Brrr is not a word that should come to mind the day before July, but the most recent effects of climate turbulence – I believe that's the new term – pushed temps down way below normal. Cloudy, windy, cool. Weather like this usually hits about two weeks after the Halloween decorations go up in Target.

When I dressed for work today I thought “I should put on a white shirt, in case the Supreme Court decision comes in.” You know the feeling, right? It's new to me. I got distracted, wore a green linen shirt, and headed in for meetings. Wouldn’t you know it: the decision came in, for Franken, as everyone expected. This meant we had to go live, and as strange as it sounds for a newspaper to go live, that's what we do: wrangle a journo, pat the face, hook up the mike, and go. I got the decision a few minutes before we went on, got cross-eyed at the legalese, had another cup of coffee, and off we went.

What fun. There was even real BREAKING NEWS handed to me during the broadcast, and if I tried to resist saying This Just In, I don’t think I managed.

At the end of the day I went to pick up daughter, and stopped at the nearby Humane Society to see the dogs. No, Jasper’s fine. From last evening:

RECENT COMMENTS
polymathamy on 06.14.12 Bleat
Amanda from Michigan on Boo. Hiss
Julie on Testing the new RSS feed idea
shesnailie on Autobots and Bruckner
Wagner von Drupen- Sachs on Autobots and Bruckner

A BOOK I RECOMMEND

http://lileks.com/bleat/?p=2746
But you never know when you'll find some slow old mutt who makes his case with mute eloquence. A ghastly animal racket came from the back of the building, barking and screeching, as if they were attempting to make some dog-monkey hybrid. With saws. I'm serious: monkeys. I have no idea what the rhubarb was about, but you can guess: the monkeys were shouting WOLF WOLF WOLF GO AWAY I JUMP UP AND DOWN AT YOU GO AWAY and the dogs were barking horrible not-man thing, what the hell and on it went.

Inside it was sad, but it's always sad at the shelter. A few of the dogs had signs on their pens indicating they'd be sprung tomorrow by a new family, but this could be the shelter version of Carousel in “Logan’s Run.” (Or the Lottery in “The Island,” which I watched last night. Watched isn't the right word; more like absorbed while shielding crucial organs from repeated blows.) Some dogs you want to coach: buddy, this isn't how you get adopted. Do not bark at people while staring out of the corner of your eyes; you look like a psycho. Look at Buddy, here – relaxed mouth, tongue hanging out, tail wagging – people think that means he's happy – and a general yes boss whatever you say boss you're the greatest I'm sure glad you're running the pack attitude.

There was a striking Aussie Cattle Dog who met your gaze with forthright defiance:
He put his paw through the cage to touch my hand. Interesting dog, but he’d chase Jasper around and make his day noisy.

This next one just breaks your heart, doesn’t it.
Why do humans form such kinship bonds with dogs? Oh, gosh, I don't know.

Afterwards I got the kids and took them all home, entertaining them on the way with the story of Amazing Amanda. It was a life-sized doll Natalie had a few years ago. It talked. It knew what day it was. It gently admonished you if you gave it cookies for supper. It was hellspawn, and sometimes we'll make up dialogue for Amanda expression all sorts of evil deeds in the same singsongy innocent voice. By the time we'd gotten halfway home we had Amanda burning down houses because “Fire is pretty.” I made the neighbors pretty too, mommy. Then piano; I sat in the hallway and tried to stay awake. Perkin's for supper. There was a clown. There's often a clown.
She walks around and hands out balloons. It was one of those days where you just aren’t surprised to see a clown in the restaurant. Why not. Bring on the mimes while you’re at it.

We played the games on the kid-menu. Natalie had a sensible question: What is a Jinx?
We've decided that Patty Pie's mouth is not the pie-portion of her anatomy, because that would mean her arms come out of her mouth. But it's still unclear.

I revived myself with a flagon of coffee, but I'm still beat and ready for nothing. The week is shaping up to contain an absolute train-wreck of work on Thursday – I have to give another Powerpoint talk, do the TV news thing, AND write a column, quaint as that now sounds. And I've been “tasked” to another Top-Secret Thing, this one code-named . . . PHASE 2. But today will have the usual assortment – Out-of-Context Ad Challenge at 10:00 or so, and a Mpls update later in the day. Right now: the first “What-City-Is-It” cartoon puzzle from a 1948 Sunday Tribune, up at buzz.mn.

**Oh, I almost forgot:** This matchbook appeared a few years ago in the Matchbook Museum; its advertising terms baffled me. I made some guesses, and it turns out I wasn't far off. The proof? The son of the restaurant's owner fills us in.

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**49 RESPONSES TO wednesday, july 01**

**hpoulter says:**
July 1, 2009 at 6:01 am

I had the “Preacher style fried chicken” figured out, but “$400 Waffles” just looked like the world’s worst slogan. Amazing to hear from the owner’s son on a two-year old blog post.

**MarkG says:**
July 1, 2009 at 6:10 am

The mouth is the somewhat u-shaped squiggle under the eyes, that
is on top of the pie-portion of her anatomy.

shesnailie says:
July 1, 2009 at 6:11 am

_@_v – ‘preacher style’? brings whole new meaning to the phrase ‘chickens comin’ home to roost’…

Bob says:
July 1, 2009 at 6:11 am

That IS Patty Pie's mouth. It ISN’T her arm. It is the arm of a poor unfortunate who got TOO CLOSE! Patty hasn't yet gulped her prey into her gut to be digested. YUM! Tastes like chicken.

hpoulter says:
July 1, 2009 at 6:13 am

According to the “Word Detective” blog, the words “jinx” and “jinks” (as in “high jinks”) are not related. He says this about “high jinks”:

The “jinks” in “high jinks,” meaning “playful, rowdy activity” or “disruptive pranks or unruly behavior” comes from a slightly different Scots dialect sense of “jink” as a noun meaning “game” or “prank.” Apparently “high jinks” in the 16th century was a drinking game (at the time also known as “high pranks”) in which the loser in a throw of dice had to perform a silly task (or drink a certain quantity of alcohol). By the mid-19th century, “high jinks” in standard English had come to mean “lively merrymaking” and “boisterous pranks” in general.

www.word-detective.com

Retread says:
July 1, 2009 at 6:19 am

I'm relieved to hear about Jasper. I consider MY e-dog, since I can't have an actual dog just now 😊.

boblipton says:
July 1, 2009 at 6:36 am

I always assumed that preacher-style chicken included the parson's nose.

Bob

Cory says:
July 1, 2009 at 6:54 am

High jinks – one of those things you never, ever see in the singular. I engaged in a high jink while putting on my pant.

swschrad says:
July 1, 2009 at 7:00 am

stream of consciousness morning, nothing but one-liners here. I'm taking it outside. High0jinks, I'm callin' you out!
Bryan says:
July 1, 2009 at 7:20 am

When you get up to Phase IV that's when the intelligent ants take over.

We have two dogs. They were littermates and raised with their (now deceased) mama so they get along fine. We have decided that, if boy dog dies first, we need to get a companion for girl dog because she's lonely and miserable without a playmate. If girl dog goes first, boy dog will do just fine. He's always been a Lone Wolf kind of guy. Fortunately, they're both in the prime of their life so we hopefully won't have to make that decision for a while.

Bonnie says:
July 1, 2009 at 7:21 am

My dog, Corbin, looks exactly like the little black fella with the white spot on his chest. Same anxious look, same beautiful paws. He's the best dog I've ever had. He's starting to go grey around the muzzle now.

Dogs give us love, and they break our hearts because they always leave us too soon.

Dr. Spyn says:
July 1, 2009 at 7:33 am

James, you broke my heart with those dog photos. As a race, I'd say we don't deserve them. The best we can do is care for the ones that share our lives.
[http://www.redhottypewriter.com/TestSubjects/TestSubjectsHomePage.htm].

Julia says:
July 1, 2009 at 7:39 am

Jasper is looking quite the distinguished gentleman.

CarolynT says:
July 1, 2009 at 7:39 am

How could you resist that little guy at the shelter? That should be the poster dog for the next adoption drive. We went shelter shopping recently for a second dog and, I could swear, the dog we got picked us and not the other way around.

HunkyBobTX says:
July 1, 2009 at 8:06 am

I think the whole human – dog relationship started something with statement like this:

“Look, at the pretty wolf, Daddy. Can we keep him, PLEASEEASE!”

That black pup is really cute. Sure, he'll find a home soon!

teach5 says:
July 1, 2009 at 8:08 am

I like the contemplative Jasper. He's thinking deep thoughts, and

HunkyBobTX says:
July 1, 2009 at 8:09 am

Sorry. I promise I'm not completely illiterate.
What I meant to say above is:

‘I think the whole human – dog relationship started with a statement something like this:

I need to get back in the habit of reading what I type before I hit submit.

WatchWayne says:
July 1, 2009 at 8:10 am

Too much cognitive dissonance here:

1. That shelter is waaaay too clean and bright. There's almost no way you could visit and not take a few of the residents home. The shelters around here are dank and smelly, and all the dogs have a death-row sort of look about them— you leave, empty-crated, and resigned never to have another pet.

2. Shouldn't that kids' menu say Patty Cake (as in “a baker's man...”)? Those ad people just didn't listen to what they wrote.

3. We had Amazing Amy (perhaps the Southern variant?) and had to exorcise the batteries right out of her, after daughter, Victrola, started arguing about her culinary choices— “I want some bananas”... “No, you're having peas!” The very worst thing was that a lightning strike anywhere in the state would summon Amazing Amy's otherworldly powers, and she'd randomly wake us all up, saying she was hungry or needed her diaper changed. Scared the willies right out of the Vickster, and willies are a real pain to clean up in the middle of the night. In contrast, she got 300,000 miles out of a silent, hand-sewn, rabbit-like doll “Maria” given by a family friend.

4. Our terrier-mutt, Annabelle, was a happy, well-adjusted little critter until Fritz (should have been Napoleon) came along. Smaller, younger, but a complete pain in Annabelle's fundament. Now she's totally repressed, and he remains tyrannical and oblivious.

Ron Ramblin says:
July 1, 2009 at 8:35 am

Someone dumped one of those little blue Astralian dogs at our house a few years ago and it was pretty obvious why. The dog was really sweet, but it never stopped moving. She was also a nervous tinkler. She had a knack for finding pieces of dead animals and hiding them around the house so she could roll in them after I cleaned her up. It was sad but frankly a bit of a relief when she left us. Our German Shepherd really seemed to enjoy her company.

Tim Morris says:
July 1, 2009 at 8:38 am

That $400 was quite a bit of money in the late 30s. Assume 1939 just because the owner's son said late 30s, early 40s, and the Inflation
Calculator (http://www.westegg.com/inflation/infl.cgi) put it at just over $6000 in 2008 dollars. Pretty good for a pre-reality TV contest.

Chris says:
July 1, 2009 at 8:53 am
I think Jasper needs a buddy!

juanito - John Davey says:
July 1, 2009 at 9:10 am

Weather like this usually hits about two weeks after the Halloween decorations go up in Target.

And following actual seasonal advertising, that would be... let's see, uhhmm, the first of July...

There was a clown. There's often a clown.
Clown at Perkin's, clown in the Senate. Minnesota is in alignment!

Preptile says:
July 1, 2009 at 9:35 am

Cannot decide whether the pooch or the clown is sadder. Their realm is diminished since John Wayne Gacey, and most today are as welcome as Marcel Marceau at a heavyweight fight. I digress. It is doggedom that I have come to praise. Forget who said it but..."we give them what food space and love we can spare, and they give us their all. It is the finest bargain ever made".
Those seen above awaiting their shot for misbehaviors untold, need only be forgiven and given chance for redemption. Just like my unseen avatar.
Some are of course destined to go thru life as "bad doggys'. Had a giant schnauzer next door who could sense one at birth, and dispose of all evidence in short order, without the cook. She preferred smaller litters of two or three, altho she was more prone to delivering 12. This did cut down the kibble bill. Not so sure her defense would work with children so cute that their mothers could just 'eat them up'. The in-laws would never understand.
Still there is little that a doggy could do that I would find unforgivable.
When relatives leave that big smelly one on the carpet, it just isn't as cute.

JohnW says:
July 1, 2009 at 9:47 am

Phase IV?? Glorioskies, I thought I was the only person who had ever seen that...

bgbear (roger h) says:
July 1, 2009 at 10:21 am

It helps if you channel Telly Savalas when telling stories of talking dolls.
We ended up with a lost Queensland Aussie shepherd, cattle ranchers found her, she had bad hearing which may explain her
getting lost.

She was pretty mellow when not in wolf mode. I made the mistake of teasing her and telling her to round up the horse we had at the time. She tried to herd the horse and I thought she was going to get kicked into the happy herding grounds.

bgbear (roger h) says:
July 1, 2009 at 10:32 am

“Phase IV” was in the “Zero Season” of MST3K.

Also, I am sad to admit, I have a memory of seeing it in the theater during its first run. Maybe I am thinking of “Charlie's Ant”.

Steve says:
July 1, 2009 at 10:39 am

With regards to the matchbook mysteries… I do sincerely apologize if this is inappropriate but… there is a very old off-colour joke…

“Son, what do you want to be when you grow up?” “A preacher, 'cause I like eating fried chicken and making love to other people's wives”. Ahem… I think I'll go do something out in the yard…

absepa says:
July 1, 2009 at 10:44 am

Darn you, James! Now I won't be able to get that sweet, pleading face (topped by the most adorable perky black ears) out of my mind for weeks. I'm the world's biggest sucker for dogs; I love them all. Guess it's a good thing I'm a few hundred miles away, or I would be trying to figure out how to incorporate her into my three-dog pack. And my husband would be planning to divorce me.

John Robinson says:
July 1, 2009 at 10:46 am

I also saw Phase IV when it came out. Admittedly, while looking as if it was shot on a budget of thirty-four cents, it does have a certain creepiness about it.

Gilmoure says:
July 1, 2009 at 10:50 am

Weird. We're planning on hitting the pound for a new dog for daughter (8 years old). The last dog we got there fooled us. Was small puppy, doing the sitting quiet thing. Has since grown in to 90 lb lap dog who worries through the house at night, keeping wolves and dinosaurs at bay.

Daughter would really like a smaller dog, that won't crush her when it climbs in to her lap. Coincidentally, should be finished with fencing in our two acres by the time we get new pooch. Hopefully, this will give old dog room to not feel crowded by new dog.

HT says:
July 1, 2009 at 10:55 am

absepa: oh, your husband would get over it. Just show him the picture, act all mopey, and he'll cave after a day or two. Hey, it
worked on my wife (it's how I got our sixth dog, and from 1200 miles away, no less).

hpoulter says:
July 1, 2009 at 11:08 am

I only know Phase IV from MST3K, but I thought it was one of the more watchable films. The scientific and mathematical banter sounds like they ran it by somebody who had at least a clue, and it stars that actor I think of as “the lawyer from McCane and Mrs Miller”, who is pretty good in a low-key way.

Some MST3K movies (“Hamlet”, “Sky Divers”, “Castle of Fu Manchu”...) are so bad good riffing can’t save them.

And SPEAKING OF RIFFS??? What happened to Lileks' next RiffTrax? Schedule overload much?

hpoulter says:
July 1, 2009 at 11:09 am

[EDIT] “McCabe and Mrs Miller”.

Kev says:
July 1, 2009 at 11:17 am

Is it me, or does Patty Pie look like some sort of feminized, badly-drawn Homer Simpson?

And re the shelter dogs–I would adopt one in a heartbeat if I didn’t live in a zero lot-line neighborhood where the backyards are so small that it would be cruel to keep a dog cooped up in one. (This doesn’t keep some of my neighbors from having them, of course, but I’m not gonna Be That Guy.)

Teresa says:
July 1, 2009 at 11:21 am

Thanks for the pic of Jasper – I adore looking at him (wish I could pet him too, one day they’ll have a computer screen for that – heh).

Up here in the great Northeast (Boston area) it's been cloudy and raining nearly non-stop for the past month) temps in the 60's for the most part. Where’s my global warming? Can I sue Congress for ruining my summer by trying to make the world cooler???

bgbear (roger h) says:
July 1, 2009 at 11:32 am

Ugh, “The Skydivers” oh, the horror. I am convinced that Coleman Francis is indeed the worst filmmaker of all time.

hpoulter says:
July 1, 2009 at 12:05 pm

“Starfighters” might be worse than “Skydivers”, although the host segments are good – including “United Servo Academy Men’s Chorus”, the movie is snooze city, unless you’re turned on by aerial refueling.
bgbear (roger h) says:
July 1, 2009 at 12:15 pm

“United Servo Academy Men's Chorus”

Is one of my ringtones.

I agree that “Star Fighters is right down there with “The Skydivers” saved by the host segments.

Poopy Suit!

D Palmer says:
July 1, 2009 at 3:53 pm

It's hard to tell from the pic, but that coat and face look a bit more Australian Shephard (an American breed usually called an Aussie) than Australian Cattle Dog (an Australian breed sometimes called the Blue Heeler).

Either one makes a great pet. I had a Aussie with the blue/grey coat (Blue Merle) super smart and super sweet. Kids just loved him (and he them). I really miss having a dog

ss says:
July 1, 2009 at 4:12 pm

It doesn't matter, Mr. Lileks, that you continue to make the alt text on the pictures so utterly banal. I will continue to check every time. In fact, it is your fault that I do so, as you introduced me to Achewood. And I have to say, little Easter Eggs like that would be even more enjoyable than “dog1” “dog2” “clown”. And for a man mastering the laconic art of the Tweet, it would seem good practice.

Lileks says:
July 1, 2009 at 5:52 pm

Actually, ss, they were “dog2 and “dog3,” weren't they? I thought “well, no one will wonder why there's no “dog1,” since no one checks. I should have known!

GuyfromNH says:
July 1, 2009 at 7:28 pm

Sorry, clowns creep me out... don't know why... they just creep me out... and to see one at a restaurant... I'd demand a food taster.... brrrrrr....

Marjorie J. Birch says:
July 1, 2009 at 7:53 pm

oh, if I could only adopt the Australian blue heeler! My nephew had the red version of this breed — it looked like a pink fox from a distance. Smart, loving, funny critter. Even my mother liked the dog, which is unheard of. As my brother said, the only problem with the critter was that she was smarter than all of us put together. If I hadn't been a city apartment dweller, I would have taken her in when my nephew decided to go back to college.

The trouble with dogs like Australian blue heelers, cattle dogs, is that they are working dogs, akin to Border Collies in that they need
something to DO. Something USEful. If you don't find some kind of activity for them, they will find something for themselves and trust me, you won't like it.

Nephew's dog wound up in a kennel for her own safety, became bored, dug her way out, and attempted to herd a car with sadly predictable results. I'm still sorrowful.

As for the dog-human emotional bond — there's a story called “At the Gate” by Myla J. Closser (found in a book entitled Famous Modern Ghost Stories, edited by Dr. Dorothy Scarborough, also in Illustrated Classics Famous Gothic Tales). I won't describe it. I dare anyone — no! I DEFY anyone to read it and not burst into helpless tears. It gets me every time.

Loge says:
July 1, 2009 at 9:14 pm

Damn, I hope Rachel Lucas didn't read the bleat today, England will be flooded …

OH MY GOD … Marjorie, I found a link to “At the Gate“. Had to go get some Kleenex and then kiss my sleeping kids. Wow, thanks for the warning.

Here's the link:


Click on it everyone, I triple dog dare you …

Teresa says:
July 1, 2009 at 9:17 pm

James – I thought it went without saying that Jasper was Dog 1. 😊

boblipton says:
July 1, 2009 at 9:45 pm

No, James is Dog One.

Bob

David in San Diego says:
July 2, 2009 at 7:59 am

How did you get Hugh Hewitt to dress up like a clown?

GardenStater says:
July 2, 2009 at 12:50 pm

I just adopted a wonderful dog (photos posted on Buzz.mn). Named him Fido. He's part Australian Cattle Dog, part Blue Heeler, and part (I think) smooth Fox Terrier, and maybe a little Jack Russell mixed in. A great dog, smart as a whip.

If you want a dog, don’t waste time driving around to shelters. Go to www.petfinder.com, and enter the kind of animal you’re looking for, and your zip code. It will show you all the dogs (or cats) within your geographic area, and more. That’s how I found my last 4 dogs, and it’s well worth it.
Warren says:
July 2, 2009 at 4:57 pm

Kingman, Kansas as one of the Harris locations, huh?

I live in Kingman, Arizona.

Named after, I believe, the same man: Lewis Kingman.

I must be getting jaded; synchronicities like that don’t affect me as they once did.
Jam-packed & jelly tight, Wednesday was. Whatever that means. Meetings all day, video shoots, then a jaunt off East on I-94 to the adjacent state of Wisconsin to do a video on a fireworks stand. Back home by 8:30, frantic editing, voice-over work, then writing the script for tomorrow's NewsBreak while the video crunches. Then: it's 10:48, let's write a column! Tomorrow has an early-morn video shoot and a presentation about the Top Secret Thing. So no time whatsoever to explain why I'm not picking on Jack Kirby, and have only the utmost love & respect. Tomorrow will have lots of stuff, but for now: nothing. Except:

Lance Lawson is up at buzz.mn.

Yesterday's Minneapolis Update is . . . updated. Go HERE.
25 RESPONSES TO Thursday, July 02

Jillian says:
July 2, 2009 at 1:28 am

Yep. Days like today are the kind that are youtube worthy. Some days I can write 5 blog entries and get them lined up for almost a week and then some days I'm lucky to keep my quota of one a day. Hang in there!

bellczar says:
July 2, 2009 at 3:52 am

What a stark contrast between the old block and the reflective glass Wells Fargo back office that is now there. It looks nice, but it has a negative impact on pedestrian activity. To say the very least.

Speaking of the tower of the Milwaukee Depot, when are you going to make them explain how it went from looking like a campanile: http://collections.mnhs.org/visualresources/VRDbimages/pf019/pf019732.jpg

bellczar says:
July 2, 2009 at 3:59 am

One more thing … the Morrison Building (with the Gluek's ad on it) was once a majestic looking edifice. It looks like they just lopped off the top in a fit of pique:
http://collections.mnhs.org/visualresources/VRDbimages/pf044/pf044230.jpg

Do you suppose the Thomas Cafe could be a remnant of the tall white building to the east of the Morrison Building? (Why would they do that? Fire?)

Michael Rittenhouse says:
July 2, 2009 at 6:51 am

Mmph. Now I have that “Peanut Butter Jelly Time” song stuck in my
head.

**PersonFromPorlock** says:
July 2, 2009 at 6:54 am

The 1952 business directory may be a little late; the newest car I see is a '49 or '50 Ford. I suspect the picture was taken in the Spring or early Summer of 1949 because of the lack of other, similar Fords, which were hot sellers.

**Bryan** says:
July 2, 2009 at 7:01 am

“Jam packed and jelly tight”

Is that a Minnesota thing? The only time I've ever heard it is in a MST3K episode, one of the Hercules episodes (I think) and Joel says, “Oooh, I'm jelly-tight in this thing!” in reference to Herc's outfit. My three main sources for Upper Midwestern-isms are Lileks, my mother and MST3K.

**hpoulter** says:
July 2, 2009 at 7:18 am

No, it's a Southern thing, and it was “Jam Up and Jelly Tight” - originally from the Black jazz world, I think, but it went mainstream with the Tommy Roe song of the same name in the 60s.

**Jimchig** says:
July 2, 2009 at 7:41 am

I agree with your comments about the signage. I've always loved the hustle bustle look of city neon in the downtown areas of any city. Whether in person, in movies or on postcards. Of course, I've never had to drive around looking for a particular business amid the light show, either. That might be difficult.

**Nancy** says:
July 2, 2009 at 7:58 am

H/T the Urban dictionary:

jam up—adj.
Used to denote something incredibly extraordinary, awesome or amazing.

Jelly Tight—adj.
Something or an event that is cool;hot;nice

A bit redundant but what the hay...

**hpoulter** says:
July 2, 2009 at 8:16 am

Here's a recording from 1927 – “It's Jam Up”, by the Original Tuxedo Jazz Orchestra.

www.archive.org/details/OriginalTuxedoJazzOrch-ItsJamUp1927
hpoulter says:
July 2, 2009 at 8:31 am

The expression “jam up” pre-dates Jazz. I found it in “Nature and human nature” by “Sam Slick” alias of Thomas Chandler Haliburton, published 1856.

“‘Orifice,’ said I, for I hate fine words, for common use, they are like go to meetin’ clothes on week days, onconvenient, and look too all fired jam up. Sais I, ‘what's that when it's fried. I don’t know that word?’

Ain’t the Internet just full of things?

Greg Zywicki says:
July 2, 2009 at 8:32 am

What's with the Kirby non-sequitur.

hpoulter says:
July 2, 2009 at 9:16 am

 Might be related to the May 6 Comment by “Mike”, who accused Lileks of always picking on Joe Simon and Jack Kirby and emailed 95-year-old Simon a link to the bleat to check it out (would have needed a ouija board to contact Kirby)

lileks(.)com/bleat/?p=2092#comment-11003

RJ says:
July 2, 2009 at 10:05 am

I agree with PersonFromPorlock that 1952 looks a little late for that photo date. I think maybe 1949 would be the best guess. New car designs changed a lot starting around 1949, and the new shape (wider hood, horizontal trunk lids) became very popular very quickly. A 1952 picture would show lots of the newer design cars, I think.

Dr. Spyn says:
July 2, 2009 at 10:58 am

That’s some honkin’-big Detroit iron in the photo. I think Sherman tanks were smaller, and probably lighter. And, what the heck was Gluek’s Stite?

Jimchig says:
July 2, 2009 at 11:04 am

Brand: Glueks Stite Malt Liquor
Brewery: Gluek Brewing Co.
City: Minneapolis
State: MN

Joe Broderick says:
July 2, 2009 at 12:35 pm

Regarding the “Kirby non-sequitur”-I thought Tuesday's comic book cover was drawn by Jack Kirby.
Dave says:
July 2, 2009 at 1:08 pm

Duluth passed an ordinance...maybe in the 1970's...banning signs sticking out from a building. It must have been a fad at that time to have all of your downtown buildings having flat fronts. Superior has several signs that survived. Globe News for example.

JDB says:
July 2, 2009 at 2:45 pm

Mmmmmmmmmmm, Stiiiiiiilte.

D Palmer says:
July 2, 2009 at 3:46 pm

Hey James,

Did you ever name your favorite guilty pleasure song? The post generated about 300 replies, but I don't ever recall the promised follow-up from you.

Sorry to go off topic, but it was the only way I could be sure you would see the question.

Cheers

ss says:
July 2, 2009 at 6:10 pm

Actually, Mr. Lileks, I think you meant mplsdet1. Time for a new folder.

Nancy says:
July 2, 2009 at 6:21 pm

hpoulter Says: “The expression “jam up” pre-dates Jazz. I found it in “Nature and human nature” by “Sam Slick” alias of Thomas Chandler Haliburton, published 1856.”

Pretty cool. Hey watch out, you mentioned Haliburton. Don't want to wake any trolls.

Matt says:
July 2, 2009 at 8:46 pm

Mmmmmm... I wonder if Jimmy “Black Cat” Lileks left more than a few ducats with the proprietor at said fireworks stand in Wisconsin. Hmmmm..?

ssmart says:
July 4, 2009 at 12:15 pm

Glueks Stite...alias ‘The Green Death'

belczar says:
July 6, 2009 at 12:30 am

I just happened to notice that Gluek Stite is rated dead LAST among
the thousands of beers at ratebeer.com.

Not a drinker, but there is not a single beer in the top 50 I have ever heard of.
Friday! July 03. Something’s different. What?

An amazing day, now that I look back; started in the early AM, with a video shoot at the paper, then a Presentation on the Top Secret Thing Phase One Mark II, then a column, then the sudden decision at 2 o’clock that my work here is done, and a nap might be in order. Pow: out. Up: vacation begins.

Got up to get out, fetched 3 girls from the summer day-camp on the other side of town. I asked one of the counselors if my daughter could have a new water bottle with the camp logo, since she’d dropped hers and it had shattered. She said yes – in fact, they were all breaking, and had to be replaced. “We switched to a different kind of plastic because the parents worried that the other plastic gave you cancer,” she said. “But they all broke.”

Wanted to say “yes, we were having a white-lead gargling contest last night, and the bottles leaked everywhere.”

After I dropped off the other kids Natalie and I went to Target to get supplies for the Fourth. Evil SWINE and DESPOILERS OF SUMMER: they put up the school supplies before the Fourth. GAH. Summer has been shoved off to a few aisles like last year’s fashions. No one likes this. No one wants this. No one will be banging on the door a minute after closing time tomorrow to demand admittance because they need a plastic pencil box now. You cannot sell...
fireworks, watermelons, backpacks and pencils in the same store in July; they should repel one another and be hurled to all four corners of the store. Well, we'll never try that again. Someone call the Pentagon and tell them we've discovered a new elemental force that could possibly be weaponized. Honest to God, Natalie's face was drained of color when she saw the displays. 

Noooooo!

If I'd had a bottle of lemonade in my hand I would have walked around like Max Von Sydow, sprinkling consecrated liquid to sear the demon. I cast you out! Begone, erasers asleep in your plastic blisters! Away, spiral-bound notebooks emblazoned with licensed tween idols! The power of July compels you! The power of July compels you!

Today was the first trip she's decided she will push the cart. She's progressed from sitting in the cart to pushing it. Happens much quicker than you expect. I still remember coming out of Target in the rain, seeing her giggle in the seat under her new Hello Kitty umbrella. One of those memories where you not only hear Time's Winged Chariot, but feel the hoof hit you in the back of the head.

Some updates prompted by comments in the, er, comments:

1. I never did get around to admitting which song I like, but shouldn't. I think that's how I phrased the subject, trying to distinguish it from the Guilty Pleasure genre, but that's a distinction without a difference. Perhaps it's the difficulty of explaining why I shouldn't like a song. If it sounds good, it is good. Right? If you like it, then you like it, and shouldn't feel embarrassed, unless it's Bloodrock or Bob Marley's cover of “Itsy Bitsy Teeny Weeny Yellow Polka-Dot Bikini.” Sometimes you rebel against songs because they sum up an era you enjoyed as a youth but came to dislike because A) you saw it more clearly, B) you had a subsequent era that was better, and C) it was the seventies. I've been watching some of this:
Price is Right shows. They have a horrible fascination, because they bring back 1973 with such full undiluted power I’m right back in summer break in Fargo, sitting in the kitchen, whiling away a hot morning with a show that not only consists entirely of commercials, but breaks for in-show commercials before it breaks for commercial breaks. I mean, it’s genius. The things you forget. The cars:

This car was literally called “The Thing.”

