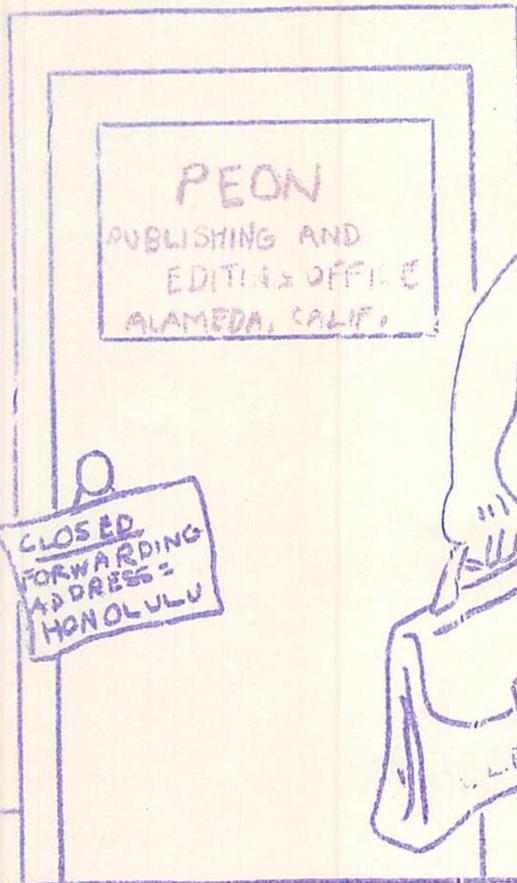


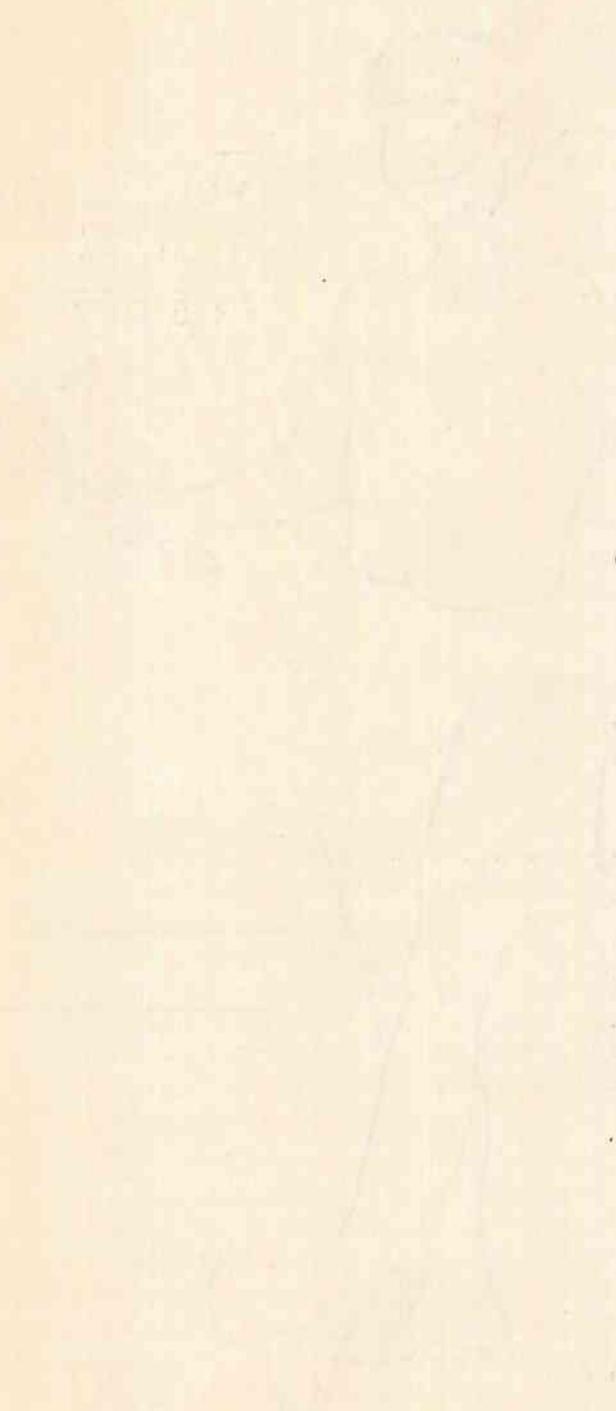
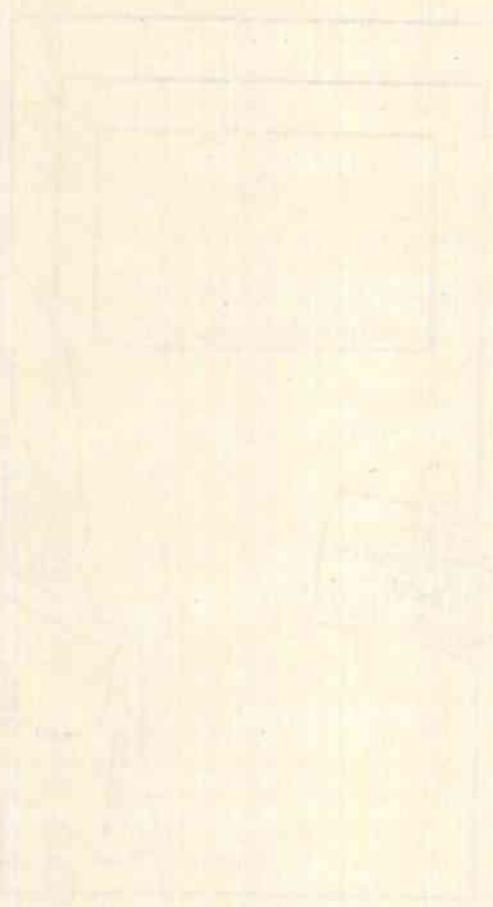
PEON



march '50

Jerry

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INDEX

UNTIL TOMORROW	3
Larry Saunders	
OUR HERO	6
Jack Cordes	
THE CIRCULAR FILE	7
Roy Tackett	
HARMONY	9
Jim Harmon	
MEETING OF MINDS	13
The Readers	
NIGHT SOUNDS COME TO ME HAUNTED HOUSE	19
Henry Andrew Ackerman	
PEON NOTES	2
The Editor	

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peon notes

Alpha and all that! This issue comes to you with a new address, and one that we hope will last two or three years. As you probably have guessed by now, what with Jerri's masterpiece (?) on the cover, we're in Hawaii. Barber's Point, Oahu, T. H., to be exact. We sent out a one-pager the middle of January telling all about it, so it's needless to go in to all that once more. Sufficient to say, where the Navy says, the editor goes!

