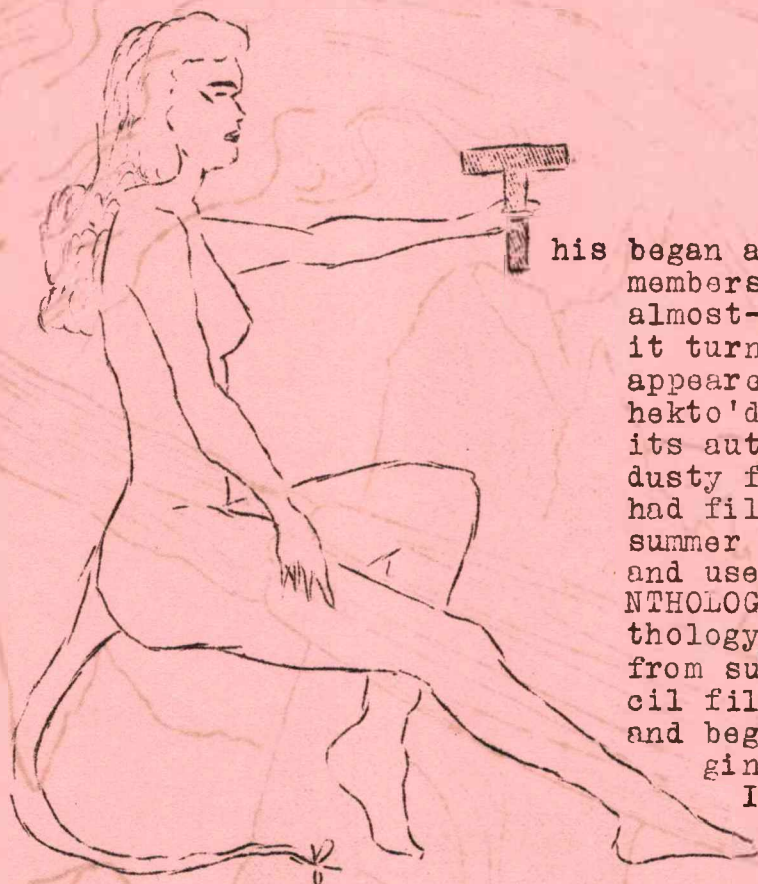




APRIL 1949

Produced upon the HIAISM Mimeo at 2120 Bay Street, Saginaw, Michigan, by Arthur H. Rapp, for the 50th Mailing of FAPA, February 1950. This is a one-shot, for which we may all be profoundly thankful.



his began as an anthology of material by members of FAPA, taken from the past almost-three years of SPACEWARP. As it turned out, some of the material appeared in the era when WARP was a hekto'd zine, some was regarded by its authors as better off buried in dusty files, some of the stencils I had filed away in a hot attic for a summer or two had fused into a waxy and useless mass -- therefore, FAPANTHOLOGY becomes, instead, an anthology for members of FAPA, taken from such parts of SPACEWARP's stencil file as were available, useable, and began and/or ended with the beginning and/or ending of a page.

It's original aim of reflecting the non-FAPA work of FAPs has dimmed into the more mercenary aim of possibly

persuading some of you guys to subscribe to SPACEWARP. After all, not all the interesting prose of fandom lurks in its apas...

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Interior artwork by Ed Cox and Robert L. Stein, among others, {und Rotslor		

*This is a regular WARP column, 10 instalments of which have appeared thru this time (January 1950).

Beginning with its March 1950 issue, WARP will also present a column revived from VAMPIRE -- Fanzine Scope, by one F.Towner Laney. Now is the time for all good FAPans to send in their subs to SPACEWARP.

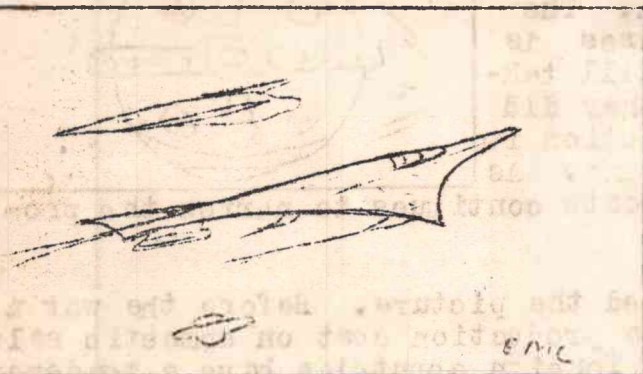
mgmparamountrepublicmgmparamount
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m **FLICKERING FUTURE** r
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by T.E. WALKINS
1605 Wood Ave.
Kansas City 2, Kansas

The train is coming down the track, TOOT, TOOT, TOOT! The station agent and Clark Kent look down at a broken rail. We sit back in our movie seats with a smug sense of satisfaction. There is no danger, that train will not jump the track because we know who Clark Kent is. He is not a bird, he is not a plane, HE IS SUPERMAN! All he has to do is to reach down and twist that rail back in place with his little finger. Snucks, he could blow it back in place.

The station agent does not know that the man beside him is SUPERMAN. The train is coming down the track, TOOT, TOOT, TOOT!! The agent rushes up the track to warn the train. We wonder why Clark Kent delays. Twist that rail, boy, that agent can't stop that train. Kent looks around, spies haystack, runs behind haystack, trumpets sound, train whistle toots, agent waves madly, and tATA, tATA, out from behind haystack comes (oh my achin' eyes) SUPERMAN in full regalia -- long underwear and cape.

O.k., o.k., so he can't twist rail without special underwear. Let's go, SM, the train is coming fast, TOOT, TOOT, TOOT! Whizzes past agent. This is a job for SUPERMAN! Off he goes. Gets in front of train. Mighty muscles bulge as he pushes on engine and stops train cold. People get out and gather round. Eyes pop. And THEN, with many a grunt and groan, SUPERMAN twists rail back in shape. Oh, well, I suppose SUPERMAN has to have his ego too and he doesn't twist rails unless someone is looking. But not for our 45¢. We've



seen the feature anyway and this is the serial. On our way out we notice that the kids have their eyes glued to the screen. Don't sneer at the little darlings -- they are future stf fans. They are getting their ABCs. They will start out on SUPERMAN and Buck Rogers and perhaps continue to enjoy van Vogt, Williamson and Russell.

The thing that disappoints us is the lack of good science fiction on the screen. There have been quite a number of fantasy pictures and some I would call semi-science fiction, but very few real science fiction pictures.

Four pictures produced since the silent era I would call science fiction of a sort. "Just Imagine" was a stf humor picture produced by Paramount in the middle thirties. It had something of the flavor of Edgar Rice Burroughs and his Martian stories. The city-of-the-future scenes and rocket scenes were done in miniature and were just as phoney as a lead dime. The movie patrons laughed at the picture instead of with it. Paramount never made another.

