



Maggie is the eighty-fourth SFPA-zine (volume two, number sixty-one) from Jeffrey Copeland. It is intended for mailing number 248 (maybe) of the Southern Fandom Press Alliance and selected others. The text of *Maggie* was composed using the T_EX typesetting system, and is set in 11-point Palatino. It was published by Bywater Press, 3243 165th Ave SE, Bellevue, Washington 98008, on Thanksgiving, 24 November 2005.



ation of *Homer* for the purpose of finishing up comments and getting me completely caught up.

To recap: As I mentioned at the end of *Homer*, that zine had to end abruptly because I'm off to Europe for a customer visit for the Monday and Tuesday of Thanksgiving week. SAS cancelled my original outbound flight, so I had to make due with British Airways through London. BA doesn't have standard power plugs in the business class seats like SAS does. If I'd had a little more advance warning, I could have borrowed an adapter. Good thing I brought a backup laptop battery.

My normal strategy on these massive timezone shifts is to stay awake through the flight, so that I have a very long transit day. That tends to snap me back into the new timezone a little more easily. It doesn't work as well travelling westward — which is why the year we lived in Santa Monica but I was working in Yokohama, I used to take a day off when I got home. No such luck this trip. If I'd had the time, I would have taken the opportunity to fly into London a day early, and bummed around at the V&A for the day.

Nonetheless, talking to you folks will serve to give me something to do through the long night eastward and the long day westbound. I should be done with all the comments by the time I get back. If I'm very lucky, I can overnight this to Sheila on Friday and still make the mailing.

➡ However as we near Thanksgiving, a quick addition to the "Things for which I am grateful" list in *Homer*: Business class lounges.

Mailing Comments on SFPA 247 (concluded!)

Guy Lillian 🐉 *Spirtus Mundi* ★

I trimmed a comment to you from *Homer* at the last minute:

ct me: "The Smithsonian might not be a terrorist target, but it was recently in the news for being in shoddy condition. Can't have that: it's one of this country's genuine jewels. Since the Smithy now sports free admission and needs money to renovate, I'd have no objection to a small fee if we could be sure the bread was devoted to museum upkeep." The Smithsonian has always been free, no? Meanwhile, the Smithsonian recently hid a show of photos of Alaskan wildlife in a basement and stripped the explanatory text, apparently not to offend the all-powerful Senator Ted Stevens, and his bridge to nowhere.

Rich Lynch 🐉 *Variations on a Theme* ★

ct Lillian: "On Ion Trails: 'Cheryl Morgan ... asked us to lend our talents for the production of a most unique publication ... a faux in-flight magazine for this year's worldcon. ... I hope Interaction publishes a printed version and Cheryl finagles me enough copies to run through here.' It did appear in print, at the opening ceremonies. There was a copy on each chair in the large hall where the opening

ceremonies were held, and afterwards, I saw stacks of the publication at several different locations in the convention center. There certainly were enough left over to provide you a supply, and I hope they did." Since I wrote my comment to **Guy** in *Marge* offering to cut copies of the CD of *Ion Trails* my own copy of the Interthingy program book arrived, complete with that CD. I've had some correspondence with Cheryl, Kevin Standlee, and others about it. Let's see what can be done. That said: the thing is pretty damned funny. I particularly like the bank ads sprinkled throughout — clearly they're a send up of some existing bank, but is it a British or Canadian one?

[[Note added later: Direct observation answers that question. British.]]

ct me: "On complexity and MS Windows: 'Efforts to map the dependencies between different components have met with varying success.' If this were the 1960s, I'd expect Arthur C Clarke to write a story about how all the MS Windows computers networked would become a cognizant entity. Back then it was only the phone company we had to worry about." But in the 1960s when Clarke wrote that story, we all assumed the phone company was intelligent itself. (Though subsequent actions in breaking up the Bell System have suggested otherwise.) I think the story we're both thinking of is titled something like "Awakening", but at eleven thousand meters over Greenland, I'm 2300 great circle miles away from my copy of Tor's definitive edition of Sir Arthur's short stories.

"The Most Chilling News Story of the Year Luttig, who has been mentioned as a possible candidate for the U.S. Supreme Court, was joined in his opinion by Judges M. Blane Michael and William B. Traxler Jr." Wasn't it our new Chief Justice of the Supreme Court who ruled one of this series of cases? It really frightens me when senior members of Congress complain that the political prisoners at Guantánamo and other concentration camps are "clogging the courts with frivolous lawsuits." Always in the past, people charged in front of military tribunals in time of war have had the right of *habeas corpus*, which these fascists would now deny.

"I mentioned in the previous SFFA mailing that the TV series *Lost* had become my latest gratuitous time sink. I think I probably ought to retract the word 'gratuitous' because it's more than just addictive, it's well written and entertaining." As I said earlier, I only could stomach about half of the first episode, which was a complete mishmash.