The housewives (they all gave their professions as housewives in this episode, and did so with a certain hesitance):
They cut away from that shot right away. She was nervous and uncertain, and TOTALLY BLEW the showcase; the other contestant was all sunny cheer, and everyone wanted her to win.
She did. If you doubt me, well, there's an episode recap on the web. Of course there's an episode recap of a 1973 Price is Right show. What makes you think there wouldn't be?

And of course the models, the two leggy hand-wavers who smiled on behalf of everything from baking soda to new cars. Watching the show, I am reminded why it held my interest as a young lad. Janice Pennington:

Says Wikipedia:

“In 1974, Pennington married famed mountain climber Fritz Stammberger,
who went missing in 1975 in a restricted area along the borders of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Soviet Union. She later married writer Carlos de Abreu in 1984 after Fritz was legally declared dead. In 1992, Pennington discovered that Fritz helped organize CIA bases among those borders and died fighting with the Afghans against the USSR.”

It gets better:

“In 1994, Pennington and de Abreu wrote *Husband, Lover, Spy*, an account of Janice’s search for her first husband. Pennington admitted that after he went missing, she would return to her *Price Is Right* dressing room in tears when a contestant played the Cliff Hangers pricing game. In that game, a mountain climber caricature climbs up, then falls off, of a cliff when a contestant loses the game – the ‘yodeling’ climb music turning into a loud crash when the climber goes over the cliff.”

She’s [66 now](http://lileks.com/bleat/?p=2774). (Link goes to her MySpace page; GIS may result in NSFW pictures from her Playboy stint.) By the way, do you see some Scarlett Johansson [here](http://lileks.com/bleat/?p=2774)? I do.

And then there was Anitra Ford. Hamina hamina hrr stampa stampa:
She was exotic in ’73. That’s such a ’73 look, too. The nose, the hair, the teeth, the perfect accumulation of personal details. Betty to Janice’s Veronica. But I’ve always been a sucker for the Bettys. She’s on Myspace as well. One of her friends, God bless her, is Gene Rayburn. Who is dead. Ten years now.

**So maybe** the song I like is a game show theme, and I shouldn’t like them because I wasted too much time watching those stupid shows.

Then again: the other day I was driving home from work; a police car sped past, shot over to the curb, and an officer ran out, gun drawn. Another officer was behind a tree, gun drawn. At that very minute the radio was playing a song I thought was SO TRAGIC when I was a kid: “Indiana Wants Me (But I Can’t Go Back There.)” As I drove by and snapped a shot, I heard the part that always gave us chills when we listened to the sad, sad song: “This is the police. Come out with your hands up. You are completely surrounded.”
But that’s not the song. It’s not an ELO song, because over the years I’ve come to admire Jeff Lynne, a lot – he did create a unique sound.

It might be “The Hustle.” This song was everything I stood against. Those battles are over.

I’m not sure. Ask me tomorrow.

As for Jack Kirby: Mike in the comments wondered why I was picking on Kirby in Comic Sins. Well, the whole point of Comic Sins is to read too much into the covers – freeze them and overstudy them, just for fun. Aside from all that, I have nothing but awe and thanks for Jack Kirby, and if someone gave me a pencil and said “here, you do better” the only proper response would be to plunge it into my eyeballs. Kirby defined the look of heroism when I was a kid. There were only a few I idolized: Kirby, Steranko, Eisner, and Ditko. Jack was the best. But I suspect he might have wondered why a gunslinger wears a bulls-eye on his chest, then gone ahead to do the best he could.

And now to finish “In Like Flint,” one of those rare movies that manages to be a parody and a straight-ahead example of the best things it parodies, mostly thanks to Coburn. As I twittered last night while watching it, I’d love to see a straight 60s-spy movie done a la “Mad Men,” without the Austin Powers mugging and shagadelic groovyness. You’d have to trim away the pop-art sensibility that makes “Flint” amusing but date, but it might be damned cool. Of all the Bond movies I’d like to see remade, “You Only Live Twice” would be top of the list – partly because it was my first, but mainly because you can’t get any more supervillainous than a rocket base in a volcano with a retractable roof. I still wonder how SPECTRE dealt with the loss of that asset. It’s not as if they could write it off. There’s a downside to being an international extralegal criminal organization, you know.

Later today: First Day Covers – should have been yesterday's update; sue me – and of course 100 Mysteries. The Strib column on fireworks can be found here. Real actual direct link! Yesterday’s NewsBreak video with my little vid on fireworks can be found here. Mistakes I remember making: screwed up the word “ramp,” and lost my place while reading the weather off the prompter. Have a larf at my expense.

There. That should make up for yesterday, no?

NO? Well, we'll see you on the Fourth, then.
53 RESPONSES TO **friday! july 03. something's different. what?**

Shopfloor » Blog Archive » The Shattering Effects of the Bias Against Bisphenol says:
July 6, 2009 at 11:16 am

 [...] Lileks reporting in The Bleat on the consequences of the anti-BPA campaigns, litigation, legislation, hysteria: Got up to get [...] 

Richard says:
July 6, 2009 at 1:51 pm

The Barker's Beauties you've got are just before my time. These are my ladies:

http://www.curtalliaume.com/priceisright1.jpg

Holly Hallstrom. Now there's Hamina hamina hrr stampa stampa for you.

As for Drew's blog, I'm not surprised that they haven't changed The Clock Game controller since 1972. It seems like everything on that set dates from the Ford Administration, at the latest.

wimseyguy says:
July 6, 2009 at 4:04 pm

Thanks swschrad for the Flickr links. If I recall, most of those mikes were pretty sturdy, so Gene Rayburn could have used it as a weapon as well.

Looks like the owner is also a Pittsburger. (If the references to the Crawford Grill and the vintage Jazz scene weren't enough, the Stanley Cup photos were a dead giveaway.)

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http://lileks.com/bleat/?p=2774
It was a perfect Fourth, even with the rain. The rain made it better. It began two hours before we had the standard gang over for meat and detonations, and arrived with tremulous drama – the skies become somber, all the leaves began to flutter as if passing along a horrible rumor, and then it hit. On the way out, one single clear window-rattling thunderclap, as if telling us it knew what we had planned and wasn’t the least bit impressed.

Then the sun; then the heat. Then the first round of fireworks – since the guests leave for another engagement every year, I always blow off some stuff for the general amusement of the children, and then it’s the Trial of The Sparklers. Hold it away! Don’t look at it! Drop it! Don’t step on it! Have fun!

At least this year was easier on Jasper; we figured his deafness would make it less traumatic, even though they can read the booms with Super Dog Sense. A few years ago he put scratches in my car door trying to claw his way into the car, and I wondered if he thought the other-place-quick-going-thing would take him away. Two years ago he tried to burrow through a wall in the furnace room. This year he heard little, but when the screeches of the rockets started, he correctly interpreted them as the howls of damned souls, and went down to the garage. My wife let him into the car. He sat there until it was over. It must be immensely frustrating: he senses the peril, but we do not. What do I have to do to warn you? What must I do to make you understand?
For an old dog, he was keenly involved with the event, prowling for dropped food, walking from person to person, softly whining: that meat you have. I know it's yours. But still. Oh, if only you knew. Me? Here? Okay? Please? No? I gave him some beef and some brats, cutting them up into tiny pieces to prolong the joy, but that's human-thinking. Give him one piece, and it's gone, forgotten. The possibility of another piece overrides the memory of the previous one. The only way you can sate a dog is to put a plate of sixteen charred brats on the floor and let him have it, and then he'll stagger off, sprawl on the floor, and pass out as his body diverts all available blood to working on the unholy bolus in his gut.

We almost had 16 extra brats, too. The grill did not cook evenly. The grill nozzles have become clogged, and the heat isn't well distributed. When I turned it on the back rack didn't ignite, so I raked it with a knife – or knifed it with a rake, can't recall – until the nozzles were free, at which point PHOOMPH! and I turned to my wife: eyebrows? I have them still? Okay, then.

The Giant Swede helped with the cooking, because I tend to burn things. When I had a charcoal briquette grill the burgers were often indistinguishable from the means I used to cook the meat.

After the sun set, the locals started shooting off their own supplies, although not as many as I'd like. I'm one of the few. A neighbor who usually sets off rockets capable of bringing down the International Space Station didn't have anything this year, which made the evening an anticlimax: his stuff goes up very high and you can read fine print by the explosion.

**In the morning**, the sad burnt detritus was heaped around the bricks I use as a staging area. The bricks rest on a circular patch of rock embedded in the lawn for reasons we'll never know. It's just there. Perhaps it was pushed there long ago by glaciers or tumbled along by ceaseless streams emptying into the ravine below. It's been at rest for centuries. Some day someone who owns Jasperwood will bring it up when he redoes the backyard, I suppose, and it'll be discarded before anyone has the chance to learn it broke off from some ridge formed hundreds of millions of years ago a thousand miles to the north. I can see why they wouldn't bother. Rock isn't that articulate. Rock's story is mostly the same: I'm old, and I came from somewhere else, and that's about it. Thanks for the ride.

The day after, as I said, the pile of burnt cones looks pathetic, like Christmas wrapping paper after everything's undone. But the 5th is different than the 26th; you're almost relieved Christmas is over, but it's still around, an agreeable houseguest. All the decorations are immediately out of date, but you're in no particular hurry to pack them up. Let it all ebb away over a week, then be replaced with the brisk frank fact of January. The Fifth has nothing but the knowledge that the highlight of the summer is over and done. But. This is the first year where I didn't feel haunted by my mother's lament: after the Fourth, it feels like summer's over. It feels like it's just starting, really. So much left and so many things to do.
**Media:** I watched “The International,” with the always-dependably good Clive Owen uncovering a European bank scandal. It reminded me how much of the 70s are back: once again, we take as a matter of course that large corporations have contract killers on the payrolls, although I imagine today the benefits are better, and they get COBRA when they’re made redundant. Little of the film made sense, but it had a tremendous shootout in the Guggenheim. No actual art seemed to be at stake. Watching the movie I had the same emotions I got from the Bourne flicks and a few other thrillers that take place in the New Steely, Shiny Europe – it seems such a soulless place filled with dead history and bright hard buildings determined to show off their impressive ahistorical modernity. No one’s happy, but everyone’s well-dressed.

**That's it;** nothing else. A perfect weekend; nothing more to say. Buzz.mn up now with this week’s train-heavy history; Matchbook later. Have a grand day.

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**19 RESPONSES TO monday, july 06**

**HunkyBobTX** says:
July 6, 2009 at 4:07 pm

“The only way you can sate a dog is to put a plate of sixteen charred brats on the floor and let him have it, and then he’ll stagger off, sprawl on the floor, and pass out as his body diverts all available blood to working on the unholy bolus in his gut.”

If I had read this while I was drinking coffee, the coffee would be on the screen.
Glad to hear you enjoyed Independence Day, James!

**RLR** says:
July 6, 2009 at 4:09 pm

*Matchbook later,* eh? I love Bleat-time.

**mike hollihan** says:
July 6, 2009 at 4:16 pm

I like Clive Owen as well. The thinking man’s Troubled Hero. But as soon as I saw the ads for “The International” my first thought was “BCCI scandal, with guns.” Umm... no thanks.

**MikeH** says:
July 6, 2009 at 4:35 pm

I was a bit confused about getting matchbook first then bleat, but hey all is good. My day feels complete. I’m grilling a bit steak tonight for meatless monday, I feel proud. I’m a true American!!
Wramblin' Wreck says:
July 6, 2009 at 4:39 pm

The Bleat Magic Fairy does exist! I leave a comment on Matchbook thread asking where is the Bleat and 3 minutes later, ting! there it is. Will wonders never cease!

Thanks James!!

Dave says:
July 6, 2009 at 5:18 pm

“the New Steely, Shiny Europe – it seems such a soulless place filled with dead history and bright hard buildings determined to show off their impressive ahistorical modernity. No one's happy, but everyone's well-dressed.”

That's what I remember about Europe, how hard and cold and off-putting the modern buildings looked. Life in Helvetica font.

A well-traveled friend dismissed Europe as an historical theme park.

Of course Europe's history is increasingly irrelevant to its new immigrant Islamic population, as are its liberal traditions.

And actually I would feel safer if I thought my bank had hitmen on the payroll.

Lars Walker says:
July 6, 2009 at 5:55 pm

“Life in Helvetica font” is no slouch of line either.

Will says:
July 6, 2009 at 6:18 pm

“When I had a charcoal briquette grill the burgers were often indistinguishable from the meals I used to cook the meat.”

Wait, what?

jamcool says:
July 6, 2009 at 6:47 pm

Life in Helvetica font.

As compared with the US, which is Life in Highway font (or Clearview font depending on your state DOT)

Bridey says:
July 6, 2009 at 7:24 pm

And in California, alas, we live our lives in Comic Sans MS.

(Seriously, Dave, great observation there.)

Patrick Shanahan says:
July 6, 2009 at 7:54 pm

What a wonderful thumbnail sketch of The 4th. It's like reading an account of my own, albeit written by a more sophisticated, more
urban(?) balder cousin. Right down to the marginally undercooked brats and the aged hound.

It's a wonderful gift you have James, the ability to give people a clearer window on their own lives by letting us into yours. Thank You.

boblipton says:
July 6, 2009 at 8:18 pm

Balloonatic, surely.

Bob

juanito - John Davey says:
July 6, 2009 at 10:53 pm

The Fourth has been kind of strange for us since we moved to El Dorado County in 95. NO fireworks are legal – safe & sane, or unsafe & insane. Fire threat is just too great. They have a big fireworks show in Placerville at the county fairgrounds 16 miles away, but it's like going into Lake Tahoe on New Year's Eve at Stateline – borderline riot-tastic. Folsom has a similar event, but also has a cattle drive through old Folsom and the Folsom Rodeo going at the same time so traffic is miserable there as well.

In Cameron Park (literally on the hill behind us – I can just about throw a rock from my yard and it will land in the town of Cameron Park) they have the annual Summer Spectacular at Cameron Park Lake – bands, activities, and at about 9:30 a 30 minute fireworks show. It has gotten better every year. They hold it the Saturday prior to the Fourth of July, and it typically falls on my oldest daughter's birthday party. So every year she assumes that they are shooting off fireworks for her.

We used to be able to see the fireworks from our deck, but the houses they've built at the top of the hill (ah, the views from up there…..) block that out now. We've watched from the top of the hill, and from some other high points, but the best so far have been the past two years when we park along the Cameron Park Airport runway – they launch the fireworks from the Lake out towards the runway, and we have a perfect view directly underneath. So the ordinance show is always the week prior to the fourth for us. Here's how my lovlies get ready for the show parked along the runway: — http://twitpic.com/8namr and —http://twitpic.com/8n98p

Instead the fourth is occupied by my buddy Bar B Que-ing pancakes for breakfast, and then all the kids hit the pool before it gets insufferably hot. It's one long day of swimming, and it wears the kids out like nothing else.

Lileks says:
July 6, 2009 at 11:36 pm

Augh – the MEANS I used. Will change. Thanks ~

Mike Gebert says:
July 6, 2009 at 11:50 pm

Where once Britain was in proud, modern-yet-slightly-prim Gill Sans. (You typehounds know what I'm talking about. Penguin covers, the Tube and the Beeb, the beginning of Powell &
Pressburger movies.) Of all the things they gave up to join the EU, Gill Sans may have been the most irreplaceable.

Dave (in MA) says:
July 7, 2009 at 1:26 am

It’s…

The Anti-Jasper!

Chas C-Q says:
July 7, 2009 at 6:23 am

“No one’s happy, but everyone’s well-dressed.”


Gene Dillenburg says:
July 7, 2009 at 9:04 am

First, this oft-repeated refrain, that the Fourth of July is somehow the end of summer. Poppycock and balderdash. You’ve still got a good 8 or 9 weeks to go before Labor Day! Even if you ascribe to the theory that summer peters out around mid-August (and, seriously, if you haven’t “done anything” with your summer by 8/15, it really is too late to start), you’ve still got warm temps, clear skies and reasonably late sunsets through the middle of September.

Second, this idea that Christmas decorations are somehow “out of date” on the 26th is likewise palpable nonsense. The Christmas *season* runs through January 1. Or, if you’re like my Mom, until the Epiphany, when the ceramic Wise Men finally leave their exile at the back of the tree and join the rest of the manger scene. Then, on January 7, you go to school in the morning, leaving a house that is fully and warmly decorated, and return to empty, sterile rooms. The switch has turned off. Ordinary time has returned.

Marbee says:
July 7, 2009 at 11:43 am

“I always blow off some stuff for the general amusement of the children, and then it’s the Trial of The Sparklers. Hold it away! Don’t look at it! Drop it! Don’t step on it! Have fun!”

Holy Cow! Were you spying on our fourth of July activities? My husband said those exact words, perhaps in a different order and including “don’t stick that in your sister’s face!”

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http://lileks.com/bleat/?p=2809
It's a rare day at the office when you come away exhilarated from a two-hour meeting in a windowless room, talking to a disembodied voice coming from a plastic starfish in the middle of the table, but this was one of them. As I keep saying: I've had more fun at the job in the last two years than ever before, and I've also seen more enthusiasm, initiative and out of the box thinking. For instance: what if we sell the box? No one's been in the box for years. We could partner with another media outlet to raise awareness about what's in the box, then sell it. We'll have to tape it shut first, of course.

But, some would say, box-selling isn't our core business. True. But what is our core business? Cores. Demand for cores is down 945% in the last quarter, thanks to YourFreeCores.com and AllCoresUnlimited.com (both of which have eaten into craigslist core-reselling market, to our grim satisfaction). So we need to find something else. Here's the thing, though: No matter what we do, short of folding the print side and going entirely online, supported by ads, we will be sneered at and peed upon by people who not only rely on papers for news online, but regard the use of AdBlock as a sign of an enlightened being.

I'm tired of people who just want papers to die, already. Not just the ones they don't like, but the entirely medium. It is not necessarily a sign of advanced intelligence to wish the end of a community journal. The web can replicate news, but it can't replicate newspapers.
I’m also growing tired of hectoring lectures from people whose entire career seems devoted to telling newspapers what to do, but who can’t write in a voice that isn’t humorless, tendentious, and filled with self-regard because they saw this coming a year or two before anyone else. If you made these people write newspapers, they’d fail even faster.

It’ll be an interesting couple of years for my paper. I’ve never thought we were going to go away, but I have more hope than ever before.

Besides: websites are not immune to audiences falling away or turning elsewhere. There are a few websites I used to visit several times a day I dropped from the bookmark, because the proprietor got a few new hobbyhorses. That’s fine; we all get bees in our bonnets. But one way to blow off traffic is to spend a great deal of time magnifying an issue, confusing “lots of posts about the subject” with an argument, dismissing anyone who doesn’t feel the same about the subject with the identical amount of fervor, and – le straw finale – wading into the comments flailing the ban stick because people do not have the precise amount of outrage you demand they have, or because they express weariness with the constant creak of the hobbyhorse. Monomania is one thing; joylessness is another; joyless monomania is death.

Anyway: What kills newspapers – and this isn’t anything brilliant or insightful, it’s just obvious – is dull content and bubble-think. The first is self-explanatory; the second can be summed up in desire to find a “green” angle on everything from State Fair food to Christmas paper wrapping. There’s a market for that – there’s a market for everything – but it’s just not a large one. If you assume that everyone but just everyone is going green, you’re thinking inside the bubble. And the bubble is in a box. And the box is biodegradable, which is good, but it’s also a coffin, which is not.

It takes me three nights to watch a movie; the latest is “Sink the Bismarck,” a fine sturdy war film that reminds you how the maritime-combat genre has completely disappeared. “Master and Commander” was a wonderful film, and they should have made nine more, but apparently if the captain of a ship isn’t Johnny Depp fighting supernatural sea-creatures there’s no mass appeal. “Bismarck” makes WW2 look low-tech, which it wasn’t, but without our modern tools of warfare it’s like two men punching in a dark warehouse. The loss of the Hood makes me wonder if the audiences of the day remembered how great a catastrophe that was. Pride of the fleet, and kaboom, argh, gurgle. I’ll get back to that in a moment, but since it will yield no screen caps, let me pad out this installment with something new: The Faces of The Price is Right. As noted, I got some early TPiR, and they’re fascinating, in a cheerfully bright and banal sort of way. The quality is great – the garish palette pops off the screen – and the faces and hairstyles might be the best part. Mrs. Ordinary American, thrust on the stage for one firefly moment. People don’t look like this anymore. Well, they do. But their hair doesn’t. (To remind you of our New Feature: captions are now in alt-text for fun, mouse-over action.) (No reason, really.)
UNTOLD RICHES AWAIT YOU

This is just a fragment of the site, you know. Head HERE for the full menu. Enjoy!

BLEAT PREMIUM

Go HERE to join - for as little as you like. You'll get an email with your passwords. The page for your bonus-secret ultra links is HERE!
Finally, a few products: a color TV from Teledyne Packard-Bell, a great-sounding brand name:
And Anitra, working that popcorn.

**Today:** small-town website at buzz.mn around noon, along with Comic Sins later, and B&W World Sci-Fi edition. See you soon.

**Oh, one final thing** for discussion. Saw this graphic on netflix. I wonder if they agonized over who got two disks?
106 RESPONSES TO tuesday, july 07

Allan E. says:
July 7, 2009 at 11:55 pm

I grew up in Dayton Ohio and we got both the morning and afternoon papers. I read both of them every day. When I moved to Mountain Home seven years ago I immediately subscribed to the local paper, The Baxter Bulletin. But about a year and a half ago it started to go down hill and also become a leftist rag. When it came time to renew my subscription I let it go. I could have put up with the bias. What made me quit reading it and most other newspapers and magazines is that almost all of them have forgotten the basic W’s. Who, What, When, Where, and why. Do they still teach this in journalism schools these days. It is so frustrating to start reading an article only to have half the information left out. A lot of this has to do with political correctness, but the rest of it seems to be just laziness or lack of basic research. One of my neighbors brings over his paper after he has read it and most of the time I do not even bother looking at it.

Ross says:
July 8, 2009 at 1:06 am

“Now, Yoyodyne, sure.”

Big-boo-tay!TAY!

dustbury.com » Give my regards to broadsheets says:
July 8, 2009 at 6:51 am

[...] “I’m tired of people who just want papers to die,” says Lileks, and not just because he works for one: It is not necessarily a sign of advanced intelligence to wish the end of a community journal. The web can replicate news, but it can’t replicate newspapers. [...]
ExGeeEye says:
July 8, 2009 at 8:01 am

JamesS, JohnW– a quick search of youtube revealed a clip shot from Prinz Eugen of Hood blowing up. At a distance, and looks like either forward or astern of Hood. Not “cinematic” enough for a movie 😂

chris says:
July 8, 2009 at 10:18 am

I know what would get me to purchase an online subscription. I want to read the paper. I don’t want to necessarily read the news. I grew up reading the St. Paul papers (yes both of them and delivering them as well), every day of my life. It was ingrained into me by my mom. Now I live in the hinterlands, and rarely read the paper on line. But when I am back in the Cities, the first thing I do is get a copy of both papers. I want to see the whole thing, ads and all. I care less about the “news” than what’s going on. As Mr Lileks has made very clear, sometimes the ads tell us more about our community than the news.

If there were for instance a pdf file available of the daily paper, I would definitely buy a monthly subscription. How much would I pay? Ah. There's the real question.

Defrost Indoors says:
July 9, 2009 at 8:17 pm

You are one hard-core mollusc. Have you considered going back to Lynx? (hands up all who remember moving from their favorite gopher client to Lynx)

*raises hand* And I’m under forty, too. 😊

I live in a medium-ish sized Canadian city (~100,000) and find the local rag to be unbearable because there seem to be so few local stories and far too many columnists who are not saying anything interesting, nor are they saying it particularly well. I’m not that interested in a retired high school teacher droning about, say, how much pleasure she gets out of gardening. Um, good for you, I guess? Why are you in the paper again? Our host may be treading the same ground but it's well worth the daily visit just to be charmed by the clever writing. The local rag also seems smug and insular, not unlike the city itself, come to think of it, and the online version is terrible: difficult to navigate, badly organized, and there's ALWAYS a freakin' pop-up inviting me to subscribe, which defeats my AdBlock no matter how much I tweak it. The craptastic online design is the fault of the syndicate which owns the paper (Osprey); they seem invested in actively driving people away.
Novel work in the evening, so it's a short bleat. I took some time away from the book over the last few weeks, and it's screaming and demanding attention, so off I go.

Just my luck to write a newspaper / murder mystery after Michael Connolly, but it's a different sort of book. I imagine his has the depressed-newspaper vibe of the last season of "The Wire," complete with aging boomers wondering what happened, consoling themselves with Bitter Cynicism; mine's a bit more comic, to understate the case, and I don't expect he spent a lot of time on Minneapolis history and culture. The themes of this book are similar to a failed novel I wrote, failingly, about 14 years ago; both have a main character whose father was a famous local media figure in the old golden days of Minneapolis. When the Gateway still stood, the Foshay was the tallest tower in town, and downtown had department stores and movie theaters. And everyone read the paper.

It's set in the present, in the ruins. Part of the story was under my nose for at least ten years. Yours, too. It's been here all along.

Saw an entry at Reynold's Wrap about a 1 TB drive below $100, and yea, there was great rejoicing. It is a momentous, er, moment, but I've been seeing drives that size around $115 for some time, both internal and external, and have been slowly upgrading all my storage capacity to account for two things:
1. The need to packrat and duplicate all available media, and

2. The death-taxes-and-click-of-death certainly that these drives will fail, and when they do, they’ll take an unimaginable amount of data with them. This is the modern dilemma: you have a terabyte. Great! Let's fill it up! But what if the drive dies? Then back it up. What if they both die? Well, you could be hit by a car, tomorrow. As it backed up. Hah! Oh, the irony, in the now generally-accepted sense of the word.

I draw the line at four backups of anything, but sometimes that feels like I’m going naked in the world with naught but a gossamer hanky to hide my shameful-parts: read the reviews of the sub-$100 drive mentioned in the link. The common theme seems to be “it died the first time I looked at it,” closely followed by “it died the second week, and they sent me another, and it exploded in a shower of metal and I was plugging it in.” In other words: the drive might be under a hundred because they're trying to get rid of it.

**Anyway**, since I'm pressed for time, it's another installment of the Faces of the Price is Right, where we seek to study the people whose true selves may be obscured by outdated hair. The visages of 1973, haunting us from across the gulf of space and time. No alt-text this time, because. Just because.

I went to high school with 94574 girls who looked like this. The straight part, the blue eye-shadow, the whole corn-fed-ness:

![The Florence-Henderson look](image)

The Florence-Henderson look. Her neck appears to show the first milliseconds of an entry wound. Ten years later, you could tighten up the ‘do, color it jet black or bleached blonde, and you’d have a Bona-Fide Post-Punk Punk Chick, Midwest college division.
Undergoing an absolutely seamless transition from Ma to Grandma:

Speaking on behalf of all young males in 1973: you stay right there, and I'll go get the Boone's Farm. Here, you listen to some Rush while I'm gone. Just be a minute.
Let's go back to Connie, and extend our deepest sympathies. The sternum-high elastic midriff. The Waistcoat of Pain.

Gramps seems to like it. Creepy old gramps.

Ah, but it's more than people. It's products. Fanta: beer preferred by 9 out of 10 pawn shops!

Finally: we learn where the Gobbler got its furniture.
Later today: Out of Context Ad Challenge, around 10:30. See you then!

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53 RESPONSES TO Wednesday, July 08

Jimchig says:
July 9, 2009 at 8:33 am

Nice pic, snailie!

Not only has his shirt been shredded off, but his belt is undone. That must have been some scuffle. I'm surprised his shoes are still on.

E says:
July 9, 2009 at 10:25 am

Those fungal chairs are still alive, but are in hiding....


Fred says:
July 11, 2009 at 7:57 pm

Re: the fellow that mystifies James at http://lileks.com/mpls/casablanca/4.html. Would it be too trite a science fiction plot for someone to be looking at that webpage at this very moment and saying "Wait a minute! That's me!"
Once again, the most important part of my day was a meeting, and there's nothing much to say about that. Except that we met, did things, and then unmet. No: a meeting breaks up, or ends. You can’t undo the fact that you met. Oh, you can pretend it never happened, lie to yourself, push away the thoughts until it all seems like a mad, crazy dream. But once you've met, you’ve met.

Sorry, blathering. Meetings. They'll do this to you. At some point you find yourself leaping up to whiteboard something, realizing that you've already committed in your mind to using whiteboard as a verb. In the last series of meetings for the Top Secret Thing Phase 1, we got stuck on the word “bucket” as a term for various components of the project, and I thought of two things:

1. The walrus who had a bucket until they took his bucket away, and

2. The big pails of Elf Brand Herring Cutlets we used to stock the salad bar at the Valli. The lid said ELF and CUTLETS in the biggest letters, so you naturally had great sport with the idea of a huge industrial facility that processed thousands of elves, turning their bodies into strips of briny, succulent salad toppings. The bar also had something called Three Bean Salad – a fine band name, perhaps, but it was disgusting slimy stuff no one wanted to eat. Yet we had to replenish it often. This was the first salad bar I'd seen that had a “Sneeze Guard,” and the term itself made you want to stay away.

Still one of the best jobs I ever had.
A few weeks ago I was blathering on about old Dinkytown, and the poet with whom we all had a difficult moment at one time or another. Discovered someone with his exact name and occupation and age had gone up the river, but that’s neither here nor there. I forgot my favorite anecdote.

The Valli was a 24-hour joint, which meant we got the bar rush. Every night. Since there was a bar downstairs, we created our own bar rush; it was a nicely closed ecosystem.

I worked upstairs and down – the 5-9 shift was lucrative, but the fun was downstairs, 9 to closing. Taps off at 12:30, bar emptied out at 1 AM. The last customers in the bar were the U of M janitors, coming off the evening shift to pound down pitchers of weak beer and play pool before they were chased upstairs to have supper. I can see them now: Russell, Mike, Vern, Kitty, a short Gimli-guy who seemed older than everyone, and one other guy who always getting over a hopeless crush on a waitress or a boil on his neck.

