

BACK NUMBERS CAN BE EASILY PROCURED

Prepared for P.E.A.P.S.
April 2005
Issue 15

Warren Harris

(707) 577-0522

email: backnumbers@gmail.com

1130 Fourth Street, #1116
Santa Rosa, CA, 95404

In This Issue:

Columns:

Revealed At Last (Editorial Comments)	1
The Round Table (Letters of Comment)	2
Pulp Sources.....	2

Articles

Days of Futures Past by John Locke.....	3-4
Photos from the Maltese Falcon exhibit	5-7
Photos from Wondercon/SF Book Show	8-10



All Fled, All Done

Well, here we are at the last issue of *Back Numbers*. I had decided the last issue was, well, the last issue, when I received an article from John Locke that I had forgotten that I'd requested. So I'm doing one last issue to run that, and to clear out the files of some photos that went with articles I never quite got finished.

This is now the third issue in a row that was printed only because somebody, Rich Berman in October, Shane Roth in January and now John Locke, submitted an article for me to run. That tells me that it's time to stop.

I've had a pretty good run, 15 issues of *Back Numbers*, two issues of the *Herald Argus*, five issues of *Cosplay Magazine* and one of *Don't Shake Me*. That's a lot more than I ever thought I'd manage.

I'm tired and looking forward to GAFIAting. No more zines, no more cons, no more deadlines, no more photography, no more scanning, no more going to events with a camera and a notebook because I "have" to write a report, no more writing period, no more stress.

I don't want to buy books and magazines and zines just because I intend to review them and then never get around to doing the reviews. It's turned my pleasant love of reading into a series of homework assignments. I really dislike reading fiction magazines, yet I have stacks of things like the new *Amazing Stories* because I intended to do a review. Ok here's the review of the first issue: I didn't find it interesting enough to read. The Harlan Ellison story sucked. The non-fiction, which is the only thing I read in these things, was outdated by the time the issue hit the stands.

I had a whole host of articles I wanted to write and projects that I wanted to finish, but they must be left undone.

I've enjoyed reading P.E.A.P.S over the last few years and I'll be sorry to not be getting the mailing anymore.

The Round Table



First off, great issue. It's likely the best thing I've read in the year that is still quite young.

The Rear Window article interested me as I had the pleasure of hearing Peter Bogdonovich (or as pretty much all the hip film school kids call him "Bogs") at a film festival and heard talk about Hitchcock and Rear Window in particular. Hitch was indeed thrilled with RW even more so than Psycho, which most consider his masterpiece. The adaptation of Rear Window from the original story is very brave, as even in the 1950s, pitching the concept to a studio producer would have gotten you laughed at, unless you're a slightly over-weight, ego-maniacal Brit who happens to be something of a genius.

Raymond Burr was fantastic, but Thelma Ritter was a big deal too. She had been in All About Eve and was riding the wave of that for a few years, though she'd slow down and make only about 15 more films before her death in 1969, with a few periods of inactivity.

As a filmmaker myself, I can say that short stories are still be turned into films, probably in a greater percentage now than they were in the 40s, 50s and 60s, though

they are typically being made into short films that are seen mostly on the festival circuit. As a viewer for the Cinequest Film Festival, I see several hundred shorts a year during the selection process and about 1/5 are based on short stories, and about half of those are from recent short stories. An excellent recent example is Metal Tears which was an adaptation of Mike Resnick's Robots Don't Cry and there are dozens more of every genre. The sad thing is, these films seldom get seen beyond folks like me how seek them out or are forced to watch them.

My personal collection of old pulp magazines has grown and contracted over the decade and a half that I've been working on it. I've got a few Argosy, a number of Startling Tales, some Weird Tales and a couple of Westerns that each feature a story in the Weird West Tales sub-genre, and a few that are Police Gazette-types from the teens. I mostly pick these up at flea markets, often with covers in tatters, and just read the hell out of them. At the largest, my collection was around 50 or so, but very few of those still remain, having been replaced with 'new' issues bought for pennies a piece.

