



Ceci n'est pas une pipe

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We return to finish the truncated *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* unfinished in the May mailing. When I left off, there were notes and markers for about 150 comments, 5 bits of natter, and 8 leftover reviews. Onward:

So the Department of Justice finally caught up with Microsoft and served up an antitrust suit. It's about time. They've engaged in a number of questionable, if not downright illegal, practices since their founding. The fact is that Microsoft has been using its hegemony in operating systems to force hardware vendors to preferentially push its other products. Netscape and web browsers are but one victim of this strategy. I've gotten pretty tired of hearing folks who produce mediocre products claim that they're forcing them down our throats via illegal business practices for the good of the public and competition. The best possible outcome of this would be for Bill Gates to be publicly beheaded, but since that isn't going to happen, I'd settle for his being forced to split his company into two: an operating systems business and an applications business.



What happens to Texas if Alaska is split into two? It becomes the *third* largest state in the Union. Similarly with splitting Microsoft in two. . . Remember that John D Rockefeller tripled his fortune within five years of Standard Oil being broken up; I suspect the same would be in store for the Boy Billionaire. But those of us who have to use software produced by the smug and incompetent might be better off.

the Iraqis may have finally turned cooperative, for the moment, but the Indians... I heard an Indian commentator on NPR a few evenings ago pontificating about how she was proud that India finally has The Bomb, like all Americans are proud that it does. Well, I hate to disabuse her, but I've never been particularly thrilled that the US has the Bomb, nor that the UK does, nor that the many former Soviet republics do: ICBMs fly from North Dakota to Moscow in 20 minutes, from northern India to Peking in single-digits of minutes, from Kurachi to Delhi in seconds.

The world is too small, and too crowded, to allow someone — anyone — to stand in the middle swinging a sword without regard for his neighbors. Arthur Clarke once coined the slogan “Guns are the crutches of the impotent,” and noted that intercontinental ballistic missiles are too. By that measure, the rulers of India must have pretty damned small penises.

*a*ssholes! One might have predicted it, but that’s the only word to describe the new school board in Boulder. For about the past decade, Boulder, like other mature, built-out cities, has been shipping students into schools in town from suburbs. For years, schools in town have kept their enrollments up by hosting focus programs, such as the Core Knowledge School that my nephew Graham goes to, and the Waldorff curriculum program that shares the building with JJ’s school.

Now, suddenly, the rules are changing. The board vice president, who was so incompetent as a principal that she was fired by the last board, wants to close Boulder High School and replace it with a new \$50 million building because the current one is old. * Further, they want to spend roughly \$100 million to build schools in the suburbs. To support those new schools, they have to shut down some of the schools in town. Not surprisingly, since the current school board is opposed to any program that doesn’t have the seal of approval of the teachers’ union — like anything that requires the teachers to put forth an effort and teach — only schools with focus programs are on the potential closure list.

When these yahoos realized they were about to be toppled by a shit storm of opposition, they quickly backpeddled. Of course, they did it in the most reprehensible way possible: quoth Jean Bonelli, the incompetent principal, “This closure proposal was the idea of one person, Tom Siegal.” Siegal is the superintendent, who developed the closure plan at the board’s specific and close direction. A School Board that combines incompetence, sliminess, lying, shifting with the very breeze — ah, the joys of politics in Boulder.

What plays into this is a stupidity of Colorado law: Colorado, in the aftermath of Proposition 13 in California, passed what’s alternately called the Bruce Amendment or the TABOR Amendment. It freezes expenditures, and requires massive handwaving when governmental entities in the state run a surplus in order to return to the it — it often costs the bulk of the surplus to handle the return. Interestingly, even though the single largest expenditure in the state budget is for education, the only things exempted from the Bruce rules are prisons and roads.

* I don’t remember the actual age, but it’s older than me, and younger than Ned. For comparison, we’ll note that the elementary school I attended in New Jersey is Harry Warner’s age.

Worse, if a local school district raises more money, they lose nearly an equivalent amount from their state funding. So, in inflation-adjusted dollars, nearly every district in the state is spending less per pupil now than they were ten years ago. The situation is so bad that at Allie's school, which operates on 85% of what other schools in the district do, we're spending less per pupil than they do in Mississippi.

The real shame is that I believe the only way to preserve Jeffersonian democracy is to preserve universal public education. But actions like these, coupled with the past shenanigans about content standards, are going to drive people like me who can afford private schools out of the system.

Research and development continues apace around here: I've finished the second part of our two-part *SunExpert* column on news readers (for the July and August issues). At work, I'm up to my hips in a piece of software that I still can't really talk about. On top of that, I've been wanting to rewrite the main tally program in the Hugo software suite for quite a while. I started when I was on the road working on printer standards last year. I'm going to try to finish this summer. Lisa's been bugging me to register the copyright on these for some time, but I've been reluctant to do it until I've removed the last vestiges of the work I did on the Hugo software while I was at the Microelectronics Center of North Carolina. Why? Because the intellectual property agreement at MCNC made it clear that I could *use* the software I developed while there, but never made it clear who owned it. Of course, after that, there's a five page list of things that I want to do to the Hugo suite for both code cleanup and usability.

I still haven't gotten to the compression garble I talked about last time, but reading the compression code is something I'm starting to do in odd moments.

Routes from house to office are often entertaining... Even though I have this miserable commute, I amuse myself by varying the route between Boulder and Ft Collins on a regular basis.

The basic hyperspace route — that is, one involving Interstate 25 — requires a jog east of about 17 miles, and then a jog back west to get into Ft Collins of about 5. To get out to I-25, I can run almost due east from the house along Baseline Rd (it's called that because it runs at exactly 40° north through Boulder), through suburban Lafayette at the east edge of Boulder County and very rural Erie with its dirt roads on the west edge of Weld County, and then blast due north for 35 miles, past Longmont, to Loveland, and thence to Ft Collins.

I can also take CO 119 north from the house to the IBM plant, and then CO 52 due east, through unincorporated Niwot, which features six thousand square foot houses on tiny lots. Alternately, I can travel through Longmont, the town north of

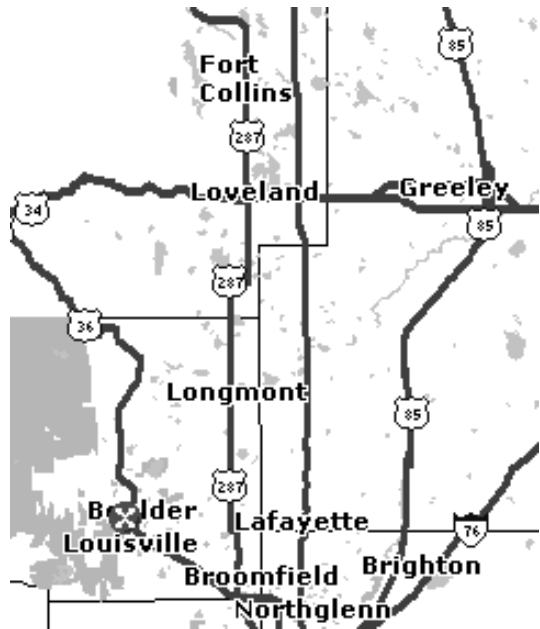
Boulder to get to I-25.

The really fun route, though, the relaxing one, is to take US 287, which runs north-south through eastern Boulder County, up through the middle of Larimer County. On that route, I get to drive through real towns, Louisville, Longmont, Berthoud, Loveland, Windsor, and finally to Ft Collins. It's a trip that I can't do on autopilot — I can't set the cruise control, and I actually have to pay attention — but it's still very relaxing.

The downside of the route is that some stretches are one lane each way, and occasionally you end up caught behind a 65-year-old in a Cadillac who believes that his purpose on earth is to prevent young whipper-snappers from driving at the speed limit.

If you vary your route enough, you eventually discover fun things, like the fact that there's the same odd house on Baseline Rd in Lafayette, and on US 287 just south of Longmont. And that you only see billboards for cigarettes out in the country, never in the city. And that the Loveland city hall is built from a turn-of-the-century schoolhouse. And that there's a single storefront in Berthoud with two shops: Telescopes and astronomy supplies on the right; Aromatherapy and fortune-telling on the left.

! My brother Ian called me at the office a few weeks ago to inform me that I have a new niece, named Samantha Lane Copeland, which is pretty good news, and ● which I think is as good a place as any to finish the matter.



The plain truth is that I knew better but went to Everest anyway. And in doing so I was a party to the death of good people, which is something that is apt to remain on my conscience for a very long time.

— Jon Krakauer, *Into Thin Air*

Reviews

Jon Krakauer's *Into Thin Air* is the story of a May on Mount Everest and the stupidity, greed and ego that killed too many people from two separate expeditions. Krakauer is a contributing editor to *Outside* magazine, which is geared toward jock-types with more money than sense. He was invited on an guided expedition to Everest, in which the loss of ability to think at altitude due to oxygen deprivation was clearly demonstrated. Among the villains: the leader of the South African expedition, who refused to share supplies cached at the high camp when disaster struck, even though he and his team were safely at Camp II; among the heroes: guide Anatoli Boukreev who went out at 3am into the teeth of a blizzard at 27,000 feet three times to save seven climbers.

The first few chapters of *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* made me want to pack up and move to Savannah. Fortunately, after reading more of it, sanity set in, and I reconsidered. This is the somewhat fictional account of a spectacular murder trial in Savannah, and the very colorful characters who permeate the city. Like all southern cities, more perks beneath the surface than is imaginable at first glance. I haven't bothered to see Clint Eastwood's movie of the story, because the book has such texture that none of it could survive the translation to the screen.

Bound for Glory is Woodie Guthrie's autobiography. I listened to an abridgment read by his son Arlo, and the observations about life on the road during the depression and after are often still appropriate now.

Once you cut through the thick accents, *The Full Monty* has an interesting story to tell. A flock of unemployed steelworkers decide to take their clothes off for money. The doubt and issues they face while getting from dressed to undressed are an interesting collection.

Daylight is a Sylvester Stallone disaster movie in the Lincoln Tunnel. Don't bother even on video.

E.T. is still fun after all these years. As a family video on a Saturday evening, we still invest in half a box of tissues.

As you know by now, I'm a sucker for caper movies, and Tom Selleck's *Lassiter* is no exception. A daring American jewel thief, a London detective with no scruples, Lauren Hutton playing a Nazi moll with a streak of sadism. The traditional sneaky escape. Joe Bob says check it out.

Andrew Chaikin's *A Man on the Moon* is an encyclopedic review of the flights to the moon that comprised the Apollo program. He takes a careful view of the

science of each mission, and discusses the interactions between the engineers, the geologists, the astronauts and the politicians. He discusses finding sample 15415, the so-called Genesis sample, from which we get the best guess of the moon's age. †

The current issue twentieth anniversary video of *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* features a trailer about the making of the movie. Spielberg talks about how he couldn't have made a movie about leaving his family now that he actually has one. That's a sort of interesting observation: how many of us would be willing to leave everything we've known for an adventure like the one featured in *Close Encounters*? Brings us back to the handful of men who've been to the moon, doesn't it? In any event, twenty years hasn't dulled the sensawonder that this movie brings.

Somehow, I managed to make it through being a teenager in the late sixties and early seventies without ever finishing *Stranger in a Strange Land* — at least I remember the beginning, but don't remember the end. It's a wee bit dated after nearly 40 years — and we won't get into a discussion about Heinlein's attitude toward women — but it has a variety of interesting things to say about people interacting, about religion, about how narrow human beings are. A classic.

