

All The Mailing
Comments That
Fit In Print


All the Mailing Comments That Fit in Print is the fifty-eighth SFPA-zine (volume two, number thirty-five) from Jeffrey Copeland. It is intended for mailing number 228 of the Southern Fandom Press Alliance and selected others. It is published by Bywater Press, 3243 165th Ave, SE, Bellevue, Washington 98008. The text of *All the Mailing Comments That Fit in Print* was composed using the T_EX typesetting system, and is set in 11-point Palatino. The original of this publication was printed on 24 July 2002 and it was reproduced by the Xerographic process.




No real natter this time, since I wanted to spend the effort on mailing comments. I'll summarize by saying that Liz spent an extra week in Indianapolis after her stepfather Bill died. She was away on my birthday as a result, but we treated ourselves to a long weekend in Victoria, British Columbia, without the kids when she got back. Saw some members of the resident L-pod of Orcas up close while we were there. Liz's mom, Barb, is coming to spend a couple of weeks in July, and we'll take a jaunt down to Portland to see the traveling show of September 11th quilts, America From the Heart.

Let's jump in:

Reviews

 *Spiderman* was the first summer blockbuster we saw. It very nicely captures the mood of the comic-book character I know and love. Good special effects — including excellent web slinging shots. While I'm not sure Kirsten Dunst is the great actress she's being flogged as, she does make an acceptable Mary Jane. Tobey Maguire, on the other hand, will never be William Shatner, but he's got this character nicely nailed.

 We will stipulate at the outset that Nicole Kidman has the best ass in movies since Bridgette Bardot, and we will further stipulate that any movie which opens with a shot of that posterior might be interesting. However, such stipulation does not allow us to dismiss the charge that *Eyes Wide Shut* is actually little more than "Barry Lyndon Goes to an Orgy". While every shot in the movie is absolutely, stunningly beautiful, Stanley Kubrick's last movie is flawed by being paced like a snail, having Tom Cruise on the screen more often than Kidman, and being so obsessed with the actual act of coitus, that as nearly as I can tell, none of the main characters actually experience it.

Roughly, Cruise's character, a frighteningly successful New York physician, who continually brandishes his medical license like Joe Friday does his badge, becomes obsessed with the belief that everyone is getting more sex than he is after hearing his wife describe a fantasy she had about another guest at their vacation hotel the previous summer. Mind you, this is despite the clear attraction that his wife has for him, and the clearly fulfilling sexual relationship they have. Like he did in the champion crummy movie of all time, *Magnolia*, Cruise once again plays a character whose motivations are so unclear that we have no sympathy for him at all. Could Cruise act, this might not be the case, but alas, he can't and we don't. He spends two days seeking out sexual adventures, managing to never be more than a spectator — even though he manages to sneak into a masked-ball orgy, which gave

the censors fits — and then has to confess his nocturnal explorations to his wife. It turns out that once he's confessed all, his wife is willing to move on. In this, as in every moment she's on-screen, Kidman is believable as the loving, caring, forgiving spouse. It's too bad Cruise isn't.

While I understand Kubrick's need to have an attractive, married couple in the lead roles in this movie — there is a certain marital intimacy on the screen that could not be achieved by people who had not intimate off-screen for years — perhaps if Kidman had played the spouse attempting to stray, the whole movie would have been more believable.

An orgy looks particularly alluring seen through the mists of righteous indignation.
— Malcolm Muggeridge, 1966


🐼 Isador Rabi observed after the Almagordo test, "It did bring home to one how terrible this thing was that treated humans as matter." That thought was the only one in my mind as we left the theater after *The Sum of All Fears*, which for me is this summer's first scary movie.


If you've read Tom Clancy's novel, the main plot points will be familiar, even if everything else has been more-than-a-little jiggered for the screen. Terrorists — in this case neo-Nazis — obtain a nuclear weapon, set it off in a football stadium during a game, and then let the mutual suspicion between the US and Russia take its course. Our hero Jack Ryan manages to convince everyone to calm down and thus prevents total nuclear annihilation.

The sequence of the explosion and its immediate aftermath — including what must be a two-minute soundless sequence of Ryan in a helicopter — are frighteningly effective. The scenes of the aftermath of the nuclear explosion and the destruction it leaves are simply chilling, and appear reasonably accurate.

And now that we've got Ben Affleck playing Jack Ryan, we can replace the "which Bond is best" debate with a "which Jack Ryan is best" one.

🐼 *The Bourne Identity* is a pleasant enough piece of summer fluff, with the best car chase I've seen since *Bullitt* — qouth the hero, "uh, there's a little bump coming up." Things don't blow up, but lots of bullets fly; we don't have a plot where the fate of the world hangs in the balance, but the lives of some characters do. We get Matt Damon playing the amnesiac Jason Bourne, Franke Potente (Lola from *Run, Lola, Run*) as the love interest, and some nice supporting work by folks like Julia Stiles (*Ten Things I Hate About You*, O) and Chris Cooper (*American Beauty*). (OK, Stiles could have phoned her part in, it was so two-dimensional, but she's fun to watch work, and doing something like this for real money allows her to do interesting art movies.) Nicely done spy thriller.

 Last year's contribution to Orson Scott Card's *Ender* franchise was *Shadow of the Hegemon*, in which we see what happens to Bean once he returns to Earth after the Bugger, er, Formic War. Card does some fascinating extrapolations of Earth's political life, centering on the rise of the Russian Federation, the long-view gamesmanship of China, and the perfidity of some south Asian countries. Frankly, even though Bean's adventures were interesting, the political speculation were even more-so. A good read, and I await the next book in the series, *Shadow Puppets* with bated breath.


 I've now read the easily obtainable four of the five nominated Hugo short stories. In reverse order of quality, I can say:

- Stephen Baxter wants to be Olaf Stapleton, even though the job is already taken, and so he keeps writing these huge galactic space opera things, that are often as competent as the worst examples of early pulp penny-a-word stories. His example this year is **"The Ghost Pit"**. Perhaps I am missing something since he keeps getting nominated.


- Michael Burstein, on the other hand, who wrote a killer story last year in the form of "Kaddish for the Last Survivor", has turned in an imitation Stephen Baxter entitled **"Spaceships"**. Though, to its credit, it's actually better writing than Baxter's.

- Mike Resnick provides the only "wow! how'd he do that!" with his spectacular **"Old MacDonald Had a Farm"**. In less than 6000 words, Resnick comments usefully on the philosophical relationships between language and sentience, and between morality and feeding the planet. Why, pray tell, do we need fake sawunder from Baxter when Resnick provides wonderful near-future challenges for humanity with the ease of plucking petals off a rose? (I am obligated to observe that both Liz and Allie have excoriated me for my praise of this story: both had serious suspension-of-disbelief problems with it.)

- Michael Swanwick (whose shorter, punchier "Ancient Engines" should have won two years ago, rather than his "Scherzo with Tyrannosaur") provides the smashing good adventure tale of a swashbuckling, genetically-modified canine visiting a post-apocalyptic London in **"The Dog Said Bow-Wow"**. To describe it further would be to tell too much, I think.


 Robert Altman's ensemble movie of last year, *Gosford Park*, is a spectacularly-researched period piece. It has a small plot, lots of characters, and lots of character. However, the story is fleeting and insufficient to carry us through the spectacular setting merely for the social commentary, which was covered just as well twenty years ago by the BBC in *Upstairs, Downstairs*. Nonetheless, in this vacuum, there are some very nice performances, such as Maggie Smith and Michael

Gambon upstairs, Kelly Macdonald and Helen Mirren downstairs, with Stephen Fry as a completely bumbling police inspector, (saying things like “No, I don’t need to talk to the staff. I want to talk to people who knew him intimately.”)

 Stephen King sat down a couple of years ago and wrote a very long essay on the craft of writing, called (oddly enough) *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*. I would not normally have read it, since I find King’s fiction uninteresting. However, it was recommended to me by my sometime writing partner, Jeff Haemer, who drew some interesting parallels between writing code and writing prose. However, one of the things that struck me is the similarity between King and cartoonist R Crumb: just as Crumb can’t *not* draw — he constantly carries a notebook and a Rapidograph pen with him — King can’t *not* write. After his nearly fatal encounter with a van on a back road in Maine a couple of years ago, he was literally aching to get back to the keyboard. Having read this, though, I’m now encouraged to again try some of King’s fiction.

NASA has two remarkable records: first, a space program far more successful than anyone had dared hope; and, second, the most incredibly bumbling, stupid, inept public relations of any government agency.


— Robert A Heinlein, in *Expanded Universe*, 1979


 Scattered around the buildings in which I work at Microsoft are banners commemorating various products — “Internet Explorer 5.5 / June 20th, 2001,” says one I walk under on the way up the stairs to my office every morning — each signed by the participants. At about the mid-point of the new IMAX movie, *Space Station 3D*, we see a similar banner saying something like “We’re behind you, STS-100 crew of Discovery”, and if you look closely, you can see that there are hundreds of signatures on it. And I realized, once again, that goddammit, and no kidding, sometimes it really *is* rocket science.

This could have been the best propaganda movie of the summer: “Look folks,” it could have said, “there’s a reason we’re doing this. We need to understand what makes our little blue-green marble tick if we’re going to keep from melting the ice caps and boiling off the oxygen. We need to be able to take some of our industrial base off the planet, and mine the asteroids, and figure out how to feed twelve billion of you. Because if we don’t, you’re all doomed.” But instead, it descends to Tom Cruise (again?! crap!) narrating a script consisting of essentially “hey: look at the pretty pictures,” with only the briefest press-release-language about “understanding the importance of our planet’s ecosystems.”

To be sure, the pictures are very pretty. And anyone who begins to understand the engineering challenges of what we, as a species, are trying to do 250 miles

above our heads will be impressed. But, go to see it for the pictures, and don't be disappointed by the lack of understanding on the part of NASA that they have to sell their adventures, too.

 Even though *Men in Black II* did nothing to advance the story line, nothing to show growth in the characters, and nothing different from the original *Men in Black*, it's got Lara Flynn Boyle playing the bad girl with lines like, "Silly little planet: anyone could take over the place with the right set of mammary glands," and it meets JJ's criteria for a summer movie: It's got aliens and things blow up. I think that's all the needs to be said.

 The Hugo Novelette nominees are somewhat better than the short story contenders:

- I thought I'd dodged the bullet after last year's "Too Many Boring Letters", and that Ted Chiang's "**Hell is the Absence of God**" was going to be unavailable on the web. Unfortunately, it appeared on Fictionwise while I was in the middle of reading the other novelette nominees. Chiang constructs a universe in which divine miracles manifest themselves such that they are equally likely to do something wonderful for you and destroy your life. There is no correlation between your devotion to God and the outcome of your witnessing a miracle. In other words, Chiang's version of God is a capricious asshole, and then you die.


- I'll save you the time to read 11513 words: In "**The Days Between**" by Allen Steele, the protagonist is accidentally woken up too early from hibernation on an interstellar voyage. He's relegated to spending the rest of his life alone on the ship as it steers itself to its destination. He does and then dies. The end.


- In "**Undone**", James Patrick Kelly gives us time travel with multiple time-lines, genetic modification at-will, and an interstellar battle between philosophical opposites. Yawn.

- "**Lobsters**", by Charles Stross is a fairly funny cyberpunk story. Our continuing hero goes to Amsterdam, uplinks, has a beer, has a phone call from an AI in Moscow who wants to defect, and then it gets wierd. I mean, what can you say about a story with the line, "Europe has achieved peaceful political union for the first time ever: they're using this unprecedented state of affairs to harmonize the curvature of bananas." In view of the discussion we've been having the last couple of mailings about the Open Source Software movement, this story is particularly fascinating.

- Shane Tourtellotte's "**The Return of Spring**" is a vast improvement over his attempted space opera. It's a simple human drama about a man cured of Alzheimer's returning home, and the problems he faces reintegrating into his former life. Like Steele's story, it pretty much hinges on one character. Unlike Steele's story, we actually care about him, and that makes all the difference.

(I was in a real quandry about which of these two stories to rank first. This is Stross' first nomination, and everything of his I've read — like everything of Kristine Kathryn Rusch's — makes me say "oh, boy! where can I get some more of this?" On the other hand, Tourtellotte's story is a human drama rather than amusing cyberpunk. Both stories are good, but for vastly different reasons.)

