



Aristotle Meets Gernsback is the fiftieth SFPA-zine (volume two, number twenty-seventh) from Jeffrey Copeland intended for the Southern Fandom Press Alliance's 220th mailing and selected others. It is published by Bywater Press, 3243 165th Ave, SE, Bellevue, Washington 98008. The text of *Aristotle Meets Gernsback* was composed using the T_EX typesetting system, and is set in 11-point Palatino. The original of this publication was printed on 25 March 2001, and it was reproduced by the Xerographic process.



It was the familiar story. You've heard it before. You've read it to a child. The Three Little Pigs had built themselves houses. And, of course, the day came when the Big Bad Wolf came to the door of the first house, the one built of straw, and he bellowed — as Big Bad Wolves are wont to do — “Let me in, Little Pig, so that I may eat you, or I will huff and puff and blow your house down!”

The first Little Pig, not wanting to get eaten and being no fool, yelled back “Bugger off, you foul canine!” Or maybe he yelled “No I won’t! No I won’t! Not by the hair on my chinny-chin-chin.” It doesn’t really matter which, because the wolf huffed, and the house of straw, being built neither to local building code nor with the modern techniques recommended by the Straw Bale House Manufacturer’s Association, caved in after very few puffs.

The first Little Pig emerged from the shambles of his house, and just ahead of the pursuing wolf, ran as fast as his little piggie toes could carry him up the hill to the second Little Pig’s house built of sticks.

Yell. Rush. Door open. Slam. Suddenly, there were two Little Pigs, one breathing very heavily, behind the door of the second house.

The Big Bad Wolf trotted up to the door and he bellowed — as Big Bad Wolves are wont to do — “Let me in, Little Pigs, so that I may eat you, or I will huff and puff and blow your house down!”

The two Little Pigs, not wanting to get eaten and being no fools, yelled back “Piss off and die, fool!” Or maybe they yelled “No we won’t! No we won’t! Not by the hair on our chinny-chin-chins.” It doesn’t really matter which, because the wolf huffed, and the house of sticks, being built neither to local building code nor with the solidness of the log cabin in which Abraham Lincoln was reared, caved in after very few puffs.

The two Little Pigs emerged from the shambles of the second one’s house, and just ahead of the pursuing wolf, ran as fast as their little piggie toes could carry them up to the crest of the hill to the third Little Pig’s house, which, as you will recall, was built of bricks.

Yell. Rush. Door open. Slam. Suddenly, there were three Little Pigs, two breathing very heavily, behind the door of the third house. The third Little Pig surveyed his cohorts, turned silently, and picked up the telephone to talk for a few moments. The first two Pigs, meanwhile, watched out the window horror-stricken as the Big Bad Wolf came trotting up to the door, to bellow — as Big Bad Wolves are wont to...

But just then, a long black sedan pulled up in front of the brick house. Out of it emerged two large Pigs with no necks, wearing double-breasted pin-striped suits and fedoras.

They grabbed the Big Bad Wolf and proceeded to beat the living daylights out of him. These guys were good at what they did, and they took pride in their work. If there was a square centimeter of unbruised surface on the Big Bad Wolf, it was hard to see. Finally, the Pig with the smaller neck reached into his coat, pulled out a long-barrelled .44-caliber pistol, and shot the Wolf in both kneecaps. They lifted the bleeding, battered, bruised Wolf heaved him into the trunk of the large black car with no resistance, and slammed the lid.

They turned, tipped their hats to the third Little Pig watching from the window, and his wide-eyed cohorts looking on in co-mingled horror and fascination. The third Little Pig sketched a wave in return as they climbed into the long black sedan and roared off.

"What," cried the two Little Pigs in unison, "*what was **that**!?!?*"

"Oh," said the blasé third Pig, he of the brick house, "those were my cousins, the Guinea Pigs."



From comedy, to tragedy:

On Holly's last full day, she was actually a bit perkier than she had been. She sat with Liz in the kitchen, and climbed up on the bed with me when I went down to read. She let me pick her up and put her on my chest, and purred when I petted her back, which had grown so thin, and stroked under her chin. The next morning, she came with me upstairs to the kitchen, and I sat with her for a while in her favorite spot in front of the refrigerator, where it is warm.

Even though she was nearly blind from cataracts, she could find her way around the house well enough, but I think her sense of smell was failing, too, so she was losing one of the clues she had for finding her way. She'd been losing weight for two months, and had grown frightfully thin. We'd taken to sequestering her in another room as many as four times a day to make sure she could eat without interference from the other cats. Nonetheless, she kept losing weight, and it was clear that she was cold and stiff much of the time.

On January 31st, Liz took her to the vet for the last time. Because of her weight loss, he'd been concerned when he cleaned her teeth in December that she had cancer, but could detect no tumor. We'd rejected his suggestion of exploratory surgery then, both because of her age — 15 we think, though when we adopted her the Humane Society couldn't tell us when she'd been born — and her lack of weight. This time, there was no doubt.

She was happy with us, and I think we gave her a good life. We did the best we could for her these last few months.

She was a great cat. She was frisky, and playful, and affectionate, and demure, and slept with us most nights, and had a less-grating Siamese voice than most black cats I've known, and I will miss her.



So I took part of the bonus I got for my last patent application, knuckled under and finally got myself a Palm IIIx. I was still happily using a combination of my Filofax, various purpose-built applications, and Microsoft Outlook for scheduling and to-do lists. However, being able to have an electronic reading device, and to be able to use Pocket Quicken for on-the-fly entry of credit card slips was a big win. There are downsides: text entry in the silly Graffiti scribbled alphabet has many letters and numbers that are not intuitive to me — 8, 9, and V being the prime offenders, with E and C getting confused often — I now have to keep my whole life in Outlook, which though better than many, is still not my favorite application.*

On the other hand, I get to carry around several things that I want to read with me all the time, so I can flip out the *Palm Beach Post* series on how Al Gore was deprived of the Presidency or *Three Musketeers* or Alan Winston's LASFAPA zine, and read them in odd moments. (You'll recall that I've now written two installments of my monthly column about programs on the desktop to get readable text to the Palm. Those of you with Unix systems and Palms — *Janice, Liz* — know who to ask, if you're interested.) I am now also compulsively adding things to my electronic to-do list instead of keeping an index card in my pocket for items like "get updated anti-virus signature files for home machines". Plus, I have some games that are sufficient to amuse JJ when we're out together and there's a delay, like at a restaurant. His current favorite is something called HardBall, a version of

* Why? Because you can't synchronize the Palm to multiple desktop applications, and my schedule at work — the occasional meeting, the seminars, the time I block out for reading — must be in Outlook so other people can coordinate their schedules with mine.

Pong. (I find it fascinating that we've gone from an arcade Pong machine the size of a coffee table, to Pong in something the size of a pack of playing cards.)

You might ask since I work for Microsoft, why didn't I get one of the HP or Compaq Pocket PCs? It certainly helped that Liz had already gotten a Palm, but it still wasn't an easy choice. The reader software is clearly superior on the Microsoft platform, as I've discussed before, and the screen is bigger, but other aspects of the user interface are not as clean. Also, while Outlook is okay on a big screen, it's less so on a postcard-sized one, and on a PocketPC, you use a scaled-down Outlook for calendar and list-making. In general, there are tasks I really do want to relegate to my desktop, rather than trying to carry a completely general-purpose machine (which incidentally is a power hog) around in my purse. But even given that caveat, the Palm has been around long enough that there's a huge body of software for it — something that's not going to exist for the Microsoft platform for a couple of years. When I'm ready to upgrade the Palm, the Microsoft platform may be sufficiently mature and it'll be the right time to reconsider.

Significantly, the first thing I read solely on the Palm was Vannevar Bush's 1945 essay "As We May Think" on how technological advances will enable knowledge workers to organize themselves better. I find it a sufficiently fascinating read — both in what Bush got right and what he got wrong — that I've reprinted it in dead tree form, and franked it through this mailing of SFPA.

The scary realization is that the Palm and the Pocket PC are the nearly-complete embodiment of the hand-held secretarial device Arthur C Clarke postulates in *Imperial Earth*. If Clarke underestimated the effects of Moore's law sufficiently that we've gotten this far in twenty-five years, how far will we be in 275 more, when his novel is set?

The world has arrived at an age of cheap complex devices of great reliability; and something is bound to come of it.

— Vannevar Bush

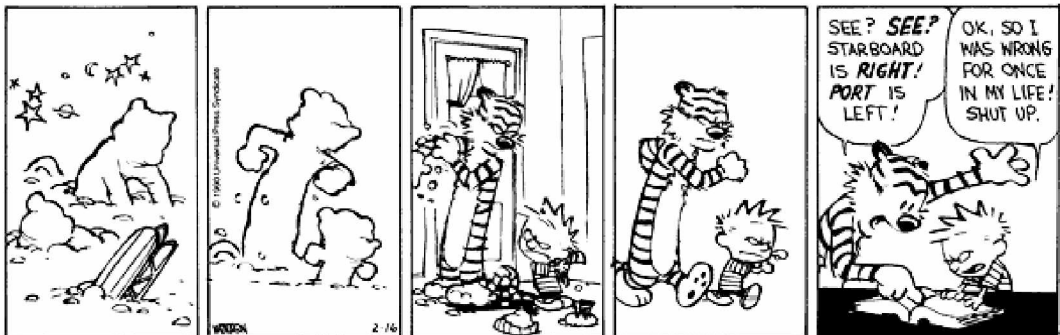
I guess I'm expected to comment on the earthquake we had on February 28th. The news photos you've seen were confined to a very small area of downtown, where all the old, unreinforced masonry lives. Or rather, lived. No damage to speak of was done on our side of the lake. The house escaped unscathed except for some pictures shifted on the walls, a small pot which leapt off the sideboard into a

padded dining room chair, and some model rockets that launched themselves off the top of my office bookshelves. (Both the Apollo and Soyuz managed to end up on the floor. The Apollo model blew out the same panel that vexed Jim Lovell, but the Soyuz came apart at the seams. I'm not sure whether that's a statement about the merits of American *vs* Soviet engineering, or about 30-year-old airplane glue.) We were without power at the house for a grand total of 85 minutes, I think.

