Cool thing I discovered today: the guy who played Lt. Riley on two episodes of “Star Trek” teaches at a college in St. Cloud, about an hour from here. A co-worker showed me a picture he took of the fellow sitting in his home theater in front of an enormous picture of Riley. Why did everyone love the character? Because he had personality, because he got drunk in one ep, and because he appeared in two episodes. Which made him, like, one of the family.

Man, did I babble today. An hour podcast in the morn, the XM radio PJTV podcast in the afternoon, the Hewitt show after supper. Yap, yap, yap. Wrote a half-dozen blog entries, did something else for another project I’ll reveal Monday, spent some time honing a column that just did not want to be honed. A sane man would have said NOW IS THE TIME ON SPROCKETS WHEN WE RELAX but no; spent the night on this and that, shoveling coal into the Moloch-maw of the website, lest you turn away forever if there’s not a big batch of Stuff. I don’t blame you; I blame me.

Once I start a project it just has to be finished – LA Dining is a perfect example. It’s a minor thing. It’s just a booklet. It only takes 30, 40 minutes on a Friday to rotate the images, crop, readjust, “research,” write the copy. Some people like it. I feel obligated to put every page up. No one else will. The internet relies on a vast, self-interested crowd who do things because they want to and no one else will. That project will be done in a few months; no
big deal. What makes me sigh with weariness is this: in the words of Yoda, there another. I have a version of the book from 1940. So yes, it has to go up, too.

100 Mysteries is coming to a close – the most protracted piece of cinematic masochism you’ll find. There is a sci-fi version of the collection. I am considering it. WHY? Because it gives the week a certain structure, and structure provides a certain amount of pleasure. Things to do, things to tick off.

Comic Sins, Matchbook – easy. Fifteen minutes. 30s magazine ads: done in a few months. Black and White World – I do that for myself, mostly, but it has an audience; I got a letter from the daughter of Robert Ryan the other day. She’d found an early Bleat version of B&W World and enjoyed it. Well. So, yes, more of that. But I need to do less for a month or so, because there’s some behind-the-scenes overhauls in process, and I need to finish the novel.

There’s something I have to do this weekend that’s very important to me, and you might not see it until Tuesday. Monday may be light. Just a warning.

Anyway:

Bleatplus.

30s magazine ads: hello, soup!

100 Mysteries

Annnnd . . . a Diner! It's a one-take special. The subject is “bees.” There is also whistling. Maybe one of you – just one – will note that I anticipate the coda solo whistling of a particular comedy song, and if just one of you thinks: ahh! then I will be happy. It's a lot to ask, I know.

A newspaper column; find my face and click. HERE.

And now is the time on Sprockets when I watch something old on TV. Anything. I don't care.
adds is *Hello, Soup* because as I opened up the Bleat I was listening to *Bowling For Soup’s* *Shut Up An Smile*.

**JohnW** says:
October 1, 2010 at 11:49 am

“There is a sci-fi version of the collection. I am considering it.” Oh, YES, please!

**juanito - John Davey** says:
October 1, 2010 at 12:02 pm

Favorite line in Bleetplus Testimonials today:

**scars horribly**

Fabulous!

**xrayguy** says:
October 1, 2010 at 12:05 pm

First, pleeeeeeaaase, pleasepleaseplease do the Sci-Fi hundred. Second, Emhardt;probably you were trying to say he was a C or D level Orson Welles, regarding the part you were describing. Next level up would have been Victor Buono; Victor would have just eaten the role up. I like Victor.

**Mxymaster** says:
October 1, 2010 at 12:08 pm

“Soup” is such a crummy word. “Stew” sounds like something you might eat. “Soup!” is a sound effect. A squishy one.

I guess the kitchens in pre-Revolution France had no R&D department. All those clever entrepreneurs would later move to the U.S. to create magic soups (uck, that word) out of whatever wasn’t needed to make Mighty Dog.

Well, whatever. When I have a cold, I want a can.

**bgbear (roger h)** says:
October 1, 2010 at 12:11 pm

I have the Sci Fi set from Miller Creek and yes, there are stinkers but, I was surprised at the number of films I have never seen and were worth watching straight or with the voices of wise crackin’ robots in your head.

There are also forgotten made-for-TV films.

Also, SciFi is stretched to include Sword and Sandal mythology films. two words: “buffalo shots”

**Philip Scott Thomas** says:
October 1, 2010 at 12:15 pm

100 Mysteries: *He’s like the poor man’s . . . I don’t know, evil civilized articulate fat guy.*

Sidney Greenstreet, perhaps?
wiredog says:
October 1, 2010 at 1:09 pm

Yes on the SF series…

Onion soup from Julia Child's book:
Onions that are slowly browned, then browned more, then browned more, until they are almost, but not quite, on the edge of burnt. Takes about half an hour over medium heat. And one onion reduces to about a tablespoon of cooked onion, so you need lots of onions. A trick is to add a tsp of sugar to the onions to speed along the browning process.

Then you add beef stock and simmer for half an hour. Put into individual serving bowls, add a lice of baguette, cover with cheese (gruyere or swiss) and broil until melted.

Tastes awesome…

John Robinson says:
October 1, 2010 at 1:12 pm

Lawd hab mussy, the Hormel folks sure went ape with the purple prose, didn’t they?

I guess the idea of picturing some road-weary trucker, home after six hundred hard miles and eating a bowl of their chicken noodle soup while standing over his rusty sink overflowing with last Sunday's dishes, didn’t seem… I dunno… royal enough, somehow.

Mark E. Hurling says:
October 1, 2010 at 1:24 pm

More about bees, eh? It's like Winnie the Pooh concluding “You just never know about bees.”

MichaelsDaddy says:
October 1, 2010 at 2:01 pm

I had Monty Python's Previous Record at one time in my life. The song I recall… but the words make a lot more sense now.

Was anticipating hearing “Flight of the Bumblebee” in the mix somewhere; surprised there are so many other bee-related songs.

browniejr says:
October 1, 2010 at 2:39 pm

@bgbear: so… Does “buffalo shots” = “deep hurting!” ??

Wagner von Drupen- Sachs says:
October 1, 2010 at 2:47 pm

Was really hoping for Jonathan & Darlene Edwards' version of “Be My Little Baby Bumble-Bee.” Darlene's sound effects are priceless.

Basil White says:
October 1, 2010 at 2:56 pm

Please more Curious Lucre!
Oh, shut up | The Bleat.

bgbear (roger h) says:
October 1, 2010 at 2:59 pm

deep hurting indeed.

The Diner will wait until Saturday shower and breakfast time. Already bee songs are giving me ear worms (or is it larvae?) and I can imagine countless puns.

Mr_Hat says:
October 1, 2010 at 3:05 pm

I'm sure the 1940 LA Dining will be good, but not sure any analog could be nearly as fun and interesting as the one that's being posted.

RexV says:
October 1, 2010 at 3:39 pm

I've been reading a few Raymond Chandler novels lately which makes the LA dining guide a real treat. Always nice to imagine Marlowe dropping into one of those joints for a Gimlet and three course dinner.

boblipton says:
October 1, 2010 at 4:22 pm

A welcome collection of offerings, even the stuff I don't care for.

For those of you who enjoy our genial host's tweets about how people try to get off arrests on the suggestion that the illegal substances in their cars, handbags and various other items are not theirs.....


And, for the nonce, I hope everyone has a pleasant weekend as foliage season approaches in the Northeast.

Bob

MikeH says:
October 1, 2010 at 6:44 pm

It would be cool to get other years on the LA dining guides, though I would keep it in the 30's and 40's. Still love the guide anyway despite it being 4 years before my time here on Earth. It still reminds me of my dad.

Mr. Michael says:
October 1, 2010 at 9:22 pm

Three minutes into the 100 Mysteries offering, and I'm already in love with the stage crew: They drew the face backwards on the Jacket~ 笑

(I know, it's a tiny thing... but such simple pleasures make me feel good somehow.)
DH Sundwall says:
October 1, 2010 at 11:46 pm

Don't mean to look a gift horse in the mouth but is there an RSS feed for the Diner anymore?

Regardless, THANKS! Will always love a new Diner.

Cory says:
October 2, 2010 at 7:20 am

Robert Emhardt plays the bad guy in a lot of 1950's movies but he is quite touching in an early episode of Andy Griffith as an out of town businessman who comes to Mayberry. IMDB it.

It is growing up television acting and story telling at its most simple and its finest.

wawona says:
October 2, 2010 at 7:20 pm

re “100 Mysteries”: Robert Emhardt's character was kind of fun, I thought, not “evil”!

He sure did talk loud, though. Everyone did. Was it the microphones? Between the cat-kicker, the watery soup and the guy bellowing at the heroine from three feet away, I think I get a feel for boardinghouse living, now, yeah.

Did anyone else find the ending absolutely incomprehensible? not bad, otherwise, and as a librarian, may I just say, I liked that plotline. “How would you like your books, madam?”

Ha. Funny.

wawona says:
October 2, 2010 at 7:43 pm

…also.. pardon my ignorance, but can some kind person tell us how to subscribe to the “Diner”s? I have a new Mac, Safari and iTunes 10 but the only Diner that appears when I click “subscribe” is the “in the Gazebo” episode from last March. (And a fine episode it was, too!) All others are “errors”. The new one, linked above, just hangs and never loads. Thank you if anyone can shed any light on what might be the problem…

JohnW says:
October 2, 2010 at 11:55 pm

“Cyril Connolly?”

Benzin Bruder says:
October 5, 2010 at 11:46 am

No one else has addressed it so I guess I had better.

Why did everyone love the Lt. Riley character?

Simple. He took Kathleen home again (and then, of course, he did it one more time)
Fred says:
October 20, 2010 at 7:59 am

I do believe that our host has given up on posting the Diner on iTunes. I don’t understand why they aren’t consolidated in one place on his site but I take what I can get when I find it…
Went up to Fargo this weekend. And that's about the entirety of the story, really – as normal and simple and uneventful as any such trip could be. I needed to hit the road, drive alone for four hours and look at trees, so I did. Had intended to make a little video travel journal of the trip, talking as I drove, with the scenery and the towns in the background, the camera mounted on a dashboard rig, but the mike ran out of batteries, sparing me and you a narration of dubious worth.

Fall came earlier this year, and the trees turned as soon as the calendar page turned to October. It's beautiful, but it all looked brittle, as if every leaf could be knocked to the ground if you kicked the trunk or fired a pistol or clapped two wooden blocks together. I wasn't really in a mood to linger here or there – but I did stop off at Treasure City to see if I could find something for my daughter, because Dads bring home things from trips. I got something with her name on it, paid for it, and reached out for the bag – the clerk smiled and said she had to staple the receipt on the bag so the camera saw her do it.

I'm still not sure what that proves, exactly.

So I made good time. Listened to old radio, the iPod – there's always a stretch after three hours where I crank up old, old songs from high school and early college, sometimes tunes I heard as a junior high kid, eager to get “with it” and “tuned in” to the new, mod sound of Today! as brought to you by K-Tel. So it's amusing to think of yourself at 13 singing along: my baby loves love,
my baby loves love / she's got what it takes and she knows how to use it. The songs summon up moods and impressions more than memories, alas, and few things are more discouraging to a parent than reaching back to eras you'd think would be thick stuffed book, and finding only pages and fragments. Longevity exposes a design flaw: we forget childhood, but remember our twenties. Most would swap one for the other. Or perhaps want them in equal portions.

Stopped off at the usual place in Detroit Lakes where I get matches; there's a guy who has a booth in an antique mall, and he usually has some fine stuff. He had nothing. The drawer that held the matchbooks was gone. Dang. I saw this fellow, who was amusing:

Time for a gritty, dark reboot of Superbrandman!

When I got to Fargo I stopped off at Island Park, because I love the park in the autumn. Visited the old sentinels. The Great War statue . . .
There was a mom and her daughter at the ancient bandshell, the child tottering around and laughing. Guys from the college playing hoops. Seniors walking with that keep-the-joints-moving determination. Saturday evening,
downtown. When I was 15 they had a big arts festival in the park in the fall, “Imagination ’73” – tents with lectures and demonstrations, food, bands, the usual. It seemed like the best thing in the world ever at the time. The park, twilight, crowds, music, girls! Or the theoretical possibility of! I remember going to an evening showing of “Things to Come,” which left me in awe, since I’d never seen things that looked like that. Sleek white 30s modernism. I remember walking through the deserted park afterwards, the tents empty, wind tossing the leaves around, still warm, head full of wonder and thrills and amazement, feeling Very Tragic and Romantic. Three years later I ended up in the park after dark with a cheerleader, which was another sort of wonder and thrills and amazement, but that’s another story – and there seems to be ten years between the two tales, not three. Anyway. The constant in all the visits is the bandshell, with its humble plaque: DEDICATED TO MUSIC. Built in the late 20s. It’s like a little Arcadian temple. I always have to go back there every year or so, sit on the steps, look around, recollect – then sigh and stand and get on with what I’m here to do.

Which is eat. We went to Doolittle’s on Saturday night, a place that cements the natural connection between aviation pioneers and roasted meats, and I had a steak so tender it sang an aria from Il Pagliacci when I waved the knife over it. Sunday morning we had breakfast at the Village Inn, which I used to hold in low regard until they redid their graphics. Not their food, mind you, but the graphics. They’re talking up their retro history, blending mid-century graphics and patterns into the menus and decor, and they went Full Neutra on the typefaces. Dumped all the 70s orangey-crappy stuff, so yes, now I’ll go there. Plus, they have renamed this month “Pietoberfest,” which is worthy of a standing ovation.

Back on the road. Made good time.

For supper we went to the Tin Fish, an outdoor restaurant on the shores of Lake Calhoun, some of the shots above were taken from the patio. This place is just ridiculously beautiful. You know fall is the long kiss goodbye, but you don’t care.

Anyway. Here’s two minutes of the trip up. Looks so much better in HD, but whaddyagonnado. That’s Island Park at the end, complete with a cliche shot I stole from 37% of all movies made between 1967 and 1974. If you don’t see it, try here.
Today's links: Matchbook, and a really fine LA Dining 1962. Trust me: this is special. See you around.

43 RESPONSES TO ten again

Seattle Dave says:
October 4, 2010 at 12:21 am

Born in 1967 and not watching a lot of movies between then and 1974, I was worried that I wouldn’t know which shot you were referring to.

Then, there it was, and I smiled with recognition and relief.

zefal says:
October 4, 2010 at 1:07 am

Yes, there it was. The water tower shot?

browniejr says:
October 4, 2010 at 1:18 am

Judging a place’s food by its font: ??
Frank Vento, Mr. Personality-Plus: At the beginning, I thought he was going to claim he wore an onion on his belt, because that was the fashion in those days, but I kept with it and was pleasantly surprised.
The cliché shot: all you need was Jill Clayburgh or Karen Black crying on the bandstand to make it complete...

Craig in SF says:
October 4, 2010 at 1:40 am

Well, I think the cliche shot is the zoom into the sun at the end, yes?
Also I wonder why James is making this trip up Highway 10 that is “very important to him” to quote Friday's bleat. Perhaps he wants to enjoy the autumn scenery before the winter descends in its blanket of monotony. I do hope another family member hasn’t died and he’s
headed to another funeral. The music in the video was quite melancholy and reflective.

**chrisbcritter** says:
October 4, 2010 at 2:07 am

Ah, now we're finding some goodies in the restaurant book – the Don Raikie Trio at the Peppermill; besides recording a great version of the theme from *77 Sunset Strip*, his band was on Jan and Dean's (then known as Jan and Arnie) first record – a song about the stripper you see on the next page, “The Bazoom Girl”, Jennie Lee.

Under Spotlight, I really jumped to see this name:

WALLY GEORGE: Etcetra

If you lived in southern CA in the '80s, you'll probably remember KDOC-TV's weekly conservative shoutfest *Hot Seat with Wally George* – local TV's successor to Joe Pyne, and father of Rebecca DeMornay(!). He once mentioned he had a band back then, “Wally George and his Hollywood Twisters”.

Page Cavanaugh had a great band as well – I've got two of his LPs.

**Kerry Potenza** says:
October 4, 2010 at 5:46 am

Nice little film there. Left me feeling Zen.

Yay fall! My favorite season!

**Fred Baumann** says:
October 4, 2010 at 5:46 am

I really enjoy the music you choose for these videos. It's very engaging, somehow.

**Wagner von Drupen-Sachs** says:
October 4, 2010 at 6:29 am

LA Dining: to “dispense” is not the same as to “dispense with.”

Pwned.

**wiredog** says:
October 4, 2010 at 6:56 am

“Fall came earlier”
Not here. The more impatient trees started turning around Labor Day, just like they always do.

colors are subdued because of the heat and dryness this summer. I think the half a foot of rain last week washed some of the colors out, too.

**John** says:
October 4, 2010 at 7:47 am

I can't remember the last time I read anything at all about bandshells, or even anything with the word anywhere in it, unless you count a dictionary. Until I read this Bleat, I had completely forgotten standing in a bandshell in Chapultepec Park in Mexico City...
City one bright afternoon last year. Thanks. That was a nice memory to have rescued. Hey, whatever it takes to make Mexico seem civilized!

Re Village Inn, funny: I had never heard of this chain until last week, and I fancied myself a regular visitor to the High Plains. Solid breakfast, but in the U.S., breakfast is always solid. No other nation “gets” breakfast.

RPD says:
October 4, 2010 at 8:50 am

I've always been impressed with our host's ability to find or compose ideal musical accompaniment for his video creations. I've never had a head for music, so if I tried I would just end up with some random rock song pulled from a CD. It wouldn't be nearly as good.

I guess I haven't seen enough 67-74 movies, failed to recognize the cliche' shot.

And since I didn't see Friday's Bleat until today, I also encourage taking in the Sci-Fi collection as a follow on to 100 mysteries.

Pilgrim says:
October 4, 2010 at 8:54 am

With that new menu, how will you know you're at Village Inn? Won't be the same. Maybe better!

hpoulter says:
October 4, 2010 at 9:01 am

Right, Warner von D-S – Lileks misread the whole kosher food thing. “dispense” is certainly an odd way to put it – what's wrong with “serve”? – but it doesn't say they were dropping the kosher food.

I guess the zoom into the sun was the cliche shot. Could be the train, though (although both shots were OK by me)

teach5 says:
October 4, 2010 at 9:09 am

Lovely little film, thank you. The best is the giant turkey. Awesome—and much more impressive than the giant ball of rubber bands!

juanito - John Davey says:
October 4, 2010 at 9:15 am

Seattle Dave says:
October 4, 2010 at 12:21 am

Born in 1967 and not watching a lot of movies between then and 1974, I was worried that I wouldn't know which shot you were referring to.

Hey, 1967 – a very good year! Well, at least for Dave and I!

I always enjoy the drives to and from Fargo on 10.
LA in 1962 was slightly more impressive than 2010…

**Daniel says:**
October 4, 2010 at 10:20 am

“So it's amusing to think of yourself at 13 singing along…” Sometimes the song and the place come together. Earlier in the year I was visiting my childhood home of Sacramento, driving over one of the bridges over the American River — and got tugged back to Spring of 1970 by Simon and Garfunkel’s “Bridge over Troubled Water” on the radio. Same place, same song. The sky and the water and the cottonwoods are about the same as they were 40 years ago. Felt like I must be on the way to school (7th Grade!).

**GardenStater says:**
October 4, 2010 at 11:00 am

My guess re: the cliche shot is when James is driving through the deserted town, on the rutted road, past all the construction equipment.

It provides that perfect sense of hopelessness that dominated most films of the late 60s-early 70s.

**Maharincess of Franistan says:**
October 4, 2010 at 11:01 am

By the way, my baby loves “lovin’” — not “love.” So she's not necessarily romantic, just randy.

**Wagner von Drupen- Sachs says:**
October 4, 2010 at 11:09 am

Hey! You kids born in 1967 get off my lawn!

**Spud says:**
October 4, 2010 at 11:18 am

You tease us with the “cheerleader in the dark park”, but no payoff. I'm tempted to go into Eric Idle mode and jab my elbow in your ribs: Was she a mover, eh sport? He-asked-with-a-knowing-smile! (Well, maybe some things are better left unsaid …)

**Glenn says:**
October 4, 2010 at 11:33 am

Re: mid-century fonts. Just saw this and thought I'd pass it along.

http://blogs.laweekly.com/squidink/design/a-sign-a-font-a-truck/

**crossdotcurve says:**
October 4, 2010 at 12:01 pm

The restaurant El Coyote mentioned in the link is where Sharon Tate ate dinner on August 8th, 1969. The rest of her night didn’t go so well. And just a couple of houses away from El Coyote is where Darby Crash of the Germs OD’d.

The restaurant is still there. Great margaritas.
Daniel says:
October 4, 2010 at 10:20 am

“So it’s amusing to think of yourself at 13 singing along...”
Sometimes the song and the place come together. Earlier in the year I was visiting my childhood home of Sacramento, driving over one of the bridges over the American River — and got tugged back to Spring of 1970 by Simon and Garfunkel’s “Bridge over Troubled Water” on the radio. Same place, same song. The sky and the water and the cottonwoods are about the same as they were 40 years ago. Felt like I must be on the way to school (7th Grade!).

Daniel – H street Bridge? Howe, Watt, Sunrise, or Hazel? Which school were you at in the 7th grade? Kit Carson for me.

And yes – the bridges haven’t changed much. Although they are currently widening the Hazel Ave bridge. And the widened Watt Ave a few years ago....

Juanito - John Davey says:
October 4, 2010 at 12:06 pm

Wagner von Drupen- Sachs says:
October 4, 2010 at 11:09 am

Hey! You kids born in 1967 get off my lawn!

Sorry, I didn’t hear you – I was busy yelling at the kids born in 1978 to get off my lawn....

Dave (in MA) says:
October 4, 2010 at 12:34 pm

Wagner von Drupen- Sachs says:
October 4, 2010 at 6:29 am

LA Dining: to “dispense” is not the same as to “dispense with.”
Pwned.

Maybe it’s a Minnesotaism. They call a parking garage a “ramp” there, which is sorta like referring to your entire house as “the stairs”.

Jennifer says:
October 4, 2010 at 12:39 pm

Oh, I think it’s the shot zooming into the sun. That seems extremely 70’s cliche.

I liked the music you selected, also.
Terry Fitz says:  
October 4, 2010 at 1:18 pm

Nice little video…but did you blow the Stop sign at about 0:34? It is when we are willing to sacrifice the rules and conventions of society on the altar of Art that we begin the long slide toward anarchy. If it turns out that Stop sign wasn’t for you, then never mind.

Mark E. Hurling says:  
October 4, 2010 at 1:36 pm

I hate to quibble here as nice as that photo of the soldier atop the Civil War statue was, but the term Great War was used to refer to WW I in the all too brief period before WW II broke out.

Marie says:  
October 4, 2010 at 1:57 pm

Just likin’ the spaceship keeping you company at 0:28. That was a spaceship, yes? If not, please don’t disillusion me. Life is dreary here today, and the thought of you and a spaceship drag-racing through the Dakotas cheers me up.

Kevin says:  
October 4, 2010 at 2:30 pm

Re kids born in 1967 and kids born in 1978– I work at a laboratory adjacent to the UC Berkeley campus, and we have students working here who were born in the 1990s! Utterly ridiculous– and I believe that some of them are even allowed to vote. Then again, Berkeley politics are just a tad predictable– there's Left, and there's Lefter. And then you have the aging hippies, just waiting for some cause to fire them up so they can march and protest something. That said, it IS a very interesting place to work.

GardenStater says:  
October 4, 2010 at 4:05 pm

@Marie: “That was a spaceship, yes?”

Either that, or a smudge on the car window.

But don’t let me disillusion you.

GardenStater says:  
October 4, 2010 at 4:08 pm

Oh, and Mark E. Hurling: There WAS a shot of a Great War memorial in the video. I’m guessing James posted this late at night, and got befuddled.

Medium Wave says:  
October 4, 2010 at 5:11 pm

@GardenStater

My guess re: the cliche shot is when James is driving through the deserted town, on the rutted road, past all the construction equipment.

It provides that perfect sense of hopelessness that dominated most
films of the late 60s-early 70s.

No, no! The hopelessness starts when all the roadside construction equipment disappears from the scene!

Wylee Coyote says:
October 4, 2010 at 5:15 pm

Not sure what the cliche shot was, but that panning shot of the names on the war memorial did bring to mind the opening of Dirty Harry.

Mark E. Hurling says:
October 4, 2010 at 5:36 pm

Ah, then. Sorry for any confuzzlement.

lanczos says:
October 4, 2010 at 6:02 pm

CRIMINY! George MacRAE – Must have been the hither-to-unknown-brother of GORDON MacRAE – And George was that hither-to-unknown-Godfather (Or rather “godfather”) of Shaun Cassidy. Whoever HE is…

But the REAL story here is “Gail Winds”: She became a “chorus dancer” at age 12, and “stripteuse” at age 17, and later “one of the top burlesque queens”! But, no problem – she has been “in show business” for “all her life.”

Chris says:
October 4, 2010 at 6:19 pm

Hey, you old geezers born in 1967, Get off my internet! (1969 vintage, myself.)

Nalora says:
October 4, 2010 at 6:26 pm

“When from every hill of flame, she calls and calls each vagabond by name.” — Bliss Carmen

swschrad says:
October 4, 2010 at 9:30 pm

had to make a Fargo run myself last Thursday… clear out Mom's estate house.

nothing but echoes.

and the garage is full ‘o’ the stuff my sister didn't take and we didn't leave for the Starving Greecians.

Sunday, did some maintenance on the lawn mower. today, ripped the seized a/c compressor out of The Great White Whale and replaced it.

the Island Park bandshell… we hung a reverse-projection screen on the thing 40 years ago for a nighttime Camp Fire Girls ceremony. had to scut around the park department a while before we found somebody who would turn on the power for us.
Ten Again | The Bleat.

Kev says:
October 5, 2010 at 9:27 am

The music for that video pretty much has to be Pat Metheny—I can usually recognize him from the first few notes—but the particular tune is escaping me at the moment. (And being a day late to this post, I doubt our genial host has the time to chime in with the answer; oh well.)

Kev says:
October 5, 2010 at 9:56 am

Re LA Dining: Shelly Manne had quite a line up at his Manne-Hole club (keep it clean, guys). Red Mitchell, Phineas Newborn, Shorty Rogers and Shelly himself; that place must’ve been hoppin’.

And one thing I never have understood: Groups that called themselves things like the “Joe Marino Duo.” I can understand not putting down all three names in a trio, but a duo? C’mon, Joe, just name the other guy already! (Unless, I suppose, Joe was difficult to work with and always changing personnel…or maybe the other guys were busy and he was constantly shifting duet partners for that reason.)

Winnipeg Guy says:
October 6, 2010 at 9:40 pm

Nice vid! More please.

Ross says:
October 10, 2010 at 12:28 am

‘…No other nation “gets” breakfast.’

Tell that to the British. A standard breakfast “fry up” has scared off any number of supposedly hearty-eating Americans.

By the way, it’s nice to be back among the Bleatniks & to see so many of the regulars chiming in: lately, work has been too crazy for my usual nightly fix there, but now they’re making me telecommute, so I’ve been forced to join this century & finally get a computer. The upside is I can have Flash here—after a year or more, I can finally see/hear the whole magilla again. Bliss…

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I’m Valued

So I get this letter from American Express, thanking me for being a valued cardmember. It’s nice to hear, because Chase said I was a valued cardmember too, and when I called to activate the new card the customer service rep sounded like he’d nearly wet himself over the prospect of talking to yet another valued cardmember who’d been a valued cardmember since 2008.

“Yeah,” I wanted to say, “I took the card because it came with 20K worth of
credit, and everything in the world was starting to fall apart about then, and I figured hey, worse comes to worse, I put the mortgage on the card, or live off it, and then you guys would probably be teats-pointing-to-heaven by the time you noticed I was a deadbeat, so really, it's me who should be thanking you.”

But I just modestly stammered something shy and humble: shucks, t'aint nothing. Just a matter of signing my name and paying the statements, y'know? The real heroes are the ones who make minimum payments on enormous debt, further increasing the size of the debt. They're the ones you should thank.

Anyway, he was happy, and activated the card – I half-expected it to jump in my hand like a ringing cellphone – and asked if there was anything else he could do. Extend my credit? Additional cards? Fly out to the house and primp the pillows? No. After we were done there was a brief survey about my level of satisfaction, and since I imagined a manager standing over the fellow with a bullwhip waiting for the answers, I gave him the highest possible marks.

You get good service from Amex, too. They're nice. You know who's hit-and-miss? Disney Vacation Club. You get some customer service reps who are just bubbling with Disneyoisity, and take the whole “cast member” thing seriously, and then you get some sour lumps who would say “hold on, I'll check” in a bored voice if you asked for availability at Gollum and Daffy's Terrytoon Cafe. I don't do the survey for them, because they have enough problems, being themselves and all.

Anyway. The Amex letter offered free airfare, which always makes you think one thing: it will not go where I want when I want to go there. It is simply impossible to get a free ticket that's good for anything but travel to Indiana on a Sunday night. No slight against Indiana, but you know what I mean. I opened it anyway. Dear valued cardmember. Or is it cardholder? Is there a difference? Probably. When you're good on your payments, you're a cardmember. When you're behind, you're a cardholder.

I was being offered two free tickets. Companion tickets, of course – buy one, get three. Good for over 100 destinations. You figure, there's got to be one of them worth going to, no? All I had to do was sign up for the Travel + Leisure Golf Club. If within two months of receiving the magazine I decided that I wasn't interested – and that's fine; as a valued cardmember you have high standards, and American Express cannot assume that everyone feels the same way about these things – I could cancel, and keep the tickets. If I wanted to continue I would be billed $39 for the first year, and $69 for the year after that.
I was certain that if I damped the paper and held it up to a flame I would see the secret writing: we’re pretty damn sure you’ll say yes, forget about the tickets, and not notice the recurring billing. Otherwise, what, do you think we’re crazy?

Because they are absolutely nuts to offer $1,438 worth of airfare for $2.99. I mean, if they just came out and said it: two companion tickets for $100, and gave me a list of places that seemed like interesting destinations, I’d consider it. As it is, I’m wary. There’s the whole cancellation thing. I know I would never do it. You just never sit around thinking “anything I should do this year? Oh, right, cancel the Travel + Leisure Golf magazine I never read.” You think “I still have the tickets, so I’m ahead of the deal.”

No. No, I won’t. I’ve never made airline reservations without encountering some warning that said, in essence, “those tickets you want to use? No.”

Yes, that’s just the sort of savvy consumer I am: informed I could have two free tickets for a penny shy of three dollars, I suspect there might be a catch.

You may ask: why do I have a Chase card when I have an Amex? For the reasons described above. Also because it’s a Disney-only card. I know this makes no sense whatsoever, but I put everything related to the family Disney trip on this one piece of plastic, because it has a picture of Mickey Mouse on it.

I call this “financial planning.”

It was an ordinary Monday, with a grave failure: I forgot to get sausage for the pasta, which deprived Child of the great pillar of weekly cuisine. Had to make sloppy joes. Or rather Manwiches. At Target Sunday a demonstrator was passing out wedges of Manwiches made with ground turkey, which should have been Turkwiches, if you think about it. Although they weren’t really sandwiches at all. Nor were they sloppy, because the structural integrity field generated by modern, thick sauce prevents spillage. So it could be a Turkey Joe, then. He also played for the White Sox in ’16. One fine year then he went down to the minors with an alcohol problem.

I wrote some fiction and exercised and wrote this, and now it’s Mad Men, a day late. Tomorrow looks remarkably like today. Unless they cancel all my cards.