Thanks

Christopher J. Garcia

Producer: The Chick Magnet

Writer/Editor: The Drink Tank, available only on efanzines.com

Programmer: The Silicon Valley Science Fiction Short Film Festival

Pulp Sources:

Mike Chomko is my source for many of the pulp-related books that are reviewed here. He offers free shipping on orders over \$25. (And it's not hard to spend more than that with him, let me tell you.) He will hold books until your order reaches \$25 if you want. He has been able to get me pretty much any pulp-related books I asked for. He also publishes an excellent pulp fanzine, Purple Prose. Drop him a line at chomko@enter.net. For those of you not on the web, he can be reached at 2217 West Fairview Street, Allentown, PA 18104-6542.

Bill Thom's Coming Attractions pulp-related news site is the place to find the latest pulp-related information. The address is: <http://members.cox.net/comingattractions/index.html>.

Howard Hopkin's latest issue of Golden Perils, number 36, is out as well. The web site is: <http://www.howardhopkins.com/page4.htm>. He also has a PDF version of his book on the Avenger available.

Sword and Sorcery, an web-based fiction magazine, has just published a second issue. It can be found at: www.swordandsorcery.org. Each issue has a Harold Lamb reprint and new fantasy fiction. I actually found some of the new fiction in the first issue to be quite good. Lamb expert Howard Andrew Jones is editing it.

Back Numbers Can Be Easily Procured is published whenever Warren Harris gets around to it. Contents copyright 2005 by Warren Harris. All rights revert to creators upon publication. Back Number is prepared for the membership of the Pulp Era Amateur Press Society. Copies of all issues in Acrobat PDF format can be found on the web at www.efanzines.com.

Day of Futures Past

By John Locke

On March 4, 2005, I was privileged to take a special tour of Seattle's new Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame (SFM, www.sfhomeworld.org) with two other pulp-collecting pals. As a fan of the genre ever since my tiny little hand balled into a fist of wrath against the evil machinations of *Lost in Space's* Dr. Smith, I was enough of a know-it-all to anticipate being underwhelmed by the visit. Instead, I staggered out in semi-disbelief at the quantity of great material on display.

SFM sits at the foot of the majestic Space Needle, built for the 1962 World's Fair, with another remnant of the Fair, the monorail, threading through the middle of the building, a hard-to-describe mass of curving lines and bulging, brass-plated shapes (see the web page), designed by architect Frank Gehry. The brainchild of Microsoft co-founder, Paul Allen, the museum complex originally was the exclusive domain of the Experience Music Project. Later, the SFM took over about a third of the space.

Inside the main entrance, we met our guide, Brooks Peck, a human (as his SFM business card identifies him). Brooks proved to be extremely knowledgeable about sf literature and film, as well as the purpose and direction of the museum; and, from a practical standpoint, he knew his way around the rabbit's warren of the museum's interior. Lording over the entrance was an eight-foot-high reproduction of Gort, that memorable non-human from *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. Coming over the museum's sound system was the great electronic score from *Forbidden Planet*, one of a variety of sf-based themes that played while we were there.

The first exhibit we saw was a display commemorating SpaceShipOne, which on June 21, 2004 made big news by becoming the first civilian-piloted, privately-funded (by Allen) spaceship. The exhibit hinted that there is more to sf dreams than fantasy and entertainment.

Then intruded a fire alarm followed by an efficient evacuation and the quick arrival of two fire trucks. While standing outside, we speculated that it was all part of some monstrous caper to relieve

the museum of its priceless artifacts. Certainly, our appetites had been sufficiently whetted to fear being turned away at that point and, luckily, it turned out to be a simple false alarm.

Back inside, we resumed our bug-eyed study of the museum's exhibits. These were organized thematically. For example, one display, The Changing Face of Mars, had a variety of materials related to depictions of the Red Planet, everything from a first edition (in jacket, of course) of *A Princess of Mars*, to pulp covers, including a nice *Amazing Stories Annual*, even to the *Mars Attacks* cards.

A fandom display included an Ed Emshwiller portrait of Theodore Sturgeon; Hugo's Hugo, the statuette awarded to Gernsback himself; Forrest Ackermann's Hugo; early fanzines; and the *Astounding* issue with *Slan* on the cover. Details like the last made you feel like the museum really grokked the Zeitgeist.