David Schlosser ➦ **Peter, Pan & Merry** ★

I'm missing pages 3 and 4 here. Take those comments as read.

ct me: "Ct Ned: Well of course the dead people who voted did so by mail. How were they going to get to the polling places?" As Liz pointed out to me, 90% of the dead and 70% of the felons voted Republican in the gubernatorial election. But as for the dead actually showing up in polling places, how they used to work this in the Tamany Hall days was to scour the graveyards for names, register them, have a guy with a beard show up to vote for the first of a list, then send him to the barber to have the

beard shaved leaving the sideburns and moustache. Repeat for moustache only and clean-shaven. (Reading the fascinating *Steal This Vote*, a detailed history of how elections have been stolen in the United States.)

☐ "CJJanice: Re 'missing Ronald Reagan' - A couple years ago Kay mentioned that she'd much rather have GBI back as president and I replied that I'd rather have Reagan back. That is a scary thought." Yes, it is: but Liz and I were missing the evil California liberal, Tricky Dick Nixon the other day. After all, he at least had the grace to resign when he got caught rigging a presidential election.

"Special Counsel John C. Danforth today delivered to Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder his Final Report Concerning the 1993 Confrontation at the Mt. Carmel Complex, Waco, Texas." Thanks for reprinting this: Danforth was certainly not a loony liberal.

Liz Copeland 🐾 Home with the Armadillo ★

Nice NASFiC report. I'm sorry I couldn't get the front and back covers printed on the nice 24 pound coated stock. That's all the more annoying because that same printer was quite happy to print the covers of my next zine, *Marge*, on that stock.

Toni Reinhardt 🐾 Yngvi is a Louse ★

ct me: "Hey Jeff, let me say that I really enjoyed meeting you and Liz and the kids. I was most impressed with your kids. I am so glad that they got their looks and brains from Liz." Thanks. I say that about their brains all the time. Liz has done a really good job of teaching the kids some common sense. They seem to have turned out okay.

"Overall poverty in the country has decreased also by a full percentage point." Pardon me? According to the populaton statisticians at the University of Michigan, working from Department of Labor statistics: "For the next ten years [the 1980s], the poverty rate remained above 12.8 percent, increasing to 15.1 percent, or 39.3 million individuals, by 1993. The rate declined for the remainder of the decade, to 11.3 percent by 2000. Since then, it has risen each year, to 12.7 percent in 2004."

"The war in Afghanistan went well, but Iraq hasn't. (Which was what I feared when it was started.) What should have been done was split the country up into Sunni, Shiite, and Kurds. Hell, it is a phony country anyway." We're agreed on both of these points: when we went into Iraq it was clear we didn't have any kind of a plan for the peace. But the compelling reason



"Oh, here's something: 'Average heterosexual couple with a strong desire to stay home and get to sleep early seeking same.'"

for not splitting Iraq up into three separate countries is that the Turks, Jordanians, Saudis and Kuwaitis (or mini-Saudis), don't want that.

"I am impressed by the Governor of Louisiana. ... She also failed to call for help from the Feds. I know it is shocking, but she is required to ask from help, as the Feds just can't come in without her request. She also failed to call out the La. National Guard before the hurricane hit." Nope: She declared an emergency on the Saturday *before* the hurricane hit, at the same time as the governors of Florida and Mississippi. I think she also called out the National Guard at the same time, but I'll have to check on that, when I'm someplace with a network connection.

mike weber ➤ **Gone** ★

"Windows XP installation has reached its half-life. (You do know that Windows has a >half-life, don't you? Every installation of Windows naturally degrades along a logarithmic curve until it becomes annoying, then unbearable, then unusable." The XP on Bywater ("the boy computer") was installed in the first couple of months of commercial availability, from lab media, and only got fully reinstalled because I was rebuilding the machine for other reasons. So I'll agree with your half-life argument, but in my case, it's measured in years. But I'm pretty strict about what gets installed, run anti-virus religiously, spyware scrape with some frequency, and defragment the disks when I can.

ct me: "So, having recently watched 'The Forget-Me-Knot', do you believe the producers' more-recent assertion that it was always supposed to be the bridge, or the reported-at-the-time claim that it was a patch-up job done on an already-completed Steed/Peel episode when they decided they needed a smooth transition rather than Mrs. Peel one week and 'Whoa! Who's this bint then?' the next?" If it was a fixup, the seams aren't obvious: Tara King gets a lot of screen time and is fully integrated into the episode. So unless, she was intended to be a one-episode spear-carrier or occasional recurring character, I'd say it was intended as a bridge from the get-go.

☒ *"Agree/disagree: One reason The Incredibles works so well is because they treat it first and foremost as a movie and only secondly as Amazing Animation."* Agree. Which is a hallmark of Pixar. They're doing movies, not cartoons. It's just their actors live in little boxes in Silicon Valley rather than hillside mansions in Los Angeles.

