

# GUILTY PLEASURES

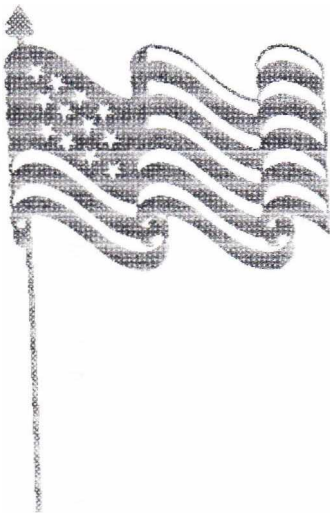


# GUILTY PLEASURES

For SFPA 216

July, 2000

## Campaign 2000 rolls on...



On the Fourth of July I got to see some examples of what makes America special, and great. On July 3, as is the custom in this community, the public radio and tv stations sponsored their annual "Fanfare and Fireworks", a salute to Independence Day and patriotism. A few thousand people gathered at the

University of Florida bandshell and surrounding areas, spread out blankets, lawn chairs and coolers and with frisbees flying enjoyed four hours of patriotic music by local groups capped off by a spectacular fireworks display.

We were out there as well, wearing our "Howard Rosenblatt--Working for Solutions" t-shirts, waving flags, passing out literature and showing off our man.

And I might add the weather was the best 4th of July weather we'd seen in over a decade--highs in the 80's, relatively low humidity, light breeze. Made the campaigning a lot easier.

But the next day was even better. Imagine if you will that

Alachua County, Florida is a wheel with Gainesville as its hub and the outlying communities making the radius. Since House District 22 splits Alachua County pretty much straight down the middle, just about everything from west Gainesville to the county line is in Howard's district. So we got ourselves out to the smaller communities on the 4<sup>th</sup> and I got to march in the Archer Community Parade.

Archer's a one spotlight town west of here, often noted only as being en route to

Cedar Key on the coast. But the people who live there love their little spot with its old Victorian homes and they sponsored a one mile parade that looped through downtown and around back to the Community Center.

Howard and I walked the parade route, shaking hands, introducing the candidate, passing out literature. And we weren't alone. Other candidates in every race from school board to tax collector to state house were there as well--men and women, black and

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**By EVE ACKERMAN**

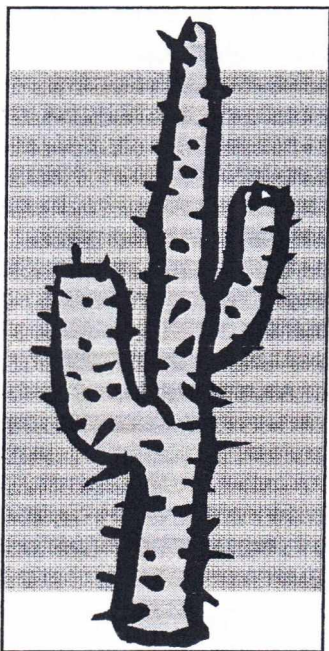
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white, young and old.

It occurred to me as we neared the community center, stepping lightly because we followed the horses (but preceded Smokey Bear in his forest fire fighting bulldozer) that this was truly the democratic process in action. The voters lined the streets and we were there to meet them, to say "hi", to discuss issues in the kind of face to face contact that is all too often missing from politics--no slick TV ads, no newspaper attacks, just a handshake and an "I'd appreciate your vote".



As you probably know if you follow the news at all, Florida is just

now recovering from a severe drought. I thought this would happen. We had the most perfect Spring I could recall in 30 some years of living in this State. But while everyone was going on and on about the beauty of the weather, all I could think of was "Vintage Season".

We were put on water restrictions--first we were down to watering our lawns one day a week, then it was restricted to no use of in ground irrigation systems.

But I watered my lawn with impunity. Why? Because about four years ago I switched to a reclaimed irrigation system. It cost me a bundle up front but it took my irrigation watering off the utilities bill and now with the drought I wasn't restricted because I wasn't using potable water. My neighbors were, well not *green* with jealousy since their lawns were so dry, but they were sorry they didn't invest in the reclaimed water system. I figure the non-chlorinated water is better for my lawn anyway, so it's a good situation all the way around.

