

**The Notorious Jumping Zine of Calaveras County** is the fifty-second SFPA-zine (volume two, number twenty-nine) from Jeffrey Copeland. It is intended for mailing number 222 of the Southern Fandom Press Alliance and selected others. It is published by Bywater Press, 3243 165<sup>th</sup> Ave, SE, Bellevue, Washington 98008. The text of *The Notorious Jumping Zine of Calaveras County* was composed using the T<sub>E</sub>X typesetting system, and is set in 11-point Palatino. The original of this publication was printed on 28 July 2001, and it was reproduced by the Xerographic process.



# F

or my birthday and father's day, my wife and children gave me an absolutely wonderful present: an electronic highlighter. It's a little digital camera in a very fat pen body, which does optical character recognition. It stores the result as text, which I can send to my Palm, or directly to the computer. Using this little plaything and my Palm, I did a whole lot of the writing on this zine while we were on vacation in Alaska.

Since the company that makes it is Swedish, it can read nearly any European language using the Latin alphabet. You can even add text into its memory by using it as a pen, "writing" on a patterned surface, except that the handwriting strokes it recognizes are entirely different from those you use on the Palm. It's also got software in it so it can double as an address book and duplicate some other functions in the Palm, but that strikes me as overkill.

The one downside is that the OCR is a little flaky in some typefaces, so that (for example) "republican" keeps getting read as "repubUcan" from Guy's zine. It basically has the "John Wamock problem", named after the Adobe Systems principal whose name got transformed from "Warnock" in the company's early fonts. It also won't read off blue paper — though it will from yellow. Other than the necessity to do some fixup after scanning, it's been a wonderful thing.

# O

h boy, have we been traveling. Between our trip to New York for my mother's 75th birthday, and our vacation in Alaska, we popped down to Portland for Westercon, and there saw many SFPAnS and old LA hands.

Highlights:

- The obligatory SFPA one-shot was composd on my Palm with Liz's keyboard over drinks in the hotel bar.
- The APA panel, which turned into a LASFAPA reunion.
- The print-on-demand publishing panel, at which Toni, from the panel, kept firing questions at me, in the audience, to make sure I was awake.
- Seeing Kyla and Ruth, and Sandy Cohen, and Kim Marks Brown (who wanted to take JJ home), and Bruce Pelz.
- Actually getting to meet, face-to-face, folks I've been sending Hugo software to all these years, including the current and next victims.

- Hearing from David Bratman that in the episode of *Deep Space 9* in which Cisco is transported back in time to be a writer at a '50s pulp science fiction magazine, many of the magazine mockups on the tables in the office featured stories by Seth Goldberg, courtesy of Seth's old college classmate, Mike Okuda, who grew up to be *Star Trek*'s production designer.
- A tee-shirt reading "If you're a real Goth, where were you when we sacked Rome?"



After returning to Bellevue from Portland for a mere 22-hour turnaround — seven of which I spent in the office fixing a bug — we were off to Alaska, where we joined up with Liz's mom and stepfather, Bill. Bill has wanted to go to Alaska for years, and as he approaches 80 his traveling days are dwindling. This completed visits to all fifty states for him — three of which weren't states when he was born — so we were happy to have helped in his quest.

On the other hand, I think that twelve days was about five more than either they or we really needed to spend together, so sensibilities were just a little frayed by the end of the expedition.

Nonetheless, it was a nice trip. Alaska is a beautiful and interesting part of the country.

Again, a brief reprise of the high points:


- We saw many interesting animals. Seals and sea lions, humpback whales, puffins and cormorants, bald eagles. We saw all sorts of interesting flora, but like plants in general, it all went in one ear and out the other for me.
- The mountain formerly known as McKinley kept hiding behind clouds and we failed to see it the whole time we were there.


- There is a game in Alaska of odd road names — as near as I can tell, bestowed by the folks who built there first — so we saw things like “Our Road” and “Louiseandjane Road”.
- A bumper sticker that we lorded over our vegetarian daughter: “Vegetables aren’t food: vegetables are what food eats.”
- The discovery that the Anchorage Zoo is the fault of the Crown-Zellerbach paper company. They apparently had a contest in the fifties for their customers, offering as a prize “\$3000 or an elephant.” The winner was an office supply dealer in Anchorage and he took the elephant. This caused C-Z some grief, since they were really expecting to pay the cash, and didn’t have an elephant in stock. The office supply dealer wanted to start a zoo, and the elephant was his first acquisition. Now they have polar bears, and recovering animals wounded in the wild, and two yaks named “Elvis” and “Priscilla.”
- Seward is a fascinating small town out on the Kenai peninsula. It’s the farthest north that it’s practical to navigate in the winter — Valdez, where they load the oil tankers, is further south — so it’s been of strategic importance dating back to the Russians.
- Whittier — on the other side of a mountain and Portage Glacier from Anchorage — was originally built as a secret naval base in WWII.
- It’s not possible to get close enough to a calving glacier in a boat to actually hear and see the calving. In principle, you can get right up against the glacier in a boat, since you’re in a fjord, and the water’s 600 feet deep up to the cliffs. However, a house-sized chunk of ice falling into the water is not safe to be near, so you need to back off a couple of hundred yards. At that point, you’re a sound second away from the glacier and by the time you hear it calving — it’s a very hard sound to miss — it’s too late to see it happen, though you can sometimes see the splash. The only thing for it is to stand squinting at the vast, glaring relective surface of the ice and watch for cracks to develop until you actually see a chunk of ice break loose. And that’s an impressive sight indeed.
- Every earthquake I’ve experienced or whose aftermath I’ve seen in California — including the sequential ground shifts of up to one meter from quakes at several points along the San Andreas Fault — is a mere bagatelle compared to the 1964 Alaska quake. Earthquake Park in Anchorage is the place of maximum vertical displacement of 35 feet. The signs say, roughly, “There didn’t used to be a cliff here.”


I found a big poster that was fresh off the presses with the quotes of junket blurbsters. “It will obliterate your senses!” reports David Gillin, who obviously writes autobiographically. “It will suck the air right out of your lungs!” vows Diane Kaminsky. If it does, consider it a mercy killing.


— Roger Ebert, reviewing *Armageddon*

## Reviews

 *The Tailor of Panama* is John Le Carré’s retelling of Graham Greene’s *Our Man in Havana* turned into a movie. With Pierce Brosnan as the disreputable British agent, Geoffrey Rush as the Tailor, and Jamie Lee Curtis as his wife,\* it’s very nicely done and only takes mild liberties with the plot of the novel. The primary liberty is that the movie doesn’t end quite as badly for everyone as the book did.

 *Shrek* is just very nice, give or take the bathroom humor†. It’s got a nice story, a soundtrack that you can dance to, absolutely wonderful animation — there were separate animation teams for building and clothing surfaces — and manages to make fun of nearly every Disney animation convention in the process. Once again, we get to play the game of “wait a second: what movie was *that* shot stolen from?”


 If you want something visual that’s not to abysmal, let me suggest *But I’m a Cheerleader*. A young lady’s parents are worried about the possibility that she might have homosexual tendencies, so they send her to a deprogramming camp. Once there she begins to think that perhaps being a lesbian isn’t such a bad thing after all. (Ru Paul plays a pivotal role in the film, but finding her, er, him is a trick.)

 *American Beauty* was sufficiently disquieting that I had to watch it in 45 minute chunks. It has elements of *Sex, Lies, and Videotape*, and *Falling Down* in it, but it has a unique slant on finding your personal space. And while this movie has an array of dysfunctional characters rivaling last year’s other flower movie, *Magnolia*, at least some of them were likable, even without a golden retriever. Lester Birnham – more than ably played by Kevin Spacey – actually arrives at the end of the movie happy, a happiness he’s constructed himself, wrested from the disaster of the life he’s been expected to lead. Very good stuff, even if a little unsettling.


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\* And, Guy: she looks as good with her shirt off at 43 as she did at 25 in *Trading Places*.


† Bathroom humor seems to flock to any movie in which Eddie Murphy has a part like flies to... oh, never mind.

