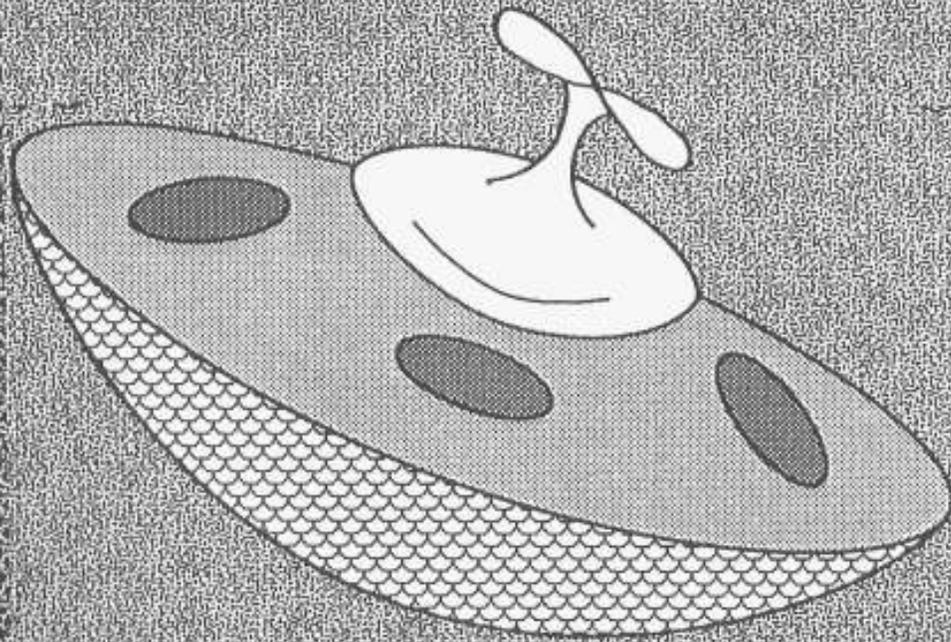


Space Cadet

(or: The Aging Old Fart Nostalgic Time Waster Gazette)



The Space Cadet Gazette #2 – March 1995
Published quarterly (or whenever I feel like it)

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The Space Cadet Gazette is available for \$1.00 per issue, or \$4.00 for four issues, or \$1,000 for a thousand issues, or \$1,000,000 for a lifetime subscription (necessarily my lifetime, not yours).

SCG is also available for the usual: trade with your zine or regular letters of comment.

SCG is open to submissions, especially (short) articles reminiscing about your personal experience within the SF genre, be it fandom or your favourite books, movies, conventions or whatever. But in truth I will consider anything that evokes the ‘sense of wonder’. No payment, but lots of egoboo.

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Editorial

About a month after I sent off issue #1 of SPACE CADET, for the space of two or three weeks, I received an average of four to five locs and fanzines a day in my mailbox. Quite a thrill, believe me. And very encouraging. It means I didn’t fling SC into the vacuum after all. There exists a kind of zinefan-ether out there which supports such egocentric phenomena as this zine. So long as people are interested, I will write and publish SPACE CADET.

The payoff for me, of course, is in the locs and zines I receive. More than that, comes the feeling of being part of a community of like-minded individuals (which, oddly enough, seems curiously lacking in SF fandom as a whole), of sharing and participating in leisurely, reflective communication at a time when speak-before-you-think instant contact is all the rage. It is precisely because zinedom is so laid back that I find comfort in it.

I have no axe to grind, no vital information to share with my readers, no wisdom to impart; I merely wish to entertain. My idea of a good time is to read an interesting book. It is my hope that you will continue to find what I offer to be of interest, and with any luck, a little bit amusing as well. If not, then by all means inform me that you want me to stop sending you this dreadful rubbish!

Apart from the regular, serialized features, my choice of subject matter is likely to be rather eclectic. You’ll find book reviews, movie reviews, personal history, obscurantist weirdism, and in general, whatever happens to excite my interest at the time of writing.

This is a per-zine, devoted primarily to my own mental meanderings, so guest articles – to be included – must be short and to the point, and if they are weird and funny, so much the better. I want my readers to look forward to their next issue of SC (as opposed to “Not again!”). I mean, if we can’t have fun, why bother?

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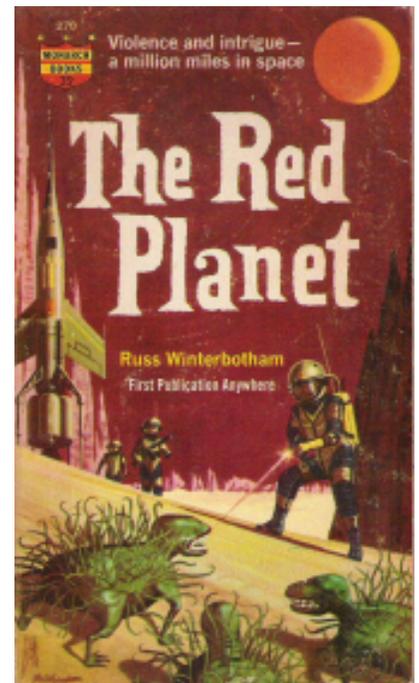
All articles by R. Graeme Cameron unless otherwise credited.

Confessions of an SF Addict -- by R. Graeme Cameron

While not the first SF book I'd read, THE RED PLANET was the very first SF pocketbook I went out and purchased for myself. The year was 1962. I was 11 years old.

What attracted me to this particular book? Look at the cover. The Martians are bright green (of course!), the sand a somber tan, the spacesuits bright yellow, the spaceship olive green, the sky dark red, and the Martian moon above a dusky orange. Beautiful. I wanted this book as soon as I saw it. Spacemen. An alien landscape. Martians. What more could an 11 year old boy want? To this day I remain a sucker for "sensa wonda" cover art.

I just re-read the book cover to cover for the first time in over thirty years. It's not as bad as I'd remembered. In fact it reads very much as if author Russ Winterbotham was hoping Hollywood would turn it into a movie, or perhaps, less charitably, that he'd been influenced by grade-B SF films. THE RED PLANET has a passable, if cliché-ridden, plot. The ubiquitous meteor shower for instance. Or the expendable crewman sent out to repair a damaged motor who discovers too late that his air supply has been sabotaged. But for all that, it's actually kind of fun, in large part because the technology and the characters are so redolent of the time it was written.



To begin with, we are introduced to the point-of-view character, Bill Drake, one of six men chosen for the first manned expedition to Mars. He's in the mission control room which is conducting the flight of a Mercury-like capsule in which the last possible candidate is attempting to qualify for the mission. The rest of the proposed crew is present, including Mission Commander Doc Spartan, a martinet with social skills somewhere between Adolf Hitler and Attila the Hun. Bill Drake doesn't care, he's got nothing to do except watch Spartan's assistant, Gail Loring, run the show.

It seems that Bill lusts after Gail, despite her intelligence. A quote will illustrate my point: *"She was all business. It was a pitiful waste, because she was an attractive girl and so untouchable. She wasn't beautiful... She was good-looking, the kind of girl who wore well. Without lace or fancy trimmings, she was solid, durable, functional -- and feminine, in spite of herself.... Even in slacks she looked good; a statement I could make about no other woman I've ever seen. She wore no make-up, except lipstick, and that didn't hurt her. She had brown hair cut close, almost mannish style, and still she looked like a woman."*

Hoo boy, this kind of stuff is painful to read today. What sort of effect it had on young girls trying to read SF back then I daren't imagine. But as an 11 year old boy, I paid no attention. Undoubtedly I skipped over all the "mushy stuff" and went straight for the action, and Winterbotham didn't disappoint, at least initially. By the end of the first chapter the orbiting spaceman is dead, Gail thinks it's her fault, and the Mars mission is in jeopardy. Where are they going to find another candidate to make up the 6th member of the crew? From the thousands of test pilots and fighter jocks available? Nah! Too obvious. Spartan chooses Gail.

Even as a kid, I knew this was a device to provide love interest, and I was outraged. "Mushy stuff" was included in movies for the girls in the audience, and that I accepted as a deplorable economic necessity, but in a book? Only boys read SF books. And boys weren't interested in pages wasted on "love" and stupid things like that.

Still, there was hope she'd be left behind. Bill points out that: *"A lot of people would take the stand that an unmarried young woman could hardly expect to spend two-and-one-half years in close quarters with five unmarried men and expect to come back chaste."* Her response is to laugh. As a kid I thought it was because she found the idea she couldn't resist temptation just plain silly. Now I suspect it was because she thought it hilarious that Bill assumed she was a virgin. Don't know what the author had in mind. Can be read both ways of course.

Doc Spartan has a solution. She must marry a crew member, and offers himself. She spurns him, but agrees to marry Bill Drake, providing it be a marriage of convenience only. This sets the stage for all sorts of jealousy, sexual tension and outbursts of frustrated lust, exactly the sort of thing an 11 year old boy avoids like the plague (at least back then -- I can't speak for kids today, who are exposed to so much more. Granted, I discovered my father's (or brother's?) stack of Playboy magazines hidden in the attic, and instantly fell in love with the nude centrefold of a very young starlet by the name of Jane Fonda, but hey, I certainly didn't want my serious fiction to be messed up with such diversions....) Fact is, I ploughed on, hoping against hope that the mushy stuff would be kept to a minimum, and that the delights promised by the cover would soon appear.

The situation improves. The six crew members are launched into orbit atop a Saturn rocket to rendezvous with the Jihad, the Mars expedition vehicle. Winterbotham has done his research. The Jihad is a logically designed collection of modules powered by a plasma engine. Acceleration is slow, but steady. Air and water are recycled. Everything makes sense. The one odd thing is that the transfer capsule does not actually dock with the Jihad. The crew transfer via EVA, which is actually far more dangerous. However, at the time the book was written no spacecraft had yet attempted to dock with another, and the author seemed to think it was theoretically impossible anyway, as judge by the following:

"One little push was all I needed and now I had to somersault quickly, and, at the same time, push out the long loose end of copper wire so that it would strike the side of the Jihad before I did. This was very important, for the electrical potential of the Jihad must be adjusted to that of the Saturn capsule to guard against being struck by a bolt of lightning as I contacted the sides of the craft. Apparently there was not much of a differential for I saw no sparks against the black sky."

What a bizarre concept. I suppose it was one of the many hypothetical dangers (like the idea that the internal organs wouldn't function in weightlessness, or that astronauts would succumb to vertigo) that were proved wrong in actual flights. The idea of having to 'ground yourself' on the spacecraft you were approaching by trying to lasso it with a copper wire is something I've encountered in no other book or story. Unique touch, that.

There follows several chapters of intrigue, murder, attempted rape and other boring stuff, my adolescent hopes kept alive only by the occasional interesting bit, like the announcement that the ship is being swept by radar signals from Mars. Wowzers! There be Martians after all!

Soon the Jihad is close enough to Mars to justify the author describing the appearance of the planet in detail. The book was written three years before Mariner 4 revealed the cratered surface of THE RED PLANET. Winterbotham's Mars is Percival Lowell's Mars, not that I'm complaining mind you. The old names for features which in fact have turned out to be visible only from Earth are wonderfully evocative: 'Solis Lacus Minor', 'Mare Erithraeum', and best of all, 'Umbra' and 'Pnyx'.

"What do you make of those things, Dr. Joel?" I asked, pointing out the spots.

Joel shook his head. "Our astronomers have noticed them," he said. The one in Lacus Major is called Umbra. The other is Pnyx, at the junction of two canals. Certain people have suggested they are cities.."

"Circular cities?" asked Gail, who also watched the screen.

"With a dome over them," I said. For now I saw why they glinted. That shiny surface was some transparent substance which covered the city like an inverted bowl. Beneath were blackened buildings.

All this as the Jihad's landing capsule howls through the thin martian atmosphere. Domed cities! And trouble abrewing, for Doc Spartan instructs the crew: *"If you see signs of life.... shoot first."* This is rather typical of the mission commander, who has already murdered one crewman and attempted to kill another. No wonder Drake muses during the descent: *"If the Martians don't get me, Dr. Spartan will."*

But the landing, at least, is accomplished safely. They spend their first day on Mars digging a defensive moat and a breastworks of rock to shoot from if need be (they're armed with M-14's). Just a trifle paranoid I'd say. While digging the moat they discover rubies:

The soil was full of them. They were more plentiful than pebbles on Earth.

"Possibly a lot of the colour of the Martian sand is due to aluminum oxide tintured with chromium," Joel explained. He assumed we all knew this was the chemical composition of rubies.

"I suspected the Martians used lidar," said Axel.

And, of course, he assumed we all knew that lidar was light radar, which physicists on the Earth were just learning how to use. It's a method of amplifying light through a special tube of artificial rubies.... And so on and on for a lengthy paragraph. "He assumed we all knew" is a singularly awkward way of introducing scientific exposition, in that it leaves the reader feeling vaguely annoyed and insulted. Still, I had forgotten that

lasers were once referred to as 'lidar'. Learn something new every day. Unless, of course, Winterbotham made up the term. But at least he's trying to incorporate futuristic high tech and explain why the Martians had so readily developed their own.

Drake and Axel are ordered to drive a 'Mars-car' to the lip of the nearest canal, which turns out to be on the order of the Grand Canyon, about five miles across and three miles deep. Taking advantage of an ancient landslide, they drive to the bottom and discover a broad swath of reddish-green vegetation, mostly cactus-like and toadstool-like plants, all charged with electricity, flanking a narrow stream. Here Winterbotham points out the difficulty behind the concept of open water in Martian canals: *"the atmospheric pressure was so light that water was evaporating in great quantities."*

Questing about for an explanation, he discovered: *"tiny springs along the bank, sending little rivulets of water into the canal. It was so simple that I should have guessed where the water came from. It all came from the polar caps, of course, but the water flowed underground. The Martians had simply cut their canals to feed on the artesian supply from the North Pole."* Thus in one stroke he provides a plausible explanation for the existence of canals on a planet with light atmosphere. Rather insightful in fact, considering that modern planetologists believe that the only source of water on Mars lies frozen in colossal permafrost beds just beneath the surface. I guess I'd have to describe Winterbotham as one of the last apologists for Percival Lowell. The real Mars is fascinating. But Lowell's Mars would have been wonderful. Truth can be disappointing....

But fiction can be darned exciting, especially to an 11 year old kid....

A small creature, a little larger than a St. Bernard, was approaching the Mars-car. It looked like a dwarf camel, except that it was headless. And the hump wasn't a hump, but a shiny bump with a metallic luster.

I said it had no head, but it did have a mouth -- gaping, grinning and full of pointed teeth. It had four legs and many arms -- long, sinuous, many-jointed, with two fingers at the end -- growing like a fringe around that bump in the middle of the creature's back.

Then I saw that the vegetation in its path was smoldering. The animal had only to move a small black thing that spouted on a stem from the top of its hump, and whatever lay in front of it started to smoke.

"Axel!" I screamed into my helmet transmitter. "There's a Martian down here!"

