary information to get them started on their own atomic explosive device. It was, admittedly, very crude, compared to the horrors of the ancient weapons, but it did suffice.

I also helped lead the raid by British commands against the heavy-water plant in Norway where the Nazis, under Illuminati direction, of course, were distilling enough material to put the atomic devices of the ancients into operation. With the destruction of the heavy-water plant, as well as the cryolite distillation laboratory at Sweinfurt,

which had been disguised as a ball bearing plant, we put an end to any hopes the Illuminati had of mass producing atomic weapons.

Faced with the realization that the western atomic device, crude as it was, could blast right thru their protective barriers beneath the Swiss Alps, the Gnomes withdrew their support and most of their agents, and world peace was speedily restored.

But the plans of the Illuminati are never at rest, as I was soon to realize. Over the years I had come in contact with one or two other rogue agents, defectors from the Illuminati ranks, as I had become.

One of them, a newspaper reporter named Lane, had been especially useful in mobilizing the people of North America against Illuminati plans. The other, a Frenchman known only as Nabor, had helped organize the Free French Resistance movement against overwhelming odds.

In 1954 I received a message from Nabor. It seems the Illuminati were on the move again. They had targeted the French Empire as the best place to strike against world civilization, and had begun operations in late 1946.

I could recognize their tracks. They were spouting the same sort of propaganda they had used in the recent past—pure French blood vs. tainted Native blood. Native peoples thruout the French sphere, armed and stirred up by Illuminati agents, were now in very active rebellion, and the first great test of their efforts was coming to a climax on the Viet Nam peninsula.

The Viet Nam land mass is one of the most fertile in the world. This single piece of geography could easily feed most of the world's population if properly administered. Of course, this was something the Illuminati could not permit, hence, rebellion flared there. There was also a diversionary effort in North Africa, but the brunt of their efforts were in the far east.

The Illuminati had also managed to slip secondary agents, ex-Nazi SS and Gestapo men, into the French Foreign Legion, and then, with a double coup, the Legion had been given the mission of restoring peace in the Viet Nam provinces. This was very much like throwing gasoline onto a fire in order to douse the flames. Needless to say, what had been a small seed of discontent had rapidly become a full fledged and bloody rebellion.

I don't know what I expected to accomplish. For some reason Nabor felt that the French Foreign Legion post at Diem Bien Phau could help swing the tide.

The idea was that the Illuminati agents and followers at this command could be weeded out in the tried and true method used by the Foreign Legion for generations. Malcontents were sent to point duty, or to sentry posts in exposed regions, or took the first wave in an attack. Within a short time the Legion would be rid of its trouble makers, and Nabor felt that these methods would work well here as well. But we were too late.

The Illuminati knew of our coming and set a trap around the fortress at Diem Bien Phau. We were locked in against rebellious tribesmen fifty times our number, now mysteriously armed with the most modern weapons money could buy, pouring down a rain of destruction on our position.

We killed the Illuminati followers and their agents, and we didn't have to use any subtlety to do it either. Firing squads and lightning raids by Nabor, myself and the core group of loyal French officers took care of that. But after holding out for forty-five days, the Commander decided to try a Break Out. It did not succeed, and the fortress was completely overrun. It was 1954, the end of colonial rule in Viet Nam forever, and the end of the French Empire as well.

Nabor was killed. I was captured and taken back to the caverns beneath the Swiss Alps where years of "retraining" took place. I was forced to subsist on a diet of white chocolate and marshmallow cream cookies. I was forced to listen to pop culture music and hours of droning indoctrination interspersed by Walter Lantz cartoons until my resistance collapsed, and I accepted, and I believed.

But my years of independent training came to my rescue. In the tiniest corner of my mind I managed to hold out a spark of independent thought. I resisted the efforts of the torturers, and endured.

Finally, after twelve long years, the Gnomes felt I had been fully reeducated and bent once and for all to their will. But by now I was an old, old man, almost one hundred years old in fact. I underwent ten more years of youth restoration treatments to bring my age down to that of a man in his twenties.

At last, in the 1970's, with a hypnotic set of instructions implanted in my brain cells, I was set free, keyed with instructions that even I did not know or understand. I was established in the United States with a new identity. I have waited here, as have thousands of other deep planted agents, for the next moves, the final plans of the Illuminati plot to dominate the planet.

Then, at last, the Sign came. It came, as before, thru manipulation of the world's sugar supply. I had thought that a new wave of popularity for white chocolate would be the method, but I was wrong. It is so futile to try and second guess the Illuminati.

In December 1986 red M&Ms reappeared on the market. My programming went into effect. I performed certain acts which I cannot remember, and which my implanting prevents me from remembering. Instructions come to me on rock & roll records, which I must play backwards at slow speed to decipher, and then I perform other acts.

More time passed, and then Der Tag. In 2002 pastel M&Ms were introduced, and I knew the final act was about to unfold. Then, over Christmas 2009 personalized M&Ms, with customer messages written on them were introduced, and I received specific instructions. Among those instructions was to rejoin the Southern Fandom Press Alliance. Of course I obeyed.

I do not know whether my spark of resistance, or the years of training to overcome the efforts of the Illuminati count for anything or not. So far my efforts to rebel have been useless. Indeed, just to tell you this much has caused me quite a bit of pain. But I tell you anyway. I doubt it will be believed.

I don't know what the future holds. As I said, my mind is blank in many areas. I know we are all active, we deep planted agents, and I believe things will be coming to some focus of activity very soon, but what that focus may be I just don't know.

Why, thank you. Yes, it is good fudge, isn't it. Here, have another piece. I made the whole tray myself. The convention staff asked for help supplying snacks for the con suite and I was happy to help out. Yes, it's an old family recipe.

Your sister runs a small confectionery shop? Well, isn't that interesting. You know, if you really like this, I think I have the recipe here, someplace. No, really. You can have a copy. Good things are meant to be shared. I know how much everyone enjoys good home-made fudge, especially the kind that has white chocolate in it.

APPROACHING GEEZERHOOD Yes, like it or not, the years are whizzing past. It's 2010, which means according to my handy pocket calculator, that I will turn 67 years old this summer. Time marched on a lot faster than I figured it would.

Frankly I never paid much attention to age. For decades people always told me I looked much younger than my physical age, which was fine with me since I never paid much attention to how I looked anyway. Bad haircuts, and the whims of fashion never affected me much. My sartorial skills have been restricted to T-shirts in warm weather and sweaters in the cold weather, solid color polyester pants all year round.

But now, on those rare occasions when I actually look at myself in a mirror, I notice I am no longer a sort of youngish looking persons. I have some lines in my face. The hair is all still there, but instead of being brownish-grayish it is mostly whiteish. My mental age for the past few decades has been 27, but physically I seem to have moved way beyond that. I am now at that point where people refer to me as Mister Jennings. People ask me if I'm entitled to the senior discount. I am at that point where people begin to assume you are over the hill. Geezerdom is just around the corner.

Of course there is some little problem with terminology to begin with. What are the steps along the road to Geezerdom? Shouldn't I get to be an old foggy first, or maybe an old coot, or elderly perhaps, or even a gaffer before hitting true Geezer status? And of course, just a few steps beyond Geezerhood lies the shifting territory of Old Fart and Doddering Old Fool.

I have to say that a few things have jolted my sense of reality lately, and one of them was the realization that the days of freewheeling fandom have apparently pasted, gone like Prohibition, the roaring twenties or the old wild west.

When I contemplated rejoining SFPA, I decided to check on the situation for producing fanzines. I was in for a few rude awakenings. For example, the traditional means of producing fanzines seem not to exist any more. No more ditto machines, no more mimeographs. I was astonished to discover that not only are there almost no modern manufacturers of these traditional instruments of small press publication (at least in the USA), there are also almost no supplies. In particular, there are no mimeograph stencils.

I happen to still have a very nice Gestetner mimeo machine that used to work pretty well. I used it right up thru most of the 1990s to produce newsletters and ad sheets for my retail store, along with the occasional mail catalog offering. I closed the store in 2000 and went all mail order, and when I did that I did not print catalogs—I sell thru internet book sites, which has proven to be a very efficient and profitable system.

But I need to print a fanzine of some kind for SFPA, so I went looking for supplies and had that rude awakening. One of the most astonishing revelations to me was that Quill Office Supply, a mail order company founded by two science fiction fans specifically so they could obtain mimeo paper, stencils, correction fluid and the like at reasonable prices, now no longer carries ANY mimeo supplies of any kind! Talk about a kick in the head!

In fact, nobody does. After a lot of searching across the net I finally did find one company that sells mimeo stencils and ink and styluses and the like. But the prices are high. A quire of stencils for example, costs \$20, plus the ever popular shipping charge. That works out to about a buck a page, just for the stencils, not counting paper and ink.

Well, I have rummaged around the warehouse. I have plenty of ink, and I have close to a case of real mimeograph paper. In addition, as some of you might know, a Gestetner machine will print very nicely on almost any kind of paper, from rough and porous, to glossy smooth. Ink drying times may vary, but the Gestetner was always the Rolls Royce of the mimeograph industry.

Last night I dug around the piles of crap in the house and managed to turn up two old boxes of stencils, buried for lo these past ten or twelve years. I don't know if they are all dried out and useless or not, but I have sort of decided that I am going to produce a genuine fanzine, a mimeographed fanzine, and I will keep on producing mimeographed zines until I run out of ink and paper. I may even buy more stencils, even at the outrageous new prices, to use up these old supplies.

Howsomever, I also need to produce a different kind of publication, one that can present the various types of illos and photos I have in mind. Finding anybody around here who can do electro-stenciling any more seems like a lost cause. I did talk to the former Gestetner mimeo dealer, still in existence and selling the new line of Gestetner copiers and other materials of similar ilk, and he states that he might, just maybe, have that old electro stenciler in the back somewhere with a pile of eK-stencils. If so things will look brighter. If not, I will continue with more modern methods.

