

Origin 23

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**The Publication of the National Fantasy Fan Federation
History and Research Bureau**

The editor is John Thiel, bureau head, residing at 30 N. 19th Street, Lafayette, Indiana 47904. It is a monthly publication. Working with him in this endeavor are the following staff members:



Jon Swartz, 12115 Missel Thrush Court, Austin, Texas 78750, jon_swartz@hotmail.com .

Judy Carroll, 975 East 120 South, Spanish Fork, Utah 84660, autumnseas8012@gmail.com .

Jeffrey Redmond, 1335 Beechwood NE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49505-3830, redmondjeff@hotmail.com

My own email address is kinethiel@mymetronet.net, at which address you can write to Origin with your letters of comment or contributions.

There you have it, a small but effective group of N3F activists working together to bring science fiction and the National Fantasy Fan Federation into clear focus. We hope to increase your knowledge of and pleasure with science fiction and the sf organization to which you belong and to contribute to your sense of belonging. We are ourselves in the process of becoming acquainted and want that sense of belonging to be present in our bureau as well as the N3F at large. Working to this end, Judy Carroll is describing her own feelings of belonging in her column here in Origin, and encouraging talk of what sf means to the reader of it. She also manages the writing bureau and the correspondence activities, and Jeffrey Redmond and I are in her correspondence exchange activity and are getting more talkative in our correspondence with each other. Judy also sends long pieces of correspondence to those with whom she communicates, as distinguished from the flash correspondence of busy people. These exchanges are the essential thing that keeps an organization going, and getting to know one another assures people of their placement in an organization.

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EDITORIAL

Ye Ed has the same kind of problems he has been seeing in the fanac occurring around him, and as a result this issue is less than complete. There's been a local speedup of activities and increase of pressures here in Lafayette, some of it partaking of the Christmas rush. The weeks have been speeding by like in THE HOUSE ON THE BORDERLAND and the events resemble what might be seen in an event horizon around a black hole in space. My niece was arrested and jailed for a week for failure to appear in court and the police, wearing guns, went through my house looking for her boyfriend. These have been straightened out but the weather blockaded a lot of activities and I had a heating system failure that cost me a couple of thousand dollars to get a new heating system, necessitating my putting the screws on some people who have been dependent on me. The basement got flooded and there will be more money required to deal with that; the washer broke down due to a faulty pump and it looked like we would all start to stink, so to speak, but we got a new pump put in. Noise was coming from the dryer too, but it seems to be holding up. One of the dogs got in heat and all three of them were getting wild, barking and howling, there were fights during the night that kept me from getting the proper amount of sleep, I got fleeced a couple of times at the stores where our sustenance comes from and someone worked a badger game ploy on me during the confusion, all of it resulting in more money loss, there were outrages in the billing including a bill that did not decline when the machine involved broke down and hadn't been turned on; there were traffic jams all over town, the computer crashed a couple of times, some of my files disappeared, and my communications descended from second rate to X-rated. Judy Carroll was also having problems and was not able to complete her column this month. But here we have what we were able to get together and I think we have some valid contents. These are hard times, I keep telling people it seems that way to me, but they're too busy yelling about Trump to pay much attention to the problems I've been talking about. Hopefully we will have a better issue next month, including having a more optimistic editorial, which is what I've been trying to maintain, and with Surprising Stories out of the way I think I should be able to round up more material for the next issue of Origin.

Y'all could help out with this, but perhaps you are having problems of your own? It does seem to me like there is a lot of trouble going on.

Well, I will see you again in the next issue.

.Oddly out of kilter with the science fiction and fantasy field as we know it, Frank Frazetta was one of the best of the fantasy artists during the second half of the know it, Frank Frazetta was one of the best of the fantasy artists during the second half of the 20th Century. Jeffrey Redmond recalls him in this article:



FRANK FRAZETTA



Make no mistake about it: I am most definitely a Frank Frazetta fan, and forever will be. For a while in the late 80s, I lived from one Conan the Barbarian paperback to another. And it wasn't just because of Robert E. Howard's stories, but especially for the cover art by Frank Frazetta.

