

BACK NUMBERS CAN BE EASILY PROCURED

Prepared for P.E.A.P.S. mailing #60
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Issue 3

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Our Featured Issue:

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Corrections:

Pulp Adventures Inc. was the publisher of 12 Spider novels.

John DeWalt's apazine is El Dorado.

The names of Chuck Juzek, Emile Tepperman, Fredric Wertham, Charles Addams, Joe Lansdale, Fredric Brown, Jo Hammett, Rudyard Kipling, Erle Stanley Gardner, Bernard Cornwell, Orson Welles and William Hope Hodgson were misspelled in the last issue. I apologize for my poor proofing.

I also misspelled Femme Fatale, Jaberwock, Foreword, Afterword, Sympathetic, San Francisco, and, in keeping with PEAPS tradition, Allan Quatermain.

I did not mean to imply that Robert Randisi was a pen name for "Check Spelling."



Back Issue Fulfillment Department:

A Short Issue This Time

I'm trying to keep this a short issue this time, I need to recover from the 60 page giant I ran last issue. Perhaps this way, I can spend more time proofreading, always a task that I need to do more.

Speaking of Pulpcon...

For the second year in a row, I'm going to be missing out on Pulpcon this summer. I'm not very happy about this, but my finances don't look like they can take the trip this year.

A Modest Proposal:

I suggest we agree that Haggard should have named his most famous character Quartermain and accept that as an alternate spelling here in PEAPS. (And I'm expecting some wag to question why I think Asheya should be spelled differently.)

Back Numbers Website:

Much to my amazement, I now have a website. It is undoubtedly the worst pulp website on the internet. Its sole purpose is to allow me to distribute issues of Back Numbers in PDF format. Currently issue one is available, shortly after the membership gets this issue in the mailing, I'll put up issue two.

The address is: www.geocities.com/argosy_collector/index

Late Again:

I had high hopes for getting this out to Brian early. I also had every intention of getting proofs ready in time to do a good job of editing and proofing. But I'm writing this less than a week from the deadline, and I know there are typos. I'm sure I'll be running a large corrections box in the next issue.

Part of this is Pulpcon. Even though I didn't attend this year, it seemed that Pulpcon sucked up about a week of my time. Also, I've had several major projects at work that have taken up valuable time, and one of my coworkers took off some time unexpectedly to tour with his band. Now I may not be able to get time on the Infoprint for several days to output my pages.

All of this means that I'm rushing at the last minute to finish pages and I still won't get the pages in the mail as early as I'd like.

Production Woes

PEAPS members must be cursed with computer problems, this time it's my turn. As I was working on this issue, after having spent several hours writing, my Pagemaker file became corrupted. A considerable amount of work was lost. It seems that Pagemaker has a habit of corrupting files when they become too complex.

After losing all that work, I've decided to switch to InDesign. I've been meaning to teach myself InDesign for a while now, and this looks like a good opportunity. So far I really like it, but it's hard to get used to an entirely new program. I know Pagemaker very well, and it's frustrating to have to figure out how to do simple things in InDesign. Fortunately, they are both made by Adobe so many of the commands are the same.

Contributors

While I did not expect to have any contributors, I've been lucky to have friends who have written up items for me. So with this issue, I'm going to start using bylines.

Thanks to Ray Skirsky for an excellent convention report last issue.

This issue we welcome aboard Richard J. Berman, who joins us with three reviews.

Hopefully we'll see more from both of these writers in the future.

The Blackboard

Quartermain has only one R.

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Pulp Writer William E. Brandon 1914-2002

By Warren Harris

Pulp writer William E. Brandon died of cancer May 11 at his home in Clearlake, California.

Brandon began his 70-year career as a writer penning stories for a number of pulp magazines, graduating to the slicks, television, academia and hardback publication.

He sold his first stories, at age 17, to pulps such as *Black Mask*, *Detective Fiction Weekly* and *10 Detective Aces*.


By the 1940s he had broken into the slicks, having work, stories and poetry, published in the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Esquire*, *Harpers*, *The Paris Review* and the *Progressive*.

During World War II he served in the U.S.

Army Air Forces as a photographer, rising to the rank of sergeant. Although his formal education ended after he graduated from high school, he served as a visiting professor at the University of Massachusetts, California State University Los Angeles and California State University, Long Beach.

While his early work was detective and mystery stories, he spent most of his career writing about the West. He also translated poetry from several European and Native American languages.

He edited an anthology of American Indian Poetry, *The Magic World* and several books on American Indians, including *The American Heritage Book of Indians* which had an introduction by John F. Kennedy.

A final book on Indians, *The New World*, is scheduled to be published in 2003. 

Letters of Comment:

Hi Warren,

WOW!!!!!! When DeWalt told me how good your contributions were, I had no idea they'd be this good. My mind is reeling from all the information. And books I never knew existed. Godspeed the day you get everything out of storage and onto shelves. I sympathize with you there-99% of my stuff is in storage pending a move to a bigger place next year. It's so frustrating, having been used to just grabbing a book I need off the shelf in my Library.

A couple of comments:

The 12 Spiders were published by PULP ADVENTURES, INC. not Pulp Adventures Press. The plan was for the entire run being reprinted in the 20 years. I still retain PULP ADVENTURES (not Pulp Adventures Press) as an imprint for my line of pulp reprints, but the company name is ED BOND ENTERPRISES.

ZORRO THE MASTERS EDITION: Why was it done in the order it was? Because there were only a couple of the pulps in our possession from which to reprint the stories. I didn't even get all of *CURSE OF CAPISTRANO* until just recently. I am reprinting the shorter works in order of publication. Five volumes contain the shorter works. (V1-V5) The 7 novels each stand alone in their own 7 books (So people can file them however they wish). Since I was into the WEST period, I chose *TASK*, (I was missing some of the *Argosy*/*All-Story* pulps at the time, so could not schedule *THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF ZORRO*). The novels were to fill-in between the Volumes until I obtained all the stories for a particular volume. In fact, I

am only missing the following:

ARGOSY 02/08/1941

THE SIGN OF ZORRO (part 3)

WEST 07/1947

Zorro's Masked Menace

(needed to complete Volume 3)

(which is why *TASK* is coming out before V3)

I have *THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF ZORRO* as the next novel I'm publishing (after V3).

MICKEY SPILLANE: I don't know if you're aware of it, but I am publishing a book at the end of this year that will contain ALL of his comic book text work. Edited by Max Allan Collins & Lynn Myers. Intro by Max Allan Collins.

Paul Gallico wrote *THE POSEIDON ADVENTURE*

Keep up the excellent work!

Thank you,


Cat & Ed

Ed Bond Books

www.edbondbooks.com

info@edbondbooks.com

Cat and Ed:

Thanks for your kind comments. I look forward to the Spillane book when it's out. I'll be sure to review it here. 

In Sam Spade's Footsteps

By Warren Harris

It was a warm day in early June, and after putting it off for far too long, I made the time to take the Dashiell Hammett walking tour that Don Herron has been leading in San Francisco for the past 26 years.

Herron used to offer the tour year-round, but now usually leads it only in May and October. Fortunately for me, he extended the season this year by two weeks because of special requests.

The tour starts at the northwest corner of the new main library, just

across the park from city hall. The diverse group for this tour was about average, Herron said, with eighteen people or so showing up, only a few who had actually read any Hammett.

Herron's tour has become more than a Hammett thing to do, it's part of the things to do if you are a San Francisco tourist.

Herron does a good job of balancing the need to cover the basics, explaining

who Hammett was and why he's important, with more detailed information for the Hammett fans.

One pair of ladies on the tour were confused about what these "pulp magazines" were that Herron kept referring to. I tried to explain, but I think I did more harm than good. One of them later said that she might try reading this Hammett guy, but only after she'd finished her cat mystery.

The rest of the tour group was mixed, with several having read Hammett, a couple of librarians, and others who didn't have a clue. A few seemed more interested in getting something to eat at the midpoint rest than in getting the tour back underway.

The tour is oriented toward *The Maltese Falcon* but Herron also covers the Continental Op stories and Hammett's life in San Francisco. He pays particular attention to "The Whosis Kid" and "The Gutting

of Couffignal" and their connection to *The Maltese Falcon*.

The first major stop on the tour, after a brief introduction to Hammett and his era, is the corner of Van Ness where Herron tells the story of the beginning of "The Whosis Kid." He does a great job of setting the stage, and I could easily picture the notorious Whosis Kid walking down the street, the Op observing him, when a sedan, curtains drawn, starts toward the Kid. Gun barrels poke out the window, the sedan roars toward the Kid and shots ring out.

The tour continues with Herron pointing out the apartment where, according to the description in the story, the climax takes place, the group continues on to see several places where Hammett lived when he first came to San Francisco.

Along the way, Herron pauses now and again to continue Hammett's story, weaving his career as an operative for the Pinkerton agency with scenes from the stories and novels.

At the midpoint of the tour, Herron stops in front of a four-story apartment building on Post, just down the block and across the street from Kayo Books. In fact, it's right in front of the bus stop I normally use when I visit Kayo Books.

This he tells us is not only the building where, recent research has shown, Hammett wrote many of his stories, his first three

novels and part of *The Glass Key*, but it's also Sam Spade's apartment building where several major scenes take place in *The Maltese Falcon*.

Herron picks up the house phone and dials the number to one of the apartments, the door lock buzzes open.

It seems several years ago, a guy, now known as Harry the Hat, took Herron's walking tour and became interested in Hammett. At that time the tour just stopped in front and Herron pointed out that this is the building where Hammett lived, and that it matched the description of the location of Spade's apartment. One day Harry was in need of an apartment and saw a for rent sign while driving past the building. The first apartment he was shown was Hammett's old apartment.



