Back to normal now. It takes a week to readjust from a long vacation. Everything reached equilibrium on Friday, when I found myself in the hallway of the school where Natalie takes her piano. I finished “Conspirata,” a novel by Robert Harris – the middle portion of his three-book series on Cicero, and doesn’t that just sound so learned? He’s a good author; I first encountered him with an alternate-history novel about Nazi Germany in the 60s, but he’s been on a Rome jag for the last few years. The day before I’d tweeted something about Caesar, and lo: I got a tweet back from the man himself. I dinged him for his treatment of Cicero, and he replied that Cicero “was here as well,” linking to Cicero’s tweet feed. Sure enough, there was old Chickpea. The lemures speak.

Now I enjoy tweaking Caesar when he tweets about his campaigns. Sometimes he replies. He’s a busy man. I suspect he enjoys being tweaked by those who are snarky and powerless and pose no possible threat. That was Caesar’s strength; it’s remarkable what you can accomplish when you don’t care about anything. Except the one thing.

Hope you had a good weekend. I did. Temps helped: we cracked 60 on Sunday, which eliminated the last of the snow, aside from a few doomed floes. (There’s one chunk in a shady spot which usually lasts until the tulips are up, but I helped it along by chopping it up with my heel. I am the sort of man who kicks a season when it’s down. I admit it. Took down all the Christmas lights, plugged them in to see which had survived: about an 80%
failure rate. Thank you China. *Quality* work there, lads. I plugged in the gazebo lights and set them for dusk, and when they popped on I felt remarkably happy: this could be *it*. This could be *spring*.

Working weekend, with many fruits to follow on the Bleat this week. Excuse the minor Monday update, but if I wasn't outside, or shopping, I was dealing with computer issues, and those are three dead-boring topics to recount. You're welcome. But be assured, *Media was consumed*.

Watched “The Day of the Locust,” a symptom of the 70s’ desire to revisit the 30s. It’s long and serious and grim and full of Stark Truths about things we might not otherwise have realized – Hollywood is shallow, for example, and it just chews folks up. Since it didn't do well and was out of release for a long time, it is highly regarded. Does it hold up? Well, Karen Black plays flibberdegibbet-crazy, Donald Sutherland is weird, and Burgess Meredith is a crusty old coot. A stretch for everyone, you might say. The much-honored ending is nightmarish enough, but ridiculous. Most people do not pause in the middle of a riot for a socially-relevant hallucination. It's also shot in gauze-o-vision. There was one moment that gave me a smile, though: at the movie premiere, the MC introduces Dick Powell.

I was struck by the resemblance, and wondered who the actor was.

Well, yes, *that makes sense*.

One more thing about the brilliance of the script: before the riot at the end, we see a newsie hawking a paper. *Wuxtry, wuxtry, read all about it, president gets banner headlines for anondyne remarks:*
Remember well those noble sentiments, O ye filmgoer, for when the people go mad – as they will always do – the camera will find that paper again:

We didn’t listen! We never listen! I’ll give the movie high marks for one thing, and that's Billy Barty as a drunken cock-fighting trainer. I would have built a sequel just around him.

Later today: Matchbook museum, of course, and a Peter Graves eulogy over at the Strib blog. See you soon!

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53 RESPONSES TO Monday, March 15

Kev says:
March 16, 2010 at 5:55 am

Work hours are essentially set and the hours of sunlight are out of your control. So do you want the sun to be out when you’re sleeping and at work or during the time after work? Why is that a tough choice?
Very well said!

Chris says:
March 16, 2010 at 12:20 pm

“I have nearly every single episode of MST3K’s entire ten-year run—commercial, bumpers, the whole magilla—on VHS tapes. Every. Single. One.”

Keep Circulating the Tapes
I’m sorry, someone had to do it.

Fred says:
March 19, 2010 at 8:38 pm

“I have nearly every single episode of MST3K’s entire ten-year run—commercial, bumpers, the whole magilla—on VHS tapes. Every. Single. One.”

Color me positively emerald….
developers! I'm just adding this, and will add something more, later. Who cares? You're reading this? Really?
It's not official, so we'll have to wait a fortnight, but: good news en route. And by “good news” I mean something that affects me personally and has absolutely no impact on your life in any significant form, but since I am the center of the universe I expect you will share my happiness. Is that egomaniacal enough? I swear, I could audition for Zod, except that when I commanded people to kneel they’d think it was because it made eye contact easier. Too short to be Zod.

There's a T-shirt.

Capital day; not as hot as yesterday – seems almost decadent to use the word “hot” in March – and the long-range forecast calls for pain the week after next, with snow, or “bastard dandruff,” expected to fall. When Natalie got off the bus today she was in a T-shirt, smiling, almost skipping (she never skips), and she said it was great spring was here. I said hold the phone, we might get snow the week after next. She stopped. Jaw hung open.

SNOW?

Yes, alas.

HOW MUCH?

Oh, a dusting. Or more. Won’t stay. Don’t worry. It’s just a desperate measure. Winter is over. Someone should make a Hitler video about winter being angry it lost.
Yeah that would be funny.

See, she knows what a Hitler Video is. For all I know they made one about the cancellation of Danny Phantom. She is keen to tell me about memes she's discovered, too, so we have that common vocabulary. (My poor wife is baffled by it all, but she has ceded all things internetal to husband and child.) I went off to take a nap the other day and shouted I'M CHARGIN' MAH LAZERS and she laughed. It's shorthand, it's just pop-culty drier lint, but as long as I can keep some common currency I'll bank it, possibly at First National Mixed Metaphors, because eventually kids enter their own world of concerns and fascinations, and they don't share because they don't think you care. Why would you? You're a grup, careworn, slaving at the frown-house all day. There is no way you would think that this cool thing is a cool thing. You'd have to be a kid.

Lucky me, I come from a generation that wiped away most of the distinctions between high and low culture, and replaced the Search for Truth and Beauty with the pursuit of cool. Truth brings responsibilities, and Beauty is a value judgment; Cool is a pack of smokes. But I'm generalizing. I like cool.

I hate hip, but I like cool.

Peter Graves died. I had some notes at the Stribblog, but left out how much I loved “Mission: Impossible” as a kid. For a while it was hip to rag on the portrayal of Barney, who was always stuck working in an elevator shaft – but really, they went to places where a Black man would stick out, and that's not how I saw him as a kid: he was the guy who had technology. As I've said before, the Black people on TV when I grew up were all indispensable: Barney made the plots work, Uhuru kept the ship in touch with Starfleet, and the fellow who pushed around Ironside – well, there was something of an antebellum relationship there from the outside, but hell, Ironside would have gone down a hill screaming if it hadn't been for him. (“Ironsie” would have been a much different show if it had taken place in San Francisco, no?) (For those who don't get the reference, it was Raymond Burr's post-Perry show. Dig the opening credits, here:
Man, that's the soundtrack of my entire TV life, right there. Quincy Jones, of course. In a similar vein, but less gritty, was “Cannon.” I had no idea that the guy in this show – the fat cop who got his man – was the voice I heard in “Rocky and Bullwinkle,” let alone one of the greatest radio actors of all time:

Then, of course, there was Mannix:
A great theme, but as a kid I always wondered why the awesome Mannix was karate-chopping toast in the second “N” of the name sequence.

Anyway. “Mission” was a fine show. The bottom of the hour was always the point where it seemed the mission might be long: someone stopped Peter Lupus, and said “Achtung, senor comrade, do you know your name is a disease favored by hypochondriacs with vague, broadly defined symptoms?” and he would stop and the music would come up: COMMERCIAL! After the bottom of the hour break, the guard would look at his papers (most of the missions took place in countries where one was expected to have Papers) and wave him on, and the plot would continue. The endings were wonderful: the IMF team stripping off masks and fake beards and burning things and walking with great purpose and satisfaction to the getaway. A tidy little piece of entertainment . . .

. . . which they had to spoil, in the movie, by making Jim Phelps a traitor. I’m sure that made the screenwriters feel . . .

Virtuous, to use an odd word. But wrecking an icon, showing that the heroes were villains, is a form of virtue for some, if it keeps us from believing in the false icons The Man wants us to worship. You know, like, er, Jim Phelps, that fascist. Some icons are permitted if they are idiosyncratic and compassionate, which is why Kojak could shoot dozens of guys: he liked lollipops and said “who loves ya baby” and could be considered a Righteous Dude who was essentially Down With It, sort of a Greek Shaft.

The difference between hip and cool? Can’t give you an example of hip; nothing comes to mind. But cool? Yes:
So RIP Peter Graves. He grew up in my neighborhood here in Minneapolis and went to the movie theater down the block, the one they changed into a video store in the 90s. You could rent “Airplane” there.

Later today: Comic Sins, and an incredible find in B&W World. Stay tuned.

88 RESPONSES TO tuesday, march 16

bgbear (roger h) says:
March 16, 2010 at 1:20 pm

it was of course fiercely anti-drug, and I believe there was an episode where a pot-smoking couple wanders off and lets their toddler drown in the bathtub.

Ooh, time to do the 6 degree thing again: The marijuana puffing computer programmer daddy in that episode was played by Jack Webb regular Tim Donnelly (fireman Kelly). Tim Donnelly was in the MST3K victim “Clonus Horror” which included in the cast MST3K regular Peter Graves.

To get really annoying, Peter Graves was Price in “Stalag 17” directed by Billy Wilder who also directed Sunset Blvd which included Jack Webb in the cast.

shesnailie says:
March 16, 2010 at 1:27 pm

“it wasn't until a chatty hotel clerk in Slovenia told me the reason she was inputting my data into the computer was, the computer forwarded them right away to the police. Their software was a little odd, though"
@_v – i bet they were still using SCMODS

kevin says:
March 16, 2010 at 1:39 pm

I too dislike hip, but like cool....

http://unhappyhipsters.com/
http://www.latfh.com/

Mr_Hat says:
March 16, 2010 at 1:44 pm

Wow. My two fave 1980 movies in the same thread.

Let's go for the trifecta. Come down and see the, uh, mile of cars we have on our lot.

browniejr says:
March 16, 2010 at 1:56 pm

@Peter: Hawaii 5-0 started in the '60's, and ran all the way to 1980. ... Still LOVE the theme and “Kam Fong as Chin Ho” and “Zulu as Kono” references. Mission Impossible similarly started in the '60's and ran into the '70's, and even had a restart from 1988-1990 (different cast).

If I had to pick a cop show that best reflected each decade, I would pick:
Dragnet- 1960's (even though it had a revival in the '90's- Al Bundy as Joe Friday just didn't work)
Hill Street Blues- early 1980's
Miami Vice- Late 1980's
1990's??? 2000's ???

bgbear (roger h) says:
March 16, 2010 at 2:09 pm

Bakersfield PD was the best cop show of the 90s.

Reno 911 reflects the 2000s pretty well.

Borderman says:
March 16, 2010 at 2:37 pm

This was just arrived in email from a colleague.

From Airplane! (1980). Urgent conversation in the cockpit between Dr. Rumack (Leslie Nielsen) and Capt. Oveur (Peter Graves).

Rumack: Captain, how soon can you land?

Oveur: I can't tell.

Rumack: You can tell me. I'm a doctor.

Oveur: No. I mean I'm just not sure.

Rumack: Well, can't you take a guess?

Oveur: Well, not for another two hours.
Rumack: You can’t take a guess for another two hours?
Movies make such wonderful epitaphs. Thirty years later and that still puts me in stitches.

Larry says:
March 16, 2010 at 2:53 pm
We should not forget “77” Sunset Strip I think it's the one that started them all

Cory says:
March 16, 2010 at 3:15 pm
Larry and Browniejr give the impression TV started in 1960. There were plenty of good detective shows in the 1950’s, pre 77 Sunset Strip.
Two of the most notable – Peter Gunn and M Squad (with Lee Marvin). And just for the record, I’ll take those two TV themes ahead of any of the ones you have mentioned. You tube ‘em.

swschrad says:
March 16, 2010 at 3:51 pm
“Jack! Jack! Hi! Jack!”
and off between two cops to the clubbing room.

Matt says:
March 16, 2010 at 3:57 pm
This is the first time I’ve heard these themes since they were coming out of my parent’s console TV. Except in Kill Bill of course, but I didn’t know what it was at the time.

xrayguy says:
March 16, 2010 at 4:18 pm
Other dribble no one cares about- “Cannon” was also “Matt Dillon” on the radio version of “Gunsmoke”- yeah, picture that image on TV. Also, Mike Connors went by the name “Trip” in several movies- this was because his real last name was Overtherug (giggle, giggle).

chrisbcritter says:
March 16, 2010 at 4:30 pm
“Also, Mike Connors went by the name “Trip” in several movies.”
Touch, not Trip – he got that nickname for his high school basketball prowess.
And don’t forget Peter Graves’ return to the revived MI series filmed in Australia and brought about as a way to get around a Hollywood writers’ strike by reusing old scripts.

Aleta Jackson says:
March 16, 2010 at 6:04 pm
I too loved “Mission: Impossible” because of Barney and his Magic Happeners (engineer as hero) and Jim Phelps’s cool under pressure.
HATED HATED HATED the stupid movie, did my best to forget it.

inhaocsig says:
March 16, 2010 at 6:12 pm

There is a recent commercial (for a product that I can't recall & if my daughter were here, she'd name it instantly) where the girl says, “It's totally cool... and hip!”

Would James have a love/hate relationship with whatever they were selling?

Does “total coolness” quench the fires of hip hate?

Baby M says:
March 16, 2010 at 6:19 pm

Amazing Fun Fact: the Mission: Impossible theme was written as a throwaway chase scene music cue for the pilot, but Bruce Geller liked it so much he switched it around with the music written for the titles.

This Bleat will self-destruct in five seconds.

browniejr says:
March 16, 2010 at 6:26 pm

@Cory: The problem is I started in 1961... I love the Peter Gunn theme, but have never seen any episodes. M Squad I will have to check out. The old radio shows are great on XM/Sirius, and I have discovered many a great episode there. The problem is TV channels like “TVLand” don’t really play that many pre-1960's shows anymore, treating ’80's shows like “Tool Time” and “Married with Children” as “vintage” TV. I think they are missing something.

JamesS says:
March 16, 2010 at 6:30 pm

The truly unforgivable sin committed against “Mission: Impossible” by the Tom Cruise franchise was not the traitorous reveal of Jim Phelps, as horrible as that was.

No, it was the rewriting of Lalo Schifrin’s wonderful theme in 4/4 from the original 5/4 time signature. Oh sure, they give you the opening few bars in five to tease you in, and then it drops into a boring square time phrasing.

Ack.

JamesS says:
March 16, 2010 at 6:34 pm

Still LOVE the theme and “Kam Fong as Chin Ho” and “Zulu as Kono” references

I always got a chuckle out of that too... until I realized it was really no different from “Jack Lord as Steve McGarrett,” or “James MacArthur as Danny Williams.”

Those crazy white Europeans and their funny names!
Baby M says:
March 16, 2010 at 6:50 pm

The *Hawaii Five-O* title sequence is still the greatest travel commercial ever made.

Bob Lipton says:
March 16, 2010 at 7:03 pm

Besides the great tv themes already mentioned, I was very fond of the themes from "I Love Lucy", "The Munsters", "The Addams Family" and the perky little theme from "I Dream of Genie".

Stupid fact: John Williams wrote the music to theme from 'Gilligan's Isle'. Fortunately, he's more than made up for that.

Bob

browniejr says:
March 16, 2010 at 8:00 pm

A few stupid facts related to this thread/ commentary:
"Johnny Williams" also wrote the theme to "Lost in Space" (I like it… Gilligan's Island- not so much.)

They did a remake/ new pilot of Hawaii 5-0 in 1997 with the character of Chin Ho (played by Kam Fong (Chun)), even though the Chin Ho character was killed off in the series' 10th season...

