

Twygdrasil And Treehouse Gazette #80

Richard Dengrove, 2651 Arlington Drive #302, Alexandria, VA 22306
RichD22426@AOL.COM

January 2003



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ILLOS: (Cover) Assyrian winged lion with human head from the palace of Assurnasirpal 885-860 b.c., (p6) Archie McPhee ad for Armadillo purse, (p12) Fred Jane's 1890s unairworthy craft, (p18) Archie McPhee ad for Chinese Takeout Purse, (p24) Archie McPhee ad for a clock purse, (p30) Archie McPhee ad for a pink poodle purse.

MY COUSIN WAYNE'S DEATH

My cousin Wayne is dead. MY COUSIN WAYNE IS DEAD!! It took me some time for the full realization to strike me.

What was so great about Wayne? He was a playmate of mine. One of my closer playmates. Our mothers were twins; and – at the time – close. They visited each other once a month. However Wayne acted, we had to be close too.

It is true as a playmate he had his problems. He was not the brightest star in the firmament to say the least. On the other hand, Wayne could write fair sized letters in a good hand so he wasn't that retarded.

Another problem he had in his childhood was emotional instability; no question about that. I remember riffs in which he had an obsession about sticking his finger in a fan. And another about drilling a hole in his head and inserting a coin. Of course, never did either. But merely saying so seemed to be enough.

Nevertheless, he was my playmate. You might torture him but you would never divorce him.

His problems, it turned out, were due to his parents. His father, my Uncle Frank, acted as if it was his fault he wasn't as bright as he was expected to be. And he unrealistically believed, despite the evidence, Wayne somehow somewhere could go to medical school.

Expectations were astronomical for all us kids. My father felt the same way about me. I wasn't material to become a doctor, and yet somehow as a square peg I had to fit into a round hole. And there was much lamenting when both Wayne and I could not meet astronomical expectations.

Also, Wayne had further problems

at home. My Uncle Frank had mood swings and my Aunt Freda was manipulative and suspicious. Actually, despite her ways, Wayne loved his mother, although, I hear, he nearly came to blows with his father on more than one occasion. In fact, my Uncle Frank ultimately kicked him out of the house. Which may have been a blessing.

All these problems dissolved when Wayne left his parents' home. Maybe another reason he was so great was I wish I had known Wayne better in adulthood.

When you met him as an adult, he rubbed you the right way. When you read his letters. Even when he mistakenly believed I was interested in the detergent he was selling, he was still endearing. His sister Diane said that she could not wait until December and September rolled around, and Wayne visited her. He had the ability to make her spirits soar.

Others felt the same way. Diane claimed that when she tried to stop his mail after he died, the postal clerk was disappointed. Wayne had been one of the few people who was nice to her. Later, Diane found that an incredible number of people attended his wake.

Although Wayne was the affable innocent in some ways; he had good survival skills in others. When he was fourteen, he ran away from home. They found him a couple of weeks later. He had a job: albeit, washing dishes: and had been able to rent a room. That set the pattern for his entire life. He was able to wander from one State to another, from Wyoming, Utah, Nebraska, New Jersey; and get jobs.

One episode I haven't decided whether it was just callousness and a fear of having a bad time on Wayne's part. Or whether it was an honest appraisal of the situation, i.e., survival lifewise.

He gave up his kids. His wife, a housewife, fell into post partum depression. And she refused to take care of them. And he wasn't up to it. So he parked her and them with her mother. Later, when she remarried a man who didn't want them around and offered the kids back, Wayne refused and agreed to give them up for adoption instead.

Survival healthwise was another matter entirely. It was awful Wayne died so young. He was two years younger than me, 55. I was told originally that he hit his head. And that's what killed him. Possible. I found out several weeks later that it was a heart attack.

My cousin Diane's husband lamented that he didn't do anything to increase his odds. They knew he had hypertension and he did nothing to treat it. In fact, they knew he had not been to the doctor in twenty years except for an emergency room visit.

Also, they knew he smoked like a stack. He was proud when he was down to only fifteen cigarettes a week. It is a shame but I can't fault Wayne too much. He had been far away from the middle class for many years. He couldn't really have been expected to be imbued with our hypochondria.

Because of my childhood relationship and my lost adulthood possibilities, I was there when my cousin Diane spread his ashes over his mother's grave. And in the ocean at Atlantic City. He loved Atlantic City; his best years, it seems, were spent as a desk clerk there.

SCATTERING MY COUSIN WAYNE'S ASHES

The scattering was quite an

adventure, but explaining how may be difficult. A lot of stuff happened that was important to me, but I don't know how important it would be for others.

The facts are simple. Wayne did not wish to be visited and mourned so he asked his sister, Diane, to cremate him and scatter his ashes. Which, despite her religious Judaism, she obliged. For the festivities, I drove to her house Thanksgiving Weekend in the Philadelphia metropolitan area, Warminster, PA.

The next morning I, Diane and her daughter Myra drove to another part of the Philadelphia metropolitan area, a cemetery in Cherry Hill, NJ. There Wayne's mother is buried; and his father, grandparents, etc. About fifteen living relatives were on hand to watch. One, I last remembered from forty years ago, when he was a young man. His son, who looked like him, was also there. Presently, Diane scattered Wayne's ashes over his mother's grave.

Next, Diane announced that we would go to Atlantic City and spread Wayne's ashes there. Only two additional people were that committed to Wayne to join our troop: Diane's Brother-in-Law, Yeshua, and his friend Buzzy. We made that leg of the journey in one car.

Basically, Diane dumped the ashes in the ocean. She found a place where she could do it and the ashes would not blow back. She said Wayne would be a gypsy in the next life like he had been in this life. And six States in five years would be nothing; he would be on the shores of Europe and Africa. And Asia.

Next, we browsed in the shops along the boards that sell everything they could make a buck at: antiques, jewelry. tourist tsotskes. And ate at the Stage Deli in the Taj Mahal casino. Diane paid for all our

overpriced but sumptuous meals.

At one point, she apologized for us having fun at Wayne's funeral, but it was what Wayne wanted; not people mourning over him. Finally, we returned to our homes.

About the crowd that went to Atlantic City that day, it was a rogues' gallery.

COUSIN DIANE: The family hasn't considered her too bright. I bet because she dressed dowdy and she was isolated and unsure of herself in years past.

Now as a mother with kids, a career, a husband and a talent for organizing, she is very confident. And, in fact, she reveals herself to be a roly poly, bundle of energy. It is clear she is intelligent. She reads a lot. She told me about her exploits in tracing our geneology, which outshined mine.

She has a good sense of humor as well; somewhat vitiated by a raucous laugh she inherited from her father.

Also, she has a very active inner life, a very vivid imagination. She told me about the ghosts she has been plagued with: particularly the ghost of her father. There was no question of these being real flesh in blood ghosts; in fact, she presumed they were creatures of her imagination. And acted accordingly. However, she also admitted these illusions were very vivid to her.

HER DAUGHTER MYRA: She is next in the Atlantic City rogue's gallery. She just started college art school. She is the epitomy of the unconventional; so unconventional

she may not be unconventional anymore. She wears tacks in her sneakers, convenient for putting up pictures.

Immensely fat like her mother, whom she resembles; but, unlike her adolescent mother, cute in her own way.

She loves all things Japanese: she reads mangas and watches animé. Also, has a book on Japanese street slang. Also, she is learning the different sets of Japanese characters.

Even us adults were the targets of her taste for the exotic. Usually, a person as young as her, protective of their status, would keep their distance from us. But not her. She didn't seem to mind she had limited things in common with us adults. In fact, she thrived on it. She even liked to listen in to our conversations. Even to our memories of things past, past long before she was born.

On the other hand, the adults did not seem to mind it when she played her music on the car player. Mostly parodies by Adam Sandler.

YESHUA The next in the Atlantic City rogues gallery. He is enthusiasm personified. That he is a six foot three Israeli helps. Very talkative, very forthright, not particularly consistent. He claimed to love everyone one minute and the next minute enumerated those whom he hates.

For instance, the Palestinians. You don't support the Palestinians around him. Even at fifty-three, he is intent to go back to his paratrooper

**Most
Armadillos
are Nocturnal!**



Armadillo Handbag

outfit in Israel for a tour of duty. Which universal military service there makes possible.

Another person he hates is his wife. Whom he blamed for stranding him in the States and a job as air conditioner repairman, when he yearned to return to Israel and be a farmer.

There were, however, some people he liked. He liked Wayne and My Uncle Frank, Wayne's father. I can understand why Yeshua liked the easygoing Wayne. But Uncle Frank, when I knew him, would have been too much of a snob to have a friend like Yeshua.

He must have changed. I learned he drank in his later years. And Yeshua claimed they both drank together. He said it had killed my Uncle Frank and he had to stop before it killed him. The drinking did, however, leave Yeshua a red complexion and nose.

BUZZY: The next character in our Atlantic City rogue's gallery. A friend of Yeshua's. He was very quiet and I could only find out from him mere hints of a rich life.

He did indicate he hated gambling. He said not to believe people who claim they win regularly. With his pencil mustache, he looked like a gambler; maybe he was a reformed one.

Also, it seemed that there were hidden depths to the man. I mentioned that reincarnation had been a Jewish belief for several hundred years. And he told me that many Eastern European Jews still believe in it. So he had spoken to some of their innermost beliefs. If only we could peer into Buzzy's mind.

MYSELF: I am part of the eccentric's rogues gallery too. As usual far more conservative than I like to think I am, although more and more over the years owning up to it. I was the only one dressed in tie and jacket. I was told to dress comfortably. I said I would be most comfortable at a funeral in tie and jacket. Which, in effect, the scattering of Wayne's ashes was.

In addition to seeing some interesting characters, I found out some things about my family on my mother's side I didn't know. Both I and Diane have something inside of us that wants to find the facts about it. Yet we have only family legends colored by people whose credibility we doubt factually and spiritually. I more than Diane.

Facts were never my mother's strong

point. And, for the most part, I had to depend on her for my sources. Diane had sources better spread out within the family. Who showed more common sense. For instance, her sources told her to search for my grandmother and her sister by their Yiddish names, Meshke and Tupka, as well as their American names, Minnie and Lily. My mother only told me to look by their American names.

Also, Diane claims our family may have been from a place in Lithuania, Saugai, rather than Vitebsk in Belarus. That may have been the family's village of origin; the relatives were always protesting they were Lithuanians. Except for my mother, the only person for whom a Litvak means a Latvian.

The problem is all the older relatives agreed that the immediate patriarch, Chaim Cohen, lived in Vitebsk in Belarus. Still, with this information, I am ready to start the search again – one of these days

Also, I found out some interesting information about more recent relatives. For instance, my Uncle Frank had told us that he had retired from dentistry because lab costs had risen too high. Diane told me it was because of renal disease. He had hypertension and drinking exacerbated it.

Then there was the matter of Louise, Diane's sister. Louise has a right to be bitter. Aunt Freda decided no one would treat her scoliosis. And Louise was bent and looked vaguely like a human spider while she lived at her mother's.

