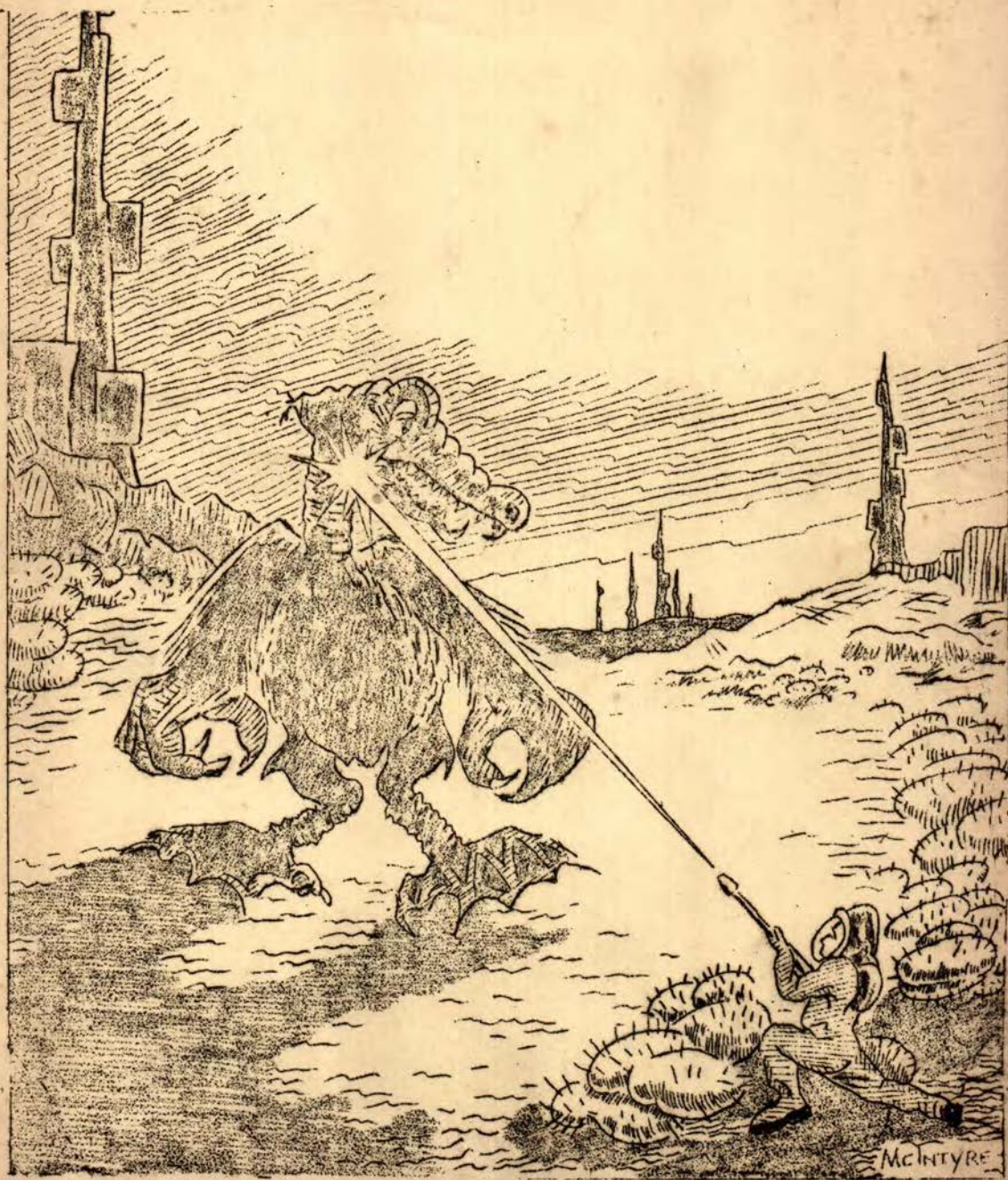


PEON

MAY '53



PEON

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Charles Lee Riddle

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Norwich, Connecticut

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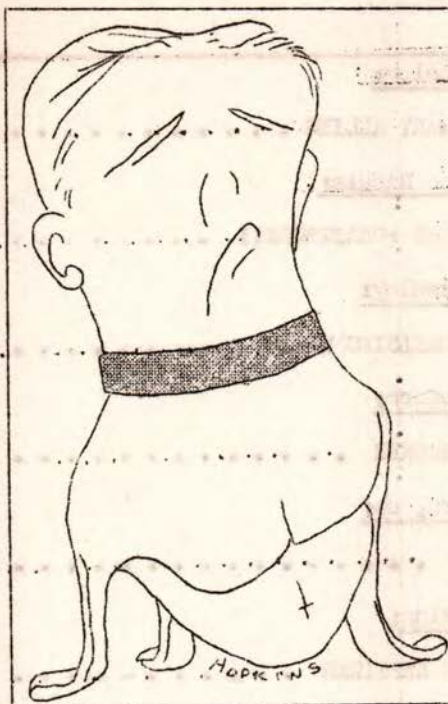
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Peon Notes

In the last two or three letters exchanged between Jim Harmon and myself, we have discussed the television programs received in this area. Since I am on what is called the "fringe area", our t.v. reception varies with the weather. Normally, we get Channel 6 (WNHC-TV out of New Haven, Conn.) from fair to very good and Channel 10 (WJAR-TV, Providence, R.I.) from poor, to fair. Jim was amazed to learn that when we have a warm night, the station comes zooming in, and I even manage to pick up several Boston and New York stations fairly good. However, as evidenced during this past winter, our reception is very poor on a cold night or day.

These letters and our remarks about t.v. reception set me to thinking last night, about an ideal television receiver. Instead of having the regular channel selector marked off from two to thirteen as are the present day sets, it would be equipped with a set of twenty-six push-buttons, each labeled with a letter of the alphabet. To get the station of your choice, all you would have to do is push the buttons according to the call letters of the station. And even though that station might be three thousands of miles away, it would come in just as if you were right under the transmitter tower. The only other control knob on the set would be the volume control. The set would automatically adjust its contrast and brightness to fit in with the light available in the room. If you had a bright room, such as in the daytime, the set would automatically adjust to show your eyes a perfect picture.

What I have envisioned, of course, is something that will probably never come to pass, for I understand that t.v. transmission is very limited in distance. However, if you took my idea and worked it out for a little bit, all sorts of interesting possibilities could be thought of. First of all, there wouldn't be any need for television stations scattered all over the country. Perhaps the t.v. stations could be concentrated in a certain area, say around Hollywood where most of the movie stars and movie studios are presently located; for anyone anywhere could dial in those stations. Why, there wouldn't be any part of the country--or the world for that matter--that couldn't be reached by t.v. this way.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 32)

The Unwary Allies

Joe L. Hensley

"You passed your tests," the Dean said. He sat back in the peculiar, egg-shaped chair. "Now it is up to me to pass on the machine's assignment."

Humming leaned forward eagerly.

"We have a planet in mind for you. I'll tell you a little about it. Tonight, after you return to your quarters, you can read the reference works on it. You may, of course, refuse the assignment and accept an alternate one, but the machine picked you as one who should be most adaptable to conditions there. And many of your particular classification and category are needed urgently there."

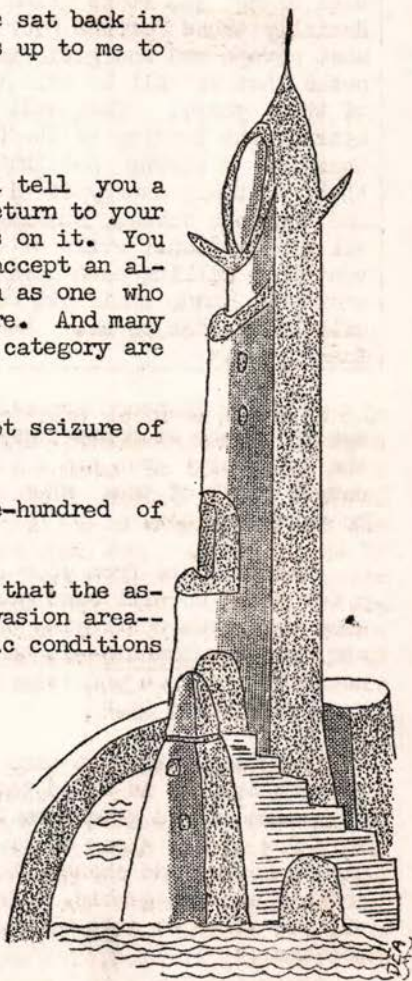
"How soon are the Gnans expected to attempt seizure of this planet?"

"In about four-hundred of our years, one-hundred of theirs."

It meant nothing, Humming decided, except that the assigned planet was on the fringe of the invasion area--such planets usually suffered from chaotic conditions because there had to be a speed-up.

"I will accept the assignment without question," Humming said.

The Dean smiled softly at him. "Thank you," he said. "As you've already deduced--this planet is on the fringe area and science technicians have been shipped by the bucket load. Therefore, science is far ahead of the other fields of learning. In about 20 of their years



they will develop atomic energy. Already they have learned how to fly in their own atmosphere in crude machines. In medicine, if all goes well, the machine has calculated that not long after atomic energy they should discover cell control. Your technical specialty should be very useful when you have matured into your new identity. Remember--you must teach them tolerance for science. You must help them keep from destroying themselves."

"I understand," Humming said.

