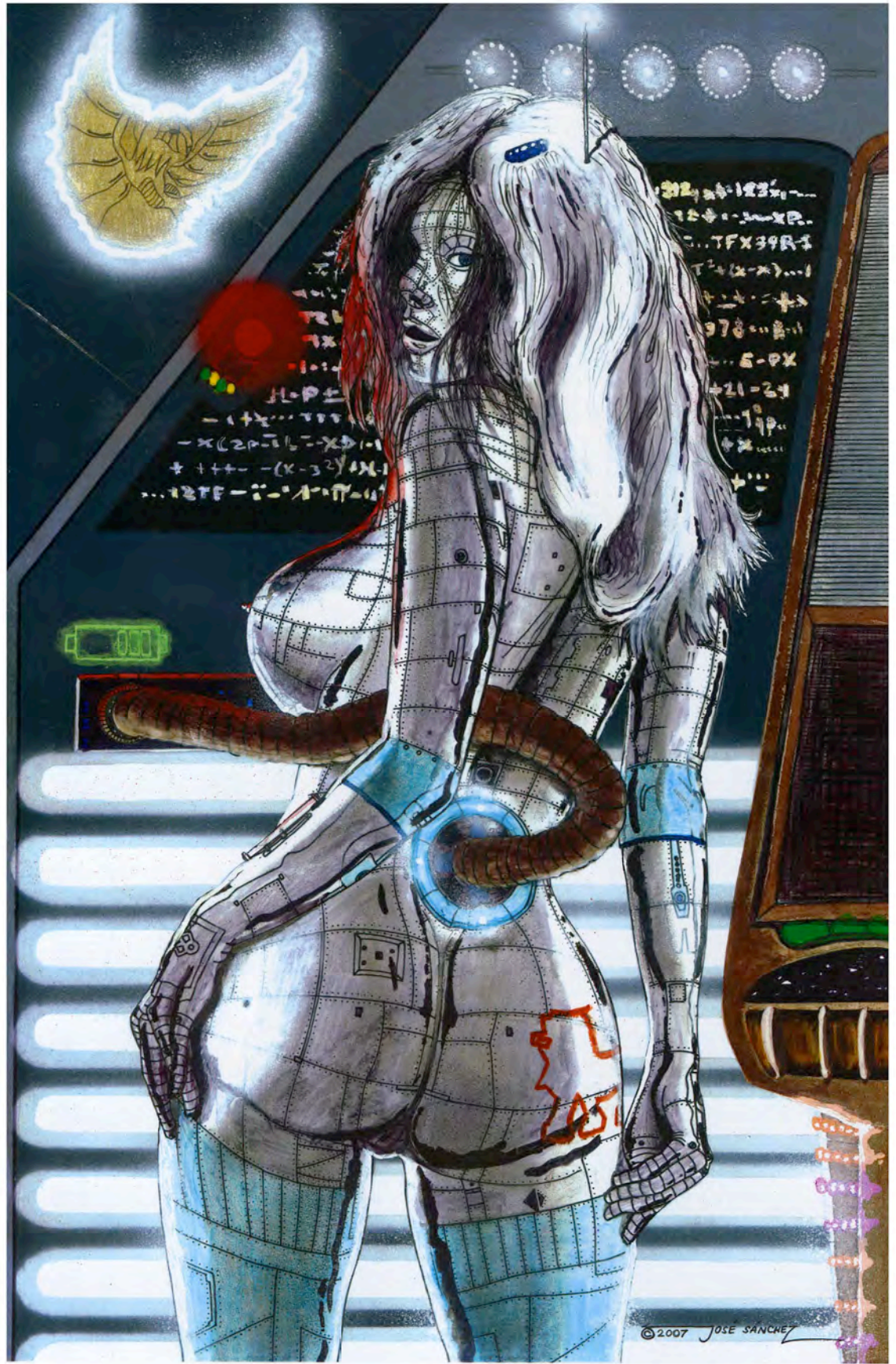


The
Knarley
Knows
136



October 2010

The Knarley Knews -- Issue 136

Published in October, 2010

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Editorial insertions are denoted: ☐TKK:...☐

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1. All contributions may include a pseudonym (e.g. Knarley, Sydrous, Shit-for-Brains) at the contributor's whim.
2. To get this fanzine you are required semi-yearly to initiate contact with the editors (black-holish behavior is not rewarded). This could be a postcard, phone call, your fanzine, or contribution of your choice. The editors, of course, prefer a contribution so they don't have to write so much. This notwithstanding, you may purchase copies for \$3.00 each.
3. Advertising is free provided that the ads are of interest to the editors and that it is for a non-profit organization.
4. It is the editors' policy not to unduly censor or restrict the ideals of free speech. (We like a good argument as much as the next guy.) However, we reserve the right to make minor content and format changes to fit your piece in or to add appropriately denoted editorial comments.
5. Contributions are currently acceptable using the following computer formats.
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Next Issue Deadline: December 10, 2010

Editorial

(In which Knarley gets to spume!)

It is now sometime in October of 2010 and there hasn't been an issue of *The Knarley Knews* since August of 2009. What in the world is going on? For over 20 years *TKK* was about as regular a fanzine as I can recall and now suddenly I've become about as regular as a sink with a giant hair ball. I've even been so remiss as to not even inform others of my change of address. I guess this is what they might refer to as FAFIA, or maybe it is just a delayed mid-life crisis. We may never know, but I'm hoping that this issue will herald the removal of the hairball that is in the sink trap of my fannish activity.

In short, here are the mitigating circumstances that have resulted in this unprecedented delay in pubbing my ish.

1) We purchased a new home in late September 2009 and moved in November. The chaos of the move made it difficult to find time to put together an issue.

2) The printer on which I'd been doing the scanning and printing ceased printing many issues back and then finally stopped working as a scanner. I could have done the scanning at work, but selecting the art work one night and then having to wait until the next day to scan it was not appealing. This issue has since been remedied.

3) The computer on which all the files and address books was stored became really cranky about starting up and finally failed. After the move it took me about two months to find the box it was in and then after finally running diagnostics I determined that the mother board was dead. In theory this meant that the hard drive was still salvageable. I thought I'd been regularly backing up my files, but I could only find a backup of the *TKK* files from 2007, before our move to California. (I've been a very naughty computer owner.)

The Apple "Genius Bar" was no help with the dead computer. They spent about two minutes on my problem and after keying in the serial number told me it was a legacy machine and all they could do would be to send it in for servicing; which they did not recommend due to the price if it was the motherboard and marginal if it was the power supply. I was able to learn more by all on my own by taking the cover off and operating the diagnostics as directed in the user manual.

For a few years now we've used an external firewire/USB hard drive on our other Mac as an extension to the now rather small internal hard drive. This started to flake out a few months ago and internet sources suggested this was due to a "power" problem that could be remedied by hooking the device into a USB hub. This wasn't a huge problem except that the Mac is so old it only runs USB 1.1 so access is **very** slow. It took the better part of two days, for example, to copy the files off the flaky drive to a new eSATA drive in an en-

closure with a firewire interface. All the PC laptops, on the other hand, all have the faster USB 2.0 interface so I thought I could use it as a backup device for the laptops. Fat change, the drive failed to consistently connect to the laptops and eventually failed to even report its size to the configuration utilities and was not even recognized by the diagnostic utility provided by its manufacturer. On a whim I took the no longer even flaky hard drive apart and found that it had a SATA interface. This was good news as I was able to remove the hard drive from the dead iMac and connect it into the power supply and interface board of the now vivisected dead hard drive. Good news, the drive fired up, but was only readable on the Mac and not the PCs. Not too unexpected given the file formatting on the drive. I was thus able to recover my files, which included recent (OK not so recent) issues of *TKK* and more importantly my current mailing list.