 Speaking of disquieting, Liz tossed Suzanne Chazin's first novel, *The Fourth Angel* at me. It's a mystery about a serial arsonist in New York, being investigated by a woman fire marshal. Every once in a while I read a story that's genuinely scary frightening — Gregory McDonald's *Who Took Toby Rinaldi?*, Scott Card's *Lost Boys*, Dan Simmons' "Entropy's Bed at Midnight"... stories that cause me to quote Lisa Roberts: "I'd close my eyes to go to sleep, but it's dark in there!" — but this is the first time that it's been frightening because I've been there, rather than having a writer punch the right buttons in my imagination. (As I've described before, one evening about 17 years ago, a Glendale, California fire marshal named John Orr decided to amuse himself by setting fire to the hardware store in which Liz and I were trying to buy some screws. While I often don't believe in the state committing capital punishment, I'd happily beat this son-of-a-bitch to death on my own nickel for attempting to murder my wife and unborn daughter.)

(As an aside, and because I'm going to talk about Hugo nominees in a minute, I finally got around to reading Terry Bisson's "macs" from last year's short list. It's a very good story, which raises some excellent points about the purpose of capital punishment, but then takes a left turn and peters out.)

 Let's be up-front about it: *Laura Croft Tomb Raider* is not high-concept entertainment. It's a special-effects shoot-'em-up based on a video game. It's got Angelina Jolie, as a heroine with (to quote Roger Ebert) a pair of great ears — after all she hears a ticking clock in the hidden passage. She flies from the rafters, kicks bad guys, and, oh, by the way, fights the Illuminati. It's a lot of fun.

 After Charlotte Proctor mentioned it, I made a point of finding and watching Matthew Broderick's *Infinity*, which is a retelling of the friendship, love, and marriage between Arline Greenbaum and Richard Feynman. Dick Feynman was a great, curious, witty, questioning, intelligent man, and for a brief period, Arline made him into a human being. She was bright enough to ask the right questions, secure enough in her own soul to stand up to him, and they would have grown old and happy together had she not tragically died while Dick was working at Los Alamos. In the years after Arline's death, Feynman was apparently difficult to be around. By the time I'd met Dick in the late seventies, he'd married Gweneth, had his children Carl and Michelle, and had settled down again to be the man Arline had loved. The world is a poorer place for his absence.

 *Happy, Texas* is the story of two escaped convicts who arrive in a small town pretending to be the gay beauty pageant coordinators the town is expecting. Confusion ensues. Amusement ensues. They both have trouble attempting to not

show that they're practicing heterosexuals. William Macy gets a turn to play a very interesting small-town sheriff. Overall very nicely done.



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. Catherine Asaro's "A Roll of the Dice" is a romance story that's an advertisement for one of her novels. Lucius Shepard's "Radiant Green Star" is a confused mass of characters without motivation. Williamson's "The Ultimate Earth," Chiang's "Seventy-two Letters," and Egan's "Oracle" were not worth the waste of time to finish reading. The only one approaching a good story is Kristine Rusch's "The Retrieval Artist."

Fortunately, the novellette and short story nominees were much better. I can recommend Rusch's "Millennium Babies," which explores questions of success and perception; Stanley Schmidt's "Generation Gap," even though it covers some of the same ground as last year's Turtledove stories "Forty Counting Down" and "Twenty-one Counting Up"; even Langford's "Different Kinds of Darkness" presents an interesting idea.



While we're talking about short science fiction, it's worth taking the moment to recommend [fictionwise.com](http://fictionwise.com), where you can purchase electronic copies of lots of text. Several of the Hugo nominees were available there. I've been using them to load up my Palm with a selection of short things to read. They've got an interesting micropayment scheme, in which you send them increments of \$5 and then draw on it as you purchase stories. The only downside is that the pricing structure: novels are typically \$6 or \$7, and shorter fiction is in the range of 50¢ to \$1.50 a story. For novels, that's about what you'd pay for the dead-tree form of the book; for the short fiction, you end up telling yourself "oh, it's only 75¢, I'll just go ahead and get a copy", and soon enough, you've spent ten bucks.



*Sugar & Spice* is a movie about cheerleaders robbing a bank. It's painful to sit through the whole thing for the one or two good bits.



*Cats & Dogs* is quite worth it. This movie provides a theory for the on-going animosity between our various four-legged domestic companions. Certainly the scene with the airborne ninja cats — complete with visual quotes from both *The Matrix* and *Kung Fu* — is worth the price of admission all by itself. Best line is delivered by Butch, the crusty old dog: "son of my mom!"





## Mailing Comments on SFPA 218

**Toni Weisskopf** ✉ *Yngvi is a Louse* 🍷

Hank's stories about his time as a bartender are fascinating. I see he actually did switch to decaf.

## Mailing Comments on SFPA 219

**Ned Brooks** ✉ *New Port News* 🍷

*ct Lillian:* "From the little I know about it, an antique vase can be restored for display – but not for value. I would explain the situation to the insurance people and see what they say – you have nothing to lose." The vase from Liz's grandfather that started this conversation is sitting in her studio, in pieces. She actually wants to have it mended so that we can see it and be reminded to be careful.

🍷 "I don't see much parallel in the effects of technology on 'free speech' and 'bearing arms'." Look again: technology has allowed the casual user to have power tools in fields of both communications and weapons. The internet allows the mis-informed to reach more people than lived on this continent two centuries ago. I can buy a gun on the open market that would have made me invincible against the muskets at the same time. Does this turn the basic assumptions Madison and Jefferson brought to the Bill of Rights on their heads? Maybe not, but it certainly pushes them some.

*ct Lynch:* "I'm not sure what you mean by 'lots of spam' – I have been on the fandata list for years and only get spam about once a day on average." When we got back from twelve days in Alaska, I had 100 messages in my mailbox at [alumni.caltech.edu](mailto:alumni.caltech.edu). Half of them were spam. Two-thirds of the remainder were from a mailing list.

*ct Hlavaty:* "'Mean and dumb' is about right for Da Shrub – unfortunately his handlers are only mean." I think "arrogant" is also true. Both certainly came into play when Senator Jim Jeffords walked from the Republican party, mostly as a result of being pissed

off at his heavy-handed treatment from the White House. (I was certainly amused by the duplicity involved: Trent Lott was running around screaming about how it was dishonest for Jeffords to be elected as a Republican and then leave the party. I heard no such complaints when Ben Nighthorse Campbell ran for the Senate from Colorado as a Democrat, and very soon after being elected changed parties to Republican, even though he made a campaign promise to not change parties.)

*ct Strickland:* *"There was a spam today trying to sell me a DVD player. They claimed that theirs – unlike some others would play all DVDs from anywhere in the world."* I don't know how much of this you know, but DVDs are encoded with the region in which they're sold — North America, Europe, Asia — and DVD players are only supposed to play the DVDs for a particular region. It's actually possible to manufacture a DVD player that doesn't check the region encoding on the DVD itself. It's also possible to build software for the DVD drive on your computer to decode any DVD, regardless of region. Both are illegal in the United States. (Digital Millennium Copyright Act. Grumble, grumble. Asshole lawyers. Grumble. Disney Bastards. Feh!)

*ct Metcalf:* *"I think 'cyberstalking' would have to consist of something more than making a mildly adverse comment about someone on your own website, as you say Forry Ackerman did to Harlan Ellison. I'm not sure what it would be — nuisance e-mails or hacking perhaps."* Considering Ellison's low annoyance threshold, I think the "turnabout's fair play" rules apply here.

*ct Markstein:* *"[on election] I don't much care – I don't like either one of them, nor do I think the choice is nearly as important to the world as their adherents seem to."* It's six months later. We've got an appointed president, faith-based shredding of the Constitution, and a judicial appointments office in the White House staffed by ex-Scalia clerks (and taking no advice from the American Bar Association). Do you still think it isn't important?

*ct me:* *"Ditto will fade in ultraviolet light, like any aniline dye – but several collectors on the net lists have claimed that old ditto fanzines that have been kept away from the light are still bright."* I think the point I was trying to make is that even though they've been in file boxes for years, the dittoed zines are noticeably fainter than when they were published. The question you raise in the next sentence, about how you tell for sure that the colors have faded, is an interesting one. I've forgotten how the Swedes did it, but they realized in the fifties or sixties that the standard for the blue color in their national flag had degraded over the years, so that the flag was fainter in the 1960s than it had been in the 1760s. They re-standardized the colors at that point.