"I am glad that your peculiar field of learning has been expanded," the Dean said. "A strict-sensed scientist like myself cannot realize the value of the written word. These people that you are going to are already well along and it is time that more of your classification were sent. Racially these Terrans (Terra is the name of their planet), are among the most savage and energetic races we've ever dealt with. The machine computes that we will be able to reveal ourselves to them in about fifty more of their years. That will give them about fifty more years to entrench against the landing of the Gnans. But the calculator also tells us that there is a strong possibility that they may destroy themselves before then. Atomic energy is always dangerous in the hands of a savage race. And they are savage, Humming. They are a carnivorous race, bisexual, with all the emotional evils of the type. And yet we cannot step in and prevent them killing each other off, for until they have built up their own knowledge, made their own decisions, and gotten a taste of the stars, they will be useless to us. We want them to be a help, not a burden when the Gnans come."

Humming listened intently. Outside the plastic window, he could half see the other students hurrying to classes. The great, domed buildings of the University gave him a pleasant feeling of nostalgia as he occasionally caught sight of them when he moved his head. Forty years of study. But he was ready now.

"Many others from your class will be sent there," the Dean said. "In a few years we will send more. You have but one responsibility--you must keep them from destroying themselves. It's not an easy assignment. There are groups--elements--in the Terran social structure that hate science because they do not understand it. You must help give them a smattering of knowledge about it."

The Dean smiled at him. "Suitable identities have been prepared. I realize that it is a bad thing to send scientists to put their world more in a turmoil and give them the means to destroy themselves--then send so very few of you along to try to prevent that destruction. But the Terran planet has a good chance, better than any so far that we have investigated so it's a timed gamble. The machine quotes a 40% probability that they will be able to stop the Gnans--if they do not destroy themselves in the meantime."

He shook Humming's hand. "Good luck," he said. "Somehow I wish I was

going with you. I realize that there is a lot we could not tell you here at the school, but the machine has set it up that way. You will, of course, be allowed a question period with it before departure. Also there will be a seminar class that you may wish to attend in the Arts building tomorrow. A returnee from Terra will speak."

Humming took out his books and studied that night. His vast background in galaxy politics and literature seemed almost useless now. He would be going to one tiny planet. And from the half-hints that he had picked up, he would not even remember his existence here--if the whispers were correct.

Some of the books were cold statistics and facts. He read them carefully. But the books by the others who had gone before him were the fascinating things. There had been some excellent work done. It gave Humming a peculiar sense of oneness when he read those books--of being with the great ones who had blazed the trail. The early pioneers of his own field. So many of them had picked this Terra, realizing the challenge it embodied. A touchy place, a planet of high emotion mixed with the raw vigor, of its inhabitants. And there was a chance there. A 40% chance, unlike the chances on the old worlds, sterile and lost, where only a token stand would be made.

It was rather strange to contemplate being born again, with only the seeds of the knowledge he had gotten here in college to help him along. He went to sleep thinking about it.

In the morning Humming dressed and ate and then attended the seminar. The speaker was a recent returnee, who had lived for a long while on Terra and had been brought back for a lecture tour. Humming knew that meant he was an expert, for such chances were not usually taken. He listened to the lecturer, and took notes carefully.

The lecturer was a tall man, even for Humming's race. Humming could see the lines around the eyes and mouth--the wrinkles that a stored body got while it was in storage and its owner away on a mission. It gave him a queer feeling to look down at his own hands, and realize that they would soon look like the hands on the returnee. And he might never return--so few did.

"Things have changed since I was sent on my mission," the lecturer said. "My assignment was to give them more of a questioning type of mind; make them see that the laws and theories of their sciences were not the final word. I understand that a new set of machine evaluations is in effect and that your own missions will be slightly different from my own." He sighed. "I do not know what I can tell you to add to your own store of knowledge. The reference books are rather complete on Terra--besides you will not remember this anyway."

He looked around the room. "Therefore, I will accept questions."

Humming stood up. "Sir," he said, "I noted in Algan's Psychology of Terrans, that they possess an A3 type of brain that is only partially developed. Has any attempt been made to speed them up--mutate them so as to give them the better use of their brain power?"

The lecturer frowned. "I asked that same question of the machine before I was sent out on my first mission. There is a reason. Briefly, it is because mutations are unstable in their first form. If we speeded them up in their mutation rate, we would lose the very qualities that they must have to fight the Gnans--a ruthlessness and vigor that would die out in a mutated strain. No, we must let them remain fairly much as they are. Give them tools and let them use and innovate on them." He looked around the classroom. "Each of us doing our assigned jobs will help in that."



"Is it true that all memory of our existence here will be removed from us?" Humming asked.

"The machine will answer that for you. However I believe that I am at liberty to say that memories of this world would not be desirable when you reach Terra." He smiled at them.

Someone in the back of the room asked: "What name did you work under while you were there?"

The lecturer told them and the questioning student said: "I shall read your work closely before I leave."

"In view of the circumstances," the lecturer said dryly, "it would probably be better if you read it after you reach Terra." That brought a general laugh. "I am returning with you. With the build-up going on, it seems I am still needed." He smiled again. "My Terran body awaits me--a little older than yours, but still serviceable." He did not seem displeased.

When the seminar was done, Humming went back to his own room. Now there was only the long awaited question period with the machine before departure. There was a sort of grave excitement in looking forward to it.

He put on a heavy cloak in his room and went out into the cooling double suns. He began to walk nostalgically. There were the questions to be considered for querying the machine, but they were already in his mind. He would write them out when he returned.

The campus was enormous. He walked through the canyons of buildings, his feet noiseless on the soft walkway. The suns went down and he saw the automatic lighting systems flash on. His own world was beautiful and ancient and almost desolate now. Only the Universities had remained and

soon they must move to a world further from the enroaching Gnan hordes. Perhaps, someday, when the Gnans were defeated, there would be a return.

Humming felt a sense of elation. He checked the figures the texts had given over again in his mind. When Terra had first been taped and calculated, the machine had given them a probability of 13%. Then, as the other factors had been added in and they had responded to the technology imposed on them, the curve had risen.

It was still rising.

It would take a stubborn race to check the Gnans; a race as full of racial pride and determination as his studies had shown these Terrans to be. He was glad he had been picked to go by the machine.

When, at least, he returned to his room, the summons was there. He was to report to the room of the machine in the morning. He sat at his desk and began to write down the questions he intended to ask. There were only four. He was allowed five.

In the morning he rose early. His mind had remembered one more question during the sleep period. Irritably, he knew that it was a question that he did not really want to ask. And yet, it must be asked for his own peace of mind.

He added it to the list. Five questions now.

He went to the building of the machine. Its built-in protective devices scanned him, admitted him.

He sat before the huge thing and entered his first question: "Are there any planets other than Terra with a strong possibility of stopping the Gnans?"

Back came the tape after a short wait: "Not under present cultivation."

"Will my work be successful on Terra?"

Answer: "42% probability."

"Is my particular line of work important to the existence of Terra?"

This time the wait and the answer were longer.

"Your own particular technology, "Classification: Writer", is being increased numerically as quickly as classes can be prepared. Your subcategory, "Science-Fiction Writer", is also being increased. It is very important to the continued existence of Terra. A vast increase in interest in that field will begin to come about by the time you reach your maturity."

(continued on page 18)

MY ACHING POCKETBOOK??

CHARLES LEE RIDDLE

Several years ago, in an article published in PEON, I wrote about the flood of prozines then scheduled and hitting the market. At that time (there were approximately 20), I said that the average fan who tries to keep up a collection would have to either (a) specialize in one or 2 magazines; (b) give up trying to get a complete collection and just try to keep up with the current issues; or (c) just give up.

Now, with some 28 American prozines currently on the newsstands today I wonder what the average collector is doing to keep up with all the new ones. Personally, I've given up the idea of trying to fill in my back issues, and merely am trying to keep abreast of the ones currently on the stands--not to forget those new ones showing up (it seems) every day or so!

This past week, mostly for my own information, I made a survey of the current magazines being offered for our reading pleasure, and for the benefit of those collectors who want such, the following is the listing I made. I believe it is correct and current, as of the fifteenth of May--however, what with all the new ones coming out so often, I'm not in a position to be very positive.

For those who like statistics, I've discovered that there are five monthly magazines; seventeen bi-monthly publications; four are published quarterly; one is issued nine times a year; and one annually. If no more new magazines were to be published this year, this would make a grand total of 186 magazines released this year. And if the average collector was to buy all these listed (Weird Tales has not been listed for obvious reasons), he would spend this year a grand total of \$61.80, or approximately an average of \$5.00 per month. Did I say "average" collector? I should have said the "well-heeled" collector!

<u>MAGAZINE NAME</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>COST</u>	<u>YEARLY COST</u>
Amazing Stories	B	.35	2.10
Astounding S. F.	M	.35	4.20
Beyond Fantasy Fiction	B	.35	2.10
Dynamic Science Fiction	Q	.25	1.00
Fantastic	B	.35	2.10
Fantastic Story Magazine	B	.25	1.50

(continued on page 14)

OUR INCREASING WORLD

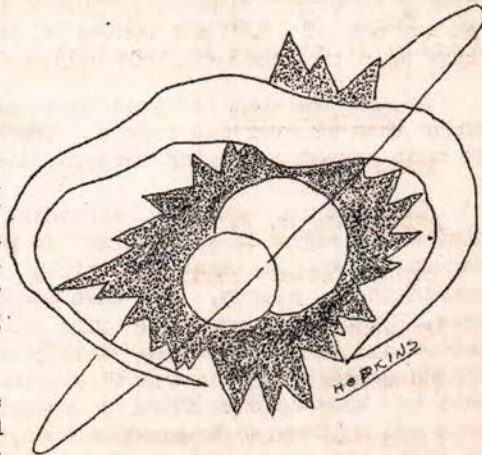
IAN T. MACAULEY

With the number of science fiction magazines on the stands now close to 30, Taurasi, in FANTASY TIMES, comes forth with the glaring information that two more are in the planning stage. Fans all over are complaining of this increase in the production of their favorite literature--not because of the fact that they don't want to see additional publications on the stands, but because they just can't afford to buy all of the stf periodicals as they once could. The days of the real completists are over, it seems.