–

Update: a minor Comic Sins. Tumblr is loaded up and ready to go; if the queue function works, you’ll see some October magazine covers from the past. Plus PopCrush and all the other things. Have a grand day.
42 RESPONSES TO *i'm valued*

Dave (in MA) says:  
October 5, 2010 at 1:35 am  

As of this writing, the entire Bleat is a link to Squatty McPokescroton.

GardenStater says:  
October 5, 2010 at 5:00 am  

Squatty sez: “You got a problem wit dat?”

Irish Al says:  
October 5, 2010 at 5:45 am  

He's going to do himself an injury keeping his knife like that. Mind you I suppose it would be a useful bullet-deflector.

Jeff says:  
October 5, 2010 at 5:53 am  

If adding turkey to the sauce makes them “turkwiches”, I don't want to know what you cook up to make them Manwiches... but I'm pretty sure you don't get it at your local supermarket.

Wagner von Drupen- Sachs says:  
October 5, 2010 at 6:49 am  

The comic looks like Stephen Fry on the left and Hugh Laurie on the right. The pose also suggests at least one of their routines.

Mxymaster says:  
October 5, 2010 at 6:58 am  

“And guffaw as they decide to bury the hatchet and go beat the crap out of a Swabbie!”

I get those travel things from Amex all the time, although I haven’t had an Amex card since 1989. I don’t travel much, either. But I hate offers like that on their face, because I don’t want to be the guy on the phone, red-faced and whining, because my free whatsis didn’t arrive. BUT YOU PROMISED!!!!!!

How about: You give me what I want at a low price, and I continue to use your services? Lower the price and keep the special offers and “free” stuff.

Rick says:  
October 5, 2010 at 7:12 am  

Is it me, or does the entire column today link to the Comic Sins page?

boblipton says:  
October 5, 2010 at 7:31 am  

Yes, it is you, Rick. You're weird.
Bob

Nancy says:
October 5, 2010 at 7:51 am

on the good side—didn't have to search for the link…

DerKase says:
October 5, 2010 at 7:51 am

“He also played for the White Sox in ’16." ???
Man, he must be like 115 years old.

Brisko says:
October 5, 2010 at 7:53 am

@ DerKase

Gotta do something in your twilight years, especially if you need money for your alcohol problem.

wiredog says:
October 5, 2010 at 7:55 am

It's you, Rick, and not just today, either. ;)
1 lb ground beef, cooked with a small amount of onion, drained.
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup white vinegar
1/2 cup ketchup.
Mix and simmer. Serve into toasted hamburger buns. My kids love them. And no need to buy that nasty canned stuff.

Moishe3rd says:
October 5, 2010 at 9:15 am

Squatty McPokescrotum.
Nice.
It makes me think of the President reading his teleprompter and doing freaky double takes as ghostly pornographic images slide by underneath his speech text...
Nice…

Johan says:
October 5, 2010 at 9:25 am

Doubling your credit card debt, tripling it, or having any debt for that matter is horrifying. But hey it's the American way, you're just leaving the American dream, by living off debt.

It's a ghostly way if you come to think of it, what we've become, or what the nation makes us become, by taking advantage of our weaknesses… for spending, and owning more stuff. The path to the dark side one might consider:

I'm starting a blog about debt, and how to overcome debt, or what to do when you're confronted with those funny people from the credit card business, it will be on http://www.pipeno.com, stay tuned:)

Johan

Bill Peschel says:
October 5, 2010 at 9:26 am

Reading the new book about D-Day, about the savage fighting in the bocage, soldiers shooting prisoners because they can't send them down the line, massive destruction, so I can't read those comics without a bit of flinching. Besides, if I was going into combat, I'm not going to be squatting and firing a pistol, not against 88s and machine guns.

But I did like “Squatty McPokescrotum.”

Hunkybobtx says:
October 5, 2010 at 9:42 am

Is our genial host a closet South Park fan? Squatty McPokescrotum sounds suspiciously like Scrotie McBoogerballs.
Just sayin’…

swschrad says:
October 5, 2010 at 10:16 am

@Moishe3rd: ah, that takes me back to the glorious days of radio news. (radio anything, anyway)
reading along about the latest wondrous revelations of Watergate,
and Scotus and Potus fighting in the streets with the armed forces waiting for somebody to decide who to follow... and also there is a road closed for the weekend.

when the gnarliest photos ever to be offered in a dark alley start appearing against the glass between studios. “welcome, intern, to the business. whatcha gonna do?”

keep reading, of course. The Red Light is on.

The Red Light is always on, whether it is or not.

they who forget need to ask if you want fries with that.

I had to remind a new studio in a new location full of engineers trying to get a monitor working about that a month later with an open mike.

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**MJBirch** says:
October 5, 2010 at 10:31 am

O, the credit card callers. I used to get chirpy telephone calls “... because you have such an EXCELLENT CREDIT RECORD, we are offering YOU a SPECIAL LIMITED INVITATION ...” and I always wanted to say “I know damn well that telling me that I have an excellent credit record is not a compliment — what you are really saying is “you unAmerican piece of slime, how dare you be frugal — you don’t owe us nearly enough money and we want to trick you into getting yourself hopelessly in debt LIKE EVERYONE ELSE.”

I registered for a no-call list and life became more peaceful. And I dream of getting rid of all credit cards.

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**bgbear (roger h)** says:
October 5, 2010 at 10:35 am

There is a story that the staff presented Soupy Sales with a topless/naked woman, off camera, during a broadcast for his birthday or something.

Oh the 60s.

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**JamesS** says:
October 5, 2010 at 10:51 am

What AmEx will do is give our Dear Author some large number of points which can be used to purchase airline tickets from airlines which do business with AmEx. He won't get “two airline tickets” or whatnot in the mail or something like that.

A couple of years ago when I got my AmEx gold card, they had a deal where they'd give you two roundtrip airline tickets if you spent $500 within the first two months of having the card. It so happened we were about to buy a new air system for the house, so we put it on the card and got something like 54,000 points. I didn't use them right away, but saved up some more over a couple of years, and last month the wife and I flew down to Daytona Beach to visit her sister, stayed in a nice four-star hotel and rented a convertible, and almost all of it was covered by the points.

Those deals are usually worth it if they're from a major, reputable card, but you do have to pay attention to the fine print.
Mark E. Hurling says:
October 5, 2010 at 11:02 am

“teats-pointing-to-heaven,” a most novel way to clean up the phrase, Tango Uniform.

JerseyAmy says:
October 5, 2010 at 11:13 am

In my house, turkey sloppy joes = sloppy toms. I think that came from a cookbook when I was a kid, but I like it.

John Robinson says:
October 5, 2010 at 11:32 am

Ground turkey is an affront to God and man.

Covering it in uber-sweet Manwich sauce does not change that fact.

Just sayin’.

hpoulter says:
October 5, 2010 at 12:14 pm

@bgbear – On Soupy Sales’ show, he would open a door on stage that was placed so it normally hid what was behind it from the camera. They put numerous surprises behind that door to crack him up. But, they had more than one camera. Here is what the kiddies didn’t see (NSFW):

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2f2cTZwvyQ

swschrad says:
October 5, 2010 at 12:16 pm

@bgbear: the story is true, at least Soupy claimed so in a book long years past.

there was a noontime I was watching before I had to scurry off to school or something in which his jaw hit the floor at end of show and he immediately cinched it up and got the standard close off after a short stammer. I will bet that was the reputed day.

bgbear (roger h) says:
October 5, 2010 at 12:22 pm

nice to see an “urban legend” proved.

seems so Mad Men like.

GardenStater says:
October 5, 2010 at 1:24 pm

@hpoulter: Thanks for the link. Those were the days. If the crew did that today, Sales would get fired and op-ed writers all over the country would stand in condemnation.

buzz says:
October 5, 2010 at 2:00 pm
Methinks you've got the wrong ethnicity for Squatty.
This is clearly a case of moyle bonding.

DryOwlTacos says:
October 5, 2010 at 2:06 pm

I'm amazed that the forces of political correctness still allow the marketing of a product called “MANwich.” Even venerable old Ranch Style Beans changed their label, which used to say “Husband Pleasin’” and featured a 60s-style generic dad face licking his chops to something inoffensive like “Family Favorite.” Today I hear on the news that female crash test dummies will now be deployed for automotive safety ratings. We've come a long way, baby.😊

Re credit cards: Ever notice that the people who have the most of them are the ones who are the least likely ever to pay off a balance? We went through a bad financial patch a few years ago and we got new credit cards in the mail (that we had not requested!) about once a month. Don't tell me the credit industry isn't predatory.

Nota bene: We are all paid off now and they are leaving us alone, for the most part.

Larry says:
October 5, 2010 at 2:06 pm

Thanks for the link. First time I've seen tiddies on You Tube. Its not what you see, its where you see 'em!

swschrad says:
October 5, 2010 at 2:33 pm

@bgbear: Sales did get fired. the deal was, at the close of a show, he asked the kids to go find Mommy's purse, get out all the green slips of paper, and send them in.

that only works if you're Government.

or slightly squirrelly. I have gotten a few cross-eyed looks from folks telling them they're now in Minnesota… and every time they see a red “T” sign and there's somebody sitting at the bench, they have to stop and give each one of the government representatives a $20 bill, the state's short this week, and that's a tax stop.

(those were the old bus [transit] signs)

bgbear (roger h) says:
October 5, 2010 at 2:50 pm

@larry, yeh, I for one prefer to see them on women😊

GardenStater says:
October 5, 2010 at 3:28 pm

Good one, Roger.

fizzbin says:
October 5, 2010 at 4:46 pm

@Moishe3rd….Ooooo, you give me idea. But that would mean
another century in Purgatory, if THEY haven’t decided (again) that it doesn’t exist (Oy, who can keep track?).

@swschrad… I have it on good authority that the military almost decided to follow themselves, if you get my drift. We dodged a close one that time!

@hpoulter…..mucho muy thanks for the link. Thank the gods for YouTube 😜

@bgbear….oh, thanks, now I can’t get the picture of moobs outta my head 😜

**swschrad** says:
October 5, 2010 at 8:45 pm

@fizzbin: Al Haig (barely) kept his head under Nixon’s debacle.

kind of messed up some during the initial hours of Reagan’s shooting. “I am in charge, here, in the White House,” my speckled behind. Ford was in charge, wherever he was, there was communications with him. should he not have been, it was the Speaker. Haig was shuffling the papers.

@hpoulter: there is a tradition in television of when you have engineered a setup of somebody, whether it works or not, you also do a piece for the Christmas party before everything is broken down for the next show. I would seriously believe the “boobs on parade” there was for what we called in our shop “The Epic.”

such as when we had an interview set up with the mayor. I had a Barbasol pie at hand and did a tossout question on another spool of film afterwards, “So what the hell is up with that damn lagoon, anyway?”

to which the answer is, inevitably, “Not a damn thing! => SPLAT! <=
got the only big laugh of The Epic that year.

**browniejr** says:
October 5, 2010 at 10:33 pm

Bonnie- that “nasty canned stuff” is made just up the road from my house…

Made from tomatoes that arrive by the truckload (just like your ketchup / catsup)

**browniejr** says:
October 5, 2010 at 10:35 pm

Ack- link was busted:

**Russ Shackelford** says:
October 6, 2010 at 7:26 am

So did you gobble them up?
Yesterday's lunch for daughter was rejected; the bread was stale. Let me back up and give you the context:

I'm going to put the turkey on a bun, because the bread is stale.

Noooo! Buns are different!

Yes, but they're also fresh, and don't crumble when you look at it, like this bread here.

Buns and turkey are weird together!

(odd look) Wait until your first funeral. That's all there is afterwards. Well, ham.

Can I please have the bread?

Ohhhhkay.

So I get out a serrated knife. Not the bread knife; it's dull. You could sharpen it on a balloon. Why? It's not like I've been using it to saw metal pipes. It's just gone up against bread, for heaven's sake. But in the long run, an army of loaves dulls even the sharpest instrument designed to do it harm. There's a lesson in there. Buy a whetstone.

So I saw apart the bread, and it comes apart.
Look at this!

I don't care.

Ohhhhkay. I assemble the sandwich, put it in a special Halloween-decorated bag because every aspect of life that can be customized should be customized, and package everything up and off she goes, ta ta.

After school:

How was lunch?

I didn't eat the sandwich.

Why?

The bread was so stale. (quickly) But it was still better than a bun.

What is the matter with you? What is wrong with a bun? Buns are regarded in some quarters as superior to bread. Well, I don’t have any more bread.

Awwwwww!

So . . . I went to the grocery store. Had to go anyway. Got some baguettes, two of them, a buck a pop, different styles. Each was described as having a “thin crust,” but from the feel of them they were dipped in cement and coated with lacquer. Practically had to use a bandsaw to open them up. I applied the circular slices of lunchmeat, folded them over, sliced some cheese: sheer artistry. This reminded me that I have failed to inform you about the change in the packaging. A great wind has blown through the world of packaging lately, a cold and clarifying wind, and it has changed the fussy oh-hey-let’s-design-the-HELL-out-of-this style of the previous decade for something more austere. I give you the Great Recession Lunchmeat:

I prefer the new version. It’s the Neutra font again, by the way. Note how
bizarre the name looks now; the typeface looks more apt for Halloween. But they dropped the capitalized F, so it's now . . . Delifresh? One word? De-LIH-fresh? The word SHAVED is less prominent, probably because research showed people associated the word with legs or armpits or chins. SHAVED means “it's all messed up, lots of different-shaped pieces that stick together,” but it seems more . . . natural than SLICED, which is just round pieces sliced from an extruded log of compressed, mechanically-separated, reformed chicken parts. You imagine a slurry of liquified poultry poured into molds and compacted until it can hold a shape.

Yum! Well, she also gets raisins, and a tiny bag of 100 calorie Cheez-Its Party Mix, and she's fine. Every day the same thing. Every day. I'm the same. Pathetic. Except today; had leftover Joe, which went in my lap as I ate at my desk. Figures. It was a sad lunch. They're all sad lunches. The microwave at the office looks like something you'd see in “24 Days Later” after Rage-Virus victims tore up a kitchen. You actually want to spray your lunch with Lysol before you eat it. Compounding the irritation is the control panel – the failure of the consumer electronics UI can be summed up perfectly with the picture of someone who's about to use a microwave for the first time, because they stand there with their finger outstretched, not knowing what they should do. You want 30 seconds, so you push 3 – and HEY HOLD ON the machine turns on, and the digital readout says 8:59, because you just activated DEFROST LEG OF LAMB FROZEN DURING THE NIXON YEARS. There's a button for "vegetables." The only reason a microwave should have a button for "vegetables" is this: you push it, and it turns out it's a Star Trek replicator, and vegetables appear.

Speaking of Star Trek replicators: I always liked the sequence of the commands: Tea, Earl Grey, Hot. Kingdom Phylum Class. But you'd think HOT would be the default, and ICED be the exception. Probably was on some replicators. Even in the future the UI people will contrude with our expectations.

There are three microwaves at the office. Each one has a different interface. I've probably learned the interfaces for ten in my life, and each became natural and intuitive. Couldn't remember any of them if the machines turned up again.

There's no number pad on my current microwave. It has a knob. Press “Cook” then dial the time. The lack of numbers makes visitors even more confused. I dial the number, say “Seconds, thirty,” and push START. Wow.

A fine day; warm. Sunny. Tomorrow looks like more of the same. I have to go to the Army Surplus store to find goggles. Daughter wants to dress up for Halloween as – get this – a Canadian character in an anime series that revisits WW2 through a bunch of characters who are on an island. There's 78 episodes, or so. This has led to many questions about history and nations: what's the difference between Russian and Prussia?

“The letter P.”
“DAD.”

Good day for the dog, who is now 15 1/2; he always comes to life at dinner time, and becomes quite intent on scraps. But tonight he was up for the walk like I haven't seen him in a while – trotted around the route, then ran up the steps. Ran. And there are a lot of steps. It's because my wife hadn't eaten yet, and he knew there was the potential for additional sausage. Don't look at me; I never fed him table scraps, because that leads to dogs who do not know their place during mealtime, but that battle was lost long ago.

No one believes he's 15 1/2.

Today: a little Black and White World. Don't know about tumblr; it ate all the queued posts yesterday and gave me a SORRY WE ARE WORKING ON NEW FEATURES page when I tried to requeue. Am considering just dropping the damned thing and folding it into the Institute Archives, or moving it to Posterous. I mean, it's nice that they provide it for free, but it's frustrating.

Pass it along, if you wish

56 RESPONSES TO uh . . duh-lifrish?

Seattle Dave says:
October 6, 2010 at 9:47 pm

I was graduated from high school and moved out of the family homestead in 1986, nearly 25 years ago. The gargantuan Sharp Carousel microwave/convection oven my mom had (which must have been at least five years old even then) is still plugging along. It's lined with heavy stainless steel (easy to clean). The space-age control panel consists of two rotary timers and two sliding power selectors (one for the micro, one for the convection), a mechanical “start” button, and the “push to open” button. It dings when it's done. On the other hand, in my 15 years sans roommates, I've gone through two new microwaves from the warehouse store. One morning, they just seem to decide it's time to stop working. On the other hand, before they die, they do amuse me with L.E.D. messages such as “HAVE A NICE COOKING,” but frankly I'd rather they just worked.

Kev says:
October 7, 2010 at 8:57 am

I was fueled through college on white can/black lettering BEER at $1.69 a 6-pack from the Hy-Vee. There was also LIGHT BEER, but I was too much the connoisseur for that swill.

Not only that, but in our grocery stores (some of which had nearly a half-aisle of generic foodstuffs at the height of that craze), LIGHT BEER was ten cents more per six-pack, presumably due to the extra cost of printing one more word on each can.

I once brought a six-pack of BEER as a gag gift when I visited some friends at another college while I was in school. They sent it back with me unopened. 😕
Stjohnsmythe says:
October 7, 2010 at 9:25 am

prefer the new version. It's the Neutra font again, by the way.
Note how bizarre the name looks now; the typeface looks more apt for Halloween.

When I first saw Neutraface I was captivated, went to the foundry's site and blanched at the price, but was in a delirium of desire; now it's everywhere and has lost its magic. Too bad.

Perhaps you've seen this, a Bearded Lady GaGa ode to Neutra:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xIIcu28bfxSI

PDB says:
October 7, 2010 at 3:09 pm

Kev- Your post made my day... ‘too much the connoiseur for that swill.’ I thought about it a few hours after I read it the first time and broke out laughing again... thanks for sharing the story!

Ross says:
October 10, 2010 at 2:05 am

Petronius: I could be wrong, but it seems _very_ unlikely that any UFA films were still being made for other markets: by 1934, Hitler had already had a year to sic Goebbels on “decadent” foreign(esp American) films and turn what was left of the German film industry insular and propagandistic(& yet, they let that beautiful, full-color UFA “Munchhausen” come out untouched by the party; I suppose, the stories being a legitimate example of traditional German culture, no one who could have ruined it saw it as needing “correction”). There's a wonderful documentary series from a few years back that Branagh narrated, called “Cinema Europe: The Other Hollywood” that ends with the Nazis & the war holding the pillow over the wheezing face of what had been a truly international industry(although sound+American willful ignorance were pretty much fatal).
I have to say I do not understand all these kids not eating or making their own lunches; I was coming home & _cooking_ lunch for myself in grade school(not to mention laundry & light sewing repairs). How spoiled do you have to be to need an adult to make a sandwich for you? Good Lord.
Lastly, I agree w/Our Genial Host about the almost complete lack of uniformity in microwave UIs–the same goes for copiers(or did, anyway) and figuring out how to work the front seat release to climb into someone else's two-door's back seat(of course, I speak of my days as an adult passenger some 25yrs ago, having been a late-blooming driver).

Ross says:
October 10, 2010 at 2:14 am

Oh, and in our family, one short answer to “What's the difference between Russia and Prussia?” would be, “Well, Prussians no longer _have_ a country.” Dad's family were from Upper Silesia: he got a letter after the war from one of his grandmothers who he was surprised to learn had survived, but was chased out of their centuries-old home at the end of the war. Fortunately for her, she
was apparently just too old for the Russian soldiers to consider raping her, like nearly every other female in their westward path.
It's the dreaded PHOTO BLEAT, filling up space because it was a night of work and I happen to have some pictures.

Or, I could go with the random picture taken in a second-hand clothing store with plenty of Halloween stock, and note that this description of a fake mustache would be a fine name for a rock band:
Naked Flame would be a good name, too.

Sorry; spent most of the night on the column. You have no idea how hard it can be sometimes to find a topic that's right for spry, merry, local-based humor, without some polarizing undertone. It's not that I'm under orders not to polarize; not at all. I just don't want to. I get a forum in a big paper, and I'm going to strive as hard as humanly possible to alienate half the readers because I HAVE AN OPINION ABOUT THINGS. This is why I compartmentalize my work, really – at worst it's the illusion of comity, but at best it's the recognition there are still some shared spaces. I get tired of everything being This or That, Libtards or Wingnuts.

Not to say some opinions expressed in the column wouldn't be campfire tales at Camp Cranky, but some issues transcend simplistic divisions. That's all.

So I wrote about a turtle.

Also wrote a Joe Ohio. The new design of the site will impress you, I think. It will knock you back on your ear, as they say. The last three matchbooks have been a challenge: one was a finance company, the second was Macy’s, the third was for a bar in Texas. As I've noted, I choose these at random, without looking at them. Macy’s was simple enough – go to New York. But why? When I called up the Texas matchbook today I groaned: how the hell do I fit this into the narrative? Because there is a narrative; one always emerges. There are three plots going on, and I don't know where they're going, or whether they'll be resolved in Volume 2. (The third batch of 52 stories will be released in 2012.) When it's done the entire opus will be about 150,000 words. I think I know where I want it to go. Don't know if the matchbooks will let me take it there.

It's like I Ching + tarot. It's like Don Draper + Johnny Dollar.

Speaking of which: last night, while obsessively stepping up and down on the step board to burn off supper, I listened to a 1980s radio interview with the daughter of Bob Bailey, who played Johnny Dollar in the finest run of radio noir ever. She was a little girl when her dad was doing the show. She remembered going to the soundstage on Sundays. She remembered sitting in a room with Virginia Gregg – a name that may mean nothing to you, but she appeared in every other Dragnet TV show. She remembered her father
confronting the evaporation of his career after the sudden end of dramatic radio, mostly because he didn’t look like his voice. He started drinking – again – and vanished for nine years. He resurfaced, dry, and was involved in an akly rehab program for other sots when he was felled by a stroke, and when the interview took place he was living in a home.

He didn’t have any way to listen to his old programs. It was doubtful he knew they were even out there – but they were, and in the next century they’d all find their way home, one at a time, to archive.org. He died shortly after the interview with his daughter, utterly forgotten.

She noted that her son sounded just like her father, and was in the Air Force. Since pilots often move to the civilian side, I wonder if he went to commercial aviation. Took the mike to announce the details of the flight, and made some old slumbering fellow wake up and think: I know that voice.

Anyway, it’s a lesson in fame and transience and being there when a medium dies. Bob Bailey was a fine talent, but a minor figure at the time – revered now by fans of the genre, but even then his show ran on Sunday afternoons. Anyone on the internet today should hope they have half his staying power, but we won’t. The internet is an enormous propellor that swamps everything, churning and thrashing and driving the great ship forward. There’s hard astern and hard to port but it’s always forward. Seriously: can you imagine someone in 2025 discovering a brilliant five-year run someone had on the internet in 1997 – 2002?

But I was talking about Joe, wasn’t I. I don’t even know his last name. I won’t know it until volume 3. I had a chance today to name it, but I didn’t. Because I know exactly when and how I’ll need to reveal it.

GAAAAAH said my daughter when she came up behind me and clapped me on the shoulders. I was sitting in the dojo, waiting for karate to end, writing the story. They’d had class outside because it was a gorgeous day. She asked what I was writing, and I told her.

“Is this the newspaper murder mystery?” she asked. We walked over to the Chinese food joint. I said it was a different story, based on matchbooks. “You have a lot of matches,” she said. “How long is the book?”

Well, three volumes, 50 stories each, 1000 words per story . . . what’s that?

She frowned and did math and said WHOA.

After dinner she decided to write a story, and so she sat at the kitchen table and typed and typed, and there it is, on the desktop, with a filename that says DONTREAD.

Oh, the shoals I will be negotiating in the time to come.

Did I say pictures? I walked to the Army Surplus Store today to buy some goggles for her Halloween costume, and the trees by the First Bank building were lovely. High Fall.
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!
Warm, too. The change in the foliage hues, the low slant of six o'clock light, the leaves in the parking lot whipped up by the wind and chasing each other in circles – novelties, diversions, amusements. But three months ago you would have crossed to the shady side of the street, because it was hot. Now you cross to the sunlit side, and you take what you can get. As long as it’s offered.

41 RESPONSES TO yours truly

**Ed Driscoll** says:
October 7, 2010 at 1:18 am

Speaking of *Dragnet*, did you see that Art Gilmore, voice-over artist extraordinaire, who also played the captain in 72,623 episodes of both the 1950s and 1960s-era *Dragnet*, *Adam-12* and *Emergency* recently passed away? (He was also the announcer on a little 1964
TV special called *A Time for Choosing*.

**Kerry Potenza** says:
October 7, 2010 at 5:34 am

Seriously: can you imagine someone in 2025 discovering a brilliant five-year run someone had on the internet in 1997 – 2002?

Perhaps not, but I DO imagine that the Bleat and The Institute of Official Cheer will be fondly remembered by many.

**Dreeana** says:
October 7, 2010 at 6:05 am

I love IMDB; someday maybe it will include radio performances. Your post the other day about radio shows and I pods floored me, because it was on an afternoon that I had been listening to the OTR channel in the car, raced in to see if I could find the rest of the show on archive.org, and so on. Even something that seems totally quirky turns out to be more common than one might think.

**PersonFromPorlock** says:
October 7, 2010 at 6:13 am

Typo: ‘astern’ should be ‘astarboard’.

**Joe Sixpack** says:
October 7, 2010 at 6:41 am

High fall, indeed.

**Mr_Hat** says:
October 7, 2010 at 6:50 am

“Carnival Article” reminds me of a cheap firework I got when I was sixteen. The entire label: “Light fuse, smoke pot”.

**Mxymaster** says:
October 7, 2010 at 7:47 am

Sure I can remember someone who had a brilliant ‘Net run in roughly that time period: Steven Den Beste.

Heard a few “Johnny Dollar” episodes recently and thought man, this concept deserves to be brought to TV. There was a graphic novel about Johnny done a couple of years back, but I believe it’s OOP.

Steptoe trivia: “Steptoe and Son” was the British original for “Sanford and Son,” (All of Norman Lear’s decent ideas were stolen from British TV.) I doubt Carnival Articles had any connection.

**Nancy** says:
October 7, 2010 at 8:00 am

The color of fall skies can make me stop mid-walk and look—the contrast of the leaves against the sky—and breathe in the clear air. It has only been a few weeks since the last hot day here. But a hot day in September is not nearly as sincerely hot as August. And what a year it was for heat.
hpoulter says:
October 7, 2010 at 8:01 am

Perhaps not, but I DO imagine that the Bleat and The Institute of Official Cheer will be fondly remembered by many

Interesting thought – nostalgia of the future? Old Time Internet? Of course, we don’t know how to market it because we don’t know what media will be available – jacked-in (wireless) brain plugs?

Brisko says:
October 7, 2010 at 8:37 am

I can’t wait for new Joe Ohio. His “real” last name had never occurred to me; I just assumed, in the back of my mind I suppose, that he was the precursor to such *ahem* luminaries as Hannah Montana and Ollie Oregon.

dcmatthews says:
October 7, 2010 at 9:15 am

The reason the name “Virginia Gregg” means anything to me is that she was the voice of Tara in the 1967 Hanna-Barbera series “The Herculoids”. Not the most demanding role she ever had – she could probably have recorded her role in the entire series run in a three-hour recording session because most of it was variations of saying “Zandor!” But finding out she was a very prolific radio actor led me to an appreciation of old-time radio, and the Bob Bailey episodes of “Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar”.

Jeff says:
October 7, 2010 at 9:37 am

Maybe “dontread” is the story of the Michelin Man, whose name is actually Donald Tread…

JohnW says:
October 7, 2010 at 9:51 am

Mxymaster says:

Sure I can remember someone who had a brilliant ‘Net run in roughly that time period: Steven Den Beste.

I miss Kim du Toit.

rbj says:
October 7, 2010 at 10:04 am

I’m not seeing the foliage changing here yet in Toledo. Weird that most leaves are still green.

wiredog says:
October 7, 2010 at 10:19 am

What about the Wingtards and Libnuts? Huh? What about /them/?

I think there will be some websites that will be remembered fondly
for the way they were in a certain era. Kuro5hin was great until 2002, when Rusty decided not to do any heavy (or any) moderation. At which point it got overrun with trolls. Still is. Not sure why Rusty keeps it open. Slashdot was much more fun in its early years. Dave Barry’s blog is a fun place to hang out.

bgbear (roger h) says:
October 7, 2010 at 10:19 am

All the YT Johnny Dollars I listened to were multi-parts that ran over several weeknights.

Did it run in both formats?

GardenStater says:
October 7, 2010 at 10:33 am

I miss the Buzz.

bgbear (roger h) says:
October 7, 2010 at 10:35 am

answered own question, I now see the one episode stories of YTJD.

Bill Peschel says:
October 7, 2010 at 10:51 am

There was a poster at the Straight Dope whose name I’ve now forgotten. Canadian, I think. He told long stories about his various adventures. A very funny fellow whose catchphrase, “Putz” has been preserved as a special symbol posters who never heard of him now use.

He’s dead now. Working in a warehouse when a compressor, being brought down by a forklift, shifted and crushed him.

I wonder how many still remember him. I hope they remember his name.

(BTW, Den Beste was great. I’ve still got his essays on my hard drive, and he was a great influence on my politics. He’s still out there, but commenting on Japanese animation.)

swschrad says:
October 7, 2010 at 10:52 am

@Jeff: the Michelin Man’s name is Bib. it has been a long time since he started throwing slices out of his middle, but it’s on. that was allegedly the ad campaign in native France in the 50s.

a stack of tires of various sizes, off the truck, coming to life.

nightmare fuel.

but I’ve never had one let me down, ever.

winterhawk says:
October 7, 2010 at 11:14 am

Bill Peschel: The Straight Dope poster’s name was WallyM7. Sadly, the “Putz” smiley was retired a few years ago, along with the
“Happy Orthodox Jew” smiley. (I’m a longtime member of the SDMB—cool to see two of my longest internet connections converge.)

I totally know who Virginia Gregg is/was! We used to watch Dragnet every night on Nick at Nite (back when it was good and actually showed *real* classic TV instead of stuff from 10 years ago). The thing I most remember her as is the pyramid scheme lady, but she was on a bunch of episodes.

Spud says:
October 7, 2010 at 11:18 am

In the Michelin Corporate halls he’s referred to as Mr. Bib. Well, at least in the US. In France he’s probably Monsieur Bib. Any time you need an IT service you go through BibRequest, a site on the (internal) intranet. Isn’t that cute? Enough company “secrets” for now …

bgbear (roger h) says:
October 7, 2010 at 11:23 am

I liked Peggy Webber on Dragnet. She always played a lady with a hard luck story. On the radio she was Joe’s mother and any other number of ladies.

IIRC she was a radio writer and producer at a very young age, kind of a real-life Peggy Olson.

JamesS says:
October 7, 2010 at 11:33 am

The sky in those photos reminded me of the first line of William Gibson’s *Neuromancer*:

The sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel.

It sounds depressing at first — *dead channel* and all — but when you realize what a brilliant, almost unworldly blue that is, you know he’s actually describing a beautiful day.

