

Nice Distinctions 17

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This is Discordian Regimentation #117, a Church of the SuperGenius publication. In Wile E. we trust.

Welcome to the new annual Nice Distinctions. Bernadette, Kevin, and I continue to thrive; she is teaching and tutoring ambitious high school students in Queens; he maintains the computer system for a large capitalist organization. I continue to freelance. Last year as I was beginning to worry about the infrequency of work, the phone rang....

Work journal

I have temp work—3 days a week onsite proofreading/copy-editing for a media company in Manhattan. It will complicate my life, but I welcome it.

* I'll be using AP style, which alas means no serial commas and names ending in -s forming possessive without an additional s. I shall treat that not as Heresy and Error, but as a requirement of the medium and its need to conserve space—kind of like a moderate form of texting. (That would be a weird job: texting copy-editor. "Spell out 'you' again and u r fired.")

* At work I do a lot of online fact checking. Today I looked up John Mueller, a professor at Ohio State, and learned that he holds the Woody Hayes Chair of National Security Studies. I hope that doesn't mean he recommends sucker-punching other countries if there's any chance they're going to attack you. Michael Bérubé, at Penn State, has a Paterno chair, which I imagine is kinder and gentler, but still capable of kicking ass.

* My temp job, being temporary, has ended. It worked out very well: six weeks (three days a week) copy-editing, proofreading, and fact-

checking columns, puzzles, and such. I liked the people and the designer coffee (Timothy's French Moka from a single-cup machine). I will not miss the subway commute or Internet Explorer, which validated my anti-Microsoft prejudices. I remain loyal to the fox whose flaming tail illuminates the world.

The next week I started regular freelance work copy-editing technical journals, which I am still doing, mixed with occasional novels.

About a year ago my right shoulder started hurting. I suspect it was bursitis, which my father had back in 1950. Back then, you couldn't do much about it, but last month my doctor gave me a cortisone shot, and the pain appears to be gone for the duration. Corticosteroids also appear to have turned my asthma from a life-threatening condition to an annoyance, and so, to an extremely smart African-American (alas, no longer amongst us), with the silly-sounding name of Percy Lavon Julian: Thank you.

Next year in Orlando!

The great rallying cry of the ICFA tribe reached fulfillment; we saw the Promised Land and it was good (thank you, Don Morse, Jeri Zulli, et al.).

* My spouse Bernadette Bosky, my cohusband Kevin Maroney, and I found our way to the new venue for the International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts, and almost immediately noticed that Terry Weyna had done likewise (a good omen).

* The theme of this year's conference was the Sublime, that which is so wondrous as perhaps to be frightening; Scholar GoH Roger Luckhurst noted that one could say the same of the subprime, a subject of much news discussion. (Alas, the suggestion that next year's conference deal with the ridiculous was not accepted.) At the opening ceremony, it was noted that the Sublime struck some of its perceivers dumb and others verbose, and Gary Wolfe remarked that William Hope Hodgson "influenced many writers who could not finish his books."

* Nathaniel Underland's paper on *We Who Are About to* by Joanna Russ invoked Wittgenstein to point out that the missing word in the novel's title is "that which is not lived through."

* Miguel Tejada took a highly informative look at the differences between Hispanic and Anglo fantastic, with the former accepting ghosts and the latter preferring pseudo-scientific entities such as UFOs.

* Bernadette once again discussed Peter Straub's fiction, this time the way his characters can find the sublime in the everyday (and worse): the marvelously deranged narrator of "Ashputtle" tasting through the bread she eats to the animals and their droppings in the ground that produced it, and the deceased speaker of "Hunger: an Introduction" finding fascination in the still living, even as personified by a dim-witted five-year-old picking her nose in front of the TV.

* David Swanger talked about some of the emotions involved with the Sublime, including Curiosity, Epiphany/Insight, and Wonder. (I hadn't realized those were emotions, a group I had thought confined to sad, glad, mad, scared.)

* I have attended the Conference almost every year from 1982, so while I have never presented a paper and have no academic credentials, I now look as if I belong there, and thus I am allowed to chair sessions. I had agreed before the conference to chair one, and as I awaited another session, ICFA president Farah Mendlesohn informed me that the scheduled chair hadn't shown up and asked me to fill in, which I did. I had gone to the session largely to hear Greg Bechtel's paper on one of my favorite trickster novels, Thomas King's Coyote tale *Green Grass, Running Water*. I thought the paper was worthy of its subject, and I was not alone: It won the Grad Student Award.

