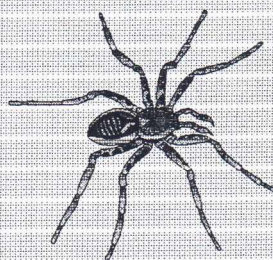


*MILKY  
PLEASURES*

NUMBER 24, FOR SFPA 228



EVE ACKERMAN



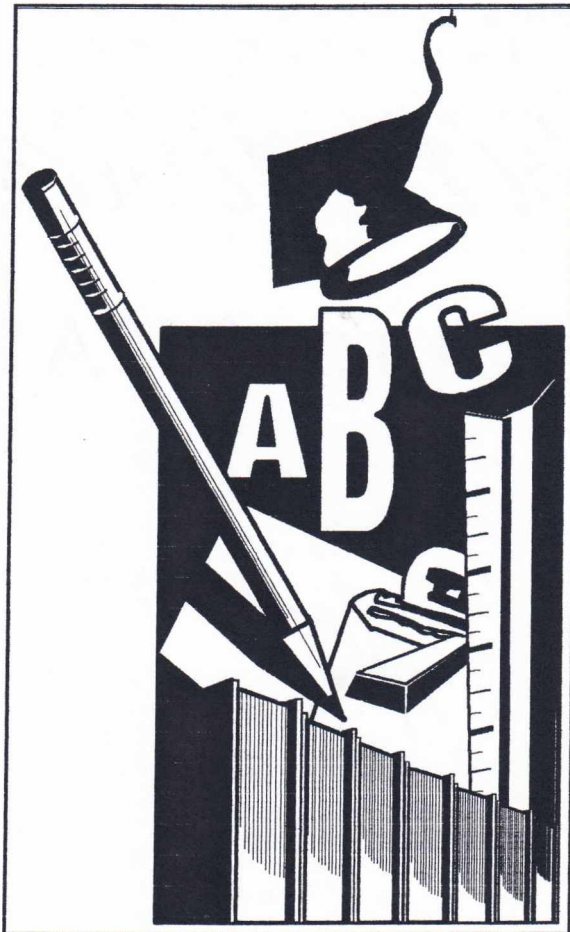
# GUILTY PLEASURES 24

A zine by Eve Ackerman, 3530 NW 30 PL

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*G*raduation Day has arrived and the decision has been made. Next year Raphi will be a Brandeis Owl.



While Raphi was still hoping to go to Israel for a year before starting college, the loss of his scholarship money from Brandeis was the deciding factor about what to do next year. Brandeis was not willing to defer the scholarship for a year and we weren't in a position to refuse the offer.

Raphi was also accepted at the University of Chicago, Northwestern and the University of Florida's Honors program. He was turned down by Harvard and Yale, but I think he was less upset

when he found out no one from his class got into Yale. And Harvard sent out a rejection letter that put it in perspective: 19,000 qualified applications were received. There were 1,600 open slots.

Everyone who knew us, including some Chicago grads, said "take the money and go to Brandeis." For one thing, most people considered Chicago a better school for graduate work than undergrad. Northwestern has excellent programs but I couldn't see choosing between there and Brandeis when Brandeis was offering so much. Not just the money, but the Boston locale, the presence of close friends from high school, the chaplain being our rabbi for the past 20 years and the Jewish infrastructure. Raphi wouldn't have to worry about getting kosher food or having Sabbath services, but at the same time it's not Yeshiva University. The school values its diversity and there would be students from all walks of life attending classes with him.

In mid-April we went up there for open house on what turned out to be the hottest day on record for April, 93 degrees. Now, for us Floridians that's not so bad when we're prepared for it, but when you're in a locale where little is air conditioned and you've brought clothes suitable for a Boston spring rather than August in Gainesville, it still hurts. But we liked what we saw and sat in on a couple classes, Advanced French (Raphi said it was easy) and Quantum Physics (hard). And it probably didn't hurt that Raphi spent the night with friends on campus, young ladies from Gainesville who took

him around and showed him the nightlife while I spent the evening at the rabbi's house.

