

VISIONS OF PARADISE

#129



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Artwork

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The Passing Scene

May 2008

As usual, I attended the annual *National Honor Society* induction, one of my two favorite events of the school year (the other being the *Senior Award Ceremony*) and I enjoyed it thoroughly. While there I had visits from two former students, Winston, who is finishing his 6th year at Rutgers Pharmacy School and moving to Tennessee for an internship, and Padma, who recently sent me her office IM address, where she is working in NYC. She and I have been chatting several nights per week, as well as several hours on weekends, which is much more frequently than when she was a college student. After she graduated college last May we had less contact than ever for nearly a year, and I began wondering if she was going to drift away as most of my students do after college. I am very pleased that has not happened, as she was one of my closest students and is now becoming one of my closest friends.

School was very stressful lately with the arrival of the AP tests. Most of my students in AP Statistics and AP Calculus were ready, but not all of them, so I pushed them hard the last two weeks, including four days of mock-AP tests, to force them to spend more time studying. By the two days of the tests themselves—AP Statistics was Tuesday afternoon followed by AP Calculus BC Wednesday morning, a very tough schedule since half the students taking them were the same—there was very little more I could do for them except stay late Monday and Tuesday afternoons to give them a bit of last minute advice and confidence boosting.

Spending time helping students is what I enjoy most about teaching, and since I primarily teach honors students I get more pleasure working with my students than most teachers do. Monday and Tuesday afternoons before the AP tests I stayed until 4:30 helping students study for AP Statistics and AP Calculus BC. Around 4:00 Monday Shiva, Hanna, Sabrina, Joy and Li Li came to give me a rundown on the AP Stat test. AP Calculus was a morning test, so I got to hear the annual moaning about it in class.

Admittedly this was a very stressful time for my students and me as well, but I would not give it up for anything. Every year I am reminded why I bypassed the opportunity to become district math supervisor.

I have decided to start a third blog at Livejournal where I will post some of my fiction. Not only will it make my better stuff available to a very small audience, but it will encourage me to write more fiction so I will have stuff to post. I recently posted my two-part political satire “Slick Willie’s Used Car World,” an alternate history about Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton.

I created a *google.reader* account which enables me to scan various websites easily each day instead of going to each one individually. I wish I could let people subscribe to my blogs using an RSS subscription, but Blogger does not offer than option. Kate has done some research and found a possible website which might help adapt my blog to RSS, so I will try to do it (although I am not hopeful, since I am anything but technologically-savvy). I would consider switching to another blog, but all my archives are at blogger.

The massive earthquake in China affected Chengdu where Fei Fei's parents live. They were among many thousands of people who feared staying indoors any longer than necessary in case of aftershocks, which arrived a few days afterwards. That is certainly scary, and I hope there are no further seismic activity there. Her parents have been friendly with some people in a nearby village, including a bunch of small children. That village was right in the center of the earthquake, and since it occurred her parents have had absolutely no contact with anybody in the village. They are really worried about the poor children.

Mark, Kate, Jean, and Kate's mom and younger sister spent several days visiting potential banquet halls for their wedding next summer, eventually choosing Perona Farms for their wedding reception next July 10th. It is a very nice restaurant offering lots of good food, but the price is fairly reasonable since they are having the wedding on a Friday in July, when banquet halls have more trouble selling accommodations than they do on Saturdays in the Spring and Fall. So now begins the year of endless planning, haha.

My left arm has been bothering me for about a month now around the elbow. Some days it feels like it is getting better, but other days it is worse. If it does not improve considerably by the end of school, I will go see a doctor, something I avoid doing unless absolutely necessary. Partly that is a reaction to my father who was such a hyperchondriac that he visited doctors several times per week the last two decades of his life. I swore I would never become like that. (Please avoid the lectures here: I go to doctors when I feel it is necessary, just not as a regular habit)

I talked on the phone with my photographer friend who wants to get together to go over his pictures of Route 46 so I can start researching and writing the book this summer. That would be a good idea since I will be relatively free this summer writing-wise.

