

PEON

Number Sixteen
DECEMBER 1950



1750 JUNE 1750
1850 JUNE 1850
1950 JUNE 1950

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DOUGHERTY '50



Fig. 1

1. Cylinder
2. Piston
3. Valve
4. Shaft
5. Base

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Volume Two Number Four

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GOO

ELI NYE SPRY

A Honor Certificate Story

THIS STORY WAS REJECTED BY MARVEL

Mr. Royal A. Frew, Editor-in-Chief,
Trajectory Transcript,
Spaceport City, Planet III.

Dear Mr. Frew:

Like every spaceman except maybe a few snooty liner officers, I am a constant reader of your journal. I've always found your Special Hazards column particularly valuable, because those old fudduddies on the government's official Notice to Astronauts are always months behind and want everything checked to seventeen decimals. So here's a warning for you to pass along:

"Extreme caution advisable in permitting children born in the Asteroid Belt aboard spacecraft. Inadvisable unless equipped to handle wild animals. Inadvisable to leave such children unguarded. In dealing with such children, take nothing for granted."

Of course you'll want to know what this is all about, so here's the story.

Sincerely,

Sven Larsen
(Master Spaceman)

My Vega-type freighter Hot Huzzy was Terra-bound from Edge points after eleven months out. Cargo, Stage One tharlamine concentrate in sealed drums. We'd cut fuel reserves rather thin, so we were crossing the Belt on a Type XII trajectory, low and close. The four of us -- that's me, skipper; Mick McGuire, mate-pilot; Fred Hartley, engineer; and Russ Tinkham, astrogator -- were making happy talk about our homecoming.

And then the spacephone buzzed. I took it.

"Belt Eight," the fellow identified himself. "You for Terra?"

Belt Eight, I remembered, was a dervish nest controlled by McKver Syndicate, a reconstructed asteroid with equatorial rockets and a fast axial spin to give it a bit of inside-out gravity.

"Yeah, you poor old dervish. It's the green hills of Earth for us!"

He didn't even snarl.

"We got three people here who need a quick run in."

"The Huzzy ain't no plush job."

"They won't mind the accommodations," he busted back. "This is an emergency. Six hundred credits."

I grabbed Tink's slipstick and started calculating. We wouldn't pass up the extra change if we had the fuel.

But Eight figured we didn't want to stop.

"All right, you -- pirate!" His big transmitter nearly knocked my ears together. "Six thousand credits, cash on clearance."

Something was cooking, but the perfume of six thousand credits kept me from smelling the perfume in the oven. Probably a big business deal, three Syndicate executives whose playmates on Earth would knife them in the back if they weren't there to do some back-knifing themselves.

"I'll take it," I told the Eight operator. We had just enough fuel.

X

We spent a busy while braking, turning, and following their beam down through the Belt rubble. Then we had to hang off a couple of hours, back-jetting and dropping our hull charge and matching spin. Finally we equalized and hit their polar nose cone without a spark. They grabbed us with the magnets, the air-seals squished into place, and we undogged the nose door.

Two men came up the hollow shaft of the cone. In that reverse gravity even though it ran only about .17, they were walking upside down.

"You the skipper?" one asked.

"Yep."

"I'm Fosdick, in charge."

"Interesting place you got here," I said, fishing for an invitation to look around and have a drink.

But Fosdick was nervous as a churchmouse in a cathouse.

"Here's the agreed passage money. Count it please."

The other station fellow aimed the pickup head of a vizaudio recorder my way as I checked the loot. The bills were all small denomination, most of them crumpled and greasy. But they were money.

"Right."

"You agree, then, for a vizaudio recording that is a binding contract; that you have received full payment to remove three passengers from Belt Eight and transport them to Earth?"

"How come they don't wait for the regular McKeever boat?" I asked.

"Not due for six weeks, and we're -- they're -- in a hurry. Is this a contract?"

"Yes," I acknowledged, "it is."

Fosdick smiled then, for the first time.

"Okay," he called down the shaft, "send 'em up."

#

Our passengers weren't Syndicate executives. The man was about thirty, young-scientist type, and he looked tired. The woman would have been whistle-bait, except she'd have scaled thirty pounds underweight at Earth gravity and her eyes had that scorched, no-sleep look.

The real surprise was the boy. A few women are beginning to get around, even out to the Edge, but children off Earth are rare.

Maybe they should continue to be.

He was a sturdy little chap, four and a half or five, I guessed, healthy and clean, and nice-as-he stood there between his parents, a Space

Patrol emblem in nineteen colors across the front of his khaki coveralls. A son for a man to be proud of, I thought.

"Captain Larsen," Fosdick said. "This is Bob Blank of McKeever Research, and his wife, Mary."

His voice changed tone a little. "And this is Blank Blank."

(I've changed these names; no use getting sued. But Blank Blank sounds right for the kid.)

We all said the usual things, but somehow they acted sheepish and worried. I tried to add things up. Something hadn't been going right for them. The miscellaneous bills meant the station crew had chipped in for their passage. Decent of them, I thought at the time.

Then the kid looked straight at me -- his parents had hold of his hands -- and said very distinctly,

"Goo!"

Something churned over and shivered inside me. Retarded development. Couldn't even talk. Probably feeble minded. I took a closer look at him, and he had an indefinable wrong look. Underdeveloped, somehow, although

I felt terribly sorry for Bab and Mary Blank, and somehow embarrassed.

"Give 'em my cabin, Tink," I ordered. "Strap 'em for the pullout and let's blast."

Tink led them away. The kid squirmed a couple of times, as though he wanted to get loose, but his parents held on to his hands.

Fosdick looked at me.

"Larsen, I'm a stinker," he said. "I like Bob and Mary, and you never did me any dirt. So I'm ashamed of myself. But by the plutonium horns of Satan if that -- that -- stayed here another day I'd have blood on my hands. Now you get it -- him -- out of here my pronto or I'll sue the pants off your bottom and the gold out of your teeth."

I still didn't get it.

"Here's their papers. And here's some Hypnol. Don't be afraid of dosages to three times normal lethal, because he's insensitive as a potato."

I blinked as I took the quart bottle. Hypnol usually comes in 20cc ampoules.

"Watch yourself," the station manager warned. "I'm cutting magnets in exactly four minutes and you'd better have your hatch closed. Now SCRAM!"

We cleared on steering jets and hung idle while Tink and I plotted. Going up over ecliptic again would take more fuel than we had, so we set course to bull straight through the junk-spattered space of the Belt. We had to pick our hull charge almost at random. (Right then, Mr. Frew, I'd have paid plenty for the Charge Correction and Collimation Tables from the latest Transcript.) Finally, we set the chargers for average conditions, poured on the coal, and then it was Ho, for the green hills of Earth.

So we thought.

#

While Mick took the watch, I went through our passengers' papers.

Standard ID plates for the adults. Official endorsements showing they had been married three years and had been in the Belt three years lacking two weeks.

But the kid was four or five.

Huh?

There was a Provisional plate for him, without etched fingerprints, or portrait. Citizenship, USNA*III. Okay. Birthplace, AB-9-cu-17-R. A set of space coordinates. Date of birth --

I saw bureaucrat-bother ahead. The plate said Blank Blank was two years and two months old. But the poor little feeble minded tyke we had aboard was four at the very minimum.

Someone was having us on. Six thousand creds was high for a Belt-to-Earth hop. And the way Fosdick had acted.

My tongue wrapped itself around a sheaf of pointed questions about who was doing what to whom and why and who'd go to jail for it.

Right then Mary Blank screamed.

I went busting into the cabin without knocking. Mary and Bob Blank were poking around in places you couldn't have hidden an kitten, and if there had been pictures glued to the bulkheads I'm sure they'd have been looking behind those too.

The kid was nowhere in sight.

"I thought we had him doped," the woman wailed. "And I only napped a minute."

"The censored little fiend was faking all the time!" Bob raged. "He's getting too smart. I ought to -- "

"Bob!" The reproach in that one word shut him up.

They were searching so frantically in such impossible hiding places that their craziness got me going too. I held up one hand in front of the ventilator opening. The air current was weaker than it should have been.

The Hot Huzzy was rigged originally for the Venus run, and she has a refrigerant cooling system with air ducts like sewer pipes, just too small for a grown man to crawl through. Once when we'd needed metal for emergency repairs -- that's another story -- we'd stripped the cover grilles and never gotten around to replacing them.

"You come the hell out of there this instant!" I yelled into the pipe.

"Please, darling, come back to Mama!" Mary added her plea.

"Goo!" the answer came back, and it sounded derisive.

I didn't know enough, yet, to be worried. I just interphoned Mick and Tink and Hartley to grab him if he came out another hole.

About that time Mary fainted. Bob and I grabbed her floating body and got the cot straps around her. He checked her carefully, biting his lips.

"Nothing serious," he said at last. "Just complete exhaustion. She'll go into a normal sleep, and God knows she needs it."

"What the hell goes on around here?" I demanded.