At one point, her mother announced it was too late to have the operation. It apparently wasn't. When Louise left home, she got the operation. And stands straight right now; just very short and very thin.

By the way, my Aunt Freda did the same thing to herself. She chose not to have a hysterectomy, like my mother did. And so

died early of cancer. At least that is what Diane believes.

On the other hand, I was able to point out something to Diane. Relations were cut off between our families while my Uncle Frank lived. My Aunt Freda had complained my mother had not visited her during her last days dying of stomach cancer, whereas my aunt had camped out at my mother's hospital door during her hysterectomy.

I pointed out that they were feuding. And Aunt Freda was not a pleasant person. She kicked me out of her hospital room without much reason. And my Uncle Frank later apologized.

Then again, the scattering of Wayne's ashes raised a question even as it answered others. Why did Louise, who has cut herself off from the family, claim that she was the one who brought back Wayne's body from Knoxville, Kentucky? I would tend to believe Diane, that she did it. Especially since Louise was nowhere to be seen at the scattering.

MY XMAS VISIT TO MY PARENTS

Another adventure I had was visiting my parents' place for Christmas. I had been practicing saying to my father "You're 100% correct." Said seriously, that is supposed to confuse him according my brother and my colleague at work Alicia. Alicia has a grandmother who is always being critical. And that is the way, she tells me, she handles her.

You and I might be skeptical of someone who told you you were 100% correct. But my father has been waiting all his life for me to give that answer. Along with that, nursing the fear it may be a pyrrhic victory.

But I never got to say it. My father felt I took his criticism so badly last time he decided not to criticize me this time around. It must have taken superhuman willpower: I am sure he regarded my reaction as the height of perversity.

Anyway, he criticized my brother and sister enough. And we all sighed with relief. At this point, that he criticizes is a sign he is well. If he doesn't, it is a sign he is ill. Which, at his age, 89, he can't afford to be.

Also, my sister partly made up for it by screaming at me; albeit, only a short time. What was happening is the prospect of taking care of my mother was getting to her; a job which my father had chosen her to do. And it looked like it would entail her giving up her career and personal life, and devoting all her time to nurse someone with alzheimers.

Of course, the situation meant she could be easily set off. And she couldn't aim her barbs at my father. She felt I had made a tactless remark. Or done something unthinking. It was not exactly the best timed outburst: things got hairy because I was driving the car at the time. Fortunately, I was able to get her calmed down. And she later apologized.

Actually, I feel for her.

Unlike my father. I told him I sympathized with my sister. And he said taking care of my mother was nothing that she didn't owe. Of course, I was never asked to make that sacrifice. His tough part had overtaken him again – with a vengeance.

Believe it or not, he has a tender, generous part too. Which, unfortunately, didn't inspire any incidents worth telling.

On the other hand, maybe Lois and I should be the ones who are taking care of my mother. When my sister came, my

mother's alzheimers had gotten worse. She could not recognize my father at all. She was wondering who the nice stranger in her bed was. My father confirmed this.

In fact, it was worse than before. Before, he had been able to point to the portrait she had painted of him. And say, 'See, I'm your husband.' But this time, she couldn't see the resemblance. God! This must be a humiliation for him.

After my sister came, she recognized him, her. And all of us kids. And she was even better after I came. Go figure.

Still, I notice that there are few to no names and places in her speech. Things, she used sprinkle it with. Even her paranoia has been affected by the alzheimers. My sister claims that she often accuses unnamed individuals noq, and not her daughter-in-law, Debby, and her granddaughter Joanie.

We had some black humor about this. At my brother's Xmas party, we told Joanie that my mother wouldn't recognize her. So what she should do is come to my parents' house and call herself Melissa, her middle name. And commiserate with my mother about that awful person Joanie.

I know, sick. Anyway, Joanie's too good a kid to do anything like that.

While my mother's memory got better while we were there, something got worse. My sister noticed that there were chunks of filth in her bath. And she blamed me for not cleaning up after I showered. How could those chunks have gotten there otherwise? My mother could not have brought them.

After I left, my sister apologized over the phone. My mother could have. She has gotten incontinent. And doesn't seem to realize it. She just goes about her business when it happens. If we had any doubts before this, we had none now: this is a sure

sign of alzheimers.

Fortunately, I didn't smell anything peculiar in my parents' house. And I didn't spy anything on the floors. So it hasn't gotten to be a big problem – yet.

One day, my sister and I decided to go to my father's friend, and my friend, Cyril. My sister felt we had to give a gift. So my father decided I should go down to the bar in the basement and get some "hooch" for Cyril.

He gave me a tray with a mound of keys and told me it was there. Most of them, the label had fallen off; so I wondered how my farther knew which key went where. I found out he didn't for the bar. Finally, he told me to unscrew the hinges on the cabinets. Which, in the end, seemed to be the simplest thing to do. It was what my brother often did as a kid.

Cyril lives across New Jersey in Princeton. A retired professor of psychiatry, he lives with his wife Vi, who may be still practicing. I and my sister always have a good time talking with them.

He is from Wales and has an English accent. His wife is from the New York area and has a New York accent. They make an odd company. But, in a strange way, a very compatible couple. Cyril is to some extent the theorist and his wife does the practical things.

Several years ago he had a stroke, which left him unable to do any of the usual things you would do. In a month, he was back to reading books and doing his usual reviews of them. Something he really wanted to do it. It was a superhuman act superfast.

His driver's license, he gave up.

That shows you where Cyril's priorities lie. Of course, giving up everyday responsibilities has disadvantages to him. He

used to dominate over his wife. Now she is in the driver's seat in more ways than one.

Usually any disagreements from this are friendly. However, another family conflict was not. I had to drive both his wife and him around. Their daughter was back from New Zealand and she had commandeered their car.

The daughter is an unpleasant person. Whenever she saw either me or my sister, she grimaced and walked away. Also, she objected to her brother staying in the same house with her. So he had to stay elsewhere.

So Cyril, Vi, my sister and I went out to eat with the brother. We had lunch at the library. You heard me right, the library. The local library had a small café in it. Which seemed to be rather busy. Its fare seemed to be health food; unhealthy enough so that it had taste. I had a vegetarian sandwich, which wasn't too bad. It had large mushroom in it, which wasn't portobello. Also, the peanut soup wasn't too bad either.

The son is a nice guy. He is a professor of Slavic Languages at Indiana State University, and he rather patiently listened to my questions. I wondered about variations on my grandmother's name. We figured out that we needed a professor of Yiddish, which is not considered a Slavic language. And he named two. And told me to tell them he sent me.

Doing research with him that day in Princeton was a very thin German fellow and his plump Bulgarian wife. Whose field was English studies. And who spoke it quite well. With an American accent that competed for dominance with her German accent.

I guess those were the most important things to happen on my trip. I was really glad to be back home in my apartment,

although I can't say there weren't times I didn't enjoy myself.

COMMENTS ON SFPA MAILING #230

JEFF COPELAND
the southerner 230

♥▲♥ \$3 more for first class. As Arnold Stang used to say: Big deal!!

NED BROOKS
the new port news 206. nov. 2002

♥▲♥ ct. Me. I hear the German post W.W. I local currency is not worth much. Too much of it was made. But it certainly is something curious, which people might like to collect despite that.

♥▲♥ We're talking about magic when we are talking about witches riding goats. Under a glamour, goats can withstand the weight of elephants much less humans. Hey, witches, according to the witch hunters, could be in two places at once. That's even more fantastic.

♥▲♥ No, the idea of free will is proven, just not scientifically. There are other ways to prove things. Faith is one. Of course, you prove things for different purposes that way.

♥▲♥ Bow and arrow is considered an art, which anyone should be able to practice in their backyard. That a proficient person can kill someone just as easily as with a gun, and BBs cannot, is irrelevant. It is still considered an art form and BBs are not. The controlling factor here is respectability: bow and arrow are more respectable than BBs.

♥▲♥ ct. Sheila. Sometimes I eat veggie burgers rather than meat. They are probably

mostly soy and are not really meat, but you can pretend.

♥▲♥ ct. Toni. According to Cecil Adams in his column "The Straight Dope," a lot of air escapes in any plane anyway and the pumps compensate for it. A small hole in the fuselage, like one made by a bullet, is not going to do much.

♥▲♥ ct. Guy. In America in 2003, predestination is more difficult to believe than free will. We like to think we are in control of our destiny no matter how much the evidence is we are not.

Bad logic is marshalled in the service of this view. The spiel goes this way: if Jeffrey Dahmer was predestined to eat his lovers, he can't be blamed. The problem is the State was predestined as well to sentence Jeffrey to jail, and can't be blamed either.

In addition, that we are predestined does not mean we are not making decisions either. All the things that make up decisions can be predestined. We may be predestined to do something because we desire it. Or, we may be predestined not to do something because there is a law against it. And we don't wish to risk arrest..

This logic is just windowdressing. The bottomline is that we wish to believe we are in control of our destiny. We can slip the bonds of cause and effect. And all arguments are marshalled to defend that view.

♥▲♥ What kind of email virus have you gotten? With mine at work, it was the attachment that got you.

♥▲♥ ct. Don. I see a reason to distinguish between Communist, Fascist and Theocratic systems. The all important thing is which side they are on. For instance, under the Nazis, I, as Jewish, would be dead. Which would not necessarily be the case

under the Communists – if I kept my mouth shut and my nose ‘clean.’

♥▲♥ ct. Toni. My MRI had the loud knock too. It was like being buried alive and having to spend the rest of eternity listening to industrial machinery.

♥▲♥ The support for the war in Iraq hasn’t caught on like wildfire. Of course, I bet the theory is that this policy won’t catch on that way until we are in a shooting war, like in 1991. When repelling Iraq was wildly popular.

NED BROOKS **it goes on the shelf 24.**

♥▲♥ HOUSE OF LIFE. The theory I heard about Tunguska is that it was hit by a small comet, which are basically snow balls, dirty snow balls. And the water evaporated leaving no remains.

♥▲♥ A PLANET OF RIDDLES. A book on earth science with nasty comments on Napoleon. I remember Commander Rupert Gould in his book *Oddities* (1928) described a certain work as “Astronomical Hiccups with Diversions on the Partition of Poland.”

♥▲♥ People do not seem to realize there is a difference between what works and what we can give a sound explanation for. Which makes it extraordinary to them that although even numbers are always the sum of two prime numbers, there is no proof for it. Of course, nothing could be more common than that something works but we have no explanation for it.

♥▲♥ THE SCARLET EMPIRE. David M. Parry, the ostensible author of *The Scarlet Empire*, was, I believe, the head of

the National Association of Manufacturers. While he would have had a beef against communism, the belief is he hired a ghost to write it.