Joe Broderick says:
March 16, 2010 at 8:15 pm

I know I'm mostly repeating others' sentiments here, but below are my picks for TV's great musical themes (1960s vintage):

I Spy
T.H.E. Cat (A short-lived show, starring Robert Loggia)
Mission: Impossible
Hawaii Five-O
Mannix

Joe Broderick says:
March 16, 2010 at 8:20 pm

Here's the "T.H.E. Cat" opener. Not quite as cool as I thought it was back in 1967, but still pretty jazzy.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbH1_48IrjA

grs says:
March 16, 2010 at 8:41 pm

I have all the I Spys on DVD, working my way slowly through them, and I rock out to the theme song every time, to everybody else's embarrassment.

Joe Broderick says:
March 16, 2010 at 8:47 pm

grs.
The “I Spy” opening graphics were pretty cool, too. Or so I recall.

**Crabtree** says:
March 16, 2010 at 9:38 pm

I'm a little surprised my favorite 70s cop show hasn't been mentioned yet. It may be the lack of a great theme song. Columbo. This is one show that has aged remarkably well.

Just one more thing… A Trek connection for you. Mission: Impossible stared Greg Morris, who was the father of Phil Morris (who played Barney's son in the 1980s MI spin-off) and Iona Morris. Iona was in an episode of Voyager. Phil was in Star Trek III, a couple of episodes of DS9 and one of Voyager. BOTH children were in the TOS episode “Miri”… from which our host got the word “grup.” It's a small, nerdy world, isn't it?

**Crabtree** says:
March 16, 2010 at 9:40 pm

Oh, and in memory of Peter Graves I watched the MST3K episode “It Conquered the World,” in which we learn almost too late that man is a feeling creature.

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

**Richard C. Moeur** says:
March 16, 2010 at 10:11 pm

Can't say that I was ever a fan of Cannon or Mannix. But I yield to no one, not even our host, in my appreciation for Burgess, Hugh, Tony, and Doug in “Search”.

Never picked up on the Arness / Graves connection, even when I was listening to “The Wall” 3 decades ago and wondering why someone on the TV in the background during “Is There Anybody Out There?” would be calling Jim Phelps “Marshal”.

When things are getting a bit – interesting – when working on a difficult project around the house (or office, or wherever), I find myself whistling one of the incidental music themes form “Mission: Impossible” – ya know, the one they'd typically play when they'd be skulking about in some Eastern Bloc wald. Can't really describe it (I'm musically illiterate (innoterate?)), but it's the one with the strings & snare drum. Helps me think that the scriptwriters are on my side and will let me wrap things up nicely in a few minutes (plus commercial breaks).

**Stjohnsmythe** says:
March 16, 2010 at 10:14 pm

I think it fitting that Peter Graves should have the last word:

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

**D T Nelson** says:
March 17, 2010 at 12:11 am

I was going to mention that, writing about Peter Graves, you used a version of the M:I opening credits from the season before Peter Graves joined the show, back when Stephen Hill was the one who listened to the self-destructing tape and flipped through the dossiers.
to put together the team for the job, and briefed the team — and
then was not seen again in that episode. But ajtoley beat me to it.

So then I was going to say that Stephen Hill later played the great
District Attorney Adam Schiff on Law and Order, but bgbear beat
me to it. ("Good work. Take the rest of the week off." "Adam, it's
Friday afternoon." "Eh, so it is.")

But, I do have some comments not previously commented.

The version of the Ironside theme you used is the later, jazzier one.
The one I don't like. Here is what I think of as the Ironside theme:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNS0u6USBTA

Bridey's remark about the Dragnet episode where the pothead
couple lets their little boy drown in the bathtub caused me to say
this out loud: "Where's little Robby? Where's little Robby?" (Which is
the remark by the father [played by the guy who was Gage and
deSoto's main firehouse foil on "Emergency"] to Joe Friday as he
came to realize something was wrong.)

Regarding John and his Slovakian hotel, I seem to recall reading that
it used to be common for the police in US cities to visit hotels daily
and see who had checked in, to see if there were any mopes, mooks,
yeggs, or lamsters they needed to talk to.

Thank you Mark E Hurley for the Firesign reference. A Firesign
reference is always appropriate.

While I really like the Banacek theme, I think my favorite 70s cop
show theme might be the first version of the "Harry O" theme:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_o5-7bAEtWQ. "Harry O" was a
great show, too soon cancelled — and they kept re-orchestrating the
theme, for the worse. And may I add, David Janssen was a fine actor,
too soon dead.

Mannix was a 60s cop show, and has my second favorite 60s cop
show theme. Remember how the first season Mannix worked for a
big computerized private investigation agency run by Joseph
Campanella, and the credits showed lots of spinning tape reels and
punch cards running through a card sorter? Here it is:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CF_49tWPNWA That was before
Mannix struck out on his own as a lone wolf PI and had to hire Gail
Fisher as Peggy to run the office.

My favorite 60s cop show theme, and maybe all-time favorite, which
no one has yet mentioned, is the one for David Susskind's "N.Y.P.D."
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERAfdei0Si4 (I cannot find just
the opening credits, so you can forward to 2:00 if you want to skip
guest star Al Pacino. And unfortunately, the audio and video are a
little out of sync in that clip.) I still have an aging Scotch C-30
cassette with that theme on it, complete with the 60 Hz hum of the 3-
inch Zenith speaker. ("Police Squad" stole the "NYPD" visual and the
"M Squad" music.)

Dave (in MA) says:
March 17, 2010 at 1:55 am

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kd85Qim_Z6A Perhaps one of the
best 60s/70s cop show themes.

Alex says:
March 17, 2010 at 6:55 am

James,
Why post a tribute MI opening with Graves instead of Stephen Elliot?

Lou Shumaker says:
March 17, 2010 at 10:27 am

I had forgotten that Graves played the traitor, but as a kid, I vividly remember him being thrown out of the barracks and shot by the German guards.

And the Dragnet with the baby drowned in the bathtub still haunts me. Remember the episode when they came upon the murder scene, and the dying man's declaration was “oft”? They figured out he meant “loft,” looked there, and found the body of the guy who killed the vic.

(And let's not get started on “The House on Green Apple Road,” in which William Windom (WILLIAM WINDOM) got carved up in the kitchen and left blood everywhere. And that was an “ABC Movie of the Week”!

Paul in NJ says:
March 17, 2010 at 11:10 am

Loved the title sequence from “Mission: Impossible.”

The fact that that ep starred Steven Hill and not Peter Graves? Not so much. Ah, well. The man did have a sense of humor and would'a found it... visible.

lanczos says:
March 17, 2010 at 6:59 pm

Fury – The Story Of A Horse – And The Boy Who Loved Him

Loved you, Peter Graves, much more than that little wimp ‘Bobby Diamond’ – and then there was ‘Packy’...

metaphizzle says:
March 19, 2010 at 1:00 pm

My goodness. People talked about Quinn Martin productions, and M Squad, and about Airplane!, but not about the series connected to all of these:

“Police Squad! IN COLOR! Starring: Leslie Nielson! Also starring: Alan North! Tonight's special guest star: William Shatner! And Rex Hamilton as Abraham Lincoln!”

William Overby says:
March 20, 2010 at 4:22 pm

Wow! Thanks for posting the videos. Amazing the memories those bring back!
This morning’s dream: while doing a book signing, I knocked over a candle and burned down a small town. Before that, however, I’d had a shoot-out in a dilapidated boarding house with Barker-Karpis gang, and dispatched several criminals. I had taken up the identity as an author to escape reprisal, and as I saw the town go up in flames I thought: now everyone’s mad at me.

It’s a column night, so I’ll be long-winded and vague. Hah! Just kidding. I’ll be short.

Picked up Gnat from school early; time for the dentist. Time for the drill, alas. A lesson in prevention would be administered at the point of a drill, the hideous whining drill. I remember well my first cavity: it was detected in an old dentist’s office in Moorhead – don’t know why we went there, but it’s seared, seared in my memory – and the kindly dentist found a hole in need of drillin’ ‘n’ fillin’. He said words which made me sit right up in the chair: “No time like the present.” WHAT? And so it began: the needle, the drill, the subsequent numbness. At least Gnat had fair warning, but that could be worse. Plenty of time to worry.

But she was only a bit worried. I told her that needles today were much better than the railroad spikes of my day, that they numbed the area first, and they’d give her laughing gas to ease the anxiety. She wanted to know if she’d be like the kid in the YouTube video. No.

“Drat.”
So I got her out of school and took her to the dentist, and we sat in the office looking through an issue of Highlights, the magazine half-read by kids sitting nervously in doctor's offices since 1943, and we read the Timbertoes and rolled our eyes and Goofus and gave tepid approval to Gallant – really, the kid is such a suck-up – and then she was called. I read for half an hour, and then she came out with her face not working at all and her upper lip puffed up like she'd gotten a Hollywood enhancement injection.

"It wasn't bad at all," she said. "Now when I learn I have a cavity I won't worry."

Well, no, that's not the lesson. Damn you painless dentistry! At least the laughing gas had helped, right? “Yeah, it made me relax all over.” Great! But don't do drugs.

After this we went to Southdale, where she was going to sell Girl Scouts cookies by the Dairy Queen. We killed some time in the Apple Store, playing the Wall-E game. As usual, the store was filled; half the tables were occupied by folks getting tutorials. One fellow was helping some older folks with concepts and acronyms, and explained that PDF files were “printable document files.” I twitched a little, and tried to keep myself from being That Guy, and wandering over and saying “portable document file. Portable. Cross-platform. Portable.” But maybe he was talking about printer description files. Or maybe the iPhone has a dowsing app, and he was talking about potable drink finders. Best to keep out of it.

At four she went to sell cookies. To her dismay they were supposed to dress up as giant Girl Scout cookies: "oh wonderful" she said. "I'm a samoa." I took pictures for her to enjoy 20 years later and post on her 3d holographic OmniLifeSite, then ran to the bank to get money to make change. The only bank in the area is located in the grocery store, and from what I read in the crime blotter it's robbed about once a week. The teller asked me if I'd like to open an account, and pointed to a sign: if I opened a new checking account with a deposit of $25, I'd get $100.

"You're having a sale?"

"Yep!"

“A four for one sale?”

“Uh – yeah!”

I didn't have the time, and I wouldn't have done it anyway – spend your way to insolvency if you must, but don't ask for my help! Back to the mall; handed off the kids to the other parent, hit a drive-through for a wad of gut-filling quasi-food (hadn't eaten since breakfast), went home, and BANG: nap.

That was my day. That, plus finishing a piece on the trip for a Strib travel story, and doing Newsbreak in the morning – the guest was unavailable, so I had to interview myself, in a way. You may enjoy: the topic was CFL bulbs and a new push to make incandescent bulbs legal in Minnesota. It's here.

http://lileks.com/bleat/?p=6142
towards the end for the video of the lady pan-bender. Marvel at how well my tie matches my shirt, too. I also finished a few updates; don’t know if I posted this one before, but it's the Heinz 1933 World's Fair pavilion, HERE. Also in the 30s section: more Health ads. Can’t remember if I linked to the last batch – I had a lot of things in the pipeline before I went on the cruise. It's HERE. If that looks familiar, just jump ahead to number 5.

Now, something to ruin your day, or make it. Your call. I think this may be the best magazine cover EVER.

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57 RESPONSES TO thursday, march 18

Emgee says:
March 18, 2010 at 1:32 pm

Leave BanachSpace alone, and let he who has never mistyped a
word cast the first stoan. I should know better than to read the comments section, but I just wanted to know what is supposed to happen after clicking past the 5th page in the 30s section, it just takes me to the 30s home page. Please email me the answer Jim, so I don't have to check back here, plzthx.

bgbear (roger h) says:
March 18, 2010 at 1:52 pm

I had three fillings in December. Because I’m allergic to Novocaine and they didn’t have a substitute, I went without. It's uncomfortable, but I really don't get what people complain about.

Didn't I see you in “Little Shop of Horrors”?

Wagner von Drupen-Sachs says:
March 18, 2010 at 1:56 pm

Pretty good trick, actually, getting that big floppy work-glove finger into the trigger guard. I always shoot my nose off when I try to do it.

kc says:
March 18, 2010 at 3:38 pm

Thanks, guys – best laugh I've had all week!

shensnailie says:
March 18, 2010 at 5:07 pm

...@. v – that clown was seen at the gun store muttering “laugh at me, will they”

oh and george bush has been out of office for well over a year now. his national guard record ought to be a moot point by now. save the duckspeaking for a political forum.

lindal says:
March 18, 2010 at 9:48 pm

Bg Bear-😊 Feed Me!!!
I had braces for five years, too. That may have helped the “whatever” factor about dentistry.

hpoulter says:
March 19, 2010 at 5:23 am

I turned the evil clown picture into a fridge magnet. A fine addition to the collection.
Still not finding what you're looking for?
Drop a comment on a post or contact us so we can take care of it!

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

Please install and activate the “Twitter for WordPress” plugin to use this section.
Screechiness aplenty: picked up child and two friends from orchestra class and took them to Subway. Gave them instructions: the man who makes your sandwich will not be happy. His shirt will say “sandwich artist,” and artists are temperamental sorts with Issues, since they spend their day grappling with Truth and Beauty and Mayonnaise. So be firm, clear, direct: start by announcing your bread preference, followed by length. Sound off!

“Italian, six inch,” they yelled.

You will do well. As it turned out, the clerks were surly beyond measure, having judged the arrival of three little girls as a nightmare no matter how well they did.

“That guy was all like unhappy,” said one friend. I said you’d be unhappy too if you made sandwiches all day for people who didn’t know what they wanted and stared at the menu board as if it was an ever-changing kaleidoscope of options. I thought: fast food people are the only people wearing uniforms these days, at least as far as kids see. For them, uniforms are associated with meniality, the surest sign of a job occupied by someone who doesn’t want to do it.

The only uniform I wore was a waiter’s vest at the Valli, a brown polyester thing you could pierce with as much flair as you liked. (Management had a few rules, but unless you festooned yourself with loud red political buttons,
you'd get a pass. I wore a few pins with strange meaningless clip-art patterns, these things being extra-hip in the 80s, and made myself a new nametag every day. I'd write HELLO MY NAME IS JAMES on the back of a green Guest-Check sheet (yes, I worked in a restaurant that had the classic Guest Check pads; at the same time I was working for a college paper where everyone smoked and drank and wrote on manual typewriters. It's as if I was present for the absolute tail-end of the Previous Era, but didn't know it) and I'd add some “clever” tag line that reflected the mood of the day. Kept a few; should scan them some day. For the Valli site.) The waitresses wore dresses. Yes: mandatory skirtage. The uniforms were tight, brown, with two white lines that ran down the front, intersecting the boobal area.

I'd give anything to go back and time and see it all again, except that I know I'd want to walk up to myself and slap myself on general principle. It's a cruel trick that we can't remember early childhood, but remember early twenties.

Speaking of the end of the Previous Era: I remember gas station uniforms, but only because I hung around my dad's Station, and he had two service bays, and all the guys wore Unitog coveralls. With their names embroidered over the left breast pocket. In red.

While I was working at the Valli I must have seen “Saturday Night Fever,” since it was all the rage on the jukebox downstairs. Hated it then, but time has applied the great Crowbar of Musical Mercy and separated the era from the songs. Now I can see the virtues in some of the songs – “Stayin' Alive” is a perfect piece of pop – but the brackish crass crap of the era fills every frame of the movie, half of which I watched last night. And it's a good movie. It really is, for popular entertainment; unsparing and cold-eyed at times, as fits the lyrics of its signature song (somebody help me / I'm going nowhere). From the distance of 30+ years, it almost looks raw and realistic, and it certainly fits alongside the other “gritty” movies of the decade. See it again, if you have the time, and tell me that something unexpected didn’t arise from those performances, that script. They may have set out to create a dancin’ fool version of a Welcome Back Kotter character, but they got something else out of Travolta; what seemed to some like a dumb lummox dese-and-doseing his way through a teen angsty drama now looks like a remarkably natural job of inhabiting a genuine character. It's not a romance, either. It's anything but.

