

The New Port News
208



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for

SFPA 232

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Ned Brooks, 4817 Dean Lane, Lilburn GA 30047-4720

770-982-5062 or nedbrooks@sprynet.com

<http://home.sprynet.com/~nedbrooks/home.htm>

Cover art by L. R. Brightwell from **Duiker's Delight** by Thomas Fenton
(The Epworth Press, London 1954)

OO - Jeff - Got the mailing on February 11.

Variations - Lynch - I love John Fahey's music. I have seven LPs (including the Chrysalis *Transfiguration of Blind Joe Death*) and several CDs. I have avoided the Christmas music though, as I don't much care for such stuff.

Leroy Anderson's *The Typewriter* is mentioned occasionally on the Typewriters yahoo group, and there are websites where it can be heard. I don't much care for Anderson myself - in general, too fast and tinkly for me.

The need for a pre-amp is a function of the cartridge, not the turntable itself. I now have only an ancient 4-speed Benjamin Miracord and the last cartridge I put in it required a pre-amp, which I got easily enough at the time, a tiny solid-state thing. I have used this mostly to make cassettes from, so that neither it nor the LPs are much worn. My recollection is that the old electrostatic cartridges needed no pre-amp but the later magnetic cartridges did - I am certainly no expert.

Nephew Joe was just summoned for March jury duty in DeKalb County. The questionnaire included two odd questions - whether he was a policy holder with Allstate or State Farm. I'm not sure how he answered this - he has no policies at all as far as I know, but is carried on my mother's auto policy with one of those companies. The only thing I could think of was that they were forming a jury pool for some civil suit involving those companies.

You must be right about the effect of building diesel fuel on the WTC disaster - it should have been in one of the basements.

Rear-ender - Guy - Congratulations on DUFF! Some trials might go better if you did show up without pants.... Try a tutu....

Hundred - Hlavaty - Amazing! I wouldn't even attempt such a thing. The most unusual one is probably not to have learned to ride a bicycle. But it's not too late!

The Sphere - Don - Even I had heard about the gay comic cowboy, little attention as I pay to any of those genres.... People who worry about such things are probably better thus distracted from anything important!

I had no idea your site tracked the traffic to each page! *Milquetoast* must have gotten into a lot of dictionaries by now. Is there any connection between this Caspar and the later Caspar the Friendly Ghost?

Are you sure of this story about repairing an axe handle with Duck Tape? I wouldn't have expected to get even one more wallop out of it even if the tape was put on an inch thick. That it

would seal a bike tire innertube I can believe.

The Raelian clone story seems to have died - I don't know enough about the technology to have any opinion on whether it could have been done. I have a vague notion that I read recently that none of the mammalian clones are exact duplicates of the donor because the mitochondrial DNA still comes from the host - someone else here probably knows more about that.

Spiritus Mundi - Guy - I didn't know turkey bacon was even possible! I don't eat it often enough for it to matter though.

It never occurred to me when reading the early Tiptree stories that he was a she, but I never cared much about gender in an author anyway. A good writer, but never one of my favorites, by which I mean mainly that I wasn't impressed enough to recall the details of any plot or the name of any character.

I am surprised that a lawyer would be allowed to ask a witness whether a defendant "has free will" - centuries of debate and libraries full of books have failed to establish whether the question even has meaning, much less what the answer is.

I remember Jughead's hat - a sort of beanie with a turned-up serrated rim. Somewhere such things must have been popular. I have a vague notion that one of the Bowery Boys wore one in the old movies.

Both the OED and Wentworth & Flexner trace the expression *pissed-off* as meaning angry to the WWII US military.

Peter Pan & Merry - Schlosser - I had heard the BBC *Hobbit* and LotR first, which made the California-accent LotR sound "wrong". I don't know that I hear accents when reading books in general, though with some the idioms used probably make you think of the most likely accent.

There is a website for a French car that runs on compressed air - no pollution at all and no heavy batteries. But the figures given make no sense to me - the volume of the storage tank seems to be considerably larger than the car itself. Maybe they have discovered hyperspace.

