

# The Sphere

Vol. 200 no. 1 is published for the 229th Mailing of The Southern Fandom Press Alliance by Don Markstein, 14836 N. 35th St., Phoenix, AZ 85032, (602)485-7860, ddmartstein@cox.net, don@toonopedia.com, <http://www.toonopedia.com>, <http://www.uncadonald.com>. Headline type: Binner. Since I didn't do anything special for my 100th consecutive mailing, I don't see why I should for my 200th.

I see Saddam Hussein is now willing to let UN inspectors look around, and it doesn't seem to have had the slightest effect on the Bush administration's desperate struggle to find some threadbare fig leaf of approval for attacking Iraq. Is anybody surprised?

I suspect he's merely making a point. It's the same point made by the Taliban when they offered to turn Osama bin Laden over, if the U.S. government would simply provide evidence that he actually committed the crime. (While I'm sure nobody doubts he did, it is customary to provide court-grade evidence when requesting extradition.)

Both made that point eloquently. In the latter case, pyrrhically as well, and I'm sure it won't be long before we see how pyrrhically Saddam made it. But certainly, both made it eloquently. Not, of course, that either of them is what a reasonable person would call a good guy, but give them credit — they were eloquent in making their point.

In case you're one of those politically religious types that missed it, the point is simply this:

The greatest threat to world peace today is the U.S. government's notion of what constitutes "defense".

Meanwhile, the attempts to provide that fig leaf reached so stupendous a point of desperation that Cheney himself actually traveled to the Middle East, hoping to find it **there!** And of course, by the time he was finished, they were more adamantly opposed to the idea than ever, impossible as that level of opposition may seem.

And I can just see his attempts. Even the Republicans right here in SFPA are so convinced of the Truth and Righteousness of their point of view, they honestly, sincerely believe anyone who doesn't share it is a moron; and a guy like Cheney has **got** to be even more steeped in the religion than they are. If he came across even one tenth as badly as they do, and it seems unlikely he could be anywhere near so accommodating, then the response of any reasonable person (much less an Arab leader) would just about have to be "What an arrogant jerk!"

## The Two Grand Conspiracies

Somebody on a message board last month made a remark about how he's tired of people using Nazis as a metaphor for evil politicians, when there are far worse evils in the world. I probably wouldn't have found any flaw in the statement if it had stopped there, because there are greater evils. But he went

on to note that the Nazis were responsible for "only" 25 million deaths (quotes his — he wasn't trying to make out like this was okay or anything), whereas **Communists**, the true "very symbol" of evil, killed 100 million.

I don't know exactly where he got his figures, but I'm not disputing them. I replied that it appears to me, that makes Nazis lots worse — in Europe alone, during the mere decade or so they were in power, they managed to kill a quarter as many people as the Commies did all over the entire world, during practically the whole 20th century.

He said that was merely because the Germans went about it like Germans, the most coldly efficient people on Earth, always do — set up mechanisms to carry it out on a routine basis, using the techniques of mass production.

I'll skip the question of whether or not that's another way of stating they were more evil. What I couldn't believe I was seeing was this guy **making excuses** for the Communists — saying their less impressive kill record (as prorated according to the greater scope of their opportunity) was merely due to the fact that they were handicapped by not being German. That their Will to Kill is actually much stronger (tho at this point he didn't offer supporting data) but their abilities fall short, as would anyone's, of those of Teutonic extraction.

Let's not even get into whether or not this is a crock of shit. It's quite a statement even if all his explicit premises are true. And by the way, need I mention which brand of politician he enthusiastically supports?

I have never understood why some people believe, apparently as an article of faith, that despots who call themselves "Communist" are *ipso facto* worse than those who don't. But I can certainly observe its strength. Just as an example, I know people who actually believe, with all their hearts, that Elian Gonzales's father was acting on Castro's orders when he pleaded for his son's return, rather than on the plain, simple and perfectly obvious motive of wanting what was left of his family reunited, just because Castro calls himself a Communist and all people in Communist regimes just naturally act only on orders of their despotic rulers.

Can you **imagine!**

And yet the people who believe this are utterly blind to the evil of any other Latin American regime.

There is a genre of conspiracy theory which holds that the history of the past few centuries is driven by a struggle between two grand conspiracies. Some

call them P1 and P2, some call them the British Aristocracy and the Vatican, and some don't even give names to them. Personally, I'm not gullible enough to believe any particular theory, any more than I'm gullible enough to believe there's nothing at all underneath the froids that densely litter history books and newspapers.