*ct Weisskopf:* *"Charlotte's Finn friend was partly right – as I understand it, the Texas electors could not have voted for both a president and vice-president from Texas. The Bush gang realized this in time and got Cheney's 'official residence' moved to Oklahoma."* Actually, it was Wyoming,

From a professional standpoint, all satirists hope the voters will favour us with Bush.

When you look at the flaws of the two candidates, one suffers from proclivities that are arguably correctable; the other from a condition he can do nothing about. Gore's a moving target, Bush is a stable, hard target, like Quayle.

In my lifetime, we've never had a major presidential candidate who's out-sourced virtually all his thinking. Bush's life story gives fresh meaning to the phrase "assisted living." [The] Brits are steeped in centuries of entitlement, but for most Americans, a restoration is a novel experience. The country may be in for a bit of a shock.

— Gary Trudeau, interview with BBC News Online, 27 Oct 2000

from which he served in Congress. It's a shame that the lawsuit on the issue of his residence was thrown out without a hearing. I would have liked to see the logic from both sides in a trial.

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

ct Lillian: *"On the election: 'Al Gore won the 2000 Presidential election, and I haven't the slightest doubt in the world about it.' I think he probably won, too, but by the time it all hit the courts, even if he'd managed to come out on top, it was too late for him to be seen as a legitimate winner."* The only problem with his being perceived as the legitimate winner is the amount of mud that had been thrown in the forty days after the election. However, the recounts by the consortium of newspapers showed two things. If the recount had continued only on the undervotes, as Gore was pushing for, Bush would have won because the republicans had more people on the ground being more aggressive about questioning any Gore vote. However, if you also count the overvotes, ballots marked with multiple marks,‡ more votes actually were cast for Gore. Note that the lead papers in the consortium, *The Miami Herald* and *USA Today*, only really pushed the first of those two pieces of data.

☞ *"But Bush hasn't emerged any better off – about one-third of the nation right now doesn't believe Bush's presidency will have legitimacy, according to a Newsweek poll."* Similarly, reports from people on the ground — if not from the news media — were that half the people on the streets in Washington on January 20th were protesting.

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‡ This includes ballots marked with Gore or Bush, and then having the same name written in the write-in slot. If that doesn't meet the definition of clear intent of the voter, I don't know what does. Ballots like those, overwhelmingly for Gore, were uniformly rejected in at least one county.

☞ “On the other hand, I’m going to be optimistic about the next four years. Bush will be under pressure to keep the economy on track, and there’s a ‘centrist coalition’ forming that should head off any of the nutso stuff from the right wing of the Republican party.” It’s only sporadically working. It’s very hard for reporters to hide the contempt that the White House has for Democratic members of Congress: the Bush operatives are willing to negotiate with the moderates only to the extent of not compromising with democrats. On the patients’ bill of rights, for example, Bush is pulling in all sorts of markers and trading favors with liberal Republicans rather than chance the Democrats version of the bill passing. This from a man who bragged about the patients’ bill of rights passed in Texas during his administration, even though it had to be passed over his veto. Further, it’s pretty clear that in any dispute in the White House over policy, it’s the more conservative views of Cheney that actually get implemented.

The real danger is that if the Democrats take a majority in both houses of congress in 2002 — which is statistically almost certain — it will push Bush’s policy pronouncements to a more centrist position, which will make it easier for him to get re-elected.

On the other hand, I tripped over an editorial the other day:

Murder, robbery, rape, adultery and incest will be openly taught and practised, the air will be rent with cries of distress, the soil soaked with blood, and the nation black with crimes. Where is the heart that can contemplate such a scene without shivering with horror?

It’s from *The New England Courant*, and they ran it on the election of Thomas Jefferson in 1800. *Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose*.

ct Hlavaty: “File 770 has pretty good coverage of what’s going on in fandom, and most fans look forward to getting it in the mail. If Mike published more frequently than bimonthly he’d have that focal point fanzine, and probably, as a result, win the Fanzine Hugo from now until forever.” My memory is that the whole point of a semiprozine category was to allow Mike in particular to take home a couple of rockets by giving *Locus* some other category, which it did. I’d just as soon do away with semiprozine altogether, but we’ve discussed that before.

ct me: “Concerning the bit about ‘who is the highest SFFAn’ (in altitude, at least), I’d determined that Gary Robe (at 1200 feet) was the ‘winner’, on the presumption that Norm had minaced out. But now that he’s been reinstated, he wins easily (he’s over a mile high, I think).” If I’m remembering correctly, the center of the intersection of Baseline Road and 30th Street in Boulder is exactly 40° north, exactly 105° 15’ west, and exactly 5400 feet above sea level.

ct Cleary: “...the first time I’ve ever had my blood cholesterol checked. It came out at just under 100, which I was told was midrange...” Midrange on what scale? Desirable is about 200, and average among Americans is about 220.

ct me: "One hopes that if Bush brings him [Baker] into his administration, it's in some post where he has no chance to anything harmful or obstructive." Ambassador to South Africa? Like Starr as a Supreme Court Justice, Baker in any position of responsibility is not going to pass the Senate.

ct Strickland: "On travel diaries: 'I try keeping a diary of my own trips, but usually fall down by the third day or so.' I probably would too if there was more to do at night; when you're on the road by yourself it can get lonely, so writing postcards is something to do to fill in some of the evening hours." When I'm traveling by myself, I always have my laptop, and find myself writing code or zine in the evenings. I always load it up with stuff to read, too.

### **Guy Lillian ☒ Rear-Ender ♣**

"The only problem is money. My salary bites. I have the right to work outside cases, but hustling them up is a challenge indeed." For us unassuming types, the whole salesmanship thing that's required to hustle up business is painful.

"While we're mentioning bests, these: the best movie I saw in 2000 was *Almost Famous*." It was very nice. I think it may have been the movie which I enjoyed the most, too, even though I didn't see it until 2001.



### **Arthur Hlavaty ☒ Confessions of a Consistent Liar ♣**

ct Lillian: "You and Ted White both appreciate Jackson Pollock. Ted succeeded in explaining to me why I like Mondrian (pure design/layout), but has not been able to make a convincing case for Jack the Dripper." That would also explain why I like Mondrian and dislike Picasso. I certainly see the point of Pollock, but think all of his paintings look alike.

"I like Erin Brockovich appearing in her own movie. In the proud tradition of Jim Garrison and Larry Flynt." Garrison also appears in *The Big Easy*, a nice Dennis Quaid, Ellen Barkin movie.

ct Gelb: "I think Gore's para-Oedipal refusal to let Clinton campaign for him may have done even more harm than Nader." We've done this before, but Clinton could certainly

have carried Arkansas and probably Tennessee, making Florida unimportant. On the other hand, I don't buy the argument that Nader's supporters wouldn't have voted at all, so if Nader hadn't insisted on a vanity campaign, Gore would have won Florida anyway.

ct me: "I think the one area in which I was hopelessly naïve about the election is not the Republicans bringing in thugs to prevent vote counting or five Supreme Court justices deciding a case on the great legal principle of *Our Guy Won*, but the idea that 'the margin of victory was less than the sampling error.' Silly me, I didn't think of voting as a sampling process." But Arthur, any accounting process is a statistical problem, and has a sampling error. Corporate accounting departments have large overage and underage buckets for just this purpose.

☞ "I think the moment I became enthusiastic about Gore was when he lost the first debate by being more qualified than Dubya and admitting that he knew it." Which was roughly my reaction, too, but I've already quoted Henrik Hertzberg's assertion from *The New Yorker* that what we were actually seeing was the student council election.

ct Brooks: "So HTML is bringing us back to indenting paragraphs by typing spaces. Somehow I am not surprised." And I'm not convinced that HTML's successor XML will make the situation any easier.

ct Brown: "Insofar as 'adult sitcom' is not an oxymoron, *The Flintstones* was one." That's true, but it's also the case that *The Flintstones*  $\equiv$  cartoon(*The Honeymooners*). I'm a little surprised that you'd consider *The Flintstones* to be an adult program given your dislike of *The Honeymooners*.

