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BLAINESWORLD

Teaching

**Dispute
Resolution**

Speaking

Consulting

Radio Show

Newsletter

Blaine's Best

About Cynthia

Welcome to **BLAINESWORLD**, the only official guide to the workings of the mind of yours truly, Blaine Greenfield. **BLAINESWORLD** is the first and only complete work known to modern man that addresses the burning question of what it is, exactly, that I do with my every waking hour. It is also a treasure box of selected gems that I hope will enlighten, enhance and inspire you, my esteemed guest.

Best,
Blaine

What's New at
BLAINESWORLD.NET

What's new? EVERYTHING is new! **BLAINESWORLD** is now officially on the Internet, and your opinion really matters. Whether you're a student, client, coworker, radio fan, loyal newsletter follower, or even a family member, I hope you let me know what you think. Your opinion really matters!

While you're getting your thoughts and notes together, please note our email address, should you wish to contact us: bginbc@aol.com. Please change your contact manager, address book and palm pilot to reflect that address.

If you are a new visitor to our site, please take a few seconds to let us know how you discovered our place. Just click [here](#) and your own email program will be set up to send us your comments. Thank you, in advance.

Upcoming Events

Please see weekly newsletter, Section 12, for events you might want to attend. In the unlikely event you're not already getting this missive, see below (for the "Special Offer").

Special Offer

Sign up for free to receive the infamous **BLAINESWORLD** Newsletter. To get this weekly missive, please [click here](#).



073537⁵ 735⁵ 53

(You may have seen other counters, but I bet none are as impressive as mine.)

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#639

12.29.2008

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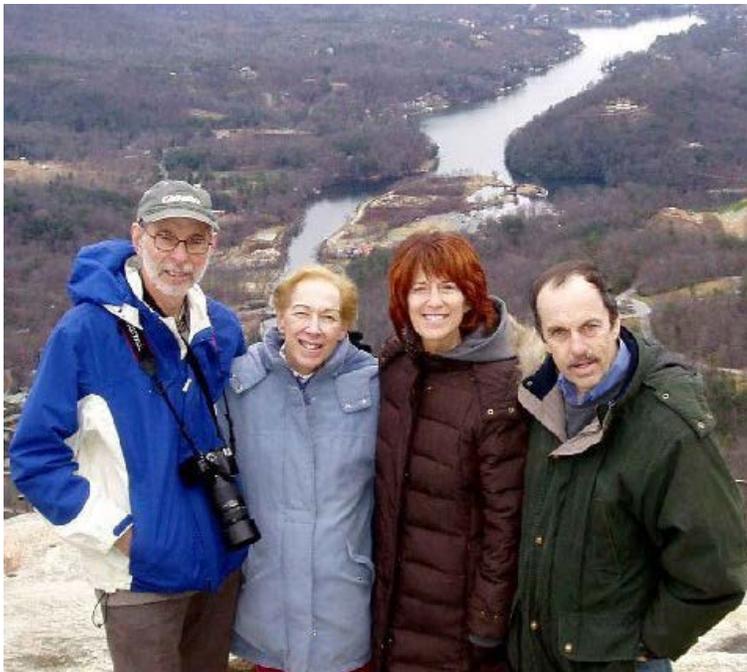
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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I had our first visitors . . . our friends, Natalie and Ivan, came down from Pennsylvania--helping us out at the same time by driving down one of our cars . . . we've had a blast with them, discovering many things to do and places to see in Asheville.

B. In no particular order, we:

* Visited the soaring cliffs of Chimney Rock Park where we took an elevator inside the mountain so that we could see the view that can be seen in this picture:



* Went to a service at the Unity Center . . . we were all impressed with the music, as well as the warmth shown to us by all the members and particularly the minister, Rev. Chad O'Shea . . . it seemed he went out of his way to make us feel welcome.

We further got a kick out of the fact that he started the service with a cute joke:

Mrs. Goldstein, a Jewish woman walks into a hotel and tells the clerk she would like to rent a room. The clerk looks up at her and says "I'm sorry, we don't have any rooms available."

Mrs. Goldstein is standing for a moment when a man walks up ready to check out. She immediately says "I'll take HIS room." The clerk again tells her, "Sorry, but we simply don't have a room for you, We don't rent to Jews."

"Ahh," says Mrs. Goldstein. "And what makes you think that I'm a Jew?"

"Ok," says the clerk "Tell me, do you believe in Jesus?"

"Absolutely!" says Mrs. Goldstein.

"Ok, that's a start. Where was Jesus born?"

"Bethlehem!" she replies.

"Ok" says the clerk, "And where in Bethlehem was Jesus born?"

"In a manger!" says Mrs. Goldstein.

The clerk now leaned over and got right up to her, "Tell me, why was Jesus born in a manger?"

She belts out "Because some jerk like you wouldn't rent his parents a room!"

* We went to Scully's Signature & Drink to sing karaoke . . . Natalie and Ivan each did a great job singing songs by themselves . . . the four of us then sang "If I Had a Hammer" together; that's (I-r) Natalie, Ivan, Cynthia and yours truly:



C. As you might expect, we got to eat out a bunch of times as well . . . places we went to included:

* Scully's (828.251.8880) for dinner, right before we sang . . . I'm sorry to report that this was our only poor dining experience since we've been here . . . they had run out of a bunch of items before we sat down, and the food we got was very salty . . . I'm hoping that maybe the kitchen was having an off night.

* Stir Fry Cafe (828.505.4934) in Asheville . . . we liked the many choices that were available, and I especially liked that you could create your own dish . . . my combination of snow peas, chicken and brown rice was just right . . . keep in mind that some of the stuff here can be on the spicy side, so consider yourself forewarned.

* After we went to the Unity Center, we followed Nancy Clark to her home . . . she is a friend of both Natalie and Ivan (from when she lived in New Jersey) who graciously invited us to lunch at her place . . . everything was delicious, yet the highlight

of the meal was her chutney . . . here's her recipe for it:

Ingredients:

1 cup water
1 cup sugar
12 ounces cranberries, fresh (or frozen)
1/2 cup vinegar
1 cup raisins
1/2 cup peeled diced apple
1/4 teaspoon allspice
1 /4 teaspoon ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
1 /8 teaspoon ground cloves
1/2 cup chopped walnuts (optional)

Directions:

1. Bring water and sugar to a boil in a medium saucepan over medium heat.
2. Add remaining ingredients; return to a boil.
3. Reduce heat and simmer 15 minutes or until apples are tender.

DEFTLY CHANGING SUBJECT:

Nancy is a very talented jewelry-maker . . . she heads her own company, Healing Intentions Jewelry, and will even custom-make an order if that's what you want . . . her email is clarknancy2000@yahoo.com; she can be reached by phone at 828.693.1586.

D. I used to be a newspaper junkie and would often read several papers a day . . . however, I'm now down to just one: THE WALL STREET JOURNAL . . . I look forward to every issue and when I was recently having a delivery problem (as a result of my move), I was really upset that some issues did not come my way.

In addition, I have always read a local paper . . . however, I was finding that when I lived in New Jersey, my local paper was getting smaller and smaller.

Upon arriving in Asheville, I tried subscribing to the area's local paper . . . I was told that they'd get back to me on my request, but they never did . . . so I started purchasing a copy each day . . . within a week, I discovered that I was pretty much throwing away my money . . . the paper had virtually no content.

What's more, it could be found online for free . . . so I now do what my friend Bill Magliaro has been suggesting that I do for years; i.e., read that publication online . . . I spend maybe a minute or so skimming the Asheville headlines, then I switch over to what he recommends: USA TODAY:

<http://www.usatoday.com>

I also skim the online version of THE NEW YORK TIMES . . . and now I understand why print newspapers are dying . . . why should anybody subscribe when you can get the same information--and much more--by just using the Internet?

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Danny Brice--computer division manager for TSAChoice, Inc . . . he sold us computers for use in our new home that are both working great.

However, he did much more than just sell them to us; he also helped move all our existing programs from our old computers . . . for me, this was a real blessing in that I was and still am using some stuff that can no longer even run on any current operating systems.

In addition, he set up my laptop so that whenever I use it, any work gets automatically synched onto my main computer . . . we also appreciated his ability to answer all our questions, and we liked his question of us: Have I solved all your problems? He did--and then some.

Should you need to purchase computers and/or have computer-related problems, I strongly recommend that you consider contacting Danny . . . he can be reached at 828.225.3318; his email is dbrice@tsachoice.com.

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2. FYI

The aforementioned Ivan (also see Section 1A) reminded me of this great idea for how to sign the back of your credit cards:

Use the words, "Ask for ID."

When a merchant sees this, he or she is supposed to ask for some other form of identification . . . this makes it very difficult--if not impossible--for anybody other than you to use your credit card.

FYI, part 2

CORRECTION:

Last week's issue mentioned a great website for documentaries to both view and share with others.

Eddie in Florida immediately notified me that I had a typo:

Link is incorrect. There's an "L" where there should be a "G." I found the right one, though:

<http://www.snagfilms.com>

Thanks, Eddie; sorry 'bout that. Fortunately, the link to my virtual theater was correct:

<http://www.clearspring.com/widgets/494037af58fb5b39?p=&flv=title%3DBLAINESWORLD%252520choices%252520Ftop%252520docs%26ids%3D26%252520C56%252520C130%252520C314%252520C60%252520C61%252520C62%252520C63%252520C64%252520C65%252520C66%252520C67%252520C68%252520C69%252520C70%252520C71%252520C72%252520C73%252520C74%252520C75%252520C76%252520C77%252520C78%252520C79%252520C80%252520C81%252520C82%252520C83%252520C84%252520C85%252520C86%252520C87%252520C88%252520C89%252520C90%252520C91%252520C92%252520C93%252520C94%252520C95%252520C96%252520C97%252520C98%252520C99%252520C100>

By clicking it, you can actually watch the full theater-link version of some of my favorite documentaries. Or choose others for your own virtual theater.

* Pat in Pennsylvania:

See link below to convert cassettes to MP3 files:

<http://www.geeks.com/details.asp?invtid=PLUSDECK2C>

This is better than transferring them to a CD as you don't need to take a disc along anymore. And you don't; need to store them or worry about where they are or if they get scratched. All you need is an Ipod. This device gets mounted in your PC. Plus you can save the files to your PC in case you ever get a new Ipod, etc.

If you do a web search you can find places that will do the transfer for you. Usually costs about \$ 25.00 per tape.

* Ellen in Pennsylvania, a certified Six Advisors Coach (with a REQUEST FOR HELP):

What are adults telling graduating seniors about the current job market? Also, are people in their 20's in jobs working hard, less motivated because of the job situation or the way they are being treated or their expectations?

MY TWO CENTS:

Ellen is compiling answers to help her with an upcoming presentation she will be making . . . so if you could respond to her that would be great . . . her email address is: ellen@leapsandboundscoaching.com . . . if you do respond, please also send me a copy . . . thanks!

* Diane in New Jersey, another coach (with a GENEROUS FREE OFFER):

Are you interested in kick-starting your goal setting process for 2009?

Diane Allen, a Business Coach with Encore Coaching, has a simple but powerful PACE self-coaching tool to help you identify and achieve your most meaningful goals.

To obtain a copy, email Diane at dallen@encorecoaching.com.

* Robyn in Pennsylvania, a faithful reader (SEEKING A REFERRAL):

I was wondering if you had any recommendations on where I could go to get jewelry appraised in the lower Bucks County region?

I recently inherited some jewelry that belonged to my now-deceased grandmother and some also belonged to her mother. Some pieces look like they might be valuable and might need to be insured. Any suggestions would be very helpful.

* Walter in Pennsylvania with movie recommendations:

Happy Holidays. Just saw a bunch of films.

DOUBT: Outstanding. Great acting, tight suspense. Caused a lot of doubt.

BENJAMIN BUTTON: Cool story. Pitt is Pitt. Kate B is very good

VALKYRIE: Tom always looks good in uniform, but average acting. Informative story; they did give it suspense. Cool period piece. Not as good as BUTTON.

MILK: Tremendous job by Penn. Better than both BUTTON and VALKYRIE.

* Joe in Pennsylvania:

Good luck to you and Cynthia in getting acclimated to North Carolina! Congrats as well on your pending retirement upon this last semester at BCCC. I will continue to enjoy your informative and entertaining newsletter

I enjoyed the tidbits that you shared of your experience listening to Brian Biro. "Being a great communicator is not as important as connecting with people" was the quote that stands out to me the most

You have mentioned several times in presentations to groups in my industry and in your class that I sat in this past winter about reaching out to prospects, clients, friends and contacts with something that reminded you of them, and that they would find value and appreciation for what you brought to their attention. I look forward to applying what I have learned to appropriate use.

***** GETTING CLOSE *****

I'm very appreciative to all those who responded to my request for help about a title to use on my business cards . . . the one I'm currently thinking of using is the following:

Rewirement Expert-in-Training

If you care to share your opinion--good, bad or indifferent--I'd love to hear it . . . in the meantime, here were some other possibilities that came up:

Professor, Publisher, Marketeer, Husband (all on one line)
Raconteur
Southern Gentleman-in-Training
Visionary
Master of Mirth
Impresario (thanks for that one, Natalie!)

And my early favorite, which I'm now shying away from because some folks weren't crazy about it:

Bon Vivant

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3. First visit

On his first visit to Boston, the North Carolinian met a girl at a bar and asked her, "Did you go to Harvard?"

The girl responded, "Yale."

"Okay. DO YOU GO TO HARVARD?"

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4. Reviews

A. SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE is the story of a street kid who lands an appearance on India's version of WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE? . . . when he does better than anybody thought would be possible, the police take him in for questioning . . . his life story unfolds during this process, and it is an amazing one that will keep you on the edge of your seats . . . you won't recognize any of the stars, but don't let that stop you from seeing this film . . . stay for the credits, too, for a lively musical number featuring the entire cast . . . rated R.

B. GHOST TOWN is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #625 follows:

Enjoyed GHOST TOWN, a cute romantic comedy about a dentist who suddenly starts seeing dead people after a routine colonoscopy . . . what was unusual was that after an OK beginning, it really picked up in the second half and by the end of the film, I really cared for the character played to perfection by Ricky Gervais . . . Tea Leoni and Greg Kinnear were also watchable in the other leading roles . . . rated PG-13.

C. Wouldn't it be great if you could create a business or store that people love to talk about?

That's in large part the premise behind CONVERSATIONAL CAPITAL, an informative book by Bertrand Cesvet--written with Tony Babinski and Eric Alper . . . what made it so good was the fact that Cesvet--chairman and chief strategist of SID LEE, a leading provider and experiential design and creative design services--incorporated many real examples from such word-of-mouth innovators as Adidas, Cirqque du Soleil and Red Bull.

For example, he mentioned the necessity for creating an Exclusive Product offering (EPO) and went on to elaborate by showing just how this has been done:

* In the era of growing customerization, opportunities to own something exclusive increase every day. Addidas offers shoppers the means to fashion their own set of shoes in the "mi Originals" section of its stores. No two consumers will have the same list of songs on their iPods. KitchenAid mixers are available online in more than 50 colors and finishes so that you can create a kitchen that expresses your personality. You can even put together your own custom blend of vitamins and minerals with Vuru, an online vitamin store.

I also liked how CONVERSATIONAL CAPITAL got me thinking by citing such studies as the following:

* When Bain & Company recently survey executives of 362 firms, we found that 80 percent believed they delivered a "superior experience" to their customers. When we asked customers, however, they told a very different story: They said only 8 percent of companies were really delivering.

I was surprised by the inclusion of one firm in the book: Wal-Mart . . . it was praised in how it practices continuity, as evidenced by this passage:

* It has always had--and still enjoys--a reputation for low prices. This continues to be an important consumer draw, thanks to a consistent pricing policy. At the same time, however, Wal-Mart earned a negative reputation as a destroyer of communities because

it made business difficult for small-town competitors. To work against that negative perception, it has integrated counter-balancing aspects to the experience of shopping there. Famously, when you walk into Wal-Mart, you are greeted personally and made to feel welcome. More recently, Wal-Mart has agreed to allow people with RVs to set up camp in its parking lots. Cross-country drivers can rest assured that, if there is no room for them at the trailer park, they can count on Wal-Mart to provide a safe landing spot. With the effect of these RVs cropping up in parking lots nationwide, the chain has fostered the creation of a new kind of community.

Cesvett concludes with a very useful Part Three, which has specific information on how to implement conversational capital . . . I also liked how he includes a website for those wishing to continue the discussion.

D. Heard THE WISE AND WITTY STRESS SOLUTION KIT, a funny but surprisingly thought-provoking CD that was written and read by Loretta LaRoche.

If the name sounds familiar, it is because you may have seen her on one of her PBS specials . . . she's a stress management expert, motivational speaker and humorist that advises that laughing for no reason makes you feel good.

She shows you how to do this, too, with such observations as the following:

- * My grandmother was a martyr. She wore black in case anybody died.
- * You aren't going to be asked by a physician, "Are you having a good time?" You should be.
- * Nobody stops by for coffee anymore. We have to watch THE VIEW to watch people drinking coffee.
- * Why do you have to call everybody to tell them you're in line?
- * I don't care what your title is. It's not going to be on your tombstone.
- * Stop thinking about what doesn't work. If you're married to the wrong person, get rid of him.

I particularly liked her conclusion. . . she encouraged listeners to have a heck of a time every day because as her mother used to say, you never know . . . and it's true!

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5. TV alert

A. The first-ever broadcast of Don Larsen's perfect game from the 1956 World Series airs at 7 p.m. on Thursday, which is also the launch date for Major League Baseball's official channel . . . to see if the station is in your area, please click:

<http://mlbnetwork.mlb.com/network/>

Then go to "channel locator" at the top of the page . . . you can also find out more information about what other programs will be broadcast on the station, including "Hot Stove" (a look at free agent signings).

B. CONFESSIONS OF A TEEN IDOL debuts on Sunday at 8 p.m. on VH1 . . . buddies Scott Baio and THE WONDER YEARS' Jason Hervey join a psychology expert to help other faded heartthrobs get over their fall from grace.

C. TESS OF THE D'URBEVILLES is a two-part remake of Thomas Hardy's romantic tragedy . . . TV GUIDE says the first night ends on a hopeful, if haunted, note . . . [then] the tale quickly descends into misfortune, misery and murder, all the while holding you in its morbid spell . . . Sundays, January 4 and 11, at 9 p.m. on PBS . . . since PBS times and dates often

vary, methinks your best bet is to double check your local listings.

D. SUPERSTARS OF DANCE features professional hoofers from eight countries--including Ireland, India, Argentina and the U.S.--compete in an attempt to help their country win an international trophy . . . Riverdance star Michael Flatley hosts . . . Sunday at 9 p.m. on NBC.

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6. Message for non-pet owners

The following message was posted on a refrigerator for all non-pet owners who visit and like to complain about the pets:

- * They live here. You don't.
- * If you don't want their hair on your clothes, stay off the furniture. That's why they call it "fur"-niture.
- * I like my pets a lot better than I like most people.
- * And to you, they may appear to be animals. To me, they are adopted sons/daughters who are short, hairy, walk on all fours and don't speak clearly.

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7. Websites

A. To get you moving toward resolutions you may wish to set for 2009, please click:

<http://www.triplux.com/dayzero/>

This website will help you complete realistic goals in your life . . . one way is to ask yourself these 6 questions:

1. Who do I love, and what am I doing about it?
2. Am I pursuing my dream or is fear stopping me?
3. Am I doing something that matters?
4. What am I doing to help others?
5. Am I as good a person as I want to be?
6. What am I doing to live life with passion, health and energy?

After thinking about these, then click this link to get started?

<http://www.triplux.com/dayzero/default.asp?view=gettingstarted>

B. MANY THANKS to Pat in Pennsylvania for sending me information on this website:

<http://www.pandora.com/>

To quote his email: Check this out. I typed-in Frank Sinatra and "The way you look tonight" came on. Maybe something for your newsletter? Like portable music for whenever and wherever you are on a PC? No need for MP files when you are on the go and at a PC?

EVEN BETTER:

I'm in the process of trying to create an all-Turtles station . . . see for yourself by clicking:

<http://www.pandora.com/?sc=sh53369431210340707>

This still needs work; i.e., it plays some music by the Turtles (arguably, the greatest rock group of all time)--but also songs by groups that have somewhat of a similar sound, including the Kinks, Mellowmen, Shakes, Beatles, etc. . . . there seem to be no commercials.

If anybody else tries this website and/or is currently using it, please let me know if it is possible to restrict music to just one artist.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blainesworld.net>

You can even view past issues of this missive by clicking "Newsletters" on the left, then "Past Issues" . . . when you do, you'll see a search engine at the top that can help you find something you may vaguely recall seeing . . . for instance, I just got a kick out of revising quote from Mike Veeck that ran in BLAINESWORLD #480:

Dad [Bill Veeck] died of a heart attack, but the WASHINGTON POST sportswriter Tom Boswell had a better explanation. "Cause of Death: Life." Nancy Faust, the longtime organist for the Chicago White Sox, believed Dad actually lived much longer. "With the amount of sleep he didn't get, Bill probably died at 85 instead of 71."

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8. Computer tip

In June, I first reported about how Google makes it easy to personalize your Internet home page . . . all you need to do is click:

<http://www.google.com/ig>

After using the above for some six months, I can only tell you that it is great; in fact, it's almost the best thing since sliced bread . . . or maybe I should say . . . since a chicken wrap sandwich? (And does that tell you how far my diet has changed since my high cholesterol reading back in July!)

But I digress . . . when I now sign-on to the Internet, igoogle is my home page . . . I can immediately see the NEW YORK TIMES headlines, the latest sports results, the correct time, movie times for local theaters, movie reviews, weather in both Asheville and "up North," and even a joke for the day.

And in case you're wondering, here's the latter item:

The children were lined up in the cafeteria of a Catholic elementary school for lunch. At the head of the table was a large pile of apples. The nun made a note, and posted on the apple tray: "Take only ONE. God is watching."

Moving further along the lunch line, at the other end of the table was a large pile of chocolate chip cookies. A child had written a note, "Take all you want. God is watching the apples."

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9. Who is your role model?

Try this without looking at the answers. Please don't look down until you do it; you'll find it very insightful.

1. Pick your favorite number between 1-9
 2. Multiply it by 3.
 3. Add 3, then again Multiply by 3. (I'll wait while you get the calculator.)
 4. You'll get a 2 or 3 digit number.
 5. Add the digits together.
 5. Now Scroll down and with the above number--that you just computed--you'll see who your role model is from the list below:
1. Einstein

2. Nelson Mandela
3. Abraham Lincoln
4. Helen Keller
5. Bill Gates
6. Gandhi
7. George Clooney
8. Thomas Edison
9. Blaine Greenfield
10. Abraham Lincoln

Who would have think that I had such an effect on you and others?

By the way, you can stop picking different numbers. I am the one that you most would like to be; just deal with it.

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10. A quote I like

My religion is very simple. My religion is kindness.--Dalai Lama, spiritual and political leader of the Tibetan people

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11. Thought for the day

Last respects

One day not too long ago the employees of a large company in St. Louis, Missouri returned from their lunch break and were greeted with a sign on the front door. The sign said: "Yesterday the person who has been hindering your growth in this company passed away. We invite you to join the funeral in the room that has been prepared in the gym."

At first everyone was sad to hear that one of their colleagues had died, but after a while they started getting curious about who this person might be.

The excitement grew as the employees arrived at the gym to pay their last respects. Everyone wondered: "Who is this person who was hindering my progress? Well, at least he's no longer here!"

One by one the employees got closer to the coffin and when they looked inside it they suddenly became speechless. They stood over the coffin, shocked and in silence, as if someone had touched the deepest part of their soul.

There was a mirror inside the coffin: everyone who looked inside it could see himself or herself. There was also a sign next to the mirror that said: "There is only one person who is capable to set limits to your growth: it is YOU.

You are the only person who can revolutionize your life. You are the only person who can influence your happiness, your realization and your success. You are the only person who can help yourself.

Your life does not change when your boss changes, when your friends change, when your parents change, when your partner changes, when your company changes. Your life changes when YOU change, when you go beyond your limiting beliefs, when you realize that you are the only one responsible for your life.

The most important relationship you can have, is the one you have with yourself.

Author unknown
(if you know who wrote this and/or the source, please let me know)

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12. Advance planning department

A. For the best comedy in Bucks County, Philadelphia, South Jersey and Delaware, please click:

<http://www.comedycabaret.com/news.html>

HBO comedy star has just been booked, and you can also catch TONIGHT star Mitch Fatel, Joe Bolster (one of my favorites), Terry Gillespie and lots of others

B. I don't think I've ever seen a bad production at the Kelsey Theater at Mercer County Community College in West Windsor, NJ . . . in the months to come, you can catch any and/or off the following: WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOLF, MAN OF LA MANCHA, THE SUNSHINE BOYS, THE WIZ and GODSPELL . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.mccc.edu/kelseytheatre/schedule.shtml>

If you have young children or grandchildren, make sure you check out the many excellent programs that Kelsey runs just for kids . . . that information can also be found at the above website.

C. Actors' Net in Morrisville, PA is another place for top-notch community theater . . . upcoming productions include ORSON'S SHADOW, THE LAST DAYS OF THE DINOSAURS, BOOTH and FINIAN'S RAINBOW . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.actorsnetbucks.org/index.html>

PS. On January 1 and every day thereafter, please keep in mind the following:

Happy New Year Wish
by Joanna Fuchs

My Happy New Year wish for you
Is for your best year yet,
A year where life is peaceful,
And what you want, you get.

A year in which you cherish
The past year's memories,
And live your life each new day
Full of bright expectancies.

I wish for you a holiday
With happiness galore;
And when it's done, I wish you
Happy New Year, and many more.

MY TWO CENTS:

And keep in mind that 2009 is going to be your year!

Also, please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . in addition, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#638

12.22.2008

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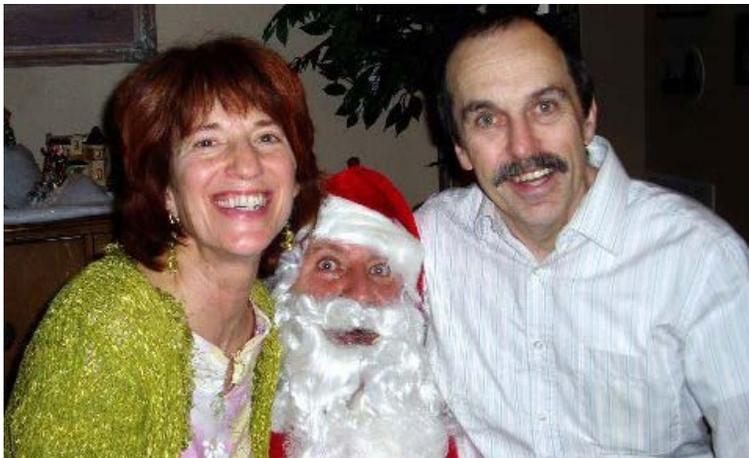
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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I were delighted to be welcomed to Asheville with an invitation to our first party . . . it was a Christmas bash, held at the home of our friends Carole and Brian Biro (see also Section 4D).

We got to eat some great food, including Brian's famous Caesar salad . . . he kept telling everybody that maybe he would become the next Paul Newman when he retires; i.e., by taking his recipe and making it available to others . . . yet who knows? It was quite good--and that's high praise considering that I'm not a big fan of such salads.

In addition, we enjoyed meeting their wide range of friends--all of whom made us feel most comfortable . . . Santa even made an appearance, bringing gifts for those in attendance . . . that's him (below) in the middle with Cynthia on the left and yours truly on the right:



B. Our good friend Michael called the other day to see how we were doing . . . he said, "I bet that everyday is like Saturday," and come to think of it, he was right . . . Cynthia and I sometimes have to pause to think about what day it actually is, which is quite a nice thing.

His comment got me thinking to something my mother used to say about her life in Florida . . . she would often tell me that it was like living in Disney World, not only because of the weather . . . but also because there was so much for her and my father to do and see.

That's sort of how Cynthia and I are feeling right now . . . we're enjoying the weather . . . it usually is the same as in the New Jersey/Pennsylvania area, though with slightly milder winters and summers . . . that said, we were particularly fortunate to have temperatures in the 60s when the Northeast was hit with recent snow and ice storms.

As for things to do, we have been pretty busy just getting our house into shape . . . making our job much easier, however, was the assistance provided by Jim Foley--owner of More Space Place . . . he designed a series of closets and storage areas that left us pleasantly surprised with the recognition that we have more than enough space for all our stuff.

We're still laughing at how Jim found us extra space in the master bath . . . he suggested putting a cabinet above the toilet . . . quite frankly, we had our doubts about that one; i.e., until Jim drew a computer image of somebody using the toilet that showed there was plenty of space above the person's head.

The installation--completed when we were still in New Jersey--was perfect . . . what a rarity it was to find a company that you didn't have to call back for corrections after the fact.

We were so impressed with this job that we have already begun speaking with Jim about the possibility of getting a Murphy Bed/bookcase for our guest bedroom.

What makes the experience in dealing with More Space Place so pleasurable is that Jim's a real nice guy, too . . . when we stopped by his place to thank him for a job well done, he gave us a warm greeting that made us feel like we were his longtime friends (and not just his customers).

For more information, call 828.665.9665 or please click:

<http://customclosetsasheville.com/index.html>

C. Fortunately, we have also managed to discern that we won't go hungry in North Carolina . . . there are many eateries near us, many just minutes away . . . two we have enjoyed were:

* Apollo Flame Bistro (828.665.0080), located in the same strip mall as More Space Place . . . they serve both Italian and Greek food . . . Cynthia said her Greek salad was excellent, and I very much enjoyed my chicken wrap served on warm pita bread . . . portions were large, prices were reasonable and service was good.

* Kanpai Sushi Tai in downtown Asheville (828.225.8885) . . . our order of steamed vegetables was made just the way we wanted it; i.e., add snow peas and don't include mushrooms . . . however, the dish we're still raving about was the coconut fried rice with chicken . . . per our request, they made it with brown rice . . . the end result was something so tasty that we're looking forward to when we can have the leftovers.

D. MR. CURIOUS HERE:

Cynthia has some 10 cassette tapes on yoga that are close to having seen their final day . . . plus, she'd like to play them on her CD player . . . do you know of any easy, inexpensive way to convert these cassettes to CDs? Or might you even be willing to do this for her? (She'd pay you for your effort.)

We've seen a device that can do this . . . and also convert vinyl records . . . but it costs some \$300, and we have no real need for it beyond this one-time use.

Please advise.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Dr. Scott Pickett--our new veterinarian in North Carolina

Dr. Pickett heads the Best Friends Mobile Veterinarian Clinic in Asheville,

which he started with his brother Stewart in 2005 . . . what makes his practice so unique is that you never have to go see him; instead, he comes directly to your home or business in a modern van that is fully-equipped to handle just about any situation.

Shortly after arriving, we needed to get all three cats checked . . . we were particularly concerned about Shanti, in that we had been told by our previous vet that she had a suspicious-looking growth on her jaw . . . Dr. Pickett confirmed that it was cancer, but for now, all appears to be stable . . . he said that our other two cats, Precious and Tiger, were both in fine shape.

We were impressed by how thorough an exam Dr. Pickett conducted on each cat . . . also, we were appreciative of how quickly he got back to us with results, suggestions for future care, etc.

And Stewart, who serves as technician/office manager for Best Friends, was equally caring.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.bestfriendsmobilevet.com/Aboutus.html>

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2. FYI

As many readers know, I'm a regular reader/big fan of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL . . . it is so very informative, and I find that I learn much from reading it--not only about business, but also about politics, computers, entertainment, etc.

Health is another topic covered extensively by THE JOURNAL . . . one recent article, in particular, caught my attention:

"Face Time: the Benefits of Seeing Patients as People" by Kevin Helliker, 12.2.2008, p. B9 . . . because of copyright restrictions, I can't run the whole article . . . however, here's the key part that I'd like you to consider:

Radiologists read scans more carefully when they also had a patient photo, a study found. Here are some suggestions:

* Bring a photo to your scan or email one to the scanning center and ask that it be included in your file.

* Photographs aside, provide the clinic with detailed reasons why you're getting a scan.

Dr. Turner [the person who did the study] predicts that further study will bear out the power of the old-fashioned head shot to improve radiology. Included in his presentation were comments from radiologists who participated in the study. One said the inclusion of photographs "made me feel more like a physician." Another said a photograph "makes each CT scan unique."

SPECIAL OFFER:

If you're a student at Bucks County Community College or some other school . . . or want to enter a subscription in your son or daughter's name (and they're a student), please click:

<http://subscribe.wsj.com/semester>

You'll be taken to a form where you can directly sign-up for 15 weeks up to a year at the guaranteed lowest rate; i.e., at 70% off regular rates . . . you also get FREE online access . . . when they ask for professor, put down "Greenfield, Blaine" and if you have any problems, give a holler.

FYI, part 2

Last week, I wrote about a product called Magic Eraser . . . I don't think I have ever received so many emails about any other particular topic . . . just to cite some of them:

* Robyn in Pennsylvania:

I just wanted to let you know that I've used the Magic Sponge several times. So far I've been able to completely remove:

Sharpie marker, crayon, and pencil stains off countertops.

All sorts of scuff marks off hardwood floors such as shoes, crayons, markers and some I couldn't identify.

Light soap scum off the bottom of vinyl shower curtain liners.

Those orange marks around the drain in the shower and sink.

Burnt marks off a stovetop, both electric and gas.

Dirt off the refrigerator, microwave and dishwasher, including the handles.

Food and drink stains on countertops.

Light scuff marks or food stains on the walls.

All sorts of artwork left on the walls by the kids such as crayon, marker, pencil, etc.

I love how it cleans without having to use irritating chemicals on minor stains. The only warning I have is to check a small unnoticeable area on a wall before working on stains for the first time. I've discovered that the sponge can remove some types of paint. I've also discovered that if a drink stain has been on a countertop, it will lighten but not completely remove it. The same goes for heavy marks on the walls and well-set burnt marks on the stove.

* Dana in Pennsylvania:

It IS the best product out there to remove marks on painted walls, corian countertops and other hard surfaces. Just beware, it is like a fine sander so use with water and do not rub continually over the same area for a long time or you will remove your paint.

* Terri in Pennsylvania:

It should be called "Miracle Eraser." This product is awesome. I have not yet found a stain it doesn't remove!

* Arlene in Missouri:

I use Magic Eraser to remove smudges from refrigerator handles. It works well on white refrigerators especially.

* Kathy in Florida:

Magic Eraser is absolutely wonderful. I use it all the time.

SECOND REQUEST:

I also mentioned that I need to redo my business cards, given that the important phone numbers I have on the back will soon be outdated when Obama takes over from Bush . . . furthermore, I will only be full-time at Bucks County Community College for one more semester, so I'm looking for some other title to call myself--other than professor or even professor emeritus.

My goal is to come up with something creative that would also serve as a conversation-starter when I meet new folks.

MANY THANKS to the many readers who already submitted their thoughts on the subject . . . I'll share some of these with you in the near future, but in the meantime, I would still very much like to hear from others who care to care to express their opinion on this weighty topic.

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3. Wisdom from kids

No matter how hard you try, you can't baptize cats.

When your mom is mad at your dad, don't let her brush your hair.

If your sister hits you, don't hit her back. They always catch the second person.

Never ask your 3-year old brother to hold a tomato.

You can't trust dogs to watch your food.

Reading what people write on desks can teach you a lot.

Don't sneeze when someone is cutting your hair.

Puppies still have bad breath even after eating a Tic Tac.

Never hold a dustbuster and a cat at the same time.

School lunches stick to the wall.

You can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk.

Don't wear polka-dot underwear under white shorts.

The best place to be when you are sad is in Grandma's lap.

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4. Reviews

A. Sean Penn is outstanding in MILK, the true story about America's first elected gay politician . . . he makes you really feel for Harvey Milk, a businessman who lost many races before getting elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1977 . . . Josh Brolin, so fine in both W and NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN, again shines as Dan White--Milk's political colleague who eventually turns on him . . . make sure you stay for the ending credits to see how close the actors actually resembled their real characters . . . rated R.

B. THE HOUSE BUNNY is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #623 follows:

THE HOUSE BUNNY is a goofy but fun tale of an orphan-turned Playboy bunny who gets kicked out of the Mansion . . . having no place to live, she winds up the house mother to a sorority that has seen better days . . . you can predict almost every joke, but you'll laugh in spite of yourself . . . Anna Faris is just perfect in the title role . . . her technique for memorizing names is one you'll never forget . . . rated PG-13.

C. I loved the premise behind THE EXPERTS' GUIDE TO DOING THINGS FASTER by Samantha Ettus; i.e., to become more efficient in every aspect of every day.

Ettus presents 100 different ideas in short but insightful chapters that included daily essentials, lifestyle lessons, beauty basics, romance road maps, physical feats, money matters and healthy hints . . . she chose 100 of the world's leading experts to write them,, ranging from Hannah Storm on getting ready in the morning to Sir Richard Branson on getting a loan . . . some names were not immediately recognizable, such as New York's most famous doorman ("Make Someone Feel Good") and an Olympic eater ("Cure a Stomachache"), but that did not take away from the value of their advice.

I learned much from reading this book, and methinks you will too . . . for instance:

* [reducing the length of meetings] Start at a specific time each day, and make it an odd one, like 8:08 a.m. or 4:44 p.m. I've observed a strange psychological pattern: people are more likely to be prompt when the start time is not on the half or quarter hour. (Worried that you'll forget the meeting while traveling? Set a recurring reminder alarm on your cell phone or Black Berry.)

* [returning phone calls] Stay away from message dumping (e.g., calling a person's office to leave a message at 9 p.m. when you know they've left for the day). This practice is transparent and reflects poorly on you. The only way to close a deal or reach a resolution on something is to speak with the person directly.

Some ideas were so good that they were repeated--in slightly different fashion--in different chapters, such as:

* [achieving success] Distractions are the enemy of focused attention. A successful race car driver told me, "A little bit of distraction and you could have a really bad day." . . . Deborah McGinness, senior research scientist at Stanford, said to me, "Getting my degree, every year I cut out things. I remember the year I sacrificed movies. I just said, 'I can't afford the time. I'll put movies back in my life again once I finish the Ph.D.' "

* [unleash your creativity] Clear the deck so that you can focus your energies on the area in which creativity is needed. Completely unplug yourself from your phones, computer, email, television, radio, and any other distractions from people and pets.

So that said, I guess it's time for me to stop taking calls and answering emails . . . and, also, turn-off the DVD I'm half-watching . . . so I can finish the rest of this week's newsletter!

D. Brian Biro (see also Section 1A)--known professionally as America's Breakthrough Coach--has conducted a series of interviews with some of the most extraordinary people of our time.

He has made all of these available on CD . . . I recently had the opportunity to hear his talk with Nino Qubein, president of High Point University and a legendary motivational speaker . . . was I ever impressed, not only with Biro's interviewing techniques but with what Qubein had to say.

Among the tidbits I gained from listening were these:

* As long as you're going to think, think big.

* Being a great communicator is not as important as connecting with people.

* Reputation is what people think you are. Character is what God knows you are.

* Unfortunately, the only people in our society who welcome change are babies in wet diapers.

* Your value is measured by the size of problems you are capable of solving.

* Young people are like airplanes. You only hear about the ones that crash. You don't hear about all the ones who do great things.

And this final bit of advice that is something that I'll be attempting to follow in my rewirement:

* As adults, a third of your life is in earning, a third of your life ought to be involved in learning and a third of your life should be involved in serving.

My only regret is that I never got to have Qubein as my boss at any college where I have been employed.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

On obtaining this informative CD, as well as Biro's other many excellent programs and books, please click:

<https://www.3251.sslldomain.com/connectec/secure/biro/order.htm>

In addition, should you wish to book Biro for your next meeting, seminar, event or conference, please click:

<http://www.briandbiro.com/about.htm>

You won't go wrong!

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5. TV alert

A. Just in time for your New Year's Eve parties is the fact that you'll be able to catch 30 MINUTE MEALS and get suggestions from Rachael Ray about what to serve . . . Saturday at 10 a.m. on FOOD NETWORK.

B. Faith Ford and Cameron Daddo star in A KISS AT MIDNIGHT, a TV-movie about two rivals in the matchmaking biz who eventually fall in love--against their better judgment . . . Saturday at 9 p.m. on HALLMARK.

C. NEIL YOUNG: HEART OF GOLD captures the singer in a 2006 concert . . . Saturday at 9 p.m. on VH1.

D. The docu-comedy, SUMMER HEIGHTS HIGH, concludes with the opening of Mr. G's musical . . . I've been watching this warped series and have found it to be surprisingly entertaining . . . Sunday at 10:30 p.m. on HBO.

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6. Why men don't write advice columns

* Letter to the advice columnist:

Dear Walter,

I hope you can help me here. The other day, I set off for work leaving my husband in the house watching the TV as usual. I hadn't driven more than a mile down the road when the engine conked out and the car shuddered to a halt. I walked back home to get my husband's help.

When I got home I couldn't believe my eyes. He was in our bedroom with the neighbors' daughter. I'm 32, my husband is 34, and the neighbors' daughter is 22. We have been married for ten years.

When I confronted him, he broke down and admitted that they had been having an affair for the past six months. I told him to stop or I'd leave him. He was let go from his job six months ago, and he says he has been feeling increasingly depressed and worthless. I love him very much, but ever since I gave him the ultimatum he has become increasingly distant. He won't go to counseling, and I'm afraid I can't get through to him anymore.

Can you please help?

Sincerely,
Sheila

* His response:

Dear Sheila:

A car stalling after being driven a short distance can be caused by a variety of faults with the engine. Start by checking that there is no debris in the fuel line. If it's clear, check the vacuum pipes and hoses on the intake manifold and also check all grounding wires.

If none of these approaches solves the problem, it could be that the fuel pump itself is faulty, causing low delivery pressure to the injectors. Mainly have your air filters cleaned or replaced.

I hope this helps with your problem.

Walter

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7. Websites

A. You can now watch top feature-length documentaries for free, share them with friends or even make your own virtual movie theater or yourself or friends by clicking:

<http://www.snalfilms.com>

This is an amazing website that I just discovered . . . I also put together a compilation of five interesting films that I thought you might like to see, including:

* SUPER SIZE ME

Filmmaker Morgan Spurlock unravels the American obesity epidemic by interviewing experts nationwide and by subjecting himself to a "McDonald's only" diet for thirty days straight.

* PAPER CLIPS

Whitwell Middle School in rural Tennessee is the setting for this documentary about an extraordinary experiment in Holocaust education.

* ORTHODOX STANCE

Dmitriy Salita, a 25 year-old Russian immigrant, is making history as a top professional boxer and a rigorously observant Jew.

* WHALES IN CRISIS

Embark on a globe-spanning journey with National Geographic to discover the most recent findings about these majestic, highly intelligent creatures.

* NEW ENGLAND HOCKEY: LIFE AT THE RINK

Winters in New England are long, dark and very cold; and for most New Englanders, the one thing that keeps them going is a sport that has roots deeper than any other--Hockey.

To view any and/or all of the above, just click:

<http://www.clearspring.com/widgets/494037af58fb5b39?p=&flv=title%3DBLAINESWORLD%252520choices%25252Ftop%252520docs%26ids%3D26%257C56%257C130%257C314%257C60%257C>

B. For years, unauthorized Monty Python stuff has been posted on YouTube . . . however, that will no longer be the case since there is now an "official" YouTube site devoted just to Monty Python:

<http://www.youtube.com/montypython>

You can view more than two dozen high-quality clips from their films and TV shows, interviews with members John Cleese and Eric Idle, and rarely seen home movies.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blaineworld.net>

To view some of my favorite websites, click "Blaine's Best" on the left, then "Websites" . . . I'm in the process of revising these, but in the meantime, please go to letter "R" for a free reverse phone directory . . . this will enable you provide a phone number, then

get contact information about the person and/or company.

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8. Computer tip

FREE downloads for you computer, iPod or Apple TV that are completely legal can be obtained from the iTunes store by clicking:

<http://www.itsfreedownloads.com/>

You'll find lots of free music and free videos . . . in addition, you can keep up with latest free iTunes downloads by subscribing to the RSS feed or the email mailing list . . . you can even use the free iTunes web widget and add it to your MySpace profile, Facebook applications, iGoogle homepage or many other websites and blogs.

And if you're looking at even more free music than what iTunes has, then please click:

<http://www.jdoqocy.com/click-2147028-10364977?url=http://www.emusic.com/dailydownloads/toolbar/main.html>

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9. My kind of obituary

James William "Jim" Adams lived life to the fullest--even after he was dead.

His final act was to have his family send the following obituary to the local newspaper--the Casper (WY) STAR TRIBUNE--that was published September 15, 2008:

A celebration of life for James William "Jim" Adams, 53, will be held at a later date.

He died Tuesday, Sept. 9, 2008 at Memorial Hospital of Converse County in Douglas.

Jim, who had tired of reading obituaries noting other's courageous battles with this or that disease, wanted it known that he lost his battle. It was primarily as a result of being stubborn and not following doctor's orders or maybe for just living life a little too hard for better than five decades.

He was born June 8, 1955 in Garrison, ND, the son of James William and Ruby Helen (Clark) Adams.

He was sadly deprived of his final wish, which was to be run over by a beer truck on the way to the liquor store to buy booze for a date. True to his personal style, he spent his final hours joking with medical personnel, cussing and begging for narcotics and bargaining with God to look over his loving dog, Biscuit, and his family.

He would like to thank all "his ladies" for putting up with him the last 30 years.

During his life, he excelled at anything he put his mind to. He loved to hear and tell jokes and spin tales of grand adventures he may or may not have had.

He is survived by five sons, Jeremiah Adams and his wife, Nicole, Mica Olivas, Wade Olivas, Brice Simpson and Cole Adams; sister, Jerri Giegerich; two ex-wives, Vickie Harrison and Marilyn Williams; four grandchildren; two nieces; and two great-nieces.

He was preceded in death by his parents and a brother-in-law.

In lieu of flowers, he asks that you make a sizeable purchase at your favorite watering hole, get rip roaring drunk and tell the stories he no longer can.

Gorman Funeral Homes is in charge of the arrangements.

SOURCE:

<http://casperstartribune.net/articles/2008/09/15/news/obituaries/a8e87b45d855b1be872574c4007aa6d2.txt>

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10. A quote I like

There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.--Albert Einstein (1879-1955), German-born theoretical physicist best known for his theory of relativity

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11. Thought for the day

Santa Claus, the true story

I remember my first Christmas party with Grandma. I was just a kid. I remember tearing across town on my bike to visit her on the day my big sister dropped the bomb: "There is no Santa Claus," she jeered. "Even dummies know that!"

My grandma was not the gushy kind, never had been. I fled to her that day because I knew she would be straight with me. I knew Grandma always told the truth, and I knew that the truth always went down a whole lot easier when swallowed with one of her world-famous cinnamon buns.

Grandma was home, and the buns were still warm. Between bites, I told her everything. She was ready for me.

"No Santa Claus!" she snorted. "Ridiculous! Don't believe it. That rumor has been going around for years, and it makes me mad, plain mad. Now, put on your coat, and let's go."

"Go? Go where, Grandma?" I asked. I hadn't even finished my second cinnamon bun.

"Where" turned out to be Kerby's General Store, the one store in town that had a little bit of just about everything. As we walked through its doors, Grandma handed me ten dollars. That was a bundle in those days. "Take this money and buy something for someone who needs it. I'll wait for you in the car." Then she turned and walked out of Kerby's.

I was only eight years old. I'd often gone shopping with my mother, but never had I shopped for anything all by myself. The store seemed big and crowded, full of people scrambling to finish their Christmas shopping. For a few moments I just stood there, confused, clutching that ten-dollar bill, wondering what to buy, and who on earth to buy it for.

I thought of everybody I knew: my family, my friends, my neighbors, the kids at school, the people who went to my church. I was just about thought out, when I suddenly thought of Bobbie Decker. He was a kid with bad breath and messy hair, and he sat right behind me in Mrs. Pollock's grade-two class.

Bobbie Decker didn't have a coat. I knew that because he never went out for recess during the winter. His mother always wrote a note, telling the teacher that he had a cough, but all we kids knew that Bobbie Decker didn't have a cough, and he didn't have a coat. I fingered the ten-dollar bill with growing excitement. I would buy Bobbie Decker a coat. I settled on a red corduroy one that had a hood to it. It looked real warm, and he would like that.

"Is this a Christmas present for someone?" the lady behind the counter asked kindly, as I laid my ten dollars down.

"Yes," I replied shyly. "It's ... For Bobbie."

The nice lady smiled at me. I didn't get any change, but she put

the coat in a bag and wished me a Merry Christmas.

That evening, Grandma helped me wrap the coat in Christmas paper and ribbons, and write, "To Bobbie, From Santa Claus" on it -- Grandma said that Santa always insisted on secrecy. Then she drove me over to Bobbie Decker's house, explaining as we went that I was now and forever officially one of Santa's helpers.

Grandma parked down the street from Bobbie's house, and she and I crept noiselessly and hid in the bushes by his front walk. Then Grandma gave me a nudge. "All right, Santa Claus," she whispered, "get going."

I took a deep breath, dashed for his front door, threw the present down on his step, pounded his doorbell and flew back to the safety of the bushes and Grandma. Together we waited breathlessly in the darkness for the front door to open. Finally it did, and there stood Bobbie.

Forty years haven't dimmed the thrill of those moments spent shivering, beside my grandma, in Bobbie Decker's bushes. That night, I realized that those awful rumors about Santa Claus were just what Grandma said they were: ridiculous.

Santa was alive and well, and we were on his team.

Author unknown
(if you know who wrote this and/or the source, please let me know)

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12. Advance planning department

A. Do try to listen to this new radio show:

The Medical View: East Meets West with Doctors Beth Dupree, Amy Harvey and Deirdre Walsh

Saturdays from 10-11 a.m. on 860 AM in Philadelphia

Or listen via the Internet by clicking:

<http://www.wwdbam.com/>

B. Just in time to bring in the new year and release holiday stresses:

Restorative Yoga workshop with Kathy Russo returns Sunday, December 28, 2-4 p.m. at the Princeton Center for Yoga & Health

A great way to round out your holiday week. Relax, renew, nourish yourself. Bring your holiday guests; they will thank you for this gift!

To register, please click:

<http://www.princetonyoga.com>

C. Remember: Laughter is good for the soul.

So what better way than to welcome in the New Year than be attending a live comedy performance? Some of the best can be viewed at the following locations:

Bucks/Montgomery County:

<http://www.comedycabaret.com/doylestown.html>

Greater Northeast Philly:

<http://www.comedycabaret.com/northeast.html>

South Jersey:

<http://www.comedycabaret.com/cherryhill.html>

Delaware:

<http://www.comedycabaret.com/delaware.html>

D. Best-selling author James McBride joins those in the Princeton area for the paperback release of his highly acclaimed novel SONG YET SUNG. He will be there for an entertaining and enlightening discussion and book signing.

Monday, Jan 26 at 7:30 p.m.

Barnes & Noble Booksellers
MarketFair Mall
3535 US Route 1 South
Princeton, NJ
609.716.1570

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PS. Hoping that you join me in celebrating ALL the holidays (you get more food and gifts that way), may you and your family have a Merry Christmas . . . and to help make that possible, consider copying my plan:

I'm going to put mistletoe in my back pocket so all the people who hate me can kiss my butt!

And on the subject of celebrations, don't forget to have a Happy Kwanzaa too!

Also, please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . in addition, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#637

12.15.2008

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1. Reflections

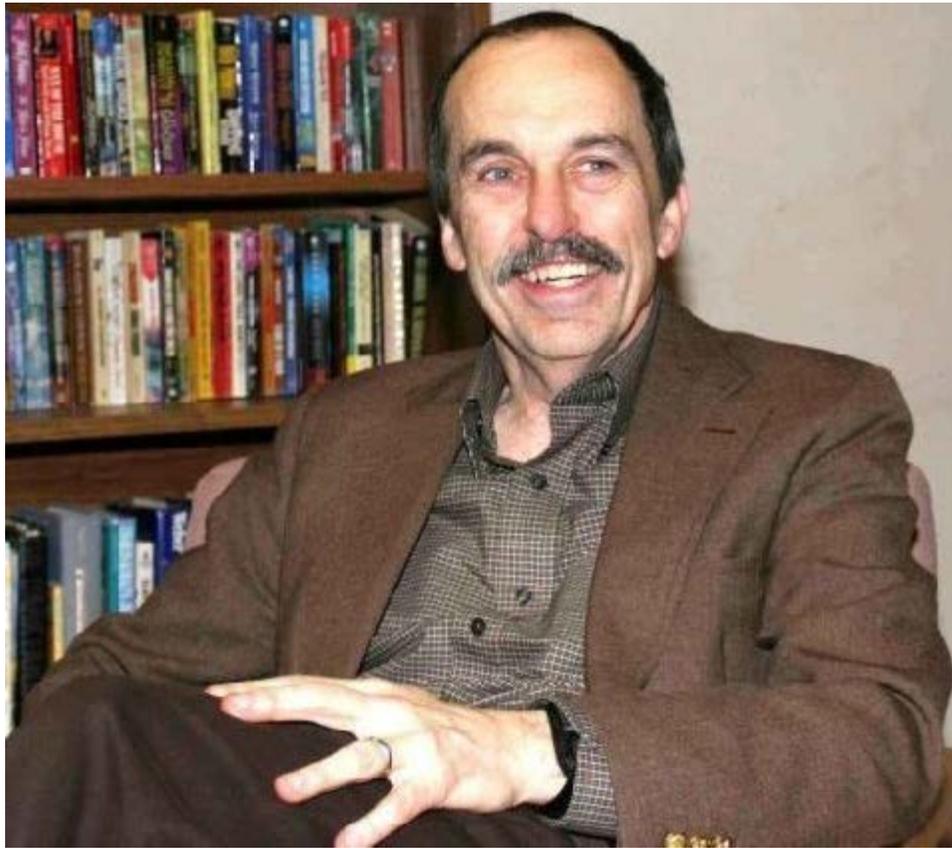
A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I had a memorable day as we celebrated the fifth anniversary of our first date . . . on Saturday, we managed to get down to our new home in Biltmore Lake, North Carolina in about 12 hours . . . our cats survived the trip even better than we thought they would . . . there was only one hitch along the way; one of us--and I won't mention any names (only initials: CG)--got a ticket while speeding through Virginia . . . that's NOT a good idea, as we found out.

We further discovered something else; i.e., that navigator systems aren't completely reliable . . . our TomTom stopped working about 3/4 into our trip . . . fortunately, my friend George in Pennsylvania managed to guide us the rest of the way via Mapquest . . . but what we learned was always to have backup directions . . . you never know when you'll need them.

Just about the rest of our time, both before leaving and after getting here, has been spent either packing or repacking . . . we seem to be making progress, yet there still remains much to be done.

B. On the last night of my teaching a class at Bucks County Community College, I threw a party for many of my former students . . . and some longtime friends, too . . . over 50 folks made it to the Fireside Lounge where we had some great desserts from Sam's Club . . . my friend Kevin Jameson did a super job as MC and another friend, Michael Lazanski, took care of the refreshments . . . MANY THANKS to them both.

Frankly, I was a bit embarrassed to hear the many gracious things that were said about me--but flattered too . . . that's yours truly sitting down in the middle of the festivities:



And SPECIAL THANKS to Pat Hannigan for taking that picture . . . he's the same guy who recently took the beautiful pictures for my daughter Risa's wedding . . . should you be in the need of a great photographer, he can be reached at 215.968.1615.

C. Check Section 7A of this week's issue for a website you won't want to miss (information on FREE shipping for the holidays, as well as for other great deals) . . . I realize that because of your busy schedule, you may not get to read every issue and/or you might skim over certain sections . . . if that be the case, here's an idea: save past issues until you can get to review them thoroughly, even if just for the websites that are typically mentioned in Section 7 . . . then when you have some spare time to surf the Internet, you can get caught up on some good stuff that you might otherwise have missed.

D. I NEED YOUR HELP!

My business cards are outdated, given my new phone numbers . . . in addition, the back part--with the important phone numbers--needs changing because Bush will be stepping down and Obama will be taking over.

And though I will still be a professor at Bucks County Community College through this spring semester, that will be changing too . . . so I've been trying to come up with something a little different to put on the front side; e.g., to describe me.

My goal is to come up with something creative that would also serve as a conversation-starter when I meet new folks.

Three possibilities I'm considering:

1. Something that uses the words "retirement" or "rewiring" because that's what I like to tell people that I'm doing, as opposed to retiring . . . I am looking to do some new things and move in different directions--as opposed to just continuing my college teaching . . . so I could perhaps call myself a:

Rewirement Expert-in-Training?
Rewiring Expert-in-Training?
Rewirement Guru-in-Training?
Rewiring Guru-in-Training?

Or is there anything else along these lines that you might suggest?

2. To call myself a:

Bon Vivant?

If you're not familiar with that French term, here's how it is defined in my online dictionary:

Main Entry: bon vi·vant

Function: noun

Pronunciation: "bän-ve-'vänt, "bO n-ve-'vä n

Inflected Form(s): plural bons vivants/"bän-ve-'vän(t)s, "bO n-ve-'vä n (z)/or bon vivants/same/

Etymology: French, literally, good liver

a person having cultivated, refined and sociable tastes, especially in respect to food and drink

Also:

A person who enjoys the good things in life, especially good food and drink
en.wiktionary.org/wiki/bon_vivant

Any reaction to this one?

3. Or I'm also open to any other suggestions, recommendations, comments, etc. that you might make as to other descriptions.

Thanks, in advance, for any feedback that you may care to share.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Warren Fluharty--our decorator. Here's what Cynthia had to say about him:

Warren came to us via a recommendation from Scott and Harry, two of our neighbors.

When we first met him, we were impressed by his quiet and confident demeanor. Since we have been working with him, he has come through in so many ways. His knowledge and intuition in regards to decorating a home is amazing. We have trusted him with a range of important decisions . . . from choosing the color of our walls, to the curtains, to smaller, more practical issues like where to put a garbage can when there is no space for it, etc.

Warren has also been extremely reliable. We go shopping together for many small items or at other times, he just picks stuff up for us.

Warren chose the small amounts of furniture that we did buy with amazing expertise, and then knew exactly where it would look the best. His ideas are creative and invaluable. He is also the person who has visited us the most in our new home. It is always fun to see him at our door. Thanks so much, Warren . . . this was one great decision to choose you as our decorator.

Warren also recommended Adam King, his store manager, to help us unpack when Cynthia came to North Carolina to meet the moving van. He has also been invaluable to us. His fun, warm personality became immediately apparent. He is the kind of person who looks around, sees what needs to be done and just does it.

For more information, feel free to call Warren at his cell number: 828.273.1101 or stop by to see him (or Adam) at his store, Structure, located on 6 Fairview Road in Asheville . . . you won't go wrong!

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2. FYI

My friend Earl in Pennsylvania tells me that the best thing he has every found to remove scuff marks from walls is a product called Magic Eraser.

I did some more research on the product and found out that it has many other uses . . . for more information, please click:

http://www.mrclean.com/en_US/tips.shtml#eraser

MR. CURIOUS HERE:

Has anybody else used this product? If so, what was/is your reaction to it?

FYI, part 2

* Mel in Pennsylvania:

It [<http://www.FreeConferenceCall.com>] works great. I can't figure out how they make any money!

Also, for \$9/month, they will save the transcripts of your conversations as MP3 files for download, and for another fee, they will transcribe them.

A good deal!

* Rabbi Katz in New York:

Reba and I wish you and your dear wife our very best wishes on your retirement that is in the offing and your move to your new residence. Reba and I have been following your growth and achievements, and we cannot help but be grateful and impressed by your achievements and your wonderful way of making your words a source of wisdom and encouragement for your "congregation". We send you our affectionate regards and good wishes. I'm still your Rabbi.

* Rick in Pennsylvania:

I have never "gotten around to" thanking you for sharing your thoughts

and observations (and occasional "ramblings") on a regular basis. I always marvel at the amount of activity you manage to squeeze into any given day/week and STILL find time to then WRITE about it all!

Best wishes to you and Cynthia on your relocation, and of course, for the Holidays. May your new year be one of good health and good fortune.

And BTW: I took the liberty of passing along the long press release about "grief and the holidays" to a friend who has struggled with the loss of her son the past two years. I am sure it will be helpful to her.

Take care . . . all the best!

* Jack in Pennsylvania:

Facebook and MySpace are used more and more by employers to monitor past behaviors of potential employees. Colleges are also doing the same scrutiny. Just remember, whatever is placed onto Facebook or MySpace can be viewed by anyone because it is public domain. Text messages on a cell phone are public domain as well. Posting anything to a website or text messaging is the same as standing on a corner and shouting out for all to hear.

As an aside, monitoring the Internet usage of sexual offenders found that 100% of sexual perpetrators in Pennsylvania were found to routinely view MySpace and 75% of the same convicted routinely view Facebook.

* Jeannie in Pennsylvania:

I have enjoyed reading David Sedaris too and prefer his one person shows. He usually comes to Philadelphia (I just saw him this winter) from France and has the audience in stitches. Probably saw him 3 times, including once in Princeton, and absolutely recommend his live shows.

* Jody in Pennsylvania:

I love David Sedaris, have read all of his books (Me Talk Pretty One Day is my favorite) and saw him at the Keswick Theatre in Glenside, PA last year. He is also regular contributor to NPR. His sister Amy Sedaris, is an actress and comedy writer as well. Just saw her on the Letterman show.

Glad you enjoyed his new book and don't wait to read his previous selections.

* THANKS to the same Jody--and to Walter in Pennsylvania also--for forwarding this important warning about that very same subject; i.e., forwarding email:

As you know I rarely forward emails, although occasionally I will. However, after having read the following I will not forward nor respond to fwd emails. The email came from a reliable family member who researches everything.

Subject: FYI

As of today, I WILL SEND NO MORE OF THESE "forward to" EMAILS TO ANYONE. This also applies to your cell phone texts that ask you to forward to everyone you know! They're making money off of the phone numbers you forward to.

Now . . . memorize what follows:

- 1) Any time you see an email that says forward this on to "10" of your friends, sign this petition, or you'll get bad luck, good luck, or whatever, it almost always has an email tracker program attached that tracks the cookies and emails of those folks you forward to. The host sender is getting a copy each time it gets forwarded and then is able to get lists of "active " emails addresses to use in SPAM emails, or sell to other spammers.
- 2) Almost all emails that ask you to add your name and forward on to others are similar to that mass letter years ago that asked people to send business cards to the little kid in Florida who wanted to break the Guinness Book of Records for the most cards. All it was, and all any of this type of email is, is a way to get names and "cookie" tracking information for telemarketers and spammers--to validate active email accounts for their own profitable purposes. You can do your friends and family members a GREAT favor by sending this information to them; you will be providing a service to your friends, and will be rewarded by not getting thousands of spam emails in the future! If you have been sending out (FORWARDING) the above kinds of email, now you know why you get so much SPAM! Do yourself a favor and STOP adding your name(s) to those types of listings regardless how inviting they might sound!

You may think you are supporting a GREAT cause, but you are NOT in the long run. Instead, you will be getting tons of junk mail later! Plus, we are helping the spammers get rich! Let's don't make it easy for them!

Also, email petitions are NOT acceptable to Congress or any other organization. To be acceptable, petitions must have a signed signature and full address of the person signing the petition. Read the full story here:

<http://www.snopes.com/inboxer/petition/internet.asp>

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3. Business travel

Anyone traveling on business for my college must fill out an expense report. A field on the form asks for "name on credit card."

One Einstein entered "MasterCard."

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4. Reviews

A. If Vince Vaughn is in a film, I'm usually going to laugh . . . that again was the case in his latest effort, FOUR CHRISTMASSES, where he and Reese Witherspoon play a happily unmarried couple who find themselves having to spend time with their divorced parents . . . the beginning was very funny; however, by midpoint, it started to drag . . . and I did find the ending to be far too predictable . . . reviews from most critics were not very favorable; however, from a box office standpoint, FOUR CHRISTMASSES has been a big

hit . . . rated PG-13.

B. MAMMA MIA! is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #617 follows:

MAMMA MIA! was one of my favorite shows . . . I don't know if I would rank the movie version quite that high, but that said, I'd still recommend you see it—especially if you share my appreciation of the musical group ABBA . . . there are many great songs and a lot of energetic dancing in the story about a girl trying to find her real father . . . if you skip the slight storyline, you'll have a fun time . . . Meryl Streep will surprise you with her singing (I believe she did it herself) . . . Pierce Brosnan, on the other hand, doesn't have the greatest voice, but he still manages to deliver a winning performance as one of Streep's past lovers . . . I also liked the work of Amanda Seyfried, an actress who reminded me of a young Goldie Hawn . . . rated PG-13.

C. I think I've enjoyed everything written by Nicholas Sparks . . . so whenever a new book by him comes out, I put it high on my list of books that I want to read.

That's exactly what happened with his latest, THE LUCKY ONE . . . I got a copy shortly after its September publication date and just now got to finish it . . . ironically, it was the first book I read in my new residence in North Carolina--and also the setting for the story.

And what a story there is . . . a U.S. marine finds a photograph of an attractive young woman . . . he attempts to find the owner, but when he can't, he keeps the photo . . . doing so, he immediately begins to hit a stretch of good luck . . . he eventually decides to find the woman and when he does, he can't believe the attraction that he feels toward her.

No wonder, given this one description by the author:

* Seeing Beth last Sunday night while she was dropping Ben off had done it. Wearing shorts and a tank top, she'd stepped out onto the porch and waved at Ben, flashing this kind of Farah Fawcett smile. Even if it was directed at Ben, it drove home the fact that she was getting better-looking with every passing year.

By the same token, Logan (the marine) attracted Beth:

* No, she wanted Logan here because he was good at listening, and she knew he wouldn't interrupt her rant, or try to solve her problem, or get bored if she said, "I can't believe he actually did that," a hundred times. He would let her vent."

I really got into the two main characters, Beth and Logan, but also became drawn into the stories of others--including Beth's mom and her way of expressing things:

* I knew within a few days that he [her eventual husband] was the one for me. I know how crazy that sounds. But being with him was like toast and butter from the very beginning.

Other memorable characters included Beth's ex-husband, her son and even Logan's dog Zeus . . . this was a very romantic book and a real page-turner until the end of the story . . . that was when a storm

set in and for some reason, it felt like I was rereading another Sparks' bestseller: NIGHTS IN RODANTHE.

Give the story a different ending, and I would strongly recommend that you read THE LUCKY ONE . . . as it is, I still think you'll like it--though it just misses being one of the author's bests.

D. I heard the CD version of FINDING FAITH IN DIFFICULT, written and read by Iyanla Vanzant (author of a book I previously enjoyed, YESTERDAY I CRIED) . . . this one was equally as good.

As the author notes:

* Faith is the breakfast of champions. It is the staple diet of those fearless enough to see the invisible, hear the inaudible and attempt the impossible.

Now I don't know if I'll be able to succeed in the latter category, yet I do feel inspired to try . . . the way to do this is to follow the saying that Iyanla's father had:

* [Do} whatever it takes.

There were many other tidbits that I gained from ON FINDING FAITH IN DIFFICULT TIMES; among them:

* Don't focus on what we don't want. Instead, we must focus on what we desire.

* When you find yourself in a disharmonious situation, ask yourself: "What can I do or give that will bring harmony to the situation?"

* One of my teachers once told me, "You'll never know what kind of soldier you are until you go into battle."

* We never really need faith until a storm enters our lives. Let faith be your umbrella.

I also liked how Vanzant ended the program when she said:

* I think of faith as my American Express card. I never leave home without it.

In addition, I liked the guided visualization exercises that were included with the program.

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5. TV alert

A. In the mood for some holiday music? Check out FAITH HILL, JOY TO THE WORLD: A SOUNDSTAGE SPECIAL EVENT for the country star's rendition of seasonal favorites, including "Holly, Jolly Christmas," "Little Drummer Boy" and as might be expected, "Joy to the World" . . . Thursday at 10 p.m. on PBS . . . check local listings because PBS dates and times often vary.

B. GREATEST HOLIDAY MOMENTS: TV & FILM COUNTDOWN includes such classics as the ringing bells in IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

and Rudolph's blinking nose . . . Friday at 8 p.m. on NBC.

C. **BREAKING THE HUDDLE: THE INTEGRATION OF COLLEGE FOOTBALL** is a documentary that recalls the effects of the civil rights movement on the amateur gridiron . . . Saturday at 11 a.m. on HBO.

D. **CHRISTMAS IN WONDERLAND** stars Patrick Swayze (and here's hope that is doing OK) and Carmen Electra in a misadventure about what two tykes would do with a million bucks--and no parental supervision . . . Saturday at 8 p.m. on ABC FAMILY.

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6. CNN interview

A female CNN journalist in Jerusalem (in December, 2008) heard about a very old Jewish man who had been going to the Western Wall to pray, twice a day, every day, for a long, long time.

So she went to check it out and as she arrived at the Western Wall, there he was, walking slowly up to the holy site.

She watched him pray and after about 45 minutes, when he turned to leave, using a cane and moving very slowly, she approached him for an interview.

"Pardon me, sir, I'm Rebecca Smith from CNN. What is your name?"

"Morris Fishbien," he replied.

"Sir, how long have you been coming to the Western Wall and praying?"

"For about 60 years."

"60 years," said Smith. "That's amazing! What do you pray for?"

Fishbien answered, "I pray for peace between the Christians, Jews and the Muslims.

"I pray for all the wars and all the hatred to stop.

"I pray for all our children to grow up safely as responsible adults and to love their fellow man."

Smith was clearly impressed. So she then asked, "And how do you feel after doing this for 60 years?"

"Like I'm talking to a frigging wall."

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7. Websites

A. Thanks to Donna in New Jersey for providing the following website that shows you what online stores will provide FREE online shopping this coming Thursday, December 18:

<http://www.freeshipping.org/>

Many places are offering this, including Amazon.com, Banana Republic, Best Buy, Gap, Nieman Marcus, Nike, Nordstrom, Walmart and countless others.

Even better: Check the bottom of the above page for other coupons and coupon codes, including those from Brookstone, Chico's (50% off orders of \$100 or more), Kohl's, Office Depot, etc.

You can also subscribe for free coupon alerts as they become available.

B. THE FORBIDDEN SNL SKIT

Apparently, SNL did a "Bailout" skit, which has created some incredible problems for NBC.

They have pulled the video and apparently gone after anyone who put the video out there because the video has all but disappeared off the Internet.

Yet because I thought you'd find it both funny and of interest, here is one copy still out there:

<http://msunderestimated.com/SNLBailoutSkit.wmv>

Methinks you should probably try to view it in the near future, given that I don't know how long it will be up.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blaineworld.net>

I appreciate the fact that you're a reader of this missive . . . to see another FREE publication that methinks you'd like, go to "Blaine's Best" on the left, then "This is True" . . . you'll find a link to a weekly syndicated newspaper column by Colorado humorist that reports on bizarre-but-true news items . . . what makes it so fun is the ending commentary by Randy.

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8. Computer tip

To give you the flexibility to access and control your PCs or Macs from anywhere, please click:

<http://www.logmein.com>

You'll be able to operate a remote computer exactly as if you're sitting in front of it, whether that computer is next door or even in Asheville!

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9. Values of exercising

In contemplation of my upcoming rewirement, I've been doing a lot

of research about increasing the amount of exercise that I do . . . here's just a small sampling of what folks have been telling me:

The advantage of exercising every day is so when you die, your friends can say, "Well she looks good, doesn't she?"

I like long walks, especially when they are taken by people who annoy me.

They say that doing some walking can add 5 minutes to your life for every day you do it. This can enable you, at 85 years old, to spend up to an additional eight months in a nursing home at \$11,000 per month.

My grandpa started walking five miles a day when he was 70. Now he's 77, and we don't have any idea where the hell he is.

The only reason I would take up walking is so that I could hear heavy breathing again.

I have to walk early in the morning before my brain figures out what I'm doing.

I joined a health club last year, spent about 400 bucks. Haven't lost a pound. Apparently you have to go there.

Every time I hear the dirty word "exercise," I wash my mouth out with chocolate.

I do have flabby thighs, but fortunately my stomach covers them.

If you are going to try cross-country skiing, start with a small country.

I know I got a lot of exercise the last few years . . . just getting over the hill.

We all get heavier as we get older because there's a lot more information in our heads. That's my story, and I'm sticking with it.

Every time I start thinking too much about how I look, I just find a Happy Hour and by the time I leave, I look just fine.

And one final thought of no particular significance: You could run this over to your friends, but why not just email this over to them?

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10. A quote I like

Santa Claus has the right idea. Visit people once a year.--Victor Borge (1909-2000), Danish-American humorist, entertainer and pianist

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11. Thought for the day

The best time of my life

It was June 15, and in two days I would be turning thirty. I was insecure about entering a new decade of my life and feared that my best years were now behind me.

My daily routine included going to the gym for a workout before going to work. Every morning I would see my friend Nicholas at the gym. He was seventy-nine years old and in terrific shape. As I greeted Nicholas on this particular day, he noticed I wasn't full of my usual vitality and asked if there was anything wrong. I told him I was feeling anxious about turning thirty. I wondered how I would look back on my life once I reached Nicholas's age, so I asked him, "What was the best time of your life?"

Without hesitation, Nicholas replied, "Well, Joe, this is my philosophical answer to your philosophical question:

"When I was a child in Austria and everything was taken care of for me and I was nurtured by my parents, that was the best time of my life.

"When I was going to school and learning the things I know today, that was the best time of my life.

"When I got my first job and had responsibilities and got paid for my efforts, that was the best time of my life.

"When I met my wife and fell in love, that was the best time of my life.

"The Second World War came, and my wife and I had to flee Austria to save our lives. When we were together and safe on a ship bound for North America, that was the best time of my life.

"When we came to Canada and started a family, that was the best time of my life.

"When I was a young father, watching my children grow up, that was the best time of my life.

"And now, Joe, I am seventy-nine years old. I have my health, I feel good and I am in love with my wife just as I was when we first met. This is the best time of my life."

Author unknown

(if you know who wrote this and/or the source, please let me know)

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12. Advance planning department

A. Steve in Pennsylvania shared this information about upcoming performance dates for Justin Solonyinka, his future son-in-law:

* Wednesday, December 31st, 2008

Performance at the UUCLV as part of First Night Bethlehem
424 Center Street, Bethlehem, PA
610.866.7652

Justin will perform a solo show.

Then at 8 p.m., catch Acoustic Bender at the same location.

* Sunday, February 22nd, 2009

Acoustic Blender CD Release Party
at the world-famous Godfrey Daniels Listening Club
7 East Fourth Street, Bethlehem PA
7 p.m.
610.867.2390

Acoustic Blender will perform a live all-ages show.

To download some of Justin's music and/or for more information about him, please click:

<http://www.tinylightsmusic.com/>

B. Michael in Pennsylvania:

Dear Friends, here is the Book Group lineup for Spring 2009:

We meet in the Rollins Center Quiet Study Room, next to the Fireside Lounge at Bucks County Community College, Newtown, PA from 7:30 to 9 p.m. All are welcome to join us on the second Thursday of each month to share your thoughts and questions about any or all of the selections. For more information, call 215.968.8164 or send email to: hennese@bucks.edu

January 8: OPEN ME by Sunshine O'Donnell (2007), at which time the author will join our discussion!

From Booklist:

The employment of children as part of a centuries-old, ritualistic profession, albeit illegal, puts a compellingly odd twist on the subject of child abuse in the story of *Mem*, a young "star" mourner, paid to weep and wail at funerals. O'Donnell's meticulously researched first novel juxtaposes ancient texts, including a ninth-century T'ang dynasty poem, novelistic exposition, twentieth-century newspaper reports, and historical notes on such weeping maids and wailing women still employed by funeral directors today when too few mourners appear at burials or when surviving relatives pay someone else to perform their grief. Many states have banned the practice because of the training methods inflicted on little girls by mothers and grandmothers who teach them to weep on cue (e.g., forcing five-year-olds to fondle corpses, abandonment because of inadequate performance). Perhaps the emotional abuse of ritual humiliation and degradation within this cult of tears is the novel's most disturbing aspect. A mother's love for her daughter, however, is what ultimately grabs the reader. Not for delicate sensibilities.

Future dates are as follows:

February 12: ISLAND: THE COMPLETE STORIES by Alistair McCloud

March 12: THE SOLOIST: A LOST DREAM, A UNLIKELY FRIENDSHIP AND THE REDEMPTIVE POWER OF MUSIC by Steve Lopez

April 9: A MERCY by Toni Morrison

May 14: LITTLE HEATHENS: HARD TIMES AND HIGH SPIRITS ON AN IOWA FARM DURING THE GREAT DEPRESSION by Mildred Armstrong Kalish

June 11: LOVING FRANK by Nancy Horan

PS. To those like me who celebrate ALL holidays (more gifts and great food that way!), here's to a happy Chanukah for you and your family . . . this wintertime Jewish Festival of Lights, which celebrates religious freedom, begin this coming Sunday and runs through December 29.

Now if my spelling of the above holiday looks wrong to you, I should tell you that's the version that I grew up with--and for some reason, it still looks right to me . . . however, that said, Hanukkah is the preferred spelling used by the Library of Congress and is now the most popular one . . . to those wanting still more information on this weighty topic, please click:

<http://joemaller.com/2005/12/21/sixteen-ways-to-spell-hanukkah/>

Also, please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . and make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#636

12.8.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I spent a rare week apart . . . it was the longest that we have ever been separated since we met nearly five years ago . . . she was in North Carolina, setting up our home . . . everything went smoothly; i.e., except for the day that the movers got there . . . it seems that the truck was too large to make one of the turns into our street . . . so they had to back out the development, get a replacement truck, unload and reload everything, and then come back to make the delivery . . . fortunately, this was accomplished within a relatively short time frame and all turned out well.

Despite this blip in the process, we were very pleased with our movers and would recommend them strongly . . . from when they came to help us load until the very end of the process, they couldn't have been more helpful . . . they were also extremely careful with all our stuff, as well as friendly . . . and perhaps best of all for us was the fact that the final bill was actually less than the estimate . . . for more information, ask for Andy Beal . . . he's the vice president of sales at 800.326.4736, ext. 557; abeal@bohrensmoving.com.

B. I did get to see one show in Cynthia's absence: PLAID TIDINGS, a special holiday edition of FOREVER PLAID at the Off-Broadstreet Theatre (see also the BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD, immediately after Section 1D) in Hopewell, NJ . . . this is a cute musical about four singers who are tragically killed, yet get a second chance to make a farewell performance.

Tom Orr and Jim Petro, two of my favorite local performers, were both outstanding in their roles . . . in addition, I liked the work of Christopher Tolomero and Timothy Walton as the other members of the quartet--and would welcome the chance to get to see them again.

Everything about this production had me smiling, including a great sing-along number at the end of Act I: "Christmas Calypso" . . . do try to catch the show before its limited run concludes on December 21 . . . for more information, please click: <http://www.offbroadstreet.com/>

C. I managed to make it to a Growth Coach mini workshop on Friday, presented by my good friend Kevin Jameson . . . I learned a lot, in particular by going through some of the exercises that he ran.

In one, those in attendance were asked to write their epitaphs . . . try that sometime, even if just by yourself . . . it really gets you thinking . . . in another, Kevin asked all to respond to this powerful question: If I were diagnosed with an incurable disease and only had 6 months to live, what 3 things would I do differently?

He also had us complete a DISC Dimensions of Behavior Map . . . this enabled us to discover our unique behavioral strengths . . . there were four possibilities: Dominance, Influence, Steadiness and Conscientiousness . . . can you guess where I scored highest?

If you thought Steadiness, you were right . . . this indicates that I am motivated to create a stable, organized environment, and that I tend to be patient and a good listener . . . the quotes that may be attributed to me include the following: "I enjoy helping people" and "I can be counted on to get the job done."

If you'd like more information on Kevin's work, please click: <http://www.GrowthCoachPartners.com>

Also, I attended an informative "Boost Your Immune System!" workshop--presented by Sandra Hoedemaker . . . she's a holistic health counselor who says that washing hands does work to prevent the spread of illness . . . what's interesting was her advice with respect to how long you should do this: the amount of time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" to yourself twice.

Hoedemaker further advised us to incorporate both ginger and green tea into our lives . . . she mentioned that we should eat mushrooms, too, but that would be pushing it for me.

For a listing of her upcoming FREE workshops, please click: <http://www.simplylivinghealthy.com>

D. Here's my new contact information, as of December 13:

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Phone: 828.633.1049
Fax: 828.633.1327
Cell: Stays the same--at least for the time being.

My email also stays the same: bjinbc@aol.com . . . that

was made possible because of the fact that I chose to live in a county with the same initials as Bucks County; i.e., Buncombe County.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Bob and Julie Thick--producers at the aforementioned Off-Broadstreet Theatre.

Bob and Julie do it all . . . they choose the plays, sell tickets, order the excellent desserts (that are included with every show) and often direct or do the choreography . . . from time to time, they'll even appear on stage.

In addition, I look forward to having them personally greet you when you arrive . . . they then say good-bye when you leave . . . it's a nice touch that I wish more places did.

I also get a kick out of something that Bob does . . . at the beginning of every evening or Sunday matinee performance, he'll go through the regular announcements about exits and not taking pictures . . . he follows that up with recognition of those having a special anniversary, or birthday.

Since I became a semi-regular at Off-Broadstreet some eight years ago, I've seen some 15 shows there . . . I've never been disappointed . . . it is one of the places I'll miss most when not in the area, though that said, I do plan to catch a future production whenever I'm up North visiting my Yankee friends. (Can you believe I'm already saying thaaaaat?)

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2. FYI

As is usually the case, please don't expect any Christmas, Chanukah or Kwanzaa cards from the Greenfields of Biltmore Lake . . . it's not that we don't love you; rather, we feel money that we would have spent on cards, postage, etc. could better be utilized by others in need.

So, in the past (and we'll continue in the future), we have made a contribution to our local paper's Holiday Fund . . . we make it "in appreciation of all our friends, relatives and neighbors," and this year, we'll be supporting the fine efforts of THE 2008 COURIER NEWS WISH BOOK . . . for more information, please click:

<http://mycentraljersey.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?category=special08>

FYI, part 2

* Marty in New Jersey (on faxing services):

I use efax. Company assigns a fax number (may not be your home area code) and you can send, receive faxes from your computer.

I'm satisfied with it--but honestly I use it very rarely. two or three times a year.

* Warren in New Jersey:

I have never used Facebook or MySpace, but I am a proponent of the networking tool, LinkedIn. I recommend as a great way to make professional contacts, share information, solicit feedback, etc. If you are investigating ways to network electronically, I do recommend LinkedIn.

* Wendy in Pennsylvania:

It's so funny that you mention Facebook in your newsletter. I just joined and thought that it would be a great place for you to post pics and messages especially when you move so that we could keep an eye on you and Cynthia! It is a fun way to communicate and share. I'm sure that you will have a great time with it. Hope you're not too lonely without Cynthia there and hope that everything is going smoothly for her in NC.

* Robin in Pennsylvania:

Wow--you and I are really on different planets when it comes to certain movies. I loved HAPPY-GO-LUCKY--as did every woman I know who's seen it. Great performance. Wonderful profile of a woman trying to maintain her emotional equilibrium in a world that is increasingly threatening.

CORRECTION:

A fairly major one, too, from last week's issue . . . in Section 1C, I mentioned something that we are discussing with the College known as dual enrollment . . . I instead had a glaring typo and called it "dull enrollment" . . . thanks to Karen in Pennsylvania, Jean in Pennsylvania, Elaine in Pennsylvania, Marty in New Jersey and Kathy in Florida, among others, for bringing this to my attention.

* Kathy in her email then added this great suggestion:

On magazine renewals . . . I don't answer the first few renewal letters I get from them until the subscription actually expires. I recently did this for two magazines (WOMAN'S DAY and LADIES HOME JOURNAL), and they both then offered me three years for the price of one . . . now that's a deal I couldn't pass up!

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3. Online dating

Jay Leno on THE TONIGHT SHOW notes, "THE WALL STREET JOURNAL reports that two million people get married because of someone they met online. The bad news: Four million got divorced because of someone they met online."

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4. Reviews

A. I'VE LOVED YOU SO LONG is watchable, in large part because of a mesmerizing performance from Kristin Scott Thomas . . . she plays a woman who has just been released from prison . . . her reentry

into society isn't easy . . . some welcome her; others don't . . . as the film progresses, you learn why she was imprisoned in the first place and you are kept guessing until the end to find out the whole story . . . the other performers in this French film are equally fine . . . overall, it drags a bit . . . but I'd recommend you catch it, even if you can only find it on DVD . . . rated PG-13.

B. You don't have to wait to catch HANCOCK on DVD; it is already out . . . this movie about a flawed superhero started out great . . . it was very funny for about the first hour, then completely went downhill in the second half . . . Will Smith, playing against type, had me laughing in the beginning . . . Jason Bateman was fine at a PR executive . . . Charlize Theron was wasted as his wife; she didn't have enough to do . . . rated PG-13.

C. I had never read anything by David Sedaris until a student mentioned his latest book, WHEN YOU ARE ENGULFED IN FLAMES . . . she said it had been a big help to her when she quit smoking . . . so because of my interest in that topic, I immediately went out and got a copy--and am glad that I did.

Sedaris is an American humorist, author and radio contributor . . . he has written several bestsellers, all of which have been collections of his essays.

WHEN YOU ARE ENGULFED concludes with a longish piece about the author's attempts to quit smoking . . . that was what I read first and doing so enabled me to develop a better understanding of the smoker's mentality . . . in particular, this passage caught my attention:

* When I look back on my many years of smoking, the only real regret I have is all the litter I generated, all those hundreds of thousands of butts crushed underfoot. I was always outraged when a driver would empty his ashtray onto the asphalt. "What a pig!" I'd think. But he only did in bulk what I did piecemeal. In a city you tell yourself that someone will clean it up, someone who wouldn't have a job unless you dropped that butt onto the sidewalk. In that respect you're good, you're helping. Then too, it never felt like real litter, like tossing down, say, a broken lightbulb. No one was going to cut his foot on a cigarette butt, and because of its earthy color it pretty much disappeared into the landscape, the way a peanut shell might. This made it "organic" or "biodegradable" --one of those words that meant "all right."

That made me think about why others never realized this fact . . . but then again, maybe they will after reading this book.

Other parts had me laughing, such as when he talked about fashion:

* In 1976 my glasses were so big I could clean the lenses with a squeegee. Not only were they huge, they were also green with Playboy emblems embossed on the stems. Today these frames sound ridiculous, but back then they were actually quite stylish. Time is cruel to everything but seems to have singled out eyeglasses for special punishment. What looks good now is guaranteed to embarrass you twenty years down the line, which is, of course, the whole problem with fashion. Though design may reach an apex, it never settles back and calls it quits. Rather, it just keeps reaching, attempting to satisfy our insatiable need to buy new stuff. Squinting is timeless, but so,

unfortunately, are the blinding headaches that often accompany it.

And then there was this observation that put a smile on my face:

* That's Business Elite for you. Spend eight thousand dollars on a ticket, and if you want an extra thirteen cents' worth of ice cream, all you have to do is ask. It's like buying a golf cart and having a few tees thrown in, but still it works, "Golly," I say. "Thanks!"

As a result of reading WHEN YOU ARE ENGULFED, I've become a David Sedaris fan . . . I now look forward to reading future books by him, but in the meantime, I plan to go back and read some of his earlier stuff.

MY SPECIAL OFFER REMAINS:

If you'd like a FREE copy of THE EASY WAY TO STOP SMOKING [the best book I've ever encountered on the subject] by Allen Carr--sent with my compliments--just send an email to my assistant Bridget: hughesbr@bucks.edu . . . put STOP SMOKING BOOK in the subject line . . . in the body of your email, include your name, snail mail address, email address, and phone numbers . . . I only ask that you keep me informed of your progress . . . or of the progress of anybody else you give the book to . . . and, also, that if you get it for yourself or for somebody else that the book gets read within 30 days of receipt.

D. If you're like me and a fan of Dr. Bernie Siegel (author of THE NEW YORK TIMES bestseller LOVE, MEDICINE and MIRACLES), then do what you can to obtain THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO HUMOR AND HEADLING--his CD that will make you both laugh and think.

Siegel is a physician who believes that laughter can help boost the immune system . . . he describes his work and best of all, in doing so tells many funny stories that would lead you to believe that had he not become a doctor, he should have become a stand-up comedian.

His ideas make sense for virtually anybody, regardless of age, education, profession or health . . . for example, there was this one that I would love for any store to consider:

* Hang a sign that reads, "If you're ever less than a B-, let us know, and we'll give you a hug."

Then there was this bit of useful advice:

* It's OK to sleep late and enjoy life 'cause the truth is that you're going to die anyway. So get busy living!

When it comes to children, Siegel had me laughing with this quip:

* You know why neither one of us will get a divorce is because neither one of us wants the children!

Lastly, he noted that:

* You don't kill yourself doing what you love. You only get tired. So go take a nap, then start all over again.

Good advice . . . in fact, that's something I'll do right now so that I can get some much-needed beauty rest!

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5. TV alert

A. Mariah Carey, Bing Crosby and John Lennon are all in one special on GREATEST HOLIDAY MOMENTS; SONGS OF THE SEASON COUNTDOWN . . . Friday at 8 p.m. on NBC.

B. SHATNER'S RAW NERVE features William Shatner interviewing Jenna Jameson, an American entrepreneur who just happens to be recognized by man as the world's most famous porn star . . .Friday at 11:30 on BIO.

C. THE GREATEST GAME EVERY PLAYED is Chris Berman-hosted replay of the 1958 legendary Colts-Giants game . . . Saturday at 9 p.m. on ESPN.

D. HOLIDAY WINDOWS 2008 . . . if you're really into the holiday season, you can spend an entire show watching department store windows . . . methinks I'll pass on this one, but perhaps others might find it fascinating . . . Sunday at 8 p.m. on HGTV.

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6. Seniors

My friend tells this story about his wife . . .

My wife, Marilyn, and I went to breakfast at a restaurant where the "seniors" special" was two eggs, bacon, hash browns and toast for \$1.99.

"Sounds good," Marilyn said. "But I don't want the eggs."

"Then, I'll have to charge you two dollars and forty-nine cents because you're ordering a la carte," the waitress warned her.

'You mean I'd have to pay for not taking the eggs?' Marilyn asked incredulously.

"YES!" stated the waitress.

Marilyn said, "I'll take the special then."

"How do you want your eggs?" the waitress asked.

"Raw and in the shell," Marilyn replied.

We took the two eggs home.

DON'T MESS WITH US SENIORS!

We've been around the block more than once!!

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7. Websites

A. Ever need to get a group of people on the phone at the same time? This free teleconferencing service is simple to use, requiring only a name and an email address to receive an instant account:
<http://www.FreeConferenceCall.com>

You get a dedicated dial-in number and an access code for free teleconferencing services, which are ready for immediate use. Your free teleconferencing line is available to you 24/7 . . . each free teleconferencing account accommodates up to 96 callers on an unlimited number of 6-hour conference calls . . . if you wish, you can even record and play back the entire call, also free . . . regular long distance charges apply, but there are no charges from the site.

MY THINKING:

Sounds like a winner, but I haven't tried it yet . . . if anybody has, please share your opinion so I can then share it with others.

B. This is the one of the best presentations of the sixties online:
<http://moreoldfortyfives.com/TakeMeBackToTheSixties.htm>

It is very well done. Just click on the link and sit back and enjoy the memories. Great photos and facts. And make sure your sound is on.

MY TWO CENTS:

If you weren't around then or you're too young to remember, enjoy and rather than be envious, try to build a world as good as this one!

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click: <http://www.blainesworld.net>

HELP REQUESTED:

Please feel free to check out "Radio Show" to the left . . . as you may recall, I was all set to host a new show in the Bucks County/Mercer County area, only to have to shift gears at the last minute when we sold our home so quickly . . . so now that I'll be in the Asheville area, I'm very interested in getting back on the air--or even on cable . . . might you have any ideas and/or contacts that could help make this a reality?

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8. Computer tip

Thanks to Doug in Pennsylvania for sharing this warning:

New worms target both MySpace and Facebook users

This worm IS infecting computers here at Bucks and elsewhere. Messages and comments on MySpace and Facebook include links to: [http://youtube.\[skip\].pl](http://youtube.[skip].pl). [intentionally a wrong address so you can't go there]

If the user clicks on this link, s/he is redirected to: [http://youtube.\[skip\].ru](http://youtube.[skip].ru), [another wrong

address, again so you can't go there]

a site which purportedly contains a video clip. If the user tries to watch it, a message appears saying that s/he needs the latest version of Flash Player in order to watch the clip. However, instead of the latest version of Flash Player, a file called codecsetup.exe is downloaded to the victim's machine; this file is also a network worm. The result is that users who have come to the site via Facebook will have the MySpace worm downloaded to their machines. And vice versa.

Please click on the link below for more details: <http://www.kaspersky.com/news?id=207575670>

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9. Wall Street terminology, Part 1 of 2

With the meltdown on Wall Street, it's important for even ordinary citizens to understand the terminology bankers and brokers use. Here's a start:

BEAR MARKET: A 6-18 month period when the kids get no allowance, the wife gets no jewelry, and the husband gets no sex.

BROKER: What my stockbroker has made me.

BULL MARKET: A random market movement causing an investor to mistake himself or herself a financial genius.

CAPITALISM: What Republicans said wanted before they got hit by losses and embraced the Socialistic "bailout."

CASH FLOW: The movement your money makes as it disappears down the toilet. himself or herself for a financial genius.

CEO: Chief Embezzlement Officer.

CFO: Corporate Fraud Officer.

FINANCIAL PLANNER: A guy whose phone has been disconnected.

INSTITUTIONAL INVESTOR: Past year investor who's now locked up in a nuthouse.

(to be concluded next week)

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10. A quote I like

Ninety percent of the politicians give the other ten percent a bad name.--Henry Kissinger, German-born American bureaucrat, diplomat and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize

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11. Thought for the day

Comparisons

THE BUZZARD:

If you put a buzzard in a pen that is 6 feet by 8 feet and is entirely open at the top, the bird, in spite of its ability to fly, will be an absolute prisoner. The reason is that a buzzard always begins a flight from the ground with a run of 10 to 12 feet. Without space to run, as is its habit, it won't even attempt to fly, but will remain a prisoner for life in a small jail with no top.

THE BAT:

The ordinary bat that flies around at night, a remarkable nimble creature in the air, cannot take off from a level place. If it is placed on the floor or flat ground, all it can do is shuffle about helplessly and, no doubt, painfully, until it reaches some slight elevation from which it can throw itself into the air. Then, at once, it takes off like a flash.

THE BUMBLEBEE:

A bumblebee, if dropped into an open tumbler, will be there until it dies, unless it is taken out. It never sees the means of escape at the top, but persists in trying to find some way out through the sides near the bottom. It will seek a way where none exists, until it completely destroys itself.

PEOPLE:

In many ways, we are like the buzzard, the bat and the bumblebee. We struggle about with all our problems and frustrations, never realizing that all we have to do is look up!

Sorrow looks back, Worry looks around, But faith looks up!

Live simply, love generously, care deeply, speak kindly and trust in our Creator who loves us.

Author unknown

(if you know who wrote this and/or the source, please let me know)

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12. Advance planning department

A. Robin in Pennsylvania:

Jazz Celebration Big Band Holiday Gala Concert, featuring Stan Kenton's Christmas Medley, Winter Wonderland, Santa Baby and other "swinging" holiday favorites!

Thursday, December 18, 2008
8-10 p.m.

Poco's Comedy Cabaret (2nd floor)
625 North Main Street, Doylestown, PA
215.348.3424

\$10 cover.
Over 21, please!

B. THANKS to Jean in Pennsylvania for granting me permission to run the following press release that she wrote . . . it's longish, but worth reading for the message.

Psychologist Susan Apollon will be signing her books from 2–4 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 21, at Barnes & Noble, 210 Commerce Boulevard, Fairless Hills, PA.

She is the author of *Touched by the Extraordinary: An Intuitive Psychologist Shares Insights, Lessons, and True Stories of Spirit and Love to Transform and Heal the Soul* and co-author of *Intuition Is Easy and Fun, the Art and Practice of Developing Your Natural Born Gift of Intuition*.

Here are nine hints for making space in your grief for some holiday joy:

First, give yourself permission to cry. Apollon's mantra on dealing with grief is "face it, embrace it, and replace it." In other words, the only way to "get over" sadness is to experience it. "If you need to cry, cry, even if you're at a party and have to leave the room," says Apollon. "You might even set aside an evening to get in touch with your grief. Fix the cocoa you used to drink with your mother or go through your photo albums. It's healthier to feel the sadness and loss than to detach yourself from it. It's right and normal to grieve; just don't make it the dominant part of who you are."

It's okay to break tradition. It's also okay to say "no." You know your own limitations, says Apollon. If you simply can't face hosting your annual holiday feast, complete with dozens of relatives, don't try to soldier through it for the sake of your guests. People will understand. In fact, it's okay to leave town altogether. "Some people find it helpful to get away completely, to somewhere that doesn't remind them of holidays past," notes Apollon. "You might consider a tropical vacation, or you might take the time to visit a friend across the country. Doing something completely different can be a good coping mechanism, especially for that first tough year."

Consciously attach a new meaning to the holidays. Holidays are difficult because they remind you that someone special to you—someone who should be there—is gone. In your mind, your daughter (or mother or husband or friend) *is* Thanksgiving or Christmas or Hanukkah. Without that person, family dinners and parties just don't have the same meaning. That's why Apollon suggests you find a new way to connect with the person you've lost. "Buy the gifts that you would be giving to your lost loved one and donate them to a charity or volunteer in a hospital or soup kitchen," says Apollon. "If you consciously guide yourself to attach a new meaning, one that still involves your lost loved one, you will find that you are able to create a new beginning for your holiday celebrations with that person."

Honor your lost loved one in a way that feels comfortable to you. It's usually better to acknowledge your loss than to pretend that nothing has changed. You might light a special candle for your loved one, hang a tree ornament in his memory, or bring out a favorite photo. "Some clients actually set a place at the table for their missing family member," says Apollon. "I've even had a few tell me they received a 'message' of gratitude from their loved one for acknowledging him or her! On the other hand, some people discover that the empty chair is more upsetting than comforting. Do what feels right to you."

