



GENE
DAY ©
76



PARSONS-7-6

REH: Two-Gun Raconteur No. 2

Volume 1

Summer 1976

For The Followers Of Robert E. Howard

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Art

Cover: Bran Mak Morn In Battle by Gene Day
Inside Front and Back Covers: Glory McGraw and Atla by David Parsons
Page 8 by John Jamilkowski
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Damon

The Junta



Steve

HONORARY MEMBERS OF THE JUNTO:

W. C. Fields, James Dean, Janis Joplin and Bruce Lee.

A TIP OF THE STENSON TO:

Glenn Lord for giving permission to reprint the REH letter and for his help and support. And to Ken Donnell for printing this issue.

JAMES BOZARTH returned as promised with three more examples of his work.

GENE DAY is a well known name and I'm happy to have him aboard. Besides doing work for ORB, FANTASY CROSSROADS, and HALL PUBLICATIONS, Gene will soon be going to work for DC. Not bad for someone who has never had an art lesson!

EL DIABLO DE CROM, the world famous and largely unknown Howard scholar/philosopher, graces our pages with one of his morality plays. De Crom lives in a Florida swamp, his only contact with the outside world being David Parsons.

ARNIE FENNER, aka Deadeye, proves he's equally good with pencil and pen as he is with his trusty .357 Magnum by honoring the back cover with a drawing of everybody's favorite Puritan.

JOHN JAMILKOWSKI submitted several pieces of art. One of those appears in this issue and I hope you like his work as well as I do.

ELAINE KUHN managed to come through, albeit a bit late, with the second installment of her fine article. Whether you believe in Astrology or not, her pieces make interesting reading.

DAVID PARSONS, besides being extremely good looking and highly talented, is a REH fan from the word go. David's turned out two beautiful drawings done in different techniques to suit the moods of the two very different Howard women.

KEN RANEY is 22, married and expecting a visit from the stork in September. He's been drawing for nine years and has been involved with fandom for two years. Ken's major art influences are Frazetta, Smith, Adams, J. Buscema, Krenkle and Raymond. As POOL OF THE BLACK ONE shows, Ken is well on his way to becoming a pro.

STEVE SMOLINS is an optometrist and when he's not looking into other people's eyes, he's busy adding to his already huge REH collection.

JOHN STASH, a crusty old character, has 'sold' a box of his private files to the Black Coast Press for two boxes of cheap cigars and a stack of girlie magazines.

WAYNE WARFIELD, the dean of REH fandom, was kind enough to take time out from his important work with Hall Publications to write a fascinating article on the Celts.

Ken & Bandit

David

DEDICATION:

This issue of REH: Two-Gun Raconteur is dedicated to

SHAWN KING

one of the very few people who gave a damn.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Diana and Delores for services rendered.



The Dark Lines

Editorial Noise by Damon C. Sasser

Well, here we are at the editorial and I'm happy to be back. REH:TGR #1 was a smashing success (at least I think so) and this issue should have a even bigger impact. Even I was surprised at how well it was received, and, of course, relieved to discover REH fans would support this type of REHazine. For what it is worth, I want to thank those of you who were willing to take a chance with \$2.50 of your hard earned money on the first issue of REH:TGR.

Despite it's meager appearance, REH:TGR #1 managed to stir up a bit of controversy. Byron Roark's AN EXPERIMENT IN EXPLOITATION was the type article you loved or hated and response was mixed. Elaine Kuhns' AN ASTROLOGICAL LOOK AT REH caused a lot of negative comments to roll in, which probably stems from the fact that many don't believe in the art of Astrology. However, in the second part of this article, Elaine answers her critics and gives some insights as to how she reached her conclusions. Also, if you have any questions or comments regarding the astrological look send them to me and I will forward them on to her. I, personally, enjoy Elaine's contributions and look forward to part three which will take a look at how the planets had an effect REH's writing ability.

I wonder how many of you are suffering from 'Howard Overkill'. I've got a mild case of it. There seems to be an endless parade of hardbacks, paperbacks, fanzines (this one included!), booklets, records, prints, posters, portfolios, and Lord knows what else waiting in the wings. One has to be a virtual millionaire to keep up. The best thing for one to do if it is impossible, financially, to buy them all is to get the most important items. I can't tell you what they are; you'll have to decide that for yourselves. But, there are a number of dealers who offer discounts or special rates. The whole subject of collecting Howardia is discussed in a very fine article in this issue. Don't get the idea that I'm complaining about there being too much REH stuff coming out, but it is coming a bit too fast for one to enjoy and absorb it all.

As you have no doubt noted, this issue looks a lot better than last issue. My new printer, The Fanzine Workshop, certainly did a nice job and they will be doing all future issues. Also, the art is greatly improved and I think it is very good -- some of the best I've seen in a REHazine. Next issue will feature more art and pages. The contents are a little off-beat, including several fictional pieces which help soften the serious articles. Overall, I feel there is something for everybody.

I'll ask now for LoC's. I do answer all letters and print as many as possible. Also, I listen to what, you the reader want. So, if you have any suggestions or ideas, please let me hear them. I'm also interested in contributions, but please be sure you enclose a self addressed stamped envelope.

But I've wasted enough space. Turn the page and you'll find everything from a history of the Celts to the mis-adventures of a slightly nutty private eye. As for me, I'm already hard at work on REH:TGR #3 which looks to be the best issue yet. In the meantime, enjoy this issue and take care 'till next time out.

Wayne Warfield P.O. Box 326 Aberdeen, Md. 21001



My thanks for REH:TGR #1, which was eagerly awaited. With an issue finally out, you officially become a member of fandom's publishing circle. I hope you enjoy your position, and continue publishing for many years.

It is hard for me to really get "into" TGR (even my own article) due to the new fan slant. This is not a criticism, merely a statement of fact. As an old fan of not only REH, but the whole genre of fantastic literature; your debut issue held little that was new to me. I am sure, however, that newer fans will find it of much interest, and there must surely be a need for such things.

Everything was well written except for an error here or there. . .which is expected. Fans will remember "CROSS PLAINS". . .which had a record almost for typos. These things will iron out in time.

Your scope was well handled, whether intentional or not. Ish #1 covered a broad area of things Howardian. Most interesting to me, personally, being Glenn's news and Byron's article. The latter was a well written review, and some of the best writing I've seen from Byron. I've become numb, however, to exploitation complaints and/or comments. It's up to an individual as to what is worth what.

I do not like Bozarth's art at all, but this is but a personal opinion. From your correspondence, I know you are expanding to other artists. . which I consider good for the zine.

Fans will, undoubtedly, gripe about the price. I don't think most realize the cost of producing any zine. If they get too hot on you, you might consider laying some figures on them!

I thank you for the plug for my efforts. We have many projects lined up for the months ahead.

Why did you exclude Jon Bacon from your plugs? Any reason for that, or just an oversight? Jon's efforts deserved a mention, I thought.

In conclusion, I know you are proud of your "baby". I consider anyone who can get such a project off the ground worthy of a pat on the back. I'm sure TGR will continue to grow, and improve.

((Thanks much for your kind comments and contributions to TGR. Yes, I did forget to mention Jon (and Dennis too), but starting with this issue I've got a plugs page to avoid such embarrassing incidents in the future.))

Paul C. Allen 1015 West 36th St. Loveland, Colorado 80537

Received my copies of REH:TGR #1 the other day along with your note requesting a LoC, so here goes...

Since I've been a Howard fan for too many years, much of the issue was lost on me. I would imagine newer fans found quite a bit of interest in the issue. As first issues go, it is a good one. Bozarth's artwork is amateurish, but he will probably improve with experience--I can't agree that he's great but I'm also glad you didn't bill him as being the greatest thing since Frank Frazetta. Elaine's article was a total loss--I've always felt that astrology is a crock of shit.

I enjoyed your comments on Red Sonja; would be nice to see Marvel put some effort into the comic. Since it was created merely as a money-making spinoff, I suppose we can't expect too much of it, though.

The article I really want to comment on is Roark's. Why does he have such a hard-on for Don Grant? I've known Don for about ten years now; I happen to think highly of him and so do a lot of people. Has anyone physically coerced Roark to purchase the Grant Conan volumes? I doubt it. Does Don have a monopoly on the Conan series? Abso-

lutely not--they're all readily available in British paperbacks for \$1.50 each or so and I know plenty of dealers that stock them. Are the Grant volumes unpopular? Hardly--they continue to go o.p. in well under a year despite the relatively higher prices and increased print runs.

So what is Roark's bitch? Where was Roark when Don went out on a limb in the mid-60's and began publishing volumes of Howard fiction completely unavailable elsewhere (except for one very rare o.p. book and a few high priced o.p. magazines)? Don is still publishing books with new or never-before-reprinted material at \$7 a copy. The deluxe Conan volumes are deluxe volumes--primarily, the typesetting, paper and binding. They cost a bundle to produce and therefore sell at higher prices. They're designed for collectors. Particularly those who appreciate finely produced books. Anyone merely wanting to read the Conan stories would be an idiot to buy them, obviously. Don has made no attempt whatsoever to deceive anyone into believing otherwise and, conversely, markets them on the basis of their production quality and not literary content. When Don published People of the Black Circle he went out on a limb. He invested one hell of a lot of money in it--because he appreciates the art of book publishing. When it sold out in significantly less than a year's time, it was only natural for Don to feel encouraged in continuing the series. Obviously, the demand was (and is) there.

Does Roark think Grant is making a bundle from these volumes? I doubt it. I've never seen Don interested in "making a bundle". When Don was dealing in used material years ago, he consistently priced material well below the market average--I know because I got a hell of a lot of material from him. If Don wanted to "make a bundle" he could do so very easily--but I've never seen Don interested in doing that; he's too nice a guy. By the way, People of the Black Circle was originally priced at \$15 a copy, not \$12 as Roark states. Don lowered the price to \$12 for the next two volumes. Due to the unexpected popularity of the books, I suspect Don was able to realize some economies of scale and lowered his prices--that's the kind of guy he is. Since printing and publishing costs have generally risen faster than the rate of inflation in the last couple of years, Don's costs probably increased to the extent that he was forced to go back to \$15 by the time Red Nails came out.

