



**Home With the Armadillo** is brought to you by Liz Copeland, of 1085 Albion Way, Boulder CO 80303. Phone is 303/499-8924. Begun just before deadline in July for SFPA #204. And the one and only email address is liz@indra.com. 1998

I guess I'm backsliding into my old habits, doing really small zines at the last minute. Of course, it being summer doesn't help. I'm spending about 4 or 5 days a week with the kids home all day which really cuts into the time to do my individual projects. Such as sewing, or reading or even writing SFPA. Normally, both kids would be in camps, at least half days. But, Allie wants to go on this trip to Greece next summer, so she proposed that we take the money for her camps this summer and next to pay for the Greece trip and she would earn her spending money for it. This seemed like a reasonable idea and I was very proud of her for figuring it all out in advance so we agreed. Next summer, I'll have some better ideas on keeping her busy and out of my hair, but this summer, we're doing things together. And with JJ. Because Allie is staying home, he wants to stay home from his camp 2 or 3 days a week too. So, we go to the pool, go to the park, play with polymer clay, do the family errands, and watch TV.

The latter has been especially popular during the last two weeks when the daytime temps have been between 90 and 100 every day. It finally broke today, with some rain, how amazingly different, and we were very happy to see it. I mean, really, this is not Arizona. That's where we're going for vacation.

First, I should report on what Guy considers our vacation - DSC. That was the adult only weekend getaway; the end of July is the family vacation. Big difference. Uncle Guy doesn't have to deal with this difference, lucky him.

DSC was great fun, even if the hotel was an abyss of incompetence. Jeff and I had time alone, we had good time with some of our favorite SFPAnS, and ex-SFPAnS, most particularly JoAnn, and we even enjoyed all of the programming we attended. (Toni's slide show and the SFC meeting with the awards.) Toni, JoAnn and I hoisted Fifi at the SFPA party (I found these little plastic black poodles at one of the local toy stores, see, and what was a girl to do?), I got to chat with George Inzer and it's been almost literally decades since we did that, met Janet and her hunky husband Kyle and the new baby (I never did see the older two kids), painted my toenails gold thanks to Corliss, listened to the Ned & George show, and a myriad of other delights. If you want more details, read Guy's zine. Next time, come to DSC yourself and join in the fun.

We came back from DSC, unpacked our luggage and then I began unpacking the 20some boxes in the garage. I quickly realized that this was more than a 4 day task, so we shifted the garage sale date back a week. This meant it overlapped with my mom's visit which gave her a chance to do some unbridled shopping. We ended up with a clump of stuff on the workbench that we were keeping, 2 boxes that got moved to the storage shed, and the rest was either trash or for the sale. The sale went well; we did about \$250 gross. The kids got about \$100 of that, and our costs ran about \$25 so we got enough to buy a home carpet cleaner. We desperately need one, as the carpets are this oatmeal/beige color and

we have 2 kids, 3 cats, and a large dog who loves to go outside and roll in the dirt and then track it all in. We also have some large items left over to sell separately and that should get us another \$150 or so. This may become a bi-annual event since that seems to be the frequency with which I can tolerate doing it, and we seem to accumulate/outgrow enough stuff in that time frame to give us a good sale. There's something satisfying about it - seeing our castoffs go to a good home, and making a bit of money in the process. But not enough to do it that much more often. :-)

Of course, we didn't get everything sorted out in time for the garage sale. The garage boxes were dealt with, but not those pesky 5.25 inch floppies and the other assorted computer stuff that's accumulated. Nor did I get all the sewing/craft stuff sorted thru. So, there's still house decluttering to do, not that I think it will ever end, but it would be nice to have a short time when it wasn't looming over my head as an undone task. \*sigh\*

We took my mom's visit as a chance to run around and do lots of stuff. There was a visit to the Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum in Golden where we saw their exhibit of Blue and White quilts. This is a very nice little museum, by the way, and it provides a nice way for local quilters to show off their work. Then we drove to Longmont to see the Art Deck exhibit. This is an exhibit originally put together by the Smithsonian. Fifty-four quilt artists were invited to do a card from the deck, with 2 of them getting to do the jokers. The only limitation was the size which was standardized so that the pieces would look like a deck of cards. Some of the people in it are nationally famous, at least in quilting circles. And some of them are in my on-line quilting group. It's a beautiful collection of pieces and I recommend seeing it.