Invite your loved one to be a part of your holiday experience. Apollon means this literally, not figuratively. She suggests that you talk with your lost loved one and share your feelings with him throughout the holidays. Ask for guidance and help from the person. He will hear you and may even send a sign—perhaps a whiff of his cologne or a smoky image in a photograph or a synchronistic moment—so pay attention. "There are many ways to communicate with someone who isn't with us in the physical sense," says Apollon. "Journaling your feelings to the person can help you release your pain and provide a greater sense of clarity. I often encourage my clients to verbally invite the person they are missing to be with them and to ask them for signs. However, don't anxiously wait around for the signs. Ask and then let it go. Allow whatever happens to unfold naturally."

If you don't want to go all out, do the holidays in a small way. You don't have to decorate lavishly or bake up your usual six dozen secret-family-recipe homemade cookies to celebrate the holidays. Instead, put up a tiny tree and pop a pack of pre-made cookies in the oven. "Recognizing the holidays in some small way can be healing," says Apollon. "It's a way of accepting the fact that life goes on and of giving yourself permission to enjoy small pleasures." Interestingly, says Apollon, some people who have passed on may want their families to adhere to holiday traditions. One of her clients dramatically scaled down holiday festivities the year her son died, setting a small, decorated tree on the table instead of putting up the usual big, lavishly appointed one. "The son let her know right away that he wasn't happy with it," says Apollon. "For three mornings in a row she woke up to find all the ornaments mysteriously removed from the tree and set neatly off to the side. Finally, she got the picture! Don't assume you need to minimize the holidays as an expression of grief—your loved one really is present, and he may very well want you to keep things the way they're 'supposed' to be."

On the other hand, if you absolutely can't find any holiday joy, go find some other kind. Maybe you're too depressed or too angry with God to celebrate Christmas or Hanukkah even in a tiny way. That's okay, says Apollon. But don't deprive yourself of all joy. Go to a movie. Meet a friend for coffee. Take a long nature hike with your beloved dog. "The law of attraction says that if you want positive experiences, you need to do something that feels good," Apollon points out. "Make it a priority to do something that brings pleasure, even if it's not holiday related."

Learn to be conscious of the moment. Practice being fully present in the now; it truly is where joy resides. "Every day of your life, every moment of your life, you can choose joy or not," Apollon reflects. "Of course, no one feels joyful all the time, but when we learn to live in the present—to really pay attention to how food tastes or what a child's laugh sounds like or how the snowflakes look against the edge of the woods—we can savor moments of delight even in a time of grief."

Realize that miracles really do happen at the holidays. Here's the thing about the holidays, says Apollon. They really are magic. You knew this as a child but may have forgotten it. But spiritual occasions like holidays allow us to step outside the box we live in most of the time and let miracles in. "Paradoxical as it sounds, grief and holidays are a lot alike," she reflects. "They both help us detach from trivial things and focus on what's important, what's real. Open your mind and heart this year and see what happens. Maybe you'll feel a sense of connection with your loved one who passed on, or maybe you'll feel joy for the first time

since your loss. Either one might qualify as a miracle." Remember, says Apollon, the holidays won't always be such a struggle. If you work through your grief instead of repressing it, you'll find joy again.

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PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

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#635

12.1.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I have been just a tad bit busy lately . . . we were both working full-time and at the same time, getting ready for our move to North Carolina.

In fact, as I type this, that is where Cynthia now is . . . she is meeting the movers as they unload the truck at our new house . . . she'll be there for a week, getting it ready . . . and then fly back to join me when we drive one our cars down, along with our three cats.

That said, let me apologize for being late in getting this week's issue to you . . . my main computer was packed up, so I've had to do the best I can with this new laptop I'm working on . . . I'm just grateful that I still have my desk almost everything else was packed up.

B. My last teaching semester at Bucks County Community College is winding down quite well . . . I was particularly pleased with the fine job that my Tuesday night students did on their marketing strategies for the Peace Center in Langhorne, PA . . . for more information about this outstanding organization, please click:

<http://www.thepeacecenter.org>

MR. CURIOUS HERE:

Many of the student teams suggested that the Peace Center should consider getting involved in Facebook and/or MySpace . . . I then asked my students how many of them were and it seemed everybody was . . . so I'm wondering: is it (past) time for me to do so as well?

To date, it seems I've fought the tendency to go that route . . . in fact, I've even declined invitations from many readers to join their networks . . . I'd be curious about your experiences with respect to this subject.

C. My work as president of the teacher's union at the College has also kept me quite occupied . . . I had thought this would be an easy semester, but it has proven to be quite the contrary . . . two grievances (one involving the 60-40 ratio of full-time to part-time faculty and the other having to do with salary inequities) are now both slated to go to arbitration in February . . . in addition, we have been in constant discussions about the implementation of something known as dual enrollment, wherein high school students will be able to take college courses at their regular schools taught by their regular teachers.

Then I had to deal with a call for my resignation that was distributed by one of my colleagues . . . that same individual next made a motion to the union's steering committee, calling for a vote of no confidence . . . I was gratified by the fact that this motion didn't even get a second; in fact, the proceeded to vote on a motion of confidence in my leadership . . . that passed 29-0 with no abstentions.

So as you might imagine, I have chosen not to resign and will be concluding my term as union president this coming spring semester . . . that means, the Bucks County/NJ area is not getting rid of me quite so soon . . . I'll be coming back every other week or so to deal with this part of my job, and at the same time, I'll be continuing to work on my sabbatical project.

D. THANKS to Bill in Pennsylvania for sharing the following news item about what's arguably the greatest rock song of all time:

<http://www.variety.com/article/VR1117996630.html?categoryid=16&cs=1>

To hear the song for yourself, put up your speakers and please click:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gkVM-jGNn04>

THANKS, also, to my brother Ken for sharing this clip about his wife (and my sister-in-law) Lavelle who was recently interviewed about window shopping at Lord & Taylor:

<http://www.foxbusiness.com/video-search/m/21533207/window-shopping.htm?q=window+shopping>

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, my choice is an easy one: Cynthia--the very same woman who just so happens to double as my wife.

She first made it possible to sell our Belle Mead house as easily as we did by getting it ready in about a week's time . . . doing so involved discarding much of the clutter we had both accumulated over the years and, also, "staging" it so it looked just right.

Toward that end, she reluctantly put "Karl" [the name I gave her favorite Buddha] into hiding . . . funny story, though . . . only when

we brought it out from the closet did we find a buyer . . . almost the very next day.

She then got our entire house ready for the movers, again in just about a week's time . . . even they commented on the fact that this helped make their job easy.

Amazingly, Cynthia did both of the above tasks while continuing her final few months as a guidance counselor in the Elizabeth Avenue School in Franklin, NJ . . . she just recently retired and will be missed by the many students she has helped over the years.

Yet that said, I'm thinking that the school's loss is Asheville's gain . . . she is sure to make an equally significant contribution there!

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2. FYI

Cynthia likes OPRAH, the magazine . . . so I went online to find the best subscription price . . . there was a wide range in prices, but for the most part, they were all within \$1-2 of each other . . . I even checked my union's website, but they were virtually no different than the rates I had already checked out.

I'm not sure why I decided to check rates at amazon.com . . . there I found a price that was about 1/2 the other rates and for a longer term as well . . . so here's my recommendation: check out amazon.com for a lot more than just books!

FYI, part 2

* David in New York:

My company General Refining Corp has been active in coordinating Home Gold Buying Parties. We pay outstanding prices for all broken and unwanted gold and silver. Call Dave Greenfield to set up your event or make any inquiries. My number is 646.232.7440; email: Dgreenfield235@aol.com.

MY THINKING:

I've been reading a lot lately about such parties . . . methinks they could actually be a lot of fun . . . I can also vouch that you won't go wrong with David, in that he's a real good guy who also happens to double as my nephew.

* Warren in New Jersey, a longtime BLAINESWORLD reader and Director of Pricing for Pep Boys:

I would like to emphasize to all of your readers that the bit about gift cards as it relates to Pep Boys is not at all true (as corroborated by the Snopes.com link you provided). Pep Boys did close some underperforming stores in fiscal year 2007, but, as stated directly last week by its CEO Mike Odell, has no current intentions to close any more stores. Pep Boys still operates nearly 600 stores/service centers in over 30 states, plus

Puerto Rico. Pep Boys added, rather than subtracted, store count in fiscal year 2008. People in possession of Pep Boys gift cards can feel free to use them as quickly as they want, but they needn't be concerned about rushing out to do so. While Pep Boys is feeling the same negative affects of the current economic crisis as are other retailers, there is no concern about its imminent demise.

* Tom in Pennsylvania [when asked by me for information about his current show playing at the Off-Broadstreet Theatre in Hopewell, NJ]:

PLAID TIDINGS is the sequel to FOREVER PLAID. Many new songs, mostly Christmas, with a few repeats.

MY TWO CENTS:

This show is a lot of fun, appropriate for almost any age (though those over 40 will probably appreciate it most) . . . it stars two of my favorite local performers: Tom and Jim Petro . . . shows run through December 21 . . . for more information, please click: <http://www.actorr.com/next.htm>

* David in Pennsylvania [reacting to my review of THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PAJAMAS]:

Just read BOOK THIEF . . . much the same subject matter. It is told from the perspective of death. A must read.

* Jim in Pennsylvania [about the same movie]:

Very, very powerful and good for any young person to see with his or her parents. The audience was stunned silent at the end with many in attendance weeping.

* Ginger in Florida [with still another comment on the film]

We saw this last weekend and haven't stopped talking about it since. I'm not sure any other move I've seen had such an impact on me. Looking at things through the German's eyes was incredible.

* Phil in North Carolina:

I was thinking about what you said about your faxing needs. If you send and receive very few faxes a month, the best and cheapest for you would be to do what I do--especially if you're going to be traveling back and forth for the next few months. I use a company called Jconnect. Make sure you use the free version.

Faxes come in via email and go out via your regular home phone line. Set up takes a little work, but it's easy after that.

Make sure you get the free version. Here's the website:

<http://www.j2.com/>

MY QUESTION:

I know there are other companies who do the same thing . . . has any reader used either Jconnect or anybody else for such a service? If so, please share your reaction(s).

* CORRECTION; sorry 'bout that:

I gave a wrong email address last issue and quickly heard about it from the person who submitted the original item . . . Diane in New Jersey contacted me and asked me to rerun the following with her correct email address:

Thanks for the quick mention of the Marketing Club alumni. But my email address is incorrect: dmworth@comcast.net (forgot the "m").

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3. Cheap therapy

According to comedian Nick Cobb, "Everyone needs therapy, but nobody can afford it. What I do for therapy is set up job interviews every week. It totally works. The interviewer says, 'Tell me about yourself.' I say, 'I'm so screwed up. My parents used to beat me with a stick.' I don't get the job, but I get so much off my chest."

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4. Reviews

A. Poppy is a free-spirited elementary school teacher in Mike Leigh's latest, HAPPY-GO-LUCKY . . . Sally Hawkins is excellent in the title role, and I also liked the work of Eddie Marson as her driving instructor . . . but overall, the film left me flat, and I wouldn't recommend that you rush out to see and/or even rent it . . . rated R.

B. STEP BROTHERS is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #619 follows:

I dare you not to laugh at STEP BROTHERS, a comedy about two deadbeat man-children thrown together when their single parents marry . . . Will Ferrell and John C. Reilly are both hilarious in the title roles . . . and though the film drags in the second half, the ending pulls things together nicely . . . there's also one scene that I can't describe in BLAINESWORLD (this being a family publication) that if you see it, you'll long remember it as being one of the funniest--grossest, too--that you'll ever see . . . rated R.

C. Imagine attending a graduation and actually being inspired by the commencement address.

That happened not too long ago at Sarah Lawrence College when author Ann Patchett spoke to the graduates . . . her remarks became the basis for WHAT NOW? (see also Section 2), an inspiring essay that got me thinking about some of the directions my life has taken--and will continue to take as I approach retirement.

They key is for me to do the same thing that Patchett recommended:

* To pay attention to the things I'll probably never need to know, to listen carefully to the people who look as if they have nothing

to teach me, to see school as something that goes on everywhere, all the time, not just in libraries but in parking lots, in airports, in trees.

I need to also be more receptive to learning, wherever it takes place--much along the lines of this following passage:

* Receiving an education is a little bit like a garden snake swallowing a chicken egg: it's in you but it takes awhile to digest. I had come to college from twelve years of Catholic girls' school. At the time I thought that mine was the most ridiculous, antiquated secondary education in history. We marched in lines and met the meticulous regulations of the uniform code with cheerful submission. We bowed and kneeled and prayed. I held open doors and learned how to write a sincere thank-you note and when I was asked to go and fetch a cup of coffee from the kitchen for one of the nuns I fairly flushed at the honor of being chosen. I learned modestly, humility and how to make a decent white sauce.

Lastly, I liked gaining insight into the author's mindset while writing:

* I came to understand that fiction writing is like duck hunting. You go to the right place at the right time with the right dog. You get into the water before dawn, wearing a little protective gear, then you stand behind some reeds and wait for the story to present itself. This is not to say you are passive. You choose the place and the day. You pick the gun and the dog. You have the desire to blow the duck apart for reasons that are entirely your own. But you have to be willing to accept not what you wanted to have happen, but what happens. You have to write the story you find in the circumstances you've created, because more often than not the ducks don't show up. The hunters in the next blind begin to argue, and you realize they're in love. You see a snake swimming in your direction. Your dog begins to shiver and whine, and you start to think about this gun that belonged to your father. By the time you get out of the marsh you will have written a novel so devoid of ducks it will shock you.

WHAT NOW? is only 97 pages in length, including pictures . . . but don't be put off by that fact . . . you'll enjoy it . . . also, the book will make for an ideal holiday gift.

D. For some reason, I wasn't all that big a fan of Fred Rogers when I was younger . . . it's not that I disliked the guy; I just never watched him (nor did my daughter).

However, it seems that since he died in 2003, I have taken more of an interest in his work . . . I've read one book about him and when I came across the CD version of LIFE'S JOURNEYS ACCORDING TO MR. ROGERS, I jumped at the opportunity to listen to it.

It is a compilation of views held by Rogers on a wide variety of topics, including graduation, job changes, marriage and career choices . . . some stories are presented, and you even hear some singing from him.

Yet one thought, in particular, stood out for me:

* Here's a gift for yourself. Sometime in your day, try

to turn off the noises around you. Try to think about nothing.

Some of the many other tidbits that I picked up from this program included the following:

- * What matters most is not winning, but helping others win.
- * There is no cure for loneliness. What really matters is our relationship with others.
- * Try your best to make goodness attractive. This is one of the toughest assignments you'll ever be given.

Lastly, this concept also grabbed me:

- * Take a minute to think about one person who helped make you the person you are. (The person doesn't have to be alive.) Imagine how happy that person would be to know that you were thinking about them.

Blair Brown, B.D. Wong and Richard Kind handled the narration . . . their performances added to my enjoyment of the program.

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5. TV alert

A. THE CHRISTMAS CHOIR is the tale of a workaholic who finds the real meaning of life after his fiancée dies . . . TV GUIDE describes it as "the kind of TV-movie tissues were made for" . . . Saturday at 9 p.m. on HALLMARK CHANNEL.

B. FLIRTING WITH FORTY stars Heather Locklear as a divorced mom who gets her groove back . . . Saturday at 9 p.m. on LIFETIME.

C. Patricia Heaton and Treat Williams star as the parents of an ambitious young man with Tourette's Syndrome who dreams of teaching others how to deal with their disability in FRONT OF THE CLASS . . . Sunday at 9 p.m. on CBS.

D. Oscar winner Timothy Hutton plays the alcoholic leader of a merry band of modern-day Robin Hoods in LEVERAGE, a new drama on TNT . . . Sundays at 10 p.m.

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6. Attitude

A young man named John received a parrot as an early Christmas gift. The parrot had a bad attitude and an even worse vocabulary. Every word out of the bird's mouth was rude, obnoxious and laced with profanity. John tried and tried to change the bird's attitude by consistently saying only polite words, playing soft music and anything else he could think of to "clean up" the bird's vocabulary.

Finally, John was fed up and he yelled at the parrot. The parrot yelled back. John shook the parrot and the parrot got angrier and even ruder.

John, in desperation, threw up his hands, grabbed the bird and shoved him in the freezer. For a few minutes the parrot squawked and kicked and screamed. Then suddenly there was total quiet. Not a peep was heard for over a minute. Fearing that he'd hurt the parrot, John quickly opened the door to the freezer.

The parrot calmly stepped out onto John's outstretched arms and said, "I believe I may have offended you with my rude language and actions. I'm sincerely remorseful for my inappropriate transgressions, and I fully intend to do everything I can to correct my rude and unforgivable behavior."

John was stunned at the change in the bird's attitude. As he was about to ask the parrot what had made such a dramatic turnaround in his behavior, the bird continued . . . "May I inquire as to what the turkey did?"

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7. Websites

A. Ever want to find out more about the meaning of your name?
If so, please click:

<http://www.behindthename.com/>

For instance, you'd find this about Blaine:

From a Scottish surname which was derived from the given name Bláán, which meant "yellow" in Gaelic. Saint Bláán was a 6th-century missionary to the Picts.

B. If you'd like to play the classic game of charades, please click: <http://www.youcharades.com>

Simply click on a video and you'll find that someone is acting out the name of a movie, book, song, etc. . . . you can then try to guess what that person is doing. Overall, it's a fun website that you'll find fun to view with both family and friends.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blainesworld.net>

In case you're wondering what happens to your name and/or email address if you subscribe to BLAINESWORLD, my online newsletter, please check out my Privacy Statement . . . it can be found by clicking "Newsletter" on the left of the home page, then "Privacy Statement."

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8. Computer tip

Google has begun allowing users to re-rank and edit their search results . . . the SearchWiki tools, as they're called, allow you to log into a Google account (something that I strongly recommend that you set up) to move up results that you find interesting, delete ones that aren't useful and add personal notes.

For an excellent overview of what now can be done, please click:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t8PI1H0dIXE>

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9. Real newspaper headlines, part 2 of 2

(concluded from last week)

More that have been excerpted from the "Notebook" pages of NEW REPUBLIC magazine:

Man Run Over by Freight Train Dies
Los Angeles Times

Scientists See Quakes in L.A. Future
Portland Oregonian

Wachtler Tells Graduates That Life in Jail is Demeaning
Buffalo News

Free Advice: Bundle Up When Out in the Cold
Lexington Herald-Leader

Prosecution Paints O.J. as a Wife-Killer
Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel

Economist Uses Theory to Explain Economy
Collinsville Herald-Journal

Bible Church's Focus is the Bible
Saint Augustine Record, Florida

Clinton Pledges Restraint in Use of Nuclear Weapons
Cedar Rapids Gazette

Discoveries: Older Blacks Have Edge in Longevity
Chicago Tribune

Court Rules Boxer Shorts Are Indeed Underwear
Journal of Commerce

Biting Nails Can Be Sign of Tenseness in a Person
Schenectady, New York, Daily Gazette

Lack of Brains Hinders Research
Columbus Dispatch

How We Feel About Ourselves is the Core of Self-Esteem,
Says Author Louise Hart
Boulder, Colorado, Daily Camera

Fish Lurk in Streams
Rochester, New York, Democrat & Chronicle

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10. A quote I like

Once again, we come to the holiday season, a deeply religious time that each of us observes, in his own way, by going to the mall of his choice.--Dave Barry, American author who wrote a humor column for THE MIAMI HERALD for over 20 years . . . he also won the Pulitzer Prize for Commentary in 1988, though to quote from his website, "Many people are still trying to figure out how this happened."

For more information about this very funny guy, please click:

<http://www.davebarry.com/about.html>

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11. Thought for the day

The idea was that we should not accidentally wind up with too grand an opinion of ourselves, and frankly I regard this as sound counsel. In a world that is flooded with children's leadership camps and grown-up leadership seminars and bestselling books on leadership, I count myself as fortunate to have been taught a thing or two about following. Like leading, it is a skill, and unlike leading, it's one that you'll actually get to use on a daily basis. It is senseless to think that at every moment of our lives we should all be the team captain, the class president, the general the CEO, and yet so often this is what we're being prepared for. No matter how many great ideas you might have about salad preparation or the reorganization of time cards, waitressing is not a leadership position. You're busy and so you ask somebody else to bring the water to table four. Someone else is busy and so you clear the dirty plates from table twelve. You learn to be helpful and you learn to ask for help. It turns out that most positions in life, even the big ones, aren't really so much about leadership. Being successful, and certainly being happy, comes from honing your skills in working with other people. For the most part we travel in groups—you're ahead of somebody for a while, then somebody's ahead of you, a lot of people are beside you all the way. It's what the nuns had always taught us: sing together, eat together, pray together.

SOURCE:

WHAT NOW? (see also Section 4C) by Ann Patchett

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12. Advance planning department

A. Kevin in Pennsylvania:

I'm planning my first Growth Coach mini intro workshop for Friday, December 5, 12/5 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., lunch included.

<http://www.GrowthCoachPartners.com>

FOR THOSE WHO DON'T KNOW MY GOOD FRIEND KEVIN:

He's an outstanding creative thinker/teacher/entrepreneur who

has been a big help to me in both my career and life . . . consequently, I'm going to attend this event . . . it promises to be a winner!

B. LAST CHANCE:

Are you a former or present student of mine? Or has your company or organization been used by my students; e.g., for their term projects?

I'm writing to let you officially know that this is the last semester I'll be teaching traditional courses at Bucks County Community College . . . and to mark the occasion, I'm hosting a farewell reception/networking event that I'd very much like you to attend.

Date: Tuesday, December 9

Thursday, December 11 is the backup date if there's bad weather

Time: 7:29 p.m.

Location: Fireside Lounge

Dessert will be served . . . if you can make it (hopefully, the answer is YES!), please RSVP to me if you haven't done so already . . . put YES FOR DECEMBER 9 in your subject line . . . more details to follow.

A REQUEST:

Please share the above invite with any other students of mine that you may know. In addition, if you're with a firm that has worked with my students and/or your know of such a firm, please feel free to share this information with them too. Thank you!

C. BE THE MEDICINE 101--a Deeper Awareness of You

LEARN AND HEAL DEEPLY TODAY!

Saturday, December 6th: 10 a.m.- 5 p.m.

\$150

Please RSVP by FRIDAY at 1 p.m.

About the course:

Pain is not necessary, and can be removed and released in 5 to 20 minutes.

Chronic pain can leave in less than an hour.

If there are other things that must be done to release the pain, you will know how to proceed.

Would you like to learn these healing secrets and more?

Join us today for a class that will change your entire life, health and happiness.

The teachings and wisdom of this class is developed by Janet Straightarrow from her 41+ years of work and Being The Medicine for herself. This class represents her vision of harmony, love and truth for all. Deepen and intensify the work from your experiences in the ongoing class or begin your work

with this workshop.

For more information:

Janet StraightArrow
18 Bank St, Suite 300
Morristown, NJ 07960
973.647.2500<http://www.oasisforthesoul.com>

D. Michael in Pennsylvania with information on the next
Book Group discussion at Bucks County Community College:

December 11: Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress:
A Novel by Dai Sijie and Ina Rilke (2002)

From LIBRARY JOURNAL:

This deceptively small novel has the power to bring down governments. In Mao's China, the Cultural Revolution rages, and two friends caught in the flames find themselves shuttled off to the remote countryside for reeducation. The stolid narrator occasionally comforts himself by playing the violin, and both he and more outgoing friend Luo find that they have a talent for entertaining others with their re-creations of films they have seen. A little light comes their way when they meet the stunning daughter of the tailor in the town nearby, with whom Luo launches an affair. But the real coup is discovering a cache of forbidden Western literature including, of course, Balzac that forces open their world like a thousand flowers blooming. The literature proves their undoing, however, finally losing them the one thing that has sustained them. Dai Sijie, who was himself reeducated in early 1970s China before fleeing France, wonderfully communicates the awesome power of literature of which his novel is proof. Highly recommended.

We meet in the Rollins Center Quite Study Room, next to the Fireside Lounge at Bucks in Newtown from 7:30-9 p.m. All are welcome to join us on the second Thursday of each month to share your thoughts and questions. For more information, call 215.968.8164 or send email to: hennesse@bucks.edu.

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PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#634

11.24.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I typically get together with her relatives about twice a year at Family Circle gatherings . . . this past Sunday, one was held at a new restaurant for us: Chengdu 1, in Cedar Grove, NJ; 973.239.7726 . . . what makes it unusual is the fact that it specializes in Sichuan-style food, which can be quite spicy . . . the place also has many unusual dishes, though our group stayed mostly with such choices as shrimp with cashew nuts, tangerine beef, chicken with mixed vegetables, and pork fried rice . . . it was a lot of fun, having 13 folks at one large table--all sharing in both the food and good conversation.

B. During the week, I got to attend a seminar put on by my financial gurus at Kohlhepp Investing (215.340.5777) . . . I was somewhat reassured by the prediction from Ed Sr. that Social Security for us will not change . . . though for our kids and grandkids, it will be a whole different story.

Furthermore, I found it interesting that the current recession is not all that out of the ordinary from a historical perspective . . . and that down the road, things should get better . . . one can hope!

C. I'm blessed to get the chance to work with so many fine individuals at Bucks County Community College . . . in particular, I'm glad that four were recognized at the recent College Recognition Ceremony: Adrienne Clark, Marian Colello, Sharon Dougherty, and Patricia O'Connell received Administrative Special Recognition Awards--all most deservedly.

At the same event, it was announced that two of my teaching colleagues beat me into retirement: Jon Alley and Arta Szathmary . . . in addition, four staffers also announced their retirements: Drew Ermelin, Sherry Hartnett, Mary Ann Pone, and Dave Snellman . . . the College will have a hard

time replacing all these individuals, and they will be missed.

D. What a treat to find myself mentioned in two blogs . . . the first, written by longtime friend Cara Schollenberger for part of a graduate course she is taking, had this to say:

A very good friend and colleague of mine, Blaine Greenfield, was always concerned that students would be engaged in the class. He hoped that they would want to come because it was important to them and meant more than just a grade. As a way of making sure he was true to his intentions he would often start class off by saying, "I promise you will leave class today with something you can use!"

At first I thought that was kind of odd but after all, isn't that what learning is really all about?

For the whole post, please click:

<http://carachatter.blogspot.com/>

Another blog by a guy I don't know, George Bruno, had this to say:

I referred my mom to a guy I know who use to speak at one of my networking groups. Blaine Greenfield. His site is:

<http://www.blainesworld.net>

Three computers and ten years later . . . and having forgotten sites that I bookmarked ten years ago, my mother asks me if I read a particular piece from Blaine. I totally forgot about Blaine's e-newsletter, like I said that was three computers ago. She had been reading his stuff consistently now for years. And all from a little email to her years ago saying "Mom, you should read this guy Blaine Greenfield. You would really enjoy what he says."

For that whole post, please click:

http://happyhour.blogtownhall.com/2008/10/14/if_you_have_an_opinion_you_can_blog.shtml

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to three of the many fine people that Cynthia works with in her job as a guidance counselor in Somerset, NJ . . . as she notes:

There are certain people that give 100%, and then they reach in further and give more. Gloria Harzold, principal of Elizabeth Avenue School, and our office secretaries, Judy Nocero and Pat Sanchez, all fit into that category.

Gloria Harzold is committed to the well-being of our children and doesn't leave a stone unturned when brainstorming ways to help them. She is patient and acknowledging of ALL staff members, and empowers them to do their best. I feel honored to have worked with her.

Judy and Pat are efficient and helpful at ALL times. Even when their plates are full to overflowing, they smile and make you feel good while at the same time juggling many jobs at once.

The warmth and care for all of our staff and children at Elizabeth Avenue School starts at the main office. It sets the tone for our entire school. And

a lovely tune it is.

See below for a picture of Cynthia (second from left), flanked by l-r: Judy, Pat and Gloria . . . they were at a recent retirement party for Cynthia, whose last day will be this coming Wednesday:



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2. FYI

From THE FIVE SECRETS YOU MUST DISCOVER BEFORE YOU DIE (see also Sections 4C, 10 and 11) by John Izzo:

Over the years, I have led many personal and leadership development retreats with my dear friend Dr. David Kuhl, a gifted physician and author. During workshops, we conduct an exercise whereby we ask people to imagine that they have only six months to live. We tell them that they cannot be certain whether these will be healthy or difficult months. We then give them a specific date precisely six months from the day of the workshop.

"Pretend," we say "that on that day six months from now, you will die. What are five things you must do before that time? A tense stillness comes over the room, often covered up with awkward humor. As people begin to write down what they must do in those six months, they most commonly write about relationships that must be healed. Sometimes there is a dream long deferred. Once people have finished their lists, we ask: "If you had only six months left to live and the things on your list are things you must do, are they not important enough to do regardless of how much time you have left?" Left unsaid, but obvious to all, is that we are already in this position. We may indeed have only six months to live, and asking ourselves how we would live our life if we had only that time left is a great path to living with no regrets.

FYI, part 2

* Dana in Pennsylvania:

Folks, I'm just passing this along. I have not checked validity. Do that for yourselves if you are concerned . . .

CLOSINGS AND LAYOFFS

Be forewarned: If you have gift cards from any of the following stores, hurry up and use them before they close stores in an effort to cut costs.

Ann Taylor closing 117 stores nationwide. A company spokeswoman said the company hasn't revealed which stores will be shuttered. It will let the stores that will close this fiscal year know over the next month.

Eddie Bauer to close more stores. Eddie Bauer has already closed 27 shops in the first quarter and plans to close up to two more outlet stores by the end of the year.

Cache is closing stores. Women's retailer Cache announced that it is closing 20 to 23 stores this year.

Lane Bryant, Fashion Bug and Catherines closing 150 stores nationwide. The owner of retailers Lane Bryant , Fashion Bug and Catherines Plus Sizes will close about 150 under performing stores this year.

Talbots and J. Jill closing stores. About a month ago, Talbots announced that it will be shuttering all 78 of its kids and men's stores. Now the company says it will close another 22 under performing stores. .

Gap Inc. closing 85 stores. In addition to its namesake chain, Gap also owns Old Navy and Banana Republic. The company said the closures--all planned for fiscal 2008--will be weighted toward the Gap brand.

Foot Locker to close 140 stores. In the company press release and during its conference call with analysts today, it did not specify where the future store closures--all planned in fiscal 2008--will be.

Wickes is going out of business. Wickes Furniture is going out of business and closing all of its stores, Wickes, a 37-year-old retailer that targets middle-income customers, filed for bankruptcy protection last month.

Levitz--closed already. The furniture retailer is going out of business. Levitz first announced it was going out of business and closing all 76 of its stores in December.

Bombay Company. Freehold Mall store in NJ closed. The company unveiled plans to close all 384 U.S.-based Bombay Company stores. The company's online storefront has discontinued operations.

Zales and Piercing Pagoda closing stores. The owner of Zales and Piercing Pagoda previously said it plans to close 82 stores by July 31. Today, it announced that it is closing another 23 under performing stores.

Disney Store owner has the right to close 98 stores The Walt Disney Company announced it acquired about 220 Disney Stores from subsidiaries of The Children's Place Retail Stores.

ATLANTA --Nearly 7+ months after its chief executive said there were no plans to cut the number of its core retail stores, The Home Depot Inc. announced Thursday that it is shuttering 15 of them amid a slumping U.S.

economy and housing market.

CompUSA (CLOSED) clarifies details on store closings. Any extended warranties purchased for products through CompUSA will be honored by a third-party provider, Assurant Solutions.

Macy's--9 stores.

Movie Gallery. 160 stores to close as part of reorganization plan to exit bankruptcy. The video rental company plans to close 400 of 3,500 Movie Gallery and Hollywood Video stores.

Pacific Sunwear--153 Demo stores.

Pep Boys--33 stores.

Sprint Nextel--125 retail locations. New Sprint Nextel CEO Dan Hesse appears to have inherited a company bleeding subscribers by the thousands and will now officially be dropping the ax on 4,000 employees and 125 retail locations.

J. C. Penney, Lowe's and Office Depot are scaling back.

Ethan Allen Interiors: The company announced plans to close 12 of 300+ stores.

Wilsons the Leather Experts--158 stores

Pacific Sunwear will close its 154 Demo stores after a review of strategic alternatives for the urban-apparel brand. Seventy-four under performing Demo stores closed last May.

Sharper Image: The company recently filed for bankruptcy protection and announced that 90 of its 184 stores are closing. The retailer will still operate 94 stores to pay off debts, but 90 of these stores have performed poorly and also may close.

KB Toys posted a list of 356 stores that it is closing around the United States as part of its bankruptcy reorganization.

Dillard's to Close More Stores. Dillard's Inc. said it will continue to focus on closing under performing stores, reducing expenses and improving its merchandise in 2008.

MY TWO CENTS:

I have checked this out and unfortunately, most if not all of it is true . . . see below:

<http://www.snopes.com/politics/business/storeclosings.asp>

* The flip side to the above posting is this website from AOL Shopping that lists many products that may well out for the holidays or that might not be on sale later:

<http://shopping.aol.com/pages/black-Friday-sneak-peek/20021?ncid=AOLCOMMshopDYNLsec0001&icid=200100397x1213802430x1200904218>

And here's something else you might want to read (about how to get the best doorbuster deals if you venture out to shop on Black Friday):

<http://living.aol.com/holidays/christmas/gift-guides/doorbuster-secrets?icid=200100397x1214010711x1200908488>

See also Section 8 for one more tip that methinks you'll appreciate.

* Bill in Pennsylvania:

I was happy to read about the [Bill Lewis] event and its success, as I was unable to be there. There is something great about a community joining together around an important cause.

Nonrelated . . . I thought you would be interested in a website my daughter came across:

<http://www.wordle.net/>

You add text and wordle creates a word diagram of sorts based on how frequently certain words are used.

* Shelly in Pennsylvania:

Please send this to anyone who might be interested in helping to feed people or families in need: Chicken of the Sea (canned tuna) is having a jingle contest, and one of the awards is \$100,000 worth of tuna donated to the winner's local food bank! There are only 15 finalists in the country and two of them (entry numbers 6 and 44) have named their local food bank as Philabundance, which has a Community Kitchen in Philadelphia.

The contest ends December 9th, and until then you can vote online up to 3 times a day. Have fun watching & listening to the entries or skip that part. But please place your vote for either #6 or #44. The link is:

<http://www.mermaidjinglejam.com>

* Dianne in New Jersey:

Where are they (members of the Marketing Club at BCCC) now?

If you know anybody who fits that bill, please let me know. Also, let Blaine know as well.

I can be reached at dmworth@comcast.net

* Ken in New York (with two movie recommendations):

Saw THE DUKES. Not bad. You might enjoy.

BOY IN STRIPED PAJAMAS. Outstanding! Best picture of the year!!

PLEASE NOTE:

Ken, who also doubles as my brother, often gives me great advice on what films and shows to see . . . I haven't seen the first one yet, but based on his recommendation, I did see the second . . . and I agree with what he wrote . . . for more information, please see Section 4A.

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3. Almost but not quite

When my friend took his six-year-old son to the barber at the local submarine base, the boy was thrilled to settle down into the chair where admirals had previously sat.

And when the barber asked what kind of cut he wanted, Blake proudly pointed to his dad's crew cut and said, "A haircut just like his!" Then he added, "But without the bald spot."

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4. Reviews

A. Do whatever you can to see *THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PAJAMAS*, my pick so far for this year's Best Film . . . it is the touching story about a young German boy and his forbidden friendship with a Jewish child who lives at a nearby "farm" that's really a concentration camp . . . they eventually find a way to meet, which leads to the film's climax that will blow you away . . . Asa Butterfield and Jack Scanlon are both remarkable as the two youths, and I liked the work of Vera Farmiga (so watchable in *THE DEPARTED*) as one of the mothers . . . rated PG-13.

B. *FRED CLAUS* is now out in DVD format . . . my review from *BLAINESWORLD* # 581 follows:

Sometimes, you get lucky when you go to see a film . . . with Cynthia, I went to see *LIONS FOR LAMBS* . . . the great cast (Cruise, Redford and Streep) caught our attention, but within 10 minutes, we were bored to the extent that we couldn't stand any more of this talky look at the human consequences of a complicated war . . . so we went to the theater next door where *FRED CLAUS* was playing . . . Vince Vaughn is very funny as the big brother who lives almost his entire life in his more famous brother's shadow . . . though rated PG, some of the humor will simply go over the heads of many younger viewers . . . that's especially true of the one scene where Vaughn attends a group therapy session for unhappy siblings, including Frank Stallone (Sly), Stephen Baldwin (Alec) and Roger Clinton (Bill) . . . I'm still smiling as I think about it.

C. Approaching his fiftieth birthday, Dr. John Izzo asked several thousand people to identify the "wisest" people they knew . . . based on their responses, he then identified 235 "wise elders" . . . these were men and women from the age of 60 all the way up to 108, and included a town barber, real estate broker, native chief, a Holocaust survivor, several business executives and writers, and many others.

Izzo next attempted to distill these insights, first into a five-hour PBS special and then into a book I strongly recommend: *THE FIVE SECRETS YOU MUST DISCOVER BEFORE YOU DIE* (see also Sections 2, 10 and 11).

It got me thinking about what really can make for happiness in life, as well as what really matters . . . one middle aged woman named Maggie talked about how:

* . . . she had tried to live her entire life from the perspective of an

"old woman sitting on my rocking chair on the porch." She told me that whenever she had a decision to make she would imagine sitting on her porch as an old woman looking back on her life. She would ask that old woman to advise her on the path she should take. It was a beautiful image.

Then there was the story of John, 93, the man who had left the Community party and later became an artist . . . he had been married for 52 years and said his marriage gave him the greatest happiness in his life:

* "Friends were always envious of us," he said, "saying we were lucky to have such a great relationship. When they asked me for the secret, I would tell them that you always have to treat your partner as an equal, which is what we always did. You have to accept each other with the flaws that all of us have, along with the good parts. They might change for the better later, or not, but you have to accept them for who and what they are. Whenever I was angry at my wife, I would ask myself: Is the thing I am angry about more important than our relationship? Is it worth jeopardizing the love we have for each other? And the answer, of course, was always no."

Lastly, I was touched by the tale of Bansi, 63, an immigrant from Tanzania, now living in Canada:

* Raised as a Hindu, she felt that the choice to be kind was at the center of a happy life. When I asked her about the best piece of advice she had ever received, she told me something her mother told her as a child. "My mother always used to tell me: 'Do good if you can to every person you meet, but always make sure you do no harm' Living by this simple idea has given me great happiness. Each time I meet someone I try to lift them up in some way by being loving, and then I have made sure to do no harm by what I say or do."

I gained extra value from THE FIVE SECRETS by the author's inclusion of several thought-provoking questions at the end of each chapter . . . the ones he had at the very end of the book were particularly insightful, including this one:

* If you could give only one sentence of advice to those younger than you on finding a happy and meaningful life, what one sentence would you pass on?

MR. CURIOUS HERE:

Care to share your own advice; e.g., for me to share with other readers? I promise to compile your responses, then run them in a future issue.

D. Dr. Wilfred Grenfelt, a medical missionary, was traveling by dog team in Newfoundland in 1908 to meet a patient . . . when he took a short cut, he became stranded on an ice pan . . . his exciting tale is told in ADRIFT ON AN ICE PAN, a book he wrote that I recently had the pleasure of coming across in a CD version.

I wonder what I would do if faced with a similar situation, and that's what made this story worth pursuing . . . In particular, I could almost feel the cold he faced that drove him to sacrifice and then skin three of his dogs to clothe himself against the elements.

Would I have done something similar? Perhaps, especially if it meant

saving my own life and five other dogs that would surely have perished had it not been for Grenfelt's quick thinking.

If you're in the mood for something that may be a bit different from what you normally read, see if you can find a copy of *ADRIFT ON AN ICE PAN*.

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5. TV alert

A. *ROSIE LIVE* has Rosie O'Donnell hosting her own variety special, which may be the first of an eventual weekly series . . . guests include Jane Krakowski, Kathy Griffin, Alanis Morissette, and rapper Ne-Yo . . . Wednesday at 8 p.m. on NBC.

B. *CNN HEROES: AN ALL-STAR TRIBUTE* recognizes everyday folks for their selfless acts, compassionate choices and incredible deeds . . . Thursday at 9 p.m. on CNN.

C. *ELLEN'S EVEN BIGGER REALLY BIG SHOW* features Ellen DeGeneres as host of an energetic variety show that includes magicians, musical acts and celebrity impersonators . . . Saturday at 9 p.m. on TBS . . . on the same channel on Sunday at 11 p.m., look for *LAFFAPALOOZA!* . . . a group of comedians, including Mark Curry and Sheryl Underwood, is a stand-up summit with Tracy Morgan as the host.

D. Watch for *BLITZ* on Sunday at 8 p.m. on *BBC AMERICA*; it concludes the next night--same time, same station . . . it is about a Muslim family torn apart in post-9/11 London . . . according to *TV GUIDE*, it is a two-part British thriller "that's as timely as it is terrific."

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6. Same complaint, different treatment

Two patients limp into two different medical clinics with the same complaint. Both have trouble walking and appear to require a hip replacement.

The first patient is examined within the hour, is x-rayed the same day and has a time booked for surgery the following week.

The second sees his family doctor after waiting three weeks for an appointment, then waits eight weeks to see a specialist, then gets an x-ray, which isn't reviewed for another week and finally has his surgery scheduled for a month from then.

Why the different treatment for the two patients?

The first is a golden retriever, the second is a senior citizen!

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7. Websites

A. I don't usually repeat websites that have been run previously in this section, but I'll make an exception with the following one:

<http://www.aldaily.com/>

ARTS & LETTERS DAILY (last mentioned in BLAINESWORLD #338) is a FREE service of THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION . . . you'll find information on philosophy, aesthetics, literature, language, trends, breakthroughs, ideas, criticism, culture, history, music, art, disputes, and gossip . . . also, you'll get links to newspapers, magazines, columnists, and book reviews . . . and you can find articles and/or essays on such topics as whether John Milton is boring, a movie that looks like a Thomas Kinkade painting, the death of public intellectuals, and term paper mills.

B. After reading THE FIVE SECRETS YOU MUST DISCOVER BEFORE YOU DIE (see also Sections 2, 4C, 10, and 11) by John Izzo, I came across this website that features his ideas:

<http://www.bkconnection.com/thefivesecrets/>

You'll find a moving 6-minute video that I'm confident that you'll enjoy . . . the accompanying music is nice, too.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blaineworld.net>

Want to know how many others view this website? All you need to do is look at the counter in the lower left hand corner of the above homepage.

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8. Computer tip

If you order stuff online, pause when you get to the "Proceed to checkout screen" . . . then try NOT placing an order; rather, close the open window . . . you'll often get an immediate follow-up by email, in which the company asks if there was anything else they could have done to help you complete the transaction.

That is where you ask for something--such as FREE shipping . . . you'll be amazed at how often your request is granted.

The key is that you have nothing to lose by asking!

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9. Real newspaper headlines, part 1 of 2

The following have been excerpted from the "Notebook" pages of NEW REPUBLIC magazine:

Study Finds Sex, Pregnancy Link
Cornell Daily Sun

Whatever Their Motives, Moms Who Kill Kids Still Shock Us
Holland Sentinel

Survey Finds Dirtier Subways After Cleaning Jobs Were Cut
New York Times

Larger Kangaroos Leap Farther, Researchers Find
Los Angeles Times

"Light" Meals are Lower in Fat, Calories
Huntington Herald-Dispatch

Alcohol Ads Promote Drinking
Hartford Courant

Malls Try to Attract Shoppers
Baltimore Sun

Official: Only Rain Will Cure Drought
Herald-News, Westpost, Massachusetts

Teenage Girls Often Have Babies Fathered by Men
Portland Oregonian

Low Wages Said Key to Poverty
New York Newsday

Man Shoots Neighbor With Machete
Miami Herald

Tomatoes Come in Big, Little, Medium Sizes
Daily Progress, Charlottesville, Virginia

Dirty-Air Cities Far Deadlier Than Clean Ones, Study Shows
New York Times

(to be concluded next week)

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10. A quote I like

When I asked her what she had noticed in all those years of counseling couples, she told me: "I noticed that when people are first together they focus almost entirely on the things they like about the other person. But over time people focus more and more on the things which irritate them about the other person rather than what they like. If people would just turn that ratio around, most marriages and families would be so much better."--Maggie, an 85-year-old marriage counselor quoted in **THE FIVE SECRETS YOU MUST DISCOVER BEFORE YOU DIE** (see also Sections 2, 4C and 11) by John Izzo

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11. Thought for the day

I REALLY enjoyed reading **THE FIVE SECRETS YOU MUST DISCOVER BEFORE YOU DIE** (see also Sections 2, 4C and 11) by John Izzo . . . you can tell that by the fact that the following passage is the fourth time I have cited the book in this week's issue:

What we pay attention to grows

A number of years ago we conducted a research study involving several hundred people who were trying to make simple but important changes in their lives (such as losing weight, exercising more regularly, eating in a healthier way, speaking up more, having more balance, and so on). These hundreds of people were brought together, and then the group was split in half. Each group was led through a process to identify the changes they wanted to make in their lives (the knowing).

Next the two groups were given two very different methods to implement change (the going). One group set very specific goals for themselves, such as to run three times a week, to eat only healthy foods for ten weeks, and so forth. They were asked to write these goals down and review them once each week for the next twelve weeks.

The second group was given a very different method to implement change. They were given cards and asked to write down a few words or phrases that would remind them of the change they wanted to make in their life (eat healthy, be more active, speak up for yourself, take time for self). They were then asked to carry the card with them wherever they went for the next 12 weeks. Ten to twenty times per day they were to take the card out, look at it, and to be aware of the choices they were making. Carry the card, look at it many times, and never go anywhere without the card. They were also told not to beat themselves up, not to engage in negative self-talk, but to simply be aware of these things as they went through their day.

Twelve weeks later, both groups had made progress, but one group achieved a great deal more change (as much as three times more)--and that was the group who carried the cards. Through the simple act of paying attention, change occurred.

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12. Advance planning department

A. the NJ State Bar Foundation will hold a public seminar on buying and selling a home from 7-9 p.m., Thursday, December 4 at the NJ Law Center, 1 Constitution Square in New Brunswick . . . FREE and open to the public . . . advance registration is required . . . call 1.800.FREELAW or please click:

<http://www.nisbf.org>

B. Tom in Pennsylvania, one of my favorite local performers:

FOREVER PLAID PRESENTS PLAID TIDINGS (a Special Holiday edition)
at the Off-Broadstreet Theatre in Hopewell, NJ

This one needs no hard sell. If I weren't in this show, I would be buying tickets to see it. There are only 10 performances so I doubt there will be a ticket unsold. In these economically depressed times, there is no better Christmas tonic than this show. Nothing but beautiful music and fun!

DECEMBER 5TH THRU THE 31ST

Any one who has ever seen "Forever Plaid" remembers the 4 wacky, lovable

nerds, Jinx, Frankie, Sparky and Smudge, who sing like angels because they are!

On the way to a gig in Scranton PA, their car was hit by a school bus full of Catholic school girls who were on their way to see the Beatles at Shea Stadium in 1964. Now they get one more chance to return to our world for the Christmas Concert they never got to play!

It's Swing, 50's Do-wop, Hip Hop and more!!

Starring:

TIMOTHY WALTON, JIM PETRO [another local favorite of Blaine's], CHRISTOPHER TOLOMEO, and TOM ORR

December 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, and 21

Fridays and Saturdays at 8:00 and Sundays at 2:30

PLUS: a special New Years Eve performance at 7:00, which is selling out very quickly!

For more information, please click:

<http://www.actorr.com/next.htm>

C. Are you a former or present student of mine? Or has your company or organization been used by my students; e.g., for their term projects?

I'm writing to let you officially know that this is the last semester I'll be teaching traditional courses at Bucks County Community College . . . and to mark the occasion, I'm hosting a farewell reception/networking event that I'd very much like you to attend.

Date: Tuesday, December 9

Thursday, December 11 is the backup date if there's bad weather

Time: 7:29 p.m.

Location: Fireside Lounge

Dessert will be served . . . if you can make it (hopefully, the answer is YES!), please RSVP to me if you haven't done so already . . . put YES FOR DECEMBER 9 in your subject line . . . more details to follow.

A REQUEST:

Please share the above invite with any other students of mine that you may know. In addition, if you're with a firm that has worked with my students and/or your know of such a firm, please feel free to share this information with them too. Thank you!

D. Organizing to keep the holidays simple

Patricia Diesel, president of Keep It Simple Now, LLC, will share ideas for streamlining holiday preparations to decrease stress and increase employment. Utilizing her background as a professional organizer and life coach in combination with her high energy and enthusiasm,

Patricia will set the stage for a wonderful, simple holiday season.

Tuesday, December 9 from 7-8:30 p.m. (registration begins at 6:30)

Somerset Medical Center Fuld Auditorium, Somerville, NJ

FREE. Pre-registration is required by calling 908.203.6234 or via online:

<http://www.somersetmedicalcenter.com/events>

PS. Here's hoping that you get to enjoy your turkey on Thursday,
along with plenty of loved ones and friends . . . toward that end:

May your stuffing be tasty
May your turkey plump,
May your potatoes and gravy
Have never a lump.

May your yams be delicious
And your pies take the prize,
And may your Thanksgiving dinner
Stay off your thighs!

Also, please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers
back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . and make it
a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#633

11.17.2008

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12. **Advance planning department**

1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I joined a group of friends on Sunday to see JECKYLL & HYDE at the Villagers Theatre in Somerset, NJ.

The show has always been one of my favorites . . . this particular production of it was outstanding; in fact, it was one of the best we have ever seen put on by a community theater troupe.

Christopher Pica was amazing in the lead role, and the two leading ladies (Alison Gleason and Jennifer Bacigalupi) were equally fine . . . costumes were spectacular, as was the choreography . . . all totaled, there were over 30 performers on stage--often at the same time . . . in addition, a 7-piece orchestra added to our enjoyment, along with the work done by a performer named Cosette McGlone-Hardi . . . she played the dog, quite well too I might add . . . I liked what she had to say in the playbill; i.e., she dedicated her performance "to all the little dogs out there who have been turned away at ANNIE auditions throughout the decades."

We found out in an interesting talk-back session after the show how the sound of cracking necks was achieved; i.e., by snapping a Tic Tac box . . . we also found out that rehearsals had been going on for some 3 and 1/2 months, often for as many as 3-4 times per week.

If you can, do try to catch JECKYLL & HYDE before it ends its run this coming Sunday . . . tickets will probably be scarce, but do try getting them by clicking:

<http://www.villagerstheatre.net/>

From there, we all went to our favorite Japanese restaurant: Tomiko on Route 206 in Hillsborough; 908.874.5088 . . . we've never had a meal that was less than outstanding, and this time was no exception . . . everything is sooooo fresh . . . and the help,

particularly the manager/owner Tommy, is both friendly and helpful . . . this is one of the places that I will REALLY miss when we move from the area in just three short weeks.

I'll also miss our favorite Chinese restaurant in the area, Little Szechuan in West Windsor, NJ/ 609.443.5023 . . . Francis, the owner, is another person who always makes us feel welcome . . . his food never misses the mark, and it is always prepared exactly the way we want it . . . we went there on Saturday, prior to bringing Risa and JP dinner in the new East Windsor, NJ apartment they had just moved into that day . . . they seem happy, and it will always be nice to visit not only them--but also our old den furniture and some other items we wound up giving them.

B. One other person I'll miss is my dermatologist, Dr. Judith Stenn . . . I had an appointment with her the other day and when we were chatting, I realized that I've been going to her for well over 10 years . . . she was the doctor who found that I had melanoma (between my toes, no less), and for that I'll always be grateful . . . we talked about my staying as her patient--e.g., when I came back to the area for visits--but sort of jointly decided against it because of the fact that if I ever needed a follow-up, it would be extremely inconvenient to arrange.

In addition, I'll miss the staff in Dr. Stenn's office: Sunny, Judy, Terry, etc. . . . they all couldn't have been friendlier to me . . . or to Cynthia, who also was a patient there.

Should you live anywhere near East Windsor, NJ, please do contact Dr. Stenn at 609.443.4500 for what I hope will become a regular visit for you to a dermatologist.

C. One of the high spots of my week was attending the Pay it Forward dinner for Bill Lewis . . . well over 350 people in attendance and some \$45,000 was raised.

Bill was able to attend, and he delighted everybody with his humorous remarks . . . John Worthington, his good friend, put together a moving video tribute that showcased the life of Bill (including a time when he had a lot more hair) and his family . . . to see it for yourself, please click:

<http://myspacetv.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=vids.individual&videoid=46643456>

John was also nice enough to take the following picture of yours truly, along with both Bill and John's wife Dianne--who had once been a student of mine:



For more information on this spectacular event, please click:

<http://www.phillyburbs.com/pb-dyn/news/111-11142008-1621248.html>

D. In case you don't typically get down to Section 12, Advance planning department . . . let me repeat something up top that ran in last week's issue:

Are you a former or present student of mine? Or has your company or organization been used by my students; e.g., for their term projects?

I'm writing to let you officially know that this is the last semester I'll be teaching traditional courses at Bucks County Community College . . . and to mark the occasion, I'm hosting a farewell reception/networking event that I'd very much like you to attend.

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A REQUEST:

Please share the above invite with any other students on mine that you may know. Thank you!

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Stephen Forbus--president of ProFundraisers Inc. and the driving force behind the aforementioned fundraiser for Bill Lewis.

I was amazed how he brought so many individuals and organizations together . . . in large part due to his efforts, more than \$22,000 was gained from sponsorship, more than \$30,000 in auction items and more than \$6,500 in tickets.

He did not take one cent for his efforts, which also included serving as the dynamic auctioneer at the event that night.

Stephen's been helping out non-profit organizations as a fundraising consultant for more than five years, and was the Director of Development for two non-profits before beginning his consulting practice. He specializes in helping small and mid-sized non-profit organizations with marketing to their donors, cultivating new donors, volunteer training, event planning, and grant writing.

You can find out more about ProFundraisers by clicking:

<http://www.ProFundraisers.com>.

If you work with or for a non-profit organization and would like to know how to maximize your fundraising efforts, feel free to send him an email at stephenforbus@comcast.net or give him a call at 215.245.8412.

MORE ABOUT STEPHEN:

To show you what kind of guy he is, when I told him that I'd like to recognize his efforts, he immediately sent me the following email that he asked to also have included in this week's issue:

Todd Buch is the honorary chairperson for this event and has also helped in recruiting other sponsors for the event. I am the event coordinator and have also been involved with recruiting other major sponsors and auction items. Suzy Buehler has been in charge of our auction database and has been a key development person in attracting other major sponsors. Deb Myatt has been in charge of ticket sales and has fielded literally over a hundred calls for tickets. Judy Lofton (our printer) has donated her time and her staff's time to assemble the program book and print the tickets, item bid sheets, bid record sheets, and program book.

Dr. Joel Kravitz, Steve Moran and Paul Lacerte have played key roles in selling tables and tickets. Dan Bates and Marie Kurko have been in charge of decorations and publicity. Ginny Fiorentine from the Center for Independent Living has been receiving checks, cash donations, and keeping track of all income. And Anita Steen (from Steen Outdoor Advertising), Blaine Greenfield, Brian Perchick, Dan Bates, Deb Myatt, Ed MacConnell, Joan Weiss, Joel Kravitz, John Worthington, Marie Kurko, Paul Lacerte, Stacy Kutner, and myself have all been involved with getting items for auction.

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2. FYI

My first rule in dining out is to avoid the following: tuna tartare, fried calamari, mixed greens, tomato and mozzarella, Caesar salad, roast or grilled chicken, blackened or poached salmon, crab cakes, and the requisite steak. I have nothing against any of these dishes, but when I go out, I don't want something that (a) even I can make and (b) I have had a million times. Andre's one exception to this rule was his personal holy grail: the perfect burger.

SOURCE:

SERVICE INCLUDED (see also Sections 4C and 11) by Phoebe Damrosch

FYI, part 2

* Diane in Pennsylvania (with an update on her husband Bill; see Section 1B):

This is Bill's email address for those of you who would like to shoot him an email:

billlewis1024@aol.com . . . note: 3 l's

Bill is making more and more progress at home. The nurse and the therapists come to the house, and he is learning to get around the house in his wheelchair doing things he had done before.

We went to the surgeon on Tuesday. The break in his neck did not heal yet. The surgeon put a soft collar on Bill now, and he will be weaned off of that within a few weeks. The surgeon informed us that if the bone does not heal in another three months, he will have to possibly fuse the bone in his neck.

Please continue to keep us in prayer and thank you all for your support!

* Rebecca in Michigan (on traveling with cats):

An article I came across in a well-known magazine stated:

About traveling with your cat: Dr. Shawn says it is really up to you. If your cat travels well in the car, it would certainly be cheaper and easier for both of you. In the doctor's experience, most cats tend to do just fine on road trips, given that a car ride allows you more freedom to comfort your cat along the way.

But if you know your cat won't tolerate a car ride well, you can fly with it instead. Most airlines allow cats to travel on planes with their owners as "carry-on" in an approved carrier--always a better choice than isolating an animal with the baggage. Fees vary depending on the airline. However, make sure your cat isn't wailing the whole time. Passengers having to sit near it won't appreciate hearing it cry.

To ease your cat's anxiety during travel either way, try giving the cat a few drops of Rescue Remedy (a widely available flower essence helpful for mild anxiety, now sold in a formula especially for pets) as often as needed. Other herbal products with similar calming properties is NutriCalm by RX Vitamins and Composure Liquid from Vetri Science.

For a simple remedy, you may also turn to lavender or chamomile oil. Both have soothing, calming properties and help many anxious pets enjoy a more pleasant ride. Put one or two drops on a cotton ball or cloth, and place into the pet's carrier. Or dilute a small amount of either oil with two parts water in a spray bottle and mist on the floor of your car about 30 minutes before traveling.

Any of these solutions might work alone, or you can try a combination approach. Talk to your vet about the best plan for your cat.

I myself thinks a cat does better traveling in the car, knowing what he hears is his owner's voice and is talked to along the way. My cats have always done pretty well in the car knowing that I was right there with them.

* Lorraine in New Jersey:

Do you know someone who needs help with their small business?

REFER THEM TO US!

We provide FREE expert counseling on:

Balancing your Business During a Recession
Writing Effective Business & Strategic Plans
Identifying Financing Resources
Establishing your Web Presence
Marketing Strategies
Doing Business with the Government
Human Resources
And more!

You already know about the NJSBDC, but does your family, friends and associates?

If you know someone who has their own business and could use some help being pointed in the right direction, we can help!

Refer them to our website:

<http://www.sbdcnj.com>

They complete the **Consultation Request Form** and the **Existing Business Assessment Survey**.

Then we will set them up with a consultant to help.

Providing free confidential one-to-one meetings and low-to-no cost accessible management training, we can help them meet their challenges.

We can also be reached via email: NJSBDC@TCNJ or by phone, 609.771.2947.

* Bob in New Jersey (on an 11.10 article I sent him from THE WALL STREET JOURNAL about the use of Pravachol--even for healthy people):

Fact: I have been on Pravachol for about six years. My cholesterol was borderline, but a cardiac surgeon told me I should take it because he thought

ALL people should take it. He said it makes your vessels like Teflon. NOTHING STICKS TO IT!! Came to realize that almost ALL the doctors I knew were taking it, including skinny marathon runners. The studies were not in yet but throughout the medical community the word was out.

Fact: My cholesterol was 190 when I started taking it. Now my cholesterol is 100. 60 HDL, 40 LDL. I am happy with that. Losing weight (140 lbs) helped that a lot.

Fact: When heart surgeons see a patient on Friday and they say we will do a bypass on Monday . . . they put the patient on statins over the weekend. They tell me the blood vessels just act better; it gives them new life.

Fact: I also take some drugstore Niacin. This helps get the HDL up. Ask your doctor; it works.

Fact: Do not use too much grapefruit or grapefruit juice if you are on a statin. Also, take the statin at night because it is at night that your liver produces cholesterol.

Fact: Just start asking doctors personally if they are on a statin. You will be amazed. They take care of each other and they pass the word. I know many docs who are taking samples the drug reps give them!

Fact: Note that the biggest concern in the article was cost. How much will we spend on prevention?

This really is a miracle drug, as far as we know right now.

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3. Thanksgiving dinner

The new bride wanted everything to be perfect for the Thanksgiving dinner she was hosting for her in-laws. So she called the turkey hotline and said, "I bought a 12-pound bird. How long does it need to cook?"

"Just a minute," said the hotline operator, paging through her reference book.

"Thanks!" said the bride as she hung up.

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4. Reviews

A. Paul Rudd and Seann William Scott play two men who are hardly model citizens in *ROLE MODELS*, a very funny comedy . . . when their bad behavior puts them in trouble with the law, they soon must complete community service in a Big Brothers-type program . . . Christopher Mintz-Plasse, who made his debut as in *SUPERBAD*, continues to impress me here in what's essentially a costarring role . . . the language is foul; however, if you can get past that, you'll find that the laughs never stop coming . . . there was also a ending that was surprisingly touching . . . rated R.

B. TROPIC THUNDER is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #626 follows:

B. TROPIC THUNDER is still out in a few theaters . . . catch it, if you can; if not, put it on your list of films to rent when it comes out on DVD . . . it is a satire about Hollywood movie-making that had me laughing throughout . . . Ben Stiller, who also directed, stars as an action hero who has begun making many bad career choices . . . to redeem himself, he takes on a role in a Vietnam war flick that becomes complicated by the fact that real life druglords capture him . . . he is joined by Jack Black as an insecure comedy star going through heroin withdrawal and a very funny Robert Downey Jr.--so lost in his art that he undergoes an operation to become black . . . rated R.

C. SERVICE INCLUDED (see also Sections 2 and 11) by Phoebe Damrosch had me hooked when I read the back cover and its WARNING:

May contain material offensive to vegans, pharmaceutical lobbyists and those on a low-sodium diet. Animals were harmed during the writing of this book.

Now that sounded like something I would want to read . . . and I did--with delight.

Damrosch, upon graduation from college, supported herself as a waitress . . . she soon became the only female captain at Per Se, the four-star New York City restaurant . . . this book presents her account of what life in this industry is all about.

I laughed at some at some of the rules she had to follow, such as Rule #20:

* When asked, guide guests to the bathroom instead of pointing.

Her take on this was even funnier:

* I understand the logic of this. I hate wandering around restaurants, opening broom closets and storage rooms looking for the ladies' room. Even when someone says it's around the corner and to my right, I still manage to end up in the coffee station. At Per Se, unless we were holding plates in our hands, we were expected to show the guest the way. I usually saw them just past the bar because at least a few times a week, guests walked into the glass wall of the wine cellar; and if they didn't walk away with a bloody nose, they certainly walked away with less dignity. After selling them the very wine that clouded their minds and blurred the line between air and glass, it hardly seemed fair to let them go unsupervised. Once past the danger zone, however, I gestured down the hallway to the well-marked bathrooms and let the guest take it from there. Even so, some of the men seemed a bit uncomfortable, as if I planned to accompany them in and help. The eighteen percent you will leave me, sir, I always wanted to say, would not cover that.

In addition, the author provided many useful tips for diners; among them:

* Please do not ask us what else we do. This implies that (a) we shouldn't aspired to work in the restaurant business even if it makes us happy and financially stable, (b) that we have loads of time on our hands because ours is such an easy job, and (c) that we are not succeeding

in another field.

* Don't send something back after eating most of it.

Lastly, I enjoyed reading Damorsch's account of her love affair with a sommelier . . . it enabled me to feel like I got to know them both better, especially after reading this one exchange:

* "Who are you?" Andre demanded when I refused an ice cream cone a few weeks later. "The woman I fell in love with never said no to ice cream."

"The woman you fell in love with could also stand to lose a few pounds."

"Are you kidding? My preup is going to have a weight minimum. You lose a pound, I dock you."

Yup, this one was worth fighting for.

SERVICE INCLUDED is a MUST for anybody in the restaurant industry, though I think that just about anybody else who eats out will enjoy it too.

D. A CD's title can often intrigue me . . . such was the case with HOW TO START A CONVERSATION by Don Gabor, a communications consultant/author.

Gabor promises on the cover that "you'll be amazed at how fast you can learn how to start a conversation just by listening" to his audiobook "and by practicing the skills with everyone you meet!"

Furthermore, he urges listeners to "just think of how much more confident, poised and successful you'll feel when you can walk into a roomfull of strangers and strike up a conversation with anyone there."

I don't know if anybody will get to quite that level after just one time listening to this CD, but methinks that several times will certainly get you moving in the right direction . . . there were many good examples; what I liked most was the fact that several of them were actually acted out in the program.

Although this was a relatively short program, I nevertheless gained much information from it; among the tidbits were the following:

* By initiating more conversations, you'll reduce your fear of rejection.

* Taking the risk to start a conversation gives you the opportunity to guide it.

* Look for people doing what you like doing--e.g., dancing--then go up to them.

* Three easy ways to start a conversation: Notice something positive and ask the person a question, notice something the person is wearing and ask a question and comment on the situation you're both in and ask a question.

* Right after you meet somebody, say his or her name aloud. Then repeat it as often as possible.

* Self-disclosure is a way of sharing information about yourself. Make

it positive.

Gabor also provided the narration for this CD . . . overall, he seems to really know his stuff . . . consequently, I wouldn't mind reading and/or listening to something else from him.

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5. TV alert

A. THE IFC MEDIA PROJECT debuts on Tuesday at 8 p.m. on IFC . . . this program attempts to give a sobering wake-up call to anyone who takes at first value . . . the first episode focuses on "news taboos" or subjects the media either embraces wholeheartedly or totally shies away from addressing . . . there will also be an examination of the media's frequent use of the word "allegedly" . . . Tuesdays at 8 p.m. on IFC.

B. OLD-FASHIONED THANKSGIVING stars Jaqueline Bisset as high-society woman who looks down on her financially strapped daughter . . . it is an adaptation of a short story by Louisa May Alcott . . . Saturday at 9 p.m. on HALLMARK.

C Although not a big fan of the regular series, I will probably watch 24: REDEMPTION on Sunday at 8 p.m. on FOX . . . to quote TV GUIDE, this prequel to January's seventh season "is a shot of pure adrenaline and deluxe action filmmaking."

D. COLBERT CHRISTMAS: THE GREATEST GIFT OF ALL airs on Sunday at 10 p.m. on COMEDY CENTRAL . . . Stephen Colbert welcomes Elvis Costello, Jon Stewart, Willie Nelson and even a bear to his cabin.

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6. Ravioli

An elderly Italian man lay dying in his bed. While suffering the agonies of impending death, he suddenly smelled the aroma of his favorite ravioli wafting up the stairs.

He gathered his remaining strength and lifted himself from the bed.

Gripping the railing with both hands, he crawled downstairs.

When he reached the bottom of the stairs, he leaned against the door frame, gazing into the kitchen, where if not for death's agony, he would have thought himself already in heaven, for there, spread out upon waxed paper on the kitchen table were hundreds of his favorite ravioli.

Was it heaven? Or was it one final act of love from his wife of sixty years, seeing to it that he left this world a happy man?

He threw himself towards the table, landing on his knees in a crumpled posture. His parched lips parted, the wondrous taste of the ravioli was already in his mouth.

With a trembling hand he reached up to the edge of the table, when suddenly he was smacked with a wooden spoon by his wife.

"F*CK OFF!" she said. "Those are for the funeral."

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7. Websites

A. Want to look up the definition of a word? If so, please click:

<http://www.definr.com/>

I further like the option to learn a new word every day . . . when you do, you'll also be provided with a notable quote that actually uses the word . . . for instance:

dreck

<http://definr.com/dreck>

n : (slang) merchandise that is shoddy or inferior [syn: **schlock**, **shlock**]

Notable quote

[On the American tax code] If I wanted to be bored by 6,000 pages of unreadable dreck, I'd read WAR AND PEACE four times.--Lewis Black

B. If you like to laugh over the simple and enjoyable acts of cooking, eating and drinking, please click:

<http://www.ingestandimbibe.com/>

There are various articles listed on this website's main page and viewers can entertain themselves by reading humorous postings--such as this first one: How (Not) To Cook, Serve and Carve A Thanksgiving Turkey.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blaineworld.net>

To make it easy for your friends, relatives and colleagues to subscribe, feel free to forward the website to them . . . then encourage them to check out the "Special Offer" at the bottom of the homepage.

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8. Computer tip

When your computer is loading something (an article, a website, etc.), my recommendation is to let it load completely before attempting another task . . . this will greatly reduce the amount of times you get booted off when on the computer . . . also, in the long run, this tip will reduce the amount of stress in your life--particularly if you give up the idea that watching your monitor will make things run more smoothly.

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9. Rebukes and insults, Part 2 of 2

(concluded from last week)

"He can compress the most words into the smallest idea of any man I know."--Abraham Lincoln

"You've got the brain of a four-year-old boy, and I bet he was glad to get rid of it."--Groucho Marx

"I've had a perfectly wonderful evening. But this wasn't it."--Groucho Marx

"He has the attention span of a lightning bolt."--Robert Redford

"He loves nature in spite of what it did to him."--Forrest Tucker

"His mother should have thrown him away and kept the stork."--Mae West

"She is a peacock in everything but beauty."--Oscar Wilde

"Some cause happiness wherever they go; others whenever they go."--Oscar Wilde

"He has no enemies, but is intensely disliked by his friends."--Oscar Wilde

"He has Van Gogh's ear for music."--Billy Wilder

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10. A quote I like

I think the purpose of life is to be useful, to be responsible, to be honorable, to be compassionate. It is, after all, to matter: to count, to stand for something, to have made some difference that you lived at all.

Leo C. Rosten (1908-1977), American writer

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11. Thought for the day

In my opinion, a good diner must pass three tests. First, it must have more booths than tables. Second, the patty melt should be revered; I should not have to specify rye or choose a cheese. Most important, a chocolate milkshake must be made with chocolate ice cream--not vanilla with chocolate syrup--and it has to be served with the remaining shake in the silver blender cup in which it was made. I learned as a child that diners that skimp on that extra serving of milkshake should not be trusted. When I was young, diners were a place of worship, perhaps because the hamburger (later replaced by the superior patty melt), fries, and chocolate milkshake my parents allowed were like manna to a child who grew up on rabbits raised out back, potatoes from the garden, and homemade carob-chip cookies.

SERVICE INCLUDED (see also Sections 2 and 4C) by Phoebe Damrosch

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12. Advance planning department

A. Robin in Pennsylvania:

Jazz Celebration: Big Band playing again on November 20! Join us for some really terrific music.

Thursday November 20, 2008 . . . 8:00-10:00 p.m.
Poco's Comedy Cabaret (2nd floor)
625 North Main Street
Doylestown, PA
215.348.3424
\$10 cover; over 21, please!

About Jazz Celebration Big Band:

Jazz Celebration Big Band was formed in June 2007 by Paul Morris, a professional trombonist from Newtown, PA, to perform jazz standards of the large jazz orchestra genre. Its musicians have performed with Sammy Davis Jr., Tony Bennett, Burt Bacharach, Aretha Franklin, Joe Piscopo, Manhattan Transfer, Johnny Mathis, Johnny Ray, The Four Aces, Tony Martin, Nancy Sinatra, Liza Minnelli, The Philadelphia Orchestra, and many others. Jazz Celebration Big Band features vocalist Claudia Perry.

B. Natalie in Pennsylvania:

We took my niece and nephew, Anna and Brett, to see THE KING AND I at the Kelsey [in West Windsor, NJ] on Saturday night. It was fabulous. The actress (Elizabeth Rzasa) portraying Anna was the star of OKLAHOMA, the one who played Laurie in the version that you saw in Newtown, PA. She was fantastic. Ivan and I couldn't get over how much she's improved in her dramatic abilities. She gave a sterling performance. The voices were awesome, and it was a terrific theater experience.

THE KING AND I runs concludes its run with performances on Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday afternoon . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.mccc.edu/kelseytheatre>

C. Figen in Pennsylvania is offering a world-wide Free TeleClass on Monday November 24, at 8 p.m.

The topic is "Universal Energy, What It Is and How You Can Benefit From It."

There will be a discussion about universal energy and how to access it. In addition, there will be a guided meditation for grounding, protection and energy enhancement, as well as a Q & A session.

This guided meditation is a very powerful technique from Lewis Bostwick, the father of Psychic Education in the US. It will help release fear and tension; and transform you by bringing in the light to move forward calmly with confidence. This teleclass is FREE. Your only cost will be your

regular long distance charges--if there are any--to dial the tele-conference number.

To register, please email Figen with your request:
figen@lovethewayyoulive.com.

D. Kevin in Pennsylvania:

I'm planning my first Growth Coach mini intro workshop on Friday, December 5 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., lunch included.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.growthcoachpartners.com/>

To register, please call 215.345.4566.

PS. Thursday, November 20, is the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout . . . it was started to encourage smokers to quite for a day in hopes they may quit for good.

According to the American Lung Association, within 24 hours of quitting, a person's chance of heart attack decreases, while two weeks after quitting, circulation and lung function improve, and within one year, the risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's.

SPECIAL OFFER:

If you'd like a FREE copy of THE EASY WAY TO STOP SMOKING by Allen Carr--sent with my compliments--just send an email to my assistant Bridget: hughesbr@bucks.edu . . . put STOP SMOKING BOOK in the subject line . . . in the body of your email, include your name, snail mail address, email address, and phone numbers . . . I only ask that you keep me informed of your progress . . . or of the progress of anybody else you give the book to . . . and, also, that if you get it for yourself or for somebody else, please do what you can to see that the book gets read within 30 days of receipt.

As to whether the book will help you, I can tell you that I've given out over 100 copies . . .almost every recipient has reported back to me that it worked.

Also, please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . and make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#632

11.10.2008

In this issue:

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I had a fun time on Saturday when we visited with my cousins Joan and Blanche to view all the photos my dad had taken over the years . . . he was quite the amateur photographer, having accumulated thousands of photos that he then painstakingly put into albums.

The four of us went through all the albums, choosing the photos that we each wanted to keep . . . see Section 7C (below) for information on how you can actually see some of these for yourself.

From there, we went to Bob's Place in Floral Park, NY, where we were joined by my cousin Blaine--yes, there's another person out there with that name!--for a delicious dinner . . . I enjoyed my Chicken Rosina, prepared with garlic, white wine, diced olives and tomatoes . . . Cynthia found her Shrimp and Chicken Stir Fry dish to be quite tasty . . . we also both shared a House Salad that was unusually good because of its inclusion of both candied walnuts and Anjou pears . . . but our favorite item was the dessert, a turtle cheesecake . . . we ordered two pieces that we then all split.

Service at this restaurant was excellent . . . in particular, we liked the warm greeting that the owner (Bob) gave not only to us, but to everybody else who entered or left . . . for more information, please click:

<http://bobsplacerestaurant.com/index.php?p=home>

B. On Friday, I had the pleasure to attend the AFT Pennsylvania Higher Education Dinner . . . it's always one of my favorite events to attend, especially because it starts off with my getting a chair massage from Steven Pincin . . . he's the massage therapist who has been coming to this particular session for it seems like almost as long as I have . . . should you live in the Lemoyne, PA area, he can be reached at 717.737.1896.

From there, it was on to having my picture taken with President-elect Barack Obama . . . there he is, flanked by yours truly on the left and Marianne Kepler (a fellow Union officer) on the right:



The dinner featured a keynote address by Congressman Patrick Murphy, the dynamic member of the House of Representatives from Bucks County . . . he inspired all those in attendance with his brief remarks, stating that his goal was to listen more than he talked because "my wife reminds me often that God gave me two ears and one mouth."

That's Congressman Murphy (on the right) in a photo graciously taken and shared by Jared Freedman, a staff representative for AFT Pennsylvania:



C. MR. CURIOUS HERE (and a strong suggestion):

When my mom died, her finances were in fairly good shape; i.e., with one big exception.

It involved a Putnam Hartford Capital Manager Variable Annuity that was set up as follows: Muriel Greenfield Revocable Living Trust.

My father was named as the Successor. Unfortunately, nobody else was named as a Successor Trustee. And therein lies the problem.

There is a death benefit that Hartford still has--but Hartford says it won't release that benefits until it is ordered to do so by the court.

The court says it won't order the release of the death benefit until the original Trust document can be found. When we were in court, the judge said he needed to be sure that the death benefits were intended for my brother or me. He told us to go find that original document, setting up the trust--though we told him it can't be found.

We can't find it with my mother's stuff--and we have searched endlessly for it. The lawyer who set up the Trust (a guy who had scammed my folks out of some \$200,000 in off-shore drilling investment) said he no longer had the original document.

Hartford said it doesn't have the original document; it only has the first and last pages.

Merrill Lynch shows the contract under my mom's account, but says it does not hold the Trust document. I think Merrill only showed the contract because my parents had listed it when they set up their Merrill Lynch accounts.

So that said:

Any suggestions on how to handle this mess? We are working with a lawyer specializing in elder law, and we believe she is a good one . . . but she is getting as frustrated as we are with this mess.

The strong suggestion:

If you need to handle the finances of your parents or other relatives, make sure you know where all their financial documents are kept. And that they are up to date, especially with respect to beneficiaries.

When and if it becomes necessary for you to take over matters, do it sooner rather than later if possible. By the time my mom "allowed" me to write her checks, she was paying my father's cellphone bill (though he hadn't used one for some five years), she was making a contribution to virtually any charity--legitimate or not--who sent her direct mail, etc.

Also, please initiate any financial discussions when all parties are of sound mind.

D. CONGRATULATIONS to Linda Jacobs . . . her company, Soup to Nuts, was named Best Caterer in Bucks County by the PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER . . . some other good news about her company (to quote from an email she recently sent me):

Another exciting happening this year is working with Bucks County Foodshed Alliance and other local farms. I've always preferred local and seasonal food. Now besides, the fresh taste and nutrition, we are now made aware of carbon footprints. I'm so excited about the work of the local farmers to make it available.

For more information about Soup to Nuts, please click:

<http://www.SouptoNutsCuisine.com>

CONGRATULATIONS, also, to my friend Gina in North Carolina . . . she and Michael were recently married and are now back from their honeymoon in Ocean Isle Beach, NC . . . if you'd like to see pictures from the wedding, please click:

<http://www.myspace.com/fancyfullone>

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to John Dumont--the lawyer who handled the closing for the recent sale of our Belle Mead home in New Jersey.

He also drew up the lease agreement that is now enabling us to stay here until the middle of December.

I was very impressed with how John returned every call, as well as every email . . . he did so in a prompt, professional manner.

His advice was always valued, and it helped us to wrap up things as quickly as we did.

Pat Fell, his assistant, also helped make life easier for us.

Should you want to contact John, your best bet is via phone (609.688.9353) or via email: jhd@dumontwatsonlaw.com.

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2. FYI

Advice-giving on the other hand, though well-intended, poses some difficulties. If your friend takes your suggestions, but the outcome isn't positive, both of you will feel uncomfortable. If your advice is ignored, however, you may find yourself feeling somewhat offended. The best advice? Let your friends know you are always there to listen, and if real advice is required, share the name of your therapist.

SOURCE:

THE ART OF FRIENDSHIP (see also Sections 4C, 10 and 11) by Roger Horchow and Sally Horchow

FYI, part 2

* Bob Greene, one of my favorite authors:

What a great, great letter, and what a wonderful and generous review.

I'm so glad you enjoyed it. Some of the things you pointed out in particular--especially what you said about the importance of "We Play," and so many of the other observations you made-- make me know that you understood exactly why I was telling the story the way I did. Thank you.

I apologize for the delay in writing back to you. I was out covering the presidential campaign for CNN, and I received your letter and review when we were traveling across the country. This is the first I've been able to let you know just how much your kind words meant to me.

If you should be in touch with any of your friends who you think might like WHEN WE GET TO SURF CITY, I'll be very grateful if you recommend it to them, the way you did in the review. I'd love for this story to be shared by those you think might like to come along on the journey.

Again, thanks so much for your kind words about my writing, and the eloquent thoughts behind them. They mean a lot.

* Bob in New Jersey (commenting on an article I had sent him: Laura Landro, "Hospitals Seek to Limit Use of Transfusions," wsj.com, 10.29.2008):

What a great WSJ article on Blood Transfusions.

They provided some great questions that consumers should always ask about getting a blood transfusion:

Will I need a transfusion? If so, why?

What are the risks involved with blood transfusions?

What are the risks if I choose to minimize or avoid blood transfusions?

Will I need iron, vitamins or medications to increase my blood count for this surgery?

If I do need a transfusion, how will it affect my recovery time?

Once you decide that you need to have a transfusion, there is an important thing, as a consumer, to assure. Make sure that the nurses (there should be two) who bring the blood to your bedside are sure of a few things. They need to positively identify YOU, the patient. They need to positively identify that the blood is signed out to YOU. And they need to assure that the prescription or order from your physician is verified that it is for YOU. This will involve plenty of checking, re-checking, double-checking and then verifying verbally. Blood should always be administered by two professionals, not one, always talking to each other and to the patient constantly to prevent any mistake. Consumers should always ask that the wrist bands be verified, and the patient (if possible) should be an active part of this process.

Administration of blood products is a rigorous system that should not be viewed as casual, even if the patient is getting the 20th unit of blood in two days. "Casual" is not appropriate in any part of patient care, especially in anything to do with blood products and transfusion. Your nurse will be pleased to teach you the protocol they go through because they know that the nurse's best friend is an educated, involved patient.

There are 400,000 websites talking about blood transfusion safety.

Investigate!

* Henry in Pennsylvania:

Have you or someone you know sought help for a health issue within the past 2 years? The process may or may not have flowed smoothly for you or the person concerned, though for over 70 million Americans, access to quality care has become very difficult, as highlighted in the recent election campaign.

"Sick Around the World" is a gripping documentary (aired on PBS Frontline April 15, 2008) that discusses the delivery of medical care in 5 capitalist countries (The U.K., Japan, Germany, Taiwan and Switzerland) as compared to the United States. Please watch this very informative 45 minute video at:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/sickaroundtheworld/>

Or better still, call Dr. Henry D'Silva (215-860-7442 or 267-679-0617) to schedule a viewing and a discussion for your group. And if you have an interest in local solutions to this major national crisis, please visit:

<http://www.buckshealthcare.org>

* Diane in Pennsylvania, on behalf of her husband Bill and the rest of the Lewis family:

A Letter of Thanks

Little did I know that on Sunday, August 10th, when I said good-bye to Bill and when he left for church, my whole life would be changed forever in a split second.

I will never forget that day as I was home preparing dinner and I received a phone call that Bill had a very serious accident while trimming branches at church.

I remember driving with my sister to Frankford Torresdale Hospital praying that Bill would not have either a spinal cord injury or brain damage.

When the doctor came out and told me that they had to med-i-vac Bill to Jefferson, I knew my worst fears had come true as one could only imagine.

After many tests and countless hours, the doctors came out and informed us of Bill's injuries. He had three dislocated fingers, a tear in his aorta and his spinal cord had been almost completely severed. Leaving Bill, with only a 3% chance of ever walking or having any movement again from his chest down.

After Bill's operation to put his spine back into place with rods and many screws, he developed pneumonia from being on a ventilator and under heavy sedation for so long. Because Bill could not breathe on his own at this time, the doctors had no choice but to put a trachea in him.

Slowly as the weeks past, Bill's progress starting to improve. I believe that because of our family and friends like you, that Bill could hear each visit and your prayers, thoughts, and support that God brought him through the worst.

After a month at Jefferson, Bill was transferred to Magee Rehab where

Bill and myself would have to learn how to live our life in a whole different way.

Everyday Bill goes to physical, occupational, group, and speech therapy learning his new way of life, never once saying "WHY ME?".

It has been three months now and because of Bill's positive outlook on life, and because he always lives his life with the glass half full, I know that has helped Bill get through his recovery.

I know that we have a long journey ahead of us, however, I know in my heart with the help, support and love of my family and friends, we will get through all of this.

On behalf of myself, Bill and our children, we want to take this opportunity to express our sincerest appreciation for your contributions, prayers, and support. We are deeply grateful for your generosity. All of the funds will go towards medical equipment and making our house handicapped accessible.

Bill would like everyone to know that his body may be broken, but his spirit will never be.

In closing, we would just like to say thank you once again.

SPECIAL THANKS to the many readers who wrote to help the mother who posted the anonymous question about her son's psoriasis; among them:

* Sue in Pennsylvania:

<http://www.earthclinic.com/CURES/psoriasis.html>

Apple cider vinegar works wonders; see the above website for information . . . recommend organic acv . . . start slowly . . . maybe 1 teaspoon per 8 oz. water . . . build up to one or two tablespoons per 8 oz. . . . it's difficult at first, but gets easier . . . I used it to treat my ulcer . . . can also use it in a bath . . . and there are some shampoos out there that have acv in it.

* Vicki in New Jersey:

I have psoriasis, and it started when I was 27 & I'm 50 now. My best friend has it also; hers is worse and she has it everywhere. She's on Enbrel and gives herself injections. I know it's extremely costly and the Dr. has to prove that he/she tried everything else in order for the insurance to approve Enbrel.

There are also pills but after a period of time you need a liver biopsy, so I decided not to take them.

I use temovate ointment (keeps the skin moist). It's like Vaseline and is annoying because it gets on other things: sheets etc. At times, it is so bad I have to use the ointment and then Saran Wrap around my legs, elbows or wear plastic gloves on my hands at night.

I had it in the scalp, behind the ears, and thought it was snowing all the time. My Dr. gave me a small bottle, of clear liquid that I used daily and it cleared up. The worst thing for me was and is scratching. Scratching makes it so much worse. I itched and then bleed, the itch is that bad. So bad he wanted to give me tranquilizers, but I said no. When it came to the scalp, I scratched and then used the liquid

medication. It burned from scratching. I used to pat the area instead of scratching and it helped. Thank God it cleared up. I can't recall the name of the medicine but I have an Dr's appointment on Tuesday and I'll ask him.

* Gary in New Jersey:

Ava and I have been going to Dr. Kevin Holder in South Orange for 15 years. He is a board certified internist, but practices holistic medicine. He does miraculous things when the mainstream doctors say there is nothing else to be done. If you are desperate, it may be worth an appointment to see him Once he sees you, he will spend as much time with you as necessary. Great bedside manner. His contact information: Dr. Kevin Holder, 5 Stanley Road, South Orange, NJ; Tel: 973.762.6077.

Good luck!

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3. Punctuality

When asked her opinion on punctuality, an applicant for an office job assured the interviewer that she thought it was extremely important. "I used periods, commas, and question marks all the time," she said.

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4. Reviews

A. Kevin Smith's ZACK AND MIRI MAKE A PORNO is definitely not for anybody who is offended by foul-language . . . but if that doesn't bother you, methinks you'll enjoy this raunchy comedy that's surprisingly romantic . . . it is about a guy, Seth Rogen, and a his platonic pal, Elizabeth Banks, who live together in order to save money on both their housing and bills . . . when they become really down on their luck, a chance encounter at their 10-year reunion gives them the idea to make a porn movie to make some money . . . Rogen and Banks have great chemistry in the leading roles, and I also liked the work of both Justin Long and Craig Robinson . . . make sure you stay until the very end of the credits for an add-on part to the film that most everybody else will miss . . . rated R.

B. There are no new DVD releases that I can currently recommend, so let me instead suggest a classic that I just revisited: ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST.

It is a satire about mental institutions that deservedly won the 1975 Academy Award for Best Picture . . . Jack Nicholson and Louise Fletcher also won Oscars for Best Actor and Best Actress, respectively . . . also, there's a brilliant ensemble that includes Brad Dourif, Christopher Lloyd, Vincent Schiavelli, and Danny DeVito.

Parts of it had me laughing, while other parts moved me as much as they did when I saw the film over three decades ago . . . rated R.

C. I'm so glad that I came across THE ART OF FRIENDSHIP (see also Sections 2, 10 and 11) by Roger Horchow and Sally Horchow before my upcoming move to Asheville, North Carolina.

Knowing virtually nobody there, I'm somewhat apprehensive about how to go about meeting new folks . . . yet the authors seem to have made it simple for me by presenting--to quote the subtitle--70 SIMPLE RULES FOR MAKING MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS.

For example, here's one idea that I had never thought about:

- * Host a party for your good friends and ask each of your guests to bring one person that you don't know.

I then got a kick out of this suggestion for dealing with the problem of forgetting somebody's name:

- * Say, "Nice to see you" rather than "Nice to meet you." No one wants to think they were so completely forgettable that you've blanked out the first meeting.

Lastly, there was this useful suggestion for avoiding banalities that get you nowhere in a conversation:

- * Unless you are a meteorologist or a farmer, there is usually nothing vitally interesting in a discussion of the weather. . . . Your goal is to learn about the person you are talking to, not make empty noise.

I strongly recommend THE ART OF FRIENDSHIP to anybody interested in making or meeting new friends--even if you think you already have more than enough . . . by chance, even if you fall into the latter category, you'll be pleasantly surprised to pick up some new techniques that will help you strengthen existing friendships.

D. Heard ATTRACTING TERRIFIC PEOPLE--written and read by Dr. Lillian Glass.

Glass, a media personality and communication specialist, talks about the fact that if you want good people in your life, you have to be one yourself . . . she suggests that you think about five people you admire or respect . . . then list the positive characteristics that best describe their personality; e.g., accepting, alive, balanced, caring, generous, joyous, passionate, etc. . . . then seek other people with these same characteristics.

Another idea that I liked was the following: Use compliments as perfect icebreakers. For instance, tell somebody, "You look great in that dress. Where's you get it?"

Glass also stressed the need to:

- * Visualize the people you want to be around you.
- * Utilize the Spiral of Friendship. Always share terrific people you know with others.
- * Don't negative to negative people.
- * Treat the ones you love better than anybody else in the world.
- * Learn one new thing each day.
- * Always want the best for others.

My enjoyment of ATTRACTING TERRIFIC PEOPLE was enhanced by the author's enthusiastic and absolutely terrific narration.

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5. TV alert

A. 30 ROCK continues with interesting guest stars . . . this time it's Jennifer Aniston, playing a stalker . . . Thursday at 9:30 p.m. on NBC.

B. Chandra Wilson, one of the stars of GREY'S ANATOMY, stars as homeless woman Yvonne in A FALL FROM SEATTLE GRACE, a fact-based cable drama on Saturday at 9 p.m. on HALLMARK.

C. RICKY GERVAIS: OUT OF ENGLAND--THE STAND-UP SPECIAL airs on Saturday at 9 p.m. on HBO . . . I liked him in GHOST TOWN, a recent movie in which he starred, so will try to check this out.

D. FILTH is MASTERPIECE CONTEMPORARY movie that TV GUIDE calls "a clever, hipper look at a subject [premarital sex] that continues to ruffle feathers today" . . . Sunday at 9 p.m. on PBS . . . because PBS times and dates often vary, please check local listings.

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6. Celebration

A friend's wife, a professor of medicine, has published five books. After she'd written her latest one, my friend stopped at a market to buy some chocolate and champagne.

"Are you celebrating something?" asked the clerk as he bagged my items.

"Yes," my friend replied proudly. "My wife just finished a book."

He paused a moment. "Slow reader?"

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7. Websites

A. If you like to shop online, please click:

<http://shopping.yahoo.com/articles/yshoppingarticles/142best-shopping-deals-online/>

By using these websites you can save a lot of money . . . best of all: you'll probably still have money to buy something for yours truly. (Hint-hint!)

B. Here's an IMPORTANT message that I'd like everybody to view, regardless of the type of TV that I have:

<http://www.hulu.com/watch/36608/talkshow-with-spike-feresten-cable-psa>

I guarantee that it will make you appreciate your understanding of technology, no matter how little you think that may be.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blaineworld.net>

If you're new to this newsletter or website, please feel free to check out "Blaine's Best" to the left, then "Pictures" . . . you'll see shots of yours truly, as well as of my friends and relatives . . . make sure you keep your sound on to listen to what's arguably the greatest rock song of all time!

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8. Computer tip

If you order stuff online, make sure you are on a "secure" site before you give your name, address or credit card details. Look for the picture of the unbroken key or closed lock in your browser window.

If you don't see such a picture, don't go any further. Period.

For more information on this important topic, please click:

<http://www.safeshopping.org/>

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9. Rebukes and insults, Part 1 of 2

Particularly literate people have a way of delivering rebukes and insults. In fact, they do it a lot better than I do. Among my favorites:

"A graceful taunt is worth a thousand insults."--Louis Nizer

"I feel so miserable without you. It's almost like having you here."--Stephen Bishop

"He is a self-made man and worships his creator."--John Bright

"He has all the virtues I dislike and none of the vices I admire."--Winston Churchill

"A modest little person, with much to be modest about."--Winston Churchill

"I've just learned about his illness. Let's hope it's nothing trivial."--Irvin S. Cobb

"I have never killed a man, but I have read many obituaries with great pleasure."--Clarence Darrow

"He has never been known to use a word that might send a reader to the dictionary."--William Faulkner (about Ernest Hemingway)

"Poor Faulkner. Does he really think big emotions come from big words?"--Ernest Hemingway (about William Faulkner)

"He had delusions of adequacy."--Walter Kerr

(to be concluded next week)

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10. A quote I like

In each conversation, listen carefully and pick up at least one thing you did not know before.--Roger Horchow and Sally Horchow in THE ART OF FRIENDSHIP (see also Sections 2, 4C and 10)

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11. Thought for the day

When I REALLY like a book, I'll mention it in four separate sections of this missive . . . that's the case with THE ART OF FRIENDSHIP (see also Sections 2, 4C and 10) by Roger Horchow and Sally Horchow, the source of this following passage:

Friendships aren't based on a tit-for-tat exchange system, which is why when you choose to send a long e-mail or letter, it's nice to let people off the hook and let them know that you don't expect them to respond in kind if they can't or don't want to. Write "Read/respond when you can" or "No response necessary" at the top of the letter or as the subject line of an e-mail to get this across. Ted Cross, a family friend, takes a more amusing approach, attaching a note to a clipping that says: "Don't you dare respond to this." A rule of thumb in writing a quick e-mail to simply touch base with a friend is to limit the length of what will fit on a sticky note (a small one).

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12. Advance planning department

A. The Princeton Varsity Club presents "A Conversation with Larry Lucchino '67 and Wyc Grousbeck '83" at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday in Princeton University's McCosh 50.

Mr. Lucchino is the current president and CEO of the Boston Red Sox and has served as president/CEO of the Baltimore Orioles and the San Diego Padres. Under his watch, both the Orioles and the Padres built new stadiums. Mr. Grousbeck is CEO of the Boston Celtics.

The two men's appearance is the latest installment in the university's '51 PVC Speaker Series. Admission is FREE.

B. With the advent of a young, stylish mom as First Lady in January, many people are remembering the woman who set a very high bar, indeed, for First Ladies of that description--Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy.

Making the case that there was more to "Jackie" than Chanel outfits and Casini gowns is Kathleen Galop, Esq., who will speak about Mrs. Kennedy's impressive legacy in the field of historic preservation at 7:30 p.m. at the Mary Jacobs Memorial Library, Rocky Hill.

Ms. Galop serves as principal of Preservation Possibilities, an historic preservation consulting firm. She has extensive experience and a national

reputation in the administration of historic preservation projects.

Admission is FREE. The program is offered through the Horizons Speakers Bureau of the NJ Council for the Humanities.

C. Are you a former or present student of mine?

If so, you may know that this is the last semester I'll be teaching traditional courses at Bucks County Community College . . . and to mark the occasion, I'm hosting a farewell reception/networking event that I'd very much like you to attend.

Date: Tuesday, December 9

Thursday, December 11 is the backup date if there's bad weather

Time: 7:29 p.m.

Location: Fireside Lounge

Dessert will be served . . . if you can make it (hopefully, the answer is YES!), please RSVP to me if you haven't done so already . . . put YES FOR DECEMBER 9 in your subject line . . . more details to follow.

A REQUEST:

Please share the above invite with any other students on mine that you may know. Thank you!

PS. Quick question: What holiday is being celebrated on Tuesday?

- A. Veteran's Day
- B. Veterans' Day
- C. Veterans Day

There is debate on the subject, but the most accepted answer seems to be "C" . . . for more information on this burning controversy, please click:

<http://www.columbiamissourian.com/stories/2007/11/09/apostrophe-sparks-veterans-day-conundrum/>

Regardless of how you spell it, please join me in honoring ALL American veterans on the above day . . . to find out even more about the holidays, please click:

<http://usmilitary.about.com/cs/generalinfo/a/veteransday.htm>

Also, please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . and make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#631

11.3.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I had some good news this week . . . make that, very good news . . . we closed on the sale of our Belle Mead home on Friday . . . that said, we worked out a deal where we will rent it from the new homeowners until mid-December . . . it is then on to Asheville.

Cynthia is officially retiring from her job at the end of this month . . . I'll stay at Bucks County Community College until the end of May, commuting back and forth a few times each month to complete my sabbatical and my term as president of the teacher's union.

We also found a renter for my mother's place in Floral Park, NY, in large part because of the efforts of my brother . . . way to go, Ken . . . he was also fortunate to be assisted by a helpful realtor, Annette Kroll . . . her number is 718.631.8867.

B. On Sunday, we finally got to meet my grand nephew Julian when we had a delightful visit with him at the home of his parents, David and Bettina . . . see below for the picture of us with Julian that you just knew I'd have to include:



From there, we journeyed uptown to meet Cynthia's sister and brother, along with their spouses, for dinner at Meridiana, 2756 Broadway, NYC; 212.222.4453 . . . we broke down and split orders of veal parmigiana and spaghetti bolognese, something we hadn't had since I started watching my cholesterol several months ago . . . they were both quite tasty, but surprisingly, I didn't miss them as much as I had thought would be the case.

C. Cynthia was able to attend a great workshop this past week called Cycles of Abundance, sponsored by the Holistic Membership Network . . . there were many fine speakers, including our good friend Janet Straightarrow.

Another speaker, Vilasi Venkatachalam, really got Cynthia thinking to the point where she wanted to share Vilasi's ideas not only with me--but with all the readers of this newsletter . . . here are just a few of the many tidbits that Cynthia gained from listening:

- * You are the sum total of the five people you consistently keep company with.
- * The best thing we can get from anyone is 10 minutes of wisdom . . . choose your mentors as those people who are further along the path than you are so you can learn from them.
- * What two people would you chose to talk to if you had a chance to speak to anyone in the whole world? More importantly: What would you ask them if you had a chance?
- * In five years from now, you will be exactly the same except for the influence of the people you meet, the experiences you have and the books that you have read.
- * Ten minutes of advice can change your life.

