FANDOM AT A CROSSROADS

"Fantasy Crossroads" was a semi-pro publication that became the premier fantasy fanzine after the demise of Glenn Lord’s *The Howard Collector* in 1973. Edited and published by Jonathan Bacon quarterly over the last half of the 1970s, it ran 15 issues, plus one Special Edition. In the first issue, Bacon states:

"Fantasy Crossroads" is not only the title of this fanzine, it’s also a statement of philosophy. The area of fantasy literature has been neglected either because of intellectual snobbery or because it was considered the realm of children. I will not attempt to rationalize fantasy literature as an area of great intellectual pursuit. Fantasy has always been an escape … and in high pressure, high tension times any escape mechanism which does not pervert the human spirit is welcome. On the other hand no one can deny that fantasy literature contains its share of classics.

He goes on to say that the field includes Sword and Sorcery, epitomized by Robert E. Howard’s Conan, and is a grand field with plenty of territory to cover.

"Fantasy Crossroads" intends to bring these areas together. We intend to be the crossroads where the various sectors of fantasy fandom gather to exchange their best works and criticize their worst. We hope to present more than just fan and pro work in these pages. We want to present not only the written work of Robert E. Howard (for example) but also background on the man from his letters and his friends. His few remaining intimate friends will not always be with us … let’s find out about Howard from them while we can. We hope for depth not just fillers. Come join us at the *Crossroads*.

The indicia describe *FC* as a “hobby publication dedicated to all aspects of fantasy but with a special emphasis on the life and work of Robert E. Howard.” The first seven issues and the Special Edition were published by the Comic Club of Graceland College, Lamoni, Iowa and then, with issue #7, by Bacon’s Stygian Isle Press. The print runs of issues #1-3, #4/5, #6-9, #10/11, and #12-14 and the Special Edition were 890, 450, 520, 565, 980, 985, 1000, 1200, 1200, 700, 1350, 1200, and 535 respectively; that of #15 is unknown. The first seven zines and the Special Edition were side-stapled stacks of colored construction paper (which was what was available free at the Graceland College printing shop) that gave it a distinctive, if somewhat amateurish,
appearance. The cover price was $2.00 for issues #1-3, $4.00 for #4/5, $2.00 for #6 and #7, $2.50 for #8 and #9, $5.00 for #10/11, $3.00 for #12-15, and $3.50 for the Special Edition ($3.50). FC was issued quarterly.

The first issue (November, 1974) was devoted to REH and the comic book writers and artists Will Eisner and Jack Kirby. Bacon begins with interviews of Eisner and Kirby, followed by portfolios of movie stills and fan art. Then he presents an article on Howard that includes his poems “Recompense,” “The Singer in the Mist,” and “The Song of the Mad Minstrel”; the story “Delenda Est”; the first publication of a synopsis from which Lin Carter and L. Sprague de Camp wrote “The Hall of the Dead”; and a checklist of the REH contents of the 45 issues of Marvel’s Conan the Barbarian comic, the first five issues of Marvel’s Savage Tales magazine, and the first two issues of Marvel’s The Savage Sword of Conan magazine. The issue was rounded out with several comic-related reviews and ads. The comic-related content would diminish with time as Bacon’s interest tilted more toward fantasy. At 86 pages for $2.00, it was an impressive start indeed.

The second issue (February, 1975) opens with a column featuring letters from Eisner, REH’s associate Harold Preece, and John Jakes, followed by a strong REH section consisting of two letters from Howard to Preece, the second publication of the story “The Curse of the Golden Skull” illustrated by Steve Fabian, Preece’s “The Last Celt” reprinted from The Howard Collector (with an unpublished epilog and some prefatory Q&As between Bacon and Glenn Lord about Conan), two versions of the poem “Heritage” (the first appearance of one and the second
appearance of the other), the poems “Always Comes Evening” and “The Poets,” a checklist of Marvel’s *Kull* stories, and the western “Drums of the Sunset” (with the previously unpublished ending, courtesy, as for all these new publications, of Glenn Lord). A sketch of Preece’s career as a newspaperman is included in Bacon’s introduction to the REH section. The rest of the issue is comprised of fan art, an interview, reviews, news, and ads, for a total of 96 pages.

Preece’s “The Last Celt” article (which would give the name to Lord’s bio-biography of REH, in which it is reprinted) recounts how he met Bob though Bob’s friend Truett Vinson, who happened to be a pen pal of fellow Texan Herbert Klatt, as was Preece. Yet Preece and Howard never discussed their common Texan heritage, but only their mutual interest in Celtic history and lore. Preece says, referring to the romantic couple Tristan and Isolde of Celtic legend:

> As some incarnated Tristan I can remember Bob Howard, though that Isolde who might have been a needed substitute for his mother never appeared. But he had other Celtic individualities, too; individualities transmitted, perhaps, through those genetic inheritances that Jung talks about, shaped and developed both as escape and reality in that ordinary little town of Cross Plains where he lived … Supremely, perhaps, “within spirit which lies outside time,” he was Conan, from whom he believed himself literally descended and whom certain scholars of pre-history say actually existed.