In the interim, our minivan started coughing up blood on its way to the great junk yard in the sky. We'd been stringing this vehicle along for the past year even though it was quite a rust bucket underneath. The gas gauge hadn't worked for over two years (just remember to fill up every 350 miles or risk running out of gas). We also knew that we had an intake manifold leak (somehow the vehicle passed SMOG with this problem back in May 2010) and the vehicle would periodically turn itself off without warning and, more importantly, without throwing an engine code that would give an auto technician some hints on what might need to be fixed. Earlier in the summer we gave it a long overdue tune up and that seemed to improve matters slightly. More recently, we went camping and one morning Letha flushed some kind of rodent out from under the hood after some particularly flaky operation. It appears that the rodent must have gnawed at least part-way through one of the tachometer wires as two days later the tachometer would drop to zero while we were traveling under full power at highway speeds. Not having a tachometer reading is not big deal, but every time the wire disconnected or reconnected it caused a small lurch in the car as the engine computer got confused regarding the actual settings. OK, we could live with this, but then the water pump developed a leak and the repair cost was projected to be around \$500, and this didn't even address the intake manifold, the gas gauge, and the other lurking problems. Letha limped the minivan to our *favorite* auto repair place and there the vehicle sat for over a month. (They were very nice about it, and we eventually rescued the vehicle, but now keep a jug of water in the car until we get around to replacing the water pump on our own – only about \$30 in parts plus a new batch of coolant.) While we decide whether to keep the minivan (not too expensive from an insurance and registration perspective) we now find ourselves the owners of a new Prius. It has more room than our PT Cruiser and gets at least twice the gas mileage of the PT and the minivan. This will save us considerably in fuel

Towards a New Theory of Capitalism:

The Ethics of Free Market Capitalism

by Alexander R. Slate

Please understand that I do not hate capitalism. Nor do I dislike free-market capitalism. As an economic theory it certainly works best. As far as business goes, the guides of capitalism are by far the most appropriate.

However, I am not a great believer in systems as so many are. In my opinion, no system (or theory for that matter) is applicable in and of itself to every situation. Stated in another way, “Systems (or theories, or philosophies) may great guides, but lousy masters.”

The same is true of capitalism. For when capitalism is applied to the exclusion of all else, it can be taken too far. It need not even be taken to its extremes for it to lead us in the wrong direction. The problem most likely stems from the fact that business does not exist in a vacuum. It exists within society; and both society and business exist within the framework of the world as it is, as it was, and as it shall become.

But this framework is not the whole of what frames the problems. The problem is also one of shortsightedness, with a lack of appreciation for the long term.

“**Capitalism** is an economic and social system in which capital, the non-labor factors of production (also known as the means of production), is privately controlled; labor, goods and capital are traded in markets; profits distributed to owners or invested in technologies and industries; and wages are paid to labor. However, since prior economic systems featured all these elements to some degree, capitalism might differentiate itself by the pervasiveness of wage labor in the interdependent social class context of nonlabor income derived from property not intended for the owner’s (or employer’s) active personal use.” [Wikipedia, “Capitalism”]

The man most identified as the expounder of free market capitalism is Adam Smith, author of *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (Hereafter referred to as *The Wealth of Nations*). Smith posits that the market, devoid of regulation, is guided by “an invisible hand.” This is further taken to mean that when an individual pursues their own self interest that they also pursue what is in the best interest of society. “It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own self-interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages.” [Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, Chapter 2]

Yet Smith opposed any form of economic concentration because it distorts the market’s natural ability to establish a price that provides a fair return on land, labor, and capital. The monopolists, by keeping the market constantly under

stocked by never fully supplying the effectual demand, sell their commodities much above the natural price, and raise their emoluments, whether they consist in wages or profit, greatly above their natural rate. He also seemed to be against monopolies, “The price of monopoly is upon every occasion the highest which can be got. The natural price, or the price of free competition, on the contrary, is the lowest which can be taken, not upon every occasion indeed, but for any considerable time together.” [Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, Chapter 7].

Smith, therefore, seems to argue much the same as I do, that no system (fair market capitalism included) can be whole unto itself. Monopolies seem to be the natural direction of self-interest taken to its furthest point; therefore monopolies should be desired. However, Smith argues that monopolies go against the natural price – against the invisible hand that should guide us to what is right for society.

But perhaps, in reality the problem is one of perception. I raise the following question. “Are monopolies really in the best interest of the industrialist or the businessman?”

The natural thought is that if I control a monopoly, then I control the market and I can make what I want from my monopoly. However, there is another theory of thought, still within the capitalist framework that competition is good. Not only from the standpoint of the consumer, but from the standpoint of the producer or seller as well.

Now it is easier to see how it certainly benefits the consumer. But how does it benefit the producer? The answer is by preventing sloth, by spurring innovation. By forcing me to look at my business and either becoming more efficient or looking towards new markets.

I could continue this line of thought and investigating several arguments about the situation presented. However, we are digressing, to a degree. Continuing along this line of thought may be an interesting discussion in its own right, but it won’t get me where I am trying to get to. But it was a worthwhile digression, for a couple of reasons. One, because it showed that even Adam Smith was leery about unchecked free market capitalism. And second, and even more importantly, because what it does is illustrate that you can’t necessarily take what appears to be the obvious, or easy, lines of thought.

Returning back to the basic position of *The Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith was right about capitalism – to a degree. The problem is that one must take what he says in context to where and when it was written.

Sue's Sites: Mt. Baldy

By Sue Welch

Sunday, October 5, I wake in panic. It is today or I can't go on my hiking trip to New Zealand, only three weeks left to get in shape. I finish my coffee and notice it feels cold in the house, definitely cooler than the 90 degrees I have become accustomed to waking to the last two months. Sweat pants I think and a t-shirt instead of shorts and a tank top. I grab a light fleece jacket. What happened to the mountains I think looking outside? They have disappeared into black clouds and fog – well no matter it never rains in October. Today is the day or else!

Half an hour later finds me parked at the fire road that leads to the notch of Mt. Baldy. The car temperature gauge reads 35 degrees. I search the backseat for another fleece jacket, grab my pack and start up the road. The first ten minutes seem ok; I keep my usual pace of about a twenty-minute mile. Then reality sets in. I know I can do this, I have done this many times before, maybe it was a few years ago but it is just a dirt road with a good slant, no surprises. I keep putting the foot behind to the front. Requirements for my upcoming trip are "being able to walk six hours a day at three miles per hour over varied terrain." I need to speed up I think sitting down for a rest-this doesn't work out very well either because it is down right cold. My hands are numb and my t-shirt is wet from sweat. The wind is strong pushing the wisps of clouds and fog up the opening in the mountain. I can never see how far I have come or how far my feet have to move to get to the notch. The forest service says the road is 3.6 miles with an elevation gain of 1,642 feet.

About 90 minutes later I stagger into the restaurant at the notch. Chips and a big cup of coffee seem good, forgetting the apple and cheese sandwich in my pack. \$5.23 cents is the cost but I pay and carry with difficulty the cup to a table by the wood-burning stove. For the next half hour I watch in fascination the beauty of the clouds coming up the mountain. I am above the fog now and the sky is robin egg blue. Eventually I regain my normal breathing and again feel my fingers – the trip down takes an hour, easy. I need to do this at least twice more I think heading for a nap on the couch upon returning home.