But man, when I see how rabid some people get about Communists, and how casually they dismiss the thought that anybody else could threaten our alleged freedom, I begin to wonder if perhaps the names of those two grand conspiracies might be Communist and Republican.

## Speaking of Which

While we're on the subject of somebody besides Commies threatening our freedom, how's about this business of turning all the meter readers and telephone repairmen into spies for the government! And this business of locking American citizens, on American soil, up as "enemy combatants", without bothering with such obsolete "technicalities" (as they like to call Constitutional rights which are exercised in a courtroom) as filing charges.

And this, when according to the Constitution, we're not even at war! Boy, if Clinton had tried anything as thoroughly dictator-like as that . . .

A few weeks ago, one of those religious Republican types — not Orthodox, really, but faithful enough to think I'm a liberal — came by for a visit. The conversation happened to drift in that direction, and he performed a truly impressive feat of mental gymnastics. He defended both of those programs on strictly Republican principles! I'd give the gist, but it was kind of hard to follow because it kept drifting in and out of alien dimensions.

I suppose I could probably mount a half-assed argument in favor of them, if given a free choice of points of view. But to start from wanting government off our backs, and get there — wow!

## Ten Months Old and No Longer a Virgin

After knocking off work one day last week, I staggered through the living room on my way to bed, and what should I see but Rachel (currently 20 years old), enjoying *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* on AMC. And with her was Nathan, now ten months old. I must've seen that movie 40 times in the thousand-plus weeks it's been running (mostly before either of them were born), but what the heck, it's always fun, so I stopped to watch.

By the way, I consider *Rocky Horror* almost entirely wholesome. The only scenes I'd try to avoid letting a child see are the ones with Eddie — the axe murder

at the end of his first appearance, and pulling the tablecloth back at dinner. The rest is just grown-ups acting silly. And even if it is horrible and immoral and all that, what the heck, Rachel is old enough to see it and Nathan is too young to care.

Nathan's response was the same as when he first saw *The 5000 Fingers of Dr. T* — he really got into the song-and-dance scenes, laughing and swaying in time to the music, but didn't much care for the rest. He was amused, tho, when Mom and Grandpa gave standard audience response lines, in unison.

And how young everybody looks! Susan Sarandon, who now plays parents of people that age . . . Barry Bostwick, the nigh-elderly mayor on *Spin City* . . . and of course Tim Curry! I see him in trailers for the new version of *Family Affair*, and I think, who is that wrinkled old man? I've enjoyed his performances wherever I've seen them (I even liked him as the voice of Kilokhan on *Superhero Samurai Syber Squad*), but I'll never be able to watch him without a flash of Frank N. Furter.

By the way, Rachel's boyfriend (24) complains that he used to enjoy going once in a while, but lately it's been taken over by goths. I suppressed laughter. I wonder how many times the crowd has turned over, and the outgoing ones thought it had been taken over by young weirdos.

By the way, Nathan walks now, and has done so since about a week before he was 10 months old (he's probably 11 months when you read this). At least, he walks when he feels like taking the trouble — mostly, he'd rather crawl, because his legs are still a little wobbly, but he can really make time on all fours. He also climbs up onto the couch at will, which calls for a new level of babyproofing.

Also by the way (by another way?), tho there's some controversy over this, I believe I'm justified in saying Nathan's first word was "duck". He once said something that sounded very much like it, when referring to a foot-long rubber duckie of mine that I've been letting him play with. (I'd like him to personalize it for me by making a permanent mark or two, before I give it a place with the rest of the toy ducks in my office.) One or two others disagree — back when G was his only consonant, he is alleged to have said "agua" when reaching for a bottle of water. I certainly don't have any objection to the outward expression of his Hispanic heritage (his father's name is Trevino), but — no, his first word was "duck", and don't you try to tell me different.

## Don Markstein's Toonopedia™

Well, I passed the 500-article mark, as expected, and I'm noting the fact in my 200th issue, also as expected. I didn't do anything special to mark either

occasion, tho, except mention it here.

