

Derogatory Reference 98

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Published four times (or so) per year. The print version is available for \$1 (\$2 outside the USA), arranged trade, or letter of comment (e-mail counts). If there is an X after your name on the envelope, send at least one of the above if you wish to receive the next issue. The e-mail version is available on request. Copyright © 2001 by Arthur D. Hlavaty. Staff: Bernadette Bosky, Kevin J. Maroney, Peter Celeron. Permission to reprint in any nonprofit publication is hereby granted, on condition that I am credited and sent a copy. This is a Church of the SuperGenius publication. In Wile E. we trust.

I started this zine so long ago that it began with a harangue about the evils of sucking up to the Taliban for the War on Some Drugs.

At the end of June 2001, I remembered that the N and R subways were running again, so I decided to go down to the World Trade Center for my lunch break. I went to the excellent Borders and left, not hearing the organ playing the sinister foreshadowing music. Not only was it destined to be my last visit to the WTC, but when I got back to work, I was called in by my supervisor and informed that my services would no longer be required.

I have survived better than the towers did, doing freelance writing, copy-editing, and proofreading. Kevin's company, which was an obvious future success a year earlier because it was a dot-com, became an utter disaster because it was a dot-com (without of course changing in any relevant way), and it no longer exists. But we endure, perhaps even prevail.

September 11 Report

Bernadette and I were home when it happened. Kevin might have been on his way to work in Manhattan (not in the World Trade Center), but he was taking our rats to the vet, so he was even further away than we were.

The Internet works. We were able to reassure and be reassured in no time. We apparently have not lost anyone we know, including those who worked in the World Trade Center.

"Some people did us dirt, so some people better watch out." Our idea of who "some people" are is still pretty vague. I've been pleasantly surprised by the willingness of the administration and the American people to refrain from blaming "the Arabs" or "the

Muslims." (I know, the soft bigotry of low expectations.)

Evelyn Waugh once said that the happiest moment of his life was the Hitler-Stalin pact, when for one shining moment all the bad guys lined up together. Since Osama bin Laden and Jerry Falwell agree that the fall of the towers was a judgment on decadent America, they should be on the same side. Alas, we don't know how to arrange that.

Some of my views haven't changed. I still think that Osama bin Laden should face mass-murder charges and that the Taliban is a barbarous, misogynistic abomination that could use a good dose of cultural imperialism.

I also haven't changed my view that we should be making life better for everyone in the Middle East, for general do-gooding, and to reward those who turn their backs on the more barbarous versions of their religion. Ideally, we'd make Afghanistan a rich and pleasant land, and then if they harbored terrorists, we could threaten to pull out, thus "bombing" them back to the Stone Age they're in now. We should speak of this now, but carefully, so as not to give the impression that the way to get our attention is terrorism.

During World War I, Lytton Strachey was asked what he was doing in London while brave boys were fighting to protect civilization. He replied, "I am the civilization they are fighting to protect." That's important. (Alfred Bester's "Disappearing Act" tells what happens if we ignore that.) Still another thing I haven't changed is being a First Amendment nut. For America to be worth saving, it has to have freedom of expression.

Silver-colored lining: If I hadn't been fired, I'd have been sucking rubble-laden air into my asthmatic lungs at work.

After September 11, Virginia Postrel cheerfully noted the misfortune of a family killer a few days earlier who had proudly proclaimed that he'd be in the headlines for a week. Another news story I was just as happy to lose: We had what Philip Roth calls a communal ecstasy of sanctimony up in New Bedford. It seems that there was a party for the high school football team (16 and 17 years old) and the parents of one of the players hired a stripper, who did what she was paid for, and perhaps allowed some of the boys to lick whipped cream off her. There was the usual shock at these poor lads having sex thrust into their consciousness, where it would not otherwise have been until adulthood or marriage or something. Those wowsers who get extra kicks by cross-dressing as feminists were saying that the participants should all be jailed or at least thrown off the football team for the crime of treating a woman as an object.

Nicholson Baker's latest book, *Double Fold*, plays the dozens on America's librarians for what he sees as dereliction of their duty to physically preserve books and newspapers. *The New York Times Book Review* calls it "a jeremiad, a philippic, an imprecation against library professionals and all their friends who are bent on discarding books and newspapers made of genuine righteous paper while recording their contents on vile, accursed microfilm."

Librarians are not engaged in the disinterested pursuit of pure evil. As C.S. Lewis (the phrase is his) pointed out, no one is.

