

DOUGHERTY '50



PEON

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PEON NOTES

Aloha. Before I get started on the notes for this issue, I'd like to send hoomaikai nui and mahalo to two publishers for the good books recently appearing on the market. Especially valuable to any collector's book shelf is Shasta's "The Man Who Sold The Moon", and "Sidewise In Time." "TAMST" is the first in the series of Heinlein's future history, currently scheduled for five volumes.Then there is the new anthology from Gnome, "Men Against The Stars"—a good anthology for a change. Martin Greenberg is indeed to be congratulated for gathering together a selection of fine stories, all laid around a central theme, the conquest of space by man—something on the order of Heinlein's series. If you haven't obtained any new books lately, I'd suggest you investigate some of the newer releases....Speaking of Heinlein, it seems he is becoming the Ray Bradbury of the hardcovers, what with his books coming out left and right!

-NORTESCON-

Starting with the next issue of PEON, I'm going to begin another new subscription policy. You can pay a buck for the next nine issues (12 for a dollar if you're an NFFF member), and get PEON for that many issues. Or, you can write each time and ask for the next issue. Now, which do you think will save you money? The reason for this is that I have run up against a navy regulation that says I cannot engage in a private business while in the U. S. Navy. According to a legal officer I talked to, as long as I don't have a profit on PEON it will remain a hobby and I can keep it up. But the moment I have a profit of even one little penny, it becomes a business, and that's verboten in the navy! So to play safe, this will be the way you'll receive PEON in the future; either a buck for the next nine or twelve issues, or a card for each issue. (CONTINUED ON PAGE 25)

SECTION FOUR & NINE

Larry Saunders

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We left Outpost IV late in the afternoon. The sun was low in the heavens and although brilliant to the sight, left much to be desired in the form of warmth.

The snow beneath us was hard and unbroken; a cold northwest wind riffled through our meager clothing. Dazzling rays of reflected light stung and wounded our eyes. The temperature was way below zero. Adding to our physical discomfort was the thought that there were no Outposts about for thirty miles. That was toward the South. We were headed for the West.

Our errand was considered trivial by Brother Sans, at least he said so; but he was known to be efficient, and there was trouble of sorts brewing in the vicinity of Section Nine. From his brief orders and description, we were to scout around the thickly-wooded hill country that is feared so greatly by the Leaders.

It seems that there had been a number of related murders in that small section. Some fairly important officials of the Leaders, and a few spies whose presence was thought to be undetectable, were found mutilated and claw marks about their bodies. There had been small scraps of information drifting back concerning a revival of the Black Arts, which was considered by the Leaders a direct revolt in defiance with the Brothers' Religion. A purge had begun. A number of undesirables, in the eyes of the Leaders, were condemned as witches and assorted demons. There had been several public burnings, but it seemed to do no good. Either the ignorant peasants were in league with the fiends, or they were too terrified to speak.

We--Sabastian and I--were to scout around, picking up all the information available in the hope of discovering the validity of the reports.

We were to use our own methods and we were not to fail. We were made to understand that if we failed, our treatment would be quite severe. We already knew this through past experience. The traditional oath of allegiance to the Brothers was taken, then we left. If we succeeded, our reward would be quite bountiful.

Now, on the open trail and with night coming on quite rapidly, we put on added effort to reach Section Nine. The country about us was completely wild. Trees, black and swollen, swayed and creaked in the strong wind. Snow was blown about in swirling rip-tides. The wind was becoming unbearable. It was sheer torture to face that wall of ice.

And on we went. Down through small wooded valleys; across frozen streams, through crusty drifts, struggling across windy hill-tops; past glades of white poplars, always toward the West. Soon our limbs were numb our lips were cut and bleeding; we were utterly fatigued. We were

probably in Section Nine by now, but we had seen no sign of any human habitation. There should be some sort of an inn nearby. If we failed to come upon one, we would have to spend the night in the open. Happily, we did discover an inn, almost completely hidden by the surrounding trees.

It was small and seemed the typical country inn run by an ignorant peasant. Dirty, smug, homely--it seemed beautiful at that moment. I had no money to speak of, so it would be no great risk to spend the night there.

The path that led to the entrance was not broken in, testifying to lazy, if not a few guests. But, wearily and thankfully, we trampled up to the inn. The setting sun, seen through the black outline of the waving trees, tinted the snow blood red. Then we stood before the dingy entrance. The house, seen at close range, was sturdily constructed of rough logs, copied after ancestors whose origin was forgotten. There was no signpost to distinguish the inn, but inn it must be; or more accurately, would be. We had . . . special privileges.

On the huge wooden door lay a squat metal knocker which I boldly lifted and commenced rapping. After a moment's impatient waiting, the door was opened slowly, then swung fully inward. The proprietor, a huge broadly built man crowned with a great crop of red hair, stood before us with a dour look on his rather stupid face. He eyed us with open hostility. He did not seem happy in having the prospect of housing two wandering drifters.

'Ignorant peasant' I silently classed him. I nodded, slipped off my snowshoes, and then stepped past our hostile host. Sebastian followed. The proprietor stared at us, then slammed shut the door. He motioned us over to a small desk, sat down, opened a small lodging book, and then looked up inquiringly.

"Hans," I said, "from the East." He nodded slowly, then wrote hurriedly in the book. He seemed puzzled.

"You...you say you are from...the East?" He emphasized 'East'. He continued, "I...I have had very few gentlemen come from that section."

"I can imagine," I said.

He seemed to be screwing up his courage for one question. "Are you from Section IV?"

"Yes."

He visibly brightened and seemed relieved. A nervous smile twitched at his lips. It did not become him. "I am happy to serve you. How long will you be staying?"

"Tonight will be all, I think. I'll see. Would you kindly tell me

"Supper?" he said. Evidently he was more ignorant than I thought him to be. Then..."Oh--you mean eating, sir? Well I have something heating now. It will be ready in a short time. Ah...but your friend...his name?"

"Sabastian." I said.

A short time later, Sabastian and I were seated on small cross-legged stools, situated near the huge hearthfire. We were served a stew that is quite common in this vicinity. The proprietor flitted to and from our presence and I had the impression that he wanted desperately to tell me something. What it was and why he should want to confide in an Eastern Post agent, never was quite known. For as we were pleasantly drowsing by the hearth, a loud thumping sound thundered through the room. The proprietor rose from his desk and moved cautiously toward the door.

"Who is it?" he shouted.

"Ravol" came back the hurried reply.

