

Home

With

the

Armadillo

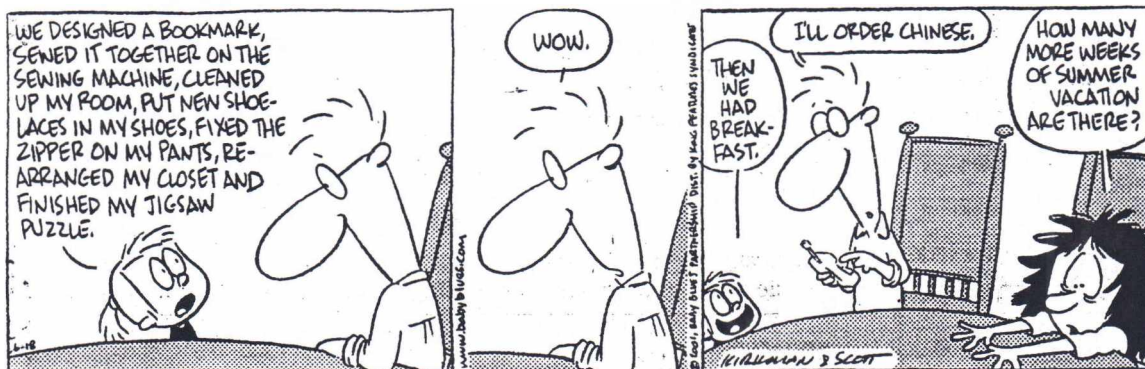


Home with the Armadillo #48 is brought to you by Liz Copeland of 3243 165th Ave. SE, Bellevue WA 98008. Phone number is 425-641-0209. Email is received at lizc@nwlinc.com. Done in May 2001, for SFPA 222.

So I'm joining the group of SFPAnS who are obstinately commenting on all of the mailings no matter how behind they get. Thus, this zine has current reviews, some natter about our summer travel, and comments on SFPA 219.

We started our travel season with a trip to New York at the end of June. This one was because of Jeff's mother's 75th birthday. Next year is his father's 80th birthday and the year after is their 50th wedding anniversary. Looks like we'll be vacationing on the east coast for a few years. That takes us right up to 2004 which is my mother's 75th birthday year. But I digress... Our trip out was fairly smooth with the exception of trying to get out of Newark airport and onto the correct freeway. They don't believe in signs in Newark and Jeff had printed out directions from the computer map people instead of a map so once we were out of synch with the directions (as in not being able to find the street we were supposed to turn onto), we were totally lost. After circling around Newark Airport what seemed like a dozen times, we eventually ended up driving west on the one freeway we could find because Jeff could remember what to do once we hit the Garden State Pkwy. We finally made it to the grandparent's house and surprised them successfully.

Their house is a very open floor plan and with 2 grandparents, their 3 kids and 8 grandkids in it, it was over capacity. This was mostly a problem in getting the toddlers to sleep as the openness caused noise to be echoed



upwards to the floor where they were sleeping. Fortunately, we all like one another so everyone dealt with it comfortably. We arrived on Thursday evening, in time to help setup for the party on Saturday. There were another 15 people at the party, which gave us a very full house. Ian, Jeff's brother, put together some poster boards with old photos and no captions for everyone to puzzle over. It was a great visit, and I loved watching the cousins all play together.

We came back from NY on Monday, and left for DSC on Friday. Just enough time to unpack, do laundry, make sure we had everything we needed for our trip to Alaska, and then load the car to drive to Portland. The drive down and back made clear what everyone is talking about when they talk about regional traffic congestion. We normally don't notice the traffic much as we deliberately chose a house within a short surface street commute from Microsoft.

