

SPA FOLK

No. 5

1969



GPA FOR NUMBER 5



ESPECIALLY FOND GRATITUDE GOES OUT TO THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE,
WITHOUT WHOSE HELP THIS MANNER OF MAGAZINE COULD NOT HAVE COME ABOUT

Frank Frazetta
Bill Gaines
Steve Hickman
Mike Kaluta
Tom Long
Kenneth Smith
Jim Steranko
Berni Wrightson

IN GRATITUDE



Editor and Publisher.....Rich Hauser

Kenneth Smith
17 JUNE 1969

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moral and actual support; Kenneth Smith, for outstanding generosity; and
Bill Gaines and Jim Steranko, for letting us poach their valuable time
NEXT ISSUE - Described in Editorial; Released Summer '70; Order now \$1 $\frac{1}{2}$
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Much unpublished Frazetta art, and great articles. \$2, 78 pages,
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 Norman Mailer, Jessica Reichert, Nancy Webb, Roger Zelazny, Dick Cavett,
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 "Brushing your teeth and washing your hands !"



CODY

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In the EXOTIC CITADEL

Printed by THE MADISON PRESS, CHICAGO

Thee editors all:

Rudy Hausser *John Z. Guzman*
Peter Kupchawski *Tom Pappalardo* *Al Wong*



Fold back again the pure pages of another SPA FON magazine. The issue that took more than a year in the making once again fills your hands and mind, and with all that time on the line, it better be good, right? Right! Starting with our fantastafrazetta cover we deliver our stored power! Then our observant readers will notice the refurbished contents page -- it's design is completely new! Kenneth Smith, Master of Philosophy, bows into our eager pages with this well-due vitalization of the contents layout, complete with supple SPA FON babes hugging our namesake. And that be just starters; there is more from his precise pen on the following pages, and we hope the enthusiastic SPA FON - Ken Smith collaboration will continue strong from this issue on.

Now, speaking of contents, you'll notice no Wrightson strip this time, as predicted lastish. The facts of the matter are that Berni did do a strip for us, had it finished a full year ago. And thereby hangs its unavailability; it was finished too soon! (Strange as that hits you.) Berni feels now that it does not represent his present level of drawing, and he's intent on shelving it rather than see it spread to gourmet readers such as yourselves, the SPA FON people of America. (And Canada.) He has the desire, if not the time, to do a new story-strip for SPA FON, however. So let's all encourage him on -- SPA FON #6 would be glad bearer of such a newly rendered handiwork by BW. In the meantime, Berni has poured his horn a'plenty into our pages via many gorgeous full page inkings. Thankee' Berni!

And what about "The Hole in Space" and where it's headed to, you ask. Well, Mike Kaluta has gone through many changes in the past year, like three address changes, finally moving to New York City and rooming with the venerable BW! He is currently working on professional projects, as a result being so pressed that he couldn't keep up on the strip for this issue. But we hope optimistically to have him back nextish. Sniff* Mike knows that we need his tender story touch render us content and stable of mind, and he's bound to respond with new bursts of creativity aimed at SPA FONer's by next Summer. To inspire him, let's have a moment of silence to mourn our loss this issue. (Hear that Mike -- a thousand silent SPA FON readers!)

To fill the gap of visual story, Mike's buddy and artist supreme, Steve Hickman, does us proud by the maiden installment of his "Demon Star" story strip. The second startling part next time.

And while we're talkin' 'bout our next issues's strips, would you believe we're scheduled to print an unpublished EC story in #6? By ghoully, it's true! Uncle Bill Gaines (interviewed this issue) has given us the nod to print an Al Williamson - George Evans science-fiction job that hereto has never enjoyed the light of day.. We'll do it next number, Lord willin! So don't miss it. Erudite EC fanatics will realize that this story was slated for the 3-D EC which never saw print. WITZEND readers recall the WOOD story "Spawn of Venus" supposed to be in the same EC. Now SPA FONer's will savor the Evans - Williamson tale. So include Bill Gaines in your prayers tonight for his unfailing generosity! An EC staff member once poetically praised our Uncle Bill by saying, "Fun around the clock -- you bet, we had our fill." And now I speak for all SPA FONer's by saying, "Long live Uncle Bill's Barrel of Gaines to us all!" Whew!

Now that I've unloaded big guns about next issue, and since this number speaks for itself, let me address myself to the moon and mail early! No -- there I go trying to avoid the issue with slapstick. Let me seriously address myself to the new price of SPA FON. (Don't forget the almost triple-size and colorful cover while we talk money.) Yep, we now cost \$1.50 Merry thieves are we at SPAFON. Necessary evil, since we carry no paying ads. And while we're at it -- we've been coming up with an issue a year amidst your pleas of, "Where's SPA FON, crooked Editors?" Right? So let's make it official. It seems a year is necessary to do SPA FON right nowadays, and we're pledged to improve with each issue. So, Hear ye, Hear ye! Once a Summer, every Summer we'll greet your eyes. We won't say die as long as body and spirit are together, and we're all young devils. What's more, with the sorry demise of SQUA TRONT, our brotherzine, after the Christmas #4 issue, Jerry Weist and Roger Hill, the Wichita linesmen, will bust into our pages as associate editors. Yep, one issue a year is all we can muster, but it'll be well worth the wait. Our solemn pledge.

You can reserve next Summer's SPA FON #6 by sending off \$1.50 post haste. Also in it will be an enlightening interview or two, plus the Al Williamson Master Checklist. It will be the most extravagant ever done, and was TOO BIG to get into this issue what with the long Frazetta one, which gives you an idea of its size. A possible Kenneth Smith portfolio, our first Jeff Jones fantasy inking, a much awaited Vaughn Bode appearance, and untold other art will add additional sparkle to the pages. Poems, letters, and a story will dullen them, hah! The cover for #6, full color again; a dandy surprise for now! The Exotic Citadel here now heralds a subscription editor, Tom Pappalardo by name, to take the loot. His is the task of keeping all mailed monies and addresses straight, and he's always been a dependable creature. MANY THANK to each and every SPA FONer for monetary support gone by!

End of Editorial. Now enter you the Spa Fon World of Contents.....

AND REMEMBER, Our slogan thisish: He who throws dirt loses ground!
Our credo every ish: Spa Fon better than ever forever!

Rid Hauwe



JIM STERANKO

profile of a personality

On the chill night of April 1, I arrived in Sterankotown, Pennsylvania, having rodded my Chevy some 850 miles from Chicago in one swoop. I fought a lost feeling as I passed through the eerie, moonlit Pennsylvania mountains; the car radio kept me company.

It was past midnight, so really April 2, as I entered the Village of the Man I sought. I was safe, I fancied, as April Fool's day was legally past. No black magic conjured by Steranko could fall upon my hapless head now; I knew he was a veteran of magical arts! Reining my car to a halt by a pay phone just outside the town limits, I dialed Jim, praying the number would work and I was not really somewhere in Lovecraft's Arkham country. It did work, and the Jaunty One's crisp tones came to me there in that phone booth, where history was made when I chimed, "I'm close, Jim!"

It was DAMN cold that night, and I was where no Hauser had ever been before. There followed some wit from Jim, and my knees started to shiver perceptibly. The phone stuck to my hand, I think, as the sweat froze. There then followed lengthy instructions on how to get from phone booth to Steranko's super-agent pad. Now my teeth started chattering, and my head almost shook off my neck. God, was it frigid! And all his fault!

Hanging up the phone finally, I stiff-legged it back to the car on crystallized legs, starting the engine to bring heat to the frozen car seat. Then, miraculously, I homed in to Steranko's apartment house without going exactly opposite where I was supposed to go. The pad: some fantastic super-gadged penthouse with fur rugs, space-age furniture, and hot and cold running broods, right? Wrong! The pad lay secluded in a leaning old Pennsylvania red-brick building. Inside, up two creaking flights of stairs, was Steranko's roost. Windows all tight shut, heat up, and lights on, Steranko throbbed within, like an exotic plant flourishing in a greenhouse.

I went from the cold extreme to the torrid, from the frigid outer world to the hot life within Steranko's threshold. The next day, I was to say of the apartment, "Can I open up a window and let the steam out, Jim?"

The interview was conducted in about six hours, two madcap sessions of three hours each. In between sessions, a few hour's sleep on Jim's couch revived my stupored senses. That sleep saved my mind, and possibly my vision and hearing, too!

All the while he talked, Jim worked with deft strokes on a painting. A television and radio were constantly playing, I talked on incoherently, and there he sat painting amidst all the mania, a conscientious Imperial Ruler. He got no sleep that night, tho I napped briefly. And he got very little sleep the next two days, as we dashed around in New York from one place to another. New York was a magical mystery tour, with Steranko the guide: from Roy Thomas' apartment (many thanx for the hospitality) to Wally Wood's. From lunch with Dick Giordano (he picked up the tab tho your humble editor objected for a split-second) to Jeff Jones' place. In between sorties, Phil Seuling gave us sleeping quarters and nursed us along, with baloney sammiches for breakfast, etc. Truly, every door opened for Steranko and friend, and Steranko never stopped. Friend tried to stay alive and well, mainly.

And during that first night, during the interview, he was just as animated and unpredictable as he was changing about New York. That first night Jim, at various times, jumped up and showed me clever tricks his trained Belgian hare Wyatt could perform; he guided me around his apartment showing me paint-chipped walls hung with Richard Powers' paintings; he showed me his uncountable stacks of LP records; and he showed me many exciting unpublished originals of his own design.

And ever we returned to that room at the end of the hall, at the border-lands of reality, where Jim Steranko sits at his easel and works, walls stuffed with books ceiling to floor surrounding him, the Belgian hare moving around in its wire cage in the corner, the TV and radio pouring out their noise. And as he sat there that night he talked to a whirring tape recorder, his incisive thoughts never dulling.

The printed record follows. Read on, SPA FONers!

RICH: I've heard tell that Steranko isn't your real name!

JS: Yes, that's true! It's a little known fact that my real name is Lance Stardust.

RH: Great! How about sports. For instance, didn't you like broad-jumping in school?

JS: How about this scene. I've been doing a single all my life. I've gotta start doing a double today.

RH: Hey, what is this kind of talk?

JS: OK, forget it! I was on the tumbling team. You know, rings, parallel bars. Like, I enjoyed individual sports.

RH: (Noticing Jim's compact physique) How about basketball?

JS: (Looking with inquisitive stare at RH)

Well, I was on the basketball team in the seventh grade, which is a stretch of the imagination. But I never played; just happened to be on the team.

RH: (Looking at a large-scale drawing of "The Shadow", that mysterious invisible sleuth of pulps, radio, and comic books) Why did you do this, Jimbo?

JS: I was experimenting with a new technique. Actually, I love "The Shadow." I don't know if I ever told you, but I became good friends with the two men who wrote "The Shadow", Walter Gibson and Bruce Elliott. They're both drinking buddies in New York. Bruce Elliott's a magician, and was editor of the old DUDE and GENT mags and a dozen other mags. I called him up one day, and he knew about me, and we became great friends. He's like my father in New York.

Walter Gibson is one of the most prolific men alive. He wrote most of the "Shadow"

novels. Man, he turned out two complete 60 to 80 thousand word novels a month. I think that's as impressive as hell! He had a battery of three typewriters at the time, and sometimes he'd work till his fingers were bloody!

RH: Did he tell you that before you drank or after you'd drunk?

JS: Well, I'm just telling you what he told me, Rich.

RH: Do you like Shel Silverstein?

JS: Yeah, I think he's really funny! I'll tell you who knocks me out. Gahan Wilson fractures me with his cartoons.

RH: Yeah, he's morbid. And he does it with such a twist. To change the subject, what about Raquel Welch?

JS: I don't dig her; she's too phoney.

RH: You mean, as an actress?

JS: No, I mean as a sex symbol. She just tries too hard. And if you've gotta try.....

RH: I do dig her. She's a giant, and her face has those tremendous protruding cheek bones. She's not beautiful, no classic beauty, but there's so much of her. She comes over pretty strongly to me.

(Looking over Jim's shoulder as he works on painting..... SALEM commercial on the TV in the background. In the foreground, Jim's painting is "Springtime fresh".) Isn't it hard to work in watercolor like that?

JS: This isn't watercolor. This is acrylic. It's water-soluble, but it's a very fast medium -- it dries quickly. And that's what I like about it.

RH: (Looking at an already completed painting now. A girl in a mysterious setting -- long, white gown, running past a fantastic gnarled old tree. In the background an evel-looking man approaches, hands outstretched in a magical gesture.) So you plan this for EERIE or CREEPY, huh?

JS: I did it with them in mind. I think I might be doing some work for them, covers primarily. They're prestige books, and the reproduction is very fine. In fact, I might do TALON for them (or for fandom alone -- see ad elsewhere in this issue for the news). It would be a labor of love, in any case. I'd outdo myself to get it just right, so that I could make a definitive statement about sword and sorcery and get it out of my system. Rich, you know, there are some things that are in you and just got to come out.

RH: But this story (looking at the art spread out on the couch) this "Let Them Eat Cake" is definitely going to be printed by Marvel.

JS: Yes, that's going to be in the first issue of their new horror number, TOWER of SHADOWS. You should pardon the expression. (It was re-titled "At the Stroke of Midnight!") They wanted to call the books CASTLE of FEAR and TOWER of EVIL, but the Code wouldn't let them.

RH: Is that possibly because they're titles reminiscent of some bygone hairy-scary titles? (Couldn't pass up that chance to plug EC, could I, SPA FONers?)

JS: Possibly. The Code felt they were too rough to use as titles.

RH: Boy, the Code really does put the dampers on horror, doesn't it?

JS: Ahh, you've noticed that, did you?

Well, I tried to do this story "At the Stroke of Midnight" in as good a taste as possible. I try to do all my stories in good taste. That's why there's no blood, or anything I believe to be objectionable. There is the guillotine; there are the people screaming. We even wondered if those things could get through the Code or not.

RH: Once before when we happened to be talking I evoked a comment from you about Al Feldstein, who wrote many of the EC scripts. At that time you said something to the effect that Al was a top scriptwriter in the development of horror comics. How bout it?

JS: Well, I think those books (EC's) are impossible to top. They were just too damn good. Good men writing and drawing! And since only two or three writers wrote all of them, they had tremendous control over the quality.

RH: "At the Stroke of Midnight" is a horror story, your first to my knowledge, and you were trying to tell it as effectively as possible. I was wondering if you thought Feldstein accomplished that when he wrote for the EC horror titles? Do you think he was very effective?

JS: Yes, I do.

