

BACK NUMBERS CAN BE EASILY PROCURED

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Issue 1

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Just who is this guy anyway?

Well, it would appear that after a considerable amount of ~~nagging, prodding with a sharp stick~~, encouragement by John DeWalt, that I'm going to send in the fee to get onto the PEAPS wait list. John seems to think I will have enough to say of interest to the membership to fill my minimum number of pages. I understand that some waitlisters have contributed pages before becoming full members and this seems like a good idea to me. This way I can make a dry run at putting together my contributions each mailing without worrying about having to meet minac. If I can't make minac while I'm waiting to join, I figure I can gracefully drop from the waitlist before causing any trouble.

Since El Dorado is the only contribution that I get, I'll have to limit my mailing comments to it unless I get lucky and there are extra copies of the mailing to purchase. The rest of my pages will most likely consist of reviews of recently read books, gripes about library book sales and dumb questions. This issue has a small comic section, which will not be a regular feature. I decided that these two were too on-target for the audience to pass up.

For those of you who don't know me, which is probably most of you, I'm a "newbie" to pulp fandom, having bought my first pulps at the 1996 Pulpcon in San Jose. (Ah, Moulder Hall. Will we ever forget that weird smell?) DeWalt, Bob Flowers, Rich Harvey and many others made that such a great convention that I made the trip the following year to Bowling Green.

After skipping a year I went to the next two at Dayton and then had to skip again this year because of financial constraints. (Hey Rusty, how about holding another West Coast Pulpcon? Rusty?)

As far as my collecting goes, I'm an Argosy guy. There is some great stuff in those issues, and they are affordable. I think the reason John DeWalt and I get along so well is that we're both always looking for the cheap stuff. As much as I like the Shadow, Black Mask, Dime Detective, Weird Tales and the other expensive stuff, I just can't afford to collect it.

John and I were talking the other day and he came up with the idea of getting just one really good pulp at every Pulpcon and I think I might try that. I know at past Pulpcons I've had the idea to buy one issue of a particular pulp, such as Black Mask or Dime Detective or Ten Detective Aces, for my collection, but the idea of going in and budgeting to get a real first class issue is a new one that I hope to try next year. I've always wanted an issue of Black Mask with an un-reprinted Paul Cain story in it. I have just never been able to think about dropping a couple of hundred dollars on a single pulp magazine without getting ill.

I also have some Detective Fiction Weekly and Adventures, and various issues of detective and adventure pulps and even a science fiction pulp or two, but nothing that could be termed a serious collection.

My pulp collecting has been restricted by three factors. One is that I live on the West Coast, for most of my

life in Nevada. Not only do I have to pay West Coast prices, but the pulps seem to be rarer out here than back east. I saw only a handful during the time I was in Nevada and they don't seem to turn up here in California much either. I suspect that there were very few pulps that made it to Nevada during their heyday. After all, Nevada was sparsely populated until recent years and the population has always been very transient and not very literate. (Of course I just ran across a letter to Argonotes from a woman from Tonopah who, when young, found an attic full of Argosys.)

The second factor is that I'm cheap, as I mentioned before. When I have hundreds of books I've gotten at library booksales for 50 cents each sitting at home waiting to be read, I just cannot bring myself to buy a tattered copy of Crimebusters for \$50.

Third is that I'm young for a pulpster, in my early 30s, so I wasn't able to get in on the ground floor. Those stories of Nick Carr's and others about magazine shops that sold Shadows by the stack for less than cover price and all the Dime Detectives you could carry drive me crazy.

So I end up being more of a pulp reprint collector than a pulp collector. I suppose I started out as a science fiction fan, reading Heinlein and Piper and Leinster when I was a teenager. And of course I read Burroughs. Later on I branched out into the hard-boiled writers, with Hammett being my favorite, Paul Cain a close second, and the Weird Tales crowd, particularly Howard. I suppose I'm pretty broad in

my interests when it comes to pulp fiction, although I've never been a sports, romance, Spicy, weird-menace or western fan.

Of course, I'll make an exception if the Spicy is by Howard or Page or the Western is by either of them or Edgar Rice Burroughs.

In the hero pulps, I'm a big Shadow and Spider fan, like G-8 and the Avenger and Operator 5, but never got into Doc Savage for some reason.

I know it's a little strange that whether story first appeared in the pulps is often the deciding factor as to whether I want to pick it up. Whenever I see an anthology of mystery stories, I check the contents page and copyright page to see where they first appeared. If it's Dime Detective and Black Mask, you've got a sale. If it's Manhunt or Mike Shane's a sale is a strong maybe. If it's "new," with "new" meaning 60s or later, it better be cheap and it better have a lot of authors I really like, preferably authors who started in the pulps.

I do enjoy a wide range of modern, or at least post-pulp authors, but the fact is that a story that appeared in the pulps will interest me even if the material is not something I ordinarily would buy. For example, I don't really like most

modern horror and I won't read Steven King, yet I'll pick up every Weird Tales collection of reprints I can find and read it pretty much cover to cover, skipping only the DeGrandin stories.

I recently found a copy of "The Mammoth Book of Sword and Honor" at a library book sale for only 75 cents. But I was disappointed that the only pulp reprint was one Mundy story. All the rest were either written for the collection or appeared in other markets. How can you possibly do a mammoth anthology of historical war adventure stories and use only one story from the pulps? Not a single Howard, Bedford-Jones, Chidsey or Lamb.

The collection, edited by Mike Ashley, is pretty good, I must admit, and I have been enjoying reading it, but I bought it on the strength of the Mundy story alone. After a some hemming and hawing I finally decided that the Mundy story was worth seventy five cents by itself and the rest could be considered a bonus. I told you I was cheap.

Actually the real reason I hesitated was that I really didn't want to take on a 500 page plus book when I have an entire bookshelf at home groaning under the weight of unread books. No matter how much I try to read and how

much I try to avoid adding to the pile, my to-be-read stack just grows and grows. But I understand that's a common problem among pulp and book people.

As for why I'm naming my contribution "Back Numbers Can Be Easily Procured:" about the time I was looking for a name for this beast, I picked up a couple of coverless Western Stories. (They were "free with purchase," said purchase being as many Argosys as I could fit into my backpack.) As I looked through them I noticed that Street and Smith used the phrase at the start of ongoing serials.

The poignant sound of that phrase beat out my previous title, which didn't sound quite right: "Freighted with Treasures..."

If only it were that simple to get back issues, I'd have a letter with a fistful of dimes headed for the Street and Smith offices in the mail today.

Coming up in our next issue will be some mailing comments, reviews of books, including the two volume Conan set from Millennium in Great Britain and several recently published chapbooks from Black Dog Books, reviews of the recent issues of Pulp Adventures and Purple Prose, and hopefully more pulp finds.

Distribution

I've been impressed with Howard Hopkins' idea to distribute Golden Perils over the internet in PDF format. Since I work with Acrobat files on a daily basis, it's not a problem for me to convert an issue of Back Numbers into a screen-resolution PDF.

When the members of PEAPS get the current issue, the previous issue will be made available on my website for those who want to download it.

After thinking it over, I've come up with the following distribution scheme for Back Numbers:

Members of PEAPS get a hard copy through the quarterly PEAPS mailing. Contributors, if any, will also be provided a hard copy.