So what, in their own view, were the librarians doing? Not twirling their mustaches in delight at the thought of destroying that which they were sworn to protect. Rather, they redefined their task from the preservation of objects to the preservation of knowledge. Newspapers are bulky, and they proliferate, and we live in a world notoriously subject to moth and rust. The librarians thought they saw a way to preserve the information in the papers in a way that took up much less room and was less subject to decay.

Baker doesn't see it that way, perhaps because he doesn't understand the difference between a library and a museum. He says,

"Actually, most people look at old books as things that are valuable and worth keeping in themselves." I look at old toys as things that are valuable and worth keeping in themselves, but I don't think they belong in libraries.

Microforms, like so many good ideas from the middle of the twentieth century, turned out to have unsuspected flaws and side effects. There is a loss of information, the machines don't work as well as one would like, the microforms too are subject to decay, etc., etc. But they were an attempt, and not an entirely unsuccessful one, to make libraries better at what libraries are for.

In fact, when I went to library school in 1988, one of my motivations was that computers were starting to make the library profession significantly more interesting, as we learned how to preserve the information without having to maintain all that paper. It was the kind of Good Thing science fiction always promised us, and it seems to be getting better. I can do more and more research without messing with old paper *or* microfilm. In William F. Buckley jr.'s phrase, Baker is standing athwart the course of history yelling "Stop!" I don't think it's listening.

A bit of amusing football news: As you may know, good ol' American know-how has found something new that can be peddled: the names of our sports stadiums. When the Denver Broncos built a new stadium, there was a major outcry against getting rid of the sainted old name, Mile High Stadium, but as they say, it was dark, they had money...The stadium was to be named after the company (since it is not paying me to advertise it, I will refer to it as MeanRichWhiteGuys Inc.), and the city and the Broncos will be \$120 million richer.

Then a local reporter, Woody Paige, wrote that the new stadium's shape had inspired an unofficial name: the Diaphragm. Worse (or better) yet, Paige said he'd heard it from a MeanRichWhiteGuys Inc. employee. MeanRichWhiteGuys Inc. announced that it would sue, but has now backed down. (The paper is now saying it will continue to refer to the stadium as Mile High Stadium.) Now all

we need is a long, thin stadium with a rounded end. (The Polo Grounds was close.)

I always want to be aware if I am offending the normal people. (After all, a gentleman is defined as a man who never gives offense unintentionally.) My latest assistance with this problem comes from Eudora, my e-mail software, which marks with one or more red peppers incoming mail that might be offensive and similarly warns me if I am about to send out something that "could get your keyboard washed out with soap, if you get my drift." (There is as yet no warning mark for excessive cuteness. Perhaps future software can assign one to three Barneys.) In general, it's the words you can't say on (free) television, but the first incoming message I was warned about was a woman on a sex discussion mailing list saying that she slept in her panties.

On another mailing list, I was told that offensive references to race, religion, or sexual orientation would be censored. So I replied with the words *honky*, *Xtian*, and *breeder*. The message went through the mailing list and was not assigned any peppers. On the other hand, it flagged the name of cartoonist Dik Browne, thus accusing me of both obscenity and misspelling.

There is a new Cultural Studies book from New York University Press called *Our Monica, Ourselves: The Clinton Affair and the National Interest*. I am not making this up: The book jacket says, "the affair between Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky now stands as the seminal cultural event of the 90's." Don't these people read what they write? (It goes on my all-time faves list with the book of feminist psychiatry that proclaimed it was challenging Freud's "long-standing" phallic theory and a book about a home for unwed mothers described as "full of the juices of life.")

When the NFL season began, the officials were locked out, which means that all the competent people were replaced by stooges hired by the rich white guys that run things. Appropriately enough, President Bush did the first coin toss.

I wrote a review for Amazon.com:

The academic world is desperately trying to solve the problem of self-reference, from Gödel's arguments in mathematics to post-modernism in literary criticism. The field of parapsychology is filled with frauds and self-promoters to the point where one is tempted to throw it all out and concede to the materialists and behaviorists.

George P. Hansen, in *The Trickster and the Paranormal* [Xlibris], suggests that these problems can be considered in the light of the trickster figure, that archetype found in cultures all over the world appearing at the edges of society, resisting definition, and representing "deceit, disruption, reduced sexual inhibition, magical practices, boundary crossing, destabilizing structures, transition, [and] marginality."

