

scopus:3007

number ten end of the second millennium

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The content is intended to amuse, instruct, annoy, shock, or flabbergast you, the reader. (Sometimes all at once.)

FAIR WARNING!!

The opinions and views expressed inside this zine are those of the author of the article or letter in question. If they offend you, shock you, anger you, or disgust you, then congratulations! You've been paying attention!

--Shredded paper packaging material!

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Art Credits: Ian Gunn, Joe Mayhew, Brad Foster, Charles Mohapel (photo)

EDITORIAL:

MaK T en Mod SiX - H otel

I had thought to have more than one issue of this fanzine out by now. Shows you how "the best laid plans..."

Well, anyway, we've got this stuff to use, and we're getting it together. Now all we have to do is remember where we put it...

Contrary to what Guy H. Lillian III wrote in the latest ish of *Challenger*, *scopus:3007* is not dead.

At any rate, not yet.

I have had no income for nineteen months now, and we've been living hand-to-mouth, but I still have managed to have this zine *this close* to being ready for a while.

I'll get it out. But #11, if it appears, will probably be in a quite different format.

We'll see.

In the meantime, see you around... maybe at ChiCon 2000, if you can get there.

Shredded paper packaging material!

--@

...da legal thang, man...

This is *scopus:3007* number ten, dated Summer 2000, and released in August 2000. Editor: **Alexander J. L. Bouchard**. Publisher: **Megan J. S. Bouchard**. Mascots/Familiars/Distractions: **Petoskey Stirlen Bouchard** and **Ada Jane Stirlen Bouchard**. (*A small note: These two are our cats. We are owned by them.*) This is a science fiction fanzine, which means that, every once in a while, someone **may** mention science fiction, or science fiction fandom (a loosely-organized group of individuals who share at least one interest, the genre of literature known as science fiction, in common). Enter at your own hazard.

This issue (as a whole) is ©1998, 1999, 2000 by AJL Bouchard, and the individual articles and pieces of artwork are © by their creators. All rights revert to the contributor after publication. Void where inhibited. Objects may be weirder than they appear.

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Submissions may be addressed there. E-mail is **ajlbouchard@juno.com**; please make a note of it, if you have the old address.

Submissions will be greatly appreciated; write or e-mail me to find out what I want, and how I want it.

*{Just a note: since this was written, we have a new member of this motley crew... He's a gray longhaired stray who adopted us. We named him **Shadow**. More next time. --@}*

Any technology indistinguishable from magic is insufficiently advanced...

The Publisher's Page musings by Megan

The Time of My Life

I have managed to experience one of the greatest times of my life while I was in Balitmore. The time was the experience of all the wonderful people that I managed to meet while there who were involved in one of my "quirky sense of adventurousness" (Al's term) on my road to becoming **The Menopause Fairy**. It is amazing to me on how many people helped me with this idea I had. Who would have thought so many people would understand and support such an adventure? Never in my wildest dreams did I think I could pull it off, and never in my wildest dreams did I think I would have the nerve to do it. It is so funny how it never occurred to me that I would be up on stage in front of thousands of people, vamping my way through a skit that had just been put together a few hours before, in a costume that was being completed moments before the masqureade started. But, considering my life is sometimes on the second-by-second time schedule, it sort of fit.

All I can say is that my experience has still carried over. When I still get pictures and letters telling me how much of a smile I gave people, my heart just sings. I have always believed that I am the



Megan as *The Menopause Fairy* (photo by Charles Mohabel)

most blessed person in the world, even on those days when my body fails to make it through. Some of those days have been occurring lately, but I just chuckle at the thought of Pierre's remark, that if I die, he would crawl under my skirt and take my body and the mobie on stage. God bless Pierre for having such a dedication to costuming and for being such a friend. I met people who I had never

known, who got involved just because of the fun of it. Bjo came by and played with the costume for awhile. Sara who was across the hall spent hours helping me. Byron, Tina, Lori, John, Marty, Bobbie, Charles, Chris, Lenny, Thea, Sandy and god only knows who else. The simple wish was to give my husband a happy memory, and instead I have made new friends and have thousands of new memories.

Like I said, I can't be more blessed.

{*Editor's note: Nor could I. —@*}

Ghu and Roscoe willing, we'll see many of you at chicon 2000. —@

Out of the Closet

the costuming column

©1998, 1999 by Thea

Everything You Wear Is A Costume

"And welcome, to another episode of *As The Stomach Churns*...when last we left our Intrepid Costumer, she had just returned from WorldCon to discover that her company was going under, her allergies had triggered bronchial asthma, and her adopted Uncle was in the hospital with mysterious seizures"...

AND THIS IS REALITY!!! Imagine if we had made something up!

Is it any wonder that we miss no opportunity to slip away into a fantasy of our own or someone else's making – properly dressed, of course.

(Lest you think me arrogant, I do not use the *Imperial We*; it is merely a reference to all my Gemini selves)

Now, there are those who don't believe in costuming as an integral part of life. That's okay. There are lots of people who don't believe in any number of things. This is more a function of their life experience and the underlying assumptions thereof than of anything else. A lack of belief in something, whether God(dess) or astrology or dragons or chiropractic medicine or the search for the Great White Whale, does not prove that does not exist and/or is not valid. Conversely, believing in those same things does not mean that they *do exist/are* valid either. Our beliefs are coloured by our experience, or lack thereof. Our clothes, like our beliefs, reveal our experiences, our worldview, and our self image. An unwillingness to explore (whether costuming or anything else) is a mark of a fossilized brain, of a sore spirit, of someone locked into their limitations. Now, there may be good and valid reasons for this, but they are not usually anything that cannot be helped by a good therapist or counselor.

We are not one single being. Unlike, say, an amoeba, we are multi-faceted and complex, and normally fill many functions. We play many roles - each (normally) with its own costume. "(S)he wears many hats", we say.

The fact is, a person who knows how to wear many different kinds of clothes (and the line between costumes and clothes is tenuous at best; there have been times when the two words were used pretty much interchangeably (here's where acknowledge of history comes in) and it is only in fairly recent America that the definitions have become more rigidly applied) comfortably is perceived as being more capable and of a higher class, no matter what the circumstances really are. Dress For Success is no joke, even when the principles are interpreted very much more liberally than John Malloy does. The Quality, even when impoverished, tended to wear their clothes well, and still do. Of course, there are those who choose to be NQ (Not Quality), and wonder why Life seems so much harder for them (There are, to be sure, those who do not so decide, but who do not know anything else. They are trainable. And, once exposed to a different way of life, they do tend to change). What they could learn from a good look in their mirror!

Now this is not to say that a new outfit, or even a new wardrobe, will change your life. Only that it can. For a certainty, though, walking around in sloppy jeans and t-shirt, with poor posture and a woebegone appearance is most likely to attract, for the most part, only those others who are similarly afflicted. It's your choice. And you decide whether to make that choice or not (keeping in mind that the decision to not choose is in itself a choice, made by default and stealing what control you may have over the situation).

