

The New Port News
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for

SFPA 228

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Covers by Vernon Hill from a 1910 calendar;
Henry Holiday for *The Hunting of the Snark*

OO - Jeff - Got the mailing on June 10. Much thanks for the extra copy of the *Commonplace Book* for my collection!

Variations - Lynch - Interesting material on classical music. That is a long drive down to Florida. I think it took me 13 hours to get from Newport News to Orlando for the worldcon. I thought I might stop somewhere to sleep, but I didn't.

Tyndallite - Metcalf - I once had the edition of **Fahrenheit 451** that was bound in asbestos cloth - I bought it from Rusty Hevelin at the first SF con in Norfolk VA in the 60s. But I never heard of the one "printed on asbestos". What did the stuff look like? I have seen asbestos in several forms, but never as paper. I wouldn't have thought it would make very good paper.

Twygradrasil - Dengrove - Fascinating cover! Can you translate the text on the cover? It's a bit too murky for me to attempt even with a German dictionary. I didn't know the Germans had cartoon money after WWI! A Google search on "Notgeld der Stadt Ruhla" gets just one hit, a site in German that I can't make much of.

One of the few Vonnegut books I didn't have was **Timequake** and I found that recently in a thrift store. I doubt it would appeal much to the average 12-year-old, but I rather like it myself. Of course it is short on action and long on commentary - but it's interesting commentary.

The Queen of Sheba is in a similar style and from the same publisher (Putnam's) and the same year (1922) as one of the Traprock books - the big difference is that instead of the silly photos, they have silly pseudo-Egyptian drawings. If Stark Young wrote it as "Phinneas A. Crutch", it was no doubt because that sort of nonsense was popular and Putnam's thought they could sell more of it. These are large, attractive books with what appear to be serious titles - only when you begin to read them do you realize it's all a gag.

I had heard long ago that Wayne Woodard (1914-1964) took the name "Hannes Bok" as a tribute to the composer. The main impetus was probably that he didn't want to be Wayne Woodard. There was one noted Bok that he might have heard of - Edward William Bok (1863-1930), editor of *Ladies Home Journal* (1889-1919) and author of several books in the 1920s. This Bok was of Dutch ancestry, and his son Curtis Bok became a judge and wrote the impressive true crime novelization **Star Wormwood** (1959).

There were two bad SF novels called **The Clones**, but the one by Eugene Carl Shaffer didn't appear until 1980. I had no idea that P. T. Olemy's 1968 effort was the first novel with

"Clone" in the title! The OED traces the word to 1903 - and notes a 1968 article in *New Scientist* about concern over the possibility of "clonal man"! Perhaps if we looked up that issue we would get a hint as to who was behind the pseudonym P. T. Olemy. Before that the cites on the term have to do with bacteria and plants.

I don't know enough about Jewish theology to evaluate the ideas in Abraham Ettleson's **Lewis Carroll's "Through the Looking Glass" Decoded** (Philosophical Library 1966). He says, for example, that Tweedledum and Tweedledee represent the parts of Haman and Mordecai in a Purim Play; and that the Lion and the Unicorn (who eat plum cake with Alice and the White King in Ch.7) represent Pharoah and Moses respectively. Apparently Moses is not well enough represented by a Unicorn, as Ettleson insists that the king's messenger Hatta (noted for his "Anglo-Saxon attitudes") also represents Moses because God addressed Moses as "thou" and Hatta spelled backwards (Attah) means "thou" in Hebrew. And the "unbirthday present", of course, is a Chanukah present, because Chanukah isn't anyone's birthday.

I would have guessed that "cotton" was from the Spanish *algodon*, obviously dating to the Moorish rule of most of Spain. I see the OED traces it in English back to 1300. I had wondered about the rabid Puritan Cotton Mather - if his father was literate enough to name him Katan from the Bible, you would think he could have spelled it right. None of my references mention "Katan" - the closest is *Kartan*, the name of a city also called Kiriathaim.

Well, now they've found Chandra Levy's body, and say she was murdered - even though they can't (or won't?) tell what she died of. She had been in Rock Creek Park before, and had just looked up a mansion in the park on her PC. Other women had been attacked in the park, and a guy was in jail for it. I wouldn't be surprised if the crime (if any) was never solved.

