WELCOME ABOARD

Yes, welcome aboard the rocket ship of Dr. Hans Zarkov, as we journey to the fantastic planet MONGO! In this special issue of "Comic Crusader" you'll see both the barbarism and the splendor of the world Alex Raymond created back in 1934.

I'm extremely grateful to the many people who contributed to this issue, both artist and writer alike. However, special thanks are due Al Williamson for this issue's beautiful cover and interior art. My thanks also to Joe Sinnott for the drawing on the last page of this issue. It's a personal favorite of mine and it's the closest I'll ever come to being on Mongo.

On page 38 of this issue, you'll find a drawing, I believe unpublished, by Alex Raymond. Raymond did this while he served aboard the U.S.S. Gilbert Islands in 1945. It may be the ship's symbol. My thanks to Charles Roberts, a friend from Virginia, for sending it to me. Thanks also go to Detroit fan Jack Fresso for lending me the Grey Morrow paintings of Dale and the Hawkgirl on page 14.

Those of you who are regular readers of "Comic Crusader" know I've never dedicated an issue to anyone before. With this issue, I am! It's dedicated to a man who is the Flash Gordon fan supreme. His narrative, over the Flash Gordon sound track Bob Congrove and I transcribed, kept us in hysterics. Without this man, the issue you see before you, could never be. This issue is dedicated to my friend......

MIKE ROYER

Best—

ART KEY

Adkins 17
Black 20-29-39-40-41-42
Cookrum 5-24-28
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Fritz Back Cover
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Williamson inked by Sinnott 6-13-27
Wrightson 17

COMING NEXT ISSUE!

ISSUE 12 - will have a barbaric flavor to it.

The feature article will be on Planet Comics! "Lost World" by Tom Fagan. A beautiful, full page illustration by Jim Steranko accompanies this article. It's one of the finest pieces Jim's ever done!

There will also be a strip or two - some art by Berni Wrightson, Bob Juanillo and "Crusader's" regulars. A most unusual issue for only 50!

ORDER FROM
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02026

All characters in this issue are © King Features Synd. 1971
It's 1936 and Universal Pictures presents......
FLASH GORDON! The first of three Flash Gordon movie serials. A serial in 13 chapters, from the screenplay by Frederick Stephani, George Plympton, Basil Dickey and Ella O'Neill. Based on the newspaper feature entitled Flash Gordon, owned and copyrighted by King Features Syndicate. Photography by Jerry Ash and Richard Fryer. Produced by Henry MacRae.

The Cast of Characters:

The first few chapters faithfully follow the basic story elements of Alex Raymond's colorful Sunday pages. Where they do differ in plot, it is a case of budget which prohibited adding large casts, new sets and locales....and at the same time, the cast of a story that is seen only once a week, for approximately 20 minutes, it becomes quite necessary for the roster of characters to remain intimate, otherwise the viewer would need score cards to keep track of who's who. We'll concern ourselves with this point later, in various places.

Chapter one - "The Planet of Peril" (or..."When Worlds Collide, Anyone?)
At a large east coast observatory, we find Prof. Gordon and Prof. Hensley watching the approach of a mysterious planet, through the eye of a huge telescope. Both scientists agree, that the Earth is doomed....as

a result of a collision with the mysterious body in space. This is similar to the opening of the Jan. 7, 1934 Flash Gordon strip, in which a newspaper banner headline declared..."World Coming To End"..."Strange new planet rushing toward Earth - only miracle can save us, says science."

On film, Hensley remarks - "I wonder why we don't hear from Zarkov? I still believe in his theory!" Prof. Gordon - "Ridiculous! Zarkov is mad! His theory's fantastic! He'll never reach the planet in that rocket-ship!"

Dr. Zarkov is introduced to the strip reader by Raymond's following narrative..."The scientist, Dr. Zarkov works day and night, perfecting a device with which he hopes to save the world--his great brain is weakening under the strain!" At the observatory, the two scientists read several telegrams appraising conditions and reactions all over the world. As they read, the movie viewer sees several pieces of stock newreel type footage depicting panic, pandemonium and riots all over the world. Thus far, the flesh and blood characters of Gordon and Hensley are acting only as audio and visual transmitters of Raymond's comic strip narrative panels 2, 6, 4, and 5 of the first Sunday page. The use of screen scientists is more effective than voice over narrative and better paced than the staccato tempo of Raymond's first Sunday page. Prof. Gordon is handed one last telegram. "Why...It's from my son, Flash!"pause to read - "He gave up his polo same just in time to catch the transcontinental plane...hoping to be here with us before the end!"
The scene shifts to that transcontinental plane. Aboard we find young virile Flash Gordon. In the strip, he is introduced to us as..."Tall, graduate and world-renowned polo player." Across the aisle from Flash, sits the very attractive blond, we will soon discover is Dale Arden...soft and beautiful. Larry Ivie tells us that Miss Rogers was allowed to appear with her natural hair color because of the public's fondness for
the color at the time, as popularized by the "Blond Bombshell" Jean Harlow. Dale's hair color, as drawn by Raymond, was brunette.

The airplane is being tossed about violently in a fierce electrical and meteor storm, caused by the close proximity of the strange planet. The pilots, afraid that their craft may not survive the meteor storm, advise their passengers to make use of the parachutes that they will find at the back of their seats. The passengers hurry to exit the plane. Dale hesitates at the open door of Flash, knowing that this is the first week and sears off a wing of the plane. Flash takes the girl, who was sitting across the aisle from him, in his arm and "balls out," as the stricken plane plummets earthward. They land near an observatory of Dr. Zarkov, where they see a rocket ship.

On film, Flash and Dale approach the rocket ship, which suddenly Zarkov steps from concealment, holding a gun. - "Stop! You are my guest!" Zarkov - "I'm sorry if we're intruding. Parachutes aren't particular where they set you down." Zarkov - (ignoring Flash's sarcasm) - "Who are you? Flash! You didn't have time to drop a calling card! This is Miss...

He turns to Dale. Dale - "Dale Arden!" Flash - "Nice name," then to Zarkov, And I'm Flash Gordon!" Zarkov - "Gordon...Gordon? Prof. Gordon's son?"
Flash - "Yeh...that right! An' that rocket ship makes you Dr. Zarkov!"

In the strip, Zarkov forces Flash and Dale, at gunpoint, to accompany him to Mongo as martyrs to science. In the film, Zarkov explains that his assistant has turned coward and asks Flash to go with him to save the Earth. Dale accompanies the two men, because there is still a chance on the Earth where she may remain. With an explosion, Zarkov's rocket lifts into the air and rockets into the stratosphere. The trip is eventful, with the exception of when Dale almost died of oxygen, which reminds Zarkov to turn it on...

something he forgot to do in the excitement of takeoff.

Things are a bit different in the comic strip. (1-14-34) The closer they approach the comet threatening Earth, the madder Zarkov becomes - until he finally cracks. A battle ensues between Zarkov and Zarkov, with Flash finally knocking the doctor to the floor unconscious. The rocket succumbs to the planet's gravitational pull and crashes. Flash survives from the wreck, with the sound of Earth's destruction said - why destroy the Earth - why not conquer it?" Zarkov agrees.

Zarkov explains how it was a rocket, of his own design, that brought him to Mongo. Flash then orders him to return to his laboratory, where he will be given all that he desires, except his freedom. When Flash turns his attentions to Dale, Flash lunes at him, trying to choke him. He is recaptured and thrown into the arena, that I mentioned previously. Princess Aura pushes her way past soldiers and handmaids to stand beside her father's throne. Aura - "A bargain father! If he survives, he is mine!" Flash answers - "IPI!

A gong is struck, and Flash stands in the arena as three man-beasts, with long fangs, dressed only in fur G-strings, snarl to the attack. These are the film counterparts of Raymond's "Monkey Men." Flash watches intently, as one by one, Flash disables the ape-men.

Flash - "He fights well, the Earthman! But he shall not escape the pit!"
especially for one who is flying a rocket ship for the first time. Ming comments that whoever that gallant pilot is, he will be royally rewarded...if he survives the flight.

In the comic strip, after Flash enters the rocket ship, Aura slams the door shut and bolts it. Aura: "Now! You are mine! Dale Ardan shall not have you! I shall hold you here until she becomes my father's bride!" Note that Raymond incorrectly spelled Dale's last name. He did this for weeks.

On film, Flash isn't doing bad. He brings one of the Gyro ships down, but before he can do more damage to the invading fleet, the crew of his ship becomes engaged with the lead Gyro ship and the two vessels spin, locked together, to the ground below. Flash, unhurt, leaps from his wrecked ship at the same time as Prince Thun emerges from his ship. The bearded Lion Man draws his sword and lunges at Flash. Flash disarms the Lion Man. Thun - "Why do you not slay me?" Flash - "I fought only to save my friends who are prisoners in Ming's palace!" Thun - "Then you're not an ally of Ming?" Flash - "I'll say I'm not! He's been trying to kill me ever since I landed here!" Thun explains, after introducing himself, that Ming is also his enemy. So an alliance is formed between Flash and the prince of the Lion Men. Above them, Ming's fleet is defeating the Gyro ships, who are now retreating. Thun leads Flash to a secret passage that leads to the palace. There, they hope to rescue Dale. Notice how everyone knows where all the secret passages and doors are!

Thun and Flash capture a guard, at the rear gate of the palace and force him to lead them to Dr. Zarkov. They greet each other excitedly here we find out what concerns Flash more than the safety of the Earth. Zarkov: "Flash! I didn't know what they had done to you!" Flash: "Ah, I'm alright! This is Thun, a friend!" Zarkov: "Flash! The course of this planet has changed! The Earth will not be destroyed!" Flash: "Ah, that fine! Where's Dale?" Flash soon learns that Ming is forcing her to become his bride, in a ceremony held in a secret chamber under the palace. Flash forces a guard to lead him to Ming's chamber under the palace. Flash forces a guard to lead him and Ming to the place of the ceremony, but the guard stops at the entrance of a tunnel, for fear of the great beast that guards it. Meanwhile, everyone is gathering in the underground wedding ceremony chamber. At one end of the room is a large stone idol of Two Dale. Dale is escorted into the room, wearing a long white flowing open midriff gown. She is obviously under the hypnotic spell of the dehumanizer. She stares blankly into space. In an alcove, off the chamber, a soldier strikes a large gong. He's separated from the others by a wall of drapes. One of Ming's lieutenants informs Zarkov who got in the easy way, with Ming that with the 13th stroke of the sacred gong, the wedding ceremony will be completed.

Back in the underground tunnel Flash and Thun are on their way to stop the wedding, when they hear the gong reverberating through the catacombs. Thun explains its meaning and Flash plunges on to save Dale. At this point, they run into a detachment of Ming's guards. A brief fight follows and Thun yells to Flash to go on without him. Flash races down the tunnel until he comes to two massive wooden doors. All the time, the gong is sounding at regular intervals. He pushes open the doors and in the mist filled tunnel beyond, comes face to face with the giant beast that guards the Tunnel of Terror. Flash is grasped in its crab-like claws and lifted off the ground. As the picture fades, the last thing we see is the yawning jaws of the hideous protector of the tunnel about to close on a helpless Flash Gordon.

Chapter three - "Captured by the Shark Men"

We see the recap scenes, as Thun grapples with the soldiers of Ming. Flash rushes headlong into the clutches of the Tunnel of Terror monster. While all this is going on, the priest is lighting bowls of incense that rest on the base of the large idol of Two Dale. The gong continues to ring out. As Flash is about to be crushed by the beast, Thun rushes into the scene, carrying a ray rifle that he has apparently gotten from the defeated soldiers. Flash's body goes limp. Thun aims carefully and fires, striking the monster in the mouth. Flash is dropped to the ground and the monster falls on its back, writhing in pain as it dies. Thun assure Thun that he's alright, the two once again push on,
racing against time. They discover the chamber and by the shadow of the wall, they see Flash jump the gorge and dive into the torrent. There are a few moments of silence and the wedding party becomes uneasy. King demands - "why does not the sacred gong sound the final note which completes the wedding ceremony?" As if in answer, everyone's attention is commanded by a movement of the Great God Tao's arm. The huge statue begins to wobble on its base, then topples over into the midst of the startled wedding guests. Prepare to operate the water trap! Auala - "But that will deliver them to Kala, King of the Sharkmen!" King - "Well?" Auala - "The Earthman Gordon must not be killed. He is mine!" King, to Torch - "Obey my orders!" Zarkov - "You order their death?" King - "No, Dr. Zarkov! Death will not come to them so simply, heh!" Torch steps to a control panel. Meantime Flash, with Dale in his arms and Thun an hour down the long spiral stone staircase. At the bottom, they are met by soldiers. Again Thun creates a holding action, as he yells to Flash - "Take her away! I can handle "em!" With Dale in his arms, he lassoes them down the stairs. King orders that Kala be notified to make prisoners of them all, his daughter included, if they live to reach his palace. Flash and Dale come to the end of the tunnel and find their way barred by a door they could not open. At this same moment Torch is turning a handle on a control board that drops Flash and Dale through a trap door. This deposits them in an underground river, where they are subdued and taken as prisoners.

