

Playing Pepe le Pew is the fifty-sixth SFPA-zine (volume two, number thirty-three) from Jeffrey Copeland. It is intended for mailing number 226 of the Southern Fandom Press Alliance and selected others. It is published by Bywater Press, 3243 165th Ave, SE, Bellevue, Washington 98008. The text of *Playing Pepe le Pew* was composed using the T_EX typesetting system, and is set in 11-point Palatino. The original of this publication was printed on 30 March 2002 and it was reproduced by the Xerographic process.



I'm starting to write natter — as I so often used to do — at 30,000 feet. This time, I'm over the Pacific on my grand Asian tour. This is part of my farewell performance working for the Indian development organization. First prize is ten days in Tokyo, second prize is five days in Hyderabad and I get them both. I understand about Asian distances a little better, too: if I get on an airplane in Seattle, I can be in Tokyo ten-and-a-half hours later. But once I'm in Tokyo, it takes two days and two crossings of India to get to Hyderabad. That's only partially a matter of distance. Some of it is because the trains don't run as often on those tracks.

There's a separate trip report made up of the e-mail I exchanged with Liz and some others while I was gone, but as this zine expands to fill the time available for its completion, I realize that the trip report is probably not going to make this mailing. I picked up some intestinal bug in India, and was down for two days the week of the deadline. Since I'm starting my new job on the Monday after the mailing goes out, I don't think I'll have time to do an extra zine this week. We'll see. I'm also afraid this zine will be (in large part) a mass of grey text, rather than its usual illustrated self.

I've written in these pages before about my annoyance at pervasive advertising. Now I've got my little airplane seat television monitor tuned to the live map of our route, which cycles through time to arrival, head wind, outside temperature, and other interesting statistics, all in both English and Japanese. But the screens of statistics and maps are interspersed with Duty Free ads.

And y'know that sprightly pop tune that's the theme music for teen TV drama *Dawson's Creek*? (Or maybe mercifully, you've never seen *Dawson's Creek*, and *don't* know it.) I spent twenty minutes the other week on hold with UPS getting a package redirected and I ended up listening to a tape loop of that song as musak. Yuch!

Meanwhile, it's been a hell of a couple of months. We've lost Chuck Jones, Dudley Moore, Ray Lafferty, and Billy Wilder. And then, as I was finishing layout on this zine, the Queen Mum died in her sleep.

For me the startling, unbelievable matter is this: when I was nineteen years old, somebody offered to pay me to draw. For over fifty years and over 250 films, other somebodies have, amazingly, persisted in continuing to reward me for doing what I love to do.

— Chuck Jones, *Chuck Amuck*

Jones' death is immensely saddening. We've lost Pepe le Pew and Road Runner and Coyote and Michigan J Frog. We've lost a genuine American treasure, who went through life disguised as a witty, kindly man, dispensing truth one drawing at a time, 24 per second.

On the other hand:

Almost three decades later, he was asked, in all seriousness, whether he would have made movies if he hadn't been paid to do so. And Wilder, the man who has told more cold truths than many of us would care to hear, didn't hesitate for a second: "What do you think, I'm a sucker?"

— Anthony Lane, in "Boys Will Be Girls: The making of Billy Wilder's 'Some Like It Hot'", *The New Yorker*, October 22, 2001

Billy Wilder had brash sensibility with a touch of cynicism. Who else would have described Marilyn Monroe as having "breasts like granite and a brain like Swiss cheese," or responded to his wife's request to bring plumbing fixtures back from a European trip with a cable "unable obtain bidet, suggest handstand in shower." His movies have the same charm. *The Apartment*, *Some Like it Hot*. His work with Izzy Diamond is some of the best post-war screenwriting.

We'll miss both of them.

We aren't going to make it to DSC. Yes, I know, any excuse is a lousy one, but we realized that we needed to spend our travel budget this year on making college visits with Allie. This is right annoying, because I'd have really liked to come to Huntsville and have the First Occasional SFPA Model Rocket Contest. Y'all are encouraged to have it in my absence. Just remember: I zend zem up. I don't care vere zey come down. Zat's not my department says Werner von Braun.

Reviews



Wall Street Journal reporter David Banks recently wrote *Breaking Windows*, which is about the recent history of Microsoft. For some odd reason, I felt compelled to see what Banks had to say. Roughly, his view is that Bill Gates, as the CEO of Microsoft, made some fundamental mistakes in not hedging his bets. Microsoft's current "Windows everywhere" strategy is a loser from Banks' point-of-view, because it continues to ignore the fascinating possibilities of the Internet. Indeed, when MS vice presidents Brad Silverberg and Jim Allchin battled over who was going to own the Microsoft Explorer web browser, it was (in Banks' view, at least) a battle for the heart and soul of the company. When Allchin won, that ensured that the PC desktop, not the net, would be the primary platform supported by Microsoft. From that bad decision, all the company's financial troubles flow. Banks also takes us into the executive conference room where a jet-lagged Bill Gates decided the appropriate response to Judge Jackson's order to remove the browser from Windows 98 was to ship a version of the operating system that wasn't functional. (Rule number one, if you're involved in a lawsuit: don't piss off the judge. Rule number zero, if you're involved in a federal lawsuit without a jury: don't piss off the judge. Gates, the son of a lawyer, should have known better.)



Historian Stephen Ambrose has been taking a lot of heat lately from academics for not properly crediting his sources. It is a tempest in a teapot. And it's irrelevant because Ambrose's own prose is so compelling. In *The Wild Blue*, he talks about the crews who flew B-25's for the 15th Air Force out of Italy. The men in the 15th make for a more interesting, and less told, story than the 8th Air Force, with its celebrity pilots (James Stewart, William Wyler) and reporters (Walter Cronkite, Andy Rooney). Ambrose follows a young college kid named George McGovern through his training as a bomber pilot, his shipping out to Italy and his flying twenty-five missions over German, Austria and France. For me, the story is fascinating because McGovern's military career so closely resembles my father's. (Indeed, my father and McGovern met in the late sixties without either realizing they had a common past.) As he did in his previous books like *D-Day*, Ambrose describes the simple heroism of men who went to war because it was the right thing to do. The simple terror of flying thousands of pound of high explosives through a wall of anti-aircraft flak never ceases to amaze me, and I am grateful that I've never had to experience it.* In any event, I've admired McGovern for a long

* When I first saw an actual B-25, and had an opportunity to climb aboard it, I immediately came

time, and was pleased to read about a bit of his personal history — and my family history.

🐉 One Friday evening's movie recently was *Rat Race*. Yes, it's a remake of *The Twelve Chairs* and *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* (which plots were stolen by Donald E Westlake's *The Dancing Aztecs*), but it's a nice one. Characters chosen at random chase the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, having amusing adventures on the way, and nonetheless end up emptyhanded. Nice performances by John Cleese, and Whoopi Goldberg, and Seth Green. An absolutely hilarious bus ride and helicopter sequence.

🐉 Our quiet romantic dinner for Valentine's Day was followed the most interesting movie we could see before midnight: the new Schwarzenegger flick *Collateral Damage*. Roughly speaking: Los Angeles Fireman's wife and son are in the wrong place at the wrong time, and die in a terrorist bombing. Fireman (since he's Ahhhnold) goes after the terrorist leader, looking for blood. Shelved for six months in the aftermath of September 11th, it's pretty clear where this movie was recut for the new sensibilities. The CIA's role as co-bad-guys is heavily downplayed, but the moral question of popular insurrection vs terrorism is raised.

🐉 I've had some bad days at the office in the past year, but none involving my boss coming in at 7am to shoot me for no reason he's willing to disclose. Such is the opening scene in the novel *Vertical Run*. And from there it gets odder, with government hit men, secret monkeys, and corporate espionage. This is a mere potato chip of a novel, but it's an amusing ride nonetheless.


🐉 I've taken grief from my wife for it, but I walked out of *Rollerball*. "And you wouldn't walk out of *Magnolia*!?!," she says. The kids wanted to see it, and so I took them, but the 1975 version was rated R for violence. This one was rated PG-13 even though it's got a much higher level of gore, and the kids were grossed out.


🐉 *Ghost World* is a story about a misfit recent high school graduate, who draws incessantly. She meets an equally weird guy, who's obsessed with old music, and she keeps trying to set him up on dates. All very odd, all very interesting. Our resident oddball artistic teenager found it completely fascinating. I found it moderately interesting.

🐉 There were three movies that I skipped on airplanes this month which I'll catch later in their un-"edited for airline use" form: I want to see Kevin

home, called up my father, and asked in all seriousness, "were you fucking crazy?"

Spacey in *K-Pax*, since I suspect his performance opposite Jeff Bridges will be very, very good. Bruce Willis and Billy Bob Thornton doing *Bandits* is not likely to be high art, but it's almost got to be amusing — I stopped watching this when they'd clearly trimmed an early sex scene with a shovel. Then, I'd like to see *Dinner Rush*, a little Danny Aiello movie that takes place completely in a restaurant over the course of an evening — it looks completely fascinating, but not only was dialog clearly removed (working restaurant kitchens during dinner rush are not sources of genteel social intercourse), but it was on one of the overnight flights, and I wanted to sleep.

 Meanwhile, I was praising the rendition of the Cole Porter standard “Makin’ Whoopee” from *The Fabulous Baker Boys* the other day, and my daughter said it was no big deal: “My generation has been oversexed by the age of 12. So Michelle Pfeiffer would have to be doing that song naked in a vat of lime jello to get anyone’s attention.” I don’t know about you, but I’m pretty sure that would get *my* attention.

 David Brock has now written a book entitled *Blinded by the Right: The Conscience of an Ex-Conservative*. The man who brought us Paula Jones is rethinking not so only his conservatism, but his participation in the bare-knuckle boxing match that was the Clinton presidency, Brock has apparently managed to apologize for the damage he did. I’ve not read the book yet, but I noticed Henrik Hertzberg’s review in the 11 March *New Yorker*. I’ll recommend Hertzberg’s piece, too, since it also makes some interesting observations. I’d have reprinted it, but I’m afraid I’m out of room.