Had a very nice trip out. For once, I deserted the Navy's usual means of transportation, the lumbering transport, and flew here aboard a spick and span new C-97, of the U. S. Air Force. It's one of those plush-plush jobs; a strato-cruiser, with a lounge on the bottom deck and really comfortable seats top-side. However, I must say that the Navy does one thing better (if nothing else) in that we have pretty WAVE hostesses, instead of army (male) personnel. Not that I'm griping about the army personnel who were members of the ship's crew. Not at all. They were the nicest

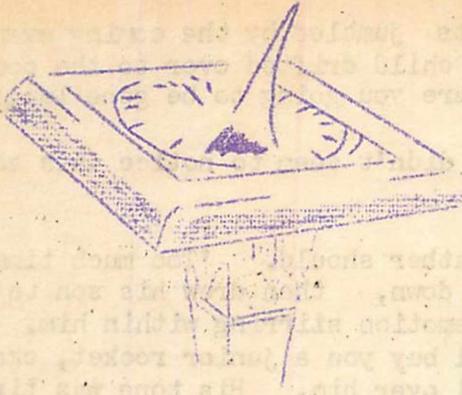
nicest bunch of persons you could meet. From the plane commander, Colonel R. L. Curtice, on down, the crew members did everything in their power to make it a nice flight. Special mention should and does go to S/Sgt R. L. Kennison, Sgt W. L. Simmer, and Cpl A. A. Russo, who were the flight attendants. And of course, S/Sgt Charles H. Huffman, the radio operator, who was very courteous, and took pleasure in showing his radio equipment. The whole trip made me feel glad that the Air Force and Navy are allies (it says here)!

That's not all the flying that your editor has been doing in the past four weeks. During the last half of my pre-embarkations leave, Mrs. Riddle, the two boys, and myself flew to New York City for a five day visit with relatives. While there, naturally enough, I just had to go around and visit the various publishing offices of my favorite prozines and see several of the fans there in that area. Might say that I looked in at several of the second-hand magazines shops around the hotel on West 44th. Oi, the prices they asked! They should drop dead, before I'd pay those prices. Outside, of that fly in the soup, the visits were very nice. Perhaps the best time of all was when I visited the new offices of Planet Stories, after tracking them down from the 50's to West 42nd Street, and met the new editor, Jerome Bixby. Had a nice two/three hour chat with him; and with the rest of my readers, wish him the best of luck in the future with the new job. Met and talked to San Herwin up at Standard, and congratulated him on the

UNTIL TOMORROW

LARRY SAUNDERS

I.N.P. SECURITY REPORT: Subject
Matter: Project K-610E.



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The recent destruction of Project K-610E, publicly known as the first interstellar spaceship, and which led to the consequent death of 532 officers and crewmen, is being thoroughly investigated by the Intra-Security Council. No damaging evidence was unearthed, but certain reliable sources claim of plots against this nation, this being the opening of a huge campaign of intensive sabotage. Public statements were issued by numerous topranking officials, none more severely expressed than ICCDC's official spokesman, who said, "...one of the blackest and most cowardly deed ever perpetrated upon a friendly nation...we will..undoubtedly..declaration of war....." Similiar statements were viewed by Senator Hayes who is a well known anit--formest, and the Board of Economic Developments. The outlook is extremely critical. Many factions are pressing for an immediate declaration of war. Feelings are at fever pitch...war is inevitable...mobile and space units are being fitted for immediate action... "...victory for us is only a matter of weeks" says War Secretary Cainn.

She smiled, with that special smile that was saved for occasions such as this. Her husband, Bob, now holding her hand so grimly, so tense with deep emotion, was shipping off in the new multi-billion dollar atomic spaceship in a matter of minutes.

There was so much to be said, so little time to do so. As the papers had declared in their loud verbal headlines, there was entirely too much risk, especially so for a married man.

'Yes, there was much risk,' she thought, 'but this was Bob's life. I wouldn't change it, not that I want. Let him believe in me, why h u r t him now? Kiss him, hold him tight--Bob and Caren together--for the last time. It doesn't matter, now, nor will it later.' She pressed her arms tighter around his neck, with a fierceness that surprised him.

He held her close, for the hundreth time it must have been--each time feeling like the first, and last. She was dear to him, immensely so, but so was deep space. He had little choice between the two he loved so dear, but his wife had been understanding--another point that drew her closer to him.

Suddenly, as if the world of saneness had gone mad, a shrieking crescendo of noise echoed and re-echoed through the night air. The huge ship was being tested, being made ready for her maiden voyage to the limitless stars. Orange lights flickered brightly, a huge shape loomed faintly against the blacker night.

Bob held his wife closer, his thoughts jumbled by the coming events. Then, from Caren's small tube-like car, a child drifted over to the couple and said in a high soft whisper, "Daddy, are you going to be gone long?"

Caren stiffened in Bob's arms, but he didn't seem to notice this as he looked down at his son.

He had never known Bob, Jr., as a father should. 'Too much time in space,' he thought. He kneeled awkwardly down, then drew his son to his side. "Not too long sonny," he replied, emotion stirring within him. "We can have great fun when I come back. I'll buy you a junior rocket, okay?" His son's face lit up, then a shadow fell over him. His tone was tired, dejected. "I guess so, but I never see you for a long time, and I wanted you to stay home with Mom and me. It gets lonesome."

Standing by herself in the gathering moonlight, Caren made a decision. Not really a hasty one, since she had thought it completely out months beforehand. Now, from her husband's actions, she definitely decided that her plan must be carried out.

It hurt her deeply to see the look of fleeting love pass shyly between father and son. She was glad she had planned for this. Why, it was actually easy, emotionally and otherwise.

Stepping over to her torpedo-shaped car, she pressed the baggage button. Instantly a small section near the black slid open, revealing a large storage compartment. She reached in and drew out an oblong shaped box. Around its sides were wrapped various ribbons. On the front there was a card with an inscription that read: "Do Not Open Till Ship Is In Flight. To Bob--with all my emotion and devotion from Caren."

It had cost her much time, money, and effort to sedure this package. But it was worth it, she thought to herself.

Before she closed the compartment, she remembered something else. She precured it, then put it in her handbag. That could wait--for the present.

Caren hoped she wouldn't appear overly nervous as she gracefully slipped over to the two figures whose features were brightly distinguished by the moon overhead.

She smiled, bitterly, with a tinge of triumph as Bob (silly fool) with one arm about his son, pointed to the gigantic ship, and in a voice vibrating with pride, said, "She's a great ship, sonny, and maybe when you're a little older, you'll go with me together on the same ship." (God forbid, she thought.)

His son nodded assent vigorously.

At that moment a shrill wail clamored out over the darkness. The call to stations. The father unconsciously hugged his son tighter, then turnd slowly to his wife.

"I'll see you soon, Caren." his voice was husky.

