

Letter from the Editor

I recently had an embarrassing episode with a bottle of Skol gin. While this inherently appalled (appalls) me, I was forced to step back and assess the greater picture of the situation. I assumed that a clairvoyant moral would fall into my lap, though nothing I didn't already know landed there. But what I did learn was this: 1) Skol makes terrible gin, and 2) being a monk isn't so stupid after all.

Clearly, this relates back to *Babble-ON™*, in that nothing profound need be said in order to be appreciated (and perhaps feared). Enjoy this issue and keep the submissions coming.

Dan

Journey into the Mind of a Liberal: a Liberal's Perspective By *Jezebel Rodham-Nader*

Nowadays, it's so easy to brush aside the ideas that challenge this nation's popular beliefs. Patriotic hysteria is sweeping dissent under the rug, and I won't stand for it any longer. You see, I am a liberal. Loud and proud. WE'RE QUEER! WE'RE HERE! GET USED TO IT! (Something like that.) So often the press skews us to look like raving hippies (damned conservative press), but we are real people with intricate souls. I am here to share mine with you today.

I was raised in a middle-class family with two parents who are still together to this day. I was forced to go to a school that was noted for its excellence in the sciences and its astronomically low crime rate. During my summers, my parents shipped me off to camp. They embraced all commercial holidays and thought that my affections could be bought with gifts. They embarrassed me by coming to all of my recitals and sporting events, and they made me and my brothers play board games every Tuesday. If that isn't hell, I don't know what is. So, naturally, I had to find an outlet for

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Picture of the Week:
Once in a Blue Moon by Lyonel Feininger

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Political Corner with Susan "Poly-Sci, Poly-Schmi" Myhr

Brainwashing the Airwaves with Woolite Or, "The NPR Diseasification of America"

True, the title is wordy. Of course, it's intentional. The author makes no attempt to shield or disguise her sarcastic, derisive attitude towards our country's only government-funded NATIONAL radio as in, it should, at the very least, acknowledge the possibility of multiple ideas. But I digress....

The ideal of OBJECTIVE, factual reporting is obsolete bunk. If it ever existed, it doesn't any more. If reporting must be SUBJECTIVE, however, make it so! Arrive at a clear opinion and then do not cower behind hyper-politically-correct-driven fear, the downfall of opinion-less masses. Keeping all of this in mind, NPR is sponsored by every charitable trust and foundation it can wring a nickel from. From the time I turn on the radio until the familiar bongs of "All Things Considered" sound, I usually have enough time to brush my teeth, do a line of coke, and call my parole officer. In other words, lest we forget that NPR is not solely government-run, these announcements bang-to-the-head remind us of that fact.

But seriously, I am just a humble pseudo-political scientist with only a few minutes to spare in writing this, so I'll cut to the chase. I have spent the past 3 months in

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Q&A

Ask Dead
Leprechaun



Our field correspondent, Swinton Chumblebrook, was recently assigned to cover the story of the California re-election. Of course, the first person to come up on his list of contacts was the Leprechaun, from such fame as *Leprechaun 1, 2, 3, 4, Leprechaun in the Hood, and Leprechaun: Back in da Hood* (not yet released). Let's see what he had to say.

SC: So, have you decided to run for governor, as well?

L: Yes, I feel like I can really identify with my inner city constituents while still pandering to big business.

SC: You must be referring to your background with *Leprechaun in the Hood*....

L: If you like. You've seen my films then?

SC: No.

L: I tend to use a more Stanislavskian technique. I think it appeals to more viewers.

SC: Anyway, what's it like being dead and trying to get votes from living people?

L: Well, I never really died, so it's not so bad.

SC: I see. Do you think the political race will help your new movie?

L: Could you lean in close, so I can tell you a secret.

SC: Sure.

At this point the interview was broken up as the Leprechaun ripped Swinton's face off and proceeded to terrorize the journos in the vicinity. ☒

Kafkaesque Happiness

(Part Three)

By Dan Fritz

What has this series of articles been about? Specifically, it has covered some of Kafka's short stories and addressed whether or not Kafka is contradicting himself. But what is the underlying message?

From my perspective, a general critical view of the world has always been healthy toward trying to better understand the world or at least my (our) place in it, but there is a fine line between critical thinking and complaining. Far too often, even the "critical thinkers" fall victim to complaining, because they get in the habit of pointing out flaws or things that bother them. I'll admit that at times I've fallen victim to this myself. So, what about Kafka?