* Two great books to read: ZERO LIMITS and ONE MINUTE ENTREPRENEUR.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Vilasi's email address is vilasi.venkatachalam@gmail.com, and the website of the Holistic Membership Network is:

<http://www.holisticmentorshipnetwork.com>

D. A request:

If you don't like something that you read in this missive, please let me know as soon as possible. I much prefer you telling me than just unsubscribing. A longtime reader apparently did not like the review of a book in a recent issue. She didn't even object to what I had written; rather, she took a dim view of the authors' viewpoint.

As I wrote to her, it would have been much better had she written me about her displeasure--requesting that I run her email. I also told her that she should read the book (she hadn't bothered to do so), then if she still felt strongly, I suggested that she write the authors directly.

And to see a better way of handling disagreement, please see Dan in Pennsylvania's email in the second part of Section 2.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Patty O'Connell--the excellent Burgdorff realtor who helped us sell our Belle Mead home so quickly.

From start to finish, we managed to wrap things up in under three months . . . Patty was there with us every step of the way . . . she made suggestions, when and where necessary, and constantly kept us apprised of what was happening.

Her excellent communication skills made working with her a pleasure . . . it seemed like she would return calls, for instance, even before we left her a message.

We were also impressed with Patty's wide range of contacts that we were able to use to help get our home ready for sale.

You won't go wrong working with Patty O'Connell . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.burgdorff.com/patricia-oconnell>

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2. FYI

Whenever you make a purchase, check to see if you get a discount by belonging to some organization; e.g., AFT, NEA, AARP, AAA, etc. . . . you'll often get one, even if the discount is not publicized.

Recently, when renting a car in South Carolina, I asked the above question and was offered a discount of 5% . . . kidding around with the agent, I asked her if she do any better; e.g., if I showed her my AMC Movie Watcher Card.

She said "no" to that, but that her company--Thrifty--gave a 10% discount to anybody who showed a Sam's Club membership card . . . fortunately, I had one available.

FYI, part 2

* REQUEST FOR HELP (from a reader who wishes to remain anonymous):

Could you ask your readers for any home/natural cures they know of for psoriasis. My son has that, and it makes his scalp flake . . . causes sores . . . and is on his face.

He is so handsome and brave, using his walker dealing with CP everyday at school. I want to help him clear this up ASAP.

We have been to the dermatologist. Little help. Two creams over \$300 per tube per month. And they have steroids in them- with side effects I am not comfortable with.

They don't know for sure what causes it, and there is no cure. I am open to suggestions.

* Dan in Pennsylvania, responding to the FYI piece in last week's issue:

Hunting seasons are positioned to be right before, within and right after the rut, the deer mating season. Deer, both male and female, change their normally careful behavior during this time of year. This behavior and hunger are the things that push them out of their habitat; i.e., what habitat remains.

Deer hunger is also caused by deer genocide, which is also know as the development of housing and shopping developments. Hunting is the one activity that scientifically thins the herds to prevent overpopulation in smaller habitats caused by deer genocide. Science has shown that areas that eliminate deer hunting are the ones most likely to have casualties, both deer and human, caused by deer/human (auto) collisions.

Bambi and Bambo kill many humans during this time of year. Are you living in a deer genocide zone?

* Bill in Pennsylvania:

Congratulations on the marriage of your daughter. I remember when she was a young girl.

I had the misfortune of hitting a deer this past Friday night. It happened on Route 13 in Levittown, about 4 minutes from my home. It appeared out of nowhere and I could not even slow down. I had \$2850.00 damage to my car which is still in the shop. The deer was killed. I see dead deer almost every day during my travels in Bucks County.

* Diane in Pennsylvania with an update on Bill (Lewis), her husband:

This past Sunday Bill finally came home and I am still smiling from ear to ear. We are all so happy to have him home. Please continue

to keep us in your prayers as Bill still has a very long road of recovery ahead of him.

Please feel free to call him anytime (215 953 5288) and say hi or you are more than welcome to stop by and see him.

Bill will continue home care, plus out patient physical and occupational therapy

Love,
Diane, Bill, Rachel and Billy

IN CASE YOU LAST WEEK'S ISSUE:

Kindly read this absolutely great column by Kate Fratti that ran in the BUCKS COUNTY COURIER TIMES:

<http://www.phillyburbs.com/pb-dyn/news/257-10272008-1611552.html>

The last paragraph contains information on how to get tickets for the Nov. 13 dinner and auction to help the Lewis family . . . I do hope that you can join me there!

* Mark Sanborn in Colorado, author of THE ENCORE EFFECT:

Thank you for the terrific Amazon review. I appreciate it!

Delighted you enjoyed the book and appreciate your thoughtful and insightful review.

Please let me know whenever I can be a resource.

* Caren in Pennsylvania:

Thanks for passing on the Rosh Hashanah sermon by Joan Weiss's rabbi. It was so moving!

I wanted to share a website with you that is the home page of my brother's friend Bob. He is a cancer survivor and he and my brother (Cork Friedman) go on long distance rowing adventures in Florida to raise awareness and funds to support cancer research. The site is:

<http://www.rowbobrow.com>

* Donna:

DONATE A MAMMOGRAM. (COSTS YOU NOTHING!)

A favor to ask, it only takes a minute . . .

Please tell ten friends to tell ten today! The Breast Cancer site is having trouble getting enough people to click on their site daily to meet their quota (45,000 clicks) of donating at least one free mammogram a day to an underprivileged woman. It takes less than a minute to go to their site and click on "donating a mammogram" for free (pink window).

This doesn't cost you a thing, and you don't have to give any Information.

Their corporate sponsors/advertisers use the number of daily visits

to donate mammograms in exchange for advertising.

Here's the web site! Pass it along to people you know.

<http://www.thebreastcancersite.com/>

AGAIN, PLEASE TELL 10 FRIENDS TO TELL 10 FRIENDS!

THE ABOVE IS LEGIT; SEE FOR YOURSELF:

I already went to the above and clicked it on . . . though I ordinarily don't recommend that you forward such information, this is legitimate . . . see for yourself by clicking:

<http://www.snopes.com/inboxer/charity/mammogram.asp>

Also, when you hear such claims, don't just automatically believe them . . . go to the [snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com) website and check them out for yourself . . . too often, you'll heard words to the effect of "I checked it out myself at snopes" and in reality, the person never did.

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3. The well-versed parishioner

A new pastor was visiting in the homes of his parishioners. At one house it seemed obvious that someone was at home, but no answer came to his repeated knocks at the door. Therefore, he took out a business card and wrote "Revelation 3:20" on the back of it and stuck it in the door.

When the offering was processed the following Sunday, he found that his card had been returned. Added to it was this cryptic message, "Genesis 3:10."

Reaching for his Bible to check out the citation, he broke up in gales of laughter. Revelation 3:20 begins "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Genesis 3:10 reads, "I heard your voice in the garden and I was afraid for I was naked."

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4. Reviews

A. Clint Eastwood's CHANGELING is the best film I've seen in quite some time and right now is my choice for an Oscar for Best Picture . . . this is the true story about a single woman whose young son vanishes . . . when the child returns months later, she insists that the boy isn't her son . . . but the corrupt L.A.P.D. disagrees and even puts the woman (Angelina Jolie) in a mental hospital . . . Jolie also deserves an Oscar nod, as does Eastwood . . . he did the soundtrack, too, and his depiction of the 1920s seemed very realistic . . . rated R.

By the way, in case you were wondering . . . the title, CHANGELING, derives from fable lore . . . it refers to an ugly or craft little creature left behind by fairies, in place of a child stolen from its mother's cradle.

B. WHEN DID YOU LAST SEE YOUR FATHER? is now out in DVD

format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #614 follows:

Jim Broadbent first caught my attention in TOPSY-TURVEY and then followed-up that incredible performance with an Oscar-winning one in IRIS . . . see those two films, if you can, along with WHEN DID YOU LAST SEE YOUR FATHER? (his latest) . . . it's the touching story of a father and his son, well-played by Colin Firth, that bounces back between the 1950s and 1980s . . . Juliet Stevenson is also excellent as Broadbent's long-suffering wife, as is newcomer Matthew Beard as the Firth character when he was a teenager . . . be forewarned; i.e., to bring a hankie . . . though rated PG-13, I only think older teenagers would find it of interest.

C. I had no idea what having Tourette's syndrome was like; i.e., until I read AGAINST MEDICAL ADVICE by James Patterson and Hal Friedman . . . it is a true story about how one family dealt with the reality of having to deal with this debilitating illness.

As Cory, the son with Tourette's indicates:

* I once told my parents that they couldn't live through a single day with what I go through every day of my life, and that was when I was a lot better than I am now.

The book is written in his voice. I'm glad the authors went in that direction because it conveys more powerfully what it must have been like to have gone through a 13-year journey of both medication and treatment.

For example, I actually cringed when I read what he had to experience just to get through school:

* I finally entered high school, and the biggest surprise is that nothing has really changed. It's turning out to be as much of a minefield as middle school. Instead of becoming nicer as they've grown up, some of the meanest kids have become smarter at using my weaknesses for fun and games. It's as important as ever for them to look cool, and they do it by putting down others who are different or have problems. I'm an easy target, and it makes me feel bad just about every single day of high school.

I was particularly moved by one passage, toward the end of the book, when his mother made an impassioned plea to get him back into school:

"Let's be honest," she says, her voice suddenly more relaxed but still serious. "You all know that this isn't about only rules or the number of hours Cory has physically sat in classes. You have enough reason to help him keep going if you want to. That's what it really comes down to. Taking what he has been able to do here so far, thinking about all the amazing things he's achieved out of school, and helping him to build on them, helping him to keep going, like you always have before. You've always been on his side. Most of you have been wonderful to him. Why turn your backs on him now?"

You'll be moved by AGAINST MEDICAL ADVICE, and you'll find yourself rooting for Cory and his family . . . it is a book I highly recommend.

D. INNER PEACE FOR BUSY PEOPLE, written and read by Joan Borysenko, grabbed me from the moment I saw the title . . . this was a book that speaks to me, I thought, and I was right.

If you're like me and sometimes feel overwhelmed by the pressures of work, family and a whole host of modern-day stressors, then this is the perfect resource for a number of practical tips on how best to cope with them . . . as one such example, perhaps my favorite one:

Keep in mind: Everything is over at the end. If it's not over, it's not the end.

Or this one also struck home:

* Life is not an endless series of tasks that you complain about because you're busy.

In addition, I thought this was an excellent suggestion:

* Make an oxygen list . . . the things you want to make a more important part of your life. Then choose one item and make a commitment to actually do it.

There were many other useful tidbits I gained from this excellent program; among them:

* My good friend Loretta LaRoche asks, "What's the purpose of getting everything done?" Your tombstone will still say: Got it all done. Dead anyway.

* Our goal should be to wake-up on Monday and say, "I'm so glad to be alive. I can't wait to see what's next."

* You want to get to a state where the guy in the antique store says "Let me tell you a story." And you respond, "I'd like to hear your story."

And then there was this one that I will attempt to implement as soon as possible:

* To be mindful in the shower, say to yourself, "This is all I will do. I will plan my day now." Better is for you to savor your shower.

I'd like to tell you more about INNER PEACE FOR BUSY PEOPLE; however, I must stop now . . . to take my shower!

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5. TV alert

A. MEDAL OF HONOR, a profile of those who have won this award, airs on Wednesday night at 9 p.m. on PBS . . . because PBS times and stations often vary, check local listings.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL calls this program a "success in rendering portraits of unimaginable heroism with discipline and dignity" . . . I'll watch, if just to see the opening testament from a World War II medal winner who recalls how he trembled uncontrollably President Truman approached. That was then the commander in chief took him by the shoulder and told him, "I would rather have this medal than be the president of the United States."

B. Catch REAL TIME WITH BILL MAHER on Friday at 11 p.m. on

HBO if you want to get the acerbic comedian's spin on what happened on Tuesday with respect to the presidential election.

C. Daphne Zuniga stars in MAIL ORDER BRIDE, a romance-soaked Western about a con woman, a cowboy and a gun-crazy mobster . . . Saturday at 9 p.m. on HALLMARK CHANNEL.

D. SUMMER HEIGHTS HIGH premieres on Sunday at 10:30 p.m. on HBO . . . Australian Chris Lilley plays three roles in what TV GUIDE calls "the riotous opener of his high school mockumentary."

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6. Death notice

When the husband finally died, his wife put the usual death notice in the newspaper--and added that he died of gonorrhea.

The very next day, a friend of the family phoned and complained bitterly, "You know very well that he died of diarrhea, not gonorrhea."

Replied the widow, "I nursed him night and day so of course I know he died of diarrhea, but I thought it would be better for posterity to remember him as a great lover rather than the big sh*t he always was."

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7. Websites

A. If you want to search and find online newspapers from anywhere in the world, please click:

<http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/>

This website narrows your search down, based on the area you wish to look up . . . I liked it because it enabled me to quickly find a listing of all papers in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, etc.

B. Regardless of who you are going to vote for, SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE continues to do a great job of poking fun at the elections . . . here's John McCain and Sarah Palin (actually, Tina Fey), addressing the nation on QVC:

http://www.nbc.com/Saturday_Night_Live/video/clips/mccain-qvc-open/805381/

You can also see Sen. McCain on the Weekend Update by clicking:

http://www.nbc.com/Saturday_Night_Live/video/clips/update-sen-mccain/805401/

C. One more election video for you, this time from Ron Howard who supports Obama . . . he appears as the characters we've loved for decades, first as 8-year-old Opie Taylor (THE ANDY GRIFFITH SHOW) and then as high schooler Richie Cunningham (HAPPY DAYS) . . . also appearing are Andy Griffith and Henry Winkler, his TV costars . . . watch this one, even if you're not a supporter of the Democratic candidate because it is both funny and touching.

<http://www.funnyordie.com/videos/cc65ed650d/ron-howards-call-to-action-from-ron-howard-and-henry-winkler>

D. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blainesworld.net>

Should you miss a past issue of this newsletter or want to look something up, just go to "Newsletter" on left and then "Past Issues" . . . there's a great "Search Newsletters" box at top; e.g., to help you find a joke on something you remember having read about the "office door" of various specialists . . . you attempt to find what you've been looking for and within seconds, you come across the following entry from BLAINESWORLD #476:

Specialization

A new medical facility with several different specialists opened in a trendy part of the city. Wanting to be different and creative, the administration decided that each doctor's office door would, in some way, be representative of his practice.

So, when construction was complete, the eye doctor's door had a peep hole, the orthopedist's door had a broken hinge, the psychiatrist's door was painted all kinds of crazy colors, and the proctologist's door was left open--just a crack._

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8. Computer tip

How to shop for jeans online

Check out any and/or all of the following websites:

<http://www.safu.com>

It applies Google-like algorithms to finding your jeans. Answer the seven-question survey (which asks about lesser-used measurements like your inseam and the space between your waist and the waistband), and Zafu searches its huge database of body types, measurements and fits.

<http://mejeans.com/>

With a large variety of denim (they even have super-comfy 10 oz. denims), cuts and details, the ways to customize your ideal pair of dungarees are virtually limitless.

<http://www.tailormade-jeanswear.com/http://www.ic3d.com/jeans/index.html>

Both of the above will enable you to clone your jeans; i.e., when your favorites are too worn out, you send them in and get an identical pair--without the big holes.

Costs will vary, but in general, methinks you'll be surprised . . . you might well pay a lot less than you do now for designer jeans.

SOURCE:

Adapted from an online article by Erin Scottberg that can be found at:

<http://www.lemondrop.com/2008/10/29/how-to-shop-for-jeans-gasp-online/?icid=200100397x1212214628x1200803582>

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9. Best excuses for missing class

* Tonight, one of my MBA students told me he missed class last week (it's a one-night-a-week class) to attend the World's Strongest Man competition. He was not a competitor. He said it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity since the competition is rarely held in the U.S.

* Years ago, one student told me he was unable to return to campus because he had been trapped in the monastery he was visiting over break by a sudden rise in the river (a result of a recent hurricane).

* Another (when I was teaching in the Northeast) told me she missed her evening class because it snowed and she was at her boyfriend's apartment, and he'd just built a fire--so they shared a bottle of wine and read to one another.

* A student gets up in the middle of the first exam, hands me an unfinished exam, and walks out the door without so much as a "goodbye." I was like, wow, I guess she wasn't prepared!

The next class period, she approaches me and tells me that she developed a frightening migraine and went straight to the hospital. She didn't say anything to me because she was afraid she would throw up all over me. I am suspicious until she takes out the hospital paperwork. They actually kept her for observation that night.

So, yes, I let her take a makeup.

* I had a student miss class (and her final oral presentation) because she was selected to get a beauty makeover on the local news program. Not only did she earn an F for that presentation, but she did get hit with the ugly stick. There was an unfortunate experiment with hair color.

* Several years ago I had a student miss because his clothes had been stolen from the laundry room and he didn't have anything to wear to class.

* I once had a couple of stoners tell me they missed a week of class because they had to go to a grandma's funeral in Santa Fe (a long ways away from here).

When I asked them what state Santa Fe was in, they just stood there giggling. Jeesh.

SOURCE:

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION, 10.3.2008, p. A42

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10. A quote I like

The greatest pleasure in life is doing what people say you cannot do--Walter Bagehot (1826-1877), British businessman, essayist and journalist who wrote extensively about literature, government and economic affairs

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11. Thought for the day

Jim in Pennsylvania:

My good friend, Ken McArthur recently stood in a circus tent, asking 2,000 people to spread a message of hope to teenagers who don't think that life is worth living.

I think it's a great message of hope for anyone and would love to see all of my readers think about spreading it today.

Here's Ken's simple message for giving hope (and maybe saving someone's life!):

G--Greet and meet: talk to others, smile, say hello, ask someone how they are doing.

I--Involve yourself and others: find a cause you can support, volunteer, pledge resources. Get the people around you involved, especially if you see someone beginning to withdraw. Invite them to participate in some activity, to "get out" of their comfort zone.

V--Validate others: tell others that they matter--especially family members and friends that you tend to see daily but may take for granted, give genuine complements.

E--Empathize: be a listening ear, take time to be fully present, don't try to solve--just acknowledge someone's feeling/hurt.

You can find out more about Ken's wonderful project with his Impact Action Team at:

<http://speakupsavelives.org/>

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12. Advance planning department

A. Joni in Pennsylvania:

Chic and I saw THE INVETIAGATION on Friday evening. It was a very moving and emotional experience. This 3-hour play was based upon the second Auschwitz War Crimes trial, held in Frankfurt Germany. If you get a chance, see this play. It is a harrowing account of the trial you won't forget. It is playing until Nov. 9th at Actors Net in Morrisville, PA.

For more information, please click:

www.actorsnetbucks.org/

B. Friends of the Library Reception and Historic Walking Tour of Wycombe

An Historic Walking Tour of Wycombe led by Jeffrey Marshall of the Heritage Conservancy will begin at 4 p.m. on Saturday, November 8th. The walking tour should take approximately a half hour. A Library Reception will be held from 4:00-7:30 p.m. at the home of Linda and Pat McCann in Wrightstown. Refreshments and Hors d'oeuvres will be served.

Your check for \$35 (\$30 tax deductible) per person made payable to the Bucks County Community College Foundation will be applied to the Charles E. Rollins Library Endowment Fund.

For more information:

Linda McCann mccannl@bucks.edu; 215-968-8003

C. Michael in Pennsylvania with information on the next Book Group discussion at Bucks County Community College:

November 13: The Shadow of the Wind by Carlos Ruiz Zafón and Lucia Graves (2005)

From Publishers Weekly:

Ruiz Zafón's novel, a bestseller in his native Spain, takes the satanic touches from Angel Heart and stirs them into a bookish intrigue à la Foucault's Pendulum. The time is the 1950s; the place, Barcelona. Daniel Sempere, the son of a widowed bookstore owner, is 10 when he discovers a novel, The Shadow of the Wind, by Julián Carax. The novel is rare, the author obscure, and rumors tell of a horribly disfigured man who has been burning every copy he can find of Carax's novels.

We meet in the Rollins Center Quiet Study Room, next to the Fireside Lounge at Bucks in Newtown from 7:30-9 p.m. All are welcome to join us on the second Thursday of each month to share your thoughts and questions. For more information, call 215.968.8164 or send email to: hennesse@bucks.edu.

MY TWO CENTS:

Michael does an excellent job in running these discussions . . . if you go to one session, I do believe you'll be hooked to want to attend others during the year.

D. You won't go wrong hearing Earl Sigmund, my friend, talk about "10 Websites Guaranteed to Grow Your Business at No Cost to You" on Friday, November 21 from 8-9 a.m., followed by a 30-minute Q & A session . . . the session will take place at the Lower Bucks County Chamber of Commerce, Fairless Hills, PA . . . cost is \$15/member; \$30/non-member . . . to register, call 215.943.7400 or register online at:

<http://www.lbccc.org>

Click on events and type in Business Technology Forum.

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PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#630

10.27.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I joined friends for dinner at the Bamboo Grille in Basking Ridge, NJ . . . it's a very attractive restaurant that had three excellent salads: Thai stir-fry chicken, citrus Caesar and tropical rain . . . we liked the fact that you could get them in a small size to go with your dinner, and that they were accompanied by a very tasty berry-bacon vinaigrette dressing . . . we then both ordered the Macadamia Crusted Tilapia, which proved to be a wise choice . . . it was just about the best we've ever had . . . John, our server, did an excellent job and helped make sure that this is a restaurant that we'll want to visit again . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.bamboo-grille.com/content/view/8/8/>

On Sunday, we saw DAMES AT SEA at Mercer County Community College's Kelsey Theatre . . . it's a fun rags-to-riches musical about a chorus girl who becomes a Broadway star . . . think 42ND STREET, and you'll have the idea . . . the songs all sound familiar, but that's because they are actually written parodies of stuff that you do know . . . Jim Petro, rapidly becoming one of my favorite local actors, was quite good as the sailor who writes songs in his spare time . . . Kat Ross, as one of the chorus girls, stole almost every scene she was in . . . she also served as the show's choreographer . . . and Lou Woodruff, as always, did a fine job of conducting the six-piece band.

B. In last week's newsletter, I forget to mention one key person who contributed the success of my daughter's wedding: Pat Hannigan . . . he is a photographer extraordinaire who took many excellent pictures . . . I haven't seen all of them, but do see below for one of (l-r) Honey, the maid of honor; Risa; JP, her husband; and Mike, the best man:



And here's one of Cynthia dancing with yours truly:



Should you want to reach Pat to take pictures for virtually any occasion, he can be reached via email: pat.hannigan@verizon.net or by phone, 215.968.1615 . . . you won't go wrong.

Lastly, I failed to congratulate my cousin David and his lovely wife Grace for having won one of the DJ's contests . . . everybody was called on the floor to dance, then every few minutes, folks were instructed to sit down who were married in the last year . . . then the last five years, ten years, etc. . . . David and Grace were the last ones standing, having been married for 45 years!

C. THANKS to Walter in Pennsylvania for telling me that I've been

in the news . . . to see what all the hubbub is about, please click:

http://www.cnnbcvideo.com/index.html?nid=i2Og5RRqy6Cd656wF.11KDMwNzE5NzM-&referred_by=8466464-8si6SBx

Please don't get on my case that this website supports Obama's candidacy . . . send me something similar for McCain, and I'll gladly run that too.

I won't tell you who I'm voting for, but what I will do is encourage you to vote . . . and if by chance you're not registered to vote, make sure you don't let that happen again by clicking:

<http://www.eac.gov/voter/Register%20to%20Vote>

D. MR. CURIOUS HERE:

Any suggestions for a restaurant or country club in Mercer County, NJ or Somerset County, NJ that could host a Sunday morning brunch for about 60-70 people--probably in May, 2009? . . . if so, please forward them to me at your earliest convenience . . . I'd be particularly interested in places that you have personally tried and/or would recommend.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Jaclyn Boone--Cynthia's Feldenkrais instructor.

To quote Cynthia, who nominated Jaclyn:

Jaclyn is a gift to me. She started as a Feldenkrais instructor who gave me private lessons. Since I have been working with her, I have seen much improvement in the way I feel. A session does not go by without some jewel of knowledge or a new way to move that gives me more comfort in my body. She just loves her field and shares her knowledge and expertise with such joy. She lives her life in the same way. I am blessed to have met her.

Jaclyn can be reached at: feldenkraismethod@mac.com
or via phone: 609.279.9883.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE FELDENKRAIS METHOD, please click:

http://www.feldenkrais.com/method/the_feldenkrais_method_of_somatic_education/

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2. FYI

Barbara in Pennsylvania, in response to reading about my recent collision with a deer, graciously shared this information:

Most deer accidents occur during hunting season, which I am strongly opposed to in our communities and parks. When it comes to avoiding auto-deer collisions, drivers and communities have a number of options.

Enclosed is some information, tips and links regarding

deer alert devices that you may find helpful to coexist peacefully with all wildlife. We use these devices on our cars. It was recommended to me by a truck driver. And one year, I gave them to all our friends and family for a holiday gift.

To date, no one has reported any accidents with deer. It is a small investment for you and your loved ones and the damage to your car.

Thank you for remembering to drive slowly and heed deer warning signs. Perhaps you can share this with your readers.

<http://www.all-creatures.org/aip/nl-14nov2000.html><http://www.sevendeads.com/p-3407-deer-whistle.aspx>

<http://www.deerwhistle.com/><http://www.nextag.com/deer-alert/shop.html>

DEER TIPS:

Individual drivers can make themselves more aware of deer-prone areas and be more vigilant:

Encourage your community to invest in "strieter-lites" reflectors. See:

<http://www.strieter-lite.com/>

Remain particularly alert during the hours around dawn and dusk, especially during the fall and spring and during hunting season when deer accidents have been shown to increase up to five-fold.

Slow down in areas where woody, brushy or other dense vegetation along the roadside may attract and conceal deer.

After dark, be aware of roadsides for deer or their "eye shine"—the reflection of lights by the deer's eyes.

Reduce speed when deer are observed crossing the road. Others may follow and cross the road single file behind the leader.

Don't assume that deer will proceed directly across a roadway or maintain a constant rate of speed. They may suddenly stop or dart back the way they came.

When slowing down or stopping due to deer being on or near the road, do not slam on the brakes if other vehicles are behind you. If possible, use the emergency-hazard flashers or tap your brakes to warn other drivers.

Attempt to scare deer from the road by flashing the car's headlights and sounding the horn in short bursts.

Maintain control of your vehicle. The likelihood of injury is much greater if you swerve into oncoming traffic or such stationary objects as trees, guard rails and barricades along the edge of the road.

FYI, part 2

* Diane in Pennsylvania with an update on her husband Bill Lewis:

I wanted to let everyone know that Bill's discharge date will be November 2nd, which is next Sunday. Bill will continue to have outpatient therapy and also home care will be coming in to help us.

It will be so nice to have Bill home especially for the kids. Rachel has a lot of movies lined up for him and Billy is freshening up on Tennis on the WII game. (Bill has been playing that in therapy and he told Billy that he is going to kick his butt playing tennis.

The contractors will be finishing up the bathroom for us this week. For those of you who don't know, we knocked out our walk-in closet that was right next to the bathroom to make it bigger for Bill. They have done a remarkable job making it handicap accessible for Bill. The hospital bed was delivered this week and set up ready for when Bill comes home. (Thanks Kirk.) We finally got all the approvals we need for the ramp to be build.

Bill will be going to the event on November 13th and he can't wait to see so many people that will be attending so he can mingle as he does so well.

Again, thank you for all your thoughts, prayers and support!

Please continue to keep us in your thoughts and prayers as this will certainly be a new challenge for our family.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Kindly read this absolutely great column by Kate Fratti that ran in the BUCKS COUNTY COURIER TIMES:

<http://www.phillyburbs.com/pb-dyn/news/257-10272008-1611552.html>

The last paragraph contains information on how to get tickets for the Nov. 13 dinner and auction to help the Lewis family . . . I do hope that you can join me there!

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3. Quietude

A Sunday school teacher asked her little children, as they were on the way to church service, "And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?"

One bright little girl replied, "Because people are sleeping."

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4. Reviews

A. THE DUCHESS is a highly entertaining costume drama about Georgiana Spenser, the Duchess of Devonshire, who is married to a boring, mean-spirited duke . . . what made it so entertaining was that it was based on a true story, in many respects very similar to Princess Diana's life . . . Keira Knightley is impressive as the Duchess and Ralph Fiennes shines as her husband--a man you very quickly grow to hate . . . the accompanying soundtrack added to my enjoyment of the film . . . rated PG-13.

B. KIT KITTERIDGE: AN AMERICAN GIRL is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #615 follows:

KIT KITTERIDGE: AN AMERICAN GIRL is a family drama about a resourceful young girl whose bravery and determination help her save her family's home during the Great Depression . . . it stars Abigail Breslin, who was so fine that she received an Oscar nomination in LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE . . . here she's almost as watchable . . . I've seen just about every film she has been in and can't help but wonder if she'll be able to continue her successes as she gets older . . . I hope so . . . some others in the case (Stanley Tucci and Joan Cusack, in particular) come across as cartoonish, but that was the nature of their parts . . . a happy ending makes this the perfect film for both children and their parents . . . don't be put off by the G rating; methinks you'll enjoy KIT KITTERIDGE.

C. I got to relive many of my teenage years by reading Bob Greene's WHEN WE GET TO SURF CITY (see also Sections 10 and 11), a moving account of his many years as a member of the backup band for Jan and Dean . . . it was also fun to read and left me yearning for the likes of such entertainers as Chuck Berry, Martha and the Vandellas, the Everly Brothers, Jerry Lee Lewis, the Beach Boys, the Monkees, the Kingsmen, James Brown, Lesley Gore, the Drifters, Little Eva, and the Coasters--all of whom make cameo appearances in the book.

Greene, long one of my favorite authors for such books as HANG TIME and BE TRUE TO YOUR SCHOOL, continues to impress me with how he presents glimpses of America such as in the following account:

* It was one of those concerts you don't want ever to end--the Oklahoma heat had us drenched by the second song, the sound system was booming, the people at the water park swarmed to the concert area like bugs at a picnic to spilled jam, still in their bathing suits and dripping as they danced the evening away.

He also hit what it must be like to tour the country, playing in a rock band:

* But on the day of a concert, as opposed to a day devoted to travel--this was what delighted me, the economy of the phrasing, and all that was conveyed in three words--there was this notation:

It was utterly factual--that was the agenda for show day: Today, we play.

How many adults are so lucky? How many adults, getting up in the morning to go to work, would you do just about anything to be the recipient of a message like that, written or unwritten?

TODAY WE: Play

It was the essence of all this--the magical lure. And, on show days, I never tired of looking at the itinerary and seeing, once again, what was planned for us.

Only one thing--only one thing of importance.

Today?

Today, we play.

Lastly, I liked how Greene caught the essence of what it must be like to go from city to city in the search for the perfect culinary delight:

* Ted Drewes's [in St. Louis] proved to be every bit as good as [Bob] Costas promised; the stand offered shakes, malts and sundaes, but the specialty was something called a Concrete. It got its name from the thickness of the mix; it was a concoction made of frozen custard and other ingredients, and its defining characteristic was this: it was handed to you in a paper cup, and you could turn the cup upside down and hold it over the ground and the dessert would not fall out. It was just that firm--like concrete.

WHEN WE GET TO SURF CITY is the perfect gift book for anybody you know who grew up in the 1960s . . . rock and roll fans from any era will like it too.

D. Most books are meant to be read . . . one exception to this rule might well be EVEN THE STARS LOOK LONESOME by Maya Angelou, the continuation of her bestselling WOULDN'T TAKE NOTHING FOR MY JOURNEY NOW.

I was fortunate to hear the CD version of this book, which is a combination of essays by the author on a wide variety of subjects.

What made it so outstanding was to actually hear the author . . . her voice is unlike any you've ever heard . . . to listen to it makes you feel like she is talking directly to you.

EVEN THE STARS grabbed me from the opening:

* My last marriage was made in heaven. The musical accompaniment was provided by Gabriel, and angels were so happy that ten thousand of them danced on the head of a pin.

I was mesmerized from that point on . . . and each chapter seemingly kept getting better, covering such diverse topics as aging, learning, vacationing, sexuality, teaching and violence.

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5. TV alert

A. To keep current, I try to catch NOW on PBS . . . the show goes behind the news headlines to report on how corporations and government policies affect society and democracy . . . Fridays at 8:30 p.m. on PBS . . . times and dates often vary on PBS stations, so check local listings.

B. AT THE MOVIES has two new hosts, Ben Mankiewicz and Ben Lyons . . . they're younger and hipper than many other critics, and I enjoyed the one show that I've seen so far . . . Saturdays at 7 p.m. on FOX (NYC), but check local listings because this is a syndicated show that frequently appears on other stations and at other times.

Or for a station near you, please click:

<http://bventertainment.go.com/tv/buenavista/atm/>

Another movie review show that I've long watched is REELTALK with hosts Jeffrey Lyons (Ben's father) and Allison Bailes . . . Saturdays at 10 a.m. and repeated on Sunday at 12:30 p.m. on NBC (NYC) . . . again, check local listings because this is another syndicated show that may not always be at this time or stations.

There's an excellent website for this show:

<http://www.reeltalktv.com/>

You can find local stations, but also an archive of past reviews and interesting interviews.

C. ARHANGEL, a post-Cold War thriller starring a pre-James Bond Daniel Craig, has its first U.S. broadcast on Saturday at 8 p.m. on ION (a newsish channel that you may to dig some to find; it replaced PAX) . . . according to THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, "In the tense days leading up to November 4, ARCHANGEL may be the best diversion on TV. . . . [it] is eerily, chillingly on target about the sinister nature of Russia past and present."

D. D.L. HUGHLEY BREAKS THE NEWS, featuring the comedian, airs on Saturday at 10 p.m. and repeats on Sunday at same time on CNN . . . according to executive producer Mitch Semel, the show is being geared-up to cover what will happen after the presidential election . . . he notes, "The reality of either candidate winning is that, in a few weeks, half of the voters are going to be angry."

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6. Goodbye

A young man shopping in a supermarket noticed a little old lady following him around. If he stopped, she stopped. Furthermore, she kept staring at him.

She finally overtook him at the checkout, and she turned to him and said, "I hope I haven't made you feel ill at ease; it's just that you look so much like my late son."

He answered, "That's okay."

"I know it's silly, but if you'd call out 'Goodbye, Mom' as I leave the store, it would make me feel so happy."

She then went through the checkout, and as she was on her way out of the store, the man called out, "Goodbye, Mom."

The little old lady waved and smiled back at him.

Pleased that he had brought a little sunshine into someone's day, he went to pay for his groceries.

"That comes to \$121.85," said the clerk.

"How come so much? I only bought 5 items."

The clerk replied, "Yeah, but your Mother said you'd be paying for her things, too."

So whatever you do, don't forget:

Never to trust little old ladies!

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7. Websites

A. If you're a walker, please click:

<http://www.walkscore.com>

You type your address, then click to get a rating as to how "walkable" your area is . . . I did so for our home in Belle Mead, NJ and the results quickly came back: 12 because the area is so car-dependent.

There's also a link for you to get more information on how to support the 2009 Transportation Bill.

B. To play a fun version of WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE, please click:

<http://www.millionairetv.com/game/index.html>

This is a fun game to play with your kids and/or grandkids . . . make sure you do so with your sound on.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blainesworld.net>

If you'd like to see some of the many books I've reviewed and generally enjoyed, please go to "Blaine's Best" on the left, then the second paragraph of letter "O."

Currently, I'm 344 in amazon.com's list of Top 500 Reviewers . . . if you'd like to help me move up, go to:

<http://www.amazon.com>

1. In search box at top, type-in a book I've recently reviewed; e.g., THE ENCORE EFFECT.
2. Find my review. It should be on the right, at the top or close to the top.
3. If you've found my review helpful, and I hope you will, click YES when asked for a response.
4. Thanks!

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8. Computer tip

Giant security holes

As is the case with any real-world fortress, most computer operating systems have security holes and flaws somewhere--it's just a matter of whether the computer company or computer hackers discover them first. Such is the case with a recent security holes discovered on computers using Windows XP, Windows 2000 and Windows Server 2003.

The hole essentially leaves computers totally open to hackers, with no involvement from computer users at all!

Luckily, Microsoft last week discovered this flaw and took the rare step of immediately releasing a security patch before any evildoers could wreak havoc. If you haven't updated your Windows machine with the latest security patches, then do so immediately. You should have already been updated if your computer is set to Automatic Updates in the Control Panel (click on Start, then Control Panel, then Automatic Updates). You can also download the patch yourself by going to the Microsoft Download Center:

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/Search.aspx?displaylang=en>

SOURCE:

For the entire article with the above information and a lot more, please click:

<http://www.switched.com/2008/10/28/sneakiest-computer-viruses-ever-security-hole-2/>

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9. Weird CraigList jobs

Palin Look-a-Like--The first law of celebrity: Within minutes of initial national media exposure, someone, somewhere on the Internet will be filming of a naked look-a-like of you.

Happy Birthday BJ--In journalistic parlance, this is known as "burying the lead."

Costumed Carolers--Our talent is table tennis and our costume is Spiderman. Where do we sign up?

Ring Girls--Look: "Sexy," Bra size C+. When choosing the public face of your "family-oriented magazine," you really can't be too careful with the specifics.

"Cop Bar" Video Extra--A few types they request include: "biker chicks," "plus size model," "English butler," "lumberjack," and "eccentrics." Sounds like a Fellini-esque romp that may be eventually used for blackmail.

Drunk Clown--According to comedian Demetri Martin's flowchart of clowns: Circus clowns = annoying. Birthday clowns = sad. A clown that's just hanging around is creepy. But if any of them get hurt, it's funny. The birthday entertainment here is clearly going for sad and creepy. If he gets really loaded, we think we can be an all-in-one clown.

Gorilla Chef--Okay, we get that Koko has expensive food tastes and you'd need be creative as his cook, but what's with the language requirement? Is Koko ordering in Spanish?

Ramen Comedian--"I need a video maker, actors, editors." We also recommend getting a new idea.

To Catch a Predator Host Look-a-Like--Finally! In these troubled financial times, a boost for the struggling Chris Hansen-impersonator industry.

Oompa-Loompas--The dignified employment opportunities for the vertically-challenged are never ending.

SOURCE:

<http://www.Asylum.com>

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10. A quote I like

"Any time you think you have a bad night and ask yourself why you're doing this [playing in the Jan and Dean band]," I said to Chris, "think of the guys who'll come here in the morning to clean up the toilets."--Bob Greene in WHEN WE GET TO SURF CITY (see also Sections 4C and 11)

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11. Thought for the day

Once someone very wise told me that we should regard the best moments in our lives as pebbles in a jar. The assumption should be that the pebbles are finite--even if we can't count them by looking into the jar, we should assume that one day they will run out. We should withdraw them with care, one by one, never doing it by rote or distractedly. If we withdraw them too rapidly, we are being greedy, and will hasten the day when they are gone; if we hoard them, if we are miserly in keeping them in the jar, then we will rob ourselves of the experiences the good things should give us.

So it is with summers. If all of life were summer, then our world would have no texture, no context. Summer would not taste the way it does if we thought it would last forever. There's no perfect way to remove the pebbles, no foolproof timetable. The closest we can come to perfection is to know just how precious those pebbles are, and to value each one.

I know that Jan did. More than anyone I think I have ever known, he never took a single one of those pebbles for granted. He withdrew each one of them from life's jar with gratitude and with love.

SOURCE:

WHEN WE GET TO SURF CITY (see also Sections 4C and 11) by Bob Greene

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12. Advance planning department

A. RESCHEDULED:

You're cordially invited to my next Marketing class on Tuesday, November 4, at which time I'll be presenting on "How to market your business for \$75 or less" . . . time: 6:30 p.m. . . . location: Penn 410 at Bucks County Community College, Newtown, PA . . . NO CHARGE, but please email me (bginbc@aol.com) to let me know that you would be joining me.

B. Joey in New Jersey:

To all comedians, actors, improvisers, real people and storytellers: Our Louder Than Words story telling events have been successful---at Friendly Grounds Coffee House. Real Stories. Real People. If you have appeared for us before, please contact me for a repeat performance!

And now, I am now looking for tellers for Thursday, November 13th and December 11th and January 8th for our next "...Louder Than Words" storytelling nights for Friendly Grounds Coffee House.

For information, please go to:

<http://www.louderthanwordsstories.com>

Some important details:

- * Story tellers can experience a new venue for story telling.
- * Stand-up comedians have the opportunity to exercise a "creative muscle" beyond your current stand-up comedy act.
- * Real people from all walks of life can share their true stories.
- * Actors and writers can experience creating the beginnings of a one-person show, in front of a real audience.

Please feel to contact me if you're interested in appearing at "Louder Than Words."

Joey Novick
908.892.6859
joeynovick@earthlink.net

PS. Happy Halloween!

To get you in the mood, please click:

<http://minibytes.mondominishows.com/poo/affiliates/play.asp?Affil=iwon&W>

Also, please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . and make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD
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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I were delighted to be with friends and loved ones at my daughter Risa's wedding to JP (John Paul Reavely) on Saturday . . . see below for a picture of the happy couple, flanked by us:



The event, held at the Battleground Country Club in Manalapan, was even better than our expectations . . . virtually everything went without a hitch.

The food was great, as well as the service . . . for more information about the facility, please click:

<http://www.battlegroundcc.com>

The flowers were beautiful . . . Brett Gash, the DJ (609.443.3783), did a fine job . . . and Robert Patten, mayor of the Borough of Hightstown, conducted a lovely service.

B. For those of you not at the event, I thought you'd like to hear my remarks:

Before I give the toast, I'd like to say . . .

Thanks to Hilary, for taking care of 98% of the arrangements.....
make that 99.6 % . . .

and to Cynthia, my beautiful bride, for helping keep me sane over the past few weeks . . . make that years.

Now if I can, I'd like to share just a brief bit of advice with you JP, my . . . dare I say it . . . son-in-law.

I got this from my longtime friend, Steve Marinoff, who's here today with his lovely wife Karen . . . Steve shared it with his son, who was recently married, and now he's graciously given me permission to share it with you . . .

JP, in the unlikely event you ever have a fight with Risa, all you need to do is keep three simple expressions in mind:

First, say . . . I love you.

If that doesn't work, say . . . you are right; and

If all else fails, say . . . It's my fault.

(as I hold up my glass)

To Risa and JP . . .

Rath dé ort, which is Irish for . . . may God's blessings be with you.

and also:

Le Chaim, which is Hebrew for . . . to life!

C. HELP REQUEST:

Thinking about Risa and her wedding reminds me of this one time when she was younger--make that much younger.

We were driving not too far from her home and a deer ran out in front of my car . . . unfortunately, I hit it and Risa was devastated . . . she wanted me to go into the woods to find the deer to see if it was OK . . . I declined, thinking to myself . . . that's all I needed to do . . . check on the condition of this poor deer, then have his or her brothers jump me . . . as in, "There's the turkey who got Bambi."

I mention this because I recently hit another deer . . . it wasn't my fault, really, but I feel terrible about it . . . my car feels even worse; i.e., there's some damage that I need to now repair . . . which leads me to ask:

Do you know of any auto body shops in the area that you would recommend for such work? I'd prefer it being in Somerset County or Mercer County in New Jersey, but would consider Bucks County as well . . . any help you could provide would be much appreciated.

D. INVITE:

If you're a past or present student of mine, I'd love to have you join me on my last night of teaching at the College; i.e., on Tuesday, December 9 . . . what I'll probably do: wrap-up the semester with my regular students, then have some sort of get-together for everybody else--probably at around 7:30 p.m. . . . details to follow, but if I haven't already asked you about this idea, please send me an email if you're interested and/or available . . . put down in subject line: YES FOR DECEMBER 9 . . . send it to: bginbc@aol.com.

Please also share this information with any of my past or present students that you may encounter.

This is my 32nd year of teaching at Bucks County Community College, plus I've taught another five years at other schools . . . I'll be on sabbatical in the spring and, also, completing my term as president of the teacher's union . . . then it's off to Asheville.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Hilary Greenfield--Risa's mother and my ex-wife.

As indicated above, she did a great job in taking care of just about all the arrangements for the wedding. And she did so while working in her full-time job as one of the librarians at Hightstown High School.

What you don't know . . . or "the rest of the story," as Paul Harvey likes to say . . . what Hilary had to go through to get an officiant for the event . . . we had been set on having my nephew David's wife, Bettina, handle things . . . that is what she does--and does it very well, by the way.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.weddingsbybettina.com/Site/index.html>

But shortly before the wedding, Bettina and David had their first child: Julian Darius . . . so that meant Hilary had to run around to find a replacement . . . she was able to line-up a friend, a pastor, and things were going along smoothly.

Yet he then had the audacity to have a minor stroke . . . without even telling us, no less . . . so with only about a week left, Hilary again found the need to get a second replacement.

Fortunately, Mayor Patten was available and all went smoothly.

And Hilary, through all this, managed to not have any sort of breakdown!

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2. FYI

Examine those areas in your life where your resources (your time, talent and skills) are not being put to the best use. A student once asked Albert Einstein how many feet were in a mile; he replied that he didn't know. Seeing the student's amazement, Einstein replied, "I make it a rule not to clutter my mind with simple information that I can find in a book in five minutes." Don't spend time on things that diffuse your focus and do not advance your goals.

SOURCE:

THE ENCORE EFFECT (see also Sections 4C and 10) by Mark Sanborn

FYI, part 2

* Figen in Pennsylvania, a longtime reader, publishes an excellent newsletter that I find most informative: PEACE WITHIN AND AROUND YOU . . . to subscribe, please click:

<http://lovethewayyoulive.com/newsletter.php>

When you do, you'll also receive two FREE manuals on the subject of clearing clutter from your lives.

* Marsha in New Jersey:

Saw two great films: FROZEN RIVER and W.

* Marianne in Pennsylvania, a stress management expert, was recently quoted in a fine article in the BUCKS COUNTY COURIER TIMES, written by Jo Ciavaglia . . . here's what she had to say about dealing with the current economic situation:

When looking at emotional stressors, consider what you can control and what you can't, added Marianne Kepler, a Bucks County Community College psychology professor whose specialty is stress management.

Things we can control: where we put our money, what bills are paid and when, household expenses.

Things we can't control: overseas financial markets, Wall Street, the \$700 billion federal bailout.

Kepler recommends making the best financial decisions you possibly can. Seek advice from good, reliable professionals. Stay on top of the bills.

And let the rest of it go.

* Lisa in Pennsylvania:

I am so saddened to hear about the passing of Joan Weiss. She was a member of my synagogue and I never even knew it. I had heard her name mentioned there from time to time and said to myself, "nah no way it can be the same Joan Weiss, I'll have to look her up someday" and now she's no longer here. She was a good person and will be missed. It does sound like she lived her remaining time to the fullest, though.

You too must feel her loss as you were close colleagues for so many years, my condolences. I owe my love of sales and marketing to you and Joan . . . classes with you both in personal selling, retail management and marketing helped me figure out what I wanted to be when I grew up and you both passed on a love of learning. After Bucks, it took 13 years and 7 schools (and a few cross country moves) until I earned an MBA in marketing and am in a job I love as Director of Marketing.

As I keep up on your doings here and there by reading BLAINESWORLD, I thought you might want to hear this before you leave us. Make sure whomever they hire to fill your shoes knows how many times THE WALL STREET JOURNAL likes to turn their list. (If memory serves me correctly, it's 7?) You taught me that.

* Dana in Pennsylvania:

How many readers are going to be able to eat at those restaurants [in Asheville] after you review them? I already feel unfortunate not to be able to eat at your local NJ bistros. I go to many local restaurants around Bucks and Montgomery Co, as I'm sure many other readers do as well. Perhaps you should ask your readers to submit reviews of area restaurants that could be included in your newsletter.

MY TWO CENTS:

Not a bad idea from Dana. As always, I welcome suggestions and/or recommendations from readers. By the same token, I'll continue to write about both New Jersey and Pennsylvania places that I will frequent on my many trips "up North" . . . in addition, I'll be writing about North Carolina locales as I add more readers from there.

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3. Food for thought

Sixty is the new fifty . . . mostly because all the money we saved in the last decade is gone.

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4. Reviews

A. I first noticed Dakota Fanning when she was 8, and she starred in I AM SAM (a film you MUST rent if you've never seen it) . . . since then, I've seen just about everything she has been in--including her most recent film, THE SECRET LIFE OF BEES . . . this is the tale of a young girl, haunted by the memory of her late mother . . . she escapes the troubled life she has with her father to live with three sisters in a small South Carolina town . . . Fanning is fine in her role, as is the rest of the talented cast . . . I particularly liked the work of Paul Bettany (so fine in A KNIGHT'S TALE, another movie to rent) . . . yet overall, BEES left me flat . . . it was too maudlin for my taste and at the end, I just didn't feel the sort of attachment to any of the characters that I thought I should . . . rated PG-13.

B. There's nothing new out on DVD that I can recommend, so let me instead refer you to one film that I recently revisited: EDUCATING RITA . . . it's a delightful romantic comedy-drama about a 26-year-old working class British hairdresser who decides to seek an education at Oxford University . . . Julie Waters shines in the role, and she is equally matched by Michael Caine who plays her alcoholic professor . . . there's a great musical soundtrack, too . . . rated PG, though methinks that it wouldn't be of much interest to anybody under the age of 13.

C. I've previously enjoyed both THE FRED FACTOR and YOU DON'T NEED A TITLE TO BE A LEADER by Mark Sanborn . . . his latest, THE ENCORE EFFECT (see also Sections 2 and 10), has enhanced my opinion of this author . . . he is rapidly becoming one of our country's top business/motivational writers--and he's a personal favorite.

What I like about Sanborn is that each effort is different than the previous one . . . in this one, he talks about how to make each performance outstanding; in fact, so outstanding that people will be applauding for an encore.

Wouldn't that be a great thing to accomplish?

It really doesn't seem all that hard, particularly if you take his advice on getting feedback:

* When was the last time you asked your audience, "How would you define an encore performance?" What could you do to be a more supportive parent, spouse, or friend? How much more effective would you be if you knew what your family and friends need from you? You can go beyond satisfying your audience only when you know what they want.

A little later, he then goes on to say:

* To create the Encore Effect, you shouldn't be focused on your own happiness or success, but on the happiness or success of others. We all tend to repeat the experiences in life that have a positive impact on us. And when you have a positive impact on others, they'll want to repeat the experience in the same way.

One of the things I like best about this author is how he constantly incorporates real examples and situations into his writing . . . for example, this was his use of the following story:

* At the bagel shop near my home, there is a new manager who always delivers great performance. Recently, he was working the cash register. When an older gentleman in line ahead of me asked for the senior citizen discount, the manager smiled and said, "What? You're trying to fool me, aren't you? You can't be a day over thirty!"--all the while ringing up the man's purchase less the discount. As I approached the register, he said, "Now here's a brother who's hungry!" He's eating his bagel before he's even paid for it!" Guilty as charged. I couldn't help smiling as I paid. As I walked away, I heard the manager's banter continue with the next person in line.

You and I have been in situations where such a performance would have fallen flat. It would have been irritating, it would not have been funny, and it would have slowed down the transaction-it would have been a turn-off instead of a turn-on. But that day, in that bagel shop, the manager gave a remarkable performance. He wasn't promoting himself-he was promoting the customers. He wasn't "showing-off"-he was warm, engaging and just humorous enough to add value to what probably would have been a bland transaction in another establishment.

Read THE ENCORE EFFECT if you want to be personally inspired . . . you'll also learn how to encourage others to do their best on a more regular basis.

D. Heard THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO HEALTHY EATING, written and read by Dr. Andrew Weil.

Weil, one of America's most well-known natural health physicians, does a nice job of presenting much of what I wished I had known many years earlier in my life . . . he reviews what you need to know about fats, carbohydrates, proteins and calories, and he also presents the secrets behind the Japanese and Mediterranean diets.

Among the many tidbits I gained from listening to this short, but oh-so-insightful program were the following:

- * The less you can get processed and refined foods in your diet, the better you are.
- * Use olive oil as your major cooking oil.
- * You must have Omega 3 fatty acids in your diet.
- * Your protein should be 15-20% of your total number of calories. In general, try to eat more vegetable protein and less animal protein.

I'd tell you more, but I now feel compelled to eat something healthy!

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5. TV alert

A. Comedian Frank Caliendo returns on FRANK TV with some new cast members that will result in even more impressions in this very funny sketch-comedy series . . . look for "appearances" from John McCain, Mel Gibson, Sean Connery, Tom Brokaw, Al Gore and Harrison Ford . . . Tuesdays at 11 p.m. on TBS.

B. The Philadelphia Phillies begin their quest for a second World Series title when they take on the Tampa Bay Rays in Game 1 of the Fall Classic on Wednesday at 8 p.m. on FOX . . . other games this week are slated for Thursday, Saturday and Sunday--all at the same time.

My thoughts on the matter:

* Some Fall Classic. If there's any bad weather, we may well be watching games into the winter.

* I miss being able to watch games in the afternoon. Getting nostalgic here, I'm even recalling how I would bring a transistor radio into school in the hopes of finding a sympathetic teacher that would let you listen.

* The Phillies last won a championship back some 28 years ago. (It almost seems like yesterday.) To quote Jimmy Rollins, their shortstop: "I'm tired of hearing about 1980. We want our own parade!"

* Go Phillies!

C. I try to keep up with what's happening by watching or taping WASHINGTON WEEK . . . the show features a group of journalists participating in roundtable discussion of major news events . . . Fridays at 8 p.m. on PBS . . . times and dates often vary on PBS stations, so check local listings.

D. LITTLE BRITAIN USA airs Sundays at 10:30 p.m. on HBO . . . TV GUIDE calls it "a howlingly funny freak-show tour of America [that's] very rude and often tremendously grotesque."

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6. Next life

In my next life I want to live my life backwards. You start out dead and get that out of the way. Then you wake up in an old people's home feeling better everyday.

You get kicked out for being too healthy, go collect your pension, and then when you start work, you get a gold watch and a party on your first day.

You work for 40 years until you're young enough to enjoy your retirement. You party, drink alcohol and are generally promiscuous, then you are ready for high school.

You then go to primary school, you become a kid, you play. You have no responsibilities. You become a baby until you are born.

And then you spend your last 9 months floating in luxurious spa-like conditions with central heating and room service on tap, larger quarters

Until finally . . . you finish off as an orgasm! I rest my case.

REQUEST FOR NAME OF AUTHOR:

The above piece is sometimes attributed to Woody Allen, but I haven't been able to confirm that he wrote it . . . if you know for sure who did, please me know the author and/or the source.

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7. Websites

A. To make life simpler for you when seeking a credit card, please click:

<http://www.creditcardguide.com/>

You can see a wide array of credit card offers, both for personal and business usage . . . in addition, there are useful tools to compare and find the best card . . . and you can even apply online from this website.

B. Regardless of what you think about Sarah Palin, she was funny . . . make that very funny . . . on last week's SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE . . . she was also a great sport.

See for yourself by clicking this link for the opening of the show:

http://www.nbc.com/Saturday_Night_Live/video/clips/gov-palin-cold-open/773761/

Or this one for the Weekend Update skit:

http://www.nbc.com/Saturday_Night_Live/video/clips/update-palin-rap/773781/

PLEASE NOTE:

Make sure you also see Section 9 for more on the upcoming election.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blaineworld.net>

By doing so, you can check out what I do with your name; e.g., if you're a subscriber to this missive . . . just click "Newsletter" to the left, then "Privacy Statement."

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8. Computer tip

Google has recently introduced a free Web browser called Chrome . . . to download it, please click:

<http://www.google.com/chrome>

Using it, you'll get:

- * One box for everything. Type-in the address bar and get suggestions for both search and web pages.
- * Thumbnails of your top sites. Access your favorite pages instantly with lightning speed from any new tab.
- * Desktop shortcuts to launch your favorite web applications.

Google is hoping that Chrome is even better than Internet Explorer or Firefox . . . I'd be interested in our reaction(s); e.g., with respect to what browser you think is best.

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9. Who's funnier, McCain or Obama?

The two Senators appeared together at the Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation Dinner in New York on October 16 . . . for perhaps the first time ever, they both came across as nice guys--and funny, too.

McCain was first up; among his zingers:

* Events are moving fast in my campaign and yes, it's true that this morning I've dismissed my entire team of senior advisers. All of their positions will be now be held by a man named Joe the Plumber.

* What they don't know is that Joe the Plumber recently signed a very lucrative contract with a wealthy couple to handle all the work on all seven of their houses.

* Acknowledging that he was the underdog, McCain said that even in a setting of "proud Manhattan Democrats" he had a feeling that there was support in the room for him. "I'm delighted to see you here tonight, Hillary," he said, pointing to Obama's former rival.

* McCain then asked where husband Bill was--acknowledging that the former president had a "subtle approach" to campaigning for Obama's presidency. "When a reporter asked him if Obama was qualified to be President, Bill Clinton pointed out, 'Sure, he's over 35 and a U.S. citizen.' He was pandering to the strict constructionist crowd," McCain said.

* It's going to be a long, long night at MSNBC if I manage to pull this off. I understand that Keith Olbermann offered up his own "Mission Accomplished" banner. If they need any decorating advice on that banner, ask Keith to call me so I can tell him right where to put it.

Obama then had his turn; among his quips:

* I do love the Waldorf-Astoria. You know, I hear that from the doorstep you can see all the way to the Russian Tearoom.

* At one of these campaign rallies, someone in the crowd started yelling, "no-bama," announcing to everyone in the room that I shouldn't be the Democratic nominee because there were far more qualified candidates. I really wish Joe Biden hadn't done that.

* Recently, one of John's top advisers told the Daily News that if we keep talking about the economy, McCain's going to lose. So, tonight I'd like to talk about the economy. And while the collapse of the housing market's been tough on every single home owner, I think we all need to recognize that this crisis has been eight times harder on John McCain.

* Who is Barack Obama? Contrary to the rumors you have heard, I was not born in a manger. I was actually born on Krypton and sent here by my father Jor El to save the planet Earth.

As for his middle name "Hussein," which sadly has become an issue to fringe elements on the right, Obama sought to clear up an urban myth, "First of all, my middle name is not what you think. It's actually Steve. That's right. Barack Steve Obama."

PLEASE NOTE:

Make sure you also see Section 7B for more on the upcoming election.

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10. A quote I like

When you are encouraging others, you might say, "I think so highly of you that I want you to reach a level of performance that is higher than you believe you can achieve. I believe you can reach it. And I want to encourage you to believe it as well."--Mark Sanborn in THE ENCOURAGE EFFECT (see also Sections 2 and 4C)

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11. Thought for the day

Rabbi Mel Glazer, a friend, responded to last week's "Thought for the day" with his own Last Lecture . . . it is the epilogue from his excellent book, AND GOD CREATED HOPE, which can be obtained from:

<http://www.andgodcreatedhope.com>

Epilogue

While I was writing AND GOD CREATED HOPE, I moved to Stroudsburg, PA to become Rabbi at Temple Israel of the Poconos. As part of the move I needed to find new doctors, so I made an appointment with one of the local specialists. He suggested that I have my lungs checked as part of a thorough physical exam.

He scheduled me for a C.A.T. scan, expecting to find nothing out of the ordinary. Well, surprise, surprise! When I returned to the doctor for the results, he told me that there was a spot on my lung, and he couldn't rule out lung cancer.

Next, he scheduled me to have a P.O. scan, which would show if anything was going on in my throat. Three days later, I went to the surgery center, and through an IV, they inserted some dye, which flowed through my entire upper body, so I could be scanned. I lay still for 65 minutes, trying to "zone out," actually counting the seconds (one thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three . . .) and trying to act like the macho man that I did not feel like.

My doctor had scheduled the next appointment for a week later. I asked him for an earlier date, but he said that it took that long for the results and the evaluation of the scan. It turned out that the results and the evaluation were all done two hours after the test, but I didn't know that then.

So, I had a whole week to think about the possibility that I might be dying of lung cancer.

What made it really scary was that my mother died of lung cancer. She was a heavy smoker. I've never smoked, but I had already presumed that this might be genetic and that my life was over.

And so I began to plan.

What would I do with the time I had left? First, would I take chemo and radiation for the cancer? I decided absolutely not, since I didn't want to spend the next year suffering through mind-and-body-torturing treatments which would, at best, give me maybe another month or two of life, life that wasn't really life at all. I've seen too many of my congregants and friends go through that, and I knew it was not for me.

Would I quit my job as Rabbi? Yes, I would do that immediately upon receiving the test results and cancer diagnosis, and I even began working on my final sermon. I would tell my new congregation that there are places in this world that I want to visit with my wife, Ellen, and that I especially need to return to Israel for a final visit, so I'd be resigning from the pulpit. I would thank them for the lessons they'd already taught me even in the short time we'd had together, and I'd ask their forgiveness for any pain I'd caused them.

I would complete my relationship with them before I left.

After seeing other parts of the world, I'd return home and begin to travel all across the country, giving a lecture to anyone who might be interested, titled: "Final Life--Thoughts of a Grateful Rabbi." During the lecture, I'd talk about how gratitude was the first feeling I'd had after learning of my

impending death. Above all, I'd say I'm grateful for the life I've been granted, and I consider my life a precious gift to me from God.

After gratitude would come everything else, all my other feelings and thoughts. I would talk about how the world can only be repaired when gratitude replaces entitlement, when we move outside ourselves toward others in our lives.

When I thought about dying, I realized that I wasn't angry, just sad that I wouldn't live to see my kids' life-cycle events or share in the lives of my grandchildren.

I felt like my hopes, dreams, and aspirations had been reached, and that I'd die happy and fulfilled. If my time had come, I'd be ready, unafraid and pleased with what I'd accomplished in my life. I knew that I'd mattered to a lot of folks, and my teachings and memories would be my final gift to them and to the Universe.

I believe that when our mission on this earth is accomplished, we can be ready and prepared to leave this world for whatever comes next. The problem is: Who among us knows when their missions have been accomplished? We don't. So, if God has decided that my earthly purpose has been fulfilled, who am I to argue?

I've known too many people who have "lived too long." They spent their final years in pain or totally unable to communicate with those they loved. I would, indeed, be fortunate, because I would leave this life on my own terms, proud and grateful.

Smart guy that I am, I was sure I had it all figured out.

Needless to say, thank God, the results came back showing that the spot on my lung was some benign scar tissue left over from who-knows-what and who-knows-when.

I was elated. I really was. But, to tell the deep, dark, honest-to-God truth, I was just a wee bit disappointed at the same time. I was actually looking forward to the last year of my life. I was going to be able to fill the closing chapter of my existence with passion! Between seeing the world, teaching people across the country the truths I'd learned, and finishing my book on grief and hope, my days would be filled with joy and creativity. They would be filled with life, not death, and when the end came, I'd feel that my life had been well worth my 59 years of effort.

That's my story, and it has a happy ending. Sort of.

The gnawing-in-my-gut question I continue to ask myself ever since this happened is: What's stopping me from doing all those things I was going to do if I was going to die?

How many of them can I still do right now, even without a death sentence hanging over me? Why do I have to wait until the Angel of Death comes calling for me, for real?

These are the real questions, not thoughts of dying one day, that continue to haunt me.

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12. Advance planning department

A. Edward Nystrom, author of THE PSYCHOLOGY OF POSITIVE THINKING, speaks at the Mary Jacobs Library in Skillman, NJ on Thursday, October 23, at 7:30 p.m. . . . learn about how your mind creates the reality you experience and how the reality you have experienced creates you . . . please pre-register by calling 609.924.7073, ext. 4.

B. Friends of Bucks County Community College:

Saxophonist Richard Hodges with John Forconi, piano and John Enz, cello, performing the music of Piazzsolla, Falla and Granados.

Sunday, October 26, at 4 p.m. in Gateway Auditorium

\$10 suggested donation to support the BCCC Library.

Information: 215.968.8003.

C. You're cordially invited to my next Marketing class on Tuesday, October 28, at which time I'll be presenting on "How to market your business for \$75 or less" . . . time: 6:30 p.m. . . . location: Penn 410 at Bucks County Community College, Newtown, PA . . . NO CHARGE, but please email me (bginbc@aol.com) to let me know that you would be joining me.

D. Tom in Pennsylvania:

First, I apologize that I have not got this message out earlier, but I am already finished my second week with "My Fair Lady", with three more to go. I am in the ensemble and understudying the great Professor Higgins role in my first full-time Equity role in many years. As many of you know, I have been trying to finish the requirements for my Equity card for the last year and I am getting very close. The last month has kept me so busy that I have had little Internet time. Rehearsals were 3 weeks of 9 to 5 Monday thru Saturday.

But I digress, this is mainly to let you know that if you were planning to come, make your reservations through me. Tickets range from \$35 to \$45, but if I make the reservations it is \$30. Just send me an email. Check the Media website for times:

<http://www.mediatheatre.org/SiteResources/Data/Templates/IFrameLayout.asp?docid=716&DocName=My%20Fair%20Lady>

Here is our review in the INQUIRER:

http://www.philly.com/inquirer/columnists/howard_shapiro/20080807__Les_Miz__tops_list_of_Barrymore_nods.html

I will be letting you know if I actually get a chance to play Henry Higgins!

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PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I had the pleasure of being invited to my cousin Blanche's house to break the fast on Yom Kippur . . . it was great to get together with so many members of my family, especially since we won't get to see several of them for quite some time as a result of our upcoming move.

B. On Saturday, we were invited by our longtime friend Lisa Gable for dinner at Sal De Forte's in Ewing Township, NJ . . . we were joined by Steve, Lisa's son, and Fern, her daughter-in-law.

See below; that's Lisa in the middle, flanked by Cynthia and yours truly:



My haddock (a first for me!) was quite tasty . . . Cynthia liked

her veal parmigiana . . . service by Angela Eulo was excellent . . . we got a kick out of how she described each dish . . . when asked about why she spoke so well of one choice, she replied, "I'm a garlic kind of girl."

This was the first time we had been at this restaurant; it won't be the last.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.SalDeFortestRistorante.com>

C. On Sunday, thanks to a very nice gift from my brother, we saw Savion Glover in BARE SOUNDZ at the NJPAC in Newark, NJ.

Glover is a tap dancer extraordinaire . . . he amazed us with his dancing.

He was joined by fellow hoofers Marshall Davis Jr. and Maurice Chestnut, and they were equally mesmerizing.

D. CONGRATULATIONS to Jim Freeman, my talented colleague and friend at Bucks County Community College, who was chosen to present a paper at the upcoming Two Year College Association's Conference) in Atlantic City this coming weekend.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Joe Passerella--a plumber who heads his own company: J.P. Heating & Air Conditioning in Hamilton NJ (609.731.08619).

To get our home ready, we have had to do a few things that were noted in the inspection report . . . Joe has bent over backwards to help us get some of this work done.

In addition, his enthusiasm is contagious . . . and we also appreciate the help provided by Shane, his assistant.

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2. FYI

Look for ways to see your company or organization from the customer's perspective. Try out your customer experience. If you have retail locations where you will not be recognized, or call centers where your voice is not familiar, pose as a customer to see what your organization looks like from that vantage point. If you will be recognized, ask someone else to visit or call your company and have her describe the experience in detail. If your business takes orders and ships product, go ahead and place an order, receive the product, use it, break it, fix it--and see what the experience is like.

SOURCE:

WE: THE IDEAL CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP (see also Section 4C) by Steve Yastrow

FYI, part 2

* Jean in Pennsylvania on behalf of her son Dylan:

Dylan is selling popcorn to support Cub Scout Pack 20, where he's now a Webelo. If you're interested, go to:

<http://www.orderpopcorn.com>

and enter Dylan's code TEQJZZC so he'll get credit for the sale. You can pay by credit card and have the popcorn shipped right to you! If you don't need snacks, you can choose to make a military donation and treats will be shipped to our troops.

You can also order through Dylan if you prefer, and pay by cash or check, and we'll deliver your order in late November. Just call me at 267.994.3849. Thanks in advance!

* Pam in North Carolina:

That latest newsletter was one of your best. I have to say that despite the dismal economic situation, I can always rely on you to find something that sparks an idea. It makes me feel somehow more human as I connect with your network of readers, via your newsletter. Thanks for making me laugh and for providing all the brain food. I really appreciate it.

* Pat in Pennsylvania:

Are you sure you want to give up all these neat places to eat? Local restaurants seem to be a big part of your newsletter. I don't think there will be that many good restaurants in Asheville?

MY TWO CENTS:

I'll miss the places in NJ/Pennsylvania, but will keep checking them when I return several times this coming spring . . . that said, I've already seen that Asheville has many fine places to eat.

* Debbie in Pennsylvania:

What a beautiful tribute to Joan [Weiss]. Thank you.

Weiss Hall . . . now that would be cool.

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3. Confusion

A couple took their children to a restaurant named the Captain's Table. The youngest went to the bathroom but soon returned, confused and embarrassed.

"Couldn't you find the way?" the father asked.

"Oh, I found it," he replied, legs crossed. "But I don't know if I'm a buccaneer or a wench."

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4. Reviews

A. The more I think about TYLER PERRY'S THE FAMILY THAT PREYS, the more impressed I am becoming with Perry . . . he not only is one of the co-stars, but he also wrote and directed it--much like he has done in several of his other films (DADDY'S LITTLE GIRLS, WHY DID I GET MARRIED, etc.) . . . this is a drama about two very different families who are torn apart by both greed and scandal . . . Kathy Bates and Alfre Woodard are both excellent in the main roles, and Sanaa Lathan as one of Woodard's daughters continues her work as a most watchable actress . . . though FAMILY is very much a soap opera, it manages to catch your attention from the beginning and maintain it until the very end . . . rated PG-13.

B. SEX AND THE CITY is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #609 follows:

If you were a fan of the TV show, you'll love SEX AND THE CITY: THE MOVIE . . . even those who never got to watch it when it was on HBO will like it . . . and surprise, surprise, guys will too (though they'll be a distinct minority if they see it in the theaters) . . . you'll quickly get involved in this tale of four attractive women who spend much of their life shopping and/or talking about sex . . . Sarah Jessica Parker, Kim Cattrall, Kristin Davis, and Cynthia Nixon reprise their roles from the original series, as does Chris Noth . . . all are excellent . . . Jennifer Hudson--fresh from her Oscar-winning performance in DREAMGIRLS--is also in the cast and is fine, but she doesn't really have enough to do . . . rated R.

C. Think about the last time you ate out in a restaurant . . . if you can't remember what the waiter looks like five minutes later, you weren't engaged--something that needs to happen in order for businesses to connect with their customers.

That is one of the many ideas I gained from reading Steve Yastrow's excellent book, WE: THE IDEAL CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP (see also Section 2) . . . what's needed is for customers to think in terms of "we," as opposed to "us and them."

This needs to be done by creating:

* Encounters: interactions that improve your relationships [as opposed to]

Transactions: interactions that often damage your relationship and, at best, have no effect on your relationship.

Yastrow proceeds to give many real examples of ways to accomplish this . . . one of my favorites involved the firm that cleans his clothes:

* I have used the same dry cleaners for years. Jim Dandy Cleaners shows up, without fail, every Tuesday and Friday morning to drop off clean clothes and pick up a new load that needs cleaning. One Thursday night last summer I returned from a three-week trip out of the country, and I had to leave again Sunday night for the West Coast. On Friday morning, I stuck the dirty clothes in the blue Jim Dandy bag, and put the bag on the front porch. Later in the day I realized I'd want some of that clothing for my trip, but they weren't

scheduled to be returned until Tuesday. I called Jim Dandy, and the owner's daughter answered the phone. I told her I needed some of the pieces of clothing they had for an upcoming business trip, and asked if it was possible for me to get them by Saturday afternoon. "I'll run in the back right now and see if I can find your clothes. They're in the group to be cleaned on Monday, but I'll bet I can find them. Let me know if you can't get here by five tomorrow when we close, because I can leave them at the store next door for you." Relief, I'll have my clothes. The next morning at about 8:30 I got a call from Jim Dandy. We're delivering your clothes in about an hour." Wow. Was this good customer service? Of course. But calling it "good customer service" sells it short. It was way beyond customer service. I truly believe that the people at Jim Dandy sincerely wanted me to have my clothes for my business trip.

Wow!

Wouldn't it be great if all businesses provided that type service?

To start, consider this simple-sounding recommendation from the author:

* As you initiate encounters with customers over the next week, choose to opt for the more immediate way to communicate. If you start to email a customer, stop and pick up the phone. In another situation, instead of calling a customer, go see her in person.

If you read WE, you'll get many more such ideas that you can immediately implement to help your business grow.

D. You hear about the guy's wife who went to a self-help group for compulsive talkers?

It's called on and on and on.

That's one of the hundreds of jokes (many of them groaners) I heard while listening to A FEW MORE PRETTY GOOD JOKES, put out by the folks at Prairie Home Companion.

You'll find puns, one-liners, lightbulb jokes, chicken-crossing-the-road joke, ethnic jokes, political jokes, and many more . . . none are particularly offensive, nor are they dirty . . . yet they will put a smile on your face.

The program, hosted by Garrison Keillor, has several performers and an outstanding array of musicians . . . the fact that it was taped before a live audience made it even more enjoyable.

And before I forget: How do they circumcise a whale?

They send down four skin divers.

If you laughed or even grimaced, then A FEW MORE PRETTY GOOD JOKES is the collection for you.

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5. TV alert

A. CHOCOLATE NEWS debuts on Wednesday at 10:30 p.m. on COMEDY CENTRAL . . . because it stars David Alan Grier as a fake newsmagazine's anchor, methinks it will be funny.

B. ICONOCLASTS begins its fourth season with billionaire Richard Branson exchanging stories with South African Nobel Peace Prize recipient Archbishop Desmond Tutu . . . Thursday at 10 p.m. on SUNDANCE.

C. LIVING PROOF, notes TV GUIDE, stars "Harry Connick Jr. and Angie Harmon . . . [in] a dream cast in this beautiful account of one doctor's tireless efforts to develop a breast-cancer drug" . . . Saturday at 9 p.m. on LIFETIME.

D. Florence Henderson, Donna Miles and Pam Grier star in LADIES OF THE HOUSE, a 2008 cable drama about three women who work on an extreme makeover for their church while working out some personal issues . . . Saturday at 9 p.m. on HALLMARK.

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6. Two friends

A woman asks her friend, "How was your blind date?"

The friend replies, "Terrible! He showed up in a 1932 Rolls-Royce."

"What's so terrible about that?"

"He was the original owner."

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7. Websites

A. For those looking for ideas and things to do when traveling, please click:

<http://www.Planeteye.com>

Doing so will enable you to discover destinations, plan trips and share your experiences with others . . . you'll also get to see some great photos that may even save you time and effort in the future; e.g., if use those at the website rather than shooting your own.

B. In need of a laugh, please click:

<http://www.generatorland.com>

You'll find The Law Firm Name Generator, The Horoscope Generator, The Local Headline Generator, The Super Hero Generator, etc. . . . and even The Fantasy Team Name Generator, which recently gave me this possibility: Benchwarming Hungover Road Apples.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view

it, please click:

<http://www.blainesworld.net>

As many readers know, I enjoy speaking to various companies and organizations--and do this several times during the year . . . for more information about work that I do in this area, please click "Speaking" to the left of the above homepage.

Keep in mind, too, that I'll be living in the Asheville, NC area after December 15 . . . so I'm now available there, as well as in both New Jersey and Pennsylvania (where I'll be visiting on a regular basis) from December to June, 2009 . . . and as always, I could travel to anywhere else to present . . . that's why they invented . . . the plane!

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8. Computer tip

If you're on a distribution list--e.g., for jokes--and want to make a response, don't automatically click "Reply All" . . . sometimes, all that's needed is a response to the person who sent you the original post . . . including everybody else just creates a lot of extra email that jams up mailboxes.

Also, don't forget to use the bccc (blind carbon copy) option whenever possible . . . if you don't know what I'm talking about or don't know how to do this, please click:

http://email.about.com/od/emailnetiquette/a/cc_and_bcc.htm

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9. Help wanting

According to the Internet (so it MUST be true), here are some things that hiring managers had to contend with when interviewing applicants:

- * The candidate answered his cell phone and asked the interviewer to leave her own office because it was a "private" conversation.
- * The applicant told the interviewer he wouldn't stay with the job long because he might get an inheritance if his uncle died—and the old man wasn't "looking too good."
- * The candidate said she couldn't provide a writing sample because all her writing had been for the CIA and it was "classified."
- * When the applicant was offered food, he declined, saying he didn't want to line his stomach with grease before going out drinking.
- * The candidate flushed the toilet while talking to the interviewer during a phone interview.

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10. A quote I like

Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in.--Robert Frost (1874-1963), American poet and recipient of four Pulitzer Prizes

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11. Thought for the day

Be forewarned: The following piece is a bit on the longish side, but it is a "must" read, particularly if you followed the career of Randy Pausch and/or if you were--like me--a Joan Weiss fan.

Shabbat Ha'Azinu
The Last Lecture

(a 10.9.2008 Yom Kippur sermon, delivered by Rabbi Elliott N. Perlstein*)

I got an email the day after Rosh Hashanah, first thing Thursday morning. Elliott. Good morning and great sermons . . . so far! Great Sermons. . . . Let's see what happens on Yom Kippur.

Since we were last together on Rosh Hashanah, the Phillies won the National League Eastern Division Championship. They are waiting for the Shofar Blowing before they play. but that is only on the east coast. A good sign. We had the one and only Vice-Presidential debate and another presidential debate, and I'm still with the same person . . . T. Boone Pickens and energy independence.

This past spring someone was Hocking me a chinick. Do you know what that means: hock a chinick? It's a little like dreying my cup but not exactly. Literally, it means banging on a tea kettle. One way of saying No is saying, Stop hocking me a chinick already. All spring someone was hocking me to read a certain book. People are often recommending books that I wish I had time to read, and they mention it once and fartig . . . genug. They don't ask if I read it yet, am I going to read it. Well, I read this book. What motivated me most was not the hocking. People were reading this book and even more were talking about it all over. It became a sort of sensation. The book is The Last Lecture by Randy Pausch.

Before Janie and I left for Israel, I bought a copy of The Last Lecture and brought it with us. The first time we went into a bookstore in Israel, I thought if this book is really so popular, it would have been translated into Hebrew and so I was prepared to walk over to the counter and ask for a book called something like Hahartzaah Haacharonah, and I expected to get a gazed look in return. Before I got to the counter, I saw the book right away on the shelf, there it was Hahartzaah Haacharonah . . . The Last Lecture in Hebrew. I bought it and needed no more hocking to sit down and read it.

Why are people reading this book and watching the YouTube of the lecture itself and why are people talking about it so much? The author of the book, Randy Pausch, is diagnosed with a form of cancer that has a 95% mortality rate. I always prefer to talk in survival terms, but 5% doesn't sound any better. He was told that he had but a matter of months to live. So why are people reading this book and talking about it and blogging about it? This past year some one came into my study, sat down on the couch, looked straight at me and asked how do I die? What does one do when one is told that he/she has but a matter of months? We would understand someone who rolls over and cries themselves to death but that

wasn't Randy Pausch. He has the personal energy within him to begin a whole new project while he is still alive. There is something compelling about a man being told that his days are numbered and he lives life to the fullest. He is able to look death in the face and go on. Randy Pausch was a young man of 46 when he was told this terrible news.

Randy and his wife Jai had different visions of what he should do or would do with the time he had. His wife Jai wanted him to spend more time with the kids, Dillon, Logan and Chloe ages six, four and eighteen months, so that they would have the most memories possible of their dad. Maybe that's what many moms would like their healthy husbands to do and we men, especially in America, find our worth so much in our work so we spend more time in the office, or wherever we work. Rabbi Harold Kushner makes the point in one of his many books: "Ask any man what matters most to him, and he will say family. Ask him where he spends most of his time, and he will say at work." Rabbi Kushner writes that he never heard anyone say on their death bed, "I wish I would have spent more time at work," but that's what we do when we're not on our death bed. We men work and now many women do too, and Rabbis are amongst the biggest offenders here. Maybe there's another way for us before it's too late.

Randy had a different idea of how he would spend his days. One might say he decided to spend it working, but that wouldn't be totally fair. He reasoned that his children were so young that they probably would not really remember well the hours and days together though he did spend wonderful time with each child. Instead of purely playing with his young kids, Randy decided to write a legacy for them that they would read and see when they grew up and so be able to transmit to them his values and ideals and life lessons. He would create this living legacy for his children, yet transmit it to another group of people who meant so very much to him, his colleagues at Carnegie Mellon University where he was a respected and even loved professor of computer sciences. Randy writes, "We knew from the beginning none of this is a substitute for live parenting, but an engineer does not operate with perfect solutions but rather with the best that is possible to do within the framework of limited resources and this is exactly what I try to do with this lecture and with this book. That is all any of us can do. In our own imperfect world of limited resources, we can try to achieve the best possible solutions."

In his lecture, he is filled with vitality and good humor and a great deal to say about life. He begins the lecture doing a number of one armed push ups, and he says that if anyone pities him, they should come up and do some push ups too.

The basis of the book, to say the least, is sad. Not far into the book, I sat in Jerusalem and thought why in the world am I reading this? I have a few weeks away from the reality of my working year and this story takes me back to the most difficult of what I deal with, but I somehow could not put the book down. It wasn't because the book grabbed me like a great mystery can. I couldn't put it down because this man with a terminal diagnosis had a story to tell, and I had his book in my hand and I was committed to reading it.

Very early on, I was struck in the introduction Randy writes "Every day I ride on my bike in the neighborhood. It is physical exercise that is positive for my health." I thought if a guy with a terminal illness can ride his bike every day and take time to take care of himself physically, I ought to read his book and see what he has to say about living. You and I ought to ride our bikes every day. We should surely be doing something for our physical well being each day. I hope I hear myself saying this. Actually,

during each of these 53 long rides he talked on his cell phone, using a blue tooth with Jeffrey Zaslow who turned those conversations into this book, *The Last Lecture*. My apologies to Jeffrey Zaslow each time I quote from the book because my quotes are all translations from the Hebrew. I somehow left the original book in English in Israel. Someone in Israel is saying, "Wow look at this, they translated this book into English."

The book *The Last Lecture* and the lecture itself turn out not to be sad at all. The book and the lecture are focused on living rather than dying. Actually, there had been a tradition at Carnegie Mellon of a retiring professor giving a Last Lecture.

And so without any sadness, I want to ask you to think about writing right now your Last Lecture. Who is it for? What do you have to say? Do you have anything to say? Have you accumulated any wisdom, guidance, teachings that can enrich others. Randy Pausch talks about dreams he has fulfilled. Have you fulfilled any of your life dreams? Have you dared to dream? Are you dreaming still?

Some of Professor Pausch's favorite lines are, "Experience is what you get when you didn't get what you wanted." One of the dreams he wanted never fulfilled was playing in the NFL, but he learned a lot from his old school Coach, Coach Graham. What life experiences do you have to transmit that can enrich others?

Randy Pausch said, "Brick walls are there for us to show how badly we want something." When he applied to college, he had been put on the waiting list at Brown University. He says he was finally admitted because he kept badgering them. He kept hocking them a chinik until they couldn't take it anymore. He was accepted to all kinds of great Ph.D. programs but was rejected by Carnegie Mellon, but that's where he wanted to go and they finally let him in. He said, "Brick Walls are to keep other people out and are there for us to show how badly we want something." What brick walls have you met and scaled in life?

How about having fun and enjoying life? How many pages in your book or minutes in your lecture could you fill with having fun?

He talks about regrets: "It's not the things we do in life we regret. It is the things we do not do." Dr. Pausch spoke at Carnegie Mellon's graduation this past spring and told the graduates, "Find your passion and follow it. You will not find that passion in things or in money. Passion comes from the things that fuel you from the inside. Your passion will be grounded in people." In your lecture can you talk about things that fueled you in life that had their bases other than in things or money, the things that fuel you today and give you that personal energy?

I want to tell you about my favorite chapter of the book. The chapter is entitled "The Man in the Convertible." Randy Pausch writes about how he arrived at his office one morning some months after his diagnosis, and he received a one paragraph email from a colleague by the name of Robbie Kozak at Carnegie Mellon. She writes about how the night before she was driving home and she saw a guy driving in a convertible, the music was playing and he was kind of tapping to the beat of the music. She was somehow drawn to drive closer to the car and saw the man had a smile. Somehow she saw the smile before she saw the face. This is Robbie's email to Randy: "Finally, the car turned and then I caught the face of the man in the car. Oh my G-d, she said to herself, It is Randy Pausch." Randy writes this sight amazed her. She knew that the diagnosis of the lethal form of cancer was not good news and with this, the image

of his utter contentment touched her heart. At that moment, I was clearly in a great mood. Robbie wrote, "You are not able to imagine what you did for me in this one quick look. It reminded me the reason for living." The reason for living.

I like to see people in convertibles. I always sense they're having fun. Whenever I see one of you in a convertible, I say "good for you." If I could get rid of my allergies, I would get one too. There is so much that gets in the way of us having fun. There is so much on our minds that weighs on us. My advice to you today is go out and get a convertible or whatever your own way will be for you to have some fun and enjoy life more. If a man who was living on borrowed time could be enjoying life, we can too. And so in your lecture, what will you say about having fun? Is it OK to be having fun in life? The psalmist says come before G-d in joy. G-d does not want to see us ungebloosen. Reb Nachman, the great Hasidic master teaches it is a great Mitzvah to be happy always. It's fine to have fun.

In an interview Randy Pausch said, "I don't know how to not have fun. Right. I'm dying and I am having fun and I'm going to keep having fun every day I have left." How is that as a lesson for us who pray for a full year of life and more years yet to come? "I'm going to keep having fun every day I have left."

Another great chapter is about never giving up. He knew the reality and prepared for it even to the extent of moving from Pittsburgh to Virginia to be close to Jai's family and he never gave up hope. Maybe a miracle . . . until the very end.

Sadly and yet proudly, we have had our own Randy Pausch in our synagogue this past year. Last December, Joan Weiss was told that after three good years, her cancer had come back with a vengeance and it was a matter of time. Joan was also a professor of business at Bucks County Community College. She had touched the lives of hundreds and thousands of young people not only in class but as an advisor to young people in an organization--Students In Free Enterprise. Joan's students competed in national and international competitions against mostly 4-year colleges and won more than once. Joan was also that uniquely special teacher that we never forget. Joan was given the poor prognosis in December, and she and Fred went to Disney World with their children and little grandson Darrien. They went to have fun and they did. Then she came back and went back to work because that's what Joan did and that's what gave her meaning. Then Joan and Fred went to Bermuda and Atlanta. She had never seen the Boston Pops but wanted to, so they did and went on a three week cruise to Italy, Spain and France in July and then she went back to work for the fall semester. Joan's approach was, The end is going to come but not today. Today was to live and be like Randy Pausch. Joan always had a sense of hope. Hope doesn't always come true but hope can sustain us today. Joan told me some months ago that she wanted to go back to Israel but just days before this new year began, Joan journeyed to the heavenly Jerusalem.

Joan had a great passion in life. Her passion was not grounded in money. She showed she could be a real success in the business world but she chose instead to teach young people how to find success in the world of business and her passion was grounded in people. One of Joan's dearest friends told me that she thought she was Joan's best friend until she saw how many best friends Joan had.

Randy Pausch never made it to the NFL, but he learned from coach Graham how to do a head fake and it served him well. At the very end of his one hour

and sixteen minute lecture, Dr. Randy Pausch tells his audience that he's got a head fake. He says by the way all of this is not for you, it is for my children Dillon and Logan and Chloe.

And so I also end with a head fake. I really don't want you to write your lecture. Don't write your last lecture or any lecture. Live it instead. Hear the Shofar sounded tonight, go out from here and begin to live it as long as we are given this great gift of life. But know that how you live is itself a lecture that others are following closely.

Live it and have fun and so may you be sealed in the book of Life.
Amen.

Shabbat Shalom.

* Reprinted with permission of Rabbi Elliott N. Perlstein, Ohev Shalom, Richboro, PA . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.ohev.org>

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12. Advance planning department

A. The Women's Center at Bucks County Community College celebrates its 6th anniversary with an event to mark Breast Cancer Awareness Month. On Thursday, October 16, the center marks Breast Cancer Awareness Day with a special forum from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Speakers, including Drs. Beth DuPree, Stacy Krisher and Catherine Carruthers, will discuss breast cancer screening and diagnosis, risk assessment and prevention, and how women can heal. Nutritionist Mary Chalich will discuss diet and the connection to breast cancer.

The event takes place in rooms 202-203 of the Allied Health Building, located near the Hicks Art Center on the campus at 275 Swamp Road, Newtown. Admission is free but registration is required and space is limited. To register, contact Natalie Kaye at 215.968.8015.

B. More than 3 million people help 20 million others on this annual day of volunteering, held in partnership with HandsOn Network. Join in Saturday, October 25. Find out more at:

<http://www.makeadifferenceday.com>

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PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I got through our North Carolina closing on Tuesday in fine style . . . so look for us to become--probably on or around December 15--"the Greenfields of Biltmore Lake" . . . that is the official name of both the development and town where we'll be living . . . it is about 10 minutes from downtown Asheville in the western part of the state, not too far from Tennessee . . . there are beautiful mountains everywhere . . . don't forget that "y'all" are invited to come and see us.

SPECIAL KUDOS to Michael Phelan, a loan officer with Beverly-Hills Mortgage Service, for helping make things possible . . . he helped us get through the mortgage process in about a week's time . . . yet what we admired most about him was his creativity in coming up with various financing options for us to consider--one more favorable than the next.

He truly knows how to engage his customers . . . in fact, I couldn't believe it that when we first started talking, he mentioned a book that he was reading: WE: THE IDEAL CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP by Steve Yarrow . . . shortly thereafter, I found it in my mailbox--sent with Michael's compliments.

Should you be fortunate to need Michael's services (say if you decide to join us in the Asheville area), he can be reached at 828.654.6402.

B. We recently found a new Chinese restaurant in the Skillman, NJ area that may well become one of our favorites: Mee Mah on Route 206; 609.924.3100 . . . it is located in the same location that used to host Mrs. Chow's.

My white meat chicken with vegetables was prepared just right, and Cynthia liked her Szechuan-style shredded pork . . . the decor inside is very attractive, and the service is both professional and friendly.

We also came across a place that may become a slightly healthier alternative to our former ice cream obsession; i.e., Fruity Yogurt on Route 206 in Hillsborough; 908.874.4988.

You get to choose from a variety of tangy yogurt flavors, including blueberry, mango (my choice) and green tea . . . there's little or no fat and cholesterol, so it can make for guilt-free dessert provided you don't go crazy on the toppings . . . these include fresh fruit, as well as breakfast cereal, candy and sprinkles.

They also serve both vanilla and chocolate soft serve ice cream.

C. CONGRATULATIONS to Cynthia's cousins, Jeff and Joyce, and most importantly to their daughter Diana . . . the family recently celebrated Diana's graduate school graduation at a lovely party at their home that we were fortunate to attend . . . Joyce made just about everything and as always, she outdid herself . . . her sister came through by making most of the desserts . . . her carrot cake cookies were especially delicious.

D. CONDOLENCES to the family of Lyn Allison, who passed away on Monday, September 29, in Doylestown, PA.

I had the pleasure of both knowing and working with her during her 30 years as a reference librarian at Bucks County Community College . . . she was the consummate professional.

Relatives and friends are invited to attend her memorial service at 3:30 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 19, at Doylestown Presbyterian Church.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the AAUW Education Foundation (Designation Code 1670) at AAUW Development Office, P.O. Box 630832, Baltimore, MD 21263-0832.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Stuart Duncan--theater critic for TIMEOFF, a weekly feature of THE PRINCETON PACKET.

I've been reading Stu's reviews for many years . . . they often help me decide what show I'll see any particular weekend.

He captures the essence of every show he writes about and while doing so, always provides some additional background information that inevitably teaches me something that I didn't know.

I get a particular kick out of seeing him when we bump into each other at a local theater . . . he is friendly not only to me, but to just about everybody else . . . he answers questions, tells stories and on occasion, even directs traffic in the bathrooms (gallantly guarding the door of the men's room when women use it).

It may surprise you, but not being able to read Stu's reviews will be one of the things I'll miss most when no longer in the area . . . I guess I'll just have to check them out via this website:

http://www.packetonline.com/time_off/front/

2. FYI

Do you ever bet a spouse or significant other about something insignificant; e.g., about who would win a particular game?

One friend used to bet me a nickel that I did not know the actual Jewish New Year . . . he always won . . . (by the way, it is now 5769).

Cynthia and I don't typically go for such high stakes . . . what we instead do is bet each with the loser having to give the winner a kiss . . . that way, we both win.

We often do this and even have some fun while in the waiting line at a supermarket . . . our friendly wager is to see who can come closest to the price of our order without going over the total.

FYI, part 2

Unfortunately, I might not be able to catch BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS before it closes its run this weekend at Mercer County College's Kelsey Theater . . . I've heard it is excellent . . . in particular, you might want to catch it because one of my favorite local actors (James Houston) has a starring role.

* Here's what Natalie in Pennsylvania had to say about his work:

He was very good. I'd forgotten he was in it.

* Kitty in New Jersey commented:

Good job. It [the show] is really well done. The boy is great.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.mccc.edu/kelseytheatre/>

MANY THANKS to all the readers who wrote me when they heard about the death of my good friend Joan Weiss.

* Mary in Pennsylvania wrote this (that she also posted on Joan's office door at Bucks County Community College):

On September 26, 2008 Joan Weiss passed away. She fought a valiant fight with cancer, but lost the battle on Friday. If you had Mrs. Weiss as an instructor, you received a wonderful education in Marketing/Management and how to be a professional individual. She gave herself to the world of education in and out of the classroom. If you were a colleague, you knew her as someone who would bring new ideas to the College, someone who pulled her weight, someone who made a difference at BC3 and the community.

If you knew her as a friend, you were the most fortunate of all.

* Chris in Pennsylvania:

I really love the picture of Joan. I attended her funeral. I am very sad over her passing, but I have had 10 great years of knowing her and being her [massage] therapist. No one gave me more good advice than Joan. She was always thinking of ways to help others.

It was my pleasure to have given her holistic treatments for so many years. She truly was a unique light in Bucks County . . . and shall never be forgotten.

* Diane in Pennsylvania with an update on Bill [Lewis], her husband:

Hello everyone.

Well, Bill has finally come out of his Shell.....Clam Shell that is:)

Yes, the doctor told us today (10/7) that his back has healed and the brace (shell) can come off. His neck has not healed completely yet, and it could take another 6 weeks to heal. Bill still has to wear a neck collar, but the good news is that the brace is off and he can stay at Magee to finish his therapy. He should be home possibly 10/31 or 11/01 and will be starting out patient therapy when he comes home.

Bill goes back to Jefferson this Thursday to get the results of the cat scan that was done on him last week for the tear in his aorta. We are confident that this tear is healing.

Bill has graduated from puree foods to ground foods to eating pizza and turkey clubs. Yes, he is ready for that WAWA hoagie now!

We want to thank everyone for their prayers as this is what we prayed for. That Bill would get the brace off and continue his therapy so he would not have to come home and go back again.

I will continue to update everyone on Bill's progress.

God bless you all.

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

To join me at the Pay it Forward Dinner and Auction to help Bill out . . . the event takes place on November 13, 2008 from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. at Twining Hall in Trevoese, PA.

Tickets are \$30 per person in advance or \$35 at the door

Requests for tickets can be phoned in to Deb Myatt at 215.470.7711.

For more information, please click: <http://helpbillewis.com/>

By going to the website, you can still join the event as a sponsor and/or contributor for an auction item . . . your involvement in any fashion would be very much appreciated!

Lastly, I'm very much appreciate of the many readers who took the time to offer suggestions on how best to move our cats with us to Asheville . . . we're still searching for the "best" way, so please keep sending emails on that topic.

* This one from Rebecca in Michigan contained a lot of useful information:

I have flown with my cats before. Once when I lived in Colorado and flew back to Michigan. Didn't drug them, they just meowed a lot, but of course this was on a Private jet (in a cat carrier), and they were in the cabin with me. Siamese, Chawrie was so determined to sit on my lap and not be in the cardboard box carrier (not a good carrier to begin with and highly recommend that you don't put yours in unless you want to be clawed up) broke through the box and ended up sitting on my lap all the way there. My black blouse was white by the time I got off the plane!

In flying cats, shipping them to somewhere, they go in the cargo department of the plane (the belly part). Temperatures are not very good at that time of the year; it will be cold inside too. Wouldn't recommend it. Plus some cats just don't do well. And some animals don't always end up in the right location! . . .

Don't feed them while traveling. Just like people, they can get car sick too!

Whatever you do, make sure your cat(s) are up to date on all shots, rabies, leukemia vaccine and have it checked for FIP (feline infectious peritonitis). Yes, I know you may think your cats don't have that, but if it checks out that one of them do, it may not be a good idea to take your cat(s) at that time. Change of location, change of home, change of familiar surroundings throws a cat into wet FIP and your cat dies. FIP is checked through a blood titre test. Better to be safe than sorry. And when you are taking your cat from one state to another, you are supposed to have their shots up to date. That means you need to visit your vet before you move out of one state and drive to another. If you got pulled over for any reason, you could be ordered to forfeit the cat unless you show that the cat(s) are up to date on its shots. . . .

Once you get to your destination. take your cats and put them in one room and shut the door, especially if you're moving furniture, luggage in, etc. Once you have everything in and the doors are shut, open the door of the cage and let your cats come out on its own, without coaxing or forcing. If you don't see your cats for awhile, don't be alarmed. It is just trying to accumulate itself with its new digs. Make sure you get the kitty litter pan set up and food and have plenty of fresh water!

THINKING OUT LOUD HERE:

Fly our cats? Wow!

It could work, particularly if done in a private plane or jet . . . not as far-fetched idea as it might sound . . . the problem now: finding such a means of transport that will not bankrupt us . . . anybody have contact(s) in this industry for us to use?

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3. Nice

A teenager brings her new boyfriend home to meet her parents. They're appalled by his haircut, his tattoos, his piercings.

Later, the girl's mom says, "Dear, he doesn't seem to be a very nice boy."

"Oh, please Mom!" says the daughter. "If he wasn't nice, would he be doing 500 hours of community service?"

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4. Reviews

A. Imagine watching a movie about the inventor of the intermittent windshield wiper . . . if you can, give FLASH OF GENIUS a shot . . . it is the true-life story of Robert Kearns, a man whose 1960s invention became the standard for every car . . . yet Ford tried to steal it from him . . . production values aren't the best (it appears to have been shot on a very low budget), but the David vs. Goliath story is an inspiring one . . . Greg Kinnear is excellent, as he almost always is, in the leading role . . . I also liked Alan Alda's work as one of his lawyers . . . rated PG-13.

