



THE KNARLEY KNEWS

ISSUE
NUMBER: 140

"AH, OSAMA'S ARRIVED, THERE GO HIS VIRGINS." ZWA TT.

The Knarley Knews -- Issue 140
Published in September, 2011

Item	Page
Table of Contents/Colophon	2
Editorial	3
Sue's Sites: Austin Sue Welch	5
Factory Firsts Gene Stewart	6
Ethics of Capitalism - Part 3 Alexander Slate	8
InterLOCutions (alphabetically)	11
Cuyler Warnell Brooks, Jr.	11
Brad Foster	13
Alexis Gilliland	11
Bob Jennings	14
Joseph T. Major	19
Clint Marsh	21
Joseph Nicholas	18
Lloyd Penney	13
John Purcell	18
Joy V. Smith	12
Milt Stevens	17
Jim Stumm	19
Dave Szurek	20
Fanzines Received in Trade	
WAHF List	22
Conventions/Back Cover	22

Art Credits

Artist	Page(s)
Brad Foster	16
Alexis Gilliland	22
Terry Jeeves	13
Joe Mayhew	11
William Rotsler	8
Marc Schirmeister	Cover

All uncredited textual material is the responsibility of Knarley.

Editorial insertions are denoted: TKK:...

Editorial and Subscription Policy

The Knarley Knews is meant to be a general purpose fanzine whose primary goal is to maintain lines of communication between the editors and those beings they consider to be friendly. With this in mind, the following are the general guidelines.

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.
PC: Virtually any format
MACINTOSH: Virtually any format
6. The editors are open to bribes of any size, although their efficacy is highly suspect, and have never turned down a financial contribution.

The Knarley Knews is published bi-monthly by Parody Publishers. The entire issue is ©2011 by Parody Publishers as Freeware (reproduction allowed with proper citation) unless otherwise copyrighted. Contributors please take note.

The editorial board is:

Henry L. "Knarley" Welch -- Editor
Letha R. "Mom" Welch -- Layout Editor

All comments/requests should be sent to:

The Knarley Knews
15290 Upper Ellen Rd.
Los Gatos, CA 95033 USA
(408)335-3632
knarley@welchcastle.com OR
<http://tkk.welchcastle.com/>

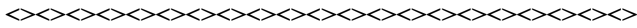


Next Issue Deadline: October 31, 2011

Editorial

(In which Knarley gets to spume!)

Welcome to yet another issue of *The Knarley Knews*. I'm working hard to keep the issues on a regular schedule and understanding the factors in my daily life that interfere with that. Nothing earth-shattering, but most nights after work I don't want to spend much time on the computer and projects and other activities seem to take priority on the weekends, even though putting an issue together is far from a monumental task. Most of it may simply be that the two computers I most use at home are near the end of their serviceable lifetime and can be frustrating to use. Have we become so used to having computers (and everything else in our lives) operate with little or no latency that we become frustrated with having to wait 60 or 90 seconds for some software to load? How did we ever manage to get anything done 10 or 20 years ago with much slower and more decrepit machines?



We finally managed a summer vacation. I say managed simply because there were times when it didn't look like one would ever happen. My work schedule did not cooperate as there were numerous potentially looming deadlines that didn't stabilize until August. By then the kids had obligations before the start of school (which seems earlier and earlier this year) so that in the end we could take the second week of August and that on only a week's notice.

So, we packed up the car and headed down to visit my brother and his family and my mother in L.A. We decided to go down the coast and, yet again, we got a late start so we didn't have much of a chance to get out of the car and do some detailed sight-seeing. We did manage to see the visitor's center at Hearst Castle and take a walk near Santa Barbara. A bit better than our last trip this was as at least it wasn't raining and we finished the drive before sunset. Having arrived in the LA area we stopped first at my brother's and dropped Kira off for the weekend. We'd been trying since March to schedule a visit where Kira could spend time with her cousins and this was her opportunity. They all had a great time, but I don't know much about the details.

Letha, Kyle, and I then drove east to my mother's in San Dimas. On the first day we decided to take the tram from Palm Springs and do some hiking. Kyle and I, chose to hike to the top of Mt. San Jacinto (about 4000 feet up from the top of the tram) while Letha and my mother hiked in the valley at the top of the tram. To put it mildly, the mountain kicked my ass. Unlike last year's high-altitude hike, we did this one on the first day of the trip and after being at sea level the day before. Despite me sucking a lot of wind and getting sore legs, Kyle and I made reasonably good time and made it to the peak, but the walk back down took longer than expected and we didn't get back to the tram until after dark. The tram ride itself is worth the trip as it goes almost straight up the side of the mountain range and rotates as it goes so that you can see all the sights no matter where you are standing. I could

have done without all the mock gasping every time the tram cleared a tower and bounced a bit. Kind of like an amusement park ride, but the other passengers were more annoying.

We spent the next day doing projects around the house for my mother and some visiting. My brother brought Kira and the cousins over for dinner and we played a game of Clue. We used to play quite a bit as children. If you've never played, the game is a bit of luck in making the necessary guesses and then how you use the secondary information about who answers what questions and who does not. While playing I thought of other ways to use tertiary information, but the normal Clue card does not have adequate space to record everything you'd need. I suppose it wouldn't be too hard to write a computer program to take better advantage of the information.

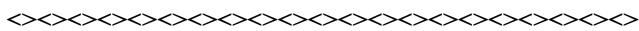
The ultimate destination for our trip was the Mammoth Lakes area. This is to the east of Yosemite and is better known for its skiing in the winter. Our drive up from LA was up the east side of the Sierras and west of Death Valley. It isn't a very hospitable place in mid-August. On a whim we decided to stop at the Manzanar Historical Site. I didn't have any idea what this was until we were actually there and Kira remembered reading a book about it in school. For those who don't know, Manzanar was one of the Japanese Internment Camps during World War II. There isn't much there besides the community center, which has been turned into a visitor's center and museum. You can also take a drive around the area with various sites identified by signs. There are also a few barracks buildings that have been recently restored. This was all **very** depressing. I was reminded that despite being the supposedly "freest" country in the world, that we have a long and continuing history of repressing people. There are the obvious examples of the African-American slaves and the American-Indians as well as the Japanese at places by Manazanar. You can almost insert immigrant group here to come up with many other examples. More recently we've had McCarthyism and the post-911 Homeland Security attack on all of our rights as citizens. This visit has made me very pessimistic about our society ever figuring it out and treating people as people. Heavy sigh...

Our stop for the next few days was Mammoth Lakes. We didn't have much of an agenda other than to do some general sight-seeing. One noted feature of the area is that it still bears the marks of relatively recent volcanic activity. On our first day we took some backgrounds and walked a trail to three craters that were the result of an explosive eruption without much magma/lava. Several of them had small lakes/ponds in the bottom that showed the high mineralization in the water. We then drove on some back roads to one of the nearby lava beds. If you've never seen one, they are fascinating. Suddenly, in the middle of the plain, there is a huge pile composed of obsidian and pumice. It kind of looks like the tailing piles

from a mine, but there isn't any mine and the size is impressive. The one we visited was over a mile long and was at least 150 feet high. We collected some souvenirs that can be viewed in our yard if you ever visit.

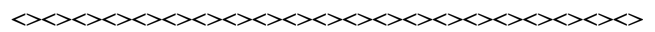
For the next day we took a jeep tour where a guide and two jeeps are provided and they took us toward more inaccessible areas around Mammoth Lakes. Kyle got to drive the second jeep and he didn't stop grinning all day. We got to see some more volcanic areas and even saw some of the remnants of the creation of the aqueducts going down to Los Angeles. The most disorienting moment was when we came across the flock of sheep and before we realized they were sheep, it looked like the entire ground was moving. After the jeep tour we drove down to Mono Lake. This is one of the most surreal landscapes you'll ever see. The Lake is a bit like the Dead Sea in that it has a high saline and alkaline content. The lake has suffered greatly as a result of the siphoning of the fresh source water for the aqueduct, but compromises in recent years have resulted in a slow rising of the lake level. Mono Lake is most noted for its tufas. These are the rock formations that are a lot like cave formations that were formed as the lake dried up. This is certainly a place worth visiting once. We finished the day by having dinner at the Mobil station on the hill. (Trust me, this is where you want to eat when you visit.)

We had wanted to visit Devil's Postpile Monument, but didn't have the time. We chose to drive home through Yosemite. The last time I visited Yosemite was in the late 1980s when I made a rock climbing trip there. The scenery is still as amazing as always with the imposing granite edifices on both sides of the valley. This was also a good year to visit as the spring and summer have been abnormally wet so that there was still plenty of water in the various waterfalls along both sides of the valley. Unfortunately, the children were not very interested and there were entirely too many people there for my liking. It took us at least 30 minutes to find any kind of parking place within walking distance of the Visitor's Center (we couldn't take the free shuttle buses as they don't allow dogs).

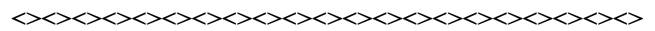


As seems to be the trend in our household, each child obtains a pet prior to moving it out of the house. Connor got a cat his junior year in high school and guess whose house it still lives in? Following the trend, Kyle talked Letha into letting him bring a kitten home. Here is how I heard about it. Letha calls me and says to bring some canned "chicken" food home. My response is "huh?" I didn't know they made canned chicken food. Letha says to forget about it. It isn't until I get home later that the "chicken" is actually a "kitten." So much for vaunted digital phone service. Like many "free" pets that enter the home, they don't stay that way. I'm not referring to the normal expense of food and the annual vet bill, but really price shocking cost. This kitten (Sparta) followed the trend. One of the other free cats (Misty, this one courtesy of Derek from one of his friends **after** he moved out) decided that Sparta was an interloper. She would go out of her way to

hiss at and take a swipe at Sparta, who rather than run away would simply wait for Misty to give up and move on. I know you can see where this is going, but it is even more than you think. The day after we left on vacation (late on a Saturday) Misty apparently took a swipe at Sparta and managed to put two claws into one of his eyes. For those of you with pets, the vet bill that out shines all others is the emergency room visit on a weekend. No ordinary vet fees here, but five-star vet bills. Grandma, who was house sitting, got stuck with the pleasure of bundling Sparta up for the vet and then trying to track us down. This occurred while Kyle and I were on Mt. San Jacinto and there was, of course, no cell service. Thus, we later discovered several escalating voice messages and no real prognosis until the eye specialist was available on Monday. The end result is that the vet was able to save the eye and although it is a bit smaller and slightly cloudier than the other eye, Sparta still retains some sight. He is still dealing with the affects it has on his depth perception, so he isn't a particularly good leaper. Misty still gives him grief, but he has started stalking her. Sooner or later he's going to get big enough to retaliate and establish himself as the alpha cat. In the interim, we keep the claws on all the cats well trimmed. As for my bank account, it still hasn't recovered.



