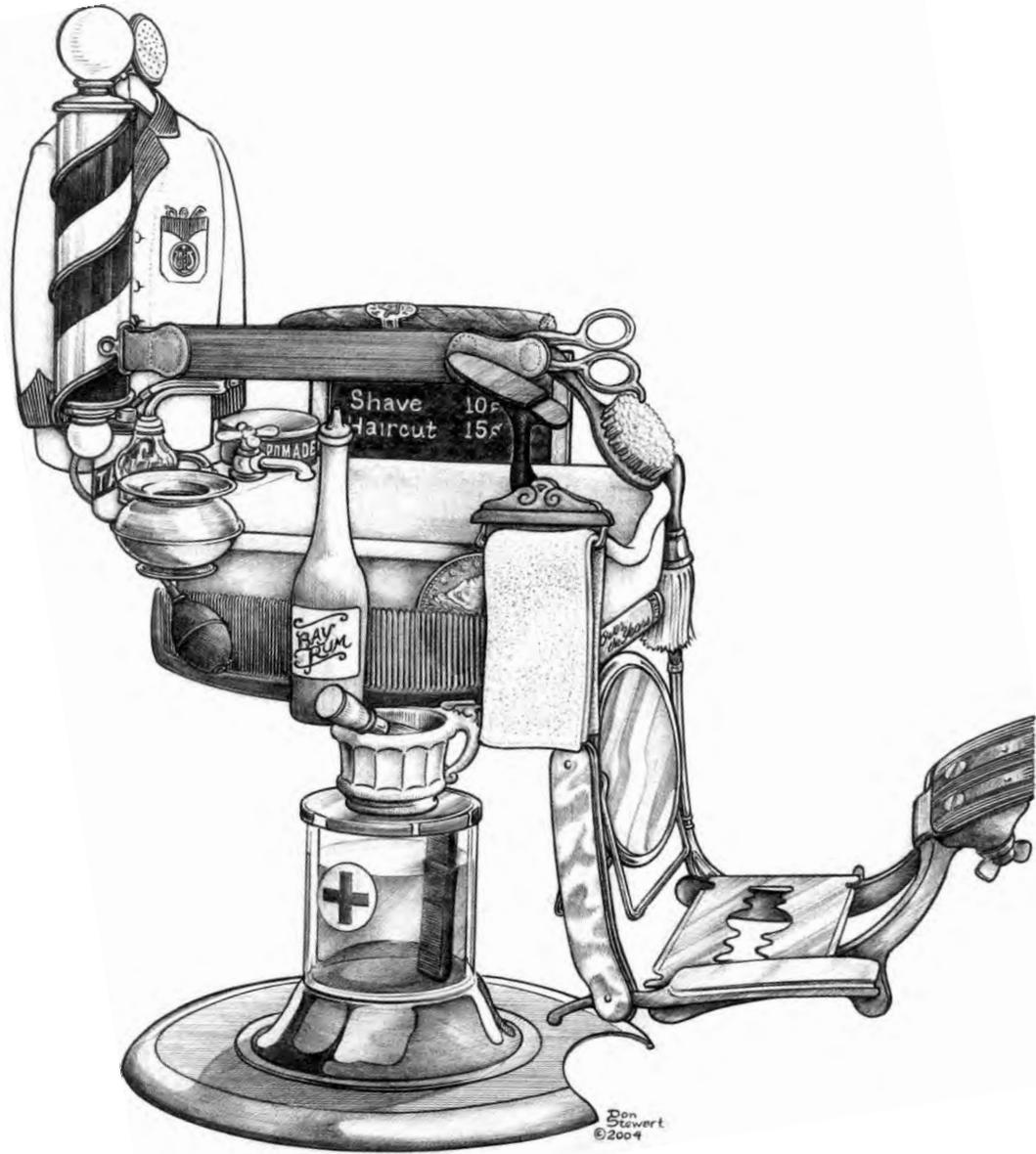


Sporadic 33



September 2015

Southern Fandom Press Alliance Mailing No. 307

SPORADIC 33

“You better learn to make a living with your head, Boy, because you’ll never do it with your hands.” – Charlie Plott to teenage son c. 1962

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Too much going on the past few weeks to foist proofreading off on Nancy. Typos are all my responsibility.

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They Start School Much Too Soon Now

Back In My Day school started right after Labor Day. Nancy says it was the same in Indiana when she was growing up. Now, it's mid-August or even earlier. As July waned we realized we had a narrow window of about three weeks to plan another short camping trip. Because of a prior commitment of the camper to daughter Maggie and her bunch, our final trip was determined for us. The only opportunity was the last weekend in July.

Alas, our favorite place on the Alabama Gulf Coast, Johnny's Lakeside RV Resort with its Lazy River, was booked up. Indeed, finding a vacancy on such short notice proved quite difficult. Nancy was Googling possibilities while sitting a doctor's waiting room and texting them to me. I called the campgrounds as fast as she found them. Finally, on our fifth try I was able to get us into Island Retreat RV Park at Gulf Shores. It is located on State Highway 180, the route from Gulf Shores to Fort Morgan and the ferry across Mobile Bay.

The trip started out with anxiety over the camper. A few days before leaving we discovered that two things that were supposedly fixed in the spring did not stay fixed. The cabin door still sticks and the shower stall is leaking again around the skylight. Nancy figured out a way to get us in and out of the door with minimum hassle but the latch still needs repairing. On top of that we discovered very quickly on the road that the hard shift from second to third gear that scared the hell out of us in the spring is still not corrected. We got that scary bump when the gears shifted down as well as up at times.

At my insistence we drove on to the coast, just monitoring the transmission carefully. Coming back we called the Ford truck place to let them know the problem was not corrected. We were concerned about Maggie and Dustin and two grandkids using the camper for a coastal trip the following week. The service manager offered no absolute guarantees, but said he didn't think the transmission would go cawlooy with them on the road. We are to take the motor home back to their Bessemer shop in a couple of weeks.

Despite these concerns, oppressive heat and nightmarish traffic, we still had an enjoyable long weekend at Gulf Shores. While Atticus enjoyed playground time, I made a run for takeout shrimp for dinner. Nancy loves Royal Reds so I went to the Gulf Shores location of Shrimp Basket, an excellent local seafood chain. They did not have any and directed me a couple of other places. I drank half a beer at the Steamer while my order was being prepared. I was headed back to the campground in about 10 minutes, every so thankful that I was not among the 50 or so people waiting for tables at both restaurants.

Always concerned about Atticus and asthma, we had brought his Nebulizer along with his regular meds. However, we had neglected to pack the mask. On Friday we drove up to Foley to a home medical store and got him the mask just in case we needed it. Then, we met my friend David Parker at nearby McDonald's. While Atticus enjoyed the playground and a Happy Meal, I transferred to David another five loose leaf binders full of high school football material. David has pursued Alabama high school football scores for years the same as I have. But he is in the modern world, having created a web page and digital format for all of this information. I am slowly passing my research on to him in increments that are not overwhelming. He then uses my stuff to fill in blanks on the web listings.

It is nice to know that those decades of work will be preserved instead of just being pitched if I check out unexpectedly.

A sad, sad note on this otherwise fun trip follows.