MichaelsDaddy says:
October 7, 2010 at 11:59 am

The shoals you will run, indeed. It is a scary world, being the father to a teenage girl (or several). Stay connected. That’s my best advice. There will be secrets, there will be private matters… but staying connected is essential for both of you to navigate through those years that lie just beyond the rocks.

John Robinson says:
October 7, 2010 at 12:32 pm

Mister James “Jim” Jimmy, I have four novels commercially published with two more in the on-deck circle, and don’t have clue one why, of all the semi-literate people in my family, the muse decided to alight on me.

And I guess it'll leave with me too, as neither of my grown sons has shown any inclination to take up the mantle. Maybe in two or three generations the fair lady will once again visit a Robinson, but for
now, I'm it.
All that to say, not only is Natalie a fine young artist, but may be glomming her old man's stellar writing chops as well. Not a bad deal, that. Congrats!

shesnailie says:
October 7, 2010 at 12:33 pm

_@_v – jennicam had a pretty good run...

bgbear (roger h) says:
October 7, 2010 at 12:47 pm

jennicam* reminded me of the “Modern Ferret” magazine and the associated website run by the Sheffermans who had a good run and many awards but, had much fall apart after 9/11.

**”Jennie” was a ferret owner and was once featured on the cover of “Modern Ferret” with her ferret.

swschrad says:
October 7, 2010 at 1:16 pm

tasty bits from the technolgy front held a good fortress until about 2001. the archive of http://tbtf.com still exists, as kdawson continues to moderate tech news with the slashdot crew.

which also deserves mention.

hpoulter says:
October 7, 2010 at 2:03 pm

bgbear – Greg Bell (XM OTR guy) played an interesting multi-part interview with Peggy Webber a couple of weeks ago for her birthday. He sat in her Hollywood home and ate tea and cookies while she exercised her amazingly detailed memories of her early career (she is way up there now, of course). She started writing radio scripts in elementaru school, and when her father moved to Tucson, she went to the radio station with a big box of scripts and got herself a gig. She says she looked like she was about 10 at the time, though she was a bit older. When she auditioned as an actress (still a kid) she did a whole stable of vocal impressions of famous actresses, and soon got steady work.

Of course, she became a great friend of Jack Webb's. We take it for granted now, but she talked about how exciting and revolutionary it was when Webb made the actors stand well back from the microphones and potted them up so they would pick up a great deal of background noise. It gave radio a new gritty realistic quality.

bgbear (roger h) says:
October 7, 2010 at 2:23 pm

@hpoulter, neat!

browniejr says:
October 7, 2010 at 3:16 pm

Other great Dragnet regulars (many were on radio):
Olan Soulé- always in the lab- CSI 1967 (!)
Harry Bartell- he also played a US Senator/ KAOS agent on Get Smart, always found that funny…
Vic Perrin (Star Trek connection)
Ralph Moody- think Grampa Simpson…

RobertB says:
October 7, 2010 at 3:21 pm

JamesS, I’m not sure William Gibson was describing a deep blue sky. At the time he wrote “Neuromancer,” it was just as likely that a “dead channel” looked like dirty snow. Most TVs did not yet shield sensitive viewers from such things.

Given the tone of the book, I think the depressing interpretation is more likely. But the advance of technology has changed the meaning of the line for anyone younger than a certain age.

Daniel says:
October 7, 2010 at 5:29 pm

The last picture, dtown2, is so lovely it made tears start in my eyes. Usually you make me laugh: “LOL”. I wonder whether this is like what my father used to say: “Ah, for crying out loud!”? “COL”? (Well, not *literally* out loud.) You know what I mean. Thank you, sir.

Mxymaster says:
October 7, 2010 at 5:44 pm

Hey, forgot Brunching Shuttlecocks — another great site once upon a time.

GardenStater says:
October 7, 2010 at 6:47 pm

@JamesS: “It sounds depressing at first — dead channel and all — but when you realize what a brilliant, almost unworldly blue…”

I have to agree with RobertB. The first vision that comes to my head when I think of a “dead channel” is what we used to call “snow.” Grey bits and harsh static. Not exactly my idea of a beautiful sky.

That’s probably another sign that I’m getting too damned old.

cnyguy says:
October 7, 2010 at 7:10 pm

Since nobody else has pointed it out yet, I will: the Michelin Man’s full name is Bibendum.

And Steptoe Product is another good name for a rock band.

Johanna says:
October 7, 2010 at 8:00 pm

Hi, I finally had the crazy idea to comment on your blog. I’ve been reading it faithfully for months now. Thanks for what you write! I have two small kids, and I don’t have much time to read. But this is what I read. I always manage at least a couple of good laughs each time I come here.
Claire says:
October 8, 2010 at 12:24 am

I'm tired of it, too.

Joni says:
October 8, 2010 at 1:04 pm

I've never been concerned with Joe's last name, which is strange, since I'm normally such a completist. But I have a perfectly clear mental image of him. Joe's hair is blond and beginning the slow inevitable march back from his forehead (and since the second batch is set two years later, I suppose it will have progressed a bit further); he has blue eyes and a nice face. No stud muffin but he looks good in those Fifties clothes.

Ross says:
October 10, 2010 at 2:35 am

Garden Stater:
I'm with you—I miss Lance Lawson Thursdays, and some of the funnier regulars who don't seem to have stayed with us. I know it's inane, but I would let out an involuntary snort/chortle whenever I used to see (IIRC)Foamer's tag line, “Oooh! Shiny!”
default copy from the developers! I'm just adding this, and will add something more, later. Who cares? You're reading this? Really?
I started to watch “The Big Parade” last night – it’s a silent film, the top grosser until “Gone with the Wind.” Featured John Gilbert. WW1 Drama. Robert Osbourne on TCM set it up nicely, and I settled in with that warm feeling of self-regard you get when you’re watching something like this. I’m the sort of chap who appreciates a good silent movie. I lasted 23 minutes. Oh, I’ll finish it some day. But last week I got 22 minutes into this:
I’d come across the ad in the Strib microfiche, and thought it was such an interesting title. He who gets slapped . . . what? Gets a biscuit? I’ll finish it, but I have to start these things before midnight. The eyes droop; the remote slides from the boneless hand.

During “The Big Parade” I googled the star, since he had a flame-out when sound came in, and died of booze in his 30s. There was a story about audience reaction to one of his first sound pictures. What was romantic and mysterious when the lips moved without sound was risible in the Vitaphone era: hearing a guy with slicked back hair say “I love you! I love you! I love you!” struck audiences as smelly old flower-water, and they rolled their eyes. The novelty of talking wore off fast. You had to have something to say.

Of course this reminds you of something. What? “Singing in the Rain.” It was a comic look at the early days of sound, even though the movie somehow seems set in the technicolor 50s. The distance between our time and “Singin’” is greater than the distance between the movie and the black-and-white silent era, yet we claim “Singin’” as our own, don’t we. At the time, the distance between the present day and the era depicted in the movie was about the same as Us vs. the computers in “WarGames.” The producers of “Singin’” could assume that a substantial portion of the audience would remember the period in which the movie was set – but still they felt free to
improvise and embellish and Hollywoodify. That was their version of the hot-
tub time-machine, I guess. Which is our modern version of “Back to the 
Future.”

In a media culture, it's the cultural products that recreate the past that define 
the past.

Today will be fun: a podcast in the morning with Jonah Goldberg and Mark 
Steyn, then lunch with Bill Corbett, aka Crow T. Robot, and one of the Rifftrax 
geniuses. Then I have to write a column about something. Then a nap. Then 
pizza. Then back to work, but it's the good work, the stuff that doesn't have to be 
released the next day. I've been used to daily deadlines for a long time, but 
the addition of hourly deadlines does wear on a fellow.

Somewhat.

A lot, actually. It's like redefining “hyperventilation” as ordinary respiration.

Today I saw something that brought up a great gout of bile, and I'm still 
trying to figure out why. It was on a site devoted to funny pictures from 
clever people, mostly illustrations or cartoons. It had Mario. There was 
another picture on the page that had a stormtrooper from Star Wars. A meme 
was involved. A meme was redefined slightly to encompass Mario. Or Star 
Wars. Perhaps there was Lego. Whatever: it was the 936,206th time I'd seen 
someone spend a great deal of talent and imagination on Mario, in order to 
create a Juxtaposition that Remixed Things to make you think, whoa, that's a 
juxtaposition there, and I have a deep emotional reaction because it brings 
back feelings of childhood. Well, not deep. Well, not childhood. Come to think 
of it, I wasted hours pushing that blocky bastard around. But it wasn't 
wasted, because now I can appreciate the recontextualization of a 
commercial icon in a different situation! Okay then. Well, let's see what's on 
Digg. Oh: someone's recreated Logan's Run with Lego. Great!

I am tired of all of it. I think the breaking point was a link, passed around and 
tweeted ad nauseum, that promised “Bohemian Rhapsody performed on slide 
whistles.” I stared at that, wondering who in the name of God – sorry, who in 
the name of the Flying Spaghetti Monster – would care to hear such a thing. 
It's like a link that threatens “the Star Wars theme played by 500 kazooos, 
performed by breakdancing Chinese police.” It's passed around and branded 
as HIP because it has all the basics: something from the 70s or 80s, something 
that got its hooks into nerd culture, and adds something unexpected, and this 
= LOLs. In a way, I admire the creators of these things; I may consider 
grafting the YouTube video of the fat baby who propels himself around a wet 
floor with the power of his buttocks on the floating things that appeared in a 
Quake game and shot rockets at my head. It would be awesome because it 
would be two things you recognize from different contexts, put 
together!!!!111!!

I don't mean to slag on the people who find clever ways to recombine this 
and that, and I certainly understand the appeal of slathering the banalities of 
your childhood with the ironic sensibility you acquired through years of
painstaking sneerage; I'm guilty of all of that. It just seems as there's something . . . sad about spending so much time investing these images and cliches with new meaning. There's no meaning there in the first place, aside from being There when you were 12, and unlike advertising or other examples of mainstream culture there aren't any resonances, anything that connects to a larger culture. Mario was just a blob of pixels; Admiral Akbar was just a squid head with a stupid line. It's a trap. I get it. I get that there's nothing to get except that you get it.

We need some new things. We don't need another reboot. We need a boot. Also on the list of OVER and ENOUGH:

Zombies
Vampires
Steampunk
Virus movies

By all means add your own in the comments.

Links today:

30s ads: more cigs

Bleatplus

100 Mysteries

... a column! (No live link at post time, but scroll down to the columnists sidebar)

... and an overhaul of an old site at the Gallery of Regrettable Food.
Have a grand weekend. See you Monday.

106 RESPONSES TO the list

Gina says:
October 10, 2010 at 6:56 pm

References to "Singin' in the Rain," Mark Steyn, and the MST3K/RiffTrax guys, and a Gallery of Regrettable Foods update. Wow. People who know me would think you wrote this entry just for me. 😊 Thanks for being my own personal blogger!

Are you working on a new ’Trax? I'd love that.
John says:
October 10, 2010 at 7:22 pm

Oh, and just before the Laramie ride and the Maugham book, it was my sad mission to take a cat to the Texas A&M vet school. It ended sadly for him, but I was moved, as I always am, by the dedication and the learning of those who attended the poor guy. Did you know there is such a thing as paraneoplastic diabetes? I didn’t, and I’d rank it 370 trillion times more interesting than Tim Burton (whoever the hell he is), mall-rat slang, and YouTube video ideas aborted because some less lazy jerk thought of them first. You want something vital, it ain’t on the Internet. The Web gave us a Howard Dean remix; OK; it is done. Let us now saddle up at sunrise, the rise of the real sun, not a monitor glow.

Is Steampunk Over? « The Center of the Anomaly says:
October 11, 2010 at 3:04 pm

[...] the end of of one of his latest posts on The Blet: Also on the list of OVER [and [...]]

TWylite says:
October 11, 2010 at 4:02 pm

I know you are, but what am I?
How meta is your meme?
How many layers of invisible quotation marks around long-expired but vaguely-remembered pop cultural references can you package in every turn of a phrase?
If you don’t answer correctly, the Hipster Gestapo will haul you away to the re-education camp in Wasilla, Alaska where you will be forced to do Tae-bo calisthenics each morning to Hooked-On Classics wearing nothing but leg warmers and CAT Power baseball caps. Big Brother is watching you, even if he has Pabst Blue Ribbon on his mind. You have been warned.

Mike Gebert says:
October 11, 2010 at 11:44 pm

Late in the day to comment, but the fact is, Gilbert’s career is not terribly different from many silent stars. Awkward first couple of movies, actually pretty good in the next few* ... but by 1933 or 1934, sound had produced its own new stars, at post-Wall Street crash wages, and the expensive silent stars either saw their contracts not renewed (Richard Barthelmess) or decided to take life easy (Colleen Moore, Mary Pickford) right about then.

* Gilbert is fine opposite Garbo in Queen Christina, and really good as a rotter in Downstairs. That said, he’s definitely less colorful in talkies than silents. I recommend the recently rediscovered Bardelys the Magnificent, which is fine swashbuckling fun with a tongue-in-cheek edge.

Fred says:
October 28, 2010 at 11:04 am

“Also, the phrase, “big girl panties”.”
Also “granny panties”...
Someone's burning leaves. It is forbidden, of course. Which is possibly why someone is doing it.

They're falling in great quantities now – a tree in the backyard shed most of its foliage over the weekend. Dry brittle shriveled things, curled up as if warding against a blow. The rest of the trees are proceeding at a more civil pace, as if enjoying the slow turn, showing off. The evergreens are ignoring everyone as usual. The late afternoon sun sets everything on fire. The breeze at night rummages through the piles, looking for something. This would all be much less enjoyable if it hadn't hit 80+ for two days, and the mid-seventies on Sunday – October is a joy when it's warm. You don't begrudge the loss of the green; summer now seems like a rather shallow idea, a song with one note.

Saturday some strangers showed up on the porch. One of them had grown up in the house, and wanted to know if we wouldn't mind if she had a look. She was accompanied by her husband, who had been her high school sweetheart – they had their first kiss right here, on the steps.

Sure, you're going to say no to that.

She lived here in 1938. The neighborhood hadn't changed too much – aside from one modern house, nothing new has been built here since the 20s, or early 30s. It's just as leafy, although of course all the trees have been replaced, except for the biggest ones – saplings in her day. She was amazed at how
much the house was different, in places, and how it was exactly the same. The living room was just as it was. The dining room. The kitchen, though – what was now the dining area was the Maid’s room. (One day she said she came home from school and found the maid and the milkman going at it. That would be right where the kitchen island is now.) Upstairs was different, too – the master bedroom was where the kids slept, all four; my studio was her parents room. The windows were the same.

I learned that the marking on the window frame – XIV – was not the date of the house’s construction, but a notation to correlate the frame with the removable windows we take out in the winter. I still have those, and showed them to her: they were the same they had back then. The back bedrooms weren’t there, then; one was an open porch, the other a screened porch. This correlates with my suspicions; they were walled in around the late 60s – early 70s, with baseboard heaters instead of the radiators the other rooms have.

What about rumors that bootleggers ran an operation out of the house in the early 30s? She said that’s what she’d been told, too. So after the Candy Maker left the house, it passed through some questionable hands before their family took it over for two decades.

They were very happy to have seen it again. I’m glad. It can be somewhat sad, no? It’s your old house, but it’s dressed up in a stranger’s clothes, and it doesn’t really know you. I was lucky – my dad held on to the family house for a long time after I left, so I got to know it from another perspective, and watched as it gradually became something else, until my old room was another room, the things on the shelves I’d left as remote as items in an antique store. Of course, if I’d found them in an antique store much later, they would have been old friends, long lost. You have to lose things for a while to get to know them again.

Saturday night we went to a place that has a lot of rusty stuff on the wall, indicating the authenticity of its bar-be-que. It’s Famous Dave’s, the original, and pretty darned good. But there’s a wall of matchbooks that makes me weep. They’re all from the 20s and 30s, and other the years half have been rubbed off and ruined; the rest are doomed.

Don’t know if they used to staple matchbooks to the wall for decor in the rural south.

Then ice cream at a little neighborhood place. A patio, a fountain, twilight – the sort of thing you do not find in the ‘burbs, and one of the things that reminds us why we live here. Not to get all boastful about it. But it’s really the best place when it’s not trying to kill you with extreme cold.

Home, today:
Since some people have asked me about the new Gap logo, here's my suggested replacement:

Lacuna

You can make your own here.

I can easily see how the new Gap logo was chosen. It had to be as simple as the previous logo, and be as recognizable from a distance as up close. It was
also important that it had to look clean. Unfortunately, the more you look at it, the more it seems to be an incoherent statement made by someone with severe brain injuries. GAAAP blugh GAAAP The little blue box is just precious; someone actually held that out as a link to the old logo, which is like saying it recalls the previous logo because sans-serif type is like serif type, inasmuch as both have the word “serif.”

**Another Old Thing** goes: a reader passes along the sad news that a storm took down the diving lady in this old motel.

While we’re at it, I salute this fellow:

**Today**: Matchbook Museum, and four more pages of LA Dining 62. See you around the usual places.
Pass it along, if you wish

54 RESPONSES TO a visitor

Andrea says:
October 12, 2010 at 5:37 am

Roman numerals on windows: That's peculiar! Our late-1940's New York house, which still has its original windows, uses the same system to keep track of which storm window goes where. It always struck me as an oddly Classical touch for a post-war tract home. I suppose Roman numerals are easier to carve into the frame with a chisel than Arabic numerals are.

Ross says:
October 13, 2010 at 3:40 am

Hmph. Seems I'm the first to react to the latest LA Guide pages:

HOLY BALLS! Keely, The Kingston Trio _and_ Brubeck's classic quartet in one show?! Blast it, where did I leave those time machine keys…?

Fred says:
October 13, 2010 at 12:15 pm

Am I the only one who never see James' Twitter link? All I ever see is “Error: Twitter did not respond. Please wait a few minutes and refresh this page.”

MamaFish says:
October 15, 2010 at 7:37 pm

I know I'm late to the party – been a long week and just now got the chance to catch up on all I've missed. I read the bit about how you have to lose things for awhile to get to know them again and it brought to mind something that happened a few years ago.

When I was a child my father had a collection of “bookshelf games” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/3M_bookshelf_game_series): Breakthru, Feudal, and TwixT were my favorites. Anyway, I loved playing Feudal and Breakthru the most. I distinctly remember being bored, taking Feudal off the book shelf, and playing with the figures (knights and pikemen and such). I remember coloring in the line drawings of the different pieces on the black & white instructions with my favorite blue markers (various shades), because I was 9 and that's the kind of thing you do when you're 9. Anyway, years later when my mother moved to Virginia she sold the games along with many other things she no longer wanted. Fast forward several years – I was in my 30's, wandering around an antique show at the fair grounds, when I spotted a couple of old bookshelf games – Feudal and Breakthru. They reminded me of how much fun I had with them as a kid, so I bought them, thinking myself lucky to have discovered another set.

When I got home I opened them up to see if my memory matched reality…..and the Feudal set's instructions had the line drawings colored in blue marker (various shades)! Not only was it a set of book like my dad had when I was young – IT WAS the set he had! 20 years and several hundred miles later, I had them back!
It's warm. It's shorts-warm. Lemonade-warm. This cannot last; we all know that. But it still feels like a pardon, not a stay of execution. Monday night I spent some time at the mall, and when I walked outside at eight it was just delicious. Took the highway home, turned up the music, rolled the window down, floored it, and drank it all in. Hit a curve and pulled some Gs. Probably the last such night of the year, and all the sweeter for it.
Sunday my daughter opens her computer, and the screen won’t come on. Worked fine an hour ago. Now, an expanse of starless black. I put my ear to the machine; daughter asks what I am doing.

Many buffalo, I say. Going west.

What?

I'm listening for the drive to see if it's spun up. It has.

What about buffalo?

Never mind. So the drive's working. I mash some keys, get an outraged beep; the system's up. I plug it into a monitor. Nothing. I go online, knowing exactly what I will find: a message board with the following exchanges

hi i turned on my computer and its not turning on, the screen is dark. help!!!

PS its a mac

reply from helpful person: I assume you checked the brightness keys? If that's not it, you might want to shine a flashlight on the screen and see if you can detect the desktop – sometimes the screen brightness resets to zero. It can be a pain to call up the systems preferences, but it can be done. Hope that helps!

reply from the realist: It's probably your logic board. Hope you're inside the warranty.

I suspect the realist goes into every forum and says “it's probably your logic board.” Just to bring everyone down. But it usually is, isn't it? What you want to read is this:

Hi – I have a MacBook Pro 17” model bought in the spring of 2007, and the video just went out. It's out of warranty, of course. Anyone else have this problem?
Reply: Yes, I had the exact same problem with that model. It’s a defect in the video card. Apple has agreed to replace it free of charge, no matter if you’re in warranty or not.

So I braced myself, found a page, called it up, and more or less I got the exchange above. It linked to a page on Apple’s support page that confirmed the free repair. I made an appointment at the Genius Bar, took it in Monday night, explained my suspicions to the tech; he said “that’s my diagnosis too,” checked the model number, and said “we have the part – it’ll be a couple of days. No charge!”

The brain is odd: you suspect you might have to pay for something, and it turns out you don’t, and you feel like you have a little extra money in your pocket. Since I needed some new jeans I headed over to the Gap, and was surprised to see a sign that said 40 percent off everything. Everything! Yes, those preposterously overpriced jeans were now reasonably priced – buy two! I bought one. At some point in your life a price gets fixed to particular items; for me, jeans should cost about $29. I don’t know why. At some point the 30-dollar Rubicon was forded; at some point I goggled at $39.50, but when it went over $50 I thought the world has gone mad. If one was conspiratorially minded you could suspect the company thought “let’s invent a new store whose prices are the same as ours used to be, jack up our prices, drive half our business to the new store and gut the wallets of the brand-conscious shoppers who wouldn’t be caught dead in the cheap stuff.” And so Old Navy was born.

Went over to Macy’s, because they’re having a sale on comforters. (Items that caustically describe your faults and the inability you’ll overcome them, human nature being depressingly immutable, were not on sale.) Everything was ugly and hence of no comfort at all – we’re back to black with metallic stripes, it seems. That will go nicely with the black lacquer furniture and framed picture of a panther I don’t have. The sheets were ridiculously priced as well, and I wanted to stand there and say NO. JUST – NO. COME ON. Of course no one pays full price; everyone waits for the sales when the prices are sliced in twain, so you can comfort yourself – ah! that’s how it works – with the idea that you saved $200 on $4.87 worth of cotton. Forget it. Went down to Men’s Furnishings to see what was new in shirts. Nothing is new in shirts. Ties remain ugly, for the most part.

But you know what I want? I want a Tommy Bahama shirt. They probably don’t come in my size, because the only people who can afford them are big rich guys with steak-stocked guts. I’m not one of those Jimmy Buffett-types who wants to live the Parrothead lifestyle, baking away in the Keys in a shirt so loud it interferes with radio signals, but there’s something about a Tommy Bahama tropical-patterned shirt I like. They’re pre-Castro. They’re also $110, so you can be sure the Rabble aren’t wearing them. It’s like there’s a law that prohibits anyone from making tasteful tropical shirts and selling them at a reasonable price. You’d think someone would come up with such a line, since we’re not exactly in the era of lighting-cheroots with-ten-dollar-bills anymore.
The store also had some Ralph Lauren athletic wear, including thin shirts for running: $65. Running shorts: $50. There can’t be that many people around who want to spend that much for clothing whose sole purpose is to get stinky. There’s always a slice of the demographic that floats through economic troubles without worrying much, but there aren’t that many of them. I’d bet this stuff is usually sold to the people who want to think they’re richer than they are, because they wear the signifiers of upper-class status. They’re in debt up to their follicles, but in the previous decade some seemed to think that debt = wealth. If your credit card came with a 20K limit, that meant you had 20K, like it was in the bank.

Apparently that lesson has not taken purchase in the minds of retailers, or things are not as bad as they seem. I suspect the former.

I have to ask: in the boom times, did you feel carefree and whee-hah Moneybags silly? Like you could carve off a tenth of the house, perform some sort of transmutational alchemy that turned it into numbers, then spend the numbers on 500-thread-count sheets and boutique wine? I never did. Maybe I’m just cheap. Maybe I’ve seen a few booms and busts, and think “this can’t last” no matter whether the times are good or bad. I hate to say “everything is different now,” because that usually means no one learned any lessons and thinks that the rules have changed. The rules never change. But the baseline is different. The fantasy of effervescent affluence is over, and that’s a good thing. It doesn’t mean things don’t get better. It means “better” is redefined. At some point a chain coffee shop will roll out a seven-dollar fancy drink with shade-grown beans and sustainable-harvested whipped cream, and people will just laugh. Spare me the candy and draw me a jake, will ya?

–

Comic sins, here. See you in the usual places.

77 RESPONSES TO dreams come true

GardenStater says:
October 12, 2010 at 12:23 pm

Al: “It’s all jive if you ask me, but that’s how it works.”

Umm, yes. That is how it works.

I tried bartering chickens in exchange for gasoline, but it never seemed to work out.

hbear (roger h) says:
October 12, 2010 at 12:27 pm

Who says you have to join the “Apple community” to own a MacBook?
Bonnie_ says:
October 12, 2010 at 12:36 pm

I grew up wearing thrift store clothes and held my breath every fall, hoping that no one in school would point at me and shout “I gave that to the Salvation Army last year!” My sister and I made a solemn oath that we would make enough money to buy new clothes someday.

Well, we did, and after college we shopped like Julia Roberts in “Pretty Girl!” and a few years later we satisfied our fashion thirst and then it got boring. Now I spend my money on really nice electronic gadgets like my Mac and my husband’s iPhone and pinch pennies like mad on clothing.

No regrets. If I’d wanted to go to Disneyland instead of spending money on clothes, I would have. Instead I have great memories of fun times with my sister at the mall.

bgbear (roger h) says:
October 12, 2010 at 12:46 pm

This part of a longer rambling I wrote about how wealth is created and distributed. It was for my own understanding and I would be run out of town by most econ departments:

As to pricing. Well it does seem arbitrary, after all drinking water is far more valuable than gold to the crawler in the desert. That is the function of the free market, to put a practical and workable price on everything so that it can easily be exchanged with everyone feeling more or less like they made a profit.

The free market is like evolution of species, the survival of the fittest, it can seem at times harsh and unfair but, we know it is for the best if there is to be strong, healthy animals.

Anders Hudson says:
October 12, 2010 at 1:09 pm

I was in my mid thirties during the dot-com boom, but I was more or less raised by my grandparents who survived the great depression. While all of my colleges were dumping cash into risky off shore tele-com stock, I was socking cash a way in the mattress just in case the banks failed. Bought a bunch of nails and tomato seeds. Now that we are in a recession (that was not a result of that “soap bubble” thing people kept talking about evidently): I’m still shopping a Mexican supermarkets and buying cheap clothes that fit. Still, I can take a trip out of town with the wife on weekends when my friends are all giving their jet skis back to the bank.

Charlie Young says:
October 12, 2010 at 1:19 pm

Wramblin’ Wreck I see your point on cycling snobbery. I am a gear head when it comes to bicycles. I love all the newest and coolest stuff that comes out and admire the high tech clothing. I learned long ago, though, that turning your nose up at other cyclists who don’t fall for all that stuff and just enjoy cycling for the pure joy of it was pure foolishness. I hold anyone willing to get on two wheels to get somewhere in high regard no matter what they ride or what they wear.
MichaelsDaddy says:
October 12, 2010 at 1:33 pm

When I saw the reference to “Barnsworth” in the comic sins page, I immediately thought of Warehouse 13 and the fact that they call their communicator thingies Farnsworths. They could have just have easily called them Zworkins, depending upon which writer won the argument.

Doug says:
October 12, 2010 at 1:58 pm

I don't think having a had me down MacBook for a kid's unusual at all with Mac owners. One of the reasons I switched from Dell to Apple was that I was having to buy a new machine because they were physically falling apart and my wife's Macs still were in great shape. Even replacing her machine every 5-6 years, well, the old one actually still works, she just needed more horsepower. My old Dells? Forget it – it's all duct tape and if you don't hold it at just the right angle the monitor flops closed.

bgbear (roger h) says:
October 12, 2010 at 2:16 pm

“Good news, everyone!” is something else that comes to mind with the name Farnsworth.

Bill Thomas says:
October 12, 2010 at 2:26 pm

And don't think I didn't hear Lando Calrissian at the end of toady's Comic Sins. Welcome, Leia.

Daniel says:
October 12, 2010 at 2:40 pm

Why do I always think “pants, 40 percent off!” is funny? It describes half the young guys walking the streets out here on the left coast: in one hand, a cell phone; in the other, a handful of pants being very inefficiently held up.

Aleta says:
October 12, 2010 at 2:46 pm

Try U.S Wings for your nice Aloha shirt. I bought my man three (he's getting #4 for Christmas), they wear well and look good and do not cost the price of a new Jaguar.
http://www.mokuman.com/pftrop2.asp

rivlax says:
October 12, 2010 at 2:47 pm

Years ago I began buying Lee jeans, and sometimes Wrangler. Lees are my favorite and you can get them for about $15-$20 less than Levis, and I think they're better jeans. At least they fit my middle-aged self better.
TWylite says:
October 12, 2010 at 2:50 pm

Naw, everything will be keen and super again if we just get up and at ‘em and give ‘em what-for with a bit elbow grease, spunk, moxie, grit, guts and stick-to-it-ive-ness. And if we reduce the marginal tax rates on long-term capital gains by 17%, allow for extended passive loss carryovers for green technology start-ups, and make sure marriage and family is defined as one man at the office working on the Johnson account, one woman in the kitchen making coconut-macademia cupcakes, one boy with freckles and three missing teeth, one girl with a pink frilly dress, one dog named Blackie (with black hair, of course), and one cat named Mister Tibbs. Only then will we take America back to a time of reasonably sized sentences. Thank you, good night, and God Bless.

rivlax says:
October 12, 2010 at 2:51 pm

These comments on jeans reminded me of something my mother asked me in about 1971, after I had gotten out of the service and was visiting home. “How long are you going to keep wearing blue jeans?” That was back in that transition period where older folks still thought only kids and teens wore “dungarees” and adults wore slacks. I realized right then that there really was a generation gap, of a sort anyway.

bgbear (roger h) says:
October 12, 2010 at 3:01 pm

Why do I always think “pants, 40 percent off!” is funny?

There is a little “Are you being Served?” in all of us.

Now if you'll excuse me, I have to go and see if I can find Mrs. Slocumb's pussy.

lindal says:
October 12, 2010 at 3:04 pm

Tipping the wink to folks in the MSP metro: Opitz Outlet on Excelsior and 100 has actual name brand clothing and household stuff starting at 75% off retail and often 90% off retail. It's very much like TJ Maxx in that you can't go looking for a white dress shirt and expect to find it, but if you subscribe to their FB page you see what the new arrivals are every week. I picked up a great DKNY outfit for $24 that retailed for $170. Look expensive and be cheap; love it.

boblipton says:
October 12, 2010 at 3:50 pm

For good clothes I check out Sims regularly.... some good stuff if you know what to look for. Also I hit Brooks Brothers in August for summer clothes and in early January for sweaters. The results are not exactly cheap, but since the shirts last basically forever, they are good value.

I dosplurge on shoes, though. When you wear 14Ds....

Bob
swschrad says:
October 12, 2010 at 3:55 pm

OK, the secret is out.