(1) Use mathematics as a shorthand language, rather than as an engine of inquiry. (2) Keep to them until you have done. (3) Translate into English. (4) Then illustrate by examples that are important in real life. (5) Burn the mathematics.

— P J O'Rourke in *Eat the Rich*, quoting Todd G Buchholz in *New Ideas from Dead Economists*, quoting Alfred Marshall, a late nineteenth century mathematical economist.

### **Tom Feller ☒ Frequent Flyer ♣**

ct me: "When I took economics in college many years ago, we learned that the Federal Reserve has three tools to manage the economy: (1) setting the percentage of deposits a bank must keep in cash, (2) the interest rate it charges banks for loans, and (3) the buying and selling of government bonds." Oh, alright, so Alan Greenspan has *three* big dials which he uses to control the world.

"I believe you're confusing Denise Austin and Denise Richardson. Austin is an exercise guru.

Richardson is an actress..." Oh, well, one vacuous Denise is pretty muchly equivalent to another.

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

ct Metcalf: "I've got to remind myself to look for a copy of Anno Dracula. I don't know for sure how good it is, but at least it sounds like an enjoyable tale." There was a first edition copy of Anno Dracula at Westercon, which you could have seen if you'd come to Portland.

ct Lillian: "Not my specialty but I have to wonder if DeNiro is one of the two actors you refer to with the question about triple Oscar winners." Nicholson is one of the triple winners. Hepburn would be the other, except she's actually won four.

ct Gelb: "From what Marty showed me, the new version cuts the stencil and does the printing with no further operator intervention. Essentially it combines the function of the e-stenciler and the mimeograph. Plus a few extra bells and whistles." Why bother? What's the advantage over a photocopier? The smeary ink on twilltone?

☞ "Hey, at least you had grandparents for a while. The only one of mine that was alive when I was born just barely made it that far. Random has some amount of semi-regular contact with his." While it's nice that Allie & JJ have regular contact with their grandparents, I think over the last month my kids have managed to have their fill of both sets of them.

ct Feller: "Even if your driving instructor said you could drive on private land without a license, how much real good is that?" Well, if you're Ted Turner, that would be an awful lot of real estate.

ct Strickland: "I think that the need to upgrade the mechanics of voting is one of the things that has been clearly shown by the recent election." Or worse, that in a fit of "economy" the powers that be will take shortcuts and make the problem worse.

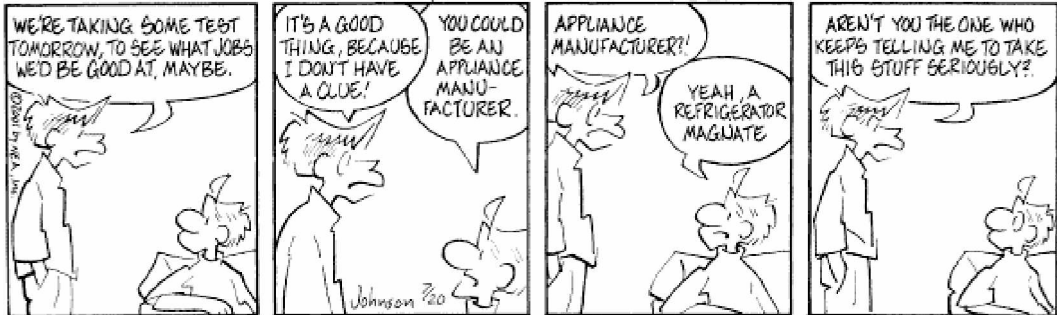
ct Markstein: "I don't think Gore had anything to do with the issue of non-postmarked overseas absentee ballots. That would have been the election officials in the relevant counties." Actually, there was a story about this on NPR during the election mess. In the counties where there were military ballots, fewer were rejected this year than in 1996. In one county the numbers were 2 versus 220. So to a first approximation, ballots were counted even without postmarks.

ct Robe: "It'll be difficult to do something like set National Election Standards. For one thing, that has traditionally been a state-regulated issue (until this year.)" The States Rights Supreme Court imposing election rules on the states is actually one of the unintended amusements of this mess.

☞ "I also think that a more significant reform would be pushing for more states to split electoral votes." That would make sense, but as we've discussed, the states want to keep to winner-take-all on electoral votes, in the belief that it gives them more weight.

☞ "Our school system has devised an interesting way around the problem of enrichment classes

.... All kids recommended by their teachers ... are tested for entrance to the program. One day each week they would get an after school enrichment class." That's really the sort of thing that should be integrated into the regular curriculum, it seems to me. But see my longer comment to Guy, in a couple of pages, for more on this.



**Richard Dengrove** ✉ *Twygdrasil and Treehouse Gazette* ✱

ct Metcaf: "Weren't there computers in the '30s when Schachner was writing about them? Mainframes." Nope. The first thing that could be construed as a programmable computer was Colossus at Bletchley Park during the war. Eckert & Mauchly didn't build their machine until after the war. What we currently think of as a "mainframe" didn't begin to appear until the mid-50s, and really took hold with the advent of the IBM 360 in the mid-60s.

"The Weekly World News is all science fiction." Yes, it is. And as I've mentioned, the WWN is the Official Newspaper of the Windows Division at Microsoft. Which is why a couple of weeks ago at the regular department beer blast, the usual incantation and antiphon response was interrupted:

Brian Valentine (Division VP): What do we do every week?

Crowd: You read us the *Weekly World News*!

Brian: Why do I read you the *Weekly World News*?

Crowd: Because we don't have a life!

Brian: That's right! You don't have a life, and so I read you the news so you'll know what's going on in the world. (Brian holds up pages ripped from the WWN.) The first story is about ...

Southern accent from back of the room: That's not this week's issue of *Weekly World News*!

Brian (ignoring the voice): The first story is about a woman in New Jersey...

Southern voice, louder: That's not the right *Weekly World News*!

Crowd: roobah, roobah?

Brian: Who the hell are you?! Where are you from!? Come up here!



Voice, approaching front of room: I'm Derek Clontz and I'm from Boca Raton, Florida. I'm the editor-in-chief of the *Weekly World News*.

Crowd: roobah! roobah! roobah!

Voice (reaching Brian's side): *This is the Weekly World News you should be reading.* (Holds up a copy of *Weekly World News* with front page headline "Brian Valentine is reincarnation of world's first Elvis impersonator!" with a second headline "Scott McNealy's Secret Shame: 'I've never played hockey in my life!'" ) (Crowd goes wild.)

OK, maybe you had to be there. But some folks from the customer love group had been out visiting WWN, where Brian's fondness for the paper is well-known. The folks at WWN are sufficiently happy with their new Microsoft web server that on a whim they printed up a couple thousand copies of that week's issue, with Microsoft-specific front page and center spread, and had their editor-in-chief deliver them. It was a complete hoot.

ct Brooks: *"I have never had anyone actually refuse to photocopy my stuff."* Actually, I have. Back when we lived in Boulder, Norm mentioned the place he had his copying done as being cheaper than the place we were using. So I took my zine there on a Saturday, after our regular place had closed. They agreed to do it overnight, and then called back at 6pm, after everyone else had closed, to tell me that unless I had a release for each and every cartoon in it, they couldn't copy it.

ct Lillian: *"Whether you will have a long lasting marriage, as I have said, is a matter of luck. Dumb luck. You may be an improbable husband but it doesn't seem to matter these days."* I don't think luck's got anything to do with it. What it *does* take is a commitment to care about each other, and to work on the relationship as a growing thing. I view my marriage to Liz as a work in progress. Anytime I take it for granted, I get smacked in the face with a wet fish. And as a result, I love her more every day, and just waking up next to her in the morning is sometimes enough to make me smile.

☞ *"Actually, since the Republican era continued this last election: what happened in the House shows that: Gore did quite well."* It's interesting to note that Shrub had no coattails to speak of, and that the Republicans lost seats in both houses of Congress. But then, they also lost a lot of seats in Congress in 1998, when, following historical precedent, they should have made large gains.

ct Hlavaty: *"Cars may yet drive themselves. But it's longer in the future than the '50s and '60s publicists of a glowing future claimed."* I think it was the research guys at Mercedes-Benz who came up with an interim solution about thirty years ago. Equip cars with gadgets on their bumpers that allows your car to electronically latch up to the car ahead of you. The lead car in a pack controls the speed and direction the pack is traveling. With the cars linked together by radio signals, there doesn't need to be

as much room between cars. Obviously it only works for limited-access highways, like the Autobahn, but it's still a small improvement.