Don Herron points out a marker commemorating Dashiell Hammett



Don Herron at the start of the tour.

So now the tour troops up the stairs to visit Harry and see the apartment where *The Maltese Falcon* was written. Harry is in the process of restoring the apartment to what it would have been like at the time Hammett was there. He even took up and put back down the hardwood floors himself so they would not be replaced when the building underwent earthquake retrofitting. In the meantime, he's put quotes from the book next to features the text mentions. The quotes match the physical features of the apartment perfectly.

Much of the apartment is original, down to the fixtures in the bathroom—the same bathroom where Spade strip searches Bridget for the missing \$1000 bill.

The apartment itself is smaller than I'd pictured it. It is a studio with a Murphy bed, not much bigger—if at all—than the apartments I've been living in over the past 10 years.

After a nice visit with Harry, who is very generous about letting a large group of tourists traipse through his home, the tour passed by Kayo Books. I suggested that the tour should stop here, but Herron said if he did, he'd never get the tour started back again. I saw his point, I could see a Richard Stark novel through the window and had to restrain myself from just a quick stop. If I had known how long it would take to get the tour started again after a drink and snack break on the next block I would've spent the time at Kayo.

But I and a couple of other tour participants had the chance for a nice talk with Herron while waiting for the others to finish.

The tour continues with stops at various locations that have Hammett connections, such as the St. Francis where the Fatty Arbuckle rape case started, and the outside of the James Flood Building where the San Francisco offices of the Pinkerton Detective Agency were located when Hammett worked for them.

He also works in some San Francisco history and other movie sites, from *Vertigo* and *Dirty Harry*, that lay along the route of the tour. There is also a stop at Dashiell Hammett Way.

The second major stop, the first being Hammett's old apartment, is the most famous Hammett site in San



The building now housing the Green Door Massage Parlor sits on the site where Miles Archer was gunned down.

Francisco. Herron leads the group to the alley which used to overlook the spot where Miles Archer was gunned down by Bridget O'Shaunessey. The field is now a building and the alleyway now faces the back of it, but many of the nearby features are still recognizable.


The tour ends up in front of John's Grill where Spade ate chops and tomatoes. The tour, even running late, was too early for dinner on Sunday.

After the tour, Herron asked the group if anyone wanted to go to a nearby bar and continue the conversation. I was the only one who accepted, and I was glad I did. We talked hard-boiled writers and pulps until it was time to go. I had just enough time to make it back to Kayo Books to pick up two Richard Stark novels.

Herron knows his Hammett history and lore. He does a good job covering the basics, keeping up with the latest Hammett research and making the distinction that what he is saying is the best information available, but not necessarily the truth in all cases.

I've read all of the Hammett stories, and I knew many of them took place in San Francisco, but until I took the tour, I didn't realize just how much it was my San Francisco. There are places that I've passed many times that I never noticed, not realizing that this is the spot that this scene or that took place. The stories have a much greater reality for me now that I can picture where they took place.

The walk is not too hard, the highest hills were taken out after research showed that the sites there were where Hammett's family lived, and not where he lived. I got a very mild sunburn after the four-hour walk, but it was worth it.

The cost of the tour is \$10 per person. 



Don Herron describes the opening scenes of "The Whosis Kid" near where the Continental Op staked out the title character.

Wondercon: A Few Pulp Amongst the Funnies

By Warren Harris

Wondercon, held each April in Oakland, has always been a pretty good convention, as comic conventions go.

This year, the attendance seemed to be lighter than in past years, but I attended only the first day, Friday. Others reported that Saturday seemed to be more crowded.

This is mostly a comic book convention, but the organizers, the same group that puts on the San Diego Comic Book Convention, bill this as “The Nexus of All That’s Cool.” As a result, there is more than just comics, but it stops short of being a science fiction convention.

A handful of dealers had a box of pulps in a back corner, mostly science fiction pulps, but there were a number of hero, detective and even Western pulps.

One dealer had a random assortment of Western pulps and was asking \$10 each for them.

Another dealer, one who was mostly selling books and pulps with a couple of boxes of golden age comics, had a good selection of pulps, ranging from Black Mask, Dime Detective and 10 Detective Aces to Weird Tales and The Spider. I’ve seen him here before and he seems to be liquidating a collection, as each year the number of pulps gets smaller. I bought an All American Fiction from him.

He also had a few very early copies of the Shadow. He was asking \$700 for one of them. I decided that was far more than I wanted to pay.

Another dealer had a few of the later Spider issues, with chunks out of the covers. Prices were good, in the \$40 to \$45 range. The dealer with the Shadow issues had the same issues, with intact covers, going for \$80. I thought really hard about buying one, but then I decided that I could buy four of Rich Harvey’s Spider reprints for that price. I bought an early 1940s issue of Weird Tales from him instead.

Books on the pulps also seemed to be expensive. I spotted a copy of Tony Goodstone’s *The Pulp* for \$80 and another one for \$50. I know where you can pick up a copy of this at a bookstore in Berkeley for \$25, so I thought these were a bit overpriced.

One dealer had a paperback reprint of *Dian of the Lost Land* and had it marked as a first printing. I pointed out that there was a hardback printing and it seemed to be a case of his not knowing about the earlier printing. He was surprised that there was an earlier edition, I was surprised there was a later edition. While mistakes happen, I think if you’re a dealer and you’re marking a book First Printing, you should know enough about what you’re selling to make sure your information is right.

As usual, the Bud Plant booth was very tempting. They didn’t have as many good bargains or any hurt editions as they have had in the past. I did end up buying a copy of *The Weird Tales Story* from them. They had a small shelf of pulp related titles, including *The Bookery Fantasy Guide to the Pulp*, both Van Hise’s second edition of *Pulp Masters* and the other *Pulp Masters*, and several Adventure House products.



Baycon: Junk, Jewelry and Jedi, not many pulps

By Warren Harris

The 20th annual Baycon was held Memorial Day weekend in San Jose.

I attended only one day, Saturday. It was more than enough. The cost for a one-day pass was \$35, for all four days was \$65.

In the huckster’s room, booths selling clothing weapons, jewelry or trinkets all outnumbered booths selling books. Only three booths sold used books, and one of those had only three small stacks of books, including a stack of Tom Swifts.

The only really good used book dealer had boxes and boxes of paperbacks at really good prices. Among other items, I picked up three Lone Ranger books in great shape for only 75 cents each. The prices were low enough, and the books good enough, to partially make

up for the cost of getting in the door.

This dealer also had the only pulps to be seen — five bedsheet science fiction pulps, an Astounding and two or three western titles.

The rest of the dealers were all jewelry, pins, velvet cloaks, bumper stickers, Star Trek licence plate frames, light sabers, boffer swords, real swords and other junk.

One dealer was selling beaten bronze mirrors, bronze knives and other Wiccan magickal do-dads.

The panels on Saturday were uninteresting. The anime program was showing programs that were available for rent or on cable. The Society for Creative Headbashing held demonstration bouts.

Guest of Honor was Harry Turtledove, special guest was Harlan Ellison.

Hall costumes ranged from an AT-AT scout

walker, lots of Jedi, Storm Troopers, Star Fleet officers and many Klingon Warriors.

The outing was valuable in one sense, now I won't be tempted to spend the money to attend the World Con being held this fall in San Jose. I saw all I needed to see at this one.

I left when one of the members of the large

Klingon contingent at the hotel bar began singing some song in a made up language and the others all joined in.

I find it hard to believe that anyone would invent a language, harder still to believe that anyone would write a song in that language, and I'm completely baffled that *they all knew the words to the song.* 🌳



Pulpdom

Edited by Camille Cazedessus II

March 2002

Subscription: 6 issues for \$30

30 Pages

By Warren Harris

The latest issue of the long-running pulp fanzine Pulpdom concentrates on stories about the sea and seafaring. As usual, there is an emphasis on earlier pulp fiction, an area that does not get the attention that it deserves.

A list of titles with bibliographical information on early J. Allan Dunn stories leads off the issue, including some information on stories printed under a possible Dunn pen name, Joseph Montague.

Al Lybeck has an article on stories set in the Sargasso Sea, "Requiem for a Lost Sea" that traces

the theme through the decades. He lists a number of stories, by authors ranging from William Hope Hodgson to Dennis Wheatley.

Fiction contents include an early William Hope Hodgson story from the pages of Blue Book. "The Voice in the Night" is a spooky story from 1907 that would have been right at home in Weird Tales 20 years later.