DSC took up 2 Doubletree hotels: the Columbia River and the Jantzen Beach. The 2 hotels are only a few blocks apart from each other which would normally be a short and easy walk except for the freeway running down the middle of the space between them. Fortunately, the group running Westercon normally does Orycon in one of these hotels so they had it all planned out fairly well. There were little yellow buses going back and forth between the 2 hotels on a 5 minute loop so it was very easy to be a lazy slug and never walk to the other hotel. Allie & JJ loved being at a convention. JJ because the movies were being broadcast on the hotel station so he could stay in the room and see all the scifi stuff he wanted. Allie because there were crowds of people and she could party with Kyla and Ruth who were pronounced totally cool. And Jeff & I had a blast seeing all the LA folk we hadn't seen in ages, and running with the SFPA herd. Kyla and Ruth were nice enough to take on chaperonage duties for Allie so we parents could flake out before midnight on Saturday and Allie could have a fine time dancing into the early hours. Great art show and a pretty good dealer's room made it an excellent con. Our only complaint was the time period on Sunday when the only food available was the expensive brunch buffet unless we wanted to eat in the sports bar. Since minors cannot even go into a bar in Oregon, this presented certain problems for our family. We ended up sitting in a table area that was officially not in the bar but the wait staff weren't really clear on who was responsible so we ended up waiting

forever for menus. With this one exception, the staff at the hotel were great. We even attended some programming: Toni's panel on Publish On Demand books, the splatter panel on realistic wounds, and Mike Glycer interviewing Tim Powers. In an ideal world, the northern zone Westercons would alternate years with DSC's that occur during the summer. We can only hope...

Reviews

The Fourth Angel by Suzanne Chazin This is an excellent book. It opens up the firefighters' world to the reader, complete with petty corruption and politicking yet still gives a sense of the quiet heroism inherent in doing the job. There's also some fascinating stuff about High Temperature Accelerant fires. A good heroine with reasonably well-detailed supporting characters gives the book a good story. All in all, well worth reading and impressive as a first novel.

Cats & Dogs is a fun movie even if it does portray cats as the villains. The various special effects are well done, and the ninja cat scenes are well worth it as Roger Ebert said. I found I liked the Russian cat with his hairball-concealed weapons even better. JJ loved it and since he's the target audience, that means the movie aimed well. If you have a pre-teen son or know a boy that age, then definitely see it.



Mac Fontana books by Earl Emerson I seem to be reading about fire fighters in my mystery selections right now. Emerson has 5 books featuring Mac Fontana, a fire chief in a small town in Washington, about 30 miles east of

Seattle. I'm most of the way through the fifth one now. I found the first 2 (**Black Hearts and Slow Dancing & Help Wanted: Orphans Preferred**) to be somewhat below expectations. Granted, The Fourth Angel had probably put my expectations somewhat higher than normal, but while the characters and setting were interesting, the plotting was a tad chaotic and didn't really use any of the fire fighting background of the main character. This was changed in the third book, **Morons and Madmen**, much to my pleasure. The fire fighting is now integral to the plots and the characters have added depth. The next two books, **Going Crazy in Public** and **The Dead Horse Paint Company**, keep up the good work. This is an author who has gotten better as the series goes on.

The Score is an old-fashioned caper movie done well. The movie is set in Montreal, with DeNiro starring as the jazz-club owning thief who wants to do just one last big score. It's a very traditional type of movie with somewhat slower pacing than most movies these days and it comes complete with the traditional surprise twists in the caper. Very enjoyable.

Mailing Comments on SFPA 219

The Southerner/J. Copeland

This is absolutely a very Jeff-like design. No graphics, eh? Maybe your next term we can get some spiffy pictures back again...