"Yes," she said dully. She tearfully handed him the package which he accepted in a dazed, confused manner. He almost dropped it. 'Blunderer' Caren thought, although she was quite puzzled over the tears.

With one last passionate goodbye and a look of deep sorrow, Bob vanished in the direction of the ship.

The wailing ceased.

Its shrillness was replaced by a monstrous roar that shook the ground they were standing on. The roaring was increased until sound was one terrifying existence. It was almost tangible. Then, the roaring slowly decreased in vibration, it rapidly became fainter, until silence once again ruled the night air.

Caren realized what she must do. Reaching in her handbag, she took out the black object she had recently put there. Waiting approximately until ten minutes had passed since the spaceship left, she pressed a small lever on the object. From somewhere--out in deep space--a bruising, eye-throbbing light illuminated the world as a giant sun might do.

It was done.

Caren sobbed softly to herself.

Five hundred and thirty-two men, alive an energetic one moment, were separate atoms the next, scattered throughout the space.

No sound of an explosion reached the ears of the watchers below, but all who saw knew what had happened. It was stunning.

Caren, realizing faintly what she had done, staggered to the car and collapsed in the seat, sobbing hysterically, with mixed joy, sorrow, and terror. She felt nauseated, and leaned back gasping for air. Her mind whirled in a state of blind confusion.

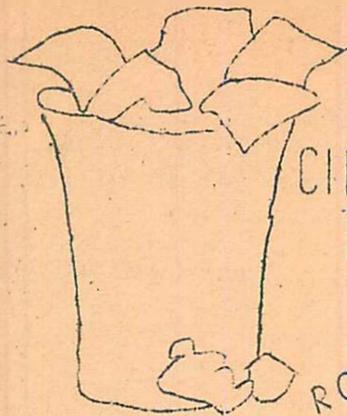
Then, once more she was in control of herself. Her emotions subsided. No one would ever know. How could they? Not that she cared if they did. But she was safe. Everything was going to be alright.

Caren noted with alarm that her son had been addressing her--for how long?---"everything okay, Mom?" His eyes were wide with concern. She hastened to assure him that everything was alright.

It was finished.

Caren realized vaguely the subsequent events that led to - this. Her mind hurt so to use. Concentrate. She hated her husband, she thought. No--not, she didn't hate Bob. He was a fine husband. But he was taking her son's love away from her. She trembled at the idea, her body shook with uncontrollably fury. She gritted her teeth when she recalled how he had put his arm around her son.

After all, she thought calmly, he was all mine now. No one else is left to take his love from me. These thoughts tended to lighten her mind



THE CIRCULAR FILE

by
ROY TACKETT

Editor Riddle is a slave driver. He gave this poor sick columnist only a month in which to prepare a column. If you can call this a column. I like the title of this thing. "The Circular File." All sorts of crud collects herein. If you have any odd or unusual items knocking about the house and decide that you have no better use for them, you might toss them into the Circular File. Otherwise, I shall have to resort to using my brain and I want to save that for an emergency. Been saving it for years now.

ITEM: "World Aflame" by Leonard Engel and Emanuel Filler (Dial Press, 1947). Ran across this slim volume sub-titled "The Russian--American War of 1950" while searching the bookstores for a copy of the "Necromonicon." "World Aflame" is a newspaperman's report to the people on the Great War. The war began on 13 May 1950 when the world's mightiest nations began a battle to the death with an aerial dog-fight over the Black Sea. On the 14th of May, 143 Russian cities are atom-bombed. The Red Army overruns Europe and China and the report tells of one of America's most costly bunders---the quick alliance with and rearmament of Germany. To Europe, anything is preferable to an rearmd Germany, and so the USSR controls the continent. Only Britain remains in the American sphere. The report tells of the annihilation of the Allied Forces in Europe and of the Allied invasion of the Caucasus,

and of the eventual retraction therefrom; of the atom-bombing of American cities by planes and rockets; of Arctic warfare and tropical rebellion. The authors tell of how every conceivable weapon is brought into play; how gas is used more as a psychological weapon than as a casualty agent. Attack and counter-attack with such bacteriological weapons as influenza, bubonic plague, scarlet fever, cancer and poliomyelitis, and finally the crowning horror of radioactive dust which poisons not only the present but the future. "World Aflame" is not a pleasant book. In 126 short pages Mr. Engle and Mr. Filler have brilliantly described the horror of total war. And not only of war but of the effects of war. The mass hysteria of the people as they flee the cities in the wake of the first bombings. Of the squallor and dirt of a world where soap can be purchased only from the black market at \$2 per cake, and a hot bath is unknown. A world where electricity is to be had only two hours a day; where food is rationed by calories; 1350 per day for white-collar workers, 1700 per day for manual workers. Truly, this is not a pleasant book. It is a book to frighten and cause lack of sleep. A book to be read by everyone. It could happen.

OVERHEARD. One of the local wits commenting on the four equations of Einstein's new theory: "I could have told them that years ago. It all adds up to nothing."

RUMOR: That Ed Cox is slipping. He did not have a letter in the February TWS.

ODE: To the Editor of PEOM upon his leaving for a tour of the Pacific.....Dear Editor, please, hurry back...your leaving darkens this vale..besides to give you this column now...I have to send it by airmail..and that costs six cents.

Anybody care to join me in a crusade to revive real honest-to-ghod bug eyed monsters?

quarterly and the forthcoming annual. His plans for future issues of SS and TWS seem to be encouraging---and should be, what with the material he has to work with, he should be a very successful competitor to ASF...One of the highlights of the visit was meeting Jimmie Taurasi, editor of FANTASY TIMES, who took me up to the editorial offices of Super Science...Had a very nice visit with Dave and Virginia Mason. Got a promise of another feature from him for the May issue of PEON over a bottle of beer about one eye...Another highlight on the trip was a hour-long chat with my fellow townsman (From Fort Smith, Arkansas), Oscar J. Friend, who promised rather vaguely to do something for PEON in the future. He introduced me to Murray Leinster very briefly, and that's that!...Don't know if you are very interested in this sort of stuff about my trips, but to me they were fun!

FUTURE REFERENCE FILE MEMO:::Is your subscription up to date for PEON? If not, you'd better get busy and renew it in time for the anniversary issue coming out in two months---the next issue, to be exact. I'm not telling much about what will be in it, but if present plans work out, you'll find such names represented in it as Anthony Boucher, J. Francis McComas, E. H. Price, Jack Riggs, H. S. Weatherby, Dave Mason, Roy Tackett, Jim Harmon, Ed Cox, to mention but a few. And of course, "Meeting of Minds." All in all it will be a gala issue, around 40-50 pages, and well worth the price of a whole year's subscription. Priced singly, it will cost 25¢. Better renew your sub today if it's gone by the wayside.