My favorite moment was when we were picked up at the airport by Dara, a theater major. Dara was filling us in on campus life and mentioned "and you may see people walking around who are wearing nicer clothes than everyone else and will give you flyers inviting you to parties off campus."

Visions of cults rose in my mind but Dara continued grimly, "You'll want to stay away from them. They lure you to their houses with parties and try to sign you up. They're in fraternities and sororities."

"Guerilla Greeks?" I said.  
"Undercover frat boys?"

"That's right. Brandeis has a no sorority and fraternity rule, but that doesn't stop them from unofficially setting up their programs off campus."

The campus itself is interesting if not the most beautiful campus I've ever seen. But I have a feeling it would grow on me after a bit. Everyone lives on campus the first year which is a good thing from my point of view as it helps integrate you into college life.

What it also means for me is the opportunity to attend more Boston area cons, so we'll see how that goes.

Micah is finishing up his first year of high school and seems to have finally grasped the idea that good grades *do* make a difference. He's also getting good enough on the banjo that he's moving up to a better model and having lived through oboe lessons and saxophone lessons, I have to say that it's much nicer listening to someone learn to play the banjo than those other instruments.

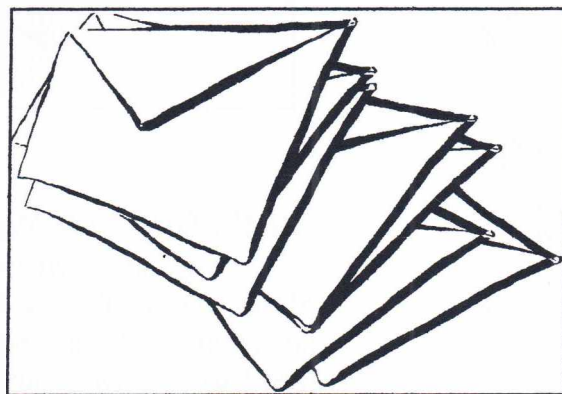
We went to Ft. White to pick up the new Johnson model banjo (yes, my brother did make jokes about Micah having a big Johnson now) and it was clear we were way out in the country. But the best part was

when the music store owner told me Micah's banjo instructor plays at his church, and told him that Micah was the fastest learner he'd ever taught and had a lot of natural talent.

And as I reminded Micah, his hero Bela Fleck also started banjo as a teenager so greatness may also be in Micah's future. Or at least employment at something he loves.

Raphi and Micah are both off to summer camp, as is their habit, though this year Raphi is staying all summer as a counselor. Some friends from high school sent him a care package. It included a box of crayons, Playdough and a book of crossword puzzles for when he gets bored, a bumper sticker that says "Jesus Hates Me", sure to be a conversation stopper in Rabun County, Georgia, and a box of flavored condoms. There was a note with the condoms that thoughtfully added the sender didn't know whether or not they had been certified kosher.

While the boys were away Howard and I attended the state Bar conference, which was relaxing for me and worth CE's for him, and when we returned home I got bit by a spider. I think. I'm not sure it was a spider 'cause I didn't catch it, but I saw a huge red circle on my lower leg, it wasn't a bull's eye pattern like a tick and there wasn't any pain. So who knows? I did call my doctor who warned me there's not a lot they can do, but he can try giving me