The proprietor seemed to recognize the name, but his hand rested on the latch in indecision. Then at an insistent command from the outside, he hurriedly unlatched the door and pulled it inward. The wind howled and screamed as a figure, covered with snow, scurried into the room. The door was hard to close against the pounding wind.

The stranger stood himself gratefully, then motioned to the proprietor.

"Mayes--my wraps. You have food ready? Good."

He moved toward the blazing fire; stopped when he noticed the two of us. He did not seem surprised. No--he seemed almost pleased.

His face, seen in the flickering firelight was thin, with high set-back cheekbones. His eyes were large and sparkled with something that was akin to merriment. Offhand, I estimate him to be about forty. He was definitely not of peasant stock. I classified him as one of the old time intellects, but they were either Brothers or eliminated, so the conclusion was one of suspicion..

He nodded civilly to Sabastian and I, then settled with his back to the fire, leaving his features in the shadows. He called for Mayes to serve him and when this necessity was finished, dismissed the nervous man.

For the first time, he spoke to us directly.

"You are strangers from the East." A statement of fact.

I nodded.

"Sent by, let me see, ah...yes, by Brother Sans."

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Again I nodded. I wondered how he knew what was supposed to be highly confidential. What kind of cat and mouse game was he playing? I tried to draw him out. If this was a trap, I had to know.

"And you?" I said.

He waved his hand in a gesture of impatience.

"In due time." A pause. "There have been rumors circulating back to certain parties in the East." He spoke slowly and deliberately. "Rumors to the effect of the existence of a new-born cult and monster murders." Another pause. "Human monsters. I am correct? They are frightened back there. Their power is being questioned. And if rumor was verified, these new cults would be quietly and efficiently eliminated. So it would be logical for the Leaders--back there--to discover the truth of these most alarming rumors. They would probably send scouts to verify the spies' rumors. Maybe two scouts?

The man knew too much.

I ventured. "You seem to know more. Then you should know that in trusting two strangers, you trust your life. As for your rumors, I would not mention them again if I were you. There are spies who overhear everything." I leaned forward. "I tell you this for your own sake. For all I know, you may be a leader in this so-called Black Movement. Do not bother to deny it. Today there are too few men left with intelligence. The intellects either belong to the Brothers or they are leaders in these rising cults. May I flatter you by saying that you are intelligent? Your manners, your face, your bearing--all point to a one-time gentleman?"

"You know, as I do, that the average peasant is stupid, illiterate, and almost utterly incapable of rousing himself from his predicament. He allows himself to be led by the nose by the overlords. I and my companion are agents of such a master. We have no feud with you or your ideas. Do you think that we did not know that this..buildup was a trap? Your claim could only lead to one. Well, know this; we are here on an errand that must be accomplished one way or another. I venture to say that you are fully aware of this errand. As I've said, there are spies everywhere. You may have been the errand's instigator. Either way, you are fully aware of the penalty of failure on our part, are you not? Then, let that be my warning.

"We--my companion and I--have a choice--of a fruitful reward, or death by torture. As far as I am concerned, there is only one possible choice to be made. Your good judgement will answer that, I am sure."

I drew back, furious with myself for my sudden outburst. If Ravel had planned for this, he had succeeded well. I glanced furtively toward the shadowy figure. He seemed to be trying to make a decision.

"You do not speak." I said uneasily.

"No. What you have said has changed matters considerably." He turned toward the fire. "May I make a suggestion?"

Surprised at his sudden change of tone, I nodded in wonderment.

"I think you suspected it, but in any case--you and your friend were to die here tonight. You are not surprised? I thought not. My first conception of you and your friend was the obvious one; that you were paid underlings of the Brothers. Let it be understood that we knew you were coming; that your death was pre-arranged. Then it will be easier."

He paused, stared into the fire, then continued.

"You know what I am going to say, but let me summarize for the basic background. After the last war, the area known as the United States of America was left in ruins. In subsequent years, private kingdoms sprang up operated by former gangsters and assorted riff-raff. These Kingdoms adopted their own so-called religions, and as time passed, enrolled new members in its doctrine of protectionism. You know what I mean. The main example being the dirty little huts, with their half-starved tenants.

"That is the prime purpose of every kingdom. And old time-prove axiom is keep the masses in ignorance and subjection and you are reasonably safe but let one grain of intelligence worm through the system and you have trouble.

"Now listen. What I am going to tell you will do not good back at Outpost IV. They know this and fear it. You don't. I hope it may help to decide for you what's right and wrong."

He studied me for a moment.

"You have an intelligent, sensitive face. Why do you work for such as they when you know they are dead wrong?"

I started to murmur a protest, but he brushed it aside.

"Never mind. That's your business. To continue; a number of years back, a few intelligent men realized the rottenness of the situation, and started a movement that was designed to counteract the results of the corrupt Kingdoms. This movement consisted of the Black Arts as its backbone. It attracted, repelled, and frightened the ignorant peasant, all in one. Because of this, it grew steadily in size and numbers. Today it is networked throughout the entire Kingdom system. It is powerful, and it waits the day to strike. It uses terror and sudden death by mutilation as its biggest weapon. When it does strike, everything in connection with the Leaders will be destroyed. You understand, then, what will be the fate of the hirelings? That is my warning." He stood up and stretched. "Understand--I have said nothing incriminating and if you bring me forth to Outpost IV, I shall claim that I was striving to obtain information from two question-asking strangers--all in the good cause of the Kingdom."

"That is unnecessary," I said.

"That may be." He answered. "Mayes!" That worthy appeared rather suddenly from one of the cabin-rooms. He hurried over to Ravel. "Mayes, show me my room. And be sure these gentlemen have comfortable quarters... Oh yes--" as an afterthought, "--the fire is going out. A few logs would help."

With a brisk nod and a crisp "Good-night", Ravel vanished into one of the cabin-rooms.

He was right. A few logs would help. It was growing quite chilly. I moved away from the dying fire.

"Mayes, our rooms please."

#####

Later I lay back in the double room provided and thought of the interview with Ravel. The man was extraordinary. There was something amiss somewhere. Time and investigation would tell. But what Ravel said....

What was to be done remained to be seen.

Outside the wind howled and buffeted the house continually. Cold breezes blew gently over my face, lulling my senses. In a short time I was fast asleep.

Morning found Sebastian and I cold and shivering as we hurried into our clothing. Outside, a storm had blown up and snow was blowing about in white sheets, plastering the trees and turning the world into a white Hell indeed.