"Frankenstein" was a success, but Universal loused it up with frequent and corny sequels. "The Shape of Things To Come" was an

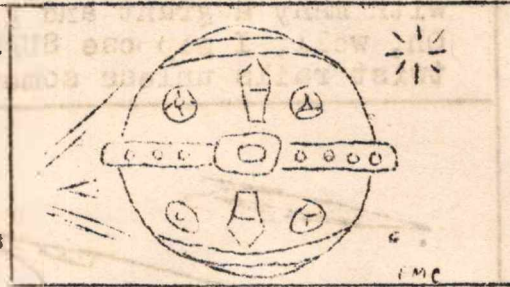
English film from an H.G. Wells story and was a prediction of the second World War. It was a good picture, but not much of a financial success.

"The Lost World" was the most successful science fiction picture both from a financial and production point of view. The prehistoric animals looked quite real and the whole production was tip top. This movie was a good example of what the movies can do in presenting the imagination of science fiction authors.

There have been a number of pictures produced that might be called semi-science fiction such as "The Invisible Man," filmed from an H.G. Wells story; the famous classic, "Dr Jekel and Mr. Hyde," and a number of others.

At the present time no studios are contemplating filming science fiction. It would seem that the time is ripe for this type of picture. The movie patrons laughed at "Just Imagine" because it was too unusual. Now after the atomic bomb and the V-2 rocket and with better story and production would they laugh? Science fiction is a treasure trove of untouched material that could provide the motion pictures with many exciting films. The producers are retrenching on costs and it would seem that the science fiction stories could be bought for a fraction of the cost of best selling novels and stage plays. And yet the listing of future films in "Variety" gives no science fiction stories filmed or about to be filmed. What gives?

The answer to that question lies in the economic mudle which most motion picture producers now find themselves. During the war the motion picture companies made the biggest profits ever made by any type of entertainment. Employment and wages were high, prices fixed and commodities scarce. The over-excited public spent their money on entertainment. A large share of the swag went to the movies. Today employment and wages are still high, but commodities are not so scarce and prices are not fixed and are sky high. The share of the swag to the motion pictures is way down. Of course, Hollywood is still taking bigger grosses per picture than they did before the war, but the cost of production is much higher than prewar and still rising. As the line between gross receipts and costs continues to narrow the producers sweat.



Several other factors have entered the picture. Before the war a picture producer figured on making his production cost on domestic sales and his profit on foreign sales. Now foreign countries have a tendency to tax American pictures for all they are worth to save their dollar exchange. The British tax 'em 75% no less. The French may do the same. Many countries under Russian domination won't admit American pictures at all. In the future the American picture may do well to meet distribution costs on the foreign market.

The movies are meeting more competition than ever before from big time sports, liquor and that fast-growing baby, television. Just how much business they will lose to television is the biggest headache to the motion picture producer right now.

The movies are meeting more censorship than ever before. Every organization that ever had a beef at the movies are hitting them now. The old practice of Hollywood of giving in on the slightest complaint

of some well organized minority is drying up their story material. They cannot film sex, race, or political problems with any degree of honesty.

The impact on Hollywood is terrific. As the profits dwindle the actors, producers and production men scurry around like ants in a step-ped-on ant hill. People get fired over night, contracts change hands, pictures half completed are dropped because of costs. The result has been that since the war, Hollywood has produced the poorest run of pictures in its history. Little experimentation is going on now. The documentary film such as "Boomerang" and "The Street With No Name" is the only new thing that Hollywood has tried. Race prejudice pictures such as "Crossfire" and "Gentlemen's Agreement" have had a small success, but no new ones are on the way.

In such a set-up it is not difficult to see why the science fiction film, which has had no outstanding success in the past, is not being produced today. The new cycles are Westerns such as "Red River" and "Silver River" and musicals such as "Easter Parade" and "The Lady in Ermine," both tried and true formulas aimed at a large mass audience.

There are factors, however, which might cause a new cycle of science fiction films when Hollywood catches its economic breath. A larger audience is in the making--read paragraph 1. The kids today are reading SUPERMAN and Captain Marvel and are better prepared for science fiction films than were the kids of yesterday who read western stories and dime novels. The atomic bomb has stirred the imagination of the average man like no other event in history and he is better geared to accept the science fiction premise than he was ten years ago. Science fiction writers are writing better stories--some of them are getting into the slick magazines, almost unheard-of in the thirties. Some producers are predicting that television will take over the mass audience entertainment and that the movies will produce pictures for select groups to be shown in small theaters. This would work in our favor as our ever growing numbers could put out a strong bid for science fiction pictures.

And one of these days some happy-go-lucky Irishman is going to fly to the moon. If nothing else will jolt the Hollywood producer, that will!

How would you guys like a couple of seats for "The World of A," by van Vogt, in technicolor and three dimensions? On the aisle, you say? Right this way, boys!

- END -

THE GHOST

The ghost walked the streets of old
Saw how it had changed today;
He had lived there long ago
He knew not how far away.

His old friends he could see--
But talk with them, oh no!
Nor did his friends know that he
Was so near to them, oh woe!

Sad he returned to his haunts,
To go on his way alone;
No one could know his wants.
He looked back once -- then
was gone.

by RUSSELL WATKINS
203 Wampum
Louisville 9, Kentucky

THE RUMOR

by L. T. GEORGE

Chapter I

The guys were laughing and talking with their gals and joking around as the man came in and nobody noticed him. I wasn't paying much attention to what was going on except my sundae and only noticed that he did come in. Pretty soon Tip comes over and starts talking to Jonesy who's sitting next to me. Now when Tip starts talking to Jonesy, I wake up and take notice. After all, Jonesy is my girl and Tip is my rival wolf. Not that I'm a wolf.

"What's up?" I ask just to break into the conversation. "Anything or just the same as usual?" This was a small burgh and nothing usually does go on.

"Oh, nothing much," Tip says and turns his great charm back to Jonesy who isn't saying anything much for fear we'd, Tip and me, get going at each other again. But I'd soon put a stop to him.

I finished off my sundae, flipped the coin of the realm to the white-clad fizzician and says:

"Well, let's deprive this place of our presence and take to the heap," to Jonesy, who immediately took to the idea.

We got into the crate and I finally got the thing groaning into motion. I hoped that Dad would get me that new Buick when I start in at college. You see, I am a Senior and soon to leave the fair, shady-laned town of Mapleview for the big college, in an equally small town. Jonesy was a Junior, and I was worrying about leaving her here in Mapleview with Tip on the loose. My thoughts were busted by her dreamy voice pouring into my ears.

"Did you hear what Tip was telling me? I mean, the rumor that's making the rounds now. Bill Taylor came into Kline's and told it around," she said in that dream-voice of hers.

Now I remembered who that guy was who came in. I made words.

"Whatever Tip was telling you isn't worth repeating and he shouldn't of soiled your lil ears with it anyway," I said, wincing at the corn. But anything to get a crack at mine enemy.

She went on, ignoring my beautiful words.

"There's a rumor going that they've fenced off the approach to Miller's woods and the swamp," she said. "The Sheriff has been down there making an investigation. I wonder what's going on?" she ended in a musing tone of voice. I knew she wanted me to drive down there and have us a look-see.

"Well, it'll turn out that somebody's got got drowned in a bog and they are afraid a kid will fall in next," I said quickly, regardless of facts, preparing to lead the conversation away from the subject and concentrate on the dance at the Grange the next night. But I was doomed to failure.