May 22nd was Jean's 60th birthday. Mine will be in August. Neither one of us understands how we got to that age so fast, and we certainly don't feel 60. In fact, I have been told several times by teachers in the past few years that I am obviously nowhere near retirement age. One teacher even told me I must be in my late 40s! That was great for my ego, haha.

But since age is pretty much a relative thing, as Ceil continues to prove year after year, I guess the number does not really matter. For Jean's birthday I bought her the newest volume in Alexander McCall Smith's series of *Ladies' No. 1 Detective Agency*; Mark bought her a suncatcher and Andy got a Paul Simon Greatest Hits cd. The following weekend, when we were all home during the dinner hour, we went to Charley Brown's restaurant for Jean's birthday dinner.

Last year an English teacher at my school retired so she and her husband could enjoy their retirement years together while they are still healthy enough to do things. Thursday her husband died unexpectedly of a heart attack! That frightened a lot of people at school who have been thinking about retirement but for one reason or another have been putting it off. It certainly reminded me of the necessity of lowering my stress, meditating and exercising more, and consider how many more years I should continue the stressful grind of teaching.

I am not a particularly sociable person for several reasons. One particular reason for that is that I am fairly obsessed with my work, whether my schoolwork or my writing and reading out of school. If I am not accomplishing something—or reading, the only exception!—I feel very guilty that I am wasting needless time. There are several people at school with whom I am fairly friendly, but I never leave my office to go chat with them even though, if I encounter them in passing, or they come to visit me, I enjoy our conversations thoroughly. Quite frankly, I am surprised (but pleased) that they stay friendly with me.

I have quite a few correspondents, both former students and fellow sf fans, but I am a notoriously bad correspondent who has a difficult time dragging myself away from "serious" writing to do "frivolous" writing. And yet I really like all those people, and if I do not write to them regularly— or in some cases, IM them—I might easily lose them, which would really sadden me. But no matter how much I determine to be a better correspondent, somehow it rarely happens.



Listmania

Periodically during the past 40 years I have ranked the fiction I read from A (highest) to D (lowest). Here is a listing of the books I have given A rankings during this period. Keep in mind that for long periods of time I did not rank books, so there are definitely omissions to this list. Perhaps someday I'll sort the top 50 books into a ranking by preference.

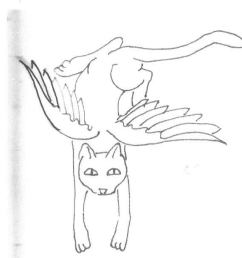
Aldiss, Brian W.	Helliconia Spring
Anderson, Poul	Tau Zero
Iain M. Banks	Look To Windward
Barrett, Andrea	Voyage of the Narwhal
Baxter, Stephen	Resplendent
Benford, Gregory	Timescape

Bester, Alfred	The Stars My Destination
Bishop, K.J.	The Etched City
Bishop, Michael	Brittle Innings / No Enemy But Time / Unicorn Mountain
Bradley, Marion Z	The Mists of Avalon / The Forbidden Tower
Card, Orson Scott	Ender's Game / Speaker for the Dead
Carroll, Jonathan	The Bones of the Moon
Chabon, Michael	Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay / The Yiddish Policemen's Union
Cherryh, C.J.	Brothers of Earth / Downbelow Station
Cowper, Richard	The Road to Corlay
Crowley, John	Little, Big
Denton, Bradley	Buddy Holly is Alive and Well...
Delany, Samuel R.	Nova
Doctorow, E.L.	Ragtime
Farmer, Philip J	To Your Scattered Bodies Go / The Fabulous Riverboat
Ford, Jeffrey	The Shadow Year
Hegi, Ursula	Stones From The River
Kay, Guy Gavriel	Last Light of the Sun
Keyes, Daniel	Flowers for Algernon
King, Ross	Michelangelo and the Pope's Ceiling
King, Stephen	The Shining
Kress, Nancy	An Alien Light
Le Guin, Ursula K	Left Hand of Darkness / The Dispossessed
Lynn, Elizabeth A.	The Sardonyx Net
Martin, Geo R.R.	The Armageddon Rag
McDevitt, Jack	Infinity Beach / Seeker
McIntyre, Vonda	The Moon and the Sun
Merle, Robert	Malevil
Mieville, China	Perdido Street Station
Morrison, Toni	Beloved
Panshin, Alexei	Rite of Passage

