

2005



Annual

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I define a saint as a person who behaves decently in an indecent society.

-- Kurt Vonnegut, *Timequake*

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**THIS ISSUE OF *eI*** is in memory of Philip Francis Nowlan and his creations Buck and Wilma...always in our hearts and minds.

In the world of science fiction, this issue of *eI* is also in memory of Ken Bulmer, Irv Koch, Denis Lindbohm, and Robert Sheckley.

#

As always, everything in this issue of *eI* beneath my byline is part of my in-progress rough-draft memoirs. As such, I would appreciate any corrections, revisions, extensions, anecdotes, photographs, jpegs, or what have you sent to me at [earlkemp@citlink.net](mailto:earlkemp@citlink.net) and thank you in advance for all your help.

Bill Burns is *jefe* around here. If it wasn't for him, nothing would get done. He inspires activity. He deserves some really great rewards. It is a privilege and a pleasure to have him working with me to make *eI* whatever it is.

Other than Bill Burns, Dave Locke, and Robert Lichtman, these are the people who made this issue of *eI* possible: Robert Bonfils, Bruce Brenner, Graham Charnock, J.A. Coffeen, Brittany A. Daley, Mike Deckinger, Robert Elkin, Charles Freudenthal, Elaine Kemp Harris, Justin Leiber, Arthur Lorte, Richard Lupoff, Jon Macy, Charles Nuetzel, Alexei Panshin, Rosemary Pardoe, Adam Parfrey, Art Scott, Robert Speray, Steve Stiles, and Jon Stopa.

**ARTWORK:** This issue of *eI* features original artwork by Ditmar and Steve Stiles, and recycled artwork by Harry Bell and William Rotsler.

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What we have created instead, as customers and employees and investors, is mountains of paper wealth so enormous that a handful of people in charge of them can take millions and billions for themselves without hurting anyone. Apparently.

-- Kurt Vonnegut, *Timequake*

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## **GUEST EDITORIAL:**

### **Evil But Ours**

**Artwork recycled Harry Bell**

By Jon Stopa



Remember Nixon's exit from the White House-- the brave smiles and words and the helicopter flight that took the disgraced President into exile? What if Bush, unlike Nixon who went quietly for the sake of the nation, decides to act differently? He is stubborn, after all.

Serious thought should be given to the possibility that the Cabal in the White House will not go peacefully after Impeachment for lying to get us into war.

Picture Black Helicopters swooping down on the White House lawn and Deepwood Troopers rescuing Bush, Cheney, and their families from

Secret Service agents, whose bullet-riddled bodies cover the White House lawn,



killed while trying to take the Bushies into custody.

One could almost see it--the heroic mercenary who throws his body between Cheney and a war protester. Barb Bush, left behind because she wanted to finish her bath, running across the lawn after a helicopter, wrapped in a bath towel. The great photos of the evacuation of the refugees from off the White House roof. Vice President Cheney stomping on Condi Rice's fingers, which are clasped on the door jam of the last, overloaded helicopter, as she begs to be allowed to sit in the back of the machine.

Certainly, George W.H. Bush, the fearful father, would be on television, tearfully begging the fleeing murders, responsible for the deaths of over 2,100 American men and women service members, and tens of thousands of Iraqis, to give themselves up. To no avail.

The Christian part of the nation would grieve when finally the killers are trapped and driven to ground while attempting to hide in Mammoth Cave.

An evil President, but our President.

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We are here to help each other get through this thing, whatever it is.

-- Mark Vonnegut (Kurt's son)

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**...Return to sender, address unknown.... 14**

The Official *eI* Letters to the Editor Column

Artwork recycled William Rotsler

By Earl Kemp

We get letters. Some parts of some of them are printable. Your letter of comment is most wanted via email to [earlkemp@citlink.net](mailto:earlkemp@citlink.net) or by snail mail to P.O. Box 6642, Kingman, AZ 86402-6642 and thank you.

Also, please note, I observe DNQs and make arbitrary and capricious deletions from these letters in order to remain on topic.

This is the official Letter Column of *eI*, and following are a few quotes from a few of those letters concerning the last issue of *eI*. All this in an effort to get you to write letters of comment to *eI* so you can look for them when they appear here.

**Wednesday July 27, 2005:**

Another issue of *eI* comes to me and I'm quite pleased, as I've spent two weeks working on my 48 Hour movie and not nearly enough time reading fanzines.

Will Eisner was one of the men who made San Diego ComicCon what it is today. His giving out the Eisner awards really made people realize what an important thing they were. No one ever received a Hugo from Hugo Gernsback, did they? My early comic book experiences were all DC books like The Flash and Justice League of America. I didn't read anything of the Spirit until they began to be reprinted, though I probably didn't read them until the early 1980s, though it may even have been later. His graphic novels are wonderful and it's obvious that they influenced a generation of comics writers that are flourishing on the indy scene today. In fact, writer/artist Scott Morse (who did the greatest picture of me ever drawn while we were both in high school) probably owes more to Eisner than anyone I can think of.

The Burroughs piece shows all the little things that make it wonderful to live my working life as a historian. Getting

to know those of the past is a joy. Submerging oneself in the world of William Seward Burroughs seems a dangerous thing. Even reading the 80-somethingth edition of *Naked Lunch* I can feel the trauma leaping toward me off the page and I fear that the original thing would only push harder into the world. I've had a few original manuscripts in my hands for extended periods of time, and they positively sing to you. I did a lot of work on the DaDaists and had the chance to examine originals of Tsara, Schwitters and others. I spent several weeks getting to know Schwitters in particular and had access to the largest collection of his original works in the world. After just a few weeks, I found myself able to think along the same lines and not being able to stop it.

I know nothing of Dave Van Ronk.



Ah, another look at a writer whose work I'm familiar with on a couple of levels. Teachers moonlighting as writers of various levels of smut are a long-standing tradition. In my senior year of high school, an English teacher of mine took me aside and commented that the paper I had written quoted a book she had written some years before. It was a soft-core piece of science fiction smut, but I remembered it well and quoted it often in papers that year. When I looked her up, she had written a few other books under the same pseudonym and a couple under her real name. I was most impressed, though most of them were from the late 1980s, long past the paperback age that I so enjoyed. I find it rather amazing that more than a few people could make a living writing porno in those days and now there are almost none. Those days ended with the advent of the VCR, I'd say, though I know of at least one full-time erotica writer whose work gets seen here and there.

Another fine issue and I can't wait for more

By the way, I forgot to mention in my LoC that the definition of sleaze was once given to me by a prof I had in college: "If you ever find yourself reading and getting that old familiar feeling in those old familiar places, then whatever you're reading is sleaze."

-- Chris Garcia

#

I've just been seduced into spending the last 2+ hours at your site and must return to work. Had to tell you how fascinating it was before I go. I am so pleased to have made your acquaintance. Thanks for keeping me on your update list.

--Rose Idlet

**Thursday July 28, 2005:**

*e121* is full of important facts and incidents; Steve Gertz's article on Burroughs has many sharp observations. I liked Brittany Daley's thought on sleaze and the importance of the concept. I think I understand why you think it meaningless in describing a form of expression. But the way the image-makers and today's corporate entertainment industry in general characterizes something as sleaze (instead of "safe," "decent," "family-friendly," or "clean") shows how, for them, marketability trumps creativity. I think connotations of "sleaze" include that which is squalid, unhealthy, fraudulent and disreputable, often in a sexual context. There are physical connotations as well: flimsy, cheap, poorly designed, or deceptively alluring. Sleaze is readily associated with bad taste, low-income levels, racial minorities, alternative sexualities, prurience, alcoholism, drugs, misdemeanors and felonies and coarse kinds of entertainment that encourage uninhibited expression of impulse. All these connotations allow the corporate-friendly media to teach people contempt for whatever is not "uplifting," and cannot be mass produced, peddled as improving one's social standing and self-respect, and emptied of creativity and/or individuality.

--Jay A. Gertzman

**Sunday July 31, 2005:**

BTW, I brought up the latest *eI* and did something I've never done before -- I read it all on the monitor. Normally I wait until work and print it out using their laser printer and then read the hard copy over several nights. But the stories were so compelling that I got pulled in and read them all in one sitting.

Tom Ramirez's piece was top-notch. This was the best story about the writers and the process that's ever been done. Who would have thought that Robert Silverberg's coverage of the topic could be passed. And he had the Houston trial down too. Two home runs in one story. I hate it when those long runs of pink and yellows start having definition and particular books are discovered to have interest. I'll be looking through those lines now, pulling out Tony Calvano books for a closer look.

--Robert Speray

**Saturday August 6, 2005:**

I finally had time to read the latest *eI* and I must say the Ramirez article was one of the best pieces I have ever read. The only story that rivals it is the piece you wrote on Hoover and the FBI. It's a shame what happened to him after the trial. The staff not being allowed to talk to him so Hamling could use him for possible future trials. But perhaps the worst thing is he still has not received any sort of recognition for his writing. It's been 40 years Earl. How about it? You're not on trial, so the Fifth Amendment won't work here.

--Bruce Brenner

**Thursday August 11, 2005:**

As I type, the Stones are in Toronto. Just last night, they played their traditional pre-tour gig at a small venue in Toronto, and the tickets were only \$10 each. However, there were fewer than 50 tickets available; the gig was mostly for industry insiders. The Stones' manager is from Toronto, and Keith Richards owns a house here, too. It's gotten to the point, the local news reports the Stones are in town, people say, "Oh, hi, guys, welcome back," and go back to their everyday routine.

The age of the collector is fading somewhat, I fear, and that Burroughs collection may sit in those boxes for a while. I would hate to see the component pieces scattered the winds; is there a place that values such literary collectibles? First place that comes to mind is Bowling Green University, but they spend tons of money on such ephemera. Would they have the money needed to get this collection?

The Tom Ramirez autobiographical article was a great read. Writing for a living is something I've always dreamed of doing, but I found out the hard way that I'm a better editor and proofreader. To be able to write what you want is just fine; to put it out that quickly is a gift. Shame about the *National Enquirer*; my mother used to buy that rag, and I'd flip through it out of curiosity. Even though some of the articles were patent nonsense, the magazine did try to foster a sense of community, especially to keep its supermarket sales up. Today, uber-rags like the *World Weekly News*, with tales of giant babies and wolf women on the front cover, is pure sci-fi with tinges of utter bullshit, and the public laps up every drop. Ramirez didn't seem to have much use for you, Earl, but I get the feeling that time heals those wounds, and he wouldn't have written up what he had written for you if he still thought of you badly. Once all is explained, and you do, it looks like the lot of you could get together for dinner and drinks, and reminisce well into the wee hours. That would be a party to celebrate.

--Lloyd Penney.



**Monday October 3, 2005:**

*eI* (Earl Kemp) verges on overkill as this prolific and colorful writer/editor serves up heaping portions of outstanding essays. Although *eI* has good outside contributions, the main course is almost always Earl's colorful anecdotes and trenchant articles. The larger issues can be a little overwhelming, but the rewards are great.

--Arnie Katz, *VFW* 46

**Wednesday October 5, 2005:**

Earl, Congratulations! You have done a great job. It is superb. I had a quick read this morning, but over time I will go back and back to it. At last someone has treated Maurice to a deep appreciation that he deserves. Now I do not have to do it and can devote time to other things. Will this ever appear between hard (or soft) covers?

--Jim Haynes

#

Earl -- Earl -- Earl -- What to say? What to say? What to say? (That complimentarily and repetitively hasn't been said before, that is). In that, as usual, any new addition to your website pages is always a treat and an adventure, and a true reading experience. This latest, Me and Maurice, no exception. What great and interesting and enjoyable fun! Looking forward, as usual, to what can possibly come (no pun intended -- well, maybe a "little" pun, not to be confused with a little "bun") later. Lucky for all of us, you do seem to have the knack for forever topping yourself (usually only managed by an experienced sexual contortionist). --William J. Lambert III

#

I just finished going through the latest edition of *eI* and, as always, am impressed by the extreme thoroughness with which you have covered the blighted career of Maurice Girodias.

I have skimmed most of the articles (and will get back to them in due course), but I did read fully my own contribution (what handsome dawg I was back then!) "Darlings of Death," and yours entitled "Maurice...the gangster of love." What a withering, slashing dissection of poor Maurice and his business ethics! The article was so well done (where are the footnotes?) that there was an almost academic feel to it, especially at the outset. Such imagery, such precise choice of words! Such venom!

And, after skimming these articles, I can see how utterly naive I was to even approach Girodias for a meeting. And how lucky I was to have missed this "great" opportunity. And in light of your mention of his pirating of Greenleaf authors, I can better understand why he granted me the time in the first place. How he must have been gloating inside as I pitched my feeble wares!

In a way I feel a bit honored to be included among these other authors who had so much more extensive contact -- good or bad -- with Girodias. My contribution seems totally puny by comparison.

However I think that I was one of few who zeroed in on the physical milieu of his scabrous office. Yes, he was running scared, he was on the brink of total collapse. But I would have never dreamed it was happening judging by his suavity, his charm, his impeccable tailoring.

And as Walter was so fond of saying at the close of each of his history-revisited series way back when: "You were there!"

Again, yours is a true labor of love. You make us smut peddlers almost respectable. Three cheers!

You ARE something else. To do all this work year in and year out. And for what? I still feel that some kind of book should come out of all this -- even if you have to self publish. But I do think that some publisher out there would go for it. It IS history, dammit!

--Thomas P. Ramirez

#

Much of this of course I have seen but the Ramirez piece was entirely new to me and plenty else. A magnificent work. This is a tribute disguised as an anatomization and gives the man his due. No one like him ever, indeed. It would be unfair to his memory if I did not say this: I miss him.

--Barry Malzberg

# I continue to be amazed at the amount of work you put into your zines and books, and at how culturally important it is.

--Dick Geis

### **Thursday October 6, 2005:**

I haven't finished reading all the Girodias material, but I am having such a great time I have to write a few words now. First thing that caught my notice was the list of people who wrote pseudonymously for Olympia. D. Bruce Berry -- wow! A controversial fan in the 1960s, to say the least. Joseph Hansen -- is this the same Joe Hansen who wrote all those fine gay murder mysteries?

Andrew Offutt -- Burroughs pasticheur. Last I heard from Andy he was living in a tiny burg in Kentucky. He told me that anybody who was having trouble paying his bills on the meager income of a genre hack could live well if he was willing to move to . . . a tiny burg in Kentucky. Didn't work for me.

And of course Barry Malzberg, who also wrote as -- Barry Malzberg. One of the truly fine, talented, serious writers of his generation. Last book I read of his was *In the StoneHouse*. A brilliant collection, total knockout. And it was published by Arkham House.

Arkham House? Huh?

Not to deprecate that fine publisher, without whose efforts neither H.P. Lovecraft nor Clark Ashton Smith would have survived the demise of their pulp outlets. Robert E. Howard would have been a minor writer of hack westerns, boxing yarns, and sea stories. Hell, even I have an Arkham House book in my background, and I take pride in being a Arkham House author. But . . . they pay 35 cents and sell 200 copies, most of them to wacko collectors who don't even read the books lest they decline in rating from "mint" to "fine."

What a crime!

Is Joseph Cummings (Joseph Como) the same person as Joseph Commings, author of *Banner Deadlines* (Crippen & Landru), a wonderful collection that got me through a stressful medical experience a couple of years ago?

Is Jerry Weil ("Leslie Adirondack") the same Jerry Weil who had a very very minor career as a science fiction writer in the early 1970's, using the byline "Pg Wyal" -- ?

Does the gostak really distim the doshes?

Reading about Ella Parker, George Locke, oh, be still my heart!

I don't know how I stumbled across a copy of *President Kissinger* back in the 1970's, but I thought it was a damned fine book. Looking at the cover again, I am struck by the fact that Heinrich Kissinger and Peter Sellers were clearly conjoined twins, separated at birth.

You doubt me? Take another look.

And Peter Collier . . . ! Peter Collier . . . ! He was one of my editors when I used to write for Ramparts magazine.

--Dick Lupoff

#

You are very generous in thanking me - I appreciate your message.  
And more important - Barney and I think the result looks very good - well done!!!  
I haven't read everything yet, but will this weekend when there is a space of time.  
We'll be in touch. Very best from Barney and me,

--Astrid Myers/*Evergreen Review*

### **Wednesday October 12, 2005:**

Having utterly nothing to do at work today, I spent my time (among other things) reading the latest *eI*. Frankly, it was underwhelming -- not nearly what I'd hoped for. It badly needed **\*an editor\***. What you presented us with is a scrapbook, unorganized and nearly incoherent, which cannibalizes from itself. Lacking is any organizing theme, or chronology. What was desperately needed was an **\*overview\*** complete with a timeline. As it is, what you've given us is fragmentary and biased (both pro and con). It's a muddled mess. It needed an editor to pull it all together -- not one who just throws stuff at us.