"But Tip says that they think the Beardsly child already has been lost in there. He said they are trying to keep whatever's going on secret! It's an awful

place anyway. Have you ever gone way in?" she asked, almost melting me with her wide, misty blue eyes. The heap weaved back and forth on the road a couple of times before I was able to answer her.

"Nope. I kept out of there. Went partridge shooting along the eastern edge once last fall, though. Not bad there," I replied and let the heap come to a shuddering halt in front of her abode. Before I could even open my mouth to say another word, she scoops up her books, jumps out of the car and runs up the walk. I'm worrying til I see her grab her kid brother (Little Napoleon) away from the poor dog and then turn a-round and call goodbye and wave to me. I wave back and mumble something.

Oh, well, I thought, the ways of women are indeed strange, and turned to the task of getting the heap started down the street.

Chapter II

I was just finishing supper when Dad started talking about the rumor. I'd completely forgotten about it until he mentioned it again. This time I learned more about it.

"Did you hear the rumor going around about Miller's swamp?" he asked. From the twinkle in his eye, I knew that he knew something about it. Mom said no, and I risked a falsehood and said no too.

"Well," he said, drawing back his chair, "Milvern down at my office told me something's up down by the swamp. Sheriff Link has ordered it closed off. Funny thing is, though, that they aren't telling just why. Or what for anyway," he said. We had all finished eating and retired to the living room. The maid, with an ear open, started clearing away the dishes.

"What d'you mean, why or what for?" I contributed. "Is there some dirty work going on?"

"Lewis, must you always turn things into something gruesome?" Mom asked me. I shrugged while Dad finished lighting his pipe.

"Well, we do know this The Boardsly child has disappeared, and they think the child is lost in the swamp. But," he said, pausing dramatically, "Why the secrecy involved?"

I was quick to jump into the situation.

"Well, maybe somebody killed the kid, dumped the body in the swamp, and this is all cover up because they don't want publicity," I rattled off, and then realized that Mom was getting exasperated with me again. I shut up but too late.

"Lewis, sometimes I think those magazines you read have too much control over your imagination," she began. Dad, who was neutral in this argument, gave up his conjectures as a lost cause and opened his newest Hunting & Fishing. I grabbed my trig and English books and rushed upstairs telling Mom that she needn't worry about Weird Tales unduly influencing my mind.

Chapter III

I got up to my room and chucked the books on a table. Then found the latest Astounding and went out on the back porch via the back stairs where I could read in peace. I was deeply engrossed in van Vogt's "Clare" serial when Ted Ward's voice broke into my thoughts. I looked up in time to see him vault the white picket fence, nearly land in Mom's flowers and run across the yard toward me. I rolled over on the

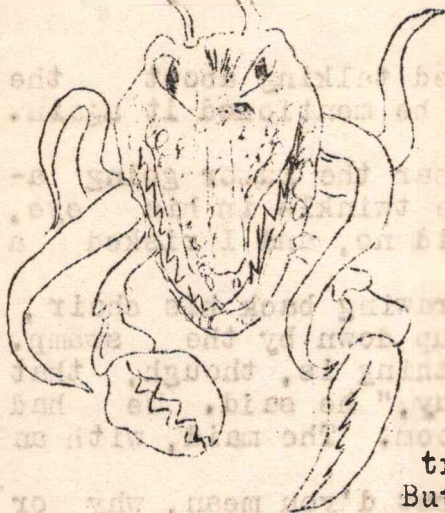
couch and got up in time to open the screen door for him.

"Hi, Ted, what's new?" I tritely remarked and eased onto the couch again. I rescued the Astounding and a Startling from certain destruction as he plumped down on the couch beside me.

"Did you hear," he panted, "what happened down in Miller's swamp?"

"No, I haven't heard much," I replied, sensing that my neighbor had some inside news. This was developing into something.

"I know. They aren't letting much out but me and some of the fellows were down there hanging around and helping with the fence. They've put up a big one on the townside," he continued. "I got some hints as to what's going on. The Beardsly kid, you know, little Joe Beardsly the kid that played on the grammar-school baseball team, well it seems he's dead. They found him in there," he finished. His enthusiasm died down and he leafed through the pages of an old FFM, absent-minded like.



"Well, blast it!" I huffed, "what's happening? I mean, cut the stalling. Come on boy, give! Don't stop now!"

It came out in a rush now. He knew and he wanted to share in his terrible knowledge. For it was terrible.

.....
"Somebody found what was left of the body pretty deep in the swamp. The man got sick when he saw it. He notified the sheriff office and the coroner and a couple of policemen went down. They found that the kid had wandered off down there and couldn't find any tracks other than the man's that had found him.

But the thing is, the body was half eaten! They never saw the likes of it before and can't think what there is around here that would. I don't think any dogs around here are wild and that's the only thing that I know of," his voice trailed off. I just sat there, aghast I guess. "What do you think of it?" he finished.

"Sounds like something out of Weird Tales to me," I said, as it was the first thing that popped into my head. "This needs investigation too," I continued, "from us. We ought to get some of the guys together and sneak down there and look around. How about tomorrow evening?" I asked, all enthusiastic over some real adventure. It sounded good anyway.

"Hey, you won't be so all-fired quick to go off into that place tomorrow night when I tell the rest of it," he replied.

"The rest of it?" I yelped.

"Yeah," he said, his voice low, "and this is the worst of it. They saw or think they saw what did it or traces of what did it! I didn't get all of this because they told us guys to scam out of there and they drove off anyway. But Jack Shannon's father is one of the cops, you know and he pumped his old man. Anyway, that's it," he finished.

"Yeah? You didn't tell me what the thing, is it a thing? I like," I said, all lathered up. This sounded good. Maybe I could write an article on it for a fanzine if it panned out good.

"Oh," he said, disappointed-like, "well, I wasn't able to find out. That's the worst of it. We only half-know what's going on."

"Well," I shot out, "that's why a bunch of us ought to get down there and see if we can find out just

what is happening down there, or what is down there," I said, all heated up again. "Tomorrow night while this is still hot. Too late tonight to go."

"Wait a minute! What about the dance? Most of us are going. And I thought you were going to take Maxine," he countered (Maxine is Jonesy's real first name.)

"Bro-ther!" I breathed, "I forgot all about it! I did? How could I !"

"Well, you did," he shot back. "Now what? Say, ...we could sneak off after the dance or at intermission," he pondered. "But what would the girls do? I guess we'll have to wait," he finished.

"No," I said, trying to save the ship. "We ought to be able to swing it somehow. Maybe we could take the girls...no, that's no good. They'd like it being dragged around in that mess. I got it! You and me can go down tonight! Then we could take the rest of the guys down later!" I enthused, all excited again.

"Naw, it's too late now," he said, shattering my enthusiasm. It was, too, for we'd been talking for quite a while.

"Well, gotta get back across the fence, Lew," he said getting up. "Say, can I borrow this FN? I haven't got mine yet."

He usually returns them okay so I said yes he could and he went out. The last I saw of him, he was sailing across the fence into his yard. He is one of our top track men and he is too lazy to walk down our driveway and up his.

Chapter IV

Well, in the middle of the night I heard the solution of the whole thing. It was raining. And it sounded like it wasn't going to stop for quite a while. If it didn't stop, that meant the dance would probably be called off and if it was.....