Pears, Iain	An Instance of the Fingerpost / A Dream of Scorpio
Pohl, Frederik	Gateway
Robinson, Kim S	The Wild Shore / Icehenge / Red Mars / Green Mars
Sargent, Pamela	The Shore of Women
Saylor, Steven	Last Seen in Missilia / The Judgment of Caesar
Silverberg, Robert	Nightwings / The Masks of Time / Dying Inside / The Book of Skulls / Shadrach in the Furnace
Simak, Clifford D.	Way Station
Simmons, Dan	Hyperion / The Fall of Hyperion
Stewart, Sean	Mockingbird
Tepper, Sherri S.	Grass
Vinge, Joan	The Snow Queen
Vonnegut, Kurt	Slaughterhouse 5
Wilhelm, Kate	Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang
Xueqin, Cao and Gao E	Dream of the Red Chamber
Yan, Mo	Red Sorghum
Zelazny, Roger	The Dream Master / This Immortal / Lord of Light

Most # of "A" Rankings by Author

5	Robert Silverberg
4	Kim Stanley Robinson
3	Michael Bishop / Roger Zelazny
2	Marion Zimmer Bradley / Orson Scott Card / Michael Chabon / C.J. Cherryh / Philip José Farmer/ Ursula K Le Guin / Jack McDevitt / Iain Pears / Steven Saylor / Dan Simmons.



Wondrous Stories

Jeffrey Ford is one of the very best f&sf writers of the current decade. Stories such as “The Cosmology of the Wider World,” “The Empire of Ice Cream,” and “Botch Town” are among my favorite recent pieces of short fiction. But when I read that he expanded “Botch Town” into the novel **The Shadow Year**, I was undecided if I wanted to read it. Sometimes an expansion of a beloved novella can be extremely disappointing. Only the fact that I have liked every Jeffrey Ford story I have ever read convinced me to give it a try. But my expectations were not particularly high.

The Shadow Year, like its predecessor “Botch Town,” is a rite of passage story set somewhere between the 1960s and 1970s. The narrator is still unnamed (although I think of his name as Jeff since he is likely based on the author), a 6th grade student with an older brother Jim in middle school and a younger sister Mary. His father works three jobs to keep the family fiscally above water, and the mother works one job, then comes home and proceeds to get drunk every night while the father works his night job. The grandparents lived in a converted garage adjacent to the house. In spite of that description, the family is neither dysfunctional nor stereotypical, but loving and supportive with occasional disputes typical of such families.

The main plot of the book and novella concerns a prowler who is seen periodically peeking in windows around town. The three siblings consider themselves detectives who try to find the identity of the prowler. They achieve a breakthrough of sorts when the narrator notices that Jim’s miniature town in the basement—the Botch Town of the title which contains replicas of all the town’s houses and inhabitants in miniature—also contains a prowler who mysteriously moves to whichever location where he is seen in the real town.

The original “Botch Town” was a very spooky story, much more effectively emotional than a blood_and_gore horror story, and the novel retains that atmosphere. The scene when the narrator encounters the prowler in the library is still genuinely scary, but where the novella thrives on spookiness alone, **The Shadow Year** has a fully-developed plot involving the three youngsters’ search for both the prowler and for the murderer of several townspeople.

Unlike many typical horror novels, Ford spends much time fully developing the characters in the novel, primarily the central family, although several other townspeople as well. The town itself lives and breathes as much as a real 1970s town could. Don’t for an instance believe that **The Shadow Year** is pure mainstream though. Younger sister Mary has an uncanny ability to move figures around Botch Town prefiguring will soon happen in the town itself. And both the prowler and the murderer—neither of whom actually show up in “Botch Town” but are important characters in the novel—are anything but mainstream characters.

When I reviewed “Botch Town,” I moaned the fact that the novella had to end, and I had similar feelings when I finished **The Shadow Year**. This novel is now on my short list of best f&sf novels of the decade and it convinced me that I am not content to read occasional Jeffrey Ford short fiction but will seek out his other novels and collections as well. He is a great writer.