First editions of key works of sf, and pulps, were numerous, and part of nearly every display. As were key props and costumes from just about every noteworthy sf film. But it isn't all old-timer faves. Far from it. The museum is surprisingly up-to-date, including items from films as recent as *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*.

The Hall of Fame is quite an elegant display. It's an arcing 20x5 array of back-lit Plexiglas panels, about a third of which represent the current members of the HoF. Each member panel has what appears to be a facial photo carved into the back surface. The effect is tasteful and dazzling. The HoF is the permanent home of the The Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame, founded in 1996 by the Kansas City Science Fiction and Fantasy Society. HoF members, predominately writers, are listed on SFM's web site. Each year, the HoF inducts four new members "on the basis of their continued excellence and long-time contribution to the science fiction field."

One large display room is dedicated to original art. It includes a collection of speculative space travel illustrations done by Fred Freeman for *Collier's*; a number of striking space paintings by Chesley Bonestell; another Emsh; a Frank Kelly

Back Numbers

Freas; several Frank Pauls, including the covers for *Wonder Stories*, September 1934, and *Future Fiction*, November 1940; a Robert Fuqua cover for *Amazing Stories*, January 1944. My favorite was a brilliantly-vivid Norman Saunders cover for the April/May 1939 *Marvel Science Stories*. Additionally, there were other paintings scattered throughout the museum, including more Bonestells, and the Earle Bergey cover for *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, Summer 1944.

The museum has an amazing number of props and models from sf movies, spread throughout the different displays. Stuff you can't believe you're seeing all in one place. The Ray Harryhausen model from *Earth vs. the Flying Saucers* that captures the moment of impact between a saucer and the Capital Dome; it's about two-feet high. The saucer from *Day the Earth Stood Still*. The *Blade Runner* spinner car. The *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* submarine, sans giant squid. Captain Kirk's chair from the bridge of the *Enterprise*, which started life as a piece of office furniture. From *Aliens*, Ripley's power loader, that anthropomorphic warehouse-worker-of-the-future walking suit, and the model of the alien queen. Both of these are huge. The kid on the bike that flies in front of the full moon in *ET*. Yoda. The rocket from *Destination Moon*. A high-tech model of a sentinel from *The Matrix*. A couple of the alien eggs from *Alien*, and I was mighty glad they were secured in a glass case. A lot of the models, especially the older ones, show some wear and tear. They also have surprisingly minimal detailing, revealing what the camera conceals.

There were a number of costumes. Officer jerseys from *Star Trek* (didn't see any of the mini-skirts). From *Blade Runner*, Rachael's (Sean Young) black business suit, and Zhora the snake dancer's raincoat. Anne Francis' gossamer frock from *Forbidden Planet*. The space suit from *2001*. A Chuck Heston figure wearing the torn space suit from *Planet of the Apes*, posing with a firearm, appropriately enough. Darth Vader's helmet. The silver skull from *Terminator*. A full latex headpiece from *Predator*.

Then there were all our beloved robots: Robby, Robocop, "the robot" from *Lost in Space*. Most of these were the original props, though a few were quality reproductions.

One of my favorite displays was the ray guns. Buck Rogers' atomic disintegrator? They've got it. There were too many to count, from phasers to hand guns to two-handed pieces.

The museum also includes a number of video displays, some interactive. There are two spherical displays with movies and images playing on them. One is projected to from inside; another, developed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for weather study, is projected to from outside. These can be instantly made to look like planetary bodies, using actual NASA photographs. One large, widescreen display, set behind a window like you were looking into outer space, had highly-detailed CGI models of a lot of recognizable spacecraft cruising past each other: the *Enterprise*, The *Millennium Falcon*, the ship from *2001*, flying saucers, space stations, the mother ship from *Close Encounters*, you name it. And since the scaling is accurate, when the ships pass close, their relative sizes become apparent. Another large widescreen display contrasted utopian/dystopian visions using highly-detailed, original CGI animations of the worlds of *The Jetsons*, *Blade Runner*, and *The Matrix*.

