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# OFFLINE READER

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## FOR SFPA 222 -- MC's on 221

**Jeff C in SOUTHERNER 221:** You got my mailing label correct but have a ...28 in my ZIP code on the roster instead of ...38. And ... it's money time again. Hmmmm ... somehow I get the idea you want the money sent separately, in the nice envelope <G>. OK.

**Norm M. in TYNDALLITE V3N95:** Funny you should mention Julius Schwartz's claim to have "done the first fanzine." I can't come up with a cite, and hope you can, but if I recall correctly, he did publish what COULD be called the "second fanzine of fandom as we know it." That is, the 'zines going back to 1888 COULD be considered to not be fanzines in the sense that there is a continuous tradition from them to what are now thought of as fanzines. (I wish I could pick Dick Eney's archives on this as I think he's the one who said who published what would be considered the first fanzine even under the criteria used for Schwartz's.)

The reason I make an issue of this is because Julius is walking around fandom insisting that he be the Fan GoH at a Worldcon because he did the first fanzine. He convinced a lot of people of that, especially in the Atlanta area and large other parts of the South. I knew about this and think he might be a good Fan GoH at some Worldcon, but the reasons should be broader than his "first fanzine" claim. That is, because he did a lot in fandom a long time ago and is still around.

At Heroescon, in Charlotte, this past June, I was sitting at the Charlotte 2004 Worldcon bid table. Schwartz also had a table. Remember this is mostly a comix con with some gaming added. (But it's run in the same convention center we would use and is the main, if not only continuing, sf&f RELATED convention in town.) I KNEW what was coming.

In due course Julius came up to the table and asked for "who's the highest ranking person here?" (This is the sort of thing that has happened elsewhere with different people or groups who "want something." But that's another story.) I answered, "I'm the Chair so I guess you're looking for me." He then launched into how old he was and that he should be the Worldcon Fan GoH and pushed his latest autobiography of himself in my face (literally). Rather forcefully.

So I spent about 15 or 20 minutes, as politely as possible (yes, me, polite and moderately tactful -- I was ready for this one) telling him that we'd already chosen the Fan GoH for if we won, that I'd have contacted him already if it were him so it was not breaking secrecy to tell him that he wasn't, but that I absolutely couldn't tell him who it was unless we won. OK, I could say there IS a Fan GoH and listed the other categories ... and the usual ... "they're well known names" and maybe a tiny amount of other hints, but that's it.

It was ... "interesting." But, for once, I was ready for one of these incidents. I don't think he's going to die soon just because he's 80++. I think he's going to be around, doing his thing for quite some time ... and the issue of what he did vs. what others did is going to come back up. Therefore I can use any info. I can get.

**Ned B. in NEWS 197:** Help! Can you come up with, or tell me how I can EASILY get the "d" key cap for an old old Brother International model, portable typewriter? (I had the model number, but no longer have it.) It was Kay's. She bought it in Venezuela when she was a newspaper reporter down there and used it for a long time without the key cap. Now it's gone to her father so he can TYPE (as required) the paperwork on Medicare/Medicaid claims for his optometry practice. (He's slightly younger than Julius Schwartz but still sees patients one day or so a week, plus at the local nursing home.)

On the thorn vines in the azaleas and the like. I have azaleas like that too; like trees. Other thick stuff too. I wear gloves and an old Army jacket and hat. I bought a long "bypass loper" at Home Depot. Thus I can mostly get at the bad stuff trying to be inaccessible. You should visit here. We can compare jungles <G>.

**Richard D. in GAZETTE 70:** I NEEDED that DSC report you did and coming from a viewpoint such as yours, as well. THANKS!.

On Civil Service pay, I well remember the problems with the FBI offices in NYC and other high cost areas. That was in the middle of my relative "peak" period in Civil Service. While I was still at Ft. McPherson in Atlanta, before locality adjustments, and before I

went to DC metro, we also had one case in which someone "returning" from Alaska was "OWED" a job (similar to returning from Overseas). His salary has been manipulated up to about \$20,000 higher than the same job would have been in the "lower 48" so he could survive in Alaska. Or maybe it was \$40k higher. Of course nobody wanted him in THEIR budget and I was one of the people who had to somehow justify not taking him into my branch. NASTY situation. I think he was finally stuck on someone. The locality adjustment system came WAY late. It's still got problems, but it's at least reasonable.