Now compare this description with the cover art. Instead of many-jointed arms with two fingers, there are writhing tendrils. Instead of no head and a hump, there's no hump and a head. Later on, Winterbotham reveals the Martian's have padded feet like camels, whereas the Martians in the cover art possess four-toed feet that are dainty and rather cute. Mind you, their skin is a most satisfactory bright green, but their lips are so red as to appear covered in lipstick. Winterbotham must have groaned when he saw the cover art done by an artist with the (alleged) name of Ralph Brilliant. Brilliant he may have been, but obviously not very attentive to detail.

Truth to tell, it's hard to decide which concept is the more idiotic. But at least Winterbotham has some internally consistent logic at work. It turns out that each Martian functions as an individual electric cell, producing power to communicate on radio wavelengths and to project radar beams as a weapon. This makes sense. Radar can fry you. I remember, as a child, stomping through the snow in the countryside beyond the town of Chibougamau, Quebec and glancing at the white domes of a Norad Radar site, part of the PineTree Line (next line further North: the Mid-Canada line, and then lastly, north of the Arctic circle, the more famous Dew Line) and reading a billboard-sized sign in the empty field that said something like: "Any closer and the radar will kill you. Stay out!" I recall I promptly turned back toward town and picked up speed, only to break through snow and ice into an ice-cold stream up to my waist. Whereupon I began to move even faster. And in

the summer Chibougamau is infested with clouds of "No-see-ums." (Blackflies.) Currently I have no plans to return to Chibougamau, but I digress....

Uhhm, lessee.... the Martians constantly interrupt communications with parroted phrases like: *"Sweetheart!...Thiswaydrake!...Ha! Ha!"* which is vaguely amusing, and they become twice as dangerous if two of them hold hands, three times as dangerous if three of them hold hands, etc., etc., which is a lot more amusing. You guessed it, the climactic battle sequences involve thousands of Martians holding hands as they rush the Earthmen in a line formation so that their combined electrical power can be utilized by a single individual to produce some really powerful radar beams. All for nought of course, as the Earthmen simply blow them to pieces with explosive bullets. Quite idiotic, but at least the concept of handholding killer Martians is rather novel, and that's what SF is all about, isn't it? Novelty?

But to get back to the canal, Drake escapes to the ship, closely followed by two curious Martians. Spartan kills them, but not before the radio a warning to their buddies. Oops, maybe he was a bit hasty. He sends Drake and Gail out in a Mars-car to see how the Martians feel about this. They discover an abandoned, lifeless canal, and beyond it, a road. At the end of the road, an abandoned city, its dome smashed, *"as if some giant hammer had struck it with a terrific, shattering blow."* The city is full of functional, featureless buildings, which makes sense, the Martians have no eyes after all. Besides, it saves Winterbotham the trouble of describing them.

On the other hand: *"At the edge of the city stood a monument -- a headless camel, a Martian, with his eight arms raised proudly above his spine."* If they have no eyes to see, why make a statue? Bounce radar beams off it? Fondle it with their many-jointed arms? And does the description imply their spine runs through the electric-cell hump atop their back? Hmmm.

But of course, the most surprising discovery, was *"a terrific crater"* on the other side of the city.

And now I knew why the city was no longer lived in, why there was no water in the canal, and why the road wasn't used.

"The bomb!" I said, almost in a whisper. (Except for the exclamation point.)

Mars had its own nuclear war!

At this point about 15,000 Martians advance holding hands and Drake and Gail retreat to the ship for the final battle.

Hmmm. Domed cities. Ever since this book I've always like domed cities. Odd, because the description is sparse indeed, yet in my 11 year old mind I conjured up poignant visions of the wind keening through the shattered dome and the empty buildings. In fact, that's why I like domed cities so much, they look great when they've been smashed to ruin. Mind you, I don't think Buckminster Fuller would have approved of my liking for domes, tied up as it is with the 18th century mania for appreciating the beauty of ruins..... hmmm, remind yourself not to put me in charge of the Earth... I have a rather unique approach to city beautification schemes.... blame it on Russ Winterbotham.... hmmm...

Anyway, a whole bunch of Martians get blown up real good, Doc Spartan gets his, and the survivors -- Axel, Drake and Gail -- take off to return to Earth secure in the knowledge that no one is going to come back to Mars. First, because the water on Mars is full of ammonium hydroxide (very deadly to drink, though peachy keen for washing clothes). Second, because all Martian lifeforms are based on cyanide, so there ain't nothin good to eat. And third, and most important of all, the planet is teeming with millions of extremely pissed-off Martians, probably ALL holding hands, forming a line clear around the planet, just waiting for a spaceship to drop into

orbit to be fried by the biggest Martian-induced radar beam yet. At least, that's what I would have written had there been a sequel.

Today THE RED PLANET would probably be considered hack work at best, and I guess that explains why I've never seen a reprint, it's too 'dated', too firmly planted in the era it was written. But that's the charm of it. It's a period piece, and worth reading as such.

Besides, it stirred that old "sensa wonda" within me when I first read it and has haunted me ever since. More importantly, it spurred me to seek out other SF pocketbooks. The next one I purchased, drawn by it's powerful cover which figured -- you guessed it -- a domed city (though not smashed yet), was CITY AT WORLD'S END by Edmond Hamilton, which I will review in #3 of SPACE CADET.

As for Russ Winterbotham, on looking him up in THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION, I discover that he had been something of a big name in the BIG LITTLE BOOKS before and during the war, having written 60 of them. He concentrated on SF novels beginning in 1952, producing THE SPACE EGG (1958), THE MEN FROM ARCTURUS (1963) and THE PUPPET PLANET (1964), among others. Retiring in 1969, he died in 1971 at the age of 67.

Russ Winterbotham was not the greatest writer in the world, and you've probably never heard of him. But I, for one, appreciate him (and artist Ralph Brilliant), for the wonderful introduction they gave me to a world of books of MY choosing. Prior to THE RED PLANET, all the SF books I'd read had been gifts or library books. Now I'd discovered the joy of selecting and purchasing my very own SF books. A life-long addiction had begun. Thanks Russ.

Monologue

One-sided conversation overheard on a bus:

"Yeah, people are always stealing my ideas. You heard of 'Shivers'? The movie about a worm in a bathtub? I wrote that. Yes, I did. Never got paid a cent. Ha. Ha.... I wrote a song for the 'Sexo Punkoids' called 'Disco Sucks, So Stomp It.' You never heard of it? Man, it was on the charts for six months! Ha. Ha. I still get a cheque for two hundred bucks every week. Royalties. Ha. Ha.... And Amanda Lear paid me to screw her. She's a great lay. Ha. Ha. You never heard of Amanda Lear? She's Salvador Dali's mistress! He's a fun guy too. Still get postcards from him. Ha. Ha..... Another great guy Ozzie Osborne. Know him? The musician what bites the heads off rats? Ha. Ha. Drinking buddy of mine. Fun guy, hilarious, sensitive, cries at the drop of a hat. Ha. Ha.... I know all kinds famous people. That other artist, the one what throws paint at walls n'stuff. Ha. Ha. No, not Pollock. The other guy. The one who puts out the Surrealist newspaper. Kerouac. Jack Kerouac. That's his name. Good drinking buddy. Great cartoonist. Ha. Ha..... My Doc says I'm all right if I take my drugs. Ha. Ha. So I tells him, that's what your wife says. Ha. Ha.... Oops. This is my stop. Gotta see my parole bud. Keep your pecker up. Ha. Ha....."



After the middle-aged man with the artificial leg and the non-stop monologue stepped off the bus, a wave of nervous laughter swept over the passengers. Safe at last. A miss is as good as a mile. He's still out there.... somewhere.... The Baron Munchausen Syndrome personified.

I Dream of 4E

I sometimes have very vivid dreams... in colour. Some people believe you don't see colour in dreams.... But you don't 'see' B&W either. You imagine, you visualize.... so of course you 'see' colour in your dreams. Your 'mind's eye' sees anything you can imagine. And what I imagined in this dream.... Ghod knows what inspired it. Reading YAWNING VORTEX for a start (see Letter Column). Various Freudian desires.....

I dreamed I was a caterer.

Okay, so far not too exciting.

I dreamed I was catering a party for 500 farmers and their wives.

Okay, so far something very much less than exciting.

I dreamed the party was hosted by Forrest J. Ackerman and that it was being held in the basement of his house.

Got your attention now, haven't I?

The dream started off with me standing beside a steaming barbecue pit, feeling vaguely pleased and vaguely confused as I stared at the recumbent forms of farmers (& their wives) sprawling in all directions as far as the eye could see. I remember thinking "Boy, this is the biggest house I've ever been in. I can't even see the walls from here."

Mr. Ackerman walked by. "Sir! Sir! Could I take a break? I want to see your famous collection."

Forry paused to glance at me, eyes twinkling. "Sure kid, why not? You've earned it."

Happy as a clam, I ran for what seemed like miles through mist (or was it steam?) till finally I could make out rows of shelving ahead of me, hundreds of rows, thousands of shelves, each covered in chicken wire. Peering through the wire, I made out complete sets of Lon Chaney Sr. bubble gum cards, paintings by Bela Lugosi, statues by Boris Karloff, a complete model of the city in METROPOLIS, and other wonders strangely never mentioned in FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND. Boy, was I excited.

Then I came across Forry's military Dinky toy collection. I had a bunch as a kid, but they were mere toys. Forry's were motorized half-scale models constructed of emerald-green cast iron! Hot dang! And then it hit me. No wonder his collection was famous. He collected stuff that never existed! Wow! I remember feeling envious as all get out.

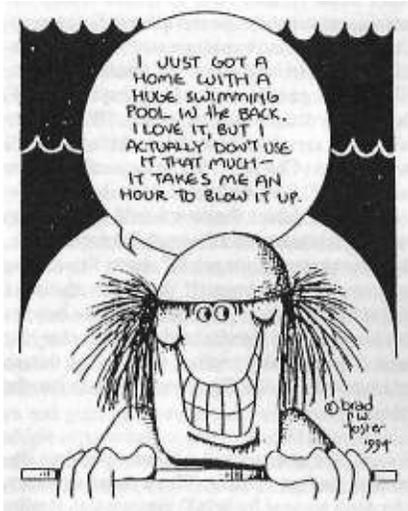
Then I heard the whistle of a steam engine. I turned, and there was Forry's 'model' train, a full-scale steam train thundering along the base of the basement wall. I turned again and Forry was standing beside me.

"Sir! Sir! Can I ride the train?"

Forry positively beamed. "Why not, kid? This house is for everybody."

I ran up to the track. All the fancy European-style cars (again in emerald-green) had already passed. But I managed to swing myself onto a flat car that had a kind of recliner arrangement on it, all the better to enjoy the dioramas set in the wall as I swept past. Had to wear a gas mask because of the smoke from the engine. A minor

nuisance. I noticed some of the paint in the dioramas was peeling a bit, and reflected that Forry probably didn't have enough money to keep absolutely everything properly refurbished, but it didn't matter, the trompe l'oeil effect in each diorama was perfect as far as I could see. The subject matter varied, sometimes it was scenes from movies, other times incidents from the lives of famous SF actors and writers. I remember thinking, "Man, pity I don't have a camera. Probably moving too fast to focus anyway."



The wall was on my left. Suddenly the basement floor on my right dropped away to reveal a vast marble baths complex, one bigger than anything Caracalla could boast of, and a spiral staircase descending from the heights above, a staircase on which hundreds of very nubile, very nude young women were going down to the baths.

Suddenly it hit me. 500 farmers. 500 farmer's wives. And 500 farmer's daughters!

Just as I was about to leap from the train into the baths we entered a tunnel. We seemed to go up and down and make several sharp turns. Then we shot out on to a kind of causeway that pointed down to the barbecue pit where I'd started. The train slowed to a stop. I leaped off. There was Forry.

"Graeme! Graeme!" he cried. "There's no more food. What should I do?"

"Shut down the party. Send everyone home."

"Good idea!" And Forry ran off to spread the word.

I ran in the opposite direction. Now that the party was over, my duties were finished. There was still time to join the gargantuan hot tub party, if I could just find that spiral staircase. Somehow I found myself on the floor above. I ran past room after room, each containing a farmer and a farmer's wife, both packing to leave. As I ran I somehow stripped and grabbed a towel. Picture it. There I was, naked as could be, towel streaming from my hand like a banner, running down an endless hall searching frantically for the opening to the spiral staircase. Dignified I wasn't, but I didn't care. I was desperate.

All at once I found it! The spiral staircase! I started down. And then, as usually happens in dreams, everything changed. The spiral staircase became a spiral slide festooned with paddles balanced on points of metal. Attempting to thread my way through the unsteady paddles, every step I took threatened to hurl me into the abyss. Oh no! I wasn't going to make it!

The dream became bliss. I didn't have to go any further. The young women were coming up in order to dress. Just as the first of 500 naked young women was about to slide her writhing body over mine on the narrow spiral slide... the dream ended. Dang.

Oh well. All I can say is, Forrest J. Ackerman throws one heck of a great party.

Wizard of Mars -- by R. Graeme Cameron

WARNING! This article is a reprint from BCSFAzine #233 Oct 1992! In the future I will probably alternate original reviews with reprints of those I've done for BCSFAzine. Since most of the people who read SPACE CADET have never seen BCSFAzine I think I can get away with this.....?

The 1964 film WIZARD OF MARS is one of the most charmingly inept SF films ever conceived. Written, produced and directed by a single individual (always a bad sign), the best that can be said for this classic gem by David L. Hewitt is that it is well lit and exhibits strong, comic book-like colours. And hey, it has John Carradine as the title character. What more could you ask for? Well, how about Forrest J. Ackerman as technical adviser?

The film begins aboard MARS PROBE ONE as it orbits Mars. There's Doc, Steve the pilot, wise-acre Charlie, and a non-love interest gal whose name I never did catch, so I'll just call her Gal. The cabin of the spacecraft has large windows on the ceiling, but none facing forward. If they want to see where they're going, they each pull down their own individual cardboard periscopes, referred to as 'Camera Scopes'. The crew is much given to punching buttons and staring at battery testing metres. Computer tape wheels twitch on the walls. A few lights flash on and off. In short, yee average extremely lowbudget spaceship interior.

Doc tells gal things like: "Be sure to correlate your cameras. We don't want any overlap." He decides to peek through his own scope. "I'm picking up some sort of pulsating light!" he exclaims. Sound effects from FORBIDDEN PLANET fill the air. Naturally they all panic, I guess they've seen that movie too. "Watch out," yells Gal, "there's another one ahead!" Everybody fiddles with the single control knob on their scopes. Steve gets into the act, "Collision alarm! Emergency procedures, quick!" Evidently their emergency procedure consists of doing nothing. Charlie provides precise information: "Scanners show we're approaching something of monstrous size, and fast!" We see a shot of lightning (in space?) striking the spacecraft. Charlie is the master of his instrumentation, he's got a handle on the threat now: "Whatever it is it keeps changing size, and range. Distance varies from extreme range to zero!" It doesn't seem to occur to him that maybe he shouldn't put much faith in his instrument readings.