Mt. San Antonio, nicknamed Mt. Baldy, is the highest mountain in the San Gabriel Mountain Range. It is visible from much of Southern California and much of Southern California is visible from its peak. It tops out at 10,064 feet (3068 meters). From late fall until June, its snow covered top pictures winter to those enjoying their 80 degree day at the beach. Mt. San Gorgonio, known as Old Grayback, the area's highest mountain at 11,502 feet, is about 25 miles to the east. Mt. Baldy's notch is at 7,800 feet. The easiest way to get to the notch is on the ski lift, which operates year round on weekends and daily once the ski slopes are open. From the notch four chair lifts take skiers up to the start of 26 different



Photo courtesy of wikipedia.org

trails and runs down to the notch. This is a popular ski area due to its closeness to the city.

For hikers, from the notch to Baldy's summit, is a mere 3.5 miles with an elevation gain of 2,264 feet. The first part of the trip is through a pine forest, giving way farther up to a few stunted lodge pole and limber pines and bare rocky terrain. Small alpine type plants grow along the way. The last bit to the top is across a very narrow path with steep drops on either side. This has always been my excuse for stopping at the notch. For those in good condition, this is considered a moderate hike.

A few years ago on a beautiful 70 degree May day, I climbed the fire road to the notch where skiers were skiing in sleeveless shirts and ski pants. The snow pack was still many feet thick and terrific for skiing. On the north side of the mountain until a few years ago there were pockets of snow for sledding all year, even on hot summer days. On this particularly October day, unbeknown to me, on the north side of Mt. Baldy was a raging fire, fueled by the wind. Fortunately, the following day the wind stopped and this fire was put out.

P.S. The following Saturday Henry and my dog, Pete, accompanied me up the fire road to the notch where we met Letha, who tried out the ski lift. It was a typical beautiful warm sunny Southern California day and we sat outside, enjoying brats and mulled wine ordered from the restaurant before descending back to the car.

☐CKK: *This hike was the day after Letha and I attend Mark Strickert's wedding.*☐

INTERLOCUTIONS

Alexis Gilliland
4030 8th Street South
Arlington, VA 22204
September 28, 2009

Dear Henry and Letha,

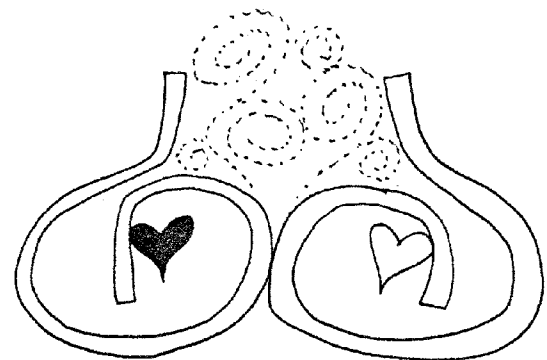
Thank you for *TKK* #135 with its fine cartoony **Schirmeister** cover. It took a bit of looking to spot the “inter-species jealousy,” but with hair and a bra the centauroid lady on the bottom is clearly mammalian, while the centauroid lady on top appears to be a, um, well, the teeth and tail suggest a dinosaur of some sort, albeit with nipple-free boobs. A *Disneysaurus*, perhaps. Re your editorial, it isn’t obvious that the housing market has finally bottomed out. Nationally the ratio of housing coming on line, and all those regular defaults, there are also a lot of “strategic defaults” as homeowners with no history of missed or late payments decide to unload their serious negative equity by simply returning the keys and writing off their investment as fiscal damage control. The next hit to the banks will come as commercial properties find themselves unable to roll over their loans. We hope that Herbert Hoover coined the word “depression” as a gentler euphemism for the words then available, namely “panic” and “crisis.” In your comments to **Jim Stumm**, saying that Sam Walton was more honest than Bernie Madoff is faint praise indeed, given that Madoff is a convicted felon. Wal-Mart prospered because of economies of scale not available to those mom and pop stores, rather than by predatory pricing, defined as taking a temporary loss to drive your competition out of business, and then raising your prices to make it all back. After the local mom and pop stores closed down, Wal-Mart’s prices stayed low. If you don’t like Wal-Mart, you are free to shop in other venues, such as Target.

Jim Stumm notes that he cannot find textual support for my speculation that Libertarians regard their children as sinks for wealth rather than as an investment in the future. Well, actions speak louder than words, and we confess here to a certain anti-Libertarian bias, in the my wife Lee was previously married to Jerry Uba, a Libertarian. I will concede Jerry’s conduct reflected his own personal soul and not the Libertarian philosophy that he embraced, though that philosophy was consistent with his actions. However, those actions informed my thinking, and provided a rationale for the observed fact that there are very few nubile females among Libertarians. If **Jim** can offer a different explanation for this lack of nubile females, I would be happy to consider it. To challenge my assertion that ethical groups tend to out compete less ethical groups, he argues that if that were true the ethical groups should have taken over by now, and this clearly has not happened. Why not? Possibly because as the external challenge to the group lessens, the group evolves

to favor the individual over the group, or to put it another way, ethical behavior imposes a cost on the individual so the group devolves away from ethical behavior whenever it get the chance. On freeloading, surely a primal behavior (i.e. the popularity of government services and the unpopularity of taxes to pay for them), we note that humans have evolved both the ability to lie, and the ability to detect lying, and any social milieu where there is a lot of opportunity for freeloading ought to drive the evolution of intelligence in both the freeloader and the freeloaded. Within a group, however, the costs of freeloading must be discouraged. For example, in religious groups, the invention of an omniscient, omnipotent, and just God is (among other things) a concept indoctrinated in the young to minimize or at least inhibit anti-group behavior. **Jim** would also like to see a manned space station on the Moon, preferably done without government financing. Given that shipping stuff to the Moon costs on the order of \$25,000 a pound, making a profit by doing business there would be enough of a challenge so that the free enterprise system is unlikely to do more than bid on government proposals.

Dave Szurek rightly denies that religion is needed for ethics since the fact is that ethics are needed for religion. *Darwin’s Cathedral* by David Sloan Wilson, examines how successful religions used ethics to benefit their members, to cope with freeloading, to check the abuse of power, and how they addressed the problem of converts seeking those benefits. Out of the many Jewish sects in the first and second centuries, the Christians were most open to converts, while the Essenes were the least open. The former became a world religion while the latter became extinct. And yet (as noted above) the evolution of those sects and religions often subverted their original purpose. By freeloading to gross excess Pope Clementine VII, the bastard son of Guiliano de Medici, provoked the Reformation of Martin Luther.

Best wishes,
Alexis



I LOVE YOU MORE THAN YOU LOVE ME.
notale

□**TKK**: *Economies of scale certainly helped Wal-Mart, but they also engaged in predatory pricing. (Anyone who shopped for baby formula in the mid 1990s saw this first hand as prices varied as much as 50% based on what each local Wal-Mart was doing.) But not all Wal-Marts survived and when they closed the mom and pops they'd run out of business were no longer available as an alternative.*□

Eric Lindsay
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29 Sep 2009
Hi Henry,

Thanks for the PDF of *TKK*#134. Nicely detailed Solar Tours cover by **Brad Foster**.

Budget, time and inertia certainly work against attending conventions for most. That said, we are packing at the moment for the convention in Canberra, and will be departing Townsville early on Thursday. No direct flight, but only a single change of plane in Sydney.

Like you, our equity at Airlie Beach is still tied up. Unlikely to change until the marina gets completed, which is probably four years away. However it means that I take a break at Airlie Beach every three or four weeks (and generally party too hard with my friends there).