Roark should also remember that Don doesn't sell his entire print run to the public at \$15 a crack. Due to his increased publishing schedule and the larger print runs of each volume (due to demand by the consumer I should note), Don now uses a distributor (Dick Witter at F&SF Book Co. -- another fine gentleman whom I respect highly). His distributor wholesales to dealers at 60% of list price--\$9. I don't know what Don sells to his distributor at, but it certainly can't be more than 50% of list price--\$7.50. I'd like to see Roark produce and market a volume like Red Nails at \$7.50 a copy and feed his family from the profits!!

Since Roark is involved in publishing a magazine (and a very fine one) that sells for \$3.50 a copy, he ought to be slightly familiar with the publishing business. On economic principle alone, he ought to know better than to criticize Don Grant. Unfortunately, Roark has obviously never had the good fortune to know Don Grant personally; and Roark is the real loser there.

((You raise some interesting points, Paul, but I believe you are mistaken on two items. First, if you check Byron's article again you'll find he correctly states the price of Black Circle. Secondly, the probable reason for the \$12 price tag on the second and third Conan books is the fact that they are considerably smaller than the first and fourth volumes.))

Kevin Cook 203 Babylon Tpke. Merrick, New York 11566

I just finished reading the first issue of REH:TGR earlier this evening. Your goal of presenting information for the newer Howard fans is a worthy idea, especially

if the articles are presented in a manner that appeals to veteran fans as well; this was certainly the case in the first issue. If you can continue printing the finely written articles and reviews, then your zine fills an important niche in Howard fandom.

The exhaustive material about Solomon Kane was a fine study of Howard's brooding Puritan hero. A similar study of Francis X. Gordon once Son of the White Wolf is published would be of interest. I didn't really care for Bozarth's The Dark Man: A Portfolio except for the third plate -- his Solomon Kane cover was a much better illustration. My dislike for the portfolio might stem from the fact that I didn't picture Turlough O'Brien as anything like Jim drew him.

The astrological look at REH could turn out to be quite interesting; I look forward to the second part of the article. Wayne Warfield's general overview of Howard as a man and a writer is an excellent introduction to Howard for newer fans and presented the material in an interesting, readable manner for the old vanguard. I, for one, can't afford to pay \$12 to \$15 for the deluxe Conan books so I can understand Byron's opinions. I'm sure that there are people, though, who appreciate Don Grant's quality book-productions and would rather buy deluxe specials than regular hardcover books.

I've always liked "The Horror From the Mound" and Bill Wallace's article about it was a finely written study of a rather neglected story. I am totally disgusted with Marvel's Red Sonja although there is some potential for the character in the Hyborian Age. As you suggested, though, I'd have preferred that Roy Thomas had left her in the sixteenth century where she belonged.

Your news section seems quite up-to-date on current REH items and I hope that you continue it in future issues. I'm also happy to hear that you will have a letter column starting with the second issue. Your offer to answer any questions from fans will undoubtedly help newer fans gain valuable information about REH and his stories. This first issue showed a definite promise of more excellent material to come.

George Hamilton 17111 E. Imperial Hwy. Yorba Linda, Calif. 92686

Received REH:TGR #1 the other day. I certainly welcome any new Howard zine! Your aim at the Howard newcomers is certainly a healthy approach. I'll give you some comments below which are meant to be constructive and are meant to help you.

First of all the cover of a zine should always have a very good illustration to attract attention. In your case, you certainly used the best illo in your mag for the cover, however I feel using better artists will improve the quality of the mag quite a lot.

Secondly, the ink of the ribbon of your typewriter is too dark! I couldn't read pages 25 thru 28 and 35,36,37 unless I strained my eyes like hell! Needless to say, there were some additional pages that weren't easy to read.

Off hand, I'd say the aforementioned items were the negative side of your zine.

As for the plus items, the news section is always a welcome section in any REH mag. I enjoyed most all the other articles though I must point out as far as Roark's article was concerned, he failed to mention that Grant's deluxe editions are aimed at the hardcore collector and not the regular buyer as he is trying to make us believe.

I'll be looking forward to your second issue and according to your letter, it should be quite an improvement over the first issue. Wishing you success with your new publication.

QUICK COMMENTS: Marty Ketchum, Galena, Kansas: I found your first issue to be one of mixed blessings. One of the things I disliked was the blurred printing on certain pages. To be sure, you will overcome these technical difficulties with experience (or else I'll have to suffer bumping into walls the rest of my life). . . Mr. Daniel Gobbett, Riverdale, Maryland: I especially liked your emphasis on Solomon Kane in your issue, so much has been written about Conan lately. Both your article and "The Annotated SK" were very good.

Letter

ROBERT E. HOWARD to
CLARK ASHTON SMITH
postmarked March 15, 1933

Dear Mr. Smith:

I hardly know how to thank you for the copy of THE DOUBLE SHADOW. I have read the stories with the most intense interest and appreciation, and hardly know which I like the best. All are magnificent, splendid examples of that poetic prose which is so characteristic of your work. I envy you your rich and vivid style.

It was a pity Strange Tales went out of circulation, and I am sorry that the magazine's demise left so many of your stories unpublished. They had only one of my yarns when they quit. However, I sold them only three stories altogether.

I am very glad that you have found the Conan series of interest, and appreciate very much the kind things you said about the yarns. I shall look forward with eager anticipation for "The Dark Eidolon" and the other stories you mentioned to be published in Weird Tales. Incidentally, your story in the current Weird Tales is splendid.

I am enclosing a check for EBONY AND CRYSTAL and would feel most honored if you would write your autograph on the fly page.

Thanking you again for the magnificent DOUBLE SHADOW, I am,

Most cordially yours,

REH

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Jamil Kowski

A FOOL AND HIS MONEY ARE SOONER STRANGERS

A morality play in one Act.

by

El Diablo de Crom

Cast of Characters:

(in order of appearance)

Phul a boy looking for something to
occupy his time

Phad a dark stranger

Phan another boy seeking a manner
in which to occupy his time

Scene: a newsstand, somewhere in America
in the bicentennial year

Copyright by
David Parsons 1976

Curtain rises on the scene of a newsstand somewhere in America. Various book shelves stuffed with paperbacks, magazines, newspapers and comic books. The boy, Phul, is standing center stage, thumbing through a comic book, when enters stage left, Phad, the dark stranger. . .

Phad: (in a low voice) Pssst! hey kid. . .you there, reading the Conan comic.

Phul: (looking up from his comic) Huh? . .

Phad: Hey, you wanna read a real REH book, he wrote all those Conan yarns ya know. . .

Phul: Yeah really? Let's see. . .

Phad: Sure kid, I got one here you won't believe. This is the best one Ol' Two-Gun ever wrote. . . Look at these. . . (opens his overcoat, revealing hundreds of books, pamphlets, magazines, booklets, records, patches, posters and other paraphernalia) Here, this one I'll letcha have for FIFTEEN DOLLARS. .

Phul: Wow, fifteen dollars, that must be pretty far out.

Phad: You better believe it, that's cheap in this day and age, plus look at all them pitchers, some on every page. . . Here, look at this one, been outta print for a year, a steal at Thirty Five Dollars. I got booklets too! Why here's an REH yarn you can't live without. . . this one's never been printed anywhere before, only made 200 copies. . signed by the artist. . .

Phul: Far Out!!

(Enter Phan, a boy, stage right, looks intently but quickly thru book racks, notices others and moves up behind Phul and looks over Phul's shoulder at book in question.)

Phan: Yuugh!! That's awful artwork, my little brother could do better than--

Phad: Whaddya mean, these are the greatest fan artists of all time, it's a new renaissance kid, these things are gonna be worth millions, ya oughta buy three copies of each. . .

Phan: But, I don't like westerns.

Phad: (hostility wells up, but controls himself) Okay, but you'll like this one, it's about a drunken Irishman in Turkey, why this is the best. . .

Phan: I don't know, I didn't know the Irish were in Turkey in eight-hundred B.C.

Phul: There's a lot you don't know.

Phad: Obviously, now take this one, it's about a lunatic sailor in Singapore. .

Phan: I thought Robert E. Howard never left the Southwest, what would he have known about. . .

Phad: Is that important, so it's not accurate, you want something fun to read or history and geography lessons?

Phul: Hey, I get enough of that in school.

Phan: Well, I like those Conan and maybe the Kull stories, but I guess I'll just have to hunt them down in the used book stores or wait until they come out in paperback again.

Phad: You'll wait forever if I have anything to-- I mean, right so in the meantime, why not check out these fanzines, look at this one, even has nckked wimmen.

Phan: Yeah, but I've enjoyed de Camp's stories -- those guys say he's. . .

Phad: You better believe it kid, it's all his fault. But look, here's one with a portfolio of a famous pro artist. Just look at those illos, a master in the classic sense of the word. . .

Phan: I got those in the paperback versions a year ago, anyway aren't those illos from a story by a writer other than Robert E. How--

Phad: Art knows no bounds. Hey are you a fan or not, kid? Whatsa matter with you, you gotta get these fanzines so you can start writin' loc's and get involved. That's where the fun is at, involvement. Who knows, you might be able to start your own fanzine, and from there . . .

Phan: (aside to Phul) I heard you can get British editions of those Conan paperbacks really cheap if you just send off to Eng--

Phad: Whaddya un-patriotic kid, these here guys deserve your support. Look, I got one here you can't live without. . .

Phan: (aside to Phul) Hey, look brother, I gotta split, here's my phone number, maybe we can get together and rap sometime. Catch ya later. . . (leaves)

Phad: Don't pay no attention to that know it all, what I got here no REH fan worth his salt would be without. Just check out that binding, real sinister black, why they did everything but print it in blood.

Phul: Wow! How much is that one?