But then

Howard told me that we were ratted out. Last month on a Saturday he was working with his Bar and Bat Mitzvah students when there was a knock at the door.

It was the Watering Police.

Gainesville Regional Utilities had been dispatching trucks around town, especially to "certain neighborhoods", neighborhoods with known scofflaws--the kind of people who have inground irrigation systems are aren't afraid to use them.

Someone in our neighborhood saw that our lawn was nice and green and that there was dampness on non-watering days and called it in.

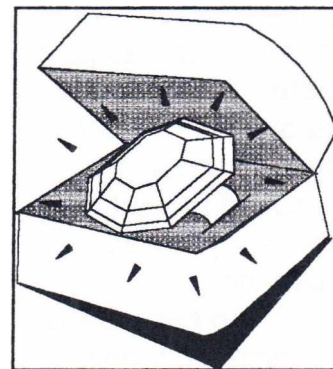
Howard explained to the GRU lady that we had a reclaimed water system and were exempt.

"Do you know where you second meter is?" she asked suspiciously.

"It should be about a foot away from the main meter," Howard said, and sure enough it was, down in the front yard under some leaves. So she didn't issue a citation but I was thinking

afterwards that we should have a little yard sign, like our security system sign, explaining that we can jolly well water when we want because we were prudent enough to invest in a reclaimed water system years before the drought!

The drought finally broke. We're beginning to get our normal afternoon showers and it's making a difference for the lawn owners, though it may be too late for some of the farmers. But it's nice to see everything looking washed off and less dusty again, even if I could have enjoyed the dry, lower humidity air for longer. Ah well, with the summer rain comes the summer humidity so I guess it's all part of the package.



I have a piece of jewelry I hardly ever wear. Janice has seen it--the infamous

Rosenblatt  
Aquamarine which came, some say, with a curse--I had to marry Rosenblatt to get the aquamarine.

It was infamous in more ways than that--I had it appraised a few years back and was told it was a blue topaz, not a genuine aquamarine. Not Howard's fault though. He'd bought it for me because I'd admired it in the jewelers when we were picking up our wedding bands.

Now you ladies may think this is a wonderful thing, having a husband who if you admire something in the jewelry store buys it for you. It's a mixed blessing. I've learned to be very careful not to be too obvious in what I'm looking at otherwise I could end up with some pieces of jewelry that scream "this woman has zero taste!" And then I'd be obliged to wear them because my husband bought them for me and I love my husband.

So back to the aquamarine/topaz. I hardly ever wore it because it was literally painful. The design was this large Tiffany cut stone held by two golden lightning bolts that

ended in a chain. The problem was the lightning bolts had sharp tips that could pierce the skin and cause a stigmata like effect by the end of the evening. Or poke holes in my clothing.

I was mentioning to Howard that I felt bad because we'd been married nearly 25 years and I hardly ever wore his wedding gift.

"So have it recast into something you want to wear," he said.

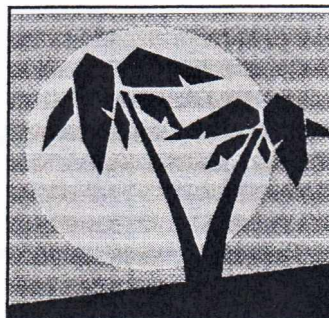
I tell you, the man is brilliant.

I took it to a jeweler we know (not the one who told Howard it was an aquamarine--oddly, he'd gone out of business) and he showed me some designs he'd done. I found a beautiful Art Nouveau mounting for a pendant and knew the blue stone would look stunning. And it does. Now I wear it often, Howard's happy that I'm happy and for very little outlay of cash I've got a nice, snazzy new gift.

## DSC 2000

It was wonderful meeting so many of you in person at DSC! Attaching

names to faces is always a pleasure in fandom and I'm hoping to making to next year's event. The Jekyll Island



venue was perfect for a relaxacon and the weather cooperated. We even managed to pull the dinner excursions off without too much hassle. And if you missed Janice's "Tits Seminar--How to Tell Real from Fake," just ask Guy for details.