I'm swschrad. and I live in an Apple Community ™.

we are required to wear black turtlenecks and be insanely great. we regard the latest iPhone as suspect, because almost all of them are black, and everybody knows Stuff in the Apple Community ™ has to be white. preferably with a clear layer over the top.

we commute to Ordinary Communities on the Time Machine. ctrl-alt-splat-666 is the secret code.

we create the winning lottery numbers, and there is always one digit off when we sent them your way.

you are not worthy, but we'll take cash, verified checks, Visa, Master, AmEx, Discover while you attempt to catch up.

Apple Communities ™.

better than gated.

Joe Broderick says:
October 12, 2010 at 4:00 pm

Good one, swschrad.

Gene Dillenburg says:
October 12, 2010 at 4:41 pm

My parents were raised during the Great Depression. They taught their kids the value of a dollar by teaching us the value of a nickel 20 times. So no, no splurging during flush times — which leaves one with the money to enjoy oneself in the lean times.

My local public school in Chicago was named after Farnsworth.

steveH says:
October 12, 2010 at 10:23 pm

Regional store chains…

The first time I heard any mention of the Bon Marché store was in a story (or three) by Robert Heinlein.

It was only a couple decades later that I found out he hadn't made it up, around the time they were absorbed by Macy's.

Except for the local library, we kids didn't get out much, I guess.

Patchthebun says:
October 12, 2010 at 11:34 pm

For $1300 they replaced the logic board and the graphics card. Apparently nvidia made defective graphics cards. Whatever though, I'm just glad we didn't have to pay $1300!

All this talk of Hawaiian shirts- I had no idea they were so expensive! My husband has a ton (over 30) but they were all free from his work, and he gets several new ones every year. It's a good thing too, because they tend to get torn and stained, lose buttons
and are generally in a sad state until I trash them.

Richard C. Moeur says:
October 13, 2010 at 12:11 am

For the last 2 decades (and 40,000 miles of riding), I have avoided the “cycliste” look, and pedaled around town (and farther beyond) looking like a Normal Person With A Styrofoam Hemisphere On His Noggin.

The bikes, though... they're distinctive. Yeah, that's the word for 'em. 😊

Have several jerseys that have been sitting undisturbed in the closet for quite a while. Not in a hurry to put 'em on anytime soon.

And if anyone else won't give me the time of day because of this? Their problem, not mine.

Others seem to agree with the “ride without looking like a ‘rider’ concept – for examples, see http://momentumplanet.com/bikestyle

Claire says:
October 13, 2010 at 12:12 am

Best place for sheets is Tuesday Morning. You can get seriously high thread-count sets for around 75% off. Still pricey, but totally worth it- they will last forever. I sound like a commercial.

BeckoningChasm says:
October 13, 2010 at 12:58 am

I hate to say it, but I will. No matter the computer or the OS, stick an external drive on there and keep all the data on that. Everything.

Now, if it's a PC, you can just throw it in the air and watch it crash while you get in the car to buy a new one. If it's a Mac, on the other hand, well, you can still throw it in the air and watch it crash but the wincing is going to be much, much deeper.

Hey, I do not hate Macs. But computer death-throes are a lot easier if you spent a few thousand less.

Dave (in MA) says:
October 13, 2010 at 4:51 pm

Wearing:
$3 faded red skivvy shirt from Ocean State Job Lot
$12.99 black dungarees from Costco.
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

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One of the consequences of summer's end and increased office hours: less time to read the Economist while sitting outside over lunch. So I am three issues behind. There are massive special reports on India and the World's Forests I have not read. Once you're one special report behind, it's over – unless it's something you're really interested in, you're not going to read it. You get resentful: I don't care that much about the World's Forests, okay? I mean, I do, I do, but not 18 pages worth. Thumbnail me. Good? Bad? Troubled, with signs of hope? Hopeful, with Many Challenges Ahead? Tweet it and we're good.

I do want to read about India, since it's one of those interesting places that's very important, and I will never go there. Pretty sure about that. Perfectly content to read about it from a distance. Is the Congress (I) party still calling the shots? I'd know if I read the piece. Is it Congress (Eye) or Congress (One)? Did I hallucinate that part entirely? How the hell did we get Bombay out of Mumbai, anyway? Some officious Englishman thought “Mumbai” sounded like you had a mouthful of porridge and marbles, and demanded something a bit more bombastic, perhaps. As it happens I am having tech issues with an Indian software company; bought a program for keeping track of your movies, one of those things aimed at the anal-retentive person who spends more time tagging and adding meta info than actually watching movies, and it's buggy as a Bowery mattress – quits on start half the time, has to be
reinstalled. They've asked for crash reports. There are no crash reports. It's just boots, the icon appears in the dock, then it shrinks and vanishes like a small kid who walked in on an epic parental spat. I’m sending them a small movie of the process. I will never get my money back.

ANYTHING ABOUT THAT IN THE ECONOMIST? No.

Good day. Somewhat cooler. The Kindle arrived, and I don't like it. I’m sure I will come to like it, but for now I am underwhelmed. When you’re used to the iPad version, it's gorgeous; the pages turn. On the Kindle the page flashes, goes all black, then changes to the next page. It's very fast, but it's like being photographed by a Satanic flashbulb. I got it because you cannot read an iPad in direct sunlight, and it carries a charge that lasts for, oh, the amount of time it takes for 12 issues of the Economist to pile up, and I used Amazon credit. The iPad is better for reading, except in the aforementioned sunlight. I like holding it better, and using my thumbs to swipe.

There’s something that wouldn’t have made sense a few years ago.

Anyway, the Amazon shipment also brought the new book by Rick Riordan, an author my daughter loves. Get this: to celebrate the publication of the book, the author and publisher had a big webcast from some parking lot somewhere, decked out with big logos, with throngs of kid-fans and characters in costume. She was so excited, she almost dissolved; she read a page that gave suggestions for making your own webcast party, like labeling food “ambrosia” and drinks “nectar,” so she did exactly that. “I feel kinda stupid but it's fun,” she said. What to have for ambrosia, though? The food of the gods? Earlier that day I’d been to Kowalski's, the grocery store, and got a gratis sample of some White Cheddar Cheese popcorn. It's sink-to-your-knees-and-weep-with-gratitude good. I gave a few kernels to my daughter; she declared it Actual True Ambrosia, stuck the label on the bag, and went up to her room to watch.

The webcast started a little shaky – someone forgot to cut the mike on the event's organizer, so we heard backstage chatter, and someone forgot to turn down the soundtrack, so the music drowned out the voice over. We live in a day when books have soundtracks. But then the author took the stage and answered questions for an hour, and my daughter watched the whole thing, rapt.

You should do this for your next book! she said. I told her I was, sort of; there will be a promotional video for the “Falling Up the Stairs” ebook – and by the way, I hope you don’t mind if I release it in Barnes & Noble “Nook” version first. I’m sure there's a PC / iPhone / Android app for the Nook, right? The cut is so much better, and I can make more money if I price it cheap. Sixty-five percent of a book under ten bucks goes to the author. Amazon is 70% them, 30% me. You can see my dilemma. Anyway, I should shoot the exteriors this week, before it gets too cold. Yes: exciting exterior scenes of the two apartments where the book was written! Plus so much more.
What, I don’t know. Well, no, I do; buried in the basement is the book I wrote while I was writing the book, my attempt to keep all the character and plotlines straight. I still map these things out by hand, even though there are software alternatives. Yes, I’ve tried them. They don’t work. But I have a strange throwback attachment to paper that belies my super-cyber meta-organized uber-tagged information ecosystem. For example. Every weekend I draw up a list of the things I have to do the coming week. It looks like this. The top list and three boxes are for web updates, and the boxes indicate “laid out,” “written,” and “posted.” Below that are various daily jobs.

Pathetic, eh? But a to-do program just doesn’t provide the pleasure I get checking off the boxes, and looking at the list at week’s end and saying: that’s what I did.

Now to go do something else. I’m also watching “Orson and Me,” a movie about Orson Welles and someone who is not me. The fellow who plays Welles has a smashing entrance; looks like him (until you realize he doesn’t, but then he does), talks like him. It’s remarkable. You can tell the movie takes place in the 30s, because the saturation slider was moved to the left about 20 points. Washed out color = 30s, you know.
Today in Black and White World: an interesting little 50s sci-fi movie with a rare screen appearance by a fellow whose voice, like Orson's, you surely know. See you around!

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!

54 RESPONSES TO i'm behind on the economist

@angiebee says:
October 14, 2010 at 12:16 pm

FYI...Amazon apparently updated their Kindle-publishing pricing structure last week, now offering a 70% royalty option. Here it is: http://forums.digitaltextplatform.com/dtpforums/entry.jspa?externalID=393
Stewart says:
October 14, 2010 at 1:05 pm

Go for the e-book with the author profits, no argument there! But but but, how about those of us who are still in the dead-tree world? I trust there will be a version of more heft than electrons?

DensityDuck says:
October 14, 2010 at 4:55 pm

Yeah, I'm surprised that five of the first seven comments weren't about how Amazon has a 70% royalty option.

Although...there's some cosmic-level strings attached. It's 70% of the price...but it can't be more than $9.99. And you can't charge more on Amazon than you charge on other sites. And if you sell a printed version of the book, the ebook price can't be more than 80% of the print book price. And it can't be “primarily public-domain material”, and Amazon decides what that means.

The other option is...35% royalty. So I'm guessing that either A: James wants to sell for more than ten bucks, or B: James figures that it's “primarily public-domain material” and therefore ineligible for the high-rate royalty.

Denis C. says:
October 15, 2010 at 5:20 pm

Bombay is the anglicization of “Buon Bahia” (Good Bay – I also read Good Ocean), the Portuguese name for the city. It is just a coincidence that Mumbai (the name is derived from Mmnba Aai-the deity worshipped by Koli fishermen) was chosen as the new name.
WHY A STORK?
A lost cultural reference, alas. Plus: Listen! [...]
I take a picture of the dog every day now.

Because you never know. But as I tweeted earlier, he's full of vim. Years ago he might spend the afternoon up on the low bench by the front windows, watching the world, but he's content to snooze on the rug in the dining room. If I go outside to work he follows and plops down in the grass and that's fine.
too. When it's dinner time he's alive, and orating as ever; such an aria of wheedling he makes. He trots around the table, sits, sighs through his nose, stands, warbles some more – and then demands the walk. Off we walk. He trots. A year ago he plodded; every step seemed a chore. The drugs gave him life again. Tonight, like last night, he ran up the long flight of stairs – no, not the effortless bounce of yore, but he had the desire to get inside to see if there might be rice, and his legs poured it on.

Which is why it's amusing when he turns to me at the end of the night, puts his paws on the steps, and looks back: you're going to pick me up, right? I do. And he still complains. When I put him on the bed he snorts with the insult of it all.

I've known old dogs. They retreat. They slow down – as he did last year – and they display only passing interest in the things that once intrigued them. They smell something only to confirm that it's just a smell. Other dogs are annoyances. The master of the pack gets a weak wag when he returns to the den. The ears are gone and the eyes are cloudy and the nose is naught but hints and whispers.

Well. Tonight we were walking on the route, and there was someone ahead with two dogs. Two young dogs full of pep. New to the world, romping in the dusk. One of them sat down and stared at Jasper. He stopped. His ears went up, and he pricked with interest. We took the alley route so we didn't have to have an encounter, and he had an extra bounce in his trot as we walked up the slope. It's such an interesting world.

He will see another spring.

As I mentioned yesterday, I was watching “Orson Welles and Me.” Or did I say “Me and Orson Welles”? Same thing. Didn't know that the lead callow youth, the Me, was Zac Ephron, heartthrob and son of Nora. He's okay, I suppose, but the strength of the movie is the parts, not the sum, and the pleasure of seeing a reasonable reincarnation of Welles strut around and cock an eyebrow. Who knows if it's real? It meshes with the myth, the dazzling talent, the enormous self-regard, the nimble mind, the Olympian confidence, the germ of genius buried in the loam of ego. You can see why sitting in a studio 30 years hence, your gut resting on your thighs, asked to repeat the commercial about peas – well. It would be difficult for mortal men.

Then again, he probably saw the voice-over work for horrible documentaries like he saw the “Shadow” work – a paycheck to fund the next important thing. There was always one of those around the corner. It's probably just as well that he grew stout, too – a thin Welles would have been a relic, a shadow on the margins, but a Gargantua Welles with a tree-trunk cheroot was a character.

The movie recreates the famous staging of Julius Ceasar, and gives you a flavor of what it must have been like – recasting Shakespeare in Fascist vocabulary in 1937. I am not an automatic fan of theatah movies, but you
have to be stony-breasted not to enjoy the opening night scenes, when the play ends and the audience rises.

There's a scene towards the end where the Me – the high-school kid – recites from memory a swath of the play for his English class, and it made me smile; when I was in fourth grade I was in a North Dakota State University production of “Ah, Wilderness,” playing Tommy. (I still have my notices.) Over the course of the endless rehearsals I memorized the entire play. I wonder if it's impossible not to. You could sit backstage in a locked room and you'd still know all the dialogue.

Oh, I have more than my notices. I must have clipped out every relevant item from the Fargo Forum.

Had a moment to spare today, and did some updates on the North Dakota small town site. The fuzzy-picture problem seems to have been on Google's end, and it's fixed. I floated over the map, looking for a sizable town – in NoDak terms, that means more than six intersecting streets. Lo:

Zap. The town of Zap, North Dakota.

When I was the kid at the Little Country Theater doing O'Neill, the grups were planning to go to Zap for spring break. They were impossibly old, you know – COLLEGE STUDENTS – and they were all talking about something called Zip to Zap. The Flower People would get on the magic bus and drive to the perfectly named down of Zap and it would be a happening. Says wikipedia:

> The Zip to Zap was an idea of Chuck Stroup, a student at North Dakota State University in Fargo. Stroup could not afford to attend the more traditional spring break festivities held in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

> Therefore he came up with the idea of what was to become known as the
“Zip to Zap a Grand Festival of Light and Love”. Stroup placed an advertisement in the student newspaper at NDSU, The Spectrum. His idea was soon embraced by college students throughout the upper midwest of the United States and states as far away as Texas and Florida,[2] thanks to extensive publicity in various college newspapers and in newspapers throughout the nation over the Associated Press wires.

The site names the dates as May 9 – 11. My program for the play says we ran from May 7 through the 10th; I imagine the more adventurous members of the cast got in the car after the last night and drove straight to Zap to get whatever Light or Love was still around.

It was in short supply.

Students began arriving in Zap on Friday, May 9, 1969. They quickly filled the town's two taverns. The demand for beer was such that the tavern owners decided to double the price. This action upset the students, but in the long run it did not matter since all the beer was rapidly consumed.[1] Drunken students took the streets of the small town. Vomiting and urinating on the streets by the students caused great concern among the locals, who quickly began to fear for their safety. The temperatures fell below freezing and the drunken college students started a bonfire in the center of town, using wood that was left over from a recent demolition project.[1]

The townspeople, led by Mayor Fuchs, asked the students to leave: some complied and some did not. What had started out as a spring break get-together quickly turned into the only riot in North Dakota’s history. Local security forces were overwhelmed and the cafe and one of the bars were completely destroyed.

Governor William Guy called in 500 troops from the North Dakota National Guard to quell the riot. Over 1,000 partiers were still in Zap when the guard arrived on the scene at 6:30 am, although just 200 of them were still awake. The guardsmen with fixed bayonets roused the hungover students. There was little resistance to the dispersal.

Damage from the riot was estimated to be greater than $25,000. These bills were ultimately paid by the student governments of North Dakota State University and the University of North Dakota.

Why am I not surprised that this exists? It does.
There’s a quote towards the end that sums up so much: “They upped the price of beer to fifty cents. If they’d given us a couple acres out of town there wouldn’t have been any problem.”

Because all towns just have a couple of acres they can give to a bunch of people who show up and complain about the price of beer. This isn’t to say Hippie culture is drunk and violent. I attended a Rainbow Family gathering in 1990, and it was completely peaceful. Anarchic and sloppy and eventually smelly, but no one burned down anything on purpose.

**So.** No updates today; saving it all up for the Massive Friday Burst. Now to work on a few things – column’s mostly done, the boxes are checked, and maybe a bit of novel work.

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Pass it along, if you wish

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49 RESPONSES TO *role filled in play*

Orebaugh says:
October 14, 2010 at 1:09 am

I don’t remember the Sixties, so I must have been there.

Actually, at Zip time I was 5 and living in New England. If I’d wanted to go, Mom and Dad probably wouldn’t have let me.

Ross says:
October 14, 2010 at 2:43 am

“…the more traditional spring break festivities.” Traditional for whom, exactly? I never heard of what people now think of as “Spring Break” until years after I got out of college—and no one I &
my older siblings grew up with ever heard of it, either. It was just, if you had money, you might go on vacation over Easter break, but even that was usually a family deal around here. When, exactly, did the most degenerate version of that trip become the norm? (In college, the only people I knew who went to Mexico over Easter were the pre-med students risking their own health to study parasitology in some not-on-the-map village in the hills.)

As for Welles, he admitted freely that every job he took post-studio went to fund his indie films. That's why some of them have such discernable sections to them: he often had to put filming on hold until more money came in.

Poagao says:
October 14, 2010 at 3:00 am

Every time I hear about Orson Welles, I remember what my great aunt told me when I asked her what he was like when she played a bar girl in Citizen Kane. “He stunk,” she said. “He always reeked of alcohol.”

Fred Baumann says:
October 14, 2010 at 6:01 am

“I take a picture of the dog every day now.” That's a great idea. I've enjoyed each and every picture of Jasper you've ever shared, even though I'm not much of a “dog guy.” You write about him as movingly as any other member of your family, which is saying a lot.

Enjoyed the embedded Zap mini-documentary, too. My favorite was the salt-and-pepper sage in the matching sweater — a period fossil like myself — gassing away about how since it was “just a month or two before Woodstock,” ergo there must have been “something in the air... some sort of sense that the tribes ought to be gathered.”

Sheesh, I hope all that Kool-Aid tastes good! The only thing I recall “in the air” at that time was especially strong smelling in the back of Mike Wale's black van in our high school parking lot, where the clouds of smoke rolled out during the lunch hour.

NCWood says:
October 14, 2010 at 6:31 am

And Chuck Stroup is today the president of a bank in Hazen and all-around civic leader.

Richard C. Moeur says:
October 14, 2010 at 6:43 am

We zipped around Zap on a cold gray day on last year's road trip thru North Dakota. Stopped in Beulah & Underwood instead. We noted that North Dakotans are some of the nicest folks around — must be because they know they have all those missiles, & can get even with you later if needed. 😁

GardenStater says:
October 14, 2010 at 8:23 am

I've never understood the mentality of people who, when they don't get their way, decide to destroy and/or vandalize other people's property.
Kati says:
October 14, 2010 at 8:26 am

To people named things like “Zapp” and “Zapf,” I doubt that a town named “Zap” was considered particularly hilarious—the same for “Zip.” But what do I know, I’m from Michigan, where “Hell” does a respectable tourist business.

Brisko says:
October 14, 2010 at 8:32 am

@ GardenStater

It’s the same mentality of monkeys (seriously, if you’ve ever had a monkey you’ll understand) and two year olds.

“If I see it, I want it. If I want it, it’s mine. If I can’t have it, no one can.”

Kate says:
October 14, 2010 at 8:43 am

Were you kidding about Zac Ephron being the son of Nora Ephron? I believe her two children are Bernsteins.

Chris says:
October 14, 2010 at 8:56 am

Your clip reminds me of Jon Lovitz’s director character on the Simpsons: “Play Enjoyed By All”

Bigcountry says:
October 14, 2010 at 9:29 am

Is there a marker on the site in Zap, commemorating the day when 500 National Guard troops woke up some drunk college students on spring break, and asked them to leave?

Not exactly Kent State, but still . . . .

Ron Ramblin says:
October 14, 2010 at 9:31 am

Full of country goodness and green pea-ness.

Scott says:
October 14, 2010 at 9:55 am

Not Kent State indeed. Yet, just like the petulant college brats in Zap, the students at Kent State also liked to riot and set things on fire.

swschrad says:
October 14, 2010 at 10:19 am

I have it on good authority (Steve Stark) that “completely destroyed” is rather overstating the point. some bar booths that were rather wobbly kind of broke up and got tossed into the fire.

I was Faculty Affairs Editor at the Spectrum at the time (no, I didn’t
catch any in the act) and it all seemed rather overplayed. a kegger
without bringing your own kegs went blah, and folks drifted home.
a few got to stay the night in the county seat courtesy of the county
sheriff, and one or two didn't bail out until Monday.

if somebody had told the Zapmeisters ahead of time, there would
have been plenty of beer, and no issues, I suppose.

but no planning, word of mouth, the thing went 1970s version of
viral, and stuff happens.

I didn't go, aged 19 and just developing a taste for the hops at the
time.

Mark E. Hurling says:
October 14, 2010 at 10:28 am

It wasn't just Kent State and Zap that the highly charged hormones
of youth erupted into insanity that Spring of 69. Southern Illinois
University blew up so big after Kent State that the quarter was
declared over 6 weeks early. Everyone was sent home after 10 days
of sporadic disorder that had first 400 Illinois State Police who had
just finished getting the University of Illinois back into some
semblance of order and boy were they pissed and loaded for bear.
Then for good measure the Governor sent in 4000 National Guard
troops with tear gas spraying booms on their helicopters. So yeah, I
remember the 60's and my cohort of misbehaving Boomer brats all
too well.

Pencilpal says:
October 14, 2010 at 10:49 am

It's been my experience, through many community theater
productions, that any grammar school-aged kids involved ALWAYS
memorize all the lines of all the characters well before any of the
adults are off-book. Not sure if it's because they've been learning
language by ear for more years than by reading, or if they just so
love to show up the grownups.

GardenStater says:
October 14, 2010 at 10:59 am

@swschrad: Take note: “Local security forces were overwhelmed
and the cafe and one of the bars were completely destroyed.”

Also: “Damage from the riot was estimated to be greater than
$25,000.”

Sounds like more than a couple of busted-up barstools to me.

You're probably right: If the good citizens of Zap had received some
advance notice, they probably would have stocked more beer. But
from what I could tell, they had already planned a big feast for them
the day after.

I don't care if it was less damage than everyone thought—you don't
go into someone's home (uninvited, no less) and then damage it
when you aren't pleased with the reception you're getting.

fizzbin says:
October 14, 2010 at 11:27 am

The Hippie-Yippie-Dippie Days were way overblown by the press.
None of my friends/classmates went in for that crap. I was just back in the World when Kent State happened. When I heard about it, I was torqued that the FNG had fired into a crowd exercising their right to dissent. Then I saw the films (no tape at that time) of the NG trying to execute an orderly withdrawal, only to find themselves at the wrong end of a boxed canyon and being bombarded by rocks and bottles. I looked at the hate on the faces of the effing sissyboy college students and thought: If I were there I wold have fragged your candy-asses.

I guess even then I was a grumpy old man. I'm much better now: I just have a virulent dislike of collitch stewdents 😐

fizzbin says:
October 14, 2010 at 11:31 am

GardenStater – I believe the $25,000 is 1969 dollars. In 1972 I bought my first spanking brand-new car for $3,000.

fizzbin says:
October 14, 2010 at 11:38 am

GOOD GORT!!!! Undie Odor—somebody PLEEEEEESE rip my eyes out 😳

fizzbin says:
October 14, 2010 at 11:42 am

An another thing….if you don't wash the thingies that the undies cover, Luxing your undies won't make no never mind!

Wramblin' Wreck says:
October 14, 2010 at 12:09 pm

Just my opinion:
Niceness Quotient is inversely proportional to population density.

The nicest people I have seen generally come from low density rural areas (Wy and ND) while people from high density cities are dog anuses. (anuii?)

MikeHu says:
October 14, 2010 at 12:09 pm

If this link works right, it will take you to a contemporary “St. Petersburg Times” newspaper article about the Zip to Zap.”
http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=feST4K8j0scC&dat=19690512&printsec=frontpage
There's even a grainy photo.

MikeHu says:
October 14, 2010 at 12:12 pm

OK, actually it's page 8 of 52 for Google, and, I think, Page 6A of the original newspaper.

old unkajoe says:
October 14, 2010 at 12:47 pm
Chet Huntley and Floyd Kalber. Two guys who knew how to do the news.

GardenStater says:
October 14, 2010 at 12:58 pm

@fizzbin: Good points re: Undie odor. My first thought was “Dear God, didn't people always wash their undies back then? How many days did they wear them before laundering?” I'm glad I live in relatively stink-free times.

@Wramblin' Wreck: Your point re: population density is true, to a point. But I've always found that if I'm friendly to folks I meet, I get the same treatment in exchange, whether in the city or the sticks.

T. Lassiter Jones says:
October 14, 2010 at 1:02 pm

Rioting and setting things on fire because of 50-cent beer, as opposed to rioting because several of your fellow students were shot to death during a non-violent march. Hmmm. I don't think either riot is ethically justifiable, but I do think there is a difference there to be acknowledged.

Mark E. Hurling says:
October 14, 2010 at 1:15 pm

@fizzbin,

Now, now, ya' old fart. College students suffer from an inability to function in the real world. Our daughter is just about to find out what a harsh mistress (moon notwithstanding) that can be in the upcoming months as her senior year winds down.

RLR says:
October 14, 2010 at 1:21 pm

@Mark E. Hurling

Sounds like someone is preparing to convert the less-than-4-year-old pool room back into Prodigal Daughter's bedroom. 😊

juanito - John Davey says:
October 14, 2010 at 1:43 pm

Lileks
He will see another spring.

One hopes! It seems that Jasper entered your world 3 or 4 years before our lab Barnaby was preparing to leave ours. Jasper, to me, has always had two eras: the first puppy pics, where the ears weren't quite what they ended up being, and his current repose, with that head held regally high, ears attentive. Even in his dotage, he has always appeared keenly tuned to his surroundings. It has to be the ears. Any dog with ears like that seem to be Jasperesque to me.

So I affirm, let's look hopefully to another spring.
old unkajoe says:
October 14, 2010 at 1:53 pm

@GardenStater: My experience matches your own. If you're nice to people and are even a little bit interested in them, they'll be nice right back. Some of my best experiences have been conversations with NYC taxi drivers and diner waitresses.

Bonnie_ says:
October 14, 2010 at 1:58 pm

By the time I went to college, all of us were Reagan babies trying to get our degrees so we could make that shining city on a hill our own. My greatest desire was to put enough money together to buy a pleated skirt, an L.L. Bean button down shirt and Bass wejuns so I could look perfectly preppy.

I'm so glad I didn't have to go through the 60's.

Christopher says:
October 14, 2010 at 2:10 pm

Zac Efron (not Ephron) isn't Nora's son.

Chuck says:
October 14, 2010 at 2:44 pm

Didn't the organizers of Zapfest set up a web site for info? Residents could have posted events they were planning. Asked questions. Gotten volunteers. What? Haven't the internet been around forever?

Chuck says:
October 14, 2010 at 2:46 pm

Never underestimate the power of drunk college students. A few years back, the Democrats in Wisconsin proposed lowering the drinking age to 19 (or 18) in efforts to get back in power (Tommy Thompson era). But just then the students of UW-Oshkosh got drunk and rioted. That ended the talk of lowering the drinking age.

Chuck says:
October 14, 2010 at 2:51 pm

Kent State...I have a contrarian view. There was violence there that week. Small businesses destroyed, firemen attacked, buildings burned. And there were rumors that domestic terrorists were in town. The events were much more complex than the writers of history lead you to believe.

Elisson says:
October 14, 2010 at 2:59 pm

It's so nice to see someone use the word "vim" in an actual sentence.

Mark E. Hurling says:
October 14, 2010 at 4:17 pm

@Chuck, what you have described in the complexity of events for
Kent State is almost word for word what happened or believed to have been going on in the background at SIU that month also. It bears reminding all and sundry that Bill and Emily Harris, along with Bill Ayers (of Weather Underground fame) were all from the Midwest; Indiana and Illinois respectively.

**DensityDuck** says:
October 14, 2010 at 4:32 pm

Welles: I again quote Michael Caine about Jaws 4. “I have not seen the movie. By all accounts it is terrible. I have, however, seen the house the movie built for me, and it is fantastic.”

And, of course, there's Frankie Munz's recent riff on the same theme.

And does anyone else find it wonderfully ironic that Orson Welles's last role was voiceover work for a cartoon movie about robots that turn into cars?

**fizzbin** says:
October 14, 2010 at 6:37 pm

While we're on the subject of undies...in the late ’70s results of a survey were released which revealed that the Germans changed undies once a day. The French changed their undies once a week! Jeez, I was conflicted because my ancestors were both Prussian and Norman. Of course, Normans were actually North Men (Vikings) and there is no record as to how often Vikings changed their undies, if ever 😄

@Mark E Hurling...I don't really dislike college stedwents – my kids all worked their way through various U's. But I have an image to maintain, heh.

**Chas C-Q** says:
October 14, 2010 at 7:45 pm

So, does that newly-discovered tape, featuring four revolver shots – about a minute ahead of the Guardsmen's volley – and shouts of “kill him!,” recolor anyone's notions about Kent State?

**Mark E. Hurling** says:
October 14, 2010 at 8:32 pm

Chas C-Q,

Do you have a link to this info?

**Mark E. Hurling** says:
October 14, 2010 at 8:40 pm

Disregard, found it.

Fascinating stuff.

**Sam L.** says:
October 14, 2010 at 11:41 pm

M E Hurling: RAH, RAH, RAHeinlein!
jamcool says:
October 15, 2010 at 1:43 am

In addition to his wine ads, Welles (who had a house in Sedona in the 70s) did tv ads for an Arizona flour mill pushing their product (the one whose silos still tower over downtown Tempe)

Jamie Moulthrop says:
October 15, 2010 at 12:18 pm

Funny- I just finished a WFB novel where the lead character was the editor of the NDSU student paper at the time and started the Zip to Zap. I guess that's where he got the inspiration. It's called " The Rake "... and no, it's not about gardening

commenter says:
October 18, 2010 at 12:28 pm

“Role filled in Play” is the best headline ever. Almost like very dry wit.

Fred says:
October 25, 2010 at 9:39 am

Ya, calling what the students were doing at Kent State non-violent is just a display of ignorance.
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?
Today in the ever-shifting autumnal landscape of Jasperwood:

Stopped off for a haircut on the way home. It’s such a production, getting your hair cut. In the olden times, it was easier, right? You walk downstairs from the office, turn left or turn right, walk a block, and there’s a barber shop. Three chairs and a wall-length mirror and blue Barbicide bottles. Pick up an Esquire and wait your turn. Now it’s different. You have to go to a...
shiny place with a wall of Product and the magazines are all aimed at women. Where are the old barbershops of yore, I ask? And the answer is: there's one six blocks south of my house and another one ten blocks to the west, complete with three stools and a wall-length mirror and a revolving pole outside, but I never get around to going there, because I think there might be parking issues.

Or so I realized when I was waiting today. C'mon, man, you're one of those guys who believes there's a virtue in the unalloyed manly folkways; why don't you go to the fargin' barber shop? It's right on the corner. Big sign. BARBER SHOP.

Perhaps because I'm worried someone would ask me about the Big Game. Or how the Team is going to do. I'd say “sorry, I don't follow sports,” and there would be a moment of silence – the clippers would cease their snicker-snick, the buzzing razor fall silent. Then the cutting would resume, but it wouldn't be the same. It would be great if barber shops advertised their conversational repertoire, let you know you could talk about this or that if you wished, and avoid the other thing. Barbers with particular expertise would be available during certain hours. Art History: 2 – 4 PM. Why 80s Music Is Unjustly Slagged: 6 – 6:35 PM. And so on.