Sasquatch - Poulette - Oddly enough, there is a *germ* of an idea in this farrago of nonsense. There is no explanation of the hand, the midget, or the "Oogle" bird, but if we knew what food the sasquatch finds irresistible we might indeed be able to trap one. I doubt that prunes (now to be called "dried plums" or else) would be a likely candidate. Maybe chocolate, or beer?

Twygdrasil - Dengrove - Your description of your cousin Wayne reminds me of Phil Harrell, the first fan I ever met - he had no great talent or ability, not was he at all good-looking, and yet people liked him and he always had a job of some sort. His charm even worked at long distance - Ray Bradbury gave him a poem for his fanzine. He died in 1980 of a brain tumor, about the same time I missed the collation of SFPA 100 because I was working overtime on the last wind-tunnel test required before the first launch of the first Space Shuttle, the *Columbia*, just lost to time or fate or some technical error.

I have never tried soyburgers that I know of. I would prefer not to know until after I had tried it - certainly such a thing is unlikely to do me any harm, unless it was made with those genetically modified soybeans that contain a cashew-nut gene and excite the cashew-nut allergic reaction in people who have it.

Well of course if you believe in predestination it's because you were predestined to.... Perhaps the cosmic order is arranged so that only those who believe in free will can have it.

As far as I know all attempts to infect my PC with a virus have been foiled either because I

didn't open the attachment, it was aimed at IE and I use Netscape, or the Norton Anti-Virus software caught it. I get on the average about one attempt a day, out of 100-200 e-mails. Mostly the *klez* variety, though there have been others. The Norton software retains a log of them.

Where did you get the background information on the authorship of Parry's **The Scarlet Empire**? If it was ghost-written it would be interesting to know who the ghost was. I see that Clute & Nicholls say he was a "businessman and writer" - he didn't have to be that great a writer to produce this book, though I would rate him more readable than ERB.

I just the other day found another Masonic-style tome full of bizarre ritual, this one for the Order of the White Shrine of Jerusalem. Unlike the Masons, this outfit had both men and women members, though the highest office seemed to be a High Priestess.

I have somehow missed acquiring George Griffiths' **The Angel of the Revolution**, but I've seen the Jane illos. They may have been the first to show a large ship held up by multiple horizontal rotors, but they weren't the last - the idea recurred on many pulp covers. In the end we actually got aircraft with two rotors - but the rotors are a lot bigger compared to the size of the craft, and they require a lot of power. I wonder if the Fred Jane who drew the illos for the Griffiths book was an ancestor of the founder of the long series of large reference books on aircraft, naval vessels, etc.

The "New Ten Commandments" on the back of IGOTS 24 are by Taral, a Canadian of surprising talents. I have liked his artwork since the 70s, but never had anything like this from him before. He is also a tailor!

If you think Blackwood's occult stories are boring you should try his "Uncle Paul" novels - I would not have thought it was possible to write a novel completely devoid of conflict!

No, asbestos itself is a mineral pretty much impervious to aging. What would happen with the **Fahrenheit 451** binding cloth is that the bonding material on the asbestos fabric would wear and age, and thus release asbestos fibers. I had one once - it was clearly a *woven* fabric, not a felt. So there were probably two bonding materials, one to allow the asbestos to be made into thread, and the other to size the cloth after weaving. Raw fibrous asbestos was used only in applications where a very thick insulating layer was required - for most other uses it was mixed with a bonding agent. Some of these bonding agents would never fail if let alone - Portland cement was one, it grows stronger with age. The big problem with asbestos in schools and other public buildings was its use as pipe insulation and furnace insulation - it was mixed with plaster and cast into pipe covers and such, and with time and damp the plaster would crumble and release the asbestos. And there was so much of it already in use this way when the problem of breathing the fiber was discovered. The buildings where I worked dated to the 1930-50 era, and the solution chosen was to leave the stuff in place but encapsulate it in doped fabric. There was also some use of it in cellulose ceiling tiles - those were removed when detected. There was an enormous 1933 building across the alley where the walls were entirely of a corrugated building material made with asbestos and cement in panels about a half-inch thick (the trade name of the stuff was Transite); and the garage at the house I bought in 1966 was covered in shingles made of a similar material. But hazardous fibers could only be released from these materials by pulverizing them.