--Ted White

### **Friday October 14, 2005:**

I'm late this time, and I'm sorry. Here's what I've been thinking since I read issue 22 about ten minutes after it hit eFanzines.

The intro is brilliant. Having our 'lead' as it were set-up with that simple bit about his reading the IPRCOP is just about the perfect way to give us the glimpse of him.

Taking on a character like Maurice must be tough; both in writing and in life.

That list of Olympia writers who used their real names may as well have been my 'other' bookcase...you know the one without all the SF on it that I use to impress chicks. The list of Olympia writers who used other names might feature a large chunk of those whose books I remember reading when I was in my 'Let's put these on the other other Bookcase' period. There's a lot of names I know I've read in there. Just a lot of names I know I've read.

Patrick Kearney's look at his interactions with Maurice and fandom is wonderful. I've often used books as a bartering tool, including my most famous escapade, the trade of a petty rare Ace Western for \$1,500 worth of rusting metal that made up a Vespa motor scooter. I then traded that scooter for half-a-dozen issues of *Film Threat*, which then got shipped off for the complete works of Cordwainer Smith, which I then sold to get money to make rent and bought a ticket to SiliCon with the leftovers. That entire transaction took two weeks and to this day I'm still proud.

That edition of *Black Spring* is plenty rare nowadays and I've found two copies over the years, including one that was noted that it came from the library of some guy who it turned out was either Jello Biafra or a guy with the same name living in SF at the time. Sadly, I've only seen scans of *Bawdy Ballads*. I've owned both *President Kissinger* (I gave it as a gift to a girl who used it to replace one of the folksy books in the local Big Yellow House) and *Inside Scientology* (which is tucked away with all the rest of my Masonic/Anti-Masonic/Rosicrucian/CoS stuff in my Mom's storage Locker in Clovis, CA).



What an amazing set of letters between Rosset and Girodias. I really can't believe that I'm getting to read them. When I get things like this in my hands (about once a year a collection like this, though on much less interesting topics, ends up with me) I know I'm seeing a form of history that we don't get to see too often.

Maurice's reaction to Malzberg is just mind-humpingly delightful. I have friends who write screenplays. They tend to buy from each other. One will buy it for 3 to 4 times what it's worth and say the extra is because it'll cost them twice as much as they can afford and they'll still not put out a work half-as-good as what they're given by the other. The man could rant too. A man who can rant like this is a rarity. I bet I would have hated him had I been in that world, but at least I would have been entertained by the way he put his lunatic ramblings.

Victor Banis is one of my favourite writers. I'm always amazed at how he manipulates the words to work for him. Maurice thinking of him as the star of Greenleaf is probably a pretty accurate statement. I also enjoyed Thomas' look at his dealing with Girodias.

Another amazing issue that can only come from Earl Kemp

-- Chris Garcia

### **Sunday October 23, 2005:**

I have just now done a final take on the Maurice Girodias issue. I think I have already complimented you on the "Gangster of Love," article, but again, well done. You really nailed that poseur, but good!

BUT upon a second rereading I did enjoy the Victor Banis piece again, and want to tell you that I think Banis is one helluva writer. I don't recall what his Greenleaf pen name was, but I'd like to know. [Don Holiday] I will look through my porno collection to see if I might have a copy of one of his masterpieces on hand.

That guy is witty as hell, can sling words almost as good as old Henry Miller. I laughed just as hard the second time as I did the first. What an imaginative writer! Did he ever do any straight novels? If so, I'd sure appreciate a couple titles so I can look him over at greater length.

--Tom Ramirez

### **Wednesday November 2, 2005:**

I read with great interest your recent web publication "Me and Maurice," having known Girodias, written for him and worked for him back in the late '60s. I would like to comment on a couple of passages in which my name is mentioned.

You write:

" He also raided the Greenleaf stable of straight-book writers like D. Bruce Berry, Harvey Hornwood, and Andrew J. Offutt."

Although I published three books with Greenleaf, I hardly considered myself one of their "stable." Each of those books was sent in unsolicited, and was accepted and paid for with a minimum of correspondence, and no follow-up.

Maurice contacted me on the recommendation of a friend of mine who was half of the "Tor Kung" team. At the time he had no knowledge of my having published with Greenleaf. So it was hardly a "raid."

Later you write:

" Nothing was sacred to Girodias. He pirated books that he had no rights to from his own father. He pirated books from himself. And worst of all, he pirated directly from Greenleaf Classics. In 1966, Nightstand books published *Lust Rumble* (NB1769) by John Dexter (Harvey Hornwood) and in 1971, Maurice Girodias published *Third-Degree Rape* (OP235), by James Kerstetter (Harvey Hornwood), an

outright theft of a legally owned and in copyright property.”

To which you append Barry Malzberg's comment:

“Harvey Hornwood was for a couple of years an editor at Olympia NYC (1969-1971). Probably his idea to pirate his own novels, sell them to himself as "new," score a few more dollars on Maurice (for whom all his employees had utter contempt). Don't blame Maurice for that one.”

Barry is correct. Actually, all three of my Greenleaf books were republished by Olympia (*The Sado Swappers* as *The Pain Lovers*, and *Passion's Pupil* as *Carnal Knowledge*, in addition to the one you mention). This was strictly my doing, in my capacity as an editor at the New York Olympia office. It was an underhanded ploy, but it was all mine. As Barry says, you can't blame Maurice for that one.

My only quarrel with Barry's note is the "utter contempt" thing. While certainly aware of his shortcomings and peccadillos, I don't think most of his employees would have gone that far. Certainly I wouldn't. In fact, some years ago I wrote what I think is a fairly even-handed if subjective short memoir about Maurice and the New York version of Olympia Press (actually called Maurice and Me), which was published in *Penthouse Forum* and later reprinted in (I think) *Paperback Parade*.

The conclusion read:

"Impractical, unworldly, irresponsible and devious Girodias certainly was, but I am glad to have known him. He was also charming, witty, visionary and, above all, courageous. He battled censorship, prudery and stuffiness wherever he found it. He struggled incessantly--and joyously--for literary and sexual freedom in the face of government repression, legal tribulations and constant financial hardship. He never lost his taste for attacking and outraging what he called the 'Universal Establishment.' He was a flawed and not always admirable human being, but he fought the good fight."

--Harvey Hornwood

#

Thanks very much for taking the time and trouble to pass this on. Harvey Hornwood is temperate and level-headed and I couldn't possibly have any quarrel with him. He's certainly right in pointing out that I have no business assigning to him an "utter contempt" toward Maurice and in fact I have read his *Penthouse* memoir on the man which is respectful and fair. If I had his e-mail address I'd send this to him directly; I'd take it as a favor if you'd forward it along to him.

Poor Maurice! The Lion marooned in the winter of his own soul.

--Barry Malzberg

**Tuesday November 15, 2005:**

And I forgot to say that I liked your articles about Tangier in the recent e's. I think that Paul Bowles was one of the best American writers of the 20th century - not so much for his novels, but for his short stories, which I find are so amazingly compact with not a spare, redundant, word in them. My enthusiasm for him was one of the reasons why Cronenberg's film *Naked Lunch* ranks high on my list of "Best Films". Well...the film (like most of Cronenberg's) was rather good in its own right, of course, but Ian Holm's take on Paul Bowles was a highlight. (And I loved the typewriter talking through its anus!)

--Dick Jenssen

**Tuesday November 22, 2005:**

I was trying to figure out just who Maurice Girodias was...the top dog in the litporn world at the time? I'll keep going

and try to focus that definition even more. As I go on, it would seem that he was an exploiter of writers, hiding them behind a myriad of pseudonyms while grabbing the majority of the profits. Not sure if I'm right here, but this is the impression I'm getting. And yet, it would seem that he was your predecessor in the soft core porn publishing business, paving your way. A man with Poirot-style pride and prissiness, yet perhaps a little uncertain of the books he produced.

How much more I can glean from this, I don't know. With every issue of eI, I learn more about that industry and the people in it. Mission accomplished, I would hope. Is there anything more I can say on the subject of Maurice Girodias? Just that a lot of people didn't like him, and none are unhappy that he's dead.

--Lloyd Penney

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Books in the form so beloved ... hinged and unlocked boxes, packed with leaves speckled by ink

-- Kurt Vonnegut, *Timequake*

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That Crazy

# Buck Rogers

Stuff



Original artwork by Steve Stiles

## EDITORIAL: Buck You Very Much

By Earl Kemp

When I was a small child, I played with Buck Rogers toys. He was my hero, and so was Flash Gordon. I can remember being confused at times back then about that because Larry “Buster” Crabbe played both parts in my almost favorite of all Saturday matinee at the double feature movies with...ta! Ta! TA! Larry “Buster” Crabbe as one or the other of them. I also remember being confused about Buster’s name... Crabbe. It always made me laugh and that was years before I ever even heard of crabs.

This issue of *eI* is devoted to Buck Rogers, and a return to my science



fiction roots. I gathered up almost more material than anyone might want to know about my hero, and his friend and companion Wilma, and give them all to you wrapped up nice and pretty as a Christmas gift from me and Bill and from Dave and Robert in the back room.

Enjoy!



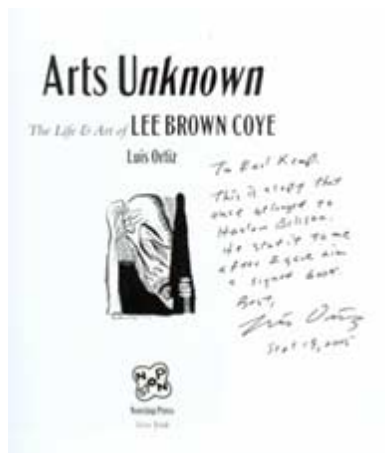
This issue also marks the end of our fourth year of publication. Will wonders never cease? I wouldn't have taken a bet on the possibility of that ever happening, yet here it is and we did it up as best we could.

This issue also marks yet another milestone because Bill Burns and I welcomed our 100,000 th visitor to *eI* shortly before this issue was closed. Again a miraculous milestone and an incredible improbability.

Buck You Very Much for making it possible for us to be so damned happy/proud right about now. Please don't forsake us now that we're almost finding out how to do it right. Watch us closely....

#

There are two books of significance to me personally that I need to mention here. The first of them is the just published *Everything You Know About Sex Is Wrong*. I have a piece in it as do regular *eI* contributors Victor Banis, Steve Gertz, and Jay Gertzman...in addition to dozens of articles and diatribes written by other people. It is literally an encyclopedia of information about misconceptions regarding sex.



The second book is Luis Ortiz' *Arts Unknown: The Life & Art of Lee Brown Coye*. This is a great book for old farts who remember and love *Weird Tales*, old Arkham House books, and creatures of the night. They're all here, in glorious black and white and color, only a lot better than ever seen before as far as reproduction goes.

Also, this is a very special book indeed for me, marking a full-circle return from 54 years ago and Evanston, Illinois and me and Harlan Ellison. Who would've figured...?

Happy Holidays!

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In the third edition of *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, the English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772 - 1834) speaks of "that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith." This acceptance of balderdash is essential to the enjoyment of poems, and of novels and short stories, and of dramas, too. Some assertions by writers, however, are simply too preposterous to be believed.

[The following is a discussion of the Buck Rogers comic strip, based on my forthcoming book, *The Comic Strip that Changed the World*, forthcoming, that is, if and when I complete it, and if and when I get a publisher.

[You may notice that the early days of the strip are stressed far more than the later ones. That is because the early days were the formative ones, because they set the stage for the rest, and because in my opinion, they were by far the best of the strips. However, I have friends, fellow Buck Rogers enthusiasts, who disagree strongly with me on that last point. Maybe they are more right than I am, but my view is the one I am capable of doing justice to.

--Jim Coffeen]

## The Buck Rogers Comic Strip

By J.A. Coffeen

Things moved fast. Science fiction was first recognized as a type of fiction by getting its first magazine, *Amazing Stories*, in 1926; Philip F. Nowlan wrote a story, "Armageddon, 2419 A.D.", that was published in a 1928 issue of the magazine; and in 1929 the comic strip *Buck Rogers* appeared in newspapers.

The magazine story told of a future in which America had been conquered by the Han, Asians with a high technology. They had great aircraft supported by down-pointing rays that caused the air in their beams to rush upward, and armed with disintegrator rays that turned to nothing whatever they hit.

Americans lived in hiding to keep from being disintegrated in raids by Han aircraft, but had secretly developed a technology that included inertron, a substance with reverse weight, it so would "fall" upward. A person with an amount of inertron to cancel most of his weight could travel rapidly across country in long leaps. Americans had guns that fired rockets, as well as a form of radio the enemy couldn't detect, and a device for seeing through solids.

Anthony (Tony) Rogers is thrust into this struggle after being trapped in a mine cave-in in the 20th century, and preserved for 492 years. Subtract that from 2419, and he started his sleep in 1927. Maybe Nowlan wrote it in that year.

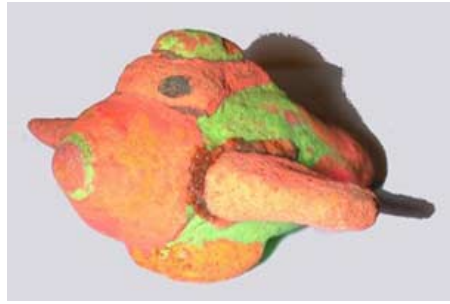
Tony defends a young woman soldier, Wilma Deering, and joins the American forces. The story is good science fiction, with devices given explanations enough to make them seem as though they might someday be invented.

The story came to the attention of John F. Dille, head of the National Newspaper Syndicate, either by him reading the story or by Nowlan offering it to be serialized. Dille had wanted to have a science fiction comic strip, and hired Nowlan to write it. He had staff artist Richard Calkins draw it.



Jim Coffeen





When Jim Coffeen was a teenager, he made model Buck Rogers rocket ships out of modeling clay. These pictures show examples of the ships he saved from that period.

The strip appeared in 1929. Dille had changed Tony's first name to Buck, probably thinking it was catchier. Wilma was allowed to keep her name. The strip started with a bang, with Buck trapped in the mine, coming out of it, and seeing Wilma make a long leap and fall unconscious, all in the first day's strip. Like the magazine story, it was told in autobiographical form — first person, past tense -- as though Buck was later relating what had happened. For instance, "Wilma and I were..." This continued for years, but by the end of the strip it was in third person, present tense. "Buck goes after..."

He adapts quickly to this future world he is part of. He and Wilma become inseparable. He has to defeat a former boy friend of hers, Killer Kane, in personal combat. Kane becomes the perennial bad guy in the strip, appearing almost every time the plot calls for dirty work to be done.

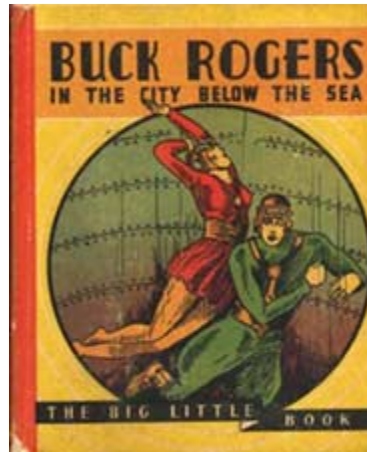
Buck and Wilma together play a part in the struggle against the overlords. When they plan to marry, something prevents it, and although they remain sweethearts, they never again come that close to marrying. That is probably because, in the 1930s, it was assumed that female leads in adventure stories should be single. But in the magazine story, Tony and his Wilma did marry, and it improved the story.

The setting of the strip was very like that in the magazine, with repeller-ray craft, disintegrators, inertron jumping belts, rocket guns, and Americans having to hide from Mongol raids (the Han were called Mongols in the strip).



The strip dealt with the Mongols for a little more than the year 1929. A peace treaty was signed, and the Americans put down a revolt for their new ally. Quite different from the magazine version, as a sequel to "Armageddon," titled "Airlords of Han," indicated that the Han were a crossbreed of humanity with an evil extraterrestrial race from a meteor that slammed into central Asia. This crossbreed was so inimical to mankind that it had to be exterminated for a human civilization to continue. The version in the strip was better — a human enemy no more hated than any other.

The end of the Mongol threat pretty much used up the plot material from the magazine story, so Nowlan had to come up with new adventures. Okay, right on time, here come invaders from Mars, who pluck Wilma from the Pacific Ocean, somewhere off the coast of Asia. They are determine, having evolved from tigers rather than apes. Like Killer Kane, they pop up as an enemy through most of the years of the strip.