BAD NEWS DEPARTMENT:::Sorry, but I'm forced to knock off the 50% discount on subs to NFFF members. I've tried to hold on to this discount, but just can't make ends meet even part of the way as it is. In the future, PEON will cost 15¢ each, 9 issues for \$1.00, but I will give you NFFF members-12 issues for that buck.

REMINDER MEMO:::Are you or your letter listed in this issue's "Meeting of Minds"? You're missing a lot of fun, if you haven't written a letter to this place of hair-letting-down. Besides, look at that two buck prize you might cop--or the one dollar one for the second best letter. 'Nuff said?

APOLOGIES (and we've got several) FILE:::First, to E. H. Price, for misspelling his middle name on the by-line in his article in the December issue of PEON. He's never said anything about it, but I take full blame and offer humble apologies...and second, to Jim Harmon, for mis-mailing his copy of PEON with his first column. As usual, Jim let me (and the rest of you readers) know about it in his usual manner!...finally, third, to all of you who have written, and received no answer. Please bear with me---due to all these transfers, mail has stacked up so that I'm just beginning to be able to make a dent in it. And to make matters worse, there was a batch of mail waiting for me, when I arrived in Hawaii, the other day! Believe me, you'll hear from me some of these days soon.

P. S. . . . I'd recommend that when you write out here, you'd use air mail--it gets here twice or three times as fast quicker than surface mail, and only takes three cents more.

See you next issue.

Lee

HARMONY

by
jim harmon

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A PUZZLED COLUMNIST:::You may have read the words "...Jim Harmon failed to get through with his column for this issue..." in Editor Riddle's editorial last issue. Did you wonder about them? I did. For instance, at this writing, I don't know whether this is my first column for you, or my second. No, my memory is excellent--in fact, spectacular. I know I wrote you one before, but I don't know whether it was published or not. The December issue of PEON is the first I've received in half a year. A rather shady way to run a publishing company I must say. Just because I have never paid for any. I trust if my previous column has appeared in PEON, I will receive a copy of that issue. I say I trust..oh well you can read, Editor Riddle. After all, just because I never paid... what do you expect from a lad who's been unemployed for 16 years--17 this April 21, my birthday. Hmm? Well, money's always nice.

However, to take a closer look at this situation (through my Tom Mix Combination Magnifying Glass-Telescope-Secret Compartment-Duck Call Bullet) it seems that only two things could have happened. Either my other column was lost in the mails or the PEON containing it was lost in the mails. In either case, the inefficiency of the U.S. Mails is to blame. But comes the Revolution eh Comrade?

Always I tell the peasants--Revolt! Revolt is what I always say. And some day, I revolt. I'm one revolting fellow, eh, keed?

A DIFFERENT ASPECT TO UTOPIA:::What is Utopia? Why, any fan can give

you the answer. That's a place where everybody reads science-fiction---where everybody gets a couple of fanzines in every mail--where everybody talks beams, mutants, and Astoundings. Let's take a look at that world. Let us!

You wake up in this new world.. You open your big ugly face. You let it hang that way. Your wonderful collection has been touched. Touched is hardly the word for it. It has been fairly let go at with one hell of a haymaker. You leap out of bed and run over to it. You see small rather insignificant portions have been torn from the covers. What could they have on them? Your great mind works fast. Of course, it's those small, fairly sexless lads, the heroes! Sobbing into your bosom (a neat trick) you go downstairs. Then, you give an agonized scream. Those sections of your mutilated covers are pasted around the walls of the kitchen. Is this some mad plan to drive you mad thought up by the other fellow in your latest feud? Then the woman in the house says, "Aren't all those boys in those scientific costumes cute? They make a lovely border!"

"Yes," you stammer, "but why my stf.er, science-fiction collection when you could have cut some pictures out of some Buck Rogers comic strips?"

"Really, Dear," she replies. "After all, comparing stf with, agh Buck Rogers!"

"Stf? STF? What-what about-it?" you ask in astonishment.

"Stf is significant!" is the reply.

You collapse into a near-by chair. "Is it?" you ask, weakly.

"Of course," she answers, "and, dear, since you're the oldest fan I know, I've arranged for you to

give a talk before the girls.

The girls?" you mutter. "Those old....alright, alright. I'm going out for a walk."

Once outside, you prepare to relax. Then you see IT! You give a horrified scream, and clutch the coat sleeve of a passerby. "Dear God," you whisper, "what's happening to that woman's head?"

"Huh?" he asks. "That's a Lensman hat, of course. It coils and uncoils and changes color."

"Oh..." you say as you look at the man's newspaper. "The Chicago Fantasy News Tribune...a combination of the Tribune and FN?"

"Of course" is the answer. "Nobody reads the Trib anymore so..."

You stagger away from the stranger, and head updown. On the main drag, you see one sign glaring from everywhere--FANTASY BARGAINS!

You wander into one of the book stores, and pick up a 1947 Astounding. You ask the price, only to hear, "That's \$10.50, in cash."

"But," you say, "This used to be no more than 50 cents."

"You nuts or something, Pal?" the clerk asks kindly. "Everybody buys stf now. The prices are way up. Anyway," he indicates a sign "These prices are approved by Jasper T. Honeyfinger."

"Who's he?"

"Why, the number one Fan, of course."

"What happened to Ackerman?"

"Who's he?"

"Tell me," you gasp, "who are the next B.N.F.?"

"Well, there's Fritzdinglevich and Mortonhavenhammerheadson."

"Mortonhavenhammerheadson?"

"Yeah, good ole Mort."

"But what about Ackerman, Kennedy, Riddle, and Sneary? I used to know all the big name fan personally. They were my pals, my buddies!"

"Haw-haw," he laughs fiendishly and says, "they ain't now!"

"No," you sob, as you leave.

Once home, you turn on the radio to a soap opera to take your mind off your troubles and onto someone elses'. But what do you hear? "Now, we present Just Plain Oona and Jick, the story of two people living in the future, that asks the question...."

You stifle a scream and turn the dial swiftly, but instead of Young Doctor Malone, you get Old Doc Hethusleah. It's hopeless!

A movie, you think desperately, of course. Moments later, you are talking to a girl in the ticket booth as the signs are being changed. You ask, "Is there a good murder mystery on?"

She stares at you. "Aren't you a fan?"

"A murder mystery fan."

"Ha-ha," she laughs. "You read detective stories? You must be nuts!"

"What?"

"Well, don't you know everyone reads science fiction?" she begins, but you aren't listening. You are looking at the sign they've just put up, which reads: "Samuel Goldwin presents 'The Grey Lensman'

starring Errol Flynn, Greer Garson, Montgomery Clift, Susan Hayward, Rita Hayworth, Ann Sheridan, Ann Sothern, Boris Karloff, Lionel Barrymore, Vincent Price, and 2000 Beautiful Dancing Girls In Technicolor."