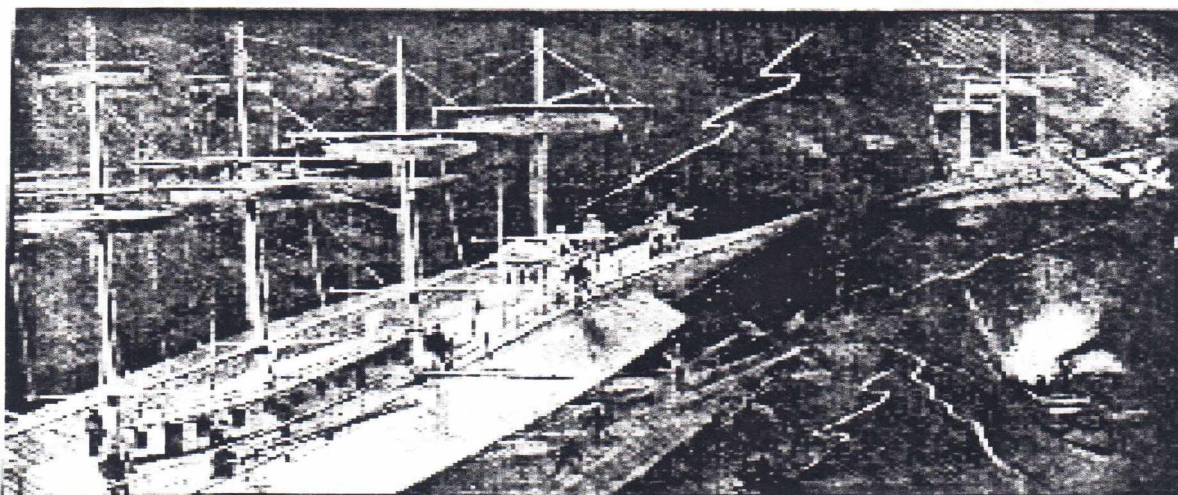
♥▲♥ THE IFS OF HISTORY. Hmmm, if the Confederate Army had marched on Washington after Bull Run. If the Confederates had purchased the East India Company Fleet in 1861. (Were they offered it?) A little more off the beaten trail than the usual alternate history: if the Confederates had won at Gettysburg.

This is even more off the beaten path. For most people, important events must have important causes. However, the smallest causes could have changed the course of the Civil War, according to those who do theoretical work on alternate timelines. A pin dropping differently theoretically could have completely changed the course of the Civil War. Hell, subatomic quanta doing something different could have too.

Ray Bradbury had the right idea. I think he wrote a story about a person going dinosaur hunting back in time and that changing the outcome in his time of a Presidential election.

♥▲♥ CHAPTER DEGREES. You’re right that carousing was big in the Masons in the 19th Century, and insurance and self-help. However, according to Mark Carnes’ *Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (1991), the rituals were what sold Masons then. And other semi-secret lodges. That is why they had to be standardized. And why the claim that they were secret became a joke.

♥▲♥ UFO’S AND THE COMPLETE EVIDENCE FROM SPACE. Poor Mr. Ross, a follower of George Adamski. I hear



Fred Jane unairworthy aircraft

George was a particularly low rent guru. He was employed by his so-called disciples in various menial capacities. Like flipping burgers.

Also, he said that if Prohibition hadn't ended, he wouldn't have had to promote that flying saucer crap. He could have gone on making wine as a so-called Tibetan monk.

However, Mr. Ross might not be so poor. Adamski adapted the virtuous, angelic extraterrestrials, popular for centuries, into space brothers by claiming they had contacted him. And thus created the second most popular UFO alien. So, despite his humble circumstances, Adamski could be said to have accomplished something.

♥▲♥ FUH-KAR-WEE INDIANS. We're the fuh-kar-wee. Or where the fuh-kar-wee?

♥▲♥ THE WOLF BOY OF CHINA. The Tartars imposed shaved heads and pigtailed? I thought that was the Manchus.

♥▲♥ TURQUOISE DAYS. A city

supported by vacuum bladders may be unairworthy. But it doesn't hold a candle to Fred T. Jane's illos of airships in George Griffith's *Angel of the Revolution* (1893). An 1890s future war book. (See illo above.)

♥▲♥ NEW TEN

COMMANDMENTS. God certainly has to tell us that the world is good. It's hard to know that from experience. Too many people fall through the cracks. Too many bad people prosper.

By the way, my wife copied these New Ten Commandments and sent them to friends.

DAVID SCHLOSSER
peter, pan & merry #46

♥▲♥ ct. Me. You're right: people shouldn't go scotfree if they drank too much, took too many drugs, or didn't take enough drugs; and did something illegal. They might not have been able to control their actions under the influence of drink or drugs; but they sure as hell could control their consumption of same.

🍷🍷🍷 The doctors seem to be able to diagnose the reason for my wife's lameness; the trouble is taking their advice and letting it succeed or fail. She is willing to take the meds her doctor gave her. But has been dawdling around about setting up physical therapy. I wish she would do it; I don't like seeing her lame if she can avoid it.

🍷🍷🍷 I agree that Israel has a tough row to hoe. How to go after terrorists groups without hurting innocents. But I don't think it's hoeing. When terror hits, Sharon's answer is bomb the Palestinian Authority headquarters and put a West Bank city under curfew.

🍷🍷🍷 No, I checked it. Hezbollah, while it is active in Lebanon, is Iranian backed.

🍷🍷🍷 ct. TKFWR. The problem with testing for the safety of drugs, like HRT, is that that is a more complex issue than researchers give it credit for being. Very often researchers often ignore pluses and minuses. There is a matter of what the overall death rate is in addition to that for particular diseases being tested for.

And then there is the matter of quality of life. Maybe you would die sooner but your quality of life might be better. Your days out of bed might be increased. You might have less pain. You might be plagued by fewer ailments.

🍷🍷🍷 The reason why Palestinians are still refugees while Jewish people in Israel are not is simple. The Israelis believe the territory of Israel is their true home. While many Palestinians believe the territory of Israel is their true home. Not even the West Bank and Gaza is their true home. So they will be refugees forever. I hear some

Palestinian refugee camps in Gaza are cities.

And the Palestinian attitude is not unknown among other peoples. One of our administrators, a Lithuanian, claimed that her parents felt their home was Lithuania. They were not in refugee camps at all, but they still considered themselves refugees.

🍷🍷🍷 ct. Guy Lillian III. For what it's worth, I think you're gilding the lily with protecting aircraft from hijackers. The flying public has been forewarned. The doors to the pilot's cabin are secure. Al Qaeda is not liable to pull another 9-1-1 that way.

What we have to look at is vulnerability where there is a vested interest in it not being corrected. Like the cockpit door and hijackers. The airlines were afraid locking the cockpit door might cost money. But not doing it has a cost them a lot more.

And us a lot more.

🍷🍷🍷 ct. Jeff Copeland. While I believe it is legal for Congress to abolish the Supreme Court, we are not apt to do that soon. It is a tradition. Just like we are not apt to repeal the Electoral College soon. It is also a tradition. Undemocratic but a tradition.

🍷🍷🍷 ct. Gary Robe. All laws against porn are complex. People, including the courts, can't really decide when writing becomes harmful. There is an additional complication with child porn: the law also wants to insure that no children were abused in the making of the porn.

🍷🍷🍷 NATTER X COMMENTS. I remember hearing about *Pirate Jenny* as less a Trekzine than an example of alternate press in Texas. I read about it on an Electronic Bulletin Board ten years ago. Remember Electronic Bulletin Boards? If memory serves me correct – and in this case

it could be serving the demons of confusion – it had a personal section in it. One woman advertised for dates, but said, “No disciples of the Subgenius.”

🍷▲🍷 Your Jewish folk music group reminded me of a Baltimore station I listened to when I was coming home from the scattering of Wayne’s ashes. It had an hour or two of klezmer music, which I found to be a pleasant change.

Some of the music was very curious. I heard a 1940 tune Xavier Cugat based a 1950 tune on. Lifting the melody from a Jewish piece whole hog, and passing it off as Latino. Then there was “Don’t Cry Mama/ I Need Your Money for a Dowry.” And “When Henry Ford apologized to me” from 1927 when a court did in fact force him to apologize to the Jewish people.

TIMOTHY C. MARION **the curse of cthulhu**

🍷▲🍷 In short, R. Alain Everts, AKA Randal Kirsch, was a bottomfeeder. Stealing valuable documents related to fantasy writers from unsuspecting owners.

That article by Michael Baron tried to cast him in a good light. I bet Everts was the source of it. Even so, his excuse for the 150 Lovecraft letters was lame. He admits he was given them only so long as he was associated with Brown University.

As for the rest of the account, I wouldn’t trust it past you could throw a stick. I wouldn’t even believe that the trunk with “Randy” written on it was not his. Whether that Nazi Jones swore in an affidavit or not.

The Library of Congress, by the way, has been having trouble with people stealing valuable documents from them. One scholar stole a million and a half dollars worth of

Lincoln documents. He said they were his; but he found himself, anyway, in a secured institution at government expense.

Which is why security was tightened at the Library of Congress long before 9-1-1.

RICH LYNCH **variations on a theme #17**

🍷▲🍷 Nice logo/title. It looks like it is a bunch of fonts which somehow go with one another. I will have to do something with my logo/title.

🍷▲🍷 CALIFORNIA 2002. Blackberry-chocolate olallieberry bread pudding with whipped cream sounds heavenly. Unfortunately, it is just the kind of thing, as a diabetic, I should be very circumspect about eating. It would be something for rare occasions only.

Not that I haven’t been a bad boy at times. We had two days of self-improvement, organization-improvement training recently. And I needed to stay awake. I figured carbohydrates coursing through my veins would do the trick. I took two giant muffins and made them last for most of a day. In addition to consuming three giant sized coffees.

I still dozed off during the videos.

🍷▲🍷 So hotels.com can get you savings just like the commercials say. I will have to remember to try them.

🍷▲🍷 There was an article in the September/October 2002 *Skeptical Inquirer* about the Winchester House. The legend has been that Mrs. Winchester, its original owner, had built wing after wing because a spiritualist had told her that she would die if the building stopped.

But the writer, Joe Nickel, claimed the evidence is against that. It is more

probable building room upon room onto the house was a hobby. A TV show I saw claimed that she did it to amuse guests.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Me. If you are afraid the post-9-1-1 post office will destroy perishable items like CDs sent to your workplace, then the thing to do is have them sent to your home.

You won't be the only Federal employee who has received work mail at home. I remember someone from the Superintendent of Documents who had me send my purchase order to her home. It was the only way I could get the publications I was ordering. The Superintendent of Documents must have been in a bad way then.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Ned. The irradiation must be limited to Washington. My mail never comes that way. However, my agency has done something to overdo 9-1-1. We have TV monitors on every floor broadcasting CNN without the sound. This will help us greatly in case al Qaeda attacks.

🍷▲🍷 Too bad about Dal Coger. People have been hyping antibiotic resistant bacterial infection so much I, curmudgeon that I am, have been doubting it is that big a deal. Of course, I know in tuberculosis it is. And it seems to have been in Cal's case.

ARTHUR D. HLAVATY **confessions of a consistent liar 79**

🍷▲🍷 ct. Me. The American Psycho movie was anti-yuppy. Only it was more subtle than *Texas Chainsaw Massacre II*, where a family of caricatures kills anyone who says they wish to "do" lunch.

🍷▲🍷 ct. TKFW Reinhardt. The music industry is a bunch of bottomfeeders. It

would be against their religion not to charge for anything the customer hears.

