

Vertigo



(presumably successful) being held in Charlotte, Richmond, Roanoke, Greensboro and Siler City. In addition, there was recently a con held in Columbia, S.C. and there is talk of one in Greenville, N.C. In addition to the cons I have heard dealers say that they now have better sales at flea markets than at cons so there is yet another alternative open for those of you interested in buying and selling. Now that there is a welcome influx of alternative cons and gatherings we can consider braking the steady onslaught of Durham mini-cons a bit. In 1979 there may only be two or three cons here or there may be the usual four. We will see how things shape up towards the end of the year. Nothing goes on forever and ten years seems like a good time to slow down a bit.

The April 2, 1978 Durham mini-con will also mark an important anniversary. It will be the Seventh Anniversary of the last episode of Dark Shadows. For those of you who do not remember the show, it was a daytime soap opera that featured vampires, ghosts, time travel, alternate worlds, papier-mache bats, and anything and everything supernatural. How you commemorate the occasion is up to you. (This has been a paid political announcement, paid for by the Friends for the Re-election of Barnabus Collins Committee, Betty Stinson - Chairperson.)

GOOD CIRCULATION CON Dept

Durham mini-con XXXVIII was held on January 29, 1978 at the same old place and surprisingly drew almost 100 people. I say surprisingly because even though it was cool/cold and we were forced to have everything inside we did not run into the drastic space problems we had expected. We actually had some dealer space left over and did not have wall to wall people most of the day. This failure to be really crowded can probably be attributed to people coming and going all day long with new arrivals taking the places of those who left. That is what I usually do when I go to an area con, stay a few hours and leave early rather than stay all day. Among those who signed in were: Stephen Squires, Carl Taylor, Samuel Joyner, Peter Hirschman, Leon Howard, Scott Whiteside, Brian Lockhart, Clay Kimball, Jay Lenard, David Luebke, Lester Brim, John Hitchcock, Billy Ingram, Jerry Minter, Randy Minter, Mike Coxe, John Peters, Ben Harrell, Norman Hunter, Chris Wrenn, James Lowe, Eddie Lasky, Richard Wrobel, David Matthews, John O'Lean, John Broadhead, Steven Rowe, Drake Maynard, Charles Lawrence, Kent & Viva Kerr, Richard & Mildred Minter, Mike Pugh, Mark Jordan, Bobby Brewer, Ken Puryear, J. Weston, Tony Galloway, M C Goodwin, John Allison, David Southerland, Watson Edwards, Gerald Williamsin, Bill & Leslie Pearce, Milton Read, Russ Garwood, Michael Carruthers, Gordon Messer, John Tanner, Brian Wooley, Kevin Lashmit, Donna Steele, Denis Wolff, Doug Foltz, Charles Guess, Tom Long, Henry Kidd, Stuart Hough, Karl & Barbara Wagner, Paul Snead, Janet Rawlins, Tim Hewitt, Michael Gay, Webster & Daniel & Benjamin Spicher, Milo Holt, Coleman Honeycutt, Mrs Coleman Honeycutt, Barry Hill, Steve Shoulars, Peter Gillis, Don Rogers, Robert & Rebecca Bailey, D Gary Grady, Bill Allen, Betty Stinson, Mike Cromartie, Jon Baxley, John McConry, Steve Turner, Tony Kirven, David Ayscue, Carroll Credle, Carol Strickland, Willie Nash, Charles Bridgers, Lisa Morris, Adam Burns, Woody Weatherman, Chris Woodbury, Terry & elm, Yance Parrish.

UPCOMING CONS Dept

After Durham the next con in the area is on Saturday May 6th at the Friendly Shopping Center Auditorium in Greensboro. It runs 9 to 5 and the admission is free. Scheduled guests are Manly Wade Wellman & Karl Wagner. For more info (table availability, etc) send an SASE to Clay Kimball, 212 S. Mendenhall, Greensboro, N. Car. 27403.