While we were in Mammoth Lakes, one of the suggested activities was geocaching. We made a half-hearted attempt at a cache near the lava bed, but didn't learn enough until we would have been forced to back track over some not so nice roads. The week after we got back, one of my co-workers asked for my help with one of the puzzle caches involving a math problem that had to be solved in order to learn the actual coordinates to the cache. Since then, Letha and I have gotten a bit more serious about geocaching and are currently testing some of the smart phone applications to support our growing habit. We have been using geocaching as an excuse to get out of the house and go visit some local place of interest. Many of the caches are placed to point out interesting sites that you might not otherwise notice. There are also quite a few within walking distance of work, so I've been using them as a reason to get out of my office chair.

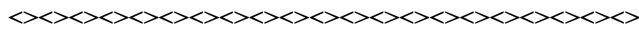


Last year Letha and I traveled to Kansas City for Labor Day weekend. It was an opportunistic trip as we used accumulated frequent flyer miles to make the trip. For the first leg of the trip they either seriously over-booked the flight or had to substitute a smaller aircraft as the wanted 15+ volunteers. Letha and I took them up on their offer and not only got better flights, but also pocketed \$400 each in vouchers. The only problem with the vouchers is that they are only good for a year. Given the summer planning disruptions described above, we found ourselves with a looming spend or lose deadline. Fortunately, we were able to use the vouchers to purchase tickets before, but travel after the expiration of the vouchers. (This turned out to be a good plan as each of the prior two weekends included heavy rain from the recent hurricanes.) We decided to spend a long weekend in Richmond

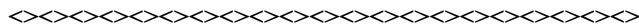
visiting our old friends Ron and Carol. (I had seen them in 2008 when I went east for new law firm training, but Letha hadn't seen either of them for much longer.) Other than the indignities of airport security and sardine packing on the flights, this was a welcome break from everything else. We flew out late on Thursday with an early Friday morning arrival. Once in Richmond, we stopped just outside the airport for breakfast. About the time we finished our meal I noticed some police lights over by the airport and then saw someone walking across a field and away from the airport and police with his hands on the back of his head. My first thought was this might have been someone who escaped from the local penitentiary, but that didn't make any sense as he was walking away from the police. It was then that Ron and Carol remembered that President Obama was visiting Richmond that morning and this apparent sight-seer got too close.

I can't say that we did much while in Richmond. We did some geocaching, had some great conversation, ate good food, and even assembled a composter. This was a wonderful trip and

we should do something like this more often. Just get away for a few days with no schedule to visit some old friends.



One of the delights of living in Northern California has to be Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), our wonderful electrical utility. One of the interesting aspects of PG&E is their billing formula. With PG&E you are billed an escalating rate for electrical consumption with the first tier of kilowatt-hours being the cheapest and with the price going up from there. This isn't such a big deal except that the break points between the tiers changes with the seasons. This means that even though my electricity use went up less than 10% between the early spring and mid-summer, my bill nearly tripled in cost. And, in due course, the bill will go back down even though my energy consumption won't be significantly changing. Nothing like more disruptions to the monthly household budget.



Until next issue...

Sue's Sites: Austin

By Sue Welch

Austin, a dot on a map – in the hill country of central Texas. But also a place where my Grandmother's sister's daughter Barbara lives. A year ago I bought family tree maker software and access to ancestry.com in order to build a genealogy of my grandparents while there are still people around who can give me names, dates and significant happenings in these two families. So when Barbara called and invited me to spend a week in Austin I jumped at the chance; last time I saw her was in 1988. I met her daughter Debbie and son Chip only once in 1966.

Barbara lives in Towers of Town Lake, a 12 story complex of condo units overlooking the river. One of the first such housing units in the downtown area built to promote downtown living, this building with its 160+ units provides amenities such as indoor and outdoor pools and spas, weight rooms and exercise facilities, a lending library, meeting rooms for events as well as 24/7 staffed personnel to be of assistance for residents. Today there are numerous other similar buildings along the river offering quiet country living combined with downtown shopping, restaurants, etc. within walking distance.

The Colorado River winds its way through downtown; along its bank is a wide seven mile trail. Perfect for walking, jogging, baby strollers and dogs. Along this path are picnic areas, fields for sports, playgrounds for kids, fishing and lots of relaxing. This area is teeming with people, enjoying the beautiful outdoors. And yet just a block away is a bustling downtown.

Austin is the fourth largest city in Texas with a population of approximately 800,000 and the 15th largest city in the United States. Settled in the 1830s, it was first named Waterloo and became the capital of the Republic of Texas in 1839. It was later renamed for Stephen F. Austin, known as the father of

Texas. (Austin led 300 families from the United States into this area for its first successful colonization.) Today Austin has a diverse ethnic makeup and economy. In the 1990s it adopted the nickname "Silicon Hills" due to its many technology firms. Whole Foods Market, Freescale Semiconductor, Forestar Group, and Dell are headquartered in Austin.

Austin is known as the "Live Music Capital of the World". I was there during its SXSW music festival which brought over 20,000 music lovers into the city for concerts and traffic congestion. The Austin Symphony Orchestra provides excellent concerts.

Sightseeing – there is plenty. Explore the largest and tallest state capital building in the United States. Check out the beautiful old Governor's mansion. Try a carriage tour of city's old Victorian homes. Tour the UT (University of Texas) which educates over 50,000 students each year. Be sure to check out Welch Hall while on campus. Learn history at the Lyndon B. Johnson presidential library and the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum. Johnson City, home of the LBJ ranch, is worth a look as is Fredericksburg, one of the original German settlements in central Texas.

Austin restaurants are many, diverse, and delicious. After dinner take a tour to see the world's largest bat colony of over 1.5 million Mexican free-tailed bats living in downtown Austin. The bats love this area and you will too.

Barbara provided me with a lot of family history and pictures of her side of our family, transplants from the Cleveland area. I met her niece Ginny who brought family pictures and stories, and I enjoyed a delicious brunch at her daughter Debbie's, secluded home in the country. Reacquainting myself with family turned out to be a wonderful idea – thanks Barbara.

Factory Firsts

by Gene Stewart

We live in a serial killer factory called, with renewed irony, the United States of America. The FBI is considered Expert Central for all things serial killer, but even the FBI has no idea how many are active at any given time. Estimates range from 40 to 400 and are conceded to be guesses. Suffice it to say there is a surfeit of them, especially in USA.

In *Bowling for Columbine*, Michael Moore pointed out something that would seem, upon reflection, self-evident, namely that violence, especially the kind brought about by weapons, ought not surprise a place that produces weapons. What holds true for Columbine holds true for the nation. The USA is the most violent “civilized” country on the gasping planet. Violence of all sorts is its prime export.

While such facts are not a source of pride, they do provide fodder for some interesting speculation. For example, is the USA’s excess of sociopathic greed and psychopathic destructiveness a refinement of the human condition? Examining that question leads to curious conclusions.

Serial killers are thought to be as old as mankind, if not older. Certainly we can spot them here and there through history, although the further back we check, the fewer specific incidents are reported. Prior to the 1800s, we tend to hear only about nobles such as Vlad Tepes, Gille de Rais, or Elizabeth Bathory.

Beginning in the 1600s peasants make the historical records. We find 14 year old Jean Grenier admitting to eating children in 1603. His claim that he became a werewolf resonates into even the prehistorical past because tales of werewolves, vampires, and other mythical creatures likely came about as attempts to explain horrific crime scenes of the type serial killers, or lust killers, or sex criminals, tend to make.

It is in such myth that our speculation deepens. As metaphor for rapacious depredation, few match werewolves and vampires. Feeding off the people, living on their blood and bodies, is a good way to describe nobles and the aristocracy. It’s also a good way to construe modern corporations. Blood-suckers and ravenous monsters are decent descriptions of the corporate mentality current deploying greed like teeth and talons to tear away gobbets of pulsing planet. Lives are consumed in the process.

Imagine, too, how affected history has been by a collective fear of monsters. Banding together in caves does not require a postulated memory of pre Ice Age beasts such as saber-toothed tigers or cave bears when serial killers were always with us, unseen but hard at work feeding off us. Those others among us pass largely unseen, and leave behind spoor the likes of which has fueled our nightmares since before we tried to tame fire.

From our caves we made villages, towns, and cities, thinking to keep monsters at bay even as we provided the monsters among us perfect protective cover. Crowds are best for serial killers; ask Jack the Ripper. Slums and ghettos are perfect hunting grounds. Too many people, too few resources, and desperate competition to survive all provide a crop of victims just begging to be torn to shreds and sometimes eaten.

Even now we see the effect of serial killers on our public policy, which remains fear-driven. We spend more in the USA on defense than any dozen other countries combined, yet manage only to make ourselves less safe by providing safe haven for sociopaths and psychopaths, individual and corporate both.

What’s really happening, of course, is politicians using fear to stampede the populace into either supporting pork barrel programs or being distracted from noticing the looting. Either way, fear-driven responses are destroying what was once the USA.

In other words, sociopaths are attacking the nation, now, both metaphorically and literally. From being the world’s leading serial killer factory, the USA is now also a victim.

Once again, huge effects flow from these human-shaped creatures. These things in human guise are driving us toward extinction and, so fear-driven are we, so jumpy and kept on edge, that we the people project our terror on imaginary villains such as Al Qaeda, (actually just a data base in a CIA computer), bin Laden, (a sick old coot ostracized from his wahabi family for his extreme religious views and murdered by American SEAL Team 6, now a Major Motion Picture), and vague Them who “hate our freedom” and other ridiculous lies. What other countries hate is the USA shoving its way into their affairs and pissing all over them when they balk. What other countries hate is the USA killing their populace in the name of enforcing the IMF and underhanded, vampirish, werewolfian big business.

Mountain top removal, fracking, oil spills, clear cutting forests, monoculture, GMO, unrestricted pollution, nitrogen run-off, loss of topsoil, ubiquitous dioxins, radiation leaks, climate change due to global warming... the list of attacks is endless.

No documented attack by wolves on human beings can be found in the historical record, despite what ranchers and Sarah Palin may tell you. So why were-wolf?

First, no question that a wolf’s howl is eerie, especially if one is huddled in a cave by a small campfire at night. Our Trog-lodyte ancestors, however, knew which animals to fear and

which to give a respectful distance, from experience. They likely would have known wolves to be safe if left alone.

In Greek and Roman times, educated people understood myths as metaphor. Only children might have taken them literally, or the most credulous heathen. Werewolves were used to explain why some people did wild, bad things. Wolves, too, suckled Romulus & Remus, remember; the wild offered succor to early Romans, in short.

By latter Roman times, the church had introduced blood to the vampire myth, which in Ancient Greece had referred to siphoning off life-force. Making it literally blood allowed a vivid link both to form between church doctrine and deeply rooted fears. Could a promise of salvation in exchange for obedience be far behind?

By the Dark Ages literalism, largely thanks to the church, ran rampant. Peasants lived poorly and were prey for life's uncertainties, as well as chattel for the nobles. With priests whispering superstitions into their ears, they created a bestiary of monsters to cower from and, when desecrated bodies were found, to blame. Wolves, gliding through the deep shadows in the thick forests of Europe, caught the bad rap of projected ignorance. Wolves are big, fairly visible, certainly audible, and they run in packs; they intimidate by numbers. People projected their fear on wolves.

Wolves also prey upon herd animals, so domestic sheep and cattle were at risk. This threatened livelihoods and engendered bitter hatred.