RH: And do you think his snap endings were snap endings?

JS: They were. They were among the most memorable of comics ever printed.

RH: And they were a happy medium between quality and popularity. High quality and high sales, which is hard to accomplish in any field.

JS: Should anyone ever get that close again to effectiveness and quality, I would consider it a phenomenon. Unless of course you get high calibre men like Gaines and Feldstein together again doing horror.

In fact, one of the things I began to realize about EC is that they took ideas from many sources. Many of their concepts appear to have been adapted from stories by many authors, from various books and mags. So I think that accounts for much of their success. They've used ideas from here and there. I guess that's the only way to write; I have nothing against it. I get ideas from here and there. Something I'll read, see, hear about.....

Hey, I'll tell you something that you might get a kick out of, being a Sherlock Holmes fan. Do you remember "The House of Fear" and "The Musgrave Ritual" (where they went downstairs and found the treasure) and do you remember "The Hound of the Baskervilles"? Well, those three films were the inspiration for "The Hellhound of Ravenlock."

If you're going to write a story about Hollywood, you've got to know about Hollywood, right? And if you're going to write a book about atomic submarines, you've got to know about atomic submarines. So, conversely, you've got to write about what you know about, the things you dig -- like all the haunted houses, and crime stories, and mysteries.

Hey, do you think this painting is a little too low-key? (Speaking about a super-stud detective pb cover he's working on) There are no wild colors in it, obviously.

RH: Well, that girl in the background there is a little subdued, pale.....

JS: Well, that was intended. Incidentally, I

wanted to tell you a thing or two about composition. I composed this thing in bed one night. And it works out; let me demonstrate. It's based on a series of triangular forms that lock together. Here's one (demonstration) All of the triangles are locked together, to give a sense of dynamic symmetry! It's so difficult to do a comic page with that same power. You can't give enough time; you can't compose each panel to make every one a masterpiece.

INTERLUDE: Ye Ed.'s nap.

RH: Hey, can I use this little baby (Jim's tape recorder) for interviewing Bill Gaines in NYC?

JS: Of course you can..... But why don't you use that little kamakazi job you picked up? (An aspersian cast upon my little Japanese make taper, which hadn't worked after the 850 mile car ride.) Did you get that in trade for comic books or something like that?

RH: Jeez, I'm getting dumped on all over this fair state! First a guy tries to swindle me in a turnpike gas station, now you come up!

JS: They saw you comin'..... They said, "Let's

swindle this rube!" (Belly laugh) You know, that thing of yours should have been a wash-machine. Did you see the way it was agitating the tape when you tried to use it?

RH: Hey! How 'bout a little soap in your venerable mouth? That's a good \$121.00 mail order set you're talkin' about. Only when you talk into it, it stutters! Maybe it'll work for Gaines and Feldstein.

JS: Look at the design of the thing..... it really impresses me. Look at the sheer flow of lines. (Laughter) Look at the pure organic shape of it.

RH: It's pretty stream-lined, isn't it? It's alive -- look at the way the cord is coiled!

JS: Alive..... I mean, it positively looks like a machine right out of the future! Are the parts made out of plastic, too?

RH: Yeah, all plastic; made in Japan, y'know.

JS: No kidding Mine was made in Germany. Now I will speek; you will lissen!



RH: Vee haf veys of deeling with you! I will not tolerate dis in-sub-or-din-ation!

You know you can't get away with Gestapo talk, Jim. I'm a crude kraut from way back!

Hey (getting back to earth) you told me that you hadn't had any formal art training. Now, that's incredible to my mind. Did you read books; was it a natural feel followed by a lot of self-betterment, or what?

JS: Well, one day, late in grade school or early in high school, I had an accident with the bicycle, and I broke my leg in two places. Since then, I've stayed out of those places! I was laid up in bed a long time. So what do you do when you're laid up in bed a long time?

RH: You get a Mr. Potato Head doll and stick things in its potato head!

JS: No..... you get a couple of old books. Dig up your old comic books, and you start drawing. You wind up in bed for a few months and you'll turn into a comic book artist, too. I never told that to anyone before, either. You know why?

Because I just made it up.

RH: You rub your temples, you get serious, and then you hand me a fat line. Nice.....

JS: You know, Hauser. This is the dullest interview I've ever given. I mean, I've known Howard Rogofsky's wife to ask better questions, like "Where's the ladies powder room?" Or, "Where's Howard? Has anyone here seen Howard?" (Laugh)

RH: OK, I've got a goodie for you. Like, "What are you going to be doing in the near future?"

JS: Now you've fouled up! I wanted to tell you who was stronger, the Hulk or Thor.

RH: What character would you like to do if you went to DC?

JS: I'd like to do my own character, a new character. I felt Nick Fury was entirely my own after I started doing him, except the name was the same. That's why I threw out all the old characters, like Gabe and Dum-Dum and Sitwell, and put in all my own: the Countess and the Gaff.

Now, to answer your previous question about art training seriously..... Ever since I was a kid I loved comics. Even before I could read, I had comic books. My uncle used to bring home big bags of comics he'd bought second hand, a penny apiece, or two for a penny. I was hooked.

RH: Did you save all of them?

JS: Yes, I saved them. I had two tremendous collections destroyed. They must have been worth a fortune. You asked me before about sports..... well, I dig personally competitive sports, like fencing. But I did spend a good deal of my childhood inside learning how to draw.

RH: Do you value any books that taught you a lot? I see a book ANATOMY for the ARTIST on your bookshelf up there. I see it hasn't been bent a lot.

JS: To tell the truth, I got most of my training out of comic books; I learned everyone's distortions. But I got into comics entirely by accident. When I started in the business, I said I would change the whole comics industry. And that's a pretentious thing to say. But consider the things that've happened at Marvel. You know, they used to have the ti-

tle in banners or bursts or flags across the top. Now everyone's working them into stone-work, etc. I started that, and again I had to fight for it. They didn't want to do it. I started zip-a-tone again. People had abandoned that kind of effort. I love to tell stories, so I also got them to let me write. To give you an example of how seriously I take writing, let us discuss this "At the Stroke of Midnight" story (Tower of Shadows 1). I did the art and text for it.

We discussed at a session what the plot for this horror story in the first issue should be. Stan gave me an idea of a couple of plots that he had in mind. They were mostly fantasy plots like his old AMAZING ADULT FANTASY books used. Like, how the spacemen landed on a world and nothing was there, and they looked around, then jetted away. And in the last panel, there was a little kid holding a balloon, and that was the world they'd landed on. That's an example of the kind he wanted to do again, with those little snapper endings.

So I told him I thought it would be a mistake doing those again, and not taking advantage of a peculiar trend that's happening right now -- the phenomenal success of DARK SHADOWS, ROSEMARY'S BABY, and all the paperbacks that are being published right now with the real supernatural quality about them. So we talked, then I came home and wrote my story, putting in some nice subtle bits of business like the picture, the witchcraft angle, the name of the house itself, "Shadow House." Now, I didn't intend it as an EC type story, to answer your next question, but I'll tell you what my thoughts were in that direction.

I believe there is a place for narrative. I believe you can have to have narration so that phrases that noone could ever say can be employed. That's the reason that Marvel's books and DC's have been stilted, the lack of use of narration. For example, the second page of "At the Stroke of Midnight" starts out with a whole block of narration without the characters saying anything. You get a feeling about the surroundings and the house itself:

"An icy wind blew across the water, whispered to them as they began to descend the steps out into the very face of the bleak rock itself. Marie wondered how the house could ever have been built, or why the wind had not toppled it from its lofty perch. From the base, the climb seemed like an eternity as it wound an ever-angular path upward.

You could never have those characters saying those things. They could only talk about it in an objective way. But their silence, combined with the narrative effort, has a positive force of direction.

Another thing I've done to make it more realistic is to purposely eliminate all thought balloons. You never know what these particular characters are thinking, and it's unrealistic in story-telling to hear thoughts. You know..... you see someone moving about furtively in the dark, and you hear his thoughts. That transfers the story-telling; that would be incongruous -- the voice-over technique.

RH: Marvel has relied a lot on the thought balloons in their super-hero stories to convey the mental state of their characters, their thoughts, doubts, troubles, etc. What you advocate is a real break from Marvel's formula.

JS: I would take it very much amiss to think there was any technique I could not use simply because it was not of the editorial policy. The story will be printed just that way, unless the Code butchers it even more.

RH: How much authority does the Code have in keeping something from being printed?

JS: Complete! Every page, every panel is censored. Every line. This is always a headache. Strange as it seems, dirty books and magazines which are available on the same newsracks as comic books are not censored. You can put out books packed with naked broads and there's all the freedom to do that. But in the comics we try to put out food, clean books and we're censored. Why do we have to be censored when there are books available right now with more violence, more sex, and that are more distasteful than anything we'd ever do? That's my point.

Frankly, I would very much like to drop the comics Code, and if Marvel or any other company wanted to drop it, now's the time. After all, the comic book business is doing well; it's at the top now.

The Code is just another way of getting around that parental responsibility. Frankly, there are more crimes committed today than ever before, percentage of population-wise. So we have the Code, but we have more crimes. If the Code was working, would this happen?

RH: That's an incredible truth you point up. I heard on the radio very recently where J. Edgar Hoover, chief of the FBI, released figures saying that 72% of the serious crimes are committed by people under 25 years old. Now, 50% of the population is under 27, or thereabouts, so three-quarters of the serious crimes are committed by half of the population, the younger half. And these are people who grew up under the comics Code, which came in strictly about fifteen years ago. So during what the psychologists call their formative years, these people were having their juvenile literature censored. That didn't work, obviously.

JS: People know when they're watching the movies that what they're seeing isn't real-- it's fantasy. Same thing with what they see on the page in comic books. Using the Code is putting too much stress on comics, and avoiding parental responsibility.

RH: I see an ancient gun over there; do you collect guns?

JS: No, but I collect swords -- edged weapons! I just got a chance to buy that one and did. Speaking of guns, that brings to mind the West. You know, I always wanted to do a Western. And I asked Stan if I could do a Western book. The answer was No.

I dig Westerns, especially the new flicks the Italian Westerns with Clint Eastwood, for instance. They're very exciting, and I think you could do a book utilizing some of those techniques. You know what kind of Western I'd like to do..... an Epic!

I sat down trying to think of a title for a Western that had never been used before, something that would typify the West, would be nothing else but the West. GUNSMOKE says the West. So does a title like STAGECOACH. I came up with a title finally for my one and only Western story, the definitive one. Dig it..... SUNDOWN. I had a couple of alternates. One was BULLETS, the other DUST. The shortest, simplest way to state the West, probably the best way to state anything.

RH: SUNDOWN was your choice, methinks, because it's got that poetic touch to it. Also, it brings to mind the sadness, the melancholy of the West.

JS: Right.

I'd like to throw in all the stuff that's been done before, only I haven't done it. It would be all new and fresh to me. You know, the angles through the wagon-wheels, the old steer lying there reduced to nothing but bones and skull. I would lay it in there pretty thick

-- my statement about the West.

I work in themes, making a statement about the human condition. For examples, I write stories dealing with greed, revenge, hatred, Passion, fear, jealousy, murder. These are all themes, and each one of my stories is developed around one of 'em.

I'd hoped to do a Western employing one of these themes. It would encompass all of those things about the West that we've loved viewing those old Republic Randolph Scott movies. I imagined a lot of beautiful color work. The skies, orange and pink skies at sundown. Vast deserts, everything with the whole epic feel about it. But I never got the OK for the book.

When I'm writing, I decide what I'm going to depict in a story. If I'm writing a story about greed, I collect my thoughts about it, figure out what I'd like to say about it, what my attitudes are. I think many of the comic books today are without a statement. You know, the good guy fights the bad guy, and the good guy wins. In the Fury books,





STERANKO

Fury didn't always win. In the first book, "Who is Scorpio?" he didn't catch Scorpio. The ship Scorpio was in cracked-up in the desert and burned because of a gunshot in the gastank. No, Fury didn't always win, and good doesn't always win. In fact, in comic books, the bad must never win; the Code will not let the bad win.

RH: Does the editor or publisher resent the Code a lot?

JS: Well, I think Stan Lee resents it, if only for the production hold-ups.

RH: What is it that gives a person his credentials for censoring comics?

JS: I imagine they're the most morally upright persons you could ever know.

RH: Oh, are they virgin?

JS: I suppose so.....

RH: But right now in your career you're most enthused about painting?

JS: It's a challenge, and somehow I've always been annoyed by the idea of failure.

RH: You can't stand to fall into a production rut, can you?

JS: No, I'm not a ditto machine. I'm a creative guy, and I can't stand to see my artwork or my personality development stand still. It's got to be moving all the time. Once you stand still, you might as well just die. Take a look back and see how many hacks there are in comic books -- they're just turning out jobs, just adequate comic book jobs, not saying anything socially. My work has to say something, and right now I've been working on comic books.

I believe that in the final analysis of an artist's work, you have to consider the story telling style of that artist. In the horror story "At the Stroke of Midnight" a more realistic, more literal style is used than I use in telling, say, a super-hero story. I didn't want to employ the devices of the super-hero story, which mainly can be attributed to Jack Kirby: forced perspectives, the hands and feet shooting out of the panels, the wild action. It just doesn't happen in real life. So, for a more precise, horrific atmosphere, believability has to be used. The reader has to get involved in the story, and not in the pretentiousness or virtuosity of the artwork. If a reader goes through the story and stops to say, "Look at that crazy angle he put in there. Isn't that great! Look at that panel! Now..... what's the story?" the chilling horror effect is lost. That shouldn't happen.

I don't consider myself an artist; I consider myself a story-teller. Now, when I think of an artist, I think of someone like Reed Crandall, or Al Williamson, or Hal Foster. There is a bunch of guys whose work is art! Primarily, I'm a writer. I have written a number of books, I write my own stories by choice, and I consider drawing a peripheral accomplishment, expedient to getting the job done the way I want it.

You can't imagine the disappointment in writing a story, having someone else do the art, and when it comes back, it's nothing like the original concept! Or conversely, drawing a story, and the writer puts in words that are completely meaningless to me. There is a loss of the power and dynamics that were intended for the story. That's why I also color my own work, so that there's a complete marriage of ideas, like one hammer-stroke!

RH: Isn't it true that many comic book art-

ists would rather have someone else write their stories? Wouldn't they rather just worry about the illustrating?

JS: Well, some artists would prefer to write their own. Ditko, Wood, and Gil Kane are examples. Kurtzman was one of the very best. He layed-out all of the EC war and MAD stories. Feldstein did the science-fiction and horror. So, there are five guys who have written their own, and some of that stuff is magnificent! Eisner is another one, Foster and Raymond too, if you want to get out of the comic book field. However, there are a lot of hacks around who shouldn't be writing their own stuff.