Any book with a Frazetta cover was a book sold as far as I was concerned. But as much as I loved Frazetta, I knew little about him. This was on purpose, though. I often try to keep an ignorance going with my heroes because knowing too much can end your admiration for someone.

But now that a new DVD about him has come out, I just couldn't resist. I just had to know something about this man who had given me so much pleasure. "Frazetta: Painting With Fire", a two-disc package, is a fine introduction to the artist and, since I knew very little about the man, the film filled in for me nicely.

We learn about the life of this artist, and hear from an impressive list of interviewees, who tell us what an incredible influence he was in the world of illustration. Artists such as Bernie Wrightson, Bill Stout, Neal Adams, Dave Stevens, Michael Kaluta, Al Williamson and John Buseema sing his praises as an original who had an effect on their work.

The oldest of four children and the only boy in the family, Frank Frazetta (he would later drop one of the *zs*) was born on the 9th day of February, 1928 in Brooklyn, New York. He discovered the wonders of drawing before he was three, when he sold his first crayon drawing to Grandma—for the tidy sum of one penny. It was through her interest and encouragement that he continued his drawings through those early years.

When he hit kindergarten, his teachers were astounded that there was a child of only five and a half drawing better than ten year olds. Throughout elementary school, Frazetta created comic books with the main character a snowman and an array of assorted characters. He began drawing his own comic books around the age of six. Intricate, labor-intensive colored pencil stories featuring his original characters like "Snowman" and "The Red Devil and Goldy" still exist and exhibit a level of style and sophistication that is amazing. One of his sisters would often take his home-drawn comics and trade them to other kids for their store-bought issues of Famous Funnies.

Frazetta's artistic ability wasn't a secret to his elementary school teachers. "Christmas, Easter, and Thanksgiving were my big days," he remembers. "I guess I drew more Santas, bunnies, and turkeys on blackboards than anyone could count. At the insistence of one of my teachers, my parents enrolled me in the Brooklyn Academy of Fine Arts when I was eight.

“The Academy was little more than a one floor/three room affair with a total of thirty students ranging in age from eight—me!—to eighty. I still remember the Professor Michael Falanga’s look of skepticism as I signed in. He was rolling his eyes and you could almost see the thought balloon over his head, ‘Oh no! Not another child prodigy!’ He sat me down with a pencil and paper and asked me to copy a postcard featuring a group of realistically rendered ducks. When he returned later to see how far I had progressed, he snatched up my drawing, exclaiming, ‘Mama mia!’ and ran off waving it in the air, calling everyone over to look at it. I thought I was in some kind of trouble.”

But Falanga, a fine artist of some renown in his native Italy, was impressed with Frazetta’s natural ability and believed he had tremendous potential.

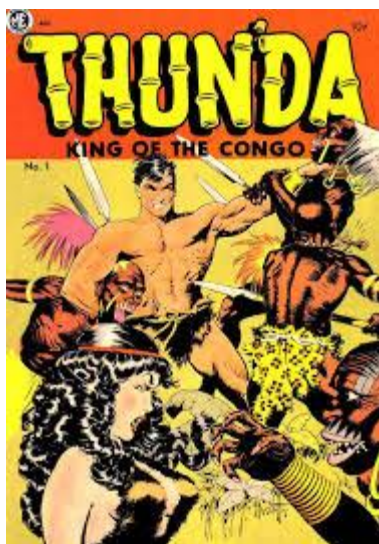
“He died when I was twelve,” Frank explains, “right about the time he was making arrangements to send me off to Italy at his own expense to study fine art. I haven’t the vaguest idea of whether it would have really affected my areas of interest. I don’t know, but I doubt it. You see, we never had any great conversations. He might look over your shoulder and say, ‘Very nice, but perhaps if you did this or that...’ He spoke very broken English and he kind of left you on your own.

“I think I learned more from my friends there, especially Albert Pucci. Falanga would look at some of the comics stuff I was doing and say, ‘What a waste, what a waste! You should be in Italy and paint the street scene and become a very famous fine artiste!’ And didn’t that thrill me!