☞ "One prediction that failed is that we would have paper dresses. In the '60s or '70s, someone tried to market paper dresses. With the consequence that women found themselves with dresses that tore rather easily." Nobody tried to make dresses out of Tyvec, I guess.

"A Regency romance about gay pirates?" Boy, that Eve! She's such a tease. I've now started reading her book, and she stops the excerpt just when it gets interesting, and something is revealed that makes the sexual tension get a notch higher.

"Of course, contradiction hasn't prevented there from being Science Fiction Westerns. ... And contradiction hasn't prevented a 'turned on' Jazzy Bach." Yeah, but the man who originally did that synthesized Bach, Walter Carlos, is now Wendy Carlos, and how Science Fiction is *that*?



ct Feller: "Someone who was a Congressional aide suggested why Bush chose Cheney. Age and experience. The real President would be President Cheney." Both the *New York Times* and *The New Yorker* ran lengthy articles about Cheney and his management style in recent months. The *Times* was fairly implicit in mentioning that all decisions in the White House flow through Cheney's office. *The New Yorker* casually mentioned that Cheney's office suite isn't in the old Executive Office Building like all VP's – even Gore's – have been, but is in the West Wing. In other words, there's a tacit admission here that while Shrub is playing the role of head of state, Cheney is running the government. Now, that may be a good thing from some points of view: Cheney certainly has the intelligence and the knowledge to navigate the bureaucracy, and the one thing Bush is good at (as demonstrated from his ability to always raise money for failing businesses) is going out and being the front man. On the other hand, having Cheney setting the agenda, when his views are fairly far to the right, bothers me.

"I hear the Atkins diet prohibits veggies as well because they have carbohydrates in them." We're thinking of different things maybe: I thought the Atkins diet prohibited

having Barbara Wagner put a pie in Lon's face.

ct Strickland: "I can understand why Kornbluth did not include nuclear weapons in his *Not This August* (1955). How could Russia conquer the U.S. if the U.S. had atomic weapons?" I guess it's time for me to re-read *Not This August*. I remember the presence of atomic weapons, if not in the initial loss by the US, then in the denouement.

☞ "As for the *Midsummer Night's Dream* set in the early 1900s. I remember seeing it. It was beautiful. Someone had paid a lot of attention to the scenery. And the idylls. And I think Callista Flockhart did a great job with her comic vulnerability. And was great looking: this was before she got *Anorexia Nervosa* and pop eyes." I must continue to disagree: Flockhart can't act her way out of a paper bag. The real reason for seeing this movie is Michelle Pfeiffer's scenes with Kevin Kline, which are simply wonderful.

ct Schlosser: "Or it's like Harry Warner, Jr and stamps. I think peel off stamps are a sign of real progress. But to Harry, they are one more sign of us going to hell in a handbasket." I'm afraid I'm with Harry on this one. The peel-off stamps make it harder to carry a couple in your wallet. I wouldn't object so much if I could get some of the old-style ones, but now they're all self-adhesive.

☞ "The rule against electors voting for Prez and VP from their State was misguided from the beginning, ... Whoever was writing the Twelfth Amendment overdid it. It was sufficient to say that they had to vote for a different person for President and Vice President. They did not have to be from different States." Not at all: This manages to prevent any single state from getting all the power in the executive branch. Even then, there was concern about the presidency being too powerful, though Jefferson considered it an unimportant position.

☞ "Making voters responsible for their own actions? Or, at any rate, giving a confusing ballot a careful reading." Yes, you need to check the ballot to make sure you know what you're doing, but to anyone at Harlan Ellison's height or shorter, the Palm Beach ballot was worse than confusing, it was impossible. Given the angle of the ballot booklet on its stand, and the height of the booth, a short person, particularly one with less than perfect vision, it wasn't possible to differentiate the tightly packed lines. Of course, without the booklet, there's no way to tell from the ballot card alone if you've voted the way you intended. Again, I refer to Frank Cerabino's wonderful series in *The Palm Beach Post* entitled "How Al Gore Lost The Presidency."

ct Cleary: "I can sympathize with your mother not getting a divorce or doing anything." A colleague's mother is having a similar problem. She wants to remarry, but his parents had never bothered to get divorced. Her lawyer was dawdling on getting the paperwork filed, and then managed to get himself disbarred. Of course, this is all happening in Canada. . .

☞ "By the way, I hear the sales tax could be made equitable if they taxed services as well, like

lawyers, maids and gardening.” Sales taxes on services are a real pain to administer and enforce. Massachusetts tried it, and I think it was repealed after one year. I suspect the bookkeeping effort alone took much of the revenue.

*ct Ackerman:* “I don’t know how convenient it is to read a book on a computer. ... I hope someone develops a decent, cheap, practical electronic book soon.” Actually, there are reasonable versions of this, now. By time, I use my Palm nearly exclusively as an electronic book. As I’ve said, the Microsoft Pocket PC platform has much better reading software, but at between two and five times the cost for the hardware. (For reference, the entry level Palm M100 is about \$130; the HP Jornada 525 is \$360. The Rocket e-Book, which is intended as strictly book hardware, with no PDA functionality, is about \$250, but it has a bigger screen.) ☞ “Or maybe someone could come up with, for want of a better name, a book maker. Sounds shady, but what I mean doesn’t have anything to do with the race track. It prints out a book from the web, binds it and, voila, a book on the web is a regular book. You can have leather bound, quarto copies of *Pirate’s Price*.” There are pilot projects for just such print-on-demand things now. The problem is that the books are still frighteningly expensive, so printing costs for the one-off swamp the savings on warehousing and shipping. Worse, it’s hard to sell a book at a bookstore if the deal is “oh, you want a copy, we’ll print it for you right now,” rather than you being able to look at it on the shelf beforehand. (Yes, you buy the book sight-unseen from Amazon, but that’s not why you went into the bookstore in the first place, is it?) The net effect is that print-on-demand is only really useful for text books at the moment.

There was a panel on this topic at Westercon, featuring both Toni and Amazon’s SF buyer, and it was quite interesting. I observed from the audience that a fundamental problem is while computer technology inexorably follows Moore’s law and improves by a factor of two every eighteen months, that doesn’t follow for mechanical technology. The price improvements we see in printers are due to volume, not technology advancement. The mechanical advances comes in little spurts, not in a steady curve.

*ct Brown:* “The media, as opposed to honest journalism, had a field day with the Florida election ruckus. Not only do horse races sell; calamity sells as well.” If the media had just stayed out of it, and hadn’t insisted on “the people’s right to know, right now”, things might have been a lot calmer. The frenzy was manufactured. The “people” were plenty calm, and would have been willing to wait as long as necessary. The press were antsy for closure.

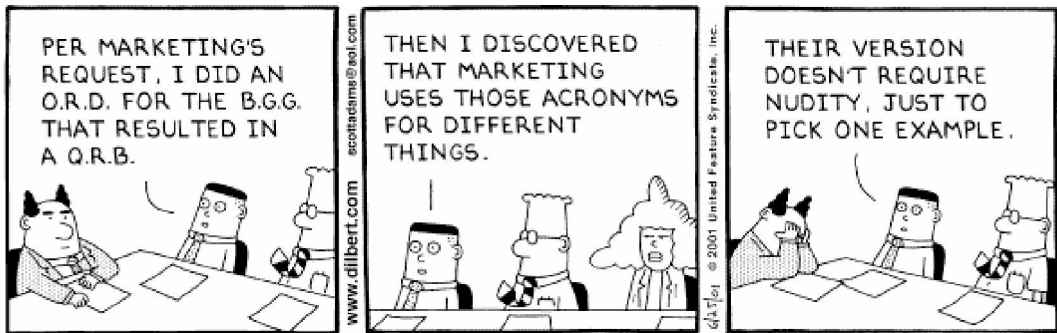
*ct Robe:* “People are very sympathetic to local scouts; they will support their various drives.” But interestingly enough, the institutionalized homophobia is starting to hurt them. Our church in Austin was never willing to host a Boy Scout troop, even though we were quite happy to host a Girl Scout troop. Local chapters of United Way all over

the country are refusing to continue funding local Boy Scout councils.