New articles since last mailing are: Barney Baxter; Clara Cluck; Clutch Cargo; Clyde Crashcup; two things called Dial H for Hero; Elongated Man, Gummi Bears; Invisible Scarlet O'Neil; Jungle Jim; Lady Luck; Mad magazine, Metamorpho the Element Man; Mighty Samson; Miss America; Peter Piltdown (aka Rocky Stoneaxe); Peter Potamus; Peter Rabbit; Phantom 2040; Rip Hunter, Time Master; Shazzan; She-Hulk; Space Family Robinson; Spy Smasher; Tasmanian Devil; Taz-Mania; Touché Turtle; and The Web. New total: 520. The 500th was Metamorpho, if you're interested. But then, if you were interested, you'd be reading this section, and I suspect you're not. That's okay, tho, because I do it mainly to help keep track of progress myself.

The possible obscuros this time are Lady Luck (a four-page back-up in the weekly *Spirit* newspaper section, justified by the fact that Will Eisner was connected with it), Peter Piltdown (an obscure 1930s caveman, justified because he was revived under the name Rocky Stoneaxe and ran in 1950s and '60s *Boys' Life*, so most of the men of my generation have seen it), Peter Rabbit (justified by the fact that it ran in Sunday newspapers more than 30 years), Clara Cluck (no real justification, but she was introduced on a slow anniversary day and I had to do the article so "Today in Toons" would have something to link to), and maybe a couple of borderlines. Not too bad. I can afford to be way more self-indulgent than that.

One of the not-too-obscures is an odd case. I have a general rule against putting in things less than ten years old; and tho I say it's not hard-and-fast, the fact is, I didn't have articles on anything more recent than that. Until now. Phantom 2040 started in 1994. Amazingly enough, I got through the whole thing, thinking the cartoon had started in 1992, then in the once-over before posting the article, found it hadn't. I could throw away the article and the work I'd done on it, or I could hold it back for two years, or I could simply post it, and I decided to simply post it, because as I said myself, the rule isn't hard and fast. But I did sneak it in, not noting it in the recent additions or mentioning it where I usually mention such things. Except here, of course, and you're not reading this anyway.

I don't have any recent tabulations on how many page views I've had since opening, but it hit 3,000,000 some months ago, and they're currently coming in at an average rate of about 8-9,000 a day. Highest traffic in August was over 11,000; lowest was under 6,500, so, quite a range. "Today in Toons" is being read an average of a little over 100 times a day. For September so far, my ten most popular articles are Bugs Bunny, Tweety Bird, Mighty Mouse, Popeye, Speedy Gonzales, Droopy, Road Runner, Mr. Magoo and Casper the Friendly Ghost, in that order.

I occasionally get letters from fanboys who say I

should do more superheroes, especially Marvel, because after all, they're the only comics/cartoon characters anybody is interested in. But the only superheroes in my top 25 are Justice League of America (#16) and Superman (#25), and neither of those is Marvel. (I enjoy pointing that out when the fanboys write. They've got worse tunnel vision than the people who live in a bi-polar world of Republicans and liberals.)

As always, find it at <http://www.toonopedia.com>

## We Have Cats . . .

. . . the way people sometimes have cockroaches or lice, i.e., as pests. One of our neighbors used to feed hers outside, and of course, she needed to put out more and more food as time went on, because her cat's friends would come by to share. In fact, they came from miles around to eat with him, and quite a few moved into the area on a permanent basis because of the genial eating conditions.

She moved away years ago, but the cats, or their descendants, are still here. They've since found alternate means of feeding themselves, not one of which enhances the ambience of the neighborhood one little bit.

One of their favorite shitting places used to be right outside my office window. I think that was because they knew I didn't like them (I sometimes try to run over them with my bike), but it's hard to be sure because I don't make much noise at work, and it must not have been easy to smell me through the window, over their own effluvia, so how could they know I was there? Anyway, when I started in with chemical warfare a few years ago, i.e., spreading stuff around the yard that they don't like being around, I paid particular attention to that area, and eventually they stopped using it.

Speaking of spreading stuff around the yard, the best suggestion I got was to go down to the zoo and ask for a gallon or so of urine from large African or South American cats, and "mark" the yard with it. I never tried it because the "local" zoo is seriously out-of-the-way from here, but it does seem like a good whiff of panther piss would make them want to go elsewhere. (We'll set aside the question of whether or not it would make me want to go elsewhere.) If they put the stuff in spray bottles, carefully cleansed of microorganisms, it would probably sell pretty well in neighborhoods like ours. In fact, I would suggest "Panther Piss" as a brand name.

We never got to the point of putting poison out for them, but I strongly suspect at least one of our neighbors did. In fact, I suspect that may be what happened to Russkie, the only cat I've allowed in my house during the past 20 years or so, whom I thought so highly of, I even wrote an obituary for him here. (Not that Russkie was the only cat who has

been in my house during the past 20 years or so — on a couple of occasions, believe it or not, I've actually had to chase neighborhood cats out!