Vern was the local Elvis, if you can imagine Elvis with a wallet on a chain. Once I went apartment hunting with the Giant Swede; he was answering an ad that turned out to be the home of one of the Valli waitresses. Sue, in fact. Vern was there. Vern was in bed. Vern nodded Good Afternoon, got out of bed wearing denim-print underwear, sat down, lit a Marlboro 100, and waited for us to leave. Vern was the kind of guy that made companies test market Marlboro 200s and demin-colored condoms.

Russell was a kind soul, given to interludes of stoner philosophy – he was one of those ecumenical sorts who regarded alcohol and marijuana as practiced collaborators, not opponents. Kitty I saw a few years ago when we met at the Valli to welcome back Medhi, who’d gone to Iran a quarter-century before and vanished. Gimli was there too. He was still a janitor at the U. We were now all older than he had been when he was older than us, if you know what I mean. Somehow it all averaged out.

But this is about Mike. He was Vern without the swagger. In a good mood, he was just another cheerful guy in jeans and a flannel shirt and long hair, but he had a smart wary focus that made you step back the moment the mood flickered from good to pissed.

We were on wary terms – I was a friend and former roommate of his girlfriend, so he probably knew I got an earful from the Old Lady. He was right, but I didn’t let on. I wanted to stay on his good side. Same with Vern. It profited a bookish twerp to have the local muscle not regard him with rote contempt.

It wasn’t hard to be on their good side. Keep the coffee filled, empty the ashtrays, be quick breaking dollars into quarters for the cir machine and pool table, and for God’s sake don’t look at them like lower-class brutes who really should not be in a college bar, I mean, really. Most important: let them leave last at closing time. You always winced when a new waiter tried to shoo them out along with everyone else. No. This was their place too.
I know they tolerated me with no particular affection, except for Russell; he loved everyone. But there were a few times I needed help, and they were there. When Door-Gunner Sarge went crazy after I 86d him, and he showed up with the gun a few days later, they let me know they thought he was wrong, and I appreciated that. When

I had to chase down a dine-and-dash runner once, Vern and Mike joined in – not because I was leading the charge, of course; it looked like an opportunity to righteously pound someone. But still, it was backup. This was their place too.

Mike was one of the best pinball players around, and one of the few who smoked while he played. Mike was one of those guys who could smoke a cigarette while he smoked another cigarette. Usually you laid it down on the glass – or, in the case of Rick, you threw it at the backplate before you began just to see the sparks – but Mike just smoked and played, smoked and played. He got better as he drank. But sometimes he got dark when he drank, too.

Really dark.

**And so it came to pass** on a weekend night that the entire crew was assembled upstairs at the Valli at 1:30 AM, waiting for pancakes. In my mind everyone's there: Dime-A-Time, the goat-aroma math professor who always sat in B-8 and never tipped more than ten cents; the perpetually grinning and grizzly-faced bobble-headed idiot savant who would sit for hours during peak time working problems on napkins and graph paper; the couples in the private booths of A section, the regulars in B, where you could see everyone come in the door. The loft is open and full. The kitchen's sizzling – orders shouted, dishes crashing, Springsteen coming from the cook's radio. Sam's on the grill; maybe it's Mickey. (He was the local revolutionary; I saw him the other night on an old 90s episode of COPS. He was leading a protest downtown. There was a scene in which he exchanged words with an officer, but it was with the bounds of civilized discourse. At the end of the segment the policeman said the event went pretty well, but they'd had to arrest some people, and Mickey had bit a cop.) I'm with the Giant Swede and the Crazy Uke in B-5, probably. Probably Jack as well, working through his third pack of Marlboros. In A-4: Mike, and probably his girlfriend, and a couple others. Mike looks dark and drowsy.

Who should sit in A-4 but The Poet. Dressed in the shiny work corduroy jacket and Honest Workingman's Plaid Shirt. He's had a wee dram or nine as well. He never came to the Valli. He either drank on the West Bank or Seven Corners.

This wasn’t his place.

We don't know how it started, but if I remember the girlfriend's account, one or the other started staring at the other guy. They'd met before. I imagine each detested the other on sight. Mike was a smart fellow; he read books, serious books. The Poet was the sort of stout sour fellow who looked down on everything, and radiated disapproval, so I'm sure he glared at Mike. Two
alpha dogs in the same kennel: staring contest.

“F*ck you.”

Don’t know who said it first. I can imagine Mike saying it; I can imagine The Poet barking it out, but my money’s on Mike.

The challenge, having been made, had to be picked up. And so The Poet said:

“F*ck. You.”

Well. Where do you go from there? Of course: you speak louder.

“NO,” Mike said. “F*CK YOU.”

The room hushed, as it will when people suddenly sense trouble. Or fun. Or both. And now that it was silent, it was the Poet’s turn.

“NO. F*CK. YOU.”

Maybe Mike realized it was better to leave the Poet as the last one to shout in a newly silent restaurant; made him look like the fool, and more likely to be shown the door. Maybe his girlfriend elbowed him into giving it up. After all, they had a life ahead. A few years later, marriage. Then one kid. Then two. Then that would end – but that was all ahead, a long ways away, as far away for her as the Poet’s stint in stir.

A few beats, some murmurs, a laugh, and the room resumed its usual commotion.

That was a long, long time ago.

Last I heard, Mike was selling insurance in a small town to the north of the cities, and doing very, very well.

That was a day at work, back then.

Today? I had a meeting.

–

But I don’t complain, because I’m enjoying the Top Secret Thing, Phase 2, and enjoying it. I still keep Valli hours, but that’s what naps are for.

Today: Lance Lawson up at buzz.mn. Later today we should have something else, either the Faces of Price is Right, or First Day Covers. Or neither! Or both. Stay tuned.
Defrost Indoors says:
July 9, 2009 at 8:46 pm

“Bucket”, in the cellphone industry, also refers to how many minutes or text messages you get in a given plan or package, i.e. after you’ve used up the 50 bonus messages, they’ll start to come out of your bucket.

DryOwlTacos says:
July 9, 2009 at 10:39 pm

It's Bouquet!

Mark says:
July 9, 2009 at 11:47 pm

Great post. Thanks. Writing likes this is why I've come here often over the past few years.

Ross says:
July 10, 2009 at 3:23 am

" Wramblin' Wreck Says:
…Buckets are for tools!…"

Well, yes. I think the Bleatniks made it clear what they think of those who can’t even use a cliche correctly. ;- ]

James, I think we can officially refer to you as a "raconteur"(and w/o all the usual snideness implied in most modern usage). Prost!
(Or, if you prefer, Proust: “Let us be grateful to people who make us happy. They are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.”)

Tom says:
July 10, 2009 at 11:54 am

James:

You got me – it sure was Rocky Rococo's and not Bullwinkle's. Yes Harvey lived in the hotel. I don’t recall him sitting outside listening to the radio – I usually traveled up and down 5th St SE on my way to and from Dtown. But he always wore a hat.

Thanks for the memories – I live in Washington state now. I gotta take my wife and son there on my next trip back home.

Tom

p.s. – did you ever live in Sanford Hall?

Lileks says:
July 10, 2009 at 7:26 pm

Yes – Sanford Hall, second floor.

Fred says:
July 11, 2009 at 10:07 pm

Speaking of buckets I seem to recall a phrase I read in a story once but when I google it nothing comes up. “If it starts raining money,
grab a bucket."

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3: Black & White World
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5: Comic ads
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October 2012
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http://lileks.com/bleat/?p=2866
The laptop has decided I don't want to type the letter t. That sentence, and this one as well, aren't a “clever” way of showing the problem I'm having; this is what the typing looks like. I'm sure there's an easy fix, but in the meantime it's making for some interesting words. “Meantime” sounds like some sort of personalized Japanese animation; laptop could be French music; and interesting is how most people pronounce the word anyway.

Most people could be a rap star. Probably is already.

I want to search the Apple forums for help, but the search comes across either as dead letter or dead leer. I do believe one can produce words sans a dead key, as I have proved before your eyes now. But it's a pain o avoid the , and I do not look forward to writing on his machine anymore, until the key is fixed. Dra he luck.

Fine day; did a video interview (watch it! I had to put on a suit for that) with our pop critic about the Jonas Brothers concert; wrote a column; had a small part of a meeting, then went to get child and friend from yet another “Camp,” this one being devoted to Webkinz. It would be great if it was really like Webkinz, and you could drop off the kid, put her to sleep and come back
three weeks later, and they’d still be out. Went home, burned dinner, and got to work on preparing the vast buffet I have to lay out tomorrow – the entire Newsbreak Extra has to be written by yours truly, as well as the video clips and other bits of cover. Also a column. Also about 20 hours of work on the Top Secret Thing Phase II due. So we’re light here, but: I’ll just roll out a bunch of stuff today for fun. First Day covers, 100 Mysteries, and the Faces of The Price is Right. First, though, a morning topic.

I found this on the net: the pilot for a show I loved beyond reason or measure when I was a kid. To my surprise, it’s pretty good, as those things went, and the look of early 70s computer high-tech is delightful. Can anyone identify it?
**What** was your favorite TV show as a kid – and has it held up? See you in a bit. Oh – there's the weekly Minnesota City Cartoon Challenge up at buzz.mn. AND the Friday Newspaper column is HERE. See? It never ends.

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**164 RESPONSES TO Friday, July 10**

**steveH** says:
July 10, 2009 at 10:29 pm

At various times during my childhood:

* Maverick — James Garner; Jack Kelly & Roger Moore, not so much.
* Rocky and Bullwinkle
* Robin Hood (Richard Greene version)
* I Spy
* Star Trek
* The Man From UNCLE
* The Prisoner (and Secret Agent)
* The Outer Limits
* Sugarfoot
* Combat
* Victory at Sea
* Hogan's Heroes

If all the compressed air and/or WD-40 don't help the keyboard, it's time for ifixit.com. Repair parts and some of the best online service documentation around.

I have several Macs that lived on for years past their best sell by dates because of ifixit.

**Lohwoman** says:
July 10, 2009 at 10:40 pm
I don’t know if “77 Sunset Strip” held up since I haven’t seen any episodes since they were new. But I’ll never forget Jeff (Roger Smith) being stranded in the desert and those buzzards flying over him. Mostly it was a glib show so this episode was a shocker for me. “M Squad” was and still is a remarkable show. Ditto “The Fugitive.” Top-notch writing, a tour de force for David Janssen. And all those TV actresses from the 60s I’d forgotten about (Bethel Leslie, Susan Oliver, Vera Miles, Patricia Crowley, etc.). I think it’s the best TV show that ever was.

**neen** says:
July 10, 2009 at 10:56 pm

I can’t believe nobody's mentioned The Big Valley – Lee Majors, Linda Evans, and to top it off, Barbara Stanwyck. Good stuff!

**Wallace** says:
July 10, 2009 at 11:38 pm

As I look back I have many favorite shows from my youth like Leave it to Beaver. But growing up in West Texas we didn't watch much TeeVee, being encouraged instead to spend time outside doing constructive things like shooting red ants with BB Guns and blowing up stuff with Blackcat firecrackers.

**hpoulter** says:
July 11, 2009 at 6:29 am

Marjorie – Oh yes, indeed. Rose Marie = Baby Rose Marie, child star in Vaudeville. If you watch those old clips you can even recognize her.

**Preptile** says:
July 11, 2009 at 8:28 am

I have to amend my list. How could I have left out the Rifleman? He still shoots straight. Mission Impossible holds up well too. Although varied weekly few shows drew me toobward more than The Wonderful World of Disney, in all it’s glorious color. Of course you never knew whether nature films might dominate, w beavers knowng nests from firs, or whether Spin and Marty would be in big trouble again before spinning downstream to the Mickey Mouse Club.

A sense of community was offered via those TV shows, leading us to think of Walt Disney as family, much like Uncle Walter Cronkite would also qualify on CBS.

Try not to sing along w Cubby here.

M, I, C, See ya real soon, K, E, Y, Why because we like you ........

All of you can finish that song without my help because at heart you remain mouseketeers. Like me.

Still MI holds up better than the lot w Peter Graves, Greg Morris, Peter Lupus and Martin Landau as a serious credible cast. It is a pity that Landau’s sister Virginia Wade never made a cameo.

**Will** says:
July 11, 2009 at 10:25 am

from the Buzz: “BTW: ETA on the End of Buzz as We Know It? A fortnight. Steel yourselves. ”
Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me. Fool me 14 times, Jim, shame on the dog-faced kid.

Will says:
July 11, 2009 at 10:26 am
Er, I meant to type James. I know you don’t like the diminutive, sorry.

Mr_Fastbucks says:
July 11, 2009 at 11:56 am
Speed Racer was the greatest cartoon because there was real gunplay, death, and mayhem in nearly every episode. After school I really needed that. It would be impossible to produce today as evidenced by last year's attempt by the Wachowski's. Sprinkle in some “Three Stooges” and some “Sanford and Son” and I'm in hog heaven.

LindaY says:
July 11, 2009 at 6:39 pm
Late to the feast… PROBE, of course, which became the series SEARCH (apparently NBC thought it sounded too much like a doctor show) with Hugh O'Brian, Tony Franciosa, and Doug McClure as C.R. Grover (the C.R. stood for “Christopher Robin,” as he explained in much embarrassment in one episode), and the incomparable Burgess Meredith (and yes, I remember the episode where Cameron was kidnapped). Hated when they changed the cool dark control room for the icky white one. Carl…I still have the ViewMaster, too!

Favorite shows as a kid… you have a week? I read everything I could get my hands on and still managed to watch prodigious amounts of television. Loved the animal series, LASSIE, FURY, MY FRIEND FLICKA, RIN TIN TIN… I still love LASSIE… I still watch it weekdays when I can on WHT… corny, yeah. Still love it. GET SMART… still funnier than any of the trash on TV now. Still love WILD WILD WEST; who watched it for West? Thinking women watched it for Artemus Gordon! 😊 Some classic MASH is still good, when they weren’t pontificating: “Dear Dad,” “Dear Sigmund,” the wonderful “Movie Tonight,” etc. Loved MY WORLD AND WELCOME TO IT. Anyone remember the series HE AND SHE with Dick Benjamin and Paula Prentiss? Marvelous stuff. Also the 1975 ELLERY QUEEN with Jim Hutton and David Wayne… great 1940s retro. Animation: JONNY QUEST was the best… also STAR BLAZERS. Bought the set of the first two series. Still think MAKE ROOM FOR DADDY is pretty funny, too.

jvon says:
July 12, 2009 at 6:38 pm
“Battle of the Planets” — competely awful, but I loved it then.
“The Incredible Hulk” — ditto
“Star Trek” — good then, great now.
“Gilligan's Island” — pure awesomeness. And I still like Maryann better.

Al says:
July 13, 2009 at 11:31 am
I think it’s “Probe”, a relatively short-lived high-tech spy show. Sort of like Jmaes Bond but with a revolving cast of lead characters.
Remember faces but not named. If I remember correctly it was
called something else at first then had to be renamed due to a la suit
of some kind. One of the spies had a radio emplanted in a tooth and
he would turn it on and off by biting (really!). I think they had a
Time Tunnel like control room where all of the action was
monitored/. Of course, I could be completely wrong.

Tex Lovera says:
July 13, 2009 at 12:10 pm

Car 54 Where are You – Fred Gwynne was classic
Hazel
Dennis the Menace
Lassie
The Rifleman
Dragnet
Wild Wild West
Star Trek
The Twilight Zone
Gilligan's Island – a truly talented bunch of comedic actors; what
voice talent they had
The Beverly Hillbillies – this may have been the best of the bunch;
how they got laughs without being condescending towards ANYONE
– a good lesson for today's writers
Bullwinkle
Bugs Bunny
Jonny Quest
Captain Kangaroo (Mr. Green Jeans, Grandfather Clock, Mr. Moose,
Bunny Rabbit always stealing carrots)
Space Angel
Get Smart
Hogan's Heroes
McHale's Navy
Adam 12
Emergency
SCTV Network 90 (much funnier than SNL)

Funny how that list absolutley dwarfs what's on TV today, isn't it??

Ross says:
July 14, 2009 at 1:30 am

“…still can catch “Illya” (David MacCallum) on “NCIS”; he's aged
pretty gracefully.”
There is an episode of NCIS wherein, while discussing the eventful
life of McCallum's character, one regular character muses to
another, “I wonder what he looked like when he was younger?”
Mark Harmon’s character, walking past, stops, smiles a bit and says,
“Like Illya Kuryakin.”
If you're a fan of McCallum's, you must see “Hear My Song"(if you
haven't already) at least once. A strange, & very funny UK-made
film.
The posters about Richard Boone & “Have Gun-Will Travel" are
correct. But a typical touch that made that western unlike any other
was that the first episode tells us what the Chinese hotel porter's
name is & that “Hey Boy" is a sort of mutual agreement, because
otherwise Paladin would be the only resident calling him by name.
The implication was that it would throw the porter & make the
resident too conspicuous.
Sitting in the gazebo, enjoying the new sprinkler. It goes *chika-chika-sssssss.* It replaces a useless ACE sprinkler that stopped going back and forth – you know, the classic sprinkler through which kids run in all the ads. As far as I can tell those just throw water up in the air, and some of it gets on the grass. I’m watering because the backyard is going brown, and this makes me a control-freak with a misplaced sense of priorities, based on greed, outdated notions of urban beauty, and a pathetic desire to outdo my neighbors – or so I learned from [this Fark thread](http://www.fark.com), which discussed lawns and Canadian laws pertaining thereof. It’s an interesting read, because the people who don’t like lawns generally exhibit the same sort of petty, crimped self-righteousness they ascribe to pro-lawn people. (It has come to that: we are now pro-lawn and anti-lawn. Or rather pro-green even grass, and anti-that.) The amusing thing: if my lawn sat atop of my roof, it would be good. On the ground, it’s a waste.

Yes, the very term “suburban lawn” says it all for some. Everything people once wanted ends up as a sneer-term, shorthand for the RUIN brought about by progress, by the suburbs. I was reading some comments on a blog about downtowns, and someone brought up once again the invidious impact of freeways on cities and downtowns. Once they built them, people left the core, and the downtowns emptied out. True. As someone who loves old downtowns, I wish the cities had done a better job of remaking themselves, instead of knocking down everything that made them unique. But I have yet to see the photographs showing Federal officials and GM goons whipping...
people out of their beloved neighborhoods and driving them in herds to the
godless burbs. Sometimes I think people wanted to go. It’s almost as if they
responded to new options by making a choice.

**Had a dinner party** Saturday night with relatives. Gary the SuperRealtor, my
wife’s uncle, was talking about home sales in the south metro: gangbusters.
Interesting term, and it dates him – he’s 64 – but even when he picked up the
word, it was old. Comes from the line “they came on like Gangbusters,” which
was – I’m reasonably sure – a reference to the calamitous opening of the
“Gangbusters” radio show. Anyway. The sub-$250 market is going great in
town. Mostly first-time buyers. Hit with the Hammer of Death, though, was
an expensive suburb to the immediate west of Minneapolis, so close in that
it’s really part of the old city. Lots of high-end houses for sale; all the
management people lost their jobs.

In a related note: as I was shopping **IN THE SUBURBS** on Saturday, I saw a
guy with a sign advertising “30 – 40 % off” at the Smith and Harkin garden
store. Well, I thought, they’re dead, then. When I parked in the Target lot I
googled the chain, and sure enough, super-extra-dead bankruptcy underway.
They cited declining sales and the tough economy, which was no surprise.
Just once I’d like them to say “oh, we’re sick of this, and we hate plants
anyway. Don’t know what we were thinking.” I went there once, years ago,
and thought: this is preposterously expensive stuff. I would have to make
Trump-money to pay this much for a fargin’ clay pot, and even then I would
feel my frugal forebears wince from beyond the grave. I had the same
feelings back in the 80s, when the term “gourmet” was applied to everything
from jelly beans to dog crackers. Sto elevating the commonplace for the sole
purpose of giving people meaningless reinforcement of their class status!

But there I go, don’t I. Well, I didn’t want to ban gourmet dog food. When
these things collapse, as they always do, there’s no surprise.

Now, off to Home Depot to get bird seed. Well, grass seed, but I’m being
realistic.

**Several hours later**

Apparently you can’t buy just grass seed. It’s either Fescue Blend or High
Traffic or Sunny or Shade/Sun mix or Total Darkness. There are new earth-
friendly grasses coated with some substance that locks in moisture and
waters the seedlings even if you forget. I bought two bags of soil, thinking
that anyone who ever wants to commit a murder and dispose of the body
should lug around a few sacks of soil for practice, and then went to pick the
bones of Eddie Bauer at the mall. This is the time when everything’s marked
down 92% or more. Did what I usually did: grabbed four or five things, then
talked myself out of each of them. Ended up with a shirt I really liked – but it
had a defect. The clerk said she could call other stores to see if they have one;
I suggested a price reduction. And so the $50 shirt was mine for $8. I’m sure
they still made a profit.

Took a few more pictures I’ll give the RECESSION tag, or perhaps something
more descriptive, like “the Icarus of Retail Does a Face Plant.”

This storefront is on the third floor of Southdale, a part of the mall that's never had any luck. I noticed that the video store had closed – I don't even remember its name, but it sold DVDs and toys – er, action figures, and other collectibles. Stabbed dead by Amazon, I suspect. It's now a Jacuzzi store, of all things.

This one has been empty for years and years:

It was a Mervyn's, and it closed, what, five years ago? They never filled the space. Big empty black hole at the end of the mall. I remember the last thing I bought there – a bucket of Easter-themed My Little Pony toys for my daughter. Marked down.

Note how the removal of the signs makes it look like someone raked the storefronts with gunfire.
Went to the grocery store, again, to get the things I hadn’t gotten before. A few items of note.

Surprise? Harvest surprise? Well, if you planted beans and they came up flax, or skeletons, that would be a surprise.

Continuing the long, proud tradition of ugly BBQ sauce labels, the oddest one yet. DARE brand? With the D.A.R.E. lion? Well, it’s nice to see a positive message among all the other pro-drug-abuse BBQ sauces, but it still seems odd.

After the party was over Saturday night I stayed up to watch “Knowing,” which might be the most depressing movie I’ve seen in a very long time. End-of-the-world depressing. I had no idea it was directed by the man who did “Dark City,” but I knew it had big slabs of Nicholas Cage, and I always like him. Nothing much he does sticks with me, aside from “Wild at Heart” and a sequence in “Ghost Rider” where he drives a motorcycle up a building with his head on fire, but no matter. Hard to explain why you don’t dislike the actors that are supposed to make you roll your eyes, but he just seems like a okay guy. A right joe. That’s all.

As a creepy, eerie, unnerving movie, it works – and has a few set-pieces that
are worth the price of the rental. One of those movies that you pick apart in
the car on the way home from the theater – the person who liked it explains
the inconsistencies and unexplained assertions, the person who didn’t care
one way or the other keeps digging, and then you’re home and you pay off
the babysitter, and that's that. If you're watching it home alone in the dark,
though, and it's two AM, the last half hour makes you glad the serrated knives
you used to cut the bread are in the dishwasher, because you’d saw open
veins 1 and 2 if they were handy. Man.

So, let’s cheer up with the Dog:

![Dog](image)

He had a good weekend, too. Scraps and syrup. It all ended in a bath, alas; he
went in the lake the other day, and has been itching something fierce – you
touch his flank and the legs start to twitch.

He doesn’t like the new sprinkler. He walked over to his usual spot in the
shade, noticed it was wet, and gave me a look: *and your point is?* When I
moved it he regarded it with deep suspicion and resignation, as many old folk
look at something fast and chattering.

**Later today:** Matchbook and Faces of the Price is Right. Now: *buzz.mn*. See
you around.
hpoulter says:
July 13, 2009 at 2:34 pm

Water isn’t expensive, per se – you’re free to collect rainwater or lap it out of puddles if you want – but treatment, storage and pumping cost a lot. We insist on the most thoroughly treated water and wastewater in the world. We are flushing our toilets with water that is far cleaner than what most of the world drinks. You can drink the effluent from the latest sewer treatment plants. This is not all bad, but it is expensive. Some kind of dual-use systems may be in order, and are probably inevitable in the Southwest.

The reason your sewer bill is based on your water bill is because your water use is metered and your sewer is not. The industry estimates that about 75% of your water consumption will go back in the sewer and your rates are based on that.

RB says:
July 13, 2009 at 2:46 pm

“…but force the environment to adapt to them.”

Isn’t that the purpose of human endeavor?

I can’t distinguish between Nicolas Cage and Kevin Costner, so I avoid them both. I miss a lot of really lousy movies that way.

Hal Duston says:
July 13, 2009 at 3:54 pm

I first discovered Nicolas Cage in Peggy Sue Got Married, and then later, Guarding Tess, and It Could Happen to You. I don’t remember much about his role as Peggy Sue’s ex, but I really liked his secret service agent protecting Shirley MacLaine and how their relationship developed. His portrayal of the police officer splitting the winning lottery ticket reminded me of a very young Jimmy Stewart.

Cliford Craig says:
July 13, 2009 at 4:49 pm

“Knowing” was recommended by a friend. I was going to watch it but I do not need depressing movies anymore. Jasper is one fine looking animal.

Dave (in MA) says:
July 13, 2009 at 5:00 pm

If you think you’re seeing a lot of dead malls now, just wait until Obamunism is in full force. Even just letting the Bush tax cuts expire next year will be bad enough, never mind the impact that socialized medicine and Crap-and-Turd will have.

Spud: Gaia forbid that any family should have more than two children or you drive anything more than a 4 cylinder vehicle (electric vehicles preferred).

If you’re not commuting by bicycle or government choo-choo, then you’re selfishly wasting our scarce, precious resources and deserve to die!
My wife went to rent “Knowing” but accidentally clicked on the OnDemand listing for some Renee Zellweger chick flick (but I repeat myself). She meant to watch Wooden-Face but got Squinty instead. The helpful Verizon person who finally answered the phone after only 20 minutes took care of it. Like any other Cage movie that I’ve ever liked, it was in spite of his starring in it.

Bridey says:
July 13, 2009 at 5:17 pm

Well, Dave (in MA), we don't have ObamaCare and cap-and-trade yet. Nothing's been passed. Indeed, public nervousness and His Highness' crashing poll numbers may even delay the juggernaut a little. Not that I have much hope in the long run, given that the Republicans are somewhere between irrelevant and comatose. (Somewhere, madCanada's ears are perking up.)

But anyway, it is kind of too bad that Renee Zellweger has vanished into romantic comedies. She has been really good in more interesting movies — she was terrific in “The Whole Wide World,” opposite Vincent D’Onofrio, of all people, who did an excellent and even subtle job as Conan creator Robert Howard, who was apparently a genuine emotional train wreck. And I liked her in “Chicago,” which was not precisely a chick flick. Yet of late she has become the female Matthew McConaughhey — bit of a waste.

As far as the squint, I’m generally in favor of any American actress who has a little different look, since they’re largely an army of more or less talented clones.

Pam-EL says:
July 13, 2009 at 7:15 pm

chika-chika-ssssssss
spspspsp sssssssssssss sp
tafita tafita tafita fffffffffffffffff
Olde school: sssssssssssssspshphphphphphphphphphphphph

bgates says:
July 13, 2009 at 8:29 pm

Everything people once wanted ends up as a sneer-term, shorthand for the RUIN brought about by progress

Maybe. It's still going to be a long 3 1/2 years.

Kev says:
July 13, 2009 at 9:13 pm

Gaia forbid that any family should have more than two children or you drive anything more than a 4 cylinder vehicle (electric vehicles preferred).

I can't find a link to it, but I believe it was the comic strip character Pogo who said something to the effect of, isn't it funny how the people who talk the loudest about overpopulation already went to the trouble of being borned theirselves.

bohlipton says:
July 13, 2009 at 9:13 pm
I used to enjoy Nicholas Cage. He was a good actor who gave interesting performances. Then he became commercial in big movies and his performances became less and less interesting until he made the artistic decision that he would give a much more interesting performance if his head was replaced by a big ball of flame in GHOST RIDER. So I stopped looking on him as someone I would go to see in a movie.

Bob

Allan E. says:
July 13, 2009 at 9:36 pm

Smith & Hawken reminds me of the Pottery Barn I once went to at an upscale mall in Alexandria, VA. Almost everything there could be bought for one third the price at an Ace Hardware. The few things that couldn't were things I would not want anyway. The free market system seems to take care of stores such as this. Too bad the present powers that be are bound and determined to destroy the free market system.

DrZin says:
July 13, 2009 at 11:21 pm

Interview after interview I've seen of Cage belies the idea that he's any kind of regular Joe. He's one of the most pompous, pretentious idiots I've ever seen.

I don't let his presence dissuade me from choosing or enjoying a movie, and he has his moments, but I'm always semi-thinking about his droning on about his “craft” with as though he's doing a lousy impersonation of Sir John Gielgud.

Wallace says:
July 13, 2009 at 11:31 pm

Whenever I see “Southdale” mentioned, I'm always reminded of Garrison Keillor's old gag, “brought to you by malls of Minneapolis....Southdale, Brookdale, Chippendale etc”.

Cindy says:
July 13, 2009 at 11:51 pm

Ahhh Knowing, watched it last night with my pre-teen. Scared the heck out of him and for the first time in many years he slept in my bed! LOL It was depressing and kinda creepy.

JDB says:
July 13, 2009 at 11:59 pm

Renee Zellweeger was outstanding as Mae Braddock in Cinderella Man. Women's roles in sports films are generally not that interesting but she and Patricia Clarkson as Herb Brooks' wife in Miracle were both great. I credit the actresses and not so much the scripts in those two films.

francis says:
July 14, 2009 at 12:09 am

Just have to comment: My neighborhood isn't terribly obsessive
about the lawns, we all keep after them well enough and that's about it. But I live on a hillside where the view from my yard was down a valley though about eight neighbors yards, all green and nice, with some tall scrubby woods at the bottom. It's a big part of the appeal to the place, and previously the biggest annoyance was somebody's bugzapper about three yards up. Then the next door neighbor's house was let vacant and sold at auction, and the people that bought it literally BLACKTOPPED the whole yard. Apparently the husband likes to tinker with junk cars, that are to be moved in in the coming weeks. It's so depressing, our nice green valley with a huge strip of blacktop running down the middle, about fifty feet from my yard. And is only going to get worse, as they move in the Astrovans and aging Corvettes. It's like going from living basically in the woods or rural 'burbs to living next to a junkyard. Of course, it's a big hit on my property value, but that's minimal compared to stepping out my door into the valley versus stepping out my door into a junkyard.

