



ASTRO  
CRUISE

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**W**e had a completely fan-sodden time the first weekend in May. And it helped to make up for the disasters of the month. First, on Saturday evening, we collected Alan Winston and his sweetie Deborah at the airport on their way to their week on a jazz cruise. It was our first opportunity to meet Deborah in the ten years she and Alan have been keeping company. We had a magnificently pleasant dinner with them, and wish our visit could have been longer.

Then, on Sunday, we had lunch and a very pleasant afternoon visit with Gary Robe. We caught up on southern gossip, heard about Gary's travels, heard about Isaac's struggle with rheumatic fever, and went on an expedition to capture this year's wild Fifi.

As we've alluded to in various mailing comments we're not going to make it to DSC this year. You'll have to have the SFFPA party without us. We sent Fifi with Gary so she can be properly hoisted. We're going to miss this very much. I was looking forward to doing Huntsville with JJ, and bringing model rockets, and hoisting Fifi, and having my traditional Saturday-afternoon-at-DSC-and-the-sun-is-over-the-yardarm mint julep.



**O**n Thursday, May 9th, we were having dinner with the former Softway crowd. The newest transplant to Microsoft and his wife are long-standing members of the Toronto fan group, and are now making contacts in Seattle convention-running fandom. We were comparing notes on people we know, and I told the story of the time a group of LASFSians were visiting Disneyland. When Bruce Pelz got separated from the group on Main Street, Fred Patten or Len Moffat stuck their head in a shop and asked the clerk if they'd seen a large dark man in black. Yes, said the clerk: he's in back. Except that Bruce was wearing a pink shirt that day.

We got home from dinner to the distressing news from Hal O'Brien, via Ulrika in LA that Bruce had died of a heart attack that evening.

When I started working at Interactive Systems, I had immediate credibility among the UCLA Computer Club crowd because I knew UCLA's engineering librarian, Bruce Pelz, socially.

At Allie's first Worldcon (in Atlanta) when she was eighteen months old, Bruce found out that her favorite animal was the elephant, and he spent ten minutes doing elephant imitations for her.

Bruce appeared as a character in any number of Larry Niven and Niven-Pournelle stories. My favorite Niven story, "What Can You Say About Chocolate-Covered Manhole Covers", takes place at Bruce and his first-wife Diane's divorce party.

It's not fair. This has been a hell of a spring for all of us, and this loss is just the capper. Bruce will be missed. As Ulrika wrote in a different context, "Words. What wretched, pale, wintry little things they are, really. Bah."



I hadn't realized that Congress holds an annual art contest for high school students, with the best piece in each district getting displayed in the congressional office buildings over the summer.

It turns out that we have a high school student who does art, so a couple of weekends ago, we found ourselves in the local office of our congresswoman, Jennifer Dunn, looking at the collected art from high school kids in her district. Because she was saving her best pieces for her Advanced Placement portfolio, she sent a piece from her B list to Congresswoman Dunn. Some of it was just dreck. But there were some really cool pieces, including a well-composed, magnificently-printed photograph by one of Allie's classmates.

So now comes Jamie Kellner, who made his name as the president of WB television (and thus committed such crimes against humanity as bringing us “Dawson’s Creek”), and is now head of Turner Broadcasting. Brother Kellner tells us that watching television without watching the commercials is theft.

Now, when the VCR was invented, and people started fast-forwarding through commercials, the producers of advertising make the images compelling enough that we’d stop and check out the ad, or at very least recognize the name of their product.

Now, with DVRs — digital video recorders — like TiVo and Replay TV, because the program is stored on a disk rather than a tape, we can skip forward 30 seconds without even scanning, and may never actually look at a commercial. So, advertisers are starting to figure out ways to get to look at the commercials anyway.

They’re asking the wrong question. Yes, in network television the audience is the product, not the programming, but don’t accuse me of stealing because I don’t want to watch the commercials, and ask how to cram commercials down my throat past the technological barriers. The right question is “is there a different way to fund the content?”

How, after all, do HBO and the other movie channels make money? They offer you a subscription, rather than selling your eyeballs to Anheuser-Busch and Gillette. Why can’t I buy a season’s subscription to “Buffy” or “ER”? As long as the subscription isn’t going to work out to \$2 for two hours — this is, Blockbuster prices — I think it’s even economically viable. (My guess is that the sweet spot is about \$25 for 18 episodes.) Certainly, it’s technologically possible: Part of the objection to the DVRs (at least with Replay TV) is that I can transmit a show I’ve recorded to someone else’s DVR over the internet.

(One advantage of subscriptions is that I know very accurately how many households are watching the program. Figuring that out has been a massive television sub-industry, with Nielsen and others jumping through hoops to gather ratings. Paradoxically, if I distribute the program via subscription, though, I no longer need to know exactly how many people are seeing it, and what their demographics are, because I no longer need to know how much to charge for the commercial time and whether I should be flogging beer and razor blades or Buicks and Depends.)

Part of the networks’ objection to the DVR is that they lose “brand equity”. Perhaps, again, they’re in the wrong business. If I can’t sell “Frasier” by making it follow “Friends”, then maybe “Frasier” shouldn’t have gotten made in the first place. If people don’t watch something because they it was broadcast by XYZ, perhaps they’ll watch something because it was produced by XYZ Studios. That is, maybe the networks need to develop themselves as a brand for production not

a brand for transmission. (Though, frankly, people don't seem to actually care who's transmitting "Friends" or "Drew Carey" or "Buffy". Neither do they care what studio produced "Terminator" or "Shakespeare in Love" or "Hunt for Red October".)

Two additional points:

First, I think that ReplayTV allowing you to send copies over the net violates the original Supreme Court decision that said recording a program on a VCR to watch later is fair use.

Secondly, the studios and networks have put a massive burden on ReplayTV by getting a court to require them to keep track of every program recorded or sent by every user of one of their devices. But, under the fancy cover, a ReplayTV is just a Linux computer with a video input card and large disk for storage. This means that to circumvent the prying eyes of the content providers, the next generation of ReplayTV may be open source software developed by some college student which you install on your own Linux machine.



**M**y parents skipped the country so that my father could avoid having an eightieth birthday party. The plan was to fly to Rome, drive down to Calabria, visit my mother's relatives, and carry on to London to visit my brother and his family, "Be careful driving," said my sister. I asked, "Hey, are you sure you don't want to take the train south from Rome?"

So, of course, there was the eight-car accident and five broken ribs that they encountered thirty km south of Cassino.

My brother flew to Rome, extracted them from the hospital, flew them back to London and he and his wife spent three weeks cossetting Mom & Dad. Since the broken ribs were all Mom's, she spent the whole three weeks trying to remember to inhale even though it hurt.

Services for Unix 3.0 finally shipped to manufacturing. Because the people in Redmond who invented the technology, built the hard parts, and have now been discarded, were merely ancillary to the process of celebrating the release, the party was at 7pm in Hyderabad, and we all had to get up at 6am to be in the office so we could watch them having a party on a video conference link.

No matter how shabbily we were treated in the process of getting it out the door, we all have reason to be proud. It's a great product.

Todd: "Marxism presupposed that technology would never pass beyond a certain point... Marxism's 19th-century creation lends it an attractive distance in the postindustrial, late capitalist era"

Ethan: "There is more to prosperity than envy and redistribution."

Susan: "I'm sure the Hollywood unions are just waiting with bated breath for coding and multimedia production to unionize. What's it going to be—I write the code and then somebody from I.A.T.S.E. comes in and has to press the RETURN key?"

— An office debate from *Microserfs* by Douglas Coupland

Meanwhile, we end the month of May with the death of Liz's stepfather Bill Rogers, and she's spending collation weekend off in Indianapolis with her mother.

Bill had been in declining health for some time. When we went to Alaska with them last summer, it was clear that Bill's Parkinson's disease was getting worse. He fell and broke his hip when they got back, and spent two months in a nursing home. So this was not completely unexpected. He got to die at home, which was important to him.

Bill was a study in contrasts. He was a devout Quaker who was a veteran of two wars. It was appropriately ironic that he died on Memorial Day.

He had an abiding faith. It wasn't just a religious faith, but his kindness and generosity flowed directly from his faith in humanity.

Bill was infinitely curious. He was constantly reading something new and different.

The kids were his buddies, and Allie in particular considered that Bill was her macaroon brothers. It was frustrating for them that he was unsteady much of the time, and had trouble getting around. For me, that wasn't a problem: I just walked at Bill's pace when we were with them.

I'm going to miss Bill quite a bit, and I wish him happy trails.

# Reviews

❖❖ *Bandits* is Bruce Willis and Billy Bob Thornton doing bank robbers. Not high art, but certainly worth a visit to the video store. Cate Blanchett does her usual workmanlike turn.

❖❖ We just sort of expect that any movie with Kevin Spacey will be good, and that any movie with Jeff Bridges will have good acting. *K-Pax* has them both and does both. Good story, nicely ambiguous ending, excellent — really excellent: Spacey does a thing with his eyes in the closing scene that had JJ saying “wow!” — acting.

❖❖ Denzel Washington won an Oscar for his role of a dirty cop in *Training Day*. But Ethan Hawke deserved one more for his performance as the new detective assigned to Washington’s squad. It’s a powerful movie, but Washington’s character is nowhere near likable, nowhere near admirable, nowhere near decent. Hawke’s character is a man who is feeling his way in an ugly situation, and he turns in a stellar performance in the process.

❖❖ *High Heels and Low Lifes* has Minnie Driver and Mary McCormack overhearing the radio conversations of a gang breaking into a bank vault. They attempt to blackmail the gang for some of the loot. It’s not as funny as the trailers would lead you to believe, though it is amusing in that understated British fashion. I can recommend half-a-dozen other funny movies that are better overall.