The story gains three regular characters in an episode involving the sunken land of Atlantis, its people adapted to life beneath the sea.

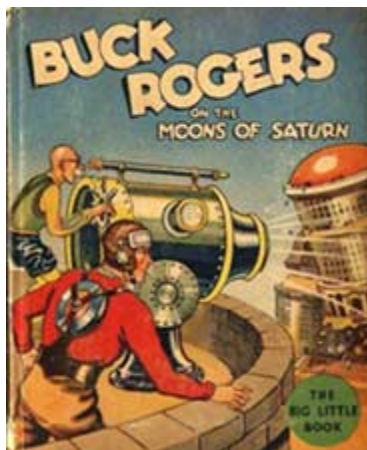
Elderly scientist Dr. Huer adventures with Buck and Wilma, holding up well for an old man, even to getting conked on the head, and to whipping a king in fisticuffs. He invents devices that keep the strip moving technically.

Ardala Valmar is a fellow criminal with, and sort of girl friend of, Killer Kane.

Black Barney is a fierce Hindu air pirate who allies with Kane and Ardala, but later in the story appears as a loyal friend of Buck and Wilma.

For some time the strip stands out from other science fiction by its developing technology. Inventions already made are improved. New inventions are made and become part of the environment. Most science fiction of the future establishes a technology of the time, and doesn't change it much. Where the technology in those stories is static that in Buck Rogers is dynamic. Pretty good distinction.

Inventions are improved. The Mongol hand disintegrator requires both hands to operate it. A later version is smaller and pistol-like. A paralysis ray projector is a large instrument mounted on a table. A later one is a handgun.



The front and back covers of this Big Little Book.

New inventions are made. Huer invents one-way energy, so a person can lightly hold a thing like a flashlight and exert a strong force with its beam. Like inertron's reverse weight, it assumes that there can be ways around some of our known principles. In this case it is the principle that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Another principle-canceling device is the gyrocosmic relativator, that cancels a ship's inertia, so it can start at top speed, or, when it runs into something, just come to an immediate stop without being damaged. These bold ideas are similar to the kind of breakthroughs in knowledge of the physical world that really occur.

At about the time of the end of the Mongol threat, a year from the start of the strip, a Sunday page started. It was drawn by Russell Keaton, although signed by Calkins. Its style was enough like Calkins' that I didn't notice any difference.

It featured Wilma's teenage brother Buddy, who promptly (in the first picture) invents the flying belt, essentially a jumping belt with small rockets on extensions to the sides. At a time that seems only a little later (times aren't quite synchronized between dailies and Sundays), the dailies show a "flying belt police," so I'm not sure who should get the patent. On his test flight, Buddy is captured by a tiger ship over the Atlantic at about the time his sister is grabbed from the Pacific by another ship of the tigersmen. Quite a coincidence — brother and sister in different oceans, captured by the first two tiger ships seen on Earth.

Buddy acquires a girl friend and traveling companion, the Martian princess Alura. No, not all Martians are tigersmen; there is also a completely human race on Mars, the Golden People.

Buddy and Alura explore Pluto and Venus. They become king and queen of Venus, where there are bird riders, dragon riders, people originally from Earth who have invisible war tanks, giants, etc. Captured by a ship from Alpha Centauri, they gain a scientific advisor, the Centaurian Kabba, who serves a function in the story like that of Dr. Huer, but instead of inventing, Kabba just applies Centaurian technology.

In the dailies, technical progress continues. Huer jury-rigs a one-way-energy tube for personal flight, strapping it to himself and having it shine on a metal plate in front of it. Later it appears in a manufactured form, the tube with a small shield in front and a crossbar handle in back. A person holds the cross-bar and is pulled along. By this time the jumping belt has been replaced by a degravity belt, a mechanical device that adjusts the wearer's weight to anywhere from normal to zero. So you set your belt to some weight, grab the crossbar, and away you go. Just don't let go, or you'll have to drift down with your degravity belt. An improved version is the moto-belt — the degravity and one-way-energy in a single case strapped to the back. That is an ideal personal-flight device. An army is shown flying in formation with moto-belts.

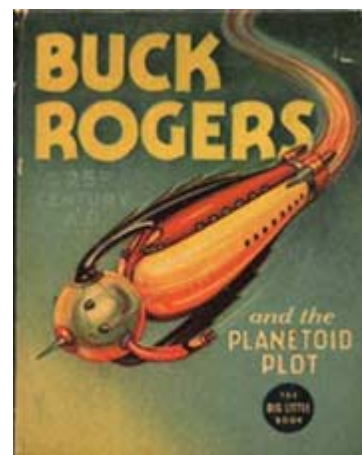
In 1932 the technology in the dailies backslides. Someone gets a flying belt from a ship's stores. A flying belt with rockets! The more advanced moto-belt using one-way energy is never seen again. My guess is that someone thought the drawings needed to show an exhaust, so readers would know something was driving the person through the air. And there would also be the problem of explaining the moto-belt to new readers. For whatever reason, there seemed to be the two opposing forces in the making of the strip — advancing technology and pulling back, "dumbing down" so the kiddies would understand. But Buck Rogers had been wildly popular with the kids when it started. They sopped up all the hi-tech eagerly.

Maybe it was the grownups who needed the dumbing down. Reminds me of the *New Yorker* magazine commenting on the Buck Rogers phenomenon in a condescending tone. The article mentioned characters wearing space suits — so they wouldn't get hurt in space! The kids who read Buck Rogers were better educated in that than the adult who wrote the article and many of the adults who read it.

In 1933 Rick Yager took over drawing the Sundays. His style too was enough like Calkins' for the page to look like a Buck Rogers page. Later, he also did the writing. Unfortunately, many of his plots involved the good guys being tricked into a terrible fix by the bad guys, and using a trick to get out of it.

He had a good character, Admiral Cornplaster, a boy of a race that had suction cups on fingers and toes.

Both dailies and Sundays continued to have adventures based on what had gone before. But in 1936 in the dailies,



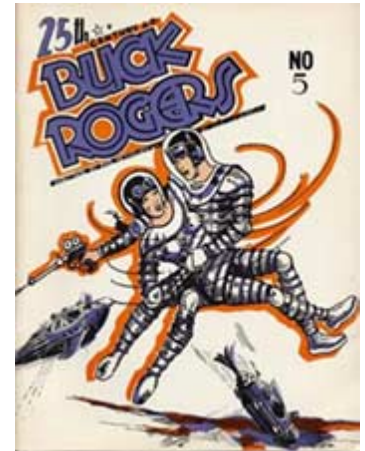
1937 in the Sundays, amnesia struck. Earth found itself at war with Venus. The Venus military was a lot like Earth's. A man named Sethor ruled. Of course, there had certainly been a power vacuum when Buddy and Alura left, and it had to be filled some way. Perfectly reasonable. And I'd expect the bird riders, dragonriders, etc., to have been absorbed into a modern culture. But where were the giants? The invisible tanks?

What happened? Nowlan was still writing the comic. Had he forgotten the Venus he had designed? Of course not. Did he think that, as that Venus had been just in the Sundays, the more juvenile version, it didn't count? Couldn't be that, as the popularity of the strip from the first had been driven by kids.

I suspect that he or someone noticed that war clouds were gathering in the real world, and thought the strip might as well get in the act. In 1937 the Spanish Civil War was being fought. It was considered a testing ground for the bigger war to come. Whoever was controlling the strip must have also thought the kids would have forgotten the Venus of two or three years before. Well, to put in a personal note, this kid remembers it now (but he has to admit that his memory has been aided by looking at his collection through the years).

To make their future war feel like the real one, they needed the opponents to be similarly armed. During World War II there would be other attempts at making Buck Rogers relevant to the times, most of which fell flat, in my opinion. This one was by far the best. It felt like a real war, fought with the kinds of weapons used in the strip, and with a few new ones introduced.

Good as it might have been, it was cut off abruptly in favor of an episode about a new planet entering the Solar System. Why?



Phil Nowlan died in 1939. Dick Calkins took over the writing of the dailies, while continuing to draw them. World War II started. There must have been pressure again to make the strip relevant. In 1940, Buck is somehow thrown back in time 500 years! He introduces 25th century technology to help the war effort. Strangely, some of that technology had never been in the strip. He "invents" inertron, but by mixing chemicals — it had been made by radiation. He produces a ray that shrinks a person or object to tiny size, a device that had never been in the strip. He fights in World War II, and is bombed out of existence. Presto, back in the 25th century. There is an indication that it was a dream, but a 20th century kid has come to the 25th with him. What a sad state for our Buck Rogers!

After a rather charming episode of Wilma being paralyzed in a fixed position and worshipped as a goddess, the dailies are back to two more imitations of World War II, and not good ones at that.

In 1942, the Sunday pages had a war episode, "The Rising Sun Planet." It was utterly corny, with evil Japanese-like people repeatedly trapping the characters, who each time got untrapped. And on and on.

In 1947 Calkins left the strip. He had been trying different ways to make the dailies up to date. Maybe in an attempt to satisfy the troops' desire for pinups, he made Wilma look like Daisy Mae Yokum, and then like she came from *Playboy*! In the last episode he wrote and drew, Buck encounters the spirits of Nero, Caesar, and others, who provide him with a super-ship that they have been working on for centuries. What a situation for Calkins' successor to continue!

We start having a series of different writers and artists. John Dille, who caused the strip to exist in the first place, did the writing for over a year. The artists apparently made no attempt to continue the strip in its familiar style. Strange. When other comic strips have changed artists, the difference in style of drawing has been hardly noticeable.

Somewhere in the writing after Calkins, Wilma Deering was dropped from the strip. Dropped Wilma Deering! Why not drop Buck instead? What in the world were they thinking? It was done subtly, with her reappearing once or twice, and then not seen again. That is, not seen until one of the writers near the end of the strip's life had the decency to bring her back for a brief visit.

When Calkins left, Murphy Anderson took over, drawing in his own style. Good enough drawing, but to me not Buck Rogers. The last of the artists was George Tuska, who drew the strip for its final eight years. He had no concept of future technology, but drew most scenes right out of our times, just sticking in a spaceship, robot, or other feature as called for. I'll say this for him — he sure could draw wimmin.

During Tuska's time there were several writers, apparently just asked to write science fiction stories. They mostly didn't follow through with what had gone before. It is reported that various science fiction writers wrote episodes. Again there wasn't follow-through. A person might wonder if some of them didn't just dig out stories that hadn't sold, and stick in names from Buck Rogers.

Whatever the cause, the final daily, in 1967, makes quite a contrast with the first one. The first has his sleep, awakening, and seeing Wilma's long leap, his first of the 25th century's wonders. The last strip is one picture, of kids running around, their noise annoying a man. I've read several places that Buck Rogers was killed by progress catching up with it. 20th-century technology caught up with most of the technology of the last of Buck Rogers, but came nowhere near that of the start of the strip. No, the Buck Rogers strip wasn't killed by progress, it was done in by self-inflicted wounds.

But —

Buck Rogers was "The Comic Strip that Changed the World." How's that for a modest claim? How can a comic strip, in the kids' part of a newspaper, have any effect on the world as a whole?

Buck Rogers has had several effects on the world, some major and some less so. I'll start with the most important and work down, more or less, not putting a great deal of effort into an exact sorting. There are so many that I think I'll number them.



1. Buck Rogers influenced kids, causing them to dream of a future with wonderful new devices, especially spacecraft. Kids grow up, you know. They go into some kind of work. Some became astronauts, scientists, writers, engineers, and inventors. The work some of those people do changes the way we live. Although there is no way to get solid evidence, I believe it's safe to say that humanity got into space sooner than it would have without Buck Rogers. And the same for many more of our technical advances.

2. The strip introduced the public to the idea that the future will be different from the present in technical development. It didn't attempt to give a picture of specific new devices we would have, but just that we would have many.

3. As with the kids, it prepared the adult public for a future that involved space exploration. So when the "space race" between the U.S. and the Soviet Union came along, people knew what the race was about.

4. The strip introduced the public to science fiction. That is clearly shown by the fact that for years the general public wasn't familiar with the term "science fiction," but knew of the genre of writing as "that Buck Rogers stuff." Or, among people particularly disinclined to accept the possibility of a technically advanced future, "that crazy Buck Rogers stuff."

5. In doing so, it gave a big boost to the popularity of science fiction, a boost that the science fiction community has never recognized.

6. Almost alone among science fiction stories, it made much use of personal flight, that is, flying by means of a device that a person wears rather than sitting in. The beginnings of personal flight have now already been invented, possibly in part inspired by Buck Rogers.

7. The strip also popularized the idea of non-lethal weapons. They too are coming into being.

8. Buck Rogers gave us some additions to the language — "zap," "disintegrator," (already a term in science fiction, but not in the language in general) and of course "that Buck Rogers stuff" with its "crazy" variant, and just "Buck Rogers."

9. A number of science fiction comic strips appeared following the success of Buck Rogers, some quite well known.

10. Some updated versions of Buck Rogers appeared, not necessarily much like the original, but keeping the name, and therefore the influence, alive.

11. The name continues to pop up in all sorts of places, with the assumption that people are familiar with it, thus prolonging that familiarity.

How's that for a mere comic strip? Among other things, helping us go into space, perhaps the next great change after we changed from hunting-and-gathering to farming. Not at all bad for one of the funnies.

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The skeptic does not mean him who doubts, but him who investigates or researches, as opposed to him who asserts and thinks that he has found.

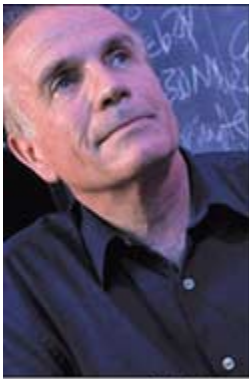
-- Miguel de Unamuno

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## Fritz Leiber and the Buck Rogers Comic Strips

By Justin Leiber

I'm glad to write of Fritz's experience working on writing Buck Rogers strips when he spent a couple of weeks at my basement apartment near the University of Chicago in 1959, my last year of PhD course work in philosophy there.



Justin Leiber

What I recall, most specifically, was his delight in the unique narrative and technical problems of the story-telling newspaper comic strip. He spoke of them in a wholly uncondescending manner, as a craftsman in one artistic area looking into and trying his hand in another area, with not even a hint of any distinction between "fine" and "high" art and "popular" or "lowbrow" word-smithing (like an Ancient Greek, who made no distinction between art, craftsmanship, and technology, calling all *techne*, Fritz made no distinction here).

The Buck Roger's strip ran (as newspapers did) on a daily, weekly (weekday, Saturday, and most importantly the wonderfully colored Sunday) and, more arbitrarily, on the number of weeks that made an episode, the fixed number of weeks for which the writer and illustrative artist were paid, with the illustrator's work sometimes divided into drawer, colorer, and letterer.

For each day, Fritz would provide a brief description of what was to be pictured in each cell of the daily three or four, with the speech of the characters, and brief narrative continuity. This was perhaps a constraining but empowering technical form somewhat like the rhyme and meter requirements of a sonnet. The weekly narrative requirements added another baroque layer, like the complex of theme and variations in a Bach fugue. Since the strip ran in black and white for the weekdays, providing for one sort of audience, while the Sunday paper provided a colored version for a sometimes quite independent audience, with some papers just taking the Sunday version and a few just the weekly. So the weekly version had to tell a scene or chapter, a narrative sequence, a mini story with its own beginning, middle, and end (a problem creating incident, a tension-filled expansion, and a resolution -- of course pointing to a new aspect of a continuing larger problem).

But since some readers would just get the Sunday version, some just the weekday version, and many got both, the weekly version and the Sunday version had to tell the same story in two different versions, the longer and more detailed weekly version and the wham-bam Sunday recapitulation, which had to picture and narrate coherently what was essentially the same vignette but at the same time make it seem new and fresh to the weekly reader, like a narrative in which the same events are seen from two perspectives. Complicated indeed! Fritz also made me see that the comics largely employ a restricted but terse and classical, indeed Shakespearian, Anglo-Saxon



Earl Kemp is presenting a proclamation and plaque naming Fritz Leiber President Emeritus of the University of Chicago SF Club. Chicon II photo, September 1962.

English.

And the weekly sequence itself of course had to fit into a larger story; as indeed this larger episode had to fit, more or less (!), into the still larger, decades old adventures of Buck Rogers. Ultimately, all a bit like the Sherlock Holmes adventures, leaving trails of inconsistencies and bearing marks of changes in the larger culture, as when Holmes's early cheerful use of Belushi-esque speed balls, the current nadir of dangerous addiction, is tastefully dismissed from the later canon by Doyle himself, or when re-issuers of Howard's Conan stories remove his use of the racist terminology without even a footnote, or Agatha Christie's *Ten Little Niggers* (1939) becomes *Ten Little Indians* by the 1960s and has now settled in as *And Then There Were None*. Ironically, Christie got her original title and plot from a musical hall song (1869), which changed a American original song version (1868) by substituting "Niggers" for "Indians," possibly as the English at that time had romantic visions of "noble savages," while Americans of that time were genocidally completing the cleaning off of our native American population. And "then there were none," indeed.

