

The New Port News
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"For gorsake stop laughing—this is serious!"

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for

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Cover art by Stan Cross from a Sydney Australia *Smith's Weekly* of the 1930s

- Sent from New Zealand by Tom Cockcroft.

OO - Jeff - Got the mailing on December 13. Much thanks for the extra copy of the quotes collection!

Hugo Box Scores - Copeland - You are a glutton for statistical labor! About all I get out of this is the impression that any link between the Hugo Award and my personal tastes in literature is purely coincidental!

Peter, Pan and Merry - Schlosser - I would guess that most abuse of children is not sexual. Today's paper carried an account of a foster mother whose screaming at her child was broadcast live on a radio talk show. She went on for 4 minutes, threatening to kill the child, apparently having forgotten she was holding a phone link to an open mike! The child has been removed from her care. And here in Atlanta we have the case of an undercover cop who shot a teenager to death - Johnny Cochran is representing the family. The cop (who has a record of excessive violence - he had broken the bones in a woman's face over her car stereo being too loud) says the kid was one of a gang breaking into a car. But the kid was driving his family SUV and perhaps just trying to get away from a man waving a gun, thinking he was being car-jacked.

Murray Leinster's *A Logic Named Joe* that predicts the Internet (though of course he didn't have our terms for it, which hadn't been invented yet) is quite readable - and probably more interesting to readers who have experienced the Internet than it was at the time. It originally appeared in a 1946 ASF, in his own collection **Sidewise in Time**, and was anthologized in **Science Fiction Carnival**.

There is no specification in the Bill of Rights that the protections enumerated there are limited to "citizens" - the word does not even appear.

The Curse of Cthulhu - Marion - Great cover! I didn't know that R Alain Everts was also known as Randal Kirsch - I never heard of Randal Kirsch. What a noisome lot of literary vultures!

Variations - Lynch - Interesting trip report! I have little use for Fedex - their drivers are idiots. They left two large boxes in the rain at my garage door today, right where I would back over them if I opened the door from the controller in the car and backed out. And it isn't the first time. Why didn't they ring the doorbell? Why didn't they use the large waterproof bin at the front door?

My 1986 Toyota Corolla hatchback still gets 30 mpg at 70 mph - once when I drove it down from Virginia at 55 mph, it got 37 mpg. But anyone driving at 55 on the Atlanta expressways probably wouldn't survive to be arrested for blocking traffic.

Confessions - *Hlavaty* - Most of the Joan Aiken books I have seem to be YA, but they aren't particularly short. I've never seen whatever she has written for younger children.

I remember the first US undenominated postage - a Christmas stamp - and being told later, when they started with the "letter" undenominated stamps that these could not be used for international postage. But somewhere along the line a postal clerk told me the rule had been dropped, and I have been using these stamps for overseas postage for years. A couple of years ago I bought some \$65 worth of old commemoratives and others at a slight discount from a fellow typewriter collector, and these turned to include quite a lot of the orange "F" stamp with a face value of 15¢.

It never occurred to me to worry about Jorge Luis Borges' politics - what I like in his work is hardly political.

Derogatory Reference - *Lafferty* - Nice cover! A hundred issues - that's not too many! I haven't done that many genzines even counting all five titles.

I thought I remembered that Bester's *Pi Man* was compelled to act so as to reduce statistical anomalies rather than to "make patterns", but it's been a long time since I read that book.

Pop music obviously meant a lot more to you than it did to me, even though I am only five years older and must have heard much of the same music. There was much of it I wish I didn't have to remember hearing, but even with the music I liked I had no expectation that it would change the world.

I quite agree with you about "belief" - there are a lot of things that I don't feel qualified to decide one way or the other or the other other, etc.

Tyndallite - *Metcalf* - I think there are more geological reasons not to expect coal in a volcano that that it would have long since burned up - but I am not a geologist so I don't know the technical terms. Coal is the result of time and pressure on layers of very old organic debris, but I think volcanos are produced from layers of rock much deeper in the Earth's mantle than the oldest organic deposits.