I feel this way about any job, whether it be as a brain surgeon, or a comics artist, or just shining shoes. I do my very best! For example, if you did a movie that took three years of your life, that time is equivalent to part of your life. And though no single comic book story has ever taken that long to produce, I've been working in the comic book field for three years now. All my work in one collective effort represents three years of my life, and I want it to be the best possible representation of my personal development. That's why I can't stand still for people editing my work over the top of my head. There have been some terrible changes made, completely diverse from my original concepts.

I can't compromise my principles or my integrity. I put a helluva lot of work into my stories, and I expect my editors to consider that fact. In "At the Stroke of Midnight" there's a lot of Baroque architecture, and a lot of engraved woodwork. One page has 22 panels in it. I didn't have to put all that in; I could've taken short cuts. That's what I mean by having a lot of personal integrity about my work. I get paid even if I put the minimum on the page. I just expect consideration for all the extra work.

Now, I'm convinced that all these ideas work, simply because they've been successful.

If I were an editor, I'd get everything my way. I'd be a scabitch to work for, but I think you'd see some really outstanding, if not extraordinary work.

RH: Would you like to be the editor of a comic line?

JS: No. It'd be too much work with all those temperamental guys like me around. (Laugh) Also, being an editor keeps one from drawing. Infantino, who is a tremendous artist, is an editor now; he's in an administrative capacity. So we've lost his work, some of the very best. He's stopped telling stories.

RH: As an editor, then, you wouldn't give an artist ultimate say over how a story is to be, either.

JS: It depends on the artist. Kirby, when he was doing the old BOY COMMANDOS and NEWSBOY LEGION used to get scripts that he thought were ridiculous. He'd just toss 'em out and start from scratch, and the books he did himself were damn fine comics!

I think Ditko had it much his own way when he was working for Marvel, and it's repeated itself with me. Some artists have tremendous telling power. Ditko, for example, knows how to get right to the core of a story. That fellow understands the comic book media very well.

RH: What do you propose for the Sword and Sorcery character you've developed -- Talon. You haven't told a story with Talon yet, have you?

JS: No, though I have a story for Talon written. I feel that a Sword and Sorcery format cannot be successful under the confines of the comics Code. I think the basis for Sword and Sorcery is Sex and Blood!

RH: That was Robert E. Howard's belief, with good plot thrown in for the money.

JS: Howard had the definitive Sword and Sorcery concept. I don't think you'll find a S&S character that's more successful than Conan. I haven't found one yet.

I think certain other little things by other authors are good. I love the Fritz Lieber "Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser" stuff; it's magnificently written. But for sheer powerful writing, I think Howard says it all. That's the formula.

Did you see DC's new S&S character? It's sheer prostitution. I wouldn't call it Sword and Sorcery; it shouldn't be called that. The Code doesn't like anyone to use swords to begin with. They don't like bladed weapons -- that disturbs them. I think the closest thing you can get to Sword and Sorcery in the comics is "Thor." And if you'll remember back to "Viking Prince".... that was sheer S&S. But where's the power?

There's a problem translating from medium to medium. What you read in words in Conan takes some kind of an artist to depict that heroically. I drew FURY in the only kind of style he could have been drawn in. It was a Zap! kind of art. FURY was contemporary; he was Today, and could only have existed in that kind of style.

I remember that at the last convention we were at, a lot of the fans were surprised to see TALON in the different style, a very classy brush-and-ink style. But really, a Sword and Sorcery character should only be done in that style, an illustrative style like Frazetta or Foster works in. For horror, I use a completely different style, and this is one thing that I think very few comic artists have.... summed up in one word: RANGE! Can you use the same kind of style to do a crime story, to do a love story, to do a war story, to do a horror story?

Each one of those types of story requires a different style.

RH: When you get used to one artist you like, usually his art looks about the same no matter what the story subject matter. It's easy to pick his art out at a future date; I've never seen completely different styles used the way you do. It's a damn amazing contrast between story-telling styles that you've achieved.

JS: Well, it works.

RH: I was so surprised when I saw the horror story that I didn't know who'd done the art till I saw the signature; I didn't think you'd drawn it!

JS: I don't think an artist should get locked into one style. But you do see the earmarks of my story-telling style in "At the Stroke of Midnight". The continuity in the panels is part of my style, too.

RH: Since you feel you are more a story-teller than an artist in comics, you must have some serious intentions when you tell a story. How about telling a horror story, which has been your latest effort. What are the elements in telling a good horror story?

JS: In any horror story or suspense story, the secret is in foreshadowing the conflict. For example, on the first page of "At the Stroke of Midnight" you see a silhouette of the house on the hill, bare trees all around with limbs like gnarled hands. Now you know God damn well -- that ain't no Summer bungalow! And on the second page, when they climb up the steps, and the wind's blowing, and it's cold, with the moon and the trees all around, there comes the line: "Above them Shadow House waited." You

already know something's gonna happen. And that's the way to tell a successful horror story -- where you know, something's gonna happen, but you don't know what, or when.

RH: Now, the conflict with the surroundings seems to be very important in a horror story the way you describe it.... conflict always being necessary in one form or another to provoke interest.

JS: There are elements which have to be in every story in order for it to be good: conflict, crisis, climax. It must always be that way.

RH: And in a horror story, usually the crisis and climax are right on top of each other.

JS: Yes, in order for the twist ending to work. You'll notice where I held back the events of the guy killing his uncle. That was deliberately held back until the very last moment, and there's a flashback to tell it. And it you'll notice further, it wasn't told with a thought balloon then. Rather than a thought balloon, I figured the woman would say, "How'd you ever have the guts to push him off the cliff?" And then the shot of the pushing is shown in black and white, like a memory on the page. Memory is intangible, so I interpreted it in black and white. This is a dramatic effect with a momentary shock value.

RH: Do you think the conflict with the surroundings, the atmosphere, is truly important to horror?

JS: Very important. In fact, it's absolutely necessary. When we first talked about doing horror stories, Stan wanted them to take place in contemporary surroundings, like at a peace rally or at student demonstrations. And I thought, for Christ's sake! Horror just doesn't take place in broad daylight. You've got to have an atmosphere of horror. And you've got to build on that mood: swamps, graveyards, mad houses, and haunted castles.

RH: Can you think of one horror movie where the action was completely modern? The setting?

JS: No, and I told Stan. Now, he was trying to build a horror formula on his previously successful super-hero formula. And there is merit in what he wants to do -- bring the horror stories up-to-date. But frankly, I could not think of one circumstance where it would work. So who's gonna think of a whole year full of them?

RH: That brings ROSEMARY'S BABY to mind, which was very much in the modern swing, but..

JS: Yes, you see, you've got to revert back again to the house.

RH: Right, as they come into the house, and look around, they see all the wierd characteristics of the house and neighbors. The horror develops from that point on. But the setting was modern New York. They blended the two together very effectively.

JS: Now, while we're on the movies, you can tell the fans who read your book that almost all my techniques come from the movies. And I'll tell you something that very few comic artists ever think of. You see, it's important in a film what shots follow each other. It doesn't work when there's a long shot of a lone rider riding across the desert, with a million miles of sand between him and the camera lens and then suddenly there's a close-up of his eyeball. You can't do that because it's too much of a jolt to the audience. So,

you take a long shot, then a closer shot, and there's smooth transition through a series of shots. Continuity -- I call it structural rhythm.

In "At the Stroke of Midnight" you can see these movie techniques working to tie the story together into a single powerful memorable unit. Also, there is something I use called geometric rhythm. It has a subconscious effect to tie the story together. As an example, if you recall the Captain America story of the funeral of CA, there is a wake sequence that was designed like a stained glass window. And obtrusive ballooning in this case tends to diminish the subconscious effect of the page; here is a case where I'd like to make balloons more unobtrusive, another big campaign of mine.

Now, about the geometric rhythm. Let's refer to that CA funeral page. On that page are four medium-size panels on the bottom, with four taller panels directly above them, and with one big panel at the top flanked on each side by a small panel. If you look at that page and, in your mind, eliminate the balloons, even the coloring on that page tends towards the stained glass church window effect. Now, it was never meant to be noticed directly. What it was meant to do was to convey a subconscious impression.

This is another technique in the strip which, linked with the structural rhythm, and the coloring, tends to create a tone about the story. Also in the funeral sequence, I have knocked out a lot of the background and made it all black. This use of color, or lack of use of it, is meant to convey the tone as well. The black brings you down; it's very sombre.

RH: Do you aim at the subconscious a lot with your art?

JS: Yes, the subconscious, absolutely. Eventually the reader will forget the story, but he'll remember, "God, what a book that was! It made me sad -- or elated -- or horrified!" This has to do with all the images in the book. (Not the words.) The images themselves create a tone.

Now, in a super-hero story, I don't think you can use all the techniques I've talked about in the same ways. This gets back to the fact that an artist should have range. He should be able to do different types of stories differently. So, you see why my style is different with the various stories. It would differ entirely in love stories. Super-heroes have all the muscles and require a certain construction. And I think Jack Kirby defined the super-hero formula to its ultimate power. Who else brought it to his power?

RH: You mean the action, charging, fighting, the steel-spring muscles, th.....

JS: Don't write a book, Hauser! I just asked you a question.

RH: OK. So, who else could do it as well as Kirby without using his formula? Well, I can think of only one other comics artist. He's a past master, in my book, my personal choice: Lou Fine.

JS: Well, Lou Fine's books were not as powerful as Kirby's were they?

RH: He was great on THE BLACK CONDOR, a flying super-hero. And a lot of his forte was that he could draw the flying, swooping, gliding BLACK CONDOR like nobody else could! I will admit that Kirby did draw with more impact, and his action was more rockem-sockem. But Fine was no slouch on fight scenes, and could draw someone getting slugged in a way that it looked like he was losing teeth.

Whereas, Kirby could create the great

scenes of a wholeslew of people fighting and catapulting about, really action-packed. For impact, I say you're right, Kirby takes it! But for beauty mixed with excitement, my choice is Fine.

JS: Getting back to the range of an artist, Fine's style would have been great for romance books. Everything was well drawn; he put everything in its place. He used a fine line and nice textures. And, (are you ready for this), Kirby's best work was in his romance books.

RH: You know why I'll accept that without surprise? Frazetta's best work came in love, also. What's it gonna be after art, Jim?

JS: Movies, Rich. I'm very enamored with live film, because you have to work not only with images, and a script, but with motion! You've still got composition and structural rhythm, but you've got much more than that. The damn things move!

Getting back to comics, you know, strange as it seems, my stories have been taking me longer and longer to do. You'd think that after doing twenty or thirty stories, I'd be getting faster and faster. But once I've used a specific technique in a certain effect, I discard that use of it. I have to come up with new ways to render stories; why repeat myself?

You know, the first three SHIELD books I did were working from Jack Kirby's layouts. And the difference between his way of telling a story and my way are like day and night. You can see it if you compare the first one I did all myself with the three before.

Hey, how many meals did I miss? Let's find some food, Hauser!

* * * * *

And on that note we leave our visit with Jim Steranko, that fantastic flying machine.....

We are sorry that we could not bring you Jim's impersonations of Humphrey Bogart, Clark Gable, Boris Karloff, Peter Lorre, Sidney Greenstreet, or Kirk Douglass, also highlights of the time spent with Jim.

But they lose something in the typing.

We brought you all that could be put on paper of our visit with Jim; there is a lot to him that defies transcription..... A very unique bundle of energy is this Man.



IN THE Adventure Tradition of *Burroughs' TARZAN* and *Howard's CONAN***TALON**

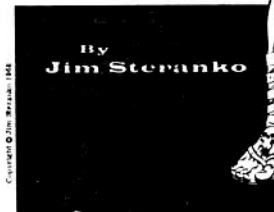
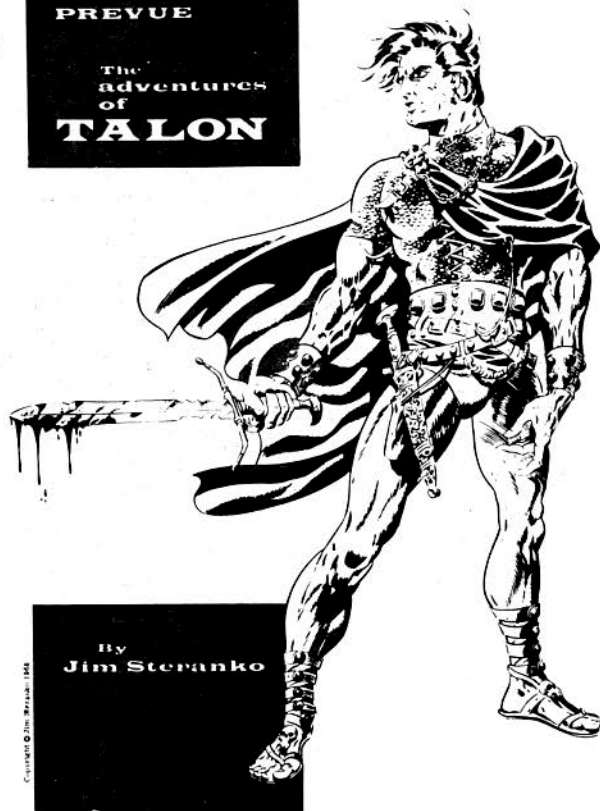
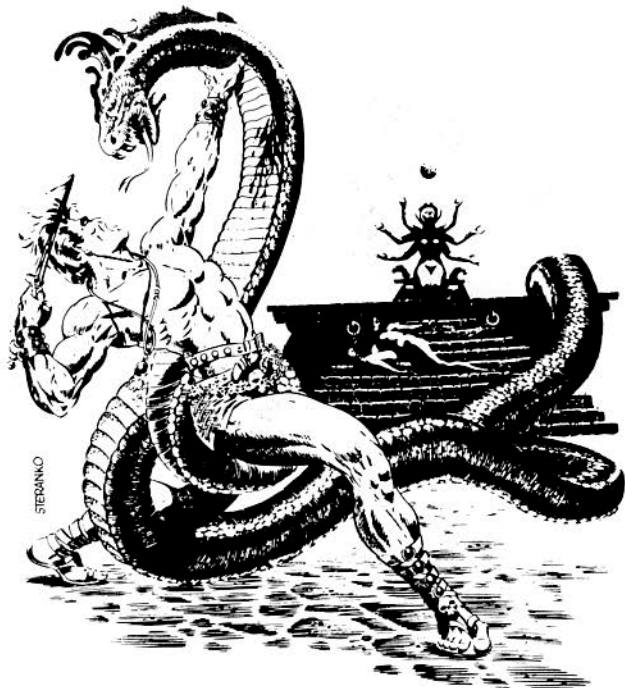
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No. 17

TIM HOLT

COWBOY STAR OF THE MOVIES



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in this issue
**2 thrilling tales of
THE GHOST RIDER!**
Read "The Hooks of Horror!"