B. YOU DON'T MESS WITH THE ZOHAN is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #610 follows:

If you're in the mood for some laughs, catch YOU DON'T MESS WITH THE ZOHAN . . . it's a very silly comedy about an Israeli commando who fakes his own death in order to pursue his dream of becoming a hairstylist in New York . . . toward the end, it bogs down a bit when the mood switches and the film becomes a heavy-handed plea for Mideast peace . . . yet that said, star Adam Sandler is as funny as he's ever been and John Turturro also shines as the guy out to kill him . . . rated PG-13.

C. If you're a fan of acupuncture, homeopathy, chiropractic therapy, or holistic medicine, you probably won't want to read TRICK OR TREATMENT by Simon Singh and Dr. Edzard Ernst . . . its premise, as stated in the subtitle, is to present THE UNBELEEVABLE FACTS ABOUT ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE.

In doing so, they state in the very first two paragraphs what readers can expect to find:

* The contents of this book are guided entirely by a single pithy sentence, written over 2,000 years ago by Hippocrates of Cos. Recognized as the father of medicine, he stated:

"There are, in fact, two things, science and opinion; the former begets knowledge, the latter ignorance."

There's much to like about this book . . . for one, there were interesting tidbits about famous people, including the following about Florence Nightingale:

* Nightingale's passion for statistics enabled her to persuade the government of the importance of a whole series of health reforms. For example, many people had argued that training nurses was a waste of time, because patients cared for by trained nurses actually had a higher mortality rate than those treated by untrained staff. Nightingale, however, pointed out that this was only because more serious cases were being sent to those wards with trained nurses. If the intention is to compare the results from two groups, then it is essential . . . to assign patients randomly to the two groups. Sure enough, when Nightingale set up trials

in which patients were randomly assigned to trained and untrained nurses, it became clear that their counterparts in wards with untrained nurses. Furthermore, Nightingale used statistics to show that home births were safer than hospital births, presumably because British homes were cleaner than Victorian hospitals. Her interests also ranged overseas, because she also used mathematics to study the influence of sanitation on healthcare in rural India.

I also liked how the authors clearly explained concepts and while doing so, incorporated some humor into what otherwise could have been very dry material . . . for example, as indicated in this passage:

* Scientists even began to poke fun at homeopaths. For example, because homeopathic liquid remedies are so diluted that they often contain only water, scientists would sarcastically endorse their use for the treatment of one particular medical condition, namely dehydration. Or they would jokingly offer to make each other a drink of homeopathic coffee, which was presumably incredibly diluted and yet tasted incredibly strong, because homeopaths believe that lower amounts of active ingredient are associated with greater potency. Similar logic also implied that a patient who forgot to take a homeopathic remedy might die of an overdose.

At the very end of the book, there's an excellent "Rapid Guide to Alternative Therapies" . . . these cover some 36 others, including Colonic Irrigation, Feldenkrais Method, Magnet Therapy, Osteopathy, and Reiki.

Be forewarned that you might not like what you read in TRICK OR TREATMENT, particularly if you believe in any and/or all of the above . . . however, it will get you thinking--and that's always a good thing.

D. Heard and enjoyed THE 12 LIFE SECRETS, written and read by Robert Stuber . . . this is a program that promises much; i.e., to quote the subtitle: [provide you with] YOUR ULTIMATE ANSWERS TO GETTING WHAT YOU WANT.

I'm not sure that you will get quite all that from listening, but you will get a lot of useful tips that you can immediately begin to apply to your life that should make things easier for you . . . the key lies in this one secret that will change your life:

* Your thoughts control your life. And you control your thoughts.

Although this may sound basic to many, the reality is that we often forget this concept . . . so even if you've heard it before, you'll appreciate how Stuber gets you to not only revisit it . . . but he also gets you to reflect on it through the use of many excellent examples.

Among the other valuable tidbits I got from this program were the following:

* Our life and destiny will be shaped by what we think about.

* Adopt the traits of the person or persons you most admire.

* Your philosophy is the foundation of your life. It is the master operating system of your life.

- * Each of is responsible for his or her own happiness.
- * Nobody cares more about your money than you do.
- * Keep a journal. It will become the textbook of your life.
- * Doing what you love to do is the surest guarantee for success in life.
- * To lead more effectively, you must be the person others want to follow.

In addition, I liked how Stuberger incorporated the quotes of others--including Warren Buffett:

- * The two rules of investing: 1. Never lose money in investing; and 2. Never forget #1.

This fine program is available for purchase or rental . . . if you want to get it, please click: <http://www.achievementlibrary.com/>

Above is the tape rental club I belong to; i.e., the Achievement Tape Library . . . this a great way to hear CDs and/or audio cassette tapes, view videos, etc.--all for a fraction of what it would cost to buy them . . . call the head of the firm (Paul Arroyo) directly at 1.800.735.3660 and mention my name . . . that way, you'll be sure to pay even higher prices . . . NOT.

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5. TV alert

A. THE MENTALIST airs Tuesdays at 9 p.m. on CBS . . . it stars Simon Baker as a psychic . . . according to THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, hero [Baker] is intriguing enough and confident enough . . . to bring viewers under his spell."

B. SATURDAY NIGHT LIFE WEEKEND UPDATE features Seth Meyers and Amy Poehler as co-anchors . . . they promise to keep the door open for Palin and other candidates to appear because, notes Meyers, "Our door is always open to have people make fun of themselves." . . . Thursdays at 9:30 p.m. on NBC.

C. LIFE ON MARS has a contemporary NYPD get in an accident, only to wake up in the bell-bottomed world of 1963 . . . the show has gotten an lot of "buzz," meaning that a lot of folks are expecting big things from it . . . Thursday at 10:01 p.m. on ABC.

D. DOGS 101, CATS 101 premieres on Saturday at 8 p.m. on ANIMAL PLANET . . . THIS 10-part series (8 devoted to dogs, 2 to cats) tells you everything you wanted to know about the two most popular household pets.

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6. What a guy

Bill meets Doug shopping at the mall and sees he has a small gift-wrapped box.

"It's my wife's birthday tomorrow." Doug said.
"Last week I asked her what she wanted for her birthday."

"And?" Bill asked.

"Well, she said 'Oh, I don't know just give me something with diamonds in it.' "

"So what did you get her?" asked Bill.

"I bought her a deck of cards!"

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7. Websites

A. Not all carbs are the same . . . for more information, please click:
<http://www.glycemicindex.com/>

You'll learn about the glycemic index or GI, which describes this difference by ranking carbohydrates according to their effect on our blood glucose levels . . . what you need to do is choose low GI carbs--the ones that produce only small fluctuations in our blood glucose and insulin levels--to reduce your risk of heart disease and diabetes . . . this is also the key to sustainable weight loss.

B. If you missed the SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE coverage of the Palin-Biden debate, please click:

<http://www.popeater.com/television/article/snl-sends-up-vp-debate-with-fey-queen/192515?icid=200100397x1211060392x1200610520>

What makes this so great is that it does a job on both sides!

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blaineworld.net>

If you REALLY want to be impressed, look at the counter in the bottom left corner of the home page . . . I bet you didn't know you had so many fellow readers.

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8. Computer tip

Try being a little more patient when using your computer . . . I find that when I don't wait long enough for a program or website to load; i.e., I start pounding on my keyboard in an attempt to get it to do the next thing (and the thing after that, too) that I want to do . . . too often, this seems to "freeze" my computer and sometimes, I'm even forced to reboot.

I'm almost always better off when I wait just a little bit longer . . . when a particular program or website loads, it is almost as if my computer is telling me that is when it wants to do the next task.

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9. Sound advice

Be sure and cancel your credit cards before you die.

This is so priceless, and so, so easy to see happening, customer service being what it is today.

A lady died this past January, and Citibank billed her for annual service charges on her credit card in February and then in March added late fees and interest on the previous monthly charge. The balance had been \$0.00 when she died; but now the balance had grown to be somewhere around \$60.00. A family member placed a call to Citibank.

Here is the exchange :

Family member: "I am calling to tell you she died back in January."

Citibank : "The account was never closed and the late fees and charges still apply."

Family member: "Maybe, you should turn it over to collections."

Citibank: "Since it is two months past due, it already has been."

Family member : "So, what will they do when they find out she is dead?"

Citibank : "Either report her account to frauds division or report her to the credit bureau, maybe both!"

Family member : "Do you think God will be mad at her?"

Citibank: "Excuse me?"

Family member: "Did you just get what I was telling you--the part about her being dead?"

Citibank: "Sir, you'll have to speak to my supervisor."

Supervisor gets on the phone:

Family member : "I'm calling to tell you, she died back in January with a \$0 balance."

Citibank : "The account was never closed and late fees and charges still apply."

Family member : "You mean you want to collect from her estate?"

Citibank: (stammering) "Are you her lawyer?"

Family member: "No, I'm her great nephew."

Citibank: "Could you fax us a certificate of death?:"

Family Member: "Sure." (Fax number was given.)

After they get the fax :

Citibank : "Our system just isn't setup for death. I don't know what more I can do to help."

Family member : "Well, if you figure it out, great! If not, you could just keep billing her. She won't care."

Citibank: "Well, the late fees and charges still do apply."

Family member : "Would you like her new billing address?:

Citibank: "That might help."

Family member : "Odessa Memorial Cemetery, Highway 129, Plot Number 69."

Citibank : "Sir, that's a cemetery!"

Family member : "And what do you do with dead people on your planet?"

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10. A quote I like

Large, naked, raw carrots are acceptable as food only to those who live in hutches eagerly awaiting Easter.--Fran Lebowitz, American author

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11. Thought for the day

New direction for any war

Methinks we should just consider the following idea:
Send Service Vets over 60!

I am over 60 and the Armed Forces thinks I'm too old to track down terrorists. You can't be older than 42 to join the military. They've got the whole thing a*s-backwards. Instead of sending 18-year olds off to fight, they ought to take us old guys. You shouldn't be able to join a military unit until you're at least 35.

For starters:

Researchers say 18-year-olds think about sex every 10 seconds. Old guys only think about sex a couple of times a day, leaving us more than 28,000 additional seconds per day to concentrate on the enemy.

Young guys haven't lived long enough to be cranky, and a cranky soldier is a dangerous soldier. My back hurts! I can't sleep, and I'm tired and hungry. We are impatient and maybe letting us kill some a*s that desperately deserves it will make us feel better and shut us up for a while.

An 18-year-old doesn't even like to get up before 10 a.m. Old guys always get up early to pee, so what the h*ll. Besides, like

I said, I'm tired and can't sleep and since I'm already up, I may as well be up killing some fanatical son-of-a-bi*ch.

If captured, we couldn't spill the beans because we'd forget where we put them. In fact, name, rank, and serial number would be a real brainteaser.

Boot camp would be easier for old guys. We're used to getting screamed and yelled at, and we're used to soft food. We've also developed an appreciation for guns. We've been using them for years as an excuse to get out of the house, away from the screaming and yelling.

They could lighten up on the obstacle course, however. I've been in combat and didn't see a single 20-foot wall with rope hanging over the side, nor did I ever do any push ups after completing basic training. I can hear the Drill Sgt. In the "New Army" now, "Get down and give me . . . er . . . One."

Actually, the running part is kind of a waste of energy, too. I've never seen anyone outrun a bullet.

An 18-year-old has the whole world ahead of him. He's still learning to shave, to start up a conversation with a pretty girl. He still hasn't figured out that a baseball cap has a brim to shade his eyes, not the back of his head.

These are all great reasons to keep our kids at home to learn a little more about life before sending them off into harm's way.

Let us old guys track down those dirty rotten cowards terrorists. The last thing an enemy would want to see right now is a couple of million pissed off old farts with attitudes and automatic weapons who know that their best years are already behind them.

If nothing else, put us on border patrol . . . we will have it secured the first night!

Share this with your senior friends. It's purposely in big type so you can read it.

Author unknown
(if you know who wrote this and/or the source, please let me know)

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12. Advance planning department

A. Yours truly is presenting on "Positioning: How to Differentiate Yourself from the Competition" to a graduate nursing class at LaSalle University's Bucks County campus in Newtown, PA on Wednesday, October 15, from 6-7:15 p.m.

If you'd like to attend as my guest, please send me an email to that effect . . . put LASALLE PRESENTATION in subject line.

B. Robin in Pennsylvania:

Jazz Celebration Big Band playing at Poco's in Doylestown on Thursday,

October 23rd at 8:00 p.m. Come out and hear great jazz.

For more information, call 215.348.3424.

C. REDUCED RATE ticket offers from PLAYBILL for Broadway shows:

* RADIO CITY CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR

Visit radiocitychristmas.com and use code PB54M.

By phone: 212.307.1000 and mention above code.

* LEGALLY BLONDE

Visit ticketmaster.com and use code OCT.

By phone: 212.307.1000 and mention above code.

* BALLERINA WHO LOVES B-BOY

Visit ticketmaster.com and use code PLAYBB.

By Phone: Call 212.560.8912 and mention code PLAYBB.

* FORBIDDEN BROADWAY

Visit broadwayoffers.com and use code FB14PBL for regular seating or FBPBPRE for premium seating.

By phone: Call Telecharge.com at 212.947.8844 and mention the above codes.

* ALIENS WITH EXTRAORDINARY SKILLS

Visit broadwayoffers.com and use code AL3PBL3.

By phone: 212.947.8844 and mention code AL3PBL3.

* HOW DO YOU CAPTURE NOW?

Visit broadwayoffers.com and enter code CNPLAY66.

By phone: com 212.947.8844 and mention above code.

D. Business Technology Forum on Friday, November 21

Presented by Earl Sigmund, CPA (New Business Learning Center)

Topic: "10 Web Sites Guaranteed to Grow your Business at No Cost to You" will be held from 8-9 a.m. at the Chamber. There will be a half hour question and answer session following the presentation.

Cost: \$15 members, \$30 non-members. A continental breakfast will be provided.

At this forum, you just might find the elves you need to help you get your business to the next level.

To register: Please contact Susan at sharkins@lbccc.org and she will be happy to provide you with additional information. Or you can call 215.943.7400.

PS. If you're Jewish, may you fast well on Yom Kippur as you begin the New Year.

To everybody: Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#626

9.29.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I got through the attorney review process for the sale of our Belle Mead, NJ home . . . all went well, thanks in large part to the help our real estate attorney (John Dumont in Princeton; 609.688.8400, ext. 230) . . . he knows his stuff . . . the new buyers then had the house inspected, so we're now awaiting to hear from them about those results . . . and hoping that they can get through the process of obtaining a mortgage without tooooo much difficulty . . . keep your fingers crossed for us.

B. Several folks have asked us about our plans for moving . . . if all goes well, we will have a closing sometime in October in New Jersey . . . we will then rent our home back from the new buyers until December 15 . . . we will probably move our stuff to North Carolina sometime in early December, then follow with the cats when we move out . . . I'll come up a few times per month from January to May, finishing my sabbatical and other work at Bucks County Community College and continuing as a mediator for the Trenton Municipal Court during the same time period.

MANY THANKS to those who have already responded to my two questions from last week:

* Any suggestions for the ways to make our move by car easier when traveling with our three cats?

* Any ideas for a place for me to stay when I come up? (I'm looking for a room with a queen- or king-sized bed, TV, private bathroom, wireless access, and limited use of a refrigerator. A Bucks County locale would be my first choice, though Mercer County would also work. Naturally, I'd be willing to pay something.)

Please continue to respond to either and/or both of the above.

C. We then headed for Asheville for the weekend and the first few days of this week . . . our closing is tomorrow, September 30; more details on that in BLAINESWORLD #627.

As we usually do when we go there, we're trying to check out places we've never been to . . . so one night we went to Kelsey's Restaurant in Hendersonville (828.693.6688) and ordered fish . . . see, a guy--yours truly--can change his spots . . . Cynthia enjoyed her salmon . . . my Alaskan whitefish was tasty, though I was disappointed that it had a light breading that had not been mentioned on the menu . . . if you go, see if you can sit by the fake waterfall . . . it's a nice view, and you even see the even faker mountains.

Another night, our North Carolina realtor Suzanne Smith (828.254.7355) very graciously took us out for dinner to Province 620 in Asheville:

<http://www.province620.com>

Things started off well with great salads for all . . . I especially liked the raspberry balsamic dressing . . . Cynthia enjoyed her ribeye steak . . . the portion was very generous . . . my chicken was delicious, particularly the topping of cranberry, pecan and Mandarin oranges.

We were joined by Don, her friend, who impressed us with his great looking shirt!

On our final night, we went to Stone Ridge Tavern in Asheville (826.665.3333) . . . our herb tilapia dishes were both excellent, and we were appreciated the fine service we received from Jeremy.

D. The folks in Asheville continue to impress us, too . . . specifically, we enjoyed meeting and working with:

* Warren Fluharty, our decorator (832.271.1101) . . . he has already been most helpful to Cynthia, and we look forward to having him assist shaping up our home;

* Jimmy Fox, manager of David's Bedrooms in Asheville (828.252.2337)--the place where we bought our new Tempur-Pedic bed . . . Monica Simpson, a sales associate, was also most friendly . . . we truly appreciated how she let us try out the mattress, even turning down the lights in the store for us so we could take a nap; and

* Phil Murphy, whose Household Management company is designed to give us "less stress, more time" . . . he'll be helping us set up our electronic equipment, among other tasks . . . for more information, please click:

<http://go2guy.biz/>

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Joan Weiss--my longtime colleague and friend at Bucks County Community College who passed away on Friday after a courageous battle with cancer.



There will not be a day that goes by when I won't think of her when I walk into Penn Hall, the building in which we both taught and had our office. Her enthusiasm and dedication were a constant inspiration to me, as well as to her many students.

John McCabe, one of her many favorite students (in reality, I think all her students were her favorites), shared these thoughts about Joan with me:

I was thinking, "What did Joan teach me?" Then, two seconds later, I stopped and said, "What didn't she teach me?" I have the quality of life I do now because of her. She taught me how to deal with any situation, how to treat people . . . and not only to be a success in life, but how to succeed as a person as well . . . overall, Joan taught me how to just give a damn.

I also liked what Rabbi Elliot Perlstein noted at her funeral, "Today, a light went out in Bucks County."

Joan taught in the Business Studies Department since 1983. She became a Sam Walton Free Enterprise Fellow by beginning a Students in Free Enterprise team at BCCC in 1990, which she led as faculty adviser for 15 years. Under her leadership, BCCC SIFE won international championships in 1997 and 1998; in 1997, she received the Jack Kahl Award as the Sam Walton Free Enterprise Fellow of the Year. In 2000-01, Prof. Weiss received the Lindback Distinguished Teaching Award.

Prior to becoming a teacher, Joan was a buyer for Lit Brothers department store in Philadelphia. She also maintained her real estate license in Pennsylvania and was active with the YWCA of Bucks County, the Lower Bucks County Chamber of Commerce and Hadassah.

Prof. Weiss leaves behind a husband, Dr. Frederick Weiss; a son, Saul,

and his wife Alanna; a grandson, Darrian; and her parents, Fred and Sara Cantor.

Contributions in her memory may be made to the Joan Weiss Legacy Scholarship Fund at the BCCC Foundation, 275 Swamp Road, Newtown, PA 18949 or by calling 215.968.8224.

UPDATE:

Several students have begun a push to have Penn Hall renamed Weiss Hall in Joan's honor . . . what a great idea!

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2. FYI

In working with others, consider this useful technique from Hale Dwoskin's THE SEDONA METHOD (see also Sections 4C, 10 and 11):

Ask, don't tell. We've already discussed what happens when someone tells you that you have to, or should do, something. It immediately brings up resistance. Conversely, your imperatives also trigger resistance in others. So be clever. Avoid bringing up unnecessary resistance in others by asking them to do what you want them to do rather than telling them. If you get into this habit, you'll find that you get a lot more cooperation. By the way, I would also recommend that you communicate in this fashion with yourself, in order to get more cooperation and less resistance from within, as well.

FYI, part 2

* Jason in Pennsylvania:

Places to stay . . . we've had a lot of luck through a service called Couch Surfing:

<http://www.couchsurfing.com/>

which is for short stays in people's homes.

There is also a similar, more established program called the Evergreen Club:

<http://www.evergreenclub.com/>

Thanks again for inviting us to your class; we enjoyed it.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO ATTEND A CLASS:

Your best bet is to check below, Section 12 . . . whenever I have something that I think would be of particular interest to readers, I post it there . . . that's where I also mention upcoming classes and/or seminars.

* Arlene in Pennsylvania:

Loved the story about the soldier who called his parents. Although a sad tale, it really made me think about the many who are coming home feeling like burdens. God bless them all.

* Jim in Pennsylvania:

My good friend, Ken McArthur is standing in a circus tent today asking 2,000 people to spread a message of hope to teenagers who don't think that life is worth living.

I think it's a great message of hope for anyone and would love to see all of my readers think about spreading it today.

Here's Ken's simple message for giving hope (and maybe saving someone's life!):

G: Greet and meet: talk to others, smile, say hello, ask someone how they are doing.

I: Involve yourself and others: find a cause you can support, volunteer, pledge resources. Get the people around you involved, especially if you see someone beginning to withdraw. Invite them to participate in some activity, to "get out" of their comfort zone.

V: Validate others: tell others that they matter--especially family members and friends that you tend to see daily but may take for granted, give genuine complements.

E: Empathize: be a listening ear, take time to be fully present, don't try to solve--just acknowledge someone's feeling/hurt.

You can find out more about Ken's wonderful project with his Impact Action Team at:

<http://peek.snipurl.com/3vauy>

* Ruth in Pennsylvania:

I keep reading your review of YOU CAN'T GET IT 'CAUSE YOU'VE ALREADY GOT IT! over and over again and love the passages you choose and how you introduced them to your audience.

Thanks so much for the review. You really got it. Thanks!

May we forward your quotes and this issue of your ezine to others?

MY RESPONSE:

YES to forwarding copy of both the newsletter and review. Other readers should feel free to do the same about anything they come across . . . and when you do, ALWAYS encourage your friends and relatives to sign-up for a FREE subscription to BLAINESWORLD . . . just have them drop an email to: bginbc@aol.com and put SUBSCRIPTION in subject line.

* Arta in Pennsylvania:

Have you seen the flyers for discounts at Borders for Teacher Discount on October 3 and 4?

When I was there, they told me that Discounts were only for K-12 teachers, and I could not get a discount.

Well, I was there last week and spent over \$200.00. They said I did not qualify for any kind of discount because I am not K-12. I went to the website and saw something about Business and Educator Discount.

I got an email, indicating that Professors do not qualify for either discount. I guess we are not Educators.

MY TWO CENTS:

This makes no sense to me . . . I believe Barnes & Noble has a similar policy . . . methinks that it is time to write them again . . . I've complained about this in the past to no avail, but maybe seeing Arta's email will get them to change their mind.

* Carol in Pennsylvania, the proud grandmother, with a CORRECTION (sorry 'bout that):

Mike & Nancy had their third son, Sean--not second. Ryan is son #1, Christopher is son #2 and Sean is now son #3.

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3. What a guy

Bill meets Doug shopping at the mall and sees he has a small gift-wrapped box.

"It's my wife's birthday tomorrow." Doug said.
"Last week I asked her what she wanted for her birthday."

"And?" Bill inquired.

"Well, she said 'Oh, I don't know. Just give me something with diamonds in it.' "

"So what did you get her?" asked Bill.

"I bought her a deck of cards!"

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4. Reviews

A. TROPIC THUNDER is still out in a few theaters . . . catch it, if you can; if not, put it on your list of films to rent when it comes out on DVD . . . it is a satire about Hollywood movie-making that had me laughing throughout . . . Ben Stiller, who also directed, stars as an action hero who has begun making many bad career choices . . . to redeem himself, he takes on a role in a Vietnam war flick that becomes complicated by the fact that real life druglords capture him . . . he is joined by Jack Black as an insecure comedy star going through heroin withdrawal and a very funny Robert Downey Jr.--so lost in his art that he undergoes an operation to become black . . . rated R.

B. IRON MAN is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #605 follows:

You don't have to be a comic book fan to love IRON MAN, a terrific action film about a billionaire industrialist who changes the direction of his company after getting kidnapped . . . it has it all . . . there's great acting from Robert Downey Jr. as Tony Stark/Iron Man, Jeff Bridges (not playing his usual good guy) as the villain, Gwyneth Paltrow, and Terrence Howard . . . the special effects won't overwhelm you . . . there's some humor throughout . . . and even a touch of romance . . . also, the ending is as good as it gets . . . rated PG-13.

C. Imagine if you could let go of any unwanted feelings . . . even better, think about how great it would be if you had a simple procedure that could help you achieve this state of mind in a very short period of time.

That's the basis of THE SEDONA METHOD (see also Sections 2, 10 and 11) by Hale Dwoskin . . . the author actually gives you all the information that you would learn in one of his seminars.

For example, to begin letting go, all you need to do is follow these five steps:

* Step 1: Focus on an issue that you would like to feel better about, and then allow yourself to feel whatever you are feeling in this moment.

Step 2: Ask yourself one of the following three questions:

Could I let this feeling go?
Could I allow this feeling to be here?
Could I welcome this feeling?

Step 3: No matter which question you started with, ask yourself this simple question: Would I? In other words: Am I willing to let go?

Step 4: Ask yourself this simpler question: When?

Step 5: Repeat the preceding four steps as often as needed until you feel free of that particular feeling.

This seems so basic, yet the more I practice doing the above, the more it seems to get me "unstuck" from situations that have previously bothered me . . . part of this has to do with the tendency we all too often have to ask, "Why?" . . . Swoskin notes:

* Wanting to understand or figure out why, or from where, problems arise can also be a major obstacle to letting them go. For we have to hold on to our problems in order to figure them out. Interestingly, if there is something that's important for you to understand, letting go of wanting to understand often brings the understanding that you've been seeking with a lot less effort. Ask yourself a question: Would I rather understand my problems or just be free of them? If you would rather be free, I highly recommend letting go of wanting to figure them out.

As for the value of following the advice in THE SEDONA METHOD, I think nothing points it out better than the following passage:

* There are a few important keys to improving relationships that are often overlooked. One is mutuality. If you are doing something internally or externally that is not mutual with your partner, it will only frustrate you both. Here is a simple example taken from my relationship with

my wife. I used to enjoy only seeing "guy flicks," and Amy only wanted to see "chick flicks." It caused a dilemma with our TV watching and movie-going. Instead of trying to impose our will on each other, or assuming that one of us had to sacrifice for the other, which wouldn't have been a mutual solution, we openly discussed the issue, released our feelings about it, and began to identify movies that we both could enjoy. In fact, because we released to gain mutuality, we both are now more open to the other's tastes in movies and rarely disagree about our choices. When we do disagree, we simply go to see the movie our partner chose, if we feel mutual, or we go alone or with another friend. Either way, we're both a lot happier. I even enjoy most chick flicks now as much as I enjoy guy flicks. Amy likewise enjoys some guys flicks.

One other thing I especially liked about the book were the many quotes from folks who have undergone training from Dwoskin or his associates.

Such training--or reading THE SEDONA METHOD--should prove helpful to anybody who has ever had to inappropriately suppress his or her feelings.

D. Heard SOMEWHERE IN HEAVEN: THE REMARKABLE LOVE STORY OF DIANA AND CHRISTOPHER REEVE by Christopher Andersen.

Christopher Reeve, at one time, had it all . . . he was the star of four Superman movies and though his career had gone through some ups and downs, he was still a working actor who had both a loving wife and son . . . then in 1995, an equestrian accident paralyzed him from the neck down--making him "president of a club I never wanted to join."

That is where his tale became even more interesting . . . his courage in fighting his battle inspired the nation until his unexpected death in 2004.

Diana Reeve, his wife, stood by his side until the end . . . she then died, less than two years later, from lung cancer . . . perhaps no greater tribute to this woman was the fact that the foundation named initially by her husband was renamed the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation.

You'll be touched by SOMEWHERE IN TIME . . . I recommend it strongly . . . in addition, Edward Hermann's powerful narration will add to your enjoyment of the book.

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5. TV alert

A. The season finale of AMERICA'S GOT TALENT is on Wednesday at 9 p.m. on NBC . . . I'd like to see Nuttin But Stringz win, in large part because of the group's goal: to inspire as many people as possible with their sound and to let the world know that it's cool to play the violin!

B. VICE PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE airs on Thursday at 9 p.m. on ABC, CBS, CNN, C-SPAN, FOX, FNC, MSNBC, NBC, and PBS . . . I'll be watching to see if Sarah Palin can keep up

with smooth-talking Joe Biden.

C. 4REAL is a new series that salutes community leaders around the world . . . the first show features Cameron Diaz spending time with a Peruvian medicine man intent on keeping tradition alive . . . premieres Sunday at 5 p.m. on THE CW.

D. I'm a fan of Robert Carlyle (THE FULL MONTY, MARILYN HOTCHKISS' BALLROOM DANCING AND CHARM SCHOOL, etc.), so I'm looking forward to his role as a cold-blooded spy on "The Enemy," a five-part series on MASTERPIECE . . . begins Sunday at 9 p.m., but check local listings because PBS times and dates often vary.

NOTE:

If you also like Carlyle, make sure you catch him in the upcoming 24 prequel . . . he plays Jack Bauer's mentor.

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6. One good deed

A guy is at the Pearly Gates, hoping to be admitted. So St. Peter says to the guy, "I can't see that you did anything really good in your life, but you never did anything bad either. I tell you what, if you can tell me one really good deed that you did, you're in."

So the guy says, "Once I was driving down the road and saw a gang of bikers assaulting this poor girl. So I pulled over, got out my car, grabbed a tire iron and walked straight up to the gang's leader--a huge ugly guy with a studded leather jacket, bald head but with hair all over his body and a chain running from his nose to his ear.

"Undaunted, I ripped the chain out of his nose and ear and smashed him over the head with the tire iron. Then I turned around and, wielding my tire iron, yelled to the rest of them, 'You leave this poor, innocent lady alone! You're all a bunch of sick, deranged animals! Go home before I teach you all a lesson in pain!' "

Impressed, St. Peter says, "Really? I can't seem to find this in your file. When did this happen?"

"Oh . . . about two minutes ago."

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7. Websites

A. Ever need to be reminded to do something? If so, please click:

<http://www.hassleme.co.uk>

You can get FREE emails that will remind you about any goals you want to complete; e.g.:

Go to the gym roughly every 4 days.
Write an entry in my diary roughly every 3 days.
Call your mother roughly every 7 days.
Practice the piano roughly every 3 days.
Go for a walk in the park roughly every 2 days.

B. Is the customer always right? You can judge for yourself by clicking:

<http://www.NotAlwaysRight.com>

You'll find a compilation of actual conversations with customers, such as the following from Video Rental in Lansing, MI:

Customer: "I want a free rental on my account for this movie!"

Me: "Was the movie damaged? Did it skip or something?"

Customer: "No, it sucked. I don't want to pay for a bad movie."

Me: "I'm sorry, ma'am. But we don't give free rentals on account of bad movies."

Customer: "But you people should have told me it was bad!"

Me: "Well, I'm sorry. But we don't get to see all the movies we have here."

Customer: "I don't give a f***. This doesn't change the fact I want a free movie!"

Me: "Like I said before, we don't give free rentals based on bad movies . . . [looks at movie] " . . . or bad taste."

Customer: "Huh? What do you mean?"

Me: "You rented NINJA CHEERLEADERS. This would be like me going to a restaurant, ordering a rat on a stick, eating it, and then asking to get the meal free."

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blainesworld.net>

In case you've always wondered how many other folks view it, make sure you check the counter in the lower left corner . . . pretty impressive, isn't it?

D. D Anthony, a motivational author whose book I favorably reviewed in BLAINESWORLD #615:

I've recently overhauled the book website:

<http://www.STSTheBook.com>.

If you get a chance to stop by, it would be great to know your thoughts.

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8. Computer tip

A friend sends me his newsletter by email . . . I have no problem with that . . . however, I do wish he would not send it as an attachment . . . my recommendation: just include the newsletter in the body of the email; e.g., like I do each week with this missive.

Our college continually makes the same mistake . . . it sends out email with attachments and what happens is that many folks don't even bother downloading the attachments.

In general, the attachments take time to download, and they may have viruses in them . . . also, every time you download such an attachment, you just add extra stuff on your hard drive that takes up valuable space.

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9. Where to live after retirement, part 2 of 2 (concluded from last week)

You can Live in the Deep South where:

1. You can rent a movie and buy bait in the same store.
2. "Y'all" is singular and "all y'all" is plural.
3. "He needed killin'" is a valid defense.
4. Everyone has 2 first names: Billy Bob , Jimmy Bob, Mary Sue, Betty Jean, Mary Beth, etc.

You can live in Colorado where:

1. You carry your \$3,000 mountain bike atop your \$500 car.
2. You tell your husband to pick up Granola on his way home, and he stops at the day care center.
3. A pass does not involve a football or dating.
4. The top of your head is bald, but you still have a pony tail.

You can live in the Midwest where:

1. You've never met any celebrities, but the mayor knows your name.
2. Your idea of a traffic jam is ten cars waiting to pass a tractor.
3. You have had to switch from "heat: to "A/C" on the same day.
4. You end sentences with a preposition: "Where's my coat at?"
5. When asked how your trip was to any exotic place, you say, "It was different!"

AND You can live in Florida where:

1. You eat dinner at 4:15 in the afternoon.
2. All purchases include a coupon of some kind--even houses and cars.
3. Everyone can recommend an excellent dermatologist.
4. Road construction never ends anywhere in the state.
- 5 Cars in front of you are often driven by headless people.

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10. A quote I like

There is an acronym--FEAR equals False Evidence Appearing Real--that I often share with my students, because most people's

fearful expectations are totally unfounded. Even when fears appear to have a foundation in reality, these are usually blown way out of proportion to the actual risk, if there even is any. It's clear that anything that can help us let go of fear more easily can make a tremendous difference in our lives.--Hale Dwoskin, author of THE SEDONA METHOD (see also Sections 2, 4C and 11)

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11. Thought for the day

You can tell when I REALLY like a book by the fact that I mention it four separate times in this missive . . . that's certainly the case with Hale Dwoskin's THE SEDONA METHOD (see also Sections 2, 4C and 10), source of the following passage:

If you've ever been in a romantic relationship, you probably experienced what most people call the "honeymoon phase." Unless your relationship is brand-new, the kind of love, caring, and enjoyment that you experienced during that phase is probably only a memory by now. So, what's the difference between what you may be longingly looking back to as your honeymoon and what you are experiencing now? Simple: in the beginning of the relationship, you loved and accepted your partner as your partner was. You may even have loved your partner because he or she was a certain way, even if that way--or those certain qualities--now drives you crazy.

Where a relationship can sour is at a point when your partner says or does something, or behaves in a particular way that you inwardly refuse to accept. You then start resisting that particular behavior or trait, while at the same time expecting the person to exhibit it again. . . .

We change--or resist--about our partner, and then we start comparing everything they do to that internal list. If it matches, we add an inner check mark and resist it even more. Once we start this list, we are also constantly looking for items to add to it. This whole process usually spirals out of control and ends in separation, divorce, or in simply putting up with a relationship that is no longer supportive of both partners.

There is a simple way to break this pattern and extend your honeymoon for the rest of your lives. First of all, burn your list. Unless you're determined to destroy your current relationship, continuing to add to and tweak your list is merely asking for trouble. Get into the habit of looking for what you can love and appreciate about your partner, rather than how they need to change or be fixed, and it will change the whole dynamic of your relationship. This is not a substitute for loving communication about things that your partner does that you would prefer he or she not do. Nor is it an excuse to allow your partner or you to continue indulging in obviously destructive behaviors. It is merely a way to start to tip the balance back to the way it was when you were enjoying your honeymoon.

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12. Advance planning department

A. McCarter Live:

When Lanford Wilson's play "Talley's Folly" opened off-Broadway in 1979, Marshall W. Mason was the director. Thirty-one years later, Mason is guiding the acclaimed play again--this time at Princeton's McCarter Theatre. He comes to the Princeton Public Library at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday to discuss the Pulitzer Prize winning romantic comedy. Free. 6 Witherspoon St., Princeton. 609.924.9529.

On the web:

<http://www.princetonlibrary.org/events/adults/b1c6d892-4b3b-9e47-bd5c-068d88d4efa1.html>

B. Charlene in Pennsylvania:

COME VISIT MY STUDIO DURING THE 2008 PHILADELPHIA
OPEN STUDIOS TOUR

Saturday, October 11 and Sunday, October 12
Noon to 5 p.m.

1627 N. 2nd Street--3rd floor, Philadelphia, PA

215.925.2884

C. Natalie in Pennsylvania:

Women's Center presents Breast Cancer Awareness Day, Thursday,
October 16, 11-3 p.m. Allied Health Building, Rooms 202-203,
Newtown Campus, 275 Swamp Road, Newtown, PA.

Drs. Beth DuPree, Catherine Carruthers and Stacy Krisher
of the DSI Comprehensive Breast Care Center in Bensalem will discuss
breast cancer screening and diagnosis; risk assessment and prevention
and how women heal starting at noon.

Lunch will be provided, so registration is required. To reserve your space,
contact Natalie Kaye: 215.968.8015 or kayen@bucks.edu.

D. With the theme of "GETTING DOWN 2 BUSINESS" Trenton Small
Business Week is celebrating its 15th anniversary from October 20 to 24.

The City of Trenton will play host to a weeklong celebration of activities
for businesses, entrepreneurs, and individuals starting or changing careers.
More than 35,000 business owners and entrepreneurs have benefited
throughout the years from the activities of this special week, held in the
fall of each year.

Special seminars and workshops scheduled for the week include: The 4
Ways to Grow Your Business, What It Takes to Start Your Own Business,
Lean tools for the Office, Green Cleaning, Podcasting--What It Is and the
Advantages, Google Ad Words, How to Do Webinars, Your Guide to
Purchasing a Franchise, and many more!

For a full list of the week's events, sponsorship opportunities and to register,
visit:

<http://www.smallbizweek.com>

or call 609.771.2947.

PS. L' Shanah Tovah to all my Jewish friends and readers . . . this is Hebrew for a "a good and sweet year."

Regardless of your religion, here's a way to make some big bucks . . . bet a nickel with any Jewish person that he or she doesn't know the actual year . . . very few will . . . the answer, by the way, is 5769.

It seems like only yesterday it was 5768!

Also, please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . and make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#625

9.22.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I are sooooo glad to be sharing the following information about my favorite nephew David and his lovely wife Bettina:

JULIAN DARIUS
GREENFIELD



Our Little Prince

Of all things bright and beautiful

BORN SEPTEMBER 16TH 2008
3:17P.M IN NEW YORK CITY
WEIGHING IN AT 7 POUNDS 11 OUNCES 22 INCH

TO PARENTS DAVE AND BETTINA
GRANDPARENTS PATTY, KENNY & LAVELLE,
CHRIS & DANNY
TASSOS

AND PROUDER GREAT GRANDPARENTS
BETTY, MARILYN AND SHELDON

Also on the subject of good news: CONGRATULATIONS to Chic Dowburd . . . he recently attained certification as an elementary school teacher in Pennsylvania, having completed several courses and passed The Praxis Series tests.

B. We're had some other good news when we received another offer for our home--and then quickly accepted it . . . right now, we are currently in Attorney Review . . . assuming that goes through without too much difficulty, we will then get our home inspected and move quickly toward an October closing.

Our plan would then be to rent it back from the new owners until mid-December, at which time Cynthia would retire and we would move to Asheville for good.

That said, we're REQUESTING HELP ON THESE TWO ITEMS:

* Thoughts/suggestions on the best way to move our three cats . . . it is about a 12 hour drive, and the cats don't travel well.

* Suggestions on where I might stay in the spring . . . I'll be coming up 1-2 times per month (sometimes with Cynthia), typically for 3-5 days . . . my preference would be Bucks County and/or Central NJ, and I'm open to a hotel room or possibly even a room in somebody's home--especially if I had wireless access . . . a microwave and refrigerator would be an added "plus" . . . any ideas?

C. Last weekend, we went with friends to see THE ODD COUPLE at the Villagers Theatre in Somerset, NJ . . . although I've seen the movie several times and the TV show was one of my favorites,

I still got a kick out of this production.

All the performers made it feel fresh, and we laughed throughout the evening . . . John Correll as was just great as Oscar . . . Kris Longwell, who we've seen in several other shows, keeps getting better and better . . . his Felix made me appreciate the fact that I'm not a super neat freak and nor is Cynthia.

Special kudos to JC Gibriano, the set designer . . . his work added to our enjoyment of this entertaining play, which runs through September 28.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.villagerstheatre.net>

D. By the time you get this, Joan Weiss--an outstanding professor at Bucks County Community College and one of my closest friends there--will have been moved from St. Mary's Hospital to Chandler Hall. She is resting comfortably. Please keep her in your prayers.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Adrienne Clark--coordinator of development projects for the Bucks County Community College Foundation.

I've had the pleasure of working with Adrienne Clark ever since she came to the College a few years ago and have always been impressed with both her enthusiasm and competence . . . but apparently I'm not the only one who feels that way . . . see below for what Garney Morris, a member of the Board of Trustees at Bucks, had to say about her:

I would like to nominate Ms. Adrienne Clark [for a BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD]. The most recent golf outing that I co-chaired was my firsthand experience working with Adrienne on an almost daily basis. She was eager and always helpful . . . and a real pro.

If I wanted something extra done, she was the "go to" person.

The results of this year's golf outing were better than any of the last 13. It certainly was a team effort and Adrienne was very much a part of this very successful event.

FYI:

Thanks, Garney, for submitting the above . . . and it got me thinking . . . from time to time, I've received similar nominations from other readers; i.e., nominating people they think are deserving of such recognition . . . so if you ever have somebody in mind, drop me an email with that person's name and contact information, along with a brief paragraph on why you think he or she merits a BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD . . . I can't guarantee that I'll be able to use all submissions, but I'll do my best.

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2. FYI

Look for some great deals, particularly if you can wait until Black Friday (the day after Thanksgiving) to buy tech items . . . the good news is that most won't involve mail-in rebates . . . Best Buy, OfficeMax and

Wal-Mart have each given up on them after numerous customer complaints.

Here are the predictions from Dan de Grandpre, CEO and Chief Dealguy at dealnews:

* Laptop and Desktop PCs

UMPC for \$199

15" Intel or AMD Dual Core laptop for \$299

Well-equipped 15.4" Intel Core 2 Duo laptop for \$399

Moderately-equipped PC bundled with a 19" LCD for \$299

22" LCD monitors for \$99

* Blu-ray

Blu-ray player for \$149

Blu-ray player/movie bundle for \$199

Blu-ray movies you actually want for \$9.99

* LCD & Plasma TVs

42" 720p plasma HDTV for \$499

50" 720p plasma HDTV for \$699

42" 720p LCD HDTVs for \$599

46" or 47" brand-name 1080p LCD HDTVs for \$799

52" 1080p HDTVs for \$1,199

* iPods, Macs, and hard drives

Free shipping and no min. at Apple Store online

Newest iPods for 10% off

iMac and MacBook purchases for 5% to 10% off

500GB USB 2.0 external hard drives for \$49

1TB models for \$99

* GPSs, Digital Photo Frames and Digital Cameras

7" digital picture frame for \$25

9" digital picture frame for \$49

Canon PowerShot SD1100 8MP Digital ELPH for \$139

HD camcorder for \$99

Entry-level GPS units should hit \$49

Widescreen GPS with Bluetooth for \$99

Despite most Black Friday sales' focus on tech items, those not looking for electronics won't be out of luck. You can expect to find best-of-year coupons from the likes of DeepDiscount.com, Lacoste, Overstock.com, Timberland, and Petco. Other online retailers are likely to team up with Google Checkout or PayPal to offer special discounts.

SOURCE:

<http://dealnews.com/features/dealnews-2008-Black-Friday-Predictions/250942.html>

FYI, part 2

* Sue in Pennsylvania:

Am not sure I understand the calculation (in last week's issue on BMI, a unisex measure of weight relative to height) . . . am I missing something? I don't get it.

OOPS/CORRECTION:

The reason you and others didn't get it was because I had a slight typo; i.e., I left the division part out of the formula . . . here's the CORRECT version of the formula:

$BMI = (\text{weight in pounds} / \text{height in inches} \times \text{height in inches}) \times 705$

Even better, I found a website that will do the calculation for you:

<http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/>

* Diane in Pennsylvania (with an update on her husband, Bill Lewis):

Good morning everyone. Just a little update to let everyone know how Bill is doing. Please forward.

Bill is doing better and better with each passing day. His voice is getting stronger and he is able to talk more and more . . . and more:) His trachea has been capped since Thursday now and that means he is breathing on his own 100%. We hope and pray that the doctors will be removing the trachea by the end of the week. He is still congested, but so much better then before. His goal is to get the trachea removed this week and the next goal is to get the back brace off. We will know Oct. 7th. And finally the next goal is to get home.

Bill continues to be in good sprits as he jokes with the doctors and nurses. They tell him that they have not had such an upbeat and positive person at Magee for such a long time and that is what is going to help him recover.

Bill says Hi and he thanks you all very much. He can't wait to see each and everyone of you to thank you himself:)

Love!

MY TWO CENTS:

Please see Section 12A (below) for more information about how you can help out. Just go to the indicated website. Thanks!

* Janet in Pennsylvania:

A friend of mine was visiting from Mexico for a few days. I took her to Font Hill and the Moravian Tile Works in Doylestown in Pennsylvania; ever been there? Amazing places.

IN RESPONSE:

Yes, I've been to both and agree with Janet. Make sure you also check out Michener Art Museum and the Mercer Museum--all four facilities being within minutes of each other. And there are plenty of good restaurants in the area, too.

* Diana in Pennsylvania:

I recently became an Arbonne consultant. I never expected that I'd be like one of those Mary Kay or Avon ladies, but after years of fruitlessly combing through natural food stores looking for good quality vegan cosmetics and skin care, I welcomed Arbonne with open arms. Arbonne provides superior skin care and health products that are all natural and 100% vegan. I feel confident when I use Arbonne products that they will do what they say they will do, AND I feel ethical while doing so! If you're interested in sampling any of these wonderful products, I'd be happy to send you a sample or

meet with you to do a free make-over. You might also consider hosting an Arbonne demonstration for yourself and a few of your friends. It's a ton of fun, and hostesses get free product gifts and a significant discount off of their order. Call or email me for more information and to request your free sample!

Diana Loreman
Ph: 267.253.0561

Email: sensiblebeauty@gmail.com

Web: <http://ladydiana.myarbonne.com>

* Eleanor in Florida:

If anyone is interested in having a fund-raiser for any of your clubs, organizations, schools, churches, or another worthy cause, please contact me to discuss what I could offer to help raise funds. I can hold fund-raisers anywhere in the United States by using the web site provided. Someone from your organization/association will need to contact me directly so I can provide information they will need on getting one started and how it will work. This could be a one time event or a longer period of time depending on the needs of your organization.

You can reach me at: Eleanor Martin, 189 Ivy Lakes Dr., Jacksonville, FL 32259; Home: 904.230.9525; Cell: 904.651.5921

Email: EMartin123@aol.com

Also, shop on line with me, your Mary Kay Independent Beauty Consultant:

www.marykay.com/EMartin123

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3. New wine for seniors

California vintners in the Napa Valley area, which primarily produce Pinot Blanc, Pinot Noir and Pinot Grigio wines, have developed a new hybrid grape that acts as an anti-diuretic. It is expected to reduce the number of trips older people have to make to the bathroom during the night.

The new wine will be marketed as: PINO MORE!

(I heard it through the grapevine.)

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4. Reviews

A. Enjoyed GHOST TOWN, a cute romantic comedy about a dentist who suddenly starts seeing dead people after a routine colonoscopy . . . what was unusual was that after an OK beginning, it really picked up in the second half and by the end of the film, I really cared for the character played to perfection by Ricky Gervais . . . Tea Leoni and Greg Kinnear were also watchable in the other leading roles . . . rated

PG-13.

B. MADE OF HONOR is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #608 follows:

MADE OF HONOR got poor reviews from critics, yet I chose to see it and was pleasantly surprised . . . it's a predictable romantic comedy about a wealthy womanizer who doesn't realize that he is in love with his longtime college friend until she falls in love with another guy . . . making matters worse is the fact that she then asks him to her maid of honor . . . though you can imagine the complications that ensure, many of them nevertheless had me laughing . . . Patrick Dempsey and Michelle Monaghan have great chemistry in the leading roles . . . in fact, I'd like to see them together in other films . . . rated PG-13.

As it turns out, the film will perhaps be remembered for featuring Sydney Pollack in his last role . . . he played the oft-married father of Dempsey's character and caught my attention whenever he was on screen . . . he died today (Monday) as this edition was being put to press . . . in a tireless career spanning nearly five decades, Pollack not only was an actor, but he was also a producer . . .and he directed such classics as TOOTSIE and OUT OF AFRICA.

C. The idea of a blind figure skater and visionary writer combining forces to produce an inspirational guide to moving through life seemed to be one that would be difficult to carry off . . . but I was pleasantly surprised to see that Stash Serafin and Ruth Anne Wood succeeded doing just that in their book, YOU CAN'T GET IT 'CAUSE YOU'VE ALREADY GOT IT! (See also Section 10.)

In reading it, I felt that I got to know both authors . . . and what made them tick.

I also learned about skating, writing and life . . . for example, there was this idea contributed by Serafin:

* With a new piece of footwork, there is nothing to see. Then all of a sudden the invisible movements of my skates which were done so slowly become recognizable as I am told I move with such ease, precision and confidence. I'm often asked; "How can you do such little movements and get such profound results?" I have practiced two inch jumps done with tiny movements that soon (observers would tell) got suddenly higher without any effort on my part. I used to think that all skilled jumpers were able to move with this same level of ease.

And I also learned from Wood how writing certain thoughts down can help in many ways, including this one:

* We call this the "Aha!" moment which comes when we realize we already have what we want and can easily ask for more of what we enjoy receiving or having. And Scripting for Success is a great way to clarify what you want by writing it down in a story or a success headline. Reading your script every time you want to feel good, is an excellent way to stay focused on what you want.

Lastly, Wood got me thinking about how learning can take place even when you don't plan on it taking place--such as when she talked about the inspiration she got for naming her characters:

* I would get an idea for a character and then let it simmer for awhile.

Then one day, I would open a book, or surf the Internet, and I would find that the qualities and descriptions I gave to my key characters echoed common cultural archetypes through the ages. In essence, I was getting an honorary degree in anthropology, just by investigating my own multi-layered characters. They were far wiser and more embedded in the culture's psyche than I could have consciously devised.

Do read this informative book by Serafin and Wood if you're in the mood for something a bit different . . . and that will make you think.

D. I first discovered the concept of flow several years ago when I was working at home on a grievance matter that I was handling for my teacher's union . . . all of a sudden, I was interrupted by a call from my massage therapist . . . she was asking why I wasn't in her office for my appointment.

Now massages are one of the things I REALLY look forward to . . . yet I had been so "into" what I was doing that the appointment completely skipped my mind.

Sometime thereafter, I became acquainted with the work of esteemed psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and his work on this subject . . . so when I just got the chance to hear FLOW: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF OPTIMAL EXPERIENCE--written by and featuring the author--I jumped at the opportunity to learn even more.

And learn I did in this fascinating book . . . most of all, I became acquainted with the following major components of the flow experience:

- * There's clarity of goals.
- * Feedback is immediate. You know moment-by-moment how well you're doing.
- * The challenges of the activity are matched with the skills of the person.
- * There's a feeling of focus on what you're doing.
- * Everyday frustrations are removed from your attention.
- * You feel that you can be control of your life.
- * You also lose a sense of self-consciousness.
- * And as I previously observed, a sense of time is transformed.

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5. TV alert

A. DANCING WITH THE STARS returns on Mondays at 8 p.m. on ABC . . . among the contestants this year are the youngest and oldest ever to appear on the show: 18-year-old Cody Linley, best known as Hannah Montana's boyfriend, and 82-year-old Cloris Leachman.

B. YOU MUST REMEMBER THIS: THE WARNER BROS. STORY is an AMERICAN MASTERS special that crams the studio's

85-year hit parade into five jam-packed hours . . . Clint Eastwood narrates . . . Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at 9 p.m. on PBS . . . check local listings because PBS times and dates often vary.

C. The first of three 90-minute debates airs on Friday at 9 p.m. on CBS, NBC, ABC, CNN, C-SPAN, FOX, FNC, MSNBC, and PBS . . . please tune-in to help make an informed decision in the upcoming election, so that you can base your decision on what you actually hear the candidates say--as opposed to much cr*p that's being circulated on the Internet.

D. CHRIS ROCK: KILL THE MESSENGER takes on love, hate, marriage, sex, politics, the election, and probably a whole host of other topics in this, his fifth comedy special, taped in South Africa, London and New York . . . Saturday at 9 p.m. on HBO.

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6. Frozen crabs

A man boarded an airplane in New Orleans with a box of frozen crabs.

A female crew member took the box and promised to put it in the crew's refrigerator, which she did.

The man firmly ranted and raved that he was holding her personally responsible for the crabs staying frozen and proceeded to threaten about what would happen if she let the crabs thaw out.

Shortly before landing in New York, she announced over the intercom to the entire cabin, "Would the gentleman who gave me the crabs in New Orleans, please raise his hand and come forward?" Not one hand went up, nobody moved . . . so she took them home and ate them herself.

Men never learn.

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7. Websites

A. If you REALLY want to check out a college or university, visit:

<http://www.unigo.com>

This is a new website that just started in September . . . comments are posted by those who best know the school; i.e., past or current students.

For example, there was this one from an undergraduate at Louisiana State University: "We can drink any college under the table and do it with some class and hospitality."

At Cornell, a current student had this to say: "I tend not to blame the suicides on the school. As for blaming suicides on the weather: if you're that cold, then buy a jacket, for God's sake. It's much less

messy, and you don't have to write a note first."

B. Ivan in Pennsylvania:

Y'all try this website:

<http://home.comcast.net:80/~singingman7777/SOY.htm>

It's a Ray Stevens song and pretty funny, like most of his are.

Make sure you have your sound on . . . best of all, you can sing along!

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blainesworld.net>

In the unlikely event you're not already a subscriber to BLAINESWORLD, to get on my FREE mailing list just go to the bottom of the homepage and respond to the "Special Offer."

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8. Computer tip

If you're like me, you probably get a lot of email . . . to ensure that you get a response when you want or need it, put something to this effect in your subject line:

Blaine, about upcoming lunch. Best, Harry/QUESTION

That quickly sets it off as not being spam; i.e., by the use of both our names and the item for discussion (our upcoming lunch) . . . then, by telling me that it is a question at the end of the subject line, you are clearly indicating that some sort of response is requested.

By chance, if I don't get back to you in a timely fashion, do what my friend Pat in Pennsylvania does . . . he sends me back the original email and puts something to following effect in subject line:

Blaine, your daughter's wedding. Best, Pat/2ND REQUEST!!

It works, in that it is now 4:19 a.m. when I am writing this . . . and I have already made sure that I responded to Pat first.

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9. Where to live after retirement, part 1 of 2

You can live in Phoenix, Arizona where:

1. You are willing to park 3 blocks away because you found shade.
2. You've experienced condensation on your butt from the hot water in the toilet bowl.
3. You can drive for 4 hours in one direction and never leave town.

4. You have over 100 recipes for Mexican food.
5. You know that "dry heat" is comparable to what hits you in the face when you open your oven door.
- 6 The 4 seasons are: tolerable, hot, really hot, and ARE YOU KIDDING ME??!!

You can live in California where:

1. You make over \$250,000 and still can't afford to buy a house.
2. The fastest part of your commute is going down your driveway.
3. You know how to eat an artichoke.
4. You drive your rented Mercedes to your neighborhood block party.
5. When someone asks you how far something is, you tell them how long it will take to get there rather than how many miles away it is.
6. The 4 seasons are: fire, flood, mud, and drought.

You can live in New York City where:

1. You say "the city" and expect everyone to know you mean Manhattan
2. You can get into a four-hour argument about how to get from Columbus Circle to Battery Park, but can't find Wisconsin on a map.
3. You think Central Park is "nature."
4. You believe that being able to swear at people in their own language makes you multi-lingual.
5. You've worn out a car horn.
6. You think eye contact is an act of aggression.

You can live in Minnesota or Maine where:

1. You only have four spices: salt, pepper, ketchup, and Tabasco.
2. Halloween costumes fit over parkas.
3. You have more than one recipe for moose.
4. Sexy lingerie is anything flannel with less than eight buttons.
5. The four seasons are: winter, still winter, almost winter, and construction.

(to be concluded next week)

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10. A quote I like

Joy and fulfillment for me is about having the flexibility to do what I want, when I want to do it, without anyone pushing me.--Stash Serafin, blind figure skater in YOU CAN'T GET IT 'CAUSE YOU'VE ALEADY GOTTEN IT! (see also Section 4C), a book he co-authored with Ruth Anne Wood

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11. Thought for the day

Someone

A story is told about a soldier who was finally coming home after having fought in Vietnam. He called his parents from San Francisco. "Mom and Dad, I'm coming home, but I've got a favor to ask. I have a friend I'd like to bring with me."

"Sure," they replied, "we'd love to meet him."

"There's something you should know," the son continued, "he was hurt pretty badly in the fighting. He stepped on a land mine and lost an arm and a leg. He has nowhere else to go, and I want him to come live with us."

"I'm sorry to hear that, son. Maybe we can help him find somewhere to live."

"No, Mom and Dad, I want him to live with us."

"Son," said the father, "you don't know what you're asking. Someone with such a handicap would be a terrible burden on us. We have our own lives to live, and we can't let something like this interfere with our lives. I think you should just come home and forget about this guy. He'll find a way to live on his own." At that point, the son hung up the phone. The parents heard nothing more from him.

A few days later, however, they received a call from the San Francisco police. Their son had died after falling from a building, they were told. The police believed it was suicide. The grief-stricken parents flew to San Francisco and were taken to the city morgue to identify the body of their son. They recognized him, but to their horror they also discovered something they didn't know . . . their son had only one arm and one leg.

The parents in this story are like many of us. We find it easy to love those who are good-looking or fun to have around, but we don't like people who inconvenience us or make us feel uncomfortable. We would rather stay away from people who aren't as healthy, beautiful or smart as we are.

Thankfully, there's Someone who won't treat us that way. Someone who loves us with an unconditional love that welcomes us into the forever family, regardless of how messed up we are. Tonight, before you tuck yourself in for the night, say a little prayer that God will give you the strength you need to accept people as they are, and to help us all be more understanding of those who are different from us!

Author unknown
(if you know who wrote this and/or the source, please let me know)

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12. Advance planning department

A. Steven in Pennsylvania:

Justin Solonyka, the musician I've been telling you about, is performing on Friday night, September 26, from 7-9 p.m. at the Bucks County Coffee Company, 22 N. Main Street, Doylestown, PA; 215.345.0795.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.tinylightsmusic.com/>

B. ABILITIES MATTER: ENTREPRENEURS WITH DISABILITIES

Networking Event, Resources, Entrepreneur Training and Counsel,
Panel Discussions

Thursday, October 2

The College of New Jersey (Paul Loser Hall)
2000 Pennington Ave., Ewing, NJ
9:45 a.m.-1 p.m.

Co-Sponsored by Small Business Development Center at The College of New Jersey, Entrepreneur Achievement Center, Mercer County Office for the Disabled, Progressive Center for Independent Living, Allies Inc., Henry K Kessler Foundation, and American Disabilities Corporation in partnership with the Elizabeth Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities

Featuring:

Cynthia DeSouza, Ms Wheelchair 2008
Kathy and Christine Sherwood, ASL Interpreter Referral Service
Michael Melillo, SocialChord LLC
Sherlock Washington, SW Unlimited
Dr Stephen Braque, The Braque Group

\$15 includes refreshments

WHO SHOULD ATTEND? People with Disabilities interested in starting a business, businesses interested in entrepreneurs with disabilities, and service providers for both the disabled community and businesses.

For more information: Call 609.771.2947 or e-mail: sbdc@tcnj.edu

C:



PS. The fall season officially begins on September 22, so make sure to enjoy spend at least some time reflecting on the beauty of all the leaves that won't be around too much longer . . . also, please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . and make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#624

9.15.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I had a fun time at LEADING LADIES, a new comedy by Ken Ludwig, at the Off-Broadstreet Theatre in Hopewell, NJ . . . it's the story of two actors reduced to playing SCENES FROM SHAKESPEARE on the Moose Lodge circuit in the Amish country of Pennsylvania . . . things actually become worse when they concoct a scheme to swindle an old lady out of her money, in that they have to dress up as women to pull this off.

If this sounds like SOME LIKE IT HOT, that was my thinking too . . . yet we still found much of this to be quite funny--in large part because of the fine acting by the entire cast (and particularly by Joe Sabatino, so good recently in his OBT debut in TWILIGHT OF THE GOLDS) . . . his partner in crime, Patrick Andrae, also stood out.

You can still catch this show until October 11 . . . for more information, please click:

<http://off-broadstreet.com/>

B. Many folks have been asking us what we plan to do upon retirement . . . as I see it, I won't be retiring . . . instead, I see us rewiring or moving into the next phase of our lives.

I won't speak for Cynthia here . . . but I see myself trying many different things--and not just continuing to teach (something I have been doing for some 37 years) in Asheville.

Thinking out loud . . . I've always wanted to become a bon vivant, so that's one distinct possibility . . . beyond that, only God knows . . . and she's not telling me at the present time.

However, don't despair . . . I will continue to publish BLAINESWORLD.

C. My Tuesday night Marketing class is off to a fine start . . . the students seem to be really getting "into" their project; i.e., developing a marketing strategy to enable the Peace Center (Langhonre, PA) to provide more diversity training.

SPECIAL THANKS to Natalie Kaye, who helped me arrange the above . . . and, also, to Debbie Burns--the Peace Center's dynamic executive director for coming to speak to my class . . . for more information about this organization, please click:

<http://www.thepeacecenter.org>

D. CONGRATULATIONS to two longtime friends and readers, Carol in Pennsylvania and her son Michael-also in Pennsylvania.

Carol became a grandmother for the second time when Michael and his wife Nancy became the proud parents of Sean, their second son.

CONGRATULATIONS, also, to Eric Goldner (one of my top former students) for being chosen to receive a Dean's Academic Scholarship.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Bill Cannon--a Sales and Service Representative for Citizens Bank in the Acme in Newtown, PA.

Bill never fails to greet me with both a smile and warm welcome . . . he handles all my transactions with speed and even more importantly, with accuracy.

He constantly looks out for my best interests; e.g., as evidenced by a recent transaction . . . he saw my money was not doing nearly as well as it could . . .so he recommended that I close one account and open another, something that he helped me do within a few minutes . . . the result: a gain of several percentage points of interest on money that I'm holding in a money market account.

Being helped by Bill and all his other colleagues at Citizens is one of the many things I'll miss when not in the area . . . yet be rest assured, we'll come back often!

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2. FYI

I've been getting a lot of questions about the Migun thermal massage bed we recently purchased . . . Cynthia and I are both enjoying our use of it, but in order to provide you with more information, I contacted our favorite Migun dealer: Brett Acker in Montgomeryville, PA; 215.361.8151 . . . he sent me this fact sheet that I thought you'd find of interest:

The MIGUN thermal massage bed is FDA-approval for relief of arthritis, muscle and joint pain and increased circulation, and the American Chiropractic Association endorsees and recommends daily use. MIGUN is the only thermal massage bed on the market to have FDA and ACA approval. The bed has eight programs ranging from 15 to 35 minutes

in duration.

Some of the benefits from daily use include:

Reduce Chronic Muscle and Joint Pain, Lower Cholesterol, Relieve Back Pain, Lower Blood Pressure, Relieve Arthritis, Relieve Fibromyalgia, Improve Circulation, Improve Sleep, Relieve Sciatica, Reduce Stress, Improve Blood Glucose, and Burns Calories.

The MIGUN bed has substantially reduced pain, muscle spasm and inflammation and has increased the range of motion in the spinal column. It compliments, extends and enhances adjustments as well as provides gentle, but firm soft tissue mobilization from the legs to the cervical spine. It is ideal for pre or post adjunctive care.

The MIGUN thermal massage bed is based on the principles of acupuncture, acupressure, far infrared heat therapy, chiropractic and massage. Jade bulbs run from your head to your ankles and heat to a range of 104 to 140 degrees Fahrenheit. A deep penetrating heat (up to 3 inches) called far infrared is emitted from the jade bulbs when heated by a helium gas bulb. This deep penetrating heat, unlike a surface heat, is the key to the bed's effectiveness and provides the significant benefits noted above.

Acupuncture is simulated by the far infrared emitted from the jade bulbs. Acupressure is provided by your body weight pressing on the probes which stop at various acupressure points from your head to sacrum. The jade bulbs simulate a thumb/finger providing pressure on your acupressure points. MIGUN is based on the principle of chiropractic and provides spinal decompression while the positioning of the jade bulbs running along the outside of the spine help to realign any herniated discs or bulging discs.

Far infrared dilates the blood vessels, increasing the vessels size, allowing for increased blood flow and a reduction in blood pressure. The far infrared is also heating water molecules which are bouncing off the inside of the vessel/artery walls knocking off cholesterol, reducing your cholesterol. A decrease in blood pressure and cholesterol can be seen after consecutive weeks of use, approximately 3-4 times per week. The more times you use the MIGUN bed the quicker you will see the benefits. Most customers report these decreases by their 3 month visit to the doctor where their levels are measured.

Each MIGUN bed has 153 patents. A key element of the patents is the positioning of the jade bulbs.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.migunworld.com/>

FYI, part 2

* Bridget in Pennsylvania, one of my fantastic assistants who not only helps me but so many readers when they write and/or call:

I have 4 more weeks of training, then I will be on my way walking 60 miles through Philadelphia to raise not only funds but awareness for breast cancer from October 17-19.

Walking 60 miles is hard, but I will keep walking until breast cancer is

no longer. I walk because everyone deserves a lifetime .I walk because I can, and I walk so that my twin daughters will not have to walk.

I walked last year in memory of two very close friends who lost their battle to cancer. This year I walk again in their memory but also for my husband's sister Sandy, who has just been diagnosed with this horrible disease.

I need your help. I am planning on surpassing the \$3,000 that you--my friends and family - gave so generously last time around to help fight breast cancer.

You can choose to donate online at:

<http://www.the3day.org/>

by searching under my name (Breda Hughes, my out of work name).You can mail in a check via the website or by mailing it to me, and I will send it in.

If you have any questions or want to hear more about what I'm doing, I love talking about the event. Thanks for all of your support. I'm incredibly lucky to have people like you in my life!

Love,
Bridget

PS. Don't wait . . . donate today!

* Marianne in Pennsylvania:

My brother, Jim, rides his bike in the Ocean City MS bike ride every year.

Thank you for considering supporting him and me. His message follows:

A message from James Richard jtrichardjr@aol.com:

Every hour of every day, another American is diagnosed with MS. We need to take action now to help the growing number of people affected by this disease. I will be riding in Bike MS: City to Shore 2008 to help the 11,000 local people living with this devastating disease.

Today, there is no cure for MS, but we're fighting to change that. This is why I am writing to you: I need your help and support.

This year, I've set a personal goal of raising \$400, and I'm asking you to make a contribution. Simply, click on the link below to visit my personal page to make your donation.

You will be pleased to know that the National MS Society is the leading provider of programs for people with MS and their families. The Society also invests more money into MS research than any national voluntary health organization in the world. This is why I'm asking for your support.

Each one of us can help create a World Free of MS. Volunteer. Advocate. Educate. Donate. Participate. Join the Movement.

Warmest Regards,
Jim

PS. Click here to visit my personal page:

http://main.nationalmssociety.org/site/TR/Bike/PAEBikeEvents?px=2158434&pg=personal&fr_id=8150&et=g-pOO2CPV5bXZL3Ew_aOAg..&s_tafld=69111

* Annemarie in New Jersey:

I came across something that if you aren't already aware of it you may be interested in investigating. It's a company called The Smart Circle. They are hired by businesses to help bring in new customers. My experience was that someone approached me to sell me a great deal for a local salon. It's a half day spa package for about 20% of what I would have paid without this promotion. I've purchased several packages as gifts. I've checked it out with the specific salon and it's all the "real deal". They are simply trying to bring in new clients.

Apparently the way it works is this company (Smart Circle) works with the business to put together an attractive package at an appealing price. I've visited them online because I want to get a few more spa packages and was surprised to see all the deals there. Wow, what a great place to check out. I'm going to see if there's anything else for me, friends or clients.

Check them out:

<http://www.thesmartcircle.com/>

* Arlene in Pennsylvania:

Loved "A life without left turns" by Michael Gartner. The stories reminded me of the many I've heard as a result of guiding people of all ages (11 to 98) as they documented their stories in Your Life Stories Workshops.

I've been facilitating these now for four years. It is so great to read the memories that people recall.

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3. Now you know

There are three kinds of people in the world—those who are good at math and those who aren't.

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4. Reviews

A. If you're a fan of the Jersey Shore, catch GREETINGS FROM THE SHORE when in the theaters; otherwise, rent it on DVD when it comes out.

It is a small, independent film about a girl who falls in love while working in Lavalette after her senior year of high school . . . newcomer Kim Shaw is excellent in the leading role, and veteran character actors Paul Sorvino and Jay O. Sanders give outstanding performances as part of the eclectic group of characters who meet up with Shaw . . . I also liked the work of David Fumero as her boyfriend and Lars Arentz-Hansen as one of Fumero's co-workers . . . rated R, though I'd say it was a very mild R . . . this would be a fine film for anybody over the age of 13.

B. YOUNG @ HEART is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #605 follows:

YOUNG @ HEART is my favorite documentary of the year so far; in fact, it is one of the best films of this nature that I have seen for quite some time . . . it is about a group of elderly men and women who come together to form a vocal choir that attempts music by such performers as Sonic Youth, the Clash, the Ramones, and James Brown . . . you'll both laugh and cry and at the end, be inspired by what growing old can become if you don't give into it . . . I particularly liked the one music video from SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE, "Stayin' Alive" . . . rated PG . . . I urge you to see this by yourself and/or also with your parents, children, grandchildren, etc.

MUCH OBLIGED to Barbara in Pennsylvania for this additional recommendation:

We watched a movie today that was as good as any Grisham mystery we've ever seen! If you can rent it, it's worth it.

Called: A MURDER OF CROWS,, Cuba Gooding, Jr. & Tom Berenger. Really good! If you get to see it, let me know what you think.

C. When my cholesterol levels went sky high, I started a proactive approach to do all that I could to lower them . . . one thing I've been doing is to read all I can about the subject, including CONTROLLING CHOLESTEROL FOR DUMMIES (2nd ed.) by Carol Ann Rinzler.

This informative guide contained all the information I wanted to know about the subject--and then some . . . I could have done without some of the material that was surprisingly technical, and 53 pages at the end about calories and other nutrients in food were about 52 too many for me.

Yet that's not to say that much else of the rest of the information made it a most worthwhile book for me to have read . . . I learned, for instance, about something called BMI or body mass index:

* BMI is a unisex measure of weight relative to height, a number--such as 24--that serves as a predictor of your risk for weight-related illnesses, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, gallbladder disease, and arthritic pain. The higher your number, the higher your risk . . .

The equation looks like this:

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{W}{H^2} \times 705$$

To get your own BMI, plug your numbers into the BMI equation. For example, if you're 5' 3" tall and weight 138 pounds, the result is 24.5.

Its significance lies in the fact that after you do the computation, you can effectively use it to view the various categories of BMI (and what they mean):

Underweight: BMI lower than 18.5.

Normal: BMI of 25 to 29.9 (A moderate risk of weight-related health problems.)

Overweight: BMI of 25 to 29.9. (A moderate risk of weight-related health problems. For reference, BMI of 25 is about 10 percent over ideal body weight.)

Obese: BMI of 30 to 39.9. (High risk of weight-related health problems.)

Extremely obese: BMI over 40. (The highest risk of weight-related health problems.)

I also learned more about such foods that I used to like; e.g., coconut:

* Yes, trying to knock open a fresh coconut uses up calories. Yes, coconut meat is high in dietary fiber, and like other nuts, it's a good source of B vitamins. Yes, a single 2-inch square piece of fresh coconut meat has 1.09 mg of iron (7.3 percent of the recommended daily allowance for a woman of child-bearing age), and 0.49 mg of zinc (3.3 percent of the recommended daily allowance for a man, 4 percent of the recommended daily allowance for a woman). And of course, the coconut, being a plant, has no cholesterol.

Can you sense a "but" coming here? Right you are. But that same 2-inch square piece of coconut contains 15 g of coconut oil, the fat that accounts for 85 percent of the calories in coconut meat.

Coconut oil is 89 percent saturated fatty acids, which makes it an even more highly saturated fat than butter.

Yet there was also good news, such as this tidbit:

* But don't forget the chocolate or at least the very special new chocolate from Canada. In the summer of 2007, Ocean Nutrition Canada Limited, a company that makes and distributes omega-3 food and dietary supplement ingredients, announced that the O Trois line of chocolate bars and "fingers" from Les Truffles au Chocolat, would henceforth contain omega-3 fatty acids. Who can ask for anything more?

Do read CONTROLLING CHOLESTEROL if you or any family member of friend has to deal with this problem . . . you may not become the word's greatest expert on the subject, but you will learn enough so as to be able to reduce cholesterol limits without going on any sort of crazy diet.

D. Heard WINNING IN LIFE, a cassette program featuring interviews with arguably the greatest pro football player of all time: Walter Payton . . . not only was he interviewed, but so were his friends, family and football associates . . . they almost all painted the same picture; i.e., Payton is a real "winner," both on and off the field.

If you get to listen to this program, and I sincerely hope that you, take heed of much of the advice that is relevant to both athletes and non-athletes . . . for example, I liked what he had to say about mistakes:

* You're going to make them. The key to being a professional: Not to keep making them over and over.

He also gave me something to think about with respect to goal-setting:

* [Mike] Ditka was the first coach to give us a plan, such as:

We're going to win the Super bowl. Don't use:

We're going to do the best we can.

Lastly, there was this tidbit of advice that struck home:

* I'd rather apologize to somebody for something I didn't say than apologize for something I did say.

This informative program is available for purchase or rental . . . if you want to get it, please click:

<http://www.achievementlibrary.com/>

Above is the tape rental club I belong to; i.e., the Achievement Tape Library . . . this a great way to hear CDs and/or audio cassette tapes, view videos, etc.--all for a fraction of what it would cost to buy them . . . call the head of the firm (Paul Arroyo) directly at 1.800.735.3660 and mention my name . . . that way, you'll be sure to pay even higher prices . . . NOT.

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5. TV alert

A. IT'S ALWAYS SUNNY IN PHILADELPHIA, one of my favorite comedies, returns with new episodes on Sunday at 10 p.m. and then at 10:30 on FX . . . it is sooooo good to have Danny DeVito back on TV!

B. The 60th PRIMETIME EMMY AWARDS will be hosted by reality mainstays Tom Bergeron, Heidi Klum, Howie Mandel, Jeff Probst, and Ryan Seacrest . . . the five are also nominated in a new category, Outstanding Reality Competition Host . . . I hope Bergeron wins, though that said, I liked Probst's spin on the show in a recent TV GUIDE interview:

The Emmys are a reality elimination show. You start with 100 people in a category, whittle it down to five and then, on live national TV, four of them have to figure out how the f*ck to put on a smile.

Sunday at 8 p.m. on ABC.

C. ENTOURAGE is another of my favorite comedies . . . it seems to keep getting better and better, particularly since the Drama character (Kevin Dillon) seems to be getting more screen time . . . Sundays at 10 p.m. on HBO.

D. THANKS to two readers who encouraged me to check out MAD MEN:

* Sue in Pennsylvania:

Have you been watching MAD MEN? . . . I love it . . . and now I have my daughter, sister and mom all hooked . . . its addictive and perhaps the best made drama ever!

* Lisa in Pennsylvania:

I enjoy MAD MEN on AMC. It's about the NY advertising business set in the 1960s. You would like it to I think in part because of what you teach. For more information, please click:

<http://www.amctv.com/originals/madmen/about/>

Methinks you'll like it, too . . . Sundays at 10 p.m. on AMC.

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6. My pledge

I just read an article on the dangers of heavy drinking.

Scared the sh*t out of me.

So that's it.

After today, no more reading!

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7. Websites

A. ZEN HABITS is an Internet blog with some 68,500 subscribers . . . it covers a wide range of topics, including goal achievement, productivity, being organized, GTD (getting things done), motivation, eliminating debt, saving, getting a flat stomach, eating healthy, simplifying, living frugal, parenting, happiness, and successfully implementing good habits . . . to check it out yourself, please click:

<http://zenhabits.net>

I appreciate that the mastermind behind it, Leo Babauta, has released his copyright on its content . . he has also said that you can do the same with his ebook, ZEN TO DONE; i.e., you don't have to buy a copy of it if you don't want to do so.

B. I'm a big Dave Barry fan, having read many of his books . . . to see one of his best columns EVER (about his experiences getting a colons), please visit:

<http://www.miamiherald.com/283/story/427603.html>

I would have liked to have just printed the whole column for you, but couldn't because of copyright regulations . . . yet it is OK to share the link.

Please also share it with all your friends, relatives, colleagues, etc. It could well help save a life!

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view

it, please click:

<http://www.blainesworld.net>

For a list of books I've typically enjoyed, go "Blaine's Best" on the left and then "Websites" . . . scroll down to letter "O" and click the link found in the second paragraph.

Should you want to help me move up in the list of amazon.com's Top 500 reviewers (I'm currently #364), take a book I've recently reviewed; e.g., THE ART OF INFLUENCE . . . do the following:

1. Go to this website:

<http://www.amazon.com>

2. In search engine at the top, type-in above book.

3. When you find it, locate my review. It is on the left, probably near the top.

4. When asked was this review helpful, click "Yes" if you feel that it was.

D. And one more--this submitted by Arlene in Pennsylvania:

I thought this was interesting:

<http://www.ciainsight.com/c/a/Books/15-MustRead-Books-for-the-Fall/>

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8. Computer tip

Subject lines in emails get things read . . . but make sure you change them every so often.

For example, I may send a friend something to the following effect:

Invite for lunch, Best, Blaine

He may then respond as follows:

Invite for lunch/response

If I wanted to respond again, I might use this:

Invite for lunch/response/my two cents

But that should be it . . . if you want to continue a running dialogue on the invite or any other subject, I suggest that would be the time to start using something new in the subject line . . . say:

Confirming location for lunch

The one exception: If you are going to need to refer back to an email, it is often helpful if you keep the original subject line . . . this makes it easy to both file and retrieve.

I do this on such Union matters as the following:

Ratios

All email on that subject ALWAYS uses that one word somewhere in the subject line.

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9. Maxine's new boyfriends

I am seeing 5 gentlemen every day. As soon as I wake up, Will Power helps me get out of bed

Then I go to see John .

Then Charlie Horse comes along and when he is here, he takes a lot of my time and attention.

When he leaves, Arthur Ritis shows up and stays the rest of the day. He doesn't like to stay in one place very long, so he takes me from joint to joint.

After such a busy day, I'm really tired and glad to go to bed With Ben Gay.

What a life! Oh, yes, I'm also flirting with Al Zymer and thinking of calling Jack Daniels or Johnny Walker to come and keep me company.

PS. The preacher came to call the other day. He said at my age, I should be taking of the hereafter. I told him, "I do it all the time. No matter where I am in the parlor, upstairs, in the kitchen, or down in the basement, I ask myself, 'Now what I am here after?' "

TO SEE MAXINE, PLEASE CLICK:

http://www.enlightenquest.com/rcnu_folder/joy/maxinesboyfriends.htm

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10. A quote I like

Let us be grateful to people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.--Marcel Proust, French novelist (1871-1922)

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11. Thought for the day

When you thought I wasn't looking
(a message every adult should read because children
are watching you . . . and doing as you do, not as you say)



When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you hang my first painting on the refrigerator, and I immediately wanted to paint another one.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you feed a stray cat, and I learned that it was good to be kind to animals.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make my favorite cake for me, and I learned that the little things can be the special things in life.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I heard you say a prayer, and I knew that there is a God I could always talk to, and I learned to trust in Him.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make a meal and take it to a friend who was sick, and I learned that we all have to help take care of each other.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you give of your time and money to help people who had nothing, and I learned that those who have something should give to those who don't.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you take care of our house and everyone in it, and I learned we have to take care of what we are given.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw how you handled your responsibilities, even when you didn't feel good, and I learned that I would have to be responsible when I grow up.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw tears come from your eyes, and I learned that sometimes things hurt, but it's all right to cry.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw that you cared, and I wanted to be everything that I could be.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I learned most of life's lessons that I need to know to be a good and productive person when I grow up.

When you thought, I wasn't looking I looked at you and wanted to say,

"Thanks for all the things I saw when you thought I wasn't looking."

Each of us (parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, teacher, friend) influences the life of a child.

How will you touch the life of someone today? Just by sending this to someone else, you will probably make them at least think about their influence on others.

Live simply. Love generously. Care deeply. Speak kindly.

Leave the rest to God.

Author unknown
(if you know who wrote this and/or the source, please let me know)

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12. Advance planning department

A. You can now get discount tickets to MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT in New York City . . . for select orchestra and mezzanine locations, the rate is just \$59 for September tickets, \$69 for October tickets and \$79 tickets . . . to order, please click:

<http://www.broadwayoffers.com>

and use code SPDMX86.

You can also call 212.947.8844 and use the same promotional code.

This show was a lot of fun . . . plus, if you're a Clay Aiken fan, be aware of the fact that he returns on September 19.

Another option: FLAMINGO COURT, starring Jamie Farr (through September 28) and Anita Gillette . . . tickets are just \$39 (reg. \$72.50) for performances now through January 4, 2009.

Go to the above website or call the same number . . . the only difference is that you must use code FCDML908.

B. Cathy in Pennsylvania:

Thursday, September 25 at 1:30 p.m. There is an incredible speaker coming to Bucks County Community College in the Fireside Lounge. She is Retired Colonel Ann Wright.

Col. Wright will speak on her book, **DISSENT: VOICES OF CONSCIENCE: GOVERNMENT INSIDERS SPEAK OUT AGAINST THE WAR IN IRAQ.**

Ann Wright resigned from the U.S. Foreign Service on March 19, 2003, while serving as Deputy Chief of Mission at the US Embassy in Mongolia. She resigned due to her disagreement with the Bush administration's decision to go to war in Iraq without the authorization of the UN Security Council, the lack of effort in resolving the Israel-Palestinian situation, the lack of policy on North Korea and unnecessary curtailment of civil liberties in the United States.

This event is not to be missed! Professor Chris Bursk is our host for this

event and would love to have every seat in the lounge filled for this great speaker.

C. Natalie in Pennsylvania:

On Saturday, September 27, the Cultural Affairs Committee of Bucks County Community College invites you to join us for an evening of fun and delight when "Broadway Returns to Bucks" on Saturday, September 27, 7:30 p.m. in the Library Auditorium. Tickets are only \$10.00.

Don't miss Broadway performers, Cris Groenendaal (3rd Phantom of the Opera) and his wife, Sue Anderson (conductor of Cats, Sweeney Todd, etc.) in this Broadway cabaret featuring songs from The Phantom, Sweeney Todd, Sunday in the Park with George, etc.

For tickets, contact Natalie Kaye, 215.968.8015 . . . or you can order via this website:

<http://www.bucks.edu/cultural>

D. Miryam in Pennsylvania:

Now there's another way to guarantee future career success!

BRODY BOOST Camp career development workshops on October 30th and November 13th--both in the Philadelphia area. Led by BRODY's CEO Marjorie Brody, Professor Emeritus at BCCC, this full-day program will focus on the 4 Key Areas of Career Development:

- 1) Professional Savvy: Creating impact to get respect, developing a personal brand, and demonstrating executive presence
- 2) Relationship Building: Building a network strategically--both internally and externally, learning the process for developing advocates, and feeling comfortable in business social interactions
- 3) Persuasive Speaking: Organizing and developing presentations, delivering ideas with enthusiasm, and handling difficult questions
- 4) The Art of Listening: Ensuring results and relationships through listening, assessing participants biggest listening challenge and applying key listening behaviors that promote understanding and rapport.

BCCC students who register with proof of student ID will receive a 50% discount from the standard \$727 a person price, paying only \$363.50!

Call 215.376.5085 to register today . . . or e-mail Laura to: laura@brodypro.com.

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PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#623

9.8.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I went with friends to see THE BEST LITTLE WHOREHOUSE IN TEXAS--put on by the Somerset Valley Players in Hillsborough, NJ.

We've seen several productions at this theater, but this was perhaps our favorite to date . . . from the opening number, the enthusiastic cast had us into this fun-filled, tuneful musical.

Michelle Russell was superb as Mona . . . Steven O'Kane-Murin stole most every scene as the Bible-thumping Melvin P. Thorpe . . . and one of the great things about community theater is that you get to see some actors grow before your eyes as they take on different roles . . . such was the case with both Joe Zedney and Teresa Von den Steinen, both of whom we've seen and enjoyed before . . . they keep getting better in every role they undertake.

The good news for you, the reader, is that WHOREHOUSE runs through September 28 . . . catch it, if you can . . . for more information, please click:

<http://wwwsvptheatre.org>

B. On Sunday, we met my daughter Risa and her fiancée JP for dinner at P.F. Chang's in Princeton, NJ . . . this is the first time we had ever been to this upscale chain restaurant.

Our meals were all delicious . . . Cynthia enjoyed her Oolong Sea Bass, and I liked my Mongolian Beef with vegetables . . . our server, Zach, was very attentive . . . the only downside: the place was both crowded and noisy.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.pfchangs.com>

WHO WOULD HAVE THUNK DEPARTMENT:

Can you believe it . . . Risa and JP will be getting married in some 40 days, but who's counting?

C. Our house remains on the market . . . we have been getting several people in to see it, and it is showing very well—in large part because of all the work that Cynthia put in to make it look as good as it does .

Should you want to get a virtual tour of the residence of the Greenfields of Belle Mead, please click:

<http://vt.realbiz360.com//Listing-63663.html>

D. My week at Bucks County Community College was unusually hectic, in that I spent several full days working with a group of apprenticeship students at Lockheed Martin . . . the project was an interesting one; i.e., the students had to develop and then present their ideas on how to more effectively retain future apprentices.

SPECIAL KUDOS to the College's Georgina Taylor for helping develop and then run such a valuable program that works so well for the College, Lockheed Martin and perhaps most importantly, the students.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to David George--one of the outstanding folks who work in Information Network Services at Bucks County Community College.

I received his name from Joan Weiss, one of my good friends at the College, who wrote me as follows:

You always mention [this award], and I was wondering if you would mind me adding one for you.

I've been experiencing a frustrating problem using web mail at BCCC (all because I was trying to send out a message about Bill Lewis). I could not figure how to get an error message from allowing me to forward or reply to an e-mail through the college webmail.

I've been back at forth with INS, etc. And I was not giving up, being stubborn of course.

Dave George--my "savior"--called me after the Campus wide Orientation today. He asked how far I lived from him (which turned out to be real close to me) and said he would be right over on his way home from the school. In less than a minute of arriving, he was able to fix the problem that I was working on for the last week!

Here's the tip: When trying to reply to an e-mail . . . all you need to do is change the font from a "plain text" window to what is called the "styletext" window . . . and sending is easy. So simple, yet I didn't consider this.

The main thing to stress is the extra mile Dave went to help me out.

Thanks, Dave.

FYI, part 2

* Barbara in Pennsylvania (with a REQUEST FOR IDEAS):

Verne and I are looking for weekend or weekly vacation get-a-aways for now through the fall and winter. Do you have any suggestions of places that you and Cynthia may have visited and enjoyed?

Is there anything that was special for both of you? We love to hike, bicycle explore parks and nature. A friend mentioned Spring Lake, NJ. Do you have any contacts for Spring Lake, NJ?

Please let me know if there are any other scenic places you can recommend to visit and places to stay in that area.

Readers can reach me directly at:

info1@mathinmotion.com

* Jean in Pennsylvania:

Thanks so much for sending the website for Asheville. It certainly looks like a place Rob and I would love to visit, at the very least.

Your web mail talked about STAND UP TO CANCER, hosted by Katie Couric, Charles Gibson and Brian Williams.

Yael, my daughter who lives in LA, is one of the many producers working on this production and got the job because she was fundraising and running a triathlon for Leukemia/lymphoma. She met the Director of 'Stand up to Cancer in Hawaii while running, swimming and biking in the triathlon. A number of your email readers were kind enough to send her a donation for that event. Yael said it is one of the most inspiring places to work...people are professional, courteous and most go way out of their way to help one another plus the added benefit of researching and learning about cancer, cures, hoaxes and amazing stories of strength and courage.

Thanks, Blaine, for bringing this to everyone's attention.

* MaryEllen in New Jersey:

I am very interested in the shelled edamame from VegiLand. Did you purchase this in a local store or a specialty place?

WHERE TO OBTAIN:

I get it from my local ShopRite and imagine that most large food stores would carry the item . . . it is both good tasting and good for you to eat . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.edamame.com/>

* Nate in New Jersey:

They (Irving's Delicatessen in Livingston, NJ) have the best Pastrami, but I think the best all-around delicatessen is still Eppes Essen--also in Livingston.

* Bill in Pennsylvania:

On the Tempur-Pedic mattress . . . Barb and I got one several years ago. One of the best things we have purchased. I have had no lower back pain since. Good move.

* Roger in Pennsylvania:

Thanks for the recent Newsletter. Sending them here [to a new email address] is a far better thing. The old email address was getting peculiar, and I use it less these days. So all is working well.

MY TWO CENTS:

Please, please make sure I have an updated email address for you . . . ideally, make sure I have the one that you check most often . . . keep in mind that if you want to send me separate email addresses (for work, home, etc.), I'll be glad to send separate copies to wherever you want . . . there is no limit on how many copies you can get and as always, feel free to forward them with your personal invitation to have your friends, relatives, etc. enter their own subscriptions.

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3. Location, location, location

According to comic Jay Mohr, one of the great conundrums of our day is: Why are there luggage stores in airports?

"Who forgets their suitcase?" he asks. "Have you ever seen a guy with an armload of shirts going, 'Hurray! A suitcase.?'"

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4. Reviews

A. THE HOUSE BUNNY is a goofy but fun tale of an orphan-turned Playboy bunny who gets kicked out of the Mansion . . . having no place to live, she winds up the house mother to a sorority that has seen better days . . . you can predict almost every joke, but you'll laugh in spite of yourself . . . Anna Faris is just perfect in the title role . . . her technique for memorizing names is one you'll never forget . . . rated PG-13.

B. REPRISE is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #607 follows:

Don't believe all the glowing praise from critics that you may hear for REPRISE, a Norwegian film that won several awards in its native country . . . it is the tale of two young writers that left me wishing it would end within the first 10 minutes . . . I only chose to stay until the bitter end because I was with others; otherwise, I would have been out of there . . . methinks that if I could rename it, I would to this title: AS BAD AS IT GETS (in stark contrast to AS GOOD AS IT GETS, one of my all-time favorite movies) . . . rated R.

For a much better rental, get 1964's ZORBA THE GREEK . . . it is the story of a free-spirited Greek who teaches lessons of life to a young English writer . . . great performances from both Anthony Quinn (who should have gotten an Oscar) and Allan Bates;

Lila Kedrova was named Best Supporting Actress for her excellent work as the aging French courtesan . . . the soundtrack will blow you away . . . not rated, but would be appropriate for mature teenagers.

C. Read THE ART OF INFLUENCE by Chris Widener . . . it is a short but powerful parable about a recent college graduate who learns valuable lessons from one of the country's wealthiest men.

What made it so good was the fact that I really cared about the characters . . . they were believable, and their stories were interesting too.

I also liked how the author revealed each of the four key principles via discussions that seemed as if they actually happened . . . such as this one, involving a successful baseball manager, who advises:

* Don't forget the power we have to influence ourselves. When you make a mistake you should never start telling yourself negative things. Those negative words produce negative thoughts and actions. For us, it is a player who strikes out and then tells himself he can't hit in the clutch. Guess what happens? From that point on, he can't hit in the clutch. For your situation it may be a person who botches a presentation and then tells herself that she can't speak in front of others. She'll never move up because she can't lead from the front of the room. Negative words produce results. So I teach people how to take control of their minds and thoughts and the words they say to themselves."

Then there was this equally significant tidbit about how one of the character's daughters increased her income by just applying another of the principles:

* "For the first few weeks she was bringing home about twenty-five dollars a day in tips. But then all of a sudden her tips jumped significantly, up to nearly seventy-five dollars on many days. Obviously, I wanted to know what was going on. She said, 'I finally figured people out.' Well, I wanted to know what the new insight was. 'Dad,' she said, 'people love to talk about themselves! I used to just make their coffee and not say much. Now I ask them all kinds of questions about themselves.' That was it. By getting people to talk to her about their lives she was subconsciously influencing them to tip her more."

And, lastly, I liked this bit of advice that was given that all employees should take to heart:

* "Excellence is something we practice in even the smallest details. You know, when I am walking through one of my properties, if I see a small scrap of paper on the floor, I personally stop and pick it up. I don't go to the manager and have him or her get someone to do it. I do it myself. And do you know what happens?"

"What?"

"My staff sees that even the small details matters to me. They get it. They see that I lead by example. It inspires them to pay attention to even the smallest details too. Excellence in everything we do is what makes guys like Bobby and me so influential."

As you can see, none of the above is particularly profound . . . but it all makes sense--a lot of sense.

By the way, in case you're wondering, here are the four principles

to increase influence:

Live a life of undivided integrity.

Always demonstrate a positive attitude.

Consider other people's interests as more important than your own.

Don't settle for anything less than excellence.

Read the book, and you'll find a lot more about each one . . . you'll be glad that you did.

D. Just think: If salespeople always sell the way they would like to be sold, they could be losing 1/2 to 3/4 of their possible sales!

That's perhaps the key point I gained from listening to BULLS, OWLS, LAMBS AND TIGERS: PERSONALITY SELLING AND PERSONALITY MARKETING--a most informative CD program written and read by Charles J. Clarke III.

Clarke, one of the nation's top sales trainers, developed his system to enable salespeople to realize that not everybody wants to be sold the same way . . . in fact, he contends just the opposite; i.e., you need to give people what they want (as opposed to what you think they might want).

There were many useful ideas that I gained from listening; among them:

- * The toughest customer is somebody completely opposite us.
- * A master closer: Somebody who gets somebody to make a decision today that they would not have made otherwise.
- * Ask: What do you think about going ahead with the project today?
- * If the customer says "no," ask why.
- * Give the handshake they're giving to you.
- * Mirroring your voice is the highest form of respect you can give somebody else.

And this technique that I especially liked:

- * When people object to price, say: But these are (name of the company), don't you know?

If you're involved in any form of sales, make it a point to get hold of Clarke's BULLS, OWLS, LAMBS AND TIGERS . . . you'll be surprised that your customers will appreciate that you did, too, in that you'll actually be doing a much better job of selling to them.

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5. TV alert

MR. CURIOUS HERE:

What new TV shows are you watching or planning to watch? Of those, any that you recommend? Any that you saw once and vowed that would be the last time?

A. TIL DEATH has its Season 3 opener on Wednesday at 8 p.m. on FOX . . . Brad Garret and Joely Fisher make this one of my favorite comedies on TV . . . it is followed by DO NOT DISTURB at 8:30 p.m., a workplace comedy about hotel-staff members . . . it stars Jerry O'Connell and RENO 911's Niecy Nash.

B. Two TV movies look promising:

* GYM TEACHER: THE MOVIE features LAW & ORDERS: SVU's Christopher Meloni as a former Olympic failure who becomes a phys ed coach . . . Friday at 8 p.m. on NICKELODEON.

* COCO CHANEL stars in a flashback-filled biopic about the French couturier . . . Saturday at 8 p.m. on LIFETIME.

C. BILL MOYERS JOURNAL is an American television news program that provides stories outside the New York City public area on a schedule of news topics and events, such as religion, history, sexuality, geography, and more . . . Fridays at 9:00 p.m. on PBS . . . PBS times and stations often vary, so check local listings by clicking:

<http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/about/airdates.html>

Best of all by clicking the above, you gain access to the video or text archives of his show--for FREE!

D. Season 14 of MAD TV opens with a SO YOU THINK YOU CAN DANCE spoof that pits the McCains against the Obamas . . . Saturday at 11 p.m. on FOX.

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6. Three friends

Three women friends, one in a casual relationship, one engaged to be married, and one a long-time wife, met for drinks after work. The conversation eventually drifted towards how best to spice up their sex lives.

After much discussion, they decided to surprise their men by engaging in some S&M role-playing.

The following week they met up again to compare notes.

Sipping her drink, the single girl leered and said, "Last Friday at the end of the work day I went to my boyfriend's office wearing a leather coat. When all the other people had left, I slipped out of it and all I had on was a leather bodice, black stockings and stiletto heels. He was so aroused that we made mad passionate love on his desk right then and there!"

The engaged woman giggled and said, "That's pretty much my story!"

When my fiance got home last Friday, he found me waiting for him in a black mask, leather bodice, black hose and stiletto pumps. He was so turned on that we not only had sex all night, he wants to move up our wedding date!"

The married woman put her glass down and said, "I did a lot of planning. I made arrangements for the kids to stay over at Grandma's. I took a long scented-oil bath and then put on my best perfume. I slipped into a tight leather bodice, a black garter belt, black stockings and six-inch stilettos. I finished it off with a black mask."

"Well?!", exclaimed the other two. "What happened?"

"When my husband got home from work, he grabbed a beer and the remote, sat down and yelled, 'Hey, Batman, what's for dinner?' "

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7. Websites

A. To keep on top of the upcoming election, you might want to check either and/or both of the following:

<http://www.ontheissues.org>

This one is full of a great deal of information regarding the 2008 presidential election. It gives a ton of statistics and percentages with respect to what each party stands for on certain issue in America.

<http://www.factcheck.org>

This website is not geared toward the Democratic or Republican side; it simply attempts to lay down the facts on both sides so that you can be well informed on what each candidate's position is.

And while you're at it, click the following website too:

<http://www.takeyourkids2vote.org>

The whole idea behind this website is encourage parents to bring their children along with them to the voting booth on Election Day.