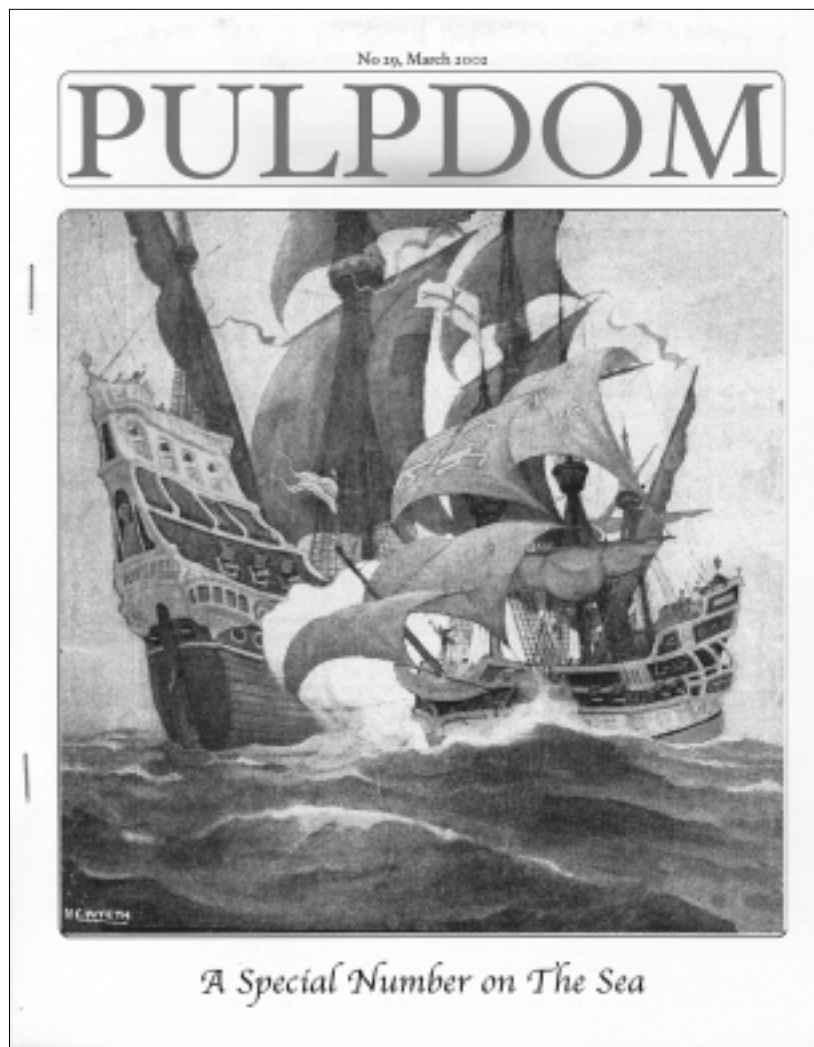
There is also a poem by popular early fantasy writer A. Merritt. "The Wind Trail" is from the pages of "The Outlook" in 1920.

There is a short article, illustrated with several color pulp cover scans, on pulps with a sea theme, such as Sea Stories.

A look at four modern novelists who write stories of sea adventures consists of lists of books in the various series.

Color images are used through, including a lovely full page adapted from the cover of a 1919 Adventure. The full color cover by N.C. Wyeth shows two fighting ships exchanging broadsides. The color back cover shows a deep sea diver on the bottom of the ocean taken from Argosy for December of 1914.

The March issue rounds out with several pages of advertising for pulp and other genre fiction items. 🌳





Windy City Convention Program Book
Edited by Tom Roberts
March 2002
Half letter-size booklet
Free with admission to the Windy City
Pulp and Paperback Show

By Warren Harris

Much more than a mere schedule of events, it's a shame that the 2nd Annual Windy City Pulp and Paperback Show program book is not available for sale.

Editor Tom Roberts has done a good job here, both in the production, and in the selection of contents.

Windy City Guest of Honor Jim Steranko provides a stunning black and white illustration of the Shadow coming to the rescue of some Johnny-come-lately. This is a great piece of artwork that far surpasses the typical convention program cover. Roberts wisely does not have any text on the cover, letting the illustration stand alone.

Roberts has done an excellent job with the printing and the cover and interior illustrations are all nicely reproduced. The format is the same as the books Roberts produces for his Black Dog Books imprint, but the quality here is even better.

The contents lead off with a terrific article on the pulp-related movies that were shown as part of the program. Ed Hulse does more than list a schedule though, this article has a lot of good information on the relationship between the movies and pulps and the writers who worked for both.

Hulse provides the background on the pulp tie-in on each of the movies shown and a good capsule review

that would enable anyone lucky enough to attend to be able to make a good decision on which to see.

There is a several page autobiography of Guest of Honor Steranko, which details his many accomplishments.

Windy City co-organizer Doug Ellis put together a partial index to a pair of rare pulps, *Scarlett Adventuress* and *Modern Adventuress*. There are some nice cover images included in the index, along with a history of the title and a short description of some of the contents. These have some stories that it would be nice to see reprinted, say in an issue of *Pulp Vault*.

Doc Savage expert Will Murray, a former Kenneth Robeson himself, writes another entry in his *Doc Savage Files*. This one details Lester Dent's alternate ending to *Pirate of the Pacific*.

For those complaining about the information being "hoarded" by members of P.E.A.P.S., there is a reprint of the "Pulp History Timeline" that John Gunnison ran originally in his P.E.A.P.S. pages.


The timeline traces year by year when each pulp listed in *The Adventure House Guide To The Pulps* began. It's interesting to see the information broken out like this, but it would have been better to have also listed the length of the run of each pulp or when each pulp ended. Pulps that have a long run are indistinguishable from one-shot issues. It also would have been nice to know which months or years had the most individual issues published, and not just which months had the most new pulps issued.

While the information is the same as in P.E.A.P.S., the layout is better here, with a more concise presentation that allowed more information to be seen at a glance.

The issue finished off with a reprint of a Robert E. Howard story from the pages

of *Golden Fleece*.

Gates of Empire is a not too-frequently reprinted story and was a good choice to include here.

Set during the crusades, it features an unusual hero for Howard. Giles Hobson is more braggart and drunk than action hero. 





The Mystery & Adventure Series Review Summer 2002

**\$3.00 (at Tower Books, subscriptions are
“whatever you care to donate”)**

Half letter-size, saddle-stapled booklet

By Warren Harris

This is an impressive small press zine that covers young adult series books.

The typography and design of this is really impressive. Editor Fred Woodworth does it all on older equipment, setting type by machinery that many would consider obsolete. Woodworth would disagree, he’s against computers and has a fondness for doing his zine the old fashioned way. His skill as a typesetter is such that his zine compares well to computer-generated zines. His lack of typos is astonishing when you consider that he doesn’t have the crutch of a spell checking program that modern typesetters have come to rely on.

His opening editorial goes in depth on typographical issues, and is interesting to those who care about the difference between bookman and copperplate.

He follows this with an essay on rationalism in children’s series literature. He makes some excellent points about how older series promoted a rational view of the world and encouraged their characters, and readers, to look for a logical and scientific solution to their problems.

Iris J. Arnesen has a scathing, but well-supported, review of a Harry Potter novel. She doesn’t like *The Prisoner of Azkaban* not only because of its anti-rational

support of magic, but because it encourages children to betray their friends and tattle to adults.

David M. Baumann writes an article on weather in series fiction.

Woodworth looks at a Fran Striker novel, *The Secret of Thunder Mountain*. “The Real Thunder Mountain” examines the book by the creator of The Lone Ranger in depth.

There is also a regular feature, “Getting Straight on Where it Was,” that has a two color map based on a Tom Quest adventure in the Florida Everglades.

Arnesen returns with a second article, this one a look at “Bomba’s Operatic Roots.” Arnesen, who produces a magazine on local opera in Arizona, seems to know what she’s talking about when she says that the creator of Bomba must have been very knowledgeable about opera. Not only does she point out several characters that have opera connections or make opera references, but she traces plots to their operatic roots.

Other articles include “The Hardy Boys in Dutch” and “A Quick Look at Cussin’ in Series Books.”

In the Bibliographic Department this issue, there is a look at Ken Holt #16 with some speculation on who wrote it.

There is a lively letters column on diverse subjects, from typography, to computers, to, of course, series books.


The copy reviewed was purchased at a Tower Records and Books, who should either be commended for supporting small press zines or condemned for putting not one, but two, non-removable stickers on the front cover as if the pencilled \$3 price tag in the corner were not enough.

These stickers really detract from the subtle coloring done over the cover image, which was taken from a series



book. The stickers don’t come off either.

The entire issue has Woodworth’s stamp on it. It is very much in the tradition of old-style fanzines and amateur publishing.

Woodworth is opinionated and devoted to his subjects, which include computers, typography, television, and the general state of modern life as well as children’s series fiction. 



The Great American Paperback

By Richard A. Lupoff

Collector's Press Inc.

2001

\$60 (\$19.95 on remainder, \$29.95 some locations)

320 Pages

By Warren Harris

While it masquerades as a pretty coffee table book with lots of cool pictures, *The Great American Paperback* is also a solidly researched, readable history of paperback publishing.

The book is very well organized. The author traces the history of the major paperback publishers, giving each of the biggest companies their own chapter.

If a paperback house has a connection to a pulp publisher, Lupoff details that connection.

He does a good job balancing the importance of the books' covers and the artists with the books' contents and the authors. While this is not a history of cover artists, he does provide good information on the big name artists and the major trends in cover art, showing the important covers. While not a book on paperback writers, he does a good job of mentioning the important and influential authors and their major works.

He also has a nice balance of sleaze with literature. Books by Mark Twain are given the same attention as those by the average hack.

This is an information-heavy book. Lupoff has lots of details and commentary. Unlike many similar books, the text goes from edge to edge, without any large swatches of white space on every page.

If he mentions a book, there is sure to be an illustration of the cover, although it may be a few pages

away from the corresponding text. There are plenty of illustrations here, and images of covers go on for pages at a stretch. The computer-enhanced images, courtesy of John Gunnison, are all beautiful.

Lupoff is not afraid to share his opinions on the covers and contents. He provides a good guide to which books are important, both for historical value and intrinsic value. He'll tell you when he thinks a book is a good read or praise the work of a favorite author. For example, he calls Jim Thompson's *The Killer Inside Me* a "perfect novel." But he's also quick to point out shortcomings.

Even the captions to the cover illustrations are laden with information that is not in the main text. Lupoff has far too much ground to cover to repeat himself.