I've lived in California, and been through serious earthquakes on both sides of the Pacific, so panic was just not likely. It felt to me about a full Richter point less than reported. It did get entertaining in the office for about a minute, as the building moved quite a bit. I've since discovered that campus is built to rather up-to-date earthquake safety specs.

When I realized that power was off at the house, I called JJ's school and discovered that they were okay, but were canceling after-school activities. Since Wednesday is chess club for JJ, I went to get him, and he was rather relieved to see me. While he was hiding under his desk, he got concerned about some of the equipment in my office falling on me.

Allie, on the other hand, is supposed to be an old hand at this, since she was not only born in California, but got to see the Whittier quake as a three-year-old. I got her out of bed and in the doorway at 5:45am for that one as Liz stayed stuck in the waterbed, getting sloshed hither and yon. After an hour and a half of post-Whittier aftershocks, Allie looked up at me, smiled and declared, "Daddy! I know the rules now! When they make the room move, the first one to get to the doorway wins, right!" Thirteen years later, she was the last one in her physics class standing up watching the lights sway, asking "hey, what's happening?" So much for earlier conditioning.



The last item is from the news, just when you all thought that we wouldn't be providing stories of Boulder lunacy any more.

3rd-grader's racism study banned

BOULDER, Colo., Feb 21, 2001 (AP) - School officials are reviewing a decision to ban a third-grader's science fair project which suggested students preferred a white Barbie doll over a black Barbie.

The Mesa Elementary School student's father, David Thielen, said his 8-year-old daughter was told the school's science fair was not the best forum for considering racial issues.

Now the school board has asked Superintendent George Garcia to look at the school's reaction to the girl's project and examine overall science fair policy.

Thielen's daughter, whose name he did not want released, dressed up a white Barbie and black Barbie in two different colored dresses. She asked 15 adults at her father's workplace which doll was prettier.

She then switched the dresses and asked 15 more adults. The doll wearing the lavender dress — regardless of the doll's skin color — was deemed prettiest by both groups.

When she asked fifth-graders at Mesa Elementary, all 15 in one class picked the white doll. In the second class, after the dresses were switched, nine of the 15 students picked the white doll.

Her conclusion: "I discovered that most grown-ups liked the lavender dress on the black or white Barbie. On the other hand, kids mostly liked the white Barbie. Only six kids liked the black Barbie."

Within an hour of setting up her display earlier this month, it was taken down. Several teachers and parents thought it would upset the school's minority students.

Thielen said school administrators violated his daughter's First Amendment rights, and he wants them to apologize. "I would think the district would want to use the exhibit to discuss race rather than refuse to even talk about it," Thielen said.

The school's enrollment is about 93 percent white, 3 percent Asian, 3 percent Latino and 1 percent black, according to the district.

"Issues around race are sometimes more difficult to discuss," school board president Stan Garnett said. "But that doesn't mean they shouldn't be talked about."

Some background: Beginning in 1939, husband-and-wife psychologists Kenneth and Mamie Clark collaborated on a series of papers on the effect of race on school children's self-image. One of their papers was cited specifically by Earl Warren in the *Brown v Board of Education* decision, a paper that described the experiment young Miss Thielen duplicated.

Ah, spring in Boulder, where the snow melts, only to be replaced by thick irony.

Reviews

★ Consider the impossibility of the situation: On your first outing in a new job, you have to work opposite four people who've scored the top honor in the field. Young Robert Brown managed to keep his composure and his skill in just such a situation in *Finding Forrester* starring with Sean Connery, F Murray Abraham, Anna Paquin, and Matt Damon. The kid pulls it off, the movie is wonderful, and you should go see it.

★ *The Patriot* is a composited story about a South Carolina planter fighting in the Revolutionary War. While it's got some nice bits, it suffers from the same problem Cameron's *Titanic* did: the stories of the real participants were probably just as harrowing and more interesting. Go see *1776* instead: at least it's a musical.

★ *Gladiator* is a big flipping "who cares". At the end of two-and-a-half hours, I didn't care about the hero, Bigus Pectorialis — his plight took on too many elements of high melodrama — didn't care about the corrupt emperor, Swingus Dickus — I saw a better rendition of the character in *Return of the Jedi* — didn't care about the fawning princess, Titsus Blondus — *Erin Brokovich* provided a more interesting female character, even though I find Julia Roberts distasteful. Worse, Ridley Scott can't direct his way out of a wet paper bag, and can't put together a movie that is more than a conflation of the commercials on which he cut his teeth, except that his movies have more gore. This is not even an adequate answer to Frank N Furter's offer in *Rocky Horror*: "If you want something visual that's not too abysmal..." Don't waste time even looking at the trailers.

[[And now we have a dozen Academy Award nominations for this piece of crap. Money will buy anything in Hollywood. Or am I just missing something? Is this good for reasons other than its content? Am I hampered by not being able to see the film for watching the movie?]]

★ *3000 Miles to Graceland* is a caper movie, with Kevin Costner and Kurt Russell. Gory, to be sure, but entertaining. As with lots of caper movies, it's the get-away that's the problem...

★ *Wild Things* is also a caper movie, but in the mold of *The Last of Sheila* with a dash of *Body Heat* thrown in. High school guidance counselor accused of raping a student — worse, the daughter of the richest woman in a very rich town, a woman he'd been screwing himself — and now he's set up by the rich kid and the poor, disgruntled kid from the poor side of town. Kevin Bacon plays the very concerned cop trying to prevent tragedy. And nothing is quite what it seems. The

plot survives the salaciousness of having Neve Campbell play the poor kid and Denise Richards play the rich kid. Oddly enough, Richards' acting isn't as stiff as it was in *The World is Not Enough* — perhaps she remembered to stretch first. If you see this, watch the credits through, since there are important scenes that you didn't get to see during the mainline movie.

★ *The Cell* was touted as a huge, wonderful, mind-bending thing. Very nice if you're sadistic and repressed, but there's nothing there past the nice visual effects. There really isn't a plot to hang them off.

★ *Crisis Four* is the second thriller from former-SAS commando Andy McNab. Amusing in a testosterone-soaked way, but I got bogged down in constantly translating the lower-class British slang to English.

★ Last year's cartoon movie of man versus nature is Japanese, and is called *Princess Mononoke*. It is very, very pretty. The English dub features some real heavy hitters who can actually act like Billy Bob Thornton and Clare Danes. I wish I knew enough Japanese that I could sit and listen to the Japanese soundtrack. (Though I know enough to realize that the dialog is subtly different in the two languages.)

[Oddly enough, I was reading excerpts from British theater critic Kenneth Tynan's diaries in *The New Yorker* the other day, and he said, in 1972,

I am certain that the full potential of the cinema will not be achieved until it concentrates on the development of *full-length cartoons*. (I've suspected this since I saw the brilliant and highly erotic Japanese cartoon "1001 Nights," two years ago.) I do not, by this, mean stylized drawings of talking animals; nor would anyone imagine anything so absurd were it not for the fact that Walt Disney's accidental domination of the cartoon scene has made it impossible for us to think of it except in terms of clothed, speaking animals and birds going through motions designed to entertain the nursery. It's significant that the first X-rated or "adult" cartoon, "Fritz the Cat," has pigs, crows and cats in its cast but no people. It is as if the first oil painter had painted only trees, and the art of painting had subsequently been defined as the art of painting trees.

We'll ignore Disney's *not* being the first animator, and the high quality of work featuring no animals coming out of European studios at the same time — we again note the Bauhaus student films from which *Fantasia* stole its look-and-feel.]

★ I was pleasantly surprised by *Recess: School's Out*, a movie of the latest cartoon nonsense foisted off on America's youngster's by Disney. It's got a pleasant plot — kid spends his summer vacation defeating bad guys who want to

stop there ever being a summer vacation again — good acting — Dabney Coleman, for example, plays the principal, and James Woods the head bad guy — and a sound track that's aimed more at parents than kids — watch for the scene with *Wipeout* as background music. I'm glad JJ twisted my arm to take him to see this.

★ In one of her periodic accidental fits of being a teenager, Allie picked out *Bring It On* at the video store. This movie about the rich high school cheerleading squad going up against the poor kids from the inner city at the national cheerleading competition actually has plot and characters. It's not deep, but it is well-done. It also has both Clare Kramer and Eliza Dushku from *Buffy: The Vampire Slayer* in it, as well as Kirsten Dunst playing the not-quite-the-airhead-she-appears team captain. Again, not serious, or even weighty, but fun.

