

Frequent Flyer

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The picture on the first page was taken at the wedding of my nephew Bryan, who appears in the middle. The other men are my grandfather Bob Senior, father Bob Junior, Bryan, brother Tim, and me. Since we all have the same last name, you can call it the Five Fellers.

It was a large wedding and included a reception, dinner, and dance. The restaurant's official count for dinner was 311. The church, the Zwingli United Church of Christ in Monticello, Wisconsin, was the same one where my parents were married and where I was baptized and confirmed. The reception, dinner, and dance took place at the Ludlow Mansion in the neighboring town of Monroe. The building dates back to the 19th Century.

Bryan married a girl whose family we have known since before I was born so we had friends on both sides of the aisle. Her aunt was in my class from the first through the third grade until they moved to another school district. It was good to see family and friends that I only get to see once a year.

Harry Potter—

A doctor wrote a letter to the New England Journal of Medicine in which he reported about 3 patients, aged 8-10, who experienced headaches while attempting to read the latest Harry Book novel. This installment was 870 pages and written at a little higher than the 10 year old reading level, so I can see that it might be a challenge.

Reuters reported that over 250 million Harry Potter books have been sold and are available in 60 languages, including Ancient Greek and Hindi. I wonder when we'll see a Klingon version.

Work—

We have gotten rather busy lately when we took over two motels under management contracts. Our hotel division does not seek out such contracts, but two of our principals are partners with a Jackson, Mississippi, real estate developer in a Jackson restaurant and our food service division manages it. When he became dissatisfied with the company managing two hotels he owns, he came to us to replace them. I think our main selling points are that two years after 9/11, we are still around and that the restaurant is profitable.

They are located in Jackson and Oxford, MS, and I've been working at the one in Oxford. It's given me the opportunity to spend time with a first cousin of my dad's, who just retired from teaching at the University of Mississippi (Ole' Miss) there in Oxford.

Originally built as a Holiday Inn in the Sixties, this property has recently converted to a Best Western. The location has both advantages and disadvantages. It is downtown near the county courthouse rather than by a major highway. This means that people won't be driving down the road and stop for the night. On the other hand, Oxford's downtown is a thriving retail and restaurant area, despite the super Wal-Mart on the edge of town.

Fall Movies

Intolerable Cruelty--

This is a funny movie about marriage and money. George Clooney is a divorce lawyer who represents Catherine Zeta-Jones's soon to be ex-husband (Edward Hermann), but he falls in love with her.

Mystic River-

There's been a lot of Oscar buzz about this movie, especially the performance by Sean Penn. However, both Anita and I fell asleep while watching it, because it moves so slowly.

It centers on three boyhood friends, one of whom is kidnapped and sexually abused at the age of twelve. (Tim Robbins plays him as an adult.) Another grows up to be a cop (Kevin Bacon), while the third (Sean Penn) begins adulthood as a crook, does time, and then reforms. Twenty-five years after the abduction, Penn's daughter is murdered, Bacon is the investigating detective, and Robbins is a suspect.

Runaway Jury-

Anita has read the John Grisham upon which this is based, and says they made some changes. The biggest was that they changed to defendant from a tobacco company to a gun manufacturer. I found it to be entertaining, but heavy-handed. The villains were the manufacturer and the jury consultant they had retained to defend them in the lawsuit, and the movie stacked everything against them.

Matrix Revolutions-

If you take this on the level of an action-adventure with great special effects, this is an entertaining movie. My favorite scene took place in a black leather bar. If you try to read religious and philosophical significance into this film, then it's a pretentious piece of shit.

The premise is that our world is not real, merely a computer simulation called the Matrix. In the first movie in the series, Neo (Keanu Reeves) learns this fact and escapes to Zion, where people live a real life. In the second, he learns more about the Matrix.

Master and Commander-

I've never read any of the Patrick O'Brian novels, but the knowledge that they and other sea novels set in the Napoleonic Wars are out there has allowed me to not think that I have missed anything in having read only two of the Honor Harrington novels. If I want to read a book set in that period, I'll seek one out, not bother with a science fiction version.

I did enjoy this adaptation starring Russell Crowe. Anita calls it a "guy" movie, because it's almost continuous action with no romance.

Comments on #235

Mike Weber—

I can't remember the title of the first alternate history novel I read, but it was not *Bring on the Jubilee*.

Ned Brooks—

Would you consider Thomas Jefferson to have been a "well-rounded person"?

Richard Dengrove—

Although the fight scenes defy gravity, in *The Matrix* movies they take place in a computer simulation where those laws don't necessarily apply. In a movie like *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, I can accept that the warriors have learned some form of magic that allows them to perform those feats.

Anita and her sister finally sold their mother's house.

I don't recall much about Keith Laumer's alternative history in which Germany wins World War I, except that the point of view character, who is from our timeline, considers it a less desirable place to live than ours. On the other hand, he finds a timeline in which World

War I is avoided entirely to be the most desirable one in which to live.

Guy Lillian—

I thought that George Clooney was quite good in *Intolerable Cruelty*, which was a much better romantic comedy than *Down with Love*.

Sheila Strickland—

We originally had reservations at the main DSC hotel but were bumped to the Howard Johnson's.

I don't know about other electronic formats (perhaps Toni can inform us about Baen's), but the books and stories you can download from Fictionwise are encrypted so that you can't print them out.

David Schlosser—

I must have heard or read references to Seabiscuit over the years, because the name was not unfamiliar to me even before the book came out. The same applies to his grandsire Man of War.

Gary Brown—

As soon as Congress began considering changes to the overtime law, especially the one that worried you about overtime exemption, I began to receive junk mail for seminars on the changes. Since I wrote the section in our policies and procedures manual dealing with the subject, it would be logical for me to attend one of them. Fortunately, I decided to wait until the proposed changes became law. Congress didn't pass them so I didn't waste my time and the company's money.

I've driven through Perry, Florida, but I've never stopped. From what you describe, I didn't miss anything.

Janice Gelb—

I always thought that a recall provision in a state constitution was for situations like the one Tennessee faced years ago when the Governor Roy Blanton sold pardons. (His nickname was "Pardon Me Roy".) Tennessee could have used a recall at that time. The corruption was so bad that Democrats and Republicans agreed to have his successor Lamar Alexander take office early.

I agree that a recall should not be used to remove an incompetent or someone you merely disagree with. That is why we have periodic elections.

Oh yes, we got our final Torcon Progress report after the convention started.

Jeff Copeland—

I don't see what's so bizarre about appointing a career military man to be Secretary of State. One of the most successful was George C. Marshall (The Marshall Plan), Roosevelt's Army Chief of Staff and one of Truman's Secretaries of State.

Liz Copeland—

Whenever Lazarus Long showed up in any Eighties Heinlein novel, I knew it was about to deteriorate.

Toni Weisskopf Reinhardt—

We haven't seen any deer at our new house, although there is a deer crossing sign up the road. We did have rabbits breakfasting on our flowers, but then they disappeared after feral cats moved into the neighborhood. We figure the cats must have moved on, because I saw a rabbit just the other day.