He does not mention prices, so his book will not date, but he does use a system that describes how collectable a book is compared with other vintage paperbacks. He has a nice essay on collecting books, but it could have been longer. He also doesn't provide a definition for condition grades or emphasize enough the importance of condition to the value of the books.

He has to stop his history of paperbacks somewhere, and he ends when publishers stopped issuing house numbers and started using USBN numbers.

The few flaws in the book come mostly from the design, by Michael Grazido, and not Lupoff's writing.

One of these flaws is the presentation of the covers illustrating the text. Covers are set to overlap one another. While in most cases very little is lost, in almost all cases there is ample room on the page to move the covers around so that the full cover could be shown. The layout is very attractive and artistic, and it would be appreciated if this were a book on good layout. Since this is a book where the reader would presumably be more interested in the cover art shown than the layout showing it, the overlaps should have been eliminated.

Lupoff says *Chinatown Molls* "sports one of the most striking covers of the era", but it is one of the 2 smallest covers on the page and the cover for *Off Limits* covers up a small part of the image. Even worse, the caption for *Dream Club* mentions the hypodermic needle on the cover, but most of the needle



is obscured by the overlapping cover for *Come Sin With Me*, even though there is plenty of room on the page for all of the images if they were rearranged.

Granted, the layout would be more static if they did not overlap. There was a choice made between dynamic layout and full display of the cover art. Layout won, art lost. All of the pages are full color to the edges. While this makes an attractive background for the images, it makes the text harder to read than if it were printed on white paper.

A few more back covers from Dell Mapbacks and a shot of a spine of an Ace Double would have been nice, but there are so many covers shown that it would be hard to find a place to wedge in any more.

Lupoff hits most of the points he needs to, although in his coverage of *Laser*, he does not mention that the last few were available by subscription only, and therefore are harder to find. He also does say anything about *Corinth* and their unauthorized reprints of pulp novels.

Lyle Kenyon Engel's book packaging empire and the entire field of men's adventure series should have rated at least a page or two. He also goes a bit lighter than he could on the story of the unauthorized editions of Burroughs and Tolkien.

One minor error was that in the text he calls the first Dell book *Murder in the Library* but the cover of the book, and the accompanying caption, shows it as *Death in the Library*. He also doesn't have all of the

information on the *Blue Steel* novel that was adapted from the unpublished last issue of the Spider.

He could also have gone into more detail on the distribution and retail sales end of the history of paperback publishing. And his calling Robert E. Howard "a bizarre, blustery character" is going to be unpalatable to Howard fans.


While he gives excellent details on the history of the major paperback houses, he could have done more with the smaller houses, particularly some of the fly-by-night outfits and their reputed mob connections.

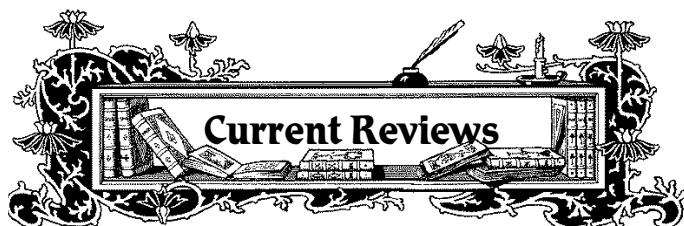
He also does not give enough space to L.A. Bantam, while he mentions the house, and runs two covers, he doesn't provide any details about this legendary, if brief imprint and its unique distribution scheme. While he ties them in with Western Publishing, exactly what the connection between the two is not explored. In fact he calls the L.A. Bantams "the holy of holies" but doesn't give a clue why.

The index should have been much larger.

Unlike some other authors turned historians, he is becomingly modest when it comes to including his own work. He only prints one cover from one of his books and he talks more about the Frazetta cover on it than his own work.

There aren't many books that are actually worth \$60, but this one is. It's a real bargain at \$19.95.

Now if Lupoff can only be persuaded to do a companion book on the history of the pulps. 



Golden Perils

Issue 25

Edited By Howard Hopkins

Golden Perils Press

June 2002

\$2.95

PDF Format

Howard Hopkins celebrates Golden Peril's silver anniversary issue with the usual mix of reviews and news and leading off with an article on Doc Savage.

Tom Barnett's eight-page article on "Secret Sequels" in the Doc Savage series matches two pair of Doc adven-


tures and constructs a speculative background linking each pair.

While he can't prove the similarities are not a result of Dent's reusing themes, he makes an interesting case for his thesis.

He has to stretch the facts a bit and invent connections, but it is all in good fun. The article is illustrated by covers from both the pulp and paperback editions of the stories examined.

Bill Thom again presents the Golden Perils Newline. This time he has 18 pages of news and things to buy. As usual he's turned up many items of interest to pulpsters that haven't been widely announced. Nothing even remotely pulp related escapes his watchful eye.

There are eight pages of reviews of genre fiction by a number of reviewers.

The uncredited back cover shows Doc Savage being menaced by a toothy dinosaur. 





Call of Cthulhu

By Monte Cook and John Tynes

Wizards of the Coast

2002

\$39.95

320 pages

By Richard J. Berman

Inspired by the horror fiction of H.P. Lovecraft and numerous other writers who have contributed to the Cthulhu Mythos, “Call of Cthulhu” thrusts players into the roles of investigators trying to save the world from crazed cultists and otherworldly monsters. Based largely on a previous game of the same name done by Chaosium, Wizards of the Coast has tried to retain the dark, gritty atmosphere of the original while using their new, universal d20 system. However, some of these rules get in the way of a great game.



The first steps in any role playing game is character creation. In this case, “Call of Cthulhu” definitely excels beyond the original. Determining basic statistics and skills is essentially the same. Just roll six-sided dice for stats, then choose an occupation you would like to play. Typical occupations include professors, dilettantes and private eyes.

One problem with the occupations given is that three sample characters have jobs that aren’t listed in the character creation section. You can figure what skills are necessary for those occupations (lawyer, journalist, athlete) by looking at the sample stats, but players should not have to search the rule book to find the occupation they want. It should be presented at the beginning.

The skills system has changed from using percentile dice (two, ten-sided dice) to buying skill levels to modify the roll on a twenty-sided die. I like this new system because it gives starting characters a chance to be specialists in certain

fields. Rules on skill use have also been cleared up and expanded.

A welcome addition to “Call of Cthulhu” is giving characters special talents, called “Feats”. Example feats include: ambidexterity, toughness, weapon proficiency and weapon finesse. Players can even choose psychic feats and give their characters a wide array of psionic abilities. In the sanity-blasting world of Cthulhu, this may not necessarily be a good thing.

The sanity rules are exactly the same as in the Chaosium edition. Investigators can lose sanity points and go insane from delving into the horrible secrets of the Mythos.

The worst part of the game is, unfortunately, one of the most integral—combat. This is where the new d20 system falls flat on its face. Combat in the original system was very simple, again based on percentile dice. The d20 method starts basic enough, just roll equal to or over a creature’s armor class on a twenty-sided die. The sticky part is figuring out all of the positive and negative modifiers that can affect the roll. The action can come to a crashing halt while the gamemaster and players flip through the rule book trying to find the correct modifier for the situation. The designers should have reprinted the pertinent combat rules and tables at the back of the book for easy reference.

Another problem is that unless beginning characters take the weapons proficiency feat, they won’t hit the broad side of a shoggoth. The penalty for untrained weapon use is -4. Now, throw in the modifiers for range and for firing more than one shot and you could easily be at a -10 disadvantage.

The bestiary of Mythos creatures is very detailed and includes most of the well-known monsters and deities. Almost every entry has a color picture accompanying it. Also included is background information and how a particular monster fights. Prospective game masters



can get many story ideas just from this section. The art is pretty good, considering the difficulty of the subject matter.

In the chapter on Mythos deities, the designers state "...the Cthulhu Mythos in the game shouldn't provide a coherent vision." However, in the portion that reveals the god's stats, they try to do just that. The Great Old Ones and the Outer Gods are given domains where they supposedly have influence. For instance, Cthulhu has dominion over evil, death, destruction, and water.

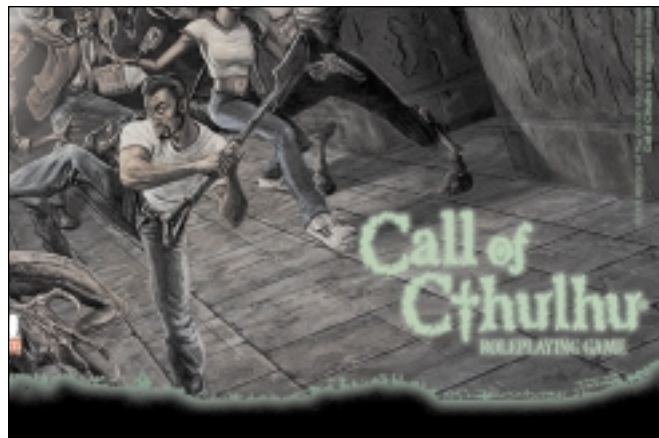
How can Cthulhu be a water god when he is dormant when under the ocean? They also give him the Alchemy and Scry skills which aren't in the book. When listing their powers, the designers just stuck to combat abilities and only gave hints to the other ones. Cthulhu's power to contact dreamers and send nightmares is barely mentioned. They also imply that some of the gods can be killed if one deals enough damage to them. This is entirely inconsistent with every Lovecraft story I have ever read.

