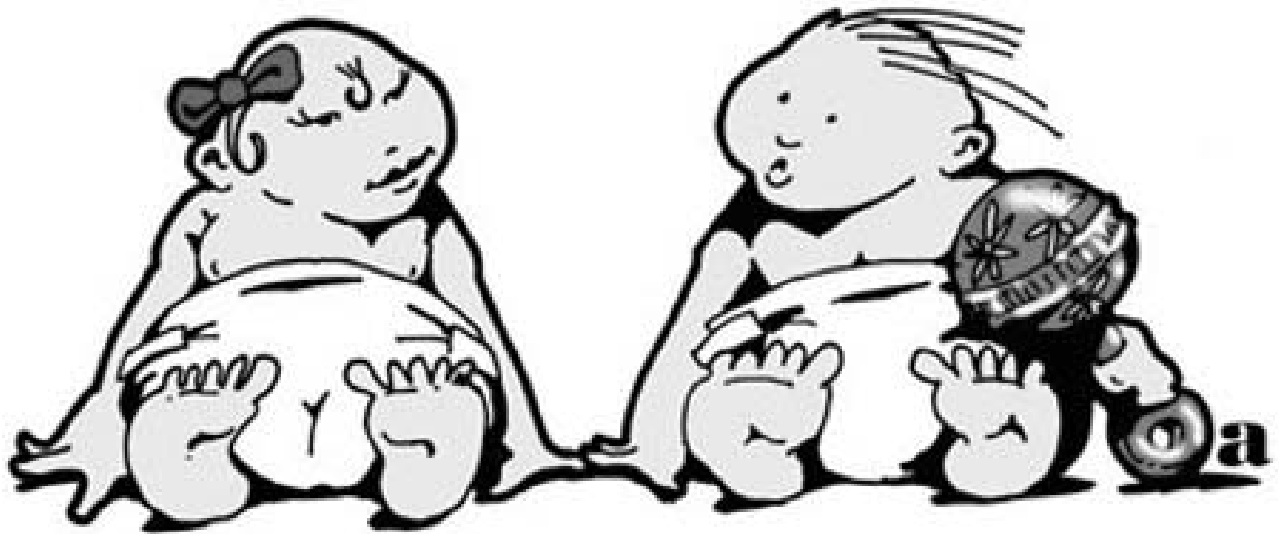


V

isions of Paradise

#107: The Passing Scene



Visions of Paradise

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Artwork

Alan White.....cover

Out of the Depths

Perhaps I should subtitle **Visions of Paradise**: *the fanzine with evolving formats*. In the past few years it has gone from quarterly to semi-annual to back-to-back formats.

Recently I was busy collating copies of **Visions of Paradise**, thinking back to how inconvenient it is copying them at school, thinking ahead to mailing all 80+ copies, and I realized how much more time I spend on publishing duties than I really wish to spend. Not to mention the cost of the mailings.

So I've decided it is time to leave the 20th century behind and eliminate the tedious paper mailing of each issue of **VoP**. Beginning with this issue, non-FAPA readers of **VoP** can obtain a copy two ways:

- I am posting the entire **VoP** at *efanzine.com*;
- readers who prefer can receive a copy attached to their email.

I will send each reader an email notice whenever **VoP** is posted at *efanzine.com*. Because I do not need to worry about printing/collating/ mailing anymore, I am also changing the zine from three components each quarter (*Passing Scene*, *Wondrous Stories*, *Halcyon Days*) to one component each month. Most likely, I will alternate *PS*, *WS* and *Halcyon Days*, although hopefully there will be some flexibility in the overall schedule, perhaps even some issues with different formats entirely.

I'm hoping this will eliminate a lot of the tedium of publishing a fanzine, giving me more time to concentrate on the parts I love, the writing and editing. Hopefully I will not lose too many readers by going online exclusively, but posting all three components at *efanzine.com*, instead of just *Wondrous Stories*, might actually pick up a few more readers in exchange. We'll see...

*

I keep in touch with developments in the science fiction field through **Locus**—which is must-reading for anybody who is a serious fan—as well as through websites such as *Locus Online* and *SF Signal*. But I also enjoy reading historical fiction, and the best way to keep in touch with developments there is by joining the *Historical Novel Society*.