When we stepped outside our cabin-room, we noticed no change of temperature as we should have. On close examination, the fire was found to be a smoldering ash heap. Someone had started a fire a few hours back, then allowed it to die out. A quick search revealed the fact that the inn was completely empty. There was something radically wrong here. Why should Mayes leave his inn unprotected in order that he might go traveling out amid a blinding snowstorm? And what of Ravel? Something had happened last night. Something, perhaps of vital importance. I decided to investigate fully.

After gulping hurriedly down a cold breakfast, we set out into the teeth of the storm; toward the East. The storm had been gathering momentum all night, and now it let loose with a murderous barrage of snow, ice and wind. The screaming wind drove tiny pellets of ice into our faces. Our breath froze in our nostrils. Breathing became almost virtually impossible. Gusts tore at us, driving us into huge drifts. Stray branches whipped our faces. Ice formed on my eyeballs and nostrils. Seeing was a painful white blur. Step after step, stumbling and choking, we made our way, blindly through that white Hell. It is a miracle that we managed to stay on the trail. As it was, we lost our way a number of times only to

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catch a fleeting glimpse of some familiar object and then struggle mightily back, floundering in every drift that barred the way. I can't say how long we endured this torture, but after hours had seemed to pass, the storm slowly let up. The snow still blew hard, but it was bearable, and distant objects were again seen as realities and not vague outlines. It was at this point that we discovered some newly made tracks, almost completely hidden by the swirling drifts. They led toward the East. That explained something. Now to follow out my flimsy theory.

We struggled on now with renewed courage and determination. Raval had asked me to think it over last night. I had. Now, if he were.... It was maddening! I spurred myself onward in angered frustration. We were bound to come on him before he reached the Post. It was a matter of time. And it was when we were only a mile or two from Outpost IV that I spotted two dark outlines in the distance. I half ran, half fell the remaining distance separating us.

Lying in the snow, face downward, lay the body of Mayes, the proprietor. Standing over him, smiling quietly, was Raval. In his right hand was a long bloody claw. He wiped it on the snow, then said rather matter-of-factly.

"It took you quite long to follow me. I knew you would, you know. Do you remember a remark you made quite innocently last night?" The wind roared in tune with my brain.

"You said, 'There are spies who overhear everything.' You were quite right. Before you--" he toed the body of Mayes, "---lies a spy. I suspected as much. He knew that and tried to make a run to his masters with more information. Didn't quite make it. Rather brutal, but his success would have meant my failure. And there were bigger stakes to be lost than one paltry life." He stopped and stared toward the East--in the direction of the Outpost. He spoke softly, so softly I had difficulty hearing in the blustering wind.

"Our world, our survival, depends on secrecy. Somehow, I expect you to understand that--you who work for my enemy. You have the opportunity to turn me over to the Brothers and collect a very handsome reward. Yet, I think I can trust you." He turned toward me. "Am I right in trusting you?"

"You have no choice," I whispered hoarsely. "Yes, I will help you. But let it be understood--I have no love for humanity. I will help you this once only. It is your desire to travel on unhindered and with no fear of retribution. Very well, that is understood. I have my reasons. They are not the noble ones you suspect of me. I....I had no idea you would resort to murder. But it is finished. Now what else would you have of me?"

I was shaking inwardly with terrible indecision. What would he have of me--and Sabastian?

Then--"I would have nothing else of you....brother." He spoke gently.
"I would rather have you be one of us, but that is your decision to make."

"Yes," I said, "that is my decision."

"and your companion, Sabastian, he will--"

"Remain with me!"

Raval stepped back. "I am sorry. Did I offend you?"

"No No Let us part. It is best."

Raval seemed lost in reflection. "There must be some reason why you help me, if you have no interest in our future welfare. Some incident..."

"Yes," I said slowly, "you are correct. Eight years ago, Sabastian and I were assigned to a very difficult task. We . . . failed. The masters in those days enjoyed sport. They . . . tortured us. We endured it. They spared our lives but we took an oath of allegiance. If we break the oath.. I leave that to you. I still wear this to testify to my failure." I stripped off my right hand glove and left the bare, charred stump in the open. Raval came closer and examined it.

"They burned your hand off?"

I nodded.

"Your companion?"

"He . . . he was stronger than I. He could endure more pain. He would not give in. They finally burnt . . . his tongue out."

"Oh . . . I see." Raval said.

There was a brief silence.

"and he "

"He is my brother." I turned to the North. The wind stung my eyes. It was going to be hard traveling. But we had no special destination. We could take our time.

The last we saw of Raval was his bent figure trudging toward the West.

and though I declined any personal part in the downfall of the Kingdoms I silently wished he and his followers luck in their struggle. And even as I traveled North to my almost certain doom I know that somehow, someday, the Black Movement would ultimately triumph, and I and Sabastian would someday be avenged.....

*** Fiction For The Scientist ***

DONALD BAKER MOORE

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I do not know whether Mr. E. Hoffman Price really believes the thoughts he expressed in the December 1949 issue of PEON. There are however many people who do subscribe in greater or less degree to his statements about science fiction and its devotees. For this reason, I shall not address this article exclusively to Mr. Price, but shall rather attempt to set forth something of what we, the "true" science fiction lovers, do believe.

We divide the field of imaginative literature into two general classes, the first is fantasy, the second science fiction. Fantasy tends to be much more inclusive and we find only a comparatively few stories can really be called science fiction.

If an author deliberately bases his story and plot on an idea which is admittedly false or contrary to known fact and theory, it is then fantasy and is enjoyed as such primarily for characterization and for internal plot integrity. For example: "if" the earth had two moons, or "if" we were the toys of some galactic super beings, what would be the consequence?

When an author does, on the other hand, attempt to use known principles and discoveries, or a logical and even probable extrapolation of them, to set the scene for a story, then we choose to term it science fiction.

The same curiosity about the world which makes us become scientists or develop a scientific attitude in the first place has lead us to become equally curious about other possible worlds or civilizations. We are inquisitive not only about, let us say, the physics of a

lightning stroke, but also about what effect it will have on civilization when it is released. This type of detailed speculation is the realm of science fiction.

There is however a lamentable group of stories which is neither, stories which pretend the guise of science and yet through the ignorance of the author are based on completely erroneous premises. Any story which obviously contains discrepancies in fact which are not tacitly admitted by the author as such is neither fantasy nor science fiction.

