

THE REMEDIA CHRONICLES #13

By Lee A. Breakiron

A CIMMERIAN WORTHY OF THE NAME, PART ONE

Leo Grin was frustrated. He and his friend, critic Don Herron, had served on the editorial board of *The Dark Man* academic journal since the winter of 2000/2001, and they were dismayed at how little progress the journal was making in the search for and publication of articles about Robert E. Howard. It had been revamped under the editorship of Prof. Frank Coffman after being moribund for 3 years, but after putting out two issues in 2001, the staff had only managed to publish one more issue by the spring of 2004. Grin knew of articles that were stuck in the editorial pipeline and was convinced still others could be solicited by a proactive editor. Yet the mere fact that so little was being published acted as a damper on both contributions and subscriptions, and the funding depended largely on those subscriptions. Most of the editorial and publishing process depended solely on the editor. But as we saw in a previous installment [1], Coffman was overcommitted to courses he was teaching, the dissertation he was working on, his advisory role at the college's newspaper, and his REHupa and REHEAPA fanzine work. And the rest of the editorial board seemed to be sitting on their hands. Grin saw them as entrenched academics who were only motivated by their own publishing obligations. Grin's and Herron's many suggestions for seeking out quality content and streamlining the committee-style editorial process had apparently fallen on deaf ears. Grin shared Herron's well-known low opinion of academic researchers, regarding them as sneering elitists. "The truth is that, despite the various good qualities the board members possess as individuals, *The Dark Man* has become a reviled publication among Howard fans, synonymous with ineptitude, arrogance, and procrastination." [2]

If they would not act, Grin resolved that he would. He would show them what could be done by doing it himself. In December, 2003, he resigned from the *TDM* board, following Herron who has left in the spring, and founded his own publication, not a fanzine that depended on gratis submissions or an academic journal that could easily get mired in red tape and extraneous commitments (and did not pay its contributors either), but a prozine that would come out often and regularly and that paid its contributors. Moreover, he believed that an editor with vision and drive could attract enough contributors and readers in and out of academia to make such a publication flourish, especially if he could combine the quality content of a good academic journal with the reading pleasure and reader involvement of a zestful fanzine. Still, Grin and Herron would be the only staff, so the enterprise would be daunting indeed. Nevertheless, Grin threw himself into the endeavor, advertising for contributions and subscriptions, reviewing and editing all submissions (with help and mentoring from Herron), commissioning artwork, and

buying and using a laser printer, collator, trimmer, and scoring and stapling machines. Doing everything himself but the foil stamping and slipcasing, he produced and mailed out all the issues and optional slipcases, all of which were handsome and well-designed. Herron suggested the prozine's name: *The Cimmerian*.

Grin was born in 1971 in Griffith, Ind., was raised in Indiana, and has lived in Los Angeles since 1996. He earned a B.A. in cinematography from Columbia College and writes movie reviews online for sites like Big Hollywood (<http://www.breitbart.com>). He was a member of REHupa from December 1999 to June 2007, producing 28 fanzines; the 17 of his *Steel Springs and Whalebone!* series ran between 6 and 110 pages each. In September, 2000, he took over maintenance of the REHupa Web site, making many improvements and paying for its support out of his own pocket. In 2002, he bought a copy of the incredibly scarce "Jenkins Gent," Howard's first published book (*A Gent from Bear Creek*, Jenkins, 1937) for \$3700 and donated it to the Howard Museum. Between 2002 and 2006, he and Rob Roehm performed the herculean task of scanning the first 199 REHupa Mailings, which were distributed to REHupa members on DVDs. (I later OCRed them.) Grin founded *The Cimmerian Blog* (<http://www.thecimmerian.com>) in August, 2005, and the REHupa Blog (<http://www.rehupa.com>) in February, 2007. Between 2000 and 2007, he attended every Howard Days celebration in Cross Plains, Tex., often documenting the proceedings there and at other fan conventions. His involvement in Howard Days programming helped build it into the affair as it known today. Unmarried, he works at a stock investment firm.

All TCs were published in a 6 ¾ in. x 8 ½ in., saddle-stapled format in two editions: a "deluxe" edition with black, textured linen covers and foil-stamped lettering (the color of which changed with each yearly volume) costing \$15.00 in a print run of 75 (numbered 1-75) and a "limited" edition with red, smooth card-stock covers and solid black lettering costing \$10.00 each in a print run of 150 (numbered 76-225). The front and back covers were embellished with icons that generally involved skulls, helmets, swords, and flames and that changed every issue; they were designed by the illustrator, who was different every year. The issues were bimonthly, except for 2006 when they appeared monthly, and always ran 40 pages plus endpapers and covers. The first eight issues were published in Downey, Cal., and the rest were published in Playa del Rey, Cal.

The first issue, dated April 2004, was illustrated by Jason Castagna, who did two interior illustrations per issue. In his editorial, Grin begins thusly:

For years, I've wanted to read a good Howard journal.

My ideas in this regard are quite specific. Classy. Well edited. Fun to read. A bustling letters column. Actually pays its writers. And, above all, has new issues appearing often. Robert E. Howard wrote over three hundred stories and seven hundred poems, and his boy Conan is world famous. Surely someone, somewhere, was going to break out with a journal along these lines, right?

Apparently not. With the exception of Glenn Lord, who published eighteen small, dignified issues of *The Howard Collector* fairly regularly between 1961 and 1973, the Howardian journal scene has been pathetic. Not for lack of trying, for sure; the battlefield is littered with attempts. (p. 3)

He goes on to summarize the REH fanzine scene from the 1970s through the 1990s, which was marked by efforts that generally consisted of a handful of issues over a few years, luring in

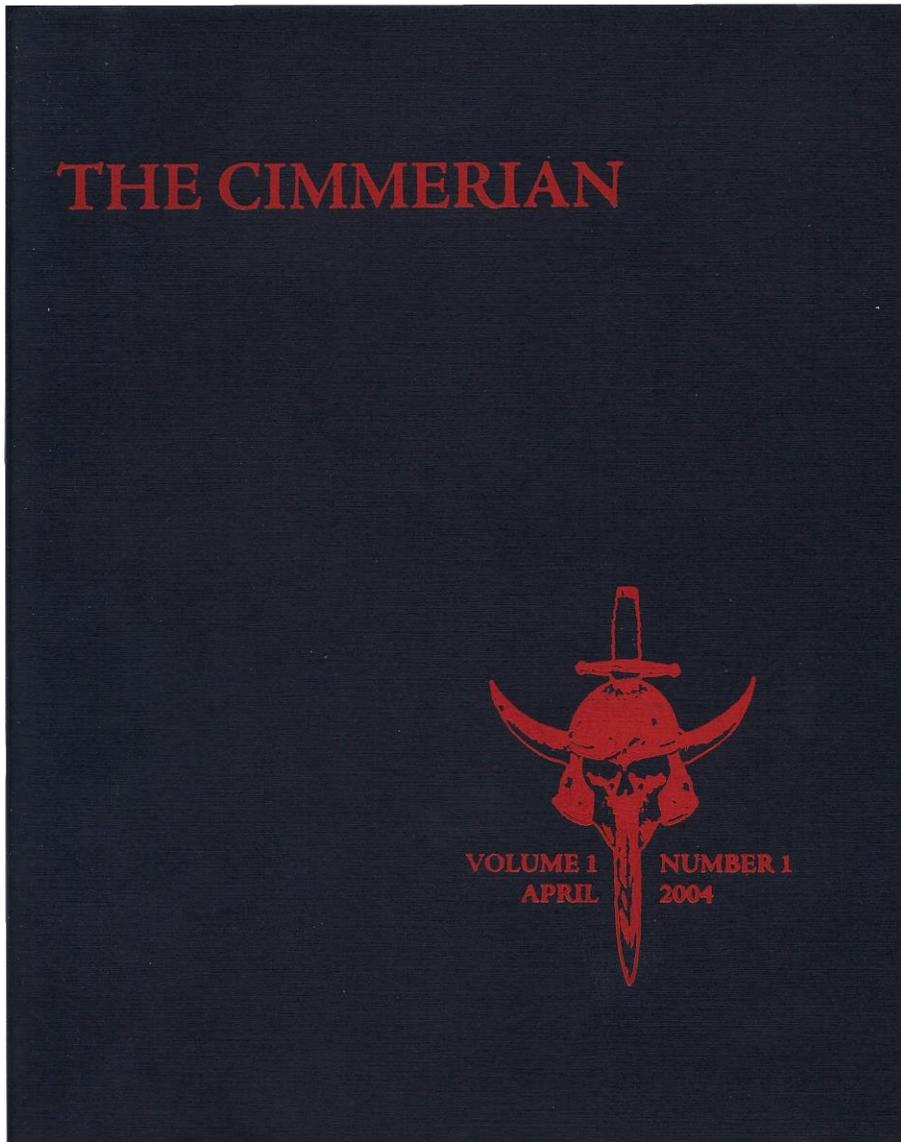
readers with unpublished Howard material supplied by Glenn Lord and having a subscriber base of a few dozen. He describes *Amra* as “less a Howard journal than a forum for fantasy authors more keen on discussing themselves than Two-Gun Bob.” He continues:

Things have gotten so bad that fans now habitually state that a regular Howard journal is an impossibility, that there simply isn't a large enough base of writers and readers to make one successful.

What a crock. (p.3)

Grin points out that REH's fan base is “huge,” as indicated by the size of Del Rey's Conan book sales, which had outsold those of about every fantasy writer except Tolkien.

The real reason no Howard journal has made a success of itself is that they've all been mismanaged into the ground. They routinely break every one of my



stated rules: not classy, not well edited, not fun to read, they have no letters column aside from slavish fanboy praises and rants, they don't pay their writers a cent, and—most importantly—they take ages to come out.

Well, after years of waiting and hoping, I've decided to give it a go myself. Fueled by Howard's spirit and by the advice and support of the best Howard critic in the world, Don Herron—he named this journal, among many other contributions—I've poured all of my blood and guts and will into this project. Only time will tell whether my effort will fail like the others or become the first true heir to *The Howard Collector*. But allow me to be bold and call my shot: you the Reader can expect to be educated and entertained by this journal for a long time to come. (p. 3)

And he was to make good on his word.

Next Grin introduces the theme of the issue, namely the Robert E. Howard Library of Classics released in slipcased, illustrated deluxe and superdeluxe hardbacks by Wandering Star under license first with the Solomon Kane Corporation and then Robert E. Howard Properties, LLC. The Wandering Star series was already being reprinted in large paperbacks by Del Rey/Ballantine, heralding the return of REH to bookstores for the first time in a decade, and the first time the stories were available in "pure text," i.e. just as Howard wrote them. This "symposium" issue on the series would explore its achievements, failures, and likely consequences, while rectifying the lack of coverage the event had had in professional publications and forums.