B. If you're one of those folks who thinks he or she can beat the contestants on TV game shows, please click:

<http://www.millionairetv.com/game/index.html>

You'll be able to play an electronic version of WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE, accompanied by the music that you hear on the show.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blaineworld.net>

To see pictures of yours truly, as well as of my family and friends, go to "Blaine's Best" on the left and then "Pictures" . . . make sure you have the sound on, so that you can hear what's arguably the greatest

rock song of all time.

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8. Computer tip

THANKS to Pat in Pennsylvania for helping me make my emails more effective.

As many of you know, I typically respond to something that is written by putting a comment or question that I get up top, then responding to it in the space immediately below.

I do that to give context to my response, as opposed to just answering "yes" or "no" . . . in addition, I often try to highlight my response by indenting the original email and putting what I have to say in the flush left margin. Or sometimes I'll use caps.

But now I'm now going to also try to indicate who said what by putting that person's initials to the left of his or her email . . so, for example, a simple email back and forth might look like this:

YOU: What about getting together for lunch next week?

BG: Great idea. Tuesday works at 1 in the cafeteria. Please confirm.

The above is particularly helpful when you try to follow the threads of an email, wherein several people have had something to say.

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9. 911 calls

Believe it or not, these are real 911 calls made in Nashville, TN . . . or at least they're real, according to the reader who sent me this compilation.

* Dispatcher : 9-1-1 What is your emergency?

Caller: I heard what sounded like gunshots coming from the brown house on the corner.

Dispatcher: Do you have an address?

Caller: No, I have on a blouse and slacks, why?

Dispatcher: 9-1-1 What is your emergency?

Caller: Someone broke into my house and took a bite out of my ham and cheese sandwich .

Dispatcher: Excuse me?

Caller : I made a ham and cheese sandwich and left it on the kitchen table and when I came back from the bathroom, someone had taken a bite out of it.

Dispatcher: Was anything else taken?

Caller: No, but this has happened to me before and I'm sick and tired of it!

* Dispatcher: 9-1-1 What is the nature of your emergency?

Caller: I'm trying to reach nine eleven but my phone doesn't have an eleven on it.

Dispatcher: This is nine eleven.

Caller: I thought you just said it was nine-one-one Dispatcher:

Yes, ma'am nine-one-one and nine-eleven are the same thing.

Caller: Honey, I may be old, but I'm not stupid.

* My personal favorite:

Dispatcher: 9-1-1 What's the nature of your emergency?

Caller: My wife is pregnant and her contractions are only two minutes apart.

Dispatcher: Is this her first child?

Caller: No, you idiot! This is her husband!

* And the winner is:

Dispatcher: 9-1-1

Caller: Yeah, I'm having trouble breathing. I'm all out of breath. Darn . . . I think I'm going to pass out.

Dispatcher: Sir, where are you calling from?

Caller: I'm at a pay phone. North and Foster.

Dispatcher: Sir, an ambulance is on the way. Are you an asthmatic?

Caller: No.

Dispatcher: What were you doing before you started having trouble breathing?

Caller: Running from the Police.

NOTE:

To listen to real emergency calls online, please click:

<http://www.911callers.com/>

You'll find serious calls here, but also dozens of stupid and wacky 911 calls as examples of how people abuse the system. It is estimated that 35% of all 911 calls are illegitimate (pranks, hangups, non-emergencies. etc.).

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10. A quote I like

Don't spend so much of your energy pursuing the life you want or avoiding the life you fear. Have the faith to live the life you have and live it fully with great love and gratitude.--Dan Gottlieb, family therapist whose radio program (VOICES IN THE FAMILY) can be heard on NPR

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11. Thought for the day (long, but well worth your time)

A life without left turns

by Michael Gartner, editor of newspapers large and small and president of NBC News (who won the Pulitzer Prize in 1997 for editorial writing)

My father never drove a car.
Well, that's not quite right.

I should say I never saw him drive a car. He quit driving in 1927, when he was 25 years old, and the last car he drove was a 1926 Whippet.

"In those days," he told me when he was in his 90s, "to drive a car you had to do things with your hands, and do things with your feet, and look every which way, and I decided you could walk through life and enjoy it or drive through life and miss it."

At which point my mother, a sometimes salty Irishwoman, chimed in:

"Oh, bull----!" she said. "He hit a horse."

"Well," my father said, "there was that, too."

So my brother and I grew up in a household without a car. The neighbors all had cars—the Kollingses next door had a green 1941 Dodge, the VanLaningshams across the street a gray 1936 Plymouth, the Hopsons two doors down a black 1941 Ford—but we had none. My father, a newspaperman in Des Moines, would take the streetcar to work and, often as not, walk the 3 miles home. If he took the streetcar home, my mother and brother and I would walk the three blocks to the streetcar stop, meet him and walk home together.

Our 1950 Chevy

My brother, David, was born in 1935, and I was born in 1938, and sometimes, at dinner, we'd ask how come all the neighbors had cars but we had none. "No one in the family drives," my mother would explain, and that was that. But, sometimes, my father would say, "But as soon as one of you boys turns 16, we'll get one."

It was as if he wasn't sure which one of us would turn 16 first.

But, sure enough, my brother turned 16 before I did, so in 1951 my parents bought a used 1950 Chevrolet from a friend who ran the parts department at a Chevy dealership downtown. It was a four-door, white model, stick shift, fender skirts, loaded with everything, and, since my parents didn't drive, it more or less became my brother's car.

Having a car but not being able to drive didn't bother my father, but it didn't

make sense to my mother. So in 1952, when she was 43 years old, she asked a friend to teach her to drive. She learned in a nearby cemetery, the place where I learned to drive the following year and where, a generation later, I took my two sons to practice driving. The cemetery probably was my father's idea. "Who can your mother hurt in the cemetery?" I remember him saying once.

For the next 45 years or so, until she was 90, my mother was the driver in the family. Neither she nor my father had any sense of direction, but he loaded up on maps—though they seldom left the city limits—and appointed himself navigator. It seemed to work.

The ritual walk to church

Still, they both continued to walk a lot. My mother was a devout Catholic, and my father an equally devout agnostic, an arrangement that didn't seem to bother either of them through their 75 years of marriage. (Yes, 75 years, and they were deeply in love the entire time.) He retired when he was 70, and nearly every morning for the next 20 years or so, he would walk with her the mile to St. Augustin's Church. She would walk down and sit in the front pew, and he would wait in the back until he saw which of the parish's two priests was on duty that morning. If it was the pastor, my father then would go out and take a 2-mile walk, meeting my mother at the end of the service and walking her home. If it was the assistant pastor, he'd take just a 1-mile walk and then head back to the church.

He called the priests "Father Fast" and "Father Slow."

After he retired, my father almost always accompanied my mother whenever she drove anywhere, even if he had no reason to go along. If she were going to the beauty parlor, he'd sit in the car and read, or go take a stroll or, if it was summer, have her keep the engine running so he could listen to the Cubs game on the radio. (In the evening, then, when I'd stop by, he'd explain: "The Cubs lost again. The millionaire on second base made a bad throw to the millionaire on first base, so the multimillionaire on third base scored.") If she were going to the grocery store, he would go along to carry the bags out--and to make sure she loaded up on ice cream.

As I said, he was always the navigator, and once, when he was 95 and she was 88 and still driving, he said to me, "Do you want to know the secret of a long life?" "I guess so," I said, knowing it probably would be something bizarre.

"No left turns," he said.

"What?" I asked.

"No left turns," he repeated. "Several years ago, your mother and I read an article that said most accidents that old people are in happen when they turn left in front of oncoming traffic. As you get older, your eyesight worsens, and you can lose your depth perception, it said. So your mother and I decided never again to make a left turn."

"What?" I said again. "No left turns," he said. "Think about it. Three rights are the same as a left, and that's a lot safer. So we always make three rights."

"You're kidding!" I said, and I turned to my mother for support. "No," she

said, "your father is right. We make three rights. It works."

But then she added: "Except when your father loses count."

I was driving at the time, and I almost drove off the road as I started laughing. "Loses count?" I asked. "Yes," my father admitted, "that sometimes happens. But it's not a problem. You just make seven rights, and you're okay again."

I couldn't resist. "Do you ever go for 11?" I asked.

"No," he said. "If we miss it at seven, we just come home and call it a bad day. Besides, nothing in life is so important it can't be put off another day or another week."

My mother was never in an accident, but one evening she handed me her car keys and said she had decided to quit driving. That was in 1999, when she was 90. She lived four more years, until 2003. My father died the next year, at 102. They both died in the bungalow they had moved into in 1937 and bought a few years later for \$3,000. (Sixty years later, my brother and I paid \$8,000 to have a shower put in the tiny bathroom—the house had never had one. My father would have died then and there if he knew the shower cost nearly three times what he paid for the house.) He continued to walk daily—he had me get him a treadmill when he was 101 because he was afraid he'd fall on the icy sidewalks but wanted to keep exercising—and he was of sound mind and sound body until the moment he died.

A happy life

One September afternoon in 2004, he and my son went with me when I had to give a talk in a neighboring town, and it was clear to all three of us that he was wearing out, though we had the usual wide-ranging conversation about politics and newspapers and things in the news. A few weeks earlier, he had told my son, "You know, Mike, the first hundred years are a lot easier than the second hundred." At one point in our drive that Saturday, he said, "You know, I'm probably not going to live much longer." "You're probably right," I said. "Why would you say that?" he countered, somewhat irritated. "Because you're 102 years old," I said. "Yes," he said, "you're right." He stayed in bed all the next day. That night, I suggested to my son and daughter that we sit up with him through the night. He appreciated it, he said, though at one point, apparently seeing us look gloomy, he said: "I would like to make an announcement. No one in this room is dead yet." An hour or so later, he spoke his last words:

"I want you to know," he said, clearly and lucidly, "that I am in no pain. I am very comfortable. And I have had as happy a life as anyone on this earth could ever have."

A short time later, he died.

I miss him a lot, and I think about him a lot. I've wondered now and then how it was that my family and I were so lucky that he lived so long.

I can't figure out if it was because he walked through life.

Or because he quit taking left turns.

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12. Advance planning department

A. I'm speaking on "Positioning: How to Differentiate Yourself from the Competition on Tuesday, September 16, at Bucks County Community College at 6:30 p.m. . . . location: Penn 410 . . . you're welcome to attend . . . just please send me an email to that effect . . . send it to: bginbc@aol.com and put in subject line: YES FOR SEPTEMBER 16 . . . then in body of email, put your name and how many guests you'll be bringing.

SPECIAL BONUS:

All those attending will learn the difference between a left- and right-handed pencil . . . I kid you NOT.

B. Natalie in Pennsylvania:

On Saturday, September 27, the Cultural Affairs Committee of Bucks County Community College invites you to join us for an evening of fun and delight when "Broadway Returns to Bucks" on Saturday, September 27, 7:30 p.m. in the Library Auditorium. Tickets are only \$10.00.

Don't miss Broadway performers, Cris Groenendaal (3rd Phantom of the Opera) and his wife, Sue Anderson (conductor of Cats, Sweeney Todd, etc.) in this Broadway cabaret featuring songs from The Phantom, Sweeney Todd, Sunday in the Park with George, etc.

For tickets, contact Natalie Kaye, 215.968.8015 . . . or you can order via this website:

<http://www.bucks.edu/cultural>

C. Plan to attend the Dinner and Auction to benefit the Bill & Diane Lewis fund on November 13 at Twining Hall, 4900 Street Road, Trevoese, PA.

Bill is the community activist who was involved in a serious accident while volunteering at his church . . . he is now working hard to recover from a spinal cord injury.

If you'd like to become a sponsor for this event and/or donate items for the auction, please call Stephen Forbus at 215.245.8412.

PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#622

9.1.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I visited our friends Gail and Mark in North Jersey . . . we had a nice dinner and caught a film, then stayed over so we could test their Tempur-Pedic bed (they were gracious enough to let us use it while they slept on the couch).

We had a great sleep and will now most probably purchase such a bed for our North Carolina abode . . . unfortunately, Gail and Mark didn't sleep quite as well . . . so maybe that's why they woke us up bright and early the next morning . . . supposedly, it was to eat breakfast--but I wonder.

They are both great hosts . . . and Mark has become quite the cook . . . the night before, he made us a fruit smoothie that was as good as anything we've had in any store . . . it included only natural fresh fruit, as well as some kale that you couldn't taste . . . for breakfast, he made blueberry waffles with organic brown rice flour that were not only tasty . . . they were even good for us to eat.

B. Speaking of beds, we broke down and purchased the Migun Thermal Massage Bed that I had mentioned a few issues ago . . . Cynthia, in particular, really likes it . . . I do too, though don't get to use it as often as she does.

Using it reduces chronic pain, lowers blood pressure, improves circulation, relieves fibromyalgia, relieves arthritis, relieves sciatica, and improves sleep--to quote just a few benefits from the company's literature.

I don't know if it does all the above, but when I do use it, I know I feel better . . . you will, too.

We purchased our unit from the store in North Wales, PA . . . for

more information, contact Brett Acker at 215.361.8151; email: migunpa@comcast.net . . . feel free to mention that you heard about him from "the Greenfields of Belle Mead."

He'll even deliver and set the Migun Bed up for an additional fee that's well worth it.

For more information about the product, please click:

<http://www.migun.com>

C. We both were disappointed when our favorite Thai restaurant, Thai Gardens in Hillsborough, NJ, closed several months ago . . . yet it has been replaced by a Japanese restaurant, Tomiko, that methinks may soon become another place we frequent quite often.

We went there the other night and had an absolutely marvelous dinner . . . Cynthia enjoyed her California hand roll (made at her request with brown rice), and my chicken teriyaki was excellent.

If you go, make sure you say "hello" to Tommy--the manager . . . he'll make you feel especially welcome.

For information and/or reservations, call 908.874.5088.

D. Folks are continually asking us: So what's the appeal of Asheville?

You can get a sense of it by clicking:

<http://exploreasheville.com/>

Yet even better, y'all can come visit us after we're set up by next July . . . best of all, we've come up with the following great idea:

We'll name our guest bedroom after you . . . it overlooks the mountains, and there will be a big screen TV . . . for a mere \$5,000, we'll put up a plaque with your name on it . . . or if you don't want to go for quite that amount, \$37 will get you naming rights to the guest bathroom . . . just \$9 will get a toilet named in your honor!

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Denise May--my friend and colleague in the Language and Literature Department at Bucks County Community College

Denise is this year's recipient of the Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching . . . she is just an amazing individual, well-respected by everybody who knows her.

Aside from her teaching responsibilities, she is the College's Academic Success and Reading Coordinator . . . also, she is in the process of helping Bucks attain National Association of Developmental Education certification . . . and for the past several years, she did a great job as Recording Secretary of our Faculty Federation.

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2. FYI

I've long been a fan of Super Orange Emergen-C . . . I drink it each morning and seem to rarely get a cold . . . it's loaded with 1,000 milligrams of Vitamin C for overall health, along with energy-boosting B vitamins and a whole bunch of minerals and electrolytes.

The flavor is pleasant, but personally, I add just a bit of sugar to sweeten it . . . the result is sort of an orangeade taste.

It comes in many other flavors, too . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.emergenc.com/>

You can even get some free samples there . . . just go to "Share the good" to the left.

I used to be able to order directly from the company, but it has since disallowed that practice . . . however, Barbi Hehn (the company's Customer Service Manager) was very helpful in informing me that I'd be better off by checking with online retailers and then suggested some to check.

Was she ever right!

Doing so, I found prices for 36 packs ranging from \$6.64 to \$12.89 . . . some companies even offered free shipping . . . taking that into account, I was able to get the best overall deal from:

http://www.vitaminshoppe.com/store/en/browse/sku_detail.jsp?id=AL-1149

If you buy Emergen-C from a retail store, you'll typically pay about 50 cents per pack.

FYI, part 2

* John in Pennsylvania:

I have set up a myspace site to share information about Bill [Lewis] and for his friends to post messages of support.

If you can, please include the address in your newsletter and pass it on to everyone who knows Bill.

<http://www.myspace.com/welovebillewis>

UPDATE ON BILL LEWIS:

He is doing much better and has just been transferred to the Magee Rehab Center . . . I was able to visit him last week and was impressed by both his smile and good spirits . . . as I left, he blew me away with the message that he wrote out: "Say hi to Cynthia" . . . that's Bill for you; always thinking about other folks . . . a few days later, I heard another Bill Lewis story . . . he was making suggestions to his church on what they needed to do for an upcoming activities.

Speaking of upcoming activities, please "hold" November 13 . . . that will be the date for the event to raise funds for Bill and his family . . . details to follow, but please try to attend and/or make some sort of contribution.

* Art in Pennsylvania:

Could you remind your readership about my Shofar website, which receives about 10,000 hits around this time of the year:

<http://www.geocities.com/afinkle221/>

* Earl in New Jersey (on reducing cholesterol):

You should still take a statin med. It will lower your risk.

* Maria in Pennsylvania:

I too had a recent wake up call with my cholesterol count. While I eat healthy, there's a big difference when you're trying to cut the cholesterol count. Try to stay away from anything processed. I rarely eat anything from a package. Also, you might want to try a grain called quinoa (pronounced Keen-Wa). It's a grain that can be made into a side dish, a breakfast, etc. etc. I cannot eat wheat, so I have to find other whole grains. Quinoa is packed with protein and wonderful vitamins. There's nothing "bad" about it. You can find it in some area stores, and I know it's at the farmers market in Newtown. If you really like it (I know you will), you can buy it in bulk at Wegmans--and for less than half the price of the box version. If you're interested, let me know, and I'll send you some simple recipes.

Also, try replacing your white rice with brown rice and any white sugar you may eat with organic raw sugar. The sugar is still sugar but it doesn't have all the chemicals, etc that white sugar does. And with the brown rice, none of the nutrients are stripped away.

Happy eating!

* Steve in Pennsylvania:

Blaine's Health Watch: a title for your future e-Newsletter?

Sounds like you do what I do, let's call it "selective health watch." It also sounded like you were bragging. You and I love to eat, and I suspect we represent a lot of people. In your quest to be an example, you have a great opportunity to get some info from your nutritionist that might cause others to consider what they do on a deeper level; of course, what we choose to do is what we choose to do.

Ask him what he thinks about Corn Beef and it's potential impacts on you. The idea of the size of the sandwich and the multiple days of eating sounds like you are kidding yourself and you are going back for more!

CLARIFICATION:

Some two weeks, I split a large corn beef sandwich into half. I ate half of the half one night and then a few nights later, the other half of the half. Cynthia had the whole other half.

I haven't had any corn beef since; in fact, I've had very little meat of any kind.

* Ellen in Pennsylvania:

Thanks for sharing your DVDs likes/dislikes. The other day, we unexpectedly stopped at Blockbuster and my spouse who does not know you asked, "What did that guy you get a newsletter from recommend? We like his picks"

You have become part of the family!

Stay well. Great to see your cholesterol is down and you are eating well. Ice cream will become more savored as a weekly treat.

* Robin in Pennsylvania:

Sorry to hear you didn't enjoy VICKY CRISTINA BARCELONA. Although I didn't think it was great, I enjoyed it. You didn't say anything about Penelope. I found the overall message intriguing: knowing for sure what we want vs. only knowing what doesn't work for us.

Also, one of Bardem's best roles is in Julian Schnabel's BEFORE NIGHT FALLS about the Cuban poet Reinaldo Arenas. If you haven't seen it yet, you're in for a real treat. Dark film, amazing performance.

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3. Senility prayer

God grant me the Senility
to forget the people I never liked anyway,
the good fortune to run into the ones I do,
and the eyesight to tell the difference.

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4. Reviews

A. You'll have to look around to find FROZEN RIVER, a grim but powerful indie film . . . yet your effort will be rewarded when you catch this tale of two women who join forces to smuggle illegal immigrants across the Canadian border . . . veteran character actress Melissa Leo delivers a stunning performance that is worthy of an Oscar nomination . . . Misty Upham is equally outstanding in the other leading role . . . rated R.

B. SMART PEOPLE is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #602 follows:

SMART PEOPLE is a dark comedy about the life of a widowed and self-absorbed literature professor who has alienated the rest of his family . . . only after he meets one of his former students is he able to begin taking the steps necessary to move forward in his life . . . I thought the scenes of academic life were very realistic; however, overall, I didn't enjoy the film and as consequently would not recommend it . . . there were very few laughs . . . Dennis Quaid was fine as the professor, as was Sarah Jessica Parker as his girlfriend . . . I was less impressed with the work of Ellen Page; she gave almost a repeat performance of her previous film (JUNO) . . .and Thomas Haden Church, so funny in SIDEWAYS, didn't have enough to do here . . . rated R.

For a much better rental, check out DAVE--a simply delightful comedy from 1993 . . . Kevin Kline plays the title character, a guy who is chosen to stand in for the President when the latter suffers a severe stroke while having sex with one of his aides . . . he winds up doing a better job than expected and while doing so, manages to fall in love with the First Lady (Sigourney Weaver) . . . both Kline and Weaver are extremely watchable . . . in addition, I liked the work of Frank Langella as the manipulative Chief of Staff . . . and look for Ving Rhames in one of his first major roles as a Secret Service agent with a heart of gold . . . rated PG-13.

C. Imagine having the plane to your daughter's wedding canceled . . . you wouldn't be happy camper . . . in fact, you might even write a complaint letter.

That's the premise behind DEAR AMERICAN AIRLINES, a funny but sad first novel by Jonathan Miles . . . his main character, Bennie Ford, winds up trapped in Chicago's O'Hare airport.

So he starts writing a letter--one that never ends . . . it actually runs the full length of the book (some 180 pages) and covers a wide range of subjects, including the joys of sitting in the waiting area chairs:

* Enclosed please find my sciatic nerve. Due to the wear and tear on it from hours upon hours in this miserable fu*king O'Hare seating--these patent-pending O'Chairs--I am sending it to you for speedy repair. A return envelope is also enclosed, which you may address to me care of the wheelchair bank across from Gate K8, Chicago, Ill.

I also got a kick out of how Bernie's mind rambled to include the facility's bathrooms:

* For the past ten minutes or so, among other activities, I've been pondering why airport bathrooms hardly ever feature graffiti. Truckstop bathrooms serve much the same purpose--as pitstops for travelers on the go--yet their walls are almost always festooned with rich commentary. Jesus saves! (The rejoinder: But Satan invests.) Don't look for a joke here, it's in your hand. Please don't toss cigarette butts in the toilet, it makes them hard to light. John 3:16. (Rejoinder: Matthew 3:20--just missed you.) Etc. And my personal favorite, which I saw scrawled on a condom machine in an Allentown, PA, truckstop: Insert baby for refund.

That last one actually had me laughing out loud . . . good thing I wasn't in an airport, in that the folks there would have probably wondered about me.

The author even came up with such investment ideas as the following:

*It occurs to me that those whizbang handheld slot machines might be a good investment for you. Here's how it would work: Passengers would be handed one of the machines with their boarding pass. At the gate, thirty minutes prior to the scheduled departure, everyone would have to take a spin at the very same time. If everyone hits jackpot simultaneously, a massive cheer goes up and the plane departs on time. If not, they wait one hour and try again. The upside for you is that we passengers would bemoan our bad luck rather than castigate you. Fate would get the blame, not the poor attendants who in this scenario will just shrug and smile and bid us better luck next time. Your planes would take off at about their normal rate but the populist heat would be diverted. See? I offer this idea to you

gratis though you should feel encouraged to cite me in the press release. It would make my mother so proud to see me in the business pages. In fact, here's my quote: " 'Americans love gambling, but their main form of gambling--heading to the airport--has been flagrantly rigged for years,' said Benjamin Ford, a transportation consultant who devised the system for the Texas-based airline. 'The Jackpot Take-Off from American Airlines is a game of pure chance, and takes the flying game out of corporate hands and delivers it into the hands of the people.' " Tweak as needed, and you're welcome.

What a concept!

And what a book DEAR AMERICAN AIRLINES is . . . it's the perfect thing to read on your next plane trip.

D. Enjoyed CRIMES OF THE HEART, a play that won the 1981 Pulitzer Prize for drama.

It was very well performed by L.A. Theatre Works, a company that has done several other plays that I've enjoyed over the years.

This one is about three rather eccentric sisters from a small Southern town . . . scandal erupts when Babe, the youngest, shoots her husband . . . how it all ends is what keeps you interested in what's happening.

Glenn Heady and Sondra Locke are particularly fine in two of the main roles . . . and that's why I usually like these productions so much; i.e., unlike typical books on tape (or CD) that feature one or two actors, every L.A. Theatre Works has several different actors for all the key parts.

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5. TV alert

A. RAISING THE BAR is a new drama about lawyers on both the defense and prosecution sides . . . it should be interesting to watch because famed TV producer Steven Bochco (think HILL STREET BLUES and L.A. LAW) is involved with the show . . . Mondays at 10 p.m. on TNT.

B. BEVERLY HILLS 90210, which used to a show I always used to watch with my daughter Risa, has morphed into 90210 . . . Jennifer Garth reprises her role as Kelly Taylor, now grown up and the school's guidance counselor, as does Shannen Doherty as Brenda Walsh . . . Joe E. Tata, my favorite character when it originally aired, even returns as Nat (the owner of the Peach Pit) . . . Tuesdays at 8 p.m. on CW.

C. SONS OF ANARCHY is billed as a "darkly humorous drama" about drug dealers and corporate developers who are the targets of an outlaw motorcycle club . . . I'll watch if for no other reason than two of the stars: Katey Sagal (yes, the same Katey Sagal of MARRIED WITH CHILDREN fame) and Ron Perlman . . . Wednesdays at 10 p.m. on FX.

D. STAND UP TO CANCER is being hosted by Katie Couric, Charles Gibson and Brian Williams . . . this fundraiser for

cancer research features Lance Armstrong, Sally Field, Meryl Streep and many other celebrities, as well as a performance of the all-star single "Just Stand Up" with Mariah Carey, Beyonce, Miley Cyrus, and many more . . . Friday at 8 p.m. on ABC, CBS and NBC.

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6. Weigh-in time

Mary decides to consult a diet doctor. He asks her, "What's the most you've every weighed?"

"One hundred fifty-nine pounds."

"And the least?"

"Six pounds four ounces."

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7. Websites

A. Where is the best place for you to live and/or retire? Take this FREE email quiz to find out:

<http://www.findyourspot.com/>

You'll instantly be provided with a tailored list of the best cities and small towns that fit you . . . I just took the quiz and found that many spots were in Arkansas . . . be curious as to what you come up with--and if you feel it has any validity.

B. Sue in Pennsylvania found this website had some "pretty good" clips to view:

<http://www.mindmovies.com/DownloadPreMades.html>

I agree! In particular, I liked the one on Health . . . but if you're interested, make sure you view the others on Spirituality, Money, Friends and Family, Attracting and Woman, and Attracting a Man.

Make sure your sound is on when you listen.

And you can even get an Ipod version from the Mac side.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blaineworld.net>

If you ever miss an issue or want to find an old one that you may have deleted (perish the thought!), click "Newsletter" the left and then "Past Issues."

This is also a neat way to find a joke to revisit . . . for example, always check Sections 3, 6 and 9 . . . that's where such material typically can be found (though sometimes, it will appear in another section as well) . . . and you may come across an item such

as one that appeared in BLAINESWORLD #484:

News flash

An e-mail computer virus swept across the globe that automatically opens free pornographic websites on the victim's screen.

Authorities intended to track down the hackers responsible for the virus just as soon as somebody complains.

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8. Computer tip

I've been having a lot of trouble lately reaching folks with Comcast addresses (via my AOL email address) . . . at times, the difficulty also spreads to hotmail.com and msn.com users.

It seems that Comcast is blocking some AOL mail as spam.

I've contacted both Comcast and AOL about this problem and been told that it is being "worked on."

On your end, what you can do:

- * Check your spam folder every so often. You'll be surprised that sometimes valuable stuff from me (and others) winds up there.

- * If you have something known as a whitelist, put my address on that; i.e., bginbc@aol.com Also include blainesworld.net. Whitelists let email to automatically come through to your inbox.

- * Forward any email messages you may get from me to your server. Complain about this to them

- * If the problem persists, feel free to also call both Comcast and AOL.

The Comcast number is: 1.800.266.2278; the AOL number is 1.800-827.3338.

You may even want to join me in writing to both companies:

Help Department, c/o Comcast, One Comcast Center, Philadelphia, PA 19113; and

Help Department, c/o AOL, 770 Broadway, NY, NY 10003.

- * Mail to bucks.edu sometimes bounces back for other reasons. When and if that happens, let Doug Burak know as soon as possible. His email address is burakd@bucks.edu.

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9. To improve your writing

So you've always wanted to learn how to write something with a bit more zip than a grocery list? Look no further!

Here are some valuable tips, courtesy of:

<http://www.plainlanguage.gov>

Avoid clichés like the plague—they're old hat.

Parenthetical remarks (however relevant) are unnecessary.

Do not use a foreign word when there is an adequate English quid pro quo.

Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement.

Don't repeat yourself or say again what you have said before.

Be more or less specific.

Proofread carefully to see if you any words out.

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10. A quote I like

Tom Brokaw described his friend and colleague Tim Russert (1950-2008) as "a man who woke every morning as if he had just won the lottery the day before."

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11. Thought for the day

Things that it took me over 50 years to learn

1. Never, under any circumstances, take a sleeping pill and a laxative on the same night.
2. If you had to identify, in one word, the reason why the human race has not achieved, and never will achieve, its full potential, that word would be "meetings."
3. There is a very fine line between "hobby" and "mental illness."
4. People who want to share their religious views with you almost never want you to share yours with them.
5. You should not confuse your career with your life.
6. Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance.
7. Never lick a steak knife.
8. The most destructive force in the universe is gossip.
9. You will never find anybody who can give you a clear and compelling reason why we observe daylight savings time.
10. You should never say anything to a woman that even remotely suggests that you think she's pregnant unless you can see an actual baby emerging

from her at that moment.

11. There comes a time when you should stop expecting other people to make a big deal about your birthday. That time is age eleven.

12. The one thing that unites all human beings, regardless of age, gender, religion, economic status or ethnic background, is that, deep down inside, we ALL believe that we are above average drivers.

13. A person, who is nice to you, but rude to the waiter, is not a nice person. (This is very important. Pay attention. It never fails.)

14. Your friends love you anyway.

15. Never be afraid to try something new. Remember that a lone amateur built the Ark. A large group of professionals built the Titanic.

And this FINAL one:

16. Men are like a fine wine. They start out as grapes, and it's up to women to stomp the cr*p out of them until they turn into something acceptable to have dinner with.

SOURCE:

This list is often attributed to humorist Dave Barry . . . the truth is that he wrote something like it, but not exactly what appears above . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.snopes.com/humor/lists/16things.asp>

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12. Advance planning department

A. Janet in New Jersey:

Together, we begin a more advanced level of work available for Advanced Seekers. I am so honored by those who have begun to work together and are continuing.

Whatever your calling, you have an opportunity to discover a new way of living and working that prevents and cures as you heal others and yourself. Practitioners from all modalities can integrate this work into their individual specialties and lives immediately. This class is one of the preliminaries that build in individual work and/or progressive professional trainings. Being the medicine challenges you to be healed and whole, living health, happiness, truth, beauty, and light. Your energy and body will heal and you will better reflect and be aware of what you can do to assist others in amazingly simple, clear ways.

Being The Medicine for ourselves allows us to bring this to others.

We are gathering at 18 Bank St Suite 300, Morristown, NJ 07960 on Thursday evenings, Sept. 4 & 18 from 7-9 p.m. First and third Thursday nights thereafter. Bank St is Rt. 202 South just off the Morristown Green; Parking Garage across the street is free when you leave after 7 p.m.

\$35. A class session this group is focused on healers and teachers and advanced seekers Bring a notebook, pen, meditation cushion, blanket, and your beautiful intent.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.oasisforthesoul.com>

Or call Janet Straightarow at 973.647.2500.

B. Deborah in New Jersey:

Denise Bonnaig teaches Power Vinyasa Flow Yoga Level 2-3 Mondays at 7:30 p.m. and Mixed Level Power Yoga on Saturdays at 9:00 a.m.

Her new early morning 5:45 a.m. class resumes on Wednesday, September 10!

All courses at Princeton Center for Yoga & Health, Montgomery Professional Center 50 Vreeland Drive, Suite 506, Skillman, NJ

For more information, call 609.924.7294 or send email to: pcyh@mindstsprings.com.

<http://www.princetonyoga.com>

C. Natalie in Pennsylvania:

On Saturday, September 27, the Cultural Affairs Committee of Bucks County Community College invites you to join us for an evening of fun and delight when "Broadway Returns to Bucks" on Saturday, September 27, 7:30 p.m. in the Library Auditorium. Tickets are only \$10.00.

Don't miss Broadway performers, Cris Groenendaal (3rd Phantom of the Opera) and his wife, Sue Anderson (conductor of Cats, Sweeney Todd, etc.) in this Broadway cabaret featuring songs from The Phantom, Sweeney Todd, Sunday in the Park with George, etc.

For tickets, contact Natalie Kaye, 215.968.8015 . . . or you can order via this website:

<http://www.bucks.edu/cultural>

D. Jean in Pennsylvania:

ST ANNE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH at 1545 Easton Road in Warrington PA:

October 4: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. - FLEA MARKET - to reserve your spot, please call 215.491.2988, leave your name and phone number. Space (car length) = \$15, Space plus our table = \$20.

November 8: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. - UKRAINIAN DINNER & HOLIDAY BAZAAR - vendors may call 215.343.3948, leave your name, phone number and product you wish to sell. Table = \$15, Table with electricity= \$20.

Look for our upcoming Nut and Fruit Roll Sales in Nov & Dec and our Cookie Walk on December 20. (Too tired to bake? Come and buy our homemade cookies for the holidays)

For more information, contact Helene Michalko at 215.343.3948.

PS. To my Muslim friends and readers, as you celebrate the beginning of Ramadan, here's hope that your fast be an easy one . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.dol.gov/opa/aboutdol/laborday.htm>

Also, Labor Day is celebrated on Monday, September 1 . . . here's hope that you get to spend it with loved ones . . . by chance if you know little about the holiday and want to find out more, please click:

http://www.jobjournal.com/article_full_text.asp?artid=1241

And please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . make it a great week, too!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#621

8.25.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I saw LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL at the Hunterdon Hills Playhouse in Hampton, NJ . . . this is a dinner-theater that serves tasty meals, along with a great dessert buffet (that we reluctantly passed on).

The shows are often good . . . there's plenty of singing and dancing, accompanied by an outstanding orchestra . . . although we are not typically fans of revues of this type, catch this one if you enjoy such entertainment . . . it features popular music from the past several decades and runs through August 28.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.hplayhouse.com/>

B. We also went with friends to New York City to see Steve Solomon's MY MOTHER'S ITALIAN, MY FATHER'S JEWISH AND I'M IN THERAPY, a very funny one-man show starring Eddie Mekka (of LAVERNE AND SHIRLEY fame) . . . he had us laughing throughout the performance with such lines as these:

* I think I'm indecisive, but now I'm not too sure.

* My grandmother taught me to never go to bed arguing . . . stay up and fight.

* Reform Judaism believes that meat, milk and cheese can only be eaten (together) at a Chinese restaurant.

Mekka stayed afterwards to greet his many fans . . . he signed autographs and, upon a request, did an absolutely perfect impression of Jackie Mason.

I'd urge you to see this production . . . unfortunately, it closed the next day after a very successful run of several years.

C. From there, we proceeded to dinner at Irving's Delicatessen in Livingston, NJ . . . we split a corned beef sandwich (that even carried us through dinner the next night), along with a make-your-own salad . . . we all also shared a delicious order of sweet potato fries--made "crispy," per our request.

Portion sizes are large . . . make that very large . . . all the employees we encountered were friendly, and we enjoyed meeting with both Mark Singer, one of the managers, and Michael Holst, the owner . . . we'll be back.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.irvings-deli.com>

D. Almost two months ago, I got a wake-up call when I had blood work done and found out that my cholesterol was very high . . . my doctor said that before he would put me on medication, I should work with a nutritionist to see if I could naturally lower my cholesterol.

So I took his advance and met (twice, so far) with Scott Laifer, a most knowledgeable diet and nutrition expert . . . he can be reached at 908.281.1090 . . . best of all, the sessions thus far have been covered by my insurance.

Scott has me eating better; feeling better, too . . . I've lost almost a pound a week, and my gut has also shrunk.

I am now eating more protein and, dare I say it, vegetables . . . my water intake has increased, and I've cut down on how many Diet Cokes I had been drinking.

I rarely eat pizza any more . . . ice cream, a formal staple in my diet, has become a one-weekly "special treat" in a very small portion.

And I tend to consume more of the following:

- * Payday protein bars that taste like the candy, but are high in protein and relatively low in carbs;
- * V8 (the low sodium variety);
- * Shelled edamame from VegiLand, a complete protein containing all the essential Amino Acids that's also a great source of fiber; and
- * Fish, as well as fish oil capsules.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Celia, an employee with the New Jersey Department of Pensions and Benefits in Trenton, NJ.

Cynthia called this office recently to ask questions about her upcoming retirement. She was lucky to get Celia as the person who answered the phone, in that to quote Cynthia:

"She helped address many of my retirement and insurance

concerns. She was friendly, patient and informative. All my questions were answered in detail, and Celia came across as being extremely knowledgeable.

"She spent a great deal of time speaking with me and encouraged follow-up questions; in fact, she even recommended that I personally come in when I'm closer to retirement.

"Celia deserves a pat on the back!"

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2. FYI

Take advantage of discounts you may receive for belonging to national organizations . . . for example, when we were last in Asheville, we were able to list Cynthia as a driver on our car rental by just showing our AARP card. . . there was no extra charge . . . many companies are now hitting you with an extra fee for this option.

Other companies give discounts to AAA members, union members, etc.

The key: Make sure you ask if such discounts are available and even if you've been told that the answer is "No," ask again at the time you are making your purchase and/or getting your rental . . . you have nothing to lose . . . at the worst, you may get something extra just because you asked.

FYI, part 2

Several readers asked me what Cynthia was having done to help alleviate plantar fasciitis . . . here's her response:

* I had the shock wave therapy done on my foot . . . my foot had already started getting better, but I had the procedure anyway . . . I am very happy that I did.

I am taking care of it very carefully as they told me to. I do heat on it two times a day. and I massage it two times a day. They told me that it could take from a few weeks, immediately, or even up to a year to improve even with the procedure . . . and that I should not get impatient.

They say they typically show 97% improvement after one year.

* Stephen in Pennsylvania (with an update on Bill Lewis):

First, I know you are keeping Bill in your prayers. I spoke with Diane this evening, and Bill is finally alert enough to know how serious his condition is. He's been able to write.

Let's continue to encourage him in our prayers and cards. Diane didn't say we should not visit, but to check with her first so see how Bill is doing before stopping in. He really needs the encouragement, and visitors should be very helpful to him--even if only for a few minutes at a time. Diane's cell number is 267.574.4003.

KUDOS TO STEPHEN:

He is leading the effort behind an upcoming dinner/program on Bill's behalf . . . details to follow, but if you'd like to get involved as a sponsor or in some other way, please contact Stephen at 215.245.8412 or via email: stephenforbus@comcast.net.

* Terri in Pennsylvania:

I thought I'd send you the link to my recently updated website. Please feel free to forward it to anyone you know who may be interested in selling, purchasing or renting a home in Pennsylvania or New Jersey now or anytime in the future.

I sincerely appreciate your support and referrals. Thank you.

Website:

www.terrivotshomes.com

* Lauren in Pennsylvania:

I am a subscriber to your newsletter and a former student of yours (Marketing), and I work full-time for an excellent moving company.

I work for Reads Moving Systems, Inc.--an Atlas Interstate agent. Our main office is located in Hatboro, Pa, and we have several other offices on the East Coast. We have an office located in Cherry Hill, NJ and would love the opportunity to give you an estimate for your upcoming move --free and no obligation.

Please give us a call at 215.443.2770 and ask to speak with Judy Miles. She can set up an appointment with you for a free estimate.

I have been working for Reads for over eight years now, and I highly recommend my company. We take pride in our work and will give you excellent service from beginning to end!

(Does this sound like a marketing pitch? You were an excellent teacher!)

UPDATE:

Flattery will get you everywhere. We called this company and made an appointment . . . but when the deal to sell our home fell through, we put such a meeting on hold until which time we are sure that somebody who expresses an interest will actually make a firm offer.

* Alex in Florida:

You surely are a voracious reader, Blaine! Where you find the time, with all you do, amazes me . . .

Under 7. Websites, in connection with <http://www.whatshouldireadnext.com>, you recalled THE LAST LECTURE by Randy and said that it was super. I agree.

I believe you'd enjoy Francis Collins' book THE LANGUAGE OF GOD--in my view a truly significant work.

Collins is simply a brilliant scientist. A PhD in Biochemistry, he eventually was assigned to head the Human Genome Project. The result of this endeavor holds enormous promise for breakthroughs in medical

science. For his leadership in this task, he was awarded the 2007 Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Bush. There is no higher civilian award.

As a scientist, originally he was an atheist, as many scientists are. As he studied, he became an agnostic. Ultimately his work in unraveling the human genome led him to a rock solid belief in the existence of an all powerful God--and beyond that to Jesus as the Son of God.

That is why he wrote THE LANGUAGE OF GOD. I think everyone should read this book. It trumps the raucous clamor that science and spiritualism are mutually exclusive. For myself, I have always felt that God created everything from the beginning, up to and including mankind's insatiable desire and ability to reason and explore.

It is a challenge to read. I think not many people have the depth and drive to deal with it.

* Shari in Pennsylvania:

Thank you for sharing the following information with your colleagues:

Position: Management Trainee
Business: Zebra-Striped Whale Ice Cream & Coffee Cafe
Location: 12 S. State Street, Newtown Borough
Hours: Flexible
Responsibilities: Customer service, barista duties, employee supervision

Shari Faden Donahue
Zebra-Striped Whale Foundation
Tel: 215.205.2227
Fax: 215.862.7005

sharidonahue@zebrastripedwhale.com

* Roger in Pennsylvania:

You might want to see the mural we are doing at the Silver Lake Nature Center. I have some photos of the mural on page three of my website:

<http://www.theartfulroger.net>

The Silver Lake Nature Center is part of the Bucks County Park System and is operated by the Department of Parks and Recreation. The center is located in the highly populated southern portion of Bucks County. Major highways and public transportation easily access the Center, a 235-acre complex within the Mill Creek Valley Park system. The lake is the terminus of the Mill Creek, Queen Anne Creek and the Black Ditch Creek Watershed. Because it contains the best protected Coastal Plain woodland remaining in the state, the Center is unique to Pennsylvania as well as Bucks County.

Visiting Silver Lake Nature Center, a 253-acre "natural treasure" in the heart of the southern portion of Bucks County, is an experience to be savored, not rushed. It's a place where lush foliage, accessible wetlands and rich woodlands abound. Where rare and threatened animal and plant species like the Red Belly Turtle, Southern Leopard Frog, and the Maryland Meadow Beauty find refuge and flourish peacefully. Where people of all ages can explore and enjoy a special part of our world.

For more information about the Center, please click:

<http://www.silverlakenaturecenter.org/>

* Pat in Pennsylvania (on switching insurance policies):

Yes, but be sure you are aware of the quality of service they provide! I once switched and went right back to the first company as the "cheaper" policy/company had terrible customer service. I was on the phone for hours.

My time is worth a lot. So in the long run it was NOT a cheaper policy! Be sure you know what service (or the lack of) you will be getting with the "cheaper" price.

IN RESPONSE:

We really had no choice, in that New Jersey Manufacturers dropped us . . . we had been pleased with the service that they had provided us . . . as for the new company we are using, they promise good service--but then again, don't all companies? You really don't ever know until you put in a claim.

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3. Model customer

A factory owner said to a store owner, "Thank you, Mr. Harris, for your patronage. I wish I had twenty customers like you."

"Gosh, it's nice to hear that, but I'm kind of surprised," admitted Harris. "You know that I argue every bill and always pay late."

The factory owner said, "I'd still like twenty customers like you. The problem is, I have two hundred."

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4. Reviews

A. I don't understand the fine reviews of Woody Allen's latest film, VICKY CRISTINA BARCELONA . . . it was terrible, and the only reason that I didn't walk out on it was because I saw it with others.

The story involves two young Americans who spend a summer in Spain . . . while there, they meet a talented artist and his crazy ex-wife . . . they all become sexually entangled, but I did not find the results either erotic or funny . . . boring might be a better description.

About the only watchable thing was Javier Bardem's performance as the artist . . . I don't know if I've ever seen him bomb in anything, though that said, his work in THE SEA INSIDE is still my favorite . . . that's one movie you should go out of your way to catch . . . he was nominated for an Oscar; I was disappointed that he did not win it.

Rated PG-13.

MORE ON BARDEM:

He subsequently won an Oscar for NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN, though I don't recommend you see it because of the subject matter . . . it also got great reviews, but I found it both violent and upsetting.

B. 21 is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #600 follows:

21, the movie, will hold your interest . . . inspired by a true story, it's the story of how a group of the brightest college students in the country took Vegas for millions by a practice known as counting cards . . . I liked it, but found it hard to believe that only Vegas was hit--and seemingly the same casino over and over . . . I would think that it would have made more sense to try different casinos throughout the country . . . Jim Sturgess was fine as the leading card player . . . Kevin Spacey was the Fagan-like ringleader that leads the way in the first half of 21; he then disappears until almost the very end Laurence Fishburne, usually one of my favorite actors, was wasted in his role as the vicious casino employee who attempts to get to the bottom of all the losses . . . rated PG-13, though this is one time that I think that the rating is wrong . . . methinks that it's only appropriate for older teenagers.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT (written after the above review):

21, unlike VICKY, didn't get very good reviews . . . but everybody who saw it liked it . . . count yourself in that group if you decide to rent this flick.

C. Reading STOP ME IF YOU'VE HEARD THIS: A HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF JOKES by Jim Holt reminded me of many papers that my students submit . . there seems to be 142 pages, but after you subtract a bibliography, credits and an index, you are down to 126 pages . . . take away another 24 pages for illustrations, and you're down to 102 pages in a smallish 4.5 x 7 format with very wide margins.

However, don't be put off by what seems to be a lack of material . . . what is presented is interesting, as well as fun . . . and you'll learn perhaps more than you ever wanted to know about such individuals as Gershon Legman (the encyclopedist of the dirty joke), Nat Schmulowitz (the most prodigious joke collector of all time) and Alan Dundes (the "joke professor" of Berkeley who saw a sinister side in elephant jokes).

I kid you not about the latter . . . as the author notes:

* It is no accident that elephant jokes appeared around the beginning of the civil rights movement, he said. Consider the parallels between the elephant and the white stereotype of the black: the association with the jungle, the potential for violence, the idea of unusually large genitals and corresponding sexual capacity. "You can see this even in the seemingly most nonsensical jokes," he said. "Why did the elephant sit on the marshmallow? So he wouldn't fall into the cocoa. That reflects the white person's fear of blacks moving into his neighborhood--they're trying to sit on the white oasis in the chocolate, so to speak. This joke was being told at a time when even liberals felt anxious about the effects of integration." I confessed to Dundes that

I found his interpretation a tad, well, oversubtle. But he insisted that there was plenty of anecdotal data in its favor. "When a psychiatrist friend of mine asked his black secretary if she knew any elephant jokes, she said, 'Why would we tell them? They're about us.' "

Holt also presents a wide variety of jokes, including these:

* There are jokes about musical instruments, especially the viola, which seems to be especially despised in the world of classical music. (Why did the chicken cross the road? To get away from the viola recital. Or, in a more esoteric vein, How was the canon invented? When two violists attempted to play in unison.)

* There are short jokes, some with a single-syllable punch line. (What's brown and sounds like a bell? Dung!) There is even the rare joke consisting of only two words. ("Pretentious? Moi?").

* But what of the pun, widely and perhaps justly regarded as the lowest form of humor? (Vladimir Nabokov, when told by a professor of English that a nun who was auditing one of the professor's classes had complained that two students in the back of the classroom were "spooning" during a lecture: "You should have said, 'Sister, you're lucky they weren't forking.' ") Well, one might say that in wordplay we are enjoying our superiority to language or reason. But now the superiority theory has become elastic to the point of meaninglessness.

STOP ME might not be the funniest book you'll ever read; however, I do believe that with respect to jokes, it will be one of the most thought-provoking.

D. I was drawn to WONDERFUL TONIGHT--written and read by Pattie Boyd--by its subtitle: GEORGE HARRISON, ERIC CLAPTON, AND ME . . . I thought to myself that I had heard of those guys; in fact, I had grown up listening to much of their music.

Yet I had not followed their personal lives all that closely, nor had I known too much about Boyd other than the fact that she had been married to both Harrison and Clapton.

It turns out that she was more than just their respective wives . . . she was also their muse, having inspired Harrison's classic "Something" and "Layla," Clapton's rock anthem.

In addition, she lived a fascinating life . . . WONDERFUL TONIGHT explores it in vivid detail, including this recollection of her first real encounter with Clapton:

* It was a sweet, turbulent life, but one that would take an unexpected turn, starting with a simple note that began "dearest I."

I read it quickly and assumed that it was from some weirdo; I did get fan mail from time to time. . . . I thought no more about it until that evening when the phone rang. It was Eric [Clapton]. "Did you get my letter?" . . . And then the penny dropped. "Was that from you?" I said. . . . It was the most passionate letter anyone had ever written me.

Unfortunately, Boyd had her share of heartaches . . . her childhood was interrupted by the divorce of her parents,

both her famous husbands cheated on her, and she was also abused by Clapton . . . to her credit, she managed to turn her life around and since has become a well-respected photographer.

The author broke a 40-year period of silence with this book . . . I'm glad she did . . . do read or listen to it if you want to know more about the music scene of the 1960s and 70s.

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5. TV alert

A. THE BLACK LIST features 22 prominent African Americans from various professions, disciplines and backgrounds who speak directly into the camera about a number of topics--from childhood inspirations to the evolving American landscape they helped shape . . . among those on the air will be Toni Morrison, Keenen Ivory Wayans, Serena Williams, Chris Rock and Sean Combs . . . Thursday at 8:30 p.m. on HBO . . . for other times, please click:

http://www.hbo.com/apps/schedule/ScheduleServlet?ACTION_DETAIL=DETAIL&FOCUS_ID=637231

B. GLAM GOD WITH VIVIAN A. FOX is a new reality contest that seeks to find the next great celebrity stylist by putting candidates through a series of fashion challenges that include how to dress a Hollywood couple, how to dress a Hollywood "it" couple and how to dress a new breakout band . . . Thursdays at 10 p.m. on VH1.

C. REALITY BITES BACK has Michael Ian Black spoofing AMAZING RACE . . . it promises to be a lot of fun . . . Thursday at 10:30 p.m. on COMEDY CENTRAL.

D. Z-ROCK is a comedy series that follows three friends leading a double life: by night they're a hard-partying rock band and by day they're a kids' party band . . . Sundays at 11:30 p.m. on IFC . . . for repeat showings, please click:

<http://www.tvguide.com/detail/tv-show.aspx?id=8104484&more=ucshowairings>

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6. Poetry corner

A WOMAN'S POEM:

Before I lay me down to sleep,
I pray for a man, who's not a creep.

One who's handsome, smart and strong.
One who loves to listen long,
One who thinks before he speaks,
One who'll call, not wait for weeks.

I pray he's gainfully employed,

When I spend his cash, won't be annoyed.

Pulls out my chair and opens my door.
Massages my back and begs to do more.

Oh! Send me a man who'll make love to my mind,
Knows what to answer to "How big is my behind?"

I pray that this man will love me to no end,
And always be my very best friend.

A MAN'S POEM:

I pray for a deaf-mute gymnast nymphomaniac
with huge boobs who owns a bar on a golf course,
and loves to send me fishing and drinking.

This doesn't rhyme, and I don't give a sh*t.

The End

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7. Websites

A. Book discount airport parking before you arrive at an airport terminal by using the Discount Airport Parking website:

<http://www.discountairportparking.net/>

The parking lots at 54 U.S. airports are located a few blocks or a few miles from the terminals and offer shuttle service.

A recent search found parking for a five-day trip (over a weekend) at Newark Airport lots ranged from \$41 to \$71.25.

It pays to shop around and, also, to read BLAINESWORLD!

B. To bid farewell to Bush, please click:

http://www.jibjab.com/originals/time_for_some_campaignin_

Doing so will enable you to also give Obama and McCain a proper JibJab hazing!

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blaineworld.net>

Should your company or organization ever need a guest speaker, hopefully you'll consider yours truly . . . I very much enjoy making such presentations (having made well over 200 over the past 37 years) and would welcome the chance to come to your place . . . for more information, see "Speaking" to the left and then "Background" and/or "For More Info."

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8. Computer tip

In the case of a major computer failure, try System Restore . . . it just might get you out of the hole.

For it to work, you must have restore points . . . if you don't have them, System Restore may be turned off.

To enable System Restore in XP, click Start > Control Panel. Be sure you're in Classic View in the left pane. Double-click System. Select the System Restore tab. Be sure "Turn off System Restore on all drives" is not checked. Click OK. Close Control Panel.

To enable it in Vista, click Start > Control Panel. In the left pane, be sure you're in Classic View. Double-click System. Select "System protection" in the left pane. In the "Automatic restore points" box, click your drives. Click OK and close the Control Panel.

Assuming you have restore points, you must use a bold-faced date in XP. With Vista, select a date in the table. Just picking out a date will not work.

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9. Olympic comments

Here are the top nine comments made by NBC sports commentators during the Summer Olympics that they would like to take back:

1. Weightlifting commentator: "This is Gregoriava from Bulgaria. I saw her snatch this morning during her warm up and it was amazing."
2. Dressage commentator: "This is really a lovely horse, and I speak from personal experience since I once mounted her mother."
3. Paul Hamm, Gymnast: "I owe a lot to my parents, especially my mother and father."
4. Boxing analyst: "Sure there have been injuries, and even some deaths in boxing, but none of them really that serious."
5. Softball announcer: "If history repeats itself, I should think we can expect the same thing again."
6. Basketball analyst: "He dribbles a lot and the opposition doesn't like it. In fact, you can see it all over their faces."
7. At the rowing medal ceremony: "Ah, isn't that nice, the wife of the IOC president is hugging the cox of the British crew."
8. Tennis commentator: "One of the reasons Andy is playing so well is that, before the final round, his wife takes out his balls and kisses them. . . . Oh my God, what have I just said?"
9. Soccer commentator: "Julian Dicks is everywhere. It's like they've got eleven Dicks on the field."

MY TWO CENTS:

These have been floating around since 2004--it not before. However, I thought you might still find them humorous; i.e., if you accept the fact that some have been around for an even longer period of time. (Dicks, for example, last played in the 200-02 season.) For more information, please click:

<http://www.snopes.com/humor/lists/olympics.asp>

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10. A quote I like

There is only one way to happiness, and that is to cease worrying about things which are beyond the power of our will.--Epictetus (sometime around 55–135 AD), a Greek Stoic philosopher

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11. Thought for the day

Being polite

by Sidney J. Harris (1917-1986), American journalist

I walked with a friend to the newsstand the other night, and he bought a paper, thanking the owner politely. The owner, however, did not even acknowledge it.

"A sullen fellow, isn't he?" I commented as we walked away.

"Oh, he's that way every night," shrugged my friend.

"Then why do you continue being so polite to him?" I asked.

And my friend replied, "Why should I let him determine how I'm going to act?"

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12. Advance planning department

A. Jane Coloccia, author of CONFESSIONS OF AN ONLINE DATING ADDICT, will be one of the authors speaking at New Writers' Night on Thursday at 6 p.m. at Barnes & Noble in West Windsor, NJ . . . for more information, call 609.716.15770.

B. CHANCE TO WIN \$500!

You can do so by coming to my first Marketing class this semester . . . at the same time, you'll learn about the "Four-mula 4 Success" that will only take you 15 minutes to implement . . . Tuesday, September 2, at 6:30 p.m. in Penn 410 . . . FREE, but please email me if you'd like to attend so I can make sure there are an appropriate number of seats.

C. To all comedians, actors, improvisers, real people and storytellers:

Our Louder Than Words story telling events have been successful--at Friendly Grounds Coffee House. Real Stories. Real People. If you have appeared for us before, please contact me for a repeat performance!

I am now looking for tellers for Thursday, September 11th and October 9th for our next "Louder Than Words" storytelling night for Friendly Grounds Coffee House.

And for our new location at Crossroads in Garwood, NJ for Wednesday, September 17th!

For information, please go to:

<http://www.louderthanwordstories.com>

Or contact Joey Novick: Phone, 908.892.6859 or email, joeynovick@earthlink.net.

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PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#620

8.18.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I had an up and down week with respect to our home in Belle Mead . . . on Saturday, we signed a contract to sell it--only to have the buyer back out on Monday . . . so we're back to trying to sell it.

Here's the listing in case you missed it last week:

<http://www.realtor.com/realestate/montgomery+twp-nj-08502-1102149810/>

B. In anticipation of getting our home ready for sale, we have been blessed to work with three fine individuals:

* Anne Marie Eggink, my favorite organizer, spent some time with me to organize my office and get rid of much of the junk I had accumulated over the past few years . . . for more information about her, please click:

<http://www.orderandefficiency.com/>

By the way, on her homepage, you'll see before and after pictures of my previous office.

* Gary Vanaman runs a company called Mr. Everything out of Hamilton, NJ . . . and his company does just about everything . . . he sent over a bunch of workers who did such things as power wash our home, scrub our garage, clean our windows, do miscellaneous repairs, paint touch-up, etc. . . . for more information, call him at 609.689.9159.

* Darlene Brown has been our contact with her husband's company, Paul Brown Landscaping . . . we have used and been pleased with its work ever since we've lived in Belle Mead . . . however, the company really came through for us when it took care of getting rid of all our weeds and mulching our grounds . . . for more information, call Darlene at 908.359.9955.

C. I can't believe all that Cynthia has done to make our home look as good as it does . . . in fact, we kid each other about the fact that we may well now want to stay as a result.

She personally went through all our closets and put together some 25 bags of clothing that we have already donated

to charity . . . what's even more amazing is that she has done this work while recovering from a shockwave procedure she had done to correct plantar fasciitis . . . it seems to be helping, and we have both been impressed by her podiatrist--Dr. Shah.

For more information about this shockwave treatment and Dr. Shah's practice, please click:

<http://www.stopfootpainfast.com/>

D. Lastly, Cynthia in her "spare" time has managed to take care of getting us new auto insurance coverage . . . we had used New Jersey Manufacturers for quite some time . . . that company's prices were reasonable, and the service was excellent . . . however, when they notified us that they were dropping us--can you believe that?--we had to find another company.

Cynthia spent quite some time doing research to get us the best deal . . . by far, AAA/Progressive came out on top, so that's who we chose to handle our auto insurance.

SAVE YOURSELF SOME BIG BUCKS:

Next time your auto insurance is up, make sure you price it out (even if you're happy with your present company) . . . we wound up getting 7 different quotes . . . the price for the exact coverage ranged from \$2,688 to an incredible \$5,031!

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Phil Cooper--president of Cooper Pest Control in Lawrenceville, NJ.

Phil not only heads a very fine, customer-oriented company that provides great service (that I can personally attest to), but he has helped me by being a guest speaker to several of my classes . . . and he has graciously loaned me giant Madagascar roaches that I have used in various presentations that I have given.

In addition, he is the author of WHAT + HOW = WOW, an excellent book on customer service.

However, I've perhaps been most impressed by Phil Cooper because of his work on behalf of the Multiple Sclerosis Society . . . to quote from a recent email he sent me:

As you consider the charities to donate to this year, I hope you will become part of my fundraising efforts for the Multiple Sclerosis Society. Each year, I ride 150 miles in the MS Delaware Valley City to Shore Bike Tour, which goes from Cherry Hill, NJ to Ocean City, NJ and back. The tour is held over two days. When I started riding 15 years ago, I did not understand this disease and I did not know anyone afflicted with it. Now I have friends and family who suffer with MS and I see its devastating affects. I also know of the courage of people who battle MS everyday. Along with my involvement on the bike tour, I serve on the Society's Board of Directors. And it does not end there . . . my company, Cooper Pest Solutions, provides yellow jacket trapping on the day of the event so the 7,500 plus riders do not suffer from bee stings.

Consistent with the Cooper mission of "WOWing our community," we hope to raise over \$25,000 this year.

Another great thing is the success of Team Spin/Cooper Pest, which is taking our efforts to the next level. We have 60 riders on the bike team this year and our jerseys are really cool. If you have interest in riding with us (there are 45 and 75 mile options) and joining the team, please call me at 800.949.2667 x3021, and we will get you more information. We are expecting a tremendous effort this year from all involved and I thank you for your support.

If you'd like to make a contribution:

1. Go to:

<http://www.cooperpest.com>

You will see MS150 CITY TO SHORE on the left side; click "Click Here to Donate."

2. You will go to the MS150 donation web site where you can donate online with a credit card.

3. Click on "Donate to Phil." Your donation will go to my account automatically, and I will be notified by email of your donation.

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2. FYI

Language can be sooooo helpful . . . harmful, too . . . consider times you may say that something is "terrible" . . . I'm trying to catch myself using such adjectives and instead, I'm making it a point to substitute such words as "interesting" or "challenging" . . . I find that when I resist the urge to put value judgments on many things, I can appreciate them better . . . or at least not get annoyed by them.

So next time you find yourself thinking how terrible your job is, consider the fact that many folks don't even have jobs . . .and that your position is interesting and/or challenging.

You'll be amazed by how quickly your mindset will change!

FYI, part 2

UPDATE ON BILL LEWIS from Clark in Pennsylvania (who forwarded this email he received from Suzy in Pennsylvania):

I spoke to Diane this afternoon and received the following update:

Bill did begin to respond a bit over the weekend--he became very agitated, but the family was able to help get him focused and was able to calm him down.

They did end up having to do a tracheotomy, which wasn't ideal, but Bill is unable to breathe completely on his own. Since the breathing tube was going down his throat, the trach is much more comfortable.

Unfortunately, one of the complications from a trach is pneumonia, which Bill has developed. Over the past couple of days, the pneumonia has caused a bit of a set back as Bill is not responding as he was on Sunday. They have been able to identify the bacterial infection, which has enabled the docs to administer the proper antibiotic.

Bill is being fitted for a back brace today that will allow them to prop him up a bit. This will allow the fluid in his lungs to move rather than pool.

I asked about visitors and Diane [his wife] said anytime would be fine.

I learned a little bit more about the accident--apparently there was someone else with Bill who had been holding the ladder. However, Bill decided to climb onto a tree branch to get closer to a higher branch when he fell/or the branch broke--that is still unclear.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO HELP (and missed this information in last week's issue):

A trust fund has been set up to assist Bill & Diane Lewis and their family. If anyone asks what they can do, please tell them that rather than sending flowers or food that they are not home to eat, please consider making a contribution to the fund. Diane is spending \$12 a day to park at the hospital, in addition to paying for gas and buying meals at the hospital.

Checks may be sent to:

Wachovia Bank
Attention: Iris Brown
951 Trenton Road
Fairless Hills, PA 19030

Checks should be made payable to Diane Lewis. Please include in the memo field of the check: "Benefit for Bill."

Cards of support are also appreciated and can be sent to their home; the address is below. Diane is taking the cards to the hospital and reading them to Bill.

Their home address is 1901 Summit Avenue, Oakford, PA 19053.

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3. Instructions

A 911 dispatcher receives a panicky call from a hunter. "I've just come across a bloodstained body in the woods! It's a man, and I think he's dead! What should I do?"

The dispatcher calmly replies, "It's going to be all right, sir. Just follow my instructions. The first thing is to put the phone down and make sure he's dead."

There's a silence on the phone, followed by the sound of a shot. The man's voice returns, "Okay. Now what do I do?"

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4. Reviews

A. Even if you are not a fan of documentaries, give AMERICAN TEEN a chance . . . it is the story of five high school seniors in a small Indiana town . . . you'll really feel like you get to know them, and you'll find yourself caring about them too . . . in addition, you'll wonder what happened to them after graduation . . . fortunately, you find out as the credits roll . . . this is a perfect film for parents to see--and discuss--with their children . . . rated PG-13.

B. MRS. PETTIGREW LIVES FOR A DAY is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #597 follows:

MRS. PETTIGREW LIVES FOR A DAY was, for me, a very long day and one that I could have done without . . . it's supposedly a madcap comedy about a woman in London in 1939 who intercepts an employment assignment for a position she isn't qualified to take; i.e., to become a "social secretary" . . . over the next 24 hours, she guides her employer among the various men in her professional and social life . . . I don't think I laughed once during the entire film . . . Frances McDormand was OK as Mrs. Pettigrew; Amy Adams (so fine in ENCHANTED) was only fair, at best, in the other leading role . . . rated PG-13.

A much better rental would be NORMAL, the story of a rural Illinois man (Tom Wilkinson) who shocks his wife (Jessica Lange) and family, along with friends and coworkers, by announcing he wants a sex-change after 25 years of marriage . . . this is a beautiful,

tender film that will leave you wondering why it was only made-for-TV . . . not rated, but appropriate for mature teenagers.

C. BE FOREWARNED:

The following review has some adult-type language that may offend some readers . . . if that be the case, please skip to the next section of this week's newsletter.

BONK by Mary Roach is a book that is probably not for everybody, in that it deals with the subject of (dare I say it?) S-E-X.

It does so, however, do so in a way that is both enlightening and quite funny in many parts . . . for example, here's how she describes her meeting with one of Egypt's top sex researchers:

* Dr. Ahmed Shafik wears three-piece suits with gold watch fobs and a diamond stick pin in the lapel. His glasses are the thick, black rectangular style of the Nasser era. He owns a Cairo hospital and lives in a mansion with marble walls. He was nominated for a Nobel Prize. I don't care about any of this Shafik won my heart by publishing a paper in European Urology in which he investigated the effects of polyester on sexual activity. Ahmed Shafik dressed lab rats in polyester pants.

There were seventy-five rats. They wore their pants for one year. Shafik found that over time the ones dressed in polyester or poly-cotton blend had sex significantly less often than the rats whose slacks were cotton or wool. (Shafik thinks the reason is that polyester sets up troublesome electrostatic fields in and around the genitals. Having seen an illustration of a rat wearing the pants, I would say there's an equal possibility that it's simply harder to get a date when you dress funny.)

As if that's not enough for you to learn, check out what she has to say about what women find appealing:

* I have a better suggestion for Cutler's customers. Stop wearing cologne. Women don't find it attractive. If you don't believe me, here is a quote from a press release from the Smell and Taste Treatment and Research Foundation in Chicago: "Men's colognes actually reduced vaginal blood flow." Foundation director Al Hirsch hooked women up to a vaginal photoplethysmograph and had them wear surgical masks scented with ten different aromas or combinations of aromas. (to be sure the women weren't just getting aroused by dressing up in surgical masks, Hirsch put unscented masks onto a control group.) In addition to the smell of cologne, the women were turned off by the scent of cherry and of "charcoal barbecue meat." At the top of the women's turn-on list was, mysteriously, mixture of cucumber and Good 'n' Plenty candy. It was said to increase vaginal blood flow by 13 percent.

Though I'm not so sure about that last recommendation or whether I'd ever try it, I do give the author a lot of credit for the research that she did . . . in fact, she sometimes even recruited her husband:

* "Regarding the position," he says when we return in our johnny tops. He wants us on our sides, spoons-style. (This was explained, sort of, in the instruction sheet: We will ask the penis to be inserted into the vagina from his partner's back.) "I think facing the wall is better," says Dr. Deng. As opposed to facing him. "That will be more romantic," he adds. On the wall, someone has hung a painting of a hillside harbor town. As though by looking at it we could convince ourselves that we were off on the Amalfi Coast-or, just as good, that Dr. Deng was. "And I will switch off the lights."

"Where are the candles and soft music?" says Ed.

"Oh, I am sorry," says Dr. Deng, straight-faced, chagrined. Then he brightens. "I can turn on my laptop. I have the soundtrack to Les Miz."

His efforts are sweet though pointless. There is no way to make this situation romantic, normal, sexual. It feels like a medical procedure, something to be got through.

Dr. Deng goes next door and returns with a 9-by-11 envelope and hands it to Ed. Inside is a copy of a U.K. version of Maxim. "This is very erotic," he assures Ed. The implication being, I suppose, that the sight of one's wife in a baggy knee-length hospital Johnny and threadbare socks is not.

I'm still laughing at that description.

There's much to like about BONK, including some great chapter titles . . . I also liked Roach's explanations of scientific studies . . . my only criticism is that the book could have used an index.

D. Heard MASTERING THE ART OF LISTING REAL ESTATE--written and read by Tom Hopkins.

Don't be misled by the title; this program is appropriate for anybody in any field of sales.

Hopkins, author of one of my favorite books on selling (HOW TO MASTER THE ART OF SELLING ANYTHING), is considered one of the nation's top sales trainers . . . I've had the privilege of not only reading his books and listening to his CDs, but also hearing him speak . . . he really knows his stuff and what's more, he presents it in a way that is easy to digest.

I picked up many valuable tidbits from this real estate program; among them:

- * The very great listers--and salespeople--do very little talking. They do lots of intensive listening.

- * You can measure your desire by asking yourself this question: How much pain can you endure before you quit?

- * Leave the office and meet more people.

- * Bring a small piece of danish to an Open House. Put butter on it and keep it on low in the oven to have the smell permeate the house.

- * When they tell you what they want for their house, show no emotion.

And this favorite of mine:

- * A top seller gives people a quart of ice cream to get them off the street.

MASTERING THE ART OF LISTING REAL ESTATE benefits from the fact that much of it was taped before a live audience . . . there was much role-playing, and it never felt contrived . . . also, there's an excellent accompanying CD that provided all the workbook materials that Hopkins would give out at a live seminar.

This fine program is available for purchase or rental . . . if you want to get it, please click:

<http://www.achievementlibrary.com/>

Above is the tape rental club I belong to; i.e., the Achievement Tape Library . . . this a great way to hear CDs and/or audio cassette tapes, view videos, etc.--all for a fraction of what it would cost to buy them . . . call the head of the firm (Paul Arroyo) directly at 1.800.735.3660 and mention my name . . . that way, you'll be sure to pay even higher prices . . . NOT.

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5. TV alert

A. TABATHA'S SALON TAKEOVER is a reality show headlined by SHEAR GENIUS' Tabatha Coffey, in which the bossy Aussie helps hairstylists whose shops are falling apart . . . Thursday at 10 p.m. on BRAVO.

B. THE CHO SHOW debuts on Thursday at 11 p.m. on VH1 . . . it stars comedienne Margaret Cho in a semi-scripted comedy . . . I liked her answer to the TV GUIDE question about whether her husband was going to appear on the show; her replay was, "No, because we want to stay married."

C. DEAR PRUDENCE stars Jane Seymour as a workaholic advice guru who becomes involved in a murder investigation during her vacation at a Wyoming lodge . . . Saturday at 9 p.m. on HALLMARK.

D. NICK NEWS WITH LINDA ELLERBEE spotlights children who are actively campaigning for the candidates . . . though the program is aimed at kids, methinks that their parents will also find it informative . . . Sunday at 9 p.m. on NICKELODEON.

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6. Who said there's no such thing as a dumb question?

The next time someone asks you a dumb question, wouldn't you like to respond like this one person did:

Yesterday, I was at Wal-Mart buying a large bag of Purina dog chow for my loyal pet, Sheriff the Wonder Dog and was in the checkout line when a woman behind me asked if I had a dog.

What did she think I had an elephant? So, since I'm retired and have little to do, on impulse, I told her that no, I didn't have a dog, I was starting the Purina Diet again.

I added that I probably shouldn't because I ended up in the hospital the last time, but that I'd lost 50 pounds before I awakened in an intensive care ward with tubes coming out of most of my orifices and IVs in both arms.

I told her that it was essentially a perfect diet and that, the way it works, is to load your pants pockets with Purina nuggets and simply eat one or two every time you feel hungry.

The food is nutritionally complete, so it works well and I was going to try it again. (I have to mention here, that practically everyone in line was now enthralled with my story.)

Horrified, she asked if I ended up in intensive care because the dog food poisoned me.

I told her no; I stepped off a curb to sniff an Irish Setter's butt and a car hit us both.

I thought the guy behind her was going to have a heart attack . . . he was laughing so hard. And by the way, Wal-Mart won't let me shop there anymore.

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7. Websites

A. If you are constantly getting hoaxes sent to your email account, please click:

<http://www.hoaxbusters.org>

You'll find what's described as the big list of Internet hoaxes and perhaps more importantly, there's good advice as to what you should do when and if you get such email sent to you.

B. If you truly enjoy spending time on the Internet, please click:

<http://www.OneSentence.org>

This is a creative website where you can read real life stories told in just one sentence by others all around the world. These are everyday stories or turning-point-in-your-life stories, boiled down to their bare essentials.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blainesworld.net>

Look to the left (make sure you watch my eyes as you do) and click "Blaine's Best," followed by "This Is True" . . . you'll find out how to subscribe for FREE to one of my favorite online newsletters, THIS TRUE . . . doing so will get you a weekly take on some bizarre-but-true news items that comes with a commentary that is humorous, ironic or opinionated.

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8. Computer tip

To find out how to connect to local businesses for free from you phone (cell or regular), please click:

<http://www.google.com/goog411/>

The video only takes 91 seconds, but it is cool . . . so is this service . . . I just tried it out myself and was impressed how easy it is to operate and, also, how useful; e.g., to locate "movies" in Hillsborough, NJ.

If you want to skip the website and just call for the information that you need, dial 1.800.GOOG.411 . . . or you're like me and need to know what the letters "translate" to, try 1.800.4664.

9. Airline travel in the not-so-distant future

Attendant: Welcome aboard U.S. Airways, sir. May I see your ticket?

Passenger: Sure.

Attendant: You're in seat 12B. That will be \$5, please!

Passenger: What for?

Attendant: For telling you where to sit.

Passenger: But I already knew where to sit.

Attendant: Nevertheless, we are now charging a seat locator fee of \$5. It's the airline's new policy.

Passenger: That's the craziest thing I ever heard. I won't pay it.

Attendant: Sir, do you want a seat on this flight or not?

Passenger: Yes, yes. All right, I'll pay. But the airline is going to hear about this.

Attendant: Thank you. My goodness, your carry-on bag looks heavy. Would you like me to stow it in the overhead compartment for you?

Passenger: That would be swell, thanks.

Attendant: No problem. Up we go, and done! That will be \$10, please.

Passenger: What?

Attendant: The airline now charges a \$10 carry-on assistance fee.

Passenger: This is extortion. I won't stand for it.

Attendant: Actually, you're right, you can't stand. You need to sit and fasten your seat belt. We're about to push back from the gate. But, first I need that \$10.

Passenger: No way!

Attendant: Sir, if you don't comply, I will be forced to call the air marshal--and you really don't want me to do that.

Passenger: Why not? Is he going to shoot me?

Attendant: No, but there's a \$50 air-marshal hailing fee.

Passenger: Oh, all right, here, take the \$10. I can't believe this.

Attendant: Thank you for your cooperation, sir. Is there anything else I can do for you?

Passenger: Yes. It's stuffy in here, and my overhead fan doesn't seem to work. Can you fix it?

Attendant: Your overhead fan is not broken, sir. Just insert two quarters into the Overhead coin slot for the first five minutes.

Passenger: The airline is charging me for cabin air?

Attendant: Of course not, sir. Stagnant cabin air is provided free of charge. It's the circulating air that costs 50 cents.

Passenger: I don't have any quarters. Can you make change for a dollar?

Attendant: Certainly, sir! Here you go!

Passenger: But you've given me only three quarters for my dollar.

Attendant: Yes, there's a change-making fee of 25 cents.

Passenger: For cryin' out loud. All I have left is a lousy quarter? What the heck can I do with this?

Attendant: Hang onto it, it'll probably come in handy later.

Passenger (finally getting suspicious): What for?

Attendant: You may need it later for the lavatory.

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The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.--William Arthur Ward (1921-1994), American author, editor, pastor, and teacher

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11. Thought for the day

The bill of no rights
by Lewis Napper*

We, the sensible of the United States, in an attempt to help everyone get along, restore some semblance of justice, avoid any more riots, keep our nation safe, promote positive behavior and secure the blessings of debt-free liberty to ourselves and our great-great-great grandchildren, hereby try one more time to ordain and establish some common sense guidelines for the terminally whiny, guilt-ridden delusional, and other liberal, commie, pinko bedwetters.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that a whole lot of people were confused by the Bill of Rights and are so dim that they require a Bill of No Rights.

ARTICLE I: You do not have the right to a new car, big-screen color TV or any other form of wealth. More power to you if you can legally acquire them, but no one is guaranteeing anything.

ARTICLE II: You do not have the right to never be offended. This country is based on freedom, and that means freedom for everyone--not just you! You may leave the room, turn the channel, express a different opinion, etc., but the world is full of idiots, and probably always will be.

ARTICLE III: You do not have the right to be free from harm. If you stick a screwdriver in your eye, learn to be more careful, do not expect the tool manufacturer to make you and all of your relatives independently wealthy.

ARTICLE IV: You do not have the right to free food and housing. Americans are the most charitable people to be found, and will gladly help anyone in need, but we are quickly growing weary of subsidizing generation after generation of professional couch potatoes who achieve nothing more than the creation of another generation of professional couch potatoes.

ARTICLE V: You do not have the right to free health care. That would be nice, but from the looks of public housing, we're just not interested in public health care.

ARTICLE VI: You do not have the right to physically harm other people. If you kidnap, rape, intentionally maim or kill someone, don't be surprised if the rest of us get together and kill you.

ARTICLE VII: You do not have the right to the possessions of others. If you rob, cheat or coerce away the goods or services of other citizens, don't be surprised if the rest of us get together and lock you away in a place where you still won't have the right to a big-screen color TV or a life of leisure.

ARTICLE VIII: You do not have the right to demand that our children risk their lives in foreign wars to soothe your aching conscience. We hate oppressive governments and won't lift a finger to stop you from going to fight if you'd like. However, we do not enjoy parenting the entire world and do not want to spend so much of our time battling each and every little tyrant with a military uniform and a funny hat.

ARTICLE IX: You do not have the right to a job. All of us sure want you to have one and will gladly help you along in hard times, but we expect you to take advantage of the opportunities in education and vocational training laid before you to make yourself useful.

ARTICLE X: You do not have the right to happiness. Being an American means that you have the right to pursue happiness--which, by the way, is a lot easier if you are unencumbered by an overabundance of idiotic laws created by those around you who were confused by the Bill of Rights.

* Napper, a self-proclaimed amateur philosopher, ran for the U.S. Senate in 2000 as a Libertarian. Sometimes the piece is incorrectly attributed to Mitchell Kaye, a Georgia state representative from Marietta.

SOURCE:

Widely circulated via the Internet over the years . . . however, I did verify who authored the piece by clicking:

<http://www.snopes.com/language/document/norights.asp>

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12. Advance planning department

A. Drum/Beater Decorating, Potluck, Bonding Ceremony

WHEN: 3:-6 p.m., Drum/Beater decorating
6-7 p.m., Potluck
7:30-9:30, Bonding Ceremony

WHERE: Cyndy "Snake Dancer" Paige's home/studio, 155 Coopers Hawk Lane, Landenberg, PA 19350; 610.274.3109

B. CHANCE TO WIN \$500!

You can do so by coming to my first Marketing class this semester . . . at the same time, you'll learn about the "Four-mula 4 Success" that will only take you 15 minutes to implement . . . Tuesday, September 2, at 6:30 p.m. in Penn 410 . . . FREE, but please email me if you'd like to attend so I can make sure there are an appropriate number of seats.

C. RESOURCES FOR VETERAN ENTREPRENEURS on September 4 at the College of New Jersey . . . for more information, please click:

http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?e=001AtrLYs66NxEcUI-aXEMkfc0EarvKLRPeghEtwmV2ZjihWLqbUbAeCy4f_ggVRU6t1aJntx0xSu4GN9ysolC8gilXMf-k53-tcUzt-c0IJxsJx4q-0aU__hpoKWazOoRvGBRU8G6nYnmVatolsNHHUo_j8qj5OTOoidATXwYJW-c7PCjJPeleQ==

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PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

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#619

8.11.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I have been busy trying to sell our NJ home . . . toward that end, we were lucky to have found an excellent realtor: Patty O'Connell with Burgdorff Realtors in Princeton.

She helped us get our home ready for sale and on the market within just a few days . . . here's the link for more information:

<http://www.realtor.com/realestate/montgomery+twp-nj-08502-1102149810/>

And here's a picture of the place:



The official residence of the "Greenfields of Belle Mead" is in fantastic shape . . . we have just had it both power washed and landscaped . . . anybody who buys it could move right in.

Belle Mead, for those not familiar with the area, is in Central Jersey--just minutes away from Princeton . . . it is part of the Montgomery School District, one of the finest in the state.

B. \$1,000 CASH REWARD!

If you help us find a buyer for the above (who actually makes the purchase

through our realtor), there's a \$1,000 CASH REWARD for you . . . this is NO JOKE!

Just make sure your name is mentioned to Patty, our aforementioned realtor, when your friend/relative/neighbor, etc. makes the call.

C. POSSIBLE GOOD NEWS FOR US/URGENT HELP REQUEST

We have had our house on the market for less than a week, and we already have one offer . . . yet until that becomes finalized, we are still showing it to prospective buyers; hence, the reward is still on the table.

URGENT HELP REQUEST:

We may well be facing the possibility of having to move from our Belle Mead home within the month . . . if that be the case, we're looking for an apartment or preferably a home to rent for the next 6-9 months.

Ideally, it would be at least 2 bedrooms with 1 or more baths . . . a basement would be ideal . . . furnished or unfurnished, though we would probably prefer the latter . . . the place must WELCOME our three cats.

Our desired location: Somewhere in Central NJ (Somerset, Middlesex or Mercer Counties), though we might also consider Washington Crossing in Bucks County, PA.

Any ideas on this matter would be very much appreciated--as soon as possible.

Also, while you're at it, might you have any suggestions for movers?

D. Somehow, we managed to squeeze-in two shows this past weekend . . . on Saturday, we saw MRS. BOB CRATCHIT'S WILD CHRISTMAS BINGE at the Somerset Valley Players Theatre in Hillsborough, NJ . . . this is an absurdist take-off of A CHRISTMAS CAROL that had us laughing . . . yet then again, one of our favorite local actors (James Houston) had a starring role, so that's no surprise . . . he never fails to delight in any role he undertakes.

The limited run ended Sunday, so unfortunately, you won't be able to catch it . . . though do look for the Somerset group's next production, THE BEST LITTLE WHOREHOUSE IN TEXAS, starting September 5 . . . for more information, please click:

http://www.svptheatre.org/Seasons/2008-41st_season/default.html#Whorehouse

On Sunday, we went with friends to the Off-Broadstreet Theater in Hopewell, NJ to see LEADER OF THE PACK . . . this was a musical retrospective, featuring 1960s songs by Ellie Greenwich . . . there's a very slight story, too, though don't go for that reason . . . rather, go to see a young, enthusiastic cast, accompanied by an excellent orchestra.

LEADER runs through August 23 . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.off-broadstreet.com>

From there, we went around the corner to dinner at the Hopewell Valley Inn Bistro and Inn . . . I very much enjoyed my Tilapia Mediterranean with sundried tomatoes (and when did you think you'd ever see me ordering fish?); Cynthia said her broiled seafood combination was quite good . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.hopewellvalleybistro.com/>

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Bill Lewis--chair of the Lower Bucks County Chamber of Commerce's Percolator Committee.

Bill, who is also a sales representative for Steen Outdoor Advertising, is one of those guys who just does whatever he can for anybody and everybody . . . he has been a guest speaker in my classes over the years, and he has also helped countless of my students.

In addition, he is active in his church . . . toward that end, he was helping that organization out on Sunday by getting up on a ladder to cut a branch . . . he fell and was very seriously injured.

He is now at Jefferson Hospital. Kindly keep him and his family in your thoughts and prayers.

PLEASE HELP:

A trust fund has been set up to assist Bill & Diane Lewis and their family. If anyone asks what they can do, please tell them that rather than sending flowers or food that they are not home to eat, please consider making a contribution to the fund. Diane is spending \$12 a day to park at the hospital, in addition to paying for gas and buying meals at the hospital.

Checks may be sent to:

Wachovia Bank
Attention: Iris Brown
951 Trenton Road
Fairless Hills, PA 19030

Checks should be made payable to Diane Lewis. Please include in the memo field of the check: "Benefit for Bill."

Cards of support are also appreciated and can be sent to their home; the address is below. Diane is taking the cards to the hospital and reading them to Bill.

Their home address is 1901 Summit Avenue, Oakford, PA 19053.

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2. FYI

When we stop responding to everyone and everything, we regain the control we can effectively exert. We give up pursuing total control and better use what we have. We learn the wisdom of what a rabbi once said: "Happiness is not having what you want but wanting what you have." We control enough of life to relish what we have. Then we gain dependable joy. As Samuel Johnson said some 250 years ago,

"The pleasures of sudden wonder are soon exhausted, and the mind can only repose upon the stability of truth." Paradoxically, at the core of that "stability" is the acceptance of instability, of change.

This is not the wisdom of just an anonymous rabbi or an eighteenth-century essayist. It is also practical street smarts, the wisdom of, say, the veteran stock picker. Great investors like Warren Buffett don't follow each stock they own minute to minute, day to day or even week to week. They make their picks, then let go of control. They wait a few years and let the stock do the work. They give control to the company they felt good enough about to invest in the first place. And they are never too busy to think.

SOURCE:

CRAZY BUSY (see also Sections 4C, 10 and 11) by Edward M. Hallowell

FYI, part 2

OOPS!

In last week's issue, I reviewed BEYOND SUCCESS! by Brian Biro, but failed to give you any information about this dynamic author/speaker . . . see below:

Brian Biro is America's Breakthrough Coach!

He is one of the nation's foremost speakers and teachers of Leadership, Possibility Thinking, Thriving on Change, and Team-Building. A major client offered the best description of Brian when he said, "Brian Biro has the energy of a ten-year-old, the enthusiasm of a twenty-year-old, and the wisdom of a seventy-five-year-old."

A former vice-president of a major transportation company and the author of 7 books including bestseller, BEYOND SUCCESS!, which reached #71 on the Amazon.com top 100 from over 2 million titles.

Brian was rated #1 from over 40 Speakers at 4 consecutive INC. Magazine International Conferences. With degrees from Stanford University and UCLA, Brian has appeared on Good Morning America, CNN's Business Unusual and the Fox News Network and as a featured speaker at the Disney Institute in Orlando.

For the latest information on Brian's speaking, books, CDs, and other life-changing products, go to:

<http://www.brianbiro.com>

* Scott in Pennsylvania:

Welcome back or should I say baaaaack?

Networkers can contact me via email directly to be added to the monthly networking event email. I've been doing it for over 5 years now, and it's been a great method for keeping my name in front of people long after I've met them at an event.

The best contact networking group (they have one of each industry represented) is Business Network International or BNI. I've been a member

for over 7 years and we generate hundreds of valid referrals every month for each other. Our chapter meets on Thursday mornings at 7 a.m. at Chandler Hall, Newtown. We are actively recruiting, so if you can, please give us a plug. Here are some of the categories we're looking to fill: Printer, Graphics Design/Marketing, Signs, General Contractor, Carpeting, Painter, Roofer, Massage Therapist, Business Advisor/Broker.

For more information, contact me at: srlittle@thirdfedbank.com.

MY TWO CENTS:

Scott's the man . . . if you are in business in Bucks County, Montgomery County or Mercer County, do yourself a favor by getting on this list . . . you won't be disappointed!

* Win in New Jersey:

WWFM, the Classical Network is goin' uptown!

No, we're not going to abandon presenting the best classical music format in the tri-state area . . . no wait, the country . . . possibly THE WORLD!

We are adding jazz on our HD2 channel.

We are looking for volunteer hosts who live or work in the Mercer County area, who have a knowledge of and passion for jazz to come and be part of the team.

Contact Jazz Coordinator, Winifred Howard, at howardw@mccc.edu

* Bridget in Pennsylvania:

As for the Olympics, I can't believe you're not interested!

To make it fun to watch, follow the back stories regarding the small town athletes etc. That is what the competition is about. Torres, the 41 mother . . . or the 14 yr old British boy who is diving, the American world beach volleyball champions upset by some tiny country, 2 unknowns who are coached by their dad, Phelps and the relay race last night winning against the French favorites by a fingertip, etc.

All the countries with athletes living their dreams or the refugee who carried the flag during the opening ceremony.

There is only one event I will not watch and that is basketball. Overpaid, spoiled spoilt athletes who shouldn't even be in the Olympics!

* Kathy in Florida:

As you know, THE SECRET asks you to create an inspiration board, which I did about a month ago. I put a picture I found online of a scale with a woman's feet on it and I wrote my target weight on that scale with a black Sharpie and put the picture on my corkboard. It's in my bedroom where I can see it every day.

About two weeks ago I found a great deal on a new scale. My other one was rusty and much the worse for wear. It arrived and it's great. Last night as I was looking at my inspiration board, I noticed something. The scale in that picture is exactly the same as the scale I just bought. Now I just have

to wait for that number to show up on the mark, and I'll be all set. LOL!

* Delores in Pennsylvania:

It is hard to believe that one year has passed since I was involved with the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's Team in Training Program. My goal was to complete a 26.2 mile run (marathon). Due to bronchitis, I was only able to complete a half marathon which is 13.1 miles.

On October 19, 2008, I will embark on a journey to accomplish my goals that I attempted last year. I am making this commitment to honor family members and anyone who is battling lymphoma or any other type of blood related cancers. My goal is to raise \$4500 dollars for this amazing cause by August 20th. I will run in memory of my family member, friends and others who have lost their lives to cancer. Their courage has given me strength to commit to running a second marathon and to raise funds to help make a difference in not only supporting and honoring their lives, but all of those young and old who are faced with the challenge of overcoming these diseases.

PS. If you have someone that you would like me to run in honor and/or in memory of, please forward me their names. It would be my pleasure to wear his/her name on my race day shirt.

You can donate online by clicking:

<http://pages.teamintraining.org/nnj/nikesf08/dchalmers>

* Terry in New Jersey (and Florida):

You probably read it already since you are such an avid reader, but this book was absolutely wonderful!

THOSE WHO SAVE US by Jenna Blum

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3. My share

Trying to do my share to help the environment, I set up a trash basket at school and posted this suggestion: "Empty water bottles here."

I should have been a little more specific. When I went to check it later, I didn't find any bottles in it. But it was full of water.

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4. Reviews

A. I dare you not to laugh at STEP BROTHERS, a comedy about two deadbeat man-children thrown together when their single parents marry . . . Will Ferrell and John C. Reilly are both hilarious in the title roles . . . and though the film drags in the second half, the ending pulls things together nicely . . . there's also one scene that I can't describe in BLAINESWORLD (this being a family publication) that if you see it, you'll long remember it as being one of the funniest--grossest, too--that you'll ever see . . . rated R.

B. THE BANK JOB is a thriller now out on DVD . . . the story, inspired by the infamous 1971 robbery that took place at the Lloyds Bank in London, is exciting just for its details of the heist . . . however, what made this film so outstanding were the many sub-plots involving high-level corruption, murder and sexual scandal that were taking place in England at the time . . . all the actors were quite believable, but I most enjoyed the work of Jason Statham as the head of the gang . . . rated R.

C. Sometimes a book's title will grab me . . . such was the case with CRAZY BUSY (see also Sections 2, 10 and 11) by Edward M. Hallowell.

That certainly describes how I often feel . . . consequently, I picked up the to see what the author had to say about the subject.

The key came very early in my reading . . . as he notes Hallowell notes on page 5:

* If you're busy doing what matters to you, then being busy is bliss. You've found a rhythm for your life that works for you. This world is bursting with possibilities; its energy can be contagious. If you catch the bug, you want to jump out of bed each day and get busy, not because you are run ragged by details or because you are keeping the wolf from your door, but because you are in love with this fast life. At its best, modern life dazzles us, giving us a chance to get more done in a minute than used to get done in a month.

But if being busy keeps you from doing what matters most to you, or if it leads you to do things you deem unwise, like getting angry at a rotary telephone, then being busy is a problem.

Then there was this example that made me stop and think; laugh, too:

* Life these days is kinda weird. Lingering is a lost art. Such is our hurry and our need for constant stimulation that a modern romantic conversation might go like this:

"I love you."

"Oh, good, Now, what's your point?"

Everyone's this busy not (usually) because they want to be or planned to be, but because they can't find a way not to be and still keep up. Being extraordinarily busy-and at times frantic-appears to be the inevitable, uncontrollable consequence of living in today's world. If being busier than I'd like to be is the price I have to pay, most of us seem to say, then so be it. After all, modern life is worth it. Life's never been this exciting.

Fortunately, CRAZY BUSY didn't just point out the problems that many of our face in our hectic lives . . . it offered many doable suggestions as to what can be done about them, such as this one:

* Clutter is one of the major forces (along with the rush, gush, and worry that have to be managed lest they not only distract but overwhelm you. You have to work at clutter every day or it will win you out. One of the best strategies is the acronym OHIO-only handle it once (whatever it is). File it, shelve it, hand it up, use it, respond to it, or throw it away.

I also liked this bit of advice from Hallowell:

* Don't spend more time than you must to get good at what you're bad at or don't like.

So on that point, let me conclude my review of this excellent book before I spend any more time on something that I don't like doing; i.e., writing more than you care to read!

D. Though Newt Gingrich is no longer an elected political official, he remains active as both a political analyst and consultant, and he continues to write books on many topics--including historical fiction.

Yet it was his past experience as Speaker of the House of Representatives that most interested me . . . so when I recently had the opportunity to get hold of LESSONS LEARNED THE HARD WAY--written and read by the author back in 1998 when he was Speaker of the House of Representatives--I jumped at the chance to hear what he had to say about a variety of topics.

These were just some of the highlights:

* In the short run, the public can perhaps makes things difficult for you. But in the long run, they are the best and most reliable judges for what they really need.

* The earned income credit program has a 21% rate of error. There are two problems with this. It teaches people to commit fraud. And it points out the double standard of the IRS; i.e., you need to be 100% accurate, but they only need to be 80%.

* We should have one focused border agency.

* Any foreign government willing to take on the drug dealers should get all our support.

* We should adopt a national goal that everybody should be able to read and right by the end of Grade 1.

And there was this one recommendation that I wholeheartedly support:

* I believe we should set the peace-time level for taxes at all levels of government at 25%.

What I particularly liked about LESSONS LEARNED was how Gingrich took on both Republicans and Democrats in his criticism of the workings of government . . . in addition, he just didn't criticize what's wrong; he made suggestions for improving the system.

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5. TV alert

A. SESAME STREET begins its 39th season on Monday at 8 a.m. on PBS . . . this year, the goal is to make math fun with such parodies as "Preschool Musical" and "30 Rocks" . . . guest stars will include Jack Black, Jessica Alba, David Beckham, Heidi Klum, Neil Patrick Harris, Randy Jackson, Sandra Oh, Jenny McCarthy, and newsman Brian Williams.

Make sure you check the above listings . . . PBS times and stations often vary.

B. KATHY GRIFFIN: MY LIFE ON THE D-LIST has Kathy and the other members of her team visiting the scandal-plagued Walter Reed Army Medical Center in the season finale of the show . . . Thursday at 10 p.m. on BRAVO.

C. MYTHS AND LEGENDS marks the 31st anniversary of Elvis Presley's death by repeating a 2007 episode, which recall milestones in the King's life and debunks some Elvis myths . . . Saturday at 8 p.m. on TV LAND.

D. KUNG FU KILLER stars David Carradine and Daryl Hannah as, respectively, a martial-arts master and lounge singer who team up in 1920s China to take down a crown lord . . . Sunday at 10 p.m. on SPIKE . . . this two-part TV-movie concludes Monday.

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6. Hunting

A father and son went hunting together for the first time.

The father said, "Stay here and be very quiet. I'll be across the field."

A few minutes later, the father heard a blood-curdling scream and ran back to his son. "What's wrong?" the father asked. "I told you to be quiet."

The boy, bless his heart, answered, "Look, I was quiet when the snake slithered across my feet. I was quiet when the bear breathed down my neck. I didn't move a muscle when the skunk climbed over my shoulder. I closed my eyes and held my breath when the wasp stung me. I didn't cough when I swallowed the gnat. I didn't cuss or scratch when the poison oak started itching.

"But when the two squirrels crawled up my pant legs and said, 'Should we eat them here or take them with us?' . . . well, I guess I just panicked."

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7. Websites

A. If you're looking for a restaurant where you can get a healthy/nutritional meal, please click:

<http://www.healthydiningfinder.com>

This website provides a centralized resource for identifying the healthier choices and corresponding nutrition information from restaurants nationwide. This is most useful for those who may have a strict diet and are looking to dine at without having to worry about whether something is unhealthy.

Hooter's was even listed . . . can get such items there as steamed shrimp,

a dozen raw oysters, snow crab legs, garden salad, grilled chicken salad, and a grilled big fish sandwich.

I knew there had to be some reason why I always liked that place!

B. For anyone who enjoys reading books, please click:

<http://www.whatshouldireadnext.com>

This is a great resource where viewers can find books that will relate to their interests in reading. After simply typing the name of a book you've enjoyed reading, this website provides a listing of suggestions that you'll find on target.

I tried it out myself, submitting one of my favorite recent books: THE LAST LECTURE by Randy Pausch . . . among the suggestions I received were the following:

LOOK ME IN THE EYE by John Elder Robinson, RULES OF DECEPTION by Christopher Reich, TURTLE FEET by Nikolai Grozni, and TWEAKED by Patrick Moore.

To get even more accurate recommendations, you'll need to register.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blaineworld.net>

If you've never seen pictures of Cynthia, my daughter Risa, etc., feel free to click "Blaine's Best" to the left and then "Pictures" . . . make sure you have your sound on, too, so you can listen to the what's arguably considered as the top song of all time!

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8. Computer tip

For a FREE full-featured office suite that's compatible with Microsoft Office, please click:

<http://www.openoffice.org>

You'll get word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, drawing, and database applications . . . in addition, you'll even have the ability to create .pdf files when you want to guarantee what recipients sees on their computer.

The above is available not only for Windows and Mac computers, but also for Linux and other operating systems.

An offshoot of it, written specifically for Mac computers, is:

<http://www.neooffice.org>

A newcomer for word processing is:

<http://www.docs.google.com>

This is a free offline suite of programs from the maker of the market-leading Google Internet search engine . . . unlike traditional computer programs, Google Docs is a Web application, which means you run it from within your Web browser.