Thanks to the able assistance of friend and fellow member of the Radio Collectors of America, Vince Quilty, this very zine which you hold in your hands has been produced by those same-said Modern Methods. Well neigh unto witchcraft, these processes allow for certain things to be done that are most difficult using traditional mimeo methods.

In keeping up a non-existent tradition, I have decided that this new fanzine will take up the name and the numbering of my old science fiction fanzine *Fadeaway*. The new numbering will begin with #16, right where the old one left off back in the 1960s. It's Tradition, suh!

Copies of *Fadeaway* will go thru SFPA first and foremost. A limited number of additional copies will be sent to other potentially interested parties after the SFPA mailing date. If you are one of those other parties and would care to receive future copies, the price is a letter of comment, the traditional coin of the realm in science fiction fandom. Short thank-you notes or brief snippets about enjoying the issue and wanting the next copy won't do. A genuine letter of comment, touching on the subjects of the issue with your thots and opinions is what is required. Money will not buy you copies. Your genuine interest and interaction in the form of a letter of comment will. If response is forthcoming, in future issues a Letters Column will be added.

Letters of comment may be sent by US Mail, or thru email. The email address, again is: fabficbks@aol.com.

The death of traditional fandom also seems to have been brought on by the willing actions of the US Postal Service. In Ye Olden Days a fanzine could be sent out 3rd class. Third Class used to cost about 50% more than a 1st Class letter. So back in the very early 1960s, for example, a stamp cost four penniless, and for six pennies you could mail out your 24 page fanzine. This ratio continued to exist for a great many years. But at some point in time, the 1990s I suspect, the rates changed, and continued to change dramatically. Nowadays there is no 3rd Class Mail. Everything either goes 1st class (\$2.43 to send that self-same 24 page fanzine) or Media Mail (\$2.77 to send the 24 page zine). The economics make it virtually-impossible for the amateur enthusiast running off fifty or a hundred or so copies of his publications to survive.

There used to be fanzines for every sort of hobby, not just science fiction and comics. There were fanzines for stamp collectors, fans of old vaudeville, collectors of glass bottles, circus enthusiasts, treasure hunters, amateur sports, basket weaving, in short, amateur zines for every kind of hobby and pastime human beings might engage in.

Time marches on. In this case, it steamrolls on. The jump in postal rates wiped almost all the fanzines out. In order to get a break in postage rates today one needs a bulk mailing permit, with a yearly fee, but even more daunting, the minimum units per mailing is 300 pieces. How many amateur publications can hit 300 copies of their zine? Not too many. Individual fanzines are gone, and now that the Post Office is scrambling to find ways of

cutting down on the enormous deficit they are struggling with, I suspect somebody in their organization regrets wiping out the lucrative, easy handling amateur fanzine publishing provided.

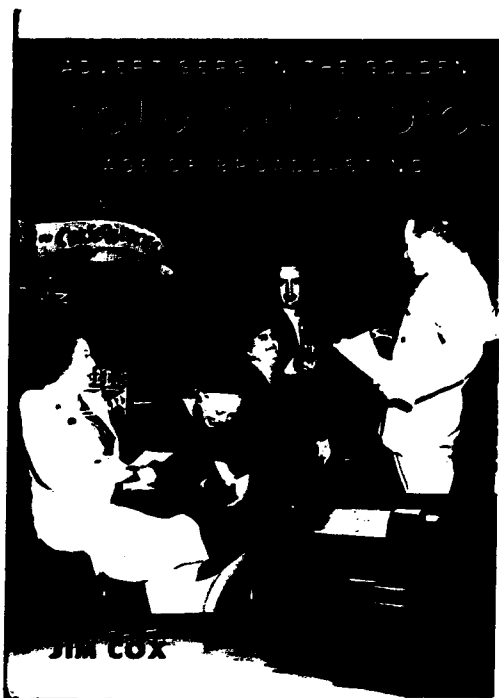
So, you shrug, who cares, you pathetic old foggy. The internet is where it's at these days. Cyberspace zines, cyberspace communication, chat rooms, email. Get with the program, link up with the whole world thru the web. Thanks, but no thanks. The internet seems to be populated mostly by people who have never learned the basics of good manners. Discussions seem to disintegrate, rapidly, to political bias, with name calling and insults replacing civility, while anything resembling intelligent discussion and commentary goes out the window. Even the discussion boards of the book selling venues with which I am connected are prey to the disease. It seems to me that the internet has become not the means of enhancing communication and intelligent discussion, but a method for enabling bullying and malicious slander, and I'd rather not be involved with that, thanks anyway.

In addition to Fadeaway, a copy of which you should be holding in your hands right now, there will be another publication from me, all mimeo as long as I can keep the mimeo going, which will be titled **The Typo King** and will be devoted almost entirely to SFPA mailing comments. One of the joys of writing on a computer is that I can make use of the greatest invention of the 20th century—spellchecker. Unfortunately I know of no method whereby I can transform the words I type with this computer onto mimeo stencil. If someone knows how to do that, please, contact me immediately. This means I will be typing stencils direct from my sturdy 1950s era Royal Typewriter, and as has been my unfortunate habit over the years, typos and spelling errors will abound. I have plenty of correction fluid left, and I will try to use it. Time has improved my typing and spelling skills slightly, but just a word of forewarning kiddies, I wasn't known as the King of Typos for nothing.

Finally, I would like to solicit articles and art from any who might be interested. As large as my ego is, I am not sure I can fill up all the pages of this publication every issue with my sparkling wit and opinion. A little help in the form of material from other folks, you, in particular, would be muchly appreciated. Written material is accepted by regular mail or by email. If you want to send something as an attached file, let me know in advance, since I normally do not open email with attachments. Illos can be submitted in advance by email (same thing with attachments), then if all is well, the actual illustrations should be sent by regular mail.

All the stuff in this issue is written by me, whether it says so or not. Illos are not by me, and will be properly credited when possible.





SOLD ON RADIO: Advertisers in the Golden Age of Broadcasting by Jim Cox

**September 2008; McFarland Publishing, Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640
7x10" hardback, 322 pages, (including index and bibliography, and a few photos), \$55.00 retail price**

Jim Cox has turned out another book on golden age radio, this time devoted to advertising and advertisers, the resource which actually powered network radio, and which continues to make modern radio successful. This is a volume long overdue in the radio collecting hobby. Without advertising revenue the networks and the local broadcasting stations which sprang up in this country during the 1920s and onward could not have survived. Money was the oil that both greased the gears and supplied the motive power to make radio work as an entertainment and a broadcasting medium.

But, as Mr. Cox points out, it wasn't always that way. Despite early efforts on the part of individual local broadcasters to make local commercial alliances (you give us some records from your store that we can play, and we'll mention your store name when we play them), there was much initial resistance to allowing overt advertising over the public airwaves. Many early radio stations were created by amateurs, but many others were established by businesses or corporations as a public service or a good will gesture, and the concept of advertising over their stations made them uncomfortable. The federal government which licensed stations to use the public airwaves was also opposed to the concept. This view was summed up by Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover at the 1922 national conference on broadcasting when he remarked "it is inconceivable that we should allow so great a possibility for service to be drowned by advertising clatter."

But as radio began to take hold with the public in the early and middle 1920s it rapidly became obvious that somebody besides benevolent corporations was going to have to pay the bills to keep these stations on the air, particularly if radio was going to broadcast anything besides classical music, uplifting moral messages and instructional lectures.

Mr. Cox does an admirable job of tracing the early development of advertising in the new medium. Going back to the very roots of advertising in this country, he traces the rise of print advertising and the birth of advertising agencies, and their wary glances at the unfolding world of audio broadcasting. By the middle of the 1920s many large stations were already accepting spot ads for a variety of products, and soon enough most other stations began grudgingly accepting different forms of advertising. Programs and entertainers named for the product sponsoring the program were created and suddenly the airwaves were awash with shows such as the A&P Gypsies, the Hotel Sinton Dance Band, Baldwin Piano Company Piano Interludes, Schrafft's Tea Room Orchestra, Wanamaker Organ Concerts and the like, where every mention of the name of the program or the name of the star was a none-too-subtle mention of the company or product which was sponsoring the program.

By 1927 when the Federal Radio Commission was established the tide had turned, with the government agency giving tacit approval to the use of advertising over the public airwaves. In the late 1920s stations and networks were accepting advertising for programs in which brief advertising messages, preferably refined and highbrow, would be heard at the very beginning and/or the end of the program. This sort of restraint didn't last very long either. The 1929 stock market crash followed by the Depression speeded the development of the full-blown radio advertisement, created by large advertising agencies.

Mr. Cox covers the incredibly rapid development of ad agency control over network radio in detail. The ad agencies working for their clients determined the best type of program a specific sponsor needed, worked up and developed that program concept, then either contacted with an independent producer, or more often, produced the entire program themselves in-house, and then purchased the on-air time from the network to broadcast the show.

The network supplied technicians, sound effects men, professional announcers if desired, as well as the air and wire services to get the show out to the public, but most of the program was completely controlled by the ad agency. This successful format rapidly overwhelmed the airwaves. Networks and regional co-ops may have silently ground their teeth at the loss of creative control, but they didn't voice too many complaints as long as the money kept rolling in.

This system, Mr. Cox notes, continued for well over a decade, until the late 1940s when William Paley over at CBS decided to wrest control back from the agencies by first siphoning off the big name talent, signing them as employees of the network instead of the ad agencies which created their shows, then producing their programs itself. These new network owned shows were then offered to sponsors, and if no sponsor showed up, they were aired as sustaining programs. When those programs gained an audience and attracted the attention of advertisers, the network sold time on the show, but retained control and full production of the program themselves. Creation of brand new dramas and comedies in-house without big name stars followed the same strategy. Remarkably, there was little opposition from the ad agencies to this new system. Buying time direct meant a potentially lower unit cost to their clients and potentially more profits for them without the heavy responsibilities involved in the creation process.