★ *Insanely Great* is Stephen Levy's book about the development of the Apple Macintosh computer. He talks a lot about personality, a fair bit about technology. In general, even though it's a book of geek gossip, it's worth reading.

★ *The Art of War* was last year's Wesley Snipes espionage thriller. Very good supporting cast including Donald Sutherland and Anne Archer. But, it's a Wesley Snipes movie: things blow up, people get killed, the bad guys get their's in the end.

Mailing Comments on SFPA 218

Before I begin with the regular mailing comments, let me back up to some stuff I said in *Fantasy and Reality*:

☒First, responding to *Toni* about Rosie O'Donnell hiring a potentially-armed guard to tail her kid to school, I said "*perhaps this isn't the best solution, and perhaps she's being a bit hypocritical, but like you and me, I'm willing to allow her to contain multitudes, too.*" Actually, on reflection, I'm not even sure she's being hypocritical: She's playing the game by the rules in place now, even as she advocates a new set of rules. That doesn't change my initial opinion, though, that if she's concerned for her kid's safety at school, maybe she needs to rethink where she's sending him.

☒Also responding to *Toni* but about learning how to manage people, I said "*But the books are about wholesale management; if you want to learn about retail management, I think you've got to learn by watching.*" Not true: for retail management, you want parenting skills. Read a little book by Adele Farber and Elaine Mazlish called *How to Talk so Kids Will Listen and Listen so Kids Will Talk*.

☒Lastly, I was discussing *Steve Hughes'* friend's daughter's view of Microsoft as a summer intern. She claimed that she'd never seen a place with less leadership.



I suggested that part of the problem might be dealing with an organization of much larger size than she was used to. However, it later occurred to me that a fundamental problem may be confusing leadership and direction: I get almost no direction in what I do from anyone in my management chain. But I *do* get fairly specific and measurable goals — finish this piece of software done to ship on this date — and occasional bits of advice — you might want to read this book/go to this talk/give a seminar to that group. I just have to develop the road map myself.

Now, on with the regular comments:

Ned Brooks ✉ *The New Port News* ✉

ct my OE zine: “SFFA cannot be mailed ‘First Class,’ ... You would have to use ‘Priority Mail’...” And I thought I had the corner of being the nit-picking pedant, Ned.

ct Lynch: “What a rip-off to make a Bach CD with only 40 minutes of music!” Um, maybe they ran out? After all, that Caribbean band who are currently everywhere singing “Who Let the Dogs Out” only has the one song, just like the band that did Guy’s favorite, “Afternoon Delight”. And Peter Frampton only has the one album. So maybe this Bach band, where ever they’re from, only wrote 40 minutes worth of songs before they got a record contract.

ct Dengrove: “You are quite right that Castro might have consulted a santero just for political reasons rather than that he believed in such stuff.” Yes, Castro might have considered it important to support the White House Office of Faith-Based Action. Incidentally, a press release from the Atheist Community of Austin crossed my desk recently: they’re applying for a grant to “offer government funded social services in an atheistic context.” (But see the *Non-sequitur* cartoon above.)

ct Koch: “You say ‘humans smell horrible and taste worse’ ... Maybe you got a bad sample...” It might not have been a bad sample, it could have just been spoiled. (If he’s been

eating my wife's nephews — the most spoiled humans I can think of — I'll pass the salt, or provide a cream sauce.)

ct Lillian: "Da Shrub never looked charming to me — more like the What, me worry kid, Alfred E Newman." Check out the November 13, 2000 cover of *The Nation*, which I've reproduced on my back cover.

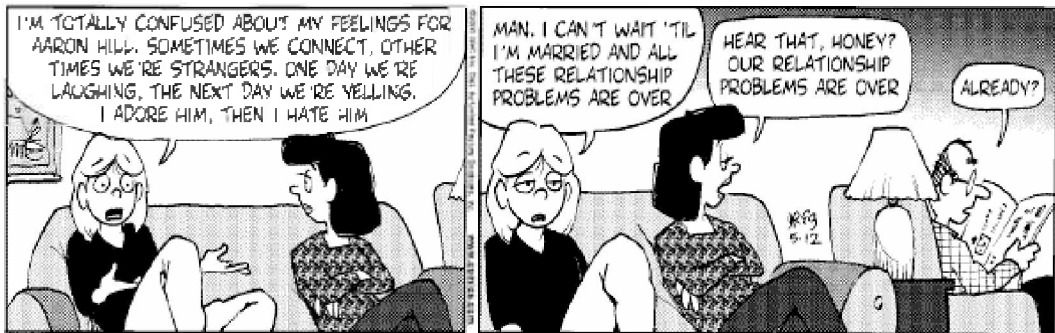
ct Brown: "How much is Brain in a Box? Maybe I should get one!" It might be more useful to send one to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, DC.

ct me: "I thought I was to be the DSC GoH in 2001 in Birmingham..." Yes, that was my confusion, Ned, not yours. And now I'm annoyed because there's frighteningly little chance we'll be able to make it to Birmingham, even if the convention isn't in that hell-hole of a hotel.

ct Weisskopf: "Good to see you at the collation (even if I was the only flaming liberal in the group...)." You mean they set you on fire for being a liberal?!?

Guy Lillian ☒ **Challenger at Chicon** ♣

Let me say again, congratulations on your engagement to Rosy. I couldn't be more pleased for you. You, of all people, deserve this happiness in your life.



Richard Lynch ☒ **Variations on a Theme** ♣

ct me: "Interesting that you'd take the trans-Pacific route to India rather than a trans-Atlantic one." Remember that from the left coast, it's equidistant, and equally ugly, no matter which way you go. The advantage of traveling trans-Pacific is the flights break such that you get an overnight someplace in southeast Asia like Tokyo or Bangkok, and that allows your body to adjust a bit. Of course, my stopping in Hong Kong is now moot, since my kid brother and his brood are now all physically in London.

ct Strickland: "I thought [Kage Baker's Hugo-nominated story 'Son Observe the Time'] was actually the best in the category, but it was up against some very strong competitors, including a very good Connie Willis story (which won) that didn't have all that much stf content." Well, lots of

Connie Willis' stories don't have a lot of stf content, but this one, "The Winds of Marble Arch", had excellent characterization, excellent plot, and nicely launches from a single premise. The last is the one thing that I've been looking for lately in a good science fiction story.

ct Schlosser: *"It's easier for us to contract out the job to our printer, who does excellent work for a reasonable price. Our mimeo days are over."* I think that if money was no object — a game one plays more often when some of the guys you have coffee with every morning measure their net worths in tens of millions — I'd still do my own printing. I'd just have a high-end Lexmark continuous-tone color laser printer to do it on, with the full-up finishing attachment that does folding and stapling.

ct Brown: *"On new ballparks: 'I know now why [Jacobs Field] is praised so often. So very fan friendly. All the seats are fantastic.' By this, do you mean they have unobstructed views? Or are just nice and comfortable?"* Both our recent local ball parks have reputations for being fan friendly. Coors Field — which we never actually went to a game in — apparently has only good seats. Safeco — in which I've been to both ball games and other events — has reasonably comfy seats, excellent sight-lines, and no obstructions, and I've sat both way up and way down there.

ct Robe: *"I read somewhere that just closing your luggage with tamper-proof plastic ties is more effective than locking." Probably true, but with my luck, I'd either lose or forget to bring in the first place the side-cutters I'd need to remove the ties.*" There are three tools that are always in my purse: a Swiss Army knife, a small flashlight, and a wonderful little folding tool (a present from Chris and Barb Kostanick) that includes pliers, cutter and screwdrivers. I also keep a smaller Swiss Army knife in my pocket with my change. All this means that on trips, I'm often beset by children who need to have a splinter removed or want to cut a picture out of a magazine. In any event, I often carry cable ties in my briefcase, so I'm all set with low-tech high-security luggage closures.

Arthur Hlavaty ✉ Confessions of a Consistent Liar •

ct me: *"After putting in a plug for Barkley for governor of Alabama, I was informed that he is a Republican. Alabama can still do worse."* Well, it shouldn't surprise you that he's a Republican: until the party was taken over by the yahoos from the Christian Coalition, it was a fairly easy mapping from rich to Republican, which is why the gays within the party, flying under the "Log Cabin Republicans" banner, held such influence. The Republican party of Barry Goldwater and John McCain — keep government off our backs (rather than the Reaganesque keep government in the bedroom but only in the wallets of poor people) — is just the sort of philosophy that would appeal in such cases. However, as for "Alabama can still do worse,"

since Fob James — a right-wing, Bible-thumping yahoo with the intelligence of a tree sloth — was governor of Alabama when we started this conversation, I'd posit that one of the few ways Alabama could do worse was to elect evangelist Jim Bakker governor.