Then, for no particular reason, a few sparks fly across the screen. Doc goes to grab a fire extinguisher, accidentally sets it off before he picks it up, but manages to put out the non-existent fire anyway. (One-shot Beaudine would be proud.) Charlie, overacting to beat the band, yells "WE had to go to Mars, WE couldn't go to the moon like everybody else!" Steve finally decides to do something. "We've got to pull up," he says, "Activate all operable rockets!" "I can't," shrieks Charlie. "They're inoperable! We're going down!" The surface of Mars looms. Now normally you'd think the crew would want to strap themselves in to brace for the crash, but not this crew. "In to our pressure suits quick!" shouts Steve. "The hull may rupture on impact!" Well Steve, that's not all that might rupture. Anywho, quick like bunnies they hop through a circular hatch into their changing room. The spaceship crashes, presumably, though we are not shown this. The crew hops back into the cabin.

We now witness a bizarre, pointless discussion, the first of many. "The transmitter works, why don't we send for help?" suggests Gal. Replies Steve, "We blew transmission, we'd have no way of knowing if we'd be heard." "Well, what's to stop us from trying?" "Well, nothing....technically." So why don't they? They don't, that's all. Why didn't the writer simply have the radio smashed all to flinders instead of trying to explain why a working radio wouldn't work? Arrgh! It is to develop an existentialist headache! So they ask Doc. He states "Before making any rash decisions, we should evaluate where we are and what we're going to do," thus neatly passing the ball back to them.

Charlie suggests they search for their jettisoned main stage which contains all their supplies. (Not too bright jettisoning it in the first place, was it Steve?) Gal mentions they have enough food for three weeks. Steve comments their suits will provide oxygen for only four days. Doc turns to the wall and contemplates a map. "We're here, at the edge of the polar cap, near the main canal. (Canal? CANAL?) Three weeks should be more than enough to reach the main stage." Doc! Wake up, Doc! Wake UP! You don't have three weeks! You weren't listening! You got four days only, you dummy!

But Gal is brighter than Doc. She wonders if it is possible to breathe the Martian atmosphere. Steve has a very weird answer, "No, it's too thin. Not enough to sustain life. But it DOES contain oxygen. If we keep our suit pressure below the outside atmosphere, and crack our helmets, it will allow the outside oxygen to seep in, thus boosting our oxygen supply." See if you can spot the flaw in this proposal. Forrest J. Ackerman, technical adviser...hmmm. "Will it work?" asks Gal. Replies Charlie brightly, "Sure it'll work. Why wouldn't it?" Always the optimist, that Charlie.

They grab two rubber rafts and a set of paddles -- no expedition to Mars should be without such -- and head toward the 'canal', which looks like a stagnant pond. "Even though we haven't seen any signs of life," says Doc as they pass through bushes and tufts of grass (yet another SF film where plant life doesn't count!), "we should stay near the shore." Cut to a shot of them sitting in stationary rafts. "How far is it now?" asks Gal. "Pretty near," says Steve, then adds "the current will keep us in midstream." What current? You aren't moving. You aren't paddling. You're stuck, boyo!

The next scene shows everyone asleep, but moving, actually moving, the rafts drifting toward a clutch of dreaded Martian water worms that can most charitably be described as looking like a bunch of toilet paper rolls squashed flat and joined together to form 'segmented' bodies floating motionless atop the water, with two leaf-like fins projecting from either side of the first roll, possibly the least menacing monsters ever recorded on film. The crew awakes and panics, striking out with the paddles, though one suspects not to kill the critter so much as to impart a bit of movement to them in a failed effort to render them more credible as a threat. These 'monsters' can best be termed hilarious.

Next they find themselves within a cave. Comments Steve, "We've been here five hours now and there's no sign of a way out." This is not surprising, as the rafts are floating dead still in a pool barely large enough to hold them. There's not the slightest movement. The crew make gestures of paddling in an absolutely futile gesture to convince the viewer they're being whipped along white-water style when it's perfectly obvious they haven't budged an inch. I've heard of suspending disbelief, but this is ridiculous! Finally Steve tells everyone the water is so hot the rafts might explode, so they'd better get out and walk. So they do.



How do you pass time in a cave? Hold pointless conversations of course! Like these: Gal: "Wonder how far this goes?" Steve: "I don't know but we'll soon find out."Or....Charlie: "Whatcha looking at, Doc?" Doc: "This rock formation, there's something familiar about it." Charlie: "Oh, come on, Doc. A rock's a rock. Let's go."....Or....Gal: "Steve, you don't suppose this doubles back the way we came, do you?" Steve: "I don't know, it sure sounds like it." Gal: "Oh, I hope not, then we'd be really stuck."Or....Charlie: "No sense in doubling back. Steve: "We didn't. Look! Daylight!" Gal: "It must be outside."Dialogue like this sort of does something to you, doesn't it? Like churn your stomach into tight little knots? With brain to match?

But alas, there's more earth-shattering suspense to endure. Having crawled out of the interminable caves, they must inch along the cliff-face above the valley of fire (whose volcanic effects consist largely of smoke pots, roman candles, and revolving wheels of out-of-focus red plastic in front of the camera lens. Always nice to see in-camera sfx, eh?) More than ever one becomes aware that Hewitt's conception of dialogue is to state the obvious as redundantly as possible. Example: Steve: "Does that look like a cave to you?" Charlie: "Uhuh, sure looks like it."Or....Gal: "Do you suppose something's happened? Oh, there he is. He's waving at us. He wants us to come."Or....Doc: "I almost wish this weren't the right direction." Steve: "May as well go as far as we can." Doc: "What is it?" Steve: "It must lead outside."

Well, thankfully, they do emerge amid Martian sand dunes. Just to inspire us with hope something might happen, Steve's voice-over narration intones "In the west, more than a day's journey, we can see what appears to be a weird, pulsating dome of light." However, they've been ignoring this, instead following a weak signal on Charlie's direction finder. It stops working. They're about to run out of oxygen. They discuss futility. They get mad. Suddenly the finder is working again, indicating the main stage is just over the next dune. "Talk about timing!" crows Charlie. Yes, someone should talk to Hewitt about timing.

Alas, the gizmo on the other side of the road turns out to be an automatic probe, a "time-corroded relic from an earlier chapter of the exploration of Mars." Charlie falls all to pieces. "It's so funny, so ironically funny," he gibbers. "We sent it here two years ago to find out if we could live on Mars. We have to travel millions of miles to find it just to prove we can't survive!" Naturally, he pulls out his rifle and shoots it. The bullet breaks a fuel line, the hissing of the escaping gas reminding them oxygen is part of it's fuel (the oxidizer anyway). Why, there's enough to last for days! Their mood improves. "Gee, I feel sort of silly..." says Charlie.

What happens next? The title is THE WIZARD OF MARS. I'll give you a hint. They're off to see the Wizard?..... Yes! You guessed it! They find a YELLOW BRICK ROAD buried beneath the sand! (Though oddly, it runs up and down the slopes of the dunes, instead of level beneath them. This suggests it is extremely recent, rather than ancient as Doc claims.) Doc: "Some form of intelligence was at work here." Charlie: "Somebody built this? Who?" Steve: "There's life here!" Doc: "This is more of an archaeological discovery than life itself!"..... Hmmm, Doc sounds a little off the wall to me.

"Where does it lead to? That's what I want to know!" says Gal. They look up and see a small castle which looks exactly like the sort of thing you'd expect to see in one of those plastic bubbles you shake to get the 'snow' flying. Amazingly enough, that's more or less what the city turns out to be! Huh? Well, you see, within the city is a glass ball which contains the city....er, well, there's also a whole bunch of columns containing little old men with big ears and giant, glowing brains, who make use of multiple exposure photography to meld together into a talking head known as John Carradine....er, played by John Carradine, who delivers a 15 minute speech containing every SF cliché known to man, at the end of which he tells the crew the Martians have come back to life so they can die (once and for all I guess, as opposed to those temporary, inconvenient millennia long deaths), but first the crew has to get time flowing again by sticking the city-within-the-ball-within-the-city into a giant pendulum, and then they have to run like hell to get out of the city before it disappears so they can disappear and reappear within their spaceship in orbit with four days growth of beard (cept for Gal, natch) only to hear from Earth control they've been out of touch for two minutes already. Which of course, explains everything. God, I like a film where everything is tied neatly together at the finish, don't you?

Marvin's Mighty Mayan Marathon – by R. Graeme Cameron

In May of 1981 I spent a month touring the ancient cities of Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras under the guidance of Professor Marvin Cohodas of the University of British Columbia. This is part #2 of my account.

FRIDAY -- MAY 1ST, 1981

MEXICO CITY

Woke up this morning to a familiar bird song. Stuck my head out the window into the u-shaped lightwell and spotted a purple finch perched on the edge of the roof singing its little heart out, just as his buddies do back home in Vancouver. A good omen.

Bed last night was narrow and lumpy, but good enough. First thing, a quick cloth sponge bath. The water seems to be warmed by the sun in large white tanks on the roof. When the tank empties, the hot water ceases flowing. For breakfast I had bread, water, and vitamin pills.

Mark and I started out early on our own to look for the recent excavations of the twin temple of Huitzilopochtli, the Aztec Blue Hummingbird War God, and the Rain God Tlaloc. Am feeling very, very eager. The morning air has a wonderful freshness, despite a low-lying haze, though astonishing how quickly the day is heating up. Powerful sun at these latitudes.

We're walking up the Paseo De La Reforma. Suddenly, near Ave. Juarez, the movie TROTSKY springs to life! Around a corner spills a horde of Mexican workers marching in step and waving enormous red banners that blaze in the sunlight. Nearby, a cluster of city policemen standing on a traffic island rend the air with shrill blasts of their whistles.

"Oh my God," I shout, "There's going to be a riot. Let's get back to the hotel!"

"Don't be silly," says Mark. "It's only the May day celebration."

Visions of Red Square in Moscow spring to mind. "The authorities won't like this. Riot troops coming. Hear the police signalling, their whistles? Let's get out of here."

Mark, tall and lanky chap that he is, stares down at me with mild bemusement. "It's a government-sponsored parade, you fool. And the police are only practicing their signals. They often do that in the mornings."

I look carefully at the police. They're not paying attention to the marchers, but are talking and laughing among themselves, seemingly rating each other's whistling. Quite a few different calls they're making, some of them almost playful. I begin to relax. Okay, so it's not a revolution. Good.



Am now squatting on concrete steps before a metal gate protecting a store front at Ave Juarez opposite Alemada Park. May Day parade still getting up. Assorted clumps of people marching by, some of them in uniforms. An indian and his two small sons have stopped in front of us. All three in light cotton clothes and barefoot. They lay out a large plastic groundsheet, bright yellow, and are smothering it with the straw hats they'd been carrying on their heads and backs in yarn bundles. Amazingly, people are flocking to buy the hats, laughing as they try them on, the two boys scrambling to get change from their father. I guess everyone wants to be protected from the hot sun today.

Bands are testing their drums. More and more banners are being carried by. We seem to be in the middle of the staging area for the parade. Sun breaking through the morning haze. Holiday atmosphere.

We walk on through Alemada Park, past the Palace of Fine Arts. Begin to notice more and more Indian women in shawls squatting on blankets at curbside selling mostly straw hats, but also chewing gum and other oddities. There's a market for even the worst junk. I spot two black-suited business men, giggling as they pass a two-foot plaster statue of "The Discus Thrower" back and forth as they walk. The seller sits beside six more replicas of that famous bronze by Myron. Very curious.

We go up Veracruz, cutting through parade groups staging in the cross streets. I feel somewhat conspicuous, especially with camera and canteen dangling. We seem to be the only gringos about. One fellow caught sight of Mark in his blue jeans and cowboy hat and called out "Yankees! Yankees!" but all in fun. The general mood is very jolly.

Past the Chamber of Deputies. The older buildings are made of hand hewn blocks of volcanic stone. Many of these old structures are bulging in strange ways, settling due to the semi-liquid state of the soil covering the old lake that had surrounded the ancient Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan. Incredibly, some particularly precarious leaning facades are held up by rough timbers propped against the sidewalk. Would hate to live in those buildings!

Almost every block has one of those hole-in-the-wall shops with a vertical spit rotating slabs of meat against a gas flame. Fascinating to watch the flies riding the meat till the flame approaches, then lift off and fly around to the other side. Oddly, I don't feel the least pangs of hunger for this 'fast food'.

Interesting to note that one shop is devoted entirely to Buddhist gear....

Eventually we notice that streets leading off to the right appear to empty into a large square. The Zocalo! We turn right up Argentina Street (which seems more like an alley than a street), passing between several large buildings on our right and construction hoarding on the left. Surprise! We've stumbled into the very lair of the Aztec Gods! Mesh openings in the fence reveal the excavated twin temple of the sacred precinct. Eagerly I press my face against the mesh.

At first the view is confusing. Mesoamerican temples are typically many layers of temple. In other words, every time a ruler wanted to replace a temple with a 'better' one, instead of knocking down the old one and building the new from scratch, they simply used the existing temple pyramid as a core and built the new one over it. In this case, the Spaniards dismantled most of the structure, leaving a kind of maze of concentric stairs and platforms, each representing a different construction phase. Once I figured out what I was looking at, I immediately sought the 'outer ring' structures, for these would represent the last temple, the very same that Motecuhzoma and Cortez saw.

I can see a wide stairway (forty feet wide? Fifty feet?) four steps high flanked by undulating stone serpents. At the top stair, offset to the left from the centre, is a large stone serpent head under a plywood covering. The head rests on a platform extending thirty or forty feet back to a set of steep stairs climbing the remains of the actual pyramid facade. Are these remnants of the last stage? No, to the right, built over the platform, is the corner of a later, larger pyramid temple, with just five risers preserved, the bulk of the facade gone, so that the surviving steps are only six feet or so wide. Nevertheless, Motecuhzoma and Cortez once climbed these very same steps (albeit somewhere in the 'air' in front of me, up the centre which no longer exists) arm in arm, Motecuhzoma desiring to show his 'guest' the beauty of Tenochtitlan as seen from it's highest vantage point. I am in near ecstasy viewing these remains, in a state of awe akin to the time I stood in the doorway peering into the Senate House of ancient Rome (but my trip to Europe is another story). Point is, the history of this place is palpable, overwhelming. The trip is worth it just for this moment.

(Alas, later research proved my assumptions wrong. Nothing remains from the version of the temple constructed by Motecuhzoma except for a part of the stone floor laid down in the temple precinct before the pyramid temple. All the stairs and sculpture I could see belonged to versions of the twin temple constructed before Motecuhzoma's era. He (and Cortez) never saw any of this. Sigh. On the other hand, the very spot where I was standing was probably quite close to the no-longer-existing facade of the temple built in his day. I like to think so, anyway)

Somewhere in the mess of ruin in front of me is a huge stone disc (11 feet across) carved in relief depicting the dismembered body of Coyolxauhqui, the sister of Huitzilopochtli (oh what a jolly religion the Azteca had!), but I am unable to make it out. But there are other serpent heads and froggy statues visible, so I am quite happy. The stonework (which in ancient times was covered with brightly painted plaster) conveys an odd pepperoni effect, some stones being red, others white. I am dying to explore the site, but the excavations are open to the public only on rare occasions, so I have to be satisfied with this brief glimpse through the fence.