The background information on the Great Old Ones and Outer Gods was useful. Some statements were questionable, (Cthulhu is the high priest of Azathoth?) but most of it is interesting and useful in generating plot lines. The best entry was on Hastur, giving great material on one of the most complex Old Ones.

The writers have taken the setting from Lovecraft's New England of the '20s and spread it out. Ideas are presented from the 1890s to the present. This time span is broken up into ten time periods with possible plot lines provided for each. These story lines are not only taken from Lovecraft, but from other authors and even movies. I like this notion of throwing non-Mythos adventures at players. It makes the game less predictable.

An interesting surprise at the end of the book is a two-page reading list. Thirty-three authors and five anthologies are listed with notes on what stories to focus on. Lovecraft, of course, has the biggest entry but they also have extensive lists for Clark Ashton Smith, Lord Dunsany and M.R. James. I think Robert E. Howard gets short-changed though. They only credit him with the questionable *Nameless Cults*. This collection, reviewed last

issue, doesn't even have "Pigeons From Hell", his most famous Mythos story. He should have been recognized by the titles of his short stories, like the rest of the authors.



This point aside, I was pleased to see such an extensive bibliography included in an RPG.

One error to note, however. The authors credit *Scrolls of Thoth* to Robert Price, when it should be Richard L. Tierney. Price just edited the collection.

At one point, the writers explain the difference between pulp horror and grim horror. To them, pulp horror is the two-fisted style of Robert E. Howard while grim horror is Lovecraft. They miss the point that Lovecraft is pulp horror, he was printed in *Weird Tales* long before Derleth started putting his works in collections.

The presentation of the book is first-class. It is a hardcover with high-quality glossy paper. The illustrations are good and most are in color. The text is well-written and there are plenty of Lovecraft's quotes from stories and letters throughout.

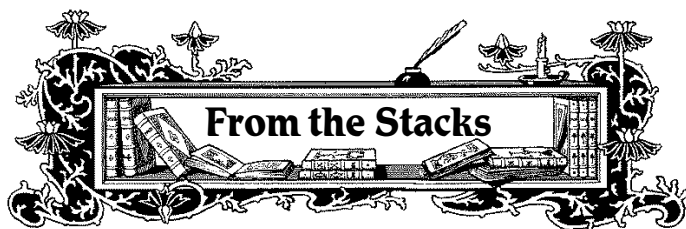
My final verdict on Wizards of the Coast's "Call of Cthulhu" is mixed. The new d20 system does not add much to the game and the combat rules can bring it to a screeching halt. Its strength lies in the universe the game is set in. The designers have done a good job

in capturing the feel of Lovecraft's stories without being wholly locked into them. Having been a fan of the original game, I can say from experience that roleplaying in Lovecraft's world can be a lot of fun.

In the course of doing this review I started having strange dreams. Dark dreams of black basalt towers entombed beneath the

waves. Dreams of things that are long past but will be again. Wait, is that a scratching at the window? Scratching... scratching...





Doc Sidhe

By Aaron Allston

Baen Books

1995

\$5.99

337 pages

By Richard J. Berman

Aaron Allston blends the Avenger and Doc Savage with sorcery, martial arts, weird science, and Celtic myth to make one of the most enjoyable reads I've had in a long time.

The story goes like this: Harris Greene, a failed professional kick boxer, foils the kidnapping of his girlfriend but gets transported to a world straight out of the 1930s hero pulps. Harris soon joins forces with Doc Sidhe, a world-renown troubleshooter, and his companions to thwart a plot that could destroy both worlds.

Okay. I know. The whole "If we fail, both universes will die!" story line has been done before. However, Allston keeps it fresh with rich characters and one of the best alternate universes around.

Typically in "fish out of water" stories, the hero gets zapped into a strange, new world and then proceeds to whine for most of the book about how he wants to go home. Then, in the last few chapters, he finally adjusts to the new climate just in time to head back to his boring existence in our world. For the protagonist in "Doc Sidhe," this is not the case.

Harris Greene is a skilled martial artist and a very likable guy. He adapts quickly to his new surroundings and works with Doc, rather than rail against him. I found myself rooting for him, hoping he kicks the villain's ass and gets the girl.

My favorite character is Doc himself. (I don't think he's ever referred to as "Doc Sidhe" in the story.) He's one of the last pure-blood elves, or sidhe, on the planet which grants him magical abilities. Doc is a technical genius, a capable pilot, and a tough combatant.

His best quality, however, is that he's not perfect and he knows it. Doc often defers to the opinions of his companions. I like this change from the supremely arrogant attitude that some pulp heroes have.

Doc's teammates aren't pushovers, either. Unlike Doc Savage's traveling cheering section, they fight alongside Doc Sidhe and have abilities that surpass even his. For instance, Noriko, the Oriental swordswoman, could probably take Doc in a fight if it weren't for his magic. Their roles are never hero and sidekick. It's more like a group of friends banding together to help people out.

The villains are appropriately despicable. I hated them, but in a good way. They were ruthless, persistent, and smart. They didn't throw themselves in front of Doc's guns but fought tooth and nail in every battle. The master plan is a good one and it takes a while for Doc to figure it out.

The action sequences, and there are a lot of them, are done very well. The fights are exciting and intense. The chase scenes are fast-paced and easy to follow. Sometimes in novels car chases are hard to understand because of a lack of good details, but this was not the case. Allston is better known for writing the more


action-packed novels set in the Star Wars universe so I wasn't too surprised by his command of a fight scene.

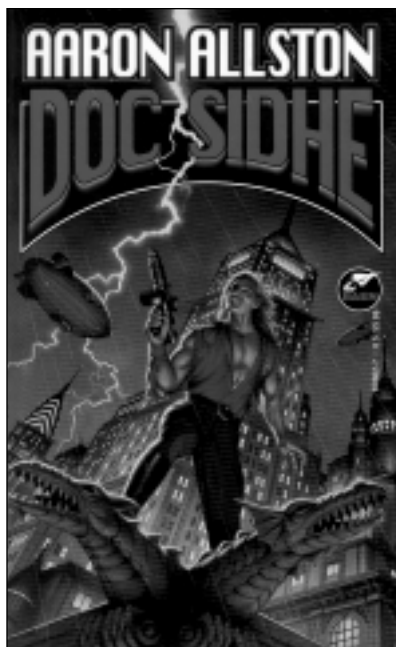
The magic system is ingenious. Spells are cast when a sorcerer, or deviser, beseeches a particular god for a desired effect and then promises the deity something in return. Magic is open-ended enough to accomplish a variety of goals but costly enough to prevent it becoming a *deus ex machina*.

Doc Sidhe also draws much of its strength from its pulp roots. Futuristic vehicles and gadgets, seen through the lens of the 1930s, are used extensively throughout the novel. The climatic battle even takes place on a zeppelin above the skyscrapers of Neckerdam (New York).

Unfortunately, the word "pulp" is never used anywhere on the covers to describe Doc. Instead, he's "this Art-Deco universe's champion." This has to be due to the erroneous and negative definition that pulp fiction has been saddled with. I think it's sad when an obvious pulp homage like *Doc Sidhe* can't even mention its origins by name.

Allston dedicates the book to Lester Dent and Walter Gibson, and his parents.

Doc Sidhe is a good, exciting start to a promising series. 





Current Reviews

Sidhe-Devil

By Aaron Allston

Baen Books

2001

\$6.99

500 pages

By Richard J. Berman

Aaron Allston returns to his pulp sorcery world in this exciting follow-up to *Doc Sidhe*. Although the action is still fast-paced and the characters are interesting, *Sidhe-Devil* suffers from a few problems. One is a carry-over from the original, but the others are brand new.

The protagonist this time is Zeb Watson, Harris Greene's trainer and manager who made a brief appearance in the first book.

After fighting off an ambush at Harris' wedding, Zeb discovers his friend's double life and accompanies him to the fairworld of Doc Sidhe. Zeb joins forces with Doc and his crew to foil the destruction of skyscrapers and the rise of fascism.

Even though it was written before the attacks, the idea of madmen blowing up buildings is still a touchy subject for me. It was impossible to read this and not think of 9/11. I really didn't see the point of it anyway, other than as an excuse for Doc to get involved.

It may have been due to the length of the book, but by the end, some of the characters were getting on my nerves. For instance, Harris acted like the leader of the group and barked out orders at everyone. I found it unrealistic that he became such an expert of the fairworld in only a few months.

There is also a lingering problem from the first book. The focus should be on Doc himself, but instead he's relegated to a supporting role again. At least he does some interesting spells and we get to see a little more into his background. Zeb's character takes over the leading role and is actually more likable than Harris was in the first novel. He's a better martial artist and

definitely braver. Zeb is more than willing to risk life and limb to help out people he doesn't even know. I like that kind of hero.

The villains rely on quantity over quality. They have an intricate plan that obviously took some brains to figure out but once Doc starts investigating, they become really stupid.


For instance, Doc and crew go to the Fairworld's version of the 1936 Olympic Games and make no attempt at disguising their identities. This doesn't seem to matter because the bad guys don't even keep them under surveillance. Doc has free reign of the city and carries out his plans at will.

The bad guys just react to what Doc is doing rather than matching him move for move as in the first book. Their battle plan is to just throw wave after wave of guards at him and hope for the best.

Another troublesome plot point was Allston's handling of racism. The racial hierarchy is divided into three groups: lights, darks, and dusksies. The lights are purebloods, darks have a little sidhe blood and dusksies have none.

Although exposing the evils of racism is admirable, I felt that it was forced. There was no mention of any racial discrimination in the first book even though half of Doc's team is made up of so-called dusksies.