While abebooks finds only one copy of William S Porter's **Roads of Destiny**, addall finds many more (15 when I looked), at prices from \$7 to \$2700 (for a signed copy). It was reprinted a couple of times, but apparently not since a Collier edition of 1927.

I agree with Langley Searles about Asimov's fiction. I found his style very dull. And yet his non-fiction is very easy to read and very good at explaining complex technical matters.

Twygdrasil - *Dengrove* - Great pictures, your mother was an excellent artist! What was Mick Jagger in court for? But I see these can't all be pictures from any US court - at least I don't remember the Ayatollah Khomeini ever being in a court here.

I never played a musical instrument either, unless you count the kazoo. I had a few piano lessons as a kid, but they didn't take. Nor is the family very musical. My mother played the piano, but we never had one. Her mother, however, not only played the piano but wrote a waltz, which my mother had me register copyright for years ago. My sister's youngest, the ex-fan Joe, abuses a guitar occasionally - about as musical as my kazoo playing.

It had not occurred to me that "making gold" would involve anything but the specific element - but of course you are right, the alchemical attempts predated atomic theory. On the other hand, fraud was always a concern - I am not clear on when they went from trying to test a sample by determining the density to the knowledge that only "real gold" would withstand *aqua regia*. In period movies we often see people biting a coin to see if it's really gold - this probably worked to

some extent, as pure gold is soft enough to be marked that way, and any other metal of the time would have a perceptible "metallic" taste.

As far as I know, the Spanish TV channels we get here on AT&T Broadband, Univision and Telemundo, are Mexican. I do not watch them much - the content seems to be at about the level US television was in the 1950s, and while I read Spanish fairly well I can't make much of the rapid dialog. I have trouble enough with English if more than one person is speaking.

Quite likely most children *thought* they were being abused at some point - it's a matter of definition and perception. I was beaten as a child, but probably no more than was customary at the time. The "repressed memory" business was a clever scam - by definition, there is no way to prove that anyone has no repressed memories - and often no way to distinguish "recovered memories" from dreams or suggestions!

So-called *ossified* opinions usually turn out to be opinions you don't agree with.... It seems quite natural to me that an older person, having thought about something for years, would either have arrived at a stable conclusion or given up thinking about the subject much. An opinion could only be described as "ossified" if it failed to shift in response to credible new data, or a demonstration of faulty logic.

I had a letter from Harry Warner, said he passed the exam to retain his driver's license - which he really needs because there is no longer a grocery store within walking distance. He noted that the strange writer John Maule (who wrote as Ilya Murometz, see IGOTS 23 and 24) died earlier this year (2002).

I would say that H G Wells' *cavourite* is properly science-fictional in that while we haven't found any such substance, neither has the possibility been disproven. Gravity is very much like the other field forces in that it acts at a distance without the need for any intervening medium, and falls off as the square of the distance. Einstein never completed a Unified Field Theory, nor (as far as I know) has anyone else. There have been hints of reductions in gravity by various devices involving rotating semiconductors - but since a frog has been levitated by powerful magnetic fields, it looks like there is a basic difficulty in separating any anti-gravitational effect from a magnetic effect.

I thought the old folk expression was *in like Flynn*, but I never knew whether it originated with the movie actor. The only reference I find it in is Wentworth & Flexner where it is given as "in like Flyn(n)" with no definition and they seem to hint that it is merely rhyming slang - that is, the name Flynn appears merely because it rhymes with *in*.

It seems to me that I once saw a rough breakdown of the ethnicity of the WTC victims and it was a totally unremarkable mix (based, I suppose, on guesses from the surnames) of Anglos, Jews, Hispanics, and Arabs. I find it hard to believe in conspiracies involving 1000s of people. Now that almost all of the victims are specifically identified, I suppose someone knows how many of them were Israelis.

I found one of Al Capp's books in the thrift store the other day - **The Hardhat's Bedtime Story Book**, Harper & Row, 1971. He was well into the winger rant mode by then!