☞ *"I also believe that Nixon is the only recent president to appear in public so stoned that everyone noticed he was making no sense (alcohol and sleeping pills at the Lincoln Monument)." I'm not sure about Bush I's "Don't cry for me Argentina speech" — it's been argued that that was just the usual tortured Bush syntax, but he *was* taking Halcyon at the time. As opposed, of course, to Reagan, who regularly appeared in public so senile that his handlers just let him babble on in shock.*

ct Lillian: *"McCain reminds me of fellow Arizonan Barry Goldwater: decent, honest, brave, willing to kick the Religious Right in the ass (as Goldwater suggested for Jerry Falwell), but they have some unbelievably dumb political ideas." I once saw Goldwater, after his retirement, talking to Jay Leno, and Leno couldn't resist asking him about Newt Gingrich, who'd just been elected Speaker of the House. Goldwater was volubly unimpressed with Gingrich's rhetoric, integrity, and involvement with the religious loons.*

ct Weisskopf: *"As someone said, the Shrub was born on third base and thinks he hit a thinks he hit a triple." It was Molly Ivins, I think, who said of Bush I, "Born on second base and thinks he hit a double." Or that may have been Ann Richards, who also, famously, said of Bush pere, "Poor George: born with a silver foot in his mouth." Pere, being actually a classy guy with a sense of humor, even if a lousy and corrupt President, sent Ann a silver foot brooch.*

ct Ackerman: *"You like Shoe? ... I think of it as a few gags run into the ground." Well, there weren't that many jokes, but they tended to be very well done. "I wasn't happy that MacNelly died, but I figured his strip would go with him." No such luck. Now that it's being drawn by his assistants, it's got fewer jokes and they aren't as well done. I capture very few of them now as potential illos for this zine. "Still it's not our worst strip. We have Beetle Bailey, Hagar the Horrible, and Blondie." I'd suggest that *Beetle Bailey* and *Blondie* ran out of new material during the Eisenhower administration. It's also possible that *Hagar* requires the same mindset that finds *The Honeymooners* funny, which I know you explicitly don't.*

☞ *"If I haven't mentioned this before, I think the world needs a Regency romance with gay pirates. Go for it, Eve." And now that it's actually published — I got e-mail from the author announcing the fact — we can say congratulations. Now, if I can find time to read it...*

Arthur Hlavaty ☒ *Derogatory Reference* •

"I found Renata Adler's *Gone: The Last Days of The New Yorker* morbidly fascinating..." I must say both Adler's book and the pissing match it caused strike me as a tempest in a teapot. The goings on at *The New Yorker* are certainly of interest (to borrow Joseph Heller's phrase) "throughout the civilized world, from Battery Park to Fulton Street," but out here in the provinces, most of us couldn't give a damn. I find Adler painting Janet Malcolm as a White Hat kind of interesting, given (as you point out) Malcolm's theory of the evil of interviewing, and her having screwed up an interview with Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson so badly that she got the magazine sued.

☛ "Lastish, I talked about being the kind of weird person who mixes High Culture with NFL references. And now Dennis Miller is getting paid for it. Of course I am envious." I find it telling that Miller's commentary is so erudite that there are web sites devoted to unwinding the references the following morning. And why the hell does it take four guys to report on a stupid football game anyway? One guy to do the play-by-play ("and he throws the ball, and some other guy catches the ball. . ."), one guy to do color commentary ("the guy who threw the ball was wearing a blue shirt, and the guy who caught it was from the other team, so he was wearing a red one; the red-shirted guy held the sheep raping record at the University of Montana"), one guy to provide erudition (that would be you or Dennis Miller), and what? — the last guy to test jock straps for freshness? Needless to say, I still don't get it.

☛ "I mentioned last issue that I was writing up Henry Morgan for the Scribner Encyclopedia of American Lives..." And once again, I have to remind myself to not confuse Henry Morgan (cranky-old fart who didn't make the transition from radio to TV) with Harry Morgan (lovable Col Potter on *M*A*S*H*).



Guy Lillian ☒ Spiritus Mundi ♣

"I forget when I noticed that the fingernail I had gnawed to the quick had become infected, but notice it I did." I did that once during the year I was working on the cyclotron floor at Columbia. It was painful and ugly, and given the finger involved and that I was living in New York, it made saluting taxi drivers spectacular.

ct Wiring Up SFFA: "Covers. Caricatures. And photographs. The lead illo on the home page must be..." All a good idea, but remember that graphically heavy pages are (1) a pain to maintain and (2) take a long time to load. Since you and Ned are probably the best repositories of ~~Galaxy Quest~~ scripts historical records, if you'll start gathering material I'll start scanning it in as soon as our scanner is repaired.

ct Ackerman: "The cliché goes that it's in the nomination, and not the award, that the true honor lies, and to an extent that's true. Those in the know nominate. The general election is decided by those who recognize names." Quite true. Both in the larger political sense, and in the microcosm of award voting. As you may know, one of our friends from Boulder is an Emmy-award-winning animator who was on the Academy Awards short-film nominating committee for years. He took the job remarkably seriously. On the other hand, watching the Awards with him was always a trip, because there was always at least one *outré* final result that just croggled him as voter stupidity.

I'm also reminded of a spate of articles I've seen recently claiming that Marisa Tomei's Oscar for *My Cousin Vinny* was a fluke, because she won over all the more experienced, older, foreign actresses nominated that year. As you know from reading the rules for Oscar voting which I passed to you recently, the Oscar final ballot is decided by straight plurality. If Tomei was everyone's last choice, there was no way she was going to win the award.

Our own Hugos, with their confusing-to-the-neophyte preferential ballot, give (to me at least) an intuitively more obvious result.

ct Brooks: "Counter-argument to yours about changes in technology requiring changes in our view of the Second Amendment ... what about changes in technology changing our view of the First? When Mr Madison wrote the Bill of Rights, speech was restricted to the parameters of one's voice, and the press could only reach as far as newsprint could be carried." It's not only freedom of the press and freedom of speech which we have to think about, but the details of copyright and libel, too. First, I believe free speech and press are still absolute, even if my "press" is at <http://www.bywaterpress.com/>, rather than on Fleet Street. My right to criticize the government cannot be restricted to ground up carbonblack on dead tree. My right to speak out against the government cannot be abridged if I speak over the radio rather than on a soapbox in the town square.

Important caveat: The airwaves are (and must be) public property, because they are a limited resource. This is why the Reagan administration throwing out

the Fairness Doctrine — the rule that all political views must be represented in the broadcast media — was fundamentally unfair, fundamentally irresponsible, and has led to a breakdown of our political discourse as the our media become more balkanized. How does this apply to the seemingly limitless bandwidth of the community cable system? The same way: the cable system, since it is a monopoly, must provide access for disparate points of view. This is harder and harder to enforce as the cable systems are controlled by a smaller and smaller number of companies.

Similarly, I think that copyright applies just as securely to my work, regardless of the medium in which I express it. Eve's pirate novel is no less copyrightable because it is available only electronically, and not on paper.† Mike Gunderloy would have us believe that copyright is dead, but unless a creator has some (not necessarily monetary) way to be compensated for his work, and to preserve that right, he has no incentive to create it. As Courtney Love put it, "We suffer as a society and a culture when we don't pay the true value of goods and services delivered. We create a lack of production. Less good music is recorded if we remove the incentive to create it."

ct Brown: "Anyone, black or white, who objects to fannish use of the Confederate flag is referred to Curt Phillips' article on the subject in Challenger 12." I understand the appeal and history involved here, Guy, and the heritage, but remember that Georgia and South Carolina, in particular, added the Stars and Bars back into their flags in the fifties as an explicit symbol in support of segregation, in the same spirit in which every tree and barn in those states started sprouting "Impeach Earl Warren" signs. I believe you and Curt Phillips when you tell me what the symbol means to you, but I know you. Even ignoring folks like Jesse Jackson, who want to stir these embers for their own political purposes, if I had been denied the right to vote or go to school or the state university by the same people who promoted that symbol, understand that I might feel differently about their clinging to it. And I might not understand your use of it. Worse, I might be so blinded by my anger at them that your explanations would be for naught.

☞ *"I still lay claim to the best first-zine-in-the-mailing ever: Impeach Dolbear... in Dennis' first mailing as OE!"* I think Bob Barr has you beat on that one: the right-wing-loon Georgia congressman filed a bill to impeach Bill Clinton in the first month of his presidency.

† Another important caveat, which I've expressed before: the changes in US copyright law are less to do with the rights of authors than they are to do with the preservation of cultural icons. Or as I keep putting it, "US copyright law is actually Mickey Mouse."

Of course, the impeachment was for the Whitewater land deal — which wasn't a crime, let alone a high one, nor took place when he Clinton was president.

ct Cleary: "As for your health, cholesterol seems to be catching up to quite a few of us. Happens in a country where the major nutrition problem is over-consumption." The issue isn't so much what goes in your mouth, as a matter of metabolism. As nearly as the current research can tell, how much cholesterol goes into your system is less an issue than how you metabolize everything else. It's a matter of how much of the cholesterol *your* body produces — remember that it's a necessary blood fat — gets reabsorbed. Apparently fat intake has more effect than cholesterol intake. Liz, no doubt, will see this comment, and quote chapter and verse.

ct me: "I don't get why Ian — your brother, right? — is persona non grata in his own house..." Yes, my brother. Mostly, it's a matter of his never being home. When they were living in Hong Kong, he spent in excess of 20 nights a month on the road. (Half-a-dozen years ago, I razzed him about not having any kids, and he muttered something about phone sex and FedEx.) Now that they're all living in London, he may be able to control his financial empire from an office closer to his bedroom, and may be home more often.

✎ "... Air Force museum in Columbus." That would be at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. I understand it's a very nice museum. "The hanger containing former Air Force One planes was closed, alas, but it gave us something to do on a future drive to Buffalo." Next time you're here, we'll take you to the Museum of Flight. They have tail number 86970, which was used as the backup Air Force One — Johnson flew it to Dallas on that horrible day in 1963 — and later as Carter's main plane. Fascinating to see the insides.