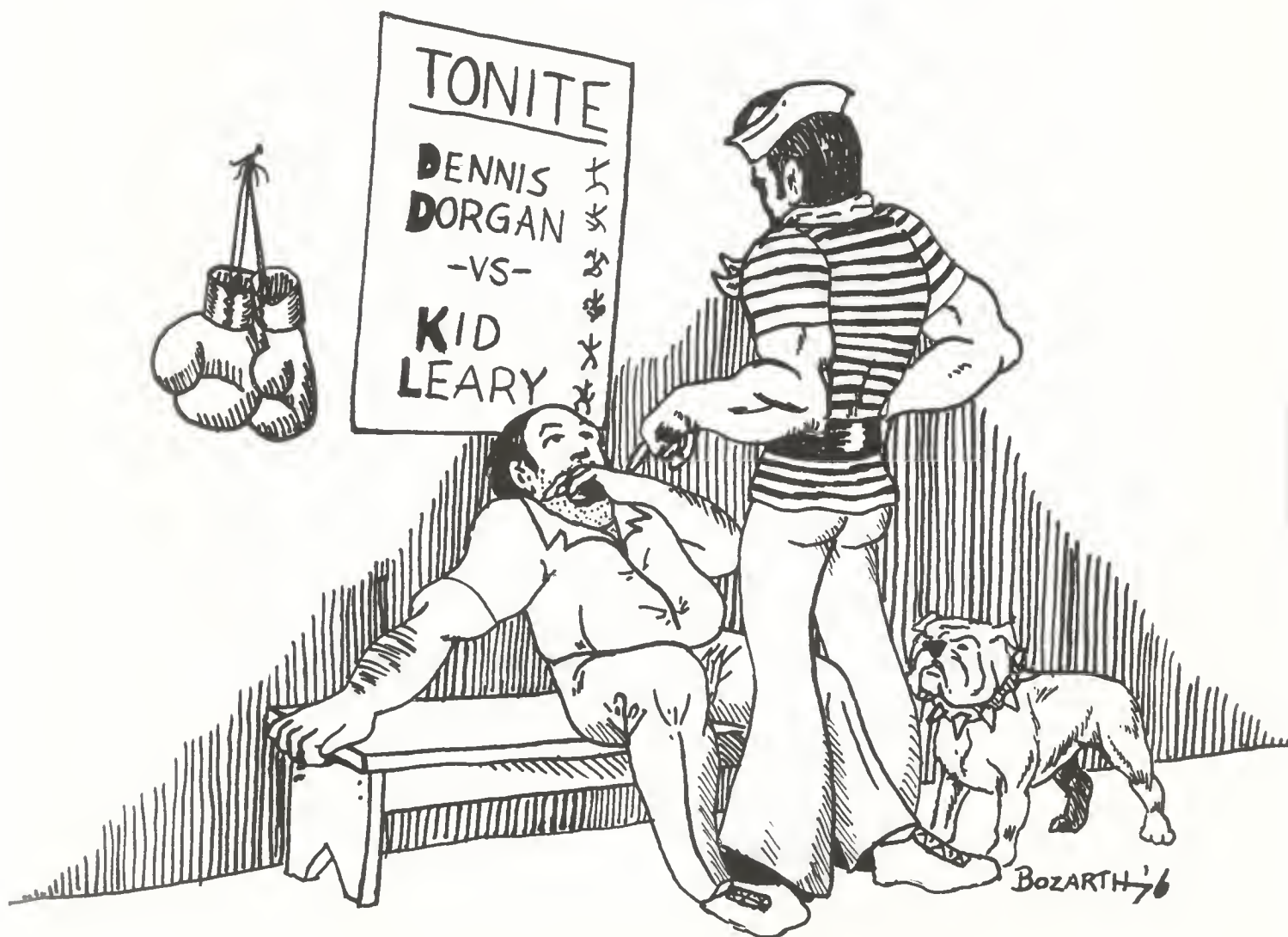
Phad: I'll give it to you for just what I paid for it, since you're a fellow REH fan, Seventy-five bucks.

Phul: Wow, thanks a lot man, here ya go. (hands Phad the money)

Phad: It's a pleasure, (counts the money as he leaves) Happy reading!

(Phul wanders off stage turning the pages of book, a satisfied grin on his face.)

Curtain



The Legendary Celts

REH and the Celtic Strain

by Wayne Warfield

Historically, Robert E. Howard's "facts" are not exactly historically accurate in regard to the Celts. They (REH's facts) did, however, make a fascinating backdrop for his varied tales. All of Howard's numerous Celt-related characters have, consequently, stirred up interest in true Celtic history. Just who were the Celts, and what do we really know about them?

We know from all the Conan stories that Cimmeria and the Cimmerians were a land and people north of the Hyborian nations (the race that overthrew the empire of Acheron, the fallen empire in "Conan the Conqueror"). The name Acheron is probably derived from Greek mythology. The Celts (or Gaels) having descended from Cimmeria. Historically, the Cimmerians (or Gimirai) were nomads who invaded Asia Minor (a peninsula in W. Asia between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean) in 7th century B.C. This does not explain where, or what, Howard based his "history" on. According to L. Sprague de Camp, Howard might've had in mind a once proposed, but now discredited, connection between the Kimmerioi (a people in Homer who lived in a foggy western land) and the Cymry or Welsh.

Conan is a common Celtic name (e.g. Conann, the Fomorian King of Irish mythology killed in battle with the Nemedians). Howard also connected Celtish traits in the majority of his other heroes, by actual ancestry or description. Noted examples include Cormac Mac Art and the Conn who appeared herein.

Howard often spoke of interest in reincarnation; and this was utilized in his fiction considerably. All of his finest characters seem remotely related with a strong Gaelic strain in their ancestry. The Cimmerians (Conan) were the descendants of the Atlanteans (Kull); and many years later we find descendants, however remote, in Bran Mak Morn and Cormac Mac Art. Covering a span of time from the first millenium B.C. (pre Roman invasion in Britain) and some 1300 or 1400 years to the end of Roman power in the British Isles. The Celtic strain, then, was the "link" briefly discussed in my article 'Robert E. Howard: Retrospectively' (REH:TGR #1) in regard to the Conan in every age theory. It was not a Conan, but a CELT!

Celt (or Kelt) is a name derived from the plural Keltai, used by Greek geographers; and used by Greek and Latin writers later (in Latin: Celtae). The name was used from at least the late 6th century B.C., to denote a great barbarian people widespread in Europe and the Iberian (Spanish-Portuguese) peninsula.

Exactly how the term Keltai came about is not known, but was used to describe all the interrelated barbarian tribes who dwelt in the regions cited. These tribes in the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. invaded Italy and the Balkans (Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Greece and European Turkey).

There is no contemporary historic fact to link the Celts with the British Isles at all. At least, no ancient source mentions the word or variations of it. Often, inexact modern usages seem to stem from philological deductions made by 16th and 17th century scholars, that the Gaelic and Welsh languages were derived from the speech of the ancient Celts. There are only fragmentary records in classical authors. Third century B.C. writers used the word Galatai as a name for the Celts, and from the second century B.C., Galli ("Gauls") was used in Latin.

Trying to trace an "origin" for the Celts is difficult. Archaeology shows that the late Hallstatt culture (early 5th century B.C. and 6th) covered all territory known from Greek reports to have been inhabited by the Celts.

Greek luxury objects (mainly bronze and pottery vessels for wine drinking) are found in barbarian chieftains' graves in southwest Germany, and parts of Burgundy and Switzerland. The earliest Greek imports date to the mid-6th century B.C. It appears that the wealthy who recieved these objects (who controlled trade routes along the rivers of the Rhone, Seine, Rhine and Danube) were the dominating, unifying element among vast

Celtic lands. The ancestors of these warrior chieftains can be traced back to the early 7th century B.C. in Bavaria and Bohemia, before moving westward.

In a more easterly region (as well as westward up the Danube, across the Rhine far into France both toward Britain and southwestward into Spain), there already existed the extensive culture province represented by the North Alpine-Urn Field culture. This Late Bronze Age culture had been mixing with older populations throughout this zone from about the 12th century B.C. It is likely that they spoke dialects that led to Celtic.

Thus, we can conceive a link with Celt and Italic, and other more easterly, Indo-European peoples.

Unfortunately, we cannot accurately trace the archaeology of the Celts until the centuries after the establishment of trade with the Greeks at Massilia. At the beginning of the 4th century B.C., Celts erupted into Italy, the Balkans decades later and archaeologically; this supports Greek and Latin historical sources. Most historians believe that Celtic bands penetrated into northern Italy from earlier times. The year 400 B.C. is the generally accepted approximate date for the great invasion of migrating tribes recorded by later historians.

The popular novel of Celtic warriors usually is written in or around Roman times. The Celtic territory south of the Alps (which came to be known as Gallia Cisalpina) and its warlike inhabitants remained an ever-constant menace to Rome; until they were defeated in 225 B.C. Of course, most are aware of earlier Celtic delegations received by Alexander the Great. These Celts lived near the Adriatic in 335 B.C.

In 279 B.C., Delphi (a city in Greece and site of a celebrated oracle of Apollo) was sacked by the Celts; but the invaders were defeated. In the next year, three Celtic tribes crossed the Bosphorus (the strait between the sea of Marmara and the Black Sea) into Asia Minor, and created widespread havoc. By 276 B.C., they had settled in parts of Phrygia (an ancient country in central Asia Minor), raiding and pillaging until defeated about 230 B.C. by Attalus I of Pergamum.

About the fall of the Celts, we know that the Cimbri, people originally from Jutland (the peninsula of N. Europe, which forms the mainland of Denmark) it is thought, were joined by the Teutoni (Germans) around 113 B.C., overcame all Gaulish and Roman resistance. On attempting to enter Italy, these marauders were finally defeated by Roman armies in 102 and 101 B.C.

Many Celtic tribes were forced into refuge west of the Rhine. The final rout of the Celts began around 58 B.C.; when Julius Caesar began the campaigns which led to the annexation of the whole of Gaul.

The Celtic settlement of Britain and Ireland is deduced largely from archaeological and philological considerations. Caesar's report of a migration of Belgic tribes to Britain is taken by some as evidence. This, however, is based on the Roman belief that the inhabitants of both islands were closely related to the Gauls. Archaeology and linguistic differences cast doubts.

The idea that the Celts were all of great height, muscular and such stems from the Greeks and Romans. Actually, their encounters were generally only with the warrior class. Skeletal remains point to differing stature, and form.

It is interesting to note that the magical-religious legendary Druids were ranked higher than warriors, yet recruited from the warrior class. The Celtic social system contained a king, warriors, freeman farmers and the Druids, also considered as warriors.

We find that fiction and history also disagree in regard to habits and customs. It seems chariots were used largely for display and retreat -- not fighting, among the Celts. The decapitation of foes was practiced for ritual purposes. What surprises most people is that naked combat was an ancient form of invoking magical protection. When clothed, the most widespread form of dress was a belted tunic, or shirt, with a cloak. Women wore a single long garment with a cloak. Bright colors were very popular, with material of wool and coarse linen.