The HNS runs a website at <http://www.historicalnovelsociety.org/> which publishes a regular newsletter distributed via email, and also features lists of upcoming fiction. But the real benefit of joining the HNS is their two regular magazines.

Solander is a semi-annual zine containing articles and interviews, much of it fascinating stuff. **Historical Novels Review** is published quarterly and contains 10 pages similar to **Solander** followed by 40+ pages devoted to reviews of recent historical fiction. The reviews are generally short, 5 or 6 to a page, and do not go into the type of critical depth found in **Locus**, but they are still a valuable resource for readers looking for historical fiction to read. The

reviews are categorized primarily by era, the current issue starting with *Ancient & Prehistoric*, followed by *Biblical*, *1st Century*, *3rd Century*, etc. After 13 pages of *20th Century*—which I generally find the least interesting reviews overall—the last few sections are *Multi-Period*, *Time-Slip*, *Alternate History*, and *Historical Fantasy*. Happily, the editors of HNR (who seem to be part-time volunteers) seat themselves happily in the midst of genre fiction, having no [dis]illusions about being literature rather than primarily story-telling.

One fascinating comment I saw in a recent issue of **HNR** was a statement by an author to the effect that alternate history was first claimed by science fiction as one of its sub-genres, but is now accepted as a sub-genre of historical fiction. I found that comment amusing since I believe both genres are wrong to claim alternate history, that it is actually a distinct genre with overlaps in both areas. I guess that is part of the “definition” problem which haunts both science fiction and historical fiction and is primarily a marketing issue rather than anything really important.

If you enjoy historical fiction, I recommend the HNS website and its two publications.

*

My “Books To Read” list currently contains 99 books as follows:

- 24 science fiction novels
- 14 collections / anthologies of short sf
- 29 historical fiction novels
- 3 collections / anthologies of short historical fiction
- 9 nonfiction books
- 11 nonfiction collections

My estimate is that I have read 20 books or magazine serials so far this year, which should reach 25-30 books for the entire year. Assuming I continue to buy 18-20 new books per year, and my reading pace stays relatively unchanged, I will read at most 10 of those “Books To Read” each year, which will take me 9 years to whittle the list down to 0 books. Somehow I doubt that will ever happen.

*

I have some philosophical problems with the Hugo Awards, but they still interest me nonetheless. My main gripe is that people who attend the World SF Convention are not necessarily “readers” per se. Even some long-time sf fans I know make comments occasionally that they “rarely read sf any more.” Yet all these people are eligible to vote for the Hugo Awards, and while I assume that not all of them do, many times the results are so skewed towards “popular” books and name recognition as to make the awards meaningless.

That being said, I think that the Hugo fiction awards the past two years have shown little of those biases, and actually seemed to reflect the opinions of a fairly-well-read voting populace. Reminds me of the good-old days of Hugo voting in the 60s and 70s before worldcons were

inundated with media fans.

I was also impressed by Neil Gaiman's classy move of withdrawing **Anasazi Boys** from the Best Novel ballot since he has already won three Hugo Awards. I believe that Hugo Awards should be shared, so it would be nice if other people such as Charles N. Brown and Dave Langford, who have each won 27 Hugo Awards, showed a trace of the same class and allowed other people to share in the categories which they have each been dominating for so many years.

In **VoP #105** I made my predictions for the Nebula Awards and the Hugo Awards, so it is time to see how many winners I actually predicted (if any!):

Category	Nebula prediction	Nebula winner
Best Novel	Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell	Camouflage
Best Novella	Magic for Beginners	Magic for Beginners
Best Novelette	The Faery Handbag	The Faery Handbag
Best Short Story	Singing My Sister Down	I Live With You

Category	Hugo prediction	Hugo winner
Best Novel	Spin	Spin
Best Novella	Burn	Inside Job
Best Novelette	The King of Where-I-Go	Two Hearts
Best Short Story	Down Memory Lane	Tk'tk'tk

I batted .500 for the Nebula Awards, but only .250 for the Hugo Awards, a composite batting average of .375. That is actually not bad and hopefully better than random guessing would have been.