🍷▲🍷 ct. GHLIII. Mimeo is warm and fuzzy as long as you don't actually use it.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Jeff Copeland. It wasn't thinking outside the box that the Enron executives were doing; it was thinking outside the law.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Eve Ackerman. Oh, George Lucas has been on a date. No, the reason for those awful love scenes in *Clones* was because he has watched too many old movies.

ARTHUR D. HLAVATY **dillinger-relic derogatory reference. one hundred.**

🍷▲🍷 MUSIC DIED 1968. Andy Warhol anti the World of Love and Peace? My sister has his book where he gives his philosophy of boredom. And she says she still re-reads it for wisdom. For instance, young people should postpone sex till after marriage so they can postpone the disappointment. I doubt that that's for you. Arthur, you never sound disappointed by sex. Still, Warhol is anti Love and Peace?

🍷▲🍷 I have to agree that in 1968 the millenium was coming. Despite the fact I was living in poverty – to some extent self-imposed – and I didn't have a girl friend and I was trying to avoid growing up as much as possible, I still experienced the thrill of anticipating the hippy millenium. Where Peace and Love would reign. It was an invigorating feeling. It was an exhilarating feeling. It was one I am sorry that I have lost.

I understand why revolutions happen and Fundie sects wait for the Second

Coming.

On the other hand, the millenium was to a great extent a product of self-delusion. Remembering now, the people around me were anything but loving. And compassionate. And maybe not even very much above par. Did the bubble have to pop? Maybe not, but I'm glad that it did.

Just as I feel sorry that I lost the feeling of millenium.

♥▲♥ EMBRACE THE POWER OF NOR. Eternal doubt is what science is all about. Who can ever be sure that we didn't miss facts. Or that we didn't get them wrong. However, with religion, purpose and meaning, doubt defeats the idea. Which is faith. A better way of saying it is blind faith. While is a redundant term if ever there was one, it aptly describes what we often need.

♥▲♥ A more acceptable name for Gay Marriage, one that will fly politically? *An Act to Control AIDS*.

♥▲♥ NASTY, BRUTISH. Michel Foucault reduces all intellectual disputes to a battle for domination. And this has something to do with his sex life. Doesn't Phyllis Schaflly reduce all intellectual battles to that? So you have to wonder about her.

Come to think of it, most people involved in politics do that. So you have to wonder about them.

♥▲♥ Obscene word for one who doesn't give oral sex? *Cock-un-sucker?*

NORM METCALF
tyndallite v3 #104

♥▲♥ ct. Me. So where were you, Norm, when Mike Weber told me Brian Ford was wrong; and Wilhelm's and Thomas' *The Clone* was the first novel with

"clone" in the title? It turns out Mike was wrong too. And you could have corrected him with all these precursors.

♥▲♥ With all that quoting, it still seems to me that you confused my Western/Martian story and my Atomic Civil War story.

♥▲♥ You mean the current L.. Ron Hubbard novels were not written by Ron? That the Scientologists have not been reprinting his oeuvre from *Astounding*. There must have been enough material from there to fill many novels – even of that size. I remember one issue which was mostly Hubbard.

♥▲♥ OK, maybe Verne was more scientific than Wells. He recognized problems and tried to have a good alibi for why his technology worked. And I won't fault him too much for having a coalmine near a volcano.

♥▲♥ ct. T.K.F. Weisskopf Reinhardt. According to Peter Nicholls, et al, *The Science in Science Fiction* (1982), the idea that humanity will evolve large brains and small bodies was inspired by H.G. Wells. His "Of a Book Unwritten ('The Man of the Year Million')", *Pall Mall Budget*, November 9, 1893.

Of course, H.G. Wells' Men from the Year Million were more extreme than that. They would lose their bodies completely. Their hands would develop into tentacles. And their mouths would grow smaller because they were fed by means of nutrient baths.

What they would look like would be his Martians in *War of the Worlds*. Octopus like creatures but actually related to us. In that novel, he goes farther than in the essay. The beings there lose their ability to have

sex, and instead spore.

The essay was a satire. The idea was that man would increase his reasoning ability and lose his emotions. Which would bring about a very impoverished existence. Living underground alone without any other animals around. Anything causing happiness would be abolished.

I guess writers have not wanted to go as far as Wells, and have had their future men at least look human. So humans have not lost their bodies completely.

This idea has affected our concept of extraterrestrials too. They often have large heads and small bodies. This is the idea behind the Alien Gray. They are also very unpleasant, like Wells' Martians: kidnapping humans, experimenting on them, plotting to conquer Earth.

The problem seems to be the same as with H.G. Wells: that they have developed their reason too much and their emotions not enough.

☛▲☛ So it was Campbell who created the Golden Age of Science Fiction. In fact, I gather Campbell was more responsible for his magazine than Stratemeyer was for the work of his syndicate. If memory serves me right, Howard Garis was supposed to have researched Stratemeyer's Tom Swift books in addition to writing them. I guess all Stratemeyer did was write the outlines to those novels.

☛▲☛ F.M. BUSBY. Science fiction had some pretty bad science in the good ol' days. As I have said, the all round record for bad science is the movie *Riders to the Stars* (1955). That asked the question: why don't meteors burn up in the atmosphere?

☛▲☛ I disagree with Buz that the *Chicago Book of Style* is responsible for bad

editing. No, editors do it on their own. There is no substitute for common sense. And a lot of people are lacking it, especially in positions of power.

☛▲☛ A. LANGLEY SEARLES. The idea of the Foundation series thrilled me enough, when I was in my twenties, that I tried to predict the future for hundreds of years in advance too. That I was half crazy helped. I wish I had that product of my misspent youth. But I grew so ashamed of it I threw out every single copy.

As for Asimov being that bad a writer, I don't buy it. He is no Shakespeare certainly; but he has a natural conversational style, which isn't too bad in either prose or nonfiction.

Of course, everything is a matter of taste.

GUY H. LILLIAN spiritus mundi 192

☛▲☛ The Boris statuettes show that you wish to keep abreast.

☛▲☛ I think Jimmy Carter was the only President I am truly proud of having voted for, in 1980. He was a decent man beset by problems not of his making. And roasted in the press.

The problem with being proud about having voted for Senator McGovern was that everyone in my set was for it. There was a lot less support for Jimmy Carter there. Ridicule was more like it.

☛▲☛ Don't hate yourself, Guy. That child abusing brute deserves a legal defense along with everyone else. It's the right every citizen has, although the Bushites and the p.c.'ers would like to see it curtailed. And perhaps made meaningless.



Chinese Take-Out Handbag

☺▲☺ ct. Me. Did Troy Donahue ever learn to act?

☺▲☺ A forensic scientist, who belongs to my skeptics group, was telling some of us about Bundy. How he basically had to brag. That he could not be silent when glory was at stake. And it was just the incompetence of the system that allowed him to undertake as many serial killings as he did.

However, we can't believe someone that evil cannot be an evil genius. A nasty effect must have an equally nasty cause. The incompetence of the system is too mundane a cause for that.

Only under the guise of satire or humor can we think otherwise. That is the reason the killer in the *American Psycho* movie did not have to appear bright; just beautiful enough so no one would suspect him. It was a satire.

☺▲☺ Yes, Rice University had the record for most consecutive loses. And they were proud of it. It was a real grind school.

☺▲☺ I agree the Bond movies were

parodies of themselves. I think the idea was that they were supposed to be light entertainment. In that case, by laughing at themselves. With better humor than the parodies inspired by them – with a few exceptions.

One critic noticed that there wasn't the humor in the books that there was in the movies. Nonetheless, they were light entertainment too: the plots had a comic book aspect to them.

☺▲☺ You're right that the big thing in Algernon Blackwood was mood. Which, I suspect, is why Chester Cuthbert found them boring. No action. Also, Blackwood was good with character and myth. Which went to create the mood. A lot of his characters are real in their way. And he knew how people really believed in the occult in the early 20th Century, despite their protestations.

☺▲☺ You're right that the new Congress isn't going to be nice for civil liberties. But it will be a great day for civil liberties if they get discredited. Of course, it will be a bad day if they prosper.

☺▲☺ My problem with TV cameras in the cockpit is not the idea. It's that I think, as I told David, we are gilding the lily.

☺▲☺ As I said, my belief is that the Administration feels since fighting Saddam played well in 1991, it will play even better now. It has been built up that this will solve all our problems in the Middle East. I suspect that it will cause us more problems. It will probably exacerbate hatred of the U.S. Alienating possible allies while emboldening our enemies.

Among the possible allies is Saddam. Who, under normal circumstances, would be more friend than foe. He being secular and

our enemies being Islamic Fundamentalists.

♥▲♥ I hate to say it. I'm not certain that James Watt didn't have his pulse on the Western ranchers who were Ronald Reagan's bedrock support. They ate up that their vested interest and religion were one and the same. That we didn't have to worry about the environment because of the Second Coming. Which was why Watt was appointed.

Fortunately, Watt fell short of political correctness and had to be canned. Just as Trent Lott has fallen short. He described his staff to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, September 21, 1983, as: "I have a black, a woman, two Jews and a cripple. And we have talent."

♥▲♥ *Nobody would have cared about Chandra Levy had she not been involved with Gary Condit? Her family – the cops – the courts – they would have.* Let me quote Molly Goldberg of the old Goldbergs' TV show: "If it's nobody, I'll call back later."

♥▲♥ Self-image overcomes crack more effectively than neglect, contempt and segregation encourage it. The people who have survived the ghetto I know of don't let it get them down they have been neglected, treated with contempt and segregated.

Of course, telling people that they are great won't improve self-image. That's New Age bullshit that does more harm than good. What they have to be told is to ignore the massive media campaign that makes it prerequisite to be a beautiful person.

And to ignore other people in the ghetto who follow those campaigns like lapdogs. As a Black colleague of mine said: "There's no shame in being poor. The shame is in trying to pretend you're not poor."

Of course, it's difficult to go against

public opinion.

♥▲♥ From where I started reading the Lu Ann strip, her worst problem is fighting against becoming Tiffany herself.

♥▲♥ Rutger Hauer's speech in *Bladerunner* was like Hal's in 2001. It strikes home that while we are becoming more machinelike, machines are becoming more human.

♥▲♥ ct. Sheila. Baton Rouge may have no place to buy a magazine, but life can be curious there. At least, if I can believe the tales my friend Alicia tells of her grandmother, Kim, Auntie Poon, Young Man Ford. They are good for hours of anecdotes.

Young Man Ford is her father, who abandoned the family early on. Which was a blessing. Ever since Alicia has avoided getting entangled with him.

With only few exceptions, like when Old Man Ford, his father, died. Then Young Man and his relatives were trying to trick Alicia into signing away her inheritance rights. While Alicia didn't want anything to do with the inheritance, she didn't like this one bit. So she made Young Man sweat for a time.

♥▲♥ ct. Dave. I'm still not convinced the *Forbidden Planet* has much to do with *The Tempest*. Not the way I remember the plot.