I would call a slide-rule a calculator, not a computer. It is programable only in that there are several scales, and the user decides which two to look at depending on whether he wants to multiply or divide, or get a log or anti-log, or find a trigonometric function value. There is even a sort of memory - the sliding hairline.

I did learn to read by sight, and before kindergarden. I knew - from context - the meaning of many words that I did not know how to pronounce. Phonics concentrates on the syllable, and could result in someone reading aloud perfectly something he had no comprehension of whatsoever. It may be of benefit to some children - but the only useful end result is for the *word* to be the essential unit of understanding, and for the reader to grasp the word in context without having to consciously fiddle with either letters or syllables.

Variations - Lynch - It was a shock to hear about Bruce Pelz. I have a photo of him from my first worldcon, the 1963 DisCon.

The rule about blood donations and travel to Europe seems odd, but perhaps the Red Cross has some sort of data.... I would have thought that travel across the Atlantic was so common and frequent that any such rule would be useless.

A recent program on the Discovery channel seemed to say that carbon dioxide in the air is continually lost to the oceans, and that the only thing that keeps up the level of CO₂ in the Earth's atmosphere is *vulcanism*. I would like to see the actual numbers on loss to the oceans, vulcanism, the plant cycle, and the fossil fuel contribution! Note that the loss to the oceans and the gain from vulcanism are utterly beyond human control.

Trivial Pursuits - Janice - Odd that I don't remember the Mike Luckovich "Yoda" cartoon

from the Atlanta paper that I read every day.

I read a good bit of Jasper Fforde's **The Eyre Affair** but have yet to finish it - it's original and well-written, but the characters seem ill-defined to me, and the plot lacks direction.

Hope you had a good time in New Zealand. I thought it was a nice place. I just heard they had a massive blizzard on the South Island and had to try to fly in emergency supplies.

Hard to say how useful my fanzine index will ever be! I am also annotating my typewriter inventory.

I have seen several horror movies where people were killed with knitting needles through the eyes!

Aha - someone who knows the true facts about Cotton NMN Mather's odd name! I first saw the NMN in the NASA phonebook at Langley Research Center, which was printed from computer-generated masters. In the computer program there had to be a field for the middle name I suppose - but if there was no middle name (generally given as just the initial anyway) why not leave that field blank? In the simplest form of the program I suppose the computer would then have printed a blank space if there was no middle name - but it would not have been a big deal to make it detect and ignore that. I see I still have a 1997 LaRC directory - which gives both phone numbers and e-mail addresses - and this NMN nonsense has been abandoned.

Ellison Webderland - Janice - What a lot of noise over nothing - Ellison could have written three short stories with the same effort he spent ranting at you. Maybe he's run out of inspiration and indignation fills the adrenalin gap! He was right that you should have stayed out of it - *never try to teach a pig to sing, it wastes your time and it annoys the pig.*

Confessions - Hlavaty - I am not rude to telepests - perhaps that is the best they can do - but I do not approve of the system that enables them. The only real value in having a phone is the possibility of instant communication - and sometimes that is a great value. The telepest takes advantage of this - but his communication has no instant value at all. Even if you were interested in the product, one time would serve as well as another, and any time would be better than their prime time - dinner time. When the police call for donations I just lay the phone down and let them babble on until they realize no one is listening - as far as I'm concerned, these calls border on extortion.

Spiritus Mundi - Guy - Cute cover - I didn't know Effinger had artistic tendencies. He caught Walt Kelly's style pretty well!

Got the *Challenger* 16 in the mail the same day as the SFPA mailing, much thanks.

I sent the pages from the Atlanta paper about lynching (with apologies to Rich) to a friend in England. This spread was inspired by the local exhibit of the photo collection "Without Sanctuary" (also the title of the book just published) someone put together. The total number of lynchings between the dates 1880-1940 (or something like that) was quoted as 4725 (or something like that). I don't think I ever said they were all over alleged sexual offenses, and I don't remember if there was any breakdown by motive. I see that the *Christian Monitor* website says "about 4700" and that a college class was able to actually research the names of some 2200 of the victims. These numbers would of necessity be somewhat fuzzy.

Judging from stories in the local paper, "self defense" killings often never reach any court

because the DA does not indict.