For myself, I will continue to play dressup, and let the world do its best to keep up with my fantasies.
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*Saying he's less
intelligent than
overcooked asparagus is
an insult to vegetables
everywhere...*

Another Piece of the Puzzle...

alternate points of view

{This article came to me on an Internet mailing list I belong to about injured postal and federal employees. (Like me.) Megan and I thought the points it made compelling enough that we needed to spread this word beyond the Net. So, with permission, and a clarification or two added for those of you who don't know the acronym-happy Federal bureaucratic felgercarb, herewith is an article I feel good enough about to use as a Guest Editorial. - @}

LYING & FINAGLING

©2000 by Michael King, Ph.D.

A couple of comments... First, does anyone think that when OWCP or USPS lies, even to a Senate committee, that anyone is going to jail? I would like to think so.

But doesn't it horrify all of you that lying and finagling have become common practice? That we have to go so far as to always have witnesses, copies, canceled checks, tape recordings or video tapes to back us up, not just with the government but with almost everyone we deal with. Your friendly neighborhood store, "accidentally forgets" to inform the computerized cash register of certain specials so we get charged full price? You must carefully count or you just might find yourself missing a few bucks here and there after you check out your groceries. Banks should be immune to charges of finagling, right? But get this, banks are in complete agreement to honor another's transactions (we pay for this service through various charges banks levy on their customers -- us) but go to an ATM machine and use another bank's debit card and how much do they whack you? I know of places that now charge \$4.00 for this transaction; in addition, the bank has one less customer to deal with in person, and overall a few less employees to handle the in-person transaction. Some if not all, charge for checks and a walloping charge if you accidentally (of course) write an overdraft (bounce it) and you pay 2½ percent interest on YOUR money. Some will, if you are lucky, grant you the service charge free every month if you have your government check transferred in electronically.

And I won't even bring up the usurious rates we pay for using plastic, not to mention the real goose that laid the golden eggs, the gold and platinum (for them) credit cards. And if you get those neat blank checks in the mail from your credit card company it's a great deal -- that is unless you decide to use them. Not only are they going to charge you a nice chunk of change up front to use them, they'll come up with around 22 ½% interest for making monthly payments, or using simple interest around \$22.50 per hundred dollars a year, same as what they pay you for your savings account, right? Well, no, it isn't calculated that way; someone correct me, but if you paid the required payment on time, you would have paid the loan down just a few dollars each year. Furthermore, if you are just one day late on the payment you might get whacked an additional \$25.00.

Why do we have to see the old parts before we pay a mechanic for replacing worn or broken parts in our car?

Why are some things hyped and sold on television and radio but "not available in stores?" Because they don't want you to see it or heft it around to see if you are getting your moneys worth. Or, whether you need to be an engineer to put it together or operate all those fancy dicers and slicers? Or maybe it is so cheaply made it only lasts one or two times after you use it.

How many presidents in our memory have lied to us or deceived us and have been allowed to get away with it?

How many heads of government agencies and politicians have been caught dipping into the cookie jar like Pooh caught with his paws in the honey?

Officers of the law have taken justice into their own hands; confabulated stories and manufactured evidence, shot, beaten and even murdered suspects (or sodomized them) with a stick or their fists, because they were someone that pissed the cops off. And, I'm against suspects, or anyone else for that matter, abusing our law officers.

When will we realize that we need to teach our children, and everyone else, to behave, to tell the truth, to have principles and individual honor, to learn respect for other human beings, to be compassionate as well as just so that we don't have to be looking over our shoulders all the time. We have to stop looking at social reasons for every problem in our society and expect more from those who should be setting the example for all of us in society.

At one time, big business recognized the need to look after people, customer and employee alike, and to be fair, not because they had a burning desire to save the less fortunate, or because of their Christian goodness, but because it was good business. There are exceptions of course, but companies that treat their employees as human beings don't get sabotaged by those employees or hire security because of employee theft. Or have to fear for their life because of the aberrant nut case who readily cites employer abuse as his excuse for blowing a few innocent people away at the job site.

Persons are left with the feeling today that they have been forced to deal with the one store in town that is the cheapest yet treats the customer like cattle, neither paying to give personal service or to see that their product is not only cheap but a good bargain as well, and not just a good ticket item that turns over quickly and returns a healthy profit per square foot of space used. The rule is: Let the buyer beware. *Caveat emptor*, you can bring it back (make sure you keep a home accounting system with a central repository for store receipts) and be prepared to deal with suspicious return clerks or managers after you have waited anxiously in line for an hour or more, afraid they will hint that the item you bought last week has been used for months (yes, that happens) or surly, why do you want to return it? Never mind that all their signs say We Happily return your money if not completely satisfied.

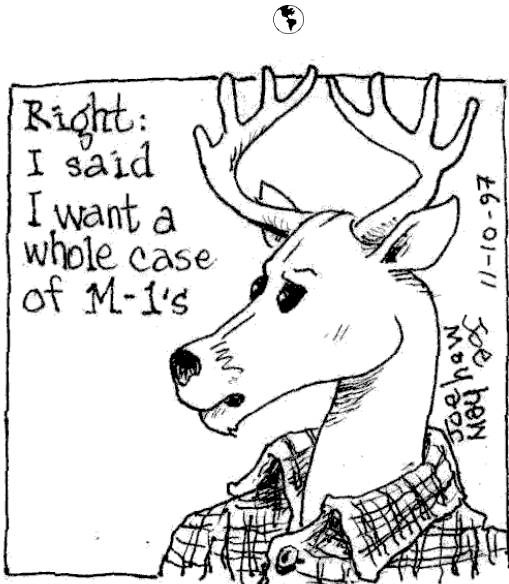
Why can't we seem to get it in this supposedly enlightened and informed society, that there is a dividend for giving people value for their money, for being honest, for putting ourselves in the place of the aggrieved person, such as the middle manager who loses his job just six months short of retirement because of downsizing or retrenchment or corporate takeovers, when everyone knows that it is because it will save the company money, "never mind the social contract thank you, we paid a dividend twice as large as last year." The much younger manager who replaces the worker over 40 at half the latter's former wage doesn't care that he is instrumental in displacing someone who will unlikely work again in the meaningful job market, and perhaps he shouldn't care, everyone has to eat. But the company or bureaucracy that allows and encourages this to happen has created incalculable company and social damage.

{Editor's Note: OWCP is the Office of Workers Compensation Programs of the U. S. Department of Labor.

They are supposed to be the ones who enforce the Federal Employees Compensation Act, which provides for disabled Federal employees.

You notice I said "supposed to be".

I've been trying to deal with them since 1988... those of you who know the story have already guessed what I think about those... Oh, skip it. - @}



WHACK 'EM & STACK 'EM

The fanzine review column

And now, in no particular order, a sampling of the zines I've received since BucConcer...