*

Throne of Jade is the second novel in Naomi Novik's *Temeraire* series in which airborne dragons serve as an early air force during the Napoleonic Wars. While large parts of the first novel **Her Majesty's Dragon** were primarily concerned with the bonding between the dragon Temeraire and his companion Laurence, the second novel avoids all that slow-paced backstory and jumps right into the main storyline.

Temeraire originally fell into the hands of the British navy when Laurence's ship defeated a French ship carrying the soon-to-be-hatched dragon egg. After the egg hatched, it was learned that Temeraire was a rare Chinese *celestial* which had been given to Napoleon as a gift. When the Chinese learned that Temeraire was now fighting for the British, the emperor's brother Prince Yongxing traveled to Britain to demand the return of the dragon.

The Chinese Empire was powerful at that time, so the British did not want to risk its joining the Napoleonic wars on the side of the French which would surely shift the balance of power so drastically that defeating Napoleon would become nearly impossible. Instead the British government sends Temeraire and Laurence aboard a huge dragon-carrying ship to China for negotiations. Almost as soon as the ship departs, Prince Yongxing informs Laurence that he is not worthy of flying with a royal dragon, and upon reaching China he will be dismissed. This so distresses Temeraire and Laurence that most of the voyage is a three-way power struggle between the Chinese ambassadors, representatives of the British government, and Temeraire and his crew.

A handful of Chinese play important roles on the shipboard portion of the novel, including imperious Prince Yongxing, reserved scholar Sun Kai, and cheerful old Liu Bao. One of the novel's highlights is the Chinese New Year's celebration, and one of its major threads is the prince's own attempts at bonding with Temeraire—although on a considerably shallower level than Laurence's lifelong bonding with the dragon. The prince initiates a series of discussions with the dragon, reading to him in Chinese much as Laurence had always read to him in English, and ordering his cooks to prepare the dragon a series of gourmet meals, a vast improvement over the raw cattle and fish he was used to being fed.

Traveling across several oceans involves considerable danger. The ship survives an attack by a group of French ships with their own rare fire-breathing dragon (which proves no match for Temeraire's equally-rare *divine wind*), a storm so powerful Temeraire must be chained onto the deck of the ship lest he be dragged into the ocean, and an attack by an 85' long sea serpent.

The last third of the novel takes place in China where Laurence and Temeraire must deal with the renewed efforts by the Chinese to separate him from his dragon, since they are not pleased either with Temeraire being used for warfare or having bonded with Laurence. Several attempts are made to assassinate Laurence, twice on ship and once on land when a group of several dozen men lay siege against the island where Laurence and his companions are kept isolated.

The novel's climactic scene includes a one-on-one duel between two Celestial dragons which is far more interesting than any prior battle scene. All in all, I preferred **Throne of Jade** to

Her Majesty's Dragon for several reasons. It is more plot-oriented, it examines the culture clash between the British and the Chinese, and there is an interesting mystery at its core. This novel is recommended even to readers who, like me, were slightly disappointed in its predecessor.

*

I am a lifelong science fiction fan who does not favor the “hard science” end of the spectrum, so Ray Bradbury is one of my “Big Three” of science fiction’s Golden Age (along with Clifford D. Simak and Alfred Bester). I have read many of his books over the years, but a close friend of mine gave me a few I had not read, including **S is For Space**, a collection of unrelated stories from the 1940s through the early 1960s.

The stories are typical Bradbury, running the gamut from horror stories of the creepy, quiet variety (“Chrysalis,” “The Screaming Woman” and “Come Into My Cellar”) to the wistful fantasies in sf clothing which made Bradbury’s reputation. “The Man” tells of an obsessed spaceship captain frantically racing from planet to planet seeking a Messiah whom he always seems to barely miss, while many of his crew know exactly where to find him. The book contains two *Martian Chronicles*. “Dark They Were, and Golden-Eyed” and “The Million Year Picnic” are two of the best stories in the book (although the latter seems strange here since it also appeared in **The Martian Chronicles** itself), both especially fitting in the early 21st century when humanity seems to be racing pell mell towards self-destruction. If only Bradbury’s fanciful escape was available to some—but not too many—of us!