❖❖ So we finally saw *Thirteen Days*, Kevin Costner’s movie about the Cuban Missile Crisis. Good flick, but it had a couple of failings. Since it’s told from Kennedy friend Kenny O’Donnell’s point-of-view, he ends up being the hero, or at least the knight-errant fighting on behalf of the real heroes, Jack and Bobby. (And a quick look at the credits explains that: O’Donnell’s son Kevin was a producer of the movie.) Then it paints Air Force General Curtis LeMay as the bad guy — certainly LeMay was a loose cannon and a completely gung ho asshole, but painting LeMay as a bad guy doesn’t do the historical record any good. Then it attempts to add unnecessary dramatic tension to a historical situation which had enough of its own, thankyouverymuch.

❖❖ I can take or leave Brad Pitt, but *Spy Game* gives him a chance to work nicely opposite Robert Redford. Nice movie, told largely in flashback, with the main action taking place over the course of 24 hours as the spy about to retire tries to save his protégé who’s being left out in the cold for political purposes.



◆◆ Nobody writes a script with double-crosses better than David Mamet. That's reason enough to see *Heist*. Gene Hackman's performance is another. Nicely done caper movie with Danny DeVito, Delroy Lindo, and Ricky Jay.

◆◆ I'm reminded of the joke about the farmer whose ranch is out on the flood plain. As the water rises, the sheriff comes by to evacuate him. "No," says the farmer, "no need to evacuate me: the Lord will provide." Later, as the water is lapping up around the first floor windows, his uphill neighbor comes by in a rowboat. "No," says the farmer, "no need to evacuate me: the Lord will provide." When the water has risen to the second floor, the National Guard arrives in a helicopter. "No," says the farmer, "no need to evacuate me: the Lord will provide." Finally, as the farmer is trapped on the roof, he turns skyward, and yells, "Lord, why have you forsaken me?" The clouds part, and a booming voice comes down, "You schmuck! I sent you a truck, a boat, and a helicopter! What more did you want?"

*Serendipity* is a bit of fluff with John Cusack. Other than that, the plot is as flaky as the character played by Kate Beckinsale. "If we're truly meant to be together, fate will take care of it for us," she says, "we don't need to do anything explicit about it." So, to answer Kate Beckinsale's character: "You went into Bloomingdale's for gloves, and you met this great guy on a starlit night, and had everything you need for romance. What more did you want?"



◆◆ Kristine Kathryn Rusch, who wrote two of last year's good Hugo nominees, "The Retrieval Artist" and "Millenium Babies", also writes mysteries about a black private detective named Smokey Dalton under the name Kris Nelscott. The first, *A Dangerous Road*, takes place in March and April, 1968 in Memphis. As the hero is unravelling a case that ultimately explains some of his own personal history, his boyhood friend and college classmate, now a minister named King, comes to town to help protests surrounding the strike by the city's garbage men.



# Mailing Comments on SFPA 225

**Ned Brooks** ✉ *New Port News* ✉

*ct Dengrove:* "I have forgotten why Herr Doktor Fahrenheit chose 32 and 212." I seem to remember that it was because zero was actually the freezing point of some specific formulation of brine, and 200 was the boiling point for the same mixture.

*ct Lillian:* "I saw one of the Xena-File episodes - made no sense at all. I have about given up watching it e thing but this is just soap-operaish smoke and mirrors." That's your mistake: expecting X-Files to make sense. Though the notion of Xena on X-Files makes me want to see the show again.

*ct Gelb:* "You went to a fancier high school than I did - biology was not required..." Back when you went to high school, Ned, had biology even been *invented*? (Duck.)

*ct Liz:* "I have the same problem with e-mail - the lists generate too much. At 100-200 a day I have little time for anything else. I have dropped one list and may drop more." My first thing every morning in the office — well, after getting the first cup of tea — is to do "mail triage." There's a stack of about 75 that get thrown out right away, about 15 that need some short answer, and about ten that actually require some action. Then, in my personal mailbox, there are usually about two that require a response, about five that are informational, and about a dozen spam.

☞ "No, there was no explanation of why the armadillos are moving north - ... If they would eat the damn fire ants they would be welcome, leprosy and all, but I'm told they won't." If they won't eat the fire ants, will they at least eat the kudzu?

*ct me:* "I quite agree with you about the secret tribunals... The argument that Roosevelt did it in WWII cuts no ice with me..." The argument also goes that Lincoln did it, too. However, the driving force seems to be John Ashcroft's delight in shredding the constitution with William Rehnquist's book *All the Laws but One* as its philosophical underpinning. Rehnquist's book, you may recall, is the one that argues that in time of war it's perfectly acceptable to ignore civil liberties.

☞ "I read *Gone With the Wind* many years ago and have not read *The Wind Done Gone* at all, so you mean by plagiarism - is text carried over or what?" My understanding is that whole scenes are recast in slave patois, or Ebonics to use the current term.

*ct Markstein:* "You are right that every day is an anniversary — I have a book somewhere that lists what you can drink to every day of the year." Gadfly computer columnist Stan Kelly-Bootle once noted, "The Russians have wonderfully continuous potational pretext: At the APL '93 Conference in St Petersburg, a typical toast was: 'If Lenin alive now, he would be 123 years, three months, four days and six hours old.'"

## Guy Lillian ☒ Rear Ender ☛

"I stayed pretty healthy, although I'm having more skin problems at 52 than I ever did as a teenager." My sometime writing partner Jeff Haemer notes that he's finally reached the age where he's still young enough for zits, but now also old enough for wrinkles.

"On the morning of that hot day in Cocoa, Florida, my brother and I had watched a Delta rocket rise to the heavens, bearing a solar satellite designed to probe the origin of the universe. That afternoon, when I watched Rosy, the woman I'd adored for 25 years and loved for at least 15, come through the doors of the Porcher House on her father's arm, I knew I could have saved NASA the trouble. The origin of all things lies in love." I've quoted this back at you in its entirety because it's such an archetypal Lillian paragraph: beautiful phrasing, wonderfully evocative. You are so besotted, it's delightful.



## Richard Lynch ☒ Variations on a Theme ☛

ct Schlosser: "On movies: 'No question that Shrek had a lot of good bits, both short and long.' I agree that it was a pleasant movie, but it also seemed like it was mostly just a series of sight gags connected by a story line." No, I think the better description is "sight gags connected by fart jokes." Somehow the idea of crafting an animated character after a live actor (a trick that I think started with Robin Williams as the Genie in *Aladdin*) means that Eddie Murphy as Donkey equals Scatological Humor.

ct Liz: "No real comments, except that I thought your 9-11 quilt was extraordinary. Nicki likes it a lot, too." It still makes me cry. Here I am sitting on an airplane halfway to Bombay, with tears streaming down my face, and a concerned Thai stewardess hovering.

ct me: "As for going to India, the one time I did it, I took the trans-Atlantic route, via Frankfurt. I remember that I arrived in New Delhi at about 2am." From the east coast, that route to India makes sense. From Seattle, it's a wash. Since I was stopping in Tokyo, the Pacific route was pretty much mandated. I would have liked to have come back through London and Toronto so I could say I'd circumnavigated both directions, but that about doubled the airfare. I actually had some business I could have conducted in

Toronto, except that my colleague there was going to be in Redmond the following week.

*ct Weisskopf:* "On travel delays: 'Some stupid goober from Gainesville, GA decide[d] to waltz right through security so he wouldn't miss his plane [and airport security] shut down the entire airport for more than four hours.' ... You seem to be a bit critical of security for shutting down the airport (and I can understand your frustration at the situation) but as for whether or not a camera bag (which he was after) was a possible threat, how was security supposed to know what was inside?" Indeed, how did they even know what he had? And how the hell did they manage to let him just waltz through the security checkpoint anyway? And where were the much-vaunted National Guardsmen with their automatic weapons, and why didn't they just shoot the goober? Here's the postulate: Airport security in the US was a joke. Here's the corollary: Now it's a federalized joke. I'd supported the notion initially on the expectation that Federal involvement would result in consistent training and standards, and so far it's done neither.

*ct weber:* "On automotive CD player options: 'I want one of those cassette-on-a-string converters that go from the output jack of a portable CD player to the cassette deck of a car stereo, so that I can use my Discman-type portable player.' I've never heard of that before, and it sounds intriguing. ... I'd think, though, that a portable CD player wouldn't have the ability to absorb road shocks without disrupting the playback..." We have a portable CD player for the van, specifically designed with shock absorber for in the car with a little cassette interface, except that Allie keeps stealing it, and the van only gets driven around town anymore. We finally broke down and got Liz a new car CD player. Of course, it was surrounded by a sportier car, too.

*ct me:* "I've got to get a copy of Chaiken's A Man on the Moon." I saw a new, profusely illustrated three-volume Time-Life edition of this about a month ago at Half-Price Books, and should have gotten it. You might also look into the twelve-part HBO series *From the Earth to the Moon*: I haven't seen it, but it credits Chaiken as source material, and was produced by Tom Hanks and Ron Howard after they did *Apollo 13*.

### **Arthur Hlavaty** ✉ **Derogatory Reference** ⚡

"The Internet works. We were able to reassure and be reassured in now time." Since (as you know) I worked for Jim Ellis at MCNC, I was particularly moved by Kevin's RASFF posting touching on this:

From: Kevin J. Maroney <kmaroney@ungames.com>  
Newsgroups: rec.arts.sf.fandom  
Subject: My worst moment yet, and how rasff came to the rescue  
Date: Thu, 13 Sep 2001 23:26:27 -0400

Well, beyond the three hours I spent wondering if Chris Quinones was still alive:

Today was the first day back in the office for most of us at Unplugged. I got in later than usual (subway problems), but one of my officemates was even later. He walked in looking glum but solid, and I gave him a high-five (hey, we're alive; it could be worse). He walked two more steps to his desk, sat down, and immediately started \*wailing\*.

I yelled, "What? What's wrong?" and turned around. He was holding a business card from his desk—I didn't see the name, but I immediately recognized the Sun logo on it. Before he could say anything, I said, "They're all alive. Everyone from Sun made it out safely. Janice said so on rasff."