“After he died the students tried to keep the school going; we had become such close friends that we couldn’t bear to close up shop so we all chipped in and paid the rent and continued to hold classes. I did nude life drawings and still lifes; we’d paint outdoors. It was all totally different than the way I work now, but it taught me a lot about brush technique and perspective and helped me to develop my own style.”

When Frank started working for Magazine Enterprises and National (now known as DC Comics) he graduated to the adventure titles and drew stories for Durango Kid, Manhunt, Adventure Comics, and Blackhawk. His covers for Ghost Rider received tremendous recognition and in 1951 M.E. gave Frank the go-ahead to create his own comic, THUN’DA.





"I came up with this Tarzan-like character who gets trapped in a lost world," he explains. "They brought in Gardner Fox to write the script based on my idea and the first story in the book followed my plans pretty closely. Then the editor, Ray Krank, had Fox take everybody out of the prehistoric setting, by the end of the third story in the book, and ruined the entire concept. They turned it into just another cardboard jungle comic."

Thun'da #1, published in 1952, was the only complete comic book Frazetta ever drew. He quit working for Magazine Enterprises after they sold the rights to the character to Columbia Pictures for a serial starring Buster Crabbe. Since he had created Thun'da under the comic industry's standard work-for-hire agreement, Frank never received additional payment for the characters and art he had created. Bob Powell took over as artist on the comic with the second issue and stayed with it until the title was canceled with #6. The first issue has become a classic. It was considered by many to have been the best year for Frank as far as comic work was concerned. He ghosted a few weeks of Flash Gordon for Dan Barry and tried unsuccessfully to sell the syndicates several other ideas for newspaper strips: Ambi Dexter featured a baseball pitcher adept with either his right or left hand, Sweet Adeline was the humorous story of a young working woman, Nina was a female version of Thun'da and Tiga (originally conceived in 1950 with a script by Joe Greene) was a post-apocalyptic adventure tale.

During the early 1950s, war was raging in Korea and the prospect of being drafted was a daily worry. Yet this time was an invigorating, fun-filled period in Frazetta's life. He worked as much or as little as he pleased, producing a memorable stack of art for E.C. (publishers of world-class scary and violent comics), Toby Press, and Prize Publications.

His Buck Rogers covers for Famous Funnies are considered some of the finest comics work ever published, and many prominent film makers have cited them as a visual influence on their movies. These covers overwhelmed George Lucas, who has stated (quite accurately) that they were the inspiration for his Star Wars stories.

At the same time, Frank was far from a workaholic. He enjoyed life too much to just be chained to a drawing board, and he made a point of playing baseball every day. He enjoyed hanging out with artist friends like Nick Meglin, Angelo Torres, and Roy Krenkel, posing for reference photos, and going to the movies. Handsome, muscular, and charismatic, He was popular with women and he had a string of intense romances. In 1952 petite seventeen-year-old Eleanor Kelly caught his eye and his days of jumping from one relationship to the next came to an end.

"I sensed that she would be forever loyal and I never ever had that feeling about any other girl I'd been involved with," Frazetta reveals. "Sure, she had most of the physical attributes I looked for in a woman; she was beautiful and athletic. But beyond that she was very sharp and alert and pert and she knew a lot of things I didn't know."

When Frank left Al Capp's studio in early 1961 he thought it would be no problem to land another steady job. And so, with portfolio in hand, he went searching. But it seemed his work had become poison to any publisher he showed it to. His best stuff was rejected as being too "old style". He honestly believed he'd been blacklisted by Capp because of his leaving the studio on such a down note.

This "down time" in Frazetta's career is best shown in the drawing of his Self Portrait (1962). It captures well the look of the troubled artist at the time. The story goes that he painted it after another exhaustive day of trying to find work. He wasn't completely out of work, though. There were companies that found his talent quite useful. For instance one of those companies, Midwood, hired him to illustrate a few of their spicy novels.

Finally, the slow trend ended in 1963 when Frank's best friend Roy Krenkel introduced him to paperback covers (with which many of us are familiar). He started with Ace Paperbacks, doing a series for Edgar Rice Burroughs' novels. This was the first published appearance of his painted work. It was also his first official work on one of his favorite characters, Tarzan of the Apes, a dream of Frazetta's since childhood.

