
OFFLINE READER

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From: Irv Koch, 3630 Salem Dr., Lithonia, GA 30038-2941; 770-593-3350. irvkoch@sprintmail.com works better than phone.

GRUMBLE GRUMBLE ... GRUMBLE!!!

The investing situation has grown far far worse. "Practical" inflation is outrunning me, more and more, so that meals other than at fast food places have gone back to being a near luxury as they were when I had no decent income. Ability to "grow" has been reduced to "poor at best" because I no longer have enough to work with and what I do have to work with, I have a much harder time risking. This has also dropped my ability to increase income to near nil. So, I need a job, worse and worse. The Kmart bankruptcy removed what amounted to another two weeks pay. I'm better off waiting until 2003 to get whatever the BONDHOLDERS (thank ghu I didn't have the stock) will be given, but meanwhile, besides not having the income, somewhere between half and two thirds of what I put into it, is tied up as well (that is, I should get back much more than the current value). Then when I get the money back, it will have to go into something with a lower yield as well as fewer dollars per year ... permanently. On Bethlehem Steel (Preferred Stock), the best I'll ever likely get is about 9% of what I put into it, and may be a longer wait than Kmart to recover that. (Dumping now, I can only get back 2% or 3% of my money -- with lots of luck.)

My credit card total owed had been rising about \$1000 a month ... that I couldn't pay ... not wouldn't. This may have slacked off, and some has been dropped to 1.7% per month interest via the balance transfer route, but ... this is NOT GOOD.

I've sent out many resumes. I won't say "more than I can count" because most have been via e-mail and it's easy to keep a record. They're either in a specific e-mail subfolder, on Accessatlanta.com's "my stuff" list, or on Monster.com's "my stuff" list. Job hunting, since I last did it, even not seriously, has gone online. This is good. It makes it easier to achieve the same amount of frustration and run into a slightly different set of hazards. Scams. Bogus listings put up by agencies for one reason or another. Getting ignored. Dealing with an endless sea of "possibilities" with, each, very low probability. I've given up on the Atlanta Journal Constitution (AJC) at this point and almost suspended the other two until I finish my SFPA zine and do some more Federal applications.

I say "almost," because applying for most Accessatlanta and Monster.com listings only requires clicking a few buttons. The time and effort is spent doing the search and deciding what's "a possible." It's easier to just do this every few days (rather than every day) than let the whole mess drop.

So I didn't read the newspaper want adv's this time, even to start. Not on paper. I did it via www.ajc.com's want adv's -- and -- pretty much -- I can skip the much more time consuming hunt for Jobs Display adv's -- which in paper form take up pages of paper. If they have an email address, I send -- otherwise not. Later, if I don't get anything, I can start sending snail mail or figure out how to fax from my machine. The surprise is the large percentage of these that want you to FAX them a resume. Some want you to phone them if interested -- but on previous outings, so many of these were bogus (trying to suck you into a presentation for their sales or multi-level-marketing deal, for example), that I'm skipping these. They also tend to be below \$10.35 an hour (or \$21,528 per year).

The good news is that I *STILL* can hold out for that (or GS-3 -- more like \$9.20 per hour -- but 26 days per year annual leave, four hours per two weeks of sick leave build-up, and other benefits).

I'm not signing up for all the million online listing deals either. It takes time and is more likely to lead to duplication (which means whoever gets the several identical resumes from me will toss them ALL without reading). I can always switch to others if these give no feedback/results, and, so far, AJC, Accessatlanta, and Monster appear sufficient. The later two have their own peculiarities in how I have to track what I've already checked, responded to, etc. As is, the responses from Federal, while not great, have been sufficient to turn me off messing with these much, at all.

But, they were good enough. I may need to put up some variant resumes and I certainly need to compose cover letters, but ... so far, I'm getting some responses even if no true interviews. I do not consider sales jobs as true interviews nor those that are wild goose chases --

situations in which if either party knew the other, there would never have been an interview -- like ... they never saw a resume on me to start with and the third and fourth parties who set it up ... weren't paying attention. I've had one of each but no real interview, so far. But it's not been long either and I've received few "sorry no match" responses. So maybe they're still sorting out what they were sent.

I did sign up with one agency so far, Adecco. This is one of the two employment agencies I figure on doing. I was highly underwhelmed. OTOH, it appears you can, and must, to do any good, sign up with each of their area offices independently -- they don't talk -- much. And ... they immediately ALMOST sent me on a wild goose chase. I'll give them a few weeks, contacting them regularly as you're supposed to do, and then forget them (or maybe just forget them NOW). Maybe even scratch them off the list and go with some other agency as one of the "two." This one, BTW, was the Northlake/LaVista/Tucker office. The second agency I intend will be Raandstad, as close to Buckhead/downtown as they have an office.

