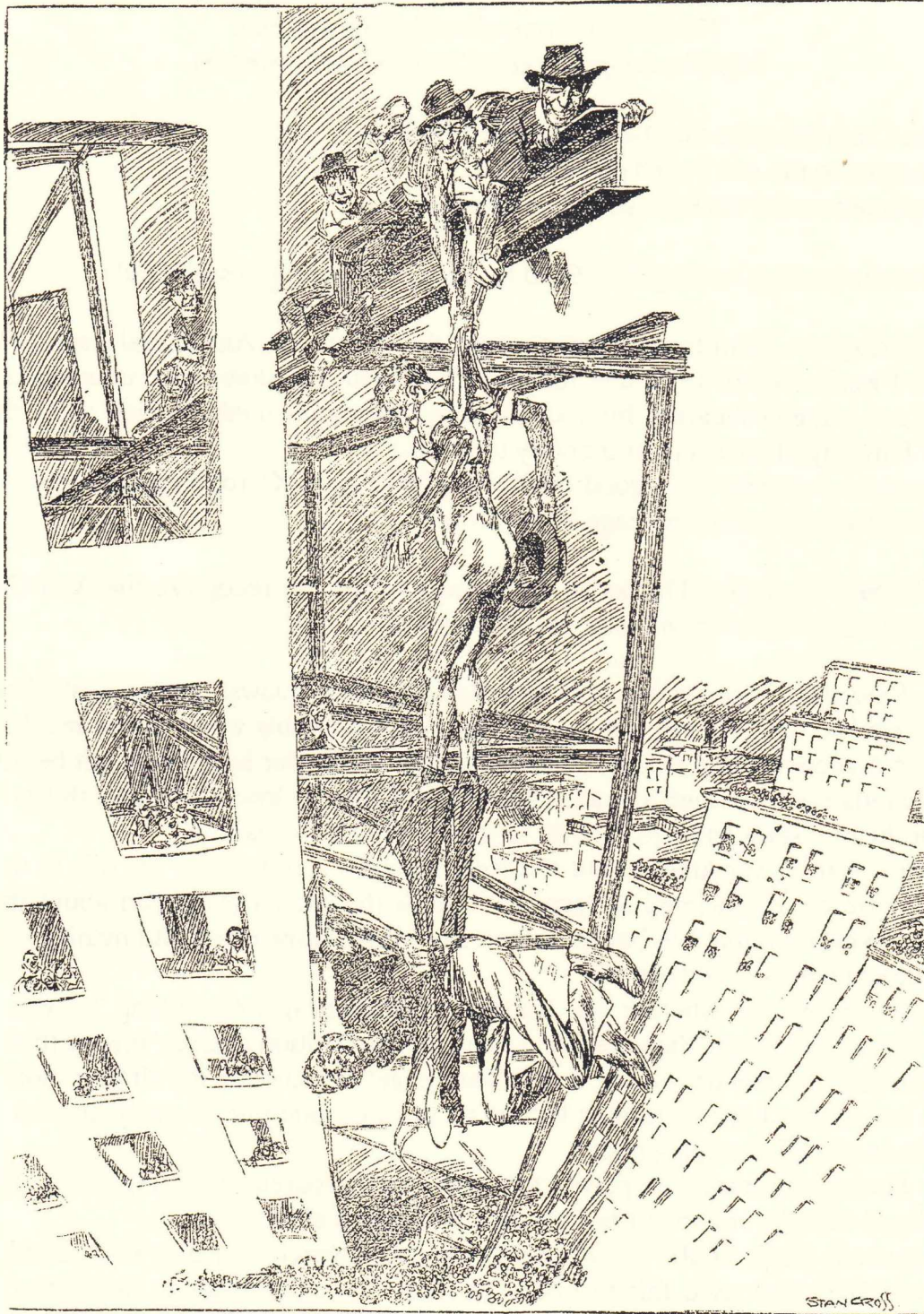


The New Port News
211



"Cripes, that was a narrow squeak!"
"Yairs—we were lucky to get out of it."

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Cover by Stan Cross from the Oct.14, 1933 *Smith's Weekly*
(a sequel to the one I used on NPN 207,
reprinted on the back for your convenience)

OO - Jeff - Got the mailing on August 7. Glad to see we have an OE candidate!

Last Minute - Hughes - Glad to hear you survived the visit to the Antipodes! I saw quite a lot of Maoris when I was in NZ in 1975, and thought I had read that they make up about 10% of the population. I saw a sheep-shearing, but didn't accumulate so much information about them. Can't remember if I ate any - I have a poor memory for food.