The template goes like this:

Fanzine Title, by Editor, editor's address, e-mail (if available), frequency, price, terms (including "The Usual").
My comments follow in italics.

No Award #6 & 7, by Marty Cantor, 11825 Gilmore St. #105, North Hollywood CA 91606. Email: martyhoohah@netzero.net Irregular.

Marty's return to the zine wars is welcome, even for someone like me, who never saw Holier Than Thou, his fanzine of (almost) legend. Hey, anyone who can be a major-league smartass (self-confessed) and get away with it in a group such as LASFS has earned some respect, chilluns!

He said on the Trufen mailing list that, time (which he has a lot more of, since he retired) and money (which he has a lot less of, for the same reason) permitting, No Award would

be out fairly often, or as soon as he collected enough material for each issue.

Hopefully, this happens quite often.

The Knarley Knews #80, by Henry "Knarley" Welch, 1525 16th Ave., Grafton WI 53024. Email: welch@msoe.edu Bimonthly.

Well, brethren and sistren, Brother Knarley has decided to testify.

He testifies that he actually was LATE getting out an issue of TKK!. He's not keeping up with his bimonthly schedule!

Okay, so we cut him some slack because the ish is damned good.

Okay, we cut him some slack because he publishes my column, MY REALITY CHECKS ARE BOUNCING. [Shameless Plug Department - Thank you.]

So we cut him some slack.

You got a problem with that?

Twink #17 by "E. B. Frohvet", 4716 Dorsey Hall Rd. #506, Ellicott City MD 21042. Quarterly.

The pseudonymous "Frohvet" puts out a pretty good zine, contentious in places, questioning the dominant paradigm, and drawing out the general from the specific (trying to characterize science fiction's portrayal of blacks, as an example), and stirring the pot with his continuing feature, "We're All African, Anyway".

You may not agree with the editorial style, but the substance is definitely there. I recommend it highly.

Challenger #10, #11 & #12, by Guy H. Lillian III, P. O. Box 53092, New Orleans LA 70153-3092. Email: ghliii@yahoo.com Website under construction. Irregular.

Just when you thought Guy couldn't put out an ish better than the last one, he goes and does it.

#10's focus on the outcasts was followed by #11's spotlight on other things]. Guy's passion for certain subjects (the inequities of the legal profession, beautiful women, and his days at DC Comics) is obvious in his writing, and his self-deprecating humor is refreshing in limited doses.

He's been nominated for a Hugo for Challenger, and I'd like to see him get it. He's doing one helluva job, in my opinion.

PhiloSFy #13 & #14, by Alex Slate, 8603 Shallow Ridge, San Antonio TX 78239-4022. Email: slateal@swbell.net or alex_slate@hotmail.com Irregular.

Alex manages to assemble what he calls "ethics with a genre edge", and the result is always readable, and usually quite thought provoking.

Where else would you find alien contact management as seen through the lens of the Torah and the Talmud? Or discussions of the ethical considerations of warfare from the perspective of Heinlein's Starship Troopers? Or, perhaps, the

ethics of a system of governance that is inherently fair, just, and limited in scope?

Plus, how could you resist an editorial titled "Certified Cranky"?

You go, bud. I recommend this zine highly.

FOSFAX #179, by Tim Lane & Elizabeth Garrott (for FOSFA), P. O. Box 37281, Louisville KY 40233.

FOSFAX, which has for years considered one William Jefferson Clinton to be a black criminal, a blot on the honorable escutcheon of this grand and glorious nation, rolls ever onward, blasts of conservative and liberal rhetoric spewing forth in glorious microprint.

It's always a good read... easier to take if you don't take yourself (or your politics) too seriously.

STET #9, by Leah & Dick Smith, 417 W. Willow Road, [suburb] IL 600XX. Email: [tk] Irregular. The Usual or \$?

After far too long a time, the Smiths have come up with a new issue of STET. The format is experimental, as is the reproduction (two-color press rather than mimeo), but the same slaunchways look at fandom that characterized earlier issues is still there. So is the calendar they've been producing the past couple of years, along with a plethora of informative articles.

Nice to have you back, guys. How's about not making it so long the next time? (P. S.: I'll try to do the same.)

Vojo de Vivo #1, by Michael J. Lowrey, 1847 N 2nd Street, Milwaukee WI 53212-3760. Email: orange@execpc.com Irregular. The Usual or \$2.00 (and would prefer The Usual).

I started hearing of Michael on the Trufen mailing list, and when he announced he'd finally pubbed his ish, I emailed him and asked for a copy. Six pages, on three burnt-orange sheets of paper, arrived shortly thereafter.

Mike explained why his trademark is dressing in bright orange clothing, why he'd been in fandom for almost thirty years without pubbing his ish, and why he's a member of three different unions.

He didn't explain the title of the zine; since he says he's an Esperantist, I assume that it's in that language, and my linguistic Guess-O-Matic (as opposed to my linguine'd Bass-O-Matic) would hazard a speculation that the title means "Voice of Life", or something similar.

Whatever. It's a good zine, and I recommend it.

Derogatory Reference #95, by Arthur D. Hlavaty, 206 Valentine Street, Yonkers NY 10704-1814. Email: hlvaty@panix.com Approximately 4 times a year; the Usual or \$1 (\$2 outside the US).

I've been getting DR from Arthur for a few years now, and the clarity and wit of his writing hasn't declined any.

Keep writing, Arthur... even the esteemed Wile E. did catch the Roadrunner once!

Shipyard Blues 2000, by John D. Owen, 4 Highfield Close, Newport Pagnell MK16 9AZ UNITED KINGDOM. E-mail: J.D.Owen@open.ac.uk Website: www.rastus.force9.co.uk/SBHome.html No cash price listed; available for "The Usual".

I received this from John early this year (Y2K), and haven't had the chance to properly respond to him. (My bad.) He has a review of the themes used by Stanislaw Lem, a long discussion of the inner meanings of Babylon5, music reviews, and some nice artwork. All told, it's a good start/restart/reentry into fanzine fandom.

Vanamonde, by John Hertz, 236 S. Coronado Street #409, Los Angeles CA 90057. No price listed; assume it's available for "The Usual" or Editorial Whim.

John sends these one-sheet apazines out in batches; he produces one per week for APA-L and Minneapa. That surely is one steady production rate, especially since APA-L is published weekly, IIRC. Anyway, despite being an apazine, Van is quite readable; you don't really have to have read the other items John's commenting on. Lively, well-written, and a pleasure to read.

New Kind of Neighborhood, by Ylva Spångberg, Disponentg 3, S-112 62 Stockholm, SWEDEN and Lennart Uhlin, Högsåtrav 22, 5 tr, S-181 58 Lidingö, SWEDEN. E-mails: ylva_s@yahoo.com, lennart@sfbok.se Available for "The Usual".

These two bill this as "A fanzine full of Swedes", and many of the articles are translated into English from their original Swedish. (For those of us who don't speak or read Swedish, this could be considered a Good Thing.) It's their attempt to show that they are learning the ropes of this neighborhood, and I think they are doing quite a creditable job. Welcome to the game... any number can play. And remember... death does not release you.