Probably the major gripe of s-f fans have with the tremendous number of science fiction magazines on the stands today, is that quantity is up and quality is down. Only the steady publications, such as Astounding, Galaxy, Startling, Thrilling, Hoff&SF, that have been around for a good number of years are producing the majority of the readable stf. The new magazines that are issued every month or so, seem to have trouble finding good authors, and are, consequently, publishing material inferior to that of the well-established publications in the stf world. And, too, even the old-timers are having their difficulties. In plain English--there are not enough good stf authors and stories to go around.

Howard Browne thinks that he can beat the lack of writing by good stf authors and good stories, by publishing what he ridiculously calls science fiction by so-called "popular" authors. Obviously, Browne has failed in the latter attempt, as witness the injury that he has caused to science fiction by publishing such stories as "The Veiled Woman" by Mickey Spillane (of all people), a very inferior short story by Billy Rose in a recent issue of Fantastic, and that bit of trash called "Mars: Confidential." If Mr. Browne thinks that he is spreading stf to a more wider audience, he is sadly mistaken. Many people, on buying their first science fiction magazine and reading a story similar to that by Spillane in the third issue of Fantastic, may give up reading stf altogether, and think of science fiction as that sole story they read by the "popular author" who attracted them to buying the magazine.

But, I'm getting a bit off the track of the original idea behind this article by criticizing Browne and his blunderings. However, before I leave this brief criticism,



comes the question: "Why is it that magazines such as Planet, Other Worlds, and Imagination, although they have been around for a good many years are, have been, and probably always will, publish material on a much lower level than their fellow compatriots?" It seems as if Mr. Reiss, Mr. Palmer, and Mr. Hamling would have learned their lesson by this time.

At any rate, it's quite evident that there is simply too much science fiction being published today in too many publications. The only resource left to the bewildered fan is for him to purchase the top magazines, and boycott the others. That way, a good number of the inferior science fiction periodicals will be forced to disband publication, and the field will once again not be over-crowded.

Besides the huge amount of science fiction magazines being published, there are other evidences of the ever increasing science fiction world. The public is more and more gradually becoming adjusted and interested in space-flight. This is a good thing, and which I am not criticizing if the public's interest in space flight is not limited to their kiddie's space suits and zap guns. However, such nation-wide magazines as Colliers and Time and Life have presented good accounts of the facts behind space-flight. These articles by the top slicks should win many converts to science fiction, and should change the opinions of many to the truth, instead of their considering space flight a funny matter.

There have been arguments, pro or con, on whether the kiddie stf toys and T.V. shows are ruining the public's intelligent appreciation of science fiction. Many people consider this type of literature as merely a play-hobby of their little boy or girl, because they have no knowledge of the true science fiction. Their knowledge is limited to the children's space shows, and the tremendous number of space toys available for the American youth. Should this over-production of kiddie science fiction interest be discouraged? No, for if the child is exposed to enough juvenile forms of science fiction, he will probably, in many instances, develop an interest in the printed stf in the later years of his life.

No one can deny the fact that science fiction is reaching more people today than it ever has before. The causes of the latter can be attributed to most anything--flying saucers, the atom bomb, and the like.

Interest in, and the spreading of, science fiction should not be denied its right of increasing in popularity. But, one thing that fans can do is to see that the right kind of science fiction publications remain on the stands, and that people are educated and free from prejudices. They also can make sure that science fiction and its principles, become and remain far more than that half-hour or hour a day their child spends watching "Space Cadet" and the like on the T.V. screen. If we fans want to keep science fiction magazines from building up to a tremendous boom and a likewise tremendous bust, we might do a little gospel preaching to the public.

Any suggestions?

CHAIN SMOKER

Larry Saunders

"You know, I suppose if you happen to be a member of an alien planet, a satisfactory disguise would present many problems. I rather suspect that homo sapiens is a rarity."

I nodded, relaxed in the hotel lobby couch, lit up a cigarette, and regarded Jamison thoughtfully. Jamison was quite an oddity and in all honesty, I can't say that I ever liked him; even though we had made it a habit to discuss situations out of the ordinary whenever we met. For some unexplainable reason, his actions and manners antagonized me and set me on the defensive.

"Yes," I said, "to assume the form of a man or female wouldn't be an impossibility. Surgery could accomplish anything of that order. But consider the human angle. Could an alien go undetected once he or she was thrown into mixed company?"

Jamison, caught up in the spirit of the discussion, hastily unwrapped a piece of gum and stuck it between his teeth. Between chews, he said, "That's not the point exactly. Under favorable conditions, I think an alien might get away with it, but I don't think he would attempt it. It's too risky; too massive a project; too likely to lead down a blind alley or what's worse, to detection. Then again, human behavior is far too erratic and too inconsistent a course for an alien to plot safely. What an alien would want, and as a matter of fact, must have, for security's sake, would not be a disguise at all. An alien's demands could not be met by ordinary means of disguise. It's an impossibility. But if we take the word "disguise" and impart it with a truly liberal interpretation, then the answer becomes very simple."

"All right," I said, "how would you interpret disguise to an alien's advantage?"

"First off", Jamison said after a thoughtful pause, "I would clearly realize that what I wanted mostly was infiltration. To infiltrate, I would use a disguise. This disguise would be very subtle, yet very direct. It would be very impractical from the human viewpoint, yet in reality extremely practical. With this disguise, I would analyze human behavior; why a human does this, or wants that, or thinks this, and says that. I would want to realize the idea of values from a human viewpoint. I would want the intelligence rating of the mass as well as the individual. I would want to know the plans of the intellectia---"

"Hold it right there," I interrupted, "Sure you'd want to know these things, but how would you go about doing it?"

Jamison stopped chewing and a pained expression crossed his face. Hell, it wasn't as bad as all that!

"This drug," I said slowly, "would it not necessarily have a permanent effect?"

"....very simply. I would not inhabit the human body and mind directly, but indirectly. To accomplish my infiltration, I would use a drug. To administer the drug--" he shrugged, "--may means would be unlimited. As for example, the water we drink, the food we eat..."



This seemed to puzzle him. "No," he said, all the while staring at me intently, "No, I don't see why it should. After all, all you want is information. The drug itself might be categorically classed with all drugs. By that, I mean internal amounts would have to be taken at regular intervals. At least I should think they would be. It might be a craving for candy, or liquor, or tea, or cake--anything on that order."

"Gum?" I asked innocently of him.

"Gum, surely." He said quietly, after a long interval. "And, you might include cigarettes."

"Yes, you certainly could include cigarettes," I said just as quietly. I glanced at the one I was holding, then deliberately crushed it under my heel. Jamison, seemingly paying no attention to my actions, very coolly eased the gum from his mouth, wrapped it neatly in a small piece of paper, then threw it into a nearby wastecan.

Habits can ruin a man," I said diffidently, then added, "though not for the same reason you gave. Personally, I smoke too much."

"Yes," Jamison said meaningfully, "I've noticed that."

"It's been a longtime habit. I've always been a chain-smoker. At this

stage of life, it's too late to drop the habit."

"Have you ever tried?"

"Many times," I said, "But I never could make a go of it."

He nodded wisely and said, "As with most people. You can readily see how easy it would be for you to be under the influence of an alien."

Well, for my money, this was going too far. "Viewed in the sober light of reason," I replied, trying to be very calm, "All that we've discovered has been pure fantasy."

"Of course," Jamison agreed to this very smoothly. "How in Heaven's name could it be otherwise? Certainly," he paused, "we don't seriously consider ourselves to be aliens, do we? It's the imagination that counts."

I felt vaguely relieved, as if a burden had been released from my shoulders. I also felt anger and indignation rising within me. I wanted a cigarette, but I just couldn't find the strength to light up while Jamison sat before me. Damn it all, I had a guilty complex. Mumbling a hasty excuse, I retreated from the hotel lobby, and sought out the nearby bar. After a few drinks, I was thoroughly disgusted with myself and wondered if I would ever grow up. Here I sat, a grown man in his full senses, seriously debating pro and con over a whiskey sour, whether I was an alien or not!

The most sensible action to take was to analyze my reactions. Okay. First off, I knew damn well I was not an alien. Secondly, I knew damn well that Jamison was no alien. Why couldn't I light up in front of him then? Answer: I could, if I had really wanted to. What really stopped me was the man's abnormal attitude. His power of suggestion combined with my acute sensitiveness. I felt guilty through association. Very simple. Only, I do not like to be put into a hole, that way. Not all. All right; so to hell with the man. Which might seem rather drastic, except I don't like to bother to sweat for no apparent reason.