Most fictional Celts seem moody, but history shows them noted for high spirits. They loved war and excitement, were hospitable, fond of feasting, drinking and quarreling -- but incapable of prolonged concerted action. They generally prized music

and many forms of oral literary composition.

This, then, is the historical version of the legendary Celts. From this background, we have recieved numerous great fictional tales, of which Robert E. Howard's are my personal favorites. In his own words. . .

"Cormac Mac Art has all the guile and reckless valor of his race. He is tall and rangy, a tiger. His weapon is the sword. The Vikings rely little on the art of fencing, their manner of fighting is to deliver mighty blows with the full sweep of their arms. Well, the Gael can deal a full arm blow with the best of them, but he favors the point. In a world where the old time skill of the Roman swordsman is almost forgotten, Cormac Mac Art is well-nigh invincible. He is cool and deadly as the wolf for which he is named, yet at times, in the fury of battle, a madness comes upon him that transcends the frenzy of the Berserk. At such times, he is more terrible than Wulfhere, and men who would face the Dane flee before the blood-lust of the Gael." (from 'Tigers of the Sea')

Howard's Celtic history is, perhaps, not entirely factual; but a fiction enhanced by history -- both of which are fascinating reading.

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The Pool Of The Black One

PLATE ONE: "He made a gesture toward the sea. . ."

PLATE TWO: "His attention was centered on the band of beings. . ."

PLATE THREE: ". . .Conan ducked beneath their swoop and drove his sword
through the giant's groin."

PLATE FOUR: "Instantly there was a rending crash and the jutting edge gave way. . ."

THE POOL OF THE BLACK ONE first saw print in the October, 1933 issue of Weird Tales and was the sixth tale to appear featuring the Cimmerian. The story itself is jam packed with swordplay, hideous sorcery, a decadent race of black giants and a grand finale of violence and horrible death when Conan's buccaneers clash with the Black Ones. Perhaps one of the more gorier Conan tales, POOL features a number of highly illustrative scenes. The following pages present four of the memorable moments in this mini-epic.

A Portfolio by Ken Raney











Scorpio Rising

An Astrological Look At REH: Part Two by Elaine

I understand there were a few letters of criticism of my article in the last issue and that the essence boiled down to the fact that they didn't 'believe' in Astrology.

I hope Damon will allow me the space to answer those critics.

It is not my intention to change anyone's mind about what they believe -- but I would like to make a few comments along those lines.

Believing in Astrology doesn't make it work any more than not believing in it keeps it from working. In fact -- belief has nothing to do with the validity of the subject at all. It is a term often used to express an emotional response to something we don't understand or have any direct knowledge about.

When people ask me if I 'believe' in Astrology -- I always reply -- "it doesn't matter what you believe, it's what works that counts."

The next question usually is "does it work?" And my answer is that it works as well as I, or anyone else, am capable of making it work.

I have always thought that opinions were supposed to be based on knowledge, research, experience and understanding of a subject.

A rather interesting fact about many of the well known astrologers today, is that they started out to 'prove' there was nothing to it. But they realized they had to have knowledge about it, in order to properly refute the validity of it. However, after having made a thorough study of the subject, they knew Astrology worked when a person had the individual ability to make proper judgements, and that it was the element of human judgement that was often a fault (the very famous Sidney Omar, who was a CBS broadcaster at the time, is a prime example of this). Even Doctors with all their training, knowledge, experience and correlated research don't always make perfect judgements. Whatever the field of endeavor -- I don't know of anyone who does.

I got into Astrology because I was curious and wanted to be able to make my own judgement about it. It's been a lotta years and I've never been sorry. Although there are times I look ahead and see things I'd rather not know about my own future and that of my family and friends, I feel that in the long run even though it may be a bit painful, that being forewarned can be a definite advantage to being forearmed. And it has worked out that way many times.

Nuff said! And I hope this is the last time that we'll have to deal with the subject in a general way.

Now, back to the horoscope of Robert E. Howard.

If the time of day (1:48 A.M.), I selected is right, REH had the sign of Scorpio rising.

Since the exact time of day REH was born was not available, through the process of elimination and rectification, I arrived at this time, and feel that there is much justification for feeling that it is correct.

Damon informed me that he had received a letter asking how this was done. Since this is a rather complicated process, I will try to put it in the simplest terms possible.

Since the rising sign determines our physical appearance -- I was able to see a photo of REH -- I was fairly sure he had Scorpio rising. The whole thing really isn't that far out if you know what to look for.

Scorpio and Taurus rising are the easiest to detect as both have a short neck (Taurus more so) and both have wide, heavy shoulders, and large bones. These are the similarities that you might notice first, but beyond that there are many differences that make it easy to separate them.

Scorpio has sharp, piercing, penetrating eyes, a prominent nose and low, heavy eyebrows. Their hands are large and powerful, and they may become stout or even fat as the years go by.

The glint of eye, and the set of the jaw indicate the great determination which is the most outstanding characteristic of Scorpio. They will stand up staunchly for their rights even if the odds are very much against them, and if you are a friend (or a defenseless stranger who is being taken advantage of) they will stand up for you too.

Those piercing eyes can look right through you and size you up instantly -- but don't try to figure out what they're thinking. They'll only tell you what they want you to know and if you think you are going to pry it out of them, you are badly mistaken.

They are usually outspoken, and on occasion can be rather blunt, sarcastic and make very cutting, stinging remarks.

Once you determine which sign you think it is, you take the sidereal time for the day they were born, and the longitude and latitude of the place they were born, and pinpoint the approximate two hour period that this particular sign was passing over the Eastern horizon. Then using that two hour time frame and the thirty degrees of that sign (in this case Scorpio) you pick a degree at random and set up a test horoscope and look it over to see what looks right about it and what doesn't, taking into account what you know about them and whether it fits. You go back and forth with the various degrees until the planets seem to fit best into the proper sections, and then you take the most likely degree and progress the chart forward for the various years in which unusually good or bad things happened to that person. In REH's case, I used the thirtieth year (the year he committed suicide) and found when I used 11 degrees, 43 minutes of Scorpio rising, there was a clear indication of what had taken place. Then you figure out exactly what time of day 11 degrees and 43 minutes of Scorpio was rising, and that's how I arrived at 1:48 A.M.

This sort of thing is very tricky and time consuming and sometimes you can literally spend hours and not arrive at anything you can feel confident about -- but with the picture and the other factors involved, I felt it was worth a try.

Before going on with the rest of the Scorpio traits, I would like to give you a direct quote from a book I have:

"Scorpio wants all or nothing! He has an emphatic and persuasive voice, and says, 'Out of my way, please! I'll do it if it kills me!'"

This is a perfect demonstration of the extremes to which some Scorpio's will go at times (depending on the other aspects involved of course and whether they are a help or a hindrance in the situation). On an emotional basis they can be gregarious and warm at times and rather cold and indifferent at others.

In fact, they can be very extreme in their approach to most anything or anybody. They will either like you a lot or not at all.

If they are religious -- they're probably the best Christian on the block -- whether they wind up in church on Sunday or not.

Many times they will do the opposite of what might be suggested as the best thing to do -- even when it is perfectly obvious that you are right.

However, regardless of their courage, surface cool, and undaunted approach, they are prone to worry about things that probably won't ever happen.

Carrying a grudge is another Scorpio trait and if they feel you deliberately wronged them, it will be exceedingly hard for them to forgive you, and they almost never forget. Even the higher types will probably at least think or maybe even talk of revenge. But if you are dealing with one of the lower types -- beware -- for they will stay awake nights until they have devised the best possible way to get even with you.

At times they can become very involved with themselves and their concerns almost to the exclusion of everybody and everything.

At other times they can be generous and will be cooperative if the project is carried out on their terms. But don't tell them how you would like it done and then argue with them to do it your way. In most cases -- Hell could freeze over twice before they would give in.

They will make their own choices and stand by them -- willing to take the consequences, whatever they may be.

Some of the key words for Scorpio are: power, creativity, sex, death, retribution, regeneration, obsession, and determination. It is through the creative power of sex that we come into this life and through the retribution of death that we are regenerated into the spiritual realm. The sheer power of Scorpio and the planet Pluto (its ruler) ranges all the way from the lowest depths of the Satanic and supernatural world to the highest spiritual realm of the Heavenly world. It is up to the individual as to how they will use this power.

Collecting Howardia

by Steve Smolins

Why do I collect Robert E. Howard material? Actually, there are only two good reasons why I first began collecting REH material. Of course the most obvious reason is that I enjoy his writing as much as, if not more than any other writer. The more practical reason being that there are a finite number of items to collect.

I began my collecting career in the field of comics, but soon discovered that this was a never ending task. Then I discovered Edgar Rice Burroughs and fell madly in love with his works. At my first Nostalgia convention in 1973, I bought my first ERB first edition, and soon discovered the Pandora's box: ERB collecting was as never ending as allergy shots. I had previously read some Conan stories and thoroughly enjoyed them every bit as much as the ERB stories, and so, with a little investigation, I discovered the World of Robert E. Howard.

Of course, the most accessible REH items are the paperbacks. In fact, the new Zebra books are really stimulating REH fandom. However, Conan is no longer in print in a paperback format in the United States. Consequently, the demand for the old Lancer series is rising. Although these books are in demand, they are not scarce. Don't be fooled into paying outrageous prices. I bought many of my copies on the stands, but have since collected a second and third set from used bookstores for only half the cover price. However, for a hard to find title in mint condition, you may not mind paying a little extra.

Once having collected all the paperbacks, I was ready for the big step. . .hardbacks. I was very apprehensive since most of the REH collectors I had talked to had told me certain volumes were impossible to obtain. Some editions I could hunt a lifetime for a single copy and not find one. Aside from the impossibility of finding these volumes, I was told the cost would be prohibitive. When you hear of the scarcity, of limited printings, of high costs, of the savage hordes of fans searching, remember my words. It's just not that hard and it can be done, and I did it. I'm not saying it isn't frustrating and demanding because it is, but it is also fun and rewarding. Now listen and listen close 'cause here is how I did it.