"There's nothing really wrong with him, and he is not a mutant." Bob acted ready to fight.

"Wait a minute!" I interrupted. "Just who is that boy?"

"Out son."

He understood my raised eyebrows.

"Yes, he's only two. But you're used to children born and raised under Earth gravity, while he's had .063 grav, and a different radiation gradient."

He spoke with a mixture of pride, apology, and a chip on his shoulder.

"He was standing up at six weeks. In the light gravity of the sub-station where I was researching, his muscles would handle his weight even then. That gave him a chance for exercise and development of coordination. At four months he was flying all around the pressure dome."

I got the idea then, vaguely. When our first was on the way, Veronica had bought a whole library of books, and all had made quite a point that the first few months are extremely important in determining the course of a child's development. They'd had much to say about environmental determinants, but nothing about low-grav conditions. Those books had been written for Earth.

Bob leaned down and gently patted his sleeping wife's shoulder.

"Poor Mary. I shouldn't have taken her out there with me. Or we should have waited. But then when we knew, she refused to go back to Earth. We got the doctor over from Nine-B, a short flitter trip away, so that part was all right. But after he began getting around --

"And he didn't follow anything in the books. Even his food..."

"Right now we got to get him out --" I began. I like things shipshape and workways.

#

The Huzzy gave that gut-wrenching lurch that comes with abruptly changed power settings. Then Hartley made the interphone sizzle.

The kid had popped out in the engine room, behind Hartley's back, and started playing with the pretty relay panel. He'd kicked us into free fall with a tube overload before Hartley saw him. The engineer had made a grab, but he'd been born under Earth gravity and had never quite gotten over it. The kid had had a fine game dodging him, until Hartley's angry noise had frightened him and he'd dived back into the ventilating system. Hartley had a lump on his head and a sprained thumb.

"And the unprintable stole a kit of wrenches and the small cutting torch!" he finished his report.

I hauled myself up to a ventilator and listened. Through the ship-hum I heard a giggle.

"Blank-blank! If you don't come out of there this instant I'm going to paddle your --"

"Goo!"

Then a metal-on-metal noise. He was beating around in there with a wrench.

I began to understand why Fosdick's crew had chipped in to get the Blank family out of their station without waiting for the McKeever supply ship. It would have been cheap at the sixty thousand credit price!

#

When we were back on trajectory again, I called a council in the control room.

"Smoke him out like you would mice in the woodwork," Hartley growled. He's a bachelor.

But some things you just don't do to babies. And besides with our air purifiers running low -- we'd been out a long time -- we'd have gotten smoked too.

"Let's listen at different openings and figure out where he is," Tink suggested. "Then when he goes to sleep we can quietly disconnect that section of the duct and haul him out."

"Ha!"

There wasn't any mirth in the way Bob Blank barked that word. We all stared at him.

"He doesn't sleep. Just dozes, a few minutes or so each day, and that in short snatches. That's one reason he learned to handle tools so early!"

"He what?"

"Handles tools. Takes things apart. While most children sleep sixteen hours a day, he's been learning. Don't know whether gravity or radiation did it, but it's sure been hell on us. On some things he's way ahead, while on others he's behind."

Hartley and I looked at each other, our faces white.

Even the small torch could go through a hull plate or tube mount like a soldering iron through butter. And some designer with a passion for simplification had made nuclear shift torches easy to operate. Just push a button. Too damned easy...a monkey with a machine gun would be safer.

"Glue him down with three or four gravities," Mick had his say. "Then catch him and handcuff him and leg-iron him and gag him and blindfold him and - and - and --"

"Fuel?" Tink bollixed that scheme. For three-grav acceleration it would have taken wire we couldn't spare, and the Belt is no place for such astrogatory shennanigans anyhow.

"Food!" I yelled my brilliant idea. "We'll coax him out."

I bumped into the galley, ran my face slam into a glob of floating coffee, bumped my elbow on a loose pressure pan. The kid had gotten there first.

The coffee was hot, and even when I got my eyes working again I could

not see him very well. The air was full of flour and salt and spices and drifting cans and pots. A clammy tapioca pudding wrapped itself around my neck. The kid had done a good job.

I let out a bellow and dived. I used to play football and not so bad, but this time I caught nothing.

That little fiend kicked one little foot against the range and went straight up. I bumped my shin. He shoved off the overhead with his hands, banked off my face with both feet, and by the time I picked up myself he was behind me in the doorway. Laughing.

"There he goes! Grab him!" I shouted.

"Good!" said the -- well, let's call him a child.

I made another pass. My fingernails scratched his wrist. He wailed like a haki banshee and went down the longitudinal passage.

I followed more slowly, holding to the hand rails. We've all been brought up to walk, and we don't completely break that habit no matter how long we're in space.

But the brat had never walked in his life. He just touched a hand or foot here and there, and most of the time he soared.

He dived into the radio cubby, and I grinned. There's no ventilator in there. I started after him. He dived between my legs. I jumped, startled, and my shoulder hit the spacephone transmitter modulator tube. Glass tinkled -- and we'd burned out the spare three months before.

The imp didn't have the cutting torch with him, I saw. He'd stashed it somewhere.

Hartley and Bob Blank were in the passage aft of the radio, with Tinkham and Mick forward.

"We got the unprintable boxed!" I yelled at them. "Don't let the unprintable slip by you this time, and keep him away from those unprintable ventilators!"

We started edging in. The kid looked around, decided it all wasn't funny any more, and started to bawl.

He crouched, took off in a flying leap to evade us.

Then something clouted me.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 26)

kan kan kabitzer

by J. E. Watkins

THE FIFTH BASIC!! We are under a new editor, who, as far as I know, does not have an anti-flying-saucer complex; so gather around fellows, if you have ever read the Kabitzer you will know that I have a private flying saucer available at all hours and that flights are frequent.

The new science fiction magazine, GALAXY, is sponsoring a contest on the best explanation of flying saucers. Willy Ley runs the contest. There will be 40 prizes given away, including a trip to an atomic energy lab center and a trip to Mount Wilson Observatory. A \$100 bonus will be given to each of the first three prize winners if a subscription accompanies their entry. The explanation has to be in 300 words or less to qualify. And THAT, fellow fans, is where the flying saucer expert of fandom, (namely me) folded up. I have a beautiful explanation of flying saucers, one that has not been thought of before, but I can't boil it down to 300 words to save my soul. My old complaint again, verbosity. Even writing it like a telegram and hypenating-whole-clauses-together-like-this, I need 500 words.

So I might as well spill it, perhaps one of you fast talkers can squeeze this into 300 words for \$100. If so, I should get my cut--25%, or perhaps %10. Alright, a dollar. How about a package of PHILLIP MORRIS? A cigar? A letter of thanks?--I ought to get something.

According to Willy Ley, there are three basic explanations of flying saucers that have already been given: 1. They are phenomena which are known, such as weather balloons, light reflections, etc; but which are not recognized as such by the observer. This is the explanation given in THE SATURDAY EVENING POST a couple of years ago. 2. They are a secret American development. READER'S DIGEST. UNITED STATES NEWS AND WORLD REPORT. 3. They are spaceships from another planet. TRUE, FATE.

'There is FOURTH BASIC not mentioned by Ley, probably because he thought it too fantastic. Ray Palmer is rumored to have cooked this up in the days when he thought space was too hot for space ships. Space travel being impossible, the saucers had to have a world origin. They had to come from another dimension or time-space continuum. He must have given up this idea because in one issue of OTHER WORLDS he reports the sighting of a flying saucer in space through a telescope by an amateur astronomer. Nevertheless, saucers might come from another dimension and float back and

forth between continents, a sort of in-and-out-the-window effect; AND, if one wrinkles one's brow a little, one could call this a FOURTH BASIC explanation.

Before we get into the red meat of the column which concerns a FIFTH BASIC EXPLANATION, even more logical than any of the others; let us dispose of an idea that might be called $2\frac{1}{2}$, because it is closely allied with BASIC TWO. It is quite improbable that the flying saucers are a secret weapon of any other country. Why would the USSR fly their secret weapon over Oregon? That's just silly. The Russians are at times silly, but are they that silly?

There is a new book out, BEHIND THE FLYING SAUCERS by Frank Scully, published by Henry Holt and Co. Mr. Scully is a THREE BASIC man and he gives quite a convincing argument as to why the saucers are real, come from another planet or star and why the information about them is suppressed by the United States Government. Scully airs several other theories, all of which are variations of one of the BASICS above.

One theory concerns caverns in the earth which are inhabited by little men, the caverns having vents at the north and south poles. These little men fly their saucers on magnetic lines of force and are out here investigating our atomic explosions to find out what sort of neighbors they have. Another theory concerns ether ships that are manned by beings from one of the seven planes above the earth or above one or more of the planets of the solar system. These planes of existence are invisible to us just like some sounds are out of our hearing range and some colors are out of our sight range. The saucers are materialized and then dematerialized rapidly giving them their propulsion. A variation of this theory is that the saucers are THOUGHT ships from another plane of existence and have been sent here to investigate our atomics by beings far above us in science and morals. Hot damn!

