

The New Port News
200



TWO OF A KIND
"THERE ARE FOUR MARKS"

200 The New Port News 200

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Art by Dan Beard from **Captain Jinks, Hero** by Ernest Crosby
Funk and Wagnalls, New York 1902

OO - Jeff - Got the mailing on October 9. A shock to hear about Meade Frierson dying so suddenly.

Tyndallite - Metcalf - Looks like your keyboard may be losing its "5". Several letters became unreliable on mine and I got a new one - it doesn't always "unshift" quick enough and I get two uppercase letters at the beginning of a word.

What did they find in a 2000-year-old Mediterranean shipwreck that could be called a "computer"?

I am surprised you call Chesterton's **The Ball and the Cross** "science fiction" - I started it once (at a library in Auckland NZ) and never finished it when I had my own copy, but I assumed it was theological fantasy. I will have to try again.

Markstein is Acting - Lynch - You still have WS_FTP! I lost it when the modem died and the idiot techs at Gateway had me format the hard disk trying to install the new modem to Windows95. After hours of gruesome cyberbuggery they admitted it was impossible and I would have to put in Windows98. I had gotten WS_FTP from fanac.org and when I asked them for it again they said it was obsolete and defunct. I think they recommended CuteFTP. It took a while to get used to it, but it seems to be faster than WS_FTP.

Twygdrasil - Dengrove - What if Chandra was at the World Trade Center on September 11....

I got a Sears washer and dryer when I bought the house next door in Newport News. They were in good shape and the only trouble I ever had was the tendency of the washer to vibrate too much and walk across the floor. The chances of either such machine exploding are pretty small!

I am not surprised that the security company would not want to work on a 30-year old alarm system - they may not have the parts or a tech that ever saw that system!

No, I never had even a false beard. I remember that about shingles being dormant chickenpox, which almost everyone carries - but why is it that most people never get shingles but once?

To me the prose (which I can judge fairly well from the first page) is a good indicator of whether I will read the book. It's quite true that the prose could be good and the plot, characters, and technology drek, but I would have to read quite a lot of the book to be sure about that. However, no matter how good the plot and characters and technology are, I probably wouldn't wade through turgid prose to find them. The effect of the cover art is probably subliminal, but I am more likely to look at something with a poetic title.

The houses on Paul Street were numbered west from Jefferson Avenue, the main north-south thoroughfare parallel to the railroad tracks. Paul Street never went through to

Jefferson, but was numbered as if it had, so that it would have consistent numbers with the parallel streets to the north and south.

My new modem works fine in Windows98, but Netscape will not use the modem directly as it did the old one. No one seems to know why. It doesn't matter much - I dial up and it links, then I open Netscape Navigator and my home page appears. Or I open Netscape Messenger and a NetScape ad appears. But when I tell it to go get the mail, it does. The old Netscape would run the modem for itself and get the mail automatically.

My point about the Germans of 1632 was that if they had cotton goods from Egypt they would have been expensive imports like the silk from China. But they would have had linen and wool from local cottage industries.

I don't much like the idea of the voodoo cards to get from one floor of a building to the other - are you sure you could get out in an emergency?

It seems to me about as likely that the Confederate flag could be divorced from the idea of slavery as that the swastika could be divorced from the idea of the Holocaust. No symbol is evil in itself, it's all in the association of ideas - and those are the ideas most closely associated with those symbols.

I saw something in a magazine about the CJD that Joe Mayhew died of - while it is illegal to buy or sell human organs, there is (or was) a trade in *dura matter* from cadavers. This is the tissue between the brain and the skull, and it was reused in brain surgery. There seems to be a movement to stop this, as the patients all too often get CJD later. Joe had had brain surgery some years before he died. I should have saved the article - I think it involved a lawsuit. Our resident MD probably knows more about it.