Mailing Comments on SFPA 223

Ned Brooks ✉ *New Port News* 🍷

ct Markstein: “You are right about land mines – a truly evil idea.” Like the neutron bomb, which I noted last time with a clipping from the *LA Times*, land mines are intended for causing individual human beings intense anguish. One of my mother’s uncles found himself walking through a farmer’s field during the invasion of Italy. Being a good Italian farm boy, he was careful not to step on any of the plantings — carrots, I seem to recall. The chap several back in the platoon who ignored the rows of vegetables and stepped on a carrot top discovered the vegetables marked the landmines.

ct me: “Infinity sounds interesting – I’ve read a couple of Feynman’s books.” So have I. My freshman and sophomore physics courses were taught out of his books. What I know about quantum mechanics is Dick Feynman’s and Paul Dirac’s fault.

“...I agree with you about the DVD scam. There are not that many US movies I would want, but quite a few from the UK.” Not even *Candy*? The point of the region encoding, of course, is to allow distribution rights to be parcelled out by the studios as they wish. I suspect, like with the Recording Industry Association and Napster, this is going to backfire in the long run. (Hal O’Brien points out that while Napster was in operation, CD sales were going up faster than the economy was growing, and now that Napster’s been shut down, CD sales are declining faster than the economy in general. I’m not sure they’re related, since discretionary spending tends to not track the economic growth quite the same way, but it’s an interesting data point.)

And by now, you’ve read Mike Weber’s zine with a hack for turning off region encoding in a particular DVD player.

Norm Metcalfe ☒ **Tyndallite** ♣

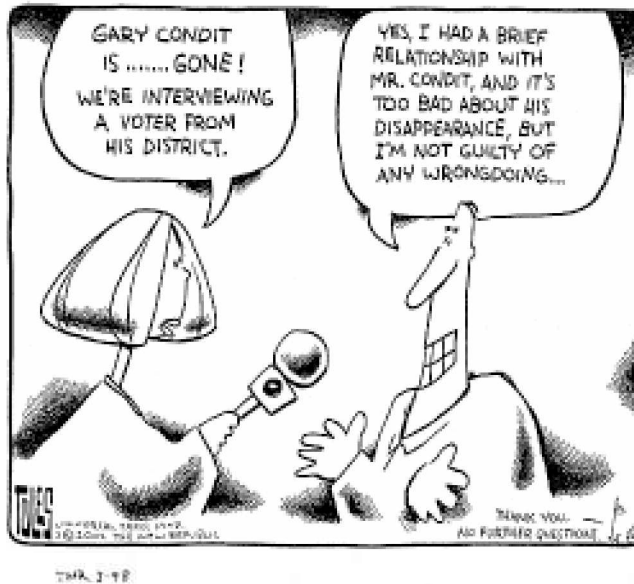
ct me: “To quote you: ‘I read the Hugo short fiction at Westercon and in Alaska, and this year’s ballot features the sorriest set of novella nominees I’ve ever seen.’ Was there nothing better or is this another failure of the nominating process?” Well, you’ll notice in a later zine I bemoan Charles Stross’ lack of nominations. I think Charlie’s an idea generator, and spins a compelling tale. (Unlike, say, Catherine Asaro, who generates interesting ideas, does wonderful world building ... and then writes romance novels around it.)

Rich Lynch ☒ **Markstein is Acting Like an Obnoxious Jerk (But So What Else is New?)** ♣ This is, as my Swedish friends say, a storm in a waterglass. I’m not sure why you two are so upset about it. ☞ “There is already credible evidence, based on information from several New Orleans fans, that Markstein is in fact the night manager of a porno theater.” Remembering that I read none of Markstein’s stuff, if this is what he’s objecting to, I think it’s rather silly. It’s like Bill Clinton claiming he actually smoked the cigar. We’ve got sufficient evidence to the contrary.

Richard Dengrove ☒ **Twygdrasil and Treehouse Gazette** ♣

On your long natter about the Chandra Levy Case, I can’t help but think that, like Markstein and the Lynchs, this is a storm in a waterglass. Yes, the question of what happened to this poor young lady is of interest to her family, and should be of interest to the Washington police (who seem as competent at this point as Boulder homicide detectives), but it only became national news because Fox needed a compelling scandal to launch their news network. What a waste of time and effort.

ct me: “The best horror stories are those we can identify with. ... But anything subtler than that can prove a bust. I tried to write a horror story years ago. It was about people having their selves annihilated and replaced by the mind of some creature from outerspace.” It’s ground nicely covered in a Silverberg story from about 1968 called “Passengers,” where



the visiting aliens get a thrill by taking over the humans' bodies for a couple of days at a time. You come back to awareness with a hangover and unexplained lipstick stains, for example. ☞ *"How about threatening bosses?"* Nope, that falls into the same problem as Dilbert does occasionally when it gets to be documentary rather than entertainment.

"Alright so your definition of computer is 'programmable.' What would it have to program? Be capable of doing addition multiplication, subtraction, division? Didn't slide rules do that and more? ... Would you have to be able to program a spreadsheet too?" Nope, you're missing the point, I think. Let me try a first-order approximation: A programmable computer can be loaded with an arbitrary set of instructions which it can then run on the data you feed it. In other words, a programmable computer allows you to specify the way you want the data to be manipulated independent of the design of the hardware. The difference engine wasn't programmable in that sense (if I'm remembering the architecture of the difference engine correctly) — it was basically just a big calculator. Babbage's analytical engine, on the other hand, allowed for arbitrary strings of instructions, but was never built. We've had calculators for millenia — think abacus — but the concept of programmable computer didn't reach practice until about ENIAC.

"If atomic weapons played a part in Kornbluth's Not This August, then I heard wrong. Or interpreted wrong. I never read the book..." Oh, do read it. It's an interesting reflection

on the futility and necessity of armed conflict. But at the danger of spoiling some of the plot, the operative bit near the end is: *"If our demands are not met, we shall continue destroying Russian and Chinese cities at twenty-four-intervals until our stock of hydrogen weapons is exhausted. We shall then drop bombs capable of generating fission-product clouds upstream from land masses of Russia and China which will wipe out all life in those areas."*

"I have to confess no one is consistent in politics. Especially not when you have the good guys on one side and the bad guys on the other. Which is a normal mentality in politics. You're not going to treat both the same. You want the good guys to have an edge, especially the winning edge. In fact, usually, you want to stack the deck." But it doesn't have to be, and it pisses me off that we're playing for points, rather than ideas. David Brin gave a talk at Microsoft just before I left for Japan. It was David's usual amalgam of hope and thoughtfulness. One of the things he pointed out was that in liberal western democracies, we've solved the problem of having society structured like a pyramid, with the large number of poor supporting the very small number of very rich. Instead we have a diamond — a large lump of middle class with smaller bits of very poor and very rich at the top and bottom. What we're arguing about it not how to redistribute wealth, but how to raise everyone up.

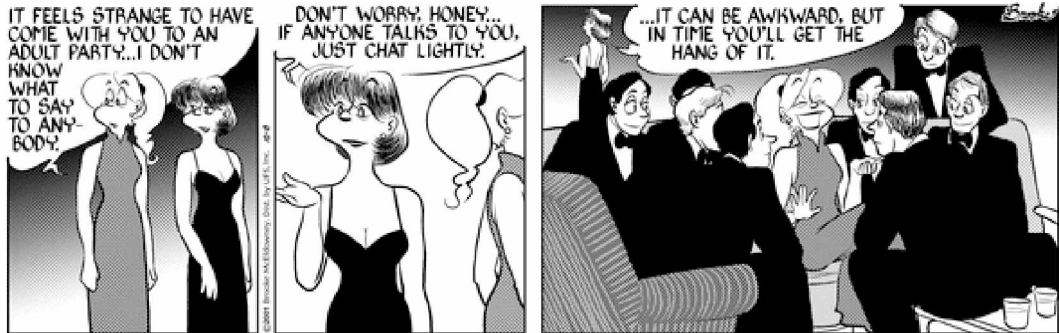
"The Internet may be giving us a lot of misinformation." There's a story in Clifton Fadiman's collection *Fantasia Mathematica* called "The Universal Library" by Kurd Lasswitz, which suggests some things about the number of possible books. Among them is that any such universal library would contain all possible *mis*-information also. I remember this everytime I look something up on the web.

Rich Lynch ☒ Variations on a Theme ♥

ct Southerner: "I can't remember if I voted for the new SFFA constitutional amendment, but I do know I was a bit ambivalent about it. I do agree that the OE should be held blameless whenever somebody publishes something derogatory in SFFA. But I hope you (and your successor) will not turn such a blind eye the next time non-SFFA stuff, like the sort Markstein used last time, is brought up here in an attempt to discredit a member of the apa. There was no way you could check on Markstein's claim, so you let it go, even though it turns out to be false and nothing more than a cheap shot at me. Next time, I hope you (and your successor) will ask for some supporting evidence, or at least check with the person attacked to see if the accusation holds any water, before allowing such a SFFA zine to be part of the mailing. (No disrespect intended, by the way.)"

No disreect taken, Rich. I understand your concerns here, but first, even though I agree with you that Markstein was out of line – and I must point out that you're a little over the top with your title – I wouldn't and won't remove zines for such behavior. I don't believe it's my job as OE to control content — and part of the reason for that constitutional amendment and the regular statement in the OO

is to make it explicit that the OE *does not* control content. However, second, and on a practical turn, even if I believed in content control, it's not really practical for the OE to read every word before it goes into the collating rack. Yes, there are some zines I egoscan as I collate — and all OE's do — but that's vanity, not method. And in any event, as I keep saying, Markstein's is the one zine I never read anyway. Were it not for his past history with Liz, it might be otherwise, but that's just the way it is.