Has it really been a year for you in California? That seems amazing. I do however hope that by now you have taken the patent exam.

Glad also to hear that your opt-in electronic fanzine plan is gradually growing. Takes fans a long time to change sometimes. It was, I think, interesting to see how quickly email LoCs got popular.

On philosophy and happiness, I always thought Tom Lehrer got it right. Life is like a sewer... what you get out of it depends on what you put into it. ... On religion, deluded, delusional or fraud seem the choices.

Not that **Alexis Gilliland** is any slouch with his comments. I particularly liked the bit on school boards, given the school system in Australia is being challenged by comparative testing on a national scale. The education authorities generally hate it, so I figure it is a good thing. I also note some religions are repackaging their wares as ethics much the way **Alexis** suggests.

Joseph seems to support a large administration. The human race managed to survive bad food for a long time. If the aim is to ensure free trade, then why not simply support smuggling? Sure, some foods would be dangerous, but civil trials and public demonstrations can cut that down to a reasonable level. Especially in an overcrowded world.

On the other hand, I remain very impressed by **Joseph** and the allotment. We have a 5 metre square garden area here, and I find it impossible to cope with. For a while I was successful in growing rocks, but now we are thinking of changing this to something green. Mostly the only thing I can produce that is green, is meat from the fridge, and I usually throw that out.

Regarding corporations as sociopaths, as well as having the welfare of shareholders as a duty of directors, there is little reason the rules should not include consideration for the society and the employees. Sure, that is a harder task, and some will fail. But the rules under which corporations exist should not include protection for sociopathic activity.

Nice **Schirm** cartoon for the cover on 135.

Radon levels in Australia vary a lot, but only about one house in 2000 is close to levels thought a potential problem. Those of us in tropical areas tend to have a lot of air flow, thus unlikely to find problems. The almost universal lack of basements is also probably a factor.

Your rented home seems fairly self contained out in the country. Everything in our house is electric powered, except for the solar hot water. We thought that was fine, except for all the times the electricity fails (we think lots of large scale wiring changes by the distribution system). So we went out and bought a little (Weber) barbecue that runs from bottled gas (no town gas here). That gives us a fall back for cooking. There is no water tank here. Nor likely to be. We have rain during the wet season. Lots of it. The storage you need to get through the dry season would be exceedingly large.

Speaking of houses, **Alexis** had a wonderful take on Instant Housing on page 7.

Regards,
Eric Lindsay

□**TKK**: *I think allotments are a great idea, but only popular in big cities. Grafton, WJ had allotments in the form of flower gardens in public land along the road that were cared for by local citizens or groups.*□

Alexander Slate
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1 Oct 2009

Getting settled in Dayton.

Knarley, good luck with all regarding your houses. Once more, thanks for the issue. I'm going to apologize in advance for the tone of much of what follows, because it isn't typical of me – well, I hope it isn't typical. But ...

Jim Stumm: I grant you the free will argument as true in so far as its assumptions lie. But if it is true then ... Oh, I don't know. I just hope it isn't so. If it is then all of these discus-

sions are frankly useless, its just us going through the freaking notions because we are compelled to.

Now on to a bit of a rant. You are frankly pissing me off with your second paragraph regarding meta-ethics and your paragraph on personal ethics in response to **Trinlay Khadro**. "But what I look for, and don't find, is a logical argument." There is and can be no fully convincing logical argument regarding ethics, meta or otherwise, because ethics is ultimately an individual choice as to how to act. My point in raising the existence of some meta-ethical structures is not to attempt to convince anyone that they should be adopting any or all of these, but to answer your question regarding ethics being a totally situational set of affairs. "Ethical discourse seems to build castles in the air with no foundation, full of vague and dubious generalities with very little solid truth. You say that you're not trying to prove that charity is a universal moral imperative. What then? If you're only describing your personal preference, you seem to be too much concerned with how other people behave ... I have long wondered how one might determine what is the right thing to do, not in particular cases, but in general. What is the basis, the fundamental rule? Ethicists don't tackle this question, I suspect because they have no answer." So I answered the point that there are some attempts at general framework and **you** insist on now trying to change the question to one of looking for the one **single argument that you agree with that in addition** will also be able to convince everyone else.

And why don't I just solve the problem of warfare and world hunger while I am at it? There is no answer, there is almost no chance of there ever being an answer like that. Why is it that people keep on looking for a one size fits all solution to every freaking situation. The universe isn't like that – there is no grand unified theories. Not in physics, and certainly not where ethics and moral thought is concerned.

Next point – "You use a clever rhetorical device to appeal to emotion. I suppose that ..." I am **not** trying to appeal to anyone's damn emotions with the words I use. I use a rhetorical turn-of-phrase in order to make a logical freaking point (I did warn you that this was a rant!). If you so choose then ignore my particular word choice and look for the logical point I am trying to make, but I think in this case it may be the metaphorical "leading a horse to water." It is also not just a common aspect to ethical discourse, it is a common aspect of all discourse. You are not Mr. Spock, a creature of pure logic, and neither is anyone else.

I cannot convince you or anyone else of anything! Only you can convince yourself of anything. I can only offer options for you to consider, so get off your freaking high horse.

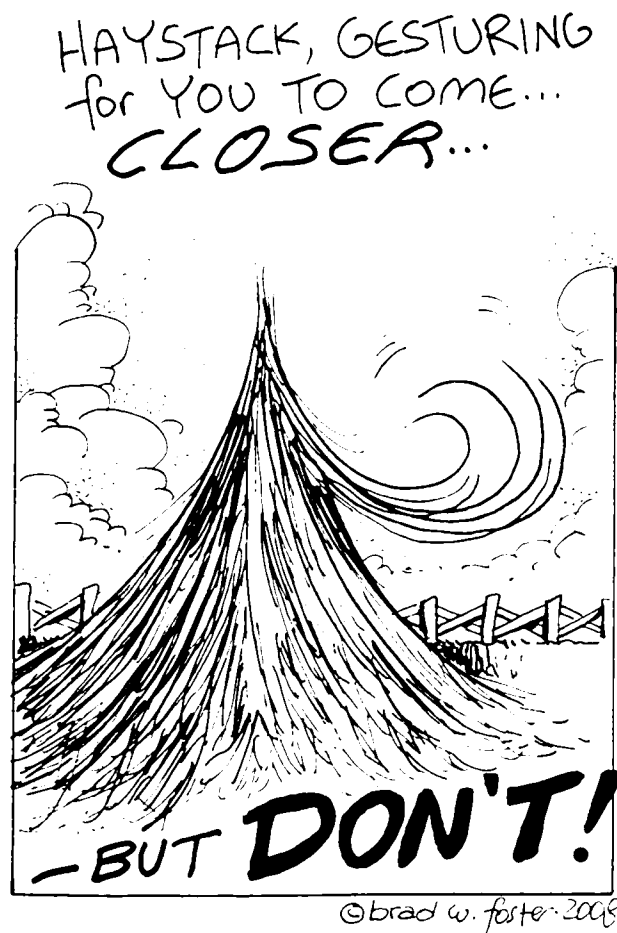
You (not you personally, but the generalized you) cannot legislate ethics. Ethics and legislation hopefully have a point of intersection, but legislation is a set of either imposed or agreed upon (depending upon your bias for the particular legislation in question) set of rules for a particular society. Ethics are a personal choice. I thought **I have made it clear** that not

all things that may be considered ethical are not necessarily legal, or even necessarily moral! If you haven't gotten it, you need to go back and re-read my writing with a dispassionate sense of approach and discard your biases.