As a good honest bibliophile and sword and sorcery master, Fritz came to be particularly horrified at the unnoted textual "clean up" of Robert E. Howard's stories in the very successful 1966 L. Sprague De Camp and Lin Carter edition. In Christie's case, the titles were changed (common enough when a book moves from British to American publication -- changing for example C.S. Forester's ironic *The Happy Return*, which perfectly captures Hornblower's character and story, to the pot-boiling bloody-sea thriller *Beat to Quarters*. But De Camp and Carter changed the very words of Howard's texts, eliminating the forthright, revealing, and characteristically-flavored racism, hyped by Howard and the pulps, of American white culture through the 1920s and 1930s, and also making other marketable changes, changing other Howard's protagonists to Conan and making "his" overall story more coherent and filling it out.

Their excuse of course was that this was popular commercial literature. (Karl Wagner eventually put together a limited hardcover edition of unexpurgated Howard stories but the publicly known Howard is De Camp and Carter's Howard.) Fritz's respect for the humblest craftsmanship shows out here as well as in his gay and respectful sojourn as a Buck Rogers creator.

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Cleaning birdshit out of cuckoo clocks.

-- Kurt Vonnegut, *Timequake*

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## About Buck Rogers

By Charles Freudenthal

### Introduction



The Buck Rogers toy Wilma pistol.

I have never entirely understood the power that the (early) Buck Rogers imagery has over my imagination. Part of it is nostalgia. Occasionally I will see a "panel" that I actually remember from my childhood. This is always an occasion for reverie. Images are more powerful than text in this regard.

Dick Calkins spaceships seemed humorous parodies of rocket designs of the time. I think Calkins (who had started illustrating "aviation" comic strips) wanted to convey the strangeness and otherness of *The World Of Tomorrow*. But there was always that humorous element!

I will say from the outset that I consider Buck Rogers as written and drawn by Phil Nowlan and Dick Calkins or Dick Calkins alone to be the only authentic Buck Rogers. The humorous expressions, postures, and

downright cavorting disappeared in the work of the later artists.

How Rick Yager came to take over Buck Rogers by 1940 is a long and complicated story.

Comic creator: Rick Yager [http://www.lambiek.net/artists/y/yager\\_rick.htm](http://www.lambiek.net/artists/y/yager_rick.htm)

Some long-lived comic strips have a succession of artists in their history. (Gasoline Alley has existed 3/4 of a century!) It is very rare for a new artist to drastically change the style of a strip. This is what Yager did. Under Yager, Buck Rogers looked as if was aimed at preteens. Gone were the humor, kinky space ships, and curvaceous women!

The main purpose of this article is to give the accessibility of various Buck Rogers "products."

## Buck Rogers Books

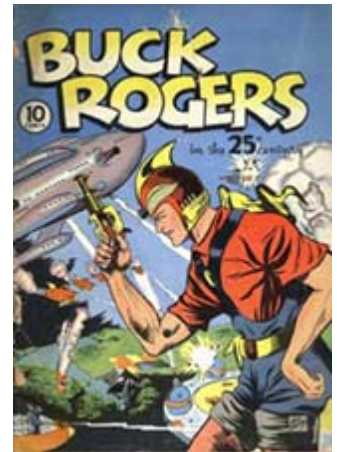
Thanks to Internet sources (bookfinder.com, etc.) a very great number of Buck Rogers reprints and information sources are available.

The prices I have inserted represent a "low average" from bookfinder.com.

*The Collected Works of Buck Rogers in the 25 th Century* - Editor: Robert C. Dille

(Chelsea House, 1969, 370 pages, h/c) Almost 1,400 strips! - \$35

This is an incredible buy for the reader or collector. If one were to buy one Buck Rogers book, I would recommend this one. These are selections of one- or two-year sequences from 1929 to 1949. The artist/writers are Phil Nowlan, Dick Calkins, and Rick Yager.



At the beginning, in 1929 (25th century!) Buck and his American allies, fighting Mongol! invaders, are armed with recognizable Curtis Hawk P-6 fighters and Springfield rifles, which seemed a bit odd.

In *The Monkeymen of Mars* (1943) there is a dreadful bit of racism. These Monkeymen are supposed to be descended (indeed!) from Japanese who landed on Mars 500 years before! (How?)



The Buck Rogers toy Helium pistol.

Later in this same sequence Calkins speaks of the Sun's "orbit" spiraling down on the earth. Nowhere else have I found geocentrism in Buck Rogers!

Somewhere in the strip history, rocket pistols morph into disintegrators without changing shape! (Remember the Gyrojet "rocket" pistols of the late '50s?)

No Twiggies appear in Buck Rogers! Wilma's curvaceous form is modeled even into her metallic space suits. Most of the women appear in 1920s/1930s bathing suits.

*Adventures of Buck Rogers – The Story of Buck Rogers on the Planetoid Eros* by Phil Nowlan and Dick Calkins, Whitman Big Big Book (Hard cover "comic book". See Big Little Books below), 316 pages. 150 full page illos. \$79

This is the most glorious of the Whitman Buck Rogers Publications. It is the most "scientific" of the Whitman Buck Rogers books and would qualify as decent pulp s.f., as a short story.

The premise is that the asteroid/planetoid Eros is a cigar shaped, derelict "spaceship" with the inner wall of the ship

inhabited. (Eros is 5 by 20 miles!). Nowlan worked out a lot of the gravitational problems quite convincingly. This story has more coherence and s.f. credibility than any other Buck Rogers story that I have read.

The story has a rather comic opera cast of characters that I find entertaining.



*Wings Over Tomorrow: The Collected Science Fiction of Philip F. Nowlan* (TPB)

Dr. Huer fixes the engines and Buck pilots the ship back to Titan from whence it came. After some more comic opera, Dr. Huer becomes King of the Titanian system by means of fisticuffs!

Buck Rogers landed on Eros in 1935 (25th century).

The Near Earth Asteroid Rendezvous Mission landed on Eros in the 21st century. (2/12/01)

(Near Earth Asteroid Rendezvous Mission <http://near.jhuapl.edu/> Many fine images. The NEAR found only a barren rock. (Buck Roger's "cigar shape" looks stepped on!)

*Buck Rogers: The First 60 Years in the 25th Century* - Editor Lorraine Williams, Introduction by Ray Bradbury. According to sale sites in bookfinder.com this book has reprints of the "Armageddon 2419 A D" story and reprinted Buck Rogers comic strips. I have never seen this book. \$35.

<http://www.wildsidepress.com/product.asp?itemid=1129&catid=331> \$18. This website has a list of the stories and some background information.

## Big Little Books

Big Little Books are the best source of Buck Rogers after the two collections above. The low average price is about \$40. (*Buck Rogers In the City of Floating Globes* brings over \$150.)

BLB's are about 4-1/2 X 4 X 1-1/2 in. They are hard cover, pulp interior, and have TRIMMED EDGES! (Remember that hoo hah?) The pages were alternately text and illustration.

This website will tell you all you want to know about BLBs. The first four or five paragraphs will give you a good idea. Learning About Big Little Books <http://www.biglittlebooks.com/learning.html>



## Buck Rogers Reprints

These two websites offer reprints of the Buck Rogers strips and other classic comic strips

Pacific Comics Club: Buck Rogers <http://www.pacificcomics.com/buck.html> offers a total of 52 giant volumes! Volumes 1-52, \$10 per volume

Buck Rogers Sundays Reprints <http://www.kenpiercebooks.com/buck.htm> 3-month set \$40.

## Buck Rogers Toys

The effect of Buck Rogers on the consciousness of children, in particular, was immense. The Buck Rogers phenomenon spawned a gigantic industry of books, toys, games, etc.

If Phil Nowlan didn't invent "the ray gun," he made it a permanent part of our culture. This article is a must for those besotted with the original Buck Rogers. There are many mini-illos.

Buck Rogers Toy Pistol – <http://www.toyraygun.com/buckrogersrayguns.html>

Here are fine illustrations of two of the greatest of the Buck Rogers toys.



MARX BUCK ROGERS SPACE SHIP! \$3,400!! Great picture! [http://scoop.diamondgalleries.com/news\\_images/1783\\_4468\\_2.jpg](http://scoop.diamondgalleries.com/news_images/1783_4468_2.jpg)

[BUCK ROGERS DISINTEGRATOR PISTOL & BOX, XZ-38 SPACE GUN](#) Great picture!

BUCK ROGERS 25TH CENTURY ELECTRIC CASTER SET. About \$450

<http://www.hakes.com/item.asp?Auction=186&ItemNo=37910>

Good picture. I actually had one of these when I was a kid. You could make 2-inch lead castings of Buck, Wilma, and Killer Kane. (I still remember the burned fingers and splashes of molten lead!)

MANY BUCK ROGERS ITEMS WITH PICTURES

eBay Store - Toy Ranch: Toy Guns Space Guns, Space Toys, Robots

<http://stores.ebay.com/Toy-Ranch>

### **Buck Rogers Radio**

At this website you can get Buck Rogers radio programs from the thirties, free! This site has many other free radio programs.

Buck Rogers Audio <http://www.radiolovers.com/pages/buckrogers.htm>

OTR means Old Time Radio. This is one of the many sources of old time radio MP3s or cassettes. Buck Rogers OTR MP3 List <http://www.otrcat.com/buckrogers.htm>

### **Buck Rogers Serial**

An informative and entertaining review. History - Review Article Tony LoBue's Flash Gordon Website... <http://flashgordon.ws/buckrogers.htm>

Audio of the soul stirring "bridge music" of the Buck Rogers Serial. *Star Wars*, watch out!

<http://flashgordon.ws/sound/br.wav>

A surprising review from the *New York Times* *BUCK ROGERS* [serial] review, cast, and synopsis. 241 min. "Originally released as a serial, Buck Rogers was later re-edited into two different feature-length condensations, *Planet Outlaws* and *Destination Saturn*."

[http://movies2.nytimes.com/gst/movies/movie.html?v\\_id=122228](http://movies2.nytimes.com/gst/movies/movie.html?v_id=122228)

Amazon.com: [Buck Rogers: DVD: Buster Crabbe, Constance Moore, Jackie Moran](#). \$12!



At the age of eleven (?), at the end of a chapter, I saw Buck Roger's rocket crushed in the gigantic rock gates of the Hidden City. About 60 years later I acquired the VHS and found out that Buck had survived the catastrophe. Surprise, surprise!

## Buck Rogers Television

This has no Buck Rogers resonance for me. I include this IMDB site for completeness sake.

"Buck Rogers in the 25th Century" (1979) <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0078579/locus>

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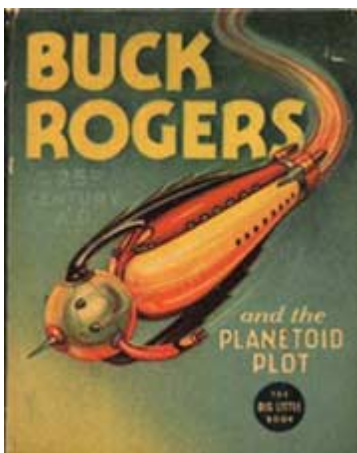
Cynic: A blackguard whose faulty vision sees things as they are, not as they ought to be.

--Ambrose Bierce

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## That Crazy *Buck Rogers* Stuff\*

By Steve Stiles



Although there are many reasons to enjoy *Star Trek*, as a jaded old science fiction fan I mostly appreciate one particular by-product of Roddenberry's series: It \*finally\* replaced *Buck Rogers* in the public's mind as being synonymous with science fiction. For far too many years we suffering science fiction aficionados were confronted with the descriptive and dismissive phrase, "Oh, that crazy Buck Rogers stuff!" When applied to the works of, say, Robert Heinlein, Isaac Asimov, or Philip K. Dick, it could be pretty galling. Now the phrase is "*Oh, like Mr. Spock!*," which is, of course, a vast improvement.

"Buck" Rogers first saw life as a novelette written by [Philip Francis Nowlan](#), *Armageddon 2419*, which appeared in the science fiction pulp magazine [Amazing Stories](#) in 1928. Anthony Rogers, a veteran of the Great War, is trapped in a gas pocket after a mine cave-in, and, due to radioactive gas, falls into a 500 year slumber. When he awakens he finds a devastated United States occupied by oriental despots called Hans, who, we are told, are mentally advanced but have "a vacuum in place of that intangible something we call a soul." Rogers joins forces with a variety of American groups and tribes, eventually uniting them to defeat the dictatorial invaders.

One of *Amazing's* readers for that issue was syndicator John F. Dille. Nowlan was contacted to adapt his story into a comic strip, with one change: "Anthony" became "Buck." Once again, on January 7, 1929, Rogers would repeat his half a millennia long nap in the new syndicated strip, *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century*. Buck sprang into action in

the very first installment, awakening to spot Wilma Deering soaring through the air with the aid of her flying belt, or "Rocket drifter." Now accompanied by Wilma, Buck employed his old-fashioned 20th century American gumption, joining forces with guerrilla bands ("Orgs") to oust the conquerors (now "Mongol Reds"). No sooner do they do so when the country is again attacked by the Tiger-Men of Mars. As Gilda Radner's Roseanne Roseannadana would say, "It's always something." (Later on, in the Second World War, the Martian Tiger-Men would take on distinct Japanese racial stereotypical characteristics.)

The Red Planet invasion, early in the second year of the strip, had one benefit in that it launched Buck's career as a space traveler. Wilma is kidnapped by the Tiger-Men and taken back to the home planet, forcing Buck to build his own spaceship ("*Roaring rockets! We'll show these Martians who's who in this solar system!*"). Joining Buck in subsequent adventures were Wilma's brother Buddy, who became Buck's teenage sidekick, his friend and mentor, the brilliant Dr. Huer, and Killer Kane, a traitorous freebooter.

The first artist on the strip was [Dick Calkins](#) (1895-1962), who had started his career as a newspaper sports cartoonist and artist. During the First World War Calkins had been commissioned as a lieutenant in the air force. The war ended before Calkins could see action, but for years afterwards he often added "Lt." to his signature on the strip. It must be said that Calkins was hardly an accomplished artist. His drawings were crude, the anatomy, perspective, and inking barely adequate. His sole strength (admittedly an important one for that strip) was his ability to draw futuristic gadgets and riveted, pulp-style spaceships with some flair.

The Sunday Buck Rogers debuted on March 30, 1930, and, although signed by Calkins, was actually ghosted by [Russell Keaton](#), whose draftsmanship abilities were far superior to his employer's. The artist had assisted Calkins on another strip, Skyroads, which he would eventually work on under his own name. Keaton, an aviation buff, divided his time between strip work and his other profession as a flying instructor, unfortunately dying of leukemia at the young age of 35 in 1945.

Nowlan was forced off the strip in the 1940s. According to cartoonist [Murphy Anderson](#), "*Phil Nowlan was fired from the strip before he died. He was fired for getting too 'far out'.*" A succession of writers and artists followed his departure. Murphy Anderson, most remembered for his work at DC Comics, replaced Calkins in 1947, and was then replaced by Leonard Dworkins, who drew Buck from 1949 to 1951.



Dworkins was followed by Rick Yager (my own favorite on the strip), who both wrote and drew Buck from 1951 to 1958, giving it a much greater flair.

Yager had actually started working on the spaceman's adventures in the 25th century sometime in 1932, soon after graduating from the Chicago Academy of Fine Art. Gradually taking over over more of the art chores until, by the mid to late '30s, he was drawing as well as writing the Sunday episodes. By the early 1950s, Yager took over the dailies too, and continued on (with Dworkins assisting) until a contractual dispute with the syndicate forced him, after nearly three decades on *Buck Rogers*, to quit.

Science fiction writers [Fritz Leiber](#) and [Judith Merril](#) took over scripting after Yager's departure. George Tuska handled the art until 1965 when *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century* was abruptly canceled, leaving Tuska to go on to pencil Iron Man and many of Marvel Comics' other characters over the next 22 years.

Buck Rogers has also appeared in other genres. The Yager strips were reprinted in *Famous Funnies*, which ran brilliant Buck Rogers covers by [Frank Frazetta](#). Original Buck Rogers stories ran in a Gold Key version from 1979-1983. In 1939 Universal produced twelve chapters of a Buck Rogers serial, starring [Buster Crabbe](#). (The serial was re-released in 1953 as *Planet Outlaws* and in 1965 as *Destination Saturn*.)