I always assumed that whatever went through the apa got page credit in the Box Scores, but I have no idea whether all the statisticians have counted franked material. Certainly whatever of *Challenger* goes through should be counted.

Nice covers on the *Challenger* 16 - with that front cover, one might think you were aiming for newstand sales.... Good to see the tribute to Ray Lafferty. I have been asked who controls the literary estate, and my only guess was Dan Knight, or that he would know.

Interesting article by Dengrove on antique aliens. I read once that whereas people in the 20th century saw flying "saucers", earlier sightings had been of spindle-shaped objects, at least when they weren't seeing women mounted on broomsticks. Did the aliens change technology, or is it a matter of perception - a saucer, after all, might be thought spindle-shaped if seen only edge-on.

Hilarious tale of his encounter with the Mystic East from Terry Jeeves! Joseph Major's Tolkien spoof is a bit too silly for me - hard as that may be to imagine.

You are right about the drama of criminal law - though as with most drama I think it is enjoyed most by the spectators. The issue of insanity as a defense is clouded by the fuzzy state of psychology as a science and by the corrupt state of the prison industry. From the standpoint of public safety it matters little whether a violent criminal is sane or not - he can hardly be left to continue his depredations. And yet humane reason gags on the notion of punishing someone for acts he could not control. I am doubtful about the notion of "punishment" in any case. The ideal response to murder by a lunatic was provided in at least one case - one of the major contributors to the Oxford English Dictionary was an army doctor in the Civil War who after the war went to London and killed an Irishman in the street because he thought all the Irish were out to get him. This doctor spent the rest of a long life in a comfortable asylum - because the family had the money to pay for it. But there seem to be a lot of borderline cases where the gurus cannot agree whether the defendant is crazy or not, or even what "crazy" means.

Why did the police or the DA even take official note of Kirpen's threat to "blow up his house with a nuclear bomb"? Wasn't this a failure of common sense on their part? Suppose Kirpen had threatened to let a genii out of a bottle, or put a voodoo curse on the mayor - would he have been charged with terrorism? Probably not, because the official line is that geniis and voodoo curses are imaginary. And yet a threat to detonate a nuclear bomb was equally unreal, even though a permissible part of the current bag of bugbears.

Peter Pan & Merry - Schlosser - I suppose any rules intended to slow the spread of BSE are pretty much guesswork - last I heard they still had not isolated the active agent of infection. A local man died from eating a ground-beef dish at a Mexican restaurant - nothing mysterious though, when the Health Department checked they found a well-know bacterial contaminant at 60 times the allowable density in the ground beef.

I'll be interested to hear how the Prius works out. It would suit my commuting needs pretty well - as long as I didn't have to carry much. I am always amazed at the arrogance of the insurance companies - are Prius owners supposed to drive uncovered (illegal in many states) until they think they have enough data?

Revenant - Sheila - I guess that was the problem with trying to do the music that Tolkien

describes in the movie - no matter how they did it, a lot of people would probably object. I have a BBC *Lord of the Rings* on reel-to-reel tape, probably from the 70s. I haven't listened to it in a long time. About all I remember now is that I didn't like it as well as the original BBC version of **The Hobbit**, which has music that sounds really strange until you get used to it - I think they were using medieval instruments.

Oblio - Gary B - I saw the photo of the one-legged runner with the spring prosthetic somewhere, but I don't remember where now. Either the local paper or the Net, most likely. I didn't notice anything, so maybe it was already jiggered. Or maybe I just didn't notice. I would not be inclined to edit such a picture - but I don't know how extreme it was.

Yeah, I haven't heard any more about nuking the mail, and haven't gotten any that looked scorched. Sooner or later someone will mail something that is set off by the nuking.... I doubt the postal rate increase the end of June will be enough to pay for all this techno-oodoo.

My experience of Turks is minimal. I did room with one at Georgia Tech. His name was Oktay Chen and he was very quiet. He did not look goofy however - he looked rather like the movie star Charles Boyer.

Interesting that Madeline Albright would tell a reporter that her office called Yasser Arafat "Stinky". The Israelis may well have left him no place to wash in!

George's Zine - Poulette - Hmm - no "Poulette" on the roster, and yet this zinelet is not listed as franked. Oh, he's a waitlister - but has no address. Sounds like Georgia Tech's imaginary "perennial freshman", George P. Burdette!