Guy Lillian ✉ *Spiritus Mundi* 🍷

"And there was a world science fiction convention, too. The epic party in Mike Resnick's suite where I met the Bwana Babes (including the brilliant musician Janis Ian, who once put Leonard Bernstein into tears for being so good, so young) and watched fine hoochie-koochie dancers hoochie their koochies." Boy, you get to all the classy parties. (Sign in a Tokyo department store: "New Shop opening 3/2, fourth floor, Hootchie Koochie". On of the amazing things about the Japanese is their use and abuse of English.)

ct Southerner: "Running for re-election as Official Editor? Excellent! You have a supporter in the Easy." Well, late though it is, I thank you for your support. I'm up for a third go-round, I think, since I seem to have the rhythm down.

ct Hughes: "As for a legal decision defining parody, the Supreme Court's Larry Flynt decision probably does." Wasn't there also a decision about Two Live Crew's version Roy Orbison's "Pretty Woman" song that gets cited in the same space?

ct me: "I've been trying to picture your writing mc's on thin air - I take it that's how the electronic highlighter works. Obviously a cool tool but I bet you got some strange looks." That's not quite how it works. You *can* write with it, but I don't since I have the Palm. You run the scanner over a patterned surface to write with it, forming fairly normal letters. For scanning text, you just run it over the lines you want it to read. It's been an interesting tool. I have it with me in Asia, where it's been quite useful. Of course,

it's better on some typefaces than others. It seems to be really recalcitrant on your zines for some reason.

The thing can communicate through an infrared port on its tail, which is how I normally use it: I scan all the comment hooks in a zine, then let the scanner talk to my Palm through their infrared ports, and make corrections and add notes on the Palm. Then when I synchronize the Palm with my desktop computer, I have access to all that stuff. However, the laptop I travelled through Asia with has its own IR port, so I just communicated directly with the laptop, which was quite entertaining: I'd set the scanner to beam out a file, and the laptop would bleep and pop up a little box that said, "I detect another computer nearby, and it's trying to talk to me! Can I listen? Please!?"



☞ "I found the film of *The Tailor of Panama* clever but I'd forgotten about it till I read your notice." There are sufficient differences from the book that the moral of the story changes, but the basic plot — *Our Man in Havana* if you want the Graham Greene version — is still there.

☞ "Suzanne Chazin's 4th Angel sounds very good." It really is. Good characters, good plot, compelling storytelling. I want to read the next thing she writes.

☞ "As for Lara Croft - Tomb Raider, I recently commented in LASFAFA - a dangerous place for such asides - that Jolie's lips looked like split sausages." Yes, in that venue, it would get you some grief. Not as much as 20 years ago, but we're all getting older. On the other hand, her lips did look like split sausages. Not that we noticed, given the artificial bust enhancement. . .

☞ "Anyone watching *W.C. Fields' Man on the Flying Trapeze* the other night saw an early performance by the other guy who won three Oscars: Walter Brennan. He played a singing burglar. (I told you it was a Fields movie. Oh, how I want to show *Rosy The Fatal Glass of Beer!*)" What a great movie! I first saw it at freshman orientation.

☞ “I don’t get that Ahab cartoon.” Which one? The one where Ahab is poised in the prow of the boat, harpoon at the ready, and yelling “Marco!”? It’s a kids’ pool game. The kid who’s “it” closes their eyes and says “Marco.” The other kids yell “Polo” and scurry to a different location. Much splashing ensues while the kid with eyes “closed” tries to tag one of the others.

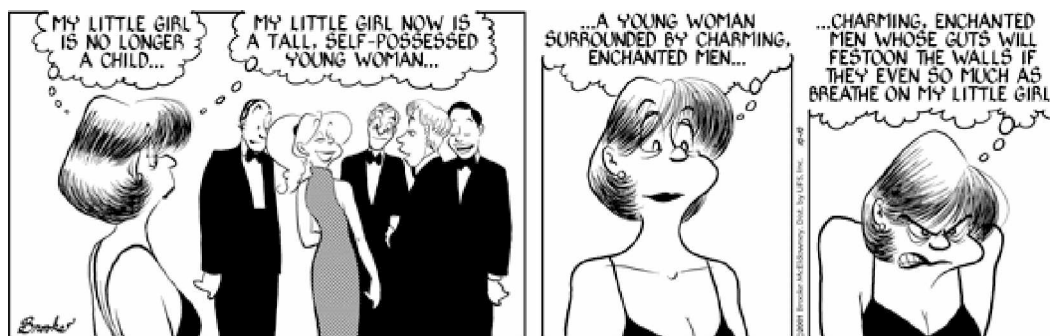
☞ “Yes, try to make the ’02 DSC. Have you ever been to Huntsville? J.J. would like the space museum, and we could find and lay a fanzine on the grave of Al Andrews.” I wish we could. And I feel like a schlumpf that we can’t. I wanted to be there, and I wanted to have a SFPA model rocket contest, and I wanted to see you and Rosy still honeymooning, and see what Hank looks like as a newlywed, and spend a lazy afternoon gossiping with Steve and Suzanne, and make mint juleps for a SFPA party. Such is part of the cost of living on the wrong side of the country.

☞ “Sherman! Bah! The NYT Book Review recently praised that foul creature, claiming that it was nobler to burn farms and starve families and create an atmosphere of loathing and alienation that lasted until the election of Jimmy Carter than beat Joe Johnston’s army in a stand-up fight. War is Hell, and there you’ll find William Tecumseh Shennan.” This is a continuing theme over the last couple of years, you’ll maybe notice. There’s been a concerted effort to, if not excuse the “war is hell” ethic, at least praise the warrior. We’ve had the whole “greatest generation” thing, we’ve got Mel Gibson doing a movie of the first big American battle of the Vietnam war, *We Were Soldiers*, we add half an hour to *Pearl Harbor* so that there’s a victory in it, our popular culture has been making fun of the values of the sixties.

Were I a paranoid believer in massive conspiracy theories, rather than a sane man who realizes that everything goes in cycles, I’d note the wave of “those guys who fought World War II are absolute heroes” crested just ahead of those airplanes flying into those towers.

The Pentagon very ostentatiously closed down its propaganda office shortly after opening it. One wonders if it had been operating all along and continues to do so.

ct Liz: “We don’t mind y’all making all those trips to the east coast if it doesn’t keep you away from DSC. Should you eschew (*gesundheit*) our home convention, I won’t have a chance to say hey until 2003, when I imagine you’ll be in San Jose for the worldcon.” We were going to build our east coast trip this year into a real vacation and include DSC. Really. But we need to get Allie on a college tour. We probably won’t make it to the east coast at all – my father decided he wanted to go to Heidelberg and Rome for his 80th birthday, rather than have a party. And actually, San Jose is this year, but we won’t be there either. I’m getting too crowd averse for Worldcons, I’m afraid. (If I’m crowd averse, I’m not sure what I was doing in India — no, I tell you what I was



doing in India: cowering in my fucking hotel room.)

"Allie's maturation will have reached the just-shoot-yourself-old-man stage by then ..." No, we passed that milestone the day you and I were talking on the mezzanine of the Jekyll Inn, she came bouncing up the stairs wearing a halter top, and you went into brain freeze. (But see the sequence of 9 *Chickweed Lane* cartoons in the vicinity.)

✉ "My cover is a detail from *Guernica*, the Picasso mural painted after the 1937 terror bombing of the ancient Basque city by Nazis. Picasso's largest painting, it's said that during the occupation of Paris, a German admirer visited Picasso's studio and saw the work on a postcard. 'Ah, Senor,' he said to the artist, 'so you did that.' 'No,' Picasso replied. 'You did that.'" Nice story, but Picasso spent the occupation on the Riviera. 🐞 "During my wonderful year living in New York, during which I never did more than drive by the World Trade Center, I'd often visit the original at the Museum of Modern Art, where it hung for decades. About 20 years ago it was sent to the Prado in Madrid, where it dominates that museum's Picasso collection." I actually used to visit *Guernica* at the Modern, and thought then (as I do now) that it's an ugly painting. I understand why he painted it, and understand the statement it makes, but it nearly runs afoul of the "if you've got a message, use Western Union" rule. Meanwhile, you do realize that Picasso's will instructed that *Guernica* could never be returned to Spain until there was an elected government.

"And so, as I said before, I took heart when I saw 'the Lady' standing in New York Harbor, while all Hell fell around her. She is a symbol worthy of the firefighters and EMTs who are still risking their lives to save strangers on the shifting mountain of wreckage the terrorists left behind. They are American heroes." It is a particular irony that in a Fire Department where even guys named Silverstein got Catholic funerals, nearly the first man in uniform to be killed was Mychal Judge, the department chaplain. The head of the firefighters union said "He always said God had a reason for doing things. God took Mychal Judge as the first firefighter that we lost here, because God wanted to test us. He said we won't have Mychal with us, but He said take the faith that [Mychal] gave us."

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

“ct Lillian” “Why not sent the Chall masters to your brother up in NY and then he can have them copied there before smuggling them across the border to be mailed from inside Canada?” Actually, one of the books I ordered for Liz for Christmas was from a shop in Alberta. It was actually postmarked from some little town in Montana and sent priority mail. Apparently they smuggle stuff across the border to mail from the US side.

“ct me” “I’d rather risk the consequences of having the Democrats take back Congress than of having the additional two years of near Republican control. For one thing I would, generally, prefer a split of party control. I keep hoping that that would produce some sort of compromise centrist governing rather than deadlock.” As I suggest above in my comments to Mr Dengrove, compromise centrist government isn’t going to happen as long as we have political debate by sound bites, and the goal is gaining points, not running the country.