After my mom left, the day after my birthday, we started planning the annual Bastille Day party. We invited almost everyone we knew, as usual, and I was surprised to find just how many people that came out to be. I often feel like we don't know anyone here in Boulder. This isn't true, but it seems that way in comparison to the numbers of people we saw regularly in either Austin or Los Angeles. The party was very successful with people coming at 3pm and most leaving around 9 or 10 altho a small group lingered until 11. I'm looking forward to doing this again next year.



And right after the Bastille Day party, I had to move into gear on getting ready for vacation. We're going to Scottsdale, Arizona as the only RCI condo available in New Mexico when I called was the week before school started. So, we will brave the Arizona heat, and go at a more convenient time. One of the things I enjoy doing is sitting down with the AAA book, and making a list of what things we might like to go and see. Our current list has 3 different zoos, 2 art museums, 1 airplane museum, a railroad park, a miniature golf/waterpark place, a reenactment Wild West place, and the Cosanti Foundation. Since there are also several movies opening during that week that we want to go see, I don't think we'll have any lack of things to do. Allie also wants to get a super tan so we will have to spend a certain amount of time just lounging by the pool. So Jeff and I will take books so that we can alternate reading while the other one of us tries to avoid being drowned by the kids.



Speaking of movies, we've been doing our share for the summer movie market. Both of the local papers had movie inserts in May so we made up a list for the summer. There's no way we could see them all, but we're giving it a good try. We started with **Godzilla** which was fine until the little baby Godzillas turned into Jurassic Park type raptors. That sent JJ running from the theater and refusing to go back to see the ending. This kind of stuff is really starting to annoy me.

Next was **Deep Impact** which was a moderately good movie - decent character development, accurate science about the meteors, etc., and a reasonable plot. Much better than **Armageddon**, more about that one later.

Then Jeff took JJ and Allie to see **Mulan**. His reaction was that Disney apparently didn't know that there was any difference between Korean or Chinese or Japanese. But the animation was good, and JJ liked it so Disney hit it's target market.

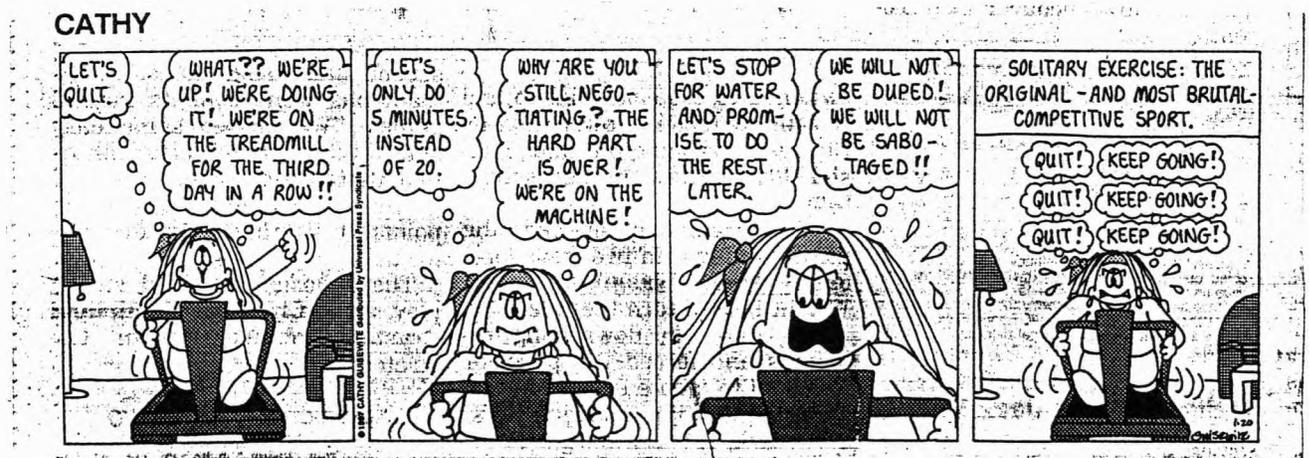
We saw **Armageddon** next. A manipulative movie, designed to put you on an adrenalin roller coaster. But lots of things get blown up, and NASA gets a big plug. I think several SFPAnS covered this one in the email one-shot so I won't say more.