However, Mr. Cox is also quick to note that the clutching hands of the agencies did not really fall away until television came on the scene in the early 1950s. The cost of producing television programs was generally so expensive that very few ad agencies could justify the costs of doing it themselves. Interestingly enough, when television began to strangle network radio, it was the networks who became extraordinarily creative in finding ways to induce advertisers to continue to pour money into radio, and the extremely high cost of television production was one of their prime fulcrum points. By allowing multiple sponsorships, incidental spot ads, taggers, and opening-spot advertising, the major broadcasting units were able to keep network radio programs alive until the early 1960s.

Mr. Cox's book is divided into several sections, including the history and commercialization of network radio, a section devoted to the leading advertisers during radio's golden age, with a separate look at smaller sponsors, a glance at the development and presumed accuracy of the rating systems, an appendix which details variants and methods used in radio advertising, and a glossary of advertising and broadcasting terms.

The section on the big name companies who purchased the ads and financed the programs in the golden age of radio is particularly interesting. You might call this the Secret Origins of name brands, and often those origins make fascinating reading. The inventors and entrepreneurs who created these nationally known brands were often dedicated self-righteous individuals who believed deeply in what they were creating, and refused to compromise their goals or vision. Many of these people held to impossibly high moral standards concerning their products and their employees, while others could charitably be described as grafters and confidence men. All these stories make interesting reading.

The sections on the development of the ratings systems, and its assorted pitfalls is also very well done. In an inexact science, the lengths to which ratings system designers were willing to go to get what they perceived as reliable information about the listening habits of the nation was remarkable.

The section later in the book which Mr. Cox terms variants, covering the various types of radio advertising, and how they developed and evolved is one of the strongest chapters of the entire volume. The section should more properly have been titled "Techniques" and deals carefully with the where and why of golden-age radio advertising, and exactly how the many types of ad pitches came to be so effective.

There are also problems with this book, some of it due to the often rambling enthusiastic verbiage Mr. Cox uses in describing his subject matter. The section on commercializing the ether and the growth of the ad agencies for example, is loaded with facts and figures, so many that they literally bludgeon the reader and leave him reeling as he stumbles out of the final page of the chapter. Some facts are certainly important and worth noting. For example, in 1930 gross ad revenues for radio were estimated at \$40.5 million. By the end of 1931 it was up to \$90 million, by 1945 that figure had grown to \$423.9 billion (that's with a B, as opposed to the M for millions mentioned in the previous figures), and by 1952 the amount was \$624.1 Billion dollars. Clearly, advertising on radio was big business. But Mr. Cox insists on covering every variation in revenue and every shift in advertising focus in mind numbing detail. It's too much, way too much for this reader, and I'm a dedicated radio collector. One wonders if the casual reader would even make it out of the chapter alive, much less finishing that whole section.

Mr. Cox also has a habit of skipping back and forth between chronological time line information and often superfluous asides which he likes to drop into the narrative flow at random points. This is often disconcerting and makes understanding some of the information he is presenting more difficult. Sometimes this kind of discordant

information flow seems like he is shoveling myriad barely-related facts at the reader faster than they can possibly be assimilated. This can be both aggravating and frustrating.

There are also obvious omissions in this history which I find disturbing. Just to touch on a few examples: under the write-up on the Quaker Oats company; the ins and outs of creating the conglomerate which became Quaker oats are covered very well, and the list of radio shows the company sponsored seems complete, but nowhere in this section can be found a single word about Quaker Puffed Rice or Quaker Puffed Wheat, the premier kids brands the Quaker company owned which were long time sponsors of the Sgt. Preston radio show on both radio and television, as well as other children's shows. These two products generated hundreds of promotional premiums and tie-ins, and were a vibrant force in the children's cereal market well after the death of network radio. Mr. Cox does mention the famous square inch of land in the Yukon promotion, but fails to mention Puffed Wheat and Puffed Rice as the brands that created it.

Here's another one. In covering the Texas Company, creator of Texaco gasoline, Mr. Cox notes Texaco's long running sponsorship of the Metropolitan Opera (1940-2004) and the connection with Eddie Cantor and Fred Allen, but fails to even mention their first and most successful radio program, the Texaco Fire Chief show starring Ed Wynn which was one of the earliest and strongest nationally popular radio programs ever developed. This is a very glaring oversight.

How about this one, in covering the E. R. Squibb & Sons company, maker of pharmaceutical drugs, Mr. Cox fails to note the one program Squibb sponsored which is familiar to almost every radio collector in the world: the Academy Award Theater, which aired 1946-1947.

There are other omissions as well. This seems to me to be the result of very hasty research, and it reflects badly on the entire book when such obvious errors of omission manage to sneak thru.

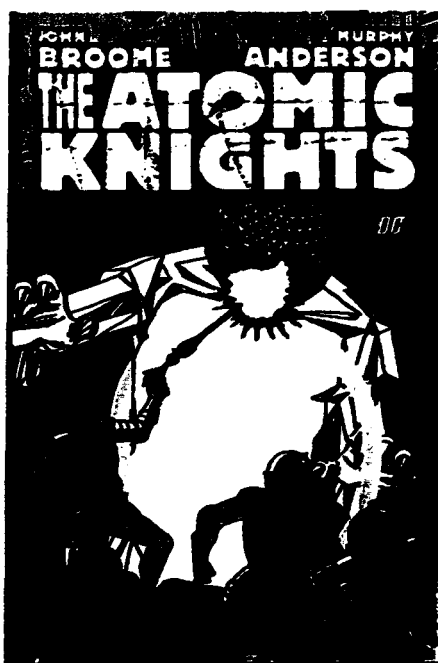
Mr. Cox is also fascinated with large words, and obscure words. His favorite word this year seems to be parenthetically. You would be hard pressed to go five or more pages anywhere in this book without stumbling across a new parenthetical. His favorite new obscure word seems to be quadrennial. This means a four year period, and Mr. Cox goes to some lengths to inject it into various sections of his book. This is a particularly obscure word which, in my opinion, would have been better banished from this volume.

There are also some serious editing problems with this book. There are some major typos and misspellings which really should have been corrected (and not just by spell checking software, but by real human being type proof reading). Here's a glaring example: page 46, in discussing Franklin D. Roosevelt's famous fireside chats, he mentions that the earliest one achieved a Hooper Rating of 9.7 reaching 6.3 *billion* people. Uh, the entire human population of planet Earth did not reach 6.3 billion people until the year 2002. The figure clearly should have been 6.3 million, yet this same mistake, using billion instead of million, is repeated thru the paragraph. Even more disturbing are errors involving dates, often injecting the wrong century. Here's one from the chapter notes section, where we learn that one of General Mills founders C.C. Washington taught school 1938-1939, then a few sentences later, that by 1842 he had been admitted to the bar and founded a bank in 1855. There are many similar date errors as well as common spelling errors scattered thruout the book.

At this point anybody who has ever read one of my fanzines must be rolling in the aisles, doubled up in hysterical laughter that the king of typos and spelling mistakes would dare to mention spelling errors in anybody else's work. However, let me just point out that there is a considerable difference between errors in an amateur fanzine, however wide the circulation of the fanzine might be, and that of a hardback book intended to be used as a reference volume, presumably the result of scholarly research, and one which also carries a \$55 price tag. With those aspirations and that price tag I expect decent editing, and that means correcting obvious spelling mistakes and glaring date errors.

It is impossible to pinpoint where the blame for this lies. Mr. Cox is cranking out books about OTRadio at a phenomenal rate. He has turned out ten books from 1999 to 2008, and a new one is due to hit the streets in a few more weeks. That's better than a book a year, so it is tempting to blame the author for these problems. Mr. Cox's books are researched and then, judging from this volume, written very rapidly. Yet at the same time it seems to me that most of the responsibility lies with the publisher, McFarland, who produced the book. The publisher translates the manuscript into text, formats that text, and the responsibilities of a publisher generally include editing and proof reading. Other publishers do it as a matter of routine. Perhaps McFarland doesn't feel that's their duty. However if they expect to continue selling books intended to be used as reference volumes for libraries, universities and serious researchers, they had better revisit that point pretty damn soon, because this level of sloppiness is not acceptable.

Having said all that, this is still a good book, a valuable book, and a volume that anybody interested in golden age radio, whether collector or researcher, will find both interesting and useful. There's lots of good stuff here, covering a subject which has not been seriously visited in depth before now, and this work is a giant step forward in helping us all understand how radio advertising was created and how advertising made the world of golden age radio function. I wish the writing was clearer and less convoluted; I wish the information was more complete, I wish the typos and date errors had been corrected, but I still thought this was a very good book and I recommend it to anyone who cares about OTRadio.



THE ATOMIC KNIGHTS Originally published in **STRANGE ADVENTURES** 1960 – 1964; written by John Broome; art by Murphy Anderson; edited by Julius Schwartz; 2010; DC Comics (a division of Warner Communications); 7x10-1/2", 189 pages; hardback; \$39.99 retail price

A collection of Atomic Knights stories from the pages of Strange Adventures Comics is long overdue. The series was a very well remembered feature from the early 1960s, a period which saw both the birth of comics fandom and an explosion in the popularity of comic books after half a decade of shaky sales.

DC Comics, noted for their strong series of science fiction related heroes and stories, was only publishing two pure science fiction comics at the time this series began, Strange Adventures and Mystery in Space, which both began in back in 1951. Thruout the history of comic books, from the 1940s up thru the 1960s, the problem with science fiction comics was that while sometimes their sales were very strong, the sales were often inconsistent. Science fiction themed comics didn't have that dependable consistence of, say, romance comics, or western comics, or war comics, or even funny animal comics.

The answer for DC and for several other companies that tried science fiction titles was to inject a few continued characters to keep the readers interested. Mystery In Space added Adam Strange and his adventures on the planet Rann with issue #61. In the ninth issue of Strange Adventures Captain Comet became a regular feature and there were others along the way.

