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RANDY RANTS

I refinanced my house and now my monthly payment is about \$130 less a month and it was all said and done, I actually made about \$800 on the deal (with PMI and other mortgage escrow refunds).

My Mom returned for a two-week visit to escape the stress of her grandchild (my 19th old nephew). We looked at apartments down here for her but she's going to stay up there (as she's terrified of change even though she's much more relaxed down here). Needless to say, I spent two weekends in July driving to and back to NC, which really put a crimp in my zine production schedule. Thus, I've postponed the next issue of the *SFC Bulletin* until August. At least I'll be able to report about DeepSouthCon in it.

I've started ChemLawn this year just to see the effects. They killed all my weeds and now I have bare spots which were filling up nicely until they told me with nut sedge which costs extra to (attempt to) get rid of. Sigh.

My spare (\$25) computer's CD-ROM and parallel drive have stopped working. The diagnostics indicate the secondary IDE controller has failed. I'll try reseating the boards, then replacing the cables. Then I might try picking up a PCI Card IDE controller on the cheap.

I need to make time to exercise as I'm in the worst shape. I also need to make time to do art. The year is half over. The days grow shorter. Sigh. ☒



BOOK REVIEWS

Okay, time and space is short so here are some mini-reviews. Note that more detailed reviews of the Baen books will be in the next SFC Bulletin.

One Foot in the Grave, Wm. Mark Simmons

Toni sent me the next book in this series so I tracked down the first one. Hard Fantasy/Horror fast pace fun read about a man who loses his family tragically and becomes a near vampire who is pursued by real vampires and other ghastly creatures who want his secret of not fully turning. B.

Dead On My Feet, Wm. Mark Simmons

This is the second book in the series where the living near vampire character has a Louisiana based detective agency and gets caught up in a mystery

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involving zombies, ghosts, vampires and a shadow government planning to unleash plagues upon the world. Lots of fun action. B+

Forge of the Titans, Steve White

The ancient gods were actually extra dimensional aliens who left Earth thousands of years ago and helped found a human civilization in another star system. Now a new war of the gods threatens to destroy both Earth and this other world. Fortunately, some of mankind has "evolved" mental talents (telekinesis, telepathy, astral projection, etc.) that will affect the outcome of the war. There's a lot of stuff in this novel (perhaps too much) but it's a fun light action packed read. B-

Shadow Puppets, Orson Scott Card

The latest book in the new series picking up with the characters from *Ender's Game*. Not as compelling as the previous ones but interesting reading. Although, Card's usual themes of the importance of family and love and the usual characters that are emotionally distant/confused seem a little forced here. B

Letters from a Nut, Ted L. Nancy

This was gift. It's a short humor book of various "real" letters sent to real organizations asking about or talking about offbeat things in a manner of seriousness but that we know is a hoax. The real responses are also printed. There were a couple of laughs out of me but overall I did not think it was that humorous as it's very dry. C

Siddhartha, Herman Hesse

I read this when I was 17 and again recently for my book discussion group. It's an interesting little book of philosophy in the form of the life and times of the main character who seeks to both find and lose his self. I really like the Zen and Christian influences. Basically happiness comes from within and unconditional selfless love is good. B+ ☒



MUSIC REVIEWS

Dial a Song: 20 Years of They Might Be Giants

I've actually only heard a few snippets of this group over the years but have always been intrigued. Now I'm a big fan after listening to this two-disk set. The first disk was much better than the first. There are lots of fun almost folk songs here. If you like quirky pop songs

about almost anything (including history, science, and pop), then check this out. A on the first disk. B on the second.

Bjork Greatest Hits

I've always enjoyed her quirky voice and lyrics and this CD compiles her best work into two disks. A

Time Capsule, B-52's

I'm on a quirky bent obviously. I just had to have some of their classics (*Rock Lobster* and others but unfortunately not *Monster in my Pants*). This is a single disk. They have a two-disk collection out now but I did not want to overdose on them. A

The Singles, The Pretenders

I have this on vinyl but since storing my turntable, I've been buying CD's of my favorite vinyl records. Real rocking music with interesting meaningful lyrics. A ☒



MOVIE REVIEWS

Finding Nemo

Cute fun with beautiful computer animation. B+

The Hulk

More Greek tragedy than fun comic book action romp. Dull at times and just plain weird at others. A Hulk Poodle! Sheesh! C.

Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines

Does not take its self seriously so it's fun. However, not half the movie that Terminator 2 was in terms of underlying themes and strong characters. Major sticking point in invalidating the whole philosophical point of the second one. B-

The League of Extra Ordinary Gentlemen

Just plain fun (though large doses of suspension of disbelief are required). Pretty good action and characters with mostly good plot flow. A-

Pirates of the Carribean: The Curse of the Black Pearl

Argh! Surprisingly fun Disney movie. Pirates will be all the rage in costume contests for the next year or so. Be sure to stay for the final scene after the end of the credits. A ☒



MAILING COMMENTS

FOR SFPA 233

NED BROOKS

The New Port News 209

Regarding Bush's logic: President Bush's expressed logic is that Saddam and his regime were a real threat to United States and the World, not his weapons of mass destruction (real or imagined). I don't necessary agree about the severity of the threat or even if this justify the war.

Regarding repressed memories: Some events are so traumatic for some people that the mind attempts to deny them immediately and continual denial leads to repression of the event as a self protection mechanism. Likewise, sometimes this leads to "fracturing" of the personality as a protective mechanism. The mind is more mysterious than we can imagine. Otherwise, the person would not be able to function or remain (relatively) sane. Often this happens in younger minds which are often less able to cope with traumatic events. I have a poor memory for past events myself, probably because I rarely reflect upon the past.

Regarding the amendments to the "Amber Alert" legislation: Thanks for the information. Sigh, it's a shame that control freaks, by their very nature, seek out office and make such laws trying to control others.

Regarding Asians in the US Civil War: Some friends of mine during lunch one day came up with the idea of making a Hong Kong action type of film (with Asian actors) that would be a retelling of the Civil War but using the techniques and tactics of ancient China but using the names and places and historical outcomes of the US Civil War. (We're a bunch of Gamers).

Regarding 200 Knives: It was a poor-impulse-control buy off the Home Shopping Network. There were 8 cases (12 each) of different pocket knives, a dinner ware knife set, two bowies of the same type, one big bowie, one huge decorative Richard, the Lion Hearted Sword, and a camp gear knife and hatchet kit. Most of these, I will give away for the next few years as presents here and there. I'll also try to sell some at yard sales. I'm keeping a few for myself also.

Regarding the Iraq war as the "right" thing: That's a tough call without omnipotence and/or 100 years of hindsight. I personally don't think it was the wisest or most moral of actions but I can't deny that Saddam was a monster and a threat. However, millions are suffering under North Korea's government also, so perhaps it's the perceived terrorist threat that seems to be the driving force behind the decision (irrational fear often leads to irrational responses). North Korea is a real threat but not a "terrorist" threat (yet). Sigh.

Regarding "Islamic Democracy": What do you mean? Turkey is mostly Islamic and they have a Democracy. Japan was democratized. Democracy is not a hard concept to understand, just hard to implement.

Regarding "Courage the Cowardly Dog": I like it also but it is also mildly disturbing. Sort of like "Invader

Zim”.

Cars kill 42,000 Americans a year. Are they weapons of mass destruction? Are Ford and GM terrorists?

RICH LYNCH

Variations on a Theme 20

Regarding Spring in DC: I hope the cherry blossoms were nice this year.

Regarding Rachmaninoff: Thanks for the information.

Regarding Warner: Thanks for the information.

Regarding Family Reunion: Sounds like fun. We've not had one in years and they were usually just one-day affairs with a potluck dinner. Since I'm on the fringe of the family, I doubt I'll see another.

Regarding Steve Hughes comments: I too have seen the type of comments he is talking about but I just shrug them off as I know there's no point in bear baiting and one must remove the mote from one's own eye first.

Regarding "DC Party Animals": My home town, Lexington, NC currently has decorative pig statues throughout town. Lexington is well known for it's barbeque and has an annual barbeque festival. Some of them were cute.

Regarding Sniper: Glad it's over and y'all are safer (at least from them).

NORM METCALF

Tyndallite, Volume 3, Number 107

Thanks for the comments. RAEBNC.

ARTHUR D. HLAVATY

Nice Distinctions 1

Here's to one hundred more issues of this zine. Good luck with the blog.

Regarding distinctions: There are two types of people in the world. Those that can be categorized and those that cannot.

BOBBY GEORGE POULETTE

Wer Saddam is Hidden

You crack me up.

RICHARD DENGROVE

Twygdrasil And Treehouse Gazette 82

Condolences to you and your family on the passing of your father. I hope your mother's assisted living facility is working out.

Regarding Carry Guns: A lot of potential crimes are prevented by people who show their guns when threaten without ever having to "kill" their assailants. Conceal carry deters crime.

Regarding Bush 2nd Term: Not with my vote unless the competition are complete bozos.

Thanks for the comments. Yes, the BOC is from the seventies. Each of the original 13 states received their own "original" copy of the Declaration of Independence. I guess everyone signed 13 times?

