Editor Leo Grin, in the July 2006 issue of his prozine *The Cimmerian* (Vol. 3, #7), effuses about “the most anticipated event of the entire centennial year: Howard Days. Yes, it was everything we dreamed it would be. Over three hundred attendees. Three days of non-stop Howard action. Thousands of dollars in auction items and swap-met swag. Stories and guests and Vietnam flashbacks, oh my. It’s all here within these pages.” (p. 3) He’d covered the two previous annual Robert E. Howard Days celebrations himself, but for this event he decided to pass off the duty to another fan in order to get a fresh perspective. His choice was newspaperman Rick Kelsey of Dallas, who brought his reporting experience to bear with good effect in his “Celebration of the Century,” his 23-page, photo-studded article covering the epochal happening.
And quite an event it was. Expanded to 3 days from 2 meant more panels, get-togethers, and things to do and talk about. It meant larger crowds and new faces, and its economic boon couldn’t have come at a better time for REH’s hometown of Cross Plains, Texas, whose residents were still recovering from the effects of the wildfire of December, 2005, though they had cleaned up so well that one had to look twice to see evidence of the devastation. Project Pride’s Era Lee Hanke testified to the larger-than-normal crowds. “I would imagine there were over three hundred. We had people from twenty states, five foreign countries, France, Germany, Sweden, England, and Canada. The gift shop was indeed very busy all the time.” (p. 6) Kelsey quotes liberally from several attendees, including REHupans Rusty Burke, Bill Cavalier, Mark Finn, Chris Gruber, Scott Hall, Dave Hardy, Gary Romeo, and Damon Sasser; former REHupans Paul Herman and Don Herron; and on-and-off-again REHupan Dennis McHaney, many of whom were actively involved in the many events and the necessary publicizing thereof. Kelsey weaves a sprawling tapestry of scenes and experiences that gives one a good sense of what it was like to be there.

For the first time there were two Guests of Honor: Glenn Lord (1931-2011), godfather of all Howard scholarship and fandom, and Roy Thomas, scripter of the first, and most, of the Marvel comics about Conan and other REH characters that did so much to popularize the Texas author and his creations. There were in fact so many attendees that the usual banquet featuring a Guest of Honor speaker had to be forgone, since the CP Community Center would have been an inadequate venue, and the partially burnt town did need to benefit from visitors seeking sustenance.

Not one for public speaking, Lord was interviewed in the CP high school gymnasium by Herman and then took questions from the audience. Lord said that he discovered Howard’s stories around 1951 in the book Skull-Face and Others (Arkham House, 1946), then started buying up the pulps containing REH, and started publishing his fanzine The Howard Collector [1,2] in 1961 to disseminate the information and rarer pieces he had found. Visiting Cross Plains in 1957, he found out about a trunk that had been in Howard’s room after his death that was filled with thousands of typed pages. REH’s father, Dr. I. M. Howard, had sent it to pulp writer E. Hoffmann Price, who in turn had loaned it to someone else. Lord was finally able to track down and purchase the trunk’s contents for a little less than $1,000. It contained hundreds of stories (some fragmentary), drafts, poems, and letters. Lord published these between then and 2007, often in REH fanzines. These and the book and magazine deals he arranged acting as agent for the Howard heirs between 1965 and 1993 netted them more than two million dollars and led directly to the 20-year Howard publishing Boom beginning in 1966. The Howard Collector and Lord’s bio-bibliography The Last Celt: A Bio-Bibliography or Robert Ervin Howard (Grant, 1976) provided the foundation of all subsequent REH scholarship. He eventually amassed a collection of some 400 boxes of REH-related items, the largest such in the world. In 2013, nine boxes of 14,000 typescript pages were donated to the University of Texas’s Harry Ransom Center [3], having been appraised at 26.8 million dollars [4].

The high school was also the site of an interview with Roy Thomas and a performance of two plays, an adaptation of REH’s Sailor Costigan yarn “Waterfront Fists” and his girlfriend Novalyne Price Ellis’s “Day of the Stranger,” enacted by Finn and his Violet Crown Radio Players, who specialize in such dramatizations for live radio and who have recorded such on CDs. Thomas and artist Barry Smith launched Marvel’s Conan the Barbarian comic in October, 1970. Thomas wrote hundreds of Conan stories, encompassing adaptations, as well as tales about REH characters like Solomon Kane, for Marvel’s long-running, critically acclaimed color comics and black-and-white magazines, the latter notably including The Savage Sword of Conan.
Other events during the first two days included walking and bus tours of the town and its environs, and panels on: REHupa and its mission; McHaney’s *The Man from Cross Plains: A Centennial Celebration of Two-Gun Bob Howard* (Lulu.com, 2006) book written to benefit Cross Plains’s Fire Relief Fund; editing Howard typescripts for publication; Paradox Entertainment’s plans for promoting REH in print, comics, movies, and computer games; and Howard’s boxing at the CP ice house, as well as screenings of Ethan Nahté’s documentary-in-progress on Howard and of the 1996 film *The Whole Wide World*, which adapted Ellis’s memoir *One Who Walked Alone, Robert E. Howard: The Final Years* (Grant, 1986); the special Robert E. Howard Postal Cancellation; and an auction and swap meet at the Community Center, which also benefitted the town. Besides the usual socializing, the pavilion next to the Howard House saw readings and singing of REH’s poetry and the presentation of the Second Annual Cimmerian Awards (see below).

The last day was marked by the town’s Barbarian Festival; a panel by Thomas on all the various media formats in which he had written Conan stories, as showcased in his book *Conan: The Ultimate Guide to the World’s Most Savage Barbarian* (Dark Horse, 2006); readings by Finn from his biography *Blood & Thunder: The Life and Art of Robert E. Howard* (MonkeyBrain, 2006); a panel on REH biographies; and finally the traditional barbecue at Caddo Peak Ranch. Finn summed it up: it was the “greatest fan-gathering of Robert E. Howard fans in history. Not to take anything away from the original group of REHupans who made the first pilgrimage many years ago. Thanks to them, we all have a tradition that we can enjoy every year, reconnect with friends, and bask in the fellowship generated by our mutual love for Robert E. Howard, the greatest pulp writer of them all: Author; Poet; Texan; Legend.” (p. 27) Cavalier added, “We can only marvel at all the enthusiasm that poured forth from Project Pride. They provided this wonderful venue for Howard fans – a testimony to both their hospitality and their concern for the legacy of Robert E. Howard – and attendees were fortunate to be the [beneficiaries] of their good graces and tender mercies.” (p. 27)

Closing the issue is “The Lion’s Den” letter column, which begins with Darrell Schweitzer agreeing with Romeo’s “Viagra for the Soul” in the May issue regarding his defense of L. Sprague de Camp, whom Schweitzer says “was first, and foremost, a Conan fan. He was not somebody who said, ‘Oh, here’s a chance to fill my wallet.’ He had many other ways of doing that. In the beginning, at least, it wasn’t clear that he would ever get much money out of his involvement with Conan.” (p. 29) Schweitzer pointed out that many of de Camp’s literary contemporaries did not share in his enthusiasm for Howard, including Fletcher Pratt, Robert Bloch, and Frank Belknap Long. “[I]n that sense he was very much ahead of the curve.” (p. 29)

Inspired by the controversy about *Weird Tales* editor Farnsworth Wright in previous issues, REHupan Rob Roehm writes in to say, “After reviewing Howard’s correspondence, I’ve formed my own opinions. Howard didn’t ‘hate’ Wright, and he certainly didn’t think Wright was infallible. I think, like many relationships of this sort, Howard’s feelings ran hot and cold. Nice things are said when things are good, bad things are said when things are not.” (p. 30) He thinks REH would have submitted to *Weird Tales* again if the magazine had paid down its debt to him. Also, Roehm says he had tried to track down the letter Bob Baker had said Howard wrote to Edgar Rice Burroughs asking how one pronounces “Tarzan,” but was unsuccessful.

After a laudatory letter from Donald Sidney-Fryer, Jack Jones writes in to say that Howard Days was a huge success, but that, unfortunately, Wandering Star books were already declining in resale value. REHupan Morgan Holmes corrects Schweitzer about there being no pulp generalists who survived the death of the pulps, other than Erle Stanley Gardner, citing several. John Haefele also rebukes Schweitzer for defending *Weird Tales*’ neglect of Lovecraft and notes
that the latter’s “At the Mountains of Madness” would have had a lot more impact in WT than Astounding. Eric Johnson comments on his travels through Texas. Bob Lumpkin says that “The Lion’s Den” has been focusing too much on HPL.

Herron reappears with more reminiscences about Bob Baker, praise for Hardy’s article on El Borak, and depreciation of Romeo’s statement that de Camp found Sword & Sorcery to be valid fiction. “The problem is that de Camp saw S & S as merely escapist entertainment fiction, he did not attempt to take it any deeper than that. In fact, if you look at his entire body of work and his many critical remarks, you can see that de Camp was not interested in literature proper, he was just a Bored Businessman out for a little fun. Instead of shooting for great poetry, he was happy with doggerel, instead of trying to equal the best of Howard, he was content to pad the Lancer books out with drivel.” (p. 34) Herron takes Cornelius Kappabani to task for dismissing Herron’s criticism of Wright, noting that only Don Wandrei’s intervention had saved Lovecraft’s pivotal “The Call of Cthulhu” from Wright’s editorial axe. Herron scores Wandering Star for overpaying its artists, helping to bring about its own demise. He defends his use of REH quotations that Burke had faulted and declares that Howard’s most reliable statements regarding Wright, namely those in One Who Walked Alone, indicate that REH would not have resumed his submissions to WT.

