



Comments 14



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OUR REMODELING PROJECT

It's over!!!!

Yes, we finally reached a stopping point. There are still a few things that need to be done but none of them get in the way of living in the house. We've even managed to get most of our books unpacked which involved several trips to our storage unit. It's amazing how much more like a home this place feels like now that the books are accessible.

The bookshelves were made for us by a local cabinetmaker and came out much better than we expected. They are double-sided library stack style in natural birch and big enough to hold our entire collection with room for growth.

Then there's the printer table. "Printer table" does not convey the image of a 10-foot long cabinet with bookshelves on one side and paper storage, with doors, on the other. It was made by a company in Blue Ridge to our specs and came out really well. When they delivered it, it looked very large. Now, with our printers and scanners on it, it looks like we should have made it longer!

The only real project remaining is finishing the stairs from the main floor to the basement. We need to do a little carpentry work then we'll probably have them covered with carpet.

Start to finish it took just over 8 months from our selling our house in Atlanta to the end of the project. Now we get to stop and enjoy it.

FANCY BB GUNS

Our latest toys are a couple of fancy BB guns. OK, pellet guns if you want to be technical. Suzanne's old Daisy BB pistol finally stopped working and we went shopping for a replacement. At the store we asked the salesman to show us his "best" gun. He did.

It was a Walther CP99. The Walther P99 is a modern automatic pistol and this gun was an exact copy of the real thing. It weighs the same as the real gun, has the same balance, the same trigger pull and the same sites. Shooting it is just as much fun as shooting a real gun but a lot easier since we can shoot it in our front yard.

After playing with the first gun for a few days, we ordered another one from an Internet company. Now both of us can shoot at the same time. I like it so much that I'm looking for a good deal on the real gun.

PAINTBALL

While we're talking about guns, we've also been checking out paintball. Hank suggested it and he and Toni already have their equipment. Suzanne and I are planning on waiting until we've tried out some rental equipment before buying ours. Why paintball? Hey, how often do you get to hunt down and shoot your friends?

SEE YOU AT THE DSC IN HUNTSVILLE!

Mailing Comments

The Southerner #226

Nice to see the postal system has gotten back to normal, sort of. I've been watching the transit times of my zines since we moved to Ellijay and they seem to be the same as they were from Atlanta. I expected at least a day or two delay but that is not the case.

For Your Consideration

Jeffrey Copeland

I never gave *Fellowship* any chance of winning Best Picture since the Hollywood community doesn't like fantasies. As it turns out, I think it did very well. The best chance for a Best Picture Oscar will be the third episode assuming it makes as much money as the first one. Hollywood does like money.

I was pleased to see Jennifer Connely get her award. I think she's a very good actress who has gotten little recognition in the past. I loved her in *The Rocketeer* and *Dark City*.

A Beautiful Mind was a very well done film and deserved Best Picture. I knew the story but the movie still surprised me. The way in which they worked in the imaginary roommate was wonderful.

Tyndallite Vol. 3, Num 100

Norm Metcalf

Boy the Jules Verne thread has run for a long time! I was reading a book on the German submarine service in WWI. The subs they had in service could only run submerged for a couple of hours. The batteries of the time were not up to prolonged use even at very slow speeds.



The New Port News 202

Ned Brooks

Aluminum house wiring. Aluminum wiring was much cheaper than copper for a short time. The Vietnam War used up so much copper that its price went way up. I remember that because the Tennessee Copper Company actually put its copper smelting facilities back in production. They had stopped actively processing copper some years earlier because the price was too low. It was a good time for the locals since "the company" employed over 75% of the local population. After the war, the price of copper dropped and the mines closed back down.

Oh, almost all houses have aluminum wiring from the power poll to the breaker panel. It's lighter and cheaper and the breaker panel has contacts designed to mate with aluminum.

Cable systems. So your cable system has been playing with its channel assignments. I have an old Sony tuner I used to use that won't go above channel 99. There is no easy fix. You could get an external cable box or a separate tuner but I suspect a new TV is cheaper. It will be worse in the future since most cable systems are converting over to digital and then you have to have a cable box or a TV with a digital tuner.

Zine covers. I like your covers from the "trust buster" days. Seems like business is always seen as the villain. Some times rightly so.



The Patriotic Route

Guy Lillian

Good zine.