You take **Alexis Gilliland** to task for stating that libertarianism (small l – the philosophy, rather than large L – the party) regards children to be in competition for parental resources. You say that you have never come across any such proposition. Well I have. I have tried to find where I saw it, but cannot. I believe it was in one of the webcomics on Bigheadpress.com, which generally presents strips espousing libertarian philosophy, but I have not been able to find it.

Also, regarding evolutionary ethics. No one has ever stated that evolution was ever the straightest or easiest route to anything. Not all mutations covered under the theory are necessarily successful for a variety of potential reasons.

Now, about your statements on voucher schools... "But, if it's true, such schools won't last long. Parents would soon find out about them by their student' poor results on standard tests. And they will pull their kids out of such schools and enroll them in better ones. With competition among schools... good schools will drive out bad." While we might wish it were true, it's not. Someone once told my wife, "In art, as in sewage, crap often rises to the top." That's as true in most areas as it is in art and sewage.



OK, now that the hyperbole is out there. Yes, there is some truth to your assertion; in certain cases the schools that are deliberate scams will be found out and put out of business. But I do not believe it is a general truth, because many parents couldn't give a rat's behind about results on standard tests or either don't care enough or aren't bright enough or aren't motivated enough to shop smartly. Schools may survive because they pander to particular biases – the schools that specialize in “self-esteem” or in a particular religious set of teachings or a particular cultural set of teachings – or simply because they market themselves well, or even because they are cheap and convenient.

You talk about the success of the DC private school systems. Well, DC has a pretty big bureaucracy devoted to oversight of voucher schools. You haven't accomplished anything to limit big government, you've just traded one bureaucracy for another.

OK, rant over. On to other things.

Dave Szurek: Hope that you are feeling better and wish you a speedy and complete recovery. You are correct that religion is not needed, per se, for ethics. But some underpinning rationale of thought is needed. Call it morality as opposed to ethics, and for many, religion provides the driving thoughts to morality.

I don't deny the point that biology and environment have their influence on our actions. But not completely. You yourself concede the point. So I think that we are not at odds. It has just taken, point-counterpoint-retort-and further explanation to read a meeting of the minds.

Alexis: Good point about service fees and taxes. My best to you, **Lee**, and the rest of the gang.

Well, that will do it for now...

Best...
Alex



□**TKK:** *I am tired of hearing about standardized test scores in school. I will grant that they measure some things about the success of a school, but under No Child Left Behind they have simply become a measure of how well the school can teach to the test. In many cases, rote memorization has taken the place of thinking and even learning. Teachers are getting in trouble for teaching current events rather than the “legislated” lesson for that particular part of the day. Whatever happened to “teaching moments”? A good teacher can adjust the daily and the current lesson plan when necessary to improve education, but the mandate for a district-wide high score on the test is taking all that creativity and good learning away. I’ve seen it in both so-called good and bad schools.*□

Milt Stevens

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-
-

October 9, 2009

Dear Henry and Letha,

In *Knarley Knews* #135, Henry says he has trouble starting his editorials. I think that's a common problem and not limited to just editorials. It's too bad we don't have something like those berries the mentats use in *Dune*. Eat a few berries and our fingers are set in motion. Of course, the end results might not be all that great but it would be easier than the current method. Over the years, I've seen fans refer to drinking beer while doing fan writing. I tried that only once and didn't think much of the results.

Unfortunately, the beginning isn't the only problem in writing. You have to eventually come to an end and that can be a problem also. Even with a beginning and an end, you still have to devise things to put in the middle. My brain feels strained already. Henry Kuttner thought of an interesting solution to the problem of beginnings and endings in his short story “The End.” The story begins “This is the end of the story.” It continues “This is the middle of the story.” It concludes “This is the beginning of the story.” It's a very clever story.

You're looking at a house overlooking Monterey Bay and commuting to Silicon Valley? I think I've figured it out. You wear tights and a cape and yell “Up, up, and away.” Commuting is much easier that way.

Henry doesn't seem like a very likely juror. In the parlance of the movies, “He knows too much.” The perfect juror would know absolutely nothing but would have a whole bunch of prejudices. Which side you are on determines which prejudices you want.

Given the effectiveness of school districts and school boards in the United States, it's remarkable that anyone can read anymore. Back when I was in the public school system, the school board in Los Angeles seemed to feel that literacy

might lead to Communism, so it probably shouldn't be encouraged. Text books kept getting thinner and thinner with each passing semester.

At least, schools should be less bothered by lack of financing than most other government agencies. According to school officials, they have never had enough money. Back when I was a kid, they claimed they could fix everything with just a few more millions. By now, the figure has grown to a few more billions. I have long suspected their problem is lack of talent rather than lack of money.

Yours truly,

□**TKK:** *Some of the talent issues could be addressed by getting rid of bureaucracy that drives away good people, higher pay, and unions that didn't defend the incompetent.*□

Jim Stumm
PO Box 29
Buffalo, NY 14223
Oct 9, 2009

TKK, Walmart: It's always that old line about Walmart running mom and pop stores out of business. But if the customers continued to shop at the old store, it would be Walmart that would be driven out. The customers make all the difference, yet they are never blamed. Why is that? I know, it's so much more satisfying to put the blame on big corporation owned by the rich guy.

Lower wages and benefits for Walmart employees make possible lower prices. Why should I be more concerned about the welfare of the employees and less concerned about the welfare of the more numerous customers? Every Walmart employee applied for the job knowing what the deal was, and he can quit any time. I presume every worker seeks out the best job he can get. So the alternative for those who work at Walmart must be a worse job, or none at all.

Schools: The fact that private schools exists shows that they can be funded. If there were no public schools, there would be no school taxes, and all that money would be available for private school tuition. Vouchers could provide for impecunious students, as I said last issue.

I suppose in most places private schools educate only a small minority of students. But when I was a schoolboy in the 1950s, Buffalo had two school systems, with Catholic schools that enrolled about the same number of students as public schools. The city was divided into dozens of Catholic parishes, and every parish had a grammar school, grades 1 to 8. There were about a dozen Catholic high schools, grades 9 to 12. I went to Catholic schools for all 12 years, walked to grammar school, rode city busses to high school, paying the usual bus fare. I never rode a school bus.

Somehow Catholics managed to finance their school system with no government money, even though Catholics also had to pay taxes that went to public schools, that they didn't

use. So don't tell me that a private school system can't be funded.

About those fake voucher schools in Milwaukee, I presume that they were shut down when they were ferreted out. What a contrast to wretched inner city public schools that go on and on, doing little to further the education of many of their students, putting them into a dangerous environment, leading some 50% or so to drop out before finishing high school. Rather than shut down these appalling schools, when they repeatedly demand more money, they get it, rewarding failure in the perverse socialist way. The harm isn't done to just a few students, but rather to generation after generation of kids who are run thru the mill then dumped onto the streets with no real education and not much alternative to a short, violent life of crime.

Toll roads: In NY there are some complaints about the placement of some Thruway toll booths, but for the most part, the Thruway uses a system that charges tolls roughly in proportion to miles driven.

Lloyd Penney: The Peace Bridge is operated by a bi-national Peace Bridge Authority (google that to see their website). The governments of NY and Ontario appoint the Authority commissioners, but that's all these governments do. Their charter tasks the Authority with setting Bridge tolls high enough to cover all Bridge expenses. So toll revenues go to the Peace Bridge Authority no matter on which side they are collected. They don't stay in NY or Ontario.