This projected, if unwarranted, fear of wolf violence translated when people were found demolished. "Wolves did this," villagers would cry, when perhaps the deceased died in some other way. Yes, wolf prints and other spoor may have been found; they are scavengers. Found meat is good meat, to a wolf. But wrong conclusions were leapt to, and hidden behind a screen of bloody wolf accusation lurked the serial killer.

This meshed nicely with the church's rants against man's "animal nature," meaning sex and violence. Keeping the peasantry docile and stupid was the church's role. Nobles supported church efforts in this by arranging wolf hunts to eradicate the scourge. Thinning and cutting the forests eased fears to a degree while fattening the landowners' purses.

Serial killers were identified only when caught red-handed, a telling phrase. Blood on their hands, these monsters in human form were considered debased, animalistic, and somehow cursed. Werewolves made perfect sense, literally, to too many Medieval peasants.

Only after the Enlightenment had held sway for a couple centuries did we begin seeing instances of serial killers in the historical record handled as mental aberration rather than superstitious evil. Educated people, at least, began realizing there were those among us who did not experience life as most did it. There were, in fact, deeply flawed, inadequate,

or otherwise skewed people who lacked the very qualities we cite as human: Compassion, empathy, and conscience.

These subhumans – Italian criminology theory held sway for quite some time, stating that recidivist and serial criminals were atavistic, throwbacks to earlier "types" of human being, essentially calling them animals – were responsible for horrific crimes now and then, and seemed not to care. They could not be reformed or even rendered contrite. If left at large they would simply continue torturing and killing at will, and many would improve their skills and expand their repertoire.

Fear of such beings began to accrue for the public with the advent of Jack the Ripper in London, England's east end Whitechapel district in 1888. The resultant publicity, the saucy nickname, and the mass media afforded by newspapers made Jack the Ripper our first "modern" serial killer. In fact, he was far from it, but he was the first treated to notoriety of an immediate sort. It galvanized the public, and fear-driven reform resulted.

Today we use the term "serial killer" and other jargon thanks to the FBI's Behavioral Science Unit and its pioneering profilers. We pretend as a society to a sophistication our fear-driven behavior belies. Horror movies once got away with Universal style monsters such as reanimated corpses, vampires, and werewolves. Today, our bugaboos have matriculated through radioactive mutants and hidden Fifth Columnists and Communists to sharks and, finally, serial killers.

The killer thriller is basic now. Hannibal Lector needs no introduction and is an anti-hero for our new world. Dexter even kills other serial killers. The American Serial Killer Factory keeps pumping them out. Once it was relatively rare to hear of a Black Dahlia or a Starkweather. Then it became commonplace to watch Son of Sam or Zodiac killings unfold. Now, our children take guns to school and arrange ambush in order to keep up the all-American slaughter.

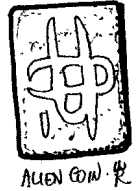
Would a peaceful, peace-loving, genuinely peace seeking nation produce a product like the serial killer? Perhaps, now and then, but not in an assembly line that has only increased its pace and output.

Is such a peacenik society even possible? Even gentle Polynesian islanders often had histories as cannibals by the time they were found by European explorers. Easter Islanders fought a war to near extinction. American Indians had skinwalkers, the equivalent of a werebeast, and the wendigo, and many another metaphor for the beast within us all.

Being unable to gain perspective by escaping our own context, we are sure of only one thing: Serial killers influence society strongly for the worse. Any deeper meanings in this fact await parsing by what ever minds come after us, if any.

Towards a New Theory of Capitalism: The Ethics of Free Market Capitalism Part 3

by Alexander R. Slate



What follows is really part loc and part my main column...

Brad, your statement is pretty much true regarding what I said about practice vs theory. But I would like to point out two things. First, capitalism isn't a theory of government; it is an economic/business practice theory. Yes, it requires certain actions or reactions from government to make it work, but it can operate under many modes of government. Now digressing some – you aren't alone in your choice of best type of government. I believe the case may be made that Socrates or Plato first put it into theory.

Second, I would like to point out at least one theory of economics/business practice (probably a bit closer to the government point that you bring out than capitalism) where there are problems with the theory. That theory is communism as defined by Marx and Engel. Oh, I believe that communism can work in certain cases, but not as these two laid it out. To them, communism would be the best way for an industrial society to operate; and I heartily disagree. The communist ideal is quite antithetical to any efficient operation of an industrial society.

Joseph, the dotcom bubble model is a variation of the profits model which is adapted to an emerging markets situation, and only really applicable to the first few years. Now, to sidetrack at least one question – yes, the internet at that point in history qualifies as an emerging market. In this case, market share is a marker which will eventually translate, as the market matures, to money and therefore profit.

Alexis, a couple of things... while in the past my columns have very much discussed government, my intention with my article(s) on capitalism is not to discuss government, except perhaps in an ancillary way concerning what type of legal environment governments may create so that capitalism may flourish. But I do not believe that there can be a solution (insofar as what I intend to propose may be considered a solution) to the ill or ills that I may discuss that is the result of governmental actions. In this sense Jim Stumm and the Libertarians (and I believe that Jim sides with the Libertarians on this) would be correct in that government's attempt to 'fix' the situation through laws and taxes would at least not solve anything and could make things worse.

Now I will somewhat take you to task, Alexis, for your response to Jim. Your statements, "Well no, there are lots of examples ... the only question being how such a thing might be done." This doesn't really counter Jim's arguments as I believe you think it does. Your statements have merit in and of themselves, but don't address the point that much government action tends to muck things up as badly as many Libertarians believe. Governments can in the short run influence the business environment for both good and ill. And parts of your last paragraph, "Eventually there is the question of moral hazard,

lacking which our hungry capitalists will take unreasonable chances in the hope and expectations that if things go wrong, the government will bail them out at the expense of society" actually supports what Jim Stumm said.

Having taken you to task for some of what you have said, I will now turn around and compliment you on the last 3 paragraphs of your loc concerning honesty and transparency. It was very well written and I agree with the majority of the premises presented.

Now Gene Stewart's, Milt Stevens', and Bob Jennings' comments all touch upon different things, but they all help to get me to the things I want to talk address in my article. This leaves me at a bit of a loss of where to go from here, because once I get started ... Well, I gotta start with one of 'em.

OK, Bob Jennings; my series of articles is not going to be about destroying the free market system of capitalism. At least I don't believe so. The capitalist system isn't perfect; no 'system' is going to be. But capitalism is probably the best environment for business. Yes, there are some great companies out there that do it right and I hope to use some of them as examples for how I would like businesses to act. A great example is the small micro-banks, who fund very tiny free-trade startups (typically in very poor economic markets) with micro-loans, getting very little profit in return; in fact it is sometimes the case where part of the requirement of the loan is for these small businesspeople to front the capital for others when (and if) they are able to succeed. I do believe it is possible to conduct business ethically and well and make a profit and have a positive impact on society and the economy. And ultimately the 'answer' has to come from within the business community and be freely adopted by the community. It cannot be imposed from without, e.g., by government (and this belief is the root of some of my earlier statements above).

This is one of the more important reasons why I do not believe regulated capitalism is the end answer that Gene Stewart would make it to be. But there is also the fact that regulated capitalism is reactive and not proactive.

But, as regards Jennings and start ups not being able to show a profit for the first couple of years – true enough, but what about when we are talking long established companies who manipulate the situations to avoid showing a loss for a single quarter?

With regards to the greed of management teams and the abuse of the systems; no, I haven't ignored it. I wrote a whole paper back for my Masters on the problems caused by over generous (and often undeserved) compensation of top corporate management. But these obvious abuses are just that, abuses. Easy pickings, correcting this still only solves part of the problem. I am just as concerned with a manage-

ment philosophy based upon collective (and in part private) ‘greed’ that the practitioners of which actually believe that they are simply being efficient – therefore doing what they are supposed to do for their companies and therefore actually doing ‘the right thing’. When in reality they don’t see the bigger picture and realize how and why their actions are not good for business (as a whole) and society in the long run. My intention isn’t to deal with plain personal greed, but with misguided corporate philosophy.

Now, we move on to Milt Stevens and the definition and importance of profit. Milt, you are correct that the definition of what profit is can be fiddled with by the accountants. And that is part of the problem, the perceived need to chase profits so that we play with the numbers to make it appear like we are succeeding when we might not be.

Your other point, about profits not being everyone’s goal is trying to make the same point that Bob Jennings made. I’ve already dealt with that, but let me add that business is not a monolithic thing. And the theories and actions of smaller businesses and individuals are often guided by different principles than medium to large-scale corporate capitalism. And even then as some have already shown, and as I have stated (though not necessarily effectively) there are multiple schools of thought.

[BACK TO THE MAJOR THREAD OF DISCUSSION]

The problem is that a major school of economic thought has captured the fancy of too much of mid- to large-scale corporate business culture. Business has become an end unto itself and success becomes measured by profit return – and bigger is better. Now we can indeed play with the terms and have multiple ‘winners’ – I’ve got the biggest gross profits – no, I’ve got the biggest net profits – no, I’ve got the greatest profit to investment ratio. But all that is missing the whole point!

What has gotten lost here is that the purpose of business is to provide goods and services that people need or desire. A secondary result of that is that the conduct of business also provides the people that engage in business with purpose and goals --that of taking part in something which enables society and mankind to continue.

In other words, think of business like philosophy, the purpose is to help man lead the good life. Business, and money for that matter, should be a means to an end, not an end in itself.

Can businesses be run in an ethically responsible manner and still make a profit? Can capitalism be compatible with the ideals of humanity, community, ecology? I believe that the answers to both these questions are yes.

The secret has been alluded to by Bob Jennings. Part of the trick is that one size fits all systems do not work! This has been one of my beliefs for a long time. I have discovered over the years that things are often counter-intuitive. Much of what is held to be common wisdom is neither common, or wisdom, or neither common and wisdom.

Yvon Chouinard is the founder of Patagonia, the sporting goods company, and a very successful businessman. I had

the joy of reading his autobiography a couple years back. That autobiography is titled, *Let My People Go Surfing: the education of a reluctant businessman*. In the book, Chouinard relates some of the business practices that have made Patagonia a successful company. Many of these practices come under the heading of making life easier for the employees of Patagonia – of making Patagonia a place where people want to work. Business run day care, and further day care that can accommodate sick children. So that working parents can be productive knowing that their children are being taken care of, and that they don’t necessarily have to miss a day’s work if the children come down with many of the common childhood ailments. This is good for both the employees and the company.

Now, that is not a secret reserved to Patagonia. Other companies have realized it as well. Hell, even the Department of Defense understands the benefits of child day care (though not of day care for sick children). Yes, it does mean higher operating costs; but the effects of higher operating costs are overcome by true productivity. But, it all depends upon how you would look at the business case analysis. A truly thoughtful (and compassionate) business case analysis will not simply take single order effects into account, but go into second and third order effects. In this case, a reduction in employee work absences coupled with lowered workforce turnover (resulting from employees both enjoying working for the company and having the ability of being able to work for the company – as opposed to having to quit to raise a family) results in having to maintain lower excess staff to take care of missing personnel and lower training costs from not having to train new workers as well as not having to wait until the new workers productivity comes up to company standards translates to overall savings overcoming the cost of running the daycare.