THE EAST COAST APA Dept

There is a new apa rising in our midst and even though I've missed passing on the word before the first mailing you should still be able to join by the second. If you enjoy writing and/or publishing an apa may be the place for you. Perhaps the best way to introduce this apa to you is to reprint the announcement left us at the last mini-con.

"The East Coast Apa is finally getting organized! If you wish to join, send \$1 (minimum) to Carol A. Strickland, 307 Lewis St., Greenville, N. C. 27834. Minac is 6 pages every 3 months. ECAPA will be monthly. Ana apa is an amateur press alliance. Members send their own fanzines to a Central Mailer, who collates and sends each member the apazine; everyone gets a copy of everyone else's zine. Zines can contain anything: strips, stories, discussion, mailing comments, etc. Dues cover the cost of postage and envelopes. An account is kept for each member. Minac is minimum acceptable page-count. For the first issue, twenty copies of each zine will be required; we'll see how many members we get before we set a permanent copy count. 1st deadline: March 1!" Obviously we've missed the first deadline but you should still get this in time for the second.

RETURN OF ACG Dept

Any of you who enjoyed my short article last issue on Richard E. Hughes, editor of the American Comics Group, will be glad to hear that the rest of that article will be appearing in the next few months. My 30-plus page article on ACG will appear in The Comic World #17, a special double issue. The article covers all facets of the company but concentrating on the post-Code supernatural/science fiction stories. The Comic World #16 will have the return of Clay Kimball's column, postponed from the previous issue (and sitting on the shelf for a few years). The Comic World is one of my favorite fanzines because it features in depth articles on the old comics, a lost art these days. Copies are \$1 or \$6 for a six-issue subscription from Robert Jennings, RFD 2, Whiting Road, Dudley, Mass 01570. Back issues #9-15 are available for \$1 each and #8 (a double-sized issue) is \$2.

FOLKS AROUND HERE Dept

Manly Wade Wellman has sold his new John the Ballad-Singer novel, THE OLD GODS WAKEN, to Doubleday. . . NIGHT WINDS, by Karl Wagner, will now be out from Warner in August and will have a Frazetta cover. Dave Drake has finished a novel set in the times of the historical King Arthur. . . All three Chapel Hill authors will be represented in the next Year's Best Horror Anthology. . . BLOODSTONE has gone into a third printing from Warner. . . DARKNESS WEAVES is out in England from Coronet. . . The first Whispers anthology has been sold to paperback, and Doubleday has requested a second hardback volume. Stuart Schiff will also be co-editor (with Fritz Leiber) of the Second World Fantasy Awards volume, containing the winners from the 2nd and 3rd Cons. The first volume was edited by Gahan Wilson and about a third came from Whispers. The Chapel Hill writers were all represented. . . Though he isn't local you fantasy fans may be interested to know that Ramsey Campbell wrote three of the Pyramid series of adaptations of horror movie classics. His books were Bride of Frankenstein, The Wolfman, and Dracula's Daughter. . . Whispers Press has a couple of classy hardbacks out, both for \$10 each. One is the long awaited A WINTER WISH, a poetry volume by Lovecraft. The other is RIME ISLE by Fritz Leiber (illos by Tim Kirk), the latest Fafhrd & Gray Mouser novel. Write to Stuart David Schiff at Whispers Press, Box 1492-W Azalea St., Browns Mills, N. J. 08015. . . The George Evans art is starting to come in