Jack Williamson in "The Humanoids" mentions devices to detect neutrons using an as yet undiscovered or unthought of physics. This we accept as possible. George O. Smith, on the other hand, either through ignorance or carelessness, attempts to detect neutrons by present knowledge of their characteristics when all such knowledge in reality indicates detection to be impossible. We are similarly distressed when Poul Anderson presents a "gadget" story in which not only are many of the ideas completely impossible according to present knowledge, but they are self-contradictory!

No, we do not think that we should get a course in science from every story we read but we do insist that an author must not in writing science fiction distract us by incorrect assumptions and terminology. We likewise insist that in writing fantasy the author must be self consistent with the hypotheses and assumptions stated or implicit in the plot.

On one hand we have the amazing space operas with gravity screens

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 20)

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1940- Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Dec, 35¢ each
1941- Jan, Mar, Apr, June, Aug, Oct, Dec, 35¢ each
1942- Feb, April, June, Aug, Oct, 25¢ each
1943- Feb, April, June, Aug, Fall 25¢ each
1944- Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall, 25¢ each
1945- Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall, 25¢ each
1946- Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall, Dec., 25¢ each
1947- Feb., April, June, August, October, December, 25¢ each
1948- February, April, June, August, October, 25¢ each

FANTASTIC NOVELS

Vol. 1, No. 1 July 1940, \$2.00
1948 - March, May, July, September, 25¢ each

FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES

Vol. 1, No. 1, Sept-Oct. 1939 \$2.00; November, December, \$1.00 each
1940- Jan., March, May-June, Aug., Oct., Dec., \$1.00 each
1941- April, Aug., Oct., Dec., \$1.00 each
1942- April, June, Aug, Oct., Nov., Dec., 75¢ each
1943- Sept., Dec., 50¢ each
1944- March, June, Sept., Dec., 50¢ each

N.R. O'NEILL, 637 1/2 BIXEL ST., LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

AMAZING STORIES

Vol. 1, No. 1 April 1926 \$4.00

1926- May, June, July, Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec., \$2.00 each
1927- Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec, \$1.50 ea
1928- Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec, \$1.00 ea
1929- Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec, \$1.00 ea
1930- Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec, \$1.00 ea
1931- Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec, 75¢ ea
1932- Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec, 75¢ ea
1933- Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug-Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec, 75¢ ea
1934- Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec, 75¢ ea
1935- Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Oct, Dec, 75¢ ea
1936- Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, Dec 50¢ ea
1937- Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, Dec 50¢ ea
1938- Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, Nov, Dec 50¢ ea
1939- Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec, 50¢ ea
1940- Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec, 35¢ ea
1941- Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec, 35¢ ea
1942- Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec, 35¢ ea
1943- Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Nov, 35¢ ea
1944- Jan, Mar, May, Sep, Dec 35¢ ea
1945- Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec 35¢ ea
1946- Feb, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec 25¢ ea
1947- Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec, 25¢ ea
1948- Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec, 25¢ ea

AMAZING STORIES QUARTERLY

Vol. 1, No. 1 Winter 1928 \$3.50, 1928 - Spring, Summer, Fall, \$3.00 ea
1929 - Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall \$2.00 each
1930 - Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall, \$1.50 each
1932 - Winter, Spring-Summer \$1.00 each
1933 - Spring-Summer, \$1.00; 1941- Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter 50¢ ea
1942 - Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter, 50¢ each; 1943 - Spring, Summer,
Fall, Winter, 50¢ each; 1947- Winter, 50¢ each; 1948 - Spring,
Summer, Fall, 35¢ each.

AIR WONDER STORIES

Vol. 1, No. 1, July 1929 \$1.50; 1929 - Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec, \$1.00 ea
1930 - Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, \$1.00 ea

SCIENCE WONDER STORIES

1930 - Feb, Mar, Apr, May, 75¢ each

SCIENCE FICTION SERIES

Numbers - 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 \$1.00 ea

N. R. O'NEILL 637½ BIXEL STREET
LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

the annals aardvark

BY A. AARON AARDVARK, III



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The foetid slime of the Venusian swamp--jungle gurgled. It trembled. It boiled and heaved. Then, the nauseous purple surface parted as something thrust itself upward.

The girl's terror-laden scream ripped the fog-shrouded air.

For she had instantly recognized the something. It was the front end of a Great-Venusian-Bugbug! (Not the head, for Great-Venusian-Bugbugs carry their heads 'midships, normally having no predilection for sticking their necks out. Just the front end.)

The girl shrieked again as more of the monster's 117-foot bulk came into view. And again. And again.

She was wearing a strapless fur brassiere, which she filled competently, very brief shorts of some sleazy material, and floppy-topped patent leather boots reaching halfway to her knees. (Floppy-topped patent leather boots, although unsuitable for mucking about in Venusian swamp-jungles, are Romantic. If the author doesn't mention them, the artist will automatically repair this oversight.)

She screamed once more as the Great-Venusian-Bugbug's seventeenth tentacle emerged from the ooze. She knew she was facing death, or perhaps a Fate worse than.

A few minutes earlier (Terran Standard Time) the Bugbug had been

at peace in the depths of his swamp nest. In the semi-liquid mass he had breathed contentedly the clean, sweet tang of H₂S released by decaying vegetation. He had eaten his fill of beryllium ore, and the butyl mercaptan from the rubberworm that had suicidally wriggled into one of his three ingestive organs had provided just the proper fillip for dessert. So he had been mulling happily over alien memories of the last time he and the five other sexes of Venusian-Bugbug had assembled for a mating. How long before? Who understands the timesense of a Great-Venusian-Bugbug?

His pleasant reverie had been interrupted by the crash of the spaceship. Not by the impact itself; on Venus, things flopped and crashed and clattered all the time. But the hyperradioactivity seeping from the shattered drivers had set up a tickling sensation in his impervium-tough hide, an odd sensation that had aroused his curiosity and brought him to the surface.

Again yet the girl screamed. Twice. Once at the Great-Venusian Bugbug and once at the other Thing that had come lurching into sight among the giant toadstools.

She knew what that one was too.

It was a Shrdlu!

The Great Venusian Bugbug gave a Bugbug's equivalent of a mental shrug.

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But, his curiosity was aroused, and he decided he might as well investigate this strange, tiny, utterly alien creature. Was it really alive? But he had to be quick, before it was devoured by the prowling Shrdlu.

So he sent out a probing telepathic tentacle.

WHAM!

It hit him suddenly. All at once she (the term "she", like the concept of only two sexes, was confusing, but he understood it with a vague intuition) was the essence of all beauty and the quintessence of desirability.

It was L O V E ! !