* Thence to a session on Fandom. Every year I have to adjust to the way a word that I think of as referring to a culture even older than I am like ~~John McCain~~ has come to mean writing fiction about media characters. Oh well, they say that every tribe's word for itself means "the people," and for that matter there are people who refer to a few new approaches to literary criticism as simply Theory. This session was about the commercial pressures on what is essentially a gift culture. As usual, Eden Lackner and Barbara Lucas presented absorbing, thought-provoking papers, as did session chair Robin Anne Reid at a different session.

* Winter Elliott did an excellent paper on the scientific sublime in *The Dispossessed*,

relating it surprisingly to a charming bit of early sf, Margaret Cavendish's *The Blazing World*.

I was happy to be assigned to chair the session on that most sublime topic, the posthuman. The papers were good. Loren Means talked about how we already have machines that act a lot like the Tines in GoH Vernor Vinge's *A Fire upon the Deep*, and Rebecca Testerman probed the paradoxes of memory in Philip K. Dick's "We Can Remember It for You Wholesale" and Spider Robinson's *Deathkiller*. John Fast suggested an expansion of the libertarian two-axis scale of political orientations (more/less government control of the economy—more/less government control of private lives) to the amount of biological and technological freedom people should have (an interesting idea, but it might correlate too closely with private-life freedom to be a true independent variable).

Of course, the posthumanism session ran into the idea that something like the famous opening of Cordwainer Smith's "Scanners Live in Vain"—"Martel was angry. He did not even adjust his blood away from anger"—is a step backwards. I don't know; there isn't a day that I don't want to adjust my blood away from anger. (Chemical means are not sustainable.) But of course we run into Philip K. Dick's idea that human beings are much more wonderful than machines because we feel and they don't, which is probably what Dick is most known for (as Tom Disch, *olev ha'sholem*, is the guy who wrote *The Brave Little Toaster* and maybe some other stuff).

[I realize I am in the minority here, but to me it is a bit of satirical science fiction worthy of Philip K. Dick that our field's mad genius (OK, one of them) gained showbiz fame from a movie with a totally different work's title, a director who couldn't read anywhere near all of the book he was supposedly adapting, and a usually better star whose performance lent more credence to the theory that his character was a mechanical simulacrum than anything in the script did. But then I am completely out of step with the current state of—you should pardon the expression—Dick Studies. If I were running the Library of America, they would not be dredging up mediocrities like *Dr. Bloodmoney* and *Now Wait for Last Year* while ignoring the really

mind-blowing stuff: *Time out of Joint, Eye in the Sky, A Maze of Death...*]

I should not slight the social aspects, such as meeting a delightful group of Mary Pharr's students, and our usual banquet meeting with Peter Straub. All in all, it was an enjoyable experience, although, as you may have noticed, somewhere along the way I lost a bunch of transitions and topic sentences.

Kurt Vonnegut said many things I liked and a few I didn't. One of the latter is "We must be careful what we pretend to be because we are what we pretend to be."

I have finally found a case where that may be true: Internet trolls. Someone pretends to be an asshole to trick people into getting angry mistakenly. So he has increased the negativity in the world in order to demonstrate the moronically simple proposition that if you act like an asshole, people will treat you like an asshole. Is he not what he pretends to be?

Morbid self-examination

They say, "Love isn't something wonderful that you feel; it's something difficult that you do." The second part of that is true. My mother followed the definition of love that Robert Heinlein took from Harry Stack Sullivan: The happiness of her children was essential to her own and she did a lot of difficult work to ensure that. It has, however, also been obvious to me that she did not have wonderful feelings towards me, and I thought that didn't really matter.

I've changed my mind. I have come to accept the definition of love that says that respecting the person you love is essential, along with doing things to make the loved one happy. My mother did not like and respect people in general; I think she managed to respect my father, whom she loved very much, but it probably wasn't easy. I was people, so she didn't like or respect me a lot, although she was willing to do a lot of hard work to make my life better. She told me that I destroyed her faith in humanity when I was five, and I realized that was because I acted like a five-year-old, so when I figured that out, I decided not to take it personally, but when you're five years old, you can't help taking that sort of thing personally.

There are a few things Ayn Rand gets right that many other people don't, and one is that there are real problems with the idea that it is more virtuous to love the unlovable than the lovable. For one thing, it is not good to feel that one is loved in that fashion.

Some more words from Kurt Vonnegut

Another flaw in the human character is that everybody wants to build and nobody wants to do maintenance.