Now when you move to a lower cost part of the country, your adjustment just goes down. I think the State of GA government has something like this, now, too.

Re your Thrift Savings Plan stock fund, what you are doing is called Dollar Averaging and is the standard way to go. When you retire, you get to laugh at the detractors. No ifs, ands, or buts.

**Janice G. in PURSUITS 95:** Kay is better. Mostly.

Re your whinging about whatever taxes affected YOU, that's the great American passtime. One's stand (position) depends on where one sits ("tax someone ELSE"). As long as everyone realizes that, and doesn't get too bad about it, we can just cry on each other's shoulders and get along fine <G>.

**Steve H. in COMMENTS 11:** I'm running at about 53/77 of my peak on net value, these days, on a cost basis, and 61/77 on present value. With the exception of a couple very small issues (Bethlehem Steel Preferred and 100 shares of an itty bitty bond fund), everything is headed more or less up AND either holding steady or raising dividends. But that wasn't your first comment to be commented upon.

On submarines. They were used in the Civil War. There were a few more such oddities by the time of Jules Verne. They did tend to sink, though.

On speech recognition systems, and mike w. will likely bring me/us up to date on this one, I've been told that David Weber is using one exclusively as he shattered both wrists in a fall, over a year ago, but they didn't heal well enough. Therefore Baen Books staff get to do a LOT of "clean up" beyond normal proof reading. Still, in some cases, I think it's practical to use the stuff ... if there's someone available to clean it up.

I suspect you'll clean up selling your city house. There are only so many good locations and decent buildings seem to not go DOWN in price, especially as people move in from higher cost, Northern, areas, or otherwise all want to move to the same places.

Back to investing, when the mailing, that I'm answering, came in, I was actually sitting on a PILE of CASH. Sold my last big problem case (CRRR), and there wasn't anything really attractive to put the money back into, nor any crying need to do it at that time. It ended up being spread around to a lot of stuff, including GA Tax Free Bond fund, Exxon, Ford, etc. Then I sold a batch of "covered Calls" on Ford, Dupont, and Union Planters Bank. So I got to pocket the cash, sorta, and get even more if the calls (options) are exercised. UPC and DD will probably be -- the down side being my total net value will go down (as they're selling ABOVE the Call price, right now, and headed mostly up. Ford ... probably will end up a small bit above what I paid for it, this December, plus having paid about 5% dividends, but NOT get Called.

**Sheila S. in Revenant 6:** One of Kay's biggest problems was that she never did find a Doctor who could put all her problems together. The closest was her longest standing Chiropractor. Nevertheless, things are getting better.

On your money in accounts all over, and deferred compensation, if nothing else, make yourself a list of everything and track it.

**Jeff C. in Mars:** I'm glad you find my Stock Stuff interesting. The "day of reckoning," when I would have to get at least some sort of "real job," is now GONE. Poof. And, as I shift, generally to safer stuff, it should never come back.

Your strategy ... for you ... is perfectly reasonable. There is a vast gap from that, however, for people like me who have NO other income than from the investing. Steve Hughes is close, but he seems to have some sort of other income when he wants to mess with it, and plain old had "enough to quit," when he started.

On the other hand, besides the margin interest, I now have car payments <sigh>. Burnt out an engine coming back from Balticon. For buying a new, cheapest, bottom of the line, Saturn, which was about what I wanted, I get to pay \$270 a month for 4 years. That includes the 0.9% interest. For that low interest, it was worth it to buy a new car, at maybe \$4k or \$5k more than a used one. I had the "pile of cash" at that time and could have paid cash. However, even if I only get 4.2% interest in a money market fund (instead of

the 4.5% in the GA Tax Free Bond fund which it actually went to, I still come out ahead. <shrug> And the old car had \$4k or \$5k of odds and ends it needed ... like a new windshield, paint job, broken seats, etc. All that just went away.

On Options, you got yours as part of pay. What I have are ones I created/SOLD. (Not much but a little extra income.) First I buy a stock, even on margin. Then I sell a "covered Call" -- "covered" means I actually own the stock. "Call" means that whoever bought the option can buy it at a "strike price." That strike price, of course, has got to be about 5% more than I paid, and the call period not much over 6 months out. (That, is, if I did it twice, I'd make 10% a year.) And I only do this on stuff that pay's dividends ... at least 4% if possible. So, with 6.5% margin, I'm going to make a little more money than if I didn't do this stuff. And I don't let my "equity" in the account go below 50% (meaning that if I have \$100,000 total, I never ever let the margin part go over \$50,000). And ... the other \$50,000 is stuff paying out about 10% on what I paid for it, and will do so long term. So worst case is the whole mess would pay for itself in 10 years ... but, what will more likely happen is about \$35k will be called before the year is over, and, next year, I'll do it again. So I should build up about \$50,000 in about 5 years.