He gives us a view of how the trickster has appeared everywhere from primitive cultures to the contemporary battle over psi (both sides), with copious, wittily described examples, and he invites us to find the trickster archetype elsewhere. (I had not considered the extent to which Robert Heinlein was a trickster.)

He does not answer the great questions he discusses (one would be suspicious if he did), but he gives us new tools to ponder them with. The broad spectrum of areas he covers makes this the sort of generalist book that can be nibbled to death by specialist eats ducks. (For instance, he uses the nonword "deconstructionism.") Nevertheless, this is a thought-provoking, mind-opening book, one that I recommend to all.

(I do think this self-reference question is a big one. I strongly believe that the discipline that controls self-reference controls the universe. It is everywhere: irony commenting on its own sincerity, Duchamps's urinal and other art works about their own artistic nature (or as Borges said in "The Aleph," the genius was not in the art, but in the reasons the art should be considered good), reflexive sociology, etc., etc. Or consider the investment entities known as *derivatives*: items whose value changes with the ups and downs of the stock market, thus bringing postmodernism to international finance. You may remember that Nicholas

Leeson pissed away a billion dollars of his bank's money ~~gambling with~~ investing in these entities. Enron seems have engaged in a great deal of this sort of thing.) The most depressing part, to me, is not that derivatives exist, but that the market may need them.

(The postmodernists raise important questions and are right about many of them, but we need a way to say, "OK, I'm aware of the status of my discourse already. *Now* will you shut up and let me tell a story?" I think that this concept of the trickster, the crosser of boundaries, may offer a clue, but I don't yet know what it is.)

One book that would seem to need no plug from me is *Postmodern Pooh* [North Point Press hc], Frederick C. Crews's long-awaited sequel to *The Pooh Perplex*, with all new viciously accurate parodies. There's the Marxist critic Carla Gulag, who says of Frederic Jameson: "In this one instance it seems possible that the Dialectic suspended its usual course and intervened directly in human affairs." There's the conservative critic who is obviously Roger Kimball, or obviously Tom Wolfe, depending on which review you read, but is just as cruelly mocked either way. There's the one everyone agrees is Stanley Fish. And more more more.

You may remember Chuck Colson from the Nixon days, when he said he would run over his grandmother for Nixon. Since then, he has had a religious conversion and now would run over his grandmother for Jesus. He recently remarked that just as Windows shows the creative genius of Bill Gates, the world is evidence of a Creator. Let's see: serious design flaws, major disasters, built-in obsolescence—sounds good to me.

I had problems e-mailing chunks of this zine because I have to connect to the net through AOL, which also brings back to me my Repressed Childhood Memory:

At the height of the recovered-memory craze, *Doonesbury* did a sequence where Mark Slackmeyer interviewed a practitioner. The therapist asked Mark to think back, and Mark brought up a memory of an older man scaring him. The therapist eagerly suggested, "It's a priest, and he's trying to molest you!"

"No," Mark replied, "it's LBJ, and he's trying to draft me."

My Horrible Memory, like Mark's, is institutional and less traumatic than rape or beatings. The total institution in question is the one we all get drafted into: elementary school. The repeated trauma was learning things when they were first explained and then trying not to misbehave while the teacher kept trying over and over again to get it through to the "slow" kids.

One of the ways the material was presented so the slow kids could get it was with lots of pictures. I soon realized why people nastily said, "Do you want me to draw you a picture?"

I now know that I overgeneralized. For one thing, "slow" was often, but not always, euphemistic. Some who took longer to learn the stuff eventually got it at least as well as I did. (And even those who didn't weren't the enemy; the system that forced me down to their level was.) But let's not get all egalitarian here. Most people are even dumber than I am, some very much so. Most of the "slow" kids ground to a halt fairly early in the learning process.

The trauma also meant that it took me a long time to learn that pictures are not just for explaining things very slowly, and my prejudice against comic books (and graphic arts in general) leaves out serious art that I am incapable of understanding, though as with humanity, Sturgeon's Approximation applies. But I still relive the trauma every time I have to wait for AOL or some other GUI to draw the pictures needed by the majority of its users.

Whatever else you may say about your past, it got you here, so I try to think of the good aspects of even disasters. I have such a tendency toward low self-image that if I hadn't had the grade school horror, I might be tempted to identify with the working class. Now, however, I will always think of them as the ones who took forever to figure out "The cat sat on the mat" while I wanted to read about dinosaurs. I shouldn't despise them; I try to remember that they have feelings and can hurt, and I should try to help minimize their pain. But I'm not one of them.