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9. Professional ethics

After attending a conference on professional ethics, four psychiatrists walked out together. One said, "You know, people are always coming to us with their guilt and fears, but we have no one to go to with our problems. So why don't we take some time right now to hear each other out?" The other three agreed.

The first psychiatrist confessed, "I have an almost uncontrollable desire to kill my patients."

The second psychiatrist said, "I find ways to cheat my patients out of their money whenever I can."

The third followed with, "I'm involved in selling drugs and often get my patients to sell them for me."

The fourth psychiatrist then confessed, "You know, no matter how hard I try, I can't seem to keep a secret."

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10. A quote I like

Have a human moment a few times a day if you can. Speaking to a live human being helps clear the mind of cobwebs. Just make sure you like the person you have the human moment with.--Edward M. Hallowell in CRAZY BUSY (see also Sections 2, 4C and 11)

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11. Thought for the day

As you can see by my having cited CRAZY BUSY (see also Sections 2, 4C and 10) by Edward M. Hallowell on three separate occasions in this week's newsletter, I REALLY liked the book . . . so much so, in fact, that I wanted to also share this fourth passage with you:

"Multitasking" refers to a mythical activity in which people believe they can perform two or more tasks simultaneously as effectively as one. To appreciate how faulty this notion is, consider how you behave in your car when you get lost. As you focus and try to get your bearings, one of the first things you do is turn down the radio. Why? Because you want to pay single-minded attention to the task of finding your way. The second "task" of listening to the radio detracts from the attention you can pay to the task of finding your way.

Or imagine playing tennis. You hit the ball and immediately get ready to make your next shot. You focus single-mindedly on the ball; the better

the player you are, the more focused you become. You put all your energy, experience, instinct, and thought into each shot as well as the shot you plan to hit next and what you imagine your opponent will do. The game becomes mental as well as physical, like human chess.

Now imagine playing tennis with two balls. You have to keep track of both, running each down, watching your opponent do the same, as you frantically try to keep two balls in play at once. There is no way your game with two balls, could be as good as your game with one.

Multitasking is like playing tennis with two balls, or three, or four. Some people say they pay better attention when they multitask. For a person to do better performing two task at once, it must mean that she was not fully engaged with the first task and needed two tasks to get her adrenaline flowing, thus boosting her performance. While this can happen, it would make more sense to try to fully engage with the first task. . . .

There is an exception. You can ride a bicycle and ponder quantum mechanics at the same time. If you're good, you could ride a bicycle and mix pancake batter at the same time. This is because the riding of the bicycle is done on automatic pilot. You have practiced riding bikes long enough for the skill to be embedded in your brain's automatic pilot, the cerebellum.

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12. Advance planning department

A. Comedy lives in both Pennsylvania and Delaware!

* For Bucks/Montgomery County:

TV TAPING FRIDAY NIGHT and other great shows

<http://www.comedycabaret.com/doylestown.html>

* For Greater Northeast Philly:

#1 Sports Comic JOE CONKLIN and other Funny Nights

<http://www.comedycabaret.com/northeast.html>

* For South Jersey:

Ventriloquist TAYLOR MASON coming and other great shows

<http://www.comedycabaret.com/cherryhill.html>

* For Delaware:

We will be back in September at the Baby-Grand

<http://www.comedycabaret.com/delaware.html>

B. BRADFORD HAYES QUARTET will be performing jazz for FREE at the Princeton Public Library on Monday, August 11, at 7 p.m. . . . for more information, call 609.924.9529 or please click:

<http://www.princetonlibrary.org>

C. After receiving an amazing 17 Perry Award nominations in 2008 for various outstanding accomplishments in community theatre, Maurer Productions OnStage is ready to unleash another puppet-filled production featuring a certain tubby little cubby all stuffed. That's right, OnStage will present A WINNIE-THE-POOH BIRTHDAY TAIL from August 15 through August 24 at the Kelsey Theatre, Mercer County Community College, West Windsor, NJ.

Designed and built over several months, the puppets are presented in the Japanese style of Buraku. "The puppeteers are not hidden behind walls or under the floor," said Maurer. "They are on stage with their puppets."

Tickets are \$8 for children and seniors and \$10 for adults. To buy tickets online, please click:

<http://www.vendini.com/erd.php?id=6211645&cid=7564&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.kelseyatmccc.org>

D. Newtown Presbyterian Church seeking cast members of all ages for its production of BRIGADOON in November. Audition will be held 6:30 p.m. on August 24 at the Newtown Presbyterian Church in Newtown, PA.

If interested, contact David Yantz at 215.493.2861 or DirctrDave@aol.com.

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PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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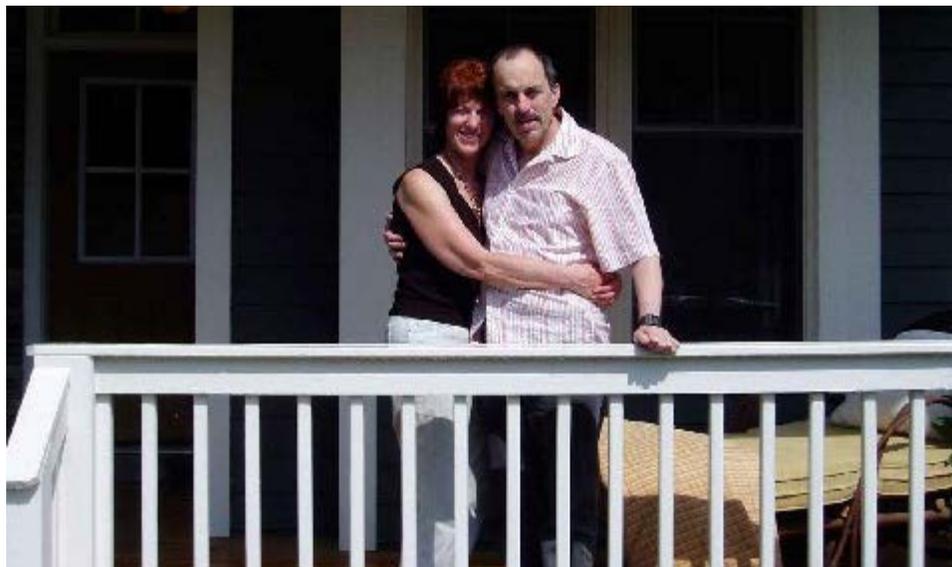
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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I returned from our vacation in Asheville . . . we had a most enjoyable time and, as reported in last week's issue, we wound up buying a townhome.

Here's a better picture than you saw in BLAINESWORLD #617--a view from the front:



And here's one from the back:



B. As you can imagine, much of our vacation was spent taking care of the details of home buying . . . yet we still managed to see three shows while there:

* We saw ALL SHOOK UP at the Flat Rock Playhouse in Flat Rock . . . this is a musical, featuring songs by Elvis (with some excellent arrangements) and a slight but amusing storyline . . . we then saw NOISES OFF at the Parkway Playhouse in Burnsville . . . this is an English farce that was very well done by the ensemble cast . . . and the last show we saw, KISS ME KATE, was perhaps our favorite . . . it's the classic Cole Porter musical that was performed with great enthusiasm by all members of the cast . . . we were particularly impressed by the building that housed it: the beautiful Haywood Arts Regional Theatre in Waynesville.

We also visited the following:

* Biltmore House, America's largest house . . . the dining room seemed to be as large as the entire first floor of our new home.

* Carl Sandburg's home . . . it was also quite something, though on a much smaller scale . . . if you go, try to visit on one of the days that there's a performance about his life in the nearby park . . . this added greatly to our enjoyment of the subsequent tour.

* North Carolina Center for Creative Retirement, run by the University of North Carolina Asheville . . . I see us taking many courses there and perhaps teaching some, too.

* Hot Springs Resort and Spa where we had a luxury soak, followed by a massage for the both of us.

* Bele Chere, a weekend celebration that's attended by some 300,000 visitors . . . there's continuous music . . . we also got a kick out of a dog jumping competition.

* Congregation Beth HaTephila where we attended the

first service performed by the new rabbi.

* The Jewish Community Center, the only such facility in a town with as few people as Asheville has.

* The Asheville Movement Center where Cynthia had a Feldenkrais session with Lavinia Plonka.

* And then there were such eateries as the Black Forest Restaurant, Perk's, Fiore's, Thai Basil, Bogart's, The Bier Garden, The Purple Onion, O'Naturals (a fast food restaurant that serves only natural, organic foods), and EarthFare (an organic supermarket that had about the best salad bar/fresh cooked food section that we've ever seen) . . . I can't recall a bad meal the entire time we were there!

C. Perhaps our most unique experience was discovering something known as the Mingun Massage Bed . . . there was one where we stayed at, so both of us got to use and enjoy it . . . we then found the local store where they were sold:

<http://migunofasheville.com/>

Visiting it was surreal . . . you can't even experience the massage until you go through a 30 minute orientation . . . then you can come as often as you want for as long as you want at no charge.

Using this Bed supposedly is good for just about everything: bad back, cholesterol, high blood pressure, you name it . . . we got a kick out of how they describe any negative side effects you may encounter: the rebound effect . . . to get rid of it, naturally, you just have to continue using the Mingun Massage Bed more!

MR. CURIOUS HERE:

We're contemplating buying this product for our home . . . by chance, any reader have one? If so, your reaction to it? Or if you don't actually have one, have you ever gone to a store similar to the above? What's your opinion?

D. Asheville continues to amaze me by how friendly the people are . . . I can't possibly name all the folks who made a positive impression on us; however, just some of them included the following:

* Ralph Julian who did our home inspection.

* Warren Fluharty who will be our interior decorator.

* Phil Murphy who runs a unique company called Household Management, which provides people with "less stress and more time."

* Kyle Chapin who gave us a chair massage one day.

* Two of our new neighbors, Scott and his Uncle Harry, who we already feel closer to than anybody in our Belle Mead neighborhood.

* And Jason Diehl with Alamo who went out of his way to solve a relatively minor problem we were having with our car rental.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to both Carole and Brian Biro--our hosts on our aforementioned visit to Asheville.

We did not know them prior to our visit . . . Cynthia had somehow found them on the Internet at this website:

<http://www.homeforexchange.com/>

Go to Advanced Search, then type-in 4499 in the Property ID box . . . you'll see a house even more impressive than its description.

Though our goal was not to exchange our home (we may well be interested in this in the future), the Biros made the entire bottom floor of their home available for our two week vacation . . . included was use of the sauna, hot tub, Mingun Massage Bed, laptop, etc.

They were as gracious hosts as we've ever encountered and made us feel most welcome . . . Carole even invited us one day to join her in a Celebration of Life at the Center for Creative Living in Asheville . . . we found the experience to be quite impressive.

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2. FYI

Early in his career, Coach Wooden had many rules and a few suggestions. Through the years, he gradually switched to having very few rules and many suggestions. One of the most important rules he maintained throughout his career concerned unselfishness. Whenever a teammate threw a key pass, set a tough screen or hustled to help out on defense, Wooden expected the player who benefited to immediately acknowledge the effort with a nod, a word of thanks, or a thumbs-up sign. This kind of recognition for unselfish teamwork became automatic on UCLA teams. Coach Wooden realized that although only one person puts the ball in the basket, several players contribute to create the opportunity.

The same is true in every facet of business. When a sales representative makes a presentation to an important client, the marketing, operations, administration, production, and research and development teams have all participated in making that presentation possible. It is essential that appreciation and acknowledgement for behind-the-scenes support be conditioned into the heartbeat of your organization. Not only does such recognition fuel even greater positive effort and energy in those around you, it also helps keep you constantly aware of how important your teammates' contributions really are.

By conditioning unselfishness into our organizations and our own hearts, we create a fertile environment for growth and development of several of the 15 Secrets, including self-control, initiative, industriousness, loyalty, friendship, cooperation, and team spirit. Unselfishness is the ultimate connector.

SOURCE:
BEYOND SUCCESS (see also Sections 2, 4C and 11)
by Brian D. Biro

FYI, part 2

Yours truly now has two homes for sale . . . they are:

* Our present residence in Belle Mead . . . 4 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, great backyard view, and lots more to tell . . . we'll have it listed by next week; however, in the interim if interested, send an email to me at bginbc@aol.com . . . put BELLE MEAD HOME in subject line . . . to note: there's also a CASH REWARD to anybody helping me move this property in a timely fashion.

* My mother's apartment in Floral Park, NY . . . see below for more information:

A SPECTACULAR RENOVATED 1 BEDROOM, 1 1/2 BATH. LARGE LIVING ROOM, SLIDING GLASS DOORS AND BALCONY. SUNNY GOLF VIEWS. SEPARATE DINING ROOM / DEN. HUGE MASTER BEDROOM. INCREDIBLE OUTFITTED CLOSETS. HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE. BUILDING # 1. INCLUDES INDOOR PARKING. \$569,000.

You also get access to all stores downstairs, including a bank, restaurant, movie theater, supermarket, cleaner's, drugstore, health club, etc. . . . golf and/or tennis memberships are also available at a very reasonable extra cost . . . and there are both indoor and outdoor pools . . . for more information about the overall community, please click:

<http://www.northshoretowers.com>

To find out more about the apartment, call Annette Kroll at 718.631.8867 . . . make sure you let me know if you or somebody you know contacts Annette, so that if there's a sale as a result, I can get you a CASH REWARD . . . this is no joke!

* Faleen in New Jersey:

I think you made an error in the last newsletter . . . you didn't send a picture of your home; you sent a picture of what looks like a roadside store that you may have gone to . . . please double check.

I DID DOUBLE CHECK; MY FINDINGS:

Yes, that's our home (in BLAINESWORLD #617) . . . however, because you couldn't see the home close up, I can see where there may have been some confusion . . . hopefully, the pictures in Section 1 of this week's issue will present a clearer view.

THANKS to the many readers who wrote to congratulate us on our move; among them:

* Rabbi Katz in New York:

Reba and I wish you the very best of joy, good health, and fulfillment in your new home to be. You deserve every bit of sunshine that will enter your lives. We bless you.

* Rabbi Glazer in Colorado:

Mazal Tov on your new home!

One of these days, your rabbi will call and say: we're coming.

* Walt in Pennsylvania:

Congratulations on your new home. We will put you on our visit list when we take a road trip south.

MY HOPE:

That many of y'all will come to see us . . . the welcome is always there . . . you'll like the area, too . . . you might even like it so much that you'll decide to come join us as our neighbors.

* Brian in Pennsylvania:

Welcome home and congrats on the new place.

* Robin in Pennsylvania:

Congratulations on your new place in Asheville. Happy for you, not happy for the rest of us who will miss your big presence in the NJ/Bucks area!

MY TWO CENTS:

I'm not that big; in fact, 5' 7" in my stocking feet . . . though truth be told, I'm a rather tall 5' 7" . . . most who see me think I'm at least 5' 7 and 1/4"!

* Chuck in New Jersey was one of many readers who inquired about my future teaching plans:

Congratulations on your new home! It looks great. For all that I've heard Asheville is a wonderful area. Also, good luck on selling your home.

Does this mean you won't be teaching this fall?

MY RESPONSE AND ONLY REGRET:

Bucks County Community College can't get rid of me thaaaaat quickly. I'm teaching a full load in the fall semester, then I'm on sabbatical in the spring--but am still planning to be around.

My only regret is that because of the need to get our New Jersey home on the market, as well as several planned trips to North Carolina in the fall, I will NOT be able to go forward with my planned jazz show on WWFM, Jazz on 89.1, HD2, Trenton, NJ.

That said, plans for the station continue to move forward. Win Howard, one of WWFM's producers, is doing a great job on getting things ready for the fall launch.

Win is also looking for jazz buffs who might be interested in hosting various shows she is planning, including "Jazz, Jersey Style" (the one I was going to host). Should you be interested in the possibility of hosting a show, please contact Win at once. Your best bet is via email:

howardw@mccc.edu

Feel free to mention my name . . . and put in subject line:
INTERSTED IN POSSIBLITY OF HOSTING A SHOW.

* Edina in New Jersey emailed the following youtube clip about a benefit that she attended with her husband Tunc:

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=BG-qg49ZMCA>

Watch closely, and you'll see both Edina and Tunc--our good friends--in the very beginning . . . you'll also see mention of their company (Saras).

* Sue in Pennsylvania:

I just heard something interesting . . . seems that if you eat coarse sea salt (which tastes very good on food), you can eventually reduce thyroid medication . . . my sister has been having some great results . . . may not be great if you have high blood pressure . . . but I know you have thyroid issues, so maybe something you might consider . . . your readers may want to know it, too . . . here is the website:

<http://www.celticseasalt.com/>

* Pat in Pennsylvania:

I did try the Starbucks new drink. I tried the chocolate one. It was OK, but it still is like 270 calories. Try water. It's cheaper, less calories and offers you more. And its not fattening!

As far as E-greeting cards, try these. Not sure if you have these or not. See below:

<http://www.hallmark.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/home%7C10001%7C10051%7C-1?landingPage=homepage>

<http://www.beatgreet.com/redirect.html>

<http://www.egreetings.com/>

http://www.123greetings.com/thank_you/everyday/

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3. Sigmund lives!

A Freudian slip is when you mean one thing and say your mother.

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4. Reviews

A. Don't believe the mostly negative reviews you may have seen and/or heard about SWING VOTE . . . it is a funny film about a loser who suddenly is cast into the limelight when his one vote will determine the election for our next president . . . yet it's also a heartwarming one, in which Kevin Costner--giving his best performance years--is the single parent to a precocious pre-teen . . . though I'm a big Abigail Breslin fan, it was good to see this later role go to newcomer Madeline Carroll . . . she was outstanding . . . rated PG-13.

B. There's nothing much out currently on DVD that I can recommend,

so I'll instead go to an older flick that just got released: CROCODILE DUNDEE . . . it's a fish-out-of-water tale about an Australian bush ranger who when attacked by a crocodile, kills it with his bare hands . . . a New York reporter gets hold of the story and eventually has the ranger accompany her back to New York . . . Paul Hogan in the title role was great, as was Linda Kozlowski as the reporter who falls in love with him (in real life, too) . . . I remember laughing out loud at several scenes; so much so, in fact, that I just put it down on my list of films that I want to revisit in the near future . . . I'm only disappointed that Kozlowski only appeared in two sequels to CROCODILE DUNDEE, both of which were terrible, and very little else . . . rated PG-13.

C. I've always been a big fan of basketball coach John Wooden . . . not only because of the winning record he amassed at UCLA, but also because of the way he both coached and taught.

So over the years, I've tried to read as much as much about him as I could find . . . yet somehow I had missed Brian D. Biro's book, BEYOND SUCCESS (see also Sections 2, 10 and 11); i.e., until just recently when I had the pleasure of personally meeting with the author and he most graciously gave me a copy.

What a gift!

Biro, one of the nation's foremost speakers on leadership and team-building, actually had access to Wooden . . . he got to interview him and then based what he wrote on Wooden's Pyramid of Success.

Yet what made this such a winner for me was the fact that Biro also brought his own examples and activities, including this one that really caught my attention:

* The Personal Victory Exercise

1. Write a brief description of five to ten of your greatest personal victories.
2. Create your own personal victory anchor.
3. Visualize the event as if it were actually happening right now.
4. Meet with a friend and share your personal victories with this person.
5. Try firing your personal victory anchor when you're in a neutral frame of mind and notice the emotional impact.
6. Add at least one personal victory to your list each day for thirty days and repeat steps 1 through 5.

I also like how he constantly incorporated Wooden's own philosophies and words; e.g.:

* It's amazing how much can be accomplished when no one cares who gets the credit.

In addition, Biro introduced me to individuals and stories I had never read about in the many other motivational books I've read

in my life . . . you'll be inspired by the tales about Elzea Buiher and Yves LaForest and, also, the thrilling account of how an underdog US. swimming relay team beat West Germany in the Olympics.

Lastly, I learned an important key to visualization that I had never seen before:

* The fifth and final fundamental of effective visualization is not one I have read in books or heard in seminars. Instead, it is something I have observed in others and felt within myself. We give our visualizations their greatest strength when we fill them with people we love and care about. This is the single most powerful way to enliven your visualizations with emotional clout.

Don't negate BEYOND SUCCESS because you think it is only about basketball . . . though the sport is often mentioned, this fine book has applications to business, education and just about any other field you can name . . . I look forward to sharing it with my students, as well as with my daughter and future son-in-law.

D. I usually try to read at least one book per week and, also, listen to one book on tape or CD . . . it was difficult to find the time to do the listening while away, so this past week I instead managed to read a second book . . . its review follows:

Turning sixty is something I can relate to, in that I'll be celebrating that birthday next June.

Anne Morrow Lindbergh in FORWARD FROM HERE describes how she went through a similar experience . . . as she enters the period her mother once described as "the youth of old age," the author details the many unexpected surprises she has encountered.

Her observations were amusing at times, yet also oh-so-insightful--such as this one:

* As I grew older and older, I got more used to the idea that death would happen to everybody, including me, but that in my case it would not happen for a very very very very long time. By the time it happened, I hoped, I would be so old that it wouldn't bother me. This is not quite true yet, but again, I think I may be getting there. I hope it takes me a while longer. There's no need to rush.

As I journey on, I carry my lost loved ones with me: my sister, my mother, and all the others. I have learned over the years that I can do this, that love continues beyond loss. It continues not abstractly but intimately, and it continues forever. My experience has also made me understand that loss is inevitable, and that loss, too, continues forever, right along with love.

I also liked what the author had to say about pets of all kinds . . . she devotes two chapters to birds . . . however, it was this observation about her dog that especially caught my attention:

* Many of our visitors, seeing that we had a dog, entered the house with loud voices and waving hands, making a noisy fuss over him. This kind of behavior just caused the poor dog to slink off into a corner and stay there until the visitors left. Helen Wolff came in without

commotion and then sat quietly and drank her tea, like the well-behaved guest that she was. The dog came over to greet her, eventually, sniffing her hand and wagging his tail, probably grateful for her good manners. She told me once that she felt it was better to let animals or children come to her, if they wished to, rather than the other way around.

The part of FORWARD FROM HERE that most caught my attention was Lindbergh's account of how she discovered thirty years after the death of her father (famed aviator Charles Lindbergh) that he had three secret families in Europe . . . upon this discovery, she then went to meet them--discovering that her new extended family was far more complicated than she had ever imagined.

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5. TV alert

A. FOOD DETECTIVES has host Ted Allen donning a white lab coat to conduct scientific experiments . . . as he noted in a TV GUIDE interview, "We also want to get into oysters as an aphrodisiac, but we haven't yet figured out how to test that on a family network. I don't know . . . maybe heart rate?" . . . Tuesdays at 9 p.m. on FOOD NETWORK.

B. There are two season finales that might be worth checking out:

* SO YOU THINK YOU CAN DANCE concludes over two nights on FOX . . . Wednesday and Thursday--both evenings at 8 p.m.

* LAST COMIC STANDING ends on Thursday at 8 p.m. on NBC . . . methinks that the judges may well be funnier than some of the comedians; they include Jon Lovitz, Gilbert Gottfried and magicians Penn and Teller.

C. Friday features such musical talents as:

* The Jonas Brothers on GOOD MORNING AMERICA on ABC at 7 a.m., though the performance probably won't start until 8:30 a.m.

* Celine Dion on TODAY on NBC, also with a 7 a.m. start that probably won't begin until 8:30 a.m.

* Kenny Chesny in concert on SOUNDSTAGE on PBS at 10 p.m. . . . PBS times and dates often vary, so check local listings.

D. SUMMER OLYMPICS OPENING CEREMONY airs on Friday at 8:08 p.m. on NBC . . . that time is not a typo . . . the event will try to capitalize on one of China's luckiest numbers by starting at exactly 8:08 p.m. on 8.8.08 (with the station airing it on tape delay in the U.S.).

IS IT JUST ME?

But does else share my lack of interest in these or any Olympics?

I'll try to catch part of this opening event, then maybe some basketball and perhaps the closing ceremony . . . otherwise, that's just about all I care to see.

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6. Fixed

A Kentucky couple, both bona fide rednecks, had nine children. They went to the doctor to see about getting the husband "fixed."

The doctor gladly started the required procedure and asked them what finally made them make the decision ... why after nine children, would they choose to do this now?

The husband replied that they had heard recently on Fox that one out of every ten children being born in the United States was Mexican, and they didn't want to take a chance on having a Mexican baby because neither of them could speak Spanish.

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7. Websites

A. If you are a prospective college student and want excellent ideas of which major is best for you, please click:

<http://www.mymajors.com>

Yes, you do have to register . . . but if you do, it will be worth your time and effort . . . when you do, an account is created and you can run through a simple interview with a series of questions . . . when done, you will get a list of five majors that will match both your interest and academic experience.

B. You well may know that one of my all-time favorite quotes is this one:

Service is the rent we pay for living on Earth.--Shirley Chisolm (1924-2005), first African American woman elected to Congress who represented New York's 12th District for seven terms from 1968 to 1983.

I mention it because if you believe in the concept and the idea of giving service back to your community, please click:

<http://www.volunteermatch.org>

By simply typing in a local city or zip code and a specific key word for the volunteer work you are looking to do, this website will certainly guide you in the right direction. It's very easy to use.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blainesworld.net>

To see some of my favorite places to hang while on the Internet, click "Blaine's Best" to the left and then "Websites" . . . I just noticed that some of this section needs updating, so that's what I'm in the process of doing . . . sorry 'bout that.

Yet even so, there are still some websites that you might want to check out; e.g., see Letter H for an amazing translation site . . . I still remember that it helped my daughter get through high school Spanish!

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8. Computer tip

Disguise or "munge" your email address in blogs, Internet discussion groups and even your own website, if this isn't done automatically for you . . . doing so will enable spammers from harvesting it.

Perhaps the best method is to replace the @ sign with the word "at" spelled out . . . also, remove any dots or periods and replace them with the words "dot" or "period."

For example: bginbc@aol.com

Could well be replaced by:

bginbc (at) aol (period) com

Anybody could figure out what the real address is, but spammers would not be able to easily do so.

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9. Grief

Billingsley went to see his friend, Hatfield, who was dying in the hospital. As Billingsley stood by the bed, Hatfield's frail condition grew worse, and he gestured frantically for something to write on. Billingsley handed him a pen and a piece of paper, and Hatfield used his last ounce of strength to scribble a note. No sooner had he finished the note, he died. Billingsley put the note in his pocket, unable in his grief to read it just then.

A few days later as Billingsley was talking to Hatfield's family at the wake, he realized that the note was in the pocket of the jacket he was wearing. He announced to the family, "Hat handed me a note just before he died. I haven't read it yet, but knowing him, I'm sure there's a word of inspiration for us all."

And he read aloud, "You're standing on my oxygen tube!"

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10. A quote I like

We achieve our goals by focusing on what we want, not on what we don't want.--Brian D. Biro in BEYOND SUCCESS (see also Sections 2, 4C and 11)

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11. Thought for the day

When I REALLY like a book, I mention it repeatedly in this newsletter . . . that's obviously my thinking about Brian D. Biro's BEYOND SUCCESS (see also Sections 2, 4C and 10), the basis for this following passage:

Several years ago I heard a beautiful expression of this principle when I attended a church service in Anchorage, Alaska, just before Thanksgiving. The minister shared many thoughts about the true meaning of the holiday that really struck home that day. She said that most of us had been raised to look at Thanksgiving as a time to give thanks for the special people in our lives, for our good fortune, and for all the blessings we have received.

"Indeed," she went on, "it is important to appreciate all the wonderful gifts we have been given. But, this Thanksgiving, I suddenly realized that perhaps we should give our greatest thanks for all the obstacles and setback we have faced along life's path, for it is from these that we have grown the most."

In my seminars, I tell participants about that Thanksgiving thought--genuinely giving thanks for life's toughest obstacles--because this is such a beautiful expression of a fundamental truth about great leadership. When adversity strikes, the quality and intensity of our true intent ultimately plays a far greater role than does talent or ability in determining how effectively we impact others. Napoleon Hill once wrote, "With every adversity is planted the seed of an equivalent or greater benefit." It is our intentness that nourishes this seed, increasing our ability to gain strength from adversity.

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12. Advance planning department

A. Upcoming New Jersey Small Business Development Center events:

* DOING BUSINESS WITH THE STATE

In partnership with New Jersey Chamber of Commerce.
August 19, 8:30-11:30 am. at The College of New Jersey
in Ewing NJ. Fee: \$39, which includes a Continental Breakfast.

Also at the same location:

* RESOURCES FOR VETREPRENEURS on September 4.

* FEDERAL CERTIFICATION on September 9.

* RESOURCES FOR ENTREPRENEURS on September 19.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.tcnj.edu/sbdc>

B. Bucks County Community College's Foundation Golf Classic takes place on August 25, 2008 at the Philmont Country Club-North Course in Huntingdon Valley, PA . . . to learn more about golfing

and sponsorship opportunities, download the registration brochure:

http://www.bucks.edu/foundation/documents/Brochure_001.pdf

You can also call 215.968.8224 or send an email
to: foundation@bucks.edu.

C. On Saturday, September 27, the Cultural Affairs Committee of Bucks County Community College invites you to join us for an evening of fun and delight when "Broadway Returns to Bucks" on Saturday, September 27, 7:30 p.m. in the Library Auditorium. Tickets are only \$10.00.

Don't miss Broadway performers, Cris Groenendaal (3rd Phantom of the Opera) and his wife, Sue Anderson (conductor of Cats, Sweeney Todd, etc.) in this Broadway cabaret featuring songs from The Phantom, Sweeney Todd, Sunday in the Park with George, etc.

For tickets, contact Natalie Kaye, 215.968.8015 . . . or you can order via this website:

<http://www.bucks.edu/cultural>

D. An Evening of Jazz will be presented at Mercer County Community College's West Windsor campus in West Windsor, NJ on Friday, November 7 (and NOT on September 19 as I originally reported) . . .the event will be sponsored by WWFM, Jazz on 89.1.

PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#617

7.28.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I send our warmest personal regards from Asheville, NC, where we are still vacationing and having a blast . . . our trip has changed somewhat, though, in that we wound up buying a townhome . . . so we have had to switch gears somewhat to take care of the many details that home buying entails. I'm not at my regular computer, so I'll try to include a picture of our new home and hope that you can see it:



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We are on the right side . . . in the front, there are trees . . . in the back, there are more trees and a beautiful view of the mountains . . . in addition, you have a view of the lake surrounding the community.

It has 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths and is located in a gated community called Biltmore Lake, which is about 15 minutes from downtown Asheville.

SPECIAL THANKS to our realtor, Suzanne Smith (with Prudential Lifestyle Realty), for all her help in making this purchase a reality . . . she's THE BEST . . . if you're buying or selling a home anywhere near the Asheville area, do give her a call at 828.551.4609.

B. Several folks have been asking us, "Why did we choose this area to live?" . . . there are many reasons, including:

- * The beauty of the entire area. Mountains and trees are everywhere.
- * There is sooooo much to do here.
- * The people are very friendly.
- * There's a great downtown area, sort of like a large Princeton. Also a bit like Montclair, but quite unique unto itself.
- * They have something called the College for Creative Retirement. Many interesting non-credit courses are offered.
- * Cynthia, in particular, was drawn to it before I was. The whole community is very spiritual.

You'll have to experience it yourself; e.g., on your next vacation . . . come visit us when we are down here permanently (hint-hint).

C. Stay tuned for more details in next week's issue, as well as for information about all the great things we've done so far (visited Carl Sandburg's home, soaked in the spa at Hot Springs, saw two shows, ate at several fine restaurants, took a Migun Massage Bed "test drive," etc.).

In the meantime, do I have a deal for you!

We will be putting our home in Belle Mead, NJ, up for sale, upon our return this coming Monday night . . . it has 4 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, a dining room, a living room, a den, a library, an unfinished basement, a great view in the backyard, and open space to the right . . . the school district (Montgomery) is considered to be one of the finest in the state . . . if you are interested in further information—or you know of somebody who might be—contact me at once before we officially put it on the market . . . the best way to contact me is via email: bginbc@aol and put BELLE MEAD HOME in subject line.

SPECIAL NOTE:

THERE'S A \$5,000 REWARD FOR YOU IF HELP FIND US A BUYER!

D. I was saddened on Friday to hear about the death of Randy Pausch, the computer science professor who rose to fame after giving a last lecture about celebrating life in the face of his terminal cancer.

For those who have not been following his life in the pages of BLAINESWORLD, I urge you to view this lecture by clicking:

<http://download.srv.cs.cmu.edu/~pausch/>

That's his webpage where you will find a lot of other good stuff . . . but make sure you scroll about halfway down to see the actual lecture.

And methinks you'll also be inspired by his bestseller that he co-authored with Jeffrey Zaslow, THE LAST LECTURE . . . it is one of my favorite books.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Neil Battle—the salesperson we've worked most closely in buying our aforementioned townhome . . . he works for Beverly-Hawks & Associates, and if you decide to join us in Biltmore Lake (and we hope you do), you won't go wrong working with him.

He's been both extremely helpful and knowledgeable . . . in addition, his follow-up is excellent . . . he can be reached at 828.209.5253.

If you can't reach Neil, feel free to speak to Leslie Niven . . . she's the other salesperson in the office who has also been a big help to us.

Lastly, I would be remiss if I failed to mention Luci Gullledge, the office coordinator . . . her infectious smile always makes us feel welcome . . . best of all, she has been giving us useful lessons on the proper pronunciation of "y'all."

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2. FYI

"It's my pleasure."

That's an expression that I have heard more than once in North Carolina after somebody helps me, for example, at a store.

Isn't that a great thing to say?

I don't know about you, but I like it much better than what I often hear when elsewhere: "No problem."

FYI, part 2

* Jean in Pennsylvania:

Your joke in Part 3 is quite real ("Several Weeks"). Our neighbors have four children: 1-yr-old twins, a 3-yr-old, and a 5-yr.-old--AND two dogs and four cats. The dogs often come to our yard to hang out and play, craving attention, while two of the cats linger on our front porch. One cat has spent entire days sleeping on our porch.

* Shai in Pennsylvania:

Good Luck as you continue your search for your new (retirement) home. What an exciting time for you and Cynthia!

I am very happy to hear you found A NEW EARTH to be a moving and helpful book. I agree with you wholeheartedly. I have been reading and rereading it for several months now whenever I feel the need to revisit it. I hope your readers will seek it out and find it helpful also.

* Em in Minnesota:

For your greeting ecard sending pleasure . . . BeMine.com at:

<http://www.bemine.com>

It's completely free, with over 1,500 cards to choose from . . . while the site does focus on romance, there are many other card choices for holidays, birthdays, etc. . . . and I've always been very careful with advertising and take pride in people being able to send hassle-free cards, without getting lost in "pop-up hell" . . . I've run BeMine.com since 1997 and was one of the first ecard sites on the net . . . in addition, this fall I will be adding a line of Thanksgiving and Holiday cards appropriate for businesses to send (the "non-cheesy" type) and have put up a page of samples here:

<http://www.bemine.com/holiday/>

While you can only send one card at a time on my site, I will be offering businesses who have a mailing list they'd like to send cards to, the option of having us send their cards for a nominal fee . . . I will also be offering custom Holiday cards for businesses interesting in having their logo incorporated, a custom image used and also cards in Flash . . . I will be updating the site with further information on this a little closer to the holidays... thanks in advance to your readers who visit!

Em Henderson, owner BeMine.com . . . sending love and smiles around the world since 1997.

* Elizabeth in Washington:

I guess I thought someone might send you info to RealAge.com, and so I didn't need to. It is a comprehensive website which asks for much personal information and then gives you a terrific plan in many health areas of life to improve your health. Sounds a bit scary, but it is terrific. I began my RealAge membership with the receipt of the book YOU: STAYING YOUNG for my birthday last year. It is written by Dr. Roizen and Dr. Oz, Oprah's doctor team.

The book is playfully informative with fabulous picture charts illustrating explanations. But the website gives you hints about what exactly to do to change your health. It tells you why you should floss, exercise, stretch, breathe, what to change in your diet, suggests vitamin supplements . . . it helps. There has been no fee at all, and health information is updated as you wish. It factors in your bad health issues as well as your good ones and uses that information to give you the Real Age of your body, a number we all want to be the best we can get.

* Mary in New Jersey on the subject of favorite movies:

A love story ROBIN AND MARINA. It's a not so well known robin hood movie. Sean Connery, Audrey Hepburn, Richard Harris, and Robert Shaw are all in the cast. Wow, I love this movie. Try it.

* Debbie in New York, also on the subject of favorite movies:

If you liked the EUROPA film perhaps you should read BEAUTIFUL LOOT . . . it discusses how Russia during WWII put together a panel or committee to determine what were the most valuable art pieces that the Nazi's had and where they were located--and then they went about stealing it from themproblem was: the Russian were no curators . . . they were storing it in bombed out churches, water logged tunnels and so on . . . so they ruined a lot of it . . . anyway, their idea was that they needed to get repaid for the cost of the war and that's how they were going to insure it ...thought you might find that interesting.

* Bob in Pennsylvania (with a PAID marketing internship):

The Silver Lake Nature Center exists to provide educational programs about nature and the environment to the public. The position is grant funded and for a full-time position (40 hours) for a minimum of 12 weeks and a maximum of 24 weeks (preferred). The pay will be \$8.00 per hour with free lodging (possibly shared with others); without housing, the salary will be \$10. The job does require weekend work. Position to start anytime between September 1 and October 15, 2008.

Send cover letter, resume and three references to Robert Mercer by email, (ramercer@co.bucks.pa.us) or fax (215-785-3228).

* Janet in New Jersey (looking to share space in Morristown, NJ):

I have a 700+ sq ft office space just off the square in Morristown. My landlords have been kind enough to hold it for me while I have been recovering from my loss.

Now they need a full time rent for the space.

Since I am just beginning again and traveling to work part of the week I would like to see if I can attract a few people who also need part time space in Morristown to share the space and the rent, which includes utilities and has two bathrooms.

The space is open and can be divided a bit. Lots of natural light.

I like the open space for large groups to teach. I also see clients here.

It is a lovely energy and has parking on street and a parking garage across the street. Night parking is free in the garage for classes or sessions ending after 7 PM.

Yoga, Martial arts or other teaching modalities would work. Group meetings and classes and private sessions of many modalities all work. I am looking for healing energy, not commercial enterprises, that would weave well together. I am open to any painting and decorating as agreed.

I am also open to hosting occasional groups-classes, weekly, monthly, weekdays and weekends.

YOU CAN CHECK MY WEBSITE BELOW TO SEE IF WE CAN WEAVE A GREAT SPACE TOGETHER

Please call me below if it feels of interest.

Blessings, Janet

Janet StraightArrow
www.oasisforthesoul.com
973-647-2500

* Marsha in New Jersey (with a car for sale):

My brother's car is For Sale. It is housed in a garage in NYC.

\$18,500 negotiation available.

Subaru Outback 2.5I Limited package (adds \$4000 to value), Champagne Gold, 2005, 12,500 mi coming off lease.

Serious interest only, please email studio12H@aol.com and on subject line state CAR FOR SALE.

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3. Lifestyle change

When Thompson hit seventy, he decided to change his lifestyle completely so that he could live longer. He went on a strict diet, he jogged, he swam, and he even made it a point to get some sun each day (using proper sun tan lotion, of course). In just three months, Thompson lost thirty pounds, reduced his waist by six inches and expanded his chest by five inches. Svelte and tan, he decided to top it all off with a sporty new haircut. Afterward, while stepping out of the barbershop, he was hit by a bus. As he lay dying, he cried out, "God, how could you do this to me?" And a voice from the heavens responded, "To tell you the truth, Thompson, I didn't recognize you." _

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4. Reviews

A. MAMMA MIA! was one of my favorite shows . . . I don't know if I would rank the movie version quite that high, but that said, I'd still recommend you see it—especially if you share my appreciation of the musical group ABBA . . . there are many great songs and a lot of energetic dancing in the story about a girl trying to find her real father . . . if you skip the slight storyline, you'll have a fun time . . . Meryl Streep will surprise you with her singing (I believe she did it herself) . . . Pierce Brosnan, on the other hand, doesn't have the greatest voice, but he still manages to deliver a winning performance as of Streep's past loves . . . I also liked the work of Amanda Seyfried, an actress who reminded me of a young Goldie Hawn . . . rated PG-13.</ div>

B. THE BAND'S VISIT is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #596 follows:

THE BAND'S VISIT is a quirky Israeli film about an Egyptian band that's slated to perform at the opening of an Arab cultural center . . . however, en route, it gets stranded in a quiet desert town . . . the residents there provide them shelter and food, as well as friendship . . . this is a slice-of-life story that's, at times, sad, funny, touching, and even thought-provoking . . . I did not love it as much as many critics did; however, I would recommend that you view it when it comes out on DVD; i.e., if you can't find it in the theaters . . . rated PG-13.

C. Ingrid Bergman was an actress who acted on stage, screen and television in five languages . . . doing so, she won three Academy Awards, a Tony and an Emmy . . . and she lived a fascinating life, as depicted in NOTORIOUS by Donald Spoto.

This is one of the best biographies that I have read in quite some time . . . reading it made me feel as if I got to know Bergman and what made her tick.

If you're a movie fan like me, you'll enjoy the behind-the-scenes stories about her career, such as this one account of how she came upon her screen name:

* The first meeting between Ingrid and David (Selznick), over cold lamb and whiskey, continued as he returned to the subject of her name, which he said was too German. What about renaming her Ingrid Berryman? "Bergman is a good name and I like it," she replied. "If I fail in American, I can go back to Sweden and still be Ingrid Bergman."

I also liked reading about her take on acting:

* I haven't read many of those books about acting. I think instinctively, and even the first time I read a script I know exactly how the woman is. That is why I turn down many things I don't understand. I must understand the character completely; I mean, there must be something inside me that is that person, and then immediately I feel it. It is more a feeling than a technique.

And though there were a lot of names used throughout the book, I did not feel that Spoto was mean-spirited in what he had to say about Bergman or her many lovers . . . after all she was, to quote the book's title, somewhat notorious . . . and she did leave her first husband and daughter to have both an affair and child out of wedlock with Italian director Roberto Rossellini.

Yet it was Spoto's account of her non-affair with Alfred Hitchcock that I found particularly moving:

* But Hitchcock's immediate response that warm September afternoon in his office was to remind Ingrid of the final scene in SPELLBOUND between her and Michael Chekov, who had played her mentor. "It is very sad to love and lose somebody," Hitchcock quoted, repeating the dialogue of Dr. Brulov as he embraced the weeping Dr. Peterson, who fears she has lost her lover forever. "But in a while you will forget and you will take up the threads of your life where you left it not long ago. And you will work hard. There is lots of happiness in working hard--maybe the most." The speech now had a different application.

Ingrid at once recognized the words, and her eyes filled with tears. Hitchcock had offered her comfort with the same words he spoke for himself: what other refuge had they, these two lovers, but the work that lay before them? She might not have Capa, but she had her work, and now her work was with him; as for Hitchcock, he knew all too poignantly that yes, indeed, her work was with him, but her heart was not--or rather her heart was with him as a daughter and friend. They were both, in a way, lost souls. That quiet afternoon, they sat--allies in distress, sipping gin martinis, smoking too much and finding in their unspoken sympathies for each other the courage that comes from the deepest kind of love, a caring beyond the jungle of sex and into the clearer field of affection.

I now want to go back and rent not only SPELLBOUND, but such other Bergman classics as INTERMEZZO, GASLIGHT, ANASTASIA, and, of course, NOTORIOUS.

D. I've seen the DVD version of THE SECRET, but had never actually read the book (with the same title) by Rhonda Byrne.

So I was delighted to be able to listen to the above when a friend lent me her CD tapes . . . if you're not familiar with the premise, it is about something called the Law of Attraction . . . in essence, it says like attracts like . . . you can get anything in life you want if you are open to receiving it in a positive fashion . . . the key is to avoid negativity.

When reading or listening to the book, you may not think there's much to it . . . the same message seems to keep repeating itself . . . and though there's an impressive list of authors/consultants who are cited (among them Jack Canfield, John Gray, Bob Proctor, and Rev. Michael Beckwith), what they have to say at times comes across a bit choppy.

However, I carp . . . let me instead share just a few of the powerful Insights that I gained from listening to THE SECRET:

- * Whatever thought is in your mind, you're attracted to it.
- * See yourself living in abundance, and you will attract it.
- * What you think about most will appear as your life.
- * It's impossible to be feeling bad and having good thoughts at the same time.
- * If you praise and bless your enemies, you will feel your attitudes shifting.
- * We'll never run out of things because life is meant to be abundant. And this one that I've been thinking about ever since I finished

THE SECRET: * You are not your past. Whenever I reflect on book long after I've finished it, I know that's a winner for me . . . that's the case with what Byrne had to write; I still find myself thinking about it even as I type this review!

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5. TV alert A. **CRISS ANGEL: MINDFREAK** has the chained-and-locked Criss trying to escape from a Florida building that's about to implode . . . what makes this episode of the show so unique is that it is a live show . . . Wednesday at 10 p.m. on A&E. B. **REALITY BITS BACK** features contestants who gorge themselves for the sake of satire in "The Biggest Chubby" to see who can pack on the most pounds . . . Thursday at 10:30 p.m. on COMEDY CENTRAL. C. **FAB FIVE: THE TEXAS CHEERLEADER SCANDAL** stars Tatum O'Neal as a principal having to deal with a scandal involving five teens—one of whom is her daughter . . . Saturday at 9 p.m. on LIFETIME.

D. **A PORTRAIT OF ALZHEIMER'S** is an Emmy-winning 2004 profile of parents and their caregivers . . . afterwards, David Hyde Pierce chairs a panel discussion about the disease . . . Sunday at 9 p.m. on PBS . . . since PBS times and dates often vary, check your local listings.

6. Good advice

Always wear clean underwear in public, especially when working under your vehicle.

From the NORTHWEST FLORIDA DAILY NEWS comes this story of a Crestview couple who drove their car to Wal-Mart, only to have their car reek down in the parking lot. The man told his wife to carry on with the shopping while he fixed the car in the lot. The wife returned later to see a small group of people near the car. On closer inspection, she saw a pair of male legs protruding from under the chassis. Although the man was in shorts, his lack of underpants turned private parts into glaringly public ones. Unable to stand the embarrassment, she dutifully stepped forward, quickly put her hand up his shorts and tucked everything back into place. She took a deep breath and stood up boldly to face the crowd. She looked across the hood and found herself staring at her husband, who had been standing idly by.

The mechanic, however, had to have three stitches in his forehead.

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7. Websites A. To find out the Best of the Web This Week (and every week, in fact), please click: <http://www.switched.com> Among recent postings: * Is Martha Stewart really blogging? * Turns out that DUI Test videos are pretty darn funny. * Neil Patrick Harris has grown up and he's taken the Web by storm. * You'll get this in your inbox by Monday—video of a "real" dinosaur. There's lots of other good stuff here, too, including a piece on Best Free Stuff For Your Computer.

B. If you're interested in what goes into making a film and what takes place behind the scenes, please click:

<http://www.firstshowing.net>

You'll be kept up to date on all the hot gossip from back lots, movie sets and Hollywood bigwig offices . . . in addition, it's a great place to find new trailers and production stills.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blainesworld.net>

In case you've ever wondered how many people actually view my website, make sure you check the counter in the bottom left corner.

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8. Computer tip

If you have multiple email addresses (see last week's issue), look at what one get the most spam . . . I'll bet it is the first one that you ever set up, especially if you did so back in the 1990s before there was a lot less spam than we now have . . . strongly consider phasing out your old address and tell contacts to replace it with another one in their email address lists . . . make sure that if they have an email white list that permits email from known senders that they include your new email address there.

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9. Best caddie comments (even appropriate for non-golfers)

#10. Golfer: "I think I am going to drown myself in the lake."

Caddie: "Do you think you can keep your head down that long?"

#9. Golfer: "I'd move heaven and earth to break 100 on this course."

Caddie: "Try heaven; you've already moved most of the earth."

#8. Golfer: "Do you think my game is improving?"

Caddie: "Yes, Sir. You miss the ball much closer now."

#7. Golfer: "Do you think I can get there with a five iron?"

Caddie: "Eventually."

#6. Golfer: "You've got to be the worst caddie in the world!"

Caddie: "I don't think so, Madam. That would be too much of a coincidence."

#5. Golfer: "Please stop checking your watch all the time."

Caddie: "It's not a watch. It's a compass."

#4. Golfer: "How do you like my game?"

Caddie: "Very good, Sir. But personally, I prefer golf."

#3. Golfer: "Do you think its really a sin to play on Sunday?"

Caddie: " The way you play, Madam, its a sin on any day."

#2. Golfer: "This is the worst course I have ever played on."

Caddie: "This isn't the golf course, Sir. We left that an hour ago."

And the #1 best caddie comment:

Golfer: "That can't be my ball. It's too old."

Caddie: "Its been a long time since we teed off, Madam."

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10. A quote I like

The only way of finding the limits of the possible is by going beyond them into the impossible.--Arthur C. Clarke (1917-2008), British science fiction author and futurist

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11. Thought for the day

U.S. Postal Service

Our 14 year old dog, Abbey, died in August, 2006. The day after she died, my 4 year old daughter Meredith was crying and talking about how much she missed Abbey. She asked if we could write a letter to God so that when Abbey got to heaven, God would recognize her. I told her that I thought we could so she dictated these words:

Dear God,

Will you please take care of my dog? She died yesterday and is with You in heaven. I miss her very much. I am happy that You let me have her as my dog even though she got sick.

I hope You will play with her. She likes to play with balls and to swim. I am sending a picture of her so when You see her, You will know that she is my dog. I really miss her.

Love, Meredith.

We put the letter in an envelope with a picture of Abbey and Meredith and addressed it to God/Heaven. We put our return address on it. Then Meredith pasted several stamps on the front of the envelope because she said it would take lots of stamps to get the letter a all the way to heaven.

That afternoon she dropped it into the letter box at the post office. A few days later, she asked if God had gotten the letter yet. I told her that I thought He had.

Yesterday, there was a package wrapped in gold paper on our front porch addressed, "To Meredith," in an unfamiliar

hand. Meredith opened it. Inside was a book by Mr. Rogers called WHEN A PET DIES. Taped to the inside front cover was the letter we had written to God in its opened envelope. On the opposite page was the picture of Abbey & Meredith and this note:

Dear Meredith,

Abbey arrived safely in heaven.

Having the picture was a big help. I recognized Abbey right away.

Abbey isn't sick anymore. Her spirit is here with me just like it stays in your heart. Abbey loved being your dog. Since we don't need our bodies in heaven, I don't have any pockets to keep your picture in, so I am sending it back to you in this little book for you to keep and have something to remember Abbey by.

One of my special angels is taking care of this for me. I hope the little book helps.

Thank you for the beautiful letter and thank your mother for helping you write it and sending it to me. What a wonderful mother you have. I picked her especially for you.

I send my blessings every day and remember that I love you very much.

By the way, I'm easy to find, I am wherever there is love.

Love,

God and the special angel who wrote this after God told her the words

SOURCE:

I received this via the Internet, so I'm not sure who wrote it . . . but unlike many such emails, I found that the actual story was true by clicking:

<http://www.snopes.com/glurge/abbey.asp>

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12. Advance planning department

A. Carole in New Jersey:

National Night Out is next Tuesday, August 5. Most events run from around 6:00-8:00 p.m.

In past years, the Mercer County Million Mom March Chapter has set up gun violence prevention information tables in East Windsor, Ewing, Hamilton, and West Windsor on Tuesday nights, and also participate at the Trenton NNO Kick-Off on Monday evening (time TBA).

So far, we are scheduled to participate in Trenton and Ewing. However, we would also like volunteers to cover East Windsor, Hamilton and West Windsor on Tuesday.

If you are able to assist at any of the tables, please let me know IMMEDIATELY. Thank

you in advance for your support.

Carole

mercermmm@gmail.com
609.882.3711
609.771.1348 (fax)
<http://www.millionmommarch.org/>

B. Joey in New Jersey:

To all comedians, actors, improvers and storytellers:

Our first two Louder Than Words story telling events were a success--at Friendly Grounds Coffee House in Flemington.

And now, I am looking for story tellers for August 14th and September 11th for our next Louder Than Words storytelling nights.

For more information, please go to:

<http://www.louderthanwordstories.com/>

And please feel free to contact me if you're interested in appearing at Louder Than Words on August 14th or September 11th!

Joey Novick
908.892.6589
joeynovick@earthlink.net

C. THANKS to Scott in Pennsylvania for always keeping me informed about the many great programs offered by the Lower Bucks County Chamber of Commerce; among them:

Thursday, August 14. Percolator Meeting. Speaker: Joe Scholenberg, MVP Sports Training & Fitness, LLC. Program: Be Fit and Be Productive. Time: 8 a.m.-9:15 a.m. Holiday Inn Select, Bucks County, 4700 Street Road, Trevose, PA.

Monday, August 18. Your Next Step. Program: The Role of Your Chamber in Your Company's Strategic Plan. Guest Lecturer: Earl Sigmund, CPA (New Business Learning Center. Time: 8-9 a.m. Chamber Office, 409 Hood Blvd., Fairless Hills, PA.

For more information:

<http://www.lbccc.org/>

Or call 215.943.7400.

PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#616

7.21.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I just discovered a probable replacement for our almost daily ice cream snack; i.e., a Viviano nourishing blend (or smoothie) available from Starbucks.

They come in two great flavors--both of which are very tasty:

* Orange Mango Banana. Made with a whole banana blended with all natural Naked® Juice made exclusively for Starbucks, our proprietary Protein & Fiber Powder, 2% milk and ice. Just 250 calories with 16 g of protein and 5 g of fiber.

* Banana Chocolate. Made with a whole banana blended with Protein & Fiber Powder, 2 % milk, mocha sauce, and ice. Just 270 calories with 21 g of protein and 6 g of fiber.

The two blends can be easily customized as follows:

* A Shot of Espresso added to the Banana Chocolate Blend provides the bold, smooth flavor of espresso with no extra calories.

* Matcha Green Tea Powder added to the Orange Mango Banana Blend gives the beverage the antioxidants of green tea with only 40 additional calories. The powder also increases the amount of Vitamin C to 45 percent Daily Value.

* Nonfat Milk in place of the standard 2 percent milk shaves off 20 calories and up to 3 grams of fat. In addition, you could also request it with Soy Milk.

For more nutritional information, please click:

http://www.starbucks.com/retail/beverages_lineup.asp?subcat={846CD90A-7133-44CB-B8DC-A6B210A19B81}

Our favorite Starbucks, the one near us in Hillsborough, NJ, also was distributing coupons that enabled us to try the above for FREE . . . if you don't see them out on the counter, ask about them . . . I understand they are good at all locations except Barnes & Noble Cafes . . . though I have no idea as to how long they'll be available, if you see no coupons out, ask the barista manager to ring up discount #0078 for you . . . it's worth a try.

B. If you don't see either of us around for the next few weeks, it's because we continue our quest for the perfect retirement locale in a return visit to Asheville, NC . . . we'll combine it with a much-deserved vacation so be forewarned . . . there's a very strong possibility that BLAINESWORLD may not be published next week.

C. KUDOS to the Princeton Public Library (see also Section 12A) for hosting still another excellent program that I recently attended . . . it featured a documentary directed by Ben Saltzman, a talented NYU film student: JUGGLING FOR LIFE . . . the story follows the New Jersey Juggling Program, run by Lou De Lauro, wherein students are taught to juggle and then do a final performance to help raise money for a cancer camp.

D. CONDOLENCES to Garney Morris and family on the passing of Doris A. Morris, Garney's mother . . . details about her life can be read by clicking:

<http://www.phillyburbs.com/pb-dyn/news/222-07132008-1562394.html>

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to either the First United Methodist Church, 263 King Street, Oviedo, FL 32765; or Emilie United Methodist Church, 7300 New Falls Road, Levittown, PA.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to James Griffin--an employee with the Transportation Security Administration at Chicago's O'Hare Airport.

He was the person who checked our passports and tickets before going through the security checkpoint on Monday when we were coming home from the American Federation of Teachers conference.

No big deal, you might think, but he made it one . . . he greeted us with a great smile, then exchanged some words with us that had us smiling too . . . I don't remember all that he said except for the fact that as we were leaving, he said something to us to the effect of, "Isn't that nice, a father traveling with his daughter!" . . . Cynthia found it amusing; I would have preferred him saying, "Isn't that nice, a son traveling with his mother!"

When I turned around, I saw James doing that with all the other passengers in line . . . I was so impressed that I went to one of the supervisors to comment on the job that he was doing . . . when I did, I asked if he received other compliments . . . the response was that he did . . . no surprise!

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If there is unhappiness in you, first you need to acknowledge that it is there. But don't say, "I'm unhappy." Unhappiness has nothing to do with who you are. Say: "There is unhappiness in me." Then investigate it. A situation you find yourself in may have something to do with it. Action may be required to change the situation or remove yourself from it. If there is nothing you can do, face what is and say, "Well, right now, this is how it is. I can either accept it, or make myself miserable." The primary cause of unhappiness is never the situation but your thoughts about it. Be aware of the thoughts you are thinking. Separate them from the situation, which is always neutral, which always is as it is. There is the situation or the fact, and here are my thoughts about it. Instead of making up stories, stay with the facts. For example, "I am ruined" is a story. It limits you and prevents you from taking effective action. "I have fifty cents left in my bank account" is a fact. Facing facts is always empowering. Be aware that what you think, to a large extent, creates the emotions that you feel. See the link between your thinking and your emotions. Rather than being your thoughts and emotions, be the awareness behind them.

Don't seek happiness. If you seek it, you won't find it, because seeking is the antithesis of happiness. Happiness is ever elusive, but freedom from unhappiness is attainable now, by facing what is rather than making up stories about it. Unhappiness covers up your natural state of well-being and inner piece, the source of true happiness.

SOURCE:

A NEW EARTH (see also Sections 2, 4C and 11) by Eckhart Tolle

FYI, part 2

MR. CURIOUS HERE:

I'm looking to put together a listing of online greeting cards that you use . . . ideally, they'll be FREE, but if you like any that charge a nominal fee, let me know them too . . . please send me a brief blurb about them, describing what they offer, the website address, etc. . . . as always, I'll share as many of the responses as space permits.

* Sue in Pennsylvania (LOOKING FOR HELP):

I am looking for someone who cleans houses near Southampton, PA (Bucks County). Would you kindly ask your newsletter readers if anyone does this for a living?

I am also looking to hire movers. We need a truck to move our household items from Pipersville to Southampton, PA (Bucks County).

Please respond to: hinkles1@aol.com.

Thanks!

STILL MORE RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION ABOUT LOWERING CHOLESTEROL:

* Julien in Maryland:

My cholesterol too was high. I now eat a bowl of cooked oatmeal EVERY morning with fresh fruit, preferably blueberries and that alone

brought my cholesterol down by 22 pts. I do take PRAVACOL to lower my numbers but that wasn't giving me the desired results. The doctor suggested the oatmeal and if that didn't work, he was going to increase my meds but was concerned about future liver function tests. I also take 3 1000 mgs of Omega 3 fish tablets daily (1 with each meal) per his order. Additionally I lost and am continuing to lose weight, which I feel has helped. Another suggestion is to add almonds to your diet to raise the good cholesterol but watch how many because of their high fat.

I was recently diagnosed (2 weeks ago) with Type 2 Diabetics and the above was an added plus to get everything under control. I see a diet specialist and can happily report that even after only two weeks, I have gotten my glucose under control. Having been newly diagnosed my numbers were not too far out of line and with the continuing weight loss, I think I will be ok. I must confess, though, I don't have ice cream or pizza and my "bread" is either rice cakes or Pepperidge Farm ultra thin wheat bread.

* Debbie in New York:

Eat fresh food and nothing processed. . . . I just visited a friend in Tennessee and she eats the worst sh*t there ever was because she's concerned about her weight, so all she just consumes low fat stuff . . . and to save money - processed and packaged foods . . . I would die on that diet . . . so I'm out to educate her and also, I gave my son the IN DEFENSE OF FOOD book . . . it's changing the way he eats and how he looks at food combinations . . . you really should read it.

* Warren in New Jersey:

I have been battling hereditary high cholesterol levels for many years. I haven't eaten red meat, eggs, etc. in over 20 years. I started on cholesterol medication when I was 30 and will be on it for the rest of my life. I am sure your doctor has already advised you that the two best things you can do for yourself are diet and exercise.

On a daily basis, I take long bike rides, take brisk (not slow paced) walks or exercise on gym equipment in my basement. You need to keep exercising your body to the point of increased heart rate and blood flow to try to keep the arteries clean. Alas, with daily exercise and a strict diet (no red meat, eggs, shrimp, fried food, and other high cholesterol food), during this year's annual physical in June I learned my levels are continuing to climb. Since there is nothing else to change in my diet, my two options are increased exercise and/or stronger medication. Since I have already been taking medication for nearly 20 years, I am reluctant to move to stronger medication as the potential long term side effects (liver damage) are disheartening.

And so I have increased my exercise regime. I will find out in September if the increased exercise routine has helped. I hope so.

The short version of this is: Take control of what you can.

* Marty in Texas:

One word my friend: Metamucel. It's MAGIC POWDER, the only thing other than drugs that worked for me.

Stop eating the regular Ice Cream. You say NO. Eat low/zero fat ice cream. Stay away from high fats (like all that good Italian food.) Stay away from/cut down sweets. Sugar turns to fat.

Exercise. The more calories you burn the less retained in your body.
(If you do, then you can go back and eat Italian food, sweets and ice cream.)

Also, Zocor (generic name: Simvastatin) is very inexpensive and comes with a lot of fine reading--interactions/side effects/warnings. I love it. Works well for me, so I can pretty much eat what I want.

Triple Bypass does wonders for when you don't do the above very well. It may not be whole lot of fun (I know first hand.); however, it's a good fix for when the above is not heeded. Triple Bypass is very expensive, by the way. No reading material either.

AND SOME RESPONSES ON THE QUESTION OF FAVORITE MOVIE:

* Kitty in New Jersey:

The movie SOMEWHERE IN TIME is based on a novel of the same name, which is truly a mesmerizing read. It won the World Fantasy Award for Best Novel, and it only cost \$6.99 from Amazon. I enjoyed it even more than the movie.

* Murray in New Jersey:

My favorite movie: A THOUSAND CLOWNS.

The theme: DON'T be tied down to conventional decision making in your daily life. Improvise. Be daring. Be different.

Jason Robards Jr. is amazing in the title role.

But my question is this: Do you think this is my favorite movie because the lead actor's name in the movie is Murray?

Well, as my Uncle Julius once said, "It couldn'thoit!"

* Sue in Pennsylvania:

Loved SOMEWHERE IN TIME and UMBRELLAS OF CHERBOURG, but my all-time favorite is GONE WITH THE WIND . . . Vivien Leigh's portrayal of a woman fighting for survival and overcoming adversity always takes my breath away . . . and her on again off again love affair with Clark Gable always left me always wanting more.

MY TWO CENTS:

I'd still like to see other suggestions, so feel free to keep them coming . . . this will be a great way for all of us to build up a list of films to rent from Blockbuster or Netflix.

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3. Several weeks

An older, tired-looking dog wandered into my yard. I could tell from his collar and well-fed belly that he had a home and was well taken care of.

He calmly came over to me. I gave him a few pats on his head. He then followed me into my house, slowly walked down the

hall, curled up in the corner, and fell asleep.

An hour later, he went to the door, and I let him out.

The next day he was back, greeted me in my yard, walked inside and resumed his spot in the hall and again slept for about an hour. This continued off and on for several weeks.

Curious, I pinned a note to his collar: "I would like to find out who the owner of this wonderful sweet dog is and ask if you are aware that almost every afternoon your dog comes to my house for a nap."

The next day he arrived for his nap with a different note pinned to his collar: "He lives in a home with 6 children, 2 under the age of 3. He's trying to catch up on his sleep. Can I come with him tomorrow?"

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4. Reviews

A. Though a documentary, THE RAPE OF EUROPA is as exciting a film as you'll see this year . . . it describes the plight of Europe's greatest artistic treasures during the Nazi reign . . . as the Third Reich was attempting to destroy the continent's culture, art lovers throughout the world worked to save as many pieces as they could . . . Joan Allen's narration added to my enjoyment of this World War II tale that I hadn't known too much about . . . unrated, but probably appropriate for any mature teenager and up.

B. It's a shame that there's not very much "out there" with respect to DVDs to rent . . . about the best of a very poor lot is VANTAGE POINT, a formulaic thriller about a presidential assassination attempt . . . it is told from multiple viewpoints, but after a short while, that got both old and confusing . . . the attempt to rewind what happened, over and over, was done far better in GROUNDHOG DAY . . . I usually am a big Dennis Quaid fan, but he was just wooden in this film . . . rated PG-13.

You'd do far better by renting WITNESS, a much better thriller about a young Amish boy who witnesses a murder in Philadelphia . . . to escape the killers who are after him, the boy must go into hiding in the Amish country--accompanied by good cop Harrison Ford . . . he's excellent in this, as is Kelly McGillis who plays his love interest in what is a very untraditional romance . . . and on the subject of McGillis, it's too bad we don't see her in more films . . . rated R.

TO SAVE MONEY:

You could also see WITNESS ON TV on Tuesday at 11:30 p.m. and on Wednesday at 9:45 a.m., both times on AMC . . . however, since AMC now breaks up their programming with both commercials and those oh-so-annoying announcements in the corner of the screen, I strongly recommend that you rent it instead.

C. Eckhart Tolle's THE POWER OF NOW was one of the most powerful books I have read in the past several years . . . it helped me appreciate the joy of living "in the now."

His latest effort, A NEW EARTH (see also sections 2, 10 and 11),

goes beyond what he wrote previously to show why it is necessary to transcend our ego-based consciousness if we truly want personal happiness . . . also, by so doing, Tolle contends that we will awaken life's purpose.

Tolle, a contemporary spiritual teacher, is not easy to get "into" for some readers . . . yet if you make the effort, you will find yourself drawn into what he has to say by his use of some very thought-provoking observations--such as this one:

* As I was walking with a friend through a beautiful nature reserve near Malibu in California, we came upon the ruins of what had been once a country house, destroyed by a fire several decades ago. As we approached the property, long overgrown with trees and all kinds of magnificent plants, there was a sign by the side of the trail put there by the park authorities. It read: DANGER. ALL STRUCTURES ARE UNSTABLE. I said to my friend, "That's a profound sutra [sacred scripture]." And we stood there in awe. Once you realize and accept that all structures (forms) are unstable, even the seemingly solid material ones, peace arises within you. This is because the recognition of the impermanence of all forms awakens you to the dimension of the formless within yourself, that which is beyond death. Jesus called it "eternal life."

I then read a few more pages before I came across this equally interesting passage that summed up how I often feel:

* I usually congratulate people when they tell me, "I don't know who I am anymore." Then they look perplexed and ask, "Are you saying it is a good thing to be confused?" I ask them to investigate. What does it mean to be confused? "I don't know" is not confusion. Confusion is: "I don't know, but I should know" or "I don't know, but I need to know." Is it possible to let go of the belief that you should or need to know who you are? In other words, can you cease looking to conceptual definitions to give you a sense of self? Can you cease looking to thought for an identity? When you let go of the belief that you should or need to know who you are, what happens to confusion? Suddenly it is gone. When you fully accept that you don't know, you actually enter a state of peace and clarity that is closer to who you truly are than thought could ever be. Defining yourself through thought is limiting yourself.

Lastly, I liked how he often used stories to drive points home:

* The inability or rather unwillingness of the human mind to let go of the past is beautifully illustrated in the story of two Zen monks, Tazan and Ekido, who were walking along a country road that had become extremely muddy after heavy rains. Near a village, they came upon a young woman who was trying to cross the road, but the mud was so deep it would have ruined the silk kimono she was wearing. Tazan at once picked her up and carried her to the other side.

The monks walked on in silence. Five hours later, as they were approaching the lodging temple, Ekido couldn't restrain himself any longer. "Why did you carry that girl across the road?" he asked. "We monks are not supposed to do things like that."

"I put the girl down hours ago," said Tazan. "Are you still carrying her?"

Now imagine what life would be like for someone who lived like Ekido all the time, unable or unwilling to let go internally of situations, accumulating more and more "stuff" inside, and you get a sense

of what life is like for the majority of people on our planet. What a heavy burden of past they carry around with them in their minds.

Read A NEW EARTH if you're in the mood for something a bit out of the ordinary, but in a very positive way . . . it will make you think about what's written on almost every page, then want to go back to revisit it . . . I know that's the case with me and so this is one book that I won't be lending to too many others.

D. Marjorie Brody is a well-known coach, consultant and speaker that I've had the pleasure of hearing several times . . . so when I came across her cassette tape, 21 COMMON MISTAKES FOR 21ST CENTURY BUSINESS ETIQUETTE AND HOW NOT TO MAKE THEM, I jumped at the opportunity to listen to it in the hopes that I might pick up an idea or two.

Was I ever disappointed!

Yet only because I gained a many more ideas than one or two . . . in fact, my problem in this review is going to limit the tidbits of information that I did gain.

Among them were the following:

- * If you forget a name, introduce somebody you do know by saying, "I don't believe you've met" [the other person]. That will always result in the third person giving you his or her name.
- * To be prepared for small talk, be interesting and be interested.
- * Always include a subject line in your email.
- * Respond to your email within 24 hours.
- * People open doors for a purpose, not necessarily men opening doors for women.
- * The host of a lunch pays for the lunch, regardless of gender.
- * Presenters need to be early and greet participants.
- * When traveling, come prepared with lots of dollar bills for tipping.

My only nitpick with this tape is the title . . . 21 COMMON MISTAKES goes beyond just providing business etiquette advice . . . the ideas can and should be utilized by just about anybody, no matter what his or her field of endeavor . . . students also would find this of value as they enter the work force.

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5. TV alert

A. HEIDI FLEISS: THE WOULD-BE MADAM OF CRYSTAL is a documentary about the woman who got busted for running a call-girl ring for the rich and famous . . . ten years and one jail sentence after that effort failed, she tried to open the first and only legal brothel catering to women . . . Monday

at 9 p.m. on HBO.

B. Monday might also be game show night for you; i.e., if either of these shows seem of interest:

* **WANNA BET?**, in which celebs like Drew Lachey, Jerry Rice and George Wendt wager money on whether a contestant can perform a strange stunt . . . hosted by popular British TV comics Anthony McPartlin and Delcan Donnelly--better known as Ant and Dec . . . 9 p.m. on ABC.

* **DATE MY EX** returns . . . this bizarre dating game features Jo and Slade, the former **REAL HOUSEWIVES OF ORANGE COUNTY** couple, and has Slade living with a bunch of guys to see if they're good enough for the woman who dumped him for a singing career . . . 10 p.m. on BRAVO.

C. **GREEN PORNO** stars Isabella Rossellini playing a variety of insects in eight shorts that are, according to TV GUIDE, "wonderfully weird" . . . Tuesday at 8:30 p.m. on SUNDANCE.

D. **JINGLES** premieres on Sunday at 9 p.m. on CBS . . . contestants attempt to perform the perfect commercial for various products.

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6. Fifty dollars

Morris and his wife Esther went to the state fair every year, and every year Morris would say, "Esther, I'd like to ride in that helicopter."

Esther always replied, "I know Morris, but that helicopter ride is fifty dollars, and fifty dollars is fifty dollars."

One year Esther and Morris went to the fair, and Morris said, "Esther, I'm 85 years old. If I don't ride that helicopter, I might never get another chance."

To this, Esther replied, "Morris that helicopter ride is fifty dollars, and fifty dollars is fifty dollars."

The pilot overheard the couple and said, "Folks I'll make you a deal. I'll take the both of you for a ride. If you can stay quiet for the entire ride and not say a word, I won't charge you! But if you say one word, it's fifty dollars."

Morris and Esther agreed and up they went. The pilot did all kinds of fancy maneuvers, but not a word was heard. He did his daredevil tricks over and over again, but still not a word.

When they landed, the pilot turned to Morris and said, "By golly, I did everything I could to get you to yell out, but you didn't. I'm impressed!"

Morris replied, "Well, to tell you the truth, I almost said something when Esther fell out, but you know fifty dollars is fifty dollars."

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7. Websites

A. To find free and clear answers to common questions, please click:

<http://www.wisegeek.com/>

There are some 25,100+ original articles, including answers to:

- * How do I reseed a lawn?
- * How do I create my own website?
- * What foods are toxic to dogs and cats?
- * What is the best way to get rid of stretch marks?
- * What is a bulging disk?
- * How can I lower my blood sugar?

B. If you want to watch some of your favorite TV shows at anytime of the day, please click:

<http://www.tidaltv.com>

This website is still in beta mode, so there's not all that much available . . . but that said, you can find several CBS programs on it, including CSI, SWINGTOWN, etc. . . . in addition, you can find such oldies as ONE DAY AT A TIME, as well as such specials as HOW TO CREATE A GREEN WEDDING.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blaineworld.net>

In case you've ever wondered about what I do with your name (if you're a subscriber to this missive), please look at "Newsletter" to the left, then "Privacy Statement."

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8. Computer tip

As you probably know, you can get multiple email addresses from AOL, Google's Gmail, Yahoo Mail, and most other Internet service providers . . . get a different email address for the different things that you do; e.g., communicate with friends, pay bills, shopping, etc. . . . this will help minimize spam . . . in addition, if any one email address becomes a spam magnet, drop it.

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9. Embarrassment

"Dr. Janet," the embarrassed woman says, "I have a sexual problem. I don't get aroused by my husband."

Dr Janet says, "Okay, I'll do a thorough exam tomorrow. Bring your husband in with you."

The next day the woman returns with her husband. "Take off your clothes, Mr. Thomas," says the doctor. "Now turn all the way around."

Okay, now lie down, please. Uh-huh, I see. Okay, you may put your clothes back on."

Dr. Janet takes the woman aside. "You're in perfect health," she says. "He doesn't turn me on either."

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10. A quote I like

The ego cannot distinguish between a situation and its interpretation of and reaction to that situation. You might say, "What a dreadful day," without realizing that the cold, the wind, and the rain or whatever condition you react to are not dreadful. They are as they are. What is dreadful is your reaction, your inner resistance to it, and the emotion that is created by that resistance. In Shakespeare's words, "There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." What is more, suffering or negativity is often misperceived by the ego as pleasure because up to a point the ego strengthens itself through it.--Eckhart Tolle in A NEW EARTH (see also Sections 2, 4C and 11)

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11. Thought for the day

You can tell when I REALLY like a book when I cite it on four separate occasions in this newsletter . . . that's my opinion about A NEW EARTH (see also Sections 2, 4C and 10) by Eckhart Tolle, the source of this passage:

According to an ancient Sufi story, there lived a king in some Middle Eastern land who was continuously torn between happiness and despondency. The slightest thing would cause him great upset or provoke an intense reaction, and his happiness would quickly turn into disappointment and despair. A time came when the king finally got tired of himself and of life, and he began to seek a way out. He sent for a wise man who lived in his kingdom and who was reputed to be enlightened. When the wise man came, the king said to him, "I want to be like you. Can you give me something that will bring balance, serenity, and wisdom into my life? I will pay any price you ask."

The wise man said, "I may be able to help you. But the price is so great that your entire kingdom would not be sufficient payment for it. Therefore it will be a gift to you if you will honor it." The king gave his assurances, and the wise man left.

A few weeks later, he returned and handed the king an ornate box carved in jade. The king opened the box and found a simple gold ring inside. Some letters were inscribed on the ring. The inscription read: This, too, will pass. "What is the meaning of this?" asked the king. The wise man said, "Wear this ring always. Whatever happens, before you call it good or bad, touch this ring and read the inscription. That way, you will always be at peace." . . .

Those words inscribed on the ring are not telling you that you should not enjoy the good in your life, nor are they merely meant to provide some comfort in times of suffering. They have a deeper purpose: to make you aware of the fleetingness of every situation, which is due to

the transience to all forms-good or bad. When you become aware of the transience of all forms, your attachment to them lessens, and you disidentify from them to some extent. Being detached does not mean that you cannot enjoy the good that the world has to offer. In fact, you enjoy it more. Once you see and accept the transience of all things and the inevitability of change, you can enjoy the pleasures of the world while they last without fear of loss or anxiety about the future. When you are detached, you gain a higher vantage point from which to view the events in your life instead of being trapped inside them. You become like an astronaut who sees the planet Earth surrounded by the vastness of space and realizes a paradoxical truth: The earth is precious and at the same time insignificant. The recognition that This, too, will pass brings detachment and with detachment another dimension comes into your life -inner space. Through detachment, as well as nonjudgment and inner nonresistance, you gain access to that dimension.

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12. Advance planning department

A. Actress and audiobook performer CJ Critt visits the Princeton Public Library for a tribute to detective novelist Janet Evanovich at 7 p.m. on Monday . . . known as "the voice of Stephanie Plum," Ms. Critt has narrated more than 150 titles of popular fiction, including 17 books for best-selling author Evanovich . . . Ms. Critt will share a behind-the-scenes peek at the world of audiobook performance, along with several excerpts from the zany world of the Plum character . . . for more information about this FREE event, please click:

<http://www.princetonlibrary.org>

B. There will be a concert by the world-renowned Wiener Kammer Orchestra (Vienna Chamber Orchestra) at 8 p.m. on Thursday in Princeton University's Richardson Auditorium . . . the program will feature Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Major and his epic Symphony No. 3, "Eroica" . . . admission is FREE with tickets made available to the public at 6:30 the day of the performance . . . for more information, call 609.631.7884.

C. CANCELATION OF SOMETHING MENTIONED LAST WEEK:

THE MUSICAL OF MUSICALS: THE MUSICAL production has been canceled; consequently, it will not be running through July 26 at the Villages Theatre in Somerset, NJ . . . look for the next production, THE ODD COUPLE, to run from September 12-28 . . . for more information, please click: <http://www.villagerstheatre.net>

D. CHANGE IN DATE:

An Evening of Jazz will be presented at Mercer County Community College's West Windsor campus in West Windsor, NJ on Friday, November 7 (and NOT on September 19 as I originally reported) . . . stay tuned for details, but I do know it will be sponsored by WWFM, Jazz on 89.1. HD2, Trenton, NJ--the station that will be hosting my upcoming radio show.

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PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

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#615

7.14.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I went together to meet with Scott Laifer.

He's the nutritionist (in Hillsborough, NJ) I will be working with, per the recommendation of my doctor. We were both impressed; he's certainly knowledgeable about his field. In addition, he's very passionate about sharing a message; i.e., that I need to develop a "Forever Lifestyle." It is not a diet. It is permanent.

I won't go into all the details now, but the key thing I need to do is cut down on the amount of carbs I've been consuming for far too long. Instead, I need to add more protein and more vegetables into my diet--something I've already begun to do.

Should you want to work with Scott, he can be reached at 908.281.1090. He's also a personal trainer.

B. Shortly after our meeting, we headed to Chicago where I was a delegate to the national conference of the American Federation of Teachers . . . we had a blast.

Though I was disappointed that Barrack Obama did not speak to the group, Hillary Clinton made an appearance . . . I'd call her support of Obama lukewarm; it almost seemed as if she was campaigning for 2012 . . . however, she did note that:

* The Republicans should hold a press conference tomorrow to apologize to the country and say we're not just going to run anybody; and

* I admire Senator's war record, but make no mistake about it, he will offer four more years of the same.

C. I attended several of the sessions, but the best time I had was when I was with Cynthia and/or with the other members of the Bucks County Community College delegation.

One afternoon, we took a delightful architectural and historical cruise along the Chicago River . . . on another day, we went to the Shedd Aquarium . . . it was a bit too crowded for our liking, but we were appreciative of the service we received from a helpful employee there by the name of Tawunna . . . when she heard we were teachers, she informed us of the fact that there would be no charge!

We enjoyed meals at such fine restaurants as Ben Pao and the Atwood Cafe . . . but the high spot of the trip, at least for me, was the fact that we got to see three shows.

First off was JERSEY BOYS, the story of Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons . . . it was great, not only for the music but for

an amazing performance from Jarrod Spector as Valli . . . the next night we saw AIN'T MISBEHAVIN' . . . this we liked least, probably because there was no story . . . a talented cast instead just sang most of the songs of Fats Waller.

That's our delegation (below) from l-r: Cynthia, your truly, Angela and Michael Hennessey, Mary Ellen Lohin, and Jim Freeman:



The best, by far, was the last show we saw: SUPERIOR DONUTS, performed by the Steppenwolf Theatre Company.

This is a powerful drama with some comic moments, written by Tracy Letts . . . it is the story of a donut shop that has seen better days . . . its owner seems incapable of changing with the times; i.e., until he hires a new employee . . . we were blown away by the performances of both Michael McKean and Jon Michael Hill, as well as by the rest of the ensemble . . . one other nice touch: there was an informative post-show discussion, led by an assistant director whose name I'm sorry I did not catch.

If you're anywhere near Chicago, catch this play that runs through August 17 . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.steppenwolf.org/>

D. CONGRATULATIONS to Bill Faehl, a former student, who was a keynote speaker at the national convention of the Manyu Elements Cultural and Development Association (a U.S. organization of Cameroon citizens from the Manyu district living in this country) . . . later in the day, the association presented him with a Distinguished Service Award for the work that his church has been doing in Manyu.

CONGRATULATIONS, also, to Joanne Peck--proud mother of Christine Haynes . . . Joanne just told me that her daughter passed her State Boards with flying colors and is now a Registered Nurse in the State of Pennsylvania . . . Christine will also be continuing her employment at the Horsham Clinic.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Amelia--an employee with Hot Tix on 72 E. Randolph in Chicago.

She was the person who helped us get discount tickets for two of the three aforementioned shows (see Section 1B) . . . even with the one she didn't have, JERSEY BOYS, she told us what exactly we had to do to get the best available seats.

Amelia was extremely knowledgeable, as well as friendly . . . she

was even right on her target with her restaurant recommendations.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.hottix.org/>

THAT SAID:

Though you can get some tickets online, you'll most probably be better off by going to one of the two Chicago locations . . . more shows are typically available.

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2. FYI

Tomorrow, take the time to smile and greet at least five people you would not have otherwise greeted-nothing extended, just a, "How are you? Have a great day!" Notice the effect it has on them and you. And have a great day!

SOURCE:

THE NURSE IN THE DELIVERY ROOM SLAPPED ME . . . ONCE (see also Sections 4C, 10 and 11) by D Anthony

FYI, part 2

I'm very much obliged to all the readers who sent back replies to my MR. CURIOUS HERE question about what I could do to lower my cholesterol . . . several asked me about my tryglycerides . . . they're fine, thank you . . . that reading was a normal 92 . . . yet in case you missed it last week, the other levels were not so fine . . . specifically, my totals were as follows: Total, 271; LDL, 191; and HDL, 62--with the first two readings being far out of the range that they should be.

* Penny in Mississippi wrote with perhaps my favorite response:

You asked for suggestions as to how to lower your cholesterol, and I have the absolute solution as how to do that . . . it's quite simple, and it will also help with sugar, weight and many other health problems . . . the answer is if it tastes good--spit it out!

* Kathy in Florida sent this useful advice:

MORE SEX!

Then there were these other responses:

* Sue in Pennsylvania:

I know you are trying to eat healthier . . . and I understand because I too would prefer to eat pancakes every day . . . sugar is like crack to me, and I am an addict . . . but here is a product I like very much . . . its a green powder drink . . . and though I still think we all need to eat more veggies, I think this drink is good for people who struggle with getting the right foods in them . . . it really does taste good and is easy to drink . . . and it tastes better and better with continued use.

There's even a claim about improving cholesterol; check it out:
http://www.greensfirst.com/gf_content2.asp?node=15

* Vicki in Florida:

I take Lovaza (used to be Omacor). It's a fairly new prescription drug that is mostly omega 3 fish oil. Quite pricey, so I suggest fish oil liquid over the counter. It's better than the fish oil capsules if you can swallow the oil. It definitely will lower your cholesterol, but you need to cut down on the fat intake as well.

* Angela in Pennsylvania:

Ask your doctor about time-released Niacin. You need to stay away from starchy foods also--pasta, breads, things that have hidden sugar. That may be of help too.

* Ellen in Pennsylvania:

They say eating oatmeal for breakfast is helpful. My doctor agrees. It is better to eat the old-fashioned oatmeal since it is not stripped of the things that keep you fuller. (Instant oatmeal is not as good.)

* John in Pennsylvania:

Suggestions on lowering cholesterol:

20 mg policosanol/day, 50 mg niacin daily . . . lowers ldl and raises HDL(good cholesterol), vitamin C up to 3000 mg/day, Vitamin E: make sure use mixed trooper, CoQ10-100mg/day.

Herbs:

Use 300 mg ginger/day . . . add dash or two of cinnamon to coffee each day . . . also, fresh raw garlic, not cooked.

And more protein, less simple carbs.

Good Book to read: THE DOCTOR'S HEART CURE by Al Sears, MD.

* Craig in Pennsylvania:

Read the SOUTH BEACH DIET book . . . reduced my cholesterol and sugar tremendously, and I started higher than you . . . also, exercise daily . . . I truly sound like one of those people that give advice and I dislike!

CHANGING SUBJECT DEPARTMENT:

* Marsha in New Jersey (seeking a travel companion for Las Vegas trip):

I booked a trip to Las Vegas, staying at the Golden Nugget from Thursday to Monday, the third week in July, to include sight seeing, entertainment and other activities of interest. Looking for someone who is spontaneous and willing to book a last minute discounted flight and share the room and hang out together.

Let me know if you or anyone you know may be interested. If all else fails, I plan to have an incredible time all by my lonesome.

I can be reached via email, mkontell@aol.com, or by phone: 201-982-1470.

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3. Innocence

One Sunday morning, the pastor noticed little Alex standing in the foyer of the church staring up at a large plaque. It was covered with names with small American flags mounted on either side of it.

The seven year old had been staring at the plaque for some time, so the pastor walked up, stood beside the little boy, and said quietly, "Good morning Alex."

"Good morning, Pastor, what is this?" he asked the pastor.

The pastor said, "Well, son, it's a memorial plaque to all the young men and women who died in the Service." Soberly, they just stood together, staring at the large plaque.

Finally, little Alex swallowed hard and in a voice barely audible and trembling with fear, "Which service, the 8:30 one or the 10:45 one?"

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4. Reviews

A. KIT KITTERIDGE: AN AMERICAN GIRL is a family drama about a resourceful young girl whose bravery and determination help her save her family's home during the Great Depression . . . it stars Abigail Breslin, who was so fine that she received an Oscar

nomination in LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE . . . here she's almost as watchable . . . I've seen just about every film she has been in and can't help but wonder if she'll be able to continue her successes as she gets older . . . I hope so . . . some others in the case (Stanley Tucci and Joan Cusack, in particular) come across as cartoonish, but that was the nature of their parts . . . a happy ending makes this the perfect film for both children and their parents . . . don't be put off by the G rating; methinks you'll enjoy KIT KITTERIDGE.

B. An email from Barbara in Pennsylvania got me thinking; she wrote:

Your suggested DVD rental (SCENT OF A WOMAN). It is one of my all-time favorites. Everything you noted about the film was sooooo accurate. I've seen the film at least five times and always look forward to the tango, the new car test ride and of course the speech at the end! Marvelous choice, Dahling!

My son's favorite all time movie is SOMEWHERE IN TIME. Awesome, awesome movie!

It could be fun to hear from your readers on their favorite all-time movie. It could be interesting!

What do you think?

MR. CURIOUS HERE:

Anybody care to respond to Barbara? Let me add my two cents, commenting first about SOMEWHERE IN TIME . . . another reader, Kathy in Pennsylvania, also told me it was her favorite . . . so I revisited it recently and would urge you to do the same, particularly since there is virtually nothing out that just came out on DVD.

This film is about a writer drawn mysteriously to the expression on a woman's face in a photograph . . . the only problem is that she's been dead for nearly 70 years, so the only way he can visit her is through a form of hypnotic time travel . . . it sounds preposterous, but somehow the film works--largely because of the performance of both Christopher Reeve and Jane Seymour in the leading roles . . . the accompanying soundtrack, also, is as good as it gets . . . rated PG, though perhaps a bit sophisticated for young audiences.

As for my all-time favorite movie, it is UMBRELLAS OF CHERBOURG . . . if you're in the mood for a very romantic story about two lovers who are separated by war, this is the one to catch . . . it stars a young Catherine Deneuve, and Michel Legrand's music (including the classic "I will wait for you") is something I'll never forget . . . not rated when first released in 1964; however, because of its mature themes, I would think that a PG-13 rating would be appropriate.

C. Sometimes a book's great title will catch my attention . . . that was the case with THE NURSE IN THE DELIVERY ROOM SLAPPED ME . . . ONCE (see also Sections 2, 10 and 11) by D Anthony . . . its subtitle also helped: STORIES AND PERSPECTIVES TO HELP YOU UNLOCK YOUR AMAZING POTENTIAL, in that I'm typically a sucker for such tales.

One such story especially caught my attention:

* As we were wrapping up the conversation, I offered one parting comment for the two young ladies to consider. I told them the reason this particular act [putting down an umbrella to let rain hit my face] was so meaningful to me was my belief that when we are touched by a fallen raindrop, that's about as close as we can get, in this lifetime, to being actually touched by heaven.

With that, the girls then followed suit, each taking their umbrellas from above their heads. Together we stood, joyfully experiencing the cascading rain, treasuring each passing moment, appreciating heaven's touch.

Just a little something to think about the next time a bit of rain enters your life, the next time you're concerned about getting a little wet.

Reading D Anthony's book enabled me to feel almost as if I could share what he was experiencing . . . that also happened in the passages where he talked about the death of his mother . . . for example:

* Five years later and it still hurts. It doesn't take much either--a song, a movie, a random memory that happens my way--and I'm done. All of a sudden, I'm a grown man crying like a child, a child who has lost his mother. It wasn't supposed to be this way. And it still hurts. However, the reality is, my hope is the firsthand knowledge of how much I miss her or just how much she means to me.

And if you happen to still be blessed enough to be able to touch your mom's face, to hear your mother's voice, go to her, do whatever it takes. Hug her, kiss her, tell her you love her this day and each and every day for the rest of your life.

And if it warms her heart, if she smiles, I'll take a little comfort in knowing my mom's passing has not been in vain.

Whatever you do, don't keep her waiting.

Whatever you do, don't wait too long.

Lastly, I liked how the author presented a series of challenges (or missions as he called them) throughout the book, such as this one:

* Today, identify one task, no matter how big or small, that can be accomplished today, one task that will take you one step closer to living your dream. Then set out to make it happen. In this way, we can again prove to ourselves that we are not among those dependent on the odds of a lottery for our happiness and fulfillment, for the achievement of our aspirations, for us to begin to approach our intended destiny. In this way, on this day, you will give your dreams yet another chance to come true.

Reading *THE NURSE IN THE DELIVERY ROOM SLAPPED ME . . . ONCE* will get you thinking about such things . . . at the same time, it will help you gain a better appreciation for both your life and the lives of others.

D. I enjoyed *THE NEW PRINCE*, written and read by noted political strategist Dick Morris.

He's the guy who helped secure President Clinton's comeback victory in 1996 . . . here, he takes the ideas first expressed in Niccolo Machiavelli's *THE PRINCE* some five centuries ago and updates them for the 21st century.

Though written nearly 10 years ago, it still feels so fresh that it seems like both of the candidates currently running for President are applying the ideas . . . or at least they should be.

For instance, among the many tidbits that I gained from listening were the following:

* Issue messages are more effective than image ads in getting votes. They're also more effective in explaining the true character of the candidate.

* Campaigns can't win if they are based solely on a negative message.

* Voters pay little attention to allegations of scandal. After Clinton's impeachment, his popularity rose 5%.

* Voters are a lot less concerned about the abstract qualities a candidate may have than they are about what he will do to help them in their own personal lives.

* People are more inclined to vote for, not against.

* The art of leadership is to maintain sufficient forward motion to control events and steer public policy without losing public support.

And this one that every politician must remember:

* After you lose, nurture your donors. Act like you didn't lose. And smile, even though it hurts.

THE NEW PRINCE is just about essential reading for any candidate, regardless of whether running for a national, state or even local School Board office.

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5. TV alert

A. Benjamin Bratt stars on THE CLEANER about a recovering addict in charge of a crew of extreme interventionists who'll stop at nothing to help others find treatment . . . Tuesdays at 10 p.m. on A&E.

B. My all-time favorite TV game show was the GONG SHOW . . . Chuck Barris' cult-classic is updated for the 21st century with Dave Attell as host . . . Thursdays at 10 p.m. on COMEDY CENTRAL.

C. I'll watch MONK's 7th season opener on Friday at 9 p.m. on USA if just to see Hector Elizondo as Monk's new therapist . . . in addition, Brad Garrett guest stars.

D. Lou Diamond Phillips and Jason Priestley star in TERMINATION POINT, a 2007 sci-fi flick about a secret government experiment involving time travel . . . Sunday at 9 p.m. on SCI FI.

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6. Professional advice

A doctor and a lawyer were talking at a party, but their conversation was constantly interrupted by people describing their ailments and asking the doctor for free medical advice.

After an hour of this, the exasperated doctor finally asked the lawyer, "What do *you* do to stop people from asking you for legal advice when you're out of the office?"

"I give it to them," replied the lawyer, "and then I send them a bill."

The doctor was shocked, but agreed it was a good idea and decided to give it a try.

The next day, still feeling slightly guilty, the doctor prepared the bills. When he went to place them in his mailbox, he found a bill from the lawyer.

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7. Websites

A. Ever hear of Matt Harding? He's a young guy who decided to dance in as many places as possible . . . he usually dances alone, but this video is different . . . it's guaranteed to put a smile on your face; see for yourself by clicking:

<http://cosmos.bcst.yahoo.com/up/player/popup?cl=8612964>

Can you imagine what the world would be like if before a war could begin, everyone would be required to lay down weapons and dance in groups with Matt? There would be no more wars; rather, there would be a lot more joy!

B. For those not familiar with the story of Christian the Lion, please click:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=adYbFQFXG0U>

It will touch your heart!

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blaineworld.net>

If you're not already a subscriber, go to the bottom and see "Special Offer" . . . then just follow the directions there . . . as always, feel free to forward this copy to your friends, relatives, colleagues, etc. and encourage them to do the same; i.e., subscribe . . . there currently are some 865 subscribers; more are always welcome . . . you can't

beat the price, either, since it remains FREE!

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8. Computer tip

Coupon clipping on the Internet

It can be done. According to THE WALL STREE JOURNAL, here are your best bets for such activity:

* Coupon Service: Thecouponclippers.com

Fees: 50 cents per order plus 10% of the face value of each coupon. Shipping is 58 cents.

Selection: Very extensive

Health-Food Section: Yes

Comment: Our favorite site, for ease of use and its variety of organic-product coupons. Users can shop by department or via search tool.

* Coupon Service: centsoff.com

Fees: \$7.50 annual membership fee plus \$7.50 for up to 50 coupons.

Selection: Extensive

Health-Food Section: No

Comment: Good site, but it is only cost-effective if you use a large quantity of coupons.

* Coupon Service: smartsources.com, ppgazatee.com, coolsavings.com

Fees: free

Selection: These sites all link to the same coupons, which are skewed toward snacks and beauty products.

Health-Food Section: No

Comment: Coupons are printable. But with no search tool, locating coupons is time-consuming. Also, only one or two coupons print per page, so stock up on printer paper.

* Coupon Service: grocerycoupons.com, onlinecoupons.com, grocerycard.com

Fees: \$9.95 a year for grocerycoupons.com, and a whopping \$99.95 a year for the others. Also, 10% of the face value of each coupon and 75 cents for postage.

Selection: Fairly limited. These sites all link to the same coupons.

Health-Food Section: No

Comment: Too much money for too little reward.

SOURCE:

Hannah Kate Kinnersley, "The best sites for coupon clipping," THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, 5.22.2008, p. D2

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9. Courses for women, part 2 of 2

by Peter in Pennsylvania (in response to a list of courses he saw for men)

Controlling the effects of ESP in the relationship:

Men constantly complain that we get angry when they do not do something that they should have done, when they do not know exactly what it is that they should have done but should have figured it out despite having absolutely no idea that we wanted them to do the thing that they were not aware of in the first place, but we don't care because they should have known.

It's really simple to us but men will continue to struggle with this concept.

They constantly complain that if we had alerted them to our specific needs they would have gladly taken care of it because they love us so much, as if it is our fault for not being proactive and communicating to avoid a negative situation. In this class we explore this warped logic of men and why they continue to struggle with our telepathic communication. We will partake in experiments in which class members will stare at the back of a man's head for 5 minutes without speaking. After the five minute period, we will ask the man exactly what woman's specific needs are and what exactly he should now do.

State regulations forbid the attachment of electrodes to testicles for incentive after the unfortunate voltage surge accident last year, but the class is still a lot of fun.

Body language 101:

When no means yes and maybe means no or sometimes yes depending . . . yes may actually mean no in certain circumstances. While it is perfectly clear to us women folk men continue to struggle with this concept, too. In this class we will emphasize the importance of body language for men, especially for those awkward social events, such as when we bend over in the supermarket to pick something up . . . and how to make it clear to your man that this was not an invitation to lift your skirt over your head. We will also explore how to have your man understand exactly what the phrase, "Oh . . . Yes . . . No . . . Don't . . . Stop" actually means, depending on our body language, and we will explore the 47 alternate legal scenarios in which this phrase can be applied.

In addition, when he asks if it is OK to go out with his buddies and you respond, "Do what you want," the correct body language we teach in this class will help him determine whether your statement was a green light with no problem; emasculating permission from the office of your dictatorship; or a clear threat that he is dead meat if he actually goes.

We will also explore the subtle difference in the arms folded foot tapping pissed off posture technique . . . that in this posture arms folded should be across the boobs, flattening them in mammogram fashion . . . lifting the boobalidge over the arms in Victoria Secret lift and push fashion will only lead to embarrassing scenarios similar to when the idiot lifted your skirt over your head in the supermarket.

Shopping for men 101

UG! ARG! . . . men need pants for wedding . . . go to Mall . . . hunt for pants . . . focus on hunt . . . ignore other stores . . . not need that stuff . . . sale on bed sheets? . . . don't care . . . need pants not bed sheets . . . must resist . . . Victoria's Secret . . . find pants store . . . go inside . . . kill pants with spear . . . try pants on . . . UG! ARG! . . . pants fit . . . not worry; look fat in pants . . . go home . . .red pants do not match either pair of sneakers . . . don't match favorite orange and green-checked jacket with leather elbow patches. . . .ARG . . . don't care . . . look stupid at wedding standing next to beautiful wife . . . wife not happy. . . me ask: what's wrong?she say "Nothing" . . . me think everything OK.