Anyone who sends me a copy of their fanzine or has a published letter of comment will be allowed to download a PDF of the current issue once the mailing reaches

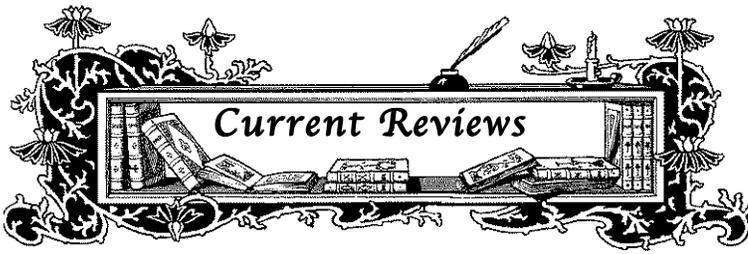
the PEAPS membership. PDFs will also be made available to "friends of Back Numbers" and to PEAPS waitlisters.

Anyone who is active in pulp fandom and who has a project reviewed in Back Numbers will also be allowed to download a copy in PDF format. I feel it only fair to allow them the opportunity to respond, if they desire, in the next issue.

After the most recent issue is received by PEAPS members, the previous issues will be offered on the website and a notice will be sent to the Pulpmags newsgroup and alt.pulp. I don't want to release the current issue because I think there should be an incentive to those who create their own zines and participate in PEAPS.

This sounds complicated, hopefully in practice it won't be.

Back Numbers Can Be Easily Procured is published whenever Warren Harris gets around to it. Entire contents copyright 2001 by Warren Harris. All rights revert to creators upon publication. The current issue in PDF format is available for trade, a published letter of comment or if Warren thinks you're an upstate guy. Issues are available for free in PDF format when the subsequent issue is received by the membership of the Pulp Era Amateur Press Association.



Crime Time 22 \$9.95

The latest issue of the British “Journal of Crime Fiction” has a pulp fiction theme and articles by several names familiar to pulp fans. While the bulk of the issue remains dedicated to more recent fare, there are articles by Mike Ashley, largely focused on the weird menace pulps, and Peter Haining.

Haining’s article serves as an advertisement for his recently published “The Classic Era of American Pulp Fiction.” In fact, it seems to be a minor rewrite of the introductory chapter as several times he makes reference to the aims of “this book.”

A check of the book reveals this to be the case, he didn’t even write a new article for the magazine, just reprinted parts of the first two chapters of the book.

The nine page article does a worthy job introducing what pulp fiction is and why it is important. But aside from the obligatory list of great pulp writers the modern reader may recognize, he focuses much of his attention on the illustrations. For the dedicated pulp collector, there is little that is new and some of his conclusions are suspect.

For example, he remarks that “their market was almost solely focused on the U.S. male,” completely ignoring the women readers of the general pulps, *Weird Tales*, *Westerns* and the entire romance pulp genre.

From letters to the editor columns many issues of *Argosy* and *Detective Fiction Weekly*, it would seem that women made up a significant percentage of the readership of both magazines. Of course we’ll never know how much the data might be skewed by editorial decisions, but to discount women as readers of the pulps seems foolish.

He does include some very interesting background material on *Argosy* regular Borden Chase that I don’t recall seeing elsewhere. Apparently his real name was Frank Fowler and he started out as a driver for a Chicago bootlegger who was killed by Capone’s men. Haining says that he changed his name and moved from Chicago as a result of the killing. Unfortunately, he neglects to cite his references, even as to the extensive quote from Chase about working for Munsey. This quote clearly seems to read as if Munsey himself had on passed judgement on Chase’s work. Perhaps this information comes from a commonly

k n o w n source, but it’s new to me and very interesting as from evidence in *Argosy*, Chase’s first work for that magazine was in the early 1930’s when he co-wrote “East River.” As this story was published several years after Munsey’s death in December of 1925, there obviously needs to be more research done. Biographical notes in *Argosy* (see sidebar, page 4) indicate that he did have a number of stories published prior to “East River.”

However, this sketch does not list his real name or mention the Capone story, although it does say that he was a member of the “offshore fleet” during prohibition, which would indicate that he may have been involved in bootlegging.

Did Chase write for the *Munsey Pulps* in the 1920s? According to *Argosy*, he spent much of the 20’s working as a foreman on tunneling projects.

This quote from Chase is the only lengthy quote from any pulp writer or illustrator, and aside from *Munsey* and Chase, no pulp writer, editor or illustrator seems to get more than a passing mention.

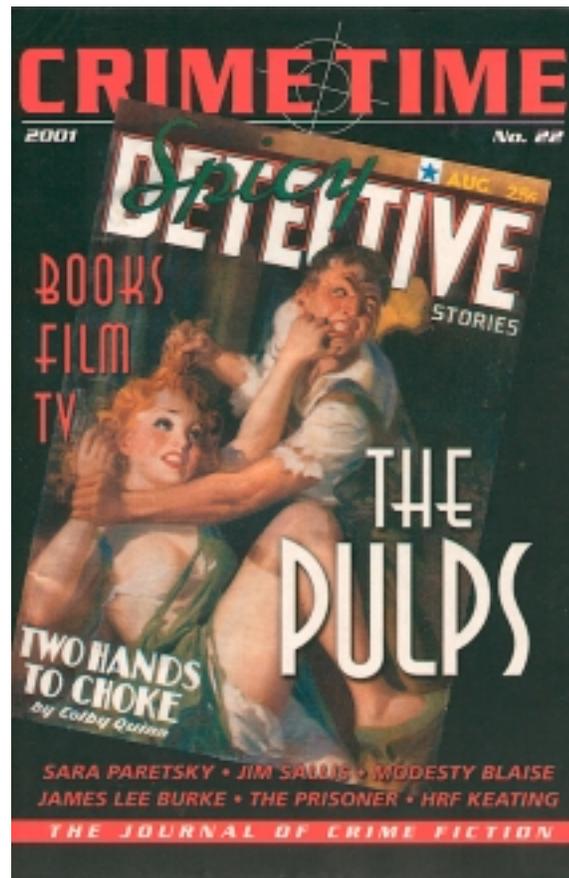
While the quote from Chase is interesting, I have to wonder why he was chosen as the lone representative of the pulp fraternity and why we don’t hear from other writers. Giving Chase more space than Hammet, Burroughs, Brand and Lovecraft combined seems unbalanced considering the point of his quote

could have been made by any number of comments by writers of the period.

Much of the information Haining includes has been printed elsewhere and on the whole pales besides his excellent introductions to the stories reprinted in his “The Fantastic Pulps.”

There are also a number of holes in Haining’s history of the pulps.

Haining neglects to mention *Adventure* or *Street and Smith* and glosses over the hero pulps. He does not



“Crime Time”**From Page 2**

mention the Westerns, Love, Sports, or Science Fiction pulps in any detail.

The article is illustrated with a variety of covers, in black and white, which reproduced muddily on the paper. Most of the selections were from the Popular pulps, focusing on the Horror titles, with a few others to round it out. No publication data was included.

Regular “Crime Time” columnist and PEAPS waitlister Mike Ashley has two pulp related articles in the issue.

He first provides a review of a post card set based on the sleaze paperback covers.

He has the obligatory paragraph declaring that these, despite the publisher’s marketing, are not true pulp fiction and explaining the difference. The article includes a black and white illustrations of several of the postcards in the set.

Ashley clearly knows his paperback cover artists and identifies several even though the publisher failed to do

so.

In addition, he devotes his regular Collecting Crime column to the weird menace titles and does good job. Although I wish there had been an article focusing on the Black Mask school or Dime Detective as well.

The overall effect of the illustration on these three articles and the general trend of the text could make the uninformed mystery reader associate pulp fiction with sex and horror. It would have been nice to see an in-depth article on the pulps influence on the development of the hardboiled mystery, noir, thriller and detective story in addition to the articles presented here.