Used Japanese cars may be a good deal - my 1986 Toyota Corolla runs as well as the day I bought it and still gets the same mileage, over 30 mpg.

Better Watch Out - Foulette - Thanks for telling us that we can recognize the Anti-Christ by his Bermuda shorts - but whatever will they do on Bermuda?

Twygdrasil - Dengrove - Nice color cover! Sad tale about your inlaws. I guess most of us will get a little weird if we live long enough - those who know me probably won't notice much difference. My father had Alzheimers and would remember things that never happened, but he wasn't mean about it. My mother is 94 though and although she occasionally loses or forgets things is mentally stable except she says she's going to vote for Boy George Dubya again.

That's more than I ever knew about the Rosicrucians - I remember the ads in the old pulp magazines, but never felt inclined to respond. I guess the most I ever read about them was in Robert Anton Wilson's *Illuminati* books. I don't like obscurantist elites - if anything is of value to mankind, it should be published openly.

Hard to tell from here whether the Islamic prohibition against making "graven images" is taken any more seriously now than the Old Testament prohibition against "mixing threads in your garment". The mullahs may drag it out if they want to get at someone for ulterior motives. But all the pictures and videos I see of Islamic locales seem to include just as many "graven images" as you would see in any US shopping mall.

Carmina Burana can hardly be played too loud - as compared to "Snoop Doggy Dog", which should be played with the volume turned all the way down, if at all.

The thing about Iraq's WMD is that the Bushy Boys insisted that they *knew* Saddam had his finger on the trigger and used this to justify an illegal invasion resulting in a lot of death and destruction. This "knowledge" has since been shown to have been based on documents that they actually knew were forged; and now that the invasion has succeeded in wrecking Iraq, no WMD are to be found. If they "found" them now, I would certainly suspect the find had been synthesized, like the "throw-down gun" that the police plant to justify an illegal killing by a cop.

And now the thousands of prisoners we have been holding in tents in the summer sun are

being moved into Saddam's most notorious prison....

I think it may be true that all *Freecell* games presented by the MicroSoft software are winnable. There are only 32,000 of them, and this is a tiny fraction of the number of patterns actually possible. I have gotten up to 3750 playing while waiting for downloads and have yet to find one I couldn't win - though some took many restarts. Google finds a website that shows that it is easy to synthesize an unwinnable pattern, so if all the MS FreeCell games are winnable, they must have an algorithm for selecting these from the much greater number of patterns available by random selection. Or MS had people play until they had accumulated 32,000 winnable games - leaving out both those that are obviously unwinnable, and those that were just too tough for their players.

I don't understand your comment about Cavourite. If there were such a substance that could block the gravitational field (as metal, or any conductor, can block the electrostatic field), then the effect would be as described. All objects create a gravitational field in proportion to their mass - it is the interaction of these fields that we perceive as gravitational attraction. If Cavourite were interposed between the Earth and a bowling ball, the bowling ball would no longer be attracted to the Earth. The Earth would no longer be attracted to the bowling ball either, but that would not be noticeable! What would happen to the bowling ball? Well, it would be faintly attracted to distant masses on the other side of the Cavourite from the Earth, but probably not enough to measure. The big effect would be the ball's own velocity - if it were at the Earth's equator, it would be going about 1000 mph on a curved path, and the centripetal force would act in the upward direction, causing the ball to rise. The ball would rise with an acceleration of:

$$a = v^2/R = 1000^2/4000$$
$$a = 250 \text{ miles/hr}^2 = 0.1 \text{ feet/sec}^2$$

Not exactly zooming, and of course if the ball drifted out of the area where the gravity was blocked it would immediately fall back with an acceleration of 32 feet/sec². Furthermore, it could be held in place by a piece of dental floss - if the ball weighs 5 lbs = 80 oz, the force required to restrain it would be proportional to the acceleration, as the mass is constant. The force exerted on the ball by an acceleration of $a = 0.1 \text{ feet/sec}^2$ would only be about 0.25 oz.

On the other hand, if the experiment were carried out at the North Pole, the bowling ball would merely become weightless, acted on by very small unaligned forces. After a while it would drift back into the Earth's gravitational field and fall to the ground (or the ice or the deck or whatever there might be to stand on at the North Pole).