Lord, in the Q&As with Bacon, explains that the Conan referred to here is Conan na Eireann from the Fenian or Ossianic Cycle of Irish heroic sagas.

Howard, Preece, Preece’s sister Lenore, and a few others formed a circle of amateur poets. “Bob,” Preece said, “the one professional among us, was its star.” They published verse in a little typewritten journal of one copy passed through the mail called *The Junto*, where the 20-year-old Howard’s career as a great poet began. Howard, Preece, Vinson, and Tevis Clyde Smith would gather for nocturnal sessions near Brownwood, Texas, during which Bob would expound on the legends of Ireland, which he and Preece believed to have been the apex of a great Celtic domain once extending across most of Europe.” Bob theorized that the fairies, leprechauns, and other Little People of Celtic lore were the remnants of Europe’s original inhabitants, forced to retreat into caves after the advent of the taller Indo-European conquerors, which anthropologist Margaret Murray later thought she had found evidence for in fact. “A strange man, this burly-looking Texan who so often liked to look and talk tough, yet who had that endless talent of an artist combined with that dedicated fact finding of the scholar. … He, of all American poets, deserved both a longer life and a more eloquent death.”

In the epilog, Preece recaps the path to literary glory that Howard’s fiction and poetry were to take in the ensuing decades after Howard’s death, thanks to the dedicated ministrations of August Derleth, Glenn Lord, and others who recognized his worth and genius.

The 60-page third issue (May, 1975), after a story by Harlan Ellison, presents an art portfolio of REH’s female characters (as portrayed by Stephen Fabian and others) followed by a new article by Preece on the women in Bob’s life and his attitude toward women in general; the Kid Allison boxing yarn “The Good Knight” (a.k.a. “Kid Galahad”); a letter from Howard to Preece; an article by George Hamilton and Wayne Warfield (editors of the fanzine *Cross Plains*) on collecting REH books; and the REH poems “The Ghost Kings” and “Flint’s Passing” (the first appearance of the latter). The issue ends with fan art, an interview, letters (including ones from
Robert Bloch, REHupan Bob Barger, REHupan and future Fantasy Newsletter editor Paul C. Allen, fanzine Nyctalops editor Harry Morris, comic artist C. C. Beck, and Marvel writer Roy Thomas), reviews (including ones of REH’s Verses in Ebony (Hamilton & Brown, 1975) and the fanzines The Howard Review #2, REH: Lone Star Fictioneer #1, and Cross Plains #6), and news. Bacon admits it was Marvel comics that first turned him on to REH, as they did so many others.

In his article “Women and Robert Ervin Howard,” Preece records what he knew of REH’s experiences with women. Bob told him that, when he was 15, he had an ill-fated crush on an older girl from a traveling carnival. When Preece, in correspondence between them, voiced a low opinion of female intellect, Bob was quick to upbraid him, extolling the achievements of many women. Preece added:

I could wish that Bob, so born out of his time, might have found his Hypatia or Sappho—or just an intelligent, understanding wife who could have seen to his survival following the death of his mother. But off college campuses, there were few intellectually developed women in our frontierish native state.

Though Howard wasn’t very aggressive at dating, Preece heard, through their friends in the Junto circle, of a relationship Bob had for a time with a conservative lady who even lured him into attending her Sunday school. Much later, Preece learned of “a school teacher he had pathetically courted a few years before his death” and, for the first time, prints a letter from Howard to her (Novalyne Price) rebuking her for also dating a friend of his (Truett Vinson) without informing
him, but omits their names. Glenn Lord provided the letter, which Preece assumed was the couple’s parting communication. Preece quotes Lord as writing:

It is difficult to speculate just what Bob would have done had he married one of the women in his life. He might have been able to withstand the shock of his mother’s death—but would he have lived to a ripe old age with a bad heart?

Preece was of the opinion that such a relationship would have only stifled the development and expression of Howard’s art. His reminiscences of Howard regarding women seem thin, speculative, and sexist, and are partly invalidated by Price’s memoir One Who Walked Alone (Donald M. Grant, 1986).

Bacon made the next issue double-size (#4/5) because of the accumulation of REH and Algernon Blackwood material, both of which he was loath to cut. He said that both reader opinions and his own inclinations favored a mainly Howard fanzine, but he still hesitated to go completely in that direction. He decided to favor pro art over fan art and to deemphasize comic books and science fiction. The issue came in at 122 pages.