By the time the 1960s dawned SA had several rotating regular features, The Space Museum, a sort of anthology of oddity gimmick stories centered around exhibits in a vast museum from the far future, and Star Hawkins, a future detective with a robot Girl Friday which mixed hard-boiled private eye action with screwball humor.

The Atomic Knights, introduced with issue #117, cover dated June 1960, was a welcome addition to the lineup, and offered something completely different. Set in the near future, it dealt with a theme near and dear to the hearts of every science fiction writer and fan of the 1950s, as well as most of the politicians and the people who

lived thru that era—nuclear war. According to the comic, a nuclear holocaust took place on October 9, 1986 with every nation launching and counter-launching its atomic missiles at each other, and in a blaze of glory civilization was obliterated in slightly less than twenty days.

This post war future was bleak indeed. According to the comic, all plant and animal life had been wiped out. But there were human survivors (otherwise, there would be no story). Scattered human beings remained in widely dispersed locations, living on emergency food packets and whatever stored food from the pre-war era might be located and salvaged. Into this world we are introduced to Gardner Grayle, an ex-soldier with a memory problem. Attacked by a small group of people in the ruins of a city, he escapes, and begins to regain his memories. He encounters and helps another man being attacked by a larger mob, Douglas Herald, a school teacher before the war, who explains that the survivors in this wrecked city are starving because the Black Baron has seized all the food, and made himself ruler of the region by vent of his possession of two fully charged atomic pistols and a gang of lackeys.

He also has radiation grenades, and when one of them is lobbed at the pair inside the building where they are resting, they hit the deck but figure they're doomed. Instead they discover they have dropped behind six suits of medieval armor, which for some unknown reason is now resistant to radiation. Wearing those suits of armor, they will be safe from the Baron's ray pistols. They decide to recruit a few like-minded companions, attack the Black Baron's fortress and open the food supplies to all the people.

The very first recruits are twin brothers Hollis and Wayne Hobard, the last survivors of their family. Brydon (no other name was ever mentioned) one of the few scientists left, also volunteers, but Brydon is instantly attacked by the town survivors when he announces his former occupation. The local people blame science and the scientists for causing WWII. Douglas Herald's sister Marene shames the crowd into accepting him, and Brydon then demonstrates his new invention, a metal detector which can uncover hidden food ration packs.

By one of those remarkable circumstances so common in four-color comics, all the suits of armor just happen to fit each of the different men, and a smaller suit just happens to be exactly the right size for Marene as well, altho the men immediately forbid her from taking part in their mission.

The newly formed group confronts the Baron's at his fortress, and when he attacks them, they manage to defeat him. It's tough going there for awhile, since the Baron's men have high powered rifles as well as atomic ray guns, but just as the Baron is about to put a .50 slug right thru Grayle's heart, Marene, in the smaller suit of armor rushes in and deflects his arm. Needless to say, after this battle, the group decides to establish themselves at the Atomic Knights to represent order and justice, deal with other menaces and help rebuild civilization.

This origin adventure was thirteen and a half pages long, enough to provide a good solid beginning and develop a satisfactory background story to support the concept. However problems with the series begin to creep up immediately. After the origin story, the series is cut back to eight pages, and the stories now become problem solving adventures dealing with some sort of bizarre menace. The second story, for example, has the Knights trying to figure out how to defeat a crystalline Salt Creature that somehow sucks up any and all water it encounters. No rational explanation for this creature was offered, but hey, it's a comic book, you have to buy the bit to follow the story. The third story has the Knights encountering humans in the bomb shelters of New York City who have mysteriously reverted back to early cro-magnon cave man status. This problem was resolved in nine pages.

The difficulty is that in trying to make the Atomic Knights a problem situation feature, similar to the Adam Strange stories in *Mystery In Space*, or the Space Ranger stories over in *Tales of the Unexpected*, the unique potential, and the even more unique problems presented by the world in which the Knights operate are being completely ignored.

For openers, if the background story as created remains the same, and the Knights concentrate only on unusual local menaces, then the human race and civilization along with it are doomed. Clearly stated in all of these early stories is the premise that all plant and animal life have been destroyed. In fact, in the origin story, Douglas Herald tells Grayle that: "The war killed *all* plants and animals! Food can't be grown anymore! The only remaining food is the huge stocks that have been stored here and there *prior* to the war..." This information is not only restated in the introduction on each following story's title page, but is often echoed within the stories themselves.

Writer John Broome, editor Julius Schwartz, and artist Murphy Anderson were all long time science fiction fans, and they all must have been well aware of the problems this setup produced. And if they weren't, I'm sure the group of dedicated fans who wrote letters to editor Schwartz (including me) would certainly have pointed it out.

The Atomic Knights stories appeared in every third issue of *Strange Adventure*, sharing a rotation with the *Space Museum* and *Star Hawkins*. Three issues of lead time ought to be enough to think these problems thru, but in

the case of the Atomic Knights, nothing much changed until issue #129, June 1961, when the Knights suddenly encounter the lost island continent of Atlantis, catapulted forward out of time by their use of cobalt bombs, with its ruler still determined to conquer the world. This highly convoluted story plot complete with a large number of implausible and absolutely unbelievable twists managed, after all was said and done, to reintroduce plant life to the war blasted world of the 1980s. Plants were growing on that Atlantis island, before it vanished back into time, and Merene somehow managed to gather up seeds, grass, fruit and sod, so that plants can be reintroduced.

In the next story, where the rulers of Atlantis are still trying to conquer the world despite being stranded in the future without their island, we learn that Bryndon has managed not only to make the seeds grow in the radiation blasted earth of 1990, but has also devised some method of making the plants, including trees, grow to full maturity within a few weeks. How? The story brushed it off as science from the old days: "tricks of cultivation," a one sentence explanation which was pretty hard for me to buy back in 1961, and even harder to accept today in 2010. Still, the problem of food for the human race was effectively solved, removing an enormous barrier to the believability of the series.

The ruler of Atlantis, Khagan, and his plans for world conquest provided the story plot for the next four Knights stories, again, reverting back to the problem-solving premise of the earliest plots. In issue #138, March 1962, the Knights take another leap in story development when they encounter two giant dogs, Dalmatians, and use them to battle the Atlantians, using the dogs as canine riding mounts.

And the explanation for the horse sized dogs? Well, it seems they were sent up in an experimental spacecraft to check on radiation over the polar regions before the atomic war, and here are the crashed remains of that ship (altho not very smashed up) and "the strange radiation...over the North Pole may have affected the growth glands of the two dogs turnings them into giants! They would have been automatically released by the rocket and landed by parachute before it crashed! That explains how they're alive...And they may have found food in the cavern, simple plants unfit for human consumption, like lichens, that dogs could eat and grow on! Anyway, it's the only theory I can come up with now..."

OK, strange radiation equals giant dogs I could maybe accept. After all, its harmless comic book pap, but the bit with dogs eating lichens and cave moss to survive it too ridiculous to believe. Dogs are carnivorous creatures, they eat and survive on meat protein. They could not possibly have lived on moss and lichen, even if they were somehow able to scrape the stuff off the walls of the cavern where they slept. Stories which create major inconsistencies like this tend to alienate even dedicated loyal readers. As long as the writer is going to blame bizarre radiation on their incredible growth, why not go all the way and have the dogs survive on the radioactivity created by the atomic war, then they would never have to eat and could have lived very nicely in the glowing nuclear wasteland where they were discovered.

This story also introduces yet another major plot inconsistency, as fields of corn (American maze) are shown growing around Durvale, the Knights home base. Maze/corn is a uniquely western hemisphere plant and could never have come from the island empire of Atlantis, whether the island was cast into the future or not.

Issue #144 featured the only time the Atomic Knights ever made the cover of SA, and it was a double length adventure in which the Knights must deal with a race of mole people who have developed plants that emit inky vapors to cover the earth so they can take over the surface world. Hey, don't ask, just go with the flow. In this story it was revealed that the mole creatures were the ones who triggered the atomic war, not the human beings.

I thought then and still believe now that this was a really crummy cop-out. The blame for destroying civilization and almost wiping out the human race ought to belong to the human beings who armed themselves to the teeth with nuclear weapons of mass destruction and were more than prepared to use them. Shifting the blame to a race of mole-like creatures who live unsuspected in caverns beneath the earth defies logic at any level. Why would they start an atomic war when WWII not only blasted the surface of the planet and wiped out most human life, but also left most of the surface so scorched and covered by life killing radiation that any chance for survival in that wrecked planet was bleak at best. Not a logical or believable move.

Belief or the lack thereof seems to be one of the key operational points in my concerns about the Atomic Knights back when these stories were first appearing and even more so now, in 2010 when they have been reprinted.

Thru the entire series there is major disjoint between stories and background. What should have been a logical progression of adventures building on the determination of the Knights and their efforts to expand human contact and somehow help to rebuild civilization, a building block progression with something learned and something gained from each new encounter, moves very slowly for a comic book series. There are fits and starts, as the Knights expand their base of operation and discover other humans, expand contact and trade and begin the

long rebuilding process. They deal with problems affecting everyone, but they don't seem to learn much from their encounters.

For example, in the five-issue linkage of stories dealing with Kragan the Atlantian ruler and his plans for conquest, the Knights encounter several unique weapons the enemy forces devise, some of which almost defeat them. But instead of taking those weapons and then using them for themselves in future encounters, they are completely ignored. In fact, everything the Knights experience is mostly ignored. They managed to hold onto the two ray guns they took from the Black Baron in the first story, using one to create a unique power source for a ground scooter, but they do not, for example, use firearms, even tho it is clearly shown in many stories that rifles and pistols and plenty of ammunition are to be found in this future world. In most stories, in fact, the Knights go into battle with no weapons of any kind. They rely on their fists and blind luck (supplied by writer John Broome) to overcome their problems.