Leon Nielsen closes the letter column and the issue by expressing admiration for Grin’s grueling monthly publication schedule for The Cimmerian, Gruber’s compilation of boxing citations in The Cimmerian Library, and Cavalier’s essay on the first Howard Days in the June issue. He states, however, that neither the zine nor fandom is benefitting from the discourteous repartee in the letter column.

Two Cimmerian Awards were not given, namely the Valusian Award for Outstanding Anthology, because none had been published, and the prestigious Black Circle Award for Lifetime Achievement, because no nominee got more than Grin’s arbitrary 60% of the vote, though Burke and Herron led the pack. [5] Realizing this would continue to be a problem, Grin was to change this procedure the next year. The Atlantean Award for an Outstanding Book by a Single Author was won by McHaney for his Robert E. Howard: World’s Greatest Pulpster (Dennis McHaney, Lulu.com, 2005). [6]

The Venarium Award for Emerging Scholar went to Roehm. A married high-school English teacher living in Lancaster, California, and longtime Howard fan born in 1966, Roehm had just been admitted to REHupa the month before. His fanzine, Onion Tops, debuting in Mailing #190 (Dec., 2004), would always be notable, not only for its consistent focus on REH, but on the biographical and geographical details of the author’s life. He had contributed 58 such zines as of June 2014 (Mailing #247). Roehm compiled his Index to Cromlech and The Dark Man (The Cimmerian Library, Vol. 1, 2005) and, with Joe Marek (writing as Alex Runions), edited the book West is West & Others (Lulu.com, 2006) collecting rare early noncommercial pieces by REH in the public domain. These, his TC essays “Howard’s Ruin” and “The Mystery of the Treasure Room,” and two articles in McHaney’s The Man from Cross Plains played important parts in his winning the award [7].

Harrison’s Casebook (REHF, 2010), Tales of Weird Menace (REHF, 2010), Adventures in Science Fantasy (REHF, 2012), the upcoming Western Tales and Pirate Adventures, and, with Patrice Louinet, Spicy Adventures (REHF, 2011). These join the Wandering Star/Del Rey editions of pure texts toward finally making all of Howard’s writings available scholars and the public, an essential step in gaining the author the critical recognition he deserves. As a further aid to scholars and fans, Roehm has compiled the results of his on-site and Internet detective work into REH’s background and acquaintances, publishing them as Howard’s Haunts: A Photographic Journey through Robert E. Howard’s Texas & the Events of the Howard Centennial (Roehm’s Room Press, 2006, winner of the 2008 Cimmerian Award for Outstanding Achievement, Book), The Collected Letters of Isaac M. Howard (REHF, 2011), Lone Scout of Letters: Herbert C. Klett (Roehm’s Room Press, 2011), School Days in the Post Oaks (REHF, 2011), REH’s Back to School (REHF, 2012); with Rusty Burke, Tevis Clyde Smith’s “So Far the Poet…” & Other Writings (REHF, 2010); and, with his father Bob, The Brownwood Connection: A Guide for Robert E. Howard Fans (REHF, 2010, winner of the 2011 REHF Atlantean Award for Outstanding Achievement, Book). He’s also published articles in the periodicals The Dark Man, The Howard Review, REH: Two-Gun Raconteur, and the Robert E. Howard Foundation Newsletter and in The Cimmerian Blog (between June 2006 and Nov. 2008), the REH: Two-Gun Raconteur Blog (from Feb. 2010 to date), and the REHF Web site (Nov. 2006 to date), sharing in the 2009, 2011, and 2012 REHF Stygian Awards for Outstanding Achievement, Website. He won the second-place 2010 REHF Hyrkanian Award for Outstanding Award, Essay for his “The Long and Winding Road: A Poetic History”; the 2011 and 2012 REHF Black River Awards for Special Achievement; the first-place 2011 and 2012 REHF Cimmerian Awards for Outstanding Achievement, Blog Posts; and the first-place 2012 REHF Hyrkanian Award for Outstanding Achievement, Essay for his “The Vinson Papers” series, all of which making him the most decorated awardee in REHdom. He helped edit and otherwise assisted with many other REH-related publications and, with Grin, upgraded the REHF Web site. He is currently the Publications Coordinator and a member of the Board of Directors of the Robert E. Howard Foundation and is editor of the REHF Newsletter. All of this has earned him the soubriquet “The Hardest Working Man in Howard Fandom,” not to mention the most prolific.

The first-, second-, and third-place Hyrkanian Awards for Outstanding Essay went to Rob Roehm for “Howard’s Ruin” in The Cimmerian, Vol. 2, #1 [8], former REHupan Charles Hoffman for “Blood Lust” in TC, Vol. 2, #5 [9], and Chris Gruber in “Born to Edit Boxing Stories” in TC, Vol. 2, #3 [10]. Grin again won the Aquilonian Award for Outstanding Periodical (The Cimmerian). [11] Paul Herman was again given the Stygian Award for Outstanding Web site (HowardWorks.com). [12] In accepting, Herman says, “I’d also like to thank several others, including David Gentzel, Rusty Burke, Patrice Louinet, Joe Marek, Dennis McHaney, and a slew of unnamed scholars and fans over the years. And, of course, Bill Thom for all his continuing hard work.” (p. 25) Gruber won the Black River Award for Special Achievement, specifically for discovering and publishing REH’s original typescript for “Iron Men” in his Boxing Stories (Univ. of Nebraska, 2005). [13]

The August issue of The Cimmerian (Vol. 3, #8) is remarkable in that a rare convergence of events enabled Grin to focus the issue on Howard’s first published book, the 1937 edition of A Gent from Bear Creek printed by Herbert Jenkins in the UK.

The first event was the completion by UK REHupan Danny Street of his months-long investigation searching for all extant copies of Gent in UK libraries. In June, 1933, Howard tried to interest publisher Denis Archer of London in publishing a collection of eight of his short stories. Archer declined because of “the prejudice that is very strong over here just now against collections of short stories,” but said he would be interested in publishing a full-length novel.
REH sent such a novel, “The Hour of the Dragon,” to Archer in May, 1934, but the publisher went out of business before the book could be produced. [14] Howard then submitted it to Weird Tales, where it was serialized in 1935 and 1936 and published in book form by Gnome Press in 1950. Still determined to publish a book in England, REH collected nine of his humorous Breckinridge Elkins westerns from Action Stories, added four (not two as per Street) new adventures, a romantic interest named Glory McGraw, and numerous connecting passages to construct a unified novel, and sent it through his agent Otis Adelbert Kline. Jenkins bought the publishing rights 6 months after Howard’s death.

Realizing, then, that copies of Gent, rare as they may now be, would be more likely to be found in the British Isles than elsewhere, and inspired by information from Herron and former REHupan Richard Toogood, Street was able to locate and view four copies in UK libraries, namely those in the British Library, London; the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh; the
Bodleian Library, Oxford; and the Trinity College Library, Dublin. These can also be viewed by others applying for the proper permissions. Street reproduces photos of three of the copies, but the National Library of Scotland didn’t permit picture taking. Its copy and that of the British Library were in the best condition, about “fine,” though none had a dustjacket. Also, none was a second printing, namely the cheaper edition of 1938 sought by Lord [15]. Street did discover a copy of a dustjacket in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, that differed somewhat from that of Lord’s own copy, and thus is apparently that of the second printing. Finally, Street located and posted a copy of the original contract signed by Howard’s father allowing the book’s publication by Jenkins. [16]

Street later turned up another institutionally held Gent, “fine” in a first-edition dustjacket, at the Cambridge University Library. [17,18]

Next in the issue is Herron, who recounts his realization that a fellow San Franciscan friend of his, Toni Lee Gould Roady, had married someone from Cross Plains, which led in turn to his surprising discovery that the Roadys owned a carbon copy of the Gent typescript that Kline had produced and sent off to England. It seems that Toni’s husband George had been given the typescript and other items by Zora Mae Baum Bryant for doing odd jobs for her over the years. Zora Mae had inherited the Howard copyrights when Alla Ray Kuykendall Morris had died in
1995. As we saw in our last installment, Zora Mae had died in 2005. [19] Among the other items was an old, nonfunctional Underwood typewriter that Herron suspected might be the one REH cannibalized for parts for his operational typewriter, an Underwood that at the time was believed to be the one owned by collector Jay Corrinet. More on that in our next installment.