As for the dancing: like waitresses wearing skirts at the Valli, there wasn’t anything unusual about seeing people dressing up to dance actual dance steps, not then – but now it looks like the end of something, not the start of a new style.

After that it was safety pins and pogo dances, at least in the eyes of people writing articles for music magazines. If I had to choose today I'd still go with the crowd that drank too much coffee and wore skinny ties and crowded together to leap up and down to The Jam, but there's something to be said for being able to ask a strange woman if she knows the New York Hustle and the Latin Hustle. And there's much to be said for a movie that use one BeeGees song to highlight a hedonistic hardware-store clerk dance before an adoring
claque and show his brother, a priest who wants to leave the church, tell a kid that the Pope probably won't sanction his girlfriend's abortion.

It was the 70s.

May it never be the 70s again. I don't think it can be the 70s again. The world not only feels rotten in those old films, it looks rotten.

**Hey, links!**

New Diner. It's short, but it's the first of two parts. HERE.

New 50s comic ads. I don't know if I posted the first part – it starts HERE. If I did post that, and you've seen it, the second batch starts HERE. If I haven't posted this, well, yo: 20 pages of new stuff.

Small 100 Mysteries, HERE.

Have a grand weekend! (Did half the new Bleatplus members; should get the rest out tonight or Saturday.)

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**102 RESPONSES TO friday! march 20**

**GardenStater** says:
March 21, 2010 at 10:23 pm

@NEOkie: “...my husband's take on the decade is legal drinking at 18 and an end to the draft....”

Well, that's something I hadn't thought about. As a senior in HS, I was able to go out at lunch and have a couple of beers, completely legal. That was something that no kid today can enjoy.

**buzz** says:
March 24, 2010 at 9:52 am

The 100 Mysteries link seems to be broken.
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!
developers! I'm just adding this, and will add something more, later. Who cares? You're reading this? Really?
Little to report today, although in a sense there's a great deal – but that's for next week. Woke a little later, and got to have breakfast with the family for once; no more trotting out in the early AM while everyone slumbers. No coffee in a take-out container. For a while I went with a ceramic cup we were given last summer for our participation the Secret Project; it was fine, but coffee got cold, and the silicone lip made it seem like you were suckling from a grown-up sippy cup. Which of course you were. I also have a metal one with plastic innards; keeps it hot, but makes coffee taste like robot plasma. The only thing that worked for me were these Dixie cups made of some odd furry plastic-type paper, with a tiny aperture through which one sucked the precious ichor, like an astronaut.

This morning I put her on the bus and went up to the computer and drank coffee out of a cup in my sweats, the way writers should do it. By cracky. Did a little blog entry on tiny bar I found in a picture from the late 50s. It was also a “cafe” and a “restaurant” and no doubt smelled of Winstons and Hamm's all day and all night; given the neighborhood – in decline at the time – you'd find a few professional boozers there in the AM hours hunched over a shot, the sort of guys who spent their entire day at the end of the bar, ending up a muttering ruin by the end of the evening. I wouldn't want to spend much time in these places, but I mourn their loss, because a neighborhood needs a splash of neon and a place where music spills out the door when someone enters or leaves. But that's nostalgic nonsense, I
suppose. More likely these were places were old guys spent day after day putting a pillow over the face of their own troubles until it stopped kicking, and started snoring. They’re not all “Cheers.”

Not often you get this: side-by-side package design.

The new, the old. I like the new. But isn’t that how it always is? Oooh, new
look, ergo I must remind myself I am an up-to-the-moment type of person by approving it! No, not always. I think the last ten years have been somewhat wretched for product design, with a forced ebullience throwing graphic elements all over hell. I mean, look at that Kix box. It’s just yelling at you.

Of course, cereal should have a certain energy, since that's what it's there for: processed corn fragments infused with sucrose to give you a temporary energy burst and the commensurate illusion of well-being. So naturally you’d want Phil Silvers, crazed, dressed up as a mailman.

I think if we could go back in time to a grocery store, we'd spend most of our time in cereal aisle. I would. Certainly not the meat aisle; nothing much has changed there. Red then and red now. Less rabbit, but otherwise the same. The music would be different, though – if I went back, I'd take a tape recorder to get the Muzak. In fact if I managed a store today I'd play the old Muzak; some could enjoy it. Ironically, others could enjoy it for what it was, cool and distant, a soundtrack of idle consumerism.

Fans of this sort of stuff can find an example here, and it's oddly haunting.

Dropped off the taxes today. Felt poorer. Went to get my hair cut; got one of those stylists who talks a lot, talks slowly, and frequently stops cutting to wave around the scissors to make a point. Maybe it's just me, but I want the cutting to be constant. Ongoing. I want there to be a regular process of cutting. When it's slow and tentative I don't know what's happening, because I can't see, and it's like having a stranger dress you in a dark closet. Went to Walgreens to buy popcorn because I didn’t stop there Saturday, and it's the only place I buy microwave popcorn: two boxes for three dollars, All-Natural No Gunk Added Mini-Bags. Got in a long line; eventually they opened up two more, and of course the people at the end of the line went to the head of the line of the newly opened counters. What is the matter with people? Of course, part of the blame rests with people in the original line, who either think they're committed to this line and there's no sense in shaking things up now, or don't notice. I always wave the person ahead of me to go first, because I'm just a fine and wonderful person, aren't I? Well, no; it's just the thing to do. Today the woman in front of me told me to go ahead, because she just had so many things I had two boxes.

She did indeed have so many things: a dozen boxes of Peeps, assorted Easter candy.

“The bunny is stocking up early,” I said.

“Well I have to get them in the mail.”

“Sending Peeps? Who doesn’t have Peeps?”

“It's these.” She held up something called a Chocolate-covered Coconut Nest. “My grandpa used to love these, but now they don’t have them where he is, and so I send him some.”
The things you remember. I recall my Grandfather always had a sack of those pink Peppermint Lozenges, which he would dole out as prizes for a game of Hide the Thimble. Grandma was partial to Brach’s, which could be purchased in bulk at better drug stores everywhere; caramels around a chemical-flavored center, often hard as knuckle-bones if they’d been out for a while. I have no idea if this was their favorite candy – who can know such a thing? – but if I was heading back in time I’d fill my pockets with each. That was the genius of those schmaltzy Werther’s Originals ads – you were either instructed to remember an imaginary Gepetto who theoretically could have given you these rock-hard candies, or encouraged to become one yourself. This kept you from wondering about the plague of Werther’s Copycats that must have spoiled the brand for a while, leading them to append ORIGINALS to the name. Even so it’s a strange name: BRAND NAME CHRONOLOGICAL STATUS, in other words. Werther’s Original what?

Went to the grocery store I used to go to all the time but don’t go to anymore. They have good pre-made meals, and I was on my oddy-knocky tonight; almost went for the herb-turkey thing with mashed pertaters and stuffing, but was seduced by the possibilities of a tandoori chicken sandwich on bread with an Italian name. The Muzak wasn’t; it was an 80s selection with pop songs you’ve heard a million times, and leaves you with the haunting image of an old woman, elegantly dressed, studying a row of pickles while Michael Jackson insists that he’s bad. God help me if I’m an old man and some wretched thump-crunk booms from the speakers while I’m shopping for supper, but it’ll happen; pop-wise, we’ve eaten our seed corn.

LATER today: Comic sins. See you around.
Funny about retail shops violating ASCAP licensing. I worked at local a toy store that had two locations, one in metro San Jose, CA and the store I worked in smaller Capitola, CA. The San Jose store had a proper Musak set up and the smaller town store used the radio.

I assumed the “ASCAP police” only patrolled the big cities.

**Kurt** says:
March 23, 2010 at 11:30 am

I must fly too much; I looked that cereal box and pictured Kansai airport in Osaka.

**Mark E. Hurling** says:
March 23, 2010 at 11:47 am

Thanks Borderman. Those commercials are forever associated with the long suffering Cubs (or Sox for that matter) fans who watched their teams wither every July for decades. You could hear and see them on TV or radio no matter where you were. Ubiquitous R’ Us.

**bgbear (roger h)** says:
March 23, 2010 at 11:57 am

*The new, the old. I like the new. But isn’t that how it always is? Oooh, new look, ergo I must remind myself I am an up-to-the-moment type of person by approving it! No, not always.*

This “old” is “new” paradox could explain the “newer entries” “older entries” mix up on the page template.

**juanito - John Davey** says:
March 23, 2010 at 12:07 pm

**bgbear (roger h):**
March 23, 2010 at 11:26 am

Funny about retail shops violating ASCAP licensing. I worked at local a toy store that had two locations, one in metro San Jose, CA and the store I worked in smaller Capitola, CA. The San Jose store had a proper Musak set up and the smaller town store used the radio.

I assumed the “ASCAP police” only patrolled the big cities.

I figure, if you’re going to violate ASCAP, go all out and use a “Pirate” Internet Radio Feed. After a song by, say, The Who, break in with an announcement that “The Who, buy, use, and endorse our products! Be like the Who, and buy our stuff now! – and next up, Wall of Voodoo with Mexican Radio”

And I love visiting Capitola. After my folks got rid of the way-too-small-for-seven-kids beach house our family had in Carmel, we used to stay at The Venetian. They also own a pretty small, simple, property in Rio Del Mar, The Rio Sands. Small, simple, and dirt cheap. But only two blocks from the beach and the kids have a great time.
Borderman says:
March 23, 2010 at 12:09 pm

Those commercials are forever associated with the long suffering Cubs (or Sox for that matter) fans

I'd heard this about the Hamm's bear and Chicago baseball. My condolences, although the Sox finally hit the big time against Houston in '05 as I recall.

I knew the Hamm's commercials because they sponsored the news on WOW-TV Channel 6 in Omaha, circa 1960. I used to get a huge kick out of that bear and his various misadventures, not to mention the duck, and her female voice answering, "Wah-ah-ters!." Was so easily amused at that age.

lindal says:
March 23, 2010 at 12:15 pm

Aged peeps are an Easter delicacy in my family. Also known as "marshmallow jerky". I have two packages at home right now in the pantry with the plastic over wrap removed. Mmmm. Fresh peeps however, seem worthy of being shot at, that's why I hide them in the pantry 😊

bgbear (roger h) says:
March 23, 2010 at 12:19 pm

Capitola is nice and peaceful good food and stuff. It used to have a really inexpensive theater taken back from pron, really fun place to see a movie, primitive.

When I first arrive in the county for college, there were people running around Capitola in red pajamas, followers of the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh who lived and worked there until he called them all up to Oregon which IIRC was to increase his local political power.

shesnailie says:
March 23, 2010 at 12:21 pm

_@_v – for those of you who can’t get enough music to buy toasters by…

http://www.ultraswank.net/compilation/retro-shopping-volume-1-music-to-buy-toasters-by/

it's downloadable!

swschrad says:
March 23, 2010 at 12:45 pm

the Hamm's Bear and his critters died when Heublein bought the company in the early 80s. there is a very active bunch of Hamms collectors in the twin cities area. it was fed by a brewery employee who was ordered to “clean out all that stuff, toss it, get rid of it” after the ownership change.

why, of course, he rented a U-haul and stuffed his garage full. and the basement. and the locker.
swschrad says:
March 23, 2010 at 12:55 pm

curiously, the Hamm's menagerie is owned by the ad agency, Campbell-Mithun iirc, but you'd have to get a use license from the successors to Heublein to replicate the stuff.

naturally, there are some folks who don't follow the rules out there.

Jennifridge says:
March 23, 2010 at 12:55 pm

I loved being able to hear the Kresge music. Still listening to it, in fact. The waltzes and lullabies are lovely, though some of the peppier stuff grates a bit. I'm too young, I think, to have ever heard this kind of Muzak, but some of it reminds me a great deal of the kind of music one would hear in old cartoons.

If my druthers were a reality, stores would play the happy little tunes from the Hal Roach shorts. Hope the Lala popup is okay.

http://popup.lala.com/popup/165760615705864786

Borderman says:
March 23, 2010 at 1:18 pm

the Hamm's Bear and his critters died when Heublein bought the company in the early 80s.

In the words of Chief Dan George in Little Big Man, “The white eyes do not know where the center of the earth is.” Ain't that the truth.

you'd have to get a use license from the successors to Heublein to replicate the stuff.

naturally, there are some folks who don't follow the rules out there.

God bless 'em. If you ever encounter that ex-Hamm's brewery guy, tell him Wakan Tankan sends his blessing to the enchanted Northland.

Paul in NJ says:
March 23, 2010 at 1:20 pm

So, it looks like the optimal way to distribute spots in the new line is for every other person (starting with the first one who is not currently being served) to go to the new line.

Perhaps, if you're an engineer with a curled-up tie. But, hey, I'd like to see you try and explain that system to the impatient people on line.

Wagner von Drupen- Sachs says:
March 23, 2010 at 1:50 pm

I expected the Kresge muzak would make me feel all warm-fuzzy
nostalgic. But O, the horror! The horror! It served to remind me of why as a youth I used to rail against such stuff. That was one of the few things about which I was right. I suspect they played it just to drive riff-raff like me off premises — making for a pleasanter shopping experience for the target market.

shesnailie says:
March 23, 2010 at 1:51 pm

_@_v – there's a volume two for that shopping music…

http://www.ultraswank.net/compilation/retro-shopping-volume-2-shopping-spree/

best of all it contains the classic shopping tune “happy-go-lucky” by laurie johnson!

the site has loads more compilations!

bgbear (roger h) says:
March 23, 2010 at 1:53 pm

What I believe is called the “snake” line or queue (the other is parallel?)is the only fair thing for the customer. This is where you all line up together and wait for the next available cashier. This way you don’t get stuck behind the customer with a big order or problems or get dogged when the new cashier opens.

I assume retailers only do this if they have the store space to lay out snake lines since from their point of view the set up serve the same number of customers.

Borderman says:
March 23, 2010 at 2:10 pm

shesnailie:…best of all it contains the classic shopping tune “happy-go-lucky” by laurie johnson!

You do mean the Laurie Johnson, a subject of Her Majesty and composer of The Avengers theme, don't you? Wowser. Of all the names I never thought I'd hear today. Sherman, set the Way-Back Machine for 1965!

shesnailie says:
March 23, 2010 at 2:15 pm

_@_v – yeah bay-bee!

Borderman says:
March 23, 2010 at 2:22 pm

Apologies for previous. Unclosed tags. This corrects it. YEAH, BAY-BEE!

best of all it contains the classic shopping tune “happy-go-lucky” by laurie johnson!

You do mean the Laurie Johnson, a subject of Her Majesty and
composer of *The Avengers* theme? Of all the names I never thought I’d hear today. Sherman, set the Way-Back Machine for 1965!

**Borderman** says:
March 23, 2010 at 2:23 pm

I give up. Just click on *The Avengers* if you want to hear it.

**hpoulter** says:
March 23, 2010 at 2:34 pm

Is it Happy-Go-Lucky, or -Lively? Google turns up hits for both.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IdLYUdIF8kc

**Mark E. Hurling** says:
March 23, 2010 at 2:37 pm

Borderman, I got so disgusted by the Chicago BB teams I gave up on the sport entirely by the age of 12. Like watching paint dry as far as I’m concerned.

**shesnailie** says:
March 23, 2010 at 2:50 pm

_@_v – ultraswank is listing it as ‘happy-go-lucky’ but wikipedia calls the song ‘happy-go-lively’ found a lo-res linkable version online as ‘lucky’

http://home.roadrunner.com/~dasimperator/happy_go_lucky.mp3

**JerseyAmy** says:
March 23, 2010 at 3:07 pm

Re: Inappropriate music in stores, last year my local A&P played Britney Spears’ “If You Seek Amy.” Not the sort of thing I usually listen to closely enough to hear the lyrics, but say the song title out loud and you’ll understand my surprise at an establishment playing it.