There is a FIFTH BASIC EXPLANATION that has nothing to do with astral planes and 30-inch men, or caverns in the earth, or super-secret projects of the Air Force, or mass hallucinations. Now when I pop this explanation before your eyes, don't throw PEON out the window. Give me a chance. I have good sound logical reasons, based on scientific deduction for this theory. Are you ready.

THE FIFTH BASIC! Flying saucers could be the airplanes of intelligent birds. NOW WAIT! Don't tear up this fanzine. There are other articles here that have been sweated over, typed out, mimeoed and mailed for your enjoyment and you shouldn't destroy their efforts on account of me. Give me a hearing and then you can rip out the Kabitzer if you are still a little ill.

To understand the FIFTH BASIC, let's review a magazine article from HARPER'S (Sept. 1949), "The Fire Apes," by Professor Loren C. Eiseley, head of the department of anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania. In this article the professor describes the evolution of a species as a

series of jumps. A life form lives in a certain "corridor" with little variation for hundreds of years and each generation is like the last generation; and then small groups under severe selective pressure move rapidly to another form of existence. The professor calls this "the great symphonic movement through the world of the corridors." The fish who crawled out of the sea, the amphibian who learned to walk, the saurian who learned to fly are examples of this type of evolution.

The great law of corridor changing is that no life form can change its corridor successfully if the new corridor is already occupied. The inhabitants of the new corridor will destroy the invaders. Our corridor is the brain or thought corridor and there is little chance that man will permit a species other than man to enter our corridor. It is with our brain that we rule the world, and will will permit no challengers.

There have been attempts at invasion. Professor Eiseley states that the fossils of a tribe of intelligent apes who used fire and utensils has been discovered. These invaders did not survive, BUT AN INVASION WAS MADE THEN!

There is a chance that a species might survive in our thought corridor if they could find an area to develop out of the way of man and free from man's interference. Bats are a sub-marginal development of this type. They are flying rodents and invaded the bird corridor and survived because they fly at night out of the way of birds. It is true that there are night flying birds such as owls, but the food requirements of the two species are so different that there is little competition.

There are only two areas on earth where a species might develop out of the way of man's interference; deep in the sea and high in the air. There could be intelligent fish and intelligent birds. We will drop the fish because birds are more logical saucer flyers.

For several hundred thousand years man's invasion of the air has been limited to how high he could jump from the top of the highest mountain he could climb. His invasion of the air has occurred only in the last 100 years, first with balloons and then with machines. During the several hundred thousand years before man's invasion of the air there is a chance that some smart birds entered our corridor and evolved into saucer-builders. There are several points about flying saucers that can be explained in no other way:

1. Why don't the saucers contact man? Why did a flying saucer "shoot down" Captain Thomas F. Mantell at the Godman air Force Base, Fort Knox Kentucky, on January 7, 1948, when he got too close to them in an F-51? If flying saucers are directed by intelligent birds who have a sub-marginal existence to man, all their instinct, all their religion, all their education would be directed toward the idea of keeping out of man's way. They have to in order to survive and they know this as an instinct.

2. Why have most of the flying saucers been sighted in the "square" states west of the Missouri valley and east of the west coast? These states are sparsely settled and are logical places for the home bases of the saucers. We may have seen these bases, but the birds are masters of camouflage, having spent thousands of years to develop the art. A man wouldn't see one of these bases if he walked right through it.

3. How do the saucers go? Are these birds better mechanics than we are? In the air they are. In his book, Frank Scully states that several of the saucers have been found grounded near magnetic fault areas in New Mexico. Some of our top scientists have looked over these ships in secret for the government. No engines or means of propulsion have been found on the ships. The theory is that they travel along magnetic lines of force. Birds are also thought to use magnetic forces as an instinct to migrate from north to south and back. Homing pigeons use it. Is it not logical to believe that birds would develop this instinct that is so peculiar to them and so fundamental to their flying, and to install a perfection of this force in their mechanical devices? The saucers are a recent development of bird science. Those found were near a magnetic fault area in New Mexico and they were grounded because the pilots did not know how to operate around this area. No saucers have been found for over a year and it is now believed that the pilots have found a way to fly safely over these magnetic fault areas. This does not mean that the birds know more science than we do. They have better planes because they have been flying for thousands of years.

4. Why have the saucers been operating so much in the past few years? Flying objects have been sighted for many years. The saucers are a recent development of the birds. They had to develop them because man has invaded air! This has frightened the birds more than any event in the last 500,000 years. Most of the saucers have been sighted in the United States because we do more flying than anyone else. Most of the sightings have been near air fields or by pilots flying in the air. The birds are investigating our ability to fly. On March 18, 1950, hundreds of saucers were seen by the residents of Farmington, N. M. This was reported by the Denver Post. Could this be a mass flight over the magnetic fault area where several saucers had cracked up? Could this be a training flight to see that all the "boys" understood how to operate around magnetic faults?

Reports about the pilots of the saucers under investigation by the Government are meager. Scully says they were "little men" about 30 inches high. Why couldn't they be BIG BIRDS? I'll bet if any carving was done on those "little men" a wish bone was found. And I'll bet those BIG BIRDS aren't "chicken" either. We had better leave them strictly alone until we learn to fly like all get out. Well, tweet, tweet, fellows!

coming
NEXT ISSUE

"TEA TIME" by Harry S. Weatherby; "MESSENGERS OF DEATH" by Ed Ludwig; Plus the regular columns of Jim Harmon and T. E. Watkins and Roy Cummings. It will be a good issue, so request your copy today!

Menehune Mutterings

ROY CUMMINGS

A couple of issues ago, I promised that I would tell more about the Menehune, the legendary little people of Hawaii.

Tales going back as far as the oldest inhabitant of the islands can remember having heard from his grandfather who heard it from his great-grandfather, attest to the belief in the Menehune, at least as a Polynesian version of the gnome or brownie.

Their appearance, their habits, their powers and a brief recital of evidence of their deeds have appeared in "Menehune Mutterings" before.

There is a good deal of evidence to support the theory of many that the Menehune were supernatural beings, or if you want to put it that way, that they did not exist except in the imagination, and that as creatures of the mind, they were handed down in legend from generation to generation.

The evidences of their accomplishments as in the Menehune ditch on Kauai, their fishponds there, and on the other islands of the Hawaiian group, are explained as deeds done as a matter of course generations before and their human builders.

This is a convenient device sometimes indulged in even by those who study the human race, its origin, and its peregrinations, when they are unable to discover the link between relics and remnants of an older civilization found superimposed upon similar vestiges of a civilization which once left (and possibly is still leaving) evidences of its actuality.

During the war years, for example, as a war correspondent for The Honolulu Star-Bulletin, I had occasion to visit the island of Tinian. The B-29s were based there for the highly effective fire-bomb raids on Tokyo that

had just about brought Japan to its knees before the Big Boom reduced all other forms of warfare to a primitive state, no matter what the four-and-five-starred u s c r s of manpower say today.

On Tinian there are the remains, in the forms of columns surmounted by half hemispheres, of what must have been in its day a huge temple or open-columned area.

Scattered in other parts of the island and on other islands of the Marianas group are similar ancient relics though none as large as the one at Tinian, called the House of Taga.

A well known anthropologist from Yale was on Tinian during part of the time I was there and I asked him one day about the odd and unexplained columns and spheres.

The answer was something to the effect that the present people of Guam, the Chamorros, were presently capable of having produced the strange columns and that in all likelihood they were made and set up by the ancestors of the Chamorros, but so long ago that the builders and the purpose of the building had been forgotten.

At any rate, the best assessment of the authentic background for the Menehune as a living race seems to be that they were a race of people who pre-dated the Polynesians

as occupants of the Hawaiian islands.

This theory goes something like this:

The Menehune (which is not necessarily their own name for themselves but what the Polynesians named them) were occupying the Hawaiian islands at the time of the first great migration of the true Polynesians who came from the south or west.

It is possible that the Menehune found on Hawaii at the time of the first arrivals of the Polynesians were already merely a remnant of a more numerous inhabitant of the islands.

Perhaps they had found conditions not to their liking and survived badly. Perhaps they were those who found enough sustenance and pleasure in a new land to remain there while the larger portion of the original adventurers returned to their homeland.

The next step is the arrival of the Polynesians. The Hawaiian and Samoan of today in the pure-blood form is a stalwart specimen of manhood. The early Polynesian is said to have been of even more magnificent physique, tall and muscular.

It is surmised that the Menehune were of a smaller race, perhaps of the stature of the Japanese or Filipino, but certainly not a pygmy or midget.

To the big Polynesian, the Menehune was a small man. Of greater strength and perhaps with a system of life more adapted to the new lands they were to fill, the Polynesian undoubtedly looked down upon the previous claimants of Hawaii, possibly conquered and enslaved them, killing off many in the process.