More about the Roadys’ typescript and typewriter was unearthed later by Herman in his search for a definitive text to use for the upcoming publication of Gent by the Robert E. Howard Foundation. It turns out that Zora Mae was cleaning house and was about to trash possessions she had inherited from the Kuykendalls, including many REH typescripts and the typewriter. George Roedy suggested that she instead donate the typescripts to the Cross Plains Library, aside from the Gent typescript. That and the typewriter he asked for himself. Zora Mae complied. When Herman visited the Roadys in 2010, they had moved from California to Missouri, and Toni told him more of the backstory:

Tom Bryant as a wealthy oilman, who built a really nice house on the edge of Cross Plains. That house still stands there today. He was also a friend of Dr. Howard. When Dr. Howard got old he gave a lot of REH’s stuff to Tom, likely around 1943 or 1944. After Tom and his wife passed, Tom’s brother Elliott, and Elliot’s wife Zora Mae, moved in. And indeed, Jack Baum, son of Zora Mae, had found a box of REH’s books in the attic, along with a watch that may have been Bob’s, and he had the same explanation for why those items were in Zora Mae’s house. Zora Mae also likely received a stack of typescripts from the Kuykendalls when they left all the REH copyrights to her. The Kuykendalls had likely gotten them from Kitty West when Kitty shut down the successor to the Kline agency in the early 1960s, just before Glenn Lord became agent. At some point thereafter, after Elliott had passed, Zora Mae had decided she wanted to get rid of a bunch of this stuff. Zora Mae had told me personally that she had no interest in REH, that she knew him only as Dr. Howard’s Crazy Son, and didn’t like his stories. So I can understand her wanting to get rid of the REH material she had. [20, pp. 18-19]

Roehm has posted [21], and Jack Baum has published [22], a photo and details about the pocket watch, which appears to have been Bob’s, since it has the letters “RH” inscribed on its back. The other possessions included a trunk of Dr. Howard’s, which the Baums donated to the Howard House and Museum, and some of his letters, mostly written to Tom Bryant. Herman examined the typewriter and says it appears to be REH’s (but not which of the two). [20] The Roadys apparently still possess both the Gent typescript and the typewriter.

Returning to the Jenkins Gents, the only two held by institutions outside the UK are the one given by Dr. Howard to the Ranger, Texas, Junior College [23, p. 10] and the one bought by Grin for $3700 and donated to the Robert E. Howard House and Museum. The Ranger copy was borrowed, unbound, photographed, rebound, and returned by publisher Donald M. Grant in order to produce his offset-printed 1965 edition of Gent. [24]

One Gent in “good” condition with restored endpapers was sold on eBay in December, 2002 (not 2001/2002 as per Street), for $2465 by a British bookseller. [25,26] Alistair Durie, author of the pictorial history Weird Tales (Jupiter, 1979), found another copy at a London bookshop for which he paid about $3500. [27]

Bookdealer Leonard Shoup of Burlington, Ontario, bought a “good” copy for $15 on the ABEbooks.com Web site in July, 2006, and listed it on eBay shortly after for $6000. The book
was bought with the Buy It Now option for $8500 on 24 July, 2006, by Canadian pulp collector Dwight Fuhrro, who actually had no interest in the book, but who had arranged with REH collector Edward Gobbett (eBayer “rarethus”) of Lanham, Maryland, to trade it for nine “near fine” copies of The Shadow pulp that he had acquired at the 2004 York, Pennsylvania, Book and Paper Show. This account is given by Sasser and Gobbett in the August issue of TC, along with photos of the book and Gobbett; Street gives color photos. [28]

(There are only five or six other copies known to be held in private hands. One was bought from Arkham House editor and publisher August Derleth by Glenn Lord, which was apparently destroyed by Hurricane Ike in 2008. Dennis McHaney acquired a copy in 1985 and sold it for $6000 in 2006. [29,30] The late FAX publisher Darrell C. Richardson’s copy was auctioned by Adventure House publisher John Gunnison in March, 2010, for $11,000 to an unknown collector. [31] A Canadian collector is said to own one (the “Mel Stein” copy). Another “good” copy, or maybe the same one, was bought on eBay in 2007 for $10,000 Canadian, again by Gobbett. Lastly, a copy was bought on ABEbooks.com for $30 by former REHupan Patrice Louinet in April, 2010. [32] Reportedly one more, in fair condition, was discovered by the grandchildren of a cousin of REH’s in 2014. That brings the total number of Gents known to exist to 14 or 15. Only Cambridge University’s, Lord’s, and McHaney’s former copy have dustjackets. None of the copies are of the “cheap” 1938 second edition.)

After announcements about REH-related publications, conventions, films, and the debut of the TC Blog, the August issue continues with a poem by Donald Sidney-Fryer and ends with the letter column. Former REHupan Brian Leno kicks off the latter praising Gruber’s The Cimmerian Library volume on boxing, commenting on the authors of boxing books that Howard may have owned, and lamenting the lack of a complete REH letters collection. Leon Nielsen writes in again to complain that the upcoming Solomon Kane movie, with a script by director Michael J. Bassett, sounds like it is going to have little to do with Howard’s creation, given that it contains an invented origin story. (This prediction proved to be accurate; the 2009 film turned out to be watchable, but yet another movie that was Howardian in name only.)

In his usual acerbic style, Herron contributes a series of vignettes of his experiences at and impressions of the Howard Days Centennial. Sidney-Fryer lauds the June and July issues of TC, especially Cavalier’s account of the first HD and Kelsey’s coverage of the Centennial, and extols Lord for:

his pioneering efforts on behalf of REH, his specialist magazine The Howard Collector, and the first ever REH bibliography The Last Celt. Without Glenn an enormous amount of valuable material would have been irretrievably lost!

HPL was already well-established when both Glenn and I were conducting our researches on REH and CAS respectively. Neither author had achieved any great circulation and recognition back in the 1950s and 1960s, and being pioneer scholars for authors too glibly dismissed as hacks writing for pulp magazines, we may have found it rather lonely. But both of us persevered, not knowing then that at some point in the future we would find ourselves in the company of many other aficionados such as we do today. (p. 37)

McHaney finishes off the issue with a letter deriding the current incarnation of Weird Tales magazine, pointing out how bland and amateurish it is compared to its pulp version. Weird Tales co-editor Schweitzer takes McHaney to task in the next issue with a letter citing the impressive publishing credentials and awards of himself and his fellow WT editors and the
many well-known fantasy authors WT has published during its latest incarnation. He questions McHaney’s credentials and concludes that McHaney “should just give up and go away” because WT is a fantasy/horror publication for the general reader, not someone looking for an REH fanzine. Schweitzer also defends himself against Morgan Holmes’s rebuttal of the former’s thesis that no pulp generalists, aside from Gardner, survived the death of the pulps, asserting that his original thesis was that none survived as generalists, but had to specialize in the new book markets. Finally, Schweitzer dismisses Herron’s letters as the screeds of a “mean-spirited windbag” (p. 35) and points out that if de Camp had never escaped a rampaging hippo, as Herron evidently wished [33], there would likely have been no Howard Boom. Later in that same letter column, Leno praises the August issue of TC, but scores Schweitzer for WT’s lame attempt at a humorous response to Grin’s article “The Everlasting Barbarian: Robert E. Howard at 100 Years” in its own August/September 2006 issue and for the poor response WT has garnered from its readers in terms of letters of comment, unlike its popular original incarnation.

As Grin chortles in his editorial to the September 2006 issue of The Cimmerian (Vol. 3, #9), “Scholarship. Bookmanship. Discoveries and revelations galore … this ish has it all.” (p. 3) John Haeffele returns with an article in the bookmanship category, specifically one celebrating the 60th anniversary of the groundbreaking Skull-Face and Others anthology of some of Howard’s best fantasy, the first such American hardcover, and one of only four large, lavish volumes published by Derleth’s Arkham House in 1946. Haeffele is an expert in Arkham’s history, and he takes us on a fascinating retrospective of the fantasy editing part of Derleth’s career (the man was also a prolific author in his own right). It is difficult to decide whether to marvel at Derleth’s good taste about and faith in the worth of REH’s fantasy, despite the financial risks involved in publishing it, or to wonder how he could be so myopic about why Howard was great and which of his tales deserved recognition.

Derleth began a frequent exchange of letters with H. P. Lovecraft in 1926 when the former was only a teenager. In 1930, spurred by a letter from REH critiquing his “The Rats in the Walls,” HPL remarked to Derleth that “I think I shall write Howard shortly, for he seems to be an exceptional chap. I like some of his work very much, though he makes too many concessions to the popular fiction ideal.” (p. 5) A few months later, he wrote Derleth again, saying:

Howard proves to be a very interesting correspondent, & I believe he has it in him to produce much better work than we have seen. He has spent most of his life knocking about ranches & boom towns in Texas, & defers more to popular standards than a more sedentary & reflective person might.” (p. 5)

and later:

Have just heard more from Howard — a highly interesting character, & much superior to his work. He has a poet’s sense of the epic sweep of Texas life & history, & really ought to link up more with this native & lifelong soil of his. Perhaps he will some day — I shall certainly encourage it.

The exchange between Lovecraft and Howard continued, and in November, 1932, HPL effuses to Derleth:

God, what a man! I never knew any human being to be so deeply & passionately saturated in the life & traditions of a region as that bird is in the life and traditions of his native & ancestral southwest. He oozes its heroic &
sanguinary lore at every joint, & falls into long epic or descriptive recitals which come close to pure poetry … (p. 5)

(Yet, as late as 14 December, 1935, Lovecraft writes a letter to Kenneth Sterling, which we mentioned last time, wherein he disparages REH for having the “basic mentality” of merely a “good respectable citizen,” whom he deigns to find “interesting” because the man is “original, independent, & sincere.” [34] The fact that Lovecraft’s snobbish and intellectually distorted perception of reality prevented his recognition of Howard’s genius is obvious to anyone who doesn’t take HPL’s judgments as gospel, which unfortunately excludes his greatest champion, S. T. Joshi, who, as we have discussed, has done much damage to REH’s reputation and literary standing. [35-38] An unbiased, psychologically perceptive reanalysis of Lovecraft’s letters, especially to and about Howard, is not only absolutely called for, but well overdue.)