☒ *"As to 'non-starter' movies, i think Kate and i watched rather less than ten minutes of Moulin Rouge before agreeing that this was not a film to be cast aside lightly. One of only a very small."* There are two production numbers worth seeing in that movie. The first is the one where we're introduced to Nicole Kidman's character, and the second is @@@@ check singing "Like a Virgin."

"Excerpt from Roger Ebert's Review of Mr & Mrs Smith" That was snarky and nasty. And amusing. Which is what I expect from Ebert when he doesn't like a movie. But I disagree with him on this one: *Mr & Mrs Smith* achieved what it set out to do,

much like the first *Matrix*.

"*Svchost?* From Microsoft: *Description of Svchost.exe in Windows 2000.*" Thanks for finding and running this. As we've discussed in e-mail, I read this on the morning after I'd had an argument about whether *svchost* was documented. Having a pointer to *where* was remarkably helpful.

The spacer comic is for you: the normally black-and-white *User Friendly* features a spot of red for the day in the form of the poppy.



Gary Brown ➦ **Oblio** ★

ct Dengrove: "Yes, decent portable readers with good readable screen and a device that feels like a book as you read it (other than you don't turn the pages, but advance the copy on the screen)." I'm not sure what you mean by "feels like a book." As a similar example, you shouldn't expect a web page to act like a magazine — some of the biggest errors in web design come from people who treat the web as a new kind of movable paper. But, at the same time, I had a conversation with a guy in the Windows Mobile group a couple of weeks ago at an internal show-and-tell. I think I got the point across that we're working the wrong direction on screen size: smaller may work for phones, but it makes all the other applications I want on a handheld device worthless. For him the compelling app was web browsing, so he understood that. I also pointed out that the feel of the device in the hand has to be right, and the proximity of the controls to where your fingers naturally fell was important. It was clear that he, at least, hadn't thought about this one, but he understood my desire for a page-flipper button, like the Mark I HP Pocket PCs and the Sony Cliés had.

(I'm travelling this week with my trusty ancient HP Pocket PC, rather than my Palm: first because the "Filofax functions" — calendar, address book — are more-or-less interchangeable, and second, because the HP is better for a reading device, and my current electronic reading is *The Constant Gardener*. But mostly

compellingly, I seems a little more polite to carry a Microsoft PDA when I'm talking to customers.)

ct Lillian: "You know, I understand how some folks can fall for a line from someone who appears helpless or sincere, then that person takes money from them. But over the Internet? I don't get it. I've read a couple of those long, involved notes about money in Nigeria and it is hard enough to make sense of, much less fall for." One born every minute. There's a guy in Scotland who's made a hobby of playing these scam artists. It's pretty amusing.

ct Schlosser: "I've been trying to determine my tolerance for being inspected, verified and held to prove who I am for government officials just to go about my daily routine. I'm sure not much. Yeah, there are things we must do to prevent people from bringing death and destruction to our public streets, but not at the risk of losing our freedom. I'm sure that if the demands on us to show everything about us to some unknown jerk in a uniform continues, I'll find out soon enough. But I'd really like to know." I was at the DMV the other day* to renew the licence plates for one of the cars. They demanded my drivers license for identification before they would talk to me. This is interesting, because you can register the car by mail directly with the county, and in that case, clearly, they aren't inspecting my identification.



☐ "You should be happy. *Calvin & Hobbes* is back in reprint form in many newspapers through the end of the year and *The Complete Calvin & Hobbes* will be published in October. \$150 or so. Like *The Far Side* collection." The reruns of *Calvin & Hobbes* is one of the comics I get by mail on a daily basis. Though they seem to be running them a bit out of sequence: they ran the last strip recently — the Sunday "It's a magical world, Hobbes, ol' buddy . . . let's go exploring!" one, misdating it for 30 Oct 1994 — and didn't seem to restart from the beginning thereafter. While I'm delighted that the complete run is being reprinted with Waterson commentary, I think we've got all the original reprint books, so I'm likely to give it a pass, unless the discount at Amazon is as

* Actually, it wasn't the DMV: in Washington, there is a Department of Licensing, from which you get your driver's license, and then there as separately franchised license bureaux from which you register your vehicle or boat.