*ct me:* "During the Florida ballot ruckus, Bush and his fellow Repubs were trying to say that the punch card ballots were far more accurate than hand counts. That is not the usual belief. When the punch card ballots are challenged, legislators or the courts provide for hand counts. Including, I have heard, in Texas. But with the Repubs  $1+1=3$  when the political push comes to the political shove." Yes, it was Bush who signed the bill making hand recounts of punch card ballots the norm in Texas. But among the interesting duplicity in the last election, we had the Rs simultaneously challenging the accuracy of hand counts in Florida, while insisting on their accuracy in New Mexico, where they hoped to gain back six electoral votes.

☞ "The slide rule. It used to be a fixture among techies. I hear the Caltech cheerleaders chanted, 'Slide rule, slide rule. Rah! Rah! Rah!'" That's not exactly how it goes: I seem to remember that it was, "Three point one four one five nine / (something something) / Slip stick, slide rule / Fight! Fight! Fight!"

☞ "It's hard for me to believe that the travel time from Rome to London was the same in Caesar's time as in Lincoln's. With steam and clipper ships? And railroads?" The statistic was for the over land route, and the reason for specifying 1860 is that neither the US or Europe had transcontinental railroad service until the back part of the decade.



**Guy Lillian** ☒ *Spiritus Mundi* ☛

*ct OO:* "As for the poll results, no mystery about why I particularly enjoyed this set thanks to all for my presidency (like W, the guy who came in second claims the office)." Yeah, but at least I'm not relegated to lecturing in some backwater university for four years.

*ct Metcaf:* "Many thanks as ever for keeping me up to date through newspaper clippings – on local developments in the ever-more-disgusting JonBenet Ramsey case. When, dear Jesus, will that child rest in peace?" The answer to your question is simple: When every tabloid reporter and editor in the country has been dragged into the parking lot at the Boulder Justice Center and shot once in the head. The Boulder Police screwed

this case up from the get-go. The District Attorney has no evidence on anything. Stupidity has let her killers go free, and saddled her parents with the continuing suspicion that they were responsible.

*ct Brooks:* "Could live without Aaron Copland, George Gershwin, Leonard Bernstein? Gack! Your ears must be made of stone. They made God's music." Hey, Guy, I could live without Copland, Gershwin or Bernstein. It was *Bach* who made God's music. What was the pun Beethoven made on Bach meaning "brook" in German? "He wasn't a brook, he was an ocean?"



*ct Lynch:* "Your comment about the unknown and unknowable source of Joe Mayhew's CJD (is that 'Mad Cow Disease'?) prompts the thought that tracing a disease to its source ought to be a medical specialty." The specialty is called epidemiology. And that would be the original purpose of the Centers for Disease Control.

*ct Liz:* "Gee, first Schlosser, now you: a visit from Philip and Elizabeth! Did the Queen give J.J. an O.B.E.?" Order of Baby Excellence? No, Allie was awarded that by Elizabeth on February 9th, 1985 in the hospital nursery.


*ct* "In advance, through your itinerary, I enjoyed your Alaska plans. Say hello to our great wilderness before W. turns it into a giant Shell station." I'm tickled to be able to scan your sentences and write a comment on them into my Palm while actually in Alaska. It is an absolutely wonderful place to visit. I can't imagine being here in the winter, though: I don't mind twenty-two hours of light a day; twenty-two hours of night would make me want to slit my wrists.

*ct* "I disagree with Ellen Goodman. This past election showed that the American democratic system is not 'better than'. In an extreme situation like 2000's, I think a parliamentary system has ours whupped all to Hell." A parliamentary system? Like the legislature in Florida being able to decide the election by appointing a slate of electors by fiat, completely disregarding the voters? Because that's what they did, and their slate of electors

would have been the legal one in the absence of Supreme Court action. In an extreme situation like 2000, a legal means of deciding the election would have been sufficient. The illegal judicial coup we got was not.


*ct Brown:* *"Recruiting new members is most difficult these days; we've been gathering in a few old members and some friends of rosterites, but strangers? None."* Well, we've slowly been adding friends. But frankly anyone who's of an age and a temperament to be willing to do an APA is already known to us, I think. People with less time in fandom aren't inclined to think in terms of dead trees like we do.

*ct Schlosser:* *"How did the newspapers' recount of the Florida ballots go? I understand some counties refused to allow the papers access to their votes, state law and freedom of the press be damned."* Not possible. Florida has one of the most comprehensive open records laws in the country. Those physical ballots are public records. The problem is that the newspapers asked for the undervoted ballots, and in several counties got a different number of ballots than had been reported as undervoted earlier. Yet another example of the fallibility of accounting under stress.

 *"Just to keep the Elian argument going for another round, what would you have thought in 1939, had his mother been a refugee from Nazi Germany? Would his father's rights still have been as transcendent as Gonzalez' were in 2000? I don't know my own answer."* Unless the child was in immediate personal danger — presuming, for example, he was Kurdish, and his father was asking to take him back to Baghdad — I'd always be inclined to honor the surviving parent's wishes. No matter how much I disagreed with the regime in question. I'd certainly insist the father come to collect the child, and have a talk with him to make sure he really wanted to do this and wasn't being pressured — as the US did with Elian's dad — but if parental accountability means anything, we have to go with what the father wants here.

*ct Strickland:* *"I liked the Ian McKellen Richard III too..."* I still have to see it. The whole notion of staging it in the '30s strikes me as fascinating. Of course, Shakespeare being a Tudor stooge, the play makes Richard out to be the bad guy.

*ct me:* *"The media and the populace seem anxious to forget Gore's popular majority and the sleazy way the Republicans assumed power."* As I pointed out earlier in this zine, folks on the ground in Washington on January 20th observed that half the people on the streets were protesting the theft of the election. There was no mention of the number of protesters in any newspaper or wire service report I saw. Remember that the media was all fired sure that Bush was going to win, and couldn't understand why Gore was even showing up. And then Gore got more votes anyway. . .

 *"The Contender had some nice moments and fine performances, especially those of Joan Allen and Jeff Bridges, but the script was confusing and the denouement dumb."* Yes, the denouement is not as clean as I'd have liked, and I can't imagine someone as naïve as Joan Allen's

character being a successful Senator, but the points are still made about fairness and media frenzy and honesty. And frankly, part of why I like this movie is the monologue Allen's character delivers as her closing statement in the hearings. For a clearer statement of beliefs in a Congressional committee you have to go back to the fifties and "I cannot and will not cut my conscience to fit this year's fashions."<sup>o</sup>

*"[Spoiler] If your daughter or your wife was accused of appearing in a pornographic photograph and the proof that she was innocent was as obvious as a birthmark on her leg, how long would you keep quiet about it?"* As long as she wanted me to. I might take a page out of Harry Truman's book and suggest to a reporter or two that they might need steaks for their black eyes, (or out of Bill Clinton's and suggest that somebody's nose wasn't safe), but I'd like to think I trust the women in my life to fight their own battles, and that I'm man enough to wait until they ask for help to give it. (Yeah, it doesn't always work that way with little things like opening pickle jars, but I'd like to think that the experience of being a passenger in a car driven by my daughter has made me better at backing off.)

*"A far better political film is Thirteen Days..."* This, too is on our list of movies to see. In fact, I think it's the next DVD we're supposed to be getting from Netflix.

☞ *"You must see Traffic, too, the current front-runner for Best Picture, and the current front-runner for Best Picture, and the most original film - in terms of cinematic artistry - of double-aught. I liked its courage in admitting that the drug war is a losing proposition, its insistence that it's worth waging anyway..."* Interesting précis of the points made. I'd no interest in seeing this, really, but your enthusiasm may convince me otherwise. Oh, were there more time in the day!