In 1979 Buck returned to the big screen in *Buck Rogers of the 21st Century*, a probable attempt to cash in on the success of 1977's *Star Wars*. An equally mediocre television series followed the movie, and the revived interest in

the property prompted the New York Times Syndicate to launch a revival of the Nowlan strip, this time with writer James Lawrence and science fiction artist Grey Morrow. Cary Bates replaced Lawrence in 1981 and Jack Sparling became the strip's artist in 1982. In 1983, *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century*, plagued by syndicate distribution problems, sputtered to an end.

Whatever the strip's flaws were, Calkins introduced the general public to a number of science fiction concepts that, in 1929, had been limited to the pulps and novels. For better or for worse, flying belts, ray guns, robots, once the stuff of fiction, are all now becoming part of our reality.

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\*Reprinted from <http://www.stevestiles.com/index.html> with permission of Steve Stiles.

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We wish to find the truth, no matter where it lies. But to find the truth we need imagination and skepticism both. We will not be afraid to speculate, but we will be careful to distinguish speculation from fact.

-- Carl Sagan

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## Buck Rogers, Nazi Fantasy

### Artwork recycled William Rotsler

By Richard A. Lupoff

Parents of hungry children have been known to do all sorts of things for food. Didn't Jean Valjean steal a loaf of bread to feed a hungry child? Didn't survivors of Hurricane Katrina actually raid grocery stores to get nourishment for their children? Is there no shame in this world?

When I walked away from a nice secure job in the computer biz in 1970 I thought I had a pretty good game plan worked out. I'd already sold a couple of novels and a nonfiction book. I figured I could turn out two books a year plus assorted shorter pieces and take good care of my family that way.

Oy! Was I ever in for a rude awakening!

At first things went pretty well. I had a couple of contracts in my back pocket and I was able to turn out copy at a pretty rapid pace. I also managed to pick up a fairly steady series of assignments from journals you may or may not have heard of: *Ramparts*, *Crawdaddy*, *SunDance*, *Night Times*, *The Organ*. I landed steady gigs reviewing books for the *San Francisco Chronicle* and for Andy Porter's slick magazine *Algol*. Those provided lots of checks, as did occasional shots at the *Washington Post* and the *LA Times*. And, not to go into excessive detail, I garnered some bucks via steady albeit part-time teaching at the College of Marin and occasional guest appearances at UC/Berkeley, UCLA, and Stanford.

Sounds pretty good, dunnit? It was a lot of fun and produced some nice publishing credits and copy for my résumé. But somehow the number of dollars received versus the number of hours required just didn't add up right and my financial condition was steadily deteriorating. We had three small children and taking care of them was a full-time job for Pat. Our savings were just about exhausted and things were looking desperate.

One day my agent phoned and asked if I was familiar with Buck Rogers.

Jeez, what a question! Any science fiction fan of that era knew Buck Rogers whether he wanted to or not. All you had to do was mention science fiction outside fannish circles and you knew the next words you were going to hear: "You really read that crazy Buck Rogers stuff?"



Cute, cuddly Dickie Lupoff, circa 1938.

At least it wasn't, "Do you believe in UFOs?"

Sure, I knew the comic strip, I'd seen the Buster Crabbe serial, and I'd even read *Armageddon 2419 AD*, by Philip Francis Nowlan in the sweet little Avalon edition put together by one of my personal heroes, the great Robert W. Lowndes.

"You know, there's a Buck Rogers TV series in the works," my agent went on. "There's a chance to novelize a couple of screenplays. Are you interested?"

I hadn't quite reached the point of stealing bread for my children, but this looked like a heaven-sent chance to earn some dollars. Okay, novelizing screenplays might be the lowest form of fiction writing. It was definitely lower than writing pornography; Larry Shaw had offered me a chance to do that. I realized that I couldn't do it. I phoned Larry and told them that I was willing, and I ought to be good at it, I really, really liked women and sex, but when I hit the *on* button on my Selectric it just didn't happen.

"Oh, that explains it," Larry replied sympathetically. "If you really like women and sex, you'll never be a good pornographer. Don't waste your time trying."

Hey, where was I? Oh, novelizing screenplays.

Dell Books had arranged to publish a series of novels based on the forthcoming television show. The editor responsible was Jim Frenkel, for whom I'd done a couple of science fiction novels. We got along well and this looked like a reasonably pleasant relationship, if not exactly a very creative one.



Bill Rotsler had done a few novelizations and referred to the process as "creative typing." Well, I think Bill was at least half right.



While my agent tussled with the other parties involved, Jim and I talked about the project. The contract negotiations were more complex than they are for a normal book. You don't just have an author and a publisher involved. You have a license holder, a production studio, and a television network, too. After a while my agent sent me a preliminary binder-agreement to sign and return while everybody and his lawyer worked out the full-scale contract.

Jim Frenkel, in the meanwhile, promised to send me the scripts of the two episodes I was supposed to novelize, along with production notes, character and background bibles, and cast photos.

I would have to write fast because they wanted to get the books onto the stands while the TV series was fresh and getting a publicity rush. There was another reason for me to write fast. Nobody was certain that the TV series was even going to happen. The network brass were dithering. I guess this is par for the course. It certainly accounts for some of the heavy drinking that goes on in the industry, not to mention the strains on personal relationships.

The arrangement, then, was this: Glen Larson Productions would send all the source materials to Dell. Dell would send them on to me. I would start work. If the TV series aired, I would complete two novels, Dell would publish them, and I would receive a nice paycheck. If the decision was made not to air the series, I would be notified to stop work forthwith and deliver to Jim Frenkel as much "product" as I had completed. Dell would presumably deep-six it. Or, more likely, cold storage it in case the project was ever revived. And I would be paid *pro rata* for however much work I had done.

Yes, that will assure promptness, won't it?

The package from Dell arrived late in the afternoon. The older kids were home from school. The little guy was playing on the swing set in the backyard. Pat was working on dinner. I opened the package, took one look at the contents, and decided that I was not going to let it ruin my evening with my family.

Next morning I sat down with the materials Frenkel had sent me.

There were two scripts, one titled simply, "Buck Rogers in the 25th Century;" the other, "Buck Rogers: That Man on Beta." No bible. No cast photos. I picked up the phone and called Jim Frenkel. Where was all the material I'd been promised?

Tough luck, buddy, you've got all we've got.

Well, when you can't write through a problem, you write around it. If I wasn't going to be able to describe "Buck's steely gray eyes" or his "deep brown eyes" or his "brilliant blue eyes," I'd just write something like "Buck's glinting, determined eyes."

Ah, well.

I started reading. "Buck Rogers in the 25th Century" would be the pilot episode of the series. As scripted by Glen A. Larson and Leslie Stevens, this was a wildly revised version of the Buck Rogers story, created by Phil Nowlan in *Amazing Stories* and processed and reprocessed through endless comic strip and comic book and Big Little Book and movie versions. I finished reading the script, heaved a sigh of resignation and turned to "That Man on Beta."



Pictured here are examples from one of Richard Lupoff's Buck Rogers memorabilia. It is a popup book showing the type and arrangement of artwork used in it. Courtesy Richard Lupoff Collection.

This one really bothered me. It concerned a plot by the Evil Alien Empire to create an army of *ubermenschen* with which they intended to conquer the Earth. Buck Rogers is kidnapped and assigned the task of impregnating all the prospective mothers. What a wild Nazi fantasy. The mothers involved were selected for perfection in their own infancy and fed some kind of wacko growth hormone that brings them to full maturity at age four or five.

What kind of weird sickos were writing for Glen Larson? And what in the world made them ever think that this kind of stuff could make it onto network TV? These guys were talking about serial rape of four- and five-year-olds.

I grabbed my telephone again and called poor Jim Frenkel. I asked if he'd read those Buck Rogers scripts. Of course he hadn't. So I told him about them. He said there was nothing he could do. Just shut up and write.

I said, “There’s no way I’m going to put my name on this kind of disgusting trash.”

Jim said that Dell had already had the covers designed and sent out publicity materials with my byline prominently displayed on the covers of the books.

I told him I didn’t care; I wasn’t going to have my name besmirched that way. Unless he agreed to remove my name from the books, I was not going to write them. This was not easy for me to say. Not with three small kids to feed. But there are limits.

Finally, reluctantly, Jim agreed.

Now it was time to start writing. I’d spent a day reading the scripts, got as much of a night’s sleep as I could, had my fight with Frenkel, and was now ready to settle down to my task of creative typing.

I was using a great old red-painted IBM Selectric in those days. My desk faced a window beyond which bloomed a pyrocantha bush. A large and talented spider had set up shop in the window-frame and spent her days busily building and then tending her web. Beyond the web, brilliant scarlet berries burgeoned in the bush, shimmering with morning dew.

I set up with the first Buck Rogers script just to the left of the Selectric. Pat brewed a pot of ultra dynamite java, filled a cup, and set it down to the right of the Selectric. I took a deep breath, reread the first few paragraphs of Larson and Stevens’s script, raised my eyes to the spider and started typing. Oh, did my fingers ever fly over that keyboard! Oh, did I ever down cups of coffee! Oh, did I ever maintain eye contact with that spider!

After a while, as the level in the coffee pot fell and the stack of manuscript pages rose, the sun melted the morning dew off the pyrocantha berries and a gorgeous emerald-hued hummingbird arrived to take her breakfast. Now I had two lovely examples of nature to study, the spider in her web and the hummingbird hovering over the pyrocantha berries.

Thank heaven for touch-typing!

By early afternoon I felt I’d accomplished a good deal. I was well into the script and well into my “novel.” I was also exhausted and totally wired thanks to Pat’s coffee.

I’m not much of a tippler, but after those hours of mad typing and powerhouse coffee, I really, really needed something to help me relax. I opened a bottle of wine and downed glass after glass of the stuff. By dinnertime I was able to sit with Pat and our kids and enjoy the meal. After that – early to bed.

Next day, more of the same.

It took me five days to write that “novel.” I’ve never reread it in the 27 years since it was published, but if you’ll wait right where you are I’ll see if I can find a copy in the house and take a look at the first paragraph.

Okay, here the sucker is.

Here’s how it starts:

*Prologue: 1987*

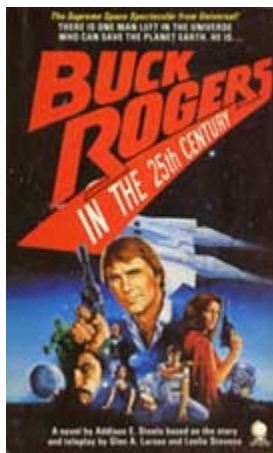
*The spaceship, standing tall and proud in the early morning sunlight at Cape Canaveral, Florida, was the most advanced production of Free World technology. Its lines were clean. Its command module was functional, efficient, manufactured to the micromillimeter by the most brilliant engineers, the most expensive machinery, and with the most sophisticated techniques that mankind had ever conceived.*

Ehh, kinda stinky, I think. But what the heck. It's a novelization. At least there are real sentences there, complete with subjects and predicates, initial caps and periods at the end and commas in the middle. Let's look at:

### Chapter One

*An incredibly antiquated spaceship tumbled aimlessly, out of control, through the blackness between the planets. Why it had never found its way out of the solar system, to drift forever in the space between the stars, was a matter of cosmic laws. In its disastrous tumble, Buck Rogers's ship had failed to reach solar escape velocity. Falling freely, with no propulsion system functioning, it had reached the farthest point of its orbit and then arched back toward its point of origin.*

= = =



Well, okay. Immortal prose it isn't, but what the hell, who buys these novelizations anyway? I've often wondered about that. I have a feeling that it's people who just love the movie or TV show so much; they just have to have it to keep for themselves. At one time I thought the availability of videos would kill the market for novelizations. If you can actually own the movie, why do you need the book? But I seem to have been wrong.

My preliminary agreement with Dell had called for a flat payment for each of two books. My agent assured me that the full-scale contract would have a royalties clause in it.

The day after I finished *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century* I didn't touch my Selectric. I phoned my agent. The final

contract wasn't ready yet. I phone Jim Frenkel. He didn't know whether the TV show as going to air or not. I took my dog for a relaxing walk in the park. I went home and read a good book. I'm not sure what it was, not after all these years, but I think it was *The House of Mirth*, by my favorite author, Edith Wharton. I enjoyed dinner with my wife and children. I went to bed early.

The next day I started work on *Buck Rogers: That Man on Beta*. I had worked out my strategy for sabotaging this vile book. I turned the sexual part into a farce and Buck into a buffoon who couldn't get laid in a whorehouse with a no-limit Platinum Card in his wallet. The Glen Larson people had brought in an R2D2 clone robot named, I think, Tiki. A loathsome, disgusting creature. I introduced a gigantic mainframe computer in the book and had poor Tiki fall madly, hopelessly in love with it.

That was my strategy for sabotage: I turned this would-be sex novel into a frustration burlesque.

I wrapped up the two books in eleven days, counting my day off between books. My spider friend had captured and eaten 126 bugs in that period. The lovely green hummingbird had eaten 242 pyrocantia berries. I had drunk ten pots of strong coffee and consumed ten bottles of cheap wine.



I still didn't know whether the TV show was going to air, and I didn't care. I mailed in my manuscripts. I got my paycheck. My children got their dinners. Pat got her husband back. I never did get my full contract. A few months later I ran into Nick Austin, an editor from England who had published UK editions of several of my books. He mentioned that he'd bought the British rights to the two Buck Rogers novels, and did I happen to know whom this fellow was who wrote as "Addison E. Steele." I admitted to Nick that I was that person.

Nick said he hoped I'd got a good share of the money he'd paid for the books, because he'd paid plenty. Of course, I never got a nickel beyond my first flat payment. The UK money and payments for German and Hebrew editions went to Dell and to Glen Larson and to Frank Dille, the company that owned the character Buck Rogers.

As for me? As Jon Stewart would say, “Ahh – maybe not so much.”

A few weeks later I picked up the morning paper and learned that the Buck Rogers pilot was to receive limited theatrical release, and in fact was about to open at a theater near my home. Pat and I went to see it with our friend Jerry Jacks. It was very, very strange, I tell ya, sitting in the theater, watching Gil Gerard and Erin Gray or whoever the hell played those roles acting out that story and speaking those lines. Not that I'd created them. That's a whole other peculiar experience.

And eventually the series did air, and had a moderately successful run of two or three seasons on network TV.

But a couple of years ago I was in Southern California attending the Mission Hills Paperback Collectors Show. Some of the participants arrived early and went book-scouting in Hollywood. Lacking anything else to do I went with them. At one point I found myself wandering through a musty bookshop. I noticed a couple of my new-found collector friends puzzling over a pair of Dell paperbacks.

I peered between them and got a very strange feeling. Those books looked oddly familiar but I didn't remember ever reading them. In fact, they were books of a type I almost never read – TV novelizations. But still – but still – and then it came to me.

“Say,” I injected myself into the collectors' dialog, “I know those two books.”

“Really?”

“Yes. I wrote 'em a few years ago. I'd completely forgot about them. But I wrote those things.”

This elicited a skeptical response. “It says *Addison E. Steele* on the covers.”

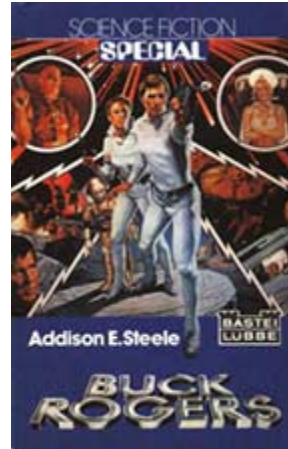
“Yes. I wrote them. I used that name on them.”

The two collectors pondered for a while. Then one of them said, “Suppose we buy them. There are two of them, two of us. Would you sign them, one for each of us?”

I hesitated briefly. Then I said, “Okay.”

One of these days I suppose the Buck Rogers TV series will be out on DVDs, if it isn't already.

I don't want a copy.



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Simplicity of language is not only reputable, but perhaps even sacred.

--Kurt Vonnegut, *Palm Sunday*

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## Curious Couplings 4

By Earl Kemp

As I wrote in *eI19*, I have noticed a number of odd coincidences regarding sleaze paperback covers and other publications that have intrigued me. Some of them were reasonable and understandable, some of them were outright criminal theft, and some of them were beneath contempt.

What I propose to do is to run a few of them in some issues of *eI* to see if I can create real interest in perusing the venture. It is a participation project. You send me jpegs of your favorite duos to [earlkemp@citlink.net](mailto:earlkemp@citlink.net) and I'll take it from there.