The newest display was dedicated to *The War of the Worlds*, though it predates the announcement of the new Spielberg/Cruise film. Items spanned from Wells to Welles to the 1953 film. Especially interesting were the Alvim Corrêa book illustrations done for a Belgian edition in 1906.

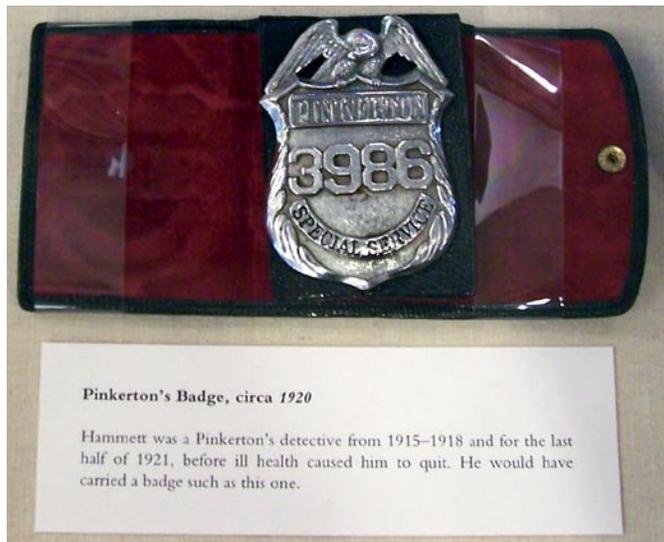
Does that cover everything? Not even close. These few recollections only scratch the surface. The wealth of material in the museum is amazing, astounding, astonishing, and even fantastic, particularly since it was amassed in a few, short years. The exhibits are in flux, constantly being improved, as the staff tries to make the displays more dynamic and interactive. The general admission is \$12, and we hear it gets quite crowded on the weekends.

On the way out, you pass by the gift shop. There's plenty of tee-shirts, books, coffee mugs, and toy ray guns; everything but a few extra copies of the *Amazing Stories Annual* on sale.





Julie Rivett, Hammett's granddaughter gave a very interesting lecture as part of the San Francisco Library's celebration of the 75th anniversary of the publication of *The Maltese Falcon*.

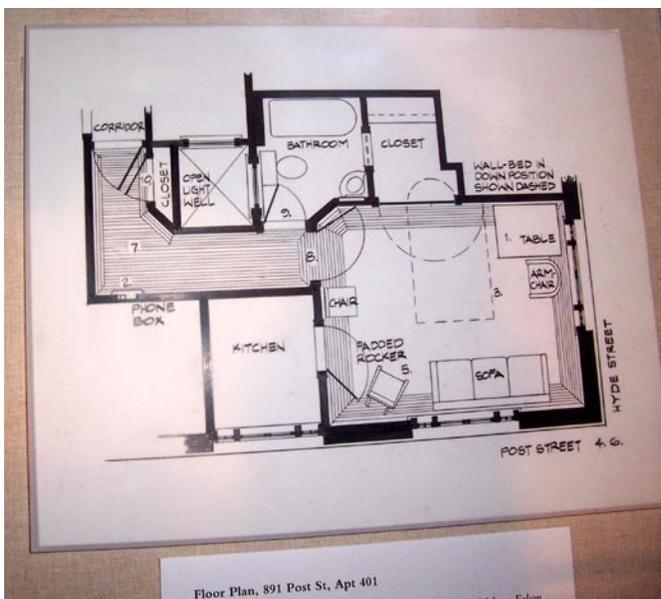


Pinkerton's Badge, circa 1920

Hammett was a Pinkerton's detective from 1915-1918 and for the last half of 1921, before ill health caused him to quit. He would have carried a badge such as this one.



Other photos from the library's exhibit: A Pinkerton badge similar to the one Hammett would have had, A *Maltese Falcon*-branded alarm clock, a sketch of Hammett's/Spade's Post Street apartment, Several scarce pulps with Hammett stories.



Floor Plan, 891 Post St, Apt 401



Back Numbers



A first edition of the Maltese Falcon and an early foreign edition.