The letter column in issue #4/5 (August, 1975) included missives from Prof. Dirk Mosig (the H. P. Lovecraft scholar) and Bob Barger. Leading the reviews that follow is a scathing indictment by Mosig of de Camp’s Lovecraft: A Biography ( Doubleday, 1975), whose detailed list of flaws includes “amateur psychodiagnoses” and “colored by the author’s hostile attitude toward his subject” that are so familiar as criticisms that were later leveled at de Camp’s biography of REH, Dark Valley Destiny (Bluejay Books, 1983). Bacon provided the review to de Camp, who mounted a spirited defense. Bacon even allows Mosig a rebuttal.

Thereafter comes a portfolio and articles on J. R. R. Tolkien, an article about and two stories by Harlan Ellison, the first appearance of REH’s boxing tale “Man with the Mystery Mitts,” the REH poem “War to the Blind,” and the first appearance of the REH fragment “The Abbey.” Also in this section is a short article by Warfield, who speculates that Howard’s being a social misfit might have been an inspiration to his work. Then James Coplin contributes an epic poem about the Picts, which is followed by a portfolio on Conan and other fantasy swordsmen featuring art by K. W. Ramey III, Dennis Fujitake, Fabian, Tom Foster, Broc Sears, Randall Spurgin, Cliff Bird, Ric Cruz, Sam de la Rosa, Herb Arnold, Douglas Herring, REHupan Gene Day, and Ronn Foss. The issue closes with REH’s poem “Day Breaks over Simla” illustrated by Frank Cirocco, a graphic telling of the Volsunga Saga, an article on and two stories by Blackwood, an article on the Weird Tales’ letter column “The Eyrie” by Robert Weinberg (quoting editor Farnsworth Wright’s refusal to let others continue Conan’s adventures after REH’s death), news, and a checklist by Masaki Abe of REH books available in Japanese.

Issues #6 and #7 had covers and some interior art by Gene Day. In #6 (November, 1975), the debate over de Camp’s biography of HPL is continued by others, though de Camp contributes an unrelated missive, while Warfield decries how little actual fantasy has been gracing FC. Following a story by Bloch, the Mosig-de Camp debate is resumed by its principals, with de Camp accusing Mosig of embarking on “a campaign of bitter, nitpacking, irrationally vehement attacks” on him, and Mosig explaining his motive as correcting the record when “opinions are offered as facts, and distort the portrait of a man like Lovecraft” and calling de Camp’s portrayal atrocious and biased. There follows some fan poetry and art, the first publication of REH’s story “The Gondarian Man” and then his poem “Hope Empty of Meaning,” the story “The Phantom
Athlete” by Clyde Smith, much news, and a letter from Howard to Preece (it and REH’s poem reprinted from *The Howard Collector*). This issue ran 44 pages.

Issue #7 (February, 1976) opens with the last shots by de Camp and Mosig, surprisingly conciliatory and mentioning what might be corrected in the next edition of the biography. The rest of the letters include ones by Bloch, Paul Allen, Warfield, and Don Herron. Allen praises *FC*’s publication of the Kid Allison stories. Warfield calls for more recent fantasy (which Bacon does promise) and for saddle-stitching the spine of the magazine (which Bacon says is impractical considering his resources). Two letterhacks side with de Camp and only Herron sides with Mosig. The rest of the 40 pages is filled with stories by the Lovecraftian Carl Jacobi and a couple fans; a Stephen Riley art portfolio; poetry by de Camp and some fans; REH’s poem “Madame Goose’s Rhymes”; an untitled, unpublished fragment of an REH suspense story (“The night was damp, misty …”); an unpublished letter from REH to Preece ca. September, 1928; the Kid Allison story “College Socks”; and news.

In January, 1976, Bacon published a 32-page Special Edition of *FC* as a production of the class he taught at Graceland College on fanzines. It contained REH’s boxing story “Fists of the Revolution,” his poem “Visions” (reprinted from *THC* #16), and his “More Evidences of the Innate Divinity of Man” (reprinted from *The Junto* and actually a survey of historical methods of torture); fan fiction, poetry, and art; the article “Heroes of Swords and Sorcery” by Jerry L. Schattenburg (who discusses the S & S stories of Fritz Leiber, Michael Moorcock, Lin Carter,
Karl Edward Wagner, and Gardner F. Fox); and a critical review by Preece of de Camp’s monograph *The Miscast Barbarian*, followed by a rebuttal by de Camp. Preece states:

Currently a prominent author with a marked streak of Texaphobia, L. Sprague de Camp, has attempted what amounts to a once-over lightly interpretation of a writer whose complexities he often treats with lordly condescension and rather facile psychological jargon.