Sorry, not really the forum for it, but I'm so aggrivated...

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**Ross** says:
July 14, 2009 at 2:31 am

Yeah, “Raising Arizona” & “Moonstruck” are great, but if you “Con Air” really want to see cage beat someone's face in(& feel a little sick about cheering him on), watch him bloody James Gandolfini in “8MM”–a truly disturbing film.

**Ray Butler** says:
July 20, 2009 at 5:34 pm

You just wouldn’t be you without the Staw Man arguments. Sigh.
At the coffee house. Haven’t been here in a while. Less a house than a store, really. The music playlist today is 80s. From the speaker poured that famous piece of mid-80s German fatuity, “99 Luftalloons.”

Said to nice young clerk: “Nothing like 99 Red Balloons in the original German!”

Pity smile. Pause. “I’m sorry, what?”

“It’s the song – it was a hit in the 80s. This is the German version. It’s better because you don’t have to understand the lyrics.”

“Oh! Well, I wasn’t around.” Smile. Pause. “What can I get you?”

Kids today. No respect for kids of yesterday. Thing is, we were required to know every fargin’ thing about the 60s when we were coming up, being schooled in the ways of the Most Important Musical Genre Ever. You were required to nod at your elder and respect their sage ways, and thus I found myself in a few dorm rooms listening to peers explain why Crosby, Stills, Nash, Young, Reefer and Cocaine were incredible not just for their harmony and song-writing skills, but their ability to make music that on longer than three minutes. To which you could only say: may all your girlfriends take “Love the One You’re With” to heart everytime you’re out of town.

To be honest, I did listen to a lot of Zeppelin, but at least they were still alive, still producing, still touring. The first three albums seemed to come from
another era.

I'm in the EVIL SUBURBS again. Came out here to get anti-itching spray for the dog and a fishing rod for daughter. You know, the average trip. Both are needed right away, which is why – to repeat myself for the 9348503rd time – I'm glad I live now, because getting on a streetcar to go downtown for these things wouldn't be an option. And I doubt they had anti-itch dog spray in those days. Your dog itched, you let him scratch. Didn't get her a licensed or endorse rod – the options for kids were Hannah Montana, which holds no interest, Barbie, which is SO little-kid-and-long-ago (she had to use a Barbie one today, and complained bitterly about it. I reminded her of the hours she spent on the Barbie games, and we had a happy conversation on the way home about the merits of each. Game nostalgia: it's one of those things we have. I suspect more dads have game nostalgia in common with their kids than Moms. BECAUSE MOMS ARE BUSY DOING THINGS. Okay, okay, Betty F., take a Miltown.) There was a Transformer rod, which I wouldn't get lest it turn itself into an animate, self-aware Cuisinart, and a Spider-Man rod. No. I got something else, but it seemed too big – so just to make sure she was equipped, I went to the Sports Authority, a place whose name sounds like all your purchases are legally binding. Found a kid's rod she may or may not like – it could be construed as Too Kid, but she could think it's cool. I will not reveal the existence of the backup rod until the other, cheaper rod fails.

Got the dog spray. Hope it works. He's miserable. Hasn't moved much all day, since the slightest motion seems to set off twitchy itching. Just touching a flank leads to twitchery.

Off to home; I'll report back to see how the brightly-colored rod went over.

LATER

And it's a go! Good.

Now outside, enjoying a Reyka on the rocks – I drink this vodka because I feel bad for Iceland, and want to do my part for their evaporated economy. Unless they raise the price again. I'm having internet contrusions again, and the despair, she is great. The same damned problem; pages load a bit, then stall. Everything loads a bit, then stalls. File transfers start out "robustly," to use the word people like to throw around when they're talking about the internet, and the transfer rate trickles down to nothing. Three ISPs. Two different routers. Three different modems. New cabling on everything. COVAD techs to the house to check out the wiring. No one knows anything. No one has any idea. It's making my job impossible and I do not know what to do.

And now, for no good reason except that it's something I'm vaguely interested in this month: the Faces of The Price is Right, part 4. You can learn more from game shows and magazines than history books and pre-fab dramas. This is what people actually looked like.

Trust me. I was there.
The modified Purple Conductor’s Hat. All above the Groovy Railroad:

It’s always nice when Miss Garland drops by, dead or alive:

On to the contestants:
They were reacting to A NEW . . . sailboat. As you can tell, Lady Jumpsuit on the left is doing a quick grim calculation; the lass on the right, wearing one of those sternum-high bosom-accentuation devices so popular in 1974. is just stunned by the beauty and majesty of the moment.

The winner was:

Panathea. Here’s where it gets interesting. Of the PiR shows I’ve seen in this series, it’s white, white, white – one fellow of Japanese ancestry, and he was a
gardener by trade. Panathea was Black, and a delightful contestant, just the sort of happy extrovert the producers look for when they’re vetting the people queued up to watch the taping.

I do wonder if the producers, or anyone in the booth, worried about this:

A fridge full of watermelons. But that was the prize for the next round, and I’m sure the producer was happy Panathea won the sailboat. Still, I wonder if anyone thought “uh oh” when Panathea came on down, given the fridge-full-of-watermelons to come, or – quite possibly – perhaps people gave no thought to the matter? You can make the argument that they should have been concerned, because it would look bad. C’mon, the African-American contestant wins a sailboat, and we give her watermelons. Yeah, that’ll play well. Or you can say Who Cares? The only color on this show is Green. Well, also orange, lots of orange, but mostly green.

Lady Jumpsuit seems to have strolled out of a country-western song, no?
Miss Gwenny Paltry, come on down:

This woman ran down with confident obvious athleticism:
Bob noted she was very good at running. She’d gotten a lot of practice being chased by boys? She said, well, no. Oh, then you got a lot of practice running after the boys? She said, well, no, Bob. I felt bad for her; most people don’t expect to end up on national television interrogated about the frequency with which they pursue the opposite sex on foot.

**The prizes.** We have to discuss the prizes. This was a luxury premium box in those days.

Burnt orange AND avocado green. Win win.
This was an acceptable car in those days. My. God.

When it came to the showcase, it was Lady Jumpsuit against Panathea. Keep in mind they get a Black contestant once every two months, or so it seemed. What's her showcase? A trip to fabulous . . .
Gracious, she was. But she passed to Lady Jumpsuit. And now, here's your fabulous showcase!

Riding lessons! Immediate cutaway:
I'm not trying to make a big deal of race and culture here, but it does illustrate the assumptions the show made. You can’t get any WASPier than sailing, horseback lessons and a trip to Norway.

One more thing: kids, do you know what Janet’s holding?


**LATER:** Comics up around 11 or so; Miscreant Roundup at buzz.mn for your noontime reading pleasure.
81 RESPONSES TO tuesday, july 14

Spud says:
July 14, 2009 at 11:28 am

What, no mention of Nena’s Euro underarm hair?? Any bonus points for knowing all of the Yardbird’s history too (who begat who when)?

I enjoyed the alt-text for the PiR pictures. Maybe in your spare time you could design another site: ALT-GEN:ALT-TEXT. Pictures of 70’s game shows would be displayed with your special flavor of alt-text, and your loyal readers could add their own alt-texts in the comments. Kind of like the “lolcatz” thing that was big for a few minutes. After it catches on you could branch out to old talk shows (Mike Douglass, Dick Cavett) once they offer that on cable, if they haven’t started already. [I’m a TV-by-antenna kind of guy.]

Natalie says:
July 14, 2009 at 11:40 am

Good goshamighty, those fingernails could murder someone! Makes me wonder if the red is polish or remnants of vital fluid from her last victim.

hpoulter says:
July 14, 2009 at 11:57 am

Knew I shoulda Googled my spelling. I have enough trouble spelling in English.

Lisa P says:
July 14, 2009 at 11:59 am

Poor itchy Jasper. Check with your vet to see if it’s ok to give him benadryl. My goldie has always itched, and the vet prescribed one milligram per pound twice a day, taken with one fish oil capsule twice a day. That helps a lot. Switching her to corn and wheat free food also helped a lot. I know the dose sounds high, but dogs are not people, and react differently to medications.

Re: the Gremlin – when we first started dating, my ex had a Gremlin (orange, I think). It did have a deceptively powerful engine. He took off from a stop at full speed to show off for me and broke a motor mount because of the torque. It was our first date, and the sudden takeoff caused the glove compartment to fall open and all the contents to spill into my lap. There was nothing unusual in there, just the usual stuff, but he was still completely mortified.
**huddydrvr** says:
July 14, 2009 at 12:03 pm

James – your download problem may be related to a bug in Safari related to a corrupted preferences file, if Safari is what you're using.

Go to home>library>Preferences>Safari and find “Downloads.plist”. Move it to the desktop, and restart Safari. Try a download. If it works better, then trash the file you moved (it'll make another one anyway). If Safari doesn't seem to work right, put the file back. Warning: Your Mileage May Vary.

I hate it when Preferences starts taking bribes and hiring its relatives. Perhaps if you paid it protection?

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**Rat** says:
July 14, 2009 at 12:13 pm

Does anybody else think that Lady Jumpsuit looks like Geddy Lee circa about 1974?

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**Wramblin' Wreck** says:
July 14, 2009 at 12:24 pm

James, I know the answer to your internet problem. One word – Apple.

The apple computer does not want to be contaminated by any contact with PCs, however indirect it may be. So you can connect and receive data at the normal rate for a short time then the Apple computer begins to resent this intrusion by PCs from the internet. The data transfer rate decreases and eventually stops to keep the Apple pure and unsullied.

I know I am being sarcastic but I truly believe that if you use a PC to connect to the internet you will not have this problem.

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**Marjorie J. Birch** says:
July 14, 2009 at 12:34 pm

FreeState: was your professor a German named Dr. Preis? (der Preis is right?)

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**Kurt** says:
July 14, 2009 at 12:38 pm

I really like that maxi-blue Gremlin – the color looks a lot nicer in person than it does on TV. Gremlins are very cool, especially when they have a 304 V-8 engine under the hood, with quite a lot of power for a relatively light car.

We enjoyed watching “Let's Make a Deal” on GSN (it's not currently being aired), in part for some of the awful cars they gave away (not one but TWO Chevy Vegas!), with the occasional gem tossed in (Malibu SS, Corvette, etc.). What's amusing is that back in the mid '70s, a Cadillac Coupe de Ville or Eldorado is still considered super-upscale and desirable.

But LMAD is noteworthy to me because it's completely color-blind. There are contestants of every race and it's never an issue at all.
JeffdeCal says:
July 14, 2009 at 12:50 pm

If it's 1973, she's likely to have been “Afro-American.” Never quite stuck, so was short-lived.

Many people's definition of “racist” is too wide. Assuming you're going to get WASPs in that era was just a cultural norm; I don't see anything overtly racist about it. And let's watch our assumptions: that woman may have had relatives in Oslo, for all we know (okay, the facial expressions say “No,” but we shouldn't presume). She may have even been Republican. She's middle-class enough to be appearing on TPIR, remember?

It's too touchy to be uncomfortable with the acronym WASP. It's just a neutral description of the salient elements of the dominant (easy, now) culture. Appearance, cultural ancestry, religious tradition. It's not as much a street term as it is an academic one. If you want to put a spin on that, you'll want to put a spin on everything. Not every label is libel.

Now, if the backstage crew saw that the black woman was “coming on down” to be a contestant, and quickly re-stocked the fridge w/ watermelons, THAT would be racist.

MadAnthony says:
July 14, 2009 at 1:45 pm

Growing up, my dad had almost that exact same Gremlin – a '72, yellow, with black stripes.

It was oddly proportioned, but it was solid – he kept the car until 1989, when he traded it in for a Plymouth Voyager for my mom and inherited her '86 Renault. The Gremlin still ran, but had a tragic and fatal case of rust.

juanito - John Davey says:
July 14, 2009 at 2:32 pm

Spud Says:
July 14th, 2009 at 11:28 am
After it catches on you could branch out to old talk shows (Mike Douglas, Dick Cavett) once they offer that on cable, if they haven’t started already.
[I'm a TV-by-antenna kind of guy.]

Merv. Griffin.

Super!

juanito - John Davey says:
July 14, 2009 at 2:34 pm

MadAnthony Says:
July 14th, 2009 at 1:45 pm

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It was oddly proportioned, but it was solid – he kept the car until 1989, when he traded it in for a Plymouth Voyager for my mom and inherited her '86 Renault. The Gremlin still ran, but had a tragic and fatal case of rust.
AMC.
Renault.
Plymouth.

Your Dad was a glutton for punishment…

Well, not really. AMC and Plymouth both had their moments. But a Renault? Please.

**Erica** says:
July 14, 2009 at 2:35 pm

Wow, primo Lee Press-on Nails, Janet. You can see where the tips are attached and painted over.

**Warren** says:
July 14, 2009 at 3:01 pm

The thing that I hated, hated, hated about *99 Luftballons* was the shoddy translation of the titular lyric to “99 red balloons”.

If they had done it instead as “99 hot-air balloons” they would have kept the scansion intact. The syllable count and stresses are identical. But oh no. They had to add a useless modifier instead.

After all it wasn’t the color of the things that showed up on radar and got the superpowers panicked into a nuke exchange.

**Atom** says:
July 14, 2009 at 4:57 pm

Janet?? Its Janice.. and Anitra was the hotter model. I would taker her riding lessons.

**Claire** says:
July 14, 2009 at 6:34 pm

Do you have any kind of booster on your modem? We hooked one up to bounce signal into the den from the office where the cable originates. Worked great for 6 months then x-fer rates started going downhill slowly over a few weeks to the point where pages took 5 minutes to load. It still said I had a strong signal (all green bars) the whole time. Unplugged the damn thing, moved the laptop closer to the office modem and problem solved.

Did you try another computer to see if it's your computer or if it's the signal coming in? Did you try going wired (not wireless) to see if it helps? Somebody, somewhere ought to be able to troubleshoot this for you. How frustrating!

**HT** says:
July 14, 2009 at 8:10 pm

I still remember the James Bond movie “The Man with the Golden Gun”, where all of the cars were provided by AMC.

My own experiences with that brand of vehicle were also in the 70's, where they comprised almost the entirety of the University Transportation Services daily rental fleet. Not slow, by any means, but through the mists of time is seems that I remember you had to turn the steering wheel through several complete revolutions in order to make a shallow right hand turn. Not very maneuverable, as
my glancing collisions with a couple of telephone poles (sort of like the Titanic and that iceberg) would subsequently attest.

Patrick says:
July 14, 2009 at 8:58 pm

jeischen Says:

You're right, teens of the '70s were required to be up on their knowledge of '60s bands or perhaps more accurately, late-'60s bands. Our elders (FM DJ's) taught us all about the history and trivia of the members and the albums of The Doors, The Who, The Stones, The Beatles, Clapton, Hendrix and, of course, my personal heros, Led Zeppelin. They had been to Kashmir, to the Misty Mountaintop, to California with an achin' in her heart. Jimmy Page was a guitar god. After their first six masterful albums I can't tell you the huge letdown I got from "Presence." "In Through the Out Door" was a disappointment. By the time "Coda" came along, I had moved on. I can't imagine me trying to get my kids to appreciate the intricacies of Page's guitar solo on "Stairway to Heaven" but I did notice my oldest daughter had TiVO'ed a special on Green Day, so maybe the rawk gene still survives in my family.

I think what has made these gods of rock what they are is that they managed to hold on to the very end, from decade all the way into the next. Some are still going strong today, even though their music may not sound as good as it did 30 to 40 years ago.

Bands today can't do that. One will become popular one day, and then three months down the road, they're forgotten. They end up in the discount rack like another can of beans. Even if a band from the 90s has made it past 1998, they're still not as good as they were in their earlier years, and will never, ever be as good as any of the bands from the 60s and 70s. Case closed. End of story.

As for your daughter TiVOing Green Day, you need to have a serious talk with her about rock music. This talk should be just as important as THE TALK, the one every parent dreads.

Green Day's got nothing on Zep, The Stones, The Dead, The Doors, The Eagles, The Beatles, Pink Floyd, CCR, BTO, ELO, or any other band from that era, and any solo artist. Green Day just needs to pack up their instruments and go back to practicing the recorder in 4th grade music class, or better yet, tapping on the rhythm sticks in Kindergarten. Same with any group that's popular today. They need to put down their instruments, sit down inside a soundproof booth, and take daily required classes of classic rock, each consisting of eight consecutive hours of nothing but listening to the greater than greats. Listen to the music. Feel it. Absorb it. Make it become a part of you. Become a part of the music. Become one with the music. Let the music overpower you. Become one with the music. Drink it in. Let it fill you. Whoa-oh-oh, listen to the music all the time.

jamcool says:
July 14, 2009 at 9:33 pm

Of course, AMC offered the “Levi's” option, complete with denim seats

shesnailie says:
July 14, 2009 at 11:13 pm

_@_v – can't help wondering how 99 balloons luft or red managed to
match the radar signature of a nuclear missile launch to the point that fighter were scrambled… and where were these balloon launched? north dakota? outside of the af base at rhein-main?

and what is it with the vitriolic hatred people have for the amc gremlin? was anybody under the delusion they were buying a ferrari when they bought onea them? it's a freakin' compact car. nothing more, nothing less. not like you hear people bleating about the chevette…

Dog Faced Kid says:
July 14, 2009 at 11:53 pm

James,
That brought tears to my eyes. I haven’t laughed that hard in months. Thank you so much.
DFK

Wallace says:
July 14, 2009 at 11:57 pm

The young Bob Barker, good picture. One of my many claims to fame is that I appeared, as a kid, on the original Truth or Consequences show in the early 60s which Bob hosted. Courtesy of my Mom, who grew up in Spirngfield Mo, with Bob Barker and his wife Dorothy Jo. The thing I remember most is meeting Glen Glenn, the sound guy who did most of the early TV shows including I Love Lucy. Ah the memories…!

Ross says:
July 15, 2009 at 2:21 am

“…If all a person knew about Germany was that 99 Red Balloons came from there, I’d say that person knew quite a lot.”

And you’d be a fool. Please try to remember, people, that assuming Nena=Germany(or Austria, et al.) is like the rest of the world taking one of our musical celebutards as completely representative of the USA. Despite the impression you get on, say, BBC America, there vast stretches of the country that want nothing to do with the Greens, the EU, etc. I mean, 16 years of Helmut Kohl running the place–not exactly a leftie, kids. Ask me sometime what my sister-in-law's cousin–the Austrian policeman–and his neighbors think about all this. You’d swear the GOP picked up another state & just clean forgot about it…

Julia says:
July 15, 2009 at 8:57 am

Good advice above on the dog itching. He's probably too old to develop ragweed allergies now but that's what my fog had. Pollen allergies in dogs express themselves as itchy skin. We had her on little pink pills that contained steroids and antihistamines, every August through November. It's called “Vanectyl” up here.

NukemHill says:
July 15, 2009 at 12:16 pm

I'm having internet contrusions again, and the despair, she is great.
I second the Downloads.plist possibility. When plists go bad, much
gnashing of teeth ensues.

However, if something similar were to happen on Windows, you’d probably have to re-format and re-install your whole system to solve it. Resolving most issues on a Mac is pretty simple. It’s knowing where the preferences are and how they can get munged that’s the problematic part for novices.

Have you talked to a Genius at the Apple Store? He/she might have some insights, if Downloads.plist isn’t the issue.

John says:
July 15, 2009 at 12:33 pm

The thread that won’t die…but why should it? These TPiR images are great, maybe even better than today’s, and I see no reason why they shouldn’t reappear on this site in 2045. (I enjoy thinking about what this site will be like when today is a candidate for nostalgia.) Well, Ross, I will allow as how my flip pseudo-insight into Germany was…underinformed. But not foolish. I just don’t know much about Germany and Austria, but on Portugal and Slovenia I think I’m fair-to-good (read about ’em on my site), and I do believe that when those Europeans Vote Weenie, they really mean it.

metaphizzle says:
July 15, 2009 at 4:03 pm

“*I think what has made these gods of rock what they are is that they managed to hold on to the very end, from decade all the way into the next. Some are still going strong today, even though their music may not sound as good as it did 30 to 40 years ago.*

*Bands today can’t do that. One will become popular one day, and then three months down the road, they’re forgotten. They end up in the discount rack like another can of beans. Even if a band from the 90s has made it past 1998, they’re still not as good as they were in their earlier years, and will never, ever be as good as any of the bands from the 60s and 70s. Case closed. End of story.*”

You’re comparing the high points of one generation’s counter-culture to the entirety of this generation’s mainstream culture. Apples and oranges.

The best music of this generation doesn’t get played on the radio because it’s not mainstream enough.

JeffdeCal says:
July 15, 2009 at 10:35 pm

I dunno, but my high school students show up to my class wearing AC/DC and Led Zeppelin t-shirts. And they know the music on my iTunes pretty well. They say it’s more “authentic” than today's music.

Who knew?

Reese says:
July 16, 2009 at 9:54 pm

Wife and I are so happy to have seen TPiR in person about four years ago. Bob Barker is in his waning days, but we know him like you see here. Before the show, pre-taping warmup comedian guy warned us that by gosh, Bob is old. If you happen to be called to
“come on down” and win your bidding game, “Don’t hurt Bob! He’s delicate!” Something to that effect.

Drew Carey’s growing on us. I hope thirty years hence someone else (another Lileks?) reprises this theme.

Fred says:
July 24, 2009 at 9:50 am

Not to whine too much but could you put the comments link at the bottom of the blog entry? I know most of the time that I'll want to read them but having it right there when I finish the article would be better in my opinion.

Am I being too obnoxious, telling someone how to organize his webpage?
You'll have to forgive me today – the Top Secret Thing, Phase 2, has reached the critical moment when the Powerpoint must be frozen in place for all time, and so I have nothing to say. Many things to show you, as you'll see, but as for actual writing, you've come to the wrong place. Besides, all I did today was work on the TSTP2; as with the last TST, I wish I could show you the fruits of my labors. But if all goes well, you'll see them down the road.

The only thing non-TST related today (aside from a guilty half-hour stolen to read in the gazebo – got another Steve Saylor Rome Sub Rosa book, this one being “A Murder on the Appian Way.” Much better than the thick and logy “Venus Throw” that preceded it. We're now into the beginnings of the Roman Revolution, a time of great calamity. It's a mark of Rome's immense success that they never ran out of rich people to kill) was taking Natalie to a “Bastille Day” birthday party. Oh, the jokes are endless: I sent you with culottes, and you left them at the park, what am I to call you know? Tumbrel rides for everyone! At the end of the party, the kids turn against the people who started the party. Pin the tail on the donkey, then pin the blame on the first estate. And so on. I have no illusions about the French Revolution – it wasn't another iteration of the American version, but a particularly European variant, with all the usual hatreds, bloodshed, ancient factions, and sublimation of grand ideals in a petty struggle that ended up in oceans of blood, Thermidor purges, the rise of state terror and the inauguration of messianic cult-of-personality tyranny. Other than that, well, nice job.
Started watching “John Adams” again last night – had TiVod the whole show, but the DVR died before I could watch them. Remarkable work. A product of PlayTone, too; now and then I hear Mr. Hanks say something that makes me scratch my head and sigh, but it doesn’t matter. When you look at the stuff he’s produced or been involved with – “From the Earth to the Moon,” “Band of Brothers,” “John Adams,” and even the slight but wonderful “That Thing You Do,” I feel a love and reverence for the country and the culture I share completely. Without blinders and without reservation. He does good work.

Anyway. As I said, no time. So while I was doing something else I did some frame grabs for the next installment of The Faces of The Price is Right, a look at the way things were in 1973.

One child of the Depression. And another:

Contestants included one of the lesser Judds. She could wear that hair today:
It's possible she could have chosen a style that made her face look wider, but it's also possible the sky could darken with aerodynamic pigs:

Catherine reminds us of the tight synthetic sweater-vest over the long-sleeved polyester shirt designed by Dow to trap and intensify BO. We had driven that from our minds, entirely:
One of the contestants faced a timeless choice:

A BACONER? There was such a thing? There was, and it was made by Hamilton Beach:

UNTOLD RICHES AWAIT YOU

This is just a fragment of the site, you know. Head HERE for the full menu. Enjoy!

BLEAT PREMIUM

Go HERE to join - for as little as you like. You'll get an email with your passwords. The page for your bonus-secret ulta links is HERE!
A toaster that made bacon, in other words. Why are these not available for a reasonable price in an attractive design today? Why must I dizzy my bacon in the microwave for seven minutes, when BACONER technology was clearly available 30 years ago?

Audience shots included an aging hot-rod enthusiast, or a member of a goat-worshipping cult:

Is there a car? There's always a car. HOLY JOSEPH that's a lot of hood:
Janice handled the straight-ahead pretty-person poses, without acting. She didn’t have to move; just being Janice was sufficient:

Anitra, on the other hand, worked it:
The grand prize:

I wanted one of those *so much* when I was a kid; it seemed like the ultimate in travel adventure. I even sent away for KOA brochures, planning imaginary trips around the country. The inside:
All that stuff in a house you pulled with your car was just too neat. I was also fascinated by motels – Holiday Inn and HoJo in particular – and eventually I realized my Dad was cool to the idea of hauling around a trailer. My mother probably thought that a vacation might be something that did not involve another house to clean. But I had a friend whose family camped – they were also the ones who did woodburning and HeathKits and other craft-y stuff, so somehow it fit. We camped out in the driveway a few times. It was heaven.

I’d still like to do it. I’d still like to drive around for a week or two, living in a trailer. As long as we stayed in a motel.

LATER today: Lots of stuff in the pipeline, ready to roll, but I think I’ll confine it to Out of Context Ad Challenge at 10 AM and save it up for Thursday. Blame the TST Phase II. But thank me if it ever sees the light of the day.

65 RESPONSES TO wednesday, july 15

Bryan says:
July 15, 2009 at 2:44 pm

ArganikMark:
My grandparents bought their house on the tip of Englands Point in ’56 (had to call Mom to verify) so the whole area was less built up. They lived there year-round until, like, ’78. When Grandma finally died in ’94 the family out there decided to get rid of the property for just the reasons you mention. Also, one family lives in Jackson and the other lives in Detroit so they bought a house on a lake more equidistant.

WatchWayne says:
July 15, 2009 at 3:10 pm
Not just bad office skills, but failing memory, too, upon further review. It was a 1975 Corvette, quite similar to the ’73-’74 in the picture. And that was the price.

juanito - John Davey says:
July 15, 2009 at 3:14 pm

Kurt Says:
July 15th, 2009 at 12:36 pm

Silly me thinking “bacon” was a noun all these years. It’s such a good verb: “Bacon me, honey!”

That is a nice-looking Corvette. “Corvette Medium Blue Metallic” is a boring color name, but Corvette didn’t have fancy names like AMC’s “Maxi Blue” or the famous Dodge (1970) ones: “Sublime,” “Go Mango,” and of course “Plum Crazy.” But a Corvette is sexy on its own.

Don’t forget Ford’s very own “Grabber Blue” (Might have to file charges on that one.)

Kurt says:
July 15, 2009 at 3:30 pm

More research gleaned these actual Ford color names from 1970 (groan-worthy but fun):

Original Cinnamon
Bring ‘Em Back Olive
Three Putt Green
Anti-Establish Mint
Last Stand Custard
There She Blue
Young Turquoise
Hulla Blue
Good Clean Fawn
Counter Revolutionary Red
Knight White
Freudian Gilt
History Onyx

Man, I wish I’d been working in advertising back then!

Jimmy H says:
July 15, 2009 at 5:31 pm

One of the things I love about this site is that it uncovers truly obscure items. As for the Hamilton Beach Baconer, I came across a whopping 3 references to it on Google, and one of them was for a discontinued listing on Ebay. I lived through the entire 70′s but I don’t remember this one.

cnyguy says:
July 15, 2009 at 7:26 pm

It seems to me that those cleverly-named Ford colors Kurt listed up there were offered on the then-new Ford Maverick, which was aimed at the so-called “youth market.” Not so sure Ford’s strategy worked, since the Maverick was a bigger seller among buyers of a more advanced age– at least in upstate New York anyway, where the age of an average Maverick driver appeared to be somewhere
between 80 and 102.

George M says:
July 15, 2009 at 8:33 pm

Ah Jim, Heathkits – oh those were the days. I remember my first – a shiny tube shortwave radio. It actually worked and I moved on to a solid state one – it was solid all right – weighed 7 pounds! They worked very well and I had a ball not only building them but using them for years. I was sad when they went out of business.

Patrick says:
July 15, 2009 at 8:39 pm

Cambias Says:

My favorite terrifying 1970s kitchen appliance was a hot dog cooker a friend of mine owned. It had prongs that stuck into the ends of the weenie (no non-standard-size dogs allowed!) and cooked them by passing house current straight through the dog. Kind of like something Thomas Edison might have dreamed up in his battle against Westinghouse and Tesla — “See! Alternating current can COOK you just like this frankfurter!”

And how did it taste? Kind of . . . ozony. Pretty horrible, really. We only ate hot dogs cooked in the electric hot dog execution device once. After that I guess my friend's parents sold it to some police or intelligence agency in a third world country.

I think I saw a reference to that on an episode of “CSI”. Grissom did something similar to a pickle, and talked about that's how he cooked his hot dogs in college.

bgates says:
July 15, 2009 at 10:38 pm

Baconer: It's the Baconest!

*********

I loved “Apollo 13”. I thought “Road to Perdition” was great. I enjoyed “The Man With One Red Shoe”, “Bosom Buddies”, the alcoholic uncle on “Family Ties”, and the crazy black belt on “Happy Days”.

And I heard that head-scratching comment where Tom Hanks said anyone who didn't vote the way he did, and the way I probably would have, on Prop 8 was “un-American”. I don't think Tom Hanks is condemned to hell for supporting gay marriage. But as far as I'm concerned, he can go to hell anyway.

chrisbcritter says:
July 15, 2009 at 11:05 pm

It surprises me to hear that hot dog cooker was a store-bought item, as I remember in the 70s it was a do-it-yourself craft project:

1. Take one 4”x6”x1” block of wood.
2. Nail 4 bottle caps to the bottom (1 on each corner).
3. Drive two 6” nails most of the way through the bottom.
4. Take an old two-wire lamp cord and separate and strip the ends.
5. Twist one end around each nail head (Solder optional) and finish hammering them flush.
Then impale your hot dog on the nails and plug it in. I think I saw this in either a Scout manual or Boys' Life magazine...

chrisbcritter says:
July 15, 2009 at 11:10 pm

Oh – one other Ford Maverick color:

Thanks Vermilion.