Sidhe-Devil also lacks the Doc Savage feel that was so prevalent in *Doc Sidhe*. There is a taste of it in the beginning when the team flew out of Doc's penthouse hanger in a futuristic vehicle but the rest was a straight-forward adventure story. Allston started to bring in elements of the Shadow for one character but he never fully developed it.

In conclusion, *Sidhe-Devil* was an enjoyable book, but disappointing when compared to *Doc Sidhe*. 



Editor's Note:

Baen Books, in what is a militant break with many publishers, is releasing some of their backlist books for free on the internet. Usually these are earlier books in a series so the free book will promote the latest release.

According to Eric Flint, books that have been given away free in electronic format have become major sellers as many readers who sampled the free books wanted to purchase hard copy versions.

Aaron Allston is taking part in this program and *Doc Sidhe* is available at no charge in electronic format from Baen Books. The web site is at www.baen.com.

Recent Reading:

Black Bird

By Richard Stark (Donald Westlake)

This is the first of the Grofield novels I've read. Grofield is a sometime partner of Parker who is also featured in his own series of novels.

One of the interesting things about this book is that it shares its first chapter with the Parker novel "Slayground". Only here, the action is seen from Grofield's perspective. The first chapter in both show Parker and Grofield trying to take down an armored car. Thanks to some bad work by their getaway driver, the getaway is a mess. In "Slayground" which I reviewed last issue, the first chapter sets up a tense cat and mouse game between Parker and his opponents (who don't realize until too late that they're the mice.) In *The Black Bird*, Grofield is captured by the police, but is offered a walk on the armed robbery charges — if he agrees to become a spy for an unnamed U.S. spy agency.

Grofield is not nearly as tough or competent as Parker, who would have found a way to screw both sides and get away with the loot. Grofield stumbles through the book, but at the end, he comes up with an appropriate Parker-style way to resolve the situation. Unfortunately, his solution is moot after a strategic bombing run.

Johnny Liddell's Morgue

By Frank Kane

A bookstore in Las Vegas had a stack of these Johnny Liddell books, and I picked up a few at \$3.00 each. I had not read any of Kane's books before, but they looked like they might be good P.I. fiction.

The stories in this are pretty generic private eye stories. Liddell works for free, gets framed for a murder, has a client he doesn't know about get killed so he continues on the case out of the goodness of his heart.

It's going to be a while

before I begin any of the other Kane books I have.

Quiller (original British title: Northlight)

By Adam Hall (Elleston Trevor)

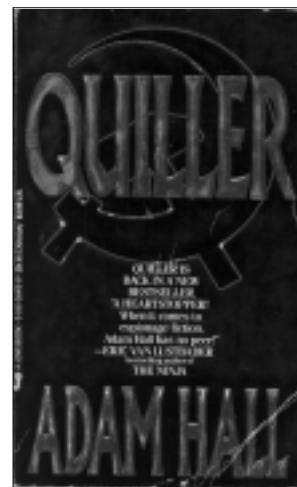
You can feel the chill of northern Russia in this book, both from the cold, and the fear of the KGB on Quiller's trail. Quiller is sent behind the Iron Curtain to extract a mole who is the key to keeping the cold war from heating up. This is the first of the "second" series of Quiller books, after a break of 4 years. I don't know if there really was a break, but it's the longest time between books in the series, and the format of the titles change at this point. Quiller is betrayed by all sides here, to the point where there is almost no chance of his survival. Of course, Quiller is the master at survival when the odds are against him, but when his own agency is setting him up, and trying to assassinate him, he's got more trouble than usual.

Quiller's Run

By Adam Hall

Following the betrayal in "Quiller", he quits the bureau and strikes out on his own, taking a free-lance assignment for a South East Asia government. Hall is at his best in this one, with the atmosphere of southeast Asia permeating the book. Quiller is hired to take out the beautiful and deadly woman who heads a secret organization that is about to take possession of the weapons that will turn all of Southeast Asia into a conflagration.

Cut off from the support he's used to getting, taking on an enemy that has already survived several assassination attempts, Quiller has to evade death at the hands of a legion of female assassin/bodyguards, a car bomb, and a thuggee assassin who has never failed. This is the best Quiller I've read. Hall is at his best at creating suspense and tightening the screws. There is a great scene where Quiller is attending the funeral of one of the villain's lieutenants in a spooky temple when he realizes that he is surrounded. The funeral bells are tolling, the enemy agents are in the gallery, and then the beautiful, but deadly, adversary herself shows up. The chapter ends with Quiller, unarmed, prepared to fight to the death as the robed assassins unsheathe their blades. It is a very effective scene. Unfortunately, the next chapter starts hours later with Quiller telling in retrospect how he



survived. This is a very annoying stylistic quirk that occurs in all of the books. Hall brings you right to the edge, ends the chapter with what seems to be certain death, and then describes the ending as a flashback, in an offhand way, in the next chapter.

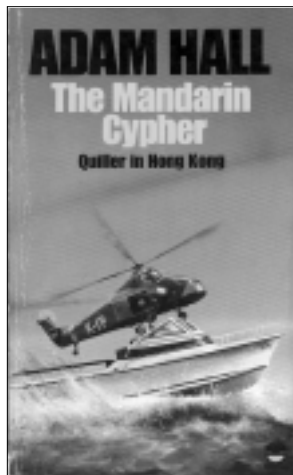
Still, the book was well worth reading. I realized quite a while before Quiller did that he was still working for the Bureau, even though he had resigned. They had, once again, tricked him into taking on their mission. Of course, he knows he's being tricked. It's one of his traits that he mopes around demanding a mission, but then will bitch that the mission isn't important enough, or if it is a critical mission, he'll try to back out because it's a suicide run. So he has to be tricked into taking the mission that he really wants to take. But he knows that he is being tricked, and lets them trick him, so that he can have an excuse to go on the mission he wants to go on anyway. I don't know why he doesn't just accept the assignments in the first place.



The Mandarin Cypher

By Adam Hall

This is an earlier entry in the series than the two above. As always, Quiller has to be finagled into taking the assignment in this entry from the early 70s. This is a fairly good, but not exceptional, Quiller adventure. Quiller has to investigate the death of a British national in Hong Kong. The local flavor seems lacking here compared with the adventures that take place behind the Iron Curtain or in Southeast Asia.



Quiller is upset that he's been given what seems like a routine inquiry, but again, his handlers have tricked him into taking a tough job that ends up with Quiller being dropped off by submarine to infiltrate, frogman style, a Red Chinese oil drilling platform.

The ending seemed rushed. I wouldn't recommend this one as a place to start the series, but it's not bad if you're already a Quiller fan.

The Ninth Directive

By Adam Hall

Quiller is again in South East Asia (I guess I shouldn't say "again" as this is the second book in the series, earlier than Quiller's Run by 22 years.) and his mission this time is to keep one of the world's best assassins from killing a member of the British royal family. There's a nice scene where his control bluntly tells him that he's a pain in the ass, is not the best agent the Bureau has, and how he always has to be coerced into doing what the Bureau, and Quiller, wants done.

I think I am beginning to understand Quiller as a character. He claims he isn't a thrill-seeking assassin with a death wish, but he protests too much. He is adamant that he is not a killer, except in self defense. But throughout the series, there are a number of exceptions. In order to maintain his self image, he forces his bosses to back him into a corner where he must either go on a suicide mission or kill someone in cold blood. He is certainly a more complex character than you often get in spy fiction.

If anyone has a copy of "Quiller Balalaika" for sale, please let me know. It's the last of the 19 Quiller books, and it so far hasn't been printed in the U.S. I understand that Hall finished it just a few days before his death.

The World's Most Dangerous Places

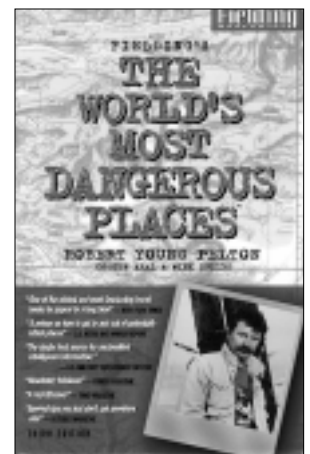
By Robert Young Pelton, et al.

I normally have no interest in travel books, but this one is an interesting exception.

Instead of reviewing places that a tourist might want to go, these guys do reviews of places that nobody in their right mind would want to visit.

I've had this book for several years, and I just never got around to reading it. It's a pretty thick book, at 900 plus pages, so I guess I just haven't wanted to invest the time it took to get through it.

This serves as more than just a travel book, the writers do an excellent job of describing the current events and history of places that end up on the evening news. For example, if you want to know who all of the various terrorist groups, death squads, military strongmen and dictators are in Columbia, they give a good rundown. I enjoyed this more for the background on current news events than for the



Back Numbers Can Be Easily Procured

travel information.

There are also some great stories told by the contributors, who are mostly war correspondents, combat photographers, and nut cases with a death wish. Some of the stories told are “How I took photos during the civil war in Lebanon,” “How I snuck across the border to interview the Taliban” and “How I got imprisoned in Africa as a spy.”

There is even an account by a former French Foreign Legionnaire detailing what it’s like to be one these days.

This is really a book that convinces you that there’s no place like home.

I did have some problems with some of the editorial slant and with some of the choices made. I certainly don’t think that the United States ranks up there with Somalia as one of the world’s most dangerous places. No European country makes the list, despite ETA attacks in Spain and some tantalizing hints about thieves using knockout gas to rob train passengers in Eastern Europe. Knockout gas, now there’s a hoary old pulp cliché.