Our Pal Monty, a Heartbreaking Loss

During the weekend at Gulf Shores Monty began to have digestive problems. He didn't eat with his normal gusto for leftover shrimp and other seafood. He occasionally threw up.

As it turned out we were unable to get him to the vet until Aug. 3. They gave us an antibiotic and an appetite booster, telling us to come back in a couple of days for blood work if he didn't improve. He did not improve. I took him back on Aug. 5 and the blood work show a liver deficiency. They wanted to keep him on an IV for a couple of days. I was to pick him up on Saturday. I got a phone call from the clinic that morning saying there had been no improvement.



At Barnicle Bill's in Fort Meyers Beach

ing positions every few minutes. The throwing up that had started at the clinic continued, a sign that the liver was failing. Talking about it later, Nancy and both prayed that he would die in his sleep at home like his predecessor Button did.

But he did not. On Monday morning, Aug. 10, we took him through the back door of the Montevallo Animal Clinic. While Nancy held him in her lap and I cried, the doctor gave him an injection to make him sleep, then one to stop his little heart. It was over in a matter of seconds. We brought him home and buried him in the backyard.

I have lost many pets over the years – we lived by a busy highway when I was growing up – but no loss has hurt like this one. He was the runt of the litter with a tongue that hung out constantly because of a missing tooth and he was slightly cock-eyed. While his sisters lolled about he climbed up Nancy's bosom and gave her a kiss. His place in our lives was sealed.

He never really seemed to grow up. He was always just a puppy with a distinct personality that kept us amused for many years.

The tears continue to pour. This is going to be a hard thing to get over.

Dr. Parker was very frank. There was nothing else they could do. He said putting Monty to sleep (I don't like that term "putting down") was really where we were headed. He said we could take him home for the weekend and say our goodbyes.

Monty was lethargic, would not even really sniff whatever food we set out for him. He grew weaker every day, often having difficulty getting across the room. He could not seem to find a comfortable place, usually chang-

Atticus Goes To Kindergarten

Over the summer we began to have a few issues with Atticus. There was regression in his potty training and a level of defiance that we hadn't seen emerged. Some of it is no doubt related to the loss of his mother and we have scheduled him for some counseling and play therapy in September. But then, Nancy discovered a more tangible reason for the potty situation: He was uncharacteristically frightened of kindergarten, partly because Montevallo Elementary School is a large, sprawling structure. It was a huge step for a little guy to leave the comfort zone of University Baptist Child Development Center, where he has been befriended and nurtured for more than four years.

A week before school started there was a meet-and-greet/orientation for kindergarteners and parents with the teachers. When we walked in the door he almost immediately spotted Kaitlyn, a neighbor and UBCDC classmate. Ashlyn, another classmate came in moments later, then Dylan from his T-ball team. Several teachers called him by name, having already met him through his mother or friends of ours. The anxiety dissipated rapidly.

We live close enough to the school to walk him over and back in nice weather. When we picked him up at the end of the first day, Nancy asked him how it went. He held up a thumb and said, "Awesome!" When we walked him over to the school on Day 2 of his kindergarten experience, he broke away, running for the door when we reached the sidewalk in front of the entrance.

I think he's going to do fine.

Who Has the Pack Rat Gene?

It still isn't clear if Atticus has inherited my pack rat gene. He is reluctant to turn toys loose, even ones he hasn't played with in months. We've managed a compromise of sorts in that he can select some toddler toy for removal when he gets a new Lego project. There has been some measure of success with this.

Of the children, I appear to have passed that gene only to Lil. Maggie and Mary maintain neat, orderly households and Charles is not in the bloodline. (Just for the record, though, son-in-law Dustin Davenport, Maggie's husband, has a bit of the accumulator in him.) And it goes without saying that pack ratting is a collector phenomenon, not hoarding.

When we downsized in 2007, Lil was off at Hollins University in Virginia. It fell to me to wade through the chaos in her room. You could not see the floor for clothes and other things just tossed off. And, of course, there were scores, maybe hundreds, of books, magazines and various music formats. I dutifully grouped things into Lil Books, Lil Clothes, Lil Shoes, Lil Writings, and just Lil Stuff. When I was done we had to move and store 25 lawyer-style boxes.

Since her death, there has been the slow, painful chore of going through those boxes, disposing of stuff. Some of it is easy, things that I think Atticus will like to have down the road, books that are of interest to me, etc. The clothing that was usable we cleaned and donated to Shelby Emergency Assistance agency in Montevallo.

The majority of the books posed a problem. It seemed a shame to take books, one of the things she loved so much, and just dump them at the thrift store. Then I had a flash when Joe Moudry and I were planning our July lunch meeting. The second hand media store, 2nd &

Charles, that is always part of our get-together, was where the books should go. It is a store for people who *love* books. They will give you store credit or a cash pittance for things they buy for resale. The items they don't buy can be placed in a large Free Books bin in front of the store.

Most of Lil's books were too worn and dog-eared for purchase, but the ones 2nd & Charles bought started a store account which I will use for Atticus when a decent amount of money is accumulated.

Riding Out a Storm Brings a Surprise

I reluctantly drove over to Tuscaloosa one morning to do some research in the University of Alabama library. I say reluctantly because getting in such a hassle. As a visitor, you have park in a parking deck, pay \$5 for the privilege, then walk several blocks in the Alabama humidity to get to the library. Also, in the past I have had difficulty with the computerize microfilm readers. However, this time was a good visit. A nice young man helped me master the controls, then showed me how to copy and email baseball box scores to myself. Now, that is an improvement over the old days of eye strain!

Headed back to Montevallo that afternoon, I found myself in a tremendous thunderstorm. I hate waiting, so I will normally slow down to 30 miles an hour just to keep moving. This storm with wind and blowing rain was so severe that I elected to pull over in front of an abandoned store about 15 miles from home. While I was sitting there, listening to All Things Considered, I felt a jarring whump like someone had hit me from behind. I glanced in the rear view mirror and saw only darkness. A minute later there was another whump but not as jarring.

The storm cleared and I drove on home. When I got out of the Tundra in my driveway, I was stunned to see that the top to my bedliner was gone. The first bump had been it thrust against the back of the cap, the second was it being ripped off and deposited God knows where. And like the sometimes unexplainable nature of tornado damage, nothing in the bed seemed to have gone away with the top.

My Latest Sports Rant

I can suspend belief in a musical when some guy is walking down the street, bursts into song and is joined by all of the people in the stores on the chorus. I can suspend belief when Godzilla eats Tokyo or James Bond lays an oil slick with his Austin Martin. But I can only roll my eyes when the Major League Baseball Network puts four guys wearing suits and a baseball gloves on a fake indoor diamond acting out fielding plays. Now, somebody, maybe Fox Sports, is doing it on a fake football field. That is beyond ridiculous.





“I’ve never yet come out of a bookshop without purchasing something... Sometimes I half-heartedly determine not to buy any more books until I have read the ones I already have, but such madness soon passes.” – Al Andrews

Reviews

TIMESCAPE by Gregory Benford (Pocket Science Fiction, 1981, second hand store purchase).

Apropos a recent discussion in SFPA, this was a book some 17 years out-of-date when I read it. That is to say, it was set in 1998 and involved attempts at time travel. The time differential between Benford wrote it and I read in no way lessened by enjoyment of the book.