The Bugbug found himself in the Venusian version of a blush, and hastily shifted the frequency range of his visual organs. He had--entirely inadvertently--been viewing on a band that rendered the girl's fur brassier, sleazy shorts (and yes, even her floppy-topped patent leather boots!) completely transparent.

And that was wrong. The Bugbug feeling toward this petite and enchantingly lovely creature was not mere common lust. Not at all! It was a Pure and Spiritual Love.

He felt the terror in her thoughts. He did not interpret it as such, for a Bugbug knows no fear of anything. But she was perturbed and quickly he sensed the reason. It was the Shrdlu, now crouching for its fatal spring.

And Love told him his duty. He must protect this lovely creature called Girl, at any cost to himself whatsoever.

He concentrated his senses on the Shrdlu, contending with caution and hesitation. To interfere would violate the ancient armed truce between Bugbugs and Shrdlus. Furthermore, this was not just any old Shrdlu. This was Etaion Shrdlu,

st deadly and vicious of his vicious and deadly tribe.

But Love called!

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The rest of the story is simple enough. Etaion Shrdlu tries to eat the gal. The Bugbug, motivated by his Pure and Spiritual Love, intervenes. There's one hell of a battle, good for plenty of wordage, and the swamp becomes littered with blood, guts, pieces of monster, uprooted toadstools, etc. There are grunts and groans and gurgles, with and occasional shriek from the wench.

Eventually the Shrdlu gets thoroughly pied up and hellboxed. But in the process the Bugbug gets well kicked around also, with maybe a few fairly essential parts missing. He has Suffered for Love, and looks like the bottom of an ill-tended parrot cage.

As the Bugbug drags himself toward her after the fight, while the Shrdlu still kicks in convulsive death agonies, the girl thinks she is about to be eaten. But somehow the battered, bleeding Bugbug manages to pass the word about his Pure, Spiritual and Undying Love.

So he becomes her protector and manages to convey her, patent leather boots still unsullied by the foetid purple slime, to some outpost of Earthmen. Maybe, just to make it more poignant, the rescuers misunderstand their relationship and perforate poor old Bugbug before she can stop them. So Bugbug dies with the lovelight still gleaming in his visual organs, and the gal weeps bitterly over his dead 117-foot body.

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This stinkeroo, or a slight variation thereof, has a vile habit of popping up about four times a year---like malaria or delirium

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 20)

WISHFUL THINKING SAUCERS

curtis l. butler

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A character asked me the other day, "Who is behind this plot to discredit 'Flying Saucers'?"

It took me quite aback, because I certainly was not aware that there was any scheme afoot to either establish "flying saucers" as physical fact, or to bury evidence of them either through suppression of news reports or ridicule.

This character pointed to the tag, 'flying saucer', as part of a deliberate effort on the part of someone who controlled the nation's newspapers to point the finger of ridicule. He blamed the inconclusiveness of evidence in news stories on the news reporters themselves or upon the publishers or on editors or on dispensers of news such as news services. He implied that all of these, and more, were part of a dark conspiracy with forces unknown and were privy to knowledge of which the "general public" was unaware.

This way of thinking was a reflection of a number of fuzzy minds which will always refuse to face a bald fact. They are of that great group of muddle-heads who are willing to believe almost anything without proof.....if it is dinged into them enough. When confronted with some assertion that is backed only by numerous references and loud shouting, they will invariably refer to that old saw, "where there is smoke, there must be fire."

Let's look at cigarette advertising. Now there is a case where smoke (if you'll pardon the pun) is really obscuring the issue. Yet some people will insist that his particular brand of coughing herb has eliminated that great (and recently discovered) plague "throat

scratch" or "nose itch" or "T-zone tickle". Show them the facts of chemical analysis or test them with brands of cigarettes and he seldom will change his mind.....Old Grubb did the most shouting and he is convinced that Old Grubb has cured him of a loathsome disease.

The willingness to believe that flying saucers are something more than natural phenomena stems from another source, too.

After the atom bomb, which came as a complete surprise to most people who were unfamiliar with discoveries in that field in the last 50 years, people generally are willing to believe almost anything. To them, the atom bomb came as something previously thought to be fantastic. It is still a mystery to most. Why should flying saucers be beyond the realm of possibility.

Then, too, there is the group of people, myself included, who would like to believe that these objects are more than just natural phenomena. Nothing would please me more than to find that there is such a thing as extra-terrestrial intelligence which had mastered inter-planetary or intra-galactic travel. But I still do not want to let my desires get in the way of common sense.

I don't believe it impossible that these intelligences, if any, could have done such a thing. But to proceed on the premise that they are in liaison with some human being or group of men for the purpose of suppressing news of their existence, is just too much to swallow.

Speaking from experience as a news-writer, I can say that whoever invented the phrase, flying saucer, if it was invented, did so with only one thing in mind: it

was a good tag for a headline getter. And most news reporters are interested in getting a story that will gain attention. It is a good propaganda phrase, colorful, descriptive, and contradictory. Just the thing that will arrest the attention of the reader or listener. It is nothing more than that.

For centuries, such stories as sea monster sightings, red rains, rains of fishes, multiple births, two-headed calves, and other natural happenings slightly out of the ordinary course of human experience have found their way to front pages simply because they are attention getters. Flying saucers are in the same category.

Obviously, the name of Charles Fort and the Forteanism comes to mind. Fort made it a practice, and so do his disciples, of clipping news stories to back up his extrapolations.

The fallacy behind the clipping of news stories is this: In the case of this type of "brightener" story, the news reporter who writes the original piece seldom includes contradictory facts in his writing. He is interested in writing only those facts which tend to back up a particular incident - - to make it even more mysterious - - to excite comment. To take a detached scientific attitude and ferret out all of the facts, would only knock down his little piece of hokum.

The reporter's story is cut even further in many newspaper offices to conform to space, so that even more factual material is lost in publication. In the end, the reading or listening public gets a view of one side only, no matter how convincing the facts to the contrary may be.

Therefore, to those who point newspaper accounts as ample proof of some pet belief that there is

"something more to this than meets the eye" may be right. But that "something more" is usually very prosaic and not all in line with what they are thinking.

There is this added thought: Denials or fuller explanations of these "mysterious" reports are seldom given equal prominence in news reports, and in most cases are not even printed.

Getting down to actual reports of flying saucers, or discs, or spheres, or pterodactyls (as was reported in one instance), there is little to say that has not already been said over and over.

It boils down to this, however: There is little doubt that "mysterious" moving objects have been sighted in the skies. But their mystery stems mainly from incomplete data, or inaccurate reporting on the part of the viewer.