We had a crisis the other day when I noticed something was dead in the general vicinity of our house. I noticed this on a Saturday afternoon when I was sitting on the porch and I looked suspiciously at Yofi, wondering if she'd finally caught a squirrel and was going to gift me with it. She refused to talk though and when I checked her I realized

she hadn't rolled in anything dead, which would have been her first move if she'd been fortunate enough to find something.

The odor was at its worst when the wind was drifting from the West so I checked around the woodpile.

*Nada.*

But I knew it was out there somewhere so I went to the west part of the backyard. Nothing there, so I went out front.

I saw the flies buzzing around Raphi's car and hoped I'd find something had quietly gone to sleep under the Vigor and not woken up. I wasn't that lucky. Raphi hadn't driven his car for four days but there wasn't anything underneath. I looked in the car, but it was locked up tight.

That only left one other spot.

I called Howard and Raphi outside and said "something's died under the hood of the car."

To make this even more exciting, we had about seven teenagers at the house who thought this was the neatest thing that had happened all day!

So Howard and

Raphi went out there, popped the hood latch, and sure enough, they found a cat dead and decomposing all over the engine block.

In pieces.

There was no way to easily remove it so we discussed various options from pest control

companies to the city garbage service and then I said "It's a car problem, call AAA."

Howard thought this was a good idea because we couldn't start the car as it was and perhaps if it was lifted up by a tow truck the cat corpse would fall out.

Incidentally, I'd seen a feral cat and her nearly grown kittens hanging around my yard last week and we figured out this was one of the kits.

"Wow, he's really wedged in there!" the tow operator said. Raphi was not thrilled to hear this. See, the last time he'd driven the car it had made a very strange noise when he started it up in the morning, but when he turned off the AC the noise went away and he drove to school, not really thinking about it again...

Until that moment.

"I killed a kitty!" he wailed.

"You don't know that," I pointed out logically. "It could have crawled in and died, and it could have done that any time in the last four days! It's not your fault!"

So the tow operator, who'd handled these kinds of situations in the winter when the stray cats look for someplace warm, donned some rubber gloves, pulled out cat chunks and hosed down the engine.

In the meantime the assembled teens were full of unhelpful commentary and when we got to the synagogue that night



poor Raphi had to deal with all kinds of exaggerated versions of what really happened.

But as I told him later, "Face it Raphi. Cats happen."



Our library now offers a website where you can request and

renew books. I love it. Everytime I see a book I don't want to purchase, or read of new books being issued I just log on



and put in a request. It even shows where you are in the line so you know how long it will be before you get it. For instance, I'm 36th in line for Janet Evanovich's new mystery HOT SIX. This is so much more convenient that traveling to the library, filling out the request cards and then waiting for the books. I'll still have my library "browsing" time when I go to pick the books up so I lose nothing by the effort. Ain't technology grand?



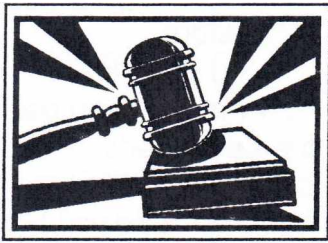
I've just returned from the annual Florida Bar conference downstate. I promised myself that while most

of my time would be at Howard's disposal, I would make a side trip to the Levenger's retail store.

I don't know how many of you get the Levenger's catalog, subtitled "tools for readers" but it is the catalog I drool over each month. All these neat things you never knew you needed or lusted after until you see them in Levenger's and say "oooh, I want that!"

The only Levenger's retail store is in Delray Beach, Florida. It's a combination bookstore, cafe, retail store and outlet all under one roof and well worth the trip. I'm typing this sitting at our new Herman Miller notebook "scooter", a small desk that adjusts for height and angle and scoots under your chair so you can have your notebook in your lap, but not sitting on it. This allows you to among other things, position yourself in a more ergonomically correct position while using your notebook and it removes the hot notebook from off your lap. Howard also likes to use it as a writing desk in the evening while he's watching SportsBeat

and going over his daily correspondence.