Nor do I believe Apuleius *Golden Ass* had much to do with the *Odyssey*. Some "high" literary critics have claimed that it was a sexual *Odyssey*. The hero offended Priapus and afterward was impotent. I read most of the plot and it had nothing to do with that. In fact, I didn't spot one incident of him being impotent.

On the other hand, I read a rather

long passage about a dinner party at a rather wealthy man's palace. Then there were passages of the hero hiding from various people.

ct. Janice. I know the election was supposed to be a slaughter for the Democrats. I can't see that. There were two more seats in the Senate and six more in the House.

Yes, I know the Republicans were supposed to lose, but that expectation comes from many years when the prior election saw Presidential coattails. Which, there definitely weren't during the 2000 election.

It is easy to see why the Republicans gained. The Republicans have had the advantage of embodying patriotism in the wake of 9-1-1. Which defeated that veteran who had lost three limbs.

The mystery is not why they gained; it's why they didn't they gain more? Why not a mandate? They being "patriots" in a patriotic time. I suspect the recession had something to do with it. While it wasn't able to give the Democrats a majority – which I predicted it would – it insured the Republicans only have a bare majority.

ct. Robe. Yes, the third season of the first *Star Trek* was the pits. I did a parody of it at the time. The Enterprise is being chased by an enormous Jewish mother who wants to stir it into her chicken soup. However, the Star Trek crew kill her by telling her they don't love her.

ct. Me. I thought Professor Challenger was supposed to look more like an ape than the illustration on your cover. While the novel sanctions the ape men being killed, he prospers as their lineal descendant.

SHEILA STRICKLAND

revenant #15

ct. Since you have embarked on getting your masters, your best bet is to psyche yourself into confidence if it is at all possible. It can only be a plus now. I found out by sorry experience that confidence is a plus in and of itself.

I always perform better if I am confident of myself. Even if I am kidding myself. Even if I am believing a lie. ...And that's the truth.

ct. ONCE AND FUTURE

CANADA. My management will not countenance paying for my conferences either. But we are better off than some librarians. My solos list periodically has messages from people who are being let go. Corporate librarians mostly. The company believes it no longer needs a library. Or the solos list receives messages that managements have decided librarians should have no say in what happens in the library. Or messages that some manager believes librarians are worthless. And say so.

ct. Spiritus Mundi. Some people get that self-important that they cannot be bothered with work or fun. They have to strive to snub other people. That is the most important thing in life. It sounds like that type has taken over Crescent City Con.

And they won't stop to wonder if they are so much better than everyone, why can't they afford a con suite? So I imagine your fears are correct and Crescent City Con won't become a tradition.

ct. Guilty Pleasures. I agree that Eve is a writer because she writes. That reminds me of a line attributed to George M. Cohan, who penned musicals. A newspaper man asked him if he could write a musical without a lot of vulgar flagwaving. And he

said he could write a musical with just a pen and piece of paper.

TOM FELLER
frequent flyer

🍷▲🍷 CYBERPUNK WORLD. I guess we won't need credit cards in the future; it will be a microchip surgically inserted into us. Or, better still, it will be our unique pheromones.

🍷▲🍷 CONSTELLATION. I seem to remember the faster-than-light project in Joel Achenbach's book *Captured by Aliens*. The head of NASA thought it up to keep up morale and publicity in a time when NASA's budget had been cut to the bone and its political capital could be measured in the single digits. Faster-than-light travel belonged to the childhood fantasies that motivate adult rocket scientists.

🍷▲🍷 FAIL SAFE. I don't know about the criterion for a good novel being that the characters have to change. That used to be the big criterion. I remember, in the '30s, one librarian claiming one of the Raggedy Ann books lacked that. And thus was not worthy of appearing in her library.

Whatever the merits of Raggedy Ann, the criterion has problems. For one thing, I get the feeling it hasn't been too well defined or thought out. For another thing, the point could be that, with all that happened, the characters didn't change. Which, as far as I can see, would make perfectly legitimate novel.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Me. My criterion for claiming you are not fat is what I see. The doctors and Weight Watchers don't use that criterion: they use the weight charts. Which are supposedly scientific. And objective. But, let's face it, who can be objective about

weight? And I'm not certain the doctors and Weight Watchers least of all.

🍷▲🍷 Buying Worldcom and Enron would have been a lark. I was only going to spend a hundred or two hundred on their stock. But usually brokers want several thousand in your stock account before you can play. I gather Etrade might be different but I haven't had the initiative to pursue it.

So the windfall will pass me by. Or the pleasure of seeing my money disappear will pass me by.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Gary Robe. Disposing of documents in the Federal government has been arbitrary and capricious. I get the impression there were supposedly strict rules about it when I entered the government. But I remember the oddest items being sent to the National Archives.

This impression has been reinforced when I have asked the National Archives for the historic documents of agencies. I get letters and memos that seem to have been collected haphazard.

I confess they allowed me to get the full story behind the first USDA seal. The seating Secretary saved all his follies. But, afterwards, the National Archives file only contained a letter between Cornell University and a top agriculture official. It had both information and blarney, but no policy implications.

Now I haven't heard people talking of sending documents to the National Archives in years. So the system must really be haphazard.

🍷▲🍷 Did Star Trek improve until "Trouble with Tribbles"? I get the impression that was an extraspecial episode that stood out from the ones before and the ones afterward.

GUY & ROSE-MARIE LILLIAN
guy and rosy for duff

♥▲♥ I usually despise things like DUFF and TAFF, but, in your case, Guy, I am willing to make an exception. Bring on the ballot. And the fee.

JEFFREY COPELAND
weasel crossing

♥▲♥ I don't believe Gore decided not to run for President to let the nation heal. I think it was because he failed to get the support of party leaders. And while it would have been nice, as you say, for him to have it, I think he jumped the gun in the opposite direction.

Gore has had a problem with wanting people to like him, which serves no President well. And this time that did him in even before he attained the Presidency.

As for the Democrat on the horizon who knows party officials and can bring out the vote. Apparently, only Nancy Pelosi has been good at such things. We'll see how good she is nationwide.

If she is, even though she may have no Presidential aspirations, her presence will affect the election. As you say no candidate on the horizon can't mobilize the party, and so whoever it is is going to have to look to her.

♥▲♥ **REVIEWS.** I agree with you. When I was reading science fiction, I read it for the possibilities of the future. They were exhilarating. And that was true from space opera to hard SF to New Age. You hit the nail on head. Even satire about the future exhilarated me. Even futures past, like Cyrano de Bergerac's *Voyages to the Moon and Sun*.

♥▲♥ ct. Me. As you say, hearts-and-

minds is the big thing that must be indoctrinated. Some indoctrination does the opposite as intended to individuals' hearts and minds. In my senior year in high school, we got a Catholic school transfer whom Catholic school had made the biggest Atheist you would ever want to meet. Another example of wrongful indoctrination has been the Fundamentalism of the South: it seems to have made a lot of Southern fans atheist as well.

♥▲♥ Did General Franks allow the Taliban and al Qaeda to escape to keep this War on Terrorism con going for the Bush Administration? That's giving the Bush Administration too much credit for having vision. Most likely, the Taliban and al Qaeda just crossed the border into no man's land agreement or no agreement? And Franks' men couldn't see them to stop them.

♥▲♥ There is probably a Cthulhu too. Our fears are real. We can't ignore them anymore than our faith and our dreams.

♥▲♥ I didn't actually say we had a government of men and not laws. We have a government of laws if we have the proper men and women to enforce them consistently. Of course, there is always the possibility that we have men and women who won't.

♥▲♥ ct. Yourself. I think I finally have a printer that can print *Twyg*, but I don't have the patience to wait for the print run. I prefer to go down to my local Office Depot and have my zine photocopied.

♥▲♥ ct. Steve Hughes. The market couldn't be cooled down completely. But some of the craziness that heated it up could have been stopped. The quadruple accounting practices, for instance. Also, the

financial devices that made junk bonds look like Fort Knox could have been reeled in.

To Clinton's credit, his people, Levitt and Rubin, tried. They proposed regulations. And they got their butts kicked by the Republicans and some of their own party.

♡▲♡ ct. Janice Gelb. The performance review process is arbitrary in the Federal government too. As you probably guessed. When someone gets a really bad rating, it's more often due to personal hatred than performance. My boss is in the process of trying to get rid of an employee, whom, as far as I can tell, is great performance wise. But – to say the least – not tactful.

♡▲♡ In short, the Rand-McNally places rated and the *U.S. News & World Report* college ratings should join the AIDS statistics, Global Warming and the probabilities of marrying after forty as examples of How to Lie with Statistics.

Statistics give a patina of science to what we really want to believe. We really want to believe the best colleges are Harvard, Yale and Princeton. We really fear in our heart of hearts the AIDS epidemic is growing exponentially. And we have to prove all this scientifically. Proving anything else being a nonstarter.

♡▲♡ ct. Guy Lillian. I suspect Bach, as heavenly as his music is, is a human taste. Extraterrestrials, who in 100,000 A.D. come across a 21st Century space probe, will be puzzled. I also suspect that the ubiquitous picture with the man and women, the infinity sign, et al are human ideas.

What we should do is see what symbols animals will recognize. While we can't guarantee extraterrestrials will be anything like them, at least the symbols then

will not be limited to our species.

MIKE WEBER ascending descending

♡▲♡ ct. Me. Well, maybe the *Wizard of Oz* was not about populism and "free silver" per pretentious claims. But at least it was in the Midwest where such was going on. *Through the Looking Glass* as Jewish wisdom sounds like not only the wrong pew but the wrong church.

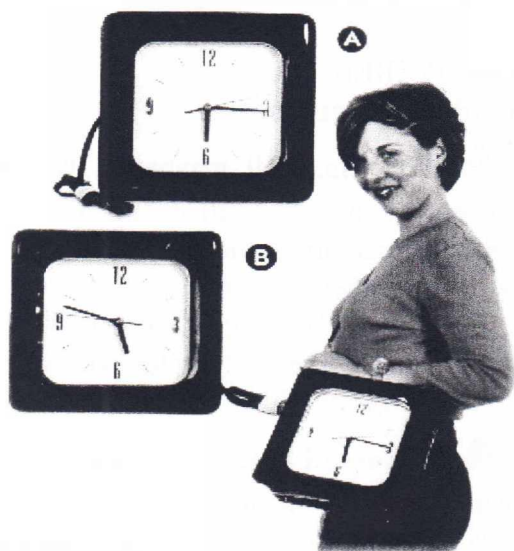
♡▲♡ Doesn't asbestos become friable when it becomes old, according to the theory? And thus carcinogenic. So we have to know how old that version of *Fahrenheit 451* is with the asbestos cover.

♡▲♡ Lying about drugs on TV and elsewhere. We're irrational about drugs in more ways than one. Many people fear that our ideas of reality and sanity have been taken away as is. And taking a psychedelic substance makes things even worse.

♡▲♡ You may be right that the Magen David is a symbol of religion rather than a religious symbol, although I suspect by now it is a religious symbol.

♡▲♡ Robbie as Ariel in the movie *Forbidden Planet*? The monster from the Id as Caliban? My vague memories of the plot say it doesn't work.

