

# PEON

## JAN '49

As the old year comes to a close and the new year approaches, we want to thank all of our friends and readers who have made the first five issues of this fanzine so successful. Without their friendship, cooperation, and understanding, PEON would not have been. Our special thanks go out to Sam Peeples, K. M. Carlson, Arthur Rapp, and Doctor David H. Keller, for their help in obtaining the material you have been reading--and to Mrs. Riddle for her understanding of why we have to clutter up the hall closet with the magazines, books, and fanzines that we have collected in the past year. We hope the new year will bring to you one and all luck, success, and happiness. In other words, we wish you all a....





# GOING HOME

by D. Mason

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A greyness overhead, the blaze of noon to the world of Minor 18, lit up the promenade dock of the Guardsman with a pale, eerie glow that did not quite conquer the ship's own lights. The Guardsman sped now high over the larger continent of 18, on its way from one bright city of the dark world to another similarly bright.

Their shadows shifting strangely in the swinging light, a man and a Fedorian stood at the rail, watching the endless vista of eroded grey rocks. The Fedorian was a seven foot shapelessness, draped in the enveloping dark cloak that customarily hides the curious construction of the people of Fedor even from each other. His high-domed, faceted head was turned toward the man, in a listening attitude.

The man was not in any way unusual. He wore a plain business-like dress which showed him to be a native of some one of the many humanoid planets with a similar culture--too many for any positive identification. He was a young man, with an old, tired face, a face which the grey light did not help. It was the face of a man who has run away from a thing that was not important enough to run away from.

The tinny voice of the Fedorian emerged from the folds of the cloak. "This is a cold world. If I were not a servant of my people, I would go anywhere but here."

The man laughed abruptly. "The day when a Fedorian asks a direct question will be the day, all right. What is it you really want to know, Qual?"

"Friend Collen, I did not ask a question. I merely found it remarkable that you, of all men, should accept a post here, when there are so many bright, warm planets...."

"....Like my own." The man laughed again, but the laugh was metallic.

He spoke again, after a while, his voice distant, as if he were talking to himself.

"You'd like to know, but you're too polite to ask. Nobody has to ask questions where you come from--do they? And the answers are all known now anyway. All the answers--what two and two really make, and whether pigs have wings..

"By the way, Qual, pigs do have wings. Wings, and jet motors to drive them. Pigs can mount to the stars. But they're still pigs.

"I like this world. It reminds me of a Dore engraving, of the hell into which Lucifer fell, after he made war in heaven. Sometimes a man needs to find a place like this, if there's no god to put him into a proper hell. The damned prefer hell, Qual; that's why they're damned.

"It isn't a bad job, tending the energy station here. It's only a simple atomic pile, and I do know simple atomics. Though the science wasn't very far advanced on my world. It's queer, at that. I was once known as the leading man in the field of atomics on my home world..supposed to know more about it than anyone else alive.

"No, we weren't one of the Federated Worlds. We were independent. We had not been in contact long--only a few years ago that first contact was made with any other planet.

"It's a nice little world, that one where I was born. I was brought up in the country, and later, when I married, I lived in the country again--in the green hills, under a bright sun--quite like that world in Argol near yours. There were trees...and the sky was sometimes an astonishing blue. I've never seen that precise shade of blue anywhere else but there. We would sail on a lake, sometimes, my wife and I..in a simple little boat that the wind pushed, like the ones the natives used to use here.

"Most of the time, though, I worked. I loved my work. I loved it so well, that I never knew or cared what others might make of it. I remember saying to a class of my students once, that science was truly international--that the pursuit of knowledge, for its own sake, was all that could matter to a scholar. Let the foolish ones use what we taught them wisely or not--it didn't really matter.

(continued on page 7)