THE MODERN**CHECKLIST**

Arranged and Annotated for the Collector
by Alan Wong and Rich Hauser

GLOSSARY: Numbers in parenthesis () denote the page-length of stories. Comments occur at places to help separate the major from the minor and the rough from the refined appearances. Happy trails to you!

I. COMICS: ME PUBLICATIONS

Bobby Benson's B-Bar-B-Riders

- #9 Cover by Frazetta (Not detailed)
- 11 Cover by Frazetta
- 13 Cover by Frazetta

Durango Kid

- #1 Untitled - Origin of Dan Brand, "White Indian" (7)
- 2 "Blood on the Frontier" (7)
- 3 "The War of the River" (7)
- 4 "Brothers of the Wilderness" (7, exceptional)
- 5 "Trees of Doom" (7)
- 6 "Pirate Fury" (7)
- 7 "The Battle of the Dungeons" (7)
- 8 "Massacre" (7)
- 9 "Tory Treachery" (7)
- 10 "Sleep of Death" (8, one of the finest)
- 11 "The Blood of Valley Forge" (7)
- 12 "River Gauntlet" (7)
- 13 "The Trail of the Traitor" (7).
- 14 "Voyage into Danger" (8)
- 15 "The White Wolf" (6, much sought after)
- 16 "The Underworld of the Wilderness" (7)

Ghost Rider

- #2 Cover by Frazetta
- 3 Cover by Frazetta
- 4 Cover by Frazetta
- 5 Cover by Frazetta

(All the above are attractive works; the masked mysterious Western character on his white stallion is Frazetta's kind of subject matter!)

Manhunt

- #11 "The Robber of Rainbow Buttes" (7) (A Trailcolt story, still cartooney, but better than Trailcolt 1's lead story.)
- 13 "The Rodeo Robbers" (7, reprinted from Trailcolt #1; very cartooney and rough)

Straight Arrow

- #3 Cover by Frazetta (sharp inking)
- 22 Cover by Frazetta (cartooney)

Thunda

- #1 Cover by Frazetta;
All interiors by Frank. This comic is the only one ever to be 100% Frazetta, and goes down as an unsurmountable high point in comic adventure strips. The subject matter is "Thunda - Lord of the Jungle", the Tarzan-like character Frank originated and executed himself, story and art, in this first issue.

Tim Holt

- #17 Cover by Frazetta (Ghost Rider cover, one of his best using the GR)
- 21 Cover by Frazetta (Ghost Rider)
- 23 Cover by Frazetta (not easy to tell it's his)

Trailcolt

- #1 "The Rodeo Robbers" (7, rough)
- White Indian
- #11 Reprints the Dan Brand stories from Durango Kid 1-4
- #12 Reprints from DK 5, 9, 10, 11
- #13 Reprints from DK 7, 12, 13, 16

FAMOUS FUNNIES PUBLICATIONS

Buster Crabbe

- #1 Backcover by Frazetta (An anti-dope ad)
- 4 Cover by Frazetta
- 5 Cover by Frazetta
- "The Maid of Mars" (11, a long sci-fi yarn by Frank, Al Williamson, George Evans, and Angelo Torres. It's a bonanza, along with the cover)
- 7 "Prayer Works Wonders" (1)
- 9 "Boy Scout's Jamboree" (1)

Heroic Comics

- #65 "Sunny's Sunday" (2, with Williamson)
- 66 "Adrift in a Rowboat" (2)
- 67 "Three-year-old Hero" (2)
- "The Scared Life-Saver" (2)
- 69 "Beyond the Call of Duty" (3)
- "Memorable Memorial Day" (3)
- 70 "Always Around When Needed" (2)
- 71 "He Stayed Behind" (1)
- "He Gave His Life to Save Lives" (2)
- 72 No title. A story about Sergeant Kouma's war heroism. (3)
- "With Only a Shovel" (2)
- "He Chose to Fight" (2)
- "Red Cross New Method of Artificial Respiration" (1)
- 73 "Heroism on the Korean Front" (2)
- "Bivouac" (2)
- 75 "Brought Back to Life" (1)
- 81 Reprint of "Boy Scout's Jamboree" from Buster Crabbe 9.
- 82 Reprint of "Boy Scout's Jamboree" (1)
- 86 "Only Doing His Job" (3)
- 87 "Stranded in a Mine Field" (3)
- 94 "Cindy is Saved" (2)

Famous Funnies

- #202 Reprint of "Prayer Works Wonders" (1)
 - 209 Cover by Frazetta
 - 210 Cover by Frazetta
 - 211 Cover by Frazetta
 - 212 Cover by Frazetta
 - 213 Cover by Frazetta
 - 214 Cover by Frazetta
 - 215 Cover by Frazetta
 - 216 Cover by Frazetta
- (Famous Funnies 209-216 are the celebrated Buck Rogers covers, each worth framing.)

Movie Love

- #8 "William Holden" (6, with Williamson)
- 10 "Burt Lancaster" (6, excellent romantic rendering of Lancaster)



Frank Frazetta

Robert Barrett

Helmut Mueller

(Foto taken during Mr. Barrett and Helmut's two-day stay at Frazetta's home. See SQUA TRONT 3 "The Trip")

FAMOUS FUNNIES PUBLICATIONS (cont)

Personal Love

- #24 "A Love of My Own" (8)
- 25 "Too Late for Love" (7)
- 27 "The Wrong Road" (8)
- 28 "Empty Heart" (6)
- 32 "Untamed Love" (8) (Frazetta's most astounding performance -- setting is the jungle, and the charging lion actually breathes.)

(All the above Personal Love issues are high points of Frazetta's comic art; don't let the subject matter fool you.)

DC PUBLICATIONS

Adventure Comics

- #150 "The Ten Century Lie" (6)
- 151 "Sir Justin, Bronco Buster" (6)
- 153 "The Dud of the Flying Knights" (6)
- 155 "The Imitation Knight" (6)
- 157 "Camelot, U.S.A." (6)
- 159 "Knight of the Future" (6)
- 161 "The Flying Horse Swindle" (6)
- 163 "The Knight in Rusty Armor" (6)

(The above are Shining Knight stories, equalling "Prince Valiant" in background and beauty.)

All Star Comics

- 50 "The 37 Terrible Days" (3, not part of the JSA story.)

All Star Western

- #99 "Batalye -- Immortal Indian Warrior" (3, reprinted from Jimmy Wakely Comics #7)

Blackhawk

- #118 "The Town Jesse James Couldn't Rob" (3)

Gangbusters

- #14 "I gallop with Danger" (8).

Gangbusters

- #17 "I Wrecked the Cattle Rustlers" (8)

Jimmie Wakely

- #6
- 7 "Batalye -- Immortal Indian Warrior" (3)

Mystery in Space

- #1 "Spores From Space" (8)

Star Spangled Comics

- #113 "The Black Cougar" (10) (One of his longest and finest DC jobs.)

Tomahawk

- #2 "Texas Trailblazer" (4, with Williamson)
- 29 "The White Indian Chief" (3)
- 57 "The Million Dollar Tombstone" (3)

EC PUBLICATIONS

Crime Suspenstories

- #17 "Fired" (6, with Williamson)

Shock Suspenstories

- #13 "Squeeze Play" (7, a fine EC job; set with Coney Island as a background)

Weird Fantasy

- #14 "Mad Journey" (7, with Williamson and Krenkel. Their pioneer EC job, but not lacking in any respect.)
- 20 "I, Rocket" (7, with Williamson and Krenkel)
- 21 Cover by Frazetta and Williamson.

Weird Science

- #19 "The One Who Waits" (7, with Williamson)
- 20 "50 Girls 50" (7, with Williamson and Krenkel)
- 21 "Two's Company" (6, with Williamson)
- 22 "A New Beginning" (8, with Williamson and Krenkel)

Weird Science-Fantasy

- #29 Cover by Frazetta (The Buck Rogers cover)

Danger is our Business

- #1 "The Vicious Space Pirates" (6, with Williamson. There's some special magic in this work.)

Billy the Kid

- #1 "Guns" (2, with Williamson)
3 "The Claws of Death" (4, with Williamson)
John Wayne Comics
#3 "The Claws of Death" (9)
4 "Black Gold" (6)
6 "Murder Will Out" (10)
7 "An Invitation to Murder" (10)
8 "The Weeping Walloper" (12)
18 "The Ugly Duckling Bandit" (9)
25
29 "Black Gold" (6, reprinted from JW 4)

NOTE: All the Frazetta John Wayne stories are done with Al Williamson.

STANDARD - NEDOR

Black Terror

- #22 "Violins for Villainy" (11, an early work in which Frank only did certain panels, apparently. Early, crude art)
24 "From the Black Terror Scrap Book" (1, the lower left panel of the splash page is the only Frazetta in this comic.)

Exciting Comics

- #59 "The Deadly Quest" (9, a Judy of the Jungle story, and not one of Frank's best jobs)

Real Life Comics

- #50
52 "Leif the Lucky" (4, illustrating a Prince Valiant type story. The Shining Knight DC jobs are much more finessed.)

Thrilling Comics

- #66 "Don't Argue with a Gun" (Text heading)
67 "There's no Feud Like an Old Feud" (6, the first of the Looie Lazybones stories, a take-off on L'il Abner. Denoted LL below.)
68 "Shutterbugs" (9, with Mayo)
"Everything's Vine" (7, LL)
69 "Cake Fake" (8)
"A Package for Pappy" (6, LL)
70 "Holiday in Hogbite Holler" (7, LL)
71 "A Bride for Kissin' Jim" (7, LL)
72 "Weddin' for the Widder" (5, LL)
73 "Lotions of Love" (6, LL)

Wonder Comics

- #17 "The March of the Dinosaurs" (9, the only certain panels are Fritz's. Early, experimental art.)
19 "The Silver Knight" (13, but Fritz does only the wolf and in some panels the heroine)

PRIZE PUBLICATIONS

Headline

- #16
Prize Comics
#65 "Gnats to You" (12)
"Hot Tot" (7)
66 "Swami Rivah, Stay "Way from My Dough" (10)
"The Iron Man" (8)

Treasure Comics

- #7 Not titled-- Tale of William Penn (4)
8 Not titled-- Tale of Benjamin Church (4)
(The above Prize Publications work is all early Frazetta, and as a result rough)

MISCELLANEOUS COMICS

Bware

- #10 Cover by Frazetta and Sid Check (Two comics exist with this title and number; only the issue dated July, 1954, has the Fritz cover)

Fight Against Crime

- #5
Forbidden Worlds (ACG)
#1 "Demon of Destruction" (8, with Williamson)

Jesse James (Avon)

- #20 "Chief Victorio's Last Stand" (7, with Williamson; splendid horse scenes)
Strange Worlds (Avon)
#3 "The Invasion from the Abyss" (7, with Williamson, Wood, and Torres; a fabulous combination of their talents. Also a very nice Wood Kenton of the Star Patrol story.

Tally Ho (Swapper's Quarterly)

- #1 "Snowman" (with John Giunta; Frazetta's first comic work, but hardly typical of his ability; he draws only the crocodiles and the villain in an otherwise lackluster story by Giunta.)

Western Fighters (Hillman)

- #11 (6, with Williamson)

FUNNY ANIMAL TITLES (STANDARD)

NOTE: TH = Texthead drawing, only one illustration, about 1/4 page, atop the center text story.

Barnyard Comics

- #13 "The Goldfish and the Sparrow" (TH)
"The Flying Pig" (TH)
"The Grateful Bear" (TH)
14 "Jumpy Jumps" (TH)
"Jungle Prince" (TH)
15 "The Homeless Cat" (TH)
"The Walking Stick" (TH)
16
17 "The Talking Giraffe" (TH)
"The Bold Brave Moose" (TH)
"The Kitten Who Wanted to Swim" (TH)
18 "Circus Tickets" (6)
"Beppo the Monk" (TH)
"The Mouse and the Moose" (TH)
"The Greedy Mole" (TH)
19 "Barney Rooster" (7)
"Hucky Duck" (2)
"The Cats with the Beautiful Tails" (TH)
"The Cleverest One" (TH)
20 "Barney Rooster" (7)
"Big Ears and Little Ears" (TH)
"Ollie the Ostrich" (TH)
"The Forest Concert" (TH)
21 "Let's Always Be Friends" (TH)
"The Stubbornest Mule" (TH)
"The Lazy Beaver" (TH)
22 "The Peculiar Duck" (TH)
"Freddy Bear to the Rescue" (TH)
"Hucky Duck" (7)
"Mike and Jerry" (TH)
23 "Miggles and Bojo" (TH)
"Scaredy Cat" (TH)
"Firefly's Light" (TH)
24
25 "Hucky Duck" (2)
"Bashful Cricket" (TH)
"The Talented Bear" (TH)

Buster Bunny

- #1
2

Coo Coo Comics

- #34 "Busy Billy Beaver" (TH)
"The Turtle and the Pelican" (TH)
"Percy the Puffer-Fish" (TH)
35 "The Lonely Turtle" (TH)
"The World to the Wise" (TH)
"Kitty on the Keys" (TH)
36 "Ferdinand and His Friends" (TH)
"Pat Pony Heads the West" (TH)
37 "Maggie the Magpie" (TH)
38 "The Elephant Who Never Remembered" (TH)
"The Playful Bear" (TH)
39 "Ferocious Lamb" (TH)
"Barnyard Hero" (TH)
"Flying Possum" (TH)
40 "The Wingtown Drummer" (TH)
"The Ambitious Fox" (TH)
"The Lion and the Hyens" (TH)

- Coo Coo Comics (cont)
 41 "Supermouse" (9)
 "Dodger" (6)
 "Clunky the Elephant" (TH)
 "The Lamb Who Wanted to Be Somebody" (TH)
 "The Showoff" (TH)
 42 "Dodger De Squoil" (5)
 "The First to Grow" (TH)
 "The Strange Little Creature" (TH)
 43 "Small Fry" (TH)
 "Johnny Sheds His Pride" (TH)
 44 "Supermouse" (9)
 "Butch and Buttercup" (5)
 "Wishful Willy" (TH)
 "Chauncy the Chick" (TH)
 "A Cure for Chubby Chipmunk" (TH)
 45 "Butch and Buttercup" (5)
 "The Bunny Who Wanted to Know" (TH)
 "Fisty" (7)
 "Hardback Softheart" (TH)
 46