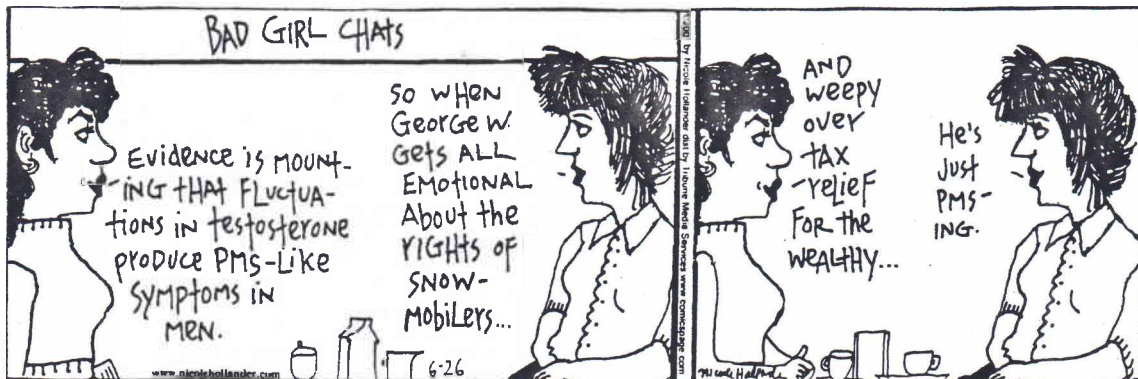
And I am honored to be the first OO mistake in your first mailing. And I thank you for fixing my email address so quickly.



The New Port News 195/N. Brooks "Every time I hear about the Kent State massacre I get mad all over again - I have had people try to tell me the guardsmen were justified in firing indiscriminately at unarmed students." While I don't get mad every time I hear about it, I do agree with Matt Helm on this issue. They should either have a specific dead protester for each shot they fired, or not have fired at all. (The Intriguers by Donald Hamilton, chapter 16). But then, they weren't police; on the other hand, firing into a crowd of unarmed civilians is against policy for the army, too.

"The freedoms provided for in the Bill of Rights are mostly still intact for well-dressed whites - several recent investigations in Philadelphia and NJ have shown that minorities are stopped on the street or in their cars, as a matter of police policy, even when there is no evidence whatsoever of a crime." This is called racial profiling and is reprehensible wherever it occurs. Unfortunately, the black community in Seattle has decided that if blacks are stopped for anything short of killing someone then it's racial harassment on the part of the police. There have been 2 black men killed in police shootings in the last 2 years. The first one stole food from a grocery store and shot at the security guard who tried to stop him. Fortunately, the guard was not hit. The thief then ran off somewhat erratically, followed shortly by the police, and even when surrounded, he refused to stop. He was waving a knife and headed for an area of town with significant pedestrian population. At one point, he made a move with the knife that one policeman thought was seriously threatening and he was shot. Once. The second man was stopped for backing out of a parking lot across 4 lanes of traffic. It's not entirely clear how, but the cop ended up with his arm inside the car when the man put the car in gear and drove off, dragging the cop along with him. At some point, he ran the car backwards into a concrete planter, stopping it long enough for the cop's partner to get to the passenger side of the car and tell him to let go of the cop and stop the car. He continued struggling, including reaching for the gun being pointed at him from the passenger side cop, and was shot. The black community leaders (self-appointed) have demanded that all of the police involved be fired. The policeman involved in last year's incident was cleared by the mandatory investigation. This year's incident is still being investigated. All 3 of the policeman have won awards for community policing. We

have had marching and protesting and lots of assumptions that both of these shootings were unjustifiable. (We'll ignore the people who think that the police should have shot at the legs, or shot the knife out of his hand, or shot out the tires on the car as being people who watch too much television and thus have little grasp of reality.) There must be some middle ground between stopping everyone for being black, which is what they apparently do in Philadelphia, and never stopping anyone who's black, which is apparently what they want in South Central Seattle. (Just FYI, last year's shooting victim was mentally ill, although I still haven't figured out how the police were to know that, and this year's was an escapee from a work release program with a long criminal record which includes an assault conviction.)



ctSheila: "There was a spam today trying to sell me a DVD player. They claimed that theirs - unlike some others - would play all DVDs from anywhere in the world." Ian, Jeff's brother, and his wife Deb have a VCR player that plays both formats of VHS tapes, which came in very handy as they bought it in Hong Kong, and are now living in England. But, according to Jeff, DVDs don't have a different format; they have an encoding system so that DVDs sold in Europe, for example, cannot be played on players sold in North America. Technically, any player that played all encodings would be in violation of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. I have no idea what would happen to someone who owned one of them.