# THE HAPPY PHYSICIST TO HIS NYMPH

Come, live with me and be my love--

And we shall all the problems prove

That in the textbooks lie enlaid

Just waiting to be cubed and squared--

A cyclotron I'll build for thee

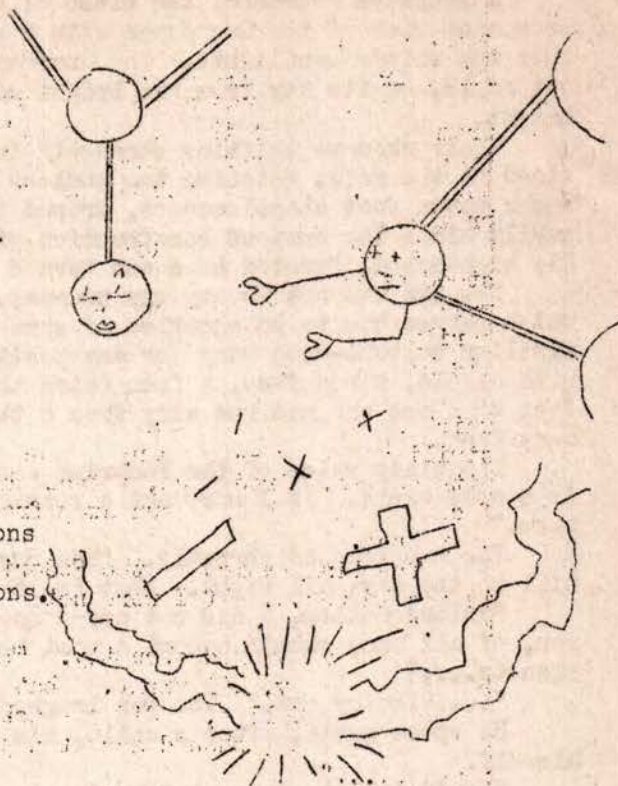
And, busy as the well-known bee,

We'll fling the neutrons all around

Until the final answer's found.

And then we'll have some chain reactions

And reduce ourselves to common fractions.



(The November 20th issue of the New Yorker carried a paragraph from Planet Stories in its Department of Understatement.)

## ODE UPON THE NEW YORKER'S DISCOVERY OF SCIENCE FICTION

The Knickerbocker tickertocker has taken note of us,

HOORAY, shout all the little fans, in chorus; sea to sea.

For in this august chronicle of literary error,

A lash to drunken printers and to editors a terror

Between a bit from Legal News, a scrap from Foreign Cables

Comes a paragraph that's culled (HOORAY) from dear old Planet Fables!

(Fanfare of trumpets!)



(The above material(?) was forced upon us by D. and V. Masen)



# FANTASY COLLECTING

by S. A. Peeples

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## (B) CONDITION

If fantasy collecting, be it books or magazines, is your hobby, then you must face up to the fact that condition, in collecting as in any other pursuit, is a major factor to be considered. If you read a book, then discard it for another, condition means nothing; the story is paramount. But if you are a true bibliophile, a true fantaphile, then you'll want as fine a copy as you can get, and you'll learn to hold out for a copy in condition suitable. It is quite okay, naturally, to pick up any wanted book in ANY condition, pending the discovery of a GOOD copy---but in any such case, PRICE should be the main consideration. Many dealers have discovered carelessness is a train of a great number of fans, and they send out books NOT in good condition; and they get away with it! Don't pay a big price for any book unless it is in a condition that you are satisfied with.

Not strictly pertinent to this section of the series, nonetheless the question of FIRST EDITIONS is to be considered. I speak for actual knowledge when I say that not one fan in ten KNOWS a first edition when he sees it (excluding those instances of late that publishers place, on the reverse of the title page FIRST EDITION). And lack of at least a general knowledge of book-publishing practices is a good way to get gypped royally, believe me! In brief, here is the way to tell a first edition!

- (a) Most present-day publishers state the fact on the reverse of of title page.
- (b) With but few exceptions (the Carl H. Claudy juveniles, movie-editions such as KING KONG, for example) the publishing firm of Grosset and Dunlap (G&D) put out ONLY reprints. The same applies to WORL, A. L. BURT, TRIANGLE, MODERN LIBRARY, BLUE RIBBON, MADISON SQUARE, GARDEN CITY, JACOBSEN, BURROUGHS (excepting when plainly marked FIRST EDITION on reverse of title page).
- (c) In the instance of older books, a copyright date on reverse of title page MUST coincide with year printed on line above (or below in some cases) publisher's name on title page.

There are many, many exceptions to these rules, and I heartily regret the fact; but there it is. Books are sometimes "remaindered", that is, unbound copies are sold outright to reprint publishers, who then bind them (with their own name on spine) and use their own dust jackets. When is a first edition NOT a first edition? There is no one alive who can answer that question. Publishers, such as Harpers, did not use "FIRST EDITION" designation, using instead a system of letters that tell the year and month (GIRL IN THE GOLDEN ATOM, for instance.) Is my copy a first edition? Who knows? I think so, at least. Others use sometimes a colophon (trade-mark in most cases) to determine first editions, and whether this colophon is on the front or reverse of title page denotes the edition. Some publishers put out first-and-second printing before publication editions, and with those sometimes a few first editions, so marked, were issued, and sometimes not. There is a guide to these tricks of publishers to conceal a first edition, but I have advertised in vain for a copy. (Hey, Stephen Hulse, how's about that?)