 **Go To** by *New York Times* technology correspondent Steve Lohr, is subtitled "The story of the math majors, bridge players, engineers, chess wizards, maverick scientits and iconoclasts – the programmers who created the software revolution," and is the history of computers as told through interviews with the folks who did some of the interesting work. (Thus it parallels *Out of Their Minds*, a book of short bios of computer scientists, which I reviewed here some time ago.) For example, he tells about Unix by interviewing Ken Thompson and Dennis Ritchie. And talks about the invention of high-level languages by talking to the original FORTRAN and COBOL implementors who are still alive. On the other hand, rather than talk to Fred Brooks about IBM's OS/360 project, he talks to Watts Humphrey, who epitomizes the worst kind of "suit" in the computer industry. There are innumerable copy-editing and continuity goofs here, which makes me wonder if anyone made an editing pass over the whole book. Worse, if Lohr is the *Times's* technology correspondent, they're in serious trouble: he makes some egregious errors that he never would have made if he was really conversant with the technology of the computer era. For example, "...a 10-fold increase each in memory and processing speed combined to deliver a 100-fold improvement in systems performance..." Or even better, when he can't differentiate hardware and software as in: "[C++'s] flexibility made it useful in many different machines, often in hostile environments, which is why it was used by the Australian national lottery in its betting machines, many of them in the sun-baked outback."

 As I mentioned in my single paragraph of natter, we went to Portland to see the traveling exhibit of "**America From the Heart: Quilters Remember September 11, 2001**". I've seen the catalog of this show — since Liz has a quilt in it, it's sitting on our coffee table — but the photographs in the catalog don't capture the intensity of seeing all the quilts together on a single wall, four hundred feet long. The catalog couldn't cause Allie to burst into tears and say, "no, I can't look at these." The catalog couldn't capture quilts that were pure texture, like "Evil Lurks in the Shadows," which is various shades and finishes of black with a slash of red in the middle. Even though the catalog could capture the words in D L Folz's artist's statement, "I couldn't *not* make this quilt," it couldn't substitute for reading the memory book at the end of the wall.

Many of the quilts that were simply flag variations from the original show have

been elided from the traveling subset. For me, this made the show tighter, with a clearer emotional impact.

Oddly enough, because “Where’s My Mommy?” is grays rather than bright colors, and because the ghostly images of the towers and the mother are subtle, Liz’s quilt is not nearly as striking as some of the other quilts in the collection of a hundred-odd. Nonetheless, it is compositionally one of the better of the bunch.

The quilts that stood out for me were:

- “Evil Lurks in the Shadows,” which as I mentioned before doesn’t show up well in the catalog;
- “But the Door Never Opened,” which covers the same emotional territory as “Where’s My Mommy?”;
- “A Passing Shadow,” which is a story quilt by a woman who lives up the hill from the Pentagon, and includes a frame of an airplane casting a shadow on her house;
- “One Life Lost – 6000 Times,” is technically just amazing: it is multiple overlays, with the top gauze layer being a transfer of the ranks of photos from various obit pages.

❖ I don’t have time to finish reading them before finishing this zine, so I’ll review the Hugo Novella nominees next time. You won’t be able to read the reviews before the voting deadline anyway. Not that my opinions carry any weight. . .

Mailing Comments on SFPA 226

Beginning by reproducing my closing paragraph from last time. . .

Arthur Hlavaty ✉ *Confessions of a Consistent Liar* ♣

“ct me: No, I do not remember the ‘Ode to Velveeta.’ Care to refresh my memory?” Mercifully, I don’t remember the text either, but Chris regularly gets a copy of this zine, so he may be able to supply it. **Mr Kostanick, over to you.**

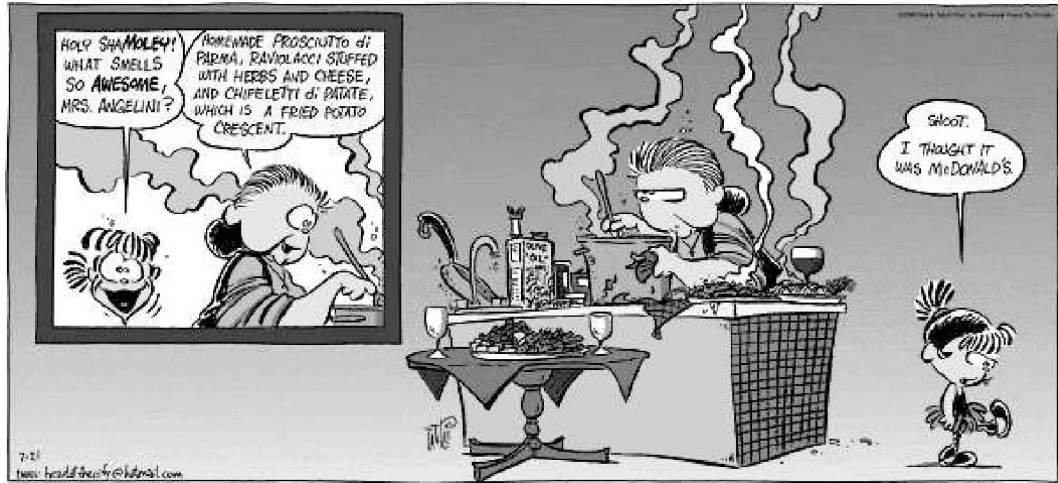
When he got the zine, Chris sent me e-mail:

That ran in an early zine of mine in LASFAPA. Unfortunately I deep six’ed all the APAs in a cleaning fit years ago.

Schlosser probably has all the LASFAPAs, so he might be willing to dig it out. It would have been in my zine in late 1984 or 1985.

A few stanzas from memory:

On toasted bread you turn to goo
and in my veins you form a glue
Oh plastic cheese, I thee salute
you do not need to make me poot



Ned Brooks ☒ *The New Port News* ♣ Yow! This yellow of yours next to Arthur's Astrobrite Orange is a little shocking.

ct OO: "Thanks for the Bartland's Unfamiliar Quotations Pt.2 — you did send the first part, though it says Commonplace Book on the cover." That's by design. Each volume has a different title. So far we've seen "Commonplace Book," "Bartland's Unfamiliar Quotations," and "Fractured Fairy Tales." Though how the last relates to the first two, I'm unsure. You'll notice each mentions an "alternate title" in the colophon, which turns out to be the title of the next volume.

ct Hlavaty: "I doubt it would have been possible to keep all the newspapers that were microfilmed. I have seen old newsprint - it's dark and brittle. But apparently some 19th-century periodicals from before the invention of pulp paper were discarded as well." Nicholson Baker's contention is that properly stored, old pulp newsprint can be kept indefinitely. Except that as nearly as I can tell that apparently means stacked carefully on shelves, in a temperature-controlled environment, with no one actually touching them. What apparently is pissing him off is that the conversion to microfilm was sloppy (and monochromatic) in a lot of cases, and now the original material is mostly gone. Except that the solution should be obvious: if he's got samples to check against, and the copies are lacking, make new copies.

ct Dengrove: "I disliked the Hildebrandt art from the start - not only is it garish, it's wooden. I am not artistical enough to say why..." Allie thought the Hildebrands in her Mother Goose were overly goopy when she was little.

ct Markstein: "In the partially comic-strip magazine El Peneca that I saw in Chile in the late

1940s there was... The only other strips I remember from that magazine are one with some kids who had a vehicle that was variously a car, plane, boat, submarine, very skiffy..." Aha! This is fascinating: Robert Rodriguez says that the combination car/plane/boat/submarine he invented for *Spy Kids* was something he originally sketched when he was about ten years old, which would have been in the late '70s.

ct Gelb: "If a terrorist is to be defined as someone targeting civilians, you would have to include most of the world's governments!" I'm of mixed minds here. In general, I'd suggest that a terrorist *intentionally* targets civilians. Which makes the folks who bombed Dresden and Coventry and London and Tokyo and Hiroshima during the second world war terrorists.

ct me: "Did I send you the extra copy of Revelation XXIII? I guess not — there are still two of them there. I will put it in with this NPN." Yes, I've gotten it now. It's sitting on the shelf with my file copies of the other quotes.

☞ "Speaking of Trinlay Khadro's nonac, all I have seen lately was one post on one of the SF Net lists where she was offering some posters for sale." I've had a fair amount of e-mail with Trinlay since she dropped out. It was sheer life that forced her to drop out. I've been sending her my zines anyway. She had some extensive comments about my Asian trip report, and started up a correspondence with Satoshi Sakamori, one of my Japanese colleagues whose personal web site was mentioned in that report, and has sent a long LoC on my last zine.

Guy Lillian ☒ The Patriotic Route ♣

"Alzheimer's is a slow goodbye, and Christmas Day was one part of it. If — I should probably say 'when' — it happens to me, I hope I have as nice a place to live. If — I should say when — it happens to me, somebody send me pralines." I've had a chat with my doc, and there's an addendum with our wills codifying it: it essentially says "no heroic measures." So, by the same token, if it happens to me, I hope somebody brings me pralines — laced with an overdose of barbiturates. I've spent forty-five years living from the neck up. Middle age is beginning to graphically show me the failings of the human body as an engineering project, but as long as my brain is still working, I have no interest in giving up life. Once I stop being able to reason, there's just no fucking point. ~~I guess that means you should shoot me if I ever vote for a Republican.~~

"By the time we got to Times Square it was full-on dark — night comes quickly in the far, far north." No, in the far, far north it comes *early* in winter — Sunset in Buffalo is at about a quarter to five on December 21st. At the equator, it comes *quickly* — on December 21st in Sri Lanka the time from sunset to civil twilight is about twenty minutes, as opposed to thirty-five in Buffalo.

In your description of Times Square, you talk about the posters: "Britney Spears — side bet: Playboy spread within two years — beamed above us, ten stories tall." One of the

scary things we saw on our trip to Las Vegas last fall was a twenty-story-tall Britney Spears on the side of the MGM Grand. She was pictured wearing an Elvis-style sequined jumpsuit. As for your sucker bet: I'll up the ante: she'll show off her silicone-enhanced bust, but there will be no hint of pubic hair. (And if we're both wrong about her doing it willingly (probably to revive a flagging career) *Playboy* will publish pictures taken by an ex-boyfriend within ten years.)

"We drove up the West Side. ... There the Natural History Museum, site of my coolest moment, ever." Why? How?

Richard Dengrove ✉ *Twygdrasil and Treehouse Gazette* ✉

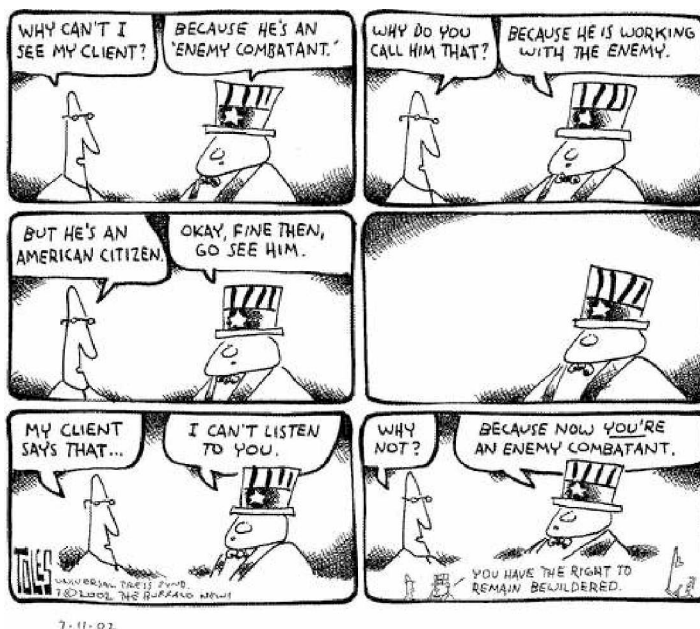
"Also, my friend told us about how the Arimington Parish people didn't believe the Jesuits were Catholic." Yes, that makes sense: Jesuits are liberal, thinking Catholics, which some regard as an oxymoron. Objections to the characters in *Keeping the Faith* aside, given their actions and flexibility, the priests played by Edward Norton and Milos Foreman in that movie have almost got to be Jesuits. (It's been a lapsed Catholic long enough that I've forgotten how to tell which order a priest is from the subtleties of his uniform, but they're certainly not Franciscans, who are remarkably distinctive.)