I wouldn't worry about being a member of the SLA as long as they don't adopt that multiheaded cobra as their logo!

Revenant - Sheila - Well, they tried to keep me from graduating from Georgia Tech for an incomplete in PE - I had passed track and swimming, but never took the third part, gymnastics. I pointed out to them that at the time they had agreed I should not take gym, as I have 20/600

vision and would either break my glasses or my neck or both. I could no doubt have managed rope climbing and tumbling about on a mat, but I would not want to get onto parallel bars.

I'm not about to give up cheese either - how could you have a pizza, one of the major food groups. I have no idea how to evaluate the hazard of the hormones and antibiotics in meat - probably more of a hazard to children than to me.

There are people here who probably know what the pest bush in my mother's yard is, or on the Net. I have not seen it myself, by the time they mentioned it to me it was probably dormant because of winter. I know nothing about plants. I did manage to find out that the big feather-duster thing by the driveway is one of the four entirely different plants called *dog fennel*. I have azaleas from some previous enthusiast - I don't care for them myself - and two different kinds of holly, and enormous tea olives (totally unrelated to either the tea or the olive plant). And of course pines and gum trees and magnolias. Maybe in the spring I can get a picture of the bush my mother doesn't like and find out what it is.

Aha, so Mars used to be red and is now butterscotch? That was a hell of a storm, to change the color of a planet! The photos from the Mars Rover looked dull red, and it was said to be iron oxide I think, but I have no idea how true the color in those photos was. I think it was synthesized from b&w video data taken through different filters.

I don't rake leaves either. I had to in Newport News with three large oak trees, but here there are only three dogwoods over the lawn and I just mow over those leaves with the mulching mower.

Excellent piece by Joseph Campbell!

Thirty - Guy - Oogh! I have been rear-ended a couple of times, but never that bad. Glad to hear it was no worse. You realize you brought this on yourself with the series of zine titles!

Weird Stuff - Hughes - Fancy printing! Are you on the Net list to get the "Pulp Cover of the Day"? I forget the exact name, but Google would find it. Some are better than others - they include old pbs as well as magazines.

I have gotten no end of spam offering the little remote-control cars, but it's not my thing and I don't even know any kids the right age for that sort of thing - my sister's kids are all grown and her granddaughter is only 2. The only place here they would work would be the kitchen, all the rest of it is mushy carpet.

Oblio - Brown - Atlanta got down to 9°F and we had a couple of days that it never got above freezing, but most of the winter so far has been the usual - maybe just below freezing at night and 40-60 during the day. So far nothing has frozen on the roads, so traffic is unaffected. They did close some of the schools that had insufficient heating capacity for our pampered youth.

I must have missed getting into comix because I saw few as a child after I was about 8 and we went to Chile. I like artwork and I have enjoyed a few things by Eisner and Crumb and Bode, but in general I can't get much out of comix longer than the strips in the daily paper, and most of those are pretty lame. I used to go in the place under the late lamented Oxford Two book store where Jerry Page worked and look at some of the graphic novels, but nothing really connected.

Cuba is an interesting example of the socio-economic variations that are possible. They have no natural resources other than sugar and tourism and yet have managed to be something different than just another slave-labor pool for the mega-corporations. How stable it is remains to be seen - and stability is not necessarily a good thing. Apparently no one is starving or freezing to death and health is said to be good - but other than as an example of survival, what is created?

What is added to the glory of human civilization?

I am surprised that you, of all people, don't get Marion's *The Curse of Cthulhu* - it is pure journalism. That is, he is reporting objectively on a phenomenon of Cthulhu Mythos fandom. I was surprised at it because I didn't know he was much interested in such literary piracy, but I thought it was well done.

Alan Hutchinson's daughter Valerie is online? Fetch me my cane and shawl and I'll just sit in my rocker and watch my hair fall out....

Trivial Pursuits - Janice - Sorry to hear about your back. I could send you some dog-fennel seeds for the deck boxes - they grow to look like big feather dusters, green in the summer and gold in the fall. No flowers, no thorns, no care required. They die back to the root every year, but the stalk left is almost weightless.