Tennessee Trash - Robe - Nice photos. Sorry to hear about Isaac, I hope he recovers soon!

Interesting account of the Venezuelan political situation. Sorry to hear about Rick Norwood's son. I don't think I've heard from Rick since I moved to Georgia, though I see he's still on the mailing list for *It Goes On The Shelf*.

Comments - Hughes - While I think of it I have a gizmo you might find interesting, found in a local antique store - a Delft ODSS II scanning stereoscope. It is made for 9x9-inch photos.

Wasn't that "Robur the Conqueror" (rather than "Robert") in the Verne story? I have a vague recollection of his ship having both bouyant gas lift and the propellers, and thinking it would be clumsy and have too much drag for any sort of speed.

The idea that the USPS security procedures will drive people to UPS won't last long - UPS will no doubt have an incident soon enough. I frequently mail stuff for my sister by printing a UPS label online and dropping the parcel at any of several local pick-up stations such as Office Depot or the Kroger.

There are probably people on fictionmags@yahoogroups.com that know something about the *Planet Comics* copyrights, or at least where to look. You can join it in the usual way I think.

Some people have all the luck. My doctor gave me a bunch of Claritin pills but I could not see that they had any effect at all.

All the Stars - Jeff - Yes, the prep school I went to offered biology. It was taught by a campus character, Dr. King, who looked a bit like one of the Martian big-brain aliens in the old pulps.

I'm not sure why I didn't take it, other than that I got through grades 10-12 in two years and a summer school.

No, I don't think that armadillos eat kudzu, at least not enough to matter - I think their diet is mostly bugs and grubs. We saw a few dead ones by the back roads when I drove my mother and sister down to Forsyth to visit my father's grave on Memorial Day. We also visited a graveyard in Culloden Georgia where some distant relatives were buried long ago - an old town that seemed to be deserted. I had imagined it was named after the battle in Scotland, but my mother says it was named after the founder.

You are ahead of me, I didn't even know Rehnquist had written a book. He and Ashcroft should both be impeached.

It didn't bother me that Catherine Asaro's books could be considered "romance novels" - so could many of Tanith Lee's. But Asaro's writing seemed flat and colorless.

The Sphere - Don - I have seen a recipe for preserving newsprint - it was quite tedious and involved soaking in a solution of antacid and careful drying.

I don't worry a lot about aspartame, since I don't use much of the products that contain it. Certainly it would take a lot of adverse side affects to overturn a \$3 billion/year industry.

Just *Doonesbury* and *Boondocks* and *Dilbert* are exiled from the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* daily comics pages (they all get into the Sunday color section) - the first two appear on p.2 of the "Living" section (which also has the comics and entertainment stuff) along with some media gossip and Ann Landers, and *Dilbert* is in the "Business" section. But we don't get *Mallard Fillmore* or *B.C.* at all. The vile *Cathy* was replaced with something not quite as lame for a while, but apparently she has fans and they brought her back.

Yngvi - Toni - I enjoyed the party at your new house! Alas, to me most pop music is "lout" pop music.

Well, I much prefer Tolkien's "We're hunting Orcs" to the slangy "Let's go hunt some Orc" of the film version. I guess no one will ever know what happened to the Entwives, at least I haven't heard of anything about them emerging from the bottomless trunk of manuscripts. You could try a google search!

Tolkien's mythos included God and a creation myth, but not an organized religion - and I didn't miss it. The three volumes about the War of the Ring are told from the perspective of the Hobbits and don't include this part of the background. If you read **The Silmarillion** you realize that the backstory would have been known to the Elves and the Istari, but not to the Men, the Hobbits, or the Dwarves. Probably Tom Bombadil knew but didn't care. Sauron knew all too well - he is closely analogous to Milton's Lucifer.

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I will not have been at DSC this year. Nothing to do with the con or any of the fans - the appeal of going just failed to overcome the inertia of staying home. As I have grown older and the brain-pan leakier and the digestion less tolerant, these affairs have become less enjoyable - I was never a real party person anyway. I have always felt that startling events tended to occur where I was not - perhaps an alien ship will land on the hotel roof, or Hank will slay a dragon conjured from an ancient grimoire. Please get photos.