Spiritus Mundi - Guy - Fancy cover! I got an old pulp cover image over the Net - I think it was from the Yahoogroup "pulpoftheday" that sends one at random every day - that showed the villian bronzing a girl. All the previous efforts in the background were nude, but the current victim was minimally clothed. He had just started at the feet and was working his way up.

"The good George Bush"? Gag me with a spoon....

Sorry to hear about the car. And with no warning at all? I lost all the oil in a Volvo once

when the drain plug fell out, but there was no apparent engine damage, I drove it for years after and then my sister drove it into the ground.

Interesting trial cases - it's often forgotten that no matter how "bad" a crime is, or what the defendant's record may be, the state is supposed to prove guilt of a specific crime to get a conviction.

My mother occasionally cares for a friend's 16-year-old doglet. About all I can say for it is that it remains continent and does not bark. In fact, it does nothing but wander about or lay down right where it is most likely to get stepped on.

Gibbs doesn't bother me - but I wouldn't want to work for him!

I think vanVogt is best read at the Golden Age of 12 - I enjoyed what I read of him then.

I just saw what was said to be Audrey Hepburn's first film role, less than a minute kissing Alec Guinness in the opening scene of *The Lavendar Hill Mob*. The announcer on TCM said she was playing a waitress, but her tailored suit didn't look like waitress gear to me.

James Lipton's **An Exaltation of Larks** had an "Ultimate Edition" in 1991, over twice the size of the original but with the same d/w design.

Clute says Joe Green first published SF in 1962 - so no connection with the "Joseph Greene" who had **Captives in Space** from Golden Press in 1960?

Trivial Pursuits - *Janice* - Everybody gets to be a juror but me.... In the Peninsula area of Virginia where I worked for the government it was rumored that the courts carefully avoided putting NASA engineers in the jury pool, as being too inquisitive.

Was **The Wind Done Gone** meant to be funny? "Parody" is usually assumed to be humorous, but satire is not.

I am supposed to be refinancing - I was supposed to go to a closing last Monday after filling out a lot of 19-century paperwork, but they called and cancelled, said there was something more to chase down. I have a mental picture of Dickensian clerks in stiff collars, standing at high desks, scratching in big ledgers with steel pens.... I pointed out to them that this is the 21st century and everything there is to be known about me and the house is in their computer already - it's the same mortgage outfit, Countrywide.

Funny Sorel cartoon!

Revenant - *Sheila* - I always enjoy hearing Andrei Codrescu on the radio. I tried reading one of his vampire novels, but it was only so-so.

Just by accident I happened to see a BBC America show with a vicious parody of LotR - Frodo (called Dodo) was played by the actress who plays the Vicar of Dibley in that show. This was a segment of a comedy skit series called *Saunders & French* that I had never seen before. I have the Extended DVD of FotR, but haven't watched it yet.

Frequent Flyer - *Feller* - I can certainly see how anyone would be confused that *paint* is an "expense" but *wallpaper* is a "capital expenditure"!

I could see Hispanics being "profiled" for drugs or gang violence, but has there been any Hispanic terrorism in the US to speak of?

The Sphere - *Don* - I quite agree that it is safer to save in ascii! Does WordPerfect 8 do that on demand, or only if it was installed over 5.1?

The origin of the word *universe* you are looking for may well be in comics zines that I would never have seen. I certainly wasn't trying to start an argument with you about it!

Yes, while I liked the first Lemony Snicket book, I doubt I will ever get around to reading any more of them.

Weasel Crossing - Copeland - Cute cover! I was lucky - I never had a "pointy-haired boss" in 39 years at NASA. Some of my bosses were more competent than others, but none of them were malicious.

Thalassemia minor is an inherited characteristic - my nephews apparently got it from their Italian paternal grandmother. It kept Joe from joining the Coast Guard as he wished.