I have seen the anti-aspartame website - the gist of it seems to be that the FDA approval of the extract of an African plant was pushed through by the big soft-drink lobby in spite of some research showing that it may cause abnormalities in the user's brain. The fact that aspartame is a "natural substance" means little - so is cobra venom! So is raw egg white, which most people apparently tolerate but I am severely allergic to. I am not suggesting that eggs should be banned - but if aspartame causes any abnormal change in the average brain it seems rather foolish to approve it for general use.

I heard on the radio the other day that the religious schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan have the students memorizing the Koran in Arabic - a language they do not speak - so that they are essentially reciting gibberish. I suppose the same was true to some extent in medieval Europe where the Bible was in Latin and the populace to a large extent illiterate.

Tibetan monks in China in the 1890s certainly were not non-violent - see the *moldering tomes* page on my website.

Your PC - as it comes from Gateway or Dell - has no "programming language" in which you yourself could write programs. I have TurboBasic installed in mine - not a complex installation, I just copied the executable to a DOS directory. Of course it will only run from DOS, which is fine with me - if I want to write a program I exit to DOS, go to that directory, and open the software. There are hundreds of programs there that I have written over the years. One of them, for example, can read an old WordStar file and write it back out in clear ascii instead of bugged-up WordStar ascii - this takes only 4-5 lines of code. Another (which takes many lines of code) can sort a word of 3-6 letters into all possible permutations of those letters. Another can multiply numbers with more digits than will fit in a calculator input and display the exact answer. Other programs draw geometrical figures of various sorts, including one for the "curve of the snowflake".

I have found megabytes of stuff in the Temporary Internet Files folder. It does not seem to make the least bit of difference if I erase them. Sometimes when I access a large site the PC itself notes that it is "deleting umpty-ump files".

Variations - Lynch - I am amazed that you suggest it is the OE's job to decide what is "SFPA" or "non-SFPA" with a view to censoring the contributions of members. This is neither practical nor desirable - I do not want an *apa-nanny* any more than I want a cyber-nanny.

The popularity of the ugly '57 Chevy merely proves again that no one ever lost money underestimating the taste of the American public.

I think it is as useless to worry about spam as it is to worry about junk mail - actually spam is less of a bother, as it weighs nothing. I think I get at least two of the Nigerian scam spam every day - I rather wish I had saved them all, I could publish them as a bad example. The thing that bugs me is the accursed telepest - someone should market a loud beeper at the optimum audio frequency of the telephone system so that the victim could blast these toads out of their earphones.

A Page for SFPA - weber - It seemed to me that the mail delivery was better in the week of September 11. The Slanapa deadline is the 15th, and I got a zine from Frank Denton in Seattle in two days by 1st Class. Your cat sounds amazingly well organized!

Spiritus - Guy - On *Lawn Order* they always decline to even go to trial if the only evidence is the uncorroborated word of an accomplice. But of course, that's a fantasy.

Didn't Wiley Coyote try rocket-powered roller-skates, with the expected result? Thrust should always be kept in line with the center of mass....

As far as I know the address for the Hampton Roads SF Assoc. is still HaRoSFA / Box 9434 / Hampton VA 23670 - but if they have published anything they haven't sent me a copy. Mainly they party and put on the annual SciCon. Odd that no one from the area is in any *apa* I know of or on any of the Net lists I'm on - I must have sucked all the fannishness out of the area when I left.... Tim Marion is in FAPA and rejoined Slanapa for a while, but of course he has lived in Manhattan for years.

Dave Hall was never in SFPA as far as I know. It was Meade that was looking to make his fortune in the lottery, not me - I never could get very interested in gambling.

Your notion about the "rare innocent man" on death row is contrary to the published facts - in Illinois fully half of the population of their death row were found to have been wrongfully convicted.

Hildebrandt *exquisite*? *Chacun a son gout* (said the farmer as he kissed the wrong end of the cow). Tolkien was a good amateur, Tim Kirk was great, Alan Lee was vaguely artistical - as to the rest, JRRT was quite right not to allow an illustrated edition.