As an author, Kafka is naturally a critical thinker. It's the luxury of the author to present his case in his own words, censoring at will. But what an author cannot always successfully do is edit and analyze his own works, leaving the potential for contradiction wide open. As it appeared to me, Kafka had (through his characters) become something of a habitual complainer—not in the sense of someone who always looks toward the greener grass on the other side, but someone who always looks at the mud pit on this side. And when he gets to the other side, it becomes a mud pit to him, as well.

To be honest, I present no conclusion here regarding Kafka and his philosophies. He clearly had personal issues with his father (as evidenced by his personal writings), but it would be unfair to assess his life by what his literary characters think and do. There is also no sense in pointing any fingers, be it warranted or not.

As a conclusion, I *do* present this: it is great both to step out of yourself *and* to love (as referred to in the past issues). But even greater is the ability to enjoy who you are and what you are doing now, rather than being your own worst enemy by habitually complaining. Enjoy the good things about your life today, and then you'll be able to figure out how to improve it tomorrow. ☒

Gossip Column: Overheard in the Congressional Bathroom

By Mike Greenlie, Congressional Bathroom Attendant

Diane Fienstein: Isn't it ridiculous what they try to get away with nowadays?

Hillary Rodham Clinton: I know! How could they even think about starting Holcomb when he lost the playoff game to Pittsburgh? Not to mention that they are paying a pretty penny for Couch!

Dick Gephart: I don't know why it didn't work....

Dennis Hastert: Did you continue to stir until the consistency is like paste?

Dick Gephart: Yes, but there were still lumps.

Dennis Hastert: Next time, use an electric beater instead of a wire whisk.

Tom Daschle: How do you cover-up your gayness anyhow, Lance?

Lamar Alexander: Well, besides only allowing good "friends" call me Lance, I try to fondle two female interns a session. That keeps the rumors away.

Tom Daschle: Hey.....eyes front, Lance....

Elizabeth Dole: Hey! Attendant boy! Yo! Could you get me some toilet tissue in here? This roll's out! Yo! Brainless! Can a brother get a sheet?? ☒

Ikea'd You Not:
A Real Life Furniture Adventure Story
By James Schneider

My brother walked into my dark room and proclaimed, "Let's get our free Poangs." And with that, I groaned. It was 4:30 AM, and as my tired aching head rose off the comfort of a pillow and the tranquil serenity of slumber I knew I was in for something *other*. It was certainly not the case that I've never been awake at 4:30. In fact, many adventures have ended sleepless after 4:30 AM. This time it was two men on a mission, with an entire family caught in the middle.

My brother and I, having seen an Ikea advertisement wherein the first 100 adults receive a free chair, were hell-bent on landing a couple of free Poangs. The same Poangs that comfortably cushioned us through repeated viewings of Hollywood classics like *Die Hard* and *Con Air*. The chairs nearly \$100 retail price was more than enough incentive to get the unemployed Schneider boys into a tizzy. And, if it meant sleeping overnight in the dangerous parking lot, well...my parents wouldn't allow that so we were up far too early for a free chair.

My throat felt as if I had just gargled with glass as the remnants of last week's cold reared its ugly head at the ungodly hour. My eyes, about as open as could be expected, allowed my battle-worn frame to safely cascade down the stairway and into the porch where a stack of newspapers became my new pillow and the floor my new bed. Meanwhile, my brother John was riding high on an adrenaline buzz and was chipper as ever as he tried to rouse my sleeping parents.

Brutally shocked into consciousness, my mother was amazed that John's desire for free furniture was so high. My brother pleaded with my mother to leave immediately despite the danger of drunk drivers. John insisted that he was in good shape to drive at 4:30, almost 5 by this point, and begged her to either come or just let us go. My mom began explaining for about the fourth time in as many hours the route to Ikea, while John nodded along the same as the last three. All this amounted to far too much wasted breath.

My father rambled into the porch and began yelling at a tone uncalled for at nearly any hour. He was enraged that my brother would go so out of his way to get a chair that he would pass up the opportunity to get his own car. Further, the \$140,000 dollar tuition that was about to be fed into John's Columbia education stuck out as another means of securing Poangs, if it was so important to him. One of only two days off work, my father was certainly not in the mindset to wake up at 5 o'clock for my brother and me to get a free chair. All the yelling created a surge. Adrenaline now coursing through my veins, I woke up and started bouncing around vibrantly.

My sarcastic tone contrasting the serious mood my father was bringing to the utterly ridiculous situation brought some funny-at-the-time statements like, "Why don't we all go! 4 adults will surely increase our Poang potential!" I suggested that we wake up my 83 year old aunt, cause she's way over 18, and probably wouldn't be that messed up by the time. Or, why not wake up my grandparents. Surely they would want to know the undeniable comfort of the chair of choice. Oh, those Swedes and their furniture. How can you not love it?