The novel alternates between 1964 and 1998, when the world is dying from ecological collapse, food riots and general disorder. A small group of scientists is working desperately to send a message back in time to 1964, pleading with scientists back then to take precautionary steps to head off the disaster. The obvious parallel story involves scientists in 1964 receiving a cryptic message that they eventually determine is likely from the future.

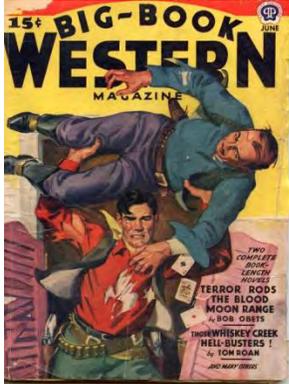
Between these two alternate story lines, Benford weaves a highly readable story with an interesting plot and believable characters. Although most of the science was over my head, I could circumnavigate it sufficiently to remain focused on the story. I’ve now read two of his novels (the other being *Artifact*) since my return to fandom, and I am happy to have made his literary acquaintance. I hope to meet him personally some day as I understand that have a common connection in having lived in Anniston, Ala.

“Gun-Pard for Hangtown” by Tom Roan, 10-Story Western Magazine, January 1944; “Those Whiskey Creek Hell-Busters”! by Tom Roan, Big-Book Western, June 1944, internet purchases)

In one of my many microfilm excursion while researching my baseball book, I ran across a brief item that stopped me in my eye tracks, so to speak. It was a 1933 news item from The Associated Press about a pulp writer having been acquitted of murder in a North Alabama trial.

Having learned many years ago to steel myself against getting sidetracked on interesting non-task newspaper stories, I made a quick photocopy of this one and went on with my work. The photocopy surfaced a few months ago in a cleaning out of old files.

In 1931 Roan, a prolific western pulp writer, was arrested for the murder of a prominent physician in DeKalb County, Ala. The incident occurred at a party (in which adult beverages were present despite those Prohibition times). There was no question that Roan did the shooting; the issue was whether or not it was self defense. There were three trials. The first one ended in a mistrial. The second one saw him convicted and sentenced to life in prison. However, his attorneys got the conviction overturned by the Alabama Supreme Court and a third trial followed. He was finally acquitted.



Most interesting, though, is that he did not seek to get out of jail on bond. He asked that his typewriter be brought to the jail and he continued to crank out his stories. I counted a dozen or so that were published during his incarceration. He was a model prisoner and the sheriff made him a trusty at some point.

I have pieced together a ton of information about the trials and some biographical information through the help of fans on the fictionmags.com forum. I am still looking for more biographical and anecdotal information about Roan's life. He was described by one as a writer who lived the kind of life he wrote about – not that he was a cowboy, but that he had been a lawman at times.

While my interest was on the writer, I decided I needed to read some of his writing. Probably overpaying a few dollars, I picked up these two magazines. Roan's stories are billed as novels though they ran only 22 and 20 pages, respectively. Plot summaries are irrelevant. The characters are shallow and the stories even shallower. Cliches, especially western jargon types, abound on every page. And then there are the ones Roan creates out of whole cloth: "Yawberry got there, with Tingle hobbling along like a half-ragged old money at his right elbow." "pistol-swaggering fellows" I get, but what in the hell is a "a half-ragged old monkey"?



Roan is also big on colorful names. There are not a lot of Fred Jones and George Johnson-type characters in his stories. Instead we get Swanky Dan Shrack, Tightwad Booth, Big Ike Beverly, Droopy Brown, Monkey Smith, Texas Charley Wade, the Lone Wolf of Cimarron, and a mess of "Olds" – Old Cass Miller, Old Flip Cooper and Old Nancy Yardley. The story titles are clichés, also, with no relationship to the action.

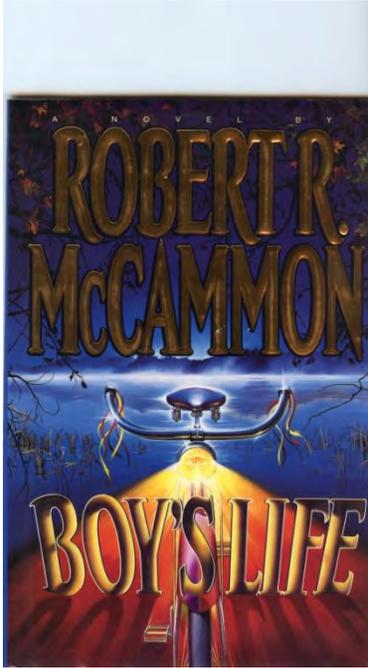
I found myself wondering not only why these two stories were published but also how this man managed to sget omewhere around 500 stories published. Of course, there are probably a dozen producers like Roan for every Louie LaMour or Zane Grey. And, I imagine the same is true for other pulp genres.

That being said, these were great fun to read for what they are. If I am able to put together a more comprehensive biography of Roan, I'll probably track down some more of his yarns.

Quotable:

“I find that a lot of people are outlaws under the skin and you’ve never exactly taken to the game. Yes, I said game. All life’s a game. Two thirds of the people of the earth are born to eat off the rest, like fleas on a dog’s back if you want to put it that way.”

Boy’s Life by Robert R. McCammon (Pocket Books, 1991, hc, used purchase)



Joe Moudry finally stopped badgering me about Robert McCammon. He simply thrust this book into my hand as we wandering the aisles of 2nd & Charles, saying, “You must have this book.” Mission accomplished, Joe. I have it and I have read it and I have enjoyed it immensely.

Set in South Alabama in 1964, the story follows a year or so in the life of 12-year-old Cory Mackenson. It begins with him helping his father on an early morning milk delivery route, an outing that is interrupted by a car that suddenly appears before them and plunges over an embankment into a bottomless lake. Cory’s father makes a desperate effort to get the driver out before the car sinks, a task that is impossible because he sees that the man is naked, has been savagely beaten and is handcuffed to the steering wheel.

While the murder captivates the small town of Zephyr, other factors come into play over the course of the summer and the beginning of the next school year. Among the characters are a 106-year-old black woman who is believed to have mystical powers, a vicious backwoods crime family, a Ku Klux

Klan type group with nefarious plans.

McCammon carries the story along with wonderful descriptions of the every day doings of Cory and his pals. The opening murder mystery story line becomes more of a behind the scenes theme as other events move to the forefront. But it is never too far away and McCammon brings it to a startling conclusion.

I found a couple of anomalies. Cory’s family and other whites refer to black people in the town as Mr. and Mrs. I grew up in small town Alabama and such respect was never accorded to any person of color. Joe said he experienced such respect in Birmingham. I say his experience was an anomaly, also. The second was the presence of a civil rights museum. I say 1964 was way too early in the movement for such to exist. However, I was able to deal with these little irritations because of McCammon’s fine craftsmanship as a storyteller.

Quotables:

--...we all start out knowing magic. We are born able to sing to bids, and read the clouds and see our destiny in grains of sand. But then we get the magic educated right out of our souls. We get it churched out, spanked out, washed out and combed out. We get put on the straight and narrow and told to be responsible. Told to act our age. Told to grow up, for God’s sake. And you know why we were told that? Because the people doing the telling were afraid of our wildness and youth, and because the magic we knew made them ashamed and sad of what they’d allowed

to wither in themselves.