Al Andrews is buried in Huntsville? I didn't know that. Why? I thought he lived in Birmingham all his life.

The radio just announced that here in Gwinnett County the "Office of Public Information" has been replaced by the "Office of Homeland Security".

Peter Pan & Merry - Schlosser - That was my question - I didn't know whether *kosher* included the nutrition of the animal as well as how it was killed. See my comment above about Joe Mayhew's CJD - if it is true that there have been numerous cases of CJD in brain surgery patients who recieved *dura matter* transplants from cadavers, it may be that the prion can arise

spontaneously as well as from cattle with BSE.

I don't know about pepper *spray* - the photo I saw showed prisoners with their hands cuffed behind their backs and deputies rubbing something in their eyes.

Revenant - Sheila - You are quite right - *Comte* is the French for Count; and there was a historical line of French Counts named Saint-Germain. The famous one apparently had no proper claim to the title but was a travelling bunco artist. Lord Dunsany, on the other hand, really was the 18th Baron Dunsany. His name was Edward John Moreton Drax Plunkett - "Baron Dunsany" is a hereditary title. I think there is still a Baron Dunsany - his son held the title, and may hold it still for all I know, or a grandson. Castle Dunsany is in Ireland, and the baronial land was probably granted to the first Baron Dunsany by some English king.

I guess it is always a delusion to think that there is likely to be any correlation between how attractive a person is and how likely you are to like their writing! I knew from the first page of one that I would never read Catherine Asaro's books. The best writer I ever knew personally was Avram Davidson, but mostly by correspondence. I knew Moorcock back in the 60s, and Rachel Maddux and Manly Wade Wellman and Nelson Bond - but only casually. I traded fanzines with the Haldeman brothers, but long before they sold anything professionally. Rachel Maddux was most like a character in her novels. Many of the most famous writers are said to have been unpleasant people, but the ones I knew seemed much like anyone else.

The idea that there would be "rules to magic" - as opposed to the idea that what happened was the whim of some god or demigod - was the beginning of the scientific method, I think.

Confessions - Hlavaty - Had to go find my dark glasses to look at that cover.... Doesn't seem to fit your rather saturnine image - are you feeling ok?

Sorry to hear about your job and the pets. The thought of you copy-editing the prayers of the Pope does rather boggle the mind!

Ah, but the colors of Twiltone were warm! I still never publish on white paper.

Random Thoughts - Hughes - Good luck with the new house!

Trivial Pursuits - Janice - Nice cover, but apparently Dubya took us to war without bothering about a formal declaration thereof. Afghanistan is not the sort of place where you can tell how many innocents have died - they were dying at an astounding rate without our efforts - but we do know that four UN techs engaged in mine deactivation were killed in the bombardment of Kabul.

Peter Cannon has a funny Machen parody in Ben Indick's FAPAazine - funny to me anyway. I've read about all of Machen, but little of Wodehouse, so the **Scream for Jeeves** wouldn't be as interesting.

I see I have Susan Cooper's **King of Shadows** - I haven't read it yet but I liked her earlier books. I think I got it on remainder from Daedalus.

Fred Gwynne is apparently a better actor than I would have guessed from *The Munsters*, but he still seems a bit silly to me for the killer in *Arsenic and Old Lace*. Granpa Munster, who was played by Al Lewis, was suppressed by the feds for some reason that they seem to have managed to suppress as well - even the website that said that was what happened to his website is gone. Al Lewis (now 90), who had been politically active all his life, had maintained the Granpa Munster persona in his run as the Green Party candidate for Governor of New York.

Offline - Koch - Drop SFPA? Tsk.... As a literary hobby it isn't very expensive; and as a religion it is far superior to the ones want you to kill people. Unless you are Hank of course, and want to kill people anyway....

