

A Blast from the Past # 4

or: The Days of Future Passed

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Today is June 9, 1998. A lot has happened since the last edition. I called Liz and Jeff May 30 to let them know I didn't have any pages; long strings have never been my strong point! With everything that has gone on, I just didn't have it in me to create. I guess you can say I've been in re-active mode, as opposed to pro-active, which I prefer. He reminded me of DSC, which I really have been wanting to go to. So I asked my family, and they all said sure, why not, let's go, and as it turns out, I have the weekend off.

Going to DSC after all those years is a pretty intimidating thought. I've changed, you've changed, new faces there, old faces gone. Chris is a big role-playing games and Magic fan, so he should have fun. Cathryn is a big Star Wars, Ann Rice, and Anne McCaffrey fan, so she'll have fun. Cassie just likes being with people, so she'll have fun. Kyle thinks sf fans are strange, so he'll probably go hang out at the airport.

I'd like to be able to come up with a few pages to take to Birmingham and send back with Liz. Getting the mailing yesterday was a huge incentive to make up for my deficit. So I grabbed the 202 mailing to try to throw together some mc's, so we'll see where this goes....

A brief run-down on the events of the last 2½ months since the unexpected demise of my ex-husband: March 20-23 my son Chris played Harold Hill in The Music Man, which was excellent. March 24, my husband Kyle took the kids went to their dad's house to move their belongings out (Chris lived with his dad before the accident), and Chris moved in with his best friend's family in Atlanta. April 10-14 Chris and I went to Los Angeles for USC Preview, a program to convince scholarship winners to attend USC.

(Chris is a National Merit scholar.) We went to both Hard Rock cafes (LA and Hollywood), and spent Easter Sunday at Universal studios. The last week in April I found out that the ex-stepmother (who had taken Chris' car away from him March 24) was calling USC to get "her" deposits back (fortunately the tuition deposit was non-refundable!). May 2, Chris was in A Midsummer Nights Dream at the school. May 7, I got my long hair cut off! May 10, Chris came to Aiken for Mother's Day. May 19, we drove to Atlanta for the fine arts banquet at Chris' school, and stayed May 20 for the choral performance that Chris was in. We drove back to Aiken (3 1/2 hours) late that night, and turned around and drove back to Atlanta for the academic awards ceremony 8:30 a.m. May 22. (You can imagine how exhausted I was at this point, driving back and forth to Atlanta....) Friday May 29, we drove to Atlanta yet again for Chris' graduation, driving back to Aiken late that night, so that I could work Saturday and Sunday. Cassia, now 7 months old, was a trooper throughout all this, an exemplary traveler. Chris drove to Aiken Monday June 1, and we celebrated his 18th birthday June 3. This week he's back in Atlanta with his girlfriend, and we'll pick him up Friday the 12th on the way to Birmingham and DSC.

Somewhere the last week in May we finally were served with the will, and found out the widow got everything (no surprise to me, albeit the kids were pretty disappointed). I've talked with an attorney, and chances of us successfully contesting this are very small. (We can only hope that he left her some massive debts....). Fortunately, I did have a life insurance policy that will get Chris through college, and Chris will be able to get his UGMA account that his dad was saving for college.

The preliminary NTSB reports only say that the engine failed, and the crash occurred during an attempted forced landing. No cause for the engine failure has been established, but statistically the most common reason in aviation is fuel exhaustion.....

On a brighter note, we have decided to take a family vacation, partly because the kids were supposed to go to Hawaii with their dad in June, to celebrate Chris' 18th birthday and graduation from high school. The kids requested a cruise, so we've signed up for the Carnival Destiny's Western Caribbean cruise July 12-19, leaving from Miami and stopping in Cozumel, Ocho Rios Jamaica, and Grand Cayman. I am so ready, I wish we were leaving now!

And now we proceed to:

MAILING COMMENTS ON SFPA 202

The Southerner, Liz Copeland--Sorry to see Moudry gone. Maybe we can recruit some new blood at DSC? I'm curious to see how many of us will be there...

The Marsh Creek Gazette, Steve Hughes--You must have some very evil squirrels living in Marsh Creek. Or are we to presume aliens have invaded? ... Interesting to read about working at home after reading your comments in SFPA 203; that didn't last very long, did it? Kyle has been working out of the house since he's been home with the baby; he has a webpage and he's been doing airworthiness directives research for general aviation aircraft. It seems to be really picking up recently.