The problem isn't as bad as it was a few years ago. (GiGi says a large one has decided our back yard belongs to him, which is why the others don't hang around much anymore — out back, anyway.) But an occasional creative solution for the problem is still quite welcome. I recently came up with one.

## We Have Mice

There have been several instances in recent weeks of family members seeing little dark blurs scampering across the kitchen, and even more of rustling sounds in areas where nothing should rustle. Aside from general disgust, the current scare over hanta virus, etc., either of which would be quite enough to motivate us to get rid of the things, we currently have a baby in the house. With Nathan getting more and more mobile, we absolutely can not tolerate anything sharing our home that is smaller than him, and has teeth.

Poison is absolutely out — not just because it often makes them crawl into the walls to die, and thus stink up the house (which I understand is true even of the ones that advertise they make mice crave the great outdoors before perishing), but also because Nathan might get into it, no matter how careful we are about keeping it away from him.

I also don't want a cat unless absolutely necessary. Aside from my attitude toward the ones that have already taken up residence around here, I just don't like the things — or any animals that have to be taken care of, for that matter. (Russkie was a special case — he endeared himself to me by being the first living thing Karen, who had early developmental problems, ever called by name.)

Which leaves traps. I had mice once before, back in the early 1970s, and found spring traps quite effective. In the current situation, tho, there are drawbacks, mainly the fact that with hanta virus relatively common only a couple of hundred miles from here, to the extent possible, I'd like to keep all their bodily fluids inside their bodies. Cage-style traps have several advantages, one of which (says a Web site we've consulted on the subject) is that the mice are perfectly content there, with the food inside, allowing you to kill them in relative peace.

The disadvantage is that you do have to kill them, up close and personal, and then deal with their little carcasses. While I'm not averse to that on moral or ethical grounds, I'd just as soon avoid it if I can.

However, I've found glue traps much to my liking. Trying to get the food at the center would be the equivalent of wading through a room full of rubber cement, knee deep, on all fours. The mouse never succeeds in stealing the bait. It's like a tar baby. By

the time you find him in the morning, his struggles have usually put him on his back, with all his hair stuck in it, and he is quite, quite helpless. Then you simply dispose of the still-living mouse along with the used trap, and let him die alone, at his leisure.

The disadvantage there, says the Web site (and as I've found in practice) is that they can make rather unpleasant vocalizations when they're stuck like that. But even that has its sunny side.

I usually dispose of them by simply putting the trap and mouse, glue side up, on the ground outside, and waiting for them to go away by themselves. In a situation like that, those unpleasant mouse sounds can be loosely translated as "Here, kitty, kitty, kitty . . ."

Reassigning the former pest as pest bait, and the mouse trap as a cat trap, is much nicer than putting out poison. For one thing, while it's not always lethal (for that, I'd have to get all four legs and/or the mouth tangled up), it strikes me as a fairly satisfactory level of torture. For another, any non-feral cat I happen to catch that way can probably limp home and (if he's willing to sit still) get it cut off, and won't ultimately be harmed — unless you count a hard lesson in staying the hell away from my house.

### Gary Brown:

>cringe< I am Seriously Embarrassed by having been quoted in Dan Raviv's book on Marvel's recent business history. I haven't read it myself (and won't until I see it at the public library — I am certainly not going to put money into that phoney's pocket). But from those who have, I understand he took what I said and applied it to some stupid fan discussion of the Spider-Man Clone Saga, which I never even read because I'd long since given up on Spider-Man when they did it. Not that I'd have been likely to disagree with the general opinion that it was garbage, but at my age, I Do Not Appreciate being made to look like a teenage fanboy, who feels Betrayed to the point of endless strong invective, when they publish a story that changes things in a way he doesn't like.

In reality, the comments were about Marvel's business practices — in particular, a truly shabby thing they'd done to their freelancers just then. In other words, the strong opinion I expressed had to do with the professional side of comics, not the fan side, about which my strongest opinion is just a sort of unfocused, generalized disgust.

And Raviv knew what he was doing when he switched my comments around. He phoned me while writing the book, and we discussed it long enough, and in enough detail, to where he could not possibly have thought I was a teenage fan rather than a 50+-year-old writer of comics, or that the discussion I'd taken part in was about the content of the comics rather than the company's business practices.