"Another subject that night was the Knights of Columbus. My friend's boy friend belongs to them. And gave a short description. It sounds very much like the Masons; only the Catholic Church is heavily involved." That's because, in principle, you can't be a Catholic and a Mason, though that's been honored in the breach since about Pius XII. One of the conspiracy theories surrounding the death of Pope John-Paul I postulates that he was murdered because he was going to start enforcing the rules again, and the Vatican bank was so tangled up with the Masons that that couldn't be allowed to happen.

ct OO: "I hope the reason Trinlay dropped out wasn't finances. Better it should be overextending herself." See my comments above to Ned on this.

ct Brooks: "It looks like Blaine's porn was higher class porn. For some reason, there was a lot of that in the '20s and '30s. After the '60s, all porn decided to crawl around in the mud. No more quarto leatherbound editions. No more classical illusions." Classical illusions, or classical allusions? Of course, now that pornography is free on the net, we don't even get classical allusions, and *Penthouse* magazine can't support itself anymore. There's even a web site at MIT that consists mostly of pointers to sites that get censored. I think it's a real important public service for MIT to tell me what sites to avoid. To make sure you know what web sites are on the proscribed list, check out <http://www.mit.edu:8001/activities/safe/notsee.html>.

☞ "You're right. People can shoot off cannons seriously as part of the 1812 Overture. There are parts that seem almost to call for a cannon." Actually, the score has parts for artillery. Rich



Lynch probably has more details off the top of his head.

☞ “Maybe carbon dioxide from global warming could be stored at the South Pole in enormous kegs of beer. ... Right!!!!” I’m amused that after abrogating the Kyoto Treaty, our only president has finally admitted that perhaps global warming is a problem, but claims that it’s too late to do anything about it. Perhaps “amused” isn’t the right word.

☞ “The loophole in the Constitution is that foreigners have been granted no rights. The hell with a tribunal! You can jail aliens without a trial. I am sure it’s legal. I am also sure it’s completely against what America stands for.” Well, if jailing aliens without a trial is against what America stands for, how do you feel about throwing American citizen Abdullah Al Mujahir (né Jose Padilla) in jail on suspicion of being in a conspiracy to build a “dirty bomb?” And then holding him there incommunicado for a month and not letting him talk to a lawyer. (Notice the Catch 22: he can’t communicate with anyone on the outside, so he can’t say that he wants a lawyer. If anyone tries to hire one for him, they’re told they don’t have standing since he hasn’t asked for a lawyer.) Apparently, the irony of John Ashcroft announcing this *from Moscow* four weeks after the arrest *after* he’d been transferred to military custody was missed by the press. Perhaps a lawyer in the audience will correct me, but to arrest someone on conspiracy, don’t you need at least two people and one overt act?

Meanwhile, the non-citizen, Zacarias Moussaoui, the twentieth hijacker, is in the midst of a joke of a civilian trial in Virginia, in which he keeps making long

statements to the judge about his desire for the destruction of the United States.*
Can I be confused, please?

The worst government is the most moral. One composed of cynics is often very tolerant and human. But when fanatics are on top there is no limit to oppression.
— H L Mencken

ct Lynch: “I once did navigate my way to somewheres in Phila by watching the signs. And they were prominent enough at the time.” Try that in Boston, where the street signs are small and hidden, and the prominent signs give you useful information such as this intersection is “Father Francis Fondlebum Square.”

☞ *“The Japanese do a lot of things that are boring. I once saw a Japanese exhibit — at the National Gallery, I believe. It came with a film on the tea ceremony.”* The point of the tea ceremony is to be very formal, and to dive into the moment. It is a meditation, not an excuse to drink tea. There is a complicated etiquette involved in even admiring the teacups before the tea is made.

ct Hlavaty: “Nicholas Baker forgets there are pluses and minuses to every form of preservation. Holding the hard copy on the shelves certainly has a lot of minuses. Especially if it’s paper made during the pulp era. That disintegrates like mad.” Again, see my comments to Ned: Baker claims newsprint never disintegrates. I don’t know about atmospheric conditions on his planet, but on mine, it disintegrates like mad. I was looking through my files of zines the other day, and discovered that some of the ones in fifteen-year-old age-range were printed paper with a relatively high acid content and are starting to discolor. And those are kept in much better condition than many libraries are capable of.

ct Lillian: “I don’t know whether Rex Stout intended Nero Wolfe to be that fat. In one early novel, he had Wolfe say he was 1/7 of a ton. Or 266 lbs.” In later novels, he was reported to be a sixth of a ton, or 333 pounds.

☞ *“Whether Bush can play the national security card through 2004 is another thing.”* Hey, the reason that *New Yorker* cartoon is so funny — the two men in dark suits at the door flashing their badges to the husband and wife and saying, “Hi, we’re from the FBI. We’re here to make sure sure everyone’s scared shitless.” — is because that’s essentially what they’re doing. Hey! There’s going to be a terrorist incident on the fourth of July! Can’t tell you from who, or why, or where, or what, but we just know it’s going to happen. Now go on about your business.

ct Metcaf: “As for the Afghan caves, our Binker, being the spellunker that she is, wanted to warn the U.S. government about them. Knowing what we know now, the U.S. government should have listened. But, at the time, she was one of a thousand voices. Those who wished to attack Iraq were

* Okay, even taking into account that his citizenship is French, he’s still a little over the top.

a lot louder. And more worthless.” The Bush administration seems to have as much of a hard-on for Iraq as bin Laden had for the World Trade Center. Perhaps Shrub’s daddy didn’t really mean it when he said, “Our goal is not the conquest of Iraq. It is the liberation of Kuwait.”

Though speaking of Binker, I had a chat with her at a DSC about five years ago, and she was telling me that one of her colleagues from grad school had done a study of the US media in the two years leading up to the Gulf War, and that in that time there was a hundred-and-eighty degree reversal in the general approach. We went from “they’re good guys because they’re fighting Iran” to “they’re bad guys because they’re fighting Iran with nerve gas” all before the first rumblings of Iraq invading Kuwait. I seem to remember that no conclusions were drawn, but it was a fascinating data point.

Every government looking at the actions of another government and trying to explain them always exaggerates rationality and conspiracy, and underestimates incompetency and fortuity.

— Silberman’s Law of Diplomacy, US Circuit Court Judge Laurence Silberman

ct Robe: “Banner making software seems to have vanished since the death of the Dot-Matrix printer. I remember banners for every occasion at work. Now you see hardly a banner.” In lots of the HP printer cartridge packages are (or used to be) coupons to send in for a CD of software for doing exactly this sort of stuff. I think most of HP’s inkjet printers will take continuous form paper. (I think our Lexmark will, too, now that I think about it.)

☞ *“A swim New Years eve: that’s a great idea. Except from age and habit, I would prefer to be in bed shortly after twelve. And six hours sleep would hardly be enough for me.”* A chap who used to work at QMS used to celebrate New Years by staying up all night and writing code. He’d generate some huge new feature, and check it in at five or six in the morning.

☞ *“I know Ashcroft has claimed that he had some important intelligence from interrogating those prisoners.”* Yes, and it’s lead to all those very specific warnings about terrorist activity that we’ve had for months: “You might have a terrorist under your bed if the UPS man is bringing strange packages that glow in the dark.” “Today’s threat level is mauvey russet, with possible patches of partly puce, and a likely outburst of technicolor yawn.” “There will be terrorist attack sometime.”

ct Feller: “According to Walter Mossberger’s column in the Wall Street Journal, Apple has gone in the opposite direction and made the newest iMac simple and easy to use.” That sounds like a press release. Simple and easy compared to what? Wasn’t that supposed to be the Macintosh charter in the first place?

"I finally tested how well my files were backed on CDs. I restored five. All looked fine as far as I could tell." When I don't have a failed CD — a "coaster" in nerd parlance — I always compare the contents on the CD with the files that I thought I burned. I've yet to find a CD burner in the last two years, though, that didn't generate a large number of failed burns — a "coaster toaster," in the MIT phrase. I think that as the price point for CD burners has dropped the quality of the hardware has dropped, too.

ct Schlosser: "I bet 'ski' is Slavic for 'son of.' In a lot of places, a name's suffix seems to mean 'son of.' Like Ericsson. Now what does Genderov mean, I wonder?" Genderov? Gender of? Is this a surname for the male child or the female child? (In yet another of his crimes against humanity, I saw Morley Safer do a travelogue on Iceland once, and he made fun of the Icelandic habit of having surnames based on one of your parents' names. He did this because the chap he was talking to was having trouble talking in English while thinking in Icelandic, and was tongue-tied as he explained that his name was Sven Larson, he was married to Ingrid Piastoter and that their children were Eric Svenson and Elsa Ingridstoter.)

*"Wouldn't a technothriller be science fiction. I remember when science fiction about the near future was a big thing." The prototypical technothriller — the first in the class, really — is *The Hunt for Red October*. It is based on science fact even if it does have some vague science fictional elements.*

ct Strickland: "I think the Scottish Walk comes first, with its bagpipes and quilts. Then there is the Irish Walk, maybe a day or two later, also with bagpipes and kilts." Then a day or two later the English walk, with bowlers and umbrellas?

ct Brown: "My lawyer friend Urry tells me that Cheney can get away with not making public his Energy Committee proceedings if it had no paid Federal employees. So he can say that, legally, it is not the same as Clinton's medical insurance committee chaired by Hillary." But Hillary was prohibited by law from having a paid appointment while her husband was President, so I'm not sure how this follows.

☞ "Yes, I remember that rumor about the State Department being car bombed on 9-1-1. I wonder how that got started. Also, the governor of Maryland wanted to get into the act. And claimed a number of Maryland monuments were in danger." There are monuments in Maryland? I can see the terrorists now: "Uh, oh! They've got a roadblock out so we can't drive this car bomb up to the Washington Monument. Let's go blow up the University of Maryland flagpole instead."

ct me: "By the way, what's this I heard that Apple beat Microsoft to the punch in basing their operating system on Linux for the new iMac?" Mac OS/X has libraries and utilities based on Berkeley Unix, not Linux, but the operating system kernel is actually a microkernel based on Mach. Roughly, the whole operating system is a successor to the one that was built at Next, the company that Steve Jobs did after he got booted out of

Apple the first time, with the NeXTstep graphic interface replaced by a Macintosh one. Microsoft will never ship a Unix. Microsoft, as a corporate culture, is constitutionally incapable of understanding Unix, since Microsoft's culture thrives on large-and-complicated-is-better. I think it entirely possible that Microsoft sewed the seeds of its own destruction when it decided that Windows was the only operating system it was going to support across all hardware, everywhere, from PDAs to cell phones to game consoles to set-top boxes to servers. (There was more I was going to say, but it's probably poor form to publicly criticize the company I work for.)

As the majority of hobbyists must be aware, most of you steal your software. Hardware must be paid for, but software is something to share. Who cares if the people who worked on it get paid?

— Bill Gates, letter to the Homebrew Computer Club newsletter, 3 Feb 1976

☞ *"By the way, I won't deny I would love it if software was free; but I think as a matter of principle creators should get paid for their trouble. Not that they do under the current system."* Again: Stallman blew this in a large way. He meant "free software" as in "free speech," not as in "free lunch." His doctrinaire intention was that there be no intellectual property restrictions on the distribution of software. I don't believe that should apply to every piece of software, and I don't believe that the GNU Public License requirement that I distribute the source code (which is what Stallman was actually after) prohibits me from making money from my code. I might feel seriously different about this if I'd ever made significantly more than my salary from my efforts in this arena, or if the more interesting of the software I wrote myself had been commercially viable. (Not that I completely agree with the quote from my boss, above, either.)

Incidentally, even though I'm happy to give away most of the software I write on my own, one of the pieces of software that I give away — the Hugo suite — is not distributed under the GNU License specifically because I don't want to distribute the source. Initially, that was because a couple of innovative algorithms were involved, but they were developed before software patents were common, so they had to be protected as trade secrets. Now, it's a matter of having had the relatively minor restrictions I place on use of the software violated a number of times. The last thing I want to do is release the source to a Worldcon committee, have someone redistribute the source with modifications and then blame me for bugs they've introduced. With everything else, I'm willing to take that risk, but with the Hugos, it's neither a large market or a large window to get it right.