Alexis Gilliland: IN the deregulation of electricity, the devil is in the details. The arrangements some states call deregulation have such perverse rules that what results bears little resemblance to a free market.

In NY you can buy electricity from the old monopoly, or switch to a new supplier. The old monopoly handles delivery and billing in any case. I get phone calls from suppliers telling me I could save money by switching. But I haven't switched because I use so little electricity that I would only save about \$1 a month, so it's not worth the bother and risk that something will get screwed up in the changeover. Also, a card included with my electric bills gives me options to switch to one of three suppliers of green power (solar, wind, etc.) at a little higher price.

My impression is that deregulation of electricity and competition among suppliers is working satisfactorily in NY, but only a minority of users have switched to alternative suppliers. But having competitors keeps the old monopoly on its toes as well.

Jim Stumm

□**TKK:** *I blame BOTH the customers and Walmart. Whether you want to admit it or not, Walmart has been known to engage in predatory pricing to undercut local stores. Many items in the stores can vary greatly in price depending upon*

*the store you visit (this used to be common with baby formula, for example). Once the traditional competition is gone Walmart relaxes the prices. Walmart also out-competes by being a one-stop shopping option. The customers should show more loyalty if they want to retain the convenience and friendliness of the local mom and pop. I balance this where I can having mixed my shopping between Home Depot, Sears Hardware, and the local Ace depending upon who carried what I needed and could provide the particular service. Home Depot did well with lumber, etc.; Sears on appliances; and the local Ace on many smaller and specialty items. You employee and job analysis loses some punch when we consider the lessons of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*. I don't see any easy solution to the school problem. I'd love to see a good funding and oversight program for a hybrid system where all schools taught proper history and science. I suspect the Catholic schools of your youth received a fair subsidy in property tax waivers.*□

Lloyd Penney
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October 11, 2009

Dear Henry:

It's early in the day, and today is Canadian Thanksgiving Day, and the bird is in the oven, and the apartment smells great. I've got a little time here, not sure if I can get the whole LOC written before we sit down to eat, but I will get at least started on a response to *The Knarley Knews* 135.

More fun stuff from **Schirm**...let's hear it for mammals! Any further comments are just going to get me in trouble, anyway, so carry on to...

That really was quite the move you made, and it looks like life is still a little upside-down since you moved west. I keep in mind the move our family made in 1977 when we moved from Ontario to British Columbia. Life was certainly different, my younger brothers had to make new friends in a new school, and it took us a few weeks to find an apartment to move into while we searched for a house to buy. The house was never purchased because it was simply too expensive to buy one, and even after all these decades, housing is still too expensive to buy here. There is nothing for the first-time buyer, and it feels like there never has been anything.

Jury duty is a civic obligation, but it's a pain. Some people are in the rotation, others are not. I've done it three times now, and Yvonne's been notified that she's been added to the rotation. Guess there's too many people the lawyers don't like. Last time I went in for jury duty, most people sat around and were bored, but for me, it was a great time to catch up on LOCs. For us, the prospective pool of jurors hangs around for a week.

My career has been linked to publishing, and anyone involved in it knows that this career is going the way of barrel cooperating and wheelwrighting. More than 300 magazines have disappeared in the US, and about 50 in Canada. Electronic versions are being created with far fewer staffers, and there's less cost, and less income. As I search for work (yup, still hunting), the publishing websites I look at have near-continuous tales of layoffs, shutdowns, delays and worse.

The pancreatitis that **Dave Szurek** suffers from has also laid Joe Haldeman low, in addition to a twisted colon. Joe is in a Cincinnati hospital, soon to be moved, and recovery is slow and long and ongoing. I wish both Joe and Dave well, and may it be a memory soon.

Our building is full of cats and dogs, and while we see the cats on the rare occasion, we see the dogs daily, and they become part of our lives as a regular greeting. I'd like to think we become part of their lives, especially for a friendly hello, and skritch behind the ears or the base of the tail. When they aren't around any more, either passing away or moving away, we miss them. We don't have pets of our own, but we are content to borrow everyone else's. That's where we find that often, the animals are much more social than their owners are.

I reorganized our bookshelves recently, and reminded myself how cheap books used to be. A recent trip to a used book store showed me that even used books are expensive at \$3 or \$4 a shot. New paperbacks are around \$10 to \$12, and hardcovers are close to \$40. Any purchases I make these days are often at thrift stores, where a paperback is about a buck. Getting books at the WorldCon this year provided some pleasant reading, and at the right price, I must admit. Yes, they were obtained through a pricy membership, but to be able to simply pick up a book at will was a great privilege.

Social media are coming and going faster than ever. LiveJournal has had its peak, and FaceBook is losing its appeal as well. At least FaceBook is trying to change to keep what appeal it has left. Even Twitter is just starting to lose its appeal to some people. Our attention spans are limited, and even doing something we like, we need a change from time to time. For me, LJ and FB have had their uses and benefits, but as soon as they don't, I'm gone. I am sure another social media will come along to take the public by storm, for a limited time.

It's now the 12th, and dinner was grand. We did invite a few friends over, especially those who might not have anyone to have Thanksgiving with, and we ate the lot. And now that dinner is digesting, I find there's not much more to say. May your family have the same kind of Thanksgiving we enjoyed, and we'll see you next issue.

Yours,
Lloyd Penney

INSTANT HOUSING



□TKK: Heard a little about Canadian Thanksgiving this year as two Canadians are on my hockey team. I never could understand the appeal of Twitter. That is why I'll never make a fortune as an Internet pioneer. I used e-mail long before AOL existed and I still don't need the fancy interface for 99% of my e-mails.□

Joseph Nicholas
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26 Oct 2009

Dear Henry and Letha

My thanks for issues 134 and 135, and my apologies for not having responded before now – “too much to do, so little time” as I believe I may be misquoting Kipling. (Or perhaps it was Dr No, as played by Joseph Wiseman in the first Bond film, who I note died only a few days ago (as I write).) And various bits of busyness – I see that in my comments published in issue 134 I listed a couple of forthcoming holidays, with a nod to another possible jaunt in the autumn: that duly eventuated, as a trip to the Loire Valley. A rather curious trip, too, since we actually spent only two days in the Loire, in the old city of Tours: the trip was bookended with a visit to Monet's garden at Giverny, northwest of Paris at the start and closed with a visit to Napoleon's pile at Fontainebleau, south of Paris, a few days later. And in between my camera started malfunctioning – had you ever thought that a digital camera could take out-of-focus pictures? Neither had I – yet there were half my pictures of the partially ruined (and partially restored) castle at Chinon, where Joan of Arc first met

the Dauphin, evincing all the signs of blurriness and camera shake you'd expect from a too-hasty shot with a film camera. Luckily, it recovered just as spontaneously as it had malfunctioned (and I didn't notice the malfunction until later, otherwise I would have retaken the blurred photographs), but a couple of days later was playing up once again. The old computer standby of switching it off and then switching it on again fixed it, but in the long run it clearly needs replacing. Like any other piece of digital hardware these days, it's obviously Not Made To Last.

But I see from issue 135 that you've begun to think about buying a house. I hope the process goes smoothly, is all I can say, since buying a house is allegedly one of the most traumatic things you can do during your life. (The other is said to be getting married, although I didn't find that particularly disturbing or upsetting.) Sixteen years on, I can still remember the sleepless nights it caused me, as I lay there thinking of all the things that could possibly go wrong with the move, or the hidden structural faults that the surveyor would uncover, or the with regret letter we'd receive from the moneymen turning down our mortgage application ...in the event, of course, it all went off without a hitch, even though we didn't have much furniture when we moved in: a bed delivered in kit form which we had to assemble for our first night, a dining table from my parents, a beanbag and some folding chairs, and boxes and boxes (and boxes) of books. And you, of course, have past experience of buying a house, so are likely to find a second instance of it less traumatic than the first (assuming you found it traumatic at all, of course).