Goofy Comics

- #20 "The Cowardly Lamb" (TH)
 "Lucky Bird" (TH)
 "Blinkie's Bones" (TH)
 21 "The Poor Little Woodpecker" (TH)
 "The Bugland Mail Goes Through" (TH)
 22 "Clumsy Bear" (TH)
 23 "Randy Raccoon's Problem" (TH)
 24 "The Bold Little Antelope" (TH)
 "The Wanderers" (TH)
 25 "The Eagle Who Wouldn't Fly" (TH)
 "Ernie the Elephant" (TH)
 26 "The Rabbit Who Wouldn't Run" (TH)
 "Wingless Wonder" (TH)
 27 "The Reckless Horse" (TH)
 "Lonnie the Lone Wolf" (TH)
 28 "Roaring Cat" (TH)
 "Cometo the Pup" (TH)
 29 "Forest Hero" (TH)
 "The Timed Pup" (TH)
 "The Adventurous Elephant" (TH)
 30
 31 "The Colt Who Wanted to Sing" (TH)
 "Spotted Snob" (TH)
 "Little Brown Dog" (TH)
 32 "The Beautiful Swan" (TH)
 "Lazy Bear" (TH)
 "Strong Little Elephant" (TH)
 33

Happy Comics

- #20 "Crooner Cat" (TH)
 "The Big Badger Hunt" (TH)
 21 "High-Flying Squirrel" (TH)
 "The Friendly Spider" (TH)
 "Sharpy and the Salmon" (TH)
 22 "Robin Redface" (TH)
 "Wandering Kitten" (TH)
 "The Conceited Squirrel" (TH)
 23 "Beautiful but not Dumb" (TH)
 "Silky and the Wren" (TH)
 "Ernie the Earthworm" (TH)
 24 "Golden Horse" (TH)
 "The Friendly Lion" (TH)
 "Dan Uses His Head" (TH)
 "Willie the Weasel" (TH)
 26 "Dobo the Dog" (TH)
 "The Silent Monkey" (TH)
 "The Silly Eagle" (TH)
 27 "Chocolate and Vanilla" (TH)
 "The Just-the-Same Mouse" (TH)
 "The Eating Contest" (TH)
 28
 29 "Flippy the Monk" (TH)
 "The Talkative Mouse" (TH)
 "Eager Beaver" (TH)
 30 "The Wistful Bear" (TH)
 "President Mouse" (TH)
 "Coalie the Lamb" (TH)
 31 "Woodland Olympics" (TH)
 "Jerry for President" (TH)
 32 "The No-Hound" (7)
 "Herbie" (TH)
 "Miserable Mouse" (TH)

Happy Comics (cont)

- #33 "Diamonds and Pebbles" (6, a much treasured item by Frazetta collectors. Cinderella type fairy tale.)
 35
 36
 37

Spunky Comics

- #1
 2
 Spermouse Comics
 #1 "Gnicky the Gnu" (TH)
 "Bobby Bunny Runs Away" (TH)
 "The Sad Crow" (TH)
 2 "The Quiet Pup" (TH)
 "The Lost Chipmunk" (TH)
 "Willie the Weasel" (TH)
 3 "Kimi" (TH)
 "Unhappy Animal" (TH)
 4
 5 "The Foolish Fawn" (TH)
 "The Armor-Plated Softies" (TH)
 6 "Goofy and Gus" (TH)

MAGAZINE MATERIAL

Blazing Combat (Warren)

- #1 Cover by Frazetta
 2 Cover by Frazetta
 3 Cover by Frazetta
 4 Cover by Frazetta

Castle of Frankenstein (Gothic Castle)

- #5 Two interior Burroughs illustrations by Frazetta.

Cavalcade (Skye Publishing Company)

- Vol 4 #15 "The Perfect Gentleman" (2)
 Vol 4 #17 "Indian Summer" (1, a full page wash)
 Vol 4 #18 "The Giantess" (1, one of his best erotic fantasy pieces.)
 Vol 5 #10 Reprint of "The Giantess" (Loss of detail in enlargement.)

Creepy (Warren)

- #1 "Werewolf" (6, Frazetta's last full brush and ink story. Not lacking in any respect)
 2 Cover by Frazetta
 3 Cover by Frazetta
 4 Cover by Frazetta
 5 Cover by Frazetta
 6 Cover by Frazetta
 7 Cover by Frazetta
 9 Cover by Frazetta
 10 Cover by Frazetta
 11 Cover by Frazetta
 15 Cover by Frazetta
 16 Cover by Frazetta
 17 Cover by Frazetta
 27 Cover by Frazetta

Dude (Skye Publishing Company)

- Vol 6 #16 One drawing on inside back cover.
 Vol 7 #1 "Cattin' on the Couch" (1)

Eerie (Warren)

- #2 Cover by Frazetta
 3 Cover by Frazetta
 5 Cover by Frazetta
 7 Cover by Frazetta
 8 Cover by Frazetta

Gent (Skye Publishing Company)

- Vol 6 #? "The Gent Zodiac" (Twelve interior illustrations depicting the women of all horoscope's signs. Quoting FF fan Alan Wong: "Sex fiends should latch onto this one!")
 Vol 7 #1 "Sex in the Afternoon" (1)

Horror & Fantasy (Sari Publishers)

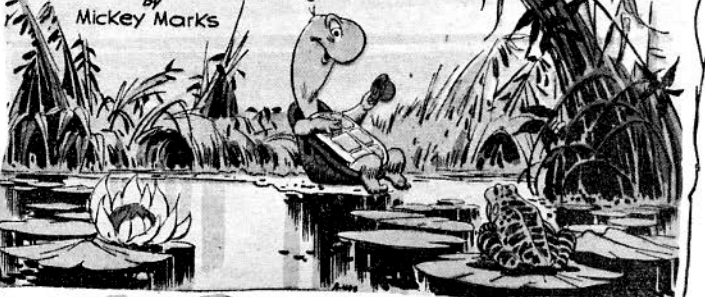
- "Special Edition of Movies International #7"
 Reprint of "The Night They Raided Minsky's"
 Movie Poster featured as a two-page spread



HERBIE



HARDBACK SOFHEART

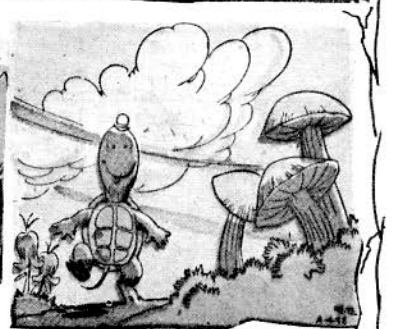


TALENTED BEAR

By Uncle Andy



Wandering Kitten



THE THINGS THAT HAPPEN TO ME!



Jumpy Jumps

By Mickey Marks



The Ambitious Fox

By Betty Cummings



Bashful Cricket

By Elizabeth Starr



The Rabbit Who Wouldn't Run

By Elizabeth Starr

Mad Magazine (EC)
 #90 Backcover by Frazetta
 106 Backcover by Frazetta (Great whimsy concerning Tarzan and his ape "Pals")

Monster Mania (Renaissance Productions)
 #2 Wrap around cover, front and back, by Frazetta. (Prehistoric scene done in an undisciplined pastel way. Unusual FF)

Spa Fon Fanzine (Fantasy Incorporated)
 #2 Cover by Frazetta. (A Johnny Comet head. Out of print.)
 #4 Various interior sketches by Frazetta. (Out of print)
 #5 Cover by Frazetta. (Your're holdin' it!)

Squa Tront (Weist Publications)
 #2 "Tiga" newspaper pilot. (Redoing of "Last Chance" strip from Witzend #3, using FF's original script.)
 #3 Pencils of the eight "Flash Gordon" dailies FF did (for Dan Barry in the early fifties)

Witzend.

#1 "Savage World" (With Williamson, Torres, and Evans. An unpublished Buster Crabbe Comics story. Excellent comic work.)
 2 One illustration by Frazetta.
 3 "Last Chance" (Mentioned above under "Squa Tront 2 heading.)
 4 Back cover by Frazetta

HARDBOUNDS

President Eisenhower's Cartoon Book (National Cartoonists Society)
 1 plate, a portrait of President Eisenhower

Edgar Rice Burroughs - The Master of Adventure (Canaveral Press) 6 plates by Frazetta

Tarzan and the Castaways (Canaveral Press)
 6 plates by Frazetta

Tarzan at the Earth's Core (Canaveral Press)
 6 plates by Frazetta

PAPERBACK COVERS

ACE : Burroughs books: all Cover by Frazetta
 Back to the Stone Age (With Krenkel)
 Beasts of Tarzan
 Beyond the Farthest Star
 Carson of Venus
 Jungle Tales of Tarzan
 Land of Terror
 The Lost Continent
 Lost on Venus
 The Mad King
 The Monster Men
 Savage Pellucidar
 Son of Tarzan
 Tarzan and the City of Gold
 Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar
 Tarzan and the Lion Man
 Tarzan and the Lost Empire
 Tarzan at the Earth's Core
 Tarzan the Invincible

ACE: Miscellaneous

Gulliver of Mars
 Hunter out of Time (1 interior sketch, not cover)
 Maza of the Moon
 Swordsmen in the Sky
 Warrior of Llarn

BALLANTINE BOOKS

The Autumn People by Ray Bradbury
 Tales from the Crypt
 Tales of the Incredible
 Tomorrow Midnight by Ray Bradbury
 The Vault of Horror

NOTE: All the above Ballantine books are reprints from EC comics.

GOLD MEDAL BOOKS

The Amazons and the Iron Throne
 The Reassembled Man
 Rogue Roman

LANCER BOOKS : Conan

Conan
 Conan of Cimmeria
 Conan the Adventurer
 Conan the Avenger
 Conan the Conqueror
 Conan the Warrior
 Conan the Usurper

LANCER : Miscellaneous

The Busy Body (Same illustration as the movie poster)
 Phoenix Prime
 Reign of Wizardry
 The Secret People
 Torture Garden
 Wolfshead by Robert H. Howard

PAPERBACK LIBRARY

Atlan
 Brak the Barbarian vs. the Sorceress
 The Serpent
 Thongor Against the Gods
 Thongor in the City of Magicians
 The Tritonian Ring by L. Sprague DeCamp

POPULAR LIBRARY

The Creature from Beyond Infinity
 Danger Planet
 Outlaw World
 The Solar Invasion

MISCELLANEOUS PUBLISHERS

Brak the Barbarian (Avon)
 The Dangerous Age / Bad by Choice (Midwood)
 (8 interior illos of Frazetta babes)
 Nightwalk (Banner)
 Perfumed / The Wild Week (Midwood)
 (8 more Frazetta babe plates)
 What's New Pussycat? (Dell; cover same as one of his posters for the movie)
 Wonderful Wizard of Oz (Airmont)
 (Cover with Krenkel; 8 inside sketches by RKG)

FRAZETTA MOVIE POSTERS

What's New Pussycat? (2)
 The Busy Body
 After the Fox (2)
 Yours, Mine, and Ours
 The Night they Raided Minsky's
 The Secret of My Success
 Hotel Paradiso
 The Fastest Guitar in the West
 The Wrong Box
 The Fearless Vampire Killers

FRAZETTA RECORD ALBUM COVERS...

Fastest Guitar in the West (Roy Orbison)
 Hotel Paradiso (Movie soundtrack)
 Herman and His Hermits
 Movies Are Better Than Ever - Jonathan Winters
 The Night they Raided Minsky's (Soundtrack)
 Welcome to the LBJ Ranch

MISCELLANEOUS FAN PUBLICATIONS

The Frank Frazetta Art Folio (Opar Press)
 Attezar #1 (House of Greystoke; to be re-leased soon; 6657 Locust St., K.C. Mo. 64131)
 The EC Hardbound (Nostalgia Press; Reprints SQUEEZE PLAY from Shock Suspensstories #13)
 The Girl From Farris (House of Greystoke; cover)
 Johnny Comet #1 (Ed Aprille Publications; reprints first 96 dailys from FF's syndicated strip)
 The Magic of Frank Frazetta (Chester Grabowski's spectaculars; Reprints the Frazetta Burroughs illustrations from the Canaveral Press books and others)

A N C

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Katlas

Feb.