Anyway, Liz and I spent a dinner discussing software licenses when we were in

British Columbia — hey, do we know how to have a romantic time, or what? — and as a result I wrote a couple of hundred words to add to the Hugo documentation on why it *isn't* open source.

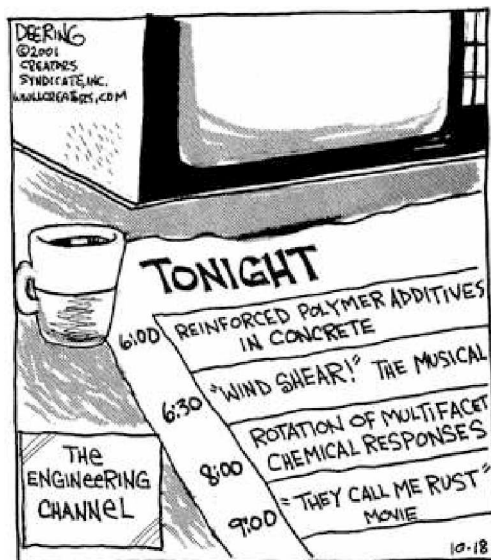
☞ “What inaccuracies did you find in Burke and his *The Day the Universe Changed*?” It wasn’t *The Day the Universe Changed*, in particular, but that Burke is sloppy in general. For example, in one of his books he talks about how the printing press changed things in Europe, and there were less than a hundred thousand books on the whole continent in 1450, but that all changed by 1550. Nope: there were half-a-million volumes in the Moorish library at Granada in 1450. His notions of cause and effect are tenuous, and he frequently commits *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* errors.

ct Cleary: “If you want a propeller beanie to see whether it attracts cute girls, go to *Interstellar Propeller’s* website, <http://www.propellerheadhats.com/>.” When I was at Systemhouse, the folks who actually wrote code (a small fraction of the employees of the company), were derisively referred to as “propeller heads.” I seem to remember being tempted at the time to get T-shirts made up for my staff of developers that said something along the lines of “Damned straight, I’m a propeller head” on the front, and “How do you think the company makes any money?” on the back. (Of course, the question on the back was a complete non-sequitur: while the actual cash income was due to the technical people, Systemhouse actually made money on the balance sheet by cooking its books.) But, the propeller beanies are very cool.

Rich Lynch ☒ *Variations on a Theme* »

ct Lillian: “On fan history: ‘I’m not sure Julie Schwartz claims to have edited the first fanzine, or if that’s a distinction others claim for him.’ I think it’s his own, and since the term ‘fanzine’ didn’t exist back in the 1930s, his claim was the first ‘true fan magazine.’” I was going to settle this in the traditional way, dictionary citations at ten paces, but the OED doesn’t list “fanzine.”

ct Dengrove: “On romance and science fiction: ‘I wouldn’t have read Catherine Asaro’s books, having heard they had won all sorts of romance awards.... They might not be Bodice Rippers; but they certainly would be Spacesuit Tearers?’ Not all. On a sampling of one book (*Primary Inversion*, which was her first novel, in fact), I can say she can write a very interesting story with a minimal amount of romance; it’s far more of an adventure story.” If you think *Primary Inversion* wasn’t a romance novel, or



that “A Roll of the Dice” wasn’t a bodice ripper (albeit with the man’s bodice being ripped), then you must have thought that Eve’s — sorry, Darlene Marshall’s — *Pirate’s Price* was a swashbuckler. ☞ “Many of her subsequent books are in the same universe (the Skolian series), so I’m sure I’ll read another. As soon as I can figure out which book is next in the series.” There’s a web site for that, that I just re-found for Liz: http://www.kentlibrary.lib.mi.us/whats_next.htm, which provides lists of series given author and a title in the list. In any event, *Primary Inversion* is followed by *Catch the Lightning*, which is followed by *The Last Hawk*, then *The Radiant Seas* and *The Veiled Web*. If `whats_next` gives you grief (as it often does) try www.bookbrowser.com.

ct Schlosser: “On baseball: ‘Maybe [Major League Baseball Commissioner] Selig wants MLB to undergo contraction so that some new teams can be born?’ Nah, this is all about money. If you get rid of the teams that aren’t financially successful, it’s all that much more money from the TV contracts for the remaining team owners, and it also heads off any revenue-sharing schemes that would be needed to keep these near bankrupt teams afloat and competitive.” How does killing off the Twins and Expos get more money for the other teams? Since TV revenue goes to the home team — and the Dodgers and Yankees are adamant about not changing that since they have the largest TV markets — it seems that contraction will have no effect at all. Once there’s real revenue sharing — like the teams in a broadcast split the money — then this makes some kind of sense. But otherwise this is just a ploy by George Steinbrenner to up the value of his team by supply and demand.

ct Gelb: “But the Dramatic Presentation Award might be split by the time nomination for those comes up, which would cut down any competition from Buffy.” I think a short-form best dramatic presentation Hugo is almost as bad as a best web site Hugo. We have trouble coming up with five good dramatic presentations many years, so adding an award for *Buffy* (or *Enterprise* or *Smallville*) will neither improve the quality of SF on television, nor give us more worthwhile nominees in movies. Remember that in the past decade of dramatic presentation nominations, we’ve had nine nominations for television in some form or another, including *Babylon 5* winning twice in a row. (Two of those ten years have two short-form nominees, by the way.)† Adding another category strikes me as the inverse of the *Locus* solution — let’s add a category so that *Buffy* can be nominated, instead of let’s add a category so that someone other than Charlie Brown can win — rather than a solution to the problem at hand, which is a lack of consensus about what short form stuff is worthy of nomination.

† And in one memorable year, 1968, every nominee was a spectacularly written episode of the original *Star Trek* — “City on the Edge of Forever” (Harlan Ellison), “Mirror, Mirror” (Jerome Bixby), “Tribbles” (Gerrold), “Doomsday Machine” (Spinrad), “Amok Time” (Sturgeon).

(Hmmm, as an aside, it would be interesting to take a look at the complete list of fiction and best dramatic presentation Hugo nominees and winners. Several years ago, when Liz wanted to use past decade's the Hugo and Nebula nominees as a reading list, I went to the trouble of getting all the fiction ones together on the computer. Adding the dramatic presentation list should be a pretty easy web cruise. That means that publishing the list shouldn't be a big deal. Let me see if I have time to do so this time.)

ct me: "On movies: 'Lord of the Rings is the most beautiful movie I've seen in quite a while.' Me too, but I'll qualify that by defining 'quite a while' as 'in a bit more than a year' as that's how long it had been since *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* had appeared." I guess you're right about that: my comment at the time was, "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is simply beautiful. It is beautifully photographed, the sets are beautifully designed, the costumes are wonderful, and the choreography is amazing."



Guy Lillian ☒ *Spiritus Mundi* ✻

"The winners are predictable in both Actor and Actress categories — Russell Crowe didn't merit the Oscar he got last year for flashing his buns in *Gladiator*, but was very fine *A Beautiful Mind*, and he's odds-on..... In the Bedroom's Tom Wilkinson was subtle and powerful, and carried the movie, but my beloved Sissy Spacek has been claiming the awards. Her Oscar will serve as a tribute to the entire film..." Well, both of those guesses were wrong. I'm still uncertain about Denzel Washington's role, even though he won. But I'm amused (nay, pleased) that the only award *A Beautiful Mind* didn't win out of its nominations was Russell Crowe's.

"CBS' 9/11 documentary was a stunning experience. It brought the war home more vividly than even a visit to Ground Zero did for me." I should have liked to watch that documentary, but I was in Japan at the time. I had some interesting correspondence with New York fan Michael Weholt about it from Asia. Weholt worked across the street from the World Trade Center, and he and Patrick Nielsen Hayden provided some really spectacular reporting on the ground in those first days in rec.arts.sf.fandom.

It was that spot reporting that caused me to add Weholt to my normal perennial fanwriter nominees.

ct OO: *"So this is the second edition of this mailing's Official Organ – done after the reception of Toni's stringsaver. The first printing will now assume the mantle of Rare Collectible..."* Gone. I threw the whole first run into the shredding bin. However, I recently tripped over what I believe to be the only extant copy of the first press run of the LAConII film program. Among other things at that convention, I agreed to typeset the film program notes which were compiled by Alan Winston. The convention's publications head took my carefully typeset proofs — back when they came from a real honest-to-gosh phototypesetter — carefully glued fourteen pages of the photostats to boards, and delivered them to the printer. Which would have been cool except that there were supposed to be fifteen pages. I discovered this on the Sunday before the convention at the LASFS clubhouse when I grabbed two copies of the film program for my files off the pallet of publications.

ct Dengrove: *"The demon GuyLilyan resembles me in every way, except when you say that 'For him to do your bidding you need to provide him with a can of beer.' Never touch the stuff."* OK, then you get the demon GuyLilyan to do your bidding by giving it a can of corflu or showing it your tits.

ct Metcaif: *"I've seen Don Grant's facsimile editions of Sherlock Holmes from The Strand."* I seem to remember that Bobbi Armbruster actually has some of those original issues of *The Strand*.

ct *Forbidden Planet* is SF, and superb SF at that. Really got my juices going in 1956. *This Island Earth* is a separate movie, nowhere near as satisfying: I'll agree with you that *This Island Earth* is not nearly as good as *Forbidden Planet*, but if you go back a couple of years, I still think *The Day the Earth Stood Still* is way cool. It's got a great sense of "there's something larger than us Out There."

ct Robe: *"The Super Bowl commercials tying drugs to terrorism scared me on at least two levels. First, it's possibly true, but worse, it means Ashcroft's Justice Department will be seeking the same extra-constitutional mandate against dopers as they've claimed against Arabs. The Bill of Rights is for sissies: pass it on."* Those ads make me see red every time they're on: they're complete bullshit. The drugs coming out of South America are a product of corruption of the ruling oligarchies of the countries involved. The Taliban — our current boogeyman — effectively halted the production of opium in Afghanistan, and now, the US-sponsored government of restored warlords is fighting with the growers not over whether there's going to be opium, but who's going to control the trade. (Apparently, it was opium trafficking that was the cause of Afghani vice president Hajji Abdul Qadir's assassination over the fourth of July weekend.)

ct Feller: *"There's a loathsome rumor that Amtrak may soon cease its New Orleans service, too, so ...alternatives are drying up."* I just don't get it: The US is the only country

in the world that refuses to subsidize rail travel. Like NASA with its inadequate space shuttle and space stations designs, (and the Post Office, too, for that matter), Amtrak should have gone to Congress in the first place and said: “Look, here’s how much it’s going to take. This is a realistic estimate. It does not involve wishful thinking, or the planned miracle of democratic capitalism taking off in Russia, or impossible guesses about the cost of refurbishing ‘reusable’ boosters. Yes, it’s a lot of money, but because we’ve made this a real estimate, we’re 95% sure that we won’t have to come back with a ‘revised’ estimate in the next Congress.” Instead, passenger service has been with second-hand equipment on tracks borrowed from people who have a disincentive to cooperate, denied the subsidies that air travel and transport by truck get. It was doomed from the start.

☞ *“Speaking of 24, someone wondered about the sequel, when we’ll presumably watch Kiefer Sutherland sleep for an hour a week all season long.”* Ouch! As I said last time, I’m not sure there’s enough coffee to keep him awake a second twenty-four hours.

ct Schlosser: *“Didn’t buy Krispy Kremes when you had the chance??!! Jeff, I call for a vote under the expulsion clause!”* Well, you’ll have to hang me, too, since I’ve passed up chances to buy Krispy Kremes.

☞ *“I’m not fond of Mel Brooks; Young Frankenstein is unworthy of its Hugo.”* I don’t know: given the competition that year — a failed Roddenbury pilot, “The Questor Tapes”; *Phantom of the Paradise*, the less said about which, the better; *Zardoz*, which was pretty, but had a stupid plot; and *Flesh Gordon* (yes, the porn version — the Dino De Laurentis version wasn’t until 1980), Mel Brooks was probably the best choice, even if *Flesh Gordon* was a funnier movie.