Wabe #1, by Jae Leslie Adams, Tracy Benton, and Bill Bodden. Available for "The Usual"; they ask that trades be sent to all three of them. Jae Leslie Adams, 621 Spruce St., Madison WI 53715; Tracy Benton, 108 Grand Canyon Dr., Madison WI 53705; Bill Bodden, P. O. Box 762, Madison WI 53701-0762. E-mails: jaeleslie@aol.com, benton@uwalumni.com, and billzilla@mailbag.com. *This new zine by an editorial triumvirate (hmm... most of these new ones are coming out with two or three editors... maybe This Means Something...) is nicely produced, readable, fun, and has thoughtful content. Not bad for a first effort. (Beats hell out of my first ish...) Recommended highly. Encore, encore!!*

Squib #5, from Victor Gonzalez, 905 NE 45th St. Apt. 106, Seattle WA 98105. E-mail: squib@galaxy-7.net Website: www.galaxy-7.net/squib/ "This is the real thing, for the usual price." Irregular.

Victor's fifth issue of *Squib* is as full of controversy and damfine writing as the previous four; Ted White's article reminiscing about Ardis Waters leads off the ish, and provokes some stern comment. (See review of *GLOSS*, *infra*.) These people write well enough to make you actually care that they care about topics you ordinarily wouldn't give two hoots in hell about. However you get this zine, either in print or as an Adobe PDF file, get it.

GLOSS #1, from Lillian Edwards and Victor Gonzalez, c/o Victor, addresses for [Squib](#) supra. A joint effort from Victor and Lillian (another multiple editor setup... hmm...) published when Victor was on a trip to England for Eastercon, IIRC. Lillian's lead article dissects Ted's reminiscence of Ardis Waters from her own pomo, postfeminist perspective. The other articles are as good as you'd expect a zine that passed through the hands of Victor to be. Good writing, slick production, a good zine. Get it. I quote, "Ah have spoken."

MIMOSA #25, by Richard & Nicki Lynch, P. O. Box 3120, Gaithersburg MD 20885. Available for "The Usual". Irregular. Once again, the Lynchi have put forth a gaw-juss ish of *Mimosa*. From the wraparound cover by Julia Morgan-Scott (which seems to have become one of their trademarks) to the nicely saddle-stapled pages, this shows as a classily-produced zine. And the insides ain't bad, neither! Dick and Nicki show again how they've managed to win several Hugos, and this ish's itinerary is proof enough... John Berry's Remember Him - A Tribute to Walt Willis is funny, touching, and a sweetly wistful look at days gone by. Later in the ish is Walt's own tale of the 1952 Worldcon, The Harp at Chicon, reprinted here in slightly abridged form. It's choice, a flagon of vintage Willis. The keynote of the ish for me was Joe Mayhew's self-illustrated article, My Own Personal First Fandom, describing his entry into the world of the Washington Science Fiction Association. The Lynchi say there will be a #26, but maybe not more. I hope they can see fit to keep on keeping on for a long time to come, though.

PLUS LOTS, LOTS MORE!



BROAD THOUGHTS FROM A HOME VIDEO NASTIES

Ron Bennett

The shelving behind me is stacked with video tapes. And so are the shelves in several other rooms, including the attic and cellars. I have thousands of tapes. Some of them are even labelled. I'll get round to the others when I have time. Usually I'm too busy taping TV programs on three or four machines at the same time. I don't know what I'll do when digital TV comes in and we have two hundred channels from which to choose. Buy more TV sets and video recorders, I suppose. And thank goodness for the time

delay programming. Otherwise I suppose I'd never sleep.

It's surprising how much I tape. But, after all, who knows when one might wish to run through again The Heavy Industry of Sark, Garden Gnomes, Yorkshire Pudding Recipes Old and New, Animal Hospital, The Bay City Rollers on Tour, Citizens' Band Radio Season by Season, The Inaugural Speeches of Chinese Vice-Presidents, Sitar Lessons for Greek Speaking Beginners, Hiram Holliday, The Dallas Cowboys' Songbook, The Dating Game, The History of Street Lighting in Albuquerque, Make Your Own Corkscrews, The Dry Wines of Guatemala or Irish Dancing for String Puppets?

Like everyone else, I have a shelf devoted entirely to commercial TV adverts, and an entire room given over to Oprah Winfrey, Ricki Lake, Leeza, Montel Williams and, naturally, Jerry Springer. My primary love is the movie. I think it one of the great joys of the age in which we live to be able to own one's own copy of movies which, in my younger days, I queued in the saturating chill of a Yorkshire downpour to have the chance to view, classics like *Casablanca*, *Gone With the Wind* and *Aloma of the South Seas*. Take last night's late movie, *Internal Affairs*.

Raymond Avilla, played by Andy Garcia, is the new boy in *Internal Affairs*. He is partnered with Amy Wallace (Laurie Metcalf). They investigate Van Stretch (William Baldwin), a cop who has beaten up a suspect. Eventually, they get around to examining his financial situation. The family's annual income is around eighty-five thou but, in addition to living in a house way beyond his income level, the cop has spent some three hundred thousand in the past eighteen months.

No one in *Internal Affairs* has, prior to our hotshots, noticed this minor anomaly.

Our pair decide that Van Stretch is Up To Something. And, even though nothing has so far been introduced to suggest anything of the sort, they decide that he's too dumb to be U.T.S. on his own, someone else is U.T.S., too.

Because he hasn't been on the screen for two or three minutes, suspicion naturally falls on the quivering Richard Gere who plays Van Stretch's partner, Dennis Peck.

This does not exactly come as a surprise to us who are In The Know. We have had it made Very Plain that Peck is a Bad Cop. This was made V.P. in the first scene when Peck plants a weapon on a fleeing man shot dead by a colleague.

Peck now needs to shed his partner and sets him up to be shot while examining a parked van. After the dastardly deed has been completed, Peck then shoots the killer in the head at close range.

This incident with its powder burns and angle of trajectory is naturally ignored by experts in forensics, ballistics and any other minor ics which might interfere with the action.

Indeed, the pace is quickening, and almost sufficiently to keep the viewer awake another five minutes. Peck is engaged by Steven Arcoas, a shady upmarket slimeball, to kill his parents.

"Can I trust you?" asks Arrocas.

"Of course you can trust me," Peck replies, looking him directly in the eye. "I'm a cop."

This is meaningful.

Meanwhile, our intrepid pair have decided to Go After Peck. They catch up with him just as he's killed both Steven Arrocas and Arrocas' wife.

I'm a little unclear why Peck bumps them off. I must have dozed off, after all.

Wallace and Gromit... sorry, Avilla... search the Arrocas home, looking for Peck. Naturally, being well-trained police officers, they don't phone for back-up, but... again, naturally... split up to search the house separately. It's a complete surprise that Peck shoots one of them.