Confessions of a Consistent Liar 65, Arthur Hlavaty--ct Richard Dengrove: I consider WP and Word for Windows pretty much interchangeable, but I don't know that much about the differences in them. I've been using WP 6.0a because the office had an extra one. What is the difference between the 2 programs? ... ct me: Why is it important to you that thinking and intuition are not opposed to each other? Some people are intuitive thinkers, and some are more concrete. I like to think that intuition is related to increased intelligence, and that it simply represents logical deduction occurring so fast that the intervening steps are not apparent. Also the faculty of making conclusions based on limited input (fuzzy logic) is a function of increased mentation. Like McCoy told Spock in ST4, "your guesses are better than most people's hard facts." ... What is Szazian? ... Are you saying you don't like Newt Gingrich? And yes I know he's Speaker of the House, and not Senator. Why do I keep slipping up on that?

This is Not a Minazine #85, Lynch--ct OE: interesting point about the sabbatical. As long as the waitlist is so short, it can't be any kind of incentive. I still have memories of being on the waitlist for a *long* time back in the 70's. Does anyone have any records back then of how long? Or how long I was in after I joined? I think I gave away my old SFPA's 10-15 years ago. ... ct. Janice: I'm glad it's not just me; I'll always remember Mandy Patinkin as Inigo Montoya! Of course, I never watched that show he was on, was it ER or Chicago Hope? I get enough of that stuff at work. The only medical show I've really enjoyed was St. Elsewhere; it appealed to the clinic in me, since I really liked House of God. ... Remind me not to drink any slivovitz! I have zero tolerance for EtOH now after a year and a half of teetotalling courtesy of pregnancy/lactating. I would be unconscious after half an ounce! ... Interestingly enough, I was looking through my rolodex from the early 80's, and your address was their in my ex's handwriting. Didn't you used to live in Chattanooga? I remember going to a Chattacon way back in the late 70's. Or is my memory playing tricks on me again?

Seasons #31, Binker Hughes--Have I even mentioned how much I love your covers? How do you do them? Where do you get the pictures? Of course, they do have the effect of making me feel ashamed of my own cover-less state.... I do have to get busy and start experimenting with the digital camera so I can come up with a cover! ... I also have enjoyed your raccoon stories. I admire your perseverance in trying to spare their lives. A true animal lover... I'm not sure I would have gone to quite that much trouble. ct.

Janice: I have a Buckaroo Banzai-inspired leather jacket, too, but it doesn't have the logo on it. It was a gift, and I've worn it quite a lot. It's leather, quite nice. ... ct. me: Thanks for the summary of the time I've missed! I keep forgetting to pass your greetings along to my siblings, but I'm sure I'll remember next time! Avery moved to Tucson last week, got an offer he couldn't resist. I'm not sure if he'll be making it back to Dragon Con or not.

It sounds like you're in an enviable state of peace and acceptance with your life. I like to think that mistakes are opportunities for personal growth, and personal disappointments are challenges to be solved on the road to self-improvement. But they sure are a pain in the neck when they happen.... Thanks for welcoming me back.

ct David Schlosser: I take the rational approach to emotions, i.e. anger is a secondary emotion, triggered by something that causes you discomfort, be that pain, fear, frustration. The key is to identifying the underlying trigger, and dealing with that, before the anger becomes too big to control... The problem is that anger left ignored does tend to fester and cause secondary problems, as you point out with the pressure-valve effect, exploding at something unrelated. For years, I didn't understand why I felt depressed, and it took additional years of work to work through layers of unresolved anger that I had been "stuffing" down inside. It takes energy to keep all that anger stuffed down, energy you can't use on more productive things, like maintaining a healthy relationship....

The New Port News 178, Ned Brooks--ct me: Kyle had this copied for me at Staples, and I forgot to specify double-sided. ... Thanks for the offer of the fanzine index; now I know where I can get it when I want it! I like your comparison of Windows to an idiot robot driver... does Bill Gates know this?... What size freezer bags do you use for SFPA? One gallon? I imagine the larger ones take 2 or more. ... Who got the money from the technology NASA developed (i.e. patents)?