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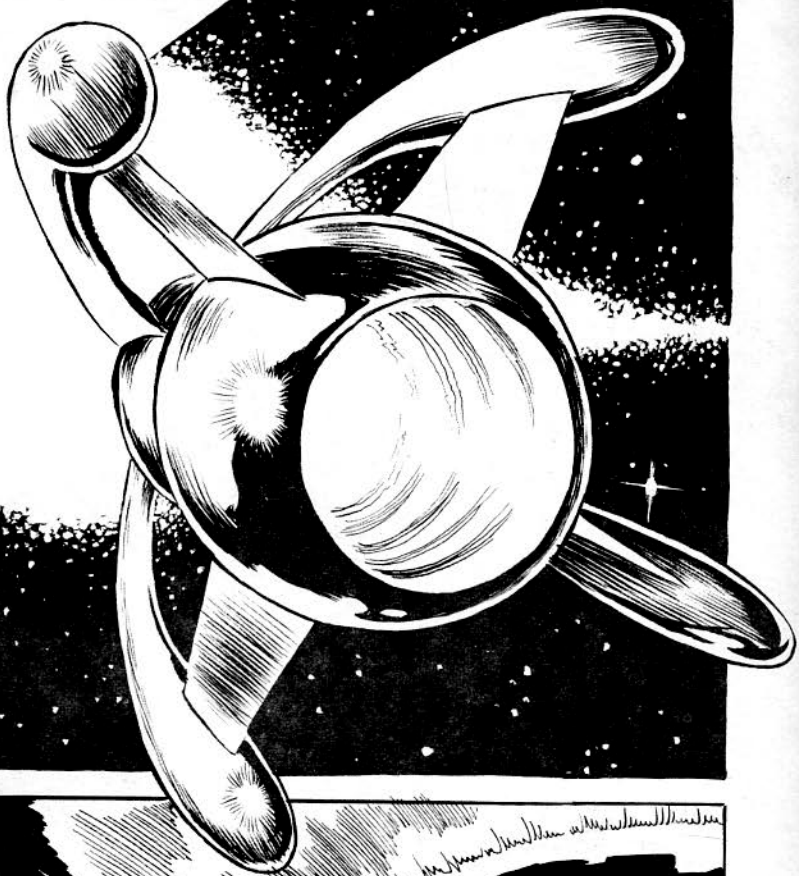
FAMOUS FUNNIES



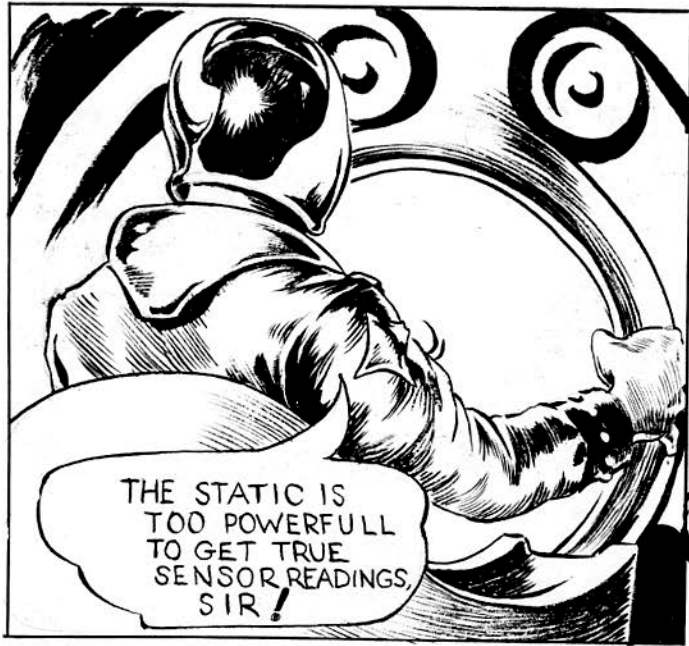
ALGOL STAR

ALGOL—TO THE ANCIENT ARABS, THE DEMON STAR! IN THE CONSTELLATION PERSEUS, ASTRONOMERS FELT IT COULD PROVIDE THE KEY TO SOME AGE OLD PROBLEMS. — SIX MONTHS AFTER COMMANDER VERLON VRANA RECEIVED HIS ORDERS, THE CRUISER ARCTURUS WAS ON HER WAY —

Story and Art
Steve Hickman



BUT MIDWAY ON THE MISSION A GIGANTIC SHIMMERING CLOUD OF ENERGY BLOCKED THE WAY!



THE STATIC IS TOO POWERFULL TO GET TRUE SENSOR READINGS SIR!



TRY THE *ULTRA-VIOLET* WAVELENGTHS ... AND PUT THE VISUAL IMAGE ON THE MAIN SCREEN.



GREETINGS, COMMANDER VRANA— ON BEHALF OF THE CYXXX!

WHAT!?

TRY ALL THE RECEPTOR BANDS AGAIN!

SIR, THE CYXXX EXTEND THEIR KNOWLEGE FOR OUR MUTUAL BENEFIT— PLEASE RELAX...



LISTEN, FOR WE
ARE NOMADS, AND
WISE IN THE LORE
OF THE VOID. WHEN
YOU RECEIVE ORDERS
WE KNOW THEM-



AS WE KNOW
THE ENTIRE
HISTORY OF
YOUR RACE



WE KNOW YOUR
LIFE ENTIRELY-AS
WE KNOW YOUR
FRIENDS



WE, THE CYXXX,
LIVE AS ENERGY, DE-
VOID OF WHAT YOU
KNOW AS MOTIVATION
BUT NOW WE
REQUIRE AID-

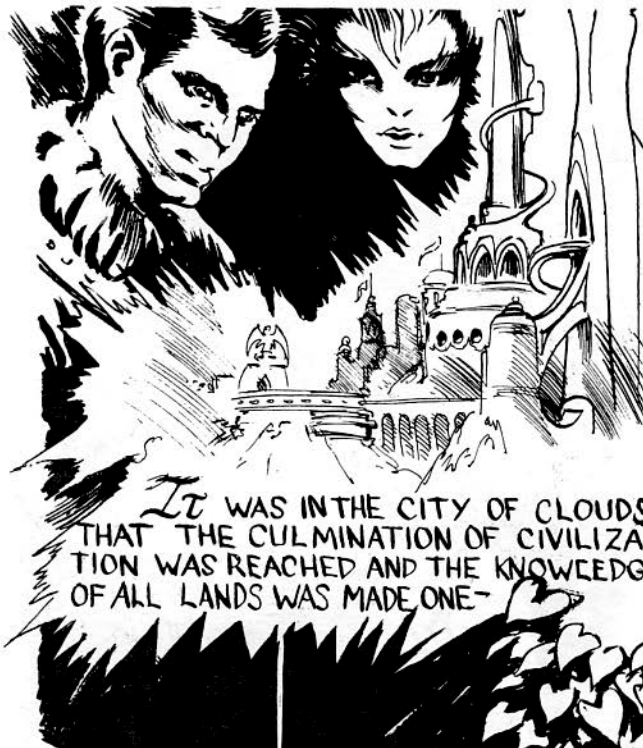


HERE IS THE EMBODIMEN OF
ALL THAT CAN BE KNOWN—
SHE WILL SHOW YOU WHY
CYXXX CHOSE TO
REVEAL OURSELVES
TO YOU...

I WILL MAKE DREAMS
FOR YOU, VERLON VRANA,
A TRUE DREAM OF WHAT
HAS PASSED...

FREE YOUR MIND FROM
FEARS THAT YOU MAY
SEE MY SONG OF THE
YOUTH OF CYXXX—
WHEN WE WALKED
ON SOLID EARTH
AS DO MEN...



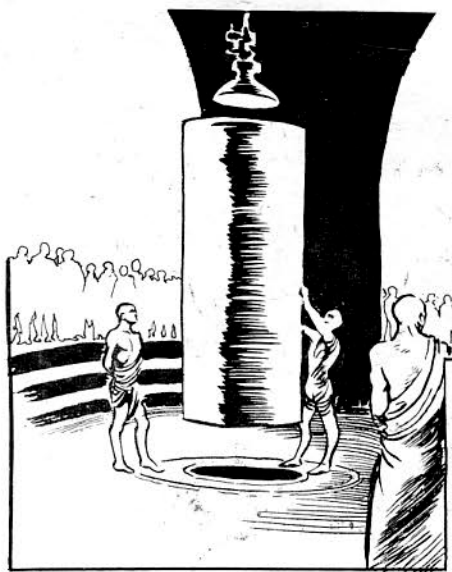


THE WAY TO OUR PRESENT IMMORTALITY WAS MADE KNOWN AND THE COUNCIL DECIDED TO FREE THE CYXXX OF MORTAL NEEDS FOR ALL TIME...

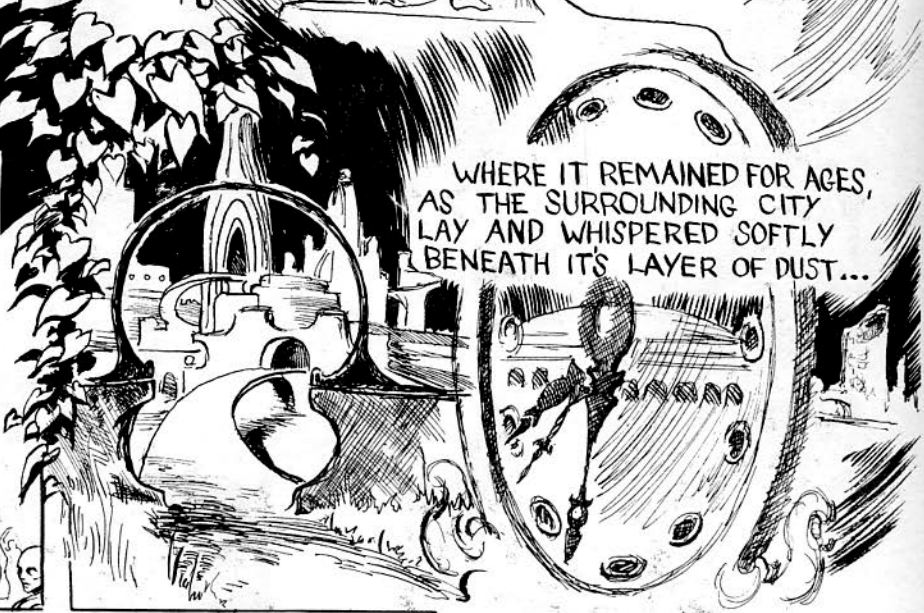


IT WAS IN THE CITY OF CLOUDS THAT THE CULMINATION OF CIVILIZATION WAS REACHED AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF ALL LANDS WAS MADE ONE-

AND THE SUM TOTAL OF THE CYXXX CULTURE WAS DEPOSITED IN THE ETERNAL CITY...



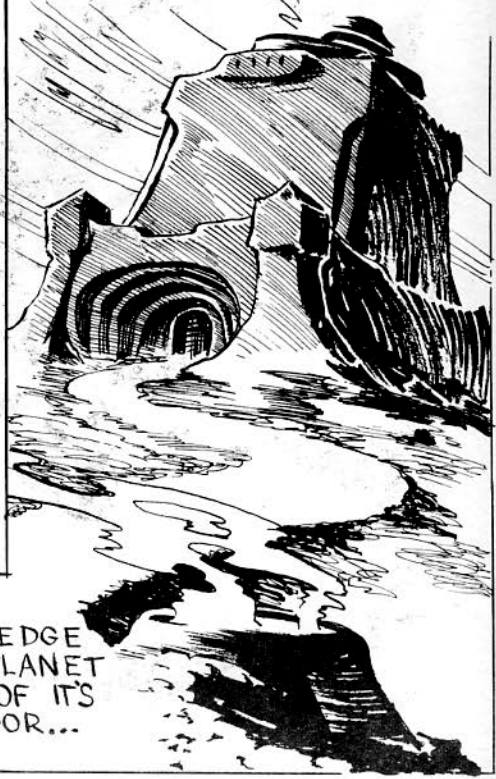
WHERE IT REMAINED FOR AGES, AS THE SURROUNDING CITY LAY AND WHISPERED SOFTLY BENEATH ITS LAYER OF DUST...



EVIL DECENDENT OF AN ANCIENT EXILE - WHO, TO AVENGE HIS ANCESTOR


UNTIL, LURED BY LEGENDS OF VAST KNOWLEDGE, THE DUST WAS DISTURBED BY AN

USED THE KNOWLEDGE TO TWIST THE PLANET INTO A PARODY OF ITS FORMER SPLENDOR...






BUT WE HAVE A MISSION!
WE CAN'T JUST RUN OFF
AND SAY WE'RE HELPING
FRIENDS!!




AH, AND THEREIN LIES YOUR
GREATEST ASSET TO US! THE
STAR ALGOL TOWARD WHICH YOU
SO JOURNEY IS THE CYXXX'S
MOTHER STAR-ALGOL 7 IS OUR
HOME PLANET!



YOUR MISSION WILL PROCEED ACCORDING TO YOUR
ORDERS AND THE CYXXX WILL PLACE AT YOUR DISPOSAL
ALL THAT YOU SEEK, IF YOU WILL AID US IN FREEING
THE AGE-OLD BENEFACOR OF OUR RACE. BACK TO
THE SHIP WITH YOU, COMMANDER, WE CAN CONTACT
YOU AT ANY TIME!



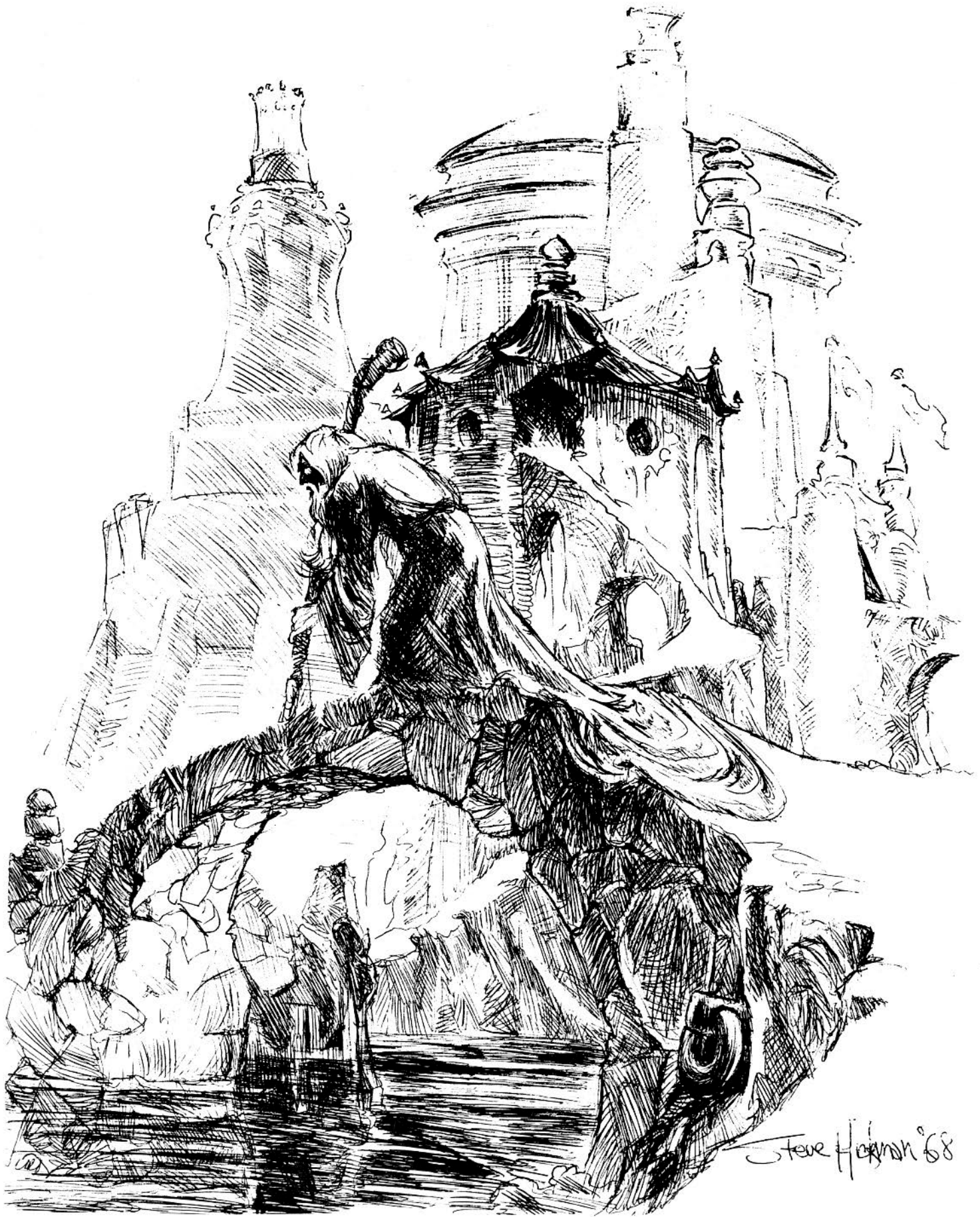
WAIT! WHO IS
THIS 'BENEFACOR'
YOU SPEAK OF?