--I thought about the fact that there was a whole world going about its business before the sun [came up], and people who were just waking up weren't part of it.

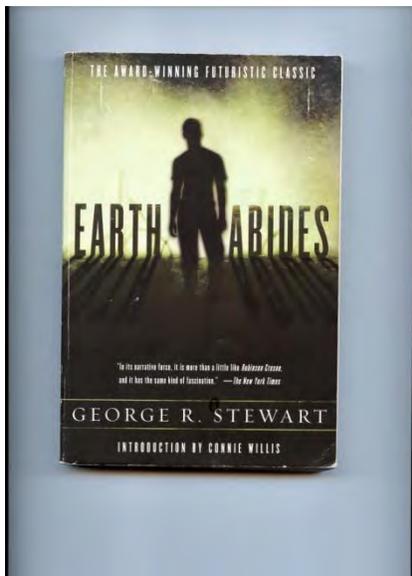
--In spite of what the calendar says, I have always counted the last day of school as the first day of summer. ...I ran out along the corridor, my arms unencumbered by books, my mind unencumbered by facts and figures, quotations and dates. I ran out into the golden sunlight, and my summer had begun.

--Mr. Cathcoate frowned. I figured he didn't like remembering it, or else he was trying to put the details together again. A ninety-two-year-old man has to open a lot of locks to recall a day when he was nine years old.

--When they dragged him out of court, kicking and screaming, he damned everybody in sight, even the stenographer. They said he threw so many curses that if those bad words had been bricks, they'd have made a three-bedroom house with a two-car garage.

Earth Abides by George R. Stewart (Ballantine, 2006, pb, internet purchase)

At DSC53 in Bristol there was a discussion of which 10 science fiction novels should be de rigueur reading for all serious fans. Someone, I believe Curt Phillips, mentioned this 1949 book, possibly the earliest of the post-apocalypse works. When a plague sweeps the earth, the human race is left to handfuls of survivors. The story follows Isherwood Williams through decades of surviving and building a community with his "wife," children and grandchildren. Unlike later books, which focus on militias, lawlessness and government rebuilding, this one relates the simple breakdown and replacement of the old civilization as water, gas and other amenities of our world disappear by simple attrition.



Stewart's presentation of these changes is an almost David McCullough-like presentation. There is no need to develop skills and technologies because there are stores where most things they need can still be scavenged. Ish tries vainly to instill a creative spirit beyond scavenging:

"...it still seems easier just to keep on opening cans as long as there are plenty of cans in the grocery stores and warehouses."

"But the end will come some time. Then, what will people do?"

"Well, I suppose, whatever people there are then – they will just have to solve that problem for themselves."

This is an extraordinary book, painting such a totally different view of a post-apocalyptic world. It is very much like the *Life After People* documentary series that ran on the History Channel in 2008.

Quotables:

--...in a little while ge discovered that the absence of electric light was not really as important to him as the absence of electric power, particularly of refrigeration. The icebox was dead now, and his food spoiled.

--The roads and drains and the wall shad been constructed only for man's convenience,

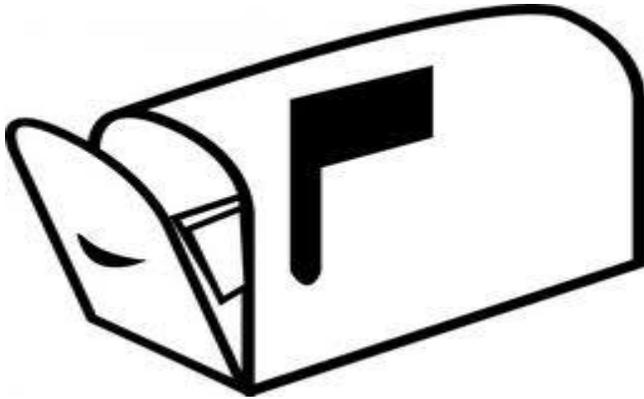
and now that man was gone there was no need of them. The water might just as well follow its natural courses, and cut back through the rose garden. Soaked and muddy, the Harts' rugs would begin to rot where they lay. No matter! To think of that as something bad was merely to think in terms of what had once been and no longer existed.

--If you lost the continuity of time, you lost something that might never be recovered. Probably it had already been lost unless some of the other survivors had been more careful about the matter than he had been.

--Some of the adults had been inoculated in the Old Times, but their immunity must long since have lapsed. All the children were totally unguarded. Even with all the old-time medical skill typhoid had been combated chiefly by prevention. Once the disease was established, there was no remedy but to let it run its long and sinister course.

--For a little while there will be jostling, quick rises, and sudden falls; then, a quiet and a peace such as the earth has not known in twenty thousand years.





Letters

Shelby Vick, Panama City, Fla.

Great cover, Bill –

I'll hafta admit I didn't notice the tigers until I read the write-up. I COULD blame it on my weakened eyesight, but that won't fly, as I could see 'em as soon as it was mentioned.

As always, I enjoyed your tale of your travels, including all the various breweries. Love the names some beers were given. Shows real imagination.

One thing puzzled me, tho. I'm not deep enuf into beer to understand what a 'flight' of beer is. You made it obvious it consisted of more than one beer, but that's the best I could do.

...Oh, and many apologies for my delayed response. Had health probs that slowed my current ish of Planetary Stories. (www.planetarystories.com) When I recovered sufficiently, EVERYthing went wrong. I'd format a story, look at it, find more than usual errors, go back to try and correct 'em and make ANOTHER stupid mistake. What shoulda taken two, three weeks is still not finished, and I've been working more than SIX weeks on it. Oh, it's down to just waiting for some illos to show up to add to a story, but still....

Love the cartoons, especially the one about Hemingway and what coulda happened if, at the start of his career, he had obtained a computer!

Your letter column is full of cogent comments by intelligent and witty pipple. I fail, however (revealing my lack of experience with Sporadic) to unnerstand the labels each writer is given. (By the way, it was good to see that Norm is still around. Boy, has Tyndall changed since he left!)

But now I'm going to put my foot into it, probably even extending it into my mouth.
Racism.

Let's take an in-depth look at this. To begin with, I don't consider myself a racist. For instance, even tho Bill Cosby is black, I see what he has done as someone taking advantage of their prominence, not as a black drugging white (and, for that matter, black) women. I don't consider Obama as a failure just because he is black, but rather because of his record.

As for the Redskins, the baseball history I've consumed relates that, as the team was

building their rep, they had an American Indian coach they all-but-worshipped. When the teammates came up with the idea of calling themselves Redskins, it was in honor of their coach. He was both flattered and pleased with the suggested name, and willingly went along with it. To change their name would remove the honor they gave the coach.

As for South Pacific . . . well, of COURSE there is blatant racism in it. It was the way things were at the time, right or wrong. Changing it (or avoiding the musical) would be a denial of history. Hey, Uncle Tom's Cabin was racist! Let's accept things for what they were instead of attempting (fruitlessly!) to change history. I 'spose a warning could be displayed at the beginning of the movie, something like: Racism was part of life in those days.

Or consider the popular song, "There Is Nothing Like A Dame." 'Dame' is not sweet and soft, like a girl. Very anti-feminist. It's harsh and almost disrespectful. However, that was the thrust of the song.