Princess Auala comes upon Thun rising to his feet at the bottom of the stone staircase, evidently the victor in his fight. Auala - "The She-men have taken these people! I can get into Kala's palace if you'll help me!" Thun - "I'll do anything to help my friends!" They turn back the way they came.

Flash and Dale find themselves prisoner in the Hydra-cycle, the underwater craft of the Sharkmen. It is interesting that the serial model makers made the same mistake in constructing this craft that Raymond did. They put the propellers on the front of the underwater craft! It just won't work, fellows. Oh well, despite this fact, with only one stop to avoid being seen by an octosan, the Hydra-cycle makes it to the Sharkmen's underwater city. The octosan is diverted by the arrival of a giant shark, that engages it in battle. Actually, what we see is a piece of stock footage of a shark and octopus fight. It probably was used in 1936, but today it only contributes in helping make this episode one of the most dull and peddled of the whole series. The model of the Sharkmen's city is a bit disappointing, compared to the other cities to be seen in the serials. It just looks like a bunch of radio tubes stuck in the ground. Oh well...picky, picky.

Our heroes are brought before King Kala. Kala tells them that Dale is to be returned to the ship. Demanding, Flash yells - "What is it all?" Kala does not question the orders of King! They are obeyed!

Flash - "Yes, obeyed by you and others!" Kala - "I am King Kala! Flash - "You, who call yourself a king, are a coward!" Kala - "Coward! I can crush the life out of you with my hands!" Flash - "If I could be killed by a weapon like you... I would welcome death!" Kala - "Prepare yourself!" Well, as you can guess, Flash fights with Kala and after a furious fight defeats him. As his soldiers help him to his feet, Kala smirks - "You are the first man to ever defeat me in physical combat. I salute you! Take them to their separate quarters... See that they are both released in the morning!" "Thank you," says Flash.

Flash should have saved his thanks, for Kala has him locked in a water tight room, which he soon floods with a torrent of water. With Dale in his clutches, Kala puts a large handle and a side panel open in Flash's nearly flooded room. A giant octosan floats in. Flash sees it rising toward him. He tries to swim away, but it grabs him by the foot. Dale watches him, as Flash is slammed against the bottom of the tank room. Kala says - "No man can pit his strength against Kala... and live!" And as Flash is pulled to the bottom, his body expels so much strength, his unconcealed, fake octosan, the picture fades, and we might find ourselves agreeing with Kala.

Up until this time, the serial has followed the strip and some day there was no octosan in the strip and Flash escapes from the tank cell with the aid of a mysterious party that passes an air helmet and a weapon to him through a panel in the wall. (In the comic strip, this panel is a window.) Flash, in the serial, escaped in a different way, as we will see in the next chapter.

Chapter Four - "Batting the Sea Beast"

After the printed forward and recap scenes, see Kala instructing a dummy how to become the hero to save Dale. Dale meets his end by Sharkmen guards to her barefaced, wrapped quarters. Leaving the alove, Kala is faced by Aura, who marches in followed by Thun, demanding to know what he has done with the Earthman. Meantime Flash struggles with the phoney octosan. Aura pushes past the drapes to see Flash's predicament. Aura - "Stop that fight...at once! Dale fights octosan!" Aura - "By drawing the water from the tank! Now DO IT!" Flash is saved. Aura leaves to release Flash, while Thun is left to stand guard over Dale. Dale regains consciousness and joins Thun. From their window, Thun and Dale see that Flash is all right. Dale is ready to go to Flash, but Thun cautions her that they should wait until Flash and Aura come for them.

Now the scene shifts to King's city atop the mountain peak. Zarkov is seated at a radio set, attempting to make contact with Earth. On Earth, Prof. Gordon and Hensley are also seated in a radio set. According to Gordon and Hensley, who have so far defied scientific detection, are signals from that strange planet who will rush toward the Earth stopped so suddenly and mysteriously.
Hensley - "You believe that someone from another planet is trying to signal us?" Gordon - "Yes!"

Ming assures Zarkov that his friends are being cared for by Kala. As Zarkov asks - "But how can you be sure that Kala will obey your order?" - Ming says, "Kala's palace is a vast structure, built of metal produced in this laboratory. It is held up by a magnetic force controlled from here. It is absolutely in my power!"

In another part of the lab, Capt. Torch and another fellow, dressed as a medieval monk, are watching the screen of the space-o-graph. On the screen, several soldiers of Ming are fighting with a bunch of cave men. Torch says - "Looks like a fight between the outer guards and Queen Aura's cave men! I must warn the Emperor!" Torch steps up to Ming and Zarkov, who are engaged in a pseudo-scientific discussion, but Ming brushes him away, not wishing to be disturbed. Torch turns and marches away, back to the space-o-graph.

Flash throttles the Sharkman, Aura picks up a ray-pistol, drops it during the fight, and fires it at the control panel. Aura explains that only by knocking out the machine that provides air and keeps the water out of the city, can they make their escape. Flash asks about Dale and Thun and Aura replies - "We mustn't think of them now!" Flash - "I'm going back after them!"

Back in King's lab, we find Torch and the space-o-graph operator still watching the screen. However, the image on it now is the control panel Princess Aura has just destroyed.

In Kala's throne room above, Dale is having great difficulty in breathing. Kala - "Something has happened to the air machine!

At the space-o-graph, Torch orders its operator to find out what is the matter. On the screen we see panels straining, as water is trying to force its way into the lab. Dale faces the floor. Knowing that they cannot save themselves, Aura says to Thun - "Our only hope lies with Ming!" As more and more water comes into the city, they try to get through to Ming on the space-o-graph.

As you can tell, several things are happening at once. The rapid cuts from place to place help greatly in filling up the story, which now will lead us to the climax of this installment.

Torch, seeing on the space-o-graph, that the Shark palace is starting to crumble, races over to Ming to tell him about the trouble. Ming - "What happened before?" Torch's reply is - "But your Majesty, I tried to..." But we know differently, don't we. What happened to Queen Aura? Hmmm. What the serial writers had in mind is open to speculation, but it is interesting that the editor left the footage which was the beginning of something that was obviously never re- tained. And Queen Aura. In the strip, it is Queen Aurora who rules the cave world. Was she a soldier shown on the space-o-graph earlier, before the Shark city sequence? Double Hmmm!

Back in Torch and Aura's room before the viewscreen. Zarkov - "Can nothing be done to save them?" Torch - "Too late!" The screen shows Flash and Aura race to the throne room, rivets strain, water pours down corridors, and Aura - "I knew the danger, but I couldn't see!" - Decides in his arms. Flash - "Thun! We've got to get out of here!" Thun - "We haven't a chance!" Flash - "Why not? We've got only a couple seconds before the wave will rush in!" As Aurora heroically turns up the alcove, they look up to see a giant tidal wave coming at them. As the pictures fades, our heroes are completely obliterated, only to see the view screen.

Chapter Five - "The Destroying Ray!"

After the wall of water hits them, we see that our cast of characters are still standing. Back at King's laboratory, the Emperor says - "There may be a chance to save them, if we can get them slowly walks away from the lab to a huge generator apparatus that wasn't there last chapter. Ming - "This generates a ray which counteracts the magnetic power that holds the Shark palace under water." Thun - "But it's not in the generators!" He works the controls on the device. A beam of light moves up from the center of the generator, reaching towards the ceiling. On the viewscreen, we see a crater in which the Shark city was resting and the city rises from the ocean floor. Ming turns off the machine and they all return to the screen. Zarkov - "The Shark palace is above water!"

It is interesting to note, that part of chapter 3 and all of chapter 4 and the first part of chapter 5 was deleted when Universal released the feature version "Booket." A cutout of the end of the serial.

Ming orders Torch to organize a rescue party to be sent to the Shark city. Meantime, our leads, Flash, Dale, Thun and Princess Aura, all sopping wet, leave the lab and enter that's right, a cave. You got me? As Torch leads a detachment of soldiers through an underground tunnel, apparently leading to the Shark city, Kala sits before a view screen and must assume, watching the rescue operations. Creeping stealthfully into the lab is a heavy set fellow, who watches Zarkov intently. His outfit is patterned like that of the one Barin wears in the strip. He steps out revealing himself to Zarkov. (shame on you Barin!)

Barin explains that he is the real ruler of Mongo and that he was dethroned as a child, by King Ming. Then, "I sent his father to the other. Baring's scientist of your genius can aid me in overthrowing Ming." Barin and Zarkov clasp hands and they leave the lab to rescue Flash and company. Meanwhile, in Barin's rocket, which is parked at the entrance of a cave, they blast off. These serial writers have really got a thing about caves, don't they?

Our cast emerges from some mouth and start down a rock strewn path that leads into a desolate level terrain. Nearby, winged Hawkmen are circling to land. Our heroes are on the way to Prince Thun in London - a matter which they discussed while in the cave. Flash spies the Hawkmen and Aura explains that they are King Vultan's men and Thun adds that they are deadly enemies. They start to run over, but are jumped by the Hawkmen. Flash yells for Thun to take the girls to safety, as he grapples with the winged men. Thun takes off with the girls, but Aura drops behind and returns to her beloved Earthman. A good thing too, for Thun and Dale walk right into the clutches of more Hawkmen. Thun is knocked out, and he and Dale are borne away. At the same moment, Barin's rocket ship is landing in a nearby clearing. At the sight of reinforcements, the Hawkmen, fighting Flash, retreat. Zarkov
introduces Flash to Barin. Flash - "You came just in time! Aura, where's Dale?" Aura tells him that the Hawkmen have taken her and Thun away. Flash - "We've got to find them at once!" Aura - "No! There isn't a chance. King Vultan's palace is in the sky!" Barin - "My rocket ship is at your disposal." Against Aura's wishes, they rush to the rocket ship and with an explosion, take off to the rescue.

We now shift our attention to the beautiful Sky City of the Hawkmen, supported in the sky by beams of light. Under helges of brightly lighted tubes, the beautiful Dale lies on a table. About her, stand Hawkmen. King Vultan comes forward to see how the reviving Dale is coming along. We are in a chamber off to the side of Vultan's majestic throne room. A Hawkman says - "She is recovering, Sire!" Vultan - "What has been done with the Lioman who was captured with her?" Hawkman - "Why, he was revived and sent to the atom-furnace, as your Majesty ordered." We are shown Thun, in the atom-furnace, as he and other slaves, stripped to the waist, shovel stuff into furnaces, as they are whiped by a Hawkman guard. And meantime our friends, who are rocketing toward the Sky City, are spotted by Hawkmen lookouts. One is sent to report to the king.

On a balcony is a giant gun, that looks remarkably like a studio flood lamp. Hmm. Back at the table, Dale breathes heavily and calls out for Flash. Vultan - "She calls for a Flash! We shall have to provide a Flash for her, if that's what she wants. A HaHaHaHa!" Vultan is a jolly fat man, isn't he? Dale wakes up, and shock at the sight of this big bearded fat man with wings, runs for the door. But her way is barred by a guard. Oooh...has she got a nice body. Oh well...back to the story. A soldier reports Barin's rocket and Vultan orders it destroyed with the melting ray, then he orders everyone from the throne room. Vultan - "Can't you see I'm busy?!" Do you blame him gang?!

The men on the balcony receive their orders to destroy Barin's ship and proceed to do so. They turn the ray beam into the heavens searching out Barin's ship. The ship is bathed in the light. Barin - "The melting ray from Vultan's defense gun!...They're trying to destroy us!" Zarkov - "Then we're doomed!" Barin - "Certainly are, if the ray hits the ship!"

Back in the throne room, Vultan continues to chase Dale around the palace, chuckling all the while. He swaggers around...Dale gets more and more nervous. She stands in front of the throne, as he walks to the wall to the right of his throne, a duplicate of Baymond's drawing, where he pushes a button. A wall panel slides away, and a bear, covered with candy stripes emerges. Dale runs across the room and stands, back against the wall, watching as the bear comes closer, a ring in its nose.

Back in the rocket ship, things are getting hairier. They just can not escape that ray. Aura asks if there isn't any way they can escape it. Barin tells her the resisto force of their rocket ship is being neutralized by the ray. Incidentally, Barin's dialog here is dubbed in. Richard Alexander, his back to the camera, did not speak the dialog. It's a different voice. Wonder what he really said?