I was down with a major allergy reaction when Jeff and the kids went to see **Small Soldiers** so I will have to catch it later on video. They all 3 liked it so I'm sure we will be renting it when it comes out.

Allie and I love the Lethal Weapon series, so she went with me to see **Lethal Weapon 4** the day it opened. Jeff and I went to see it 2 days later. So, maybe my opinion is biased by having seen it twice. My summation is that this is probably the last one as it ends with everybody living happily ever after. There's the usual fun dialog, stuff blowing up, etc. but I was disappointed in the small role that Russo got, and I really didn't see the reason for the double pregnancy except to have a cute hospital scene at the end. See it as a matinee or wait for video.

The rest of our summer list is: Bulworth, The Truman Show, A Perfect Murder, Six Days Seven Nights, Out of Sight, The Mask of Zorro, Saving Private Ryan, The Parent Trap, Snake Eyes, Virus, The Avengers, Blade, The Negotiator and Shooting Fish. We will probably see The Mask of Zorro and The Parent Trap in Scottsdale and obviously several of these have already disappeared from the big screen and will have to wait for video.

The other big thing in my life right now is trying to keep the exercise commitment going. Lisa and I are considering getting a personal trainer, since my problem seems to be doing it, and hers is finding something that works.



## Mailing Comments on SFPA 203

*The Southerner/Liz COEpland*  
change. If not, you die!!!

Okay, I hope everyone noticed the deadline

*It Goes on the Shelf/Ned Brooks*  
the OO for this; The title said 18, but the page footers said 19, so I didn't put anything on the TOC.

I hope you don't mind I left the number off

*The New Port News 179/Ned Brooks*

I hope the moving is going well; I have finally finished the unpacking during the garage sale preparation and it took only 3.5 years. I'm sure you'll be faster.

Gosh, I guess I should be glad that I don't Windows more often. It would be very frustrating to get those illegal operations messages.

I would think that squirrels and rats have different sized teeth and would therefore leave different types of marks on the wires in the car. This was apparently not the only incident lately, but I hadn't considered sabotage as a possibility.

*Seasons #32/Binker Hughes*

It was good to see you at DSC. And I hope the job search bears fruit soon.

Thanks for the compliment on the color work on the OOs. Unfortunately, those were done with the printers at QMS and since Jeff has now left there, we will run out of them at the end of the year.

I guess we're going to pass each other in the Box Scores going in different directions as I sink back into my mincing ways and you keep producing meaty zines... \*sigh\*