As I'm sure you know, the Southern Rebellion was instigated by both states' rights and taxation. Yeah, slavery became a strong element (as well it should) but the South ceased slavery at the end of the war. Many Northern states didn't end slavery until years later.

It's like the current hoopla about the Confederate Flag. I know, I know; many, especially blacks, connect it with slavery. On the other hand, many consider it a symbol of rebellion, especially the famous Battle Flag. Others have ancestors who fought under that flag as rebels against the overbearing North. Most Southerners who honor the flag do not consider that it represents racism.

Ah, well . . .

Further, it's become accepted that 'slavery' refers to the blacks. Wrong! There have been slaves for millennia, slaves of all races.

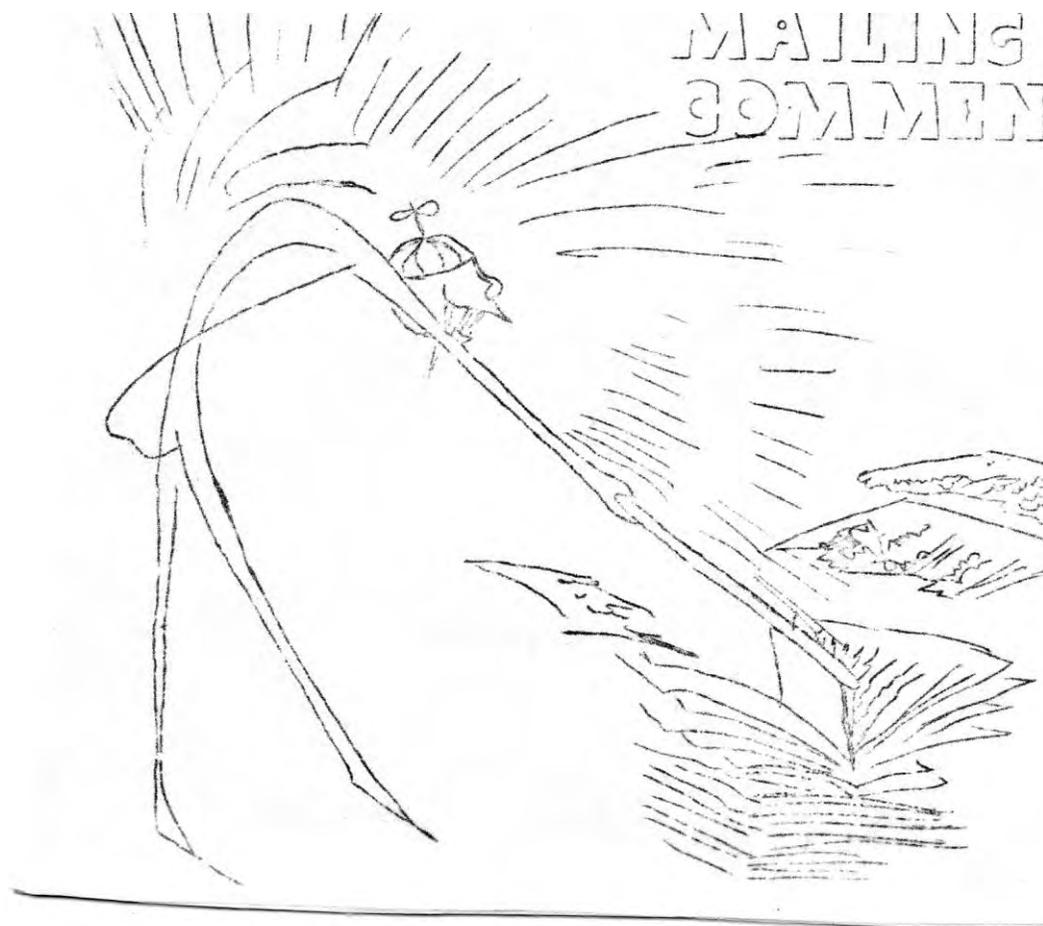
I'm against slavery. I'm against racism. Heck, I'm even against politics! I think we should go back to statesmanship instead of politics.

But that's just me.

Okay, now I'll remove my foot from my extremely large mouth and sign off.

ShelVy





The Southerner/Joe Nice, clean format. Corrections to previous mailing are appreciated for those who want to keep facts up to speed. And it's probably helpful for Gary in compiling the box scores

Waterloo Sunset/mike Ct. David and racing tires. I'm not really a car enthusiast so my knowledge is quite limited. I would think, though, that solid tires instead of inflated ones would like proper suspension and handling in such a high-speed environment. I imagine the drivers would have some seriously sore butts at the end of 500 miles.

You are about three years ahead of me on a permanent beard. I believe I grew mine around 1978. My two youngest children never knew me without a beard. I attempted my first one when I was in college. I came home for Christmas with the beginning effort. At dinner, my daddy looked across the table and said, "You forgot to wash your face, boy." I told him I was growing a beard. He said, "Shave that damn thing off." that was the '60s

when beards were connected largely to Hippies and such. Some years later, when I had had the current brush for a number of years, he allowed as how the beard looked good on me, improving the shape of my face.

The New Port News #282/Ned Normally, this is the first zine I write MCs for. Somehow, I failed to do so this time. Consequently, I find myself unable to continue the process. There is going to be such a sadly missing part of my experience in SFPA and fictionmags.com. It was Ned who provided me with scans of all of the old issues of *Sporadic* when I got back into fandom. I am going to miss his wit and his insight on so many things. I can't imagine not ever having a copy of *It Goes on the Shelf* again.

Challenger #39 (Special SFPA Edition)/Guy An interesting package. I can see why you had been faunching to put it together. I particularly enjoyed the piece on how Meade Frierson's *HPL* came together. When it became available briefly for a download last year, I printed it out and put it in a loose leaf binder. One of these days I'll get around to seriously perusing it.

The Typo King #33/Robert Eight or nine childhood eye operations? Mother of Pearl! My own childhood eye problems seem quite insignificant by comparison. What I remember most is getting my first pair of glasses in the seventh grade. I remember walking in a classroom and, all of a sudden, I could read what was on the chalkboard. It was a life changing moment. I'm so glad your situation looks better, so to speak, and hope it continues to improve. I have always felt I lacked depth perception, a problem when trying to park a vehicle.

I doubt if the bad hootch bartenders serve to the already-overindulged is homemade these days. It's probably just the cheaper brands, for example substituting Kentucky Gentleman for Jack Daniels. For many, many years in Alabama, bartenders were required by law to make mixed drinks from miniatures, the kind of bottles used on airlines. This was to guarantee that the buyer received, I believe, 1.25 ounces of booze in his drink. I suspect it started a small hobby, also. I'll bet there's a group of miniature collectors out there somewhere. I don't *collect* them, but I find it hard to throw them away. Somewhere out in Bill's Beer Barn, there's a box full of miniature bottles.

I discovered *The X-Files* late and became addicted to it, all of the flaws you cite notwithstanding. I enjoyed the alternate presentations of alien invasion and unrelated supernatural occurrences. I must say, though, that by bringing the invasion theme to its (to me) unsatisfactory conclusion, they rendered the show useless for reruns. But to carry your criticism a step further, there can be nothing remotely realistic to practically any of the old time radio shows or pulp fiction stories and authors that you enjoy and write about with great affection. Fiction is fiction. I enjoy this one, but not some of the ones you like.