Next haircut, I'm going to the barber shop. Not that today was bad; no. Quick and brisk and out-you-go. But I would like to wander into a place to have my hair cut, and not look at the clock on the wall and calculate how long it'll take before I can get back to . . . . to whatever it is I do. A place where you amble in and take your time. Hot towel on the face, sharp blade on your neck. Smells what ain't got nothing to do with no notes of hibiscus, son.

Or is this ridiculous? A desire for nostalgic affectation instead of efficient utility?

—

Busy day domestically, so this is it. But there are updates! To wit:

The Gallery revisits an old favorite, the Knudsen book, volume one. 100 Mysteries.

Hey! Back from the dead, it's Ghost Signs.

Bbeatplus, for members.

Strib column – not live at the moment, but scroll down to the “our voices” sidebar.

See you around – or see you on Monday.
66 RESPONSES TO a little off the top

bgbear (roger h) says:
October 15, 2010 at 2:07 pm

BTW, Knudsen does still make the best sour cream hands down even under Kraft Foods.

I grew up on Knudsen milk. I'll let you know if I get bone disease or not.

GardenStater says:
October 15, 2010 at 2:23 pm

@Dianna: Send us your address!

Chuck says:
October 15, 2010 at 2:51 pm

The ghost signs….one of my favorite is the “Nash Motors” one in Superior Wisconsin (north end, near Winter Street). I should take a picture and submit it next time I am there.

RexV says:
October 15, 2010 at 3:05 pm

I've been going to the same barbershop for over ten years now. I get my haircut each time by the little lady who owns the place with her husband. She knows how I want my hair cut and I get a consistently good cut each time. The maddening thing about the chains is that once I found someone who gave a good cut they'd moved on to another place.

And yes, there is almost nothing as relaxing as hot lather and a hot towel on the neck.

Andrew S. says:
October 15, 2010 at 3:39 pm

Who presents that mystery? The backdrop is the telltale design of RKO Pictures. Presumably no introduction was needed at the time.

boblipton says:
October 15, 2010 at 3:41 pm

Terry Fitz, those are good ones, but I prefer, when they start talking about football, to say either

“I haven't followed it since Pele retired.”

or “Is that the one with the funny-shaped ball?”

Alternatively, I say “Just cut my hair. Where's your copy of the Police Gazette?”

Bob

chrisbcritter says:
October 15, 2010 at 3:52 pm

When I was little I'd usually get a “Princeton” cut from Chris, the
Greek barber in Glenview, except for one time when I got a real short crew cut which my mother disliked even more than I did (of course, she didn't have to go to school with it!) Eventually Mom learned to cut our hair and she got very good at it; after I moved away I'd always let her give me a trim when I visited so she could dote on her first-born a little (and she never got on my case about the foot-long ponytail I had when I was going through my Native American period). Now I go to King Arthur's up here in YV; jovial fellow in a nondescript commercial building but it's got the old atmosphere (and chairs dated 1958).

Dave S says:
October 15, 2010 at 4:05 pm

Anyone who recognizes the picture of Phil on flicker above should give him a try. He likes old rock n roll trivia.

tobin says:
October 15, 2010 at 4:09 pm

Richfield barber shop – 2308 W 66th St. Can't be that far from your house and every time I've been there, a parking spot right in front. Good guys, good haircuts, and one time an old guy came in, went straight to the “secret” cabinet, and pulled out the dirty magazine that was there.

thiggs says:
October 15, 2010 at 4:09 pm

I go to an old-fashioned barbershop. If you want to talk about the game, they've got that covered. If you don't, they'll talk about whatever. Problem is, I just want to get a haircut. I've got no ready supply of banter. Bigger problem is, two of the staff are real hacks. So they stand there with an empty chair while I continue to wait for one of the guys who CAN give me a tolerable haircut. Awkward.

My wife said I should try the unisex salon where she gets her hair cut. The girl asked me dozens of questions about how I wanted the cut done. I don't know, that's your job! OK, she's trying to give me what I want, but I honestly don't know – just make me look good.

All through the 80s I went to a guy who set up shop back in the 70s as a ‘Hair Stylist’. I guess that was the style of the time. Appointments necessary. But he was a regular guy, a macho Italian who could talk sports, but also investments and business and politics. He'd just ask if I wanted my ears to show or not, then he'd give me a fantastic haircut that would look good for weeks longer than you'd expect. Too bad I moved to another state.

JeffdeCal says:
October 15, 2010 at 8:07 pm

Gave up the salons just six months ago and set out to find an old-time, masculine barber shop in my city. Went through a couple of different places, but I found a great little one-chair, one-man place, and now I can slip “my barber” into a conversation and mean it sincerely. I'm a man again. Go for it, James. Parking, phooey!
**swschrad** says:
October 15, 2010 at 9:03 pm

haven't been to a Jackalope-studded barbershop in quite a while myself. we have a chain two blocks down that I'm using.

I could go to the hardware store and ask 'em to see how close to my head the weed whippers go for free... ain't much hair left up there.... but my glasses are expensive, and if they get whipped up the wall, I'm sunk.

-0-

we got the estate house sold today, and came back home (to new home, in my city, not Dad's). anybody want a very friendly yearling cat who looks like he's been hunting for a living, check out the Enfield MN rest area. he was checking people out and walking back to the edge of the parking lot, and I think somebody dumped him. smelled cat on the wife and I, and was rolling on our shoes.

we'd have taken the thing, but last week our male Pumpkins about killed a cat that jumped the fence. Pumpkins and other cats, uhhh, not so friendly.

**Kev** says:
October 16, 2010 at 10:42 am

*All this being said, I will concede one thing to the salons: It's awfully nice to have a good-looking woman shampoo your hair.*

I've never been able to understand the concept of getting a shampoo at a salon; why would you pay someone to do something that you do yourself at home every day, for free? The woman would have to be really good-looking in order for me to pay for that. 😂

**shesnailie** says:
October 16, 2010 at 10:04 pm

_:v_ – now i have a sudden need for a biscuit...

http://m.facebook.com/album.php?aid=2029948&id=1504867971

**Brian Lutz** says:
October 18, 2010 at 12:16 am

I've been going to a chain place for my haircuts for quite a while now, but since I recently moved, I'm looking for a new place (even though I'm not much farther from the old place than I was before.) Being deep in the heart of yuppie territory there's no shortage of high-end froo-froo salons here, but not a lot of actual barbershops. There's one I tried for my last cut in an old converted gas station that has the look down, but ultimately it seems to be just the same old chain place wrapped up in a disguise. There's also a few scattered places that have included other services with the cut like scalp and shoulder massages or men's pedicures, but those places tend to be expensive. There's even a handful of the old-school barber shops out there, but those tend to be the really expensive ones. Then there's the really yuppie places that charge $45 for just a shave (I steer well clear of those.)

**Ross** says:
October 20, 2010 at 7:51 am
I've been with the same barber/stylist(either term suits him fine) since 1984, when his place(owned by a Greek barber) was in the same mall I was a tobacconist in. He also cut my Dad's hair for a while, which caused me to wait months longer than usual to see him after my Dad's passing, because I dreaded having to answer the inevitable “How's your father?” He's a fun guy(there was a lot of socializing amongst the mall-crawlers back then–I can remember once watching him, drunk as a lord, take a full half hour to find the door to the patio among the glass panels at the restaurant we all used to close nightly) and does a first-rate job, as long as he isn't distracted. Passed on the talent, too: his son spent some years as a stylist to the stars in LaLaLand, before coming back here to open his own place. I'll probably look him up when Rex finally retires. They don't do shaves anymore, for the reasons mentioned by the earlier posters.

As a small boy, Dad would take my brother & me to a fairly traditional barbershop(Tom & Jerry–both bald w/bad comb-overs, of course), where I was “Little Steve”, because the father-son resemblance. When he left home, I didn't get my hair cut for years, until my brother got fed up & bought me a gift certificate to that Ur-70s salon, “M'Lord's/M'Lady's”. You can picture it already, can't you: M'Lord's, upstairs, was tricked out in oppressively-heavy half-timbered stucco, black leather & chrome(like the Playboy Advisor columns come to life), album-oriented FM on the massive stereo components... To a kid my age(& poverty), though, it was something of a revelation. All the stylists were(stunned disbelief!) babes, and the smell of that shampoo...ambrosial(I only found a fragrance close to that once, before Mill Creek brand did away w/the supposedly hypocritical fragrances on their line–darned hippies). I loved it there, because they actually wanted me to look good with long hair(& when I say long, there's a snapshot of me looking like I'm sporting Charles II's wig talking to our bald HS choir conductor–talk about contrast). Back then, my hair when long was, I have to admit, impressive: colors like a beautifully-stained black walnut cabinet & the kind of natural waves women spend real money trying to achieve/maintain. When I finally had to cut it senior year for a part in a play, a photographer school chum of mine came along to shoot the event. He almost left in terror, though, when I told my regular stylist to cut it off & six 20-something beauties, all holding sharp implements, blurted out in unison, “Ooh! Can I do it?!”
A lost cultural reference, alas. Plus: Listen! […]

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?
The switch flipped again around 1 PM. What had been sunny and warm grew overcast in a minute; a wind came up and the temps went down. Rain came later. All the leaves fell off. Snow by five. Then an asteroid hit.

Well, no. But it went from being nicer than you’d expect to being just as bad as you might fear – not the weather itself, but the sure knowledge that the good days are gone, and the bleak raw grey November are approaching like a tank.

I turned off the Oak Island Water Feature today. There wasn’t enough water in the tank to make the fountain splash. Pulled the plug. Now that I think of it, the weather changed a few minutes later.

I had offended the Gods. Or pleased them. Who knows with those guys.

Friday night we did not have the usual pizza, or anything else; daughter was at a sleepover. But the dog believed it was Friday, since no food as being made; he took a sentinel’s posture at the top of the stairs, and waited.
Eventually I took him out for a walk, and he trotted along with a brisk pace; he not only matched me but beat me, and made me run for the last lap, because he believed that pizza would be present when we got home. It was not. This would have meant a bad weekend for him, except A) dogs do not know weekends, and B) Sunday night he treed a raccoon. For a 15 1/2 year old dog this is like Sean Connery appearing as a hero in an action movie.

Later Friday night I went to the Mall to get my laptop back from the Apple Store. Beautiful night. Across the parking lot, the big condo / hotel. The condo portion does not appear to be inordinately burdened with occupants.

I like the mall in the evening. More than ever it seems disconnected from anything serious or important. It's no longer the Locus of Life, since the era of consuming for its own sake has dissipated. It's almost a theme park. You get a certain nostalgia for the days when preposterously expensive ice cream and six-dollar coffee drinks were the natural right of anyone who had a
rectangular piece of plastic in their pocket. I had a nice chat with the Apple
guy who gave me my computer back, and we talked video codecs and
conversion programs. I know you're supposed to be able to change your own
oil, and that's the standard for being a man, but it's time the modern
equivalents got some respect.

Speaking of which, sort of: tonight at dinner Gnat was complaining about the
dullness of her knife, and gripped the blade.

“Don't pick up a knife by the blade,” I said.

“Why?”

“It's a rule. Always assume a gun is loaded and never pick up a knife by the
blade.”

“Oh.” She seemed impressed. Fatherly wisdom and all that. Then I
reconsidered.

“Except if you're throwing the knife. Then you hold it like this.”

“Why?”

“Because the weight of the handle gives it momentum when you throw it.”
I'm just making this up, but it sounds right.”

——

This doesn't fit anywhere, but I have to say it: you local Bleatniks have
convinced me to try my local barbershops. Stay tuned for Adventures in the
Land of Barbicide.

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So many things to get done this weekend; did so few. Did all the site updates,
wrote a Joe Ohio, finished the upcoming Travel section and redesigned the
North Dakota small town site, but that sounds like actual accomplishment.
Meh. Still formatting “Falling Up the Stairs” for Kindle et al, and finding out
how to do this without signing some deal that gives me .07% royalty is
annoying and confusing. One site will convert your book and put it in the
store but they'll take 25% of your 35%, but Amazon will give you 70% if you
sign a particular interminable disclaimer, and Borders will have a new
service that lets you publish easily and quickly for all the famous platforms
like the UPod or the Kandle or the Nanook, and B. Dalton's has a program for
selling ebooks to the dead. Also, there's the Apple iBookstore, which is like a
combination of Fort Knox and a nudist leper colony: you can't figure out how
to get in, and you're pretty sure you don't want to anyway.

It should be better, but it's not. It's understocked, and as long as there's Kindle
on the iPad, who needs it? Me, that's why: I want color. Kindle doesn't know
from color, as they say in old movies where people speak in tiresome
Runyanesque dialects that eschew contractions and derive their comic style
from gangsters who say things like “eschew.”
I’m getting used to reading on a Kindle, but I find it creepy that it shows pictures when it’s turned off. As far as I can tell I have no control over which ones are displayed. I had to turn the thing on and off again to get rid of a lousy picture of Emily Dickinson. Why would I want her on my reading device? Because she’s EMILY FARGIN’ DICKINSON, and hence I should say ohhh, she’s wonderful. How cool. Look at me! I am the sort of person whose electronical devices display pictures of cult poets.

Anyway. One success: getting my wife’s printer set up. I did this by buying a different printer. If you’ve been following the story: I bought her a printer. It did not want to talk to her computer. I took the printer back. I got another one. It refused to accept ink cartridges. I took it back. I gave my wife my old printer, but it decided that the ink cartridges were not official genuine HP cartridges, possibly because they were over a year old. Still, once a printer starts doing that, you have no idea what it’s capable of. So I used the store credit to get the cheapest possible HP printer ever made – six dollars more than the cost of replacement ink for the old one – because my wife prints fewer than 20 pages per year. If that. You might say: why not just let her use yours, and walk the file over on a thumb drive or via the local network? Heh: you’re a young feller, aren’t you? Not married? Didn’t think so. It’s a question of being able to just PRINT without doing anything else. That’s what Lola wants, and you know how that song goes.

So I got out the cords and looked at the manual. There was a sticker over the USB port, with pictures: the circle-red-slash over a picture of the USB cord being inserted, and then a picture of the CD with drivers inserted. The manual confirmed I SHOULD NOT UNDER PAIN OF DEATH hook up the USB cord before I have inserted the CD. So this I did. It thought a while. Then it said it could not be installed on this computer, because it was running 10.3, and it needed 10.5.

Sigh. Despair. I got out the disc for 10.5, fed it to the Mac Mini; for 30 minutes it made a sound like a rat trying to chew its way out of a wooden box, and then it said it couldn’t run 10.5 because it didn’t have enough RAM.

Sigh. Despair. In the end I got an old laptop I’d brought back to life last week while trying to reclaim some lost work stored in dead formats. Brought it up to the present, installed the drivers, and it’s happy. I’m about to make the first test print now. Be right back.

It works!

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**Matchbook museum;** four more pages in **LA Dining 1962**, with a tantalizing mystery on the final page. See you around.

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Pass it along, if you wish
56 RESPONSES TO *don’t take the knife by the blade*

**chrisbcritter** says:
October 19, 2010 at 12:06 am

Ah yes, the Ice House. I worked in a print shop in front of them on Colorado Boulevard from ’82 to ’90 and printed their tickets and flyers, so I got to know the managers Bob Fisher, Evan Fisher and Elaine Tallas. Real nice people. The folk music days were long over and it had become a comedy club; I saw some good comics there including Joel Hodgson, Dana Carvey, Dana Gould, Mort Sahl, Gary Mule Deer, a very young Jason Stuart (met him in a waiting room and we watched TV, making fun of Priscilla Presley's hairdo) and even Soupy Sales (standup and stories about his TV show but no pies). Lily Tomlin's *This Is a Recording* LP was made there. Check it out if you're in Pasadena!

**browniejr** says:
October 19, 2010 at 1:13 am

Bgbear- no! Similar looking guy though, later played trumpet for Carson ( Not Doc ...). The Systems Analyst was one of Gannon’s neighbors that came over to play cards, nod when Gannon told Joe he should get married and “settle down.”

**kbiel** says:
October 19, 2010 at 6:00 pm

Never ever load the CD/DVD included with a printer. The drivers will already be present on your computer, either OS-X or Windows 2000+, or will be easily retrieved from the Internets, usually from MS or Apple's servers. The reason they do not want you to plug in the USB first is that once you do you will find that the printer drivers installed automatically and the printer worked fine. Why is this a problem? Because then you get the drivers that were certified by MS or Apple without the extra bloatware they want to install on your system.

**Ross** says:
October 20, 2010 at 8:27 am

A small quibble, Genial Host: the “Doesn't know from ____” phrasing isn't Runyon-esque, it's immigrant English(specifically, Yiddish & German). Runyon's characters, being New Yorkers, combined these familiar constructions _with_ high-flown vocabulary & no contractions. It almost certainly grew out of an imitation of some powerful or popular local character(starting as irony or satire, becoming habit & later required speech--what my circle used to refer to as “Hi, Honey–I'm Home!” Syndrome) and organically developed its own rules & forms as any other in-crowd slang/shibboleth does.

**fizzbin** says:
October 20, 2010 at 11:16 am

Pardon the intrusion (he said as he intruded) but in order to turn off a Kindle (other than calling it Sony) you have to slide and hold the off button for 5 seconds. This will not only bypass the screen saver, it will extend battery life. Simply flicking the off switch puts the
Kindle on standby and draws power for awhile, necessitating recharging more often and subsequent battery replacement before its time...or whatever.

Your welcome.

CCH says:
October 22, 2010 at 7:17 pm

You can get rid of those creepy screensavers and replace them with better ones:

Mad Men is done. If you’re curious, my review, and various meandering thoughts, are over here at pajamasmedia. so I’m out of TV. Gave up on “The Event,” because it came down with a raging case of the Stupids early on, and nothing seemed particularly compelling. Aliens? Humanoid aliens, here on earth? No! Warring factions with different goals? You don’t say. There was so much cardboard in the characterizations you could wrap all the actors in twine and set them out on the boulevard, and recycling would pick them up without question. So now I have to go back and start watching some of the nine billion other shows I have recorded. Or just watch old movies. Or read.
Which I am doing: on the Kindle is “Romancing Opiates: Pharmacological Lies and the Addiction Bureaucracy,” which really sounds like a ripping yarn, eh? But it’s by Theodore Dalrymple, whose works are like intellectual rubbing alcohol poured on a self-inflicted abrasion. He’s a doctor, and has written several studies of British culture. Not for him the modern cant; not for him the therapeutic culture with its manufactured pathologies and gentle absolutions. It is your problem and it is your fault. His main argument in “Romancing Opiates” is simple: heroin addicts chose their path. Unless you believe there are needles flying around London, that is. I’m simplifying the argument, and he goes into great detail from his personal experience as a prison doctor – and I’m sure some would complain that makes his work anecdotal, not authoritative. Sure, he’s spent a lot of time with addicts, but he hasn’t read the latest research.

Trust me, he’s read it. I enjoy his style – he has a skill for mordant aphorism, and I had to laugh when the first chapter kicked off with “Heroin is the opiate of the masses.” (He rephrased Marx’ critique of religion, substituting heroin; amusing.) His assertions are undramatic and calm and straight-forward, but the effect is like dashing a bucket of cold water on hot embers.

Also began, from the beginning, the Sherlock Holmes stories. I don’t know why I’ve never read them before; it might be some old prejudice about the Victorian era, a time for which I felt respect but little affinity. It’s the hats, I think. Tall hats. I blame myself for this, but also because history has failed to give us a compelling narrative that bridges the end of the 19th century and the start of World War One. Damn you, History! Be more novelistic! I’m joking – ha ha! – but I’m not. For me, there’s the end of the 19th century, and then there’s a big yawning void until Princips knocks off the Archduke and the wide red ribbon of the 20th century begins to unfurl. I’m sure there’s an exhaustively documented history about the era. I’m sure a great many important things happened whose impact can be directly traced to something sitting on my desk today. But it’s as if the century changed, everyone held their breath, the Titanic sunk, and then there was war.

The Holmes books now seem quite modern, something that comes from being older and realizing that time moves differently than you think it does when you’re younger. The centuries are not great stone blocks a mile wide and a mile high. They’re staircase steps.

I’ve only read the first one. But I did listen to a few BBC radio plays, “The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes” – new stories, wonderfully acted, with only a little bit of I-say-now-Holmes-what’s-that fuddleheaded Watson; he’s more of the sharp companion of the stories.

Perhaps that’s why they don’t seem so ancient: Watson was a veteran of the Afghan wars.

And now to do my side plank exercises. I’ve already done the daily step session – 30 minutes of vigorous stepping! Watched Miami Vice, the pilot episode. Loved that show; still can remember when it was SO TOTALLY RAD
because it had pop music and synth music and pastel colors, instead of cops in brown polyester suits with lapels the width of a 727, sitting around grimy rooms with junkies chained to the radiator and some bald Greek guy shouting CROCK-AH. (This would usually be the time when I tell the anecdote about teaching Telly Savalas about Mac laptops, but another day, perhaps.) The pilot contains a scene with the fellow who’d play Manny in the regular series, a scrappy wheedling informant I haven’t seen since he was eaten by a T-Rex in the “Jurassic Park” sequel. It was so realistic that casting agents may have just assumed he was dead.

Here's a little ad I rescued from the fiche the other day.

Industrial fatigue! The leading symptom of industrial disease. The opposite of industrial fatigue is Farmer Fatigue, of course; that can be cured by heading into town and buying some Dry Goods, and perhaps Dr. Brown’s Pancreatic Tonic. Which leads us to North Dakota Small Towns on Google; the latest installment is here. (Bizarre: in preview a bunch of garbage is added to the url that's not in the code. If you have this problem., just backspace to the end of .html. Sorry! Don't understand.) I redesigned the entire site for reasons known only to me. And anyone else who notes how I can’t leave well enough alone.

See you around in the usual places!

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74 RESPONSES TO *watson, the needle*

grs says: October 19, 2010 at 11:55 am

*James, you don’t have to read the Holmes stories in order. Pick a few of the best ones... ‘The Empty House’ (Holmes comes back from the dead)*

Yikes! That would be like reading The Lord of the Rings trilogy beginning with the third book. (And good job revealing a plot point.) There was a progression to the stories. You lose a lot of context if you don’t read them in order.
James, a great book on the transition from the 19th to 20th Centuries and the events leading up to (and making inevitable) World War I is Dreadnought, by Robert K. Massie.

**PersonFromPorlock** says:
October 19, 2010 at 11:57 am

Incidentally, for all who enjoy Sherlock Holmes stories, August Derleth's 'Solar Pons' series is an excellent pastiche of them and there are even more Pons stories than Holmes ones.

**GardenStater** says:
October 19, 2010 at 12:04 pm

@Spud: Good choices.

**GardenStater** says:
October 19, 2010 at 12:07 pm

@swschr: “...an occasional mystery piece of paper stuffed in as a place marker to provide a jolt of history in 20 or 30 years.”

Funny you mention that. Years ago, a friend gave me a set of the complete works of Sir Walter Scott. Tucked into a few pages were small scraps of newspaper used (I presume) as bookmarks. On one of them, I could just make out the words “President and Mrs. Grant visiting the city.”

Shows you how long those books went unread.

**boblipton** says:
October 19, 2010 at 12:19 pm

For those who want a feeling of the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, might I suggest you try John Buchan's Richard Hannay stories. Reading the 39 STEPS instead of seeing the excellent but nothing-to-do-with-it Hitchcok movie is a revelation and even MR. STANDFAST set in the midst of the Great War reveals a differnet mindset: tough and sentimental.

Buchan was Governor-General of Canada when WWII was declared. Verbum sap.

Bob

**RobertB** says:
October 19, 2010 at 12:40 pm

My favorite way to learn about history is to read biographies. Sure, you get a limited view, but when you read the story of a person's life it helps to emphasize the way we all straddle eras.

I recently read the first volume of William Manchester's excellent biography of Winston Churchill. Most of us think of Churchill during World War II, a figure of the twentieth century. But he was a Victorian, a product of the British Empire at its height, and he never really let go of that view of the world. He's a clear link from the 19th century to the absolute heart of the 20th.
TWylite says:
October 19, 2010 at 12:47 pm

We 21st century knowledge workers get, like, “digital_fatigue.net 2.0″, like. It is characterized, like, by using the word “like” in speech where space characters would go in print. To cure it, we go to the Multivitamin Smoothie Bar, and get a Double Venti Spinal Tappuccino, dialed up to 11. Like.

Yael says:
October 19, 2010 at 1:11 pm

Another recommendation, here, for the BBC’s ‘Sherlock’ (don’t have PBS ’round here, I just saw it all on Daily Motion; the BBC tend to be more reasonable about this stuff than companies like NBC or Fox, it seems) – but also with a bit of a caveat.
First of all, yes, absolutely brilliant adaptation of everything to modern times. I was impressed by how the characters were not just very believable as contemporary people (with a whole bunch of little adjustments that make those familiar with the source material smile), but also are at the same time immediately recognisable. I really felt that Holmes and Watson ARE Holmes and Watson, the way they would have been if they lived today.
Now, that little caveat business. Thing is, the plots are only very very loosely based on the originals. You have a few details that match or correspond with some details in one (or more) of the original stories, but the rest is absolutely new. This is good on one hand, because someone who’s read the stories won’t find themselves just constantly comparing the two, and looking for how the story was adjusted to modern times, not to speak of knowing the solution ahead. However, I felt that it also had the effect of turning the show into yet another detective show – and there are plenty of these already. Me, I tend to love detective shows (possibly partly because of how much I always loved reading Holmes), so I really enjoyed the show a lot, but I’m kinda worried that someone not fond of the genre might find it a bit too… regular, in that aspect. So, just so you know.
But I still highly recommend watching it, after you read the stories. If only to enjoy the adaptation.

juanito - John Davey says:
October 19, 2010 at 2:32 pm

GardenStater says:
October 19, 2010 at 8:37 am

And of course, the 21st Century began on September 11, 2001.

It was also the first day of the rest of our lives. That day changed everything. In all honesty, it had already changed, we just didn’t know it yet.

RobertB says:
October 19, 2010 at 12:40 pm

I recently read the first volume of William Manchester’s excellent biography of Winston Churchill.

I love Manchester’s biographies. But two of my favorite Manchester books were Goodbye Darkness because it closely tracked with my
then 18 year old father’s experiences invading Okinawa, and *The Glory And The Dream*. Sure, Manchester was on the opposite political side of the fence from me, but that fellow could tell a story.

juanito - John Davey says:
October 19, 2010 at 2:56 pm

winterhawk says:
October 19, 2010 at 11:01 am

Two men say they’re Jesus—
One of ’em must be wrong.
A protest singer, he’s singin’
a protest song.

There’s rumors in the loading bay and anger in the town….

GSC says:
October 19, 2010 at 5:07 pm

The Holmes stories are a real joy and I have read them many times. Doyle was a talented writer and really infuses the stories with a sense of his times while moving the plot along quickly and smoothly.

For a similar sense of the times from the Victorian period through the 1920’s in America I recommend John Dos Passos’ USA trilogy.

I read the novels in college and had my preconceptions of that time turned around. Dos Passos’ prose style can be tiresome in large quantities, however. His politics are heavy-handed at times too.

Francesco says:
October 19, 2010 at 7:27 pm

I cannot recomend enough Barbara W Tuchman’s *The Proud Tower*. It is the story of the generation before the first world war in Europe & the US.

jamcool says:
October 19, 2010 at 9:47 pm

My complaint about Mad Men is that they “jump a year”…last season they ended at the end of ’63. This season started at the end of ’64. I imagine next year they will start in 1967.

TByrd says:
October 19, 2010 at 11:21 pm

bgbear…Yes, we still make drugs out of natural opiates. Morphine, codeine, & tincture of opium are easily processed from the latex sap of the opium poppy. Semi-synthetics such as heroin, oxycodone, and hydrocodone are also derived from these biologically active substances. The semi-synthetics are more difficult to make and are far more addictive.

Opium and cannabis in various forms is smoked or eaten legally for certain tribal ceremonies in India. Semi-synthetics are not legally available in India. In hospital in India you are limited to morphine and codeine as opiates for pain relief. Old fashioned tincture of
opium (aka laudanum) and the less common paregoric are available and quite useful for all the endemic forms of dysentery in the Asian subcontinent.

_TByrd_ says:
October 19, 2010 at 11:41 pm

also bgbear. ... Why the heck not make a deal with Afghan farmers to buy their poppy crop? That would definitely keep the money out of terrorist hands. Not much else will grow in Afghanistan. (Believe me I've been there) But the prevailing attitude goes beyond all common sense. People abuse drugs/alcohol/food/whatever because they don't want to deal with what they have to deal with. The demand for illegal drugs in the U.S./west is growing exponentially despite the 'war on drugs'. What is it in American/western culture that people do not want deal with?

_Ross_ says:
October 20, 2010 at 9:02 am

I'm afraid I'll have to be the reactionary and say that updating SH or "Hawaii 5-0" are pointless sops to people who can't be bothered to try & imagine a world that doesn't look like the one they're currently in. It's patronizing and contributes to the dumbing-down of the culture at large. Glad you're rediscovering "Miami Vice"--people forget how out-of-touch network TV was before that show became a hit. Those few shows that had reasonably current pop music had to use craptacular cover versions by annoying commercial jingle singers and "Barnacle Groans" (sorry, "Barnaby Jones"--can't lose the habit of using MAD's parody titles, or making my own, like John Wayne's last film, "The Shootin'-est") at the time "Vice" started still had "hippie" bad guys that looked like The Turtles' Flo & Eddie, circa 1968 (complete with Prince Valiant haircut). I still remember sitting there, all unsuspecting, watching the pilot when it first aired. I was hooked at Crockett describing the later-Izzy's twisted hit man as "a little light in the loafers, talks like a cross between Carol Channing & Tito Puente"--I think I actually did a spit take (as I did, despite my brother's warning to put my dinner & drink down before the start my first episode of "Police Squad"). Apparently, my mother & I were the only people in town who watched it at first, because it was a good two months before anyone I talked to about this cool, stylish, daring new cop show knew what I was on about. If you haven't, you should watch "crime Story" all the way through, as well: Michael Mann does Mad Men era.

_Ross_ says:
October 20, 2010 at 9:07 am

Oh, and John Diehl has done some outstanding work elsewhere over the years: watch him in Ted Turner's "Gettysbeard" (dagnabbit, did it again--"Gettysburg"). And I meant to say at an earlier Bleat that "BlatherWinceRepeat" is easily the funniest screen name I've seen in ages. Well done.

_Ross_ says:
October 20, 2010 at 9:17 am

Forgot the recommendations for Our Genial Host: two books, one non-fiction, "Out In the Noonday Sun: The Edwardians In the
Tropics”(which has a section on Frederick Selous, the real-life model for Alan Quartermain, killed in 1917 at 66 by an enemy sniper while leading a unit of older, experienced irregulars like himself against German colonial troops–Connery as an action hero, indeed) and, in a strange closing of the circle, the novel “Mr American” by George MacDonald Fraser(of “Flashman” fame), the son of the Royal Medical Corp officer in whose arms Selous died. “Plate of shrimp”, indeed.

fizzbin says:
October 20, 2010 at 12:15 pm

@TByrd: your idea about the Afghan farmers and their crops is interesting. In a perfect world such a plan may have legs. Regrettably, in this world I think the Taliban Man would enter the farmer's humble home and say something like this, “You know, Abdul (it is Abdul, isn't it), if you take the Apostates money for your crop, we will come to the compound, gather everyone together, take your youngest son and slowoowly disembowel him. We Taliban, merciful and just, let you decide what to do".

I have no answer as to what it is in American/Western culture that people don't want to deal with. It is interesting that the rise in drug abuse/despair seems to mimic the rise in secularism. After all, our own Comrade Dumbo has declared an end to American Exceptionalism whose purpose was to build that Shining City on the hill.