Finally HPL sends his file of REH letters to Derleth, declaring “I wish you could help to bring out the poetry-suffused regional epics which I feel he has locked within him!” (p. 5) Derleth did commence correspondence with Howard at this time. They exchanged information about the history of their native regions and their personal financial situations, as well as books, photos, and comments on the fiction and verse they had read. After the deaths of REH and HPL, Derleth began assembling Lovecraft’s letters for publication (including some from Dr. Howard) and founded Arkham House for the express purpose of publishing HPL’s writings, the latter comprising the press’s first two volumes, *The Outsider and Others* (1939) and *Beyond the Wall of Sleep* (1946).

Though he was to expand Arkham House’s purview to encompass other authors, Derleth was slow to include Howard among them, opining that Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, and Henry S. Whitehead were the greatest *Weird Tales* writers, and not even including REH in the top eight of his prospective candidates generally (though he numbered himself among these). The problem was Derleth’s impression that only five Conan tales were worth reprinting and that series characters seldom stood up well in book form, in which all of an author’s inconsistencies and redundancies would be exposed to the reader. “I had enough trying to re-read Conan; after the fifth Conan story I was ready to vomit,” he said. (p. 7) Fortunately, lobbying by editor Donald A. Wollheim, *The Acolyte* fanzinst Francis T. Laney, pulp collector Robert A. “Rah” Hoffman, and others finally swayed Derleth to gamble on a Howard anthology, even though REH agent Otis Adelbert Kline conceded, “I do agree with what you say about the Conan yarns. A steady, unbroken diet of violent action and saber-hacking would, I think, pall on the reader.” (p. 6) Derleth secured Dr. Howard’s permission shortly before the latter’s death. In 1942, Derleth and his business partner Donald Wandrei engaged the up-and-coming fantasy artist Hannes Bok, who went on to create many of the most distinctive covers for clothbound books of the period. Bok offered to do a Conan figure for *Skull-Face*. Haefele says, “I haven’t seen – but can well imagine! – Derleth’s response.” (p. 9) What Bok produced instead was one of the most famous fantasy-cover illustrations of all time. The print run was 3004 copies with a cover price of $5. It sold rather well in spite of a decline of interest in fantasy at the time in favor of hard science fiction. Fine copies of the book now sell for about $1,000.

During this same period, Derleth included the Howard story “The Black Stone” in the 1944 book *Sleep No More: Twenty Masterpieces of Horror for the Connoisseur*, a collection he prepared for publisher Farrar & Rinehart. He also appreciated verse, so Arkham House published poems by Howard, 12 in *Dark of the Moon: Poems of Fantasy and the Macabre* (1947) and two in *Fire and Sleet and Candlelight: New Poems of the Macabre* (1961). As conflicted as Derleth was regarding Howard’s work, he did go on to publish four more volumes containing it before his health began to fail. *Always Comes Evening* (1957), compiled and initially subsidized by Glenn
Lord, was the first all-REH poetry collection. *Dark Mind, Dark Heart* (1962) was an anthology containing “The Grey God Passes,” which was found among REH’s unpublished writings. Fifteen more were collected in *The Dark Man and Others* (1963). Finally, “The Blue Flame of Vengeance” was published in the anthology *Over the Edge* (1964).

For this article, Haefele won the third-place 2006 Cimmerian (“The Hyrkanian”) Award for Best Essay.

Herron is on deck again with news of still another Howard-related discovery. Once more talking to Toni Lee and George Roady, he learned that George’s mother Sally Roady owned 25 books that had belonged to Dr. Howard, ones her late husband Bobby had been given by Zora Mae Bryant. Herron and Grin examined these books, which have since been given to the Howard House and Museum. Herron details their contents. By far most are about the Bible and theology, Dr. Howard having been a deeply committed Baptist. Some have Dr. Howard’s nameplate and others have his name written inside. Many of the books contain underlining, notes, and elaborate
doodles by Dr. Howard in regular or colored pencils. Then Herron has an extraordinary insight:

For me, the most startling discovery found in the books was the amazing doodling, with the few samples available hinting of many, many more elaborate sketches we may never see. The suggestion, of course, is that Isaac Howard experienced hypergraphia, which is sometimes noted in association with temporal lobe epilepsy or manic depression or bipolar disorder – a condition often accompanied by hyper-religiosity and emotional problems. (p. 20)

...  

Before I paged through the volumes from Doc Howard’s library, I always assumed that Robert E. Howard was just a typically fast pulp writer, able to turn out all his stories and hundreds of poems and many, many letters simply because he wanted to do so. All that work done in slightly more than a decade. Now I cannot help but think that this star writer for *Weird Tales* may have had a physical reason for that sensational burst of writing. Idiopathic or genetic TLE is reportedly rare, but that familial TLE exists is documented. (p. 21)

(And this is a further reason to think that REH was bipolar.) Herron wonders what revelations this discovery might lead to about the personalities, beliefs, and readings of father and son. (I am not aware of any such investigations to date, but Jack Baum’s tallying of books in his mother Zora Mae’s house suggests that Isaac and Bob had access to more than 450 books with copyrights ranging from 1820 to 1936. [22] Jack wonders, “Did Dr. Howard’s obsession with the cerebral push Robert to a contrarian interest in the physical?” [22, p. 6] At any rate, Bob was apparently not converted by the religious ones, since he seems to have remained an existentialist. [39])

(In 2013, when Louinét’s research into the Howard family history came up with several instances of Dr. Howard’s confusion remembering dates and places, I pointed out Herron’s discovery of Isaac’s hypergraphia and how it is sometimes associated with temporal lobe epilepsy. [40] The brain’s temporal lobe is essential for establishing long-term memory for facts and events, and damage to it can result in partial amnesia.)

In the next article, “Sailor Steve Meets Winston Smith,” REHupan Steve Tompkins reveals a discovery of his own, namely an excerpt from the Costigan story “Champ of the Forecastle” that was quoted by George Orwell in his 1940 essay “Boys’ Weeklies” on the British twopenny weekly papers catering to boys of all ages. The slight condensation of the passage indicates that it was actually taken from the version “Champ of the Seven Seas” published in the 1938 reprint of the original 1930 *Fight Stories* pulp. The former was bylined with the REH pseudonym Mark Adams. It is likely Orwell did not know or care that it was by Howard; he was only using the quote to illustrate the difference between the tame British weeklies and the much more colorful “Yank Mags.”

After that, Holmes reappears with a trip report on the Pulpcon #35 convention of August, 2006, in Dayton, Ohio, lamenting the lack of any mention of REH in his centennial year and how listless this year’s meeting is compared to previous ones. (In 2010, this convention was replaced by PulpFest in Columbus, Ohio, under new management. At least the 2007 Pulpcon featured Glenn Lord as Guest of Honor.) Holmes goes on to reminisce about other Pulpcons he had attended, the interesting people he had met there, and the discovery by him and fellow REHupans Tim Arney, Cavalier, Vern Clark, Rick McCollum, and Marco Praete of original Howard typescript pages in a box of pulp-related material a dealer had brought to sell. The pages turned
out to be ones sold by Lord to a collector named Joseph J. Kankowski and consisted of four letters and seven drafts of letters. The drafts, from his debate with Lovecraft on barbarism vs. civilization, were the first indication that REH drafted any of his arguments.

Richard L. Tierney brings the essay part of the September issue to a close with the Third Triptych of his poetry cycle “The Doom of Hyboria.”

James Reasoner opens the letter column with an entry in the pulp generalists debate, citing several of them that had survived the demise of the pulps. “But I think there’s an even more important aspect to consider: among both pulp generalists and specialists, the ones who went on to have successful careers in hardbacks and paperbacks were the ones who were able to write novels.” (p. 33) Reasoner thinks that, despite the flaws in his novels, Howard would have been professional enough to master the form, had he lived. Even so, “it really is a little surprising that his work has survived and his popularity has remained so strong for so long. It’s a testament to his skill that he was able to do that based largely on short stories and novelettes.” (p. 33)

Romeo writes in to answer Herron, who questioned his use of a de Camp quote and suggested that Romeo was being disingenuous with his conclusion that “clearly de Camp sees Sword-and-Sorcery to be valid fiction.” Romeo points out that Herron had employed the same quotation in his landmark essay, “The Dark Barbarian.”

Kappabani submits a missive enthusing about his HD Centennial experiences. He defends de Camp’s completion of REH fragments, saying that they contributed to the Howard Boom and were at least “not trash.” He also says there was a precedent for de Camp’s changing “El Borak” stories to ones about Conan, since REH did such repurposing himself. Lastly, Kappabani praises the TC slipcases and TC’s nomination for a World Fantasy Award. The remaining letters, by Schweitzer and Leno, were discussed earlier.

The centerpiece of the October 2006 issue (Vol. 3, #10) is a 21-page interview of 89-year-old Norris Chambers, son of Dr. Solomon Chambers, one of Dr. Howard’s closest friends and one of the few people then alive who personally knew the Howards. (Norris was to die 2 March, 2013. [42]) His family first met Isaac, Hester, and Bob Howard in 1915 when Isaac relocated his medical practice to the town of Cross Cut in Brown County, Texas. A well-known doctor in the area, Solomon Chambers had by that time largely given up doctoring in favor of running a drugstore in the town. In 1917 or 1918, the Chambers family moved to the Galveston area, where the Howards went to visit them. They saw a lot of one another after the Chamberses returned to Brown County 7 years later. After the deaths of Bob and Hester in 1936, Norris stayed with Dr. Howard for a few weeks, helping him sort out the contents of Bob’s famous trunk and listening to the stories of the talkative Isaac.