Front and center in this first issue is the aforementioned Don Herron, known not only for his landmark critical anthologies *The Dark Barbarian: The Writings of Robert E. Howard—A Critical Anthology* (Greenwood, 1984) and *The Barbaric Triumph* (Wildside, 2004), but also for a controversial, polemical style that may not be to everyone's taste, but which displays him to be generally dead-on in his assessments and unsparing in his critiques, which he is through most of the initial essay, "Conan the Expensive." In it he traces the ill-starred history of Conan the Cimmerian in hardback, starting with *Skull-Face and Others* (Arkham House, 1946) edited by August Derleth and the Gnome books of the 1950s under the editorship first of Dr. John D. Clark and then L. Sprague de Camp. Clark retitled *The Hour of the Dragon* as *Conan the Conqueror* (1950) and, in his introduction, says, "Don't look for hidden philosophical meanings or intellectual puzzles in the yarns—they aren't there," an evaluation that proved to be so wide of the mark that it's laughable today. De Camp, though a professed admirer of Howard, had such a superficial understanding of and condescending attitude toward REH as both a writer and a person that it's hard not to wonder if he wasn't jealous of Howard's—to him, inexplicable—success. Though de Camp's editing of the Gnome series and then the Lancer paperbacks of the late 1960s was pivotal in popularizing REH, he undercut his own efforts and damaged REH's reputation by converting Howard's non-Conan stories into Conan ones, rewriting "The Black Stranger" as "The Treasure of Tranicos" (1953), finishing Howard's incomplete tales, and indulging in, as well as enlisting others for, a number of insipid pastiches, from *The Return of Conan* (Gnome, 1957) by Björn Nyberg to the hackwork of Lin Carter. Though handicapped out of the gate, Howard's prose finally won over the public because of its sheer quality and energy, while de Camp's adulterations have fallen by the wayside.

Paralleling these unfortunate missteps with REH's legacy are similar ones with the oeuvre of Howard's *Weird Tales* cohort H. P. Lovecraft by his avowed champion Derleth, who founded Arkham House supposedly to preserve HPL's work, but who, as Herron demonstrates, did almost as much damage as good by repeatedly referring to Lovecraft as a "big fish in a small pond" (the

field of horror), putting out HPL anthologies riddled with typos and alterations, and engaging in the same sort of “posthumous collaborations” as de Camp did. Ironically, it was the reaction to this mishandling of both REH’s and HPL’s legacies that led to these authors’ eventual recognition as literary giants through the publication, finally, of pure texts and of literary criticism worthy of their achievements. This reaction may be said to have started with Herron’s acerbic essay, “Conan vs. Conantics.” [3]

Nor was this the end of Conan’s tribulations. In 1974, publisher Donald M. Grant started issuing an unfinished series of expensive Conan hardbacks which contained only REH stories, but which were marred by frequently substandard artwork and poor editing, including the omission of 525 words from *The Hour of the Dragon* (1989). In 1977, Glenn Lord enlisted Karl Edward Wagner to do a series of Conan hardcover anthologies for Berkley/Putnam using *Weird Tales* texts, but these were hardly perfect in execution and were aborted after three volumes because of machinations by de Camp, who did not want them competing with his own pastiches [4]. Lord, as agent representing the Howard heirs, then came together with de Camp to form Conan Properties, Inc., under which even more new Conan novels were commissioned from various writers, but the interest in a de Camp-envisaged saga dissipated. Too many people wanted all-REH pure-text editions, eventuating in the *Wandering Star* and *Del Rey* books, though the first, hardback versions were expensive editions aimed at collectors.

The first *Wandering Star* releases were *The Savage Tales of Solomon Kane* (1998), in connection with an effort to make a movie about the character, and illustrated by Gary Gianni, and *The Ultimate Triumph* (1998), marking the natural union of Howard’s colorful prose with the art of REH’s greatest visual interpreter, Frank Frazetta (1928-2010). Next were *Bran Mak Morn: The Last King* (2001), illustrated by Gianni, and *Conan of Cimmeria, Vol. One, 1932-1933* (2002), illustrated by Mark Schultz; the latter became *The Coming of Conan the Cimmerian* (Del Rey, 2003) in paperback. Herron finds these volumes to be a mixed bag, faulting most of the art except Frazetta’s. “These books attempt too much, when preserving perfect texts of Howard should be the goal.” (p. 10) He finds most fault with the commentary in the Conan volume.

It is here, though, that Herron goes astray, opining that the material by fellow former REHupan Patrice Louinet is too extensive and should have been relegated to a separate book. But it is difficult to imagine how such a book could have been a successful venture, nor does it seem inappropriate that definitive texts of such importance should be accompanied by detailed commentary, which after all could be skipped by the uninterested reader. He faults Louinet for thinking that Howard had “reached some deliberate artistic highpoint in writing the Conan stories. ... If Howard had not committed suicide, if he’d kept writing Conan, the quality would have fallen off from time to time—he might well have just dropped the character completely.” (p. 12) However, it’s hard not to see that REH had in fact achieved such a literary highpoint and, had he survived, would probably achieved other highpoints in other genres. Then Herron attacks Louinet for supposed “theft of intellectual property” for bringing up the idea that Howard might have inherited his frequently gloomy nature from the emotionally oppressive surroundings of that part of his boyhood spent in an area of Texas called Dark Valley. De Camp had discussed this concept in his REH biography *Dark Valley Destiny: The Life of Robert E. Howard* (Bluejay, 1983), which Louinet does not mention, so Herron accuses him of plagiarism and of being a “second-rate intellect.” (p. 13) But it was Howard himself who first advanced the theory in his correspondence with Lovecraft. And de Camp reads so much into it that he virtually postulates that suicide was consequently REH’s fate, incorporating such a destiny into his book’s very title. It’s understandable that a commentator might want to mention this idea while discussing Howard’s style without dragging in the detritus of a flawed biography. Considering his contributions to REH scholarship here and elsewhere, Louinet deserves better.

Wandering Star's Robert E. Howard Library of Classics was to continue with only one more volume: *The Complete Conan of Cimmeria, Vol. Two, 1934* (2003), illustrated by Gianni, which was reprinted by Del Rey as the paperback *The Bloody Crown of Conan* (2004). Though starting well, sales of the deluxe editions did not continue as well as expected, causing a hiatus in their appearance that caused collectors much angst until *The Complete Conan of Cimmeria, Vol. Three, 1935* was published for Wandering Star by Book Palace Books in 2009. Illustrated by Gregory Manchess, it was preceded in 2005 by the Del Rey paperback and then hardback versions *The Conquering Sword of Conan*, co-opting first edition status. The collector series was continued by Subterranean Press with *Kull: Exile of Atlantis* (2008), illustrated by Justin Sweet, following Del Rey's hardback and paperback of 2006; *The Best of Robert E. Howard, Vol. One: Crimson Shadows* (2009), illustrated by Jim and Ruth Keegan; and *The Horror Stories of Robert E. Howard* (2010), illustrated by Greg Staples. These were paralleled by Del Rey versions in 2006, 2007, and 2008 respectively. Del Rey's *The Best of Robert E. Howard, Vol. 2: Grim Lands*, illustrated by the Keegans, was published in 2007, but a hardback version has yet to appear. Del Rey also published the paperbacks *El Borak and Other Desert Adventures* in 2010, illustrated by Tim Bradstreet and the Keegans, and *Sword Woman and Other Historical Adventures* in 2011, illustrated by John Watkiss.

Next in offering a positive but qualified review of the Wandering Star/Del Rey (WS/DR) series is Darrell Schweitzer, something of a pariah in Howardian circles for penning *Conan's World and Robert E. Howard* (Borgo, 1978), which has been called the worst book ever written about REH. The book contains inaccuracies about Howard's life and work, and superficial evaluations of the Conan stories that, for example, make an issue of the fact that several stories contain similar settings like ruined cities. But the *Weird Tales* readers REH wrote for could not be assumed to be familiar with all such stories. "His stories contain thrilling action, vivid description, and sometimes first-rate fantastic invention, but not much else." [5] Schweitzer admits now that *Conan's World* was a shallow effort of youth, but has never disavowed it. He at least went on to moderate success as a fantasy writer and critic, including 16 years as editor or co-editor of the then current incarnation of *Weird Tales*.

In his essay, "The One and Authentic Cimmerian," Schweitzer attests that the WS/DR series is important for putting the real Conan back in bookstores for the first time in years and for meeting the demand of serious fans for REH-only pure-text stories. He does score the series, though, for systematically omitting any reference to de Camp's contributions, including Louinet's supposed appropriation of the idea of Dark Valley's influence. The main point that Schweitzer makes, though, concerns his view that the texts of all books meant for popular consumption (i.e. not those of WS/DR) should be edited not only for errors of punctuation and grammar, but also for plotting errors and inconsistencies, if just because the latter may turn off prospective readers. For this reason, he agrees with corrections de Camp and Wagner made to *The Hour of the Dragon/Conan the Conqueror* in which Howard had Conan wearing three different types of helmets in the space of a few pages. Moreover, he endorses the cuts de Camp made to "The God in the Bowl" and "The Black Stranger" and the bowdlerization of racist slurs in *Hour* in order to make the stories more marketable, in much the same way, he says, that REH rewrote stories that *Weird Tales* editor Farnsworth Wright objected to or to salvage rejected stories for other publishing venues. Schweitzer also supports de Camp's completion of story fragments, his conversion of non-Conan tales into Conan adventures, and even his wholesale rewriting of "The Black Stranger" as "The Treasure of Trancos" so he could get it published. He at least admits that de Camp's and Carter's pastiching is a "less defensible practice." (p. 16) Whether one agrees with all this depends on whether one sees de Camp's dilution of Howard's prose as doing more good than harm. It is no surprise that de Camp's inflated opinion of his own writing relative to REH's allowed him to rationalize the procedure, but it is harder to understand Schweitzer's

justification, given that he concedes that de Camp's prose is markedly inferior. "Robert E. Howard fans owe a debt to Sprague de Camp, similar to the one Lovecraft fans owe to August Derleth." (p. 16) One might agree, but, with Herron, not necessarily think this was all a good thing.