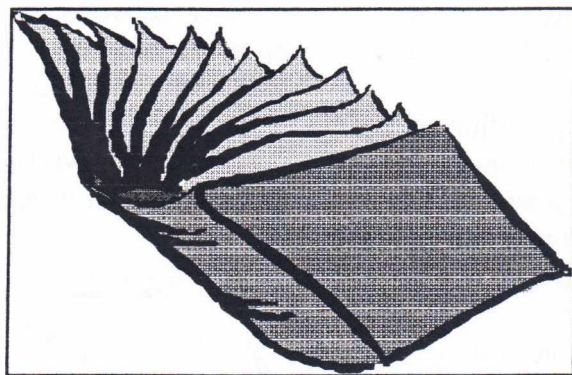


steroids in the hopes that it can stave off necrosis. It seems to have worked, since now there's a bluish-red circle on my lower leg, but the circulation is still good and while the skin is peeling, the new skin looks pink and healthy rather than ulcerated. My pest control guy (who I believe knows a lot more about insect bites than my doctor) thinks it might be a jumping spider and I don't care as long as they do their chomping on the wildlife outside.

## THE WRITING BUSINESS

I'm amassing quite a file of rejection letters from agents, but I'm hanging in there. I figure by the time I exhaust the list on the RWA website of agents who specialize in romance genre writers, there will have been enough industry turnover that I can start again.

But I keep writing, and keep sending off the queries. The important thing is to move forward and not wait for the book to sell. In the meantime *PIRATE'S PRICE* continues to sell, I've been getting good reviews (at least, no one's sent me any bad reviews) and after it gets picked up by Fictionwise.com I expect it to do even better.



## Fandom is a way of life--

I got an e-mail today informing me of the passing of Bruce Pelz. I'm getting far too many of these e-mails lately, but then I see too many names I recognize in

the obituaries as well. And when you look at an obit for someone 60 years old and say "So young!" you know your perspective on life and aging is changing.

I met Bruce through LASFAPA via Janice Gelb, and had the pleasure of first really meeting him at a get-together in Los Angeles in 1986. He'd been Fan GoH at my first WorldCon, Noreascon 2, but I wasn't yet active enough in fandom to have spent any time with Bruce there.

We still have pictures from our LA trip showing Bruce, a UF alumnus, giving us a sign he'd removed from one of the UF buildings during his undergrad days. Bruce said back in the 50's the closest thing to a SF group at UF was the Spelunker's Society, caving being a big activity in North Florida, and Bruce in those days being of a size to get in and out of the tight spaces.

Bruce will be missed.

Tom Feller (not old and decrepit, so don't read anything into this segue) dropped by for supper a few weeks back. It was good to see him again as we'd missed seeing Tom on his occasional visits to Gainesville.

## Books!

### DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY--Lois

McMaster Bujold--I anxiously awaited what we've been told is the last Miles Naismith Vokosigan adventure for a while, and I was only somewhat disappointed. The writing was good, the story was topnotch, but I wish there had been more of Miles' relationship with his new wife, Ekaterin. She was largely off camera for much of the book, there, but not part of the action.

However the book's theme of children and the next generations was

carried off in the usual Bujold style, which is to say plotting was tight and pieces fell neatly into place by the end of the tale. My favorite line:

"So are you saying that if you ordered it, those thugs out there would shoot?" said Venn sourly.

Miles managed a slight bow in his direction, not easy in free fall. "Sir, if an Emperor's Voice so ordered it, they'd shoot *themselves*."

I'm going to miss Miles, but as usual, he's going out with a bang.

## WHOSE BODY?/MURDER MUST ADVERTISE/GAUDY NIGHT--Dorothy L. Sayers-

-I admit, with some embarrassment, that I hadn't read Dorothy L. Sayers' mysteries before this month. For years I'd heard people talk about them, especially GAUDY NIGHT, but I was living a life without the presence of Lord Peter Wimsey.

I'm pleased to say that's changed. Lord Peter is one of those great characters of 20<sup>th</sup> C. writing, an amateur society sleuth whose languid demeanor covers up a very sharp brain, physical abilities and a record as a shell shocked veteran of The Great War. He reminded me a lot of Dorothy Dunnett's Lord Lymond of Crawford.

If you haven't read these classics, I encourage you to do so. Very entertaining, and characters who leap off the page.