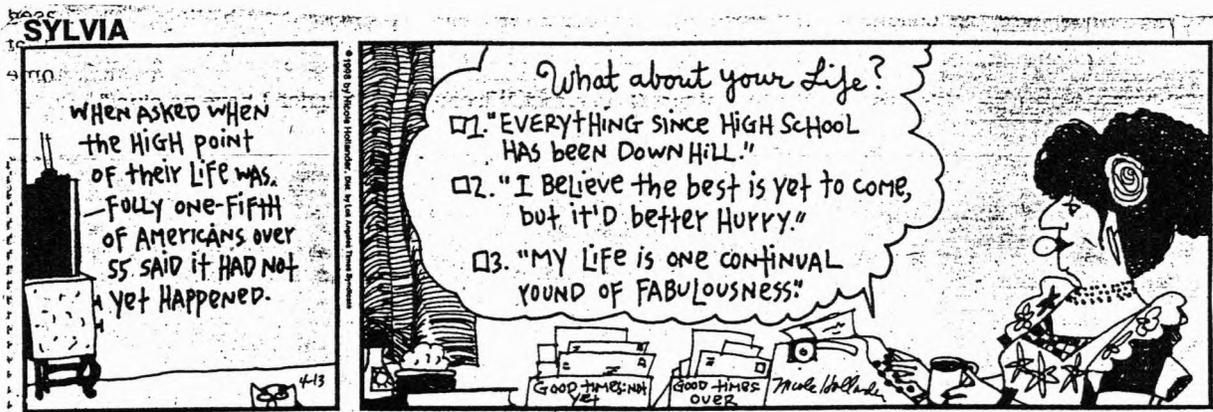
I must admit that I still consider some stuff to be Men's Work. Killing cockroaches, for instance. Climbing up on the roof, for another. If Jeff isn't inclined to do it, or can't for some reason, I hire someone. Of course, that someone doesn't have to be male... Such are my inconsistencies.

About the T-shirts. Yes, they're useable, but do you actually wear them? If they're just sitting in a box, then they might as well be cut up. As for the wool scraps, I have a friend who has just finished her second quilt, and she did it in plaid flannels. She did it using a block that's called a ninepatch. The block is made up of 9 smaller blocks in 3 rows of 3 blocks each. It's usually done in 2 contrasting colors so that one of the colors forms an x in the block and the other fills in. Say you used black and your dark plaids. A sample block would look like this where B is a background color (such as black) patch and P is a plaid one:

B	P	B		P	B	P
P	B	P	or	B	P	B
B	P	B		P	B	P

You would pick which way you wanted to do the blocks depending on which color you wanted to dominate. Or you could alternate the 2 types of blocks to get an interesting alteration of the plaids with your background color. To do them by hand is actually fairly

easy but takes longer. Lisa enjoys handwork because it tends to be fairly mindless and it has taken her less than 4 months to finish this quilt for her bed. The details of sewing the blocks is also fairly easy; you mark the seam allowance using a silver or yellow pencil on the wrong side of the fabric. Usually, it's a 1/4 inch seam allowance. For example, if you want 12 inch blocks (finished size), you would cut the plaids into 4.5 inch blocks which would give you 12.5 inch blocks made of 9 patches. Then, you use thread in a matching color, and use a running stitch to sew them together on the seam line you've marked. Traditionally, the 9 patch is done in rows and then the rows are sewn together, but if another order of putting them together seems better to you, then do it that way. Once you've made the blocks, you can measure them to be sure they are the same size. If not, you can trim them to the size of the smallest block. Then, you sew the blocks together. If this all seems too complicated, maybe your local library has some books that will explain it better. The other thing to do is check at your local quilt store and see if there is someone who would be willing to coach you on doing this quilt in exchange for some of the fabric. Plaid flannels are very popular in certain quilting circles altho it tends to be mostly in areas which have fairly cold winters. Anyway, if there's any other questions I can help with, let me know.



**Spiritus Mundi 165/Guy Lillian**

Your chest cold might in fact have been allergies. I used to get bronchitis every spring, until my allergies were diagnosed. Of course, I have a couple of home remedies that you might try next time. First, there's the ginger lemon tea. Mince up about 1 inch of fresh peeled ginger root and put it in a teapot or a small saucepan. Add 2-3 cups of boiling water and let steep for about 10-15 minutes. Then add the juice of 1 lemon, and sweeten with honey to taste. Drink it warm and it will clobber colds. Another great one that I use anytime of year when I'm feeling cold or damp, is herbal chai. Put 5 cups of water in a pan, add 5-8 cinnamon sticks, 10 cloves, 10 cardamon pods (I split them open, the flavor is better. You can use cardamon seeds if you can't find the pods, then use about 40 of the little black things), 5 peppercorns, and about 1.5 inches of ginger, peeled and sliced thin. Simmer for about 30 minutes, then strain. You can add honey or milk to this and drink it either hot or cold.