The public response was overwhelming. Other paperback firms started noticing. A back cover for Mad Magazine, a caricature of the Beatles' drummer Ringo Starr, was noticed by United Artists Film Studios. They had Frazetta do the poster for WHAT'S NEW, PUSSYCAT? For it, Frank received \$4,000.00, a whole year's pay (back then) earned

in one afternoon! It finally started to pay off.

An interesting story lies behind his cover for THE MAD KING. He so enjoyed his work for the 1964 edition, that when it came time to hand over the art for a reprinted 1970 edition, he reproduced the entire painting and handed that over instead. Even though the copy was of lesser quality, it was readily accepted simply because of Frazetta's popularity. Between 1963-1965 he produced twenty-five covers and twenty-two interior illustrations for Ace.

Then Frank began an inspired series of paintings for Jim Warren's publishing company, which provided total freedom for Frank the artist to utilize his talents to the fullest. Just about that same time, Lancer Paperbacks were picking up on Robert E. Howard's Conan the Barbarian series. They engaged Frank to do the covers. When these hit the bookstands, they became one of the greatest selling series in history, with upwards of ten million copies. Many people bought the books just for the cover art, and couldn't have cared less about the contents.

Because Frazetta's covers did sell so many books, he became more selective about the material offered to him. He retained ownership of all original art and permitted only first printing rights. This in itself started a whole new trend in the paperback industry. To this day Frazetta's work is considered fine art. Fine Art is something that is total: "It has a beginning, a middle, and an end". To prove his point, Frank will talk about design while pulling pictures from the wall and turning them upside down, drawing the eye toward the center of interest, being pleased that it works from any angle.

In 1970 Doubleday's Science Fiction Book Club embarked on an aggressive program of reprinting Edgar Rice Burroughs' interplanetary adventures. Naturally, Frazetta's phenomenally popular covers for Ace and Lancer made him the only logical choice to illustrate the series. His paintings for A PRINCESS OF MARS, the first in the series, was so perfectly "Frazetta".

Although Frank and Ellie were quite comfortable in their New York area Long Island home, and were keeping busy raising their four children, they moved back to Sheepshead Bay in Brooklyn to be close to family. While there, Ellie had saved some money and taken a gamble by starting a small business called Frazetta Prints. It consisted of just five posters of some of Frank's early work. She worked diligently with a few distributors to get Frank's artwork into the public eye. Now, some twenty-eight years later, it has blossomed into an empire of over a hundred and fifty different prints, books, lithographs, and literally anything that pertains to Frank's art.

After living in Sheepshead Bay for only a year and a half, Frank still longed for open space and privacy. With his son starting high school, and the big city school violence getting out of control, Frank decided to set out and fulfill his long time dream. They started out in search for that old farm house and lots of land. His one son would later explain about this period in his father's life.

"I recall driving with my dad for days in western New Jersey and Pennsylvania, his dream place—to no avail. The prices had sky-rocketed in the past ten years, and anything my dad liked was already well out of his price range. All the quaint old farms and parcels of land had been bought up and developed upon. Dad turned to me and said, 'I can't believe I waited so long, there is nothing left.'

"We drove hundreds of miles with not even one prospect," his son would later explain. "Then, lo and behold, a realtor in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, said, 'You know, there is this old place just out of town that has sixty-seven acres and a pond. But the house is extremely run down and practically worthless.' My dad said, 'Let's take a look'. He always told me you can always fix or replace a home, but there is no substitution for land and privacy. He always had great foresight, especially when he first laid his eyes on the house. He immediately fell in love with it.

"Sure, the house was run down, the rolling fields were overgrown with brush and trees, the entire place was seemingly never maintained. Maybe even since the turn of the century! The asking price was one which dad could afford. The only thing holding him back from closing was that someone had already put in a bid! Just five hundred dollars less than the asking price. The offer was refused and to my dad's disbelief the potential buyer had walked away from the deal! Before you could put a period on the end of the previous sentence, my father said, 'I'll take it'.

"Oh boy! All I could think of was how much my mom loved my dad, to move into this place. There was a lot of work to be done in order to turn this run-down house into a home. Mom and dad were determined to make this place a home for their four children. And with the aid of a mop, a Kubota tractor, and lots of hard work, this old house was transformed into the now beautiful estate where three of the four children, and nine grandchildren, reside.