Ashley’s column is illustrated not only with covers but with two pieces of interior art as well. Although again I didn’t find any publication data.

Aside from the pulp fiction, the issue also contained a well-rounded group of articles, many by the authors of books discussing their work, reviews and articles on crime television shows. On the whole, the magazine is a little talky and informal but with a good variety of

crime fiction-related articles.

Many of the articles were either on hard-boiled, P.I. or police procedural subjects. For those interested in mystery fiction, regular issues may be of interest.

An added bonus was a very well done article on Modesty Blaise. Illustrations included covers of some of the books as well as art from the comic strip.

While the article was about the heroine in general, author Mike Patterson provided a lot of information on the series of novels by creator Peter O’Donnell.

It was a good overview of the series and provided plenty of interesting information even to someone who has read all of the books. While not a pulp character, her adventures have all of the action and plot-driven over-the-top action of a hero pulp.

The issue is roughly the same size as an American perfect bound trade-size paperback. (Yes, I know that trade refers to distribution method more than size, but still...) The interior pages remind me of the stock used for modern digests, which is pleasantly pulp-like, but does not take the images well.

Borden Chase (Frank Fowler?) in Argonotes

As for Borden Chase, for ten years or more he has been a sandhog, though he tried his hand at a number of other things before he finally found himself at work in one of those human moles called a subway tunnel. He has been a gunner’s mate in the Navy—and a boxer—during the World War; he has been by turns an insurance man, a prize fighter, a member of the “off-shore fleet” during Prohibition years. In addition to everything else, he is a writer, and has published a great many stories. Until “East River” was sold to the movies, so that his expert advise upon the picture’s technical set-up was demanded, he fully expected to be at work on the new Midtown Hudson Tunnel that will form another link between New York City and the New Jersey shore. Just now he is a technical adviser to Hollywood, but he feels that by nature he is a sandhog and

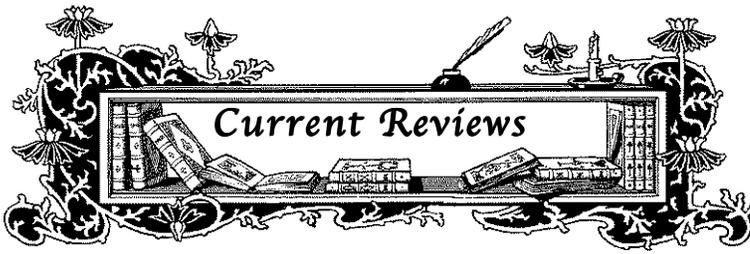
always will be one. And no doubt when “East River” has been finished for the screen Borden Chase will be found in the “air” down beneath the Hudson, doing the thing that gives him the greatest kick in life.

—Argonotes, October 6, 1934

Did you read that swashbuckling tale of sandhogs, “East River”? Not many weeks ago, had you been on the Fox lot in Hollywood, you might have seen Eddie Lowe and Vic MacLaglen, in the roles of *Shocker* and *Jumbo*, swaggering about the set and trying to steal from each other the tense moments and the big scenes in the film. For the rivalry of the pair is one of long standing, dating from the time when “What Price Glory?” was being filmed, with the two

popular stars as Quirt and Flagg.—Others in the case of “East River” are Marjorie Rambeau, Charles Bickford and George Walsh; but one of the most interesting and picturesque figures on the lot while the film was being shot was Borden Chase, the man who, with the help of Edward J. Doherty, wrote this swift story of tunnel digging out of his own experience. Chase, ex-Massachusetts Tech student, ex-river tunnel foreman, ex-newspaper reporter, might easily have been mistaken for one of the tough, hardboiled “extra” characters on the set. His nose bearing the dent of some past blow, his old black felt hat on the back of his head, no one would have suspected that he was on the lot in the official capacity of script adapter, dialogue improviser and technical director.

—Argonotes, November 10, 1934



The Best of Weird Tales: 1923 \$12.00

Editors Marvin Kaye and John Gregory Betancourt have come up with novel idea for a new (or somewhat new) *Weird Tales* anthology.

First published several years ago by Wildside Press, but still in print, is the first of a proposed series of anthologies that reprints the best of each individual issue of *Weird Tales*, with each book featuring the best of one year's worth of stories.

The 1923 volume is light on big names, with the exception of Lovecraft, but there is still a good deal of worthwhile fiction represented. Overall the book gives a very nice representation of what it must have been like to read the pulp during its formative year, with a wide range of story types represented.

One of the high points of the book is the introductions to each story. The editors describe each issue and reveal why they chose a particular story. They give a feel for each issue and a critical appraisal of the contents, along with an issue-by-issue history of the magazine. It's nice to see the reasoning behind the editors' decisions, and the editors' opinions seem informed and judicious.

While I think they handicap themselves by restricting themselves to only one story per author, they do a good job of selecting stories. The only other drawback is that they limit themselves to shorter works, and therefore longer stories that they wanted to print do not make

it into the anthology.

I particularly like that they choose stories that have not been recently reprinted, but let the reader know where those other stories can be found. Too many times an anthology will contain many stories that have already been reprinted too many times before in too many anthologies. I don't know how many copies of Howard's "Names in the Black Book" I have, for example. While this results in a few of the "best" stories not being in this "best of" collection, it gives me more stories that I would otherwise not be able to find. Too often I end up skipping story after story in an anthology because I have the stories in other volumes.

In this volume the only story I had elsewhere was Lovecraft's "Dagon"



which was included because of its historic significance.

As a collector of *Weird Tales* anthologies, I really appreciated the "this is the best of what you haven't seen before" selections. While I would have bought it even if it had a higher percentage of stories I already have, it made me feel that I was getting my money's worth.

The only shortcomings of the anthology was the lack of interior art, a cover gallery or other editorial matter from the first year. I think a few pages of letters column material or other extras would have given a better feel for the flavor of the first year.

For me, personally, I think they made the right decision in leaving out any poetry. I always end up skipping poems reprinted in *Weird Tales* anthologies. However, it is another omission that would have helped show what the first year was like.

I think they could have relaxed their only-one-story-per-author requirements and had a slightly thicker book that would truly have the "best" of the year. After all, the best authors would naturally have more than one worthwhile story.

There was also an error in that in the introduction to one of the months, the editors speak well of a Kline story that they say they are reprinting, yet the story is not included. They also did not put the story name in the header above each story, a minor fault, but one that would have been easy to correct. Typos are also a problem, with many stories having simple typesetting errors.

There are 13 stories, including work by Farnsworth Wright and Frank Owen. Eight of the stories have not been reprinted elsewhere and even those that have been reprinted are hard to find.

The format is a nice sized, if somewhat thin, trade paperback with a gloss white cover. A duotone cover has new, but appropriate art by Stephen Fabian.

I have high hopes that the series will continue as I look forward to reading the best of 1924.

Editorial: Pulp Not Pornography

While we as pulp fans are concerning ourselves with the misleading definitions of pulp fiction that have sprung up in recent years, thanks to Tarantino, we need to be careful about how we ourselves as pulp “experts” present our choice of fiction to the public.

It seems that whenever pulp fiction is presented to the masses, it is with a suggestive wink: “Hey kids, look, bondage!” As if the only genres that existed in pulp fiction were Spicy and weird menace.



In Peter Haining’s article in *Crime Time*, I found many of his references to pulp fiction to be in poor taste. He refers to “providing armchair action and masturbatory ideals.” From some of the things he has to say, you’d think we were collecting “Jugs” or “Hustler” and not the magazines that produced Chandler and Cain, Woolrich and Bradbury, Heinlein and Bedford-Jones. He presents a picture of the average pulp reader as an adolescent boy behind a locked bathroom door with a copy of a Spicy in one hand trying to “feel better about his sex life.”