**Borderman** says:
March 23, 2010 at 3:08 pm

*the classic shopping tune “happy-go-lucky“ by laurie johnson!*

The very sound of it makes me feel like———putting on my bowler, sending Mrs. Peel a message that we’re needed, and getting a few things for supper *all at the same time!* Not an easy thing to do. That Laurie Johnson is something.

Thanks for the link.

**Borderman** says:
March 23, 2010 at 3:13 pm

*I got so disgusted by the Chicago BB teams I gave up on the sport entirely by the age of 12. Like watching paint dry as far as*
I'm concerned.

The balance of skill and luck in baseball fascinate me to this day. There is no other game like it, and so for me there is no other game. I ignore giant egos and steroid shooters watch it for the game. I do know several folks who share your opinion about the excitement of watching paint dry, however.

Mark E. Hurling says:
March 23, 2010 at 3:27 pm

It's funny you should mention skill, Borderman. I never really thought about that. High school got me hooked on sports where brute force and determination could overcome skill. Football, and throwing the discus, or trying to punch a hole in the sky with the shot put. In college I discovered judo relies on skill at some level, but I always went with speed and neanderthal intensity to win.

Hope I didn't offend with the paint remark. I need to think before I type sometimes.

Borderman says:
March 23, 2010 at 3:52 pm

Hope I didn't offend with the paint remark.

No way, Jose—uh, Mark. I think here on the Bleat you can just write what you think, within reason, and let the chips fall. No offense taken, anyway.

I realize baseball is not for everyone and I really do know several folks who share your opinion. Now that I think about it, the particular balance of skill and luck in baseball probably is what kept me interested all these years, and caused me to lose interest in the magnum force sports. I don't know of anything else where the outcome hinges on such a delicate balance of luck and skill. Too much or too little of either one and defeat is snatched from the jaws of victory. Or so I've come to think.

I'm not a particular fan of all his work but the late George Carlin had a terrific bit of stand-up about the differences between baseball and football. Nails it smack dab on the head.

shesnailie says:
March 23, 2010 at 3:57 pm

_@_v – i know drying paint – from the sherwyn tribe – and he's is an easy-going sorta dude. takes a lot to offend him…

xrayguy says:
March 23, 2010 at 4:15 pm

Alpha-bits Silvers eventually morphed into another postal carrier name Lovable Truly, a tall, gangly Howdy Doody clone who could have been played by Sterling Holloway in the live version; or Lumpy Barnam, he seemed to have more energy.
Borderman says:
March 23, 2010 at 4:25 pm

i know drying paint – from the sherwyn tribe – and he's is an easy-going sorta dude. takes a lot to offend him...

Yes, Drying Paint is easy-going. And slow to anger. Like his uncle, Covers the Earth. They are the pride of the Sherwyn nation. And they drink Hamm's.

Baby M says:
March 23, 2010 at 4:35 pm

Snailie, thank you for the Laurie Johnson download. I feel strangely compelled to buy my wife a '62 Rambler in stunning pastel turquoise for trips to the supermarket.

Baby M says:
March 23, 2010 at 4:44 pm

When i was growing up, the stores that were too cheap for Muzak played Stereo 99, whose playlist stretched the vast distance from Mantovanti to 101 Strings.

Most of the establishments around me now play oldies rock, which leads to hearing things like "Radar Love" and "Don't Call Us, We'll Call You" in the pasta aisle.

Mark E. Hurling says:
March 23, 2010 at 5:40 pm

Thanks Borderman. I've heard that George Carlin routine and like almost all his work, his insight into the use and absurdities of how we use language is funny and yet thought provoking at the same time.
Got a flier in the mailbox today from a lawn-service company called “Hortilawn,” and spent a good five hours off and on trying to come up with a paraphrase of the famous Dorothy Parker quip. Couldn’t do it. I wonder if she deployed that witticism on the spot, or crafted it in private and waited for the right moment; I imagine that life at the Algonquin Round Table would make people husband their witticisms so they had ammo for the next day. I still think it must have been a fairly unpleasant place, with everyone trying to be cleverer than the last person, half of the people in the bag, half treating hangovers with an early drink, the abstemious few looking at everyone else with contempt.

Hah! HAH! Vindication. I googled the Table to get a few facts, and lo, a comment from Dorothy Parker herself:

> These were no giants. Think who was writing in those days—Lardner, Fitzgerald, Faulkner and Hemingway. Those were the real giants. The Round Table was just a lot of people telling jokes and telling each other how good they were. Just a bunch of loudmouths showing off, saving their gags for days, waiting for a chance to spring them.... There was no truth in anything they said. It was the terrible day of the wisecrack, so there didn’t have to be any truth.

I think of more terrible times to live through than the day of the wisecrack,
but you get the idea.

**Wife out of town** for a few days at a health-care / insurance / Medicare conference. Wonder if they'll have anything to talk about. (Not that it would be useful to me – between her work and the doctors / nurses in her family, I learn only about widely variegated factual situations, which are fairly useless against the Power of Specific Anecdotes.) The dog wonders where she's gone. Daughter is doing her piano. Ordinary night. I just finished a great little addition to the Black and White World, which will delight you. I guarantee it. Funniest thing I've seen this year, and not intended as such; a true middlebrow treasure, an amazing collision of popular and high culture. **HERE you go!** Out of Context Ad Challenge up around 10:30 or so.

**Want more?** Okay, here's your random Star Trek: the Animated Series Frame Grab of the Week. Name that context!

Extra tough bonus question: what does this have to do . . . with this guy?

**Okay,** one more thing, to use up all the pictures I've been saving for no particular reason. Explain the different colored linoleum:
Out of Context Ad Challenge up around 10:30 or so. See you then.

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68 RESPONSES TO *wednesday, march 24*

**wiredog** says:
March 24, 2010 at 1:38 pm

@Charlie Young
Sadly, my mother tossed out my early ST books and stuff, including the Enterprise Blueprints, one summer when I was at camp.

**Crabtree** says:
March 24, 2010 at 2:01 pm

TAS is what gave us the Shatner “sabotahg” rant, I believe?
Kevin says:
March 24, 2010 at 2:06 pm

@writeaway
I was utterly pleased once when one of the scientists I work with picked up an envelope and exclaimed, out of the blue, “What fresh hell is this?” But I was more than pleased, I was astonished, when I encountered another of the scientists standing in front of a printer, waiting expectantly for her document to print, and I heard her demand, “Give, Queenie, give!” Made my day, it did!

Chicago Bob says:
March 24, 2010 at 2:19 pm

Yes, BUT... it’s *much* more clever if the last word in the faux Parker quote rhymes with “drink”, as she was playing off the old adage: “You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make it drink.”

You can lead a Hortilawn but you can’t make her blink.

OK, that's pretty lame.

hpoulter says:
March 24, 2010 at 2:32 pm

@will:

You can see Looney Tunes at
http://www.kidswb.com/video/#/Looney%20Tunes

There's only 20 there now, but I think they rotate them, and they are good ones, with decent definition. Check out “Porky in Wackyland”.

WatchWayne says:
March 24, 2010 at 2:37 pm

Whether there was a classic Halsey-Taylor there or not, you can be sure the tiles were replaced as a result of wateristic damage. Problem is, the tile makers only keep colors going for a few decades at a time, and pus-pink has been supplanted in popularity by cartilage grey.

Di says:
March 24, 2010 at 2:50 pm

Is the green tile made of non-slip material, maybe?

And I swear I saw Walter Slezak in the orchestra in front row.

Cory says:
March 24, 2010 at 3:59 pm

Dorothy Parker: When informed Calvin Cooldige had died, she asked “how could they tell?”

D Palmer says:
March 24, 2010 at 4:09 pm

Maybe it's just me. But I look at the shape of the Tribble and the look
on Kirk's face and I think he picturing some quality time with Spock tonight trying out this new thing he heard about, tribbling.

**Charlie Young** says:
March 24, 2010 at 4:12 pm

@D Palmer...OUCH!

**madCanada** says:
March 24, 2010 at 6:22 pm

Re: the Round Table. A while back, when I was 22, I met a pal for drinka at NYC's fabled Algonquin. (I might very well have sat in the very seat in which Dorothy planted her cranky derriere.) Anyway, as we drank that night, many jokes were made...but in our case, they were spontaneous and veered more towards toilet humour than the witty & urbane.

**ssmart** says:
March 24, 2010 at 7:27 pm

mad..."but in our case, they were spontaneous and veered more towards toilet humour, than witty and urbane"...Nope, you hit it right on.

**JamesS** says:
March 24, 2010 at 8:34 pm

The ST:TAS episode with the Kzinti was the Larry Niven classic short, “The Soft Weapon.” I think it replaced Nessus with Spock, but otherwise was a pretty spot-on retelling of the story. The only really good episode of the bunch, even if the Kzin unis were pink.

**Baby M** says:
March 24, 2010 at 9:45 pm

“Yesteryear” was the best of the bunch. It was about Spock's childhood, and his teddy bear with the six-inch fangs, and it was written by Dorothy Fontana.

**Jerry Ray** says:
March 25, 2010 at 8:44 am

All these floor tile guesses need a healthy application of Occam's Razor, it seems.

Leaky plumbing and/or spills causing the previous tiles to buckle up and need to be replace seems the most likely explanation. It's not an ADA or “non-slip” situation, and I doubt it's a case where the greenish tiles are really the same color as the reddish tiles but don't have as much wax or wear on them. They probably just replaced some buckled/loose tiles with whatever they had on hand.

**Larry** says:
March 25, 2010 at 10:50 am

Jerry
That's a big 10 4 buddy happens allthe time no replacement vct so they pick a close colour
Cindy says:
March 27, 2010 at 8:17 pm

About the tile-kids wear tennis shoes, while adults wear dress shoes. OR kids stand between the two fountains, while an adult would stand in front. OR Jerry’s right, OR we’re both wrong...

Cindy says:
March 27, 2010 at 8:21 pm

OOPS-I was looking at the DIScoloration of the tiles-not the actual difference in color...

← Older Comments
I have nothing to report, having done nothing of consequence besides write and otherwise peer at a large, glowing rectangle. Sometimes this isn't a barrier to long entries, but it certainly seems so today; after writing and writing (turned in two rather large pieces) the desire to write more is oddly diminished.

Just called daughter down to do her math, and was met with the standard reply: OKAY JUST ONE SECOND. There is something she HAS TO DO on the computer, possibly finishing a drawing or finishing up one of those interminable indistinguishable fan-fic stories devoted to the “Warriors” series. If you don’t know, they’re about cats. Who live in packs. And fight other cat-packs. Then die and go to heaven, which seems to be populated entirely by cats. It may be a separate heaven; theologically that may not fly, but when it comes to mysteries such as these we have no idea, do we? We may get to heaven and discover it’s full of beetles. They do have numbers on their side.

The Cats in Heaven don’t seem to do much but watch, and occasionally intercede with gauzy warnings and advice, like most shades and spirits do. They can never come out and say anything. They sit up there perched on clouds watching the world like it’s TV, and then when they have the chance to be useful they trot out the Hallmark bromides about being true to yourself and finding your destiny. Maybe it’s hard for them to be specific, but it would be nice if we could rig up some sort of ectoplasmic stock-ticker device they
could manipulate with more specificity than a Ouiji board. Even when it’s the afterlife it has to be annoying to make people spell something out one letter at a time. Imagine if you’ve been contacted by relatives who want to know who to trust, and you want to tell them “Wilhelm Schiestengruber Gumbel-Putty III,” which would just take all night, and end with an argument about whether you meant I, the personal pronoun, or III, as in “30” in Roman numerals. “He could mean ay-ay-ay, as in a Spanish exortation of delight!”

But the name is German. “So it’s a German in Mexico.”

Rule of thumb: it’s rarely a German in Mexico, unless you’re talking about the Zimmerman Telegram.

Experimenting with a new Internet radio recorder, Snowtape, i had been using Radio Gaga – yes, yes, I know. Snowtape has a cleaner interface, and simple is better; Whether I actually listen to the music after I’ve recorded it is another matter; I am becoming the digital equivalent of those people who live in houses so full of stuff they scurry around in tunnels. Why not listen to the radio, you ask. They have lots of stuff. Yes. I listen to satellite radio in the vehicle and through the iPhone, but listening to music on the radio is like . . . well, as my daughter would put it, that's like something mom would do.

(Speaking of daughter: we just concluded the math portion of the evening, and moved on to Photoshop Lessons. She wants to design a custom background for her YouTube page that doesn't tile the same old image, but has one big image. At first I had no idea what she meant, but then she said – swear to God – “I want to create a beta channel and I can do it if I set the boxes to zero percent capacity.” She meant opacity. So we figured out how to do that, and now she is on her knees and elbows on the floor with a tablet and a pen designing her background.

That's my girl.)

Anyway, my wife listens to the radio; she changes the kitchen radio to FM stations that play modern mid-tempo songs I cannot tell apart, or she leaves it on the classical station after making Sunday dinner. It's turned down low, and I never notice it until it's past ten, and I walk into the room and hear a pipe organ trickling from somewhere, like we have, literally, a churchmouse. They station plays pipe organ music every Sunday night. Never liked pipe organs. I associate them with standing in church in itchy clothes and singing a song out of my range, something with 42 verses. For the hardy perennials I made up my own lyrics; to this day I sing “Breakfast for he who commeth in the middle of the night” whenever the song calls for “Blessed is he who commeth in the name of the Lord.” I got an elbow in the ribs from my pious childhood friend about that. (He's a pastor now.)

Here's today's odd images: This was a vehicle ahead of me the other day.
Huh? Trust me, this isn’t ‘shopped.

Either he’s a proud 9/11 denialist with a sense of humor, or a friend played a joke on him.

Links coming up later today; stop back around 10 or so. See you then.

44 RESPONSES TO Thursday, march 25

Charlie Young says:
March 25, 2010 at 12:40 am

So what is Natalie up to in math?
Dave (in MA) says:
March 25, 2010 at 1:13 am

Well, we know it's not Joe Isuzu. He's not about the troof.

hpoulter says:
March 25, 2010 at 5:06 am

We used to sing many variations of church hymns. One of the milder and more subtle ones:

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed. The little lord Jesus has laid his li'l head. The stars in the Heavens look down where he lay. The little lord Jesus is hitting the hay.

(or “has called it a day”)

hpoulter says:
March 25, 2010 at 5:07 am

The “Troofer” – it wasn't Jesse Ventura, was it?

hpoulter says:
March 25, 2010 at 6:37 am

That’s “bright skies”, not “Heavens” but memories are rusty. And speaking of hymns (why not?)

My school hymn (yes, my school had a school hymn) was “Once to Every Man and Nation”, lyrics by James Russel Lowell, which includes the truly awful line:

“By the light of burning martyrs, Christ, thy bleeding feet we track”.

As my buddy “Mandrake” was wont to remark:

“Hey, buddy – light up another martyr, willya? I can barely see these footprints.”

juanito - John Davey says:
March 25, 2010 at 7:56 am

We’ve just gotten our first whiff of the “Warriors” with our 8 year old.

When queried if I had heard of the “Warriors” I replied “come out and playyyyyy”.

Lost on everyone. I have to work with an older crowd.

Brisko says:
March 25, 2010 at 8:14 am

I saw a Toyota pick up years ago that someone had taken the letters off (it was one of those older models that actual metal letters instead of just painted ones), respaced them and painted in a D and an exclamation point so it said “TO YODA!”

I couldn't help but think that Yoda would have preferred “Yoda to!”

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!
Ken Paulson says:
March 25, 2010 at 8:25 am

I heard someone say once that organ music is like organ meat: You either love it or hate it, and nothing anyone else says will change your mind.

Jerry Ray says:
March 25, 2010 at 8:50 am

I've seen quite a few Chevrolet trucks here in Atlanta modified to read “HE ROLL” by painting over a few letters and modifying the E on the tailgate.

Les Nessman says:
March 25, 2010 at 9:38 am

Local crank used to roll around here in an Opel modified to read ‘APOLLO MOON LANDINGS FAKE’ until Buzz Aldrin socked him on the nose.