I try to have enough on margin to pay about \$4,000 in interest a year. That's the Standard Deduction. I have to itemize anyway so I lose it. I figure I need that much in deductions (investment interest). Meanwhile, THIS year, Kay's given that much to her churches and charities. AND, I think they just put the Standard Deduction for married couples up to the same \$4k each as for singles instead of \$3500 each (part of the "marriage penalty").

And since I have such huge capital losses from selling off the MT and NHI, I won't be paying capital gains taxes for several years to come.

I do NOT sell short (sell stock I don't have, but in effect borrowed). Not any more. Been there, done that, got out with about \$5,000 this January. Ran and am not going back.

**Gary B. in Oblio 134:** The misplaced step stool, I mentioned in a previous issue, was more like the "straw that broke the camel's back" for Kay's various problems. She went all out to get an over all fix. Didn't work but she finally found doctors that got most of it at least to improve.

On my Vanguard mutual fund accounts, which are less than 10% of the total, I'm behind, overall, about \$3k. But it's pretty much bottomed out. And the High Yield Fund keeps paying 9.5% or so (and is about 80% of that 10%). I'm not putting anything more in there for quite a while, however. Decided I'd go back to individual bonds (Kaymart, Bausch & Lomb).

As for Krispy Kreme, I got tired of eating problems so let those snacks go by. I got my long term permanent 100 shares of Phillip Morris, though, which controls Kraft and Miller Beer. NOT the Kraft IPO; that, in my opinion, was purely for the benefit of MO (Phillip Morris).

**Randy C. in Press V2N15:** Did you collect the \$600 that the defaulting house seller owed you?

Your house is comparable to ours.

It's 29 years old, or thereabouts, at this point (27 when we bought it) and I guess you could call it a Rancher. It's sorta one level and the general configuration as in your picture.. It's not brick -- mostly a peculiar, tough, wood siding called 11T1 or something like that with SOME brick exterior. It has a covered SMALL front porch, wood eaves and trim, plus a LARGE wood back deck (one story above back yard) that has fancy stuff on it.

Square feet? It said 1200, but when I measured it, it was more like 1700 and I don't want the taxes or insurance raised, so I've used what number the original owner said. It's 3 bedrooms as is yours -- master plus two -- one being used as Kay's office, and 2 baths -- sorta -- one regular full, plus the one off the master bedroom with a shower only (BIG one) vs. tub & shower. Living room ceiling is flat with stippling same as the rest of the house BUT has these brown plastic looking "wood beams" as a sort of decoration, plus a batch of nice overhead lights and fan (there's another overhead fan and light in the master bedroom) plus it's got the stairwell to the basement in it -- against the wall to the front office -- and the stairs have a nice railing and carpet. Formal dining room -- no vaulted ceiling but it's got a wall of built in bookshelves <grin>. Kitchen with table vs. breakfast nook. Nice appliances and cabinets.

Laundry room -- yup -- in back of the garage or as a hallway to it -- also has the hot water heater closet in it, some pegboard with hooks and stuff, and two sets of shelves. Pantry -- yup, in the kitchen, but it's small. OTOH there's an extra freezer and refrigerator out in the garage and we use the refrigerator, open, and turned off, as an extra pantry. The freezer out there is mostly empty but is handy.

Lot size ... mmm .... I think it's about 100 x 100 sf but it's hard to tell. Fences -- no. They just aren't done in this neighborhood/subdivision. I don't know of zoning or other restrictions against them, but they're not done and I like it as is. What there IS, is a small canyon on the back quasi-boundary. I think the property stops short of it but, in effect, the boundary is the center of the creek that runs at the bottom. There are, shall we say, irregularities and peculiarities about the "sub division" and the "no one owns it" land. No one seems to want to stir things up, however, and I'm happy with the existing situation.