Preece’s piece is an eloquent defense of Howard, his importance, and his genius. He says that de Camp defines REH as having a “schizoid personality,” but his other points against de Camp seem weak and unconvincing. De Camp takes him to task, saying “I do harbor admiration and affection for the Howard that I picture, from what I have learned about him, or I should not have spent so much time promoting him and his works.” *The Miscast Barbarian* would form one chapter of de Camp’s book *Literary Swordsmen and Sorcerers: The Makers of Heroic Fantasy* (Arkham House, 1976) and would later be expanded to become *Dark Valley Destiny*, the first comprehensive biography of Howard. He never did interview Preece.

With the 44-page issue #8 (May, 1976), the look of *FC* changed radically, going from side-stapled construction paper to a wraparound, saddle-stapled semi-prozine with a smaller font. Issues #8 and #9 boasted color covers by Rich Corben. #8’s was erotically graphic enough to require a defense by Bacon in the next issue. #8 featured the unpublished REH spicy western “Daughters of Feud” and his poem “Miser’s Gold”; an unpublished letter from HPL to Clark
Ashton Smith mentioning Howard; new stories by Clyde Smith and Clifford M. Eddy, Jr.; stories by de Camp and others; poetry by Steve Eng (as John Bredon) and other fans; a new column “Of Swords & Sorcery” by Paul Allen (the first installment spotlighting Fritz Leiber); and art by Gene Day (a portfolio on “The God in the Bowl”), Steve Fabian, Lee Brown Coye, Ric Cruz, and others; reviews; and letters. News got relegated into an insert. In his letter, Lovecraft refers to REH as seeming “to be a rather erudite person … Some of his work—especially the ‘Elder World’ stuff—is delightful, but he is woefully prone to spoil his tales by concessions to the cheaply romantic element.” The letter column featured epistles from REHupans Bob Barger and Scott Connors, as well as from Arnie Fenner, editor of REH: Lone Star Fictioneer.

Bacon later said that is was good that Howard’s spicy westerns like “Daughters of Feud” received little acceptance in the pulps or REH “might have turned out to be one of the better porno writers of our time … and we might have lost out on Conan, Kull and company” [1].

Issue #9 (August, 1976) presented the very short REH piece “The Last Laugh”; stories by Clyde Smith and Charles R. Saunders (the latter an Imaro adventure); Part I of an REH Editors/Publishers Roundtable Discussion about the pleasures and problems of fanzine production (featuring Fenner and Byron Roark of REH: Lone Star Fictioneer, George Hamilton and Wayne Warfield of Cross Plains, Dennis McHaney of The Howard Review, Damon Sasser of REH: Two-Gun Raconteur, George Scithers of Amra, and Bacon); fan stories and art (including a “Red Nails” portfolio by Gene Day); reviews (including Allen’s S & S survey of Karl Edward Wagner’s Kane stories); letters; and news, all in 44 pages. It contained letters by de Camp (on
Frank Belknap Long’s impressions of HPL), Fenner, Warfield, Stuart Schiff (editor of Whispers magazine), and Scott Connors.

The 80-page double issue #10/11 (March, 1977) ascended to prozine status, at least with regard to the design consistency throughout, the lack of which had marred previous issues. However, it begins with the first parts (by Wagner and Joseph Payne Brennan) of a controversial round-robin story which Bacon commissioned from 17 prominent fantasy authors as a completion of REH’s untitled James Allison fragment that Bacon titled “Genseric’s Fifth-Born Son.” One would expect a certain inconsistency of styles, as was the case with the round-robin story “The Challenge from Beyond” to which Howard himself contributed, and that’s certainly the case here, not to mention a meandering plot. This may have seemed like a worthwhile experiment at the time, but the consensus of fandom since has come down against posthumous collaborations like this, de Camp’s, and Carter’s as exploitive and probably damaging to Howard’s reputation.

The zine continued with Part II of the REH Editors/Publishers Roundtable Discussion; an interview of REH publisher Donald M. Grant (and a bibliography thereof) by Stephen Riley; fan fiction and poetry (including some by Eng); Allen’s column (on John Jakes, Norvell Page, Larry Niven, and Gene Lancour); one chapter each from Bacon-commissioned (though never completed) biographies of REH by Preece and Clyde Smith; a survey of the Zebra paperbacks of REH by REHupan Brian Earl Brown (welcoming their advent, but denouncing their mislabeled, misrepresentative covers); the article “Howard and the Races” by de Camp (concluding that REH was, if a racist, a comparatively mild one by the standards of the time); reviews; news; and letters.
The latter included ones from de Camp, Frank Belknap Long, and Brown (who says “Leiber could write rings around Howard”). The issue featured art by Frank Frazetta, Virgil Finlay, Roy Krenkel, Gene Day, and others.