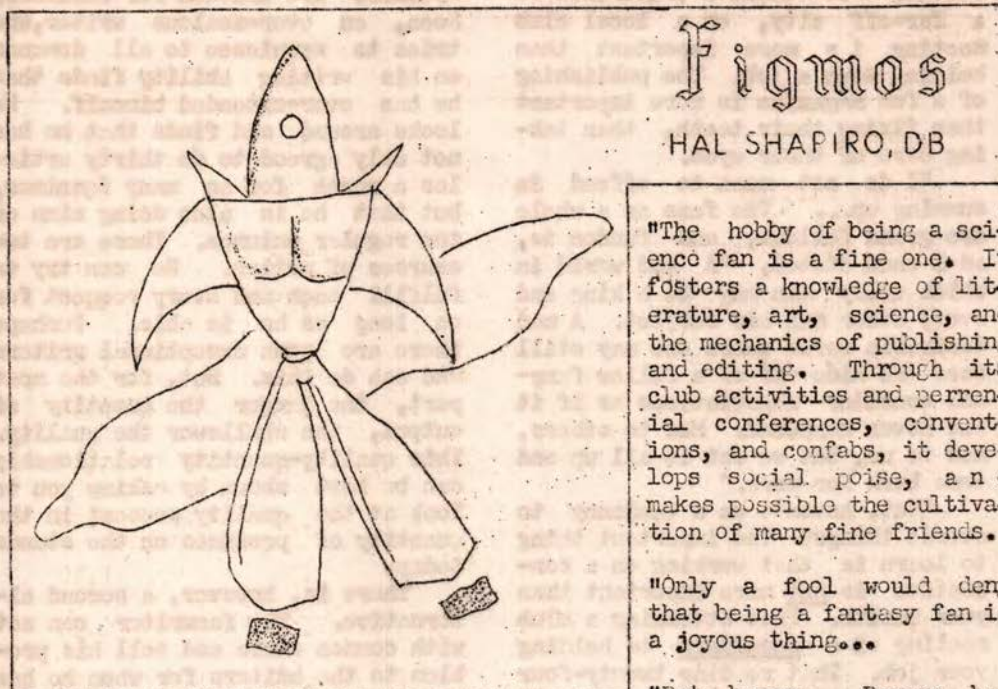
And everything seemed to be in order, except as it turned out, it was not. At first, everything ran smoothly. Whenever Jamison and I met, we contented ourselves with a polite nod in each other's direction. This suited me fine. I don't think it suited Jamison. Before long I noticed his eyes on me whenever I happened to be smoking. All right, my suspicions were being confirmed; that crackpot was convinced I was an alien. I shrugged it off at first, but after a while, the gag began to wear thin--so much so, that whenever we met at the cigar counter, I found myself ordering cigarettes out of the corner of my mouth. Realizing that things couldn't go on as they did, I decided to do the only sensible thing--give up smoking...for the time being.

In the meantime, I had been very busy systematically checking off all
(CONTINUED ON PAGE 28)

MY ACHING POCKET BOOK !!
(continued)

<u>MAGAZINE NAME</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>COST</u>	<u>YEARLY COST</u>
Fantastic Universe	B	.50	3.00
Fantasy Fiction	B	.35	2.10
Future Science Fiction	B	.25	1.50
Galaxy Science Fiction	M	.35	4.20
Galaxy S. F. Novels	B	.35	2.10
If	B	.35	2.10
Imagination	9/Yearly	.35	3.15
Magazine of S. F. & Fantasy	M	.35	4.20
Other Worlds	M	.35	4.20
Planet Stories	B	.25	1.50
Rocket Stories	B	.35	2.10
Science Fiction Adventures	B	.35	2.10
Science Fiction Plus	M	.35	4.20
S. F. & Fantasy Reader	Q	.35	1.40
S. F. Quarterly	Q	.25	1.00
Space Science Fiction	B	.35	2.10
Space Stories	B	.25	1.50
Startling Stories	B	.25	1.50
Thrilling Wonder Stories	B	.25	1.50
Two Complete S. F. Books	Q	.25	1.00
Universe Science Fiction	B	.35	2.10
Wonder Story Annual	A	.25	.25

FREQUENCY CODE: M - Monthly; B - Bimonthly; Q - Quarterly;
A - Annually



"The hobby of being a science fan is a fine one. It fosters a knowledge of literature, art, science, and the mechanics of publishing and editing. Through its club activities and perennial conferences, conventions, and confabs, it develops social poise, and makes possible the cultivation of many fine friends.

"Only a fool would deny that being a fantasy fan is a joyous thing...

"But, beware. Beware, be-

cause science-fiction fandom can also be a vicious trap...

"Most science fiction fans begin when they are quite young. Shall we say, between the ages of fourteen and sixteen. I dare say that with few exceptions they are, in mental scope and flexibility, the equal, if not the superior, of the average person of twenty-one. They have to be, for writing, illustrating, criticising, publishing, arranging clubs and conventions, beyond any question of a doubt calls for a high order of intelligence and organizing ability.

"The new science-fiction fan finds that he has been introduced to a world of wonder. A world into which he can gradually immerse himself entirely, shutting himself off, for long periods of time from reality outside...

"So it is with most fans. People across the continent know them. They publish a fan magazine.... And on the subscription list will be a hundred odd people. People who live in New Jersey, New York, Chicago, in Los Angeles, Denver, Canada, Mexico, Australia, England and New Zealand. People living thousands of miles away know them by name, regard them as individuals of some importance, write to them, contribute to their magazines...

"And so it is that they build up a false sense of values. To be number one fan is several times better than being president of the United

States. To attend a conference in a far-off city, or a local club meeting is more important than holding down a job. The publishing of a fan magazine is more important than fixing their teeth, than taking care of their eyes.

"I do not mean to offend in summing up... The fans as a whole are grand fellows, and fandom is, as I once stated, "A mad world in which every man may be a king and every other man his subject. A mad desirable world where one may still cuss the hide off of a fellow fan--and consider negotiations as if it had never happened. Mad to others, mad to us, but we eat it all up and come back for more."

"But, haven't we a tendency to overdo things? The important thing to learn is that working on a convention is not more important than your health. That attending a club meeting is secondary to holding your job. That reading twenty-four science-fiction magazines a month religiously is not obligatory--your eyes are far more important..."

"The problem of the harmful effects science-fiction, as a hobby can have upon its enthusiasts should be faced..."

"Is having the largest science-fiction collection in the world more important than having a decent suit of clothes on your back?"

"Common sense and moderation should be the key-note of the science-fiction fan."

The above is quoted freely, and without permission, from Sam Moskowitz's article, "Escape to Nowhere," as it appeared in the Dec. 1941, issue of SUN SPOTS. And I quoted it for a particular reason. It seems that many fans, soon after entering fandom, throw themselves whole-heartedly into this new pleasure. Commitments are made and

articles are written for fanzines. Soon, an over-zealous writer, who tries to acquiesce to all demands on his writing ability finds that he has over-extended himself. He looks around and finds that he has not only agreed to do thirty articles a month for as many fanzines, but that he is also doing nine or ten regular columns. There are two courses of action. He can try to fulfill each and every request for as long as he is able. Perhaps there are some exceptional writers who can do this. But, for the most part, the larger the quantity of output, the shallower the quality. This quality-quantity relationship can be best shown by asking you to look at the quality present in the quantity of prozines on the stands today.

There is, however, a second alternative. The fanwriter can act with common sense and tell his problem to the editors for whom he has promised to write. If the editors are as open-minded as all sfans profess to be, he will release the writer from the unwisely-made commitment. Thusly the writer will survive to write again. That is the primary reason why this will be the last "Figmos" to be placed in the pages of PEON. At this writing (April 26), the writer is facing a discharge from the U.S. Air Force and, until a reliable and reasonable schedule of work, eat, sleep, college, social life, fandom (and in that order) can be worked out, much writing will be suspended.

However, before I leave you to your own devices, there is much news and stuff laying around that may as well be passed on to you. Who knows--someone may be interested.

That excellent drawn comic strip which so many fans seem to favor,

"Prince Valiant", will soon scamper on the silver screen in three dimensions. 20th Century-Fox has signed Bob Wagner and Janet Leigh for the parts of Princey and Aleta.

According to a recent Saturday Review, the experimental house that was built at Yucca Flat to be A-bombed had only one book in its innards. Some prop man with a fine sense of humor had included a copy of "Gone With the Wind."

According to a filler item, beer is a 10,000 year old beverage, antedating the earth itself, according to the bible, by a few thousand years.

Fans who look for the serious, allegorical side of POGO will be interested in "The Cave and the Rock", a novel by Raoul Faure. This little book tells the story of Frut "a big adult lizard, olive-green on top and yellow underneath, with a double sooty collar on the neck." He is part of a tribe of lizards who live on the tableland. Over them rule the Sages and the All Loving Fathers. Above all, however, is the great serpent ghod, Sarass the Unfathomable.

The rule of the Fathers (administered by the Sages) means conformity. Those who do not conform, or who disbelieve, are thrown into the pit, to become one with the ghod. Frut is a disbeliever and therefore becomes a subversive menace to the tribe. As event follows event, he high tails it across a desert and finds another tribe of lizards with no ghods, no rulers, no nothin' except a perfectly rational utopia. Recommended. Even though there are holes in the utopia.

For those going to the con in Philly, here's some advance information from a friend of mine who recently attended a convention in that city. Says he of the hotel: "They are building, or re-building

two elevators....Best spots are the coffee room (had nice breakfast there)--and the Hart room (good bar and pleasant quarters)....Would say they needed more help--we waited 1 1/2 hours to register and missed a good reception. Quite a crowd arrived at the same time, but they should have expected it....Couldn't get another key to our room either..... There is a good restaurant down the street, Stouffer's, and a good H&H cafeteria. Then there is a good bar run by some ex-fighter. Also, Charlie and Bill's Delicatessen had a fine swiss cheese and corned beef on rye there--very good. We stopped there one night after going to a doubleheader at the Palestra. There were three fine shows in town too, though I did not have time.... Charlie and Bill's is new. You just cross the street, turn right, and it's about one or two blocks....It is an old hotel, but comfortable. My bed was okay--the room was spacious."

Ran across a nice little volume the other day titled "The Hidden History of the Korean War" by someone named I. F. Stone. Selling for five bucks, this 364 page book has an apt title for, if the history of the Korean War was hidden, the author has further confused the issue by enveloping its main events in a smoke screen in which he tries to create doubts and suspicions of UN motives. This result is brought off with the skill of a deft and accomplished polemic writer. At no time, for instance, does Stone come out and flatly state that the South Koreans were the aggressors, but the impression can definitely be planted in the unwary reader's mind. There is an apparent objectivity about Stone's references to Red China and the USSR, but the conclusions drawn would certainly not offend party members and the

reader of the Daily Worker. A very fascinating book for students of politics and psychology.