Regarding Bertrand Russell "narrowing" the distance: I've also played Devil's Advocate when talking politics, etc. with people at parties. It's great fun when you say something you know pigeonholes you in their minds instantly and they start reacting accordingly. I try not to do much of this anymore as I think playing with people in this way is not nice.

Regarding Catholic Communion: One of my Catholic friends informed that non-Catholics are not supposed to take Communion, but no one is refused it if they go forth to take it. That is, the church does not invite non-Catholics to take communion but if you get in line, they will not turn you away.

SHELIA STRICKLAND

Revenant 18

So do they call studying "hitting the books" at Library School or is that politically incorrect.

Regarding Nightcrawler: The comics really played up his faith long before the movie. He even became a Priest (but that turned out to be a brain washing and he was never actually ordained).

Condolences on Silky.

TOM FELLER

Frequent Flyer

I hope y'all are loving your new home. Cool that y'all saw Willie Nelson. I envy your dulcimer experience. I hope DSC was fun for all of us. Thanks for the comments. I hope Anita's back is better.

DON MARKSTEIN

The Sphere

Good luck with your books about comics. I look forward to being able to check them out.

Regarding your comments to me: Not that I expect a True Believer like yourself to believe my own words when you can infer my whole true beliefs yourself, but I'll attempt to wean you out of some of your misconceptions. Wow, our government has done bad things? Jeepers, say it ain't so Batman! I can jump to absurd inferences as well as you and suppose you would

have preferred the Nazis to have triumphed over the U.S. based on your comments. You missed my main point entirely. I don't have problems with people writing stories about evil U.S. government actions. I don't trust the government very much myself. I do take issue when the history and background to comic book characters that I like are rewritten in a negative light. It's one thing to give a character a flaw (like Iron Man's alcoholism, which made him more interesting). It's another to rewrite his back-story to make his very origin unpleasant (like perhaps changing it to say he did not help invent the suit but stole all its technology outright from the kindly communists). My dislike for comic book history revision is not an indication of my politics, thank you very much. I'm well aware of the many "bad" things that our government has done through out its history. In case you've not already locked down in your conclusion about what I think of the way they changed Hal Jordan (Green Lantern) to a mass murdering villain. I did not like it.

On your other wrong conclusions that you leap so readily to. I did not and do not support the war in Iraq. I don't think we had enough reason to do it. I've not "swallowed" all the lies. Sorry if I don't fit your pigeonhole for me. Obviously I'm just confused about my own beliefs and you'll explain to me next issue why I can't dislike Captain American's history rewrite and hold these opinions too. However, I'm willing to give a small benefit of the doubt to the idea that the Bush administration believed it was acting in the best long-term interests of the U.S. I don't agree with the preemptive strategy myself but I understand it. But it's this preemptive strategy that is probably why I'll not be voting for Bush again. That being said, I do think it would be irresponsible to not try stabilizing Iraq before leaving. I'm glad the war went well (for us) and Saddam lost power and hope Iraq can be restored to a functional country (without our presence and continuing loss of life) as soon as possible.

Chill dude. I know you are passionate about comics (as I am) but don't fly off the handle about ascribing beliefs to others that you know nothing about. I'm sorry if my OPINION irks you so. Thanks for all the comments though. At least it shows you actually found something in my zine worth responding to, even though it was much like the other famous fictional Don tilting at windmills. I'll try to keep it up. However, if you are just bear baiting me, like it appears you are with Toni, please stop.

Don't even get me started about how Highlander II tried to rewrite the Highlander implied fantasy mythos into a bad science-fiction plot instead of good mysterious fantasy one. ;-)

Enough Said.

DAVID SCHLOSSER

Peter, Pan & Merry 49

Regarding Steve Hughes Taxes: Perhaps he has to pay taxes for the next estimated quarter, not the current quarter?

While I did/do not agree with the decision to go to war, I will continue to hope that it really did/will put a crimp in terrorist organizational support and reduce the chance that any WMD or WMD development be given to terrorists. This seems better than hoping it goes the other way just to embarrass an administration that I don't care for. Hoping otherwise seems like cutting off your nose to spite your face.

I hope your refinancing went well. I'm fairly happy with mine. Thanks for the comments. :-)

Regarding Tax Refunds: \$4000! Wow! Steve Hughes could probably put that to work for you.

Glad the butter nappers confessed. Perhaps you need a lock box for the butter when guests are over.

T.K.F.WEISSKOPF REINHARDT

"Yngvi is a Louse" And Other Graffitos 83

Did you get the Charlotte's Web picture okay?

Thanks for the wfuv.org site. Cool!