This is too much! You slide silently to the sidewalk.

After a while, you hear a voice from far-away, saying..."My, he's certainly taking a long Null-A pause."

When you wake, it is late night and all is quiet. You sit on the curb and silently reflect on the situation. It is no more exclusive to be a fan-everybody is. It takes the kick out of it for everyone to be a fan. No one thinks you're crazy anymore. You don't know all the fans and you couldn't possibly get all of the thousands of fanzines published. Prices on fantasy are way out of your reach. Science fiction is being perverted in all forms. It has become the thing to do to become a stf fan. Somehow you feel very lonely.

But relax! It isn't really happening; it's pure flight of fancy. But did you ever stop to think that science-fiction is becoming more popular everyday and someday this picture may come true....?

A WORD TO THE WISE::Lately, various authors of westerns, adventure, and historical novels, and occasionally science-fiction or fantasy have been telling us how science-fiction and fantasy should be written and how fandom should be run. They seem to think that just having their names on the membership list of the noted Fantasy Fans of Fandom of the Lower Slabovian Fantasy Readers Club makes them just a big fan names as Ackerman or Sneary or any of us. I don't happen to agree with them, but perhaps you do. In such case, I will reoutline the

general line most of these boys hand out:

(a) Fans are teen-agers. Included in this is implication that teen-agers are morons, despite the fact that surveys show the most of humans have the highest I.Q. during this period; overly sex-conscious (that's rather senseless---a high powered sex-drive is a sign of a healthy body and mind); and go in for horseplay. The last part is admitted, but I can see little to complain about on this count.

(b) Fans are screwballs. We have been called this so often and for so long it hardly makes us burst into tears. Fandom can show a record of accomplishments and intelligent action which, I think, any fair-minded person would admit belied that statement.

(c) Science-fiction is tripe. A matter of opinion. Their opinions don't seem to agree with everyone's opinions.

(d) They can write better stf than anyone else and science fiction should be written the way they write it. I won't remark on their lack of modesty since I am not a modest person myself. However it seems that if they were such great stf writers they would be recognized as such. As for everyone writing as they do, the stereo-typing of anything has never improved it any.

(d) Fans have delusions. Or haven't you heard, boys, that's what makes us human beings. Now, really, if we want to think that stf is the greatest stuff ever written and that we're the smartest people that ever lived, what harm does it do? It's all in fun (to use a trite phrase).

All in all, these authors telling us how to run fandom is like an construction expert telling some kids playing in the sand how to build their sand castle. We're in fandom for fun, and anyone who does not like fandom has the privilege of getting out. (NEXT PAGE, PLEASE)

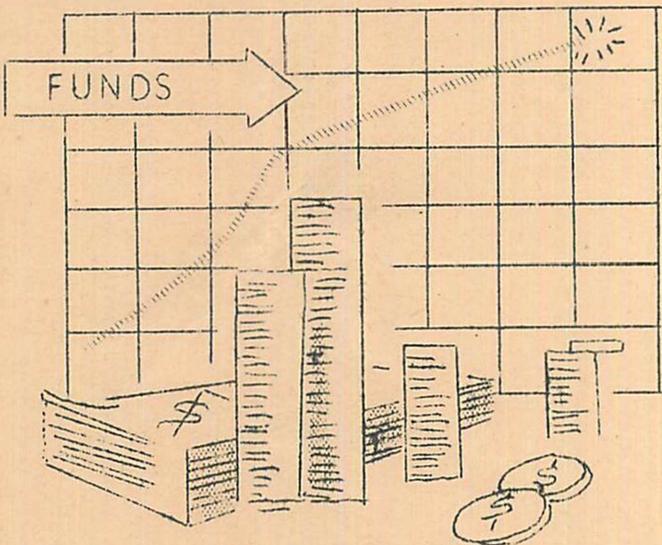
Personally, I would very carefully take these writers and very carefully stuff them in a small, net, circular hole and plug it up. But don't worry. They'd get out all right; they're some of the biggest bums I know.

A PARTING SHOT: IF Art Rapp hadn't edited part of my letter out of a recent POSTWARP, I would have been one of the first to reveal that Superman and Lois Lane were married. I also said that I could picture a scene some months after

the wedding day. Clark Kent is pacing the hospital corridor. When the doctor comes out, Clark asks, "Is it a boy or a girl?"

"Darned if I know," replies the doctor. "It just flew out of the window."

Well, I'll have to sound taps for Harmony this time, but I'd like to leave you with this thought: Many a guy with a column tries to bring down the house, but seldom finds much support!!

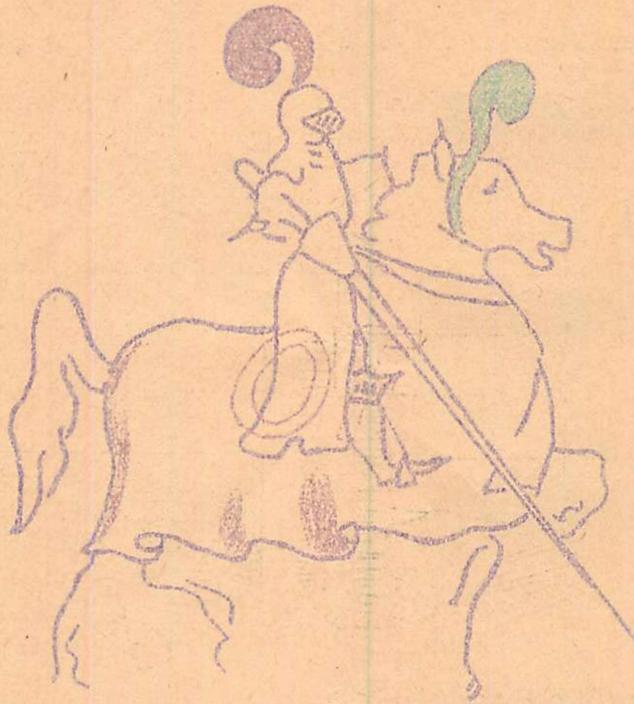


LET'S HELP OUT---

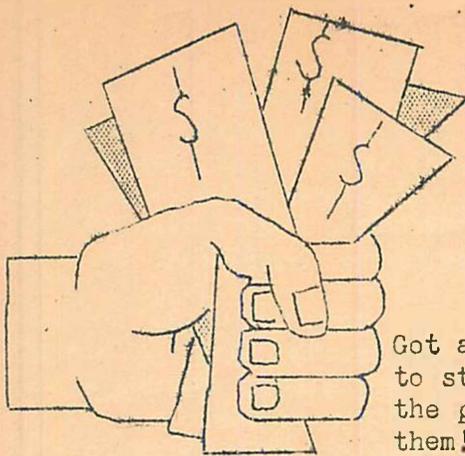
Have you sent your dollar for membership to the NORWESCON Committee as yet? The last convention was a huge success, and this one will be better and bigger in all ways. But, planning on the program for a convention is always hard--and especially so for the planners, unless they know how much money they're going to have to use. So, let's all help out the NORWESCON Committee, by sending our dollars today to:

NORWESCON,
Box 8517,
Portland, Oregon.