I laughed out loud at the imagery of your PC being like a cat with a dead mouse when it saved some hard disk rubbish for you to look at. Very apt simile.

"... but then I saw a big fat squirrel playing in the gutter, and making a hell of a racket at it too. I don't know how he got up there - no trees overhand the roof and there's nothing else I can cut back." According to the info that came with our squirrel guard for our birdfeeder, squirrels can jump 10 feet and that can be sideways or up or down. So if you have trees within ten feet of the house, that's probably how they're getting up there.

We haven't tried the hang gliding CD yet. We've had lots of problems with our computer lately, and we probably won't want to risk it until we have the second Windows machine up and running so that if we crash one machine trying to play it, we'll still have our essential computer capability. We'll let you know what happens when we do try it.

Great idea on killing intruding bugs with an electrified fly swatter. I'll have to look into getting one of these for the kids. We have these big black flies that invade in the spring. Fortunately, they don't bite. Oh, and while the slugs in the garden are icky, I can only be happy that they don't fly. (Now there's a good band name: The Flying Slugs.)

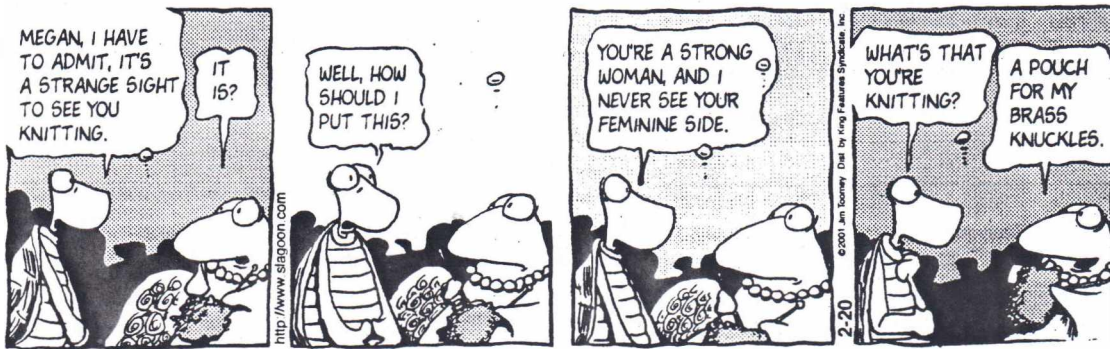
Variations on a theme #4/R. Lynch It's amazing how things come up at the same time in so many different places. My quiltart list, of all places, recently had a discussion of glogg. Glogg is also popular locally because of the Scandinavian influences in the area. Just in case you're interested, here's a recipe from one of the quiltart members.

- 1 bottle aquavit or ½ bottle vodka
- 1 bottle claret, burgundy or other dry red wine
- 10 cardamom seeds
- 5 whole cloves
- 3 pieces dried orange peel
- 4 dried figs
- 1 inch cinnamon stick
- 1 Cup blanched almonds
- 1 Cup raisins
- ½ lb. Sugar cubes

Heat everything but sugar in saucepan until the boiling point. Remove from heat, put sugar in long handled sieve,

dip into hot liquid to moisten. Light the sugar with a match, dipping the sieve into liquid until the sugar has melted. Store in bottles. Serve warm.

Let us know in advance if you do accept invites to be on the Orycon programming. If you're going to be there, we'll try to go. We're going to this year's Westercon which is at the hotels that Orycon normally uses so you'll get reports from all the SFPAns attending Westercon about the hotels, staff, etc.



Peter, Pan & Merry #35/Schlosser

Even if your driving instructor said you could drive on private land w/o a license, how much real good is that? If you live on a multi-acre property, like a farm or ranch, it can be really good. Most Western rural kids learn to drive before getting a license by doing chores on the farm property.