But you cannot be certain of a first edition, at least you CAN be certain your copy is an ORIGINAL edition. Avoid G&D, Burt, and the other publishers of reprints where possible. CHECKLIST, in most instances gives the original publisher. Consult it--use it! But if you do not own a copy (and you should) then make a list of the major publishers of fantasy, such as H. K. Fly, A. C. MacClurg, Burroughs, Harpers, etc., and of course the new fantasy publishers such as Arkham House, Hadley, Shasta, Gnome Press, New Collectors Group, FCPI, etc. By using a little commonsense you can tell if your book is an original edition or not, even though you may not be sure it is a FIRST edition.







# THE GREEN LETTER

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Perhaps, in the four appearances of "Meeting of Minds" in the pages of this journal, nothing has caused so much comment as the letter by Vaughn Green in PEON #4. Although "Meeting of Minds" is not being feature in this issue, we are presenting the letter below, since it is the best answer to Mr. Green to date. The letter is rather long, and the writer was afraid that we wouldn't be able to run it in the regular letter department, which is true. However, since it answers so aptly Mr. Green's remarks, we are running it this issue as a special feature. For more letters regarding and pertaining to this 'issue in fandom' see next month's issue of PEON.

-O-O-O-O-

THOMAS M. SAWRIE,  
Department of English,  
East Central Junior College,  
Decatur, Mississippi.

Dear Mr. Riddle:

I'm sitting here at my old oak desk watching the last of the Thanksgiving holidays ebb away across the gray face of the rain-soaked land. For the last few days our only company has been the steady drip of rain from the eaves and the wind sighing around the bare walls of empty, lightless buildings. During these stretches a heap of mail accumulates at the village post office in a grand and glorious hodge-podge all roughly ear marked college. If you are a hardy soul you are at laiberty to go through the whole stack until you find the few items addressed to you. Yesterday's excavations netted me the current issue of PEON and I felt well repaid. I know that as of now I should be planning the series of academic gambits that will enable me to teach on through the zone of rampant expectancy that precedes the Christmas holidays and made a medium of sense. As it is, I sit here planning a letter to the "Meeting of Minds" while the tinkle of broken crockery painfully indicates that my two little ones are launching another counter attack on the former sixteen piece dinner set.

....In the second instance I wanted to get squarely aboard Mr. Vaughn Green's neck. Mr. Green's letter letter hit me squarely between the eyes like an antique flounder and left me muttering in my beard.

After a high handed resume of contents Mr. Green hauled out an assortment of axes that he wished to grind. Even now I hardly know what to say about a collection of bilious drivol of this order, but this I do know, I am determined to say something for the simple reason that this sort of thing should not be allowed to pass without challenge.

In getting underway we should consider the basic drift of Green's communication. Picking at random we find these little items: Should Paul Cox be evicted from fandom; prime example of a person who should be thrown out; long past time that F.J.Ackerman be thrown out; plenty of others to be given the heave ho; elements which should be singled out and disposed; should be gotten rid of; drop its "deadwood" etc. et. etc.

From all of this it is possible to infer that Mr. Green wishes to dispose of somebody. After all, from Mr. Green's view point this may be well and good. It is certainly honest. It is the honest reflection of a warped personality disgorging its odious overload of partially digested thought in public. It is well to note at the outset that the man who finds that he is so completely ready to dispose of everyone in sight is logically suspect on that ground alone.

But let's not dispose of this mess out of hand. Let us consider some of these specific proposals, so necessary in this blanket purge of fantasy fans.



Mr. Green first states that the question has come--"should Paul Cox be evicted from fandom?" The question has indeed come up and been more than adequately answered by Arthur Rapp in "Spacewarp." Rapp said in substance that if any such high-handed tactics were adopted that they could count him out too. In closing his discussion he cited the words of M. Voltaire: "I wholly disagree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." That, I think, answers the question the Green has raised. It is not a question of agreement or disagreement, but something a great deal larger and more inclusive. I doubt seriously whether I would be in even partial agreement with Mr. Cox's racial thinking. I have one theory on races in general. There is one race, the human race, and of that race we are all charter members. That is my idea. I am reasonably certain that Mr. Cox has another, but honest difference constitutes no valid reason for the ejection of either Mr. Cox or myself. The bone of contention here is not the nature of opinion at all but an insidious attempt to rule out the possibility of any opinion at all that does not tally with some private ideology of a would be hatchet man.

Mr. Green, after throwing Mr. Cox to the wolves, progresses to Mr. Ackerman who according to him is "overdue." He alleges that Mr. Ackerman "bends fandom to his every whim." Now I never bent to one of Ackerman's whims, nor do I intend to. In fact, if he tried to bend me I might bend him twice while he was bending me once. But assume for the sake of argument that it is all true. Does this mean that it is time to throw Ackerman out or to wake up and think for yourself? I leave it to you. If people are so malleable they might as well be putty in one set of hands as another. In actuality I believe the charge to be unfounded and the estimate of human spinelessness to be basically untrue.