The scene is a dress rehearsal of "Noah's Ark." It is thousands of years ago. Hundreds of people and animals are running about. All is confusion. But above all the noise and clamor can be heard the desperate voice of the electrician: "What lights shall I use?" cries he.

And the heavens open, and a voice comes unto him: "The flood lights, you damn fool."

Driving to conventions, to meet other fans, and just driving around, one is apt to beget his own philosophy of the road. I knew that, personally, after driving for any length of time behind cars with those large fish-tail tail lights. I have the feeling of having watched Eddie Cantor all evening on TV. And I wish to hell that the kids who are continuously marking "Beat the Cougars" and similar sympathies on bridge abutments would come back and let me know if they did or not.

Incidentally, Hope and Crosby's next picture won't be to Mars. It is to be a technicolored musical titled ROAD TO THE MOON. Scheduled to start shooting immediately after Hope finishes the picture on which he is now working. No indication of the number of dimensions to be used.

Well, it's sort of hard to bring this column to a close. Having read PEON, almost since its inception in 1948, it's sort of hard to crack out of the pages which are so hard to break into. However, as a final message, I'll quote one of the world's greatest scientists who summed a lot up when he wrote:

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_i R_{ik} &= 0, \quad \sum_i T_i = 0 \\ R_{ik} &= 0, \quad R_{ik,1} + R_{k,i} + R_{ij,k} = 0 \end{aligned}$$

THE UNWARY ALLIES (continued)

Humming stirred restlessly--- "What will be my new identity name and will I remember anything of my real identity?"

The machine clicked softly, and the tape was in his hands.

"Assignment of identities are not made by this machine. You will not remember your real identity, but the training you have received here will be a part of your new identity on Terra. Gradually, as you become older, certain memories will return as they are needed."

And now the question that had haunted him. He put it into the calculator.

"If the Terrans defeat the Gnan race, is it possible for our culture and theirs to live peaceably in the Universe?"

The machine whirred softly, and the tape came out into his sweating fingers.

"With our race as leaders--the probability is .035%. With their race as leaders--probability 89%."

MARCH 19, 1926. NOTICE IN
A SMALL INDIANA NEWSPAPER:

"Born: A son, Joe L.
to Mr. and Mrs. R. R.
Hensley at four a.m."

If you like to write, publish, or draw, then you should ask about membership in the Fantasy Amateur Press Association. A few vacancies in the membership occur every quarter---for further details, write the Secretary-Treasurer, A. E. Winne, 109 Ashely, Springfield, Mass.



TO ELES!

Charles Glaton Darwin, nephew of Charles "Origin of the Species" Darwin, has a new book out, "The Next Million Years", in which he insists it will be a "grave new world" instead of a "brave new world." He sees man little changed a million years from now except that he will be a lot hungrier and in decline.

Bruce Bliven, a journalist and chairman of the editorial board of The New Republic, in his new book, "Preview of Tomorrow", Albert A. Knopf, \$5.00, also looks at man's tight food supply and investigates some technological trends, but does not predict any change in man as an organism. Even the prospect of space travel does not lure either Darwin or Bliven to foresee any mutations in man that might occur as a result of environmental pressures in space. No doubt, they looked out at the moon, found it airless, full of holes and unsuitable for habitation and promptly forgot it. Of course, the scientists have a certain dignity to uphold and cannot permit their imaginations to flit about the cosmos within the public view. They are more or less earthbound until some happy Irishman actually lands on the moon. Extrapolation is permitted them only to a limited extent.

Even Dr. Loren C. Eiseley, an anthropologist with an imagination, writing in Harper's (Sept. 49), cannot see much hope for man as a species because he is becoming increasingly specialized, and such a species tends to disappear in nature because it loses its power of adaptability.

Some scientists will flirt with the crystal ball, while their brother frowns in disapproval. Huxley, the biologist, suggested that man was due for a mutation in consciousness and Stapleton's space adaptations of man had some publicity.

Given such leads, science fiction authors go "crazy" (Be-Dop). Mutated man has always been a favorite subject. We have had van Vogt's Slans, Alfred Bester's master-telepaths ("The Demolished Man"--Galaxy),

Heinlein's "homo superior" (Astounding) and a host of others. The space adaptations of man have also been ingenious. However, at no time have our authors strayed too far from the home plate, homo sapiens. Like the scientists, they have limitations. These limitations are impossible to ignore because they involve the technique of story writing. They must create a hero whose conflicts will have an emotional reality to the reader.

Suppose some author decided that man would evolve during the next million years into a round ball whose main function in life was to jiggle. Who in the hell would want to read about Round Ball 6347, slightly larger than the other round balls, who jiggled too much? All of which reminds us of van Vogt's "Book of Ptath", a story of civilization 200,000,000 years in the future. The world has changed beyond recognition, new seas, new continents, rivers of boiling mud, everything made of wood because metal has been used up long ago, but good old homo sapiens is still in there looking the same as ever and doing the two things that make sf stories readable today, loving and fighting.

In recent years, a new organism has been cooked up that has the exciting possibility of emancipating our authors from this technical straight jacket. It is the "blesh". This unusual entity was born in a story-"Baby is Three", by Theodore Sturgeon in Galaxy of October 1952. The word blesh is formed from two words, blend and mesh. Sturgeon's organism is a blesh of a number of mutated humans, who, working together, form another organism that has a mind and a personality all its own. The beauty of a bleshed organism for science fiction writers is that they can convert the bleshed organism into all sorts of fantastic shapes and leave the units of the blesh near enough to human beings to give their conflicts emotional reality to the reader. See?

Another joy in this idea is that it is a proper extrapolated extension of our American economy. Our production line, in which a number of individuals do one thing in the production of an article, is actually a simple blesh. This method of production vastly increases the pro-ratio unit output. For example, 100,000 men each trying to make an automobile in 50 years would be fortunate in producing 500 respectable vehicles. Put a hundred thousand men on a production line, each performing one operation, and they will produce 200,000 cars a year. Another aspect of the producing corporation is that it has a personality all its own that cannot be attributed to any single individual in the corporation.

This vast increase in the pro-ratio productive power of the individual by putting him on a production line is a miracle in itself, but when you add the personality of the corporation you have the smell of an adaptable organism. This new force in our society is responsible for most of the conflict in our society today. And it is much more logical to extrapolate on the basis of this organism than on some supposed mutation in consciousness, a change that is not apparent in anyone yet. We live in groups, learn in groups, and produce in groups. What will it mean for the individual tomorrow?

One casualty of this trend is "egoboo". An individual can hardly take credit for the accomplishments of a group, or at least his "egoboo" is considerably diluted by his fellow workers. During the recent Oscar Derby in Hollywood, both Shirley Booth and Cecil B. DeMille accepted their Oscar only on the understanding that they represented a large number of individuals who make their success possible. Without writers, actors, cameramen, color technicians, composers, musicians, and many others, "The Greatest Show on Earth" would not exist. DeMille coordinated the talents of these people, and accepted his Oscar in their name. Of course, his talent was the most important contribution to the blesh, but his talent alone could not produce a single scene.

Will man increase or decrease his chances of survival by working and evolving in blesh groups. There are two dangers. One was pointed out by Dorothy Thompson in her column, "On The Record" (April 27, 1953). She writes that the Ford Foundation has earmarked 15 million dollars to investigate not civil liberty, but the freedom of man as man. She complains, that our increasingly technological civilization (blesh) is making man "an object", "a social unit," "a part". He is not a man anymore, he is a limb, a hand, a brain. In other words, he is a part of a larger organism. He is becoming more specialized, and according to Dr. Eiseley, mentioned above, this marks him for extinction.

The other danger is tryanny. This can be in any degree. The movie director who insists that the picture be photographed his way, instead of listening to his expert cameraman. Stalin who liquidated thousands of farmers who refused to be collectivised. In the May, 1953, Ladies Home Journal, Edward Hope has a story, "Fireworks for Michelle", in which a young woman marries a junior executive in an oil corporation. She finds that the corporation intends to manage her entire life in spite of the fact that she, herself, is not an employee. She is told where to live, what furniture she can have, what groups to join, and even when she can afford to have a baby. This couple solves the problem by leaving the corporation and going on a farm.

To quit the blesh, however, is not an easy answer. The individual is a hand, a limb, a brain, and if he quits one group, he must find another where he can use his speciality. He is less free, less adaptable. That was the worst aspect of our unemployment in the 30's, the unemployed man was helpless.

Blesh tyranny is where one member of the blesh tries to enforce his ideas on all the other units. George Orwell's terrible picture of the future in "Nineteen Eighty-four" was the ultimate in this type of blesh. In his story, even the subconscious mind was controlled.

If we can produce a blesh where the units act in freedom and use their full talents we might achieve an organism whose power of thought and adaptability will be as greatly increased as the economic blesh increases the power of production. It will be the new organism that will adapt and the human units may continue to specialize. In this way we can circumvent

Dr. Eiseley's goomy prediction of our downfall through specialization. To achieve this, we must prevent tyranny. One man enforcing thought control on all the units prevents the growth of the organism's intelligence. It limits the intelligence to that of one unit.