I have several typewriters your father could use while I made a key-cap for his. Several manual portables anyway, and probably at least one electric. Last week I made a handle for the waffle iron that my mother got for a wedding present 65 years ago - the original bakelite handle had broken off. The handle I made was not elegant, and certainly didn't resemble the broken one - I cannot make bakelite (technically *phenol formaldehyde*) in the basement. But it works. Mechanically the handle could have been replaced with many substances - but to be able to use the thing it had to be replaced with a good insulator that could withstand the high temperature. I used aluminum on the hot side and wood on the side you have to touch to get the waffle out.

The question of what to do with the deceased's typewriter collection has been discussed on the *typewriters@yahoogroups.com* list - without any firm conclusions!

The Sphere - Don - I think I read that the guy murdered in Mesa was a Sikh (and thus had a turban and a beard), not a Moslem at all. Not that the murder of random Moslems would be justified either.

What will we call this undeclared war? The "Afghan War"? There have been a lot of those! It will be popular for a while, and then merely boring. There won't be a lot of popular opposition as long as only a few of our people are killed. The arms manufacturers will get a chance to try out their new toys and sell the ones that work to the government.

We have a good fictional picture of a society based on a war that never ends - 1984.

Hlavaty is copy-editing the Pope and you are selling Christmas collectibles - who was it said that the world is not only stranger than we imagine, but stranger than we can imagine? I suppose next Hank will open a candle boutique.

I really don't see the objection to the "Christian" material in Johnny Hart's *B.C.*. All the most interesting strips - *Doonesbury*, *Boondocks*, *Dilbert* - have a strong personal point of view. It's the strips that are "about nothing" that annoy me.

The Shot - Feller et al - Is this a oneshot I see before me? Fie....

Frequent Flyer - Feller - What happens with those electronic door locks in the hotels when the power fails? Obviously you are not locked *in* the room - but suppose you had left a child or an invalid in the room for a few minutes? Do the doors default to locked or unlocked?

Did Verne consider the g-forces on his astronauts in **From the Earth to the Moon** at all? I think escape velocity could be achieved with a cannon within survivable limits - but the cannon barrel would have to be about a mile long.

Werewolf With Fleas - George - I hadn't heard about Pamela Anderson, you will have to explain how she was attacked with helium balloons by an Afghan on a fast bicycle. I find it a little hard to picture!

I had not thought of it, but you are right, the cover of NPN 198 does look like a recruiting poster for the Campfire Girls of Afghanistan. For that matter, so does the cover for NPN 199 - a dream sequence, with djinn. Must be an engram deep in my subconscious....

I might join the *DucksInSpace* list except I am on too many already and get as many as 200 e-mails a day now.

This is a family apa, George, we really don't need to hear about a werewolf rubbing his front

on a tree....

5 Million Years to Earth was the film version of Nigel Kneale's **Quatermass and the Pit**. Pretty good too, I have seen it several times. The TV schedule tonight announced that AMC would show the 1977 *Tentacles*, with Henry Fonda, Shelley Winters, and John Huston - but they didn't. Instead I watched a little of the premiere of *Soulkeeper*, where the only actual actor is Brad Dourif, who has to spout nonsense in a sort of Lugosi accent. I was amazed that he could keep it up for the whole scene.

Now look what you made me do - I had to go look up *pellucid*. Somehow I thought it mean "clear" - yes, the OED traces it back to 1619 as meaning transparent or translucent; and by analogy a clear line of reasoning. ERB probably named *Pellucidar* because he dreamed that up at the same time he noticed that light would shine right through his head from one ear to the other.

Avatar - *Cleary* - The SFC flyer is cute! Leana should realize that Harlan wears lifts in his Nikes.... The **Southern Fried Sci-Fi** anthology sounds like something Bud Webster was involved with.

When I first moved here I had a lot of trouble with power outages - mostly very short ones, just enough to reboot the PC. I am told this is not good for it, so I got a non-interruptible power supply. It has enough outlets and enough capacity to keep the CPU, the monitor, and the scanner happy for about 10 minutes if the power fails - plenty of time to save the file and shut down. I don't think I have shut down but once since I got it - the power usually comes back in a few seconds.