Mailing Comments

Ned Brooks ✿ *The New Port News* ✉ *ct Dengrove*: “A local fan, John Fusek, sent me a long list of book sites on the web. . . Here's his list. . .” Since I was typing this in anyway to check them out, it's at <http://alumni.caltech.edu/~copeland/sfpa.html>, though I haven't proofread or tried them all to make sure I didn't make any typos. (Warning: alumni has been sporadically out-of-service due to hacker attacks and subsequent recovery since the first week in June. I hope by the time you read this that things will be back in order.)

✉ “The charisma of Heavens-Gate's Applewhite eludes me — I thought he looked like a clueless twit, I wouldn't have followed him around the corner.” Applewhite was a mediocre student in the music department at the University of Colorado for a while. In their continuing effort to beat the local angle on any story completely to death, the local fishwrap tracked down his classmates, many of whom are now engaged in scintillating pursuits like being insurance salesmen in Iowa and Kansas, and asked them about Applewhite. Most of them apparently said things along the lines of “The other

† The most accurate Argon dating on 15415 was done by Gerry Wasserburg in a lab called The Lunatic Asylum. I spent summers working for Gerry before he won the Crawford Medal — a sort of Nobel Consolation Prize — from the Royal Swedish Academy.

cultists must have been on drugs; this guy couldn't be engaging at all." In other words, folks who knew him had the same reaction you did, Ned.

ct Larson: "The Strauss & Howe Generations sounds like psychobabble to me. Except within a given family there is no such thing as a discrete generation. . . ." Well, we talk about the "Baby boom generation," right? It's a convenient, though geneologically incorrect, way to group folks who were born roughly at the same time. Janet unfortunately quoted the part of the introduction that sounds the most like psychobabble. But their theory seems to hold up, at least in retrospect. To restate it in a different way: kids who grow up at roughly the same point in history are going to have roughly the same outlook and attitudes. This, in turn, is going to cause them to act similarly in similar circumstances. More importantly, because part of that environment is their parents, we have a repeating cycle of generational patterns in America. As they point out, the real test will be to see what becomes of the Gen-Xers (Toni) and the Millennials (Allie) forty years down the road. Strauss and Howe have made some fairly specific predictions about what will happen between the 1990s and the 2030s.

Also, Ned, note that decades don't line up with the calendar either: I've heard the convincing argument that "the fifties" lasted until 22 November 1963, and that "the sixties" included both the murders at Kent State and the Watergate scandal, even though both of them occurred after 1969.

"Ned, what do you think of mortality?"

"It's a mistake, George; no one should ever indulge in it."

— George Wells and Ned Brooks, Deep South
Con, 27.iv.96

Ned Brooks continued. . .

ct Wells: "I can't imagine, from her speaking voice, that Hayley Mills was much of a singer, but I never heard her try." I don't know if she did her own singing in the original of *The Parent Trap*; I'll have to check the next time the kids watch the movie.

"I am told that it isn't necessary to type the `http://` part of an address — if you leave it out the system is smart enough to assume it." Depends on your browser. I've seen cases where you didn't need it and cases where you did.

"I have my PC set to ask before it accepts a cookie, and generally refuse just on general principles. I could set it to never accept a cookie, but it is interesting to see which sites continually pester you for one." Cookies have become an evil thing, but their original intention was fairly benign. Remember that you can't leave any information on the web server. When you look at the Barnes & Noble web site, for example, there's no record left of where you left off navigating through the maze of pages at their site. There are

two reasons for that: one is that because of scalability issues, it's impossible to keep track of everyone who's been at the page; the other is that the server has no idea of the history of this browse since you make a new connection with it for each successive page you read. Cookies allow you to do things like mark where you are in the tree for later return, record your preferences for display from this site, and in an example Haemer and I sketched out for our column but never published in *SunExpert*, keep running track of data collected by a statistics form. Unfortunately, it appears (and I emphasize "appears", because I haven't seen the examples of gross abuse that people keep complaining about) sites are now using them to record the sort of stuff that telemarketers collect. But none of that should matter, because the cookie, by definition, is stored on *your* machine, not theirs.

ct S Hughes: "Do you have the TrueType tengwar font?" I have a METAFONT source for a tengwar font somewhere. It was built by Mike Urban, one of the UCLA computer club usual suspects. Mike, when he was at TRW, went on to write two of the most important underground technical reports of the early '80s: one was a short tutorial on using Unix if the last system you used was VAX/VMS; the other was how to use T_EX if the last typesetting system you used was *troff*.

"Got two copies of this zine." That explains how we ended up short. Sloppy paper shuffling on my part.

ct me: "So, in the browser wars, what does it mean that Netscape is now offering theirs free for the download?" I think that it means nothing for the war in the long term: Netscape has been giving away their browser all along. That they're now giving away source code is an interesting strategy. The Microsoft press flack that John McChesney from NPR talked to about this was completely croggled. How, he asked, are people going to get standardized software when everyone is building a modified Netscape? He's completely confused, of course: the standard is not in the software to read the web pages; the standard is the HTML in which the pages are composed.

Do I know what this all means and what's going to happen? Haven't a clue. I *think* that it means that there will be good public domain alternatives to Internet Explorer soon, available as patches to the Netscape source. Unfortunately, with Microsoft's illegal marketing practices, most people are going to still just install Internet Explorer, which has some really annoying features.

(Incidentally, Netscape were inspired to give away their source code in part by a paper Eric Raymond wrote entitled "The Cathedral and the Bazaar," which has made quite a splash among software marketing types. Eric suggested that there are two different strategies for developing software: you build it like a medieval cathedral, with a master architect, and a bunch of guys running around doing his bidding, and formal testing, and widely spaced releases, or you build it like a

bazaar runs, with people running around madly, each doing a little thing, managing the whole cooperatively, releasing the software everytime something interesting happens. Eric's observation was that a whole operating system — Linux — was developed using the bazaar method, and he argues that it's as well-debugged and thought-out as a cathedral operating system, like Windows.)

Steve Hughes ♣ **Spider Pie** ☞ *"This [new toy] is really neat and relatively inexpensive, a Wacom pen pad." The times I've tried to use one of these, I've not been able to get the feel of it. Though I have finally gotten comfortable with the touch pad on this machine.*

☞ I like the little scanned images of the zines in the margin. Nice touch.

ct The Southerner: "Nice masthead, is it color laser print?" Yes, it is. When I was still at QMS, I had been printing the mastheads on any of a HP Color Deskjet 1600, a QMS Rembrandt, a QMS Monet, or an HP Color Laserjet, depending on what test printer was up, and which looked better. (I only know the QMS color printers by their code names; I never bothered to learn their model numbers.) When I left QMS, I printed enough of mastheads (and mailing label blanks) to last through a second year of Liz being OE. All of those — from SFFA 198 forward — were done on the Color Laserjet. The interesting trick was to find art that was horizontal, rather than vertical. For example, the picture of Buzz Aldrin saluting the flag fit, but the better picture of him jumping was too tall.

ct Brooks: "I ran into someone else, a few weeks ago, who is still using DOS-based tools for his PC..." Were it not for the layer of POSIX tools on this Windows machine, I'd be running DOS myself. In fact, all of the Hugo software runs on DOS: they're essentially character, not graphical, applications, so it makes no sense to make an effort to port those programs to any flavor of Windows.

"I know you like Fancy Font but I've gotten so spoiled by having hundreds of fonts to choose from, I would really miss Windows font handling capability if I had to go back to using DOS." As you know, I'm militant about not using any of the Microsoft word processing stuff, and I've got 624 POSTSCRIPT fonts sitting here to choose from, not counting the roughly 400 native T_EX bitmapped fonts, which I can build as required. (That I typically only use Palatino, Optima, Courier and T_EX's math and symbol fonts is a statement about my lack of imagination, not a statement about the variety available to me.)

☞ *"Actually road rage is more commonly seen among small car and SUV drivers than the people who own muscle cars. ... I see road rage as more the result of the high stress levels we all live under than anything else."* I think that there's a more subtle Freudian thing that causes muscle car drivers to not have as high an instance of road rage as people driving little compacts: The poor twit who is driving the compact can't afford a bigger **peris** car. The SUV driver bought the big macho car because he wants to rape

the road itself. (On the other hand, one will see those SUV guys tearing past you, uphill on Colorado Highway 7 in the winter only to see them in a ditch around the next curve, because the driver didn't understand that static friction and dynamic friction are not the same thing. In other words: having the macho SUV gives you a means to get it moving, but doesn't guarantee that you'll be able to find a dry, non-icy patch when you want to use your brakes.)

ct Frierson: "I've often wondered what I would do if I was out of a job and couldn't find work in my field. Given . . . the agreements I've signed over the years, it's perfectly possible that I could be faced with having to completely change fields and start over." The advice I've been given is that many of the non-compete clauses are not enforceable. Of course, I've always been covered under non-disclosure agreements and contracts drafted under California law, where the courts have held that you can't be deprived of your ability to use your skills to earn a living. And I've never had a complicated contract directly with the venture capitalists for a startup, like I presume you have, Steve.

(Actually, it's not true that *all* the NDAs have been Californian: The one for QMS was governed by Alabama law, and had a most curious non-compete clause. I promised that after I left QMS, I wouldn't go to work for another company whose principal business was laser printer development or manufacture for a period of eighteen months. The kicker was that the clause only applied to printer companies incorporated in Alabama with offices in Mobile county. Its intention was to prevent disgruntled employees from setting up a competitor locally. As I was reading the paragraph I got more-and-more annoyed knowing it was unenforceable, until I got to the Mobile sentence, at which point I just laughed and signed it.)

ct Dengrove: "I know I could put up a web page for the same effort as doing this zine." I handle that trick by just converting the source text for a zine or article directly into HTML. But, see my comments to Harry Warner later on about the relative volumes of each of my various writing commitments.

ct Gelb: "My father was a policeman . . . and I picked up the habit of sleeping with a gun in a convenient place." Guns in the house still make me nervous, which is part of the reason we're completely unarmed, even though we've lived (Yee Ha!) in both Texas and Colorado all these years.

ct Lillian: "Suzanne and I saw the Cirque du Soleil . . . in Vegas. . . . They use a high tech stage with disappearing platforms and wire lifts." As I've said before, I think Cirque du Soleil has overlaid some interesting acrobatics with a bunch of glitzy stuff. I liked them in the bigtop on Santa Monica beach better, before they went Las Vegas.

ct Larson: "Your comment on 'not being a liberal' really strikes home with me. . . . Needless to say, I'm not a liberal myself. I've been a fairly successful capitalist and I'm not at all ashamed of it." Putting on my Usage Police hat, it bothers me that the Limbaughization

of the language inspired Lee Atwater to get George Bush in the habit of using “liberal” as an epithet, equating it with “socialist” or “communist.” The word “liberal” has a long and honorable history, beginning with the Latin root “liberalis” (generous), and going forward to its cousin, “liberty.” Liberalism and capitalism are not antithetical concepts: note, for example, Jay Rockefeller and Ted Kennedy, two men in the Senate who have been successful at both. (Indeed, we still speak of Jay’s cousin, Nelson, with fondness as a liberal, even though he was a Republican.)