Grant describes his efforts to get REH into print; he didn’t have the resources to beat Arkham House or Gnome Press, but he later put out the first deluxe editions. He attributes Howard’s success to imaginative settings and headlong storytelling. Grant had problems with typography in his early efforts, including *The Sowers of the Thunder* (1973), on which artist Roy Krenkel lavished several years of work. The extent of Grant’s bowdlerization of Howard’s texts wasn’t yet known.

Preece’s chapter on REH discusses Bob’s love of reading, especially pulp and history, and his participation in a boys’ group called the Lone Scouts. Smith’s memoir describes their friendship and a story-writing venture with Bob while they were in high school, and mentions the stories Bob wrote for *The Tattler* published by Brownwood High School students. The continuation of Smith’s piece ended up in *Report on a Writing Man and Other Reminiscences of Robert E. Howard* (Necronomicon Press, 1991). Bacon later published a rough draft of Preece’s chapter on Preece’s and Howard’s boyhoods in Callahan County and their first attempts at writing [2].

The last four issues of FC ran 44 pages. #12 (November, 1977) was published jointly by Simba Reproductions and Stygian Isle Press. In it *Genserics’s Fifth-Born Son* continued with chapters by Richard L. Tierney, Michael Moorcock, and Charles R. Saunders. Allen’s “Of Swords & Sorcery” column contains updates on ventures he mentioned previously and reviews of novels by Andre Norton, Catherine L. Moore, Lester Del Rey, and John Crowley. The hand of the new editor, Clifford William Bird (publisher of the magazines *Balik* and *Simba*), is evident in the interior illustrations, a synopsis for the round-robin story, an unnecessary disclaimer for Allen’s column, a summary of and pitch for Clyde Smith’s publications, and a story of Bird’s own called “The Silver Ape” with a map of its setting, the world of Simba. Other illustrations are provided by Day, Fabian, Riley, and others. Saunders further contributes an article in which he attempts to explicate anthropological questions concerning Edgar Rice Burroughs’s *Tarzan and the Golden Lion*. There were also poems by William Hope Hodgson, Preece, and Clyde Smith. In his editorial, Bacon announces Morning Star Press’s publication of the REH poetry book *Night Images* (1976) with illustrations by Frazetta and Corben, which marked the start of expensive collector’s editions. He says its contrivance to make the book an instant rarity made him and others uneasy. It was noticed later that entire stanzas of some poems had been dropped.

In the letter column, Allen opines that the World Fantasy Convention would be the most credible issuer of any fantasy fandom awards. Then de Camp corrects Lord’s *The Last Celt*, explaining that his version of the Conan tale “The Black Stranger” was not titled that, but “The Treasure of Tranicos,” of which he rewrote about a quarter in order to tie it in with his conception of the Conan saga chronology, to which he contributed with other posthumous collaborations. He also states his belief that Howard’s Conan version is later than the pirate version “Swords of the Red Brotherhood” because the former “contained an anachronistic reference to ‘a rocket from the Red Hand (a ship), which Howard would not have put into an original Conan story but which he might have overlooked in rewriting a story of Spanish Main piracy.” However, this was later found not to be the case, since REH typescript expert Patrice Louinet states that a Conan synopsis is extant [3]. Also, the geographical layout in the story is more consistent with the west coast of a Hyborian Age land than the East Coast of America.
Finally, a press release from de Camp and Lord announces the formation of Conan Properties, Inc., to control “all rights, including book, dramatic, merchandizing, and advertising rights, to the fictional character and milieu of Conan the Cimmerian, created by Robert E. Howard in the 1930s and expanded over the past twenty years by L. Sprague de Camp, Lin Carter, and Bjorn Nyberg.” Furthermore, CPI had reached agreements for the republication of the Lancer Conan paperbacks and the production of a Conan movie.

Bird had already dropped out as editor/co-publisher by issue #13 (June, 1978), whose pages are misnumbered. REHupan Joe Marek became co-publisher for the last three issues. Bacon renames the round-robin story “Ghor, Kin-Slayer,” to which are added chapters by Andrew J. Offutt and Manly Wade Wellman. Clyde Smith contributes the verse, “What Robert Howard Said One Wednesday Night,” which is so revealing that I quote it here in full:

You ask me if I envy him, the man  
Who gives us pleasure on the silver screen  
Each time we see him, and the answer’s yes,  
I envy him for all the things he has:  
His fame, his fortune, and his life of ease  
Bestowed upon him by the struggling throngs  
Sardines along the sidewalks in the hope  
Of one brief glimpse of him as he walks by  
In regal splendor, just like any king,  
While I must work for pennies all night long  
And sometimes wait many months for them.  
Hell yes, I hate him—you can be most sure  
He has my hate, and has my envy too!  