☞ *“So Jenny Montaire bought a Saturn. I can’t even afford a Phobos! (That might be funny if Phobos was a moon of Saturn, but except for Titan, I can’t remember any of the moons of Saturn. What do you want from me? I’m over fifty!)”* No, Guy, “Titan” is the name of the new GM sports-utility-vehicle because it’s larger than the Colossus of Rhodes, and makes dinosaurs scream every time you step on the gas pedal. You probably wanted to say, “I can’t even afford a Calypso.” (The major moons of Saturn are Mimas,

Enceladus, Tethys, Dione, Rhea, Titan, Hyperion, and Iapetus. There are about 22 minor ones down to 6km in size; the ten with names have monikers like Calypso, Helene, Pandora, and Phoebe. Titan's bigger'n the rest of them put together. What do you want from me? I've got a web connection.)

☞ *"An epic phrase: pride goeth before the phallus! I should think it follows it!"* Well if it's really big, pretty much everything has to come behind it. This is a case where size matters.

(This reminds me of the sign that appeared on West Lake Sammamish Parkway last week. The parkway runs along the shore of the lake, and because the longish driveways to the lake front houses are downhill and the houses aren't visible from the road, there are signposts with names on them at the roadside. Often the same signpost has several names, since the driveways branch. So, on the post that already had "Moore" and "Smith" and "Kato" on it, a new sign appeared, in lighter wood, almost pinkish in the setting sun. The sign is vertical, rather than horizontal like its fellows, with curved corners, so the bottom is round. It looks almost phallic to begin with, but the name made it positively so: the sign says "Johnson.")

ct Gelb: *"Some years wallow in great SF movies, like that year that saw Blade Runner, Wrath of Khan, Road Warrior, E.T., and Little Shop of Horrors make the Hugo ballot, and The Thing outside of it... and some are like 1987, which had Robocop and a fair fantasy called The Princess Bride and nothing much else."* See my comments about multiple categories of best dramatic presentation to Rich Lynch above. And I don't know about 1987: I seem to recall that *The Witches of Eastwick* has some nice fantastic elements to it, not to mention Michelle whats-her-name.

ct Arthur: *"Another ace line: 'whatever you say about your past, it got you here.'"* Quoth Marcus Aurelius, "Be not disturbed about the future, for if you ever come to it, you will have the same reason for your guide which preserves you at present." An old girlfriend wrote that on the back of her business card and tucked it into the wallet she gave me for Christmas one year. My wife gave me a new wallet several Christmases later, but I tucked the Marcus Aurelius quote into the new one, and then gave it to Allie a couple of years ago when she was concerned about what she was going to study in college.

ct Brown: *"I can't help but feel sorry for Mariah Carey — so talented and lovely, but nominated for a Golden Raspberry for Glitter..."* Talented? Her main talent has always struck me as her prodigious mammaries.

ct me: *"I love that Aaron McGruder cartoon about W's pretzel binge so much that I'm swiping it for the next Challenger editorial."* I've got the electronic form of that socked away somewhere if it would help. ☞ *"Betcha there's a gentlemen's agreement not to look too hard at the incident — an understanding that the cretin's handlers will keep a closer eye on him in the future."*

As I keep saying, it's a good thing we've got a liberal press in this country, 'cause otherwise, a conservative like Bush would be getting raked over the coals... Oh, wait... I notice also that they downplayed the colonoscopy he had a couple of weeks ago: Just routine, they said. No need to worry. Except that unlike any other routine colonoscopy you've ever heard of, we're going to use general anesthesia. One wonders if they're hiding a case of colon cancer. (The last 'graph of the *Seattle Times* story noted that two of the four primary indications for polyps in the lower intestine are history of colon cancer in the family and alcoholism.)

☞ "It may be foolish of me, but I can't take any of the gummint's warnings of new terrorist threats too seriously. Like their wide-eyed assertions that Osama may still be alive..." Of course Osama bin Laden's still alive, just like Saddam Hussein is still alive. Unlike Hussein, though, he's probably still getting material support from inside Saudi Arabia. But, as should be clear by now, I agree with you about the sky-is-falling warnings.

☞ "Your footnote brings forth an interesting question: what should be the nature – and the aim – of a 'post-scarcity' world? First assuring that bountifulness is general – that no one suffers. Then, maintenance, of course, since 'post-scarcity' is just another name for 'paradise.'" I think that "post-scarcity world," is sufficiently fuzzy that it's well-nigh meaningless. However, I'd point to the world that Ernest Callenbach paints in *Ecotopia* for a working example: stable-state ecology, universal health-care, nobody starving in the street. You can also look to the plebiscite at the end of *Shockwave Rider* for the proper way to act on a planet of plenty.

The Content of the Propositions

#1: That this is a rich planet. Therefore poverty and hunger are unworthy of it, and since we can abolish them, we must.

#2: That we are a civilized species. Therefore none shall henceforth gain illicit advantage by reason of the fact that we together know more than one of us can know.

— John Brunner, *The Shockwave Rider*

☞ "Re: *The Prisoner*, you say, 'the whole plot hinges on a comma.' Could be you mean the exchange, 'Who is Number One?' 'You are [,] Number Six.' That's another ending — the last episode — that now seems cloying and pretentious, but some of the earlier episodes, especially the Hugo-nominated 'Schizoid Man', remain brilliant a generation after their filming." As we're watching them, though, there is a clear dichotomy. Some of the episodes are relatively timeless and have held up well (the *Citizen Kane* effect). Some are clearly products of their time, but are still very good (the *Casablanca* effect). Some of them are psychobabble (the *Big Chill* effect). I'll let you know what my reaction is when we get to "Fall Out," the last episode. Incidentally, the Hugo-nominated episode was "Fall Out," not "Schizoid Man," at least according to *Locus's* web site.

☞ *"Hmm, another competition — what SFPAzine has been composed the furthest away from the South? I imagine Lynch's postcard-zines qualify." Pick Atlanta (34°N, 84°W) as "the South", then the farthest you can get is 34°S, 96°E, or roughly 100 nautical miles west of Perth, Australia. So if Janice wrote a zine on either her DUFF trip or her most recent six-week tour to Australia and New Zealand, she wins. Otherwise, I think I win, for "Playing Pepé le Pew," the zine composed in Tokyo, Hyderabad and the air in between. (For reference: Perth is about 12,500 miles from Atlanta, Melbourne is 9700, Auckland 8100, Tokyo 6900, Hyderabad 8700, Bratislava 5000.)*

Here's the other question: what's the geographic center of SFPA?

ct Liz: *"It is very cool that your 9-1-1 quilt is receiving such widespread notice. Is it still viewable on-line? I'd like to trumpet it once more." It's still in the same place on my web site, <http://alumni.caltech.edu/~copeland/mommy.html>. We'll have seen the traveling show of those quilts by the time this zine is published. We're taking a special trip down to Portland to do so, since they'll be at the Embellishments conference the weekend of July 19th. This will be the second time I've seen a quilt of Liz's again after a long time. The last was the child abuse quilt, which was not only clearly one of the top handful in the show, it was even more striking and visceral than I remembered it. I think that I'll find the same thing here: many of the quilts in the traveling show are concerned with patriotic or spiritual themes, but "Where's My Mommy?" is about simple human loss.*

ct Ackerman: *"Like your film reviews, as they include small films of quality. ... Trouble is, around New Orleans such flicks only show at the tony Canal Street Cinema, which may have received a death blow: the yuppie mall where it's located now charges for parking, effectively doubling the price of a ticket." The Bellevue Galleria, which has the most comfortable movie theater in town, has always charged for parking. The theater validates your parking ticket, but the movie tickets are a buck more a pop. (However, I long for the day when the guy in the projection booth was a professional, and not a pimple-faced 18-year-old who isn't sure how the film goes in the projector or how to adjust the framing on the screen, and wants to turn the sound up to rock-concert levels.)*

David Schlosser ☒ Peter, Pan & Merry ♡

ct Lillian: *"Seems to me that the best rejection of what occurred would be if the Republican party were repudiated at the polls in the next couple of elections. Anything more dramatic than that would be a repudiation of our system of gov't rather than of the specific election events." But, there's a war on, son, a war, I tell you. You can't vote against the President when there's a war on. ☞ "... Considering a) the lowish voter turnout we usually get and b) the success (in places) of instituting term limits I wouldn't doubt for a minute that a lot of people don't want to be bothered with the drudgeries of a gov't ruled by law." It always amazes me how much Americans appear to not care about the principles on which their country was founded. ☞ "And*

I'll agree that the best way to stand up to the terrorists is to not shed liberties for protection, to not pull into a cocoon of suspicion, to not be cowed into changing to try to suit them." I'm willing to take the same attitude the British have towards the IRA: I'll be damned if I'm going to change anything I do because of the threat of terrorism. That's what they want, and I'm not going to give them the satisfaction. (Of course, since I'm Italian on the other side of the family, if anything happened to my family because of this, I'd find the people who did it and kill them with implements out of the tool box in the garage. Slowly. I wouldn't be sufficiently merciful to use the advice of one of the bad guys on *Buffy*: "I mean, the last time I tortured someone, they didn't even *have* chainsaws.")



Sheila Strickland ✉ Revenant ☛

"As I mentioned a while back, over the last year or so I had become discontent with my church and with the Southern Baptist Convention in general. For the past year and a half, I've been attending Blackwater United Methodist Church. I like the church and the people there very much; in fact, the first time I walked into the sanctuary, it felt like this was the right place to be." That sounds like our feelings about Live Oak, the Unitarian-Universalist congregation we helped found of in Austin. We were comfortable there, we had good friends there, we wish we'd been able to stay in Austin to continue to revel in that camaraderie. It's the existence of Live Oak that keeps me thinking about moving back to Austin eventually.

ct Robe: "You mention Corliss having school-related nightmares — I still have those type of dreams even after so many years of being away from school." I really don't have school-related nightmares anymore. I have nightmares where I'm worrying about the kids or Liz. Then again, after more than twenty years, "The Ride of the Valkyries" doesn't cause me to twitch, either.‡

‡ For those unfamiliar, "The Ride" was the traditional wake-up call during finals week at Caltech. It's now the traditional wake-up music on the last morning of a Space Shuttle flight, in part because

ct Schlosser: *"Ct Markstein on jailed Christians in Afghanistan: I wasn't following the story closely, but I wonder if they really were 'preaching' Christianity. One person casual reply to a question about religious beliefs could be another person's proselytizing."* They went to Afghanistan with the intention of actually being missionaries, that is, actually preaching Christianity. So, they were the classic outside agitators who went somewhere with the intention of breaking the law. They were important for a couple of reasons: they were nice photogenic blond girls from Texas, and their church was just down the road from Shrub's ranch. Notice that when the government of Iraq fell, the United States didn't make a big deal about nerdy guys working for Electronic Data Systems that the government had imprisoned; their boss, Ross Perot, had to rescue them himself.

ct Markstein: *"The Baton Rouge paper runs 'Mallard Fillmore' on Sundays. It used to be funny, and I still read it hoping it will be funny again; but it's usually just a rant against the evil liberals."* Yep, that'd be me. My personal cards say "Jeffrey L Copeland: Evil Liberal and Purveyor of Hugo Software to the Trade".^o Anyway, "Fillmore" replaced "Heart of the City" in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* comics; they started running it next to "Boondocks" a couple of months ago.

ct Gelb: *"Would customs have been worried about any food or just fresh or uncooked items? I know I can't bring fruit back from Canada; but I've brought plenty of packaged items without trouble. Maybe I've just never read the customs declarations forms too closely."* I seem to remember words about fresh fruits, vegetables, and any kind of meat the last time I flew into the US. There were signs warning about fresh fruits and vegetables when Liz and I came in from Canada in June. Of course, since we were the first car off the ferry, the Customs guys actually wanted to look in our luggage, which is a first for me.

ct me: *"I'm making a mental list of DVD's I want to see once I get my player. Our library has more and more; so I can start out borrowing them before I start buying. I'd enjoy seeing The Prisoner again and the DVD of Buckaroo Banzai sounds like another one I'd like to see."* We've got about three shelf-feet of DVDs now, and have gotten rid of about a hundred VHS tapes. I can also recommend the uncut DVD of *Almost Famous* if you liked the movie — there are three disks: one's the original theatrical release, one's uncut with about forty minutes of extra scenes and director's commentary, and one's an audio CD with half-a-dozen songs by Stillwater.