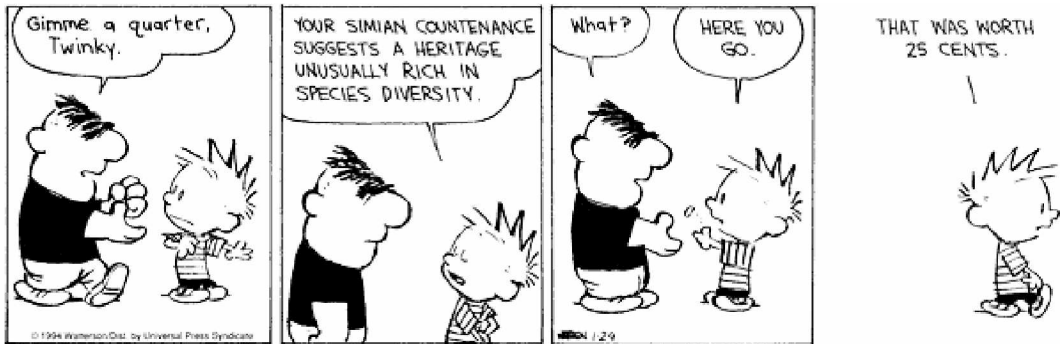
deep as it was for the book of *New Yorker* cartoons.

ct Markstein: "And that reminds me, I wonder what the origin of the word google is. I suspect it is to eye or watch closely. Probably why the copyright owners of Barney Google haven't sued yet." Google's founder, Larry Page and Sergey Brin say it's a pun on *googol*, the mid-20th century neologism for 10^{100} .

ct me: "You know, the one kid in Frazz looks so much like a slightly older Calvin that I can't read the strip. Is this obvious to anyone else?" Which one? Frazz himself or Caulfield, the kid?



And a nicely representative Calvin for comparison.



☒ "Why is a Canadian-style single-payer health-care system not good enough for the U.S.? It takes out too many potential campaign contribution payers." Good point. I notice that AARP only got on board with the Medicare drug thing when they realized they could make a buck selling insurance policies.

☒ "When I flew from Fort Lauderdale to Dallas for this year's San Diego Con, the two elderly people ahead of me who had trouble walking were made to take their shoes off and subjected to a pat down. I was shocked. Later, I learned that they are paying more attention to the elderly as 'potential suicide bombers.' Where in the hell did THAT one come from? Amazing." As Liz has explained in her zine, her stepfather, who was pretty much wheelchair-bound in the last couple of years of his life, was made to stand without a cane while some

TSA jackboot decided he wasn't a threat. Bill was too gentle to be upset about that for long, but I imagine my mother-in-law wasn't the only little old lady with gumption who had cause to be pissed off at the government thugs. It's just that little old ladies tend to settle their differences with letters to their congressmen and lawsuits, not by turning into suicide bombers.

☞ *"I was half-kidding about the Ace Double zine you did and was surprised by the replacement copy you sent. You will be pleased to know, however, that I placed it AND the other copy side by side in the mailing."* As I said, it was an excuse to play with the zine again. And it *did* turn up a bug in my software. If I'd thought to do it as a single volume in the first place it probably would have had more interior art.

☞ *"What you told me about buying a new computer is exactly what my sister suggested. She promised to help me figure out everything when I do spring for it (she works for EDS)."* I'm glad you're getting consistent device from the experts. It's not always the case that the customer-compatible liveware gives the same story.

☞ *"I just realized, George had a pretty bad time of it on your front and back covers."* George was the prototypical Addams self-portrait character in the 1940s. I believe it was Elizabeth Jenkins who pointed out to me that the rounder matronly wife in the 1940s (the one on both the front and back of that zine) looked an awful lot like Addams' first wife, and that the later "Morticia" character strongly resembled his second. If you look, there's a similarity between the "George" and "Gomez" characters, too.

ct Reinhardt: *"One reason I've thought about getting a TiVo is I work nights and I have to keep up with some of the regular shows some how. But you're right, after they are TiVo'd, you have to find time to watch them."* But, you can actually take only 22 minutes to watch that sitcom, because you get to skip the commercials. But watching the stuff you've recorded is always a matter of finding the time. We've taken to watching *Numbers* at 10:15pm on Fridays, as it's being recorded, which unfortunately means (by the time we've taken a bathroom break) that it's midnight before we get to bed.

Janice Gelb ♀ *Trivial Pursuits* ★

"Locked Rooms by Laurie R King, eighth in a series about a young Jewish woman who is married to Sherlock Holmes in his later years, upheld the excellence of the previous books in its story that travels back to her girlhood just after the '06 earthquake in San Francisco." While I like Laurie King's Holmes pastiches, I think her series about the lesbian detective in San Francisco is better.

ct Brooks: *"You posit here as to why they make people take their shoes off at the airport. There's absolutely no reason except what security expert (and fan!) Bruce Schneier calls 'security theater.' There's no utility to it, there's no evidence that any other terrorist besides the stupid UK guy who got caught trying to use one would consider hiding bombs in shoes. It's just to make people feel that the security folks are doing something proactive."* One of the interesting things the other