At the same time, paranoia set in. What if the quest for a stupid chair ended our existences? Was it really meant to be? I didn't see us getting a free chair as even a vague possibility. And, yet, wasn't that the mission that we had just set forth on? What if we were lost? What if there were 20 trucks filled to the brim with illegal immigrants waiting to get their greedy paws on my Poang? Why did my head hurt so much? Oh yeah.

After far far far too much debating, the family finally made a decision...sort of. My parents would drive behind my brother and me, and once we arrived safely in the parking lot around 6 AM, they would return home. Slightly modified, my mother rode with my brother and me, and my father woke up my 12 year old sister for his own passenger. We would all drive to Ikea and then my mom and sister would go back with my dad, leaving the insane ones to pick up our chairs.

At about 5:30 the blue Volvo rolled out of the driveway with John at the wheel. We surveyed the block and confirmed that, yes; indeed, no one was awake yet to get our chairs. We still feared that someone else would pull the chairs out from under us, but at least we were moving. As we rounded the corner of my block, my mother's cell phone began to ring. That spelled about as much disaster as one could think.

My father's car had stalled out perhaps 2/3 of the way down the block. The Volvo turned around and our hearts sank. We were now manually pushing a 2 ton vehicle at 5:30 in the morning for no conceivable reason. I suggested that we just leave the "old man" and just head towards Poang delight, but my suggestion was not made in full earnest.

Under the chill of the morning air, and the exertion of an all-out sprinting attempt to push the car, mixed in with the aforementioned gargled-with-glass sensation, made for a terrible time. I hacked and choked, but pushed intensely, thinking in vain that we could merely regain our stride and pull off a free Poang chair.

Once the car rolled into the driveway, with much help from the Schneider boys, I hacked up a lung or two and nearly lost whatever was residing in my stomach at that point. Probably nothing. But, I felt sick and slightly annoyed at wasting 2 hours for absolutely no good reason. I figure it was a sign that we shouldn't go. Whatever the reason, my head easily returned to the pillow at 5:45 AM. Certainly, it was a mission in futility, but an adventure nonetheless. Good night! ☒

Interestingly enough

(Or everything you never wanted to know, although of some interest)

In this issue an insight on:

The Pirates of the Caribbean and the Early Spanish-American Urban Order

By Cecile Fromont

The tension between order and disorder is at the core of a historical study of piracy in the 16th century Caribbean and its necessary pendant, the port city. At the threshold between these two entities, the stones and walls of the fortifications embody the defense of the Spanish order versus its enemies, the pirates. Fortifications are the materialization of a liminal space, on either side of which two spaces, both concrete and abstract, come to meet and confront. The fortified coastal cities not only take part in the Spanish scheme of colonization and urbanization but also function as components of a larger system: the Atlantic World as a space of concurrence and confrontation. As interfaces, the Caribbean cities stand for more than just themselves and mean more than what the Spaniards inscribed into them. They are also seen, analyzed, scrutinized, understood and narrated by other nations, and mainly through the eyes of the Pirates of the Caribbean.

The Boazio maps, illustrating Drake's 1585/1586 voyage to the West Indies are rare iconographic documents. This series of maps was created by the Italian cartographer Boazio who had the particularity of having traveled along in the expedition. They consist of an ensemble of illustrations prepared for the various editions of the *Summarie and True Discourse of Sir Francis Drake's West Indian Voyage*¹. The maps of the four cities sacked by Drake: Santiago de Cabo Verde, Santo Domingo, Cartagena and Saint Augustine, were made in two formats, one to be bound in a printed edition of the *Summarie*, the other to be sold separately in form of portfolio¹. The maps of the New World were of great value: knowledge of the Americas was rare and therefore precious and maps were an important part of the pirates' booties. Largely printed and reprinted, in association with the story of the expedition or just by themselves, the Boazio maps had an obvious propagandistic purpose. A comparison between the two versions of the map of Santo Domingo, for example, reveals the manipulations of the maps to serve a political agenda. The later, larger version (Fig. 1) provides corrections in the glossing, but more remarkably includes on the top right the coat of arm of the Hapsburgs. Keeler, in an analysis of Drake's West Indian voyage's different narratives, relates the escutcheon to this episode of the *Summarie and true discourse*:

“Amongst other things which happened and were found at S. DOMINGO, I may not omit to let the world know one very notable token of the insatiable ambition of the Spanish King and his nation, which was found in the king's house wherein the chief governor of that city and country is appointed always to lodge, which was this. In coming to the hall or other rooms of this house, you must first ascend up by a large pair of stairs, at the head of which stairs is a handsome spacious place to walk in somewhat like unto a gallery, wherein upon one of the walls, right over against you as you enter the said place, so as your eye can not escape the sight of it, there is described and painted in a very large Escutcheon, the arms of the king of Spain and in the lower part of the said escutcheon (...) was written these words in Latin NON SUFFICIT ORBIS: which is as much to say as the world suffices not”.