Also praising the appearance of pure REH texts is REHupan Gary Romeo, who contributes the essay, "Napoleon's Triumph?" (a reference to a character in Orwell's *Animal Farm*). An avowed de Camp partisan, he mounts an eloquent defense of de Camp that illustrates why the controversy regarding de Camp's treatment of Howard has persisted so long: de Camp did much good as well as harm to REH's reputation. Though most readers of *Weird Tales* admired Howard and were sorely aggrieved by his death, the calls by some for another writer to continue the Conan tales were scotched by Wright, who said:

Several ... readers have expressed the wish that Conan's adventures be continued by other hands, for Mr. Howard's barbarian hero is very popular. But Howard's style was so compelling and individual, bearing the marks, not of mere talent, but of actual genius, that we fear any attempt of other and different authors to recapture the mood and style of Mr. Howard's fascinating stories about Conan must fail to accomplish their purpose. (pp. 20 & 21)

Howard's work might have fallen into limbo with that of so many other pulp authors had it not been for the efforts of Derleth at Arkham House and Clark and de Camp for Gnome. An Ace Double paperback of *Conan the Conqueror* (1953) failed to sell well, but Lancer and Ace paperbacks, often featuring stunning covers by Frazetta, and the efforts of agent Glenn Lord led directly to the Howard publishing boom of the late 1960s and the 1970s, treating fans to Conan books, fanzines, comics, movies, cartoons, a TV show, computer games, and role-playing games, cementing Conan as a cultural icon, but obscuring the author behind him. The Conan pastiches by de Camp and Carter and, especially, the series by Tor Books starting in 1983 (allowed by de Camp) only worsened matters.

Acknowledging the need for and success of the WS/DR books in rectifying this situation, Romeo also spotlights the omission of de Camp in the introductions and essays. "[N]owhere is the name mentioned of the man most responsible for the popularizing of both Conan and Howard: L. Sprague de Camp." (p. 22) De Camp's critical stances are mentioned, but consistently attributed to unnamed sources, e.g. "several critics" and "one school of thought," by agreement between REHupan Rusty Burke, the overall editor of the WS series, and Louinet, chief editor of the Conan books. They were on record as frequently criticized de Camp's editing, pastiching, amateur psychoanalyzing, and sloppy assemblage of *Dark Valley Destiny*. Romeo also makes the same plagiarism charge against Louinet as did Herron and Schweitzer. Burke and Louinet certainly should have at least acknowledged de Camp in their references, but it is understandable that they would want to focus their commentaries on Howard and his writings, rather than on tracing the history of how those critical ideas had come about. Ultimately it is those writings and related commentaries that are important and will survive.

Still, there can be no denying the recognition that eventually accrued to REH through de Camp's actions, regardless of his motives. It took many years of trying before de Camp was finally able to interest publishers in printing Conan in paperback, starting with Lancer in 1966. And it was he who edited and marketed those books, which sold millions of copies and inspired the comics, fanzines, and other media versions that followed. De Camp promoted REH in book introductions, in fanzines like *Amra*, and as a consultant to the 1982 Conan movie, writing the movie's novelization. He then put a large amount of research writing the first full-length

biography of Howard, interviewing many of those who had known REH personally, saving their memories for posterity. Credit should be given where credit is due for such efforts. A major book could be written on the long road it took for REH and his characters to achieve the popularity and acclaim they deserve. Lord was too self-effacing to write such a memoir. A comprehensive history by someone like Romeo, preserving and setting the record straight, would be welcome indeed.

Herron writes a letter in the following issue in which he says he “doesn’t disagree in the least with the majority of Gary Romeo’s spirited stand in behalf of L. Sprague de Camp” (p.36), but takes issue with Romeo’s statement that “the editors at Wandering Star think de Camp *actively and deliberately* hurt Howard’s literary standing by tampering with the Conan tales. This theory is first expressed as early in 1976, when Don stated [it] in his essay ‘Conan vs. Conantics.’” (p. 36) Herron declares that de Camp was simply inept at writing and wasn’t actually seeking to do harm. He also disputes Romeo’s claim that de Camp’s work benefited REH lit-crit. Herron adds that Schweitzer’s *Conan’s World* “follows in complete lock step with de Camp’s opinions.” (p. 38)

Grin closes out the essay portion of the issue with “Hell Needs a New Devil,” referring to a quote from “The Pool of the Black One” and meaning that the advent of the WS/DR editions has finally removed textual impurity as a major issue bedeviling Howard fandom.

The Wandering Star Robert E. Howard Library of Classics is the most ambitious Howardian endeavor ever attempted. Encompassing thousands of rare typescript pages, hundreds of hours of meticulous editing, and a plethora of artistic and design goals, it is the first attempt to preserve the Texan’s work in a pristine, unadulterated form. ...

... No longer do fans have to worry about Howard’s stories being rewritten or edited for politically correct or partisan reasons. No longer do fans have to worry that Howard’s original Conan stories will be subsumed and forgotten amidst the ocean of Cimmerian emulation and pastiche. No longer do scholars have to explain the embarrassing lack of textual uniformity in Howardian scholarship. (p. 30)

Taking the long view, Grin does not choose sides in the debate about de Camp’s machinations and Wandering Star’s critical commentaries.

... Glenn Lord’s chief claim to Howardian immortality is that he hunted down all those original typescripts back when no one cared, when they were sitting in musty garages and attics, one careless decision away from the scrap heap, the yard sale, or the garbage dump. Glenn, to his eternal credit, took it upon himself to rescue much of Howard’s work from the very brink of the abyss. Now Wandering Star has preserved the fruits of that grand labor for posterity. It is, in its own way, an effort of equal importance, and deserving of equal gratitude. (p. 31)

This included the monumental efforts not only of Burke and Louinet, but art designers Marcelo Anciano and Jim Keegan, textual editor David Gentzel, and Web master Edward A. Waterman, REHupans all. Still, much of what Lord unearthed would still require another decade to see print through the work of the Robert E. Howard Foundation.

The first issue of *TC* concludes with REH-related announcements, a sonnet “The Stain of Victory” by Richard L. Tierney, a reprint of an article from the *Cross Plains Review* newspaper, and, as would be the case with all issues, profiles of the contributors and a colophon. The article, first published 6 November 2003, was by Robert C. “Bob” Baker, who, as a child, had seen Howard lying on a bed in his home only a few hours from death. A doctor told him “not to look at a dying man.” (p. 38) This inaugural issue represented an auspicious start to the journal, but later ones would be even better.

James Van Hise reviews *TC* #s 1 & 2 in his REHupa zine, calling it “worth seeking out.” [6, p. 2] He is critical of Herron’s article though, which he says “basically attacks the [WS] books for not being what he would have done, and after awhile one gets the distinct impression that he’s miffed that even though he’s been a Howard fan for decades, that he was never consulted on contributing editorially to any of the books.” Van Hise accuses Herron of abandoning Howard and REH fandom after the 1980s until he published *The Barbaric Triumph*. “Only after the new Howard boom, which was instituted *entirely* by Wandering Star, did Herron seem to suddenly rediscover Howard as an author worthy of comment, criticism and editorial effort.” [6, p. 2] Van Hise also ridicules Schweitzer and Romeo for attempting to defend de Camp’s editing. “Does one give credit to someone for botching something so badly that it needed to be completely redone?” [6, p. 3] He also questions the sincerity of de Camp’s efforts to market Conan to paperback publishers, noting that out-of-print works of deceased authors are generally cheap enough to find a buyer unless the one marketing them has added a hefty commission to the bill.

Dr. Charles A. Gramlich also reviews *TC* #s 1 & 2 in the same Mailing, calling the articles “somewhat of a mixed bag” and stating that Herron and Romeo “engaged in some rather strange bashing of Wandering Star and of editors Rusty Burke and, particularly, Patrice Louinet” including “a ridiculous charge of plagiarism against Louinet ...” [7, p. 15]

The next number of *The Cimmerian* (Vol. 1, No. 2, June 2004) begins with an editorial by Grin luxuriating in the wealth of lit-crit available from both young and old contributors alike, both generations being represented in the issue.

David A. Hardy leads off with a first-rate essay on the El Borak adventures entitled “The Great Game,” a reference to the geopolitical struggle for dominance in the East waged by rival empires like Britain and Russia. However, as Hardy explains, Francis Xavier “El Borak” Gordon does not side with any nation, but acts as his own man, favoring the faction he believes intends the best for the local tribes. A Texan expatriate and lone wolf, Gordon moves with ease and aplomb through harsh environments, most often in Afghanistan, and its frequently barbaric inhabitants, often in disguise and triumphing as the result of his skill, resolve, and daring. To make the settings and characters of such stories seem convincing, Howard had to do an extensive amount of research into regional geography, history, and culture, something his brilliance, quick reading, and evidently eidetic memory enabled him to do and which added such realism to his historical and other types of tales. He even talked to old-timers in Texas, plumbing their recollections of early settlement days for background to his regional fiction. He also read many stories by authors in those literary markets he aspired to break into. What reference works REH might have used for the El Borak stories are unknown. The Robert E. Howard Bookshelf (<http://www.rehupa.com/OLDWEB/bookshelf.htm>) lists all books known to have been owned or read by Howard, but he also read library books and bought magazines.

Gordon was one of REH’s most popular characters and appeared in 17 novellas, short stories, and fragments. These fall into two groups: often fragmentary ones written when he was a juvenile and later ones written at the peak of his career and powers in the 1930s. These have been

collected, respectively, in *The Early Adventures of El Borak* (Robert E. Howard Foundation, 2010) and *El Borak and Other Desert Adventures* (Del Rey, 2010). In the latter, Gordon is a fully-realized character into which Howard had obviously put a great deal of work and research. Hardy combed the literature in search of characters, real or fictional, that REH might have used as a basis for Gordon. There are some similarities to the Britishers Lawrence of Arabia and General Charles “Chinese” Gordon, but Hardy identifies the American adventurer and mercenary Alexander Haughton Campbell Gardner (1785-1877) as Howard’s most probable model. Gordon’s middle name “Xavier” might have even come from Saint Xavier, a place in Mexico where he and his parents had lived. While Hardy makes a good case, there is no solid evidence; REH might have invented Gordon out of whole cloth.