Her back to the wall, arms spread, Dale heaves her breasts and begs Vultan to take the bear away. Vultan ushers the bear back through the opening in the wall, giving it a swat on the rump as it passes by him. He steps forward...she breathes deeper. He comes closer and Dale looks as if she's really about to get it. The picture goes back as Vultan marches into the camera. Fade to the rocket ship, where Barin is struggling with the controls. All of a sudden there's an explosion at the front of the ship, we hear Aura scream, and the ship drops, falling through space. So episode 5 ends with Flash, Zarkov, Barin and Aura about to lose their lives, and Dale about to lose her virginity. Don't tell me
Zarkov, Barin, Aura and Flash on the rescue mission to free Dale and Thun from Vultan.

Chapter six - "Pleasing Torture"

The recap scenes of this chapter are in a quite different order than those ending the previous chapter, right after the printed synopses, we see Vultan, who laughing boisterously, is mangling the Atom furnace up the wall, and we have the bear bit. Dale screams, takes his away. Cut to the ship, and this time while Barin gives his line about the risisto force being neutralized, we see him closer shot as he walks melodramatically toward the bear. Last episode, it was a shot of the group standing at the front of the rocket, Barin seated at the controls. Now! The light bathes the ship, there is the explosion, and it falls dramatically downward. The officer at the leap orders another to report to Vultan that his orders have been carried out. The ship falls, Barin rights the controls, and it suddenly stops. Flash - "What happened Barin? What stopped the fall?"

Aurora - "We were saved by the gravity defying rays that support the Sky City!" Zarkov - "Then we're safe?"

Barin - "As King Vultan's prisoners our chances are slim!"

Back in the throne room, Vultan ushers the bear through the wall entrance, slaps its butt, then walks menacingly toward the delicious Dale. I prefer this method of integrating the old scenes with the new, but this is the only time they really do it, except when they're cheating their way through the story. We'll see a lot of this in "Trip to Mars" and "Conquers the Universe!"

Vulan tries to grab Dale, saying "Ahh, be reasonable!" He pulls her to him. As they struggle, they are intercepted by the soldiers that bring in the prisoners: Flash, Zarkov, Barin and Aurora. Dale runs and throws her arms around the mangling Flash. Flash and Barin are sentenced to the furnace rooms, Zarkov to Vultan's laboratory and Aura a prisoner, to keep her father, Ming, from attacking the Sky City. Meanwhile, Torch informs Ming they've found an injured Hawkman who tells them that Flash and the others have gone with Barin, in his rocket ship, to rescue Dale. Flash - "Where Vultan will no doubt call the Earthgirl to marry him. It's a habit of his!" You should ask, Ming! Or Barin, he comments - "Barin, why... I thought that treacherous pretender would interfere..."

Ming orders his rocket fleet prepared to fly to the Sky City to teach Vultan a needed lesson. Back at the Sky City Zarkov is told his friends will continue feeding radium to the Atom furnace until he discovers a new force to keep the Sky City aloft. Aurora, in the meantime convinces Zarkov that the only way to save Flash's life is to convince Vultan that she loves him. She attempts this at a banquet that evening. Aurora steps close to Vultan and tells him that the Earthgirl finds the men of Mongo more attractive than those of her own planet. Vultan is pleased at this. "My little doll!" He leans toward Dale and she shrinks away from his advances.

The scene changes to the furnace room, where Flash, Barin and Thun are feeding the Atom furnace. Thun and some other slave, shell of a man turn a wheel that regulates the opening and closing of the massive furnace door, a Hawkman turns the large dials of what could be a giant clock, possibly a device also connected with the opening and closing of the furnace door. We mention this because it serves no other purpose than to suggest something is going on. It has no function. Perhaps it was inspired by the "Museum of Jurassic Technology" I can say. It looks good, but makes no sense. The lonely guy, working with Thun, falls to the floor unconscious. A Hawkman guard begins to whimper and whisper. As the background an alarm sounds which Vultan hears in the banquet hall, Vultan arrives and restores order. Informed by the Captain of the guard, that Flash caused all the trouble, Vultan sends him to the Static Room. To test Dale's love for him, Vultan brings her to the Static Room, where she sees Flash hanging suspended between two poles. In front of him, large rods are coming together. As they meet, sparks explode all over the place. Flash is being electrocuted. Dale screams. The rods meet again and sparks fly all over Flash's body. His body goes limp, and Flash is seemingly killed by the electrical currents.

The raw events of the strip, do not appear on the screen in the same order as in Rayson's novel or strip, Dale is on her own to try and save Flash by her wits... by pretending to prefer Vultan to Flash. In the strip, Zarkov makes a scene about saving Flash to save Vultan, he is a guinea pig; there to seek her revenge on Flash for spurning her love. There is some involvement with Vultan's other wife, which is used by the screen writers. We'll continue with the film version, and time to time refer to its inspiration point from the colored Sunday page.

Chapter seven - "Shattering Doom"

Vultan, to test whether Dale loves him, instead of Flash, takes her to the Static Room, where Flash is being electrified. Dale screams - "Stop it! - Stop it!" Flash has gone limp. Vultan - "Do you love the Earthman?"

Dale - "No!"

Vultan - "I can't bear to think of you tortured!" Dale can stand it no longer, and she swoons. Vultan rushes forward to grab her, and, he does...the sly dog, by placing her in a device that resembles a hollow iron lung, its interior lined with circular metal tubes. Zarkov saves Flash, by placing her in a device that resembles a Fool's gold, its interior lined with circular metal tubes. Zarkov saves Flash, by placing her in a device that resembles a hollow iron lung, its interior lined with circular metal tubes. Zarkov activates the machine and Flash's body is raised to the light of the tubes.

Aurora - "Will he live?" Zarkov - "Yes!"

Back at the throne room, we find Dale and Vultan. She no longer wears the harem type white wedding outfit that showed her figure and gave her the image of a slave. Her body is now covered, from head to toe, by a medieval type gown...but you can still tell how nice Jean Rogers was built...the lovely girl is wandering. Boo Huh! Vultan, attempting to proceed directly to the Sky City aloft, but, while all this was going on. He has discovered a new force to keep the Sky City aloft, but his exultation is interrupted by the arrival of Aurora and the Hawkmen carrying the unconscious Flash. Zarkov saves Flash, by placing him in a device that resembles a hollow iron lung, its interior lined with circular metal tubes. Zarkov activates the machine and Flash's body is raised to the light of the tubes.

Aurora - "Will he live?" Zarkov - "Yes!"

Flash removes Aura's arms from about his neck, as he says - "I'm grateful to you for saving my life..."

Aurora - "Is that more than your gratitude?"

Now, you tell me, after the way you treated your own show in your own show, was made for kids. Wavoom! Flash - "I'm an Earthman. Someday I hope to return to my own planet, and if you ever go back to Mongo with Aura, to Earth, or is Aurora a better name, at least, they hope. Flash turns to leave the laboratory. A guard tells - "Stop!" Flash stops, and turns back in the direction of Aurora. She grabs an acetylene torch off Zarkov's desk and makes a flash with it. Aurora - "Promise me you'll never see Dale Arden again, or I swear by the Great God Mao you'll never see anything again!" Flash stares at her, refusing to say anything. She holds up the torch to his
chest, as if about to raise it to his face...but his cold stare unhinges her. She drops it, and runs off, heartbroken. The guards try to take Flash back to the furnace, but he escapes. Flash runs into the throne room to interrupt Vultan who is presenting Dale with a box of pretty jewels and baubles. He is promptly recaptured by Vultan's soldiers and returned to the furnace room. To prevent any more trouble from Flash, Zarkov is ordered to attach a wire to Flash's wrist and the other end to the furnace room control board. Flash is told that if he causes anymore trouble, a switch will be thrown, and he will be electrocuted instantly. As Zarkov leaves the furnace room, his eyes dart furiously, as if searching for something. Flash sullenly returns to work, now wired for electricity.

A tower sentry spies the approaching space fleet of King the Merciless. Vultan hears the alarm, as Princess Aura walks up to him and vows that now he will answer to her father for his defiance! Dale is ordered brought into the throne room.

Back at the furnace room, a shift change is called and Thun, Barin and Flash doggedly shuffle to sit and rest behind the short lead wall that is in the center of the furnace room. Out of sight of the guards, Zarkov sneaks into the room and creeps to Flash's side. He tells Barin to get a shovel. Zarkov - "I'm going to take this wire and attach it to the handle of a shovel..." Flash - "What for?" Zarkov - "When the time comes, you throw the shovel in the atom furnace. Remember...once you've thrown the shovel, your lives depend upon you reaching the shelter of this lead wall." Zarkov completes his work and sneaks back out of the room. The guards call for a shift change, so the heroes return to their work.

Again in the throne room, Ming and his retinue enter and march to Vultan's throne, where the hawkman stands with the girls. Ming - "I come not for pleasure, but to punish!" Vultan - "Before your Majesty makes idle threats, you had better consider your position and your present surroundings!" At these words all the doors to the throne room open and in march Hawkmen carrying their ray rifles. Ming - "You dare to threaten your Emperor!" Vultan - "No-o-o...but perhaps we had better talk it over." To this point in the strip, Vultan has been a real son of a bitch...not the comic opera type heavy he's been so far on the screen.

In the furnace room, Flash looks at his shovel so that it looks as if the wire is still attached to his wrist. At a moment when the guards aren't looking, Flash leans toward Barin, who is shoveling next to him and says - "Ready, Barin?" Barin - "Ready!" Flash and Barin throw their shovel loads into the furnace and Flash shouts (in a dubbed voice track...it's not Crabbie) "Go for the wall, men!" Flash battles a guard with his shovel, while the others rush for the safety of the lead wall. Flash turns and throws his shovel into the furnace, as the door again opens. At the same instant a guard throws the switch which he believes will kill the troublemaker Flash, who is leaping over the 4' to 5' lead wall, in mid-air as the shovel enters the furnace and the room is filled with a blinding explosion.

Chapter eight - Tournament of Death

Obviously, Flash has left across the wall, to escape losing his life in the fantastic explosion that follows his hurling of the shovel into the atom furnace. He and his friends rush from the furnace room, as Flash yells they've got to get Dale. They burst into the throne room only to be captured again. The atom furnace has been destroyed! The beams which support the city are burning, but I have discovered a new ray which will save the city!

Vultan orders the doctor to use it at once. Zarkov argues, on one condition...his friends be given their liberty. Vultan promises, swaying by the Great God Tao. Zarkov returns to the lab and pulls a button on his device...and Goldie...all kinds of mad-lab things happen. Of course, the city returns to its normal position. Zarkov - "It's a success! My friends are free!"

Ming - "As Emperor of the Universe, it is my right to call a Tournament of Death...and the Earthman will have to enter it!" Vultan - "But if he survives, I hold you to his right - liberty, a kingdom of his own and the bride of his choice!"

Ming - "Yes...Heh, if he survives!"

The Tournament of Mongo in the comic strip, is a beautiful lavish and barbaric happening, packed with violence and splendor. The serial makers plan their tournament too, but budget and size of cast dictates that some things will have to be changed. There'll be no hordes of armies of different races, no smooth bowl-shaped arena, none of the romance and intrigue that catches Aura, Barin, Flash and Dale in its web, as can be found in the strip. But, that doesn't mean it can't still make the same statement...Granted, a bit simpler, but none the less, the same basic statement as the strip. Let's continue.

On film, Barin adds - "Do not forget, your Majesty, the babe applies to anyone else forced into the tournament, and emerges victorious!"

Vultan - "I will order the tournament to commence..."
at once!" It takes place in the arena before Vultan's throne, in his palace.

The first event pits Flash against the mighty masked swordsman of Mongo; a large fellow, whose head is draped in a black hood. Of course, to anyone in the theater audience who has ever seen Prince Barin, they have a pretty good idea who he is. A very droll sword-fight, which is over long, happens on the screen. As the supposedly furious fight goes on, everyone watching with concerted interest, Vultan asks Ming who the masked champion is. Ming tells him that he is the finest swordsman in all Mongo. After what seems like about two and a half days, Flash is able to catch the tip of his sword in the top of his opponents hood, unmasking him. Hold on folks...It's Prince Barin!!

Barin - "I'm sorry Flash...I was forced into this" Flash - "I might have killed you!" Vultan - "Clever trap, King. But the Earthman won!" Ming - "Yes...He won the right to fight the mighty beast of Mongo!"

On his way to his chambers, Flash receives an explanation of why Barin entered the tournament. Barin hoped that he might wound Flash sufficiently to satisfy Ming, or that Flash would kill him, thereby ending his misery. Flash - "Barin? Is your wish to live still valid?" Barin - "I love Princess Aura!" He exits. Then cautions Flash that he will next fight a giant ape...a sharp horn on its forehead. Flash does such a double take, it's almost comical. The ape closes with Flash and it begins to look bad. The chapter ends with the ape bearing Flash to the floor. Dale screams...fade out.

One can only speculate, is the orangopoid thrown in the serial, by the writers, to make up for leaving out all the other memoies of Raymond's tournament?