"In just six months the place was beautiful, the fields were cut, the house was painted, the children were hitting golf balls, fishing and playing hide and seek on the property. That very same year a developer had offered my dad four times more than the purchase price. With no disrespect to the gentleman, my father said politely, 'No, thank

you, this is our home now'."

Some twenty-nine years later the now beautiful estate will welcome the addition of the new Frazetta Art Museum. The decade of the eighties began auspiciously with an invitation by Ralph Bakshi to come to Hollywood and co-produce a new animated film based on Frazetta concepts. Bakshi was a longtime fan and admirer of Frank and always thought his art should be seen on the big screen. Frazetta accepted the offer and moved to Hollywood. They hired a team of animators to draw and paint, with live performers so that select scenes could be rotoscoped. Frazetta wanted the film to feature realistic and believable action. Many action scenes were Frank himself doing the falling, kicking and rolling over because some of the stunt men said it couldn't be done. Well, Frank proved some of Hollywood's top stunt men wrong.

Frank sculpted several clay models of the key characters for use by the staff. He also painted a large oil for the movie poster and a number of stunning pencil illustrations that were used in the opening sequences of the film. He worked furiously on this project night and day. But because of poor marketing and distribution irregularities, it was not the success he had hoped for.

Undaunted by this disappointment Frazetta returned to his estate in Pennsylvania and purchased a ten thousand square foot building in downtown East Stroudsburg. Initially his two sons started their own business at this location, with Ellie devoting herself to opening the new Frazetta Art Museum. This was a longtime dream of his wife, Ellie, and she threw herself into the project until it was completed. The museum tastefully displayed his most famous works. Accented with African art and wildlife bronzes, it was an unprecedented showcase for any living artist, much less for one categorized merely as an "illustrator".

In April of 1985 the new museum opened with much fanfare. A lavish opening day party was thrown and it was attended by many local politicians, Ian and Betty Ballantine, Frank's longtime friends, Dave Winiewicz, and Nick Meglin, Frank's mother, father, aunt, uncle, and scores of fans. Frank repainted a new version of the standing "Masai Warrior" oil for the museum. It dominated one wall. The museum became a kind of mecca for the many fans who would travel long distances to see the many marvelous masterpieces on display.

"It was all Ellie's idea," Frank explains. "We were always getting calls from the fans asking if they could come see the originals. The best we had done through the years was to have some exhibits at various conventions, but that got to be a risky hassle. We

did the museum for all the people who have had fun with my art over the years. It wasn't for profit—if I wanted to make money I would've sold the originals. My joy is in showing the work.”

A fire on the lower floors of the building in 1995 closed the museum; fortunately none of the artwork was damaged. Announced plans to relocate the gallery to Boca Grande, Florida, were changed at the last moment and Ellie re-opened the museum in East Stroudsburg in 1999. But along with financial comfort and critical acclaim, the 1980s also brought health problems to the vigorous artist.

“The first symptoms appeared about 1986,” Frank relates. “I had three jobs going on at the same time and I was burning the midnight oil. Coincidentally I had bought some really inexpensive turpentine, real junk. The fumes were so terrible that it probably screwed my thyroid up. Nobody's quite sure what makes a thyroid malfunction or quit or go hyperactive, but they certainly know it can be affected by chemicals. I was working for about two weeks with this turpentine that just permeated my studio. My wife and kids wouldn't even come into the room, it was so bad. But good ol' Frank just kept plugging away. I'm tough, this won't affect me. Around the time I was finishing the jobs I suddenly got this eerie, insidious taste in my mouth. It was almost as if Death had entered.”

His recovery sparked a creative renewal and in the early 1990s he re-emerged into the market. He allowed a few of his originals to be sold at auction at Sotheby's and Christie's, where they went for high five-figure sums. Frazetta finished a lovely oil entitled “The Princess and the Panther” and it was used on the cover of **Heavy Metal** magazine. This was followed by the publication of SMALL WONDERS in 1991, a book by Kitchen Sink Press devoted to reprinting many of Frazetta's funny animal drawings from the 1940s. This was closely followed by the publication of PILLOW BOOK, a collection of his watercolors from many stages of his career. Most of these watercolors were personal productions designed to be given as presents on certain holidays. Ellie would often encourage Frank to paint her a watercolor for Christmas, Mother's Day, *etc.* Or he would simply do them just to amuse himself. The book has a small selection.