Bruce — Sterling — points out in *The Zenith Angle* is that making people take their shoes off and searching so that no sharp objects are on airplanes† does precisely nothing. Not only are the other passengers on a plane someone is attempting to hijack now unlikely to cooperate, but if you want the plane itself as a flying bomb, it's much more convenient to steal a business jet — a Boeing BBJ or a Bombardier or a Gulfstream V — and fill it full of something explosive, say ANFO, which worked so well for Mr McVeigh. Most business jets are not as carefully secured as commercial planes, and there is a constant stream of them stolen anyway.

ct Lillian: *"Don't think I knew that SFPA was once quarterly but I'm glad it changed before I got here. It's one of the reasons I dropped out of FAFA as soon as I gained membership: too much time lapse between mailings means not much interaction between members, which is one of the factors I like most about apas."* I always saw FAPA as a vehicle for publishing genzines, rather than a apa with interaction in the sense that SFPA and LASFAPA are. That it's quarterly, and the minac is expressed in pages per annum doesn't help, because it's hard to maintain any kind of a conversational flow.

☐ *"As for the commandment ... translated 'Thou shalt not kill' checked the four different Jewish sources easily available to me..."* It doesn't surprise me that "Thou shalt not murder" got translated into "Thou shalt not kill." So much of the English rendering of the Old Testament loses content. But I wonder if the "kill" to "murder" mistranslation happened when it was translated in to the vulgate — that is, the Latin — or if it happened when it was translated into English. (As a side note: the Dominican nuns to whom I was subjected through junior high school believed in the literal interpretation of the English, just like Jerry Falwell. When one of them explained to my catechism class that this meant it was okay to kill an insect but not a cat or dog, I wondered to myself what her interpretation was about cows and chickens. I was old enough at that point to know that the Pope specifically allowed



"The Internet startup had only enough cash for one more day. But, miraculously, the money lasted for eight days, until more venture capital could be raised."

† I just had an actual stainless steel breadknife put in my hands by British Airways, by the way.

killing in wars, so I knew she was full of crap.)

☒ *"Another online comic site is mycomics.com. It's only \$9.95 a year and has a more extensive selection than Yahoo comics. It's how I've been keeping up with my comics while I'm in Australia and I'll continue to use it for that..."* I guess there are different comic strips in the papers in Australia. Who do they think they are? A different country or something? But I actually subscribe to all three of the online comic services: Universal Press Syndicate (Doonesbury, Boondocks, Foxtrot), United Press Syndicate (Andrews, McMeel, who do Dilbert, Calvin & Hobbes, and Frazz), and King Features (Blondie, Zits, Funky Winkerbean, Crankshaft).

☒ *"I had exactly the opposite experience with Batman Begins ... Although it's appalling how much Katie Holmes dragged down the movie."* I don't know whether I pointed out the two competing entertainment news stories I saw about the time *Batman Begins* came out: In one it explained that the new *Herbie* movie with Lindsey Lohan had to go back into post-production because the studio execs thought that her breasts were too large and too bouncy for a family movie, so she was given a computer mammary reduction. In the other, it explained that Katie Holmes had CGI nipples added in her scenes in *BB*. Mixed messages much?

ct Schlosser: "I certainly don't agree with 'abstinence is the best policy' as a way to handle family alarming concerns for high schoolers. However, I think it's a false analogy to say that it would be just as stupid as avoiding accidents by saying 'just don't drive' or 'just don't have guns in the whole country' mostly because of the moral and religious aspects to premarital sex that aren't relevant to gun violence or driving." However, there's an argument to be made, in general, for calm assessment of risks with teenagers. "Don't ever have sex" is bad advice, and so is "Fuck all you want." On the other hand, a conversation of the form, "there are emotional consequences that come with having sex with another person that take some experience to understand" is useful to have with ones' children.

(Interestingly, on this trip I finally got around to reading the infamous article on teenagers "hooking up" from *The New York Times Magazine* back on 30 May last year. One of the people Benoit Denizet-Lewis talked to is a teacher who advocates abstinence education. Relevant quote: "Those who embrace an abstinence-only sex-education program try to influence teenage behavior by explaining that sexual pleasure requires mutual respect and security." While I'd put it differently — it's not necessary that "security" includes marriage; and it's not impossible to have the occasional really good "zipless fuck," — in the main, that's the advice I've given my son.)

ct Lynch: "I never thought I'd retire here even before the Australia move. Costs here are way too expensive if you're not actually getting a high-tech salary. I honestly don't understand why anyone who has no family ties here or is not in the tech business stays here, great weather or no." I certainly share that thought. Liz and I are starting to think about exit strategies, though they

mostly involve buying a place in Bellingham for investment now, and moving the extra 30 miles north when we retire. Of course, by then, the Canadian dollar will have soared against the American. (One of my Canadian colleagues moved all his investments to the US when he started working at Microsoft. Then he realized that this was a mistake, because ① he has always planned to retire to Canada, and ② he's suddenly actively losing money on exchange rate, and ③ his father works in the investment department of one of the big Canadian commercial banks, and can provide excellent local advice.)