Herron and Grin interviewed Norris for hours on 12 June, 2005, in White Settlement, Texas, where he had lived since 1947, having retired from a successful career repairing televisions and electronics. It was when the Howards visited the Chamberses in Galveston around 1917 to 1920 that the photograph below, of Bob (then 11 to 14 years old), Drs. Howard and Chambers, and Norris’s sister Effie was taken (reproduced in TC), though the Chamberses apparently no longer have a copy or any other pictures of REH.

Recalling some of the many talks he had with Dr. Howard after Bob’s death, often on car rides, Chambers confirms recent evidence found indicating that Isaac, and not Bob, had purchased the family’s burial plot in Greenleaf Cemetery, Brownwood, Texas. [43] (Bob did like Brownwood and may have had a role in selecting the site, as Chambers has said elsewhere. [44]) Isaac was
worried enough about water seepage into the coffins that he considered moving the plots. (He did have the original wooden caskets replaced with steel ones and exchanged the original, smaller headstone with the current one. [44])  Asked if Isaac had every speculated about why Bob took his own life, Norris replied:

No, I never did just hear him say. He was stricken with it. It was a terrible blow to him. He thought that he maybe could have done something that he didn’t do – he regretted it in that respect. He said, “Maybe it was my fault. Maybe I didn’t raise him right. Maybe I should have done this, or maybe I should have insisted that he do something else.” Stuff like that.

I don’t know, I think he might have thought that it was the morbid-type stories that he wrote a lot of times that had something to do with it. I don’t know if it was or not. It was just his personality, I guess. I don’t know. It’s hard to say.

Like that poem he wrote, one of the later ones, I forget the name of it [“The Tempter”], that said something like:

Something tapped me on the shoulder
Something whispered, “Come with me
Leave the world of men behind you,
Come where care may never find you

That was one of the poems that was in the trunk there that we got out. I had a copy of that, one of the original copies, that I gave to … Hart I believe was the name of the guy who came here, and they wrote that first book about his poetry. Always Comes Evening I believe was the name of that book. Glenn Lord was the
author, Bill Hart was the one who came here. I had quite a lot of stuff of Robert’s here at that time. Just a world of stuff that Dr. Howard had given me. And that was one of the poems that was in there. It may have already been published, I don’t know about that.

Anyway, I let them have those, and he said he would send it back, but they never did. (p. 8)

Regarding the suicide note, Chambers states that Isaac showed it to him and that it was typed on a full, unfolded sheet of paper.

Chambers then reveals that the car Bob shot himself in was not the old one de Camp describes in his biography *Dark Valley Destiny: The Life of Robert E. Howard* (Bluejay, 1983), but a new 1935 Chevrolet Bob had just bought. Afterward, Isaac had the car cleaned up and the bullet damage repaired, and drove it at least until 1941. (This rather callous behavior is only one of several acts by Isaac at the time, which seemed to oscillate between that of a bereaved man to those of a man who seemed only interested in what he could get from his son’s properties, when he went as far as to destroy a will Bob had written in which Bob had left his estate to his friend Lindsey Tyson. [45]) Despite this and the fact that Isaac had a short temper, Chambers emphasizes that he was well liked in the community and was thought to be a good doctor.

Asked to describe the original layout of the Howard house, Chambers seems to be impaired by his memory and his then limited access to the premises, so questions remain about where Isaac and Hester slept and where Isaac kept his office. Chambers is sure Bob kept his exercise equipment on the back porch, not in a shed in the back of the property. The window between Bob’s office and the bedroom Hester was cared for in was a not-uncommon relic dating from before an expansion of the house. Before she took ill, Hester helped Isaac in his medical practice by running a machine that cleaned patients’ colons. “Now I know my mother said that Mrs. Howard said that people thought she was stuck up … but Mama said she didn’t think she was. … My mother liked her all right.” (p. 23) (In a later interview by Sasser, Chambers says that Hester was well liked in the community and mentions that she and Isaac belonged to different churches in Cross Cut (Methodist and Baptist respectively). [46])

While in high school, Chambers typed up the scripts of many of REH’s stories, mainly about Breckinridge Elkins, and some about Conan), working from marked-up drafts Bob had typed. Asked if REH was as talkative as his father, Chambers says:

Naw, he was pretty quiet. My first impression of him was that he talked very precise. When he talked, it sounded just like a book, like somebody reading out of a book. He just had that pronunciation, and his composition was just like he had written it. I guess he just practiced it so much that that’s just the way he talked. Very precise talk, and he wasn’t too jolly. He was usually pretty serious. (pp. 16-17)

About what Isaac thought of Bob’s writing, Chambers states that Isaac thought it was great. “Dr. Howard always said, ‘Robert’ll be famous someday,’ and he sure was right about that.” (p. 20) (In still another interview with Sasser, Chambers says, “Dr. Howard said several times that ‘Someday this house will be a shrine!’” Sasser adds, “I think that prediction has been pretty well correct.” [47] Indeed.) Chambers continued:
He was proud of what he could do, but … I think they both wished he had done something else. I don’t think they were real satisfied with the way his life was turning out there. (p. 18)

…

[H]e didn’t have much social life. He did a little bit of dating before he died there, but for a long time he didn’t, you know. And he didn’t have but two or three friends he saw, and he didn’t see them very often. Dr. Howard commented on that some, that he wished he had taken some other career. (p. 19)

Chambers says that when Bob was a little boy in Cross Cut, he didn’t go out and play with other boys the way one might expect him to.

He was more of a home boy.

Now I don’t know if [Hester] was the one who caused it, or why it happened that way, but he never was a regular guy, he was always a little different. According to what the people said who knew him, you know.

My sister knew him pretty well – when she went to school, he was going to school when she was. My brother knew him. And they thought he was just a little different, you know. He wasn’t what you would call a regular person that did regular things. But he was a nice guy when I knew him. He was already grown and successful when I knew him. (p. 19)

(Chambers knows about Bob’s odd behavior in Cross Cut partly from what his mother told him and partly from an unpublished manuscript then in his possession by John Limmer about the history of Cross Cut, the latter quoting Louise Newton as saying that her husband Ross had played with REH as a child and described him as “weird.” [48])

Asked whether REH carried either knives or guns, Chambers answers that “he had two or three guns around, and a rifle or two.” (p. 19) He believes Bob wore glasses sometimes. Neither Bob nor Isaac used tobacco. Chambers doesn’t know if REH drank regularly, but he did hear that REH and some acquaintances were drunk once. Isaac talked some about Bob exercising, but never mentioned him as being bullied, though such things were common enough. (There are still posts by Chambers about Texas history on [http://www.norrisc.com](http://www.norrisc.com).)

Next in the October issue is an obituary for fantasy writer David Gemmell (1948-2006), followed by “Dog-Brothers” by Tompkins, a paean to Gemmell. Tompkins points out that Gemmell established the largest and longest-running Sword & Sorcery empire since the Howard Boom, but also that Gemmell was an unabashed fan of REH. Gemmell is quoted on the Del Rey REH paperbacks thusly: “I adore these books. Howard had a gritty, vibrant style – broadsword writing that cut its way to the heart, with heroes who are truly larger than life.” (p. 26) Tompkins says:

Much earlier, in one of his first major interviews (for the UK genre magazine *Fear* in 1988), he bemoaned heroic fantasies in which it is a foregone conclusion that the hero “will kill 75 wizards, a couple of armies, several dragons, a few werebeasts … and end up crowned king of Lemuria or somewhere.” The interviewer eagerly jumped in to ask if he meant characters “like Conan.”
“Conan’s a bit different,” Gemmell demurred. “It was done rather well. There was a pace and vitality about Howard’s work that carried you through.” (p. 26)

Tompkins rounds out his tribute with a comparison between the dog sequences in “Beyond the Black River” and Gemmell’s 1992 novel Waylender II: In the Realm of the Wolf, opining that the latter was meant to be a homage to the former.

Following this is an obituary of Darrell C. Richardson (1918-2006), who was an ardent, prolific fan and collector of pulps, especially of writers like Edgar Rice Burroughs and Howard and of artists like J. Allen St. John. He edited and published the FAX Collector’s Editions, which put out The Lost Valley of Iskander (1974), The Incredible Adventures of Dennis Dorgan (1974), The Swords of Shahrazar (1976), Son of the White Wolf (1977), and The Return of Skull-Face (1977). He owned a copy of the Jenkins Gent and gave Dennis McHaney access to his personal collection of brilliant color pulp covers and illustrations for use in McHaney’s own books.

After a poem by Schweitzer, The Lion’s Den opens with a letter from Jack Jones, who praises the July and August issues and says he envies Gobbett’s lucky acquisition of a Jenkins Gent, which Jones has been looking for for thirty-some years. Schweitzer returns, saying Haefele’s article on Derleth confirmed his own opinion that the editor had little sympathy for Howard or adventure stories in general, preferring weird stories. Derleth did publish Skull-Face and Others, “but how could anyone who truly appreciated the best of REH have chosen such a title story, or have included such a third-rate sample of the Howardian oevre at all?” (p. 31) Schweitzer notes that the book took 13 years to sell out. Such slow sales can mean the end of a small, specialty publisher, and indeed Arkham House got into serious financial trouble in the 1950s. Schweitzer goes on about pulp generalists, asserting they were forced to specialize when they transitioned to book writing because book stores tend to pigeonhole authors as to genre. He attributes the current Weird Tales’ dearth of letters as due to the passing of the fan “letterhacking” fad in pulps and magazines, with most such commentaries moving onto the Internet. Besides, he says, most letters of comment are written by a small number of articulate fans who are not necessarily representative of a magazine’s readership.