For the rest of the night I couldn't sleep. I kept turning over and changing the position of my feet and legs trying to find a new, cool spot. And my mind was just as restless. Figuring out how Ted and I could slosh down to the swamp and look around. I finally dozed off again and about a minute later, it seemed, the alarm brought me out of it with a jolt.

By nine o'clock I'd found out that the dance had been called off because of the rain. A leak in the roof had developed and the floor of the hall was sopped and unfit for dancing. Of course, I'd cleaned up, eaten and all those other things but they seemed incidental. Then, after I'd gone through my morning mail (including reading both fanzines that came) I got Ted over.

"Well," he said, shaking himself like a wet dog, "looks like we can make it now doesn't it?" He seemed strangely unenthusiastic about the thing now and as soon as he got his raincoat hung up, he sat down beside me and said just what I thought he would.

"Do you think it's wise for us to go?" he asked.

"Now look," I said, "don't tell me you're backing down! Why, all we need to do now is to wait a few hours, about an hour after lunch and then we can go. It ought to be done raining by then and our guns won't get wet."

"W-e-l-l, I wasn't exactly backing down," he replied, "I was just wondering. After all how do we know what we'll find there?"

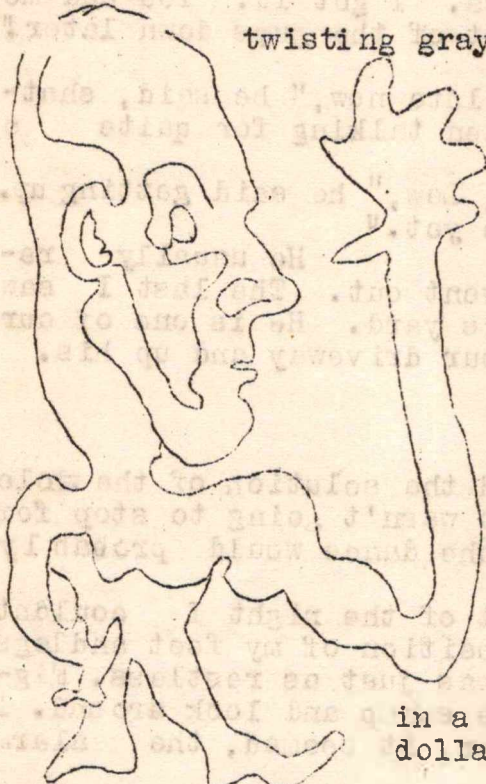
"Look, dope," I said, pacing up and down before the couch, "that is the



idea! Can'cha see....?" I stopped looking for words. "Yeh," he says, "something too big for us to handle, for instance." "Oh, hell," I shrugged uneasily at him, "I doubt it. But..." I was remembering what he'd told me. I guess he was more aware of it than I was. So I started talking and talking fast. For over half an hour. Then we agreed on the time we'd leave. After all, I wasn't going to go alone!

Chapter V

"Lucky it stopped raining hard," Ted said, feeling the wet draining down his face as a light wind blew the misty fog.



I looked up at the twisting gray mess in the sky and wondered when it would let loose again, and regretted it. "Damn, that's three times I've stepped in a deep puddle," I raged.

And so we squished along the cow path down along the branch of trees from the forest toward the swamp. The ground was low in the first place and the puddles were only deep spots where the water could get depth. As it was, the ground was like a sponge.

The half mist-fog blew across the meadows and condensed on us while our feet were getting wet even in lumberman's rubbers. We didn't say much but we were thinking plenty. Were we nuts coming out here like this? Or wasn't there anything...?...but they had recovered a grisly thing that was once a boy...something that we've never seen had done that to him.....

"Here we are," said Ted in a gay voice that rang dull as a counterfeit half dollar. "After you Alphonse." "Oh, no, I couldn't think of it," I said graciously. "After you, Gaston."

So I took the lead and started slopping and sloshing into the swamp. Now there are many different types of swamps but this was the more northern kind. It consisted of a shallow scoop of land that was filled with water in varying depths according to the season and rains. Soggy mud made up the "solid" spots and to avoid getting badly wet, you had to go from clump to clump of grass. To finish the scene off, alders and smaller bushes and trees grew in abundance which were good for scraping mosquitoes off of your face and skin too. There were a few bogs around but whenever we felt the "ground" sag under us, we got away from there fast-like. An occasional water-soaked log made for a dubious stepping stone.

I stopped on a big rock that was strangely out of place here and made room for Ted to inch up beside me. I stared at some dead leaves floating in a stagnant puddle.

"Well," ventured Ted in a stage whisper like sandpaper on wood, "What next?"

"What are you whispering for?" I asked aloud. And I regretted it because I felt so foolish and unprotected talking out loud like that. For some reason.....

"Well," I whispered, "Isn't this about the place we're supposed to start...ah...looking for clues? Signs or

something?"

He didn't answer and I looked at him. He was staring down to my left so it was hard to see what he was looking at, since he was also to my left.

"What is it?" I ventured. I was irritated by a sudden quivering of a stomach muscle.

"Look," he whispered and pointed. I followed the direction his lone finger showed, and looked.

Chapter VI

At first, I couldn't see anything different from usual. A moss-covered rotten log sticking up out of the water with clumps of grass all around. Dead leaves and sticks and stuff all around in one big tangle. Alders here and there. Then I saw the branch of the big tree. It was broken as if somebody had stepped on it. The dead orange of the ends showed up bright against the dead, wet black of the bark. It was crushed as if a big foot had trod on it. But what foot is about two feet wide? I was about to say something silly and irrelevant when I noticed the smooth look of the grass and leaves. Like grass looks after water has been running over it in one direction for quite a while. It looked like someone had dragged a sack over it. A sack of cement.

"That must've been recent, Lew, or those little pieces of rotten wood would've been washed away in the rain. And the black mud would've been too." Ted was dead sober and his blue eyes were troubled.

"Well," I said finally, "I guess that's the direction we take."

"Okay," he replied. He started off the rock without another word. We didn't bother wondering what had made the trail. We did know that no man had. Not unless he was dragging things around and why should he, way out here in this mess?

Ted had his gun in his hand and I suddenly found that mine in my hand was the most reassuring thing in the world at that moment. The Smith & Wesson felt pretty darned good right then!

"Oops, getting deep," Ted yelped quietly. "We'll have to circle out of this. Ground rises over there." He pointed to a small forest of alders.