Mark and I press on past the Metropolitan Cathedral (circa 1573) into the Zocalo. The large masonry building at the end of the Zocalo to our left is the National Palace. Men on its roof are shovelling squares of coloured paper on to the crowd below, shiny paper that glitters in the sun as it drifts down. Very pretty effect.

We stop directly in front of the palace. The huge square (second only to Red Square in Moscow for size) is empty apart from the rows of police and soldiers ringing it. There are no spectators. Except for some television camera crews, we are the only civilians in the Zocalo. Several policeman glance at us. I feel a trifle nervous. Fortunately it appears that a couple of gringos who have wandered in where Mexican citizens fear to tread are not worth worrying about. Or perhaps the casual way we sauntered in to the Zocalo indicated we were 'supposed' to be there and no one dared check our credentials? We decide to stay put and see what happens.

On turning around I observe that there are some spectators after all, but not exactly ordinary people. High-ranking officials and their families occupy a set of temporary bleachers against the base of the palace. Other people crowd the balconies above. In the centre of the building's facade, about three floors up, is a particularly long balcony festooned with purple banners. President Portillo is there, wearing a brown suit, surrounded by his family and top ministers. I see him glance down at Mark and myself. He looks puzzled. I control the urge to wave. Who knows how the police would react?

With a crash of drums the parade begins. The whole point seems to be to assemble in the side streets, then march once around the square waving red banners and chanting up a storm, to pass in front of the President, and finally exit, presumably to search for the nearest bar. The Mexican people can only see the parade on television. Is this classic state propaganda or what? Portillo stands beaming, saluting every passing contingent with upraised arms. Are they honouring him, or he them? Or a little of both perhaps? Among the different groups trotting by that Mark and I are able to identify are airline pilots, stewardesses (two from our flight!), maharachi players and famous Mexican actors. The whole show becomes rather hypnotic in its repetition and noise. We decide to leave. The police look vaguely offended.

We head back to the hotel. Am beginning to feel the effects of the thin air (Mexico City is more than 9,000 feet above sea level) and the air pollution (worst in the world). We arrive just in time to learn that everybody is going out to look at the twin temple. But first they're trooping out to the train station to get tickets to Palenque. Well, nine of us. Marvin and three others plan to detour to Villhermosa by bus. The thought of a nice, relaxing train ride is more appealing. So went along to the train station. There our attempts to speak Spanish to the ticket seller provoke anger on his part (no patience with idiot gringos). We think we've booked the express train, but events were later to prove otherwise. The ticket agent's revenge I think.

One thing I notice in the train station, an aspect of Mexican life style perhaps, is that children are tolerated more, allowed to run riot and play without any attempt at supervision. In my tired state I find their noise and fuss excruciating. Need sleep.

Mark and Dale and I head back to the hotel. I wait on a street corner for twenty minutes while they do some shopping. Feel very conspicuous standing there all alone, unable to speak the language.... Unhook my canteen from my belt and the condensation runs down my shirt. Once more the buffoon gringo.... I note that a billboard across the street displays Anthony Quinn promoting a brand of brandy. Seems he's a really big star down here..... Buildings all around seem to be crowded tenements, washing hanging from every window. Millions of kids

playing soccer on the sidewalk.... A staggering drunk comes running along. Accidentally slams his head into a telephone booth and falls over backwards. Those around him gasp in alarm. People reach to help, but he bounces back up and continues on....Very lively, this city.

Finally, finally, back in the Hotel Mario Angelo. Want to take a hot shower, but the hose from the water tank on the roof has broken, steaming water pouring into the courtyard... Dale finds a two inch cockroach in her suite, captures it in a jar. I am less than thrilled and collapse in bed. Dead asleep.

TO BE CONTINUED.....

Why Frederik Pohl Thinks I'm a Lunatic – by R. Graeme Cameron

In 1986 I produced a one-shot fanzine titled ENTROPY BLUES that sank into oblivion before it was even printed (or so it seemed). Still I believe, in my humble manner (still God-Editor of BCSFAzine after all), that some of the articles are worth reprinting. So I snuck them into #200 of BCSFAzine back in January of 1990. Those of you who are BCSFAns will have read this there. However, the majority of SPACE CADET's readers will, I trust, find this first of a series of ENTROPY BLUES REPRINTS of interest.



TO MEET THE MASTER! At V-Con 14 in 1986. Ah yes. First into the Salish lounge for the SEMI-PRO VS. FULL TIME WRITING panel. Pohl walks in, ahead of the other speakers. I leap from my seat in the front row to confront him. Graciously he extends his hand. <OPENING GAMBIT>: Do you mind if I take pictures, Mr. Pohl? "Of course not." [*Thinks: Who is this twit?*]...<RUSH IT IN QUICK>: I gotta 80,000 word novel at DEL REY under SERIOUS CONSIDERATION (I know it's true cause they told me) and I wonder if you could tell me anything about the editor, Shelly Shapiro, and how she thinks and all like that? "I'm afraid not, I only met her once." [*Thinks: Good God, where do these people come from?*] (**Thanks thanks thanks**)... Stare at Pohl for next hour snapping pictures every thirty seconds from distance of five feet. Make him feel comfortable...

Immediately rush to Ballroom Centre for HOW TO GET STARTED AS A WRITER OF SF panel. Sit in front row directly in front of Pohl.

[*Thinks: Damn, here he is again*] Absorb every word, eyes blinking hero-worship, drooling with happiness. [*Thinks: Wonder what his I.Q. is? If any*]... Question period. <DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO APPEAR INTELLIGENT>: Mr. Pohl, I have a book at DEL REY -- [*Thinks: Again? Sure likes to toot his horn*] -- and I was wondering what the process of revision is like, how one works with the editor? (**Please, please, enlighten me!**) Pohl looks at me as if I'm some kind of pest. (**Me? Never!**) [*Thinks: This guy is a moron. Better give him my stock answer for neophytes*] "Of course you don't want to antagonize an editor, so learn to accept their suggestions." [*Thinks: Now shut up and leave me alone*] (**I will. I will**)... Panel finished, Pohl gets up to leave. <ABJECT APOLOGY>: Mr. Pohl, would you autograph this please? "Of course." [*Thinks: SLAVE SHIP? I wrote this thirty years ago. Hasn't this twit bought any of my recent stuff?*] <RUSH IT BEFORE HE GOES>: Mr. Pohl, I just want to say, I've always admired your satire, the deft way you fool around with everyday concepts, like in SPACE MERCHANTS. "Oh gosh, you make me feel soooo good. Well, must be off." [*Thinks: SPACE MERCHANTS? Why is it always bloody SPACE MERCHANTS? Ah well, even this idiot has some taste. Kornbluth would be pleased*] (**Gosh, I think he likes me**)....

FREDERIK POHL READING: Salish Lounge. Resolved: being sensitive and perceptive, it finally dawns on me I've been pushing myself on Pohl in an unseemly manner, so have decided to sit in the back row and be

quiet. Halfway through Pohl's reading a small bee appears beside my cheek. ARRRGH!!! I leap to my feet and shuffle furiously sideways, punching my right fist frantically at the tiny -- and I dare say to Pohl -- invisible bee. Pohl looks up. [*Thinks: Holy Christ! It's him! AND HE'S GONE BERSERK!*] I bound clumsily from one side of the room to the other waving my arms above my head. [*Thinks: Better pretend nothing is happening, go on reading. Maybe he'll calm down.*] The bee leaves me standing drenched in perspiration and embarrassment. [*Thinks: What a maroon!*] **(Oh God, this is not my day)**...

War! What of It? – by Charles S. Cameron

PART TWO of the World War One memoirs of my Grandfather, Charles S. Cameron, who served in the 16th Battalion (Canadian Scottish).

CHAPTER IV: GIVENCHY -- JUNE 1915

Our way to the front line at Givenchy known as the "Ducks Bill" led through a regular maze of trenches. Long before we finally arrived in the front line we were all heartily of the opinion that our guide had lost his bearings and was leading us on a regular cooks tour. Eventually we arrived much to the relief of the battalion holding the line. We were tired, sore and grouchy, as only troops can be, and owing to our paucity of numbers the order was given "Every second man on duty until dawn." My immediate neighbour and myself arranged to take turns of a few minutes doze with our chins resting on the parapet; if a stray bullet came along it was none of our business. History and historical novels tell of men being shot for less, but such was our implicit faith and trust in each other that we never hesitated in emergency.

Next day we took stock of our surroundings. The "Ducks Bill" was truly named: one of those peculiar places where you faced the enemy whilst the enemy also faced your rear; the Bosch lines at one point were only fifty yards away. This gave rise to the rumour that we were being undermined and would soon be blown sky-high -- we did not favour that method of going out. But it's a wonderful world of compensations; we were too close to be shelled and whilst the neighbourhood daily received a large quota of 'coal boxes' we were immune to this form of entertainment for the time. The thought of the mine and trench mortars which were just coming to the fore in organized strafing alone disturbed our meditations; so vivid were some of the latter that perfectly sane men swore that they could hear Fritz sapping underneath. I never did have such imagination -- heard nothing and cared less.

An attack by our division was imminent and the word was quietly passed around that our Colonel had been overheard phoning Brigade Headquarters volunteering to make the charge on our front. We knew we were only some two hundred strong, all ranks included, and the thought of charge caused us considerable amusement, however grim. Headquarters decided otherwise.

During ration parties to and from the rear we found overland routes which we favoured rather than use the communications trenches. Travel fast and duck if you had to was our method. This stood us in good stead when our company was again lost on the way out. We see-sawed backwards and forwards for over an hour with a good few miles march to billets still ahead of us. What a night! The machine gun section were immediately behind and the language of the man carrying the tripod of the old Colt then in use blazed like lightning through the air. Just as we had received the order for the hundredth time to about return and retrace our steps we recognized a land mark of the overland route which ran at right angles some twenty yards away.

In a flash we formed a veritable battering ram and pushed and cursed the entire Company ahead until we reached the spot where we could climb out. The rest followed and finally we walked along the banks of the

canal towards Bethune asleep on our feet. It was afterwards reported that someone in his sleep stepped into the canal and with his heavy equipment and rifle just sank. I can't vouch for this but it was possible.

We were soon back in the same part of the line; the battalion which had previously relieved us had gone over the top, captured four lines of trenches, but owing to the failure of the troops on their flanks they were compelled to retire to our original line.

The weather at this time turned very hot and lice and bluebottles appeared in quantity and size unbelievable. There was a considerable number of the dead of the recent engagement and others in front of the trenches whom we could not bury owing to the close proximity of the enemy line. The odour of putrid human flesh is very nauseating.

On the way along the trench one day I passed a handsome laddie who was whiling away the time firing at the Fritz line through a snipers steel plate in the centre of the parapet. He was standing in the blazing sun with nothing on but his kilt and boots; beautifully developed he was a splendid picture of manhood. A few minutes later I returned to find him dead. The wily Bosch had lured him on, signalling misses to him with a shovel whilst a German sniper watched carefully and plugged him through the loop-hole of his steel sniping plate.

On the afternoon preceding our next nightly excursion to the front line we received a surprise pay. Usually we were paid, if at all, the day after we came out of the line. There was more reason than rhyme in this procedure and the purpose was twofold. Firstly we promptly enriched the natives and secondly we were always broke long before it was time to leave for the next trip into the line. We, therefore, stayed around the camp and nobody had to waste any time looking for us.

Our billets lay across the canal from Bethune, but a pass to the town at such short notice was out of the question. My old friend Bill, Harry, Dick and myself were determined to go to town. We approached the guard in charge of the bridgehead but all we received was a pleasant smile. Scouting along the canal banks we found a raft two feet in width which when placed laterally across the canal was only about twenty feet short; this was close enough. We arranged that we cross in pairs. Harry and I went first, but Bill who was noted for his bull-headed movements jumped on at the last minute while Dick gave us a push. The results were disastrous. Harry made the opposite bank whereas I fell a few inches short. Looking over my shoulder whilst pulling myself out of the water I was just in time to see Bill do some very fancy and final steps on the raft which was rocking violently: an elephant couldn't make more commotion in a swimming pool -- he couldn't swim. Harry knew this and dived over my head, kilt, boots and all, and soon had Bill back on the raft. there he lay roaring with laughter. Dick smiled his acknowledgments of the show from the other side whilst an Imperial battalion which had come to rest at that point howled with delight. After lugging Bill and Dick across we spoke very plainly to Bill in that simple and pointed way soldiers have and loved him all the more. We rung our kilts out, enjoyed a good meal up in town and returned to billets by the same route, but with more care. We shoved Bill across first.

One thing I could never understand but took for granted like everything else was the line up of troops of all nationalities outside of No. 3 in Bethune. We had had our red-light districts back in old B.C., but lining up outside in the street was something foreign to our nature. We were pretty good foragers.

We were not loath to leave Bethune and the district; and was it not rumoured we were going out for a long, long rest? Rest nothing!!! On our last march through Bethune on our way north at dead of night we were still carrying fairly heavy sticks adorned with various coloured pennants. These had been issued to us to denote our progress in the proposed advance at Givenchy which we never made. Why we were still carrying these sticks nobody knew. Such was the army!! Each section carried one pennant and ours was fairly freely pawed around until some intrepid spirit sent it hurtling noisily over the cobblestones of Bethune square. Nobody was guilty and Sergeant Jack had to retrieve it for himself. It seemed lighter to carry after that break.

During our short period of warfare we had all contrived to get rid of the Ross rifle and picked up Lee-Enfields. The Ross rifle was cumbersome in the trenches and when overheated with rapid fire the bolt had to be kicked open with the foot; that wasn't so good. Only a half-hearted official attempt was made to deter us in our choice of arms.

CHAPTER V: STEENWERCK -- PLOEGSTEERT -- ARMENTIERES

We arrived on the outskirts of Steenwerck hot, dusty and very lousy. Soon organized baths were part of the routine, but hitherto we had to confine ourselves to a voluntary plunge in any nearby canal much to the amusement of mademoiselle. There was not even a ditch around our farm billets so several of us planned to have a wash after dark with the aid of a pail and a farm's water barrel. We were in the midst of our ablutions when a female farm hand appeared around the corner with pails for water. Whose ghosts we were did not appear to interest her, she screamed loudly, dropped her pails and fled. The extra pails were very handy. Cleansed and free from lice the hayloft did not appeal to us so we rolled ourselves in newspapers and slept in the orchard -- we didn't have pajamas either.

During our stay in those billets we held battalion field sports; running trunks were very much at a premium but we met the situation by discarding our kilts and pinning our skirts underneath with safety pins. Thus untrammelled we pranced around. Four of us, including a former Olympic representative of Canada, won the relay race winning the much needed sum of five francs each.

We celebrated the occasion with due and fitting honours, but on awakening the next morning in the hayloft I realized that nobody had looked after rations and we had nothing to eat. I had recently attained the giddy ranks of Lance Corporal and religiously attended to such matters. Not knowing that Sergeant Jack had been out the night before I cursed him soundly. He wasn't feeling very bright and I received a terrific clip on the jaw; he was a burly fellow but my God, I was annoyed! I stumbled in the hay, but in falling caught him by the knees, threw him on his back and fastened on to his throat. Jack gasped and bellowed when possible until we were pulled apart by our friends. Jack was "wan of the Old Skins". We had always been good friends and still are; and at the battalion reunions Jack invariably remarks, "Jock, do you remember our fight in the hayloft?"