I think "shrimp with grits" should be called something else, preferably in an obscure foreign language, to avoid annoyance to those of us with weak stomachs. My neighborhood is full of fast food franchises at which I do not eat.... I have gone to the IHOP a few times, but it isn't very fast.

Many ways have been imagined that a government might collapse - too many of the civil servants retiring at once has probably never happened in a large country anyway. A draft might be hard to arrange - the draft boards might be the first to go. Could be interesting - what would Accountant Boot Camp look like? Perhaps they will just announce a retirement freeze - I hope it isn't retroactive! The simplest thing (which of course they will never think of) would be not to allow anyone to retire until he had trained a replacement to the same level of incompetence. There would hardly be any noticeable effect at the USPS!

I fear my dreams will be haunted by your picture of a fish playing a kazoo.

Yngvi - *Toni* - Great cover! Sorry to hear Hank was ill. September 11 was hardly a day to relax and watch TV.

The argument on the Star Wars missile defense is severely muddled by the way it jumps back and forth between the political question of whether such a system would be a good thing to have, and the technical question of whether it is possible at all. From what I have read of it I doubt it is possible in any useful sense. Of course, you have to be sure you have defined "success" clearly in these discussions. I would define success as a system that would stop all small missile attacks and most of a large attack. But I suspect that to the politicians involved and their paymasters in the arms industry, "success" is rated by how much cash they can suck out of our pockets.

Is the chihuahua really a dog? I thought it had been determined that it was actually a mutant Mexican rat, first sold to credulous tourists by sly Mayan peasants. But I think Hank underestimates the beast - think what courage it takes for such a puny creature to draw attention

to itself at all! Most small animals that make a loud noise are well hidden (like frogs and crickets) or can fly away (like birds). If Hank were trapped in a world of technologically superior aliens ten times his size would he rush about screaming at them?

So you gave up on the dream of an Addams Family house and bought something with a big double garage door (like mine)? Better look into the restrictive covenants before you have a mural put on it - there's a tedious lawsuit in progress here between a home-owners association and a guy that they claim lowered the property values by enhancing his front yard with a fountain, a large stone griffin, and gargoyles, all with special lighting.

I remember when no-lick stamps first came out - the PO tried to charge extra for them. That didn't last long! But while I never felt the need to carry any about, I think the no-lick variety would have a longer shelf life in the rather damp environment of a man's wallet. In a woman's purse I can't see that it would make all that much difference.

I agree with you about the Peter Sellers *Fu Manchu*. And right after the brilliant *Being There* - what was he thinking?

If Strachan is right about the CE safety regulations, I suspect that system will collapse under its own weight soon enough. Or will it just become a corrupt system of selective enforcement - like our drug laws? We really cannot find enough area on the surface of a pencil to inscribe in several languages (and pictograms for the illiterate artist) "Do Not Eat", "Do Not Poke In Eye, Ear or Nose", "May Have Sharp Splinters if Broken", etc.

Passages - Janet - Interesting trip report. I could live without billboards! An idiotic insult to the intelligence - I don't mean signs telling where something is, or that you have found a place you might be looking for, but these monstrous abominations advertising some product or service that one would look up in the yellow pages or find at the supermarket if wanted. Do people actually make purchasing decisions based on being assaulted with this visual garbage?

Tennessee Trash - Robe - They have now decided that airline passengers need not be deprived of their fingernail clippers.... I always carry one - my fingernails break rather easily and I find it very annoying to go about with a jagged edge catching on everything. Not that I am likely to fly anywhere any time soon.

Armadillo - Liz - I enjoy color and form in a way - I like certain artwork - but I can't say I was ever much thrilled by the selections of color and form to be seen in the local shopping venues!