You would think modern knights, like the knights of the medieval ages, would at least carry swords and daggers, but no, they do not. In fact in issue #150, March 1963, when the team encounter semi-intelligent walking plants (a direct swipe of the triffids created by science fiction writer John Wyndam, which had also recently been turned into a movie), the Knights are battling these stalking monsters with, get this now, wooden clubs. Hey, I wouldn't lie. A couple of machetes or swords would have done wonders here, and blunt clubs would have, realistically, done almost nothing, but since this is a comic book, somehow our heroes managed to triumph over the foes despite their almost total ineptitude in the martial arts.

This lack of forethought shows up regularly, and may also be seen in the bare-bones character and background development. For example, one would think that after the discovery of these two wonderful giant dogs who became so important to the future survival of the Knights, that our heroes would at least have named the two animals. Nope, they never bothered. They were just "the two giant dogs" thruout the rest of the series.

Some of the difficulty again comes from the limitations of the format. Clearly, after the first few issues, the Atomic Knights were a selling point, possibly a strong selling point, to the continued survival of SA. Yet after the origin story the page count for the adventures dropped to eight or nine pages. Even when the adventure was nine pages long, the first page was always a full page splash panel that set up the plot, and the last page (and sometimes an interior page) was not a full page, it was a half page, leaving room for a DC house ad below. DC's policy was to feature stories with five or six panels per page. Even allowing the maximum of six panels per page, times seven and a half pages of actual story means that most Atomic Knights stories had to be set up, developed and resolved in forty-two panels or less. That doesn't leave much room for anything. Stories had to be slammed thru with an absolute maximum impact. Complex plot situations tended to be glossed over. All too often the writer and editor took very simplistic stories that could have been resolved rapidly and padded them out to the full forty panel length. There are more of these fluff padded adventures than I care to think about.

This problem was not resolved until #150 March 1963, the Triffid rip-off adventure, when the stories were finally expanded to double length. Double length meant fifteen and a half pages, minus the full page splash panel, fourteen and a half pages of actual story telling. Not surprisingly the stories got better.

During this period the series finally managed to focus on a problem which had always been core to the end-of-the-world scenarios in science fiction literature--namely the rise of potential despots and thugs who would make themselves brutal rulers of any surviving humans. The Atomic Knights fought Organizer Kadey and his Blue Belt fascists in two separate adventures. But it was near the end of the run. The wheel of time was turning, and it was obvious by 1964 that costumed super heroes were what the comic book buying public wanted. Issue #160, January 1964 marked the last of the Atomic Knights adventures. Issue #161 saw the publication of the last Space Museum story as the powers at DC decided to shift editor Schwartz and the people who worked with him, to different titles.

Julius Schwartz took over the reins of Batman, while Jack Schiff took over the two science fiction titles. Author John Broome and illustrator Murphy Anderson had worked primarily with Schwartz, and he had plenty of work for them with his new titles. Jack Schiff tired the mix of hokey monsters, alien space invaders and magical menaces which had been reasonably successful in his other "mystery" titles, but it wasn't long before heroes in assorted forms came to the pages of SA again, beginning with the introduction of the Immortal Man in #177, and Animal Man in #180, and then, in issue #205, cover dated October 1967, the defining hero for the entire history of the comic appeared; Deadman.

I always hoped, back in those olden days, that editor Schwartz would take the Atomic Knights with him when he shifted titles. After all, he took Hawkman from the back pages of Mystery In Space and gave him his own comic book. The Atomic Knights, if they couldn't get their own stand-alone title could perhaps find a new home in

one of his other comics. I think I even wrote to him with that very suggestion, but of course, it was not to be. The editorial jump meant the end of the series.

Well, the Atomic Knights had their loyal fans. I was one of them. I remain one of them. Despite the often obvious flaws of the series, the problems with story length, the inconsistent attention to background detail, the limited characterizations, this is a series which is fondly recalled by those of us who lived thru the era.

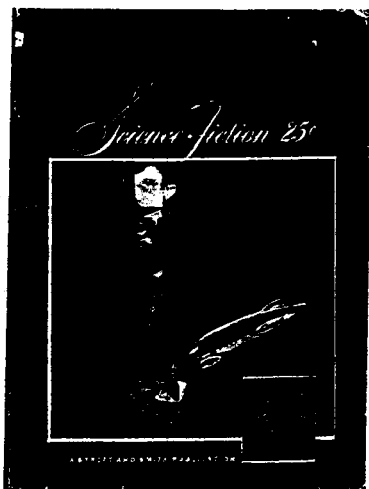
The artwork by Murphy Anderson was spectacular when it originally appeared, and it remains as sharp, crisp, and detailed, today as it was then. More than that, it was appropriate for this series. In times past I have tried to picture some other artist handling this series, and almost always I cannot follow thru with the exercise. Anderson's artwork, once seen, defines everything about the Atomic Knights. It is a joy to be able to savor it once again.

As pleasant as it was to finally read all the Atomic Knights stories under one cover, I wish I could say nice things about the package DC produced for it. Yeah, it's a hardcover book, featuring glossy illo-style boards, but the paper inside is not high grade slick stock such as can be found in the Archive editions. It is book paper, thicker than comic pulp, but similar in many ways. And what dynamic pictures did DC choose to use as the glossy illos for the covers of the book? Well, somebody has taken a couple of panels from one of the stories and blown them up to super gigantic size so that the color screens print dot pattern is tremendously enlarged, creating a bloated, very cheap and trashy appearance with no central focus and nothing to hold viewer attention. It is absolutely hideous. And get this—the spine of the book doesn't even have the title printed on it! How shoddy is that?

The dust jacket features a re-colored blow-up of the splash panel from the second Atomic Knights story. To say this is not particularly impressive is to overstate the value of the illustration. How hard would it have been to commission a new Murphy Anderson cover for this project? Oh, right, sorry, that would have cost a few bucks, and apparently the goal for DC Comics in their reprints these days is to cut corners whenever and wherever they possibly can. This volume and a number of other recent productions demonstrate that policy all too clearly. In fact, this book doesn't even have a decent historic introduction. Murphy Anderson has a quarter-page of semi-nostalgic comments and that's it. DC could have asked some dedicated comic collector to write an intro and they could have probably have gotten a good one for free. I would have gladly written an intro for free, but then, sending a request would have cost DC a 44 cent stamp, and they are, after all, trying to keep expenses to an absolute minimum.

Several other recent DC volumes also use this pathetic print-dot-pattern illustration style, and comments by other comic fans, both new and old, have not been kind about this. In the comic book store where I normally buy my product, (including this volume), a couple of people suggested that the solution to this problem might be to take the art director in charge of the DC hardback division out and hang him. I certainly don't advocate anything so drastic as that. On the other hand, it might not be a bad idea if somebody were to whack the guy up the side of the head with a two-by-four nine or ten times until he gets this stupid enlarged panel dot-pattern crap out of his mind. The effect is absolutely hideous.

Despite that, you should still rush out and buy this book. The assorted Price Guides say those old back issues of *Strange Adventures* are worth fifty to a hundred bucks each. Of course you can actually buy them in the ten to twenty dollar range, but ten or twenty bucks times fifteen stories adds up to a lot more than the cost of this hardback volume, plus they are all here in one place, all shot from the original stats, all in order, and all in hardback format. \$39.99 for the complete series of the Atomic Knights is a worthwhile investment indeed, a chance to encounter and read one of the more unique and interesting DC comic creations from the Silver Age. Don't pass it by.



YESTERDAY'S WORLD OF TOMORROW

The title of this article, the first of what I hope will be an ongoing series, is a direct swipe from long time science fiction editor and fan Robert Lowndes. He used this as the title to some of his editorials for *Science Fiction Stories* and *Future* back in the late 1950s. I have always liked the title and the concept. For about forty years or so I have been toying with the idea of doing a similar feature,

using the exact same title if possible. Time marches on. Science Fiction Stories, Future, Science Fiction Quarterly, all the magazines Lowndes edited are all long gone. Columbia Publications is also long gone and alas, so is Bob Lowndes himself. I don't know if he would have approved of me using his title and his idea, but I've finally

decided to do it anyway. The title should be self explanatory.

ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION April, 1942, editor, John W. Campbell Jr.

This is a copy of Astounding which has been in my collection for many years, but for one reason or another, I never got around to reading it all the way thru. I acquired a run of the bedsheet sized ASFs in the late 1960s, and read most of them immediately. But for some reason I didn't polish off this one.

The bedsheet ASFs were the very heart of SF's Golden Age, to hear the old timers talk about it. And looking at this particular issue, it's not hard to see why. The cover by Alva Rogers is not that impressive at first glance, but it has depth of design which becomes apparent when one looks at it closer. A futuristic airship or space ship of some sort is dropping down to an open space and a futuristic building. But what makes the illustration stand out is the framing background: the gigantic trees which tower over the scene, close packed (much closer than in any real earthly forest), so huge that the girth of the nearest tree seems almost as big as the airship itself. This picture, as with most bedsheet ASFs covers, is inset inside a framing border. brass colored, the title lettering leaf green and white. A closer look at the picture most certainly does evoke a sense of wonder.

And that cover happens to illustrate the lead story for the issue, the first of a two part serial "Beyond This Horizon" by Anson MacDonald. Anson MacDonald, as every true stf fan knows, is actually Robert A(nson) Heinlein.

I'm sure everyone has read Beyond This Horizon in book form, an impressive piece of work from the master of science fiction writing. What I was struck by here was the opening for the story Heinlein uses. The reader is dropped kicking and screaming, innocent as a new-born kitten, right into an ongoing story with no clues as to what is happening at all. This, of course, is something of a Heinlein trademark, a technique he consciously developed in his science fiction writing—avoiding backdrop explanations for his societies, inventions, politics or any other plot elements he injected into the story, and relying on the readers to take the subtle hints and comments he mentions as the story unfolds to fill in the background on their own. He was one of the first, and in my opinion, one of the very best writers to ever use this technique.