And if you think I sound disgruntled, you should have heard another guy, who was quoted from the same discussion, in the same section of the book. His early response (in correspondence between him, me and the person who runs the board where the discussion took place) was to suggest suing the jerk! (I'd name him, but it was private correspondence — but I'll go so far as to say he's a comic book writer/artist who is a good deal better known than me, or most other mortals for that matter.)

I, however, simply chalk it up to an arrogant journalist, convinced he's creating truth rather than reporting it, taking a pile of data he's collected on a subject he has no real interest in and dumping it all out into a book, then moving on to the next exploitable topic he has no real interest in. It's not like he was dealing with real people, y'know.

Anyway, if I had a nickel for every untrue or falsely-slanted statement in print that casts a bad light on me, I'd pocket a bundle off of SFPA alone.

Re: Your question about how expensive it would be to put up a SFPA Web site. Web publishing is dirt cheap. Domains can easily be had in the \$15-20 range, tho hosting costs by the month. While sfpa.com is owned by the San Francisco Paralegal Association, sfpa.org by the Southern Forestry Products Association and sfpa.net by the San Francisco Psychology Association, new top-level domains are currently opening up. At the moment, sfpa.us returns an error code, meaning it's probably available, and I know where we could buy it for \$42 with a year's hosting thrown in! (Or vice-versa, actually — this place will sell a year's hosting for \$3.50 a month, which is cheap enough, and throw in a .us domain registration at no extra charge.) And if sfpa.us is taken by the time the mailing is out, there are more coming in, besides which, it should be possible to get one registered in any of dozens of foreign countries with their own top-level domains (I understand a lot of music companies have opened offices in Chad, whose top-level domain is .cd).

As for hosting, I'm currently paying \$8.95 a month to get unacadonald.com hosted, and Real Soon Now, I'm going to get off my lazy ass and move it to a server that charges even less. The Toonopedia™ costs more because it's bigger and does huge piles of data transfer, but even the \$18.95 a month I'm paying for it isn't breaking me — and anyway, I could get it cheaper if I seriously shopped around.

Message boards can be had as freeware, and I'm sure someone here has the expertise to get one running. (I don't have one on toonopedia.com because at the moment, I can't afford the data transfer. For a site like mine, they chew up gigabytes like popcorn, but an organization the size of SFPA should be able to run one at a very reasonable rate.)

So the answer to your question is — with the will to have one, and a volunteer to operate it, the mone-

tary cost of a SFPA Web site would be practically negligible.

And if even that's too much, what the hell, get one at Tripod or Xoom, where they give the things away free to anyone who doesn't mind it carrying ads.

What I want to know is — is there one for CAPA-alpha? I wouldn't want to rejoin, but if there were a message board I could drop in on occasionally, it might be nice to say hi.

Ahem. I **do** have a feature on the Toonopedia™ site that's designed to bring people back on a regular basis. And believe me, it isn't always easy keeping "Today in Toons" going. The only reason I do it is, there are quite a few regulars who would miss it if it were gone, and I place a great deal of value in them.

As for Spongebob Squarepants — great cartoon! It'll have an entry, count on it. But not until either it's ten years old, or I relax the policy on how old the toons have to be.

## Tom Feller:

Good take on the "using drugs helps terrorists" advertising campaign. Mine is a lot less snappy. The only reason terrorists are involved in the drug trade is because of the high profits engendered by the fact that they're against the law. So it isn't **using** drugs that helps terrorists, but **keeping them illegal**. Let people choose what to ingest into their own bodies (another way of saying "get government off our backs"), and the terrorists will have to find other ways to finance themselves.

I don't know why planes can't be built so there simply isn't any human-size access at all between the cockpit and the passenger area. The pilots can board through a separate outside entrance; and if coffee or food or something needs to be passed to them, let it be done through the sort of thing that separates cashiers from customers in many self-service gas stations.

## Arthur Hlavaty:

Like you, I don't believe Bush II or members of his administration planned the 9/11 attack. Unlike you, tho, I don't necessarily disbelieve it either. I especially don't disbelieve the possibility that they had as good a reason to know it was coming as Roosevelt had of the attack on Pearl Harbor, but like Roosevelt, callously let it happen because they knew it would advance their political agenda — beginning with but by no means limited to the sudden cessation of criticism and inquiry over how he achieved office.

Again, I don't necessarily believe this — but I'm very much looking forward to the results of future inquiry into the matter of who knew what, when, should the ability to inquire into U.S. government doings somehow survive his administration.