How these agencies work, re non-paper applications and processing, has changed too. I'll give Adecco credit for at least taking a paper resume since the first possible client wanted one, even though they can't, in their normal system, deal with resumes via e-mail or upload from disk into their program.

Civil Service has been another story. Most of these require paper, still, sort of. And you are no longer allowed to go to most agency actual offices -- and the physical OPM Jobs Center apparently no longer even exists nor has for quite a while. They expect the lowest laborer to be able to get on a computer at a public library and find the Job Announcements online. (This is Federal. Dekalb County is another story and basically on hold 'til I run out of better leads to pursue. The state -- forget it.) Basically, you go to agency web sites or www.usajobs.opm.gov. If you're not already "in house," the vast majority of openings are posted on one of those. And you can find agency sites online, via search, if not the OPM site.

So the issue becomes, instead of how many of the 11++ federal personnel offices in Atlanta do I want to keep up on, how many sites? And, OBTW, it helps to know that many of the jobs for a particular agency (like OPM itself or the IRS), even if in the next office to one served by an Atlanta personnel office, are serviced/announced by one in CA or PA! Cute. Very ... "cute." Going to the OPM site, but searching via job location, picks these up. You just send your application to wherever. And I HAVE a good OF612 package -- and can either e-mail, upload in chunks (keep reading on why that is), or e-mail.

And, yes, I did take the test for the cattle call IRS GS-3 temp. clerk jobs. I'm scoring lower and lower on clerical tests these days. New type tests and lack of practice -- I hope. But, I made the cut to get on the Register for IRS Atlanta Service Center. Likely they'll still take me as planned but in March or April instead of mid-January. If not, and I still need to go that route, now I know to take the test in AUGUST, as soon as they start giving it -- and <sigh> to go for the GS4 tax examining assistant job/group I didn't want to have to do ... AGAIN. But I'll still not accept night shift nor "remote locations" as I did last time (1987). The default plan is still to get my foot in their door and then work into better and higher jobs until I get to GS <grumble> 7.

I now need \$36,000 a year in year 2001 money for 10 years (and have less than 4 years to work up to it). The fed's if "regular" Civil Service are best for me as I get 26 days a year vacation as soon as they get all my employment records straight, and have some other benefits (like matching up to 7% of my salary in a "thrift savings plan"). (Plus another \$4k a year to make up for the Kmart disaster, which, alas, may not be possible.)

But CDC is the top target, not IRS. I actually got referred to a Selecting Supervisor as among Best Qualified on a GS-6 SECRETARY job (at Corporate Square no less -- which is near my first -- 1976 -- job location in Atlanta). From their web register no less. So I conclude my OF 612 "package" is decent and only needs a modest amount of additional work.

I'm also currently under referral, non-competitive, for a GS4 general flunky clerk at OPM in the Federal Center downtown. That one was a straight paper send in.

Anyway, and skipping the long version, I decided to forget the DLA semi-online Contract clerk/etc. register, that I kept on my desk for weeks as "to do." Too much work for too little chance of getting an interview or the like. CDC and "all agencies with Atlanta area openings" off USAJOBS appears sufficient. If not, I'll eventually go after VA and their online system. Most of these allow you to cut and paste from your resume or OF612 into what amounts to an online OF612.

The problem with VA is they turn out to be "excepted service" rather than "competitive civil service." That means they don't have to follow anyone else's rules. On hiring ... <shrug>... regular civil service doesn't count them for seniority in many ways and it's MAYBE vice

versa. If they don't count my seniority (15.5 years) for LEAVE ... that is NOT good....

Yeah, I've been told that I should register for EVERYTHING and send applications to every conceivable possibility. And I could indeed spend 10 hours a day, 7 days a week, doing that, unlike the way things used to be. But my experience is that it would not only not increase my chances but lead to wild goose chases or worse in which I'd be tied up somewhere and miss out when a "real job" came along.

We'll see.

Things could be worse, I said last time, and for fan activity they got worse. I have now dropped off, or will soon drop off, everything online except one private (sff.net) newsgroup. I quit GA Filk. (And almost immediately took on Secretary of Atlanta Sisters in Crime -- though that's only 4 meetings a year and signing a few forms.) One too many persons demanding special treatment and claiming the Chair or "someone" said I MUST give it to them ... on top of a long list of other irritations which were cumulative. Basically, fandom is no longer worth the effort in most cases. This APA and an annual appearance, Sunday, at Chattacon, to keep my string, will likely be all that remain. If I do get a job, considering I also have to take care of a house, and will have long commutes, that's all I'll have time for.

I listed most of my books (Irv's Books, not quite imaginary company) at Half.com -- the problem will be getting to the Post Office during business hours if I get a job.