Hardy would incorporate parts of this article in his expansive essay “Gunfighters of the Wild East” [8], in which he explains how the El Borak stories unite East and West, fantasy and reality, greed and selflessness, and a personal mythology that reflects on real-life adventures and comments on other writers’ works. Going through all the tales, he shows how they, sprawling

THE CIMMERIAN



VOLUME 1 NUMBER 2
JUNE 2004

over a 20-year span of creativity, draw motifs and elements from Howard's other works. Though Gordon is larger than life, there is a basic realism to his exploits that may be attributed to REH's research, sharper focus on what he wanted to do, and his ever-increasing mastery of his storytelling skills. Hardy discusses the influences on Howard of the oriental adventures of Rudyard Kipling (more "The Man Who Would Be King" than *Kim*) and Talbot Mundy (though Howard's plots were resolved more violently). Hardy suggests that Gordon's nickname of El Borak was probably taken from that of a pirate in Rafael Sabatini's novel *The Sea Hawk* rather than from the name of Mohammed's steed. While Gordon's origins as a Texas gunslinger may link him to the Western genre, it is more in the character of James Fenimore Cooper's frontier scout than that of a Zane Grey or Max Brand gunfighter. These Eastern stories employ a variety of locales, characters, motifs (captive rescue, quests for treasure or revenge, tests of strength, and international intrigue), genres, and even protagonists other than Gordon, such as Kirby O'Donnell. "The Gordon series is wild and restless; like its protagonist it refuses to settle into routine." [8, p. 553] Though the inspirations for these motifs may be seen in the work of other writers, Howard often inverts them to give them his own twist, such as making a captive woman not white and not an abductee but a runaway. The motivations and the attitudes of the characters are not glossed over or romanticized, but are well-drawn and practical. His characters are individualists to a man. And paramount among them is El Borak, who is utterly confident, courageous, self-sacrificing, loyal to friends and followers, and bent not on gain, but on justice. "Gordon is the ultimate individualist, beholden to no man, living by his own code, yet his constant motivation is loyalty to friends, to allies, even to India against the murderous ambitions of would-be conquerors." [8, p. 553] Hardy's own knowledge of the Orient and related literature is evident throughout the essay. The definitive treatment of the El Borak stories, this piece was the Third Place winner of the 2011 Robert E. Howard Foundation ("The Hyrkanian") Award for best essay.

Next on deck is REHupan Mark Finn with his essay "The Runyonesque Raconteur," in which he makes a fascinating comparison of Howard's humorous boxing stories, done for the pulps, with Damon Runyon's comic "Broadway stories" about buffoonish gangsters published in the slick magazines at the same time and later made into the musical "Guys and Dolls" and the movie "Little Miss Marker." Popular to this day, Runyon had written about boxing for newspapers through the 1920s and later penned some boxing fiction. Though very different people, REH and Runyon both had good ears for slang and vernacular that pervade their tales and both had abundant comedic talents. Though his fantasy is dark and grim, Howard's rollicking sense of humor is evident in the boxing yarns about sailor Steve Costigan a.k.a. Dennis Dorgan and in the humorous westerns starring Breckinridge Elkins and similar characters, all written at the height of his career and deserving to be better known. Though complete collections are still in the works, the largest ones for Costigan are *Waterfront Fists and Others* (Wildside, 2003) and *Boxing Stories* (Bison, 2005), while those for Elkins are *The Complete Action Stories* (Wildside, 2003) and *A Gent from Bear Creek and Other Tales* (Wildside, 2005).

REH and Runyon both read and wrote prose and poetry at an early age; both loved the Old West, the authors Bret Harte and Mark Twain, and boxing; and both were rapid producers of economical, exaggerated, and well-crafted prose. Finn compares their styles and plots, finding many similarities and differences. Runyon writes in the present tense using a reliable but unobtrusive narrator, while Howard writes in the past tense as the unreliable and clueless Costigan; both their narratives are in the first person. They both liked to insert comments about society and culture, and often made fun of the upper class.

Ultimately, what makes both series work so well is the simple fact that they are well-told stories. The characters each author created were extensions of themselves, containing certain elements of wish fulfillment, along with a lot of

personal experiences thrown in for good measure. The Broadway stories were wildly successful in their day and lived on for years after Runyon died, while Howard's funny boxing stories were some of his most profitable and popular yarns. (p. 19)

...

Howard's humorous boxing stories are, for me, as good as he gets. They have all the action, drama, and poetic violence of their darker, more realistic counterparts, with the added bonus of humor. That Howard the Bloodletter could also pen such funny stories is nothing short of remarkable. (p. 20)

REH wrote 47 boxing stories, humorous and otherwise, more than in any other genre. That he is not better remembered for them is the consequence of their once disreputable venues (the pulps), their spotty publication history, and their having been overshadowed by the popularity of Howard's fantasy, especially Conan. "That this prolific period of his career, one that was obviously so close to his heart, isn't more well known or more kindly looked upon is a savage blow to his literary legacy and his enduring memory." (p. 20)

The career and personality of REH have been compared to those of Ernest Hemingway, Jack London, H. P. Lovecraft, and Christopher Marlowe, but not as well as in this comparison with Runyon. Small wonder that Finn was to win the Cimmerian ("The Venarium") Award of 2005 for Emerging Scholar.

The review section of the zine concerns *The Barbaric Triumph* edited by Herron. The first review, by author Richard A. Lupoff, affirms that REH is a writer of greater substance and depth than one would expect for a producer of "mere" entertainment. "To my mind Robert E. Howard is eminently worthy of analysis, if for no other reason than his significant impact on American and international culture." (p. 21) After praising Hoffman's essay "Conan the Existential" for its insightful revelation of REH's deep interest in philosophy and precognition of Sartre's development of existentialism, Lupoff goes on to claim that Waterman's essay on Howard and irrationalism is really asking if REH was a mystic. Lupoff bases this on Waterman's quote from a letter from Howard to Lovecraft that states "Surely in its infancy mankind faced beings that live today only in dim ancestral memories, forgotten entirely by the material mind. Otherwise, why is it we half-visualize in that other, subconscious mind, perhaps, shapes beyond the power of man to describe?" Lupoff adds, "Was Howard talking about racial memory, or was he suggesting something even stranger and more fantastic, the mystic survival of beings long extinct and half-forgotten?" (p. 23) (Bunk; of course REH was just talking about racial memory.)

While discussing Herron's article "The Barbaric Triumph" on the characters and relationships of the three *Weird Tales* titans Howard, Lovecraft, and Clark Ashton Smith, Lupoff makes the simplistic assertion: "I think it would not be stretching a point to suggest that none of these three ever grew up. Each remained a little boy within himself throughout his life. Each remained attached to his Mommy or to a Mommy surrogate whether aunt or wife, for all of his days." (p. 27) Donald Sidney-Fryer would take him to task for such an assessment in his essay "In Defense of 'Little Boys'" in the next year's *TC*, as we'll see next time. Lupoff goes on to say that his vast experience as an author qualifies him to declare, "there is clearly an Oedipal element in the lives and works of the Three Titans. In Bob Howard's case the complex is most pronounced ..." (pp. 27 & 28) REHupan Steven Trout, however, has convincingly argued that conflict with his father may well have been more important than an attachment to his mother as a psychological driver. [9] Referring to Grin's essay "The Reign of Blood" on hate as a major factor in REH's

psychological makeup, Lupoff says, “And as for Bob Howard’s obsession with hate as the chief motivator of his characters, it does not take a psych wizard to perceive this fact: The hate that Howard felt was, at its core, self-hate.” (p. 28) (Really? What did he hate about himself, exactly? Does antipathy toward others necessary relate to one’s opinion of oneself? If it’s a self-esteem issue, where’s the evidence?)

Lupoff is certainly right when he concludes:

The end of Herron’s essay, and the end of the book, leaves one convinced that Lovecraft, Howard, and Smith have clearly won their places in the ranks of memorable authors of their century. Of the Three Titans, Robert E. Howard was the most productive and by far the most versatile. His talent was immense and universal. The tragedy of his suicide is therefore all the more profound, and his remembrance all the more deserved. (p. 28)

Lupoff does fault Herron for illogical sequencing of the chapters. He also points out that REH’s frequently used theme of the cyclic rise and fall of civilization vs. barbarism, referred to in the book’s title and Guillard’s essay in the book, is still being played out today in the rise and fall of Fascism and Communism and the challenge to Western civilization posed by Islamic extremism. “The barbarians [are] at the gates.” (p. 24) (But such extremists are not capable of overthrowing the West; its fall will come from the internal decay of liberty, public solvency, and socio-economic progress.)

The last review of *The Barbaric Triumph* is by editor, writer, and collector Robert Weinberg, who praises the book as deserving to be on the shelf of any Howard scholar, but he is less enthusiastic about its appeal for other readers. He claims the contributors are more intent upon criticizing those who find fault with or underestimate the Texan author than on criticizing or judging his work. “Instead of illuminating Howard’s skill, they cover his talent in a shroud of overblown rhetoric.” (p. 32) He concludes that the popularity of REH’s work is all that is ultimately important. “In a hundred years from now, all the explanations, all of the papers, all of the essays will be long forgotten. But, Conan will remain.” (p. 32) (Maybe, but I hope for more than that; Howard deserves better.)

Weinberg does make the interesting point that REH (and, by extension, his characters) may not be so much driven by hate, as Grin contends in his essay, as by rage. Hatred is focused and personal, while rage can be a more general reaction to the injustice or intolerability of a situation, which certainly sounds like it is more in keeping with what we know of Howard’s personal character.

The issue continues with a poem by Schweitzer and a couple excerpts from a journal kept by author Richard L. Tierney, who chronicled his and a friend’s visit to Cross Plains in October, 1965. They talked with the *Cross Plains Review*’s editor Jack Scott, who mentions seeing REH shadow-boxing down the street as he was apparently working out the action for his stories.

Ending the issue is the first letter column, “The Lion’s Den,” an obvious play on Grin’s first name. The initial letter is a laudatory one from Clark Ashton Smith scholar Ronald S. Hilger. “The bar has been raised considerably for other scholarly journals in our field.” (p. 36) He finds *TC* classily produced, well edited, and enjoyable to read. “There is little doubt in my mind that this journal will easily attract many notable contributors and quickly develop a substantial readership.” (p. 36) It would, indeed. The second and last letter is the one from Herron discussed previously.

Grin devotes half of the third issue of *The Cimmerian* (Vol. 1, #3, August 2004) to well-illustrated coverage of the 2004 Robert E. Howard Days celebration in REH's hometown of Cross Plains. Held on Friday and Saturday in the second week of June every year since the late 1990s, this event has become the world's largest gathering of Howard fans. Coming from all over the world, attendance is typically at least a hundred. A well-known figure in REH studies is always invited to be the Guest of Honor speaking at the banquet. Authorities on Howard, often REHupans, serve on panels discussing topics of current interest. The speakers, panelists, and other activities are arranged by REHupans in consultation with members of Project Pride, the local volunteer organization which owns and operates the Robert E. Howard Museum. Events are held at the museum's pavilion, the library, the community center, and often the high school. There are always tours of REH-related sites in and around town, as well as a silent auction at the banquet for donated items, with the proceeds going to Project Pride. Howard-related items are also available for purchase at the museum's gift shop. The event traditionally closes with a barbecue hosted, at their own expense, by the Middleton/Murray family, on whose Caddo Peak Ranch stands West Caddo Peak. West and East Caddo Peaks are referred to in REH's story "Spanish Gold on Devil Horse."