Our next move was to Ploegsteert front line via the piggeries. The latter were, we understood, the piggeries of the Belgian Royal Family. As piggeries they were a fit subject for admiration -- cement floors and very clean. We took the place of the pigs for a few nights and found the resiliency of the cement floors not so much.

Life in the front line in this district was peaceful and enjoyable. The weather was warm, but casualties very light indeed. Later on in better organized warfare the company cooks were installed in the line and fed the troops very well under the circumstances. But at the time of which I speak we had to cook for ourselves, usually banding together in groups of six or so. Many and varied were the concoctions made.

The village of Ploegsteert was very handy and we often sent out from the front line for eggs for breakfast. This was scarcely an officially recognized practice, but such were the times.

There was one little fellow who I suspected had been a bit of a poacher on his native heath. Once in a while he would disappear for an hour or so and return to the line with a rabbit or bird from the neighbouring brush and woods. While we guzzled his rabbits we cursed him roundly as rifle bullets have a habit of travelling far and fast if not stopped and rabbits and birds do not prove much resistance in this regard.

We were quite happy with regular baths at the brewery in Armentieres during brief rests at the billets, but we couldn't even hope for any lengthy stay and just as the weather was getting colder we moved a little further North-West to the Messines front where we remained for several months.

Wandering along the shaded Ploegsteert road one day I came across the grave of a famous English Rugby threequarter. Shades of Inverleith! Memories of that wonderful spring afternoon in 1912 when the Scottish Puck thundered triumphant. But now, those voices were stilled and the civilized nations were at war.

CHAPTER VI: MESSINES -- SEPTEMBER 1915

New territory always brought a certain note of uncertainty if only for a short spell. Different parts of the line served to specialize in different forms of strafing, some worse than others, and as often as not it was a case of "better the devil you knew than the devil you didn't know". However, the trenches at Messines proved sufficiently far apart that only shell-fire proved the major frightfulness.

We had barely become established in our new position when we were off on flying column duty, or so it seemed. The Second Canadian Division had landed in France and had taken up a position just north of us at Kemmel Hill. We were intermixed with them, battalion with battalion, old troops with new. The Imperial regiments had done the same for us and it was fitting that we should sponsor our own new division. Meanwhile the guns were pounding down South at Loos and we were continually marching in and out of the trenches; for what purpose we did not know. Whether an attack was intended should the Loos push prove successful or whether we were just strengthening the line in anticipation of a German counter was at that point a matter of conjecture and the source of many rumours.

Our constant running hither and thither was somewhat disconcerting. Sleep was very irregular and finally the rations were missing one morning -- no rum, no hot tea and it was bitterly cold. Kilts were not made for trench warfare, especially when the cold winds were blowing. A careful check of our part of the line produced some bully beef and some raw onions. Tough food for tough people at 4:00 a.m. Some of the lads got into a very bitter argument over a matter of trifling nature, but such is the effect of an empty stomach on the human animal that we almost had a fight there in the front line between the closest of friends.

Fantastic rumours of spies in and out of the line were ever on the wing much to our disbelief, but we assuredly became keenly interested when our Sergeant-Major found two right in our own front line. Much to our disgust they proved to be a couple of Welsh miners conversing in their native tongue; they were attached to every party of tunnelers who were sapping from our trench.

Returning to billets behind Messines we received large reinforcements from another Canadian Highland Battalion still in England which later came to France as a unit of our Third Division. They were a hefty battalion; for the most part dour Scots. The reinforcements were much needed and we settled down as an organized unit to six months winter trench warfare. The battalion bombing section, a new arm of the service, was formed about this time. More frightfulness! This unit was composed of volunteers so our little group which believed in letting well alone did not volunteer with the exception of my old friend Bill.

This was but the beginning of the age of specialists: Bombing Sections, Machine Gun Companies, Intelligence Sections, Trench Mortars and later the Tank Corps. Schools sprang up all over France where belligerent staff officers and lead swingers taught seasoned veterans the art of war enthusiastically telling them to give the Bosch the bayonet. Bayonet hell! It had its uses but shoot fast and often appealed to us more than the bayonet -- such a brutal weapon. Nevertheless, these schools were very instructive. I attended two for a few days, but of that anon. They were also useful in providing jobs for those who had the nerve to stay out of the line and a much needed rest to the troops sent for instruction.

TO BE CONTINUED.....

Letters of Comment

E Version Note: All addresses (both snail mail and E mail) are undoubtedly out of date but I include them as I am attempting to duplicate the original published version of this zine as closely as possible.

From: PERRY GRAYSON

: perryg@pro-palmtree.cts.com
Editor of YAWNING VORTEX,
6442 Pat Avenue, West Hills, CA, USA 91307
13 January, 1995

I received your first issue of SPACE CADET this afternoon, for which many thanks. I would indeed be willing to send out a copy of YAWNING VORTEX, my 'zine, in trade for your quaint premiere. I'm glad to say that you are the first individual to contact me regarding Forry's little plug in FAMOUS MONSTERS #205. Hitherto, all distribution of 'YV' has gone to the Esoteric Order of Dagon APA, as well as a number of subscribers who discovered the advertisements I posted for 'YV' on the net.

In your note you remarked that you're a big fan of Lovecraft, which will certainly mean you'll find something of interest in YAWNING VORTEX but on the whole, my 'zine is one that I feel appeals to more than just the Lovecraftian. Since the tastes of its editor run thusly, you'll find that YAWNING VORTEX encompasses items of concern to the reader, collector, and fan of early, Golden Age, and modern SF (though only a meager amount of this latter section, as there are not many "modern" authors whom I personally esteem), horror of the WEIRD TALES era and beyond, and of course fantasy of the UNKNOWN and similar varieties. There are many features in 'YV' that deal with Frank Belknap Long, the author who most inspired and influenced me--and you'll find no issue to be an exception. So, in some respects it is more a Belknapian 'zine than a Lovecraftian one, though there are always forays into the work of a myriad others. A list of favorite authors would run: Frank Belcap Long, HP Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, the late Robert Bloch, Robert E. Howard, Edmond Hamilton (the flavor of SPACE CADET might mean you enjoyed CAPTAIN FUTURE as much as I like that pulp hero--and Long's JOHN CARSTAIRS, SPACE DETECTIVE), Henry Kuttner, Donald Wandrei, C.L. Moore, Leigh Brackett, Ray Bradbury, Hannes Bok (splendid artist, to boot), A.E. van Vogt, Richard Matheson, Charles Beaumont, Fritz Leiber, Carl Jacobi, Theodore Sturgeon, Lord Dunsany, Fletcher Pratt, Ramsey Campbell, Arthur Machen, Robert W. Chambers, M.P. Shiel, Harlan Ellison, William Hope Hodgson, and a slew of others...

The reason why Forry printed the comment about YAWNING VORTEX was that I happened to interview and reprint a piece by him in Vol. 1, No. 2. (special Halloween issue) I also am including a reprint of another fan story from THE FANTASY FAN (1934) in #3 (due to be published by Feb. 1). My interview came just before Forry and Jean Marie Stine published REEL FUTURE, which is Forry's fine new anthology. Since I live in close proximity to him, you can expect more surprises of an Acker-nature in YV in the months to come.

You mention that "Amid the mountains of dreck, there is a new generation seeking gold. I hope!" in SPACE CADET #1, and I couldn't agree with you more. There are a few souls such as myself who may be young but are dredging up the quality material that exists in the past of the fantastic genres. I'm one who believes that age *is never a limitation*. I'm both a writer and an editor, and have known that I was the former since I was but a lad.

In case you might be interested, my first project as editor will be published by Necronomicon Press (my good friend Marc Michaud, who recently won the Howard--World Fantasy Award--for best small press publisher): ESCAPE FROM TOMORROW is Frank Belknap Long's memorial story collection. The three weird tales (two science fictional ones) have not been reprinted since their original run in WEIRD TALES. I am also

compiling the comprehensive Long bibliography and pursuing a number of other Belknapian projects, including biography, criticism, and other volumes, in addition to my own fiction writing.

THE GRAEME: *Fortunately I've read and enjoyed many of the authors you mention, so I know I'm in for a treat with each issue of YAWNING VORTEX. Edmond Hamilton, for instance, is one of my seminal influences. His CITY AT WORLD'S END helped convince my adolescent self that SF would be a life-long interest of mine. I'll be reviewing it in the next issue of 'SC.'*

And it's interesting to note that your E-mail apparently contributed toward the rather bizarre dream I describe in 'Confessions.' No mean feat. When I told you about this you responded as follows:

“Not only have I dreamed of Forry and his vast treasure-troves at the Ackermansion, but I've met the man twice and have toured the house. If you have not had the opportunity, I heartily recommend you do so if you are ever in the CA area. Forry is one of the kindest and most generous people I've ever met; his charm and wit are sheerly amazing. Hopefully I will be visiting him again soon. You see Forry has given me gracious permission to search through his letter collections for those he received from Lovecraft to transcribe--so that they may aid the project headed by my friends S.T. Joshi and David Schultz, who are those chiefly responsible for the publication and study of obscure facets of HPL--and are slowly but surely putting his correspondence in view of the Lovecraftian public in its unexpurgated form.

From: SCOTT PATRI

Editor of ZERO-G LAVATORY,
Box 1196, Cumberland, B.C., V0R 1S0
5 January, 1995

Above the address of the envelope was the title SPACE CADET, and the first thought in my mind was that someone was commenting on a part of my article in ZERO-G LAVATORY #2 where I do a bit of 'Trekkie' bashing. By the weight of the contents, I was preparing for a good tongue-lashing by a Star Trek Fan, and when I opened the envelope I was thrown for a loop, for inside was a fanzine called SPACE CADET!

Of joy of joy I began reading it.... Interesting zine you've published, for I always wondered how a person's personality is affected when they are hit in the head in their youth. Now I know. :)

I liked the article on the Ed Wood Saucer controversy. There's nothing like wasting time on discovering insignificant trivia about B-grade movies to take your mind off the real problems in the world.

Thanks for plugging the ZGL, but next time include my full address. Fandom exists because of communication, and if we didn't have other people to write to, we would be just a collective of separate individuals that are into weird stuff instead of a united force of people that are into weird stuff.

THE GRAEME: *Point taken. From now on you'll see I'm careful to give the full address for every zine mentioned in 'SC.' Ghu knows, I acquired my mailing list by reading zine reviews in assorted zines which had come my way as God-Editor of BCSFAzine. Should some Fan-Ed wannabe desire to build a similar list, I intend that access to copies of 'SC' would be of aid. At the moment I have constructed a list of over 100 tentative trades. Once 'SC's trading relationships are consolidated, I will offer my list to interested Fan-Eds on request.*

From: CHESTER D. CUTHBERT

1104 Mulvey Avenue,
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3M 1J5
10 January, 1995

I have been seeking ways to cut down on the number of fanzines reaching me because I do not have time enough to give them the consideration they deserve. I do receive consistently all the Canadian Fanzines mentioned in SPACE CADET #1, and yours is so distinctive that praise must be given.

Your "CONFESSIONS OF AN SF ADDICT" surprised me by not mentioning the F&SF magazines; juvenile books, comics, and visual media appear to have preoccupied you. The magazines were my main source of enjoyment and led to books, but the visual including comics have never greatly appealed.

"Marvin's Mighty Mayan Marathon" indicates your adventurous inclinations which circumstances made impossible for me to share. Economic restrictions forced me to adopt a decision to live at secondhand through the written word: I adjusted so well to this that I am happily content with my life.

Your Grandfather's book "WAR! WHAT OF IT?" I suspect will show the anti-war feeling matching that of your other Grandfather. My own readings of anti-war books has convinced me of its futility and eliminated the illusion of patriotism which led me to volunteer in the Second World War; fortunately I was rejected for service.

Your writing certainly qualifies you for an author's career, but unless you write solely for the pleasure of writing, almost any other occupation is more rewarding. Dealing or collecting books pays better than writing them.... A single copy of a pamphlet by Edgar Allan Poe is worth more now than he earned in his lifetime, even allowing for the depreciation in the value of currency.

I've just finished reading Heinlein's STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND and this will indicate that I am not well-read in the important books because I spent years reading F&SF books by Canadian authors.

THE GRAEME: *Now that I think about it, is IS odd that I never picked up the habit of reading the SF zines available at newstands. Even now I rarely buy a zine unless it contains a story by a local author I know personally. I suspect my choice of reading matter as a child was based on the limited funds available to me via my allowance. Then again, I'm one of the first generation kids to be breast-fed (so to speak) by television, and am tremendously visually oriented. On the other hand, I read an average of 100 books a year, at least half of them SF, many of them anthologies, so perhaps it's just a matter of never having enough time to peruse the magazines.*

From: TEDDY HARVIA

701 Regency Drive, Hurst TX,
76054-2307 USA
11 January 1995

I am interested in reading more of your grandfather's war experiences. My mother's father served in the U.S. army as a foot soldier in France in 1918. He had stories but I heard only one and know now he edited out the harsher details.

My father served in the Corps of Engineers in the Philipines in WWII but never talked because he didn't think we'd be interested.

THE GRAEME: *Publishing SPACE CADET on a quarterly basis, each time excerpting only a few pages from 'WAR! WHAT OF IT?', probably means you're in for the long haul. I figure the excerpts won't run out till the turn of the century.....Hmmm, I guess that means I'M in for the long haul as Fan-Ed, but that's OK; it's what I want to do.*

From: HARRY WARNER JR.

423 Summit Avenue,
Hagerstown, Maryland, 21740, USA
11 January, 1995

The first issue of SPACE CADET was so much fun to read that I wouldn't even consider waiting and combining a loc on it with comments on the next BCSFAzine.

Your fine summary of how you gradually got caught by SF makes me wonder what sort of neofanhood I would have had, if'd been born a quarter-century later. My acquaintance with SF was necessarily based on the prozines because that's all there was in the 1930's except for primitive kid stuff like Buck Rogers on the radio and Flash Gordon in the funnies. Would I have spent most of my time with SF in the movies and on the tube, as you did, or would my love for reading have caused me to insist on reading as many paperbacks as I could get my hands on with consequent neglect to the film and tape form? My indifference toward the latter in mature life and beyond leads me to suspect I still would have preferred written SF.

Normally I don't read war memoirs or war histories or anything else involving the violence of war. But I'm glad I made an exception for your grandfather's unpublished book excerpt. It might be publishable today, even if it wasn't put into print when it was new. World War I could quite possibly become a big thing because hardly anyone who fought in it is still alive and active. The US civil war enjoyed exactly the same sudden boom around the middle of the century just when the last North and South soldiers were all dead and dying.

I even read attentively THE TRUTH ABOUT ED WOOD'S FLYING SAUCERS even though I can't remember having watched an Ed Wood movie. I gather you didn't have access to a VCR that can move ahead on a frame by frame basis...