Epigrams are not supposed to be correct universal generalizations, and Vonnegut has never been accused of being a desperately nuanced writer, but even conceding those, the quote is wrong. There are many people who don't want to build, and many who have possessions they love to dust, polish, oil, etc.

Still, my first impulse was to believe it, because it applies to me. Fifties sf told us that the 21st century would be a time when the Robot Maid and other machines did our maintenance for us. This is not my beautiful 21st century, and I feel cheated.

I have, however, found a kind of maintenance I enjoy doing. I look up a lot of stuff in Wikipedia, and I fix the entries I use: For instance, I correct typos, and if someone is said to have "graduated [school]," I add "from." (Anyone who says, "I graduated college," shouldn't have.)

OK, so I admit that I am of the Post-humanist religion (I don't know if there are gods, but either way I think we should become them), and in fact I am the sort of fanatic who wants to immanentize the eschaton. We haven't done it yet, but we are continuing the process that began when some lazy, insufficiently life-loving person got out of her fair share of the tribe's labor by inventing the wheel. And even if we make the need for physical maintenance into a solved problem, there will still be interesting stuff to do.

Foreshadowing

"The president's son, also named George Bush, led a group that bought the Texas Rangers. Lost for years in the shadow of his father, the First Son's ownership of a baseball team suddenly made him a personage. Actually, he was only one of two general partners, the other one being the brains of the operation. That was Rusty Rose, a Dallas sharpie who'd made a fortune short-selling stock. (He was sometimes called Rusty the

Mortician.) But Bush was the out-front guy, a role in which he exulted.

“Does he know that he doesn’t really run this team?” a writer once asked a Rangers official.

“No, no,” said the official, “and don’t you dare tell him.”—John Helyar, *Lords of the Realm*, 1994

I’m in the midst of Clive James’s fascinating new book, *Cultural Amnesia*. There’s a chapter on good titles. We agree on *The Avenue Bearing the Initial of Christ into the New World*, *Sanctuary*, and *Casanova’s Chinese Restaurant*. He, however, is impressed by Hemingway’s *Across the River and into the Trees*, which I have not been since I noticed it in my parents’ library during my adolescent years and thought “...to Grandmother’s house we go.” Also, he omits nonfiction titles, at which Marshall McLuhan excelled (*The Mechanical Bride*, *Through the Vanishing Point*, *From Cliché to Archetype*).

James also notes that one of the perks of being a dictator is the power to bore. That gives me a new insight into the philosophical harangues in de Sade and the Gor books.

Still reading Clive James. A chain of associations leads me to the cruel amusement I enjoyed in reading a story about Hilaire Belloc (in A.N. Wilson’s bio). He had a very successful book during World War I and set out to invest the money in Tsarist bonds. Warned about Bolshevism, he pooh-poohed the danger because he was sure that Lenin’s Jewish masters would not allow him to betray International Finance.

The Pain Peddlers

Years ago, a politician’s wife had a public and messy drug relapse, and the next week the cover of *People* offered a look at her “private pain.” What sort of alleged human being offers someone else’s private pain to anyone with \$2.95? Nor is this merely some sort of girly emo thing. The manly men who cover sports want the quarterback who threw the losing interception to give us all some suffering to suck on.

The latest opportunity for this sort of feast is of course the Spitzer mess, and the media are full of people who want more agony from Eliot Spitzer, who did not lie us into a disastrous Asian land war, allow an American city to die through malign neglect, or louse up

the economy by taxing the rich as little as possible, and Silda Spitzer, who did nothing wrong.

“There is a genetic element in weight.”

“Of course. The self-control model is discredited.”

“There is a genetic element in sexual orientation”

“Of course. Punishing someone for being gay is like sending him to prison for the color of his hair.”

“There is a genetic element in symbol-using intelligence.”

“Nazi elitist eugenicist!”

Not forgotten

Alice Bosky, Bernadette’s mother, has died; as Bernadette said, “after many years in a care facility, predeceased by most of her cognitive faculties.” She was an excellent mother to Bernadette, and she and I always got along well.

Kurt Vonnegut is all over this issue, as he is all over my mind.

Johnny Hart died, many years after his sense of humor did. I can remember when he was funny.

Paul Watzlawick once gave his last name to a receptionist, and she replied, “I didn’t say you were [Slavic].” Hilarity, or something, ensued. He once introduced two shrinks, having briefed each with a statement that the other was a paranoid schizophrenic with the delusion that he was a psychiatrist. (The trick broke down, as one had read a paper by the other.) He worked with Gregory Bateson on language as a way of understanding mental problems. *How Real Is Real?*, which he wrote, and *The Invented Reality*, which he edited, are both very much worth reading.