In "Cross Plains Memories," Grin gives an account of the festivities, interspersing his commentary with the experiences of fan Tom Verhaaren, novelist James Reasoner, and REHupans Finn, Romeo, Chris Gruber, Bill "Indy" Cavalier, and Damon Sasser. Sketching the timeless small-town atmosphere of Cross Plains, Grin notes:

Cross Plains has always been a Mecca of sorts for hardcore fans of Howard, but until the mid-eighties there was precious little for fans to see or do besides stare gloomily at his house from the street, wondering whether the town would ever see fit to honor its most famous son in some way. This all changed when Rusty Burke decided to drag members of the Robert E. Howard United Press Association down for a visit in 1986. Less than a dozen fans made up that first Howard Days roster. But the ladies who made up Project Pride—led by Billie Ruth Loving, a one-time student of Howard's girlfriend Novalyne Price—gave them a hearty welcome nonetheless. The genesis of Howard Days was born.
(p.5)

Thereafter, Project Pride, with the help of REH heir Alla Ray Morris, bought and restored the Howard House, got it added to the National Register of Historic Places, built a pavilion next to the House, and planted a historical marker near REH's grave in Greenleaf Cemetery in nearby Brownwood, the latter always attracting visitors paying their respects. The event got steadily bigger and later was held alongside the town's own fair, the Barbarian Festival. Both are much-needed boons to the local economy. The Cross Plains post office, named the Robert E. Howard Station, issues a special, limited-time postmark adorned with REH-related fan art, which is different every year. Unique Howard books, magazines, and typescripts are put on view at the Cross Plains Library.

This particular year, the Guest of Honor was author and bookseller Robert "Bob" Weinberg, twice winner of the World Fantasy Award, author of at least 16 books, editor of 120 more, co-owner of *Weird Tales*, and owner of an REH collection second in size only to Glenn Lord's. Panels were held on the many places in Texas Howard had visited or talked about, on REH's boxing experiences (at the remains of the very ice house where they took place), on the history of *Weird Tales*, on the Howard publishing Boom of the late 1960s and 1970s, and on REH literary criticism (especially the release of Herron's *The Barbaric Triumph*). Herron spurred the gift shop sales by initiating a Howard Days bookselling program in conjunction with Project Pride. But

more than any particular activity at Howard Days is the sense of camaraderie and shared fervor one unfailingly experiences there, making it an event every fan should do his best to attend.

Weinberg's keynote address at the banquet was entitled "Sacred Ground," from his statement:

As a fan and collector of Robert E. Howard for the past forty-six years, I can think of no greater honor. I've won many awards as a writer and an editor, but all of them pale in comparison to being the guest speaker at a festival celebrating the work of Robert E. Howard—held in the town where Robert E. Howard spent most of his short life. Because, truthfully, I feel these streets, these buildings, this land where Robert E. Howard once walked, is *sacred ground*. (p. 25)

By far most of his relatively short talk is on how he became addicted to collecting books and magazines, especially those containing REH, from the time he was 12 years old. He also wrote many articles about Howard. "Like a number of other Robert E. Howard fans of the time, I felt it was my duty, my obligation, to spread the word about Conan and Kull and Solomon Kane and their creator. And I kept buying everything being publishing with Robert E. Howard's name on it." (pp. 23 & 24) In 1976, he published *The Annotated Guide to Robert E. Howard's Sword & Sorcery* (Starmont House), the first book entirely devoted to REH's life and work. At the end of the heartfelt and well-received speech, he presented Project Pride with cancelled checks he had collected which were made out to REH as payment for his pulp stories.

Weinberg doesn't say so, but he didn't always have such a high opinion of Howard. In 1969, referring to E. Hoffmann Price's account of REH's supposed paranoia and his shooting at his so-called "enemies," Weinberg concludes:

[T]here is little doubt that the man needed psychological help.

...

The man had always been closely attached to his mother. When he learned that she was dying, the man drove out into the desert at 8:00 A.M. on June 11, 1936, and killed himself with the pistol he had kept for those enemies. In the last analysis, it is clear that *he* was his worst "enemy."

Howard was not, and never will be, considered a great writer. His stories suffer from hasty construction, and have many tremendous logical inconsistencies. The action is fast and crisp, but characterization in many tales is less than adequate. ... Howard had a liking for certain phrases and scenes. He always had bodies being cut in twain. He liked certain words, and used them with annoying regularity." [10]

Of course, Howard actually committed suicide just outside his home. Weinberg is just parroting an error made by de Camp. [11, p. 7] Lord corrected it in a note in *Amra*. [12] Fortunately, Weinberg had learned to better appreciate REH by the time he wrote his *Annotated Guide*.

Grin interviewed Weinberg after his speech and posted the text [13], though Weinberg is incorrect about the so-called "REH tribute" *Return to Wonder* #7 issue when he says it contained Howard reviews. His *Annotated Guide* was never reprinted.

The issue continues with a poem, “A Spirit on the Wind,” dedicated to Howard, by REHupan Frank Coffman.

Next comes an interview of Bob Baker by Grin, Herron, and Weinberg about his memories of REH, inspired by his *Cross Plains Review* article reprinted in the previous issue. According to Baker, Howard “talked real slow” with a voice “kind of like Humphrey Bogart’s. ... [He] wasn’t much for conversation,” but when you did get Howard going, “he was so darn smart, you felt belittled ... [Y]ou couldn’t understand what he was talking about, he was so far ahead of his time.” (p. 33) Baker remembered REH’s passion for exercise and his big hands, thick forearms, and handsome appearance. Sometimes, when he came into the room, he brought with him an almost palpable sense of danger, like you wouldn’t know what he might do.

In the letter column ending the issue, the first missive, by Schweitzer, notes that publisher Donald Grant did do a second, corrected printing of *The Hour of the Dragon* when, as Herron had mentioned, it was discovered that a passage was missing at the end of chapter six. (And I can confirm that an errata sheet was issued.) He also defends de Camp’s skill at literary criticism. “He was not a profound critic, but good at historical essays.” (p. 34) In response to Herron’s low appraisal of de Camp, Schweitzer adds:

My feeling is that REH fandom needs to chill out. It is way too political, with attacks on and defenses of Orthodoxy—the Party Line presently being very anti-de Camp, but likely to shift into the middle eventually—rather than actual considerations of the text. It needs to be more about what Howard wrote than what de Camp did. (p. 34)

Romeo follows with a letter dismissing as nonsense Herron’s claim that de Camp hurt REH’s reputation with his pastiches. “[S]aying that Howard’s literary reputation was hurt because of de Camp’s presence in the Conan series is as ridiculous as saying Frazetta’s artistic reputation was hurt by cover artist John Duillo’s presence in the same series.” (p. 35) Then Reasoner writes in to praise *The Cimmerian*. “You’ve achieved your goals so far: the magazine looks great, is fun to read, and manages to be intelligent, thought-provoking, and entertaining.” (p. 35) Regarding de Camp, Reasoner says, “I think every creative decision he made in the editing and re-writing of Howard’s work was wrong, but I don’t fault him for trying to make money off the situation.” (p. 37) Coffman follows with a letter differing with Grin about his implication that academic papers are not read or enjoyed by the average fan. “It is certainly true that some articles published in scholarly journals are in need of revision for readability ... and that some are genuinely pedantic, ... but this is most definitely not the universal or even common case.” (p. 37) He also defends the use of foot/endnotes as providing needed references and avenues for further study. Lastly, Charles Hoffman hails *The Barbaric Triumph* as “arguably the most significant contribution to Howard studies to date.” (p. 38) Consequently, he takes issue with the negative portion of Weinberg’s review of the book, saying:

I can’t really agree that the anthology is more properly referred to as a “critical defense” of REH; the only article that may be construed as seeming defensive of REH is mine, and that was written thirty years ago when Howard enjoyed far less critical acceptance than today.

...

The purpose of *The Barbaric Triumph*, *The Dark Man*, and *The Cimmerian* is not to bring “new” readers to REH as Weinberg suggests, but offer the observations of those with a deeper interest to like-minded individuals. (p. 38)

Cavalier reviews the first three issues of *TC* in his REHupa zine, concluding:

The Cimmerian is an absolute must-have for any Howard fan, collector and scholar ... It is an invaluable source of information, opinions, entertainment, solid reading and just plain good Howard journal-ing. We couldn't ask for anything better.” [14, p. 5]

Van Hise reviews *TC* #s 3 and 4 in his own REHupa zine. [15]

Half of *TC*, Vol. 1, #4 (Oct., 2004) is devoted to Rev. Robert M. “Bob” Price, writer, editor, anthologist of much Cthulhu-related fiction for the Lovecraft journal *Crypt of Cthulhu*, and the foremost religious authority in Howard studies, as we saw in our profile of him in a previous installment in this series. [16]

The first piece is “Reverend Bob on Two-Gun Bob: A Conversation with Robert M. Price” by REHupan Benjamin Szumskyj. Szumskyj conducted an e-mail interview of Price for his REHupa fanzine in 2000, which Leo Grin later expanded on. Price says he has no religious beliefs anymore, but has retained a great love for all the mythologies and symbol-systems that the human imagination has created in its long quest to make sense of the universe, including fantasy fiction and even comic books. Regarding Howard:

I was captivated instantly by the powerful narrative drive, the wonderfully evocative ancient color and atmosphere, and the sense of vanished grandeur one finds especially in Howard's Conan, Kull, and Crusader tales. Where else can one find a writer who magically melds together the best of Edgar Rice Burroughs and Talbot Mundy, whose works I also love? Howard's hybrid of modern hard-boiled sensibility and ancient poetic narration, reminiscent of the best of the biblical Genesis, remains unparalleled. As a skald of ancient fantastic epic he exceeds Tolkien, for my money, and I say so as one who loves Tolkien. (p. 6)

Price's favorite Howard character is Conan, about whom he says:

He is the most fully realized, the most mature, the most complex of Howard's characters. As Marc Cerasini and Charles Hoffman argue in their great *Reader's Guide to Robert E. Howard*, each of Howard's major heroes was his latest ego-ideal, put forth as a goal which he would then advance to attain. Conan was the greatest of these, and the tragedy was that he did not live long enough to become Conan.” (p. 11)

As to Howard's abilities and inspiration, Price repeats the old chestnut about creative people being crazy, though current studies indicate that such individuals are creative despite their problems, rather than because of them [17]. Price has no illusions about Howard ever gaining mainstream literary acceptance, the lack of which he in part

attributes to the fact that REH was racist. However, most Howard scholars now think he was no racist than was common for his time, and probably less so [18].

Price was a friend of Lin Carter, whose writing ability and enthusiasm he admired, though he thinks less of Carter's fiction after *Conan the Buccaneer* (1971). He also finds little to fault in de Camp's REH pastiches or biography.

The second Price-related article in the issue is his "The Last Temptation of Conan," reprinted from *Crypt of Cthulhu*. In it he reviews the 1996 movie *The Whole Wide World*, which was about the romance between Howard and Novalyne Price (later, Ellis) and based on her memoir *One Who Walk Alone: Robert E. Howard, The Final Years* (Grant, 1986). Rev. Price (no relation) likens Howard to a channeler of Conan and compares REH and his characters to Jesus and other literary and comic-book figures. Price claims REH's mother was his muse and that Howard had a divinely ordained mission (i.e. his writing) that entailed his own death.