The most moving story is “The Smile,” which was published in 1952 and seems to come out of the same deep-seated Bradbury fear as “The Fireman” (**Fahrenheit 451** in book form). It tells the story of a post-disaster Earth in which all remnants of the pre-catastrophe civilization are shunned or destroyed, and of a queue of people waiting for a chance to spit at a famous, ancient painting of a woman having a secretive smile. Here Bradbury evokes in less than 10 pages the same emotions “The Fireman” did at considerably longer length, with the boy Tom serving much the same role as the title fireman of the more famous story.

While **S is For Space** is certainly not on the same level as **The Martian Chronicles**, it is still good Bradbury worth reading.

Halcyon Days

Lloyd Penney

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April 30, 2008

Many thanks for **VoP** 127. I'm kinda writing this on the road before the date above, mostly because we're on some long-awaited holidays, and given my time management habits, I will be trying to write locs wherever and whenever I can.

I think the complaints about there not being enough SF to read are really from older readers who may not be finding enough familiar names to read. There are so many new names out there, it's difficult to know who's good, and who's a one_book wonder. We try not to judge by its cover, but I think there are visual cues about some SF books, and they may not be there any more, or the cues have changed. I can see that we are victims of SF's volume of new books; how do we read even a small percentage of the books available? However, we can take heart with the increasing number of books, a measure of the genre's health. I guess I am atypical by not reading much fantasy, and not reading any horror, and it's been a long time since I've read any of the SF magazines. There's just a limit to the money and time you can devote to SF. Sad to say, but it's true. If I had my way, I'd be taking a shopping bag full of stuff away from my local SF bookstore every week.

Good to see you still keep in touch with Fei Fei. Given the current situation with Tibet, and the fact the Olympic torch relay has been disrupted almost everywhere, I wonder what her take is on China's and the world's reaction to support for a free Tibet is. I won't say much about Tibet right now; my own country has had its own brush with a region trying to gain independence.

What kind of reputation do you have at your school? Sounds like some students consider you to be a rough one to deal with, and then find out afterwards that you're a pussycat after all. How do reputations like that one start? Men who tough in their jobs are seen as leaders; women who act the same are seen as bitches. It's not fair to them, and my ex_principal sister_in_law would agree.

E.B. Frohvet's letter just shows how subjective our enjoyment of SF is. However, I agree with him that the genre has moved forward faster than my tastes have. I expect that I shall be reading older novels, and may move back to my original reading material, the anthology. Maybe my patience for the longer works is waning, and I'm an old school space cadet, longing to travel beyond the Rim.

I remember the Olive Garden restaurants...they were one of the many chains that failed in Canada. Plenty of US_based chains have succeeded, mostly because they opened Canadian_based offices and subsidiaries, and there's also lots of Canadian_based restaurant chains like Jack Astor's. Yvonne has a lot of newly_diagnosed food allergies that means there are few restaurants we can go to.

My loc...I eventually had to travel about 20 to 30 miles to find a used book store willing to take the big box of books I had. No luck on the job front, but every so often, I come across a number of interesting jobs all at once, and out go the resumes.

(I am now writing this loc at about 28,000 feet as Yvonne and I are winging our way to Las Vegas (via Houston) for Corflu Silver, and some celebrations of our own... May 28 marks our 25th wedding anniversary, and we're vacationing a little early.)

Panasonic got rid of me as soon as they could, and the job hunt continues. I could have gone to that website **Brant Kresovich** wrote about, but nothing beats the hunt and the musty smell of a bookstore. You never know treasures you'll find, shelf after shelf, box after box.

[Fei Fei is understandably dismayed by the problems in Tibet since she developed considerable empathy for the Tibetan people during her stay there. She also has deep distrust for the Chinese government from when she was a young girl during the Tiananmen Square massacre.

[I am one of the tougher teachers in my school, so students come into my classes with considerable trepidation. Most of my students quickly learn that my personality is much softer than my expectations, but most students outside my classes are not familiar with that side of me.