As a linguistic aside, one of the dictionaries over my desk claims that “liberalism” first appears as a separate word in the eighteen-teens, as, alternately, a Protestant movement emphasizing intellectual freedom and the ethical underpinnings of Christianity (from which movement directly flows Unitarianism) and the economic theory emphasizing free competition, a self-regulating market and the gold standard (from which flow the underpinnings, if not current practice, of western European social democrats.)

ct L Copeland: “Looking over your book list. . . I couldn’t help but notice only two SF books out of 15. Is this your usual percentage?” It was until recently. This month we’ve been talking past her as she’s been buried in various Darkover books.

ct Brown: “What really upset me . . . [with American Express losing a payment was]. . . the way everyone kept reassuring me they would take care of it and then did nothing.” Boy, this story reminds me of one: When we bought our first house at 329 Avenue 42 in the Mt Washington neighborhood of Los Angeles, we called the gas company to have the gas switched to our name from the tax cheat we bought the house from. “So, you won’t have to send anyone out? You can just switch things in the billing office, right?,” I asked. “Sure, no problem,” came the response. When we moved in, we discovered the gas had been shut off. I called the gas company the next morning, and they claimed they’d never gotten the switchover request, but they’d send someone out to turn the gas back on. So far so good.

A month later, two gas bills came, one for 329 Avenue 42, and one for 329 42nd St. I called the gas company, and they said they’d fix it. A month later, we got two bills again. I took the bill for the house that wasn’t ours around to the gas company office. They were dubious, but when they looked us up on the computer, they understood what had happened and promised again that it would be fixed. A month later — stop me if you’ve guessed this — two bills came again. I talked to a supervisor in the billing office. No problem, she said. A month later — you’ve seen this coming, right — we get a bill, and a “pay this, or we’ll cut off your gas” notice. (Sigh.) I wrote a letter to the folks who lived at 329 42nd St, saying “Look, I’m sorry about this mess, but I’ve tried to fix it, and they won’t. Perhaps you can before your gas gets turned off. Fortunately, it’s LA, so you won’t freeze.” I

attached all the previous bills, and my notes of conversations with the folks at the gas company, and I sent copies to the gas company billing department, and the Public Utilities Commission. Two days later I got a call from someone at the PUC who had just reamed the people at the gas company a new asshole. He told me not to worry, they were going to leave the gas on, apologize to the other people discount their (now large) outstanding bill, and not ding our credit record.

ct me: "Actually the thing I find most annoying about the Clinton / intern affair, which is not about who he has sex with but whether he lied under oath, is the way nobody seems to care if the President is a complete sleaze bag or not." I think the problem here is that after all the years of hearing about Kennedy's affairs, and Eisenhower's, and Johnson's, and the Reagans' divorces, we're just numb about the issue of the sex lives of public figures. † Basically, it's the boy who cried wolf.

So whether Clinton is keeping his pants zipped or not is not an issue as far as most people are concerned. Neither do I think people care whether he lied about it — in a country where three-quarters of the populus admit to having been unfaithful to their spouses, lying about an affair doesn't seem like a big deal to most of us. As a corollary, I agree with Molly Ivins' observation that whether a politician is screwing someone other than his spouse has no correlation to whether he's screwing his constituents.

"... By now you've probably figured out that I'm not one of his fans, I believe the person who has that office should represent the best qualities of the people who make up this country and I don't think Clinton is anywhere close." I understand that you're not a Clinton booster. I don't always like what Clinton has done either, but I think out of forty-odd presidents, the number of times we've had the best the country could offer can be counted on one hand: Jefferson and Lincoln. We've gotten lucky a couple of times and gotten guys who took over the office and grew into it: Teddy Roosevelt, Harry Truman. We've had some real clunkers: Harding, Nixon. We've had guys who tried to do good, but had fatal flaws: both Johnsons.

Meanwhile, how's your Linux installation coming? Up and running all over the house yet?

On a similar subject, see my discussion about cathedrals and bazaars in my comment to Ned above. The notion of open source code is an interesting one, but to those of us who live and die (or IPO and profit, as the case might be) from the

† Interesting footnote, if you didn't know: part of the reason that Lyndon Johnson hated Dick Nixon's guts is that Nixon originally got to the Senate by defeating Helen Gahagan Douglas in what was one of the nastiest and least honest political campaigns of the century, and earned Nixon the nickname "Tricky Dick." Johnson and Douglas had been having an affair for some time.

proprietary nature of the software we develop and sell, it causes some cringing.

ct Lichtman: "Suzanne and I set out to detail all of my fannish publications and discovered an interesting detail: I seldom bothered to date fan zines or make mention of where they were circulated. Needless to say, it makes cataloging them a little difficult." I don't number them on the zine, but I do try to date them and name their destination. On the other hand, I keep one file copy of everything I publish, and a list in the folder of title, date, pages, distribution.

Harry Warner ❄ Jewel of the Senile ❄ *ct Lillian: "My own guess about why Mother Teresa's death received so little play in the media, compared to the outburst for Princess Diana: the media are anti-Christian." I don't think so: Mother Teresa didn't get press coverage because she wasn't young and sexy. And her death was almost like the old *Saturday Night Live* schtick, but rather than "Francisco Franco is still dead," it was "Mother Teresa is finally dead." (Though, I'm crogged about the idea of Diana as sexy: I've always thought that Fergie was the cute one who married into the family. To paraphrase Gary Trudeau's line about Elizabeth Taylor: "A tad overweight, but auburn hair to die for.")*

*ct me: "Brendan Gill's rules of life impress me as the supreme example of all-out selfishness." Oh, I don't see them that way at all. Consider them as logically "and"ed, rather than as a hierarchy: Enjoy yourself, but not if it hurts others. That's it, because in the end we all die. Remember where this comes from: Gill's father was a fairly well-off insurance executive in Connecticut, so he and his siblings had a comfortable upbringing. Further, Gill *pere* was of the "enjoy yourself" persuasion, too, and decided that making the kids wait until he died, and they were in middle-age, to enjoy their inheritance was not going to be fun for anyone, so he gave them each some amazing sum like a quarter-million dollars (call it three million in current dollars), when they graduated from college.*

❄ *"Would the recently improved version of VCR Plus solve most or all the taping plus listening problems for persons with a fairly recent model of both VCR and TV?" Only if the new, improved VCR Plus thing also adjusts the channel on the cable box, and can be set by timer.*

❄ *"WinterSilks (and you'd think a mail order firm would refrain from a capital letter within its name without a space before it, because it's such a nuisance to do the eccentricity on the keyboard). . ."* As I've said before, if I was king of the universe, anyone making a trade name with a capital letter in the middle (WinterSilks), or worse, beginning with a lowercase letter and having embedded capitals (eXceed), would be sentenced to twenty years as towel boy in Bill Gates' mansion . . . after the revolution, when it would be a bath house for retired Russian emigrés.

"Because rumors can run through fandom over the most trivial matters, I should emphasize that

there is no hidden reason for my resignation from SFFA." Yeah, sure, Harry. We all know the real reason. Wink, wink. :-)

"Activity stats based on the number of words contributed might put me among the top five or six members in most of these past seven or eight years. And only an insignificant number of those words were reprints or long quotes." I was thinking about word count the other day, because I realized that I write between ten and twenty thousand words every other month for SFFA, compared to two thousand every other month for *SunExpert*, compared to sixteen thousand words (forty-six hundred lines) of code I've written for my main project at work since January. About 10% of the SFFA word counts are quotes from previous zines, but those only serve to make the zines self-contained.

I'm sorry you're leaving. Hope you have the renewed energy to do your two remaining APAs.

Arthur Hlavaty ❄️ **Derogatory Reference** ❄️ "I did see an announcement of the annual OldCo Christmas party. I went to last year's and invited Bernadette. She may have been the only employee's Significant Other there, which leads me to suspect that the invitations contained some sort of warning against bringing guests, in one of those secret codes used by the socially competent." That was one of the amazing things during the eighteen months I was at Systemhouse (or, as my writing partner calls it, "System Ho"): There was a series of secret handshakes and other signals that I never figured out. Worse, I never figured out if I hadn't figured it out because I never got the proper adult indoctrination, or because I was a member of the wrong fraternity, or because I was trained as a nerd, not an MBA.

"I hear that a popular subject on the TV talk shows is to have a dysfunctional family come on and get DNA testing to see if the kids are legitimate, with the national TV audience watching the reaction to this information." Liz got caught up in an episode of Jerry Springer one afternoon, after we'd recorded an episode of *Babylon 5*. I had to leave the room. She came downstairs later to tell me that it was women who were going on television to confess affairs to their husbands, most of the wives, for example, with their sisters-in-law or their husbands' girlfriends.

"But how can one discuss computers and ugly together without mentioning *Wired*?" It constantly amazes me that someone as thoughtful, with as interesting things to say, as Nick Negroponte, would allow his ideas to be presented in as hard-to-digest a wrapper as *Wired*. But what do I know? I'm not an architect-turned-professional-prognosticating-nerd.

"My prep school class and I loathed [Pride and Prejudice]. . . Twenty years later I reread [it], for a class, and found it pleasurable." I find that I'm now reading all the stuff I missed in high school. For example, it wasn't until about five years ago that I finally read *Huck Finn* — I suspect that like that recent idiot on the San Francisco school board,

there was someone in my town who saved us from the experience of reading Twain by equating the use of the word “nigger” with racism. I’m also working my way through *Moby Dick* a little at a time. (My father, having purchased a copy of *Finnegan’s Wake* in Paris in 1947, reads some more each year, but has never finished it — but then *Finnegan’s Wake* is generally acknowledged to be a career, not a book.)

“I hear that a woman named Terry McMillan (*Waiting to Exhale*) is alleged to write *Women’s Trash*, but specifically aimed at Black women. . . . If so, it’s about time.” As we were waiting to see *Men in Black* last summer, I noticed a poster for that movie with those black kids from Nickelodeon, and mentioned to Chris Kostanick that I found it annoying that there were now separate, but equally stupid, cultural icons. His counter-argument was that it was actually progress.

“There are complaints that [Latrell Sprewell’s fine] is permissive, which I supposed is a matter of degree. Sprewell has in essence been fined over \$6,000,000, which I believe is comparable to the assessments on the like of Charles Keating and Micheal Milken for stealing much more.” Milken’s civil fine was actually \$600 million. But the more interesting comparison is that Sprewell’s fine is about the same as what OJ Simpson paid in civil judgment and lawyers’ fees for killing his wife.

☞ In the first part of this zine, I commented to you: “There are two facts that Nicholas Negroponte mentions separately in *Being Digital* but does not relate: (1) A CD-ROM can hold several hundred of the world’s great books, with full indexing (2) A CD-ROM can hold a one-hour television show.” about how we’ve gone from one hour of standard TV to two hours of HDTV on a CD, but until I re-read the comment in your “good parts” edition, I didn’t twig to the relative value that the Negroponte equality places on books *vs* television.

Guy Lillian ✻ **Spiritus Mundi** ☞ “So what’s new. . . ? I’ve made my reservations for . . . DSC (I was the first to book a room). . . .” If so, we must have been second, because they were horribly confused about just what I was trying to reserve a room for. (Of course, now that the convention has come and gone, I understand that we may not have been second: the confusion was just symptomatic of their approach to everything. Or as I put it in Gary Robe’s hearing, “Normally, you have to go to a third-world country to find a hotel this bad.” He agreed.) ☞ “‘Susie’ has been approved for her SSI ‘crazy check,’ so when my 25% comes in, I’ll pay for both rooms, in total right away.” Don’t forget to set aside some money for taxes, old chum, before you get another nasty year-end surprise from Uncle Sam.