## DAUGHTER OF THE GAME--Tracy L. Grant--

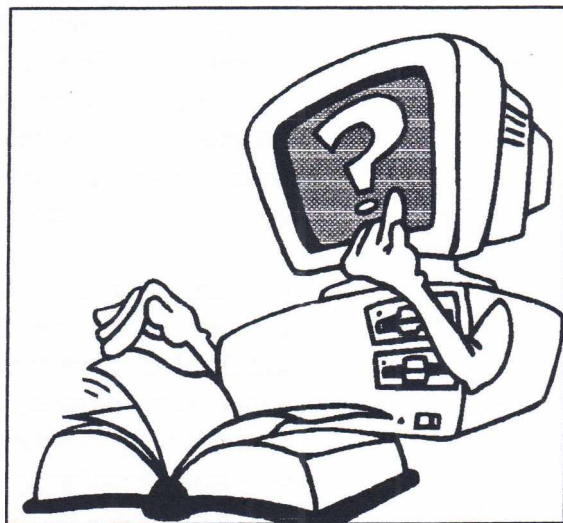
This was listed as a debut romance because while Grant has been writing for some time, she used to write in tandem with her late mother. This is her first solo effort.

DAUGHTER OF THE GAME begins where most romance novels end. It

has a beautiful couple, rich, smart, sophisticated and very much in love with each other, a love that's deep and passionate. Napoleon has been defeated and they can get on with their lives, taking their place as social lions in London.

Then their young son gets kidnaped. Lies and secrets surface that threaten everything they hold dear, and their carefully constructed life begins to fold like a house of cards.

I found the book enthralling and I'm looking forward to more solo efforts from Ms. Grant.



## THE BEEKEEPER'S APPRENTICE--Laurie L.

King--This was another mystery novel I'd heard recommended for some time and finally got around to reading. I'd put it off 'cause the premise sounded annoying and contrived: the aging Sherlock Holmes takes on a brash young American woman as a student, but I found the characters fresh and exciting and the entire novel a real page turner. It's a series and I'm looking forward to reading more about Mary Russell's adventures as she grows up with the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS--THE BAD BEGINNING and LEMONY SNICKET, THE UNAUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY--Lemony

**Snicket**--I like books written for kids with attitude, and these fill the bill. For everyone who thinks there's too much sweetness and light in Harry Potter, for everyone who wants to see children's literature that presumes children are a lot smarter than we give them credit for, for everyone who wants to see words used well, I recommend Mr. Snicket's novels and the companion biography. The mysterious Lemony Snicket toils away at tales of the sad Baudelaire orphans who lead lives filled with misery and woe, which the author sets up deliciously by saying "In this book, not only is there no happy ending, there is no happy beginning and very few happy things in the middle."

Walt Disney would not approve, but the rest of us are cheering Mr. Snicket on.

## LAST OF THE AMAZONS--Steven

**Pressfield**--This was different.

Again, a friend recommended it as having wonderfully realistic battle scenes and it did. More importantly, it tries to present the legend of the Amazons as a historic reality, and does so in a way that seems quite realistic. In this novel, the clash between Theseus, ruler of Athens, and the armies of the Amazon nation are not a gender war as much as a clash between aboriginal cultures and civilization. One could easily see it as a

tale of Europeans and American Indians or Australian Aborigines.

Pressfield puts effort into creating characters who are sympathetic and interesting, and it pays off. I enjoyed this one a lot more than I thought I would.

## SPIDERMAN--the movie--

I don't think I've been this satisfied with comic to movie casting since Christopher Reeve was tapped to play Superman. Tobey Maguire is perfect as Peter Parker/Spiderman, not too big, not too buff, unsure of himself and still making mistakes. They kept fairly close to the storyline of the comics too, and overall I found SPIDERMAN a very satisfying effort. The most sour note for me was when Norman Osborne, the Green Goblin, is threatening Spiderman and ordinary New Yorkers attack him in a post 9-11 ploy that rings false.