Suzanne finally dragged me up to Niagara Falls last year. I'd flown over it many times but never realized just how big the falls are. We took the ride on one of the many "Maid of the Mist" boats and got nice and wet.

Twygdrasil And Treehouse Gazette #74

Richard Dengrove

Catholic funerals. Over all I've found Catholic funerals to be the least objectionable of any religion. The Catholics usually attend to the business with a minimum of emotional baggage. I suppose it's a reflection of actually their believing in life after death. If you do believe, then how can you grieve over someone who has merely moved on? Miss them yes, but grieve for them? No.

Robert the Conqueror's aircraft. You asked if Robert the Conqueror's aircraft could have flown. There was nothing wrong with the basic idea but the power plant needed to run the propellers is still beyond our technology. You would also need a pretty fast computer to control the flow of power to the different propellers to keep the ship from going out of control. Like the Nautilus, the technology was based on existing *ideas* not on existing *technology*.

Backing up data on CDs. Never ever use the "treat the CD just like a floppy" software! Not only does it have reliability problems, the CD you create may not be readable on other PCs or by other programs. If you want to be safe, use the "single session, finalize the CD" option when writing them. Another trap is writing directly on the CD to label it. Lots of makers use an alcohol-based ink that will eventually eat through the CDs protective coating and damage the data. If your going to write on a CD, use a pen made for the purpose.

Suzanne and I now have DVD recorders in our PCs. They really have compatibility problems with other readers but the high capacity is nice. I still can't get over being able to back up a 4gig file on a single disk!

Enron. I've been following this very closely and so far I don't see any evidence of large-scale dishonesty by the Enron people. It seems more like a lot of people covering up various bits of bad news. It looks to me like most the criminal activity, if there was any, took place after things started falling apart and people started trying to cover things up.



On the other hand, the Author Anderson people may have been knowingly covering up the problems for a long time. They may have committed more “crimes” covering up bad accounting than the Enron people did mismanaging the company.

Just for the record, so far I’ve seen no evidence brought forward to show any criminal activity on the part of the Enron executives. Bad judgment? Yes. Highly questionable decisions? Certainly. Criminal activity? Maybe not.

Showing bad judgment is not a crime. Good thing too or most all of us would be in jail!

Variations on a Theme #11

Rich Lynch

“Sanitized” mail. The process of irradiating mail to sanitize can affect the consistence of the paper by causing chemical changes. This means that paper and ink combinations that should be archival quality may turn out to be more like pulp paper. There have been a lot of discussions on one of the bookbinding groups I belong to on the subject. But that’s nothing to what the process does to film! The irradiating process is going to drive a lot of business to UPS.

Investing. About two years ago my broker called to try and talk me into getting off my low yield Treasury bonds and into much higher yielding corporate bonds. I thought about it a lot, since the difference in income was significant. Now my caution looks fully justified since Enron bonds made up about 25% of the proposed portfolio.

It’s hard to stay really conservative when I could double our income by taking just a “little more” risk. Every time I get the urge, I remind myself that while we may not be making all that much money off our portfolio, we’re also not working.

Glasses. I just had an eye exam and had to replace my glasses. I use three pairs: close up, computer and distance. Sooner or later I’m going to try bifocals but I have some kind of psychological problem with admitting I need them☺.

Spiritus Mundi 188

Guy H. Lillian III

Storage units. Suzanne and I have been doing the same thing as you guys; trying to empty our storage units, we have two, one load at a time. We finally got our shelves installed and we’ve been taking truckloads of books out of storage and putting them on shelves. In our case a truckload is about 10 boxes. I can’t wait to get them all unpacked. It will be the first time all my collection has been accessible since I moved out of Binker’s house. Our goal at this time is to get down to only one unit.

Mardi Gras. One of these days I’m going to bring Suzanne down for Mardi Gras. It may not be as much fun as of old, what is?, but it’s still a world class party. By the way, why no shots of showing off their assets? Rosie’s influence perhaps?

Your cases. I still find the concept that someone is not responsible for his actions because he voluntarily took drugs pretty ridiculous. It’s sort of like a driver going 100mph in a residential neighborhood claiming he’s not responsible for a kid he hits because he was going too fast to control the car.

When you knowingly create a situation where someone can get hurt, you should be held accountable if they do.