Good Things

Thomas Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* [Holt tpb]. OK, so it takes me a while to get up my energy and courage for the big ones. This book was worth it: the usual Pynchon mix of humor, conspiracy, and general strangeness, this time applied to history. It is even truer to 18th-century spelling and typography than John Barth's *The Sot-Weed Factor*, which this lazy reader grudgingly admits is a feature. Pynchon is a Luddite, but not an utter shit about it like Jeremy Rifkin and Leon Kass; we hear about the evil of rectilinear divisions of Nature's wonderful wiggleness (such as the eponymous Line), but are not beaten over the head with it.

James Garner appearing in *First Monday*. I never thought I'd live to see Bret Maverick on the Supreme Court.

Nalo Hopkinson, *Skin Folk* [Warner tpb]. With all the talk about multiculturalism as a moral imperative or a commie plot, we can forget that it is an excellent way of warding off boredom. These Caribbean stories have a distinctive and delightful flavor.

The Doo-Wop Box [Rhino CD] is 100 of the best vocal group songs (1950–1963). From "The Great Pretender" to the Vito & the Salutations version of "Unchained Melody," which may be the ultimate Vulgar Barnyard Travesty. You can quibble about definitions and omissions (no Corsairs, no Rivingtons), but it's awesome, and I thank Kevin for giving it to me for the recent holidays. I believe that we've been in the Postmusical Era for about thirty years, and one sign is that they stopped putting songs on records and started putting them on computer discs. It's nice to know that the discs can be used for music, too.

Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* [Vintage tpb]. I don't care what anyone says, I like mimetic fiction. But these days I don't read enough of it. This book reminded me of the pleasures of that maligned genre, including complex and likable characters and a delightfully entangled plot.

Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club* [Farrar hc]. Fascinating account of the Pragmatists (William James, John Dewey, et al.). I sup-

pose if you wanted to be cranky, you could complain that it's a lot of biographical chat instead of a rigorous philosophical analysis. This time I don't want to be cranky.

NESFA's reprint program has moved on to two of the funniest sf writers in history, with *From These Ashes, the Complete Short SF of Frederic Brown* and William Tenn's sf complete in two volumes (*Immodest Proposals* and *Here Comes Civilization*). As we have come to expect of NESFA, the books are admirably complete, carefully edited, and remarkably low-priced.

Nasty, Brutish, & Short

In the spirit of God/Mammon ecumenism so beloved by the Republicans, the religion best at separating people from their money could merge with a similarly skilled corporation. The resulting entity would be called Enron Hubbard.

Outlook Express is Microsoft's way of saying, "Pick up the soap."

We've been sold the entropic view: Progress ends; decay is forever.

We built this country on denying to *competent* prosecutors the sort of privileges John Ashcroft wants.

Seeing the headline that said, Bin Laden Deputy Dead, I sang, "We missed the sheriff..."

AOL's use of HTML in e-mail continues to progress, if that is the word I am looking for: First it was "We're going to let everybody write with crayons." Then it was "We're going to make everybody write with crayons." Now we're moving up on "And if you don't use our crayons, it won't work."

Animal evolution, based on fighting and breeding, has brought us this far, but perhaps it is now time to say, "Thanks. We'll take it from here."

I like what Margaret Cho said to a heckler, "Do I come around to where you work and slap the dick out of your mouth?"

Millennium Philcon

Waiting two and a half months to do a Worldcon report has its drawbacks, but it does act as a filter—a way of reducing the size to manageable proportions and keeping only the good parts. For instance, by now I have forgotten everything about how we got there, the food, the hotel problems (if any), etc.

As a general topic sentence-like summary of my experiences, I would say I enjoyed it, except for two problems:

- ✓ 1) Bernadette was unable to attend (large writing project due soon after);
- ✓ 2) The Novel Hugo offered final evidence that the gargoyles have taken over the cathedral.

Anyway, I now summon up my notes and reprint the ones that make sense to me, with explanations:

Teeney names

This was everyone's first complaint. MilPhil forgot the basic rule that the names on con badges should be printed in large clear letters. As this had been done right at worldcon for many years, some complained it was like living in an ethnic joke, where you can't get ice because they lost the recipe.