This excerpt was taken from a deposition the man gave after the wife was arrested for assaulting him at the wedding.

Need we say more? Its either take this class ladies or end up in jail.

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10. A quote I like

A favorite quote of mine suggests there are two ways to get to the top of an oak tree, by climbing it or sitting on an acorn. How committed

are you to your hopes and dreams? How committed are you to you?

Whether you realize it or not, the probability of success is yours to determine. It's your choice, begin to climb, or find yourself a comfortable acorn. Either way, know that the choice is yours to make each and every day.--D Anthony in THE NURSE IN THE DELIVERY ROOM SLAPPED ME . . . ONCE (see also Sections 2, 4C and 11)

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11. Thought for the day

You can tell when I REALLY like a book when I cite it on four separate occasions in this newsletter . . . that's my opinion about THE NURSE IN THE DELIVERY ROOM SLAPPED ME . . . ONCE (see also Sections 2, 4C and 10) by D Anthony, the source of this passage:

In the end, it's important to understand that life boils down to a collection of self-fulfilling prophecies. When you wake up in the morning and anticipate you will have a good or bad day, chances are you will be correct. My theory is that the way we feel is about 15-20 percent circumstance and 80-85 percent perspective. If we alter our perspective, we can't help but change our lives. Or, to quote W. Mitchell (a highly recommended motivational speaker--his story will touch you): "It's not what happens to you, it's what you do about it that matters."

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12. Advance planning department

A. Opera New Jersey will perform selections from Michael Ching's new opera, a setting of "A Midsummer's Night Dream," with an interesting twist at McCarter's Berland Theater on Thursday at 2 p.m. in Princeton, NJ. The twist is that the whole opera will be sung a cappella; i.e., voices only, no accompaniment.

This special event is FREE and open to the public. Due to limited seating, reservations are required. To make them, please call Patricia Kiernan Johnson at 609.799.7700, ext. 104.

B. As usual, there's some real good stuff playing in local theaters . . . to cite just a small sampling:

* OLIVER runs through July 20 at Kelsey Theater in West Windsor, NJ . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.kelseytheatre.net>

* THE MUSICAL OF MUSICALS: THE MUSICAL runs through July 26 at the Villages Theatre in Somerset, NJ . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.villagerstheatre.net>

* SWEET CHARITY runs through July 27 at Actor's NET of Bucks County in Morrisville, PA . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.actorsnetbucks.org>

* LEADER OF THE PACK runs from July 18-August 23 at the Off-Broad Street Theater in Hopewell, NJ . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.off-broadstreet.com>

* MRS. BOB CRATCHIT'S WILD CHRISTMAS BINGE runs from July 25-August 10 at the Somerset Valley Players Theatre in

Hillsborough, NJ . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.svptheatre.org>

D. Invite to the Morrisville Jazz Festival from Eric Mintel:

We're sending this email blast out to you regarding the Incredible, the Amazing and the FREE 5th annual Morrisville Jazz Festival in honor of Mike Sherlock happening on Sunday July 20th in Williamson Park, Morrisville, PA off Delmor Ave (just outside of Yardley and right across from Trenton, NJ). The festival runs from 3 to 9 p.m.

It's an incredible setting to hear live jazz by some of the area's greatest talent. Bring a picnic dinner, a blanket and chairs and relax to the sounds of the Ella Gahnt group at 3 p.m., Arpeggio Jazz Ensemble at 4 p.m., The Donna Antonio Trio at 5 p.m., the Eric Mintel Quartet at 6 p.m., and the 17 Piece Big Band Midnight Sun from 7-9 p.m.

All of this great music is FREE for you. We all need your support and hope you can come to this great jazz festival that is quickly becoming a staple of the industry in Bucks County, PA. Click on the link to the festival below to see the events planned for the day and read about the past festivals:

<http://www.morrisvillejazzfest.com/>

For more information and/or directions, call 215.295.8181. We hope to see you there; it's going to be an incredible day!

D. Building and Financing Your Business with the SBA (sponsored by US Small Business Administration)

Wed., July 29 . . . 10 a.m.-Noon . . . No Charge . . . New Brunswick Library in New Brunswick, NJ . . . the SBA supports the banks in lending small and large loans to small companies; find out which program is right for you!

Click here for online registration:

http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?e=0011rQ_2hzFSbjmezzhZCYypEGzLueXNbZpruoBXsL_fyBFHY6ITVJl4zvG80SLRWdqURDey2gfO8yQfoG2zrRsbUcbWylJw0CDUYIa-aQ0THyAOml7Jq7ZWipdjgccgPqwt4y3x6IOgKQckbEaNdaukDkhwucwnxdneJlpt-1yOq_ZArDNH8Tu_gEF_gsrzam

Or call Dolly at 609.771.2947.

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PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#614

7.7.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I hosted our 2nd annual Picnic/Official opening & probable closing of the grilling season on July 4 for a bunch of local friends . . . we at least had a bash and hope those in attendance did, too.

That's the two of us, proudly waving our American flags:



Mike Lazanski handled grilling duties with his usual flair . . . should you want to contact him for your next event, he can be reached at 215.547.6196 . . . Laura Klimitas, an independent chocolatier for DoveChocolateAtHome.com, took care of desserts by showing everybody how to make a simple mousse . . . that's her in the middle, flanked by Natalie Kaye on the left and Joyce Litchman on the right:



Laura can be reached at 215.953.0343 . . . if you choose to contact her, you won't go wrong; i.e., as long as you also invite us to your event . . . and if you play your cards right, she might even bring along her trusted sidekick/assistant Paul . . . he helped make our event the success that it was, and I'm confident that after another 93 or 94 such parties, he may even be ready to handle hosting duties himself.

B. On Sunday, we joined with family members for the unveiling of the tombstone of Cynthia's mother Elsie . . . I especially liked this one piece that Marty, Cynthia's brother-in-law, had everybody read together:

The death of those close to our hearts grieves and humbles us. It devastates our lives, lives that once were filled with the warmth of their presence.

It reminds us that we all must die, even the most humble and righteous among us.

And yet we know that life does not end at the grave; the soul lives on.

How, then, do we accept the reality of earth?

By remembering the goodness of our loved ones and by sharing our lives after their example.

For the memory of the righteous is truly a blessing, an inspiration for all our days.

May our lives be worthy of their memory, always.

Author unknown

(if you know who wrote this and/or the source, please let me know)

C. Cynthia also joined me at my annual physical . . . my physician, Dr. Weinstein (with Your Doctors Care in Hillsborough, NJ; 908.685.1887), said I'm in good shape with one key exception:

my cholesterol levels were too high . . . specifically, my totals were as follows: Total, 271; LDL, 191; and HDL, 62--with the first two readings being far out of the range that they should be.

This is no surprise, I guess, given all the ice cream that we eat during the week . . . so our plans are to cut down, alas, to having ice cream no more than one time per week . . . in addition, I'll also be eating less pizza; make that, a lot less pizza . . . and I'm going to be meeting with a nutritionist this coming week.

MR. CURIOUS HERE:

I welcome other suggestions you may have on how to reduce my cholesterol levels . . . much obliged, in advance.

D. UPDATES

* Cynthia is hard at work trying to find new insurance coverage for us, contacting many of the suggestions that readers graciously submitted . . . what's interesting is the wide range of prices we're getting for coverage, which leads me to recommend that you check what you pay at least every few years . . . you'd be amazed, but we have seen price differences between a few dollars to over two thousand dollars from State Farm . . . when we finalize our decision, I'll be sure to share some of our findings.

* You may not catch us around for a few days, in that we'll be in Chicago for the annual conference of the American Federation of Teachers.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Rev. Robert Moore--executive director of the Princeton-based Coalition for Peace Action (CFPA).

He was recently honored by New Jersey Citizen Action, the state's leading citizen watchdog coalition, for "his lifelong commitment to organizing and empowering communities to create a more peaceful and just society for all." Among the 300 attendees at the award ceremony in Trenton were Gov. Jon Corzine and U.S. Rep. Frank Pallone (D-6th).

The Rev. ""Bob" Moore is also slated to be honored at the 50th Anniversary National Congress of Peace Action on July 18-20 at Trinity University in Washington, D.C. He is one of just two organizers who will be recognized for having worked in peace action for more than 25 years.

For more information about CFPA, please click:

<http://www.peacecoalition.org>

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2. FYI

I believe that should is one of the most damaging words in our language. Every time we use should, we are, in effect, saying "wrong." Either we are wrong or we are going to be wrong. I don't think we need more wrongs in our life. We need to have more freedom of choice. I would like to take the word should and remove it from the vocabulary forever. I'd replace it

with the word could. Could gives us choice, and we are never wrong.

SOURCE:

YOU CAN HEAL YOUR LIFE (see also Sections 4C, 10 and 11)
by Louise Hay

FYI, part 2

* Kevin in Pennsylvania (with AN INVITATION):

Go LOKKOL and get more than answers!

Launched in 2008 by Kevin Jameson of Philadelphia, here's
the "go to" website if doing good and getting help is what you want:

<http://www.LOKKOL.com>

Here's how it works:

Register as a local resident or knowledgeable person about any particular area and when you do so, list the web address of your most favorite charity, be it Rotary, Doctors Without Borders, SPCA, Cancer Society or PITA, etc.

You name it (as long as they can take donations on-line). Then, when you plan to go somewhere and need some "native" information or want the best local florist to hand deliver some really beautiful flowers . . . search for local LOKKOLs in that area and when they answer your question quickly and with valuable feet-on-the-street information, you simply make a small optional donation to the charity that THEY listed their personal LOKKOL profile.

Even better, you can even wait . . . and make your donation AFTER you've proven that their info was on solid ground. Then, next time, when you get asked a LOKKOL question, you too can answer it and let your native knowledge shine through, plus get a helping hand for your favorite charity. What a deal!

NOTE:

For more information about Kevin, please click:

<http://ww.KevinJameson.com>

* Joanne in Pennsylvania:

Love it Blaine. You'd get my vote!

IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT YOU MISSED IT:

See below--from last week's issue--for the IMPORTANT
ANNOUNCEMENT that Joanne wrote about:

<http://www.news3online.com/index.php?code=264Q4Pp57U197MT9JLoW>

* Barbara in Pennsylvania (looking to rent at the shore or ocean):

Do you know anyone that rents their home or apartment at the New Jersey shore or the ocean? If so, please ask them to call me.

Thanks,

Barbara Pearl
215.321.5556

* Joey in New Jersey (looking to rent theatrical rehearsal space):

I am looking for affordable theatrical rehearsal space, somewhere in the Central NJ area. I was wondering if there is a listing somewhere online? Perhaps some of the theaters in NJ rent space? Please respond to: joeynovick@earthlink.net

* Kathy in Florida:

If you know of anyone who wears hearing aids, here's a link for some free Energizer batteries:

<http://offers.energizer.com/perfpack/default.aspx?flowerpower>

FILL OUT FORM OR CALL 1.866.449.EARS TO GET YOUR
FREE SAMPLE OF OUR NEW PERFORATED PACKAGE.

BLAINE'S TWO CENTS:

I actually called on the above and found out it is legitimate!

STILL MORE RESPONSES to the MR. CURIOUS HERE question (about certain home buying tips) in a recent issue; among them:

* Janet in New Jersey:

As a former realtor, I found these to be a good idea . . . more so with people who had an abundance of photos and personal effects.

I would add keep all valuables locked away. A watch, rings or wallet that you leave out when you never expect someone in your bedroom or home can be swept into someone's pocket easily. Fine art is also best to be removed for safe keeping

Do not assume everyone is honest and know that even if the realtor is next to people, personal items can disappear. Also, do not leave doors unlocked and check your locks when you get home/

Just like when you are having a garage sale people can be casing your home. Be Smart.

Like a wise nun told me in college: If you leave your purse in the room when you leave for a few moments, you are inviting it to be stolen.

* Skip in Pennsylvania:

Buyers want to feel welcomed but not as if they are intruding. Also, watch anything that may be political.

* Terri in Pennsylvania, a realtor:

I do believe that making your home easy to have potential buyers imagine themselves living in it is important. A home should be uncluttered and "neutral." What some find interesting, others may find "offensive."

But I have recently had an opportunity to see that the family photos

of the seller's potentially helped sell their home.

The sellers are elderly and ready to move on to a retirement community. The 2nd floor hallway of their home is decorated with family photos spanning the 45 years they have spent in the home, raising their children and enjoying their now grown family and grandchildren.

I have been to the home with the buyers several times, and there hasn't been one time that "Mrs. Buyer" hasn't looked at each photo and commented on it. I truly believe that the warm feeling she seems to have regarding this family of strangers has helped her to know that this was the home for her.

Settlement is in September.

CORRECTIONS

* Karen in New Jersey:

I think the saxophone you referred to is a Selmer saxophone. [Typo in BLAINESWORLD #612 had it listed as a Selner.] I have to call my brother and track down his old sax because that is the kind I think it was. I went on Google and the name Selmer came up when I typed Selner.

Thanks for the tip. I hope my brother still has his old sax.

* Marty in Texas:

Thought you may want to know that this site for telephone comparison information . . . nasuca.org . . . expired on 6.28.08 and is pending renewal or deletion.

METHINKS:

This was a big mistake on the part of nasuca.org . . . I have since written the organization about it, but in doing so, I'm reminded of the fact that if you have an Internet domain name, you should make sure that it is up-to-date and that you've paid all necessary fees.

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3. Crossing the street

A lawyer sends a note to a client:

"Dear Frank: I thought I saw you downtown yesterday. I crossed the street to say hello, but it wasn't you. One-tenth of an hour: \$50."

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4. Reviews

A. Jim Broadbent first caught my attention in TOPSY-TURVEY and then followed-up that incredible performance with an Oscar-winning one in IRIS . . . see those two films, if you can, along with WHEN DID YOU LAST SEE YOUR FATHER? (his latest) . . . it's

the touching story of a father and his son, well-played by Colin Firth, that bounces back between the 1950s and 1980s . . . Juliet Stevenson is also excellent as Broadbent's long-suffering wife, as is newcomer Matthew Beard as the Firth character when he was a teenager . . . be forewarned; i.e., to bring a hankie . . . though rated PG-13, I only think older teenagers would find it of interest.

B. UNTRACEABLE is now out for DVD rental . . . it's a predictable thriller starring Diane Lane as a cybercrimes specialist who tracks down a serial killer . . . it's quite unpleasant, and I would not recommend spending any time or money on it . . . rated R.

YOU'D DO MUCH BETTER RENTING:

SCENT OF A WOMAN, a film I just revisited . . . it stars Al Pacino in a well-deserved Oscar winning performance as a blind, retired army colonel . . . he is accompanied in New York City by a young Chris O'Donnell (who is also excellent) . . . there's one of the greatest dance scenes you'll ever see . . . in addition, I loved the another scene involving a test drive of a Ferrari that I can't tell you more about for fear that it will ruin it for you.

Lastly, Pacino's speech toward the end blew me away:

Out of order, I show you out of order. You don't know what out of order is, Mr. Trask. I'd show you, but I'm too old, I'm too tired, I'm too fu*kin' blind. If I were the man I was five years ago, I'd take a FLAMETHROWER to this place! Out of order? Who the hell do you think you're talkin' to? I've been around, you know? There was a time I could see. And I have seen. Boys like these, younger than these, their arms torn out, their legs ripped off. But there isn't nothin' like the sight of an amputated spirit. There is no prosthetic for that. You think you're merely sending this splendid foot soldier back home to Oregon with his tail between his legs, but I say you are . . . executin' his soul! And why? Because he's not a Bairdman. Bairdmen. You hurt this boy, you're gonna be Baird bums, the lot of ya. And Harry, Jimmy, Trent, wherever you are out there, FU*K YOU TOO!

Rated R.

C. I just finished YOU CAN HEAL YOUR LIFE (see also Sections 2, 10 and 11) by Louise Hay and would recommend that you get the print version, if just to see the beautiful work of artist Joan Perrin Falquet . . . it will increase your enjoyment of this bestselling self-help book that was written many years before THE SECRET became such a success.

One other recommendation: Skim the book first . . . then read the chapter, toward the end, where Hay tells her life story . . . it will put things in perspective and show you that she really puts into practice what she writes about ; e.g., in this passage:

* We need to choose to release the past and forgive everyone, ourselves included. We may not know how to forgive, and we may not want to forgive, but the very fact that we say we are willing to forgive begins the healing process. It is imperative for our own healing that "we" release the past and forgive everyone.

I found myself reading and agreeing with just about everything the author wrote . . . but perhaps my favorite part was her list

of ailments and the emotional causes for each, along with an affirmation to help overcome the illness . . . she recommends you follow this four-step approach whenever you have a physical problem:

- * 1. Look up the mental cause. See if this could be true for you. If not, sit quietly and ask yourself, "What could be the thoughts in me that created this?"
2. Repeat to yourself, "I am willing to release the pattern in my consciousness that has created this condition."
3. Repeat the new thought pattern to yourself several times.
4. Assume that you are already in the process of healing.

Whenever you think of the condition, repeat the steps.

So, for instance, when it comes to multiple sclerosis:

* The probable cause is "mental hardness, hard-heartedness, iron will, and inflexibility." The healing "thought pattern" would involve saying this aloud: "By choosing loving, joyous thoughts, I create a loving joyous world. I am safe and free."

The concept may seem far-fetched to some, yet if you are ready to accept what Louise Hay has to offer, it may well work for you. Do give it a try.

D. Heard *THE ART OF EXCEPTIONAL LIVING*, written and read by Jim Rohn.

He is one of the nation's top motivational speakers . . . and though I've heard other books by him, I never get tired of his pragmatic approach . . . such as when he says, the key to life is not doing exceptional things at all . . . just do ordinary things exceptionally well.

Rohn bases much of what he advises on his own personal experiences . . . this made it possible to relate to what he had to say, in that he has had his share of failures--most of which taught him along the way.

Though some of the material may seem basic, I found myself nodding in agreement when I heard such valuable tidbits of information as the following:

- * Learn to work harder on your self than on your job.
- * If you wish to be successful, study success. If you wish to be happy, study success. If you wish to be wealthy, study wealth.
- * You may not be able to do all you find out, but make sure you find out all you can do.
- * It's not what happens that determines your future, it's what you do about it.
- * Everybody has to be good at either of two things: Planting in the spring or begging in the fall.

And, lastly, I smiled at many of Rohn's definitions--such as this one:

* Failure: A few errors in judgement, repeated every day.

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5. TV alert

A. ELVIS MITCHELL: UNDER THE INFLUENCE has filmmakers chat with this critic about movies that influenced them . . . Bill Murray, Quentin Tarantino, Edward Norton, and the late Sydney Pollack are slated guests . . . Mondays at 8 p.m. on TCM.

B. Tracy Morgan takes over as the host of SCARE TACTICS, described by TV GUIDE as "a PUNK'D- meets-FRIDAY THE 13TH reality show" . . . Wednesdays at 10 and 10:30 p.m. on SCI FI.

C. GREATEST AMERICAN DOG features 12 people and their canines living together while facing weekly eliminations . . . Thursday at 8 p.m. on CBS.

D. Bon Jovi and his namesake band perform their well-received Nashville-influenced CD, LOST HIGHWAY, in its entirety for this 2007 concert on SOUNDSTAGE . . . 10 p.m. on Thursday on PBS . . . times and stations often vary for PBS programs, so check local listings.

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6. All the news fit to print

A biker was riding by the zoo, when he saw a little girl leaning into the lion's cage. Suddenly, the lion grabbed her by the cuff of her jacket and tried to pull her inside to slaughter her under the eyes of her screaming parents.

The biker jumped off his bike, ran to the cage and hit the lion square on the nose with a powerful punch. Whimpering from the pain, the lion jumped back, letting go of the girl, and the biker brought her to her terrified parents, who thanked him endlessly.

A NEW YORK TIMES reporter saw the whole scene and, addressing the biker, said, "Sir, that was the most gallant and brave thing I've ever seen a man do in my whole life."

"Why, it was nothing, really," was the response. "The lion was behind bars. I just saw this little kid in danger, and acted as I felt was right.:

"Well, I'll make sure this won't go unnoticed. I'm a journalist from THE NEW YORK TIMES. Tomorrow's paper will have this on the front page. What motorcycle do you ride and what political affiliation do you have?"

A Harley Davidson, and I am a Republican."

The journalist left. The next morning the biker bought the paper to see if it, indeed, carried news of his actions. He read on the front page:

BIKER GANG MEMBER ASSAULTS AFRICAN IMMIGRANT AND

STEALS HIS LUNCH.

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7. Websites

A. I hope you go to enjoy your July 4th as much as I did (see Section 1A) . . . yet in doing so, I hope you also gave some thought as to why this is such a great country . . . for a reminder, please click:

<http://www.sagebrushpatriot.com/america.htm>

Make sure your sound is on!

B. Imagine having all your websites in one convenient spot . . . you can do so by clicking:

<http://www.allmyfaves.com/>

Check out Weekly Faves at the top . . . then run your cursor over each website to get a short description to help you determine if you'd like to get more information.

I did just that and found:

<http://www.dumblittleman.com/>

This is a website that provides a handful of tips that will save you money, increase your productivity or simply keep you sane . . . I even found a useful post on "10 steps to rejuvenate your messy home-office" . . . #6, in particular, made a lot of sense:

Use the wall space

You could make use of the wall space beside your desk by putting things like a calendar and a small wall clock on it. Apart from making your work space look attractive, it also makes sure that you don't keep these on your desk and add to the clutter.

For the rest of the steps, please click:

<http://www.dumblittleman.com/2008/06/10-steps-to-rejuvenate-your-messy-home.html>

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blaineworld.net>

Looking for a book to read? Check my reviews by going to "Blaine's Best" on left, then the second part of letter "O."

If you find my reviews helpful, please continue to indicate that fact by:

1. Going to:

<http://www.amazon.com>

2. At Search, at the top, click the drop-down menu for "Books" and

then type-in some book I've reviewed lately; e.g., LEISUREVILLE.

3. Read my review. It is on the right, approximately eight down from the top.

4. Answer YES when asked, "Was this review helpful to you?"

5. Thank you, in advance. Doing so will help move me to a higher ranking in the list of amazon.com's Top 500 reviewers. I'm currently 348, based on 3,695 favorable comments of 733 books I've reviewed.

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8. Computer tip

Will you survive a PC disaster?

Every year, 43% of computer users lose irreplaceable emails, documents, photos and other files . . . to prevent that from happening to me, I had been using mozy.com, an online backup service . . . but just recently, it has not been functioning properly . . . so I contacted support at that company and all I was told was that they knew about my problem and were "working on it."

After some 10 days of this garbage, I decided to switch to:

<http://carbonite.com/>

Thus far, I've been delighted with the results . . . in addition, I have found the service to be easier to use--and better, too.

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9. Courses for women, part 1 of 2

by Peter in Pennsylvania (in response to a list of courses he saw for men)

And then there are a few classes for women, too:

Geography for women:

Throw away your maps Girls. No need to struggle to understand those confusing letters N, S, E or W that keep popping up on your digital dashboard. No need to understand road systems. This class teaches you to find your way to any location in the US using Malls, Hairdressers, Nail salons, Gynecologists, and Botox clinics as landmarks. Theories to explore rumors that Estrogen and Testosterone are actually towns in rural Argentina will also be included.

Classes will be held in the blue and gray building with the nice plants outside, just down from Oxford Valley Mall a bit. Make a turn near that new nail and hair salon that just opened. Then continue on that road until you come to the corner where that nice man was standing last year . . . I think there was a tree there also , , , anyway, if you hang a left or a right there after a while you will see my mom's old house . . .and then just keep going.

Communication for women 101:

Classic examples of men's inability to understand our language will be discussed, such as:

1. When men ask us what's wrong? . . . and we reply "Nothing" . . . what they fail to understand is that this means they have to sit down and conduct a four hour synopsis on every statement exchanged between us for the last six months. From this detailed synopsis they must sift through the micro details ad nauseam to find the minor offence he created . . . then apologize for it with flowers and gifts that lead to a cuddle but no sex because his punishment is not over yet.
2. "Does this make me look fat" . . . another classic. Men have a tendency to believe that honesty is valued in a relationship . . . and they are correct but only when we say so. Some men will respond "NO" first and we think we are home free but then they ruin it all by adding, "It's trying to squeeze your fat butt into your sister's jeans that make you look fat!"
3. "Which shoes go best with this outfit?" . . . another very dangerous question to ask. First, we will review Federal regulations that forbid this question with an array of more than seven pairs of shoes for the man to select from. This has proven to cause epileptic fits in the majority of men. We will explore what men fail to understand here. That is, you have already selected the shoes you want to wear but you have the right to test him. If he gets it right he is actually your soulmate and wonderful life partner you thought he was, and your 15 year marriage has not been a complete sham. We will explore potential tricks men play, such as he may respond with a question as to which shoes you actually prefer. This class will train you on the correct procedure to shut down the experiment. Insult his family . . . and storm out of the room in a cloud of hissy fit dust if he asks this question. We will practice fake crying and instruct you on stone-wall techniques until he is forced to come to you four torturous days later you and ask what's wrong?

Translation booklet to hand out to the men in your life will be included; accompanying baseball bat is optional.

(to be concluded next week)

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10. A quote I like

If children gave up when they fell for the first time, they would never learn to walk.--Louise Hay in YOU CAN HEAL YOUR LIFE (see also Sections 2, 4C and 11)

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11. Thought for the day

You can tell I REALLY like a book if you see it mentioned more than once in any week's newsletter . . . so that's certainly the case with YOU CAN HEAL YOUR LIFE (see also Sections 2, 4C and 10) by Louise Hay--source for this following passage:

If you believe it, it seems true.

How often have we said, "That's the way I am," or "That's the way it is"? Those specific words are really saying that that's what we believe to be true for us. Usually, what we believe is only someone else's opinion we have incorporated into our belief systems. No doubt it fits right in with all the other things we believe.

Are you one of the many people who will get up in the morning, see that it's raining, and say, "oh, what a lousy day!"?

It is not a lousy day. It is only a wet day. If we wear the appropriate clothing and change our attitude, we can have a lot of rainy day fun. If it is really our belief that rainy days are lousy days, then we will always greet rain with a sinking heart. We will fight the day rather than flow with what is really happening in the moment.

If we want a joyous life, we must think joyous thoughts. If we want a prosperous life, we must think prosperous thoughts. If we want a loving life, we must think loving thoughts. Whatever we send out mentally or verbally will come back to us in like form.

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12. Advance planning department

A. THE LEARNED LADIES can be seen on Tuesday at 7 p.m., followed by Richard II on July 22 . . . both programs are presented by the NJ Shakespeare's Next Stage Ensemble at the Plainsboro Public Library (in the Municipal Building Court Room) . . . for more information, please call 609.275.2897.

B. Allen Hoey, COUNTRY MUSIC, and George Drew, THE HORSE'S NAME WAS PHYSICS, will be reading on Tuesday, July 8, at 6:00 p.m. at Robin's Bookstore, 108 South 13th St., Philadelphia.

Allen is a talented colleague of mine at Bucks County Community College . . . here's information about his book that I recently received via email:

"Recomposing"--Allen Hoey's apt word for birds flying up and then settling back--serves as leitmotif for this rich volume, where the world's a perpetual improvisation, where "the ten thousand / things sway to the sound of fiddles and mandolins," where "poised in tumult," the mind catches threads of that transcendental melody and "float[s] across/the changes." Whether he's imagining the "Cowpunk" singer who filters his country 'n western through Zen, or eavesdropping on the bar-talk--half scatology, half philosophy--of middle-aged farmers, or tracking the ways one's own youth ripens and wizens and sours and sweetens into one's maturity, Hoey pulls us into the music of speech, the music of thought, the music of sleet against a slate roof, the jazzy music of the spheres.--Nathalie Anderson, FOLLOWING FRED ASTAIR AND CRAWLERS

C. Linda in Pennsylvania:

Rick Pine, CEO of Livengrin Foundation, a well-known and respected Drug and Alcohol Treatment Center in Bucks County, PA. "moonlights" with his buddy Denny Slavin as "Delaware Crossing," an acoustic duo that has been together in its current configuration for about two years. They do folk and folk-rock music of the 60's and 70's, and will occasionally toss in a "current" country or pop tune, as well as some oldies from the 50s

or even a Beatles tune or two.

They have had a fairly regular Friday night gig during the summer months at the Clarksburg Inn in (where else) Clarksburg, NJ, about 2 miles from the Jackson outlets, between exits 11 and 16 of Route 195. You'll find the duo performing between 7 and 9 p.m. in the outside dining area under the tent, where there is a full dinner menu available, as well as sandwiches and hearty burgers.

To check the schedule, call the Inn at 609.259.2558.

Rick tells me that while their song sets are usually arranged in advance, they do occasionally take requests, especially when they are neatly written on the back of a crisp \$20 bill. We hope he is a better singer than he is a jokester!).

As a side note for any of you other acoustic guitar players out there, Rick also has a little side business selling "lightweight, high-end, flight-worthy" Hiscox guitar cases, imported from England.

PS. The \$20 comment is indeed a joke. He gets VERY embarrassed when people give him money!

D. HOLD THESE DATES:

* Friday, September 19 . . . an Evening of Jazz, presented at Mercer County Community College's West Windsor campus in West Windsor, NJ . . . stay tuned for details, but I do know it will be sponsored by WWFM, Jazz on 891. HD2, Trenton, NJ (the station that will be hosting my upcoming radio show).

* Saturday, September 27. . . the Cultural Affairs Committee of Bucks County Community College invites you to join us for an evening of fun and delight when "Broadway Returns to Bucks" on Saturday, September 27, 7:30 p.m. in the Library Auditorium. Tickets are only \$10.00.

Don't miss Broadway performers, Cris Groenendaal (3rd Phantom of the Opera) and his wife, Sue Anderson (conductor of Cats, Sweeney Todd, etc.) in this Broadway cabaret featuring songs from The Phantom, Sweeney Todd, Sunday in the Park with George, etc.

For tickets, contact Natalie Kaye, 215.968.8015 . . . or you can order via this website:

<http://www.bucks.edu/cultural>

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PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#613

6.30.2008

In this issue:

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I might have to postpone our retirement plans for just a bit . . . to see why this is the case, please click:

<http://www.news3online.com/index.php?code=264Q4Pp57U197MT9JLoW>

THANKS to Sandy in Pennsylvania for bringing this website to my attention.

On a more serious side, I'm pleased to report that I'll be baaaaaack on radio this coming September . . . I'm slated to host a jazz show on WWFM, Jazz on 89.1. HD2, Trenton, NJ . . . you'll also be able to pick up the show on the Internet, and it will be archived as well in the unlikely event you miss a show.

Details to follow, but in the meantime, feel free to share your ideas with me for possible guests . . . in particular, I'm looking for musicians, writers, club owners, etc. that have some tie-in to jazz in the Trenton, NJ and surrounding area.

B. Cynthia and I did have two "firsts" this past week . . . we discovered the Monmouth County Park System's Summer Musical Theatre in "The Barn" at Thompson Park in Lincroft, NJ . . . this was the first time we were there, and we were delighted to see a sold-out performance of THE PAJAMA GAME on the last night of its run.

We especially liked the choreography and costumes, as well as the orchestration . . . though Martin Gruberman and Leslie Fornino were fine in the two leading roles, Connor Spahn stole almost every scene he was in . . . and we also liked the work of Jessica Mennella in one of the supporting roles . . . at the end of the show, you got to see all the performers as they lined-up outside . . . it was a nice touch.

The only thing we would have liked to have seen was biographical

information in the playbill about each of the actors and actresses.

Next up is SEUSSICAL, which runs from July 25-August 3 . . . for more information, call 732.842.4000, ext. 1.

Then on our way home, we visited Jersey Freeze in Freehold, NJ, . . . I've been there before; Cynthia hadn't . . . our soft ice cream (that's all they sell) was good, though I thought on the pricey side.

C. I'm much obliged to all readers who pick up typing and/or factual mistakes in this missive . . . I REALLY do appreciate your doing so, in that I'm often able to make corrections before all copies are sent out . . . in addition, I can make sure that what's posted in the archives is correct.

* Barbara in Pennsylvania wrote about last week's issue:

Either you are having a senior moment or I am. In your wonderful newsletter, a paragraph in Section 1B starts with "Lastly."

It doesn't make sense to me. Sorry! Or it's me? Please explain.

MY TWO CENTS:

I went back and reread the paragraph. It didn't make sense to me, either . . . methinks the typing gremlins must have been at work . . . here's what should have been printed:

Lastly, I undertook testing in preparation for my upcoming physical with Dr. Joseph Weinstein, Your Doctors Care, Hillsborough, NJ . . . I mention this because of something that practice does . . . it has you give blood and undergo an EKG at least a week before you meet with your doctor . . . that way, when you next meet with him or her, all your results are in and can be discussed intelligently . . . that makes a lot of sense, doesn't it?

Barbara's email remind me of the efficiency expert who wanted to get all the guys in the factory on their toes . . . so he raised the urinals two feet!

* I'm fortunate to have two other faithful readers, Bill and Jean (both in Pennsylvania) who continually keep me on my toes with their thorough reading of each issue . . . they each picked up on something else that I wrote last week that while not technically a mistake, did leave something to be desired.

In writing about the BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD recipient, Bill Brady, I concluded with this statement:

. . . in addition, I'll always remember--and use--his technique for obtaining a motion to end a meeting.

Yet I never mentioned exactly what he does . . . when all business has been conducted, Bill then says something to the following effect:

There being no other business to conduct, I hear a motion (he then pauses ever so briefly) and a second to adjourn (pause) . . . all in favor? (pause) . . . opposed? (pause) . . . the ayes carry; meeting adjourned.

The key: He typically doesn't wait for that final motion, nor the vote . . . nobody has ever objected and in 30 seconds, Bill manages to close meetings that sometimes take others some 5-10 minutes or even longer to wrap up.

D. HELP REQUESTED DEPARTMENT:

We've had our auto insurance through New Jersey Manufacturers for the past several years . . . the company has served us well, and we thought their prices were reasonable.

Yet as of September, 10, 2008, our policy will not be renewed . . . so we are looking for a new company . . . do you have any suggestions? Also, if you have had any agents that you've worked with (and would recommend), please let us know that information too . . . thanks, in advance.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Linda Jacobs--head of her own catering firm, Soup to Nuts, in Washington Crossing, PA.

Linda is a graduate of The Culinary Institute . . . she is extremely knowledgeable about her craft . . . and she'll work closely with you to ensure that your party will be a success, regardless of its size.

I was pleased to learn that Soup to Nuts was recently voted Neighbors Choice Best Caterer in Bucks County by the readers of the PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.souptonutscuisine.com>

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2. FYI

As you may know, I had previously been diagnosed with melanoma . . . my excellent dermatologist, Dr. Stenn (609.443.4500), caught it early . . . and all seems to be well . . . but that said, I recently received the following email from a good friend that I URGE ALL TO READ:

* Joan in Pennsylvania:

If you have been diagnosed with an early stage melanoma, which your doctor has removed, you need to be proactive. Most dermatologists just keep checking your moles, etc. and maybe ask you to take a chest x-ray every few months--which in itself is all good. They haven't all taken into account that melanoma is fast growing and it could've spread in the bloodstream . . . a single cell could have gotten loose.

Protocol has changed since '04 when I had my initial melanoma. And you should try to get a whole body scan (PET Scan) just as a precaution. Ask your dermatologist. Insurance may not cover it though, so be prepared.

Here's a website which explains the Pet Scan:

<http://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info.cfm?pg=PET>

What next follows was from:

<http://www.petscaninfo.com/zportal/portals/pat/cancer/Skin/diagnosis>

and explains it better than I can.

When malignant melanoma is found, PET scanning can help.

If you have a suspicious mole, you will need to have further tests to find out if it is malignant. To find out if it is cancerous, you will need to have a biopsy procedure. The doctor will take some of the cells and have them looked at under a microscope. If it turns out to be a melanoma, you may need to have additional tests.

Although many melanomas are curable, some spread so quickly that you could have other tumors in the lymph nodes, lungs, brain, or other places, even if the original skin melanoma is still small. This method of metastasizing also makes it very difficult to monitor recurrence. Melanoma that has spread to other parts of the body may not be found until long after the first melanoma has been removed from the skin. A PET scan can check to see if the cancer has spread.

PET is not usually useful in the non-melanoma types of skin cancer because of the growth rates and patterns. However, PET is an important test to be done right after you are diagnosed with malignant melanoma.

A PET Scan can accurately detect melanoma skin cancer and see if it may have spread. The high mortality rate of melanoma is because it spreads quickly through the lymphatic and blood systems.

FYI, part 2

* Steve in Pennsylvania was nice enough to send me the following picture that he took recently at his home:



(l-r) Casey Adams, Don Weisenstein and yours truly; photo by Steve Marinoff . . . it shows the three of us with "nothing," which

was part of an assignment that Steve completed for a Photography course he took at Camden County College . . . he received a well-deserved "A" grade, though in revisiting the shot, I do believe that he could have at least doctored it somewhat to give me more hair!

* Lisa in Pennsylvania (with a JOB OPENING in Bucks County, PA):

I'm leaving my present job to spend some more time with my son . . . if anybody is interested in replacing me, here is the information:

Marketing Manager

Manages a group of marketing professionals.
Develops and implements strategic marketing plan.
Stays abreast of changes in the marketing environment to best serve the objectives of the organization and adjusts plans accordingly.
Researches and develops pricing policies and recommends appropriate sales channels.
Relies on experience and judgment to plan and accomplish goals.
Requires a bachelor's degree.
Some travel required.

If anyone is interested, they can write to my boss:

luther_mclaughlin@abbottcobb.com

The MR. CURIOUS HERE question (about certain home buying tips) in last week's issue generated many responses; among them:

* Jean in Pennsylvania [commenting on others not sharing your sense of humor]:

When I was single, I shared a townhouse with two other singles. As I joke, I'd given my housemates a large poster of the Red Hot Chili Peppers. This band was big in the early 90s, and posed nude except for some precariously placed gym socks. The framed poster was displayed in the basement at the bottom of the stairs. Our landlord was trying to sell the place. The realtor brought in a very conservative family (father and son wore skull caps; mother wore ankle-length skirt). The parents were quite talkative, measuring out each room's dimensions and discussing possibilities. All fell silent as soon as the basement door opened. Needless to say, they did not buy the property, but we didn't care as we didn't like our landlord! (Also, the realtor had not walked through prior to showing this family, and had not given the landlord the above advice.)

* Sandy in Pennsylvania:

I have heard those tips before and I do believe they have an impact on perspective buyers; i.e., they spend more time looking at your photos and judging those in them etc. than studying the actual rooms and important features of the house. Don't leave anything too interesting out for people to see.

* Bill in Pennsylvania:

I'm not so sure about the real estate tips. Aren't the potential buyers buying the house to live in? So why should you remove items that make your house look lived in?

Yet some people can take that too far. I remember once when my wife and I

were house hunting, our realtor showed us one house where they did not bother to pick up dirty underwear off the floor in their son's room.

Also, wives will never buy a house if they find out that the previous occupant died in the house.

* Debbie in New York:

The advice is right about removing pictures, etc. I've watched a show on cable a few times and they always stress that.

* Ellie in Pennsylvania, a realtor:

If there are so many "personal" items that they are a distraction to the buyer, then I agree. We want the buyer to look at the house, not the collections. However, that does not mean to put away everything. A few pictures and personal items do make it look lived in and homey. I do agree that you should put away anything that might offend, such as obscene posters, pictures, etc.

We did sell our house in a day and we did have a few pictures about, just not a lot of clutter. I think spotlessly clean is more important than anything else!

* Courtney in Pennsylvania, Ellie's husband and also a realtor:

Those are OK ideas, but they can also make a home too "vanilla" and make the home too plain. Recommend a tasteful mix that appeals to the most people. The best advice is to remove clutter.

* Annette in New York, the realtor for my mother's apartment:

The suggestions are certainly good ones but often not easy to accomplish when the property is lived in. My personal suggestions are that the home be kept neat, clean, bright and as uncluttered as possible.

AND LEST YOU FORGET:

\$1,000 REWARD (increased from \$500!):

Yes, your eyes don't deceive you . . . help my brother and me find a buyer for our mother's apartment in Floral Park, NY, and this amount is yours . . . see below for more information:

A SPECTACULAR RENOVATED 1 BEDROOM, 1 1/2 BATH. LARGE LIVING ROOM, SLIDING GLASS DOORS AND BALCONY. SUNNY GOLF VIEWS. SEPARATE DINING ROOM / DEN. HUGE MASTER BEDROOM. INCREDIBLE OUTFITTED CLOSETS. HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE. BUILDING # 1. INCLUDES INDOOR PARKING. \$569,000.

You also get access to all stores downstairs, including a bank, restaurant, movie theater, supermarket, cleaner's, drugstore, health club, etc. . . . golf and/or tennis memberships are also available at a very reasonable extra cost . . . and there are both indoor and outdoor pools . . . for more information about the overall community, please click:

<http://www.northshoretowers.com>

To find out more about the apartment, call Annette Kroll at 718.631.8867 . . . make sure you let me know if you or somebody

you know contacts Annette, so that if there's a sale as a result, I can get you your \$1,000. . . this is no joke!

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3. Made you look

Being very organized came in handy when Robin put an extension on her house. She made sure all her bills were paid promptly. So she was mortified when she received a letter from an electrician that stated in bold letters, "Second and Final Notice!"

"I'm sorry," she said when he called him. "I never saw the first notice."

"I didn't send one," he told her. "I find second notices are much more effective."

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4. Reviews

A. I vaguely recall GET SMART, the TV show . . . yet even if you never saw it, you'll still get out a kick out of the movie version now out in the theaters . . . it's a comedy about a spy, winningly played by Steve Carell, who must work with partner Anne Hathaway to thwart the latest plot for world domination by the evil crime syndicate known as KAOS . . . their chemistry together is cute; in addition, I liked the work of both Alan Arkin and Dwayne Johnson in smaller roles . . . some of the dialogue was hilarious . . . if you're in the mood for something stupid but fun, you won't go wrong with this film . . . rated PG-13.

B. DRILLBIT TAYLOR is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #599 follows:

DRILLBIT TAYLOR is a moderately funny comedy about three high school students who keep getting beat up by bullies . . . things get so bad that they hire a supposed tough guy (Owen Wilson) to keep an eye on them . . . it's certainly not profound, but I did find myself laughing in spots . . . and as long as you don't view it with high expectations, you'll find yourself having a surprisingly good time . . . rated PG-13.

FOR A FAR BETTER RENTAL:

Catch THE JAZZ SINGER, the 1980 version starring Neil Diamond . . . he plays a would-be cantor who breaks away from his father and wife to instead become a singer of pop songs . . . the dialogue is hokey and the acting is not much better, but the music more than compensates for any shortcomings in the film . . . I'm still humming "America" in my head . . . rated PG.

C. Finally, I've come across my kind of text: PLATO AND PLATYPUS WALK INTO A BAR: UNDERSTANDING PHILOSOPHY THROUGH JOKES by Thomas Cathcart and Daniel Klein . . . I only regret that this engaging--and informative!--book wasn't available when I took the course as an undergraduate.

Imagine having humor brought into the teaching of such topics as Metaphysics, Logic, Epistemology, and even Existentialism . . . you'd certainly want to study more and/or perhaps switch majors . . . either that or you'd want a similar book for such courses as Economics and Physics.

The authors not only share jokes, but they also present a philosophical background for telling them:

* One type of applied ethics that burgeoned in the twentieth century was professional ethics, the codes regulating the relationships of professionals to clients and patients.

After attending a conference on professional ethics, four psychiatrists walked out together. One said, "You know, people are always coming to us with their guilt and fears, but we have no one to go to with our problems. So why don't we take some time right now to hear each other out?" The other three agreed.

The first psychiatrist confessed, "I have an almost uncontrollable desire to kill my patients."

The second psychiatrist said, "I find ways to cheat my patients out of their money whenever I can."

The third followed with, "I'm involved in selling drugs and often get my patients to sell them for me."

The fourth psychiatrist then confessed, "You know, no matter how hard I try, I can't seem to keep a secret."

They also take some old classics that you may have not heard for quite some time, then introduce them with a twist that will leave you laughing:

* . . . take away Socrates's rationality and he's no longer Socrates, but give him plastic surgery, and he's Socrates with a nose job. Which reminds us of a joke.

When Thompson hit seventy, he decided to change his lifestyle completely so that he could live longer. He went on a strict diet, he jogged, he swam, and he took sunbaths. In just three months' time, Thompson lost thirty pounds, reduced his waist by six inches, and expanded his chest by five inches. Svelte and tan, he decided to top it all off with a sporty new haircut. Afterward, while stepping out of the barbershop, he was hit by a bus.

As he lay dying, he cried out, "God, how could you do this to me?"

And a voice from the heavens responded, "To tell you the truth, Thompson, I didn't recognize you."

There are only 188 pages in PLATO AND A PLATYPUS . . . it left me wanting more . . . and when's the last time you hear anybody ever say that about anything remotely related to philosophy?

D. Heard SPEAK FROM THE HEART, written and read by Steve Aduato . . . he's a broadcaster and motivational speaker who shares his secrets to being a great communicator.

Listening to what Aduato grabbed my attention so

much that I then went back to get the print version--so as to make sure I did not miss anything.

Furthermore, some of his ideas made so much sense that I wanted to make sure I had them down exactly; for example, his two-step approach on preparing speeches:

* Step One: Determine How You Feel About Your Primary Message

Step Two: Ask Yourself Three Key Questions

1. What is my message? (This is the one thing you want people to remember when you finish.)
2. Who is my audience? (What will move them? Touch them? Reach them? What do they need or want from me?)
3. What do I want these people to do or feel when I'm finished?

I also liked the "Do It Now" activities at the end of each chapter . . . this one, in particular, caught my attention:

* How well do you use eye contact? Starting today, notice if you look directly into the eyeballs of the people you communicate with. If you find you have a problem doing this consider these pointers:

1. Start small and slowly. Practice making eye contact for a few seconds at a time. Just make contact for a few seconds and then discreetly move to another part of the face--lower forehead or bridge of nose. You can also look down, but only for a second or two. Then look back up and engage the eyes again.
2. Relax. Consistent, steady eye contact doesn't mean you stare at a person throughout the entire conversation. You need to make easy, relaxed contact for a short while and then allow your glance to comfortably look away and then come back.
3. Smile. Just the simple act of smiling while speaking can make eye contact more relaxed and easier for you. Let your face show how you feel.
4. Increase the amount of time you make eye contact. Little by little it will become less of an issue, less of an obstacle, less of a barrier. The key is for eye contact to become second nature to you. That takes practice.
5. Concentrate. You have to give the person you're talking to your full attention. If another person walks by who may be more "interesting" you must make yourself focus on the person you're talking to and maintain eye contact. Nothing is worse than talking to someone while your eyes are playing the field. Finish your conversation with one person before you move on to the next.

And one other thing that made this book a winner for me was Abudato's use of real examples . . . he not only used himself, but also the experiences of such speakers as Barry Farber, Richard Carlson, Bill Clinton (before he became a great speaker), Kathie Lee Gifford, and Joe Torre, to name just a few.

The book's subtitle says it all . . . Abudato urges you to BE YOURSELF AND GET RESULTS . . . read what he has to say, and you should be able

to do just that.

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5. TV alert

A. Harvard historian Niall Ferguson challenges assumptions about World War II on THE WAR OF THE WORLD . . . a three-part series that airs Monday and runs for the next two weeks at 9 p.m. on PBS . . . because PBS times and dates often vary, check your local listings.

B. THE SECRET LIFE OF THE AMERICAN TEENAGER debuts on Tuesday at 8 p.m. on ABC FAMILY . . . it stars Molly Ringwald . . . yes, the same person who starred in such 80s classics as SIXTEEN CANDLES and FOR KEEPS.

C. I'm not a big fan of seeing fireworks in person, but on TV they're fine . . . take your choice on Friday from any and/or all of the following:

* A CAPITAL FOURTH, hosted by Jimmy Smits from Washington, D.C. . . . he'll be joined by performers Huey Lewis and the News, Jerry Lee Lewis and Taylor Hicks . . . 8 p.m. on PBS;

* JULY 4TH LIVE . . . Kirsten Gum heads to Washington, D.C. to host coverage of the fireworks over the National Mall . . . 9 p.m. on TRAVEL;

* MACY'S 4TH OF JULY FIREWORKS SPECTACULR for fireworks over New York City and performances by Natasha Bedingfield, Kenny Chesney and Katherine McPhee . . . 9 p.m. on NBC; and

D. Luke Perry plays a lawman who's hunting baddies and haunted by an innocent man's death . . . Saturday at 9 p.m. on HALLMARK.

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6. See what happens

It took five years of postgrad work, but Marty finally fulfilled his dream of becoming an archeologist. His first job was with a museum, supervising a dig in a nearby town. As he worked under the hot sun, he noticed a woman and her son peering down at him and his crew.

Seeing him in a hole, covered in mud with a pickax in hand, the mother told her son, "See what happens when you don't finish school? You end up like him."

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7. Websites

A. I've been a proud AARP member for several years now; can you believe thaaaaat? But even if you can't, you can still check out this fine organization (regardless of your age) by clicking:

<http://bulletin.aarp.org/>

This website is an excellent resource for people who enjoy keeping up with the latest information on health, Medicare, prescription medication, consumer alerts, money, and social security--to name just a few topics.

B. To learn about more about the importance of learning a second language, please click:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mzEjzL6_gyE

You MUST have your son when you visit the above!

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blainesworld.net>

I'm blessed to have Lori Hansen as my webmistress . . . she does a terrific job of adding newsletters to the archives . . . in addition, if you're new to the newsletter and/or website, see "Blaine's Best" to the left, then "Pictures" . . . you'll find latest pictures of me, as well as of Cynthia and many others who inhabit Blainesworld!

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8. Computer tip

Make sure you check your spam folder at least once a week . . . if you do, you'll most probably find at least a few items that were not spam . . . retrieve them, then notify your email provider that you don't want such items to be put into your spam folder in the future.

It is good that companies are trying to reduce the amount of spam that we get . . . however, in doing so, they often are too restrictive with respect to what should get automatically sent to our incoming mailboxes.

Most importantly: Make sure that anything from me (aka: bginbc@aol.com) does not get blocked!

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9. Cat sitting

One night while my uncle was cat sitting my cousin's indoor feline, it escaped outside. When it failed to return the following morning, he found the beast clinging to a branch about 30 feet up in a spindly tree. Unable to lure it down, he called the fire department.

"We don't do that anymore," the woman dispatcher said. When my uncle persisted, she was polite but firm. "The cat will come down when it gets hungry enough."

"How do you know that?" he asked.

"Have you ever seen a cat skeleton in a tree?"

she said.

Two hours later the cat was back, looking for breakfast.

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10. A quote I like

The smallest good deed is better than the grandest good intention--Jacques-Joseph Duguet (1649-1733), French theologian and moralist

NOTE:

I've also seen this quote called a Japanese proverb, so if you know the accurate citation, please let me know.

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11. Thought for the day

The sneeze

They walked in tandem, each of the ninety-two students filing into the already crowded auditorium. With their rich maroon gowns flowing. And the traditional caps, they looked almost as grown up as they felt.

Dads swallowed hard behind broad smiles, and Moms freely brushed away tears.

This class would NOT pray during the commencements--not by choice, but because of a recent court ruling prohibiting it.

The principal and several students were careful to stay within the guidelines allowed by the ruling. They gave inspirational and challenging speeches, but no one mentioned divine guidance and no one asked for blessings on the graduates or their families.

The speeches were nice, but they were routine . . . until the final speech received a standing ovation.

A solitary student walked proudly to the microphone. He stood still and silent for just a moment, and then, it happened.

All 92 students, every single one of them, suddenly SNEEZED!

The student on stage simply looked at the audience and said, "GOD BLESS YOU, each and every one of you!" And he walked off stage.

The audience exploded into applause. This graduating class had found a unique way to invoke God's blessing on their future with or without the court's approval.

Isn't this a wonderful story? Pass it on to all your friends . . . and GOD BLESS YOU!

Author unknown

(if you know who wrote this and/or the source, please let me know)

THANKS to Arlene in Pennsylvania for sharing the above . . . it is indeed a wonderful story that she also added "is a true story; it happened at the University of Maryland."

In reality, it should probably better be described as "based on a true story" . . . for what actually happened, please click:

<http://www.snopes.com/politics/religion/sneeze.asp>

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12. Advance planning department

A. At the Barnes and Noble in Princeton, NJ:

Wednesday July 2 at 7 p.m.
Pajama Storytime Returns!

Join us for our first Pajama Storytime of the summer featuring GOOD NIGHT NEW JERSEY by Dennis Clark and Joe Veno Travel around the Garden State in your pajamas with us while we read this and other sleepy-time stories! Fuzzy slippers optional!

For more information:

Debra Lampert-Rudman
crm2646@bn.com
609.716.1570

B. THE TAMING OF THE SHREW, Shakespeare's classic battle of the sexes, continues at the Kelsey Theatre at Mercer County Community College in West Windsor, NJ . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.mccc.edu/kelseytheatre/summer2008.shtml>

C. Since the first Sunday of the month falls on a holiday in July this year, the monthly meeting for Lower Bucks Coalition for Peace action has been changed to Sunday, July 13, 2008. The evening starts with a potluck at 6 p.m., followed by the meeting at 6:30 p.m.. The meeting is held at St. James Episcopal Church, 330 South Bellevue Avenue, Langhorne, PA.

D. At the Comedy Cabaret in Northeast Philadelphia on Saturday, July 19:

Back by popular demand, it's ALAN MARX! He's been heard on XM Satellite Radio and appeared at the Tropicana in Las Vegas and Atlantic City. Comedy.com listed him on their "Hot List of Top Ten Most Requested Comics!" ALAN is presenting a CLEAN One-Man Show he calls "God Can Help You With That Character Defect!" ALAN's act is a celebration of everyday life, blending storytelling and inspiring messages! With your opening act, Mr. Rubber-Face himself, TERRY GILLESPIE!

For more information on this show or any others in July at the six Comedy Cabaret locations in the Delaware Valley, please click:

<http://www.comedycabaret.com/main.html>

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PS. Please join me in celebrating the 4th of July . . . best of all, you can view your own safe and colorful fireworks display by clicking:

<http://www.maylin.net/Fireworks/html>

Also, please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . and make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#612

6.23.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I were glad to be able to celebrate our good friend Jerry Ianni's birthday this past weekend . . . it was a joyous occasion, marked by a delicious buffet prepared entirely by his wife Charlie . . . that's (l-r) Charlie, Jerry, Cynthia, and yours truly:



On Sunday, Cynthia took a balance course at the Princeton YWCA . . . so I went with a friend to see WONDER OF THE WORLD, presented by the Somerset Valley Players in Hillsborough, NJ.

It's a farce about a woman who leaves her husband, so that

she can accomplish some 200 things now that she is free . . . there were some funny moments, most of them taking place in the second act.

One actress I've seen there before, Teresa Von den Steinen, stood out . . . she played six different parts, including three waitress (at different restaurants, almost at the same time) . . . that's no small accomplishment!

WONDER runs through this weekend . . . for more information, please click:
<http://www.svptheatre.org>

The three of us then all joined up for dinner at Jumbo Palace in Hillsborough, NJ . . . it has an impressive menu, featuring Thai, Chinese and Japanese cuisine . . . we typically like various chicken dishes, along with the boneless ribs . . . service is efficient, though not overly friendly.

For more information, please click:
<http://www.jumbopalace.com/>

B. My week was somewhat hectic . . . I spent one entire day at a court in Jamaica, NY, trying to battle with an insurance company over my mother's estate . . . I learned two very important lessons from Elizabeth Murphy, our lawyer that day from the firm of Miller & Milone in Garden City, NY:

1) Make sure the executor of the estate knows that he or she is the executor . . . this was not a problem in my case, but Elizabeth said I'd be amazed at how many folks are never told this information in advance.

2) Make sure that you know where all the paperwork is filed (or hidden) and, also, that all forms have been updated . . . in the case of my mother, she had never taken care of the latter detail, and that's where we are having all our problems.

I'd add to this list of lessons: If you're going to court, make sure you have a lot to read or do because there's a very good chance you'll be waiting around a lot . . . fortunately, I brought a pile of paperwork that kept me gainfully occupied.

I also attended an informative session at Bucks County Community College on the subject of "capital campaigns," something that the we're in the process of undertaking . . . it was presented by Jane Konefsky, a Certified Fund Raising Executive . . . and helped me become aware of the following:

- * You can never say thank you too often.
- * You should "touch" a donor seven times before you make the ask.
- * Seeking a big gift from a donor is 90% orientation and 10% ask.
- * Move the heart. Satisfy the head.
- * Be silent after the ask is made.
- * And don't forget to honor the spouse!

Lastly, I undertook testing in preparation for my upcoming physical with Dr. Joseph Weinstein, Your Doctors Care, Hillsborough, NJ . . . I mention this because of something that practice does . . . it has you give blood and undergo an EKG at least a week before you meet with

your doctor . . . that way, when you next meet with him or her, all your results are in and can be discussed intelligently . . . that makes a lot of sense, doesn't it?

C. CONGRATULATIONS to Dr. Steady Moono . . . effective July 11, he will be the Vice President of Student Affairs at Montgomery County Community College . . . our loss at Bucks (where he used to be an administrator) has certainly been Montco's gain . . . he's a real good guy, and I'm sure he will continue to do his usual excellent job.

CONGRATULATIONS, also, to:

- * Marta Kaufmann . . . she's now the proud grandmother of a baby girl: 7 lb. 2 oz. Maren Charlotte, sister to Jakob Ronen; and
- * Mark and Mary White, whose son just had another baby: a little girl named Cailyn Angle White.

D. MR. CURIOUS HERE:

We recently got a postcard from a local realtor. It had the following home buying tips:

- * Potential buyers want to imagine your house as their house. Remove personal touches that make the house seem "lived in."
- * Put away family photographs, awards, souvenirs and collectibles.
- * Get rid of items that may offend others who do not share your views of sense of humor.

What do YOU think of these tips?

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Bill Brady--president of Optimum Strategies and Solutions, a Bucks County-based business consulting firm.

Yet why I'm naming Bill is because of his work on the Foundation Board at Bucks County Community College . . . he has been a member since 1999 and chair for the past three years.

I've had the honor of serving with Bill on this Board and have been impressed by his tireless work on behalf of the College . . . his enthusiasm constantly inspires me, as well as my fellow Board members.

He runs meetings as well as anybody I've ever seen . . . I was appreciative of how he got them all done within an hour (except for the very last one) . . . in addition, I'll always remember--and use--his technique for obtaining a motion to end a meeting.

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2. FYI

Phone rate hikes

Beware of the fact that several states have recently deregulated prices

on elective telephone services for land lines, such as call waiting and call forwarding.

This means bigger phone bills for you. For example, Verizon in Ohio now charges \$3 a month for call forwarding, up from 75 cents.

To combat such hikes:

* Check your bill. Price increases vary by state and may appear on bills without a separate notice. Raise questions if you notice new charges.

* Unbundle. A few companies are raising prices on bundled packages. Keep in mind that extra services that were a good deal when you signed up now may be cheaper a la carte. You may have found you don't use some at all.

* Check the competition if you're in the area served by several carriers.

Start at:

<http://www.nasuca.org>

Then click on "NASUCA members" to see whether your state is one of 40 with a consumer utility advocate, which often posts useful pricing information.

SOURCE:

Adapted from "Money Smart" by Walecia Konrad in USA WEEKEND, 6/20-22/08, p. 4

FYI, part 2

* Andrew Blechman, author of LEISUREVILLE (a book I reviewed most favorably in BLAINESWORLD #609):

I put your emailed article in my blog. Just click in the link below and scroll down a listing or two:

<http://andrewblechman.blogspot.com/>

MY TWO CENTS:

If you're at all interested in the subjects of retirement communities and/or age-segregated housing, please read the above book. It is very thought-provoking. In addition, you might want to join me in subscribing to Blechman's blog.

* Jean in Pennsylvania:

Here's a free offer for your readers, an incredible way to save money on your entertainment budget:

Regal Cinema offers FREE family movies, one PG and one G, every Tue. and Wed. at 10 a.m. this summer. This is not advertised. Pass it on to anyone with kids or grandkids! For more information and locations, visit:

<http://www.regmovies.com/nowshowing/familyfilmfestivalschedule.aspx>

* Randy in Colorado:

The second THIS IS TRUE video is up. They're short, to-the-point stories that make another way to expose your friends and colleagues to TRUE.

More than 2,000 people have watched #2, which you can see on YouTube at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YfWrtFMzIw>

We started work on #3 today and should finish it up tomorrow. We're really having fun with them.

* Sandy in Pennsylvania:

Right after Tim Russert died from a heart attack, a very good lady friend from class, at age 65, dropped out as well. Carolyn Fisher was told by her cardiologist that she only had 25% of heart function going on and needed a pacemaker.

Carolyn decided to wait for a week and go on her R&R vacation and THEN go take care of it. The next morning she died of sudden death syndrome right in her tracks (sounding just like Russert), a day after the doctor told her that it was a possibility that it could happen that way.

Makes you wonder. am very sad about both of these people. Both were so special and very much alike in their in their love of life and love for others.

What is the lesson here? Take care, my friend. And listen to your heart.

* Jody in Pennsylvania [commenting on the Daniel Gottlieb's LEARNING FROM THE HEART, reviewed last week]:

Read it immediately after hearing him speak and enjoyed it. I find he has a way to humanize all of us and settle ourselves down a bit.

* Sue in Pennsylvania [remarking about the same book]:

Loved what you wrote about Dan Gottlieb in last week's issue. VERY sweet!

* Marcie in Pennsylvania:

Saw TWILIGHT OF THE GOLDS last night. Thought the play was relevant and thought-provoking. It was interesting to see the theater with an audience that included some actual theater loving patrons sprinkled in with the usual group of cotton-haired, bad musical revival fans. I thought the play was well cast and Lois [Carr] gave, as always, a strong and truthful performance.

I totally agree with you about the man [Joe Sabatino] who played her son. He was wonderful. I enjoyed the entire evening, including the talk back session. Herb's sister and husband joined us and got to see Lois, who they have come to know, for the first time. They were quite impressed.

YOU'RE IN LUCK:

The play runs through July 5 at the Off-Broadstreet Theatre in Hopewell, NJ . . . for more information, please click:

<http://off-broadstreet.com/>

* Michael in Pennsylvania (with a REQUEST FOR HELP):

I'm looking to rent a room in Bucks County, starting sometime in the next month or so, for the following year. Ask Blaine, and he'll tell you I'm a good guy. Anybody have such a room for me? Or have any suggestions as to where I might be able to find one?

My number is 215.547.6196. Thanks, in advance, for any help you might be able to provide.

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3. Right now

Two young boys walked into a pharmacy one day, picked out a box of tampons and proceeded to the checkout counter.

The man at the counter asked the older boy, "Son, how old are you?"

"Eight," the boy replied.

The man continued, "Do you know what these are used for?"

The boy replied, "Not exactly, but they aren't for me. They're for him. He's my brother. He's four. We saw on TV that if you use these you would be able to swim and ride a bike. Right now, he can't do either one."

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4. Reviews

A. Whatever you do, miss THE LOVE GURU . . . it's supposedly a comedy that tries to combine love, hockey and Indian spirituality, but fails miserably . . . I'm usually a big Mike Meyers fan; however, he is just not funny here--at all . . . costars Jessica Alba, Justin Timberlake, and Ben Kingsley don't distinguish themselves, either, though probably through not fault of their own . . . they were just all hampered by a script that goes nowhere . . . rated PG-13.

If you want some laughs, you'll do much better catching GET SMART . . . I'll review it next week.

B. DEFINITELY, MAYBE is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #594 follows:

I liked DEFINITELY, MAYBE because it is a romantic comedy/chick flick that any guy can enjoy, too . . . it's also different than other such films because there's no "set" formula; i.e., you can't predict every joke as it's happening . . . in fact, there aren't even a lot of scenes that make you laugh out loud; rather, you'll find yourself smiling about the tale of a 30-something Manhattan dad in the midst of a divorce who is trying to explain to his 10-year-old daughter about what his life was before marriage . . . the premise is just a tad bit convoluted, yet that did not stop me from enjoying myself . . . Ryan Reynolds and Abigail Breslin are believable as the father and daughter, and I also liked the work of all the women (Elizabeth Banks, Isla Fisher and Rachel Weisz) in his life . . . rated PG-13.

C. John Grisham reverts back to form with THE APPEAL, a political thriller about a jury reaching a decision involving a chemical company accused of dumping toxic waste.

What's unusual about the book is that you know what the jury decided by page 9 . . . what happens from that point on takes you through a mostly suspenseful ride that includes an attempt to purchase a seat on the Mississippi Supreme Court.

As is usually the case, Grisham's writing kept my interest . . . for instance, there were the following passages that I thought were especially well-written:

* "I feel awful," Brianna said, feigning disgust. Her full-length black Prada coat was split so that the backseat was dominated by her amazing legs. Legs from the floor up to her armpits. Legs unadorned by hosiery or clothing or anything whatsoever. Legs for Carl to see and admire and touch and fondle and she really didn't care if Toliver had a good look,

either. She was on display as always.

* "We know that, and that's why we like you. Sitting judges make tough decisions. Tough decisions are sometimes controversial. They leave trails, records that opponents can use against them. The best candidates, we have learned, are bright young guys like yourself who don't carry the baggage of prior decisions."

* Nat was on his fourth wife. Sheila was looking for husband number two. "And besides," she said, "how could homosexuals possibly screw up the sanctity of marriage any worse than heterosexuals?"

Overall, there were perhaps a few too many characters thrown in (some of them could have easily been eliminated in my opinion) . . . I liked the interesting plot twist plot toward the end that I won't reveal . . . yet just as I was becoming curious in what was going to happen next, THE APPEAL ended in a fashion that I thought was too abrupt.

D. I previously reviewed and enjoyed TRANSFORMING DEBT INTO WEALTH, a CD program written and read by John M. Cummuta . . . he's an established and highly successful entrepreneur who's also a small-business consultant, speaker, and seminar leader.

Recently, I came across another program that he also wrote and narrated: THE WEALTH MACHINE: HOW TO START, BUILD AND MARKET A DEBT-FREE BUSINESS . . . it's a bit too basic in the beginning for my liking (though probably fine for first-time entrepreneurs).

When he gets into what's needed to be done in marketing, though, Cummuta's ideas really begin to soar . . . he helps you do what's necessary to succeed, but shows you how to do so without forcing your business into bankruptcy . . . to cite just a few of the many tidbits I picked up while listening, please consider these:

* The more your employees can refer to systems to guide their work, the freer you become.

* Every decision you make should be customer-driven. Or if that's not the case, ask yourself: Why bother?

* Set your classified ad headline in 14 point type. It may cost you more, but it will make you stand out.

* Do your own radio commercials if you can. Your voice will stand out from all the other announcers.

* A customer-driven database can be your most important asset.

* People don't buy things. They buy results.

* Research has shown that it can take up to 27 contacts to go from total unawareness to the point of making a purchase. The average is 5-8 contacts. Those who stop after 1 or 2 leave a lot on the table.

If you want to get some ideas for growing your business, you won't go wrong with THE WEALTH MACHINE.

This fine program is available for purchase or rental . . . if you want

to get it, please click:
<http://www.achievementlibrary.com/>

Above is the tape rental club I belong to; i.e., the Achievement Tape Library . . . this a great way to hear CDs and/or audio cassette tapes, view videos, etc.--all for a fraction of what it would cost to buy them . . . call the head of the firm (Paul Arroyo) directly at 1.800.735.3660 and mention my name . . . that way, you'll be sure to pay even higher prices . . . NOT.

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5. TV alert

A. SOUNDSTAGE features Josh Groban in a 2007 concert, which relies heavily on his AWAKE CD . . . Thursday at 10 p.m. on PBS . . . times and dates often vary, so check your local PBS listings.

B. THE TENTH CIRCLE is a TV adaptation of Jodi Picoult's domestic-tragedy-page-turner, starring Kelly Preston . . . according to TV GUIDE, "The story isn't subtle, but the motions feel disturbingly real, and as played by a strong cast, it leaves you undeniably saddened." . . . Saturday at 9 p.m. on LIFETIME.

C. MEET THE PRESS will never be quite the same for me; i.e., without having Tim Russert as the moderator . . . that said, though, I think NBC came up with a great replacement in Tom Brokaw . . . his first show is on Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

D. DAVID MCCULLOUGH: PAINTING WITH WORDS is a documentary about the Pulitzer Prize winning historian that made me appreciate him even more than I do already . . . it's excellent . . . airs next on Sunday at 9:45 a.m. on HBOe.

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6. Disturbance

One night, my friend's dog suddenly began barking almost every night at around 3 a.m.

Irritated and sleepy, her husband, Larry, searched the back yard for what might have disturbed this otherwise peaceful animal.

For three days he found nothing amiss. When the dog woke up the neighborhood a fourth night at 3 a.m. with frantic barking Larry finally snuck around the house through the alley only to discover his quiet neighbor, the last man you'd suspect of wrongdoing, throwing pebbles over the fence at the dog.

Larry demanded to know what he was doing.

"My mother-in-law is visiting," the embarrassed neighbor explained. "If she gets woken up in the

middle of the night one more time she says she'll leave."

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7. Websites

A. Want to find data on the Internet? Check this website out:
<http://www.robertniles.com/data/>

Developed by Robert Niles, a California journalist and website editor, it points you to many diverse sources--some that were new even to me . . . for example, I liked this one under Language:
<http://www.rhymer.com/>

Click it and to find just the help you need for writing a poem or lyric.

B. I'm not a big fan of the TV show, DEAL OR NO DEAL, yet I found the online game fun
http://www.nbc.com/Deal_or_No_Deal/game/flash.shtml

The only thing that's missing is Howie Mandel! (OK, OK . . . there are no models, either, but what do you expect for FREE?)

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:
<http://www.blainesworld.net>

If you'd like me to speak to your company or organization, please feel free to view "Speaking" to the left for more information . . . and on that subject, see below for a picture taken when I spoke at last week's meeting of the Newtown Rotary:



That's (l-r) Paul Salvatore, a realtor with Keller Williams; Shari Donahue, one of the owners of Zebra-Striped Whale; yours truly; and Dennis O'Brien, Newtown mayor, who is holding his very own left- and right-handed pencils that I gave out to all in attendance.

SPECIAL THANKS to Jean Dolan, assistant director for PR at the College, for both taking the picture and allowing permission for me to use it.

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8. Computer tip

If you'd like to browse through over 85 million web pages that have been archived as late as 1996, please click:

<http://www.archive.org/web/web.php>

I found it interesting, for example, to check out my website . . . if you'd like to do the same, type-in "www.blainesworld.net" at the top where it asks you to Enter Web Address . . . you'll find I'm in there since January 12, 2002 . . . then going to that website, I checked in Newsletters and found that my website first appeared in October, 2001.

Perhaps you'll find even more interesting the archives for September 11th, the 2000 election, the 2002 election, and Web pioneers . . . I got a kick out of seeing what Yahoo! looked like back in 1996.

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9. Just a tap

A passenger in a taxi leaned over to ask the driver a question and tapped him on the shoulder. The driver screamed, lost control of the cab, nearly hit a bus, drove up over the curb, and stopped just inches from a large plate glass window. For a few moments, everything was silent in the cab and then the still shaking driver said, 'I'm sorry, but you scared the daylights out of me.'

The frightened passenger apologized to the driver and said he didn't realize a mere tap on the shoulder could frighten him so much.

The driver replied, "No, no, I'm sorry, it's entirely my fault. Today is my first day driving a cab. I had been driving a hearse for the last 25 years."

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10. A quote I like

The sun is already shining in the early morning while you are sleeping soundly. All the right conditions for awakening may already be happening around you. Open your heart and be ready to drink the nectar of awakening.--Anam Thubten, Buddhist scholar and writer

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11. Thought for the day

I already miss Cara Schollenberger, a friend and colleague who recently left Bucks to take another teaching position at

Kutztown State University . . . we still keep in touch, though, and she has given me permission to share the following story that she wrote:

My Dad's gift to me

In the past two weeks, I realized that my Honda minivan was really starting to make noises and not perform like I liked. With the advent of the new position at KU, I started to think about downsizing and finding a car with 4 wheel drive and better gas mileage for my hour long ride back and forth each day to work. The issue that I faced was the fact that I owed more on the car than it is worth as I had rolled money into the payments from a previous lease agreement.

So I began the daunting task of car searching and looked far and wide to find a deal that would work for me. No matter where I looked, I needed to come up with about \$4000-5000 down to bridge the gap between what I owed and what the car was worth and getting my monthly payments on a new car to be in the range that I could afford.

Finally, on Saturday after fighting the good fight for almost a week and a half, I sat down exhausted and perplexed on my family room couch. Coming up with the extra money was almost an impossibility for me. In order to make this work, I would have to go further into debt. I spent an hour writing down all of my monthly expenses, called several credit card companies, asked them to lower my interest rate (which they did--almost by half!) and then tried to take an educated guess at what my pay check from Kutztown would look like, having no information on deductions etc.

Knowing that making the lateral move was going to cause me to pinch pennies for several years, I was very concerned that I could make all my monthly bill payments and not be "car poor." With all these numbers swimming around in my head and with the prospect of keeping the van and sinking tons of money into it as it reached 90,000 miles, I put my head back on the couch and closed my eyes.

For the better part of my life things just somehow fall in place. I don't consider myself a lucky person. I never win anything, but in the course of my 44 years, at the last minute jobs and other opportunities seem to fall in place. So with my head back and eyes closed, I gave my dilemma to God.

I am not an overly religious person, but I do think I am a person of faith and while I believe in a higher power, I also believe that you are put on a path and choices are put in front of you. And it is solely up to you to make the choices that will lead you down different paths in your life.

I asked for a sign . . . something . . . anything . . . just to let me know whether I should keep moving forward on this or just keep the van and let this go. I had my moment for reflection and then I put everything away, making a promise to myself not to think about this anymore until Monday.

Sunday was Father's Day, a day that I never like to dwell on as my father died young and has been gone for some 20 years. He and I were very close and every time something great happens in my life, I am so sad that he is not here to share it with me.

My kids spent the day with their Dad, so I headed off to my Mom's house

for a visit. My mother remarried after my Dad died and while John is not my father, he is a good person and we get along fine. Shortly after I arrived at my Mom's house, John, who was a friend of my Dad's, asked me if I still had my Dad's alto saxophone. I said I did and that it was in the basement, which was not a very good place for it because of the dampness. I recalled thinking years ago that maybe I should sell it but never did.

My Dad loved that sax. His parents bought it for him when he was in high school. He played it in the Pottstown band before I was born. It was a part of him that I still had. John asked me if it was a Selmer, which is a very popular and well made instrument and I said that I thought it was. He proceeded to tell me that every Sunday in the PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER classifieds, there is an ad looking for to buy Selmer saxophones.

We found the ad, and I brought it home. I had no idea how much this sax might be worth, and I was not sure if I should call the number, contact a music store or just forget about it. I came home, went online and read up on Selmer saxophones. I also read material from several websites where experts in the field had written article after article on saxophones.

Finally, I came upon a site where a gentleman from Julliard was giving information out in the form of a posting list. A man had found a Selmer sax, much like my Dad's while shopping in Cape May NJ. He said that the lacquer needed to be redone and was wondering how much this instrument was worth. The Julliard expert exclaimed in capital letters : DO NOT RELAQUER . . . YOU HAVE A VINTAGE SAX. THEY CAN BE WORTH ANYWHERE FROM \$2-6,0000! GO TO EBAY AND CHECK OUT THE BIDDING.

So that is what I did and lo and behold, it appeared that my Dad's sax, based on its condition was worth between \$2-4,0000.

Equipped with my newfound knowledge and an idea of price, I called the number from the INQIRER. I left a message. The phone rang back 35 minutes later. Lenny was on the other end. He was a collector of saxophones, had about 15, was a sax player and had his own big band that performed and recorded. Additionally, he is a collector of WWII items. He asked if it would be okay to come see me right away.

An hour later, Lenny and his wife were in my kitchen checking out my Selmer Mark VI vintage saxophone made in Paris in the original case. We talked, he looked the sax over and played it. He liked it and told me that he would repad it and would keep it for himself to play in his band. He asked me what I thought it was worth. I said based on what I had found out and on the condition I thought it was worth \$3000. He gave me \$3,500!

He also offered my son a visit to his makeshift museum of WWII memorabilia. This was a nice man. He had a nice wife. He was going to love my Dad's sax, he was going to play my Dad's sax and take care of it and to me that was worth way more than \$3,500. But I now also had what I needed to move ahead on the car; this was my sign.

So in one short day, Father's Day, I truly think my Dad gave me a gift. I am picking up the new car tomorrow.

Miracles never cease. You just have to see them.

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12. Advance planning department

A. At the Princeton Center for Yoga & Health:

We welcome visiting guest instructor, Andrew Reece, of the Agama School of Yoga in Thailand for Studies in Esoteric Yoga for 3 weekend intensives--one each in July, August and September.

Meet Andrew and learn about Agama Yoga at a FREE Introductory session on Friday, June 27 at 7:30 p.m..

For more information:

Deborah Metzger, Director
Princeton Center for Yoga & Health pcyh@mindspring.com
609.924.7924

B. At the Bristol Riverside Theatre:

BRT presents our 3rd Annual Jazz Weekend this coming Friday-Sunday. Join us at our spectacular riverfront setting for a weekend of cool Jazz.

New to BRT, Warren Oree & The Arpeggio Jazz Ensemble was called one of the most innovative jazz bands in the Philadelphia area by Temple University Public Radio. Friday at 8 p.m.

BRT welcomes back the Eric Mintel Quartet. Pianist and composer Eric Mintel has performed at the White House for President Clinton and at the Kennedy Center, and has been featured in Down Beat Magazine and on Marian McPartland's Piano Jazz on NPR. Saturday at 8 p.m.

The Joshua Richman Trio was hailed as "the future of this uniquely American art form" by Marilyn Bergman of the ASCAP Foundation. Sunday at 3 p.m.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.brtstage.org>

C. At the Princeton Public Library:

NOODLE TALK is a playful, game-like alternative to ordinary conversation . . . it is designed to enrich interpersonal relationships.

Moderated by Alan Goldsmith, this program features questions that cover the full gamut of life experience . . . there are no right or wrong answers, just the truth of our own inner or outer experience.

Mondays, 7 p.m.: July 14 and August 11 at the Princeton Public Library in Princeton, NJ . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.princetonlibrary.org>

D. At the Princeton Barnes & Noble:

Tuesday, July 22 at 7 p.m.

Author Discussion/Signing:

Bob Golon:

No Minor Accomplishment-The Revival of New Jersey Professional Baseball. Sports historian and NJ native Bob Golon will discuss NJ's regional baseball scene since the Trenton Thunder arrived and answer all your local baseball.

For more information:

Debra Lampert-Rudman
crm2646@bn.com
609.716.1570

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PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#611

6.16.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I went with friends to see ANNIE GET YOUR GUN at the Villagers Theatre in Somerset, NJ . . . it was one of the finest local productions we have seen in quite some time.

Jessica Berger and Eric Harper were outstanding in the two leading roles . . . we also got a kick out of seeing Heather Gross in the role of Nellie Oakley . . . Cynthia, a guidance counselor at the Elizabeth Avenue School, had known her when she was a student there . . . and Matt Weinstein (so fine the Villagers' recent production of BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS), though this time in a much smaller part, still lent his presence to a very talented ensemble . . . we also liked the 10-piece orchestra.

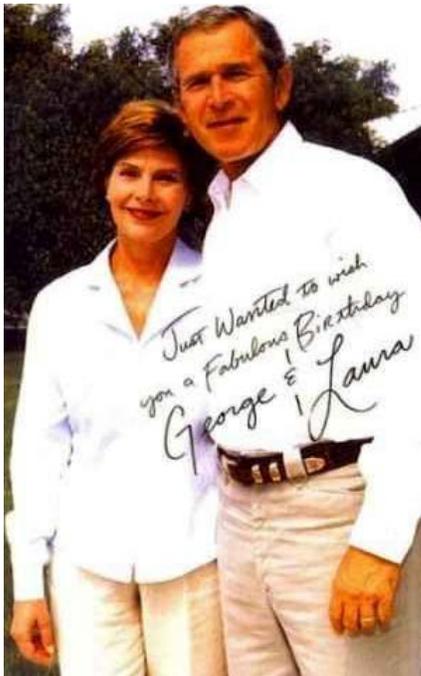
The show runs through June 29 . . . for more information, please click:
<http://www.villagerstheatre.net>

B. The next day, Cynthia and I went with other friends to see LOVE, SEX AND THE IRS at the Newtown Theatre in Newtown, PA . . . this was a funny farce that had us laughing, in large part because of the talented cast of eight (all equally fine) . . . direction by Jeff Dworkin and Annette Fielder was also excellent; my only regret was that I didn't get to see Jeff on stage as well . . . he's also one very talented actor.

Unfortunately, LOVE's limited run ends Tuesday . . . so if you miss it, look for the this group's next production: CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN that will run from August 7-13 . . . for more information, please click:
<http://www.newtownartscompany.com/>

C. THANKS to all those who sent cards and emails, called me, etc. on my recent birthday . . . I know, I know . . . you're probably thinking that it was only yesterday that I was a mere broth of a lad of 58 . . . but I'm now a very young 59 . . . and looking forward to the big 6-0 next June 14.

George and Laura (Bush, of course) even got into the act, as can be seen below:



I was impressed when I received this; i.e., until I opened the card and read the following message: Thought this would look great on your table.

And my friend Chic did his thing when he had them announce my birthday before the beginning of the aforementioned ANNIE . . . I'm just grateful that he didn't do what he did when he was with his wife, Joni, at the Celine Dion show in Las Vegas . . . there he got up and personally led the 2,000 folks in attendance in a rendition of "Happy Birthday."

D. CONDOLENCES to Pete Dominick and family on the loss of Pete's dad . . . from what I've heard from Pete, he was quite a guy and one who will be missed . . . in lieu of flowers, a donation may be made in the name of Anita and Peter Dominick to Our Lady of Czestochowa, 654 Ferry Road, Doylestown, PA 18901.

CONDOLENCES, also, to the family of Tim Russert . . . I've long been a fan of MEET THE PRESS and any other show that featured Russert . . . he made politics come alive for me.

Watching his friends talk about him brought tears to my eyes . . . I was moved when they talked about how he:

* Would call you up to tell you that he was watching your favorite football team, and because you like the team, he would root for it too (as long your team wasn't playing Buffalo);

* Would tell you that he bumped into your son or daughter and then always tell you that he was looking out for them; and

* [in one instances when visiting a friend's son in the hospital] gave a baseball cap because that's what was needed at the time.

As one person commented, "He tried to help everybody. He enjoyed their success. He wanted you to succeed."

My Sunday mornings will never be quite the same!

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Agi--who works at Dari Delite, 583 Hamilton Street, Somerset, NJ.

I went there with friends over the weekend and was blown away by her friendliness, especially since we arrived after the official closing time . . . she didn't rush us; rather, she took the time to both give us samples and make us feel welcome.

We appreciated her enthusiasm, as well her smile . . . we also learned that if you gave her a compliment, you'd get even more toppings on your ice cream.

This store is quite an operation . . . the ice cream is tasty, scoops are large and there are a lot of toppings . . . yet most interesting is what else is sold there: pocketbooks, little Buddha statues and a whole host of other little doodads . . . you'll have to see them

on display to believe them!

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2. FYI

Gottlieb's rules of parenting adult children are pretty clear: Respect their integrity and their authority over their own lives. Have faith that whatever we would want to tell them, they already know. Help is to be offered with an open hand. And the offer of help should always be in the form of a question: "Would you like . . . ?" or "How can I help?" Manage our own helplessness and fear without imposing it on them. And . . . never, ever offer advice without asking permission. (This rule applies for adolescents also.)

SOURCE:

Daniel Gottlieb, LEARNING FROM THE HEART (see also Sections 4C, 10 and 11)

FYI, part 2

* Jeff Zaslow, co-author of THE LAST LECTURE:

Thanks so much for your note, for putting THE LAST LECTURE in your newsletter and for writing a review!

Randy Pausch has been struggling with kidney and heart failure in recent weeks, but earlier this month he was the surprise speaker at Carnegie Mellon's commencement. Here's a 2-minute report on it from GOOD MORNING AMERICA. Watch until the end. He's quite a showman, and he sure loves his wife!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVFmFof6aXg>

* Andrew Blechman, author of LEISUREVILLE:

Thank you so much for your wonderful review. Good to hear that you enjoyed the book, and I greatly appreciate your getting the word out to your friends. I really feel this is an important sociological phenomenon and it's time to have a national debate about it. Age-segregation is still flying under the radar.

* Terri in Pennsylvania:

Congratulations to Cara [Schollenberger, a Bucks professor who has taken another job at Kutztown University--as reported in BLAINESWORLD #606]. She is at the top of my list of memorable people who influenced my life greatly. Yes, of course you are there, too . . .haha.

Yes, BCCC is losing a great teacher and role model. I am most sad that never again will any students get the benefit of the Creativity class I did with such a great combination of educators!

THE COMBINATION:

Cara was a member of a three-person team that also included Bill Ford and yours truly. We taught together for several years, and I'll always value our time together.

* Lee in Pennsylvania:

Came across this article [on brainiest places to retire] and figured you might enjoy it:

<http://finance.yahoo.com/retirement/article/105195/The-10-Brainiest-Places-to-Retire>

SPECIAL THANKS:

To Lee and others who have been forwarding me such material . . . I truly do appreciate it . . . do keep sending me such articles, websites, etc. on such topics as life in Western North Carolina (in particular, the Asheville/Hendersonville area), retirement, etc.

* Jean in Pennsylvania:

Rabbi Glazer is quite inspiring! I've been inspired by other rabbis recently (unfortunately at funerals or shivas). Like you, I see the value of embracing all faith traditions because each has so much to offer. One rabbi said this, upon the death of my sister's father-in-law: Many stars we see in the heavens today burned out millions of years ago, yet their light is still reaching us (as a metaphor for the deceased). I hope (and indeed pray) that Alla can work past her hatred. Perhaps she should read Viktor Frankl's MAN'S SEARCH FOR MEANING.

Also, Pat should know that although your readers might not respond, you do reach a lot of people. The last Ukrainian dinner at my parents' church that you helped publicize ran out of food. People were waiting in line before it opened. They raised \$4k!

UPDATES (2):

1. The Alla that Jean refers to is the woman who didn't like the fact that I recently attended a German festival. I was glad that

so many other readers seemed to have no problem with that; in fact, many seemed to think it was a good idea. See last week's issue if you missed these comments.

2. The next Ukrainian dinner is coming up soon:
Do you savor homemade Eastern European cuisine? Come to a Ukrainian Festival on Sunday, June 22 from 1 to 6 p.m. There's also a live Polka band, raffles, games of chance, and more.
St. Anne's Ukrainian Catholic Church, 1545 Easton Rd. (Rt. 611), Warrington, PA. For more information: Helene at 215.343.3948 or please click:
<http://www.stanneukrainiancc.com>

Several readers commented on a joke in last week's newsletter:

* Berta in New Jersey:
"The difference" [a joke in last week's issue] was obviously written by a Republican. My thought would be McCain would walk by, not care, keep the money in his own pocket, and smile.

* Debbie in New York:
I see you're a McCain man . . . all I can say is he better get some excitement around his campaign because nobody cares what he has to say.

He's got a better chance of seeing God than becoming the next president . . . this country needs to go back the principles that it was founded on, which is democracy . . . and we're not practicing democracy; we're practicing capitalism . . . that's why people that work 40 hours a week can still live in squalor and have no health insurance.

Here's a good book to read: THE BIG SQUEEZE by Steven Greenhouse, a guy who live in Pelham, NY and has worked for the NY Times for 15 years . . . I read and then gave it to my son so he knows what he's up against.

* Jean in Pennsylvania:
The political joke in section 6 was extremely partisan and insulting to Democrats, IMHO.

MY TWO CENTS:
As of today, I haven't made my final choice on who to vote for in the next election . . . I am still open to hearing what both candidates have to say and urge all readers to do the same.

For more information on the spending issue, please click:
http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/business/news/article_1410407.php/McCain_takes_on_excessive_CEO_pay_Republican_spending_Roundup_

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3. College visit

Visiting a college campus, the prospective student spots a building called Hemingway Hall. "That's nice," he says, "a building named for Ernest Hemingway."

"Actually," says the tour guide, "it's named for Joshua Hemingway."

"Was he a writer?" the student asks.

"Yes. He wrote a big check."

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4. Reviews

A. I wanted to like THEN SHE FOUND ME, starring Helen Hunt--one of my favorite actresses (though I wish she were in more films) . . . here she plays a schoolteacher who longs to have a child . . . but her luck changes when her husband leaves her and then more bad news follows when her adoptive mother dies . . . enter Bette Midler as her real mother and Colin Firth as her love interest . . . I guess it's supposed to be a romantic comedy, but it did very little for me . . . methinks that's largely because of the dialogue, though Hunt is largely to blame because she also cowrote the script . . . and she was the director, too . . . rated R.

B. THE BUCKET LIST is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #589 follows:

THE BUCKET LIST was enjoyable, but not great . . . it's the story of two guys who put together a list of all the things that they want to do before they die . . . with Academy Award winners Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman starring, it was a film that I had really looked forward to seeing--but left me somewhat flat until the ending (when it

somewhat all came together) . . . director Rob Reiner used what seemed to be a paint-by-the-numbers approach to putting it together; you could predict almost every scene.

That said, there was some good dialogue . . . I particularly liked when Freeman turns to Nicholson and tells him that there are two questions that you'll be asked when you get to heaven:

1. Did you bring joy to yourself?
2. Did you bring joy to others?

Rated PG-13.

C. Daniel Gottlieb's LETTERS TO SAM was one of the best books that I've read over the past few years . . . so when I saw that the author came out with something new, LEARNING FROM THE HEART (see also Sections 2, 10 and 11), I rushed to get hold of it.

And was I ever glad that I did . . . I was hooked after just seeing the cover and the subtitle: LESSONS ON LIVING, LOVING AND LISTENING . . . Gottlieb, a practicing psychologist, presents this information via short essays on a wide variety of topics . . . best of all, he brings in his own personal experiences and openly shares them.

I especially liked his view about not always having to be best in everything:

* I've ended up feeling a great deal of gratitude for my failures. Of course, there are people who don't believe me when I tell them I belong in the last seat in the second row. They challenge my position by reminding me of books I have written and the many wonderful accomplishments I've been fortunate to achieve. Over the years I have learned that there are some aspects of my humanity--perhaps my kindness and my ability to understand others--that probably belong in the first row. But there are many other aspects of Gottlieb that belong in the last row--technical skills, attention span, and memory (to name a few).

Gottlieb also got me thinking about how good life can be--and is--when he related this account of a friend's visit:

* I do believe in coincidence, and I was involved in a quite a fortunate one when my friend Amy came over to visit just two days before that phone call. At one point, she asked if I believed in heaven. Without giving it any thought, I said, "Yes. You're in it right now."

I saw the dazed look on her face that I often see when I make proclamations, so I went on: "What were the chances of that sperm fertilizing that egg and producing your life? And what were the chances that you would have lived all the years you have lived in relative good health? And what were the odds that you would have so many people in your life whom you love and who care about you? And what were the possibilities that you could look out of almost any window and see the beauty of nature? Heaven? You bet."

Of course, my version of heaven is not the perfect one we read about in mythology or that many believe in. There is great pain and suffering and loss in this particular heaven. But deep inside, most know it--heaven, life-is precious. It just takes some careful noticing.

Lastly, the author had me laughing when I read passages such as this one:

* Even trauma like my accident carries good news and bad news. I suffer, still get frustrated and sometimes depressed, and yet there is good news about being a quadriplegic.

The good news about being quadriplegic?

Well, first, there is the obvious--great parking spaces.

Then, think shoes. I don't have to spend a fortune on comfortable shoes, and they last as long as I want them to.

But the great news about quadriplegic is that I don't have to get up to pee in the middle of the night. So, in the middle of the night tonight, when you are sitting or standing. I'll be sleeping. (And they say I have special needs!)

On a serious note, this disability has helped me become the man I am. The image I have carried for nearly thirty years is that when my neck broke, my soul began to breathe. Because of my differentness, I have not been intimidated by my need to be like everyone else. I might not have become the man I am today were it not for this trauma.

After reading LEARNING FROM THE HEART, you'll feel like you know Daniel Gottlieb much better . . . in fact, in reading it, I thought I was having a one-on-conversation with him that made me realize that if I was ever in need of a therapist, I'd certainly want to seek him out.

D. Heard Robert H. Schuller's IT IT'S GOING TO BE, IT'S UP TO ME, a bestseller that was read by the author . . . it describes how to tap into your own dynamic divine energy by following these eight steps that are designed to lead to personal success:

Possibilities must be weighed,
Then priorities must be swayed,
New plans must be laid,
And commitments must be made.

The price must be paid,
The timing may be delayed,
But the course must be stayed,
And the trumpets will be played.

Schuller bases much of what he write about on what he calls Possibility Thinking; i.e., If you can dream it, you can do it!

He makes you believe in this concept, too, as result of his own experiences--many of which he shares in the book . . . in addition, I also liked his use of real-life success stories of people from every walk of life.

If you're like me, you'll be "sold" on his message that comes across on nearly every page . . . yet be forewarned: if you're skeptical that any of this stuff can and does work, then don't bother with reading this or anything else by Schuller.

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5. TV alert

A. LIVE FROM ABBEY ROAD returns on Thursday at 10 p.m. on SUNDANCE . . . the first episode features Mary J. Blige, Dashboard Confessional and James Blunt in what seems like a private concert.

B. SQUATTING MONKEYS TELL NO LIES" features Dana Carvey in a comedy special on HBO on Thursday at 10 p.m.; repeated on Friday at 5 a.m. . . . according to THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, "the talented impressionist . . . [in] an inspired take on Andy Rooney [asks] questions like, 'Why do they call an orange and orange--but they don't call a banana a yellow?' " . . . I've already seen this show and found it to be quite funny in spots.

C. If you have a child or grandchild, then watch CAMP ROCK with them on Saturday at 8 p.m. on ABC . . . the Jonas Brothers star.

D. JOY FIELDING'S THE OTHER WOMAN is about a middleaged homewrecker who discovers a sexy young thing is out to steal her husband . . . two old favorites, 90210's Jason Priestley and MELROSE PLACE'S Josie Bissett star . . . Saturday at 9 p.m. on LIFETIME.

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6. Show and tell

A little old lady answered a knock on the door one day, only to be confronted by a well-dressed young man carrying a vacuum cleaner.

"Good morning," said the young man. "If I could take a couple of minutes of your time, I would like to demonstrate the very latest in high-powered vacuum cleaners."

"Go away!" said the old lady. "I'm broke and haven't got any money!" And she proceeded to close the door.

Quick as a flash, the young man wedged his foot in the door and pushed it wide open. "Don't be too hasty!" he said. "Not until you have at least seen my demonstration." And with that, he emptied a bucket of horse manure onto her hallway carpet.

"If this vacuum cleaner does not remove all traces of this horse manure from your carpet, Madam, I will personally eat the remainder."

The old lady stepped back and said, "Well, let me get you a fork 'cause they cut off my electricity this morning."

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7. Websites

A. Carol in Pennsylvania:
"Offenders" Locations throughout the United States:
<http://www.familywatchdog.us/>

When you visit this site, you can enter your address and a map will pop up with your house as a small icon of a house. There may be red, blue and green dots surrounding your entire neighborhood. When you click on these dots, a picture of a criminal will appear with his or her home address and the description of the crime he or she has committed.

One thing you can do is show your children these pictures and see how close these people live to your home or school.

This site was developed by John Walsh from Americas Most Wanted. This is another tool we can use to help us keep our kids safe.

B. Want to know about the latest inventions, innovations and interesting ideas? If your answer is "yes," please click:<http://InventorSpot.com>

This website contains various inventions that fit several categories, including business, food and drink, toys, security, gadgets, and much more. Almost all of these inventions are very interesting; e.g., the post on June 16 about the Glo Pillow--an alarm clock that's not annoying.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:
<http://www.blaineworld.net>

If you want to see how many readers currently look at my website, click the above . . . then look to the counter in the bottom left . . . I'm even impressed myself!

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8. Computer tip

Have you ever wanted to convert files without the need to download software? You can now do so by clicking:
<http://www.zamzar.com>

Zamzar converts many common file types to other common file types. . . for example, upload a file you wish to convert (say a PDF) and state the file type you'd like to output (e.g., an Excel spreadsheet) . . . provide an email address and a few minutes later, you'll receive a link to retrieve the converted file.

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9. Through the eyes of a child

I often take for granted that children understand what they are reading. The following is a child's book report on the entire CHILDREN'S BIBLE:

In the beginning, which occurred near the start, there was nothing but God, darkness and some gas. The Bible says, "The Lord thy God is one, " but I think He must be a lot older than that. Anyway, God said, "Give me a light!" and someone did. Then God made the world.

He split the Adam and made Eve. Adam and Eve were naked, but they weren't embarrassed because mirrors hadn't been invented yet. Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating one bad apple, so they were driven from the Garden of Eden. Not sure what they were driven in, though, because they didn't have cars.

Adam and Eve had a son, Cain, who hated his brother as long as he was Abel.

Pretty soon all of the early people died off, except for Methuselah, who lived to be like a million or something.

One of the next important people was Noah, who was a good guy, but one of his kids was kind of a Ham. Noah built a large boat and put his family and some animals on it. He asked some other people to join him, but they said they would have to take a rain check.

After Noah came Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jacob was more famous than his brother, Esau, because Esau sold Jacob his birthmark in exchange for some pot roast.

Jacob had a son named Joseph who wore a really loud sports coat.

Another important Bible guy is Moses, whose real name was Charlton Heston. Moses led the Israel Lights out of Egypt and away from the evil

Pharaoh after God sent ten plagues on Pharaoh's people. These plagues included frogs, mice, lice, bowels, and no cable. God fed the Israel Lights every day with manicotti. Then he gave them His Top Ten Commandments. These include: don't lie, cheat, smoke, dance, or covet your neighbor's stuff.

Oh, yeah, I just thought of one more: Humor thy father and thy mother.