Chapter Nine - "Fighting the Fire-Dragon"

While Flash is apparently being overcome by the superior strength of the sacred horned orangopoid, the Princess Aura has a hurried whispered conversation with the High Priest of Mongo. Aura - "Is there any way a man can conquer the sacred orangopoid?" Priest - "There is an ancient legend..." Dale - "Tell me!" Priest - "There is a white spot on the throat!" Princess Aura rushes across the throne room, grabs a spear from a startled guard, and runs into the arena area, where Flash is fighting for his life. Ming jumps to his feet yelling - "My daughter! Get her out of there!" Vultan - "No! By your own laws, King, those who enter the arena must remain!"

At Flash's side, the princess hands our hero the lance and whispers in his ear. Flash turns, and drives the spear into the throat of the hairy beast, that then slumps to the floor mortally wounded. Ming - "Someone betrayed the secret of how the orangopoid could be slain! (turning to the High Priest) We High Priest it is your duty to find the traitor! Death will be his punishment!" If only Ming knew he was addressing the very man who ratted to Princess Aura. Oh well.

The tournament has been won, but crafty Ming, saying the arena of death is hardly the place for a celebration, declares that the victors will receive their rewards three days thence, at his palace on feast day. As you recall, in chapter 8, when rewards of the Tournament of Death were announced, the rewards were freedom, a bride and a kingdom. However, the kingdom idea was left out in chapter 9. Obviously, the writers and producer, at this point, are faced with changing the locale and the adventure, adding whole new casts and armies, if they intend to follow Raymond's narrative. It becomes apparent to only use Raymond as inspiration, rather than a blueprint. As mentioned before, to retain audience identification and interest, from week to week, it was necessary to keep the cast of characters intimate. So, it is at this point, the strip and the films go their separate ways. The latter only occasionally borrowing items from the former narrative and incorporating them into the film scenario.

Back on film, Thun apologizes, but he is returning to his father's kingdom, not wishing to enter Ming's palace again. Flash and the bearded ironman shake hands,voicing to meet each other again. A scene quite easily inspired by that parting sequence between Flash and Barin in the strip.

We are now back in Mongo, and let's save drop on part of a conversation between Ming and his High Priest. Ming - "Now that we're back on our own domain, I shall assume control of the situation!" In the lab, are Flash, Dale and Zarkov. The two men are confident that all is well, but Dale is worried, not trusting Ming. Dale wonders if the people on Earth can see them up there on Mongo.

At this point, let me point out that this is not the same laboratory set used in the opening episodes. It is smaller, and no longer high ceilinged as before. Why the change?

Zarkov assures Dale that he's positive they can, and that the sounds coming over the radio set he's sitting at are contact waves from the Earth. Zarkov vows he will not rest, until communication has been made. Meanwhile, Ming and the High Priest continue to plot.

TOURNAMENT of DEATH
Priest - "Presents of King Vultan here complicates matters." Ming - "Vultan has very finely pitted his hand in the power.
The Earthman Gordon must be removed secretly and definitely." Priest - "It shall be done, your Majesty!" Ming - "Remember, it is either he or you...the choice should not be difficult!"
The High Priest tricks Princess Aura into helping him. He tells her that she and Flash could live in happiness in the Sacred Palace of Tau. All she would have to do is have a second drug that would erase all memory of the past. When Flash awoke, the first face she would see would be Aura's (Editorial Comment - And her 40th bust). Aura comments that the Fire Monster, that guards the Temple of Terror, would never let them pass to the Sacred Palace. Priest - "At the mystic hour of midnight, the Fire Monster will be fast asleep, and nothing but the sacred gong can arouse him. I promise you the gong will not ring!" It's written everywhere filled...at last she will possess the man she wants more than anything else in the world. She agrees! (Note - The fire breathing dragon must be the brother of the dragon called in the Tunnel of Terror back in chapter three. That Tunnel of Terror leads to a lot of different places. Huh, being)
The plan works. Carlh and Flash drink the drugged wine, that they think King Vultan has sent them. As both men sleep, Aura and her soldiers slip into the room and spin the unconscious Flash away on a stretcher.

A short time later, Zarkov finds the unconscious Barin and after reviving him, realizes they are victims of a trick. They startle Princess Aura of this treachery, Zarkov, Barin, Vultan and Dale set out to find her. At her apartment, they find the latter who delivered the drugged wine and force information from him.

At the Tunnel of Terror, Aura has administered the second drug and is about to enter the tunnel but a soldier rushes up warning that Prince Barin and the others are on the way. The High Priest exclaims that it is the Earthman's weakness; his head will be forfeited. Aura and her Flash-bearers rush into the tunnel...but the dirty High Priest turns and strikes the gong. It awakes the terrible fire breathing dragon, that lumbers into the tunnel filled recesses of the cavern. The soldiers run in to告诉 terror and Aura screams. Aura - "You traitor! You've destroyed Flash Gordon!" Priest - "If I have obeyed my Emperor!"

As Barin and the others run into the entrance, they see the dragon about to destroy Flash with its lethal breathing breath.

Chapter ten - "The Unseen Peril"

Well, it looks like the High Priest has successfully carried out the orders of his chief and some kind of agent. Aura rushes back into the tunnel to stand beside her beloved. Zarkov yells - "I'll destroy it with this grenade!" The scientist pulls a grenade from his belt and throws it into the yawning mouth of the hideous fire-drone. Now you know they call it a good doctor a genius. It isn't every scientist who is praised for a good conclusion as he is...a grenade, no less. Anyway, the expected happens. When grenade and the hot breath of a fire breathing dragon combine, it settles bad news for fire dragons, in anybody's book! Priest - "Barin! Give up!...You've killed the Fire Dragon that guards the Sacred Place of the Great God Tau!" He curses Zarkov.

Zarkov inspects the body of his friend. Dale looks at Zarkov, her eyes pleading for some kind of good news. Zarkov tells her that Flash has been given a power drug that can revive him, but isn't sure he can destroy the effects of the drug. Boy, does Dale sneer at Princess Aura, who stands, her head held high, contemptuous of the others. Fade out.

Later in the throne room of Emperor Ming, we learn that Zarkov failed to destroy the effects of the drug. When Flash is to choose his bride, he states that he does not wish to choose a bride among strangers. He recognizes no one...the man and accuses the High Priest and Aura of being responsible for Flash's condition. Ming orders Vultan taken away to the dungeons.

The only similarity between this portion of the film and the strip was on May 5, 1935. After being captured by Queen Azura, queen of the Blue Magic Men, Flash drinks Lethium, which loses his memory. Flash does not recognize Dale or any of his other friends (5-12-35) and instead vows his loyalty and love to Azura.

On film, Zarkov at work in the laboratory, is interrupted by Barin who bursts in informing the doctor that Flash has been given the drops of forgetfulness and had gone away with Princess Aura. The doctor then explains that Flash protested and was imprisoned by Ming. Zarkov - "Bring Flash here, at once. I can counteract the effects of the drug!" Barin - "I doubt if he'll come. He knows none of his friends!" Zarkov - "Get him away from the princess! I will prepare for his safety and go to you at once!" When Barin tries to get Flash to leave with him, Aura tells Flash that Barin is someone to harm her. Heroic protector that he is, Flash jumps to his feet, sword drawn and attacks. While the battle rages, Aura nervously makes her way to an avenue of escape from the apartment. As the two men exchange blows, Zarkov comes in through the door, grabs Flash from behind and shouts for Barin to knock Flash out! The prince does, with the hilt of his sword. I guess Zarkov didn't want to see another 12 day boring fight between Flash and Barin again, so soon after the other duel. Ohhh...Michael Curtiz, where are you?

Aura has escaped, and our heroes rush, with the unconscious Flash, to the laboratory; hoping to get there before Aura warns Ming.

Entering the lab, Zarkov instructs Dale to look for the door after them, which she does. Zarkov then proceeds to restore Flash's memory, with a strange machine he lowers from the ceiling. Remember how at the opening of this episode, Zarkov wasn't sure he could destroy the effects of the drug? Well, as you can see, science never sleeps, or at least writers don't pay attention to what they've written, or...Hmm. The process succeeds and Flash's memory is returned. However, Ming has sent Torch and his men to Zarkov's lab to kill Flash and they arrive at just this moment. Torch opens the door and he and his men march into the room, to stand before Flash, Dale, Zarkov and Barin. By the way, this was the door locked (?) by Dale. Flash starts to grapple with Torch, but is restrained by Zarkov, who asks Flash to stand against a large metal panel on the wall. Torch orders his men to shoot, but before that can happen, Zarkov, milling, flips a switch on a control board and before the astonished eyes of everyone, accompanied by a scream from Dale, Flash disappears from sight!

Again the only connection between this and the strip happens on July 14, 1935. In the strip, Flash regains his memory, when Dale and Zarkov, who are laboring in Aura's kitchens, discover Lethium is being put into Flash's drink and keep him from partaking of it. Warned by Dale, Flash forces Aura to drink the drug of forgetfulness and shortly thereafter he regains his memory. It is now Aura who can remember nothing.
Chapter Eleven - "In the claws of the Tigron"

At the sight of the disappearing Flash, the guards jump back, and in a panic they rush from the laboratory. Dale and Barin soon discover from Zarkov that it was he who made Flash disappear. Zarkov explains that he's discovered a ray that will render a human being invisible. Confronting Dale, that Flash still has plenty of life left in him, the doctor reverses the process, bringing Flash back to visibility. Zarkov further explains that as yet he knows not how long the invisible person may remain so; but against the plans of Dale, Flash convinces Zarkov to again render him invisible, so that he may pay a visit to Ming unseen. Once again, Flash is made invisible, and we see the door of the lab open and close, as if by magic, as the invisible Earthman exits.

In his throne room, Ming is receiving an excited report from Torch and his men about Flash Gordon. Ming - "You expect to believe this impossible tale?"

Torch - "I speak the truth, your Majesty! My men witnessed it with their own eyes!"

Ming - "Bring in Flash Gordon, dead or alive! If you fail, your life will be forfeited! All of a sudden, Ming is violently thrown back in his throne, clutching desperately at his throat. Flash - "Flash Gordon is here, your Majesty, and very much alive! Unless you release my friends, this is only a sample of what's in store for you!"

Ming's soldiers try to find the invisible menace to no avail. Flash - "I could take your worthless life, Ming... but because of your daughter, Prince Barin asks that your life be spared!" Ming (having been released) - "Don't let him escape! Guard the door!" The soldiers rush to do so, but the invisible Flash is too much for them. Unable to lay their hands on him, Flash tosses them violently about. The invisible Flash yells up to Ming, from near the doorway. Flash - "I warn you Ming - this is only a sample! Keep your hands off my friends! I shall be watching you always!" We see the large door of the throne room close behind him.

In the comic strip, Flash also becomes invisible, but under different circumstances. Queen Aura has regained the throne Flash has wrested from her, and Flash, Zarkov and Dale are forced to flee the capital city of this underground kingdom. While Aura's men search for them, Zarkov spends two days and nights completing his light machine with which he makes Flash invisible.

(8-11-35) Casting only a shadow, which fills Aura's men with stark terror, Flash pays a visit to Aura at her palace, where he kidnaps the queen. Ultimately, she will become his ally against Ming.

Back on film, Ming realizes that Flash's invisibility is a result of Zarkov's work in Ming's own lab. Ming declares the machine must be destroyed, but Aura adds - "But not until the Earthman has again become visible!" Ming angrily - "I've preserved the life of this Earthman long enough, because of your whims! Now I'll stop him by pointing out that Ming cannot right a man that can't be seen. She convinces her father to leave them in the lab and that, with the help of a guard, she will find some way to overhear their conversation.

Meanwhile, down in the dungeons, the invisible Flash has released Vultan, by soaring the guards out of their wits. He and Vultan then return to the lab, where Zarkov, Barin and Dale are waiting. United again, the doctor tells them they must prepare their rocket ship for flight to Vultan's sky city and from there to the Earth. However, first the doctor once
again attempts to communicate with the planet Earth. This time Zarkov is successful. He explains to Prof. Gordon that they have very little sending power left, but they are making preparations to take flight from Mongo to return to Earth. The Earth are related to find out that Flash is alive and that Zarkov has conquered space. Communication is again lost.

Invisible Flash, Voltan and Zarkov load the rocket ship, while Barin and Dale guard the invisibility machine. The invisibility machine must be guarded, because Zarkov has pointed out that if anything happens to it, he doesn't know how he'll get back to invisibility. Princess Aura and a fruity-eyed soldier listen to everything from a narrow inner wall beyond the lab. To do this, they use a listening device dropped down the instant it is plugged into a small secret opening in the ceiling. Barin spots the device and takes Dale to safety in the catacombs under the palace.

The fruity-eyed soldier reports to King and King orders a strong body of soldiers to the lab. Just then Aura arrives and tells her father that she will find Dale. Zarkov for him, but touch the invisibility machine until Flash has again become visible. She leaves and the crafty Emperor instructs Torch to destroy Flash Gordon instantly where ever they find him.