[Congratulations on the 25th wedding anniversary. Times flies, doesn't it?]

Brad Foster

May 21, 2008

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Package with latest trilogy of **Visions of Paradise** came in this week. Had jury duty yesterday, so took them along with me to read. Had time to read those, make notes, finish a 368 pg book, do notes on reports I'm writing for last three art festivals, and still have to dig up a newspaper there. Ended up not picked to serve on the case my group was interviewed for, which was a relief since have so much to do this week, but also, kind of one of those odd reactions 'cause also wanted to know why the heck they didn't want me to be on that jury? Kind of like, I don't want to join your stupid ol' club, but I don't want to think you don't want me to be IN your stupid old club!

That's a great cover by Schirm on #126, a really unique twist on the serpent idea with the train_as_monster. Great idea, great image, just knock out work, and probably my favorite piece from him in quite some time.

Lots of names on your "Underrated rock and roll artists" list that were new to me, though always been a fan of Jethro Tull, especially the two albums you listed. Also loved Zappa. Liked your comment about the jazz/rock fusion aspect. Have you heard his lp "Shut Up and Play Your Guitar", a huge set of nothing but Zappa guitar solos?

In *The Passing Scene* you comment that you wonder, after so much time interacting with your students, how you will deal with retirement. Is it possible you can still keep some of that connection, though on a less full_time basis, through tutoring, or even some sort of independent teaching? (Is there such a thing, like a musician giving guitar lessons out of his home?)

"The Red Green Show" was really funny, we got it on our local PBS station for years, mixed in with all the British sitcoms. It could be goofy, but the best parts for me was the odd contraptions they would build from junk around the place to solve different problems. Some even looked like they might work!

And there was another quick comment buried in the text, this time near the end of *The Passing Scene* in #127, that jumps out and requires more information. Speaking of one of your students

initial reactions to being in your class, you ended with "...until she realized that I was actually much nicer than my reputation." Ooooo, that calls for an entire article telling us what your reputation is out there!

Oh, and **[E. B.] Frohvet** mentions jury duty, which also reminds me of one other aspect of my experience yesterday in jury selection. Of the 19 people they brought in to be interviewed for the 6-person jury, I noticed that when those of us not selected were walking toward the elevators, no one who had asked ANY sort of question had been included in the selected group. Coincidence, or just pegged us as trouble makers? We'll never know. (Though, while waiting to go in initially, a bailiff from one of the other courts walked back and commented on the fact that I was reading a book "Well, that will keep you off the jury for sure." We all laughed, but started me thinking, is that old chestnut about actually coming across as "smart" a sure way to be kept off a jury? I hope not!)

[I have three volumes of *Shut Up and Play Your Guitar* which I consider quintessential Zappa.

[I have been considering some method of keeping in contact with students after I retire, but I have been so spoiled by the kids at my school, both the attitudes and the diverse cultural backgrounds of the honors kids, that tutoring in the town where I live would never satisfy me. But I still have time to think about it.

[See my comment to Lloyd regarding my reputation at school. It is actually an advantage having students enter my class with trepidation since it both eases the initial need for discipline and gives them a bit more incentive to work harder.]

WAHF: **Gene Stewart** (A good issue. Kim Stanley Robinson is one of my favorites, too.).

The Lighter Side

These questions and answers are from the days when *Hollywood Squares* game show responses were spontaneous, not scripted. Peter Marshall was the host asking the questions...