I am very pleased with some of the above winners. "The Faery Handbag" was a wonderful story, much better, in my opinion, than the more popular "Magic for Beginners" which, while well written, was kind of fuzzy in what the heck was actually happening. **Spin** was an outstanding novel, well-deserving of its award. "Inside Job" was my favorite of the nominees for Best Novella, although it was not my favorite novella of 2005; that was Jeffrey Ford's "The Cosmology of the Wider World".

Is it too soon to start politicking for next year's nominees?

*

I was a member of the History Book Club about 30 years ago, and I still have some fine books I purchased back then, such as Norman Cantor's **Medieval History**, Barbara Tuchman's **A Distant Mirror**, and Jonathan Sumption's **Pilgrimage**. So when I got a flyer in the mail from them offering four free books with no required purchases after joining, I read through the flyer and was impressed with some of the fascinating books they are currently offering. When I went to their website, I found several even more interesting books.

So this morning I winnowed through the possibilities and selected four books which I ordered as my initial offering:

- E.L. Doctorow's novel about the Civil War **The March**; Doctorow's **Ragtime** is one of my all-time favorite books
- Shan Sa's novel of 7th century China **Empress**; this book and her Nanking Massacre novel **The Girl Who Played Go** are both on my *Recommended Books* list
- a biography of Charlemagne, one of the most important figures in medieval Europe
- Frank Delaney's **Ireland**, a novelization of the history of the Emerald Isle.

The Passing Scene

[For newcomers to this portion, a cast of characters can be found at the end of the journal excerpts]

Italy trip

Sunday, June 25: Drew drove Jean, Mark and me to the airport for our overnight flight to Roma, followed by a connecting flight to Napoli. We were served two meals during the flight, including a dinner of chicken, ziti, capricola with cold beans, and fruit.

Monday, June 26: We experienced a bit of the fabled Italian chaos at the Roma airport where we sat at a gate for an hour before everybody was abruptly rushed to another gate before boarding a shuttle taking us to the plane itself. Fortunately, we arrived in Napoli without any problem, and the cab ride to the hotel was not particularly scary, in spite of the horror stories we heard about Napoli traffic. I wore my money belt the entire trip because of a reputed pickpocketing epidemic in Italy, but we had no problems with crime our entire two weeks there.

Fei Fei's parents arrived in Napoli at midnight and are staying at the same hotel. Her mother was very tired and resting, so Fei Fei came to our room to discuss plans for the week. Our first day was a relaxing introduction to life in Napoli. Since Napoli is basically built in a

mountainside, Hotel Paradiso's lobby is on the top floor with the rooms below it. The hotel had an absolutely gorgeous view of the harbor with Mount Vesuvius in the distance. I spent time sitting in their lounge watching the view and reading.

In midafternoon Silvio drove us to the waterfront where we walked awhile, ate dinner (we had rigatoni, Mark had veal in white wine sauce), and enjoyed the view. We took the cable car up the side of the mountain back to the hotel.

Tuesday, June 27: The hotel had a nice cold buffet breakfast. Afterwards we took the cable car to the Metro which we rode to Piazza Cavour. We walked from there down Via Toledo all the way to the harbor, side-tracking through very narrow, winding side streets along the way. The closeness of the dwellings on those streets reminded me a bit of Chinatown in NYC. It was an incredibly-scenic walk, old-style European buildings interspersed with gorgeous churches and numerous monuments, highlighted by the square with the statue of Dante. Since it was the shopping district, we saw many interesting stores, including one road filled entirely with book-stores. Napoli is not a tourist town, so we did not encounter many English-speakers along the way. We stopped for lunch at a take-out store where Jean and Mark got pizza and I got a calzone.

We were invited to dinner at the home of Silvio's parents, along with Fei Fei's parents and Catharine, their friend from Cal Tech who, unfortunately, had her wallet stolen out of her bag almost immediately upon reaching Napoli Airport. Their home is in a typical Napoli building built into the mountain along steep, winding roads, but it has a gorgeous view overlooking the harbor. Silvio's father Gey (pronounced *Jay*) is a retired head engineer of TI's European operations who now spends his time programming video games with the help of Silvio who writes the original mysteries. Their first game was entitled *A Quiet Weekend in Capri*, and they sold copies of it on their website until they won an award and sold rights to an American company. Now Gey is finishing their second game, so Jean, Mark and I read roles for the game, which was interesting. Gey loves science fiction, especially Robert Sheckley and Jack Vance, so he and I discussed sf for awhile. He showed us two short sf videos he made starring his wife, including one based on Sheckley's "Seventh Victim." They were quite well done.