The point of the article on atmospheric CO₂ was that the loss to the ocean surface and the gain from vulcanism far outweighed any effect of the ozone layer or other human activity. And neither the ocean surface nor vulcanism is even remotely within human control. The ozone holes are caused by a number of gases that get into the stratosphere, but CO₂ is not one of them. The main culprits seem to be methane (CH₄) and the assorted man-made chloro- and fluoro-carbons.

I am doubtful about a kid continuing to believe anything just because he believed it at age six - didn't lots of kids in our generation still believe in Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy at that age? When I was six I believed that Hitler had only one arm, because I had overheard (and misunderstood) comments about "that German paperhanger" and "busy as a one-armed paperhanger". A child of six can believe *facts* - I think you have to be somewhat older to understand a philosophy or system of belief well enough to be said to believe in it.

Ascending Descending - weber - Fancy zine! Good thing I wasn't desperate to see *The Stone Tape* - it was recommended by some British fans on a Netlist. I have no idea whether I would actually think it's any good. Statistically, probably not, but as with Schrodinger's Cat, you never know until you open the box....

I think 10g is often taken as a practical upper limit for human tolerance of acceleration - and that's on a well-designed couch at the right angle. Your math is off though:

$$a = 2 \cdot 5280 / 0.0818 = 129095 \text{ ft/sec}^2 \text{ (not } 1164277 \text{)}$$

How you got the right final answer with the intermediate result that far off is a mystery!

The only thing I ever said about the 1957 Chevrolet was that I thought it was butt-ugly - I never heard of it being counterfeited. I thought either the 1956 or the 1958 looked better. Whether any of them were good cars in another matter. I didn't have a car then, and my father had a 1956 Oldsmobile. I drove it occasionally but wasn't responsible for the maintenance and knew nothing but how to make it go.

I have several of the Wallechinsky compendiums, and the one you are referring to is the 1975 **People's Almanac**. Page 728 has a one-page article attributed to a Mike Baron in which it is stated specifically that a group of enthusiasts led by Ardell Malowick produced 1957 Chevrolets until 1967 at a facility in southern Illinois. So this is not exactly an "urban legend", as it is traceable to specific names and places. According to this account, these car bodies were made by hand, without the benefit of the die molds and steel presses used in the original production. They were then sold as "well-preserved used cars" in used-car lots across the US. No figure is given for the number produced this way however. True or false? I have not the vaguest notion, nor do I much care. The title page of this book has a nice quote:

The exact contrary of what is generally believed is often the truth.

Jean de la Bruyère (1645-1696)

That Was the Year That Was - weber - Remarkable! The CD used software I didn't even know I

had. Worked pretty well except for some soundtrack dropout on the Bond mpps. For example, when the introduction explains the *baccarat* "shoe", the word baccarat is truncated to something like "bac". The pdf files worked fine - this PC came with the Acrobat Reader 5.0 installed, so I didn't have to download that again.

Passages - Janet - You want a doctor rant? I've never had a GP who had the gumption of a goat. A good dentist, an excellent dermatologist, a successful (in that he cured what ailed me) surgeon, a competent eye doctor - but the GPs have been a lost cause. They don't seem to have a clue, and aren't looking for it either. As for "looking stressed", I haven't noticed that either. The first one retired and put my files in dead storage without notifying me, so when I needed a doctor, I found I didn't have one. The next one didn't know what was wrong and didn't seem much interested, either. Then I moved here and picked one more or less on the basis of convenient access. She promptly moved several miles away. She certainly doesn't look stressed - she's dressed and made up like a fashion model - and just as clueless as the other one.

Now Blue Cross tells me I must register for Medicare - umpteen thousand people must do that every day, why can't I do it online? Think of the savings to the bureaucracy in personnel, office space phone lines and to the client in time, gas and aggravation!