✎ "I liked Erin Brockovich despite the lead character's trite hatred of lawyers..." It's the *only* thing I've ever seen Julia Roberts in where she's not annoying. Which I suppose means she may have learned how to act. I predict she'll get the Oscar — a matter of more hype than the competition — even though Joan Allen's work in *The Contender* is more deserving. I'm planning to finish this up before the ceremony, so we'll talk about it next time.

✎ "Thanks for the inspiring selection from Weekly World News. Rosy's late husband wrote for that paper." Yes, I know. That's part of why I ran it. My favorite bit from last year's DSC was being accosted by Rosy, wanting to know where I'd gotten the T-shirt with the WWN front page on it — it was an end-of-project tchotchke. I'm sorry I've been unable to get another one for her.

✎ "Glad [the Cold War] worked out like that, but it wasn't Reagan's doing." There's the folk art office poster popular in software organizations, with the seven stages of a project. Reagan is an example of step seven: "Rewards for the uninvolved."

"What Reagan did was make it possible to ignore the underclass..." I'm not even sure that was Reagan himself. Like Bush *files* seems to be doing, he merely opened the doors of the White House and invited any sorry sumbitch from any right-wing cause or lobby or think tank in to write policy.

(Interesting footnote: in the quadrennial poll asking historians to rate US presidents, two new categories were tossed in, most underrated and most overrated, and they were won by Clinton and Reagan, respectively. Of course, rating either of them now is silly, since it needs to wait another generation, at least.)



Lillian continued...

ct Liz: "Sexist though this sounds, teaching kids to drive is not a job for a woman." Sorry, Guy, but sexist though it sounds, teaching *Allie* to drive, *is* a job for that particular woman. If I had had to do it, I would have had apoplexy, and Allie would have been left in tears more often than the twice that Liz caused. There's a steep downhill lefthand dogleg on the western approach to our house, with a fifty-foot dropoff on the right side. I don't have the calmness to negotiate that from the passenger seat with Allie driving.

ct Dengrove: "Did you ever read Jim Dickey's popular poem, 'The Sheep Child'?" Does it squeal like a pig?

☞ *"Bush wanted to dole out dollars in a tax cut, with the rich getting the bulk of the goodies."* Um, not immediately true. On the income tax cut, the very rich — folks having the top 2% of the income, who account for roughly 20% of the personal income in the country — get about 30% of the tax break in the first year. This probably isn't

unreasonable, since they pay about 35% of the income taxes now.‡ I leave the full discussion of the merits of graduated income taxes for another time, but suffice it to say that I believe in them. Where it gets dicey is that the poorest Americans get no benefit because they aren't paying any income tax, and Bush wants to phase out the Earned Income Credit. Where it gets really dicey is that the backloaded benefits for the very rich kick in later with further decrease in the top brackets. Where it gets really, really dicey is that more than half of the income of the very rich is capital gains and partnership income, so a capital gains tax cut benefits them disproportionately. An estate tax repeal goes almost entirely to them.

ct Feller: "...and the play [of Hound of the Baskervilles] did not end with 'Watson! The needle!'" As you know, that line never appears in any of the Conan Doyle stories. Nor does "Elementary, my dear Watson!" — even though Holmes does (only once) use the word "elementary" when explaining a deduction. (The year I spent on the cyclotron floor at Columbia involved three months of mind-numbing work moving three-ton electromagnets and re-calibrating them. The recalibration involved setting up an alpha-particle source, turning on the magnet and counting how many particles reached the expected focus on the other side over a period of five minutes. Check at specified distances on either side of the theoretical focus. Reset magnet voltage (for a different focus) and repeat. Again, and again, and again, and again. I read all four novels and fifty-three of the fifty-six stories of the original canon Holmes over those couple of months, in five-minute bites. Then I wrote software from the data to predict beam path based on magnet position and power.)

ct Gelb: "Term limits are a Republican scam to elect more of their yuppie stooges in '94-style electoral spasms; they mean incompetence and confusion in government instead of professionalism." The argument of the Republicans is that government is the only job for which experience is a detriment. Bill Frist is an heart transplant surgeon. He didn't get to that job by walking into an operating room in blue jeans one day and saying "hey, I've never done this, that means I'm qualified." But that's the platform he ran on when he got elected the US Senator from Tennessee. It is the height of hypocrisy that Shrub was promoting himself on the grounds of being a Washington outsider (just like when he ran for governor of Texas, he promoted himself as the right choice because he had no experience in government), while at the same time, the

‡ These numbers are from my two-year-old analysis of the IRS' annual statistical summaries and news reports. While they're more accurate than anything you're likely to hear on one of the talking heads TV shows, take them with a grain of salt. I need to do an analysis based on the text of the bill, not the news summaries, myself.

Republicans have for years decried the Carter presidency as a disaster — which it clearly wasn't — because he was an inexperienced southern governor.

Term limits would mean the government was actually run by legislative aides and lobbyists. (You'll recall that after the '94 victory, the Republicans running Congress immediately allowed lobbyists from anti-environmental and business groups to write legislation for them.) The British have this institutionalized: there are permanent staff who do not get tossed at the turn of the government, and the party out of power keeps an explicit shadow government waiting and ready, with someone set to take over each department.

☞ "I only attended one part of one day at one Armadillocon, and was in no mood for a convention so I got my money back." As I remember part of what convinced you to blow off the convention was that you could come and put your feet up at our place for the weekend. I miss that you can do that.



Lillian continued...

ct Hughes: "In the gun control battle, as with abortion, statistics make for poor ammunition. ..." As I've said before, rational discussion with my gun-toting friends, like Toni and Robin Roberts, has moved me off the stock knee-jerk-northeastern-liberal reaction here. I don't agree with everything they've said, but I respect their positions, and it's allowed me to modify mine in a reasonable way. However, I still believe the second amendment allows me to choose to *not* have a gun, just like the first allows me to *not* have a religion. I make the choice to not own guns based on likelihood and personality and crime statistics and the presence of small children, and I don't believe that Toni's choices, or Robin's, or Hank's, need to apply to me. Like you, I'd be pleased to find some way to keep guns out of the hands of the criminally and psychologically unworthy, but it's in the interest of both extremes in this debate that those laws not be enforced. Hence, we have outrages like last week's discovery that it's remarkably easy to buy a gun in any of thirteen states

with a fake ID. 🐼 (Taking something you said out of context. . .) “Our whole system of criminal and civil law is aimed not at curtailing bad acts but punishing them. . . It seems to me that no authority is going to prevent terrible things from happening by clamping down. That only increases frustration and the urge to violence.” If you haven’t read it, I strongly recommend *The Syndic*, one of CM Kornbluth’s solo novels, and I believe, his best. He discusses, in a quasi-alternate-history fashion, the limits of government power, and the notion that the government that governs least governs best.

ct Lynch: “The Loop is a remarkably clean and attractive city center. . . I there a more attractive downtown anywhere in America?” While I’m partial to San Francisco’s downtown, I’d suggest the real winner is just across Lake Michigan: Toronto.

ct Schlosser: “...they aren’t the greatest thing since natural breasts but they are energetic, well-written, exciting stuff.” That’s got to be the winning analogy of the mailing, even if you were talking about the Harry Potter books. The notion of natural breasts as energetic, exciting and (er) well-written. . . oh, never mind.” “Active in the Potter marketing, Rowling seems behind in the actual writing. . .” I think that’s all according to plan — the intention was one book a year, so the story unfolds in real time. You’ll notice that she’s just released two book-lettes that are putative texts at Harry’s school.

🐼 “How to keep kids busy during car trips. When I was real little, my Uncle Bill would start me saying ‘Lookit that biiiiiig hill’ every time we passed one on Route 66. . . Nowadays I drive myself, either playing a tape or scanning the scenery, going ‘Lookit that biiiiiig hill!’” On Allie’s fifth birthday, I skipped work, and took her to Disneyland for the day. Kyla was kind enough to join us — since a single adult with a child who can’t go to the restroom alone just doesn’t cut it logistically, and Liz was sufficiently pregnant that she could barely walk. As we pulled out of the driveway, Kyla looked at Allie, looked at me, and just to get them out of the way, uttered those famous words, “Daddy, how much longer till we get there?” It was a very good day. We rode rides, ate junk food, hugged Mickey and Eeyore, Kyla shared stories of growing up in Austin when her daddy was a pilot for the Great State (for which I was grateful, since I was working mostly in Austin that year), and we all arrived home exhausted.

ct Weisskopf: “I couldn’t join in the general praise for *Space Cowboys*.” You’ve seen my comments on it by now. “Robert Duvall did the aging astronaut bit better in *Deep Impact*, and Nicholson won an Oscar for it in *Terms of Endearment*.” I’m less enamored of Nicholson’s astronaut, *qua* astronaut, than I am Duval’s: Duval actually helped make *Deep Impact* the story about humanity that it was. None of the yahoos in *Space Cowboys* could have pulled off Duval’s role. His character helped make that movie about

^o I guess now that we’ve had the breast seminar at last year’s DSC, Guy, we’ll have to keep score of “fake” *vs* “real” during this year’s Oscars.

character rather than about technology — a task at which the much flashier, much less insightful, *Armageddon* failed later the same year.