Enron. No one at Enron was forced to invest in company stock, except maybe some of the board members and top executives. That aspect of the case has been grossly overblown and widely misreported. Yes Enron did match employee contributions with company stock, a very common practice, but that was “free” money that the employees would not have gotten otherwise and tax free to boot. Companies can be very free with stock contributions since they are, well sort of, free to the company. The stockholders actually pay for the stock just as they pay for company stock options.

I don't expect to see companies stop using stock for matching contributions. What may change is the requirement, also very common, that the stock not be sold. Several Senators are pushing the idea of outlawing the use of stock for matching contributions. This is not as good an idea as it sounds since it will force many companies to not make the matching contributions to start with. Cash contributions come out of the companies' profits; stock contributions do not. Remember there are lots of companies who don't go bankrupt☺.

Of all the Enron charges that may or may not be true, there appears to be no evidence they were out to harm their own employees. It is difficult to see how any Enron executive could have profited from “forcing” employees to hold stock. The amount of Enron stock in their 401(k) plan was not all that significant.

As a defense attorney you must know that results don't always reflect intentions.

Peter, Pan & Merry #42

David Schlosser

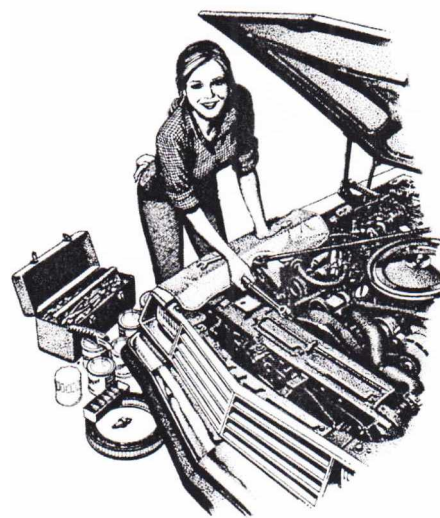
Enron. Not to over stress the point but there is no evidence that any employee at Enron was ever forced to invest their money in company stock. Quite a few did, but that was their own choice.

I found one line in your comment very interesting: “And I don't think the money has to be ‘at risk’ to qualify since one of the options we have with our plan is, basically, a money market.” It may surprise you to know that there is nothing guaranteed about funds in a money market account. In fact my old 401(k) at NDC lost money on its money market funds when interest rates changed too quickly for the fund managers to reallocate it. There have also been cases where the firm managing 401(k) funds did not actually allocate funds according to the investor's instructions.

They put the money in higher yielding investments so they could keep the difference between what the money market account would have yielded and the actual returns on the money. A great plan as long as your investments do yield more than money market. Not so great when they don't. Then there are the cases where the fund manager simply took the money.

There is also the possibility that the firm's fees for managing your money will exceed the investments income and you'll lose.

Random and Judo. Sooner or later he will almost certainly get tired of it. I studied marshal arts for almost 25 years and several times took off for months at a time. It was changing schools and disciplines every couple of years that kept me active.





Revenant #11 Sheila Strickland

LOTR. We've seen the movie twice. The last time was on the big screen at the Mall of Georgia Imax Theater. The print shown was a standard 35mm one but it looked great on the big screen and the sound was wonderful. I've got the DVD on preorder. I'm really curious how well the special effects are going to hold up to video presentation. Quite frequently effects that look great on the big screen don't hold up very well on TV.

Leaving out the Scouring of the Shire makes sense to me. It is a bit of an anticlimax. I've always believed that Tolkein wanted to show how things go back to normal after even the most world-shaking events.

I do wish they had made the Elves a little more like the ones in the book, happy and enjoying life and a little less grim.

DVD players. The Apex unit WalMart carries is a very nice one. It will play a wider range of disk formats than most players. Try to stay away from any player that's not DVD-R compatible.

Frequent Flyer Tom Feller

Flying post 9/11. Our own experience has been that the security lines are completely unpredictable. We've walked through the Atlanta security in 5 minutes and taken two hours. It's the unpredictability of the whole mess that annoys me the most. If you knew it was going to take two hours, you could plan for it and just learn to live with it.

Smoking. I really dislike the current trend toward allowing smoking in public areas of conventions. At the last Liberty Con it was impossible to avoid the smoke since many events were held in "smoking" areas. I don't mind if other people want to kill themselves but I find unacceptable that they insist on my joining them.