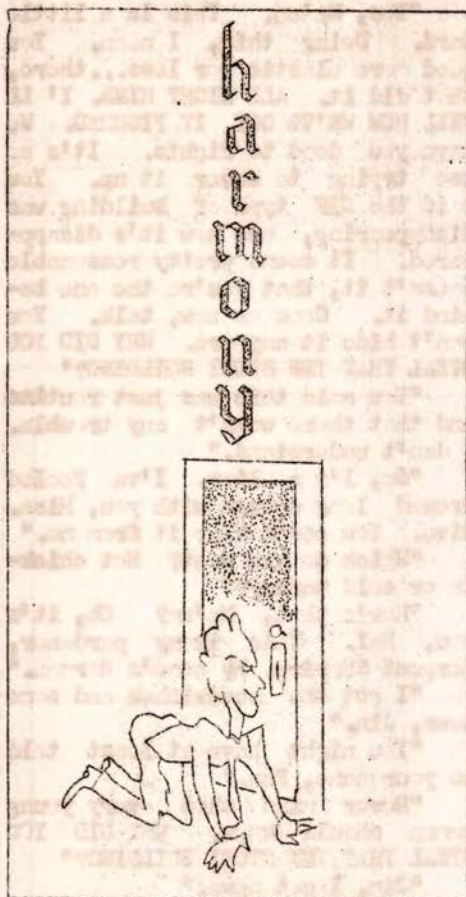
Think of the conflicts that can be cooked up on the basis of this idea. The story tellers can have their mutations of this new organism to pop the eyes of the reader, and have the conflicts and affairs of the unit of the biosh for emotional force. It's like having your cake and eating it, too. It is a science fiction writer's paradise.

-oOo-

IT'S LATER THAN YOU THINK!!

We're referring to, naturally, to your joining in with the rest of fandom, in helping make the 11th World-Science Fiction Convention the biggest and best yet. If you haven't sent in your one dollar bill yet for a membership, do it now!...And don't forget the date--the 5th, 6th, and 7th of this coming September!..Send that dollar today to the 11th World S-F Con., P. O. Box 2019, Philadelphia 3, Penna. PEOM will be there this year and we hope to see you too.





JIM HARMON

The story is science fiction. Only the names have been changed to protect postmen, homosexuals, and the author, who doesn't like law suits, or striped suits. The events are a matter of record. The author uses a dictaphone. He can't write. This is why he's an author. He can't get an honest job. You figure it out for yourself, as Jim Harmon-- both King-Size and Regular presents

DRAGALAXY

It was Sunday, April 16, 1963.
Four O'clock in the afternoon. I

knew that for sure. I didn't have a watch, but I could tell time by the stars. It was an ordinary day but something seemed wrong. My pardner's Sergeant Shapiro, the boss is Captain Riddle. My name's Harmon. We went to N3F Headquarters to report. The ten story building wasn't there.

"Something's wrong, Hal."

"What makes you say that, Jim?"

"I don't know. A feeling. The building isn't there. Something's wrong."

"How's your mother, Jim?"

"She's not in the building that isn't there. You read that article in the paper? Said that type of architecture is disappearing?"

"So what's that prove?"

"The building isn't there. You figure it for yourself."

Five O'clock. We placed a P.E.E.P. on the B.A.B.E. who wrote the article that said the N3F type of building was disappearing. We spelled so she wouldn't catch on to what we were doing. It was a hot day.

Five thirty. Hal and I watched her window from the alley. She stripped down to her bra and pants. It was getting hotter. The pants were thick and fast.

"Jim, I've got to do it."

"Do what, Hal?"

"I have to do it. You understand. I have to."

"Hal, do what?"

"Set fire to that building and make it hotter for her. I have to."

"You'll never do it. You can't do it."

"You understand. I've got to do it. You won't stop me."

"You'll never get away with it, you know."

"Why can't I burn the building? You can't stop me. Why?"

"Brick building."

"You figure it for yourself."

Six o'clock. Hal went for sandwiches and binoculars. I went for the girl. I rang the doorbell. She opened the door. She was in a bright light and very little else.

"Science-fiction fan, Ma'am. I'd like to ask you a few questions."

"Why? Is there anything wrong, Fan?"

"No, Ma'am. Just routine."

"All right. Stop inside. You will have to excuse me. I was just undressing."

"That's all right, Ma'am. Just go right on with whatever you were doing while I question you. I expect to learn a lot."

"All right, Fan. Just one thing."

"Yes, Ma'am?"

"Can I see your identification?"

"Here it is, Ma'am. I can see yours."

"Are you sure there's not any trouble? What's all of this about?"

"No trouble. Just routine."

"Routine?"

"Yes."

"All right."

"Now, WHY DID YOU STEAL THAT TEN STORY BUILDING?"

"What do you mean? What's the trouble?"

"No trouble, Ma'am. Just routine questioning."

"Well, all right. Will you unfasten my bra in back? What building are you talking about Fan? Are you sure this is just routine?"

"Yes, Ma'am. The bra just un-snaps, huh? The N3F headquarters building. Yes, Ma'am, just my usual routine. Now, WHY DID YOU STEAL THAT TEN STORY BUILDING?"

"Thanks, Fan. Yes, it just slips off over the shoulder. I don't know what you're talking about. I didn't steal any building. Now, will you help me pull off."

"Yes, Ma'am. This is a little hard. Doing this, I mean. You need more elastic, or less...there, that did it. ALL RIGHT MISS. I'LL TELL HOW WE'VE GOT IT FIGURED. We have you dead to rights. It's no use trying to cover it up. You said the N3F type of building was disappearing, and now it's disappeared. It seems pretty reasonable doesn't it, that you're the one behind it. Come on now, talk. You can't hide it anymore. WHY DID YOU STEAL THAT TEN STORY BUILDING?"

"You said this was just routine and that there wasn't any trouble. I don't understand."

"So, I'm a liar. I've fooled around long enough with you, Miss. Give. You can't keep it from me."

"Which do you want? Hot chicken or cold turkey?"

"How's that, Ma'am? Oh, it's you, Hal. This is my pardener, Sergeant Shapiro. My name's Harmon."

"I got the sandwiches and some news, Jim."

"You might have at least told me your name, Fan."

"Never mind what every young woman should know. WHY DID YOU STEAL THAT TEN STORY BUILDING?"

"Jin, I got news."

"How's that, Hal?"

"The N3F Building isn't missing anymore."

"That's the way it goes. Wear yourself out working on a case, and the solution and glory is got by somebody else. How's your sore foot, Hal?"

"The case isn't over, yet. The N3F BUILDING IS WHERE THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING USE TO BE."

"How's that, Hal?"

"You figure it out for your self."

"I guess that makes it. There's just one out."

"Care for a drink boys? Or anything?"

"Only one thing left to do, Hal. All right now, Miss, WHY DID YOU STEAL THAT HUNDRED STORY BUILDING?"

Bum-de-de-bum-bum. Dum-de-de-dum-dum. Dum.

Technical advice for DRAGALXY came from the office of D. H. Keller, Specialist, in Abnormal Psychology.

After emerging from the musty confines of the world of the criminal and the detective as seen through the somewhat bloodshot eyes of satire, it doesn't seem to be inappropriate to discuss the field of pulp magazines here.

To me, the pulp magazine has always represented a kind of rough and loud but not entirely unlikable charm and glamour. I speak now not only of science fiction and space opera mostly identified with pulp stf, but also of Westerns, Detectives, and the other specialized and general adventure magazines in the field. That's why I've reluctantly come to the conclusion that they are going to vanish from the American scene, along with--as one fan once put it--the dime novel and the big little book and other formats that had outlived their usefulness. I didn't like to see the dime novel and big-little book go.

The last of dime novels were, of course, The Shadow, and Doc Savage. Oddly enough, the wartime paper shortage drove them back from standard pulp size to the original format of the dime novels--digest-size, in which format they soon expired. Perhaps not so oddly, The Shadow regularly carried stories of the original novel hero, Nick Carter. The magazines were put out by Street & Smith, publishers of the first paper-cover thrillers.

Probably, most of the older science fiction fans, and the ones who started in at very early ages like myself, were introduced to text stf by the big-little books of Buck Rogers, Flash Gordon, Tarzan, and the others. I remember many of them were fictionalized from the comics by R. R. Winterbotham, frequent writer for stf magazines and author of the stf comic, Cris Welkin. The main publisher of the books now devotes itself to coloring books and cheap hard-cover juveniles. A few titles in the now "Better Little Book" series are still issued in a revised and poorer format--fewer and taller pages in each one, half picture, half text, with some use of a second color in the pictures. Tarzan, alone, is the one series of stf interest, the rest western or cartoon. Odd, considering the stf boom. But, I don't think over a half dozen titles are issued a year. I have a collection of perhaps four hundred. Some of them, like the first Tarzan big little book, and Tarzan Twins, and the Buck Rogers special edition as a radio premium, are quite rare. Rare, indeed, but in existence.

Like the dime novel, and the big little book, the pulp seems to be on its way out.

Once, Argosy was a pulp with a circulation many slicks would envy, but

that couldn't happen today. Because, if a pulp develops a large circulation, the publishers immediately try to gain an even bigger circulation by turning it into a slick. In the science-fiction field, Marvel and Famous Fantastic showed that this doesn't always work out by returning to their pulp formats after some slick experiments.

Look at the example of the two oldest science fiction and fantasy magazines--Amazing Stories and Weird Tales (originally, Weird was as much a science fiction magazine as many of those who claim to be now). AS had the largest circulation in the field even with the poorest material. But she changed from pulp to what I think can be called slick without any "semi" to it--the format is just a little better than the Reader's Digest. I think the publisher and editor were more interested in improving appearance than content, although that certainly was taken into consideration. Now, I've just found out that Weird is going digest-size. In her case, I imagine it's in hopes of gaining more readers for a struggling magazine. The stf boom has helped WT very little, although if it had used two or three prominently illustrated stf stories and issue, stf readers,--- those who like fantasy--would probably go along with the rest of it.