Arthur Hlavaty ✉ **Confessions of a Consistent Liar** ♣

ct Ackerman: “Are there any religions besides Orthodox Judaism and the Latter Day Saints where the men wear kinky underwear?” There are some small sects in Greenwich Village...

ct me: “I liked Shrek, though I could have lived without lines like ‘Eat me.’ I thought Cats & Dogs was more fun.” I must agree with you on this: while *Shrek* was fun, and a tour de force of animation art, at some level it was just a compendium of fart jokes.

“Here’s something we disagree about: novellas. I thought that ‘Oracle’ was good despite Egan’s all-too-usual heavy-handed preaching of the ungospel of materialism, and ‘72 Letters’ was brilliant.” I quote your Ellison observation: Everyone agrees that in every collection of Harlan Ellison stories, there’s several brilliant stories, a lousy story, an offensive story, and a number of mediocre stories. The problem is that no one can agree which is which. I loaded both “Oracle” and “Seventy-two Letters” on my Palm to read in Asia, but didn’t get to them. I did read Egan’s “Oceanic”, which won the novella Hugo in 1999, but I’d only rate it a B-minus.

ct Liz: “I wish the schools could figure out a way to do ability grouping without stigmatizing.” Unless they do — I don’t know, maybe even if they manage to pull it off — we end up with the marching morons. Part of the problem is the parents who declare themselves to be anti-elitist. “Anything you do that excludes my little Johnnie is elitism. I was permanently scarred as a child because I didn’t get into the fast reading group and I don’t want that to happen to little Johnnie.” These, mind you, are the same folks who raise a ruckus every time someone suggests cutting the budget for the (elitist) football team in order to buy more books. (Remembering, of course, that as far as I’m concerned, football *a priori* is a criminal endeavor.) Frankly, if their bad experiences as a result of their lack of native brain power was

painful for them, I'll be more than happy to relate the pain of always being the last kid picked in gym class, and because I have a better facility with English than they do, I can drag the story out for at least an hour longer.



Janice Gelb ☒ *Trivial Pursuits* ♣

ct me: "I also liked Rusch's 'The Retrieval Artist' in the novella category but unfortunately neither it nor the also-good 'Seventy-two Letters' by Ted Chiang stood a chance against Jack Williamson's name recognition..." Jack Williamson's story was just stupid, I think. Langford's short story may have won for name recognition, but it really had interesting ideas. As for Chiang's story, it hadn't gotten going by a quarter of the way through, so I just gave it up. As I told Arthur above, I'm willing to give it another try, and it's loaded on my Palm, but I haven't gotten to it yet.

"Why do peel-off stamps make it harder to carry a couple of stamps in your wallet?" Because we always buy the stamps in rolls. I have to peel off a stamp in the middle of the roll, so that I have a blank spot in the middle of the backing strip to have a blank space to rip it. Then, I have to repeat the process if I want to have a place to fold the strip. If I don't do this, I end up with a little bit of stamp gum sticking off the edge, which then adheres to the little holder in my notebook.

"The cheer containing pi that I found through Google goes 'Square root, tangent, hyperbolic sine; Three point one four one five nine; e to the x, dy, dx; Slide rule, slipstick, Tech, Tech, Tech!'" Thanks so much for looking this up. That sounds very familiar.

"I caught up on a few weeks worth of Newsweeks when I got home from my trips and it was weird to see what concerned us before Sept. 11 compared to what concerns us now." The Newsweek from September 10th is still sitting on my desk. That's the one with the analysis of the internal Supreme Court debate in Bush v Gore. Funny what a difference a week makes.

"This comment about being able to time travel but only to observe reminds me of an Efinger story about traveling back in time to see Jesus crucified and gradually realizing that nearly all of the

spectators are actually time travelers.” And then there’s *Live From Golgotha* by Gore Vidal, which is a similar plot, except the time travelers get to interact with history, and one of them is conspiring to change events.

ct Liz: “Not that I’m [not] sorry you’re lost but I’m glad someone else gets frustrated with computer directions because if you somehow get on the wrong street they’re totally useless. This happened to me during my Boston trip and drove me crazy...” The problem with those computer generated maps, of course, is lack of context. Boston is hopeless for its own reasons, and the next time I’m there, I’ll just pay the extra four bucks a day and get the GPS system in the rental car.

“I admire you all greatly for taking a vacation with so many people to take care of and track and with so few hitches. You should be proud of yourself!” Hey, that’s not us all, that’s all Liz’s doing. She planned the itinerary, made the reservations, found the hotels, looked up the cruises and the outings. Of course, that we went from a casual suggestion to Liz’s mom — now that we live here, maybe we’ll take our next vacation up in Alaska — to a full blown expedition is a tribute to Liz’s mom’s ability to hear a promise — we’re going to Alaska, and we’d like you to come with us — in a mere thought.

Dave Barry’s 13 September column that begins, “No humor column today. I don’t want to write it, and you don’t want to read it.” is a pre-echo of Scott Adams comments in last October’s “Dilbert Newsletter”:

Every morning for over twelve years I woke up before dawn, grabbed my timer-brewed coffee and sat down to draw a Dilbert comic. I did it seven days a week. I did it on Thanksgiving. I did it on Christmas. I did it when I was sick. That was my rule, unless I was traveling. No exceptions. Never.

People always asked me, “Do you ever have writer’s block?” Nope. Not once.

On 9/11/01, that changed. Somehow I managed to turn off the television for a few minutes. I stared at a blank piece of paper. It stayed blank.

The bastards took my sense of humor.

Shock. Disbelief. Grief. Anger. Repeat.

The counting began. The husband of a friend, gone. The husband of a business associate, gone. A regular customer of my restaurant, gone. The innocence of a generation of children, gone. Trust, gone. Investments, squashed.

We lost so much. But it put life in perspective, and that might be the one good thing to come from this. Friends and family are more precious. I am grateful for every bite of food and every drink of water. My cats purr better. The first normal radio commercial in several days was deeply satisfying. I had taken so much for granted.

The politicians and the soldiers have their jobs to do. We all know our

roles too – somehow automatically – a reassuring sign of our indestructible connectedness.

Now I'm going to do my job. I'm taking back my sense of humor. I hope you'll join me when you can. If you're not ready, read no further. We'll catch up later, my friend.

Tom Feller ☒ *Frequent Flyer* ♣

Belated condolences on the death of your mother-in-law.

ct me: “I read *Out of Their Minds*, 15 short biographies of computer scientists, and tried to write a review. Unfortunately, I just couldn't get a handle on it and gave up.” The book is of widely varying quality, which may be a statement about how interesting each of the fifteen computer scientists is.

ct Weisskopf: “I'm surprised that since you're a Southern girl, DSC was the first time you drank a mint julep.” I'd had mint juleps before, but it was tradition I picked up in Pasadena that made them a staple: It was Elizabeth Jenkins who began the tradition of a party to celebrate the Kentucky Derby, where the only available drink was the mint julep. Of course, there was the year when we were shopping for supplies on the morning of the race, and discovered there was no mint at Jurgensen's market. The problem was neatly solved when Mr Jurgensen called his wife to warn her we were coming and sent us down the street to pick some mint from his own garden.

Randy Cleary ☒ *Avatar Press* ♣

ct me: “[Regarding Electronic Highlighter] Cool beans!” I was kvetching earlier about how it doesn't like Guy's typeface earlier. Verdana, the typeface you use, provides a nearly perfect read. (I'm now forgetting, even though I've looked it up before: I know Carter designed Bell Centennial; is Verdana one of Hermann Zapf's typefaces?)

“Thanks for the trip reports and reviews.” Oh, they're all fun to write.

“By way, does the notion of the office of ‘Homeland Security’ send chills down your spine like it does mine?” Yeah, it just gives me the willies. Considering that it's been alternating between acting like Hermann Göring and Col Klink doesn't help. But see my back cover cartoon.

ct Liz & Jeff's Alaska Trip Report: “Cool trip report with lots of neat pictures! Moose turds?” Moose are herbivores, so they produce lots of little round turds the consistency of compressed sawdust. These are collected, painted gold and sold to tourists. Strikes me as a stupid damned souvenir, but then you've got to have something to flog to the three thousand people who just came off that cruise ship.

Toni Weisskopf ☒ *Yngvi is a Louse* ♣

ct me: "What the Supreme Court did was forbid the Florida high court from creating new rules after the election; what it did was say that the Florida court must uphold Florida laws." We're going to have to agree to disagree here. If the Warren Court had acted this way in a desegregation case, Strom Thurmond would have been jumping up and down and turning blue in the face on the floor of the Senate screaming about impeaching the Chief Justice and carrying on about the sacredness of States Rights. As I've said before, the Florida Supreme Court was resolving a conflict in the state law: count by this date vs determine the intent of each voter.

"Reyrcmt Dengrove about peel-off stamps: It's unusual for me to go with progress, and positively amazing for me to agree with Dengrove, but I'm agin you and Harry on this one. Peel-off stamps are wonderful. To carry them in your wallet, buy two and fold 'em together." See my comments above to Janice about this. It's doable, but an annoyance. Perhaps if I bought those little cardboard folders of stamps rather than buying them in rolls, it would be better, but...

"Reyrcmt Dengrove about the comment you made from the audience about comparative rates of progress between information and mechanical technology: it was a wonderful comment and made the failure of print on demand publishing to become economically feasible and widespread suddenly understandable. Thanks for being there!" It was my pleasure. As you well know, this is an area in which I have some passing interest. And I would have been there even without your urging and presence. The particular insight you note is one that actually came to me during that very panel, I think.

Janet Larson ✉ **Passages** ♥

"June 9-16 we went to Anguilla, an island in the British West Indies, for our long awaited vacation at a luxury villa, called Cerulean. It was wonderful; the villa was very private." Wow. This is my kind of vacation. Lazy days, reading and swilling champagne. I'm jealous.