Hundreds of lesser talents have since adopted this method of telling their own stories, some with greater success than others. And also in my opinion the least successful people to use this technique are those who are currently writing new comic books. In an effort to keep the reader off balance, today's crop of comic book writers seem to think using convoluted flash-backs, side excursions with different characters and anything else to keep the reader confused somehow constitutes good writing. No, it doesn't. They should read a few Heinlein novels to see how the technique should be and can be effectively used to generate real story dynamics.

The other thing that struck me as I was reading this, is why the hell did Heinlein and/or Campbell wanted to use a pen name at all? Heinlein was one of the most popular writers Astounding ever published, and having his name on a story in every issue could have been nothing but a plus, yet for some reason, Campbell and/or Heinlein used a couple of pen names for stories that ran in ASF. I have never read an adequate explanation for this.

Heinlein material that Campbell rejected, (and those stories were few and far between), were sent over to Frederik Pohl, at the time a teen-age editor at Popular Publications, to use in Super Science or Astonishing Stories. Campbell paid Heinlein a cent and a half a word, sometimes as much as two cents a word. Pohl could only manage a penny a word, and that by skimping and conniving and twisting the mag finances around, since they were set up by Popular to pay authors only half a cent a word. And Heinlein also insisted that any stories he sold Pohl would use a different pen name, presumably to protect his reputation, but possibly to escape the displeasure of Campbell, who was never overly happy about having to fight for newsstand space or author output with other science fiction magazines. Adding to that mix was the fact that Fred Pohl used to try and peddle his own stories to Campbell in person before Pohl landed that editor's job over at Popular.

Looking over the contents page for this issue, it strikes me that there may be other pen names in use here. I don't recognize names like Colin Keith, or Bertram L. Shurtieff. This is where having a handy copy of Su Bates' excellent hardback reference volume that lists thousands of science fiction and fantasy pseudonyms would be extremely useful. Unfortunately I can't find that book. Considering how much crap I've got stacking around this house, it's a wonder I can find anything. I'm sure I have that invaluable reference book safely placed someplace where I could put my hands on it in an instant, if I could just recall where that safe and convenient place might be.

There are other authors here whose names I certainly do recognize tho, people like A. E. van Vogt, L. Ron Hubbard, L. Sprague de Camp and Willy Ley.

After reading the Heinlein serial I immediately went to the Willy Ley science article, titled "The Fatal Coloration", in which Ley discusses dinosaurs, the history of dinosaur exploration, and why it is extraordinarily difficult for scientists and artists to figure out what coloration the dinos may have had.

This discussion leads directly to a subject near and dear to the hearts of dino buffs everywhere: why these creatures all died off in a relatively short time—short in geological terms that is. Apparently a lot of people back in 1942 and even more people today, believe the dinosaurs vanished in a flash over a period of weeks, or at best, a couple of years. Naw, didn't happen that way. But the disruption and extinction of the entire class of reptilian dinosaurs has fired the imagination of people for many generations.

Ley presents two extremely valid theories, backed up by solid science which he explains very clearly. One, a well established idea, is that certain dino species evolved themselves into a biological corner and vanished because new species or conditions killed them off. The example he cites is the ichthyosaurs ("fish lizard") the aquatic critters with the very long necks and fat flippers. As he points out, science knows a lot about these particular lizards because there are a lot of specimen bones covering their entire evolutionary cycle. Science even knows that they mostly ate octopi and squid and such soft bodied creatures. An octopus or a squid is a fearsome foe if you happen to be much smaller than it is, but for a creature much larger, as the ichthyosaurs were, they were almost defenseless. While the ichthos were adapting themselves to feed more efficiently on squid and octopi, meanwhile, a new class of predator was developing, creatures akin to the shark, and when it came along it found that the ichthyosaurs themselves were perfect food, since they had shed most of their body armor and all their teeth, trading those features in for speed and agility during their eons of evolutionary development, so they were as defenseless against these new predators as the octopus was against them. The end came relatively soon for the ichthyosaurs after that.

But while there are many similar cases which can clearly account for certain specific types of dinos, the fact remains that virtually all the dinosaurs vanished in a fell swoop at the end of the Cretaceous Period. During the Cretaceous Period conditions were ideal for the development and longevity of dinosaurs. The land was filled with enormous shallow fresh water lakes, lush vegetation grew on the banks and in the waters themselves, and the weather was perpetually pleasant and warm. Cloudy skies were the norm with the vast open lakes providing plenty of evaporation moisture, which precipitated back as rain to water the lush jungles which filled the dry land, and those lush rain forests also helped to perpetuate the cycle. Long necked giant dinos used the water to help buoyant their enormous bodies, long necks helped them reach vegetation in or out of the water and life was very pleasant for them indeed. Dinosaurs were reptiles, and because of their unique metabolism reptiles do not need to eat much to survive. Those few carnivoroids which were not carrion eaters (and most were), need only kill a small or medium sized plant eater occasionally to feast for a long time.

What happened? Citing interesting evidence Ley makes an excellent case that the environment changed slightly and the thunder lizards were wiped out by the simple fact that they were reptiles. Reptiles are cold blooded creatures, which by definition means they cannot control their internal temperature on their own. The normal comfort range for reptiles is a few degrees above that of human beings. Ley cites then-recent research by Raymond B. Crowles (U. of Calif) presented in Nature Magazine, which shows that reptiles cannot survive if their metabolism is heated up much beyond their normal optimum body temperature. In fact, a shift of as little as four to five degrees will spell death for most reptiles, and even the most versatile will succumb if exposed to direct sunlight and heat for eight to ten minutes. For example, a standard way to kill an African crocodile, without damaging its valuable hide, is for hunters working together to rope the creature, tie the snout and legs, drag it out into the sun, and wait half an hour. The croc will be dead, with its hide whole and undamaged. In a battle a crocodile is a formidable fighter who will continue to fight even after taking enough damage to kill a dozen lesser creatures, but its metabolism cannot survive a prolonged increase in heat.

There is ample evidence that the climate changed at the end of the Cretaceous Period. The skies cleared for some reason. The sun now fell on the planet in more abundance, and the mean temperature went up. It didn't have to go up too much to kill the dinos. Reptiles exposed to direct sunlight heat up rapidly, and if a rise of even a few degrees is enough to kill any reptile, imagine how this temperature shift must have affected monstrous sized reptiles like dinosaurs. Some might have been able to slide beneath the waters, temporarily, but the water would also warm up with all that extra sunlight. The land plants that grew in that period would not have been sufficient tall or lush to have shielded these huge monsters from the glare of the noonday sun, and they would have died, a victim to their own reptilian evolutionary adaptation to the previous conditions of the planet.

Of course left unsaid here is the little problem of what caused that climatic change. Today we tend to think of mountain sized asteroids smashing into the planet that created a blast and heat wave more powerful than a thousand atomic bombs. That might have done it. Or/and world wide volcanoes touched off by that asteroid strike or breaking out about the same time as the asteroid strike may have done the job. But I think Ley and Crowles demonstrate quite clearly that any change, even a relatively slight change in the topography and temperature or sunlight ratio received by the surface of the planet would have finished off the dinosaurs in short order. They had settled into a favorable environmental niche, and when that niche shifted, even slightly, they couldn't adapt fast enough to avoid extinction.

This is a well written, highly informative and entertaining piece of writing which demonstrates why Willy Ley was the fan favorite science writer during his lifetime. Today people tend to remember Isaac Asimov as the king of the popular science piece, a reputation he earned with hundreds of articles in a wide diversity of venues, but most familiar to stf fans thru his regular monthly column in the Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction.

As interesting as I find Asimov's writing to be, frankly there are many times when I finish one of his articles and really have no idea what he was talking about. I never have that problem when I read an article by Ley. Ley is entertaining, but he is also careful to provide solid information in an understandable and memorable way. I rarely forget what I have read in a Ley article. The fact that he shies away from certain subjects which cause my eyes to glaze over, such as mathematics and subjects closely related to mathematics, things like physics and astral astronomy may have a lot to do with that, but for me, in the long run, I enjoy the articles Ley wrote for *Astounding* and *Galaxy* a lot more than the material Asimov turned out, and I think I actually learned more from him too.

Probably the strongest story after "Beyond This Horizon" in the issue was the van Vogt entry, "Co-Operate—Or Else!" Set against the backdrop of the war with the Rull, this is an excellent piece of writing which combined problem solving, philosophy and action into a smooth well constructed plot that carries the reader along from start to finish.

The set-up is memorable. A human being is about to be marooned on a hellish jungle planet along with a huge intelligent alien beast, who happens to be telepathic. Human beings managed to conquer their planet by developing intelligence, mobile dexterity, and the ability to co-operate with each other to overcome problems. The ezwal race, believed to be simple beasts, overcame the hostile enjoiment on its planet by being larger, stronger, faster and meaner than anything the planet had to offer, and they developed telepathy so that they could read the minds of their opponents and compare notes with members of their own species. The ezwal is determined to kill the human being because the human protagonist has just learned that the ezwal are not animals, but intelligent beings. The human must have the ezwal's cooperation to survive and try to be rescued, and he must convince the ezwal that brute strength alone won't work on a planet filled with lightning fast, incredibly vicious creatures. This is a classic story, reprinted many times, and remains as fresh and innovative today as when it was first published in 1942.

Van Vogt has taken some whacks over the years from certain people who complain that his plots are too action oriented and that they are often obtuse or even impossible to understand. I think these criticisms are true for certain specific van Vogt novels. Anybody who has tried to wade thru the Null-a books without bothering to brush up on non-Aristotelian philosophy and syngestic mysticism first can certainly vouch for that. But I think most of these criticisms are not true. The majority of van Vogt's novels and virtually all of his shorter than novel length writings are quite clear, very directly plotted and are easily accessible at many different levels, as this piece clearly demonstrates.