Enron. The shuffling of money between different companies that are actually part of one larger company is very common. In Enron's case it seems to have been the primary way they "made" money. Once again, the auditors should have caught this.

Offline Reader 27 Irv Koch

Investing. I hope you've enjoyed the MCIT dividends since by the time you read this they will probably be gone. It's amazing how quickly WorldCom got in trouble. I know the company and it's management well and I'm very surprised that they let themselves get cornered this way.

I like WorldCom even though it represents about 90% of the losses I've taken in the market. I bought it back when it was above \$50 and kept it in hopes that they would make the Sprint deal work. By the time I knew that wasn't going to happen, it was too late to get out. Now I'm saving it to offset gains at some point in the future.

As much as I've lost on it, I feel sorry for Bernie Ebbers. I met him when he was on Nova's board and he impressed me both as a manager and as a person. I just hope he comes out of this with something other than a messy personal bankruptcy.

Oblivion No. 139

Gary Brown

Nice zine. I thought I'd mention that I do enjoy reading your reports of conventions and local news, like the reading program, even though they seldom generate any comments.

I wonder if *Fahrenheit 451* at only 179 pages would even be considered for publication these days?

The Phantom. We have started watching some of the old serials that have recently been released on DVD. The first one was *Buck Rogers* now we're watching *The Phantom*. It's funny, I keep pointing out things in the serial that are substantially different from the comic forgetting that Suzanne never saw the strip or read the comic book. We assume that everyone had our shared childhood when in reality lots of people never saw parts of the culture that we take for granted.

Some where around here I think I have the comic whose cover you reprinted. I used to get a lot of the Harvey comics from a little country store next to the barbershop my father took me to when I was a kid. I never realized they were just reprinting comic strips.

Comic copyrights. On a related subject, I've been trying to track down the copyright status of some old *Planet Comics*. As far as I can tell, no one bothered to renew them so they are in public domain. The online copyright files don't go back quite far enough to guarantee the renewal would be listed. Of course it doesn't help that the company that published them is long gone. Do you know of any online resource for tracking copyright ownership?

Trivial Pursuits #100

Janice Gelb

#100. Since my own record for a zine is like 20 issues, 100 seems unbelievable. For some reason I find myself changing titles about the time I get a zine under control.

Australia. A six-week vacation? Such a thing would have been unheard of in the old Silicon Valley days. Australia is high on our list of places to visit. We are currently looking around for our next destination. We had been planning on a trip with some friends but circumstances have prevented that so now Suzanne gets the fun of finding a cool place to go.

February Flights

Janice Gelb

Interesting zine! The article on airport security really struck home. At some point we are going to have to get realistic about security requirements and put a real system in place. Until then it looks like we will spend incredible amounts of money implementing a system little or no better than the old one.





Avatar Press Volume 2 Number 20

Randy B. Cleary

Nice photos of the wedding! Hopefully ours are in this mailing somewhere.

Guilty Pleasures 23

Eve Ackerman

Cruise. Yeah, the dirt-cheap cruise trips you hear about on the news are mostly imaginary. Suzanne keeps an eye out for something in the South Pacific but everything we find is either normal price or really, really bad cabins or both. There are some real deals on European travel floating around.

Tennessee Trash #46

Gary R. Robe

Flu. As I sit here typing this I'm trying to recover from a case of the flu, or something like it, that just won't go away. I think I've got it beat and then it pops back up. What really makes things confusing is this is the peak of the allergy season so I have a lot of symptoms all the time.

Business Travel. OK, I have to admit that I do miss it. After all those years of complaining about too much travel and too many presentations, I really do sort of miss them.

The Time Machine. We caught this in a great theater in a small town near, 45 minutes away, here. They have all "stadium seating" and a great sound system. I liked the start of the movie, though I didn't think you needed to give the character a reason for wanting to time travel. He was clearly the sort of person who would want to. The last half of the movie was just a little, maybe a lot, dumb. At least it had good effects.

Rheumatic fever. I hope Isaac is doing OK. One of my cousins had an undiagnosed case when he was a kid and it did a lot of damage. Fortunately you guys caught it soon enough that it shouldn't be a long-term problem. Good luck!

Playing Pepe le Pew

Jeffery Copeland

New Job. I hope the new job works out! Working for an organization located in another part of town is hard enough; working for one on the other side of the world would be a real pain. Designing type setting software really seems like an interesting job.