At the very least, one thing is clear. For all the effort Republicans and their gleeful bandwagon

jumpers in the press put into distracting Clinton from doing his job, his administration did an infinitely better job of defending the country, even if he didn't do quite as well in lining the pockets of arms merchants, than Bush's. Several such attacks were planned and attempted while Clinton was in office, but none succeeded — but it didn't take 'em very long to get past Bush.

## **Gary Robe:**

Aaron Copeland is one of my two favorite 20th century composers (the other being Scott Joplin). But there are a lot of good ones. Stravinsky ain't no slouch, to name just one obvious example. I even like Sousa. And of course, there's nothing quite like a soundtrack by Erich Korngold (or Carl Stalling, for that matter). Practically the entirety of *Fantasia 2000* is 20th century stuff, and everything in it is worth listening to (and watching). Music didn't go to hell in the 20th century — it's just that a style became prominent which, to use your expression, does indeed sound like throwing two cats in a feed sack.

Atonal "composers" actually sneer at composers who use the tonal system that's held sway for the past few centuries (and has always been the mainstay of folk music, i.e., music which is enjoyed by ordinary people without hifalutin educated reasons for thinking something that sounds awful is in reality great music, i.e., people like me). One quote I've heard on the local classical music station has to do with there being absolutely no reason in nature why notes that harmonize should come together — which, to me, indicates that the person quoted fails to understand the purpose of art, which is to create things **not** found in nature, which are more pleasing in one way or another than those that are.

Anyway, tonal music didn't go away, and it's not going to either, but the dross always does. One reason 20th century music, on average, isn't as good as what we hear from previous centuries is simply that the earlier stuff we still hear is that which has stood the test of time.

(Of course, everything new is subject to a certain amount of resistance from old folks like me. Even Beethoven wasn't universally liked early in his career; and Mark Twain, in a famous review, made the point about hifalutin educated reasons, by noting that Wagner's music was actually much better than it sounded. But I really do think the atonal music of the 20th century won't continue being heard very far into the 21st.)

## **mike weber:**

It was Max Gaines, Bill's father, who published All American Comics, which was affiliated with DC in the early '40s, and where Wonder Woman started. I never heard of him reining in Charles Moulton's scripts, tho — in fact, if anything, she was toned

down some about when he sold out to DC and went off to found EC Comics (which Bill inherited when Max was killed in a boating accident in 1947). (Max Gaines, by the way, had a highly illustrious career in comics even before DC started, including having packaged *Famous Funnies #1*, the first modern-style comic book, and sold Eastern Color Printing on the idea of publishing it. From there, came all.)

I use eBay images all the time. If I can't find a good picture of a character in my own collection, or don't want to put out the sometimes considerable effort to dig one up, I'll often search eBay for it. In fact, I have a list of characters I search for about once a week (since there's almost complete turnover in that time). My pictures of Touché Turtle, Peter Potamus, Keeping Up with the Joneses and lots of others are from eBay. One of the big advantages is that even tho it came from the collection of someone I don't know, and I never even saw the original much less scanned it myself, I don't really feel like I'm ripping anybody off. In a sense, maybe I am anyway, but nobody else is using the image once the item is sold, and it can't be seen anywhere else on the Web. In fact, I'm less embarrassed about using an eBay image than about scanning one out of a book, and there are certainly enough of those on my site.

Regarding what you call the "IguanaCon Incident" — assuming, of course, you're thinking of the same one I am (IguanaCon, even limited to this context, was more than just one incident). I wasn't going to say anything, but I did find the sequence of events described in the 227th Mailing hauntingly familiar. I was, tho, mightily amused (in a disgusted sort of way) by the contrast between the response one prominent SFPAn gave the more recent one, and the response he gave the other one 24 years ago. New times, new agendas . . .

## **The End**

Almost 12 pages before formatting, so minac is, as always, made. Which, considering the obstacles I had to overcome this time, is little short of miraculous. I had a **major** computer meltdown a couple of days before running the zine out, costing me more than a gigabyte of personal data. I managed to salvage all my writing, tho, and that means a hell of a lot — in fact, with the help of Rachel's boyfriend, Robert Markham, I salvaged it in time to format this up and get it into the mailing. There's still a lot of recovering to be done, and the machine now has a few new quirks that'll take getting used to, but it's starting to feel like my computer again.

Robert also took a bunch of our old parts, added a few of his own, and made a computer for the kids. Then he got all three networked. Far as I'm concerned, Rachel can marry a guy just like him.