The narrator then continues describing the shame of the people of Santo Domingo who had to look at the escutcheon as they were discussing the ransom for the town while having to hear the mockeries of the Englishmen warning the king of Spain that he had obviously already more land than he could possibly defend¹.

The escutcheon was added to the map probably as a mocking reference to King Philip of Spain's arrogance. The Boazio maps give us a better understanding of the discourse about the Caribbean cities developed from the pirate viewpoint. The city ports are well ordered, well defended, yet cannot resist their attacks. The juxtaposition of the motto NEC SPE NEC METU (Neither Hope Nor Fear), probably defining the attitude of the corsairs, is apposed to the enchained coat of arms of Spain in a straightforward allegory of the superiority of the pirates and their ethics over the Spanish rule.

Now, isn't THAT interesting? ☒



Fig. 1
Attack at Santo Domingo
Baptista Boazio
ca 1586

from http://www.smith.edu/vistas/vistas_web/gallery/drake_det.htm

¹ See in Mary Frear Keeler(ed.): Drake, Francis, Sir. *Sir Francis Drake's West Indian voyage*, 1585-86 London : Hakluyt Society, 1981

² *ibidem*, Appendix IV, p 310-320

³ Mary Frear Keeler(ed.): Drake, Francis, Sir. *Sir Francis Drake's West Indian voyage*, 1585-86 London : Hakluyt Society, 1981, p 245

Happy
Humphrey's
More August
Fortunes



First name starts
with A-M:

If your age is an even number:
You will find happiness in not drinking
anything.

If your age is an odd number:
You will find happiness in a cold drink.

First name starts
with N-Z:

If your age is an even number:
You will find happiness in a warm drink.

If your age is an odd number:
You will find happiness in a tall drink of
water.

...Journey into the Mind of a Liberal, from p. 1...

my unrequited anger. After smoking massive amounts of marijuana and pretending to like The Dead, I had an epiphany: If I couldn't be angry at my own life, I could be angry FOR someone else. And that is what I did. I became a liberal, which is actually Latin for "proxy hissy fit."

Now, I can fight for those who are worse off. I can take my useless parent's credit card and jet all around the world to protest the World Bank, The Kyoto Protocol, and the International Monetary Fund (most of which I couldn't tell you much about, but Starshine said they're, 'real bad,' ...so they must be). I can chant loudly in front of the White House and oppose stuff with catchy slogans.

Oh, sure. I know what you are going to say. I have already heard it from my mother. Since she is a conservative (or liberally challenged as I say), she likes to throw worthless arguments my way. So here, I dispel the myths of my momma:

- 1) Momma said that it's fine to have a different opinion, but pointing out an obvious problem isn't an answer. She thinks that by us saying what's wrong (e.g. no blood for oil) that we are not offering any viable solutions. Hello! Did she not see the, "Give Peace a Chance" sign???? Peace. You want an answer, mommy dearest?? The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind. Peace is a viable answer. Can't Bush just walk into Iraq and Iran and scream peace and be over with it? I mean, we don't have to plan past that, do we??
- 2) Momma said that we are all homogeneous. Well, that's uncalled for slander. We're not ALL gay.
- 3) Momma says we should take a proactive stance with foreign policy, that it's our duty as a hegemony. She says this means sometimes looking like a bully or someone foisting our ideas on others, but it's necessary to protect others. Well, I say....look at Russia in the 50s, Cambodia in the 60s, Romania in the 80s....wasn't it good that we left them alone? They didn't need protection against themselves, did they???
- 4) Momma thinks liberals love all people. She thinks we accept everyone, and that's useless and foolish. She is way off. We hate lots of people: conservatives, the country, the armed forces, our childhood, Tom Selleck, the man, the media, politicians, and our MOTHERS!!!
- 5) Momma thinks that we have some serious issues with our arguments, that they are at odds. Look, mom. It's simple. Here's a guide.
 - Legal NRA gun owners = **bad**
Illegal gun-owning killers = **good**
(The killers didn't get hugs as kids, so they are forgiven. I'll defend their rights. What's your excuse, Billy Bob??)
 - The press when they say what I want to hear = **journalistic integrity**
The press when they say stuff I don't like = **conservatively biased, big-business jack asses**
(Little known fact...liberals are the sole owner of truth).
 - My pious, law-abiding, Catholic, 80-year old grandma = **evil**
Pagan, criminal, pot smoking hippies in Washington Square = **pure**
(Religion is merely a tool for the Devil. Jerry Falwell is the rule and not the exception.)
 - Non-organic apple = **toxic**
Vegan hashish brownie = **tasty**
(Mary Jane ingested in smoke form is also better for your body than any non-hemp vegetable)
 - Information from soundbites, headlines, and Starshine = **accurate**
Researching all sides of an argument = **foolish**