Dinner was excellent, including several antipasto, eggplant parmigiana, croquettes, rice balls, and ziti. I grew up eating Neapolitan food, so this was a particularly good meal for me.

Wednesday, June 28: Today Silvio, Shun (Fei Fei's dad), Jean, Mark and I visited Pompeii. Fei Fei stayed with her mom who was still tired from the plane flight. We spent four hours walking in the hot sun exploring everyday classical Roman life. It was a very dusty place, and we smelled ashes much of the time, giving us a vicarious feel for Mount Vesuvius hovering over the city. Shun and Mark took lots of pictures during the trip.

Afterwards we stopped for lunch at one of the thousands of pizzerias which seem to dot Italy. Neapolitan pizza is my favorite type, being heavier on the tomato sauce rather than cheese, and we also ordered a plate of tomato and mozzarella. The three of us returned to the harbor for supper where I ate a dinner of penne with fresh tomatoes, while Jean and Mark had rigatoni.

Thursday, June 29: We took the ferry to Capri along with Silvio, Fei Fei, and her parents. Capri Town is a medieval-type town also built on top of a mountain. Its roads are so narrow cars are not permitted anywhere in the town, and only taxis and buses can go as far as the main square. Much of the town seemingly consists of one continuous building built along paths that are narrower, windier and steeper than those in Napoli. It is an absolutely gorgeous place oozing history everywhere you turn. It is also very crowded with both residents and tourists from all over the world, and filled with shops, hotels and restaurants. Prices are more expensive than in Napoli. Pizza and water cost €20 for lunch. For dinner Mark had lasagna, Jean had ravioli and I had tortellini for €41. Of course it was all delicious food!

Our Hotel Da Georgio was quaint without any air-conditioning, which was a bit uncomfortable since the weather was very hot and humid. Silvio's aunt Grizella told us that it was more like late-July or August weather than late June. Lucky us!

The three of us ran into Catharine on one of our walks, so the four of us walked to the very top of the mountain to visit Tiberius' summer residence.

Friday, June 30: *The wedding reception!* It was held in the most opulent hotel in Capri Town, a gorgeous place with rooms costing €400 per night (nobody attending the wedding actually stayed there). Fei Fei, Silvio, and their parents walked to the hotel from his parents' house (which overlooks the hotel where Fei Fei's parents were staying), looking so much like a wedding procession they had their pictures taken by both friends and random tourists. First we spent an hour outside having canapes and hors d'oeuvres, then went inside for an eight course meal: lobster, rigatoni with crabmeat, creamy risotto with zucchini, filet of fish with vegetables, sorbet, veal cutlets, wedding cake and pastries. It was all delicious and so much food to eat. I loved every bit of it! There was no music/dancing as in American weddings, but instead several speakers who discussed Fei Fei and Silvio. The first speaker was Pietro Pirona, who was their advisor at Cal Tech, and who spoke in both Italian and English about their talents and personalities. The next speaker was a priest at the Catholic high school Silvio attended. Finally, Silvio's uncle spoke, and nearly broke down with emotion a few times.

Other entertainment consisted of two slide shows, one of Fei Fei's Tibet pictures and another of slides Silvio took in Chengdu last year accompanied by both Chinese and Neapolitan music to the theme of *so close yet so far*. It was very effective. Finally there was singing by Gey (he plays and sings in a band), the female lead singer in his band, and Fei Fei's parents singing Chinese songs. All in all, it was a very enjoyable reception.

Afterwards Mark went with Fei Fei and Silvio to an open-air movie theater to watch the World Cup game, which Italy won, of course. Jean and I were sitting at a waterside restaurant eating gelato when the entire island erupted 2 minutes into the game. Italy had scored the winning goal almost immediately.