And to update you, the feral cat is now quite tame. but still jumpy. Hence, he has been named Panic. It's a name he will eventually outgrow but even at about a year old it's still amusingly appropriate. He loved forcing Monty to play with him. He comes in sometimes and wanders through the house, possibly searching for his pal. I am interest in seeing how he will react to a new dog.

The brief comments on bread and milk as storm prep reminds me that I need to take time to assess and restock our general emergency stash. I 'm sure the lack of a need for it has gotten some of the items out of date.

Great collection of cartoons, as always.

To the Cosmosphere!/Janice What was the microbrewery near your parking place on Day 1? That's information that inquiring minds need to know. So close and you guys didn't go in for a flgith. Just shows that priorities can get all screwed up sometimes.//On page 4 you sent me scurrying to the dictionary, then too a rather fruitless, no pun intended, internet search. "*but mostly the guys neeped away.*" The only definitions I could find suggest that a neep is a root vegetable like a trunip or rutabega. That doesn't make sense in this context. Help me out, please.

The Noctuary #12/Joe Condolences on the loss of Abigail. Even though we may share our lives with many furry critters, there are always one or two that are special. Obviously, Abby was in the category as Monty is with us. Our newest cat, Panic, has come into the house and wandered about a times as if looking for her sometimes willing, sometimes reluctant playmate.

Spartacus #9/Guy Nice essay on the Confederate brouhaha. I have addressed the subject elsewhere in this mailing. Nancy, being from amongst the Nothern Tribes, tends to be less charitable post-war to some of the South's leaders, particularly Lee and Davis. I don't get quite so worked up over them myself, although I do wish Montgomery school officials had found other names for two of the public high schools there.

Jewels and Binoculars #26/Tom Thanks for sharing your kinsman, Alexander Leydenfrost's art. I really liked all three pieces. You'd think he was a regular SF artist if you saw the stuff without explanation. And it's cool that you connected with his granddaughter and now have an ongoing Facebook relationship. I haven't seen anyof the *Archie* spinoff titles, but I am always amazed that the digest size *Archie* comics are always in the supermarket checkout lines along with *National Enquirer*, *People*, etc. The enduring popularity of the characters is kind of amazing, consdiering how many other popular characters have fallen by the wayside. I'm with you on the variant covers. I can't imagine spending 80 bucks just to own the entire package with only the covers being different. Gary Brown can probably offer us more insight into this marketing and attendant philosophy.

All Along the Watchtower #11/Larry Great retro contribution to the mailing, from the spectacular covers to the "In the Beginning." Of course, I have no idea when and where they first appeared but 'm anxious to find out. In 1987 I was on staff at the University of Montevallo and my only fannish connection was the beginning of a friendship with George Inzer. Those formative years in the early '60s were fun times. I'm sorry that you and I were not able to get a respond out of dick Ambrose when we put the Al Andrews commemorative together.

Thanks for sharing all of this. Now, if we can just get you off the dime and back into a Mailing Comments mode....

I think all of us are on the same page with the Confederate flag. Whatever heritage there was went out the window with hate mongering of the civil rights era.

Spiritus Mundi 268/Guy I'm glad all of the unpleasantness following Nita's death is behind you...at least for the time being. I'm sure there will be more to come with Harold's passing. I have been so lucky in that regard. My youngest abrother lived at home after he got out of service and college. He was there to help with my dad's battle with cancer, then my mom's. My other brother and I told him he could live in the house as long as he wanted. His devotion to our parents enabled Jack and I to live quite different lives. Jerry has cashed in CDs as they matured, splitting the money among us. As far as Jack and I are concerned, though, he can stay in family home without worrying about estate issues.

Ct. Sheila. I'm one up on you in that I did read *Childhood's End* back in my previous fannish incarnation. However, I did not care for it and never felt inclined to read any more Arthur C. Clark. I would like to know how he happened to settle in Bangladesh. I'm sure Google can help when I have a spare moment

I'm not sure that anchovies should be declared a separate food group – like bacon and saltine crackers – but they are damn close to serving the distinction. Most pizza delivery houses do not have them available among the toppings. Sometimes we had them to delivered product and sometimes we will add them and other choices to a frozen Red Baron. And yes, we add feta and anchovies routinely to the salads we fix at home.

Thanks for recommending Paolo Bacigalupi's new novel. I think I still have some money left on a Barnes & Noble gift card...

Peter, Pan & Merry/David We have made the plunge into the chicken world again. We bought a small coop from Tractor Supply Company, then purchased three laying hens – Rhonda is a Rhode Island Red, Dolly is a Dominicker and Connie is an Arcauna, the breed that supposedly lays pastel colored eggs. The day after we got them I was in Birmingham when I got a frantic text from Nancy that the chickens had escaped and were all over the neighborhood. She feared someone would call the police. Fortunately, No. 1 Son and his girls were visiting and returned from an outing just in time to help round up the escapees. We've heard nothing from any of the neighbors. And we do know that despite a city ordinance against farm animals within the city limits, there are backyard flocks all around. At this point, two weeks in, our investment in hens, coop, feed, water and feed dispensers, has produced some very tasty eggs at a cost of about \$45 apiece.

Thanks for the comment on the book and smiley emoticon notwithstanding, franking it through SFPA would be lovely. Of course, you know the economics of academic publishing. After I had dispersed the 10 author's copies to immediate family and four researchers in the Midwest, I was forced to buy my own personal copy! Still, the accomplishment is reward enough in this case.

Twydrasil and Treehouse Gazette #153/Rich D. What an interesting cover. I never thought about foreign editions have American magazines having different covers. Of course, that one would be from the French edition. Yet, I have a hard time figuring out a story in a mystery magazine that would relate to those images.

I enjoyed your MediaCon report. Bob Dawes's collection of funny songs brings to mind how novelty songs have long since vanished from popular music. Remember when such ditties as "Does Your Chewing Gum Lose Its Flavor on the Bedpost Overnight?", "My Friend the Witch Doctor," and any number of Coasters songs were pop hits? I have a wonderful vinyl boxed set of Dr. Demento's novelty songs.

If the popularity of My Little Pony with adults does not have a perverse, furry sexiness to it, then what is the appeal? I always found the stories insipid when they first came out. I can't imagine any adult liking them for any reason.

I agree that ejaculate is a prime example of a word that has seen a profound change in its usage. We will never again read of Tom Swift ejaculating excitedly. Another one that has lost its long-time meaning is "gay." When we were working at *The Montgomery Advertiser* in the late '70s, a local man named Gay came into the office to complain bitterly about his family name being connected to homosexuality.

I don't know what constitutes editing at McFarland. I do know that the person who did the critically reading of my manuscript offered a number of suggestions for clarifying confusing presentations and failing to provide proper citations. I also know that they converted the index from a mix of name and subject to one of just names. That was okay, because I did a limited amount of subject citings.

Ct. The Space Merchants, you said, "*we don't hear so much about advertising because it has succeeded in camouflaging itself.*" I wonder if it's camouflaging or just imbedding. Product placement is so commonplace these days in movies and TV shows. Print advertising turns up in all kinds of places, for example, on the wall behind urinals and all around our computer screens.