And there you have it. Momma lives in her blissful ignorance while I must toil with the knowledge that America sucks. Oh sure. In China you couldn't even say that, but they are Communist for Christ sake. What is that, Starshine? We LIKE Communism? Oh. Well, what about those deplorable human right atrocities in China? But we're not allowed to argue for human rights, right? I mean that would contradict our hands-off foreign policy stance. What? We CAN argue for their rights? Hold on. Do we want to be involved or not? Tell me what I think!!! Well, what about....oh, never mind, Starshine. Now I'm confused....I just need some poster board, paint, and a catchy slogan. Something like, "BE NICE! NO REALLY! WE MEAN IT!" ☒

...Political Corner, from p.1...

Williamstown, Massachusetts, surrounded by approximately 100 actors, directors, and/or theatre students. I've seen little to no television, and few radio stations are picked up in this deciduous tree-clad haven. Hence, I have surprisingly sought solace, and a little comedic release with a little help (or Hiz-elp to Chad) from my AA battery-run "Sportz Radio" with my daily dose of NPR. I step out of the shower, I turn on the NPR and take in some "Round Table"; I fold my socks, j'ecoute some "ATC" (see "bong" above). So I mentioned how NPR is sponsored by the charitable trusts and such. Well, I recently heard one that was not only gut-busting, but sadly typical of a political left that increasingly desires to have everything both ways.

Yet another commentator with a mystery accent, Cory Flintov, tells us listeners that today's ATC is sponsored by such and such foundation (identity protection unintended), an organization "designed to find and fight the causes of homelessness". What? So now homelessness is communicable? If I hand some change to that guy on the corner I could become sick, lose my home, and take to panhandling? Well then, someone (but not me, of coarse) must make tracks to the lab and use their Petri-dish skills post-haste—an epidemic is afoot! Needless to say, after I laughed myself stupid at the prospect of this charity actually existing, I started to feel just plain, old-fashioned disturbed. I wish to alleviate homelessness as much or more than the next guy. Not out of guilt or obligation or even political savvy. It's much simpler than that. It has to do with my ability to sympathetically identify with another human being's basic human needs—a gut instinct, not a skill. The moment such a feeling becomes intellectualized, the ability to inspire change, not merely institute it, evaporates. In other words, disease and social or even personal challenges are not one and the same. And what's more, allow me to speculate that a homeless individual most likely does not actively seek out stigmas while he is searching for food.

Next week: caustic commentary about another NPR quote: "I never got into the whole 'Freedom Fries' thing, but I still felt unpatriotic when I decided to spend my summer vacation in France." ☒

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Puzzle Corner

Solve the Riddle!

*The chill of its death,
You may soon mourn.
But though it dies,
It cannot be born.*

— — — — —

From Betrayal at Kronidor, © Sierra On-Line, 1993.

Name that Quote

By Frank Waterhouse

(see the answer below)

“Oh, this is your wife, huh? A lovely lady. Hey baby, you must have been something before electricity.”

Suggestions for Submissions

Your contribution can be anything you can fit onto a sheet of paper. Here are a few ideas:

Editorials	Reports	Philosophy
Reviews	Ramblings	Rants
Comics	Puzzles	Jokes
Quotes	Polls	Trivia
Drawings	Poetry	Recipes
Photographs	Short stories	News
Predictions	Advice	Graphs

Take some time to think about it. Publications go out every other Friday. Please send all of your sub-missions two days in advance to: dan@fritzcomics.com.

Next Issue...

- Musicology by Dan Fritz
- Happy Humphrey meets....
- “The End Times” with Edith Carlson

Riddle Answer: FIRE.

Name that Quote Answer: excerpt from Caddy Shack, said by Rodney Dangerfield's character.