Thank you, Janice. Thank you, Jim Ellis and Steve Bellocin. Thank you, everyone.

*"Still another thing I haven't changed is being a First Amendment nut. For America to be worth saving, it has to have freedom of expression."* But the president's press secretary doesn't think it should. He wants everyone to say exactly what he tells them to. It was Ari Fliasher who brought a firestorm of protest down on Bill Maher for expressing his opinion and saying "You want cowardly? Cowardly is firing cruise missiles from two thousand miles away." (OK, in all fairness, being White House press secretary is a horrible, thankless job, and everyone who's ever held it has wanted to twist the scrawny neck of every reporter who crossed his path, even when he used to be on the other side of the podium.)

*"Nicholson Baker's latest book, Double Fold, plays the dozens on America's librarians for what he sees as dereliction of their duty to physically preserve books and newspapers."* Sigh. Baker does have a bug up his ass on this topic, doesn't he? It seems to me (like it does to you) that the information on the pages is what's important. The inclination to save every scrap, jot, and tittle is foolish, and leads to silliness like collector's edition Star Wars dishes. As Franklin Roosevelt wrote to the American Booksellers Association just after WWII started, "We all know that books burn—yet we have the greater knowledge that books cannot be killed by fire. People die, but books never die. No man and no force can abolish memory."

*"I am not making this up: The book jacket says, 'the affair between Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky now stands as the seminal cultural event of the 90's.'"* Yeah, that's pretty foolish: it should be obvious that there's a *vas deferens* between a cultural event and a scandal.

*"But I still relive the trauma every time I have to wait for AOL or some other GUI to draw the pictures needed by the majority of its users."* I am forced to use Outlook for reading mail at the office, which is too bad. As I've commented before, Outlook is a very nice contact manager with incidental mail reader. I use eLM for reading mail on my

home machine, but that only works as long as bozos and spammers don't send me mail written (to borrow your analogy, Arthur) with HTML crayons.

Your "Nasty, Brutish, & Short" list of short, pithy bits gives me more quote fodder. In fact, "Outlook Express is Microsoft's way of saying, 'Pick up the soap.'" already appears.

From your worldcon report, "Panelist Muriel Hykes, discussing dysfunction in her family, made my favorite remark of the whole con: 'I myself am a product of poor impulse control.'" Not me: I'm not a product of poor impulse control. I'm a product of careful planning, massive injections of artificial hormones, and more hot fudge sundaes than you can shake a stick at.



**Guy Lillian** ☒ *Spiritus Mundi* ☻

"MY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS 2002 ... (1) Get Cindy her own apartment... clean, safe, close, and quick." Hey, if nothing else, you get karma points for taking Cindy in. You also get the feeling of doing something worthwhile for a fellow human being who is incapable of fully taking care of herself.

"(2) Apply for reciprocity... I've had the application in my desk for a year. I don't know why it's still unfinished. I have decent references, am not too scared of the ethics test, and can scrape up the grand. So what's holding me up?... In a way that's easy to answer. New Orleans is not my birthplace but it is my home." Yes, but is it Rosy's home? "..., here's another answer to my question: I like my job. I like being a public defender, even in an outlying country parish like St. John the Baptist." And you're a great public defender, but I've always had a problem with looking for a new job: I'm never convinced I deserve the job I've got, and can always think about what I did wrong.

"(4) Lose weight and exercise. ..." I read this as I was eating my way through Asia. I ate most evenings at the Taj Residency in Hyderabad, surrounded by very rotund Indians. In Japan, it's always easy for me: I have an active enough existence — I walk everywhere, and "high-fat Japanese diet" is a complete non-sequitur — that

I lose five or ten pounds. In India, every dish is made from ghee (that is, clarified butter) or whole milk or something else that's fat first and food content later. "And my cholesterol is elevated, not enough for medication..." Mine's been up for several years — high enough (as you know) that at one point my brother-in-law sidled up to Liz and said "buy more life insurance for him" — but constant exercise has been making it steadily drop, and at my last physical it was 190 again.

*ct Metcaif:* "I like your idea of 'running' Hugo nominations, which I take to mean a worldcon receiving nominations all year, and not just for a short time in the winter and spring." As I said last time, I think a Nebula-like rolling preliminary ballot would be a disaster. What we really want is multiple versions of the short story review service on the web that Tangent (<http://www.tangentonline.com/>) does.

Unable to actually imprison us, these terrorists want us to imprison ourselves. Sorry, but no way. It breaks my heart to think about the people who lost loved ones on September 11, but I will not let it break my spirit.

I went to the ballgame Friday night, took in Dvorak's "New World" Symphony at the Kennedy Center Saturday, took my girls out to breakfast in Washington Sunday morning, and then flew to the University of Michigan. Heck, I even went out yesterday and bought some stock. What a great country.

I wonder what Osama bin Laden did in his cave in Afghanistan yesterday?

— Thomas L Friedman, *New York Times*, 25 Sept 2001

*ct Dengrove:* "The fact that the 9-1-1 hijackers used their own names tells me that their masters had no more immediate mischief planned." But it's not clear that the hijackers actually did use their real names. You'll recall that we immediately had the family of a guy named Mohammed Atta showing up in Saudi Arabia claiming that their son-and-brother wasn't involved. It's entirely possible that Atta is the Arabian equivalent of Smith or Kim, but...

While we're at it, check out the completely revisionist eight-piece article in the *Washington Post* beginning 27 January by Dan Balz and Bob Woodward: We continue to promulgate the fake story about Norman Mineta bravely shutting down national air traffic: "Bring all the plane down," Mineta is quoted as yelling at Monte Belger of the FAA, "Fuck pilot discretion, get those goddamned planes down." Of course, Belger had ordered all the planes on the ground on his own authority finally tracking Mineta down in the bunker with Dick Cheney, to report what he'd done. (See Joshua Green in *Slate*, <http://slate.msn.com/?id=2063935>.) Then Balz and Woodward go on-and-on about how George Tenet and the CIA had indications that al Qaeda planned an attack on the US, but couldn't get anyone to listen — a



story that I suspect the Bush administration wishes they hadn't fed to the *Post* now that the CIA has released exactly what they told Bush in the August 6th national security briefing.

*ct Schlosser:* "Regarding Harry Potter's Hugo win, I do wonder if Rowling got the trophy and what, if anything, she thought of it." Since Rowling couldn't be bothered to acknowledge the nomination or the award, I understand there were complicated negotiations undertaken to have the award delivered to her in the UK by hand, with an explanation. I don't know what the outcome was.

*ct Strickland:* "Ever scarf Canada's great junk food, Fiddle Faddle? Like Cracker Jacks, only sweeter." I didn't know Fiddle Faddle was Canadian, though I noticed at the supermarket the other day that Brach's now has *chocolate-covered* carmel popcorn, which should be sweeter still.

*ct Hughes:* "My lady and I both salute and thank you for the gorgeous photos of our wedding... Rosy has a request: could she have a copy of this zine, one not scarred by my mc'ing notes?" If Steve doesn't have a copy, we didn't use either of the backup copies of that mailing, so I could pull one from those. Let me know.

*ct Gelb:* "The BCS - whatever that stands for - was acclaimed by the Today show as the second-biggest sports blunder of 2001. First? You have to ask? The XFL, stripper cheerleaders and all..." That's odd that Today would lampoon XFL: wasn't NBC a primary sponsor of the XFL? As allergic as I am to football, even the large-breasted, scantily-clad cheerleaders couldn't encourage me to watch.

☞ "I've never received a Nigerian scam spam. Should I feel neglected?" No: I hadn't seen one either until about the dozenth time Ned mentioned it, and now I get about two a week.

☞ "To improve the pacing of the award ceremony, get rid of the Seiuns (as I said often), and rehearse the guest presenters, so we won't have to sit through some goof forgetting to read the nominees or butchering Hlavaty's name or whatever." Piffle. As I keep saying, the Seiun awards are not nearly as long-winded in my experience as the First Fandom awards. As for the Seiuns, the Japanese responsible for them are sufficiently cosmopolitan that the folks responsible for the Hugo ceremony can take them aside and say something like, "we apologize for having to bring this up, but we are interested in keeping the total ceremony to a time limit, so while we are honored that you have come to present the Seiun award here, we are sorry that we must ask you to make your presentation no longer than seven minutes." It could even be said without the Oriental wrapping in full-out American, "hey, we need to restrict you to seven minutes on stage and if you insist on advertising your Worldcon bid during the presentation, next year you'll be relegated to the fan lounge at 9am on Friday."

As for preventing Hlavaty's name from being butchered, I seem to remember

that was one of the names that Bob Shaw didn't have trouble with in Atlanta when I spent half an hour running him through the names of all the nominees after the opening ceremonies in Atlanta. He was amused that I did it standing up rather than sitting down because I was carrying a sleeping infant in a backpack at the time.

What the people want is very simple. They want an America as good as its promise.  
— Barbara Jordan

*ct me:* “(What will Gore do now? I’m trying to find out, but no one - not even our senators - seems to know how to write him a letter.)” I’m surprised that your senators don’t know how to get ahold of him. Try <http://www.algore2004.com> or <http://www.al-gore-2004.org>.

☞ “What’s The Syndic?” Short 1953 novel by Cyril Kornbluth in which the mafia takes over most of the United States. They aren’t a government *per se*, but run the territory fairly and more-or-less honestly. Fascinating book.

☞ “It’s a shame that Russell Crowe won that ill-deserved Oscar for *Gladiator* last year, since he is much, much better in *A Beautiful Mind*. Ignore the trailer, which pitches the movie as an insipid chickflick; it’s actually a pretty intelligent and harrowing portrait of a brilliant schizophrenic mind.” The movie is apparently even more fictionalized than the book, which has caused quite an uproar because one doesn’t mention and the other only mentions in passing John Nash’s sexual involvement with men. (Favorite recent caption from a *New Yorker* cartoon by Victoria Roberts: “Are all Brits bisexual, or only the ones who publish their diaries?”)