Thanks for the comments. I'm looking forward to seeing y'all at DSC.

GARY BROWN

Oblivion 146

Nice cover. Don't work too hard. I hope Comic-Con went well.

Regarding the Hulk Movie: A Hulk Poodle! Arghh! There was no poodle in the movie adaptation comic though.

Regarding Clear Channel: Just heard from their spokesman on NPR discussing all the allegations. Sounds like a witch hunt mentality developed against Clear Channel. Something like 13 stations (out of 1229 stations, 12% of all radio stations in the US) did an individual station by station boycott of the Dixie Chicks. It was not a corporate level action in any way (if you can believe him). I never recalled any Bush administration official even commenting on it but I only check the news daily and probably missed it. However, it was a non-issue for me. The Dixie Chicks can say what they want but should not act surprised when the public reacts to insulting statements in tense times in adverse ways. The idea that the Bush administration put the Dixie Chicks on some "Enemies List" and sent the "Plumbers" to wreck their career by leaning on their crony contributors is absurd. I'm sure the Dixie Chicks careers are back on track by now. Probably Don Markstein will declare that since Nixon did it and was Republican, then of course, Bush must act this way too. Political Bigotry. All Republicans are guilty of any

Republican's sins and any good that a Republican does is either him rising above his party or for some yet unknown ulterior motive. Rant over. ;-)

Thanks for the comments. I think Daredevil was better than Hulk. Watch out agreeing with me on comic book history rewrites. Don Markstein might call you a lie swallowing Iraq war advocate. ;-)

I get the feeling that Brian Bendis outlandish statements are mostly just a put-on. His *Powers* letter pages really make that obvious.

For the record, if any of the top names in companies bidding for contracts to rebuild Iraq get the contracts, it will probably result in more sales of software my division makes, since they are all already big customers. I doubt there is any corporation that could help rebuild Iraq that is free of any political ties to BOTH sides. These companies are global conglomerates of incredible size. However, I must agree that the Bush administration seems a little too incestuous with large business conglomerates. Though, I think it's a matter of degree and not kind from other parties/administrations. To me the elite are the elite and multimillionaires all start to look and behave alike to me regardless of their professed political affiliations. The days of the common man reaching real political power are rare indeed and getting rarer.

JEFF COPELAND

It's Because We're Proud of You

Good luck with Allie's college experience. Thanks for the cartoons. Loved the MS Butterfly Bug Cartoon. Did you catch the poetry of Rumsfeld book discussion on NPR? Thanks for the comments. As for election 2004, I'll go out on a limb and predict that Bush will not win (even if the economy starts cranking up again) unless the Democrats totally blow it (which is about 50/50 in my opinion). Thanks for the quotes.

LIZ COPELAND

Home with the Armadillo #58

I hope you continue to recover well. Good luck with the garden. Thanks for the reviews.

GUY H. LILLIAN III

Spiritus Mundi 195

Cliff hanging adventures! Thanks for the report. Wow! Thanks for the comments.

Regarding Resnick caricature: Sure, I could draw one. Would you like one?

Regarding Knives: Give them away as presents, keep just a few for myself and sell some at yard sales.

Regarding Comic Retrovisions: Ut oh, you and Gary Brown lean my way. Watch out for Don Markstein to unleash. ;-)

MIKE WEBER

A Little Behind, I'm Afraid...

Good luck with your job hunt and next issue.

JANET LARSON

Passages 17

I'm glad you found the solution to your malaise. I pray someday everyone will have home auto-docs like in Larry Niven's Known Space novels. Good luck with Niko.

JANICE GELB

Trivial Pursuits 107

Thanks for the *SFC Bulletin* Ad. Thanks for the reviews. Sorry you'll not be at DSC.

My Month of Fame

Thanks for the trip reports. Your fame endures. I've had some "button pushers" but of a different type. ;-)

GARY R. ROBE

Tennessee Trash 53

Stop getting kicked in the head. Nice floor!

Regarding MailWasher: I've had it downloaded but uninstalled for a while now. Your comments will spur me to install it soon. I get up to 150 spam a day but BellSouth's mail guard filters around 100 of it. That leaves 50 for me to wade through. Hope you had a happy birthday! ☒



FINAL COMMENTS

Wow, this is the earliest that I've ever finished this zine. I wanted it done before DSC so I get back to the *SFC Bulletin* immediately after DSC. Plus I have to start mailing artists about ConStellation's Art Show.

Check out this 1951 Inapak promotional comic that I picked up out of the bargain comic bins for only 20 cents. Was I ripped off?

☺

Sincerely,
Randy B. Cleary ☒

MAJOR INAPAK

THE

SPACEACE

No. 1