Another stripper?!? I saw pictures at DSC of the Mother's Day stripper but now I hear there was one at CoastCon? What is this, Toni has a yearning for Times Square?

Speaking of the Internet and Hugo nominees, Jeff finally got tired of me griping about it, and went and found all of the Hugo and Nebula nominees (and winners) since 1980. I turned it into a spiffy little list with room to check them off as I read them, and just for you, Guy, I'm attaching it to this zine.

We saw **Primary Colors** recently ourselves and enjoyed it tremendously. I don't even think it comes that close to Clinton, but I do think it has some good insights on the campaign process and how people get sucked in. **Lost in Space** was the first one this year to win the JJ Copeland Unexpected Scary Stuff award. This goes to the movie that publicizes itself as being for families/children and then sneaks in stuff that makes JJ go running out of the theater. Since a parent has to go with him when this happens, we are not amused.

Oh, gosh, the temptation to take just a small nap when I'm home all the time. This has been my big downfall. But, as I am getting more geared up to do the quilt art thing, I'm getting better about not being distracted. I no longer nap, but the books are still often too tempting... A Carl Hiaasen one, how's that for synchronicity?

Good to know that Ulrika won TAFF. We're getting her zine in the mail nowadays and it's nice to know that old friends are still out there doing their thing.

There's a web interactive game where you make words from famous names. Elton John isn't too bad, but Aaron Burr is a pain. There's just not enough there to work with. I gave up playing it when it became clear that some people had gathered the names and made lists at home, then ranked the lists in point order and were typing them in as fast as they could type. Maybe they've given up on that stupid idea, and gone on to bother someone else by now. (One of the drawbacks of the Internet is the large number of people with sophomoric humor.)

We also liked **The Fifth Element**. I think we've rented it twice now. **Gattaca** was wierd in an art movie sort of way. I think I agree with you on **Men in Black** winning the Hugo.

So, how's the computer doing? Or have you actually gotten a new now?

I actually like Gene Stewart's piece in Challenger. A good, solid zine. Keep 'em coming.

See my comment to Binker this time for major quilt talk. I'll talk more next time about the piece I'm working on now, but since it's currently still in the conceptual stage, I don't want to talk about it for fear of losing momentum.

Have you seen Kevin Kline in **In and Out**? He's fabulous and it was a great movie. I especially love the dance scene where he tries to keep from dancing but his legs still want to dance.

I still haven't seen **The War of the Coprophages**. The preview bits show far too many cockroaches for me to even think about. Some of the X-Files shows are just plain gross.

My male parental unit decided to help me deal with bullies by teaching me how to punch using his punching bag in the basement. I was 5 or 6 and having problems with a boy in kindergarten. I am told that I bloodied his nose but good... I still have a really good jab.

I have some of Heinlein's juveniles in my preview stack to see if they hold up well enough to give them to Allie. I still remember **Citizen of the Galaxy** with great fondness. Now I just need to find out if my judgement at age 12 holds up.

Thanks for counting up who's first the most. I was pretty sure it was going to be Ned. If he's not first, he's usually pretty darn close, or at least he has been during our tenure.

*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*/Jeff Copeland This explanation of Friday the 13ths is much more lucid than the A/B explanation. Such a nice list you've made... Now if you could just color code it.

Too bad we didn't get that modem. While I can browse the net, I still can't load pages with lots of graphics which makes looking at the other quilters work somewhat problematic...

In Susie's defense, I must point out that she did swipe at a kitchen cabinet when one of the mice was frolicking within. Charlie, the incredibly large cat, is the one who sat and watched a mouse and did nothing.

**Affordable Housing  
in Boulder**



Single Family Homes  
Prices Starting in the 10's  
Ask about our rustic log-front models

 **Wild Bird Center**  
442-1322  
28th Street south of Canyon  
Mon-Sat 10-6, Sun 12-5

**Confessions of a Consistent Liar 66/Arthur Hlavaty** Yes, since commenting on Trygve as a name, I read an article in the camera about some fellow in Nederland who had a do it yourself cryogenic chamber for his grandfather. The article was about him being deported, and his name was Trygve. Life in Boulder....