☞ “Regarding *Krispy Kreme*, Rosy prefers *Dunkin Donuts*, but she’ll come around. Have you ever visited a *KK* outlet? They have windows on their production line... You feel like *Homer Simpson*,

and all you want to do is jump on that conveyer belt and lay there with your mouth open. \*Yummmmm-mmmmm\*” Yes: we discovered one on the mezzanine level of the Excalibur Hotel in Las Vegas, unfortunately, just after we’d had a large lunch. But, we’ve visited the one in Issaquah several times — unfortunately, we seem to always end up there at Saturday afternoon rush hour, and have to wait in the queue for an hour.

*ct weber:* “Who drew that Batgirl on page 19? Kick me to death, woman! Reminding me of the awful story in which two hoods lost a fistfight because they were ogling Batgirl’s legs. Batman and Robin weren’t distracted, but we all know about them, don’t we?” I did mention the amusing notional blueprints of houses on television that we saw at the Bellevue Art Museum a couple of months ago, didn’t I? Stately Wayne Manor has Alfred’s and Aunt Harriet’s rooms are in a different wing than Dick and Bruce’s suite. Dick and Bruce, of course, have a common bathroom between *their* bedrooms.

☞ “Nothing bestial about your anger at the 9-1-1 killers. In the face of inhuman behavior, rage is only appropriate. Let’s drag Osama to Ground Zero in chains.” Y’know, I’ve gone through several iterations of this. I thought that roasting on a slow spit would be good for bin Laden. Then, since his family is still pretty clearly in contact with him — and his US-based relatives were spirited out of the country on September 12th and 13th — trying all his brothers and uncles for accessory to murder seemed the right thing. (Note please that the bin Ladens have refused to provide DNA samples so that it would be possible to confirm or deny if any bodies found in Afghanistan are actually Osama.) But the more I think of it, the right thing to do is — assuming the incompetent turds at US Central Command can ever find bin Laden — is to take him in chains to apologize, in person, to the next of kin of every person who died on September 11th. Again, I heartily recommend Terry Bisson’s excellent story, “macs”.

### **Richard Dengrove ☒ *Twygrasil and Treehouse Gazette* ✦**

*ct The Southerner:* “It’s, as I figured, <http://www.usps.GOV>. I can see where someone might get into the habit of figuring all websites end in COM. But the government’s don’t. That’s why <http://www.whitehouse.com> lands you in a porno site.” Actually for the post office, both . . .com and . . .gov work, but their own literature mentions the first — look at an express or priority mail envelope.

*ct Brooks:* “By the way, I hear those schools where they memorize the Koran are subsidized by the Saudis. Yet are hotbeds of anti-Saudi radicalism.” Remember that Saudi Arabia is so corrupt a family business that it makes the Gambinos and Genoveses look like amateurs. At some point, the amount the Saud family is siphoning out from what’s supposed to be government money is going to come back to bite them. The strategy so far has been to pay off the religious extremists, who are the most likely to be

able to launch a coup. And that strategy, not surprisingly, results in having a lot of anti-Saudi radicals floating around.

However, I heard a completely fascinating story on NPR the other morning. There's been a twenty-year bilateral study by David Hawkins at UW of kids who elementary school in Seattle starting in 1981. Basically, the kids were encouraged to actual bond into being members of the school community. It turns out that if you get the kids when they're six and show them somebody cares (in this case by treating them like human beings), you've got them for life. The net effect is that without anything else than feeling like they were members of *some* community, this cohort of kids has had fewer problems than other kids their age. For example, they've had a 20% lower pregnancy rate. Generalize this to taking six-year-olds and only teaching them a radicalized version of Islam.

☞ *"Maybe that's a myth spread by Microsoft that your software doesn't run as fast when you delete the Temporary Internet Files, As I said, I haven't noticed much difference."* As I explained last time, the Temporary Internet Files are actually local copies of stuff on web pages. They're for convenience and speed. Depending on the speed of your connection, it may make no difference — indeed, if your connection to a particular web site is slow, I can conceive of circumstances in which it may take longer to verify that your cached copies are okay than to load new copies. In Internet Explorer, you can set the size of the cache to 0 by clicking on Tools, Internet Options, selecting the General tab, clicking on Settings under Temporary Internet Files, and then setting the amount of disk space to use to zero.

☞ *"As for the current Afghan War, so many non-Afghans are involved maybe they should call it the Non-Afghan War."* That's because all the Afghans who were fighting with the Taliban have switched sides. That's normal for Afghanistan. The problem is the non-Afghans, who joined the Taliban out of deep religious belief, not convenience. Now, the Pakistani and Saudi Arabian members of the Taliban are the only ones left. And so many of them have been smuggled across the border into Pakistan in private deals between US General Tommy Franks and the Pakistani junta that the British calling their mopping-up effort Operation Snipe was all-too-appropriate.

*ct Metca.f: "I wonder if we're not ultimately going to go back to the analog computer. Things can only be broken into so many small pieces a la digital computing. Theoretically, an analog would register whatever size needed to be registered. Of course, I don't know how you could make one and the engineers here may have a field day criticizing me."* Er, an analog computer could register whatever size of what, how?

☞ *"Also, I admit that we can see anything ten feet in size or more from satellites. Interpreting it is a problem. In the Kosovar war we didn't know a certain building was the Chinese embassy and bombed it."* Anybody who looked at a street map would have known that was the

Chinese embassy. Out of thousands of bombing sorties, the only target chosen by the CIA was that television station, er, embassy. What was actually going on? I can't begin to guess.

*ct Lillian:* "I don't know whether Catherine Asaro's books are bad, or whether they just aren't our genre, Guy." She's got really good ideas, does really good worldbuilding, has really good cultural extrapolation, and she *still* writes damned romance novels.

*ct Strickland:* "Just from who was targeted, I figure who sent the anthrax mail. A right winger in this country but pretty far out of the mainstream." Just to add to the confusion, I saw a report (it may have been in the *International Herald Tribune* while I was in Asia) that one of the September 11th hijackers had been treated last summer for a skin infection which may have been cutaneous anthrax.

*ct Hughes:* "I will say this. The subject of Bill Clinton seems to be causing you apoplexy. While Jeff appears to like a good fight, I don't think you do. Because of that, in real terms – the terms of who gets hurt – only he can win." No, and no. I actually really don't like a good fight, though try as I might, I do get pretty passionate about my political beliefs. On the other hand, if that manages to drive Steve away, then I don't win, I lose: I actually like Steve a lot, and even though we disagree about politics, I get quite a bit from my interactions with him, and spending time with Steve and Sue is always a highlight of DSC for me.

☞ "Just remember Bill Clinton is no longer President. And, given time, he will fade away." Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's what those of us on the left said about Nixon.

*ct Liz:* "Don't I remember Matt Helm movies from the late '60s, early '70s? Didn't Dean Martin play him?" In the words of the David Niven character in *Casino Royale*, Dean Martin was playing a joke shop spy. Like the *Modesty Blaise* movie with Monica Vitti, it bears exactly no relation to the books with the same characters.

*ct me:* "Of course, now that passengers know what hijackers are up to; no way can they pull that trick again." As I mentioned in my e-mail to Liz on my March trip, there was a slightly crazed guy who wandered up the aisle as we were taxiing on the way out of Tokyo the first time. There was a period of about thirty seconds where I was looking at the big guy across the aisle one seat back, and we were both watching the guy in the aisle and thinking, "between us we can hold this guy down." And there wasn't any thought of "what's he armed with," or "how dangerous is he," or even "is he up to no good." It turned out that the guy was slightly addled and had to use the restroom.

*ct Brown:* "Superman a Jesus figure? That sounds pretty pretentious." Yeah, particularly from two guys named Siegel and Schuster.

**Tom Feller** ☒ *Frequent Flyer* ✪

“Applied Digital also recently introduced a product (and a subsidiary) called *Digital Angel*, which combines biosensor technology and wireless communications linked to a global positioning system in the form of a watch and a pager-sized device.” The news clips you run are always fascinating, Tom. There’s a variant of this technology where they implant a locator chip in you, and then they can track where you are. The same day I found out about that, I heard a story about a woman with Alzheimer’s disease getting lost changing planes at DFW airport, with the obvious leap of implanting people who might get lost with a locator chip.

(And as I’m making the last edit pass, it occurs to me that the implanted version would be useful for, say, anyone traveling in South America, where American businessmen have been known to be kidnapped.)

**David Schlosser** ☒ *Peter, Pan & Merry* ✪

*ct Lynch:* “I saw an analysis of the WTC that indicated that pretty much everyone who was below the crash site had time to make it out before the collapse and that almost nobody was able to make it out from at or above the crash site. So it did do something of what it was supposed to. Also, the problem was not just that there was a big fire. The structural damage and jet fuel pretty much wiped out large areas of insulating material and thus subjected the frame to more and faster heat than was anticipated.” According to an installment of *Nova* a couple of weeks ago, the actual statistic is that between both towers, exactly four people who were above the crash sites survived.\* The *Nova* story was about structural engineers examining the failure modes of the buildings. It turns out that one tower collapsed from the outside in — that is, the curtain wall failed, pulling down the whole building — and the other tower collapsed inside out — that is, the service core failed, and pulled down the outside. The fundamental problem with surviving above the crash sites was that the service core was fireproofed by drywall (perfectly normal, and to code). This would have been okay if the collision hadn’t destroyed the drywall surrounding the fire stairs on the crash floors. The collision also blasted the insulation off the floor trusses, which were an integral part of the structural support of the buildings.

(One of the more unnerving parts of that *Nova* episode was the interview with Leslie Robertson, the structural engineer for the original project. He’s apparently

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\* The *New York Times* on May 26th has a very long story about the 102 minutes between the first plane impact and the last tower collapse. They report that they’ve identified eighteen people above the impact zones who survived. The harrowing story containing that datum recounts the telephone and e-mail and instant messenger conversations that people above the impacts had with their loved ones in the last hundred minutes of their lives.

done very little else since then but try to figure out what he could have done differently. He designed to the code of the time, based on every failure scenario he could think of. He did the best he could, but it wasn't good enough to provide an escape path for people above the fires. And maybe nobody's best was good enough.)