Airplane ads. Putting ads into the airplane information display is going to far. When we flew to Japan I spent most of the time writing with the info display up. It was a nice way to know if there was anything to look at out the window and I find watching the speed and altitude a little reassuring. On the Singapore Air flight the display was in Japanese most of the time with English up maybe 10% of the time. It was kind of fun trying to figure out what the Japanese meant by comparing with the English screens.

Airline Security. Unfortunately, because I have a gut level hatred of the idea, the best answer to airline security is probably a biometric based national ID card. The technology is there to do fingerprint

or retinal scan and it's not too expensive or flaky to implement. With the card, most people could be cleared with only "normal" inspection.

It's not perfect since someone born here with no known ties to "bad guys" could be a sleeper or unknowingly carrying weapons or explosives. What it would do is clearly point out the high-risk people and prevent their slipping through the system. The current system is just plain silly.

On our last trip my new watch, it's a special one designed for people who fly ultra light planes, set off the metal detector. So I got the full treatment including shoes, pat down and detail search of my camera bag. Of course the inspector didn't look inside my large, solid aluminum, camera that could have hidden anything but she did carefully probe and feel Bear Bear who is too small to conceal much of anything. Nor did she actually open all the compartments on the camera pack. If I had been trying to sneak something on the plane, I would probably have gotten away with it.

The simple truth is that the searches, no matter how careful, will not prevent another group of determined terrorists from taking over a plane if they really want to. From everything we know, the people who took over the planes on 9/11 were not carrying anything "illegal" at the time. On our last flight, I worked off my irritation at the "security" delays by outlining, in my head since doing it on paper could be harmful to my personal freedom, 10 ways to take over a plane using only things already on the plane or still legal to carry on. I was a little shocked that it only took me a few minutes to come up with 10 reasonable scenarios. Yes, I do know more about planes than most people but not all that much more.

People need to remember that criminal violence is not something you can prevent with security measures. You prevent it by making the consequences both certain and severe.

DSC. Sorry you won't be making it but I have to agree with your priorities. We've started playing with our model rockets again. I want to put a small, cheap needless to say, digital camera in one. I tried to get camera shots from rockets when I was a kid and it never worked out now it ought to be easy.

...a monument that neither government nor time can eradicate...

Mike Weber

It's funny how you don't really see something if your not expecting it. When I ran into you at the station the other night, it took me a couple of minutes to realize it was you. We often stop for gas and a Coke on our way back from Atlanta so I suppose I'll be seeing you again.

Hope the job situation improves!

Three foreign countries, Six airports, Nice flights, Eighteen days: The Asian Tour
Jeffery Copeland

The Japanese subway. My only experience with the Tokyo subway system was taking the Narita Express to get to our hotel located about a mile from the Shinjuku station. We arrived totally exhausted and stumbled down into the airport station. Some how we made it to the right train and even got out at the right station.



Shinjuku station is BIG and we came out on the wrong side and couldn't find our hotel. Fortunately the people are very friendly and someone pointed us in the right direction.

We really liked Japan and plan on going back sometime. The people were friendly, the food was good, if astronomically expensive, and there was a lot to see.

Credit cards. Oh, the Platinum card is only worth it if you can use the free airline ticket benefit. Otherwise it's basically the same service you get with a gold card. I get offers from them three or four times a year and it never makes sense to spend \$300 for a credit card. Amex is not your best choice for an international credit card. Visa or Mastercard either one are much more widely accepted and they often give better exchange rates.

Aeroflot. Don't be too hard on Airbus. The pilot has more to do with bumpy landings and taxing than anything else. The Tupelov you saw was designed for service on rough runways and probably has better suspension than the Boeing or the Airbus.

Neat trip!

Passages #13

Janet Larson

Don't let the lawsuit get you down too much but don't take it too lightly. It's amazing what juries will do. Their decisions often don't seem to be based on anything to do with the evidence in the case or even common sense.

Allegra-D. I've tried practically every allergy relief drug on the market and none of them are really non drowsy. Claritin has the most interesting side effect I've experienced so far: It gives me really vivid and elaborate dreams. It also seems to mess up my ability to sense just where my body is in space. I only notice it when I'm hang gliding but then it's very noticeable. I go to shift my weight a little and end up going in the wrong direction or twice as far as I intend to. Big movements don't seem to be effected but small ones definitely are.