I also remember in 1970 some college students gathered donations, bought a new Ford Maverick and buried it (on campus?) as a protest against pollution. Wonder if it's still there?

AA says:
July 16, 2009 at 10:00 am

James,

We have a 23′ RV that we use as a “comfortable” travel device. It gets 7 to 8 MPG but with a 55 gal. tank, you don’t need to make many stops. We stay in campgrounds about half the time and hotels the other half. It’s just convient to have your own bathroom, fridg, microwave, electrical power, etc. in the vehicle with you at all times.

Blather. Wince. Repeat. » Blog Archive » The Tom Hanks Conundrum says:
July 16, 2009 at 3:49 pm

[…] he often does, James Lileks wrote something last night that almost perfectly articulates something I think, but have never expressed. In this case, it is […]

Beldar says:
July 17, 2009 at 1:21 am

Janice was emphatically NOT my mom’s best friend. Janice was “Janice Pennington, Playboy’s Miss May for 1971, and one of my all-time favorite Playmates, then and now.

old rpm daddy says:
July 17, 2009 at 10:59 am

When I was a kid, I thought the perfect thing would be to take one of those campers, convert it to a balloon gondola, and go floating cross-country in style.
It’s been a nice day, even if my brains are shooting out my ears. Super-absorbent muffs only do so much, as the clerks will tell you.

Part of it’s work, with 495 things to do – including a column, now that I think of it – and part of it’s the technical problems at home that keep me from getting email, or accessing the “internet” as I seem to recall it was named. Of course, I can post this, obviously – by hitting reload the page 12 times. In the middle of getting out this and that, my daughter wanted to install a screen-capture utility, and I don’t want to be one of those cats-in-the-cradle dads (“I’ll type in my admin password soon, dear/ you know I’ll type my admin password”) so I did that, which lead to problems with Photoshop, resolved when we found an errant slider that had been set to a value no one would ever want. This was after I tried to set up the DS for wifi. Plus dinner and karate and picking her up and going hither and/or yon. The whole day was like running down a mountain with boulders in pursuit.

But I have prepared for this. Below you’ll find a few updates – Mpls, two pages, and this week’s B&W World. Around ten, Faces of the Price is Right. First Day Covers will follow later, I hope. Lance Lawson can be found at buzz.mn right now.

Back tomorrow with a hi-de-ho attitude, I hope.
13 RESPONSES TO Thursday, July 16

KCSteve says:  
July 16, 2009 at 5:22 am

You know, you might want to try an alternate internet source.  
In Kansas City Verizon has the best wireless service, not sure about the Twin Cities.

But one thing Verizon has that will give you tech lust is the MiFi – a credit card sized little widget that's a portable WiFi hotspot. Uses the Verizon WAN which has been working well for me. Supports up to 5 devices, or just one when plugged in via the USB cable (which is also how you configure it).

The one real drawback for you isn’t the $60 / month fee, it's the 5G / month data cap. That's ok on a single machine but they really need a 25G plan for this little gem.

Hit a handy Verizon store and ask about the MiFi – it'll be off in a corner being ignored.

Lars Walker says:  
July 16, 2009 at 7:16 am

Running down a mountain with bounders in pursuit! Buster Keaton!
Buster Keaton rules!

Lars Walker says:  
July 16, 2009 at 7:17 am

I mean “boulders.”

prescott says:  
July 16, 2009 at 7:41 am

Have you tried unplugging your modem and router for 30 seconds? (flips page in binder)
Have you tried restarting your computer?

hpoulter says:  
July 16, 2009 at 7:58 am

If it were “bounders” in pursuit, it would be Charlie Chaplin. I like Keaton, too. Even the early Keaton/Arbuckle shorts are noteworthy, but the longer-length Keaton-directed stuff like “Sherlock, Jr” is timeless. And the stunts! unbelievable.

hpoulter says:  
July 16, 2009 at 8:02 am

“Hallo, IT – is it plooged in?”
(any fans here?)
**HunkyBobTX** says:
July 16, 2009 at 8:41 am

I loathe today's technical support… Invariable it starts like this: “Hello, Mr. Bob. My name is Sanjeeb. I will be pleased to be your technical support person for this day. I am sorry that you are having difficulties accessing the internet. Please to go to internet explorer and type in [http://www.google.com](http://www.google.com)...”

It's this kind of thing that makes me live in dread of having trouble with my computer…and I'm fairly tech savvy.

Why don't they just publish a decent troubleshooting script and include it with the system? That's what these tech support people follow anyway.

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**Julia** says:
July 16, 2009 at 9:25 am

You know, whenever I want to finally read intelligent (and funny) comments on some blog, I always come here. Thank you Lileks’ fans.

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**Uncle Joe** says:
July 16, 2009 at 9:27 am

James, have you tried the FillZilla ftp client. I haven't used the MacOS version, but the XP version works great. I upload to a remote server constantly and have had almost zero problems.

Have you noticed more problems on really hot days? As silly as this sounds, our DSL at home would go out on hot days because of the line sagging, causing interference with the connection. Once Verizon replaced the line from the pole to the house problems disappeared.

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**Patty** says:
July 16, 2009 at 11:39 am

James, if it helps, you are NOT alone in your struggles to access the internet. I'm facing the same problems you're experiencing. I can confirm the fact that the problem is computer, OS, and browser independent. Three separate machines, 2 running XP (1 wired and 1 wireless) and one running Vista (wireless). Browsers are IE6, 7, and 8 along with a couple of Firefoxs thrown in for good measure.

 Watching movies on Netflix can be a nightmare at times because my 'internet connection has slowed' to the point that I have to refresh at least once during almost every 2 hour movie. Page loads can be slow; interestingly the most troublesome seems to be the Strib site. It's seems I frequently get hung up when the ads load...or rather don't as is often the case. BTW...recently I started getting a bunch of C++ library errors at the Strib site which causes the browser to fail and close – though it's gotten better in the past couple of days.

Like you, I've checked and double-checked everything. Replaced every line and network component. Qwest denies it's their problem, my ISP denies it's theirs. So far my only workable solution has been to reboot both the modem and the router in hopes my access will be restored. Occasionally a 2nd reboot round is required before I'm deemed worthy of accessing the entrance ramp to the world wide web highway.

Just this morning my 82 year old dad called telling me the troubles...
he's been having of late staying connected to the internet....sounds awfully familiar...

**Judge Crater** says:
July 16, 2009 at 2:21 pm

FYI DS WiFi only supports WEP security — not WPA. I installed a new wireless router causing my son to loss the ability to play Mario Kart with his friends in Japan.

**James** says:
July 16, 2009 at 2:39 pm

About the DS: I’d suggest getting an old / cheap router to put behind your “real” firewall / NAT device, so that you can lock it down better. Assume that WEP is about as useful as no encryption at all...

**rbj** says:
July 16, 2009 at 3:03 pm

James’ troubles are the result of using the wrong numbers for the web addresses. Them intertubes is tricky-like. Carrier pigeons are much more reliable.
default copy from the developers! I'm just adding this, and will add something more, later. Who cares? You're reading this? Really?
Busy. But it's paying work, the best kind. But oy, the duties – between the Top Secret Thing, Phase 2 Mark IV, writing and producing tomorrow morning's weekend NewsBreak, and a dozen other things, there's no choice but to let the Bleat suffer. There will be a 100 Mysteries update; that's THE LAW, but I can't say if it's tonight or tomorrow. All I can do is leave you with this:

Yes, it's a shot from the Price is Right. (More of that to come, until I run out of episodes.) What is it? What marvel was unleashed on the people of America 37 years ago? How much do you think it cost?
And what's your favorite appliance? Difficulty: no coffeemakers.

I'll be back when I can – the TST P2 MIV ends next Tuesday, and after that, normal life returns. Also, a column at startribune.com – scroll down to find it. I'm too bloody tired to get the link.

109 RESPONSES TO **friday, july 17**

**FraziersBrain** says:
July 17, 2009 at 6:58 pm

Love my toaster over. It doubles as a convection oven, so the only time I've ever had to fire up the big oven is to cook a turkey.

When I was a kid, my mom had a cool little hot dog cooker. Can't remember the brand name. It was an oblong plastic box with a removable lid lined with metal spikes down each side. You'd impale each end of the hot dog on the spikes (it held 6, I think), lower the lid and plug it in. After a few minutes, you'd have cooked hot dog with charred ends. Loved that thing.

**Reese** says:
July 17, 2009 at 7:01 pm

At Gardenstater: Yes, physically/geographically. Cyberly, nope. Been reading Lileks for years. So I know your point is perfectly made in that sense.

**Waterhouse** says:
July 17, 2009 at 7:51 pm

A belated kudos to whichever one of Roger Sterling's colleagues came up with “Radarange”. What a great name. Beats the hell out of iOven or whatever would be noodled up today.

**Patrick** says:
July 17, 2009 at 8:33 pm

_GardenStater Says:_

@juanito: Interesting point about air conditioning. _It was first used in the printing industry. Paper doesn't print very well in hot, humid conditions. And I remember hearing years ago that some professor declared it to be the most significant invention of the 20th Century (at least in America), because it allowed for huge population explosions in areas that most people wouldn't have lived in before (Arizona, Florida, Nevada, etc)._  

_Me, I'm not a big fan (!) of A/C. I prefer an open window._  

If you spent one day down here in the South during the summer, you'd change your opinion very quickly about A/C. Especially after it rains, and if the temperature stays up in the 90s. Add in the humidity, and you're talking heat indexes well over 100. Not but a year ago we actually got up into the 100s for just the day's highs.
Heat indexes were 20 degrees or more higher. Our local news stations would prove how hot it was by frying an egg on either the sidewalk, or one of the manhole covers. It can get so hot down here that the egg would cook before it even hits the metal manhole cover. Toss it in the air and if you catch it, it’s hard boiled.

The only time we open windows down here is when we’re ordering from the drive-thru at any fast food restaurant (especially you-know-Mc-who), or in the Fall or Spring, both of which last not long enough.

Shaky Barnes says:
July 17, 2009 at 9:19 pm

Big heavy box, rotary knob, glass plate on front with surprisingly little effective viewing area — a Curtis Mathes TV??

AndyJ says:
July 17, 2009 at 9:34 pm

“Kroc approached Ray and Don McDonald and suggested they franchise the restaurant, and open up several locations nationwide. When asked who would run them all, Kroc said “well, what about me?”"

Patrick, Not to a prick but, your story right but the names are wrong... It was Don & Mac (or Mac & Don) McDonald. that owned the original McDonalds. I just happened to have been bored enough last night to have googled the McDonalds story. 😊 P.S. Mr. Kroc’s name was Ray.

jamcool says:
July 18, 2009 at 2:57 am

Then there is Swiss Army Knife of kitchen appliances…the streamlined Kitchen Aid mixer!

And automotive air conditioning – before AC became virtually standard, Arizona parking lots were an ocean of white sedans.

Christina says:
July 18, 2009 at 6:18 am

I’ll chip in a vote for crock pot.

I had a portable oven in Korea that I miss sorely. (Koreans, by and large, don’t bake, so we waygooks who wanted to bake had to buy portables.)

A toaster oven cost $60 or more, but a friend of mine spotted these ovens priced at $170 but marked down to $100. I bought the last one, the floor model, for $50. Best $50 I spent in four years over there.

It had two dials — timer and thermostat. (I loved being able to put a cake in the oven and go to bed, knowing I’d have fresh cake in the morning.) You could choose top heat, bottom heat, or both. Or just the timer. It had a built-in rotisserie. It was big enough to roast a whole duck.

When my Korean friends found out I had an oven I had to start offering them weekly baking classes. I had to do THREE classes for gingerbread men, they were so popular. One woman bought a...
similar oven and needed 8 tries to duplicate a pineapple upside-down cake. She was so proud when the 8th time was a charm. (My friend Jin-Hee was astonished to learn that the cake's real name was pineapple upside-down cake. She thought I was just describing it to her.)

Great memories. My friend Nichole was there for the first cake baking, and as usually the Korean women were cleaning as we went. When Hee-Kyung took the mixing bowl to the sink and was about to run water into it to wash it, Nichole and I leaped at her screaming “No!” in unison. Poor Hee-Kyung's eyes leaped about a foot out of her head. She stared at us in shock and astonishment. “You have to LICK THE BOWL!” We insisted on full Western Cultural Experience. It took them a moment to catch on that we were serious but they joined in earnest, of course. In retrospect, the phrase “lick the bowl” isn’t really accurate, since you scoop out batter with your fingers and lick THEM, but that just means they also got an English lesson.

By the time we got around to brownies they were old hands at bowl-licking.

Maria B says:
July 18, 2009 at 10:56 am

Great post Christina!

Best appliance for me: washing machine. Can you imagine banging clothes against rocks to get them clean? Or using that giant grater known as a washboard? And then, ringing them out through the “fingercrusher!”
WHY A STORK?
A lost cultural reference, alas. Plus: Listen! […]

MORE
Thanks for dropping by! Feel free to join the discussion by leaving comments, and stay updated by subscribing to the RSS feed. That's the default copy from the developers! I'm just adding this, and will add something more, later. Who cares? You're reading this? Really?
Sunday was warm. I mention this only because Friday and Saturday had temps in the fifties. In July. Given the brevity of our summers, this is like walking up to someone as he’s being strapped in the electric chair and punching him in the nose. Friday I wore a coat to work; Saturday was all long pants and long sleeves, Alaska-style. The weather wasn’t just off, it was disturbed; it seemed to know it was wrong, and there was a note of panic and confusion in the wind and the clouds. I forgot what to do! I woke up today and none of this made sense!

So. Stayed inside and worked. Mostly behind-the-scenes stuff you’ll see this week and weeks to come. After the last week, it was just what I needed: sitting inside without the feeling that I was spending Precious Summer, headphones on, a French techno station on Radio Gaga, reworking messy sites root & branch, platting out the new ones. On Sunday, as noted, everything changed, and the girls (Natalie had two friends for a sleepover) ran outside to play badminton in the sun, then headed to the beach. When I picked her up at the end of the afternoon she showed me the sandcastle they’d made - a rather elaborate structure with good seawalls, defensible high ground, and other commendable attributes. They’d spelled out their initials in stones. I took a picture of the trio, beaming over their creation, BFF names embossed in the wet sand. Ah, to be nine.

Which she will be, in a fortnight. Halfway to goodbye.
The beach is five minutes from home, which is one of the reasons I love this place. But I took a side street to avoid the traffic, and was driving along when I saw a bike coming down a street – just as I looked, the front wheel jerked, the bike went down, and the cyclist went down harder. Full header. Whoa. I stopped, backed up, got out, went over. He was conscious, and preferred to get his breath before he related any additional details. So. Sat in the car with the door open. After three or four minutes two more cyclists – young, female, ruthlessly fit – pedaled up, dismounted, and asked their own questions.

*What happened? Where are you hurt? Are you dizzy? What’s your name? Where do you live?* He answered in short bursts, with remarkable civility; I might have held up a hand, pointed to my solar plexus, and pled for a surcease in the interrogation.

Eventually he sat up and gave evidence that his wind had returned, so I walked over and remarked how he wasn’t bleeding at all; no good scars out of this one. I figure, the guy does a header that ornate, you man-up the talk with BLOOD and SCARS.

When he was able to stand we popped the front wheel, put the bike in the back of the Element, and drove him to his house. Nice guy. I should have mentioned my own big bike wipe-out. It happened on the Best Bike I Ever Owned. A gold Schwinn with headlights. The hip cool kids had the banana-seat bikes, but I was happy with mine; the banana-seat and the chopper handlebars seemed . . . well, like those scary hairy guys on the records my older cousin had. The gold Schwinn had a switch that turned the lights on, and if you had a personal switch, you were that much closer to Star Trek.

I was good at riding side-saddle: get up a good head of steam, swing your leg over, stand on one pedal while hurtling along. Great fun. I hit a sewer grate right in front of my house while showing off, and was creamed. Scraped the bike, too. A year later the batteries leaked, and ruined the contacts on the headlights.

I’d forgotten about that bike until tonight. Ten years ago I might have wondered how I felt taking it around the block for the first time in the dark, my headlights humiliating Cowardly Dark. Now I wonder how my Mom felt, watching the lights vanish at the end of the street, then turning to the corner where they’d reappear. In a minute. Or two. UNLESS A CAR HIT HIM

**If you’ve been reading** for the last few years, you know I’ll occasionally write long, weepy, insufferably dull entries about my inexplicable internet problems, and the lengths I’ve gone to diagnose them. Three ISPs. A team of techs from COVAD to inspect the wires. Three modems. Two routers. New cables on everything. Dark ceremonies during the full moon to sacrifice bleating goats to propitiate whichever dark gods scramble the packets. Nothing worked. Well.

Sunday night. George (old Diner patrons from the radio days may recall him...
as the “Fun with Numbers” caller) brought over an oscilloscope. If you’re wondering: who has an oscilloscope? He does. He has about 40, I think. He rehabs them and sells them online for extra money. He hooked it up to the phone box outside, and noted the high quantity of line noise. Something was dirty. Ah, but what? Well, let’s HOLY CRIMINEY! The display suddenly reacted as if we’d been hit with a solar flare – then went back to normal. Something was misbehaving.

Step one, then: turn off all the breakers, see if that made a difference. It didn’t. Step two: get a transistor radio, tune it to a spot on the band where no one’s home, and walk around seeing if any spots or items around the house were particularly noisy. That was my favorite part! It was fun! as my daughter might say. But it was: you learned the secret voices of all your appliances. The big tube TV growled like Jupiter with a hangover; the printer shrieked and squealed as though it was in some sort of hellish torment. All very fascinating, but we couldn’t locate anything particularly noisy that explained the dirty line. Last chance: cut the main switch, and see if the hum persisted. I threw the main – and the hum didn’t miss a beat.

The problem is the very power that comes to the house – either a neighbor’s got a misbehaving appliance, or a streetlight’s acting up, or it’s the monitoring devices the FBI and the Mafia have around my house to beam thoughts into my iTunes and make all the songs say “we are watching you, hah hah.” (Except on Tuesdays.) So there’s nothing I can do. The lines are filthy, and packet scrambling is just a fact of life at Jasperwood – until fiber comes this fall. Or so they say.

And so the two-year nightmare is over. Nothing was fixed, but there’s comfort in knowing it’s unfixable.

**Oh, the things** we have this week. For starters: check below for a big entry. A buzz.mn challenge around 10:30 or so. This is the last week for buzz.mn, by the way. Unless it’s not. Trust me, we’re close. Matchbook around 4 PM. See you soon.
55 RESPONSES TO *Monday, July 20*

**JamesS** says:
July 20, 2009 at 6:38 pm

My best bike wipeout: coming down a steep hill and wondering if I could handle the 90-degree right turn at the bottom with my arms crossed over on the handlebars.

I couldn’t.

**HT** says:
July 20, 2009 at 7:49 pm

Clearly, you need to re-route your local power feed to a giant capacitor ring, and draw your power from there. Plus, build a giant Faraday cage around your house.

Oh yeah. And get cable. Sorry, “E” and “Jim T” paid me to say that.

On a related topic, my own personal worst bicycle wipeout occurred as the result of my reading a book while riding. Pedaled right into the back end of a parked car. Wrecked my favorite lunchbox, too (the one with the picture of the submarine Nautilus (the U.S. one, not the Jules Verne version). Which was then replaced with a gifted lunchbox (from an aunt) decorated with the characters from “Fireball XL-5”. Unfortunately, I never worked up the courage to stage another crash and destroy that one, so it followed me through the rest of my elementary school career. Learned a valuable lesson that day, I did.

**boblipton** says:
July 20, 2009 at 8:28 pm

I come in through the Lileks.com page, but thanks for letting me know about Leaping Larry — my computer had cached the old version, so I needed to refresh to get it.

I can see reasons for the new format as I read Lileks first thing in the morning and check in several times a day to look at comments and additions, so the comments at the top work out. But I do prefer a serif text.

Bob

**Dan Palmer** says:
July 20, 2009 at 11:11 pm

Well, if we’re covering worse wipeouts, as a young man (mid 20’s) I (6-4 and 200-205 lbs) T-boned a young woman (5-4 125 or so) on the lake front bike path at about 18 mph (she was on the wrong side of the path, we swerved multiple times to try and miss each other, but always in the same direction).

I flew over her bike and did a somersault on the pavement. Fortunately I was wearing a helmet, so other than a big bruise on my hip, I was fine. She on the other hand was not wearing a helmet and ended up going to the hospital via ambulance. I checked on her later that day and was told she had to have emergency brain surgery to relieve swelling (this was around 1992 before everybody got their shorts in a bunch about releasing info). Never ridden more than a few blocks without a helmet since.
Ross says:
July 22, 2009 at 2:16 am

Man, this typeface is hard on the eyes. My best bike wipeout happened in grade school: I was tooling along down a city street that made a six-block-long downgrade, doing the speed limit with a friend. Nothing stupid, no riding no-handed or anything, just on our way somewhere (probably a park or Capitol Court mall) when the live-action cartoon happened. Out of nowhere, the fork/handlebars shimmied, paused & the bike slapped me sideways like a giant hand swatting me to the pavement. Don’t really remember the impact, just lying peacefully on my back looking at the sky. Eventually, I realized I was lying dead center in an intersection of the main drag we were on & a side-street (fortunately c.3pm on a summer weekday, which back then meant almost no traffic), & that I should probably not stay there. No panic, no hurry. I rolled slowly over to the curb, where my friend, who looked ashen, found me. By the time I got up, a little shakily, someone had called the cops, one of which rolled up not long after in a patrol car (oh, for the days when police had the relative leisure to come that fast for a kid’s wipeout that didn’t involve blood or unconsciousness). He asked me a few questions, seemed satisfied with my answers, then asked where my parents were. This intersection was maybe a block from The Tanglewood restaurant, where my mother worked at the time. I pointed it out to him. Instead of letting me walk my wreck over, he insisted on driving me, leaving my poor friend to walk both our bikes the mile or so home. We pull into the lot, I walk around to the employee/kitchen door (trailing Officer Solicitous, nice guy that he was) where the fun started–first person I see is the old NOLA-born dishwasher w/a voice like she gargled ground glass every morning (think Pearl Bailey doing a spot-on Eugene Pallette), who sees us & booms, “UH-Oh! Jan’s son in trouble. Poh-lice got ‘im!” Not having seen the spectacular splat I made, the officer just told my mother I was shaken up & he was just making sure. The worry didn’t entirely leave her eyes & she must have misread my chagrin at my entrance/intro bringing the whole staff a-runnin’ for pain (which I don’t recall, although I did start to feel the side of the back of my head that connected swell). It being that afternoon dead-spot between the lunch & dinner services when the waitresses & bussers get prepped for the evening, she sat me at their table in the corner. I sat & traded jokes about my acrobatic skills with the waitresses who sat for a smoke while my mother, in full mom mode, made me a sundae to have while I waited for her shift to end (true luxury–normally, if I was there, I had to help, usually because I’d been caught playing hookey & had been dragged along). She came back out of the kitchen, set the sundae in front of me & I made to take my first spoonful. Next thing I remember was the waitress holding my shoulders back against the booth-back while my mother cleaned the ice cream off my face. And I still have that bump—it’s actually large enough to make my haircut a different shape from the opposite back corner.
can take care of it!

4: Sears 1934
5: Comic ads
6: 100 Mysteries
Institute of Official Cheer
Lint: the Institute Tumblr
PopCrush
Screedblog
Shorpy.com
StarTribune Column

Please install and activate the "Twitter for WordPress" plugin to use this section.

PAGES
About

THE LATEST
WHY A STORK?
A lost cultural reference, alas. Plus: Listen! […]

MORE
Thanks for dropping by! Feel free to join the discussion by leaving comments, and stay updated by subscribing to the RSS feed. That's the default copy from the developers! I'm just adding this, and will add something more, later. Who cares? You're reading this? Really?
This may seem scant, but don’t you be pulling that scant-accusation on me. First of all, there’s buckets of stuff down below, matey. Around noon, a brief Comic Sins update. In the eveningtime, it all goes well, a redesigned Black & White World site will be up; if not, just the update.

Today your host gives the presentation for the Top Secret Thing Phase 2 Mark IV. More gesticulating in front of Powerpoint slides in a suit and a tie. How did it come to this?

But ahhh, when it’s done: summer begins all over again.

There’s one more thing to add for this week, but it’ll wait until tomorrow. It’s big. Not as big as the other big thing that should be rolling around this fall, but big.

Also: until I get it a permanent place on the sidebar, please take a moment to welcome the First Ad Ever:

Hosting Matters asked if I’d be so kind to put it up, give all the bandwidth I hoover up at rock-bottom prices, and I said sure: they’re the best host ever
for anything, and I couldn't be happier. Before I had Hosting Matters I was with a host in Atlanta somewhere, can't remember who – I just recall how poorly it ended. Never had a moment of agita with Hosting Matters, or a jot of regret. It's about the only part of my internet life that's friction free.

Below: Faces of Price is Right, and some Moon musings. See you soon.

18 RESPONSES TO tuesday, july 21

Mxymaster says:
July 21, 2009 at 3:23 am

I'd like to be thinking of Anitra as I go about my business today, but I just know I'm going to be thinking of Ma suckin' on her thinkin' tooth.

Cory says:
July 21, 2009 at 5:00 am

“What's wrong with some guy saying the U.S. didn't land on the moon? Who cares. That doesn't give Armstrong the right to belt him.”

James, you left out “grammatical error” as one of the things wrong with the statement that fits in nicely with your premise. “Who cares”, while rhetorical, is still a question and should have a question mark.

kahall says:
July 21, 2009 at 7:12 am

Hosting Matters is the best. I have been using them for years for several sites and they always go above and beyond, even helping me with programing which is not part of the deal. They do Rock!

Greg says:
July 21, 2009 at 7:36 am

My old roommate sold those chairs at a yard sale sometime in the 80s.

David Mader says:
July 21, 2009 at 8:28 am

I second the HostingMatters praise. I run a rinky-dink little blog that gets maybe 50 sets of eyes a day; they treat me like I'm Instapundit. Never had a moment's heartburn with them. Highly, highly recommended.
lisa says:
July 21, 2009 at 8:44 am
I love Hosting Matters. My husband and I have used them for years for our various websites. We've never had a serious problem, and they always go the extra mile when we need help.

mrschip says:
July 21, 2009 at 8:46 am
Glad to see the ad!

Roy says:
July 21, 2009 at 9:21 am
Well that was annoying. Thank god for Firefox and Ad Block. New filter added.

Trogdor says:
July 21, 2009 at 10:09 am
The only scant accusation is with Anitra’s skirts! She pulls them up to her rib cage to make them even shorter. I don’t mind the ad at all, but if I click it do I get a free Sham Wow?

Barberofcivil says:
July 21, 2009 at 10:26 am

Cory: “What’s wrong with some guy saying the U.S. didn’t land on the moon? Who cares. That doesn’t give Armstrong the right to belt him.”

He's right of course, which is why Buzz belted him instead.

Jim A says:
July 21, 2009 at 10:42 am
Congrats on the ad, and on finding true ISP satisfaction with Hosting Matters. Is the ad really intended to link to the shopping cart page, rather than the homepage or some other more descriptive spot on HostingMatters.com?

bgbear (roger h) says:
July 21, 2009 at 11:05 am
In related news, an aggressive tabloid reporter accuse astronaut Michael Collins of never walking on the moon, after a thorough thrashing of the reporter by Collins, Collins was quoted as saying “oops, that's right, I was in the command capsule, sorry.”

Spud says:
July 21, 2009 at 11:34 am
He's gaining on you so you better look alive. He's busy revving up the powerful MARK V!
And when the odds are against him and its dangerous work, you bet your life James Lileks will see Bleat through.

[yes I know it's Mach 5]

Archer says:
July 21, 2009 at 12:12 pm

@Cory The question mark for rhetorical questions is not a hard and fast rule. While rhetorical, it is a statement. Therefore, it has a period. Also, your comma after the quotation marks is a boo boo in this instance. It should go inside them.

Check this out: http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com/

teach5 says:
July 21, 2009 at 12:51 pm

“…when it's done, it's summer all over again”???? Does this involve a trip to Disney again? A move to AZ? Big changes for you? New career path? C'mon-spill your guts, already. Enough with the cryptic messages!!

JR says:
July 21, 2009 at 6:50 pm

Wow! Anitra can stroke my appliance any time!

Ross says:
July 22, 2009 at 3:41 am

Um, Archer, some of us, who were taught by old-school grammarians, say your “always inside the quotation marks” modern style rules are idiotic and lazy. It's a question of logic: if the punctuation can properly be said to modify the quote, then they go inside. Otherwise, punctuation refers to the sentence as a whole and not the cited word or phrase.

Archer says:
July 22, 2009 at 7:08 am

@Ross “In this instance” isn't the same thing as “always inside the quotation marks.” I think you could have related the information without using the words “idiotic and lazy.” Perhaps that is what you “were taught by old-school grammarians” to get your point across. It's effective, but unnecessary.

UNTOLD RICHES AWAIT YOU

This is just a fragment of the site, you know. Head HERE for the full menu. Enjoy!

BLEAT PREMIUM

Go HERE to join - for as little as you like. You'll get an email with your passwords. The page for your bonus-secret ulta links is HERE!

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING?

Use the form below to search the site:

Still not finding what you're looking for?
Drop a comment on a post or contact us so we can take care of it!

VISIT OUR FRIENDS!

A few highly recommended friends...

0: Main Menu
1: Matchbook Museum
2: Comic Covers
3: Black & White World
4: Sears 1934
5: Comic ads

ARCHIVES

All entries, chronologically...

July 2013
June 2013
May 2013
April 2013
March 2013
February 2013
The Top Secret Thing Phase Two Mark IV (A Quinn Martin Production) came to its conclusion this afternoon. Now what? Summer. Six weeks of meetings in dark windowless rooms: done. Powerpoint: no more. Wearing a suit and gesticulating in front of slides – it was fun, and as I've said before, I'm having more fun at work now than ever. With great powerpoint comes great responsibilities, as the man said.

Noted this tweet from Jake Tapper: “Hardware store employee informed me to stay away from LG products Their old brand name was Goldstar. Junk then junk now”

I beg to differ. My LG microwave has performed solidly every day for two years; ditto the washer and drier. Solid, well-made; when you close the door on the appliances, it has the satisfying CHUNK of a '61 Caddy. Compare to the Electrolux Icon appliances we own:

100% failure rate.