Which, did you say?

Think now

Which of the actors has a higher profile? And which of them could we better Do Without?

Peck is now On The Run. Where does he make for? Canada? Mexico? Tristan da Cunha? Northern Cyprus?

Come on, now. Peck, having no doubt read Basic Plotting For Basic Plotters, which decrees that villain and hero should always meet in the final reel... Should? Must! ... naturally shoots off to Avilla's home in order to terrorize Mrs Avilla (Nancy Travis).

Peck kills her and runs off to Northern Cyprus after all.

No, wait a minute. I've got that wrong. Had you fooled for a minute, though, didn't?

No?

No. Avilla races home, confronts Peck, kills him and the final credits roll.

Another tape for the collection. Definitely one to keep, don't you think?



Just a thought...
by Megan Bouchard

Sometimes I check Al's e-mail for him before it builds up too much, due to him being on a couple of different lists.

Not too long ago I was scanning his Trufen list, and came across a line that someone would be away from the list for a while. I clicked on it in case it was similar to when Roger Sims was in the hospital. Something drew me to this message, and it caused me wrenching pain.

Michael Lowrey of Milwaukee said that the state officials had taken his little girl Kelly, and as a result they were going to desperately try to get her back. Due to the fact that Michael's life didn't fit the "normal" textbook lifestyle that the state required, his family had to conform to be "normal".

Isn't it sad that this country that was built by those who were different, the freethinkers, the dissidents, and those who wouldn't conform,

insists on conformity to be normal? What does this teach the children in this world? Be afraid... be very, very afraid to march to the beat of a different drummer.

Michael's e-mail was enlightening due to the fact that the government can come into anyone's home, whether a prison is innocent or guilty. What was Michael's mistake? Was it because he and his family had a passion for reading, but not a passion for a sterile environment void of learning? How many of us can pass the state list of regulations for the perfect house? I bet even those social workers couldn't pass the tests.

As a former foster parent, I was shocked at how the State of Michigan decided which child was abused or not. I found that because I questioned the rationale, I was not an "acceptable" foster parent any more, and definitely not an adoptive parent. After a while, I could no longer live with myself, and neither could Al, so we resigned. I was appalled at how children were still considered property, especially by the state. The state got paid per child because of Federal funding, yet the families in crisis couldn't get any help.

Because of what we've been going through with the Federal Government, I guess my cynicism is enhanced.

But if I look at his problem of the government getting away with this tyranny, I have to ask myself how much am I at fault? Have I always paid attention to all the laws and rules that Congress is trying to pass? Do I really know the real truth about the person I'm voting for? Or do I just vote party lines because it's easier? More importantly, do I vote? How many of us can truthfully say we watch and pay attention to who is running our government, and how good a job they're doing? Do we speak up if we don't like what is going on? Do we write to the Senators, Congressmen, or other officials to question their motives? When is the last time you wrote a letter of complaint or of concern?

What will be the final proverbial straw that breaks the camel's back? Will it be when small transmitters are implanted in our brains, so we conform to the norm? Am I talking out of my hat? I wonder...

When Al and I had to go for our depositions in the lawsuit we have against the Post Office, I was asked if I had any daily journals, and I stupidly told the truth, and the U. S. Attorney demanded them. Now, these are my private thoughts and feelings, they aren't about the lawsuit. But because the government has total

control, I was informed by my attorney that I have no privacy – what about you?



A Guy Named Joe...

It was a dreary day, even though the sun was shining merrily here in Detroit.

I had just heard over the Net that another one of our own, fanartist, Hugo winner, *bon vivant*, raconteur, bemused elder uncle, and friend for many years Joe Mayhew died a short time before.

Joe was the kind who would, if you asked, chaperone a large party of fen on an outing to an obscure restaurant somewhere nearby the convention center, very often talk to the waiter conversationally in their native language, and get them to excel at producing exotic, phenomenal meals. All the while, during dinner, he'd be carrying on four or five separate conversations on philosophy, religious practices, cultural shibboleths, Pro Writers He Had Known When, the state of science fiction fandom in general, and a scriptural exegesis which you could tell he was mentally translating from the original Aramaic.

He was a cartoonist of note, finally winning his Fan Artist Hugo at *BucConeer* in Baltimore two years ago. His acceptance speech was an impassioned plea for prayers and good wishes for Ian Gunn, who was suffering the ravages of cancer in Australia at the time. (Ian died shortly after the convention.)

Joe could be surly, if you tried to interrupt him in the midst of the throes of creativity; I got a growl and a black look when I almost joggled his elbow while he was inking some pages in the Fanzine Lounge in San Antonio. (He apologized later; I told him he needn't have.)

Joe helped you enjoy the places you were more deeply and more widely just by being there with you. My favorite memories of most WorldCons are inextricably linked with Joe.

His passing leaves not just a Joe-sized hole in fandom, but also in the lives of each and every one of us he touched with his presence.

The usual ending to this kind of piece is, "He will be missed." That's too much of a cliché for Joe; so let's stand it on its head, the way he often did in his cartoons.

He won't be *not* missed.

{How's that, big guy?}

@



Goodbye, Joe...

a tribute by Megan

Today is 11 June 00 and I just found out that someone I have known for many years has died. This person is Joe Mayhew, an artist and author in the Science Fiction genre.

I first met Joe in Boston at the very first Worldcon I had ever attended. It had been a

rough time getting to this Worldcon, my younger sister, Rose was in the hospital having brain surgery, and I was in Boston.

AI was in a wheelchair during this Worldcon



because he was having trouble with his knee and so, I am in a strange city, trying to do the things I needed to be doing, and that included getting Carl Lundgren's art set up in the art show.

Because I wasn't interested in some programming that AI wanted to go to, I told him I would go into the art show and look around and then wait for him in the lobby. I was in a major worry mode, because I had called Detroit and had checked on Rose's progress in the OR. She had been in surgery for a few hours already. No one could tell me anything, so I was just fussing in the waiting area outside the art show. As I was pacing the area, there was a man sitting at a table, and he was playing with some Sculpey. I wandered over to watch the demo he was giving to others and got caught up in what he was teaching. As the others started to disappear, this man asked where was I from and I told him outside of Detroit. We started to make some small talk and he continued to work with the clay, I explained to him I had tried that clay and it had gotten hard on me, so he told me to add Vaseline to it. That started a conversation on what artists use for their tools and he told me he was a so-so artist. Now remember I still don't know his name at this time and so I introduced myself and he his.

We got into some discourse about the rudeness in Boston, and then got into genealogy and as I discussed with him, my family were some of the founders of Mass, so was his. We tried to out do each other as to who came first. It was an

interesting discussion and the time was going quickly. Al still wasn't back from his programming and I needed to make a phone call. I was getting concerned by the passing of time and excused myself from Joe to go find a phone to check back with Detroit. When I came back from my call, Al still hadn't come back and I had been crying over the news on the phone. The hospital said Rose was still in OR and it could be hours before she got out, if she did live.