If you have nothing to live for, you have no reason to be, so you dull your nothing-exceptionalness with drugs.

Mark E. Hurling says:
October 20, 2010 at 2:13 pm

Yow fizzbin! Comrade Dumbo? Ouch, that'll leave a mark (so to speak).

nightfly says:
October 20, 2010 at 3:01 pm

I may have missed it elsewhere in the thread, so apologies if I'm repeating; Edmund Morris' biography of Theodore Roosevelt is also very good for that time period. The first two books (The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt and Theodore Rex) are out, still waiting for the third to publish.

Ross says:
October 21, 2010 at 10:13 pm

Sorry, one last Miami Vice thought: for the first couple of weeks after the pilot aired, I was absolutely positive I'd seen the lead actor somewhere before. It drove me nuts until I realized he'd starred in one of my favorite cult day-after-tomorrow/sci-fi flicks(that I saw a couple times at The Oriental, then our local art-house cinema), “A Boy and His Dog”.

sikis says:
October 22, 2010 at 9:59 am

I cannot recomend enough Barbara W Tuchman's The Proud Tower. It is the story of the generation before the first world war in Europe &
Late to this party but I completely echo the previous recommendations for Tuchman’s Proud Tower, which one could follow with her Guns of August. I have a recent fascination with the Edwardian era, the slow, inexorable slide to war, garden parties and the dreadnought arms race etc. I always knew a lot about WW2, it’s origins and aftermath but found that one needed to know about the Great War and then it’s origins and so on and on.

Both of Massie’s books, Dreadnought and Castles of Steel are excellent on first, the run up to the war and then the arms race that ended in the naval war of 1914-18. Follow these with Paul Fussel’s The Great War and Modern Memory and Modris Eckstein’s The Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age.

And now Boardwalk Empire has triggered an interest in the wild and weird idea of Prohibition.
adding this, and will add something more, later.
Who cares? You're reading this? Really?
I am not in the Halloween mood, a statement that leads to the following observation:

It is ridiculous to assert that any adult should be in the Halloween Mood at this point

Halloween is just Too Damn Much Halloween

The long orange smear of Halloween, spread over the entirety of October, diminishes the pleasures of giving in to the Halloween behind the Halloween. By which I mean:

The “holiday” concerns two things, besides candy. One: gruesome imagery understood to be jokey and powerless, and a peculiar negatively-defined affirmation of life, inasmuch as you're not dead, and even the dead isn't dead. Two: dressing up to be something you're not, but professes to others an alternative facet to your personality that reflects your actual self. That's the surface. It's all a lark, a game, an aria in a graveyard. I don't have any Other Self I'd like to be – although, now that I think of it, I have my father's old blue suit . . . add a mask, a red tie, and I'm The Spirit. But who would know I was The Spirit? Oh, you're that guy in the bad movie. Why? Argh. So I usually wear a mask I get at Walgreens and that's it. Maybe I should just go as a
killjob. 
I am KILLJOY! SLAYER OF PARTY CONVENTIONS!

But the Halloween behind the Halloween is the thing the holiday is constructed to obscure, the childhood moments when you were actually afraid of the dark and convinced of the monsters behind the half-closed door. Everyone, even in adulthood, has a moment now and then when the brick-thick layer of rationality suddenly seems like a brittle wafer laid on top of a writhing sea of worms and bugs, when you imagine – or just plain grasp, at some elemental level – something under the iconography of skulls and plastic corpses hanging in the seasonal aisle at Target. Define it how you wish. Existential dread, the certainty of volitional evil, Cthulu, the rational mind indulging in the possible existence of its obverse – it’s there. My favorite moments on Halloween come at the end of the night, when the party at the Triangle is over, the kids are long tucked in, the clock has dragged us all into the cold first hours of November, and I go downstairs to extinguish the pumpkins. They’re grinning, as if they’re looking forward to the moment when rodents come at 3 AM and gnaw their faces off. It’s the best part of the Universal horror movies, when the lightning cracks and the scientist’s face shines with madness, or the monster staggers across a leafless heath. It’s all the stuff that sneers at the HAPPY in Happy Halloween.

Bah. So I don’t want to be in the Halloween mood. The day means nothing to me. Except for the moment when I blow out the candles in the pumpkins and head up the stairs and the wind catches the leaves on the sidewalk, and you know it’s November. The true cold is coming. Gird thine self. Halloween is a Saturday morning cartoon. November is an induction notice.

Don’t know why I went off on that, except: the neighbors have put up some extraordinary displays. We have a single string of lights, and a ghost hanging from a tree. I have come to love that ghost, really – in the afternoon sun he glows with a remarkable radiance.

Daughter is at camp. Yes: camp. The 5th grade class went to camp for two days. There’s no school Thursday or Friday; teachers’ convention. So the entire week is shot, education-wise. We’ll have some fun this long weekend, though; I relish the time we have at home together. I don’t know why, exactly, but I just love this week. It all feels sparkly. Tonight I drove to Best Buy to pick up a kick-plate for the dishwasher, in case I want to kick my dishwasher, I guess. It came without one. Just bare unfinished guts. When I complained, one was procured, no cost. Thank you, Best Buy. I drove home on a newly configured expanse of freeway, and discovered that my exit, which for years was on the left, was now on the right. An impromptu four-lane switch, with ZZ Top as the soundtrack. That will get the nerves jumping. You never want to think of how you’ll be found when you’re dead, but upside down in a vehicle with the stereo shouting SLIP INSIDE MY SLEEPING BAG is just not high on the list.

Wrote a Joe Ohio, crunched some video, worked out, chatted with my wife, wrote this. So. Today: a cute sorta-gamin Boop-voice singer in Black and
See, this is what Halloween, the “holiday,” gets wrong. It’s a beautiful time of the year. We have to strew bones and skulls like someone who cracks a joke during Ave Maria, because it’s getting so SERIOUS. But it is lovely. A reverent diminution.

I think I’ve made my peace with Fall. October has been so kind. Bring on the stuffing and the turkey and the snow!

Spoken like a man who has plans to bug out in the middle of November, but that’s another story. See you around.
I’ll put the decorations out next week at some point but wait to reduce the odds of teenage vandalism. (We lost some nice skull light’s one year.) I did get both of the 8 foot wide airblown spiders on the roof to the delight of he 5 foot and shorter set. The wife has nixed another Daryl to the existing Larry and Daryl though.

JamesS: That line is from the great Emo Phillips.

No one I know is ready for Halloween yet, including me. The weather has been so perfect, it’s hard to think about frigid “nights” and costumes at 6pm. I want to offer sincere congratulations to James for not referring to the long weekend as “MEA”. I have friends who haven’t lived in the state for 20 years who know exactly what I mean when I tell them, “It’s MEA; we’re headed for Duluth.”

You know, the whole razor-in-the-apple scare was probably a generation old by the time we heard it as kids in the late ’60s, but were never able to track down one single verifiable instance. Not too many years ago, Cecil Adams took that one on and only found one verifiable case: from within a decade or so of Adams’ column, it was done by a guy to his own son (much like the only recorded case of trichinosis in modern history was from some doofus eating the spoiled meat of a cougar he either killed or found dead).

I think I’m inspired to write a sappy, made-for-TV movie about a man in middle age finding the ‘true spirit of Halloween.’ Which is, of course, to shake off all of one’s vices before the holiness of Thanksgiving and Christmas. Wanna be an axe murderer? Great! Wanna dress sexy? Sure thing! Get all that nasty human-nature out of your system so that you make way for all the goodness of the holidays. That’s the true spirit of Halloween...

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!

{{{}}}

http://lileks.com/bleat/?p=8217
YEAH, WHAT OF HIM, ANYWAY?

The dreadful photo blog again, because it's a column night, and I'm skint on ideas. I need some sort of restorative event to fill the tank again. A broad swath of time away from everything. But! Absent that, this.

The view outside the building today:
Here’s something I’m putting into the proper section in Black and White World: Perry Mason actors Who Were Also in Star Trek. Can you name them all? The first one is easy.
One of the best of the lot.

This lady I recognized right away, but it took a second to place her.

She acts the exact same way now as then, but she shades her performances quite nicely. In her most famous movie role, she was as cold as they came; in the Trek version she held it back and put on a hesitant, matronly act that masked both cruelty and fear. In this version she's young and confused. The smile never reaches her eyes in any of these performances, though.

This guy haunted me. Haunted me. I knew he was in Star Trek somewhere. As with many of these cases, it helps if you imagine a beard. (There's a hint up above.)
I always hated this one. At least in her role. Smug and superior. You can’t take away Kirk from his ship! Don’t even try!

So, who are they? Name those characters and their episodes!

44 RESPONSES TO yeah, what of him, anyway?

gottacook says:
October 21, 2010 at 1:12 am
Well, I know the gents, anyway: William Campbell (Trelane and Capt. Koloth) and Robert Brown [the Lazaruses (Lazari?)]

**JBKauai says:**
October 21, 2010 at 1:39 am

1A. Trelane– Squire of Gothos  
1B. Koloth– Trouble with Tribbles  
2. Yoeman Colt– Menagerie Parts 1 and 2, The Cage  
3. Lazarus– The Alternative Factor  

4. The head bimbo in Wink of an Eye (?)

**Dave says:**
October 21, 2010 at 1:44 am

My wife already thinks we're a bunch of hopeless sci-fi nerds. I hope she doesn't see these comments.

**InkyDink says:**
October 21, 2010 at 3:13 am

Louise Fletcher did Star Trek?! I did not know that. Checking her IMDb page, says she was raised by deaf parents.... It's interesting that she was able to break away from Nurse Ratched eventually. I saw Dirty Harry again recently, and the bad guy, who kidnaps the busload of kids, who was so amazingly nasty, NEVER got away from that role again.... Saw him in a movie in the '90s, with Kirstie Alley as a mountain guide, where he played a normal guy, and I still expected him to sneer at any second.....

**Irish Al says:**
October 21, 2010 at 4:30 am

@InkyDink  
He was no walk in the park in 'Hellraiser' either ... just got one of those faces.

**Kerry Potenza says:**
October 21, 2010 at 5:28 am

That upcoming NR cruise ought to recharge the battery.  
I got Louise Fletcher but none of the others. Her face is creepy, despite being vaguely attractive. I certainly hope she exudes more warmth and humanity in her eyes outside of her movie/TV roles.  
It's hard to admit that I was never a Star Trek fan, but I did watch it as a kid. The Six Degrees of Separation of Star Trek and everything else produced in Hollywood continues...

**lohwoman says:**
October 21, 2010 at 5:56 am

I immediately recognized Kathie Browne. She always came across as sweet and devious. Was she that way in “Deela” (episode)? Married to Darren McGavin until her death. An odd pairing of screen personalities, I always thought.
lohwoman says:
October 21, 2010 at 5:56 am

Oh, wait. Smug and superior works too.

Scott P says:
October 21, 2010 at 6:15 am

*The view outside the building today:*

Good grief, popcorn sky ceilings in Minneapolis!

Rubo says:
October 21, 2010 at 7:00 am

Louise Fletcher also had a recurring role on Star Trek DS9. She was devious there also.

Chuck says:
October 21, 2010 at 7:01 am

Didn’t get Louise Fletcher at all. Got William Campbell easily and got Lazarus but didn’t know the actors name. Kathie Brown is a favorite of mine, one of Kirk’s hottest conquests. You should make a page of all of Kirk’s women!

Mxymaster says:
October 21, 2010 at 7:06 am

Too bad Raymond Burr himself never made an appearance on Star Trek. I can easily see him as a universe-weary Romulan captain or an irritated admiral who thinks Kirk is a loose cannon.

Nancy says:
October 21, 2010 at 7:54 am

A pictorial list (not sure it is complete) of Kirk conquests:

Chas C-Q says:
October 21, 2010 at 7:57 am

I saw William Campbell and Jonathan Frid in a Q&A panel at DragonCon, just the two of them.

Both seemed to be genre and theater fans, asked each other questions. They said they’d never met before, but by the end of the hour they seemed like old friends.

Brisko says:
October 21, 2010 at 7:57 am

I recognized Captain Koloth instantly, but the rest of them…? Well, it's been at least a decade since I've seen an episode of the original Star Trek, so don’t judge me too harshly.
Becca says:  
October 21, 2010 at 8:32 am  
HAAAA that's totally Nurse Ratched!

Crabtree says:  
October 21, 2010 at 8:56 am  
Kai Winn Adami. I've seen Louise Fletcher in quite a few things over the years and in every one of them she has an air of barely restrained madness, as if the wrong word will send her into a violent fit of rage.

Peter says:  
October 21, 2010 at 9:05 am  
This video's been out there for a couple of years: Star Trek/ Wild West crossover actors.  
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDcFAN0uVfs

swschrad says:  
October 21, 2010 at 10:19 am  
I hae got no more power, Captain.

bgbear (roger h) says:  
October 21, 2010 at 10:21 am  
I have been doing the ST connection with the old Western TV shows they have been showing on Encore Western: The Virginian*, Cheyenne, Have Gun Will Travel, and Gunsmoke.  
There is at least one Star Trek actor a night, sometimes two in one episode. There are a number of the same writers and directors as well including Gene Roddenberry.  
*special connection, James Drury, was in “Forbidden Planet” which inspired Star Trek.

Mike Mistele says:  
October 21, 2010 at 10:56 am  
Kirk's dalliance with Deela in “Blink of an Eye" was my favorite, because they weren’t subtle about it. The two of them headed to Kirk's quarters, and, in the next scene, Deela is brushing her hair, while Kirk is putting his boots back on.

Pencilpal says:  
October 21, 2010 at 11:00 am  
Never saw 'skint' before! Thought it was a variant of 'scant' at first, but happy to look it up & find other derivation.  
No other comment, as my education is woefully (blissfully?) nonTrekular.

bgbear (roger h) says:  
October 21, 2010 at 11:07 am
Yeah, what of him, anyway? | The Bleat.

Right, the boots, classic. But, how long did it last?

hpoulter says:
October 21, 2010 at 12:19 pm

How about that Man from Uncle episode “The Project Strigas affair”? Guest appearances by Shatner and Nimoy – also Werner Klemperer. Hot stuff for TV geeks of a certain age.

Brisko says:
October 21, 2010 at 12:27 pm

@ bgbear

Are you insinuating that a man who wore a girdle had no stamina?

bgbear (roger h) says:
October 21, 2010 at 12:32 pm

There was an episode of Gunsmoke made in 1966 called “Treasure of John Walking Fox” with Leonard Nimoy in the titular role. The stoic Indian he played was pretty much identical to Spock, no emotion, smart, logical, loyal.

I assume that since he had already started filming the first season of Star Trek he was being an “Actor” and not breaking character.

I was also please to see Nimoy in an episode of the Virginia that also had Sherry Jackson who is often voted hottest Star Trek babe.

bgbear (roger h) says:
October 21, 2010 at 12:36 pm

@Brisko, I mean when the Scalosian ask if you want a “quickie” they really mean it.

bzzzzzzzzzz

LS says:
October 21, 2010 at 4:01 pm

Gary Seven’s cat lady charged in attempted murder:


bgbear (roger h) says:
October 21, 2010 at 4:04 pm

meeyow!

MJBirch says:
October 21, 2010 at 5:35 pm

bgbear: where do you watch old episodes of “The Virginian”?
lindal says:
October 21, 2010 at 9:20 pm

Not that I'm a diligent ST:TOS nerd, but the re-watch on Tor.com actually meant I was able to pass the quiz! Worth checking out if your bored or only remember ST from repeats on rainy Saturday afternoons.

David Rickel says:
October 21, 2010 at 10:33 pm

Hmm. Looking through the Kirk's Women site (in Nancy's post)–they have two pictures each captioned Sherry Jackson and Majel Barrett. The first of each is the character they describe, the second is surely someone else, aren't they? My brain has rotted enough that I no longer remember who is pictured. The second woman labeled Majel Barrett might be Marianna Hill (Dr. Helen Noel) from Dagger of the Mind. I'm not at all sure about the second Sherry Jackson–Ruth from Shore Leave, maybe?

Ross says:
October 21, 2010 at 10:59 pm

MJBirch:
“The Virginian” airs(at least on Time-Warner Cable) on the Encore Western channel daily(M-F, for sure)and their Retroplex channel once a week(they do theme days).
I myself have been DVRing EncWest, immersing myself in my father's favorite western series(and, aside from Road Runner cartoons, he wasn't much on TV), “Have Gun, Will Travel”. There just wasn’t anything else like it(until some of the better-written “Kung Fu” episodes). Smart, great writing, great directors(incl Andrew McLaglen and Ida Lupino) & a tendency to explore parts of the actual Old West that conventional oaters didn’t even admit existed. Even the odd, symbolism(in the aesthetic philosophy sense)-driven, self-indulgent ones Boone directed himself(never let a method actor direct their own work) are still interesting. Boone just got more surprising to watch as the years went on(if you really want to see some brilliant line readings, watch him tear strips off George Hamilton's character in “A Thunder of Drums”).

Hey, speaking of Boone, & harking back to the earlier thread about “How-Are-Ya 5-Ho”(“The Tiki Room?! Book me, Danno! Puki-puki…”), you want to re-imagine that show? Consider what it would have been like w/their first choice for McGarrett: Richard Boone. The show ended up being so local & (for the time, at least) “real” largely because of Boone campaigning to have the show made _in_ Hawaii(a first, despite the exteriors “Hawaiian Eye” used earlier on that same network) He would have revelled in playing scenes w/locals like Kam Fong & Zulu. Still don’t unstand why, after he won the fight about on location production he decided not to take the job, right there in his home state(at the time). He made “Kona Coast” around then, which, although a Warner Bros theatrical release, always felt like he was pitching his own series(like the stand-alone pilot movies of later TV). Maybe he felt the intentional mystery & incorruptability of McGarrett was too reminiscent of Paladin. Oh, well. At least they took a chance on Jack Lord.

Don says:
October 22, 2010 at 12:46 am

A bit of trivia about Kathie Browne (McGavin), who was Darren
Yeah, what of him, anyway? | The Bleat.

McGavin's second, and final, wife. She died of cancer several years before McGavin. They had a very long, and reportedly, happy marriage. Interestingly, McGavin's children from his first marriage made sure that Darren was buried in an entirely different cemetery than their stepmother, who resides in a lonely plot all by herself. Nice, huh?

Cory says:
October 22, 2010 at 5:12 am

RE HGWT:
Roddenberry did some of his first writing there. The writers for HGWT were like nothing TV has seen before or since. Paladin would quote Milton, Shakespeare, The Old Testament, The New Testament, all in context and rarely let you know where the quote was from. Issues of women's rights, minority rights, the Irish/British conflict came up and were handled intelligently. Then you might see someone who would become a big star, like Charles Bronson or some famous for something else like Duane Eddy or Odetta in a good role. Not your typical Western, needless to say.

Bookworm says:
October 22, 2010 at 5:41 am

Similar thing happened to me with movies that were shown on Mystery Science Theater 3000. I finally compiled a list.

http://www.mst3kinfo.com/ward_e/listtrek.html

hpoulter says:
October 22, 2010 at 6:14 am

Great obsessive list, bookworm. I wouldn't have thought of/noticed most of those. But you actually missed one. Leonard Nimoy appears briefly in one of those Radar Men from the Moon serials – either Robot vs Aztec Mummy or Mad Monster, I think. Maybe it doesn't count because it wasn't the main movie, but it's notable as Nimoy's first screen role.

SeanF says:
October 22, 2010 at 8:34 am

InkyDink, it's funny that you should mention Andrew Robinson, “Dirty Harry's” Scorpio Killer. He also had a recurring role in “Star Trek: Deep Space Nine,” as the Cardassian Garak. Pretty different than his “Dirty Harry” role, but kind of creepy in its own way.

I would presume that he and Louise Fletcher were in the same episode several times, but I can't say for certain if they ever actually shared the screen.

bgbear (roger h) says:
October 22, 2010 at 9:55 am

and one episode of Paladin had a ferret. I was impressed.
Bruce Lewis says:
October 22, 2010 at 11:38 am

D'accord. I'm no fan of Westerns as a rule, but *Have Gun, Will Travel* is the exception. It was years ahead of its time in both writing and cinematography, and in the category of screen heroes Richard Boone's urbane yet commanding presence as Paladin is equaled only by Shatner's James T. Kirk. Even the theme song was a cut above. It was dark, funny, tense, stripped down, and incredibly entertaining — the horse-opera equivalent of a sharkskin suit and skinny tie. It was the first Cool Western.

I only wonder what happened after Paladin went back East. I suppose we'll never know. Oh well, I hope Hey Boy and Hey Girl finally got married, at least.

David Ricke1 says:
October 22, 2010 at 4:13 pm

Amazing what they could fit into a half-hour show.

I've listened to a couple of the radio shows, but not enough to get a good feeling for the quality. Were the scripts as good as the TV series?

Bill says:
October 25, 2010 at 7:25 pm

If you want some real “Who was in Star Trek?” fun, watch Mission: Impossible. Spock's dad (several episodes), Stonn, the black-and-white guy who wasn't the Riddler, Sulu, Spock (two seasons), Kirk (two episodes), Lee Meriwether (six episodes), Barbara Anderson (seven episodes), Jon Colicos (Kor), Michael Strong (several episodes – Roger Corby), Warren Stevens (four episodes – Rojan the Kelvan leader), Michael Ansara (Kang) and many others. Actually, if you want something really freaky, see how many people from Mission: Impossible were in Cool Hand Luke.

BeckoningChasm says:
October 26, 2010 at 3:37 pm

It's interesting how much media production has changed. Nowadays, with VCRs and TiVOS and all the rest, there's no way that William Campbell would be cast in two different roles. “Nah, can’t use him, he was already in the Trellaine episode.”

Oh, they'd try. Trellaine would be given a throwaway line, maybe. “I must say, my dear Captain Kirk, you're an improvement over those vulgar Klingons. Of course, there was one who did rather take my fancy as a man's man. I've modeled my appearance on him.”

Chris says:
October 27, 2010 at 12:06 pm

Let's not forget the Trek/Twilight Zone crossovers, Shatner being the most obvious. He “starred” in at least two TZ episodes that I can remember.
1: Matchbook Museum
2: Comic Covers
3: Black & White World
4: Sears 1934
5: Comic ads
6: 100 Mysteries
Institute of Official Cheer
Lint: the Institute Tumblr
PopCrush
Screedblog
Shorpy.com
StarTribune Column

July 2013
June 2013
May 2013
April 2013
March 2013
February 2013
January 2013
December 2012
November 2012
October 2012
September 2012
August 2012

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

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My wife had Bunco tonight, so it was me and child, and . . . that's it; no Chuck E. Cheese, as was the case in years past. I asked her tonight why she didn't want to go there anymore, even though they had video games and pizza, and she said it just seemed like something for younger kids. This is parenthood: I gritted my teeth every time we went there, and now I miss it. I miss her running off to the Spider Stomp, feeding the tickets into the machine, playing Skee-ball, eating that ghastly pizza, trying to decide which worthless trinket to get. I miss going hand-in-hand up the steps to the car when it was done. I miss coming home and putting in a VCR tape of Kipper, and saying okay, one more, before putting her down at a decent hour after the story and the chat and the tucking in, then going downstairs with great care, so I didn't make a tell-tale creak on the steps that would signal the boogieman. Sigh.

But: to paraphrase Oscar Wilde, the only thing worse than growing up is not growing up.

Spent some time backing stuff up tonight – a chore that must be done, because I have to presume 100% failure of the primary drives and the backups, and heaven forbid I lose something I scanned in 1998. I have the most ridiculous redundancy redundancy system you've ever seen. But every time I do this I remember Anthony Burgess telling a story in an interview: he had finished a book and was heading off to the post office to mail it to his publisher, and a scooter sped by – the fellow on the back grabbed his satchel
and they sped off through the Roman traffic. You might doubt the story, since it contains the phrase “sped off through the Roman traffic,” but a scooter can fit between the cars. That was the only copy of his book. So he went home and wrote it again.

If you know Burgess’ work, and his frightening, chastening productivity in the 60s, you have no doubt he could sit down and write the book again. But it reminds you how people lived before the era of photocopiers. Sure, he could have poured out a carbon copy, but how many people did that? What fear there must have been when you put the book in a slot. No wonder so many writers moved to New York; you’d want to hand-deliver the manuscript. Otherwise it’s like pinning a bus ticket to a newborn and putting it on the first Greyhound that shows up.

Me, I’d like to get rid of every single book I have, except for twenty or so. I would like them all scanned and digitized and accessible via iPad, thank you. Yes, yes, the argument about the love of books; I love them too. The love of being surrounded by your library? Yes yes. But. I would be more likely to dip into something if it was incorporeal. On the shelf, they all seem to reproach me: you don’t remember me, do you? All that time we spent together. But I remember the good times; isn’t that enough? Really: if I could, I’d reduce everything to a big desk in a white room with a shelf holding just a few books. The obligations of possessions, the accretion of things: it’s enough to make a Buddhist of me.

But I don’t trust the incorporeal, either. One bad block does spoil the whole bunch, baby: I had a drive go south on me tonight in the course of backing up, which is why I have quadruple redundancy in magnetic media and triple redundancy in optical media. Ideally it would all be off-loaded to some server farm with stone-faced techs in white coats making sure your data is secure. Seriously: the ultimate in security now seems to be defined as not possessing a thing at all.

Ah, but what of the objects? You know, the things to which you apply Meaning simply by owning them for a while? That’s another issue. You have to realize that the meaning changes when you no long own them, which is a kind way of saying “it’s wiped clean when you die, mate.” There are some things whose previous meaning I can infer; my Grandma had a little metal container for pins, with 1893 Columbian Exposition engraved on the cover. It was regarded as junk, I guess, but my mom kept it, and then it passed to me. It’s possible my great-grandfather went. He got out of town from time to time. The fact that it sat on her dresser for seven decades was enough to infuse it with meaning, but that’ll be lost after me; daughter didn’t know her, never saw the farm, never saw the sleek 30s Sears bedroom-set dresser on which it sat. Daughter may see a corner of that dresser in an old photo, because I inherited it. But that’s the end of the chain – after that, it’s a series of facts, not a sequence of memories and emotions.

So. One of the things I’m going to do next year is a video narration of my Things. I started the other day with a little video intro for the upcoming
overhauled Grandma’s Camera site. As I may have noted, I found an old manual for her Brownie, and figured out how to open it. Looking through the lensfinder gave me chills – I pointed it at the computer screen, where there was a big scan of a picture she’d taken. I saw what she saw how she saw it.

These things matter. In the end they don’t, but for a while, they do. It’s the stories you give to objects that makes them important beyond their actual utility, but this also makes them a burden for people who are expected to hang on to them.

This is why I will make it very clear that the collection of Tiger Beat magazines someone gave me can do to the antique store. Really. It’s okay.

You know, I just remembered that I had Grandma’s bedroom set. Had it when I got my apartment by the lakes – nothing special, except for the dresser. Big round mirror. Very 30s. Took it to DC, after which it passed from our hands. She would have never thought, as a woman in her 30s, that her grandson would look in the same glass in Washington DC and adjust his tie and head off to the White House.

I don’t feel bad that the mirror ended up somewhere, and I lost the trail – every Etch-A-Sketch has been upended and given a good shake. Memory is always the adversary of tomorrow, and sometimes tomorrow deserves to win.

Just in case you thought I was a hopeless nostalgist walking around the house knee-deep in old magazines, lamenting the fact that cars don’t have fins.

It’s really late - after I got EVERYTHING backed up and got the kid in bed, I sat down to watch some TV. I’d been watching “The Graduate,” but it annoys me; never did, and really cannot now, identify with Dustin Hoffman. Plus, “Plastics” is excellent career advice, at least at the time. They laughed about it at the time because they weren’t used to getting glass shards in their feet because they dropped a shampoo bottle. I switched to “My Dear Miss Aldrich,” a 1937 movie about a Nebraska schoolteacher who inherits a New York newspaper. I’m sure she gives it all up at the end for Love, but it’s quite funny and “modern” and fresh and subversive, at least to modern eyes who think women didn’t get the vote until 1968. To my astonishment, it also echoes a few themes in the end-of-newspapers novel I’m writing now. The more things change, the more they stay dismaying.

Today’s update: The Gallery brings back part two of the Knudsen pamphlets, resized for modern monitors.

Oh: across the street today, the Pointy Building. Just so the thumbnail above has a picture.
54 RESPONSES TO the burden of things

Josh says:
October 23, 2010 at 4:46 pm

I saw The Graduate right after I graduated from college. I always thought that the movie was winking at us, agreeing that Benjamin's a milquetoast tool. Oh poor baby, my privileged life is boring and unfulfilling. The only overt sign is the lingering bus scene, but the underwater scuba scene, not to mention Mrs. Robinson's demeanor towards him (she doesn't want him to marry her daughter because he's worthless, not because she's all that jealous), suggest to me that the filmmakers don't particular like their protagonist either.

browniejr says:
October 23, 2010 at 8:08 pm
@grs- great catch- need to let the coffee kick in first before I post next time...

**MikeH** says:
October 24, 2010 at 5:32 pm

Will a fedora go with jeans and a t-shirt? (My preferred method of daily clothes wear)

If I ever get employed again and it’s a job where you have to dress up nice, I will wear my fedora everyday. I thought “but I’m bald, will it go with my head?” Then I remember William Frawley, and I feel better!!

**MattT** says:
October 26, 2010 at 5:37 pm

Every time one of kids asks me to do something yet again that I can’t believe they haven’t grown tired of because I sure have… I remind myself that a day will come when they don’t ask me and I’ll miss it terribly.
adding this, and will add something more, later.
Who cares? You're reading this? Really?
I just couldn’t do it. The day was lovely when I woke, even though rain threatened; it was warmer than usual, and after a fine breakfast I got down to some minor brain-free work on the computer, sorting and tagging, writing, backing up. Noon came, and it was time for The Errands – the rote trawl through the aisles of Target and elsewhere, provisioning the house for the week to come. But before that, perhaps, a trip to the Postcard Show. There are two every year. This is the Fall iteration.

I just couldn’t do it. The idea of sitting in a room shuffling through postcards filled me with boundless ennui. When hobbies start to feel like obligations, it’s time to step aside. So I said NO! THIS SHALL NOT BE! And then I asked myself why I was talking like Thor, and whether all men of my age who grew up reading comic books have the same ersatz heroic diction in the back of their head, courtesy of Stan Lee. Whether some part of our brain reads the paper, sees a story about Iran’s nuclear program, and thinks Lo! An Evil Doth Awaken! Or is an Evil that Doth Slumber Not? Time will tell.

So I went to Target. A fellow can get a good meal from the sample ladies, if you time it right. They had toast with jam, which was delicious. Oh, it was something more, of course; organic five-grain bread with organic blueberry preserves. But really, toast with jam. It’s not like you can taste every fargin’
grain. Another sample lady had some artisanal bread with new Ragu sauce, and it wasn't as sugar-soaked as the usual Ragu. I tried some cereal I will never buy because it's too expensive, then sampled some pasta. Some days I actually feel a pang of guilt because I don't buy the stuff, and think I can compensate with theatrical expressions of approval. But it's no skin off their noses, I suppose. (Under what circumstances is skin actually removed from a nose? Never seems to come up.) Last week I did buy the Manwich – ground-turkey combo, because it was not only Rich and Tomatoey, but Bold. I'm sure they have stats on the efficacy of demonstrations, buried in computers whirring underground in secured locations.

They didn't have pizza samples. They never have pizza samples. They must think we are well-aware of pizza, and need no encouragement.m They have pizza at Cub, which is a different kind of store with a different variety of customer – people shove through the crowd to get a free square-inch of pizza like it's the last shipment of Soylent Green.