*ct Hughes:* "Israel makes no bones about using 'racial profiling' in its security checks. The catch with using it (particularly in a place like the U.S.) is that it's all too easy for someone with a plain old prejudice to use that to harass people of their choice." Israel – like India – is very open about being racist on this. They both presume anyone looking like a Muslim is *a priori* an evil criminal. India's far worse, in that the government encourages civilian violence against the Muslims. Israel has just been building kibbutzes on the West Bank.

*ct me:* "While Kay and I like vacations where we can 'plop,' we want there to be enough to do to let the plopping be enjoyable rather than having it run off into boredom." I've got a very high boredom threshold.

*ct Robe:* "Where did you get the notion that the Taliban were particularly popular? From what I gather they weren't very popular at all — just entrenched and in power." They were just another tribal warlord as far as the Afghans were concerned. They were plenty popular as long as they were in power. Now people are flocking to the new warlord, the Northern Alliance.

*ct Lillian:* "Without discussing it, I will echo that 24 is a very cool show. I have to wonder if it'll be renewed for another season." I don't know: a second season of 24 sounds an awful lot like *The Never Ending Story, Part II*. Does the series end when Kiefer Sutherland's character can't drink enough coffee to keep awake anymore?

"I'll partially concede the point about Hugo voters. I'm sure some number vote based on name recognition and some (I hope) larger number vote based on the one or two works that they are familiar with out of the set. And then there are the more dedicated folk who will try to read or see all of them." I try to only vote in categories where I've seen or read everything or nearly everything. This means I almost never vote for novel anymore since I'm perennially a couple of years behind on novel reading.

There are three principal ways to lose money: wine, women, and engineers. While the first two are more pleasant, the third is by far the more certain.

— Baron Phillippe Rothschild

**Janice Gelb** ☒ *Trivial Pursuits* ♣

"Moulin Rouge ... I had a lot of trouble with the plot." There was a plot?

*ct Schlosser:* "The airport security measures seem absurd in a lot of ways: first of all, they're

totally random. I got a small scissors and thin crochet needle through; my department head had safety pins confiscated. Second, they're not based on much logic: bag-matching isn't applied to continuing flights so a potential bomber could simply use a timer and not board the second leg of a trip." There are a number of problems, not the least of which is consistency. Airport security in Japan is random, but it's consistently so. That is, I don't know how seriously they're going to search my bag, but I know exactly what I can't take on an airplane leaving Narita. (Actually, not completely true: I've never had an unthorough screening in Japan — just some days they're paranoid and some days really paranoid.) Airport security in India is consistent, but randomly so. That is, I know exactly what they're going to do, but not how thoroughly. In India, they do bag matching when you change planes by lining all the transfer luggage up on the tarmac, and they don't load it on the next plane until you point out your bag and climb up the stairs.

*ct Hughes:* "Wow, you got to see the Aurora in Georgia?!?!? That is so cool." Very cool. I wanted to see Comet Ikeya-Zhang when I was in India – I was far enough south that it should have been very visible – but I never got far enough away from the city light pollution to do so. Similarly, early in May when Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, Venus and Mercury were all lined up in the evening sky, JJ and I tried to get out to see them twice. The first night we were late enough that Venus and Mercury were below the horizon. The second night we had normal Seattle weather and were clouded out.

☞ *"As for the openness about sex in Germany, I remember being surprised that Israeli newspapers had a topless girl on page 3 (like the Brits) and nudity was not uncommon on television..."* Normal Japanese comic books have nudity, and often even a fair amount of S&M, but on this last trip I saw fewer sararimen reading them on the train.

*ct Liz:* "I'm surprised you're not planning on worldcon given how close it is. I can appreciate the desire for smaller cons but at worldcon you can actually create your own minicon within them if you stay in touch with friends who are there." We actually thought about it, but as we keep saying, our travel plans keep getting rejiggered. However, I think if Japan hosts the 2007 Worldcon, we'd go. It should be a smaller convention, Liz has never been to Japan, and I'd really like to show it to her.

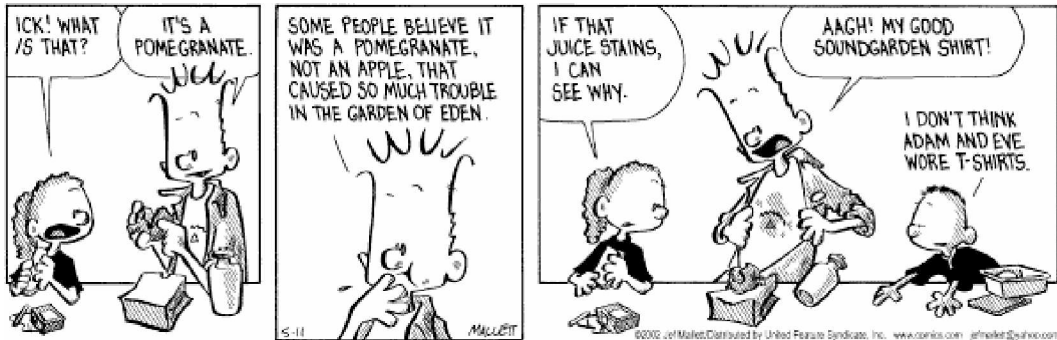
*ct me:* "Regarding counting stock options as regular income, I believe I mentioned when I got my refinance that my mortgage broker told me that some banks had agreed to include a monthly cashing-in of stock options as part of people's incomes in figuring what they could afford..." It just amazes me that they'd do this. In some sense, this is the mortgage broker saying "we expect that you'll win the rest of your mortgage payment every month in Vegas."

However, on a related note, someone told me recently that the job satisfaction at Microsoft pretty tightly tracks the stock price. Which is pretty interesting, because it's not the money that motivates people to do a good job. However, with the



extended downturn in Microsoft's stock, there's a very clear division between the haves and have-nots, which is causing some interesting stresses in the corporate culture. In other words: people may not be in it for the money, but money sure smooths over some frustrations of the job. (On the other hand, as Microsoft gets bigger, the frustrations of dealing with the bureaucracy makes the amount of money to smooth over the frustrations larger. . . )

☞ *"Speaking of the nice little gift baskets from studios encouraging people to vote for particular movies, for the second time in three years my brother is a nominator for the Screen Actors Guild awards. Not only does he have a pass that enables him and a friend to get into first-run movies for free, but DVDs and some videos have been appearing in his mailbox at the rate of 3–4 a day. . ." Didnt I make the joke about the actors in *Gladiator* sleeping with the whole Academy? Who showed up to boff your brother? But as I think we've mentioned, a friend of ours from Boulder is an Emmy-winning animator who's also a member of the Academy. He gets a huge pile of movies every winter, and we borrowed selections from him from time to time. Its how we saw the horrible Leonardo di Caprio *Romeo & Juliet*, from which the only good thing was Claire Danes.*



*ct Robe: "I completely agree about the airport security being mostly for show. My favorite story is from our department head, who was livid when she found out I'd gotten both my metal crochet hook and my small scissors on both flights back and forth to England when she had gotten confiscated from her luggage....safety pins!!!!" As I said, consistency would be really, really nice. Are we frequent flyers going to have to file a class-action suit against the airport security service to get them to publish a list of what's prohibited?*

*ct Ackerman: "I really liked the one long cruise I took. There's enough of a variety of food that you can always find something you can eat." I enjoyed my one experience with a sea voyage, but that was on a more traditional boat with passengers and freight sailing from point A (Marseilles) to point B (Yokahama) via points C though M. However, it strikes me that cruises as they're done now — in particular, the large cattle cars*

that kept docking while we were in Seward, Alaska — would be like being trapped at a convention of insurance salesmen. It seems to have all the disadvantages of current worldcons (too many people) with none of the advantages (none of them *a priori* interesting).

*ct Brown:* “I guess you can imagine my feelings about the BCS. It’s our own fault for losing to Tennessee but I think the sucky Rose Bowl game should prove once and for all how bankrupt the BCS rating system is. I don’t understand why the NCAA still puts up with it: the whole idea was to create an undisputed national champion, and the only years that has happened since the BCS was created were the years when the champion would have been undisputed anyway! The whole concept is bogus and should be scrapped.” This is the second time someone’s mentioned “BCS”. I presume it’s something to do with college football, since you mention the Rose Bowl in the same sentence. So what does BCS stand for? Bowl Cock Suckers? No, I guess that would be the cheerleading competition. College football’s got nothing to do with having a championship: It’s about extracting television money and alumni contributions. Stupid damnfool game, played by reprobates and criminals on their way from being college hoodlums to having their criminal lawyers paid for by the NFL.

**Sheila Strickland** ✉ **Revenant** ✉

*“I do have to begin with an admission this time. I have succumbed to the lure of technology. I have purchased a notebook computer!”* Very cool. I’ve now used quite a variety of laptops. The Dell I travelled with through Asia was nice, except for the crappy keyboard, but I suspect that was dirt rather than misdesign. The NEC I still have — while it’s now very old and slow — has a design flaw on the screen connector that causes it to hang.

*ct Metca,f:* “On Hugo nominations. I wish I had the opportunity to read more SF short pieces so I’d know what to nominate. Access is a problem for me. The novels are at the library; but the magazines aren’t, and it’s hard to find them on the local newsstands.” I have the same problem. I don’t have a chance to keep up with the pulps, but I go out of my way to read at least the short fiction nominees when they’re announced. However, you can get an on-line subscription to *Asimov’s*, *Analog*, and *F&SF* at Fictionwise, [fictionwise.com](http://fictionwise.com).

*ct Hughes:* “On cable signal. It’s fuzzy because it’s too strong? And I though (for some reason) that it was fuzzy because it was weak.” My experience with that sort of thing is that it’s usually a bad connector. Often it just helps to unplug and re-plug everything.