Let me put it this way. An apparent inefficiency turns out to actually be efficient! How many other apparent inefficiencies actually result in a more efficient business? Or even how many things which are commonly held ‘efficient practices’ are actually inefficient when the surface of things is looked beneath?

But it is more than just the tactical business practices that we need to be looking at. Please understand that this article cannot be a complete examination of all the business practices nor a complete redefinition of what capitalism can and should be. I am not the right author for that. I am not educated enough, intelligent enough nor patient enough to do this. It is for others to, hopefully, take up the gauntlet and develop the guiding rules that can act as a beacon fire. I only hope to provide the spark which lights the torches to create the welcoming fires.

“Competition is good for business.” I didn’t create that quote, and have heard it mentioned with respect to business. Yet, too often today businesses appear to act against that maxim. They seem to want to turn into monopolies, the subject of the first part of this article. “Competition is the keen cutting edge of business, always shaving away at costs.” (Henry

Ford) And this particular quote seems to be how competition is treated with respect to businesses; outside forces are taken into account only with respect to its relationship to the internal practices of a company.

I would take it in a different direction – but perhaps competition isn't the right word for what I hope to get across. I view competition as providing choice and options. To (hopefully) better depict what I am talking about let us look at the automobile industry.

There are so many different types of cars – vans, and SUVs, and sedans of various sizes. There are basic economy cars and luxury vehicles. This is a good thing because it offers consumers a choice of different types of vehicles to match their needs and situations. And the fact that there are different car companies is also good for a variety of reasons. So what is wrong with this picture?

Several things – first each car company thinks that it has to compete in every part of the market. This includes every geographic market as well as every vehicle niche. They also feel the need to capture the largest part of the market – this is generally done by trying to have the lowest cost for every available niche. By themselves these might not be so bad – the worst is the need to try to become the largest player; which causes the automobile companies to overproduce having too many new cars available each year in all these different niches – more on this later.

In order to accomplish these goals the companies feel the need to drive up productivity; which all too often translates being able to produce the most cars with the smallest workforce possible. This high automation to small workforce is also necessary in order to 'best' produce the variety of different vehicles with the smallest 'problem' of having to shift production processes.

Now the automobile companies are also very much afraid of real competition. Oh, they've come to reluctantly accept a certain amount of competition from the other major car companies, but this has only come about after fighting them tooth and nail at first. But they resent having to change their ways of doing business and fighting other market forces. They lobby the political capitals (particularly Washington) to prevent changes to fuel and safety standards. They also fight hard for import/export standards and tariffs to hold onto 'their' place. I have no doubt that there is some truth to the 'conspiracy theories' of Big Auto (along with Big Oil) working behind the scenes to prevent shifts to alternative energy sources. I wonder how many jobs could be created if they seriously worked to create newer more efficient engines as opposed to spending money on lobbyists to fight Corporate Average Fuel Economy Standards (CAFÉ standards) improvements? Just think how much money might be available to the first to come up with the breakthrough.

Back to the idea that the companies have to compete in most of, if not all of, the different niches. Where did they get this idea? I have to think that it's someone's 'brilliant analyses' of the efficient way to conduct business, to search out and grab market share. However, it forces all sort of business ops

inefficiencies. So what someone probably saw as efficiency probably isn't. Now combining this little practice with overbuilding what they expect to be good-selling models leads to a tremendous amount of waste. Waste of materials, resources and energy, and what is waste but inefficiency? Now it was one thing when we thought the world was our oyster and resources and energy was just there for the grabbing; but given what we now know about the state of the world – how much longer can we continue to justify this kind of activity?

Now let's add into all of this the efforts to get by with as small a workforce as possible. Yes, it may make sense from an individual company thinking. But what about the big picture? For people to be able to buy goods and services they have to have money. If we are laying people off left and right where will they have the income to buy? If everyone is downsizing, eventually the market for commerce will crumble. The service economy can only exist if there is some level of the 'iron' economy to service. We can only chase our tails so far.

So why can't businesses simply determine a reasonable portion of the market to have, leaving room for others? Why not limit production to a set level, not building to excess (though certainly there needs to be a certain amount of production above the target)? Spread the wealth around –if these companies didn't feel the need for cut-throat competition, society would be better served – more companies meaning more overall employment. More people employed means more money spread around; a healthier market for everyone. Before you comment, think on the Toyota Prius. When it first came out (and now after the earthquake) the demand outstrips the production. So some people have to wait, or do without. Is that really a bad thing? Why does gratification have to be instant? Those who have to wait or do without either wait or they can choose choice number two. And eventually a competitor will come up with a viable alternative; and as long as they are also shooting for only a healthy portion of the market things should be good for everyone. And Toyota? It only meant that the price of the Prius was higher than it might have been otherwise. It wasn't costing Toyota any more to make the vehicle, so profit per car would have been higher. A controlled amount of reasonable production makes for healthy profits and a more stable overall market – at least so it seems to me.

Now extend the whole line of reasoning to other industries, and you have where I am trying to get to. It's actually an older theory of capitalism brought back to life. This is all my new theory of capitalism is. But I believe it is healthier than the race for monopoly that can never be won; and that shouldn't be won. It makes for a healthier economy overall, means reasonable profits and thus makes for healthier businesses as well. It also means a more sane society to me, a fairer more ethical situation all around. Wow, business serving business while still doing what is best for society and people!

Well, that's it. Unless I need to respond to comments, that completes this series.

INTERLOCUTIONS

Cuyler Warnell Brooks Jr
4817 Dean Lane
Lilburn Georgia 30047
August 7, 2011

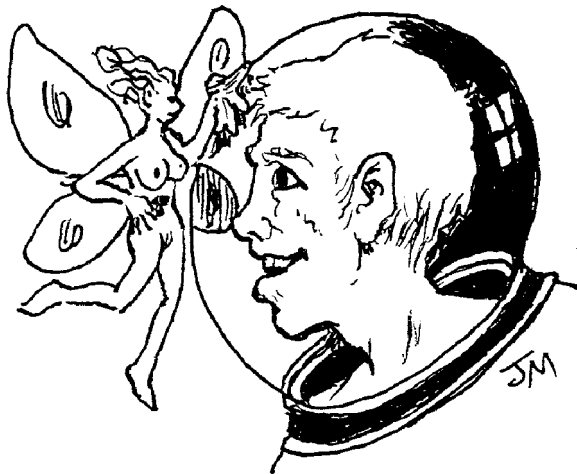
Dear Knarl,

Good to hear from you, thanks for *The Knarley Knaws* 139
The **Brad Foster** cover is nice but that font used for the title
is hideous.

Amazing description of your adventures in horticulture – I
had no idea poison oak got that big, not that I would know
it if I saw it. There is poison ivy here, but I avoid it. What
I have had to take steroids for is a thorny vine with shiny
heart-shaped leaves that is in the shrubbery that occasionally
needs cutting back. I have seen deer in my driveway, but I
don't care – there is nothing here that I would care if they ate
it. They don't seem to get into the back yard. On the uphill
side if one leapt the fence I think it would hit its head on the
overhanging shrubbery. The downhill side is more open. The
back and one side is holly bushes 15 feet high.

Has Kira read the St. Trinians stories where the girls seem to
put their field hockey opponents in the hospital?

Sad to hear about the mold in **Chris Garcia's** apartment.
I have had roof leaks, but never that bad. Mold tries in the
shower of course, but I keep at it and it's no worse. I oc-
casionally get a book or a typewriter case that smells of
mold – Lysol takes care of that. When I packed up to leave
Virginia I found that the plaster (old plaster on lath) behind
one bookcase was black – but there was no odor and it would
not come off on a cloth. The rest of the room was normal. I
never figured it out. The bookcase had stood there for over 30
years, and the stain matched the bookcase – but of course the
back of the bookcase was at least an inch from the wall, and
there was no mold on the bookcase. My best guess was that
something in the back of the bookcase, which was plywood,



interacted with the paint on the wall. That bookcase has been
here now for 13 years, backed up against drywall painted
white. I just looked with a flashlight and a mirror nothing.

Interesting commentary on Dan Brown – I had not realized
that there was any such campaign against his books, but I
read very little littry crick. My personal opinion, from hav-
ing read only *The Da Vinci Code*, is that his plots are a bit
too unlikely and his characters a bit flat and his style merely
plain. A plain narrative style is fine for a newspaper story,
but in fantasy I like something a bit more poetic. I suppose
the books are popular because of the religious controversy
(which he lifted whole from the *Holy Blood Holy Grail* of
many years before) and because they are easy to read. What
made him rich of course was the movie.

I remember when the PO charged extra for the self-stick
stamps – I never bought any of those. Now I have new
stamps that are all self-stick and some old ones at face value
from a dealer that I still have to lick. But it will be a nuisance
if they close the local branch, which I no longer stand in line
for long.

Brad Foster

CKK: *I have no idea what caused your bookcase-based wall
discoloration. It may have been something from inside the
wall.*

Alexis Gilliland
4030 8th Street South
Arlington, VA 22205
August 8, 2011

Dear Henry and Letha,

Thank you for *TKK* #139 with its excellent cover by the tal-
ented **Brad Foster**. “Dan Brown Cooties” by **Gene Stewart**
seems less a defense of Brown and his mega-selling books
than an attack on incivility, including the mild fun had by
Dave Langford in “Thog’s Masterclass,” and the Bulwer-
Lytton bad writing contest and going on down to the GOP’s
vitriolic attacks on Presidents Clinton and Obama. Hard it
is not to sympathize with the much put upon author, but if
one googles the Wikipedia article on *The Da Vinci Code*, and
checks out the Priory of Sion, which is cited in that book’s
preface, one finds a certain amount of substance to those
charges of historical inaccuracy leveled against Dan Brown.
Far from dating back to 1099, the Priory of Sion, the histori-
cal mainstay of the novel, turns out to have been founded in
France in 1956 by Pierre Plantard, who then went on to forge
and plant evidence for its alleged antiquity.

It may be that today's lack of civility can be traced back to the internet, where anonymous discourse and the rudeness it generates is not only possible but commonplace. The internet also makes it possible for individuals to gather together in like minded groups-forums of holocaust deniers, dittoheads, and idiots of all varieties (except maybe flat Earthers) which do not tolerate dissent. Thus people not only get reinforcement for their implausible ideas, but are also becoming well practiced in being rude, and/or totally unconcerned with being polite. Like the lady discussing her operation on her cell phone in public. When Lee commented on it, the indignant response was: How dare she listen in on a private call? When Lee (who is more confrontational with idiots than I am) pointed out that if she wanted privacy she shouldn't have been sounding off in public, the lady stormed off in a huff.