Sub-division streets (I skipped your "chain link fence" and "empty field" categories. There's a "jungle" in the canyon, a much steeper embankment on the other side, and "we sorta merge into each other's yards and get along with each other" on the two sides. The sub-division, it appears to me, was "abandoned" by the developers such that most deed and owners association stuff never got done. There is a batch of people who call themselves a "home owners association" but they are just a batch of people who get together to do projects. (There are classic "sub-division signs" saying "Old Salem Woods" at the Salem Tr. entrance. Keeping those and some flower beds in good shape is the main project.) There are two streets by which you can enter the sub-division from the "significant secondary" street (Salem Rd.) that runs past it. That street deadends on one end, nearby, into what MIGHT be called a primary "ex-urb" street (Evans Mill Rd.). Going the other way, it crosses a sorta main street (Panola Rd.) at about the point Panola picks up enough traffic to be considered a main road. It then goes through other heavily wooded, sorta built up, area, until it deadends into another street (Browns Mill?) which isn't sure if it's a main or secondary street at that point. The entire area can be considered either "wooded" or "heavily covered with bushes and stuff." Anyway, the two streets (Salem Tr. and Old Cape Cod) that enter the sub-division eventually dead end or become one big circle. Except for the dog leg as you enter at Salem Tr., immediately turn onto Salem something else Tr. -- one's Trace and the other's Trail -- and then on to Salem Drive, the only other streets are stubs off the "circle" which go into cul-de-sacs or just become someone's driveway, or otherwise dead end. The sub-division itself, on the one side backs a field of some sort and then another, much newer, sub-division. On the other two sides it backs "jungle" or "wooded area" or ... you just have to see it. There are other sub-divisions beyond those -- sorta.

Playground -- nope -- nor a cemetery -- but there's a park and playground and schools within 20 minutes walk down Salem Rd. and church cemeteries not too far off in various directions. Good schools -- well, yes, I guess. It's debatable and you have to figure out which schools to count and what to compare them against, but I'm going to say "good schools but not great" and REALLY good libraries. Distance to work: For me, zero. I'm online <shrug>. For Kay, it depends on which of three libraries she's at on a given day. One's really close, one not too bad, and one a 30 - 45 minute drive across the entire county and hope traffic isn't too bad.

New Paint inside and out -- sorta. That or wall paper on the inside that's new enough; a few years' old outside. Carpet and so-called hardwood flooring -- not new. Mostly in good shape. Some stone tile. Some areas need a rug over them. The roof is maybe 6 or 7 years old at this point and in very good shape except one place by the chimney that needs flashing but doesn't seem to be a problem. Electric -- some stuff. Gas heat, water heater, and Super Two Stage HVAC system. On GA Natural Gas (was Atlanta Gas Light before deregulation) and "rural" electric membership coop. The later is a GREAT deal. Gas log fireplace and chimney -- could do wood logs -- we've never opened it much and never used it.

Landscaped ... past tense ... jungle now and I can't keep it up.

Wood cabinets -- yes, in kitchen -- plus two rooms with large walls of built-in book shelves. There is also a storage room with shelves in back of the garage (sorta past the laundry/utility room) and various other built-in shelves and "stuff." Front porch has nothing on it and is small. Back deck has picnic table, built-in benches, giant flower (weed) pots, and other neat stuff. Also motion sensor lights as are in front and underneath the deck. I think we also have an entire extra room vs. yours, also -- now used as my office.

We bought for \$99,500 or thereabouts and some closing costs (I forget what) and we bought for CASH. It's assessed at \$103,000 now and has been for two years. Repair costs -- none really needed when we moved in but there's "stuff to be done," and "stuff that's had to be replaced" since then, and "major repairs" I know we'll need in a few years -- maybe many years. The guy had it built to his taste from a standard model and then re-did a lot with his two sons. A few years before moving out, he took out a Home Improvement Loan that was about \$33k at the end (or maybe to start with) and brought the house up to his idea of near perfect. Then he/they sold to us. The wife did the curtains and other interior stuff and we've not touched what they did, in general, as it was near perfect for us. Basically I used the money I got from selling the house I inherited in Chattanooga plus money held out from what my father left me. I'd have needed to have spent a lot more to fix the one up there and it would not have been as good. There's also a neat full Basement, except under 2 car garage (at other end of house than yours is) and Storage/Utility/Garage. -o0o-

**STOCK STUFF:** Too much to tell. No room or time to do it. Just thank the Fed. for low interest rates. Oh, my computer died as well as my car but the computer can be fixed ... but I got a new desktop system after several years ... but it's a "Bill Gates only" machine and not all set up yet. -o0o-