Welcome to the Pure Land, **Rev. Falwell**. No, you can’t do anything about all the queers here.

We could think about **Boris Yeltsin**’s alcoholism and **David Halberstam**’s prose, but

I prefer to recall that Yeltsin saved Russia from a coup and Halberstam revealed what a mess the alleged Best and the Brightest made in Vietnam. (The worst and the dimmest have since learned the trick.)

Two great losses to the blogosphere: **Steve Gilliard** and **Anita Rowland**.

Mildred Loving won the famous and appropriately named case (*Virginia v. Loving*) giving us the right to marry people of noticeably different race.

How the Time Stops Flying

RIP **Jerry Wallace**, who sang "Primrose Lane," "Shutters and Boards," and other good rockabilly songs.

Albert Ellis has died at 93. He was a great influence on me. For one thing, he taught me that there is no such thing as sexual morality. To be precise, he taught me that there is no such thing as specifically sexual morality: that all the moral rules for sex are special cases of general moral rules.

It could also be said that he discovered the clitoris. That statement is as fraught as the one about Columbus and America, but it has a similar element of truth: He brought word of it to a whole lot of people who hadn't known about it before—me, for instance. He was thinking outside the box long before that famous Sixties study that showed female satisfaction needn't depend on the master's johnson. (He also liked tasteless sexual humor, so I don't feel bad about putting it in a memorial to him.)

The most important thing I learned from Ellis was a psychological approach called Rational-Emotive Therapy. It says that what bothers us is less what happened to us than what we tell ourselves about what happened to us. If I ask a woman for a date and she says no, that is awful if and only if I tell myself that rejection is awful. (And, he added, if you go out and try to get laid, you may not get laid; if you sit home and feel sorry for yourself, you *will not* get laid.)

Deborah Kerr and **Teresa Brewer** both gave me viewing and listening pleasure.

Bill Walsh built the San Francisco 49ers into a dynasty. Then, as Henry Morgan said,

"There came the time, as it must in every organization, for the man with the money to fire the man with the ideas."

Phil Rizzuto: Interpreting *Hall of Fame* literally explains the presence of some players who wouldn't be there on a more strictly objective standard of performance, such as Dizzy Dean in baseball and Joe Namath in football. Phil Rizzuto was one of those, a really good player for a New York team that won a lot of pennants who went on to be a popular announcer. I didn't like his voice, but I liked his sense of values. When Pope Paul VI died in 1978, Rizzuto said on the air, "Well, that kind of puts the damper on even a Yankee win."

Grace Paley was a brilliantly perceptive writer and an admirable human being; she hated war, oppression, and cruelty and battled them with art and activism. One way in which she clarified my mind: Asked whether being a writer helped her "deal with life," she replied, "I don't want to deal with life; I want to live it." My own preference is very much for dealing with it, but I thank her for expressing the distinction so well.

Legendary Southern sf fan and weapons maker **Hank Reinhardt**: I very much enjoyed meeting him at MilPhil.

I remember **Sidney Coleman** and **Algis Budrys** as two sf critics who greatly influenced me, though they were better known as a physicist and a novelist respectively.

George Carlin was really funny for a long time. Many of us said seven Bad Words when we got the news.

Philip Agee treacherously revealed the identities of American intelligence operatives for shoddy ideological reasons. Now that he's dead, maybe we can forgive him for being a corrupting influence on Dick Cheney.

Insofar as the writer's task is to give pleasure, there are two kinds of successful writers: those who please a lot of people and those who please a few people a lot. **Janet Kagan** was one of the latter. She wrote three novels that were loved: *Uhura's Song*, a nonformulaic professional Trekfic; *Mirabile*; and *Hellspark*.

Bobby Fischer and Ernie Holmes: Two warriors I hope have found peace.

Arthur C. Clarke opened my mind in many ways.

John Templeton wanted to find where science and religion meet. Maybe now he has.

Jody Scott died last year. She had a fascinating sf book called *Passing for Human* back in 1977.

Thomas M. Disch: The author of much excellent sf (*Camp Concentration*), horror (*The Businessman*), short fiction, poetry, and criticism killed himself on July 4.

This should not surprise readers of his livejournal. Much bad stuff had happened to him, and it left him seriously depressed and embittered, as his lj made all too clear.