Granted, I only have two. But the fridge arrived broken; the electronics panel was dead, and it would no more give ice than a dead cow would give milk. Okay, a dead cow would give a little milk as it lost muscle control, but it's nothing you'd want. (How do cows die, anyway? In the wild, I mean. Aside from those that just sit down and check out, there has to be the occasional case of a cow just falling over dead. I wonder if a cow has died a natural
death in the United States in the last 100 years. They don't get the chance.)

Anyway, the dishwasher died last week. It should not fail after two years, especially since the rigorous use consists of pushing one (1) button four (4) times a week. A repairperson is coming by tomorrow; unless his vehicle is stocked with replacement circuit boards, he will just look at it, push some buttons, and say “well, I'll have to order parts from the other side of the planet.” We all know that's how it will go. But they can't order the parts until an expert comes out and says “we need to order parts.”

Googling around I find I am not alone. Of course you'll always find lots of posts kvetching about appliances, swearing they'll NEVER BUY IT AGAIN, and the company DOESN'T CARE and next time they're buying the other brand – which has its own 40-page Google result for customers enflamed beyond reason. Things break, some units go bad, people extrapolate. But I found a page that described a recall for an earlier version, due to some units, um, BURSTING ON FIRE. Now. It takes a special sort of perversity for a dishwasher, so concerned with water and its salutary attributes, to catch on fire. Apparently the circuit boards weren't properly shielded from moisture.

You'd think “moisture” would not be one of those left-field issues that bedevil dishwasher designers.

So I have a new battle: I will not pay for labor. Sorry. With careful patience I will work my way up the tree until I either get the labor costs waived, or I get someone to admit, on the record, for the Bleat, that the top of the line item they sell, the pride of the fleet, dies after moderate use, and it's your problem. I know what you're thinking: flush from my victory over Target and UPS, I'm overreaching. This is the equivalent of invading Russia in the Winter, and I will end up in the Bunker ranting about how long it's taken to get my rebate on a $19.99 DVD. UND VERE ARE MEIN REVARD POINTS?

Back now to watching “John Adams,” which is still interesting but loses a bit of the . . . drama in the third and fourth episodes. A lot of sitting around Europe, with Giamatta in full Peevish Man About to Excrete Hornets From His Ears mode, but the fourth ends with the inauguration, and it's hard not to feel your heart expand past the capacity the breast can hold. Also, everyone has bad teeth, which is good touch. Adams looks like he just came in first in a Tar Pie eating contest.

Tom Wilkinson's Franklin is the great delight of the program – a roué, a sly lazy, a dilettante given gravitas by his twinkly aphoristic skills and “learned rustic” routine. Jefferson floats on breezes of idealism and self-amusement; Hamilton stings. Washington is all reserve and muted, impenetrable dignity. It's just how you imagine them, which is why it seems right.

There's a scene where Adams and Jefferson are arguing about the nature of government in the future; Adams says, with considerable intensity, that he is trying to establish a domain in which the state cannot intrude, in which it has no place. Only thus will liberty be preserved. I imagine he would be stunned to find the dimensions of that domain today.
Price is Right today around 10 AM; Out of Context Ad Challenge around 11 or so; Mpls update later. See you around.

More

Pass it along, if you wish

45 RESPONSES TO wednesday, july 22

KCSteve says:
July 22, 2009 at 5:22 am

apparently a fair number of cows in the US do die natural deaths. Mike Rowe of Dirty Jobs did an episode on what happens to them.

Basically, if you ever wondered what happens at a rendering plant, well... it's one of the very few -- perhaps only -- episode where they put up a "the following scenes may not be suitable for younger or sensitive viewers". The scene in question involves a cow, a chain hoist, and a grinder.

In the end they gave mike a shoebox of brown powder that was about one cow's worth of end product.

THX 1138 says:
July 22, 2009 at 6:09 am

James -

re: the dishwasher.

A few danger signs to watch out for:

1. The repair person appears to be 18 years old or younger.
2. The repair person calls "back to the shop" for help.
3. The repair person replaces more than 2 parts with no sign of improvement.

I've fought many an appliance battle (one week the washer, then the dryer, then the frige, then the furnace all went out on alternating days). In some cases after a battle royale with "repair companies", I finally dug in myself, diagnosed and then repaired the problem with some help from google. I know you don't have time for that, but... experience has shown me the average repair person isn't what he/she used to be.

If the repair is done quickly by someone who knows what they are doing (and you'll be able to spot that real quick), or unless you are under an extended warranty, in my opinion it's unfair to the repair company to not pay the labor. I only say this because many times the repair company is subcontracted by the appliance company... they have no control over the quality of the appliance or the policies of the manufacturer, and you're (again, IMO) taking food out of someone's mouth for something they have no control over. In this case the fair thing to do is pay the bill, then work your way up the chain demanding a rebate of the labor.

Again, I only speak from experience... I've thrown more than a few "repair techs" out of my house, and gladly paid a few others because they did a quality job in a short time frame. Which brings me to a sore point of mine: people who get charged $175 -- $200 for a repair that took 15-30 minutes, and then complain they shouldn't be
charged for such a quick repair. I always ask them: would you have felt better if it took them 4 hours? The reason people get charged $200 for a simple (or even complex repair) is basic: The tech knew what they were doing, and because of that were able to go straight to the problem and fix it the first time – you're paying for their knowledge and experience, which takes years to accumulate.

I just hope you're not planning on having the repair completed and then telling the tech you aren't paying (which doesn't seem like something you would do).

In any event, please keep the updates on this coming.... and best of luck!

(PS: If you bought the appliance at a company whose name I won't mention, but which starts with an “S” and ends with an “s”, used to have a catalog of their various merchandise, and who can be found at most any mall.... I'll say an extra prayer for you.... you're going to need it). Sorry for the ranting......

GardenStater says:
July 22, 2009 at 6:16 am

I dunno–it seems to me that no appliance, of any kind, should break down after only two years, unless it was defective to begin with. I want everything I buy to last at least ten years. My KitchenAid stand mixer's still going strong after 21 years, but my Cuisinart coffee maker pooped out after 14 months. (At least Cuisinart replaced it, but still...)

Why is it that Granny had the same pots, pans, and appliances 50 years after she bought them? Oh, that's right–they didn't have any circuit boards. Just iron and steel.

badgerwx says:
July 22, 2009 at 6:19 am

FYI, LG used to stand for ‘Lucky Goldstar’ & is one of the Korean chaebols like Samsung, Daewoo, Hyundai (making everything from soup to nuts). When I was stationed in the ROK back in 1984, I noticed that Korean businesses (especially the small ones) had some interesting names – ‘lucky’ was included in a good many of them. Probably the owners hoped it would rub off. The US base exchanges in country carried a lot of Goldstar & Samsung electronics. I bought a Goldstar VCR & Samsung 13″ color TV while I was there & still have the Samsung. Even back in the '80s the Koreans were trying hard to get to Japanese levels of product quality & I thought did pretty damn well. Today's LG products seem to be going for the sleek, pseudo-european luxury vibe which I guess doesn't go with ‘lucky goldstar’ so it's not surprising they changed the brand name, but they'll always be goldstar to me.

kc says:
July 22, 2009 at 6:22 am

I bought a new dishwasher on the ‘damaged’ aisle six years ago. The lowest-end of the line, with a dent in the lower panel. Got it for just over a hundred bucks. Still runs like a champ. Of course, it only has to clean my Corelle and some glasses a couple times a week now, but for 3 years it was run by 3 marauding teenagers who lived here. I think it's a GE.

Didn't know LG used to be Goldstar. That was the first microwave
we owned and it lasted a LONG time – 10 years and 3 moves? And it, too, would’ve been the bottom of the line, price-wise. I’d like a new microwave now, but the one I have is 6 years old and still does its job…which is making popcorn and heating up a few leftovers now and then.

**ArganikMark** says:
July 22, 2009 at 6:47 am

A Whirlpool dishwasher came with the house when we bought it in 1990. Found the warranty card in a drawer. It was bought and installed in 1974. Still runs great 35 years later. First sign of trouble it will be replaced with no attempt at repair, but until then…..(I'm the same guy who had the '76 Vega that went over 130,000 miles without benefit of oil changes)

**Bryan** says:
July 22, 2009 at 7:07 am

My monitor is an LG and it's performed flawlessly for the past five years. It's a “Flatron Slim” which is also my rap name. The only reasons why I’m thinking of getting rid of it are a) it’s not widescreen and b) it’s not HDMI compatible but none of that is the monitor's fault. The next monitor I get will almost certainly be a Lucky Goldstar.

**Archer** says:
July 22, 2009 at 7:22 am

I have the LG Washer and Dryer and love them. Both are fully stainless steel on the interior and solid. No center agitator for the washer, so it doesn't eventually destroy your clothes, and uses only the water needed. Both are fully programmable for about anything you can think of in washing or drying. After four years of solid use, I've had zero problems. Yep, love that LG duo.

**Highway** says:
July 22, 2009 at 7:39 am

LG used to be pretty iffy for appliances, but have really upped their quality in recent years (much like that other Korean company mentioned above, Hyundai). That might be another reason they switched monikers from Goldstar to LG, just to get away from their previous reputation.

If I was buying an appliance, I’d seriously consider them as the frontrunner.

**hpoulter** says:
July 22, 2009 at 7:46 am

I have successfully fixed several appliances using Fixitnow.com (this is not an ad, I just like them). I sent them a few bucks beer money and got some priceless advice in return. Since I live in the middle of nowhere, any service visit is expensive, and it gives me a great feeling to do it myself.

One problem was a refrigerator that was whizzing on the floor, apparently at random. Their troubleshooting guide led me to the chilled water hose, which had a pinhole leak from resting against a hot motor, and leaked water whenever you pressurized it by using
the water fountain in the door. Repair cost me about $20 for parts and shipping. I also used them to get detailed schematics and instructions for disassembling my dishwasher (had an olive pit stuck in a check valve) – repair cost $0.

Walter says:
July 22, 2009 at 8:03 am

You’re right on the inauguration scene from John Adams – best scene in the series.

GrayHackle says:
July 22, 2009 at 8:13 am

Used to buy GE but most of their stuff is dookey now.

Have an LG 42″ flatscreen. Beautiful HD picture and no problems at all in the two years I have owned it. I don’t know about their other stuff. Samsung’s rep wasn’t all that good at one time but I use eight of their monitors in my business and they have been fine.

I sometimes think that buying an appliance during the right moon phase is the key. I have a Sears food processor still going strong after 35 years. Good Karma with that one.

HockeyMom47 says:
July 22, 2009 at 8:16 am

LG is the old Lucky Goldstar brand out of Korea – The quality of their appliances has really improved dramatically over the last ten years, making them a good value. LG is also a big private label manufacturer, so you might be surprised at whose “store brands” are actually LG under a different nameplate.

Mr. Dart says:
July 22, 2009 at 8:19 am

“How do cows die, anyway? In the wild, I mean.” Wild cows! I’m still laughing. Along those lines, the Aflac commercial in the barnyard where they have a milking machine attached to a white faced hereford… I can only hope they were trying to be funny. My LG cell phone is the best I’ve had but I never would have selected it if it had been a “Goldstar” I reckon.

Mr. Dart says:
July 22, 2009 at 8:36 am

If Adams is “stunned” then Jefferson has sold the Virginia estate and moved to Belize by now. And Hamilton has gone back to the islands. But Franklin is happily cavorting in a tub with a comely lass half his age. Some things must remain constant.

Baby M says:
July 22, 2009 at 9:05 am

Now that the Top Secret Thing is over and done with, maybe you can give us the thrill-packed conclusion to the Irritable Bear saga. (When we last left our story, Irritable Bear had climbed in the wind ow and was stealthily approaching the sleeping man? Who is he? Why is the bear irritated? Is the bear irritated with him, or
something/someone else? Will the sleeping man awaken to a nightmare of terror as the small but irritated bear rends him limb from limb? Inquiring minds want to know....)

Ron Moses says:
July 22, 2009 at 9:08 am

Be thankful you don't own any Maytag appliances. I believe their design engineers may in fact be "chromosomally special."

Case in point, we inherited a Maytag washing machine after the original owner chose throwing it away over hanging himself. The spin cycle was insufficient to wring enough water out of the clothes, so it was necessary to run it through the cycle a good half-dozen times before transferring the load to the dryer.

Turns out the motor sits on a track, and is supposed to pivot on this track between two positions: the normal position and the spin position. Problem is, the awesome Maytag engineers never considered that this track might need to be lubricated in order to allow the motor to slide across it. Nope, the thing comes from the factory bone-dry and chock-full o' friction. So the motor never pivots fully into the spin position, hence sopping wet clothes. Days of Googling, total disassembly of the motor unit, and a liberal application of WD-40 later, it works like a charm. But getting there was ridiculous.

Maytag, for their part, has acknowledged there is a design problem with this unit, but apparently have been unable to come up with this simple fix. Their official recommended course of action, swear to God, is to buy a different washing machine. MAYTAG YEAH!!!

Suzanne Goldman says:
July 22, 2009 at 9:33 am

Learned my lesson well with the “state of the art” Whirlpool Calypso Washer/Dryer combo set we purchased back in 2000. I was lured in by the salesman with his bright white shirt and equally bright capped teeth. This was one of the earlier models with the large capacity minus that agitator thing that is in the middle of the standard washers. You can cleanse several small children inside of this baby. Unfortunately there was product flaw with the hoses and the darn things RUSTED away from the inside. It was a pretty day when I called out to Noah asking for his ark with that flood. Barked for weeks at corporate and they sent a brand new one, the upgraded model. Works like a charm now for 8 years. Now, it's sister, the dryer... on it's fourth or fifth heating element. They can't seem to figure that one out but since it's under super duper warranty for life now I'm on speed dial to the repair center.

Daniel says:
July 22, 2009 at 9:34 am

Kenmore appliances are the only way to go. Our house is full of them from a garbage disposal to a washing machine, dishwasher, fridge, etc. All but the microwave are American made and all have been beyond perfect. Our flooded basement did briefly take out the washer, but it was repaired in one visit for less than $100.00.
You have to love old appliances. My folks bought a Sears washer and drying in 1973, in harvest gold no less. Eventually these came to me as hand-me-downs in my first house. The only trouble, the dryer snapped a belt in ’04. Bought a new belt online for six bucks and was back in business.

**gmann63 says:**
July 22, 2009 at 9:59 am

We’ve had our LG front-loading washer for 3 years now, and it’s never given us a lick of trouble. Well, that one time when I was unloading it and the drum spun around about three times, and I heard this weird click and the power lights came on – then the machine wouldn’t work and threw up an error message.

I spent some time on Google, and finally came up with the solution. Unplug the machine, then plug it back in. Works fine, and I now avoid spinning the drum.

**Terry Fitz says:**
July 22, 2009 at 10:07 am

Can’t blame you for using the power that comes with a widely-read blog to demand that labor charges are waived for you. If it works, good for you. But not so good for us, because the other side of the threat has to be, “…but if you do waive the charges for me, I won’t trash you in the Bleat.” I’ll still have to pay labor charges and I won’t have had the benefit of knowing that a particular brand is kaka. Or am I mis-reading your intentions? No biggie in any case. I’ve been a daily reader since a certain date in 2001. Can’t wait to hear about the TSTP2MIV. Got a big grin from recalling the Mark VII-steel hammer-hairy-wristed dude dealie at the end of The FBI – A Quinn-Martin Production. Here’s a link so the youngsters will get the reference: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_VII_Limited](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_VII_Limited)

**Trogdor says:**
July 22, 2009 at 10:24 am

Thanks to Ron Moses I’m probably going to use “Chock full o’ friction” in some context today.

**theodorerud says:**
July 22, 2009 at 10:37 am

How do cows die, anyway?

1. hoof and mouth disease.
2. lightning.
3. udder despair.

**Margaret says:**
July 22, 2009 at 10:44 am

You hit the nail on the head with the Adams series. Not only bad teeth but you definitely got the sense that most of the founding fathers didn’t bathe that regularly and wore wool in all seasons. The White House when it was first built was in a muddy swamp. Tom Wilkenson did very well to reinvent the role, less sagacity and more self interest. Jefferson comes off as less than heroic, more vain. Only pudgy Adams with his bad teeth embodies the middle class virtues and the scene where he chafes to be fundraising among the
decadent French aristocrats is priceless. If you have a middle class background, you can actually feel his discomfort. Which is different than his discomfort meeting King George when he became ambassador. That's more like cognitive dissonance, because although politically he was opposed to him, he was probably also weaned on God Save the King.

Gene Dillenburg says:
July 22, 2009 at 10:45 am

There are no wild cows in the United States, and never have been. (Perhaps a few ferals now and then, but given their value, that's unlikely.) The cow is native to Eurasia and North Africa. It was domesticated from a wild creature called the aurochs. (The word is believed to be the Germanic version of “Ur-ox.”) The last one died in Poland in 1627. Natural death probably involved being eaten by wolves or bears or some other predator.

bgbear (roger h) says:
July 22, 2009 at 10:46 am

I know I would get an argument from a vegan but, it seems if tomorrow everyone on the planet went vegan, we would still have to raise and kill animals for the numerous by-products we rely on.

I also get vegans upset when I point out that all agriculture interferes with the life cycle of other animals. Stop feeling guilty about being alive.

bgbear (roger h) says:
July 22, 2009 at 10:51 am

I remember in “All Creatures Great and Small” an old farmer blamed all cow deaths on “stagnation o’ t’ lungs” which I assumed led them go “tits up”

Will says:
July 22, 2009 at 11:01 am

Add me to the LG fan club. I have a DVD-recorder and an HDTV from them, both behave very nicely. Excellent features for the price, too.

On the other hand, I had one of their super-multi DVD burners in my PC, which developed dementia. Couldn’t read discs, would claim to burn discs but produced frisbees, became slower and slower, and so forth. I tossed it out and replaced it with a no-name OEM drive from newegg.com and have had no trouble since then.

So 2 out of 3 of my experiences with LG electronics have been pretty favorable.

GardenStater says:
July 22, 2009 at 11:02 am

There’s a guy in Sussex County, NJ, who operates Bobolink Dairy. Great raw-milk cheeses, organic beef and pork, and breads made in a brick oven. His website is cowsoutside.com, because literally the only time the cows are inside is when they’re being milked. The rest of the time, they’re “in the wild.” So some of them end up dying of old age. (Then they’re made into hamburger!)
Vanderleun says:
July 22, 2009 at 11:08 am

“Googling around I find I am not alone. Of course you'll always find lots of posts kvetching about appliances, swearing…" Filing the above comments under “quod erat demonstrandum.”

Now, let me tell you about my garbage disposal….

JP Gibb says:
July 22, 2009 at 11:09 am

I've had to replace the one LG gadget/appliance I've owned to date (a Verizon LG Dare) not once, but twice. I'm convinced it was the charger, but still…

SarahW says:
July 22, 2009 at 11:36 am

LG was a huge upgrade from Goldstar, the south-Korean mfg. appliances are the best to be had, overall, in construction an electronics quality. The Germans may say Immer Besser but the Koreans seem to really have their hearts in it today. LG puts many American and German brands to shame.

I picked up a number of props from the John Adams prop sale. The coffin has received the most use. I'm still mad I didn't buy the snakey flag from the opening credits.

SarahW says:
July 22, 2009 at 11:38 am

Also I presume you checked your circuit-breaker.

Irritable Bear says:
July 22, 2009 at 11:47 am

Baby M: Irritable Bear would also like to know Irritable Bear's motivation. Irritable Bear has been approaching Sleeping Man for months now, and has no idea why, though Irritable Bear suspects it may have to do with laxatives. Or Doris. Or having to type the words “Irritable Bear” endlessly. Or Rita Hayworth.

GardenStater says:
July 22, 2009 at 12:28 pm

@Baby M: “...maybe you can give us the thrill-packed conclusion to the Irritable Bear saga.”

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!!!!

Right–and just after that, we'll get the Lance solutions we've been waiting for.

Don't you get it? James is the type of guy who never looks back! (Unless he's watching old episodes of The Price is Right.)

Stormcrow says:
July 22, 2009 at 2:05 pm
While I am sure the Founding Fathers would be saddened by what has come of their endeavor, I doubt that they would be surprised. They were very conscious of the propensity of the state to intrude into the affairs of the people. Benjamin Franklin pointed out that the Constitutional convention had established a Republic “if you can keep it”. Perhaps they would be pleased that it has taken nearly 250 years to degenerate this far from their original vision.

B Jensen says:
July 22, 2009 at 2:33 pm

My automatic Hotpoint dishwasher is 60, yes 60 years old and still works as good as anything on the market today. No circuit boards, pot scrubber cycles, sanitizers or what have you – it has one button you push and a mere 30 minutes later the dishes come out clean and dry. the racks are stainless steel – no plastic here, and though it makes a fair amount of noise while operating, I love it – it actually sounds like it's doing a thorough job scrubbing away. It's simple and well made – that's why it lasted.

the wolf says:
July 22, 2009 at 5:11 pm

I like LG generally, but from now on I’m steering clear of their cellphones. I’ve had problems with each one and I refuse to pay for insurance for a product that “should” last two years (at which time I will change/upgrade anyway). I’ve yet to have an LG cellphone that didn’t shut off randomly or make random calls, regardless of what happy locking feature was engaged.

lindy says:
July 22, 2009 at 8:56 pm

I bought a corner dented dryer real cheap, but after about 3 months the thing smelled like burnt hair and the drum would slowly start moving then ramp up after about a minute. so I took the front off and discovered the exhaust pipe that ran the depth of the dryer had split and spewed all styles of lint that coated the inside of the dryer 3 inches thick, kinda like a furry cave, cleaned it all out, but while I had the drum out my kids decided to play in the drum and flatspotted it a wee bit, it made a galloping sound soon after. At about 6 months it finally kacked, it literally ground its way out the front sheet metal panel, I looked inside and it was the furry cave all over again, more fun for the kids to play in though.

Ross says:
July 23, 2009 at 3:38 am

Every time there's a discussion about how The Founding Fathers would react to the America of today, I'm reminded of a fact I learned in high school U.S. History, while researching my assignment for a debate in which every student had to argue as some major player or group of the time: the others may have been brilliant, audacious, lucky, etc. but only Hamilton was right about the future. Of all the major thinkers of the new republic, only he confidently predicted our future would be urban/industrial/commercial & that a Federal bank would be neccessary(& not just for us, but all industrialized states).
Ross says:
July 23, 2009 at 3:45 am

Oh, and Margaret's observation they didn't bathe all that often (except Franklin, who was fond of skinny dipping and nude “air baths”) is correct. It was the standard wisdom that bathing too frequently was an invitation to illness (not always as backwards as it sounds, given most people’s heating arrangements & local water quality) and that one should always wear wool (or linen, when unavoidable) next to the skin. It's startling how long after the widespread use of cotton fabric it was finally recognized as safe hot-weather material.

James Simpson says:
July 23, 2009 at 4:25 pm

@THX 1138
In regards to THX 1138's post above about Sears. My grandfather retired from Sears as an appliance repairman. He used to talk about how customers would get angry if the repair only took a few minutes; rather than getting competent efficient service, they would complain that they weren't getting their money worth. The repairmen were therefore trained to hem and haw and bang on things with their wrench and to stretch a 10-minute job to an hour so that the customer wouldn't complain and refuse to pay. Most customers could have their repairs done very quickly, but wouldn't accept it from fear of having a shoddy job done. In his retired years, when a repairman would come out to do a job for him, he'd tell them that he knew the routine: Just do it quickly.

Kenny says:
July 23, 2009 at 6:52 pm

At the Betsy Ross home tour in Philadelphia one of the character actors talks about the in-home cultures of the time, rather than the historical stuff we often read.

Apparently, when it came time for dinner, food was distributed based on who’d earned their keep. The least productive among them getting the least.

Same goes for baths, which apparently happened every six months or so. The primary bread winner went first, and on down the line in the house, with the smallest bathing last. All in the same water.

Boots says:
July 23, 2009 at 10:59 pm

“...It takes a special sort of perversity for a dishwasher, so concerned with water and its salutary attributes, to catch on fire. Apparently the circuit boards weren’t properly shielded from moisture”

We had one of those self-immolating dishwashers, the problem was that the main wiring harness was located adjacent to the Jet-dry dispenser, and said dispensers were leaky, allowing jet-dry to wander at will throughout the electronic guts. Ours had obvious scorch marks on the wire insulation, lucky it did not go up in flames.
Big big day of blogging, but you didn’t see half of it. The rest was done in secret, under a box. It'll probably go live Thursday. What's it?

The Blog o’ Things, which is the replacement for buzz.mn. No, strike that; it's what I'm doing now instead of buzz.mn, the end of which in its original form was ordained about a year ago. Between then and now, all sorts of things happened, to put it in the dullest possible terms, but it's a dull story – changing priorities, different people in different positions, a rethinking of the blog strategy, and all sorts of things familiar to anyone who works in a large corporation. But never mind that. The Blog o’ Things is a general-purpose blog with no content restrictions. Buzz.mn was locally focused, explicitly so, and while I'll continue to write about local things, now there's nothing stopping me from posting all day about other matters. Since I can write in advance and fire off the posts from my iPhone, this will work just fine. I'm content. (Accent on the second syllable, or otherwise it sounds rather egotistical.)

More tomorrow, and I'll flog the URL as well.

So. Otherwise, normal. The Best Buy Repairguy came at the appointed hour to look at the washer, and as expected, he had to order parts. As expected, the control circuits had been ruined by Moisture. Stupid Electrolux. It's all under warranty, so there will be no labor costs – but I'll be switched and hog-tied,
durn it, if I buy an extended warranty from them. Grr. The repairman had a thick Russian accent on the phone, so I wasn’t entirely surprised when he showed up wearing a name tag that said BORIS. Too perfect. I asked him where he was from, and he gave a weary smile – tovarisch, the name, the accent, is it what you are thinkink? Scotland? I wonder if he realizes that 72% of the people he meets want to ask him how’s Natasha.

Took the old dog to Natalie’s Show and Tell today. He was excited to go somewhere, but as usual was crestfallen when the car was involved. Never been a hop-in-the-car dog; he gets nervous. But once we’re somewhere, he’s happy. Natalie came running over, and took the leash, proud of her dog. She does love that mutt. As do we all.

First thing he did, as I noted on Twitter, was to relieve himself in both formats upon arrival, which you can only get away with if you’re dog or Jim Morrison. Great amusement for the other girls. One of them was wearing a series of nametags she’d gathered throughout the week, and I asked her about Amelia Earhart’s Ghost.

“That’s who I am today.” She pointed to another nametag. “I was Michael Jackson’s Ghost yesterday.” So it said. I asked what it meant to be Michael Jackson’s Ghost, as opposed to Amelia Earhart, and she shrugged. Wanted to say “Took Michael longer to crash and burn,” but best leave that one be.

More to come - here and there, including the absolute best introduction to the First Day Covers you can possibly imagine. In the meantime, by all means, enjoy some more Price is Right. (If you miss any, don’t worry; they’ll be collected in the imminent 1970s site soon.)

Back around 10:30 or so.
37 RESPONSES TO thursday, july 23

Vanderleun says:
July 23, 2009 at 1:11 am

I'd heap scorn on the First Day Cover threat if I didn't have two boxes of the little darlings in my back room from my days of autophilately.

XWL says:
July 23, 2009 at 1:57 am

"I'm content". Fine, I'll follow your pronunciation guidelines, but I don't have to like it. Instead I'll imagine you really meant, “Bow before the Lileks, I AM CONTENT, I populate the internet with wry musings, captured ephemera, and Anitra photos”

It could be a scene from the next B&W World post regarding a lost American International Pictures masterpiece, “It Came From the Internet!”

Kensington says:
July 23, 2009 at 2:47 am

The Lord knows I am a man of very, very simple pleasures, but the dog relieving himself “in both formats” may be the finest description of a canine's toilet adventure that I've ever heard.

“Both formats!”

Hee hee hee!

Joe The Painter says:
July 23, 2009 at 6:36 am

“the replacement for buzz.mn”

…And buzz.mn needs replaced for…why? As far as I remember the thing is practically brand new. Fixing what ain't broke seems to me a miserable way for one to justify one's purpose in life.

This is something that just irks me: The constant, incessant necessity for CHANGE. Nothing traditional anymore, everything older than a week or two is now the stuff of nostalgia.

…And if you haven't noticed, the recent rash of changes elswere in our American society is going to desperately require…change…

Keep something same-ish for a while, start a trend; The Maytag Repairman, the Sears Craftsman Guarantee, whatever.

Ward says:
July 23, 2009 at 7:37 am

Yes, but where's Lance?
WatchWayne says:
July 23, 2009 at 7:50 am

If his jasperness is anything like my dogs, 98% of his car rides result in cavity searches, sliced-off parts, or other indignities. I expect it's hard to remember past that to blissful runnings-around, multi-format relief, etc.

Nancy says:
July 23, 2009 at 8:58 am

“I wasn't entirely surprised when he showed up wearing a name tag that said BORIS.”
That gave me a chuckle—MY appliance guy is also named Boris and sports a pretty heavy accent. He is a man of few words but can wax philosophical on the merits of the Amana compressor v. the GE. He fixed my 11 year-old side-by-side Amana and told me I could expect at least 10 more years out of it...damn.

Dog Faced Kid says:
July 23, 2009 at 9:08 am

What? The end of Buzz.mn???? What will become of Buzzie the anthropomorphic weather triangle? Please tell me that the DogFacedKid, Armpit Lady, and Pagan-Sun-God-Puppet Head will have a home on Version 2.0

Natalie says:
July 23, 2009 at 9:10 am

It only makes sense for the new blog to be more spread out as far as topics geography (oooh, listen to me!). Your fan base stems far beyond MN.

John Robinson says:
July 23, 2009 at 9:11 am

“imminent 1970s site”

James Jim Jimmy, you, sir, have just made my day. As a child of that era (young adult, actually) I await it with bated breath. One question, though: the site will be loaded with more big slabs o’ 70s TV, right? (Karen Valentine, we hardly knew ye...)

rbj says:
July 23, 2009 at 9:16 am

Funny, my dog loves to go for car rides, but that's because they usually wind up with a trip to the park. If I'm home in the morning, he takes that as a signal that we are going to the park, right boss? Let's go! Even if I'm sick, it is park time.