Joe asked what had me so sad so I told him that my sister was in the hospital having a brain tumor operated on and her chances of survival were slim, and I was afraid that I wouldn't be back home before she died. Joe said, so she is dying? I said yes, the tumor is huge. Joe said, well did she want you to stay home, and I told him no, Rose was insistent that we go. She felt that she was going to die and didn't want us to miss the Worldcon, she had a passion for Anne McCaffrey's work. Then Joe said something I didn't want to hear, he said you might get home in time for her to be on life support, but she is going to die no matter if you are home or here. I agreed with his statement reluctantly, I knew this deep down, but was hoping for the best. Joe said, if she insisted that you go to your first Worldcon, and that you come home and tell her all about it, she would be upset if you were just sitting here moping about. He was right again. I asked him what was his specialty and he said his education was in religion, but he dabbled in art.

When Al came wheeling up later, I introduced him to Joe and he was quite pleased to meet him. Later Al said to me, do you know who Joe is, and I replied yes, he said he dabbles in art, and I thought Al was going to choke to death laughing at me.

The next time I ran into Joe, was in Winnipeg, and he remembered me. He asked how did my sister do, and I told him she died a few weeks after I got back from Worldcon, but that he was one of the people I described to him. I thanked for his time and he suggested we go to dinner later. We met with Joe and a female friend the night before we left for home and had a wonderful four hour dinner, lots of lively conversation and the fact that I called him "my philosopher" and he said that was appropriate considering his education. We parted and said we would probably see him at the airport next, and so it was.

The following time I saw Joe was at the Anaheim for the worldcon and he looked really weak and ill. He said he had just gotten out of the hospital for his heart and that the long trip from the east coast to the west was tiring. Ran into him

later at the fanzine lounge and he looked better, he had rested some and eaten. He was doing some wonderful drawings at the table and had people grouped around him. We sat and talked for a while, but because I was having some health problems I wasn't around much.

The next worldcon was in San Antonio and Joe was in the fanzine lounge and he was inking up some drawings for some people. He was somewhat short-tempered and tired. He said his heart was acting up again, but he would get some rest later in the day. Later on I ran into him and he was much more relaxed and was carrying some fun conversations. He gave Al some drawings for our fanzine, and we thanked him profusely, and Joe said, well they really aren't that great, he was just dabbling. I laughed at Joe and said, well your dabbings are better than most commercial artists and we are honored that you would give them to us.

Baltimore was a difficult worldcon to get around and I only ran into Joe for a couple of minutes at the convention center and asked how he was doing and he said he was getting along. Due to the fanzine lounge being so far away, I only got to the hotel once with Al.

So, I will miss Joe Mayhew for a lot of reasons, for his art, his wit, his kindness, his belief that he only dabbled, and for his ability to hold wonderful discussions about the history of his country. I will also miss Joe because he was Joe.



**DEDICATED TO THE
MEMORY OF JOE
MAYHEW**

How I am ending the century!

More thoughts by Megan

Well, the century is coming to an end. Some people say that it ended on December 31, 1999, others say it will be on December 31, 2000. Either way, I have decided that since 1998 the end of the century has sucked most of the time.

The First Year of Hell

What has been going on since January of 1998 has been, to say the least, **interesting**. January started out with me finally winning the twenty-year fight with the University of Michigan to return to finish my degree. Unfortunately, the only way I could go back was to take 18 credits in one term. Be careful what you ask for! Well, I got through, and on the second of May, 1998 I graduated, 20 years to the day I was previously supposed to.

At the end of May, or the first of June, a friend of mine and I decided to go to Las Vegas to attend some gem shows, and to write on disabled traveling. Well, the trip was problematic. We traveled on mobies, and found many places hard to access. My friend got some food trouble, and didn't feel well, so she stayed in the room, while I tried public transport with the mobie. Trust me, it was a nightmare. When I finally got to my destination, the hotel was difficult to access. Once I got to an elevator, and a young girl was helping, but she pushed the elevator button as soon as I got in, but my electric plug caught in the doors. I got stuck between two floors for about forty-five minutes, while the hotel maintenance tried to get things fixed. Meanwhile, the young girl is running between floors, screaming "Are you okay?" I answered yes, but was thinking this was a fine mess I got myself into. Luckily, it was a glass elevator, which I normally hate, but when you're stuck between two floors, there was at least somewhere to look. It's interesting to look at people's feet and watch them walking back and forth. After I got out, I went to the gem show at that hotel, and then asked for a ramp to get out. I didn't want to risk another elevator.

Well, then I went to wait for the bus that would take a mobie. After waiting for an hour, I decided to try mobieing back. Now I was down across from the MGM Grand, and we were staying at the Riviera, maybe two miles away. Unfortunately, I didn't have a lot of battery power, but I needed to get back. So off I went, thinking "Okay, I can do this"... trust me, sometimes my thinking processes are not the best. As I attempted to go along in a straight line, at least as straight as possible, because Las Vegas is always under construction. (So much like here in Michigan... the state flower

is the orange barrel.) I had to zigzag. The sidewalks were crowded, and a lot of the visitors didn't speak English, so getting around was difficult. As I was crossing one of the streets, people were crowding me, and a white cab came around the corner at breakneck speed. I had the green light, and was starting to cross, when the cab clipped me and dumped me over. People around me started yelling and waving at the cab, and trying to help me up. Unfortunately, the people were speaking German, and I have



troubles with English. My shoulder and ribs were killing me, but no policeman could be found. Despite the number of casinos, Las Vegas is just like the rest of the country... you can never get a cop when you need one. After getting upright and calmed down somewhat, I waited for a bus at the next casino. Finally, one came in that will take the mobie, and I got back to the hotel. I called my friend in the room and asked if she was better, and told her that I was going to get something to eat and then go to the room and to bed. We had dinner, and I got to the room and had a shower to clean off some of the gravel. I took a Vicodin for the pain. Al was due in early in the morning, so I hoped I would feel better by then.

Al called... he missed his plane, but would be in later. When Al came in, I was so thrilled to see him! We had breakfast, and then we went to bed for a while. My pain was so bad that Al and I went to try to find a doctor. I had trip insurance, plus our Federal employee Blue Cross. All they wanted in Las Vegas was cash. I then tried to get our reservations changed; no luck. We just iced me down and gave me drugs to keep the pain down. I had to get through two more days. After a bad trip home, I lost my temper with my friend and gave up along friendship.

Don't make decisions while you're on pain meds.

Al took me to our doctors when we got back, and I had a torn rotator cuff in my shoulder, three cracked ribs, and a bruised hip. The first six months of that year weren't doing too well, because at the end of that month, my heart decided it didn't like to work.