His mood grew black—much blacker than the night—  
And he lashed men and women with his tongue,  
Railing, and ranting at most everything  
That lurked in thoughts bound inside of his skull;  
No sharp edged ridicule, no rapier thrust,  
Instead, with blows as from a cave man’s club  
He tore the night to pieces as we walked.  
No gracious thoughts came from his lips that time,  
But only hate, and darkness of despair  
To mar the evening, and sometime to come.  

And yet, he spoke so much of truth that night  
That I was held by what he had to say  
And wish that he were here to walk again  
That I might hear his thoughts and hear his voice.

Allen reviews Leiber’s *Rime Isle*, after which comes the Henry Kuttner story “The Invaders, poetry by REH (“The Feud”), Tierney, Clyde Smith, and others, and Allen’s column (covering Moorcock’s Elric stories). The artists included Fabian, Day, Raney, Riley, and others. Bacon, in his editorial, discusses the art of Keiko Nelson and Alicia Austin in REH books. In the letter column, de Camp previews the Ace paperbacks he’s working on.
Issue #14 (September, 1978) opens with another Imaro adventure by Saunders, followed by particularly poor “Ghor, Kin-Slayer” installments by Darrell Schweitzer and A. E. van Vogt, an appreciation of illustrations by artists Kenneth Smith and Hannes Bok (the latter also doing the cover), and verse by REH (“Oh Babylon, Lost Babylon”). W. Paul Ganley, H. Warner Munn, Bok, James Coplin, and C. C. Norton. In his editorial, Bacon reviews the Offutt-edited Swords against Darkness III and Grant’s third edition of Red Shadows. There was no room for letters or Allen’s column.

Issue #15 (January, 1979) would turn out to be the last. “Ghor, Kin-Slayer” continues with chapters by Brian Lumley and Frank Belknap Long. Bacon interviews Stephen R. Donaldson about his Thomas Covenant trilogy. Allen discusses the sword and planet fiction of Otis Adelbert Kline, after which is a story by Adrian Cole. Grant’s new books The Three Paladins by Harold Lamb and Emperor of Dreams: A Clark Ashton Smith Bibliography by Donald Sidney-Fryer are reviewed. There is also poetry by Tierney. In his editorial, Bacon announces the establishment of the first fantasy poetry award, the “Smitty,” and an award for fantasy fiction and other related achievements called the “Balrog,” first proposed by Bacon and Fenner in FC #10/11 and presented at the Fool-Con II convention on April 1 (April Fool’s Day), 1979 at Johnson County Community College, Kansas, that Bacon spearheaded (at it, he himself received a Balrog Award for FC). Artists in the issue were Fabian, Frazetta, Riley, and others. Letters were submitted by Tierney, de Camp, Brian Earl Brown (criticizing the writing of Offutt, Saunders, and van Vogt, but praising Schweitzer’s), Joe Marek (praising Saunders), and others. Saunders reply to Brown was not published in FC due to its folding, but was printed by de Lint [4]. In it, Saunders dismisses Brown’s criticisms as “puerile, asinine, bigoted and misinformed excoriations.”

The current selling prices of #1, #2-3, #4/5, #6-15, and the Special Edition are about $40, $20, $30, $15, and $50 respectively. James Van Hise has published a guide to REH-related material in Bacon’s publications [5].

“Ghor, Kin-Slayer” still had installments to run by Adrian Cole, Ramsey Campbell, H. Warner Munn, Marion Zimmer Bradley, and Richard A. Lupoff, but these languished unpublished (though Campbell’s was published in his Far Away and Never in 1996) until Necronomicon Press printed it as a 176-page softback in 1997, thanks to Glenn Lord, who had the only complete manuscript, and Marc Michaud of Necronomicon, who secured the necessary permissions from the authors or their estates. It sells now for about $30. The best chapters are those by Bradley, Campbell, Saunders, Tierney, and Wagner. David Drake was to have contributed a chapter, but declined when Bacon could not afford to pay him.

In 1976, Bacon published a 32-page chapbook of previous unpublished Howard poetry called The Grim Land and Others in 450 copies illustrated by Fabian, Day, and others, with a cover by Coye. It also contains the previously unpublished REH fragment “The Devil’s Woodchopper” completed by Clyde Smith, who also contributes a poem. The REH poems are “Nectar,” “The Grim Land,” “The Gods of the Jungle Drums,” “De Ole River Ox,” “The Road to Yesterday,” “The Adventurer,” “To an Earthbound Soul,” “The Outcast,” “Today,” and “A Pirate Remembers.” It sells now for about $50.