Saturday, July 1: Jean, Mark and I took the bus to the town of Anacapri, which is a more modern version of Capri Town with roads not nearly as windy, narrow, or claustrophobic, yet still having considerable charm. Mark and Jean took the chairlift to the top of the mountain where they had a great view of the island. Not being comfortable with heights, I walked through

the tourist section of town instead. Later we ran into Fei Fei, Silvio, Pietro and his wife in town.

Back in Capri Town we walked down the mountain to the natural arch, enjoying some fabulous natural scenery and many gorgeous views of the sea. We ate a calzone for lunch and a slice of pizza for a post-walk snack. Afterwards we went to Silvio's house where he helped us change all our reservations for the week. The original plan was for the six of us (including Ying and Shun) to travel to Roma/ Florence/Venice together, but that was cancelled because Silvio's family doctor said Ying should not travel for awhile. So Jean and I canceled Florence and Venice entirely, deciding to stay in Roma the entire week. We also cancelled our hotel reservation near the outskirts of the city since we had expected to be traveling by van, and made new reservations near *termini* (the train station) in the center of the tourist area of the city. Those plans worked out fine since we loved our hotel and its location, which enabled us to get to most places we wanted to go by walking, yet not too far from either the train station or the Metro.

Afterwards, the nine of us (including both Fei Fei's and Silvio's parents) took a slow, leisurely hour-long walk up the mountain, enjoying the natural scenery and houses built in the same style as those near the center of town, yet mostly individual buildings, many of which had gardens inside their walls. We ended up at a very nice restaurant where 30 of the wedding guests gathered for a second mini-reception. We were there from 8:30 pm until 1:30 am eating rigatoni with shrimp, green rigatoni with cheese, fish, and dessert.

Afterwards, all 30 of us took a leisurely walk back down the mountain to Capri Town, the size of the group steadily diminishing as we stopped periodically to bid farewell to people at their houses, or lanes leading to their houses. It reminded me of a medieval procession, *sans* candles, which I really enjoyed. When we reached Silvio's parents' house, Gey flattered us by saying that he and his wife have a group of 30 friends on Capri which now has been expanded by 4 more people, those being Jean, me, Ying and Shun. That was very nice of him.

Sunday, July 2: We took the ferry back to Napoli where we stayed overnight at Hotel Ausonia on the waterfront. On the outside the hotel is a rundown old apartment building, but a tiny wire-mesh elevator leads to the hotel which occupies a small part of the building. It was very well-kept and pleasant with a nautical theme. The entire bathroom was a giant tiled shower which was fascinating. We spent part of the evening walking along the harbor watching many people swimming, sunbathing, boating, and walking along the pier. We found a large flea market and huge park and museum. After dark it all became a carnival with thousands of people enjoying the slow-paced weekend night life.

We had another typical Italian dinner (the type I never grew the least bored with at all, although Jean was glad to return to non-Italian food at the end): ensalata verdi for Jean and me, mozzarella y prosciutti for Mark, rigatoni a la mamma for all three, l'aqua without gas. All the water is bottled with options of carbonated (gas) or not.

Monday, July 3: We took the train to Roma and walked to Hotel Dorico, which is owned by a little old Italian man who has the cutest dog. It is nicely-kept and its breakfast, while not buffet-style, was similar to the breakfast at Hotel Paradiso: brioche, hard roll, soft cheese spread,

yogurt, juice, cereal, pound cake, coffee or cappuccino.

Since this was Mark's last day with us, we took a grand tour of the major sights of Roma, spending enjoyable several hours walking to the Coliseum, Palatine Hill, Trevi Fountain, and Spanish Steps. There were thousands of tourists wandering the streets with open maps and cameras, so we always felt safe wherever we went, no matter how late it was. Nearly everybody in Roma speaks English, especially at the restaurants and pizzerias, which was convenient. For lunch we had Roman pizza which has more cheese and less sauce than Neapolitan pizza.

Tuesday, July 4: We took Mark to the airport for his 9:55am flight home. He did not want to miss a second week of his summer internship. Afterwards Jean and I visited the Roman Musee which contains many ancient sculptures and paintings. While we were touring the streets, we found a street of bookstores selling only used books. They had copies of the Italian edition of **Galaxy** from the 50s and 60s, but I restricted myself to buying a copy of Clifford Simak's **City** in Italian with the title **Anna senza fine**. The Italian word for "science fiction" is *fantascienza*, a good word since it includes the mention of it being "fantasy" rather than merely "fiction" which could refer to mainstream fiction about science.