☞ *"Dennis Dolbear had the best observation about Bill Clinton's plans after leaving office. Lurk near the White House and make W's every moment in office miserable."* One of the great fears of the Rs is that Hilary's house in Georgetown is going to become a rallying place for the opposition. Bill, though, seems to be keeping himself happily on vacation up in Westchester. I think that he's conflicted, since it's clear he likes Shrub, and sees him as a kindred spirit in people skills.

☞ *"I lost your diatribe about Boulder's domestic violence policies, but Challenger is always open to righteous condemnation of political correctness."* If you still want it, I'll send it again.

☞ *"I wish you'd been around when I fried my C-drive. I still don't know what happened."*

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<sup>o</sup> Alternately, you can consider David Lilienthal's lengthy, absolutely spontaneous, rebuttal to Senator McKellar during his confirmation hearings as chair of the Atomic Energy Commission, which included the line, "I deeply believe in the capacity of democracy to surmount any trials that may lie ahead, provided only that we practice it in our daily lives." However, I'd suggest that Lillian Hellman's line is better, as it's the product of a careful, thoughtful writer, with time to rewrite.



Technology is both an end in itself and a means to other ends. When you figure something out and make it work, there is pleasure and excitement. Not just because the technology is going to do something, but because you created something with its own inherent beauty, like art, like literature, like music.

— Andy Grove

From the descriptions of the problems you've been having with that machine, my long distance "Click & Clack" diagnosis is a flaky disk controller. I would have started by unplugging the machine, taking the top off, vacuuming the insides, and removing and reseating every card and cable.

☞ "Anyway, your closing essay 'Reading Revisited' is excellent. Pass that along to your fellow Jeffrey." I will do so. That was one of our best-received columns of last year.

ct Ackerman: "Your review of Quinn Yarbro's new novel is interesting ... I wonder if she'll ever place that vampire novel about William T. Sherman." Speaking of Sherman, that other Jeffrey's middle name is Sherman since he's directly descended from him – and from Roger Sherman, Connecticut planter whose name graces the bottom of the Declaration of Independence.

☞ "I hope your district's placement of Micah's gifted classes in an economically disadvantaged school benefits the 'normal' kids there, since I always found that when kids are aware of academic hierarchies, it can have a mean effect. University heights Junior High in Riverside California, had slow, average, X (for accelerated), and XX (for double-accelerated) classes ... and was dumb enough to let us know. I remember the uncertainty on one kid who said 'I guess I'm average' when he found out about the gradation and how my parents nearly freaked when I wasn't placed in the XX math section. Hell, X was tough enough! Anyway, you've got the right idea: encourage your kids to follow their hearts. But insist they cast their wits as a wide net at university, sampling every possible discipline, and not repeat GHLIII's mistake of too narrow a focus, and a wasted opportunity." As I've probably mentioned before, the proximate cause of the school board ruckus in Boulder was enrichment classes. Actually, the first problem was a policy decision by the administration to take any pretense of academic content out of middle school curriculum. In response, a bunch of parents suggested that any kid who wanted or needed more challenge could sign up for enriched classes — notice that this was completely self-selecting, with no exams or teacher involvement. This proposal from the parents was rejected out of hand. By the administration, the school board, and oddly enough by other parents — "but it might make *my* kids feel bad," "but if all kids are equally good, why should it be important?". It still seems to me to be a good model. Some kids are bored and want to do more. Some kids need the extra challenge to keep out of trouble. If the kids can't keep up and get bad grades,

they can do the regular classes.

*ct Cleary:* "I don't mind a bit of preachiness in B.C. I'll forgive Johnny Hart anything after 'Dip in road.'" There's a fine line between preachiness and "I'm better than anyone else because I've accepted Jesus as my Lord and savior, and the rest of you are going to Hell because you're Democrats and Jews and Godless Liberals and other tools of Satan, the Lord of Darkness." As long as he's on the preachy side of that line, steam doesn't come out of my ears. Once he starts prostelytizing, my blood pressure goes up.



*ct Robe:* "Problems or not, I must attend the '01 DSC, and hope everyone within the range of these words does the same." Would that we could have. And as things are going, it doesn't look like we'll make '02 either. And Huntsville seemed like the perfect place for the First Annual "I Just Zend Zem Up" SFFA Model Rocketry Contest.

*ct You point out one of the most painful things about the election: a legal ballot in Palm Beach would have resulted in a clear Gore victory."* Full and legal counting of all the ballots would have resulted in a clear victory for Gore. Winning Tennessee so Florida wasn't an issue would have resulted in a clear victory for Gore. His campaign not fucking up in a hundred little ways would have resulted in a clear victory for Gore. Having as good a spinmeister and lawyer as James Baker would have resulted in a clear victory for Gore. Ralph Nader getting caught in bed with a seventeen year old male prostitute would have resulted in a clear victory for Gore. Face it: Gore was the more qualified candidate, and the election was his to screw up, which he did. If he'd managed to not leave it to Florida, the corrupt Supreme Court would have not been an issue at all.

*ct Gelb:* "So much disgusts me about the election that I've been croggled as to how I could even list it all, but my 'main despair', as you put it, is the casual acquiescence with which the populace and the media and even the Democrats are accepting the rank injustice of Bush's assumption of power." "Casual acquiescence" and "unreported protest" are not the same thing. As I've pointed out, there were as many people present at the inauguration to protest the

appointment of Bush as there were to cheer the appointee.

☞ “No surprise, then, that Orycon, their convention, shines in your yes, even though the hotel is apparently a glass house with bad plumbing.” Westercon was at the same hotel as Orycon — it was an ongoing annoyance that the Westercon progress reports kept saying things like “we’ll have the masquerade in the same place where we have it at Orycon” without ever saying where that place was. Nonetheless, the hotels were not bad.

☞ “Dick Francis’ protagonists are mostly interchangeable: nice guys, not particularly brave, vulnerable to bullying thugs, but open and intelligent and on the verge, usually, of liberating self-discovery. They are likable, attractive, and blessedly imperfect. That adds a great deal to his work, cf, the best Francis in my view, *Whip Hand*.” The point of *Whip Hand*, I’ve always thought is that while our hero Sid is vulnerable to bullying, he makes it better later on by facing up to the bullies. In general, Francis’ heroes come from the same basic personality molds, but have different starting points and take different paths to different end points. However, in my view, the best Francis isn’t *Whip Hand*, but rather *Reflex*, in which the hero is not only vulnerable, but openly corrupt. In two hundred-odd pages he turns his life completely around, finding depths in himself that he didn’t believe existed until he needed them, and coincidentally inventing a new career for himself and finding real and true friends.

ct Dengrove: “Vietnam veterans were saddled with much of the blame for losing the war. They smoked grass and didn’t live up to the Greatest Generation’s gung-ho heritage, and although William Calley was initially hailed as a hero, his obscene behavior eventually besmirched everyone who served there. At the same time, we who opposed the war came in for blame, as well. We didn’t ‘let’ our soldiers win.” I found it fascinating to find stories surfacing last December accusing Medal of Honor winning Senator Bob Kerrey of murdering innocent civilians in Vietnam. I found it more fascinating that the reporter who wrote the story started working on it when Kerrey was considering running for President.

ct your back page: “*Crouching Tiger* is a wonderful movie, one of the most original, vivid, exciting, moving films I’ve recently seen. The Oscars are coming up. Expect to see it mentioned, and along with *Traffic*, stand as a favorite.” *Crouching Tiger* was a truly beautiful movie. But the Academy awarding it Best Foreign Language Film rather than Best Picture was a travesty.

“51 years old and getting married. What in the world do I think I’m doing? I’ll tell you. I think I’m making sense for the first time in decades. I think I’m feeling hope for the first time in decades. I think I’m being smarter than I’ve been for decades. I think I’m saving my life.” No, Guy, most emphatically not. You have shown amazing flashes of hope – even intermingled with your ugly bouts of self-pity – for all the years I’ve known you. You have been smart and passionate for all that time. What you have done is find a focus for that

passion, a woman who appreciates that intelligence. Even though your life was already saved, you've now made it more worthwhile.