As to serving on a jury ... it emerged during the 1980s that the UK police and the security services (aka spies) routinely vetted those whose names were flagged up for jury service for potentially “unconventional views” – effectively, anyone who dissented from the political views associated with the small-c conservative Parliamentary mainstream – to ensure that such views were excluded from the courtroom and thus (so went the argument) minimise the chances of acquittal of anyone on trial for a “politically motivated” crime (such as cutting the fence at a nuclear base, lying down in front of a cruise missile convoy, etc.). This means that Judith and I, who in the 1980s were active in the anti-nuclear movement – Judith even worked full-time at the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament for a few years – will have had an appropriate tag attached to our names and will therefore never be selected for jury service. Which is just fine with me!

Regards to you both
Joseph

□TKK: Our last digital camera lasted for years and even survived cave grit in the lens mechanism. Probably lasted longer than the lens of my old SLR and we certainly got more pictures out of it. I didn't find house buying traumatic, more infuriating.□

R-Laurraine Tutihasi
PO Box 5323
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26 Nov 2009

Dear Henry and Letha,

I'm still pretty far behind with my reading. Stuff happened. Back in October my computer needed repairs, so I was without it for ten days. This month Mike got really sick early in the month, and I spent a lot of time running errands for him. Back now to catch-up mode. The house is more finished than it was, but there are still a few items left to be done. However I believe we are on our way to being able to plan a house-warming. We just need to get a few things for the guest room and bathroom.

We were in Crescent City a few years ago, mainly because I wanted to see the canyon with the ferns, which turned out to be less impressive in person than on TV. I didn't know about all the other stuff in the area that you saw. We'll have to check them out sometime. I also didn't know about the Oregon Caves. I love caves and will definitely have to check that out.

Really loved the "instant housing" cartoon – not far from the truth.

In some parts of California, there is also a white season.

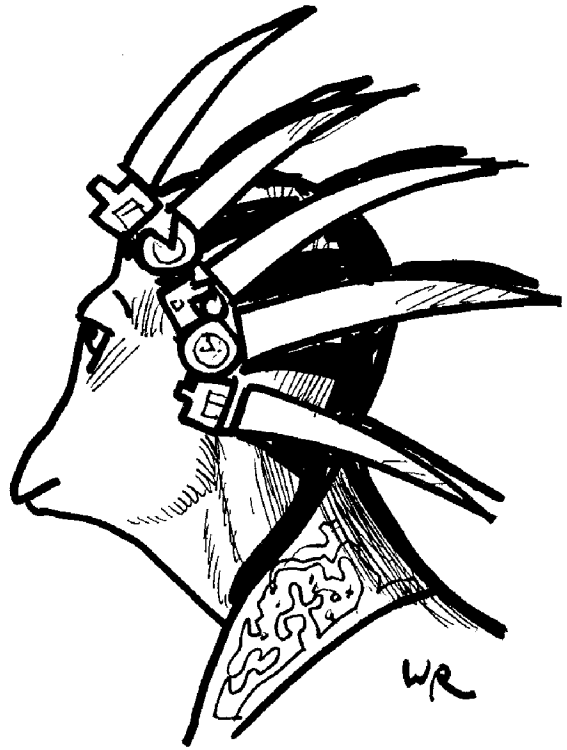
My condolences to **Brad** on his loss of Sable.

I'm sorry to hear that **Alexis** and Lee and other Eastern fans took home H1N1 with them. Although the tests, which are not totally reliable, were negative, at least two medical people think Mike had that. He certainly was sick enough and was on the verge of pneumonia. They gave him an antiviral and an antibiotic; and he's all well again except for his energy levels, which are not back yet to normal, and a nasty-sounding cough. I have an appointment for the vaccine in a couple of weeks, though it's possible I had a subclinical case (unexplained fatigue for about a week and a couple of days of achiness). The vaccine will not hurt my health, in any case. I already had the regular flu shot, though Mike missed out from being sick.

I wish everyone good health and an enjoyable holiday season.

Laurraine Tutihasi

☐**TKK**: Sorry to hear of the computer woes. We really rely on them more than we know. I have never gotten a flu shot, and only had the flu twice. The last time was in the summer and no flu shot would have done me any good.☐



We also heard from ...

Megan Bouchard, Ned Brooks, Todd Bushlow, John Carlino, Kirk Cockerill, Kurt Erichsen, Patti Hetherington, Trinlay Khadro, Chris Loy, KRin Pender-Gunn, Marc Schirmeister, Joy V. Smith, Gene Stewart, Sue Welch

Fanzines Received in Trade

"The usual" generally refers to either a letter of comment (LOC), a contribution, or trading with your fanzine or generally any friendly means of communication.

Alexiad Vol. 8 No. 5 through Vol. 9 No. 2 by Lisa and Joseph T. Major; 1409 Christy Ave.; Louisville, KY 40204-2040; bi-monthly; \$2 or the usual. A nice fanzine with lots of book reviews and a solid letter column. I think Joe and Lisa may have given up on me.

Argentus 9 by Steven Silver; 707 Sapling Ln.; Deerfield, IL 60015-3969; shsilver@sfsite.com; annual; \$3 or the usual. The inaugural issue of an interesting genzine with articles from a large number of contributors.

Banana Wings #39-41 by Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer; 59 Shirley Road; Croydon, Surrey CR0 7ES; UK; fishlifter@googlemail.com; irregular; the usual. A nice fanzine with lots of traditionally fannish content.

Beam #2 by Nic Farey; 3345 Cape Cod Dr.; Las Vegas, NV 89112; unusalsuspects@mac.com; irregular; the usual. A nice fanzine with wonderful production values and a great Foster cover.



Challenger 31 and 32 by Guy H. Lillian, III; 8700 Millicent Way; Shreveport, LA 71115; <http://www.challzine.net/>; GHLIII@yahoo.com; irregular; \$6 or the usual. This is a fine genzine with good articles, lots of photos and letters. Every bit worthy of its Hugo nomination.

Ethel the Aardvark #144-149 by rotating editors; PO Box 212; World Trade Centre; Melbourne, VIC 8005; Australia; ethelaardvark@yahoo.com.au; bi-monthly; AU\$30/year or the usual. This is the official zine of the Melbourne Science Fiction Club and covers club news and SF related material in Australia.

Fanzine Fanatique (4 issues) by Keith Walker; 6 Vine St.; Lancaster LA1 4UF; England; KWalker777@aol.com; irregular; exchange or editorial whim. A short zine composed primarily of capsule reviews of other zines.

Feline Mewsings #38-40; 2081 W. Overlook St.; PO Box 5323; Oracle, AZ 85263; <http://homepage.mac.com/laurraine/Felinemewsings/>; Laurraine@mac.com; irregular; \$3 or the usual. A nice personalzine normally distributed as part of FAPA.

File 770:157-158 by Mike Glyer; 705 Valley View Ave.; Monrovia, CA 91016; MikeGlyer@cs.com; irregular; \$8/5 or the usual. This is a fine news zine with plenty of con reports and, unfortunately, too many obituaries.