It has been objected that the very existence of Cavourite would violate Newton's laws, because at the edge of the "shadow" blocking the gravitational field a perpetual motion machine would become possible. That is, if a wheel were mounted vertically with the axis on the border and half the disk in the Earth's gravitational field and the other half above the Cavourite, the wheel would spin without energy input because half of it was pulled earthward while the other half was not. In fact, if energy were not removed from the wheel (as by a brake or an electric dynamo), the wheel would spin faster and faster until it either reached an equilibrium with air and bearing friction or exploded when the centripetal strain exceeded the strength of the material.

This is an important objection, but I'm not sure what connection it has with the problem. There are, after all, other ways to cancel gravitational attraction on half of a vertically mounted wheel! Suppose we use our 5-lb bowling ball (since we have already done the math on that) as a wheel by sticking an axle through it - now half the ball will be accelerated toward the Earth ($a=0.1 \text{ feet/sec}^2$), while the other half will not. How could this be accomplished without Cavourite? Well,

half of the ball could be in a tank of liquid with the same density as the ball itself. There is nothing technically difficult about that! Any conceivable seal at the vertical interface between the dry side of the ball and the wet side of the ball would exert more force opposing the rotation of the ball than could be overcome by the approximately 5 inch-lb torque available from the asymmetric force on the ball - but that is a mere technicality. Suppose the ball were suspended between two tanks, one containing the liquid whose density matches that of the ball (thus making half the ball weightless) and the other some much lighter fluid that is immiscible (like oil and water) with the heavier liquid. Now only a light seal would be needed at the interface, because the small amount of the lighter fluid that got through into the heavier fluid would float to the top of the tank (where, if the tanks were both exactly full) it would flow back into its own tank. Whatever heavy fluid got into the light-fluid tank would fall to the bottom, where it could be returned to its own tank by a small scavenger pump.

So we don't need Cavourite to extract energy from the gravitational field with an asymmetrically loaded rotating wheel.

The problem with the "repressed memory" theory is that the individual cannot easily verify for himself that a memory has been repressed. In rare cases I suppose that might be a video... I have read in my own writings things I had since forgotten - but these were not "repressed" memories, as the write-up shows that there was nothing to repress - in fact, nothing occurred notable enough to impress itself very deeply on the memory. Are there any documented cases where someone recorded a horrific event and then forgot it?

I'm not up on Morocco, but the government in Turkey seems to be democratic only to the extent that it is *not* Islamic.

If Hank needs only a skullcap to be a Moslem there is little obstacle - even he could sew a cap of pointy or conical shape, as this requires only one straight seam.

The white of three eggs might be as fatal to me as an atomic bomb - I'm severely allergic to the stuff.

Hard to tell with Hitler, since he and his regime ended so catastrophically, but Franco's government might have fallen peacefully even if he hadn't died. Stalin's tyranny outlasted him by many years.

Nice Distinctions - *Hlavaty* - Glad to hear the auto accident was no worse. I have never had a tire blow - hard to see how anyone could be prepared for that.

I rather doubt that any significant advance in human civilization was made by a "well-rounded" person.

I saw a road warning sign today I had never seen before: "Wait on pilot car" in black letters on a portable orange diamond. If I had actually done this I would have had people behind me honking and screaming, as there was no sign of any roadwork or workers except that the north-bound lane of the street I was turning into did have new asphalt on it - but was already in use. I was going south anyway. But wouldn't we say "wait for pilot car" in American colloquial English?

Good piece on Roy Tackett. He was in Slanapa until the end, though he had not been able to contribute for some time. For a while he would send me text by e-mail and I would format it and print it up on green paper and send it in with my own zine. But these were one-page zines, and I still have most of a ream left so I started using it for my own Slanzine this month.

Fox Troop - *weber frank* - Nicely set poem by Kip Williams - I used to see him occasionally in

Newport News and he was in Slanapa for a while but I didn't think of him as this political or poetic!

Travelers Tales - Hughes - Is this a new first, 3-D pictures in an apa, with the special glasses? I can focus on the pictures at 6-12 inches inches depending on which glasses (or none) I wear, but I cannot bring the images into coherence well enough to get any 3-D effect, which doesn't surprise me as no other 3-D system ever worked for me either.

I saw a stereo camera at a local antique show, the one held periodically at the North Atlanta Trade Center in Norcross - it was made in Russia judging by the Cyrillic letters on it.

Challenger 18 - GHLIII - The "Darth Vator"?! That's appalling.... Nice Oz photos - the only people in them that I remember from 1975 are Robin Johnson, Bill Wright, and Bruce Gillespie.

Fascinating account by E. B. Frohvet of the insurance claims adjustor's job - I wonder if it occurred to him that the vanished "Alfred" might have been abducted by aliens.... I was sorry to see him fold *Twink*, it usually got a LoC out of me.