Gary Robe ✉ **Tennessee Trash** ♥

"I'd Like To Buy An Adjective. None Of Mine Are Working." You win the title of the mailing award.

On traveling a week after the attacks, "I had no real problem. I showed my ticket and passport, the gate agent asked a few questions and marked my boarding pass. The whole process took maybe 30 seconds." This was probably profiling. Your passport shows that you do this often, you pop up on the frequent flier files of the airline. Kodak probably paid for your ticket directly. You're clearly not a threat. This is not the droid you want... (But see my comments to Steve Hughes about profiling.)

"Of course the attacks were the topic of many of the conversations I had with people there. I had not appreciated how much the news would resonate with people in Latin America." Oddly enough, it resonated not at all with the folks in India. The line from one of the managers

at the Indian development center was something like “Yes, so 5000 people died. What’s the big deal?” I had to stop and realize that he’s from a country where periodically two hundred guests get burned to death at a wedding because the tent catches fire, and where a train wreck kills five hundred.

“Vacations, Parties, Conventions, and Other Happier Subjects” You and Corlis give great vacation. Your western trip through Grand Canyon territory sounds like a lot of fun.

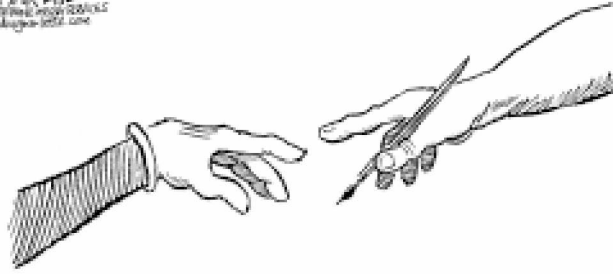
“I think that Corlis may decapitate the next person who says ‘But it’s a dry heat.’ A dry heat just means that you dehydrate faster.” As we’ve mentioned, we never left home in Boulder without water bottles. You just don’t notice that you’re dehydrated until it’s too late.

Liz Copeland ☒ *Home with the Armadillo* 🦔

“I wish I could make quilts for the kids who lost a parent in the World Trade Center attacks, but I can’t. What I can do is do something locally. And to help me deal with my own feelings, I’ll be doing a piece to send to Houston. quilt art list is tied into all the major quilt shows in a big way. (Think of us as the SFWA of quiltdom.) So, there will be an exhibit of quilts at Houston done in reaction to the terrorist attack.” It’s a damned fine quilt, Liz. I think it’s some of your best work. I’m jealous of you for having this project so you could do something constructive with your fear and anger and sadness after the disaster. I think you recovered your emotional balance more quickly that I did as a result.

ct me: *“I’ve gotten her in the regrettable habit of watching a movie on video most Fridays, since it’s one of my modes of relaxing after a hectic week’. It’s only become a habit because you won’t go dancing with me...”* I’ve never managed to learn how to dance like nobody’s watching. It’s one of my many failures.

“And here’s another quote for you, from the quiltart list: Every now and then it pays to read the celebrity blurbs in the paper. Yesterday there was a quote from Woody Allen, talking about his new film: ‘Because, if you ask me, when I start out to make a film, when I’m in my bedroom writing it, I always think that this is going to be the greatest film in the world, this is gonna be my Citizen Kane. And then, I actually start to make the film and, as my friend Marshall Brickman says, the truck with compromises pulls up every day, and by the time I’m finished with the film and I start editing it, I just pray to God that I’m saved from humiliation.’ And I know just what he means. I’ve now gone through this with 2 quilts and he’s hit it exactly on the head.” I’ve watched you do this. You start with high hopes, and then you start worrying and fussing and feeling it’s going wrong and screaming that you’ll just burn it all. And what comes out the other end is beautiful and colorful and emotionally charged and everyone who sees it wishes they had the kind of artistic vision that would let them do something as good.



CHUCK JONES: 1912-2002

Gary Brown ✉ **Oblivion** 🍷

Carl Hiaasen's column — about the hijackers just blending into the weirdness in Florida — is a nice counterpoint to the Dave Barry column Janice reprinted.

"Would you have invested your money in this group of people?" Or so you ask after printing the photo of the entire staff of Microsoft in 1979 when they moved from New Mexico to Redmond. Enough people did.

ct Southerner: "Simply TERRIBLE Rule 4, Jeff. It's almost as bad as some of JoAnn's attempts." Patience. There is a madness to this method.

ct me: "Of course, that's another problem with my 'book unpacking chores' I never enough space for what I own. I fear at this point in my life that only a decent Lottery win will remedy that." And even if you had it, you'd be lying on your deathbed muttering "Rosebud."

"What was that Michael Keaton movie called, the one he duplicated himself? Or have I asked this before and is this comment uncontrollably duplicating itself in my zines?" *Duplicity*. And yes, you've mentioned it before. *Duplicity*. And yes, you've mentioned it before.

"In perhaps one of the boldest experiments in comic book history, Bill Gaines and crew came up with their Picto-Fiction line of comic book-like magazines. *Confessions Illustrated* was one of them." We went to the Bellevue Art Museum a couple of weeks ago to see a show by Roger Shimamura — he was born in the US of Japanese immigrant parents shortly before the second World War. He did a series of paintings from his memories (and his mother's diary) of the internment camps. But, while we were there, we discovered a whole wall of the entryway covered with cover paintings from romance novels — some Seattle art collector has been buying up the original artwork. This cover reminded me of those.

One of the other interesting items on display was a set of fake architectural blue prints for houses we've seen in various television shows. Like the floorplan of the Cleaver's house from *Leave It To Beaver*. The one that caused us the most

amusement was the floorplan of Stately Wayne Manor, including the connecting door between Dick and Bruce's bedrooms.

Duplicity. And yes, you've mentioned it before.

Eve Ackerman ☒ *Guilty Pleasures* ♣

"Raphi was lying on the table next to me, both of us with needles in our arms and I said to him, 'Every generation has a defining moment that brings it together. ... 30 years from now people will ask you where you were and what you did when you heard the news of the attacks. You will be able to say 'I went to the blood bank on September 11 and I helped save lives.'" I found this snapshot of history immensely moving. Thank you for sharing it.

Mailing Comments on SFPA 224

Ned Brooks ☒ *The New Port News* ♣

ct Metca,f: "What did they find in a 2000-year-old Mediterranean shipwreck that could be called a 'computer'?" An abacus? A mechanical calculator?

ct Dengrove: "I have found megabytes of stuff in the Temporary Internet Files folder. It does not seem to make the least bit of difference if I erase them. Sometimes when I access a large site the PC itself notes that it is 'deleting umpty-ump files'." The temporary files are just there to prevent having to load large graphics again and again. It works like this: the program says "Ah, I've been to this page before, and I know that I've seen a picture of that name before. Is it the same size as the one I've got stored locally? Is it the same date? Yes and yes? Good, then I won't ask for it to be retransmitted, I'll just use the copy I saved the last time I loaded it." Then, when you click on a link on that page, and come back, it doesn't really have to reload the whole page over the net. It mostly loads it from local storage. Emptying the temporary internet files directory has no effect — except perhaps speed of loading a page.

ct Lynch: "The popularity of the ugly '57 Chevy merely proves again that no one ever lost money underestimating the taste of the American public." They're popular in Cuba and Japan for entirely different reasons: In Cuba, they're the last American car they were able to get, and so they're still limping along, post-revolution. In Japan, they were hip in the eighties — during a period when young Japanese were making comparatively a lot of money but still couldn't afford real estate, so they bought durable goods instead — because they were a sign of conspicuous consumption.

☞ "I think I get at least two of the Nigerian scam spam every day..." Aha! You're doing it. I've started getting a couple of those a week. ☞ "The thing that bugs me is the accursed telepest..." Our solution to that is to let the machine answer most of our calls. Though I grabbed the phone the other day because I was expecting a call from the daughter. "Hello?" "Yes, is misterermissus Copeland there?" (It's always

“misterermissus”, one word.) “This is Mr Copeland. And you are selling what?” “I’m not selling anything.” “OK, then what is this in regards to?” “Well, I’m calling from the Fartzafell Mortgage Agency. . . .” “Then you are selling something —” “Well, I’m. . . .” — and you lied to me. Fuck you and I hope your dick falls off.” Click.

ct Gelb: “Fred Gwynne is apparently a better actor than I would have guessed from The Munsters. . . .” Fred Gwynne was not the brainless twit he played in his TV roles. He graduated from Harvard, and I seem to recall he was editor of the *Lampoon*.

ct Weisskopf: “The argument on the Star Wars missile defense is severely muddled by the way it jumps back and forth between the political question of whether such a system would be a good thing to have, and the technical question of whether it is possible at all.” The point of the Strategic Defense Initiative is not to get an actual missile defense system, it’s a cover to extract research money for nuclear physicists. (But see Arthur Clarke’s story “Superiority.”)

ct me: You quote my title “Words Fail Me” back at me and say “... And have for some time it seems, as you are commenting here on SFFA 220.” It’s the whole reason I took a three-week tour of Asia, Ned, so I could catch up on my SFFA comments.

☞ “The domestic Media Mail is pretty much the old ‘4th Class Book Rate’...” Well, my original reading of the rules for Media Mail were that it specifically excluded books and that category of printed material which includes zines. But I’ve just double-checked and that’s not the case at all. Just as well, since the printed material rate is amazingly bothersome to use.

☞ “While I have no great admiration for David Brin’s literary talent, the only time I ever met him was at a Hogu Ranquet at a worldcon and he seemed like a nice fellow to me.” Brin gave a talk at Microsoft just before I left for Tokyo, and he was fairly amusing and not the least bit grumpy. And we’d probably disagree about his literary talent: He’s certainly not a prose stylist like Lafferty or Rusch or Kress, but he’s a very workmanlike storyteller.