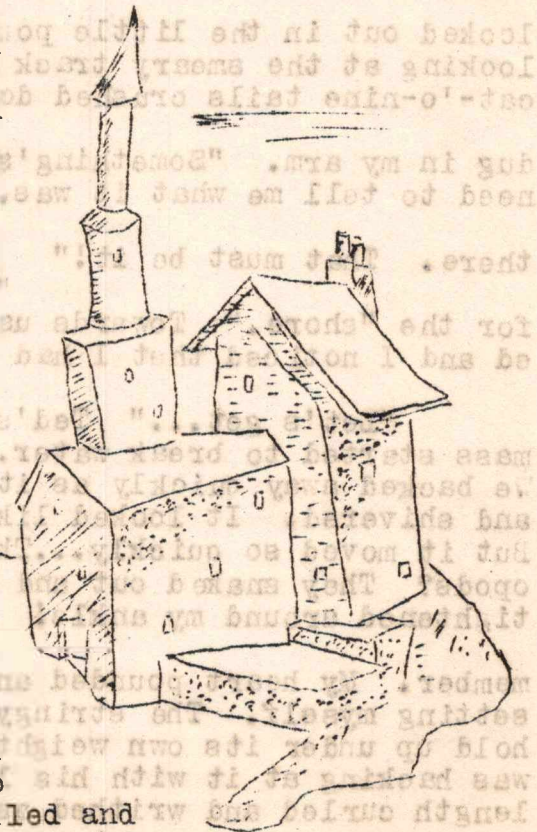
"We'll have to circle those too," I added. "We'd never make it through those."

So we sloshed on. I suddenly noticed that I made every effort to make as little noise as possible. Because Ted was too!

It started raining again as we finally came to where we thought the trail would lead. Ted stopped.

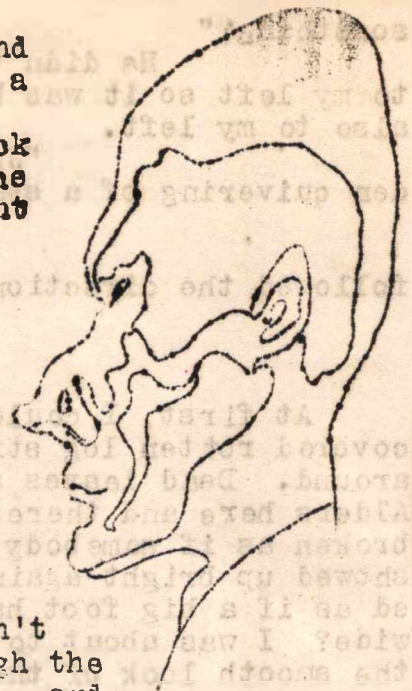
"Well," I mused aloud, "we were originally going in a straight line from that branch. If we had kept on, we'd have to come out here, I think. Let's...uh...look around. Together," I added.

It was a bit difficult to walk with one hand in your pocket but we didn't want to get moisture on our guns, even though we'd oiled and greased them up pretty thoroughly. And we didn't



want to let go of them, either. Twice I stumbled and came down on one foot quite heavily, making quite a splatter.

I spotted the mark this time. The sack again. Like it was dragged out of the water onto the higher ground. The grass was flattened down and went "against the grain" where the grass had previously streamed like hair down to the water as the higher land drained. And this time, we saw where the trail kept on going. A glistening-like trail. Sort of like a snail makes.....



Chapter VII

This time we knew that we were on the trail of it, whatever "it" was. We knew it was "it." I just went along in a daze without thinking. I did not feel like making any guesses as to what that was. Why we didn't go back and show somebody, I don't know. But here we were following its trail. Through the soggy muck, decayed leaves, rotten refuse of bushes and trees...in other words, the swamp. It looked like a huge snail had gone through like a bulldozer, scraping its path as it went.

Suddenly I was scared. Because I knew this wasn't a dream.

So we followed. Two high school seniors slogging through the mucky swamp with revolvers in their hands, following...what? It was fantastic but real.

Ted stopped again. We were on the edge of a shallow lake where the ground was basin-shaped. He turned to me and said, "Say, Lew, how do we get out of here? Have you been noticing how far we're in? This." He gestured out over the small body of water, "is way, way in the swamp. I saw a map once and we're at least two or more miles into the center!"

I didn't answer. I looked out in the little pond and watched the water boil. I stood there looking at the smeary track go down into the water; at the rushes and cat-'o-nine tails crushed down and at the turmoil in the water.

Ted's grip dug in my arm. "Something's in there," he said needlessly. He didn't need to tell me what it was.

"What'll we do?" I asked. "It is out there. That must be it!"

"It" decided for us. A streak of foam made for the "shore." Towards us. The hammer on the Smith & Wesson clicked and I noticed that I had unconsciously cocked the gun. But for what?

"Let's get..." Ted's voice died as an almost translucent jelly mass started to break water. It looked rubbery; it glistened. It stank. We backed away quickly as it foamed nearer. We just backed and gawked... and shivered. It looked like a huge amoeba. What we would see of it. But it moved so quickly...Then we saw the tentacles, or were they pseudopods? They snaked out and hooked around alders and tightened. And one tightened around my ankle!

I must've yelled something but I don't remember. My heart pounded and skipped as I tugged foolishly, almost upsetting myself. The stringy-looking pseudopod didn't look like it could hold up under its own weight but it pulled. I nearly fell. Then Ted was hacking at it with his long pocket knife. It parted and the small length curled and writhed as if alive. It was.

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Chapter VIII

Then I fired into the mass. The .38 slug ripped through it with seemingly little damage. It quivered and reared up out of the water on to the higher land. I found it couldn't move so quickly out of water. It pulled itself along by grabbing small trees and pulling. That's how it made those draggy-looking tracks. And now it was dragging itself towards us.

We scrambled back and tried to get out of reach, which was not easy. Then a pair of wide eyes, pupiless, stared at us and a gaping mouth slobbered at us. A harsh panting sound issued from it and I decided that it was more than an over-sized amoeba! Both Ted and I opened up on it. The bullets tore through it, making a sickening thud-rip sound. The thing came on...

"Look, Lew," Ted panted, "these slugs aren't doing much damage. Let's make dum-dum slugs out of them. For this....."

I agreed hastily, wishing we had rifles. We ran, if you could call it running, a distance and dug a notch into the noses of the bullets, flipped the cylinders back in and turned to face the horror slithering and squishing toward us. Alders creaked and bent and broke as it pulled on them, dragging itself nearer and nearer to us.

"Okay, let's try it," I said and pulled the trigger. The .38 bucked in my hand a little and the dum-dum thudded into the crawling horror. The thing stopped, convulsed somewhat, and then proceeded slowly.

"It worked, Lew!" Ted yelled. "It bored a big hunk in the thing but didn't go completely through. Maybe we can bust this thing up..."

He fired again and I took out extra cartridges and notched them. Then I fired while he reloaded. I aimed near the side of the thing and a great blob of "flesh" sloughed off the side of it. I fired into the middle of it until the gun was empty and my thumb sore and bruised where it scraped on the cylinder release each time the gun recoiled.

I reloaded as Ted started firing. "They're working!" he yelled. The monster seemed to lose what shape it had had and was losing big hunks each time we fired. Then it started to literally dissolve. It collapsed into itself and became a dripping pool of slime. An odor suddenly assailed our nostrils and we choked and coughed and nearly retched.

"Aaagh, let's scam outa here," I gasped. "It looks done for."

Chapter IX

Ted agreed very heartily and we scrambled from there. The silence suddenly became an extreme to the racketing gunshots of a few moments ago and only now did we realize what a noise we had been making.

It was even more of a nightmare experience making our way out of that swamp than when we destroyed the monster. The effects started to set in and several times we had to stop and get rid of the shakes. We lost lunch, the breakfast and the supper before that, before we got halfway out of the place. We tried to erase the horror from our minds and mentally tried to cleanse our memories of the terrible scene we left back there.