Brisko says:
March 25, 2010 at 9:53 am

Being punched by Buzz Aldrin would be an honor.

bgbear (roger h) says:
March 25, 2010 at 10:10 am

The cat after life sounds similar to the after life Richard Bach created in his Ferret Chronicles. It is a variation on his earlier metaphysical speculations as in Jonathan Livingston Seagull or Illusions.

The ferrets are peaceful, brave and adventurous. These cats sound like Watership Down bad bunnies.

bgbear (roger h) says:
March 25, 2010 at 10:12 am

The classic was to make simply “YO” on a Toyota pick up. I was happy to see it on the back of the pizza truck in Toy Story 2.

Mark E. Hurling says:
March 25, 2010 at 10:18 am

That wonderful duetsche name. Makes me think of a line from George MacDonald Fraser wherein Flashman being introduced to some mittel europische nobility mused something like, “well I was pretty foxed by then, and it sounded like all those names, count um von zu umble rumble or some such nonsense. I never did carry enough phlegm in my throat to speak german well.”

Sorry to perhaps disagree about the number of germans in Mexico though. A lot of them moved there about the same time they moved to the good old U.S. of A. Most were farmers and quite a few were on the run from the authorities, not unlike Wagner, after they ran afool of them in the general uprising in 1848. In fact amongst those of us of german ancestry they were called the acht und for siggers,
or 48-ers. They settled all over Texas, Mexico, and up the Mississippi basin. They influenced Mexican culture more than you might think with their heird and their music. Ranchera music is thinly veiled polka music played on the squeeze box that I am confident was not a traditional wind or string instrument of the Aztecs who ran the joint before Cortez, et. al. arrived. All those blonds seen on Telemundo are not from Clairol, by the way.

Dave says:
March 25, 2010 at 10:44 am

Maybe it was Emmitt Smith.

hpoulter says:
March 25, 2010 at 10:55 am

According to the owners manual in Toy Story 2, the Pizza Plaet truck is a 1978 Gyoza. I'm sure you know it appears in every Pixar film.

The Toy Story films are finally out on Blu-Ray this week. If only the Incredibles were on the schedule. Noooo, stinking Tinker Bell movies we get in Blu-Ray, but not the Incredibles.

Jim A says:
March 25, 2010 at 10:56 am

It's a new concept-car model, the T-Roofer.

St. Chris says:
March 25, 2010 at 10:59 am

I guess there's been some inflation since the Roman Empire.

Wisconsinite says:
March 25, 2010 at 11:00 am

If he was a 911 denialist with a sense of humor he would be the first one.

bgbear (roger h) says:
March 25, 2010 at 11:10 am

I wonder if you can check the seats of that Isuzu Troofer for “Loose Change”?

bgbear (roger h) says:
March 25, 2010 at 11:15 am

Darn it, I did notice the Gyoza* owners manual but, I did not know the pick up was in every movie now, I am going to have to look at all the Pixar films I have again. (*aren't gyoza pot stickers? must be a favorite food at Pixar)

poor me.

D Palmer says:
March 25, 2010 at 11:22 am

Gyoza are cooked soy beans served in the pod
bgbear (roger h) says:
March 25, 2010 at 11:26 am

@D Palmer Gyozas are cooked soy beans served in the pod

isn’t that edamame?

fizzbin says:
March 25, 2010 at 11:46 am

@hpoulter a long time ago I worked with an Italian from New York who was video taping our Christmas greetings to his family in New York/Jersey. I sang the following for their edification:

Past out in the Manger
Still clutching His glass
The little Lord Jesus is drunk on His a**
The party’s all over
Good cheer is no more
For little Lord Jesus threw up on the floor

A little later my friend informed me I should not travel to the East Coast, less I should take a dirt nap 😁

Baby M says:
March 25, 2010 at 11:50 am

Love those hymn parodies.

During Christmastime, whenever the cantor or the worship leader indicates that the next song is “Joy to the World,” I always feel tempted to lead out with “Jeremiah was a bullfrog! Was a good friend a-mine!”

bgbear (roger h) says:
March 25, 2010 at 11:57 am

For the teen slasher movie Christmas:

Deck the halls with parts of Molly, fa la la la la la

Bonnie_ says:
March 25, 2010 at 11:58 am

Hey, Juanito, here’s another reader who can’t resist “Warriors, come out and playyyyy.”

We received the whole gift pack of Warriors for Christmas one year and I still can’t get through it. We all devour Harry Potter, Artemis Fowl, Alex Rider, The 39 Clues, the Heinlein stories for kids like Tunnel in the Sky, but we can’t get into Warriors.

Perhaps because we have three cats who are amusingly, astoundingly dumb. You just can’t believe in Warrior cats when you watch our three Stooges nyuk nyuk around the house.

bgbear (roger h) says:
March 25, 2010 at 12:12 pm

I mistake my cat as being stupid but, I suspect that he has decided that if he stares at birds and gopher holes long enough his superior
mind and telekinetic powers will overcome their tiny bird and rodent brains and they will surrender themselves to his will.

**Mark** says:
March 25, 2010 at 1:14 pm

@DPalmer: Gyoza are the Japanese version of potstickers. When my mother-in-law comes to our house to make them there is much rejoicing.

**DensityDuck** says:
March 25, 2010 at 1:19 pm

Different heavens? Ha! I’ve got a great idea for a movie where a guy gets sent to Bee Heaven by accident. Look for “HOLYCOMB”, coming in 2013, starring Gary Shandling, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Simon Helberg, and Ethel Murman as the B-17.

**bgbear (roger h)** says:
March 25, 2010 at 1:32 pm

So, dog Heaven is squirrel Hell and vice verse?

Aside from dogs, cars and getting neutered, cats are pretty much already in Heaven.

**hpoulter** says:
March 25, 2010 at 1:46 pm

@Bgbear – yes. Every movie. Sometimes quite hard to spot (no spoilers here). My favorite appearance of the truck is in Monsters Inc. Look for “A-113” everywhere, too. They love Easter Eggs. There is a postcard from Ellie and Carl Frederickson on Andy's bulletin board in TS3 (I spotted it thanks to Pixar's 1080p trailer and my 110-inch projection screen).

**Borderman** says:
March 25, 2010 at 3:24 pm

*Baby M: During Christmastime, whenever the cantor or the worship leader indicates that the next song is “Joy to the World,” I always feel tempted to lead out with “Jeremiah was a bullfrog! Was a good friend a-mine!"

Unable to swallow when I read that and not willing to choke to death, I ended up spraying Coke Zero over the edge of the desk. Fortunately able to aim just a bit at the last nanosecond and missed the keyboard and screen. Well, that's what paper towels and 409 are for. Oh man. It's still funny all these minutes later. Maybe because it's Lent. With your permission I'll retell that story many times over the next few decades.

*Mr. Lileks: or III, as in “30” in Roman numerals.*

Don't want to be picky or anything but, uh— last time I checked 30 in Roman numerals is XXX. As in the sometimes hard-to-find
Mexican beer very much worth drinking.

Mark E. Hurling: All those blonds seen on Telemundo are not from Clairol, by the way.

True. Some of the rubios in Mexico are descended from the waves of 1930s Europeans running from Hitler and his crystal-smashing Reich, of which my wife's grandfather was one.

By the way, since the Zimmerman Telegram and Germans in Mexico have come up, do you happen to recall into whom Pike Bishop (William Holden) puts a bullet with the opening shot of The Wild Bunch finale? Why shucks, it's none other than the Federales' military adviser, Cmdr. Frederick Mohr (Fernando Wagner), of Kaiser Bill's Imperial German Army, the excited officer who earlier admonished the Federales regarding their .50 caliber machine gun, “It must be mounted on a tripod! It must be mounted on a tripod!”

Yes, The Wild Bunch is fiction, but have always been interested in why this character of Cmdr. Mohr was inserted in the story. Peckinpah and Roy Sickner are now deceased, so unless the third and only living Wild Bunch screenwriter, Walon Green, has some idea and is willing to spill the beans, we may never know. Had always thought it had some connection to the Zimmerman Telegram, even though the story is set in 1913. Inquiring minds and all that.

metaphizzle says:
March 25, 2010 at 3:26 pm

We may get to heaven and discover it's full of beetles. They do have numbers on their side.

This called to mind a scene from the gloriously weird comicbook Creature Tech in which we find out that insects have a separate heaven, and one character briefly visits it before returning to earth.

Mark E. Hurling says:
March 25, 2010 at 5:20 pm

Borderman, you positively bring out the pedant in me. Yes, I do remember that from the Wild Bunch, and I seem to recall that there were some unsavory Huns sniffing around the edges in the movie Vera Cruz.

Lest we forget, Der Kaiser had an active mission going in olde Mexico just prior to and during the Great War. It was an attempt to keep things in stir there so as to make certain that Black Jack Pershing and Patton would stay engaged at the border and not cross the Atlantic.

Ah Germans, following either inbred royalty or frustrated artists.

Ike Jones says:
March 25, 2010 at 6:02 pm

Hope I’m not violating some kind of protocol here by referring to a tweet, but I wanted to comment on the Mason – Berger – Tragg question. Mason had no respect for Berger – thought he was a hot-head who
refused to do his homework and jumped in too quickly to prosecute innocent people. Berger thought Mason got guilty people off. The fact that many of them were cleared by witnesses who confessed on the witness stand just proved Mason was lucky. Tragg didn’t seem to think that either of them was worth the powder it would take to blow his nose. Like Joe Friday, Tragg dealt in just the facts. He didn’t speculate about what might have happened, he put the facts on the table and let others deal with them as they wanted. Tragg did seem to think that Mason had a little better grasp of the facts than Berger, but that didn’t mean he liked either one of them very much.

lanczos says:
March 25, 2010 at 6:56 pm

Mr. Lileks – Did you ever join in gustily on that well known animal hymn, “Gladly, The Cross-Eyed Bear”?

hpoalter says:
March 25, 2010 at 8:01 pm

And speaking of Huns, the reason the US ended up owning a chunk of Virgin Islands was to keep them away from the Huns. We bought them from Denmark during WWI to keep the Germans from using them as a U-boat base. Visit St John and enjoy the fruits of that purchase. 7000 acres of one of the coolest national parks in the system and a really great beach campsite.

Stjohnsmythe says:
March 25, 2010 at 8:30 pm

@Bonnie and @Juanito:
You gotta keep’m separated...

shesnailie says:
March 25, 2010 at 10:26 pm

_@_v – 9/11 truthers have pretty much put me off the whole conspiracy theory thing – which is probably just how ‘they’ planned it...

lindal says:
March 25, 2010 at 11:50 pm

Re: John Davey
I’m so sad no one responded to your Evil Dead reference maybe your should use your chainsaw arm attachment to refresh their memories.

browniejr says:
March 25, 2010 at 11:54 pm

@Bonnie: Cats are dumb? They are the ones with the brains the size of a walnut, yet YOU are the one feeding them between their naps. Who is the stupid one? (I have MANY cats, so I am in the same club!)

“Dogs have owners, Cats have servants”
Ross says:
March 26, 2010 at 1:58 am

Mark E:
I hate to carp at a fellow Kraut and Flashman fan, but you seem to have forgotten the rule about vowels in German—the “oi” sound is “eu”, as in “Deutsch” (or unumlauted a/ae-u, as in “Fraulein”) and all others you pronounce the _second_ vowel (from the English-speaker’s perspective). Thus beer is “Bier”.

Mark E. Hurling says:
March 26, 2010 at 10:38 am

In the spirit in which it was offered I’ll try to avoid a koi-like rejoinder and offer this observation. Regional pronunciations and spellings of vowels in Germany vary quite a bit. My own thoughts on the matter are, you can just never tell what vowels will do in German. Granted, I’m sure there are rules (Germans after all have rules for everything) but just listen to the difference between plattdeutsch and hochdeutsch. I have cousins named Schroeder and have seen and heard that name spelled and pronounced funf different ways.
adding this, and will add something more, later. Who cares? You're reading this? Really?
Wife and child are out and gone; boring silent evening. Well, not entirely silent; I can play music late and loud without headphones. I can talk to myself and leave dishes in the sink . . . until I can’t take it anymore and put them away. One of those nights where I swear off the internet, pretend it’s not there. Sometimes it’s like standing in back of a jet engine in which someone’s feeding magazines and newspapers and pictures and the occasional cassette tape, which really stings when you get nicked by a piece of plastic. I don’t want to claim the pre-internet era was Better, just different.

Hold on, have to go on the internet . . .

. . . well, it’s for a good cause. I was finishing up a section of the 1950s comic book ads section (Lord help me, that one site will be over 250 pages when it’s done) and I found an ad that gave you all the hit songs of the day on break-resistant plastic (which means they will break, but they may file a formal protest first) and I didn’t recognize any of the songs. But I figured there was a good chance I had every one of them, and indeed I did. So I had to put together an 8-track tape.

Here it is, if you want a musical accompaniment for the rest of this page. The link to the new additions will follow the rest of this.
I had some time after work to go to Hunt and Gather, my favorite art-exhibit / museum masquerading as an antique store; here are some photos and remarks from today's visit.

This made me smile:

I wondered if it was a coincidence, but it's not. It's the annoying cloying song from the cutesy-schmoozy Disney cartoon. Around this time of the year it comes to mind, because when Gnat was a wee tot, she loved this; she loved the entire Silly Symphonies DVDs. We watched this one the other day, and she giggled non-stop through the hen-laying-eggs sequence. The rest of it is kitchy-cutey 30s, like much of the Disney output; the song's lame and the singers appear somewhat terrified by the idea of expelling breath into a microphone.
Huh?

This is quite old, if it’s “new” – Halma was invented in 1883 by an American oral surgeon who died the year after “Funny Little Bunnies” was released. No one at the studio was questioned in connection with the death.

A chair. Even then I suspect people knew this was in bad taste. As the child’s song goes: one of these things is not like the other.
Hardware store display:

UNTOLD RICHES AWAITS 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!
I love seeing big commercial art from the era as it was meant to be seen, not just reproduced on a flickr set or, er, a blog. It's big and colorful and contains all the requisite cliches: Husband with Hat and Pipe, Wife with kerchief and a waist that would digest anything wider than a sesame seed. Cuffed jeans; pointy noses.

An aquarium full of porcelain baby heads? They have that:
I always find pieces of my childhood in antique stores.

I know that came from a bike just like by beloved super-cool Schwinn, because mine was gold, too. It had headlights. I was so boss on that thing I learned how to ride it side-saddle, an impressive trick until I wiped out and embedded a thin layer of gravel grit in my face and arm.

A big drugstore sign for Bexel products:
The pharma company is still around . . . I think. The family may enjoy the drugs, but only Dolly sees what they’re doing to everyone:
Finally, this almost made my knees go liquid.
My mom had one of those. Exactly like that. When I was young, I could almost hear the snap! of the neurons connecting the image with the memory, filed away and forgotten for forty years.

I bought some matches and some Velveeta recipe books for Gallery of Regrettable Food, grateful I got out for a few bucks.

That's it for this week; hope I earned your patronage again. I checked my Bleatplus mail, and I think I have everyone – but if you did not get an email this morning, yell at me at lileks at mac dot com, with a subject like HEY DILLWEED. Links:

100 Mysteries, #72. We're getting close! Go HERE.

1950s Comic Ads; the addition starts HERE.

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49 RESPONSES TO *friday! march 25*

**Ross** says:  
March 26, 2010 at 3:34 am

“Bettyware” sounds like some Gen-X nickname for what Victoria’s Secret sells. And that “Vibro-Planet” must be where motels go to round up wild bed cushions to which they then attach restraints—restraints released by dropping coins into the box (Douglas Adams would have loved it: a lost colony of his sentient mattresses).

**Chris** says:  
March 26, 2010 at 3:42 am

100 Mysteries linnk goes to Comic Sins, and vice versa.

**Jim** says:  
March 26, 2010 at 4:25 am

Growing up in NYC i used to watch my mom use the same clothespin bag. It's amazing after more than 50 years I can identify that image !!!