ct Ackerman: "I'm actually not as happy as I thought I'd be with the new stove. Because I'm so concerned about scratching it, I tend not to use it as extra counter space as I thought I would which ..." They don't scratch very easily. And they make polish for them so you can polish it when it gets stains from pots and boil-overs. But I'm not talking about the time Liz used the hammer to break up chunks of wax on our glass stove top. (I will mention that the General Electric phone answerers in Hyderabad didn't manage to close the paperwork loop so we never got charged for the replacement part or its installation.) Oh, and on "Sabbath mode" on the stove, which allows you to override the automatic shutoff if you want to leave the stove on over Saturday: would it be a violation of the rules to set the timer to turn it on at a certain time?

ct Brown: "Regarding increasing numbers of death notices of friends and celebrities, it wasn't a major part but it was a small consideration in my decision to move to Australia. Life really is short and we need to do things that make us happy and not look back and wonder why we didn't take a chance..." As I've pointed out, in my alumni newsletter, where I am able to keep reasonably close track of a couple of hundred guys my age, I'm starting to see both "final placement" notices in the "what they're doing" column — "James Morrow (Math, '78) has left his post at the Hoover Institution, and returned to a teaching position as a full professor at the University of Michigan" (which, knowing Jim, will be his last move; he'll retire from Ann Arbor) — and an uptick in obits.

☒ "Thanks for the compliment on the report of the India trip. It's funny, I can never understand why anyone wants to read my very personal con/trip reports but I'm always interested in reading other people's..." Oddly enough, I didn't read your India report, though that's the one I did want to peruse to see how your experience in Bangalore contrasted with mine in Hyderabad. But, after years of not reading any trip reports at all, I generally at least skim them now.

☒ "Regarding the false perception that the hurricanes before Katrina hit only counties that voted for Gore, some wacko Christian groups are saying that Katrina was god's wrath on the decadent nature of New Orleans. Even by their twisted logic that doesn't work, given that the center of the decadent behavior was the French Quarter, which got off very lightly." False? I thought it was you who sent me map of the major 2004 hurricanes showing their paths all bypassing the counties that clearly voted for Gore in 2000. (As Gary pointed out, that doesn't

mean that those counties didn't get collateral damage.)

☞ "Ummm, 'The He-Man girls'???" That would be Arnold, the Governor, after his pet ballot propositions all went down to defeat this month. He's too bulky to be a "girly man", but if he's a "he-man girl" he can still get sand kicked in his face.

ct me: "Regarding the Spokane situation, not only should he have been outed because of his hypocrisy but also because of his abuse of his office..." Mayor West's sexual predilections (like Tab Hunter's and Rock Hudson's) had been an open secret among those in his industry for a while. The local paper in Spokane was happy to out him for his hypocrisy once they could get one of the guys he was cruising to go on the record. However, there was a little item in one of the Seattle papers, pointing out that the holding corporation that runs the Spokane paper also has some real estate interests that were being thwarted by West's administration, so this is a twofer for them. And interestingly, unlike Ms Lewinsky, apparently nobody came on to the mayor; he was the pursuer.



☞ "Regarding CD burners, I was grateful that I have a laptop with one. By virtue of buying Stephen a few pairs of jeans at Sears, I got a coupon for 10 free downloads at RealNetwork Music Store. It was only after I downloaded them; (surprisingly hard to figure out what to ask for) that I discovered that their .rax file extensions meant that I couldn't play them on my Mac or import them to my iPod through iTunes. I turned to LJ for advice and someone told me that I could bum a CD with them and then iTunes would import them." Well, both Microsoft's WMA and Apple's internal iPod format are proprietary, too. It's just that Apple, because it controls the end-to-end experience from the iTunes store to the iTunes application, through iSync, is able to make that MP3 or CD to Apple format conversion seamless. It also helps that their player has an MP3 codec in it so that if you do load an MP3 file, it plays without you noticing that it's not in the Apple format. It took a near act of God to get Microsoft to support MP3 format in Windows Media Player ("WiMP" to its friends), but that's sort of typical: all the players will digest the public formats, turning them into their own private form — CD into WMA in WiMP, for example — but don't cross-convert. Microsoft only supports MP3 because it's a *lingua franca*.

☒ *"I must admit that's the one thing I dislike about my DVR: the recordings are not portable so I can't watch them on my secondary TV in my home office as I could when I used to videotape things off the main TV."* Well, you could make sure you've got version 7 of the TiVo software on your DVR, and then load the TiVo-To-Go package on your Windows PC. That would allow you to load and watch programs on the computer. Or you could do what we do, which is have two TiVos[‡] and they're linked through the house network, so we can watch programs recorded on the upstairs TiVo downstairs and vice versa.