Outside of stf, one of the oldest and best pulps, Adventure, changed to a slick companion for her sister magazine, Argosy.

It would seem that if a pulp is succeeding or failing, it must become a slick or semi-slick in hopes of better things. They have to run away from the problem instead of facing it.

The pulp reader is eternal in every time, in every generation. The reader who doesn't want subtitles and characterization too much, but wants plenty of action, vacarious adventure, and enjoyable stories is always looking for the pulp magazine. You and I may like more sophistication or both types, but there is a constant group of people who want only the first. The pulps are failing because these people aren't getting what they want and like. Pulps proudly say that it's getting hard to tell a story in a pulp from one in slick. True, but you can tell the difference in quality if you try, and certainly the format is a lot better. Pulps can't beat the slicks at their own game. Apparently, only Planet Stories knows this in the stf-pulp field.

Of course, good science fiction, such as you find in the pocket-sizers and a few pulps, doesn't belong either the stereotyped categories of the pulps or the slicks, but in the greater field of general literature. But space-opera does belong to the pulps. The problem of the survival of the space-opera magazines and the other pulps doesn't lay in better and smoother paper and trimmed edges, but in better space opera. People don't read formats--they read stories.

Speaking of stories, I guess that's the last stanza of this one. But, see you in a new bar next time. The drinks will be on me, for the sake of Harmony.....

FANTASTUFF

from Jerry Carr

HOW'S THAT AGAIN?

Harlan Ellison, in MICRO #3: "...all the stories herein (Star Science Fiction Stories), with the possible exception of A. C. Clarke's tale (which is obvious fantasy), are straight science fiction." And two and a half pages later, Ellison, still raving over Star, says: "There's a painfully typical Bradbury yarn in 'A Scent of Sarsaparilla' which is a toss-up as to whether it is a s-f yarn, a non-s-f yarn, or fantasy." Let's make up our minds, shall we, Harlan?

CARPENTER, ARE YOU THERE?

Hal Shapiro said in his PEON column last issue, "Seems to be some discussion in fandom these days about the address of one of PEON's columnists being a vacant lot out in San Francisco. Any comment from the 'Fantastuff' author?" Well, yes, I'll comment. There is some discussion in fandom these days about my address....you seem to be doing most of the discussing yourself, Hal. This stemmed from a hoax that was perpetrated by one Bob Stewart, a SanFrancisfan, a few months back. It had peculiar effects, too. Elsberry in his OOPSLANNISH column, suggested that "Bob Stewart" might be a penname for yrs truly, a device to get some extra egoboo. Dave Ish (it was you, wasn't it, Dave?) wrote back and asked who Terry Carr was. And L. W. Carpenter spent a page informing Stewart of the many

reasons he had for believing that, as Stewart had said, I was merely a penname for Peter Graham. Carpenter apparently took great delight in building up a picture of me that made me seem the type to pull the Willis Death Hoax, and offered to help Stewart pin the deed on me. Until that time, incidentally, I did not even know that Carpenter disliked me; we had been corresponding (very politely discussing things), and suddenly he broke the correspondence. Shelby Vick, in the latest CONFUSION, suggests that both Peter Graham and Bob Stewart are my pennames. I note that neither Graham nor Stewart have received the latest two issues of CONFUSION, while I have...and both PG and BS have subs. Conclusion: No, Hal, I don't live in a vacant lot. Neither does Peter Graham or Bob Stewart.

SOMETHING FISHY IN CHICAGO:

Recently, a new magazine hit the stands, called Universe Science-Fiction. The editor is listed as "John Bell", which sounds like a pseudonym to me. He claims to have been a fan of science fiction for many years, and writes something Palmerish. The backbone of the mag is striking similar to that of Palmer's Fate, and Palmer's art editor, Malcom Smith, is art editor of Universe, too. The address of the magazine is on Clark Street. What does Palmer call his publishing house, fans? Right! Are you thinking what I am?

VOICES FROM THE PAST:

BLOOMINGTON NEWS LETTER, Oct. 1949: "...had New York City won, the 1950 convention would have become a professionally dominated propaganda showcase calculated more to impress the public than to entertain fans."

And, later on in the same issue: "Rather than publish some of these magazine novels such as THE KID FROM MARS, which do not deserve the dignity of hard covers, it seems that some publisher could do a service and make a profit if he would put an s-f index into printed, hard covers. Certainly a professionally printed and bound volume, moderately priced, would sell widely enough to warrant such a venture. I do trust, if none of the present fantasy publishers wish to tackle the job, the next time some fan has the urge to establish a publishing house, he will make such an index of magazine fantasy his first project." Prophetic words, no? The first was an early trace of the argument raging through fandom right now, and the second is an on-the-button prediction of Don Day's INDEX TO THE SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE ZINES, which was published recently. Who wrote these two quotes?—why, Redd Boggs. Incidentally, he did not see any harm in a predominated convention at that time. ..Here's another nice quote for you this time from EUSIFANSO, December 25, 1949: "A prediction: from now on, as soon as any craft is reported that seems to be along the lines of a flying disk, there will be an immediate debunk from "Official Sources". Yeah.

THIS HOHUMDRUM WORLD::

Norman G. Browne's VANATIONS will fold with its sixth issue. At almost the same time, Norman will issue his new fanzine, FILLER, to be filled with just exactly that—fillers. Norman believes the only way to make a fanzine a real success is to make the fanzine really novel....Walt Willis' SLAND and HYPHEN both emerged from Ireland recently, breaking a long Willis

silence....News comes that QUANDRY #30 is to be its third annish. May-be another 100-pager?....Bob Stewart is planning on 200 pages for his first annish of BOO!--but that is six months off yet....The Little Men of Berkeley seem to be disintegrating slowly. They no longer have access to the Garden Library, and Donald Baker Moore has quit the group in disgust. Hopes for a worldcon in San Francisco seem dim now. Oh well, the Golden Gate in '58!....Anyone else besides me think that Sixth Fandom is still alive? The so-called Vanguardists of Seventh Fandom seem awfully anxious to shovel the dirt over it.

DEPARTMENT OF ODD SIMILES::

"...a second chin quivering like the bag of a frightened cow." From "Moth and Rust", Startling Stories, June, 1953.

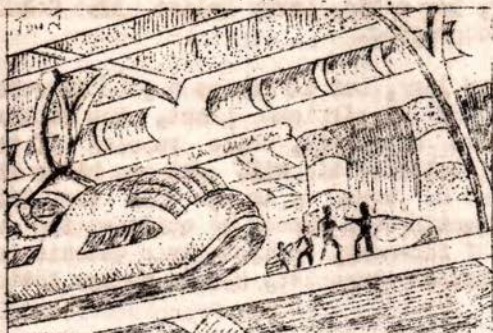
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CHAIN SMOKER:: (continued)

drug-forming habits. Since I don't like the idea of chewing my fingernails, I have temporarily abandoned the habit and have turned, very logically, to a hobby.

Within a short time, I hit upon the perfect hobby. Very soon, I'll start my own garden. Since I already have most of the essential garden tools, all I really have to buy is seed and a good insect killer. Carrots, broccoli, lettuce, tomatoes, string-beans, potatoes, radishes, corn, and a touch of arsenic should round the list out.

I think it will set me up perfectly, don't you?



THE FAN PRESS

— John Ledyard —

BOO! May, 1953. Monthly, 5¢, 12/50¢. Bob Stewart, 274 Arlington St., San Francisco, California. Mimeographed.

Since I reviewed the first issue of BOO! in the last issue of PEON, Bob has put out four more issues of it, and I'm happy to say that it has improved greatly. The second issue was large sized, hektographed, with material by Stan Serxner, Ray Thompson, Terry Carr, Don Cantin, David Rike, and yours truly. With the third issue, Bob had a mimeograph. Material here was by Carr, Orma McCormick, Thompson, Larry Balint, Cantin, Rike, etc. The fourth issue had a white-on-black cover by Ray Thompson, and added William D. Knapheide as columnist. Edmund Davidson had a good article in that issue describing the education of a non-fan...in fact, that's what he called it. The fifth issue, the latest, came just about a week after the fourth. It has a four-color mimeographed cover by Terry Carr, new columns by David Rike and Peter Graham, a batch of cartoons by Rike, and all the regular features. One feature of BOO! that I like is its hektographed art section in multi-color.

ECLIPSE. April, 1953. Bi-monthly, 5¢, no sub rate listed. Ray Thompson, 410 South 4th St., Norfolk, Nebraska. Dittoed.

This is the second issue of Eek, as Ray calls it. Contains columns by Marion Cox and Bob Stewart, articles by Lew A. Gaff, Rory Faulkner, and stories by Bob Warner, George Viksnins, and Joel Nydahl. It's a pretty nice lineup, and the material is good, too. You might try a copy.

THE PLAGUE. Vol. 1, No. 1. Free to members of the Connecticut Science Fiction League. David Bates, 840 Asylum Ave., Hartford 5, Conn. Mimeo'd.

This issue, although dated September-October of 1952, was just mailed out, I believe. It is just a little bit larger than postcard size, with poor to fair mimeographing. The format could stand quite a bit of improvement, and the editor, after a little bit more experience could probably put out a fair fanzine. The material inside is filled with the editor's efforts, and while Bates writes good, his material is rather dated. I suggest the editor be contacted for sub rates, if you're interested enough—I'm not.

FANTASTA. April, 1953. Irregularly, 5¢, 6/25¢. Larry Balint, 3255 Golden Ave., Long Beach 6, Kalifornia. Mimeographed.