**John Robinson** says:  
March 26, 2010 at 4:37 am

Not just “pointy noses,” James; pointy transparent noses. For some reason, every time I see fifties ad artwork like that I think of Stan Freberg. Dunno why.

**DrBear** says:  
March 26, 2010 at 4:57 am

The clothespin bag – man I understand. I had a dream last night
about my childhood house (circa 1960s) and the neighbor's house, where the trees were on fire following a large picnic. And yes, we had that bag too.

Poagao says:
March 26, 2010 at 4:59 am

Slowpoke sounds like it was sung by Stewie Griffin.

Kerry Potenza says:
March 26, 2010 at 5:49 am

Silly Symphonies immediately brings to mind, “Who's afraid of the big, bad wolf...”. Thanks a lot – Now, I'm going to be hearing that silly song in my head all day!

Kerry Potenza says:
March 26, 2010 at 5:54 am

My brother's about your age, and his bike had a banana seat when he was about twelve. THAT was boss!

Bob Lipton says:
March 26, 2010 at 6:20 am

They restored DOA about ten years ago and I got to see it on the big screen — and suddenly realized that I could identify the buildings in San Francisco from two trips in the late 1980s. Great movie shot on location.

Bob

Joe Broderick says:
March 26, 2010 at 7:06 am

John Robinson,

You're right on the money with the Stan Freberg association.

Mxymaster says:
March 26, 2010 at 7:21 am

Disney's shorts sucked, compared to WB especially, but I guess the little kids liked them. They just weren't that funny. Although Donald really could pitch a good fit.

Those walkie-talkies were always a waste of breath, even ones with actual electronics inside. The radio signal was not strong enough to pass through a wall, or over a fence, or through, like, air. We'd wind up pretty much standing next to each other, which sort of defeated the purpose. Two cans and a string were superior technology; at least it had a chance of working.

Rubo says:
March 26, 2010 at 7:32 am

Drugstores don't sell liquor in Minnesota(Mystery #72)? They sure do in Indiana, along with cigarettes. Healthy bunch, aren't we?
Suburban Scarecrow says:
March 26, 2010 at 7:49 am

Heck, I haven't even seen a clothespin in over 20 years. Is it weird to have nostalgia for something as mundane as a clothespin?

hpoulter says:
March 26, 2010 at 8:01 am

I've got the “Big Bad Wolf” in my head, too, but it is much less horrible than what it replaced. God knows why this floated up. Must be all the recent Firesign quotes:

This land has lots of trousers;
[off-mike] Mousers!
This land has lots of mousers;
And pussycats to eat them when the sun goes down!

I'll take the Big Bad Wolf anyday.

WatchWayne says:
March 26, 2010 at 8:38 am

I was introduced to Andy Devine as the has-been, dock rat or sea dog on “Flipper.” Much later did I find out he was a respected and prolific actor long before that. The difference between this ad and most of the others is that Scotch tape will actually do the things they suggest. Funny that they had to point out that you could tape photos to a sheet of paper– apparently it was a new paradigm that folks just hadn't considered. Even the Magic Slate works about like they claim.

The Magic Walkie-Talkies are sure-enough a voice-powered system, not completely unlike something once used by the military. The only problem was that the interconnecting wires (which they carefully failed to mention) were short enough that you could hear the conversation through the air, better than the transmitted version. I wish I had today one particular set that my neighbors had, to try them out with a longer set of wires.

My Schwinn Typhoon had that seat, only red. We replaced it at some point with the metal-flake-red banana seat, along with ape-hanger handlebars. Suddenly I felt cool again.

Jennifer says:
March 26, 2010 at 8:43 am

I see “Slow Poke” was a cross-over hit. Everyone can enjoy the musical condescension!

hpoulter says:
March 26, 2010 at 9:42 am

Andy Devine did some of his best work as an occasional visitor to the Jack Benny Show in the late 1930's (in the Buck Benny days). He got one of the longest laughs the show ever got when he made the closing announcement and accidentally called the show “the jelly program”. (I guess you had to be there)
juanito - John Davey says:
March 26, 2010 at 10:17 am

A Banana Seat with a Sissy Bar. Now that was sumthin.

*Play Real Music Overnight.* Sure, but can you play some Skynyrd?
*Freebird*

Ah! The halcyon cry of “Hey Fellows”

The Small print for Space Commander Vibro-Matic Walkie-Talkies

*Constant Eye Contact is required*

DensityDuck says:
March 26, 2010 at 10:17 am

I love how the hens-laying-eggs cuts IMMEDIATELY to the eggs being boiled. Like, they roll down the chute WITHIN SIGHT of the mother hens–imagine if the delivery ward were right next to the abbatoir. It's CRAZY. And they're singing happily about it! Laying eggs on command, even! It must be the soma in the feed.

bgbear (roger h) says:
March 26, 2010 at 10:28 am

Andy is great on Jack Benny but, best remember by more modern audiences for playing Frisby in The Twilight Zone episode with the aliens who never heard of lying or tall tales.

Also for connections, Andy Devine and Edmond O’Brien are both supporting actor in the classic “The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance”

Mark E. Hurling says:
March 26, 2010 at 10:53 am

MY mom had that clothespin bag too. I can see it hanging on the line outside one winter with some clothes frozen in place.

Velveeta, gah! We ate so much of that when I was a kid. I swore I’d never touch the stuff again.

Baby M says:
March 26, 2010 at 12:01 pm

The guy's transparent nose in the garden tools poster . . . perhaps it inspired the author of “The Eye of Argon.”

Paul says:
March 26, 2010 at 12:17 pm

A while back James presented the coolest Comic cover ever – the one with the surfer Army Ranger dudes. Well, that fireworks ad is undoubtedly the coolest comic ad ever. I'd wager that every boy in America, especially those residing in states where such pyrotechnics were verboten, gazed upon that stash and messed up the comic with his drool.
Wramblin' Wreck says:
March 26, 2010 at 12:27 pm
Fried Spam with Velveeta on white bread. A lunch guaranteed to bring back the horrors of childhood. Add a Root-beer Koolaid chaser to round it off.

Wramblin' Wreck says:
March 26, 2010 at 12:30 pm
Fried Spam with Velveeta on white bread. A lunch guaranteed to bring back the horrors of childhood. Add a Root-beer Koolaid chaser to top it off.

Lee Sullivan says:
March 26, 2010 at 12:36 pm
My late mother had that clothespin bag, too. The image hit me right in the gut, as well.

raf says:
March 26, 2010 at 12:39 pm
Andy Devine is now and ever will be Jingles.

raf says:
March 26, 2010 at 12:55 pm
“Hey Wild Bill, wait for me!”

Borderman says:
March 26, 2010 at 12:55 pm
Thanks for the link to the Funny Bunnies cartoon. Brought back some pretty wonderful memories of childhood Easters.

browniejr says:
March 26, 2010 at 1:28 pm
Hmmm…. 8 track tape (original meaning): 4 program tracks on a continuous tape each with a right/ left stereo component (for a total of 8 tracks).

Bleat definition: 8 songs in a collection.

Interesting that both can be “fast forwarded” but NOT rewound. The more things change… at least none of the songs have to be split between tracks in the modern version.

RLR says:
March 26, 2010 at 2:14 pm
Re: DOA

“The druggist is selling big bottles of liquor, you'll note – they could do that then. Nowadays, no.”

In Minnesota, perhaps not (definitely not in NC).

In California nowadays, yes.
bgbear (roger h) says:  
March 26, 2010 at 2:48 pm

I recall hearing that Walgreens was one of the biggest retailers of 
booze in the country.

There was an inexpensive retirement hotel in Santa Cruz that was 
lost in the Loma Prieta Earthquake. They had a shuttle that made 
regular trips to the downtown Longs (now CVS) Drugstore. The van 
was usually there when I did my sundry shopping and you could 
always count on being behind some elderly person with a cart full 
of cheap alcohol most often the kind they sell in the plastic bottles.

Oh the joys of self medication.

I did clean up at the hotel after the earthquake. Those plastic bottles 
probably helped make the job a little less pleasant (no, not that 
way).

BTW, don't get me wrong, working for the company that owned the 
hotel I met several of the old folks and they were generally a nice 
and happy lot.

browniejr says:  
March 26, 2010 at 5:47 pm

Is it just me, or is the Bleat really sloooow today to load comments?

In reference to last week's Diner- something originally available on 
8-track: (Shazaam!) 
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I04P04eefcA&feature=related

hpoulter says:  
March 27, 2010 at 5:54 am

The Bleat isn't the source of calling those things 8-tracks. He mixed 
it and hosted it at 8tracks.com.

Grebmar says:  
March 27, 2010 at 8:41 am

"Sissy bar"—those are two words I haven't heard in a long time. I had 
two Schwinn Sting-rays, the cool bike of the time, and the precursor 
to the BMX bike.

No comments on the clip from DOA yet? That whistle sound is really 
weird, even for the time. It's like a slide whistle, instead of whistling. 
And it's repeated so many times, like the joke that is funny once, and 
therefore must be even funnier the third and fourth time around.

shesnailie says:  
March 27, 2010 at 8:54 am

had a set of 'planet of the apes' walkie talkies that used a plastic 
tube as the 'conductor wire'

cn you hear me now?

_@_\v\[o=]-----------------[=0]\v_@_ - not really...
wendy gunther says:
March 27, 2010 at 10:53 am

Inexplicable hiatus in knowledge: I learned this year that eggs didn’t use to be available year-round. There was an egg-laying season, and during that season you could make souffles and egg cakes, and when it wasn’t that season you made your cake from a recipe that didn’t use egg. (Viz. Little Women: “It can’t have eggs in it, because we don’t have any eggs, either.” “Well, what do you have, child?” “Cinnamon.”) I figger, without any actual earth-and-farming-type knowledge, that Easter marked about the season when hens started laying again.

Di says:
March 27, 2010 at 3:31 pm

@bgbear – Funny the Walgreens that just opened down the street sells NO booze, even beer and wine. Well, this is kind of a funny unincorporated town, and maybe they have rules about how many booze-selling establishments you can have per square mile? And there are PLENTY 😊

@raf – I remember the “hey Wild Bill…” – like it was yesterday. I remember I felt sad because he seemed too big’N’fat for the horse he rode.

And OMG the poor frightened doll in the Bexel ad!

Di says:
March 27, 2010 at 3:46 pm

“Al&Roy”
Stop it!!

jamcool says:
March 27, 2010 at 11:03 pm

Andy Devine has Arizona connections… He grew up in Kingman where his parents ran a hotel… Route 66 through Kingman is called Andy Devine Avenue. Andy achieved his raspy voice through an unfortunate event—he fell with a stick in his mouth, damaging his throat.

Kingman has another claim to fame… east of town is the ranch run by the Imus family—as in Don Imus.

Mike_W says:
March 28, 2010 at 4:24 am

OT: but the “Lileks Oil Company” bowling team photo on your home page is just wonderful, Mr. Lileks.

Susan says:
March 28, 2010 at 1:47 pm

Thanks for the Andy Devine reference. I work about 2 blocks from the hotel that his parents owned in Kingman, AZ. We celebrate Andy Devine Days every September with a rodeo and parade. We even have a street named for him. Andy Devine Avenue… better known as “Historic Route 66.”
**HunkyBobTx** says:  
March 28, 2010 at 8:55 pm  

Just dropped in and entered via the lileks.com url… Worth looking at for the folks who usually come here via the /bleat subdirectory...

**GardenStater** says:  
March 28, 2010 at 9:18 pm  

@wendygunther: You're correct. I kept hens for about ten years, and they lay more when the days are longer. Unless you set up a light on a timer, egg-laying shuts down during the winter. Thus the egg as a symbol of spring/Easter.

Darn, but I miss having those free-range eggs.

**Patrick** says:  
March 29, 2010 at 7:14 am  

Why is it when I look at that “New Game of Halma” coiver I keep hearing distant musketfire, cannons, and men shouting? Like with a certain other game where you might hear distant drumming...

I never cared for the Disney shorts because they were too sugary-saccharine sweet. Some of the Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck cartoons were good, but most of the Silly Symphonies were too tame. Give me the wild zaniness of a Warner Bros. or MGM (Tex Avery) short any day. Hugh Harman and Rudolf Ising just made things too sweet and innocent.

**dennis2j** says:  
March 29, 2010 at 1:42 pm  

The clothespin bag did it for me, too. In the ensuing trickle of early childhood laundry memories I recalled the other thing that was indispensable to my mom—the Pepsi bottle with a sprinkler cap installed so that she could dampen the line-dried clothing before ironing. Somehow, I just caught a whiff of Niagara starch and Aero Wax....

**marjorie j birch** says:  
March 29, 2010 at 3:41 pm  

Bexel ad — what really troubles me is that the parents appear to be brother and sister...

The daughter/Diane Lane lookalike (early years) clutching the doll—Dolly looks like a Lenci Doll (see also the Lonely Doll childrens' books) — they all had that appalled expression on their faces.

**Jim A** says:  
March 29, 2010 at 5:02 pm  

I grew up a decade or so too late to know this firsthand, but exposure to a kiddie-show nostalgia site years ago means I'll forever associate Andy Devine with the cartoon show he hosted in TV's early days, “Andy's Gang”. Its catchphrase — used to introduce the animated trickster Froggy the Gremlin, was “Pluck Your Magic Twanger, Froggy!” [http://www.tvparty.com/lostandy.html](http://www.tvparty.com/lostandy.html)
Dan says:
March 31, 2010 at 9:01 am

I had a gold Schwinn just like that – tricked it out one year with a gold-flecked banana seat and sissy bars. Oh yeah. It lasted up until the era of ten-speeds, and was the source of my first bike wreck, jumping a ramp, down a hill, front tire first, over the handlebars. I was proud.
For some reason I have this:
It's a V-mail:

[Image of a handwritten V-mail letter]

THE PAST AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

NOVEMBER 2013

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« Jul

THE DISTANT PAST

July 2013
June 2013
May 2013
April 2013
March 2013
February 2013
January 2013
December 2012
November 2012
October 2012
September 2012
August 2012
July 2012
June 2012
May 2012
April 2012
November 2011
October 2011
September 2011
Yes, you've got V-mail! It's the photo version, too – letters would be photographed after they got the censor's stamp, then shrunk down, stored on fiche, shipped off, then blown up and printed on thin paper. The contents of the letter were banal, as most letters are; sometimes it seems as if half the subject matter of a letter consisted of apologizing for not writing, or discussing the fact that the recipient's previous letter had, in fact, been delivered. “I'm sorry I haven't written but I have been busy. I did get your letter and the one before it, and I had intended to reply to the first. But things came up, and before I could reply to the first letter the second one arrived, and after I had read it I decided that the things I was going to say in the first letter didn't matter very much anymore, as your second letter seemed to discuss some of the things I might have written about. Hope all is well, love, Hank.”

I mention this for two reasons: one, I have no idea how I got this. Someone may have sent it to me, or I bought it at an antique store. Two: the address is 1401 6th st. SE, Minneapolis.

Here I am, standing at that address, in 1997:
And here are the steps, the only remaining trace of the building:

See, I used to live there.

A student directory from 1912 suggests it was already a rooming house, with seven people giving 1401 as their address. (One was a woman, which seems damned odd for the era.) From what we knew of the house, it had been the University President's home early in the U's history. Made sense; it was close enough. Whatever architectural distinction it possessed was long gone, and the only thing that remained of its old life was a staircase that led from the
main entryway upstairs to our floor. I say “our” because we were an Artist's Commune, don’t you know, and the bottom floor was occupied entirely by hockey players who played Styx all night and drank immense amounts of alcohol. Some nights the only way we could get them to turn down the music was to bang on the floor with a hammer. Why not go down and ask? you say. Because they would hit us. We were at war, you see.