Lisa P says:
July 23, 2009 at 9:29 am

I once opened my car door to get something out while walking the dog and she jumped in. I wound up having to drive her around the block because she was determined that we were going for a ride. Fortunately, golden retrievers are easily pleased, and the short trip was sufficient.
Yes, I do overindulge my pets. Why do you ask?

Lee says:
July 23, 2009 at 9:34 am

When I meet a Russian, I have to repress the desire to ask them to say “Moose and Squirrel.”

RaccoonPrincess says:
July 23, 2009 at 9:52 am

Are you sure you know where Boris is from? He couldn't be a Ukrainian or Byelorussian or even an ethnic Russian from Uzbekistan? And why does he have to stay locked in the cold war as your comrade (the meaning of tovarich, there is a very different word for “friend”)?

My daughters are Russian. I weary of people not treating them as they would immigrants from anywhere else in the world. The worst are those who saw some shockumentary on Russian orphanages and believe they know something.

Trogdor says:
July 23, 2009 at 10:36 am

Talk about coincidence, you repairman is named Boris, and I just watched Red Dawn last night!

bgbear (roger h) says:
July 23, 2009 at 10:37 am

@RaccoonPrincess

I think James is pretty tuned into Russian, Ukranian, etc. culture. I believe he speaks Russian and one of his closest friends is Ukranian.

best to your daughters.

hpoulter says:
July 23, 2009 at 10:40 am

“Boris and Natasha” – a War and Peace reference, sans doute

Lou Shumaker says:
July 23, 2009 at 10:42 am

@XWL

I think you meant “Bow before the Lileks, I AM KHANtent,” thus getting in the obligatory “Star Trek” reference, backed by a Force 10 Shatner scream.

GardenStater says:
July 23, 2009 at 11:23 am

I miss Lance and Lori.
Dan says:
July 23, 2009 at 12:26 pm

I've only run into Jasper once, on a bike ride along the creek, & he was relieving himself of solid matter.

swschrad says:
July 23, 2009 at 1:07 pm

Truly a travesty that the Lances aren't surviving in this brave new world.

but if all that old content was blogged, printed, rolled up, dipped in preservative, and stacked, we'd all be living in blog cabins.

hmmm, is that IV still in?

HelloBall says:
July 23, 2009 at 1:33 pm

If the symbolism of that photo of [presumably] Gnataile and Jasper doesn't drive a stake through your heart... she looks like she could be 8 or 14 or 22. Jasper will always be the dog of her happiest times. The heartache of my beloved little ones growing up into wonderful adult-format people is right there vicariously, every time I see our host's family isn't immune to the process either.

All I can say is, “Laxatives!”

Uncle Joe says:
July 23, 2009 at 1:50 pm

My little rookies are completely assimilated now, but I never encountered anyone who treated them as anything other than cute little kids.

My wife and I had fun with Moose and Squirrel while in Russia. Actually, squirrel is a difficult word for a 5 year old native Russian speaker to learn to pronounce correctly.

Moose and Squirrel jokes, that is.

bgbear (roger h) says:
July 23, 2009 at 2:07 pm

I guess “squirrel” for a Russian speaker is like “ecureuil” for an English speaker.

I had an epiphany when I realized the “Moose” and “Squirrel” were said by Boris the same way he would refer to “Smith” and “Jones” that is, by their last names (Rocket J. Squirrel and Bullwinkle J. Moose). Up to that point, I though Boris and Natasha were dropping their articles.

Mr_Lilacs says:
July 23, 2009 at 2:09 pm

So buzz.mn will soon buzz.off – sic transit gloria mundi. Looking
forward to the broader horizons.

**GardenStater** says:
July 23, 2009 at 2:11 pm

I used to live next to a lady from the Dominican Republic. The first time she told me about seeing a squirrel, I had no idea what she was talking about. The closest I can come to her pronunciation is “Skweerrril” (And that doesn’t do it justice.) My wife and I still laugh about it, ten years later.

**Kevin** says:
July 23, 2009 at 2:21 pm

I used to work with a woman from Kazakhstan, and I once asked her to say “Moose and Squirrel.” She very helpfully did so, and was both a bit hurt and perplexed as to why I burst out in rollicking laughter. And it’s not as if explaining things made the slightest difference either.
Ah, but she had such beautiful, dark, flashing eyes…!

**bgbear (roger h)** says:
July 23, 2009 at 2:24 pm

Of course the proper pronunciation is “squoil” as in “them squoils is just rats with bushy tails” as heard on the streets of NY.

Proper spelling is “skwerl”

**bgbear (roger h)** says:
July 23, 2009 at 2:31 pm

I hope no one from Pottsylvania or adopted children from same reads this blog.

We got a similar kicked getting an East German co-worker to say “Yogi Bear”. Being born East German he did not know who we meant or why we said “smarter than the average bear.”

He visited a theme park on his day off a excitedly told he saw Yogi Bear, it was very funny at the time, a “had to be there” kind of thing.

**Trogdor** says:
July 23, 2009 at 2:52 pm

I never ate a squirrel, but I have friends and in-laws that have and do.

And I saw a Moose just last week, only the 2nd time I’ve ever seen one in Colorado.

Also, my dog downloads in both formats whenever I take him on a jog.

Just more of that 6 degrees of Lileks.

**shesnailie** says:
July 23, 2009 at 3:40 pm

_@_v – i don't think i'll be able to follow the new blogsite as it's not on speaking terms with my browser… as a last hurrah for buzz 1.0
i've dipped into the back of my shell and pulled out a load of lance lawsons for you to enjoy…

swschrad says:
July 23, 2009 at 6:42 pm

the Lances were good to see, shesnailie.

send the link to the new blog ‘o’ things to the browser folks and tell them to get their ( ) together. and while they are at it, here’s some of MY code to debug as well, turkeys.

let me know how it works out.

GardenStater says:
July 23, 2009 at 7:35 pm

I'm with swschrad (even though I'm not sure how to pronounce it). Thanks, shesnailie, for the abundance of Lances. Now if only James can figure out how to make this new blog more Buzzard-friendly, and we can get back to business.

GardenStater says:
July 23, 2009 at 7:38 pm

Now that I think about it, I'm becoming convinced that, in two or three weeks, we'll log on to this site, only to discover that Minneapolis will pay us to buy a house, and the Guthrie Theatre is presenting the #%*!@#$ Little House on the Prairie Musical.

And this was all just a dream.

There's no place like home–there's no place like home–there's no place like home…

Ross says:
July 24, 2009 at 2:22 am

“When I meet a Russian, I have to repress the desire to ask them to say ‘Moose and Squirrel.’”
Me, too—I know it's cheap & dumb, but it's almost irresistible. In fact, I almost loused up a friend's security check (the was going into Army Intelligence) because I referred to (that IS & always HAS BEEN the word—there is no such word as “referenced”) that joke. I was being interviewed by a tall, bearded & exquisitely-dressed DIA agent whose card showed the most Russian name you can imagine. The cold stare I got after the allusion to Boris & Natasha humbled me so badly that I didn't have the nerve to ask exactly how a young man, but obviously 1st-generation American, with such a name came to be working at the DIA.

fizzbin says:
July 24, 2009 at 1:48 pm

@Ross…you would be SURPRRRISED at who works for za DIA, CIA, NRO, NSA, BBS, HTML….what? why yes, Nurse Cratchett, I will be happy to have the free la bottle in front of me!
The long stagger to Friday night is almost complete. Just one video shoot early in the morn (almost wrote “earl-aye in the morning,” which is an old tic from summer camp. It’s from the drunken sailor song, which was a staple in those days. What do we do with a drunken sailor, what do we do with a drunken sailor, what do we do with a drunken sailor, earl-aye in the morning.

If it seemed an odd thing to sing at church camp, no one mentioned it, just as no one ever questioned the absurdity of the premise. I’m guessing that the discovery of a drunken sailor around 4 AM was not exactly an uncommon occurrence that required communal interrogation. I expect anyone in a position to find a drunken sailor earl-aye in the morning had experience with these things. And who’s this “we,” anyway? Shipmates? If so, it’s a ridiculous question. Get him on board before the Good Cap’n finds out. If it’s a group of do-gooders who’ve stumbled across some old salt face down in grog-spew in a gutter, well, I suppose you should ask your compatriots if you should wake him now or drag him back to the mission, but it hardly seems a question sufficient to build a song around.

Then we come to the immediate solution: “Oh, God, we’ve got to drown him.” Yes, that’s a natural response. A fellow’s passed out on dry land, taken by the spirits; by all means, let’s drag him to the dock and throw him over. When? “Earl-aye in the morning.” Drunk-drowning just can’t wait; it should be contemporaneous with discovery. I don’t remember any other verses – apparently there wasn’t much debate about the matter, which makes you suspect the singers were going around the docks looking for drunken sailors,
and the question was intended to be cynical, almost rhetorical. The act of asking the question was simply a spur to get the desired response.

It was fun to sing, though. The alternative was Kumbaya) and then home to write a column and blog. Then a piano recital. Then pizza. Then the long, deep, restorative nap of Friday night, which should enable me to stay up until three rolling my eyes through the “Watchman” movie.

Right now I’m just beat. But happy. Long good week. At the office today I shot five, count them FIVE video segments, four being interviews with reporters about a big story coming up Sunday. The other is a TV preview with Neil Justin; he wanted to talk about Busby Berkeley day coming up on TCM, and I was happy to oblige. As it turned out I just watched two lesser efforts – “Gold Diggers of Paris,” and “Varsity Show.” Thirties culture seems less obscure to me than it did a few years ago.

I don’t buy the idea that Depression-depressed audiences flocked to these movies for a respite from the unrelenting grimness outside the gilded walls. Dazzle us, O Hollywood, with choreographed imagery unrelated to our hopeless lives! They went to see them for the same reason people to go see Transformers: to see something you don’t see every day. I’ve read a lot of 30s paper, and never seen a headline stating “Latest Warner Bros. Musical Eases Pain of Protracted Low Factory Output,” or “Stark Monochromatic Imagery in Berkley’s Latest Assimilates Latent Fears Over Income Gap.” If they’d been shown in the 20s, they would have been examples of Jazz Age Exuberance. Shown in the 40s, a break from War Worries.

Sometimes people just want to see a movie and drink it in. Escape and dream. Best of times, worst of times, same thing. No one ever came out of “Gold Diggers Go To Casablanca” and thought well, I’m certainly better equipped psychologically to deal with 21% structural unemployment.

I will note this: Until “Things to Come,” nothing I’ve seen in the films of the 30s was dystopian or depressing. Either they were fluffy romps disconnected from reality, or pick-yourself-up, Mac tales full of tough guys who bounced on their heels and knew all the angles.

There’s something to be said for that. So here: I’m saying it.

Before I hit the hay last night I watched the first episode of another SciFi channel show – back when it was called SciFi – called “The Lost Room.” It contained much of Fanning the Smaller, who was also in the other SciFi show, “Taken.” Now, I bailed on “Taken” before it ended, because my favorite characters died, and the point of the show seemed to be the decline of American manhood from stern solid sorts to wimpy tortured dudes whose hairstyles indicated that we should regard them with sympathetic admiration. That’s the one that had Fanning the Smaller intoning Wise Aphorisms over the action, as if a 7-year-old kid knows everything about life and human nature. Of course she did! Dolphins admired her, say no more! In “Lost Room” she’s a little sweetie, though – none of the preternaturally knowing aspect of her older sister. The first episode, for a cheapy cable
series, was nice: like “Lost” with a Lynch vibe. Maybe because it's built around a motel room from the fifties. No, strike that: definitely because it's built around a motel room from the fifties.

Speaking of which: the annual summertime addition to the motel site comes next week. It's small. It will not, as is my usual pathetic wont, include a TOTAL REDESIGN of the site.

Later today: Newsbreak up around noonish; don't miss it. I found the most amusing Busby Berkley flub. A somewhat largish Comic Ads section update in the afternoon – no lie, as we used to say. It's already written, and contains a piercingly poignant piece of childhood that saddens me for reasons I'll never be able to explain. You'll see what I mean.

Back around noon. (Price is Right resumes next week.)

54 RESPONSES TO friday! july 24

NeeNee says:
July 24, 2009 at 10:41 pm

In 1970s Sunday School music class, that tune was set to “Jonah”. Being a stickler, we only sang it if that was the lesson for the day. I coordinated the music program and the kids were always amazed I could pull a song that “matched” the Bible story.

“We sail a ship with a man named Jonah, We sail a ship with a man named Jonah, We sail a ship with a man named Jonah, Early in the morning.”

Subsequent verses included “cast the lot, and the number's Jonah” and “Oh, Lord God we've got to drown him.”

Chas C-Q says:
July 25, 2009 at 6:23 am

@curtsnide

One must assess the direction before deciding whether it's “progress” or not. I think “not.”

EgregiousCharles says:
July 25, 2009 at 7:42 am

@Chas C-Q

Absolutely, it's only progress if things are getting better. They aren't.

But, 'liberal' actually means (or used to mean) promoting liberty; the freedom to make one's own decisions regardless of what the king or the elite or the majority thinks is best. An even worse fit.
I think ‘authoritarian’ might be the best fit. From merriam-webster.com
Main Entry:
au·thor·i·tar·i·an
Pronunciation: |əˈthər-ər-ən
Function: adjective
Date: 1879
1 : of, relating to, or favoring blind submission to authority
2 : of, relating to, or favoring a concentration of power in a leader or an elite not constitutionally responsible to the people
— authoritarian noun
— au·thor·i·tar·i·an·ism

anandos says:
July 28, 2009 at 1:01 pm

Arrrr, it's an old sea shantey, mate. A work tune, sung by sailors – polite lot, they – in the midst of various timing-related sea tasks. Full of hyperbole and subtle poetic devices.

That may actually be a fake shanty, its origins are a bit unclear.

Remember, folks: if there's a question you didn't really want answered. . . ask a musicologist.
WHY A STORK?
A lost cultural reference, alas. Plus: Listen! […]

MORE
Thanks for dropping by! Feel free to join the discussion by leaving comments, and stay updated by subscribing to the RSS feed. That's the default copy from the developers! I'm just adding this, and will add something more, later. Who cares? You're reading this? Really?
Frida and we took the piano class show on the road. Gathered up all the keyboards, put them in the parental vehicles, drove to a day care center, set them up, and performed. Huzzah for cars and modern technology: 100 years ago, you couldn’t give a concert at a school unless you spent three days moving the pianos down a rutted road by mule.

They played their greatest hits, including their solos, and concluded with a rousing choral version of “Viva la Vida” by Coldplay. (Really.) Then we packed up again and brought everything back to the school. It was over. I mean, it was all over. Until that day I hadn’t realized that this would be the end of the piano class Natalie had been taking for, what, four years? Five? Same room, every Friday. Same joyous release when class was done, all obligations now fulfilled, pizza awaiting, the weekend about to begin. The recitals, the practices, the battered blue bag in which we carried her music, the same friends – done.

She was sad, but I’m sure I was sadder.

But. We’ll still continue private lessons with her teacher, and the focus will be on composition. Same place, too.

Wonder if we could get the lessons on Friday afternoon.

Saturday we had a eight-girl sleepover. (I thought it was nine, but I was
imagining one.) It was a Webkinz-themed party. Yes, Webkinz have returned to occupy the part of her brain previously reserved for Club Penguin, which is now old and forgotten. Just as well: the chat function was used primarily by internet illiterates. Ah, but I repeat myself. LOL. One of the kids had run into my wife while she was buying the Webkinz Natalie really wanted, and would occasionally say “I know what you’re getting,” with a know-it-all smirk. One of those kids.

It began at four PM. When I finished watching a movie and headed upstairs, 10 hours later, there was still conversation coming from the basement. It was the Best Birthday EVER, although it had some rough moments; 40 minutes into it, three of the planned diversions had sped by, and my wife was wondering what we’d do with them.

Let them be? I almost said. But that would be the disengaged dad approach. No, us modern dads are right in there enjoying every moment, guiding them! Because if you don’t direct the activities, it’s hard to shoot it for the video. Your angles are all wrong, it’s tough to edit, and you’re left with something that just looks like a bunch of kids running around. The game that chewed up the most time – er, delighted them the most, which is what really counts – was a simple relay race. They had to get water from one bucket to a bucket on the other side of the yard. My wife used the remaining supply of Winnie the Pooh disposable cups, left over from a birthday seven years ago.

Just looked over at her on the swings, wondering how seven years – let alone nine – have passed with such swiftness (they’re greased, that’s why; it’s a special silicone spray) and she caught me looking with that Parental Reverie expression.

“Yes?” she said.

Nevermind.

Who watches the Watchmen? I did. I usually lean into comic-book movies, and cut them slack until they start biting the wax tadpole with such gusto it’s apparent nothing will redeem them, but from the start this one set me on edge, and I can’t say why. No, I can:

1. The heroes may have no powers, yet the Comedian has ability to have his head slammed into a six-inch slab of granite, and break the granite

2. The characters. Small point, but I wish the movie had characters I enjoyed. Silk Spectre was awful; Nite Owl was pudgy-dull, with all the gravitas of a hospital administration bureaucrat, and yes I know that’s the point; Dr. Manhattan was interesting, inasmuch as whispering superbeing with cerulean salami hangin’ free is interesting, but you have to admit it’s difficult to identify with a character who has Mars as his personal chill-pad. The most interesting characters were the most repellant – the Comedian, looking like Nick Fury crossed with J. Jonah Jameson, was a bad, bad man, lighting up his scenes only because of his rogue grin and constant cigar; Rorschach was the best character of the book, and he made the movie. Everyone else: feh.
3. I dislike any movie that makes me wonder whether that’s a good Eleanor Clift impersonation. The “real” people dropped into the movie made for some amusing moments, but when the Ted Koppel character had an interview with Dr. Manhattan, the program turned into something that Nightline would never become, and everything about the scene, from the reporter’s questions to the surprise guest to the chaos that erupted was just nonsense. But it had to be that way because the comic book was that way, and this was all about devotion to the source material. Except for the most important part of the end.

4. The source material. Look. I love graphic novels, and this one gets props for upending the Superhero Mythos when it did, but great writing it isn’t, and brilliant insight it lacks. (I much preferred “Marvels,” which came along later, and had better art – the illustration in “Watchmen” never bowled me over, and the coloring was often horrible.) From here in 09 I could smell its 80s roots – dated, sorry, tired politics that lack anything other than sullen adolescent angst and dorm-room bong-session insight.

Reminded me of the Dark Knight comics: Reagan was President, which somehow explained why the cities were such horrid dystopias. Makes sense, doesn’t it? Doesn’t it? Some how? Same here: the reign of Nixon (jeezum crow, Nixon) ties in with urban decay, filth, moral calumny, and all those incidents of debauched decline Rorschack decried as he walked the mean streets. If there’s one thing we know for sure about hated iconic Republican presidents, they prefer a society full of prostitutes, child killers, drug addiction, and other sundry pleasures of modern life.

Uh huh. Imagine someone setting a comic like this in the 90s, with Dr. Bronx and the Jokesteir heading off to Bosnia to kill Serbs at the request of President Clinton – who’s in his third term, because he suspended the Constitution to prepare for Y2K – and later the Jokesteir, fresh from killing Vince Foster and Ron Brown, argues with InkBlot over who killed the American Dream, with InkBlot insisting it was supply-side economics. Meanwhile, ominous newspaper headlines note that North Korea has activated a plutonium factory, and the League of Solemn Scientists move the hands on a prop clock.
It's headlines like these that let you know you’re in an alternate universe populated by people with a poor sense of newspaper headlines. Another:

![Newspaper Image](image)

It's meant to show you how the world is hurtling towards nuclear war, but y'know, those take a while to build. "Soviets move more mobile nukes to Eastern Front" might do a better job making the audience feel as if things are spinning out of control. Then there's this:

![Newspaper Image](image)

The Worker's World Worker News might have a headline like that, but not a major US paper.

It's not fatal stuff, but it goes to the ideas underlying the alternate 1985, and they're labored and trite – as is the idea, put forth by Ozzie and a few other characters, that the reason for the Cold War is control of energy resources. I think he makes that point when he's sneering at Lee Iaccoca while "Everybody Wants To Rule the World" plays in the background. I GET THE POINT. Just as I got the point when “The Times, They Are a Changin’” played in the credits sequence, which showed how the times, they were a changin’.” (The opening credits were the best thing in the movie – and they weren’t from the book.)

I may be particularly sensitive to this stuff because I get rashes when the
ideas and tropes of the Sixties are trotted out as prima facie truths – as though a reference to Vietnam and a snippet of Simon and Garfunkel is like some scriptural quote I’m expected to swallow without question.

5. The ending was just ridiculous – and it’s a sign of the movie that leaving in the giant squid would have made it less ridiculous. It wasn’t like the book at all, but had the obligatory show-down in the bad guy’s lair. Leaving aside the AWESOME PHYSICAL STRENGTH of a guy who looks like a high school theater major going through a Bowie phase, the idea that the smartest man in the world would not only call himself Ozymandis, but emblazon the poetical quote on his throne without a note of irony, is just . . . bizarre, unless he did realize the irony, and that was the point, or we were supposed to get the irony, and – oh, who cares.

I’ll give the director this:

Nice little reference to his previous film.

6. One exchange stuck out – by which I mean, it made me roll my eyes so hard I almost tipped the couch over. “What happened to the American Dream?” Owl-guy says to the Comedian, after they’ve dispatched a late-night demonstration demanding more police, instead of masked vigilantes. “It came true!” grins the Comedian, meaning, all the violence and oppression and fear and war. The dream was always a nightmare. It wasn’t about a family and a place of your own and a car and a plot of land where your kids could play; it was really about pedophilic murderers in filthy apartments and Nixon’s third term and the repression of alternative energy, and other inevitable consequences of the fascist model masquerading as liberal democracy.

It’s all very deep when you’re in high school and the ‘rents are being total Nazis. At this point, though, no one’s used the term “American Dream” without scare quotes since the second episode of “Laugh-In,” so any piercing
insight may ping off the skins of viewers who don’t stamp around the mall glowering at the Phonies. It’s an artifact of the 80s counterculture, an echo of the dyspeptic souls who masked their hatred of humans with high-flown concern for humanity, a bizarre example of reality denial: the war they insisted was an inevitable outcome of the US posture in the 80s never happened, so they remake the era with Nixon at the helm and kill millions to force us to come to our senses so we won’t do the thing . . . that we didn’t do.

There isn’t any “wrong” view – this is just my opinion, and if someone wants to defend the heck out of it, I’d like to hear it. Seriously: obviously two people can see the same thing and have two completely different reactions, and since this was no small cultural event in the world of alt media, I welcome comments telling me I’m absolutely full of krep. Have at it!

Later today: Matchbook Museum, and something else around 1 PM. See you then.

81 RESPONSES TO monday, july 27

GardenStater says:
July 27, 2009 at 1:05 pm

@Irritable Bear: “Irritable Bear knows nothing of Watchmen.”

Nor does GardenStater. I literally have no idea what any of this is. (Yes, I understand now that it’s a comic book–sorry, “graphic novel”–that was made into a movie. But I never heard of either.)

Now where do I go to find a good Lance Lawson story?

Kensington says:
July 27, 2009 at 1:15 pm

I hope Zack Snyder gets to direct an overly literal Lance Lawson movie someday, and I hope it consists of 30 3-minute black and white vignettes that are almost impossible for anyone post 1950 to figure out.

Josh says:
July 27, 2009 at 1:23 pm

First: As a Young Person Under Thirty (barely), I saw the film and the book as a historical document, like a Verne-ian vision of the future as seen from a particular point in time. Not having been steeped in those Deep Thoughts, I could just write them off and enjoy the show.

Second: The film’s ending was sooo much better. Dr. Manhattan had to leave, and he made a better outside enemy to unite the nations (ho-hum, I know) than a giant, psychic squid. The threat of
his return makes more sense than the threat of another cephalopodian teleportation mishap.

madCanada says:
July 27, 2009 at 2:17 pm

Annyway … Mr Lileks. I've not seen “Watchmen” but it seems custom-made to push your buttons. You're a veritable machine-thatgota “ping”.

FYI, I don't actually think a 3rd Nixon term would have been apocalyptic, just stinky & corrupt in a pretty banal way.

(Oliver STONE kinda pities Nixon, fer gawdsake …)

But … if I had to write a truly scary, plausible alternate history, I’d put Prescott Bush in the White House in the 1940's.

teach5 says:
July 27, 2009 at 2:18 pm

Not only the party of Barney Frank, but Al Franken, no less! Hope his senate “work” doesn’t interrupt his watching of Perry Mason reruns. Minnesota must be proud.

madCanada says:
July 27, 2009 at 2:25 pm

So as not to seem knee-jerk partisan (a quality I hate) let me also say Joseph Kennedy would have given us a presidency from hell.

Anon Anon says:
July 27, 2009 at 3:22 pm

Mr. Lileks

I have to say that I am much relieved hear someone that I consider centered and sane say what needs to said about this miserable movie.

*spoilers*

From the opening montage, including peaceful, flower-bearers being mown down by a skirmish line of heartless baby-killers, this movie was like a test for screening potential candidates for the supreme soviet.

Ozymadias secretly kills a ‘friend’ in the opening scene, also, he gives everyone in a particular building cancer to make a guy feel guilty. Publicly he tells everyone he is working on a peaceful power source to end the cold war. The movie portrays the cold war as all about energy, so, if he actually did that, it would have worked.

Unfortunately, the smartest man on earth is using this gift to create a weapon to flatten dozens of cities across the earth and blame a god-like fellow super hero (opiate of the masses, anyone?)

The stated reason for this was to frighten everyone into playing nice so as to fight a common enemy (The Lord Dong Almighty). Not withstanding the fact that he explains this in his THRONE room.

The character we are supposed to most relate to is the ‘hero’. He and his girlfriend, he stole her away from the giant naked blue guy, get their kicks by attending a prison riot to break a friend out. Prisoners and guards share equally in the beatings they hand out. Their exit delayed while their friend goes to the men’s room to kill a bad
dwarf.

Anyway, he is angry at the deaths, but is persuaded that despite the costs, this was the right thing to do after all. It is important that when you get on board with covering for mass murder, it take at least an hour to persuade you, including the time it takes to kick you @ss.

The cold war is over because everyone is scared of a guy who really isn't their enemy and who runs off to sulk over his girlfriend. A highly intelligent, powerful man has an enormously powerful technology in his exclusive control and a willingness to kill millions (did I mention the THRONE?).

As has been mentioned before, what happened in real life to end the cold war was infinitely preferable. That this movie was made anyway and with sooo much political heaviness, indicates, to me anyway, a level of preferring the triumph of one's own politics and the defeat of one's political enemies, over, you know, actual life and peace and the the blessings thereof, and whatnot.

So, if you are ok with colossal mass murder and the need to shift blame for the deaths (Ukraine famine call your office), so that cold realism and concentrated power wins the cold war and not freedom and the free market, you're in the club, extra points if you dig puree of reactionary.

Doc says:
July 27, 2009 at 4:11 pm

This thread has gotten too screedy for my liking. 😐

Dale Mancini says:
July 27, 2009 at 5:20 pm

I really like the book, I really like the movie, and can take them both for the slice of “what-never-happened” that they are. I mean, I buy Warp Drive when I watch Trek, and that's not real either, right?

Whalehead King says:
July 27, 2009 at 5:54 pm

You seem to write off the cuff and because of that I think you do, whether there is a lot of revision beforehand or not. You also seem grounded in your interpretation of things and whether or not I usually agree with you beggars the point of what you are doing. I do usually agree, but that's beside the point. Lot's of practice makes perfect and you perfectly convey what you mean to say. Well done. Thanks Mr. Lileks. Keep fighting the good fight.

madCanada says:
July 27, 2009 at 7:38 pm

Yes J/Lileks, you are articulate, sharp & frequently quite amusing. I agree/disagree with you about 50-50%, but am always gobsnacked by your gift of rhetorical/comic precision … My only question to you is (to quote Louis Jordan) … “If You're So Smart, How Come You Ain't Rich?”
Patrick J says:
July 27, 2009 at 7:40 pm

Facinating conversation. I am a rough peer of Lileks, and have never been enraptured (or embiggened) by comics, have not seen this film, and am pretty sure I will go to my reward never having seen it.

That said, I am 100% sure that James' interpretation is spot on.

Half of the commenters seem to view the criticism of the film's politics as an unseemly intrusion. To those people I say, "grow up you nerds". As goofy as it sounds, films like this are the second draft of history. They will set the default template by which future generations interpret our age. To can the ridiculous conspiracy-mongering of the '80s left fever swamps as "sci-fi-fact" demands refutation. To treat it as trivial is foolish, at best.

Moishe3rd says:
July 27, 2009 at 9:33 pm

Nice review.
I started watching this online just the other day, but the lousy darkness of the movie turned me off. I only got to the opening scene after the credits...
Not being a fan or even knowledgeable about The Watchmen, I was rather unimpressed (nonplussed too) by the whole "we live in a fascist State" thing. I suspected that the movie was not going to have a feel good ending so, I stopped it.
Which is why I am pleased that you actually did review and confirmed my worst fears over what the whole movie was about. I hate wasting an hour and a half in front of my computer screen trying to get through dreck.
(For example, I've been trying to watch "Warehouse 13." I finally gave up in the middle of the third episode. It was just all too painfully uninteresting.)
And, by the way, I say this as a 50 year fan of all science fiction and a former Marvel comic book collector.

Dr. Bobbs says:
July 27, 2009 at 10:15 pm

Did anyone notice a brief establishing shot of Ozymandias' Antarctic base of operations that looked like a third-grader's hastily thrown-together diorama for a class project?

How did such a scene get in a big budget movie?

Nancy says:
July 27, 2009 at 10:47 pm

"biting the wax tadpole"
Heh, we say that (hubby and me). As for this Watchman, I am happily ignorant of it and after perusing the comments—that is not likely to change!

Moltar says:
July 27, 2009 at 11:44 pm

Bravo, Lileks! I've been trying to explain the nonsense of this comic to geeks for years, only to be told that I "don't get it."
Predictions made by sci-fi writers in the 80's were TERRIBLE. I've read a ton of cyberpunk, and not one author even suggests that the USSR might be gone in the very near future…

bgates says:
July 28, 2009 at 12:23 am

You gave up reaching for the light

Well, yeah. To fight global warming. What's all this “reaching for lights” stuff?