I bought my first hardback at a June 1975 convention in Houston, Texas. It was *WORMS OF THE EARTH* and it cost me \$10, since it was recently out of print. This was quite a bit of money to me, but for my first REH hardback, it seemed like a small price to pay. No other hardbacks showed up at the convention by REH.

The very first thing I did was to write to Donald Grant (who published the book) and had my name put on his mailing list so that I could keep up with his new publications and get them hot off the presses. Next I took a copy of *ERB-dom*, which I had also purchased at the convention, and turned to the section called the Fantasy Collector. I found many ads by people who wanted, of all things, to sell their books. I wrote to every single person. Letter after letter flowed from my apartment and thereby I learned lesson number one: Always enclose a self addressed stamped envelope, both for courtesy and also if you expect to receive an answer. For the thirteen cents it costs, it will be well worth it. Most of those to whom I wrote were not dealers, but collectors, with extra copies, and so the prices were very reasonable.

From dealers I received book lists (usually of the same material). In the beginning this was good, but as the months rolled by, it became boring and repetitive. I kept my name on the better lists since some offered discounts and some had out of print material popping up for sale, periodically.

Now comes lesson number two. Different areas of the country have different concepts of the value of the same book. Hence, the advantage of the U. S. Postal Service (one of the very few advantages). For example, the Gnome Press Conan series was the first series I began to track down. For the same volume I found prices varied: Colorado \$80, Shreveport, Louisiana \$60, Austin, Texas \$25, Florida \$15, and in New Jersey I discovered

a man with a full set for \$12.50 each (in mint condition). Now I'm the first to admit it was a lucky find, but in July 1975 REH material was already beginning to skyrocket. You have to make your own breaks. Writing about fifty letters with about 70% response, I found these books in one month from my first hardback purchase. How did I pay for this? I reevaluated my priorities and decided to sell something I wanted less than I wanted REH. I therefore sold some of my comic books and used that money to purchase the REH books, and, in essence, converted one for the other. I did not feel like I really spent anything, although some may argue with that statement.

I continued my correspondence with those I had already written and began relations with other people. This brings up my lesson number three. I wrote everywhere. He who hesitates. . . has no REH material. I bought a first edition VULTURES in California, another WORMS OF THE EARTH in Brooklyn and a copy of ECHOES OF AN IRON HARP for \$12 (as opposed to the current market price at that time of \$25). In August of 1975 in Louisiana I bought my first copy of SINGERS IN THE SHADOWS for \$9, RED BLADES OF BLACK CATHAY for \$11, GENT FROM BEAR CREEK (first American edition) for \$13, and another Gnome Press Conan for \$25. As you can probably tell, I bought duplicates of most books when the prices were very reasonable, and when they were expensive, I did not buy anything. Some prices I did find to be prohibitive. The main reason for buying extra copies is that one never knows when a fan will pop up with a needed book and won't sell, but will trade. Also, these books are a tremendous investment. If that sounds in the least bit hypocritical, please excuse me but it does help to support this habit of collecting. Most of the time I was fairly poor, but I did manage \$15 here and \$10 there and traded or sold other material to get what I wanted. I was merely converting my collection into something I preferred more.

August was a good month for me. I discovered Robert E. Howard: Lone Star Fictioneer and the world of fanzines opened up for me. More letters. I discovered Cross Plains and The Howard Collector; both out of print fan magazines. I also discovered many other pamphlet publications of prose, poetry, unpublished stories, old stories, etc. Still more letters. I wrote to the man responsible for Cross Plains, George Hamilton. He had no old fanzines for sale, but did have copies of DARK MAN and RED SHADOWS at very reasonable prices. August 1975 had just ended.

September 1975 begins and that great state of New Jersey comes through again. I discovered a man who had (in mint condition) copies of SKULL FACE AND OTHERS (first edition), DARK MAN, SOWERS OF THE THUNDER (autographed by Krenkel), RED BLADES OF BLACK CATHAY, MARCHERS OF VALHALLA, WORMS OF THE EARTH, TIGERS OF THE SEA, ALMURIC, VULTURES, INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES OF DENNIS DORGAN, and fourteen Lancer paperbacks. The Price -- a mere \$305, which was \$305 more than I had. What did I do? I sold almost half of my fairly extensive comic book collection, keeping only the cream of the crop, and, of course, the Conan series and other REH comics. This also gave me a little extra cash for when that next bargain was likely to pop up.

About this time I sent off to Amra and received several copies of this 'zine. I was not overly impressed, but it was REH and I was rapidly becoming a completionist. Also in September, I decided to experiment a little and so I wrote to Tevis Clyde Smith. It may surprise some people to learn that many of these writers are human (some just fairly close) and like to receive mail. Although Mr. Smith had no REH material for sale, he did have some of his own books for sale and you can bet I bought them.

October 1975 rolled in and so did the Conan Grimoire for \$12 from California. About this time I saw the Ace D-36 (CONAN THE CONQUEROR) paperback at a convention for \$15, but I was unwilling to pay that much for a paperback. Again, more letters. I found a man who was selling them for \$7 a piece and I bought three unread copies.

Also in October, I discovered a rash of booklets and pamphlets being printed in very small editions. Impossible to obtain? -- Never. I simply wrote and put my name on the list. Past copies are hard to find, but not impossible. I am currently working on my second set and they are all out of print now (new titles are still coming out, though).

Now I was really beginning to understand there were many more items to collect than I could have ever imagined. New books, pamphlets, booklets, fanzines, paperbacks, newspapers and what not are constantly being published. However, by limiting myself only to the essentials, all is possible.

About this time I discovered more fanzines such as Fantasy Crossroads. At the same time I located a horde of books in Canada (seven books in October and eight more in November); again all at less than current market values by a considerable amount.

By December I had completed the Mirage Press trio of books and now had every American hardback publication including the reprints with the exception of the mythical and legendary ALWAYS COMES EVENING.

About this time I began subscribing to Xenophile. That's right, I've all of this without Xenophile. It is, however, a great publication even if its publication dates are a little erratic. They allow no comics to be advertised and have many books advertised that appeal to me. In my very first issue I saw a copy of ALWAYS COMES EVENING for sale. A quick, long distance phone call to California (about \$1) and it is mine. Now, I will be the first to admit the cost of this book to be slightly exorbitant, but at this point I was ready to liquidate my remaining comics, with the exception of the REH comics, and received my book on January 22, 1976.

Seven months have come and gone, and with a minimum outflow and maximum input I have obtained them all. Of course there are still other areas of Howardia to be explored. Just to name a few there are pulps, other fanzines, and foreign books. It may interest someone, only slightly, to know as I finish writing this article I have recently obtained an original Robert E. Howard letter to Clark Ashton Smith (in fact, it is the same letter which is being printed in this issue of TGR). I do not, of course, own the copyrights (Glenn Lord--or the Howard estate does), but I do own the letter itself and that is what counts to me.

All of this collecting and what do I have besides books, a fun hobby (possibly profitable), the thrill of the hunt, the ecstasy of having new friends all over the Northern Hemisphere, and satisfaction? I have a good collection to always be enjoyed and I've proven something could be done both for love of an author's works as well as for the sheer joy of just doing it. Also in those seven months, I had a baby son (with some slight help from my wife who has been very understanding through this whole mania), graduated from graduate school, took and passed the state boards two days after receiving my copy of ALWAYS COMES EVENING (I was riding high for those boards after getting this book). I'm now practicing in Houston, raising a family, and hunting REH material; although not always in that order. So life does continue while collecting goes on.

Just to clarify for a minute. I am no dealer and had no big dealer search for books other than normal looking for out of print books. This is my first article (as you can probably tell), and I have never publicized myself to aid my search. I have never even been involved with a fan magazine before this article. I am only now coming out of my shell and getting involved in REH fandom, and hope to become more involved in the future. My whole point in this article was, of course, to show the relative newcomer to REH fandom that anything is possible with patience, persistence, desire and, of course, some amount of money. I only hope many other fans have the luck I have had, and although I don't sell books, I do like to correspond with REH fans. Please write or comment on this article. Who knows, maybe we can even trade.



The Case of the Black Book

From The Files Of John Stash As Transcribed by Damon C. Sasser

1. Areolae In The Morning

My name is John Stash, and, among other things, I'm a private eye. My office -- if you can call it that -- is located in a rather seamy hotel in downtown Houston. It is 1938, for those of you who care about things like that, and the hot August sun is making my office a bit gamier than usual.

It was early when someone knocked on my door.

"Enter at your own risk!" I shouted, cocking and leveling my .357 Colt Python. With half the loan sharks in southeast Texas gunning for me, I can't be too careful.

The door opened slowly and a vision of loveliness entered to light up the cluttered mess. She was tall, well endowed in the chest area, full hips, dreamy gams and a face like an angel. Dressed in a tight blue dress, blonde hair spilling over her shoulders, she was a sight for my sore, bloodshot eyes.

"Are you John Stash, the private eye?" she asked, licking her sensual lips.

"I am and I'd certainly like to eye your privates," I replied in a rather bad imitation of Groucho Marx.

She looked as if she would run screaming from the office; having gotten a good look at me. I'm a tall, lanky person, rather handsome under a three day's growth of beard (ran out of razor blades, hadn't bothered to pick up any more), sandy hair (with real sand), and wearing wire rimmed glasses and my usual salacious leer. No wonder she thought I was about to jump her bones.

"Ha ha," says I trying to put the lady at ease, "only a bit of wit, my dear. Come sit down." While speaking I stood up, attempting to smooth out some of the wrinkles in my suit -- which looked like a prune -- and indicated a rickety chair. "What can I do for you?"

"I want you to find something," she said, "a book which was stolen from my uncle's private library in Arkham, Massachusetts. I have reason to believe it is here in Houston and would be willing to pay you \$500 to recover it."

At the mention of money I took my eyes off of her bazooms long enough to ask: "What book is worth that kind of money?"

"It is a volume of black sorcery called UNAUSSPRECHLICHEN KULTEN written by an insane German named Von Junzt. Have you ever heard of it?"

"Was this Unass-- or whatever, serialized in the pulps?"

"No, but--"

"Then I never heard of it," I said, my eyes straying to her headlights once more.

"Well, here is \$250; you will get the other half when and if you recover the book," she said handing me an envelope.

"Miss--"

"Oh, my name is Melons, Audrey Melons."