Under these conditions, the theory goes, the Menehune soon disappeared, and having been unimport-

ant from the outset, as far as the Hawaiians were concerned, were soon forgotten.

Stories, steeped in superstition and kapu, distorted as the generations passed, became finally, the only remnant of an earlier race.

The the later generations who have never seen the Menehune, it was easy to veil them in legend as gnomes or elves and to credit them with strange and wonderful powers such as their own gods possessed.

Their vestiges, their fishponds and irrigation ditches, walls and heiaus, may be, as some would have us believe, merely the work of an early group of Polynesians, performed so long ago they have been forgotten; and forgotten, attributed to the Menehune.

But it is more interesting and pleasant to speculate upon these relics as the only tangible remnants of a fascinating race of little people which can lay claim to having first occupied the Hawaiian archipelago.

-o-

Of the modern Menehune, the science-fiction fan soof Hawaii, there seems to be little to write this time. Something of a hiatus has descended upon us, it seems, what with Erik and Eve Fennel being busy all hours of the day at the Dianetics Department, Curt and Camille Butler taking up Dianetics along with Shirley Butler, Editor Riddle moving away from the town area out to Barbers Point Naval Air Station, and yours truly being busy moving to a new apartment. Except for a dinner held at Eric Holmes the last part of August, there haven't been any meetings of the clan to report. Maybe there will be some news to report next time...

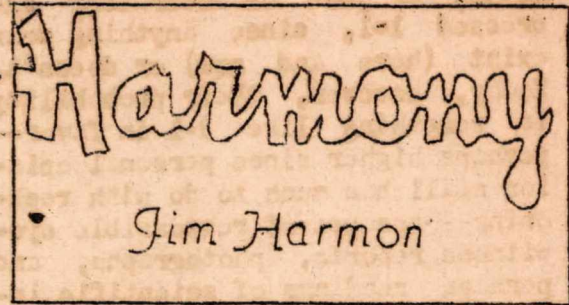
FANDOM: Fandom means a lot of different things to a lot of different people. It's a way of life, a hobby, a state of mind, people, fan magazines, pro magazines, Forrest J. Ackerman, a club, a hope, a dream, semantics, homosexuality, the NFFF, and Roscoe. Yes, it's all that a lot more, and a lot less. It's indefinable, illogical, and a lot more. It's the choking fierce pride you get when you read a Bradbury story and know you can understand its beauty and that it was written by someone like you. It's the disgust you feel when you read about the Shaver Mystery and know that its followers aren't so different from you--just people of imagination, who have let it carry them away. It's the hurt you feel when you hear of the death of Edgar Rice Burroughs, and know that a great man, a friend, and an associate has left this world a sadder place for it. It's Man looking to the skies and seeing lightning and making fire. It's Man looking to the skies and seeing the stars and making-- It's the roar of the first atomic bomb, and it's the mirror echo of the first rocket to the moon...and it's a couple of male animals twisting on a bed in L.A.

It's a driving force in life like food and sex and something that can't be denied, and it's a silly part of you that isn't you any more.

And it's books, and it's magazines, and it's Forest J. Ackerman, and it's people, and it's a way of life, and it's Roscoe, and it's all of those things, and a lot more and a lot less.

It's a million things and it's one. It's fandom--a filthy twisted beautiful, logical, insane thing. And it's YOU!

If this be corn, I must be squeezing it pretty hard, because I'm drunk on it.



But whatever fandom is, it's habit-forming. You can't get away from it, because a part of it is right there inside of you.

Sure, you get out of fandom and collect issues of The Shadow and Doc Savage in mint condition and join a devil worshipping society, but you take a part of fandom along with you.

It's like they say about drug addicts, "Once a junker, always a junker." Even after you stop getting pleasure from it, you keep it up because you don't feel "right-without-it."

Well, I haven't been feeling "right" lately without fandom. It wasn't by choice that I gave up one of the few things in the world I give a damn about. It was due to financial reasons that haven't cleared up as yet, but somehow, I know I'm always going to be a fan. A few interruptions, yes, but quit? No, I've got too many stories to write, too many views to express, too many fanzines to publish. Yes, I'll think I'll stay in fandom a while, and how about you?

SAUCER: Much speculation and many opinions have been expressed on this subject. However, little of event has been conclusively stated. The facts are in evidence for all to see, and I would like to relate what they demonstrate.

First, as to the existence of the so-called "Flying Saucers" or "Flying Discs." From the first, their probability of existence was

50-50, or just as accurately expressed 1-1, since anything does exist (here and now) or doesn't. Today, however, their probability is something like 3-1 in favor-- perhaps higher since personal opinion still has much to do with reckoning-- because of responsible eyewitness reports, photographs, and perhaps readings of scientific instruments the government is withholding. Actually, their existence is so imminent, we can practically dispell their non-existence.

Now, if they exist, what are they? Clearly they are either natural phenomenon, projects of a earthly agency, or "something" from space.

What seems to indicate they are natural phenomenon? If they are this, there must be some new widespread element causing them, for nothing exactly like the saucers has been seen except in recent years. I know of two such elements at the moment. First, atomic explosions. Remember the saucers were first seen in America and the first A-bomb was exploded within the borders of the continental U.S. Then, saucers were seen in Europe shortly after the explosion of Russia's atomic bomb. Of course, bombs were set off in Japan and Bikini, but there are few people in the islands and the Japanese are an extremely incredulous and distrusting people.

Second, in late years, there has been much broadcasting of television programs in the United States. This has been responsible for many unexplained phenomenon such as "ghosts", etc. Also, the date of the saucers' appearance in Europe coincides with the putting into effect of regular broadcasting schedules for TV stations in England, France, and Russia. I don't claim to know how either television

or A-bombs or both could cause Flying Saucers but it is a possibility to consider.

Could the objects known as "flying saucers" belong to a earthly agency? Yes, of course. That is another possibility. If such is the case, they almost certainly belong to the U.S. or Russia, since no other country or private agency possesses sufficient scientific tools or know-how to make them. We deny that we (America) own them or even that they exist. There would seem to be little reason for this if we did have them, since if we had such a weapon, Russia would undoubtedly know of it through its all-too-efficient spy system. Also our announcement of possession would reassure the American people. Now, in the event the discs belonged to Russia, we would also learn of it, and I doubt if the U.S. would allow USSR aircraft free-rein in American skies without starting war. Finally, in this line, we must realize that no one country on Earth is very far ahead of another scientifically (Russia's A-bomb wasn't far behind ours, nor would it have been without the stolen information: so if either America or Russia had Flying Saucers, the other wouldn't be far behind and the cat would be out of the bag.

Then, are the discs "something" out of space? Could that "something" be an astronomical object like meteors or comets? Yes, but it does seem that if they were, we would have seen them before. But they may be an extremely rarity such as comets with million-year orbits. Could that "something" be objects guided by alien intelligence? Yes. There are quite a few million billion trillion stars in the universe, and some of these must have planets and it seems rea-

sonable to assume that at least one, other besides Earth supports intelligent life. In fact, it's more reasonable to assume that most of them do. If mankind is to survive we must consider any alien life an enemy (sorry, if I sound like a villain in a Bradbury story, but it's logical), so these "Saucers" might be scouting us for invasion or extermination, and/or luring us into complacency about the discs. If they were friendly they would make contact with us, unless they feared or were indifferent towards us, which by emotion or logic would make them our enemy.

Perhaps you wonder just what I've said on this subject. Maybe nothing, but I've tried to say that "Flying Saucers" might be any number of things, but it is actually more logical to believe that the saucers are guided by an alien intelligence from space than not.

Maybe we will find out for sure one of these days - and it may be to our sorrow!

CONVERSATION: I looked over the racks of pubs in a local drug store. A faded and worn lot, to be sure. I commented on this fact to the tall teen-age soda jerk-clerk depositing some new slicks on the stands by saying, "Do you ever change these magazines?"

"Nope," the jerk (soda type) replied, "we never have and I doubt if we ever will."

Well, that was a highly improbable situation, but then my own question was small talk, and I could not expect any better reply. Anyway, his statement was a clever thing to say, and I can never think of clever things to say, so I just laughed. I always do that when I can't think of anything to say, clever or not.

That was a mistake. The jerk

(soda variety) thought I thought he had been funny, so he continued the conversation.

"You looking for something?" he asked.

"Yes," I answered, annoyed by obvious question a little, "Science Fiction."

"What's that?" he asked innocently.

A perfect opening for a fan. "ah..er..Buck Rogers stuff..space-ships, you know.." I said. (I can never think of clever things to say.)

"Oh sure," said the jerk (soda division), "here's one like that," he added, digging under a bed-sheet size True Bloody Sex Detective, and coming up with a bulky Amazing.

He glared briefly at a brunete on the cover who was unbuttoned up the front. "Looks interesting," he said with a wink.

"It's nothing like you think," I said piously. "Sex and science fiction don't mix."