*ct me:* “Nice cartoon on page 15. It brings to mind a scene I found especially poignant during Lord of the Rings. While the company is in Moria, I believe, when Frodo wishes that the Ring and the resultant responsibility had not come to him; Gandalf reminds him that every time ‘bad times’ come, the people who are living then wish that they did not have to live through them. But just as there is

always evil to fight; there are always good people to help you and to help you fight the evil. A good reason to appreciate your friends." I had to go and look up that Luann cartoon out of "Handcuffs and Peanut Butter." I certainly understand Gandalf's comment. I feel great affinity for the friends who've stood with me through tough times, and the friends with whom I've built things.

*ct Weisskopf:* "Stuck in an airport with nothing to read and nothing to do: that is a horror story, for certain. Then more waiting. Airports can be diverting for an hour or so; but they get pretty awful after a while." I've never found an airport to be diverting for even an hour. OK, interesting in its own right, perhaps — like Bombay or Bangkok — but not diverting. On the other hand, I always make sure I've got something to read with me. Now that I always carry the Palm with me, I've always got a selection of electronic reading material. As for Toni's problem, though, because of the goober (what a great description of the guy who breached security!) she was stuck *outside* the terminal.

*ct Portraits of Grief:* "I tried to read this several times, and I kept tearing up. Too much pain." I was reading these on the *Times* web page about once a week. A lawyer in Manhattan wrote to the *Times* and called his daily reading of the column "my act of Kaddish." While I understand that sentiment, I finally decided, after sharing these, that reading them was not helpful, that I was wallowing.

**mike weber** ☒ **Just a Page for SFFA in Case** ♣

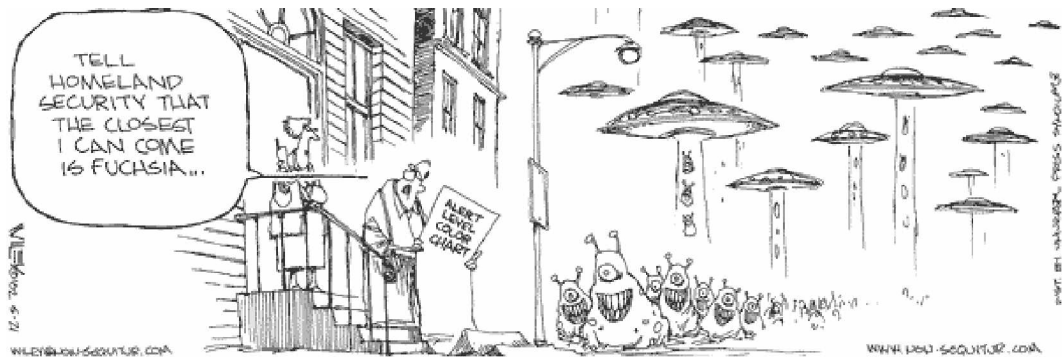
"One bugaboo that i have heard advanced is that most non-Region 1 stuff will be in FAL fonnat, not the NTSC that the US uses. So i borrowed a copy of the Brit Season One 'Buffy the Vampire Slayer' set from Bill Ritch. On the box; clearly said 'Region 2, FAL.'" It's been too long, but isn't the difference between PAL and NTSC the color encoding? Shouldn't that be a matter of the video encoder between the digital encoding on the DVD and the video outputs? And if the video signal is encoded on the disk, rather than just the data, with the video signal laid down dynmaically by the player, I'm not sure what they were thinking. (They were probably thinking "it doesn't matter because the video standard regions are supersets of the encoding regions, so we'll never have the problem." Fools.) Of course, like Richard Dengrove and analog computers (see page 25), I may be completely wrong here.

**Gary Brown** ☒ **Oblivion** ♣

*ct Dengrove:* "D.C. is humid, but not as much or as long as Florida. When you get those August days with daytime temperatures at 89 degrees and nighttime temperatures at 82 degrees, you know what humidity is." As a certain president from Boston famously observed, "Washington has all the efficiency of a southern city and all the charm of a northern one." Though, I'd mostly lived in southern deserts before we moved to Texas, so

the day-to-night temperature differential of five degrees — as opposed to the thirty degree swing in the chaparral of Los Angeles, or the fifty degree swing on the high plains of Colorado — came as quite a surprise.

• “My long-distance driving leg cramps have disappeared since I bought the Ford Taurus. I guess the seat configuration had something to do with it.” I had a chat about leg cramps at my annual physical. Lance mentioned that cramps are often a sign of dehydration. However, I’ll also note that I used to drive the 180 miles from Austin to Houston frequently in my Mazda 626 — sometimes there and back in the same day — and never had a problem, but I’m not sure that (even as much as I loved it) I could have done that in my Saturn. You just can’t get the seat in the Saturn SL2 back far enough for me.



ct Schlosser: “Maybe it’s like that old ‘if a tree falls and no one hears it, does it make a sound?’ If you spy on another nation and don’t get caught, is it spying?” Certainly, it’s spying, however it leads to other problems:† In the thirties, Britain, Japan, and the US had a conference to negotiate a treaty about how many battleships they would each be allowed to have — roughly a strategic arms treaty. Since the US was able to read the Japanese codes, they knew exactly what the Japanese negotiating position was, and were able to push the Japanese to accept a lower ratio of ships than they had originally planned. The effect over the course of the thirties was that the military in Japan kept working out ways to overcome this treaty defeat, and in the end just broke the treat outright, leading to the Pacific War. Net effect: spying caused, rather than prevented, a war.

(OK, it probably would have happened anyway: the Japanese military had been trying to run the country for a while. They’d gone so far as to assassinate

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† I’m doing this from memory, so the details may be somewhat wrong, but you can get the whole story in Kahn’s *The Codebreakers*. Trust his account before you trust mine.

three successive prime ministers in Tokyo Station — there are little brass chrysanthemums set in the pavement at each of the sites — and the talk of the Greater Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere was getting pretty thick.)

*ct Lillian:* “Interesting how getting together with old friends is something that we all seem to want. I guess we need to learn that they are OK and doing well. I’ve contacted a number of my old high school friends via *Classmates.com* and it was fun, indeed.” I keep track of a couple of college buddies. There are perhaps two people with whom I went to high school that I actually have interest in, but I’ve lost touch with them over the years. On the other hand, I do still correspond with my best teacher from high school.

• “In fact, there was a small booth at the Suwannee River which required us to pull over our Volkswagen van when we drove from Perry to Ocala and back to visit my parents. They only asked about citrus item and never looked through the stuff.” They only asked about citrus even when your van was emblazoned “International Dope Smuggling Consortium, Inc.”?

• “However, in college, jeans were the ‘thing’ and I wore them most of the time.” I’ve never worn the expected uniform. In college I wore cords, not jeans. I used to wear suits when I was consulting at IBM after the directive for IBM employees was to dress down. Now I wear khakis and buttondown shirts to the office in a universe where t-shirts are the norm.

(Though I did see an amusing incident of culture clash in the lobby of my building at Microsoft one day a couple of summers ago. This was before the security lunacy, when wearing of badges was optional. A sweet young thing was in the lobby, in a fairly conservative dress, obviously there for an interview. A standard overweight Microsoftie in cutoffs and t-shirt walked up to the badge reader and hip bumped it from his wallet side. The door beeped and as he leaned over to open it, he noticed her looking at him goggle-eyed, and said “Don’t worry, if you get the job, you’ll get a chip planted in your butt, too.”)

*ct Gelb:* “Great that you got to see Bonds hit his 73rd home run. Wonderful moment, no doubt (even though I dislike the jerk).” I’m curious why Barry Bonds has a reputation for being a jerk. As you know, I follow sports so little that I’m completely clueless about this sort of thing.

*ct Liz:* “I’m doing my best to bring ‘groovy’ back into popular use. Although, I don’t think my kids are going to be the ones to spread it. They roll their eyes when I say it — and I say it to make them roll their eyes.” One of the program managers in my old group uses “groovy,” too, but he’s old enough that he it was current when he was a teenager. On the other hand, my new group den mother, er, administrative assistant, says “right on,” and she’s way to young to have heard that term in its original usage.

*ct me:* “I see Bush and his gang have pulled back from the secret military trial bit. Just a lot of tough talk on his part, probably to see how it would fly with the American public.” Well,

that executive order suspending the constitution still hasn't been rescinded. But remember that the Dept of Defense didn't like that order at all, because they know that the only thing protecting captured American troops in the field, at all, is our respect for the Geneva Conventions when we capture theirs. On the other hand, the whole point of declaring the Guantanamo prisoners non-combatants is that the Geneva Conventions prohibit interrogating POWs.‡

*"I don't think you can blame Jonny Hart for that B.C. strip about a person who jumped to his or her death. He does those strips sometimes as much as six months in advance. However, something like that has to be the decision of the newspaper to recognize it and perhaps pull it that day or give a warning about it."* As I said before: That strip appeared on Saturday 29 September. Gary Trudeau provided a substitute story line beginning the 17th. Bill Amend's Foxtrot storyline beginning Monday the 24th was on topic; Jimmy Johnson made mention in Arlo & Janis the following Monday; Iliad (User Friendly) and Tom Tomorrow (This Modern World) had topical strips the next day, but they're web-based. However, Mort Walker got King Features – Hart's old syndicate – to pull his original Beetle Bailey strip for Saturday September 15th, and substitute a new one about the attacks.

So, claiming that Hart didn't have time is simply not true.

That said, I had some correspondence with the editor of our paper that carries BC, as I think I mentioned. He said,

I apologize for the offense.

The comics are prepared about a month in advance of publication date, and the strip you mentioned, among others, caught us off-guard. As you might guess, you were not the only reader who complained about the comic, nor are we the only newspaper that feels let down by those who supply these features.

We'll watch this more closely.