☒ *"ctWells I find some of the hosts on Air America to be a little shrill and closed-minded but I really like (no surprise) Al Franken's morning show. Unfortunately, I can't get it at work so I only listen on Fridays when I'm driving around doing errands."* Franken's on in the afternoon here, so I don't get to listen to him either. But can you listen on-line at work? Or is that the "can't get it at work" that you're talking about?

ct Liz: *"Interesting that the version of the Molly Ivins column that my newspaper ran was truncated compared to yours. Just found that again when I investigated a Charles Krauthammer column..."* Now that *The New York Times* is charging \$50 a year to read their op-ed columns online, I'm reading them via Factiva, the Dow Jones equivalent of Nexus. I started to do that with Molly Ivins' columns, too, but discovered that the *Fort-Worth Star* wasn't running all of her columns, so I went back to reading them from her syndicate's web site, <http://www.creators.com>.

☒ *"Just finished Crusie's Bet Me: thanks for the recommendation."* Yeah. While *Welcome to Temptation* and *Faking It* are funny and sexy, I got a serious emotional hit off *Bet Me*, because our protagonists each understand the other so well that he's able to defend her to her parents, and vice versa, even though "we're not dating." It gave the characters that much more depth.

ct Strickland: *"It wasn't that much of a shock to go from India to Britain – the biggest adjustment was in the value of the money."* They have money in India? It has value? My reaction was the reverse because I was doing a first world country — Japan — before India.

On the other hand, apropos Britain, I haven't set foot there in quite a while, but for how long has Heathrow been in such a mishmash state. It's worse than LaGuardia in New York. I spent 30 minutes walking down blind winding corridors this morning when I was passing through. And that was just to get through the security checkpoint to the lounge. I spent another 20 minutes walking from the lounge to gate 3 in terminal 4, which is around four bends, down a tunnel, across a bridge, ~~behind a locked door labeled "beware of the leopard,"~~ down some stairs, around two more bends and across the tarmac, even though it's "right next" to the

[‡] They made us an offer we couldn't refuse on the second one: free hardware if we paid for the service for two years in advance.

lounge.

And in today's entry in the "small world" sweepstakes, in the lounge in London I turned out to be sitting across from a guy who works for Boeing and lives on our street, albeit about 15 blocks north.

[[OK. That's a good break point. It's time to wander out of the confines of the Business Class lounge again for the last leg of my Sunday tour of European airports. But at least at this stage, my passport has a stamp saying I'm admitted to the EU.]]

[[One must be careful what one wishes for. I wrote "tour of European airports" in jest an hour and a half ago. And now, I am in yet a different European airport because the plane on which I was making the last leg of my journey had an engine warning as we headed north, involving an emergency landing in yet another capital with a feathered prop. So I've now been in four countries today. The replacement aircraft is now here, so maybe we'll make it five. Though if we don't, your chances of reading this zine are small. Good thing Mr Lillian wasn't with me.]]

[[Resuming to finish writing this and add artwork on the last leg of my trip home. For what it's worth, on the first leg of my return trip, I was on the exact same aircraft that failed Sunday night. I'm happy I didn't notice the memorable tail number until I was getting off the offending flying machine. But, I must praise SAS business class: stunningly beautiful flatware by Georg Jensen, china by Royal Copenhagen, a lav big enough to join the mile high club without cramping, and with a Marimeko tapestry above the changing table.]]

Janice Gelb ♀ *Tales from the Bunker* ★

Nice trip report, and I could have sworn I had made marginal notes for comments in it, but now I can't find any.

Gary Robe ♀ *Tennessee Trash* ★

Also a very nice trip report. Even though you didn't have earth-shattering news to shake up the fannish community like Janice and Stephen did, it sounds like you guys had a grand family vacation. As I think I've said, the travels we took together as a family while I was growing up still figure prominently in our shared lore. (I need only say "St Marks' Baptismal Font." to amuse my father or "Let's feed some toast to the koi." to get a laugh from my mother.) Nick and Isaac will look fondly on this trip when they're old.

Sheila Strickland ♀ *Revenant* ★

Since you were the closest to the action, I'm glad you came through Katrina unscathed.

And I'm sorry that you've decided to suspend grad school, though I understand the stress involved. I spent time at UNC working on my masters with a toddler in

the house, which is why twenty years later I'm still only half-way through it.

We'll look for mailing comments from you next time.

Meanwhile, we've had some discussion about media mail. I tripped over the exact definitions from the postal service website.

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- d. Not have the nature of personal correspondence.
- e. Not be stationery, such as pads of blank printed forms.

Media Mail (Book Rate)

Description

Used for books, film, manuscripts, printed music, printed test materials, sound recordings, play scripts, printed educational charts, loose-leaf pages and binders consisting of medical information, videotapes, and computer recorded media such as CD-ROMs and diskettes. Media Mail cannot contain advertising.

The maximum size is 108 inches in combined length and distance around the thickest part.