☞ *"The theory behind trading with dictator states is that, being personality-based, the government of the target county is bound to become more liberal after the dictator falls. At least I hope that's why we trade with China . . . I'd hate to think that we ignored all those human rights violations just for the potential market."* It's less for the potential market than the potential labor source: China needs the hard currency, and we need cheap blue jeans at Target. But the original reason for interaction with the Chinese in the '70s was fear of the Soviet Union — remember the Vulcan proverb "Only Nixon could go to China." Bush *pere* was originally sent to China less to be an ambassador than a spy. His job was to convince the Chinese to share the data from their listening posts on the border with Russia, and to build more, with US technology. Bush became so cozy with the Chinese that he told them he was planning to run for President — through his translator, a man who is now Chinese ambassador to the US — before he told the Republican party. (I leave it as an exercise to compare and contrast these activities with alleged Chinese contributions to the Clinton campaigns.)

Janice Gelb ☒ Trivial Pursuits ♣

"When I went off to synagogue for a brief meeting, CNN had just declared Florida for Gore, so I was in a really cheery mood during the meeting." As I think I mentioned, NPR declared Florida for Gore as I was driving home after having voted. I'd had enough of a feel for the numbers involved that I was able to walk into the kitchen and announce that Gore was the new President. As it turns out, I was completely right: Gore won Florida, and there's a usurper in the White House. As we've discussed in e-mail, even ignoring the Buchanan mis-votes in Palm Beach, if there'd been an accurate count of votes, and a real recount, Gore would have taken Florida. I find it particularly interesting that the exit polling data showed *clearly* that Gore had won the state, but that those votes didn't show up in the "official" count.

"The heads of elections in every other state have probably been lighting candles in thanks that this didn't happen in their state." If you haven't read it, check out the series by Frank Cerabino in the *Palm Beach Post* entitled "How Al Gore Lost The Presidency", which has a fascinating discussion of the mechanics of running an election. One of the articles centers on Theresa LaPore the Palm Beach election supervisor, and the design of the Palm Beach ballot.

It wasn't just the theft of Florida, of course. If Gore had put aside his disgust at Clinton's personal behavior and unleashed Bill's considerable political skills, he would have carried Tennessee and Arkansas. If Gore hadn't given up Ohio as a lost cause in October, he might have carried it. If Vermont hadn't just gone

through a divisive battle over civil unions for homosexuals, he would have carried it. Clearly, Gore was the most technically qualified candidate for president, the best educated and prepared for the job, we've seen in my lifetime. He understands the job, understands how government works, but he's not a flashy politician. That he's not now occupying the White House, having been denied it by criminal action of the highest court in the land is a shame.

(I'll also recommend Vincent Bugliosi's deconstruction of the specious Supreme Court decision awarding the election to Bush: "None Dare Call it Treason" in the 5 February issue of *The Nation*.)

(I'll also draw your attention to the photo I mentioned last time, in the hallway outside the computer room in Miami-Dade County, showing current and former Republican staffers replying to NY Congressman John Sweeney's call to "shut it down."•

The photograph was helpfully labeled by *The Washington Post* on December 5th, and shows



(1) Tom Pyle, policy analyst, office of House Majority Whip Tom DeLay (R-TX); (2) Garry Malphrus, majority chief counsel and staff director, House Judiciary subcommittee on criminal justice; (3) Rory Cooper, political division staff member at the National Republican Congressional Committee; (4) Kevin Smith, former House Republican conference analyst and more recently of Voter.com; (5) Steven Brophy, former aide to Sen Fred D Thompson (R-TN), now working at the consulting firm KPMG; (6) Matt Schlapp, former chief of staff for Rep Todd Tiahrt (R-KS), now on the Bush campaign staff in Austin; (7) Roger Morse, aide to Rep Van Hilleary (R-TN); (8) Duane Gibson, aide to Chairman Don Young (R-AK) of the House Resources Committee; (9) Chuck Royal, legislative assistant to Rep Jim DeMint (R-SC); (10) Layna McConkey, former legislative assistant to former Rep Jim Ross Lightfoot (R-IA), now at Steelman Health Strategies.)

ct Brooks: "The point of making funeral arrangements in advance is not to burden your loved ones when they are presumably prostrate with grief over your demise." As opposed to some families, where the loved ones are dancing in the aisles with glee... Let me

• Of course, Janice, you've seen it already: thanks for finding it for me again on the web after I'd lost it.

recommend a wonderful little Japanese movie, *The Funeral*, written and directed by Juzo Itami, about the family dynamics following the death of the patriarch. The same director brought us *A Taxing Woman* and *Tampopo*, the latter of which features the best sex-and-food sequence since *Tom Jones*.

ct me: "I bought the following button for Stephen at worldcon: 'Working with Unix is like wrestling a worthy opponent. Working with Windows is like attacking a small whining child who is carrying a .38'." Wow! Look at all the purple ones go by. (Don't mind me, I'm disarming a whining child.) If you haven't read it, let me recommend Neal Stephenson's book-length diatribe *In the Beginning was the Command Line*. It's been published by Avon, but it's available in electronic form at <http://www.cryptonomicon.com>, and I've got it sitting here in Palm DOC format if you'd like it.

☞ "Funny to read this comment about movie-to-play transitions. . . Of course there are the Disney plays: 'The Lion King' and Beauty and the Beast." Robert Cringely once wrote that "Gates sees the personal computer as a tool for transferring every stray dollar, deutsche mark and kopeck in the world into his pocket. . ." It applies to Michael Eisner, too, but the tool of choice is the movie.

☞ "All this stuff from your dad is fascinating. As is his neat handwriting! I'm curious: what is 'kriegie duties': KP?" I can't find full blown explanation in the text at the moment, but roughly, yes, in the broadest sense: "kriegie duties" would be all the housekeeping stuff that had to be done by the guests in a no-star hotel without maid service.

☞ "Now that you've explained cookies, could you kindly do the same about the other bogey of web privacy, one-pixel 'web bugs'?" Hmm, if I had ever heard of them, I would, but that's a new one on me.

☞ "As for extending the naming of stadia to individual people being able to sell naming rights for their property, out here you actually can get a subsidy from certain companies if you let them paint advertising all over your car." As you may know, that actual business was launched from an article in *Esquire* several Aprils ago that was completely made up, and intended as a joke.

☞ "I found the first Asaro book, Primary Inversion, hard to get into and didn't enjoy it as much as Eve." I found Asaro's construction of alien races fairly fascinating, as I think I said. Still, I'm pretty sure I didn't enjoy it as much as Eve, either. On the other hand, Liz, who reads much faster than I do, devoured all of Asaro's stuff. I probably won't read any more of them, just because I don't have the time to invest.

☞ "You say here that Locus once lost by 8 votes out of 377, but I thought it had lost by only one vote in 1993." Entirely possible. I was quoting the only totals I had in hand, which were from 1994.

☞ "Every time I hear someone praising Reagan, I just want to scream 'Iran Contra'." I just want to scream "soaring national deficit." It's Bush I that makes me want to scream

“Iran Contra”, since he engineered the coverup, made it stick, and pardoned the conspirators.

I like the S Gross cartoon from *The New Yorker* you use here, with the chap at the pearly gates and God looking down at his holstered pistol explaining “Trust me. It’s not a God-given right.” I had that cut out and scanned in to run on another occasion. My current favorite of the genre is this *Non-sequitur* cartoon:



Gelb continued...

ct Robe: “Weird that the language translation in Windoze 2000 is worse than 95. Although I must say that companies don’t handle issues involving other countries very well in general.” Particularly companies that insist on ignoring the standards involved. Sigh. Particularly companies that insist on redoing their user interface with each release. Sigh. Particularly companies which produce two classes of operating system, and the business operating systems group is institutionally incapable of listening to the consumer operating systems group. Sigh. Since software internationalization is one of my areas of expertise, if I see any company making those mistakes, I’ll try to prevent them. (That sound is my head banging against a brick wall. While taking a pistol away from a small whining child.)

ct me: “How have you managed to work in high tech and still have relatively few meetings?” Because I’ve insisted on working in small companies, where communication really can be by e-mail and phone and in the hallway outside the washroom. (A woman is diagnosed with carpal tunnel, and her doctor tells he she must give up half her job: She asks “Which half? Going to meetings about it or writing memos about it?”) John White, the long-time chairman at Interactive, used to get his own coffee so he could hang out and chat with people in the kitchen. My VP at Softway used to call during my second cup of tea on days I worked from Boulder, so we could take an extra fifteen minutes to gossip. I now have two regularly scheduled weekly meetings which have to be planned in advance because they involve people seven

or more timezones away. I usually blow one of them off, and refuse to phone in for the second unless the agenda's been published 24 hours ahead of time. On the other hand, I'm in constant e-mail contact with my immediate opposite numbers in both places, and chat with my immediate manager over lunch nearly every day when we're both in town. I don't usually even bother with the Windows Division beer blast every other week — don't care about the announcements, don't need to know the project status.

☞ *"Regards from East Coast fannish Mike Walsh, who says that he will try to get together with you guys next time he's in Seattle, which is evidently fairly frequently."* That would be the Mike Walsh who was a member of my house at Caltech, and was married to Marta Soukup for a while? Who's now flying under the Johns Hopkins University Press banner? We'd be delighted to hear from him. I hadn't realized they were the same guy.

ct Liz: *"Never heard the word 'sunbreak' before."* That's 'cause you've never lived in a place where it was necessary. :-)

☞ *"Thanks for running the User Friendly strips. I'm still surprised that none of the papers in the Bay Area carry it."* It's only on the web, out of British Columbia.

ct Larson: *"...delivery [of the twins] at 37 weeks would be 3 weeks early. I thought full gestation was 9 months, which would be 36 weeks."* I thought that, too, before we started the Copeland-Schwarzin baby-making subsidiary. Apparently length of pregnancy isn't measured from sperm hitting egg, but from the beginning of the mom's last period. So add about two weeks to the nine months, which is a round number anyway. No doubt, some mother or obstetrician will correct me here.