Here then is the next set of examples of Curious Couplings. First there is a grouping of four lesbian covers all from the collection of Brittany A. Daley.



Next we have a very interesting trio of covers from the collection of Jon Macy:



We welcome your contributions to this series. Please email your jpegs to [earlkemp@citlink.net](mailto:earlkemp@citlink.net) and thank you very much for participating in this novel and interesting exercise in futility.

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I tell you, we are here on Earth to fart around, and don't let anybody tell you any different.

-- Kurt Vonnegut, *Inc. Technology* No. 4, 1995

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# Tales of ESFA

By Mike Deckinger

The Eastern Science Fiction Association (ESFA) began as “The Null-A Men” in the 1940s, and underwent a more favorable name change to ESFA a decade later. In the late ‘50s, after bouncing around from one impermanent location to another, it found stability at the Newark, NJ YMCA. Thanks to one of the members holding a seat on the Board of Directors, the club managed to secure a comfortable arrangement for monthly meetings.

Newark had never been an especially hospitable town. In the mid 20 th century it was even less desirable; a multi-racial conglomerate of those living comfortably, side-by-side with those scrabbling for existence. Political machines governed virtually ungovernable districts, favoritism was rife, racial tensions simmered, and competence within the confines of city government was at a premium. The downtown business district, once thriving and the source of considerable revenue income for the state, was feeling the pinch of flight to the more affluent, and less threatening suburbs. It was in this mix that ESFA thrived. I sporadically attended meeting from the late ‘50s through early 1971, often accompanied by localites Joel Freiman and Robert Weinberg.

There were other groups in the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area, most notably The Fanoclasts and The Lunarians. They were, by and large, informally managed, with minimal organizational impositions, and strong fannish leanings. ESFA, however, operated on a Robert Rules framework, collected modest monthly dues which were applied toward room rent and dinner for guests at Childs restaurant, and concentrated on science fiction and collecting, barely recognizing more fan-oriented diversions. Sam Moskowitz was the most prominent member, one of its founders, and served in whatever capacity he could be roped into.

Once the new business, old business, minutes, dues collection, and limited socializing occurred, the guest was then introduced. At the time, most professionals, as well as officials of the book and magazine publishing industry, operated in or around the greater New York area. An eclectic distribution of potential guests was less than an hour away.

I was director for a year and managed to obtain a speaker each month. I only encountered two flat-out refusals. One was from a writer in upstate New York who responded kindly but indicated a bad experience in Newark had driven him from the town and he had vowed not to return. The other was from Don Wollheim. Evidently a strain of bad blood existed between him and Sam Moskowitz, and continued to percolate over the years. He was quite polite in his declination, but made it clear he did not wish to be in Sam’s presence. I never mentioned this to Sam or anyone else.

My first guest was a beardless youth, just out of his teens, named Samuel R. Delaney. He spoke of his background briefly, that he had some prior contact in the sf field and related being enticed into some fan party by Randall Garrett, at a young and tender age.

Delany had just completed a short story for *Dangerous Visions*; “Aye, and Gomorrah...” which he did not wish to speak about before publication. He had a number of other concepts brewing and took the field of writing very seriously. He had been reading sf for many years, he most admired Tom Disch. Doubleday had recently purchased his novel *Nova*. The title was an apt summation of a career that flared fiercely with meteoric brilliance at its inception, and then gradually and methodically cooled down to a state of potent inactivity.

I had read several Joanna Russ stories and found myself unmoved by them. I admired her craftsmanship but found her writings to be mostly detached fragments lacking cohesiveness. In later years she became too agenda-driven for my tastes, and overburdened with polemics rather than profundities. She did make a pleasant guest however, and wore the most appealing flashcube earrings I had ever seen.



Mike Deckinger  
Photo by Chaz Boston-  
Baden, Corflu, San  
Francisco, February  
2005.

You've probably never heard of Michael Avallone. Mike was a jack-of-all-trades writer churning out disposable copy at a dizzying velocity. He dabbled in a number of fields, most notably the mystery genre where he created private eye Ed Noon (and when gothics briefly became the rage, wrote a series of books authored by "Edwina Noone"). Mike anonymously edited several short lived genre magazines in the late 1950s for mega-publisher Lyle Kenyon Engel (*Space Science Fiction* and *Tales of the Frightened*) and churned out a slew of books geared toward the current market favorites. Sam Moskowitz anthologized one of his stories, featuring Edgar Allen Poe as a protagonist, which eased Mike's natural reluctance to appear before an assemblage. He proved to be a likeable speaker with a trunkful of anecdotes. Mike died in 1999. His wife, Fran, who died last year, became an aggressive abortion-rights proponent in New Jersey.



Shown (l to r) are Fran Avallone, Mike Deckinger, and Michael Avallone (1967).

Every March an open meeting was conducted, in commemoration of the very first formal gathering. The subject of Cryonics was creating a great deal of contention in and out of the sf field. Briefly, this involved the concept of freezing the bodies, or body parts, of the recently deceased, in sealed and regulated chambers, in the hopes that resurrection might occur at some future date when science was advanced enough to restore the bodies to life. The idea was more science fictional than anything grounded in rational facts, but Cryonics had its adherents. One of them was Saul Kent. I arranged a debate between him, Frederik Pohl, and Lester del Rey.



Shown (l to r) are Mike Deckinger, Frederick Pohl, Lester del Rey, \_\_\_\_\_(unidentified), and Saul Kent (1967).

Pohl seemed bemused by the notion, neither endorsing nor condemning it (he had been actively promoting it in his magazines). Lester del Rey regarded Cryonics as rubbish. "How are we going to pay for the upkeep?" he thundered at one point, in the inimitable feisty Lester del Rey style. "Will we have Deadicare?" He continued to steamroll Cryonics while Kent bravely, and with more than a touch of foolhardiness, stuck his grounds. There were no victors or loser, but the audience enjoyed the show.

Decades later, long after Saul Kent's name had escaped my memory, he surfaced again. Saul's ailing mother, Dora Kent, died in December 1987. Both had requested that their heads be frozen upon death by the Alcor Life Extension Foundation, a Cryonics institution in Riverside, CA. In an act of delusional validation, Saul arranged for her head to be severed and placed inside a stainless steel capsule containing liquid nitrogen. The hurried operation, and the fact it was not performed in the presence of orthodox medical practitioners, led the county coroner to consider impounding the body for inquest. A subsequent court ruling scotched that action. The remains of Dora Kent remain vaulted at the Alcor Life Extension Foundation today, perhaps rubbing shoulders (or chins) with baseball great Ted Williams who was given a similar frigid departure.

Richard Wilson had been in writing since the 1940s. He wrote dry whimsy like *And Then the Town Took Off*, and

*The Girls From Planet 5*. As a speaker he was urbane and reserved. Richard was employed at the University of Syracuse. Following his appearance he wrote requesting copies of the monthly ESFA minutes, to be stored in their archives. For the next few years I shipped him a copy each month. Whatever became of them, I couldn't say, though perhaps they reside in a publicly accessible vault, to be unearthed by students of the distant future who may puzzle and ponder over this unique and clandestine organization.

Early on a Sunday morning I drove down to Newark's Penn Station to pick up Tom Purdom arriving on the Philadelphia train. He was a new writer at the time and proved to be a winning speaker. I later visited him in Philadelphia, along with his wife Sarah, at a Philcon regional conference.

After the conference, I piled into a car with Don Wollheim and Leslie Fish, headed for a party at Harriett Kolchak's home. None of us knew the proper location. Immediately, we were lost. Don motioned to a policeman on the street, exchanging words with a civilian, who helpfully supplied directions. "That guy was being arrested." Don observed, as we drove off.

Harry Harrison had been a guest several times. Harry was an aggressive, gregarious type. I don't recall the topic under discussion, but it so inflamed Sam Moskowitz that he was almost on his feet, riposting Harry's commentary, with considerable passion. The other members were growing increasingly uneasy as the verbal sparring escalated.

Finally, in total exasperation, Harry rose to his feet and declared: "Sam, I love you like a brother, but I swear, when you die they're going to bury you like this." (Assuming an upright pose with his fist raised in blunt fury.)

Chris Steinbrunner worked for a local TV station and ran an informal film club. He invariably brought reels of film with him (this was long before the days of video cassettes). The most popular program I can recall was several trailers and excerpts from the then unreleased *Goldfinger*. Chris also played a shambling shopping mall zombie in George Romero's *Dawn of the Dead* (along with a number of other genre luminaries). I have seen it three times and I still can't find him.

Anne McCaffrey was a guest in the early stages of her career. She remarked that she was interested in scientific plausibility but "who ever believed John Campbell would publish a story about dragons?" Sam Moskowitz wanted to know who published her first story. "You did Sam," she laughed. And he had, as a short-short in Sam's short-lived homage to the Gernsback-era pulps, *Science Fiction Plus*.

Ed Emsch was in the process of transitioning from one of the most prolific illustrators to a modern artist and experimental filmmaker. He brought along several examples of his short films, including "Dance Chromatic," an award-winning abstraction, and several stop-motion studies of the construction of a book cover. Using time-lapse photography, he first committed a rough outline of the illustration to canvas, and then methodically sketched in the different sections, ultimately enriching with more intense detailing and color. In the space of a 15-minute reel of 8mm film, he went from a blank canvas to a complete and marketable cover painting. "Do you always paint so fast?" a spectator jibed. "No," Ed answered, "this was one of my slow days." His wife Carol modeled for many of his covers.



Shown (l to r) are Poul Anderson and Sam Moskowitz (1961).

Hans Stefan Santesson is another name scarcely known today. Hans edited *Fantastic Universe* and also wrote the book reviews. He also edited *The Saint Mystery Magazine*, but the unpleasantness displayed to him by titular head, Leslie Charteris, made his job an ordeal that almost resulted in his resignation. In an ill-advised move, in the late 1950s, *Fantastic Universe* was transformed from the standard digest format to a large size publication. The intent was to attract great newsstand attention, but the distribution was spotty and the layouts downright ugly. The magazine folded after a few issues.

Hans spoke of his frustrations in attempting to attract name authors with poverty rates, as decreed by an unresponsive and uncommitted publishing empire. He had superior editorial skills, and struggled to keep the

magazine solvent through his own limited devices.

From what I know, ESFA continued to thrive into the 1970s. Inevitably, as more and more of the foundational members were lost, the club staggered along, finally sputtering to a much-deserved expiration. Whatever replaced it, if anything, I could not say.

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ESFA is still somewhat active -- or an offshoot of it -- I was a guest at one of their meetings back in the spring. This was at Ben Indick's home in Ft. Lee, NJ. Barry Malzberg was there, along with Joe Ross, and Moskowitz's widow, Christine (along with some of the other people there--maybe a dozen persons altogether). I believe Steve Fabian is also a member, though he could not make this meeting. The whole thing was very informal, unlike the Sam Moskowitz days.

--Luis Ortiz

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The Eastern Science Fiction Association occupied a unique niche within the pantheon of structured, member-participatory organizations. I hope my admittedly flawed memory, stretching back four and a half eventful decades, has recreated some of the highlights.

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I was a victim of a series of accidents, as are we all.

--Kurt Vonnegut, *The Space Wanderer*, *Sirens of Titan*

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# France Book Checklist

Compiled by Robert T. Elkin

**IMPORTANT:** If you can fill in the missing information at F18 below, please email the data to [earlkemp@citlink.net](mailto:earlkemp@citlink.net) and thanks for your help.

Ed.	Byline (true name)	Title	Year
F1	Frank Meline	<i>The Lives and Loves of a Vegas Call Girl</i>	1962
F2	Duke Shannon	<i>Male Nympho</i>	1962
F3	Seth Ahriman	<i>Ring-A-Ding Lover</i>	1962
F4	Dirk Novak	<i>Time Out for Sex</i>	1962
F5	Frank Meline	<i>The Fare Sex: Life of a Las Vegas Cab Driver</i>	1962
F6	Bill Leslie	<i>The Violator</i>	1962
F7	Richard E. Geis	<i>Honeymoon Motel</i>	1962
F8	Richard E. Geis	<i>Bedroom City</i>	1962
F9	Tedd Black	<i>Shook Up Sex</i>	1962
F10	Bill Danger	<i>Part Time Virgin</i>	1962
F11	Frank Meline	<i>Door to Door Rape</i>	1962
F12	Duke Shannon	<i>Ding-A-Ling Broad</i>	1962
F13	Steve Bartdorf	<i>Broads Make the Odds</i>	1962
F14	Ross Olin (Olin Ross)	<i>Lust Planet</i>	1962
F15	Walt Vickery	<i>Cleopatra's Blonde Sex Rival (Princeotta cover)</i>	1962
F16	John Rutherford	<i>Carnal Women</i>	1962
F17	Peggy Swenson (Richard E. Geis)	<i>Call Me Nympho</i>	1962
F18			
F19	Bart Mayes (Don Rico?)	<i>Eros Laughed</i>	1962
F20	James T. Smith	<i>Desire!</i>	1962
F21	Jim Harmon	<i>Silent Sex</i>	1962
F22	Frank Richards (Don Rico)	<i>Sex Nut</i>	1962
F23	Will Saxon	<i>Hot Load</i>	1962
F24	George Smith	<i>Strange Harem</i>	1962
F25	Don Rico	<i>Sex Trap</i>	1963
F26	Adam Coulter (James T. Smith)	<i>Golden Lust</i>	1962
F27	Bill Danger	<i>In the Nude for Love</i>	1963
F28	Gay Tom	<i>Lion Lover</i>	1963
F29	Karl Kelly	<i>Jazz Me Baby</i>	1962
F30	Jim Harmon	<i>Twist Session</i>	1962
F31	Gary Bolin	<i>Carnival Sex</i>	1963
F32	Donna Richards (Don Rico)	<i>Hollywood Lesbian</i>	1963
F33	Frank Richards (Don Rico)	<i>Orgy House</i>	1963
F34	Charles Brodrick	<i>Loverboy</i>	1963
F35	Richard E. Geis	<i>Girlsville</i>	1963
F36	Kendall Hill	<i>Female and Fatal</i>	1963

F37	Donna Richards/Bart Mayes (Don Rico?)	<i>Prisoner of Lesbos</i>	1963
F38	Will Saxon	<i>Wanton Women</i>	1963
F39	Alan Roberts	<i>My Foul Lady</i>	1963
F40	Bill Leslie	<i>Torment</i>	1963
F41	Serg Ross	<i>Half-Way to Hell</i>	1963
F42	Adam Coulter (James T. Smith)	<i>Big Mama</i>	1963
F43	Leslie Sapho	<i>Women's Camp</i>	1963
F44	Frank Meline	<i>Las Vegas Cocktail Girl</i>	1963
F45	Roger Blake (John F. Trimble)	<i>Nympho Nurse</i>	1963
F46	R. C. Gold (Ron Gold)	<i>Bowling Bum</i>	1963
F47	Sol Tabor (John Gilmore)	<i>Miss Brutal [aka Brutal Baby]</i>	1963
F48	Mort Gillian (John Gilmore)	<i>Dark Obsession</i>	1963
F49	Neil Egri (John Gilmore)	<i>Lesbos in Panama</i>	1963
F50	M.J. Deer (George H. Smith)	<i>A Place Named Hell</i>	1963
F51	R.C. Gold (Ron Gold)	<i>Marriage Wreckers</i>	1963
F52	Donna Richards (Don Rico)	<i>They Called Her Swivel Hips</i>	1963
F53	Peggy Swenson (Richard E. Geis)	<i>Virgin No More</i>	1963
F54	Neil Egri (John Gilmore)	<i>Strange Fire</i>	1963
F55	Steve Novak	<i>Greeks Had a Sex for It</i>	1963
F56	Adam Coulter (James T. Smith)	<i>Debauchee</i>	1963
F57	Roger Blake (John F. Trimble)	<i>The Sins of Cheryl</i>	1963
F58	Robert Wallace	<i>Convict Lust</i>	1963
F59	J.D. Ford	<i>Sin Model</i>	1963
F60	Paul Wagman	<i>Hollywood Homo</i>	1963
F61	M. Knerr (Mike Knerr)	<i>Auto Sex</i>	1963
F62	Fred Macdonald (Charles Nuetzel)	<i>Illicit Bed (cover by Nuetzel's father, AAN)</i>	1963
F63	Dominic Plato	<i>Terry</i>	1963
F64	Dominic Plato	<i>Confessions of a Movie Star</i>	1963
F65	Victor Harris	<i>Sex in Nero's Rome</i>	1963
F66	M.J. Deer (George H. Smith)	<i>Flames of Desire</i>	1963
F67	R.C. Gold (Ron Gold)	<i>Man Hater</i>	1963
F68	Rod Harding	<i>Vacation for Sex</i>	1963
F69	Harley Brisson	<i>Passion Merchant (France logo missing from cover)</i>	1963
F70	Jim Harmon	<i>Passion Strip</i>	1963
E1	Jake Lee	<i>The ABC's of Sex</i> (headline cover; sea-green/white/dark grey flag logo, the word "Elite, small-capped, in white on the grey bar)	1962
E2	Bill Leslie	<i>Sadism and Masochism: A Psycho-Sexual Analysis</i> (headline cover; sea-green/white/black flag logo, the word "Elite, small-capped, in white on the black bar)	n.d.
E3	René Guyon	<i>A Case for Sexual Freedom</i> (trans. Eden and Cedar) Paul; intro. Norman Haire; reprints [& perhaps pirates] the 1950 Knopf <i>Sexual Freedom</i> , which itself reprints an earlier [ca. 1930s] English edition; headline cover, standard tricolor logo returns, will continue to E5)	1963
E4	[Anonymous]	<i>Resort Sport</i> (photo cover, photo section inside)	1963

Thanks on this project go to the following folks, generous with their attention, patience, and information: Earl Kemp, John Gilmore, Charles Nuetzel, Craig Longnecker, Steve Gertz, Brittany A. Daley, Miriam Linna, Steve Paul, Rose Idlet, Ron Blum, Chris Eckhoff, Wayne Stadnyk, Graham Holroyd, Anne Green, Tony Jacobs, Bob Bedrossian, Robin Marshall, Red Lachat, and the library staff at C.W. Post/L.I.U.