MEETING



MINDS



it's yours---

.....practically for the asking! Each issue we will give three bucks to the writers of the two best letters appearing in "Meeting of Minds," as judged by the readers of PEON. Two dollars will be given to the best letter writer, and one dollar to the writer of the second best letter!

Got anything to say? Want to let off steam? Want to start a rip-roaring feud? Then this is just the place for you. You write the letters--we print them! Letters should be addressed to the editor.

ROY TACKLETT

"Meeting of the Minds" returns. Goody. More egoboo. I get to see my name in the letter column too. (Almost poetry, that).

You are to be congratulated on the fact that PEON remains consistently good. The December 1949 issue was number 11 and there has not been a bad one in the lot. Only complaint is that now and again the stiction finks but that is to be expected with fan fiction.

As for the December issue, Dr. Keller's item--not properly an article more an essay--was excellent. Mr. Price's item was interesting and provocative. Cannot agree that astrology is a science but will agree that there is about as much science in science-fiction as there is atmosphere on Phobos. However, I happen to prefer science-fiction to other types of literature and as the man said "There is no criticizing of tastes." Note to Jerri Bullock: I admire your work. I think it is very good. However one thing confuses me about the current cover. If there is enough oxygen present for the combustion of wood, why are space helmets necessary? Hmmm? R. Flavie Carson: Concerning Jupiter. What did you do--hock the other six satellites?

Yak yak. I've never seen you do that, Riddle. Work with one eye on the typewriter and the other on the screen. Don't you find it a

bit messy that way? Suppose the eye on the typer should get caught in the keys? But that explains why the comic we were watching the other night had three eyes.

Bit morbid this last issue what with "Death Dealer" and "Dawn and the Bird." Why is it that fans read science-fiction and write fantasy or weird?

LEN J. MOFFATT

Once more the mighty minds meet...what great discussion, what fabulous feuds, what spectacular-chit chat will emerge...hah?

Now, the idea in writing a letter for the rebirth of a letter-column, is to suggest new subjects for discussion or to make some controversial remarks (pun intended) on old subjects. That---more or less---is the idea. OK, so what's new? Or---better still (as in the case of cheese and beer)---what's old?

Well, lots of things are new and lots of things are old and lots of things are a little bit of each, or a whole lot of each or half and half.. Half and half? No, go easy on the watter..than you..wup!

As I was saying (Pistachio, get your pinky out of my glass..there's beer in the icebox for you..)-as I was saying, in this life we get old things and new things and..uh..well..things, you know. And people (well, fans at any rate), write letters to the letter columns ab-

out these things, and they discuss 'em and cuss 'em (oh, it isn't that clever, Pistachio...you're just knocking yourself out for another beer.....oh. You were laughing at Hope on the radio. But the radio isn't on, and besides, Hope was on last night....Oh. Still laughing. Peasant!)....and let's see now...oh yes...discuss 'em and cuss 'em (huh clever enough, I think!)....and other fans write in and a regular meeting of minds is held, yessir!

Sometimes, they even talk about semantics. I remember one time there was quite a bit of discussion about science-fiction too but nothing ever came of it. It is still being published.

I wish someone would write a letter sometime and talk about discussions. That is, why do fans write letters about the things they write letters about, hah?

(Pistachio, get your thumb out of....oh! Sorry. My thumb. Alright alright, I said I was sorry!)

And so you see, Josie, when I said you'd look just as good in a sweater without them....wup! Wrong letter.

Fans. Letters. Why? That was the subject for discussion. Well, maybe it's because fans just like to fan gab, period. That's a good general reason. But what I'm getting at is why do they yak about the subjects they yak about, hah? Like maybe say..well..like maybe..lessee now...as for instance, they could write about..well..like maybe..some new subject like..uh..well..

Oh hell, I think I will write to Josie.....

r.t. RAPP

Oh, the revolt of the peons, ch? Tsk, you should be firm with the little rats. Who's editing PEON, you or they? Beat 'em over the head with a lettering guide and slap 'em down with an inky stencil.

Of course, you might wind up with a sublist consisting of ex-

changes, two maiden aunts, and a 'small' fan in Peoria who subs to PEON, so he can track down typographical errors and try to read obscene meanings into 'em. But which is more important, artistic integrity or pandering to mass taste.

Oh, you told 'em that, and they still demand "Meeting of Minds"? Why not get Vaughn Greene to denounce letter columns?

Speaking of denouncing, switch on the green spotlight to give me an appropriate corpse-like pallor as I step forward to do a bit of denouncing myself.....

Fandom is nach die Hunden gegangen!

Tsk, what incredulity I see on the faces (purple) of those who publish hectozines! One enthusiastic fan grabs me by the neck, beats my head against the nearest Shaverite, and screams loudly between the blows: "More than 300 NFFF members! SFI! FAPA! SAPS! Local clubs all over the place! Young Fandom!"

Impolitely kicking him in the (oops! you said, "Keep it clean" didn't you?) Impolitely freeing myself, I chalk an electron-orbit diagram on the floor and stand within it, protected by The Sign Of ASF readership.

"Yup, fandom has went to the dogs," I repeat insultingly, while the slavering mob shrinks back fearfully. "In fandom we got all kinds of people, ys?"

"YES!" roars the mob.

"---but in fandom these peoples dun't do nutting!" I retort. The slavering mob moans. Somewhere a neophyte pops his bubblegum disrespectfully.

"How many fanzines are being published?" I demanded.

Forty or fifty hands go up.

"Let's not count the ones exactifen put out in FAPA or SAPS more to keep in touch with old friends that because they're still interested in stf," I suggest.

The mob moderates its slavering.

"See?" I sez to the s. m.

Someone points out there are still ten or fifteen zines being published by actifen. He adds that in all the history of fandom, the output of the fan press never got much beyond that figure at any one time.

"Aha!" I sez. "But you just got through convincing me there are more fans now than ever before. If I may be disgustingly Aristotalian, that implies there should now be more fanzines than ever before."

"Looky here, bub" interrupts a serious-faced fan. "Why do you want more fanzines, old bean? After all, considering the average contents of the repulsive things, it's a mercy that no more than the present amount of time, effort, money and optimism is wasted on them."