Tom Feller ☒ *Frequent Flyer* ✶

ct me: *"[A recent referendum in Brown County, Wisconsin] authorized the city council of Green Bay and the Packers to sell the naming rights to Lambeau Field as a way of financing the \$295 million renovation that is necessary to keep the Packers competitive."* Umm, how does renovating the stadium "keep the Packers competitive?" Is there a secret ingredient in the mortar that makes them play better? Or does some fraction of the money get funneled into keeping the hooker supply flowing into the locker room? Or does "competitive" mean: have luxury boxes so that they can raise all the ticket prices and keep up competitive price gouging with the rest of the league? The football teams are either private enterprise or public facility. They cannot be private enterprise funded by public money for private profit. Were I God-Emperor of the Universe, I'd nationalize all sports teams and make them public property.

ct Dengrove: *"A credit card company once contacted me about my purchases, but I still had the card and the purchases were normal."* A colleague of mine once brought his wife a

present of lingerie when he was in Las Vegas at a trade show. A week later, he got a phone call at home from the card company, which his wife answered, and they would *not* tell her what this was about. She finally had them call him at the office, which they did, to confirm that he'd actually made the purchase. It was only after he hung up that the penny dropped, and he realized they were trying to figure out if he was having an affair and needed to change the profile of his spending habits to account for gifts to his girlfriend.

☞ "I have to tell you that Yvonne de Carlo did indeed consider playing opposite Alec Guinness in... Captain's Paradise to be better than starring in a sitcom." She was actually very, very good in *Captain's Paradise*. And as good as Fred Gwynne was — he was, incidentally, editor of the *Lampoon* when he was at Harvard — working in a dorky sitcom with him would not be anywhere near as cool as working with Guinness in the Ealing Comedy days.

Norm Metcalfe ☒ **Tyndallite 91** ♣

I have completely disjoint page numbers and ... oh, wait, I see: your four zines in this mailing are completely out of order. How odd.

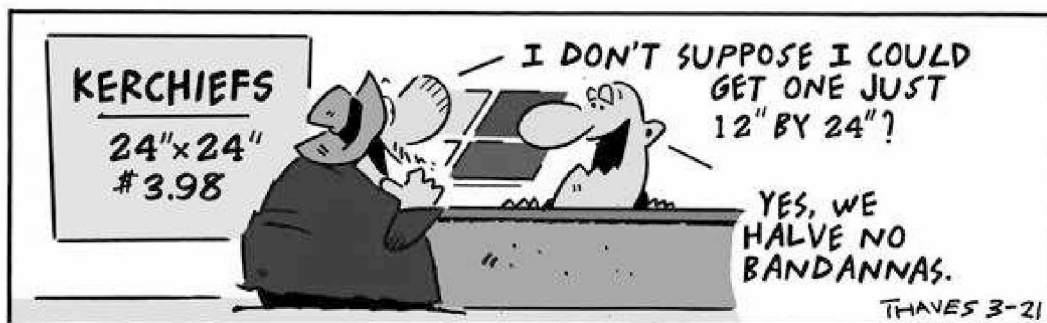
ct Weisskopf: "Yes, some science-fiction stories did predict computers by the end of the 20th century. Read some of Nathaniel Schachner's stories published in the 1930's." I'll add him to my list. But *nobody* predicted the form computers were going to take. See the musings about Vannevar Bush and Arthur C Clarke in my natter. Bush was the science establishment in the middle of the century, a role he was succeeded in by Licklider and Weisner, and *he* got the form wrong. Of course, there's Clarke's Law: "When a distinguished but elderly scientist states that something is possible, he is almost certainly right. When he states that something is impossible, he is almost certainly wrong."

ct me: "[The Weekly World News is] also the same publication that told about the WWII bomber found on the moon... So who is their science-fiction author?" Well, as you may know by now, Rosy Donovan's late husband was one of them.

David Schlosser ☒ **Peter, Pan and Merry** ♣

ct me: "I'm working on the image of having a LASFS style election for the Presidency." That's how it almost worked out anyway, isn't it?

☞ "My personal view is that, once all the recounts are done and the absentees dealt with, that there should be no further legal challenges by either candidate or party." Well, that would have happened, if there had ever been a recount, if Antonin Scalia hadn't decided that Bush would suffer "irreparable harm" should the votes all be counted. As it was, the court challenges were initiated by Bush in an attempt to *prevent* the ballots being counted. If they had been, as we know by now, Gore would have picked



up 130 votes in conservative Lake County, where voters had written in Gore or Bush on the write-in line in addition to marking the pre-printed box; he would have gained 366 in fifteen rural counties canvassed by the *Chicago Tribune* through similar multiple-markings, and through undervotes by people using the wrong kind of pen. If the Palm Beach ballots that hadn't registered in machine tallies had actually been counted, Gore would have gained 682 votes, even by a conservative measure of what constituted a vote. Since Katherine Harris' "official" numbers had Bush ahead by 538, I stand by the word I used last time: *usurper*.

And, as I think I said in November, I agree with you about the poor ballot design in Palm Beach County: those votes were effectively thrown away by collective goofs. The mistake is instructive, and systematic, and a shame, but it doesn't constitute a "do over." And even so, Gore won fair-and-square without those votes.

(Am I annoyed about this? Yes. John Quincy Adams stole the presidency. Rutherford B Hayes stole the presidency. George W Bush stole the presidency. Let the smarmy bastard go down in history with an asterisk next to his name.)

☞ *"Even if Bezos' purchases of other business puts off the date of [Amazon's] profitability, it does tend to support the claim that they are financially sound. Unless it's entirely a stock-funded purchase."* Those deals tend to be a mix of stock, cash, and leveraged buyout. The more interesting deals from the point of view of Amazon's financial health are those that bring it a guaranteed cash stream, like signing up to manage the web business for Toys-R-Us. I've been reading a fair amount of press lately about how Amazon has been pushing the bounds of accounting practice with their claims that they have enough cash to last through the year even without any sales. I've got no reason to believe the naysayers; in fact some of them seem to have a vested interest in seeing Amazon's price go down.

(What worries me from an accounting perspective is that Bob Herbold, the recently-departed Chief Operating Officer of a software company in Washington state, is going to spend his retirement lobbying congress to allow “good will” to be carried on the balance sheet. As a number. With a positive value. “Sure,” goes the logic, “we buy company zed, and what we get is their patent portfolio, their customer list, their revenue stream, their employees, and the good will of the marketplace.” I can put a definite value on two of those, make a reasonable guess at the value of two others, but the value of good will is whatever I want to make it. Can you say “savings and loan deregulation?” I knew you could.)

ct Lillian: “I’ve been wondering about the success rate of sitting VPs who ran for President.” Two have taken office: Martin van Buren (1837-41) and George Bush. The other two you mention during our lifetimes — Nixon and Humphrey — came within a hairsbreadth.

ct me: “While I may not have the stamina to keep up with most of the 20-somethings out there in most things, I think I can still hold my own where it counts.” What’s the line from *Sleuth*? Something about the effect of age on sprints versus distance events? (I originally saw that on Broadway with Patrick MacNee playing the role taken by Lawrence Olivier on screen, of the older mystery writer.)

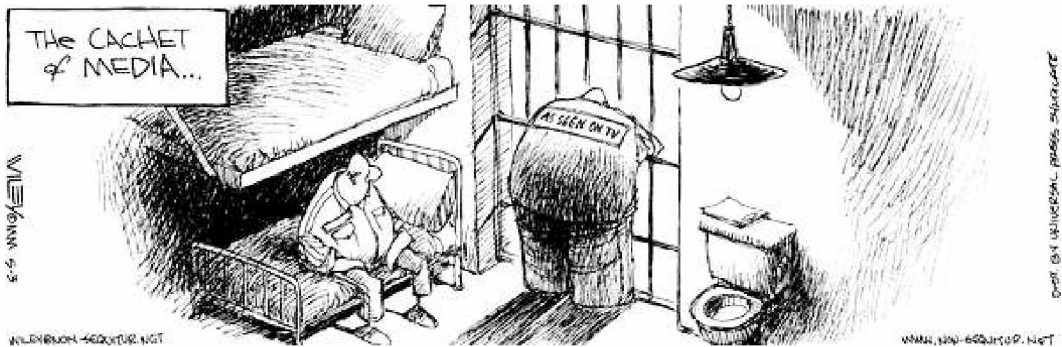
☞ “It may be a good thing that I don’t have a daughter to force upward the age of women that I find attractive.” It actually appears to be a little spotty: the 22-year-old daughter of a colleague (the one Allie refers to as “y’mean-Kris-who-never-wears-a-bra?”) triggers “cute-but-too-young,” and the 21-year-old girlfriend of our (28-year-old) test wizard triggers “no way,” but the 19-year-old redheaded intern who works upstairs triggers “completely shaggable.” Maybe it’s cause she just doesn’t look 19, but more like 25. Maybe it’s got less to do with having a daughter than changing tastes as my hair gets gray.