And then in a second message, in response to my thanking him, and mentioning Doonesbury's changed storyline, he said, "Yes, we can sub out daily comics right up to press time the day before, as long as we realize we have a problem. . . . The trick for us is just realizing we have a problem. Garry Trudeau and the syndicate that represents him have always been good about letting us know about sensitive or possibly objectionable comics. Some of the others we're just going to have to watch more closely on our own."

*ct Robe: "I read a reaction story to the new tougher security measures at airports that quoted a woman as saying when she got to the airport the same stupid people ignored her the same way they*

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‡ Not, mind you that that stopped either the Gestapo or the Viet Cong.

did before Sept. 11. At first, it made me laugh, but then it made me wonder how much of this tough talk is smoke and mirrors." When Gary Robe was here, we had a chat about airport security, and I think we both have come to the conclusion that it's all smoke and mirrors. Malcolm Gladwell wrote a piece in *Slate* a couple of months ago where he talked about having been singled out – twice on the same flight – for the extended luggage search. He suspected it had more to do with his being of indeterminate racial background (one of his parents was Canadian and the other Jamaican) and scruffy traveling clothes than anything else. But if anyone had noticed that he flew more than a hundred thousand miles last year, they'd downgrade the need to search him quite a bit.

**Steve Hughes** ☒ *Random Thoughts* ✪

"The latest evidence that most people know little or nothing about how the real world works is the Enron mess. It's simply amazing to me that the average person knows so little about the way business in America works." Thanks for the thoughtful comments about how and why Enron might want to set up subsidiaries so they wouldn't dilute their earnings reports. As I told you in e-mail,

[Your comments were] interesting and gave me a useful different insight. One thing about the Enron 401(k) plan: from my reading of the news stories the catch was that to get the company matching funds, you had to invest your contribution in Enron stock. (This is considerably different from the original report that "the only 401(k) investment allowed was Enron stock," so there may be yet other information out there.) In any event, I know a lot of people at QMS got massively caught by investing their 401(k) only in company stock, by choice, when it was trading at \$25; it was \$3 when I left to join Softway, and Minolta bought QMS last year for \$4.50 a share, I think. So it's entirely possible to make that mistake without being forced into it.

That said, and even though I now understand *why* Enron might want off-the-books subsidiaries, I'm troubled that they had so many of them (over a thousand, apparently) and why roughly a third were incorporated outside of the reach of US banking and securities laws. How many different lines of business were they in? I certainly understand the need for a lot of subsidiaries — each project my brother undertakes for Bechtel involves a different partnership (which is why he's registered as a foreign agent, since he's an officer of companies incorporated in the former Soviet block), but Bechtel's interest in each of those partnerships is rolled up and reported to stockholders on the balance sheet.

**Liz Copeland** ☒ *Home with the Armadillo* ✪

"So, no DSC. I am very disappointed and will try to find some way to finance the trip back east, but right now, it doesn't look very good." We won't be there, but Gary Robe's bringing Fifi

— see my natter.

*ct Lillian:* “[~~]~~Just tonite, I answered the phone and it was Joe, with a really deep voice asking for [Allie]. . . .course it was made worse by having one of Jeff’s coworkers and his girlfriend over for dinner and realizing that she was 22, only 5 years older than Allie.” Yeah, Joe does have a really, really deep voice, and he’s really, really tall. I think I approve of him anyway. On the other hand, Carrie, the 22-year-old, is just hilarious. I was amused when we had them for dinner and Carrie went on-and-on about how organized we were about having guests: we’ve only been practicing dinner with guests for, what?, twenty years.

*ct Hughes:* “I am so jealous of you seeing the Northern Lights in Georgia. We have yet to see them in either Seattle or Alaska.” I talked about trying to see the planets earlier, but The really cool picture on the cover is from the NASA Astronomy Picture of the day web site. The site, at <http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/>, is my default browser startup page.

**Janet Larson** ✉ *Passages* ✎

Don’t fret about being behind in SFFA. I’ve been behind, too. But keep it up: I remember how tough one active toddler could be and you’ve got a full house.

**Eve Ackerman** ✉ *Guilty Pleasures* ✎

“I got an interesting phone call this week. A lady I know from the political scene called to ask me if I knew any women who might be interested in running for the Gainesville city commission, ‘cause the only woman on the commission was about to finish her term. . . . ‘What about you, Eve, would you like to run?’” Even though she was asking you to run because the primary qualification was that you’re female, it would have been cool if you’d done it anyway, Eve. Part of the problem in the country today is that people who are qualified, and interested in the community, are backing away from holding office. I certainly understand the reasons for not doing it, though: I’m sufficiently unwilling to spend all my spare time beating my head against the wall and getting criticised for doing it when the only compensation is egoboo. ~~I at least want worthless stock options.~~

I’ve got to say, your experience with the agent who didn’t like your new novel because she thought Father Christmas was a Victorian invention doesn’t inspire a lot of confidence. I like your note back to her, particularly the strikeout “you ignorant twit.” (That echoes a letter I wrote to a certain big name scifi author when we were administering the Hugos: he’d accused us of (if I’m remembering his phrasing correctly) “not just fuggheadedness, but classic fannish fuggheadedness” for an inconsequential clerical error. I wrote him back a long note explaining how it was inconsequential, what we’d done to fix it, how it hadn’t had any effect anyway, and to take a deep breath. Of course, since I use a word processing system with



flat text files and embedded markup, the lines like “you ignorant wanker” were in comments between lines like “so there’s no reason for worry.”

*ct Lynch:* “WTC collapse: I heard a piece on NPR saying the urban architecture of America may be forever changed by the events of September 11.” I don’t think that’s necessarily the case. This sort of attack isn’t going to happen again in quite the same way — though Bin Laden and his scum have had a hardon for those buildings for more than a decade.<sup>o</sup> I don’t think the attacks change the need for central districts of office buildings — people *still* need to conduct some business face-to-face. But certainly, it will accelerate the desire of companies to decentralize. See also my comments on David’s comment to Rich on page 31.

*ct Strickland:* “Print on demand: this will only work too, in my opinion, if the books are price competitively with mass market or trade paperback books. The problem I’ve seen is POD books that would retail for \$6.00 if published mass market have to sell for around \$14.00...” The problem with print-on-demand is that the unit cost is still very high because you don’t have the economies of scale for a large print run. (As I think I’ve observed before, we assume that because computer power doubles ever eighteen months, the same rule applies to printers attached to the computers, and it doesn’t.) On the other hand, e-book pricing is just a wacky: I’ve noticed that, in general, e-books are priced at the paperback price, and I think that’s a “what the market will bear” price point, not reflecting anything about the actual cost of delivery and advertising. That’s going to have to change, I think, if they’re going to take off. Part of the barrier is that people have to make a leap before they’re willing to accept that they’re paying for the data and not the physical object, and having the same price for both just confuses things.

“Raphi insists that no matter what he studies, he will not become a professional rabbi.” What, he’s going to retain his amateur status? Does that mean he gets to go to the Rabbi Olympics?

*ct me:* “Wow, there I was grinning along with your reviews of Penn & Teller and Vegas showgirls when I read *Pirate’s Price... a rollicking, great adventure.* Thank you so much! And I hope to bring news of my next pirate adventure/romance to you real soon now.” Liz and I both found the last book so, er, inspirational when we read it separately that we’ll probably read the new one out loud to each other.

*ct weber:* “Raphi has put off donating again, not because he’s scared but just ‘cause he’s at that age when he puts off lots of things that don’t seem urgent (to him).” Allie keeps trying to donate

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<sup>o</sup> I guess when you have as small a penis as Osama is reputed to, any tall building reminds you of it; that last plane wasn’t heading for the White House, it was going to take out the Washington Monument.

blood, but gets put off because she weighs so little. On the other hand, about October 1st, she and Liz were talking about her wardrobe. We normally allocate an amount for a fancy dress for dances and parties for her once a year. This year she said, “y’know, I’m not getting any taller, so if I don’t buy a new dress this year, can I give the money to a September 11th charity?” It took about a millisecond for us to say, “yes.”

*ct weber:* “Someone asked me the other day what reference books I use the most and glancing the shelf, I found myself pulling out Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (my copy is about 40 years old), Cassell Dictionary of Slang, Describer’s Dictionary, ...” That’s an interesting question. You seem to be biased towards dictionaries, which isn’t surprising. My reference shelf at the office has a fairly eclectic mix, even if it does have a bunch of word books, too. (I actually had to send myself e-mail with the list.) Let’s see: *Webster’s 9th New Collegiate Dictionary*; a completely insufficient paperback edition of *Roget’s*; *The Klingon Dictionary*; *Kodansha’s Compact Kanji Dictionary*; both the 2nd and 3rd editions of *Strunk & White*; the 19th edition of *Standard Math Tables*; Ken Lundes’ excellent book on oriental character sets, *CJKV Information Processing*; Knuth’s *The T<sub>E</sub>Xbook*, which is the reference manual for the typesetting system with which this was composed; the millennium edition of *Reingold & Dershowitz’s Calendrical Calculations*; the Interactive Systems *IS/3 User’s Manual*, which isn’t the last Unix manual I worked on, but it’s the most conveniently bound, and is still remarkably accurate even though it’s 15 years old; and Tom Christiansen’s *The Perl Cookbook*. I’ve used all of those in the last week, including the Klingon dictionary, which I used to translate the punchline of a joke someone sent me.

On my reference shelf at home – which now that we’ve moved JJ’s and my computer into the family room is unfortunately down the hall – I have: *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* — not the compact edition of the *OED*, but the one volume non-encyclopedic version, which was actually the dictionary I used in college; the actually useful hardback *Roget’s*; *Strunk & White, The Elements of Editing* and *The Elements of Grammar*; the 12th and 13th editions of the *Chicago Manual of Style*; the Associated Press and *New York Times* style guides; the Cambridge University Press edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible; the Caltech Alumni Association and Gnome Club<sup>•</sup> directories; the 21st edition of *Standard Math Tables*; *Cooper’s Whiskies of Scotland*; and my home copy of *The T<sub>E</sub>Xbook*.