Other than that though, I liked it all.

## REQUIEM FOR A

**DREAM**--This indy movie about life among the drug culture was interesting at a lot of levels, not least because the director is in charge of the next BATMAN movie. Micah had been wanting to see it for some time, and I'd been hesitant since it was unrated, but found myself intrigued by the cinematography as well as the story. The flash frame editing, the music, all came together to make this a 2002 version of PANIC IN NEEDLE PARK, MAN WITH THE GOLDEN ARM, TRAINSPOTTING and some of the other classics dealing with drug abuse. It's worth watching if only for Jennifer Connelly's slide into degradation as a woman who ends up willing to do anything for the next fix.

## MINORITY REPORT--Can



you say "Hugo nominee?" This was one of those rare SF movies that combines good special effects with good story, something that happens all too seldom. What I really enjoyed about it was when you thought you had it figured out--I turned to Howard and said "I know why he has to kill him"--suddenly it's not all over at all. Tom Cruise was very good, the special effects weren't so far out there as to seem unrealistic, the other actors held their own. It was all good.

**INSOMNIA**--Looks like another Oscar nomination for Al Pacino. And Robin Williams may pick one up for best supporting.

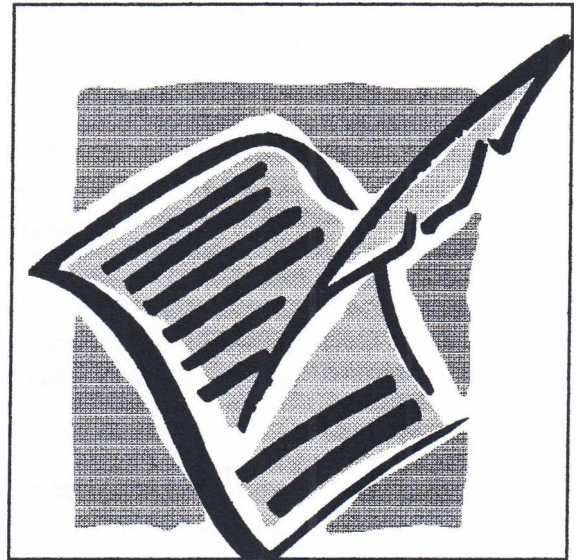
Pacino plays an LA detective who's one of the best but has seen too much and done too much in his career, and now it's catching up with him in the form of an Internal Affairs investigation and his own doubts about himself and what's right and wrong. Pacino goes to Alaska to help a friend investigate the brutal beating death of a teenage girl and finds himself affected by the white nights. Unable to sleep, he begins to crossover into a realm of hallucination and dementia brought on by lack of sleep, an accidental killing and his obsession with finding the killer. It's not giving away much of the movie to say Williams plays the villain and Pacino and Williams work well together.

The ending is inevitable, but getting there makes it worthwhile.

## Mailing Comments, SFPA 226!

**Lillian**--Thank you for sharing your honeymoon with us--at least the parts you *could* share.////###

**Lynch**--Raphi didn't get to see more of DC on his December trip because the group he was traveling with was under extremely tight security. I think they didn't want to let the kids out at all, and limited their excursions much more than in past years.////###



**Lillian**--ct. Me: USY, or United Synagogue Youth, has changed a bit <koff> from when I was a teen. For instance, there was the scandal a few years back when young ladies in one chapter raised money for Israel at a convention by selling lap dances....