There's no point arguing with the Universe; illness, fire, flood, and the death of a loved one are natural disasters. On the other hand, being impoverished by illness and being threatened with eviction because your same-sex marriage isn't recognized are unnatural disasters. They shouldn't happen to anyone, especially not someone who gave the world as much as he did.

And **Ann Green, Hannelies Guggenheim, Sherry Britton, Robert Asprin, Al Curry, Bruce Dane, Robert Legault, Gary Gyax, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Norman Mailer...**

John Kenneth Galbraith said it a long time ago: The Republicans try to run the stock market without government regulation. It breaks because it needs government regulation. The Democrats fix it. The Republicans, when they get back in, denounce government meddling and break it again. They've done it twice in 20 years since Galbraith said that. The most recent time these believers in the tender and protective mercies of the Market God were reelected, we were told that the grown-ups were back.

Could it be that George Bush's stunningly inappropriate invocation of Vietnam and *The Quiet American* is what happens now that he no longer has Karl Rove to think for him? What's next? "This is like World War II, and

we face a foe as evil and implacable as Stalin"?

Democrat elected governor of Kentucky, perhaps because Pat Boone warned that if he won, he would turn Kentucky into San Francisco. In your dreams, Kentucky.

From an unwritten local history

The drug cartels divided up the territory, as they frequently do. The CVS business family controlled Westchester, while the Duane Reade business family had a monopoly on Manhattan. Recently, however, there have been encroachments.

T. Herman Zweibel will never forgive them

Shorter OED dumps 16,000 hyphens. I'm in favor, but *e-mail* should keep its hyphen (or we'll see lots of lines ending with "em-" followed by ones beginning with "ail").

Trash

Years ago at Duke I attended a conference devoted to the literary appreciation of pop culture. A postmodernist of some note delivered an impassioned plea for her favorite marginalized categories and perorated, "Maybe we can get our students to read something other than *look as if someone had placed a turd under her nose* science fiction."

Comes now Peter Swirski, with *From Loubrow to Nobrow*, devoted to defending good category/genre writing against the "elitists" who maintain narrow canonical boundaries. (I am an elitist whose elite includes Peter Straub and Ursula Le Guin along with Joyce, Nabokov, and that lot.) He praises Karel Čapek, and particularly *War with the Newts*, including a list of reasons that worthy book has been forgotten that climaxed with

Another problem is the annexation of Čapek by the science fiction community.... Keen to upgrade its image, science fiction apologists have displayed a propensity to aggrandize its domain, sticking the label on writers who have precious little to do with space opera or monster hide and seek. Many artists have been reluctant to play the role of the genre's redeemers. Ray Bradbury spent his career fighting to emerge from the literary event horizon known as sci-fi.

(Actually, Bradbury got out easier than Vonnegut, almost immediately reaching the heights between Credit to His Category and

Not Really One of Them, while many of us wished him a speedy and safe journey unencumbered by doors hitting him in the ass.)

Absence of God is not great

Christopher Hitchens, whose best-selling book blames religion for killing millions, suggests that we wipe out a whole bunch of Muslims.

Once again livejournal is attempting to ~~submit to pre-civilized taboos~~ obey the laws on fiction about minors. I suggest that the Harry Potter fanfic communities use a phrase such as, "In the early days of Hogwarts it was placed under a spell that made its students 18 years old as long as they were engaging in sexual acts."

Beyond John Wamock

Before I got my glasses prescription updated, I frequently needed to set my browser to text one size larger than it's supposed to be and had problems otherwise. I was looking at an article in the *Guardian's* crappy little sans serif font (nowhere near the only such), and they appeared to be discussing "the penis of addiction." A closer look revealed that it was supposed to be "the perils of addiction."

Bad first sentence

She felt as desperate as someone trying to dream up a startlingly new entry in a contest that had run on way too long, so that everyone was writing verbose, formulaic entries and maybe it was all a karmic payback for treating "It was a dark and stormy night" as such a horrible opening that its creator should be mocked forever for writing it.

There's a meme going around about social class, referring to the good things some of us grew up with and some of us didn't. Some are speaking of this as "privilege," but it was noted that we used to say those who didn't have it were "disadvantaged." I prefer that; things like parents reading to their children or being allowed to drive safely whilst being the color one is should be the norm, with the absence of them being the marked state. (Privileges are things like bankrupting your company and getting a multimillion-dollar golden parachute anyway that have to be

"private laws" because it wouldn't work for everybody to have them.)