for the next Wellman book from Carcosa. . .E. Hoffman Price will be passing through the area some time in May. . .Lee Brown Coye is still in the hospital after his stroke over a year ago. . .There is a new s-f bookstore opened in Chapel Hill just across the street from the Old Book Corner. It is called the Foundation Bookstore. . .Meade Frierson III had a fire at his home on February 20th and while, thankfully, there were no injuries some completed work for upcoming Southern Fandom Confederation publications was lost. He will be unable to do anything until after March so those of you in the SFC are asked to please be patient. . .For those of you who have asked, the comics announced as stolen last issue have been recovered. The comics were not ours, for those of you who expressed concern. . .Circle Books (Will Bullard) has moved to 204 S. Main Street, Laurinburg, N. C. 28352. . .George Beahm has moved north and now gets his mail at P O Box 203, Wilmington, Mass 01887. . .This issue of Vertigo will be disgustingly puny so if any of you pay for it consider the price 25¢. We all hit dry spells at times and after over nine years of Vertigo I'm becoming so predictable that much of each issue can almost be skipped by regular readers. This is another reason for slowing down after the end of this year. . .

FOR STRIPPERS ONLY Dept

If you will remember, last issue I mentioned the Charlotte News as an excellent paper to buy for comic strips. The line-up is as good as ever but the future does not look very good. The News took a poll of their readers to determine which were the favorites and which were the most unpopular. The results were pretty bleak for the new strips of fannish interest. The last five (out of 18) were Best Seller Showcase, Spider-Man, Modesty Blaise, Asterix & Obelix, and last was Star Hawks. The first five were, in order, Blondie, Family Circus, Rex Morgan, Mary Worth, and B.C. Thankfully the paper has not seen fit to dump the low rated strips, yet. If you have no other source for these strips you should still subscribe to the News and let them know that you are only getting the paper for specific strips.

As mentioned last time, the Dick Tracy strip is much improved now that Chester Gould has retired. The art is tighter and the stories should remind you of what Tracy was like years ago when it made its reputation. Among the innovations is a Rogues Gallery spotlighting someone different every Sunday, replacing the Crimestopper's Notebook. Well worth looking into if you enjoy a good crime strip.

You might also take a look at Best Seller Showcase. The latest book to be adapted is The Sword of Shannara by Terry Brooks, a fantasy derivative of Tolkein. The best part is that you get to see Gray Morrow on a fantasy strip instead of the usual adventure strips he ghosts.

The cartoon fans among you may be interested in one of the new strips appearing in the New York Daily News, Crawford by Chuck Jones. Unfortunately the strip itself is pretty ordinary but you can tell Jones did it.

One of the few surviving strip fanzines is Strip Scene out of Canada. Even if there were others around it would probably be one of the best of the non-pro efforts. Every issue has a bunch of short articles on old adventure strips and on collecting tips or personal recollections. The best features are continuing series reviewing all Steve Canyon and On Stage stories from the beginning. The latest issue (#3) has short pieces noting the passing of long time favorites Johnny Hazard and Li'l Abner. Published quarterly at \$1.25 each or \$4 a year from Remuda Publishing, 6312 Crowchild Tr.S.W., Calgary, Alberta, Canada T3E 5R5.

Tom McNamera, the Kid Gang Man
by Steve Rowe

Tom McNamera is one of those "jack of all trades", having worked in the early days of comic strips, comic books, and movies. There is a thread connecting all his work though, he specialised in Kid Gangs and the like.

McNamera was born about 1886, however his first contribution to the popular arts that I know about was in 1916 when he was about 30. "Us Boys", a daily, and "On Our Block", a Sunday, ran in the New York Evening Journal. I have not seen examples of these strips, but am told that both contain adventures adventures of Skinny Shaner and Shrimp Flynn. The strips apparently lasted until 1925.

These strips, however, brought him to the attention of the Hal Roach studios which had a policy of hiring cartoonists (while never on the payroll George Herriman was a frequent visitor and apparent contributor). In 1921 McNamera was hired and worked with others to create the Our Gang short subjects. He had a variety of chores, from directing to writing to drawing and writing title cards. In 1924 he left with William Beaudine to work for United Artists. Among the films he worked on was "Little Annie Rooney" starring Mary Pickford and based on the comic strip about a little girl (yes, there were kid gangs in the story).