I disagree on the order to read the Heinlein in. I've already mentioned my fondness for *Citizen of the Galaxy* in my comment to Guy. I wonder how many different rankings we would get if everyone in SFPA did it?

**Peter, Pan & Merry #17/David Schlosser** Colorado got an extra dose of wet weather but that only brought us up to a medium low amount of rain. Certainly, no flooding, etc. that would make the national news. Of course, our monsoon season is August, and that's when we have a chance of flash flooding normally, so we'll see how this year is.

That's too bad to hear about the tax exemption for selling a home being a lifetime deal. I thought it was for each sale. I know the exemption for people over age 55 was a once only deal, but none of the stories I read in the paper carried that info about the new code.

No problem, Jeff can take all of you to Disneyland with him. I'll go fabric shopping at the quilt store in Santa Monica that opened after we left LA.

I hate to just say RAEBNC at this point, so I'll stick in this story about Allie opening her own savings account. Typing your name actually made me think of it. We went to the grocery store where the closest bank branch is located on Tuesday. Filling out forms, talking about all the normal stuff, then the teller explains about the mother's maiden name thing. I laugh and she gives me a funny look. Allie says "Schwarzin" quickly and gives me a so-there look. Then the teller asks her to spell it. Ha. Stumped, just like the rest of the world. But she'll have to learn it now.

**oblio no. 116/Gary Brown** Uh, oh, I'm afraid Allie may have missed the window on selling her Beanie Baby collection. We better put a page up on the web, or sell them on e-bay really quick while they're still a craze. Fortunately, she didn't take the tags off of them because she doesn't really play with them, she just put them on her shelf and she wanted to keep the names straight.

Yea, it's a pity that there's no waitlist but Curt Phillips is doing his best to send folks our way. I've gotten 2 emails this week asking about SFPA because of his referrals. We'll see what comes of it.

Inzer was at DSC and seemed to be doing pretty well, considering. Gosh, just think, you missed George, and seeing The Fabulous Fifi Hoist at the SFPA party. Now aren't you sorry you didn't make it to DSC?

Well, my pagecount certainly seems to be plunging. This zine may help some; I have lots of natter, my Hugo checklist, and a decent attempt at comments. Not to mention another in the series of crazy Boulder stories.

*Tennessee Trash #33/Gary Robe* Okay, maybe you can explain this to me, what the heck is T-ball? How is it different from Little League, or baseball? JJ wanted some baseball equipment and we were looking at bats and some were labeled T-ball and others were labeled baseball and I sure the heck couldn't tell the difference.

Jeff printed the artwork for the OOs when he was working at QMS. We take the pages with the art to the copy center and then do a b&w copy of the TOC onto the art pages. We'll be running out of them the end of this year.

It was good seeing you and your family at DSC. Tell Corliss that my daughter was very impressed with my gold toenails. Especially since they matched my Scholl sandals so well.

We're just now watching the fifth season of Babylon 5. I am cheered to hear that Byron bites it, because I really dislike this whole subplot. I'm looking forward to seeing where the Londo stuff goes.

*Comments/Steve Hughes* The wedding photos are lovely. And I really envy you the honeymoon - the beach shots are beautiful and I'm such a beach lover.

Well, we had the DSC party but Dolbear was the only one who showed much interest and he hasn't followed up. I'm counting on the next OE to be in the south and do some recruiting. Altho, thanks to Curt Phillips, we have a couple of good leads right now.

Interesting argument to Guy about the death penalty. I like your discussion of accepting the risks.

I've been debating whether or not to see **Dark City**. Ebert loved it and I've been seriously disagreeing with him lately so I had my doubts. Your recommendation puts it back on the to-see list.

*Guilty Pleasures/Eve Ackerman*

Interesting way of running into Celko. He shows up in some of the oddest places.