AH, YES! IT IS
ALGOL 7 ITSELF
WHICH WE MUST
CLEAR OF THIS
BLIGHT. YOU SEE
CAPTAIN THE
PLANET IS
SENTIENT,
ALIVE!!

TO BE CONTINUED!!





Steve Hoffman '68



by RANDY BROECKER 1969

"Even the sun...forsook Young Jacob, for its rays could not breach the forest gloom."

A PERHAPS FAIRY TALE

By John Guzlowski

From An Idea By John & Rich

The Illustrations : Randy Broecker

It was a snowy winter in the tiny Bavarian village of Vinenburg. And, with the coming of winter little Johann Werner felt not only hunger and sadness, but also the icy fingers of old Jack Frost. During this, the most joyous of all seasons for most children Johann's age, there was little for Johann to be happy about, for he had no parents.

But now, racing through the Christmas Tree Forest, Johann felt excitement and thrill as rarely he did. Long had he waited for this night and the coming of the gypsy carnival.

As he broke into the snowy clearing, the glow from the tents seemed to reach out, embracing the horizon. The music from the carnival brought thoughts of magic, and little Johann quickened his pace, throwing clumps of snow all around. Straightaway he found the tent he sought. There was to be found the gypsy queen and her fabulous jewel; much had he heard about her, even, yes, from the grown folk.

The few kopecs Johann had saved all year jingled in his seldom full pocket. Standing before her tent, excitement welled within him. Should he turn back? Could the rumors of her powers hold him away from the glowing doorway? Would she scoff at his small money and beat him?

With an impulsiveness characteristic of all children, Johann threw apart the canvas flaps and dashed in -- into the den of the gypsy witch. The kopecs jumped out of his pockets as if possessed, scattering onto the dirt floor. Afraid to look up, Johann fell to the ground, clutching for the spilled coins.

The old woman turned her eyes from a globe of crystal to look at Johann; and in a voice both mild and strong, she said: "Johann, why have you come?"

Johann looked up now for the first time. He found courage in her pleasant tone. "I have come to look into the magic jewel," he replied.

"Then sit down, my son, on that colored cloth." Seeing the coins in his hands, she added, "You need not pay with money. The faith you have in my power is enough."

And with these words, the wizened woman drew closer. About her neck, Johann saw a bedazzling gem. It captured his full attention with spangled splashes of inner light. Sore amazed, and transfixed by the light, Johann relaxed his taut face. Then, these words came from him:

"Once upon a time, a distant time, in a land far beyond the farthest sea, there lived a good boy, a quiet lad of the fields and farms. He was a help to his mother and his sisters, doing the work that was too difficult for them and too easy for the men to bother with.

"Often Jacob saw the men of his clan, laughing and joking, happy in their work as they cleared the fields and raked the harvest from the good earth. But Jacob was unrelentingly sad. He was only a woman's helper, a goatswain and a cook's assistant. Truly, he

did tasks no man was required to do. He wanted to leave the comfort and security of the kitchen for the hard laughing sport of the men and the fields.

"So, perplexed by inner thoughts, he came to his mother one morning as she was preparing the breakfast meal.

"Jacob, why have you come," she asked.

"Mother, I grow tired of the kitchen. My arms are strong, they tire not. My legs have the power of the ten-year sapling; they also tire not. But this woman's apron, it drains the strength from my body. How can I become a man? Please, let me be a man."

"The kind woman had long expected these words from her son. Readily came her answer: "In our family we have an ancient tradition. To be considered a man, one must find the magic grimple."

"She then turned and left, tears filming her crystal blue eyes.

"Jacob found no comfort in her words. Their meaning escaped him. Although he then asked many what the Grimple was, the answers were always the same, "You must find the Grimple without aid."

"Never before had Jacob been so troubled. His mother's words haunted his days and plagued his nights. Sleep came seldom as he doubted on a meaning, and at length the search for the Grimple drove him to leave his home. With firm resolution and the sword his father won at the fair two summers ago, Jacob left the land of Kortac.

"For four score and four days, Jacob walked a lonely, tree-shrouded road. His cheeks lost their country-boy redness, and his frame grew gaunt from want of sufficient food. The clothes that he wore turned to rags, and his simple sword began to rust in the scabbard. Even the sun, once his companion in days of joy and serenity, forsook him, for its rays could not breach the forest gloom.

"Despite all hardship, Jacob trod on, always reflecting upon the words his mother spoke when they parted last.

"One morning, while still in the great forest, Jacob awoke to gentle prodding. Slowly he opened his eyes and become aware of a most wondrous sight. Leaping to his feet, he shouted with elation, "Surely, 'tis an angel. I must be in heaven." And with these words still echoing through the forest, he began to dance a country jig.

"The young girl whom Jacob took to be an angel spoke, "Oh, sir knight, sir knight, please help us! My mother and I need of your assistance! Something dreadful has happened to our carriage; I believe the wheel is broken."

"Jacob stopped dancing and looked upon the fair girl's face. He thought, she is not an angel, but rather something almost as beautiful, a princess. And she believes me a knight. How wonderful! Now the joyful smile



"Lady Blinkennod screamed, 'The trolls!'"

of a youth was replaced by what Jacob hoped to be a look of manly concern. Bowing low to his knees, Jacob spoke. "Perhaps I can be of some service, dear lady."

"Together they hurried up the road.

"Rounding a bend in the tree-lined lane, Jacob's eyes widened in unbelieving amazement. Never before had he seen a carriage of such splendid richness and heart-quickenng beauty. Diamonds of the largest sort, skillfully attached to the wheels of the coach gleamed, sparkled, bedazzled, and drew him stumbling yet closer. As he approached the side of the marvelous coach, he at first hesitated, then, with timorous fingers he gently caressed the carriage door's raised, sculptured figures and designs.

"His reverie, however, was suddenly shattered by a thin, shrewish voice, screeching at him from within the carriage. "What be you doing here, boy? Come you to vandalize the sparkling coach of an old woman? Oh, merciful gods, why do you frown on me, your own Lady Blinkennod? Don't I fast on the days appointed by that whining skunk, the Lord Equal High Priest Ner'con? Don't I give alms to the beggars on every First Crystal Clear Day? Woe, woe now you send brigands to slit my purse and my own precious throat!"

"Jacob staggered back from this mournful moaning. Falling to his knees, he stuttered, "Oh, madam, I am not a brigand, a highwayman, but rather a poor peasant boy, whom your daughter has enlisted to repair the broken wheel."

"Ah, what's that you say? A farm boy, a swineherd? Why, I knew it all the time! Yes, I did. All the time. Emma, show this callow fellow the tools. Repair the wheel, boy; be quick, and don't touch my carriage!" So saying, the plumb dowager sighed loudly, sank back into the velvet interior of the carriage, wheezed once, and began to snore. She was obviously asleep.

"Bewildered, Jacob turned toward Emma. She smiled reassuringly and led him to the tool chest, which held many familiar objects. Choosing the tools he thought he would have need of, he began to work.

"Several hours later, as the long shadows of late afternoon grew faint with the coming of darkness, Jacob stood up from where he had been working on the wheel. Droplets of warm perspiration coursed freely down the sides of his face, stopping for the briefest of moments as they met the corners of his smile, then going on to lose themselves in his tattered shepherd's shirt of fleece.

"Ladies," he said, "the wheel shall once again serve you."

"A fire was soon kindled, and the three travellers began to partake of a splendid meal. They spoke as they supped.

"Where are you coachmen?" Jacob asked.

"They are gone, fearing that the wheel could not be repaired before the oncoming of night," Mistress Emma replied.

"They were men of weak, simple hearts, peasants from that village which serves as the Western gate of this wilderness. Their minds were filled with childrens' tales of wanderers lost, of monstrously cruel creatures who take sustenance from the warm blood of living men, and of crushed skulls left along this woodland road as warnings to mortal men of beings insidious and ever-present." This Lady Blinkennod added.

"As Jacob listened to her, his knees shook slightly, and his eyes searched the bushes and trees at the perimeter of the clearing. His hands slowly played over the ground around him, seeking the reassurance which only the hilt of his sword could give him. He panicked, leaping to his feet, and whirling around with his eyes moving rapidly in an attempt to examine every patch of grass at once. The sword was gone!

"Boy, boy, what's wrong?" Lady Blinkennod

shouted from where she sat across from him.

"Suddenly he stopped and mentally sighed. The sword stood leaning against the tool chest, not two yards away. "Nothing is wrong, your Ladyship. I am sorry that I disturbed you. There were ants in my shirt," he lied, to conceal his fear.

"Minutes of silence followed, filling the clearing with a new air. Gone was the quietly beautiful evensong of the forest crickets. Gone was the star-like twinkling of the fireflies. Gone entirely was the magical atmosphere of sylvan enchantment. In its stead was -- a dreadful sense of darkness.

"Grip-a-grip-grip!"

"What was that?" Mistress Emma asked smilingly.

"Perhaps, perhaps it is a tree frog," Jacob offered, looking upon her.

"Lady Blinkennod screamed, "The trolls!"

"They swarmed, dwarfed and misshapen, into the clearing. Saliva foamed from their twisted lips, and gnarled bludgeons whirled above their heads. Screaming guttural cries to their satanic gods, the trolls lurched towards the paralyzed ladies.

"With the rapidity of a wound-crazed cougar, Jacob drew his sword and drove it into the leering smile of the nearest hell-thing. Blood, black with venom, spurted from its mouth, momentarily blinding Jacob. He staggered back against a tree, the sword still clutched in his hand. Not waiting to see if the hideous man-beast would arise, Jacob hurled himself into the troll pack.

"Throughout the night, the thudding of bare, rust-flecked steel resounded in the clearing. Jacob fought the trolls, which scattered and returned stupidly as each of their fellows was brought down. As he smashed his sword repeatedly against the grizzled hides of the trolls, Jacob cried tears of futility until they no longer would come. Then, he merely fought, his arms growing sore numb from the weight of his sword. Blood darkened his face and stiffened his clothing. A dozen times he dropped to his knees, a dozen times rising with a war cry.

"And then came the dawn.

"The camp-fire, long unattended, smoldered weakly. Jacob, shoulders slumped with fatigue, watched a wisp of smoke spiral slowly toward the morning-blue sky. It was over, he thought. Yes, it is over, and I am alive.

"Soon he became aware of his bent, scarred sword hanging from his limp fingers. "You have served well," he proclaimed aloud. He longed to raise the blade to his lips, but he could not. He no longer possessed the strength.

"From the forest came a plaintive, tired voice: "Jacob, Jacob, are you all right?"

"Painfully, he parted his swollen lips as if to speak. Discovering, however, that he could not, he smiled and collapsed.

"Two days later, he regained consciousness in Lady Blinkennod's elegant bed chamber.

"Mother, mother, he's awake!" Mistress Emma called. "Oh, you were magnificent. We watched you from the carriage where we took refuge. You slew dozens of them; oh, how brave you are. The coachmen came back for us that morning. They could not believe that you alone were able to stand against the sabage monsters. You are a hero! Isn't it wonderful?"

"Hush, girl. You will talk his ears off," Lady Blinkennod said as she entered the room. "Is there anything that we can do for you, Jacob? Everything that we have is yours."

"Jacob raised himself to a sitting position and spoke: "Yes, madam....if you would be so kind, can you tell me where I can find the Grimple?"

"Is that all?"

"Yes, Your Ladyship."

"Jacob, I am sorry that I can not tell you who or what a Grimple is. However, I can take



"One morning Jacob stopped at the foot of an awesome mountain"

you to the wisest man in this city. Perhaps he, with his almost infinite knowledge of man, beasts and nature, may be able to help."

"Jacob waited patiently in the vestibule of the Imperial Keskovian Library. Dust-filled streams of sunlight illuminated the room, allowing him to examine its strangeness. Books were everywhere -- under chairs, on chairs, and around chairs. Ceiling-high stacks circumvented the room, giving it a false appearance of smallness. The volumes were thin, and they were long, and they were wide, and they were short, and they were stout. There were books with green, water-stained covers, and there were green, water-stained covers without books. Why, there was such a multitude of books that Jacob was afraid to take a single step for fear of damaging some single priceless volume.

"As he waited in thoughtful concentration, Jacob heard a voice echo mysteriously from behind one of the stacks, "Hmmm, hmmm, Pz 3-4326 myf. Hmmm, yes, here it is. Here it is. I've found it!"

"Sir, the Lady Blinkenmod sent..." Jacob interrupted.

"Lady Blinkenmod? Strange name for a book. Do you know the name of the author?" asked the disembodied voice.

"An old head, features hidden by wonderously long hair, greyed fully, peered from behind the mountains of volumes.

"You're the Jacob boy sent by Lady Blinkenmod," the librarian shouted as if he had just made a fantastic discovery. "Now, what was that volume you were seeking, again?"

"To explain his problem to the hoary librarian took no short time. Finally, however, his plight was understood by the ancient. The old one found a leaf of paper and wrote rapidly for some time. After he had covered both sides of the sheet, he handed it to Jacob.

"Jacob, if you will read these books, these hundred almost forgotten volumes of human lore and suffering, you may be able to discover the meaning of the word Grimple," the librarian said and stepped from the room.

"In the Spring of the following year, Jacob came again into the room wherein he had first met the noble librarian. The young lad found him reflecting over an unopened volume.

"Sir, I have completed the books which you instructed me to read, but I still do not understand the meaning of the word Grimple. Have I failed to contemplate them correctly?"

"The ancient smiled knowingly and said, "You have studied them well, my son. However, you must not lose hope. The meaning of Grimple will grow apparent soon."

"How long do you expect me to wait? For a year I have struggled with these damnable volumes. Must I spend my entire life seeking the Grimple?" shouted Jacob and stormed from the vestibule.