♡▲♡ It goes without saying that the people who own the music are not the people who made the music. And that the copyright and patent system gives no real



Clock Handbags

encouragement to creative activity. Hopefully, it still gives hope.

I don't think I said anything different. I was just looking at things from the point of view of them what has.

🍷🍷🍷 I think Krazy Kat's gender was well enough identified. He was one of those effeminate do-gooder masochistic liberals. The bow was a giveaway at the time.

🍷🍷🍷 Anyway someone relating the plot of *Buffy* to me made it sound very confusing.

🍷🍷🍷 You're first person to get the word. Back in the '50s, the word for an advertisement for a product in the show itself was a "plug." As opposed to the term today "product placement." And in the phraseology of the time was "plugola." Which may or may not go with "payola.."

🍷🍷🍷 So salt water does not freeze at zero. Do the engineers in this APA who claimed that, or at least claimed Fahrenheit set zero there, have feet of clay?

🍷🍷🍷 So Bill Gaines may have had

something to do with Wonder Woman after all.

🍷🍷🍷 Your calculations for the barrel of a cannon to the Moon do not take into account the Rube Goldberg shock absorbers that Verne had in his novel.

🍷🍷🍷 You prove my point. There are a number of versions of how the word lynch came into being. I heard there were several ones for boycott too. For instance, a Captain Boycott, whom villagers were boycotting in Ireland, gave the *word* to the world.

🍷🍷🍷 ct. TKFWR. The Chinese curse could not be more correct: "May you receive exactly what you say you desire".

Here is an example. My wife's mother has what she has desired all her life. Being waited on hand and foot and spending all day in bed or watching TV. And she couldn't be more miserable.

We only think we want to laze around all day. We need work and chores to stay on even keel. And make the times we laze around good respites.

🍷🍷🍷 ct. ghliii. The comic strip Lu Ann hasn't dealt much with deep issues in the strips I've seen. But the characters are head over heels above those in most strips and it has an edge to it without being doom and gloom. Plus the writer knows how to pace his stories. I think I will continue reading it online for now.

🍷🍷🍷 Walt Kelly lose his edge? Edge wasn't the main idea behind the strip. The main idea was whimsy and irony. The satire and social commentary, which had an edge, were asides.

🍷🍷🍷 ct. j. copeland. A lot of people, I am sure, shoot themselves with their own

gun. The cowboy who shot himself in the boot is famous.

My wife's father poohs poohs this. But he is speaking more from ideology than life. While he himself handles his guns according to the rules, he feels he has to justify those who don't. Like a friend's son who pointed his gun at my wife. When she complained, the father said, "Are you nervous jerky or just plain jerky?" Then she ripped into him.

☹️▲☹️ On the one hand, I can't accept your reasoning. An independent maker of cars would not necessarily be limited to the product of one plant; just like the big car makers aren't. Why shouldn't he have been able to deal with others too?

On the other hand, *People's Almanac* credited Sir Thomas Crapper with inventing today's toilet. And Otto Titzling with inventing the bra. Both well-known, tongue-in-cheek hoaxes. So I wouldn't rely on them as the font of factual truth.

For what it is worth, I looked up the story in the *People's Almanac*. According to it, General Motors stylist Ardell Malowick decided that the Chevy Bel Air was the best engineered car ever made. The large tailfins seem to have been a factor.

He stole the design and proceeded to make more. He couldn't use the die molds and steel presses GM used; so he had the body pounded into shape over fiber-glass replicas. In addition, he stole some things outright from GM. The endproduct were sold as used cars.

In 1967, the operation was shut down because of the high price of producing the car and rumors GM had gotten wise to the operation.

JANET LARSON
passages #16

☹️▲☹️ Basically you got the idea behind an APA. Namely, that we show we care about what each one of us writes – to a lesser or greater degree. And we allow each other into our lives.

☹️▲☹️ You got me to thinking about the health care crisis. I am afraid I didn't reach with the same conclusions you did. We both agree that crisis is that the cost of medicine is too high.

Medical insurance and government subsidies are ways to spread the cost. Medical insurance examining your practice under a microscope is a way to cut the cost. Without the crisis, people would be satisfied to pay as they go as they did way back when.

I tried to figure out why prices are so high. The drug companies and the medical device companies keep coming up with very expensive products. AIDS drugs are very expensive. The MRI is very expensive.

These big corporations can do this because, when people are infirm, they want to be made well. With all their heart and soul. Damn the expense. Of course, when push comes to shove to, we have to take expense into account.

A lot of plans to solve the health crisis are based on putting less money into the system. These plans are the equivalent of putting a giant stopper on the caldera of a volcano. Poor infirm people, cutting their costs is no problem. But many infirm people, especially the old ones, have money, vote, and are people to be reckoned with. Any money taken away, they see that it is added on. Through either insurance or government subsidies.

That is why I am dubious about your plan, the Medical Savings Accounts. The Conservative Plan. It takes money out of the system. In the Federal government, we have

had had plans like this. The FEHB has allowed employees to choose their plan. Some allowed them cash from the government's subsidy.

The people who opted for those plans were the young and healthy. In fact, the ones I knew were people who couldn't conceive they would get sick. And they normally would have paid more than their fair share for health. In effect, subsidizing the old and infirm. Which those plans saw they didn't.

When Medical Savings Plans become too widespread, however. If the normal tendency is followed, the old and infirm will put the kibosh on them. Or somehow come up with subsidies from the government.

The Clinton plan had the same problem: money taken out of the system would be put back in it. Harry and Louise knew to whom they were appealing. You can negotiate plans with lower benefits, but the people whose benefits are eliminated will scream like banshees. And those cuts will be overturned in no time by the politicians, who have less backbone than a banana.

What is the solution? To some extent, patients believe they need benefits based on what their doctors say. It is doctors who give them the idea. Also, in my experience, patients insist doctors figure out ways to get around insurance strictures, and doctors oblige.

Strictures which, don't get me wrong, may be penny wise and pound foolish. When my wife got her sigmoidostomy, my HMO, Kaiser Permanente, wanted it done by a general surgeon not a specialist. And without support personnel to give advice and watch her progress post-op. Both considered

necessities. I found out that was the government's two-cents in negotiating the plan, not Kaiser's – which seems to be physician run.

I think the doctors should get together and figure out how to lower the cost of medicine. They could fund research. I hear recently it was found that diuretics were just as good at controlling hypertension as drugs ten times the cost. Also, doctors could pool their experience.

In this quest, politics and economics should not be scanted. Doctors will have to cut any umbilical cords with the drug and medical device companies. Also, they will have to make alliances with the government, insurance companies and anyone whose interest is theirs.

It is not a job they are used to doing. But as you point out, if something is not done about the crisis, their jobs are going to change radically – for the worse.

♥▲♥ \$1,440 per month for medical insurance?! Sheesh!! I pay less than half that. Maybe even after the co-payments.

♥▲♥ About Tort Reform. Again, I am going to disagree. Less here. I understand why you want doctors, rather than laymen, to determine malpractice. And doctors would certainly be more knowledgeable than laymen. Of course, they often protect their kind. As you said, it is difficult for a doctor to lose his license. It would also be difficult as well for many doctors to rule in favor of malpractice no matter how flagrant.

I have also seen instances where the opposite happens, and doctors prosecute other doctors because of some grudge. The point being that knowledge isn't the only consideration.

I think the measures usually used to soften the impact of lawsuits are better. One

measure is a board of experts that arbitrates such things. With the proviso that the decision could be appealed in court.

Apparently, a board of experts, especially one considered unbiased, has weight with a jury of laymen.

Another measure which softens the impact of lawsuits is that negotiations be required – in good faith. Which is determined by the judge. And only when that is exhausted could a patient and his lawyer go to court. That's done in cases of conflicts between corporations and between the government and corporations. Why not with malpractice?

♥▲♥ ct. Me. Going with the flow is New Age but sometimes true. With horseback riding, I knew that as a kid in the '50s. And was able to remember enough of it so I could ride by wife's horse before she sold him.

Being a librarian, I go with the flow. With reference questions, I go where my informed intuition takes me. This isn't as good a technique here as with horseback riding. It is true, that way, I sometimes come up with leads I would not had I answered the question by the book. However, sometimes, I confess, I get led pretty astray. But going with the flow is what it pleases me to do.

♥▲♥ Clinton prosperity a matter of creative bookkeeping? You have to forget the computers, cell phones and TV revolutions. Also, you have to forget that Republicans were some of the greatest boosters of the "New Economy," the buzzword for legalized fraud. Hey, and after you forget all that, the Clinton prosperity was a matter of creative bookkeeping.

I have a different perspective. I forget that Enron and Worldcom scandals started during the Clinton Administration.

Easy since they didn't come out until this year. And I say that Bush is responsible for it.

I think I am on solid ground. There are few periods where business relies on "creative bookkeeping" and they end in catastrophe. But "creative forgetfulness" is always the bread and butter of politics. And it always prospers because of it.

♥▲♥ ct. Tom Feller. Little kids can be scared by a film like Harry Potter 2. But so could someone, like myself, at thirteen, be scared by some things. I remember I was terrified by *Mad Magazine*. (Before I became an avid fan.) And there were some pretty gory illustrations I got scared of in Wertham's *Seduction of the Innocent*.

But it didn't ruin me for life. In fact, now I consider my fears very silly.

RANDY B. CLEARY

avatar press

♥▲♥ RANDY RANTS. This seems to be a year for you when it pours. Wishing you luck for the next year. And, come to think of it, all the years after that.

♥▲♥ ALABAMA RENAISSANCE FAIRE. Ashley looks too nice to be a Medusa. Not even the Goth hair and lipstick make her look more than affable. Anyway, I'm used to a Medusa that shows you her fangs. Of course, since few people have seen a Medusa and lived, she could look like Wally Cox for all we know.

♥▲♥ JOYSTICK NATION. No focus is the normal sin of writers. It is the even more normal sin of people talking to you. Sometimes they end up giving you an impression diametrically opposite the one they are trying to. Entangled as that impression is with all the other impressions

they feel they must give you.

Even chefs have a problem with focus. As Winston Churchill was supposed to have complained: "This pudding has no theme."

At least this comment has a little bit of a focus.

♥▲♥ STAR WARS II. As I have said about *Attack of the Clones*, people went to it for less. And more spoils it. The original Star Wars was great because you had no expectations for it, and they were more than fulfilled. A comic book adventure that was more than a comic book adventure.

Now with all the hype, we have giant expectations for the Star Wars series, and it is impossible to fulfill them. Fortunately, I can ignore the hype and feel the new Star Wars are part of the old Star Wars. Unpretensions that have been more than fulfilled.

♥▲♥ THE RING. The movie doesn't sound too bad. Suspense, and only a final grossout, if any. It's my kind of horror movie. Through most of history, the purpose behind horror has been suspense. The final horror has been unimportant; only the buildup has been important.

Given the number of grossout movies and novels these days, that is easy to forget.

STEVE HUGHES

random thoughts

♥▲♥ We often don't agree, but I am willing to accept your account here. You know the French strategy for, I believe, the Battle of the Somme in World War I? Take one million men and creep up on the Germans.