**Randy Cleary** ☒ *Avatar Press* ♣

*"My favorite movie seen last year was Unbreakable. It was brilliant (especially for comic geeks like me)." It's been on our list for a while. There are too many movies and too little time.*

*ct Hlavaty: "I did not get the reerence in, 'Hello, my name is Sue. You are my father. Prepare to die.'" Which part? The reference to Johnny Cash's song "A Boy Named Sue," or the reference to the Mandy Patankin's line "My name is Inigo Montoyo. You killed my father. Prepare to die." from The Princess Bride. Allie, by the way, used to chant the Inigo Montoyo line. I particularly remember one day as she hopped down the stairs: "My name is" (hop) "Inigo Montoyo!" (hop) "You killed my father!" (hop) "Prepare to die!" (hop)*

*ct Lynch: "I am disturbed that some people (some with good intentions) still seem to want to adopt [a Police state] or ignore some disturbing example of Police state-like occurences." I vaguely remember an experiment conducted by a metropolitan daily newspaper one July some years ago. The took a piece of text, and stopped people on the streets and asked them to read it and tell them what they thought of the ideas. The text began "When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people..." Lots of people said it sounded like some Communist propaganda. Consider also that more than half the population thinks the first and second amendments, not to mention the fourth and fifth, are bad ideas, and I don't think the police alone are to blame here.*

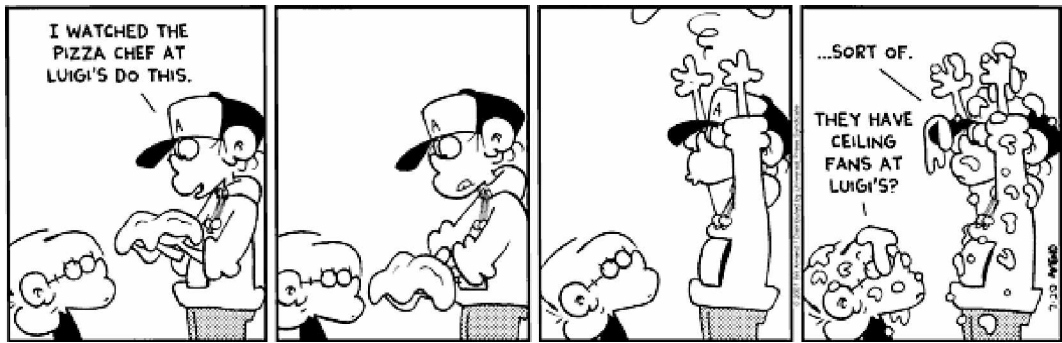
**Irv Koch** ☒ *Offline Reader* ♣

*ct Dengrove: "I finally found [a dentist in Northern Virginia], but when I tried to pull his address from my files, it wasn't there any more. Dr Sung?" Your dentist invented the android from Star Trek: The Next Generation?*

**Gary Brown** ☒ *Oblio* ♣

*"I'm well into my third month here are Polo Chase Apartments... However, my book unpacking had only started to get underway." It seems whenever we move, because I can never take the time *right now* to unpack my den, it gets to be the box room. Of course, it's made worse because I never have enough storage space in my den. In the meantime, I work in the available space in the room, and make the problem worse still.*

*On your reprint of Dave Barry's Year in Review column: "Barry's long-time collaborator artist, Jeff MacNelly, died last year, so two new artists took over his duties in similar style." As I think I've mentioned before Brookins and Cassatt are actually "the School of*



MacNelly” as they used to say during the Renaissance: they were Jeff’s assistants when he was alive, and they’re continuing to draw his various cartoons now that he’s gone. ☞ “My thanks to pal Harry Broerijes for his assistance on the presentation.” Was it retyped, or did you scan it in? (Or did Harry just manage to smuggle you the machine readable version?)

ct me: “What was that movie with Michael Keaton where he duplicated himself? ... The problem was, each copy got dumber.” And the copies were named Prescott, and George and W, right? Didn’t we do this before? (Actually, I think the comment of mine your responding to was, in turn, in response to the mention of the Keaton movie.)

ct Liz: “But at this time of year, when I’m out washing my car in shorts and T-shirt, while you northern-climate folks are spending 40 minutes just getting dressed to go out and shovel snow...” Ha! Why do you think we moved to Seattle? We only have to shovel snow once a year. Alternately, we wait until noon, and it’s gone by itself.

ct Weisskopf: “It’s interesting that Hank would equate the downturn of Florida’s assault and homicide rates with a right to carry concealed weapons and ignore ... a stronger economy and the efforts of President Clinton and Attorney General Janet Reno.” I think Hank was referring to a book called *More Guns, Less Crime* which was a darling of the political right for a while. I’ve not read the book, so I can’t comment directly, but there are severe questions about the statistic analysis used to reach the conclusions.

ct Hughes: “I think some day we will be able to ‘time travel,’ but I think it will be merely observing events and not participating in them.” I’m reminded of one of Spider Robinson’s early *Callahan’s* stories, in which a guy is bunged up, incommunicado, in prison in some banana republic during a coup, and it takes two decades before the State Department realizes he’s missing and gets him out. The stuff he has to cope with by being transported through time in this way is interesting.

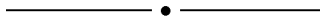
ct Lillian: “I read to the boys when I could. They liked it when I read from the Carl Barks Library. Rarely got through a full story, though, before they folded.” My dad used to read us a

couple of chapters of one of the Oz books before bed. I used to read Allie from Dr Seuss. However, in Allie's case, she never went to sleep, so in the end, I memorized all the books. This quite amused Barb Wagner one evening when she was watching me read *McElligot's Pond* to Allie, and not even bothering to look down at the pages as I did so.

☞ *"I've noticed that I've typed Rosy's name as Rosie a time or two. My apologies to her..."* I've made the same mistake, I'm sure: my godmother is my Aunt Rose, who's been "Rosie" for seventy-something years.

*ct Gelb:* *"It's interesting to note that Teresa LePore, our somewhat dimwitted elections supervisor in Palm Beach County, now just wants everyone 'to get over it'... If there was one problem I've had with our election coverage at The Post, is was our failure to call for LePore's resignation. We haven't defended her editorially, but we have said she is a good civil servant who made a really stupid mistake (with the ballot design)." But the articles from Frank Cerabino I've read make it pretty clear that she was simply asleep at the wheel, and didn't want to consult with the election supervisors in other counties about how they were laying out the complicated ballot.*

*ct Dengrove:* *"Whatever Gore did, he obviously did just fine. He won the popular vote throughout the entire country... The only thing he could have done better was win three more electoral votes. So, he has nothing to be concerned about."* I liked Henrik Hertzberg's statistic: George W Bush got more popular votes than only two candidates in history, Ronald Reagan in 1984, and Al Gore in 2000. But that said, I think he didn't do just fine: a lot of the details were let slide, and in the crucial end-game, his legal team wasn't a good match for Baker and company. On the other hand, he did run a credible campaign. The real question is: should the democrats run him again? And if not, who can they run instead?



Th-th-that's all, folks! I'm a few zines from the end of mailing 219, but I was a few zines from the end of 218 at this point two months ago. So I'm, at least, not losing ground. We'll see if my new scanner will help me gain some when I'm not trying to write zines on vacation.

Until next time...

## Art Credits

The computer generated frog on the cover is from the Ohno Laboratory at Keio University in Japan, <http://www.on.ics.keio.ac.jp>.

Page 2: *Heart cf the City* from 14 July — Westercon wasn't the best convention I've ever been to, but it was still fun. Page 7: *Shoe* from 16 June. Page 11: *Non Sequitur* from 17 July. Page 14: *Arlo & Janis* from 20 July — a bad pun for David. Page 16: *Doonesbury* from 23 July. Page 19: *Dilbert* from 25 June. Page 20: *Non sequitur* from 23 July. Page 24: *Foxtrot* from 14 July — seems like a good enough reason for a model rocketry contest to me. Page 27: *Foxtrot* from 20 July — this is why I never toss my pizza crust.

The back cover features the *Non Sequitur* cartoon from 29 Nov 99.

## Index

Arthur Hlavaty	11	Irv Koch	26	Richard Lynch	9
David Schlosser	13	Ned Brooks	7	Tom Feller	12
Gary Brown	26	Randy Cleary	26	Toni Weisskopf	7
Guy Lillian	11, 19	Richard Dengrove	14		



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