Ct. Moudry and friendly divorces. I'm reminded of a friend and former colleague at the University of Montevallo. After he and his wife of many years divorced, Sid remarried, got another divorced, lived alone for a time. Then he and Barbara, the first wife, became a couple again although without a formal ceremony. I was at a party one night when their daughter took great delight in introducing them to someone with this line, "These are my parents, Sid and Barbara. They've been dating for a couple of years."

Variations on a Theme #106/Rich L.

Ct. David and primaries vs. general elections. Am I remembering

correctly that Louisiana does not do party primaries but rather a free-for-all primary with runoffs as appropriate? I would much prefer that over the fol-de-rol that we must now endure for such an interminable period of time, i.e., the campaigning for 2016 started a year ago.

Thanks for the insight on Rodgers and Hammerstein's progressive messages. I had not picked up on that although I have seen quite a number of their creations. Nancy believes that *South Pacific* was banned or, at least, not shown in the Deep South because of the racial overtones. I remembering seeing it in a theater so I don't think such action was widespread. When I did a Google search, all I found was that it had been banned totally by the government of South Africa. No surprise there.

Yes, there has been a microbrewery revolution not only in Huntsville but all over Alabama the past few years. Huntsville now has about a half a dozen micros; Birmingham has four open and one doing contract brewing for its product. There are also others in Florence, Gadsden, Montgomery, Mobile, Tuscaloosa and Dothan. The Dothan company, Folklore Brewery and Meadery, is in the licensing product to open the first meadery in Alabama.

Meanwhile, the former brewer at a couple of places has opened the state's first distillery (legal one) in nearly a hundred years. It's been an amazing transformation.

bathwater/mike There has been a severe overreaction to Confederate symbolism since the Charleston murders. I, frankly, have viewed the flag with disdain for decades. I'm glad to see its presence diminished. I, also, have no problem with seeing Jefferson Davis's name removed from public structures. As for statues and the Stone Mountain images, I dunno. Are we possibly applying political correctness to art in that case? History is what it is, whether we like it or not.

Which brings me to the point the point of similar actions in sports. I thought it was ludicrous of the wins that Joe Paterno had at Penn State. You can't rewrite history, Big Brother. There are some situations where punishment must be paid forward, as it were. If a transgression is discovered before the next season begins, then I can accept a forfeiture of wins. If the next season has already begun, the punishment should only be paid forward. The institution has the prerogative of responding to the responsible individuals however it chooses.

Tyndallite V4 #182/Norm Ct. Dengrove and others on Heinlein's editing or lack thereof. I have noted several times, in these mailings and elsewhere, my view on that topic. In more than half a century of making a living at a keyboard, there is one eternal truth – every writer needs an editor, no exceptions. Our egos fight us over this, but it is true.

ROM/Tom There are ROMEO clubs in practical every city, even small towns like Montevallo. There has long been a group here that meets at McDonald's every morning. I have never been interested in participating. For one thing, I am not a morning person; they really wouldn't enjoy my company. Additionally, I still have a hard time realizing that I am old. When they announce the Prime Timers Club activities at church, I feel like they are talking about old people, not me. Of course, my body reminds me frequently that my brain is out of gear.

More to the point, you and Anita seem to have so many enjoyable and interesting activities in your daily live that you really don't need age-specific activities to keep you alert.

To Dance Beneath the Diamond Sky/mike I didn't see a credit, but it is a lovely cover. I think most hospitals are very concerned about surgery mistakes these days. I remember with Nancy's hip replacements and cataract surgeries, the physicians and attendants double-checked right or left several times, including the Sharpie or similar marking.

In the case of the Florida school teacher and the cell phone jamming device, why did the teacher not simply confiscate the phone and say, "You can have it back after class or at the end of the day"? Temporary confiscation was pretty common when I was in school. Still, I guess there was a certain satisfaction for the teacher in beating the kids with their own technology.

Musical discussions the past couple of mailings have made me realize that I have enjoyed a lot more musicals than I realized – although I am still consternated occasionally by shoppers suddenly breaking out into song. I had forgotten how much I love *The Rocky Horror picture Show*, for example.

Trivial Pursuits #180/Janice

I never attempted to keep a journal or a diary, per se. I realized later, though, that I had actually been doing that once I got into fandom and started putting out a fanzine. I mail out a dozen or so copies of Sporadic, four to former SFPANs, others to friends and family. I asked one of the daughters if she had an interest in the fanzine or if I was just helping clutter up her house? She said she appreciated getting it because often my recollections of things past provided information she didn't previously have about the family. I'm sure the MCs don't spark much interest to a non-member, but the overall product seems to accomplish exactly what you attempt with your zines.

I have addressed the Confederate flag issue above in comments to mike weber. To add a bit more to my feeling, I first developed an antipathy to that symbol around 1956 when University of Alabama students, rioting over the attempt of a black woman named Autherine Lucy to enroll at the school. A few short years later, as the civil rights movement unfolded, the flag became even more of a symbol of hatred and prejudice. So, Charleston was a not a factor for me, but I'm glad it provided a wider catalyst for change.

Nah, the beer swilling is not the charm of the Lasswell books; it's the charm and resilience of the characters. Well, I might not find them quite as charming if their beverage of choice was Dr. Pepper or MD-20 wine!

Ct. Jennings and the Unclaimed Baggage Center. I'm not sure how much of the stuff was lost and how much was simply abandoned – or unclaimed -- for whatever reason. For example, we saw a surf board that appeared to be about 10 feet long. It's hard to imagine something that big getting "lost." I've often wondered about previous owners of thrift store and antique items, particularly high school yearbooks. I've sold a few on eBay to people who had lost theirs in fires, floods, etc. But I wondered about the original owner. Why would you give up something so personal?

Ct. Sheila and school mascots. Where did you get the Delta State "Fighting Okra"? They have been the Statesmen as long I can remember.

Velociraptor-Free Workplace/Jeff

Robert Jennings, pay attention, quote alert here: (1) I'd really like to know why Scalia thinks expanding freedom is a threat to democracy. Or how Clarence Thomas doesn't understand that his own marriage to a white woman is legal because of a Supreme Court decision." (2) But, as I've observed before, Scalia must have gotten his law degree from a Cracker Jack box."

Instant grits have been around a long time. Also, instant oat meal, which used to be a breakfast staple for our younger daughters when I was pushed for time on school mornings. We haven't pushed much of that on Atticus yet, but he does love a doughy version such as frozen pancakes, waffles and French toast. Fortunately, he also likes bacon and eggs and fresh fruit so we can balance things out most of the time.

Fingertip Reality 93/Joe

I love the First Church of Polydeism sign. If Jesus Christ came to dinner at the White House, Fox News and the Republican Clown Car would be all over it as some kind of liberal conspiracy. Also, enjoyed seeing a photo of your Klingon friend, whom I've heard of a number of times but not yet met. My Lord, he does seriously look the part. Not much else to comment on as we have discussed some of these topics over lunch.

Uncle Lon's Unofficial Box Scores #112/Gary B. When I rejoined SFPA four years ago, I feared for my ability to meet minac requirements. I started writing down lists of natter topics to pad out the fanzine. Very few of those topics have been used. Filling the pages just falls naturally into place. I would never expected to maintain a position in the upper bracket.