As one is coming to expect, Schweitzer is followed by Herron, who praises Haefele’s Skull-Face and Tompkins’s Orwell pieces and Tierney’s sonnets, and disparages Schweitzer’s Weird Tales, claiming there is a correlation between its quality and its lack of financial success. Edward Blohm writes in next saying, as good as TC’s coverage of the 2006 Howard Days was, there was no way to capture the enthusiasm continually demonstrated by everyone concerned with the presentations. He then finds fault with a number of aspects of the current issue of The Dark Man journal (Vol. 2, #1/2). Closing out the issue are missives from Cavalier and Nielsen. Nielsen lauds Haefele’s The Cimmerian Library volume on Derleth and his TC article on Skull-Face.

As L. Sprague de Camp has been demonized by Howard devotees, so was August Derleth demonized by Lovecraft admirers. And as de Camp was accused of exploitation of Howard’s material, so has Derleth been charged with similar exploitative use of Lovecraft’s writings, an unsubstantiated and unfortunate contention which has tarnished both writers’ literary as well as ethical reputations. Comparisons have at times been made between de Camp and Derleth in this regard. (p. 37)
Would there have been a Howard revival in the late 1960s if de Camp had not talked Lancer or some other publisher into issuing the Conan series? … In the same way, one may ask if Lovecraft’s work would have been salvaged from obscurity, if not by August Derleth and Donald Wandrei? (p. 38)

Nielsen ends with a plea for the publication of REH’s correspondence (which was accomplished by the Robert E. Howard Foundation by 2008).

In the next issue of The Cimmerian (Vol. 3, #11, November, 2006), Grin focuses on the last major event of the Centennial, the World Fantasy Convention at Austin that November:

No, we didn’t win any Awards, but an awful lot happened that Howard fans will find of intense interest. Panels, announcements, late night conversations. Famous authors and artists, each with a different opinion about the work and legacy of REH. Rumors and hijinks and super-secret conclaves, parties and breakfasts and Howard-labelled beer. Meltdowns and screwups, heroics and hilarity. All of it occurring in the Pictlands of Austin, Texas, a stone’s throw from the Colorado River. (p. 3)

In an article dominating the issue, “Beyond the Colorado River,” Grin covers the convention from his viewpoint as a participant, also quoting from the accounts of fan Russell Andrew and REHupans Burke, Cavalier, Connors, Christopher Fulbright, Gruber, Angeline Hawkes, Rob Jones, Roehm, Sassar, and Tompkins. Others who attended include present and former REHupans Arney, David Hardy, Herman, and Lawrence “Deuce” Richardson; former REH copyright owners Jack and Barbara Baum; authors Peter Beagle, Glen Cook, David Drake, Alistair Durie, Steven Erikson, Robin Hobb, Howard Jones, Dennis McKiernan, Tim Powers, and James Reasoner; fans Bill Crider, Jack Jones, Charlotte Laughlin, and Dominic Quijas; editors Arnie Fenner, Stuart Schiff, Schweitzer, and Sean Wallace; artist Greg Manchess; bookseller Terence McVicker; Paradox licensing manager Leigh Stone; and Guests of Honor Glenn Lord and artist Gary Gianni. Roehm drove 22 hours from California just to catch 12 hours of it. Events there included a bus trip to Cross Plains; panels “Was REH the First of a Line of Weird Small Town Writers?,” “Interpreting REH’s Work in Art,” “Lone Rider or Ravening Horde: The Barbarian in Modern Fantasy,” “Deconstructing Howard I: The Writer, His Life, and His Influence,” “Deconstructing Howard II: The Research,” “The Weird Tales Triumvirate: The Shared Worlds of Howard, Lovecraft, and Smith,” and “Past Masters: The Persistence of What Has Gone before in REH”; an interview of Lord by Herman; a talk by Gianni; readings by Grin and authors Jayme Lynn Blaschke and Tom Monteleone; a book release party for Finn’s Blood & Thunder: The Life and Art of Robert E. Howard; and the Awards Banquet. Howard’s Centennial was the theme of the convention, and REHupans served on several of the panels.

As usual at such conventions, the most popular attractions were the Dealers’ Room selling pulps, books, and art; the networking and schmoozing with people of shared interests; and the prospects of meeting and getting signatures from notable authors and artists. Howardist conversations frequently concerned such topics as the controversial editor Benjamin Szumskyj, S. T. Joshi, and the friction between Howard and Lovecraft fandoms. Unfortunately, politics often played a role in the proceedings, from the near-derailling of the convention’s Austin venue and REH theme to the choice of winners of the World Fantasy Awards. Lord lost for Lifetime Achievement. Finn and his Blood & Thunder lost for Special Award, Professional. Grin and The Cimmerian lost in the Special Award – Nonprofessional category. At least, one Howard fan favorite, artist Stephen Fabian, won an award, as did Wallace of Wildside Press. Gianni “went out of his way to praise REH, Glenn, and Howard’s fans, and did a spectacular job of nailing.
home the importance and historical resonance of having Howard as the Con’s theme.” (p. 24) Best Novel winner Haruki Murakami stressed that he was initially inspired to write fantasy by reading REH and HPL as a boy in Japan, and that to win the Award and be ranked with such giants was a great honor. Hobb also said Howard had inspired her to become a writer.

The disappointment of Lord’s loss was a heavy blow to the Howard fans attending. Sasser said:

What really took the wind out of my sails was the rebuff handed to Glenn. Here, sitting amongst the “elite” of the fantasy writing world, is the man who singlehandedly carried the torch of Howard for decades, bringing hundreds of stories and dozens of books to the reading public and they could not even bring themselves to acknowledge his huge contribution to fantasy at a Howard-themed convention held in Texas. Shame, shame on them all. (p. 25)

(About his loss, Finn later said:

There was, in retrospect, no way in hell that I was going to win that award. It’s not intended for books; it’s for people. [49, p. 1] …

Those two awards at the end of the nominations list: Special Award, Professional, and Special Award, Non-Professional, are intended to recognize folks who don’t fit into any of the other categories. In particular, Special Award, Professional, was designed to honor publishers, editors, copyeditors, booksellers – heck, ANYONE not a writer of fantasy who contributed in some meaningful way that year.

It was never supposed to be for non-fiction books. It’s just that, when non-fiction books are written onto the ballot, they end up there, having nowhere else to go.

…

So, what’s the solution? A new awards category for non-fiction books, of course. [49, p. 5]

One can understand that such conventions tend to focus on current authors, who are frequently in attendance to advance their own careers, but it is unfortunate that so many of the judges and panelists, supposedly all pros, exhibited such ignorance of their own field’s history and legacy, and often spouted de Campisms or dismissed Howard as a “child’s author” if they knew anything at all about REH or his fans.) Referring to de Camp’s statement that “one reason that some readers do not like Carter’s and my Conan stories nearly so well as Howard’s: we are not crazy the way he was, and hence we find his emotional intensity hard to imitate” [50, p. 37], at least Drake countered that de Camp couldn’t write like Howard because REH was a genius and de Camp wasn’t.

(It is a testament to the progress REHupans and the Robert E. Howard Foundation have been making that the World Science Fiction Convention (WorldCon) in October, 2013, at San Antonio, Texas, had more and better attended REH-related panels, strong REHupa and Howard fan contingents, and a highly visible REHF book display, especially since the establishment of the REHF was only just announced at the 2006 WFC. Grin made a rather prophetic statement after the 2006 convention:
I was surprised at how many otherwise knowledgeable fantasy fans knew next to nothing about Howard, but heartened at how many wanted to learn more. There definitely is a prejudice against Howard among certain factions of the Old Guard of fantasy/sci-fi, a cliquish group who fancies themselves as intellectual and progressive, people far above slumming with pulp authors. But I got the feeling that, in addition to being out of touch, those people are fading from the scene just a bit more with each passing year, and that the younger generation is far more amendable to listing Howard among the giants of fantasy. I left feeling very optimistic about Howard’s long-term prospects among the movers and shakers of the fantasy publishing world. [51]

All registered convention-goers were given several free books, including paperbacks published by attending authors and one especially published for the event, *Cross Plains Universe: Texans Celebrate Robert E. Howard* (MonkeyBrain, 2006), edited by Scott A. Cupp and Joe R. Lansdale.

After a poem by Gruber, The Lion’s Den opens with a letter by Eric Johnson, who talks about new Conan books that are now available in Spanish, including the equivalent of the third Wandering Star volume that was still then unreleased. Following him is Schweitzer again, saying that his Robert E. Howard Reader would be a 2007, rather than a 2006, book. (It was finally issued by Wildside Press in 2010 and includes pieces by Poul Anderson, Connors, de Camp, Joshi, Fritz Leiber, Robert Price, Waldrop, and Robert Weinberg.) Holmes returns to praise Tierney’s poetry in TC. After a letter by Reasoner, Romeo writes in to make a good case for the fact that REH was indeed seriously bullied as a child, despite the de-emphasis of that fact in Burke’s “Bob Howard and the Bullies” [52] and in Finn’s Blood & Thunder. REH made unequivocal statements about it to E. Hoffmann Price, Tevis Clyde Smith, and Novalyne Price (Ellis), so why shouldn’t he be taken at his word? Such doubts “make Bob sound crazier than de Camp ever did!” (p. 38) A note from Burke ends the issue.