It is seldom that the sighting of mysterious lights or objects in the sky cannot be explained by checking with authorities such as astronomers, weather bureau men, airfields, or other sources that deal with natural phenomena.

Even then, though, the authority might be confused and unable to give a satisfactory answer because the original observer will report something that he didn't actually see, or will be confused as to details.

It is an axiom in police circles and courts of law that an eyewitness account is extremely unreliable. Close observation and an accurate report of an incident or description of a person is so rare that most modern police systems consider it impossible or extremely improbable.

The eyewitness is used in court trials involving jurors with great effect, however. Jurors, who represent the mass of people, cannot

seem to grasp the fact that an eyewitness, however positive and convincing his testimony, is most probably telling a story completely at variance with the facts. They believe him because he talks convincingly.

The eyewitness himself is convinced, after once telling his story, that it is true. He does not know, and has no way of detecting where his memory and his imagination have joined.

Several years ago the first recent-day reports of "flying disc" appeared in the news. But it was not until some months had gone by and numerous sightings of these "mysterious" objects had been reported, that the original eyewitnesses admitted that the first reports had been hoaxes. An airplane pilot's tall story had been originally played for all it was worth on wire services across the country. It was no surprise to those knowing the wide suggestibility of the human animal that other reports followed the first.

A recent experiment undertaken by a popular radio program m.e. will serve to illustrate what I mean.

On the program "People Are Funny", conducted by Art Linkletter, one couple which had failed to answer a question was told to carry out the experiment as a penalty.

The pair was told to go to a busy street corner in Hollywood, and gaze upward until a crowd had formed to gaze with them. Then they were to point excitedly to the sky and shout that they saw a flying saucer. They were told to bring anyone else who saw the flying saucer back to the studio with them to appear on the program and testify to what they saw.

The experiment was carried out

to the letter. When the couple returned, three people came back with them. Two of these people testified that they had seen the flying saucer clearly---even estimated its size, speed, and color. The third man said he had seen not one, but 11 saucers, by actual count, and that they had dipped and swerved in perfect formation.

The climax came when Linkletter informed the dupes that they had been fooled, and that there weren't any flying saucers. The three who had "actually seen them" still refused to believe they had been fooled.

Some allowance must be made for the fact that the radio program originated in Hollywood, but even so, people in Los Angeles do not differ in kind from people elsewhere. The same experiment conducted in Peoria, Illinois, or Poteau, Oklahoma, would most likely end in the same manner.

Until the newspapers tire of flying saucer stories, we'll probably have new reports of them every week or so. People will continue to confuse naturally explainable phenomena with mysterious extra-terrestrial spacecraft or what-have-you.

And then, some time in the not-too-distant-future, someone will come up with an actual disc that flies, or space travel will become an accomplished fact. And when that time comes, someone will invent the 1980 equivalent of the flying saucer for people to discuss and newspapers to print headlines about.

THE FLYING SAUCERS ARE REAL...
.....says Donald Keyhole, in a pocket book by that title. Just released, the book sells for the standard 25¢ and is published by Fawcett Publications, Inc.

THE ANNALS OF AARDVARK

(continued from page 14)

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tremens or other recurrent malady.

Pfooeey! Pfaugh! Also ugh!

One writer, in particular makes a havig of perpetrating this :bomination. However, I shall now go chicken. Not through fear of libel because if the guy sued and won he'd collect only sixteen cerits and a dull pocket krife. But these pro-writers have a preternaturally high feuding quotient, higher than fan-letter-writers, and almost as high as fanzine editors. And I have a strange aversion to bombs and live copperheads in my mail. So nameless he shall remain. But you got a guilty conscience, Bub?

On the idea that a reasonably broadminded Earthman might find a non-human interesting company despite his odd appearance, I'll gladly go along. These reprints from the bad old days, in which the hero and his pals blast the bejesus out of Martians, Venusians, and other off-Earth races simply because they are dirty old furriners, make me want to puke.

But, at this "love" stuff between dissimilar races I boggle and balk.

Love is more closely associated with asethetic standards than with logical reasoning. (For proof, look at some of the characters who comait matrimony or engage in less formalized relationships. Illogic thrice compounded.) And aesthetic standards are based on familiarity. The individual accepts as beautiful that which he has been trained to regard as beautiful, and tends to reject as ugly and/or bizarre anything not fitting his familiarity patterns. Try this out on yourself sometime.

and then there is the little matter of racial egotism.

An Earthman might fall in love with a female praying mantis. But that would hardly be an example of Love Conquers All; it would be a case history for a psychiatrist.

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FICTION FOR THE SCIENTIST

(continued from page 11).

travelling at the speed of light. On the other hand we have a story such as "Darker Than You Think." Depending on how open-minded one is this may be classified as either science fiction or fantasy. (Personally, I should be inclined to say that since this does not directly violate any current knowledge, since there really is no way of proving the non-existence of were-wolves, it is science fiction) In any case, all of us will admit that once accepting or recognizing the initial assumption, the story is completely self-consistent.

For heavens sake, let us have either well written fantasy admitted to be such, or let us have real science fiction stories, plots which examine every conceivable aspect of civilization, past or future, and which obtain credence through utilizing current knowledge to the best of the author's ability.

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A NOTE TO MR. PRICE::

You will observe that I have not fallen into the trap you have so obviously laid. Granted a hot argument is good sport and fun for all. I do think, however, that it might be fun, if I were to pose say six to twelve questions which you, as a practising astrologer, would attempt to answer. These could be published in PEON in a future and near issue.

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HAVE YOU JOINED THE NORWESCON YET??

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A Tentative Checklist of Fantasy Operas-(2)

ANTHONY BOUCHER

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(EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. Boucher continues in this issue of PEON the listing of fantasy operas that he began in the last issue. It will be continued again the next issue, and it is hoped that the readers will forward any suggestions, comments, and criticisms, to Mr. Boucher, c/o PEON.)