I took some pictures in the Halloween area, as you can see above. Meh. I am uninterested in Halloween this year, which is par; if it wasn't a month-long celebration I might be more inclined to get into the spirit, and if Natalie was interested beyond the aspect of Candy and Costume, perhaps, but man, I'm sick of it. A few years ago there seemed to be a new spin, a fresh jolt, with interesting merchandise I would never buy but was amused to behold. We would go to Target and she'd set off all the devices that made noise, and we'd look at plastic pumpkins, and I would judge this year's overall graphic package against the previous year, and it was fun. That's over.

But:

Last year, if you'll recall, I had fun with Five Days of Frankenstein, a little series that ran on the Bleat. It's been added to Black and White World, with a few upgrades, and on Wed / Thu/ Fri we'll have two new installments in the Universal Monsters sequence, concerning . . . well, you'll see. Just as I am obliged to watch a version of “A Christmas Carol” around Christmas, so do I now feel compelled to enjoy Classic Monster Movies during the last week of October. I wish I could have seen them when they came out, but whose perspective would I choose? The guy who's dragged a date to the movie in the hopes she'll hug him when it gets scary? Because brother, that moment isn't going to come; she's going to roll her eyes at most of this. Maybe it would be cool to see it through the eyes of a 10 or 12 year old, when the silvery images had a power you would shrug off when you were older.

I'll tell you this: it's better to debate Frankenstein vs. Dracula vs. Wolfman than Freddy vs. Jason vs. Scream dude, or Predator vs. Alien. Not so much disemboweling.

–

LATER Sunday night. Went to the movies this afternoon with my daughter. Actually, the movie, singular. We sat in our usual seat and cracked wise about all the ads and trailers, then settled in for some Awesome 3-D Owl Action. It's
the “Legend of the Guardians,” based on one of those tween serials you wish you’d written, because there’s a bushel of money in these things. I expected nothing but owls flying around on a quest of sorts, with all the conventions of the genre, but A) it was beautiful, and I mean non-stop sear-your-eyeballs beautiful, and B) I loved it. Partly because I can still imagine what it’s like to get lost in a story like this. The idea of a great world outside of your own with characters you know, dark forces to be opposed, noble goals to uphold. Stirring talk of valor and honor!

But leavened with anti-heroic warnings. There’s a scene in which an old own – dare I say a wise old owl – cautions a younger bird against glorifying war, because it is simply hell and slaughter, and not to be enjoyed. (The director also did “300.”) When the battle is joined, it’s quite impressive; how does one visualize and render metal-clawed birds engaged in aerial combat? With slo-mo and close-ups and screechy metal sounds, I guess. The plot trots through the requisite showdowns, brother vs. brother, old warrior vs. evil king, yellow warrior to the rescue of old warrior to defeat evil king, Han Solo flying out of the sun, and so on. It’s nothing you haven’t seen before except that it’s all owls, and you really haven’t seen any of it before, because it’s all owls.

I read reviews afterwards by the Top Critics at Rottentomatoes, most of whom did not seem to be in the mood. This happens when there’s a showing at 10 AM of a loud 3D owl movie and you’re not sitting with a ten-year-old. I’m surprised so many slagged the movie. I thought it had an astonishing amount of visual invention, a fully-realized world, and a solid emotional connection with its characters. Who are owls. Yes. Owls.

Note: before the film, the Warner Brothers Looney Tune logo zoomed up on the screen, and my jaw dropped. I had no idea there was a Road Runner cartoon before this one. Oh, joy. Too short, and from what I’ve seen the other one is better, but it was still a delight.

–

Today: the Matchbook, of course, and four more pages of 1962 LA Dining. We’re getting close to the end. It’s here. See you around!
50 RESPONSES TO the owls are pretty much what they seem

inhocsig says:
October 25, 2010 at 4:31 am

James so glad you loved the owl movie. Our family saw it three weeks ago for my youngest daughter's birthday. She and her sister have read all the books. We also were amazed at the Aussie voiced owls. It was my first 3D movie and I wasn't expecting much, but it was visually spectacular. Stuff (owls, raindrops, waves, etc.) actually seemed to come out of the screen.

Has anyone else noticed that 3D television (I looked at one in the store the other day) appears the opposite -- it looks like you are peering into the set in depth instead of items projecting out?

GardenStater says:
October 25, 2010 at 5:09 am

GAH! Six o'clock in the morning. I click over to the Bleat, and I'm faced with Big Green Witch Face.

That's a sign that I need to go back to bed for the rest of the day.

hpoulter says:
October 25, 2010 at 6:30 am

In the Dining Guide, the ad for Pandora's Box jumped out at me. It has those pre-psychedelic graphics. Turns out it was a pivotal part of the post-post war scene in LA, and the focus of the “Sunset Strip” riots in 1966, when the city tried to shut down all teenage entertainment venues on the Strip. The Pandora's Box was part of the turnover of the strip to “beatniks and wild-eyed kids”, which was the death knell for the local grownup supper club business.

The “riot” got Sonny and Cher kicked out of the Rose Bowl parade, inspired one of Steven Stills’ “revolutionary” songs, and a teensploitation movie by Roger Corman.

http://wikimapia.org/10352364/Pandora's Box 1962-1966
http://www.whiskyagogo.com/articles/811100.html

hpoulter says:
October 25, 2010 at 6:30 am

er, “Cher”.

hpoulter says:
October 25, 2010 at 6:32 am

Durn – put two URLs in my comment and got moderated. Suffice it to say for now that the Pandora's Box club has an interesting history.

http://lileks.com/bleat/?p=8242
Mr_Hat says:
October 25, 2010 at 6:39 am

So now that you've gone to a big ole' production about all manner of owls, will "owly" mean something a skosh different?

Chas C-Q says:
October 25, 2010 at 6:40 am

“Irregardless?”

Jackie Babylon's sideman sounds like Thurl Ravenscroft.

Kelly says:
October 25, 2010 at 6:58 am

My son read several of the Ga' Hoole series when he was younger & I joined in to give us discussion fodder. So, on last trip to Baylor, we went to the movie & enjoyed it. My wife didn’t – 3D action sequences make her sick.

Wagner von Drupen- Sachs says:
October 25, 2010 at 7:00 am

RE: Frankenstein. Wonder how many jobs Lionel Belmore got from directors who thought they were getting Barrymore.

Bob W. says:
October 25, 2010 at 7:33 am

James: (Under what circumstances is skin actually removed from a nose? Never seems to come up.)

Cosmetic surgery, perhaps?

inhocsig says: Has anyone else noticed that 3D television (I looked at one in the store the other day) appears the opposite – it looks like you are peering into the set in depth instead of items projecting out?

I haven't seen those yet, but your comment reminds me of my days in the mapping industry, as a Photogrammetrist. We'd look at aerial photography in 3D and extract precise data for topographic mapping. If you – or anyone else reading this – ever get a chance to tour mapping company, do so. Utterly fascinating work.

juanito - John Davey says:
October 25, 2010 at 7:55 am

Lileks
And then I asked myself why I was talking like Thor, and whether all men of my age who grew up reading comic books have the same ersatz heroic diction in the back of their head, courtesy of Stan Lee.

Which is why I follow Stan Lee on Twitter. So that I get that heroic diction and pacing someplace other than in my head, daily. Verily, be it so. I also try to work in "ever Lovin" into some cerebral narration once as day as well. Excelsior! FOOM.
Pencilpal says:
October 25, 2010 at 8:10 am

re: “dark forces to be opposed, noble goals to uphold. Stirring talk of valor and honor!”

We walked the WW II Memorial on the mall in DC Saturday, while visiting our son at American U. for Parents Weekend. First time I’ve been to the memorial – heart-seizing valor there. I could not read to the end of any of the chiseled quotations without my eyes tearing. The eagles high in the two towers – well, unforgettable. The wreaths – unrepayable, but we should try.

Then we headed back to AU to hear Rudy Giuliani speak. Can we please make him Homeland Security Secretary, right now? He jovially elaborated on how notions like negotiating with global bullies works ‘in academia’ but not in the real world, ticked off the domino-effects of passing Cap & Trade, explained why Holder should not have ordered the Undrewear Bomber to be mirandized, and flattened the arguments for closing Guantanamo. When a loud ‘boo’ came from one corner of the audience, he shot a rueful glance and stated flatly ‘You're booing out of ignorance,’ producing a gasp and then a burst of swelling applause from the audience. A wise old owl indeed.

He did ask that one topic for questions be off-limits: baseball. The Yankees had lost the league championship the night before, and he didn’t want everyone to see him cry.

RPD says:
October 25, 2010 at 8:35 am

So “Legend of the Guardians,” I have the sneaking suspicion there may be Owls in it.

Re: Thor — New Avengers cartoon on one of the kids channels. The kids happened on the 2 part opener; good stuff if you were a comics geek as a teenager. A lot of the familiar old villains as all the super prisons that were in the books suddenly belch out all their prisoners.

Scary movies. I don’t know about y’all, but the closer a movie is to possible, the scarier I find it. Dracula, Predator? all good fun. Some nut with a knife that’ll carve up any random stranger? That I find chilling.

Crabtree says:
October 25, 2010 at 8:37 am

Why have you got a picture of Adam Baldwin (Jayne Cobb) there?

Nancy says:
October 25, 2010 at 8:45 am

Yes. Why?

RebeccaI says:
October 25, 2010 at 8:55 am

I never sample those free snacks in the supermarket. Has too much of a third-worldish street food vibe for me.
Al Federber says:
October 25, 2010 at 9:11 am

Judging from these Bleats, James and family seem eat a lot of highly-processed food.

Steve says:
October 25, 2010 at 9:31 am

Agree with you completely on the owl movie. I took my 11-year-old daughter to it a couple weeks ago, and we enjoyed it thoroughly. Just beautifully done.

Richard C. Moeur says:
October 25, 2010 at 9:32 am

I remember going to Marineland when I was 4, not long before my dad died (I think we went to Knott's Berry Farm on that trip as well). It'd be nice to still have my “Bubbles the Whale” storybook.

TByrd says:
October 25, 2010 at 9:33 am

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!!! I’m watching Exorcist II: The Heretic…… with guess who as the sublimely creepy psychiatrist?…Louise Fletcher! Richard Burton is pretty hammy as the priest. Linda Blair as her usual demonically cherubic self. Sheesh, couldn’t William Peter Blatty think of a better name than ‘Pazuzu’ for a demon?

old maltese says:
October 25, 2010 at 10:18 am

The L.A. Dining item for ‘San Fernando Mission’ is not for a restaurant, by the way; it’s for the actual Catholic church, Mission San Fernando Rey de España, founded in 1797 (an attraction even before Knott’s Berry Farm).

bgbear (roger h) says:
October 25, 2010 at 10:42 am

TCM is doing the Hammer films all this month. Good stuff, horror discovers color.

Mr_Hat says:
October 25, 2010 at 10:53 am

Juanito – ’nuff said.

Claire says:
October 25, 2010 at 10:57 am

We don’t have sample ladies at our Targets. Never heard of ‘em. You lucky, lucky, man.

Spud says:
October 25, 2010 at 10:59 am

I can’t imagine fighting the great unwashed for food samples at the
Cub. We used to be members at Costco, and many people go there on the weekends for free snacks. Some try to make it a meal but the Costco “servers” seem to be able to spot the greedy. We let our membership lapse as it took too long to get there (over a half hour) and the money “saved” from buying in bulk was not all that great. Wal-mart prices were comparable without the membership. If I owned a small restaurant I might consider a Costco membership, though.

Thor was my #1 Marvel character. I’m curious to see what they do with him in the big movie coming out soon.

Imperious Rex! (as Namor used to say – or was it “wrecks”?)

bgbear (roger h) says:
October 25, 2010 at 11:06 am

I am cleaning and packing my office for a building move and I can’t find my Interocitor.

wiredog says:
October 25, 2010 at 11:17 am

@Bob W.
My dad was a photogrammetrist. He edited PE&RS for a couple of decades.

JamesS says:
October 25, 2010 at 11:54 am

Bob W. says:
October 25, 2010 at 7:33 am

I haven’t seen those yet, but your comment reminds me of my days in the mapping industry, as a Photogrammetrist. We’d look at aerial photography in 3D and extract precise data for topographic mapping. If you – or anyone else reading this – ever get a chance to tour mapping company, do so. Utterly fascinating work.

I used to do the same work for the DoD at the old Defense Mapping Agency (now the NGA) in Bethesda, MD. We were collecting digitized terrain elevation data (DTED) for the Pershing and Tomahawk missiles before the coming of GPS. We also used the data for plain old maps and charts.

We used Intergraph’s Pooled Analytical Stereoplotter System to bring separate images to a binocular-type eyepiece to get a stereo image. Our goal was to keep a lit “dot” on the ground as we “flew” back and forth across the image as the system collected the data. Dull, dull, dull.

Later we got a state-of-the-art system from General Dynamics that used digital imagery and a polarized screen where we used glasses like today’s 3D TVs use to see the stereo. That was also like looking “into” the monitor.

It sure is an interesting field, and one that most people don’t even realize exists. Does anyone ever wonder where their maps come from?
The Owls Are Pretty Much What They Seem | The Bleat.

Pete says:
October 25, 2010 at 12:34 pm

James, you are completely off your nut. We saw The Owl Movie with our daughters (both 11, twins) who have read all the books. It was easily the worst movie seen all year. Dreadful. Cool 3D effects do not a movie make.

bgbear (roger h) says:
October 25, 2010 at 12:46 pm

I have not seen enough new 3D films but, it seems the “looking into” vs. “jumping out at you” is a matter of choice of the film maker. Toy Story 3 had a “looking into”, or “down to” for overhead shots, appearance to me.

wiredog says:
October 25, 2010 at 1:32 pm

JamesS
My Dad worked in R&D at DMA, in a facility in Tyson's Corner. Used to fly out to San Diego (home of General Dynamics) and Huntsville (ESRI) all the time. He retired in 89. I bet you used equipment and software he helped develop.

Droptma Styx says:
October 25, 2010 at 2:43 pm

I, too, remember visiting the SoCal trio of attractions (Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm and Marineland) as a child in ’65 or ’66. I was saddened but not completely surprised that Marineland has been gone over 20 years now, swallowed up by HBJ as they expanded Sea World, then s**t out minus their breeding pair of killer whales. HBJ ended up abandoning the attractions business, selling the Sea Worlds to Anheuser-Busch, which it turn was swallowed up by InBev ... well, the marine analogies just get ridiculous after that. Karma, Orca-style.

Cory says:
October 25, 2010 at 3:00 pm

Pencilpal:
Re Giuliani and the Yankees.
You should have told him not to worry- they have Sabathia going in Game 8.

JamesS says:
October 25, 2010 at 4:56 pm

@wiredog:

I worked for DMA from 1983 to 2000, and was a s/w engineer there from ’85 on. The GD system I worked on was the Data Extraction segment (DE/S) of the Digital Production System.

I loved that beast, and the GD guys who built it were the best. The s/w was written in Ada, which makes me one of what is probably a fairly small population of s/w guys who worked on a production Ada system.

Tell you Dad thanks from all of us.
steveH says:
October 25, 2010 at 5:33 pm

My family used to love going to Marineland from the late ’50s, until we three kids sort of drifted off into college and out of Southern California at the end of the ’60s.

Our three kids got to go once when we were visiting family down in SoCal, and weren’t very impressed. But then, we lived an hour from the Monterey Bay Aquarium, which sort of upped the ante, sea life wise. For me, maybe absence made its memory better than the reality. Maybe we were just more easily impressed back then.

All three of them as adults are still fascinated by the sea and marine and aquatic critters, so the experience doesn’t seem to have done lasting damage.

Our visit to Marineland must have been just before HBJ kidnapped and killed it; the youngest was barely old enough to reject a stroller and make it stick. He’s 27 now. Ouch.

margaret says:
October 25, 2010 at 5:52 pm

I thought the expression was that “it’s no skin off my teeth.”

Pieter says:
October 25, 2010 at 6:39 pm

James

Love the ‘attractions’ page. Just a quick note on the Knott’s entry. Take notice of the price to visit. Adults children and parking we’re all the same, FREE! We went almost every Sunday, chicken dinner (not free), boysenberry ice cream (ditto) and a walk around the Ghost Town. Boy I miss that. The times, they are a changin’.

Russell says:
October 25, 2010 at 6:54 pm

I remember being at Knott’s Berry Farm the year John Wayne opened the Log Ride. I don’t remember the year, but I must have been young; to me, Mr Wayne seemed a very, VERY big man..

Bob W. says:
October 25, 2010 at 10:30 pm

Wiredog: “My dad was a photogrammetrist. He edited PE&RS for a couple of decades.”

I worked at three mapping companies in the Kansas City area, all commercial work. My longest stretch was at M. J. Harden Associates (13 years), and we always had the current issue of PE&RS available… also back issues in a small library. Always something interesting, though I fear much of it was over my head.

JamesS:
“We used Intergraph’s Pooled Analytical Stereoplotter System to bring separate images to a binocular-type eyepiece to get a stereo image. Our goal was to keep a lit “dot” on the ground as we “flew” back and forth across the image as the system collected the data. Dull, dull, dull.”
I started on Wild B8 stereo plotters retrofitted with injected optics and connected to a VAX, then moved up to Intergraph InterMap Analytical plotters (IMAs). The process you described (“flew” back and forth across the image) reminds me of the orthophotograph process. Yes, that did get tiring.

Most of what I did though involved “putting the dot on the ground” (or on the roof corners) to compile planimetric features, that and collecting Digital Terrain Model data for contour generation; and later on a lot of map editing in 2D using Microstation software. All of that 3D compilation involved looking in binocular eyepieces.

After that I worked for a small company, ETG Incorporated. Theirs was a softcopy process using their own software on PC terminals. At that time we wore the red – blue anaglyphic glasses to see the 3D effect.

What kept it all interesting for me – even fascinating at times – was the variety of objects to see and interpret in the aerial photography.

JamesS: “It sure is an interesting field, and one that most people don’t even realize exists. Does anyone ever wonder where their maps come from?”

Amen to that! I don’t know if they wonder, but most people who I’ve explained map compilation to have no idea of all the processes involved. When we gave open house tours, the compilation department seemed to be the most popular.

I guess there’s not all that many of us...I’m pleasantly surprised to find two bleatnicks with knowledge of photogrammetry. I’ve enjoyed reading your comments!

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**Mag** says:
October 26, 2010 at 12:18 am

When I was a kid, Orange County was full of orange groves, and Knott's Berry Farm was my favorite place to go, more than Disney. It had a dearness to it.

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**Kev** says:
October 26, 2010 at 1:45 am

*I tried some cereal I will never buy because it’s too expensive, then sampled some pasta.*

The cereal must have been Kashi Go Lean or something of its ilk. I bought it once when it was on sale, but once it went back to its regular price of ~$3.50? Forget it. I refuse to pay more than $3 for a box of cereal, and I’ll hold to that until they’re all over that price (and may that never happen!).

*He did ask that one topic for questions be off-limits: baseball. The Yankees had lost the league championship the night before, and he didn’t want everyone to see him cry.*

Eh, I like Rudy, but he needs to get over it; after all, the Yankees have, what, 27 World Series championships to their name? Down here in Texas, we were crying for joy after that victory on Friday; imagine waiting 38 years (50, if you count the Rangers’ time as the Washington Senators) to even get to the Series for the first time.
Soozcat says:
October 26, 2010 at 3:32 am

Under what circumstances is skin actually removed from a nose?
When it is held to the grindstone, of course.

http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/217200.html

Nancy says:
October 26, 2010 at 7:45 am

@Kev
Congratulations on the win. It truly great to watch. The Braves (after waiting too long for him to get his act together) off-loaded an underperforming Francoeur-who then underperformed for the Mets and got shipped to Texas. Seems he's had one good month and now is “meeting the challenge” of playoffs with a sub-.200 batting average. It doesn't seem fair he will be rewarded with a possible World Series ring! Such is life. Good Luck-I'm a NL fan, but I might just be routing for Texas...

xrayguy says:
October 26, 2010 at 10:47 am

TCM ran THE ORIGONAL “Nosferatu” this last Sunday, and as it was on well past my bedtime, I recorded it to disc for temporal displacement at my choice. Even with the goofy acting habits of silent film, Count Orlock still comes across as incredibly creepy, even just outright scary in a couple of shots. The odd lighting, dicey focus and (poor?) quality of the film stock make many of the scenes look like something out of a fever dream, as they should. When you discuss the GREAT MONSTERS, don't forget the “bird of death” Count Orlock, NOSFERATU!

xrayguy says:
October 26, 2010 at 11:01 am

Also, tripped over “Dracula” with what I think?? was a new music soundtrack. I can recall watching it with either no music (blunts the impact) or fuzzy violins (there's a band name); the music here really did add to the atmosphere.

Ashira says:
October 26, 2010 at 6:06 pm

I'm so glad you enjoyed the movie. :D To tell the truth, I had some fears you might resort to picking it apart! Though you do it brilliantly whenever you criticise something, I'm glad you liked Legend of the Guardians. The books were fantastic – I can't wait to see the film! ^___^

And that CANNOT be Jayne at the bottom; I'm sure I'm looking at the wrong picture. It can't be him. Can it?

tobin says:
October 26, 2010 at 9:29 pm

About 10 days ago, at a Target in greater Chicagoland: my first sighting of a Target sample lady. It was pizza. Generous-sized samples, too.
Ross says:
October 27, 2010 at 7:14 am

I think Page & the band show up on this very cool Proper Records Jazz & Swing Accordian anthology. Great fun & very cool.

“Russell says:
…but I must have been young; to me, Mr Wayne seemed a very, VERY big man.”

He was bigger than average, & even adults felt like his presence made him seem even larger than he actually was; read Kate Hepburn's description of what embracing him felt like, even in his last years.
I've heard Ben Johnson(who started as Wayne's stunt double)had a similar presence.

ak138 says:
October 28, 2010 at 9:56 am

Wow. Now I really want to re-watch Twin Peaks.

TWylite says:
October 28, 2010 at 9:47 pm

…and the Bears are who we thought they were.
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?
At the mall the other day I spotted this window display. Darth has had torso-reduction surgery, I think.
A damp and fussy day; filed ten tons of copy, wrote a Joe, got half the Halloween Diner in the can. (Oh yes: it’s a big one.) Checked the news, found one of those stories that means little, but still makes you think back and cogitate: all those pieces of magnetic meaning, arrayed for your enjoyment. Yes:

Sony has discontinued the original Walkman, the big thick units that played cassette tapes.

This is where someone attempts to sound hip by saying “What’s a cassette tape?” as if ignorance of things that preceded your brief tenure on this verdant rock is somehow a mark of distinction. We loved cassettes when they first came out, because they were a portable, compact storage medium. I got my first cassette recorder in 1969 – a Magnavox I wore on a shoulder strap like Spock’s tricorder, and it had a microphone. I took it over to Northport Shopping Center to ask people what they thought of the Apollo program. Probably the last bit of real journalism I ever did. For some reason it came with a copy of the Greatest Hits of Martin Denny, so I listened to “Quiet Village,” and put it together with “Hawaii 5-0” and asked my parents if we could go to Hawaii. They said “we’ll see,” which meant “ignore the likelihood that the answer will be no,” and I sent away for brochures and collected...
pamphlets from the local travel agency. Hawaii loomed large in my imagination, until the point where it didn’t. Kids are like that. Which is why it always rings false in a fictional story when someone fulfills a desire they had when they were ten – as if pure true people have an unbroken line between their adult selves and the people they were before their brain let loose the Reapers, also known as the Hormones of Adolescence. Some stuff survives the transition, but it’s rarely a passing fancy – and it’s often the things you’ve put away when you’re a know-it-all eleven-year old.

Perhaps I’ve ruined my daughter by filming so much: she will have a record of everything. How she complains now. But some day she will find all these movies, a complete chronological narrative. Wonder what she’ll think. Whether it will be a room full of butterflies or a series of wood boxes with glass tops full of insects fixed to pins.

Anyway: I had that cassette player for years, and in speech and debate would sit on the bus in the early morning listening to Beethoven through a single earplug, gearing myself up for the combat ahead with the 9th. (The first movement.) In high school I had a friend in Chicago, a cool guy who was totally into the same music but also really hard-core prog like Magma, and we would communicate via tapes, because long-distance was too expensive and made the ‘rents frown. He was the only friend I had who understood how totally awesome it was at the end of Rush’s “2112” when the voice came in and said “we have assumed control. We have assumed control.” Goosebumps dude.

Tapes faded from favor, but I know I had a small unit that played mono. Ten years after I got my first cassette recorder I felt compelled to record a day in the life of a college student, so I conducted a running narration, including a swing through the Valli restaurant, and a walk home after dark. The tape survived for decades, and was digitized a few years ago; when I do the long-promised immense site on the Valli, I’ll include some excerpts, since I’m probably the only person in the world who has audio of the place.

I know exactly where I was when I got the first Walkman – I still have it, somewhere in the basement, too. Living in the Immense Concrete Human Storage Box Arrangement known as Cedar Square West. I bought a new Genesis album and taped it without listening to it, then walked out in the sunset over the 10th avenue bridge and tried to convince myself it was genius. The most important thing was personal stereo on the move. You kids today! You have no idea! To be walking around and hearing things in stereo, this was a miracle. Even if it was “Abacab” and one had to make excuses for the new, pop-oriented direction the band was taking.

So the Walkman dies in October, the 9th anniversary of the iPod. Digital killed the analog star, as the predictable headlines would have it. I still have my first iPod, complete with its throwback Chicago font, and all the songs still locked on its disk. It was after 9/11; we had moved into Jasperwood, and I was still astonished I could stand on my front porch and behold the Hill and the Cliff. Over and over I listened to “We Have All the Time in the World” – the
slow version, not the Satchmo version, not the credits version. The one that will put you on your knees.

We're in the intermediate state now – individual devices with individual purposes and individual libraries. Give us a few years and it'll all be up above in the ether. The idea of owning a song will be as archaic as sheet music.

Side notes: yes, I know I wrote the other day about starting the Sherlock Holmes stories from the start. And yes, I watched the Masterpiece Theater update.

I am a happy man about it.

Update: have a few pages of North Dakota! This week: Gackle. See you around.

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68 RESPONSES TO the end of the personal song

Wagner von Drupen-Sachs says:

October 26, 2010 at 3:05 pm

The reason the 8 track tape didn't last was that it was based on the moebius strip and was therefore topo-gigio-logically impossible. If some busy-body hadn't pointed out that it couldn't be done we would still be doing it. We see this phenomenon in the apiary now:
someone told the bees it was theoretically impossible to fly using their method, and as the word spreads, the colonies collapse.

Sometimes It Pays To Be Ignorant!

shesnailie says:
October 26, 2010 at 3:46 pm

DryOwlTacos says:
October 26, 2010 at 1:48 pm
What, no one waxes nostalgic over the very first portable music medium— the 8-track tape?...

„@_v – in point of fact, the norelco carry-corder 150 ‘compact cassette’ cartridge tape recorder came out a year before the first 8-track recorder were made available. i have two working examples in my cassette recorder collection. nifty little units if a bit of a pain to clean the innards. the belts seem to have been made by british petroleum judging by the mess they leave behind.

r.c.a. had a precurser to the compact cassette recorder called ‘sound tape’ that failed to thrive on account of not being compact enough.

metaphizzle says:
October 26, 2010 at 3:55 pm

“Yep. Some folks will still want hard copies, and like Bob I lament the loss of fidelity with the mp3 compression. It’s a shame .flac never took off.”

Don’t count .flac out yet. Bandcamp (an independent service for buying music straight from the bands) offers .flac as one of several formats to download in. I d/l’ed Sufjan Stevens’ All Delighted People EP as .flac’s… then I immediately burned it to an audio CD and deleted the files to free the space on my hard drive.

I, too, hope physical media stick around, but I’m rather optimistic about it, considering that vinyl has not only survived but is making a bit of a comeback for the last few years.

I do remember using my parent’s Walkman a bit, but never enough to really get any emotional attachment to it. I do fondly remember listening to 90’s ska on my first portable CD player. Now? I have a CD player and a turntable for listening to music at home, and an iPod for everywhere else.

metaphizzle says:
October 26, 2010 at 4:01 pm

“Which is why it always rings false in a fictional story when someone fulfills a desire they had when they were ten – as if pure true people have an unbroken line between their adult selves and the people they were before their brain let loose the Reapers, also known as the Hormones of Adolescence. Some stuff survives the transition, but it’s rarely a passing fancy – and it’s often the things you’ve put away when you’re a know-it-all eleven-year old.”

When I was ten, I was obsessed with bugs. Upon discovering that a person could make a career out of studying insects, I decided that’s what I would do. Now, I’m working on my Masters degree in Entomology.

Which makes the butterfly metaphor in your very next paragraph all the funnier.
swschrad says:
October 26, 2010 at 4:11 pm

@shesnailie: RCA and Wollensak both had that oversized cassette wannabe in the late 60s, I’ll bet they all came out of the 3m/Wollensak plant. very curiously about the same size, shape, track format, and effect in the marketplace as TEAC's “Elcaset” of the mid 70s.

the EC3500/Norelco 150 was meant as a dictation machine, but it did just fine on the debate bus playing music. had one for a lot of years until the mechanism wore out. used the tape head for an AC detection device behind walls.

metaphizzle says:
October 26, 2010 at 4:52 pm

“This is where someone attempts to sound hip by saying “What's a cassette tape?” as if ignorance of things that preceded your brief tenure on this verdant rock is somehow a mark of distinction.”

What's a rock?

swschrad says:
October 26, 2010 at 5:08 pm

what's distinction?

Chris says:
October 26, 2010 at 6:19 pm

No one but the composer/player/arranger/publisher “owns” a song. And ownership is limited to matters of compensation. All you have, all you ever had, is a copy of the song. Thus, the format in which you experience it is nearly irrelevant. What matters, though, is your experience of the music. If the platform is part of your experience, then so be it.

And no, sheet music is not archaic. My son uses it in piano every day. Works for him — it has for hundreds of years. The written language of music will outlive all of us. Tapes, records, iPods, nah.

JamesS says:
October 26, 2010 at 8:31 pm

metaphizzle says: When I was ten, I was obsessed with bugs. Upon discovering that a person could make a career out of studying insects, I decided that's what I would do. Now, I'm working on my Masters degree in Entomology.

When I was that age I was fascinated by rocks. Rocks and mountains and outcrops sticking out of the ground, and stuff like that.

When I started college, I was a music education major. During the typical traumatic breakup with my high school girlfriend, I decided to make a clean break and select a new major. My new field: geology.

A few years later and I was a freshly minted BS Geology graduate.
Later on, my career led me from geology to cartography/photogrammetry and thence to computer-assisted cartographic systems, and ultimately to database administration and design — but that's another story.

My childhood love for geology has never passed.

Reese says:
October 26, 2010 at 8:45 pm

Ron Ramblin up there 10/26 1:01 PM,

That was probably the top use of a “walkman” ever in history! Har!

Then again, there's the “walkman” type instrument used by Matthew Broderick in Wargames to escape his captivity.

My first tape recorder was (is– I still have it) called a “Book-Corder” because it was about the size of the “T” volume in a 1950’s encyclopedia. It ate Radio Shack batteries (C-Zn) in about 15 minutes. Gift ca. 1969. I recorded from the radio speaker The Animals’ “So Happy Together.”

First Walkman-type object was a Toshiba purchased with my first paycheck out of Navy bootcamp in '82. I needed it because the midnight watches at my first Navy school were very boring. Snuck the speakers under my watchcap and peacoat collar (Chicago Winter) to listen to “The Wall” twice in four hours.