Next in the issue is one of the best essays, and the best short essay, ever written about Howard: "Heart's Blood" by Grin. In less than three pages, he summarizes the unspeakable tragedy of REH's life: his desperate struggle to succeed during the Depression at the only job he could tolerate, a veritable outcast in a small, backwater town by far most of whose inhabitants regarded him as lazy or crazy. He was burdened with caring for his increasingly mother and suffering from depression himself, yet he was still able to produce much brilliant, zestful, and passionate prose and poetry that would not even earn him measurable recognition or respect until decades after his death. "For every three stories he wrote and peddled, he sold only one. ... With no ... training of any kind he wrote over three hundred short stories, several novel-length works, and over seven hundred poems. Yet on the day of his death he had never had a single book published, and the pulps owed a small fortune in back payments." (p. 21) At only 22, he was able to write to his friend Tevis Clyde Smith:

I am not a genius, neither am I clever, educated or especially intelligent. But I have faith in myself and a capacity for work. What I am writing now is less than nothing in the long run, even though it represents my heart's blood. The world is not interested in heart's blood, but Success Accomplished and nothing else. The toil, the sweat, the torment means nothing. What the world wants is perfection and of what lies behind, men reckon but little. A man may toil a lifetime, toil like a giant and perform the deeds of unthoughted heroes, but if he does not succeed, as the world measures success, all his labors and hardships go for naught and he is a jest and a by-word, soon forgotten.

But I'll succeed if I live, in my eyes and according to worldly standards, And when I come to the end of the trail, if I have lost, I can say that at least I never whimpered for sympathy in my work. And if I win I can say that I made it absolutely on my own with never a helping hand and that I owe nothing, not one damned thing, to anyone. ...

But God, the utter futility of it descends on the soul of me like a thick fog through which I can see no light. (p. 23)

Grin concludes, “Howard did not live to see his Success Accomplished, not a single book of it. His brain and dreams have been drunk by the dust, and only his heart’s blood remains. Yet that is enough” (p. 23)

Tierney, rightly called the most Howardian of all poets by Hoffmann Price, contributes a poem about his hero, Simon of Gitta.

Then Grin weighs in with “The Ghost of Fort McKavett,” a description of a decommissioned army fort in southwestern Texas that REH much admired and that General Sherman had called “the prettiest fort in Texas.” Howard took several pictures there, including a well-known one of himself, in 1933. “Several Howard fans over the years have attempted to find the exact set of ruins that Howard had posed in front of, but so far none have been successful.” (p. 31) Little did Grin know that his article would inspire one reader to do exactly that.

Starting off the letter column is Glenn Lord, who notes that he had met Bob Baker’s brother Earl, according to Bob’s recommendation, but found that Earl did not know much about REH. Lord also mentions that another copy of the extremely rare *A Gent from Bear Creek* (Jenkins, 1937) had surfaced in England.

Herron follows with another quote from Bob Baker, that Hester Howard was “a weird woman” (p. 32), and several return lobs at Schweitzer and Romeo, including the observation that de Camp’s “school of criticism” in *Amra* never rose above the level of “Hyborian scholarship” and that Schweitzer’s statement that *Sword & Sorcery* was dead was belied by its prevalence in movies and games and on television and the Web.

Fan Jack Jones writes in to exult over how much the Howard Days programming had improved in both quantity and quality. He was most impressed with the dynamic presentation of Finn and Gruber about REH’s boxing at the ice house. He declares that:

Robert E. Howard is alive and well. There’s energy and excitement in his works. Books are being republished; new journals are emerging dedicated to his life and stories, and old ones reborn; fanzines are being published; a new line of Conan comics has appeared; screenplays are being written; Conan computer games are available; statues and figurines are available; etc., etc. etc.—REH is happening! There are “old-timers” like Weinberg, Herron, Lord, Burke & myself involved. But more important, there also appears to be an ever growing base of new “young blood” out there actively involved in the REH movement; the likes of Leo Grin, the above-mentioned Gruber & Finn, Paul Herman, etc.; not to mention the youngsters reading the comics and playing the computer games. (p. 35)

This is in contrast, he notes, with the media and convention scene concerning Burroughs and Tarzan, which he finds downright ossified and lethargic, despite the fact that Tarzan is a better known character than Conan.

Longtime member of Project Pride and sales manager of the Howard Museum Gift Shop, Era Lee Hanke, announces the death of Project Pride member and past president Joe Howser, as well as some improvements to the Howard House.

Bob Baker suggests that his sister Marie Baker Andrews might be contacted for information about REH.

Schweitzer closes the letter column with a defense of Farnsworth Wright, saying he was a much better and more successful editor of *Weird Tales* than was his predecessor and attributing his slow story payments to the business climate of the Depression. Schweitzer credits Wright with knowing how to balance popular junk by such authors as Seabury Quinn with the artistic material of Howard and Clark Ashton Smith, keeping *WT* afloat for 15 years throughout the Depression.

Can we say that Wright ever sinned against Robert E. Howard editorially? He published REH's first story, and quite a bit more. He featured him prominently. As you can see by comparing the published and unpublished versions of "The Phoenix on the Sword," Wright's requests for revision were quite sensible and improved the story. It is true he rejected some of REH's material, even Conan stories, but not the best ones. It was REH who made the mistake of submitting three to Wright at once, at the outset. That is always bad strategy. The editor will likely choose the best of the lot and return the rest. When offered "The Frost Giant's Daughter," "The God in the Bowl," and "The Phoenix on the Sword" all at once, Wright took the latter. A sound choice. What the author should do, of course, is send in the stories one at a time, so as not to compete with himself.

...

Let's put it simply: No Wright, no Conan, Kull, or Solomon Kane. If Wright had not bought a lot of Howard in the '20s, would REH even have had a career, or mightn't he have given up? (p. 37)

Ending the issue is an obituary for Joe Howser (1926-2004).

Gramlich reviews *TC* #s 3 & #4 in his REHupa zine [19] and the first four issues of *The Cimmerian* in *The Dark Man* journal. [20] He finds distasteful the controversy Grin apparently likes to incite and again denounces the plagiarism charges made against Louinet. He says the rough-and-tumble argumentative style of the letter column tends to be the highlight of many issues. "Although not everything works perfectly, [Grin] is to be commended for his efforts and his attention to detail." [20, p. 87]

The last issue of the first year and volume of *TC*, #5 for December 2004, is devoted to celebrating the 20th anniversary of the publication of Herron's *The Dark Barbarian* (*TDB*). In his editorial, Grin remarks on the critical anthology's long road from obscurity to acknowledged classic.

The first review of *TDB*, by Schweitzer, praises Herron for eliciting the book's excellent contents from such an array of REH experts as Fritz Leiber, while keeping the text free of academic jargon. "[T]he essential message of *The Dark Barbarian* ... [is that Howard] is worth taking seriously. His work has survived the test of time. ... Howard is culturally significant. ... [*TDB*] puts so much in perspective for the first time. It establishes that Robert E. Howard's work stands above and apart from the work of some of the hugely-successful pulp hacks of the '30s, whose writings are now dust. It tells the world that Robert E. Howard matters. ... *The Dark Barbarian* remains a model of how to do it right." (pp. 5 & 6)

Hoffman contributes the next review, pointing out how little critical work had been done on REH prior to *TDB* besides Hoffman's own essay, "Conan the Existentialist" [21], in contrast to the present, when we are graced with such publications as *The Barbaric Triumph*, *The Dark Man*, *The Cimmerian*, and others by REHupans. "This is entirely due to the lasting influence of *The Dark Barbarian*, the book that begat modern Howard criticism." (p. 7) In the book, Leiber offers his appreciation of the vividness, color, and grandeur of Howard's fiction. "If Howard is remembered for nothing else, he merits recognition as an important figure in twentieth-century art due to his dominant position as a pioneer of sexy, violent entertainment." (p. 7) Hoffman finds the best essays in the volume to be Leiber's on REH's fantasy, Ben P. Indick's on his westerns, and Steve Eng's on his poetry, as well as the one by Knight (a.k.a. Herron), which asserts that "Howard had more in common with the gritty hard-boiled school of pulp crime fiction, exemplified by Hammett and Chandler, than with the more refined, esoteric school of fantasy." (p. 9) Hoffman feels that the quality of REH criticism has come of age and is as good or better than the general run of Lovecraft criticism. "So why has the quantity of critical appreciation given Howard lagged so far behind that accorded H. P. Lovecraft? ... [I]t boils down to this: Lovecraft is a critic's writer, and Howard is a writer's writer" (p. 11), i.e. Howard's literary craftsmanship is more likely to be, and has been, more appreciated by authors than critics.

The centerpiece of the issue is the text of Herron's Guest of Honor speech from the previous year's Howard Days, "Thirty Years as a Howard Critic (in Twenty Minutes or Less)." He starts by describing his taking on de Camp for that author's REH pastiches and posthumous collaborations in his 1976 essay, "Conan vs. Conantics" [3]. "Yeah, I know L. Sprague de Camp was a professional science fiction writer with lots of books published, and he was kind of a scary guy for fan people to take on in that era. But he wasn't really competition for me, not when you got down to it." This brazen confidence shines throughout the speech and (as he himself acknowledges) often turns people against him who have only read his acerbic reviews, but he comes across as a very different, amiable sort when one meets him in person. And of course he did win the face-off, the

conflict finally resulting in the REH-only, pure-texts of the Wandering Star/Del Rey editions. Herron details some of the stupid passages in de Camp and Carter pastiches and discusses the exchanges between him and de Camp. Then he goes into his difficulties shepherding *TDB* past the academic editors and into print, as well as his stints in REHupa and on *The Dark Man* editorial board pushing to get more Howard-related material published. He also comments on how good the Howard House looks now, even compared to others important in literary history.

After the text of Herron's speech come reprints of reviews of *TDB* published soon after its 1984 release by the critics Cerasini, Michael M. Levy, Leiber, C. J. Henderson, J. R. Cox, Schweitzer, Hoffman, and Jesse F. Knight, documenting the book's positive reception. They generally agree that REH is overdue for critical recognition and that the book will be an important step toward that. Cerasini opines:

Too often Howard's work is denigrated because he was an author who earned a living through his pen; because he was a "physical" writer; or simply because the great majority of mainstream critics love dragons, elves, hobbits and trolls, but don't like the common man very much.