The main author has been in the news lately as the CNN correspondent who first interviewed “American Taliban” John Walker Lindh. He’s still in the thick of the war zone, still visiting dangerous places.

Two

By John D. MacDonald

This is a genuine pulp magazine reprint, with two stories copyrighted by Popular Publications from 1955. There is no information on which title or the month of publication, though.

Two was a very short read, it’s only 91 pages long and only has two stories. The first is a very short story “Long Shot” that is a sort of Florida slice-of-life vignette set at the dog track. No real action here, but it shows some of the themes that MacDonald would continue to work with through the years. The second story, “Jail Bait,” is a pretty fair, and very pulpy, story about a woman who is the target of a group of criminals. The cops are using her as bait. She’s a bit dense and doesn’t seem to realize what is really going on for most of the story, but MacDonald makes the point early on that she’s not a hardened gun moll, but a silly, average girl who thinks she wants adventure.

Both of these were competently written filler stories that are comparable with many of the lesser stories

in the pulps. Neither of these to me had the MacDonald genius going for them, but they do hold up as well or better than many contemporary tales from the same pulps. It’s interesting to see MacDonald putting his characters through what is a pretty basic pulp plot.

I wonder why Carroll and Graf decided to print only two stories here. I’d be pretty reluctant to pay full price here for a 91 page book. Luckily I found it at a library book sale. It seems obvious that they should have put in at least three to five more stories to fill out the collection

Demon Island

By Kenneth Robeson (Ron Goulart)

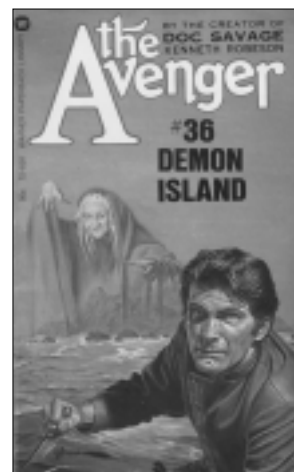
A terrible disappointment and a sad end to the series.

Unlike many Avenger fans, I haven’t minded some of the Goulart entries in the series. He does have a bad habit of “retro chic”ing his books, by putting in references based on what the average person thinks of when they think of the pulp era. But he also tones down some of the juvenile stuff Paul Ernst used, like the creasing of skulls with every shot or the boiler plate text describing the Avenger’s weapons. A man’s got to be unbalanced if he starts giving his knife a name.

But this just stunk. The elements are all there. He’s got a spooky island off of the coast of California during WW II. He’s got a band of crooks running around trying to dig up loot left by bootleggers. He’s got a Hollywood film crew whose shooting schedule is being interrupted by a mysterious haunting.

I would have accepted that the Japanese were using the island for a submarine base and were trying to scare away people. I would have accepted a rival group of gangsters, a mad scientist or a crazy hermit. I would have loved a more original approach. Instead the answer to who’s haunting the island is: (spoiler ahead) the ghost!

Yup, the island is really haunted and the previously scientific Avenger starts believing in killer spooks. What’s wrong with Goulart? The answer is never that there really is a ghost. The Hardy Boys, The Three Investigators, Scooby Doo and a legion of imitators have proven that it’s always the old caretaker trying to scare people away so he can search for the lost treasure in peace. 🐸



Mailing Comments:

Mailing comments for this issue are going to have to be short, the deadline is looming and I don't have enough time to do as thorough a job as I'd like. For various reasons, I have just received my copy of the April mailing in July and that's not allowing enough time to reread everything and comment.

Section One

Sulf V.2, #55: Norm Metcalf

Thank you for the information on the editorship of Argosy. My notes say that Matthew White was editor of the Argosy both before and after the merger with All-Story.

According to Hugh B. Cave, in *Pulp Man's Odyssey*, Don Moore is the editor in 1933, confirming your dates.

The Argonotes for August 1, 1936 announce an editorial change, but do not state the name of the new editor. This looks like it corresponds to your June, 1936 date for Byrne as the new editor.

The June 8, 1940 Argonotes confirm that Chandler Whipple was a former editor.

T'rilling Action, #4: Duane Spurlock

Thank you for the additional information on Davis and the formulas used by Street and Smith in their backup stories. Do you know if any of those backups were illustrated by Creig Flessel?

Flakes From the Ragged Edges #11: Victor Berch

Excellent detective work on the identity of William Corcoran.

Pulp Monger #9: James Van Hise

I enjoyed the Tarzan material and the Burroughs biographical material.

Ramblings of the Perambulating Pulp Fan #54: Al Tonik

Thank you very much for your additions to my "Men Who Make The Argosy" project. I needed several of the items you sent to me and your contributions will put me considerably closer to completion.

I see from its last issue that you're a supporter

of "The Mystery and Adventure Series Review." I should have known that I wouldn't be the first PEAPS person to discover it.

I am looking forward to reading your book on the early pulps. Do you have an idea as to when this might be published?

I enjoyed reading your reviews of stories in early pulps, probably much more than reading the stories themselves.

The New, Complete, Thrilling, Popular, Spicy, Mammoth, All-Comment Magazine #17: Mike Chomko

A good issue as always. I like the overview of air war pulps and the list of titles. It's always nice to have this sort of thing in once place.

Yesteryear #31: Glenn Lord

Thank you for the information on early Weird Tales copyright renewals and the list of Bellem bylines.

Sons of the Blue Wolf #35: Kevin L. Cook

What did you think of *History of the Mystery, Nameless Cults* and *To the Dust Returned*?

The Tarzan of Salvador: Darrel C. Richardson

The articles you reprint are interesting, but I wonder how much is really true and how much consists of the locals putting one over on the gringos.

Blodgett #52: Scott Cranford

So what's item 20 on your list of reasons for gun control?

Sulf 56: Norm Metcalf

I note your comments on the quality of stories in Thrilling Adventures. My featured issue this month certainly illustrates your statements.

I agree with you entirely on New Wave Science Fiction.

Hurricane H(e)aven 6: Steve Young

Thanks for pointing me in the direction of Ralph Dennis, I'll have to look for his books.

Kissett: Howard De Vore

You sir, have a cruel sense of humor. What if

Back Numbers Can Be Easily Procured

he'd really just passed away? It would have served you right to have her respond: "Oh, that old junk? We just hauled it all to the dump."

Section Two

Back Numbers: Warren Harris

I feel a little odd, writing mailing comments to myself, but this seems a logical place to ruminate on my last issue. Except for far too many spelling errors, I was pleased with the way the last issue worked out. I hereby pledge not to complain so much about other people's spelling and typographical errors.

The color for my back cover still isn't quite true to the original, but I thought it turned out much better than the first issue. My pages were too gray last time, I needed to put in more illustrations. I'm going to try to do better about that this issue.

One of the unexpected benefits of putting out Back Numbers is how much I learn by doing it. Unfortunately, many of those lessons are learned too late to get into the issue. For example, I've run across three more sources of hipster slang that I would have liked to have mentioned in my review of *Straight From the Fridge, Dad*. Upon further reflection, I probably shouldn't have used slang in my review and written it straight. I made the same mistake that I complained about Joe Gores making in a short story. I really should have added another page to my review of *The Book of the Dead*. I really wanted to add another four pages or so, but the deadline was looming and I really felt that my contribution was thick enough as it was.

El Dorado #15: John DeWalt

The news article on H. P. Lovecraft that Kurt ran in the January issue came from *The Onion*, a weekly satirical newspaper that is also available on the internet. The Beijing *Chinese Evening News*, recently ran a story from The Onion claiming that Congress was planning to move the capitol to Tennessee or North Carolina.

Forgotten Tales of Love and Murder is a rather expensive (\$49.95) hardback collecting previously uncollected Burroughs stories. Tempting, but not tempting enough.

I take it your comments on sending somebody to Burning Man are aimed in my direction. I didn't intend to run any of my photos from the year I went, as I didn't think that they were pulp related. As they are somewhat risqué, I didn't want to offend any of the other members. I wouldn't want to get into a whole Echoes/Ron Wilbur debate with anyone.

But since you asked, I'll try to pull out some photos of Earl Bergy-style costumes and run them on

the next page.

P.I.I.P. #10: Randy Vanderbeek

A lot of signed covers this time in the index. As always, I'm finding this index useful and informative.

Stacks #27: Rusty Hevelin

I am not surprised that you don't recall me, I'm not a very outgoing person. Perhaps you would remember me for helping a little at the auction in 2000.

Thin Air Wonder Stories #31: Joe Sokola

I'm sorry to hear that work is not much fun. I've been there myself. I find my life is much better now that I've cut down on the distance I travel to work.

Not Worth a 1/4 Cent a Word #29: Rick Hall

I appreciate the list of titles from the 1933 Author and Journalist. This looks like it could be a great resource for pulp research.

Hidalgo #61: Brian E. Brown

I agree that I'd much rather have three short books in a series than one omnibus brick, but that doesn't seem to be the way they are marketing books these days.

PulpGen Website: Larry Estep

Wow, you've done a great job with your website. I've really enjoyed the stories I've downloaded. The Screaming Skull is so far my favorite, but I'm also enjoying the crime stories and the Griffon stories. The Death Angel story by Page was something I've always wanted to read, even if it didn't end up being as good as his other work.