There are another hundred images that have never been seen before. Renewed interest in the work of Frazetta reached a fever pitch in the middle 90s. A number of people arose with new projects and ideas. Randy Bowen convinced Frank to help him co-create a bronze sculpture of Frazetta's signature oil, “The Death Dealer”. Glenn Danzig, a longtime Frazetta fan, collector, and emerging rock star, decided to begin his

own publishing company, Verotik. He commissioned Frank to produce a book of pencil drawings based on monsters and demons. This extraordinary volume was entitled ILLUSTRATIONS ARCANUM, and it immediately became a wild hit.

The quality of the art and the beautiful production values blended to energize Frazetta's name in the art world. Danzig followed this success with a series of Death Dealer comics, other assorted fantasy-supernatural theme productions, a series of sculptures based on Frank's Fire and Ice models, and a new character entitled Jaguar God, for which Frazetta painted several amazing oils. Danzig's company presented the Frazetta name to the newest generation and they responded.

The Frazetta Pillow Book provided a surprising glimpse of a more whimsical, if no less erotic, side to the artist. Filled with a charming selection of beautiful nude gnomes, fairies, and nymphs, the book showcased Frazetta's proficient skill with watercolor.

"Nearly all the paintings were done as gifts to me or for family," Ellie Frazetta explains. "They show the playful, fun-loving side of Frank I have known all my adult life."

And, indeed, Frank Frazetta certainly has that...and so much more. Next time you're browsing through your favorite bookstore, take a look at so many of the fantasy works' covers. More than a few will be Frazetta works. And all of them will be the absolute best!

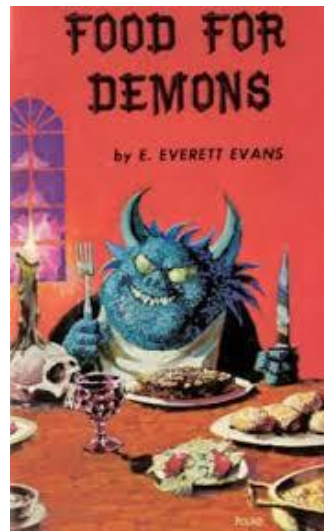


N3F HISTORICAL VIGNETTE

by Jon D. Swartz, N3F Historian

“A Book Collection Honoring a Former N3F President”

FOOD FOR DEMONS: THE E. EVERETT EVANS MEMORIAL VOLUME, edited by Kenneth J. Krueger and illustrated by Henry M. Eicher. San Diego, CA: Shroud Publishers, 1971 .



E. Everett Evans

Science fiction (SF) writer Edward Everett Evans (1893-1958) initially made his reputation as a member of SF fandom. Later in life he became a SF writer, and late in life came to be called “The Grand Old Man” of the field. As a fan he helped form the N3F and to put on the first Westercon. For years he was also active in the FAPA and the LASFS. He published/edited the fanzine **The Time-Binder** in the 1940s. For N3F he wrote several fannish publications, such as the one-shot **What is S-F Fandom** in 1944.

The Big Heart Award—founded by Forrest J. Ackerman to honor outstanding service and generosity to the SF field and for “typifying the spirit of SF writer Evans”—is named in his honor. The book under review was compiled and published to honor his memory.

FOOD FOR DEMONS was re-published in 1975 by Fantasy House (as chapbook #2 in Ken Kreuger’s Fantasy Reader series). The book was originally published in Mexico in Spanish as LOS CUENTOS FANTASTICA early in 1971.