“I’ve built up a good mailing list over the first six issues [of *Challenger*]; this time I made the effort to alphabetize it as I addressed the envelopes.” OK, I don’t use it, but our little word-processing program on the home machine has a mailing label database wizard. Would it be easier to computerize the labels?

☞ One of those blondes on your pictures of Mardi Gras pages looks like Barbara Mott from the back.

ct Brooks: "Bowling & Sorcery? Again I am behind the times. . . ." Yes, you are: there are now Bowling and Sorcery Lanes opening up all over the country. If you get two strikes in a row, the resident witch casts a spell on you, and you get a gutter ball the next time up.

ct Frierson: "What's a 'chumbawamba'?" Our corporate scientist and my daughter had to explain this one to me: it's a nihilistic, socialist, Brit rock-and-roll band, who currently have a hot song about getting drunk and falling down entitled "Tubthumping."

ct Warner: "Nero Wolfe has some great moments, but he also had some repetitious ones. . . . But what grand titles! Fer-de-Lance . . . Some Buried Caesar. . . ." Yeah, but not as punchy as those Dick Francis titles: *Whip Hand . . . Comeback . . . Proof . . . Reflex*. All beaten by the one that was suggested one evening by either Alan Winston or Chris Kostanick: ◊ *Short Hairs*

ct Lillian: "The SFFA deadline is only a month away, so I can't bring you up to date on all my women, Irv. . . ." At least you don't have the same problem as that little town in Pennsylvania that Gary Trudeau postulated in a Sunday cartoon a few years back, the one populated by the offspring of a single NBA player: Wiltsville.

ct Larson: "Credit cards! What are credit cards? The best thing I've done in the last five years: get rid of the credit cards." Back when I graduated from college, I decided that rather than get credit cards, I'd set up accounts with the merchants I regularly patronized, like the upscale grocery where I got wine and fancy baked stuff and the florist I used to send roses to the women in my life. Then, the first time I tried to rent a car, I was in deep trouble, and so I got an American Express card.

ct Dengrove: "Watching strippers doesn't so much pale, get boring, as it numbs. . . ." I don't find it numbing, so much as find there's nothing quite so boring as a woman trying to look sexy to a room full of drunk guys while she's taking her clothes off. It's an act that should be performed in much smaller groups.

ct S Hughes: "And as recently as a mere 22 years ago the ability of the OE to reject a non-southerner's application for membership was given serious consideration." I'm reminded of the observation by someone at Harvard that they considered the innovation of the United States as interesting idea, and were still waiting to see if it worked out.

ct Gelb: "I watched part of *The Apartment* the other night, and was a bit baffled." I have no idea what it was up against for Best Picture that year. Or was it a "career" award for Billy Wilder, like Jack Palance's Oscar for *City Slickers*, or Don Ameche's

◊ And since they both read this, I'm sure they'll remind me which one was responsible.

for *Cocoon*? But, I think *The Apartment* is actually a nice little movie: it's got light romantic comedy, a good performances by Jack Lemmon (though not as stellar as *Save the Tiger*), Shirley MacLaine and Fred MacMurray, a selection of well-played smarmy guys. Not bad at all.

☞ "I got a B in my only Economics class in college. . . We read a book by Galbraith. . ." My experience in Econ 101 was horrible: The chap who was teaching it was drunk when he picked the opaque text, and spent the term screwing his secretary rather than preparing his lectures. I've been meaning to go back and read Samuelson's reputedly excellent book so that I might actually pick up some of the subject.

ct Metcalf: "[In the new Bond movies] Judi Dench's M is excellent" Yes, she is. Liz's observation when we saw her in *Tomorrow Never Dies* on video the other night was to quote from some book she'd read that there's nothing more chilling or ruthless than an Englishman of a certain class doing his duty. Dench captures that exactly.

☞ ". . . but the new Moneypenny pales beside the memory of Lois Maxwell. . ." I never found Lois Maxwell so attractive that I wanted to jump her. On the other hand, while I find the new Moneypenny cute, I don't want to boff her, I want to *adopt* her.

☞ "Could the Nazis have kept power in a Germany equipped with personal computers and the Net?" I'd point out that faxes and e-mail kept the massacre in Tienamen Square eight years ago from being worse than it was. (I'd also observe that the tanks didn't roll into Tienamen until the factory workers joined the students.)

ct Lynch: "Here's a poll of sorts I've never considered: my favorite short SF. . ." Let's see, you've got "Flowers for Algernon", Willis' "Daisy in the Sun", Ellison's "I Have No Mouth. . .", and Cordwainer Smith's "The Dead Lady of Clown Town". Well, I missed this poll the first time 'round, and it's a tough one: Remembering that I prefer hard science fiction, and that I haven't read any short SF since the Atlanta Worldcon, I'd have to start with Niven's "Inconstant Moon", Clarke's "The Star" or "Nine Billion Names of God", Lafferty's "900 Grandmothers", and "He Built A Crooked House" by Heinlein. I'd pick "Paladin of the Lost Hour" rather than "I Have No Mouth. . ." from the short fellow ° (the one about redemption, not the one about damnation!) — or even "Santa Claus versus S.P.I.D.E.R.", which is pretty amusing. Then I'd go to Cherryh's "The Scapegoat", and finish up with Swanwick and Gibson's "Flying Saucer Rock and Roll" for comic relief. ("Paladin" was a Hugo winner, and the last two were nominees on our watch.)

ct me: "Count on embarrassed Republicans . . . to run for cover, as through Starr's prosecutorial brutality and political ineptitude, we see what a Republican government would be like. . ." The Republican strategy seems to change with the wind, or at least at each new moon. The

° Allie is now half an inch taller than Harlan's claimed height. Scary, ain't it?

WHAT'S CONSPIRACY GOT TO DO WITH IT?



Kenneth Starr: His conservative credentials are impeccable: He's a member of the Federalist Society, a club of right-leaning jurists; a friend of publisher Alfred Regnery; and has spoken at Pat Robertson's university. Starr even considered writing a brief in support of Paula Jones. He was appointed special prosecutor in August 1994 by a panel of judges, one of whom had questionable conflicts of interest himself. Starr stayed on as a million-dollar-a-year senior partner at Kirkland & Ellis—an unprecedented move for someone in his role. The firm's clients include the school voucher supporting Bradley Foundation, which enlisted Starr to provide legal advice. He failed to mention when he was named to the prosecutor's job that the Resolution Trust Corporation had filed a suit against K&E for professional negligence involving a Colorado thrift. His new status allowed him the latitude to investigate the very people who were suing his own firm. Now, he may be using telephone tapes of dubious legal provenance to advance the Lewinsky investigation. When he's done, a chair awaits him at Pepperdine University, where millionaire conservative Richard Scaife is a regent.

The Gossips: After **Matt Drudge**, who aspires to be the Walter Winchell of the Internet, published unverified material on the Lewinsky story, scooping Newsweek on its own reporting, the mainstream media, including NBC's Meet the Press, eagerly embraced him. **Rush Limbaugh**, the tribal drum for the anti-Clinton crowd, rarely allows any salacious rumors, particularly those involving Hillary, to go unremarked in his daily broadcasts on 600 stations. **David Horowitz**, formerly of the New Left magazine Ramparts and now operating out of the Center for the Study of Popular Culture (Scaife gave \$250,000 in 1996), recently repeated Bush-era speculation in the online magazine Salon that Bill Clinton had traveled to Moscow as a Rhodes Scholar for potentially traitorous purposes.

Blind Justice and Legal Bloodhounds: Chief Justice of the United States William Rehnquist picked the three wise men who would name a new Clinton prosecutor: Judges John Butzner, Joseph Sneed and David Sentelle. Sneed was a top official in the Reagan Justice Department; Sentelle overturned Ollie North's conviction. The Virginia-based **Rutherford Institute**, self-described fighter for "the defense of religious freedom, the sanctity of human life and family autonomy," took over the financing of Paula Jones's sexual harassment case against Clinton in October. Founder John Whitehead claims in one of his books that there are "ominous parallels" between pre-Nazi Germany and present-day America. Jones was briefly advised earlier by the **Landmark Legal Foundation**, which has received almost a million dollars in recent years from the Scaife and Bradley foundations. Attorney James Moody of Landmark is representing Lewinsky "friend" Linda Tripp in her dealings with Starr.

On Capitol Hill: House Government Reform and Oversight Committee chairman Dan Burton, who is so obsessed with the death of Vince Foster that he re-enacted the suicide in his backyard, is conducting a partisan vendetta with access to \$10 million of taxpayer funds and the power of subpoena. He is being assisted by rabid anti-Clintonite David Bossie, a staff investigator. Bossie used to be a personal aide to Senator Lauch Faircloth, who linked arms with Burton to end Robert Fiske's stint as the first Whitewater special prosecutor, citing conflict of interest problems. Then Faircloth did lunch with buddies Senator Jesse Helms and Judge David Sentelle, who, on a panel with two other judges, replaced Fiske with the more reliably partisan Kenneth Starr.

Research assistance: Nation interns Trenton B. Daniel, Jillian K. Dunham, Amanda Hickman, Colleen Kenny, Benjamin Kunkel, Pamela I. Lundquist and Lawrence Muhammad II, and Stephen Levine of the Center for Investigative Reporting.

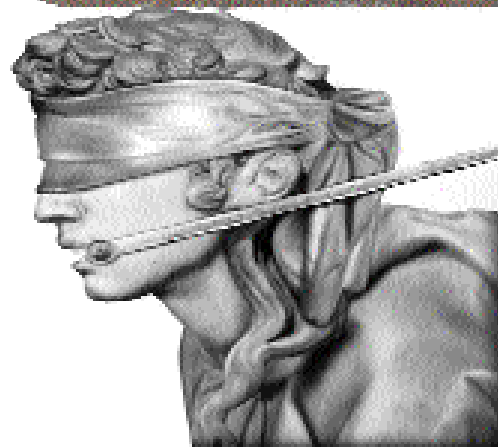
The Ruddy Files: The Scaife-owned **Tribune-Review** in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, hired former New York Post reporter Christopher Ruddy to write a string of "exposés" strongly suggesting that Vince Foster was murdered. The allegations were recycled by the California-based **Western Journalism Center**, another Scaife beneficiary, which bought at least fifty full-page ads in The Washington Times to showcase Ruddy's work. "We can reach key legislators, key journalists, key radio talk-show hosts" in this way, Joseph Farah, the center's founder and executive director, explained. The only journalist in competition with Ruddy has been the London **Sunday Telegraph's** Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, until recently his paper's Washington bureau chief, who regularly filled his reports with unsubstantiated rumors ("Clinton Took Cocaine While in Office") that were often picked up and re-reported by news organizations in the United States.