In 1929 and 1930 he did a strip for the Chicago Tribune, "Teddy, Jack, and Mary."

In 1935 he began the third phase of his career, working for comic books. He was cartoon editor for New Fun Comics in 1935, and when the Chesler shop started up he joined that and produced comics for Centaur (not kid strips this time though). He continued working for comics until late 1947 or early 1948. He apparently died in 1964.

His most accessible work appears in Fawcett and DC comics. His work for Fawcett basically consists of two page fillers done between 1941 and 1946. 1943 is a good year when most of the Fawcett books had the fillers. Eaglebeak Spruder and Cousin Egbert are good examples, usually set outside and using 2 or 3 boys.

His work for DC is more representative of all his output. "Alix in Folly-land" is in early issues of Buzzy. Alix is a sprite who under the tutoring of his uncle is observing human behavior. Alix, however, usually picks up the bad habits that he observes. And Yep, Alix spends his time observing kid gangs. "Grandpa Peters" is a 2 page filler strip that ran in many DC comics in the early 1940s. It was signed by Lefty O'Grady (Champion nine and 3/4 years old south paw) with periods, commas, and spelling by McNamera; but the art is obviously by McNamera even drawn in a simplistic style. The strip consists of grandpa telling outlandish stories to Lefty. "The Gas House Gang", which ran in the later issues of More Fun in 1946 and 1947 (as well as an unidentified Nedor comic in 1943), is perhaps his best work as well as his most representative. The star of the strip is Patsy (who is indeed a patsy) who has run-ins with Rodney. Rodney is one of those people who keep themselves one step ahead of the other person. He's portrayed as a scoundrel. The strip has an interesting McNamera trademark: the splash panel is the end result of what happens in the last panel; an epilogue as a prologue.

McNamera, while not a genius of the field, is an important contributor to the early years of three fields.

Gardner Fox Books

Continuing our saga of the non-comic book work of Gardner Fox I have a handful of books issued in the past year or so to add to the fast growing checklist. His most recent book is a romance written under the name Lynna Cooper and published by Signet and entitled MY TREASURE, MY LOVE. Not too long ago Leisure Books revived his Cherry Delight series as written by Glen Chase. The new books contain a little fantasy and s-f to go along with the sex of the earlier books. Recent additions to this series include: GREEK FIRE, THE DEVIL TO PAY, THE MOORLAND MONSTER, WHERE THE ACTION IS, and THE MAN WHO WAS GOD. That makes about 29 books in the Cherry Delight series that he has written. There are also twenty-some Lady From L.U.S.T. books of his as written by Rod Gray. Eve Drum is a spy while Cherry Delight is one of the Mafia fighters. Under the name Margaret Maitland he writes thick historicals for Belmont/Tower and Leisure Books. The ones I know of are THE UNCONQUERED, TIDEWATER, and THE CHANNINGS OF EVERLEIGH. Two of these are set in the South and the third is about an effort to revive the Confederacy in Brazil. As with the rest of his recent books these are liberally spiced with sex scenes. He also writes gothics/romances under the name Robin Anne Selby but so far I've been unable to locate any of these. All told, he has written about 150 books under a variety of different names. Of these I only have about 80, with a handful more on order from the publisher. I'm always looking for new ones I don't have but by now the odds are about 50-50 that I'll have any I find. My favorites of his books are the historicals written in the 1950s and early 1960s. He has written books under the names: Gardner F. Fox, Simon Majors, Bart Somers, Kevin Matthews, Jefferson Cooper, James Kendricks, Rod Gray, Glen Chase, Lynna Cooper, Margaret Maitland, Robin Anne Selby, and (perhaps) Clement Purvis. Drop me a line if you have any books you think I might need under any of these names. I must warn you, however, that I have almost 20 Eve Drum and about 10 Cherry Delight books plus all the s-f and fantasy books under his own name.

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TO:

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