Below Left: Various scarce or foreign editions, including an Armed Services edition.

Below: Part one of the newspaper serialization.

One error made in the exhibit was attributing a postcard to Hammett from "Gardner" as from Erle Stanley Gardner a "associate editor for Black Mask". The postcard clearly wasn't from that Gardner.

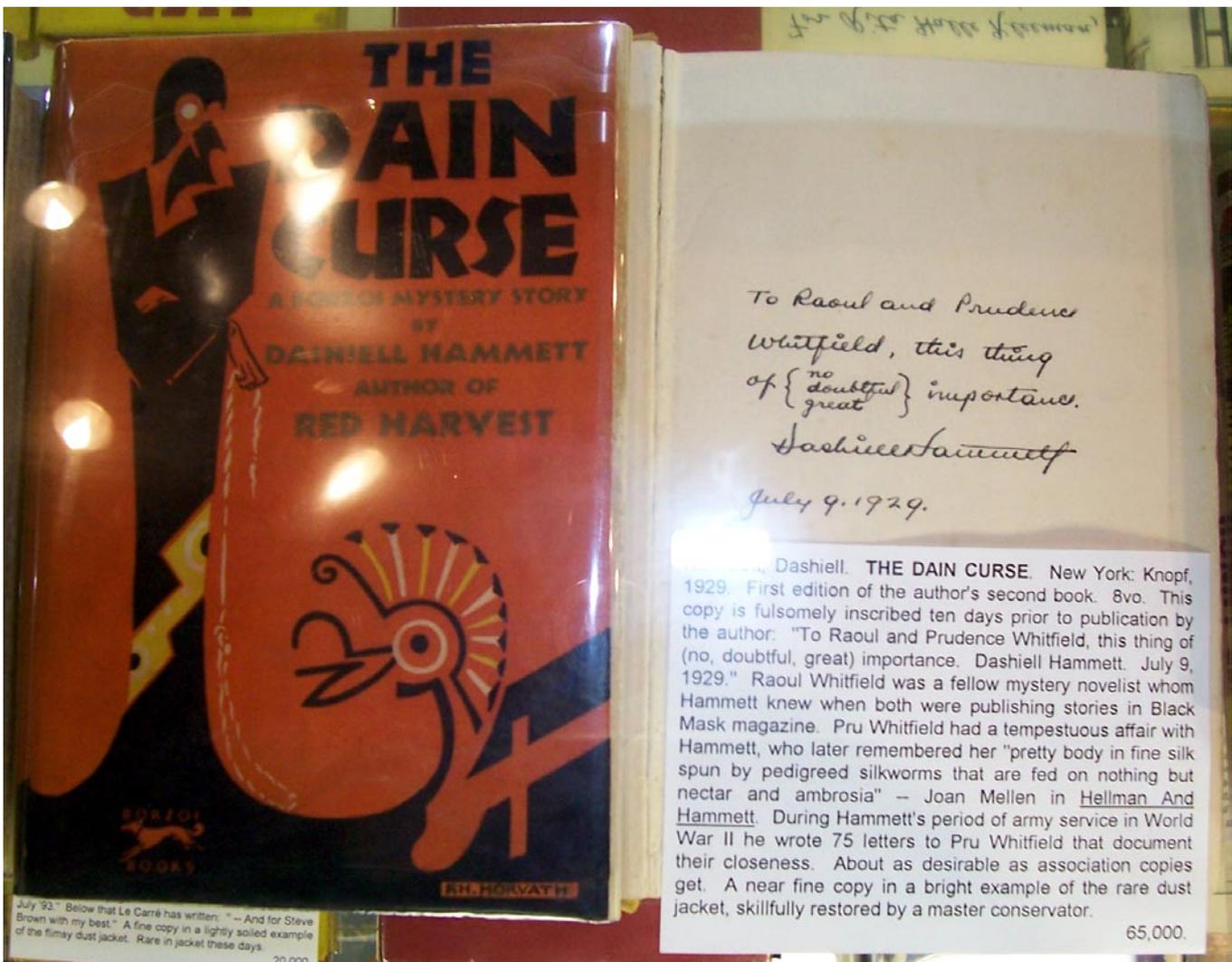


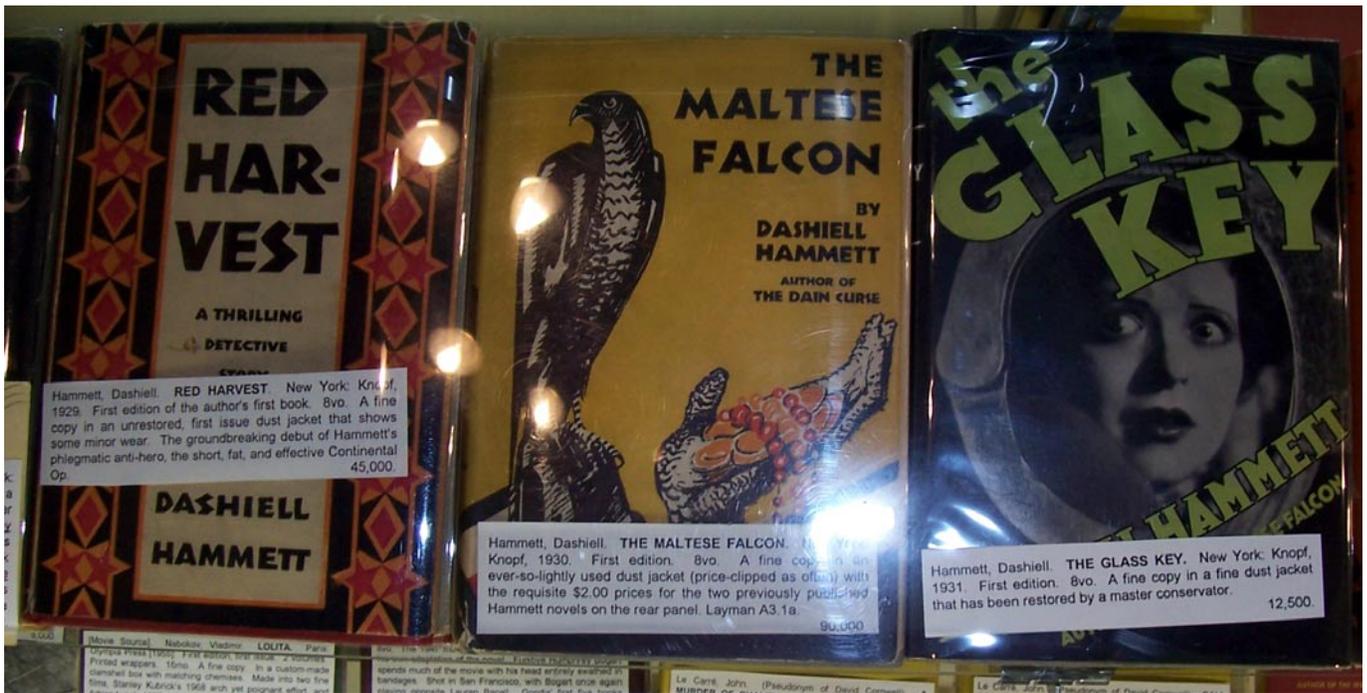
Back Numbers



While at Wondercon 2005, I ran into John Locke and Robert McKay who let me tag along with them when they went to the nearby San Francisco Antiquarian Book Fair. While prices there were too rich for any of us, it was interesting to see some of the books. I kept seeing books I owned with price tags two to three times what I paid for my copies. Everything seemed overpriced to me.

Below is a copy of *The Dain Curse* presented by Hammett to Raoul and Prudence Whitfield. At \$65,000 I decided I could do without it.





Somebody thinks that's a \$90,000 copy of the Maltese Falcon.

While Frank Robinson did not attend the book show, he was kind enough to invite John Locke, Robert McKay and myself into his home that evening to view his spectacular collection. I was stunned. I didn't even know what to ask to see. A few weeks later Robinson gave a well-received lecture on the history of the pulps at Borderlands Books.

Alfred Jan looks over a stack of pulps at the book show.