Jean wanted to take a break from Italian food, so we ate at a Chinese restaurant which was similar to American versions with two exceptions: they offered a mixed salad, which Jean and I split, and they called their "lo mein" noodles "spaghetti". We ordered lo mein and fried rice, both with chicken, shrimp, and pork, and both of which were very good.

We took another visit to Trevi Fountain, which is somewhat of a gathering spot for tourists in Roma. We had both fallen in love with gelato, but when we tried to buy some in the evening the World Cup semi-final versus Germany had started and nobody would interrupt their viewing to sell as any gelato. We were in Italy for the entire second round of the World Cup, and the Italian mania was incredible to behold whenever Italy played. Every time Italy scored a goal, the entire country exploded with horns and cheers, and after they won a game nearly everybody was either in the streets (or the Circo Massimo when in Roma) cheering and waving flags. We enjoyed being there for the tournament, especially Italy's incredible 120 minute semi-final game against Germany. The final game against France was held the night we returned home, but of course we watched it and rooted rabidly for Italy, which won the championship in a shootout.

Wednesday, July 5: We took the Metro to the Vatican Museum in the morning, but the queue stretched around two blocks, so instead we visited Santa Maria Maggiore, a very impressive church. That was one of the most impressive parts of Roma, the fact that nearly every block has some incredible Roman or Renaissance structure worth visiting. It was worthwhile just walking randomly and stopping to see whatever looked interesting. Rarely were such trips disappointing.

We had a light lunch of pita with tomato/cheese/ lettuce, then walked to Piazza Navona, one of the many plazas in the city, nearly all of which have gorgeous fountains. Novona is an artist's haven, filled with artists selling their work, much of which was very good. From there we visited the Pantheon and Victor Emmanuel Monument (celebrating 50 years of Risorgimenti; the Romans are not too fond of it, referring to it as the "wedding cake"). Jean took a lot of pictures which, combined with Mark's pictures, gave us a wonderful record of the trip.

Thursday, July 6: At noon we returned to the Vatican Museum carrying lunches of ham-and-cheese pita sandwiches. The queue was less than one block long, and we were surprised to see two friends from Budd Lake standing on it. The museum was absolutely incredible, four miles of ancient Roman, medieval, and Renaissance sculpture and artwork which took us three hours to walk. The highlight was a very long corridor with incredible frescoes on the ceiling, culminating at Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel. Then we went to Saint Peter's Square, which was the most impressive piazza in Roma, and Saint Peter's Basilica was the most impressive church as well. We both mused at how much money the Vatican has, and how powerful it obviously was during the medieval and Renaissance years to be able to afford to build such structures.

For dinner I ate minestrone soup with rice and potato, and tortellini. Jean had a mixed salad and ravioli.

Friday, July 7: This morning we climbed Michelangelo's stairs to the top of Capitol Hill which offered a wonderful view of the surrounding city. Then we crossed the Tiber River and wandered upriver until we reached—where else?—Trevi Fountain. We had pizza and a rice ball for lunch.

That afternoon Silvio, Fei Fei and her parents arrived in Roma. Her mother had recovered enough to take at least a portion of the “grand tour” of Italy. We met them for an excellent dinner at 9pm. I ate rigatoni y pomodore (I think I've gotten a bit predictable in my meals), but I also ate some of Jean's noodles with mushrooms and Fei Fei's sliced meat, both of which were good. Then we bid each other another farewell and said we will all meet next year in New Jersey.

Saturday, July 8: This morning we took the *Dolce Vita Walk* recommended in Rick Steves' guidebook, the best part of which was the fabulous Piazza del Popolo. In the afternoon we took the train to the Roma Airport Hilton where we spent the night awaiting our flight home in the morning. I did not like the hotel at all, since it was an attempt to emulate expensive American hotels, with none of the ambiance of the Italian hotels where we had stayed previously.