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Ideas or the lack of them can cause disease.

--Kurt Vonnegut

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# The Real Straight Dope Concerning A Famous Love Song!

By Charles Nuetzel



Charles Nuetzel

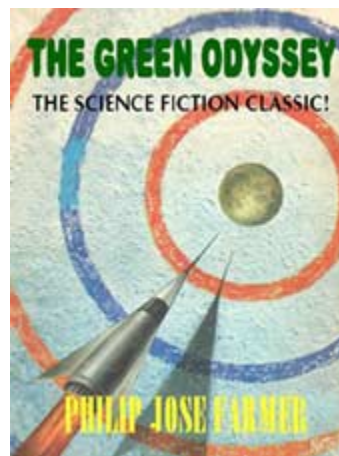
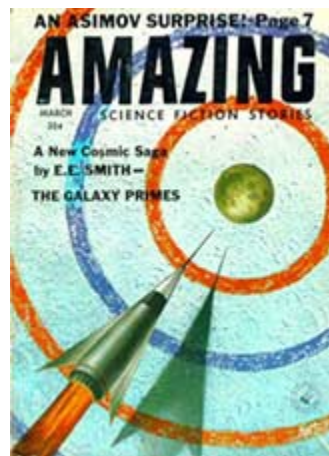
How did *Love Song* by Philip José Farmer come about? Not quite as most people might think.

And right up front I have to say, I'm as responsible for its existence as any other person living or dead.

That's what you call a narrative hook! And now that I have you by the line, I'll reel you in with the following confession.

The other day I happened, through a series of events on line, to discover Phil Farmer's website <http://www.pjfarmer.com>. There I skimmed and scanned. Saw his listings of books and came across the *Love Song* title, which I'd forgotten all about. That brought memories swiftly back.

One of them was the fact that one of dad's (Al Nuetzell) *Amazing Stories* (March 1959) covers was used for Phil's ebook *Green Odyssey* at Fictionwise.com. I have no objections to this, of course. I've done much the same thing with a lot of dad's cover art for my own ebooks to be found on Fictionwise.com, too. And in fact used the original covers of other books I'd written which didn't contain dad's art. I suppose we all do this.



Seems a common reality that all artists and writers face on the Internet.

In any case, that's merely a side issue.

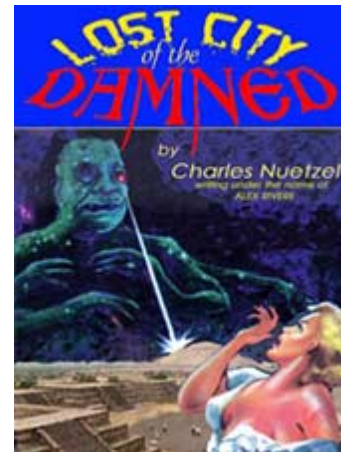
In the 1960's on I was fairly active, not only in writing, but also in packaging pocket books for local publishers in the Los Angeles area. It all started out with Bob Pike who bought an original manuscript from me (*Lost City of the Damned*) for which I convinced him to use my father as the cover artist. Dad, Al Nuetzell (ignore spelling difference), had made a reputation for himself as a science fiction cover artists during the 1950's, selling to *Fantasy & Science Fiction Magazine*, *Amazing Stories*, *Fantastic Stories*, *Famous Monsters of Filmland*. So this was the first cover he did for one of my books and the led to finally our teaming together to do a number of packaging jobs. [Earl has asked me to do an article on that period of my professional life for *eI*, and I plan on doing so in the near future. But enough to say there were a number of projects that came into being after that first round with Pike Books.]

As a result of all this, I ended up working with Bill Hughes, a very good artists, after Dad died in 1969.

I was sitting one day by the phone and I got a call from Bill who was doing covers for Rubicon Classics, a line of adult novels. I'd been packaging books for Powell Publications, using Bill as the cover artist after my father had become too ill to continue doing them for me. Bill was an outstanding cover artist and graphics man. I was lucky to meet and know him.

Hughes told me about this new line of sex novels, and asked if I would be interested in taking over the packaging of it? The man packaging them for the publisher wanted out of the deal, so a new guy was being recommend: me, if I was interested.

Well, I was never the one to turn down a good deal and this one looked excellent. They were paying a very good price for original novels. All they wanted was a lot of graphic sex. The publisher told me: The ideal story would have been a literary classic. Natch. And he'd love it to be nothing more than one prolonged seductive scene offering all the graphic details of two lovers sharing a magic moment of mutual passion. That kinda set a rather obvious editorial policy. Wow! And in a manuscript running some 200 pages or more! Give me a break! But advances were half on signing the contract, the rest on delivery of the final book, if I remember right. And solid delivery to the authors!



I remember that I was fairly busy with a number or writing and packaging deals at the time and was delighted that a cover artist (Bill Hughes) and a built-in editor were part of this packaging deal. All I'd have to do was get the manuscripts from writers and write the cover lines. I didn't even have to read the bloody stories. The editor would call me up and tell me what the book was all about, and I'd use that information to do the required flyleaf and cover copy. This would be handed over to Bill who would have it all set up in type and then would lay the cover graphics all nicely together with his artwork.

A sweet deal with a bit of money in my pocket for very little effort on my part.

And for the writers it was a sure sale. Well, okay, that depended on the writers. I, being somewhat interested in an easy, fast buck, decided to go for some fairly well-established writers who would deliver – and on deadline.

I decided I could tease some good writers into considering doing business with me. I contacted my own agent Forrest J Ackerman and got the phone numbers and addresses of some serious top-grade writers. Okay. Writers who were not your standard sex book novelist, but rather into other more literary fields, like science fiction. Or to put it another way, established professionals. [Or even put another way, Phil Farmer who was famous for his *The Lovers*, a short novel that had broken all literary boundaries when it appeared in an s-f pulp magazine back in the 1950's, would be an ideal choice. Back then, when this story originally appeared in print, the idea of sex in science fiction was like oil and water. Bad mix. You couldn't have one with the other. One *or* the other, but not mated. Well, not until Farmer exploded onto the publishing field with this story.]

Well, who could be better than a Mr. Philip José Farmer? Forry seemed to think this nice fellow would be more than willing to consider such a project as I was offering up.

So, along with a number of other writers, I contacted him and what a delightful experience that turned out to be. He was very professional about it, and able to bring it all together on deadline and deliver the final manuscript without any problems. A total professional, of course. Natch.

Well, as it turned out Rubicon Classics didn't last long. This was around 1969-70 and things came crashing down on the country, one of those depressive recessions. It wasn't the only local publisher to feel the crunch. In fact, Powell Publications was squeezed by the months on end where even truck drivers were pulling back and not doing their best to deliver pocketbooks to local distributors. When the books don't get from the printer to the local newsstand, something has to give! And that's the publisher, unless they have enough money behind them to survive the prolonged crunch. Some didn't make it by choice. The publisher of Rubicon Classics decided to pull up stakes and take his losses.

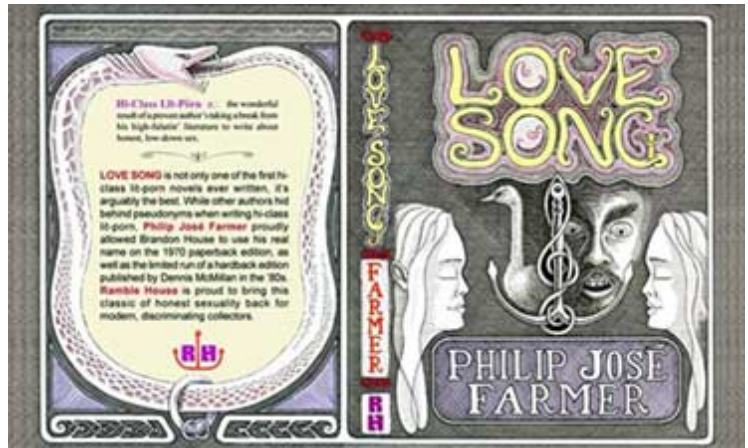
Thus, there was the Phil Farmer manuscript, all paid for (that was one of the prime features of the deal, full advance

on delivery of the manuscript). So what was he to do?

Well, I lost track of it all at that time and was into other things – surviving.

The next thing I learn is that Brandon House, the local BIG PUBLISHING HOUSE for hard cord sex books and magazines, had released *Love Song*, by Phillip José Farmer. This was, in fact, one of the bigger publishers in and around Los Angeles area. [As an interesting point, they were out with *Fanny Hill* before any New York publisher could get their editions on the stands.]

So. I just wanted to put the record straight. Brandon House may have ended up with *Love Song*, but it would never have existed if Bill Hughes hadn't called me and suggested I take over that packaging job for Rubicon Classics.



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It takes a ton of money to make a movie or a TV show. Never mind that you have to deal with the scum of the earth if you try to make one.

--Kurt Vonnegut, "Coda to My Career as a Writer for Periodicals"

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# My Gay Life: Beyond Homophobia or Gay Profundis

By Graham Charnock

Let's start at the beginning. I grew up in Alperton, a very small enclave of Wembley, itself a very small enclave of what was then Middlesex. In fact recognizing my address had a sexual connotation was the first confusing contact I had with sex.



That's me, the gay young blade.

My parents were exiled Yorkshire people, and sex and gender were not discussed amongst us, at least as such. Hence I had no early indications that there existed in human nature a dichotomy between heterosexual and same-sex orientations. It never occurred to me until much later that two of my parents' closest friends who were sisters who lived together, were probably in fact velvet sisters. And this continued for many years. I just played with my trains and model dinky toys.

Furthermore my sexuality, I now realise, was programmed mostly by Walt Disney films which painted Snow White as the ultimate lust object. I met several Snow Whites through my early junior school years, and fell in love with all of them. So in a sense, despite whatever rough beast was creaking to get out of my libido, on its way to Jerusalem, I was condemned to being a heterosexual.

Then in the early years of my teens, gay sex exploded for me. My initiation was when I went to a local cinema most likely to watch a James Bond film. It was an afternoon matinee in mid-summer and the picture palace was virtually empty. Despite this a man came and sat in the next seat to me, which I must admit puzzled me, until he proceeded to put his hand on my knee. He was of course a pederast homosexual pervert although I only realized this several hundred years later, and no, I didn't want to suck on his ice-cream cone. With a degree of self-aplomb I admire in myself even to this day, I upped-sticks and relocated myself to another area of the cinema.

At this stage I think I probably thought he was just being a very friendly man, but he was interfering with my enjoyment of the film so I took pre-emptive action, which might have saved me from being raped, sodomized and murdered and bundled into a ditch.

Whilst living with my parents. I also had most of the proto-gay sexual encounters that most of us have, whilst still teething, as it were. Arnold Ball lived a few door up the cul-de-sac and we used to hang out in each other's bedrooms, exchanging trading cards or whatever the equivalent was in those days. One day, Arnold was relaxing, or so I thought, on my bed and rolled over to show me his huge length of hosepipe. And it was huge. Similarly with a friend in the same road who flashed his sausage at me in his parents' garage. My response to both of these encounters was frankly to laugh. I was developing an early sense of humour in these matters, as well as a true bafflement about what some human beings were up to.

I continued to be untroubled by homosexuality for many years until I met Graham Hall.

I guess the deepest, but ultimately unconsummated, homosexual relationship I ever had was with Graham. To a degree Graham took me in under his wing as a young unknowing fan and groomed me in just the same way that certain other proscribed sexualities do. Don't get me wrong, we were both consenting adults when I moved to Brighton, but on my part it was just to be near him, and isn't that love? I stayed first of all in his bedsit, waking up early in the morning on a mattress on the floor to find him already on his second quart of cider, a habit which together with genetic propensities would ultimately kill him. Later living on social security I found a bedsit of my own, but we couldn't leave each other alone, and we spent six months living in each other's pockets, trawling the pubs and seedy



My first contact with gay rubber gloves

nightlife of Brighton. Occasionally one of Graham's casual girlfriends would appear and I would lose him for several days. And, do you know what, I always felt jilted and that he had been unfaithful. Ours was truly a love that dare not speak its name because possibly neither of us knew exactly what that name was.

### **Famous Writers I Have shared Beds With**



Graham Hall is seen in the photo to the left and Thomas Disch in the photo on the right

Jim Cawthorn lived in a bed-sit in Notting Hill at one time. As did Graham Hall and myself. One day Graham was given the job of showing a visiting Tom Disch around, and we all ended up in Jim's slightly seedy quarters. There was a shortage of chairs and Tom disported himself on Jim's bed and suggested I join him. Not knowing any better, I did, while Graham and Jim exchanged knowing glances. Lawrence Durrell's novel *Tunc* had just come out with a protagonist called Felix Charlock, and Tom joked about the similarity of our names and indeed the anagramatized name of the novel. I now in retrospect realise I was being set up in some way. In those days I was the kind of fresh-faced slightly geeky kid that had sort of appeal as fresh meat I guess. Hard to believe, I know. In the end nothing happened. I suspect I was so ignorant of the codes and responses that were expected of me, (a hand on the thigh, the fluttering of a soft pair of eyelids) that Tom simply gave up, and decided I was not suitable prey.

I was still naive and unknowing to a degree when I had my second run-in with Tom at Seacon. He flounced up to the registration desk together with John Clute and I booked Tom in as a 'guest' since he was involved in the programming. He asked me if guest's wives also qualified for free membership. I said I didn't know and asked him if his wife was with him. Tom pointed at John and said: 'This is my wife.' In retrospect, and in kindness, of course I don't think he was seriously trying to freeload John. I think he was just trying to wind me up. Of course I didn't register John as Tom's wife. We didn't need that kind of disgusting behaviour at Seacon.

### **Moorcock and me on the same bed.**

Tantalisingly not much to tell I'm afraid. Mike lived in Ladbroke Grove and I rented Charles Platt's flat whilst he was in New York. I had infiltrated Mike's network first of all by making a pest of myself and by working for free on and around New Worlds, and largely through my association with Graham Hall, and later by becoming one of Deep Fix (a story told elsewhere). On Mike's front door there was a picture of an Elephant Gun and a sign saying 'Unwanted Visitors Will Be Shot.' I got a kick at the time of knowing I could amble around there any time and not only by-pass the killing process but have breakfast with Hilary Bailey and their two children. One day I did so and Mike was under the weather and was sitting up in bed in a silk-dressing gown, which occasionally flopped open to reveal his nipples. We sat and chatted. Well, I chatted, and he largely moaned, but in the sense of griping and not in pleasure and



This is the gayest picture of me and Mike I could find.

certainly not as if I was doing anything to his nipples. And that was it. But I think it counts.

Another famous science fiction writer I had a chance homosexual encounter with was Samuel R. Delaney. At the time I was managing a bookshop in Baker Street, and out of the blue, Samuel Delaney came in. He was introduced to me by his companion, who knew I was also involved in science fiction. At the time I was wearing an Hawaiian shirt, and Sam complimented me on it. It was, I realize now another chance of a pick-up wasted.