"Huh! Must be kind of dull," he said. "I like westerns. Why don't you buy a western?"

"I do not care for westerns," I said stiffly. "I will, however, buy that magazine."

"O.K.," the jerk (soda rank) replied, heading towards the cash register. "That makes a quarter sale."

I brightened. "I'll soon be paying you 35¢ for that magazine."

"Inflation's hell, ain't it?" he commented sagely.

"Well, yes," I conceded. "But this magazine is being improved; it is going slick."

"Huh?" he queered brilliantly.

"You know," I replied, "smooth paper, color illustrations like.. like.." (God know why I thought of it)..True Story!"

"They'll never sell it," he said in a 'they'll-never-get-it-off-

of-the-ground tone of voice'.

"Why?" I asked.

"Not enough people read it." he said, ringing up 25¢ on the cash register.

"I'll take a coke, too," I said when he had deposited my quarter. "Oh, a lot of people read it. Maybe a million. Science fiction is the coming thing; bound to replace the detective stories; just as science has replaced crime in the news." The coke had loosened my tongue.

"I don't think so," the jerk (soda classification) said.

"Why?"

"Not enough people read it."

"Got any good westerns in?" I asked brilliantly.

TREND: There are a number of true trends evident in the field of fantasy publishing. One, there are many more publications of a science fiction nature. And of these, many are comic books. (I even saw one of Flash Gordon, subtitled "Science Fiction Stories.") Also of the text science fiction magazines, a trend is obvious. Pocket size editions and an advance in price to 35¢. Obviously, these publications are making money, so others will follow suit, switching from text to comic strips (indeed, we have a precedent in Out of This World Adventures.) Therefore, the science fiction magazine of tomorrow (and probably the average magazine as well since that's another trend) will be a 35¢ pocket size comic-book. I can see the titles now: "Other Worlds Science Comics"; "Super-Science Comics"; and of course, "astounding Science Comics: Pocket Size--Just the Right Size to Carry to Boy Scout Meetings."

And that's the final note in this stanza. See you soon again...

Hokulua

That's Hawaiian for "Please Cooperate"--and that's just exactly what we hope you will do. We'd like to know how this issue of PEON was received by the readers, so fifty of you readers of PEON will receive inserted in this issue, a post card. As soon as you have finished reading this issue, please fill out the card and drop it in the mail. The replies and remarks we receive will determine what will be in future issues of PEON, for we want to publish what you want to read. P. S.--In the first section, please mark the stories and articles, according to your opinion, as follows: A - Excellent; B - Good; C - Fair; D - Poor; and E - It should have been forgotten first!



GOING UP!

BY THE EDITOR

As is the case with everything else in this day and age, the cost of reading our favorite literature, science-fiction and fantasy, is going up. Not so much on each magazine (as of this date, only one has announced a definite future price-raise), but due to so many new magazines hitting the market.

The earliest time back that I can remember reading science-fiction (no--I've not been cleared by Dianetics, so my memory isn't too good) is in 1935--at the tender age of 12. A rather heated discussion between my wife and myself the other night regarding allotting so much of the family budget on buying magazines, led me to wonder just how many magazines I have read these past fifteen years. I spent about six nights digging through files, references, etc., and came up with some rather interesting figures. Some of you readers of PEON might be interested in these, so they are presented herewith.

No attempt has been made to check the various		35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
foreign magazines,	No. magazines	3	3	3	4	12	17	18	14	13	8	7	7	9	13	15	26
reprints, etc.	Total issues	33	23	24	27	66	102	99	92	66	39	37	45	60	75	78	113

FIGURE (1)

Likewise, I have ignored Weird Tales; primarily because I do not consider it as either science-fiction and/or fantasy fiction. Perhaps this is a rather arbitrary point--you can argue it if you wish.

Before we consider the above and following chart, consider for a moment the growth of science fiction publishing (the words "science-fiction" used subsequently shall include also fantasy) during the past decade and a half. Three magazines were on the newsstands in the year of 1935--Amazing and Thrilling Wonder and Astounding; all of which are still with us. The peak of the 15 years, excluding this year, was reached in 1941, what with some eighteen magazines being offered for sale in that year. The war directly or indirectly caused the suspension of over half of these--some being revived shortly after the war, some this year; others never, perhaps, to return.

And when we start looking over the crop of science-fiction magazines being published this year in the U. S. alone, you really hit a jackpot. At the time of writing this brief article (2 November), there were 26 different publications either already published or due for publication before the end of the year. It will take another year, at least, before 1950 can be properly evaluated.

Now, let's look over the statistics. Figure (1) above shows the number of publications on the stands for each of the past fifteen years and the total number of issues for that year. Figure (2) on the following page

lists each magazine that has been published for the preceeding fifteen years with the number of issues per year for each one.

Following this article, you will find a check list of each magazine published this year, with the publisher's address, the frequency of issuance, cost per issue, and subscription price. It is hoped that this will be of some use, especially if you plan on trying to get every issue.

At any rate, it's been fun working with these figures; and if you find an mistake, don't hesitate to let me know. I'll be more than happy to receive corrections for a possible future listing.

	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
Amazing Stories	10	6	6	7	12	12	12	12	10	5	4	9	12	12	12	12
A. Merritt Fantasy															1	5
Arkham Sampler														3	2	1
Astonishing						6	4	4	2							
Astounding	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Avon Fantasy Reader													5	3	3	3
Captain Future						4	4	4	4	2						
Comet						1	4									
Dynamic					2											
Various Fantastic Myst					3	8	6	9	3	4	4	6	6	6	6	6
Fantastic Adventures					4	8	10	12	10	4	5	5	8	12	12	12
Fantastic Novels						3	2							6	6	6
Fantastic Stories Qtrly																4
Fantasy Book													1	3	1	1
Fantasy Stories																2
Future					1	3	4	6	3							4
Galaxy S.F.																3
Galaxy S.F. Novels																2
Imagination																2
Mag. of Fan. & S.F.															1	4
Marvel				2	4	2	1									1
Other Worlds															1	6
Out of This World																2
Planet					1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Startling Stories					6	6	6	6	4	4	4	5	6	6	6	6
Stirring Science							3	1								
Science Fiction					5	3	4									
Science Fiction Qtrly						1	4	3	2							
Select Science Fiction														1		
Super Science						5	5	4	2						5	6
Thrilling Wonder	11	5	6	6	6	12	8	9	5	4	4	4	6	6	6	6
Two Comp. Sen Adv. Novs.																1
Unknown					10	12	6	6	5					1		
Wonder Story Annual																1
Worlds Beyond																1

FIGURE (2)

<u>PUBLISHER AND PUELICATION'</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>COST PER ISSUE</u>	<u>SUBSCRIPTION</u>
<u>Arkham House, Sauk City, Wisconsin</u>			
ARKHAM SAMPLER	I	\$1.00	#
<u>Avon Publications, Inc., 119 West 57th St., New York 19, N. Y.:</u>			
AVON FANTASY READER	I	.35	#
OUT OF THIS WORLD ADVENTURES	B	.25	#
<u>Clark Publishing Co., 1144 Ashland Ave., Evanston, Ill.:</u>			
OTHER WORLDS	6 wks	.35	\$3.00 for 12
IMAGINATION	B	.35	\$3.00 for 12
<u>Columbia Publications, Inc., 241 Church St., New York 13, N. Y.:</u>			
FUTURE	B	.20	\$1.20 yearly
<u>Fantasy Publishing Co., Inc., 8318-20 Avalon Blvd., Los Angeles 3, Calif.:</u>			
FANTASY BOOK	I	.25	\$2.50 for 12
<u>Hillman Periodicals, 535 5th Ave., New York 17, N. Y.:</u>			
WORLDS BEYOND	M	.25	#
<u>Love Romances Pub. Co., 130 West 42nd St., New York 19, N. Y.:</u> *			
PLANET STORIES	B	.25	\$1.50 yearly
2 COMP. SCN. ADV. BOOKS	Q	.25	#
<u>Magabook Inc., 420 Lexington Ave., New York 17, N. Y.:</u>			
FANTASY STORIES	Q	.25	\$1.00 yearly
<u>Mystery House, Inc., 570 Lexington Ave., New York 22, N. Y.:</u>			
MAGAZINE OF FANTASY & S.F.	B	.35	\$2.00 yearly
<u>Popular Publications, Inc., 205 East 42nd St., New York 17, N. Y.:</u> *			
A. LERRITT FANTASY	Q	.25	\$1.50 for 6
FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES	B	.25	\$1.50 yearly
FANTASTIC NOVELS	B	.25	\$1.50 yearly
SUPER SCIENCE STORIES	B	.25	\$1.50 yearly

<u>PUBLISHER AND PUBLICATION</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>COST PER ISSUE</u>	<u>SUBSCRIPTION</u>
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Stadium Publishing Co., 350 Fifth Ave., New York 1, N. Y.:

MARVEL SCIENCE STORIES	Q	.25	\$2.50 for 12
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Standard Magazines, Inc., 10 East 40th St., New York 16, N. Y.:*