Now, Worldcon that year was in Baltimore, and early in August. We had plans to go but Al's leg was so bad we weren't sure about it. We decided that we'd drive, but that I would have to do most of the driving. In order to drive, I had to be packed with pillows and ice packs. The trip was hell, but the con itself was interesting. There were some problems, but also the most exciting times of my life. I overcame something I had always suffered with, and with the support of many people got up onstage in the Masquerade. The main trouble was I had to spend a lot of time in our hotel, because the air in the convention center was toxic. I couldn't breathe. I pulled off making the costume under Al's nose, but I wasn't aware that his depression was spiraling down again. The heat was bad, and the humidity was so high that our camcorder wouldn't work. We went to Washington, D. C., but it took two days due to the heat. The trip home was hot and miserable.

Things seemed about as bad as they could be, right? Wrong, bucko! We got home. The day after, Al's uncle, who raised him, went into massive seizures. He spent a week in intensive care, and started to come around. So things were looking up... then the weirdness came into play. I fell in our bedroom and knocked myself out. Real smart... another head injury, gave myself a concussion. You know, I'm beginning to wonder what jinx planet I was born on. It was kind of a big problem to have another TBI, because it set me back quite a bit. Non-stop migraines for three months, and I couldn't find my way out of a paper bag. So, I didn't drive, or leave the house. It also meant I wasn't aware of how bad Al's depression was spiraling downhill. As my head started to ease up, I was finally able to get out in the first week of November, 1998. On Friday the 6th, I had the most overwhelming feeling of dread; it frightened me. I felt impending doom. I couldn't figure out what could be so bad coming up. Having psychic impressions isn't always helpful.

On Saturday the 7th, we had a 5th birthday party to go to, but we didn't feel like it. We both shook off the gloom and went for a while. On Sunday the 8th, we were cleaning up the house because I told Al my TBI had made it impossible for me to bend over to pick anything up. I got the

camcorder out to show the before and after shots, and was shocked at how bad Al looked and sounded. I asked him if I should make a doctor's appointment for him, and he said yes. So Monday the 9th was going to be it.

TO BE CONTINUED



The Mailbag

Brethren and sistren of the fanzine community, I have to testify.

I have to testify that I have sinned against Ghu and Roscoe... against all the BNFicent spirits who've come from Trufandom through the years... that I haven't kept my Shield of Umor bright and shiny, and I've gotten stuck in the Circle of Lassitude all too often.

And to top it off, there were LoC's I received from then till now, and I seem to have misplaced them.

So let me apologize to these goodfen by name... Lloyd Penney, Ruth and Rickey Shields, Mike Glicksohn, John Thiel, and all the others whom I might have forgotten... I humbly beg your forgiveness.

I choose not to offer any excuses. I was wrong, and I admit it.

{Publisher's note: Due to moving for four and a half months, two federal lawsuits in a year, and lots of computer problems, this publication didn't maintain good files. The

publisher has found that the Federal Government will paper you to death, so the concept of dealing with more papers is overwhelming. My only hope is that we can make this fanzine for a Worldcon tradition, if nothing else. I promised Al that we'd get an issue of the fanzine out by each Worldcon we attended, even if it meant we had to print them at the con.

This has happened fairly often.

So I hope you enjoy it, and eventually, we'll get back to more than one issue per Worldcon. So, as I collate and staple the day of the con, I say let the fun begin! We're back, bent but not broken, bloody but unbowed, and answering the clarion call.

Megan }



From Baltimore to Now by Megan

We left Baltimore to go to Washington D.C. to see the Star Wars exhibit. That seemed simple enough, but here in lies the problem, what seems simple can be a cover up for a trip in Hell. We got trapped on some kind of expressway for hours and the air-conditioning in the van gave out. I started to get severe heart pains, so I very ungraciously suggested we get the hell off this road. We finally were able to creep to an exit and got off at a shopping center and went in and got something cold to eat. My body was giving up and I told Al we better get me to either a hospital or hotel, I couldn't breathe anymore. We found a hotel, and turned the air-conditioning up high in hopes that I could breathe, since we found out that there wasn't a hospital close by. When we got into the room, Al took my blood pressure and it was critical, we tried to figure out what to do, when I collapsed. Al monitored me for hours and finally after eight hours I was able to sit up and we tried to figure out what to do. Our doctor had told us that this trip could kill me and boy we were sure that this was happening. I stayed in bed and Al tried to route up some food and drink, unfortunately, the majority of the town was under a power out. This was definitely going from bad to worse.

We got through the night and decided we better try to go home. It turned out to be a little odder, so we tried to get into D.C. I am glad to say that we made it to the exhibit and especially the art museum. If I didn't have the mobile, I couldn't have done it. My fear was that I would never be coming back, and I didn't want to miss this chance. Al was struggling with his desire to get me home and to see this once in a lifetime exhibit

It was quick, but good. I was starting to fade fast so we tried to find somewhere with air conditioning to wait out the heat before we started home. It was risky to start so late in the day, but the heat was killing me. We traveled for a few hours and took time out for a simple dinner and then found we had to take the long way home through the mountains. Al was in a panic and was determined to get me home. We finally had to give it up and hope we could get home the next day. We checked into another hotel and collapsed. By morning I wasn't any better and we were still in W. Virginia. The trip was the trip from Hell and getting worse. We struggled through Ohio and I was unable to breathe. We knew from taking my blood pressure that my heart was in bad shape. We kept getting ice and trying to cool me down. By the time we hit Marion, Ohio we doubted that I was going to come home alive. We pulled into a shopping center and got me coded down again, and slowly and painfully made our way to Michigan. After what seemed like a lifetime we reached Michigan. I have never been so happy to see a place in my life. We reached home and I collapsed, we got me to the doctor and I had had another mini-stroke, joy to the world. (that is sarcasm) I made a statement to Al that I would never travel with him again as long as I lived. He had been so confused and disoriented during the whole two weeks, and because I wasn't feeling good I had missed a really important fact, his medication for his depression, which had been dramatically reduced in July, apparently needed to be adjusted again. What I was missing was that he was struggling just to get through the day. Clinical depression is such a devious situation, it can creep up on a person and a family like a thief in the night. It is especially problematic when there is the addition of disabilities in the family to cope with. People have so little empathy as to how debilitating depression is, it is one of those invisible disabilities that can destroy a family.

After being home for a few days, we got an emergency phone call that Al's Uncle was in a massive seizure and we had to get over to the house. Al's mother had called the EMS and unc was being transported to the hospital as we got there. I spent all day in the emergency room with unc and then he was admitted for a week and released. Another trip to the suburb of Hell. Just as we thought things were going to finally slow down, I fell and knocked my self out-dumb, really dumb. I now had a new head injury and it gave me the worst headache for two months anyone can imagine. My eye would no longer close and I couldn't find my way out of a paper bag. When I was finally on the mend, I started to finally drive again on the 8 Nov 98. On 9 Nov 98 I finally got my check from the art show and was really pleased, yet had the feeling something was wrong, that same feeling I had been suffering with

the week before. I got home from my doctor's appointment on the 9 Nov 98 and my trip to the bowels of the earth was going to begin.