I bet Terry Jeeves didn't publish *Herb Garden* in any zine in England - he's fairly safe from the *punished* over here....

Seems poetic justice somehow that a lawyer should occasionally see the other side of the fence....

Variations - Lynch - Nice piece on Louis Moreau Gottschalk. I have none of his music and couldn't name anything he wrote, but I have heard some of his work on the radio and enjoyed it.

I don't think your question about the Internet as a factor in "globalization" as promoted by CocaCola and Macdonalds was quite fair. They are in the business of selling empty calories to nitwits, and naturally want as many clients as possible. The Internet is just another extension the facilitation of communication that started with Gutenberg - of course it may be abused, but so have books and radio and the telephone and TV been. The benefits however far outweigh the damage caused by the abuse. If CocaCola and Macdonalds were to vanish, who would be hurt but their stockholders? The nitwits would find something else to waste their money on and the employees would find other jobs - perhaps less dull and better paid.

Did anyone at the global-warming seminar present any actual data on how human efforts at CO2 production stand as compared to the historical natural balance between CO2 produced by vulcanism, forest fires and natural decay, and CO2 absorbed by growing plants and the surface of the oceans? If we are just a flea riding on an elephant's back we might as well forget about CO2 and concentrate on environmental poisons.

Note that this balance is maintained because while vulcanism is random and episodic, the absorption of CO2 at the surface of the ocean is continuous and increases proportionally to the percentage of CO2 in the atmosphere.

I was not that startled to learn that the Russian cosmonauts had a handgun, but who decided it was "malevolent-looking"? I have yet to see a benevolent-looking handgun!

The Cato Institute is "Libertarian" and yet asks guests to leave because their questions are too pointed? I guess over at the fascist thinktanks they just shoot you....

As to the final conclusion about the *Columbia* disaster, there are joints in the carbon/carbon leading edge that are more critical than the rest of the leading edge between the joints. And in fact it was the impact of the foam (at 350 mph) on one of these joints that caused the problem. Because broken pieces of foam are irregularly shaped, their impact on the leading edge is necessarily random and unpredictable, like my pitching ability. But if I throw baseballs at a Ming

vase long enough, sooner or later I will smash it. In retrospect it is easy to say that NASA should have tried simulated strikes on the leading-edge joints as soon as they knew they were losing chunks of insulation in that vicinity. But these lost chunks were not in hand - they were just bits of blur on launchpad cameras that were assumed to be lost insulation foam because there wasn't anything else anyone could think of. An investigation would have required a fairly large range of chunk mass and velocity. It could have been done in the old 8-Ft TPT windtunnel where we tested the tiles in a launch environment back in 1980, before the first launch - but that tunnel was shut down in 1995. As I understand it, once they got the idea they did it with an air cannon of some sort - but that is an imperfect simulation because the chunk is moving relative to the dummy leading edge, but the air is not. In the windtunnel the air and the chunk would be moving, and the instrumented leading-edge section could be moved about as required by remote control.

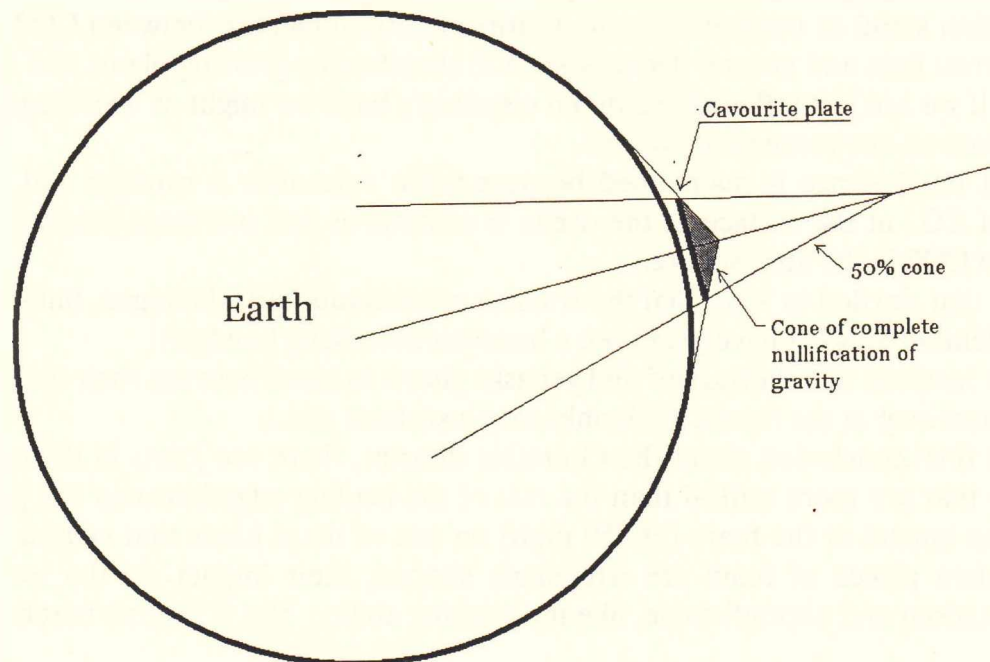
You are quite right about coal in a volcano - I was being sarcastic. Even if a volcano erupted through a coal field it would leave none in the crater to be mined.