In his editorial in the December 2006 issue of The Cimmerian (Vol. 3, #12), Grin concludes that it is safe to say that Howard’s Centennial has been a resounding success.

The last twelve months have given us a nationally televised recovery from the devastating Cross Plains fires, prominent coverage of Howard and REH Days in the Washington Post [53], the Wall Street Journal [54], USA Today [55] and other prestigious venues, Howard as the theme of the World Fantasy Convention, an avalanche of new books and periodicals including a fully illustrated and textually-restored Kull and the creation of a new REH Foundation with an ambitious publishing schedule. (p. 3)

Grin contributed to the celebration with his grueling monthly TC publishing schedule, though he thanks his readers and contributors for appreciating his efforts, and singles out Don Herron, Rob Roehm, and Steve Tompkins for their personal input and assistance with such things as proofreading.

Romantic poet and CAS scholar Donald Sidney-Fryer leads off the issue with his superlative essay “Robert E. Howard: Epic Poet in Prose,” bringing his expertise in poetic traditions and styles to bear on Howard’s own mastery of them, in particular his connection with and continuation of the mythic epics by the bards and storytellers of old, with their aura of past glories and fabled legendry. From the first, REH’s writing struck DSF “as epic, in a thrillingly vigorous mode expressed far too rarely these days. In a human world and civilization that has become increasingly “womanized” – where there exists much less range and scope for the male characteristics of decisive and straightforward physical action – Howard’s tales of personal combat and epic struggle serve to remind us not only of the violence released in war, but above all of what real fighting is like, as it was pursued in earlier times, possessing an existential edge that most of us have forgotten.” (p. 5) Contrary to Derleth’s opinion, but in accordance with Fritz Leiber’s, DSF believes that Howard was at the top of his game when he wrote the Conan stories, as indicated by the facility and pleasure with which he wrote them and by their inclusion of some of his best and most vigorous prose, as well as some of his best and most fertile concepts.
Impressed generally by REH’s protagonists, DSF says:

Epic heroes of towering stature, strength, and size, independent of any characteristic story or other epoch setting. Perhaps this explains the freshness and novelty of such heroes, undiluted by irony or cynicism and any jadedness. Howard never felt it necessary to vitiate such primordial conceptions with any puerile revisionism or insipid second thought that might have tamed them down, or might have anticipated today’s vapid and pseudo-pious political correctness.

Though heroic fantasy has existed since the epic poems of Homer, Virgil, Ariosto, Tasso, and Spenser, among others, Howard’s was an original and uniquely modern type, namely Sword & Sorcery. Furthermore, REH realizes his heroic visions and characters through the medium of prose, rather than poetic, fiction.

DSF defines an epic as a very long narrative poem structured on a grand scale and centered on a character, usually male, of heroic proportions, whose exploits often involve strategic interventions by divine beings. Discussing the more important examples from antiquity through the Renaissance, including medieval romances and folk epics, he claims that the self-taught, well-read Howard would have been familiar with these poetic models and that his love of full-blooded, fantastic adventure stories would have impelled him to emulate them in style and structure both in poems like “Solomon Kane’s Homecoming” and prose pieces about larger-than-life heroes like Conan, Kull, Kane, Steve Costigan, and Breckinridge Elkins. “To reread these stories … is to see more clearly the emergence of Howard’s unique talent – or if you will, pure genius – at relating stories in a vivid and action-filled manner. An epic manner.”

Moreover, with their fast-paced action and vigorous but poetic prose his highly individual stories not only stood out by themselves but ranked equally well next to those by Lovecraft, Ashton Smith, Whitehead, and others of equivalent merit and popularity. This represented quite a feat for someone who never had the advantage of belonging to a sympathetic circle or coterie of like-minded fellow scriveners.”

Whether consciously or unconsciously, REH uses many of the narrative and other devices typical of epic poems, as DSF demonstrates by listing several and giving examples of them drawn from Howard’s stories, e.g. (1) the solemn invocation of or to the Muse, such as his use of poetic epigraphs heading chapters; (2) the need for an elevated style, though employed with taste and restraint to avoid humor or parody, unless such is intended, as in the Costigan and Elkins tales; (3) beginning stories in media res, i.e. in the thick of the action; (4) focusing on a hero of mythic or legendary proportions, often wandering on some quest; (5) featuring heroic battles with divine or, in REH’s case, supernatural intervention; (6) epic lists or catalogs, such as of different nations or tribes lining up for battle; and (7) the pathetic or meteorological fallacy, whereby weather or other heavenly phenomena correlate with the hero’s actions, his moods, and their consequences, such as Kull’s appearance and disappearance with the sun in “Kings of the Night.” “Tightly interwoven with this technique is another: the author invariably depicts his narrative through a fast-moving body of images, pure imagery, that remains astonishingly poetic, and specifically like that of epic narration in its circumstantial detail.”

One is palpably struck by the author’s unique individuality, by the vividness, the thoughtfulness, and the gorgeous action-filled narratives peculiar to his fiction.

…
REH yields in no way to HPL or CAS as a romancer of the otherworldly, but absolutely takes equal rank as a fictioneer of the weird and fantastic. ... In his verve, imagination, and power of language, Robert E. Howard successfully evokes the epic ancients, creating as they did timeless parables of Otherwhere. (p. 13)

DSF’s piece won the third-place 2008 Cimmerian (“Hyrkanian”) Award for Best Essay.

Leno is up next with “Diary of a Bad Man,” in which he covers a mention of Howard in The Inman Diary: A Public and Private Confession (Harvard University Press, 1985). Arthur Inman (1895-1963) was a prolific American diarist who was also an eccentric, racist misanthrope. Still, the detailed diaries he kept between 1919 and his suicide in 1963 contain enough historical and cultural references to be worth reading. In particular, he read Weird Tales and admired C. L. Moore, C. A. Smith, HPL, and especially REH. About the latter’s stories, he said:

They genuinely had to do with the adventures of two characters, first Kull the Atlantian [sic], then later on, Conan the barbarian. These two men of almost superhuman strength, product of the outlands of the semi-mythical world in which they moved from one hazard to another, fought their way to kingship over the more cultured empires then upon the earth. They were fearless, tireless, often overtrustful, temporarily distracted by lovely women, now and again sentimental, but always alert, watchful, buoyantly alive, unbreakable in their intrepidity. Few obstacles blocked their assiduity of purpose, balked their strength of arm. They exemplified in their persons, their intuitions and their actions raw prowess impinging upon cultures becoming decadent. Their course through adversity to success was a swashbuckling one, their spirits being uplifted by an unquenchable brashness. (p. 16)

Next on stage is Leon Nielsen with “Legacy,” which traces the events and players involved in bringing Howard’s writing up to their current place in the public consciousness. A few weeks after the burials of his wife and son, Dr. Howard donated Bob’s book and magazine collection to Howard Payne College, where the books were labeled as being part of the “Robert E. Howard Memorial Collection.” They were put into general circulation, however, so of the original 350, only 68 remain. As pulp magazines died out due to the rise of mass-market paperback books and to World War II paper shortages, the names of REH and many other pulp writers began to fade into obscurity. Howard was rescued to some extent by Skull-Face and Others (1946) and other books by Derleth’s Arkham House and the early-fifties Gnome Press series of Conan hardbacks edited by John D. Clark and, later, de Camp. De Camp approached several publishing houses about reprinting the Conan tales. Lancer Books accepted, and its line of Conan paperbacks, followed by those of Sphere in the UK and Ace Books, set off the Howard Boom of the late 1960s and the 1970s.

Dr. Howard left his son’s copyrights to Dr. Pere M. Kuykendall of Ranger, Texas, in gratitude for helping him during his final years. Dr. Howard also gave a trunk full of REH’s typescripts and letters, including hundreds of unpublished or unfinished stories and poems, to Bob’s fellow pulp author E. Hoffmann Price of California. REH had engaged writer-turned-agent Otis Adelbert Kline to be his literary agent in 1933, and Kline continued to act as such for the Howard heirs until Kline’s death in 1946. The Kline Agency was then sold to Oscar J. Friend, who remained the heirs’ agent until his own death in 1963. When Dr. Kuykendall died in 1958, the literary rights went to his wife Alla Ray Kuykendall and their daughter Alla Ray Kuykendall Morris. In late 1964, Friend’s widow closed his agency and, at de Camp’s suggestion, gave the
job of agent in March, 1965, to REH fan Glenn Lord of Pasadena, Texas, who had edited *Always Comes Evening* (1957) and published *The Howard Collector* prozine. [57] Shortly after, Lord tried to collect as much of REH’s original material as possible, tracking down and buying Price’s trunkful of papers. He continued to act as agent, marketing Howard to publishers, until September, 1993.