☞ “It seems to me that one of the things that media (particularly the print media) should be doing is researching and printing the verifiable facts behind these claims (such as [those made by Sommers in his Nixon biography]).” Larry Montgomery, a long time ago in SFPA, made the observation that kids coming out of broadcasting school all wanted to be the morning drive-time DJ in LA or New York right now. The same thing applies to J-school grads, I think: they all want to be Woodward and Bernstein, right now, and don’t want to spend their time investigating real stories that might take effort. The problem is that too many of them are lazy, and all too willing to print engineered leaks.

☞ “Speaking of Senator Helms, I was reading the other day that, assuming a complete Electoral mess, he would be 2nd in line of succession come Jan 20th.” Complete electoral mess I assume meaning no president or vice president had been chosen. Depends how you’re

counting: Speaker of the House (Dennis Hasser), followed by president pro tem of the Senate (Strom Thurmond). Do we then step down the Senate by seniority? Surely there's someone more senior than Helms other than Thurmond!

ct Gelb: "Right now however we'll have to hope that moderates working across party lines can control the agenda and keep it on a middle ground." Looks like it's not happening. The Blue Dog Democrats — the loose coalition of fiscally-conservative southerners in the House — got shouted down on the first three tax cut bills. Those are exactly guys whose cooperation the House leadership needs if it wants the appearance of bi-partisanship.



Sheila Strickland ✉ **Revenant** ♣

"East Baton Rouge Parish now has nifty electronic machines. You push a square next to the candidate name or beside the yes or no and the square lights up. If you change your mind, you can push another square and it will light up and the first one goes dark. Once you are finished, you push another square that says 'Vote' and your vote is tallied. Voting can still be fixed, of course; that seems like a simple way than poking a hole in a card." Secure electronic voting is really tricky to get right and to have auditable. You need some physical object that can be secured, and later examined by independent parties if there's a question. The punch cards are clearly prone to mechanical error, as we've now painfully learned. I think the right answer is the mark sense ballots that are used in most of Western Washington and in the richer counties of Florida. The ballot box — in Washington, at least — ensures that the ballot is not mismarked when you put the ballot in, and kicks it back out asking you to correct it. Purely electronic voting, with no physical trail, is simply too prone to Dailey-ism.

ct Dengrove: "The CM Kornbluth book you mentioned is not totally forgotten — I have a copy of it!" I missed the antecedent, and can't put my hands on the preceding mailings right at the moment. What Kornbluth book were we talking about? Ah! From the discussion, we must be talking about *Not This August*, Kornbluth's reflection on the

necessity and futility of war. Excellent, thought-provoking novel. Several pages back, I recommended another Kornbluth novel, *The Syndic*, and I do so again.

ct Weisskopf: "Enjoyed Charlotte's review of *Frequency*. I hadn't heard much about it, and hadn't tried to see it. Now I need to catch it in the video stores, along with *Trekkies*." Run to the video store and get *Frequency*. It's a well-spent two hours. I've just added *Trekkies* to our list.

☞ "The full story of how I got [my propeller beanie] is not as interesting as the factoid that it was thrown to me by a British actor in Memphis." What were you doing with a British actor in ancient Egypt? This sounds like a story that really does need to be told.

ct Liz: "Any particular reason for holding a Bastille Day party?" It's mid-summer, Liz is a Francophile and speaks French reasonably well, even if I don't, and when we started having them, back in our Venice Beach days, the date didn't conflict with Westercon, which is always fourth of July weekend.

ct me — Geek Rant: "And now for a liberal arts rant. An honors English teacher who's never heard of Faulkner! How in the name of heaven does someone get a degree in education to teach high school English without even having heard of Faulkner?" That was rather my point. I'm just as disgusted as you are. I had the furthest thing possible from a liberal arts education, but I've not only heard of Faulkner, I've read some of his short fiction.

ct me — Father: "Are you going to print more of your father's writings from the war? They should make for fascinating reading." I've run bits and pieces from time-to-time, beginning with a passage in SFPA 197, when he started to write the narrative to go with the pictures. I'll continue to at least drop the occasional illo in.

ct me — Holy Ghost: "A hand-colored cover! Very snazzy." While Steve Hughes does better printed color, I learned the hand-coloring trick from my darling wife, who I think learned it from some Guy she met at her first science fiction convention. (Now they'll both correct me.)

☞ "Are you (or someone) going to publish your father's wartime memoirs? Even if it's only for family, your children and grandchildren and on down would find it fascinating." He's been sporadically looking for a trade publisher. In the meantime, it's been published in an edition of three for the immediate family. My copy is on the shelf to my left with important stuff like the first edition of *The Space Merchants* and the 1875 edition of *Alice*. Allie's already done several history projects out of it.

[Incidentally, in the "very cool things" department, I discovered an artifact on the Microsoft campus about a month ago. It's not part of the normal MS Art Collection, which is pretty extensive, but it belongs to Bill Gates personally. I suspect Melinda made him take it to the office since it doesn't fit in the house. It's a four-foot wide, full-height slab of the Berlin wall, which was a present to Gates from Daimler-Benz. I knew Allie would be fascinated, so I took her up to see it

on a Sunday afternoon, but it's in the conference center, which is locked up on the weekend. As we were leaving with promises to come back later, the guard came by for his rounds, and when he found out what we were up to, escorted us in. It turns out he was on duty at Checkpoint Charlie nervously watching his Russian opposite numbers on the day the Wall came down. Absolutely fascinating to hear his stories.]

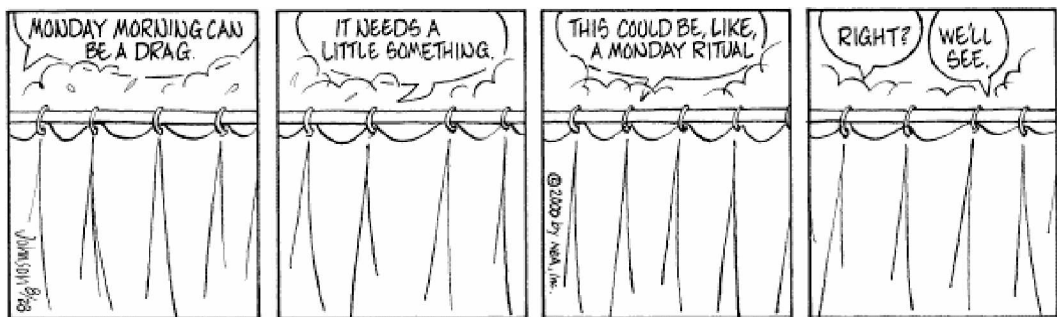
ct Gelb: "Oh, don't just skip [Rocky and Bullwinkle] because of Natasha. It's still a good movie." I wasn't all that impressed: it doesn't do a good job of translating Jay Ward's manic energy to the big screen, but I think René Russo does a fairly credible Natasha. Then again I think René Russo is fairly good all around.

Norm Metcalfe ☒ **Tyndallite 92** ♣

ct me: "You recommend Michael Shaara's *For Love of the Game*. I'll have to find a copy. It's too bad he died, I was hoping for more good stories from him. I really enjoyed 'All the Way Back' *Astounding Science Fiction* Jul 1952." I hadn't realized he wrote science fiction, and I generally don't read historical fiction. This is the first thing of his I've actually read, and I was inspired to do so by the excellent movie of the book. I'll now have to go on a search for his other stuff.

☒ Again, page weirdness: page 814 ends mid-sentence to Ned Brooks, and I have another copy of 809 instead of 815.

That, my friends, is that. I need to finish this now, rather than taking advantage of the extra week the OE threw into the deadline, since I've got a busy week ahead of me. This means I'm again more than a mailing behind in comments, dammit, but time, tide, and software wait for no man. I'm particularly annoyed that I didn't get to Gary Brown's on-the-spot zine from the epicenter of the election madness. Next time for sure, Rocky.



Art Credits

The front cover features Eric Muller's cartoon for my column in the July, 2000 *Server/Workstation Expert*. Unfortunately, Guy wasn't able to use this for his *Challenger* reprint of the original.

Page 3: *Rose is Rose* from 7 Sep 1999 — a new technique for Guy the next time he gets on an airplane. Page 5: *Calvin & Hobbes* from 16 Feb 1990 — I always have trouble telling port from starboard myself. Page 10: *Non-sequitur* from 5 Mar — Page 11: *LuAnn* from 12 May 00 — we expect this will soon be true for Guy & Rosy. Page 14: *Shoe* from 26 Feb 00. Page 18: *Shoe* from 24 March — teaching them to drive... talking... raising them... with teenagers, it's sometimes the same difference. Page 20: *Baby Blues* from 2 Aug 00 — toys are sometimes like political debate. GOP Mob on page 23 from the 'In the Loop' column, *Washington Post*, 5 Dec 2000. Page 25: *Non sequitur* from 21 March — What does a dyslexic, agnostic, insomniac do? Sits up all night worrying about the existence of Dog. Page 28: *Frank&Ernest* from 21 Mar — a horrible pun, just for David Schlosser. Page 30: *Non sequitur* from 3 May 00. Page 32: *Arlo&Janis* from 28 Aug 00 — hoping your Mondays are looking up, too.

The back cover features Brian Stauffer's cover cartoon from *The Nation* for November 13, 2000.

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