When authorities such as Haining equate pulp fiction to pornography, it can do nothing but hurt pulp fandom and the chances of getting anything good reprinted. If we present “true” pulp fiction as nothing more than antique porn and S/M fantasies, then we risk alienating the audience that could make reprinting pulp fiction financially viable.

If we are not careful, a respectable publisher won’t touch reprints be-

cause he or she will feel, rightly so, that the very name “pulp fiction” will turn off potential buyers. While porno publishers will only reprint the sex and slaughter stories, or more likely not reprint at all as even the most depraved of the horror pulps or the most prurient of the Spicys are quite tame by modern standards.

Haining comes off as a prude who is obsessed with the sexual pleasure other people might be having. He even goes so far as to call the Spicys and horror books a “major part” in the decline and fall of the pulp magazines. It’s my impression that the sex and horror pulps died a significant period before the pulps in general expired. While they did generate some negative publicity, I doubt that the mainstream pulp publishers such as Street and Smith or Popular were forced out of the pulp publishing business because of pressure from the morals squad. The demise of the pulps was caused much more by the changing economic realities of the publishing and distribution industries.

Even Haining in the book itself acknowledges that the horror pulps ran out of steam on their own, partly because they stopped appealing to a large enough buying public.

The danger of equating the pulps with porn can easily be seen by the publication of Richard Jaccoma’s “Yellow Peril” in 1978. I’d like to tell you in detail how bad this book is, but I threw the damn thing across the room after about 30 pages and it was only an act of will that got me that far. (I’d hoped to include it in an article on pulp-inspired books along with “The King of Satan’s Eyes” and “Doc Sidhe.”)

The publisher wallows in the book’s “inspired by...” attempt to claim decent from the pulps. Anyone even seeing the cover of this book (“Erotic Action in the Tradition of the Original Pulps”) would assume that pulp readers are a depraved and sexually twisted lot. The sadistic sex and racism in the book are portrayed as OK, since the author is

merely trying to invoke the flavor of the pulps. Somehow I don’t recall anal gang rape and the assassination of sleeping and defenseless men as a staple in any of the pulp stories I’ve read, but then I do tend to stay away from the Spicys.

The author has a note excusing the racist statements of his main character with the caveat that he is just a product of his time. I think there is a vast difference between overlooking whatever racism is inherent in the true pulp stories and condoning racism in a modern novel, particularly when that racism serves only to provide “flavor.”

Is “Yellow Peril” really how we want to present ourselves to the non-pulp collecting public?

I don’t object to sex on moral or religious grounds, I don’t consider myself particularly moralistic and I’m certainly not religious. I object in that it is a distortion of what the pulps really were about—good fun, exciting fiction and well told stories that really moved.

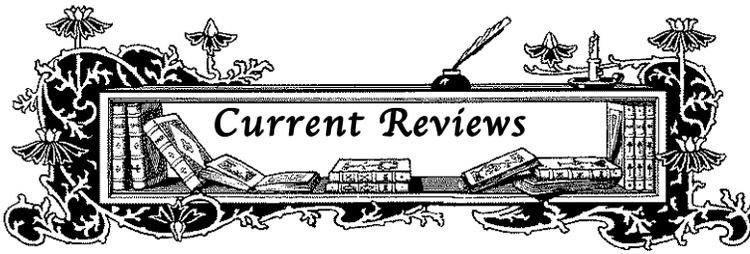
It is one thing to have an outsider, say some ivory tower academician, proclaim our chosen fiction to be trash, it’s another for one of us to do the same in a book or article that is introducing pulp fiction to the masses.

I’d much rather have pulp fiction associated with 1950s noir fiction than with pornography and sadism.

While I have a great deal of respect for what Peter Haining has done as an anthologist, with his “Fantastic Pulps” and his other attempts to bring older popular fiction to the general public, I can’t condone his joining this “filth and perversion are part of the pulp tradition” party.

Now that I’ve had a chance to review “The Classic Era of American Pulp Fiction” I am more concerned than ever about the distortion of the definition of pulp fiction.

While the Spicy and Horror books are a part of pulp history, they are not the whole story and we need to be presenting the whole story to those outside the ranks of pulp fandom.



The Classic Era of American Pulp Fiction

\$39.95

Put together by well-known British pulp anthologist Peter Haining, *The Classic Era of American Pulp Fiction* covers some areas of pulp fiction well, but fails as a general reference work to the pulps as a whole.

The book does have some excellent information on the specialized areas it covers in depth. However, Haining focuses on the Spicy and other prurient pulps to the detriment or exclusion of more mainstream fare.

Haining puts almost all of his attention on the sex and horror pulps. Commentary on this focus in his introduction is reviewed as it appeared in "Crime Time" elsewhere this issue. His first chapter is on the "Hot Pulps" such as *Saucy Stories*, there is an intervening chapter on the "Crime Pulps" (with a strong emphasis on leggy damsels being menaced) and then he devotes a chapter to the "Sex Pulps."

This chapter on the Sex pulps, does have a great deal of depth on not only the Spicy line, but also its rivals. It has some new information and goes into the editorial policies and the opposition from civic groups. But his stories of prosecutions of publishers and raids on sellers of these pulps seem anecdotal. While Haining quotes from the pulps themselves and from editorial correspondence, he does not include hard data from court records or newspaper accounts of the crusades against the pulps, which surely must exist if Haining's information is correct. There is a wealth of research possibilities as to what officials and civic leaders were involved, when and where were charges filed, and what court testimony reveals about the publishing of

these pulps. Admittedly, this research would be a bit difficult to conduct from Great Britain, but should have been done by Haining or a research associate. After all, Haining was able to come up with revealing correspondence from Frank Armer detailing just how to handle sex in the Spicy line to get away with it.

The chapter on the Spicy pulps is followed by a chapter on the horror pulps. Chapters on the science fiction and fantasy pulps are included but do not have the depth that Haining spends on the sex and horror pulps. In fact, the science fiction and fantasy sections are heavily slanted toward the sensual images at the expense of other subjects. Brundage does well, as does Finley, Paul gets a mention as well as the brass bras of Bergey, but less sexy artists get almost no space. All-Story's contributions to the early field of science fiction and fantasy are ignored, in fact the early history and development of the entire field is missing in favor of B.E.M.s carrying off scantily clad women.