Oblio No. 218/Gary B. Good luck with your home air conditioner. We live in some fear that our time is coming. Our house was built in 1958, and although the current unit doesn't date back quite that far, you can tell it has a least a couple of decades on it. We've been fortunate to have a friend in the HVAC business and he has saved us a couple of times when we thought the end had arrived. We do have the advantage of an attic fan as an alternative cooling source. Putting it in working order was one of the things I insisted on when the Realtor showed us the house. Obviously, it just pulls in hot air if it's 95 degrees, but it enables us to do without full-time AC two or three months during the season.

The cops hassling blacks had a sad spinoff in Madison, a town near Huntsville. A cop, responding to a phone call about a suspicious man in a neighborhood, encountered an Indian who spoke no English. He knocked the man to the ground with such violence that the victim is still partially paralyzed. We were absolutely appalled this week when a federal civil rights jury could not reach a verdict on this horrible travesty.

Regarding the Miami copy shooting the guy eight times...I do not know much about firearms, but are not weapons like Glocks made to shoot multiple times rapidly? If so, maybe it is difficult to squeeze off just one shot. I don't know enough about guns to say for sure.

Sorry you missed out on a no-hitter. I've never seen one (live) either, well not one I count. I saw the University of Montevallo win a five-inning no-hitter than was called by the mercy rule. The disparity in talent between the two teams was so great that I do not count that as a real no-hitter.

Ct. Janice, thanks for running the South Florida retailers that are now gone. I recognized a number of the names because the stores had far flung networks into Alabama.

Revenant #88/Sheila Congratulations on the choir's performance and your first New York visit. Despite all of the Didn't Get To items, you obviously had a wonderful trip. I enjoyed your enthusiastic recounting of the things you did get to see and do. I haven't been there in a number of years, but each of the trips was a fun outing. Nancy and I went on a walk from our hotel one time and stumbled into an ethnic neighborhood street fair. That's the kind of thing I can tell that you would enjoy, too.

Ct. Tom M. and religion changes. I as raised Southern Baptist, also, and abandoned it for pretty much the same reasons you did – the rigidity of doctrine and general push to the right. I remember that our church had a covenant which proclaimed not alcohol in any form. Well, my dad ran a neighborhood grocery store and beer was a staple for his customers. The pastor would sometimes come in the store, open the door to the beer cooler and then slam it. Daddy got his satisfaction a few years later when the preacher was run out of town for molesting a small boy. Can we spell hypocrite?

No, bypassing hamburgers and hot dogs for shrimp and smoke mullet on Good Friday was not a legitimate sacrifice. I used to give up peanuts, which I dearly love, for Lent. Since I got

Seriously Old I've been a little less attentive to the practice.

I.R.R.egular #10/Isaac

Congratulations on the bachelor's degree and the successful post-grad launch, especially getting a tuition free first round. Grandson No. 1, Sam Leach, had a similar experience The combination of a really good scholarship and the pre-paid tuition program that his other grandparents had given him have resulted in a basically free first year at the University of Alabama this fall. That's going to allow him to have the experience of living in a dormitory instead of at home. Whether it likes it or not, it will be a grand part of his college experience.

Okay, I'll forgo all thoughts of Tom Sawyer jokes about painting your grandmother's fence and focus on your more leisurely pursuits that week. I have not been to Mammoth Cave, but have been in several others. I'm pretty sure my claustrophobia would not permit me to do the lamplight tour. We helped herd Atticus's pre-K class to a nearby cave in the spring. When they turned out the lights prior to a laser light show, I had to break out my cell phone to expel a little of the darkness.

I'm glad the Corvette museum is open in Bowling Green. We've stopped at that exit many times, always promising we'll make time for a visit and eventually we will, I hope. The sinkhole was distressing news, but I guess it could have been a lot worse. We have sinkholes in this area, one of which dropped the front of the middle school several inches a few years ago.

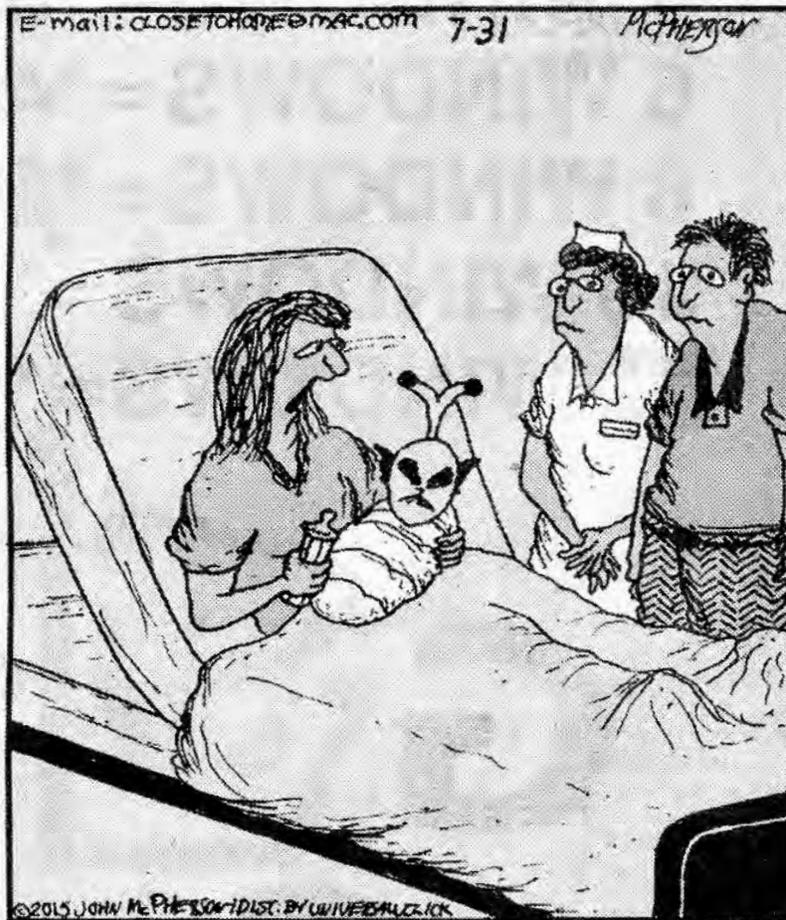
I have not yet seen *The Age of Ultron*. It has had pretty good reviews which is good because I thought *Winter Soldier* was awful. Perhaps, I'll seen the new one before your pitting of the heroes advances too far.

Tennessee Trash #126/Gary R.

What a terrific trip and with the usual beautiful Robe Experience photos to accompany the account. I understand your annoyance at Grant Teton not taking reservations. We've run into that at a couple of parks, and I still don't understand why they have such a policy. We've not done Yellowstone or Grand Teton, but we had a similar long outing (23 days) that included Denver, the Oregon Coast, Monterrey, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Hollywood and the Grand Canyon. It was fun but exhausting and, as you pointed out, the catch-up can be a nightmare when you return home after being away for so long.

CLOSE TO HOME

John McPherson



**"Maybe NOW you'll believe my story about
being sucked up into a spaceship that
weekend I drove across Utah to visit my mom."**