Media Madness: While few would mistake the New York Post or The Washington Times for serious journalism, **The Wall Street Journal's** status adds credibility to the anti-Clinton barrage with the steady stream of attacks on the Administration that pour forth from Robert Bartley's editorial pages. "The WSJ editors lie without consequence," wrote Vince Foster in his suicide note. The Journal has published three volumes of its editorials and Op-Eds, which, together, offer a compendium of almost every unproven Whitewater and Clinton White House insinuation to make its way into the mainstream media. The heavily Scaife-funded (\$370,000 in 1995) **Accuracy in Media** says it's glad to see that media coverage of Lewinsky might approach what it calls the "feeding frenzy" over the Iran/contra scandal. In 1978 Ben Bradlee termed AIM founder Reed Irvine a "miserable, carping, retromingent vigilante" and, to Bradlee's everlasting regret, put Irvine on the map for good. AIM's weekly show used to run on the cable National Empowerment Television, along with Newt Gingrich's The Progress Report, when NET was owned and run by the **Free Congress Research and Education Foundation** (which got \$720,000 from Scaife in 1995 and \$3.2 million from Bradley). Says Free Congress founder Paul Weyrich: "My view is Maoist... I believe you have to control the countryside and then the capital will eventually fall." Meanwhile, **The American Spectator**, publisher of some of the all-time greatest hits on Clinton, including David Brock's 1994 "Troopergate" exposé, has lost its appeal for Scaife, who gave \$720,000 in 1995 but later pulled out, apparently in protest against an insufficiently friendly review of Christopher Ruddy's recent scandal-filled tome.

Sex Sells: Regnery Publishing primed the public for the latest goings-on by publishing former F.B.I. agent Gary Aldrich's innuendo-larded Unlimited Access and British scandal monger Ambrose Evans-Pritchard's The Secret Life of Bill Clinton. Alfred Regnery, head of the company, is a friend of Kenneth Starr and Lucianne Goldberg—would-be agent to would-be right-wing stars. Aldrich thanked **Southeastern Legal Foundation** (which has received at least \$300,000 from Scaife since 1990) for its offer to defend him, if needed. Elsewhere, **Citizens United**, headed by Floyd Brown, producer of the "Willie Horton" commercial, which helped doom Michael Dukakis's 1988 presidential campaign, offers its book "Sick Willie": Why America Cannot Trust Bill Clinton, compiled with the aid of David Bossie. The hottest videos on the right-wing circuit are The Death of Vince Foster: What Really Happened and The Clinton Chronicles, which provides "the names and faces of the key players who Clinton used to build his Circle Of Power... as well as those who got in his way and lost their jobs, reputations, virtue and lives!" Among those hawking The Clinton Chronicles is the **Rev. Jerry Falwell**, who has said of Clinton, "Whatever it takes within the restrictions of the law to get him out of there, we need to do." Members of **The Council for National Policy**, a members-only group for the right-wing elite, among them John Whitehead of the Rutherford Institute and Senators Jesse Helms and Lauch Faircloth, received free copies of Chronicles, along with a memo urging them to "contact Senators and Congressmen with whom you have influence" to insist they look into Clinton's actions.

Pepperdine University: Located in lovely Malibu, it's holding open a position for Ken Starr as first dean of the School of Public Policy—founded with the help of a \$1.1 million gift from "life regent" Richard Scaife—when Starr finishes (if ever) his current labors. Total Scaife contributions to Pepperdine: more than \$12 million.

Deep Pockets: The Pittsburgh-based **Sarah Scaife, Carthage and Allegheny** foundations (about \$300 million in assets) answer to Richard Scaife; no surprise, then, that they support a galaxy of anti-Clinton efforts. The philosophically like-minded **Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation** in Milwaukee (about \$500 million in assets) reimbursed the State of Wisconsin for the \$390 an hour it paid Kenneth Starr to defend it in a school voucher suit.



next couple of months will commit them to a tack for the November elections. The rigidity of positions we're seeing in Congress are consistent with the predictions Strauss and Howe made about what would happen when Baby Boomers started to get into power. ☞ *"In short, I think the good guys will win this mudfight, but everyone will come out of it with a dirty face."* I'm afraid it will be worse than a dirty face: nobody will win but cynicism, which will result in still fewer people than ever voting.

☞ *"At the Memphis Titanic exhibit. . . I was nearly shaken to tears. I kept imagining myself and my relatives and friends on the ship. I saw myself hovering on the rails nearby, trying not to eavesdrop as you put Liz and this kids in the lifeboat, or Dick forced Nicki to leave his side. . . and then withdrawing en masse to the bar for a last toast before the ice water chaser."* Ah shit, Guy, every time I've read this paragraph, I've teared up, including just now, as I'm typing this comment. You're right that in a plane crash (in general) we all go together and at once, but there are still instances where one of us gets saved while another doesn't. See J. Baldwin's (I think) excruciatingly painful first-hand account of rescue efforts after the 1989 San Francisco earthquake in *Whole Earth Review*. (I'd give you an exact reference, but we just donated all our back WERs to the library.) Also, remember that in a land-based terrorist incident like the Oklahoma City or World Trade Center bombings, the person at the next desk may have died or been injured while you went unharmed.

☞ *"Having not seen Koenig's performance as . . . 'the heavy-handed telepathic cop [named] Alfred Bester' on Babylon 5, I can't guess why Straczynski named him that. Except that a light-handed telepathic cop figures prominently in The Demolished Man, of course."* Thanks. That's actually what I was asking: I couldn't remember the title of the Bester novel with the telepathic cop.

☞ *"A couple of [Alex Slate's] correspondents actually claim the shootings [at Kent State] served a greater good because they quieted campus protest against the glorious Vietnam War. God, where were they?"* Actually, my perception — remembering that I'm about a decade younger than you and was on the opposite coast — was that the deaths at Kent State and Jackson State *did* slow down protest. That this was *not* a Good Thing, I think we are agreed on. (Thirty years later, Columbia's still not built a gymnasium at Morningside Park, and that, too, is a Good Thing. Though the last time I was in New York, I noticed that Finley Hall at City College is still a burned out shell, and that isn't: the fire-bombing destroyed a very fine pipe organ, and wonderful concert space among other things.)

☞ *"Actually, you took the cards off the name plaques on the 1986 Hugos yourself and allowed me to take their picture — from far enough back so I couldn't I couldn't see the winners."* Quite so, now that you remember for me. (Maybe I can get a wholesale rate on that. . .) As you know, memory's the second thing to go; ~~for the first we now have Viagra...~~

ct Ackerman: "Well, if your lawyer's kid is dating Chelsea Clinton at Stanford, I hope he doesn't mind double-triple-quadruple dating with the steely-eyed Secret Service agents." Double-dating with the Secret Service wouldn't scare me half as much as trying to evade those father-rapers from the tabloids. The Rocky Mountain News reprinted a piece from the Ft Worth Star in which the real estate development where Chelsea's boy friend's parents live issued a press release. Are we getting to be a little self-aggrandizing, or what?

ct Brown: "The more I read about Florida the more I wonder how anyone with any adventure in his soul could stand living anywhere else... I've discovered Carl Hiaasen, y'see..." Hiassen is sure amusing. But avoid the movie of Strip Tease, since it's merely annoying.

☞ "In all seriousness, I must say I'm disappointed in the immaturity shown by the video media in covering the [Lewinsky] non-story — first frenzied, then defensive, now shamefaced." Yeah, well what do you expect when nobody bats an eye that former Republican flack-in-chief Roger Ailes was hired to be president of Fox News. You know, that new cable news network with the ads talking about how they're unbiased, because it's your job to decide, not the media's job to decide for you.

Liz Copeland ☼ Armadillo Redux ☞ ct Brooks: "Cable plus 3 movie channels cost us \$23 a month [in Venice]. Now regular cable costs more than that in Boulder." Ah, the joys of deregulation. While we've been living in Boulder, our cable bill has increased, on average, at three times the rate of inflation. This year it went up 12%. And the city council couldn't figure out why the referendum on the cable contract last year went overwhelmingly against TCI.

ct Lillian: "I always kinda liked the one that was supposed to be glasses and a pointy nose. 8)" I always liked Mae West winking: ; -) 8

☞ "Jeff and I prefer Tin Cup as a golfing movie pick. But then we're nostalgic for Texas. . ." Well, Guy won't like it because it's got Kevin Costner in it, but it does have (sigh) Rene Russo in a knit shirt.

☞ "Well, thank you. I don't know that I'd call myself splendid. . ." Snuggly, wonderful, and a great parent also all apply. As well as some other compliments I won't add in a family apa.

*ct Schlosser: "I actually really liked Dalton [as Bond], but I seemed to be in the minority here." Well, you've at least got company: it's a minority of two. I may not have made the observation here before, but I think Dalton's Bond was informed more by leCarré (particularly *The Looking Glass War*) and Deighton than it was by Fleming or Gardner. Moore's, on the other hand, was patterned on Monty Python. (Or as the David Niven character says in the big-budget movie version of *Casino Royale*: "Look at you! You're all joke shop spies!") We've gotten back to the Fleming-inspired*

Connery middle-ground with Brosnan.

ct Brandt: "You would think hanging out with New Orleans fandom would have given me understanding of most of the oddities possible, but it didn't seem to." That's right: you had to meet my father to complete the picture.

ct Larson: "We looked at minivan 5 years ago, when we got our Pontiac Transport. The only thing we noticed about the Dodge Caravans was how many of them were for sale after about 5 years." Actually, as you've mercifully forgotten, we rented a Caravan to haul some stuff from the apartment to the storage unit while we were waiting for our house to be built in Austin. It took both of us, and every tool out of the toolbox, to get the back seats out of the Dodge. And even then, we turned the air blue with swearing.

ct Gelb: "Well, I will admit that what you paid for your condo is just about the average house price in Boulder. Of course, the average house here is only a couple hundred feet bigger than your condo." The average house size in Boulder is actually more like twice Janice's condo size, in our neighborhood at least, where stuff with unfinished basements runs to about 1700 square feet. But the figure of merit in Boulder is still \$100 per square foot, which Janice beats by a factor of three. Of course, there was that condo around the corner from the office, and within walking distance to both the synagogue and Unitarian church in Ft Collins (800 square feet, \$75k) which I was tempted to buy as a *piéd a terre*.

ct yourself: "We got some of the missing X-Files episodes in the last 2 months. . ." We've now got them all. Mulder and Scully flashing their badges and shining their flashlights at every alien, in every dark corner of every warehouse in creation. Still have to see the movie.

ct me: "OK, I've been to Disneyland twice now, so you get one more chance to get me to like it. And if I don't, that's it. No more." I not sure you'll ever manage to like it. The good news is that Allie's getting almost old enough to go by herself. But we'll have to find someone to go with me and JJ. ☹ " (This does not mean you get to take Kyla instead. . .)" (Damn!)

ct Weisskopf: "Well, Jeff still enjoys Disneyland and he's a mere 2 years younger than I am. I don't think age is that important once you get past being a kid." Age has nothing to do with it. It's all in the mindset. You keep getting hung up on the question of how artificial this all is, without just going with the flow and enjoying the absurdity of it all. The alternate way to deal with it (ignoring the "drop acid and gawk" approach of some of my college mates), is to enjoy watching the kids having fun.

me ☹ **Pie in the Face** ☹ Let's see, what have we got for corrections?

First off, to Ned: Steve is right, the horsepower of the web server plays into the equation of bandwidth, too, but I'm not convinced that the diameter of the pipe

isn't a bigger factor if you're not doing any fancy forms processing. (Of course, all my experience at web server work is internal to a company; I've never had to do one of those huge ones that something like amazon.com operates on.)

I complained that there wasn't a King Features web site. Now there is, at <http://www.kingfeatures.com/comics/>, though they still don't have the Sunday comics, and the resolution of the images they're putting up is not great.

Then I quoted Clarke's disclaimer from *The Deep Range*, "All the characters in this story are fictitious except the giant grouper in Chapter Three," to Richard, as my favorite: I'd forgotten until I'd reread it in the intervening three months that Heinlein's in *Stranger* is even better: "Notice: All men, gods and planets in this story are imaginary. Any coincidence of names is regretted."