Spider Pie #11, Steve Hughes--Such a beautiful cover. ... Interesting that you define dreams for the future in terms of technology. ... What kind of writing career will you be pursuing? Technical, I'm assuming. ... Looking forward to seeing you at DSC! ... The artwork by Wade Gilbreath brings back some memories. Wonder where he is now? ... ct Ned Brooks: if you get tired of road rage, come to Aiken; it doesn't exist here! Not enough traffic... ct Guy Lillian: It sure is hard to visualize Joe Celko as a family man. Is he married? What's this about adopting a kid? ... ct me: Thanks for catching me up to date. I've definitely seen the Nova signs; I obviously had no idea you helped to create it! I'm impressed. ... I used to live one block from Greene Street, which is one of the main drags in downtown Augusta, running parallel to Broad Street. They're renovating a lot of the old houses down there, and have christened it "Olde Town". ... I still haven't seen The Puppet Masters; we did rent Starship Troopers last weekend, and I saw it for the first time. It's been so long since I read the book, I can't compare it, but I enjoyed it. The kids thought it was too gory with all the chopped up people, and I'm glad I watched it on the small screen!

Uncle Lon's Unofficial Box Scores #8, Gary Brown--40 page average; I'm in awe.

Challenger 7, Guy Lillian--Beautiful cover. Enjoyed the story about the trial with Popeye. I had the best intentions of writing you a great comment. Next time....

The Jewel of the Senile, Harry Warner Jr.--Sorry to hear about your leaving, especially since I just rejoined! ... ct me: I've heard that before

about public libraries not wanting to accept donated books. A lady I know who is active in the local Kennel Club has copies of the AKC book on registered dog breeds, and is having trouble giving them away to the local libraries. ... I have not been good about saving money. Although from what you read recently, I probably will be working throughout my 60's, so I may have 30 years in me to keep saving money! Of course now I have another daughter to save for her wedding.... such fun thoughts. ... It's true that condoms aren't guaranteed to prevent the spread of human papilloma virus, but they do help decrease it substantially.

The Northern Californian Number 4, Robert Lichtman--Enjoyed your reminiscences of The Farm. ... Interesting comments

about nicknames. My son changed his name from Christopher to Chris in third grade, sigh. I think Christopher is such a beautiful name, but I guess it's not cool. It is pretty formal....

Derogatory Reference 88, Arthur Hlavaty--I still can't believe that basketball player that tried to throttle his coach. They should have tossed him out forever.

Spiritus Mundi 164, Guy Lillian--Interesting cover.... I still have not been brave enough to try to go to Mardi Gras. The seamier side of humanity

is too scary to me. ... One of the blondes looks like one of my sorority sisters; the one with the white shorts. Her name was Ingrid. Nah, couldn't be.... Well, I didn't make it to the ACOG meeting in New Orleans in May; you can see from my summary of my life that it would have been impossible! I still want to get out there when/if I get a vacation or opportunity for a conference. ... And I love seafood. Especially oysters. ... I haven't seen JFK, and I'm not a big Costner fan. I enjoyed Dances With Wolves, and Prince of Thieves was pretty cute. ... My mother used to say that society was a thin veneer over smoldering hatred. I wonder if she could've been classed as paranoid? I thought she was just depressed.

Armadillo Redux, Liz Copeland--Arrgh! More killer squirrels! How did they get to Boulder from Atlanta? They must have found that poll that says

Boulder is the best city in the U.S. to live in.... ... ct me: I certainly hope that times are better now. I think I'm healthier, relationship wise. I know I feel that my marriage with Kyle is equal, and that I can be open and trust him. ... Kyle ended up making the decision to get the Dodge Grand Caravan. Interestingly enough, it's not recommended by consumer reports, since the price differential compared to the Caravan is not made up for by what you get, but Kyle got a pretty good deal on it. I like the sliding doors on both sides; makes it much more accessible. ... I do need to get the encyclopedia on CD-ROM. Maybe Christmas... ... Yes, the "penis at twelve" is an example of genetic drift. And thanks for the invite to join! Bold move on the part of the OE!

Pie in the Face, Jeff Copeland--And thanks to you for nagging me about DSC. If all goes right, you will be seeing me there! ... I like the way you quote the line you're commenting on; sometimes it makes a lot more sense.