Allie is currently attending the pre-IB middle school here in town and will likely be going on to the IB program in high school. She has certainly benefited from having a peer group that aims for high grades, is active in extra-curricular activities and doesn't think it stupid to read lots. She spent last summer reading Shakespeare, and is exploring more contemporary mainstream fiction this summer. Going into 8th grade, and she's already reading like an English major.

I've added both the Bujold and Shinn books to my reading list. Thanks for the reviews.

*Souf'paw/Richard Brandt*

Good news on the spammers. I hadn't heard about all of this but I am sure glad to hear about it now.

Oh, oh, I was at MidAmeriCon too! And you didn't even know me then...

Jeff was responsible for doing the art on the OOs. We have enough already done for the rest of the year, and then it's up to the next OE. But we'll be sure and pass your suggestion along.... Pillow books, yikes.

*... not pressing hard enough.../mike weber*

If you get an email address for Inzer, pass it along, okay? I'd like to chat with him some more.

Your approach to **The Avengers** movie is the same I use toward the Nero Wolfe books done by some guy who's name I don't remember but it wasn't Rex Stout. They're okay novels, but they are too different from my perception of Archie and Nero so I just think of them as different characters with the same names.

"Last \$10" is my favorite Two Nice Girls song too. I heard it on the local public radio station in Santa Monica while I was working at Interactive. I jumped up and ran down the hall to tell Jeff to listen quick. After I recovered from the shock of them playing it at all.

I skip **Twice Shy** when rereading Francis too. That's the only one I can recall offhand, but I think there are a couple of others. I like the one about the railroads, but then I don't

DEAR ABBY: I may be able to help "Frustrated Husband," whose wife's sex drive was decreasing while his seemed to be increasing. My husband and I were in the same situation. I was tired after working all day, then caring for our daughters and trying to keep the house straight.

Sex never crossed my mind unless my husband mentioned it. I was usually too tired or distracted by all the "to do" lists running through my mind to look forward to a sexy evening.

By chance, I started reading romance novels. Suddenly my sex drive increased dramatically. Some of them are very descriptive, and they caused me to think about sex throughout the day (something my husband says he's always done). The result is, come bedtime, I've been mentally preparing for lovemaking all day long. Sometimes I'm even the initiator. My husband and I are happier and more satisfied.

— BEEN THERE, DOING THAT  
DEAR BEEN THERE: I almost ripped my bodice when I read your solution. Now why didn't that occur to me?

know a lot about railroads and I enjoy the characters of the actors and the way they manipulate the play.

*Trivial Pursuits #77/Janice Gelb*

It was good talking with you at DSC.

Maybe next time we won't all be suffering from Bag Lady Syndrome.

I am really unhappy about the way the Microsoft stuff is going. The latest report, filtered thru Jeff, was that they ruled the browser was an integral part of the operating system because Microsoft wrote the code that way. Well, duh. It's too bad the lawyers don't know more about software.

I found the Classic Comics version of **Moby Dick** to be very useful; automatically skipping all of that whaling minutia that makes the book unreadable.

I have to agree that some of the Hiasen books get more than little odd. I just finished **Native Tongue** and one of the bad guys who is strung out on steroids all the time chews his own foot off when it gets run over by a car. I'm not sure this is even possible given human teeth. It was certainly a bit that exceeded my ability to believe.

Well, now I am really confused by your comment about the capital gains house deal. David says it's a once in a lifetime deal, and here you are talking about a married couple doing it twice in a row. I originally thought it worked more like what you describe, so I guess I'll just be confused.

Oops, sorry about the typo. I end up looking at the zine while I'm typing in the title info, so it was one of those finger slip things.

Nope, salaries in the Bay Area aren't in line with the housing costs, they're just higher enough to get people to move there. Usually, this is the younger, just out of school types, who don't know enough to check on the relative costs of living.