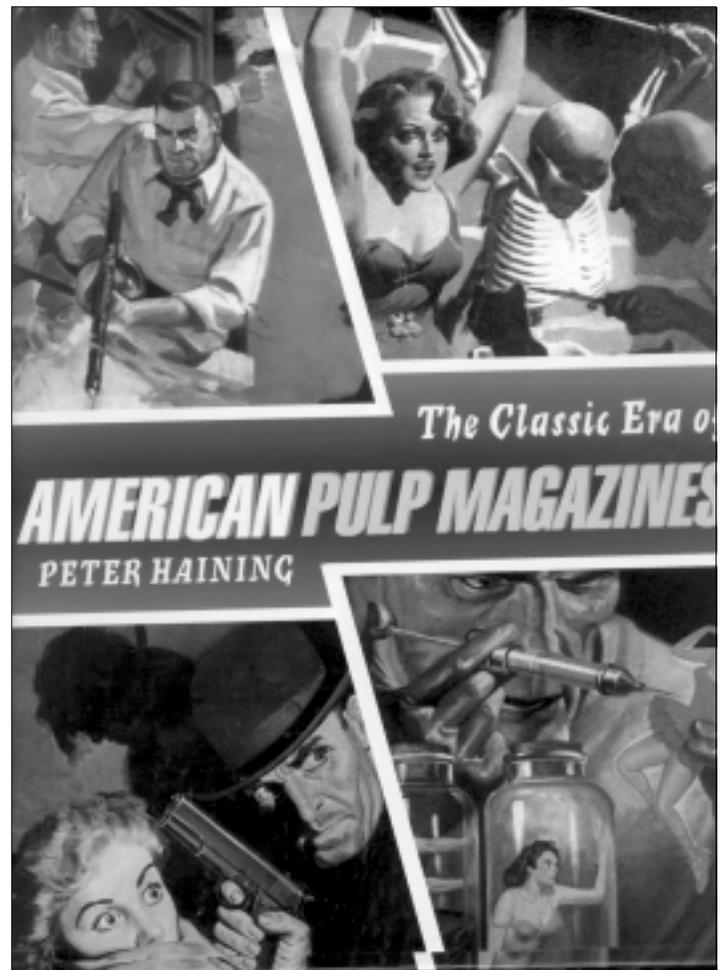
Throughout the book, the focus is on the illustrations, and not on the stories, with the exception of the sex and horror books, where he prints excerpts to

demonstrate the drooling, lust-filled passages that he seems to think are the hallmark of pulp fiction.

On the positive side, Haining includes many full color illustrations of covers, many or most of which have not been published in the other standard pulp reference guides. It's good to see some new images that haven't been printed in every reference. But while this is a strength for those of us that have all of the other books, it's a weakness for the general reader who is being exposed to pulp fiction for the first time.

The other real strength of the book is the reproduction and information on the interior art. Haining reprints many black and white illustrations and identifies the artist where possible. Unfortunately, these illustrations are often very small, much smaller than originally printed. While the reproduction is good, it's hard to make out details.

Another good point is that any artwork, cover or black and white interior, has an artist credit or a statement



that the artist is unknown. Unfortunately for many of the artists, very little is known, but Haining is meticulous in including whatever information he has.

In fact, the book is more a history of the classic era of American sex and horror pulp illustration than a history of pulp fiction. This is fine, if that's what's wanted, but it should have been titled more appropriately. I'd hate to think that a reader would think the entire range of pulp fiction was represented here.

Adventure, All Story and Argosy are sadly under-represented. Burroughs and Howard and the other writers get slighted badly. With the exception of Spicy Western, you'd think nobody read western stories and the romance, sports, air war and general titles didn't even exist.

The hero pulps not only don't rate a chapter, they are hardly mentioned. Dan Turner seems to be a bigger pulp star than the Shadow and Doc Savage combined. In fact, the only hero pulp character that rates much mention is Nick Carter. It's nice to see Nick getting his due, but not at the expense of the others. The history of Street and Smith is limited to their detective books, Popular is all about Dime Detective and especially Dime Mystery.

The book ends with an extensive chapter on the British pulps. Again, this is great for the experienced pulp collector looking for new information, but it seems a little out of place in a book titled "American" pulp fiction.

Once again in this chapter, Haining concentrates on the sex and horror pulps to the exclusion of other genres. A great deal of excellent work has been done in fanzines recently on the British pulps, and these articles show a more balanced selection of pulp fiction did exist in Britain.

There are a number of cover illustrations from the British pulps included. While the art seems cruder than in their American counterparts, it is interesting to see the variety in style and form used by British publishers.

While there is a mention of British versions of American pulps, Haining

does not provide any details other than that they existed.

He also spreads his net wide, covering the "Mushroom Jungle" of British book publishing as well, which I think is misplaced in a book on the pulps. I don't have a copy of the book "Mushroom Jungle" which is a history of the British paperback publishers to compare with the final chapter in Haining. I wonder if the information provided duplicates that in the earlier book or if the chapter instead fills in around the edges of that book and misses key areas. If the former, I wonder why he bothered to include the chapter, if the later, I wonder what basic information I've missed. From my recollection, "Mushroom Jungle" seemed to give a much more reasoned view of the British pulp publishers, with less concentration on scanty undies.

Frankly, I couldn't keep my eyes open reading this last section. It was all lists of unfamiliar names and publications I'd never heard of and have no reasonable expectation of every seeing. Even Haining admits that much of the stories and art are substandard. Of course, his descriptions of American pulp fiction would not encourage me to read any, but at least he likes the pretty pictures.

That I think is my main trouble with the book. After reading a book about pulp fiction, I want to be inspired to read some. I want to learn of authors and series I need to hunt down, genres I haven't explored yet, fuel for dreams of what I hope to find in some flea market or estate sale. This book is about pursuing the pulps because of the art, and it isn't art that appeals to me. I'll take a Graves Gladney Shadow cover over any issue of any Spicy. I prefer a DeSoto Spider to a DeSoto Dime Mystery. I like Norman Saunders crime covers better than his horror work and Belarski's Argosy covers to his terror efforts.

I understand that the sex pulps were a part of the pulp era, and I think there's nothing wrong with bringing sex pulps, if they are pulps or have a pulp connection, to Pulpcon and proudly displaying them on your dealer table. I've even been known to read Page's or Rob-

ert E. Howard's Spicy work and enjoy it, even though I think their other work is far better. I've also read and enjoyed Dan Turner stories.

But I'm troubled that an authority of Haining's standing would produce a book that sends the message to the reading public that sex is all the pulps were about.

A final appendix has brief biographies of pulp figures and this is where, with a few exceptions, that information on pulp writers can be found. The brief descriptions are, with one exception, good, but far too short.

One glaring error is that in both the text and in the appendix, he says that Justin Case is a pen name for Robert Leslie Bellem. It's understandable that an error might creep in to the book, even one as obvious as this, but the edition I have is the U.S. second printing. Such a significant error should have been corrected from the first U.K. printing. The paragraph given to Cave does not mention the Case pen name.

When Burroughs and Howard only rate a couple of paragraphs in a book on the history of the pulps, there's something wrong.

The book is profusely illustrated, with nice color reproductions throughout. I thought that the selection of covers in other pulp art reference books was better, but again, the use of art that hasn't been seen elsewhere is a plus. The black and white illustrations are nice and sharp and this book has a wider selection of interior art than any other reference I've seen.

Like many of the "coffee table" pulp art books, I thought that there was a bit too much use of white space in the layout design. I would have like to see that white space used for more text or more images.

While expensive, this is a book that belongs on the shelf of a pulp collector interested in the wide range of pulp fiction, as long as there is an understanding that it is not a comprehensive history of pulp fiction, but a specialized reference that is good in the areas it covers in depth, weak in the areas it doesn't.

Pulp Sightings

The San Francisco Bay Guardian's Lit Supplement featured a short article on pulp fiction in the September issue.

The article was written by John Marr, who is perhaps best known for publishing the highly entertaining crime-oriented "Murder Can Be Fun" zine.

Titled: "The Real Pulp Fiction," it is a very nice introductory article that packs a short history of pulp fiction, a pulpster-approved definition of pulp fiction, comments on how Tarantino is not pulp fiction and a general overview of pulp genres into slightly less than a page and a half.

There are two illustrations, one of Spicy Western Stories and one of Weird Tales. The newspaper reproduction leaves much to be desired, but the images are large enough to at least make out what's on the cover.

A sidebar has suggestions about where to find pulp fiction, mentioning Adventure House and Vintage Library and recommending the excellent *Hardboiled* anthology by Adrian and Pronzini. I think he could have gone a bit farther in his recommendations given the amount of pulp fiction being reprinted these days.