All your talk to Irv Koch about carpenter ants, roaches, and other insect pests makes me glad we live in an area where even mosquitoes are rare. Slugs may be slimy but at least they don't bite or come in the house or try to eat the house. When we moved in, I wondered why there was no screen door on the doorway leading to the deck. After two years, I know why: we don't need it.

I can only say ook! about the possible casting of the Potter movie. We've seen a trailer for the movie since you commented on this and it looks wonderful. I'm looking forward to the movie, which is good, as JJ will insist on going the day it opens.

What does being an Alternate History buff entail? I like reading alternate history books usually but have never really looked for them in particular.

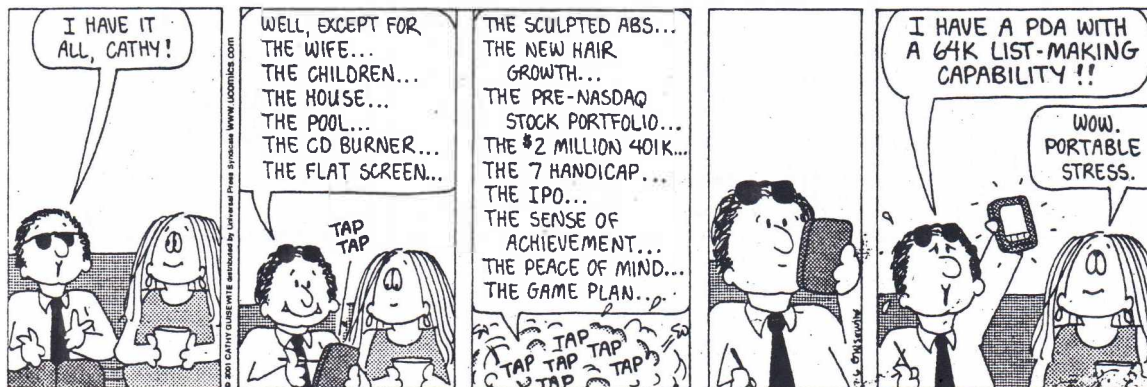
Spiritus Mundi 181/Lillian

I'm sorry we weren't able to make your wedding. I hope all went well and you and Rosy are in wedded bliss.

As you've heard me say many times, I never got into Robert Parker's Spenser; I've known too many genuine black street thugs to find Hawk anything but offensive. Two things: one, why offensive? Not true to reality, I can see easily. Second, I think that Hawk's blackness is symbolic in the sense that he's the Id, the dark forces, in the one person made up by Spenser, Hawk and Susan.

Just to keep the Elian argument going for another round, what would you have thought in 1939, had his mother been a refugee from Nazi Germany? You didn't make them Jewish, but, even so, we (both the US and other Western countries) did turn back refugees. And I don't think Cuba has any desire to conquer the world. Other than that, good thing to bring up.

One of the Elizabeth MacPherson books by Sharyn McCrumb takes place at the Highland Games in West Virginia. They are Scottish and therefore rather insane but the amusing bit is that the Highlanders run into some Confederate reenactors and agree with each other that those SCA folk coming up the hill are just plain crazy...