The building was falling down; it creaked and groaned, the pipes gave sharp raps as if the place was full of garrulous ghosts demanding a seance. Like all the places in which I've lived, I remember much and could draw a map that would be quite accurate. (I can't remember names, but I can remember floorplans.) I occupied three different rooms in the house over the years, and it's possible I had the same room as Myrtle. We certainly shared the same door.

A new apartment building was constructed on the spot, but it has a different address. No one will ever have that address again.

**A good weekend.** Movie: “Pandorum,” a sci-fi / horror movie that summed up everything I don’t like about the genre. It starts promisingly enough; a couple of astronauts are awakened on a sleeper ship heading out to colonize a planet, and everyone else is gone, and they don’t quite know what’s happened. Great premise. But you have no sense of the ship at all; it's just murky moist dimly-lit industrial spaces with monsters around the corner. Gripe #2: the obligatory super-strong hot glum scowly female who can beat up angry crazy men-mutants with her mad ninja skilz. Gripe #3: fight scenes in which people are hurled thirty feet into a metal wall, after which they stand up and continue fighting. Yep. Sure.

Went to Home Depot, but I went to the other Home Depot. The one built in a new Power Center at the end of the boom. It’s newer and nicer. I needed rods. The heavy snow bent the struts on the gazebo roof, and I figured I’d get some steel rods to brace the struts back in place – with tape! Brilliant. I had no idea where I might find rods, though. I didn’t know if they had rods. Asked a guy. He said the rods were at the end of aisle 14, and so they were. Someone else sawed them in half for me, and I was on my way – except I also needed scissors. Had three pair once. All gone. Tinker-gnomes steal them in the middle of the night and use them to execute criminals. A helpful fellow led me over to scissors, and pointed at a $18.99 item.

*That's a bit more scissors than I need,* I thought, but I thanked him and took the item down, then waited until he was around the corner and put it back.

Bought some light bulbs, too. Jasperwood has more odd light-bulb needs than any place I’ve lived in. Globes. Recessed ceiling bulbs. Tiny expensive blow-up-after-a-week halogens under the counter. It’s always fargin’ something. I know I may have taxed existing bulbs during Earth Hour, when I turned on a few more lights than usual just to protest the idiocy of equating darkness with enlightenment. The nearby water tower is illuminated at night, and it's a
beautiful thing: the spots illuminate tall solemn statues built into the tower. (These guys.) But the lights went out for an hour – except for the blinking red beacon on the top of the building, intended to remind planes on their descent that they should not crash into the tower and spew flaming debris in a residential area.

At nine the lights snapped back on again. I wonder if they paid someone to drive over, turn them off, sit in his car with the motor running to keep warm, then turn the lights back on.

Why not turn the streetlights off as well? No, no, it’s not the useful safety-oriented lights to which people object; it’s only the conspicuous boastful wastes of electricity that do nothing but make things look lovely, and carve a big space out of the black that says WE ARE HERE AND WE BUILT THIS. I had a conversation last year with someone who became angry to the point of SHOUTING that illuminated skyscrapers summed up everything that was wrong with America; I tend to think not, and there’s not much one can do to reconcile the positions.

Tonight I strung lights around the newly braced gazebo, ran cords, turned on the garden lighting for the first time since the sad disconnect that follows the first snow. Soft pools of light in the backyard now, with one spotlight interrogating the spot where the water will shoot up when I start the Oak Island Water Feature. The backyard is best at night – it’s a stage, a set, a place of shadows and simple mysteries. It may be an overreaction to curse the darkness, but I’ve no time for those who want to bless it, either.

**Later:** a simple Matchbook, tendered on an average Monday. See you soon.

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**Pass it along, if you wish**

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**64 RESPONSES TO *Monday, March 29***

**swschrad** says:
March 29, 2010 at 12:58 pm

@Joe Broderick gone rogue. audiobook at a gas station near you 😊 min. purchase of 45 gallons required.

now I, I am the total rebel. I fight back against the mavericks.

geeks gone mild!!!

**rbj** says:
March 29, 2010 at 1:13 pm

@hpoulter: I actually did wear an orange shirt one time as a kid. Got some grief over it, even though it was completely unintentional.
Joe Broderick says:
March 29, 2010 at 1:20 pm

bgbear, I don’t drive AT ALL during Traffic Safety Week. I wouldn’t want to get in trouble with Richard C. Moeur (see his website link, back about 20 posts).

hpoulter, Yes, even though my Grandfather came to Ellis Island from Ireland, I don’t wear green on St. Patrick’s Day. I do NOT, however, wear orange. That would be carrying things a bit too far.

bgbear (roger h) says:
March 29, 2010 at 1:34 pm

On April Fools Day I try to be honest, intelligent, and sober in thought and deed.

Joe Broderick says:
March 29, 2010 at 2:47 pm

I tried that, too, but I just didn’t have it in me.

Rubo says:
March 29, 2010 at 3:42 pm

I thought “Pandorum” was a pretty good popcorn movie. The guy that played opposite of Dennis Quaid, is usually the bad guy. It was a pleasant surprise to see him the hero for a change.

Joe Broderick says:
March 29, 2010 at 7:06 pm

“Pandorum” anagrams:

Man proud
Damn, pour
Random up
Arm pound
Man rod up

Singe says:
March 29, 2010 at 7:24 pm

Though I’ll agree this “turn your lights off for an hour in symbolic gesture of energy conservation” is useless and a tad nutty, I wouldn’t say it’s entirely idiotic to equate this sort of darkness with enlightenment.

Talk to any astronomer today and you’ll find one of their biggest laments of the modern era is light pollution. Because of extensive street lighting in modern municipalities, residents cannot see any but a handful of stars (ignoring for the moment what this does to professional and amateur astronomy). Many would be positively shocked and awed, perhaps even enlightened, if they could see, possibly for the first time, what the night sky truly looks like.

However, THIS isn’t about THAT so it’s neither here nor there.

Gene Dillenburg says:
March 29, 2010 at 9:06 pm
If the worst thing you can say about America is that it needlessly illuminates its skyscrapers, then I guess we're doing OK.

Larry says:
March 29, 2010 at 10:22 pm

That V-Mail poster doesn't look 40s. I should know I have a near complete collection of Life Magazines through the war.

James Vaughan says:
March 29, 2010 at 11:18 pm

... good for you! Being in the dark is depressing. Much of the current environmental movement is depressing. All the big companies are enthused because it's a way for them- to charge more- for less- and make us feel guilty and grateful!

Patrick says:
March 30, 2010 at 7:54 am

It's always interesting to read old letters like that. You have to wonder exactly what was going on in the writer's life at the time they wrote the letter, what was going through their head, and anything else you can imagine.

When we were cleaning out my great-granddad's house back in the Summer of 1997, we found a ton of old letters from various friends or relatives we didn't know, and a handful from people we did know. One I remember reading was from my mom, and it seemed like it had been dictated to her by my grandmother. I had a feeling she (my mom) really didn't want to write the letter, but my grandma made her do so anyway. The letter was thanking them for some long-ago forgotten Christmas or birthday gift, that she could put it to good use, blah-blah-blah, Grandma proofed it before it could go out, Mom went back to her room (she didn't tell me this, but I could sense it from the letter), and added in a P.S. saying what she'd really like next year for Christmas or her birthday. There were a lot of letters discussing the questionable sanity of a long-ago deceased relative, and that if they weren't careful, they would be chucked into Milledgeville (location of a long-ago shut-down nuthatch).

I wish we had saved those letters. I probably would have been like Our Host and scanned them all when I had the tools and time, transcribed them (like the post cards), and featured them on some webite or blog. Instead they were long ago used for kindling.

Jennifer says:
March 31, 2010 at 9:07 am

@Nancy Laughing right back! Yep, every other day of the year my son is the one leaving the lights on all over the house. I'm among the skeptics—we have our work cut out for us; all the info kids get fed at school, etc. is really convincing to them.

David says:
April 1, 2010 at 5:11 pm

On one of my infrequent visits to Dinkytown a few years ago, I wandered up to 6th street to see the two houses I had lived in while an undergraduate and found that apartment building on the 1400 block that had replaced the one house, but the other house on the
1300 block is still there, only a bit more run down. I remember hearing a guy next door playing the guitar (acoustic, not electric) on the porch on warm evenings. Never did find out who he was.
Spring break at home: it's going great. I don't mind not being at
Disneyworld, as usual; that'll come later in the year when the warmth has
spent its coin here in Minnesota. We just had a vacation, for heaven's sake.
Now it's a quiet week working at home; don't have to go into the office to
shoot the newscast.

Ever again. But that's another story. 😊

A reader alerted me to a collection of WPA posters – the Library of Congress
has done a nifty job of putting the work online, with thumbnails and
needlessly enormous files (seriously, 55MB TIFFs?). I love this stuff – it's
about the best gummint art ever made in this country, even though it has that
30s collectivist aroma that suggests a few of the lads were impressed by early
Soviet posters. But mostly it's just Moderne, with all the usual elements:
heavy stylization, everything hiked up at an angle, BIG BOLD WORDS to
attract the eye. Compared to the posters of the 20s, it's as if half a century
elapsed in a year, and the new future suddenly came rushing in, complete
with its own typefaces. A few of these are charming:
“Low Rent” didn’t mean the same back then. It meant Rents are Low. Hey, how about this:
Clean rational modern living! And an address, too: to the Google Street View, Robin:
Poking around the back of the project – because you can do that these days, you know, prowl around the back alleys of housing complexes in cities many miles away – I see many of the units are boarded up, and a few blocks have wire fences keeping people out. Everyone except those who are disposing of bodies in the vacants, that is.

**Then there's this.** I give you: the dead empty Howard Johnson's of Cleveland.
We're used to dead motels, but dead high-rise hotels are something else. This has the look of something from “The Road,” with its apocalyptic sky and forbidding sense of abandonment and dread: what horrible thing could have happened here to make this place die? Just knowing it was a HoJo builds all sorts of backstory into the place – the brochure with mutton-chop’d men enjoying fried clams in a restaurant with the family, little Johnny and Suzie making snaggle-toothed grins of glee over bowls of ice cream; the picture of the swank lounge, everyone swaddled in dim light and whiskey hues, perhaps an out-of-focus couple dancing in the background. The crisp sheets, the toilet sanitized for your protection and no one else’s, the cheerful girl at the desk (they were always girls in the brochures) with a flip-do, her head perhaps tilted to the side by a few degrees, extending that HoJo welcome.

The reality: businessmen in brown polyester, with a few strands of hair plastered over his bald pate, Harry Mudd’s accountant brother, checking in, taking the elevator up, opening the room, smelling the smell of soap and legacy cigarettes and bleach, testing the bed, opening the window and looking out: that's always what you do when you get the room. You go as far as you can and you look out the window and you crack the window and light
a cigarette. *Well, here we are. Cleveland for God's sake.* Then you turn around
and look for something, anything, that's different, but nothing ever is. There's
art where there's supposed to be art and there's a desk where there's
supposed to be a desk and there's a bathroom and a big mirror, and the guy
in the mirror never seems entirely happy to see you here, does he?

You sit on the bed and turn on the TV, and if it's the seventies you lean over
and turn the channels yourself, chunk chunk chunk chunk. There's always
something in the two-to-four range. Never had a room where there was a two
and a three. Never had a three, come to think of it.

Well, the meeting's tomorrow. There's a restaurant downstairs. There's a
lounge. You have a magazine. You have some reports to do.

Seven hours later with a belly full of steak and Chivas you return to the room
and fumble with the TV – hey, it's Carson. Crap, the monologue's over.
Wobby-aimed pee, brush and a gargle, bed – oh, crap. Wake up. One day
these places will have alarm clocks. You call the front desk, and it's that guy
who watched you when you came out of the lounge and said “good night,
sir,” and you try not to slur a request for seven.

You wake and leave and never go back. The little room in the sky where all
this happened is gone now; they demolished the building, and no one will
probably ever stand in that precise spot by the window and smoke a cigarette
and think: Cleveland.

**Consumer alert #1:** I've had the Dynex TV in the basement for one year and
three months. It receives minimal use. Now it does not work. It says
“Welcome. Powering Up” and hangs at that stage, forever.

Possible reasons:

A) It is feeling neglected that no one watched it very much

B) It is a cheap piece of garbage designed to break after a year and a half,
thereby spoiling you forever on the brand, which is okay because someone
else will come along

I'm going with B. From what I learn on the web – your most trusted source
for information! – it seems that the units are not serviced once they're out of
warranty. That's right. It might as well explode once it passes the expiration
date, then. Or give off a smell like spoiled milk. Or just vanish; that would be
preferable, because I could file an insurance claim. You know, the sort of
thing you do when someone has stolen money from you.


**Consumer Alert #2:**

A few days ago I mentioned Snowtape, a nice little internet radio recording
program. I wanted to add a station to the list, and was oddly unable to do so.
You would think this would be an important part of any such program, no? I
entered all the information, checked the stream; everything worked fine. But
there was a red dot next to the station. Checked the instructions, and hello:

The red marks next to your data changes into green marks after checking and approving by Vemedio. Your radio networks and stations are now available for all Snowtape users.

I can’t save a station until the app’s administrator has approved it?

That is insane. I wrote the developer and told him this is like Firefox not letting me bookmark something until they’d given it the big OK.

I discovered a feature that lets me import radio URLs without the useless stork-dance about getting Approval for listing on the general directory, but it this appears nowhere in the website instructions about adding stations. It’s like an undocumented feature: bookmark stations without participating in Social Media! If you must.

Jiminy. I will still use the program, because it’s great for recording and getting album art, but the adding-and-editing stations portion is foobar supreme.

Later: Comic Sins, and stuff at the Strib blog, where I’m ramping up the posting in preparation for a new blog coming soon. Yes: another new job at the paper. Three years, three new jobs. I haven’t been bored since the industry started collapsing: the new opportunities are remarkable. See you soon.

70 RESPONSES TO tuesday, march 29

Karen says:
March 30, 2010 at 2:27 pm

I suppose he is very valued @ co. since he’s had 3 jobs @ the co. within 3 years? Stretching him out a bit?

Mark E. Hurling says:
March 30, 2010 at 3:31 pm

swschrad, interesting choice of stations there. I grew up less than 20 miles from Kankakee. My mother was women’s editor for the Kankakee Daily Journal. It was the nearest big town until you got within the environs of Chicago, unless you wanted to count Joliet. How did you happen to pick that particular call sign?

Lindal says:
March 30, 2010 at 4:21 pm

I like Cleveland, and usually end up there once a year on business. My first thought when I saw the abandoned HoJO was that it looks a lot like post-soviet Romania. Even the quality of the light in the map
is the same.

**bellczar says:**
March 30, 2010 at 4:23 pm

James–

In the days of analog TV (1946-2009), TV stations were separated by at least one on the dial, with two exceptions. You could have both 4 and 5 and both 6 and 7 but no other adjoining stations in the same market. 2-4-5-7-9-11-13 were typically major-market stations and 3-6-8-10-12 were minor-market stations. It gets a little more crowded in the northeastern part of the country where a lot of places only had one VHF station to themselves. 3 was especially non-useful because if you had one, you couldn’t have either 2 or 4.

**swschrad says:**
March 30, 2010 at 4:25 pm

@Mark E. Hurling: put WKAN into google if you’re trying to find irony, go for the laughably obvious first. everybody gets that.

**Nancy says:**
March 30, 2010 at 4:34 pm

James,
your roller-coaster-ride of a job over the last 3 years, coinciding with the flux in your industry, strikes me as fodder for a book. You have maintained a remarkable air of insouciance as your job morphed and heads around you rolled.

**Mark E. Hurling says:**
March 30, 2010 at 5:03 pm

Thanks, swschrad. Without your comment, I would never have thought to go get a look see. I almost expected to see Les Nessman somewhere in that lineup.

**bgbear (roger h) says:**
March 30, 2010 at 5:09 pm

Speaking of Spring Break. I just realized that 25 years ago today, I got a job at an amusement park during Spring Break and ran bumper cars for 8 hours. I really liked it and stuck around for 10 years.