Yeah, Howard wants to re-up also.//

Glad to hear Random's planning on continuing with karate. Raphi hasn't done it this year because he's been too busy, but he says he'll either take up fencing or find a new dojo at Brandeis. As long as he's doing something physical he enjoys, I'll be content. Micah gave up karate much too soon (imo), but at least he walks home from school every day, nearly two miles, so he's getting some activity. Both boys have buff bods, but it's easy to slack off and begin piling up the excess so I want them to get into good habits now.////###

**Strickland**--An immersion heater for hotel room tea is a good idea. Small and portable, and while it won't give me a potful I can still get fresh, hot tea when I want. Thanks for the suggestion! Last time I stayed in a hotel I tried the method of removing the coffee basket and just letting the hot water pour into the pot, and that helped.////###

**Brown**--As always, an enjoyable 'zine, especially THE LOWER CASE classics.//Do you read GREEN ARROW? I do, but I just realized that the Kevin Smith who's penning the current storyline is Kevin Smith the filmmaker. And the stories are very, very good.////###

**Gelb**--Sadly, the seder plate from the "Rhymes with Orange" strip is a reasonable



facsimile of what we had at the community seder. It was prepared by a caterer who seems to have never been to a seder, since instead of horseradish with the gefilte fish there were chopped beets ("Sure looked like that in the picture!"), the matza balls were lethal weapons, no one pointed out to him that you could have baked goods on Passover so dessert was a fruit cup...and the portions were so small!

Not to mention that by serving Mogan David Concord as the only wine for the four cups, they were successful in their aversion therapy. We will never, ever drink

that stuff again.

Re: Boskone food: Raphi's already whinging about not being able to get decent hash browns up nawth, but we did have lunch at Legal Sea Foods in Logan Airport and I highly recommend it as a great way to spend your airport time and avoid airline food (does anyone still eat that crud anymore?).//

Great line: "...whatever kind of doctor the bride's father was, he must be really good at his job."

BTW, we got Raphi's grades from the International Baccalaureate program this week and his Extended Essay, "Finding a Jewish God in Cosmology and Quantum Physics" got an A.////###

**Hughes**--When I'm feeling jaded about going to Disneyworld *again* I think of all those folks visiting there for whom this is a once in a lifetime experience and try to see it through their eyes. Sometimes that actually works. And if you visit often enough you get nostalgic about things like the birthday dinner at the restaurant in the seas exhibit, or when we stayed in the Dolphin and Swan.////###

**Cleary**--Thank you so much for sharing the wedding photos for those of us who couldn't be there!////###

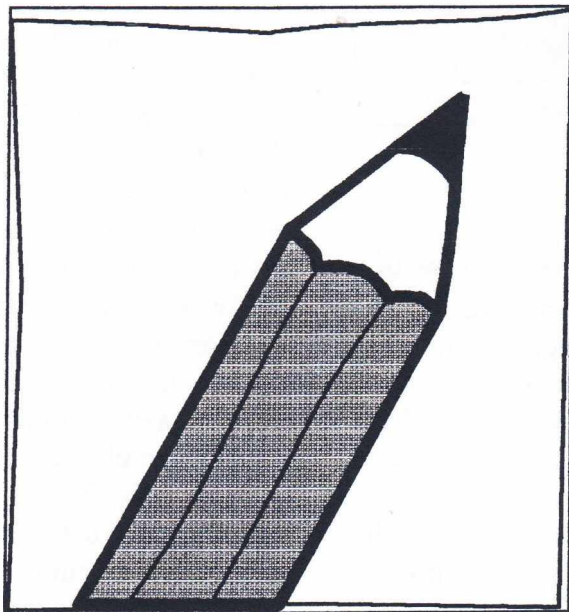
**Robe**--Your trip reports on South America are always very interesting. Thanks for sharing. //I hope by now Isaac has recovered. That's a very scary scenario, especially because I'm the sort of evil mother who says to her kids "quit being such a wuss, it's only a bad cold/flu." But I think you put your finger on it. There's a kind of sixth sense that kicks in for parents where you *know* things are not progressing



normally.////###

## MAILING COMMENTS, SFPA 227!

**Lillian**--Please thank Rosy for the review of PIRATE'S PRICE. I do appreciate it. Congratulations to you on your latest Hugo nomination! I'm so sorry you won't be at ConJose, but we'll be thinking about you.////###