THRILLING WONDER STORIES	B	.25	\$3.00 for 12
STARTLING STORIES	B	.25	\$3.00 for 12
FANTASTIC STORY QUARTERLY	Q	.25	\$3.00 for 12
WONDER STORY ANNUAL	A	.25	\$3.00 for 12

Street and Smith Publications Inc., 122 East 42nd St., New York 17, N. Y.:

ASTOUNDING S.F.	M	.25	\$2.50 yearly
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World Editions Inc., 105 W. 40th St., New York 18, N. Y.:

GALAXY SCIENCE FICTION	M	.25	\$2.50 yearly
GALAXY S.F. NOVELS	B	.25	\$1.50 yearly

Ziff-Davis Pub. Co., 185 No. Wabash Ave., Chicago 1, Ill.:

FANTASTIC ADVENTURES	M	.25	\$2.50 yearly
AMAZING STORIES	M	.25	\$2.50 yearly

Notes:

- # - No information available
- I - Irregular dates of publication
- B - Bimonthly publication
- M - Monthly publication
- Q - Quarterly publication
- A - Annual publication

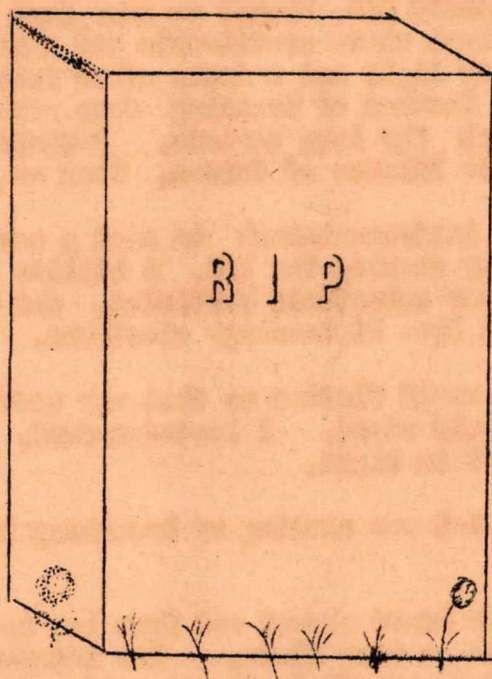
* - Several publishing companies publish under different names, but all controlled by the same editors and publishers. Remittances and letters sent to the name given will reach its proper destination.

As far as could be judged, this list was correct as of 1 November 1950; I am not responsible for what happens after this date!

- o -

<p>DOC SAVAGE FOR SALE</p>	1938 - June, August, September, Oct.
	1939 - Jan., Mar., April, May, June, August, October. <u>ALL MINT.</u>
	50¢ each --Editor, PEON

THE ANNALS
OF
AARDVARK



Here lies the work of A. A. Aardvark
who was last seen reading
a copy of DJANETTES

(continued from page 10)

My chest hurt, and it was hard to breathe and I was lying on the passage floor -- but of course, not lying very heavily. Mick was slapping my face, and I got dizzy when I pushed him away and sat up. Bob Blank was on the floor too, out cold. Tink and Hartley were on their feet, but staggering. For a few seconds my mind was empty as a watched rathole, and when I latched on, I didn't like it.

The poor old Huzzy had run straight into a pile-up of static mesons, with a hull charge not adjusted to act as a repellent. Maybe even the wrong sign. And the magnetic field of the ship's metal had tipped the delicate balance of stasis.

The theories are all at odds with each other, but we do know static mesons originate outside the System -- some sort of cosmic radiation -- and accumulate in areas where gravitronic and magnetic fields, Sigma effects, the pressure of light and a dozen other factors, are all in a certain relationship. Instead of breaking down within split microseconds, the mesons hang inert for long periods. Perhaps indefinitely, unless something disturbs the balance of forces. Then -- bang!

It takes a real instrument-hawk to spot a meson pile before hitting it, and we'd been busy chasing the kid. A billion or so mesons had let go around us to form other sub-atomic particles, and the hull shielding was not much good against free high-energy electrons.

A discharge that would flatten us that way would be more than any poor little tyke's body could stand. I looked around, expecting to find him stone dead. He wasn't in sight.

Then I realized what was causing my breathing trouble, got gray-scared and forgot the kid.

The Christmas Tree board showed red from top to bottom. Leaking from all compartments like a rusty sieve. The inter-compartment doors had hammered shut, but they weren't doing any good. Pressure still dropping.

I knew the air bank status without looking. We'd been out a long time so some loss was unavoidable, and only four of the thirty flasks still held pressure. The air purifiers could convert exhaled CO₂ into oxygen & soot, but they couldn't make anything out of vacuum.

I reached the air controls and cracked one flask. The pressure came up. The high oxygen steadied us and made Bob Blank open his eyes. Then the pressure was dropping off again. Fast.

I knew. Nothing so simple as a meteor hit; not with all compartments leaking but without explosive decompression. The be electrons from the

meson pile-up had done it, crackling through the hull skin, blasting a myriad of microscopic passages, turning the metal porous. You can do the same thing in a laboratory with a plain high-tension discharge.

"Hartley! Engine room!" I ordered. Rest of you forward!"

Our only chance --- a slim one --- was to let most of the ship go to pressure absolute and concentrate our remaining oxygen.

The boys got the idea at once, but Bob Blank hung back when they tried to drag him along.

"Where's my son?" he kept repeating. "Where's my son?"

Mick sent him back to sleep with a ham-sized fist. It was the only thing to do.

Then Mary came into the passage.

"Where's my baby? What made the lights flicker? Why can't I breathe? Where's my baby?"

She'd been in the bunk, well insulated from all metal, when we hit the pile-up. And the kid -- he'd been in the middle of a flying heap.

#

We got her into the control room and dogged the door. Then she searched our faces one after another and started yelling again.

"What have you brutes done with my poor helpless little baby?"

Being skipper has its penalties, and I was stuck with the job of telling her that with the pressure falling so rapidly we'd had to get out while getting was still possible. It wasn't easy.

But she had guts, and she'd been in the Asteroid Belt long enough to understand space customs about holding casualties to a minimum. Finally she went off into one corner of the room and sat there looking agonized. Her husband put his arm around her and the rest of us turned our heads the other way. We didn't like to think of it either, the poor little kid back somewhere in the center section with the air running out.

Tink had been watching the gauges and pushing his slipstick. Now he handed me a piece of paper, an estimate extrapolated from observed rate of pressure drop.

Twenty hours, with air thinned to barely maintain life.

To earth, after dropping speed for the stop at Eight, allowing for deceleration, seventy hours.

No go.

Mick saw the sheet too, but he'd already guessed. He stuck a big paw at Tink, then at me, while his left hand rested on the master throttle.

"It's been a great life, fellows," he said. "Too bad it couldn't have lasted longer."

Tink looked at me.

"Which'll it be, skipper?"

We could miser our air and die slowly, choking and gasping. Or with all tubes in emergency full, without turnover or deceleration, we could reach Earth's atmosphere before the air gave out -- and at that speed give the ground-dwellers a glimpse of one very spectacular meteor. The second way was more comfortable.

We were playing it strictly from corn, the melodrama of doomed but intrepid spacemen spitting unflinchingly in Death's eye. We liked each other, and we knew if one started squirming out loud it would only make the others uncomfortable during those remaining hours. What the hell? A meteor puncture you can sometimes patch, but when a hull goes porous all over like a window screen, then you've had it.

"Wait," I said, jerking my head toward Bob and Mary. "Give 'em some time."

Even for those used to heavy accelerations, emergency full made rough riding.

So we waited, and because waiting and doing nothing is the worst thing in the Galaxy, we went on with our routine.

#

"Wha'cha make of this?" Tink asked, pointing.

The gauges showed as much air in the midships living quarters as you'd find inside a well-made radar tube. But the cargo pit gauge --

"Hasn't dropped a gram-centimeter in ten minutes."

"Handle doors for me, you lugs!" I shouted, and started cramming on a helmet as though I had eleven thumbs.

If the cargo pit was really holding pressure and it wasn't just a defective gauge --

I went scrambling into the center section, nursing a notion of one man at the controls in a repair suit, while the rest rode the pit. Not good,

because the converters and controls weren't designed for vacuum operation. There'd be corona discharges and flaming arcs and Geisler effects and the dielectric rating of every condenser would be sour. But just barely possible, if --

I batted loose the cargo pit hatch dogs, expecting a puff of air that would condense a few seconds under compression cooling and then vanish.

What I got was a whooshing flood of grey-brown stuff the consistency of warm molasses. Tharlanine concentrate from our cargo, in the process of changing from Stage One to Stage Two. It knocked me sprawling, and right away began to spread as though it were alive. It filled my pockets, got into my shoes, crawled over my helmet and smeared the faceplate, then started working up inside.