Random Thoughts - Hughes - You actually admit to voting against Barnes, "who has done a good job", over the asinine flag flap? The mind boggles.... I didn't think much of Barnes - right after I moved here he was reported to have pushed through legislation specifically favoring AFLAC, and he never got very far with the atrocious condition of the prisons or the schools. But I voted for him as the lesser of two evils - Perdue didn't seem to me to have anything but meaningless platitudes and, of course, the Sacred Banner to wrap himself in. Now they have admitted that there will be no flag referendum - at least not until they need the issue again for political reasons - and I will be amazed if Perdue's administration manages anything at all towards alleviating the real problems in the state.

Oblio - Brown - As Mark Twain is supposed to have said about Wagner's music, *SpongeBob SquarePants* is probably better than it sounds.... But as to being the "best" - well, I prefer *Futurama*, *The Simpsons*, *King of the Hill*, *Courage the Cowardly Dog* or any of the old pre-50's cartoons.

DeWald is quite right - the only way to get some apparently enormous tasks done is to do at least a certain amount every day. That's how I got my fanzine collection indexed.

Are you sure the Page Placement guide was a joke? Maybe it got passed on to the Atlanta papers and they took it seriously....

The "Chattanooga in 2003" DSC actually seems to be a LibertyCon scheduled for July 25-27 at the Ramada Inn South at Exit 1 from I-75, just across the Georgia line in East Ridge TN. The LibertyCon 16/DSC41 address is POBox 695, Hixson TN 37343-0695, and they have an e-mail address:

LibertyCon@libertycon.org

The fee is \$30 until July 12, then \$45. They plan to run a charity casino.

I think Hank and Toni can't get pizza delivered because they are so far out in the boonies that the mail is dropped by helicopter. But now that the Seven Mile Creek Bible Church has been replaced by Sardis Congregational Church, there is hope - that site will probably be a Pizza Hut soon.

Statistically, meteor strikes are independent trials - Siberia has a good a chance as Florida

(well, better - it's bigger). For a certain range of sizes evacuation would help. But of course a strike in the ocean is more likely than one on land, so you might have to evacuate a lot of coasts threatened by the tidal wave.

Tennessee Trash - Robe - You mean...your SFPazine was composed further south than Gary's?! He will be mortified - probably schedule a cruise to Antarctica to clinch the title.

Yngvi - Toni - Well, if you had gotten to the Whitney Museum you could have seen my sister's quilt show. You might even have seen Mary, she took a busload of the quiltists up from Boykin AL.

Glad to hear Ruth Judkowitz is doing well!

Comments - Hughes - Speaking of "small cuts in the mouth", nephew Joe tells me that some brands of "smokeless tobacco" contain ground-up fiberglass or other abrasives to make tiny cuts in the mouth so that the nicotine is absorbed faster. I looked it up in google, apparently true!

Well, I don't guess pressure-treated plywood is really all that biodegradeable - but probably no worse than the other stuff they "get rid of" by burying it in a landfill.

Yes, lightning rods are useless unless they are grounded. And might not do much good in rock even if you drilled a hole to sink the half-inch copper ground rod in. Maybe you can get one of the big cellphone outfits to pay you to let them put up a big tower - then the tower could take the strike.

The 15,000 guards to put on airliners doesn't sound like that many to me - don't they have that many soldiers and Marines shuffling paper and washing Jeeps and mowing the general's lawn?

We're looking for Richard Jewell? Last I heard he was still suing the Atlanta paper for slander over the reporting of his alleged part in the Olympic Park bombing - I expect his lawyer knows where he is!

Armadillo - Liz - Here's hoping everything works out OK!

All The Quotes... - Copeland - You are a Publishing Giant.... Great stuff from H. L. Mencken!

Somewhere, under the Danube, bluebirds snorkle... - George - But just think how much worse off you would be if you had chosen to be an artist rather than a librarian!

The Spanish word *clave* means "key", as in a musical key, or a key on the piano (or *clavi(aha!)chord* if you are a Luddite). But I never heard of King Clave, and Argentina is not in Central America, so he was probably just a con man - I hope you didn't give him any of your bluebirds.

JOHN TREVER / North America Syndicate