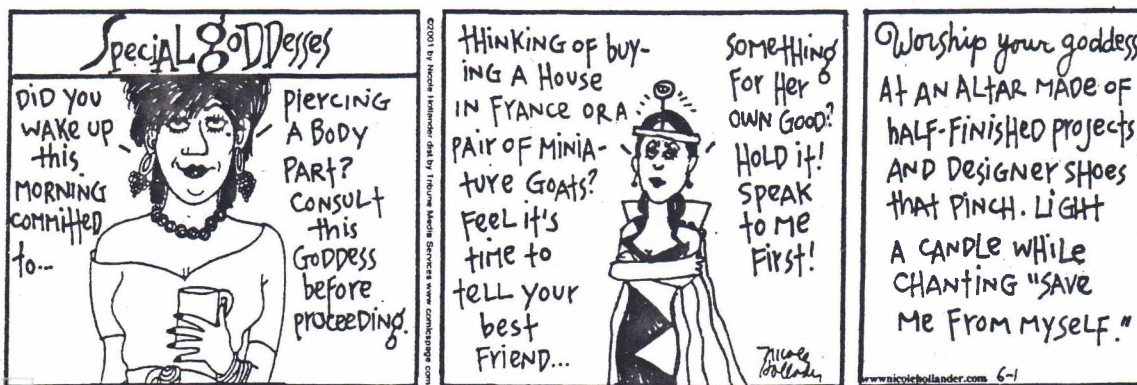


I agree wholeheartedly on **The Contender** being a good movie except for the end. I know the point is to stick to a principle but this got a bit weird about it all.

You say to Eve: I hope your district's placement of Micah's gifted classes in an economically disadvantaged school benefits the "normal" kids there, since I always found that when kids are aware of academic hierarchies, it can have a mean effect. I can vouch for the mean effect, as I was in "gifted" classes for grades 5 thru 8, and the other kids in the other classes were just plain mean towards us. I have to admit I like what Bellevue is doing. They have set a goal for everyone in the school district to take an AP class in high school. Effort, not IQ, is what's important here as it turns out there are AP courses for many areas that aren't usually considered.

If you and Rosy do ever make it to Oregon (re Janice's comments about Orycon), keep in mind that Seattle is only a couple of hours drive north of Portland.

Well, that's it for the comments this time. I can only say, I should really build my special goddess altar Real Soon Now, and maybe add some back mailings to the construction materials list...



OH SAY, YOU CAN SEE

Independence Dazed

Our voracious quest for news leads us to this shocking report – make that shocking weather report. The Seattle forecast calls for a *sunny* Fourth of July with temperatures in the mid-to-high 80s. (Take time to compose yourself.) For newcomers to the Northwest, we liken a sunny Fourth of July to a moon landing, a Bigfoot sighting, an easy commute; it's a very rare occurrence. A sunny Fourth requires preparation, take heed:

- The sun can be bright; wear sunglasses and don't look at it directly. Your eyes will compensate with a natural reflex called squinting.

- There is a product called sunscreen that will protect your skin from the sun's damaging UV rays. (Dust off lid before using.)

- Potato salad, chicken salad and macaroni salad are not friends of Mr. Sun.

- Don't be frightened by clearly visible fireworks; it may take practice to adjust your "ooh" and "ahs" to the actual explosions.

- You will not need to wear flannel-lined jeans, wool socks, hiking boots, polar fleece, turtlenecks, ear muffs, Hefty garbage bags or snowmobile suits this Fourth of July. (Read slowly and several times.)

- Beware ice cream can do a funny thing called melting when eaten too slowly.

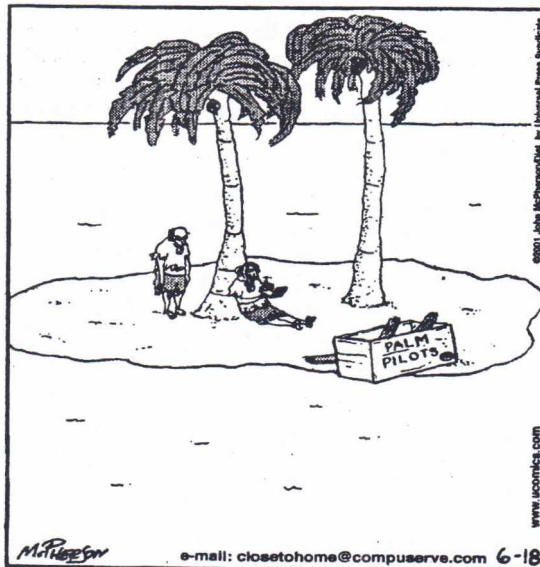
For those who may scoff and say, "I'll believe it when I see it," we politely respond that is your choice, but we're marking our calendars: July 4th sunrise is at 5:18 a.m.; sunset, 9:09 p.m.