Your account of the Latin American trip ends just when it becomes most interesting. So I'll simply hope that life and vision remain to me when the time comes that you publish enough to settle my uncertainty over whether you got the trots after all. There's nothing "self-indulgent" about publishing your journal. Famous pros are writing travelogues for LAN'S LANTERN (George Laskowski, 1306 Cherokee, Royal Oak, Michigan, USA 48067-3386) all the time.

THE GRAEME: *Yes indeed, I was unable to study the saucers frame by frame, so cheap a VCR do I possess. Interestingly, the "FLYING SAUCERS OVER HOLLYWOOD" companion Video to PLAN 9 confirms my Lindberg model hypothesis, but at the same time -- in it's opening sequence -- features a staged "saucers dangling over a cheap model set" sequence featuring saucers evidently fashioned from foil pie plates that are dead ringers for the "hubcap" saucers in the film. This, of course, does nothing to clear up the mystery. In addition, FAMOUS MONSTERS #205 quotes Ed Wood's nephew, William Wood, saying that his uncle had presented him (when he was only eight) with "...a model flying Saucer....plastic, probably 10" in diameter with a bubble canopy and a wooden base (with a label reading) 'Grave Robbers From Outer Space.'" This must have been the Lindberg model. Hmmm, one was burned, two others are now owned by Bob Burns, and William owned a fourth....how many did Ed Wood use in the film? The mystery rolls on and on....*

From: DAVE PANCHYK

Former Editor of SPINTRIAN (defunct zine)
2617 Argyle Street,
Regina, Saskatchewan, S4S 0K2

It's unfortunate that about the only Locs I've been writing have been to perzine editors to tell them that I haven't the time to read and Loc their zines. Sadly, despite the fact that SPACE CADET #1 was one of the most

compelling and diverse I've had the pleasure to receive, I'm going to have to tell you the same. I appreciate your kind offer.

Last fall I entered a Master's program in English. Soon comes an all-too short summer -- which may be taken up with graduate work -- before I leave to teach in China for a year.

I'd feel bad knowing I was depriving someone else of SPACE CADET by continuing to receive it. But I'd feel good knowing you were continuing to put out such an interesting account of your life and interests.

THE GRAEME: *Thank you for your kind words. I include this Loc to let those who remember you from SPINTRIAN days know what you are up to. Good luck with your studies, and your upcoming trip to China. I understand there are SF fans active there. Perhaps you'll come into contact with them. Cheers!*

From: PATRICK SAURIOL

Co-Creator of FREEFLIGHT comics anthology,
P.O. Box 47536, #1 - 1020 Austin Ave.,
Coquitlam, B.C., V3K 2A0

Thanks for sending me your premiere issue of SPACE CADET. The feature I enjoyed most was your grandfather's memoirs of his experience in the Great War. It speaks in the prose and sentiment that I've been taught about regarding this time, and it came across as an average person's account of what it was like fighting in the fields of Europe. Indeed, the matter-of-fact writing style fits perfectly. In a 'zine devoted to the love of alien worlds and B.E.M.s where the concept of a piece devoted to such material might seem at first out-of-place, your grandfather's notes spoke with a voice of their own. I look forward to the next instalment.

And just to give you hope for some of the younger generation, I remember FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND with great fondness. Forrest Ackerman is one of the people I want to meet, shake hands with, and then spend as many minutes as he can possibly endure telling him how much he gave to me as one of those 'dreamers' his magazine was intended for. And if there's any cosmological forces reading this out there, grant me some claim to fame that I can present him to enjoy.

SPACE CADET is off to a good start. I'm glad you'll have a kicking ground after your run on BCSFAzine, a place to hang out and talk shop. Keep up the good work!

THE GRAEME: *Well, SPACE CADET is my new hobby. Hope to keep it going for many years to come. As for 4-E, he has fans everywhere!*

From: RANDALL TIN-EAR

Editor of ANGRY THOREAUAN
REVTiNEAR@aol.com
Box 2246, Anaheim, CA, USA 92814
Sun Jan 22 14:27:31 1995

Lesse, is it Raymond? Reynaldo? Hell, there are not too many names commenced with the lettre "R", and even fewer for cause of embarrassment, so i shall quickly skip over that bad joke.

Anyhow, a trade of our respective zines would be wonderful, as I found SPACE CADET a great publication. As to how you shall perceive The ANGRY THOREAUAN Magazine, well, that is a matter that is to be determined within a few weeks.

THE GRAEME: *ANGRY THOREAUAN's mood is a far cry from SPACE CADET's nostalgic yearnings, though fascinating in its own right. I hope to include a review in this issue. Good to trade!*

From: MR TOM R FELLER

Editor of THE REASONABLE FREETHINKER

Address : CCWS74A@prodigy.com

Box 13626, Jackson, MS, USA 39236

Mon Jan 23 00:55:42 1995

Thank you for sending me the issue. I enjoyed it very much. You're only a few years older than me, so I think you're very premature in referring to yourself as an old fart. We do share many of the same SF memories.

Otherwise, I don't have much to say. I don't know enough about World War I, especially Canada's participation, or about the ancient Mayans (I just a three book set on the Mayans, the Aztecs, and the Incas) to comment on your pieces. Plus I never watched PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE enough times to venture an opinion on the flying saucers.

I have put you on my mailing list and will be putting issue #3 of THE REASONABLE FREETHINKER in the mail to you this week.

THE GRAEME: *Hmmm, had Aztec civilization survived, and developed its own film industry, what sort of films would an Aztec Ed Wood produce? Something to think about, eh?*

From: DAVID LANGFORD

Editor of ANISIBLE

Address : ansible@cix.compulink.co.uk

94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, UK RG1 5AU

Mon Jan 23 01:51:37 1995

Many thanks for Space Cadet #1, which arrived this morning. Despite a few too many exclamation marks, I particularly liked the investigation into Plan 9 From Outer Space -- I've always been fond of criticism that clears up popular misinformation by a careful reading of the text, or in this case the freeze-frame. Now, whenever any adherent of the discredited paper plate theory dares to speak up, one can assume an air of insufferable smugness and produce the copy of SC#1 which sf movie critics will henceforth be required to carry in a back pocket at all times.

The first edition of the SF Encyclopaedia featured a similar retailing of popular myth, without even the excuse of misinformation from a production assistant. Peter Nicholls (for it was he) wrote that H.G. Wells hadn't thought it through in The Invisible Man, since the chap would be blind, light passing uselessly through his invisible retinas. When you consult Wells's actual text, though, you find that he had indeed considered this and did his best to fudge it -- the retina is the one part of the body mysteriously resistant to the invisibility process.... This is one of the changes I gloatingly succeeded in getting into the second edition.

THE GRAEME: *"Few too many exclamation marks?!! What's wrong with exclamation marks!!! I find them exciting!!!!"*

From: ROB HANSEN

Address : avedon@cix.compulink.co.uk

144 Plashet Grove, East Ham, London, E6 1AB, UK

Mon Jan 23 23:36:47 1995

Got THE SPACE CADET today, for which thanks.

THEN (my serial history of British fandom, which also has a lot of incidental info about American fandom) is no longer in print, but can now be downloaded from the net. You need to connect by anonymous FTP to ftp.dcs.gla.ac.uk and retrieve files from directory /pub/SF-Archives/Then as Then.1 to Then.4 ... (NB this is case-sensitive: "then" or "THEN" won't work). Then.1 covers the '30s & '40s, Then.2 the '50s, Then.3 the '60s, and Then.4 the '70s. If you download any of this, does it count as a trade?

Also, while I haven't done any general circulation fanzines recently, I have finally finished my TAFF report, ON THE TAFF TRAIL, a 33,000 word account of my 1984 safari across fannish America. This is published as a fundraiser for TAFF and is available from me at 144 Plashet Grove, East Ham, London E6 1AB, UK, for US\$5 plus postage (\$1.50 seamount, \$2.50 airmail), cheques payable to me, all proceeds to TAFF.

THE GRAEME: *I don't know how to F.T.P. but will try to learn. I'm basically Internet illiterate. Maybe I can get someone else to download THEN for me. In any event, it's a trade. I look forward to the occasional Loc if anything in my zine strikes you of interest.*

From: JOHN MANSFIELD

Editor of CONTRACT
321 Portage Ave, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 2B9
conadian@genie.geis.com
Mon Jan 23 22:21:59 1995

Thanks for the copy of Space Cadet. Having just turned 50, I am beginning to think I qualify as an AOFNTW.

As I write this I leave to go to Europe for two weeks to attend two trade shows, a SF Con, two Media Cons, two wargaming cons and will visit Glasgow to work on the 95 Wcon and hotel/accommodations for Toronto & Winnipeg fans.

Upon my return, I go to sit on Conadian's board to vote to send our money south. Even though I asked for people to send in requests for \$\$ in the last issue of ConTRACT, only BANFCON did. The Americans flooded us. Why didn't the clubzines, perszines, clubs, etc reprint my call for fund requests? Why did they not pass it on in club meetings, etc?

THE GRAEME: *As God-Editor of BCSFazine I am sometimes too humble for the good of the club. It never occurred to me that anything we were up to was worthy of a grant from Worldcon. I assumed that your request was something restricted to the inner workings of Wcon Smoffing. Perhaps if you had been more specific in detailing what sort of response you were hoping for you might have been able to pierce through my impenetrable ignorance, but this time, alas not.*

From: ROBERT 'BUCK' COULSON

2677 W 500 N, Hartford City, IN, USA 47348

Okay, I'll send an occasional loc for your fanzine, assuming there's something in it I can write about....

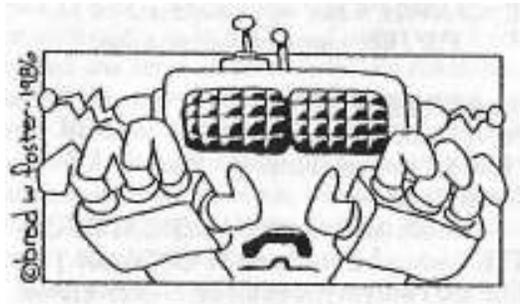
Childhood.... had a lot of weird dreams as a child, probably drug dreams. A remedy for asthma at the time was smoking dried, ground Jimson Weed, "active ingredients stramonium and belladonna." I had asthma quite often, and smoked a lot of Jimson Weed in the 30's, 40's and 50's. It did work; wheezing was either stopped completely or reduced to a bearable level.

When I was young I wanted to write. After being in SF fandom for several years and writing mostly parodies, Gene DeWeese and I sold two "MAN FROM UNCLE" novels in 1967 and kept going. (For that matter, one of our fanzine parodies has since appeared in two hardcover anthologies.) Gene writes mostly "STAR TREK" novels these days; I've been selling mostly non-fiction; book reviews and the like.

Don't think I ever saw any Ed Wood movies. Never read any Tom Corbett either, though Juanita saw the TV show and read the books. I didn't have a TV at the time.

These days Juanita and I are mostly convention fans, though I letterhack a lot of fanzines. When I got into fandom in the 1950's, fanzines were it. There was one Midwestern Con (Midwestcon); a couple on the east coast, and one in California. Now Juanita and I average a dozen cons a year, nearly all in the midwest.

THE GRAEME: *I'm curious. Was one of the "MAN FROM UNCLE" novels you wrote the one which featured Forrest J. Ackerman as a character? I used to own the whole series, and particularly recall enjoying that one.... Hmmm, kind of a 4-E theme running through this issue....*



From: JOSEPH W. CASEY

(Zine Reviewer, OSFS Statement)

Address : am278@freenet.carleton.ca

Sun Jan 29 15:39:21 1995

My favorite part of the zine was "WAR! WHAT OF IT?" It is interesting, after listening to all the second guessers and hindsighters babble, to hear the story of WWI from someone who was there. It also shows that the military hasn't changed much in the last 80 years. A standard two weeks consist of one day of breakneck work followed by 13 days of waiting. Some say that the forces are FUBAR, this show that they are following SOP. Can not wait for more.

I found the piece on Ed Wood to be fascinating. It show that you have the makings of a good investigative reporter, I don't know this may be what you do in real life. To think that I used to own one of those models, many many years ago.

Your early fannish existence sounds much like my own if you discount the fact that I had four sibs who thought I was crazy to read and watch that stuff. One question is 'Red Planet Mars' an earlier title of Heinlein's 'Red Planet'?

You might be interested to now that the Rialto moved on to holding three for a quarter showings every Sunday with one being westerns, then classics (The Maltese Falcon, etc.), then Elvis movies, and the fourth would be SF/Horror. If there was a fifth Sunday it would be The Three Stooges. The old Rat Hole, as it came to be known has long since been torn down and replaced by an empty lot (this is progress?).

I liked your second piece "MARVIN'S MIGHTY MAYAN MARATHON", tho to be honest I was afraid I was going to be bored. However, your short paragraphs kept it punchy and interesting.

I am looking forward to number two.

THE GRAEME: *You caught me there. "RED PLANET" by Heinlein, not "RED PLANET MARS." A slip on my part..... Original of Russ Winterbotham to add the word "THE" to "RED PLANET" and come up with a brand new title, wasn't it?.... The Rialto is gone? Sigh. Birthplace of The Graeme's mindset....*

From: SHERYL BIRKHEAD

23629 Woodfield Road,
Gaithersberg, MD, USA 20882
14 January, 1995

There was a fire in the townhouse next to the Lynches and since they share common walls, their place was very badly damaged. They got out with what they had on and the two cats....(They) are now in a rented furnished apartment. No idea when they might be able to move back in, how much/what can be salvaged, Computers, printers, mimeos, electrostenciler, Hugos, everything.... The Lynches have much more on their minds than MIMOSA lately.

Unlike you I have very few childhood memories, unless someone was bleeding a lot (such as the time my sister and I played "Swords" and she had scissors...).

Hmmm. "The Longest Journey" -- two cats and a dog....somewhat like the Disney movie but two dogs and a cat?

I've heard about PLAN NINE, but haven't seen it...yet.

Sigh. Seeing it said in print that there are only a handful of zines "up" there makes it even sadder that I'm not familiar with them.

Good luck. Let me know what doodles you need and I'll try!

THE GRAEME: *Sorry to hear about the Lynches. Hope their life is back on track by the time you (and they) read this..... It's two dogs and one cat? Another mistake in my memory. But yes, the Disney movie was based on the book.... Would love to get more doodles!*

From: MICHAEL W. WAITE

105 West Ainsworth
Ypsilanti MI, 48197-5336 USA
January 18, 1995

SPACE CADET #1 -- beautiful layout and relevant content (a rare combination). Your incomplete life chronology, CONFESSIONS OF AN SF ADDICT, is very enjoyable.

Our life experiences parallel one another in many ways, although I appeared on this planet several years before your emergence. I was born Nov. 24, 1936. My teen years were spent in the '50s. It was a wonderful carefree existence for most teenagers I knew, truly full of a "sense of wonder" that seems to have escaped today's youth.

I'm looking forward to more MARVIN'S MIGHTY MAYAN MARATHON. I have traveled throughout Europe and North Africa but have yet to visit our neighbours to the south. I have spent many enjoyable days & nights in Ontario. The STRATFORD FESTIVAL is a favorite hang-out of mine.