When I had A/C work done a couple of years ago they used the metallized tape, and left a roll of it behind. I've used it once to patch their deficient efforts, and for other projects. It's good for some things, but not as versatile as fabric duct tape.

Tyndallite - Metcalf - I hadn't noticed the "stricklaNice" typo in the Mailing 233 OO. It looks like the sort of glitch only the TeX typesetting software that Jeff uses could make! I used it at work, and it is so powerful and complex that it is capable of truly spectacular booboos.

Sorry about blaming Cavourite on Verne instead of Wells - it's been a while since I read either. I had forgotten it was mined as Cavourite - most of the materials with strange properties we have now - such as teflon and the fluorocarbon gases - are man-made and never existed in nature.

But wouldn't a single atom of Cavourite have little effect? It seems to me that it would block the gravitational field of the Earth (the only one around that can be measured easily) only in a tiny cone above that atom. Beyond that cone any mass acted on by the Earth's field would still feel the pull of most of the Earth's mass - think of the shadow of a flea sitting on a light bulb. To another flea just off the surface above him there would be some shade, but a couple of flea-lengths out the other flea would be pretty much fully illuminated.



So how large a Cavourite shield would we need to get to low Earth orbit, say 150 miles up, where the main engines could be used to achieve orbital velocity without working against atmospheric drag? Alas, it's a good thing the Cavourite shield can be only one atom thick, because to achieve full nullification of gravity to 150 miles, it will have to be about 2000 miles in diameter. Well, *most* of the atmosphere is in the first 50 miles above the surface - how big a shield would that take? Still over 1000 miles across.

This of course is based on the assumption that the Cavourite itself has weight! If it can (unimaginably) shield *itself* against the gravitational pull of the Earth, then we need only coat the ship itself with it and be off to conquer the universe.

I guess I wasn't paying attention - there was a 1933 story with a time-traveller going back to kill Hitler's ancestor?! Was Hitler really that notorious in 1933 or was Schachner psychic? Has this ever been reprinted? I'd like to read it.

I buy Grace Livingston Hill novels for my aunt and found a stack of them today at the thrift store. Some have skiffyish titles - **The City of Fire, Time of the Singing of Birds** - but I'm sure the content is mundane.

Revenant - Sheila - Sorry to hear about your problem with the LSU Graduate School bureaucracy. Georgia Tech tried to block my graduation for not having taken a quarter of Gym. Unless the program is overfull and all the other grad students better qualified than you this seems nonsensical.

Congratulations on stepping up to run for OE!

I have a couple of Clyde Edgerton books, but have never gotten around to reading them. Is he as good as Fred Chappell? You will be used to Toronto for the worldcon - I agree that the SARS hazard is slight, as compared for example to the hazard of driving to Toronto for the con.

The Scoundrel's Wife sounds good. I think Tim Curry will eventually play Reichsmarshal Ashcroft on the screen. Doesn't *L'Auberge Espagnole* actually translate as "The Spanish Inn"? I don't think much of "Euro Pudding" as an English title - from your description it sounds more like "Euro Stew".

A woman in north Georgia was eaten by bears last year or the year before. She had gone with her husband and sat in the car while he fished. She would have been safe in the car, but apparently went for a walk. But statistically she was probably far more likely to have died in an auto accident on the way to the fishing spot.

Employment - weber - Glad to hear you are working. There have been a lot of bad accidents on the Atlanta expressways - I remember the one with the guy falling from the railway bridge. I think 400 was shut down for half a day last week. And Cheshire Bridge at Piedmont was shut down for a day when a big antique mall burned - no one was hurt, but a fully restored Folding Corona typewriter was lost. Interesting about the rubber ducks - I had no idea that container ships lost anything like 10,000 of those semi-size containers a year!