One of the most enjoyable parts of this ASF issue for me was the brand new feature titled Probability Zero. This is composed of three short-short stories, all less than a thousand words, in which three separate writers set about creating humorous tall tales of scientific improbability. So we get L. Sprague de Camp with as very amusing story of how time paradoxes can lead to horrible situations, but can be undone if one simply waits until the decision is made to go back in time and then you decide to change your mind. Or Malcolm Jameson's treatise of how to catch that most elusive and succulent creature, the vacuum hog, who dwells in the almost absolute zero environment of Pluto.

Editor Campbell explains the concept at the end of the feature, and invites readers, and writers whether amateur or pro, to contribute their own tall tales of science. "We want science-fictional masterpieces that sound almost possible, but which are, as the department title states, "Probability Zero"—impossible by reason of known scientific laws or by definition." He lists a few points about truth in science being stranger than fiction, and invites all liars to get in on the fun. The stories must be 800 words or less. There was a significant monetary inducement for sending in these snippets. The readers will vote on each month's entries with the first place winner being paid

fifteen dollars, second place got ten, and the third place winner would get five dollars. For those counting, that means third place would get about a half cent a word for an eight hundred word story, slightly more than a penny for second place, and close to two cents per word for the first place winner, which was pretty good money for a writer in 1942 when the average person reading the magazine made a salary of between twenty-five and fifty bucks a week. Off hand I don't recall how successful this new department was. I'll have to go back and pull some other ASF issues to see if it survived.

Most of short stories in this issue were a disappointment to me. Not only were there no really strong short stories, but most of them were not even really science fiction. The L. Ron Hubbard piece, "Strain" dealt with two earth space flight officers captured by the Saturians and about to be tortured to make them reveal upcoming war plans. This story could just as well have taken place in the South Pacific islands of 1942, or along the trenches in the Great War, or anyplace else in any other historic war. Sure, there are a couple of quasi-futuristic torture devices added in, but not very many. It's hard to escape the idea that this was simply an adventure story that Hubbard wrote and then added in a few frills and palmed off on Campbell. In fact, it wasn't even a very good story, having no satisfactory resolution.

"The Eagles Gather" by Joseph E. Killeam and "Monopoly" by Vic Phillips and Scott Roberts also have the feel of being rapidly written pulp adventure stories that slapped on a few science fiction sounding touches such as space ships, uranium, and mention of other planets to pass as science fiction; but they aren't really science fiction at all. Sheer off the tar paper stapled onto these stories and they could all have run in Adventure or Blue Book, or Four Star Magazine, except those magazines would probably have bounced them because of inept writing styles.

"Silence Is—Deadly" by Bertrand L. Shurtleff has more science fiction elements in it, what with strange inventions that create a zone of radio silence and a ray that causes airplane motors to burn out, but this is a WWII war story with not much else going for it. This also features the most slap-dash writing of all the stories in this issue. It has the solid look of a first draft piece written in a hurry specifically to fill a hole in the ASF lineup this issue, and it may well have been. Any kind of rewriting would have improved the plot flow and the impact, but rewriting and polishing are also clearly not present.

No doubt Campbell was suffering the problem many a magazine, not just ASF was facing. The military was sucking up every available man to throw into the War effort, and writers were going into uniform along with every other able bodied male. Even so, I think this batch of shorter fiction demonstrates an obvious and not particularly worthwhile trait in a lot of late 1930s and 1940s short science fiction, namely that most if it was churned out by pulp magazine writers who knew how to compose basic plots and then added in the accoutrements to each story to make it fit the particular market. With only a few cosmetic changes almost all of these could have been straight adventure yarns, or westerns, or air war stories, or shifted to fit whatever type of magazine happened to be looking for short fiction that week. What they are not is science fiction, and this was the case in far too much shorter fantastic fiction of the era.

Science fiction writers tended to turn out longer stories, not just because they paid better, but because science fiction seems to fit into novelette or longer forms most easily. This is not to say that great short stories weren't around, or that they could not be created by good writers. But they aren't any of those in this issue of ASF.

John Campbell has a one page editorial which must have seemed unusually cryptic to the readers of the day, in which he discusses how science fiction sometimes accurately predicts future inventions and concepts, and how this is hurting science fiction writers submitting stories to his magazine. Campbell notes that "the science-fiction author is paid specifically to imagine devices *even if he can't think of a way to make them.*" Accurate writing during war time, Campbell says, might give good ideas to the enemy.

I'm sure a lot of readers wondered why the hell any Nazi or Jap spies would waste a second of their time reading a science fiction magazine when there was so much else they could be spending their efforts trying to ferret out. But after the war was over we learned that even if spies and saboteurs weren't reading ASF, the FBI and military intelligence officers were. In fact government agents had paid Campbell a visit and wanted him to cancel an upcoming story about an atomic bomb. Campbell talked them out of that, suggesting that pulling the story would be a red flag that something in the story actually was important. It helped vindicate Campbell's long held pet theory about science fiction as a predictor of the future, but this editorial must have seem especially obtuse to the average ASF reader in 1942.

Was this a good issue? Sure it was. With better short stories it could have been a great issue. But even as it stands, this issue of ASF demonstrates why the 1940s, particularly ASF in the 1940s was a major positive force in the development of science fiction as literature, and especially science fiction as truly enjoyable literature. Astounding Science Fiction April 1942 easily stands the test of time.

One of the most frustrating things for those of us who collect and enjoy Old Time Radio is the knowledge that the overwhelming majority of radio programs broadcast from 1924 thru 1964 simply do not exist. Of all the programs broadcast over the decades, fewer than 5% remain in existence in any form now. There are some programs, many famous and well respected when they first appeared, for which nothing, not even script pages exist. This series will take a few moments from time to time to look over a few of those titles which were well known and popular in their time, but which have since...

VANISHED IN THE VACUUM



By

Robert Jennings

Animal acts on radio have never been hard to find. People love animals, particularly animals common as pets, such as dogs, cats and horses, and these animals as well as many others show up regularly on OTRadio shows. It is somewhat more rare to find an animal in a starring role, and even more remarkable to have the animal star make it big on radio.

But one of the earliest, and probably the most successful animal stars ever to appear on radio was also a world famous movie star: Rin-Tin-Tin.

Arguably the most famous dog who ever existed, Rin-Tin-Tin was discovered as a pup inside the bombed

out remains of a German assault dog training kennel on September 18, 1918. Corporal Lee Duncan stationed with US Army forces in Lorraine, France, insisted that his battalion group check out the ruined building. Inside they discovered a badly frightened mother German Shepherd dog with her fresh litter of five puppies. Named "Betty" by the Americans, Duncan immediately adopted two of the pups, a male and a female, while his friends gathered up the mother dog and the rest of the litter.

Within the next few weeks the mother and the other dogs had died, leaving Duncan's pups the only survivors of the bombing incident. He named the dogs

after the tiny puppets French children gave the GIs for good luck: rintintin became Rin Tin Tin, the male, and Nannette the female.

Duncan was fascinated with the pups. He was at this point almost completely unfamiliar with German Shepherds as a dog breed, altho he knew the German army used them as scout and attack animals. He was astonished both at the intelligence and the devotion the young pups displayed, and he spent a great deal of time working with the pair. He learned that the German master of the bombed out kennel had been captured by the Americans, and even went to visit him in a POW camp to learn more about the breed and ways they could be most effectively trained.

When the war ended Duncan made special arrangements to take the two dogs back home with him to Los Angeles. Unfortunately on the fifteen day ocean trip, disaster struck. Nannette came down with canine distemper, and by the time the ship docked in New York she was quite ill. Duncan contacted a Mrs. Wanner in New York, at the time one of the few experts on German Shepherds in the United States. She offered to keep Nannette and try to cure her distemper while Duncan returned with the remaining dog to his home on the west coast. Before the train even arrived at Los Angeles word came that Nannette had died. Knowing Duncan's keen interest in the dogs, she graciously offered him a new female pup from her own kennel, the best of breed she had been able to produce.

Back home Duncan resumed his old job working in a hardware store, but he continued to expand his interest in German Shepherd dogs. At an unauthorized (ie, not AKA sanctioned) dog show Duncan amazed the crowd of dog fanciers when Tin-Tin-Tin was able to leap an astonishing 11' 9" on command. Following this show an amateur cameraman, Charles Jones, approached Duncan and asked if he could take some motion pictures of his dog doing stunts on command. Duncan readily agreed. Jones took those films and sold them to the Novagraph Pictures Corporation. Novagraph contacted Duncan and offered him \$350 to take pictures of Rin-Tin-Tin in action. Right then Duncan knew he and his pet had a potential future in the movie business.

But the original \$350 did not lead to instant acceptance in the movie biz. Armed with a screen script titled "Where the North Begins", along with publicity shots, film footage and testimonials from enthusiastic dog fanciers, he made the rounds of all the major studios, and was turned down flat at every single one.

The story goes that he was prepared to make another round of appointments at the smaller studios when he saw a movie crew trying to shoot a scene with a trained wolf, and not having any success. Duncan approached the crew and told them that he and his dog could do the entire scene in one take. He was told to get lost. But he stuck around as the wolf continued to be skittish and camera shy,

until finally the scene director relented and let Duncan take a try, mostly as an effort to get rid of him.

As promised, Rinty did the entire scene in one take. The wolf was out. Rin-Tin-Tin was immediately cast as the film's animal star, and "Man From Hell's River" (1922) became the first motion picture featuring Rin-Tin-Tin. The films which followed "My Dad" (1922), and "Where the North Begins" (1922) were box office smashes, and these three movies are credited with saving Warner Brothers Studios from bankruptcy. Rinty went on to star in a total of twenty-six motion pictures, each one a box office success, turning the dog into a major film star.

There had been other dog stars before Rin-Tin-Tin came along. In the early twenties another German Shepherd named Strongheart had been a box office draw beginning in 1921. He made four more pictures during the decade, yet nothing could match the popularity of Rin Tin Tin.