He's found the vital point. Barring miracles, there's no hope that present day fen can surpass the really beautiful publications fandom has produced in the past. And in other branches of fanactivity, what can be dreamed up today to equal the awesome complexity and fearful functionalism of past fanprojects? There were the schemes to provide zines for the fen in the Armed Forces. There was the Big Pond Fund. There was the fanclub-hierarchy proposed by the Galactic Roamers. There was the (ugh)Cosmic Circle.

So I wonder if by now you see what's happened? As in every other field, the newcomers to fandom are overawed by tradition, so humble before the triumphs of the past that they don't even try to accomplish anything themselves.

All of which I might add is mistaken logic. Fandom is not an end in itself, like physics or painting. It is a process, like archery practice or attending college. And the proof of this, is that with few exceptions fans go through a period of activity in stfdom, then turn to other interests and retain only a minor interest in fan affairs.

And the difference is this: in physics or painting, you try to push beyond all previous work in the field. In the other category, you merely do the best you can, in order to improve yourself, knowing that you're merely repeating activities that have been done many many times before.

The purpose of fandom, in my opinion, is to develop your own abilities, if any, in such fields as writing, art, or administrative work. Besides this, it stimulates your imagination and your personality by bringing you into contact with others in the same stage of mental development as yourself.

So what if it has all been done before? Go ahead and do it all over again yourself. Fandom's not important---it's YOU who is important.

Anyone care to stop slavering long nuf to argue the question?

GEORGE ANDREWS

Commenting on your Vaughn Green hoax. Your plot with Vaughn to write articles that would make us think. You succeeded admirably. Some of the fans were hollering, "Say! What's the big idea, Vaughn?"

Arthur Rapp was fooled. But in his case, you may, Mr. Riddle, feel a little remorse. Art just didn't know which way the wind really blew. His letter about the Green articles struck me like this: "Really, Charley old boy, I'm for you in every way. But I'm at the end of my wits, just how to accept my fellow editor's short-comings in printing Green's letters. I just don't get it."

Nor did the other writers know it was a hoax. Neither did I. I read his articles on "Democracy" in PEON. But everytime I was tempted to start a feud with Vaughn, I hit the proverbial brick wall hard. There wasn't one substantial statement--something Vaughn said about

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democracy---that would hold water. So I didn't holler, rant, rave, or gnash my teeth.

Talking to myself---an inchoerent mutter---I said, "Just one good point, Sir Von Green, and I'll rip the tar off your tarpapered "Democracy Articles."

Nevertheless, did I believe Vaughn's Anti-Democracy articles? I was amazed, stunned, and unbelieving that you permitted his letters in PEON.

But enough of the dark side of the picture. Your plan worked produced worthy WORTHY results. But at a human price!

Please, Charles, not for me; I really wasn't fooled. But for some of the other fan's sake, let up a little, won't you?

EVAN HUGH APPELMAN

Got your little notice and think you made a wise decision in readopting a letter section; letters you want? Is that all? Letters!

Fshaw! Anyone can write letters. Hmm. Two buck award for the best? Methinks it would be wiser to make it a lower sum and be prepared to pay it consistently.

With all due respect, I must say that I disagree violent with three of Francis McComas' "best" short stories. They are THE LINK, BRAIN, and HE WALKED AROUND HORSES. The former was outright lousy, in my opinion, the second was somewhat above general science fiction average, but not even on a par with the lesser ASF yarns. The last was merely mediocre.

I myself could never limit myself to a mere fifteen stories. Here, however, are those stories that I would rate outstanding. Use them for what they're worth, little as that may be.

- Asimov - NIGHTFALL
- MOTHER EARTH
- Russell - THE HOBBYIST
- THE UNDECIDED
- LATE NIGHT FINAL

- Pagdett - TIME LOCKER
- JESTING PILOT
- PRIVATE EYE

Heinlein - BY HIS BOOTSTRAPS

Simak - ETERNITY LOST

Bade - LOST ULYSSES

Jones, R. F. - MODEL SHOP

van Vogt - CENTAURUS II
- SEARCH

Hopkinson - CONQUEST

- Sturgeon - KILLZODER
- THUNDER AND ROSES
- UNITE AND CONQUER
- LOVE OF HEAVEN
- WHAT DEAD MEN TELL
- MINORITY REPORT

Wilkinson - DECISION ILLOGICAL

Shiras - IN HIDING
- OPENING DOORS

Phillips - DREAMS ARE SACRED
- MANNA

Blish and Knight - TIGLER RIDE

Benyon - ADAPTATION

Lubbard - AUTOMAGIC HORSE

Enough of this. Your cover didn't even last long enough for me to read the zine. You'd at least think it ought to be attached to the mag.

"Escape Me Not" was comparatively well written but as to "Hospitality"... Come now! There is such as a thing as going too far.

Jim Harmon's column was rather sordid, but the rest of the ish was okay. It seems to me that you ought to have a little higher grade humor than that offered by the above mentioned worthy.

DON WILSON

Since Price was talking about me in his "Let's Read for Fun," I suppose I should send some sort of a reply. Obviously, he didn't intend this, for he used the name "Smith" instead of mine, but unless two people simultaneously did the same thing I am the one he is talking about.

I had no idea Price was so struck by my objection to astrology and I didn't think about it again after I wrote him the "Blistering paragraph" he mentions. (I don't recall writing that blistering-paragraph. I do recall saying, "Bah!" but the rest of it is lost--it has been too long.) That is the trouble about writing letters---you can say something which to you seems no more important than any casual remark in everyday conversation. But your reader takes it seriously and remembers it for years and years.

I think I've been so victimized.

It is my belief that no one has yet succeeded in proving that astrology has anything. For every case that happens to dovetail with astrological predictions, a dozen or a thousand don't---just as for every pulp story that accurately predicted an actual military operation during WWII, a thousand did not. The object of scientific research is to see if a relationship exists between what has been hypothesized as the cause of a given effect, and the effect. It has been hypothesized that some attractive force attracts every particle in the universe toward every other particle in the universe --- and science's job is to observe conditions and see if it always does happen like that. In the case of astrology, the hypothesis to be considered is that the stars' positions at birth influence a person's life. I don't think this has been

proved, and I don't think it can be.

My "Bah" reflected this attitude. Apparently comrade Price took it in another light.

Derleth's domineering, sanctified, pontifical attitude was what irked me. I realized full well it was within his right to prohibit publication of the HPL letters... though he did give FT Laney written permission to publish them, and FT Laney did pass me along his rights to them. I was irked at Derleth for the great fuss he set up at someone's supposed violation of his sacred domain...even to the extent of threatening immediate legal action.