Spiritus - Guy - Nice cover! Is there supposed to be anything on the blank sheet between the cover and the page with the colophon? Guess not, I see you are credited with 13 pages and that's how many have printing on them.

I had heard about the Susan Smith ad, probably on *News of the Weird*. It is weird, but then I thought she must have been out of her mind to commit the crime, and from the looks of this has been driven further out by her incarceration.

My guess is that 1st-class delivery of SFPA saves a couple of days to a week at most - SFPA 234 left Seattle by Media Mail on August 4 (according to the postmark) and reached me on August 7.

Yeah, I get Verne and Wells mixed up, it's been a long time. I know Verne is to blame for Capt. Nemo and Wells for Martian invaders, but the others had gotten fuzzy.

I wasn't there of course, but Ashcroft's sacramental lubrication has been reported several times - at least once with his preferred popular cooking oil. I would have guessed he would spring for the "Extra Virgin" olive oil....

The Buckhead cop was undercover and says he thought he heard breaking glass from a parking lot. The an SUV came out of the lot. He says he yelled at them but the SUV came towards him and he shot the driver - who was driving his family SUV. Last I heard it was still under investigation. It sounds as bad as the Amidou Diallo case to me. As to details, I don't seem to have kept a clipping but Google probably knows about it.... Yes, but only this one hit on a message board and that could vanish any time so I have copied it. The detail I had forgotten was the race of the victim:

ATLANTA: PROTESTS ERUPT AFTER COP KILLS BLACK YOUTH

By Jimmy Raynor / Atlanta

Chanting "No justice, no peace--no racist police," some 150- 200 spirited demonstrators marched past crowded bars and restaurants in the Buckhead section of Atlanta Aug. 3. Two weeks earlier, on July 14, Atlanta Police Officer R.S. Bunn shot and killed an 18-year-old African American youth, Corey Ward, in his car.

Bunn, part of an undercover detail, claimed that he heard breaking glass in a parking lot and then saw an SUV with six young African American males exiting the lot. Drawing his gun, he ordered them to stop. When the vehicle kept going, he says he shot the driver in self-defense.

Ward's friends say Bunn did not identify himself as a police officer and they thought they were being attacked.

Ward's family and friends, with the aid of the National Youth Connection, United Youth Adult Conference, Concerned Black Clergy and others, organized a protest of 250 people on July 22 at police headquarters. They have held several news conferences and community meetings.

Bunn first made headlines two years ago for hitting a young woman in the face, breaking her eye socket and permanently damaging her eyesight. According to Bunn, Ylia Lavender refused to turn down the volume of her car radio.

At least six complaints of excess force have been filed against Bunn in his few years in the Atlanta Police Department. Several more people have come forward since Ward's killing to add to his record of misconduct and brutality.

A google on just the officer's name brings up half a dozen sites and reveals that the killing took place on July 14, 2002. And a google on the victim's name gets 42 hits and reveals that it took until September for charges against Corey Ward's passengers to be dropped. I cannot find any mention of Bunn being charged with a crime, though of course there is a civil suit against him. He was put on administrative leave after the killing, but for all I know he is stalking Buckhead in civilian garb with a license to kill today.

The airliner over Hawaii came apart *at the riveted seams* due to corrosion. The most likely effect of a bullet would be a whistling hole that would get no worse, but the bullet could sever essential control lines, or smash the windshield.

The zine I did in Australia in 1975 was called *TrainCon I*. Bill Wright didn't publish it for us, he just loaned me the little portable Roneo. I thought Wright was chairman of AussieCon I and Robin Johnson was PR man or something. But it's easy enough to look up - I see you are right, Robin Johnson is listed as Chairman in the Program Book, and Bill Wright as Parliamentarian.

I have the DVD of *Queen Kong*, released in April and available on amazon.com. I might be able to copy it to VHS, I've never tried that. But if you never see it you won't be a whole lot worse off!

First I had heard that Islam dictated what you should wipe your butt with. A bone seems a singularly inefficient choice. My mother knew a guy who went in the woods and wiped with poison ivy - and died of it. This was before antihistamines, of course.

The concentration camps we set up for Iraqis are closer to the Nazi variety than to our internment camps of WWII. Now they say they are moving the prisoners from tents in the 120-deg summer sun to Saddam's most notorious prison. That'll teach 'em democracy!

The "page count" on a CDrom could run into the millions - but then I always recommended dropping minac anyway.