☞ *"You mentioned the Paul Thomas Anderson movie as being appropriate for torturing prisoners; I can suggest another one. If the trailer is any indication, the new Austin Powers movie could be just as horrifying. After having to sit through it several times while waiting for Lord of the Rings; I started closing my eyes and trying not to listen rather than have to seen those images again."* Yeah, that

Shuttle Operations Director Phil Engelauf was in my class at Tech.

^o My business cards, on the other hand, say "Jeffrey L Copeland: Working for the Evil Monopoly that Wants Your Computer Desktop."

trailer for the new Austin Powers makes the movie pretty unappealing. But I was going to throw up if I saw the trailer for Adam Sandler in *Mr Deeds* one more time. I can't think of anyone less likely to play well in a remake of a Frank Capra movie. I think Sandler is less appealing than Tom Cruise, who at least redeems himself by being an action hero (even if his current action franchise is a James Bond ripoff). Adam Sandler, Carrot Top, Bob Goldthwait, Gilbert Gottfried: all of them can go where we send used diapers, as far as I'm concerned.

ct Liz: "You mentioned not understanding why the Hamilton books are in the Young Adult section in your library: catalogers are a mysterious breed!" Wow! I'm not sure that Laura Hamilton is appropriate for many young adults. I'm thinking in particular of the whole opening sequence in the latest Anita Blake book, *Narcissus in Chains*, where our heroine and her vampire and werewolf lovers get it on in public in a wererat S&M bar. Not to mention every word of the faerie sex books, *A Kiss of Shadows* and *A Caress of Twilight*. ☞ "In our library system, some of the Terry Pratchett Discworld books are classified in YA, some in adult; and some in both." Y'know, having to contend with both genre silliness and age silliness in finding books is a real pain. But, at least libraries (unlike video stores) have catalogs. ☞ "The question of vampires and holy symbols is one that's currently consuming the 'Forever Knight' mailing list I'm on. They've discussed whether a sacred cow in India would affect a vampire, and how a vampire on that show can live in an old church." Of course, the classic episode of this vampires and symbols thing is *Fearless Vampire Killers* in which a young girl in the village tries to defend herself from a vampire with a crucifix. Except that he's Jewish, and says "Boy have you got the wrong vampire" before biting her neck.

ct Larson: "I know most lawyers try to do a good job; but some insist on mucking it up for all the rest." Now, I guess, we've started saying the same thing about accountants.

ct Ackerman: "Ct me on cleaning coffee makers: that would be one way to try for decent tea; another might be to bring along an immersion heater. Have you ever used one of those?" I've never had much luck with an immersion heater. Of course, now that we're living at sea level again, I find myself cooking water for tea in the microwave, which was something I decried in the most severe terms when we were living in Boulder. Of course, at 5800 feet, water in a full tea kettle boils in about four minutes.

ct Wells: "Regarding Buffy, the Vampire Slayer and the show's lack of logic: I've tried to watch it a few times; but never have been able to get really interested in it. I think, though, TV makers just dump logic when they want to get on with the show." What it did have going for it is the thing that reviewer Tom Appelo pointed out: "[Whedon's] is the first show truly to master the teen native tongue, sarcasm." So, we watched it, plot holes and all, because of the witty dialog. Where else could you find lines like "You can attack me, you can send assassins after me, that's fine. But nobody messes with my boyfriend!" or "I still don't know why we had to come here to look up information on a killer

snot monster." "Because it's a killer snot monster from outer space. ...I did not say that." Of course, the season finale this year was so damned over the top — "I am Willow, quake before me as I destroy the world!" "I am Xander, the loser that shouted Love at the Heart of the World!" "I am Dawn, All Grown Up!" — that I think we've given up on it.



Tom Feller ☒ Frequent Flyer ☛

"US Airways has two frequent flyer accounts over 10,000,000 miles, and several others that are close." That's 2000 New York-to-LA trips! Yikes. Assume there was rollover from US Airways predecessors, so they've been collecting mileage since, say, 1980 — American Airlines frequent flyer program was instituted in 1979 — so that's 100 coast-to-coast flights a year, or two a week. Double yikes! OK: they probably didn't actually fly all those miles. You get bonus on every mile for flying more than twenty-five thousand in a year. You get miles for using your airline Visa card. You get miles from hotels (for US Airways, it looks like both the Hilton and Marriot groups), and car rental. So presume they only flew half that many miles, that's still back-and-forth across the country once a week for twenty years. Still, and again, yikes.

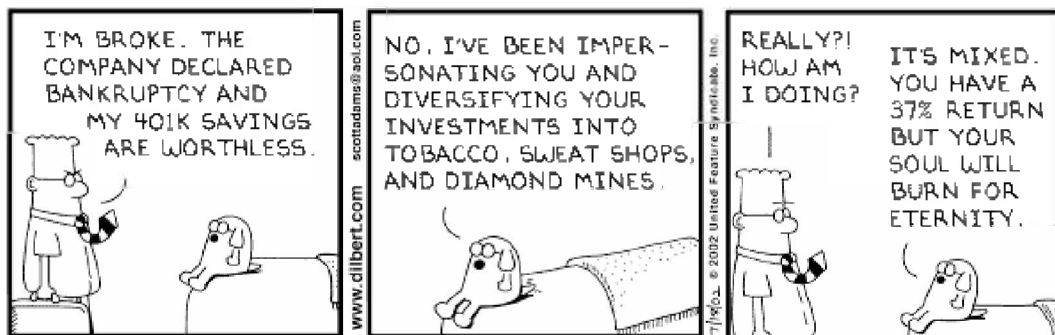
On the other hand, my younger brother, Ian, had some trouble back in the late '80s when he was commuting between Virginia and Florida. He couldn't get US Airways to send him mileage statements. That's because they kept folding Ian's miles into the account of the other Ian Copeland, the rock promoter, whose office was in New York at the time.

(*Harper's* reports in their Index column that the world's outstanding frequent flyer miles represent 42,500 round trips to the Sun — just shy eight billion miles.)

ct Lillian: "BCS stands for Bowl Championship Series, which is an attempt to match the number one and two college football teams at the end of the season. It rotates among several already-established bowl games. The controversy usually revolves over the issue of whether the top two teams are chosen to play." Since the rankings that determine the "top team" are arbitrary — it's a

frickin' poll of the sports writers for heaven's sake! — why bother? If they want a real tournament, make one. If they want real rankings, compute them. But this nonsense should be called what it is: bullshit. (To quote a line from Alan Prince Winston, "If this sounds overheated, think how it would sound if I were actually at all interested in professional sports.")

ct Hughes: "One bad element of the Enron 401K plan was that the company match was only in Enron stock, which the employees could not sell until they reached the age of 50. Of course, many of them also bought Enron stock with their own contributions, because top Enron management constantly told them that it was the best investment among their 20 choices. At the same time, those managers were selling the stock." Y'know, company officers *are* required to list their intended and actual sales of company stock. And those listings are public. Bill Gates sold off about half a billion dollars of Microsoft stock in February in seven separate transactions of a million shares a piece, for example. Steve Ballmer has never sold any of his Microsoft stock.[•] Somebody should have been paying attention to what Kenny Lay was doin' with his Enron stock.



"The March 11 issue of Business Insurance reports on a lawsuit between JPMorgan Chase Bank and two insurance companies over surety bonds. The bonds were supposed to protect the bank and two off-shore companies when Enron defaulted on oil and gas deliveries worth \$1.36 billion. The insurance companies... are arguing that the deals were really disguised loans." Sounds like the savings and loan scams, where bad loans were traded back-and-forth and pumped up along the way, with the real cash going out the back door into some people's pockets. (Incidentally, I read a book recently about the savings and loan debacle, which pointed out that part of the money that disappeared was money from the trust funds that the Bureau of Indian Affairs administers, and which they've had so much trouble accounting for over three presidencies.

[•] However, he's disposed of some stock on the non-open market, which is apparently code for putting it in trust or setting up a foundation.

Irv Koch ☒ Offline Reader ♣

ct Dengrove: "On terror, Libya and Syria cleaned up their act (mostly) after 9/11. They figured it wasn't worth the risk and they had little more to gain by supporting terrorists (outside Israel)." Ah, I was about to jump up and down until I got to that "outside Israel." Libya, Syria, and Iraq are certainly funding Hamas and Hezbollah. I don't know what they think they're doing though: if they'd just stop blowing things up for a year, they could have a Palestinian state on the West Bank. They'd get back nearly all the land that they stupidly lost to Israel in 1967 and 1973.

"Re your comment to Sheila about the anthrax mail: I agree with you and think whoever did it was surprised by the actual results and then ran like Hades. However, rumor is the FBI knows who it is but it's an ex-government scientist too smart to have left any clues that would stand up in court or even the press." A rumor from where, please?

ct me: "You report through Microsoft's Indian subsidiary? I knew you dealt with those guys, from your previous zines, but I didn't realize they were UP your chain of command. Weird." Well, the Indians were certainly up something, but let's not go there. As they've twice slipped the date for the follow-on, it's been real hard to not jump up and down and say "told ya! told ya!" ☒ "Where's the typesetting stuff used and why does it need upgrading?" I can't really say in detail yet, since it's stuff getting bundled into a new product, which is why I carefully elided product details from the e-mail I reprinted as my Asian trip reports. I can say that the part I'm actually working on is the backwards looking stuff in the existing products, while everyone else in the group is developing the new stuff. Such is the cost of being the new kid in the group (even if I am the oldest by a couple of years).

☒ *"Re Eric Raymond: Every time I see him mentioned somewhere as a big deal, I am vastly amused. Moi met him as the cute husband of a nice gal Live Role Playing Gamer in DC metro." I know Eric both through Arthur & Bernadette, and through Jeff Haemer, who did some work with one of Eric's companies, Rabbit Software. Eric is actually a big deal. Unlike Stallman, he's good on his feet, doesn't get rattled by reporters, and can clearly state the goals of his movement to the press. He is interested in software free of license restrictions not because he has a burning desire to make all software available to everyone, but (as Arthur points out) because he has some empirical evidence to suggest that team development of software is a better way to do things.*

☒ *"Ghod help your employer if I ever get elected President <grin>. I'd have him in as an advisor..."* Actually, if I were President — a lowlier position than my usual fantasy of being God-Emporer of the Universe — I'd probably have Eric in as an advisor, too. But then, I'd also have Steve Ballmer and Jim Hightower and Mario Cuomo. Ralph Nader's seat at the table would be in the lobby ... of Teresa LaPore's office.



Chuck Jones, animator

Gary Brown ✉ **Oblio** 🍷

I love the little comic book cover you've got above your colophon. A boy and his dog frolicking while a mushroom cloud appears in the background. Brings to mind the immortal line, "Of course I know what love is: a boy loves his dog."

*"Goodbye Chuck Jones ... I was a big fan of Jones' work before I understood why. As I kid I know I'd laugh at the Looney Tunes cartoons I saw, but I always laughed harder at some. And when the Road Runner came along, it was like a side-splitting event each time a new one ran in the movie theaters. When you stop and think of it, the Roadrunner-Coyote cartoons was set up on one gag: Coyote chases Roadrunner and loses. Yet, he made us laugh time and time again using that concept." In *Chuck Amuck*, Jones says that the Coyote is somewhat a self-portrait:*

The Coyote is a history of my own frustration and war with all tools multiplied only slightly. I can remember that my wife and daughter would start to weep bitterly and seek hiding places whenever they saw me head toward the tool drawer, if only to hang a picture. I have never reached into that devilish drawer without starting a chain of errors and disasters of various but inevitable proportions. Like any other man, I would rather succeed in what I can't do than do what I have successfully done before. I have never reached into that drawer without encountering one of those spiny things you stick flowers in. We don't keep that thing in that drawer, but it is always there. I count it a good day when I get only one spine under a fingernail. I tried to get the spiny thing out of the drawer once, but found out that the last time, when it had stuck to four fingers at once and been in fact lifted a few inches out of

its nest in the resulting shriek, it had fallen on a tube of glue, puncturing the tube and affixing itself to the drawer for all time. I have tried lackadaisically from time to time to remove it, and have succeeded in breaking a rattail file, a kitchen knife, three fingernails, a nailfile, a pair of manicure scissors, an eggbeater (in one of my more fanciful efforts), and a window, when the tail of the rattail file separated from the rattail file.