Great cartoon about the Bush Junta destroying the Moon - I hope it doesn't give them ideas! Fortunately, even if we could get our entire nuclear arsenal to the Moon (a good place for it too!) and set it off, I doubt we would do much damage.

The *Treasure Planet* trailer ran endlessly here for a week, looked awful to me - I could hear RLS spinning in his grave down in the South Pacific.

I was just trying to read LeGuin's **The Telling** - without much success. Fortunately there isn't that much of it, it's all double-spaced with wide margins to make a normal-looking book.

Traditionally *minac* did not have to be for SFPA or even skiffy - it just had to appear here first. And I think that's the way it should be - allows an out for people to whom forced verbosity is not a virtue but some piece of research or commentary is available.

Yngvi - Toni & Horrible Hank - Maggie finally made the cover! Black things are hard to photograph, as typewriter collectors have discovered - old typewriters, like Henry Ford's cars, are mostly black. Steve Stiles once introduced me at a convention to a lady named Dee (the surname has slipped my mind, but Steve said it was fake anyway) who said she specialized in such photography.

What's on *Peace & Love* by the Pogues? I have half a dozen of their earlier albums, but I never saw that. I thought I had at least one CD, but all I can find is one by Shane MacGowan and the Popes.

Patrick Gibbs seems doctrinaire and over-optimistic to me - especially the last sentence with the claim that "...it will become obvious that the entire country also believes". I doubt that has ever happened!

Great picture of Hank pretending to play Scrabble.... As to air rushing out of a hole in an airplane at the speed of sound - this is the limiting speed for air moving through a hole from a higher pressure to a lower pressure. Aircraft cabins are pressurized because the air outside is at a lower pressure than the sea-level 14.7 psi we are used to. At 40,000 ft, the pressure has dropped to 0.185 of that, or 2.7 psi. The pressure ratio required to drive air through a hole at the speed of sound is quite moderate: 0.528. Somewhere around 17,000 feet a cabin pressurized to 14 psi will leak to the outside at the speed of sound - and the leak will whistle, for that reason. The common whistling teakettle whistles because the steam pressure inside has reached 1.9 times the local ambient pressure, or about 28 psi. But no matter how great the pressure ratio becomes - even if there were a hard vacuum outside - the air cannot escape at a flow velocity greater than the speed of sound.

As I said before, the effect on cabin pressure of such a leak would depend on the capacity of

the pump and the number of holes. As you note there is always some leakage, and the pump must run continuously or cycle on a pressure sensor. I'm sure the engineers have already computed how many holes of a given size the standard pump can keep up with. It might well be possible for such holes to be plugged with common objects - and in any case the airplane will probably be descending to land at the nearest field. I would be more concerned about a bullet hitting the windshield (which might make the aircraft impossible to fly at any altitude) or some essential control line such as those to the horizontal tail.

There is nothing in the Bill of Rights limiting its protections to citizens or legal aliens - Amendment VI, which guarantees a speedy and public trial, refers only to "persons".

I voted for Carter and I disagreed with a lot of what he did - but I thought he was at least trying to do more than grab power and enrich his buddies. To say he is "dumb" is too simplistic - he has a degree in nuclear engineering after all. I took one course in that line and it was too much for me.

There have been many attempts to prevent the hiring of illegal aliens, and they all seem to have foundered on the greed of the employers. As long as Mexicans can be hired at much better wages than they would get in Mexico (though much less than minimum wage here), the economic pressure will drive illegal immigration. I am not an economist - have you seen any hard data on what a chicken or an apple would cost if all the labor involved in getting it to the supermarket had to be paid minimum wage and provided with a decent workplace and health insurance?

Tennessee Trash - Robe - Nice cover - the blue and gold parts especially... Will mustaches go out of fashion just because Saddam has one? I'm not much to look at, but I think I would look much worse without mine.

The alleged resemblance of Putin to Dobby the House Elf was on the Net, but I don't see much in it. Dobby reminds me of someone from the Narnia books, but I can't remember who. I thought it was Puddleglum, but the Pauline Baynes drawing of him looks nothing like Dobby.