Thank you for sharing your grandfather's memories of WWI. My father fought in France during that war, but was reticent about sharing his experiences.

THE TRUTH ABOUT ED WOOD'S FLYING SAUCERS was a bit more than I need to know about the technical (?) aspects of PLAN NINE. However I saw, and enjoyed, the movie ED WOOD. What Ed Wood lacked in directional prowess he made up for as a humanitarian. Martin Landau's performance as Bela Lugosi is awesome. I'll watch PLAN NINE FROM OUTER SPACE with renewed interest.

Is SPACE CADET a weekly or monthly publication? Only joking (or am I?)

THE GRAEME: *SPACE CADET is intended to be quarterly. It will be interesting to see if I can stick to that schedule.*

From: MIKE GLICKSOHN

508 Windermere Avenue,
Toronto, Ontario, M6S 3L6

Thanks for S.C. #1 and your note. But I am gafiated now so future issues should go to more fertile ground. All the very best, and thanks.

THE GRAEME: *Thanks for the note. At least I get to print one Loc from you, and one from Dave Panchyk. Hmmm, I'm getting the feeling I'm entering zinedom during a changing of the guard. Well, time marches on, but so does fandom (I hope!).*

From: FRANZ H. MIKLIS

Editor of GALACTO-CELTIC NEWSFLASH
A-5151 Nussdorf 64, Austria
24 January, 1995

I enjoyed your zine greatly. Your account of how coming into SF made me smile (even laugh) all over. I suddenly did remember how I entered the sciencefictional crowd and saw numerous parallels. But I can't recall all events exactly as you did. (What makes me biting into my ass... (sorry, Austrian proverb.))

I remember one very impressing story that gave me the so called "sense of wonder" or even life-time-thrill. I was about eight years of age. Austrian TV showed "THE TIME MACHINE" -- and oh my little chicken -- that was what. I had to feed the pigs soon afterwards. Usually I enjoyed this task (watching the little swine jumping around in excitement), but this time I nearly unsocked myself when entering the 200 year old farmhouse. A faint grunting came out of the ole stable and I knew: this must be "Morlocks."

I recall in detail the first landing on the moon, of course this filled me with enthusiasm about Space and the Sciences. In the German speaking world there was one TV production that made many people fans of space. This had been "Raumpatrouille Orion" with the famous actor Dietmar Schonherr. I can remember that all my aunts and even my mother fell in love with this space hero.... and some years later Cpt. Kirk invaded their hearts (and Spock my ears). I think I was twelve to that time, and my favourite game was exploring the nearby farmyards in my sand/paper/wood Enterprise. Oh, we were real heroes and didn't need any computer/video/junkgames to get thrilled.

I have to admit that Seattle and Vancouver are one of the cities I would really like to see some time. Some years ago a nice guy from Vancouver stayed some weeks in Salzburg and a girlfriend of mine fell in love with him. Oh boy, this guy really left an impact here. Even now they are talking about him. Are all of you Vancouverans that gallant and decent?

THE GRAEME: *Sure, I'd love some artwork, either of a fillo nature or potential cover art..... As for us Male Vancouverans, the answer to your question is: No. Just that guy and me. All the rest are scum. Female Austrians visiting Vancouver take note. (Who was that other guy anyway?)*

From: ANDREW C. MURDOCH

Address : uq016@freenet.victoria.bc.ca
2563 Heron St, Victoria, B.C. V8R 5Z9
Mon Feb 13 00:07:19 1995

On "CONFESSIONS OF AN SF ADDICT": I don't think I had quite the start you did, although I must credit early influences for my being a fan today. My father took me to see "Star Wars" when I was about 5 or 6. I can't for the life of me remember actually seeing the film, except that when the Death Star exploded, the whole place erupted in cheers. "BattleStar Galactica" became the first t.v. show (aside from Sesame Street) that I watched regularly. I didn't get into books and magazines until much later than you did, however (like, in my teens, and it's only in the last year or so that I've started doing something about the fact that I'm so ill-read). Kinda says something about the age I grew up in, doesn't it? I can only imagine how some kids today might be, what with being pelted on all sides by the Power Rangers.

I confess my sins to you and all fandom...I have yet to see "PLAN NINE FROM OUTER SPACE". I know, how dare I call myself a fan without having gone through the ritual enduring of SF's worst hour (and a half). Let me tell you something, it's tough being a young fan when your peers are all older than you. It's a bitch to be left out of a conversation because you haven't seen this film/read this book, and if you say so, they just stare in shock as though I were some sort of mutant. I can't help but wonder if that's the reason why there are fewer young fans coming in, or why older fans are lamenting the loss of the old traditions.

Regarding "WAR! WHAT OF IT" I can only say "WHOA!" Having grown up in an age where the only kind of warfare I was faced with was nuclear, it's strange to learn about the older trench warfare way of doing things. I could only imagine the grime and muck that characterized trench warfare, but hearing it from someone who was there makes it all so real. Keep printing it, please.

I'm glad that ZX helped inspire you. Unfortunately, I must inform you that I have decided to stop publishing ZX, probably permanently. Like most fans, I suffer from having too many hobbies and not enough time or money for all of them, and my 'zine had to be bumped. But be warned, I will 'zine again. (Pause for manic laughter fading into the darkness.....)

THE GRAEME: *In a way I envy you. There are many wonderful books and movies you have yet to read and see which (hopefully) will stir that old sensa wonda. In my case, when watching some favourite movie for the tenth or eleventh time, I often pretend I'm seeing it for the first time.*

From: HENRY L. WELCH

Editor of THE KARLEY KNEWS
1526 16th Ave, Grafton WI 53024-2017
21 February 1995

Thanks for SPACE CADET #1. TTK #50 should arrive in a week or so and that means we are now trading.

You grandfather's war diary was interesting. I guess I'll never be able to understand it.

I've never seen PLAN NINE so I guess that makes me uneducated in bad SF media. (I have seen THE MANSTER three times though.)

THE GRAEME: *THE MANSTER? Hmmm, could be worth reviewing. A most bizarre Japanese-American co-production....*

From: CHUCK CONNORS

Editor of THINGUMY BOB

Sildan House, Chediston Road, Wisset,

Near Halesworth Road, Suffolk, IP19 0NR England

(Currently in Gibraltar)

27 February 1995

Sorry for the rushed note but want to get this into the post before the rains come. No joke! Out here in Gibraltar there are flash floods down the main street!

Here's the latest issue of THINGUMY BOB (air mail in mini-form, next issue in larger type!). Greatly interested in the promise of B-Movie reviews. Have an old edition of PSYCHOTRONIC from the mid '80s but always interested in that sort of stuff!

THE GRAEME: *Hope you like my WIZARD OF MARS review. In the future I hope to include at least one original film review in each issue, plus a reprint of one I've done in the past for BCSFAzine. I love B-flics!*

From: LEWIS TANNER

120 Haven Ave, #35, New York N.Y. 10032-2636

23 February 1995

Received SPACE CADET #1 from Brant Kresovich (I've been sending him packages of zines since he began teaching in Latvia). I like your zine and am impressed by your concise writing style.

Both my grandfathers fought in W.W.1 for Kaiser Wilhelm II. One was killed in action while the other went missing and was presumed dead. I wonder if either of my grandfathers were as naive and innocent as your granddad appears to be. This is not an insult; it just seems from his memoirs that he thought warfare was another game. His memoir is curiously devoid of the memories of bloodletting, pain, and trauma that a contemporary reader would expect.

I was impressed by your research on Ed Wood's flying saucers. I've seen PLAN NINE at least three times. My favourite viewing was in a theatre about 15 years ago on Halloween. What I best remember was the laughter that accompanied -- indeed enveloped -- the audience during the screening.

I love Ed Wood's films and B-films in general. I have come to expect the quirky and bizarre in grade B-movies. Roger Corman and ilk are my heroes. B-movie shlock -- low budget of course -- are usually more interesting than the multi-million dollar extravaganzas produced in Hollywood.

THE GRAEME: *I find B-flics far more entertaining than 'A' films. Usually a lot more original. Not homogenized for the mass audience.*

I don't think my grandfather was naive. He certainly experienced his share of the horrors of war (as you'll see in excerpts to come), and he was probably aware of the anti-war literature produced by disillusioned

veterans (one thinks of Robert Graves' *GOODBYE TO ALL THAT* for instance, though that wasn't written till seven years after my grandfather's book), but I think all he was trying to do in his memoirs was record events as he experienced them, which meant putting down on paper the bravado and sense of "It's a hard job, but let's do it right" that he and his chums adopted to survive. I suspect he didn't want to record anything (doubts, fears, etc) that would lessen the reputation of those who died. I strongly suspect he wrote this ms. for his buddies, to help them remember, and not for the general public. Besides, incredible though it seems today, I think the 'Gung Ho' attitude his writings reflect were genuine. I can't see how sane men could 'go over the top' otherwise.

From: MICHAEL McKENNY

Editor of BARDIC RUNES

424 Cambridge St. S., Ottawa ONT K1S 4H5

20 January 1995

Just reading the title *SPACE CADET* made me think of Tom Corbett. When I was about 9 or 10 I was given *STAND BY FOR MARS* (1st in the 8 volume Corbett series) as a birthday present, and it was quite a surprise to find a character with my name -- Warrant Officer Mike McKenny, nicknamed Baldy, if you recall.

We have a history project on SF in Ottawa. Feel free to send any info. For instance, do you recall where and when you lived in Ottawa? I was born here on Feb. 24th in 1950. I emphatically deny dropping a rock on anybody's head. Though I was present when the younger brother of a couple of friends of mine was brought home, bleeding all over the place, a rock having been dropped on his head. His mother took it rather calmly, simply grabbed the boy and stuck his head under the tap.

For my grade one report card we were allowed to draw the cover. I didn't draw space battles, but I did contradict my relatives' guess that I'd drawn birds by pointing at the bombs.

I too loved Mars and would tell myself stories about the colonization of the planet before falling asleep.

The first really great SF book I ever read was *THE LAST PLANET* by Andre Norton. Discovered it in my High School library.

Anyway, your first issue a job very well done.

THE GRAEME: *I lived at 2009 Olympia Crescent in Elmvale Acres circa 1955 to 1966. Attended Vincent Massey grade school grades 1 to 8, and briefly, HillCrest High School before moving to Toronto.*

It would appear that dropping rocks on people's heads is a fine old Ottawa custom. Probably has something to do with Ottawa being the capital of Canada (and the centre of the Universe, or so I thought when I lived there).

From: MURRAY MOORE

Editor of SACRED TRUST

377 Manly St., Midland ONT L4R 3E2

18 February 1995

You and I have a lot in common. My birth date is Oct. 7, 1951. "Foster, R.I.P., Lieutenant. Report to the platform commander. Show an exhaust." Yes, I am quoting the first paragraph of the blurb to *ASSIGNMENT IN SPACE WITH RIP FOSTER*.

I wonder if you have kept your copy, and *FAMOUS MONSTERS*, and all the other pre-teen and teen year artifacts which made such an impression on you. I hope that you did.

I did not keep my copy of RIP FOSTER, but no, I'm not quoting from memory. I came across a copy in a bookstore and bought it. This is true nostalgia. I don't plan to re-read it. I might try it at bed-time some time for my two sons, at present age eight and five. Just seeing the book, and having it -- again -- makes me feel good.

I wouldn't have noticed this -- or cared -- when I first read RIP FOSTER. The copy I have now gives a copyright of 1958 and an earlier copyright of MCMLII (1952 -- if I can still translate Roman numerals) as RIP FOSTER RIDES THE GRAY PLANET.

You relate finding three novels, each with Mars in its title, in your school library in 1962. You must be pleased with the recent spate of books -- Kim Stanley Robinson, et. al -- using the Red Planet as a plot prop.

You might have charged 25 cents a look through your telescope at Sputnik? That would have been very entrepreneurial of you. A comic book in that year would have cost 10 cents!

I agree that your grandfather's memoir of his experience of the First World War was worth printing. I anticipate reading the rest of it. Contemporary documents like this are a form of time travel. His attitude of 'King and Country' and going to war as nothing remarkable is an interesting contrast to the current controversy arising from the attitude of the McKenna brothers in their THE VALOUR AND THE HORROR trio of documentaries on the Second World War.

Your attention to detail on a subject that interests you is impressive, i.e. Ed Wood's Flying Saucers. I brought home from the Midland Public Library, at a cost of 50 cents, a discard copy of FLYING SAUCERS -- SERIOUS BUSINESS, by Frank Edwards. I could not resist the "32 pages of astonishing Photographs." The first photo I see upon opening the book is of a flying saucer that appears to be a short-brimmed, steel straw-boater, suspended in the sky through the windshield of a vehicle.

Your article ends with you declaring the world is waiting with baited breath. What is the world using for bait? I give you a compensatory point for knowing the difference, in your Mexico visit diary, between horde and hoard.

THE GRAEME: *What is the world using for bait? Nanotech-implanted fibres from Angora sweaters. Ed Wood believed these would permeate the atmosphere and trap U.F.O.s.....*

Yes, I still have my copy of RIP FOSTER. And recently picked up RIP FOSTER RIDES THE GREY PLANET. Interestingly, the art work in the first edition (drawn by E. Deane Cate) is very Buck Rogerish and not at all credible by '50s standards, whereas the second edition features art work by Denny McMains that reflects the '50s 'style' of tech very well. As for author Blake Savage, his real name was Harold Leland Goodwin, who under the name John Blaine was best known for his 'Rick Brant Science Adventure' series.

From: BRAD W. FOSTER

Illustrator. Cartoonist. Writer. Swell Guy.
POB 165246, Irving TX 75016 USA
30 January 1995

Greetings The –

(I like to be informal, use first names, that okay?)

Thanks for the copy of SPACE CADET #1. It's a change to get a fanzine these days with a title that I can not only understand, but also even still sounds like an SF fanzine. Congrats!

You noted in your letter you'd be willing to trade for illos. I wasn't sure if you were up for big or small, so I'm sending along four, two teeny-tinys, and two at mid-size. I hope that you can use them!

Your childhood recollections are astounding to me for the sheer amount of detail you can recall!! I can barely recall the odd moment here and there in my life pre-college!! And forget anything before the age of 13. Did all this stuff come easy, or did you have to sit down and really work at remembering, researching, etc. Just astounding to a memory sieve like myself!

Loved the article on Ed Wood's Saucers!! Unfortunately, I didn't have the funds to go see ED WOOD the movie, but my favourite scene shown in the commercials on TV is when Wood is watching the saucer blow up over the Hollywood set, and he has a look of such joy and wonder, like it was the coolest thing he'd ever done!

By the by, if you don't care for any art I send, no sweat. I'll try and get you something else. However, hope you can use my occasional weird tune! Looking forward to seeing more issues of SPACE CADET!

THE GRAEME: *Yes!! Please send more art! Great stuff!*

As for my memories, certain scenes remain vivid in my mind. For instance, you know how babies always giggle when they're thrown into the air? I can remember my brother doing that to me, and I hated every second of it. I was terrified. I guess that's why I remember it. Then there's the time he packed me in a flight bag and lugged me upstairs. And so it goes. But to sort my memories into context and add dates? Yes, that took effort and research. I don't remember facts, just scenes, visual impressions and the like.