Stories included were “The Undead Die”, “The Martian and the Vampire”, “The

Brooch", "The Unusual Model", "Blurb", "Visitor from Kos", "Operation Almost", "The Sun Shines Bright", and the title story, "Food for Demons". Some of these stories appeared here for the first time. Others originally appeared in such prozines as **Fantasy Book**, **Weird Tales**, **Startling Stories**, and **Other Worlds**. The friends who commented on Evans' stories were E.E. (Doc) Smith, Ray Bradbury, A. E. van Vogt, Mel Hunter, Forrest J. Ackerman, Walter J. Daugherty, Henry M. Eicher, Walt Liebscher, and Kenneth J. Krueger, the editor.

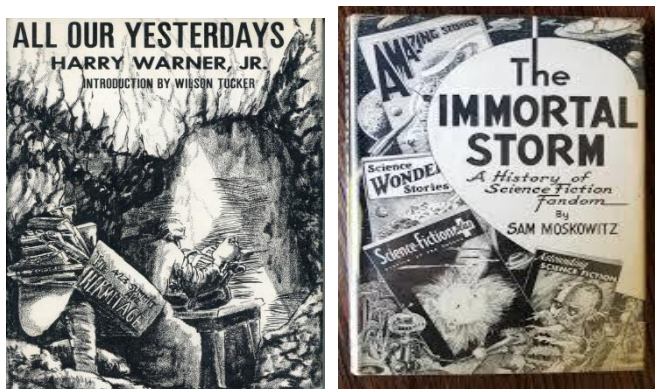
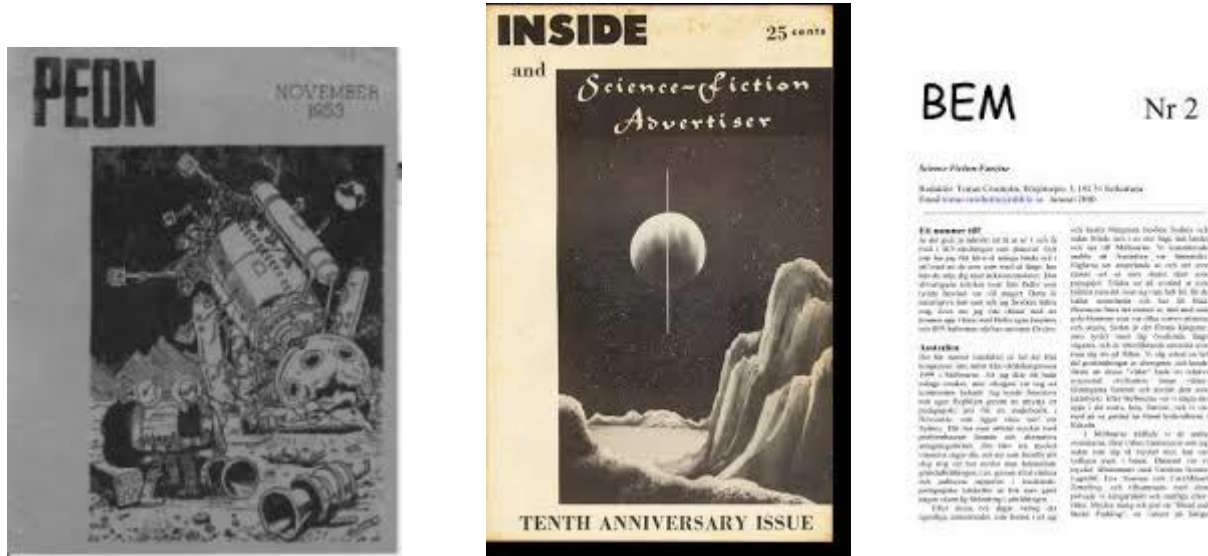
Krueger wrote the following of Evans: "At the time I met Ev he was the president of the National Fantasy Fan Federation, and before I knew him ten minutes I was a member. Before I knew him a half hour I was on a planning committee. Before I knew him an hour I was helping him cut stencils for the club magazine."

Where are the N3F recruiters like Evans today?

Note: This brief vignette was written several years ago for publication in **The National Fantasy Fan**. It is reprinted here, with only minor changes, for Origin.



EARLY FANZINES brought to view by John Thiel



Three histories of fandom also shown: Harry Warner's **A WEALTH OF FABLE** and **ALL OUR YESTERDAYS** and Sam Moskowitz's **THE IMMORTAL STORM**



That's All To This Issue