The convention was held at the charming Boca Raton Resort, built in the 1920's. Lots of ambiance and character and we stayed in the original section, the Cloisters. The buildings are a hot tropical pink, the staff is first rate and while Howard was less than thrilled with the antique nature of our room bath, I thought it was a delightful change from the Marriotts of the world.

Political pundit Mark Shields was the entertainment at the Judicial Luncheon and was very witty and insightful. I'd been expecting the Capitol Steps, which is who they usually get, but I wasn't unhappy when I heard Shields take on current events in DC.

Later that day I attended a reception with Howard sponsored by the UF Law Alumni association. I was

watching Howard circulate through the room, doing his political gig, when an older gent came up to me and said "Are you an attorney?"

"No, and I don't even play one on television."

A huge grin split his face and without missing a beat he said "What do you play on television?"

"A news reporter, in a past life."

He introduced himself and we started chatting, and it was like a quality fannish conversation--his mind would veer off in all sorts of interesting but strange tangents and I was expected to keep up, which was exhilarating and also the most fun I'd had that evening.

Meanwhile, I notice Howard across the room is giving me some very strange looks. Eventually he works his way back to my side at which point I introduce him to the lawyer I'd been talking to.

"I have to run, my dear," the gentleman says, "but it's been a pleasure meeting you."

After he leaves Howard says, "Do you know who that is?"

"Yeah, that's

\_\_\_\_. Nice guy."

"Your friend Mr. Nice Guy is the top divorce lawyer in the state. He handled the divorces for " and then Howard rattles off a list of names familiar to anyone who reads the tabloids. And even those of us who don't.

"What were you discussing?" Howard wanted to know.

"Oh, this and that. Nothing that need concern you. At this point."

Never hurts to keep people on their toes.

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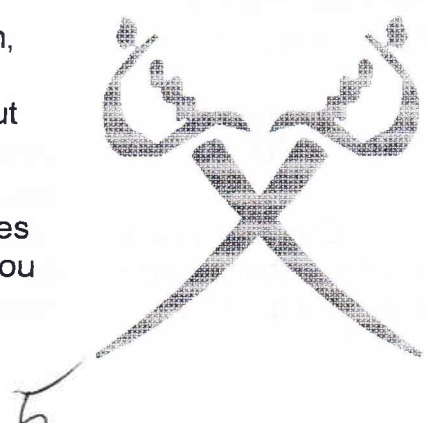
PIRATE'S PRICE is now in the hands of an editor at Dreams Unlimited, an e-publishing company. I have not heard back from her yet, not was I expecting to before next month, but I'm optimistic.

I knew the book was too short at 55K to get picked up as a single title release, and while it's the perfect length for a

category the subject matter doesn't fit within the guidelines of most houses I'd trust to handle PP. I kept trying to think about where I could expand it, work in new scenes, add things back in that I'd cut out. But no matter how many times I ran it through in my mind I couldn't escape the feeling that this novel was *done* and going back to pad it wasn't going to help.

On the other hand, at 55K it's the perfect length for an e-novel.

I've been a customer of Dreams Unlimited since they opened. They specialize in printing novels that don't quite fit in with other publishing houses. For instance, Rob Byrnes' UPPER WEST SIDE STORY is a hilarious romance about two lovers caught between the New York publishing industry and the mafia. The lovers being male makes the book hard to market, but it's a rollicking good story that should delight readers of any sexual orientation. They also published Joyce Moyer's THE MUSIC MAKER, another romantic story which couldn't find a



niche because it's a romance between three people, not two.

But DU isn't just about sex. They're re-releasing Parke Godwin's **WAITING FOR THE GALACTIC BUS**. They've also published some horror fiction, straight romance, mysteries and more.

Their new subsidiary Daylight Dreams wants to expand their publishing into historical fiction and what the owners call "hystericals", humorous romance novels. I think there's enough humor in PP to make it a candidate, but time will tell. If it does get published, you'll have the option of either downloading or ordering on disk. I'll keep everyone informed, of course, as things progress.

In the meantime, work continues on **CAPTAIN SINISTER**.