Donald Barr Chidsey Information Wanted

If anyone has any information on Donald Barr Chidsey's Nick Fisher series character in *Argosy*, I'd appreciate it if they could pass it along as I'm doing research for an article I hope to place in *Purple Prose* about Fisher and Eddie Savoy.

Fisher is a hard-boiled insurance investigator who specializes in jewelry thefts, Savoy is the gentleman crook who in a series of six stories is chased by and then reforms and teams up with Fisher. The pair went on to a second series of six appearances in *Argosy*.

I believe I have all of the Fisher/Savoy stories from the late 1930's, but I'm trying to track down appearances of

And, of course, the only genre that gets a drop head is weird menace. Why not a drop head for hardboiled, or science fiction?

While there isn't really anything an existing pulp collector hasn't heard or read before, the article is a solid, if short, introduction to the pulps from a writer who obviously either knows the field, or has done his research.

While back issues may be purchased from the publisher, the entire article is available online at: www.sfbg.com/lit/sept01/pulp.html. The only drawback is that the illustrations are not included, but as the printed illustrations are in black and white, only about 5 by 6 inches and are printed on newsprint, there really isn't much lost.

In other recent pulp sightings, OK, not so recent, "literary" writer Margaret Atwood has published a novel that supposedly features a character who writes pulp science fiction and she includes part of a pulp SF pastiche story as a literary device in the novel.

Fisher (or Savoy) in earlier issues. I know that Fisher appeared in at least one story in the early 1930s without Savoy.

In an article in the special pulp fiction issue of *Clues*, reference is made to a Savoy series in *Argosy* (which might be the Fisher/Savoy series in the later issues.) But if this is a separate series with Savoy and not Fisher, it would be an important part of my article.

I'm also interested in any Fisher or Savoy appearances in the Morton and McGarvey stories by Chidsey that appeared in *Detective Fiction Weekly*. The pair of Florida detectives make a guest appearance in one of the *Argosy* tales.

I glanced at the book in the bookstore, and was bored. In an interview with Atwood in the September 2000 issue of *Inside Borders*, a promotional magazine put out by the bookstore chain, she mentions doing research at a library that appears to be the Toronto library that holds the Merrill collection.

While she mentions trying to replicate the "pretty condensed" writing of the pulp period, my glance at the science fiction chapters in her book seemed like molasses. It was much closer to new wave science fiction, in that the characters seemed condemned to talk themselves to

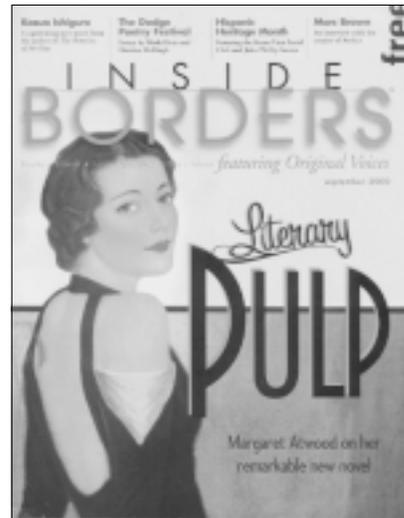
death in a plotless environment.

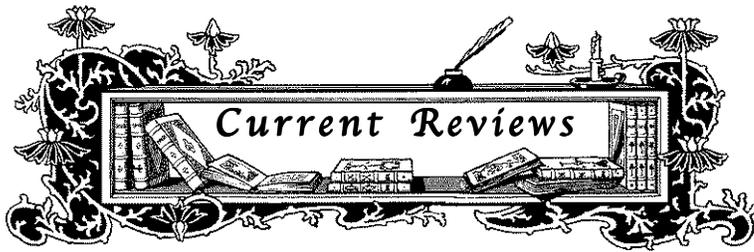
Once again we have the term pulp fiction used by the ignorant to describe something completely different. I can't think of any phrase that is clearly as oxymoronic as "Literary Pulp." What the Hell is that supposed to mean? That they've taken a story and drained it of all lifeblood so that only college professors will enjoy it? That here's a story that you can use to impress your friends by having it on your bookshelf without they or you ever having read it?

We really do need to get some mainstream anthologies of pulp stories into the chain bookstores to counteract this trend.

While gathering information for my review on "The Best of *Weird Tales*, 1923" I stopped by the Wildside Press website and discovered that they are reprinting several other books of pulp fiction. Among the items I don't think I'll be able to live without is Weinberg's "The *Weird Tales* Story."

I don't think these books are widely distributed, but those interested can visit www.wildsidepress.com





**Golden Perils
Issue 22, Fall 2001**

Howard Hopkin's fanzine Golden Perils returns with a digital issue printed in Acrobat Reader format. The issue is available free from the publisher, although it does carry a \$2.95 price inside.

The Acrobat file is password protected, so you cannot print it out, and can only read it on screen, which is a disadvantage to those without a good computer or for those like me who have access to a cheap printer and prefer to read printed pages.

The "cover" features a nice piece of new computer generated art by

Howard of Captain Future to go with an article on Grag from that series and a series bibliography.

Also included is a lengthy interview with Will Murray on writing Doc Savage and on Lester Dent.

Gary Lovisi chimes in with a article on the Trojan "pocket pulps" and Peter Renfro gives us a first timer's look at this year's Pulpcon. Lovisi's article is interesting and informative, Renfro made me even sorrier than I had been that I had to miss this year. Tom Barnett has a speculative article on the relationship between Doc Savage and the Aztecs.

The Golden Peril Newline by Bill Thom contained obits on Poul Anderson and George Evans, and news

on recently published books and comics of interest to pulp collectors. Also included was information on pulp websites.

The issue finished with reviews of books that to me did not really seem pulp related, but Golden Perils has in the past branched out to more modern media.

The "back cover," again in color, is new art of the second radio version of Doc Savage by Bill Jackson

The issue has full color art throughout. It's not quite up to Pulp Adventures, but a worthy effort.

The only odd thing was the choice of fonts used. The issue I received was typeset entirely in Courier, one of the ugliest fonts known to man. It seems a shame that such a technologically advanced publication should look like it came off of a typewriter.

Howard is soliciting contributions for his next issue, which he hints may return to printed format.

Howard's email is yinko2@aol.com for those interested.

**The Shadow:
The Third Skull**

Lately, I've been reading several of the Shadow novels that are available online in text format. While I normally don't like to read novels and stories online, preferring to print them out, I've been reading Shadow novels on my Handspring Visor. I'm finding this is very convenient, as I don't have to carry around a book and since I usually have my Visor with me, whenever I need something to read, its handy.

The Third Skull is one of the latest of these I've read and while not up to Zemba or some of the other classics, it's a pretty good story.

I like the earlier Shadows, this is from 1935, and those that feature the Shadows agent's prominently.

The Third Skull has agents aplenty with nearly all of the early agents taking at least a small part.

There are a couple of great chapters in the middle of the book where each agent has tasks assigned and you get to see each one working and performing

their specialties. Hawkeye gets to follow people, Shrevy is right there with his taxi,



Cliff scours the underworld, Jerico goes undercover. Even minor agents

get a paragraph or two holding down the fort or observing a target. And the tougher agents get to take part in gun battles backing up their master against hordes of gangsters. All in all it's a role-call of Shadow agents. The only ones missing are Ming Dawn and Dr. Tam. And of course Margo Lane, who hadn't made her regrettable debut.

The start of the novel is a bit

weak with the Shadow deducting from nonexistent evidence the facts of crime. If the Shadow paid attention to every minor event of its like that must take place in New York City everyday, he wouldn't have time to fight any crime at all.