FOR SFPA 225 -- MC's on 22

Ned B. in NEWS 200: I never made it to your place in December as I was going to, to get an epoxy typewriter key. Since my father-in-law seems happy to use the manual typewriter with one key cap missing, this may eventually just "go away" like the long delayed Celko-Brooks-Hughes-Koch-etc. gathering of Atlanta metro SFPAns and ex-SFPAns.

Re your comment to Norm M. on THE BALL AND THE CROSS, what were you doing in Auckland, NZ? As for "theological fantasy," I wouldn't bother to split the definition from sf&f in general.

Re use of human brains from cadavers in surgery ... interesting. So the question now is, did Joe Mayhew get any of that stuff put in his head?

Yes, Ned, I'm still planning to drop SFPA when my dues run out. It's not the cost but the time, and I've got MYRIAD still.

On never ending war (re comment on 1984), that's the NORMAL state of human affairs. Recent history, even with the current "war on terror," is highly abnormal.

Re IHOP, it's not supposed to be "fast," as it's a sit down restaurant. Pretty decent, too.

Re Celko being married when he lived in Lithonia. I don't think he ever lived out here. He lived in East Lake while married, though, and, of course, is Czech, not true Southern.

Ned B. in SHELF 23: The Eileen Gunn you mention working on Avram's letters is no relation to James Gunn of KS? (I happen to know his wife isn't interested in SF, and I don't think he has a daughter, but ???)

On your catalog from Museum Replicas: I thought Hank still acted as a consultant to these people even if supposedly retired.

Norm M. in TYNDALLITE V3N98: Back to the Austronesians of Madagascar. You say they sailed directly from the Sunda Strait. Could be, but from what I read, they first reached North Africa, picked up some locals (accounting for 15% of the genes nowadays), and then worked their way down the African coast.

And ... I add your page from Searles on "The first fanzine," to my collection on this matter.

Richard D. in GAZETTE 72(B? -- Oct 2001 in any case): There have been no more deer in the neighborhood, since last report, though dead smaller animals are still common in the streets.

Re knowing people on the Pentagon hit plane: I never met him, but Dennis Caswell, brother of Ellen Caswell, of Knossos, the little f&sf group I still belong to, in DC metro, was on it. We'd heard enough about him and his family, from many years back, that it was (too) close enough.

On Meisha Merlin being small ... no ... Baker & Taylor decided they were large enough to be put in the same category as Simon & Schuster, Random House, etc., so they aren't small, therefore not "small press" any way you look at it. Putting out 20 new titles a year plus keeping ALL previous titles in print, is larger than the sf&f part of many "major" publishers.

GHLIII in MUNDI 186: Re meeting your old classmates from high school: I agree that with Rose-Marie you can pretty much quit thinking about the past as you are now the one with the best luck.

And my last (I hope) word on the bid is simply www.secfi.org/concarolinas. It, and almost anything to do with fandom, now, is someone else's problem.

Of course if I REALLY wanted to bore the pack of you (SFPA) to death, I'd run copies of my resumes and OF612 through here. Maybe next time <evil grin>.

Sheila S. in REVENANT 9: I'll stay in SFPA (re my dropping out) until my dues run out, just to bother some people <G>.

On Robert Asprin: He'll be at GA Filk 2003 (Atlanta, early Jan). I don't think I will though (part of the "too much fandom" deal).

Steve H. in COMMENTS 13: It's not so much "market" problems that have killed me, as individual stocks and one bond. I'm still getting 8.5%+ yield overall -- based on what I paid for stuff. Valuation can't be spent. YOU guys can live off the interest on Treasury bonds -- you've got no telling how much more than I do. (And I saw where NOVA was making more big deals lately -- not sure if that will be good or bad, long run, but I think you did well to cash in when you did.)

You mention diplomatic core (corp? -- rambunctious spell checker you got there) prostitutes (would have been better for Clinton). Tell us more about that corp. (I've not heard of it before but it sounds plausible.)

Randy C. in PRESS V2N18: On Saturns: Your got an impressive but not unusual number of miles from your last one and a darn good deal. I went downhill on this last trade (from an SC2 to the bottom of the bottom of their line, which they had to lower, just for me).

Re homesteading: I only recently FINALLY dealt with Kay's stuff that came up from Jackson (her parents) right after we moved in. Even unpacked the Cuisinart between the time the mailing came in and I wrote this -- it was the last item still unpacked after three years. Couldn't work it though and it's customer service has the record for being the world's worst. Maybe Kay can figure it out -- it was her idea.

Gary R. in TRASH 44: Patents you got? Neat! What others do you have besides the ones you mentioned in issue 44, how did you come to get them, and what do they do?

Liptor is good stuff. It's the best of the anti cholesterol/triglyceride drugs from the view point of cost & low dose. Works for me and a lot of other people I know.