Somehow, I got a squint into the pit. The two overhead light tubes were still working, but they gave just a dim brown light through the goo that had crept up over them. Tharlanine concentrate -- no longer in sealed drums but in a lake that had no definite shape or boundaries and certainly no plane surface.

On top of the highest stack of drums crouched a blob. It was so shapeless I didn't realize it was alive until it put out a blobby tentacle, and at the end of that tentacle was violet-to-no-color flame that hurt my eyes.

Blank Blank!

And with the cutting torch!

But he was coughing and gasping. His atmosphere had gone pfft the instant I undogged the hatch.

I went after him in a upward dive. He saw me coming, tried to dodge-- and didn't make it. Like a fly on flypaper. That was what the tharlanine had done to Blank Blank, and I got him.

Out in the passage there was an emergency repressurizing valve. It gave me trouble, because the tharlanine that was spreading over everything had reached it, making it sticky and slippery all at once. But I managed. Blank Blank got one good lungful and let out a yell.

Then I tucked the sneaky little boulder -- by then he was so sneakerier than I -- under my arm and headed for the nose section like a goosed kangaroo.

We made it, with Mick operating the doors by remote. We were lucky the Huzzy's air bank carried straight oxygen instead of air mixture, or it would have been different in a way I don't like to think about.

Bob and Mary snatched their offspring before I could get my helmet

off, both trying to hug him despite the stuff smeared all over him. The kid was yowling bloody murder, and Mary's sobs of relief didn't help the quiet.

"Skipper!" Tink howled through the uproar. "Leaks slowing in the whole midships section. What the hell?"

#

Mick may look like an orangutan but he thinks somewhat faster. He remembered Fred Hartley gasping away on low air in the drive room, and got on the manual controls of the ventilating system. Hartley had plenty to say about the big glob of tharlamine the pressure differential flung through the duct -- until the tharlamine spread into his intercom box and fouled out the microphone.

But the engine room leaks slowed and stopped too.

That ended the immediate peril.

But the fun was just starting.

#

You're going to hear a lot about tharlamine -- although God help us all if practical jokers ever discover it. It should become fairly cheap, now that some fellows out at the Edge Stations have discovered how to make it without the fantastically expensive artificial gravity rigs and radiation generators necessary on Earth.

Stage One concentrate, when exposed to oxygen, expands to three thousand times its original volume and becomes Stage Two, a sticky putty which hardens at low temperatures. During this change its surface tension goes completely insane and it creeps, spreading over everything it touches, working its way into the very smallest cracks and holes.

That's what had happened to the Hot Huzzy. The stuff got under the insulation, followed the hull plates, worked into these millions of microscopic punctures, and space-chill hardened it there.

#

Bob and Mary Blank tried to mop the tharlamine off their little horned angel, but for a long while they lost ground. The stuff was still expanding and the smeary layer got thicker. Blobs and blobs and chunks formed and grew and dropped off, and as each blob touched the floor or bulkhead it flattened and started spreading - spreading - spreading . . .

Bob had gotten a little of the stuff on him, and soon he was thoroughly covered. Mary too.

I was in the same fix, only worse.

"Blank Blank!" How many of those drums did you burn open?" I demanded.

But did you ever try to question a child who has done something that turned loose results more spectacular than he had anticipated? Blank Blank just looked at me and wailed.

I scowled. He cowered behind his parents. Finally when he was sure I couldn't get at him to tear him from limb to limb he peeked his dirty face around at me and giggled.

"Goo!" he said.

#

Goo we had. In the food, in the controls, in our hair. Goo everywhere.

I finally shoveled my way into the cargo pit. Only five drums were still sealed. The -- kid -- had caught on very quickly how to operate a nuclear shift torch.

And that was no joke. The volume of the opened drums, times three thousand, gave a figure a bad many times greater than the Hot Huzzy's total cubic content.

So we all turned to and scooped and shoveled and swabbed, and the waste trap kept up a steady spfft - spfft - spfft. It was work or be engulfed, and we left a trail of goo-gobs across space from the inner edge of the Belt clear to Terra. I only need one guess at the nature of that unprecedented "soft meteorite" that ruined one of the automatic Schmidts at Luna Farside observatory.

But tharlamine wasn't our only grief. Blank Blank got away again.

Bob was holding him, but the tharlamine smeared all over him made him slippery as two greased eels. He faked a nap, and then -- whiz! While Bob and I were banging our heads together diving at him, he vanished into the ventilating system again.

I raced for the cargo pit and -- thank Gog! -- got my hands on the cutting torch first. And the Huzzy was built with the Tixton nut-lock system, which was too much for the kid. But still he was able to poke his stolen wrenches into the machinery and watch the pretty sparks fly.

I still wake up gibbering over those memories.

#

Forty minutes out, when Mick throttled up for the final atmosphere approach, Tinkham caught the kid. He was plastered against a bulkhead, not liking three-grav a bit. Hartley wanted to weld him into a steel box

until we were safely down, but he had his hands full with misfiring tubes and anyhow there wasn't time. So we had to hand him back to Bob and Mary.

The landing wasn't pretty. At the critical last-blast instant, ther-lamine in the contacts made one of the relays hang. We hit hard, skidded along, and finally stopped in a cloud of concrete dust where we'd gouged the runway.

Homecoming on Earth rates and invariable though simple ritual. The crew gathers at the airlock. The captain opens inner and outer doors together. Last man outside is stuck for the drinks.

But we couldn't do that this time. Not with ruining the poor old Huzzy for keeps.

For therlamine has a third stage. Exposed to nitrogen, Stage Two becomes carbony-hard and thereafter thumbs its nose at solvents and temperatures. That's why I'd been so glad we had pure oxygen in the air flasks--and so glad Blank Blank hadn't cut into those drums before we hit the meson pile-up and lost our nitrogen.

We'd had just enough acetone to clean ourselves, but the inside of the ship still resembled an unattended parrot cage.

So we had to go out through the airlock, door and door, as though Earth wasn't home.

#

Bob and Mary took Blank Blank out. He put his feet on Earth for the first time, and for the first time looked up at the sky directly and not through heavy filters. The glare made him grimace.

Bob and Mary smiled at each other in weariness and relief. They let go of the kid's hands, evidently expecting him to stand alone a minute or two.

He fell down, flat. Awkwardly and hard.

He tried to get up, pushing first with one hand and then, angrily, with both. And he didn't make it.

He tried to crawl, then, and managed only to land on his face.

An infant crawls before it walks because until it reaches a certain stage of development its muscles simply won't support its weight. But out in that Belt substation, Blank Blank's weight at birth would have been milligrams instead of pounds. He had never crawled before, and did not know how.

He began to sob.

Mick was the first to chuckle, but Tink and Hartley and I soon joined in. We guffawed and we roared.

I know it sounds heartless to laugh at a poor little baby because he's helpless, but that's what we did. And we're not ashamed of it either.

The kid got red in the face and beat on the pritty concrete with his little fists, in a high old temper tantrum.

But suddenly he stopped short.

I must have been laughing loudest, for he twisted his head. He looked straight at me, and I'll swear his eyes took on a hard look.

He opened his mouth.

We expected him to say, "Goo!" That was all any of us had ever heard him say.

"@*%#/" he said.

Mary Blank dragged Earth air into her lungs with a queer little shocked sound. Then she turned on me.

"You taught him that!" she accused. "You -- you -- you debaucher of infants!"

Maybe in the stress of our troubles out there in space, I had used a bit of language. I couldn't remember.

But, Blank Blank swiveled toward his mother, and that vacant, empty baby face was doing its best to express reproach. He didn't think much of Earth, or of his parents for bringing him here.

He opened his mouth.

"@*%# \$!%& @c!" he said, very clearly.

Bob Blank caught Mary's upraised hand.

"Mary!" he said reproachfully.

Then he thought better of it and released her.

"Go ahead."