The GOP attacks on Clinton didn't work, although Newt Gingrich did succeed in getting him impeached. Alas, that that impeachment should have been seen as a transparently partisan act, which did not get a single Democratic vote in the Senate. The attacks on Obama may prove to be similarly counterproductive. You will recall that Lyndon Johnson, facing a contested primary against Robert Kennedy, chose not to run for a second term. The Republicans are so flat out hostile to Obama that it seems unlikely that any Democratic rival would wish to give them comfort by running against the President, despite the unhappy state of the economy. A second unintended consequence of the GOP's passionate opposition is that it is contagious, serving to energize a Democratic base that is barely tolerant of Obama's wishy-washy namby-pamby centrism. If both bases are activated to about the same extent, that puts the election in the hands of the independents, who are likely to go with a known incumbent, particularly if he has coped with a series of difficult situations not of his own making-and you may recall that Obama was dealing with the 2008 fiscal fiasco before he was ever sworn in. Not to mention that the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were initiated by George W. Bush, while Obama's action in Libya is not only a bit short of being a war but has also been funded by Congress. The independents are also more likely to go Democratic if the GOP chooses to embrace one of their rabble-rousing Tea Party-guys. The problem with acting on fantasy (faith-based politics?) rather than reality is that reality tends to bite you on the ass if you get out of line. Mitt Romney may be the most electable Republican candidate, but he has notably failed to inspire the passion that whips the blood. At this point it is 15 months to the election, and in that interval a whole lot of stuff can happen, but I think Obama has a good chance of being reelected, and if he is, it is likely that he will also have a more congenial Congress to deal with. Stay tuned.

On the tenth I turn eighty, celebrating the event a few days early by going in and getting a pair of hearing aids. I can't really tell the difference, except that I've stopped asking Lee to repeat what she said quite so often. Which, of course, was the point of the whole exercise. What else? On the question of new, improved, and enhanced governmental controls

imposed on capitalism, you should consider that this is a dynamic process in that once those new rules are in place, capitalists will seek to subvert them, inventing new ways to make money and new ways to escape supervision. In the past they have always succeeded, and in time it seems certain that they will succeed again, then Bang! The whole thing has to be reconstructed in conformance with the new and distressing situation.

Best wishes,



☐**CKK:** *I had a house mate one time that after discussing her sex life on the phone using the kitchen extension for an hour, looked over at me studying at the kitchen table and asked, "you aren't listening are you?" Congratulations on the 80th!*☐

Joy V. Smith
404 E. Beacon Rd.
Lakeland, FL 33803
Pagadan@aol.com
8 Aug 2011

Henry,

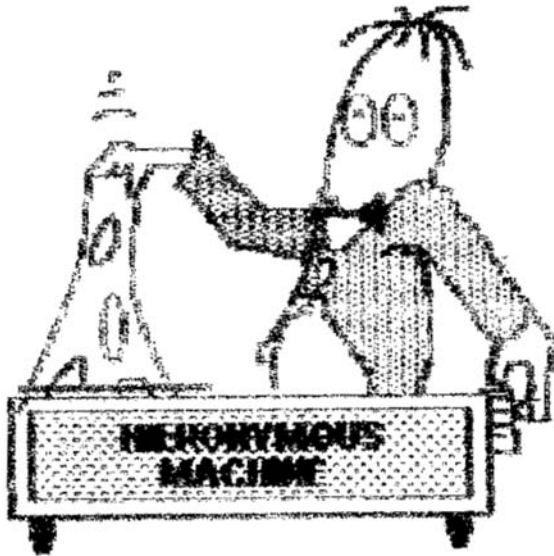
Lovely cover. I see you and the family continue to be busy, and the kids are growing up! Congratulations on your 20th anniversary!! And you're certainly busy outside too. Wow, deer are a real problem. Our landscaping challenges are mostly due to the steep slope to the east and a lake. We're getting on top of the years of neglect, which included severely pruning a half dead lime tree, but we've harvested lots of limes and shared them. We had to install another drain line, which wreaks havoc with the yard – and put a big hole in our concrete block wall this time, and practically every project that involves digging messed up our sprinkler system (6 zones), which keeps our water bill up; the geysers are impressive.

We have to watch out for mold here in Florida, but **Chris Garcia** really has a mould invasion! I look forward to seeing an update on that and finding out how long he had to sleep in his car. I enjoyed **Sue's** New Zealand report. Btw, Lyn McConchie's *Farming Daze* series about her life in New Zealand and coping with earthquakes, the weather, and all those critters is fun and interesting.

I also enjoyed the info and discussions packed into the LOCs, and I always enjoy the illos. (It'd be a pity not to use them just because the artists are no longer around; we can still appreciate their work.)

Appreciatively,
Joy V. Smith

☐**CKK:** *I have seen some of Lyn's work previously. I agree on the use of the art. Unfortunately, my stock is slowly dwindling not to be replaced. :-)*☐



Brad W Foster
PO Box 165246
Irving, TX 75016
bwfoster@juno.com
10 Aug 2011

Greetings Henry ~

Dropped by the post office last night and nice to find a big flat envelope in among all the smaller bills. Another thing that print zines have over the online stuff- they brighten up that pile of mail every time!

I think I might go a different way in describing your publishing schedule than you did in your editorial. Where you refer to it as "off-pace," which has much too negative of a feeling, I'd go with an "eccentric" schedule. Getting any sort of print-zine out is great, so I'll take it on whatever schedule you find convenient to work with.

Impressed by all the work you've managed to get done around the homestead. I've barely seen the outside of my house this summer, let alone do any work out there. We're about to break a record for the longest streak of 100+ degree days at 43... and that's not counting the hot days that weren't part of that streak. I've been inside with a fan about six feet away from me for most of the summer.

In fact, that's one of the reasons I'm typing this at 4:30am. Have managed to work my own schedule around where I spend most of my awake hours up all night and into the morning, then going to bed to sleep through the afternoon and early evenings when it is the hottest. Unfortunately, I'm going to have to slowly shift myself back out of that schedule over the next week, as I am scheduled for jury duty next Tuesday, and probably wouldn't be a good idea to fall asleep in the middle of the morning there. (Right now trying to figure which book around here might have the most "interesting" title to take along with me to read, and to let the attorneys try to figure

out. Right now I'm reading *CivilWarLand in Bad Decline* by George Saunders, but will be done before next week...)

I think it says more about my own base tastes than anything else to admit that I laughed out loud when flipped to page 12 and saw "Punch Lion" from **Alexis**. Tons of brilliant witty cartoons from the man, and it's a simple pun that hits me the hardest. Ah, simple jokes for simple souls, I'll have to deal with my own inner not-smarts I guess.

stay happy~
Brad

☐**TKK**: "Eccentric" makes me sound like I'm old and doddering. Heat is one of the primary reasons I'd never consider moving to Texas. Hopefully it will cool soon and you can adopt a more normal sleep schedule. Good luck with the jury duty.☐

Lloyd Penney
1706-24 Eva Rd.
Etobicoke, ON M9C 2B2
Canada
penneys@bell.net
August 10, 2011

Dear Knarley:

Thank you for **TKK** 139. A great **Foster** cover goes on it, and the font on the cover looks familiar. I think it's called Inco?

Don't worry too much on regularity, IMHO. I have an old laptop too, it's extremely heavy, and won't work without it being plugged on because the battery in it holds a charge for less than a minute. Needs a replacement, but the model is so old, the batteries aren't made for it any more.

Congrats on 20 years! Yvonne and I had our 28th anniversary on May 28. Hard to believe some of your kids have packed up and gone to college...seeing we're going to the Reno Worldcon, we do think of looking after your youngest in the Winnipeg fanzine lounge. Yvonne finished up her law clerk course on litigation (still waiting for her marks), and is looking for the next course, on either real estate law or wills.

Many years ago, Yvonne and I had to move out of a building where we lived on the top floor. The superintendent's stock phrase was, "You must have abused it." Linoleum's coming off the kitchen floor? The paint is flaking off the gyproc? There's a hole in the ceiling, and I can see daylight? "You must have abused it."

The recent and still on-going financial mess dropped over a trillion dollars off the value of the stock market. Does that trillion exist? There's a big difference between actual money and estimated value. Those trillion dollars are very arbitrary. Even if it doesn't really exist, they sure are important. The stock markets, including the TSX in Toronto are riding the financial roller coaster right now, and those who have holdings of gold are quite rich right now.

I am not a technophobe, but I am an educated and cautious electronics consumer. I know what I would like to have electronics-wise...a tablet would be handy, seeing they seem to be making the laptop obsolete. However, I am also aware that old tech is not bad tech. Recently, I found a way to get my old Palm Tungsten PDA reactivated and solve the problems it had with matching the touch stylus to the image on the screen. (Palm products have always had problems with its digitizer.) Now, it's working fine, and even better with the downloads of some new (to it and me) software. I need to update more records, and it looks like I will put it back into complete service. Updates software also means that my PDA goes back into service as my eReader.

My loc...nope, never did get back on with the Law Society of Upper Canada. However, this very day, I have a job interview with a design studio just west of the downtown area, so wish me luck.

Ad Astra was a good time...we announced after Ad Astra that after 30 years of being on various convention committees, we were retiring from the whole thing. Most were complementary about it, many congratulations, some were a little unhappy about that and one person was openly hostile. How dare we? Some thought we were gafiating, but this just means we won't be on any more concons. We'll happily attend the cons we can afford, but we are just members from now on.

I will wrap this up, and send it off to you, and then start to get ready for my interview. The agency that employs me and supplies me to the Globe and Mail in the evenings has been working on this job for me since January, so I hope this interview is a formality. Nonetheless, I must impress all I can. Take care, see you in the next issue, and I should be able to relay impressions from Reno.

Yours,
Lloyd Penney

☐**CKK:** *You never finished your story about the top floor apartment. Enjoy Reno, even though we live four hours away, we will not be attending. We are noting that it has been 17 years since Kyle was a week old in Winnipeg. He is now over 6 feet tall. Kira, our youngest, has the best electronics as she is very good at saving up her money. Luck, even though you are now past the interview. Send a progress report.*☐

Bob Jennings
29 Whiting Rd.
Oxford, MA 01540-2035
fabfcbks@aol.com
12 August 2011

Hi Henry and Letha;

Received my copy of *Knarley Knews* #139, thanks for same. Nice **Brad Foster** cover illo this issue; suitably surrealistic yet science fictional at the same time. I'm always amazed

at the consistent high quality **Brad** is able to maintain. You should try to get him to do another cover illo for you.

My experience has been that time flies whether you are paying close attention or not. Paying close attention just makes life's little frustrations even more aggravating. I'm not a fan of the veg-out or zonk-out theory of altering reality, but it seems to me that trying to over-manage your time invariably leads to problems both in the short and the long run.

I sympathize with your poison oak woes. Poison oak and poison sumac have never bothered me much, but poison ivy is a killer. Luckily my bod goes alternate years between being super sensitive and being not so sensitive to the stuff. This was a mild attack year for me, which was good because there was a ton of the stuff growing in the yard this time round. I think our friends the birds spread the seeds with their incessant pooping as they fly over or stop by to sample the beauties of the yard.

Unfortunately pulling weeds out of the gravel driveway early this spring I got a massive case right between a couple of fingers, one of the worst places to get the stuff, because you move your fingers constantly throughout the day, so the blisters rub against other skin, which spreads it around, and then unfortunately for me, the big blisters broke, which really spread the infection around so that very soon poison ivy blisters covered my entire right hand. I looked like a picture from one of those old medical fright ads – "Don't let this horrible affliction beset you! Australian Hand Rot can be cured with a simple application of Dr. Hokum's Medical Salve, made from genuine shredded rattlesnake skin and the blended juice of locoweed and yucca sap. Only two dollars for a guaranteed cure of this dread disease". I would have cheerfully paid twenty bucks to Doc Hokum or anybody else that promised to cure the problem.