One day in the bookshop I had to advertise for a bookkeeper. The man who impressed me at interview was a middle-aged gent called John Leslie. He was neat dapper and exquisitely turned out. When I asked him as a matter of course whether he was married he gave a wry smile. Still, fool that I was, I didn't tumble to his mumbled insouciant response. I hired him, but it wasn't until I found a diamante-encrusted stapler on his desk that it finally clicked. A frankness soon developed with us. John would arrive in the morning missing his dentures and give me a graphic description of how they had been beaten out of him in a pub car-park in the course of over-dominant fellation. John subscribed lots of gay porn videos from a mail order supplier and occasionally he would slip me a heterosexual one, with the critical admonishment: 'Those girls are just whores, you know.' It made me wonder what he thought about the studs performing for him in his films. Probably he thought they were nice young boys who simply did it for the pleasure. I know that's the illusion I kept up for a long time with 'those whores'.

John's partner was a civil servant called Derrick Sabre whom I met and liked enormously, but John's attitude towards him seemed equivocal to say the least. John would complain that the two of them had nothing in common. John for instance liked ballroom dancing and Derrick liked train spotting. In the light of this I wondered why they stayed together but now I realize that condition is common to probably all couples, whatever their sexuality. Sometimes it takes a long time to learn very basic lessons. When Derrick retired John did the same and they moved to Lyme Regis, and Pat and I visited them one time in their home, and they were very urbane and nice to see. Then John died, and Derrick dropped out of our lives, because he had only been there as a part of John. So it goes.

In 19sixtysplunk Chris Priest, through his vast network of gay connections, introduced Dicky Howett and me to the publisher of a fledgling gay magazine called *Jeremy*. Dicky did the artwork, whilst Chris and I simply pasted in all our juvenile science fiction stories. What the gay market made of them, I know not. I can't believe they bought it for the pictures which were very camp and non-explicit. But we took it very seriously and often went out for gay calisthenics in the local park. Here's a picture of Dicky's pert buttocks.

I don't have much else to tell. I've kept the best bits for my private diaries to be ritualistically shredded after my death.

Of course the sad truth, now we've been all through this, is that I'm not gay, and given my anal protestant upbringing (no pun intended) could never be. I like to pretend occasionally to wind up both friend and enemies, but, honestly I think the only thing I could take up the arse is a colonic, or more likely, at my age, an endoscopy. Whose loss, eh?

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All photographs and captions courtesy Graham Charnock Collection.



The queen in the flower shirt or Hawaiian shirt as I prefer to call it, is indeed me. Roger Robinson is the photo credit. I don't know if he will sue you. He certainly didn't ask me if he could put the picture on the web.



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How on earth can religious people believe in so much arbitrary, clearly invented balderdash?...The acceptance of a creed, any creed, entitles the acceptor to membership in the sort of artificial extended family we call a congregation. It is a way to fight loneliness. Any time I see a person fleeing from reason and into religion, I think to myself, There goes a person who simply cannot stand being so goddamned lonely anymore.

-- Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., address to a Unitarian congregation, Cambridge, Mass., January 27, 1980 quoted in *2000 Years of Disbelief, Famous People with the Courage to Doubt*, by James A. Haught

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## *Sex and Rockets:*

*The Occult World of Jack Parsons*, by John Carter

(Feral House <http://www.feralhouse.com>, 1999.)

Reviewed by Rosemary Pardoe

In discussing the undertaking by Jack Parsons of his personal 'Black Pilgrimage to Chorazin', in *Ghosts & Scholars* 26 ("The Black Pilgrimage," pp.52-53), I came to no definite conclusions on where he might have acquired the idea for this risky project. This is what I said there:

But whether or not M.R. James needed to invent the Black Pilgrimage to Chorazin, it is intriguing to discover that, in the 1940s, a Californian named Jack Parsons actually went on just such a journey, and with disturbing consequences. Early in 1946, Parsons (1914-1952), scientist and sometime leading light of the Californian Lodge of Aleister Crowley's *Ordo Templi Orientis*, invoked the Thelemic goddess Babalon in the Mojave Desert, utilising the "Enochian Tablet of Air". He had devised the magickal operation in order to "obtain the assistance of an elemental mate" (reminiscent of Count Magnus's "faithful messenger"), an object he claimed to have achieved by following Babalon's instructions, which he later wrote down as *The Book of Babalon* or the *Liber 49*. One of the goddess's demands was that: "Thou shalt make the Black Pilgrimage". Babalon did not specify in so many words where the Pilgrimage should be to, but Parsons' Foreword to the book says:

"I have taken the Oath of the Abyss, and entered my rightful city of Chorazin, and seen therein the past lives whereby I came to this, the grossest of all my Workings. Now it would seem that the further matters of the prophecy are at work; events press on tumultuously, and 'Time is' is writ large across the sky."/(15)/

Any lingering doubts concerning the destination of Parsons' Pilgrimage are removed by his *The Book of Antichrist* (1949), where he explains how, during a later invocation in 1948-9:

"...I reconstructed the temple, and began the Black Pilgrimage, as She [Babalon] instructed.

"And I went into the sunset with Her sign, and into the night past accursed and desolate places and cyclopean ruins, and so came at last to the City of Chorazin. And there a great tower of Black Basalt was raised, that was part of a castle whose further battlements reeled over the gulf of stars. And upon the tower was this sign [an inverted triangle in a circle]."/(16)/



Rosemary Pardoe



Jack Parsons. Courtesy Adam Parfrey/Feral House Collection.

Just like Count Magnus, Parsons "was taken within and saluted the Prince of that place", after which:

"...things were done to me of which I may not write, and they told me, 'It is not certain that you will survive, but if you survive you will attain your true will, and manifest the Antichrist.'

"And thereafter I returned and swore the Oath of the Abyss, having only the choice between madness, suicide and that oath."/(17)/

Of course, Jack Parsons' pilgrimage was magico-spiritual rather than geographical, but so might Count Magnus's have been. At no point in the story does MRJ specify that his journey was a physical one. It would be interesting, too, to know how Count Magnus died. Parsons was killed when he accidentally dropped some unstable fulminate of mercury, thus fulfilling Babalon's prophecy that he would "become living flame".

The one obvious link between Parsons and MRJ is their mutual fascination with John Dee (for Enochian and

bibliographical reasons, respectively). While researching for this article, we therefore had great hopes of discovering the Black Pilgrimage to Chorazin as an existing concept in Dee's works, but to date we have found only one reference to Chorazin (or Gorsim), listed as number 76 in the 91 parts of the earth named by man, in the *Liber Scientiae Auxillii et Victoriae Terrestris*. Our lack of success does not necessarily prove that it is not there, but unless and until we discover it, the most likely explanation for Parson's Black Pilgrimage has to be that he somehow got the idea via "Count Magnus". There is no actual evidence that he ever read the story, but perhaps it is significant that Aleister Crowley once criticised Parsons' tendency to get "a kick from some magazine trash, or an 'occult' novel...and [dash] off in wild pursuit".

Parsons sometimes attended the meetings of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society (LASFS): Jack Williamson, author of the supernatural novel *Darker Than You Think*, encountered him there in 1941, and found him quite well read in the genre./ (18)/ Another active member of LASFS was Samuel D. Russell, whose major essay on "Irony and Horror: The Art of M.R. James" was published in the Fall 1945 issue of Francis Towner Laney's fanzine *The Acolyte*, just a few months before Parsons received his first instruction to go on the Black Pilgrimage./ (19)/ Clearly MRJ was discussed at LASFS meetings and Parsons may have been introduced to his tales there. Possibly he was then encouraged to take the Black Pilgrimage seriously by his sayer or "magical partner", the notorious L. Ron Hubbard, who went on to found the Church of Scientology. Described by Aleister Crowley as a "confidence man", when Hubbard started working with Parsons his greatest claim to fame was as a pulp writer who had contributed several science fiction and supernatural fantasy stories to *Unknown* magazine. Crowley himself appears to have had his doubts about the authenticity of the conjurations undertaken by the two men. In April 1946, he wrote: "Apparently Parsons or Hubbard or somebody is producing a Moonchild. I get fairly frantic when I contemplate the idiocy of these louts."/ (20)/ It would certainly seem to be in character for Parsons to have adopted a fictional concept into his practice.

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Jack Parsons rented rooms in his large house in Pasadena in the '40s to fans such as Alva Rogers and Lou Goldstone, and also to Elron -- who proceeded to steal Jack's wife and some of his material and financial assets to tide him over until he could become filthy rich from his own bogus religion. Lou's widow Cynthia knew Parsons and has written of him. I'm not at home to check, but I believe some of that is buried in a *Trap Door* lettercol. She thought he was "charming." I made her a photocopy of *Sex & Rockets* when it came out, and I lent her an advance review copy of *Strange Angel* which she's currently reading. "John Carter" is supposedly some L. A.-area fan who wrote and published *Sex & Rockets* under this clever pseudonym to avoid persecution by Scientology thugs.

--Robert Lichtman, InTheBar, July 21, 2005

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When I heard, shortly afterwards, that a biography of Parsons was in the offing from Feral House, I had great hopes that it might provide the answer. John Whiteside Parsons (1914-1952) was by day a top rocket scientist, but by night he was a practitioner of Thelemic Magick and an associate of Aleister Crowley. After he took his astral Black Pilgrimage to Chorazin in the late forties, he believed he had become the Antichrist.

When he died it was in an explosion about which many questions still remain today. Thus there is much for the pseudonymous 'John Carter' to cover in this book, and, unfortunately, although he discusses the Black Pilgrimage in fair detail, he offers no theories on where Parsons got the idea. Carter briefly mentions the Biblical references to Chorazin, the legend that it would be the birthplace of the Antichrist, and the present-day ruins, but there is no suggested source given for the Black Pilgrimage. It looks more and more likely that Parsons' inspiration was MRJ's "Count Magnus" (perhaps via L. Ron Hubbard or Sam Russell), especially as Carter notes the influence of fantastic fiction on some other aspects of Parsons' activities ("...[he] may have acquired the moniker [Belarion] from a fantasy novel which featured a character by that name"; and "Williamson's book [Jack Williamson's werewolf novel, *Darker Than You Think*] evidently influenced Parsons' writing...").

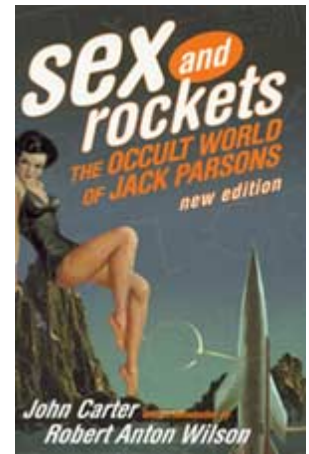
*Sex and Rockets* is an interesting read, well illustrated with photographs, newspaper cuttings, patent applications, and all manner of other related items. One feels the

author could have gone into more depth, however, and the lack of notes and references means any reader wanting to research some aspects of Parsons' life more thoroughly has difficulty knowing where to start (the reasonably good bibliography doesn't altogether compensate for this omission). As for Robert Anton Wilson's introduction (his name appears on the -- otherwise wonderful! -- dust jacket in letters as high as Carter's); this is the usual mix of joyously surreal originality and aggravatingly obvious errors of fact which we expect of him.

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\*Reprinted from *Ghosts & Scholars 26* and the Ghosts & Scholars website at <http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~pardos/GS.html> with permission of Rosemary Pardoe.

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It seemed a good idea, for example, when nothing much was really going on, ... to be beneficially excited by minimal stimuli, such as idiosyncratic arrangements in horizontal lines of twenty-six phonetic symbols, ten numbers, and eight or so punctuation marks, or dabs of pigment on flat surfaces in frames.

--Kurt Vonnegut, *Timequake*

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# Unanswered Questions

Artwork recycled Harry Bell

By Alexei Panshin

A few years ago, in an essay about the writing of my first book, *Heinlein in Dimension*, I included an example of the letters of inquiry I wrote in December 1964 to various people who knew Robert Heinlein asking for anecdotes and commentary. The sample letter I'd saved was to Ray Bradbury, who'd been helped by Heinlein when he was a young science fiction fan and would-be writer.

I mentioned that I'd heard back from some of the people I'd written to, but not from others. And that Bradbury was one of the people who hadn't replied.

Earl Kemp expressed surprise at that. He said that he knew Bradbury and had always found him to be generous and cooperative.

I answered that it might not be completely surprising. My letters of inquiry were raw and naïve, and may have struck some of the recipients as asking for too much too indiscriminately to merit an answer.

I'd only met Bradbury once in a hotel corridor, long enough to shake hands, and I'd failed to ask him then.

The question that Earl raised has stayed with me. If Bradbury had been given help by Heinlein when he was first starting out as a writer, why -- aside from my unripeness -- hadn't he answered my inquiry?

I may have found the answer in a new biography of Ray Bradbury -- *The Bradbury Chronicles*, by Sam Weller -- which suggests to me that even after the passage of a quarter century, the relationship with Heinlein was still too sore a point for Bradbury to want to talk about casually.

Weller says that Bradbury met Robert Heinlein at a meeting of the Los Angeles Science Fiction Society in the summer of 1939, about the time that Heinlein's first story was published in *Astounding*: "Heinlein's wife Leslyn wasn't a writer, but she accompanied her husband to the meeting, finding great interest in the Science Fiction Society and in Ray. While some of the older members were put off by Ray's juvenile antics, Leslyn was kind -- though she was sometimes as annoyed with his behavior as the others -- and paid him much attention and the two became friends."

Weller writes: "Heinlein eventually befriended Ray and became an important mentor, reading Ray's work occasionally and offering gentle advice. 'He mainly just told me to keep writing,' said Ray. 'Heinlein taught me human beings. He had human beings in his stories and they were much more personal.'"

In those days, Heinlein was hosting Saturday night cocktail parties for local SF writers under the name "the Mañana Literary Society," and Bradbury was sometimes allowed to attend. In his autobiography, *Wonder's Child*, Jack Williamson remembers Bradbury as "still so brash and noisy that Leslyn didn't always want him."

Bradbury was given Cokes to drink instead of alcohol. This may have been because he was still under age. Or it may also have been because he was already quite brash and noisy enough.

Leigh Brackett and Jack Williamson actively befriended young Bradbury. Henry Kuttner critiqued his manuscripts and told him not to waste his story ideas in talk, but to actually write them down. And on one occasion Heinlein allowed Bradbury to watch him while he wrote.



It was Heinlein who told Bradbury that his story "It's Not the Heat, It's the Hu..." was publishable and submitted it for him to a local magazine called *Script*. The story was accepted -- Bradbury's first sale -- and he would eventually be paid with three copies of the published magazine.

Weller writes, "Ray remembered this moment as one of the proudest, if not *the* proudest, moment of his writing career. And he owed it to Robert Heinlein."

The end of the Heinlein-Bradbury relationship came in 1942 over the issue of World War II.

Following Pearl Harbor, Heinlein, a Naval Academy graduate who had been retired from the Navy in 1934 after developing tuberculosis, wanted nothing so much as to be recalled to active duty. But, try as he might, he couldn't swing it. He would have to settle for working as a civilian engineer at the Materials Laboratory of the Naval Aircraft Factory in Philadelphia.

On the other hand, Bradbury, who was a geek and a pacifist, had no use for war. He was convinced that if he was drafted, he wouldn't survive. And I think there can be little doubt that if he had served, he would have made as unapt and inept a soldier as Henry Kuttner, or as Isaac Asimov immediately after the war, both of whom were discharged from the service early.

In July 1942, Bradbury had his draft physical. He failed because of his poor eyesight and was classified 4-F.

Weller writes: "While Ray was quietly elated by the news, at least one of his friends was incensed. Robert Heinlein ... felt that Ray was betraying his country, that he was a coward. Heinlein believed that this, if any, was the time to heed the call to arms. If Ray couldn't serve because of his health, fine. He could somehow volunteer."

And, in fact, during the war Bradbury would write ads and radio spots for the Red Cross promoting blood donation.

Whether or not it would have made a difference, Heinlein didn't know this.

Weller says: "...Perhaps Heinlein sensed that Ray did not believe in war; Ray was a pacifist, while Heinlein felt there was no higher calling than to defend the honor of one's country. As a result, Heinlein cut Ray off, and they didn't speak again for decades."

If this breach was not yet healed in December 1964, it might explain why Bradbury didn't reply then to my letter of inquiry on behalf of *Heinlein in Dimension*.



Ray Bradbury signing books at the Paperback Show and Sale.  
Photo by Art Scott, Mission Hills, CA, 2002.

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In the only love story he [Kilgore Trout] ever attempted, "Kiss Me Again," he had written, "There is no way a beautiful woman can live up to what she looks like for any appreciable length of time." The moral at the end of that story is this: Men are jerks. Women are psychotic.

-- Kurt Vonnegut, *Timequake*

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