I also received a ribbon proclaiming me a Program Participant. I had volunteered for program participating too late, and thus wound up appearing only in the Fanzine Lounge and the Academic Track. Before long, I was hearing from participants in each of those that they had been deemed unworthy of such ribbons. To the best of my knowledge, I was the only person on both, and I concluded that the tracks were marginalized, rather than oppressed, and thus participation in one was worth half a ribbon. I later heard that there had been a shortage of ribbons at Registration for a while, and at least some of the complainers eventually got them.

Panel on Early Vonnegut

This was my Ac Track appearance. We were not given precise rules for what we were supposed to do, so each prepared differently:

Betty Ann Hull read her well-written paper on *Cat's Cradle*, another panelist interviewed his teenage son about the son's reactions to the books; I scrawled a few notes to myself and discoursed from them. It still worked out well, its main drawback being that while this was going on, Robert Silverberg, Jo Walton, and Connie Willis were discussing William Tenn.

One thing I talked about was Theodore Sturgeon. The resemblance of the name of Vonnegut's Kilgore Trout to Sturgeon's is obvious. But what does Vonnegut tell us about Trout? He has a true science-fictional imagination, but he has no ability with characters or prose. In other words, he's the opposite of Sturgeon. Perhaps what was going on there was that Sturgeon and Vonnegut were aiming for the same niche: Both were eloquent, funny, hip, sexually free mainstreamy sf guys appealing primarily to the under-30 set.

I couldn't help imagining: What if Vonnegut had gotten Sturgeon's writer's block? Sturgeon would have finished "When You Care, When You Love" and given us other goodies. Vonnegut, who was probably sincere about wanting to quit after *Breakfast of Champions*, would have been able to do so, and he and we would have been spared Late Vonnegut. (I am assuming that any block would have applied only to fiction.)

rasff party

✓ Delightful. Do I list all the rec.arts.sf.fandom participants I enjoyed meeting or seeing again? Nah, asking for trouble. As soon as the print version went out, I'd say to myself, "I left out...? Aarghh!"

New Wave panel

Lotsa fun. Silverberg, Spinrad, et al. reminiscing about the Sixties, when they tried to make sf better fiction. One major theme was the problem of trying to sell the serious lit parts to an audience that liked science fiction, and simultaneously trying to sell science fiction to an audience that liked serious lit.

Crossover fiction panel

Catherine Asaro et al. discussing the writing and marketing of science fiction that also had elements of romance, mystery, etc. Halfway through, I realized it was a reprise of the New Wave panel.

But each had joys of its own. Asaro mentioned her theory that science fiction is like rock and roll, but romance is like figure skating. In science fiction, you're trying to do new things, push the envelope, etc. In romance you're trying to do predictable things with particular skill and verve.

~

Minicon party

Thoroughly delightful. A particular pleasure was hanging out with two Fan Artist Hugo nominees: old friend Teddy Harvia and new friend Sue Mason.

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Bullshit! Bullshit!

Oh, yes. The most emotional panel discussion I attended was not on sex, politics, or religion, but on mathematics. It seems there is a controversy over the original basis of measurements, and people take it seriously. As Michael Flynn discoursed on the Human Body Parts theory ("foot" being the obvious example), fellow panelist Donald Kingsbury, who favors the Astronomical Distances Theory, began chanting the aforementioned barnyard epithet. Flynn concluded his list of measurable parts by slapping his bicep, saying "forearm," and raising that member in Kingsbury's direction. Kingsbury ran over and placed his own, longer forearm against Flynn's to show the inherent variability of such measures. Visual aids make these things so much clearer.

~

This year's version of the L. Neil Smith novel

That's what won the Prometheus Award, presented at the panel on libertarian sf. Much of the time the participants bemoaned the inability of the rest of the world to appreciate the wonders of libertarianism, and of novels that expound these wonders at great length.

But there were also notable remarks like, "The first law of economics is that there isn't enough to go around; the first law of

politics is to deny the first law of economics." Eric Raymond was on the panel, bringing to it the same sort of sanity that he has brought to the Open Source movement: Don't preach about the wonders of freedom; give people something good (software or fiction) and make it easy for them to notice its connection to freedom.



Asperger's Contribution to SF Culture

My favorite panel title. For those who don't know, Asperger's syndrome is a term for a mental pattern similar to, but less severe than, autism. (Thomas Szasz said that neurosis is behavior that annoys people, and psychosis is behavior that annoys people so much that they want to put you away. In those terms, Asperger's is equivalent to a neurosis.) There's all sorts of thought-provoking info on that and similar questions on <http://isnt.autistics.org>.