Deserting personalities for a moment to flounder in a morass of not so glittering generalities, Green drags out one of the oldest red herrings in the book, the imputation of homosexuality. Here we recognize a sad example of one of the oldest psychological badger games known to man. This dark sanction has been invoked maliciously against virtually every leading figure in the world at large from Socrates to Woodrow Wilson; all too often without a shred of tangible evidence or an ounce of proof. I got my best tip on the engraving of libelous labels from an oldtime barrister. In terms of his formula, I make it a point to ask myself these questions: "Do I know or merely surmise?" "Could I produce it in a court and make it stick?"

But aside from the stupidity of the whole affair let us admit that fifty percent of fandom--that, I believe was the figure quoted--are overt homosexuals. What in the hell has this to do with literary appreciation, criticism, or a general affinity for certain types of literature as expressed en masse through fan organizations?

It goes without saying that I have found fandom not a cess pool of iniquity or a twisted labyrinth of collective abnormality. Rather, in examining this vast army of perverts all that I manage to find is a group of good, honest, basically solid people going to school, running businesses, managing their own business and seeking a bit of happiness through a mutual expression of common literary interests.

In this paramount piece of idiocy, a call for a "Fuerer" of fandom we hear the strangled squawk of the homeless megalomaniac parading his power complex.

Having run the deck of imaginary grievances we come to fandom's red front, who seek to sabotage by reading fantasy books and periodicals and reporting on them. First I must assume that I am a homosexual now I must be a fictional stalinist just to please Vaughan. From a family man and a disappointed Republican, isn't this a little bit too much to ask.

By now, our patience is exhausted but Green's back book contains another entry, a hardy perennial this time, Ben Singer. After suggesting that Ben is the "singer on the brass harp" he proposes what. You have guessed it. Throw him out!



Organized fandom is big enough and broad enough to stretch from Ben Singer at one extreme of belief to Reverend Darrell Richardson at the other, and with luck will remain that way. Vaughn Green wanted a rebuttal from Ben Singer but I hope that the foregoing and the remainder from T. M. Sawrie will hold him until it comes in.

Having presented the items in the prosecution I think it only fair to sum up for the defense.

Initially we must be seized by the basic futility of seeking to cure the social cancer of intolerance by a punitive campaign of counter-intolerance. Two felonies do not equal an acquittal but a compound felony. Two wrongs in whatever social spheres they are reckoned have yet to add up as right.

This is the logical point for me to solemnly propose that Vaughn Green be thrown out, but I am not prepared to do that. I do not feel that the time has come to throw anybody out of anything. The time has come, however, to put a check rein on unbridled tongues and undisciplined minds.

Personally I say that I have met you, Vaughan Green, though you have never seen me nor I you. They have called you by a thousand different names, but you were always the same thwarted individual crying wolf where there was no wolf. I have attempted to follow the twisted thinking of a thousand yous down the road that leads from nowhere to nothing and been gypped on the trip. As I see it your objective is that great classless, massless, fan organization in which the board of directors, president, vice-president, secretary and total membership all add up to Vaughn Green. In the realization of this objective, Mr. Green, I wish you the best of luck.

Meanwhile, I say that fandom needs men like Mr. Green. We need them so that we can face each new day thankfully and secure in the knowledge that we are not like them.

I realize that this missive is excessively length for publication, but it does not seem reasonable that things like this should be allowed to pass unnoticed.

Yours sincerely,

/s/ Thomas M. Sawrie

GOING HOME (continued from page 1)

"Qual, I was happy. Few men can say that they have led a happy life, but I did. And I want to go home again. I want to see the sun of my own world rise over the green hills, over the roof of my own house...I want to embrace my wife and see my son again..."

The Guardsman's motors dropped an octave as they slowed the liner in a long curve toward the lights below. The deck began to vibrate subtly, and Qual seemed to compact his strange body further into his cloak. The iron law of politeness of the Fedorian broke under a wave of sympathy for this alien being, this mad one who spoke with a breaking voice of home and yet signed a five-year contract on such a world as this.

Qual's metallic tones conveyed his wonder. "My poor friend, the Power Company will not hold you to your contract. If you desire to return, why not?"

The man did not answer. He looked up, instead, toward the deepening darkness of the sky.

Qual repeated, "Why not, Collen? Why not go home to your pleasant planet?"

Collen shook his head. "I can't. I can't ever go home again."

His eyes were fixed on a bright star overhead, the bright new star that has burned in heaven only ten years now, the nova Terra.