Q. Do female frogs croak?

A. Paul Lynde: If you hold their little heads under water long enough.

Q. If you're going to make a parachute jump, at least how high should you be?

A. Charley Weaver: Three days of steady drinking should do it.

Q. True or False, a pea can last as long as 5,000 years.

A. George Gobel: Boy, it sure seems that way sometimes.

Q. You've been having trouble going to sleep. Are you probably a man or a woman?

A. Don Knotts: That's what's been keeping me awake.

Q. Which of your five senses tends to diminish as you get older?

A. Charley Weaver: My sense of decency.

Q. In Hawaiian, does it take more than three words to say I Love You'?

A. Vincent Price: No, you can say it with a pineapple and a twenty.

Q. What are 'Do It,' 'I Can Help,' and 'I Can't Get Enough'?

A. George Gobel: I don't know, but it's coming from the next apartment.

Q. As you grow older, do you tend to gesture more or less with your hands while talking?

A. Rose Marie: You ask me one more growing old question, Peter, and I'll give you a gesture you'll never forget.

Q. Paul, why do Hell's Angels wear leather?

A. Paul Lynde: Because chiffon wrinkles too easily.

Q. Charley, you've just decided to grow strawberries. Will you get any during the first year?

A. Charley Weaver: Of course not, I'm too busy growing strawberries.

Q. In bowling, what's a perfect score?

A. Rose Marie: Ralph, the pin boy.

Q. It is considered in bad taste to discuss two subjects at nudist camps. One is politics, what is the other?

A. Paul Lynde: Tape measures.

Q. During a tornado, are you safer in the bedroom or in the closet?

A. Rose Marie: Unfortunately Peter, I'm always safe in the bedroom.

Q. Can boys join the Camp Fire Girls?

A. Marty Allen: Only after lights out.

Q. When you pat a dog on its head he will wag his tail. What will a goose do?

A. Paul Lynde: Make him bark?

Q. According to Ann Landers, is there anything wrong with getting into the habit of kissing a lot of people?

A.. Charley Weaver: It got me out of the army.

Q. It is the most abused and neglected part of your body, what is it?

A. Paul Lynde: Mine may be abused, but it certainly isn't neglected.

Q. Back in the old days, when Great Grandpa put horseradish on his head, what was he trying to do?

A. George Gobel: Get it in his mouth.

Q. Who stays pregnant for a longer period of time, your wife or your elephant?

A. Paul Lynde: Who told you about my elephant?

Q. When a couple have a baby, who is responsible for its sex?

A. Charley Weaver: I'll lend him the car, the rest is up to him.

Q. Jackie Gleason recently revealed that he firmly believes in them and has actually seen them on at least two occasions. What are they?

A. Charley Weaver: His feet.

Q. According to Ann Landers, what are two things you should never do in bed?

A. Paul Lynde: Point and laugh.

*

Joke from John Purcell:

A wealthy man was having an affair with an Italian woman for several years. One night, during one of their rendezvous, she confided in him that she was pregnant. Not wanting to ruin his reputation or his marriage, the man paid a large sum of money if she would go to Italy to secretly have the child. If she stayed in Italy to raise the child, he would also provide child support until the child turned 18.

She agreed, but asked how he would know when the baby was born. To keep it discreet, he told her to simply mail him a postcard, and write "Spaghetti" on the back. He would then arrange for child support payments to begin.

About 9 months later, he came home to his confused wife.

"Honey," she said, "you received a very strange post card today." "Oh, just give it to me and I'll explain it," he said. The wife obeyed, and watched as her husband read the card, turned white, and fainted.

On the card was written: "Spaghetti, Spaghetti, Spaghetti, two with meatballs, one without."

*

Joke from the late Derek Pickles:

A lady goes to her priest and tells him, "Father, I have a problem. I have two female parrots but they only know how to say one thing."

"What do they say?" the priest inquired.

They say, "Hi, we're hookers. Do you want to have some fun?"

"That's obscene!" the priest exclaimed. Then he thought for a moment. "You know," he said. "I have a solution to your problem. I have two male talking parrots which I taught to pray and read the Bible. Bring your two parrots over to my house and we'll put them in the cage with Francis and Job. My parrots can teach your parrots to pray and worship, and your parrots are sure to stop saying...that phrase...in no time."

"Thank you," the woman responded. "This may very well be the solution."

The next day she brought her two parrots to the priest's house. As he ushered her in, she saw that his male parrots were inside their cage holding rosary beads and praying. Impressed, she walked over and placed her parrots inside the cage with them and after a few minutes, the parrots cried out in unison, "Hi, we're hookers. Do you want to have some fun?"

There was stunned silence. Shocked, one male parrot looked at the other male parrot and exclaimed, "Put the beads away, Frank. Our prayers have been answered."