This central hypocrisy of the elitist, pseudo-Marxist literary "establishment" in America today is probably the only barrier to full critical acceptance of Howard's accomplishments. These critics resist the reality Howard depicted—one full of danger and violence; they eschew "commercial writers" who write to be read by the *masses*; and they are fearful and distrusting of the *individual*—that is, one who can challenge their position as self-styled arbiters of taste. They, of course, forget that what "speaks" to people is what they read, hence it is "literature." Howard's work needs no institution dedicated to prolonging its life, as many a "classic" does. As Knight and others in *The Dark Barbarian* point out, it is careless to dismiss Howard's fiction in so cavalier a manner. (pp. 21 & 22)

Schweitzer called the book the finest critical anthology he has ever read, and he largely concurs with that assessment in his review earlier in the issue.

Sidney-Fryer returns next with a poem translated from José-Maria de Heredia.

The last letter column of the volume opens with Schweitzer replying to Herron, reiterating that Wright did not wrong REH other than by not paying him on time, which he was doing not because he was a crook, but because he was doing what was necessary to keep the magazine alive. In a more convincing response to Herron, he surveys the current print market for *Sword & Sorcery*, concluding that it is too weak to survive much longer and that the general character of the subgenre is changing to such a degree that its very name is becoming inapplicable. Then Kevin L. Cook writes in to contribute to the debate about de Camp's effect on Howard, stating that de Camp was arrogant in deciding that *he* knew Conan better than REH (witness what he did to "The Black Stranger").

Glenn Lord also appears, noting that he is searching for a copy of a memorial volume of *The Junto* that should have contained Howard poetry, but which probably does not survive. Romeo submits a letter describing Texas forts that he considers “prettier” than Fort McKavett.

Letters by Herron and REHupan Morgan Holmes finish off the issue, taking on Schweitzer and Weinberg over the matter of Wright’s editorial competence. Herron argues that just a few critical acceptances might have made a great deal of difference in whether Howard, Lovecraft, and Smith continued to write fantasies. Wright rejected Lovecraft’s “At the Mountains of Madness,” “The Shadow over Innsmouth,” “The Shunned House,” and “Cool Air” and almost rejected “The Call of Cthulhu.” These rejections were a severe blow to HPL financially and psychologically, resulting, as Holmes says, in the total absence of original work by that author in *Weird Tales* for over 5 years. (In a letter the next issue, though, Schweitzer points out that Holmes overlooked “Dreams in the Witch House” and “Through the Gates of the Silver Key.”) Wright rejected strong stories while generally accepting much trash, and even changed his mind about the rejected stories, publishing them later. He was vague and inconsistent about rejecting what he did. Holmes declares, “His constant flip-flopping ... shows he had no real conception of what his readers really wanted.” (p. 38) Wright rejected REH’s “The Frost Giant’s Daughter,” “The God in the Bowl,” and “The Black Stranger,” among others, and even so ended up owing the writer around \$3000 at the time of his death, which Herron sees as at least a psychological factor in his suicide. Herron also maintains that good editors knew how to build up a stable of strong writers by judicious encouragement and acceptances and would not need to “scrape along as Wright did by relying on bottom-of-the-barrel crap.” (p. 35) By doing the former, Wright would have had a wider circulation and, hence, the money to pay REH and buy more from him. Wright published much by the popular Seabury Quinn, Edmond Hamilton, and Arthur J. Burks, but *Weird Tales* is remembered today not for those writers, but for Howard, Lovecraft, and Smith. How many more stories might we now have from that triumvirate if not for Wright? And at least eight stories from Howard are now lost forever because Wright rejected them.

As if five issues were not enough, Grin followed this and all the remaining volumes with a 40-page annual index, in a run of 75 copies in the deluxe format. He exhaustively indexed all the contents by author, title, and subject, also including a catalog of the art and details about the contributors.

In only five issues over 10 months, Grin had already published more total pages on REH than had appeared to that date in any other zine, regardless of length of run. Moreover, the same could be said for the number of excellent articles and letters. And, as we’ll see next time, he was just getting started.

REFERENCES

- [1] Breakiron, Lee A., “*The Dark Man Men, Part Two*” in *The Nemedian Chroniclers #11*, pp. 1-17 in REHupa Mailing #234 (Apr., 2012)

- [2] Grin, Leo, quoted by Herron, Don, 19 Apr. 2006 post at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rehinnercircle/>
- [3] “Conan vs. Conantics” in *And in His Dream #5*, pp. 2-9 in The Hyperborean League Mailing #5 (Oct., 1976); reprinted in *REH: Two-Gun Raconteur #3*, Vol. 1, #3 (Black Coast Press, Houston), pp. 23-31 (winter, 1976) & in *Pusad Regurgitated #1*, pp. 2-10 in REHupa Mailing #96 (Mar., 1989); reprinted in “Yours for Faster Hippos: Thirty Years of ‘Conan vs. Conantics’” in *The Cimmerian Library, Vol. 4* (Leo Grin, Playa del Rey, Cal., 2007), pp. 6-17 followed by commentary; posted with intro. at http://www.donherron.com/?page_id=1539; see letters by Daniel Gobbett, Paul C. Allen, L. Sprague de Camp, Don Herron, Loay Hall, & Kevin Cook in *REH:TGR #4*, pp. 4, 5, & 36
- [4] Henderson, Scotty, 18 Oct. 2002 post at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rehinnercircle/>
- [5] Schweizer, Darrell, *Conan’s World and Robert E. Howard* (Borgo Press, San Bernardino, Cal., 1978), p. 58
- [6] Van Hise, James, “The Modern Revival of Robert E. Howard Fandom” in *The Road to Velitrium #53*, pp. 2-4 in REHupa Mailing #188 (Aug., 2004)
- [7] Gramlich, Charles A., “REH Publishing Updates” in *Razored Zen #71*, pp. 14 & 15 in REHupa Mailing #188 (Aug., 2004)
- [8] Hardy, David A., “Gunfighters of the Wild East” in *El Borak and Other Desert Adventures* Del Rey/Ballantine Books, New York, 2010), pp. 529-553
- [9] Trout, Steven, “Cold Cuts” in *The Cimmerian Blog*, 27 Feb. 2009 at <http://thecimmerian.com>
- [10] Weinberg, Robert, “Some Notes on Robert E. Howard” in *Return to Wonder #7* (Stephen Riley, Framingham, Mass., Nov./Dec., 1969), pp. 4-7
- [11] De Camp, L. Sprague, Introduction to *King Conan* (Gnome Press, New York, 1953), pp. 7-11
- [12] Lord, Glenn, “On the True Circumstances of Howard’s Death” in *Amra, Vol. 2, #2* (George H. Scithers, Stanford, Cal., 1959), p. 10
- [13] Grin, Leo, “An Interview with Robert Weinberg,” http://www.rehupa.com/OLDWEB/weinberg_interview.htm
- [14] Cavalier, Bill, *Cold Steel #111* in REHupa Mailing #189 (Oct., 2004)
- [15] Van Hise, James, “The Modern Revival of Robert E. Howard Fandom Continues,” in *The Road to Velitrium #54* in REHupa Mailing #190 (Dec., 2004)
- [16] Breakiron, Lee A., “The Cromlechers” in *The Nemedian Chroniclers #9*, pp. 1-27 in REHupa Mailing #230 (Aug., 2011); reprinted at REHEAPA (<http://www.robert-e-howard.org>, Vernal Equinox, 2012), pp. 1-26

- [17] Gramlich, Charles A., "REH Endnote 2" in *Razored Zen* #73, pp. 10-13 in REHupa Mailing #191 (Feb., 2005)
- [18] Finn, Mark, "Southwestern Discomfit: An Analysis of Gary Romeo's Controversial Article on Robert E. Howard and Racism" in *The Howard Guerilla*, pp. 3-19 in REHupa Mailing #227 (Feb., 2011); posted at <http://www.rehupa.com/?cat=14>
- [19] Gramlich, Charles A., "REH Endnote 2" in *Razored Zen* #73, pp. 9-13 in REHupa Mailing #191 (Dec., 2005)
- [20] Gramlich, Charles A., Review of *The Cimmerian* #s 1-4 in *The Dark Man*, Vol. 2, #1/2 (spring, 2006), pp. 82-87
- [21] Hoffman, Charles, "Conan the Existentialist" in *Amra*, Vol. 2, #61 (Terminus, Owlswick, & Ft. Mudge Electric St. Railway Gazette, Philadelphia, Mar., 1974), pp. 14-17; expanded as "Conan the Existential" in *Ariel* #1 (Morning Star Press, Leawood, Kan.), pp. 77-80 (autumn, 1976); revised in *Cromlech* #1, Vol. 1, #1 (Marc A. Cerasini, New York, spring, 1985), pp. 4-13 & in *The Barbaric Triumph: A Critical Anthology on the Writings of Robert E. Howard* (ed. Don Herron; Wildside Press, Berkeley Heights, N.J., 2004), pp. 5-10

THE ROBERT E. HOWARD BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SECONDARY SOURCES, PART XIII

The list of articles below is complete insofar as it contains all items relating to Howard, excepting those by Howard himself (being primary references and cataloged elsewhere) and those inspired by Howard, such as poems by others (being primary references by those authors). It is in alphabetical order by author and then by title. The abstract, if any, is in brackets.

The Cimmerian, Vol. 1

(prozine edited by Leo Grin)

AUTHOR	REFERENCE
Baker, Robert C. "Bob"	"A Few Hours from Death" [his viewing of the dying REH], letter in Cross Plains Review (Tex. newspaper), unnum. p. (6 Nov. 2003); reprinted in The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #1 (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), p. 38 (Apr., 2004)
Baker, Robert C. "Bob"	Letter [says his living sister Marie Baker Andrews knew REH] in The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #4 (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), p. 36 (Oct., 2004)
Cerasini, Marc A.	Review of <i>The Dark Barbarian: The Writings of Robert E. Howard – A Critical Anthology</i> (ed. Don Herron; Greenwood, 1984) in Crypt of Cthulhu #25 (Cryptic Pubs., Bloomfield, N.J.), pp. 49-51 (Sept., 1984); reprinted in The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #5 (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 21 & 22 (Dec., 2004)
Coffman, D. Frank, Jr.	Letter [on proper referencing in formal REH criticism] in The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #3 (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), p. 37 (Aug., 2004)
Cook, Kevin L.	Letter [on de Camp's effect on REH's reputation] in The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #5 (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), p. 31 (Dec., 2004)
Cox, J. R.	Review of <i>The Dark Barbarian: The Writings of Robert E. Howard – A Critical Anthology</i> (ed. Don Herron; Greenwood, 1984) in Choice (Association of College and Research Libraries, Chicago, Ill.), p. 680 (Jan., 1985); reprinted in The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #5 (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), p. 23 (Dec., 2004)
de Camp, L. Sprague	Letter dated 20 May, 1984 [on his experiences researching his REH bio <i>Dark Valley Destiny</i> (Bluejay, 1983)] in REHupa Mailing #70, The Golden Caliph , p. 5 (July, 1984); excerpt reprinted in The Cimmerian, Vol. 2, #6 (Leo Grin, Playa del Rey, Cal.), pp. 30 & 31 (Dec., 2005)
Finn, Mark	"The Runyanesque Raconteur" [compares REH & Damon Runyon, esp. their boxing and humorous stories] in The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #2 (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 13-20 (June, 2004)