I had a visit with my doctor the other day to have a small mole removed from someplace where the sun don't shine. It's not something I'd normally notice, but I could tell the mole felt a little different, a bit scalier,

and my doctor agreed it was probably nothing but it's best to just take it off and have a biopsy done. And in fact, it turned out to be benign.

The procedure itself took about two minutes with the lidocaine shot being the most painful part. But I was ready for the trip to the lab. I was standing in line, holding my little bio bag with the tiny jar inside, when the lady in line behind me asked the question I'd been hoping all afternoon someone would ask.

"What's that?"

"It's a piece of ass," I said without missing a beat.

## BOOK REVIEWS!

### THE POISONED SERPENT

by Joan Wolf

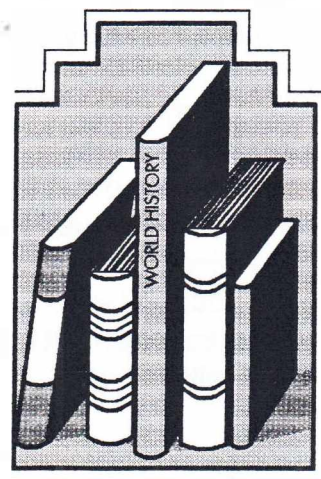
Harper Collins, 2000  
ISBN 0-06-019239-9  
Medieval mystery

Hugh de Leon, the young English lord troubled by migraines, a strong sense of justice and a hidden love is back in **THE POISONED SERPENT** by Joan

Wolf. Hugh was introduced to readers in Wolf's first medieval mystery in the series, **NO DARK PLACE**. At the end of that tale Hugh had discovered his true identity, been named heir to the powerful Earl of Wiltshire, and had a secret love affair going with the Lady Cristen Haslin of Somerford. That's where **THE POISONED SERPENT** picks up, as Hugh's uncle the Earl has arranged for Hugh to wed Elizabeth de Beaute, an heiress of great wealth and beauty. Hugh's idea of marrying Cristen for love is dismissed by the Earl and by Cristen's father as a foolish conceit since men and women of Hugh's class marry for wealth and property. Love is something the lower classes marry for.

But as Hugh and Cristen plot to elope, Hugh's "fiancee's" father, Gilbert, Earl of Lincoln, is murdered and Hugh's friend Bernard Radvers is accused of the crime. Before Hugh and Cristen can follow their hearts, Hugh must put his substantial deductive skills to work to clear

Bernard's name and save him from the noose. In the meantime though, Hugh will face some dark secrets from his own past, secrets that



threaten his very life as well as his love for Cristen.

Longtime romance writer Wolf gained a new crop of mystery fans with **NO DARK PLACE** and her protagonists Hugh and Cristen. With **THE POISONED SERPENT** she continues this enthralling story of life in the Middle Ages. Hugh is a detective of skill and bravery, an engaging hero who puts his personal sense of honor above the desires of kings and nobles. Wolf's fans can hope that Cristen and Hugh will continue solving crimes and righting wrongs in future

medieval  
"whodunnits".

## BULL GOD

**Roberta Gellis**

Baen, 2000

ISBN 0-671-57868-5

Romantic fantasy

Rewriting Greek myths into fantasy tales of romance continues to be a winning formula for Roberta Gellis. Her latest effort **BULL GOD** tells the story of



Dionysus, god of wine and Ariadne, princess of Crete. Their story interweaves many well known elements of Greek mythology including the tale of the Minotaur, the hero Theseus of Greece and what happens when mortals try to interfere in the affairs of jealous gods.

Dionysus is the youngest of the "mage-gods" of Olympus, long lived mortals with special abilities who've set themselves up as "gods" over the people of the Mediterranean. Dionysus' ability is to facilitate the growth of grape vines and ensure quality wine production. But he's troubled by fits of insanity and rages that make him a threat to the other gods and mortals. They go out of their way to avoid contact with him, leaving him to his worshippers and aides such as Bacchus and Silenos.

When the barely pubescent Princess Ariadne is thrust forward as a priestess and offering to the neglected minor "deity", Dionysus responds to her Call and recognizes something in the young woman he hasn't had for a great while--companionship and the possibility of relief from his crippling Visions.