Avatar - Cleary - And who says "nut sedge" is somehow inferior to grass as a ground cover? The people who want you to pay them to get rid of it.... I have never done anything to a lawn but mow it, either here or in Virginia, and with a battery-powered mower at that. Well, here I do poison the fire-ant hills, and in Virginia I had three large oaks and had to rake leaves. My lawn does not resemble the magazine photos of a putting green - and why should it? What benefit would it be to me to try to create a totally unnatural monoculture?

I understand the theory of repressed memory, but just what evidence is there that it actually happens?

I like knives, but the dozen or so I have accumulated over the last 55 years seem enough. I always seem to find room for another typewriter though - perhaps it's a matter of the pen being mightier than the sword....

To me *Courage the Cowardly Dog* is disturbing - but in a pleasant inventive way.

I think I would vote against Dubya no matter who else ran.

Tennessee Trash - Robe - Well, your brother Gerald can draw better than I can! Sorry to hear about the migraines, sounds gruesome. I didn't know it was possible to a Mason, Odd Fellow and Moose at the same time, but the only Mason in the family that I know of was my uncle Oliver.

I had never seen the Spanish rhyme of "married today, tired tomorrow" - is it Mexican?

Frequent Flyer - Feller - The LeGuin book sounds very odd, I will have to look it up. I enjoyed **The Telling** a lot once I got past the dismal first 30 pages.

Peter Pan & Merry - Schlosser - Radical redesigns of the Shuttle were planned years ago but never got anywhere for lack of funding. Now of course everything would be different because of progress in both electronics and materials - but the money still isn't there, and without the prod of cold-war paranoia, perhaps never will be. Space technology is not of great benefit against guerilla terrorism - and even if it was, the Bush cabal can pocket more of the elusive spondulix with the threat of terrorism than with the defeat of terrorism. They no more want to eliminate terrorism

than the criminal justice industry wants to eliminate crime, or the exterminator industry wants to eliminate bugs.

Our society certainly empowers the *claim* of repressed memories, but since the theory implies that the process is involuntary, it would still be subject, over time, to Darwinian consequences - if I can't remember something unpleasant that happened to me, I can't plan to avoid it in the future, and the chance of my "memory-repression" genes being passed on is reduced to that extent.

The situation with sentencing guidelines seems to have gotten worse this week - Ashcroft has ordered his staff to keep records and report on judges who don't meet his draconian standards, or so it was reported in the local press. Of course he has little leverage against the older judges, but can probably block promotions of the ambitious younger ones who want to move up.

Turkey and Indonesia are the closest to a democratic society that Islam can claim I suppose. Egypt has the trappings of a democracy for that matter. But my feeling is that what democracy they have is in spite of Islam - the closest to the western ideal is Turkey, and I suspect that is just a remnant of the influence of Kemal Ataturk.

Cats on Ritalin - Copeland - The old airplanes sound interesting, but it seems to me that the people who ran the Stratoliner out of fuel were just a bit dim. There must have been something about the rate of consumption in the old records.

You have a lot more patience with bad books and movies than I do!

All of the IGOTS online are just the old FancyFont files cyber-massaged into HTML - a lot of which can be done with global commands. It's been a while now but I think only the first two had to be OCR'd from mimeo copies. I've forgotten (if I ever knew) what *Challenger* was set in, but if it can be saved as ascii then adding the HTML is just tedious, depending on how fancy you want to get. My HTML is very bare-bones, I don't like the system.

Have you been able to look at Mars on its close approach this month? It's been too rainy here.

As to the WMD - the UN inspectors couldn't find them, and Saddam didn't use them when we invaded. If our people there find some now, who will believe we didn't plant them?

If you included the Colombian proverbs on uselessness and sluticity in your quotes, I got those from George, who says he got them from a Colombian roommate in college. But of course he may just be modest and actually invented them himself after a college Spanish course....

I love Les Earnest's tale of being a Japanese spy at the age of 12!

Trivial Pursuits - Janice - Funny cover! I am always suspicious of long disaster investigations that lead to a verdict of "management problems" - usually is just a ploy to make some mid-level manager on the verge of retirement, or unwanted for other reasons, the scapegoat. Have they found any memos where qualified engineers told their management what the problem was and were ignored?

You are right about the gaggle of Democratic presidential candidates - but I would vote for any of them over Dubya.

The "proof" that there were Asians in the Civil War would lie in genealogical records and photographs I suppose - I don't really consider it worth pursuing.

That looks like pretty good evidence that Joseph Campbell was a racist at one time. Of course he might have changed his mind later.

The Sphere - Don - I am always amazed that a political leader would claim that "God told him" to do this or that - the prime example since Biblical times is Joan of Arc, and it didn't work out all that well for her.