Then it started raining hard again. It would...wash...it...away and cover up most of the tracks and what had happened. In a week, most all traces ought to be obliterated.

"Lew," croaked Ted, "we'd better just try to forget this. I mean, not tell anybody. We were," he paused, "just out

for a walk or something."

"Yeah," I replied. "We were out for a five hour jaunt somewhere. I hope I never take another like it." We finally arrived home in the darkening afternoon as the rain let up and contented itself with a drizzle. Before going into the house, I luckily noticed something.

I scraped off, with some mud, some slime from my boot.....

-- THE END --

BROKEN IMAGE

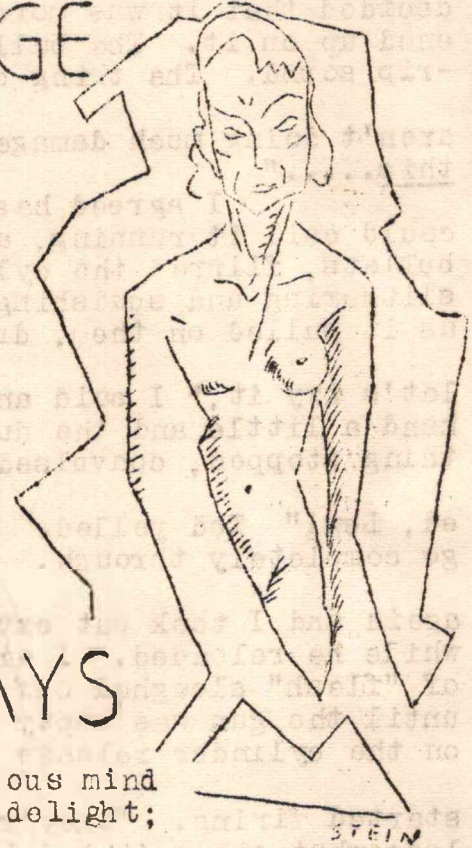
Stone and rubble and dirt clod,
Broken dwelling of a god.

Who was replaced by stronger one
Underneath a younger sun.

Step softly and most carefully
On this thin edge of immortality.

Lest in his sleep he take alarm
And strike at you with broken arm.

-- GENEVIEVE K. STEPHENS

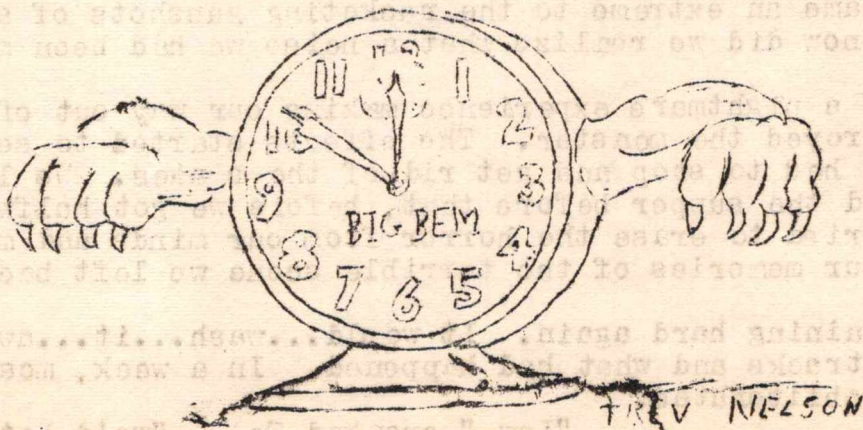


PAST GATEWAYS

Past gateways of the conscious mind
Vistas wait of madness and delight;
Towers rise up for me
By day or night.

And shadows clustering, bow low--
An Empress, absolute am I,
Of endless kingdoms
Over and beyond the sky.

-- GENEVIEVE K. STEPHENS



FILE THIRTEEN

by Redd Boggs
2215 Benjamin St., N.E.
Minneapolis 18, Minnesota



OPEN LETTER TO AUGUST DERLETH.

Dear Auggie: Perusal of the new Arkham House catalog suggests to what extreme lengths you semi-pro fantasy publishers have gone to obtain book rights to the worthwhile and preservable fiction in the yellowing pages of the pulps. From a cringing glance at the titles you have announced for publication in various Arkham House collections in 1949 and later, it is evident that you have sewed up the rights to more pulp stuff than the most ardent "aficionado" ever expected -- or desired -- to see between hard covers.

Verily, it seems to this fan that you publishers have left little more than fillers and the poems of the Planet Prince in the back files of my favorite magazines. Anthologies and various collections from your press, as well as Shasta, Hadley, Prime Press, Fantasy Press, and others, have exhausted the supply of the best work of Heinlein, Keller, Williamson, Stuart, Geosmith, Weinbaum, C.A. Smith, Doc Smith, and of course H.P.L. -- in fact, all the reprintable work of those writers who are commonly adjudged to be the giants of the pulp fantasy field. There are damn few good stories -- the so-called "classics" -- left to "book". And yet, your catalog announces an ever-swelling flood of books to come from your presses for the next few years.

In my modest way, Mr. Derleth, I think that I'm as rabid a fan as the fantasy field can boast at the present time. I am loyal to my favorite literature to the point of absurdity. I have been known to exhibit signs of epileptics when you divide your own literary works (which are not my particular favorites) into two categories: serious work and fantasy. When the torrent of fantasy books was signalled in 1939 with the publication of The Outsider and Others I vowed to obtain all the fantasy books you published. Of course, at the time, this vow entailed the purchase of only a few HPL omni-volumes, but when Fantasy Press and others joined you, I loyally purchased their offerings as far as my budget would allow.

Sure, I bought lots of cruddy stuff, nicely bound between hard covers, but I didn't mind too badly, because in most books there was something good to balance the bad, or else the stories were nostalgically remembered stories from earlier and less lush years of fantasy. But until the arrival of your catalog I scarcely realized to what ungodly things you semi-pro boys are stooping. The pulp stories you are hard-covering in 1949 and later are, to put it bluntly, a pile of crap.

When a rabid fantasite like myself feels inclined to call the pulp stuff you are immortalizing in book form "a pile of crap," I sincerely feel it is time that you, as a businessman and as a person of literary tastes, take stock of Operation Arkham House.

Let's take a look at some of the fiction you plan to reprint in Arkham House volumes.

Well, of course, there's Fritz Leiber's novel, Gather, Darkness! Frankly, although I've tried several times, I've been unable to finish this serial in Astounding, but it was highly praised when it first came out, and is adjudged a favorite on many lists of "best stories" I've

seen. Fan sentiment seems to be on your side, so we'll not quarrel over this title.