But Ariadne's mother Pasiphae is jealous of her daughter's friendship with a god and seeks to make herself even greater by coupling with a god herself and birthing the Minotaur,

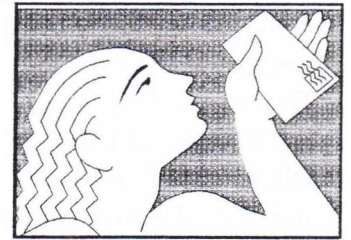
the Bull God made flesh. Only Ariadne can stand to be with the ugly little boy with the bull's head, defying her god and her family to care for Asterion the Minotaur, refusing to accept the prophecy that the child will grow to be a destructive monster. And as Ariadne grows and matures, her feelings for Dionysus and his feelings for her change into something that can tear them and their world apart.

Just as she did with Persephone and Hades, and Psyche and Eros, Gellis continues her enchanting romantic versions of Greek myths in **BULL GOD**. It's a tale of familiar characters retold in a way that brings them alive for a new audience of readers.

## MAILING COMMENTS SFPA 215

HUGHES, S~~ I remember seeing this stuff advertised in Paper Direct. I didn't realize it had gone obsolete so quickly, though I believe PD

still pushes it for decorating certificates and whatnot.///###



BROOKS~~Ct. Brown: We used to be very careful to refer to mishaps involving drugs and/or alcohol as "crashes" or "collisions", not "accidents". Addictions and Prevention professionals wanted to make a clear distinction between an impaired driver who chooses to get behind the wheel of a car and someone who indeed has an accident. It's no accident if you're under the influence and you drive.// ct. Copeland: You get drilling bumblebees too? I've filled a few holes in the hammock stand using woodputty but made the mistake of doing it without wearing rubber gloves. Using your finger to shove the putty in is fine, but it's almost impossible to get the gunk off afterwards.///###

LYNCH~~If you need to make one of those

killer drives to Tampa again, feel free to call and crash at our place for the night. Or whatever time of day.////###

STRICKLAND~Welcome aboard! I enjoyed reading your background because we seem to be the same age and entered fandom around the same time. I attended my first con (Kubla) in '79 and NoreasCon 2 was my first WorldCon in '80. I hope your involvement in SFPA helps you with your recovery and maybe I'll see you at DSC next year.////###

FELLER~~"Anita speculated that Emily prefers males with a wild streak to nerdy, stupid cats like Chester." Go figure. If you offered me a choice between two males named "Grey Mouser" and "Chester", I know whom I'd pick.

BTW, I know everyone else is going to tell you this also, but I can't resist: It's "spay" not "spade" your pet.////###

COPELAND, J~~Your article on the breakup of the Roman empire made me laugh out loud. Thanks for

sharing.//

I have no intention of seeing BATTLEFIELD EARTH except that the reviews have stated so categorically that this may be the worst piece of trash to ever mar celluloid that I feel almost compelled to see it. Your re-printing Ebert's comments helped move me in this direction. I read another comment that said "HUDSON HAWK has just been replaced as the movie they're going to show you when you're on the airplane down to Hell."//

Your comment to Liz regarding loss of status for stay at home wives reminded me of a very enjoyable romance novel I recently read (WHEN A MAN LOVES A WOMAN, Alina Adams). The heroine is a neurosurgeon whose mother kept house, chaired various volunteer organizations, did great hobby stuff, wins awards--and all her husband can say is "it's not exactly brain surgery, is it?" So the daughter grew up to be a brain surgeon partly to thumb her nose at the old man.//

This was a very thought provoking

zine. KUTGW////###

LILLIAN~~  
Congratulations, again, on the nomination. But then, you've had some fine writing in CHALLENGER. I ought to know.<g>////###

GELB~~ I was thinking of you today when I saw a program on E! about Anna Nicole Smith. No question of "real or fake" on that one!

ct. Brooks--  
Micah signed up for "Advanced PE" as his elective in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade instead of Band. While I'm disappointed he's not staying with Band, I'm not unhappy that he's choosing PE. 45 minutes of physical activity during the day is a good thing, from my point of view.//

Ct. Schlosser--  
There was a long, involved and acrimonious discussion in the Kid's Writing section of the Literary Forum on how Harry Potter seems to be so tight with his money, not giving his friends gifts, not helping the Weasley's out, etc. The consensus seemed to be that Harry hadn't had good behavior

modeled for him and so he wasn't getting it--that you reciprocate or buy gifts or things like that. But if you look at the three books carefully you begin to see changes by the third one where Harry is spending more of his money on others in small ways.