Also in 1976 Bacon published 1000 copies of the 38-page softcover Runes of Ahrh Eih Eche (i.e. REH), the first collection of Howard letters, specifically 26 of them (by far most reprinted from The Howard Collector, but six were unpublished), two letters by his father I. M. Howard,
and REH’s article “The Ghost Camp of Colorado,” with illustrations by Randall Spurgin. It sells now for about $40. Unfortunately the letters are marred by many typographical errors.


Finally in 1976, Bacon published *Erased from Exile*, a 32-page booklet of verse and fiction by Cliff and Muriel Eddy illustrated by Day.

In 1977, Bacon published 350 copies of a 16-page *Almuric* portfolio of Fabian art.

Because Bacon accumulated too much content, much of it unsolicited, to fit in *FC*, he published part of it in three issues of the magazine *Fantasy Crosswinds* in January and February, 1977. These contained 30 pages (including covers) for $1.50 each in print runs of 300. #1 contained REH’s poems “The Outcast” and “The Kiowa’s Tale” and the first appearance of REH’s story “The Curse of Greed”; fiction by Eddy, Eng (as Bredon), Schweitzer, and others; poetry by de Camp, Eng (as Bredon), Clyde Smith, and others; and art by Fabian, Day, Bird, Riley, and others. #2 presented the first publication of the REH story fragment “The Door to the Garden”; stories by Schweitzer and others; poetry by Poul Anderson, Bredon, Derleth, Lovecraft, Clyde Smith, and others; a Tolkien portfolio by Tom Foster; and more art by Fabian, Day, Bird, Charles Vess, and others. #3 contained fiction by Coplin, Schweitzer, and others; poetry by REH (“Roar, Silver Trumpets”), Clyde Smith, and others; art by Day, Bird, and others; and reviews that included one of *The Iron Man* (Zebra, 1976) by Saunders. They sell now for about $30 each.

As if this were not enough, Bacon was also active in the amateur press associations REHupa and the Hyperborean (later spelled Hyperborian) League. He became the first permanent (nonrotating) Official Editor of REHupa in March, 1976. The roster was pretty healthy during his year at the helm and the Mailings (#s 20-24) looked better than under his successor, Brian Earl Brown. But because of problems with his printer (he had started having his zines professionally printed) and due to his other publishing projects, Bacon sent out his Mailings later and later, and eventually had to turn the post over to Brown. Bacon published 19 fanzines in REHupa Mailings #17 (September, 1975) through #40 (July, 1979) and seven fanzines in THL Mailings #4-10 (July, 1976-April, 1978). They usually contained news, reviews, comments on other member’s Mailing contributions and sometimes reprinted material from *FC* and the Johnson County Community College Science Fiction & Fantasy Club Newsletter. In REHupa Mailings #s 19, 20, and 22, he published drafts of a worldwide REH bibliography he was working on.

To his further credit, when Howard’s girlfriend Novalyne Price Ellis contacted him to ask for his aid in recovering treasured letters and two signed photographs of himself that Howard had given her from R. Alain “Randy” Everts (a.k.a. Randal A. Kirsch) in 1977, Bacon wrote Everts
(then also in REHupa) twice trying to do so. Ellis had lent these in 1972 to Everts, who had requested them for his research into REH’s life. Reportedly they were lost after confiscation during a police raid of Everts’s Madison, Wisconsin, apartment in 1973, the result of a legal case against him filed by Derleth, de Camp, and Brown University, who were attempting to obtain material (including letters from Lovecraft) that it later became clear Everts had legitimately obtained. Everts’s failing was never responding with any explanation to Ellis’s pleas for the return of her property. Bacon then called for Everts’s removal from REHupa. Everts soon dropped out anyway, though he was in the Fantasy Amateur Press Association as late as 2002 and had received a $36,000 settlement from a countersuit against Brown University [6-8].

Jonathan Bacon was born in 1948, grew up in Flint, Mich., attended Northern Michigan University, and obtained BA and MA degrees in English literature and student personnel administration from Michigan State University. He was Assistant Dean of Mean at West Liberty State College in W. Va. and, at the time he started publishing FC, was Director of the Memorial Student Center at Graceland College in Iowa. He had to leave Graceland due to downsizing in June, 1977, which had forced the editorial and publishing changes in FC starting with issue #12. Due to lack of time and reduced income, he eventually had to give up his publishing endeavors, as he had his discount book business. He and his wife Joan had two daughters. They now reside in Overland Park, Kan., where Bacon works for Johnson County Community College, at which he is Academic Director of the Educational Technology Center. He may be reached through staff.jccc.net/jbacon/famhist, though he is known to have no interest in revisiting his fannish past. A photo of him from 1975 is published in REH: Lone Star Fictioneer #3 (Nemedian Chronicles, Shawnee Mission, Kan.), p. 23.