Irv Koch ✪ *Offline Reader* ✪ *ct Brooks*: "The artwork is junk from my Netscape cache directory and not to be liked more or less than any other junk fillos." You do realize, as I explained to Dick Lynch last time, that you can explicitly save these, right?



Richard Dengrove ✪ *Twygrasil and Treehouse Gazette* ✪ Your commentary on Zippergate is particularly interesting. You say at one point "However, the whole issue leaves a bad taste in many congressmen's mouths, those not overcome with Clinton's demons." Dan Burton, in particular, falls into the demon camp. Which I find really interesting, since Burton's skated closer to the edge on ethics and campaign funding issues than anyone else in Congress save perhaps Gingrich or Dornan.

Also, you note that "Even before the 1992 vote was tabulated, a lying Clinton seemed like [the press'] passport to that exalted position [it had after Watergate] again." Except that in the days of Watergate, Woodward and Bernstein were pretty much out on their own. They were breaking stories, and nobody was picking them up. The whole story was ignored outside of the *Post* for quite some time. Besides which, Woodward and Bernstein were actually paying attention to normal journalistic practice: they wouldn't publish something unless they could confirm it through two independent sources, just like they teach

in J-school. I'm not sure many of the rumors that pass for news in Washington today have been confirmed by one source, let alone two.

ct S Hughes: "One of these days I'm going to get a digital camera and a scanner, though." What I'd really like is the (I think it's) Kodak camera, which takes stock Nikon accessories and lenses, with higher resolution than the normal digital camera. I'll have to save my pennies, though, since it's about fifteen thousand bucks, obviously intended for the newspaper market.

*ct Warner: "I don't know what the explanation is for the snipped open letters, but keep the faith. When and if you get the explanation, I doubt it will be that the Post Office believes you are smuggling drugs." When I was living in Alhambra, after I graduated from Caltech, with John Sparks, Mike Gunderloy, Elizabeth Jenkins, and Carolyn MacDonald, we had a large amount of mail arrive similarly slit open for months, all stamped "Opened in error: Sears, Roebuck processing center, Alhambra." The Post Office claimed that none of our mail was getting mis-directed, and the guys at the Sears credit card processing center in Alhambra had never heard of us, and disclaimed having seen any of our mail. It turns out that John, who had dual US-West German citizenship, and a German mother, was applying for a security clearance. If his nationality wasn't kooky enough for the fibbies, he was living with *Gunderloy* of all people. Those of you who know Mike will recall that he has an eclectic and varied correspondence, even discounting his normal contacts within fandom. I guess the FBI and DoE folks watching the mail were more than a little confused that we kept getting magazines like *Anarchist Quarterly*, *Soviet Life* and both *New Republic* and *The Nation*.*

ct Lillian: "Marx said that history repeats itself: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce." That is to say that Zeppo tells it the first time, and Groucho the second?

☞ "Zippergate is about Clinton's sexual affairs. And no amount of highminded rhetoric can erase that." If we object to Clinton because of sex, we're not objecting to him because he supported the tobacco bill; if it's about sex, that makes it not about Clinton stealing campaign issues from the Republicans; if it's about blowjobs, it's not about Clinton pushing for universal health care; if it's about phone sex, it's not about committing US troops to Bosnia. Just as Packwood leaving the Senate was couched in terms of sex, even though it was really about his laundering illegal campaign contributions for Phil Gramm's presidential run.

ct Larson: "I don't know whether my table of contents has ever helped me out in egoboo. Nor has my practice of putting the subject of comments in bold letters." I find the table of contents useful, myself, and have just stolen the idea. On the other hand, for those of us who desecrate our SFPA mailings with marginal notes, the boldface type isn't as useful, though it might be for folks like Guy who treat the mailings with the respect

they deserve.

☞ “A lot of people believe that backseat driving makes driving safer when it is just one more factor distracting you from the road. . . . For that reason, I always insist that my wife do the driving.” I don’t drive when Liz is in the car, either, but that’s because she’s just a better driver than I am.

☞ “I think in Friday, [Heinlein] finally got out of the Playboy philosophy. . . The novel concerned a heroine who was as superhuman and technically adept as any James Bond.” And, we note, with amusement, at least as much of a slut as James Bond. Call it falling into the *Playgirl* philosophy.

ct Schlosser: “I hope they have perfected California pizza. When it first came to the East fifteen years ago, the restaurants seemed to just throw the toppings onto the pizza without any attempt to bake them in.” Well, when Wolfgang Puck opened Spago, the theory was that he was going to make pizza with offbeat, but fresh, ingredients. The notion of “California pizza” got transmogrified into anything with raw, non-standard vegetables on it.

ct L Copeland: “However, the idea of mafiosi and drug dealers running a business that makes very little legitimate money is no fable. I have personal experience with several such businesses in my home town. The moment you enter the shopkeeper discourages you from buying anything.” There was a little mom-and-pop grocery a little off downtown in Boulder a couple of years back that had unstocked, dusty shelves, and didn’t appear to be making any money at all. After it got closed down by the vice squad for the bookie joint that it was, a hairdresser took over the building. Either it’s legitimate, or they’ve got better cover.

ct Ackerman: “Maybe Micah roots for the Green Bay Packers. But at least he isn’t rooting for the Bangor Packers.” Who, pray tell, are the Bangor Packers? Or is this a reference to moving the team to some other place? Which, as I recall they can’t do, because the Packers are owned by the town of Green Bay, just like the Boston Celtics are owned by gazillions of small investors, who are not allowed to accumulate more than a certain number of shares. Of course, both leagues have passed rules to prevent this affront to capitalism and television rights to ever happen again. (My feeling is that anytime a team demands a new stadium, the correct response from the city is either (a) “hope you have fun moving,” or (b) to condemn the team under the rules of eminent domain to prevent them from moving. This comes up because in the wake of their Stupid Bowl win, the owner of the Broncos is demanding a new stadium, convincing John Whats-his-name to put off retirement for a year so the bond issue will pass. The team and the counties will split the estimated cost, with the counties picking up any construction overruns. I would have opted for response (a) myself.)

☞ “I see Raphi’s written some bad poetry. It has all the signs of bad poetry: I can understand

what he's getting at and relate to it. With good poetry, the standard is you cannot understand a thing." By that standard, Whitman, Frost and Sandburg are bad poetry. And it's a good thing, too.

ct Hlavaty: (his comment to me, actually) "I would put that CD typology a little differently. [A CD can hold hundreds of great books, or a one-hour TV show.] I would add (3) A CD-ROM often holds a five minute smash hit, for which the price is the same." I've noticed that Circuit City's addition to this menage is DIVX, a DVD-like format, with encryption. The player has to be attached to a phone line, and it has to call up the central computer to authorize each time you see the movie. Oh, yeah, it bills you \$4.95 every time you do.

ct S Hughes: "[On] Clinton being too uncompromising on appointees. That isn't fair to Republicans in Congress, who are proud of being fire breathers. They are proud of being uncompromising, unlike mere politicians like Clinton." Following a tradition dating back to at least the Civil War War of Northern Aggression, every bill of any import is passed through Congress with a zillion riders on it, providing for everything from prohibiting funding for abortion out of any checking account in America, to having Bill Clinton measured for a straight jacket. Which is why nothing appears to be getting done.

☞ "About Linux, I hear it is somewhat more difficult than Windows to learn and there is some software you cannot run on it." You can't run most of the monopoly software from Microsoft on Linux. But there are spreadsheets, and word processors, and other useful applications that you can run on it. Of course, the notion of software running anywhere is a fiction anyway: you can't run Microsoft stuff on any computer, just any computer based on an Intel processor, running a Microsoft operating system. As for Linux — or Unix in general — being more difficult to learn, it's a matter of the symbols in which you process ideas. Unix is no more difficult to install and manage than Windows 98 or NT is, but for much of the setup stuff there are not cute little bunny rabbits to click on. "... But computer screens freeze up and computers reboot hardly at all." In general, Unix tends to be much more stable than NT. People routinely report continuous uptime of a year or more on their Unix machines: at QMS our file server, a Sun Sparc 20 running Solaris only crashed due to power failures. I have yet to see a Windows NT box run that long without a crash or a required reboot. (Of course, the constant rebooting is hard-wired into the process: there's a whole class of things which you routinely need to modify on an 'NT machine, each of which require an immediate reboot.)

ct Metcalf: "I remember reading that, during World War II, [L Ron Hubbard] told one of his fellow Naval colleagues that he wanted to become rich by starting a cult." Speaking of Hubbard, as I was reading *Stranger in a Strange Land* recently, it kept seeming to me that every

time someone spoke of Reverend Foster, it sounded like they wanted to say “L Ron Hubbard”. Also, speaking of the Navy and (since I brought him up) Heinlein, I recently re-read Larry Niven’s Heinlein valedictory story “The Return of William Proxmire,” which is an absolute delight.

☞ *“Wouldn’t people be more prone to establish new cities in space, a la L-5 projects, than pack up Buda and Pest and sail them to Betelgeuse? At a moment’s notice people start new cities on Earth. Two great cities, Hong Kong and Singapore, from what I gather, are only a hundred or two years old.”* Actually, as great cities, they date back only that far, but like Tokyo, they’ve been there for a *long* time. But in the case of Hong Kong and Singapore, their growth into huge cities is tied to their being turned into free ports and trading centers in the last century. Hong Kong’s continued existence — at all — is predicated on its continuing to be a free port and banking center.

ct Robe: “You’re getting revenge for high school impotence by the power you wield at cons. It’s a helluva lot better palliative than the Church of the Subgenius. . .” Or the solution proposed by Julie Brown in her hilarious song “The Homecoming Queen’s Got a Gun.”

ct me: “Of course, when Monica realized that her story was endangering the President and herself as well, she discarded that tale like a hot potato.” As more and more of Tripp’s tapes are leaked, we hear less and less of the claimed smoking gun. It becomes apparent that most of them are Tripp asking leading questions, and Lewinsky acting in the classic locker room style and embroidered the truth. (I don’t know much about how women talk when they’re hanging out among themselves, but I’m willing to bet that every man in this apa has not always been completely straight when he’s talking about women with just the guys. I’d certainly have to plead guilty.)

☞ *“Weren’t the unwilling conscripts the Allies met during D-Day there because the Germans thought the allies would invade elsewhere. Where does the Man Who Never Was fit into this? Do you know?”* If I’m remember correctly, The Man Who Never Was was an invention of MI6. He was a British soldier who died of tuberculosis, so to outward appearances it looked like he’d drowned, particularly after he’d been floating in the water for a few days. They chained a briefcase to his wrist containing invasion plans for Calais and dropped him from a submarine off the coast of Portugal. The Germans found him — as they were supposed to — and jumped to the wrong conclusion — as they were supposed to. I thought there was a recounting of the story in Kahn’s *The Codebreakers*, but I can’t find it in the WWII chapter.

☞ *“What I would like to see is the young Sherlock Holmes. In the early stories, he is apparently a young man, but you never see him portrayed that way in the movies.”* You’re right: In the story where Watson first meets Holmes, it’s clear that Holmes is a grad student, but in the movies, it’s Basil Rathbone all the way.