Princess Aura instructs the mistress of the Sacred Tigon to assist her in locating Dale in the myriad of catacombs beneath the palace. The Tigon can follow a trail anywhere, and she suggests that she will wear one of Dale's sandals, so the Tigon can get her scent, they set out upon their search.

Meanwhile, Zarkov and the invisible Flash return to the lab to discover that Dale and Barin have disappeared. As they ponder the fate of their friends, Torch and his soldiers march into the lab demanding to know the whereabouts of Flash Gordon. Flash - "Here I am!" and Torch drops to his knees, fighting the invisible hands that clutch at his throat. Before our eyes, we see Flash become visible, in a rapid flash of trick photography. Apparently the effects of the ray have worn off. Flash throws Torch to the floor and turns to see Prince Barin running into the lab. Barin explains to Flash what he has done with Dale, and leaves Voltan and Zarkov to fight the soldiers, the two leave to fetch him from the cave. In that very same cave, Princess Aura and the other chick, come ever closer to Dale. The Tigon tears loose from the corridor, followed by the running girl and princess. The Tigon spots Dale and springs upon her, bearing her to the ground. Fade out.

Chapter twelve - "Trapped in the Turret"

As the Tigon bears Dale to the ground, Flash and Barin rush into the cave. Earthgirl is being mauled. (Which, by some miracle leaves not one scratch on her body.) Flash leaps into the cave and heroically grapples with the Tigon. The fight is not long, and Flash breaks the cat's neck with a full Nelson.

It might be interesting to point out that Flash killed a Tigon in a similar fashion on Sunday page 6-3-34 and Rayson has Flash breaking the neck of a Terrot in this same manner, Dec. 25, 1938.

Flash - "I guess I got here just in time!" Princess Aura watches as Flash and Dale stand in a gentle embrace. Barin steps close to the princess. Barin - "Princess Aura...why did you do this?" Aura - "I'm not accountable to you for my actions, Prince Barin." Barin - "You do not hope to win Flash Gordon by destroying the woman he loves! I've won the friendship of the Earth people by helping them...you should do the same!" Aura contemplates the wisdom of Prince Barin's words. She says - "Alright...we'll help them!" Hey...how about this change in character in Aura? After 11 episodes of lust after Flash's body, she does this about-face and allies herself with Barin to help the Earth people...to win Flash's "favor", as Barin puts it. Oh well...that's women for you. From lust to regard. Incredulous as it seems, Dale and Flash accept this change in Aura's character.

Back at the lab, Torch and his men have taken Zarkov and Voltan prisoner. Torch informs Zarkov that King is prepared to overlook the doctor's recent actions if he will divulge the secret of the invisibility machine. Zarkov refuses.

Meantime, Aura assures her friends (?) that she will intercede with her father, the Emperor. They set out for the throne room. As they enter, King shouts - "Seize them!" Barin, sword drawn, orders Ming to tell his men to withdraw. He tells Ming that if it wasn't for the love he has for Aura, he would kill him. Ming addressing Aura - "I'm delighted to learn that you look with favor upon Prince Barin! I see no reason why we should not live in peace until such time as the Earth people return to their own sphere." While King is having his forced change of heart, Torch has returned to the lab where he orders the invisibility machine destroyed. Zarkov protests, but to no avail.

Meantime, Barin orders Ming to proclaim the Earth people free at once. He does so and Flash is told he can go to the laboratory and inform Zarkov of his freedom. At the lab, Flash and Dale find Zarkov upset because his invisibility machine has been destroyed. Having been informed by Flash that they're free and confirmed by the guard that escorted Dale and Flash, the soldiers leave Zarkov, Voltan, Flash and Dale alone. (If you can call that alone!) Not trusting Ming, our heroes decide to leave for Voltan's sky city as soon as possible. Barin and Aura arrive to inquire if the Earth people are not pleased with their new freedom. Of course our friends are happy, but skeptical. Barin says he's sure Ming is sincere in his wish to rid of Flash and the others. Flash - "You're right, there! But it's how he wants to get rid of us that concerns me!" Barin tells them he will prepare his rocket ship for flight at once! Voltan - "Our departure must remain secret!" Barin agrees to meet them with his ship outside the palace walls. The place...the turret house at the lake of rocks. While Barin loads his rocket ship, Ming's spies overhear his telling a compendium (who is only here this one moment, so that Barin can be overheard, by someone.
Flash and Dale return to the lab where they inform Zarkov and Vultan of their freedom. Torch has just wrecked the invisibility machine.

leads a detachment of soldiers to the lab, but is unable to enter due to Zarkov's wiring of the door. When the door is touched, it is covered with sparks. King arrives at the door, followed by more soldiers. After a futile attempt to open the door with a ray-gun, King orders a soldier to cut off the power that supplies electric energy to the lab.

In the lab, Zarkov boasts - "We can hold out indefinitely!" But... Oh, Oh... the doctor turns on his switch and nothing happens. He realizes the electric energy has been cut off. Outside, King commands that the door be destroyed and that the lab's occupants be taken prisoner. Suddenly an alarm siren sounds. King - "An air attack!" King leaves to return to his throne room to investigate the alarm.

Inside the lab, our heroes rush to the space-o-graph and see an air attack by the gyro ships of the Lioman. I told you then that would go the wrong way. Lucky break for our friends, huh?

King, watching the gyro ships on his throne room space-o-graph orders his fleet out to meet the attack; then he orders a soldier to have the prisoners in the lab brought to the throne room. Without the electric power, this is accomplished quite easily. Aura - "Your Majesty dares to have guards lay hands upon me!" King - "You have chosen to consort with traitors... harry shall be awhile!" However, Flash points out to King that it is his ships that are being shot down from the skies. King vows that if he loses, Flash and his friends will never live to see it. King - "The prisoners to the Tunnel of Terror!"

Before this can be done, the doors of the throne room are flung open and fury falls with ferocious fighting bearded Liomans Flash and Barin join in the battle. King, realizing all is lost, makes his escape down a flight of stone steps beyond the space-o-graph. Barin, noticing his escape, takes out in pursuit of the escaping monarch of Liom. They are followed by Princess Aura.

Underground, in a tunnel, we see King whispering to his High Priests, and King turns and runs toward massive wooden doors. He stands before the doors, his arms outstretched above his head, as can be seen. The Priest pushes on a long handle and the doors open as smoke fills a filled tunnel beyond. (Say...We've seen this place before.) King bows his head and walks slowly into the gloom. The High Priest watches. King, his arms outstretched, starts up a short flight of steps that are barey visible through the smoke. As he disappears into the smoke, the High Priest pulls back on the handle and to a closed position.

At that selfsame moment, Flash rushes up to the Priest demanding to know where King is. High Priest - "The Emperor King is dead! The Emperor entered the secret place of Onslow, from which no man returns!" Aura, who has just joined Flash, Barin and Thun is comforted on the loss of her father, by Barin. Flash says that's nothing more that can be done here, so the four all return to the palace.

Later, in the throne room, Princess Aura, dressed in a revealing regal gown, sits in the throne once occupied by her late father, and she rides her royal consort, Prince Barin. Flash, Dale and Zarkov march up to the throne, while soldiers line the way with their raised swords, amid the sounds of trumpets. A regal tribute to the hero of Earth.

One would think our heroes troubles would be over. Not so, for a short time after Flash, Dale and Zarkov blast off for Earth it is discovered that the High Priest has placed a bomb aboard their rocket ship. A radio warning from Barin, comes just in time. Flash finds the bomb, resting on the shelf of the ship's generator unit in front of the rocket's door. It explodes harmlessly in space. Back at the ship's radio set, Flash thanks Barin and says - "We're safe and on our way!"

Our heroes, in radio contact with Earth, ask that all electrical power that may counteract their be killed. As generators shut down, thousands of people fill the streets to watch for Zarkov's rocket.

In the city, the cloud cover of Earth, Zarkov exclaims - "Flash... Dale... We've won! We made it! We're about to land!" Zarkov stops. Our young couple do not hear him. Flash takes Dale in his arms and kisses each other. But about that! After 13 episodes, they finally get to kiss. Oh well!

As for the Flash of the comic page, it will a few more years before he returns to Earth.
The second of the Flash Gordon serials came out in 1938. However, because of a radio broadcast, Flash's adventures took place on Mars rather than on Mongo.

The famous Orson Welles broadcast of "War of the Worlds," that frightened the nation in the fall of 1938, caused great interest in the planet Mars. Universal Pictures capitalized on this Martian interest, by having Flash's adventures take place on Mars.

Universal Pictures Inc. presents... "Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars". A 15 part serial produced for Universal by Barney Sarecky and directed by Ford Beebe and Robert Hill.

Cast of Characters:
FLASH GORDON - Larry "Buster" Crabbe, DALE ARDEN - Jean Rogers, KING - Charles Middleton, DR. ZARKOV - Frank Shannon, HAPPY HAPGOOD - Donald Kerr, AZURA - Beulah Bondi, ROBERTS, CLAY KING - Montague Shaw (Dr. Ruer in Buck Rogers), PRINCE KARIN - Richard Alexander.

List of Chapters:

As "Trip to Mars" opens, it picks up the story from where the first serial left off. Flash, Dale and Zarkov are returning to Earth in their rocket, after an exciting adventure on the planet Mongo. Their rocket noses down in an irate farmer's melon patch and from the farmer's complaints, the trio know they have landed in the United States.

It is not long, however, before a new danger threatens. Riding a strange light ray to Earth, two giant headed Martians land on our hapless planet, placing a strange smoking device in the surface of the Earth before dying in the denser atmosphere. Back on Mars, the evil King the Merciless, Emperor of the planet Mongo, watches with glee. His new found ally, Queen Azura of Mars, is less than pleased, however, at the death of two of her most loyal soldiers.

The effects of King's device are not long in manifesting themselves. Across the screen flashes a scene after scene of fire, flood, and disaster. In otherwords, Universal throws in a goob of newsreel clippings of disasters.

At a national conference of scientists, convened by the President, the nation's top brains are unable to agree on the cause or cure for the disasters. Dr. Metz scoffs at the sundry theories and trumpets the story of Alex Raymond's mythical planet. In space, not only does Zarkov discover that he has erss by some eleven soldiers, and that the rays are really coming from the red planet Mars, but Flash uncovers a stowaway...reporter Happy Hapgood.

Meanwhile, back at the lab, Ming is working on his lamp, which is causing the cataclysms on Earth by removing the Nitron from the atmosphere. Suddenly an instrument box explodes, spreading flames through the laboratory. Is this the end of King the Merciless? Will virtue triumph? Will Universal only hook the kiddies for one chapter of the serial? Not on your life, Mister! Ming calmly walks through the flames and turns a handle which stops the fire. Later, the Amateur Astronomer learns that his lamp was sabotaged by an ally of the grotesque Clay People. In punishment, Queen Azura uses her magic sapphire to turn him into clay and banishes him to the Clay Kingdom. (Remember this story. He plays an important part, later in the serial.)

Having changed course for Mars, Flash and his crew discover that their retro-rockets are ineffective, and find themselves inexorably drawn to the surface of the planet Mars. Suddenly, they are hit by the beam from King's Nitron Lamp and are thrown into a wild downward spin. Flash and his crew crash land safely in the mountainous Valley of Desolation.

Meanwhile, Ming and Azura, suspecting the identity of their adversaries, leave the palace royal in strato-sleds and hasten to confront them. In a short time, they land in the valley. Ming and the soldiers leave the ship to inspect Zarkov's craft, but its occupants have already fled. While they examine the strato-craft, Flash leaves the concealment of the nearby rocks and battles his way into Azura's strato-sled. Azura, having observed Flash on her view-screen, signals Ming with a search light. (It's evening now) Flash confronts the Martian Queen, who inquires if "All Earthmen are so violent." "Only," Flash explains, "when we have to be." To Flash's amazement, the mistress of magic disappears in the proverbial puff of smoke. Recovering quickly, Flash forces the strato-sled's pilot to take to the air, with Ming and his followers in hot pursuit. Flash lands again, a short distance away, to take Zarkov, Dale and Happy aboard. Then, just as Ming and the soldiers run up, he blasts off again, leaving Ming far behind. Ming is panic-stricken because he knows Flash is heading for Azura's city to destroy the Nitron Lamp. Ming inexplicably arrives at the city ahead of Flash. No mean feat, since he does not possess Azura's magic. Flash had stolen the strato-sled. Anyway, as Flash approaches, Azura sends up a fleet of strato-sleds to repel him. To make matters worse, Flash's reluctant pilot has bummed from the ship, sliding to earth on a bat-wing cape. As the strato-sleds close in, Flash discovers a ray-gun aboard the ship. If he can get close enough to the Nitron Lamp, he plans to use the guns two charges to destroy it! With the strato-sle-
1. After returning to Earth, our heroes are ordered out of a U.S. farmer's melon patch.