This is a small item, only eight pages long, but it leaves a good impression. Larry Anderson tells how to grow an airplane plant, Bob Stewart gives a few predictions of the future ("In 1957, while running off the last page of the OOPSLANNISH, Gregg Calkins' tie will get caught on the handle of his mimeo and he'll become so wound up in his work that OOPS will come out one week late."), Don Cantin begs zineds to quit putting out new zines, David Bates gives a bit of fan-news, Balint gives quickie reviews of fanzines, and the readers scream themselves hoarse in the letter column. This is developing.

FIENDETTA. March, 1953. Five times per year, 15¢, 3/40¢, 8 for one dollar. Charles Wells, 405 E. 62nd St., Savannah, Ga. Dittoed.

This is the third issue of fta, and it's the best so far. Redd Boggs has an article telling about a lot of old manuscripts he has laying around that will never be printed, Harlan Ellison discusses various types of science fiction readers, Russ Watkins and Dave E. N. Parker take a fling with new columns, and Wells conducts an editorial and a letter column. Aside from the fact that this could be a little neater, FIENDETTA is a fanzine that I can recommend heartily.

MICRO-. No. 3. Every six weeks, 10¢, 3/25¢. Don Cantin, 214 Bremer, Manchester, N. H. Mimeographed.

This is a quarter-sized fanzine, and hence suffers from the fact that all its material must be compact. Outstanding items of the issue are a book-review column by Harlan Ellison and an article by Bob Tucker on how to write micro-articles for quarter-sized zines. The rest of it is enjoyable enough, but struck me as being rather inconsequential.

NOTE. March, 1953. Bi-monthly, 5¢, 6/25¢. Robert Peatrowsky, Box 634, Norfolk, Nebraska. Dittoed.

This fanzine is developing rapidly. The cover is by Naaman Peterson, and is colored by hand--a really nice job. Peatrowsky has captured such fan-writers as Rich Bergeron and Don Cantin for this issue, along with quite a bit of material from other, lesser-known, contributors. Rich Lupoff has a feature called "Pal Maxy Science Fiction" in which he reviews three new sf books: "The Illustrated Ham", "Fishin': Interplanetary", and "The Marionette Masters". In addition to all this, there is a drawing on practically every page, many of them in two colors.

SEVAGRAM. April, 1953. Irregularly, 10¢, 3/25¢...free to servifans and British subjects on request. Van Splawn, 4942 West Pine Blvd., St. Louis, Missouri. Mimeographed.

This is a rather small first issue, but it promises of much better things to come. There is a fiction story, "In Man's Image", that would have been

better unpublished; reprinted articles by Redd Boggs and Paul Carter, poetry by Orma McCormick and W. E. H. Price, and artwork by Price and the editor. Mimeographing is excellent.

VULCAN #2. Quarterly, 15¢, 4/50¢. Peter Graham, Publisher, 138 Laidley St., San Francisco, California. Terry Carr, Editor, 134 Cambridge St., San Francisco, California. Mimeographed.

This is the second of the dual efforts of Graham and Carr, and is muchly improved over the postcard size of VULCAN #1. The mimeographing is very greatly improved also. This issue contains stories by Terry Carr, Gilbert E. Monicucci, Emil Portale, stories by Carr and Graham, Graham, and Carr, poems by Carr, Davis, and Graham, and features by Graham, Carr, Roger Sayers, and a few cartoons by Maurice Lemus. The cover is by guess who? Yep, Terry Carr. In fact, although this published by Graham, you might do call it Carr's throughout by a nose! Frankly, I enjoyed most of this zine and look forward to future issues. These San Franciscans must have a lot of energy what with all their fanzines, articles, etc., appearing in the mail almost every day. Recommended.

BARSOOMIAN. Summer, 1953. Quarterly, no price listed. Joseph W. Miller, 19 Newcastle Road, Rochester 10, New York. Mimeographed.

This is one of the neatest little fanzines that I've come across in a good bit of time. It is published in half-size (5½x8½), neatly mimeographed in a dark shade of brown ink, with justified margins--all showing evidence of some good and hard work on the part of the editor. As the title implies, it is devoted to Edgar Rice Burroughs, although it appears that the editor is beginning to make more of a generalized zine out of it, as he is asking for other types of contributions. This has articles concerning Burroughs and his works by Jonathan Hale, Hal McClain, David Prince, Wilkie Conner John F. Cook, and the editor. Strongly recommended.

THE TRADE AND ADZINES::

For the fan who is trying to dispose of his collection of magazines and books, or who is trying to build up his collection, three fan publishers offer excellent services. First of all, there is the nationally famous SCIENCE FICTION ADVERTISER, 1745 Kenneth Road, Glendale, California, which is the forerunner of all the adzines. However, as the editor states, if you feel that his rates are too high, you should contact K. Martin Carlson who publishes the KAYMAR TRADER, 1028 Third Avenue South, Moorhead, Minn. I believe that the K-T gives the best service to the average collector.... However, there is another newcomer to the tradezine field, THE MARTIN TRADER, published by Thomas Carrigan, 179 Sydney St., Dorchester 25, Mass. He offers a 600 distribution to fans in the U. S. and also outside of the country.....Any of the above fanzine editors will be glad to help you fix up your advertisement, and I believe that you will find the low cost of ads will amaze you, especially with the results they seem to get. Subscription prices and advertisement rates should be requested from the editor, as there isn't enough room here to give them in detail.

PEON NOTES
(continued)

I know this is all a pipe dream, but who knows, someone reading this issue of PEON might be a genius in disguise and take this idea and work it to completion. If so, I think I ought to get one of the first sets for free, don't you?

PEON

As you can tell when you read Hal Shapiro's column in this issue of PEON, it is the last one you will see here. I was very sorry to find this out, for Hal is an excellent columnist. However, I can understand only too well his problem. That is mainly why you don't see much by me in any other fanzines--not because I don't want to write for them, but because, with my official duties in the Navy, three sons to raise, a house and grounds to take care of, I have very little extra time for myself. What few moments I can find is devoted to PEON and the correspondence necessary in editing it. At any rate, Hal, we're very sorry to see you leave. Good luck to you in college, and if you ever find time to write for PEON again, the space is yours.

This brings up the question of a replacement column. I'd like to hear from any of you who would like to write this sort of column for PEON. I warn you right now, I'm a hard person to please with a column. Jim Harmon can bear witness to this fact, as he is pretty mad at me in making him re-write his last column four times.

This also ties in with the following. PEON's pages are always open to practically any type of article or fiction, as long as it ties in with science fiction, fantasy, or fandom. If you have an idea for an article or story, please let me hear from you about it. I'm sure we can work it out together.

PEON

I was recently fortunate in being able to attend the FanVet Convention in New York. The convention was to raise funds for this worthy organization, and I'm very pleased to say that I think they did get much a bit of help that Sunday. I had to leave before the auction started, due to train schedules, but from what I hear, it was a huge success. The program was well planned, and the guest speakers on the panels presented themselves very well. Arthur C. Clarke gave a very entertaining slide-illustrated lecture on his trip out west, showing pictures of various sf and fantasy authors in their natural habitats. Perhaps the best part of the program was the panel of editors of the various magazines, enlivened as usual by Evelyn Paige Gold from Galaxy (who can add to the beauty of any panel even though it has Jerry Bixby on it!). The editors answered questions from the floor, and I thought one of the best rebuttals came from the audience, when Sam Moskowitz, defending vigorously Science Fiction Plus, said they had spent about \$3,000.00 on one cover painting alone. The fan spoke up:

"If you had spent half that much on the inside instead of the outside, perhaps you'd have a half-way decent reading magazine!" Amen.

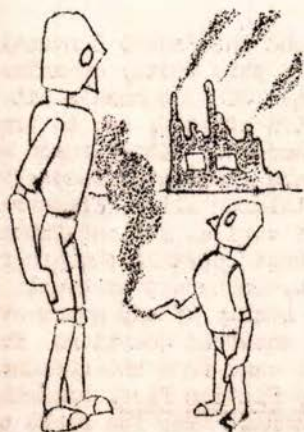
PEON

I'd like to call your attention to a project being carried out by one of the most active stf clubs in America today. I'm referring, of course, to the Atlanta Science-Fiction Organization who are preparing to publish in hard cover, Sam Moskowitz's history of fandom, "The Immortal Storm". The book will be 8x5 in size, contain nearly 200 pages, and more than 150,000 words with lots of pictures of fans and fan-events. It will be in a limited edition, and if you order now, you can get the pre-publication price of \$3.95; after publication, you'll have to shell out five bucks. I most sincerely recommend that you order your copy now (publication date is about two months off) from Carson F. Jacks, 713 Coventry Road, Decatur, Georgia. This will soon be a collector's item, so be warned in advance.

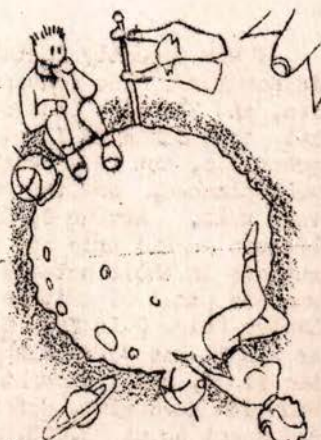
PEON

Well, friends, that just about winds up another issue of PEON. As usual, I'd like to have your comments on it, and suggestions for future issues. Remember what I said before, I'd like to hear from any and all of you about articles and stories, and if you have a poem or two 'bouncing around, send it along. If I owe you a letter (and I do have a five inch pile of letters to answer), please be patient with me--I'll get to it just as soon as I can. And to those of you who have been with PEON for these past five years (this issue marks the end of the fifth full year of publishing PEON by yours truly), thanks a million for your encouragement and support. I guess PEON will be around for another five years, and probably more, as long as I get such support and encouragement.

Next issue will be out in August, and I'll see you then. Lee



"Behave yourself! You're not at home now."



"Now what do we do?"