David Schlosser ☼ *Peter, Pan, and Merry* ☼ *ct Brooks*: “The only relationship I see between road rage and technological power is the separation from society/others that people feel when they are inside their car.” Which is why you never see road rage on a bicycle. Except in Boulder. •

ct Warner: “Interesting view that most people have the resources to save for their retirement. By extension, does that mean that those who didn’t do so (or who had bad luck with their investments) should be left to their own resources?” This is exactly the problem I have with the idea of scrapping social security in favor of everyone investing their own retirement money: one of the original ideas behind social security was to bail out those whose pension funds had been wiped out in the 1929 Crash. If we’re going to allow people to forgo social security now, they have to be willing to do it without a net — if they lose their money in junk bonds, they can live in a cardboard box.

By a similar token, my father keeps complaining that his private pension has a better rate of return than his social security. But what he won’t understand is that, by design, loose social security money (the money that’s not coming from the ponzi scheme) is invested in government securities, which don’t pay the best rate of return, but are pretty secure. That aside, an investment fund as large as social security can’t be managed as nimbly as something smaller — Fidelity Magellan, because of its size, just can’t make the same rate of return as Janus Venture.

☼ “My homeowner’s policy has the same sorts of restrictions that your’s does. The ‘personal property’ is set by a percentage of the home value.” That percentage is not set in stone. We got a rider to increase the coverage on contents after we sat down with our agent and went through a laundry list of what was in the house. (The largest undercovered asset? Books.)

ct Gelb: “I was reading an article about the storage life of various media (CD, videotape, etc) and the useful life of most electronic data storage methods is fairly short until you get into the high-end products.” How you store things plays fairly heavily into the equation. Of course, there are a bunch of twits at the National Archives who want to try and preserve every piece of computer data they can, [◊] down to the most trivial. They’re making themselves crazy trying to translate punched cards of data for PhD theses from the 1960s onto CDs.

ct Lillian: “Disney’s big mistake with Disneyland (not buying up every inch of land he could) was corrected with Disneyworld.” See Hiassen’s new book, *Team Rodent*, which I’ll review

• Which brings up a question: What goes “clip, clop, clip, clop, bang, bang, bang, clip, clop, clip, clop?” An Amish drive-by shooting.

[◊] No, I’m not talking about stuff that might have historical or legal bearing, like e-mail archives at the White House.

next time.

☞ If BUFF is Butt-Ugly Fan Fund, it must be the fund for clothing (some of those) fans who write their zines in the nude. Preferably with something *really* opaque.

ct Larson: “‘El Paso is over 1000 miles from Atlanta.’ That seems almost an understatement. I’d have guessed that it was closer to 2000 miles.” Traveling east on I-10 from El Paso, you reach Baton Rouge just after the 1000 mile mark. (I-10 is 2400 miles end-to-end.)

ct Wells: “I haven’t seen Hercules yet, but I have caught two or three episodes of Xena this year. It’s fun. It doesn’t take itself too seriously.” And, it’s got good cleavage.

ct S Hughes: “[To refer to] the Chinese agent in Tomorrow Never Dies with a quote from Batman, ‘Where does she get all those wonderful toys?’” It turns out that the actress is an action hero in her own right in Hong Kong. “She was more kick-butt than Brosnan, but he was still clearly more Bond than she was.” Which leads us to a discussion of Brosnan vs Moore as Bond. . . Wait! haven’t we done this before?

☞ “I’ve generally thought that if I was going to do a ‘Route 66’ type trip that I’d want to get a converted minivan to drive.” No, you want a sports car. Really.

ct Metcalf: “Oddly enough, while I’ve found Brosnan and Connery to be closer to Bond, I think the Dalton films were actually closer in style to the original material.” Which I’ve been saying all along.

ct me: “You grew up with the Bergen Evening Record? Hearing that I immediately flash that you must have lived somewhere close to Paramus and the ancestral home of the Goldsteins.” Paramus and Teaneck, where LeeAnn grew up, and Hackensack and Maywood, where I grew up, all have common borders.

☞ “Or maybe we should rate movies, meetings, and just about anything else using The Buchman Scale (minutes of bare female breasts)?” I think the Joe Bob Briggs Scale is more comprehensive.

Meade Frierson ☼ The Lawyer at Tenth Court ☞ “. . . Jeff’s e-mail told me I was overdue for pages. . .” And I’m sorry if it was confusing. These tend to get sent when I’m sitting at the computer near deadline and Liz says “wait, we don’t have a zine from so-and-so”. When I sent it to you, I forgot you were in mid-move and didn’t include a useful address.

“Until Eric trained me to program the VCR, this led to some strange timetables in daily life.” In *Being Digital*, Negroponte says, “At home I used to have a very intelligent VCR with near-perfect voice recognition and knowledge of me. I could ask it to record programs by name and, in some cases, even assume it would do so automatically, without my asking. Then, all of a sudden, my son went to college.”

Janice Gelb ❁ *Trivial Pursuits* ❁ “I ended up eating with Philadelphia fan Gary Feldbaum and British fan Martin Hoare.” Is Martin any relation to computer luminary Tony? ❁ “We had a great time discussing our beginnings in fandom and religion.” I can see it now: “In the beginning, all was void, and then there was a mimeo. . .”

ct Larson: “I believe the Argentinean protesters against Madonna in Evita were not because of her performance. . . but because of her lifestyle.” Though, I fall on the other side of that: I wouldn’t care if had carnal knowledge of barnyard animals (which she apparently does), if she could only act.

ct Ackerman: “While I must admit that looking through tons of wallpaper books was a giant pain, I don’t know that I’d turn everything over to a decorator either. Am I correct that she just weeds things out and then brings you selections in your taste to choose from?” In the case of the decorator in our house in Austin, she kept try to talk us out of various choices with “those colors will never go together,” when we knew they would. In the end, she dragged some clients to see the house before we moved in to show them what a wonderful job she did coordinating the colors.

ct Brown: “One thing that does confuse me about this horror story about your MasterCard is why you kept writing them letters at first. I did nearly all of my address changes by phone; ditto any follow up.” Phone calls are nice, but all the credit reporting laws require communication in writing. Any time I talk to our MasterCard carrier, they say, roughly, “OK, got it, but we won’t actually make it happen until you confirm by mail.”

❁ “. . . don’t know if you caught Esquire’s Dubious Achievement Awards. . . over a story about the flame-spurting electric chair in Florida and the attorney general saying that would-be murderers should get to another state. . . , the headline read ‘Come to Mississippi — the Lethal Injection State!’” I’m reminded of the proposed ad campaign for tourism in Texas. Half-a-dozen years ago, when all you had to do was show up in South Florida wearing Bermuda shorts to get taken for a tourist and mugged, some wag suggested a “Visit Texas” campaign, including an ad with the caption “Visit Dallas, where we ain’t shot a tourist in a car since 1963!”

ct S Hughes: “. . . I have always been bummed that I’m not considered a Southerner just because I was living in California when I got in. . .” By both tradition, and the time clause in the constitution, you’ve been considered a Southerner for a while. When Liz and Guy spent a long phone call counting up the roster after Moudry dropped to make sure Lichtman could join, you kept getting counted as one.

ct me: “Val Kilmer is the second-best actor of this generation after Kevin Kline??? Tom Cruise is chopped liver by you?” Nope, he’s not even that tasty. Cruise is a movie star, not an actor. I’ll admit he’s got a certain cute boyish charm, though. But like Leonardo DiCaprio, he relies on that rather than any talent I can detect.

❁ “. . . the IRS rules for business trips have gotten pretty ridiculous too. Used to be that if a bunch

of people went out to dinner on a business trip, one of them could claim it and the rest just wouldn't file for the meal. Now, we all have to get copies of the receipt. . . " Actually, those are probably internal Sun rules. The IRS now says you don't need receipts for any business expense less than \$75. QMS had a flock of really stupid rules that all traced back to the fact that an idiot was in charge of expense processing. Yet another advantage of being employee number 30 in a 35 person company. ☞ "I've taken to collecting blank, non-restaurant specific tabs from the bottoms of checks during the year so I can just fill them out for the correct amount and submit them." On a trip to Mobile for QMS, we had a huge dinner, at which it was easier for everyone to have separate checks. Jeff Haemer, who was reporting to me at the time, and was sitting across from me and next to my boss at the dinner, forgot to grab his copy of his charge receipt, but had the tear-off from the bottom of the check. I initialed it, I signed his expense report, sent e-mail to the twit in accounting explaining that a receipt was missing, and why, and the dinner charge still got bounced. As I recall, I reimbursed him out of the office petty cash fund.

☞ "This quote about Bill Gates being a brand new thing in the hacker world because he was a capitalist, not a hippie, needs a little more explanation, I think. The motivation wasn't necessarily hippie vs capitalist, I think it was more that most hackers really wanted to make cool/useful things for users. Bill just wanted to make money." How true. If you measure what you're doing in terms of how much money you make at it, you end up doing things like stomping on anyone with an original idea (e.g., Netscape), or buying off the competition (e.g., Apple), because you believe that the money is a sign of the worth of your ideas.

Binker Hughes ✨ **Afterburner** ☞ You ask a bunch of questions about Hubble's Law, so I went off and grabbed my copy of Misner, Thorne and Wheeler's *Gravitation*, where the two pages on Hubble are in the back half of the book and are so dense in tensor equations that I bogged down immediately. ▷ My second try was Hawking's *Brief History of Time*, which is considerably less dense in the equations. That gave me enough physical intuition to at least get the gist of what Misner was saying. Here's the deal, roughly speaking:

Even though every other galaxy is red-shifted, that is, moving away from us, that doesn't mean that we're at the center of the universe. Picture two leaves next to each other on a pond. You throw a rock in front of the leaves, and the ripples move outward, eventually causing the leaves to move. The leaves don't only move away from their original position radially, they also move away from each other laterally.

▷ *Gravitation* is my *Finnegan's Wake*

Similarly, given Hubble's observed constant H_0 , which is 55 kilometers per second per megaparsec — that is, for every megaparsec (1 parsec \approx 3.2 light-years) further away the thing you're looking at is, it's moving away from you at an additional 55 km/sec — and the size of the universe, you can date the Big Bang as about 1×10^{10} years ago.

So, when do these fleeing galaxies start bumping up against relativistic velocities? Figure that you start having to worry about the special relativity corrections when you hit a velocity of about $1/4c$. That implies that you need to be about $1/4c$ over H_0 megaparsecs away before you're approaching that speed, which is about 1364 Mpc, or $4.4 \times 10^9 ly$. By comparison, the Milky Way is only about $1 \times 10^5 ly$ in diameter, and nearby galaxies are 50kpc, or $1.6 \times 10^5 ly$ away.

Gary Robe ✿ **Tennessee Trash** ☞ It sounds like your new job is fun...

ct me: "... Corlis and I got talking about the physics of the thing. What if the pilot of the Titanic had not tried to avoid the iceberg, but hit the thing head on?..." I suspect that it wouldn't have made any difference. ☞ "I also read somewhere that the steel alloy used in Titanic's construction was probably very brittle in the cold, and shattered like an eggshell during the collision." Oddly enough, I read this comment the evening JJ had gotten a book out of the library on *Titanic*, featuring Ballard's photographs of the wreck. It turns out that rather than cracking, many of the plates just bent and popped their rivets at the top, but below the waterline. Doomed, it was, completely doomed.

Eve Ackerman ✿ **Guilty Pleasures** ☞ *ct me:* "Do you see 'AstroGlide' lubricant as fitting in this car theme, or have we advanced to the level of flight with this metaphor?" Oooh! I can just see The Car Guys on the radio: "My brother Tom always recommends a little squirt of AstroGlide on your Love Gasket before installation, but I think that you don't really need it."