Away and Beyond, the van Vogt collection, is another story -- or more accurately, several of them, very few of them outstanding. Definitely there is a need for a book comprising van Vogt's shorter works, but I'll be damned if at least three of the titles you announce for inclusion deserve anything but the passed-over-in-silence treatment whenever Mr. van Vogt's works are discussed. "The Harmonizer" and "Film Library" received the peculiar distinction of rating 5th out of six stories in the Astounding issues in which they appeared. Deprecate the Analytical Laboratory ratings if you choose, but remember that Van's better tales rated much higher than that, usually hitting the top. For the life of me, I cannot imagine any reason whatsoever for the inclusion of "Secret Unattainable." This was a potboiler van Vogt wrote about Pearl Harbor time, and describes Hitler's defeat by means of a mad scientist's super-scientific time machine. I feel it an effrontery to the U.S. Army and its allies -- who really did defeat Hitler -- to publish this fictional account of how it didn't happen.

I admire your description of A Hornbook for Witches, Mr. D. Your use of the word "verse" instead of "poetry" in both places where you mention possible admirers of this collection of Leah Bodine Drake's verse, suggests that you do not lack a sense of values in this particular instance. I incline to doubt if there are any discriminating lovers of fantastic poetry who would recognize A Hornbook for Witches as anything less than a ludicrous example of the lowbrow taste of fantasy aficionados.

The collections from the works of E. Hoffman Price, Arthur J. Burks and Robert Bloch strike me as ill-considered. Except for Bloch, these authors rate very low indeed among fantasy writers, and while there's some good stuff there, particularly in Bloch's book, most of these stories do not rate hard cover presentation.

Clark Ashton Smith is an author I fail to dig; his stories seem to me pointless and boring. Since The Abominations of Yendo is his fourth Arkham House collection, I rather imagine you're scraping the barrel merely to placate Smith fans. Even though "The Voyage of King Euvoran" is my favorite CASmith yarn (or more strictly, the story I disliked least), I hold no illusions about the other stories. Most of them are obscure, from obscure sources -- and deserve their obscurity. It'll have to be a mighty rabid Smith fan who can find anything deserving of book presentation in "The Devotee of Evil."

You know, Auggie, I laugh every time I see a new collection of your stories announced. You see, I remember what you wrote in the foreword to Someone in the Dark: "...I have never taken the time to write a really first-rate ghost story; indeed, out of some 200, less than a score stand up under a second reading..... These 16 stories are all, out of those 200 and more I have written, which can possibly be read twice...." Lonesome Places is your fourth



collection, isn't it? And it makes your third book (not including the Grendon volume) of stories that could not possibly be read twice!

I am not familiar enough with The Horror From The Hills, Invaders from the Dark or the early de Grandin yarns in The Phantom Fighter to judge their worth, but from what I've heard, you've got one stinker, one fair-to-middling, and one gem, there -- and in the order named above.

Worse Things Waiting is a happy choice, I think, judging from the yarns I've read in it. Wellman is one boy who can write, and write well. Orson Is Here is another cause for rejoicing; Every story in there with which I'm familiar is a gem. Thanks for bringing "The Missing Ocean," "The Hand of the O'Mecca," "The Black Farm," "The Hexer" and those other topnotchers into book print. Tales from Underwood would be a third collection to be unconditionally recommended -- if it did not duplicate at least four stories already available in hard covers. Why, why, must you do this?

I regret slamming Portraits in Moonlight, the second Jacobi collection, for soft-spoken Carl, with the little mustache, is a gentleman of the old school, an older edition of Samuel D. Russell. But this does not alter the fact that "Gentlemen, the Scavengers!" is a space opera which is completely undistinguished, and that "Lodana" and "Tepondican" are certainly nothing to drag forth to hang albatross-like around the neck of a very nice guy. I do like "The La Prellio Papers" and "The Corbie Door" but re-reading these yarns in a book isn't worth \$3.00.

However, Mr. D., you hit the nadir of semi-pro publishing when you schedule Rim of the Unknown, the second collection of stories by Frank Belknap Long. I have perused many catalogs and leaflets from fantasy publishers, but the only book that beats Rim of the Unknown for downright lack of quality is FPCI's Planets of Adventure. I have read most of F.B. Long's stories, and have yet to discover a high-grade story from his typer. "The World of Wulkins" and "And We Sailed The Mighty Dark" are mildly interesting, but by no stretch of critical judgment do they rate hard cover preservation. Such out-and-out potboilers as "The Trap," "Cones," "The Critters," "Filch" and "A Guest in the House" absolutely do not qualify as readable stories, and I would challenge Mr. Long to sell crud of equal quality to any fantasy magazine today. I have just tried to re-read "Cones" from Astounding for Feb. 1936, and found myself skipping sentences, then paragraphs and pages. It is unbelievably bad. To find such an impossible yarn in a scheduled collection reflects not only on the "sucker" proclivities of the average fantasite, but on the literary acumen of you, Mr. Derleth.

I respect you and Arkham House for the fine books you have given us in the past, and for the excellent material you have listed for future publication -- the S. Fowler Wright book, and Kelucha and Others, and Conjure Wife, for example -- but I cannot condone the unutterable brass you display in foisting such crap on us as the Long book and the others discussed above.

I trust you will see fit to reply to this Open Letter, but in any event I sincerely hope you will think twice before actually publishing that crud you've listed in your new catalog. We, the stefans, have been at odds with you many times in the past, Mr. Derleth, but whatever we've done -- by Shuggoth, we don't deserve being insulted by such sucker-bait as you propose to offer us. Reconsider, Auggie, in the name of Cthulhu.

-- File Clerk #13

VICIOUS CIRCLE

by DAN MULCAHY



SPACEWARP, the Lurid Fanzine, has come up with one of its periodical kernels of wisdom, this time to the effect that fandom is decentralizing, its character (?) changing. In the words of the smokestack that walks like a man: "There seems to be less and less activity on a national scale, more and more on the local level." And for once Daniel J. Mulcahy is in agreement with what he reads in these unhallowed pages.

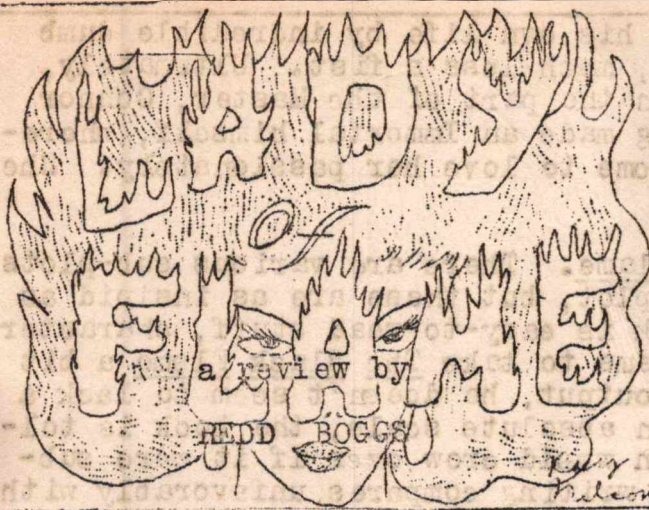
Sure enough, fandom is decentralizing. The last two attempts at a national organization -- Young Fandom and Science Fiction International -- flopped pretty miserably after a brief period of activity. The current attempt, Linda Bowles' American Science Fiction Association, may be more of a success, but I have my doubts. The truth is horridly simple.

Joe Phan has become isolationist.