Tom Conway, Metropolitan Travel
Seattle

CRABBY ROAD / John Wagner



CLOSE TO HOME



Thanks, rural Republicans: You shouldn't have



BY FROMA
HARROP
*Syndicated
columnist*

WHY fight it? Sometimes you have to give in. You say, all right, I'll take the money. I didn't ask for it, but since you insist...

That's what many of us in the "blue" part of the United States are thinking. I refer to states in the Northeast, West Coast, Great Lakes and mid-Atlantic that voted for Al Gore and generally

send Democrats to Washington.

These are the nation's high-income areas. They ship more tax dollars to Washington than other regions and generally see fewer of them return. You would think more of these people would be doing somersaults over the Bush tax cut.

Conversely, voters in most of the "red" Republican states had everything to gain from the tax status quo. Folks in these areas – the Rocky Mountains, Great Plains and South – tend to earn less money and thus pay less in taxes.

Many of these states, meanwhile, benefit from federal programs that the high-income states subsidize. If the tax cuts leave less money for Washington to spend (one of the stated goals), then these regions will see less money for the farm, low-income assistance and other federal programs they use heavily.

This, ladies and gentlemen, is what we call a paradox. Of course, people don't necessarily vote their economic interests. Other issues may move them more – the environment, abortion, education.

Misleading political rhetoric can also

mask reality. Rural and suburban conservatives especially like hearing that they bear huge tax burdens while getting nothing in return from Washington. The opposite is often the truth.

Typical was a speech given in 1995 by then-House Speaker Newt Gingrich, Republican of Georgia. It was during the battle over welfare reform that Gingrich blasted New York as a sponge for Americans' hard-earned money. He denounced its "culture of waste" and said "the rest of the country is not going to bail out the habits that have made New York so extraordinarily expensive."

Then-New York Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan hit the ceiling. He angrily pointed out that New York state paid \$16 billion more in federal taxes than it received from the federal government. And the alleged welfare capital, New York City, paid \$9 billion more.

An annual report by the JFK School of Government at Harvard University addresses this issue in excruciating detail. The report is called "The Federal Budget and the States." The most recent, for fiscal 1999, was issued right after the presidential elections.

Put the red-and-blue election map next to the report's findings. The results are bizarre. Of the 10 states that benefited most from the old tax-and-spend policies, eight voted for Bush. Of the 10 states that benefited most from the new setup, eight voted for Gore.

Consider the case of Montana. It supported Bush by a huge margin of 25 percentage points. Yet, Montana ranks last in the country in benefits derived from the tax cut. The average tax cut in Montana will be 33 percent below the national aver-

age due, in large part, to the state's generally low incomes.

People of Montana may say they don't care. They are independent folk who don't want anything out of Washington. But they've been getting it nonetheless.

Montana receives \$3,109 more per capita in federal spending than it pays in federal taxes. The money comes from various assistance programs, Social Security and Medicare. Indeed, Montana's balance of payments surplus with Washington is second-highest in the nation. (Impoverished New Mexico ranks first at nearly \$4,000 per capita.)

By contrast, well-to-do Connecticut, which has paid more in taxes on a per capita basis than any other state since 1985, will enjoy the biggest tax cut in the nation. It is followed in that honor by another Gore-voting state, New Jersey.

Connecticut and New Jersey derive relatively little benefit from federal programs. Thus, it's not surprising that their balance of payments deficits with Washington are the two worst. Connecticut's deficit is \$2,840 per capita while New Jersey's stands at \$2,342.

The urban privileged class may now rejoice. The Bush tax cuts will bring about a redistribution of national wealth toward Silicon Valley, Manhattan, Seattle, Boston and other rich areas that tend to vote liberal.

My guess is that the refund checks will be cashed. And to think we have rural Republicans to thank.

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