Otherwise, I agree 100% with Price's article. I still enjoy reading ASF myself, though I haven't looked at another prozine in over a year. I enjoy many other types of prose besides ASF, and I resent Price's classification of me as a science-fiction worshipper.

I guess that will pass as my remarks on the subject.

EDITOR'S NOTE:::The preceding letter is a result of the article, "Let's Read for Fun," appearing in the last issue of PEON. In addition to the letter above, Don later sent us a letter to him from E. Hoffman Price, which is reprinted with permission of both the addressor and the addressee.

E. HOFFMAN PRICE

My summation of my meetings with HPL is contained in Arkham's latest, "SOMETHING ABOUT CATS"; the final (thus far at least) of what Jack Williamson & I cooked up early in 1941, when I saw him in New Mexico, a series of memoirs which I was to write concerning Farnsworth Wright; James Ferdinand Morton; Robert E. Howard; HPL--THE BOOK OF THE DEAD. The first three appeared in the late W. Paul Cook's THE GHOST; he did not live long enough to use the HPL memoir. This is not

answering your question. I am not qualified to answer the question except with this proviso, that it be accepted purely as an opinion. Even an expert's opinion is worth no more than the expert himself--and I am no expert! It would be unscientific for me to answer in any terms other than those I have set forth. My only grounds for opinion would be from analogy.

I wrote most prolifically in the weird field during my years of seeking escape from my surroundings. Weird fiction was for me a blend of escapism, an expression of maladjustment; a taking refuge in the unreal and fantastic; creating worlds in which I made the rules. When I say that I was in those days a thoroughly neurotic and maladjusted person is not intended to imply that I am nothing of the sort today. But if you infer that I have over the years achieved a substantial adjustment to live and living, and come closer to finding or making a place for myself in the world, you are right. From writing nothing but the weird, I moved on to the somewhat more mundane fiction--i.e., crime, adventure, westerns. For years, these were an escape; a self expression; a form of exhibitionism; an "act"; an adventure. My slump of the past few years seems to be because no fiction of the sort which I can write and sell is any longer a self expression. And, there is nothing any more from which to escape: at least, nothing of the sort from which fiction so long was an escape. And life has been so much of a real adventure that fictionizing becomes increasingly unreal--I do not refer to that which is written, but to the writing, as writing.

There was once a fellow writer named Brown: He was unhappily married, he was in love with one of the most gorgeous young ladies I have seen in many a year, and he was upset by the death of his mother. He was a career drinker and a writer of weird fiction, and just

incidentally, held down a responsible position---this last so successfully, that he was promoted rather than laid off in the depression years. He ended by marrying the girl of his dreams. He quit drinking and quit writing.

You may have read my memoir of Robt. E. Howard in SKULLFACE, the Arkham collection. From this sketch you will rightly infer that REH has neurotic, or psychotic, to use your term.

I could mention others.

I must however add that I know several who are, as far as I have been able to judge, standdrd and normal; though these probably would have said the same about me! A degree of maladjustment seems almost a sine qaa non for writing ANYTHING when maladjustment reaches the stage properly designated as "psychotic" is an academic or semantic or technical problem. Also, I know a considerable number of maladjusted folks--screwballs of varying flavor and degree--who do not, and never, will write. Some want to but can't. Others couldn't if they wanted to. Being a screwball does not make you a writer either of weird or mundane fiction, though it does help and give you the drive IF you have the taste and feel for writing. Whether, because of your psychotic quirks you become a gambler, an alcoholic, a whoremonger, a hpphead, a stunt flyer or speed maniac, or a writer, or an evangelist, may not be entirely a matter of idle chance---but my personal notion is, these seemingly diverse manifestations derive from a common source. What determines the detail of manifestation is beyond my deciding. It is quite complex. Some even turn out to be science fiction fans, or editors of fanzines!

In the light of the foregoing, I can only say that but for HPL's psychotic tendencies, he would probably not have written anything at all, neither horror nor "rational" fiction. But the psychotic qua psychotic might just as well have

led him to write the "smoulderingest drippingest sex stories or "romances." While I am unable to document the statement, I submit for what it is worth, the following: to wit, that the most heart gripping etc., stirring romantic (i.e., unrealistic) love stuff is written by people who have had little or nothing to do with the opposite sex, and what feelings they may have had were frustrating and infrequent. I

refer to the heart throb "sincere" romance fiction which depicts people as they never were and never will be, in the boy-meets-girl department of life. If you were to sit down and write a piece of magazine fiction and do it honestly and realistically, you could not sell it. A novel permits the realistic admission that he and she are very keenly interested in the very solid substantial physical.

TWO POEMS BY HENRY A. ACKERMANN

NIGHT SOUNDS COME TO ME

Out of the dark, sounds come to me
From the Witch's Wood - the Werewolf Tree;
Sounds of the dark on the Fearsome Hour;
The unique cries from vampire bower.
Lonely sounds from the treetop's flutter -
Where satyrs quietly mutter.
Out of the dark from the mountainside;
Come numbing sounds, the ones I fear.
Be they soft and blurry or sharp and near.
I remember the Old Ones and try to hid.

HAUNTED HOUSE

(Variation on an old theme.)

all the windows gagged and a-hush
and the body now a splitting shell
and walks loudly tiny thrush.
Notice you that rotting noisome smell?
The wind sighs across the floor
In this desolate house near the fen.
Hark! That rasping--it's the door.
Is this the beginning of the end?

HELP WANTED

The following prozines are needed to fill out my collection of the last three years. If you can furnish any or all of the following magazines, please write and state your price. Desired condition is very good to excellent. When writing please give a price for each magazine and let me know its condition. You'll hear from me by return airmail.

FANTASTIC ADVENTURES

- 1947 - Complete year with the exception of January.
- 1948 - January, February, March, May, June August.
- 1949 - May, August, October, November, December.
- 1950 - January, February, March.

FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES

- 1947 - Complete year, with the exception of December.
- 1948 - April, August.
- 1949 - April, August, October, December.
- 1950 - February, April.

OTHER WORLDS

- 1950 - January.

FANTASTIC NOVELS

- 1947 - Complete year.
- 1948 - January, March, September.
- 1949 - March.

ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION

- 1947 - Complete year.
- 1948 - January, March, April, May, July, August.
- 1949 - January, February, September.

STARTLING STORIES

- 1947 - Complete year, with the exception of September.
- 1948 - January, May.

THRILLING WONDER STORIES

- 1947 - Complete year.
- 1948 - February, April, June, August.
- 1949 - June.

PLANET STORIES

- 1947 - Complete year.
- 1948 - Spring, Summer, Winter.
- 1949 - Summer, Fall.

AMAZING STORIES

- 1947 - March.
- 1948 - January, March, April, November, December.
- 1949 - July, September.

Charles Lee Riddle, PNL, USN; Fleet All Weather
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