**Randy Cleary** ☒ *Avatar Press* ♣

“Mmmmm... ‘cute teenage girls are attracted to touching beanie propellers?’ I’ll have to remember that.” Larry Niven used to have a short-nap mink jacket that he’d wear at

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• Caltech’s answer to an honorary fraternity.

conventions because it encouraged tactile appreciation.

**George Wells** ☒ *The Werewolf is Napping* •

*"There have been times when I'd drive to work on a highway with two lanes going north, and I would see three. Slapping my face would straighten my vision if I had to figure out what lane to pass a car that was ahead of me."* Brendan Gill used to tell a story about the *New Yorker* writer during the jazz age who went to the doctor and said "my chest has started hurting when I throw up in the morning." The doc said, "wait a minute, what do you mean when you throw up in the morning? You throw up *every* morning?" And the writer said, "Doesn't everyone?"

In other words, George, I don't think seeing double when you're driving is the normal thing.

*"I always thought Senator Proxmire's golden fleece awards did more harm than good. He had to keep coming up with them on schedule, no matter what was going on."* Proxmire's awards were completely looney. My favorite — if that's the right word — was the one for NASA's Lunar Receiving Lab in Houston, where lunar samples were decontaminated and studied. Proxmire, after helping to cut the budget for building it, complained of its shoddy construction and high maintenance budget.

*"General Comment: Got a phone call today. I don't have enough ... sleep apnea to have the insurance pay for a compressed air machine..."* At the rate insurance companies deny claims because "the condition isn't serious enough," I'd not be surprised if they stopped paying on life insurance because you weren't dead enough.

*"I would like to see a bumper sticker in the South: 'Proud of my brave ancestors: Confederate and African.' I don't see many African-Confederate-Americans being in the market for it. But quite a few people have African and Confederate ancestors."* Though I suspect some of that was non-consensual on one side or the other.

**Toni Weisskopf Reinhardt** ☒ *Yngvi is a Wimp* •

*"I now have a fence that would look like overkill at Treblinka that does not keep my dog in."* No, you don't even have a fence worthy of a POW camp until you've got two ten-foot-high barb wire fences, topped with razor wire, six feet apart, with rolls of barbed wire between them.

I'm told that this was not a sufficient barrier to at least one guest at Luft Stalag One. He was a track star at some big state university in the midwest, and was about 6'8" tall. One day, when the guards were looking elsewhere, he got a running start, jumped the first fence, landed flat footed on the barbed wire, and bounced over the second one. Then he made like a bunny for the woods. Except that this was a spur-of-the-moment decision, he hadn't told anyone he was going to do it, so they couldn't cover for him at roll call. As a result, when he was missing that evening,

the guards fanned out and found him hunkered down behind a tree.

The commandant wouldn't believe that he had actually done that, so insisted on seeing it again. Guards were stationed outside the fence. The track star repeated the stunt in front of the commandant and an array of prisoners to everyone's amazement. The commandant had to give the guy some time in solitary confinement for attempting to escape, so he said, "it took you thirty seconds to get out of here, so you get thirty seconds in the cooler."

Do I know this story to be true? Well, it was told to me by someone who was there, but I have no idea how much the story's gotten embellished over the years.

"My mailing address is still the same, ... Hank's address is still ..." So are you guys still maintaining separate houses? I can certainly imagine times in our lives when each having half a duplex would have been a good thing.

"I did manage to read a few books in between all of this including *Advanced Sex Tips for Girls* by Cynthia Heimel. ... This is, surprise, surprise, a chick book." No, it's not really a chick book. I always find Heimel interesting. And wasn't she a columnist for *Playboy* – not one of your chick magazines – for a while? ☞ "I'd read the original *Sex Tips for Girls* back in college... When I read it in the late '80s, it was even then becoming something of an anachronism the free lovin' *Cosmo* type girl she talked about in 1983 had yet to encounter AIDS or acknowledge the huge spread of less deadly sexually transmitted diseases..." I think Heimel is better reading for the bride-to-be than a book my mother had, which included the helpful hint to pack a flask of whiskey for the wedding night, in case anyone was nervous. And wasn't it Heimel who was the originator of the wonderful line about how if you wanted to be really hip, you should ostentatiously leave a party with your ex's new lover? Or was that Fran Lebowitz?



# Mailing Comments on SFPA 226

*me* ☒ **For Your Consideration** ♣

I noted that I was nominating the *Buffy* episode “The Body”, without realizing that it had appeared on the Nebula shortlist this year. Of course, it lost to *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*.

**Arthur Hlavaty** ☒ **Confessions of a Consistent Liar** ♣

*ct Lillian:* “I don’t know if anyone butchered my name at the Hugos after my very first nomination, when Terry Carr did so. (He later sent me a gracious note of apology.)” As I said earlier, I rehearsed Bob Shaw on the nominees’ names in Atlanta to avoid a reprise of this problem.

*ct Schlosser:* “I’ve decided there’s one good thing about Zero Tolerance: When Bush’s daughters violate some dumbass law, they get in trouble same as some poor black kid.” But they don’t: When the girls got arrested for trying to buy booze at a restaurant in Austin a year-or-so ago, there was a concerted campaign to harrass the bartender who turned them in and the cops who actually arrested them. Now, poor black kids in Austin know that that particular restaurant has had problems in the past with their liquor license, and is aggressive about making sure that they don’t make any mistakes about selling booze to underage college kids, so they’re brighter than to try it. Hell: I once got carded in that restaurant when I was 35 years old and had two children in tow. But I guess if you’re surrounded by armed men who will hustle you away from the city cops — which the Secret Service did, though they made sure she showed up at the police station the next day — you don’t have to have street smarts.

*ct me:* Thanks for your comments on my flight of fancy about Richard Stallman, and the birth of the Free Software movement being an outgrowth of his apparent misanthropy. You note, “*There was one time I sympathized with him: Time quoted one of his more extreme software manifestos, and in case anyone was still tempted to take him seriously, accompanied it with a photo of him in a folk-dancing costume, clicking his heels in midair.*” I’m willing to bet that *Time* quoted from the “GNU Manifesto”, Stallman’s basic philosophy document. The particularly *outré* passage occurs near the end:

All sorts of development can be funded with a Software Tax:

Suppose everyone who buys a computer has to pay x percent of the price as a software tax. The government gives this to an agency like the NSF to spend on software development.

But if the computer buyer makes a donation to software development himself, he can take a credit against the tax. He can donate to the project of his own choosing—often, chosen because he hopes to use the results when it is done. He can take a credit for any amount of donation up to the total tax he had to pay.

The total tax rate could be decided by a vote of the payers of the tax, weighted according to the amount they will be taxed on.

.....

In the long run, making programs free is a step toward the post-scarcity world, where nobody will have to work very hard just to make a living. People will be free to devote themselves to activities that are fun, such as programming, after spending the necessary ten hours a week on required tasks such as legislation, family counseling, robot repair and asteroid prospecting. There will be no need to be able to make a living from programming.

I might disagree with him, but he won a MacArthur fellowship for his work for heaven's sake. On the other hand, his choice of the word "free" was unfortunate, when what he meant was "unrestricted". Free makes too many people who are in the business of extracting every dollar, sou and kopek from software see red and simply stop understanding what he was getting at.

☞ *"I don't think he was even capable of understanding that people like me would want to use the software to write with, as opposed to the real delight of fiddling with software (not unlike a fanatical gynecologist wondering why anyone would bother to have sex)." Yes, there is that kind of feeling among the fanatical free software folks. I certainly write the stuff, and have fun doing it, but that's not the be-all-and-end-all for me. I write the software so I'll have the tools I need — to write and nicely print my zine, to convert reading material for my Palm, to count Hugo ballots, to index our video tapes — to do stuff I want.* ☞ *"I've known Eric Raymond for as long as I've known Richard, and I've spent more time with him and like him better. As I've said in zines, Eric strikes me as seeing open source as a tactic, rather than a crusade."* You'll remember that I know Eric through you and Bernadette, and while I don't know him as well as you do, what stuff of his I've read over the years indicates that he's interested in open source for pragmatic reasons (it's a good way to develop software) rather than philosophical ones (it's a necessary step to getting humanity to a post-scarcity world).

☞ *"ct me: No, I do not remember the 'Ode to Velveeta.' Care to refresh my memory?"* Mercifully, I don't remember the text either, but Chris regularly gets a copy of this zine, so he may be able to supply it. *Mr Kostanick, over to you.*

•

OK, that's it. This is already big enough that it's going to be a pain to staple. I don't have room for more. I'm only about three-quarters of a mailing behind now. Whew. Maybe next time I'll do this in two volumes.

I'll leave you with the teenager line of the week: Quoth our daughter, "White Stripe? Yeah, they're the coolest band ever . . . well, this month."

## Art Credits

The cover features a photo by Philip Perkins from the Astronomy Picture of the Day web site, <http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/>, for 9 May 2002. It shows Stonehenge with the bright planets Jupiter (near the top left), Saturn, Mars, Venus (forming a triangle) and Mercury (between the two monoliths and pointed to by the triangle) in the sky.

Page 1: *Foxtrot* from 25 May — perhaps this is an approach to having a SFPA model rocket contest at DSC. Page 2: *Calvin & Hobbes* from 29 May 91 — farewell, Bruce. May you enjoy New Orleans. Page 4: *Adam @ Home* from 18 May — a cartoon out of a Jamie Kellner-produced teen drama. Page 7: *Heart of the City* from 16 May. Page 10: *9 Chickweed Lane* from 23 May — a Mahler comic for Rich Lynch. Page 13: *Calvin & Hobbes* from 24 May — for anyone who likes redheads. Page 16: *Non sequitur* from 20 May. Page 23: *Frazz* from 11 May. Page 26: *Non sequitur* from 21 May — since I'm colorblind, all the damned colorcoded terrorist warnings look alike. Page 34: *One Big Happy* from 7 May — I've actually seen that shirt. Back cover: *Strange Brew* from 7 May — an explanation of how cats get so much done.

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