Maybe I'll start doing that, too, if I can get over fear of copying you! ... ct Richard Dengrove: thanks for defending honesty and decency. I think more people should take their wedding vows seriously. ct me: my brother and sister went to Georgia Tech, and I'm not sure of the ratio of men to women in the mid-70's, but I think it was about 10 to 1! ... I'm afraid I'm not creative enough to come up with one title, much less a new one every mailing! ... Don't people get really indignant when subjected to a bad doctor? Too bad the same standard isn't applied to all forms of public service. Like how many times have you blown off getting the wrong thing at a drive-through window? ... Yes, it definitely sounds like you're an introvert. ... Yes, the stats for men have stayed relatively constant, interesting enough.

Offline Reader, Irvin Koch--ct Guy Lillian: you answered my question about whether Celko is married. Out of curiosity, who is she, and what's she like? A non-fan, I take it. ...ct me: why is it so amusing about not looking much older than Cathryn? And about Sydney: as you may have guessed, she is not your stereotypical Jehovah's Witness. Mellow, no, Sydney has never been mellow. ... Maybe I will come up with a list of SF I'd like to get rid of. If Kyle hasn't already done it; he doesn't like to have unopened boxes lying around year after year, can't figure out why not.... You misunderstood, I think, I was trying to give advice to Guy Lillian about computers, just using mike weber's comment as a springboard into the whole topic, you know, kind of like one computer illiterate talking to another. I have no illusions of being an expert, just the theory that the more power you have, the more fancy software you can run, and the more user-friendly these monsters can be (although the downside is there's more to go wrong, too....). Yes, we want to sell the horse and get a better one. Know anyone that wants a registered Quarter Horse?

Twydrasil and Treehouse Gazette #50, Richard Dengrove--ct me: How was the Bush administration cutting benefits to breastfeeding mothers? Was that a WIC thing, or do you mean if someone was nursing, they would get fewer food stamps? ... Thanks for the complements on Cathryn's webpage. I'll pass them along. ...

Peter, Pan & Merry #16, David Schlosser--ct me: geography never has been my strong point. Oklahoma City was almost exactly 1000 miles from Atlanta, and so I'm sure you're right, that El Paso is closer to 2,000 miles. Of course, LA is probably closer to 3,000. Sigh, my son is going to be a long way away. Breastfed babies eat more often than bottlefed babies when they're newborns; they say that breastmilk is more easily digestible, so they're hungrey sooner, as opposed to formula, which is more difficult to digest, and thus the baby feels full longer. I hope you know what free medical advice is worth? (What you paid for it, of course...) I'd never thought about it that way, even though I've frequently wondered why people are willing to wait in such long lines at theme parks; but I guess the lines must be entertaining, or no one would be willing to do it. Universal studios has the best lines in terms of keeping you entertained; especially Back to the Future. ,, I haven't read Zelazny's Amber series in a long time, but it's one of my favorites. I actually named one of my "children" after a character in the series, too; not a human child, but my prize dog. I used to breed championship Weimaraners, and the pick of the litter I named "Lyonesse Prince Corwin (of) Amber", and his sister was "Lyonesse Lady Fiona of Amber". They both went on to become champions, and I still have

Corey, who is now 11 years old. I don't breed them anymore, the kennel was a casualty of my first marriage. ... I'm starting to feel a little less pessimistic about collecting any social security. I've heard they're trying to save money by making the retirement age older, since practically speaking, the life expectancy is older anyway! Makes sense...

The Lawyer at Tenth Court #1, Meade Frierson--Actually, Kyle and I have been seriously talking about estate planning and wills, especially in light of what we've been going through with my ex's demise. Do you do South Carolina and how much do you charge? ... Your home maintenance plan sounds a lot like Avery; he's in the process of trying to sell his house, too. Surely there are people out there wanting a "fixer-upper"? Moving can be so traumatic. ..