- Grin, Leo “Cross Plains Memories” [recapping the events of Howard Days 2004] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #3** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 4-20 w/13 photos (Aug., 2004)
- Grin, Leo “Heart’s Blood” [REH’s drive to become a professional writer, his suicidal depression, & his underrated reputation] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #4** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 21-23 (Oct., 2004)
- Grin, Leo “Hell Needs a New Devil” [crediting Wandering Star with finally ameliorating textual inaccuracies in REH stories] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #1** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 30-32 (Apr., 2004)
- Grin, Leo “The Hosts of Fort McKavett” [history & description of an army fort visited & admired by REH] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #4** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 26-31 w/16 photos (Oct., 2004)
- Grin, Leo “Requiescat in Pace: Joe Howser 1926-2004” [bio of a president of Project Pride] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #4** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), p. 38 (Oct., 2004)
- Hanke, Era Lee Letter [on the death of Joe Howser of Project Pride & comments about the REH House] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #4** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 35 & 36 (Oct., 2004)
- Hardy, David A. “The Great Game” [inspiration & development of & realism in the El Borak stories] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #2** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 3-12 (June, 2004)
- Henderson, C. J. Review of *The Dark Barbarian: The Writings of Robert E. Howard – A Critical Anthology* (ed. Don Herron; Greenwood, 1984) & of *Dark Valley Destiny: The Life of Robert E. Howard* (by L. S. de Camp *et al.*, Bluejay, 1983) in **Whispers #s 21 & 22**, Vol. 6, #s 1 & 2 (Stuart David Schiff, Binghamton, N.Y.), pp. 109 & 110 (Dec., 1984); reprinted in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #5** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), p. 23 (Dec., 2004)
- Herron, Don “Conan the Expensive” [history of Conan books from Arkham House to Wandering Star, esp. re: editorial treatment, textual accuracy, & pastiches] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #1** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 5-13 (Apr., 2004)
- Herron, Don “He Was Deadly” [interview of Robert C. “Bob” Baker of Cross Plains, Tex., reminiscing about having met REH] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #3** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 32 & 33 w/photo (Aug., 2004)
- Herron, Don Letter [rebutts Romeo’s argument in “Napoleon’s Triumph?” that de Camp did not harm REH’s reputation] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #2** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 36-38 (June, 2004); see Romeo’s reply in **#3**

- Herron, Don Letter [rebutts criticisms in letters by Schweitzer & Romeo in **TC #3**] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #4** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 32-34 (Oct., 2004); see Schweitzer's reply in **#5**
- Herron, Don Letter [refutes Schweitzer's defense of *Weird Tales* editor Farnsworth Wright] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #5** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 32-36 (Dec., 2004)
- Herron, Don "Thirty Years as a Howard Critic (in Twenty Minutes or Less)" [his Guest of Honor address at Howard Days 2003; retrospective review of his *The Dark Barbarian: The Writings of Robert E. Howard – A Critical Anthology* (Greenwood, 1984) & his related career] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #5** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 13-20 w/photo (Dec., 2004)
- Hilger, Ronald S. Letter [praises **TC, Vol. 1, #1**] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #2** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), p. 36 (June, 2004)
- Hoffman, Charles "Hard-Boiled Heroic Critic" [retrospective review of *The Dark Barbarian: The Writings of Robert E. Howard – A Critical Anthology* (ed. Don Herron; Greenwood, 1984)] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #5** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 6-12 (Dec., 2004)
- Hoffman, Charles Letter [on S. T. Joshi & *The Barbaric Triumph* (ed. Don Herron; Wildside, 2004)] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #3** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), p. 38 (Aug., 2004)
- Hoffman, Charles Review of *The Dark Barbarian: The Writings of Robert E. Howard – A Critical Anthology* (ed. Don Herron; Greenwood, 1984) in **Cromlech #1, Vol. 1, #1** (Marc A. Cerasini, New York), pp. 43-45 (spring, 1985; reprinted in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #5** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 25 & 26 (Dec., 2004)
- Holmes, Morgan Letter [on the history of *Weird Tales* editors, esp. Farnsworth Wright] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #5** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 36-38 (Dec., 2004)
- Jones, Jack Letter [reminiscing on his visits to Cross Plains, Tex., in 1993 & for Howard Days 2004] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #4** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 34 & 35 (Oct., 2004)
- Knight, Jesse F. Review of *The Dark Barbarian: The Writings of Robert E. Howard – A Critical Anthology* (ed. Don Herron; Greenwood, 1984) in **The Romantist #s 6-8** (F. Marion Crawford Memorial Society, Nashville, Tenn., 1986), p. 61 & 62; reprinted in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #5** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), p. 26 (Dec., 2004)
- Kraar, Don Review of *The Dark Barbarian: The Writings of Robert E. Howard – A Critical Anthology* (ed. Don Herron; Greenwood, 1984) in **The Savage Sword of Conan #109** (Marvel Comics Group, New York), p.

- 5 (Feb., 1985); reprinted in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #5** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), p. 24 (Dec., 2004)
- Leiber, Fritz Review of *The Dark Barbarian: The Writings of Robert E. Howard – A Critical Anthology* (ed. by Don Herron; Greenwood, 1984) in **Locus #284**, Vol. 17, #10 (Oakland, Cal.), p. 11 (Oct., 1984); reprinted in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #5** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), p. 23 (Dec., 2004)
- Levy, Michael M. “REH: Solid Old-Fashioned Appreciative Criticism—*The Dark Barbarian*” [review of *The Dark Barbarian: The Writings of Robert E. Howard – A Critical Anthology* (ed. Don Herron; Greenwood, 1984) in **Fantasy Review #72**, Vol. 7, #9 (Florida Atlantic Univ., Boca Raton, Fla.), pp. 37 & 38 (Oct., 1984); reprinted in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #5** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 22 & 23 (Dec., 2004)
- Lord, Glenn Letter [on Earl Baker of Cross Plains, Tex., & a copy of *A Gent from Bear Creek* (Jenkins, 1937)] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #4** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), p. 32 (Oct., 2004)
- Lord, Glenn Letter [on his search for an issue of *The Junto* prob. containing some REH poems] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #5** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), p. 31 (Dec., 2004)
- Lupoff, Richard A. “Dog in the Manger: A Review of *The Barbaric Triumph*” (ed. Don Herron; Wildside, 2004) [contains judgments about the work & psyches of REH, Lovecraft, & C. A. Smith] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #2** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 21-29 (June, 2004)
- Price, Robert M. “The Last Temptation of Conan” in **Crypt of Cthulhu #93** [review of *The Whole Wide World* (1996) movie, likening REH to a channeler of Conan, & comparing REH & his characters to Jesus & other literary & comic-book figures] in **Crypt of Cthulhu #93**, Vol. 15, #3 (Necronomicon Press, West Warwick, R.I.), pp. 49-54 (Aug., 1996); reprinted in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #4** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 13-17 (Oct., 2004)
- Reasoner, James Letter [remarks on editing REH & the popularity of the Zebra editions] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #3** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 35-37 (Aug., 2004)
- Romeo, Gary Letter [counters Herron’s arguments in **TC #2** that de Camp hurt, more than helped, REH’s reputation] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #3** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), p. 35 (Aug., 2004); see Herron’s reply in **#4**
- Romeo, Gary Letter [on REH’s visits to & knowledge of Texan forts] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #5** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), p. 32 (Dec., 2004)
- Romeo, Gary “Napoleon’s Triumph?” [criticizes lack of credit given in the *Wandering Star* Conan books to de Camp’s promotion of REH] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #1** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 20-29 (Apr., 2004); see Herron’s reply in **#2**

REHEAPA Summer Solstice 2013

- Schweitzer, Darrell “After Twenty Years, a Landmark” [retrospective review of *The Dark Barbarian: The Writings of Robert E. Howard – A Critical Anthology* (ed. Don Herron; Greenwood, 1984)] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #5** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 4-6 (Dec., 2004)
- Schweitzer, Darrell Letter [remarks about Seabury Quinn, Don Herron, *Amra*, & REH fandom] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #3** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 34 & 35 (Aug., 2004); see Herron’s reply in **#4**
- Schweitzer, Darrell Letter [defends Farnsworth Wright, criticized by Don Herron in Grin’s article in **TC #3**] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #4** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 36 & 37 (Oct., 2004); see Herron’s reply in **#5**
- Schweitzer, Darrell Letter [responds to Herron’s letter in **TC #4**, incl. about the current state of *Sword & Sorcery*] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #5** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 29-31 (Dec., 2004); see letter by Tompkins in **Vol. 2, #3**
- Schweitzer, Darrell “The One and Authentic Cimmerian” [defense of de Camp’s treatment, esp. editing, of REH’s Conan stories] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #1** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 14-19 (Apr., 2004)
- Schweitzer, Darrell Review of *The Dark Barbarian: The Writings of Robert E. Howard – A Critical Anthology* (ed. Don Herron; Greenwood, 1984) in **Science Fiction Review #54**, Vol. 14, #1 (Richard E. Geis, Portland, Ore.), p. 53 (spring, 1985); reprinted in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #5** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), p. 24 (Dec., 2004)
- Szumskyj, Benjamin “Interview of Robert M. Price” [his career, beliefs, admiration for, & publishing of REH, with remarks about Lin Carter, de Camp, & Lovecraft] in *A Dei in Texas #1*, pp. 4-8 in **REHupa Mailing #166** (Dec., 2000); expanded by Leo Grin as “Reverend Bob on Two-Gun Bob: A Conversation with Robert M Price” in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #4** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 4-12 w/photo (Oct., 2004)
- Tierney, Richard L. “Cross Plains Journal” [diary of his visit to Brownwood & Cross Plains, Tex., in 1965, incl. a talk with Jack Scott] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #2** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), p. 35 (June, 2004)
- Weinberg, Robert “Sacred Ground” [his Guest of Honor address at Howard Days 2004, describing his REH collecting & donation of REH story payment checks to Project Pride] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #3** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 21-26 w/photo (Aug., 2004)
- Weinberg, Robert “Small Poets Sing: Two Reviews of *The Barbaric Triumph* (ed. Don Herron; Wildside 2004) [concludes it is more for scholars than fans] in **The Cimmerian, Vol. 1, #2** (Leo Grin, Downey, Cal.), pp. 30-32 (June, 2004)