3. Flash and Zarkov travel to Azura's palace via the Clay Ken's underground rail-car.

2. Flash fires his pistol out of his rocket's window, bringing down a strato-sled. Fantastic shot, Flash!

4. Ming the Merciless communicates with some of his men, via the power house radio.
activates a special device which fills the room with the ominous crackle of electricity.
He orders nothing can save Flash Gordon now and seizes

But something CAN save Flash Gordon now, namely, the ray-gun he had dropped when he was thrown, half-consciously, into the small room to die.

Using the gun, Flash blasts his way to the balcony, focusing a ray-gun at the Nitron Lamp, destroying it. At that moment, however, Ming and his guards appear to attack Flash, who is soon overwhelmed and taken captive.

Tarnak takes the hard-won black sapphire from Flash and places it in a metal box where it can no longer affect Azura. Azura, a captive in the Clay Kingdom, is on the verge of returning the Clay People to normal, when suddenly her powers surge back, and she escapes in a puff of smoke.

One night later. However, how she intended to transform the Clay People to their former selves without her magical abilities? Ah well.

At any rate, Azura returns to her palace and learns of Flash's capture. Upon confronting Ming, Azura learns that Ming has taken the jewel from Flash. When the box is opened, however, the jewel is missing and Ming immediately summons the captured Flash and accuses him of possessing the jewel. "I don't have it," Flash replies. "But even if I did, I wouldn't reveal its location to you." Ming then proposes to kill Flash, so that no one will know of the jewel's location and Azura's power will be unaffected. Azura agrees and Flash is locked in a disintegration chamber. After Azura has departed, Ming dispatches a messenger to the leader of the Tree People, telling him that the magic black sapphire is in his possession. Obviously, Ming is planning some sort of treachery.

Meanwhile, Zarkov and Barin have located Flash, but at the same time, are discovered looking down from a skylight in on Flash, by Ming's guards. The guards blast away at them, causing a portion of the roof to give way, percolating them into the disintegrating chamber, where they attempt to free Flash from the steel chair to which he is chained. Before they can free Flash, however, Zarkov and Barin are struck senseless by the disintegrator ray.

Summoning all his strenght, in a last desperate effort, Flash snaps his bonds. Quickly, he revives Barin and Zarkov, and the trio make good their escape through the skylight. After Flash escapes Ming, he heads back to the Clay Kingdom, determined to free the Clay People from their curse. The Clay King is curious as to why Barin, like Flash, has come to him, while the film ruler employs clips from the first serial, Barin explains that Ming is his arch-enemy and that it was on his planet that Ming first tried to kill the Earth people. Barin brings Ming to the Clay Kingdom to retrieve his rocket ship, but while there, Dale is captured by the Tree Men and placed under the influence of the mists of forgetfulness. Since her memory has now vanished, Dale easily tricked her into swearing allegiance to the Forest People's god, Kalu.

While Barin, Zarkov and Happy wait outside, Flash attempts to rescue Dale, but Dale, under the influence of the priestess, states that she would be rescued with a sacrificial dagger.

Hearing the sound of battle, the trio charge in to rescue Flash. Zarkov is thrown by the Tree Men with a ray-gun while Barin carries Flash to safety. Meanwhile, Dale is brought before the king of the Tree Men, Turen. Turen orders one of his guards to inform Ming of and await Ming's instructions. Ming orders Dale brought to Azura's palace to bait a trap for Flash. All the guards withdraw from the palace, allowing Flash and Zarkov to escape. Once back in the lab, Zarkov attempts to concoct an antidote for Dale's salady, unaware that the chemicals he employs have been tampered with by Ming. Suddenly, Zarkov cries, "There's something wrong!" and hugs the beaker to the floor, just as it explodes.

In what amazing fashion does Flash escape? He doesn't know, but he and Zarkov are knocked to the floor unconscious. Tarnak arrives on the scene and reports to Ming and Azura that Flash Gordon has been captured. This report is a bit premature, as Flash and Zarkov revive and set off to rescue the king and force Tarnak to reveal the location of the antidote to the
7 Flash instructs Happy to tell Barin and Zarkov that he's located the temple where Dale is being held prisoner.
8 Dale is forced to breathe Lithium and swear allegiance to the Forest Men's god Kali
5. Flash leaves his friends with the Clay King, while he goes to fight the Nitron Bomber Squad.

6. Flash interrupts the ceremony proclaiming King Emperor of Mars.

7. Flash and Queen Azura flee from pursuing strato-shields.

8. Flash battles with the captain of the Nitron Bomber Squad, sent to destroy the Clay People.
THE EMPEROR MING

by

Flash learns that his brother, whom he had thought dead, is alive in the Clay Kingdom. (Remember the guy Azura turned to clay and vanished to the cavern, at the beginning of the serial?) The brother explains how Ming and Azura, angered by his actions, sentenced him to the living death of clay until he and his co-conspirators were freed by Flash and the others. Ming cleverly eludes King's guards, and enters the throne room. Through powerful oratory, he exposes Ming as the cause of Azura's death and turns the populace against Ming. But Ming literally has something up his sleeve—a ray-gun. "Since you rejected me as your ruler, I'll leave you know," says Ming, "and return as your conqueror!" Ming exits via a secret panel with Tarkan. While Flash and the others search for Ming, Ming and Tarkan go to the power house, where they turn the re-built Nitron Lamp on the Earth. As Tarkan watches with mounting horror, Ming gazes through a telescope viewing the devastation of tremendous devastation on Earth, all the while raving that he will destroy the universe. To make matters worse, soldiers loyal to Ming have captured Zarkov, Happy, and the Martian scout. Unaware of his capture, Flash rushes to the power house to destroy the newly reactivated Nitron Lamp. On the way, he encounters his captured friends and sets them free. As Flash approaches the power house, Tarkan confronts him, but to Flash's surprise, Tarkan declares Ming mad! Unfortunately, Ming sees Flash and company through a nearby window and fires upon them with a ray-gun. While the others cover him, Flash enters through the power house. Once inside, Ming attacks him with a ray rifle and manages to capture him. Ming starts to force Flash into the disintegration chamber. Meanwhile, Barin, who has procured a strato- sled, drops a bomb on the tower, which destroys the Nitron Lamp, but conveniently knocks Ming to the floor, enabling Flash to grapple with him. As Zarkov and Flash's other friends enter, Flash gains the upper hand and captures Ming. Suddenly, Tarkan seizes a ray gun. Ming is jubilant! The tables are now turned. Or are they? To King's horror, Tarkan not only refuses to carry out his orders, but he forces Ming to enter the disintegration chamber. Over the impassioned, but futile protest of Flash, Tarkan flies the switch activating the disintegrating beams. Zarkov succeeds in distracting Tarkan, and Flash capitalizes on the diversion to regain the ray-gun. Quickly, they unlock the chamber, and Ming is no more. Ming returns, every atom intact, in the next serial.

Flash has completed his mission! After establishing the friendly Clay King as ruler of Mars, he returns to Earth, where a hero's welcome awaits him. Crowds cheer and sirens wail, as shots of Flash, Dale and Dr. Zarkov are superimposed over shots of a ticker-tape parade in New York.
FLASH GORDON
CONQUERS THE UNIVERSE
found a way to refine the Death Dust, so that it only affects humans with enough intelligence to think for themselves. In this way, Ming will have slaves to rule, when he conquers the Universe. To prove the effects of the Death Dust to Ming, Korg is about to expose General Lupi and a giant of low intelligence, to the Death Dust. At this moment, Flash breaks into the lab, just in time to prevent the experiment.

While Flash and his friends escape, Ming orders out the Imperial Guard! Ming - "One hundred thousand Mingols to the man who captures them alive!" Ming now makes two observations. First, Zarkov was clever enough to strike at his lab and the energy pit, which is the source of the Death Dust. (This was the pit that Flash and Korg fell into.) Although not completely destroyed, it was still causing Ming to conquer the Universe. Secondly, Flash must have made a pact with Queen Fria to mine Polarite, the only antidote to the Death Dust. An antidote that can only be found in the frozen world of Frigia. Meanwhile, Flash and Zarkov and the others have reached their rocket ship and are now being pursued by a squadron of Ming's ships. Just as the ships close in for the kill, Zarkov pulls a lever on his ship's control panel. Zarkov's ship suddenly becomes invisible. Safe from detection, their heroes return to Arborea in safety.

Queen Fria is so grateful to Flash for saving General Lupi, that she gives him permission to mine Polarite in Frigia. While they plan an expedition to Frigia, they are overheard by Fria, who thinks to herself - "King will learn of this!"

Flash and Zarkov lead an expedition into Frigia; protected from the cold, only a Frigian can stand. by a spray devised by Dr. Zarkov. Leaving the ship, Flash, Dale, Barin, Roka and one of the miners begin to climb a huge snow-covered mountain in search of the Polarite. They are spotted by a Ming ship, commanded by Capt. Torch, that has been sent to destroy them. The ship drops a bomb that misses, but starts an avalanche. Our heroes are swept away by tons of snow, but miraculously survive at the bottom of a crevasse.

They are soon rescued by Dr. Zarkov, after he drives the Ming ship away with his rocket. The mining of the Polarite begins, and Flash radios the news back to his father (Prof. Gordon) on Earth. The radio message is intercepted by Ming of Frigia, and knowing his soldiers cannot withstand the intense Frigian cold, Ming sends Capt. Torch against the expedition with an army of
mechanical men called annihilations, charged with explosives. So Torch is able to explode the robots from his ship. Deep in the frozen wastes, the walking bombs attack the expedition! Flash and the miners battle theAnnihilations to no avail. Finally, Flash discovers that when Torch explodes one of the robots, Torch then has a robot man bring Dale to his ship. Zarkov and Homal try to stop the Annihilations, but Homal is knocked out and Zarkov is taken prisoner. Torch believing Flash was killed when he exploded the Annihilation, decides to take Dale and Zarkov to King, then return for Zarkov's rocket. After they have taken off, Flash remains conscious and returns to Zarkov's ship. After being told of what has happened to Dale and Zarkov, Flash refuses to follow them. He tells the others that his first duty is to get the Folorite to Earth, to stop the Purple Death. "I've got to take the Folorite to Earth first," says Flash. "Then I'll come back and settle with Ding!"

Flash rockets to Earth with the Folorite and tells his father, via radio, that he's going to drop it on St. McKinley. Once this is done, all the Death Dust will be attracted to the Folorite and be destroyed. Flash accomplishes this, then he has to go back. The ship comes very crafty he seeks in flight, attacks Flash. Flash, with the use of a smoke screen, tricks Torch into believing he has shot them down. When Torch enters the ship, he sees Flash has captured by Flash. Flash then forces the King's ship's crew to fly them to King's palace, knowing they have to rescue Dale and Zarkov. There, disguised as King and Honka make their way through palace corridors. Overhearing a guard say that Zarkov is about to meet his death in the arena, for refusing to aid King, Flash rushes up to the arena before King returns, but King's voice starts the death ray toward Zarkov. Flash leaped through the window and, with sword and hammer, tries to cut open Zarkov's balcony, restrains his guards from firing on Flash, saying - "He has chosen his own death!" As the ray engulfs Flash, Honka appears at the window. Flash, using flash, flies his ray gun at the clock controlling the death ray. He does this and the clock blows up, the death ray stops. Before King and his men can recover from this shock, Flash escapes through a door. Dale, who was watching all this with King, is escorted away to her quarters and Zarkov is ordered brought to King in the throne room.

King tells Zarkov he will let him live, but he will have to work, with other scientists in his laboratory, to aid him in conquering the universe. Zarkov is taken to King's laboratory where he meets Khom, another scientist forced to serve King. Zarkov and Khom make a pact to do all in their power to destroy King.

Meanwhile, Flash and Homal have appropriated two King guard uniforms and have rescued Dale. Using a radio-phone, they also appropriated from King-guards, Flash in contact with Zarkov in the lab, he tells Zarkov that Flash tells Zarkov he won't leave him without him. Khom gives Zarkov a means of escape...a monkey robe. After telling Flash he's escaping, he in the courtyard, where the guards are, Zarkov dons the robe and calmly walks by King's guards. What security? What a stupid escape! Oh well, back to the action! The approach of a fleet of Bari's rocket ships creates a diversion and our heroes escape. However, Zarkov, not knowing Flash is aboard the ship, is almost destroyed. Only his quick thinking saves him. Flash fires a Morse code signal to Bari with the ship's ray-cannon. Bari sees the signal and quickly Volunteers. Below, Torch and his men, having freed themselves from the ship Flash left then tied up, can do nothing as the ships return to Arboria.
the prisoners are brought before the Rock King, who orders them held until his missing son is returned to him. The king blames the prisoners for his disappearance.