ORDER OF INFORMATION:

Original title (translation if necessary) Date of first production, original language (Nature of fantasy theme--not given if clear from title)

MARKS IN FRONT:

No mark	very slight fantasy content	no mark	rarely or never produced now
f	marked fantasy content	*	produced occasionally (by
ff	very strong fantasy content	**	small groups or in Europe)
			more or less standard American repertory

Glinka, Mikhail Ivanovich (1803-1857)

ff * Russlan i Lyudmila 1842, Russian (fairy tale)

Gluck, Christoph Willibald, Ritter von (1714-1787)

f * Alceste 1767, Italian; 1774, French
* Iphigenie en Aulide (Iphigenia in Aulis) 1774, French
* Iphigenie en Tauride (Iphigenia in Tauris) 1779, French
ff ** Orfeo ed Euridice 1764, Italian; 1774, French

Goldmark, Karl (1830-1915)

ff Merlin ?189-, German

Goossens, Eugene

Don Juan de Manara 19--, English (variant on Don Juan Theno)

Gounod, Charles-Francois (1818-1893)

ff ** Faust 1859, French
ff La nonne sanglante (The bleeding nun) 1854, French
f * Philemon et Baucis 1860, French
La reine de Saba (The queen of Sheba) 1862, French

Gramann, Carl

ff Melusine 1874, revised 1891, German (water fay in love with mortal)

Hanson, Howard (1896-)

Merry Mount 1934, English (witchcraft in New England)

Herold, Louis-Joseph-Ferdinand (1791-1833)

f Zampa 1831, French (statue comes to life)

Holbrooke, Joseph (1878-)

f The children of Don 19--, English (Druid magic)

f Dylan---son of the wave (same)

Holst, Gustav (1878-1934)

f The perfect fool 1923, English (ironic magic)

Humperdinck, Engelbert (1854-1921)

ff ** Hansel und Gretel 1893, G

f Die Konigskinder (The royal children) ?19--, German (witchcraft)

Kienzl, Wilhelm (1857-1941)

ff Urvasi 190-, German (apsaras on earth)

Lalo, Victor (1823-1892)

f * Le roi d'Ys (The king of Ys) 1888, French (sunken kingdom, magic)

Lortzing, Gustav Albert (1801-1851)

ff * Undine 18--, German (based on familiar tale by de la Motte Fouque)

Marschner, Heinrich (1795-1861)

ff * Hans Heiling 1833, German (King of Gnomes tries to live as mortal)

ff Der Vampyr 18--, German

Mason, Daniel Gregory (1873-)

ff * The Devil and Daniel Webster 194-, English (based on Benet story)

Massenet, Jules (1842-1912)

f Cendrillon (Cinderella) ?19--, French

f Grisélidis 1901, French (based on the Boccaccio story)

(CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF PEON)

MENEHUNE MUTTERINGS

— BOB CUMMINGS —

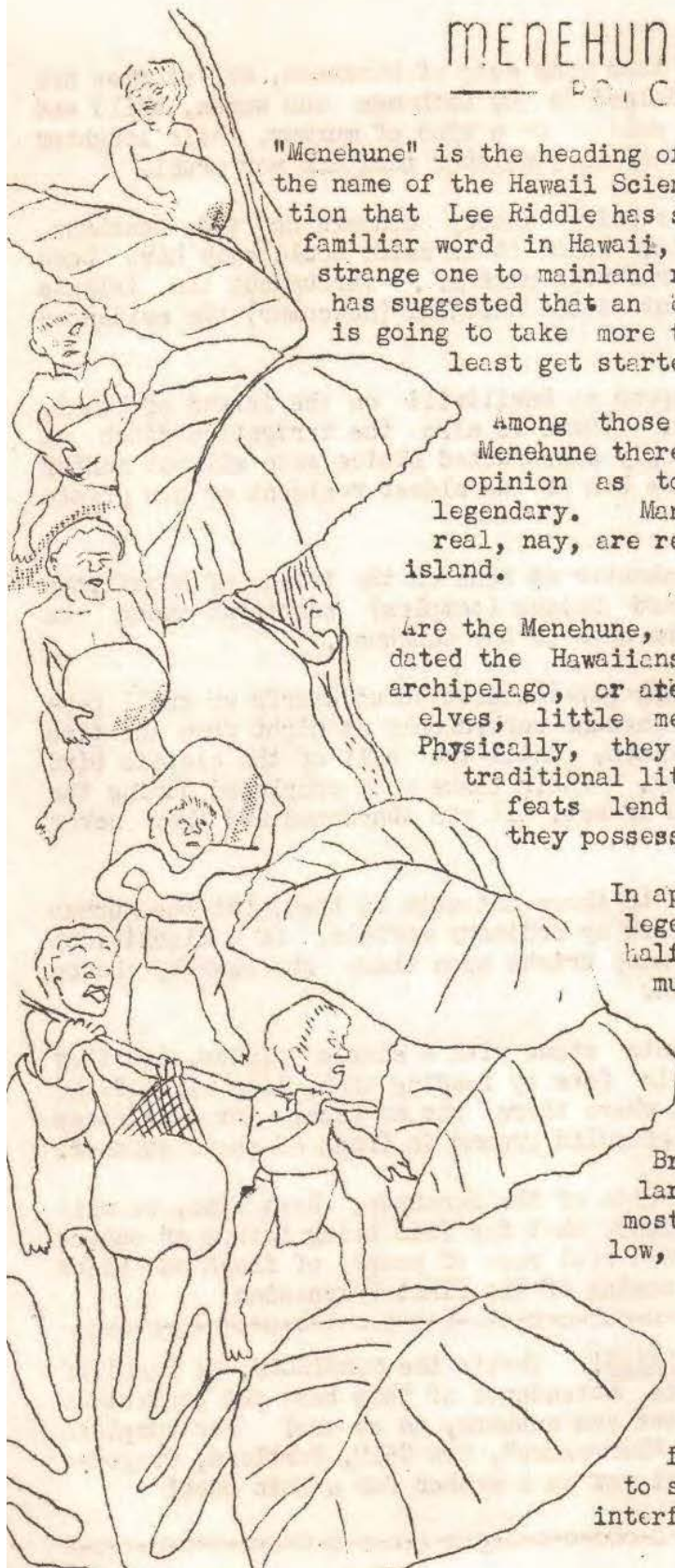
"Menehune" is the heading of this column and Menehune is the name of the Hawaii Science-Fiction-Fantasy organization that Lee Riddle has started in Honolulu. It is a familiar word in Hawaii, but since it is undoubtedly a strange one to mainland readers of PEON, Editor Riddle has suggested that an explanation is in order. That is going to take more than one doing, but we can at least get started on it this time.

Among those who claim knowledge of the Menehune there is a sharp difference of opinion as to whether they were real or legendary. Many say that the Menehunewere real, nay, are real, for they still inhabit an island.