I had to cough to keep from doubling up --- Melons indeed!

"Er-- Miss Melons, is there any chance of me getting hurt in the pursuit of this book," I asked.

"Now who would want to kill over one silly old book?" she answered my question with a question and a wink of her baby blues.

"Okay, I'll go after it." I would have taken the case for five bucks since I was busted. "Any clues?"

"Only two men here in town would be interested in it; both are fabulously wealthy and have huge book collections. I think one or the other paid someone to steal it for them -- the book is very rare. Their names are Buford Ashton and Clark Smith."

"Got 'em," I said attempting to write the names on my shirt sleeve with a leaky fountain pen.

"Fine, you have the money," she said, "and I'll expect a report from you tonight

at eight o'clock. I'm staying at the Shamrock Hilton, room 417. Good day Mr. Stash."

And with that, she arose, shook my hand lightly -- allowing me one last look at her jugs -- and then she swept from the room leaving a hint of her perfume behind.

I did a little dance around the room and headed for the barber shop downstairs.

2. "Please Sir, Not The Ming Vase"

While I was getting a much needed haircut and shave, I sent my coat and pants out to be pressed. Ah, it felt good to have money again! I dined like a king in the dingy, greasy hotel restaurant. When I had finished, I lit up a 25¢ cigar and crossed the street to Sampson's Funeral Parlor.

Sam "Ice" Sampson, the owner, was a big cadaver of a man with an awful sense of humor -- he liked to mold the face of the departed into an odd expression of joy -- a great shock to the bereaved to see their loved one grinning up at them! I found him in the embalming room, working over a young girl. I got the eerie feeling that Sam did more to the dead than mess up their faces. I slipped a ten spot into his cold hand and he slipped the keys to his best hearse into mine. I had lost my car in The Case Of The Locse Lipped Lady the year before and hadn't bothered to buy another one. A quick check of the phone book revealed the addresses of Messrs. Ashton and Smith. So I left "Ice" to his work and headed for the Ashton Estate.

It was a huge affair on the near north side with a high wall around it. Luckily, the gate was open, so I drove in and up to the front door. I stepped up to the front door, awed by the size of the place, and rang the door bell. A stuffy English butler responded.

"I came about the mice," I said, presenting him with a card that read 'Acme Exterminators'.

"Is Mr. Ashton expecting you?" he asked with a sniff.

"I certainly hope so," I answered, slipping into Groucho again.

"Walk this way," he replied, prancing down the hall.

I resisted a smart reply to that classic straight line and followed.

"Wait here," the butler said, opening a large oaken door, "Mr. Ashton will be right with you." It was the library.

My luck had to be changing! Quickly, I began looking through the volumes, but didn't spot the German book right off. Suddenly the door opened again and Ashton stepped into the room. He was an average sized man in his early sixties, dressed in a Western suit, and looking a little irritated.

"What's all this about mice?" he drawled.

"Well, I represent the Acme Exterminators and it has come to our attention that you have mice in your library," I said as I began looking through the books again.

"Nonsense, there is not a mouse on the whole estate, and besides, I've got my own damned exterminators," Ashton said, eyeing me with suspicion.

"Yes, I'm sure you do, but these are rare book mice; eat only printed paper and dust jackets," I said, the line sounding stupid even to me. I was about to speak again, and leaned on Ashton's desk, but a portion of it gave way and a book on a pedestal rose out of the floor before me. Von Junzt's UNAUSSPRECHLICHEN KULTEN!

"Ah ha," shouts I, "so we have it!" I flashed by badge and revoked license (well, he didn't know it was revoked) at him. "I represent the owner of this tome," I said, "and I intend to return it to that party." I was feeling pretty sure of myself as Ashton was a little old and I was packing my rod in a shoulder holster.

Ashton was hot and puffing with anger. "Hunk, come here," he shouted, stepping from the room. I was wondering what the hell a 'Hunk' was when, suddenly, I got my answer.

He was a huge man with ape-like arms and strangely beastial features. Hunk swept across the room incredibly fast; pinning me to the wall before I could get my gat out. He looked like a dirty fighter, so I wasn't surprised when he tried to ram his knee into my groin. I twisted aside and he missed my goodies, hitting my thigh instead.

I suppressed a groan of pain, realizing it would have hurt a hell of a lot worse if he'd been on target. Grunting, Hunk took a step backwards and I stomped down on his instep. He howled with pain, bending over to grip his foot. Free of his grip, I meshed my fingers together, making one big fist, and slammed it upward into his face. I felt the skin come off of my knuckles as my hands scraped over his protruding teeth, and Hunk sank to the floor with a gasp. I knew he wasn't out -- merely stunned -- so I leaped onto his back, picked up a vase off a nearby table and was just about to bean him with it when. . .

"Please sir, not the Ming vase" -- it was the butler -- "here, use this," he said, handing me a piece of kindling.

"Good enough," I muttered, bringing the wood down on the man's noodle. I arose, a bit shaky (I've got an aversion to people who try to crush my private parts), and turned toward the book only to discover it was gone! Ashton must have came in and removed it during my fight with Hunk.

"More men will be coming," the butler said, opening a window, "quickly sir, out this way."

"Okay, I'll go -- for now," I said, stepping out onto the patio, "but one question: why help me?"

"Oh, they can kill you for all I care," he replied, putting the vase back in place, "I just couldn't bear to see Mr. Ashton's valuables destroyed in the process!"

3. A Fine Mess

I escaped with ease and headed for the Shamrock Hilton -- the swankiest hotel in the Bayou City. The doorman gave me some trouble about the hearse, but after I greased his palm with a fiver, he let me park in the assistant manager's parking space. Money has a way of solving many problems and of causing quite a few also.

Even though I was a little early, I went up to Miss Melons' room. She opened the door dressed only in a flimsy robe. "You're early," she said, a hint of anger in her voice, "let me get some clothes on."

"No need for that," I said, "I'll just be a minute." Actually, I had planned on sticking around for a few hours as I was hoping for a little action. Despite a hot looking body, Miss Melons didn't seem too interested in me, though I do quite well with the dames.

"Well," she said, crossing her arms over her cantaloupes, "I'm waiting for your report."

"Oh that," I replied, going into the whole sordid mess.

When I had finished, she was a bit upset. "You cretin," she screamed, "what kind of detective are you? First you find the damned book and then you stroll off and leave it!"

"Hey, don't get mad at me!" I shouted, "I'm going back as soon as the heat is off." And added in a softer tone: "Did anyone ever tell you how beautiful you are when you're mad?" I know it was a hokey line, but it had been a rough day.

Apparently she could see the lust in my eyes because she turned and walked from the room without saying a word, leaving me standing there like an idiot.

Miss Melons returned a few minutes later, dressed in that tight blue dress again. "C'mon," she said, sweeping past me, "let's get the black book."

I followed happily behind her, my eyes glued to her swaying hips. She was quiet in the elevator and didn't even complain about the hearse -- most chicks are scared of it at first, but kinda like the idea of fooling around in the back.

It was dark when we finally reached the Ashton Estate, and after parking on a side street, we warily approached the wall. We didn't have any sort of plan, outside of getting into the house. I gave Miss Melons a boost over the wall and let my hands linger on her hips a bit longer than was necessary, but she didn't say anything. I

followed and we crept toward the house -- me in front, gun drawn. In the darkness, I tripped over something.

"What is it?" Miss Melons hissed.

"I think we may be in for some trouble."

"Why?"

"Because I just tripped over a dead man," I replied.

We moved up to the library window and found it broken out. Carefully, I stepped inside with Miss Melons hot on my heels. The library was in shambles and Ashton lay dying on the floor, two spots of crimson on his shirt front.

Bending down, I heard him whisper: "Clark Smith has Black Book. . . you must stop him. . . wants to summon--" and with that, he coughed up blood and died.

Miss Melons' screamed, bringing me to my feet, cursing my stupidity for not checking out the room. There were two men: one wrestling with the lady and the other was trying to kill me. His big .45 was blasting holes in everything but me while his friend took off across the lawn carrying a screaming, kicking Miss Melons.

The guy was a lousy shot and my Python barked once, the slug hitting him in the forehead; he was dead ten times before he hit the floor. The room was now silent, save for the sound of blood bubbling from the man's head.

"Well, this is another fine mess you've gotten us into," I said aloud, trying to imitate Oliver Hardy.

I stood there for awhile, a slightly rumpled knight errant off to rescue a stuck-up broad and some silly book that had caused deaths of at least three men. I turned to leave and on the way out busted that Ming vase, just for the hell of it.

4. Of Cloven Hooves And Quarters

The Smith house was a ghastly place, horribly old and in bad need of a paint job. I was sitting across the street, checking out my Colt and trying to build up some courage. Shooting a man who couldn't hit the side of a barn is a bit different than rushing into a houseful of armed men.

I counted to ten, opened the door and ran low across the street and up onto the porch. In the shadows, back to the wall, I couldn't hear a sound and that was odd; I had expected some resistance.

I picked the lock on the weather-beaten front door and entered silently. There was a funny smell -- like rotten eggs and vinegar -- and the whole house seemed to be quivering.

Suddenly, a door opened and a man staggered out into the hall. He was old and dressed in an odd bathrobe covered with moons and stars. It had to be Smith, and his chest was literally ripped open. I caught him as he fell and heard him croak: "Death awaits within!" before he died. I got a feeling of *deja vu* as I laid him down.

'Death awaits within,' thinks I, well I've yet to meet any sort of death a .357 slug couldn't stop. I kicked open the door and leaped into the room. Boy, was I wrong.

It was a big room, stuffed with books, with a fireplace in which a roaring fire was going. But it was the nightmare in the center of the room that held my attention. The thing was very large -- over seven feet tall -- with the legs of a goat, cloven hooves, and a pointed tail. Above the waist, it had the body of a well developed man, huge muscles, talons on it's six fingered hands, and a hideous face with horns and blazing red eyes. Every movement the thing made caused the house to shake and cracks were forming in the walls.

I turned my attention to the nude form the demon was approaching. Miss Melons stood in a corner, so scared she wasn't even covering up her knockers and I got an eyeful of the beautiful globes before I came to my senses and realized the full impact of my situation.