Sunday, July 9: The flight home was tiresome, with none of the expectation of the initial flight to Italy two weeks earlier. We arrived home to piles of mail and newspaper, although the house was in good shape since Andy and Mark were home prior to us. I will end here with a few last images of Italy:

- Italian food is as good as I knew it would be. I could never grow tired of Italian food;
- gelato was absolutely delicious. I think I ate more “ice cream” (without any cream, of course) in two weeks than I normally eat in two months;
- Silvio's father Gey is a really nice person, bright, talented, urbane, and a workaholic. I was really glad to meet him, and form a strong, if very brief, bonding;
- like his dad, Silvio is also bright and talented, incredibly eager to help people, and totally without any ego at all. I was happy to get to know him a bit better as well, and I hope that when he and Fei Fei return to New Jersey we can become even closer;
- experiencing World Cup fever in Italy was an incredible experience I was pleased to

- share;
- I really enjoyed the lifestyle on Capri and would enjoy being a part of it myself, moreso than the faster lifestyles of Napoli and Roma; did I mention that one night Jean saw a girl in a totally see-through dress? ☺
 - drivers were crazy in Napoli, although a bit less so in Roma, with motorbikes being scarier than cars. We never really felt threatened crossing the streets though;
 - we saw one girl on a motorbike skid on wet cobblestone and fall off the bike. Immediately a half-dozen men on the sidewalk rushed into the road to help her. Jean claims it was only because she was a cute girl, but I prefer to attribute it to the caring nature of Italians;
 - the Italian people were always kind and accepting to us, even in non-tourist Napoli, although moreso in Capri and Roma.

It was a terrific trip to Italy and, while expensive overall, it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience that I definitely should not have passed by. I will cherish these memories for the rest of my life.

Cast of Characters

Andy	our older son, a senior at East Stroudsburg University
Drew	Andy & Mark's close friend, our mythical "third son"
Fei Fei	former student of mine, now a close family friend I refer to as my "daughter"
Gey	Silvio's father
Jean	my wife
Mark	our younger son, a senior at The College of NJ
Shun and Ying	Fei Fei's parents
Silvio	Fei Fei's husband

On the Lighter Side

From George Carlin...

COWS

Is it just me, or does anyone else find it amazing that our government can track a cow born in Canada almost three years ago, right to the stall where she sleeps in the state of Washington, and they tracked her calves to their stalls, but they are unable to locate 11 million illegal aliens wandering around our country. Maybe we should give them each a cow.

CONSTITUTION

They keep talking about drafting a Constitution for Iraq. Why don't we just give them ours? It was written by a lot of really smart guys, it's worked for over 200 years and we're not using it anymore.

TEN COMMANDMENTS

The real reason that we can't have the Ten Commandments in a Courthouse? You cannot post "Thou Shalt Not Steal," "Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery" and "Thou Shall Not Lie" in a building full of lawyers, judges and politicians...It creates a hostile work environment.

MARTHA STEWART

"Boy, I feel a lot safer now that she's behind bars. O.J. Simpson and Kobe Bryant are still walking around; Osama Bin Laden too, but they take the one woman in America willing to cook, clean, and work in the yard, and haul her ass off to jail."

*

The Washington Post's Style Invitational once again asked readers to take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting, or changing one letter, and supply a new definition. Here are this year's winners:

Reintarnation - Coming back to life as a hillbilly.

Bozone - The substance surrounding stupid people that stops bright ideas from penetrating. The bozone layer, unfortunately, shows little sign of breaking down in the near future.

Foreploy - Any misrepresentation about yourself for the purpose of getting laid.

Cashtration - The act of buying a house, which renders the subject financially impotent for an indefinite period.

Giraffiti - Vandalism spray-painted very, very high.

Sarchasm - The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn't get it.

Inoculatte - To take coffee intravenously when you are running late.

Hipatitis - Terminal coolness.

Osteopornosis - A degenerate disease.

Karmageddon - It's like, when everybody is sending off all these really bad vibes, right? And then, like, the earth explodes and it's like, a serious bummer.

Glibido - All talk and no action.

Dopeler Effect - The tendency of stupid ideas to seem smarter when they come at you rapidly.

Beelzebug - Satan in the form of a mosquito that gets into your bedroom at three in the morning

and cannot be cast out.

Caterpallor - The color you turn after finding half a grub in the fruit you're eating.

Ignoranus - A person who's both stupid and an asshole.