The Germans inevitably were going

to find out about one million men creeping up on them. And Georgians inevitably would have learned about the new song. And been very angry.

♥▲♥ As for the worst wouldbe State song in the U.S., I will also take your word. A branding firm, the supposed experts, recently came up with an atrocity in my life.

The mucky mucks of the Special Libraries Association decided they had to change the name of their organization. To which I belong. Librarians are always worried about the fact the public gives them little respect. And these mucky mucks were among them. As one said, she couldn't explain to her parents what a Special Librarian did.

So they hired the branding firm. And the branding firm came up with the name SLA for our organization. No initialism, that was the name. I hate to think of the amount of money we spent. Now people immediately say Symbionese Liberation Army when they see our new name. Which is pretty far from the impression the mucky muck ladies wanted.

The association's president, to his credit, announced the change with complete bewilderment.

♥▲♥ Come on, Bush, I hear, de-emphasized his plans for Social Security this time around. They obviously didn't play in Peoria. So why shouldn't the Democrats be allowed to de-emphasize gun control?

And I can't do too much faulting on either side. The need for compromise and negotiation is not only true of politics; it's true of life. That is when we don't have to submit outright.

♥▲♥ You talk about banks taking fewer risks with their money now under the

weight of lower interests rates. In one recession in the '80s, someone claimed that he had a purchase order, but he couldn't make the product because he couldn't get a loan.

🍷▲🍷 I can believe banks bent over backwards to hide Enron's real financial state. The watchword of the time was the New Economy. Fraud was the way to endless riches. At least a certain type of fraud by a certain type of people.

That is until the bubble burst.

STEVE HUGHES

comments 17

🍷▲🍷 Writing can go beyond any mundane job. It can take your entire being. Don't let it be too consuming. I know from experience because I can let my writing also take my entire being – at least my leisure time being.

On the other hand, while I am serious about writing, I am ambiguous about publishing. I suspect publishers will not be as enthusiastic about my products as I am.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Me. I seem to have gotten an el cheapo stereoscope – very el cheapo – for ten dollars. The merchant was 3-D Viewmax. It probably cost a tenth of that to make, speaking of cardboard and tissue paper. But I have to say: I viewed your slide in 3-D. And, paying \$10 or \$15 more, again probably overpriced, I have also viewed Tyrannosaurus Rex and Yosemite National Park in 3-D.

🍷▲🍷 In arguing that we couldn't be expected to catch bin Laden, your analogies seem weak. About Mogadishu, I think we knew where he was. The mistake we made was presuming his good faith. About the Unabomber or Olympic bomber, wouldn't it

be easier to find a criminal who functions by meeting international emissaries than a lone individual who operated alone? There is a far greater possibility of loose lips with someone meeting emissaries.

On the other hand, supposed bin Laden still eluded us. Would it be a big deal? That Bill Clinton failed to bomb bin Laden only made him a loser to the Right. Apparently, most people approved his actions. And even fewer slings and arrows are apt to fall on Bush.

🍷▲🍷 ct. T.K.F. Weisskopf Reinhardt.

My mother hasn't noticed that her higher brain functions are atrophying, just like you say people in general don't. As she sinks into alzheimers, she believes, in her eighties, she is as intelligent, beautiful and superior, as she was during her thirties. If not more so.

🍷▲🍷 There was a time when researchers had to conclude certain races and sexes were inferior. And that made for many deadends in brain research then. Now they have to conclude they are equal. And that has made for many deadends in brain research.

The problem is people presume that judgments about their group reflect on them as individuals. In fact, it is worse than that, they believe that judgments about other groups reflect on them as individuals.

🍷▲🍷 ct. Guy Lillian III. So how was the World Trade Center built differently from a traditional skyscraper? I guess you'll tell us in time.

🍷▲🍷 ct. David Schlosser. Do you have any evidence that the Republican Congress during the Clinton Administration was chomping at bit to increase the SEC budget? They could have insisted.

Pink Poodle Nodder! Page 3



Pink Poodle Purse

ct. Gary Brown. I have to say that you didn't argue at the time that the Enron executives were exemplary citizens. More financial degenerates.

Where you confused people is you were arguing that they weren't as bad as others were saying. They didn't really prevent employees from selling their stock before the hour of reckoning. And that what they did was not illegal. That made some here think that you thought their actions OK. Fortunately for me, I read the not-so-fine print.

In any case, it should be clear to all, in this zine, that you are very happy to see some of them in a secured institution at government expense.

STEVE HUGHES

a christmas ornament for sfpa

I love your Christmas ornament. And would put it up next Xmas, but unfortunately our tree is microscopic.

GARY BROWN

oblio no. 143 oct-nov 2002

BACK TO COLLEGE. We all assume like wants to associate with like. But that is not necessarily the case. Certainly it wasn't the case with Sigma Nu. Its attraction for you was that its member were a cross-section.

I hear, even in the exclusive clubs, that like doesn't necessarily associate with like. A friend who has some familiarity with those places says that they all may be Bluebloods, but each member prides himself on his eccentricities.

We have a problem with people dying at our age. And you seem to have seen more deaths like that than I have. I can't say my cousin Wayne is the only one. In my place of work, we had an AIDS victim. But nearly all people whom I have continued to know since I started with my agency in 1977 are still living.

In fact, all of the people I have continued to know from college are still around.

POLITICS ROLL. Come to think of it, there is another reason why the Democrats did not do better, the Democratic Senate. To Conservatives, this prevented Bush from implementing their program and getting a mandate.

But I suspect it prevented Bush from implementing his program, and mobilizing the Democratic constituency. We will see: will tax cuts for the rich, Arctic drilling and limits on abortions be a plus for Bush or the Democrats next time around?

ct. Me. The later corrections do not mean I was drinking when I was at DSC; they mean I was drinking when I was writing the *Twyg* before last.

Of course, the Earth has a track

record of turning swampland into desert, but the Desert of Maine is not part of it. We'll see whether that holds true for the East Coast as a whole, however.

☛▲☛ The problem with inferring anything about life from our solar system is that it is only one example. And, from what we know, it may be a bad example. The planets seem to form more randomly than we thought. Big planets form near their star as well as away from it.

Does life also have more slots than we have hitherto thought? Need it even be carbon based even.

☛▲☛ Losing weight may help your back and knees, but the problem is keeping it off. As an extra insurance I would exercise and build them up. The muscles built up that way go away less easily.

☛▲☛ *The Phantom* may have had something to it in the '30s and '50s. But there hasn't been much to it since the '70s as far as I can see. The Phantom beats up the criminals, singlehandedly, and saves the day. There, a complete *Phantom* plot.

As for why he is the most popular character in Europe, I can't answer for the Europeans. Maybe the comic strip gains something in the translation.

☛▲☛ The same thing is true of my Internet Explorer: the Favorites are in chronological order. But they are in alphabetical order on the dropdown menu. And in the Favorites in the just plain Explorer. Where you can click the icon and bring them up.

☛▲☛ ct. Guy Lillian. Science fiction gives you possibilities and stimulates you think. In short, its virtue is that it gives you truth not fact.

☛▲☛ ct. Jeff Copeland. The Arabs have been believing a lot of hokum about 9-1-1. It has been proclaimed all over the Middle East he that 4,000 Israelis stayed away during 9-1-1. Based, I bet, on a 9-1-1 email hoax that 4,000 Arabs stayed away.

However, the Arabs have come up with an Israeli shipping company that moved the week before. It is true there were only a hundred people in the company and not 4,000; and this mere factlet does not really prove Arab claims that the Mossad was behind 9-1-1. Still, it is a coincidence.

Someone gave a reason why it was JUST a coincidence: namely, the company decided to move before the plot was hatched. Of course, the US doesn't really know when the plot was hatched. We only know when one of the conspirators started blabbing about it.

Instead, this factlet raises several questions in my mind. Did the Mossad know and not tell us? If there were other Israelis at the World Trade Center who died, that would prove it was a coincidence. While I know there were quite a few Jewish people who died, I am wondering about Israelis.

☛▲☛ ct. Steve Hughes. You and Steve Hughes do live in different universes. Jules Feiffer once claimed we were a nation of trade presses. Each reporting only the facts that support their position.

More so, I admit, on the opinion pages than on the news pages, where reporters are not really thinking about proving or disproving political positions.

☛▲☛ BIG TOWN. My mother the painter loved the illo for *Big Town*. I don't know how reliable her judgment is right now at 84, but she's still painting.

RANDY CLEARY (ED.)
the southern fandom confederation
bulletin v8 #1.

♥▲♥ CLEARY COMMENTS. That seems to be the idea behind fandom, a common interest in science fiction. And apparently in a whole bunch of other things. You were lucky to avoid the misfit thing. The fear of many fans that the next fan must be a misfit and to avoid them. Of course, I bet that is more common at big conventions, like the old Disclave. You seemed to have gotten into fandom in a smaller con more one on one. Also, I bet people there knew you or knew someone who knew you.

Plus you're jolly and people automatically like you.

My problem with fandom is that I only have a limited number of things in common with most fans. Of course, who do I have things more in common with? That's a problem.

♥▲♥ THE REBEL AWARD. Julie, what outsider can appreciate the things an insider does? Like you, inside of fandom. I was an insider once in Washington – peripherally. Very peripherally. I was at a Congressional hearing and had an intimate knowledge of the program they were discussing. It was fun. What blarney they were giving the public!

♥▲♥ CONVENTION REPORTS.

Overwhelming the reader with research is an even greater threat when you are writing history. You are supposed to be giving the reader the facts rather than telling the story. But of course, in actual fact, history is telling a story, even if it is of an idea and not people. Why else would it be called "his story"?

♥▲♥ Even a lot of authors who have

religion in their works don't. What kind of religion are those in Conan? You have the Temple of the Giant Cockroach. And Conan has to defend the Giant Bread Crumb from its depredations.

♥▲♥ YURI A. MIRONETS. Yuri, you're from Vladistok. I remember, back in the '60s, the joke was this. Jogging had just come in, and T-shirts were inscribed "Moscow-Vladistok Fun Run." I don't know how much fun going that distance would be.

♥▲♥ MICHAEL HAILSTONE. I wouldn't take personally that people cut you off mailing lists in fandom. Mailing lists are arbitrary and capricious. People may not even use a mailing list to send out their pubs, just ever porous memory.

But this doesn't end the things not to take offense at in fandom. I might not even take offense at insults. Some fans seem to insult everyone. It's as a woman once told her team leader at work: "Jim, you're a stupid idiot. But don't take it personally."

♥▲♥ HANK REINHARDT 1. Your rules at conventions for weapons sound reasonable.

♥▲♥ HANK REINHARDT 2. Can any partisan literature be depended upon to report even the vague outlines of incidents? According to Arthur Hlavaty, it wasn't for nothing that Dinesh d'Souza's name became Distort the Newsa. Not that there aren't liberal journalists who don't deserve the name.

Of course, you're right about guns in Britain. The burglar will be arrested for burglarizing and the tenant will be arrested for possessing the gun he used to drive the burglar away.