Unfortunately, only time cures poison ivy, but while the body was fighting back it sure seemed like time slowed down for me. In fact it seemed to crawl by at the slowest ebb I've experienced in decades. Three weeks seemed like three years, at least. You know you've got a serious case of poison ivy when total strangers glance down at your hands, then back away with one of those big phony smiles plastered on their puss, or when grocery cashiers take your money and immediately grab a handful of those antiseptic wipes to disinfect their own hands. Even Islamic terrorists gave me pitying glances. There's nothing like getting that old time pariah feeling early in the summer to get your summer off on the wrong foot.

So, yeah, I do sympathize with your poison oak woes.

The **Chris Garcia** sleep odyssey was both bizarre and amusing at the same time. I had no idea living space (or should I say, affordable living space) was quite so scarce in his neck of the woods. I'm six feet two inches tall, so I doubt I would ever be comfortable trying to sleep in a car. Back when I had the cargo van, my preferred vehicle for over thirty years, this would have been nothing. When all the power went out in

New England due to winter ice storms a couple of years ago I slept on the floor of my warehouse, where the landlord kept the place at a warm and toasty fifty degrees, but it sure beat being in the sub-zero winter weather outside.

How hard is it to clear up a fungus mold bloom these days anyway? After the infestation has been dealt with, wouldn't better ventilation be the best prevention for that kind of problem? Or did the infestation get taken care of at all. In our area one of the Kennedy clan had a big house that was struck with mold problems, and after almost three years of trying to eliminate the stuff the family finally just gave up and tore the entire building down. I hope that wasn't the case with **Chris's** apartment house. We need a little follow-up on this strange story.

Sue Welch's New Zealand travelog is still interesting, but it still evokes no real comments from me.

Gene Stewart's defense of Dan Brown's writing and his popularity as generated by *The Da Vinci Code* and the sequel seems like a lot of overreaction on his part. First of all, it was a novel. Brown never claimed the book was anything except pure fiction, and people who decided to take his back-story and the fictional history as true facts have only themselves to blame. Second, wildly popular writers, particularly if they seem to rocket out of nowhere to immediate fame and fortune, invariably get slammed by the so-called smart set who are forever looking for somebody and something to dump on and vent their sarcastic witticisms on. Back in the seventies Eric Segal wrote "Love Story" which was made into a blockbuster film, and despite a story dealing with the outpouring of honest emotion built around this basic story of love and loyalty, the college intellectual elite decided to write scathing condemnations of the book, the sentiment, and the social significance of his book and its follow-up.

So Dan Brown is in the cross-hairs this year, so what? I doubt any criticism by any of his detractors is going to interfere one whit with the popularity or the very long literary legs of his novel, and it's sure not going to stop him from writing more fiction, which, because of the blockbuster status of *Da Vinci Code* will probably sell pretty well even if his later writings never achieve the magnitude of popularity that particular story did. In short, I don't think Dan Brown really needs much defending, certainly not the amount of hand wringing and pathos Stewart manages to generate with this essay.

Lively letter column this time round. So far as kiddies with food allergies, it does seem to me that the schools are over reacting to those few cases of ultra allergic children. It would be simpler and certainly less expensive if the school district took these unique cases and assigned them to a special school where their allergies could be dealt with in a more controlled environment rather than forcing vast numbers of other youngsters to comply with restrictions to protect the single person with the dangerous allergic condition. When those kids graduate out of school and go out into the real world you can be sure the adult population isn't going to be bending

over backwards to cater to their special condition. Best they start making adjustments now, rather than wait until later to learn that they are the exceptions and that the rest of the world doesn't really care much about them.

I echo your cry about the dearth of fan artists in the hobby these days. I blame the Internet for this. It's easier to post illos on the web now and theoretically get wider attention than to run illos in fan publications. On the other hand, art that gets published in fanzines gets noticed by the people reading the zine, and often gets commented on as well. I'm not so sure that happens with stuff flung onto the world wide web very much.

Speaking of fan art, the illo at the top of page 9, labeled alien coin---what is that? It looks like a side view of a stone space ship. Or am I missing something here?

I disagree with **Gene Stewart's** letter column comment about book publishers. Publishers aim to sell books to readers; that's the whole purpose of publishing those books in the first place, to get somebody to read the things. What publishers do is merchandise and advertise specifically to impress book buyers, both at the chain level and at the individual store level, but particularly they want to impress rack jobbers and wholesalers that the books they are promoting are worthwhile and are going to be a big hit with the public. Ultimately the public makes the final buying decisions, but if the books never get out of a warehouse and onto the racks and shelves of retail stores the public will never get a chance to make that decision, and the people who determine what gets out onto the display spaces and how long it stays there are the people publishers design their promotional efforts for. But the ultimate goal is always to get those books out and before the public's eyes so the public will hopefully purchase them.

Writers selling books direct to readers is one of those reoccurring concepts that has come around yet again. This is an attractive concept, at least from the writer's viewpoint. You get to cut out all the middlemen, sell direct to the receptive reading public, reap all the rewards for yourself and everybody is happier.

Unfortunately it never works very well. Without mass exposure to the general public thru retail outlets the market for a writer's products is necessarily limited to those fans who are already familiar with his material or who might stumble across his books thru recommendations and favorable reviews.

The advent of electronic publishing is really not going to change this much at all. The ability to create print-on-demand books or to provide books strictly in electronic formats is very easy these days, but the same merchandising problems remain. With millions of new titles available on the Amazon.com or the Barnes & Noble.com websites, how is the reader ever going to locate the new writer's latest effort?

Sorting by genre might be slightly helpful, and sorting by genre in the electronic book fields might prune down those listings from multi-millions to the multi-thousands, but that still means the potential buyer has to wade thru thousands upon thousands of titles, with a flood of new ones coming onto the market every single week, and how is the potential buyer going to decide on the writer's new work?

In the real world the paper publisher relies on interesting cover graphic designs, promotional copy on jackets and inside the front of the book, blurbs, shelf talkers, hi-rise ads, floor displays, raised title lettering, 3-D stamping, metallic embossing and a host of other tricks to get the casual reader to notice that particular book. How will the electronic novel be able to compete with that?

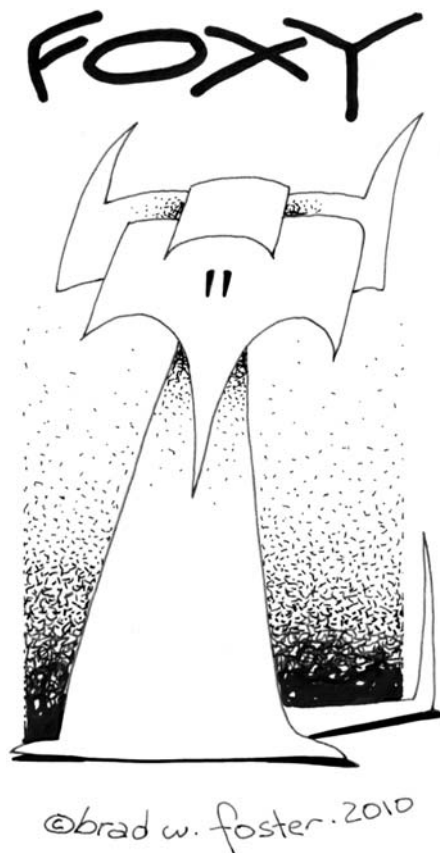
Some websites including Amazon offer an advance reading privilege, where potential buyers can read a few chapters of any book they are considering purchasing. I don't really know how well that works, but I'll bet it works best with editions from real publishers, where the print publisher has taken the time to create attractive cover art, garnished favorable reviews and supportive comments from fellow authors, can provide a short synopsis, and has worked with the writer to insure that the opening chapter(s) are specifically designed to grab the reader's attention.

I don't think your average writer, especially writers who are not have not been previously published, are going to be able to do all that, much less compete with the established author who already has a number of books under his belt and has worked with a professional editor and publisher to design and merchandise his material.

Everybody is enthusiastic about the potential of the electronic publishing market, but I would be very surprised if anything worthwhile comes out of it that has not been specifically designed and manipulated by professional publishers who, like it or not, know their craft and know how to generate interest in those books that they have decided are worthy of being published. Unfortunately, most of the writer-created e-books are being written by unknown people whose material would very likely not be accepted by a professional publishing house, and it is highly unlikely that those e-books are ever going to be successful.

Naw, I don't think we are all going to be homogenized and economically mauled so that we'll all be living in *Mallworld*, or *The Truman Show*. It's much more likely we'll all wind up living in *Westworld*. How are your survival skills against robot gunslingers?

I would be more convinced of the "dominance" of either the steampunk or the romantic fantasy niches if I could see clearer indications that they were actually selling as well as their supporters wish they were. There seems to be a lot of that material out there, especially in electronic e-book format, and also in small press volumes, but so far as making a lot of waves in the publishing industry, no, not yet. Teenage



vampire romances and zombie/ghoul novelty books are hot stuff right now, but how long do you really think that fad is going to last?

Nope again, publishers almost always print books in the hope that they can get a break-out best seller. They expect genre books, including science fiction, to sell within certain perimeters, but they are always prepared to shift gears if something catches the public's fancy and they are more than ready to rev out as many more copies as the public cares to buy. The publishing business is just that, a business. In order to survive you've got to be fast on your feet, ready to adapt to changing whims of the cash paying public, and be ready to run with a winner whenever it appears. Being able to predict a winner would be even better, but unfortunately magical talents like that only exist in the pages of fantasy novels.

I find it difficult to believe that **Gene Stewart** has a friend whose publisher sabotaged his book because it was selling too well, but if that were indeed the case, his friend would have no difficulty taking that book when his current publisher lets it fall out of print, and moving it over to some legitimate publishing firm that would be delighted to promote the hell out of it and help him sell a ton of copies.

On Electronic Autos, the problems with batteries and charging stations seems to be changing pretty rapidly. Buyers can now recharge their electric car from their home overnight with some cost adjustments to make sure the house current can support the car. The main problem with electric cars is that their range is too short. If I just want to tool around the neighborhood and visit friends over in the next town electric

cars are fine. But sooner or later most people want to take longer trips, out to see the big craft fair in the next county, or visiting Aunt Sarah in the next state, and there's when electric cars fail. The hybrid that runs on gas and electricity seems to be gaining some popularity right now, but I think there will be more advances made in the E vehicle field in the near future. I think a design for a super charging station you could drive into like a conventional gas station right now where you could plug your E-car into a terminal and in five minutes get a super jolt of juice to carry you another hundred miles would also be a big advantage. The future for E-cars looks a lot brighter now than it did even a couple of years ago, so we may all be driving one of them in the next decade.

All the quibbling about capitalism doesn't affect anything. Unbraided capitalism is anarchy, which is one of the reason we have governments, to ensure order, calm and reasonable behavior. When corporations create dangerous products or resort to dangerous procedures, it becomes the goal of government to step in and protect the lives and the rights of its citizens.