But the novel picks up quickly with some good scenes and a fair plot concerning a treasure hunt for an heir's missing legacy. The third skull comes into the book a bit late, and the second skull, while a very cool idea, is a bit implausible an item to find in real life.

It's a pretty good middle of the road early Shadow that rises to excellence with the use of a large cast of agents. In fact it's the use of agents that really marks this novel and shows how the Shadow uses his agents as an integral part of his operation. Some of the mystery itself, though, is a bit creaky and old-fashioned.

While the mastermind is nobody major, the use of gangsters is good, even if the mob boss doesn't have much of a distinct presence.

All in all, worth reading, especially since it's free.

Our Back Cover and other recent acquisitions:

While I know there is a general disdain for those who plop covers, I liked the painting for this issue's back cover so much I decided to risk it. Besides, since I'm on the waitlist, I really don't have to meet minimum pages anyway, so consider it, and this whole issue, a bonus.

I found this item down at Kayo Books in San Francisco a few weeks ago. Ron had a whole stack of Argosy pulps that he'd bought from a dealer. These issues all had Max Brand stories and may have come from the Bancroft Library at Berkeley. I picked out a huge stack and the bill came to \$200. Being flat broke, I had to cut it down to about \$60 worth of pulps that trip. This issue was one of the ones I had to put back.

I spent about three weeks regretting my decision. I'm a reader, not an art collector, and I don't collect pulps for the covers, but this cover was worth it. I should have put it on the credit card and to hell with the expense. But then that's the sort of reasoning that caused me to be too broke to go to Pulpcon this year.

When I went down again, the issue was still there and I picked it up. Of course Ron had just got in a new stack of pulps, two stacks actually and several feet high each, of Argosy, Short Story, and assorted detective books. I ended up picking up three of those and there were dozens more I wanted. This new batch has some of the best looking Argosy's I've seen in a while and Ron is pricing accordingly. But I'm going to go and buy a few a month until they're gone, to hell with the bank account.

Who was it that said: "Books will get you through times of no money better than money will get you through times of no books"?

In addition to the cover serial, which I know I will probably never be able to complete, the All-Story has a Max Brand fantastic that was favorably mentioned in "The Fantastic Pulps." I'm looking forward to reading it. And it was nice to get a 1918 All-Story for the collection, so now I have an idea of what they are like.

Other recent pulp finds include

the aforementioned stack of Argosys. When I pared down the big stack I couldn't afford, I decided to settle for getting a nice two month run from a period that I didn't have many in my collection. I managed to get a few complete serial runs.

The three Argosys I picked up when I stopped by for the All-Story were also in sequence and included a great Raoul Whitfield detective yarn. I like detective stories that have a newspaper background or feature newspaper reporters, and this one had a character who was a reporter for the Pittsburgh Post. The issue also contained a Men Who Make The Argosy for Whitfield that mentioned he had worked for a year as a reporter for the Pittsburgh Post. I noted that Whitfield's character used authentic newspaper slang, which was a nice touch. The actual solving of the mystery was a bit weak, but the story had plenty of action and moved right along.

When I was in Berkeley recently, I stopped by a comic book store and while browsing, I ran into a stack of pulps in a used comic bin. Most of them were overpriced SF pulps from the 50s, and a lot of Famous Fantastic Mysteries, but there was a copy of Clues Detective from 1938 with an I.V. Frost story, a Cleve F. Adams story with Violet McDade and a Chinatown story by Arden X. Pangborn featuring a character named Chang. It was only \$3 and I picked it up. I asked if they had any more pulps, but what they had were all expensive Science Fiction pulps. Although they did have some Famous Fantastic Mysteries for \$3-\$5 that I'm thinking hard about.

I really enjoyed the pulp, particularly the Adams "Mexican Bargain," and after reading the Wandri story I.V. Frost is growing on me. This adventure had Frost taking on frozen corpses dropping from the sky.

I hadn't liked the character much when I read the story that appeared in High Adventure, but this novelette had a good hook and plenty of action. I may reconsider my decision to not pick up the Frost collection.

I'd read a McDade story from Bernard Drew's "Hardboiled Dames" and I've wanted to read more of her adventures. It's nice to see a competent, tough female detective lead for a change instead of the professional hostages that inhabit the rest of the 1930s pulp world. "Mexican Bargain" has McDade and sidekick Nevada deAlvarado heading south of the border to free an old friend from a murder rap.

The sidekick worries, McDade schemes, lies, assaults jail guards, switches prisoners, switches them back and carries on. My only complaint was that it seemed too short.

Hey, Mr. Gunnison, how about a McDade collection from High Adventure?

Another series character who appeared in the issue was Harry Lynch's John Jaffray. While his story was about as long as Adams, it dragged and I eventually gave up on it. I can see why this character has not survived. The plot made no sense, the hero just ran around the prototypical big isolated house full o' horrors. Generic thugs did generic thug things, mysterious foreigners did mysterious

things. The detective g o t slugged over the head and ran around getting i n t o f i g h t s w i t h thugs who appeared and disappeared at random.



The Pangborn story was readable, but the plot was a little loose. Other stories seemed to be filler including one that seemed to be a series of scenes without a main character or a rational plot.

The only other "pulp" item I've

found lately was a copy of “The Case of the Crying Swallow” by Gardner. In addition to the Perry Mason title novellette, it reprints a Lester Leith, a Sidney Zoom and another pulp story from Black Mask. I paid too much, \$8, but it was a weak moment. I haven’t gotten around to reading it yet.

Library booksales have not been very good the past month. I did pick up an upgrade of “The Edgar Wallace Reader” with dj along with a set of the Skaith books by Brackett at a \$3.00 a bag sale in Pleasant Hill. I managed to fill my bag up with a few battered Howards (I hate to pass them up) that will probably end up on my table at Pulpcon, a very good Terry Carr SF anthology, a Quiller novel by Adam Hall and enough “popular” novels to net me \$6.75 in trade at the local paperback exchange.

After reading “The Ginger Star” I can’t figure out why this trilogy was the set of book everyone in the early 80s seems to have read. Even people who I never would have thought would have ever read a science fiction novel seemed to have a set of these on their bookshelves.

The first book has Eric John Stark set out of a quest where he is constantly being captured and then rescued from certain death by the prophesy surrounding him. He spends so much of this book tied up I started to think that it was a mirror image of the Gor novels. At the climax he does win the big fight, but only because he happens to have the exact backstory needed to overcome the obstacle in his path. Then the villains just give up. I’m always concerned when the action and plot of a book revolves around a prophecy. Having a weird hanging over the hero either makes the job too easy, as in “The Ginger Star” or it eliminates the hero’s free will and self determination.

In “The Ginger Star” the villains don’t just kill him because they want to prove the prophesy false, the locals help him because they hope or fear the prophesy is true. Even when the prophesy says it’s best to kill him, that ends up being what saves him and moving the story along. So Eric John Stark just ends up

being a pawn of the fates, carried along on the tide.

I’m a few pages into the second novel, but my reading of that has been interrupted by more stimulating reading.

The Carr anthology was quite good, and contained mostly light science fiction stories. The best was “Dear Devil” by Eric Frank Russell. I’m a big Russell fan, and although I think I have a digest where this story first appeared, I hadn’t gotten around to reading it yet. It’s been a while since I’ve read any of his work, and I’d forgotten how good he is. The story, about a Martian who helps Earth recover from disaster, is heartwarming without being insipid. A nice reversal of the typical Marsian invader story.

The big (“largest west of the Mississippi”) sale by the Friends of the San Francisco library was even more of a disappointment than usual this year.