*I've run out of steam, sorry. But this is pretty close to complete comments. See ya in 60.*



I didn't cut out the original news story which preceeded this letter so I'm going to explain. Seems this 20-something dude and his friend used to go up to the top of Flagstaff Mountain and then the dude would rollerblade down and his friend would drive. They would leapfrog each other, and the rollerblader would occassionally grab hold of the bumper of the car to give himself some extra speed. So, there they are, zipping down the mountain road, curving back and forth, and the rollerblader decides to pass the car, swinging out into the other lane just before a blind curve. Unfortunately for him, there was a woman driving up Flagstaff on the way to her wedding. Blam! No more rollerblader. Then a few weeks later we get this letter to the Editor. Only in Boulder....

## DEATH OF SKATER

### Laws contributed to tragedy

**R**e: The death of 27-year-old inline skater Christopher Mock, as reported June 22 and 23: Nobody but an enthusiast would have done what he was doing when he died. I saw the death of Mock as both a tragedy and a thrill.

The thrill was his — and anyone who could vicariously appreciate it — and tragedy is how it ended. But, unlike many in town, I see the laws restricting the use of inline skates, and all enforcement of them, as contributing to his loss of life. Much of what we do is directed by what we have been unable to do.

All I could feel was contempt when I read: "Boulder County Sheriff George Epp said he hoped Sunday's accident will remind people why it's illegal to skate on Flagstaff Road and other streets that have no shoulder or bike lanes."

"This is the kind of thing that we've been specifically afraid would happen."

Inline skating, like skateboarding, bicycling and walking are means of transportation. The highest court in our land has thus far upheld a fundamental right to travel. I wonder if Mock was ever ticketed for using his inline skates on more level streets, as a means to get around.

Risk-taking is a human endeavor. It has been respected as a healthful thing

to do. Risk has no meaning unless someone gets hurt or dies doing it. Risks are things to respect, not outlaw.

Obviously, many folks can live years without many enthusiastic moments, but others of us — myself included — see enthusiasm as part of our esteems. We all eventually die, either of old age or something gets us, but sometimes I think a lot of people die from loss of esteem.

I always thought it was wrong to kill people. These laws kill people.

MARK S. KERN  
Boulder

The thought of a 24 year veteran of the Boulder Valley School District teaching staff not understanding what 50th percentile means is just so reassuring, don't you think?

## Tests don't tell the whole story

I am writing in regard to "Education Fads Have Weakened Schools" by Joan Beck of the Chicago Tribune (Commentary in the Thursday, March 5, Daily Camera). Frankly, I am quite weary of the harsh criticism of American schools and students. Joan Beck tells us we are in major trouble because our high school seniors could only beat out kids from Cyprus and South Africa in Math, and essentially no one on Physics test scores, as if this were the only way to measure the success of American adolescents and children. How sad.

Ms. Beck suggests the way to correct the myriad of horrible blunders in American schools which include: "whole language," "whole math"....(after having taught 24 years I've never heard that one!), busing, ability grouping vs. mainstreaming, (her language) and Afrocentrism is by doing research. She suggests we need a research agency much like the RDA to create credible research in Education and thus initiate a sound direction which will one day yield those high scores.

As a former teacher and a concerned citizen I have to say I am resentful of the insatiable competitive attitude that surrounds every publication of test scores without any regard to the individual lives represented behind those numbers. Just stop and think about it! If everyone had scores above the 50th percentile who would be comfortable and satisfied doing the diverse variety of work it takes to keep our society functioning? I believe we need to bring a level of sacredness to our work. We need to ask ourselves: "in our work, are we contributing to the well being of the earth and the well being of others?" And furthermore we need to ask: "Does my work bring me joy?" If we can answer 'yes' we are fortunate. Test scores in 4th and 8th grade are not the only predictors of these life answers.

Every person does not need to understand physics or calculus to do their life's work. If a student is pursuing work requiring higher mathematical thinking, then they need to be skilled, the issue is... not everyone does. So perhaps the answer lies in honoring the range of children we have; not criticizing them. Smaller class size would be a valuable help as well as praise for the hard working dedicated teachers who are with your children every day encouraging them to find their "sacred life's work."

NANCY WILLIAMS  
Boulder