Even societies beset by corruption seem to exert this kind of influence. Remember the milk company in China that was lacing the milk with some sort of chemical that was killing babies? The Chinese government put most of those execs away for long prison terms. In most countries, after the government gets through prosecuting these people, then the average citizen is allowed to sue for damages in court. Every time a car manufacturer makes a safety error it faces the loss of millions of bucks due to lawsuits, not to mention the horrendous bad publicity that arises from these actions.

This check and balance system may not be the best in the world, but it works better than a socialist system, which some of the letter writers seem to favor. When the government is in control of design, procurement, manufacturing, and distribution as well as controlling the making of law and the courts that enforce those laws, then mistakes get swept under the rug and the citizens have no recourse for horrible problems the government may have created or at least sanctioned before the product even reached the public. Think of living in Stalin's Russia as a pretty good example of the way that would work. I'll stick with free enterprise democracy as it exists in the US and the rest of the western world, thank you.

Thanks for the mention of *Fadeaway* in your review column. Issue #24 went out to you last week and hopefully has been received by this time. Looking forward to the next Knarley, which will definitely be back on a firm bi-monthly schedule next issue, right?

---Bob Jennings

☐**CKK:** *I am the opposite of you. Poison ivy doesn't bother me, but poison oak does. But, separating the children from their peers now is bad for their self esteem.*☐

Milt Stevens

-
-
-

August 13, 2011

Dear Henry and Letha,

In *Knarley Knews* #139, you ask for recommendations for possible weekend getaways. There are many possibilities in California, but I have a notable liking for places near water. So the first place would go to Mission Bay, San Diego. It's quite pretty, and the weather is nice all year long. There are many really first rate hotels. The Paradise Point Hotel is the best of a quite good lot. The Bahia and the Catamaran are larger high quality hotels. They are also very attractive.

If you want something closer to home, there's The Inn at Morrow Bay. It's located north of Santa Barbara and may be only a couple hours drive from where you live.

Kira is entering high school? If I'm recalling correctly, she was the pretty little vampire on the cover of *Knarley Knews* a "few" years ago. Entering high school! As to time flying, I've noticed time has been telescoping for some years now. If I say something is a couple of years ago, it's likely to be a decade ago. If I say something was ten years ago, it's likely to be 20 or 30 years ago.

Before reading **Joseph Major's** comments, I hadn't thought about licking envelopes in years. Of course I haven't licked many envelopes in years either. I suppose licking envelopes must have been good for your soul, if you consider such things. Things that are good for the soul are usually a pain in some extremity or other. Aside from the possible spiritual benefits, it did have the practical value of sealing envelopes.

Licking envelopes was the reason I don't send any Christmas Cards to this very day. My father used to send literally hundreds of Christmas Cards every year. He sent cards to people he hadn't seen in 20 years. Guess who got to lick the stamps and envelopes. Somewhere along the line, I vowed to never, never, never start sending Christmas Cards, and I never have. You might wonder why I got into publishing fanzines which used to require licking stamps and envelopes. Well that was different.

That was something I wanted to do.

I don't intend to go into the rental business. I have only one rental property, and I inherited that. I rent it to my nephew, and my living trust specifies he gets it when I die. Every year, Turbo Tax makes ominous comments that I'm not charging enough rent. I might guess that the people who program Turbo Tax are the sort who favor charging all the traffic will bear.

Yours truly,
Milt Stevens

☐TKK: *That cover was from issue 110 in 2005. Kira is the one with bat wings on the left. (See tkk.welchcastle.com) My mother used to send hundreds of hand-written Christmas cards. Years ago we sent out Christmas boxes to close friends and family, but ran out of ideas for the included craft project.*☐

John Purcell
3744 Marielene Circle
College Station, TX 77845
j_purcell54@yahoo.com
14 Aug 2011

Well, Henry, it has been quite a while since I've read your zine, and I thank you for notifying me that it was ready for viewing online. That seems to be my primary form of fan activity these days – online, that is – and I guess that's okay. It keeps me in contact with my friends in fandom.

I can certainly sympathize with the reasons for TKK's "off-pace schedule" that you mention. My fanzine suffered technical difficulties as well late last year, which forced *Askance* to skip an issue (the Jan.2011 one, to be precise). Hate it when that happens. Fortunately, the software problem was solved and the zine has been back on track. The next issue should be up on efanzines in the second week of September, which is coming on fast, come to think of it. Better get planning and working on it soon! At any rate, I am glad to see *The Knarley Knews* back in production; it is a fanzine I always enjoy reading.

And it is a quick read, too, which is good. A couple of items warrant comment, the first one being **Chris Garcia's** temporary homelessness. Sleeping in a car is a trick, no doubt about that. **Chris** shared on Facebook – and in *Drink Tank*, too – the sad tale of the mould bloom in his apartment. Talk about a real nasty problem! Fortunately, that was a number of months ago, and now he is safely ensconced in a new abode. When I see **Chris** at Fencon VIII/DeepSouthCon 49 in Addison, TX at the end of September, he can tell me more of this sad, sad tale. I am sure I won't be the only one hearing it, either.

I read *The Da Vinci Code* and enjoyed the book, better than the movie, too. You know, Dan Brown wrote a decent adventure novel that played to a public receptive to such a story: conspiracy theories, secret societies, the Vatican is hiding "information," and so forth. And he did so in an entertaining narrative. So it's not great literature. As **Gene Stewart** notes, neither is Stephen King; both writers found genres with eager audiences waiting for entertaining stories and hang the historical accuracy. **Gene** nails it very well by relating Brown's attackers to adolescent boys snickering over dirty stick figure drawings in sex ed classes. Nice analogy. In fact, I think if people are reading these books, that's a good sign. I would much rather see young people reading books than texting or playing game apps on their cell phones.

Once again, you made me envious with a healthy lettercolumn. I have long felt that the loccol is the backbone of a

fanzine, and TKK always has good letters. Nothing in there that really stood out to me, except for the quantity and quality of the writers. Good people in there.

So I thank you once more for posting the fanzine, and I look forward to the next timely issue.

All the best,
John Purcell

☐TKK: *I didn't read *The Da Vinci Code*, but rather listened to it on CD during one long car trip. A reasonable story, even if a bit contrived with too many coincidences.*☐

Joseph Nicholas
15 Jansons Road
Longond N15 4JU
United Kingdom
josephn@globalnet.co.uk
16 Aug 2011

Dear Henry and Letha

Thanks for the latest (number 139) issue of *The Knarley Knews*.

"623 ain't a huge credit score," says **Chris Garcia**, "but ... I've got a steady job, I've never been late on the rent, my bills are all current, so I'm screwed if it takes more than that." Obviously, I have no expertise in (or understanding of) the US rental market, so all the stuff about what landlords are legally obliged to do and their responsibilities to their tenants (etc.) went completely over my head.

But I too have been refused credit, in my case a loan from a double-glazing company to install new double-glazed sash windows in our house, the reason for this being that I didn't have a current credit card. No matter that I had once had a half-share in our mortgage (now all paid off), had repaid (many years ago) whatever loans I had had, that I ensure my bank account runs in the black, that utility and other bills are all paid on time....no, I was refused because I don't have a current debt. Bizarre. One would have thought that running (and maintaining) a debt would count against one, but apparently it's the other way around: the less risky you are, the less loan companies wish to know. (So instead we had to take the loan in Judith's name because she does have a credit card – which is paid off every month, so technically speaking she doesn't have a current debt either.)

I have come across the word "cooties" (as used by **Gene Stewart**) in other contexts, but still have little idea what it means. Come to that, the other contexts in which I've seen it used suggest that it is a word with multiple meanings: an Americanism which does not translate readily into other cultures. But that should not be too surprising: all languages which start from a common base will diverge over time...just as Australian English is also developing its own meanings. In Darwin in April, for example, we saw signs announcing "highway duplication," and immediately wondered why

anyone would want to build another highway alongside an existing one. To cope with doubled traffic volumes, perhaps? However, enquiries soon established that “duplication” meant the transformation of a two-land road into a dual carriageway with a central median...or “dualing” as it would be called in the UK.

There’s a lovely typo in **Bob Jennings**’s letter: near the top of the first column on page 15 appear the words “faster than life star drives.” I suspect we could all do with one of those!

Regards
Joseph

☐**CKK**: *One factor in a credit score is the percentage of available credit that is used. With no available credit, you would rate low on this factor. I personally think you should have at least one credit card, even if you rarely or never use it for credit purposes and as an emergency spending source. A particularly annoying feature of the Bay Area housing market is that most landlords in decent areas will pull a credit report. I first encountered “cooties” in the third grade. Apparently it was something girls had that you didn’t want. It must have been some kind of horrible disease. Funny, I never developed symptoms. Are not interesting typos the seeds of future fannish phrases? I seem to have a postsarcd lying around while I hear filk music.*☐

Joseph T. Major
1409 Christy Avenue
Louisville, KY 40204-2040
jtmajor@iglou.com
August 18, 2011

Dear Knarley & Letha:

And now the knews . . . I have a thumb drive with all my working files, but it’s on a lanyard. So during the day I have it around my neck when it’s not plugged into a computer.

Meanwhile, Grant is suffering no end of troubles because the fan on his laptop quit. What was Hewlett-Packard’s response? They wanted him to buy an extended warranty! He has said he will never buy a HP computer again.

November will be Lisa’s and my fifteenth anniversary.

Deer, yellow jackets, poison oak. Ah the wonders of nature. They never mentioned that Bambi is very destructive to shrubs and small trees, not to mention standing in front of cars. My mother’s car was wrecked when she hit a deer.

“Where You Hang Your Hat”: I understand now why the **Garcia** Production has fallen to merely one issue of a fanzine per day. Seriously . . . I didn’t know the housing problem was that bad. I don’t mean just the mold, I mean not being able to find a place.

“Dan Brown Cooties”: He wouldn’t deserve that . . . if he hadn’t gone with the “this is a novel but it’s really true”

ploy. Stating a thesis as the way things are but establishing a position where if it’s challenged, he can say “Hey, it’s just a novel” and skipping off. This is a stance one finds more in authors of cheap “manly men” thrillers like John R. Davies (“Christopher Creighton” of *The Paladin*, a novel which claims that the putative author was Churchill’s personal assassin) and the obnoxious Richard Marcinko, the founder of SEAL Team Six, which unit had to get over his command term at great effort.

InterLOCutions: **Alexis Gilliland** and **Brad W. Foster**: Fan artistry is a problematic career anyhow. There is always the issue of why give away something that can be sold? Yet the same can be said of fan writing, and long years of fanzines, now augmented by blogs, show that writing about things, which could be sold, but is given away instead, is nothing new. Their efforts at building up our publications should be rewarded. Instead, we are facing the recognition of stick figures as the height of fan art.

Gene Stewart: I just bought a Kindle. It needs better indexing. Having stretched an arm or two, dug grooves in my shoulders, carrying too many books, the rise of portability is not to be disdained.

No, they were saying “you can’t write SF any more” before William Gibson was born. Somehow that didn’t stop people from writing SF.