Your couple of pages of amusing *New York Times* corrections only serves to remind that in the rawest sense, the *Times* corrects form, but rarely substance. But of the genre, my favorite is still the correction they published on 20 July 1969, withdrawing the comments they made in an editorial after Robert Goddard's first successful rocket launch. (And you've gotta give *The Economist* points for their entry.)

An Election Correction

In the issues of December 16th 2000 to November 10th 2001, we may have given the impression that George Bush had been legally and duly elected president of the United States. We now understand that this may have been incorrect, and that the election result is still too close to call. *The Economist* apologises for any inconvenience.

— *The Economist*, 15 Nov 2001

ct Hlavaty: "I sure understand that doing away with Bin Laden and his ilk will take a while, but there is no reason for us to hitch up our pants and start saying we're going to kick butt any country we don't like. Man. That's insanity." I was going to launch into a diatribe about the United States withdrawing its support for the International Criminal Court, and holding up UN Peacekeeping operations because of it, but now that I've read a bit more about the treaty that set it up, I understand the problems. While we need a standing tribunal for crimes against humanity, I now believe that this isn't it.

That said, I prefer the Clinton administration's approach — sign the treaty, but hold it back from Senate ratification while working within the structure of the court to change its setup — to Bush's — "unsign" the treaty, hold up any peacekeeping operations in the UN, take our ball and go home.

🎸 "George Harrison was as much a creator of the Beatles sound as Lennon and McCartney. His guitar changed with each song and always played the right chords, if you know what I mean." When I was in Tokyo in March, there was literally a shrine to Harrison in the music store across from Mitsukoshi on the Ginza. They had a massive display with a huge picture of him, and were selling all his solo albums and the Beatles', too. Meanwhile, I think there's a different thing between playing it and composing it. As for playing it, I think they all had a hand in getting that sound, though you're right that George was (pardon the pun) instrumental. If you listen to the "Anthology"

albums, you can even hear some songs evolve as they play around with them. But as for composing, the Beatles I grew to know and love were pretty much defined by the McCartney solo songs like “Hey, Jude” and “Let It Be”. Even if they’ve got both John and Paul’s names on them, they’re pure McCartney. (Heard Sir Paul give an interview a couple of years ago in which he said he’d asked Lennon’s estate — that is, the Japanese bimbo — to agree to re-credit the songs that Paul had principally written to be McCartney /Lennon, rather than Lennon/McCartney. He was concerned because sheet music and library catalogs were appearing that just credited the first named author. She turned him down.)

ct Dengrove: “Sheesh, you’d think after 74 issues I could spell *Twygrasill* without looking. But NOOOOOOO.” Ha! I have a shorthand in my typesetting system so with just five keystrokes I get a perfect *Twygrasil* and *Treehouse Gazette* every time.

“I’m sure we haven’t destroyed the Taliban, even at this date. Many of them ran and many more decided to give up their public religious beliefs for a return to normal life. They’ll be lurking through Afghanistan for decades to come.” The more I look at the government set up by the tribal elders in Afghanistan, the more it looks like the old government with a different name, and different guys at the top. (Cue The Who’s “Won’t Get Fooled Again.”) But you gotta admire the slick way in which Harmid Karzai muscled the King out of the head-of-state job.



ct Robe: “That’s neat about the practical jokes at Christmas time. Every family has its traditions.” In Austin, we used to have a tradition of opening presents and then eating Christmas morning breakfast at Katz’s Deli. Now we have a Christmas morning buffet of paté and cheese and bread.

ct Feller: “I think major league baseball needs fewer teams because the owners aren’t swimming in money, they are only wading in it. And that upsets them. Montreal really has deep-sixed in terms of attendance and such, so they should move them somewhere else.” As I say above, the way things are set up now, everybody by the Yankees and the Dodgers get screwed on finances. It’s made worse because the teams are all private partnerships, and

never disclose their books. (Indeed, that was one of my major objections to the boondoggle that built and gave a stadium to the Denver Broncos: the claim was that the team couldn't afford to build it themselves, was going broke without a new stadium — after all, the existing one was fifteen years old — and, no, they couldn't divulge their balance sheet to justify it, you just had to take it on faith. Considering that the quarterback was a used car salesman, I don't think so. . .)

Meanwhile, Richard Florida, a professor at Carnegie-Mellon has written *The Rise of the Creative Class*, which observes that the economic benefit to a city of building a stadium is probably non-existent. On the other hand, interesting vibrant cities with a lot of creative people, and hence a healthy, active economy, invariably have a very active gay community. In other words, don't build football stadiums, build bathhouses.

ct Schlosser: "I think Americans look at their president as a leader. He's the one who should be out front and telling us where we're going. For him to run to various bases and hide on September 11 was part of the 'take care of me first and then we'll see how the American public is doing.' I just don't think it says he's a leader." As much as I think Shrub is a usurper, I've got to disagree with you on this one. He did right on September 11th. All his politician's instincts told him to get back to Washington, but he acceded to his security peoples' concerns and kept on the move. He stayed in touch. The only way he was going to communicate with the American people was on television anyway, and he could have done that from Mars. What would he have had to do if the White House was actually a target and had been destroyed?

ct Gelb: "Hey, I saw Pay It Forward recently and really liked it. A little over the top at the end, but had enough cleverness to keep me interested throughout." There are some interesting ideas in the movie, and the author of the book on which it's based has set up a foundation to promote the notion. But the basic notion of "hey, you should do something nice for other people" is an old one.

ct me: "That title is Wellsian in length." "Can't Believe Everything You Read on the Internet?" Nah. My stab at a Wellsian title was "You better use all those bits, young lady — There are children in India who don't have high-speed Internet access."

"To be honest, I don't know if Johnny Hart is having fun with his faith in B.C. or not." My sense is not, as you know. But, I'm fairly distressed that John Leo, a fairly conservative columnist who I like because he avoids loaded terms and is pretty rational, has started getting more and more shrill.

Johnny Hart answering your request for an original of one of his cartoons: "Enclosed is the original you requested. Although there is no charge for originals, a contribution to the American Cancer Society would be greatly appreciated." I've got to say, he gets points for this approach in my book. "I'm willing to do this nice thing for you, now go and do something nice for someone else." (As I think I've mentioned, during the 1996

election cycle, I licensed the Hugo software to the game company that Arthur's co-husband Kevin used to work for. They were trying to build a vaguely educational election game. When I realized what their intention was, I told them the license fee was \$100... donated to the New York chapter of the League of Women Voters.)

Janice Gelb ☒ *Trivial Pursuits* •

"In New Zealand, I'm going to... Rotorua, a Maori area with geysers, mineral hot pools, and volcanos that everyone told me I can't miss." Liz's sister Sandi and her family lived in Rotorua when her husband had a faculty position at the university there. I'm not sure what effect the time in New Zealand had on the kids

"As for Australia, I've been promised a live cricket match..." With live crickets? So are there rules to the game? Or are they just incomprehensible to the people who aren't citizens of the Commonwealth? Did I mention that there was a steady drift out of one of the talks I gave in India, as folks snuck off to check on the score of the India vs South Africa match and got sucked in?

On the Oscars: *"As for the show itself, I think this was the least funny Oscars telecast I've seen in years."* Didn't the show have a new director this year? *"I was very impressed with the speeches by the Academy-granted special Oscar winners: Robert Redford, Arthur Hiller, and Sidney Poitier. All three were thoughtful and inspiring. The tribute to Poitier was especially well done."* The thing I noticed what that all the folks saying things like "he was an inspiration" and "he made me think that I could do this, too" in the tribute film to Poitier were black. Did he have no effect on white actors?

On tax time: *"Well, one good thing about not getting a raise last year and having all my investments lose money was the fact that I'm actually getting money back from the state and the Feds this year."* Considering some of the nasty capital losses we've taken on paper in the last year, not to mention the stagnation of some stuff, I wish I'd flipped some Microsoft stock into Amazon back when Amazon was at \$5. (Now it's at 15½.)

The cartoon: *"Ignore line 13a if line 12b is greater than the specific gravity of Jupiter."* *"You're right – these tax forms have gotten too complex."* This reminds me of the Ditch Day puzzle I left when I was a senior at Tech. It was a massive list of questions with numerical answers, like "how many World Constructors (not Drivers) championships has Lotus won?" The calculation these were plugged into gave the room number on campus where the key to *my* room was hidden.

As for that *Newsweek* article based on Philip Kaplan's "F'd Companies" book on Kozmo.com: *"Funny thing is that pretty much every company in New York City manages to accomplish home delivery without burning through \$250 million."* Kozmo was probably not the best way to get "last mile" delivery for anything. It was too labor intensive for one-shots. But UPS is too heavy-weight for that, too — it's got too big a lead time.

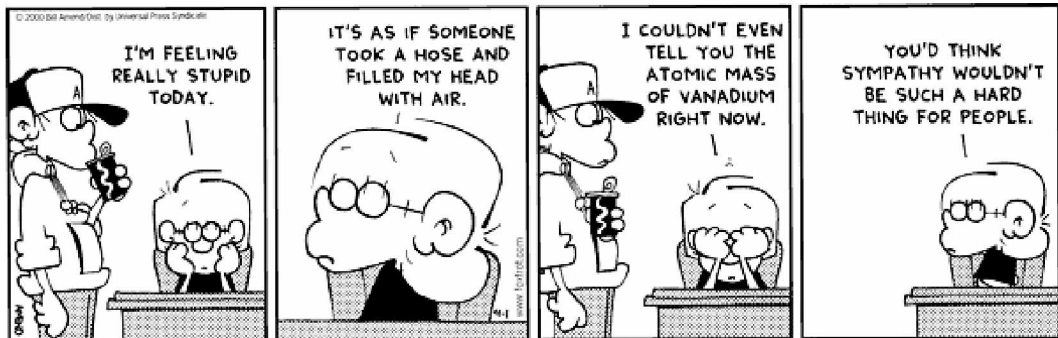
ct Brooks: "Any reports I could find about the B-25 crashing into the Empire State Building in 1945 say that the pilot was headed to Newark Airport but couldn't see because of dense fog. No one on the plane survived: the pilot and two crew members were killed as were 11 people working in the building." I have in front of me a reproduction of the front page of *The New York Times* for Sunday, July 29, 1945.

A twin-engined B-25 Army bomber, lost in a blinding fog, crashed into the Empire State Building at a point 915 feet above the street level at 9:40am yesterday. Thirteen persons, including the three occupants of the plane and ten persons at work within the building, were killed in the catastrophe, and twenty-six were injured.

Although the crash and the fire that followed wrecked most of the seventy-eighth and seventy-ninth floors of the structure, causing damage estimated at \$500,000, Lt Gen Hugh A Drum, president of the Empire State, Inc, Corporation, said last night that an inspection by the city's building department and by other engineers and architects showed that the structural soundness of the building had not been injured.

... Brilliant orange flames shot as high as the observatory on the eighty-sixth floor of the building...

One of the plane's two motors hurtled clear across the seventy-eighth floor, tore a hole in the south wall of the building, and plummeted to the roof of the twelve-story office building at 10 West Thirty-third Street, where it started a fire that demolished the penthouse of Henry Hering, noted sculptor, with resulting damage estimated at \$75,000.



ct Hlavaty: "I notice that you propose the solution for this later in your zine, 'intellectual curiosity disorder' requiring individualized education plans. I am reminded of my ex-husband who had really horrible study habits due to his history of coping with school that was geared for people slower than he was (he got a 1600 on his SATs) by waiting as late as possible to finish an assignment. Fine for high school and even part of college, but not great for his pre-med and graduate school work." I had (and have) roughly the same problem. I never had to study anything up through high school. When I got to college and had to start actually paying

attention in class, it was a severe culture shock. It is a source of on-going frustration for me that to this day I have trouble learning new things because I've never really mastered the technique for intense studying.

ct Lillian: "[Ian McKellen] also evidently had a great line during filming [of LoTR]. Evidently during the balrog scene they used a tennis ball on a string to represent the special effect, a common practice so the actor's eyes track where the special effect will be. In one take, he evidently boomed in a sonorous voice 'You Shall Not Bounce!'" One of the fun bits in the DVD of *Men in Black* is the decomposition of some of the special effects sequences. In the ultimate battle, the standin for the bug effect was a pink Post It on a stick. So for the first four layers of composition, you see Will Smith looking up and talking to "the pink sticky of doom."

ct Robe: "You say here that 'Miami did their appointed job in the Rose Bowl and averted a complete meltdown of the BCS' I completely disagree. The BCS was created to name an undisputed champion using a scientific formula." See my rant about this to Tom Feller on page 27. By the way, the sportswriters poll is one of the few places where a preferential ballot (like the one for the Hugos and DUFF) is used publicly.