It Goes on the Shelf 31 by Ned Brooks; 4817 Dean Ln; Lilburn, GA 30047-4720; nedbrooks@sprynet.com; annual?; the usual. A compendium of Ned's eclectic reading which ranges across the spectrum to SF, fantasy, and genres I can't even put a name to.

Littlebrook 7 by Jerry Kaufman & Suzanne Tompkins; PO Box 25075; Seattle, WA 98165; littlebrooklocs@aol.com; <http://www.efanzines.com/>; irregular; \$2 or the usual. A fine genzine with a broad range of articles.

Living Free 144-45 by Jim Stumm; Hiler Branch, Box 29-KK; Buffalo, NY 14223; irregular; \$2. An interesting zine dedicated to living independently.

Lofgeornost 97-100 by Fred Lerner; 81 Worcester Ave; White River Junction, VT 05001; fred.lerner@dartmouth.edu; irregular; the usual. This is Fred's FAPA zine.

Luna! #1-8 by Christopher Carson; PO Box 1035; Fort Worth, TX 76101; <http://www.lunarc.org/>; monthly; the usual. A fanzine dedicated, to you guessed it, lunar exploration.

MarkTime 94-97 by Mark Strickert; PO Box 1051; Orange, CA 92856; busnrail@yahoo.com; irregular; \$2 or the usual. A fanzine tracking Mark's life and interests.

Nacrolepsy Press Review 52 by Randy Robbins; P.O. Box 171311; Anaheim, CA 92817-7131; irregular; \$2 or the usual. A collection of capsule fanzine reviews interspersed with art, pictures, and other clippings.

MaryMark Press by Mark Sonnenfeld; 45-08 Old Millstone Dr.; East Windsor, NJ 08520; irregular; the usual. Various strange publications with experimental writing styles.

Nice Distinctions 19 by Arthur Hlavaty; 206 Valentine St; Yonkers, NY 10704-1814; <http://www.maroney.org/hlavaty/>; hlvaty@panix.com; annual; \$1 or the usual. A small perzine compiled primarily from livejournal entries.

Opuntia 68.1A-69.1D (13 issues total) by Dale Speirs; Box 6830; Calgary, Alberta; Canada T2P 2E7; irregular; \$3 or the usual. One of the most prolific zines with lots of interesting content.

Plokta 40 by Steve Davies; 52 Westbourne Terrace; Reading Berks RG30 2RP; Alison Scott; 24 St Mary Rd; Walthamstow London E17 9RG; and Mike Scott; 9 Jagger House; Rosenau Rd; London SW11 4QY; Great Britain; locs@plokta.com; <http://www.plokta.com/>; irregular; the usual. A humorous fanzine with varied content.

Quasiquote 8 by Sandra Bond; 40 Cleveland Park Ave.; London E17 7BS; England; sandra@ho-street.demon.co.uk; irregular; \$5 or the usual. Interesting collection of convention material.

The Reluctant Famulus 71-76 by Tom Sadler; 305 Gill Branch Road; Owenton, KY 40359; tomfamulus@hughes.net; irregular; the usual. This is a great genzine. Lots of SF and other interesting things along with a good letter column.

This Here #14 by Nic Farey; 3345 Cape Cod Dr.; Las Vegas, NV 89112; thishere@mac.com; irregular; the usual. More of a perzine with a feature on two adopted dogs.

Trap Door 26 by Robert Lichtman; 11037 Broadway Terrace; Oakland, CA 94611-1948; locs2trapdoor@yahoo.com; irregular; \$5 or the usual. An interesting fanzine dedicated to fannish anecdotes.

Twilight World #4-#5 by Don Fields; 266 Ramona Ave.; Grover Beach, CA 93433; oddlystupid@yahoo.com; irregular; \$2 or the usual. An interesting zine with mostly review pieces.

Vanamonde No. 793-842 by John Hertz; 236 S Coronado St No 409; Los Angeles, CA 90057; This is John's APA-L zine with interesting tidbits.

Visions of Paradise #141-154-137 by Bob Sabella; 24 Cedar Manor Ct; Budd Lake, NJ 07828-1023; BSabella@optonline.net; monthly; the usual. A nice collection of issues with Bob's diary, reviews, and LOCs.

Knarley's Planned Con Attendance

E Corflu Vitas Sunnyvale, CA

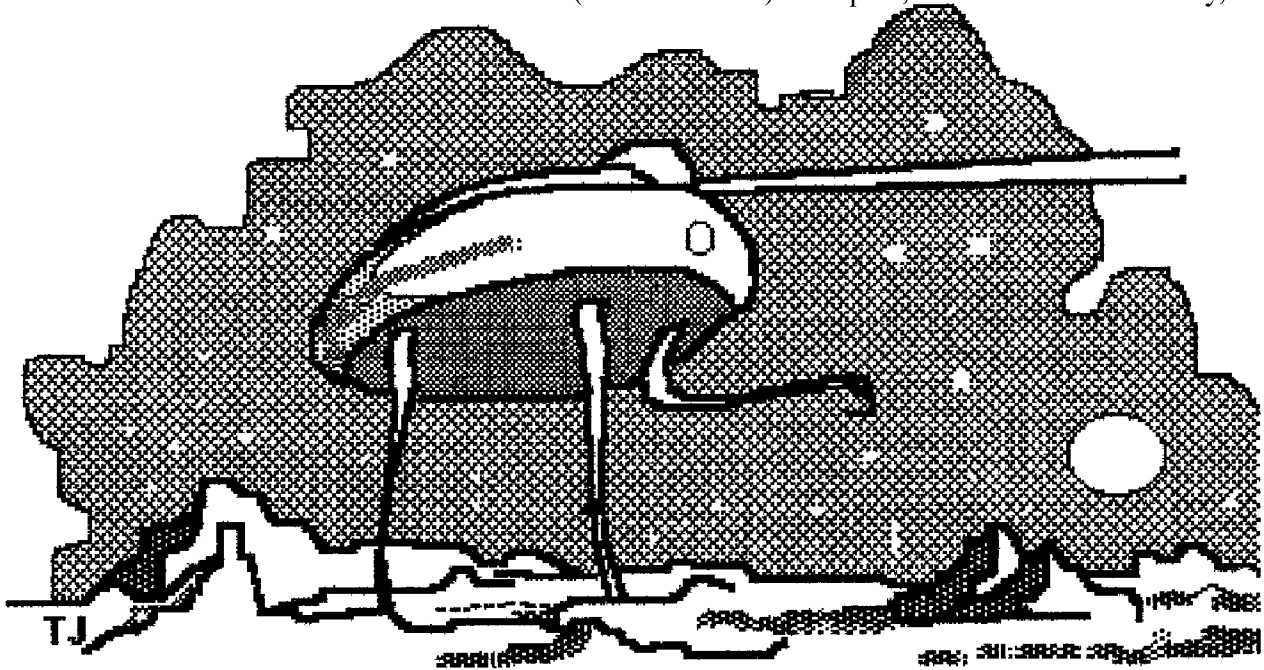
February 11-13, 2011

Fogcon 1 (maybe) San Francisco, CA

March 11-13, 2011

Mars in 2095 (Worldcon 153) Marsport, Mars

Labor Day, 2095



You Got this Issue Because ...

- ☐ The four two-week old chicks are chirping away and proving quite the distraction. (This is a story for another day.)
- ☐ One child out of the house and off to college; only two more to go.
- ☐ You are going to write me some interesting articles.
- ☐ We trade
- ☐ You sent me a contribution. Thanks.
- ☐ You sent me a letter of **complaint** comment.

You have _____ issues left before you are designated a black hole and dropped from the mailing list.