I had to do something, so I fired six hollow-point bullets into the creature's

back. Much to my surprise, the slugs had no effect on the fiend, other than to bring to it's attention my presence in the room. At this point, Miss Melons swooned -- lucky girl.

Had I a lick of sense, I would have ran from the house leaving the nutty chick and her stupid book to their destinies, but I'm a self-acknowledged idiot so I stayed. My legs turned to rubber as the snarling beast took a huge step toward me. I started to mutter a childhood prayer, when suddenly, I remembered something I had read in my favorite pulp, Surreal Tales -- that silver could have an adverse effect on such critters.

So, reaching into my pocket, I brought out a handful of quarters and threw them at the creature. Six of them hit him on the chest and stuck there, seeming to burn into it's black flesh. The demon turned around and around, trying to pluck off the searing circles of silver. Suddenly, ol' red eyes lost his footing and muttered something like "oh oh" as he slipped and fell onto a large throw rug. Carried by the momentum of it's ponderous bulk, the thing slid head first into the roaring fire. Instantly, there was a huge explosion as the fireplace collapsed and huge pieces of the ceiling began raining around me.

I decided it was time to split. Through the smoke and plaster dust, I could see Miss Melons lying in a corner. When I reached her, she was coming around, and muttered "Don't forget the book".

"Holy crud," I said, thinking how close we had both come to a messy death and the way she worried about the book. I looked around and spotted the tome lying open on Smith's desk. Slinging Miss Melons over my shoulder, I walked over and picked up the Black Book and headed for the front door.

Once in the hall, I could see the way out was blocked by flaming debris, so I was forced to find another way of escape. Luckily, I found the back door fast and made my way up a nearby hill.

Turning, I saw the burning house fold as if it were made of cards. Reluctantly, I put Miss Melons down -- Lord, she was a dish -- not wanting to let go of her warm body. The lady was still just semi-conscious and shaking in the cool night air. So, being a gentleman, I took off my coat and covered her up.

As for me, my knees were knocking together and I was fighting an urge to retch. I looked down at the black leather book in my hands. It seemed innocent enough, and yet I knew that words from the book had summoned up the hell-spawn I was lucky enough to kill. Smith had all the power money could buy, and yet he wanted more. Power, and the love of it -not money- is the root of all evil.

I looked up from my thoughts at the sound of screaming fire trucks. Miss Melons finally regained her senses and arose -- giving me one last look at her luscious boobs. She put on my jacket and buttoned it up.

"Well," she said, trying to straighten up her hair, "I'll take the book now, Stash."

"Okay, but don't forget the other \$250 you owe me," I said, handing her the book. "We had better wait until the firemen clear out before--"

At that moment, standing behind me, Miss Melons crowned me with the book. I saw an entire new constellation of stars as the ground rushed up to meet me.

Dawn was breaking over Houston when I awoke, shivering. The lovely Miss Melons had taken my pants, shirt and shoes, as well as my coat. So, there I sat in the dew, clad only in my boxers and socks. My money was gone, of course, though I had been smart enough to tuck a twenty into my sock the day before. Well, at least I wasn't totally busted.

I was going after my former client. Miss Melons had underestimated me; at the near loss of my personal life, I had gotten her book and saved her life but what had she done to me? Knocked me out, stole \$450 from me, and taken my clothes. And I had to find her soon, because she had stolen the only suit of clothes I owned.

Watch For THE CASE OF THE WEIRD WRITER Coming Soon.

REH In Prose

THE BOOK OF ROBERT E. HOWARD Zebra Books, February 1976, Edited by Glenn Lord

When Zebra Books published a paperback edition of THE SOWERS OF THE THUNDER in March of 1975, it ended the two-year "drought" brought about by the financial collapse of Lancer Books, then the major paperback publisher of REH's fiction. Paradoxically, this period (1973-75) seems to be the time when interest in Robert E. Howard and his fiction had it's greatest growth. 1974, for example, saw the emergence of four REH oriented fanzines, several "booklet publishers" and two hard-cover publishers joined long time publisher Donald M. Grant in preserving REH's works between boards. But for the most part the paperback stalls, with the exception of the Centaur Solomon Kane editions, had nothing to offer the potential Robert E. Howard fan, fresh from reading the popular Conan comics.

With the Grant and Fax hardcover editions selling out as fast as they were printed, Zebra lept full-blown into the mass-market field with paperback editions of the expensive deluxe hardcovers. Now, there's more of REH's work readily accessible to the average reader than ever before. Just about the time you think: "There can't be much else left to print by Ol' Two-Gun. . .", we're hit with a 345 page extravaganza, THE BOOK OF ROBERT E. HOWARD.

This volume (and you'll be pleased to note that on the cover it plainly states that this is Volume One, which would indicate more of the same to follow) edited by Glenn Lord, without reprinting anything from the previously released Zebra books; without reprinting any of the Conan Saga, currently tangled in red tape and buried beneath a stack of unpaid bills as a result of Lancer's demise; without printing anything featuring REH's more "famous" characters; manages to give us a pretty good "sampler" of the fiction of Robert E. Howard. In fact, with the exception of Etchings In Ivory (which has been recently preserved in a beautifully done chapbook from Hall Publications, Box 326, Aberdeen, Md. 21001), none of the material included in TBOREH has been published professionally in the last eight years. Some of it has never been published professionally anywhere.

So, essentially this is "new" material. TBOREH features horror stories, mystery, "spicy" adventure, historical adventure, "weird menace", fantasy, sport stories, westerns, prose poems, poetry and bits of REH epistolary. All in all, an excellent portrait of Robert E. Howard: Writer. Glenn Lord's informative notes, if at times a bit vague, lead off each yarn giving a little background info on how the yarns came to be and telling us some of the publishing problems REH was beginning to have as the Great Depression ate away at his best markets. One can imagine the frustration REH must have felt, when after successfully selling his yarns to magazines only to see them go bust after a few issues, leaving his work unpublished. One can speculate on how much weight these events carried to REH's trigger finger on that fatal June day, but it would seem his mother's death was the final blow.

Whatever the reasons and events that led up to his ultimate suicide, REH left a legacy that is only (forty years later) now being brought fully to our attentions. TBOREH, while not containing his best work (neither does it contain his worst) does have some of REH's better yarns. I'll have to include Etchings In Ivory, Pigeons From Hell, and Red Blades of Black Cathay among my personal favorites. The fact of the matter is, all REH fans are going to find something of interest here. Everything possesses that distinct Howard touch that has proved so illusive to the many and talented of today's genre writers who've tried their hand at REH pastiche. Howard had a way of leaving a portion of his vivid imagination on even his most blatantly commerical work.

And if he let his imagination fly in his prose, he bared his soul in his poetry. One of the most important things about TBOREH is that for the first time outside the circle of REH and fantasy oriented fanzines are we given so many examples of Howard's verse. The selections chosen for this volume, like the fiction, run the gamut of

REH's poetic imagination. From light "protest" poetry, inspired by prohibition, to songs of vengeance such as Thor's Son, the imagery evoked lingers long after the reading. Those who think REH a bigot or at least a racist should take note of The Day That I Die. And the haunting Sonnet of Good Cheer shows that REH at least took poetry as an art form seriously. Today, poetry in the popular eye is considered at the very least, effeminate; Robert E. Howard's poetry is far from that. Bold, savage, with a lust for life lived to the fullest, and affront to the face of death. REH's verse should prove an excellent introduction to the most "sacred" of genres, for those who've shied away from poetry, whatever their reasons. The visionary Dust Dance can be likened to the poetry of the Auburn sage, Clark Ashton Smith, with whom REH corresponded. Howard's poetry, like most good verse, can be read over and over with the same freshness as on the first reading and one can only wish for another paperback volume such as this containing much, much more of REH's verse.

So here we have another fine book from Zebra with hints of much more to come. With Glenn Lord's introduction and notes, Jeff Jones' interesting ink washes scattered throughout the text, and twenty-one examples of Robert E. Howard's prose and verse, this is the biggest book devoted entirely to REH since SKULL-FACE, and is a bargain at \$1.95.

--David Parsons

THE IRON MAN Zebra Books, March 1976, Introduction by Donald Grant, 186 pages

This paperback edition of TIM was published before the deluxe hardcover, which will possibly hurt the sales of the latter. Since similar collections of REH fight yarns (i.e. "The Incredible Adventures of Dennis Dorgan") sold poorly, one can expect TIM to do the same. Of course, the stories therein are vastly different from REH's humorous fight tales, but many people have never read a fight yarn and really don't think they are any good. But, Howard's serious fight stories do merit the reader's attention, as they portray strong men in epic battles -- not on a blood splashed battle field, but in an equally gory fight ring.

David Ireland's detailed illos go nicely with the text, and an above average Jeff Jones cover wraps the whole package up. Though, the copy on the cover is a mis-lead as the volume is labeled: 'fantasy/adventure', when in reality, the tales are sports stories. This may be to attract the casual reader familiar with REH's fantasy heros, but the unknowing fan might be a little upset to find he has fight yarns instead of sword and sorcery stories!

THE IRON MAN, like most of Howard's volumes, is pure entertainment and it is a nice little book that can be read in one sitting. A few hours of escapism never hurt anyone.

--Damon C. Sasser

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO HOWARDIA 1925-1975 Hall Publications, March 1976, 32 pages

GUIDE is a must item for new and old fans alike. It is indispensable to anyone trying to put together a complete collection of Howard's works. Each REH story is listed along with its original and subsequent appearances, making it easy to locate the pulp, magazine, hardback, paperback or fanzine where a given tale can be found. Unpublished material and related items are included along with an introduction by Wayne Warfield.

A Gene Day cover and art by Bot Roda, Richard L. Farley, David Reisman, Russ Parkhurst, and John Meyer accent the text. Even though most of the art is fannish, it is tolerable (I liked the cover, centerfold and the Bot Roda piece best).

One problem I noticed was the binding. Glue was used in lieu of staples and the first page in my copy is already half out. GUIDE is the type thing one likes to refer to from time to time and thus might be subject to wear and tear. --D.C.S.

REH In Graphics

BLOODSTAR: KING OF THE NORTHERN ABYSS Art by Rich Corben Morning Star Press \$14.95

One can say either BLOODSTAR is yet another REH rip-off, or it is an important new addition to the Howard mythos. I think it is a bit of both.