**Schlosser**--"Quilty Pleasures"? Go immediately to your room, young man!////###

**Strickland**--When I took the GRE's I believe they told me the scores were good for 10 years. I decided not to go to grad school, which probably made UF happy since I scored a 98% verbal and 12% math. They did tell me the College of Journalism

and Communications would take me with those scores, but I shouldn't get my hopes up about any other college accepting me.////###

**Copeland, L**--I'd never seen the "Betty" comic strip before. Thanks for sharing.////###

**Brown**--Um, could you run the photo of the well endowed runner so we can judge for ourselves whether or not the picture should have been redone? I mean, we can't make up our minds without all the evidence.

Seriously though, would the question arise if you had a female swimmer with amazingly large breasts? It's an interesting issue and one that I can see would be an editorial dilemma. My initial response would be that you can't alter the picture, but you can pick a different picture. It's still an editorial judgment call but you do that all the time anyway.////###

**Robe**--Poor Isaac! Rheumatic Fever is one of those diseases we just don't think about anymore. It always seems like something a previous generation had to worry about. I'm glad he's on the mend, and he's a fortunate boy to have parents who kept on top of the situation and digging for answers.//

Your tale of travels to Venezuela was most interesting. I bet you never thought martial arts would be a good job skill in your line of work//

On that note, glad to hear you're moving ahead with your martial arts training. I will warn you that it's sometimes hard for kids to keep up with it in high school. I know Raphi was very dedicated until his senior year, then the pressures of school became too overwhelming for him to continue with Cuong Nhu. However, he promises he'll



look for a compatible martial arts class at Brandeis, or he may take up fencing again, a different martial art. Brandeis' only nationally ranked athletic team is their fencing group.////###

Hughes, S--Yay on the remodeling being finished! Isn't that a great feeling?//

Raphi's a big paintball fan, I think for that very reason. Taking out your aggressions on your friends is fun.////###



Copeland, J--Hah! Your review of SERENDIPITY is exactly why I've avoided this much vaunted movie. It seems to have trailers on everything I've rented this year that hasn't been an independent production, and the more I watched the trailers the more convinced I was that I didn't want to see this film. Who wants to be hooked up with some broad who insists fate alone controls our actions? Whatever happened to personal responsibility, free will and taking charge of your own life? Your example of the farmer joke is a good one, and I've heard that same joke used in sermons. //

ct. Me: I agree with you about good people needing to run for office, which is why I didn't discourage Howard from doing it. But while I've got kids at home I don't feel comfortable putting that burden on the family. Maybe in another four years, if they approach me again. I trust I'll still have the same equipment to qualify.//

re: Raphi and rabbinics: An amateur

rabbi is a good thing. Up until the modern era one was not supposed to make a living from having *smicha* (ordination). On the other hand, Micah out of the blue announces the other day that *he* wants to go to seminary. I strongly resisted the temptation to say "what kind of job is that for a nice Jewish boy?" I actually think Micah would make a good rabbi. As I told someone years ago, "if you had a problem, Raphi would care about you and put all of his brainpower behind helping you solve your problem. Micah would feel your pain."////###

## End Mailing Comments!

I'm continuing with book number three, working title SMUGGLER'S GOLD. I'm having fun with the SMUGGLER'S GOLD research, even if I discovered that my poor hero isn't a naval officer like I thought, but actually an officer in the Revenue Cutter Service, the forerunner of today's Coast Guard. So I've learned a lot more about 19<sup>th</sup> C. tariffs, customs, the Nullification Act, Alexander Hamilton and the Coast Guard than I ever thought I would need to know, but as my son says, "it's all good." I think the line I like best is one that's not germane to my story, but came out of the Coast Guard research, the motto "you have to go out, but you don't have to come back." Gives a great perspective on the men and women who do search and rescue missions.

That's all for now, see you in 60,

Eve