The plane that lost most of its roof over Hawaii had rivets "unzip" all along a forward traverse joint - due to corrosion, I think they said. The local roughness caused by a bullet hole would increase the drag, but probably not enough to really matter. I would not expect the structural damage to spread.

I get a lot of porn spam, several a day out of 100-200 e-mails. Google will find porn from the key words you would expect, and perhaps some others. I once googled the famous rare book title **Boy Scouts in Bondage** (an actual Boy Scout series novel) and of course got more about Bondage than about Scouts. And of course any filter that would block porn sites would also block legitimate sites on social and medical issues. Naturally the people making filter software will emphasize the problem. With kids the age yours are you might want to look to see what is considered the best filter, but I think all of them will block some perfectly innocuous sites.

I Sent Them Up - Copeland - Well, you missed it a bit in saying that by the time I read this zine, bombs would have fallen on Baghdad. Or at least I guess it would have been on the radio, here in the wee hours of Valentine's Day. I seem to stay up later every night and rise later every day. I don't see why we should rush into such a horrendous undertaking.

I have the MSWord Viewer for MSWord documents - so Guy sends me a WordPerfect file.... There's supposed to be a free viewer for that too, but I haven't found it.

I got the original 2-volume OED, and then later the Supplement volume - but that was years

ago. I would like to have a cyber-version, but the cost seems excessive. An earlier cite for *fanzine* has been submitted to the OED website, Russ Chauvenet in 1940, I think.

It only took me a few months to get *It Goes On The Shelf* online - but the volume of text is nothing like what Guy has in *Challenger*, and my archaic FancyFont is fairly easy to convert to HTML, as a lot of it can be done with global search-and-replace commands.

A risk of 1 in 145 (fairly unlikely) is not equivalent to 99.3% (almost certain)! But I think I know what Glanz meant - a risk of disaster of 1 in 145 is equivalent to a 99.3% success rate, where success is defined as *not* having a disaster. That 99.3% looks pretty good - and it is, for something you do only once. But if you do the same thing 113 times as independent trials, the laws of probability predict that your overall success rate (never having a disaster) drops to:

$$P = 0.993^{113} = 0.45$$

that is, if the 99.3% is correct for any given Shuttle mission, the predicted success rate for 113 of them is not quite 50/50. Mathematics is a wonderful thing! This is a simplistic analysis of course - there is a large error band on the 99.3%. But given correct values for probability and true independence of trials, the laws of probability are as immutable as the law of gravity. And can be proven with simple materials - the probability of not rolling "snake-eyes" with a pair of dice is 97.22%, so the probability of not rolling "snake-eyes" in 25 rolls is very close to 0.50 or even odds. That is, in 25 rolls, "snake-eyes" is as likely as not to turn up at least once.

Tyndallite - Metcalf - Even the French don't agree on the original French of their older writers - I never found the French original for the "chain up your curb" in Eugene Sue's **The Wandering Jew**. I was told that all of his idiomatic usages were edited out in the late 1800s.

One of the gurus on the *fictionmags* netlist says that Parry's **The Scarlet Empire** was written intentionally as anti-socialist propaganda - so the silly plot was just there to prop up the rhetoric. Of course few motives are unmixed - Parry may have started out to write propaganda and gotten to enjoy skiffy melodrama. Or *vice-versa*....

I would be curious to know how many sets of Vance will sell at the asking price of \$1250! Too much for me....

Avatar - Cleary - Very silly cover - everyone knows that conjoined twins are always of the same sex.

I wish you had not mentioned Shrimp Grits - perhaps you could enhance them with some boiled okra and sell the mess to Saddam Hussein.

I will have to look up the Japanese Plum Tree up on the Net and see if they have a picture to show my mother and sister to see if it matches their plant pest. I never saw the thing myself, and it probably doesn't look like much of anything in the winter.

Yes, that was the problem - Netscape was so forgiving of HTML font-change errors that I couldn't see them at all. Lots of people use IE however, and they were seeing them. I have IE, it just never occurred to me to use it until someone mentioned the problem.