Dale, in a cell with Sonja, tries to get help by calling Khom via a small radio she had hidden on her. Sonja sees this and attacks Dale. They fight, causing the Rock Men guards to come in and separate them. Sonja is taken out and put in a separate cell, taking with her Dale's radio. Once Sonja is alone, she turns the radio on and Khom is revealed to Ming as Flash and Zarkov's ally.

Meanwhile, Flash, Zarkov and Hoka have decided on a means of escape. Hoka pretends he is ill and when the Rock Men guards enter their cell, he holds them at bay, while Flash and Zarkov make their bid for freedom and head back to their rocket for help. On their way, they encounter a tremendous magnetic force, caused by a huge lodestone that had been uncovered by the time-bomb explosion earlier. Clinging to a nearby rock, to avoid being pulled over a chasm ledge where the lodestone is, is the Rock King's son. Flash hits upon an idea to save the boy. He plans to push a boulder down on the lodestone knocking it into the depths of the chasm. However, to do this he must climb dangerously near the chasm's edge and risk being pulled to his death by the lodestone. To make matters worse, the Rock King has ordered the prisoners thrown into a boiling abyss. One of Toroh's men perishes and Dale is to be next. As Dale is lowered into the abyss, Hoka attacks and for a moment Dale is free. However, she is recaptured and returned to the abyss. Just as she is about to be thrown in, Zarkov and Flash appear, successful in their mission to save the Rock King's son. In gratitude for what Flash has done, they are all set free. It is at this moment that Sonja, Toroh and one of his men make a break for freedom. They try to escape via the rocket in which Barin and Ronal are waiting for Flash to return from setting up the Nullitrion. However, before they can do this, Flash, with the aid of some Rock Men, recapture the trio. Now, with Barin's rocket, they leave the Land of the Dead.

Instead of returning to Arborea, a rescue mission to release Princess Aura is undertaken. They manage to get in contact with Aura and Capt. Sudin (Capt. of the Palace Guard loyal to Barin) via Khom's secret radio. Sudin is instructed to open the entrance door of an underground tunnel leading to the palace, at 6:30 that evening. Sudin does so, and once the entrance is opened, the prisoners and Aura are able to enter the palace. As they travel along the tunnel, they meet and come to grips with a detachment of King's guards. One guard sounds an alarm that brings Ming to the control room. He sees the battle on a view screen and orders Capt. Sudin to open the flood gates. Sudin does so, and torrents of water sweep our heroes to the surface. Once they are all secured, Sudin opens the gates to a side tunnel and Flash and his party are saved. Realizing they can not accomplish their mission at this time, Flash and his friends return to Arborea.

Later, Ming and his guards catch Aura and Khom trying to send a message over the radio hidden in the lab. Khom tries to strangle Ming and is killed. Ming learns Flash is alive, when conversation with Khom is interrupted over the radio by Zarkov. Ming has one of his guards install Khom's voice. Zarkov will learn of Khom's death and discovery of the radio. The rescue works.

A short time later, Sonja and Torch, confined in prison cells in Barin's palace, escape to the radio room. There they overpower the operator and communicate with Ming. Ming instructs Torch to send out a false order, announcing Barin's space ships. This will clear the way for Ming's bombers. Then they travel to Barin's space ships when they are due to attack and destroy the lab, to prevent Barin from countermanding the orders. Dale overhears all this and is captured by Torch and Sonja who flee with her to the roof of the palace. Learning of this, Flash pursues and corners them. Flash and Torch look in battle as the Ming bombers begin their attack. Dale, Sonja and Ronal, who has just joined them on the roof, are overcome by the gas emanating from the bomb blasts. Flash and Torch, in the meantime, have battled near the edge of the roof, where their desperate struggle causes them to fall off. They plunge downward into the palace moat. Flash looks around him and sees Torch floating unconscious nearby. He proceeds to pull Torch from the moat, with Ming bomber landed on the palace roof. Ming's men leave the rocket and return, a few moments later, with the unconscious Dale, Sonja and Ronal. The ship takes off again, with only seconds to spare, as Barin's ships appear on the scene to beat off the ming ships. The ship carrying Dale, Sonja and Ronal escapes Barin's forces and returns to the palace of Ming.

Crafty Ming, wanting the return of Capt. Toroh, who is still held prisoner by Flash, devises a treacherous plan. He contacts Flash and Barin and proposes an exchange... Dale Arden and Ronal for Capt. Toroh. The trade is made, but as Flash rockets away Dale passes out. A note from Ming, placed in Ronal's belt before the exchange, explains what has happened. Dale has been given a drug that will soon kill her if she and Dr. Zarkov are not returned to Ming's power at once. Zarkov has no choice... he must submit.

With Dale, Aura and Zarkov held captive, Ming now has power over Flash and Barin. Desperate, Flash leads a rescue party into Ming's palace, via an abandoned tunnel and soon locates the room where Dale and Aura are being held. However, Flash is unaware that the room is protected by a death-dealing electrical trap, set by Ming. Flash, who raced in head, starts to enter the room. Dale screams a warning and Flash only receives a partial electric shock. Barin finds the controls and turns off the electric current. After Flash revives, it is learned that Aura and Barin and Hoka head for Ming's lab where Zarkov is held prisoner. They battle their way into the lab and seal its entrance. Now in
2. Flash battles an Annihilation to save Dale.
4. Zarkov, Flash, Dale and Barin check the Nullitron gun.

3. Flash isn't making out too well.
5. Flash, Dale, Zarkov and Roka captured by Rock Men.
control of the laboratory, Zarkov discovers the source of King's power... Thillinium! Thillinium, powered by rays from the sun, energizes all of King's weapons. With this power in Zarkov's hands, he holds King at bay.

Meanwhile, King has the laboratory surrounded by his soldiers and gives Flash and his friends one hour to surrender. He also tells Zarkov that he has a power other than Thillinium at his disposal. Flash and Roka, using the uniforms of the guards they swallowed breaking into the lab, slip out through a secret tunnel to spy on King. They get close enough to the throne room to learn what the other source of King's power is. A rocket ship loaded with Solarite, a tremendously powerful explosive King had planned to use on the cities of Earth.

Flash and Roka have no sooner returned to Zarkov with this information, when King calls the lab on the visiphone. King tells Zarkov if he doesn't surrender, he'll send a ship of Solarite against the Earth and wipe it out. Zarkov tells King that he must discuss the matter with his friends. King gives him five minutes.

Five minutes is all Flash needs. While Zarkov and the others slip out of the lab, via the secret tunnel, and escape in Barin's rocket, Flash takes over the ship filled with Solarite. Learning of this, a van load of King's men flies to his laboratory with Torch and Sonja. From this tower lab, King plans to use the tower's auxiliary controls to detonate the Solarite before it can be used against him. King calls to his control room, to have the auxiliary controls activated. There is no reply. Capt. Sudin, loyal to Barin, is in charge. Sudin radios King's location to Flash, at the same time electronically locking King's tower door. He then makes a statement to another guard, loyal to Barin, that is with him. "I never thought it would be in my power to destroy King!" He also tells the other guard that there is another way out of the tower, but King will never think of it in time. This statement would lead one to believe the script writers were leaving the door open for a fourth serial, by giving King a means of escape. However, the fourth serial never took place.

Meanwhile, Flash heads the Solarite ship at the tower. King sees the ship and tries to escape through the door, only to find it locked! Flash parachutes out of the ship and moments later, King, Torch and Sonja are blown to pieces!

After being reunited with his friends, Flash is told by Barin that by destroying King he has saved the Universe. Flash replies - "In his mad ambition, King declared that he was the Universe! He made this adventure by saying - "Then since you've conquered King, I shall radio your father - FLASH GORDON CONQUERS THE UNIVERSE!"

EDITOR'S NOTES:

I'd like to use this remaining space to relate a few facts pertaining to the serials and other Flash Gordon material.

The Flash Gordon serials are movie film classics. Perhaps the dialogue sounds "corny" by today's standards, but keep in mind the serials were made over 30 years ago. They are, without a doubt, the best movie serials ever made.

The Flash Gordon serials were also made into feature versions and have been released for TV showings as well. The first serial was renamed "Space Soldiers". The second had two names, "Para Attacks the World" and "Space Soldiers Trip to Mars". The third was retitled, "Space Soldiers Conquer the Universe".

In the last serial, there were two major cast changes. Richard Alexander (Prince Berin) was replaced by Roland Drew and Carol Hughes took the place of Jean Rogers, as Dale Arden.

Although "Conquers the Universe" based its costumes, characters and locations upon the newspaper strip, it had little to do with Raymond's story line. However, it was a much more fitting sequel to the first serial.

Although the people in charge at Universal tried to keep accidents at a minimum, some hair raising ones did take place. Buster Crabbe was forced through some broken glass in a shattered swimming pool and into a tank, in one instance and became badly lacerated in another. Jean Rogers, Dale Arden in the first two serials, was almost drowned in one sequence; while Friscilla Lawson, who played Princess Aura in the first serial, came in contact with an electronic machine, with a wet hand and received quite a jolt. It was because of accidents like these, that doubles were used in many of the dangerous sequences. This protected the producers of the film from being held up on production, plus a good deal of added expense.
FRIENDS OF

FLASH GORDON
FRIENDS OF FLASH GORDON is the getting together of some Flash Gordon fans to discuss various aspects of the Flash Gordon strip. Flash's friends, for this panel, are:

MIKE ROYER - JOE SINGOTT - TONY ISABELLA
and myself - MARTIN L. GREIM.

Tony's replies, to the questions I asked, were submitted in the form of a short article. I felt it best not to break up this article, so Tony's comments will appear as one statement at the end of this discussion.

The first question is:

"Besides Flash Gordon, what character in the Flash Gordon strip do you most enjoy and why?"

MIKE ROYER - That has to be Ming, the Kercless, Emperor of the Universe. I don't really know if I can find a real reason for liking him, but there's something so nasty about the character to make him appeal to me. He's the perfect villain, as far as I'm concerned. I'm only sorry that he never returned to Raymond's pages when the artist returned the strips locale to the planet Mongo.

"How about the character that appeals to me the least? For instance...Kang! God, what a waste! Oh well...

JOE SINGOTT - I always liked Prince Barin, probably because Raymond patterned him after Errol Flynn, a particular favorite of all boys of 12 in 1938. This was the time of the Robin Hood movie also. I'm sure Raymond was influenced by it.

MARTIN GREIM - Vultan, king of the Hawkmen, is my personal favorite. This character and the world he rules, has to rank as one of the most imaginative of Raymond's creations. Shellen (Shelly) Holmwood, artist of the 40's, must have thought so too. He swept many, many shots from the Hawkmen series, as well as from the other Flash Gordon stories.

Question #2:

"What Flash Gordon story is your favorite and why?"

MIKE ROYER - That's a tough question. Sentiment plays a big part in my picking the period of June 1940 through July 1941. As you'll recall, it's the first Flash strip ever published. I reread the strip a thousand times. This period is titled "The prisons of Mongo" by Larry Ivey. However, there's more to it than the prison... the Powermen, rocket ships, the secret police, the overthrow of Vultan and declaration of Free Mongo, etc.

JOE SINGOTT - My reasons for picking Barin as my favorite character would also have to apply for my pick of favorite story. The "Forest Kingdom" series, I also feel was Raymond's best artistic achievement. Then the Kingdom story was also great too.

MARTIN GREIM - I'd have to say "The Tyrant of Mongo" story is my favorite. This story had the famous flying sequence between Flash and King, King's capture and escape, plus Sonja getting her just reward for helping Ming. (She was executed.) This series was fast paced and filled with suspense. Flash almost had Ming here!

Question #3:

"How would you compare Flash's second trip to Mongo to his first?"

MIKE ROYER - Raymond was instructed by the syndicate to clean things up on Mongo and return Flash, Dale and Zarkov to Earth. It seemed Flash should do his bit towards combating the enemies of democracy, as in his case. The Red Sword and his Invaders. In appearance they were German, however their salute was the Communist clenched fist and the Nazi outstretched arm. In January, 1941, Flash returns to Mongo to obtain radiation to aid the U.S. war effort. Nastyly, when the U.S. did go to war against Nazi Germany, the strip couldn't have Flash fight the Germans' with Zarkov's knowledge of rockets and death-rays, etc. So Flash had to be returned to Mongo to continue the story goes. Raymond was furious that the syndicate told him what to do with his story, so after liberating Mongo and returning Flash to Earth, he became insane. Raymond stopped writing and only polished up the stories the syndicate contracted for him. Although the art from this period is not as strong as prior to that, so my answer to your question must be that I much prefer Flash's 1st visit to Mongo. The 2nd visit looks nice, but doesn't hold a candle in comparison. Oh...where'd I get that stuff about Raymond and the writing? Like they say in the movies, "From a very reliable source".

JOE SINGOTT - I feel Flash's second trip couldn't compare with the first, mainly because the element of surprise was lost. I also feel his work after 1940 was never the same.