Mark each package "Media Mail" in the postage area.

➡ Meanwhile, there's a little bit of business to revisit from *Homer*. Comments that I shorted because I didn't have data in-hand when I wrote them. In both cases, I found articles I knew I'd seen but couldn't put my fingers on while I was on my flight to Europe.

Ned Brooks 📧 **New Port News** ★

In *Homer*, I responded to your comment:

"Is it true – as I read in some forgotten source – that Microsoft sold the Chinese government software to block the words (or the ideograms?) 'democracy' and 'freedom' from web sites?"

by saying:

Not *per se*: all web services in China have to filter certain sites. I believe this actually happens in the transport layer — that is, at the broadband or ISP — not at the services themselves.

There was a piece in the November *Wired* which I was reading while waiting for my flight out of Seattle, more-or-less following my remembrance. The article, entitled “Confessions of a Dissident”, is an interview with Chinese dissident blogger Wozy Yin, in which he explains that

The authorities have numerous ways to squelch digital dissent. ISPs maintain lists of forbidden words, including the date of the infamous Tiananmen Square massacre, June 4, freedom of speech, Falungong... They use filtering software to block posts containing these words... Posts that circumvent the filters are deleted, either by ISP employees or by the government’s own Net police.....

For every advance in censorship, bloggers find a way around it. We replace banned words with Chinese characters that sound the same when spoken but have a different meaning when written, or we transliterate them into Roman characters. Recently I came up with another technique: After the authorities blocked one of my entries, I reposted it with the characters aligned vertically instead of horizontally.



Guy Lillian ✍ *Spiritus Mundi* ★

In *Homer*, I said:

However, FEMA – the Feds – need to be there to backup the local first responders with logistical help, with water, with food, with communications gear, with transportation. In fact, that would be exactly what FEMA did in Florida in 2004, staging supplies and personnel north of the storm’s path before Frances struck. But then the President’s brother was governor of Florida, and Kerry was ahead in the polls.

I wanted to include the reference for Florida, but couldn’t find it. I could have

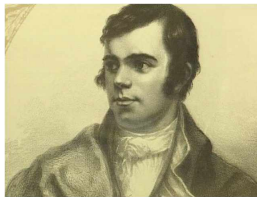
sworn it was a Paul Krugman column, but it was actually an article by Richard Clarke in *The Atlantic* for November.

Imagine if, in advance of Hurricane Katrina, thousands of trucks had been waiting with water and ice and medicine and other supplies. Imagine if 4,000 National Guardsmen and an equal number of emergency aid workers from around the country had been moved into place, and five million meals had been ready to serve. Imagine if scores of mobile satellite-communications stateions had been prepared to move in instantly, ensuring that rescuers could talk to one another. Imagine if this had been managed that not only directed the government response but also but also helped coordinate the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and other outside groups.

Actually, this requires no imagination: it is exactly what the Bush administration did a year ago when Florida braced for Hurrican Frances. Of course the circumstances then were very special: it was two months before the presidential election, and Florida's twenty-seven electoral votes were hanging in the balance. It is hardly surprising that Washington ensured the success of "the largest response to a natural disaster we've ever had in this country." The president himself passed out water bottles to Floridians driven from their homes.



That's it, folks. I'm caught up on comments, and I've finished the layout. And I'm barely past Greenland. and I'm not up to writing a three-page essay to round up an even four pages — in the last four days, I've crossed 20 time zones, visited five airports eight times, gotten no more than four hours of sleep in a lump, so bear with me if I'm not up to writing another thousand words. I've put the table of contents on the back cover, but used my original choice of artwork as a header.



Art Credits

The front cover: Continuing from the theme set by *Marge* and *Homer* here is a portrait of Maggie Thatcher. And yes, this zine starts in the middle of a word, just like *Homer* ended in the middle of a word. Page 3: Peter C Vey from *The New Yorker*, 2 Jul 2001 — which is exactly how I feel after getting no more than 4 hours of sleep in a lump for the past 125 hours. Page 5: *User Friendly* from 11 Nov. Page 6: *Blondie* from 19 Nov — all the more appropriate because I've just filled out the 'Next of Kin' form required by 'US law, Final Rule 243', whatever the hell that is, though I'm sure I don't have sufficient security clearance to find out. Page 7: *Frazz* from 17 Nov. Page 7: *Calvin & Hobbes* from 29 Jan 1994. Page 9: J.B. Handelsman from *The New Yorker*, 25 Dec 2000. Page 12: *Crankshaft* from 5 Oct. Page 16: *Helen, the Sweetheart of the Internet* from 11 Nov. Page 17: *Red & Rover* from 25 Nov 2004 — wishing you the same. Back cover: I'm out of the Simpson family themselves for artwork — or inspiration for artwork — so I've used Mr (Robert) Burns for the back cover.

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Caught-Up-o-Meter