I’ve never quite figured out the reasoning behind their policies. These policies are completely opposite any other library book sale I’ve been to. For example, they generally don’t take books unless they are near perfect and of recent release. If I want new or like-new books that are still in print, I can find them much easier at the local new or used bookstore. When I go to a library booksale, I’m hoping to find either books that I wouldn’t pay full price for, but will take a chance on for fifty cents, or older books that are no longer commercially viable for used bookstores to carry.

However, the SF Friends individually price their books at about the same as you would find at a used bookstore. But instead of having the books arranged neatly by author and genre, these are just piled up without any organization and with many errors in sorting. If I’m going to pay several dollars for a book, I’d at least like a competent book dealer to presort them for me so I can check the authors I’m interested in and avoid the garbage. If I’m going to spend several hours looking over each spine of each book I think I should be compensated by cheap prices.

They don’t put out all of their books at once, either. Throughout the show, they haul books out of the back

room, so you’d have to spend four days going over every book again and again to make sure you didn’t miss anything. The even charge extra to people to get in early, even though those people are only seeing a fraction of what will be available at the sale.

They seem to hate science fiction. I get the feeling that they feel it is beneath them, with mysteries not much better. Now if you’re looking for obscure books in foreign languages by long dead philosophers or books about flower child granola eating hippie stuff, then they’ll respect your reading choices.

The tables they use are beat up plywood sheets held up by empty cardboard fruit boxes. This requires so many boxes that there isn’t any room under the tables for books, and the tables sag anyway. I’d think that they could beg, borrow or rent some sturdy folding tables like all the other library groups and be able to have books under the tables too. That way they could put out all of their books and have a safer and splinter free sale. Yes, I hate digging around on the floor too, but if you want the good find, you’ve got to get down on your hands and knees and look at the stuff under the table. It’s just part of the deal for a real bookhunter.

At least at this sale was held inside a big warehouse space. The last sale was held outside under the blazing hot summer sun. I got a sunburn, the books got faded.

They also grade books as “deco” whatever that means, if they think the book will look good on a shelf. I’ve never quite figured out the reasoning for putting a book in this section, other than the books look to be old in some way. I saw a “deco” edition of “The Robe,” a Reader’s Digest version at that, going for \$5. That’d impress me if I saw that on someone’s shelf, you becha.

You know how at every library booksale there always seems to be one book that you see again and again. For example, there will be 10 copies of some mid 1970s bestseller all in the same edition. You know, you’ll see 20 copies of “Valley of the Dolls” or some such. “The Robe” seems to me to be the all time

champ of this. Not only multiple copies at each show, but at show after show it leads the list.

I spotted a couple of Van Hise's Star Trek books in the "Serendipity" section, but I passed as I'm not a Trekkie. This is the only place I've ever seen the Serendipity genre represented. At last year's sale, I found a copy of one issue of Pulp Review in this section. I wonder if there wasn't a whole set of them in a back room someplace that would be put out right after I left.

The only books I picked up were a couple of cartoon collections and some Dave Barry books, nothing pulp related at all.

The Saturday before the PEAPS deadline, I drove more than an hour to attend the Friends of the Napa Library annual booksale. I spotted a few common Howards in bad shape and passed. I did pick up a very nice upgrade of Harold Lamb's biography of Alexander the Great, a slightly water damaged copy of one the Amra reprint books and a modern military science fiction novel. This all for a total of \$1. For an extra fifty cents I picked up a battered Australian "Big Book of Private Eye Stories" that turned out to be a reprint of the similarly titled "Mammoth Book of..." which will go into my Pulpcon pile. As I was leaving I spotted a poster advertising the sale with the dreaded words "new stock daily." I had half a mind to demand access to all the rare Howard paperbacks I'm sure were sitting in a box waiting to be put out right after I left. Well, it was a nice drive anyway.

Ah well, the Santa Rosa yearly booksale is in a couple of weeks, hopefully it will be better. I really have to get a life when library booksales are the high point of my calendar.

A package from Mike Chomko arrived as this issue was almost ready to be printed.

Received too late for review this time around, were Price's "Book of the Dead" which a couple of chapters shows will be a great addition to the pulp history and reference shelf, three of Tom Robert's Black Dog titles, two Spiders and a Pulp Adventures from Harvey, two

G-8s and five High Adventures in addition to "It's Raining More Corpses in Chinatown" from Gunnison, and Hugh Cave's Black Mask collection.

Rich Harvey's work really impresses me, not only are the new Spiders nice books, but the latest issue of Pulp Adventures is beautiful with a marvelous full-color, full-bleed Stoll cover. He continues to showcase the wide range of pulp stories, this time with the love pulps.

The Action Ink Spider is a little odd, and I'm sure it's been discussed to death, but I've read Rich's explanation and understand why it was done that way. The first of the Bold Venture books looks great with both back up stories included.

When the change over from Pulp Adventures happened, there was considerable animosity expressed toward Rich on the alt.pulp newsgroup. One of the main complaints was that he was changing size.

A number of people didn't think it would look right on the shelf with the other Spiders. I just have to ask: do you buy Spiders to read them or to look at how nice and uniform they look on the shelf?

Take the Shadow, I have more than 30 paperbacks, from three companies in four different styles, three short hardbacks, one large hardback, and a large paperback of the Shadow Scrapbook. The only problem I see with how they look on the shelf is that there should be a fourth short hardback (one of the Crime Club doubles) along with copies of "The Night Master," "Gangland's Doom" and "The Duende History of the Shadow."

Personally I don't see this as a problem. The new size is shorter and fatter, making it more "book-like" rather than "magazine-like." People were complaining that the format change would look funny on the shelf. I say it doesn't matter. Frankly, there is no way any fan based publisher is ever going to issue a complete run of a long series in a uniform format. At the rate of six books a year, a very ambitious schedule that I know I could not keep up with, it would take nearly 20 years to reprint all of the Spiders. It's silly to think that any one person is going to finish the whole set in

a uniform format.

Reprinting the pulps is a relay race, with each fan and pro publisher taking their turn. We had a couple different efforts in the 70s, including Dimedia, then Hanos, then Carrol and Graff, then John Gunnison took a turn, then Pulp Adventures, then one from Action Ink, now it's Bold Ventures turn. If each publisher takes on the project in turn and advances the cause, eventually we'll get there. And by that time it'll be ripe to reprint the ones that got messed up by editing early on.

I am, however, a little concerned that the next issue is Master of the Flaming Horde. As I recall, that's been done. In reprinting we need to do the ones that haven't seen the light of day. Especially the Carol and Graff ones that are still readily available. Ok, they weren't perfect, but I've already read the story.

I'm a bit unhappy that the G-8 project is starting with issues that have already been reprinted. I bought the first two and I will buy the next one, even though I already have those issues in reprint format. I'm paying full price for the nice original covers, the interior art and the backup story. When I could get an Argosy for the same price as one of these, and when I'm already under a financial burden, I'm having a hard time justifying purchasing these. I eventually decided that I'm paying the price to encourage and support pulp reprinting and to make sure that there is the incentive to reprint the later issues I have not read. It's awfully hard to buy the book, and just put it on the shelf after reading a single short story in each issue. I do have to wonder what John will do when he reaches the issues that he's already printed in High Adventure.

The two Purple Proses that also arrived with this package also look excellent and I've already taken time to read through Shawn Danowski's very nice look at the first year of Dime Mystery. His description of a Page novel in one of the issues makes me ache read it. Any chance of it showing up someday in High Adventure?

Well, if you'll excuse me, I've got a whole lot of reading to do.

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ALL-STORY WEEKLY

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Author of

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