Apparently a lot of people find the Dremel useful - the WalMart here has twenty feet of display space devoted to the things and the accessories. I have an ancient Dremel-style tool that uses the same bits, and a newer Dremel. American Science & Surplus sometimes offers useful bits. I gave my sister one which she and one of the nephews use for carving soapstone. I often find it hard to hold steady for some of the jobs I do - I wonder if they make one with variable speed?

Another Rude Supergirl - weber - A SFPA first, a Tiajuana Bible apazine? Just the cover, alas. The coke-addicted rhino is an interesting idea - first some research would have to be done to determine if rhinos do become addicted to coke - but at best it seems to me this sort of anti-drug system would be rather hard on innocent bystanders who happened to be between the rhino and the coke. Just like the current system.... Other problems occur to me - I rather doubt rhinos can climb stairs very well, for example.

Glad to hear the scorpion sting wasn't too bad, but it might be worse next time if you become

sensitized to the venom.

I may try the WalMart for film processing - nothing complicated about mine and it's convenient. I am not an avid photographer - the photos from the last DSC are still in the camera.

You mean the AT&T cable service could get worse? Actually what we have at my mother's house has not been too bad after the initial aggravation, though we miss IFC and the excellent Info button that the BellSouth AmeriCast system had.

While the AmeriCast antenna was in the top of a tall pine tree, I have never seen a dish mounted that way. Would it stay in line well enough? In a big oak, perhaps. It could only be done by the technician, I'm not qualified! My sister says that people she knows who have satellite dishes lose the signal in bad weather.

Words Fail Me - Jeff - And have for some time it seems, as you are commenting here on SFPA 220.... I had to go search for the cover that "looks like Harry Potter playing Quidditch"! You are right about the idiots at the USPS - I just realized that their Rate Group numbers *vary with mail category*! Apparently the system is to be used only by a computer.

The spirit fluid formula that Robe published (as still being available from Eastman) was different from what I had heard - and harder to make for yourself, as some of the ingredients are more exotic. I had read, long ago, that it was methanol and water with a bit of ethylene glycol - if that is true, anyone knowing the proportions could make it. Or could have at one time - I'm not sure where I would go to buy methanol now. In Newport News in the 60s there were still "chemical supply companies" downtown where you could go and buy a gallon of this or that.

The domestic Media Mail is pretty much the old "4th Class Book Rate", which had long included any book analog such as recorded audio or video tape, CDs and CDroms, movie film prints. In fact, the local PO is still using the old "Special 4th Class" rubber stamp interchangeably with "Media Mail".

You are right about d/w, of course. It is pretty much forgotten today what value the romantic Victorians put on the dustiness of books. All the better publishing houses issued pre-dusted books, and a d/w was required to keep the dust in place until the book was purchased.

While I have no great admiration for David Brin's literary talent, the only time I ever met him was at a Hogu Ranquet at a worldcon and he seemed like a nice fellow to me. Maybe he's a curmudgeon and someone else was wearing his name tag that day.

Celko was married when he lived in Lithonia, before he moved to Austin. I traded a few e-mails with him. A gun-toting loon perhaps, but he never seemed very "southern" to me; and whatever quantity of beer he swilled, I never saw him drunk.

I have a bumper sticker that says WWCD for "What Would Cthulhu Do", and the other day a young couple in a van in Clairmont Avenue traffic first tried to sell me speakers, and then wanted to know who Cthulhu was. Unfortunately, traffic was moving too well for me to have time to explain Cthulhu to them. Perhaps I should print up some tracts to pass out....

The Seven Statisticians is cute!

Oblio - Brown - I had a much worse fender-bash - from my sister, in the driveway. She backed into the left rear quarter panel on my 2000 Toyota Corolla. No damage to her bumper, but my fender is caved in from the wheel-well to the rear bumper. The Toyota place said \$1800 and her insurance company said \$1500. I said "eh?" and told them to fix it. They said 4 days - 10 will more like it if they get it back to me next week. But it's cooled off enough than I can drive the 1986 hatchback without roasting.



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