Nice to see a Canadian who considers himself nonpartisan because he hates Americans from both parties. If they wanted a real nightmare scenario, the filmmakers would have had Pierre Trudeau as elected leader of a country that mattered.

madCanada says:
July 28, 2009 at 8:33 am

bgates, Canada is the angel sitting on America's shoulder. If Canada disappeared, you'd suddenly, finally realize that we DO matter. You'd find yourselves in a very dark place.

You're welcome.

Jim Kakalios says:
July 28, 2009 at 8:39 am

Wonder why my comments on Watchmen have not appeared. You did solicit positive takes on the film, after all.

EMD says:
July 28, 2009 at 11:10 am

@madCanada

I sincerely thank Canada for not being Mexico.

Fivehead says:
July 28, 2009 at 11:13 am

Lilicks gives Watchmen One out of Five-heads. Mean, nasty cartoon movie didn't regurgitate his world-view for him. This sounds like Lilick's rejected pitch to his RiffTrax buddies to do commentary on the movie; however, it's neither funny or insightful and the RiffTrax people are screening his calls and drafting a request for a restraining order.

This is so pathetic they wouldn't sell it at Target.

Did James Lileks like The Watchmen? « Quotulatiousness says:
July 28, 2009 at 11:23 am

[...] One quote from a fascinating take-down: [...]
HA HA HA HA HA, etc.!! That explains the runny dookie on the back of America's shirt. Don't get me wrong, I think most Canadians are just fine...with the right sauce. As for Canada disappearing, don't worry madC, vee haff plans!!

Before the launch of Invasion #3, I'll ask Irritable Bear to send you some Charmin...and some BearNair.

Jerry Ray says:
July 28, 2009 at 2:34 pm

It seems like there are a lot of folks in this thread who are just happy to have their uninformed (never read it, never seen it, only watched the first 5 minutes of it, etc.) opinions validated by one reviewer's opinion.

Whatever you think of the movie (I think it was alright) or the politics of the comic, you really can't deny the remarkable skill that went into the telling of the story in the comics. That alone makes Watchmen worth reading and studying, especially if you have any interest in the craft of comic book storytelling, and seeing how the director tried to emulate those storytelling techniques (some of which are strongly tied to the comic book form) in a different medium made the movie pretty interesting to me, and I'm the furthest thing from a film geek most of the time.

wombat-socho says:
July 29, 2009 at 8:33 am

Bolonium is from the Simpsons? I never knew, Doc. I don't know now whether to be happy that my kids introduced that word to me, or appalled.

As for you, madCanada, my grandfather left PEI in 1919 for the States, and none of his descendants, even the bleeding-heart Democrats, regret it for a nanosecond. I hope you get a Tory majority long enough to undo all the nonsense and thuggery the Grits imposed on you during Trudeau's reign.

DensityDuck says:
July 29, 2009 at 3:40 pm

Jerry Ray: I guess if you consider it a mark of merit that the movie took someone else's vision and someone else's art and reproduced it exactly...then yeah, the movie had merit.

I mean, what we got was basically the same thing as the first Harry Potter movie, only with different source material.

Oh, and for the record: Slow-mo is not “technique”, and neither is digital grading.

*****

As for the ending: It's an amusing way to turn the message of the comic book entirely upside-down. In the book, humanity is banding together in the face of an external threat—"we must all hang together, or we will surely all hang separately". In the movie, they're cowering under the blankets because they're scared of God.

Scott says:
July 29, 2009 at 3:52 pm
Just FYI – the colors in Watchmen were intentionally chosen to look that way. Moore and Dave Gibbons gave the book a largely orange-green-purple palette, to subvert the typical comic book red-yellow-blue palette. Made it kind of ugly at times, but there was thought behind it.

Jim Kakalios says:
July 29, 2009 at 7:22 pm

@wombat-socho
Actually, someone else on the thread corrected me – it's from Futurama. Related to Simpsons, but not the same. If memory serves, Prof. Farnsworth's clone, Cuebert, uses the term to describeone of the Professor's inventions (the drive for the space ship?).

DensityDuck says:
July 30, 2009 at 1:06 am

Oh, by the way: Rhorschach in the movie is Jack Bauer with a mask on.

Luipaard says:
August 3, 2009 at 4:20 pm

If you understand The Point about Nite Owl, then you hopefully also understand this: that the original comic book (and hence the movie) was intended to be a deconstruction of DC Comics superheroes. At it's core, Watchmen is supposed to be about ordinary people playing at being superheroes. If you keep that aspect in mind, then I think the movie/comic book makes more sense.

Watchmen was written to be controversial, to inspire discussion, and make people think. Moore takes potshots at Nixon, a.k.a. the Right, but his true targets have always been fascists in the style of Hitler.

The characters are more symbols then anything else, which is probably why you found them to be so drab.

I can go on about Watchmen, if you like.

Erik says:
August 7, 2009 at 2:14 pm

Lileks is a (obscenity removed by admin) fascist. That's all.
Dialogue from the kids in the backyard:

“Oh my gosh I see a hobo in the sky!”

“It’s the rapture!”

Natalie has some friends over, and they’re feeding off each other’s insanity. The boy is insisting he has seen real pictures of real Pokemon: “I DID A GOOGLE IMAGE SEARCH,” he yelled. The same lad was asking everyone WHAT SHOE ARE YOU a few minutes ago. One of those minds like a gyroscope in a kaleidoscope. Exhausting.

I had a telling dream last night. I’d moved into a very modern house – Frank Lloyd Wright meets Mies – on the outskirts of Washington DC. I can see it now. In fact I can recall other houses from other dreams, and can still draw their rooms from the indelible memories the dreams engraved in my head. This dream was full of foreboding, followed by afterboding, but it was characterized by a sudden autumn: from green and sun to brown and rain,
lash at the amber hostas. Then the UPS fellow arrived. He walked right into the house. Whether my brain connected the hue of the hostas to the corporate brand of UPS, I don’t know, but he wasn’t a friendly man, and seemed irritated that I objected to his walking right into the house. “Well, where was I supposed to leave it?” he snapped.

After he left I realized I would have to walk into Washington DC today, in the rain. Somehow that was the way things were. Then I woke.

Sun, and warmth, and full summer arrayed as if every day has been so fine. They haven’t. Usually we have half a dozen days where the temps vault over 90; this summer, not one. The sun’s hold is always tenuous, and has the nervous character of an alcoholic’s resolve. By one the skies had darkened and the rain came, a brief squall with fat warm drops. By two the sun was back, whistling, as if nothing had happened. Summer seems to be having issues behind the scenes, and it’s not sharing. It’s pretending everything is fine even though everyone knows it’s not. If this was a chick-flick movie about a family reunion, Summer would be the brittle flightly sister who gets a talking-to from Holly Hunter at some point. There would be hugs at the end, but of course by then it’s autumn.

So I blogged today, and did other things. Might as well officially announce the new blog o’ things, although in my mind it’s still in beta. But! It’s going to be fun – wide-ranging in subject matter, with all the old buzz.mn favorites. I’m trying to get the front page to list the posts instead of links to the posts, which – by my definition, anyway – is unbloglike. I’ll do it here for the off-bleat additions, but to me a blog is endlessly scrolling thing, much as love is many-splendor’d. Whatever that meant.

Oh, if you insist: there was a movie titled “Love is a Many-Splendored Thing.” Also a song. And a novel. Possibly an eraser given free in a cereal promotion. The story concerned a big burly Westerner in love with a Forbidden Asian woman, and it was intended to highlight the perversity of prejudice, which is why they cast Jennifer Jones as the Asian woman. All the various manifestations of the phrase had come and gone by the time I woke up to pop culture, but it persisted; it was the song on the grocery store Muzak, the song on the album of Easy Listening Favorites by Mantovani your aunt had. In olden times when you were over at a relative’s house doing family duty you could thumb through their albums, judging their choices with a teen’s easy derision. Most of my aunts loved Easy Listening stuff, aka Beautiful Music; one of them – Hazel, I think – bought me an album for my birthday because it had a seagull on the cover, and since “Jonathan Livingston Seagull” was popular among with the teens, she thought I would like it. Shot in the dark,
for her, but she had no idea: it was Grieg's Piano Concerto. (And what was on the B side, everyone? That's right: Schumann's Piano Concerto!) I fell in love with both of them from the moment the needle found the groove. It's a memory I had forgotten until now: sitting on the floor, listening to Grieg, reading Tintin comics.

And then the UPS man arrived! Well, no. But he did show up this afternoon, to my surprise. I'd forgotten to expect something. It was a graphic novel – Chris Onstad's brilliant “Great Outdoor Fight,” with Season 3 of the Venture Brothers. I watched it tonight. I had to turn it down when they used Holst's “Jupiter” movement, because that's kinda sorta sacred, and I don't want hooks put in the tune to make me think of cartoons. But I did laugh at this:

The Phantom Limb, apparently, lived in a famous house. Name that architect!

Later: Comic Sins around noon, and B&W world later. Blog o' Things throughout the day. See you there. And here! And in my dreams.

54 RESPONSES TO tuesday, july 28

Baby M says:
July 28, 2009 at 2:38 pm

I always thought of “hobo” as specifically meaning people who hitched a ride on freight trains, but I've heard my teenagers use the word “hobo” to mean a vagrant a few times. Now that I think of it, “Hobo in the Sky” would be a pretty good name for an alt-rock shoegazer band.
Also, don’t forget the greatest hobo of all: The Hobo With a Shotgun. (Google it.)

Harold Combs says:
July 28, 2009 at 3:21 pm

@Mike_W
Joe: I spent a summer in Taliesin West in the late 60’s while my grandfather was negotiating with Frank’s widow in Arizona. I recall the insane light switches, the multiple levels, and the incredible Arizona heat that kept this 10 yr old stuck inside all day. My grandfather did get one of the lloyd associates to design his home in Oklahoma and he used the same rotary selection light switches as Taliesin West. They never seemed to work right, like much of Frank’s architecture. I have always held that Frank was a sculptor not an architect because the buildings he created were never meant to be actually lived in.

Cerinne says:
July 28, 2009 at 5:56 pm

If only it had been a van de Rohe! Much love for the Venture Brothers—well, really, more the Monarch and Dr. Mrs. Girlfriend, as they’re the more interesting characters anyhow. The villains always are.

Also, DC was in fact rainy and suspiciously fall-like today.

eddy says:
July 29, 2009 at 2:24 pm

Thank god Lileks is a Venture Bros fan. As another commentor pointed out, Holst’s “Mars” was used masterfully when 21 and 24 were called back to action by the Monarch. If I ever hear “Mars” while driving, I will be compelled to toot the car horn ala 24.

Shame on the Venture Bros creators for killing off 24 (“why did you buckle up?”) because of the vocal strain of his Ray Romano-type voice. For my money, 21 and 24 are the best characters.
It's not the hot days I miss. It's the warm nights. We only have a 90-night ration of summer, and I live for the evenings where it's sultry. Having been robbed more or less on a nightly basis I am starting to feel that early-pre-autumn ennui, or perhaps mid-late-summer angst. It's not the passage of time as the quality of the days that go. And also the passage.

Ordinary day; nothing to report, except for something I'm saving up for a column. So let us look at old liquor ads. There's a reason.

One of the things I noticed as a young pup about the Life mags of the early 40s: the lack of consumer goods. This made sense; they didn't have any. What they had, in abundance, was LIQUOR, specifically whiskeys. One of the things I didn't notice was the absence of these brands in modern times, of course – parents weren't drinkers, although I think they had a bottle of Canadian Club for when Company came over. In high school I became aware of brands through ads in magazines, and two stuck out – Crown Royal, because it came in a sack, and VAT 69, because of its utilitarian name and stark typeface. You had PRODUCT 19 for breakfast and ended your day with VAT 69, I guess. When I returned to looking over Life mags in the mid 90s, as this peculiar
volunteer career as retro-delights curator on the web began, I noticed that most of the brands in the mag weren’t available today, or had sunk low. Four Roses. Three Feathers.

Sometimes they’ve just changed the brand, or the profile. Take this one:

Two things. One, Laird is still around, although their flagship product seems to be applejack. Two, do you recognize the man driving? It’s he who is driving with Hitler.
That explains the old poster, doesn't it? He's having the DTs. He's imagining Hitler is beside him. If so, he's doing a good job of holding it together.

Then there's Ten High – still made today, but not exactly a premium brand. The late 30s bottle is a wonderfully modern thing:
But for big big brands that went away altogether, you have to go with Schenley:
Why, it's FDR, helping out at the airplane factory! Just to show how the swells are doing their part for the war effort:
Schenley may be familiar to fans of old time radio; they sponsored “Suspense,” sometimes using their own name, sometimes pitching their wine lines – Roma being the most notable, and Cresta Blanca the other.

Cresta Blanca had the most convoluted mnemonic device EVER.

Schenley Industries, according to this Time article, was run by Lewis Solon Rosenstien, a smart fellow who responded to Prohibition by buying as much
whiskey as he could, confident the country would come to its senses. After the war, he expanded – into penicillin, of all things. As far as I can tell the company disappeared in a fog of mergers and acquisitions in the late 80s.

Which brings us to:

![Image of an old advertisement](http://lileks.com/bleat/?p=3256)

Creepy ad all around. But was Paul Jones an actual person? Legend says yes!
Why, legend says he fell in love with a woman, and asked her to wear a rose if she would return his affections. She did. She wore four, and he did what women always dream a man will do: he named booze after her.

Nice ad. When I saw Four Roses ads in the Life magazines, something snapped into place: the Warner Brothers cartoon about the signs in Times
Square. One of the signs advertised “Four Noses,” with a quartet of neon men with bulbous alcoholic schnozzes. Ah hah! Of course!

Which brings us to something I saw this weekend. It startled me, really – I thought it was gone, long gone. But here it was, and sold at a premium price. Where had it been? According to the company’s page, it was off the market for 40 years. And now it’s back.

_In the stores brands come and go / talked up by Diageo._

Today is nightmare-busy day, but that’s good. Newsbreak in the morning, although I’m just assistant producer; Out of Context ad challenge around 10, the Stribblog, or Blog o’Things – really, there’s no good name for a blog left; they’re all silly – is already up, and will have more updates. Mpls update in the afternoon. See you around!

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**65 RESPONSES TO _wednesday, july 29_**

_WelcomeBall_ says:
July 29, 2009 at 1:39 pm

I’m enjoying the reference to “sitting President” being applied to FDR. But then, I’m 12.

_Walter Neill_ says:
July 29, 2009 at 2:24 pm
I had Four Roses once in a bar in Germany–seems to be a way to get the barrel swill out of the country to furriners who don't know what bourbon tastes like anyway.

DensityDuck says:
July 29, 2009 at 3:44 pm
FDR Ad Thoughts:
1) “Dude, you're holding it upside down. The bomb bays go on the BOTTOM...”
2) Who told this joker it was okay to eat greasy roast chicken and get fingerprints and stains all over the drawing?
****
“When you ride alone”...I remember seeing a photoshop of this that had “When you ride alone, you ride with OSAMA!”

Jennifridge says:
July 29, 2009 at 4:35 pm
The CrestaBlanca spokesman sounds a lot like William Holden. Forgive my ignorance, but did celebrities do uncredited voice-over work in those days?

Richard says:
July 29, 2009 at 5:57 pm
New Jersey Lightning –
http://njmonthly.com/articles/restaurants/jersey-lightning.html
Cheers!
....AND WHERE THE HELL IS THE ‘DINER’?????
ric

cnyguy says:
July 29, 2009 at 7:30 pm
My dad was in the wholesale liquor business, and Crown Royal was one of his company's top brands. When we were growing up, my brother and I always had an ample supply of those royal purple velvet bags, which we used to store rock collections, toy soldiers and other good stuff. Many years later, I discovered that Crown Royal is classy booze, as the velvet bag and crown-shaped bottle suggested–very smmmmooth...
Though Dad didn’t sell Schenley, the mention of it brings a smile to my face. I grew up in Utica, NY, and a prominent downtown landmark back in the 50's-60's was a neon-lit billboard atop an office building, which advertised Schenley. Long gone, but not forgotten (by me, at least).

ssmart says:
July 29, 2009 at 7:31 pm
I don't see that as FDR at all. Looks more like Benny Goodman.
jamcool says:
July 29, 2009 at 11:12 pm

Come to PHX, we’re right now in the ‘teens...113, 114, 115 along with our evening rolling wall’o dust (called a haboob).

On the hooch ad with FDR, notice the phrase “war alcohol”!

DensityDuck says:
July 30, 2009 at 12:04 am

PS Gin No. 209 is a darn good gin. Of course, when you’re watching MANLY super-robot shows like Mazinkaiser or Getter Robo, you need something with a little more kick...Plutonium!

chrisbcritter says:
July 30, 2009 at 1:40 am

Kudos to the copywriter who came up with “America Makes the Best of Everything” – a patriotic boast about our industrial might, and a reassuring reminder of how we’re all sacrificing for the greater good. Hope he earned a carton of Lucky Strikes (in red, of course – green had gone to war) for it!

Trogdor says:
July 30, 2009 at 9:35 am

Record low temps here in Colorado. 46°, July 30, *sigh*

Gene Dillenburg says:
July 30, 2009 at 10:37 am

The Laird driver is wearing gloves. Hitler’s chauffeur is not.

WatchWayne says:
July 30, 2009 at 2:55 pm

Mr. Laird is a _careful_ driver. Herr Hitlerhauler evidently is not.

Ross says:
July 31, 2009 at 3:52 am

Benny didn’t go grey until a couple decades after that ad. “Hiram Walker’s TEN HIGH—the bourbon for rickets patients!” I had a similar shock to Our Host seeing Four Roses on a shelf, back in the ’80s, when I was a tobacconist: my boss & I were sitting at a bar when an old duffer pulled out a pack of Fatima cigarettes, a brand we both assumed had vanished after the war.

DeanRusk09 says:
August 8, 2009 at 5:49 am

re: the Ten High ad: why is Huey Long MCing a barn dance?
What would have been the start of this entry has been offloaded at the new Strib blog; you'll forgive me while I continue to fracture my identity and workflow into a kaleidoscopic nightmare that can only result in total insanity. Unless you want to consider it all part of a whole, a distributed self. Okay? Thanks.

Anyway. Aside from that, nothing happened today aside from typing and driving. It's been a maddening week. It's been a wretched week. I've accomplished little that I wanted to do, and the reason is clear: the weather, and about that I will say no more. (Here.) But it's interesting how the chill has killed my usual summer need to roam the back roads, take pictures, find deserted motels that harbor great secrets and inspire cabals to collect items which, when removed from the room, have odd powers. You know, places like this:
For the last few nights I've been watching “The Lost Room,” a Sci-Fi network mini-series that was apparently too good to continue, because it guts out after two DVDs. I expect absolutely nothing of Sci-Fi miniseries, so this one surprised me: it's “Lost” filtered through a David Lynch sensibility. The only reason I say something that pretentious is because it has a motel on the edge of nowhere with 50s decoration. Well, no, let me back up. The Lost Room is a place you enter using . . . The Key. With me so far? Because it gets trickier. Once you have The Key, any door will take you to the Room; from the Room, you can go anywhere. That's enough for a mini-series, really, but they added a clever touch. Every commonplace object from the Lost Room does something in the real world – stops time, stops fire, teleports people, incinerates flesh, balances checkbooks, etc. Naturally, people want them. Naturally, rich people hoard them. Of course, secret societies form to collect them, to bring them all together, and use them to communicate with God. Binding all the characters together is a Cop on the Run, trying to save his daughter. I spent the first hour waiting for it to turn lousy so I could watch it without caring. Didn't happen. So far, it's good.

Perhaps it's the power old motels hold over my imagination – the desire to find myself in some distant place on a hot night, sitting outside the room in a metal chair with a NeHi, listening to the traffic and the buzz of the sign, hearing the TV trickle from the next room, the gargling evacuations of the ice machine, the shudder of the soda cooler, the scrape of car wheels in the gravel lot. I'm not making that up from some movie I saw – as I have mentioned many times before, I was a traveling seed salesman down south in the summer of Malaise and the Fall of Skylab, driving around from town to town hawking Northrop King seeds, picking up racks, eking out room and victuals on a $20 per diem. Stayed in many classic motels, cheap, salesman's rates. Burlap towels, scratchy sheets, hard soap, frizzy TV. On the weekends I'd buy a good 6-pack, dump it in the sink with a few buckets of ice, and click around until I could find a PBS station running I, Claudius. (It was running every Saturday, I think.)

I missed the last postcard show, so I don't have the usual batch to add. Just as well. If I had 30 or so, I'd feel obligated to redesign the fargin' site. I'll add
these eventually, but here are some previews.

The HiLo, a late 60s / early 70s joint. Can lighting:

Looks like it's set up for some swingers to watch a couple demonstrate some new moves. Then there's the restaurant. Gobbler chairs and vomit walls:

Let's go back a few years. Here's the Woods Inn:
Amazing: it survived. This would be where I put the embedded google map, but wordpress is acting like a jerk. So if it doesn’t show, well, try the string 221+west+hopi+drive+holbrook+arizona and see what you get.

Finally, the Ranchito:
Google says it's still there, but I'll be switched if I can find it in Street Views. It's just not there.

I should note that it's in Gallup. Where the motel in the Lost Room is located.

**Later today:** it all depends. Busy day, with video duties at work and a column and the blog and other things. Back ASAP.

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**Pass it along, if you wish**

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### 56 RESPONSES TO *thursday, july 30*

**Jen** says:
July 31, 2009 at 7:54 am

One of my favorite parts of the Institute is the motel postcard collection. That's the first thing I found on this site (don't remember how, but probably through StumbleUpon) and it kept me laughing like a loon for hours. My kids were worried about me and why I was laughing at a monitor, but someday they'll understand.

I hadn't realized you were still adding postcards to the site. Guess I'd better take another tour through.

---

**greg zywicki** says:
July 31, 2009 at 9:25 am

I like the strib blog. Don't you do some other things at the strib? Maybe they'll let you link to them on your strib blog.
Eric says:
July 31, 2009 at 10:40 pm

The Ranchito Motel is the “U” shaped building with the white roof a little west of where Google Maps says the address is, and on the south side of the street instead of the north, 1009 W Coal Ave, Gallup, NM.

Eric says:
July 31, 2009 at 10:47 pm

... and only after commenting did I see the whole first page of comments. I knew I couldn’t have been only the second commenter on a two-day old post.

Martha says:
July 31, 2009 at 11:24 pm

Oh my, the Ranchito Motel! We stayed there many times on the way from Dallas to Barstow to visit my mother's idiot brother, probably in years 1962-1978 or so. Gallup is where you stop after you spend all day getting out of Texas. I think we were in a room at the El Ranchito when we first heard that Elvis had died (my sister was a big fan). Try to find a photo of Gabriel's Pancake House in Arizona, though, and it's pretty much impossible. Gabriel's of Holbrooke was where we'd stop for breakfast after Dad had gotten us up before dawn to get back on the road out of Gallup. Wonderful trips, despite the fact that Barstow was on the other end. Hated Barstow.

DensityDuck says:
August 1, 2009 at 11:28 am

Oh, and

To those who are wondering, “Why isn’t ‘S-F’ the same as ‘sci-fi’?” Well, you see, there’s a fine line between Robert Heinlein and ‘Son Of The Two-Headed Fly’...
Thursday was one long, grey, cool smear, ending with this, and a big Friday thread-busting question.

I feel like I’m not doing enough, somehow – doing everything all the time makes you feel as if you’re doing nothing as well as you should. That’s the way this week was, and I’m glad to see its end. I apologize for the lackluster Bleatage this weekend, but I guarantee this: at least two more updates today, including the inevitable “100 Mysteries.” Oh, there would have been more here, but:

1. Sis-in-law and niece came over for birthday cake for Natalie, and lo, the shriekage was sublime. It’s fun to see them have fun. Upon learning that the niece would be performing in a tot version of “Annie,” I broke into “Tomorrow” at high volume, sung like an idiot, and made her snort ice cream up her nasal passages. Mission accomplished. They ran off to play all sorts of spontaneous games, one of which involved being DJs in an “iron-glass window room” in China, which was “a very small country, but the largest country in the world.” Or so my daughter told me, rolling her eyes.

2. I had to write the Newsbreak for tomorrow – not a difficult job, but it means collecting and crunching video and pictures. I tell you, once you decide to preview TCM’s Harold Lloyd night, you absolutely have to find some examples of his 3D nudie art. You just do.

3. Had to write the morning blog entry, since I want this thing to work.
4. Had to take out the garbage. It's recycling night. Recall I spoke of Coke / Mentos detonation experiments at Nat's birthday party? Right. Six empty plastic bladders. They did not want to go in the bag; they did not want to stay in the bag, and upon being trotted to the curb, they leaped out and rolled down the hill. Then there was the giant cardboard boxes left by Boris, the Russian Dishwasher Repairman. He came yesterday to fix the appliance, and explained that he had not encountered any Electroluxes.

“Oh Whirlpool, yes,” he said. “Many Whirlpool. I am surprise to see Electrolux.”

In a way, he almost spoke in LOL cats: “I can leaf box?”

Yes you can, and I can has fun time getting it all outside.

**Hardly** reasons not to produce a long wobbly Bleat, let alone a Diner (more about that later, he said, tantalizingly) but now and then I got a free moment, and did something that was not directly related to producing content on the computer for the internet. Now and then you need some time apart. Plus, I’m bored. All the projects and struggles and ideas and enthusiasms are over or stalled, and I’m just spinning my wheels. I hate this.

One long, grey, cool smear.

So: column is [here](http://lileks.com/bleat/?p=3299). (Scroll down a bit; too tired for get the direct link.) Strib Blog, with new stuff of course, is [here](http://lileks.com/bleat/?p=3299). See you later this afternoon with Comic Ads: Bikes, and later tonight with 100 Mysteries. And of course Newsbreak at Startribune.com after noon – can you guess how I’ll work in Harold Lloyd’s nudie pix? No? Well, then you’ll have to tune in.

Oh, right: Big Friday Thread Question:

**Your First Celebrity Crush.**

*This* should be interesting.

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**213 RESPONSES TO *friday, july 31***

DroptmaStyx says:

August 3, 2009 at 11:58 am

YES to Julie Newmar as Catwoman. I even wrote teenage fanfic starring Capt. Kirk and Catwoman bumping nasties.

YES to Yvonne Craig as Batgirl and the Orion girl in ST:TOS

AND – France Nuyen in ST:TOS as Elaan of Troyus in that incredible Bill Theiss gown that had to be worn sans knickers – who knew the bare side of the hip could be so sexy?
PalinFan says:
August 3, 2009 at 12:03 pm

My top ten, most from the 70s.
1. Jacqueline Bissett, circa The Deep. She hasn't been mentioned yet, but the opening 5 minutes of that movie jammed me into adolescence with a vengeance.
2. I also had, as a kid, the Marlo Thomas "That Girl" obsession where I had to see every episode. I think it was the opening credits; the parasol and short skirts were quite something.
3. Cheryl Ladd. She seemed both more wholesome and more sexy than Farrah.
4. Tina Louise as Ginger. I've never understood why Mary Ann seems to win that debate.
6. Juliet Mills as "Nanny".
8. Cheryl Tiegs.
10. Mia Farrow.

Sue D Nimh says:
August 3, 2009 at 12:19 pm

@looneytick
Your daughter has excellent taste.
@femgeek
Waiting for your physics degree to result in a transporter-I'm so tired of wasting an hour a day getting to work.

Spock was my crush in high school, and I enjoyed Scotty's exploits. But this was before they encouraged girls to do engineering, so after my BS in forestry/wildlife, it took another 15 years to realize I was meant to be an engineer (give me a nice technical paper and slack time to read it and I'm a happy woman!)

Later, I married a man who I realized looked like Tom Selleck (Magnum PI) would look if I fed him home made cookies like I did my husband. Still married to him after 30 years (my husband, not Tom Selleck).

rivlax says:
August 3, 2009 at 1:44 pm

Sorry I missed this. Have been on vacation with no internet. My first was Hayley Mills. Saw her in “Tiger Bay” with Horst Bucholz when I was 11. Was hooked immediately.

Tim says:
August 3, 2009 at 1:50 pm

Not a TV star, but punk rock diva: Siouxsie Sioux

rivlax says:
August 3, 2009 at 1:53 pm

Reading other comments, I realize I had forgotten the mad crush I had on Mouseketeer Cheryl Holdridge before Hayley Mills. Cheryl later married Lance Reventlow, F1 race driver and maker of the Scarab race car. Reventlow was also married to another hearthrob mentioned in this thread: Jill St. John.
rivelax says:
August 3, 2009 at 1:56 pm

Dang, I keep forgetting all my early crushes. The youngest Lennon Sister (Janet) on the Lawrence Welk Show may have preceded Cheryl of the Mickey Mouse Club in my celebrity crush chronology.

bellczar says:
August 3, 2009 at 2:36 pm

@Seattle_Dave
Did you notice her in the recent “Race to Witch Mountain”? She and brother Tony had cameos. Her niece Paris Hilton looks so much like her.

steveHi says:
August 3, 2009 at 6:52 pm

Glynis Johns (The Sword and the Rose, The Court Jester, No Highway in the Sky); I had no idea she was older than my dad.

Inger Stevens
Julie Newmar

Not sure of the exact order, not that it matters.

Seattle_Dave says:
August 3, 2009 at 10:28 pm

@bellczar – I did not. I’ll have to see that. Also didn’t realize Paris Hilton was her niece. That could explain my strange attraction/revulsion response to Paris.

Seattle_Dave says:
August 3, 2009 at 10:33 pm

@Eddie Oh crap! I had completely forgotten about Caroline Ellis and “The Bugaloos.” Yeah.

Yeah.

Stevie the K says:
August 4, 2009 at 1:29 pm

Ditto to whomever mentioned Connie Hines as Wilbur Post's wife. Yowza!
Also, Mary Anne as opposed to Ginger.
Also, Bailey as opposed to Jennifer on WKRP.
Also, the woman who played the fake nazi chick on that episode of Star Trek with Skip Homeier as the bad nazi.
To whomever mentioned the obvious Jacqueline Bisset in “The Deep”, I say, how about her “The Sweet Ride” with Tony Franciosa? huminahumina
And (and I know I mentioned this in a Twitter to you JL), Angel Tompkins from Search (and, subsequently, Playboy). ah OOOO gah!

Ok, back to being an adult. Kinda sorta.
@bgbear (roger h)
They were in an early episode of The Odd Couple together. Pamela would go on to play Felix's daughter later on in the series. “Bunny is Missing Down by the Lake” is the episode. imdb.com/title/tt0664216/