The volume sports a fairly good dust jacket, though something might have been used on the blank back, and the book itself has a plain, grey cover. But it is the insides that count and the team of Howard/Jakes/Corben takes us on a beautiful trip.

BLOODSTAR is based on "The Valley of the Worm" as rewritten by fantasy writer John Jakes. The original had already been adapted in graphic form, appearing recently in B & W form in KULL AND THE BARBARIANS #1. So, taking a story already done (and very well I might add) and adding a good bit of original material to it, Jakes comes up with a fine story. One thing that makes BLOODSTAR work, is the way Jakes plays off the reader's emotions. The Teeth of Ymir, the massacre of the AESir, the final showdown with Loknar and the King of the Northern Abyss are only a few of the more memorable scenes.

I've always been fond of Rich Corben's art (especially his ladies), even though it is a bit different from the norm. While Jakes made the story, Corben made the story work. Throughout the book, Corben's fantastic talent shows. An example: The scene where Bloodstar is thrown off the worm's back and is falling -- the sequence of panels seem to induce vertigo. Needless to say, the book is a joy to read -- much better than I expected.

The only real problem with this graphic novel is the high price. Five thousand copies were printed and still the high price (as any printer will tell you, the more copies you have printed, the cheaper it is). I don't know much the art and such cost, but I feel the price should have been cheaper. If the people at Morning Star had been thinking beyond a fast buck, they might have considered doing a paper bound edition. Something like this might sell for around \$6.95 and would enable a number of fans on a budget to afford it. Perhaps, in the future, a paperback company (such as Zebra) will will bring it out for a sane price. Until this happens (if it ever does), if you want the volume, you'll just have to pay through the nose.

THE QUEEN OF THE BLACK COAST A Folio by Steve Fabian House of Fantasy \$11.00

Whether or not you are a folio buff, you won't want to miss Fabian's QUEEN OF THE BLACK COAST. Besides being a well produced portfolio, it is destined to become, perhaps, as valuable as Barry Smith's Conan folio and is a good investment.

Steve Fabian's work in fantasy circles is well known and he is one of the more popular artists of this day. With QUEEN OF THE BLACK COAST, Steve's future looks to be very bright and one can only hope for more Conan and related REH folios by him.

Featuring a full color wrap-around cover, a letter of authenticity, a copy of the Song of Belit, a cover, seven plates, a special envelope, QUEEN OF THE BLACK COAST is a bargain at 11.00. The plates themselves are 11" x 15" on very high quality paper, with fine reproduction, and the end result looks as good as the originals.

All of the plates are magnificent, but the second plate is my personal favorite. Looking very much like a Finlay drawing, plate two features the mating dance of Belit. Steve manages to capture the raw, savage sensuality of Belit fantastically. The drawing has an uneathly, hypnotic effect -- a real mind blower!

All in all, a very nice folio that won't disappoint you. So, if you love great Conan art, you'll want to pick up QUEEN OF THE BLACK COAST. It is published in a limited, signed & numbered edition of 1,000 by House of Fantasy, 5503 Perry Avenue, Merriam, Kansas 66203.

REH News

*GRANT

This summer will see THE LAST CELT available at last! It is a big book, over 411 pages, featuring an in-depth biography of REH, a bibliographical section, rare photos, letters, memorabilia, much more. Glenn Lord has put together what is probably the single most important volume on Robert E. Howard and his writings.

Also due out soon ROGUES IN THE HOUSE, illoed by Marcus Boas and a special second edition of THE SOWERS OF THE THUNDER.

*HALL

PHANTASY DIGEST, edited by Wayne Warfield, is a new professionally printed, typeset magazine of fantastic literature. Contents of the first issue include: "Graveyard Rats" by REH, "A Place of Stones" by Charles Saunders, "The Final Solution" by Wayne Hooks, "The Undying Druids" by andrew j offutt, in-depth study of Lin Carter's "World's End", verse by James Cox and John Bredcn, plus a number of features and related items. PD #1 has art by John Stewart, Jim Pitts, Gene Day, Clyde Caldwell, Ken Raney and others.

Hall will also be doing THE BLACK SORCERER OF THE BLACK CASTLE by andrew j. offutt. This is a satire of REH's sword and sorcery tales and is illustrated by Ken Raney. This is also typeset and professionally printed.

*MORNING STAR

A super-deluxe book called NIGHT IMAGES is forthcoming from this company. Featuring a Frazetta dust jacket and interior art by Rich Corben, the volume is a huge collection of Howard's verse. NIGHT IMAGES will be limited to 1,000 copies and will sell for \$25.

*SPERE

This British publishing firm will be busy doing many Howard books in the coming months. KING KULL (in October), ALMURIC (in January 1977) and TIGERS OF THE SEA, and THE SOWERS OF THE THUNDER are slated to appear. Also, a new collection called THE MARCHERS OF VALHALLA (not to be confused with the Grant edition) which includes the following stories: the title story, "The Grey God Passes", "The Thunder Rider", "Sea Curse", "Out Of The Deep", "Valley of the Lost", "For the Love of Barbara Allen," and "A Thunder of Trumpets". Also in England, Futura (Orbit) will be paperbacking the long version of "Three-Bladed Doom".

*ZEBRA

Now in print from Zebra is THE BOOK OF ROBERT E. HOWARD Volume II. Contents include: "For the Love of Barbara Allen", "Two Against Tyre", "The Footfalls Within", "Knife River Prodigal", "Sword Woman", "Black Canaan", "Kelly the Conjure Man" (an article related to "Black Canaan"), "House of Suspicion" (previously unpublished), "The Striking of the Gong" (the original version), "Guns of Khartoum", "The Good Night", and a number of poems.

Due next is PIGEONS FROM HELL. This collection is identical to THE DARK MAN AND OTHERS, with the exception of the omission of "The Dark Man". The contents are: "The Gods of Bal-Sagoth", "The Voice of El-Lil", "Pigeons From Hell", "People of the Dark", "The Children of the Night", "The Dead Remember", "The Man on the Ground", "The Garden Of Fear", "The Thing on the Roof", "The Hyena", "Dig Me No Grave", "The Dream Snake", "In the Forest of Villefere", and "Old Garfield's Heart".

Coming soon: SWORDS OF DARKNESS, edited by andy offutt, which features new S&S stories including "Nekht Semerkeht" by Robert E. Howard and offutt. THE UNDYING WIZARD, a new Cormac Mac Art novel, has just been completed by offutt.

News Items Supplied by Glenn Lord.

Billboard

THE BRITISH FANTASY SOCIETY is an organization devoted to all aspects of fantasy and provides wide coverage and constructive criticism of fantasy activities. A one year membership costs \$6.00 and you really get your money's worth. You will receive all issues of the BFS Bulletin (news, reviews, art, etc.), and the quarterly Dark Horizons, a journal of fact, fiction, art, poetry, etc.; use of BFS' extensive book and fanzine libraries; membership of Whirlpool -- the critical writers' circle -- and eligibility to vote for the yearly August Derleth Fantasy Award. If you wish to join, write to the Membership Secretary, Brain Mooney, 447a Porters Avenue, Dagenham, Essex RM9 4ND, England.

The oldest REH fanzine being published is FANTASY CROSSROADS, available from Jonathan Bacon, P.O. Box 147, Lamoni, Iowa 50140. Issue #8 is in print, content includes: "Daughters Of Feud" by REH, a letter by H.P. Lovecraft to Clark Ashton Smith, "Rough Love Pays" by Tavis Clyde Smith, "Far Babylon" by L. Sprague de Camp, "The Cod In The Bowl Portfolio" by Gene Day, and much more. This is a fine 'zine with wrap around binding, typeset, quality paper and is priced at \$2.50 a copy.

FANTASAE, a new fanzine of poetry in the Howard tradition, is published by Ken Raney, P.O. Box 448, Fort Montgomery, New York 10922. Besides some very good verse, the first issue includes art by Steve Fabian, Gene Day, Steve Riley, Clyde Caldwell, Frank Cirocco, Ken Raney and others. Only a limited number of this excellent 'zine are left for \$1.50 a copy.

The people at HALL PUBLICATIONS have been busy putting out some nice booklets. ETCHINGS IN IVORY (\$3.95), THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO HOWARDIA (\$4.00), THE CONAN COMPANION (\$2.75) are now available. Coming very soon are THE BLACK SORCERER OF THE BLACK CASTLE -(\$3.00) by andy offutt - illoed by Ken Raney, and PHANTASY DIGEST (\$3.50) a large new magazine of pro and fan fiction with articles, reviews, art, more. Order these items from Hall Publications, P.O. Box 326, Aberdeen, Md. 21001.

THE KING'S SERVICE is George Hamilton's next limited edition booklet. Featuring the same high quality of his previous publications, this one will be ready for mailing soon, and is illoed by Steve Fabian. Available for \$5.45 from Dale Brown, 9680 Bloomfield, Cypress, Calif. 90630.

The unbeatable team of Roark and Fenner have out the best issue of REH: LONE STAR FICTIONEER to appear. I'm speaking of the fourth issue which features "Three-Bladed Doom" a long, unpublished El Borak adventure, interviews with John Severin and L. Sprague de Camp, "My Sword is Quick" by M.M. Moamrath, "Incident at Cross Flains" by Ben Indick, "The Gods of Bal-Sagoth" an art folio by Marcus Boas, and art by Chaykin, Steranko, the Severins, Barr, and others. All this for \$3.50 and you can get it from Byron Roark, P.O. Box 186, Shawnee Mission, Kansas 66201.

THE HOWARD READER #1 featuring "The Blood of Belshazzar" and "Sailor Costigan and the Swami" (\$4.00), and MESMERIDIAN a fanzine featuring "Dermod's Bane" by REH will soon be published by Dennis McHaney, 3970 Carter, Memphis, Tenn. 38122. Dennis also publishes the very fine REH fanzine, THE HOWARD READER. The latest issue, #4, is still available for \$2.75 a copy.

There is a nice little monthly fanzine called TALES FROM TEXAS being published by the Dallas Area Science Fantasy Society. TFT features up to date news about comics, fiction, art, interviews, reviews and some emphasis on REH. For a mere \$3.00, you can get 12 issues from 2515 Perkins St., Fort Worth, Texas 76103.



PARSONS 7 6



K. JENNER '76

SOLOMON KANE