Trivial Pursuits #76, Janice Gelb-- I think you've made the point of the Clinton "scandal"; it's just to distract us from the real issues. ... But I know nothing about politics, so that's just a guess ... Mmmm, Legal Seafood. Boston is such a neat town. ct me: When you're talking about Princess Diana wanting a divorce, my point is that there's a huge difference between divorcing Joe Blow off the street and divorcing the future King of England. I'm not British, but I think when she married Prince Charles, she should have realized that she was marrying a dynasty, not a man, that she was in essence taking on the job of a royal, not your run-of-the-mill wife. She knew about Camilla when she married him, but she was too young and unsophisticated to realize that he was never going to drop her. But Diana was the royal consort, and historically, those women don't have loving, committed, normal marriages. ... It just fascinates me to think of the Internet being cluttered with old webpages of people no longer among us. I think I remember John Whatley, and if I'm right, he was pretty obnoxious, and nobody liked him. I'll have to ask Avery; he's still in Myriad.

Afterburner #10, Binker Hughes--Interesting questions about Hubble's law.
Your basement-clearing adventures give me more resolve to end my packrat days.

The Sphere Vol. 173 no. 1, Don Markstein--If you know Avery, he'll be fairly close to you, in Tuscon. I don't know where in Tuscon, yet.
ct me: I'm still trying to think of a name for my zine, that's why it's still A Blast from the Past. I am trying out the subtitle, Days of Future Passed, for lack of anything better. Any suggestions? I'm really floundering, here, and I'm not sure why. I've never had trouble naming an apazine before.... Of course, when I was in this position before, I was young and idealistic, and philosophical ideas came easily to me. Now, at age 40 (41 by the time you read this, being that my birthday is July 22), my brain doesn't seem to be as creative and grandiose. Or maybe it's the hormones? I was at a lecture a few weeks ago, in which the lecturer presented evidence that women given male hormones develop better spatial perception and problem-solving abilities. They also have stronger bones and increased libido, which is the real reason why they were given male hormones in the first place, in case you were wondering. ...

As to how old is old enough to be cynical: I guess I'm saying that cynicism is a waste of time and energy at any age. I don't remember what senseless destructive act you're referring to, but human nature in general is that you don't perform any act unless there is some kind of reward, so to answer

your question, no, it's not cynical "to respond to the question of why someone commits an apparently senseless destructive act, with a description of the benefit they get from it". ... You're giving a chicken-versus-the-egg argument: are unbalanced individuals the cause of our sick society, or the result of it? My point is that individuals should be required to take more responsibility for themselves, and not be allowed to sue someone for every stupid little thing that goes wrong. And yes, I think laws should be passed to that effect. For instance, if you lose a frivolous lawsuit, why shouldn't you have to pay all the court costs and legal fees of the winner? And why should Piper have to pay a product liability suit for someone crashing a plane that has been flown thousands of hours since 1940? Don't you think that if it was a defective product, someone would have noticed 50 years ago? ... Thanks for the insight on the Bridgets.

Souf'paw Number Six, Richard Brandt--You know, we could use a few more Richards around here. I still have the t-shirts for those Amigocons; that would be 1988 and 1989? One was in an Embassy suites, and the other was in a Holiday Inn type place. Possibly 1987, but I don't think so. Wasn't Kelly Freas at one of them? I do remember Jennifer Roberson at one, and Ingrid Neilsen, I bought several of her prints. My sister Sydney was living with me at the time, and she went along with me. She was Sydney Riley then, now Sydney Davis (she took back her maiden name).

Tennessee Trash #32, Gary Robe--Thanks for the welcome. ... The baby is 7 months old now, and sleeping while I type. She's such a good baby. ... That's a cute breastfeeding story. One of my patients recently had to wean her newborn, because the older child was so jealous, she couldn't get any peace while trying to nurse. ... You get the best view of South America, with locals to take you around. Most tourists wouldn't be so lucky.

Guilty Pleasures, Eve Ackerman--Actually, having a baby now is fantastic. I feel like I'm enjoying her so much more than I did the other two when they were babies. Then, I was so worried and tense. Plus, my ex was not nearly as supportive as Kyle has been.

Tyndallite Vol. 2, Number 76, Norm Metcalf--You're right, it is an exaggeration to say that Heinlein was always sexist; some of his female characters were not bimboes.

Obio no. 115, Gary Brown--Thanks for the words of encouragement. Loved The Lower case.

This is "I Messed Up..." , mike weber--Hope to see you at DSC....

SFPazine March 1998, G.H. Wells--No hooks, sorry....

Yngvi is a Louse, T.K.F.Weisskopf--Hope to see you at DSC, too. Unfortunately, it's late and I need to wrap this up. I guess next time I'll start at the end!