Billie says:
October 26, 2010 at 10:23 pm

I think that it's wonderful that you're making so many records of your daughter. I wish my parents had made more, but most of all I wish my parents STILL would. I'm in college, living on campus far from home, and I miss them all the time. They're not young anymore, they're in their early 50's, and I know that every day that I get to spend with them is absolutely precious. No one in my family has a good memory, either, so I wish that we would all invest more time in making records of the time we spend with our loved ones.

My grandfather helped raised my sister and I when we were very, very young, while my parents both worked long hours to keep us afloat and provide a good life for us. We never wanted for anything. My granddad passed away when I was a cantankerous preteen, and now I wish that I had spent more time cataloging all of the wonderful stories he would tell us about his childhood and cherishing the incredible memories he gave me, for they are fleeting more each passing day.

Please keep making and storing more memories of your family. You're not spoiling anyone. You will never regret what you are doing. Loved ones will eventually pass, memories may only fade if we allow them to.

The MCP says:
October 26, 2010 at 11:28 pm

@swschr: Just for the record, the “Elcaset” was Sony's baby, not Teac. (Although Teac *did* make an Elcaset deck which was, and still is, considered to be the best deck ever made for that ill-fated format. An EL-700 in working condition fetches *astonishingly* premium prices on eBay these days.)
Elcaset was a neat idea, at least in theory — a tape cartridge that married the portability and convenience of the cassette, with the high fidelity of open-reel tape. Since the sound quality of “compact cassette” wasn't exactly all that and a bag of chips at the time, Elcaset *could* have been a contender — but Sony priced it much too high, and didn't market it very well. (Plus, I don't think they *ever* made any effort to get the record companies to turn out prerecorded tapes for the format; I certainly never saw any.) So when Dolby B/C noise reduction and better oxide formulas turned the compact cassette into a reasonably decent-quality format, it kicked the legs out from under Elcaset and Sony threw in the towel after only about 2-3 years.

Believe it or not, I still own one of the Sony decks, along with about fifty-odd tapes for it... still sounds great.

shesnailie says:
October 27, 2010 at 6:08 am

_@_v – no to be an überg??k... but the carry-corder 150 came in three model numbers the el-3300, 3301 and 3302. the earlier 3300s originally didn't have the record-protect feature – or an adjustable trimpot on the board for motor speed – that latter feature means that surviving models often sound... er... sluggish. the 3301 had the same body styling but improved on the internals. i have one non-working el-3300 – it run at the bottom of tape-speed acceptability – and two working el-3301s

the el-3302 was largely a styling change with internal improvements. i have two of those models

while the carry-corder may have been advertised as a dictation machine, the demo tape that came with them had musical selections and the first units shipped with a patch cord to allow users to hook the machine to their hi-fi set.

included on the demo tape that came with mine is a brief recording of two office guys futzing with the unit the day they got it. the manual that came with it list the machine as having been bought in miami during the summer of 1966

of course i've digitised and uploaded the clip...

http://home.roadrunner.com/~dasimperator/norelco_test.mp3

Jeff says:
October 27, 2010 at 7:47 am

@Wagner: “The reason the 8 track tape didn't last was that it was based on the moebius strip and was therefore topo-gigio-logically impossible.”

Actually, that's not true. A moebius strip is a length of tape spliced to itself with a half twist, thereby creating only one apparent surface. 8-track tapes, like the Fidelipac-style carts that were ubiquitous in radio and television stations since the ‘60s, are a loop spliced in the ordinary way so that there are two distinct sides. This is essential since the tape only has oxide coating on one side, and that side must be in contact with the heads. Flipping the tape with the oxide away from the head drops the level dramatically and kills high frequency response, as anyone who has mis-threaded a reel-to-reel machine knows. A moebius band would be a clever idea except for the really bad performance you would get through have of every loop cycle... not to mention the extremely high crosstalk that would result from
effectively doubling the number of tracks and increasing the head-to-oxide distance half the time.

**Jeff** says:
October 27, 2010 at 7:54 am

Okay, that last sentence should read “half of every loop cycle”. The coffee hasn't kicked in yet.

For what it's worth, I've been maintaining broadcast tape machines for over 40 years — everything from '50s vintage tube-type Ampex, through decades of cart machines, up to today's digital video gear. (I still have a collection of reel-to-reel and cart machines at home, to my wife's consternation.) It's strange to see tape disappearing in favor of memory cards the size of a thumbnail, but I don't especially miss the mechanical complexity.

**Ross** says:
October 27, 2010 at 8:20 am

“Chris says:
...The written language of music will outlive all of us. Tapes, records, iPods, nah.”

With the earlier comment about moderns becoming too lazy to learn an instrument, etc., yours reminded me of something I saw some years ago when a classically-trained musician who composes film scores was explaining one of the downsides to the new composition/dictation programs(don't know the name of it, but it scores what you play as you play it), namely that they're too precise. When you have notation that exact(note & rest lengths in 124ths & the like), the player doesn't have to learn the unwritten stylistic elements that distinguish playing the notes straight from, say, swinging it or baroque from classical, etc. So they never develop the musical vocabulary that allows someone like Marsalis or Hancock(or, in an earlier time, Bernstein) to advance a young musician's interpretive skills. Over time, you get whole generations of dull, dumb(or, more accurately, ignorant) players.

I had college friends who were what is now termed “early adopters” who loaned me their first-generation Walkmans, and it really was revelatory(they were also the ones who had me over to see MTV a couple of weeks after they launched, w/a similar effect–the first video I saw was Robert Palmer's “Searching for Clues” w/the test pattern signal running under the song). My first very own(bought when I was finally working again after college–I still miss it) was a beautiful, tough little Toshiba unit–all metal & small(the cassette itself stuck out the top c.1/4″), easy to use controls, auto-play(no having to flip the cassette for side 2)& GREAT sound. I got it on the advice of the guys at a Schaak Electronics(miss them, too) next door to the tobacco shop I worked in, mid-80s. It made the cross-town bus commute until my first car tolerable. I abused that thing for years, but when it finally needed fixing, Schaak was gone & I couldn't find an independent shop that would work on it. I probably tossed it, but if I find it someday, I'll be online like a shot searching for someone who can restore it. I'm planning on replacing the cassette player in my beater, too--despite the degradation over time, the day-to-day practicality(very klutz-forgiving) of cassettes is what I love about them. Of course, now that I have a home pc, I expect a digital player will eventually replace it.
Sorry for the late comment but have been away from a computer. I had to write to say that I, too, had my infatuation with Hawaii. I read Michener’s book in ’64 or so and then read every book I could get my hand on about Hawaii. It was the place I was going to head to when I got old enough to leave the house. But, alas, I never went, and, strangely, have no desire to go. Though maybe I will at some point just to visit the USS Arizona memorial.

NukemHill says:
October 28, 2010 at 2:49 pm

He was the only friend I had who understood how totally awesome it was at the end of Rush’s “2112” when the voice came in and said “we have assumed control. We have assumed control.” Goosebumps dude.

Absolutely!
Who cares? You're reading this? Really?
Wow. October decided to drop the mask and clear the slate today. For a few days the temps have been declining at a civil pace, as if by some civilized agreement; yesterday the weather was fussy and irritable. Today the rain came and the winds rose, and for most of the day the gusts shoved around
everything with brusque disregard. Add rain. Add mean low clouds. I’m amazed there’s still a single leaf on a tree; how do they hang on against such brute force? The wind got its fingers between a door and the frame and threw it open with such force the pneumatic closing-device was pulled from the wood, and the frame itself had several screws dislodged, requiring emergency repairs in the teeth of the gale just to close it. Yet a single leaf hangs on. The storm will pass and there will still be the garish ochre riot of the late-turning maples, standing like a flaming peacock next to a bare elm that looks bald and dead and defeated. September was a disappointment, October was a lovely gift – but now, at the end, October is trying to impress November. See? I’m making it all ready for you, my Master. October isn’t Dracula. It’s Renfield.

I expect the gazebo, which weighs half a ton, to come sailing through the window any minute. It’s so windy the doorknocker is knocking, and that thing is made of metal harvested from neutron stars. It’s the original knocker from 1915; it’s a hand holding a metal ball. There are cozy nights when you enjoy the smell of the radiators – incinerated dust, really – and the crackle of the fire in the fireplace, and everything feels snug and secure. This is one of those days where you feel the elements themselves digging at your foundation and your roof and everything in between.

There are three ways to look at it: the ancient Ogg-in-Cave perspective, which had no idea what was going on, and was just afraid, or learned to hunker and endure. Then there’s the “presume the weather is a manifestation of a moody deity” approach, which I don’t think even the Romans believed. Perhaps if there was a battle ahead, and you had a camp full of superstitious soldiers, yes, you might consider the wind a message from some gas-bothered elemental lounging on a couch in the celestial mountains, demonstrating his displeasure, but that’s where your priests and their ability to divine favorable augurs comes in. The morning of the battle, you split a dove, prod the guys, and say “Windus, Goddess of Well-Secured Roof Tiles, has smiled on our endeavor!” And should any soldier wonder why the hell they’re going into battle with nothing but a blessing from a minor domestic dwelling goddess, well, there’s always a centurion to remind them that victory means money, and money means whores, so let’s swing lively, lads.

Side note: how strange and foreign monotheism must have seemed to the Romans. I can understand you having your own god, my good man, but to exclusion of all others? Really? Nothing left for the rest of us, then. Well. I would really like to study it more, because I have this suspicion that the effective and practical members of the Roman political class were mostly social believers and private agnostics, indifferent to the supposed whims of the gods and unconvinced of their agency in human affairs. There’s a nice moment in the HBO series “Rome,” where the young Octavian – later the God Augustus, of course – casually dismisses the prospect of divine intercession, but admits the possibility the existence of a Prime Mover. Seems apt for the character, both in fiction and history. Deists make good rulers. Discuss!

Or not. Big topic for a hump day.
Third approach: understanding the precise details of a particular weather event, and regarding it as “weather.” This is how I see it. Because it is simply A Thing, I can personify it. Ascribe moods and intention where none exist. It gives the year a plot, does it not? The gentle tendrils of spring! The riotous sloppy big-bellied gusto of lolling Bacchus in the summer! The lessons of Serious Autumn, the bleak Truth of Winter! It’s just temperature fluctuations and a change in the state of precipitation, from liquid to solid. But man is an imaginative creature who invests himself in every phenomenon; he cannot look at a piece of cheese gone green without contemplating the fate of all flesh. And by “all” he means “his.” So the wind becomes a friend on day when you are young, pushing you forward; it’s a foe when you are old, pushing you over. By these fictions we make stories of the ordinary. In truth the weather is indifferent and we are irrelevant, but where’s the fun in that. A mouse in a hole knows neither idea. We look for characters and stories. The entire history of the entire planet and all its people could be summed up in a two-hour musical, really.

And what marvelous tunes! Today, for some reason, I was thinking about the curse of living in a universe that’s either A) one iteration of the cosmos where the rules say “one sentient planet only,” or B) a version of the universe where life is spread so far apart we can only dream of extending our hands out there and feeling something else touch our fingertips, or c) “it’s all unknowable random crap, who knows, and maybe there’s a great civilization in another galaxy, but you’ll never know, and on the other hand they discovered an ancient sightless ant in the Amazon, a creature whose existence and highly-ordered social structure hints at a master plan whose rules reverberate through the cosmos, but fat chance you’ll know whether that’s the case, so it’s faith, eh, brother? Faith or the void.” But let’s say we finally get together, Federation-wise, with other civilizations, and we’re the only ones with music.

We would instantly become the priest class for the galaxy.

Anyway. Today’s creativity consisted of lots of blogging, and a Diner for Halloween. Of course, a Diner for Halloween. A few years ago I went to the Haunted Diner via underground passage, an episode that required a great deal of audio futzing with 20 tracks and innumerable sound FX; this year’s installment is equal to that one, and may be the most violent Diner ever. There are also hints of the identity of the mysterious cook whose skills saved the Diner. But that’s still to come. The Diner is my longest-running fictional conceit, if you count the Minnesota Daily columns about the Miracle Diner, which I do. Even though the pace has slowed over the last two years they still come as easily as ever, and I look forward to the day when I can take callers and do it live, somehow. If only there was a medium that permitted such things!

To answer questions: YES it will return to iTunes. It had to do with some sync issue, wherein my uploader insisted that every – single – ep had to be uploaded. And that’s a lot of stuff. I’m shooting for a January 2011 return.
Three Days of Dracula, this year’s version of Five Days of Frankenstein, begins here. It’s small, because we have to start with the original source. Much more substantial evaluations tomorrow. See you around!

–

PS for the prog-geeks still here. You probably got the reference in the post title. I can do without that stupid whistle in the instrumental break, you know? Argh. But this was always one of my favorites, along with “The Eleventh Earl of Mars” and “Blood on the Rooftops,” a lovely sad song saddled with bad lyrics. It’s the mellotron! Also the fact that I still remember sitting on a dorm room floor at Middlebrook Hall, lonely as hell on a fall day like this one, listening to it on headphones, certain they’d just read my mind and understood what I wanted to hear, certain I had friends after all. Imaginary gods. (Which, as it turns out, is what the song is about. Imagine that!)

“He thought he recognized him by his walk, and by the way he fell.” That line’s better than they knew it was.

69 RESPONSES TO the wind & the wondering

browniejr says:
October 27, 2010 at 2:44 pm

Or perhaps that was DH Lawrence, or TE Lawrence (still can’t get over the fact that I screwed that up the other day…)

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 ulla links is HERE!
GardenStater says:
October 27, 2010 at 3:50 pm

@hpoulter: “Where’s Billy Goat Gruff when you need him?”

Indeed. Joe, there are many other places to spew your bile. But hey—it’s a free country.

Which reminds me: the dog just did his business; need to clean it up. Excuse me.

xrayguy says:
October 27, 2010 at 4:16 pm

Like I said in earlier comment, couple of days ago, tripped over a TCM broadcast of “Dracula” that seemed to have been re-orchestrated or orchestrated to begin with. Good soundtrack, helped that dragging pace a bit.

Joe Broderick says:
October 27, 2010 at 4:45 pm

Yeah, there are lots of sites where you can spit venom, if that’s your thing. This ain’t one of ’em.

metaphizzle says:
October 27, 2010 at 4:54 pm

Soozcat wrote: “There’s another possibility in the universe: D) a significant amount of sentient life is out there, and closer than we imagine, but is deliberately steering clear of us.”

Gibbering Madness wrote: “In other words, C. S. Lewis’ theory.”

Also Bill Watterson’s. As Calvin (the bratty six-year-old, not the theologian) said, “Sometimes I think the surest sign that intelligent life is out there is the fact that none of it has tried to contact us yet.”

swschrad says:
October 27, 2010 at 4:55 pm

@cross-silo: Our Genial Host appears to have missed the media event of the year.

Ozzy Osbourne is going to be the health correspondent for Rolling Stone. said so on Fox a moment ago.

this calls for some serious snark, because I just can’t believe “Abstinence, green tea, and polka!” is going to be the title of the column.

DryOwlTacos says:
October 27, 2010 at 5:09 pm

We are now watching the series “Caprica” on SciFi Channel (I refuse to use their current stupid brand), the prequel to “Battlestar Galactica.” In this story, the modern society is polytheistic in the Roman tradition. The terrorists, who will eventually become the Cylons, are monotheists. The writers are skillfully making the audience sympathize with both factions, since our natural inclination in real life is monotheism. Good cast, great visuals.
I would like to believe that there was an especially thoughtful caveman who stared long enough at a small brook, perhaps while waiting for a fish to wander by his spear, and caught on to the correllation between the movement of water and the movement of air. If you imagine the weather currents as water, you can see what I mean, if you amplify the scale a million times, and play it in super-super-slow-motion… Watching water pass over rocks in a stream is not unlike watching clouds pass over mountains from a distance. Occasionally the atmosphere swirls with a rotational motion and increased turbulence, just like an eddy in a stream, as the water passes an object and gets thrown into a whirlpool-like spin. Sometimes the water rages violently, and sometimes it is calm and slow.

I find it hard to believe there was never an early human who didn't make the connection. It's hard to be unbiased, considering I was raised with the concept of weather being a force of physics from an early age, so it's ingrained into my brain, but still any human with the cognitive capacity to notice similarities between things at different scales of space and time must have been able to make the connection.

Of course, that cave man probably got ridiculed by the rest of the clan and thrown out for being a heretic.

I think I need to listen to more Genesis. I consider myself an aspiring prog nerd, but I'm far from there because I got a late start in the game. I've got everything Pink Floyd and Dream Theater ever did, quite a few Rush albums too, but I'm far behind in the rest of the standards — just got my first King Crimson album a few days ago (In The Court of the Crimson King), and I need much more… And I need a whole bunch of Yes, Genesis, and I'm not even sure what else I'm missing…

Dan says:
October 27, 2010 at 5:33 pm

Roman Army…
Your comment about the Centurion and his motivational speech (victory means money, and money means…) to his soldiers reminded me of…
As you've probably read, there's been a measured increase in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (ptsd) amongst our returning servicemembers from the mid-east and southeast-asia.
I, as a Vietnam Vet and also a vet of Desert Shield/Storm have my theory:
Stress must be relieved or you'll be PTSD'ing all over the place. One of the known stress relievers is cigarette smoking.
--No problem in Vietnam.
--Less "obviously" widespread, but still pretty common during the Persian Gulf War (part I).
Drinking (especially to excess) is another stress reliever. Again, pretty common in Vietnam, but almost unavailable during Desert Shield & Desert Storm. Unless you were stationed near a French outfit.
And the PTSD rate went up.
And now, the Army doesn't want you to smoke, won't let you drink in-theater (and seriously frowns on it even back in garrison). So the PTSD goes up, but there's one more thing:
Because of the “Trafficking in Persons” whoop-de-doo, they're planning on making visits to, uh, working ladies, a violation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Even in established (and, in some parts of the world, legal) commercial venues. So there goes the last stress-reliever. (and don't even THINK about stress-relieving with the female GI over there – you'll get fined or lose a stripe if you're caught. She'll be sent home, but you'll be busted.) Expect the PTSD rate to go much higher.

**Jim Parker** says:
October 27, 2010 at 9:34 pm

James, your Genesis reference today made me immediately fall into a similar state of melancholy as you described. They were like the best friends that I never knew while growing up. I even love the quirky-cute saga that is “All In A Mouse's Night” and let's not forget that this is the album that provided us with “Afterglow”, the penultimate Genesis concert closing, post-apocalyptic masterpiece.

Also of note... after this album, Steve Hackett would never return to the studio with the band. For better, or worse.

**Dave (in MA)** says:
October 27, 2010 at 10:10 pm

Ben, go over here and you'll find out: [http://www.progressiveears.com/](http://www.progressiveears.com/)

**Ross** says:
October 28, 2010 at 3:16 am

“bgbear (roger h) says:
Didn't Berthold Ray write The Threepenny Space Opera?"

*snort* Mr Bear, you are a caution. Say, that reminds me–the heck w/contact from aliens, I wanna hear from Irritable Bear!

Ben:
“No, son! You're not ready to enter the Court of the Crimson King! At this point in your training, that album could turn you into an _evil_ scientist!”

I applaud the curiosity, even though my being in the prog-rock(we used to call it “art rock”)mood in recent years is a rare thing. I never really warmed to Rush, but you _must_ delve into Yes(start at the beginning, not that ersatz 80s stuff, even though Anderson's voice really has gotten better over the years), ELP and Renaissance(ah, the young Annie Haslam singing “Carpet of the Sun”—she was a slovely as her five-octave voice, then. Actually, early Fleetwood Mac could qualify, as well(like a lot of English bands of that era–think Led Zep—they were usually called blues-rock, but when you come from a nation that actually reads & supports theatre, art rock tends to come out–that, or really pretentious heavy metal).

**Ben** says:
October 28, 2010 at 10:46 am

Haha – I love the Venture Brothers reference… In fact, that scene, when Rusty introduces Dean to prog, was like a check-list for me in my prog adventures… I saw that scene and said “Ok, I've got Pink
RobertB says:
October 28, 2010 at 11:13 am

This is probably futile, but I implore James to remember that not everyone uses iTunes. A proper podcast is published as an RSS feed, compatible with any podcatcher software.

RJ says:
October 28, 2010 at 2:13 pm

“I would like to believe that there was an especially thoughtful caveman who stared long enough at a small brook, perhaps while waiting for a fish to wander by his spear, and caught on to the correlation between the movement of water and the movement of air. If you imagine the weather currents as water, you can see what I mean, if you amplify the scale a million times, and play it in super-super-slow-motion…”

I was driving in Big Bend National Park, up a long slope toward a low pass in the foothills of the Chisos Mountains when a front moved in. The wind pushed fog over the pass into the clear air on my side. The fog tumbled over the pass and down the slope just like a waterfall. That made the air currents completely visible, and it looked like slow motion water.

rbj says:
October 29, 2010 at 8:02 am

Jeez. It's been fairly warm through most of September & October, and now the forecast for Sunday night includes the word “snowflake.”

Kev says:
October 30, 2010 at 12:25 am

Show us your knocker !! We need a picture.

Say that to the wrong woman and you're likely to get slapped… 😁

knockatize says:
November 1, 2010 at 5:46 am

Bigtime Genesis geek here, as you can tell by the screenname I'm using... Wind & Wuthering wasn't quite the last thing Hackett ever did with the band.

That might just have been “Pigeons”, wherein one of the world's great guitarists was given precisely one note to play for three and a half minutes, while Phil wondered whose idea it was to write a song about leaving 50 pounds of sh**t on the Foreign Office roof.
Ryan says:
November 1, 2010 at 10:04 am

That single leaf has the benefit of flexibility to keep it attached in the wind 😊

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It would not be Halloween around Jasperwood without a mention of Him Who Certainly Can Be Named: Spookie Ookie.
He had two appearances on Rolie Polie Olie – once as a scary creature who scared kids in Polieville, and once as a dream-demon who made Zowie into the Queen of the Pumpykins, so he could convince her to climb the pumpkin staircase to his house, where he could frighten her into giving him the Super-Remote. (I will go to my grave knowing the plot of this cartoon.) Supposedly he wanted to get into his house, but there was a darker implication; give him the Super-Remote, and who knew what Spookie Ookie would wreak. Zowie insisted he not bad, he just want to go home, but she would, wouldn’t she?

Those pictures take me back, they do. Almost makes me glad Olie was cancelled, so it didn’t turn into utter crap, and makes it a part of her childhood that didn’t join the eternal Remix In the Cloud, where nothing is fixed to a particular era. On the other hand, I have no idea why no one saw the stupidity in killing this show and its characters.

A surplus of obligations has bitten deep into blogging time, and so it will be for tomorrow as well. So:

If you go to this page, you will find a thumbnail for a video about things to do on Halloween, notable for the fact that I attempt to sing two themes from the score of “Psycho.”

Universal Monsters! Oh, I could make it a blog post, but then I’d have to duplicate it for the Black and White World section. Drac 2 is here. Drac 3 is here.

Annnnd . . . the Halloween Diner. It’s the second half that really earns your patronage, I think.

I wish you a fine Halloween, however you wish to spend it. Comments are open; feel free to discuss the issues of recollected childhood costumes, and the merits of particular candies. We will meet again on the cold stone steps of November. See you then!
73 RESPONSES TO the spookiest pumpkin-bot that ever was

hpoult er says:
October 29, 2010 at 1:10 pm

I can't believe “Gay Hitler” makes it through the censor when the well-known S-word (describing an economic philosophy) gets you flagged, even if you spell it with a B, like on Monty Python (“I gave him my baby to kiss, and he bit it in the head”).

bgbear (roger h) says:
October 29, 2010 at 1:16 pm

I don't like the sound of these “boncentration bamps”

swschrad says:
October 29, 2010 at 1:53 pm

@hpoult er: you can’t get “sensationalism” through the filters? geez, that's just Marxian

browniejr says:
October 29, 2010 at 2:36 pm

On OTR, they often refer to Lucille Ball's program “My Favorite Husband” as “the new gay family program... Where they live together, and LIKE it!” It always strikes my modern ear as funny, even though gay in those days meant something completely different.

And now for something completely different... Mr. Hilter and Mr.
Bimmler are looking at a map...

**bgbear (roger h) says:**
October 29, 2010 at 3:18 pm

Speaking of OTR, I was listening to a later Johnny Dollar and on the show it was New Year's Eve 1961. Since the show aired on Sunday nights I quickly realized that it actually aired on that date and it was also the exact day I was born.

I feel so old 😞

**swschrad says:**
October 29, 2010 at 3:20 pm

@browniejr: … and the housing crisis begins, as they begin to plat the “Moishe Peaceful Village: A Lifestyle Center. Financing by Allianz. Construction by Speer Fine Homes.”

**bgbear (roger h) says:**
October 29, 2010 at 3:40 pm

i think they were just trying to win that bi-election.

**swschrad says:**
October 29, 2010 at 4:10 pm

@bgbear: we could call it redistricting

(ducks)

**browniejr says:**
October 29, 2010 at 4:36 pm

“Expense account report from Johnny Dollar to ‘Floyd's of England' for ‘The Bear Matter':
Item one: $4.39 for flowers for the new mother.
Item two: $2.19 for cab fair and incidentals to the hospital. I can report mother and bouncing baby boy are doing fine. Talked to the father about extending his life insurance coverage.

**bgbear (roger h) says:**
October 29, 2010 at 4:44 pm

@browniejr, tee hee.

*Sister, get this shamus out of the maternity ward*

**Patrick says:**
October 29, 2010 at 4:44 pm

Just wanted to wish everyone a safe and happy All Hallow's Eve. In relation to our Host's original topic starter, I didn't really have a
favorite candy, unless it was chocolate. The one candy I did hate getting was those peanut butter log things that come in the striped wrapper. I hated those with a passion. They were so cheap. A ripoff. A sham.

After several years of receiving those, I had vowed that when I was an adult, handing out candy, nothing smaller than the fun-size candy bars would be coming from my house. I didn't care how much money I had, I was not stooping down to such low levels of candy distribution.

Now here I am as an adult, and I have kept that solemn oath. When I moved in with my parents, they had bought the el cheapo candy, including aforementioned peanut butter things. I quickly redeemed them and our household by running to the store and picking up a bag of Reese’s, Snickers, Milky Ways, Mounds, and Almond Joys. Give them those peanut butter thingies if you want. Hand out boxes of Nerds. They’ll be getting the real goods from me. I have been pretty much in charge of the purchasing of Halloween candy from then on.

As for costumes, I think I was a vampire more frequently than anything else. I remember one year going as a ghost, but not in the sense I thought. I was imagining myself like the cartoon ghosts, a sheet with two holes for eyes. My mom didn't like the idea of cutting holes in the bedsheets, so she wrapped the sheet around my head and body like a toga, then painted my face a pale blue.

Another year I went as a mummy, but my mom had to work late on Halloween that year (she was usually in charge of the makeup), so my dad pitched in. I thought he had done a pretty good job.

I remember when I was about 7 I went as a werewolf. To complete the effect, my mom dressed herself as a werewolf too. The teeth didn't fit me, so she wore them. Any time someone knocked on the door, she'd open it very quickly and growl and snarl. Most people laughed at it, but she made one little girl nearly wet her pants. She was too afraid to get close to the house, so her dad had to come up to the door to get the candy. My mom washed off the makeup after that.

Kev says:
October 30, 2010 at 12:39 am

_The ownership of a Frito Bandito pencil eraser was a major status symbol in my elementary school. I wonder if it’s possible to find one of those anywhere these days?_

I had one as well, and of course it was never actually used to erase anything; the Bandito just rode proudly atop the pencil. (I didn’t think of this when I was a kid, but it amuses me now to think that in order to get him to do that, you had to stick the pencil top where the sun don’t shine.)

Mark says:
October 30, 2010 at 2:55 am

I think The Diner should be a live show on XM! Make it so, important movers and shakers.

bgbear says:
October 30, 2010 at 9:29 am
frito bandito about $10 on Ebay

TByrd says:
October 30, 2010 at 10:33 am

Born & raised in Sonoma, I have to watch “The Birds” every Halloween. Are those ‘peanut butter log things’ the dreaded ‘chick’o’stix”? I like the Arabic sounding AbbaZabba’s best. James once said your choice of Halloween costume reveals something about your inner character. Hmmm… I’ve been a gypsy, a cheetah, a green worm sticking out of an apple, a pirate, a black cat, a dragon, a cowgirl, a witch, a pharmacist, Minnie Pearl(complete with price tagged hat & square dancin’ get up),and a belly dancer. I’ve been Kall(goddess of destruction smeared with ashes & a bra made of paper mache skulls) & a sacred cow(snazzy black and white spots with appropriate tikka & garland of marigolds) since moving to India. I hope no Hindu’s have been offended. Sincerely. At least everyone was laughing.

fizzbin says:
October 30, 2010 at 11:50 am

Speaking of “gay”, he lisped (rim-shot [heh]), try singing this little Civil War ditty down San Antone way:

We're the boys so gay and happy
Where so 'ere we chance to be
If at home or on camp duty
'tis the same we're always free

We've left our homes and those we cherish
In our own dear Texas land
We would rather fight and perish
Side by side and hand in hand

Chorus:
Then let the Yanks say what they will
We'll be gay and happy still
Gay and happy, gay and happy
We'll be gay and happy still

There are several more verses but I don't think you'll get to them. 'Course, they may join in and buy you a round or ten. Down Texas way ya sez yer piece and takes yer chance.

swschrad says:
October 30, 2010 at 4:03 pm

@fizzbin: them's fightin' words, you thilly boy.

madCanada says:
October 30, 2010 at 5:05 pm

Oh yeah, I remember. My last last costume. In 2nd year university I did myself up as Kubrick's Malcolm “Alex” MacDowell. Jockstrap, false eyelash & everything. Don't know if I'd do that today. Happy hallowz all.

Mag says:
October 30, 2010 at 8:07 pm
Only one thing worse to a kid than Chick-o-Stix: Applets and Cotlets.

**Patrick** says:
October 31, 2010 at 3:46 pm

Not the Chick-O-Sticks, although those were just as vile.

No. these things.

*Twitch*

I think my bag was filled 75% of the way with those things.

**RebeccaH** says:
October 31, 2010 at 9:03 pm

I absolutely loved Halloween as a child, even better than Christmas, and it had nothing to do with getting candy. The allure was being able to dress up as someone or something else and going out to roam the neighborhood after dark, being able to approach the houses of strangers that you would never go near any other day of the year, to knock on their doors, and to hold out a papier mache hollow pumpkin or a brown paper bag and repeat the yearly ritual “Trick or Treat”, and to get the treat without fear of them seeing the real you, who might be capable of doing the trick. It was even more magical because you had gaggles of cousins or friends going along, because then you were safe in case there really were witches and goblins and ghosts abroad on that night. Halloween used to give children a sense of power they didn’t get at other times, the power to whatever they wanted, and to demand and receive a reward for commanding that power.

Alas, I hand out candy now and observe that Halloween has become just another night where mom and dad stand nearby and insist on a “thank you”.

**swschrad** says:
October 31, 2010 at 9:54 pm

alas, we had some neighbors whose Halloween was something rather frightful. the cat got out and got away.

“Have you seen my black and white cat? A little bit of a terrorist.”

“Last time we saw that one, our Pumpkins had it on its back ready for the kill. I don’t think it’s coming here any more. I’ll look in the front for you.”

something shy of two dozen little nippers came around for cavities. we obliged.

don’t think I’ll take my blood sugar tomorrow. save the supplies for when the test means something.
Still not finding what you're looking for?
Drop a comment on a post or contact us so we can take care of it!

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