P.S. I like your exclamation points!!!

From: NED BROOKS

Editor of IT GOES ON THE SHELF

713 Paul St., Newport News VA 23605

26 January 1995

Much thanks for the SPACE CADET GAZETTE. Inclosed is the latest IT GOES ON THE SHELF and I will put you on the list to receive future issues.

You are probably right that some of the destruction of ancient monuments can be blamed on bored kids! I remember my brother and I got into trouble for wandering about back of my grandfather's house shooting bottles off of gravestones with our BB guns.

My mother never really tried to control what I read.... I must have been about 11 when she found me reading Huxley's BRAVE NEW WORLD. "Should you be reading that?" she asked. But I never really had the feeling that there were things that I 'should not have read'.

I met Calvin Thomas Beck (CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN) once in NY, a strange character.... Have you ever seen the film ALABAMA'S GHOST?

You ain't that old a fart, I graduated from college in 1959 and can remember watching TV by candle-light....

THE GRAEME: *Those old lamp-oil-powered TVs were a pain, weren't they?*

ALABAMA'S GHOST? No. Something about a musician stealing secrets from the dead? Is this what Calvin reminded you of? Or the movie reminded you of Calvin? I'm curious to know.

I'm glad my mother encouraged me to read. It's my greatest pleasure. There is one greatest... No! Two! Watching movies is my greatest pleasure. There are two greatest pleasures! No. Three! Three Greatest pleasures! Sex is.... (And probably in that order too, at least judging by frequency...)

From: KENNETH KNABBE

Editor of PROPER BOSKONIAN
POB 809, Framingham MA 01701-0203
14 February 1995

Nice to hear from you. I am happy to trade PB for SPACE CADET.

I have tried to remember when I first discovered SF. I think it was about second grade. I remember a book my teacher had given me. The main character was a being like a leprechaun except he was able to travel through time (but not space). The main part of the story took place in 1600s Ireland.

THE GRAEME: *That somehow reminds me I developed an interest in ancient history at about the same time I discovered SF. I think because while reading the TOM CORBETT books I also read THE EAGLE OF THE NINTH by Rosemary Sutcliff, a novel about the Romans in England, which my brother had as a text book in school (complete with study questions like: "What makes the first two pages exciting?" and "Does Marcus react to his new situation as we would expect him to?"). Something about searching for the lost eagle standard of a missing legion appealed to my sense of wonder. Hmmm, I wonder if Canadian schools still use this book?*

From: BRANT KRESOVICH

Editor of FROM THE CLERISY
Riga Business School
Riga Technical University
Skolas 11, LV-1010 Riga Latvia

Thank you very much for SC#1. I liked 'CONFESSIONS' a lot. Some of your landmarks are the same as mine -- OUTER LIMITS, TWILIGHT ZONE, FAMOUS MONSTERS, and STAR TREK in those first seasons. Oh, yeah, forgot about THE PRISONER, though I have no idea why my friends and I watched it so religiously - it was so weird, obscure.

Your travelogue of Mexico was fun. I'm a fan of people's travel writing and think that zines that talk about trips are way above average.

Good luck with it. You're doing really good work so far.

Did you hear about me from that great zine OPUNTIA?

THE GRAEME: *Yes indeed. It's interesting to note that Dale Speirs used BCSFAzine as a source (one among many) to build a mailing list for OPUNTIA, and that I used OPUNTIA to create a mailing list for SC. Fandom in action!*

OUTER LIMITS remains my favourite SF TV series. I have high hopes for the new version being shot here in Vancouver.

From: WALTER A. WILLIS

32 Warren Rd. Donaghadee
N. Ireland, BT21 0PD

16 March 1995

I'm sorry to be so late in thanking you for sending SC#1. The truth is that it arrived during one of my periods of lethargy, when all the incoming mail is deposited in a big cardboard box under the typing table. When it was disinterred I was about to transfer it to the 1994 box in the garage when something stayed my hand. It had something to do with the fact that you sent it to me by airmail, but more to do with the fact that there seemed to be something refreshing about it, more than the average first issue.

Your account of your early encounters with science fiction is interesting, but all we seem to have in common is the fascination of H.G. Wells' WAR OF THE WORLDS. His account of the encounter between a Martian Tripod and the Royal Navy has stuck in my memory since I first read it at about the age of 11. I gave it as my first encounter with science fiction in an autobiographical piece I have just rewritten for Jenny Glover's MAVERICK. My recollection is that the story was reprinted as a serial in a magazine called MODERN BOY.

Your account of your trip to Mexico is well worth printing, but I'm not so sure about your grandfather's war memoirs or your exegesis of the Ed Wood film. I suppose it's interesting to note how not everyone involved in WW1 was horrified by the experience.

THE GRAEME: *All we have in common is WAR OF THE WORLDS? I suppose because the North American and UK SF scenes developed each in their own way with little crossover. Which is good, of course. Anything to resist the mass market trend toward homogenization.*

Still trying to pin down my grandfather's mindset when he wrote his memoirs. One thing that just struck me. He wrote them in 1922. My father was born in 1921. Did that trigger my grandfather's decision to put his experience on paper while it was still vivid in his mind? So that he could present them years later to his son fresh and untouched by later rationalization? Possibly. Guess I'll never know.

Sense of Wonder: A Lifetime Love of Sci-Fi – by David Buss

From: DAVID BUSS

31173 Dewdney Trunk Road
Mission B.C. V2V 6H5

SENSE OF WONDER: A LIFETIME LOVE OF SCIFI.

Earliest memory. I'm a year old. I see the moonlanding on TV. The screen is a nebulous haze, but I ache with happiness. I soil my diaper thinking of Icarus.

My second earliest memory. I'm two and in a heated argument with my brother. He's four. He's in the upper bunk, I'm in the lower. He's arguing that Henry Adams' ludditism effected a didactic reaction that stalled creative scientific literature for a generation. I countered that this belied Adams' thesis, that one need only consult "The Virgin and the Dynamo" to appreciate that Adams was referring to something akin to Popperian incommensurability viz-a-viz the occult emanations of machinery; that the supersensual anarchic energy of machines heralded a formal, inertial transition; not a technocratic psychosis emasculating psychical sensibility, but dynamic chaos, as initially multiplicitous and heterodox as the Cross to Constantine. I remember chuckling that Adams wedded medieval historicism to technological contingency as McLuhan brought literary analysis to media configuration.

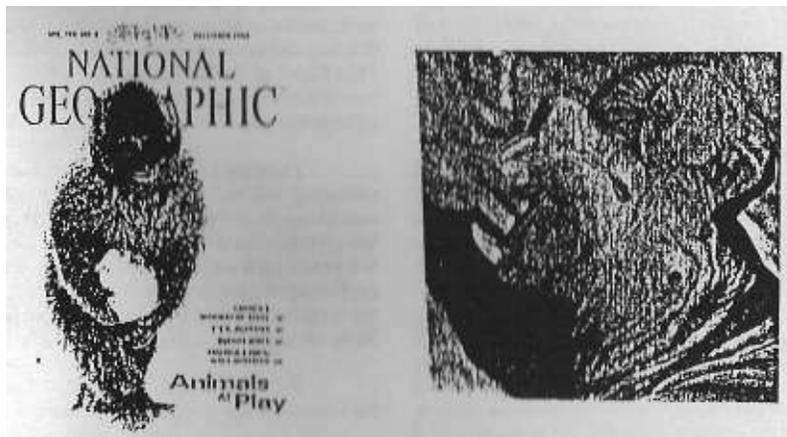
Eventually we fell asleep, but not before my brother huffily dismissed Adams as a haphazard Newtonian whose thesis was as extinct as Melville's cetology.

When I am in college I read something by Asimov and kind of like it.

THE GRAEME: *Do I detect an ever-so-vague hint of sarcasm? Hmmm? Dost thou mean to imply my memories (detailed in #1 of SC) be greatly exaggerated? In truth, I am astonished by how little I remember from my childhood. Wish I remembered more. On the other hand, I no longer think like a child (or so I assume) and my memories are recounted from an adult perspective.*

P.S. By the way, from the above, it's obvious that your brother won the argument....

Snow Monkeys Vs. Ice-Rats – by R. Graeme Cameron



This is a sad, terrible thing to bring to your attention, but it's a sad, terrible world, and we must face reality, for that's what SF is all about, eh?

The December 94 issue of NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC featured an article on animals at play, including (as shown above left) the endearing habit Japanese Snow Monkey juveniles have of fashioning snowballs and carrying them around for days, even weeks at a time. One wonders why. Sure is cute though.

Then the April 95 issue of DISCOVER Magazine included an article, sandwiched between one on arctic algae and another on rising sea levels, on the subject of the recently discovered Ice-Rats (or "Hotheaded Naked Ice-Borers") of Antarctica, complete with bloodcurdlingly repulsive photograph (see above right). Turns out these hairless 6-inch rodents live in tunnels within the ice. Because of their high metabolic rate their body temperature is 110 degrees, and they have the ability to radiate this heat through the blood-vessel enriched "hot-plate" structure on their heads. They are, in fact, capable of melting their way through the ice faster than a penguin can waddle, with horrifying consequences. To quote from the article:

"A pack of ice-borers will cluster under a penguin and melt the ice and snow it's standing on. When the hapless bird sinks into the slush, the ice-borers attack, dispatching it with bites of their sharp incisors. They then carve it up and carry its flesh back to their burrows, leaving behind only webbed feet, a beak, and some feathers."

Well, to tell the truth, I was horrified. I mean, the poor penguins! But then I began to think... the April issue. Could this be a jape? Nah! The photograph is proof. Can't be an April Fool's joke. Everyone knows you can't fake photos.... Still, I wondered...

Then I watched the recent C.B.C. (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) TV documentary on "THE SAVAGE ICE-RINKS OF SINGAPORE." Shook me to my very core, it did. Heartily ashamed to be involved, for all Canadians share the guilt. After all, we sold them our Canadian Ice-rink technology. Surely we're not to blame? We were under the innocent impression that the sinful sadists of Singapore merely wanted to spruce up facilities for their Olympic hockey team? (They had previously lacked an ice-rink, so the acquisition of such marked a quantum leap forward in their training.) Alas, we should have known! The specifications called for an ice thickness of ten feet or more! To suggest, as embarrassed Canadian Government officials did, that we thought it was something to counteract the effects of a tropical climate, is too much to swallow. No, I'm afraid we must share the blame for the creation of this hideous blood sport!

I'm talking about SNOW MONKEYS VS. ICE-RATS! Never mind cock fights. Never mind pit-bulls! Snow Monkeys Vs. Ice-Rats is the cruelest sport of our time! I weep tears copiously to think of the thousands of blood-thirsty spectators howling from the arena's stands as the poor little Snow Monkeys shuffle frantically about, desperately seeking firm ice on which to stand, pursued by schools of relentless Ice-Rats! Millions of dollars in bets are placed. Which Snow Monkey is first to be dragged under? When will the last? To think that something so gosh-darned cute must be eaten alive to slake the gambling thirst of the fiendish mob! Oh, the humanity, the humanity!

Mind you, the Snow Monkeys are feisty little devils. They don't give up without a fight. If they can pack a snowball and hurl it into the gaping maw of the emerging Ice-Rat, the latter will choke to death before its body heat can melt the snow. Trouble is, the ice-rink is made of ice. No matter how hard they scabble at the ice with their tiny little claws, the Snow Monkeys cannot make snowballs out of rink ice. They have to wait till the ice around them begins to turn to slush (as the horrible Ice-Rats melt up from below) and quickly put together a snowball from the slush, pack it hard, then leap back as the Ice-Rats burst into the open while flinging the snowball down into an Ice-Rat's gullet with great vigour. Not an easy thing to do. It's all a question of timing. What's more, Ice-Rats attack in packs. For this defense to work, the Snow Monkeys have to cluster together, then leap and throw in unison. This is referred to as "*The Dance of the Snow Monkeys.*" Considered a beautiful thing to see, though I found the footage pathetic and sad.

I'm sorry. I thought I could write about this coherently and dispassionately, but I'm really wrought up about this. But at least I've managed to bring this horrible blood-gambling to your attention. We've really got to do something about this, perhaps get Greenpeace involved. Or at the very least, force the Japanese Government to outlaw the export of Snow Monkeys. That would be a start.....

P.S. For those heartless cynics who doubt the veracity of this article... I got pictures!

Afterwords

This is where I try to sum up the experience of putting together this issue.

First of all, a feeling of chagrin. When I wrote my review of THE RED PLANET I thought the cover artist's name was Ralph Brilliant. Only when putting the art credits together did I double check and discover his name is Ralph Brillhart. Sigh. I really do want to establish a reputation for credibility, but mistakes creep in...

Second order of chagrin: changing plans. As the locs and zines poured in, I had originally planned to feature both. But as I am still producing BCSFAzine on a monthly basis as well, I ran out of time to sit down and

review the zines. So I thought I would at least list them with their address and a brief comment to enable you to check them out if you had never heard of them before. Alas, I ran out of space. I promise that issue #3 will feature zine reviews! I swear this by almighty Ghu!

Mind you, I could have listed them were it not for the late-breaking story about the Snow Monkeys and the Ice-Rats. I'm sure my fellow fan-eds will agree that morality dictates priorities!

Of course, I must admit that this issue of SC demonstrates 'creeping densification' so common to fanzines, ie: more pages and smaller text. This trend will not continue. This is the final, evolved form of SPACE CADET. I promise!

Look for issue #3 some time around the end of June. Cheers! THE GRAEME

E Version Afterwords

I've been lucky reconstructing this issue #2 of SPACE CADET because most of the text files were preserved in my computer. Many of the future issues are lacking some text files, and at least one is completely gone from my computer's memory! I'm going to have to re-type the whole thing! (Note that I said re-type rather than re-input. Force of habit.) Because SPACE CADET was digest-sized with point eight print, many people assumed there wasn't much to it, until they stopped to consider how long it took to read through an issue. Consequently re-typing from a preserved copy is going to be more time-consuming than it looks at first glance, and it's going to take plenty of glances through a magnifying glass since my eyes are no longer capable of reading such tiny type.

Something else which stands out from me is the sheer number of locs I printed in this issue. My WCSFAzine averages only two per issue. What a difference 14 years makes in fanac! Mind you, the fact that SPACE CADET was a paper zine traded through the mail probably provided more incentive. Still, I'm hoping making SC available online at Bill Burns's excellent efanzines.com site will ultimately reach a larger audience than the original paper version ever did.

Another thing which stands out is the passage of time. At least two of the loccers, legendary fans both, 'Buck' Coulson and Walt Willis, are no longer with us. And some of the others are no longer active, some of the zines mentioned now ceased publication.

Still, I'm hoping new readers will find this 'blast from the past' interesting and possibly even entertaining. If you have any comments, feel free to email me at < rgraeme@shaw.ca > and I'll add your loc to the 'E Version Afterwards' for issue #3 whenever I get it posted.

And, oh yes, not only is the text much more legible now, but the illos are much easier to see. That's a good thing!

Cheers! THE GRAEME