There had been a message on the answering machine from AI's union steward, so I called work to let him know she was trying to reach him. When the person who answered the phone told me that AI wasn't there, I asked why. She told me he had been arrested for opening the mail. My shock was totally evident and I didn't know what to say. A few minutes later and AI walked in the door. I questioned him as to what had happened and he told me the events of the morning, considering it was only 12:30pm at this time.



THE MOST DANGEROUS WEAPON...

Many people think that the primary thing about science fiction is the concept of futuristic, advanced weaponry that requires no real training to use; in fact, some think that the intelligent weapons (like the sentient tanks in Keith Laumer's *Bolo* series) are the real future of warfare.

I hate to burst the bubble of these type of people, but the most dangerous weapon is a determined human with a few simple tools, like a pocketful of sugar cubes (to foul gasoline engines), a roll of piano wire (string it up between two poles on each side of a road, and it decapitates motorcyclists or drivers of open cars), a knife (in addition to its obvious uses, it can whittle thorns into impromptu commando spikes for use against foot or mounted troops), nails and pliers (bend the nails into the same sort of form, and it takes out pneumatic tires), duct tape (need I even mention how many things you can improvise with it?), and a few other odds and ends.

Just about anything can be used as a weapon; fire extinguishers, barstools, sufficiently long pieces of dimensional lumber, windows, walls, manhole covers, trash cans, writing implements...

(A sharpened #2 pencil can be inserted forcefully between the fourth and fifth ribs, penetrating the heart muscle if angled properly.)

The main assertion is that there are no such thing as dangerous weapons; there are only dangerous people.

Think about it... aren't there people you know whom you wouldn't fear, even if they had an M-60 machine gun trained on you? And aren't there people you are deathly afraid of, even if they were buck naked and empty handed, and you were in full combat armor with every weapon you could carry?

So *hardware* isn't the main consideration of who's the more dangerous. (Nor should it be.)

As it ever has been, the ingenious mind is man's most dangerous weapon. That two pounds or so of wetware perched on top of our torsos is the "top gun" in the arms race... because whatever one man can conceive, another man can improve upon – or defeat.



For the last time, Earthling:
my NAME is Vulcan; I'm from
the PLANET Spock.

PARTING SHOTS...

WORDS

The tools of a writer are words, just as the tools of an artist are brushes, inks, paints, canvas, and pencils. The artist evokes emotion with symbolism in a visual medium; the writer doesn't have the sweep of canvas, the panorama of film, the tactility of sculpture. The writer has to work her magic on that majestic, yet curiously malleable stage known as "the imagination".

A talentless hack does nothing but fling words on paper, and is minimally interested in whatever accidental pattern may form. A careful craftsman is judicious in placement of certain elements, producing a skillfully crafted effect. The few true geniuses take infinitely more pains than the careful craftsman, and yet their work comes out so seamlessly clean, so seemingly effortless, that even a dolt with a constipated imagination thinks, for one gloriously brief moment, that he can write.

It ain't that easy, brethren and sistren.

As an example, it may never have occurred to some who try to write that they need to learn grammar and sentence structure. These are the

basics. Once you know how to use these tools, and are comfortable doing so, you can begin to experiment. You don't write music like Beethoven or Mozart right away. (Well, *Mozart* did, but that's a stupendous exception. *You* aren't Mozart.)

Knowing the difference between *infer* and *imply* is akin to knowing the difference between a cooper's hammer and a checker-faced framing hammer; each has its place, and knowing what that place is shows a command of one's tools.

There are so many more examples, each covered in style guides, such as Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style* (so much knowledge... so few pages), the *Chicago Manual of Style*, the *AP Stylebook*, to name a few.

Learn the difference between "its" and "it's". When do you use "who", and when is "whom" appropriate?

#

Still, there are bits of esoterica that someone doesn't *need*, but I think they're nice to have. A command of the subjunctive, for example, shows that this writer knows how to use a verb to convey precise meaning. Using absolute clauses, while not common, is a sign of extended perception of the functions of language. (Having said this, if I didn't provide an example, I would indeed be remiss.)

Looking for the example of an absolute clause in the previous paragraph? "Having said this" is the example.

I could go on. Fortunately for you, I decline to.

Nonetheless, I couldn't refuse to provide an example of someone whose mastery of our mother tongue was, and remains to this day, legendary. Sir Winston Churchill, when taken to task by a strict grammarian for ending sentences with prepositions, made the following observation:

"This is the sort of arrant pedantry up with which I will not put."

What more can I say?



The View From The Middle

by Megan

Did you ever wonder what view children have of the world? Well I can give a fair estimate because of being in a wheelchair or a mobie.

First off you are invisible to those who are taller than four feet as to picking butts, scratching crotches and farting. Yeah, I know that this sounds crude and rude, but the truth is I have had it happen over the years more than I care to count, and the most interesting thing is no one seems aware of the behavior of the norms. Now granted I have had a fresh dose of this after being at the world con, and most of

these people are this way all of the time, and I am not blaming fandom for the rudeness, it's just that is the latest reminder for me.

The ultimate insult is when someone farts in your face and they don't even think they should say excuse me, come on, aren't there any manners in this world? Now granted it doesn't just offend my olfactorys, it also makes me wonder about how these people are teaching their children to behave in public.

I can't tell you how many people, men and women have pulled at their crotches and yanked their butts while they were standing in line in front of me or in an elevator with me. I am aware that an elevator is sort of a no-person zone, no one is supposed to know or acknowledge anyone else, but gheeze.

I do know that many of us, (disabled and children) have been hit in the head with umbrellas, packages, and whatever else someone is carrying and they don't even recognize the injury they are creating.

It is also so bothersome when, I wait my turn in line somewhere, i.e. the elevator or a door and as I am coming thru someone jumps over the back or front of my unit, just like when mothers have babies in strollers. You would think if these people can walk that there is enough gray matter in their skulls to see how rude they are being.

Okay, cranky time over.... Just sometimes have to get it off my chest.



What Happens Now?

I'm taking this opportunity to let people know what I missed and didn't miss, but couldn't find...

Lloyd, we did vote for you. Both of us.

Ruth & Rickey, we hope you recuperated well, and perhaps we'll see you at Chicago.

Robert Lichtman, yes, we are trading. That's why you're getting this.

John Thiel, I have misplaced your letters. The fault is mine; *mea maxima culpa*.

Mike, it was inexcusably careless to lose your LoC. I will do my utmost to keep it from happening again.

Knarley, yes, there will be more *Reality Checks*. As soon as I write them.

E. B., I know it was not politic to not respond to you. This was not my intention; I've been trying to juggle what needs to be done with only twenty-four hours in a day.

Guy, we ain't dead... at least, not yet.

Charles, I apologize for not using the reviews, but we did use your photo.

And so, with the close of this number, come the faint and vaporous dreams of the next one, sometime in that hazy horizon called the future, whenever the hell that may be.

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See you next time!