☞ “Celko was married when he lived in Lithonia, before he moved to Austin. I traded a few e-mails with him. A gun-toting loon perhaps, but he never seemed very ‘southern’ to me; and whatever quantity of beer he swilled, I never saw him drunk.” I don’t think I’ve ever seen him drunk either, truth be told. But I do have a fondness for him. He’s a good raconteur, an entertaining drinking partner, and an always entertaining party guest.

Norm Metcalfe ☒ **Tyndallite** ♣

ct me: “Thanks for recommending Charles Stross’s ‘Antibodies’ and ‘A Colder War’ both as excellent and as better than what was nominated for the Hugos. . . . This is the sort of informed running informal nomination that could make the Hugos something to be proud of.” I think rolling nomi-

nations would lead to the sort of zoo that the Nebulas end up being, complete with mutual stroking and nine-hundred item preliminary ballots. Independent of that, though, I'm certainly always interested in hearing other folks recommendations for good stories to read.

Richard Dengrove ✉ *Twydrasil and Treehouse Gazette* •

ct Southerner: "How well can you calculate when mail will arrive?" You should be able to do it easily. It used to be the postal service's own internal rule that first class mail would be delivered anywhere in the continental US within three business days. They advertise that domestic priority mail will reach its destination in two or three days. Roughly, they lie. It would have been fine if they'd said in November and January "Look, the mail system is in spasms at the moment because of fears about terrorists and anthrax. We're trucking all mail everywhere, and not sending any of it on airplanes. Expect delays." But not saying anything, and then denying there was a problem, and denying they'd ever had any service standards is just silly.

Richard Lynch ✉ *Variations on a Theme* •

ct Weisskopf: "On the WTC design: 'The fact that so many people made it out of the WTC, and that the towers collapsed absolutely straight down and not fall on neighboring buildings was a paean to the architect and builder.' That said, though, they can never build towers of that design again; they are just too vulnerable – the fact that one very bad fire could bring down such a tower makes that design obsolete." I'd suggest otherwise. The only way you'd get — the only way you got — such a fire is through artificial means. There wasn't enough flammable stuff in the buildings to do that damage. It becomes, then, not an engineering problem, but a security one.

(I realize that ignores the question of whether large buildings like that are a good idea on other grounds — I not sure they are — but that's not the issue you raised.)



David Schlosser ☒ Peter, Pan and Merry ♣

ct Lillian: “In thinking a bit more about vampires and symbols, I wonder if the cross might truly be the only valid symbol.” I’m reminded of George Carlin’s line to the effect of “If Jesus had been hung, Catholics would be wandering around with little nooses hung around their necks.”

ct Gelb: “I have the same reaction to the ‘it’s the result of U.S. foreign policy’ response to the attack. (ie that it’s akin to a rape being the woman’s fault for her clothes.)” Yes, blaming this on US foreign policy excuses the perpetrators. However, it is certainly the case the US foreign policy has and continues to suck. We are inconsistent and uncertain. We support dictators and our enemies when it serves our ends — hell, up through September 10th, the Taliban were our good buddies because they executed drug exporters. We compromise our principles for the latest and most attractive bauble — we don’t care that Saudi Arabia is an authoritarian regime as long as they continue to sell us oil, nor that China is selling body parts of political prisoners as long as they provide cheap labor.

ct Weisskopf: “I’m hoping that many of the security measures that have been put in place will be phased out as things settle in and more permanent solutions have time to be put into place.” Nope, I’m afraid it’s here to stay. But it doesn’t matter. The point is to annoy the traveling public, not to actually provide security. US airport security is still a relative joke. You want real airport security? Go to Japan. In fact, United airlines doesn’t trust the security in Bangkok, so they have their own supplementary crew. Staffed by a Japanese firm. Details in my Asian trip report.

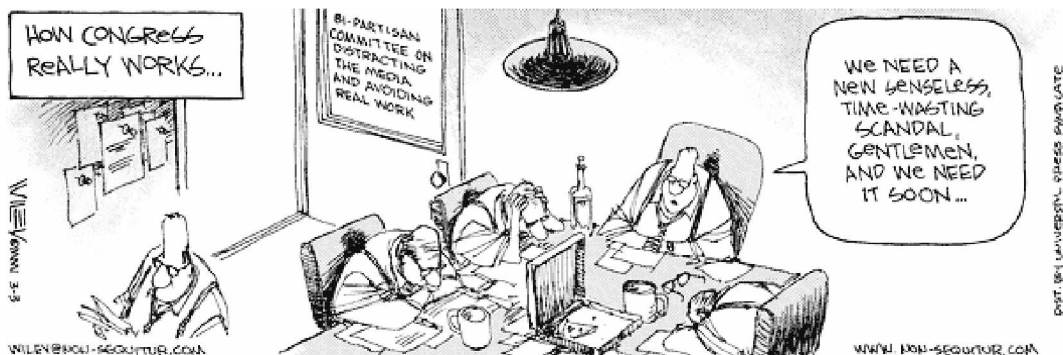
“As for the missile defense system,... Another issue is that anyone who launches a missile at us is saying ‘Here we are! We did it!’ and asking to be pulverized - to put it bluntly.” Yeah, but I think that applies to anyone launching a missile at a neighbor, too. Iraq launches a nuclear weapon at Iran, or India at Pakistan, and the US and Russia would be quite quick to turn Baghdad or Delhi into glass. This sort of behavior cannot be allowed.

ct me: “Kay was rather disappointed at Random’s lackluster reaction to Dracula too.” Which version of Dracula? The Frank Langella? Or the Bela Legosi?

☞ “[I think that quote about ‘Into the valley of death rode the (six) hundred’ was about Crimea, not Afghanistan.” Oh, details. The “never get involved in a land war in Asia” rule still applies. (And just so we all remember — the US isn’t done in Afghanistan, yet. There are still holdouts, and al Queda’s still got pockets of resistance in the big cities.)

Guy Lillian ☒ Spiritus Mundi ♣

ct Southerner/Egoboo Poll: “Also thanks for the innovative egopoll ballot, but you were wrong in one respect: your trivia questions had me thoroughly befuddled. I was forced to provide



ludicrous answers.” Yeah, but they were *funny* ludicrous answers. Let’s see if you’re any better at this year’s version.

ct Brooks: “***Irony pre-9-11 comment: ‘a suicide bomber is the ultimate in sincere dedication.’ Let them be sincere on their own damn turf.***” It anticipates the line from Bill Maher that got him in trouble with the White House. You’ll remember that shortly after the attacks Maher commented on an edition of “Politically Incorrect” “You want cowardly? Cowardly is firing cruise missiles from 1000 miles away.” Which caused him no end of grief from the White House press office.

ct Brown: “*No kidding about the Florida humidity; getting married there in the pit of summer was a test of my endurance. I could sort-of handle it, since I live in a swamp, below sea level.*” You want messy and ugly weather? Try *India* in June.

ct me: “*I want that 23 September issue of The New Yorker. I wonder if it’s buyable on-line.*” You might find one. I know they printed a poster of the cover, with the proceeds to the fire department’s widows and orphans fund. Even at something like \$350 a pop, they sold out in four days.

☞ “*Moving on to MilPhil, I’d say the worst thing about the Hugo ceremony were and are the Japanese Seiun awards. The costumes are pretty but the presentarions are a drag - and seem to take hours. But of course, now that they’re a tradition, and a whole country’s fandom is drawn up in them, how do we get rid of them?*” Since Janice has produced the Hugo ceremony before, she’s probably got stronger and more informed opinions about it than I do. However: I saw an awful lot of breast beating about how the Seiun awards had destroyed the Hugo ceremony and made it unacceptably long. Stuff and nonsense. There’s a draggy bit in every awards show. And the folks who are responsible for the Seiun awards are sufficiently fluent in English and the ways of the west that the committee taking them aside and saying “Hey, please keep your presentation to *n* minutes; if you can’t, maybe we can move you to the Masquerade half-time

show" will not cause an international incident. I'd rather hear about the Japanese national awards than go through one more rendition of a member of First Fandom long-windedly introducing another member of First Fandom, to long-windedly introduce the presenter of the First Fandom award. Jeez, by the time they're done with the presentation, another of their members has expired.

ct Larson: "August 13 vs September 28th — what a difference six weeks — actually a single day — makes." As I put it to my manager on Friday, September 14th, "Hell of a week, wasn't it?" "No," he responded, "just two hours where bad, but they more than screwed the pooch."

☒ "This won't be quite as horrid a trip... as the last one... [we] won't drive a truck longer than the Queen Mary on the way home." I've actually driven that truck. I've actually also slept on the Queen Mary, for that matter, but that's another story.

"While a great buddy and a sweet soul, Cindy is also an enormous pain in the butt." But you've got a heart of gold to take care of her like you do, Guy.

"So what is left for us to discuss?... 24, that excellent show?" The VCR has been watching 24 for us. Actually for me, since Liz isn't really interested. I meant to watch the first half-dozen episodes over the week between Christmas and New Years, but never got to it. (George Wells' reaction was something like "Wow! What a great way to do that: you won't have to wait a week to see what happens next.")

Sheila Strikland ☒ Revenant ♣

It's in the margin of your zine, and so I'm duly recording it as I type up your comments, but it says "Everybody must get cloned." I read this zine over dinner on my second night in Hyderabad. There was a really bad guitar and keyboard duo playing their renditions of American pop standards, and they did a horrific version of an old Dylan favorite. I was thinking that if we got the Dolly the Sheep version of Bob Dylan...

"Toronto Tales..." I've always loved Toronto. It's a great city. Good walking, nice restaurants, remarkably civilized even in winter. Wish I could spend more time there.

ct Ackerman: "Yet another person I missed getting to meet at MilPhil. Sorry we didn't manage to connect." That's too bad. Eve's a lot of fun to hang out with. I see her too rarely and I'm always sorry I don't get to spend more time with her.

ct me: "That's a very effective image of what five thousand looks like." The original clipping of that cartoon has been hanging in my office window since it appeared. About November one of the folks down the hall finally did a double-take and noticed it. He stood silently for a very long time, perhaps forty-five seconds, and then said quietly, "that's a very effective cartoon."