Anyway, that sort of high-functioning asocial inner-directedness seems to match a lot of people in the sf community (I don't *think* I'm one), so it's a good thing to discuss at a worldcon. Actually the panel covered behavioral dysfunctions of many sorts. Eva Whitley reminded me that I had once suggested the term *hyperlexia* as a label by which excessively intelligent people could have themselves defined as "challenged" (or that may have been back when it was still "handicapped") so as to get special schools, etc. Maybe it's just as well it didn't work. They just would have mainstreamed us anyway, and besides, as Eva mentioned, there turned out to be an actual condition (not a good one) called hyperlexia.

For current paradigms, I would suggest that parents of those the school system considers morbidly intelligent get together with shrinks to have the kids diagnosed with *intellectual curiosity disorder*, thus requiring an Individualized Education Plan with lots of reading and such. (And while I am coining, let me suggest a portmanteau word: Slurs cast on another's social competence are aspergeons.)

Panelist Muriel Hykes, discussing dysfunction in her family, made my favorite remark of the whole con: "I myself am a product of poor impulse control."



Hugoes

It was foreshadowed, in appropriately un-subtle fashion: The Hugo Award Ceremony began with a lot of Hollywood crap. Then for each of the media nominees, we got a preview or trailer, lasting several minutes. For some reason, they did not read pages of the textual candidates.

One distraction was Connie Willis almost intolerably delaying the announcement of the Short Fiction winner with digressions, many of them hilarious. Readers of her fiction should not be surprised.

And then the big one: The vox populi had declared that the best f/sf novel of the year was a middle volume of a mega-bestselling children's series.

Mind you, it's not a *bad* mega-bestselling children's series. Everyone says that the Harry Potter books are getting kids to read even if they didn't before, and I agree with everyone that this is a Good Thing. Some complain that the Potter readers don't go on to read anything else, but if you ask me, even if that were true, that's better than reading nothing. I just wish fewer of them had voted on the Hugoes.

Maybe that's the last straw. The size of worldcons, and the limitations that places on them; the way some of my social subsets get shunted off into another building; the feeling that, for many of the participants, one of the main attractions of the whole thing is just being part of a madding crowd. And now the Best Novel award to what Damon Knight would call a chunk of a novelwurst, and not even one of the more ambitious ones. But you can't blame it on "media fans," even if that's defined in the only reasonable way: as what you get when you subtract from the total con attendance those who read and/or write about the stuff. I'm perfectly willing to concede that everyone who voted for Potter IV had read it.

I'll still go to worldcons if they're near enough to travel comfortably to, such as Boston in 2004, and I'll cheerfully as ever volunteer my services as panelist. But you know the feeling when they announce the Pulitzer Prizes or the Oscars or something, and you say with pleased surprise, "One of ours made it!"? Before long, we may feel that way about the Hugoes.

Special DVD outtakes section: Things I heard and/or thought:

Hell is other people's pornography, or perhaps other people's comfort reading.

Heinlein maneuver: read cutesy romantic banter aloud until the patient throws up.

Many of the people who think they don't like science fiction are right.

Overheard: Baen's rule that any universe with global warming in it is fantasy.

I never knew an auto-parts maker who left instructions that after he died, all his auto parts should be destroyed [Oops, sorry. That's from my Readercon notes. I'll try to be more careful.]

Follow-Ups

The summer was, as they say, fraught. Along with the employment situation, we lost three pets: our good rat Bilbo and our rabbits, Lee Harvey Oswald the Rabbit and Earl Warren. We have acquired three new rats—Buddy, Missy, and Rufus—who are thoroughly enjoyable, unlike our elder rat, Fawn, who is a product of an unfortunate childhood, Officer Krupke. Our big, fat, lovable black kitty-cat, Courageous, continues to thrive despite having to live in the garage because of my asthma.

I wound up doing six jock bios for Scribner's: Frank Deford, Johnny Unitas, Joe Namath, Charles Barkley, Dick Butkus, and Deion Sanders. Bernadette did articles on Charles Williams, C.S. Lewis, and Ramsey Campbell for Gale's *Dictionary of Literary Biography*.

Once again the lettercol is sacrificed to penury and disorganization. Sorry, Martha Koester, Avram Grumer, and others who sent me interesting stuff.

In reply to my diatribe on the evils of advertising, it was brought to my attention that advertising is needed to keep customers aware of the product, especially in the face of all the advertising from rival products. In other words, it's like an arms buildup: Nobody likes it, but God forbid you have less than the other guy.