To get ahead today, a club must adopt a name like the Lower Altoona Slightly Frenetic Society, or maybe North Farragut Fantasy Fans. It must elect to its executive position Homer Glunk, who once had a subscription to Cosmic Circle Commentator. It must rush right out and buy a mimeo and put out a sloppily-printed newsletter called maybe the Goshwowboyoboy Gazette, one half of whose pages are filled with ads inviting you and you to become auxiliary members for only one lousy buck, while the other half will consist of letters from Sam Moscowitz and Charles Edward Burbee regretting that they are too busy at the moment to dash off the requested twenty-page article. If a page or two is left over, the President's Message will place the Lower Altoona Slightly Frenetic Society (or maybe North Farragut Fantasy Fans) squarely on the side of right and justice, as opposed to the Ziff-Davis Publishing Company. Having made such a fine start, our embryo fanclub is all set to take its place in the TWS listing right between the Kimball Kinnison Fan Club and the Moscowitz for President Society.

Why, I foresee a day when the National Fantasy Fan Federation will have gone wherever old fan clubs go to die, and the Fantasy Amateur Press Association will be as much a memory as the Science Fiction League; a day when there will be no national convention, but merely an endless procession of Beercons and Whitcons; a day when the Insurgent Element will have rejoined the LASFS from sheer boredom, or moved across the border en masse to set up the Baja California SFS. Fantasy Commentator will become the organ of the Greater Brooklyn Futurian Society, and Sam will perforce limit his history to the exploits of Messrs. Taurasi and Sykora.

And then, someday in the distant future, some benighted Manhattan fan will discover that there are others of his ilk as far away as Passaic. They will start an intensive correspondence, and presently organize a society called the International Scientific Association. And the whole mad cycle will have started once again. --END-- (5)



This guy, Thomas Marshall Connor, killed a man, see? He did him in with his Bare Hands. In an insanity of crimson wrath Thomas Connor slew his fiancee's lover -- and was executed for the crime.

This lovable character is the hero of Stanley G. Weinbaum's The Black Flame (Fantasy Press, P.O. Box 159, Reading, Pa., 1948. \$3.00), which is the story of what happens when Mister Connor fantastically regains consciousness a thousand years after being strapped in the hot-seat, to find himself in a New

world that doesn't qualify for the adjective Brave. Somehow, a millennium hence, the people have lost the Babbitt energy and ambition that made America Great, and the murderer from the 20th Century discovers that he is a wolf among sheep, a plumb cultus lobe against whose brawny chest the pain-rays of the authorities bounce off like 88-millimeter shells off the noggin of Superman.

Sounds interesting, doesn't it? It isn't very. You form a mental picture of rough, tough Thomas Connor rushing around, doing deeds of great heroism, oblivious of pain-rays and atomic bombs launched at him, slamming the autocrats of that era and generally setting the world to rights with supermanly savoir-faire. On the contrary, Tom Connor actually does exactly nothing about the deplorable state of 30th Century civilization! What a ghastly betrayal of science fiction tradition!

The way Weinbaum tells it -- and he, being the author, should know -- Thomas Connor is immediately arrested and imprisoned in the palace by Joaquin Smith, "The Master" of the Immortals who rule the world in that age. The Master decides that "Killer" Connor's strength and strong will are just the factors needed to revitalize the sheep-like breed of that century. He commands that Connor go about doing his duty, -- a lovely order that would please 9 out of 10 males, but Connor turns out to be the 10th male. Meantime, Connor's strength and good looks are admired by Margaret of Urbs, sister of Joaquin Smith, who claims the royal title of princess and is called The Black Flame. She slinks onto the scene like Theda Bara and proceeds to act like slinky women are supposed to act. One might suppose that Joaquin Smith, anxious to revitalize the race, would welcome an affair between the otherwise-recalcitrant Connor and the Black Flame -- but on the contrary, he frowns upon such an eventuality. This whole inter-play of contrariness leads to an impasse any way you look at it.



For some 100 pages this sorry display of stupidity continues. The Flame slinks, Connor sulks, and Joaquin Smith commands. Finally, the commoners revolt and plant an atomic bomb in the palace. There is no mushroom cloud, no particular damage, and apparently not a sign of hard radiation, but there's plenty of atomic fire, so Connor has the opportunity to rescue Margaret of Urbs, a splendid he-man exploit -- only she really wasn't in any danger at all. Occasionally Connor also es-

capas various and sundry designs upon his own life by incredible dumb luck, not so much as lifting a finger, much less a fist. Ultimately, through some high-powered reasoning on the part of the Master, Connor is rewarded for doing nothing by being made an Immortal himself, whereupon he wins Margaret, too. He has come to love her passionately. She kissed him once, you see.

That is the story of The Black Flame. There are various sub-plots and further developments of the main plot, but these are as insipid as the main thread of the yarn. The book is easy-to-read stuff, characteristic of Weinbaum and, although he seems to take The Black Flame a bit more seriously than most of his pulp output, he doesn't seem to lack a sense of values on the subject. On an absolute scale, the book is tolerably good pulp material which Merwin would crow over if it were submitted to him brand-new for TWS. The writing compares unfavorably with some of Weinbaum's shorter work, but here and there it sparkles, and always it suffices to describe and evaluate the conventionalized future-world he has taken for a setting.

Incidentally, in addition to the story outlined above, there is a novelette included in the book. This story, "Dawn of Flame", describes an earlier adventure of Margaret of Urbs, in which she outwits a backwoodsman who stands against the Immortals' conquest of the Ozarks during the wars the Immortals fought against the barbarians of that age. The hillbilly hero, Hull Tarvish, is a straightforward characterization cut rather close to the Lil Abner pattern, but he is more believable than Thomas Connor who, as has been intimated, is first revealed as a mentally unbalanced murderer, than as a fighting man among pacifists -- and subsequently shows no evidence of being either violent-tempered or rough and tough. An opportunity for superman Connor to display his brute strength or 20th Century cunning in a smashing climax, or at least, a chance for doing a Jimmy Cagney on the Black Flame's up-tilted chin, would have saved this story.

The Black Flame herself is a gorgeous creation into whom Weinbaum has pumped enough pulpish sex to burn holes in an asbestos copy of Hollywood Detective. Although the author keeps nudging us and hinting that Margaret of Urbs has "unexpected depths", he never reveals much more than her physical side. However, she is easily the best character in these two yarns, at least from the viewpoint of any male who can obtain a vicarious thrill from a woman whose only existence is on the printed page. All of the Black Flame's sex appeal seems pretty low voltage, however, when one compares her with April Bell of Williamson's "Darker Than You Think" (now there was a sexy woman!), or with that nasty-tempered Betty in Pong's To Keep Or Kill, or indeed with most of the historical hussies who show extreme cleavage on the book-jackets of the current best-sellers.

One wishes that Margaret, who being an Immortal has had 600 years to perfect the art of coquetry, would stop making like a 16-year-old high schooler trying to vamp the football hero, and begin using her high-pressure allure. The average circulating-library heroine could have had Connor in bed in 15 minutes; girlish little Amber did better on her first conquest than the Black Flame did on her last.

But perhaps it isn't her fault. Weinbaum tells us that although the Black Flame is 600 years old she has remained physically a girl of 20. Many women in the northern latitudes do not mature sexually till they are close to 30.