☞ "Regarding possible weapons on planes, Ben Yalow commented when he got his nail file snapped off his nail clippers, his Palm Pilot stylus is actually more of a weapon and they didn't take that away!" Boy, it'd be real convenient if they had a consistent list of what you can take on an airplane and what you have to put in checked luggage. And it would be real convenient if you could check luggage without having to wait an hour. And it would be really nice if they'd get your checked luggage back to you within half an hour of the plane reaching the gate. But, that will all happen about the time pigs fly, I suspect.



ct Feller: "I regret to inform you that another net search revealed that there is indeed hobbit slash fiction." Hell, there's Harry Potter slash fiction, so why not. Hobbit slash seems almost ... I hesitate to use the word "normal", ... by comparison.

ct Schlosser: "Obviously, no one could make it out who was above the [WTC] crash sites. But not everyone who was below made it either. For one thing, people in Tower 2 were told that there

was no fire in their building and they should not evacuate, so many people did not get out.” Not completely true: Morgan Stanley, which occupied a large fraction (I seem to recall something like 20 floors) of Tower 2, lost only six employees, because their VP of security, an ex-Marine named Richard Rescorla, insisted on evacuating anyway. Or as he put it in a phone call during the evacuation, “The dumb sons of bitches told me not to evacuate. They said it’s just Building One. I told them I’m getting my people the fuck out of here.” Rescorla was the last person out of the south tower after the 1993 bombing, and he died going back for stragglers this time.

☞ “I have heard an idea that’s not exactly a National Travel ID Card but that might increase security: a voluntary deep security clearance for frequent flyers that would enable them to bypass security lines.” As you may know, that’s the Israeli approach. Of course, they’ve got a relatively smaller population to deal with, and don’t have the constitutional protections we do. And I don’t buy the argument that this ID would be completely voluntary.

☞ “(Made possible, of course, by the fact that MS doesn’t share its code with outside people but the MS software all works great with each other!)” Actually, Microsoft no longer shares its operating system code with its internal application developers. One would have hoped that this would result in the interfaces being a little better documented,[◊] but that seems to not be the case.

☞ “I’m not sure that the Chandra Levy story was only a story because of Condit. I think that any Congressional intern who disappeared without a trace would have attracted some interest.” I think you’re wrong here. The scandal and gossip machinery was already in place, having been assembled during the OJ Simpson and impeachment trials. That it happened at the same time Fox was starting up their news channel only served to hype it further. If she hadn’t slept with a congressman, no one would ever have heard her name, even if she had been a congressional intern.

ct Brown: “Regarding Mariah Carey, I watch a show on the WB Network called *The Gilmore Girls* and I knew Carey had reached a real low in her career when one of the characters made a joke about *Glitter*.” We just saw that episode of *Gilmore Girls* the other night. We hadn’t been watching it because it was on opposite *Buffy*, but since *Buffy*’s gone over the cliff (or as the TV folks say, “jumped the shark”) we’ll be watching Lorelei and Rorie next season rather the *Buffy* and Willow and (yeck) Dawn. But because we’ve been watching *Gilmore Girls*, we’ve been introduced to *Smallville* — which Gary Brown mentioned apropos former-SFPAn-turned-pro Mark Verheiden, who’s the show’s producer and wrote some episodes — and that’s turned out to be worth the time.

ct me: “Both your siblings skipped your wedding? Really? Is there a story behind that?” Remember that we had been living together for about five years, and decided to

◊ For that special value of “better” beginning at “none.”

actually get married on about three week's notice, so we weren't horribly surprised when not everyone showed up. I seem to remember that my sister Mary Louise was doing field work in North Dakota for the summer. I don't remember what Ian's excuse was.

Thanks for reprinting Anna Quindlen's column from the March 18 *Newsweek*. As I've observed, we've reached the stage of Nerf security: it looks effective but it just bounces off. As I think I've mentioned, Malcolm Gladwell made some similar observations in *Slate*: <http://slate.msn.com/default.aspx?id=2064257>. On the other hand: *"In the aftermath of the September terrorist attacks, conservatives jumped on those civil libertarians, saying that it was worth inconveniencing, perhaps even humiliating, Arab-Americans for the greater good, and that selective screening might have helped avert the attacks. Those arguments collapsed amid reports that nine of the September 11 hijackers were indeed specially screened, which obviously had no effect on the security of the country."* This is the first I've heard of the hijackers having been pulled out for second checks. It merely confirms that this was a failure of imagination, not of security. But, in the context of the security at Newark airport only catching half of the test weapons last month, it's not surprising that we all assumed it was a failure of security.

Steve Hughes ☒ *Travelers Tales* ♣ Hmm, Aruba. Now duly added to the list of nice places where one can plot on the beach and eat well.

Randy Cleary ☒ *Avatar Press* ♣ Thanks for sharing Hank and Toni's wedding pictures. It was nice to see them since we couldn't be there.

Eve Ackerman ☒ *Guilty Pleasures* ♣

"I was concerned about leaving the boys home alone — did I ever mention Risky Business was the movie I watched the night I went into labor with Raphi?" As I've noted before, I actually fell asleep during *Risky Business*, in fact, during the train sequence, of all things. But, I can imagine that seeing that while in labor could leave an impression.

ct Gelb: "I especially liked the Roman Convention idea. Now that would be a retro convention to end all retro conventions. And think of the Hugos you'd give out! People would be scabbling over whether the Iliad really should qualify under fantasy. But maybe Aristophanes The Frogs could win for best media presentation?" Only the Yale version that was done in the swimming pool, with the full frog chorus. And the *Iliad* is history: it's *Odyssey* that's fantasy.

ct Strickland: "Now we're waiting for April and the letters to come pouring into the mailbox. It's going to be hard for me to resist opening them. And then sealing them shut again, naturally." Remember that even though the tea kettle is the preferred method for steaming those envelopes open, sliding a slotted knitting needle under the flap allows you to roll up the letter, extract it, and return it, all without disturbing the original seal. (I still haven't gotten to your zine where he decides where to go to college, so I'll find out and offer my congratulations soon.)

Gary Robe ☒ Tennessee Trash ♣

"By Friday evening I was feeling a bit better, and was quite ready to dump myself onto a plane home. I have had to cope with many variations of Montezuma's Revenge in my travels, but this was a whole new level of No Fun At All." On my latest trip, the episode of gastroenteritis was inevitable. I'm glad it waited until the last day to strike. And then, it didn't really catch me in earnest until I was safely at home and could rely on my own bathroom.

Thanks for the review of *Red Moon* by Michael Cassutt. Sounds like a fascinating reprise of the Soviet space program. I have a book on the unread shelf entitled *Dragonfly* on the disasters that befell *Mir*.

"And then things got worse: I wrote earlier that Isaac got the flu from Corlis and me in early March. ... Today they confirmed that he has rheumatic fever and that he has developed a heart murmur." I hope he's completely recovered by now.

There is no reason to assume that the universe has the slightest interest in intelligence — or even in life. Both may be random accidental by-products of its operations like the beautiful patterns on a butterfly's wings. The insect would fly just as well without them.

— Arthur C Clarke, *The Lost Worlds* cf 2001

mike weber ☒ a monument that neither government nor time can eradicate ♣

ct me: "The concept of a national ID card doesn't bother me that much, because we effectively already have it, though in a piecemeal and disorganized fashion, in driver's licenses, passports, Social Security and so on." And that's the point: the government has to go through those disparate clumps of data and specifically pull them together. Imagine the horror of Soviet-style record keeping with American-style centralized computer technology. Emigrating to Canada sounds like a better and better idea. And, no, the supreme court says you don't have show ID on the whim of the police. In fact, you are not required to carry identification of any kind in this country. If you get stopped by the police, you have to show them a drivers license if you're driving, but that's a different matter.

☞ *"As to the irritation factor in traveling by air, it doesn't really sound that much worse than traveling international already was..."* You know, traveling between countries was never a big deal, and is now much less painful than trying to get from Dulles to Las Vegas.

ct me: "Technically. yes, Tripp wasn't fired, since, as you say. she was an appointee and her appointment was up. However, if they had really wanted to. the new Administration could have re-appointed her." And that the Bush *files* administration didn't re-hire someone originally employed by the Bush *pere* administration might suggest something about her. (Which comes back to one of my thoughts on the matter: the Bush *pere* administration left her as a booby trap for the Clinton administration because they

knew how flaky she was — she had, after all, been running around telling all and sundry about Bush’s affairs.)

Meanwhile, I was looking for an old zine the other day, and tripped over a mailing comment to you. The title of your zine was “Why is Boy George like a Lamb Chop?” I can’t for the life of me remember what the punch line was. Do you?

me ☒ **Playing Pepé le Pew** ♣

ct Gelb: “The cheer containing pi that I found through Google goes “Square root, tangent, hyperbolic sine; Three point one four one five nine; e to the x, dy, dx; Slide rule, slipstick, Tech, Tech, Tech!” Thanks so much for looking this up. That sounds very familiar.” Rereading this, I was reminded that Caltech is about the only place I could have gone to college where I could actually have ended up sleeping with a cheerleader. Never woulda happened at, say, UCLA or Rutgers.

ct Brown: “What was that Michael Keaton movie called, the one he duplicated himself? Or have I asked this before and is this comment uncontrollably duplicating itself in my zines? Duplicity. And yes, you’ve mentioned it before. Duplicity. And yes, you’ve mentioned it before.” Actually, I got that wrong: it was *Multiplicity*. Actually, I got that wrong: it was *Multiplicity*. Actually, I got that wrong: it was *Multiplicity*. (Or have I used that joke already.)

ct Brooks: “Fred Gwynne is apparently a better actor than I would have guessed from The Munsters...’ Fred Gwynne was not the brainless twit he played in his TV roles. He graduated from Harvard, and I seem to recall he was editor of the Lampoon.” I was reminded when Allie and JJ gave me a copy of *My Cousin Vinny* for my birthday that one of the subtle jokes in it is that the smarter-than-he-looks Alabama judge played by Gwynne has a sheepskin from Yale Law School very ostentatiously displayed in his chambers.

ct Lillian: “I want a Mercedes-Benz. I want to make enough so that I don’t have to think about fixing it when it breaks.’ All things being equal, I’m not sure I’d want a Mercedes.” Of course, the obvious response to should have been, “Oh, Lord, won’t ya buy me...”

Actually, I got that wrong: it was *Multiplicity*. (Or have I used that joke already.)

Well, this was supposed to be the first of two zines this time: *All the Mailing Comments That Fit in Print*, followed by *And Then Some*. But that — along with the mailing comments for 227 — will have to wait until next time.

And I don’t have time to put together that list of past Hugo nominees either. That’ll have to wait for next time, too.

Art Credits

Page 8: *Heart cf the City* from 21 Jul. Page 11: Tom Toles' from 11 July. Page 16: *Strange Brew* from 18 Oct 2001 — well, it's a popular cable channel in *my* office. Page 18: *Calvin & Hobbes* from 5 July 1991 — boy and tiger meet Guy at the movies. Page 20: *Betty* from 16 Aug 2001 — hey, if Mel Brooks has to apologize for *Young Frankenstein*, then so does Joss Whedon for that damned musical episode of *Buffy*. Page 24: *Calvin & Hobbes* from 20 June 1991 — never underestimate the use of superior firepower. Page 27: *Shoe* from 14 Apr 2000. Page 28: *Dilbert* from 18 July — even Dilbert's 401k can be protected by diversification. Page 30: John Sherffius provided another Chuck Jones memorial in the St Louis *Post-Dispatch*. Page 32: *Doonesbury* from 2 July — Warlords? Cabinet ministers? Only their tailors can tell for sure. Page 35: *Foxtrot* from 1 Apr 2000 — "intellectual curiosity disorder" sometimes short-circuits. Page 36: *Sylvia* from 19 July — useless fingerprints and Palm Pilots as weapons: welcome to the new world order. Back cover: *Strange Brew* from 13 Jul — in honor of our Canadian friends.

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