MARTIN GREIM - I had to say his first trip too. However, I believe his second trip mirrored the times more. The battles were tactically waged, like those in real life, rather than romantically, with Flash overcoming great obstacles single handedly.

Question #4:

"Besides Raymond, what other artist on the Flash Gordon strip have you enjoyed the most?"

MIKE ROYER - Enjoy is a difficult word. Next to Alex Raymond, the artist who most kept the real "feeling" of Flash and Mongo, was Austin Briggs. It's obvious that Briggs was only doing it for the money, and page after page of his Flash stand as examples of a man drawing as little as he possibly can. Yet, there's something about them. Damn it...I look at some of those simple pages and they're beautiful. For so, Briggs somehow feels right. Also his daily strips shouldn't be forgotten. Although the stories are as silly as those written for the Sundays, it's still the "real" Flash, graphically.

JOE SINGOTT - After Raymond, it's hard to compare. However, Briggs, Barry and Williamson certainly have done excellent work with Flash. I don't appreciate the style that is being used today. What a job Williamson would do with a Sunday page.

MARTIN GREIM - Austin Briggs and Al Williamson certainly captured the Raymond flavor and in this area they are my favorites. However, for the other world of Flash Gordon, the more science fiction world, Mac Hahoy had a certain look that I really enjoyed. However, I and a legion of Flash Gordon fans, would love to see Al Williamson do the Flash Gordon Sunday pages. He's Alex Raymond reincarnated.

Question #5:

"In story line, how would you compare Flash Gordon
with Buck Rogers?"

MIKE BOYER - You know, it's funny...as a kid, and even now. I've never considered Flash and Buck in the same league. Of course, when you look back at the strips of 1949 on through to around 1950, I'd take Buck over Flash any day for drawing that appeals to me. Don't misunderstand me...I love the Buck Rogers Sunday strip, but it just wasn't the same kind of feeling I had for Flash. I could get totally involved in Baymond's worlds.

JOE SINNER - I never read Buck Rogers very much, so I can't compare their story lines. I can't see how Flash could be equaled however - Baymond was such a great story teller.

MARTIN GREEIN - I could never really get interested in Buck Rogers, except when Murphy Anderson drew him. As Mike said, "You get totally involved in Baymond's worlds" and I just couldn't do that with Buck.

Question #6:
"At what point in the Flash Gordon story line did you enjoy Baymond's art the most?"

MIKE BOYER - The evolution of his draftsmanship of April 1937 through July 1938. But I dig it all! The first couple of years were his best as a "comic" artist. Late '38 and '40 were probably his best for overall detail, '40 and '41 were, I believe, his most comfortable as a stylist. It's interesting to note that Hal Foster joined King Features Syndicate in 1937 (Feb.) and in Feb. - '38 Prince Valiant is syndicated nation wide in the same Buck comic section with Flash Gordon. Notice what period Baymond eliminates balconies for straight narrative and refines his work to super draftsmanship? That's right...1937 - 1938. Influence? Competition?

JOE SINNER - I liked the Baymond art of '36 - '40.

MARTIN GREEIN - The 1940 - 1941 period. From "Tyrant of Mongo" into "The Ice World of Mongo" is how I picture Flash. Baymond at this point, showed great draftsmanship. His later work just didn't have the detail his work at this period contained.

Question #7:
"In closing, expound on anything related to Flash Gordon that you'd care to." 

MIKE BOYER - For me, Flash Gordon came into existence one cold rainy Oregon evening in the early fall of 1950. I was thumbing through the comic books, on the rack at our family's regular grocery store. I came upon Harvey's Flash Gordon No. 1. I had no prior exposure to the wonderful worlds created by Alex Raymond. In fact, I wasn't until two years later, while digging in a trunk in that fabulous repository of treasures, my grandmother's attic, that I even became aware that the Flash Gordon of Harvey Comics had pre-existed on the colored Sunday comic page, and that its creator had a name at all. Resting at the bottom of the trunk, where my mother had placed them as a gift, I discovered there was much more to Flash Gordon than 4 eye-worn Harvey Comics. A question of my own now - Why didn't the writers of the strip use King again, after Flash was returned to Mongo? Let's face it...Baymond never said King was dead...just paralyzed...oh well.

JOE SINNER - You can't realize what a thrill it was to be a kid of 9 when many of these great strips started in 1934 - Flash, Terry, etc. You wouldn't believe how we waited for the Sunday page. It was great anticipation, as these adventures were all new and quite believable to a boy growing up with them. It was a great period to be a kid!

MARTIN GREEIN - Flash Gordon began for me as a short feature in King Comics and one Harvey comic, I had as a boy. Through the years I saved certain comic and Flash Gordon was one of them. It was Al Williamson's first King Comic that reawakened my interest in Flash. I had been involved with superheroes for so long, that I had almost forgotten how great Baymond's worlds were. However, you can see by this issue, my love for Flash Gordon didn't stay dormant long.

TONY ISABELLA - Flash & Dale & Tony & Azure by Tony Isabella

The world is full of rooks. I know, I work for a newspaper. Most papers are produced for rooks by rooks. Especially those newspaper "funnies." The rook comic page reader reads Li'l Abner for the radical new insights it offers. When he wants realism, he reads Mary Worth and believes matchmaking is the key to happiness. He thinks Nancy is outrageously funny and that Pogo is a strip for the "little kids." He's the man who invariably gets elected to public office by a thousand voters. Help!

The rook doesn't appreciate Flash Gordon. The rook can't get into a world totally unlike his. He can't appreciate the building of an existence totally unlike his. He's not the rook who watches Matt Dillon shoot an unarmed drunk. Fortunately, none of us who gather here are rooks. We can discuss Flash Gordon and the amazing worlds of Raymond created for us. The rook can't, he's got to see Haw in the next room.

Woody Gelman started it for me. He came out with that fantastically beautiful Flash Gordon volume, probably the best of the reprints of Flash Gordon newspaper strips. I sat enraptured, while viewing the three Flash Gordon - Buster Crabbe serials. My feet were solidly planted. I watched four chapters of Buck Rogers. Before realizing the thing did not take place on Mongo. I saw Hawken where they weren't and thoroughly enjoyed the illusion. Woody created Big Little Books from a genius of storytelling. Woody, fill in the gaps of my reading. Mongo might not be the best of all possible worlds but it's better than fighting with city editors.

Flash Gordon dominated my youth. Flash Gordon was my central mover and that's as it should be. But, it is to Raymond's credit that he was able to populate the strip with other well-developed interesting characters. The stereotype is beyond the limits of that stereotyping and made to breathe a special realism into the strip. Nor did Raymond cheat on supporting characters like the Vultan and Gurdan. They were real people in his own. Even bit players like Captain Solis and Major Darin (both in the Kastalgia Press book), have a nobility and reality that few leading characters had. My favorite character Discount.mp3, it would have to be Abe the Witch Queen. Gurdan, Vultan and Major Darin follow closely, but I have this fetish for beautiful sorceresses. They contain an earthiness within a mystic aura and that's a hard combination to ignore.

Flash Gordon (by Alex Raymond) is possibly the greatest comic strip adventure ever recorded. But one episode in the run of the strip stands out from the (CONTINUED ON LAST PAGE)
Since its beginning in 1934, the Flash Gordon strip introduced many fascinating people and places. Mongo is a world of many races, ranging from the primitive to the super scientific. Ranged with towering mountains, areas of volcanic activity and lush vegetation of gigantic proportions, huge reptiles still walk the land.

The following is a brief look at the planet Mongo!

Mongo is a world where monsters roam.

However, not all monsters are prehistoric.

There is the tyrant Ming.

And the throne usurper Brazor.

Mongo is also a world of advanced technology.
A technology that can create weapons like the Lion Men's space-gyros...

And the Sky City of the Hawkmen

The World of Mongo has many rulers

King Barin and Queen Aura—of Mingo

Ronal and Fria—of Frigia

King Vultan—of the Hawkmen

Thun—of the Lionmen

Undina—of Coralia

Azura the Witch Queen
AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER, ALL OF THESE MONARCHS CAME INTO CONFLICT WITH MING THE MERCILESS

FLASH GORDON WOULD NEVER HAVE SEEN MONGO, IF NOT FOR THE GENIUS OF DR. HANS ZARKOV

FLASH'S LOVE, DALE ARDEN, SHARED HIS ADVENTURE

AN ADVENTURE THAT TOOK HIM FROM THE ICE WORLD OF FRIGIA...

TO THE UNDERWATER KINGDOM OF CORALIA...

AND THE FOREST KINGDOM OF ARBORIA...
Mongo was finally freed from Ming, by men like these, and Flash, Dale and Zarkov returned to Earth.

Count Bulok - leader of a band of outlaws who used abandoned sewers to fight Ming.

Ergon - chief of the power men - Mongo's engineers.

Captain Sudin - captain of Ming's flagship and head of the naval mutiny.

After a short stay on Earth, Flash returned to Mongo - this time landing on a different continent - Tropica!

Queen Desira and Brazor.

Desira's throne had been taken over by Brazor - Flash rescued Desira and with the aid of the desert bandit Gundar, he restored her to the throne! Flash Gordon, ~hero of Mongo~.
rest. That episode is "The Power Men of Mongo." All the classic elements are in this episode. A struggle for freedom, betrayal, captivity, lost love and found love, and an uncommon heroism shown by the common people. Flash is dying in an airless coffin. All seems lost. Buck! Ming is overthrown in the middle of the night. He sits on his ass dumfounded. A deserved, highly satisfying fate. No wonder the episode is my favorite.

With Ming disposed of, a change of pace was definitely called for. Alex Raymond sent his planet-conquering hero back to his own home world for a clash with the Red Sword invaders. But Earth was much too mundane, compared to the exotic lands of Mongo and before too long, Flash and company were returning to their adopted planet. The second series of adventures on Mongo is worthy of note. They are exciting, well-told stories. They are not, however, up to the standards set by the earlier adventures. The major reason for the superiority of the first stories is that the later adventures lack a villain comparable to Ming the Merciless. Ming was all powerful. Before Flash Gordon entered his life, Ming was unchallenged by man or beast. He had Flash outclassed from the very beginning. There was a touch-and-go battle, with the outcome in doubt from Sunday to Sunday. On his return to Mongo, Flash was battling a lesser grade of fiend. We knew he was going to win against him. In the first series, the smart money was on Ming all the way.

Buck Rogers, the other (and first) science-fiction adventurer in the newspapers, started out with the same kind of massive challenge that Flash faced. Buck had a world to save from tyranny also. But the Mongols were pickpockets compared to Ming. They were soon disposed of. It took over six years to bring Ming to justice, and he went down fighting. Both had story lines of equal potential; Alex Raymond simply made more of his strip's potential than Phil Nowlan and Dick Balducci did of theirs. As for artwork, there was no competition. Dick Balducci drew appealing, but crude strips. Alex Raymond illustrated. With a vengeance.

I personally prefer Raymond's artwork during his "The Tournament of Mongo" episode. At this time, for all its beauty, the strip has a basic, barbaric appeal. Armies were forgotten. Individuals had stolen the stage for individual combat and the artwork was reflecting this intense, physical combat between two men. Even the crowd scenes reflected this individual struggle. I don't think there has been another comic strip fight to match this one.

When Alex Raymond left Flash Gordon, the strip lost its greatness. Alex Raymond, the writer, the artist, had made Flash Gordon. Without him, the strip was lackluster. It remained that way until 1966 when Al Williamson wrote and drew Flash Gordon #1 for the new line of King Comics. I don't believe there's another heir to Alex Raymond. I doubt there'll be one tomorrow. The only shortcoming in Al Williamson's three issues of Flash Gordon was that it lacked the massive challenge, the epic element.

It is this epic element that made Flash Gordon the finest adventure strip ever created. It is this epic element that will restore Flash Gordon to greatness. Someday.

--Tony Isabella

To close this Flash Gordon issue, I feel a mention of Buster Crabbe, the star of the Flash Gordon films, is in order.

Buster Crabbe, was born Clarence Linden Crabbe. At the time the serials were made he stood 6'1" weighed 188 lbs., had a 45" chest, 32" waist, and 16" biceps, for all you data lovers. A graduate of the University of Southern California in 1932, he scored that year as a swimming champion in the Olympic Games in Los Angeles. In 1934, he made a name for himself, when he starred in the feature movie "Tarzan the Fearless." Two years later, he was signed for the lead in Flash Gordon. After the first two serials, Buster became Buck Rogers for 12 more chapters of outer space action. In the mid-1950's Buster starred as Captain Gallant of the Foreign Legion, along with his son, Cullen "Curly" Crabbe. Buster has since become executive director of a swimming pool construction firm and has guided Cascade Industries to a leading position in that field.

Well, I see by the illustration below, that two friends of mine have dropped by. I'm going to take a little trip with them. See you next issue gang! --MLG.