☞ "While we were remodeling I donated the rocking chair in Micah's room to Goodwill. It was a bittersweet moment..." Yeah, we left behind the rocking chair that we'd used in both kid's rooms when we moved from Austin to Boulder, and I felt the same way.

ct Koch: "Re: Suits: Micah... just received a hand-me-down... from Raphi... 'It's not comfortable,' Micah complained... I told him life was tough and suits weren't meant to be comfortable, just formal." Actually, I've never owned an uncomfortable suit. I don't have much call to wear one anymore (I seem to recall that I went to my last job interview wearing a polo shirt), so I'm down to one: a summer-weight Brooks Brothers. Hint for Micah, though: make sure your shirt collars fit correctly, so that you can still slide a finger or two into them. It makes all the difference between feeling strangled by having your collar buttoned and not noticing that you're wearing a tie.

☞ "I have noticed since I stopped working I'm saving a lot of money on hosiery and dry cleaning."

Sitting here in a flannel shirt and jeans allows me to experience one of the true joys of unemployment.” I still wear long pants and a button-down shirt to the office, but when I’m working at home, I’ve been known to start the day in my bathrobe and not get dressed until the kids get home from school.

Janet Larson ❁ *A Blast from the Past* ❁ Sorry to hear about your ex-husband’s death, hope it doesn’t make life more complicated for you.

Norm Metcalf ❁ *Tyndalite* ❁ *ct Lynch: “In the case of Voyager they’re trying to prolong the return to Ithaca, I mean Earth. . . .”* Great line. But I want to know if Janeway’s going to need to do some trick with a phaser when she gets back to convince her dogs that she’s really their mom.

ct me: “You ask why the telepathic cop on Babylon 5 is named Alfred Bester. . . . The Demolished Man, which I thought to be an excellent novel when I read it in 1953.” Thanks for supplying the reference. Of course, that you were critically reading science fiction four years before I was born only serves to make me feel like a babe in the woods.

The managing editor explained that the job of newspaper reporter no longer carried the stature it had in the days of Watergate. The nineties had brought a boom in celebrity journalism, a decline in serious investigative reporting, and a deliberate softening of the product by publishers. The result he said was that daily papers seldom caused a ripple in their communities and people paid less and less attention to them.

— Carl Hiaasen, *Lucky You*

Gary Brown ❁ *Oblio* ❁ *“It’s great to see how well Scott and Ryan react to spring training, baseball, and the renewal of spring the way they do. . . . I don’t know all their pursuits and friends, but I know they focus strongly on baseball and that’s good.”* I’m reminded of Daniel Stern’s mention in *City Slickers* that even when he and his father were screaming at each other about everything else, they could still talk about baseball.

“Before I go into my take on all the swirl at the White House these days, I should note that some of the journalism being practiced in connection with the alleged ‘scandal’ is the epitome of lazy, corporate journalism. Get used to it — you’re going to see it more and more.” Though you’re closer to it, I think what what we’re seeing is the tabloidization of news. What’s leading it is the decline of broadcast news, since there are now fewer print news outlets, and more broadcast hours to fill. That Mike Wallace, who was once a real reporter, is now doing *60 Minutes*, which is now no more than the *New York Post* of the air, is a shame.

“Would it have been easy and sensational for the Post to write a story questioning the woman [traveling with Clinton who turned out to be an NSC staffer] and her visit to Florida? Sure. It would

have taken off like wild fire. But we did what newspapers and journalists are supposed to do — checked the facts.” I applaud the responsibility you guys showed, but we’re seeing too much of the other variety of journalism: “We heard a rumor to the effect that this happened, so we’re going on the air right now.” It’s the story of the Whitewater mess: *New York Times* reporter gets suckered by Clinton political opponents, who back up each others’ lies.

ct Warner: “Some of the suspicious fingers in the JonBenét Ramsey murder now point at her 12-year-old brother, who the parents refuse to let talk to the police.” Well, Burke was actually 9 when the murder happened, which still doesn’t explain where the semen sample came from.

I’m coming to believe that two crimes were committed here: the death of JonBenét, and the fact that in a media event, her grieving parents weren’t playing by the rules, and her parents are getting beaten up for the second one. Those rules were invented by an twit named Geraldo Rivera, and they involve the parents rending their garments on television. Mourning rituals have their place, and we each heal from tragedy in our own time and space. That their’s is different from yours or mine doesn’t make them guilty of the death of their daughter. I certainly sympathize with the Ramsey’s approach: If Allie had been found dead in our house — under whatever circumstances — the only thing I’d step out onto the porch to say to the press would be “Keep standing there: I’ve got plenty of shotgun shells.”

A journalism professor at CU recently rated the performance of the local papers on this story. He said that the *Daily Camera* got a D, the *Denver Post* and *Rocky Mountain News* each got an F, but that Chuck Green, formerly editor and now columnist for the *Post* should be imprisoned. That last is an important point. Like the Whitewater story, in which most of the press has followed the bad lead of Jeff Gerth at the *Times* even though some of his reporting is factually wrong, on the Ramsey case most of the legitimate press has been following Green’s lead. Green hates Boulder and everything to do with it. It was Green who, ten days after the murder caused no end of hysteria by suggesting on the radio that John Ramsey had confessed and was turning himself into the police that afternoon. It is Green who wrote about nothing but the Ramsey case for the first four months after the murder — that’s four columns, or 90 column inches a week — using leads like “Just as JonBenét’s father was revealing a preposterously useless profile of her merciless killer, Boulder investigators were plodding along on their own determined path. . . .”

But, even ignoring all the evidence that the Ramseys are innocent, Gary, I simply *cannot* allow myself to believe that John and Patsy were responsible for the death of their child. That’s because in this small town there are two children I’ve known for all their lives who were JonBenét’s classmates and friends, kids whose

parents I've known for a total of four score and seven years, and I simply don't want to be put in the position of explaining to them that even though their friend was murdered by her parents, they're safe. I can hear it now: "Yeah, sure Uncle Jeff: she believed her parents; why should we believe you?" This is a generalization of John's question a year ago: you wouldn't murder your child, why would you believe I'd kill mine?

ct Dengrove: "The addictive thing about the SPPA is when you cut back to just a few pages and then realize you've missed having your say on some important topics. Back in again." Yeah, as I was explaining to Harry a dozen or more pages ago, I seem to be writing more SPPA than anything else, which is, at some level, pretty crazy.

☞ "The Diana and Presidential Investigation media avalanche is something that's going to have to change. I don't think people are going to put up with it for much longer. . . . I refuse to watch MSNBC because they just can't let go." Going back to the tabloidization of the news, there was a fundamental shift a while back when the networks decided that their news organizations were cost centers, not services. It was compounded when Ted Turner launched a 24-hour-a-day news service. Nobody believed that it would make any money, but it did, and hand-over-fist at that. So now news has to be sold like toothpaste, rather than being interesting or useful on its own merits.

ct Gelb: "Wasn't it strange that Michael Kennedy and Sonny Bono die within weeks of each other by skiing into trees?" There were two amusing jokes at the time: What do the Republicans and the Democrats have in common? An extra lift ticket. And: I hear Newt Gingrich is taking up a collection to send Bill Clinton on a ski trip.

☞ "I said this earlier, but yes, I don't know if I want to move again without someone doing it for me." When we bought the condo in LA, it was literally around the corner from the temporary rental place we'd been living in. We made the mistake of doing the move ourselves. Even though it was less than two blocks, it was a horrible disaster.

ct Schlosser: "I think the 'We need help, but have no positions' line comes from a lot of places when people who don't work make decisions about how things are done." One of the things I like about working for Softway is that not only does everyone own a piece of the company, but everyone writes software. Our original ports of X windows and the Apache web server were done by the CEO. So when we need help, we get it.

☞ "In Knight-Ridder's case, it is the blind dedication to stockholders." Locus, a little software company in LA, which Liz used to work for, had their corporate goals posted all over the place. I forget what they all were, but the first one was something like "Build good software for our customers and have fun doing it." The *last* one was "Provide an honest return for our investors, including our staff."

☞ "I think rather than joining an APA, a teacher could create an APA in a classroom, then they could make up their own rules." Which certainly obviates my worrying about using

the word “fuck” in a zine, or the teacher having to fret about the class accidentally getting a spec copy of APA-69. ☞ “Of course, they do it all the time on the Internet now — they’re called newsgroups.” Newsgroups actually pre-date the Internet. They were invented by Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis at Duke and Chapel Hill, who called it Usenet, and were originally transmitted by modem, before the ARPAnet was common.

ct B Hughes: “It’s good that you can and will help get things organized for your parents. . . . I figure that some day I’m going to have to do the same for my parents — and I plan to do it without (much) complaint.” The good news for me is that the most lingering death of any of my blood relatives was my maternal grandfather, who one fall declared, “I don’t think that I need to make any wine this year,” and died in his sleep the following April. Up until that he was in great health, picking his own mushrooms and grapes, and generally keeping up with all his daughters and grandchildren. Normally, Copelands go from completely self-sufficient to dead in a matter of days.

ct me: “Wait a minute, you list Oblio here, but at #50 and then give Toni [comments]. I’m confused.” Yeah, it’s a hobby, so I don’t always proofread. No, wait, that’s your line. . . . Actually, I typed the heading, realized that I wanted to put your zine off because there were some comments from Toni that I wanted to answer immediately, and never got the heading fixed.

Toni Weisskopf ☼ *Yngvi is a Louse* ☞ Thanks for the recommended reading order of Heinlein. It’s timely: as I think I mentioned, I’m rereading the stuff I know, and trying to fill in the stuff of his I haven’t read.

I’m thrilled to learn from Charlotte’s column that there’s a Matthew Broderick movie based on Dick Feynman’s memoirs. We’ll have to see it. ☞ “As Feynman tells his stories [in *Surely, You’re Joking and What Do You Care*], he comes across as a delightfully eccentric character, insatiably curious, outrageous and charming.” Well, he was so in his later years, after he won the Nobel Prize. He had mellowed considerably after he married Gweneth, which was the period in which I met him. But before that, after Los Alamos and before Gweneth, when he was teaching at Cornell and in Brazil and during his second, unhappy marriage in California, he was apparently quite unpleasant. Jim Gleick talks about some of this in his book *Genius*. ☞ “I was disappointed to learn he had died in 1988.” Like everyone else who worked on the Manhattan Project, save Edward Teller, he died of cancer. His memorial service overflowed the largest auditorium at Caltech.

ct Lynch: “I like OPIAWOL [Owing Pages is a Way of Life]. Have created a new one: FIJAPITA (fandom is just a pain in. . .)” It still sounds like this week’s special at Taco Bell.

Art Credits

There's a paucity of art here, and I apologize for the grey mass of text, but if I want to get to comments on SFPA 203 in a separate zine before deadline, this needs to end here.

The front cover for this zine features the joke that inspired last month's delving into the art world, from POSTSCRIPT code I wrote for Jeff Haemer.

Page one features Wiley's view of Microsoft's marketing practices, from his Non-sequitur cartoon of 16 December 1997.

The map on page 4 was captured from the web map and directory service at <http://www.zip2.com>.

The centerfold is a diagram from the 23 February 1998 issue of *The Nation*.

The Non-sequitur cartoon on page 23 is from April Fool's Day 1998.

Completing the René Magritte theme, the back cover features his 1953 painting of raining bankers, "Golconde".

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