I call myself a liberal; I think the purpose of society is to be less unforgiving than nature, and I think that not knowing where one's next meal is coming from and not having a roof over one's head are so bad that the State should be allowed to use big guys with guns and clubs to prevent it. I don't call myself a leftist because I don't think inequality is bad enough to require that sort of drastic action. I wonder if some of the leftists who use "privilege" as a term for things we should all have are more motivated by envy than by mercy.

Blog for Choice Day

The first time I thought seriously about abortion was when I was in college, and a friend was raising money for one. I instantly contributed, though I was a less likely suspect than the Holy Ghost and had previously assumed that abortion was a bad thing. Thinking it over, I decided that I believed that abortion is a human right.

The way to have fewer abortions is to give good sex education and to empower women to say no if they don't want sex and to demand birth control if they do. But people own their own bodies and women are people, so abortion is a human right.

Lori Gottlieb, who has written an *Atlantic Monthly* article on how all women want to be married by the time they're thirty, did an earlier book on recovering from anorexia. You think she's trying to survive on a desperately reduced intellectual diet? I would imagine some of the skills transfer.

Scott McClellan seems to have written pretty much the standard suck-and-tell White House memoir: here's where they did the right thing because they listened to me; here's where they did the wrong thing because they didn't listen to me. (Because it's the Bush administration, there's a lot more of the latter.)

One interesting novelty: Back when she was sane, Florence King wrote that she preferred Northern men as sex partners because afterwards they didn't angrily ask, "Why did you let me do that?" McClellan asks the same of the so-called liberal media, and this time it's a good question.

From the PoMo Title Generator

1. Withdrawal as Object: Disenchanting Migrant Homosexuality in E.E. Doc Smith's *Skylark of Valeron*
2. The Guilty Voicing the Proletariat: E.E. Doc Smith, *Skylark of Valeron*, and Erotics
3. Dualism as Fuzziness: Seducing Absent Seduction in E.E. Doc Smith's *Skylark of Valeron*
4. Resisting the Erotic Identity in E.E. Doc Smith: *Skylark of Valeron* and Murder
5. Means of Production and Discourse in *Skylark of Valeron*: E.E. Doc Smith Engineering Testicular Object

Nasty, Brutish, & Short

Uncle Kurt said that strange traveling orders are "God's dancing lessons." I don't particularly want to dance, but sometimes the world shoots at your feet.

The Apple 1984 commercial was the "San Francisco (Wear Some Flowers in Your Hair)" of the computer revolution, and to us linear/literate types it likewise presaged disaster.

Alice James (sister of William and Henry) was a Sick Person, which was one of the few careers open to women at the time.

A great year for the assholes

Terrell Owens and Randy Moss battled for the NFL touchdown lead.

I don't think I'll ever get used to cell phones: First your pocket rings, and then you have to converse with a vibrator.

The Bush gang illegally restricted Department of Justice jobs to the ideologically correct and refused to look at an EPA report it didn't like. Also, water is wet.

Eugenics might not be a good thing even if we knew how to do it, but at least it could reduce the Darwinian struggle from Who Lives to Who Breeds.

Pro-choicers believe that women are sentient.

He did something so stupid that if the Bush administration found out, they'd hire the person responsible.

First sf: Dicky Seaton invented the inertialess drive, and Karl Marx invented the marketless society.

Good year for the Nobel Prize: a Worldcon GoH and a *Saturday Night Live* host.

Maureen Dowd's mixture of gender studies and fanfic would make an amusing blog, but it's completely inappropriate for the Newspaper of Record

Oh, yeah, vote for Obama, whom I'd like even if I didn't have what Jackie Mason calls "that sick Jewish thing of voting for the black guy" and even if he weren't running against someone who has become just like George Bush, only crankier.

About 70 years ago Donald A. Wollheim created the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, the first apa for science fiction fans. It has been known as a place for old and tired fans, with a leisurely requirement of eight pages a year.

Every so often, however, there has been an effort to bring in new blood, and in one of those (thank you, Harry Andruschak) Bernadette and I were separately recruited, and we met there and fell in love. (We are apparently the only such couple in FAPA history.)

And now after more than thirty years of doing a zine, I guess I have become old & tired (though I am still regularly appearing on livejournal as **supergee**), and so I am doing eight pages a year.

But the first FAPA mailing I'm sending the annual version to is also the first one without Jack Speer, who was in FAPA from the beginning and who died recently. Jack was a gentleman of knowledge and wit, a judge for a while in Real Life, and a person I enjoyed sharing an apa with. This issue is dedicated to him.

Excelsior,

Arthur