☞ *"Ct Steve Hughes on Clinton haters: I noticed the Clinton bashing back even before he was inaugurated. " Congressman Bob Barr introduced the first impeachment resolution before the inauguration. For Clinton's involvement in the Whitewater land deal. We leave the stupidity of this action, and its constitutionality, as an exercise to the reader.*

ct Ackerman: "Good for you and Ralphie for donating blood. I wish I had be able to; but I'll be rejected for another six years or so." I had a funky lipid profile for a while, and was getting rejected. But now I've been to India, which makes me disallowed for a while.

Steve Hughes ☒ Comments ☛

"The Leonids" We managed to miss the Leonids, for a variety of really stupid reasons. I notice that we're in the middle of the best viewing time for Comet Ikeya-Zhang. I'd meant to catch it while I was closer to the equator, but I wasn't ever anyplace where there wasn't a flock of light pollution at sunset. Now it's swung around the sun, and I'll need to get up in the morning to check it out.

"A Wedding" These are very nice pictures. Thanks for sharing them.

ct Dengrove: "What you do want to do is carefully inspect a rental car before you drive it off the lot." Our default rental company in Boulder was Enterprise, who as part of the signoff for the car walk around it with you. I find it a really nice feature.

☞ *"Your last comment to me about letting political views break up friendships is very germane. I'm afraid we are in for a period when people's political views are going to become very polarized." Why particularly now, as opposed to the last couple of years? I agree with the other part of your comment here, though, that it should be possible to debate issues without taking it personally. As I've said before, I find political discussions where I disagree with someone to be much more educational.*

ct weber: "Nice cartoons, we've stopped getting a paper and I do miss some of the cartoons." Both United Features and Universal Features will send you comics by e-mail. It's how I get Dilbert and Boondocks and Doonesbury, and about a dozen other strips a day.

ct Gelb: "It has truly been said, 'violence is the last resort of the mentally incompetent.' What is seldom pointed out is that violence, properly employed, is often the best answer to some problems." I certainly abhor violence, but as I said to my brother shortly after September 11th, it's important to teach our children that there's a time to turn the other cheek and a time to take off like a God-forsaken berserker and kill everything in your path. And it's important to be able to tell the difference.

ct Weisskopf: "The strain of being 'on' all the time is not appreciated by people who don't have to do it. I used to come back from business meetings totally exhausted and ready to drop. It used

to drive me crazy when someone would comment, but all you did was lean back and talk to people." I'd certainly never make a comment like that. Particularly not while I'm here in Hyderabad. Particularly not on a day like today, a twelve hour day in which I gave two talks to people who thought they already knew what I was trying to show them how to do, followed by trying to explain to the new architect of the product why he had his head up his ass. And had to work really hard not to be offensive so my message go through.

☞ *"The way the WTC collapsed. I can't agree with you that the design of the WTC helped to alleviate the death toll by the way it collapsed. If everyone wasn't busy being patriotic and not doing anything that might shift any of the blame from the terrorists, we would be hearing a lot of criticism of the WTC design. For one thing, it didn't have enough stairs to handle a complete evacuation of the building. Wait a few years and we will see some very critical reviews of the steel tube system used in its construction."* How many more stairs should it have had? And where would they have gone? You end up in a reprise of the elevator problem: If you have enough elevators to go the whole way up and down, the first few floors of the building have nothing but elevators in them. There's a Berkeley prof who's combing the wreckage very carefully to see if he can determine exactly what the structural failure mode was. This will be useful information for future buildings of that height.

ct me: "For the most part I agree, which must be some kind of first, with the opening comments in your zine. The thing I don't agree with is that the airlines should be held liable for the attack." Yes, I've reconsidered that. What happened wasn't a failure of security as much as a failure of imagination.

"If you're thinking of the Israeli airlines idea of security, forget it. Even today the measures they use would be illegal in the US. Our open society does not allow for things like extensively interrogating members of select ethnic or religious groups." In Israel security involves ethnic profiling because Israeli security guys are, well, Israeli, and assume that Palestinians are always bad guys. In context, they're probably not wrong. On the other hand, we don't need to do that. Assume that you fly from Newark to LA twice a month, you live in the ritzy suburb of Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, and your ticket is ordered through the IBM travel office a week in advance. You always show up at the airport carrying a leather briefcase and dressed in a Brooks Brothers suit. What are the chances you're a hijacker? On the other hand, this is the first record the airline has of you flying. You're going from Boston to Miami, and you paid for your ticket in cash at the counter this morning. What are the chances you're going to ask the pilot to take a detour through Havana? Who's baggage should the security guys double check?

"You asked why I dislike Clinton....." Thank you for your long, thoughtful reply. Needless to say, I disagree with the particulars you cite, but your answer gives me

some insight into the passion the man causes from the other side. I really appreciate the effort you put into this comment, Steve. As with Toni, I don't always agree with you, but I find your opinions informed and educational, and I appreciate you sharing them.

Janice Gelb ✉ *Trivial Pursuits* •

On the layoffs at Sun: *"Increasing everyone's nervousness was the fact that management made it clear that performance reviews were not going to be used as a criterion."* Interestingly, in HP's last round of layoffs, it was exactly the performance reviews that were used to determine who got the ax.

"On a more cheerful topic, how about those Diamondbacks? This had to be one of the best World Series ever." I didn't really follow the series, but the last game was being played as we were coming back from Las Vegas in October. The airport bar was packed, and engrossed.

"I know many of you think I'm beating a dead horse here, but I still must express my disgust for the way the government caved in the Microsoft case... They still don't have to disclose their code to external software developers even though their separate in-house software developers have access to it." While it would be interesting to force Microsoft to disclose all their source code to anyone who wanted, what would Sun's reaction be if a court told it to do the same? However, it's certainly the case that Microsoft cuts source licenses all the time: it's how Softway originally built Interix. I'm not sure though what you mean by "in-house software developers." Consultants? Companies who Microsoft has hired to provide device drivers?

"Another pure joke is their settlement of a lawsuit claiming that because of their monopoly, consumers were overcharged. The settlement? MS gives older machines, software, and training to schools." Not quite: Microsoft was going to put up half a billion dollars worth of older hardware and donated software, plus another half a billion in cash to be spent on whatever technology the schools wanted. Remember that the states agreed to this, and thought it was a reasonable compromise.

I'd count in the "pure joke" category the latest Sun Java lawsuit against Microsoft. After Sun won a suit forcing Microsoft to use Java in a particular way, Microsoft decided it was safer to not ship Java at all. (OK, I believe Sun was in the right on this first suit — Microsoft had made extensions to the language disallowed by the letter of the license and the intention of the language definition. And Microsoft choosing to stop shipping Java had some element of take-the-ball-and-go-home.) Now Sun is suing to force Microsoft to ship Java. I'm not sure you can have it both ways.

Also in the pure joke category is the ad campaign Microsoft is about to launch

with Unisys about how enterprise customers should avoid that open systems stuff.

ct Lillian: *"Regarding the Confederate flag, I doubt very much that you would have seen it, but there's a show on Lifetime television called Any Day Now starring Annie Potts and Lorraine Toussaint as lifelong friends, one white and one black, who live in Birmingham."* The little bits of *Any Day Now* I've seen have been uniformly good. I'm constantly amazed by Potts' range as an actress: she's good and varied in everything I've seen her in.

ct Liz: *"The quilt is gorgeous..."* As I said to her somewhere above, I'm jealous she had that project to channel her emotions after the disaster. ☞ *"I was actually too numb to cry the first couple of day after the attack. The first crying I did was when I saw a woman being interviewed on Fox News who was holding up a poster with a picture of her brother, asking if anyone had seen him..."* Allie came home that evening and said she'd realized during English class that there were some kids who kissed their parents and went to school that morning and who were going to come home that night to empty houses. That was when I lost it. I think that observation of Allie's was a part of the inspiration for the quilt.

ct me: *"This makes two cartoons from Ohman of the Oregonian that I really like: this one with the 5,000 dots and one about finally appreciating New York, which you'll find in this issue somewhere."* I've always liked Ohman. He's got a good eye, and is good at puncturing pretensions. In that he bears a certain resemblance to Don Wright.

☞ *"Regarding the Hugo ceremony, I don't think it should be a big media event. However, I do think it should be a little stylish, as I personaUy regard it as the highlight of the worldcon."* I can't disagree with that. In fact, as I've pointed out, the Hugo ceremony is one of the specifically-enumerated legal reasons for holding the convention in the first place.

☞ *"It was not Ann Richards who said the 'born on third base' line about Bush. An article about Jim Hightower in Horizon Magazine even gives the occasion: 'And during memorable speech at the National Democratic Convention, he mocked George Bush's disconnect with everyday, workaday folks: 'He is a man who was born on third base and thinks he hit a triple.'"* Damn, you're right. I knew it was a convention speech. It must have been the same year's convention as Ann's keynote address in which she used the "born with a silver foot in his mouth" line.

☞ *"If my continued uncomfortableness with my Honda outweighs my recent layoff jitters, I may be in the market for a car, as the Civic will be 5 years old in April, my minimum age for selling a car. I've been thinking about Saturns and am glad to read your recommendation here."* As you know, we couldn't be happier with any of our Saturns. As soon as I have the time, I'm going to get rid of the damned fool minivan and replace it with yet another Saturn.

ct Brown: *"Thanks for running the Palm Beach Post covers. The Merc didn't do a full-page spread but did have pretty thorough coverage."* You can take the boy out of New York, but you can't take the New York out of the boy. Wednesday, September 12th found me

at the newstand at 7:45am waiting for it to open so I could get a copy of *The New York Times*. I must say, though, I also appreciate Gary running these front pages — along with his commentary, it's great insight into how a newspaper is produced.