I don't know why he's still living with the Dursleys except that it gives them a feeling of power and control to have Harry there so they may not want to give him permission to move in with someone else.

But I have a feeling more will be explained in future books.////###

HLAVATY~~Ouch! On the bone break. You may not appreciate this now, but my first thought was "coulda been a lot worse..."

But I liked the joke.////###

SCHLOSSER~~I don't want to panic you, but when we had parades of carpenter ants our pest control guy said it usually means there's water damage in the house. He was right. Now I pay close attention when I see them and try to follow

where they're going.//



Ct. Me: ARM & Gil. Cute.// I gave blood again last week when they had an emergency need for A+. But I'm wondering if I'm allergic to something during the process--I get a small irritation like a large mosquito bite at the puncture point and it lasts for weeks. It's not a big thing, just itching and redness, but it does make me wonder.//

Gert's adjusted very well to life in the nursing home. For one thing, she was there most weekdays anyway as a volunteer, so it's a very familiar environment. Many of the residents are friends and family and she continues to participate in those activities she was doing before, plus she's now attending the conversational Yiddish group and an exercise class.

And to be honest, she's forgotten much about her apartment which is all to the good. She doesn't sit around

bemoaning what she doesn't have anymore. As I told Howard, "as long as she still knows who you and the boys are, it doesn't really matter if she forgets what day of the week it is.//####

ONE SHOT~~Ain't technology grand? Photos and all! I'm in one of those shots on the back page. The short redhead in a Hawaiian shirt cradling a bottle of wine and standing next to Janice. The bottle of wine was a kosher Australian shiraz we had left from lunch and I kept trying to donate it for the common good, but Toni had such fine booze in her suite that I couldn't compete. Thanks again for the dry cider, Toni! //####

ROBE~~Hey, crosses give me nightmares too, but probably not for the same reason Isaac got 'em. I liked your solution though. Very creative.//####

BROWN~~Sorry I missed you when I came south for the Florida Bar convention, but I hope you had a great time in Cleveland.//

Jeez, that Kay Davis thing is kind of

scary. What if this nutcase with a little bit of power called the cops in your town, threw her authority as a member of, I presume, the Texas parole administration and got you busted until you could prove you weren't Gary W. Brown. In other words, the burden of proof that you're not guilty would be on you.

Smart of you not to give out your Social Security number though. Not everybody knows giving out that information is not a good thing to do.//

Thank you for sharing the Onion take on USA today. As you know, many hotels offer USA today to their guests in the morning. I figure it's "Vacation News", just like I used to let the boys eat non-nutritious, empty calorie sugar cereals on vacation they couldn't eat at home--Vacation cereal.//####

WEISSKOPF~~ct. Me: The Florida Folk Festival is an annual event at the Stephen Foster Memorial in White Springs, about 60 miles north of Gainesville. It brings together folk singers

from around the state plus different exhibitors showing off examples of folk arts and crafts. Some of them receive grants from the state to teach folkways classes and mentor youngsters. For instance, one year I saw an old Cracker demonstrate bullwhip techniques and he had a young assistant he was training up to learn the craft. Same with the blacksmith and the basketweaver and a couple of the other craftsmen.

It's a lot of fun, educational, and a great way to spend Memorial day weekend. Unfortunately I couldn't attend this year as my boys were at opposite ends of the state (Jacksonville and Tampa) and Howard and I had to fetch them home from their conventions.// Hmmm...I'm not sure what follows Goth. But I'm hopeful it's the Ivy League look and act.//

A MODEST  
(CONSTITUTIONAL)  
PROPOSAL--I like it.//####

SEE YOU NEXT DISTY,

EVE