Are the Menehune, then, a lost race that predated the Hawaiians themselves in the Hawaiian archipelago, or are they the Hawaiian version of elves, little men, gnomes or leprechauns? Physically, they fit the specifications of traditional little men, and stories of their feats lend credence to the belief that they possessed supernatural powers.

In appearance, according to the legends, they were from two and a half to three feet tall, broad, muscular, and possessed of great strength. Their bodies were reddish in color and the hair that covered a great portion of their bodies was either reddish or black. Broad and thick of nose, their large and luminous eyes were almost hidden by heavy eyebrows on low, protruding foreheads.

Their hair was long and their faces bearded. This collection of features arranged around a fierce set to their faces gave them a fearful countenance, one calculated to strike terror into those who interfered with their activities.



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Yet, legend attributes to them many acts of kindness, and stories are told of their many games, indulged in by both men and women, child and adult. Their conversation was said to be a kind of murmur, their laughter loud and frequent, indicating they were neither taciturn nor cruel.

In support of the gnome or fairy theory concerning the Menehune, legend tells of their many feats, which it is said, could only have been performed by people with supernatural powers. Throughout the islands kamaainas (old timers) point out to the malihini (newcomer) the evidences of Menehune activity.

There is the Menehune fishpond at Nawiliwili on the island of Kauai, **legendary** home of the Menehune. There is also the irrigation ditch at Waimea valley on Kauai, a cunningly constructed sluice made without mortar and which has existed beyond the ken of the oldest resident or his great-great-grandfather.

Many other fishponds, a breakwater at Kona on the island of Hawaii, two great stone canoes and the ruined heiaus (temples) scattered among the islands are said to have been the work of the Menehune.

But you say, there is nothing supernatural about dwarfs or small people building things. But the Menchune worked only at night from the time that the sun sank below the horizon, until the call of the elepaio bird signalled the coming of a new day. Their tasks were completed during the darkness of a single night, and if not, it was abandoned and they never returned to it.

The Menchune were invisible to those not akin to them, but the murmur of their voices was sometimes heard by ordinary mortals. Of a mischievous turn, they were said to play many tricks upon those who came by chance into their areas where they lived.

Their enemies they turned into stone with a single glance, and they were known to have destroyed their foes by leading them, like will-of-the-wisps, into narrow defiles from where there was no escape or over steep cliffs by creating the illusion of solid ground in front of their pursuer.

- So much for the supernatural side of the Menehune. Next time, we will trace as well as we can the evidence that far from being fairys or supernatural beings, the Menehune were a real race of people of flesh and blood that lived in Hawaii before the coming of the first Polynesian.

[illegible]

EVERY DAY BRINGS IT NEARER AND NEARER! That's the NORWISCON, we mean!! If you haven't made any plans for the attendance of this best yet convention of science fiction and fantasy fans and authors, do so now! For complete details, write to Ruth Newbury, "Norwescon", Box 8517, Portland, Oregon--she also is most anxious to enroll you as a member for a thin buck!

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peon notes

(continued from page two)

-NORWESCON-

I'd like to get in touch with some fan around New York City who would be willing to act as my agent in purchasing the new magazines and pocketbooks as they appear on the stands. It seems that the newsstands out here in Honolulu, IF they get the new stuff, get them from six to eight weeks late after issuance stateside. For example, just last week the latest Avon mag appeared on the stands here, and I have yet to see a magazine I've heard is called "Fantasy". Those two new Avon pocketbooks are not here either. So, if some kind fan in the New York City area would be willing to purchase this new stuff and mail it to me, I'd be very happy. Naturally, I'd pay in advance! If you are interested, how's about letting me hear from you soon?

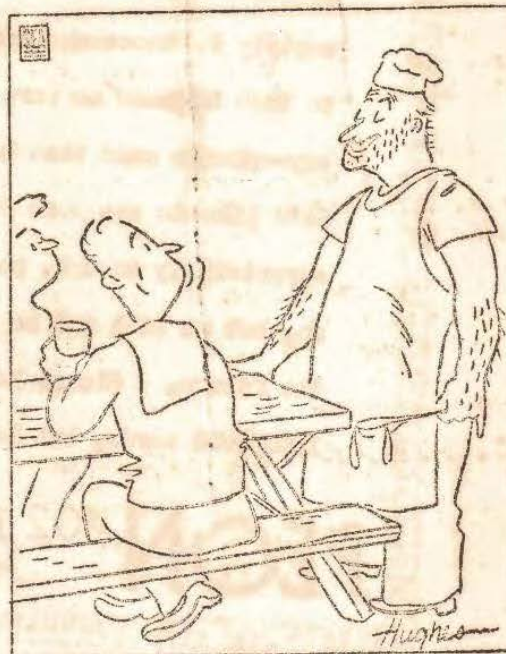
-NORWESCON-

Alright, alright, so the last issue of PEON was not much for an anniversary issue, I'll admit. Everything that could go wrong, did! My typewriter turned out to be no good for typing stencils, the mimeograph machine tore what stencils I did turn out, and typographical errors, in spite of myself, cropped up on the copy. I'll also have to admit that the choice of a lead story for that issue wasn't so hot either. Now, before Harry Weatherby jumps down my throat for making that statement, let me say that I like his stories very much, and know that he can turn out a good one. However, you'll have to admit that even the big boys write a stinker once in a while. So, in spite of the panning you readers gave "The Shrieking Approach," you'll be seeing more of Harry's stuff in future issues of PEON! I have corrected most of the errors that plagued me last time, by now, I hope, and think this issue is by far a better appearing one. I'll try to do better by you in the future. Thanks a lot to those who sent in good wishes for the forthcoming year, also.

-NORWESCON-

Assembling of the 45-pager last time would have been quite a chore if the Hui o Menchune hadn't come out emasse and helped with it. At one time, I was seriously thinking of dubbing the work that night, "Operation Staple." Mahalo nui to Roy Cummings, Shirley Rubin, Curt and Camille Butler, and last (but not least), my wife for helping out with the job of assembling the anniversary issue. The floor resembled a snow storm afterwards, but it was well worth it. Am planning on having the bunch out again tonight to help assemble this issue again...So, until next time, I'll say aloha and hope to see you next issue!

Lee



Well . . . who's going to kiss the cook?

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The back-log files of material for PEON are almost
empty! To those who have had manuscripts returned
to them because we were filled up in the past, we
say--please send them back to us--we need 'em now!
We'd like to see more readers submit articles and,
surprisingly enough, poetry! Fiction will do al-
so, but we will not be needing so much of that in
the future. Please keep your articles to around
1500/2000 words, but let us hear from you soon!

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