THE END

peon notes

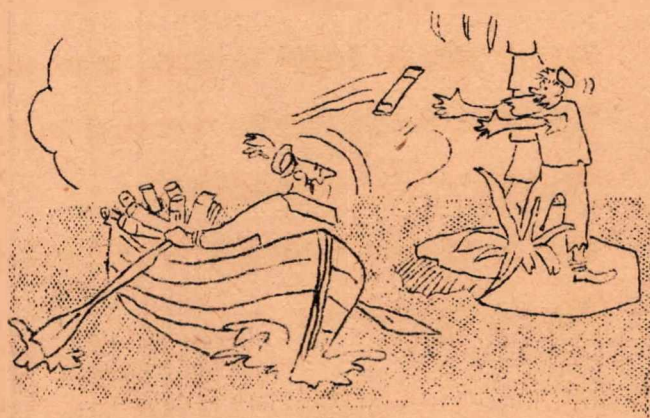
Aloha! We're at the tail end of this issue of PEON instead of our usual front page location. This issue grew kinda out of hand. I started out with the usual set-up of 20-24 pages and the next thing I knew, it was past the thirty mark! I don't mind too much, for I was more than glad to have such a good batch of reading material for you this time....We're happy, indeed, to welcome back to the fold

Jim Harmon, who, we hope, will be with us more constantly in the future... and are also very happy to welcome into the pages of PEON, T. F. Watkins and his popular column, "Kan Kan Kabitzer." When we heard of the news of Art Rapp's giving up SPACEWARP, Ted was contacted, and agreed to continue his column in PEON. A very warm welcome to you Ted....Incidentally, it's a coincidence that both Jim and Ted chose Flying Saucers for their columns the same issue, but we assure you both have some rather interesting and unusual theories concerning same..and both so widely different. Oh, well, as Ted Says, your editor doesn't have an anti-Saucer complex as yet, but if this keeps up, who knows?....In the event that you've been wondering what has happened to Roy Tackett and his "Circular File," Roy writes that it is dead, defunct, forgotten, and gone! All "written out" he says, but methinks the sights of San Francisco (the two-legged kind) have something to do with it:

George Eldredge, who likes to catch me up on anything he can find, writes there were three stories in Ed Ludwig's "Margie and the Dribbleflip" not listed in the answers as follows: "Time and Time Again" was not the 1st story on the list, but "Martian" by Glasser (Wonder Stories Quarterly, Vol. 13, page 270); No. 23A was "The Answer" by G. O. Smith (aSF Feb. 47); and No. 6A, "Decision Illogical" by Wilkinson (aSF July 48). So those of you who didn't guess these also, decrease your score by three! Two or three other readers, who are pretty sharp-eyed, mentioned one or two of the above stories also.

PEON PERSONALITY NOTETTES ABOUT::

L. SPRAGUE DE CAMP....who is to have a non-fiction book published by Prime Press sometime about January entitled LOST CONTINENTS: THE ATLANTIS THEME IN HISTORY, SCIENCE, & LITERATURE. It will consist of 90,000 words of text, and 20,000 of appendices and other matter. Excerpts from the forthcoming book appear in recent articles in Astounding and also Galaxy. Price is not known at this time, but should be reasonable, if recent issues from Prime Press are to be taken as a rule. Highly recommended reading!

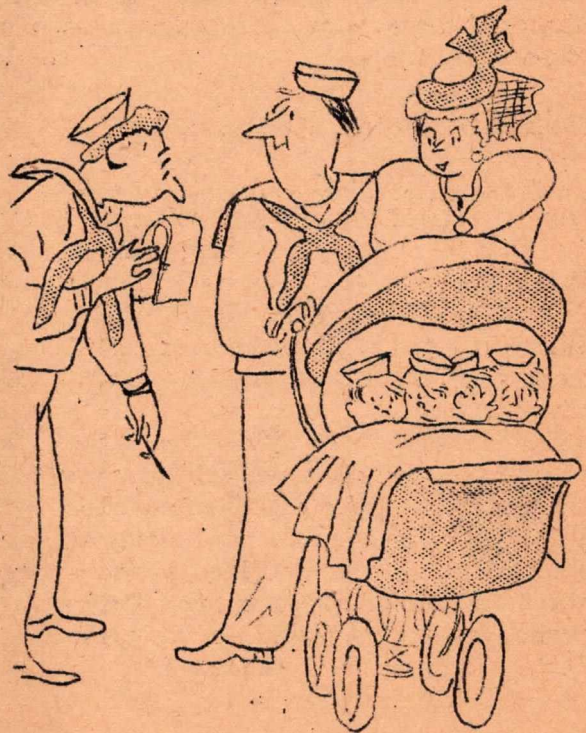


PEON gets delivered to far-away places!

E. HOFFMAN PRICE....whose recent article in PEON mentioned a bit about practicing astrology (and started somewhat a stir over it) wrote me recently (and to give you his exact words) as follows: "...meanwhile, as an antidote, I practice astrology. Thus far, I have received as honoraria, (1) small (6lb) Swiss Cheese; (1) fifth of dark Jamaica rum; \$25.00 in cash; (1) pair band knitted Argyle socks of modest color scheme; (1) antique copper bowl from Kubachi in Southern Daghestan, with copper urn to match; plus a great many square meals, with suitable liquors...Does this make me an utter pariah in science circles? My approach, you understand is truly scientific...." By the way, E. Hoffman has finally come back to the science fiction world, with a story recently sold to Planet, entitled "Exile From Venus"...and I hope he stays with us more in the future. One of the best afternoons the wife and I spent was with him up in the hills below San Francisco....he's a wonderful person to talk to, and we could hardly realize that the afternoon had gone by so fast. His stories should reflect his ability to spin a yarn, so I'm looking forward to his stories.

SAM A. PEEPLES....who had a series of articles last year in PEON on fantasy collecting, has had a second novel published by Dutton, under his Brad Ward pseudonym, entitled BROKEN RAINBOW RANCH. His first novel, DREAM ENDS IN FURY, will be published by Pocket Books within the near future under the title of OUTLAW.

Well, it appears that my constant invitations for fans coming through here to look me up has finally paid off. I just recently had the great pleasure of meeting one of my long time correspondents and PEON-author, Harry S. Weatherby, who gave you "Spirtuelle in High C" and recently, "The Shrieking Approach." Harry, who is a Hospital Corpsman First Class in the navy, was passing through Pearl Harbor on his way to a new assignment after finishing two separate courses at the Hospital Corps School in Virginia. He phoned me one Friday, and I picked him and a buddy up over at the Receiving Station. We toured one or two night spots in Wakiki (trying to drink each other under the table, it seems) and had a long talk about fannish affairs in general. Then the next day, he and his buddy spent the afternoon and most of the night with us here at Barbers Point. One of the things that came out of this two-day fanclave was the new partnership to produce SHIVERS, that fine weird-fantasy fanzine of which Harry is the editor. I will be the new publisher of SHIVERS, replacing Andrew Macura, who has had to give it up due to pressure of other business, and Harry will remain as Editor. The readers



of PEON will receive the first issue under our joint efforts shortly--if requested--and are cordially invited to subscribe thereafter at the rate of 15¢ per issue, or 50¢ for the year's four issues, as it will be published quarterly. (PEON will continue to be published as heretofore.) For further details, see the first issue....Harry's also a grand guy to know--and has one burning ambition. He wants to form his own stock troupe and travel over the country presenting plays and what-have-you after his twenty year-hitch is up in the navy--about eight more years to go! He's had the experience before, having played in various stock companies, and even one or two seasons on a real-honest-to-goodness show boat. Both he and I hope you will enjoy our joint endeavors in SHIVERS, and of course, will look forward to your comments thereon.

If you have written to Dave Mason, one of the well-known fans in the New York area, recently, and haven't received a reply, you will understand, now, why. Dave has recently lost his wife, Virginia, and we know th h o deepest sympathy of the readers of PEON go out with the editors to him on his most untimely loss.

Say, did you latch on to the new revamped Famous Fantastic Mysteries? I had been forewarned of the change in cover and size by FANTASY TIMES, but actually expected nothing like I viewed upon opening the latest issue! WOW! What a change! In fact, it's almost as if Mac West were to shed fifty pounds, dye her hair to flaming red, and star with Bob Hope in a technicolor musical! Seriously, though, the change was a very pleasant-surprise to the fans here in Hawaii, and we congratulate the editors and publishers of FFM for the wonderful change.

Occasionally, there is an inch or two of space left to fill out pages in PEON, and your editor usually finds it hard to fill this space up. So, if you have any excess magazines to dispose of, or want to obtain a few for your collections, etc., you are welcome to utilize these spaces. This is a free service to the readers of PEON and is subject to these limitations: (1) first come, first served; (2) no guarantee of when your adlet will be published; (3) space limitations may make it necessary to cut part of your advertisement; (4) no responsibility for the ads will be laid to PEON; and last but not least--this is for collectors only--no dealers, please.

Once again, we would like to remind you that if you would like the next issue of PEON, just drop a postcard for it; or if you desire to pay for a subscription, and dot have to be bothered writing for each issue, send a buck for the next nine issues (or you'll get twelve if you're a NFFF'er.)

As the navy says when it wants to cancel something--"Belay that word" about your editor being appointed to a post on the official board of the National Fantasy Fan Federation. Due to pressure of naval duties and being so far away from fan contacts in the states, I tendered my resignation with regrets to President Rick Sncary a month or so ago. However, the contest I mentioned about recruiting will still be held, but starting the first part of the new year.

See you next issue..... Lee

Starting with the next issue, PEOI will come to you quarterly. While this is for the most part due to increased pressure of official duties, it will enable the staff of PEOI to bring you a much improved fanzine. Among the new items to greet you in the next and future issues will be larger-size pages (8 1/2" instead of our present 8 1/4"); a better grade of paper and improved mimeographing; a printed and mimeographed cover--and as before the best of both fan and pro authors presenting their works for your reading pleasure. Watch for the new, new, NEW PEOI, dated February, out sometime shortly after the new year!

This is the last number in Volume Three; the next issue will be Volume Four, Number 1.





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