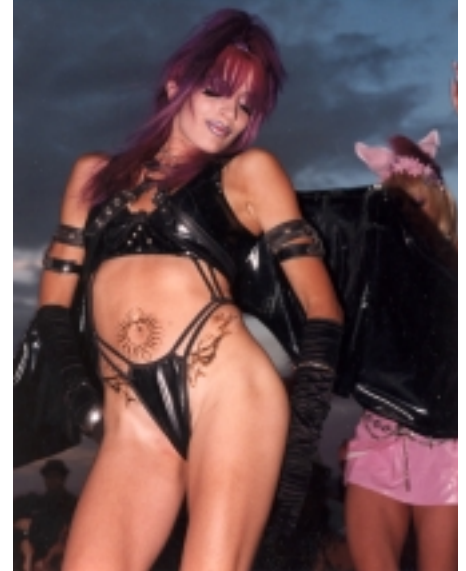
I haven't had time to do a review of your site, but it's very much appreciated. I like the variety, not only in genre, but in the time periods represented. The files are easy to print, and the images are nice and sharp. I like to print them out to read them. I see that thanks are also due to John Locke for contributing some of the files.

I have an electronic version of a Carroll John Daly story that was supposed to go into *It's Raining More Corpses in Chinatown* but didn't make the cut. I don't know if Don Hutchison has any plans for it, but if he doesn't, I could pass it along. I don't know the status on the copyright. It comes from a pulp belonging to John De Walt.

Brass Brassieres At Burning Man, 1997



Left: Not brass, but still an out-of-this-world outfit. She later showed why such costumes are impractical for active space women, they tend to slip and show even more than intended



Above: He's interacting with a remote controlled robot. The small robot was a TV with a closed circuit camera on top, mounted on a motorized platform. The Man is at back, pre-burn.

Left: Blast shields down!



Above: Leather, not brass, and more fantasy than SF. More like Brundage than Bergy. Nice wings, though.

Below: This guy had quite the manic robot act going on. Something like Grover meets an invader from Mars.



Above: This nice couple is likes to maintain constant radio contact. She wins the prize for the smallest brass brassier. She was the closest I could find in my photos to a genuine Bergy outfit.

Left: Not really any pulp connection, I just liked the sculpture, which was built on site.
Right: Rocket Car=Bad Hair



Our Featured Issue and Back Cover:

This issue's featured pulp is Thrilling Adventures from September, 1943.

It's one of the first pulps I ever bought. I didn't know a lot about the individual pulps back then, but the terrific World War II cover sold me on it. When I first started to buy pulps, I thought I would be more interested in the World War II era, but I soon started to concentrate more on the 1930s.

I bought this at the first Pulpcon I attended, 1996 in San Jose, but for whatever reason, I have never gotten around to reading it. This seems like a good opportunity to fix that.

What can you say about that cover? It's a complete reversal of the usual shifty Oriental sneaking up behind a hapless victim to knife them. It's just a terrific cover, but I can't make out the signature. Unfortunately, I'm not much of an art expert or I'd hazard a guess. How about Jerome Rozen as a wild guess out of the blue based on the initials? All you art guys may feel free to tell me how far off I am.

There are a lot of fair to good interior illustrations as well. The best, though, are two small war bond ads by Dr. Seuss that I'll try to run here.

Some of the war time ads are also terrific. I obviously bought this issue based on the art as I would not have known at the time who any of these authors were. Actually, I don't have much of a clue now except for Kuttner and a few other names who are familiar.

The cover story is a novelette by James Nelson Alger, "Mr. Confucious and the Pig Boat." The daring submarine commander "Medals" McConnigle leads his

crew on a mission to torpedo Japanese destroyers in Truk Harbor. His crew doesn't know it, but McConnigle has a personal score to settle with the Japanese—his son was killed in the attack on Pearl Harbor.

They rendezvous with a junk to pick up a Chinese guide who knows the channel into the harbor and think it's a mistake when the junk fires on them.

After blasting the junk to splinters, they pick up their guide from the wreckage and are only mildly surprised when he pulls a gun and shoots the other survivors. What I want to know is how McConnigle got all those medals if he's dumb enough not to realize that his guide is really a Japanese intelligence agent.

Like most of the stories in this issue, the best way to describe this is juvenile. For example an entire squad of Japanese, some armed with machine guns, can't handle a single American.

McConnigle leaves his crew behind to pull off a one-man commando raid. Doesn't he have seamen or marines to do this sort of thing?

All of the Japanese characters are one-dimensional murderous fiends, who the red-blooded American hero, who has to be at least in his 40s, takes out one after another. When McConnigle uses everything he has in a fight, it's his never-say-die heroics, when he's on the receiving end it's called underhanded Jap dirty tricks.

All of the stories here, with the exception of one that is not set in World War II, feature either dumb, vicious Germans or sneaky, dishonorable subhuman Japanese characters, if not both.

The only one that doesn't, "Death on the Island" by Henry Kuttner, suffers from it's own brand of problems. Kuttner, who should know better, writes a very clunky sea story.

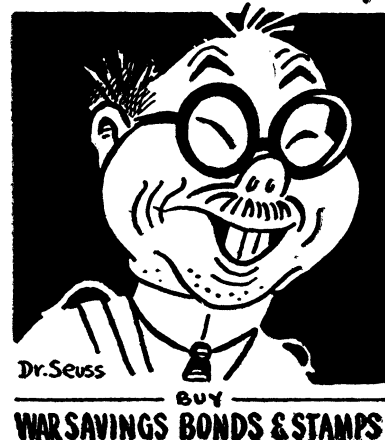
The hero is second mate on a ship's last voyage. There's a hurricane, a drunken first mate, a hold full of killer animals and the skipper's lovely daughter. Will the animals escape and threaten the captain's daughter? Of course they will.

Kuttner leaves a trail of plot points like bread crumbs to allow the hero to find out the hated first mate is out to scuttle the ship.

In the hands of a J. Allen Dunn or an H. Bedford-Jones, this could have been a good story, although I think both of those writers would have left out the animal cargo as one threat too many.

Kuttner fumbles this with animals that act

WIPE THAT SNEER OFF HIS FACE!





Ollie yanked his rod, and the Germans plunged over the railing!

more as plot points than real creatures, cardboard characters and convenient weather. This is a plot in search of a story.

Once the characters are on the island, Kuttner gets rid of the inconvenient Skipper and crew so that he only has to deal with the hero, the bad guy and the damsel in distress. And those wild animals, who are all attracted to the fire. Just like real wild animals all are attracted to fire. First the harmless monkeys show up to *warm their hands at the fireside* and then the gorilla shows up and beats up the bad guy, rescuing the hero so he can save his enemy. Said enemy of course immediately turns the tables on the hero who has to be saved by the attack of the giant python.

Even though Kuttner has not set up any kind of relationship between the hero and the girl, they end up kissing at the end of the last thrilling fight, just because that's what happens in this kind of story.

"House of Many Clocks" by Byron D. Dalrymple depends on the arro-

gance and stupidity of the Nazi opponents, as does Ted Stratton's "Fatal Blackout." Apparently Nazis are so dumb as to fall for tricks that wouldn't fool a three-year-old.

James Francis Dwyer's "Soldiers from the Mountains" is just an exercise in sappy jingoism.

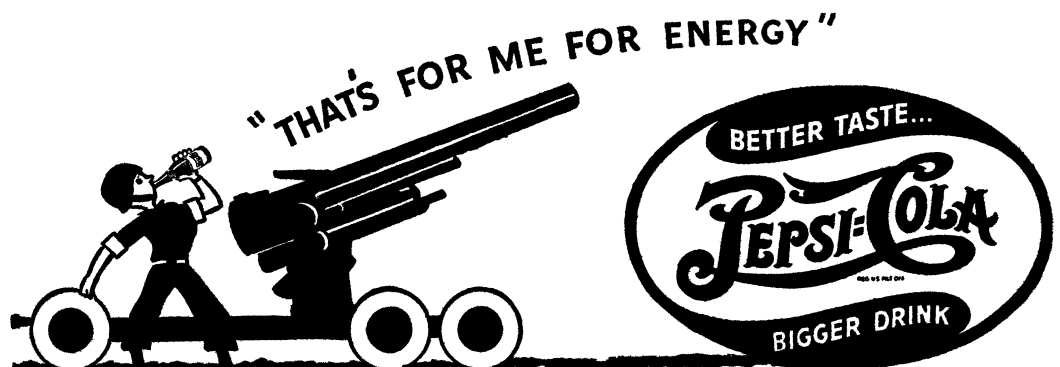
In "Ollie Tries Surfcasting" Harold De Polo tries to convince us that a small town sheriff would go fishing for a German submarine with a fishing pole and would be able to capture a U-boat commander and four spies single handedly.

Better is series story "Voices on the Jungle Air" by G. H. Gilroy-Moore, even though his hero can't seem to connect the argument he just had with the subsequent machine gun attack on him. This is part of the "Premph" series and is the best in the issue.

But that ain't saying much.

One of it's saving graces is that it has a sympathetic minority character in Chief Premph who is, brave, wise and good in a fight. A lot of the other blacks in the story are not presented as well, but at least it's the Chief who fools the dumb Nazi with a trick that wouldn't fool a three-year-old. And he gets to save the day and his Great White Bwana friend.

There is a simplistic, but informative fact feature on the Seabees and a one page patriotic message from the famous Private Marriion Hargrove to support war bonds that is very well done. I think I enjoyed these two features and the war bond ads more than the rest of the magazine.



THRILLING ADVENTURES



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59
BUY WAR BONDS
AND STAMPS
FOR VICTORY!

A THRILLING
PUBLICATION

VOICES ON THE *JUNGLE AIR*

A Complete Prempeh Novelet
By G. H. GILROY-MOORE

MR. CONFUCIUS AND THE PIGBOAT
A Submarine Action Novelet
By JAMES NELSON ALGAR