"Gray clouds obscured the Autumn sun, magnifying Jacob's gloom and loneliness. As he sat resting, back against a rail fence, he imagined that the gods themselves had forsaken him. His mind turned to thoughts of the miles he had trudged since he in rage burst from the library. He recalled the men who had cursed him and the outlaws that had pursued him, he recalled the wine which had filled his belly with twisting pain and his mind with frightening phantasmagoria. He looked on the sores which had disfigured his limbs and the blood which had caked them. Finally, he recalled the friendship and love he had encountered along the way, and that he could not return home without the Grimple.

"The next morning's sun found Jacob again tramping upon the road, his eyes searching the dust as if there lay the Grimple. Nearing a hill he glanced up and stopped. A cross, surrounded by jeering multitudes, jutted crookedly from the ground. There hung a scarred, nearly naked figure from the wooden cross-beam.

"Jacob pushed his way through the mob.

"No one should be tortured like this," he screamed to the crowd. Then, turning to the man on the cross, Jacob asked, "Sir, how may I get you down?"

"The crucified's head lifted, and his eyes opened slowly. In a broken, pained voice, he whispered, "You cannot save me. I am dying. Those who placed me here have assured themselves of that. Nails were driven into my palms, and spears into my body."

"Is there nothing I can do?" Jacob beseeched.

"Yes, there is something. Give me water so that I might again speak to these who have turned from me."

"The crowd parted as Jacob hurried through it. Nearby, he discovered a pond. His kerchief heavy with water, he returned to the cross and raised the scarf to the man's lips. They did not move.

"Jacob bowed his head and left again for the road.

"For several days he wandered until one overcast morning he stopped at the foot of an awesome mountain. Harsh, deep-furrowed crevices radiated down from its summit. Jacob, unmindful of the possible dangers, began to scale the not so gentle slope.

"Exhausted, starved, and bleeding, he reached the zenith. Whatever had drawn him here now forced him to sit quietly as a tempest raged about him. Savage rains lashed his threadbare garments to his flesh, and he looked down upon all the lands he had trekked, now washed strongly with heavenly water. The winds grew and grew, driving all feelings from his senses, leaving him a numb, blind, deaf hulk.

"And so plagued, he began to think.

"His mind raced over the events of the preceding year's time. Closely, he examined the characters of his father and the others who were called men. They all possessed attributes in common -- courage, kindness, knowledge, and ambition. Suddenly, Jacob realized that he, too, knew these qualities in himself. He screamed into the tempest, "I am a man; I am a man!"

"The rains ceased abruptly, and the clouds drifted toward the Eastern horizon. For the first time in a fortnight, the sun beamed its glorious rays upon the earth. Jacob rested for an hour, then began his descent.

"As Jacob came home again, his heart brimmed with happiness. He saw the green, even rows of corn, soon to be a new harvest.

"His mother was the first to see him. Running towards him, she cried, "Jacob, my son, you have returned to us a man!"

"Yes, mother, I am a man, but I have failed you. I did not find the grimple."

"Proudly she gazed into his eyes and said, "You have found the Grimple. It grew and appeared within you. It is Manhood."

EPILOGUE.....

Johann turned his eyes from the Gypsy's gem.

"Do you understand?" she asked in a patient voice.

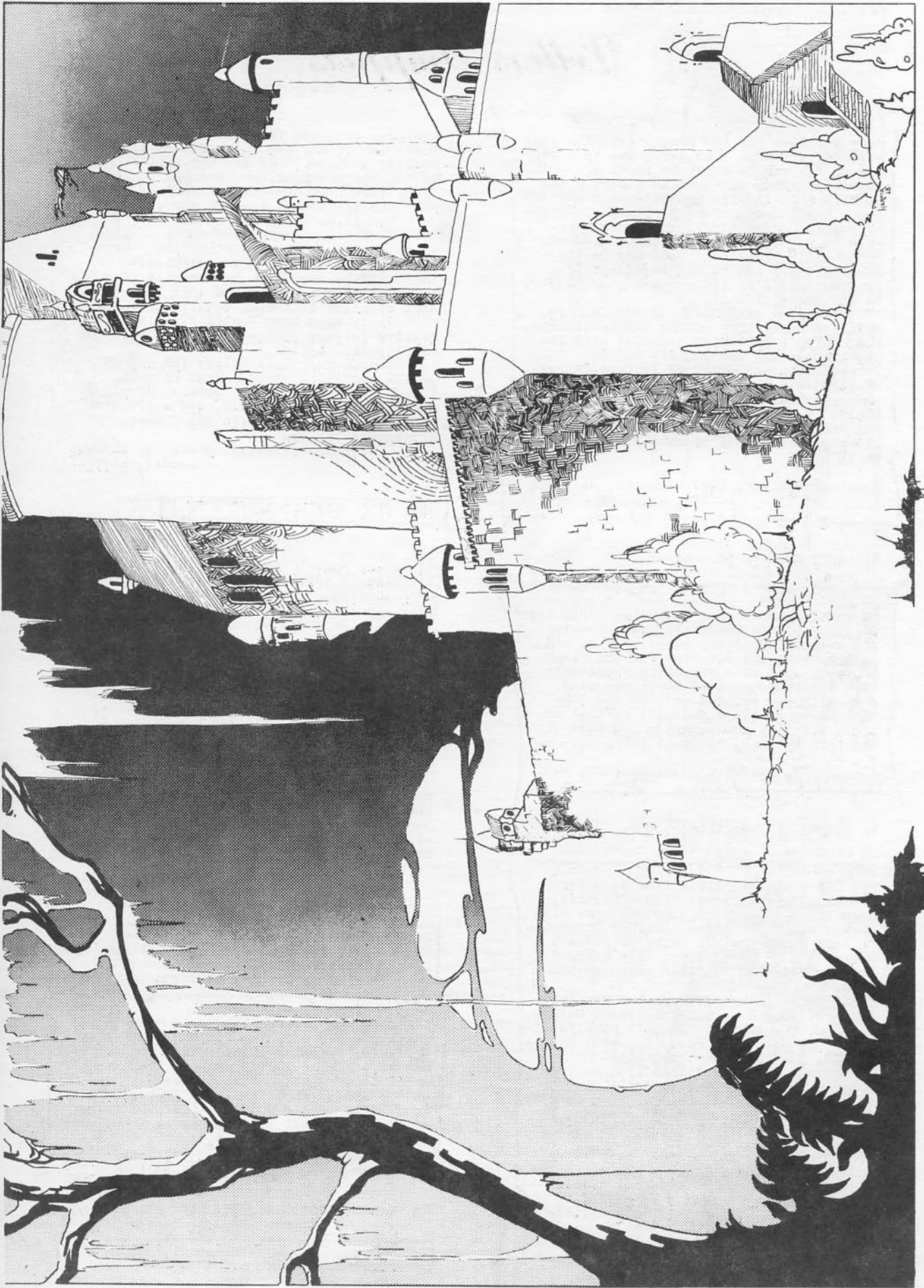
The boy thought for a moment, reviewing the vision fresh in his mind. Then, in a manner defying his youth, he said, "Only through introspection and self-betterment can a person realize his dreams and ambitions."

The Gypsy queen smiled, assured that Johann would succeed at everything he would attempt in life.

THE END



"As Jacob came home again, his heart brimmed with happiness"



Letters Snippets

Hope you like the two pieces (of Mike Cody art) I'm sending. The large one is a sample of the BARTOK strip he and I are doing currently for you. I think you're going to like it. It will run between 8 and 10 pages and I can guarantee plenty of Conan-type action, adventure, and atmosphere. I know it may sound like a rash statement, but I truly think that Cody may be the most exciting new talent to emerge from fandom. But I'll let you and your readers be the judge of that.

Starting with GRAPHICS SHOWCASE #3, we'll be doing some of the BARTOK stories, too, which I hope will coincide with the one I'm sending you for SPA FON #6.

GRAPHICS SHOWCASE #2 is finally ready at \$1 a copy. You'll like to know that the great Berni Wrightson strip, "Uncle Bill's Barrel" (the one you raved over at the '68 scarp convention) is in the issue, along with a lot of Hickman and Kaluta strip work.

Tom Long, P.O. Box 8947, Richmond, Va. 23225
Editor, GRAPHICS SHOWCASE

Enclosed is money for ish 5 of SPA FON. Don't ask me why i'm doing it. i saw your ad in SQUA FRONT and was expecting an intelligent magazine, instead I got this. (Ish #4) Something i can understand.

You state that i write screwy letters. Huh (i.e. indignant snort)

As for stealing gravestones -- kiddie's stuff. I steal coffin lids. Without digging them up. More difficult. I then whittle them down to the size of a medium-size gum eraser and sell them as door stops or something equally obscene.

So to save ink, I will close this missive (always wanted to use the word missive in a letter.)

So remember Walt Kelly: THE GOD OF SATIRE and think about Ingmar Bergman, Frank Zapa, Bartholemew Gubbins, Simple J. Malarky, Jean-Luc Goddard, and maybe even Ruben Sano. i close with the following statement: the end

Wilhelm-Bill-William-Peabody Sherman
Normal, Illinois

Guys like this are loose? - Eds.

All good news to us - Ed.

Enclosed is money for the naked girly issue with gobs of fantastic nudes running all over the shocking pages of fire and hell lurking and desiring for the flesh of the virgin male strolling whimlessly thru the fluid mass of the inner mind, a deep forest bounded only by the lapping waves of blood and gore left at a heavy price by those wanton usurpers of the fair maidens, issue it being No. 5.

F. Daniel Linder, Hickory, N.C.

We second that emotion! - Eds.

SPA FON 4 was terrific! The blue for front and bacovers was very effective, even tho the bc of my copy had some blue smears along one side. Another interesting thing was the two pairs of pages 3 & 4 and 33 & 34 in my copy. I'm going to put the extra GHOST RIDER repro on the wall.

The Fritz art you carried was great (naturally) and so was Wrightson, Kaluta, Hickman, and Harper. I can't find fault with this quartet. Favourite art: pgs. 11, 27, 29, and everything else.

This leaves me little room to comment on the monumental WS article. It was just the sort of thing I love to read. EC was genius personified! However, I prefer their later stories. The early ones seem weaker on art.

The poetry was a gas. Keep it up, please! Too bad the clown who wrote the first letter in your lettercol didn't know any poetry. ~~What a durrball!~~ (I don't want to overdo it; I'm sensitive to criticism.) Verdict on SPA FON: perfect! Andy Taskans, Winnipeg, Canada

As to Spa Fon: I was plenty surprised at the rise in quality that every issue has been showing. The covers are exceptionally good and the blue tint goes very well.

All the articles were quite good and entertaining.

All the artwork is fabulous especially the Hickman, and Wrightson, though Kaluta is a wonder himself. I do wish, tho, that you would increase the size of the letter column and try to get some sort of discussion going rather than selected ramblings; the majority of the letter column wasn't very interesting. (And it is Smith, with no E--my Ghod, how can you misspell Smith?)

I was wondering, Rich, if it would be possible to get a small plug, ad, or ready sheets in the next Spa Fon for the Houston Con '69? (I assume that the next Sap-Fon will be out by then...) The affair will be held June 20-22.

Tony Smith, Houston, Texas.
Editor, MYTHOS

How bout the boredom of this lettercol, and the free timely plugs-- don't they spice it up terrificly?- Eds.

I'm sure you are familiar with Frank Frazetta's cover painting for EERIE magazine depicting "Witches Tide." At any rate, it was so striking that I wrote a poem about it which later won the Student Award for Poetry at the 1967 Alabama Writer's Conclave. I would like to see what Mr. Frazetta thinks about it, as well as give him my thanks and appreciation for his work.

Jim Thompson, 1540 Valley View Drive,
Homewood, Alabama 35209

Is Chuck Clarkson a joke? If not, give it up.
Stephen Stanley, Kansas City, Mo.

Is that guy a joke? - Chuck Clarkson!

SERAPHIM

Formerly the EC FAN ADDICT, SERAPHIM features quality artwork and informative articles on EC and related subjects. #4 features art by Roy Krenkel, Jeff Jones, Basil Wolverton, John Fantucchio, Ken Smith, and Don Rosa.

The price for #4 is 40 cents.

SERAPHIM #5 will be ONE DOLLAR and will include art by Al Williamson, Roy Krenkel, Berni Wrightson, Dan Adkins, and many more.

Order both from -

Thomas Veilleaux
42 Sterling Street
Waterville, Maine
04901

And be glad you did. An official SPA FON-affiliated fanzine!



I just recently received your SPA FON #2-4.

I thought that SQUA TRONT was good, but "SP. F." is the fanzine to end them all!

I hope you do not reprint any of the same material that SQUA TRONT does; then it's a waste. I hope you two zines are working together, rather than as competitors.

In closing,
Before another Wertham decides
To kill us EC lovers,
Let's have some more articles besides
Those fabulous Frazetta covers!
Jim Gray, Margarita, Canal Zone

Hear that, Jer? Now the only trouble is, where is this fanzine called "SP. F." so's we can eliminate it!

Frank Frazetta's combination of a vast imagination and stunning technical ability never ceases to amaze and astound. I await breathlessly more text concerning his background, working techniques, and - oh - anything else for that matter. And I hope that you will continue to make reproductions of his work available within your pages.

Similar articles on Wallace Wood are sure to receive enthusiastic response. Similar articles on any of the EC veterans will receive enthusiastic response. Say, why don't you do an article on enthusiastic response? Argh!

Bob Kline

Instead of an article, we're printing your letter, Bob. And congrats -- you've succeeded in summing up SPA FON 4 with a single four-letter word. Thanx - Eds.

Both SPA FON 3 and 4 were great. However, on the envelope, I am "Mack" and in the letter, I am "Mike". I be neither ... I am Mark. In the letter, a 75¢ refund was supposed to be enclosed...it was not. Perhaps that is why you signed the letter "Richer Hauser," I still have faith in you.

Your Chuck Clarkson was well done, but try to finish it off next issue. Harper's illo was one of the best in the ish. The poetry was good; it seems as if it will continue whether your fans like it or not.

The mini novel was good, though not poetry. Hickman's Conan-esque character was fantastic.

About those rare comic covers your reproduce. You must either genuinely want to do something for the more unfortunate fans (most) who don't have these rare items, or you must be the biggest braggart in fandom. Personally, I think the first is true, since if you didn't want to do something for fans, you wouldn't entrust your rare mags to vicious printers who mangle things at every opportunity.

But why only Frazetta? Sure, he is one of, if not the greatest comics artist ever. But how about Williamson, Wood, Crandall, and other EC artists, as SQUA TRONT does?

Mark Barclay

Have to destroy your logic, since we have very mild mannered, polite printers. How bout the Williamson comic repro this ish? - Eds





Wright 2011