The fame of the dog was not just a fad. No animal star before, not even Strongheart, had the intelligence and the personality Rin-Tin-Tin displayed. His facial expressions could change with the situation, his personality was almost human, and the stunts he performed, all done live by himself, were almost unbelievable. Yet except for certain scenes involving fire, Duncan did not allow Rinty to have stunt doubles. The dog did all his own work, under Duncan's careful direction.

He was often cast in roles as a wolf, even tho he looked nothing like a real wolf. This was because when Rinty bared his teeth and snarled even patrons in the back rows of the theater felt a tinge of fear. Never was there a more vicious looking attack dog, or a more fateful, loyal and friendly movie dog than Rin-Tin-Tin. A favorite script plot involved introducing a small child or baby who was befriended by the dog, and who then becomes the tot's almost supernatural champion, defending it against the forces of man or nature with unwavering valor.

The public loved it. At the height of his silent movie career Tin-Tin-Tin was receiving 10,000 fan letters a week, and his master's endorsement of a product or service was enough to guarantee almost immediate financial success. It was said that Rinty dined every day to the sound of classical music on such fare as tenderloin steaks specially prepared by his own personal chef.

Off-stage Rin-Tin-Tin was fanatically devoted to his human master, and barely tolerated any other members of the species. When Duncan was around he accepted other humans, but he did not like people to stroll up and attempt to pat him on the head or ruffle his fur. That was Duncan's exclusive privilege.

A story goes that Jack Warner was on the set one day and tried to take an unwanted liberty with the dog. Rinty reacted with a snarl, lunged, and bit Warner on the ankle before Duncan could call him off. Warner limped back to the studio offices determined to terminate the dog's

Betty
White

Betty White, although she is a very grown up young lady, always takes the part of the little girl when Rin Tin Tin is the hero in the famous dog feature series over the blue network.



Rin Tin Tin

For more than two years this famous dog has been taking the part of the hero in the Rin Tin Tin Thrillers—a series of radio melodramas. He creates his own sound effects and many a tear has been shed over his direful adventures.

contact immediately. When he got there his accountant was waiting to show him the theater grosses on the latest Rin Tin Tin movie and the figures for the latest John Barrymore film. Warner is said to have sat at his desk stared at those figures for almost five minutes before declaring that "the mutt stays, the ham goes."

When the sound era came in Warner Brothers had some doubts about the ability of the dog to carry a full "talkie" feature. After all, dogs bark, only people can speak. But the first part-silent/part-talking feature, "Frozen River" (1929) proved that sound was never going to be a problem with a dog as talented as Rin-Tin-Tin.

Rinty made five more all-talking feature films up thru the end of 1930 when Warner Brothers dropped his option. The Depression was having a serious effect on movie ticket sales and the studio was worried that animal pictures in general could not draw the public into the theater anymore.

Duncan took his dog over to Mascot Studios and made a couple of serials, "The Lone Defender" (1930) and "The Lightning Warrior" (1931), to prove that Rinty was still a popular hit with theater goers, particularly younger ticket buyers.

In addition Duncan had made a deal with the National Broadcasting System in 1930 to star Rinty in his own radio show. Warner brothers was still hesitant about the dog's ability to carry his weight at the ticket office, and Duncan was apparently determined to prove that his dog could do anything that any human actor could do, including starring on the radio, an all talking, no picture medium.

The first show aired over NBC Blue April 5, 1930 as a fifteen minute Saturday evening offering, and within a month was a network success. In March 1931 the show moved to a prime time Thursday night 8:15 PM time slot. Originally titled "The Wonder Dog", the title was officially changed to "Rin Tin Tin" in Sep 1930. Later the show was sometimes billed as "Rin Tin Tin Thrillers".

Ken-L Ration was the sponsor and the program ran with NBC thru the end of the 1933 season. In the fall of 1934 the show moved to CBS, still with Ken-L Ration as the sponsor, where it carried a 7:15 Sunday time slot before finally leaving the air in the spring of 1935 after a five year run.

The show offered several radio premiums and giveaways to listeners, including a 1931 facial photo of Rinty looking pensive with autographed greetings from Lee Duncan. A Rin Tin Tin pinback button and Ken-L Ration club booklet with dog care hints may also have been tied to the radio show.

Disaster struck in the middle of Rinty's radio career. Rin-Tin-Tin died unexpectedly on Friday, August 10th, 1932, reportedly in the arms of Jean Harlow on Duncan's front lawn. He had been scheduled to start filming on a new Warner Brothers feature that following Monday.

The studio was stunned, but Duncan was devastated. Rinty had sired several litters of pups over the years, and Duncan had keep one of them, whom he dubbed "Junior". "Junior" was a handsome dog, but he did not really look like Rinty, and certainly he did not have the intelligence or natural ability that the original Rin-Tin-Tin had.

Warner Brothers convinced Duncan to do a cross-country publicity tour promoting the "son of Rin-Tin-Tin". This promotion worked even better than expected. The public was more than willing to accept any dog related to the original Rin-Tin-Tin. Warner Brothers got a dog star back, but despite making thirteen movies from 1932 thru 1939 for Warner and other studios, "Junior" never matched the acting skill or that near mythical empathy with the movie going public that his father had achieved.

And what about the radio show? Well it continued right along. "Junior" now officially called Rin-Tin-Tin Jr., altho the Jr. part was sometimes dropped from both his radio and film credits, took over for his famous father and starred in the popular radio show thru the spring of 1935.

The original Rinty on radio was famous for performing his own dog sound effects. His ability to bark, growl, whine, whimper, and make other dog noises merged perfectly with the carefully created scripts so that the dog ~~after~~ seemed more compassionate and intelligent than the human actors in the story.

A young Don Ameche, along with Junior McLain and Betty White (*not* the Golden Girls Betty White) were the primary human actors. Stories were most often self contained, although continued adventures were apparently part of the plot mix at times over the course of the show. This show got good write-ups from the press and the trade papers during its run, and the loss of the original Rin Tin Tin did not seem to have hurt the program's popular appeal.

There is no specific information as to why the show went off the air after a five year run in 1935, but Junior was busy making pictures from 1934 up and the fact that the show was broadcast out of California, where the networks charged exorbitant extra fees to reverse the standard east-to-west network phone line flow may have been important factors.

By this time Duncan was also determined to continue the legacy of his famous dog. Rin-Tin-Tin Jr. begat another son, but Rin-Tin-Tin III only made two pictures, one in 1939, and one in 1947 titled "The Return of Rin-Tin-Tin". This last movie was well received, but nothing developed beyond that.

There was a big war between the first and the second of those movies, and Lee Duncan tried to volunteer for military service as soon as hostilities broke out. He was rejected as being both over age and also because he had been injured in the First World War.

He suggested that the military use his knowledge and service to help develop sentry, guard, message, and mine-sniffer dogs for a military K-9 Corps. His efforts were rebuffed, but he was extremely persistent, calling on friends in show business and politics to back up his proposal. Finally the military relented and allowed him start his own training facility, Camp Hahn, in California.

There were not enough dogs being born for the need that developed, so he was also instrumental in getting pet owners to donate their dogs to the K-9 Corps. He trained thousands of dogs and dog handlers during the conflict. After the end of the war he was still on duty "untraining" military dogs so they could return to their civilian homes or go back home with their human handlers when they were mustered out.

In 1954 the first episode of the TV show "The Adventures of Rin Tin Tin" premiered. This program apparently starred the great grandson of the original Rinty, although two of Rinty's other descendants were unofficially credited as being among the players.

The setup is that a young boy, Rusty, had been orphaned by an Indian raid. He and his dog become the mascots of the soldiers stationed at a western frontier fort and find assorted adventures. The show was titled after the dog, but the adventures of the young boy, played by Lee Acker, were the essential focus of the plots. Long time radio actor Les Tremaine played Major Stone on this show, which ran five years, a total of 164 thirty minute episodes, and is a fondly remembered children's program of the fifties which has been periodically rerun thru the years and is also available on both video tape and DVD.

In addition to comics, toys, games, books, records and clothing, this television show also spawned a Mutual Network radio program which ran on Sunday afternoons beginning Jan 2, 1955. The actors from the TV show played their same roles on this radio production which lasted almost an entire year. From this radio series exactly two episodes have survived and are in the hands of collectors.

Lee Duncan passed away on September 20, 1960 of bone cancer. But he had already made plans for the continuation of the Rin-Tin-Tin bloodline. Over the years he had bred and shown many champion German Shepherd dogs on his own. He was determined that the line of his most famous dog should not die out.

In 1956 he made an arrangement with Jannettia Brodsgaard Propps to handle an authorized Rin-Tin-Tin breeding program. In 1957 the first of what eventually became four of Rinty IV's sons arrived at her kennels. Duncan stressed that the breeding requirements strive first, for intelligence, second for sound working structure, then temperament, and lastly, for appearance. He always considered German Shepherds to be the most intelligent and people responsive of all dogs, with the original Rin Tin Tin being the obvious tinline.

"WHERE THE NORTH BEGINS"

RIN-TIN-TIN, JUN 23

**CHESTER M. FRANKLIN
A HARRY RAFF PRODUCTION**

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY
FRANK MYTON AND CHESTER M. FRANKLIN



Today Mrs. Propps granddaughter Daphne Hereford carries that breeding program on. The descendents of Rinty serve as high profile security dogs as well as beloved family pets in a closed breeding program. Each year eight to ten neutered trained pups are offered for sale. The waiting list is a long one, and the price is steep, but the kennel has never had a complaint.

And what of those radio shows that starred the most famous dog in America? There are only two surviving programs from the 1955 Mutual radio run, even tho tape copies were made of every single episode. From that highly rated series of fifteen minute episodes that aired in the early 1930s not a single program survives, not a fragment, not even a script. Nothing at all remains but hearsay, enthusiastic notices in the yellowing pages of old newspapers and a few memories of those who might have actually heard the shows when they were originally broadcast. All of those shows are gone, Vanished In The Vacuum.