Namarie,
Joseph T Major

☐**CKK**: *The faux true story has a long history in books and movies. I once convinced two of my children that **Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story** (2007) was a biography, despite the early scene where he cut his brother in half with a machete.*☐

Jim Stumm
PO Box 29
Buffalo NY 14223
August 18, 2011

The letter I sent for *KK* 139 seems to have disappeared without a trace, not published, nor even listed in *WARF*. This is discouraging, but I’ll try again with comments on 139.

Alexis Gilliland: You note that “about a quarter of the nation’s houses are underwater.” Yes, and about 99 percent of the nation’s vehicles are underwater, since they are worth less than when they were purchased. But this is considered normal and no one sings the blues about it. This is because vehicles are bought to provide transportation, just as most items are bought for use, and they are not expected to increase in value. Why are houses different? Once upon a time, houses were not different. A person bought a house to live in it, and if it was satisfactory as an abode, he didn’t care what someone would pay for it, since he didn’t intend to sell it.

But now it's all the rage to think of your house as an investment. But unlike every other investment, housing is only expected to go up in value, with no risk of loss. So homeowners are shocked, shocked to find that housing investments can go down in value. Added to this is the modern idea that you're going to move every 5 or 10 years so you need to be always buying and selling houses. If you're going to be that nomadic, maybe you should rent rather than buy, or live in an RV that you can drive away. As for investors who walk away from a housing investment, I've read that in Australia, even if you abandon a house that you bought, you still owe the bank whatever amount the bank loaned to you. Is that the rule in any American states? I've heard that most of the housing bust is concentrated in about 6 states. Are they states that have particularly dysfunctional real estate laws? My view: if you borrow money to make an investment, in a house or anything, and you expect to enjoy the full gain if it goes up in value, then you should recognize you're taking the risk of a loss, and be prepared to suffer the full loss yourself. The one you borrowed money from shouldn't bear any of the loss, unless he's a partner in the venture who will also share in any gain. Laws to the contrary should be changed. Your only escape from an unacceptable loss should be bankruptcy.

It's not true that "the price of houses went down all over the country" though that is the impression that the lying TV news attempts to convey. There was no housing boom or bust here in western NY. There has been a small, steady increase in housing prices here throughout the period. And I haven't heard of any housing bust elsewhere in NY state either.

Unemployment: It's not lack of money that keeps unemployment high. Businesses are awash in money. I heard an employer say that he's not hiring because he has no idea what a new hire will cost him. Because of ObamaCare, he will become entirely responsible for employees' health care, with no way to escape from that obligation no matter how high the cost rises. Everyone with any sense sees that it will be hugely expensive, but no one knows how much it will actually cost.

This was bound to happen. Scheming politicians think they have found a wonderful scam. They pass laws giving all sorts of goodies to citizens and avoid the need to pay for them by forcing businesses to provide them. And then they can strut around and get themselves re-elected, bragging about how much they have done for their constituents. But as they keep piling all these unfunded mandates, and costly regulations, onto businesses, a time was bound to come when this would adversely affect employment. That time seems to have arrived. ObamaCare is not the straw, but the anvil that broke the camel's back. The best thing the Government can do to reduce unemployment is to repeal ObamaCare and other costly impositions on businesses.

The best way for a government to enable capitalism to flourish is by setting up a legal framework to define and enforce private property rights, and to enforce private contracts, and not constantly change the rules, and not impose excessive,

expensive regulations and obligations on businesses, forcing others to pay for benefits that politicians take credit for.

Politicians certainly don't possess the "best minds." Nor, as a group, are they the most moral, though they may be the most slimy and deceitful.

Gene Stewart: Your reference to "our current form of unregulated capitalism" is utterly absurd. Federal Government regulations are listed in the *Federal Register* which reached a new record high of 81,405 pages in 2010. A Small Business Administration study found that Federal regulations cost the economy \$1.75 trillion a year. More than 64,000 new rules have been imposed since 1995, including 3573 final rules that were imposed in 2010 alone. These regulations cost on average \$8086 per employee per year, discouraging hiring. (source: Competitive Enterprise Institute)

Jim Stunem

☐**CKK:** *My apologies on your missing LOC. It may have been a casualty of my failed USB flash drive. You have identified part of the issue with respect to homes. When you need a new car it is typical that your current car is both paid for and not worth much relative to annual income. This makes it easy to get a new one. With a home, part of the purchase calculus is that it could later be sold without having to then pay additional money on it. Perhaps this is then an argument for 5 year mortgages rather than 30 year mortgages, but that would depress housing values further as few people could afford to purchase a house under such a plan.*☐

Dave Szurek
505 North F #829
Aberdeen, WA 98520-2601
8/26/2011

Knarley Ol' Henry,

Was a pleasant event to get *Knarley Knews* #139 and a bit of a surprise, too. I'd heard – I don't remember where – that you have finally (and abruptly) closed shop. Guess somebody had jumped the gun on that one. I really don't remember seeing #138 or the letter a couple of readers comment on. Correction – I remember writing it, but I have no memory of seeing it in print.

Pure, unflinching democracy can and in some cases, has grown too close to mob rule for comfort, in my eyes. When an individual – or group of individuals – has his or their rights basically voted upon by people outside of he, she, or them, that's mob rule in my eyes. And I have heard and read individuals complain that "the people" weren't asked to vote on, say, gay or women's rights and therefore, we're not living in a genuine democracy. If so, I'm not an advocate of genuine democracy. I believe that certain human rights have to be protected regardless of what outsiders have to say about them

and I “have” heard people accuse me of opposing true democracy with that belief. If that’s what it make me, so be it.

I agree with **Brad Foster** that at times it appears we’d be best off under a benevolent dictatorship, but then agree, again, that there’s the problem of universally defining benevolence.

Tell **Gene Stewart** that lately, I’ve remained well in the physical sense (psychologically well is open to debate and on the matter of financial wellness, my wife and I are in the worst shape we’ve been in years. Heck, within the last month, I’ve even been known to hang a sign over there by Wal-Mart – myths that we make more than folk with a steady job – BAH – talk about \$15 in six hours instead!) but it’s always possible that by putting it in words, I’ve just hexed myself.

Dave

☐**TKK**: *The only scenario on which I would abruptly close shop and without notice would be my own untimely and unexpected demise.*☐

Clint Marsh
PO Box 10145
Berkeley, CA 94709
5 September 2011

Dear Henry,

Thanks so much for sending me a copy of *TKK* n.139. I’m envious of your yard projects and of your woods, even if they are riddled with poison oak. The yard at Bonita Hollow has space enough for a good amount of gardening, but I dream of room for chickens or maybe even a few pigs, all the result of my growing up among animals in Iowa, no doubt.

Gene Stewart’s article on Dan Brown was enjoyable and spot-on. I read *Angels and Demons* just to see what the fuss was about, took it along on a 24-hour train ride to Seattle and finished it before we pulled into the station, a virtual speed-read for me. The torture and killing scenes were a bit difficult to take, and the prose was cringe-worthy at times, but I kept looking up from the book and saying to my travelling companion, “This is utter trash, but I can’t put it down.” So Brown, a popular author by design, is obviously doing his job correctly, even if the holier-than-thous of the world (and I am often among that number) don’t appreciate everything about his books.

Keep in touch and keep up the good work. I’m slowly putting together the next issue of *The Pamphleteer* and am always happy to trade it with other publishers, especially in exchange for zines dealing with magic, folklore, publishing, or individual freedom.

All best wishes,
Clint Marsh

☐**TKK**: *You don't need much space for chickens. Only about 4-6 ft2 per bird, but they are happier with more space.*☐

Fanzines Received in Trade

Alexiad Vol. 10 No. 2 and No. 4 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.

Askamce #23 by John Purcell; 3744 Marielene Circle; College Station, TX 77845; j_purcell154@yahoo.com; bi-monthly; \$2 or the usual. A fine genzine with a long piece on why at least one Candian both loves and hates hockey.

Dark Matter 4 & 5 by Nalini Haynes; PO Box 144; Lynbrook, VIC 3975; Australia; darkmatterfanzine@gmail.com; irregular; the usual. A quite longish (200 pages) fanzine in an easy to read e-format. Includes many interviews and book reviews.

Fadeaway #24 by Robert Jennings; 29 Whiting Rd.; Oxford, MA 01540-2035; fabficbks@aol.com; bi-monthly; \$15/year or the usual. A fine general interest zine that is also distributed with SFPA.

Feline Mewsings #45 by R. Laurraine Tutuhasi; 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*.

Lofgeornost 104 by Fred Lerner; 81 Worcester Ave; White River Junction, VT 05001; fred.lerner@dartmouth.edu; irregular; the usual. This is Fred’s *FAPA* zine.

A Meara for Observers #8 by Mike Meara; meara810@virginmedia.com; irregular; the usual. A nice zine with many fine color pictures of Mike’s DIY project in Parthenay France.

The Newport News 259 by Ned Brooks; 4817 Dean Lane; Lilburn, GA 30047-4720; nedbrooks@sprynet.com. This is Ned’s *SFPA* APA-zine and is mostly mailing comments.

Nice Distinctions 21 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 with a number of short editorial-type pieces.

Opuntia 70.5B & 71 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. Dale chronicles his continuing transition into retirement.

The Reluctant Famulus 82 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.

The Zine Dump #28 by Guy H. Lillian, III; 5915 River Rd.; Shreveport, LA 71105; <http://www.challzine.net/>; GHLIII@yahoo.com; irregular; the usual. This is Guy’s somewhat irregular fanzine review zine. Mostly capsule reviews, but Guy’s opinions on the various zines are clearly present.

We also heard from ...

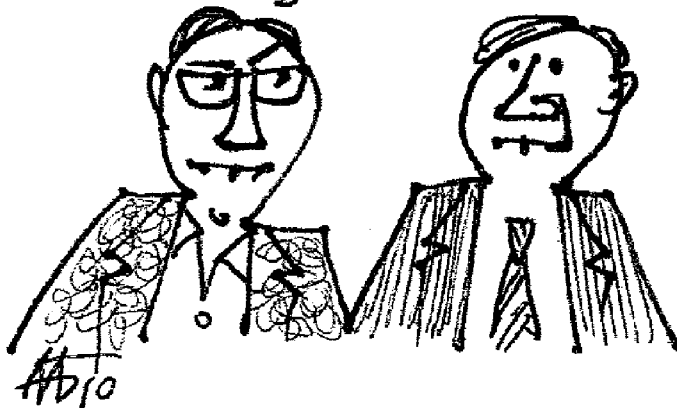
Jeffrey Allan Boman, Megan Bouchard, Patti Hetherington, Rodney Leighton, Guy Lillian, Richard Pruden, Gene Stewart, R-Lauraine Tutihasi, Julie Wall (announcing her marriage to Steven Abner on August 13, 2011 – Congratulations!), Sue Welch

Knarley's Planned Con Attendance

Mars in 2095 (Worldcon 153) Marsport, Mars
Labor Day, 2095

HOW BAD WAS HER
BEHAVIOR AT THE
FUNERAL?

IT GOT HER EXPELLED
FROM THE OVERWEIGHT
LESBIANS OF AMERICA!



You Got this Issue Because ...

_____ The new kitten thinks that the keyboard is a suitable place to play and nap, thus substantially interfering with address book management.

_____ The sky is bright blue with some light wispy clouds and the fall and winter rains have not yet arrived.

_____ 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.