Without Glenn Lord’s untiring and dedicated effort to the legacy of Robert E. Howard, much important material would have been lost or remained unavailable to Howard scholars, writers, biographers, collectors and readers. It should not be forgotten that it is only because of Glenn Lord and his arduous work to collect and preserve as much of Howard’s material as possible that there are tangible literary rights which can be commercialized, and that there are existing letters, poems, fragments and other items which may yet be published and generate profits for the holders of these rights. Whoever they may be at any time in the future, they owe Glenn Lord their most sincere appreciation. Through his effort, he has become an inseparable part of the Howard legacy. (p. 20)

In order to provide a single entity for prospective Conan publishers and filmmakers to deal with, the Kuykendalls, de Camp, and others formed Conan Properties, Inc. in the 1970s. Unfortunately, CPI was not managed objectively; REH’s original Conan stories were kept out of print in favor of an array of pastiches, comic books, toys, three weak movies, a lightweight live TV show, and a poor TV cartoon show. “It appeared that CPI was not nearly as interested in conserving and presenting Conan as created by Robert E. Howard as it was in marketing a number of inferior products under the Conan banner while using the copyright to prevent others from printing REH’s original stories.” (p. 20)

After de Camp’s death in November, 2000, the shareholders of CPI sold the firm to Stan Lee Media, which went bankrupt in less than a year, and CPI, now named Conan Properties International, LLC was bought by Sweden-based Paradox Entertainment, Inc. The rights to Howard’s other characters went elsewhere. When Mrs. Morris died in 1995, she left the rights to REH’s works to Zora Mae Baum Bryant, who had married Mrs. Morris’s cousin Elliott Bryant, and her children Jack Baum and Terry Baum Rogers. They formed Robert E. Howard Properties, LLC in 1996 to manage the literary rights to the non-Conan characters, aside from a few smaller corporate entities that had already been established for certain characters, namely Kull Productions, LLC, the Red Sonja Corporation, and Solomon Kane Properties, LLC. Robert E. Howard Properties was sold to Paradox in early 2006. Paradox has been preserving REH’s legacy through the Wandering Star, Del Rey, Bison, and Robert E. Howard Foundation pure-text books and also promoting Howard through comic books, movies, and games. Nielsen acknowledges help with this article from Lord, Burke, Grin, and Sasser.

Following this, elaborating on the role of the Robert E. Howard Foundation, Burke explains that it is a non-profit organization established with the cooperation and assistance of Paradox Entertainment for the purpose of promoting Howard publishing and scholarship, including management of collections and archives of pulp pages, typescripts, and other materials, and providing support for REH-related programs such as scholarships, grants, the Howard House and Museum, and Howard Days. At the time of its formation in 2006, the Foundation’s Board of Directors consisted of Fred Malmberg and Peter Sederowsky, both of Paradox, Burke, Herman, and Louinet, with Lord serving in an advisory capacity.

Tierney next presents the final triptych of his “The Doom of Hynoria” poetry cycle.
Then the letter column commences with letters by Flensing Hlanith and Haefele. Haefele lauds Herron for his recent contributions and agrees with Schweitzer that Derleth was both fundamentally out of sympathy with Howard’s work, yet able to listen to the opinions of friends and patrons. He wonders if Derleth chose “Skull-Face” as the title story of his first REH collection more for its attention-grabbing title than for its quality. Haefele disagrees with Schweitzer that *Skull-Face and Others* was a slow seller, not if one factors in that many in the target audience would have read some of the stories in the pulps. He seconds Nielsen’s call for publication of the *Collected Letters* and praises Finn for his balanced commentary regarding de Camp in *Blood & Thunder*. Roehm is next, pointing out how the impressive contents of this year’s *TC* show that there is still plenty to say about REH, offering his own picks for Cimmerian Awards, and announcing that he has readied the *Collected Letters* for publication.

Graeme Phillips submits a long rebuttal to Leno’s defense of his essay “Lovecraft’s Southern Vacation” in the February issue that Leno had mounted in a letter in the June issue. Phillips accuses Leno of continually making negative remarks about HPL which have nothing to do with the subject of his essay (“Pigeons from Hell”), of selectively quoting or misleadingly paraphrasing Lovecraft’s letters, and making negative assumptions about HPL without providing any evidence, such as claiming that Lovecraft was jealous of Howard’s literary success. (Unfortunately, Phillips’s attempted refutation is marred by misdirection and sophistry. He claims that Leno makes negative comments about HPL when Leno was merely referring to Lovecraft’s presumed disrespect of Howard, which HPL after all did express in his 1935 letter to Sterling.) Phillips says he doesn’t know why Leno states that Lovecraft knew about his own linguistic error in “The Rats in the Walls” “when he wrote it, but he certainly didn’t think that any of the knuckle-dragging readers of Farny Wright’s rag were apt to catch it” (p. 31), but then Phillips admits that HPL said “Nobody will ever stop to note the difference.” (p. 31) Then Phillips suggests that the linguistic issue could have been “a surprise twist ending” (p. 31), despite the fact that Lovecraft had admitted it was an error. He adds, “I am now of the opinion that there is no error in ‘The Rats in the Walls’” (p. 32) just because REH thought HPL was adhering to a less accepted anthropological theory, in spite of the fact that Lovecraft had admitted he wasn’t. Phillips asserts that Leno “believes that REH caught HPL plagiarizing another writer [Walter de la Poer] and that this subsequently soured their future relationship” (p. 32), when in fact Leno said no such thing. He adds, “As far as I know ‘laziness’ is not a criminal offense” (p. 32) and “that HPL mentions this borrowing to at least two professional writers suggests that he didn’t think he did anything wrong.” (p. 33) (But what he *thought* is not the issue; what he *did* is.) Phillips declares that Lovecraft’s comments about Howard to Sterling and Howard’s ridicule of Lovecraft for his support of Fascism should be ignored because they are irrelevant to “Pigeons from Hell” and “are merely provided to try and discredit HPL and to justify his conclusions” (p. 33), adding “I can’t get that upset about something said in a private letter [to Sterling] written seventy years ago.” (p. 33)

Leno replies in the April 2007 issue, making these points and others, concluding that Phillips didn’t convince him that he had made any errors in his essay.

Returning to the December 2006 issue, Nielsen bats cleanup with an insightful portrait in words of Howard the man, summarizing the writer’s aspirations, family and social situations, probable psychological problems, and ultimate accomplishments.

Robert E. Howard was not crazy, homosexual, schizophrenic, psychotic, bipolar or “not wired right.” To the contrary, he was a markedly intelligent and highly sensitive human being who had pronounced – and perhaps exaggerated – difficulties dealing with certain aspects of life, particularly his inner personal
feelings, relationship issues and the suffering and death of anyone, human or animal, who were [sic] close to him. He showed a great deal of compassion for those who had less and considerable antipathy for those who held the power and authority over others, be it individuals, corporations or governments. (pp. 37-38)

Nielsen is of the opinion that REH had some sexual experience, if only with prostitutes, given the explicitness of some of his stories and poetry. About his relationship with Novalyne Price, he says, “All things considered, they were two independent, opinionated and incompatible young people, attributes which often result in arguments and breakups. That they cared for each other is beyond question, but neither seemed to be willing to compromise in the relationship and make a more lasting commitment to the other person, which itself is noteworthy.” (p. 38)

When all is said and done, REH was trapped between an aloof and emotionally non-committed father, a needy, possessive and ailing mother for whom he felt strongly responsible, and lived in a small, narrow-minded community, among people who had little understanding or empathy, while fighting an unending battle with severe but unrecognized situational depression.

…

That Howard was able to keep out the pedestrian realities and personal tribulations of his world with its multifaceted constraints, and find the energy and inspiration to create such a multitude of colorful characters and volumes of wild and wonderful adventures, which are still unmatched in the year of his one-hundredth anniversary, is the true greatness of the young man from Cross Plains, Texas, who in spite of all the odds against him wanted to be – and became – a writer for the ages.

We remember you, Bob Howard – and we salute you! (p. 38)

By mid-2006, The Cimmerian Blog had already shifted into high gear. During the last half of the year, Grin discussed, among other topics, name recognition for REH, Howard’s feelings about the Fourth of July and Thanksgiving, Benjamin Szumskyj, Norris Chambers, historical accuracy in REH’s fiction, new Howard-related books, Howard Days 2006, sale of REH collectibles, Howard’s martial poetry, Project Pride, Gen Con, Lois Garrett, and Joe Lansdale. Reasoner reviews Gruber’s Them’s Fightin’ Words: REH on Boxing. Tompkins discourses on Howard’s pirate stories and poetry, David Gemmell, the correspondence between Lovecraft and Donald Wandrei, movies, editorial tampering with Karl Edward Wagner’s introductions to the Berkley/Putnam Conans, and Two-Gun Bob. Grin and Tompkins talk about REHupa Mailing #200. Finn weighs in on digital libraries, the effect of de Camp’s disrespect of Howard, and Blood & Thunder. Roehm treats the lengths of REHupa Mailings, Dark Horse’s REH comics, collecting Conan books, Howard Centennial publications, Howard’s boxing fiction, and Cryptic chapbooks. Grin and Roehm consider the Jenkins Gent. Grin, Tompkins, Finn, and Roehm cover the World Fantasy Convention.

In the third year of The Cimmerian’s run, Grin set a record for the greatest number of REH-related fan or literary publication pages that were, and probably ever will be, published in a year: over 480. Also, no other such publication has yet matched its monthly publishing schedule. The quality and impact of TC’s contents had never been better, and exceeded those of all other such publications before and after. Grin’s subsequent return to a bimonthly schedule would ease the
pressure on him, but still: how long could he and his contributors continue to meet the standards and demands he had set for himself and them? We will begin to answer this question next time.

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<td>Gobbett, Edward</td>
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Herron, Don


Herron, Don

Letter [contradicts Romeo’s claim in “Viagra for the Soul” that de Camp appreciated REH & Kappabani’s letter in #5 defending Farnsworth Wright; declares Wandering Star hastened its own demise by overpaying artists; & reaffirms his use of REH citations as to REH’s low opinion of Farnsworth Wright] in The Cimmerian, Vol. 3, #7 (Leo Grin, Playa del Rey, Cal., July, 2006), pp. 33-37

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