GARY R. ROBE

tennessee trash #50

♥▲♥ FANCY OR PRETTY. Wouldn't call you a lazy bum with all you do. Let's say that you didn't get enough travel time to write a sufficiently long *Trash*.

♥▲♥ It's too bad, at his age, Isaac can't even dream about joining the Navy, learning how to use big guns. And using them. Dreams are what made my childhood standable. Dreams are what I spent most of my childhood in.

♥▲♥ HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS. You're right. A good film maker changes the plot so it looks better on screen. People will screech that you've changed the plot. But they would be bored or confused if you don't. Otherwise, how are you going to do *War and Peace* in two hours? In three days? How long did von Stroheim's version of *McTeague* take?

♥▲♥ TWO BY PRATCHETT. A literary reviewer, Michael Dirda, in the *Washington Post Book Review*, did an entire column on Terry Pratchett and his novels. Humor, satire and science fiction have become respectable. I hope not too respectable. That would take all the fun out of them..

♥▲♥ Certainly Pratchett's Pied Piper shows more depth than another variation of the Pied Piper, the Rocky and Bullwinkle one. There, actual pies come out of a pipe the 'piper' is smoking.

T.K.F.WEISSKOPF REINHARDT "yngvi is a louse" and other graffitos" #80

♥▲♥ KREEGAH!. I prefer letting the character lead me through the story. It's like he or she is writing it and I am not. The

problem is that some of the characters are comic book characters. Or worse. I have to watch who I am letting lead me.

♥▲♥ I remember the Guggenheim best of all the museums in New York. Not for its "Moderne" content, which is at best puzzling and too often can be identified off the bat as an atrocity on wheels. No, it is Guggenheim's architecture that is memorable. You start at the top and it winds its way down.

♥▲♥ CHARLOTTE'S WEB. Is it that the criminal wants to be caught? Or is it that the criminal wants glory more than staying on the lamb? I hear all of Ted Bundy's mistakes were having to tell people what a great criminal he was.

♥▲♥ THE MAILING WALL. I hope Ruth succeeds in this career as music therapist. Too bad her talking books didn't pan out.

♥▲♥ HOLIDAY IN ORBIT. I guess the Russians were right then. They always used kerosene as a propellant. Certainly, if the author is right: he chooses it over liquid hydrogen. I hear Werner von Braun chose liquid fuels, if not kerosene, over solid fuels.

EVE ACKERMAN guilty pleasures nov 2002

♥▲♥ Given the situation in publishing, you have to send out to a lot of toads before it reaches your prince. The one who was sick looks like a good prospect for you to send to again. In fact, it seems like that was what that person was telling you. In a way, her illness is your problem. It may be your solution. ...Maybe not.

Someone who asks for changes is supposed to be a good prospect too. But my

sister did not have much luck doing that. She made many changes in her autobiographical novel, but they didn't seem to sell it. At least whoever suggested them was interested enough to ask for them.

Also, based on my sister's experience, the changes suggested may be idiosyncratic: keep the old drafts on hand and be prepared to start from square one.

There is my advice to you. Notice how advice comes easy.

♥▲♥ Being made an honorary Jew is like being made an honorary Catholic? I was made an honorary Catholic. And so I could participate in the mass. An insult? Hardly. I was there for a very good friend who wanted the best funeral for her mother, so I made no waves.

The pièce de resistance was I was offered the wafer and the wine, and accepted. Later I was told only in a Jesuit Church would that happen. That other Churches would not be so anxious to have a nonbeliever partaking of the ceremony.

♥▲♥ Some of the plot of *The Magic Flute* is obvious. It has to do with Masonry. I guess Mozart's initiation had to do with Zoroaster and the Queen of the Night. Did it have to do with a bird catcher? Of course, who knows what his ritual was like in real life. It was kept secret, and may have been different for each initiate if it was an oral tradition.

♥▲♥ ct. Weisskopf. Also <http://www.bookfinder.com> is helpful with used books, and <http://www.addall.com>.

♥▲♥ The modern Coast Guard, as opposed to the 19th Century one, has been very unpopular with the rest of the Federal government. They are one of the few agencies that enforce a half-hour for lunch.

And one of the few agencies that obeyed orders and went to Buzzard's Point, when the facility was out in the middle of nowhere with no public transportation.

GEORGE H. WELLS
somewhere, under the danube,
bluebirds... nov 2002

♥▲♥ Right, you should call Mr. and Mrs. Reinhardt, "Sir" and "Ma'am.." And your mother-in-law "my mother-in-law." Well, I'm Rich Dengrove, but you may call me "Yakov Genderovski."

♥▲♥ The Sesame Street song "Put Down the Duckie." I remember an incident when the Sesame Street song "Rubber Ducky" was popular. I bet the year was 1970. I was eating at a bar with all these people in leather jackets, and hearing the song blasted over the loudspeaker system.

♪ "Rubber ducky, you're so fine." ♪

♥▲♥ ct. Sheila Strickland. This statement insults everyone who is looking to be insulted:

"I recall I was blathering, chattering, etc. with Dengrove or his calliber, and I would have better stopped and asked you to talk instead."

A person who wanted to be insulted would think you were talking about their chatter. Of course you are actually talking about your own chatter in your "fake-nonshyness mode."

Speaking of that last phrase, I see you have learned the New Age mode. Ever think of becoming a therapist when you retire from librarianship? You have the jargon down pat. Do you need more? Hey, there are bibliotherapists, so why can't there be mediatherapists? You could cure patients by having them watch Buffy.

☺▲☺ You don't comment to me directly in this zine. And I have never been so humiliated in my life. And exascabated. Of course, given the nature of your zine, does it matter?

☺▲☺ Come to think of it, you do comment to me: "Don't cry for me, Richard Dengrove." Is that somewhere between crying for Argentina and crying for Latvia?

LIZ COPELAND

under the knife with the armadillo #56

☺▲☺ I hope it's not a year out of your life lost. That's what happened to my wife when she had her cancer surgery. And she is changed for life. Still, her rationale was the same as yours. It was worth it to remain in good health.

As for the hysterectomy, my mother had one, and her twin sister didn't. And my mother has survived her by fifteen years. Having the operation is not a great prospect but—

So good luck with the next kidney stone operation and your hysterectomy. My fingers are crossed for you. And for quick healing and a quick recovery.

JEFF COPELAND

all the quotes that didn't fit anywhere else

☺▲☺ AMBROSE (p191). I guess McGovern really liked his wife. Maybe the quote Plato attributes to Aristophanes is right. We once had four arms, four legs and two heads. And the gods divided us. And all these years we have been searching for the other half. McGovern seems to have found his.

☺▲☺ BUSH (p196). The terrorists did succeed in destroying some of our freedoms.

Which Ashcroft rather enthusiastically helped them with. Of course, he sees this not as collateral damage but as a grand opportunity to turn back the civil liberties clock to proper law enforcement, and score points with the far right.

☺▲☺ MENCKEN (p204). There is also a complicated solution to every human problem. It is the technocratic solution. It sounds good because no one can understand it. Of course, its promulgators can't either.

☺▲☺ CHURCHILL (p209). *Everything for the war, whether controversial or not, and nothing controversial that is not bona fide for the war.* I know this is Winston Churchill; but while reading it, I couldn't help thinking: "Spoken like a true politician."

Rumsfeld said the same thing too recently.

☺▲☺ MCPHEE (p219). But, of course, the terrorist weapon was not an atomic bomb, neither a thousand megatons nor 1/15th of a kiloton. It was a hijacked airliner with most of its fuel in tact. And the terrorists have been there and done that. So the next time they will exploit some other weakness of the system that is being defended to the death by those who do not wish to spend an extra penny.

☺▲☺ Bush (p220). In short, everyone knew that the accounting methods of many big corporations were somewhere in the outerspace. Including Bush or his apparatniks. There is also the Greenspan quote about irrational exuberance. However, most of the powers-that-be were silenced by the smell of large sums of money. And the chance to make same.

☺▲☺ VON HAYEK (p222). But if you

look closely, you will see that the main free market assumption is unrealistic: all our decisions are rational long range as well as short range. Someone pointed out that all systems would be at the peak of efficiency if that were the case, including socialism and Stalinism.

The usual answer to this is that socialism and Stalinism are completely inefficient in the real world. That answer is given with the hope no one will look at how the free market works in the real world.

🍷▲🍷 ALAN KAY (p228). How can we invent the future unless we can predict what our inventing will do?

🍷▲🍷 AUERBACH (p234). I don't think the idea behind prayer is goods for ourselves; or, no matter how commendable, goods for others. I think the idea behind prayer is hope. Something that the world does not give much evidence of but that we need desperately.

🍷▲🍷 LURIE (p238). The Contender seems to be very much like the show *West Wing*. The idea is that our President is so much more decent than he is in real life. That is the way we want him. If history is any indication, at the first sign of controversy, President Jackson Evans would probably have withdrawn Liane Hanson for whatever position. But, in the play, he sticks by her.

🍷▲🍷 SCHELLING (p250). Of course, once the gap in intelligence is revealed, like at Pearl Harbor or 9-1-1, the government does all sorts of silly things to pretend it is doing something. Color coded warnings, for instance. Or, recently, my agency placed TV monitors on every floor with the channel turned eternally to CNN.

IRV KOCH

offline entirely oct 2002-jan 2003

🍷▲🍷 MUMBLE MUMBLE. Good for you. You got a GS-5 job with IRS. Also, with your night school, you have the prospect of joining me and your wife in the library profession. Which, I would imagine, would be much more rewarding. At least as far as work conditions go. As I said, you seem to have an 'in' with the deKalb County libraries, so getting a job on graduation may not be a problem..

🍷▲🍷 ct. Me. I think what we were talking about was the concept of the clone. And Van Vogt had it in 1945. Of course, now I learn Edgar Rice Burroughs had it in 1919.

🍷▲🍷 There may be new civil service tests, but the scuttlebutt from my personnel people seems to be that managers hire whom they want. Which would have meant me not being hired: I had neither experience nor winning ways.

So I am glad to see that the IRS is an exception to the trend: at least it goes by the civil service test. Of course, that is probably why you hear about intense management-labor conflict at the IRS. The bosses haven't picked their subordinates and don't trust them.

🍷▲🍷 In short, I forgot an alternative: the Snicket woeful orphans are woeful in being naughty. Kids certainly would love that.

🍷▲🍷 ct.. Sheila. I hear you have to be your own advocate with the doctors these days. Look up on the web what disease fits your symptoms. Look up a doctor specializing in that disease. Make sure you don't fall through the cracks. What is very

strange is I have heard a hospital administrator say being your own advocate is what you have to do.

♥▲♥ ct. David S. I think your being an ex-GS-13 explains why Federal employers are reluctant to hire you as a GS-5. No other hypothesis is needed: not sex, race, etc. If you hadn't been an ex-GS13, they might have played a part. As is, being ex-GS-13 is sufficient.

♥▲♥ ct. Steve H. Only one live person per 50 or 100 radio stations explains why most are so awful. Playing the hit tunes over and over again until they become the bane of our existence. And probably that one live person is dead from the neck up.

THE END