I guess I could have gotten into the Atlanta paper if I were glib enough - I had a phone call at my mother's house from a reporter looking for a "Chief Brooks". Turned out this was a cop rather than an Indian and he had been misled by my mother's listing as "M L Brooks".

Oblio - Brown - Not much I can say about a con report on a comic con, but it must be great having a Matt Groening signature! I found a signed 1st edition of Hunter Thompson's **The Rum Diary** at the thrift store this week - not mint alas, it looks like it might have gotten a little rum on it!

Cow Drifters - George - I am too old to retype that whole title.... Think how foolish I would feel if I didn't make it all the way through. Especially if I only got to "moon chickens".

Glad you got to sample *Queen Kong* the movie - a little goes a long way. I review it in the IGOTS that may wander into view later in the year.

Good to hear from you and Ruth on the phone. And I missed seeing Dan Caldwell and Hank "Ex-fan" Davis. Ah well, you were all silly enough without me I expect. Do I interrupt you a lot? Anyone could do it, you are mild-mannered for a Methodist. I remember expending some effort years ago to acquire a fantasy that had not only an Interrupter (to keep the King from going off the deep end I think) but also an Encourager of the Interrupter. Who wrote that?

Was the Acropolis a Greek restaurant? I would have liked that, but the Robert Redford pie is not something I would want. I wonder if the actor knows about this use of his name. Hard to imagine anyone missing my singing!

The *Newport News* 209 cover art from 1902 by Dan Beard is not that obscure because the artist Beard was famous in his time, as was the author, Ernest Crosby, and the issue, the Spanish-American war. I bought the book in a thrift store for \$1.25, but I forget where or when. It is shelved with books whose main use would be as art sources. I would guess that copies of **Cap'n Jenks** are offered on *addall* for more than I paid for this one, but not a lot more.

Cavourite was anti-gravity of a sort, and not unreasonable as a skiffy device at the time Wells used it. I don't know how you are so sure that Jules Verne did not predict Carrot-Top - he wrote a lot of books, and they are said to be badly translated. Do you even know the French for carrot?

I have seen the annoying pre-show mugging that you mention, though not for *Smallville*, which I have never watched. I think it's just a lazy way to adjust the program length for the quantity of plot they have that week. I'm sure you've noticed on *The Simpsons* that sometimes they go right into the story and sometimes they have the whole long intro with Bart at the blackboard and Homer at the nuclear plant and Marge and Maggie at the grocery store and Lisa at band practice.

I think you are onto something with the original Siamese twins, but their offspring could hardly have served in the Civil War (1860-64) as they were born in 1825. Well maybe, but just barely - if one of them married in 1845 and had a son he would have been 15 at the start of the war. Still, they could have brought brothers or cousins along to the US who would have been the right age to serve in the army.

Everyone is against child labor - but just to be contrary I might point out that just as we are all distant descendants of people who got away from saber-tooth tigers and ate their food raw with very poor table manners (and not much in the way of a table), we are also fairly recent descendants of people who *were* child laborers. *Ad astra per aspera, quod erat demonstrandum* and *illigitimus non carborundum!*

Yngvi - Toni & Hank - You judge *parks* on defensibility? Against what? The mayor seems to be trying to defend them against the homeless - was it Voltaire that said *The law in its majesty forbids both the rich and the poor from sleeping under bridges?*

Sounds like I missed a good con. I wonder how many men are called "Joe King" - and what were their parent thinking? I hadn't thought of Barbara Mott in years.

I may be getting too old for conventions - not that I am too feeble to stand the rigors of travel and bad food, but the desire has faded. Also I was doing a medical treatment four times a day that required a refrigerated medication - the logistics of this are easy at home but would be awkward on the road.

The question of Puerto Rico shows a deficiency in the idea of "majority rule" - apparently there is no majority in favor of a) remaining a territory, b) becoming a nation, or c) becoming a state - and that's just among the inhabitants of the island. Most of the rest of the US would probably have smoke coming out of their ears before they could choose between these options. I myself don't really care at all.

What are you using for a stapler? I never saw a full overlap like that before!

Armadillo - Liz - Do any of those doctors speak English? What I have is less serious but more mysterious - *lichen planus*. Not contagious, malignant, or likely to be fatal, but an annoyance in the mouth - the affected areas become overly sensitive to hot liquids and certain spices, but not much to acidic or salty food. The hazard is that it can become erosive, which could lead to infections. Apparently I have always had it, and will always have it - it is genetic and not caused by a germ, virus, or other environmental factor.



"For gorsake stop laughing—this is serious!"