Tom Feller ✉ **Frequent Flyer** ✈️ "In a series of stories 30 years ago, Larry Niven postulated a revival of the death penalty to provide organ donors. The November 11 on-line version of *The New York Times* reported that Americans are traveling to China to receive organs from executed prisoners. Few, if any, of the donors consented. China is executing about 5,000 prisoners annually. Foreign recipients pay about 10 times more for the transplants than Chinese citizens, according to the article." I'm surprised it took *The Times* this long to catch up. China's been transplanting organs from executed prisoners since at least the time of the Tienamen uprising. Selling the organs on the open market may be a relatively new wrinkle, though.

Liz Copeland ✉ **Home with the Armadillo** 🦔

ct weber: "When I was living in New Orleans, my cats would catch cockroaches, bite them lightly to break their wings, and take them into the bathroom and play with them until they died." You will recall Poofer at the house in Mount Washington: he caught a pigeon one day and dragged the carcass into the living room tossing him around trying to get it to play some more.

ct Lillian: "Speaking of police shootings, you say 'When they massacre an innocent man who's just trying to show them his wallet, and ride a wave of public race fear to vindication, that's another story.' I'm curious, are you referring to the shooting here in Bellevue?" Actually, Guy's talking about Amidou Diallo in New York, who was shot while pulling out his wallet. The case in Bellevue — where the cop shot a guy trying to run away from the scene of a domestic disturbance — was a screwup all around.

ct Gelb: "I'm with you on the computer directions stuff. We'll just stick to maps and let them all call us old fashioned." Yeah, I agree about how well those work out for territory we don't already know. But what I don't understand is why the computer-generated directions are such a failure, but the Auto Club's strip maps work so well.

🦔 "I admire you all greatly for taking a vacation with so many people to take care of and track and with so few hitches. You should be proud of yourself!" I, in my capacity as the Copeland family tour director, thank you. There were times when I was planning the whole thing that I thought working at a travel company would be a snap after this." There is the adventure travel agency in Dick Francis' *The Edge*. You could arrange those sort of trips. It would be fun.

ct me: "'... So net, we got two cars and saved five grand over just the Toyota. Of course, I'm not driving the damned minivan...' You mean you're now driving the damned minivan. Freudian typo, anyone?" Yeah, it was certainly a slip.

ct Wells: "So, if you don't like the pregnant one on Angel, you must have been very happy when she staked herself." I've just stopped watching *Angel*. Even with Cordelia in low-cut

tops, the plots have just gotten a little too fantastic.

AaaaYiii ☒ Guy Lillian ♣

ct Hughes: "Your particular uniqueness in the 9-1-1 chorus is that you guys were in Europe at the time of the attack in Copenhagen, you say here. Hopefully you'll tell us all about the trip, but I was wondering, did any Danes or other Europeans notice your American-ness and say anything - express sympathy, or contempt?" I don't know if you've seen the web page of pictures of memorials around the world, but it's pretty clear that a lot of people in other countries were quite sympathetic. It was certainly the case while I was traveling in the last month that the Asian security guys were a bit more apologetic and understanding when they saw my American passport.

ct Dengrove: "Poor Chandra Levy. In whatever dark eddy or umarked patch of ground she rests in, I hope she forgives us for forgetting her." The only thing to distinguish her from any other twenty-something who got murdered last year is that she was boffed by a congressman. I'm not sure that gives her more right to notice than the rest of the victims.

ct Cleary: "Xena has been reborn ... on X-Files." Oh, my. I hadn't known this. I guess it's an excuse to start watching the *X-Files* again, even though Chris Carter ran out of plot ideas about two years ago.

ct Schlosser: "Most Hugo voters don't say 'we know what we like' but 'we know who we know.'" Which, of course explains Asimov's later Hugos for *The Gods Themselves* and "Gold", both nice, but undistinguished, stories.

"I want a Mercedes-Benz. I want to make enough so that I don't have to think about fixing it when it breaks." All things being equal, I'm not sure I'd want a Mercedes. I'm quite happy (as you know) with my Saturn, but if money were no object, I might be tempted by a classic Jag. (No, not a new one: now that Jag is owned by Ford, they all look like Tauruses.)



Gary Robe ☒ *Tennessee Trash* ♣

"The major difference this time was the presence of National Guardsmen in the terminal." Airports in India have armed guards, too. But I've much more faith in the National Guardsmen knowing which end of the gun does what.

Janet Larson ☒ *Passages* ♣

Thanks for the treatise on post-partum depression. Given the Andrea Yates case, it was quite timely. Though, of course, very few victims of post-partum depression end up having psychotic episodes.

Gary Brown ☒ *Oblivion* ♣

ct Hlavaty: "Although I don't recall ever trying it, I suspect the odds of getting laid during a time of great national sorrow might be better than normal — whether it be for men or women. Not that grieving makes one horny, but close, personal communication during a sad time certainly allows for more intimate relations." I guess that would explain horny muslim hijackers in stripper bars before they blow themselves up. No: that would be foreshadowing. Never mind.

ct me: "I also believe military action was the proper response. It's unfortunate, but without it we show that killing Americans is acceptable. It's one of those times you go to the max to make sure the point is made." It wasn't just Americans who were killed: the *Times of London* published a world map with little pointers to each of the thirty-some counties from which victims at the World Trade Center came. But, I actually understand the wisdom of Card's observations early on in *Ender's Game*:

Then Ender looked at the others coldly. "You might be having some idea of ganging up on me. You could probably beat me up pretty bad. But just remember what I do to people who try to hurt me. From then on you'd be wondering when I'd get you, and how bad it would be." He kicked Stilson in the face. Blood from his nose splattered the ground nearby. "It wouldn't be this bad," Ender said. "It would be worse."

.....

..... "Tell me why you kept kicking him. You had already won."

"Knocking him down won the first fight. I wanted to win all the next ones, too. So they'd leave me alone."

————— • —————

That's that, folks. All we have time or space for. I'm actually caught up in marginal notes in the mailings, and I've got most of the leftovers scanned in. I'll start working on that zine next week, after I've moved my office.

Art Credits

The cover features *Arlo & Janis* from 24 Feb, ironically the weekend Chuck Jones died. Page 7: *Tom Toles* from 10 Mar. Page 9: 9 *Chickweed Lane* from 8 Oct 2001. Page 10: 9 *Chickweed Lane* from 9 Oct 2001. Page 12: 9 *Chickweed Lane* from 10 Oct 2001. Page 14: 9 *Chickweed Lane* from 29 Jan — I have yet to meet a counter-example. Page 19: Doug Marlette's obituary comic for Chuck Jones. Page 22: *Shoe* from 14 July 2001 — bad pun, comments to Schlosser: who could resist. Page 24: *Non sequitur* from 3 Mar 2001 — Page 31: *Zits* from 11 Aug 2000 — The back cover features Tom Tomorrow's cartoon from *The New Yorker*, 26 Nov 2001.

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THE BACK PAGE BY TOM TOMORROW

AMERICA ON ALERT

WE HAVE ONCE AGAIN RECEIVED CREDIBLE REPORTS THAT MORE BAD THINGS MAY OCCUR SOMEWHERE, AT SOME INDEFINITE POINT IN THE COMING WEEKS, MONTHS, OR POSSIBLY YEARS.



ACCORDING TO OUR INTERCEPTS, THE COLOR BLUE MAY SOMEHOW BE INVOLVED. CITIZENS ARE ADVISED TO BE ON HIGHEST ALERT WHENEVER THEY ARE IN THE PROXIMITY OF THE COLOR BLUE.



OF COURSE, CITIZENS SHOULD ALSO BE AWARE THAT THIS MAY BE A CODED REFERENCE TO SOME ENTIRELY DIFFERENT COLOR, SUCH AS RED, YELLOW, OR GREEN-- AND SHOULD ACT ACCORDINGLY.

OUR INTELLIGENCE SUGGESTS THAT THE PERPETRATORS ARE LIKELY TO BE CARBON-BASED SUPERALUMINUM LIFE FORMS REQUIRING AN OXYGEN-BAISED ATMOSPHERE TO SURVIVE. CITIZENS ARE ADVISED TO EXERCISE EXTREME CAUTION WHEN IN THE PRESENCE OF ANYONE FITTING THIS DESCRIPTION.



WE HAVE FURTHER INFORMATION INDICATING THE POSSIBILITY OF A PLAGUE THAT WILL Wipe OUT MOST OF HUMANITY IN A MATTER OF DAYS... LEAVING THE FEW UNFORTUNATE REMAINERS INTO HIDEOUSLY SCARRED ALBINO ZOMBIE MUTANTS WHO COME OUT AT NIGHT TO TORMENT THE LAST MAN ALIVE, PLAYED BY CHARLTON HESTON.



UH, SIR--PSSST--PSSST--

ER--SORRY--THAT'S ACTUALLY THE PLOT OF THE 1971 SCIENCE-FICTION FILM "THE OMEGA MAN." WE CAN NEITHER CONFIRM NOR DENT THE LIKELIHOOD OF SUCH A PLAGUE, OR THAT CHARLTON HESTON WOULD, IN FACT, BE THE LAST MAN LEFT ALIVE.



JUST TO BE SAFE, CITIZENS ARE ADVISED TO AVOID HIDEOUSLY SCARRED ALBINO ZOMBIE MUTANTS WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

FINALLY I WOULD LIKE TO EMPHASIZE THAT WHILE FURTHER ATTACKS COULD OCCUR AT ANY MOMENT, WITHOUT ANY WARNING WHATSOEVER, ANY MAY BE CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL, NUCLEAR, OR SOMETHING SO TERRIBLE IT HASN'T EVEN OCCURRED TO US YET--



--THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO REMAIN CALM.

THANK YOU AND GOOD NIGHT.