**lanczos says:**
March 30, 2010 at 5:37 pm

Mark – Yes: Who – if anyone – from WKAN has won the Silver Sow award?

**Mark E. Hurling says:**
March 30, 2010 at 5:40 pm

Hogs . . . communists . . . think about it.

“Hold me closer tiny dancer, count the headlights on the highway.”
Di says:
March 30, 2010 at 6:35 pm

I mainly remember the HoJo's on the Pennsylvania Turnpike from summer vacation in the 50's (on way from Philly to Kenosha). They were the ONLY show in town, unless you wanted to get off and pass through the tollbooths again, which cost you. We gassed up, used the loo, ate our home-made lunch at their picnic tables, and were out of there. I remember being dazzled by all the goodies within but my mom said NO it's too expensive.

I loved the seven turnpike tunnels.

Diane says:
March 30, 2010 at 6:46 pm

I think I ate at the HoJo's the adjoined the abandoned hotel. When you're eight, that's a lot of flavors of ice cream. About a year later, we got Baskin Robbins, and HoJos flavors were a distant second by comparison.

Even though I grew up in Cleveland, it now strikes me as odd they'd name a road “Marginal”.

cnyguy says:
March 30, 2010 at 7:05 pm

That little nostalgic view of the defunct HoJo reminded me just how much I miss Joe Ohio.

Up here in the middle part of New York State, both Channel 2 (Utica, NY) and Channel 3 (Syracuse) could be received in some locations. Since both are NBC affiliates, there's never been much difference between the two, aside from local news and a few other original programs aired by each station.

Kim says:
March 30, 2010 at 7:37 pm

Joe Ohio IS back – if anyone subscribes to the Qor site, it is running once a week! : ) It's good to read those again.

Also, our genial host's seventh book is supposed to be published there, according to the site.

All this antici………………………………pation is driving me nuts! : D

Joe Broderick says:
March 30, 2010 at 8:28 pm

The Qor is now called … “Qornerstones.” How Qorny is that?

If they ever get rid of the unreadable white type against the ugly dark background, I'll give it a try. 'Til then, I'll stick with Lileks.

swschrad says:
March 30, 2010 at 9:13 pm

that's a 5-second click for me, too. if there is tinkly fairy music kreppyng up the experience and playing around with poison background colors and invisible foregrounds, I'll hit the home page button immediately and find something else later.
bad as six flash ads and one video ad attempting to cue up at the
same time, and you don’t get to see content until all the trash eats up
your processor time.

**Nancy** says:
March 30, 2010 at 9:35 pm

Joe Broderick said:

“If they ever get rid of the unreadable white type against the ugly
dark background, I’ll give it a try.”

I am with you. I even left a note on that site to that effect. What is up
with that? I don’t care about ugly–it hurts my eyes.

**juanito - John Davey** says:
March 30, 2010 at 11:02 pm

The dark background / white type is painful. Cannot tolerate it.

And sadly, I have to re-do a site at work that requires exactly that
combination – in order to unify branding with a Yahoo ad campaign
that some wonderkid graphic designers developed.

bleh.

**Jazzbo** says:
March 31, 2010 at 12:45 am

Here’s a neat trick. In the Google street view, double-click on Flava
Flave and you see these apartments in quite a different light.

**Mikey NTH** says:
April 2, 2010 at 5:32 pm

This probably late but:

Approval to bookmark a radio station? Don’t those stations have
broadcast licenses which gives the FCC Seal of Approval?

Note – I am sure others have mentioned this but whenever I open
The Bleat it immediately heads to the ‘mapquest picture of a
location’ thing that is embedded in the article. Does the same when
comments are clicked. And yes, I amusing Internet Explorer.
WHY A STORK?
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?
Another glorious day – 73 today, which is absurd. It wasn't this warm last year, in June. I sat outside and blogged, which was a pure sheer joy. Natalie is home for spring break, so we're hanging out – she's redesigning her YouTube page, again, with a big background graphic. She redesigns her site as much as I redesign mine. It's a joy to see her get all geeky about design, too. Even though she rejects most of my suggestions.

Yesterday's blogging can be found here. The subject matter on the Strib blog has shifted somewhat in anticipation of the next gig. I've been tied to local for a long time, either by directive (the late buzz.mn) or by my own sense that I'd best not just blog wildly, given our local focus. But the mandate shifts; adopt adapt improve, as the 3 Musketeers said. And once more I ask: why were guys noted for their facility with swords named after firearms? Run! It's the Sworders! They have rifles!

Took my daughter to a spring-break event today; afterwards she went to a movie with a friend. Diary of a Wimpy Kid. She's grown up expecting nearly every property in which she's interested to be manifested in wide-screen form – except for those damned Warrior Cats, which may be her Tom Swift. I always wanted a Tom Swift movie when I was growing up, but no: not even murmurs. No interest. There was a cartoon in the 80s or 90s, I think, and I can't bear to look at it, as I'm sure it's Extreme and Rad and full of action. Tom Swift was an inventor. A boy inventor with a plane that had a lab built right into it. He paved jungles and he plumbed the ocean depths; he was my
hero. He sustained a concussion in every book that made him lose consciousness, but he was the anti-Ali; he got smarter. I would not have been surprised to learn that Cookie, the Slim-Pickens-type cooke who accompanied him on his adventures, regularly cracked him on the head with a frying pan to knock loose some inspiration.

Occasionally a movie would inspire interest in the source material – “The Jungle Book” was such a film, the first Disney animated movie I saw in the theater, and it made me go back and read the stories . . . which weren’t quite the same, so I contented myself with my soundtrack album, never for a moment realizing how decades later I’d put all the voices together with their movie / radio personas. George Sanders! Phil Harris! Louis Prima, for heaven’s sake. It was like a time capsule placed in the hearts of children everywhere. But “Doctor Doolittle” was the movie I most wanted to see, since I loved the Hugh Lofting stories. There’s something comforting about the memories of books you read when you’re young, the mysteries they impart, and I will always remember feeling worried when the doctor came back from the moon on the back of a giant cricket, sick with fatigue. You treasure those moments; everything that comes afterwards sweeps all those things away, but if you sit still and remember, you’re nine again, cracking ice on the sidewalk on the way back from school, pretending you’re in Puddleby-on-the-Marsh. Grey days worked best for such things. Sunny days always blare the Here and the Now, the great big noisy Us. Grey days are yours.

“How was the movie?” I asked when she came back.

“Good,” she said.

She’ll probably watch it a few more times when it comes out in ones-and-zeros form, and she’ll watch it with her friends, and it will join the rest of the endless parade of instant entertainment, available whenever. But I remember when the Jungle Book and Dr. Doolittle went away, because that’s what movies did. They went away and they went away for good, forever. The ads in the paper told the story – big ads when the movie came out, medium-sized ads in the middle of the run, tiny ads towards the end that still used the logo, then LAST DAY.

Truly: even though they’re both available, I’ve never seen either since I was nine.

So: what was your favorite childhood movie?

If you’re like me, you will find this cool. I suspect it may even be way cool, but I don’t want to oversell it. I was listening to an old radio show which will be nameless to keep you from googling ahead and spoiling everything. I’m not crazy about the show, but it’s okay. It had actors like William Conrad and Paul Frees, but there weren’t very many shows that didn’t. Anyway: someone’s been murdered, and the body has just been discovered. We suspect it may be the daughter, a rather brittle spinster named Lizzie Borden, who committed the deed, and the music helps us walk upstairs to the scene of the slaughter. Ready?
I stopped, thought: no. Can't be. Then again, perhaps. It's the chord; it's the harp. Incidental music for old radio shows -- especially the later shows -- often came from libraries, dropped in whenever they needed something appropriately tense / romantic / suspenseful. As it turns out, I did find out who wrote the music, it was who I thought it was, and that led me to get out a DVD of a certain movie, flip ahead to a certain scene, fire up the audio capture, and see if my memory was right. Voila:

Here they are together. Twenty years separate the two.

Your assignment: name the composer, and the movie.

Stay tuned; links for Black and White World and BleatPlus up around 11 or so. See you then.

66 RESPONSES TO wednesday, march 31

Pat says:
March 31, 2010 at 3:21 pm

I still have almost all the Tom Swift, Jr. books (almost all of them purchased at Northern School Supply in Fargo-- I think the typical price was about $1.50) and read them to my son when he was much younger. You're right, he was always being knocked out and was never the worse for it. The cook's name was Chow, not Cookie. The authors also had a thing about using the term "gasped"-- such as "We've got to stop the Brungarian's from stealing the plans to (fill in name of invention)", Tom gasped. My son and I used to count how many times it was used in a book as we were reading it. I think the record was about 20 times.

beelzebob says:
March 31, 2010 at 3:40 pm

My parents didn't like to go to "kids" movies so saw some good stuff at an early age. Young Frankenstein at 7 and Monty Python & The Holy Grail at 8. Still two of the funniest movies ever in my book. Also ABC in NY had the 4:30 movies which I was always allowed to watch. Favorites were The Innocents and Godzilla week. Also saw Night Of The Living Dead at age 5. Didn't do me any harm. (My sister usually laughs nervously when I say that.

Larry says:
March 31, 2010 at 3:40 pm
James & All: There is a terrific book, Pictures at a Revolution by Mark Harris that talks about the disaster of the filming of Dr. Doolittle. The book is about the Oscar race for best picture in 1967 and goes into the background of each of the films: Graduate, Guess who is coming to dinner, In the Heat of the Night, Bonnie and Clyde and Dr. Doolittle and how each of the non Doolittle films was apart of the new cinema taking over Hollywood.

My favorite (on the big screen) was Sleeping Beauty and my favorite on tv was: Invaders From Mars.

Bridey says:
March 31, 2010 at 3:52 pm

Joe Broderick says: I nominate Bridey's pick of “Tommy" as the most, um, unusual choice for favorite childhood movie.

Well, I was an unusual child!

Borderman says:
March 31, 2010 at 4:14 pm

Favorite childhood movie, hands down, is The Alamo, the 1960 version directed by John Wayne. After seeing that movie at age nine, things have never been the same. In third grade used to stare out the window while the teacher droned on, giving serious thought to where I'd place the artillery on the school grounds if Santa Anna moved his army way up north and put Peter Sarpy Elementary under siege.

In 1990 made a sort of unplanned, accidental pilgrimage, with the woman who later became my wife, to the set in Bracketville, Texas. It had been built to last in 1958 and was still in use then for motion pictures (Lonesome Dove, Gunsmoke, dozens more). Tourists and their assorted critters were welcome. Had a very interesting conversation with a guy who turned out to be the owner, Happy Shahan, and was the guy who had convinced John Wayne back in the day to build the Alamo set on what was then his cattle ranch. It was like getting a tour of the Fortress of Solitiude from Perry White. My dogs galloped up the ramparts of the east wall and stood, peering intently into the distance as border collies do, expecting something to happen. A column of reinforcements, whatever. With the famous chapel facade across the plaza behind them I heard the Marty Robbins song in my head, “[Travis] sent for replacements for his wounded and lame/but the troops that were coming/ never came, never came, never came.” It sure wasn't for lack of my dogs looking for them.

Thirty years after I'd first seen the movie and in all that time I'd never dreamed I'd get so close to a movie I loved so long. I'm very lucky. God bless John Wayne and Happy Shahan.

John Robinson says:
March 31, 2010 at 5:59 pm

The year was 1957, I was five, it was my first time at a drive-in movie, and the film was Tarantula.

Thing scared the ever-loving pants off me, but at the same time sparked a love for giant bug movies that endures to this day. From classics like Them! to duds like It Challenged the World give a me a giant big movie and I'm a happy man.
John Robinson says:
March 31, 2010 at 5:59 pm

“bug” that is. big bug.

Rubo says:
March 31, 2010 at 6:07 pm

I think the movie I remember most was “The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance”. Dad liked western movies and that is what we usually saw.

With three kids and the pay of a state policeman, my Dad couldn’t afford too many movies so we went to the ones he enjoyed.

Just watched the movie again and didn’t realize until just now that the song the radio was playing wasn’t in the movie. Checking Wikipedia I guess Gene Pitney sang the song.

I think the movie still stands the test of time.

Patrick says:
March 31, 2010 at 10:23 pm

I would have to say, though, that the one movie that has forever ingrained itself into my childhood psyche, and still affects me to this day, isn’t any Disney movie or Don Bluth/MGM production. No. It’s “Pink Floyd: The Wall”. Yes, I know, scary. Although to be fair, I didn’t enjoy the live-action as much as I did the animation, with the exception of the “Happiest Days of Our Lives/Another Brick In The Wall II” scene, “In The Flesh”, and “Waiting For The Worms”. The animated sequences were very surreal, especially “The Trial.”

Matt T. says:
April 1, 2010 at 12:29 am

Geez, I’m beginning to think that James was a long-lost twin of mine. I read (multiple, multiple times) the entire Tom Swift Jr. series. I still have all 31 in hardback tucked away underneath the stairs. Unfortunately, I have two girls and no boys, so I think the allure of these books will die with me.

I also had the Jungle Book soundtrack on an LP as a kid. I loved that movie, and pretty much wore the record out listening to it. Aside from the songs mentioned, don’t forget the Beatles-like singing vultures. They were the Monkees before the Monkees!

Paul says:
April 1, 2010 at 12:40 am

Fave movie growing up was probably Hatari (excuse me … “Hatari!”) John Wayne a bunch of oretty cool guys capturing beasts in Africa for zoos. No voilence to speak of – they never hurt the animals, but was incredibly realistic. You can’t tell the Rhino to veer to the LEFT Damnit and re-shoot. I think it was the sense that what you saw you knew – on some level – was real that made it so great for a boy. And, nice to say, it still holds up.

I remember on two occasions watching it twice in the same afternoon at a local theater… the 60s version of booting up the DVD again.
Stormcrow says:
April 1, 2010 at 8:03 am

Not sure if I would call it “favorite”. To me that sort of implies something that you like to enjoy on a recurring basis (e.g., favorite ice cream, favorite hockey team) and the days of theater release followed by years in a can precluded that kind of consumption of movie entertainment. That said, the movie that most fired my imagination was “Jason and the Argonauts” with Ray Harryhausen’s stop action animation. Skeleton warriors popping out of the earth and fighting with the Argo's crew! OMG. It was the coolest thing I had ever seen.

Mike Gebert says:
April 1, 2010 at 9:49 am

So it is Taxi Driver, right? Though I had to go check and make sure it wasn't a scene that involved skeletons with swords. Weird that it could fit either one perfectly well. The Seventh Voyage of Bickle…

mOOse says:
April 1, 2010 at 12:44 pm

If you like those old radio shows you might like this radio station. They play old shows every night from 8 pm till midnight. They webcast at wrvo.fm in Oswego NY, the SUNY NPR affiliate. Love your blog!

chrisbcritter says:
April 2, 2010 at 11:39 pm

Earliest movie memory was at age 3 seeing “Spencer's Mountain” in my uncle’s '58 Bel Air at the Skokie Drive-In Theater. Later I did see the usual Disney fare of the mid '60s but for some reason the one I remember enjoying most was “The Ugly Dachsund” at the Des Plaines Theatre. Although I liked it when I was 5, in subsequent years Disney's live-action animal fare seemed to repeat itself a lot; there was always a scene where the hapless animal would accidentally utterly destroy its master's home while chasing some other animal and get blamed for it. Watching the destruction finally just depressed me rather than amused me; I've never wanted a pet since.

MikeH says:
April 6, 2010 at 11:57 am

King Kong, Mysterious Island, Seventh Voyage of Sinbad (once faked a cold to stay home from school to watch this on the “12 O'Clock Movie”), and Jason and the Argonauts. Oh, and just about any movie where a lot of Nazi's end up dead. My parents would only take my brother and I to see Disney movies at an actual movie theater in Glens Falls. Big event was seeing “One Million Years BC” at the theater when I was 11 – not for Raquel Welch, but all the stop-motion dinosaurs.

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