From late 1974 to mid 1979, Bacon was responsible for publishing over 1300 pages of material relating to fantasy, including Robert E. Howard, and was a preeminent contributor to the Howard Boom of the 1970s, long leaving his mark on the field of Howard fandom and studies.

REFERENCES


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

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.

**Fantasy Crossroads** (fanzine series edited by Jonathan Bacon)
**Fantasy Crosswinds** (fanzine series edited by Jonathan Bacon)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUTHOR</th>
<th>REFERENCE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bacon, Jonathan</td>
<td>“Conan the Barbarian Check List” [index of Marvel Comic appearances cross-referenced to REH] in <em>Cross Plains #5, Vol. 1, #5</em> (George T. Hamilton, Yorba Linda, Cal.), pp. 20-22 (fall, 1974); reprinted (as “… Checklist”) with non-REH sources added in <em>Fantasy Crossroads #1, Vol. 1, #1</em> (Graceland College Comic Club, Lamoni, Iowa), pp. 47-49 (1 Nov., 1974)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bacon, Jonathan</td>
<td>“Kull the Conqueror Checklist” [index of Marvel Comic stories cross-referenced to REH &amp; other sources] in <em>Fantasy Crossroads #2, Vol. 1, #2</em> (Graceland College Comic Club, Lamoni, Iowa), p. 27 (Feb., 1975)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bacon, Jonathan</td>
<td>Reviews of <em>The Devil in Iron</em> (by REH; Grant, 1976) and <em>Robert E. Howard’s Conan</em> (LP recording, Moondance, 1975) in <em>Fantasy Crossroads #10/11</em> (Stygian Isle Press, Lamoni, Iowa), pp. 53 &amp; 54 (Mar., 1977)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bacon, Jonathan</td>
<td>Reviews of fanzines <em>The Howard Review #2, REH: Lone Star Ficioneer #1</em>, &amp; <em>Cross Plains #6</em> &amp; REH’s <em>Verses in Ebony</em> (Hamilton</td>
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Bacon, Jonathan  
“Robert E. Howard” [intro. to an REH-related section; features a sketch of Harold Preece’s newspaper career] in Fantasy Crossroads #2, Vol. 1, #2 (Graceland College Comic Club, Lamoni, Iowa), p. 25 (Feb., 1975)

Brown, Brian Earl  

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de Camp, L. Sprague  
Letter [on his feelings toward REH & HPL as people] in Fantasy Crossroads #10/11 (Stygian Isle Press, Lamoni, Iowa), p. 68 (Mar., 1977)

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Hall, Loay  

Hamilton, George T. & Warfield, Wayne  
McHaney, Dennis  

McHaney, Dennis  

Preece, Harold  

Preece, Harold  
*“The Miscast Barbarian* in Review: The Real Robert E. Howard” [review of that bio sketch by L. Sprague de Camp, calling it condescending & inaccurate, & recording his own impressions of REH & his friends] in *Fantasy Crossroads Special Edition #1* (Stygian Isle Press, Lamoni, Iowa), pp. 27-31 (Jan., 1976); see response by de Camp on p. 32

Preece, Harold  
*“Two Views of Bob Howard, Part One: Chapter 5 from Quest for Books” [REH’s early love for books; excerpted from a projected memoir] in *Fantasy Crossroads #10/11* (Stygian Isle Press, Lamoni, Iowa), pp. 46 & 47 (Mar., 1977)

Preece, Harold  
*“Women and Robert E. Howard” [the women in REH’s life & his attitude toward them & women in general] in *Fantasy Crossroads #3, Vol. 1, #3* (Jonathan Bacon, Lamoni, Iowa), pp. 20-23 (May, 1975)

Riley, Stephen T.  
Interview with Donald M. Grant [publisher of REH & other fantasy hbs.; followed by a bibliography thereof] in *Fantasy Crossroads #10/11* (Stygian Isle Press, Lamoni, Iowa), pp. 25-38 (Mar., 1977)

Saunders, Charles R.  
Review of *The Iron Man* (by REH; Zebra, 1976) in *Fantasy Crosswinds #3* (Jonathan Bacon, Lamoni, Iowa), p. 23 (Feb., 1977)

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*“Two Views of Bob Howard,” Part Two: The Magic Name” [Smith’s early friendship with REH & list of Smith’s REH-related writings] in *Fantasy Crossroads #10/11* (Stygian Isle Press, Lamoni, Iowa), pp. 48 & 49 (Mar., 1977)

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Weinberg, Robert  