One of Moses' best helpers was Joshua who was the first Bible guy to use spies. Joshua fought the battle of Geritol and the fence fell over on the town.

After Joshua came David. He got to be king by killing a giant with a slingshot. He had a son named Solomon who had about 300 wives and 500 porcupines. My teacher says he was wise, but that doesn't sound very wise to me.

After Solomon there were a bunch of major league prophets. One of these was Jonah, who was swallowed by a big whale and then barfed up on the shore.

There were also some minor league prophets, but I guess we don't have to worry about them.

After the Old Testament came the New Testament. Jesus is the star of The New. He was born in Bethlehem in a barn. (I wish I had been born in a barn too because my mom is always saying to me, "Close the door! Were you born in a barn?" it would be nice to say, "As a matter of fact, I was.")

During His life, Jesus had many arguments with sinners like the Pharisees and the Republicans. Jesus also had twelve opossums. The worst one was Judas Asparagus. Judas was so evil that they named a terrible vegetable after him.

Jesus was a great man. He healed many leopards and even preached to some Germans on the Mount.

But the Republicans and all those guys put Jesus on trial before Pontius the Pilot. Pilot didn't stick up for Jesus. He just washed his hands instead.

Anyways, Jesus died for our sins, then came back to life again. He went up to Heaven but will be back at the end of the Aluminum. His return is foretold in the book of Revolution.

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10. A quote I like

Despite death bringing good news and bad news, I have instructed one of my friends to say the following at my funeral: "Out of everyone in this room, Dan is pretty pissed that he has to be the one in the box!"--Daniel Gottlieb in LEARNING FROM THE HEART (see also Sections 2, 4C and 11)

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11. Thought for the day

You can tell that I REALLY liked LEARNING FROM THE HEART (see also Sections 2, 4C and 10) by Daniel Gottlieb by the fact that the following passage marks the fourth time I have mentioned it in this missive:

Forgiveness has nothing to do with reconciliation or even holding a perpetrator harmless. Forgiveness is the process of giving up resentment or anger toward another person.

There is a Buddhist story about a monk who was robbed at gunpoint at a bus station. Immediately after that encounter, he felt great fear. Moments later, he felt great rage at the perpetrator. These emotions continued to wash over him, and by the time he got home he was crying. When the monk told his student this story, the student said, "After all you've been through, why are you crying?" The monk replied, "I realized that if I had been raised by that man's family and if I'd had his experiences, I would have been the man with the gun."

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12. Advance planning department

A. Bonnie in Yardley, PA:
IMPROV COMEDY FUNDRAISER
for the Morrisville Senior Servicerter

215.295.0567
31 E Cleveland Ave. Morrisville PA

Starring
THE PIECE
<http://www.pieceprov.com>

"The hilarity of a Piece performance really has to be seen to be appreciated. You are in for a clever, crazy and hilarious improvisational treat."
Eric Asaris, THE QUAKERTOWN FREE PRESS

Friday, June 20 at 7 p.m.
Advance tickets: \$6 and \$8 at the door.

And remember; friends don't let friends go to improv shows alone.

B. Cathy in Pennsylvania:
Here's an easy way to sign on for tickets for our Coalition for Peace Action event on June 22nd at Yardley United Methodist Church, where we will:

- a) hear reports from various members of the Interfaith Compassionate Listening Delegation to Israel/Palestine;
- b) eat scrumptious food and hear wonderful, original peace music by singer/songwriter; and
- c) bid Al Krass farewell as he hands over leadership to Bill Deckhart.

For all the details and to sign up and pay online, just click on to:
http://www.peacecoalition.org/action/cfpa/080622_buxmontdinner_yardley.aspx

C. Joey in New Jersey:
To all comedians, actors, improvisers and storytellers:

Our first Louder Than Words story telling event was a success---at Friendly Grounds Coffee House.

And now, I am now looking for story tellers for July 10th and August 14th for our next Louder Than Words storytelling night.

Some important information:

- * Story tellers can experience a new venue for story telling.
- * Stand-up comedians have the opportunity to exercise a "creative muscle" beyond your current stand-up comedy act.
- * Real people from all walks of life can share their true stories.
- * Actors and writers can experience creating the beginnings of a one-person show in front of a real audience.

Please feel to contact me if you're interested in appearing at "Louder Than Words" on July 10th and/or August 14th!

Joey Novick
908 892 6859
joeynovick@earthlink.net

Or for more information about the event, please click:
<http://www.louderthanwordsstories.com>

D. Cyndy in Pennsylvania:
Hello Spirit Beings!

I wanted to tell you about the Sacred Circles, which are starting at Creative Healing Arts Center in West Chester. It has been a dream of mine to manifest circles which are closer to some of you and CHA, as it is lovingly called, is a beautiful space for sacred work. You feel it the moment you walk into the door. Come and visit me there! Or you can visit my site for other happenings!

Be well,
Cyndy "Snake Dancer" Paige
610.274.3109
<http://www.RhythmOfTheEarth.com>

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PS. Please join me in praying for the folks affected by the floods in the Midwest . . . also, that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . and make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#610

6.9.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I were joined by several friends as we attended the annual Tyler Tasting bash at Bucks County College this past Saturday . . . methinks it was the best one ever, helped largely by the mild weather and for the first time, a 17-piece orchestra that provided music for dancing . . . oh and lest I forget: the fine folks at Zebra-Striped Whale were there, dishing out their delicious ice cream to those in attendance who wanted to make their own sundaes.

I understand some \$60,000 was raised from the event . . . KUDOS to Tobi Bruhn, Adrienne Clark, Jean Holmes, and all the volunteer members of the BCCC Foundation for making the event the success that it was.

That's (I-r) yours truly, Cynthia, Linda Kanner, and Rick Pine:



B. On Saturday, we saw THE TWILIGHT OF THE GOLDS at the Off-Broadstreet Theatre in Hopewell, NJ . . . it's a thought-provoking drama (with some funny lines, too) about a couple about to have a first child . . . the only problem is that there's a 90% chance that the child will be homosexual.

I particularly liked these two snippets of dialogue:

* Every parent has been disappointed with their children, ever since God with Adam and Eve; and

* What kind of mother would I be if I didn't understand my children?
[Response] Pretty typical.

All five cast members were outstanding, though I thought Lois Carr's work as the mother was especially moving . . . and I'll remember the evening for it being the first time that I saw an actor by the name of Joe Sabatino . . . he had the leading role, that of the son, and he was both funny and powerful . . . I'll look forward to seeing him in more productions.

Robert Thick's direction was outstanding.

There's good news, too . . . the production runs through July 5, so do try to see it . . . for more information, please click:
<http://www.off-broadstreet.com>

C. Princeton Public Library continues to amaze me with its wide range of programs that are open to the public at no charge . . . on Thursday, I had the good fortune to hear Princeton Festival singers Jennifer Zetlan and Marcello Guzzo, accompanied by pianist Linda Saponara, perform arias from the Puccini's LA BOHEME and other operas . . . what a performance!

I also enjoyed hearing artistic director Richard Tang present an overview of the 2008 program . . . he was joined by Stephen La Cross, stage director, who told of his experiences in preparing an opera in three

weeks . . . among the tidbit that I picked up were the following:

- * A 15-minute photo shoot took 15 people to set up and cost thousands of dollars.
- * 175 singers were auditioned to cast the 7 parts.
- * YouTube is increasingly being used to help in finding performers.
- * LA BOHEME is RENT in Italian.

For more information about THE PRINCETON FESTIVAL, please click:
<http://www.princetonfestival.org/season-tickets.html>

D. It was almost like old times as I got to meet Risa, my daughter, for chocolate-chip pancakes at the Americana Diner in East Windsor, NJ . . . they were as good as ever . . . I also got to meet her fiance, JP, for cheesesteaks at Pete's Steakhouse in Ewing, NJ . . . they, too, were as good as ever--though I must admit to not having been there since the place was named Mike's Steakhouse.

And Cynthia and I managed to find a new ice cream place . . . or at least it was a new one for us: Gibby's in Levittown, PA . . . it's an old-fashioned type stand with plenty of flavors and toppings, as well as generous portions . . . we'll be back!

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Kim Buch--manager of the Dairy Queen in Morrisville, PA.

I used to spend a few days a week across the river, doing mediation work in Trenton, NJ, and whenever I did, I made it a point to stop at Kim's place for a Blizzard . . . now I imagine that most employees could and do make a fairly decent Blizzard . . . yet all I know is that whenever Kim made it, it tasted even better than it usually did.

She's always friendly, and in addition, she has a great smile that just brightens up your day.

My only regret is that I'm not in the area as much as I used to be, so I don't go to this store as often I'd like . . . it is probably good for my waistline, too . . . yet I still make it a point to get a Blizzard from this Dairy Queen at least once a month, even if it means going out of my way!

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2. FYI

As part of my responsibilities, I used to be an academic reviewer. That meant I'd have to ask other professors to read densely written research papers and review them. It could be tedious, sleep-inducing work. So I came up with an idea. I'd send a box of Girl Scout Thin Mints with every paper that needed to be reviewed. "Thank you for agreeing to do this," I'd write. "The enclosed Thin Mints are your reward. But no fair eating them until you review the paper."

That put a smile on people's faces. And I never had to call and nag them.

They had the box of Thin Mints on their desks. They knew what they had to do.

Sure sometimes I had to send a reminder email. But when I'd ping people, all I needed was one sentence: "Did you eat the Thin Mints yet?"

I've found Thin Mints are a great communication tool. They're also a sweet reward for a job well done.

SOURCE:

THE LAST LECTURE (see also Sections 4C, 10 and 11) by Randy Pausch with Jeffrey Zaslow

FYI, part 2

I mentioned in BLAINESWORLD #608 that I liked HOW I MET MY SECOND HUSBAND ONLINE AT AGE 50: A DATING COACH SHARES THE KEYS TO INTERNET DATING SUCCESS . . . what I failed to mention was how to order it:

All you need to do is call Gayle Crist, the author, at 215.489.0225 or send her an email: coach@healthylifeplanning.com . . . then send a \$13 check (which includes postage and handling) to Gayle Crist, 420 Belmont Avenue, Doylestown PA 18901. Gayle will ship the book to you via First Class that same day.

* Debby in New Jersey:

I thought that you would like to know that the good web is continuing to grow and spread. The sister of my friend, Amy, who has quit smoking due to the book that I got from you borrowed it to give to her hair stylist. The latter's first response was to give her a dirty look. But the next time that these two women saw each other the stylist hugged Amy's sister and thanked her for her gift. She had not smoked for three weeks. Another friend of Amy's sent her daughter out to buy the book for her since she was so impressed by Amy's ability to quit. Amy has celebrated five months without smoking and continues to marvel at her increased sense of energy and stamina, and senses of smell and taste. I am so pleased for her. Thanks for the good work that you are doing.

THE OFFER REMAINS:

If you'd like a FREE copy of THE EASY WAY TO STOP SMOKING by Allen Carr--sent with my compliments--just send an email to my assistant Bridget: hughesbr@bucks.edu . . . put STOP SMOKING BOOK in the subject line . . . in the body of your email, include your name, snail mail address, email address, and phone numbers . . . I only ask that you keep me informed of your progress . . . or of the progress of anybody else you give the book to . . . and, also, that if you get it for yourself or for somebody else that the book gets read within 30 days of receipt.

* Natalie in Pennsylvania:

The theme for next year's Women's History Month at Bucks County Community College will be "Eyewitnesses to History." We are looking for people to share their experiences of the events listed below:

World War II - at home and in the service
Women's Liberation Movement
Women's Healthcare Revolution
Anti-War Movement of the 60's
Serving in Vietnam, Gulf War or Iraq War

Holocaust
Woodstock

Please contact Natalie Kaye at 8015 or kayen@bucks.edu if you would like to volunteer and share your story.

* Marty in New Jersey (commenting on a picture in last week's issue):
Looks like you're trying to steal his bike!

They're probably saying "Damn New Yorkers. They come here and steal everything!"

* Ed in Florida:

I'm sorry I never got around to mentioning to you that a stop by the town of Montreat, NC would be interesting, especially right around the college. When you return, I'm sure you two will discover it for yourselves.

Also, I'm sure you already know the whole area is Rev. Billy Graham country. His ministry owns what appears to be an entire mountain that you can see as you head toward Asheville from the east; beautiful there, isn't it? Like Bucks County but only bigger, better and a whole lot sweeter. Fall must be an absolutely stunning time of the year to visit.

* Chris in Pennsylvania:

I got a good chuckle out of the windows joke.

I went through window replacement last fall (Thanksgiving through God-knows-when). Sure wish I had known about the windows paying for themselves back then.

I paid the contractor before the entire job was done because 1. he was a close friend, and 2. he was a close (geographically) neighbor. OK, add 3. I was a pushover for a nice guy who could have coined the word "schmooze."

I ended up paying someone else to complete the job and although the first contractor is still a close neighbor, he and his family are no longer close friends. It's not worth taking him to court; his work truck is not worth the extra money I paid out, and I would place money on his wife owning their house solely to avoid losing it to scams like his to me.

Too bad I didn't wait the nine years this contractor said the windows would take to pay for themselves. And no, they did not cut my heating bill in half like the Windowizards ad promises. But I did manage to save some money and was no longer bothered by drafts when the winter wind blew.

Oh yeah, we had a very mild winter, too; unlike last year when I believe February was the coldest on record.

Live and learn. On to better things!

* Jerry in Pennsylvania:

Please check out my new website:

<http://www.jerrygrossfinancial.com>

You'll find some good articles and calculators.

Your opinion is also appreciated.

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3. Spell check poem
(reportedly nominated for a Pullet Surprise)

Eye halve a spelling chequer
It came with my pea sea,
It plainly marques four my revue
Miss steaks eye kin knot sea.

Eye strike a key and type a word
And weight for it two say,
Weather eye and wring oar write
It shows me strait a weigh.

As soon as a mist ache is maid
It nose bee fore two long,
And eye can put the error rite
Its rare lea ever wrong.

To rite with care is quite a feet
Of witch won should bee proud,
And wee mussed dew the best wee can,
Sew flaw's are knot aloud.

Eye have run this poem threw it
Your sure reel glad two no,
Its letter perfect awl the weigh
My chequer tolled me sew.

Sauce unknown

SEE FOR YOURSELF:

Run it through you spell checker and every word should show as legitimate with the possible exception of "chequer." And even that's a legitimate variant of the word checker, according to this website:

<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/>

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4. Reviews

A. If you're in the mood for some laughs, catch **YOU DON'T MESS WITH THE ZOHAN** . . . it's a very silly comedy about an Israeli commando who fakes his own death in order to pursue his dream of becoming a hairstylist in New York . . . toward the end, it bogs down a bit when the mood switches and the film becomes a heavy-handed plea for Mideast peace . . . yet that said, star Adam Sandler is as funny as he's ever been and John Turtorro also shines as the guy out to kill him . . . rated PG-13.

B. Do rent **MUSIC WITHIN**, a film you probably never heard about . . . I know I hadn't and if it was even in the theaters, it must have set the world's record for shortest run . . . what a shame! . . . based on a true story, it depicts the life of Richard Pimentel--a Vietnam vet who returns with impaired hearing . . . he has difficulty getting a job, but eventually finds his calling as an employment counselor for the disabled . . . his work leads him to become on the movers

behind the Americans with Disabilities Act . . . Ron Livingston, so fine in OFFICE SPACE, shines as Pimentel . . . however, it is the work of Michael Sheen as his wheelchair-bound buddy with cerebral palsy that makes this a DVD that you must find . . . he steals just about every scene he's in . . . I had to look him up to find out that he's not really handicapped; in fact, when I did, I then recalled he played Tony Blair in THE QUEEN . . . the accompanying sound track is also great . . . rated R for language that contains sexual references and some drug content . . . yet that said, I'd still strongly recommend MUSIC WITHIN for any teenager, as well as his or her parents, grandparents, etc.

C. Randy Pausch, a professor at Carnegie Mellon University, became an Internet sensation after he spoke on the topic of "Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams" . . . his presentation has since been viewed by millions of people and became the basis for one of the best books I've read in quite some time, THE LAST LECTURE (see also Sections 2, 10 and 11)--written with Jeffrey Zaslow.

What made both the talk and book so unique was the fact that Pausch had been diagnosed with terminal cancer . . . yet rather than just take a maudlin approach, he decided to share with his students and others his thoughts on what living should be all about . . . in doing so, he also wanted to provide something tangible for his children to remember him by.

He made me laugh, at times, and I must admit he had me teary-eyed as I read several pages . . . perhaps best of all, Pausch got me thinking such as when he talked about how hard he had it when studying for his PhD:

* . . . I took something called "the theory qualifier," which I can now definitively say was the second worst thing in my life after chemotherapy. When I complained to my mother about how hard and awful the test was, she leaned over, patted me on the arm and said, "We know just how you feel, honey. And remember, when your father was your age, he was fighting the Germans."

Then there's this lesson he learned that got me thinking about what I need to do when faced with a similar situation:

* "That's a good thing," the assistant told me. "When you're screwing up and nobody says anything to you anymore, that means they've given up on you."

That lesson has stuck with me my whole life. When you see yourself doing something badly and nobody's bothering to tell you anymore, that's a bad place to be. You may not want to hear it, but your critics are often the ones telling you they still love you and care about you, and want to make you better.

Lastly, Pausch taught me how to be a better teacher with this passage:

* "Andy, I just gave my students a two-week assignment and they came back and did stuff that, had I given them an entire semester to complete it, I would have given them all A's. What do I do?"

Andy thought for a minute and said: "OK. Here's what you do. Go back into class tomorrow, look them in the eyes and say, 'Guys, that was pretty good, but I know you can do better.'"

His answer left me stupefied. But I followed his advice and it turned out to be

exactly right. He was telling me I obviously didn't know how high the bar should be, and I'd only do them a disservice by putting it anywhere.

THE LAST LECTURE is the perfect gift, not only for teachers, but for anybody wanting to be both inspired and motivated . . . it will leave you wanting to see (or revisit) his aforementioned talk; you can do so by clicking:

<http://www.thelastlecture.com>

D. In listening to Gore Vidal's second memoir, POINT TO POINT NAVIGATION, I was immediately struck by how much name-dropping seems to be taking place . . . his list of friends and acquaintances reads like a Who's Who of important people in the 20th century . . . it includes such notables as Tennessee Williams, Johnny Carson, Rudolph Nuryev, Eleanor Roosevelt, Paul Newman, Orson Welles, JFK, Princess Grace, Amelia Earhart, and Greta Garbo, just to name a few.

Many of these individuals he liked . . . in listening to this book, which he also narrated, you get to know them better . . . if he didn't like you (think Truman Capote), watch out . . . he wrote about him and even his own mother in quite unpleasant terms.

I generally tend to prefer a book that follows a more linear fashion . . . POINT TO POINT skipped around a bit too much to my liking, though Vidal explains his reasoning for doing so by mentioning the fact that he was forced to utilize this means of navigation whenever compasses failed when he was in the navy during World War II.

Vidal has written some 46 books, as well as numerous essays . . . you'll get a better feel for his life by reading this memoir, though it was actually his moving account of his companion-for more than half a century--Howard Auster--that I found most interesting.

They met on Labor Day in 1950 . . . years later, Auster told Vidal "that he thought he was just passing through my life and was surprised as the decades began to stack up and we were still together. But then it is easy to sustain a relationship when sex plays no part and impossible, I have observed, when it does. Each had a sex life apart from the other: all else including our sovereign, time, was shared."

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5. TV alert

A. ELTON JOHN: ME, MYSELF AND I has the singer revisit the milestones of his life in a profile, which uses computer wizardry to insert modern-day Elton into archival footage from throughout his career . . . Thursday at 9 p.m. on VH1.

B. ROMAN POLANSKI: WANTED AND DESIRED is a Sundance Award-winning documentary about the director and his involvement in a sordid scandal involving a 13-year-old girl . . . the judge's actions led Polanski to flee America . . . Thursday at 9:30 p.m. on HBO . . . it is shown many other times; for the complete schedule, please click:

http://www.hbo.com/apps/schedule/ScheduleServlet?ACTION_DETAIL=DETAIL&FOCUS_ID=667809

C. Whoopi Goldberg hosts The Tony Awards on Sunday at 8 p.m. on CBS . . . I'm hoping that BOEING BOEING wins for Best Revival of a Play; I laughed throughout the show when I saw it in London in the fall . . . I'd also like to see Patti LuPone win Best Performance by a Leading Actress in a Musical just because she's sooooo fine in everything she does.

D. SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE presents an hour of choice clips from when Mike Meyers was a regular (1989-95) . . . Sunday at 9 p.m. on NBC.

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6. The difference

John McCain, Hillary Clinton, and Barak Obama were walking down a Washington DC street when they came upon a homeless man.

John McCain, gave the man his business card and told him to come to his office for a job. He then took \$20 out of his pocket and gave it to the man.

Hillary was very impressed, so when they came upon another homeless person, she decided to help. She walked over to him and gave him directions to the welfare office. She then reached into John McCain's pocket and got out a \$20. She kept \$15 for her administrative fees and gave the homeless man \$5.

When they came upon yet another homeless person, Barak told him to "have hope . . . change is coming . . ." and gave him nothing.

Now do you understand the difference?

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7. Websites

A. Sue in Pennsylvania:
This is worth the 18 minutes you'll need to view:
<http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/view/id/229>

About this talk:
Jill Bolte Taylor, a researcher, got a research opportunity few brain scientists would wish for: She had a massive stroke, and watched as her brain functions--motion, speech, self-awareness--shut down one by one. An astonishing story told by a woman who has become a powerful voice for brain recovery.

For more information about Taylor and additional links, please click:
<http://www.ted.com/index.php/speakers/view/id/203>

B. Watch catcher Adam Bender prove how tough he is as he plays his little league games with only one leg by clicking:
<http://video.aol.com/video-category/amazing-sports-plays/111381?icid=1615984947x1203970366x1200411489>

Even if you're not a baseball fan, you'll be moved by this video!

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blaineworld.net>

If you ever miss a newsletter or just want to revisit a past one, go to "Newsletter" on the left and then "Past issues" . . . there's now even a search option at the top . . . so for example, let's say you remember this quote you read in BLAINESWORLD several months ago: The value of an idea lies in using it . . . but for the life of you, you can't remember who said it . . . just type it in the search engine box, putting quotes at the beginning and at the end . . . you'll almost instantaneously be taken to the spot in issue #580 where Thomas Edison is cited as the source for the quote.

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8. Computer tip

Google used to be my Internet home page, but I've now shifted to something that Google offers that makes life even easier for me:

<http://www.google.com/ig>

This option enables personalization to include such things as time, movie times (for your home zip code), baseball results, news headlines, and a whole lot more . . . I further like the option of being able to put in more than one locale to look at for the weather, so right now I'm comparing Belle Mead and Asheville on a daily basis.

You'll like this option--much!

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9. Deathbed promise

Lying on his deathbed, the rich, miserly old man calls to his long-suffering wife. "I want to take all my money with me," he tells her. "So promise me you'll put it in the casket."

After the man dies, his widow attends the memorial service with her best friend. Just before the undertaker closes the coffin, she places a small metal box inside.

Her friend looks at her in horror. "Surely," she says, "you didn't put the money in there."

"I did promise him I would," the widow answers. "So I got it all together, deposited every penny in my account and wrote him a check. If he can cash it, he can spend it."

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10. A quote I like

Brick walls are there for a reason. They give us a chance to show how badly we want something.--Randy Pausch in THE LAST LECTURE

(see also Sections 2, 4C and 11), written with Jeffrey Zaslow

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11. Thought for the day

You can tell I REALLY like a book by the fact that I mention it four separate times in any one issue of this newsletter . . . that's certainly the case with THE LAST LECTURE (see also Sections 2, 4C and 1) by Randy Pausch with Jeffrey Zaslow, the source for the following passage:

Because I've been so vocal about the power of childhood dreams, some people have been asking lately about the dreams I have for my children.

I have a direct answer for that.

It can be a very disruptive thing for parents to have specific dreams for their kids. As a professor, I've seen many unhappy college freshman picking majors that are all wrong for them. Their parents have put them on a train, and too often, judging by the crying during my office hours, the result is a train wreck.

As I see it, a parent's job is to encourage kids to develop a joy for life and a great urge to follow their own dreams. The best we can do is to help them develop a personal set of tools for the task.

So my dreams for my kids are very exact: I want them to find their own path to fulfillment. And given that I won't be there, I want to make this clear: Kids, don't try to figure out what I wanted you to become. I want you to become what you want to become.

Having seen so many students go through my classrooms, I've come to know that a lot of parents don't realize the power of their words. Depending on a child's age and sense of self, an offhand comment from Mom or Dad can feel like a shove from a bulldozer. I'm not even sure I should have made the reference to Logan growing up to be social chair of a fraternity. I don't want him to end up in college thinking that I expected him to join a fraternity, or to be a leader there-or anything. His life will be his life. I would just urge my kids to find their way with enthusiasm and passion. And I want them to feel as if I am there with them, whatever path they choose.

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12. Advance planning department

A. One of my favorite local comedians, Joey Novick, will present "Louder Than Words . . . Stories" at 7:30 p.m. on June 12 and every second Thursday of the month thereafter . . . location: Friendly Grounds Coffeehouse, 36 Main Street, Flemington . . . the idea for the program is to feature real people telling real stories, based on the tradition of oral history and story sharing through generations . . . for more information, please click: <http://www.louderthanwordstories.com>

Or call 908.782.6799 . . . the cover charge is \$5.

B. Ivan in Pennsylvania:
I would appreciate it if you would include an announcement in

your newsletter about needing ushers for LOVE, SEX & THE IRS. The show runs from Thursday, 6/12 through Wednesday, 6/18 with Monday off. It will be presented by the Newtown Arts Company at the historic Newtown Theater in Newtown, PA.

The rule about complimentary tickets remains the same; i.e., serve as usher and then attend another night for free. Please have anybody interested contact me at 215.917.7223 or nurseman65@verizon.net.

If you'd just like to see the show and NOT usher, please click:

<http://newtowntheatre.com/>

C. Nationally bestselling science fiction author William Gibson will discuss and sign his latest book, SPOOK COUNTRY, on Saturday, June 14 at 2:00 p.m. at the Barnes & Noble, 3535 US Route 1 South at the MarketFair Mall, Princeton, NJ. Mr. Gibson's discussion will be followed by a Q&A session and raffle of 10 autographed galley proofs of his 2003 release, PATTERN RECOGNITION. Seating is limited and will begin at 12:30 P.M. on a first-come, first-seated basis. Standing room will be available and signing will follow a Q&A session.

For more information on this event or for a schedule of upcoming events, call: 609.716.1570 or email: crm2646@bn.com. All events are free and open to the public.

D. I'll be speaking at the Newtown (PA) Rotary on June 18 on the topic of "Positioning: How to Differentiate Yourself from the Competition."

Time: 12:15 p.m.

Location: Temperance House, 5 S. State Street, Newtown

Cost is \$15 for the lunch . . . if you'd like to attend, let me know so I can make a reservation for you.

SORRY:

That this is not a freebie . . . to make it up to you, however, let me tell you that for just attending, you'll have a chance to win \$500 . . . you'll also learn the difference between a left- and right-handed pencil if you don't already know it.

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PS. Please join me in celebrating Flag Day this coming Saturday . . . it is perhaps my favorite holiday and the one that I NEVER forget . . . also, continue to pray that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

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#609

6.2.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I had a blast this past weekend in Asheville, North Carolina . . . we enjoyed the area so much that it still remains as a possibility for where we will move next after we retire next June, and we are making plans to go back for a longer trip sometime this summer.

B. We looked at several communities . . . one, Carriage Park in Hendersonville, caught our attention the most . . . located in the mountains, it has been named one of America's Top 100 master planned communities for five years running . . . it's magnificent; however, don't just take my word for that opinion . . . see it for yourself by clicking:

<http://www.carriagepark.com/>

C. Naturally, we caught a movie while away (see Section 4A) . . . yet it wasn't just any movie . . . what made it different was that we saw it at a place called Cinebarre . . . you not only see the film there, but you also get to eat your snacks and/or dinner right at tables in front of you with service provided by waiters and waitresses . . . we liked it, and our food was surprisingly good . . . we split a burger, as well as a pizza . . . the only problem was that it was just a tad bit messy eating in the dark . . . neat concept, though . . . nevertheless, next time, we'll probably eat first and then catch the movie afterwards . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.cinebarre.com>

We also caught a show at the Flat Rock Playhouse . . . that's the State Theatre of North Carolina, and I can see why . . . the facility is great for viewing productions, and the one we saw (SIX DANCE LESSONS IN SIX WEEKS) was excellent . . . it's a comedy of sorts, accompanied by a limited amount of dancing and some very touching moments . . . written by Richard Alfieri, the play

is one that you should try to catch if anywhere near you . . .Barbara Bradshaw and David Weincek were the only performers; they were both excellent . . . for more information, please click:
<http://www.flatrockplayhouse.org/>

D. Lastly, I should mention that Asheville is often recognized as America's "Happiest City" . . . we could see why . . . just about everybody we met was friendly toward us and all seemed to enjoy living there.

Four folks stood out:

* On one night, we took a chariot ride around the city (actually, it's a carriage of sorts that's pulled along by a bicycle) . . . our driver, Bill, couldn't have been friendlier . . . that's the three of us below:



Bill can be reached at 704.840.8357.

* On that same night, we of course had to seek out a place for ice cream . . . and we managed to find some of the tasty treat at Kilwin's, which is a chain that we had never been to before . . . Aaron, our server, made the experience even more delightful because of his enthusiasm.

For more information about the chain, please click:
<http://kilwins.com/>

* We had brunch one day at Cafe Ello . . . my banana oatmeal brulee was even better than it sounds, and Cynthia said the blueberry scone she got was the best she's ever tasted . . . as we were paying,

we got to speak at length with Lorne Richman (the owner) . . . he told us that though he's only been living in town for a short while, he already plans to spend the rest of his life there.

For more information, call 828.254.3899.

* Lastly, we enjoyed visiting a store called Gaea . . . it offers "Gifts for the Soul," and I wound up getting wind chimes for Cynthia . . . Haidar, the owner, couldn't have been friendlier to us.

For more information, call 828.255.5553.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Suzanne Smith--the realtor we worked with while in Asheville.

She spent a day-and-a-half showing us around and taking us to places that matched our needs . . . in addition, she had done a lot more research prior to our visit and had been in constant touch with Cynthia via both email and phone calls.

We were really impressed by her knowledge of the area, as well as by her friendliness . . . should we decide that this is the area for us, we will certainly work with Suzanne.

Should you want to do the same, she can be reached at 828.551.4609 or via email: ssmith@prulifystylerealty.com . . . and if you do get in touch, make sure you ask to see her car's impressive rock collection!

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2. FYI

For added balance in the bathroom, get a Tub Bar . . . it helps you get in or out of your tub easily . . . you secure it to your fiberglass or tile in seconds . . . no tools or drilling required . . . can be used at home or traveling . . . it comes in three sizes: 11 inches, \$19.95; 16 inches, \$24.95 (we got); and an extra long 24 inches . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.shophometrends.com>

I've personally dealt with this company and have been impressed with its service . . . you can also order by phone and reach a real person quickly; the number is 1.888.810.2340.

FYI, part 2

An email from Alla in New Jersey about my attending a German festival elicited much feedback . . . among the responses:

* Kathy in Pennsylvania:

I was so saddened to read the response of one of your readers to your attending a German festival. I know that some wounds take longer to heal than others but healing can never be complete if we continue to scratch at the scab and allow infection to creep in. I wish I had the words of wisdom that your rabbi friends shared. I only know, from my own life, that love and hate are both blind and unrelenting.

Given a choice I will always choose love--sometimes that means we get hurt but the alternative- to me--is unbearable to even think about.

I have been blessed with friends of every faith, of every color, friends who had not a penny to spare but would share a meal and friends whose wealth amazed me but their kindness more so. I pray your reader will have her heart touched by such a kindness and she will open herself to healing.

* Dan in Pennsylvania:

There is a cornerstone in the Diaspora Museum in Tel Aviv with the following inscription:

To remember the past, to live in the present and to trust the future.

Best definition of mental health I've ever seen!

* Dana in Pennsylvania:

The generation of Germans who participated in the Holocaust has, for the most part, passed on. I feel that German Americans are not responsible for the acts of their forefathers anymore than we as Americans are responsible for acts our forefathers did, such as acts of slavery. I wonder if Alla ever buys Japanese products. After all, didn't "they" bomb Pearl Harbor? It's time to end the hate and bigotry. Let's start with ourselves.

* Lee in Pennsylvania:

I wanted to weigh in with regards to Alla's comments. I myself am a Jewish person, and I have to say that I found your comments with regards to the issue of Blaine attending a German festival quite questionable. Isn't that attitude of discrimination against a whole group exactly what the Holocaust was built on? I myself have met and befriended many German people. I do not blame them for what happened. Should every African American despise every white person for slavery? Where does the hate cycle end? I will teach my children about the Holocaust and the impact on our people when they are at the appropriate age as it is the duty of every of Jewish person. But I will also teach them not to hate, ignore, or differentiate ANYONE regardless of race, sex, gender or sexual preference. Every German person is not responsible, and I applaud Blaine for teaching this lesson of acceptance and tolerance.

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3. New standard

Bill and Hillary Clinton, when they first reached the White House, set a new standard for the politically active spouse.

It was almost like they were co-presidents. So much so that the two of them were often known by one name: "Billary."

Now that Hillary is still in the running to get back into the Oval Office, the roles would be reversed. In the unlikely event that she makes it, and Hillary would have top billing, their presidential name would have to be reversed too.

Yep . . . they'd be "Hillbilly."

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4. Reviews

A. If you were a fan of the TV show, you'll love SEX AND THE CITY: THE MOVIE . . . even those who never got to watch it when it was on HBO will like it . . . and surprise, surprise, guys will too (though they'll be a distinct minority if they see it in the theaters) . . . you'll quickly get involved in this tale of four attractive women who spend much of their life shopping and/or talking about sex . . . Sarah Jessica Parker, Kim Cattrall, Kristin Davis, and Cynthia Nixon reprise their roles from the original series, as does Chris Noth . . . all are excellent . . . Jennifer Hudson--fresh from her Oscar-winning performance in DREAMGIRLS--is also in the cast and is fine, but she doesn't really have enough to do . . . rated R.

B. There's very little new out on DVD that's worth recommending, so I'll perhaps surprise you and suggest EVAN ALMIGHTY . . . this comedy, a sequel to 2003's BRUCE ALMIGHTY, got poor reviews . . . so I passed on seeing on it when it was originally in the theaters . . . my mistake! . . . I just recently caught up with it and found it to be both funny and touching . . . Steve Carrell, who had a small part in the original film, stars as a newscaster who gets elected to Congress . . . there he encounters God (played by Morgan Freeman, reprising his BRUCE part) who instructs him to build an ark . . . I also liked the special effects, along with the soundtrack.

And there was this one great snippet of dialogue:

God: Let me ask you something. If someone prays for patience, you think God gives them patience? Or does he give them the opportunity to be patient? If he prayed for courage, does God give him courage or does he give him opportunities to be courageous? If someone prayed for the family to be closer, do you think God zaps them with warm fuzzy feelings or does he give them opportunities to love each other?

Rated PG.

C. Since I'm contemplating moving to a child-free retirement community, I thought it was fortuitous that I came across LEISUREVILLE by Andrew D. Blechman . . . the book's subtitle, ADVENTURES IN AMERICA'S RETIREMENT UTOPIAS, intrigued me even more . . . so I got hold of my own copy and because it was so engrossing, I was able to finish it in just a few days.

Blechman concentrates on The Villages, the largest gated community in the world (located in Florida, outside of Orlando) . . . his quote from one resident actually mirrored my reaction when I visited there this past December:

* "Life in The Villages is really too much to describe," Betsy added. "It's simply unforgettable. For me, it was love at first sight." She patted her heart for emphasis. "I can only equate it to the movie The Stepford Wives. Everyone had a smile on their face like it's too good to be true. But it really is."

Another resident said something else that I heard often when I was there:

* "Isn't it nice?" she asks. "People call it 'Disney for adults,' and I'm beginning to understand why. I just can't believe I'm here. I've met people that have been here for five years and they're still pinching themselves. It's like being on a permanent vacation."

All is not perfect, though, as the author points out . . . there are detractors, such as this one:

* "What do I think of The Villages and all this development?" Alan says. "I think it stinks. They're building without any regard to the land. I'm no tree hugger, but I hate to see the land raped the way they're doing it. They're shipping in all sorts of clay and sand just so they can make the land flat. They're cutting down trees, and putting in lakes where there weren't any. There's only one saving grace about this whole nonsense--it'll be gorgeous when it's done."

What I especially liked about LEISUREVILLE was the fact that it provided additional insight into this housing trend . . . Blechman also went to Arizona to show what has happened to those who pioneered the concept, he attended a builders' conference, and he spoke with housing experts.

He came away thinking that such a life is not for him, as he indicated toward the close of the book:

* "But when push comes to shove, I'm not interested in the Faustian bargain that living in a controlled community demands. I love my town, arts and all, and take comfort in the knowledge that no entertainment specialist designed our downtown; nor can it be bought, sold or traded like a golf certificate."

That I came to a different conclusion probably deals with my feelings about such a life . . . I like my present town, yet I think that life in The Villages (or someplace similar) would be something that I'd welcome!

D. I've never read Salman Rushdie before, so I was at a bit of a disadvantage when listening to STEP ACROSS THIS LINE . . . this is a collection of nonfiction essays on a variety of subjects, including some of his past books (that I knew only by name), his struggle to film MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN, visiting India after being away for nearly a decade, and my personal favorite, his fascination with the film THE WIZARD OF OZ.

This latter title was Rushdie's self-acknowledged first literary influence . . . he shared such tidbits as the following:

* Shirley Temple was seriously considered for the part that Judy Garland got.

* Buddy Ebsen and Ray Bolger switched roles because Bolger didn't want to play the Tin Man. Ebsen then had to leave filming because his costume gave him lead poisoning.

* Frank Morgan played a total of five different roles.

I also liked his account of being photographed by Richard Avedon and his ultimate goal:

* You hope not to scare people who come across the picture by chance.

And in talking about his many travels, he noted:

* The most precious book I possess is my passport. . . . and my first one allowed me to where nobody would want to go.

Other parts of the book were more serious . . . one particular thought-provoking essay, "Not About Islam?" called the September 11 attack a manifestation of a sickness that is widespread in

the Muslim . . . but also deplored America's response.

I'd recommend STEP ACROSS THIS LINE to anybody wanting to know more about India . . . however, if you are going to read it, my suggestion would be to get hold of some of Rushdie's other books first.

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5. TV alert

A. 30 DAYS returns for its third season on Tuesday at 10 p.m. on FX . . . this show follows a person (often Morgan Spurlock, the executive producer) spending 30 days in a lifestyle completely out of his or her ordinary comfort zone . . . in the first episode, Spurlock works in a West Virginia coal mine for a month . . . future episodes include a hunter living with an animal-rights activist, a former NFL player living in a wheelchair, a mother living with a same-sex parents, and an anti-gun advocate living with a hunter and gun collector.

B. SWINGTOWN premieres on Thursday at 10 p.m. on CBS . . . it follows the lives of an innocent couple who move into a neighborhood of swingers . . . according to Ava Gacser in the COURIER NEWS, the show "is a feast for senses. From the classic 70s tunes playing on the eight-track (of course) to the flip hairdos, hip clothes and bad decor, the show is completely immersed in that time period."

C. Catch AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH on Friday at 5:10 p.m. on TMC . . . doing so will enable you to see Al Gore discussing the perils of global warning in 2006's Best Documentary Feature.

D. SYBIL is a 2008 version of the acclaimed 1976 TV-movie . . . this one stars Jessica Lange as a psychiatrist and Tammy Blanchard as her patient, a shy but volatile young woman with multiple-personality disorder . . . Saturday at 8 p.m. on CBS.

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6. Final arrangements

Charlie had a massive heart attack and died, and his body was delivered to the mortuary. He had been wearing an expensive, expertly tailored black suit at the time of his demise, so he really looked wonderful, considering the circumstances.

His wife went to the funeral home to make the final arrangements for his interment. She spoke to the mortician about what her husband would be wearing. The mortician pointed out that the man looked really nice in the black suit he was wearing, and that frankly it would be easier and less expensive to leave him dressed as he was.

But Monica noted that Charlie had always preferred blue, and that she really wanted him in a blue suit for his trip to eternity. To silence the mortician's continued outcries, she gave him a blank check and said, "I don't care what it costs, but please have my husband in the very best blue suit money can buy for the viewing and burial."

The woman came back the next day for the wake. To her delight, she found her Charlie dressed in a gorgeous blue suit with a subtle chalk stripe; the suit fit him perfectly. She said to the mortician, "What ever this costs, I'm very satisfied. You did an excellent job, and I'm very grateful. How much did you spend?"

To her astonishment, the mortician presented her with the blank check, indicating there was no charge for these extra services. "No, really, I must compensate you for the cost of that exquisite blue suit!" she cried.

The mortician responded, "Honestly, ma'am, the change to the blue suit cost nothing. Funny thing, a deceased gentleman of about your husband's size was brought in shortly after you left yesterday, wearing an attractive blue suit. I asked his wife if she minded him going to his grave wearing an attractive black suit. She indicated that it made no difference, as long as he looked nice."

"Well surely it cost you plenty of staff time to undress both bodies and switch their clothes!" the woman said.

"Well, no," the mortician said with a discreet cough. "We just switched the heads."

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7. Websites

A. Bettina in New York:

This is not a "forward" yet, but I hope it becomes one because this video from the Women's Media Center shows just how disgusting and out-of-hand sexism is in the news media, politics and America. Please click:

http://www.womensmediacenter.com/sexism_sells.html

This is an issue where it doesn't matter if you're for Hilary or against Hilary and has nothing to do with partisanship. It is about fighting for the fair and equal and DIGNIFIED treatment of women in the media and the world.

B. Pat in Pennsylvania:

I know you are a fan of the dance songs from the 60s, the Turtles, etc. If you click on the link below and go to 2:25 minutes into this, a second song called "Sally's Sayin Something" comes on. Was this popular up in NY or was this just a local Philly song? They used to play this at all the dances in the 60s and 70s. A very popular dance song back then. Have you heard it before? Just curious if it made it up in the NY area.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1rLDS5C5pWE>

MY TWO CENTS:

It's a very catchy tune. If you play it, you'll enjoy it. Personally, I didn't recall the song, so I asked my expert on the subject (Craig in Pennsylvania, a former DJ from that era) if he was familiar with it. His response:

Remember him well, used to perform at all of the old dances where we spun the records. His biggest song was "Sally Saying Something."

I then dug further and found Harner's website:

<http://billyharner.com/>

And here's a website where you can actually see him sing another song:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oVh4sZVFHrs>

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:
<http://www.blaineworld.net>

Go the "Blaine's Best" on the left, then "This Is True" . . . you'll find out how to subscribe to what is perhaps my favorite online publication, a compilation of bizarre-but-true news items with a funny tagline by Colorado humorist Randy Cassingham . . . best of all: it's FREE!

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8. Computer tip

To find out more about colleges (for you, your children or even grandchildren), the popular website YouTube may well be the way to go . . . see for yourself by clicking:
<http://www.youtube.com>

Methinks you'll do best by looking for user-generated tours . . . that way, you'll find stuff that is sent in by "regular folks" that you or I would contribute . . . otherwise you'll see the official websites that are sent in by the institutions themselves . . . in fact, Auburn University has already contributed more than 150 videos to its site.

By contrast, the University of Wisconsin at Madison shows up near the top of the list of user-generated tours with this website featuring something known as a Jump Around:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m21PXL4xKfQ>

Even quirkier ones include the following:

* University of Colorado:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGJeUAtVazA>

A home video showing thousands of students in a haze of smoke at 4:20 p.m. on April 20, 2008, in what has become an annual tradition of public cannabis consumption on the university's main quad.

* University of Idaho:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtkpipG_fV8

A voice-over criticism of the former website for the university's children's center, wherein the narrator describes the site as "one of the strangest uses of contrast I've seen."

* University of Central Florida:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2swEcsZTxPc>

Footage of a roaming evangelist and his wife, who apparently travel to various Florida colleges, railing against many controversial topics and then getting into heated arguments with students.

* Syracuse University:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7xrCehKZLE>

A 10-minute "live documentation" of one student's personal acceptance to the university in December 2006 shot while driving and even in a public bathroom.

SOURCE:

Adapted from Short Subjects in THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER

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9. Sayings of the Jewish Buddhist, part 2 of 2
(continued from last week)

8. Zen is not easy. It takes effort to attain nothingness. And then what do you have? Bupkis.

9. The Tao does not speak. The Tao does not blame. The Tao does not take sides. The Tao has no expectations. The Tao demands nothing of others. The Tao is not Jewish.

10. Breathe in. Breathe out. Breathe in. Breathe out. Forget this and attaining Enlightenment will be the least of your problems.

11. Let your mind be as a floating cloud. Let your stillness be as a wooded glen. And sit up straight. You'll never meet the Buddha with such rounded shoulders.

12. Deep inside you are ten thousand flowers. Each flower blossoms ten thousand times. Each blossom has ten thousand petals. You might want to see a specialist.

13. Be aware of your body. Be aware of your perceptions. Keep in mind that not every physical sensation is a symptom of a terminal illness.

14. The Torah says, Love your neighbor as yourself. The Buddha says, There is no self. So, maybe we're off the hook.

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10. A quote I like

The best advice my father [Eric] ever gave me was you have to always remember that every single person who works for you or with you in your company has an invisible sign on their forehead that says: "Make Me Feel Important." So if you have a very successful day, it is vital to remember who helped you and make them feel just as good as you do.--Simon Cowell, English executive personality best known as a judge on AMERICAN IDOL

NOTE:

I'm not sure if Eric Cowell was the first to come up with this advice . . . he may well have paraphrased the following:
Everyone has an invisible sign hanging from their neck saying, "Make me feel important." Never forget this message when working with people.--Mary Kay Ash (1918-2001), U.S. businesswoman and the founder of Mary Kay Cosmetics

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11. Thought for the day

The Green, Green Grass of Home
by Erma Bombeck (1927-1996), American humorist

When Mike was 2, he wanted a sandbox, and his father said: "There goes the yard We'll have kids over here day and night, and they'll throw sand into the flower beds, and cats will make a mess in it, and it'll kill the grass for sure."

And Mike's mother said, "It'll come back."

When Mike was 5, he wanted a jungle gym set with swings that would take his breath away and bars to take him to the summit, and his father said: "Good grief, I've seen those things in back yards, and do you know what they look like? Mud holes in a pasture. Kids digging their gym shoes in the ground. It'll kill the grass."

And Mike's mother said, "It'll come back."

Between breaths, when Daddy was blowing up the plastic swimming pool, he warned: "You know what they're going to do to this place? They're going to condemn it and use it for a missile site. I hope you know what you're doing. They'll track water everywhere and have a million water fights, and you won't be able to take out the garbage without stepping in mud up to your neck. When we take this down, we'll have the only brown lawn on the block."

"It'll come back," Mike's mother said.

When Mike was 12, he volunteered his yard for a campout. As they hoisted the tents and drove in the spikes, his father stood at the window and observed, "Why don't I just put the grass seed out in cereal bowls for the birds and save myself the trouble of spreading it around? You know for a fact that those tents and all those big feet are going to trample down every single blade of grass, don't you. Don't bother to answer. I know what you're going to say. 'It'll come back.'"

The basketball hoop on the side of the garage attracted more crowds than the Olympics. And a small patch of lawn that started out with a barren spot the size of a garbage can lid soon drew to encompass the entire side yard.

Just when it looked as if the new seed might take root, the winter came and the sled runners beat it into ridges. Mike's father shook his head and said, "I never asked for much in this life--only a patch of grass."

And his wife smiled and said, "It'll come back."

The lawn this fall was beautiful. It was green and alive and rolled out like a sponge carpet along the drive where gym shoes had trod . . . along the garage where bicycles used to fall . . . and around the flower beds where little boys used to dig with iced-tea spoons.

But Mike's father never saw it. He anxiously looked beyond the yard and asked with a catch in his voice, "He will come back, won't he?"

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A. Two performers in the upcoming Princeton Festival opera, "La Boheme," will be singing some arias at the Princeton Public Library this Thursday at 7:30 p.m. . . . for more information this event and/or the Festival, please click: <http://www.princetonfestival.org>

B. LAST CHANCE:

Don't miss this year's 20th Annual Tyler Tasting Party on Friday, June 6 from 7-11:00 p.m. at Bucks County Community College, Newtown, PA. Guests will have the opportunity to sample food and spirits from over 40 of Bucks County's finest restaurants, bakeries, wineries, and breweries. New this year will be dancing under the stars in the Tyler Gardens to a 17-piece orchestra. Tickets: \$125. To order your tickets, call 215.968.8224.

C. Kitty in Pennsylvania:

If you're around June 6, 7 or 8, you really should not miss THE FULL MONTY at the Kelsey Theatre in West Windsor, NJ. It is knock down, drag out hysterical.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.kelseytmccc.org>

D. Do you savor homemade Eastern European cuisine? Come to a Ukrainian Festival on Sunday, June 22 from 1 to 6 p.m. There's also a live Polka band, raffles, games of chance, and more.

St. Anne's Ukrainian Catholic Church, 1545 Easton Rd. (Rt. 611), Warrington, PA. For more information: Helene at 215.343.3948 or:

<http://www.stanneukrainiancc.com>

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PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#608

5.26.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I had a rare Saturday to spend entirely by ourselves . . . so we created what reminded us of one of our dates back in those days of yonder when we were not yet married.

We had dinner at one of our favorite restaurants, Concerto Fusion in Morrisville, PA . . . the food is always excellent there, and the decor is as attractive as you'll find anywhere . . . yet we decided what makes the place stand out is the hospitality provided by Man Wong, the owner . . . he always greets us when we're there and make us feel welcome.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.concertofusion.com/>

We then took a walk along the banks of the Delaware River before catching an Actors' Net production of BIG RIVER at the Heritage Center, also in Morrisville . . . this musical about the adventures of Huckleberry Finn stars Evan Baranowski and Bill Thompkins (so fine in last season's DAMN YANKEES) in the leading roles . . . they were both outstanding . . . we also liked the work of Aimee Robidoux, Tom Smith and Jack Bathke . . . and it was fun to watch Corey Stradling continue to improve in every show he's in; here, he made one menacing Pap Finn while also playing two other roles.

KUDOS to Joe Doyle, the director, for his work in managing to get 29 different actors onto the very small stage . . . set designs and costumes by Cheryl Doyle were also excellent . . . and somehow Pat Masterson managed to squeeze a 7-piece orchestra into the side of the theater, and this accomplishment added to our enjoyment of the evening.

BIG RIVER runs through June 8 . . . get your tickets early because when we went, there were precious few empty seats

and from what I understand, there was a sell-out on the next night . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.actorsnetbucks.org>

And make sure to top off your evening with a Blizzard from the Dairy Queen that's down the street at 55 S. Delmorr Ave . . . we both tried a new one that was delicious: waffle cone with chunks of chocolate, pieces of waffle cone and caramel syrup . . . the store is open until 10 p.m., so you can either get your treat before the show begins . . . or if you hurry as we did, you can even enjoy it at intermission.

On Sunday, we joined a group of friends at the first annual German Spring Festival at Pheasants Landing in Hillsborough, NJ . . . the food, as always, was good; the camaraderie was even better . . . there was even an appearance by the Adlers, an Umpah Band.

Consequently, we got to do some dancing . . . yet even more memorable to us with this other couple we saw . . . though the wife was in a wheelchair, that did not stop her or her husband from enjoying themselves on the dance floor . . . their love and sweetness shined through.

For more on this event, see Section 2, part 2 (below).

B. My school year at Bucks County Community College officially ended on Thursday with graduation . . . I'll remember this one because it was the first time that Jeff Baumeister and the College's Jazz Ensemble performed prior to, during and after the ceremony . . . the music enlivened the festivities . . . Shelly Milhous and the BCCC Madrigal Singers also did a fine job with their rendition of "the Star-Spangled Banner."

In addition, commencement marked the retirement of two of my favorite colleagues--Betsy Farber and Patricia Moore--both of whom were awarded Professor Emeritus status.

We also said farewell to Nelly Ziezula, who will be taking a leave from the College to move to Greece with her husband . . . she will be missed by our Business Department, as well as by our teacher's union where she served as a steering committee representative . . . my only hope is that she returns sometime in the not-too-distant future.

That's Nelly at the event (see picture below) . . . she's to the far left in the front row . . . from l-r, she's joined by Joan Weiss, Anita Manders and yours truly . . . in the back row, l-r, that's Bob Moy, Judy Toland, Kelly Gredone, and a partially obscured Lyle Rosenberger.



C. In case you can't find me online this coming weekend, don't be surprised . . . Cynthia and I will be in Asheville, NC, continuing our search for where we will live when we both retire after the 2008-09 school year.

We still don't know too much about Asheville (or nearby Hendersonville), so if you're familiar with the area, please share your reactions to it . . . in the meantime, it appears that our choices are between there and Washington Crossing, PA--my old stomping grounds.

D. SPECIAL THANKS to Jean Dolan, my longtime friend, for proofreading this issue . . . any mistakes that you may still manage to find are my responsibility entirely.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Delores Chalmers--a cashier at ShopRite in Hillsborough, NJ.

I'm a big ShopRite fan, in large part because of the store's wide selection of products . . . but in addition, this particular locale has Delores to ring up sales . . . and she makes a big difference.

So much so, in fact, that Cynthia and I always seek out her line even if it means we have to wait a bit longer . . . Delores always

has a big smile and is very friendly; in addition, she is very efficient and seems to get us through our purchase quicker than any other cashier.

ShopRite is lucky to have such a fine employee!

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2. FYI

Kathy in Florida shared with me the following email she received:
Did you know this?

Now I know I'm bad about sending around jokes, but this is NO JOKE . . . AND . . . in all my adult years I never knew this!

Go look at the ends of your Cling Wrap and your Aluminum Foil boxes. Did you ever know there are push in TABS on the ends of those boxes to keep the roll from popping out of the box when you tear it off?

When a friend sent me this little heads up, I immediately went and checked out my boxes. Sure as HECK . . . there ARE PRESS IN TABS on the ends of the boxes. Also, on one box it reads: "Press here to lock end." Right there on the end of the box is a tab to lock the roll in place. How long has this little locking tab been there?

I then looked at a generic brand of aluminum foil and it had one, too. I next looked at a box of Cling wrap and it had one too. I can't count the number of times the Cling wrap roll has jumped out when I was trying to cover something up. I honestly feel like an idiot!

So . . . go push your tabs in and join the 21st century! I wonder if I am the LAST PERSON ON EARTH THAT DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THIS FEATURE? Was I?

SEE FOR YOURSELF:

I then asked Kathy to check this out . . . she reported finding tabs on the Reynolds Wrap, but she did not see them on her Saran Wrap . . . when I checked this out, I found out that there were tabs on both our ShopRite Foil Wrap and Glad Clingwrap . . . I'd be interested to learn about your findings/reactions.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.snopes.com/inboxer/household/locktab.asp>

FYI, part 2

I mentioned in last week's BLAINESWORLD that I was going to a German Spring Festival (and actually did; see Section 1B above) . . . my decision sparked this email:

* Alla in New Jersey:

You shock me. How come you are planning to attend a German festival?

Being a Jew, you should avoid such groups . . . but you don't. Will you enjoy yourself sitting among Germans, listening to their music? And would you dance among them too? Are you going to pretend to be a German, too? Why do you have to watch people who caused us pain and humiliation?

Don't be mad at me. I feel that even if you choose to enjoy a German festival, you should not make an announcement about it to the world because even the non-Jews will wonder about what kind of Jew you are.

MY TWO CENTS:

I was taken aback by Alla's comments . . . as I've repeatedly said in this missive, I tend to enjoy celebrating ALL holidays with ALL religions and nationalities . . . furthermore, I strive to NOT hate any individual or group.

I instead try to follow the advice cited in the following passage of Rabbi Mel Glazer's excellent book, AND GOD CREATED HOPE: How can we forgive ourselves, and others, when we believe we're faced with the unforgivable? When asked how anyone could forgive something as horrendous as the Holocaust, Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach famously said, "If I had two hearts, I would dedicate one of them full-time to hating the Germans. But I only have one heart, and I am not going to waste it on such nonsense as hate."

I then decided to contact Rabbi Glazer, a friend, for his perspective on what Alla wrote . . . his response follows:

* Rabbi Mel Glazer in Colorado:

The first time I rode in a Volkswagen, I felt awful! I felt as if I was turning my back on the six million Jews who had been tortured and brutalized by the Nazis.

Even today, I still will not knowingly buy German goods; it is a way for me to personally remember the Holocaust. However, let us be clear--today's Germany is not Nazi Germany (even if there are still skinheads walking the streets of Berlin). Germany has done more than any other Eastern European nation to come to grips with its horrendous behavior. It has repeatedly and publicly taken responsibility for its actions, and tried to understand what were the underlying motivations for what happened. The Holocaust is studied in schools all across Germany; its Catholic churches have continually reflected on how the myth of Jews crucifying Jesus added passionate hatred to Hitler's campaigns; and the political leadership in Germany has been most supportive of the State of Israel. Without German reparation payments during its early years, Israel would never have been able to succeed and flourish as it has.

Life goes on. Even as we mourn the past, we build the future, which must be better and different. Today there is a flourishing Jewish community in Germany--how delicious the irony!--which includes many Israelis. We must remember the past so that we do not repeat its tragedies. At the same time, we need to remember that ours is the responsibility to create a better future for those who will inherit our world. Moving forward is not always easy, and often painful, but it is something we need to do, with courage and strength.

CAN YOU HELP? The following two individuals are seeking employment and/or suggested job leads/ideas:

* Susan in Pennsylvania (one of my top marketing students this past spring semester):

Senior Sales Executive specializing in Marketing Database, Direct Mail, Postal Processing and CRM Campaign Marketing Tools. Successful history of direct marketing new business development in the government, advertising, publishing, financial, catalog, insurance, pharmaceutical, travel, and retail industries.

Contact: Susan H Finney
New Hope, PA
Sueb0526@comcast.net
215.862.0570

* Amanda in Pennsylvania:

Are you looking for an innovative, detailed, and results-oriented Marketing/Advertising professional or know somebody who is? If so, I am your person! I am currently looking for a Marketing/Advertising position and am positive I will exceed your expectations and add unprecedented value to your company. I have 10 years of experience in marketing/advertising/sales with experience in the healthcare, medical, pharmaceutical, automotive, juice concentrate, education, retail, and utility industries. I have solid experience in client and vendor relations, account management, media planning and buying, market research, profitability analysis, and employee management. I have excellent communication, negotiation, and time management skills which, combined with my work ethic and loyalty, are a winning combination. Further information can be found at:

<http://www.linkedin.com/in/amandafallon>

Or I can be reached at: dilissio@comcast.net to answer any questions you may have. I look forward to hearing from you!

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3. Replacement window scam (with a way to prevent being suckered by it)

Last year, my friend Barbara replaced all the windows in her house with the expensive double-pane energy-efficient kind.

Just yesterday, she got a phone call from the contractor who installed them because he still hadn't been paid for the job.

When I asked her if that was true, she replied: "HELLOOOOO . . . just because I'm blonde doesn't mean I'm stupid. I told him exactly what his sales guy told me last year: that in ONE YEAR these windows would pay for themselves, and it's now exactly one year later.

"He never called back. I bet he feels like an idiot."

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4. Reviews

A. MADE OF HONOR got poor reviews from critics, yet I chose to see it and was pleasantly surprised . . . it's a predictable romantic comedy about a wealthy womanizer who doesn't realize that he is in love with his longtime college friend until she falls in love with another guy . . . making matters worse is the fact that she then asks him to her maid of honor . . . though you can imagine the complications that ensue, many of them nevertheless had me laughing . . . Patrick Dempsey and Michelle Monaghan have great chemistry in the leading roles . . . in fact, I'd like to see them together in other films . . . rated PG-13.

As it turns out, the film will perhaps be remembered for featuring Sydney Pollack in his last role . . . he played the oft-married father

of Dempsey's character and caught my attention whenever he was on screen . . . he died today (Monday) as this edition was being put to press . . . in a tireless career spanning nearly five decades, Pollack not only was an actor, but he was also a producer . . .and he directed such classics as TOOTSIE and OUT OF AFRICA.

B. Now out on DVD is RAISIN IN THE SUN, the 2008 made-for-TV remake of the 1961 classic about a 1950s Chicago family longing for a better life . . . Sean Combs, Phylicia Rashad, Audra McDonald, Sanaa Lathan, and John Stamos return to reprise the roles they originally played on Broadway . . . they were all great, though that said, Combs can't quite match Sidney Poitier's performance in the original . . . excellent production values; it really felt like you were in Chicago some 50 years ago . . . not rated, though certainly appropriate for anybody over the age of 13 (which was just about my age when I first saw it).

C. Knowing that I met my wife online, a friend gave me a copy of Gayle Crist Shisler's HOW I MET MY SECOND HUSBAND ONLINE AT AGE 50 to read . . . given that I also have several single friends, I was hoping to pick up some tips for them--especially after I read the book's compelling subhead: A DATING COACH SHARES THE KEYS TO HER INTERNET DATING SUCCESS.

The colorful cover by Pat Achilles also helped to grab my attention.

Shisler certainly delivers in this short, but oh-so-informative guide . . . she presents her story, not sugarcoating any of it . . . she then provides step-by-step details on what worked best for her in cyberdating and then shares her formula for online dating success.

One suggestion, in particular, caught my attention because it applies not just to dating . . . but my field of interest (marketing) as well:

* Take a look at what your "competition" is doing--that is, browse the profiles of others on that site in your vicinity and age group--and then write a headline very different from those, one that truly captures your essence, what makes you distinctly YOU. This ensures that, when a prospect is quickly scanning through the profiles, yours will stand out from the crowd. One of my clients had the most success attracting men with this headline: "I'm cute and love to cook." Short, sweet, catchy, and true.

I also liked what the author had to say about dealing with rejection:

* I came to a place in my dating life where I stopped worrying about when I would meet the man for me. I no longer agonized about whether each new Internet guy would be "the one." I decided to just see each meeting as a chance to meet someone different and learn something new.

Lastly, this tidbit from Shisler caught my attention because it was and is true for dating as well as for life:

* Yes, it's a numbers game. And it might take you a while to sort through the huge number of prospects available. But the more people you contact, the more your chances of finding a winner increase. It's the Law of Averages.

Don't be misled by the title . . . HOW I MET MY SECOND HUSBAND

is appropriate for any single female over the age of 30 . . . guys might want to check it out, too, to find out what women are being advised!

D. Heard A WALK IN THE WOODS, written and read by Bill Bryson

It is the true tale of the author's attempt to walk the 2,100 Appalachian Trail, which stretches from Georgia to Maine . . . although he ultimately was not successful in completing the entire AT (as it is called), it wasn't for lack of trying.

You'll find yourself actually laughing out loud at much of his account . . . also, you'll shake your head in disbelief about his having to deal with his walking companion: an out-of-shape Stephen Katz who thinks nothing of discarding provisions in order to lighten his backpack.

In addition, Bryson makes history come alive as he describes the evolution of the trail . . . he further makes you appreciate the need to maintain such areas and in doing so, takes the National Park Service to task for not doing enough.

Much of the writing is brilliant, such as this passage describing what it feels like when you've finally reached one of your goals:

* When, after ages and ages, you finally reach the tell-tale world of truly high ground, where the chilled air smells of pine sap and the vegetation is gnarled and tough and wind-bent, and push through to the mountain's open pinnacle, you are, alas, past caring. You sprawl face down on a sloping pavement of granite, pressed to the rock by the weight of your pack, and lie there for some minutes, reflecting in a distant, out-of-body way that you have never before looked this closely at lichen, not in fact looked this closely at anything in the natural world since you were four years old and had your first magnifying glass. Finally, with a weary puff, you roll over, unhook yourself from your pack, struggle to your feet and realize--this is the barest fraction of what you will traverse before you've finished.

Bryson's use of dialogue was equally impressive, as evidenced by this hilarious account of what happened when Bryson and Katz had their first encounter with a bear:

* "Have you get anything sharp at all?"

He thought for a moment. "Nail clippers."

I made a despairing face. "Anything a little more vicious than that? Because, you see, there is definitely something out here."

"It's probably just a skunk."

"Then it's one big skunk. Its eyes are three feet off the ground."

"A deer then."

I nervously threw a stick at the animal, and it didn't move, whatever it was. A deer would have bolted. This thing just blinked once and kept staring.

I reported this to Katz.

"Probably a buck. They're not so timid. Try shouting at it."

I cautiously shouted at it: "Hey! You there! Scat!" The creature blinked again, singularly unmoved. "You shout," I said.

"Oh, you brute, go away, do!" Katz shouted in merciless imitation. "Please withdraw at once, you horrid creature."

"F*ck you," I said and lugged my tent right over to his. I didn't know what this would achieve exactly, but it brought me a tiny measure of comfort to be nearer to him.

"What are you doing?"

"I'm moving my tent."

"Oh, good plan. That'll really confuse it."

Reading A WALK IN THE WOODS will motivate any past, present or future hiker to check out the AT . . . as for me, I think I'll take a pass . . . yet I will commend you, if you give it a try, and I'll look forward to reading about your efforts as I bask in the comforts of home.

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5. TV alert

A. I'm disappointed that MEN IN TREES has been given the ax by ABC, but not terribly surprised . . . the station kept changing its time slot and, in fact, has not even broadcast a new episode for some five weeks . . . nevertheless, I'll be watching on Wednesday at 10 p.m. and for the next weeks as well in the hope that all the remaining story lines will be wrapped up.

B. Last year's winner of the National Spelling Bee won the \$20,000 top prize by spelling "serrefine" correctly . . . I don't know about you, but I never even heard of the word before . . . but thanks to my trusty online dictionary, I now know it means:

A small spring forceps used for approximating the edges of a wound or for temporarily closing an artery during surgery.

To see how you stack up against this year's competitors, watch the show on Friday at 11 a.m. on ESPN and repeated at 8 p.m. on ABC.

SEE BELOW:

Please see Section 6 of this week's newsletter for more spelling-related information.

C. OPEN HOUSE NYC is a weekly series following brokers and buyers in their quest for the perfect house or apartment . . . I find it strangely addictive . . . Sundays at 8:30 a.m. and repeated at 12 noon on NYC's Channel 4 (NYC) . . . unfortunately, you might only be able to get the show if you pick up this channel . . . but maybe there are similar shows in other markets? If you find that to be the case, let me know.

D. Mike Meyers hosts the MTV MOVIE AWARDS on Sunday at 8 p.m. on MTV . . . you'll get to see the winners of such offbeat award categories as Best Kiss, Breakthrough Performance

and Best Villain.

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6. Life can be tough

Recently, I heard that a friend's son has been going through a tough time . . . to quote from a recent email I received from him:

I had the toughest time of my life. First, I got angina pectoris and then arteriosclerosis. Just as I was recovering from these, I got tuberculosis, double pneumonia and phthisis. Then they gave me hypodermics. Appendicitis was followed by tonsillectomy. These gave way to aphasia and hypertrophic cirrhosis. I completely lost my memory for a while. I know I had diabetes and acute ingestion, besides gastritis, rheumatism, lumbago. and neuritis. I don't know how I pulled through it. It was the hardest spelling test I've ever had.

SEE ABOVE:

Please see Section 5B of this week's newsletter for more spelling-related information.

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7. Websites

A. Have you ever wondered: How many angels could dance on the head of a pin?

You can find the answer by clicking:

<http://www.rough-equivalents.com>

Greg Bulmash, who puts together this website, has taken to comment on such things . . . for example, he once calculated that a business spent 25,000 hours on something . . . what follows is what that is equivalent to:

- * 25,000 hours is how long it takes to cook half-a-million three-minute eggs . . . in a row.
- * 25,000 hours is 180 million split seconds.
- * 25,000 hours at two maximum strength Tylenols every 4 hours for pain is a 3 month old baby made entirely of Tylenol.
- * 25,000 hours is how long it takes to go to the moon and back . . . in rush hour traffic (19.2 mph) . . . both ways.

B. If you are fed up with increasing gas prices, here's something that you can REALLY do:

<http://www.spillyerbeans.com/assistanceapplication.html>

Methinks it every bit as effective as all those emails you get to boycott companies, not drive on certain days, etc.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blaineworld.net>

You may have heard me speak about the YOMBER Principle, which I contend is the single best technique for dealing with irate customers,

students or even family members . . . if you'd like to read my article on the topic, click "Consulting" to the left and then "Article Samples."

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8. Computer tip

Google's online filing cabinet for medical records opened to the public on May 19, giving users instant electronic access to their health histories.

Called Google Health, the service lets users link information from a handful of pharmacies and care providers, including Quest Diagnostics. Google plans to add more.

By using it, you'll be able to:

- * Organize your health information all in one place;
- * Gather your medical records from doctors, hospitals and pharmacies;
- * Keep your doctors up to date about your health; and
- * Be more informed about important health issues.

To check it our yourself, please click:

<http://www.google.com/health>

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9. Sayings of the Jewish Buddhist, part 1 of 2

1. If there is no self, whose arthritis is this?
2. Be here now. Be someplace else later. Is that so complicated?
3. Drink tea and nourish life; with the first sip, joy; with the second sip, satisfaction; with the third sip, peace; with the fourth, a Danish.
4. Wherever you go, there you are. Your luggage is another story
5. Accept misfortune as a blessing. Do not wish for perfect health or a life without problems. What would you talk about?
6. The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single Oy.
7. There is no escaping karma. In a previous life, you never called, you never wrote, you never visited. And whose fault was that?

(to be continued next week)

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10. A quote I like

You don't stop laughing because you grow old. You grow old because you stop laughing.--Michael Pritchard, a nationally acclaimed keynote speaker and facilitator who uses humor to inspire and educate his audiences on communication skills

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11. Thought for the day

The butterfly

by Nikos Kazantzakis (1883-1957), arguably the most important and translated Greek writer and philosopher of the 20th century

A man found a cocoon of a butterfly
One day a small opening appeared
He sat and watched the butterfly for several hours
It struggled to force its body through that little hole
Then it seemed to stop making any progress
It appeared as if it had gotten as far as it could
And it could go no farther.

So the man decided to help the butterfly
He took a pair of scissors and snipped off
The remaining bit of the cocoon.

The butterfly then emerged easily, BUT,
It had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings
He continued to watch the butterfly
He expected that, at any moment, the wings would enlarge
And the body would contract
Neither happened!
In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling
Around with a swollen body and shriveled wings.
It was never able to fly.

The man acted with well-intentioned kindness
But he didn't understand the consequences.
The restricting cocoon and the struggle required to get
Through the tiny opening, were nature's way of forcing fluid
From the body of the butterfly once it achieved it's freedom
From the cocoon.

Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our life.
If nature allowed us to go through life without any
Obstacles, it would cripple us.
We would not be as strong as we could have been
And we could never fly
Have a great day, great life and struggle a little.
Then fly!

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12. Advance planning department

A. Robin in Pennsylvania:

If you're into jazz, you'll love Big Band Jazz Celebration. They're returning for their third performance on Thursday, May 29th.

Location: Poco's Comedy Cabaret
625 North Main Street
Doylestown, PA
215.348.3424

\$10 cover

I promise you won't be disappointed; they are truly fabulous.

Here's a little background info:

Jazz Celebration Big Band was formed in June 2007 by Paul Morris, a trombonist, arranger, and music educator residing in Newtown, PA. Morris created Jazz Celebration to continue the legacy of the large jazz ensemble, as defined by the great bands of Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Stan Kenton, Buddy Rich, Maynard Ferguson, Woody Herman, and the many other bands that brought this kind of music to the forefront of the music scene from the 1940s to the 70s.

Along with vocalist Claudia Perry, the band features an array of other top musicians . . . to name just a few: from Bucks CCC, the aforementioned Jeff Baumeister (see Section 2C) on piano and John Sheridan on guitar; and Jim Stieber on trombone.

The same group will be appearing at the 20th Annual Tyler Tasting Party on June 6 at Bucks to provide dancing under the stars in the Tyler Gardens for the first time in the event's long history . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.bucks.edu/releases/TylerTastingParty2008.html>

B. Come to the Morrisville (PA) Seniors 7th Annual Jamboree on Sunday, June 1, beginning at 2 p.m.

100% of the proceeds benefit the Morrisville seniors.

Live country music by Whiskey Bent, Special Blend, Jody King, Joanne Brown, Long Hard Ride, and Mudcat Moan.

Advance tickets, \$5; at the door, \$8.

Info: 215.295.0567

31 E. Cleveland Ave., Morrisville, PA

C. Arnold Palmer--yes, the golf legend!--will visit Neshanic Valley Golf Course in Neshanic Station on June 3 to commemorate the opening of the newly renovated Neshanic Valley Learning Center and Callaway Performance Center from 10-11 a.m.

The day-long celebration at Neshanic Valley will include a Callaway Demo Day featuring the Callaway Tour Van. Free custom fittings will be available by Callaway professionals. In addition, trick-show artist Ben Witter will appear from 9:30 a.m. until Palmer arrives. The festivities will also include skill competitions including a long-drive contest, closest to the pin and chipping and putting contests.

The event is free and the first 1,000 people to arrive will receive a free gift commemorating the day and a two-ball sleeve of Callaway golf balls. Anyone who purchases Callaway equipment will be entitled to a free round of golf at Neshanic Valley. Attendees are requested NOT to bring their own clubs as Callaway equipment will be provided.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.neshanicvalleygolf.com/golf/golf.htm>

Later that day, Palmer will help the United States Golf Association in Far Hills reopen its Museum . . . this facility will now include a new golf center, named in his honor: The Arnold Palmer Center for Golf History.

The dedication ceremony is open to the public. Tours and special programs will begin at 10 a.m., and the formal dedication ceremony will be held at 2 p.m. Visitors are encouraged to arrive early to ensure parking.

For more information, please click:

http://www.usga.org/aboutus/museum/museum_index.html

D. I'll be speaking at the Newtown (PA) Rotary on June 18 on the topic of "Positioning: How to Differentiate Yourself from the Competition."

Time: 12:15 p.m.

Location: Temperance House, 5 S. State Street, Newtown

Cost is \$15 for the lunch . . . if you'd like to attend, let me know so I can make a reservation for you.

SORRY:

That this is not a freebie . . . to make it up to you, however, let me tell you that for just attending, you'll have a chance to win \$500 . . . you'll also learn the difference between a left- and right-handed pencil if you don't already know it.

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PS. Please join me in remembering Memorial Day on Monday by keeping this quote in mind: For death is no more than a turning of us over from time to eternity.--William Penn (1644-1718), founder of Pennsylvania and early champion of democracy

Also, join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . and make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#607

5.19.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I had an enjoyable time on Saturday in downtown New York with her niece Rachel and Rachel's boyfriend Zach . . . we first caught a movie at the Landmark Sunshine Cinema at 143 East Houston Street . . . though we didn't like the film (see also Section 4A), Rachel and Zach did . . . what we did agree on was the theater; it's what movie-going should be all about . . . they always feature several foreign and independent flicks, and you get to enjoy them in very comfortable seats with the best stadium-seating I have ever come across . . . we reluctantly passed on the concessions; however, we did notice that they had such items as apple-cinnamon filled pretzels and gourmet jelly beans.

From there, we walked a few blocks to a Thai/fusion restaurant called Jeeb . . . it is located at 154 Orchard Street . . . prices were reasonable, and the food was tasty . . . Cynthia and I shared dishes of fruity fried rice (very unusual!) and Siam beef . . . Rachel had a vegetable tofu dish, and Zach had a mushroom/vegetable combo.

B. On Sunday, we had dinner with my daughter Risa and her fiance JP . . . we took them to the place where we had our first date some 4 and 1/2 years ago: Pheasants Landing in Hillsborough, NJ . . . I don't think we have ever had a bad meal there and this day was no exception . . . plus, it was fun getting them to try one of our favorite dishes: spatzle . . . this is a type of egg pasta that we think is one of the real specialties of the restaurant.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.pheasantslanding.com>

We had such a fun time, in fact, that we're planning to return this coming Memorial Day weekend for the first annual German Spring Festival . . . on Saturday, the 24th, from 5-midnight and on Sunday, the 25th, from 1-8 p.m., there will be a tent on the front lawn and a German picnic with live music featuring the Tina Adler Umpahh Band.

C. My semester at Bucks County Community College wound down to a most successful close . . . it's hard to believe that I have now been there for 31 years and that in just a year from now, I will be retiring.

That said, I wanted to mention the fine job done by my Tuesday night students in developing a marketing strategy for Zebra-Striped Whale in Newtown, PA . . . they seemed to really get "into" their project and in doing so, hopefully learned something about both marketing and the ice cream industry.

SPECIAL THANKS to Tom and Shari Donahue, owners of this fabulous ice cream store, for working with my students . . . they were great, and my students appreciated the gift certificates that they all received as a result of their efforts.

The next time you're anywhere in Lower Bucks County, make sure you check out Zebra-Striped Whale, located at 12 South State Street; 215.860.4122 . . . you won't be disappointed!

D. During the week, I attended an informative session on "The Search for a Good Night's Sleep," given by Rob McCaffrey--respiratory therapist from Somerset Medical Center's Sleep for Life program located in Hillsborough, NJ.

I learned that you should try to sleep for 1--20 minutes . . . if you can't get to sleep, then start your day . . . don't nap . . . in essence, you're sleep depriving yourself and when you are so exhausted that you can't stay up, you will sleep soundly.

Also, if you worry a lot when you go to sleep, take a sheet of paper and list the problem you face on the left and then the solutions on the other side of the paper.

For more information about the Center or its programs, please click:
<http://sleepforlifeusa.com>

FOR STILL MORE INFORMATION:

A few days later, I was watching the news on WCBS and heard another sleep expert interviewed . . . should you want to hear his remarks, please click:

<http://wcbstv.com/video/?id=112433@wcbs.dayport.com>

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to James Houston--one of our favorite actors in the community theater productions we frequently attend.

This past Sunday, Cynthia and I had the pleasure of seeing him in FOR THE LOVE OF JULIET . . . he was one of the stars in a most enjoyable romantic comedy performed by the Somerset Valley Players, and as is always the case, he had us laughing from the very first time he appeared on stage.

But not only did he act; he also helped with the set construction and painting . . . that's James (below), flanked by Cynthia on the left and yours truly on the right:



KUDOS as well to Andrea Barra, Mike Beckwith and Laurie Hardy, the other performers in the show . . . they were all excellent . . . I only regret that you won't be able to see JULIET for yourself, in that we saw the last show of the run.

However, don't despair . . . Somerset Valley Players has many other fine productions throughout the year . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.svptheatre.org>

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2. FYI

To help you deal with a loved one or friend who might be dying, I thought you might like this approach that I found in an article by Jeffrey Zaslow in THE WALL STREET JOURNAL ("A final farewell," May 3, 2008, p. R1):

Randy [Pausch] was moved by comments such as the one he received from a man with serious heart problems. The man wrote to tell Randy about Krishnamurti, a spiritual leader in India who died in 1986. Krishnamurti was once asked what was the most appropriate way to say goodbye to a man who was about to die. He answered: "Tell your friend that in his death, a part of you dies and goes with him. Wherever he goes, you also go. He will not be alone." In his email to Randy, this man was reassuring: "I know you are not alone."

IN CASE YOU DID NOT KNOW:

Pausch is the professor at Pittsburgh's Carnegie Melton University who is dying of pancreatic cancer . . . he has become famous for his last lecture, delivered last September . . . it has turned into a phenomenon, viewed by millions on the Internet . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.thelastlecture.com>

You can actually view the last lecture by clicking:

<http://www.cmu.edu/uls/journeys/andy-pausch/index.html>

FYI, part 2

* Ken in New Jersey (with a REQUEST FOR HELP):
Local bar in Hamilton, NJ is looking for construction companies who need showplaces and references. In exchange for doing work at cost, company can always bring customers over at preapproved times, use in commercials and or keep signs up (for 1 year). Bar has found company to work on siding and windows under

arrangement and still needs help on:

stucco and or brick repointing
paving front and back parking lot
inside paneling for walls
new front sign that with company logo that lights up
(preferable with a programmable scrolling feature).
concrete sidewalk

If interested, please call me at 609.903.8389 or email is
krhcpa@yahoo.com . . . also, please feel free to forward this
message to others.

* Pat in Pennsylvania (with a REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK):
I'd like to see your readers feedback on Social Security. I am a few years
younger than you, but I am looking ahead to my retirement years. I am a
baby boomer and it seems we are all in for a rude awakening as the reality
sets in that Social Security as we knew it will not be there for most of us
when we retire.

From what I have read and have been able to learn, Social Security will
be bankrupt in a few years or there will only be a small set amount of \$ left
when I retire. And the payouts for baby boomer Federal Govt. employee
pensions will be astronomical. Naturally, I am doing all I can to save now.
But that does not make this issue go away or justify its losses. Where will
the money come from for all this?

This is not a Democrat or Republican issue. But both Republican and
Democrat politicians do not want to even address or acknowledge there
is a problem. It is there big time! Taxes pay for Social Security. And
especially as people retire, I do not think most want an increase in taxes.
Most are trying to make finances work when they retire. With so many baby
boomers opting for retirement, there will be less people working to contribute
taxes. So where do readers think the monies needed for these Govt. pensions
or SS programs will come from?

It's been said that Hillary wants to tax private sector pensions, stocks and
401K plans. I am not a Hillary baser and not saying if this is good or bad.
But where will we get the money for SS and Govt. employee pensions?
These coming shortfalls will be huge! Its been said that the coming SS deficit
will dwarf the defense budget. Think about that. If you do not know the kind
of money I am talking about, go and do your research and check on the size
of our Defense budget. If you are OK with paying lots more in taxes from
your pensions, 401K programs or retirement funds, when you retire, then
to you this should not matter. However, I ask you to think about it.

Lastly, consider that with less tax dollars coming in and shortfalls in money
needed for Social Security and Federal Govt. pensions, other programs will
also be cut. Big time. Education grants, health benefits, social programs, etc
will all be reduced or eliminated. Are you OK with that?

* Joan in Pennsylvania:
Thanks for the recommendation to see IRON MAN. We really enjoyed it
and don't think we would have gone to check it out if I didn't see it in
your missive. Sequels to follow!

* Jean in Pennsylvania:
We rented THE WATER HORSE (PG) for our boys, ages 9, 5 and 3,
who loved it, especially the oldest (a bit scary at times for the youngest).
It was a magical tale with realistic effects about a boy who finds an egg
near Loch Ness during World War II which hatches into the Loch Ness
Monster.

We also rented Vol. I of SPEED RACER, the original 1960s cartoon series.
All three boys got hooked. It has such timeless themes as honor, respect
and responsibility. I'd highly recommend revisiting it for anyone with kids
or grandkids. There are 5 volumes out on DVD with 11 episodes each. Vol. I
includes the lyrics to the best theme song ever, which my boys and I now
belt out in the car! With all the hype over the new movie laden with
computer-generated effects, it's nice to return to the simple classic

that inspired it.

* Natalie in Pennsylvania:

Yesterday, Ivan and I saw YOUNG AT HEART and found it profoundly moving, funny and entertaining. I highly recommend it.

THANKS to those who replied to Carol's questions on dating; to cite just two of the emails I received:

* Todd in New Jersey:

Having met my wife on line I'd like to respond to Carol in PA about Match.com if I may:

Remember that on line "everyone is young, gorgeous, tall, slim and sexy." My profile was rather honest. If you're not honest up front, how can you expect to get an honest match? I didn't say I was slim, but I didn't say I was horridly overweight. I gave my honest age. I was fairly clear about the kind of person I am and the things I value. I was as clear about the kind of person I was searching for. I did provide a series of photos, but chose the most flattering photos of me. I asked friends which photos of me they liked best.

Then I prepared for the possibility that just like in the real world, on line there are jerks, there are people who are twenty years too old for you who think that they should be dating someone twenty years younger because they're "young and sexy," etc.

My wife and I are as perfect a match as could possibly be. We are so much alike that at times we clash but most of the time we are a wonderful pair. I would rate myself a 6 on a 1-10 scale and would rate my wife a 9, so I feel like I got a person who compliments my interests and someone who is quite gorgeous. Good luck!

* Pat in Pennsylvania:

My friend Gayle Crist Shisler wrote a wonderful book that's now published, and answers all Carol's questions: HOW I MET MY SECOND HUSBAND ONLINE AT AGE 50.

I read the book, not because I'm looking for a mate (happily married) but because she asked me to illustrate her book cover. The book talks about the best things to include in a profile, safety tips for meeting online acquaintances and many of Gayle's own mistakes, disappointments and her ultimate success.

Gayle's also a "dating coach" and runs many social gatherings for singles. Her website is:

<http://www.healthylifeplanning.com>

AND ON THE SUBJECT OF WEBSITES:

Make sure you also check Pat's . . . she is an illustrator who not only draws pictures, but draws attention to her clients' ads, books and websites with her custom illustrations.

Start your Mondays with a laugh by checking her weekly cartoon on the homepage of her website:

<http://www.achillesportfolio.com>

In addition, make sure you view her line of funny greeting cards for friends and businesses.

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3. Timing

The only time the world beats a path to your door is if you're in the bathroom.

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4. Reviews

A. Don't believe all the glowing praise from critics that you may hear for *REPRISE*, a Norwegian film that won several awards in its native country . . . it is the tale of two young writers that left me wishing it would end within the first 10 minutes . . . I only chose to stay until the bitter end because I was with others; otherwise, I would have been out of there . . . methinks that if I could rename it, I would to this title: *AS BAD AS IT GETS* (in stark contrast to *AS GOOD AS IT GETS*, one of my all-time favorite movies) . . . rated R.

B. *27 DRESSES* is now out in DVD format . . . my review from *BLAINESWORLD* #590 follows:

27 DRESSES is a predictable romantic comedy, yet that said, I enjoyed it . . . Katherine Heigl plays a young woman who has been a bridesmaid 27 times . . . when her boss--the man she secretly loves--becomes engaged to her younger sister, she is faced with the prospect of having to get still another dress that she probably won't be able to wear more than once . . . Heigl is fine in the leading role, as is James Marsden as a reporter who covers the wedding scene . . . Malin Akerman, so fine in the remake of *THE HEARTBREAK KID* (though not as funny here because of her role), is again watchable . . . Judy Greer has a smallish supporting role, but nevertheless caught my attention in every scene she was in . . . and any film that uses "Happy Together" in the soundtrack deserves to be seen if just for that reason . . . rated PG-13.

C. I'm usually not a big fan of follow-up stories about somebody's life . . . but I made an exception with *CERTAIN GIRLS* by Jennifer Weiner, and I'm glad that I did.

The novel, Weiner's sixth, picks up from *GOOD IN BED*--her 2001 debut novel . . . heroine *Cannie Shapiro* is now the mother of a thirteen year-old daughter, *Joy*, who takes it upon herself to find out the true story of her life.

I liked about their respective lives unfolded, told in a first-person narrative in alternating chapters by both women . . . the dialogue, in particular, was quite realistic--and often hilarious in spots . . . such as this one passage that described a special presentation they were attending entitled "B'nai Mitzvah and the Blended Family:"

* The small man snatched at his yarmulke before it slid off his bald head and onto the floor. "Well, my youngest son is nineteen. He's undergoing gender reassignment surgery. You know, a sex change?"

Deidre's smile wobbled. I guess maybe this was something she hadn't heard before.

"He's been taking the hormones and had the laser treatments, but he hasn't had the, um . . ." He raised two fingers in a snipping gesture. Bruce winced and crossed his legs. "He dresses as a woman. He considers himself female now. He--well, she--she'll have an aliyah at my daughter's bat mitzvah, but she wants to be called by her new name. Naomi bat Peninah." He fumbled with his yarmulke again. "Naomi, daughter of Peninah. And our rabbi won't do it because technically she's still a he."

Deidre's bracelet jingled as she raked one hand through her hair. "Well," she said, "Have you considered a role where your, um, child's name wouldn't come into question? Maybe dressing the Torah?"

Right, I thought. Because she'll be so good with clothes now.

"But even though that gets us out of using the Hebrew name, what's the rabbi supposed to say? That Maddy's sibling will come to help dress the Torah. He won't say 'sister.' "

"Maybe if the rabbi won't say it, your daughter can."

The small man thought this over. "Maybe," he agreed.

Though some of the difficulties that the women encountered were a bit over the top, I found myself relating to them . . . for example, the matter of rationalizing when to check up on a child:

* "You're her mother. Invading your kid's privacy is part of the job description. Besides, it's not invading her privacy if we just decided that it was time to flip her mattress over, which you're actually supposed to do every six months."

Or attempting to explain a lack of interest, in this instance a parent who wants nothing to do with his child:

* "The allure of the unknown," my mother said. "It's like with junk food or Disney princesses. The more you tell a kid she can't have something, the more she wants it."

CERTAIN GIRLS will make you smile, but you'll also be moved by much of it . . . there's also a touching love story between Cannie and her husband, as well as an ending that's guaranteed to want you to have some tissues nearby.

D. Imagine coming to this country as a teenager with no knowledge of English and only \$50 in your pocket . . . that same individual is now a multi-millionaire, international consultant, author, and lecturer.

I recently got to hear him speak on an inspirational CD, NINO QUBEIN LIVE! . . . subtitled HOW TO GET ANYTHING YOU WANT: PROVEN STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS & SIGNIFICANCE, it promised much . . . though I'm not quite sure I can now get quite anything I want, I did nevertheless pick up many useful tips and/or reminders of things that I should be doing.

Among them:

- * Value is the ability to solve problems.
- * If you want to be happy, hang around with happy people.
- * I read newspapers at night. I read books and listen to tapes in the morning because they inspire me.
- * Every day I call on four or more of my clients.
- * I treat all of my customers as if I'm going to lose them.
- * The easier it is for somebody to duplicate what you do, the less valuable you've become.

And my favorite that I'm going to start doing right away:

* I've gotten rid of my alarm clock and replaced it with an opportunity clock.

This fine program is available for purchase or rental . . . if you want to get it, please click:

<http://www.achievementlibrary.com/>

Above is the tape rental club I belong to; i.e., the Achievement Tape Library . . . this a great way to hear CDs and/or audio cassette tapes, view videos, etc.--all for a fraction of what it would cost to buy them . . . call the head of the firm (Paul Arroyo) directly at

1.800.735.3660 and mention my name . . . that way, you'll be sure to pay even higher prices . . . NOT.

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5. TV alert

A. SO YOU THINK YOU CAN DANCE has Season 4 beginning on Thursday at 8 p.m. on FOX . . . at 9:30 p.m. on the same night, LAST COMIC STANDING begins its sixth season on NBC . . . I'm particularly looking forward to hearing from celebrity talent scouts Richard Belzer, Fred Willard and Kathy Najimy.

B. Daryl Hannah stars in SHARK SWARM, a thriller also featuring John Schneider and Armand Assante . . . Sunday at 8 p.m. on HALLMARK.

C. RECOUNT tells the story of the 2000 squeaker election between George W. Bush and Al Gore . . . TV GUIDE calls it both "crisply told" and "colorfully acted" . . . the standout cast includes Kevin Spacey, Tom Wilkinson, Ed Begley Jr., Dennis Leary, and Laura Dern . . . the latter plays Katherine Harris, the woman making the recount decision . . . as Dern notes, "When we heard that the woman was cochair of the Bush for President campaign, it's amazing America didn't go "Wait a minute!" . . . Sunday at 9 p.m. on HBO.

D. AMERICAN EXPERIENCE features Jason Robard narrating a two-part profile of President Harry S. Truman . . . begins on Sunday at 9:30 p.m. on PBS; concludes the next day . . . PBS times and dates often vary, so check local listings.

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6. Short story

Students in a college writing class were told they had to write a short story in as few words as possible. The story had to contain these three words: 1. Religion; 2. Sexuality; and 3. Mystery.

Below is the only A+ short story from the entire class:
"Good God, I'm pregnant. I wonder who did it."

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7. Websites

A. Are we to become a lost generation? To see an interesting perspective on this question, please click:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42E2fAWM6rA>

Make sure you have your sound on and, also, watch the whole thing . . . it may well reverse your thinking!

B. Golfers will find this addicting, but I do think that non-golfers will too:
<http://www.matchpractice.com/game/>

I'll be curious to hear how many putts you can make in a row.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:
<http://www.blainesworld.net>

To see the listing over 700 books that I have read and generally enjoyed, click "Blaine's Best" to the left and then the second

listing under the letter "O."

As you can see, I'm ranked in amazon.com's list of Top 500 reviewers . . . to help me move even higher:

1. Go to:

<http://www.amazon.com>

2. Choose any book I've recently reviewed; e.g., WHY MARS AND VENUS COLLIDE by John Gray. Put that into the search engine at the top of the page.

3. Scroll down until you find my review--probably the second or third from the top on the right.

4. If you find what I've written to be helpful, do so indicate that fact when asked, "Was this review helpful to you?"

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8. Computer tip

Can I trust E-Mails promising free Credit Reports?

Probably not. There's only one legitimate entity that provides free yearly credit reports from the three reporting bureaus:

<http://www.annualcreditreport.com>

Or call 877.322.8228, toll free.

Your e-mails likely come from spammers out to steal your personal information or from companies that will provide a free report—if you enroll in a credit-monitoring service that can cost \$120 or more a year. While the companies do provide a legitimate service, they often allow only a short trial period for the "free" report. If you don't cancel in that time, your credit card could be charged.

SOURCE:

AARP Bulletin, May 2008, p. 26

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9. Punny jokes, part 2 of 2
(concluded from last week)

6. A group of chess enthusiasts checked into a hotel and were standing in the lobby discussing their recent tournament victories. After about an hour, the manager came out of the office and asked them to disperse. "But why?", they asked, as they moved off. "Because," he said, "I can't stand chess nuts boasting in an open foyer."

7. A woman has twins and gives them up for adoption. One of them goes to a family in Egypt and is named "Ahmal." The other goes to a family in Spain; they name him "Juan." Years later, Juan sends a picture of himself to his birth mother. Upon receiving the picture, she tells her husband that she wishes she also had a picture of Ahmal. Her husband responds, "They're twins! If you've seen Juan, you've seen Ahmal."

8. These friars were behind on their belfry payments, so they opened up a small florist shop to raise funds. Since everyone liked to buy flowers from the men of God, a rival florist across town thought the competition was unfair. He asked the good fathers to close down, but they would not. He went back and begged the friars to close. They ignored him. So, the rival florist hired Hugh MacTaggart, the roughest and most vicious thug in town to "persuade" them to close. Hugh beat up the friars and trashed their store, saying he'd be back if they didn't close up shop. Terrified, they did so--thereby proving that only Hugh can prevent florist friars.

9. Mahatma Gandhi, as you know, walked barefoot most of the time, which produced an impressive set of calluses on his feet. He also ate very little, which made him rather frail and with his odd diet, he suffered from bad breath. This made him . . . (Oh, man, this is so bad, it's good) . . . A super callused fragile mystic hexed by halitosis.

10. And finally, there was the person who sent ten different puns to friends, with the hope that at least one of the puns would make them laugh. No pun in ten did.

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10. A quote I like

And you, who are already in the midst of marriage, remember these words: that both bride and groom carry a torch within that seeks to fulfill its truth. Your merging of light, and thus your building of one another's light, is essential to the sanctity of your marriage. Seek always to see your partner's holy and Divine light and touch it to your own often, for as you kindle and tend to your partner's inner torch, you build the flame of your own, naturally. You and your partner soar Heavenward as you look for each other's holy flames. Your countenance only becomes heavy and dour when you cease this function and forget to look inward. An eternally happy marriage is built upon this covenant of flame-building, through building one another's spirit of joy. Create opportunities for these exchanges often, whether it be an exchange of kind words, shared deeds of mutual enjoyment, or a togetherness in life's purpose for the betterment of the world.

SOURCE:

MESSAGES FROM YOUR ANGELS by Doreen Virtue, a spiritual doctor of psychology and a fourth-generation metaphysician . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.angeltherapy.com/>

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11. Thought for the day

Things we keep

Their marriage was good, their dreams focused. Their best friends lived barely a wave away. I can see them now, Dad in trousers, work shirt and a hat; and Mom in a house dress, lawn mower in one hand, and dish-towel in the other. It was the time for fixing things: a curtain rod, the kitchen radio, screen door, the oven door, the hem in a dress. Things we keep.

It was a way of life, and sometimes it made me crazy. All that re-fixing, re-heating leftovers, renewing; I wanted just once to be wasteful. Waste meant affluence. Throwing things away meant you knew there'd always be more.

But when my mother died, and I was standing in that clear morning light in the warmth of the hospital room, I was struck with the pain of learning that sometimes there isn't any more.

Sometimes, what we care about most gets all used up and goes away . . . never to return. So . . . while we have it, it's best we love it . . . and care for it . . . and fix it when it's broken . . . and heal it when it's sick.

This is true for marriage . . . and old cars . . . and children with bad report cards . . . dogs and cats with bad hips . . . and aging parents . . . and grandparents. We keep them because they are worth it, because we are worth it. Some things we keep, like a best friend that moved away or a classmate we grew up with.

There are just some things that make life important, like people we know

who are special. And so, we keep them close!

I received this from someone who thinks I am a 'keeper,' so I've sent it to the people I think of in the same way. Now it's your turn to send this to those people that are "keepers" in your life.

Good friends are like stars. You don't always see them, but you know they are always there!

Author unknown

(if you know who wrote this and/or the source, please let me know)

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12. Advance planning department

A. Author Robert K. Tanenbaum will discuss his sign his book, ESCAPE, on Thursday, May 22 at Barnes & Noble, 3535 Route 1 South, West Windsor, NJ . . . for more information, email: crm2646@bn.com or call 609.716.1570.

B. It's not too late to register for:
May 22, Thursday
DARE TO BE CREATIVE: A TWO-PART MARKETING
ESSENTIALS WORKSHOP

Geared for those who want to know what it takes to make your business a household name on a shoestring marketing budget.

May 29, Thursday
START YOUR OWN BUSINESS THE RIGHT WAY

Have you always wanted to leave the drudgery of a 9-to-5-job and work for yourself? Do you have a business idea you know could be successful, but you don't know where to start? Then this seminar is perfect for you. In this three-hour, soup-to-nuts, interactive seminar, you'll learn "Smart Start" ways to launch your business--successfully!

May 30, Friday
YOUR LEADS CLUB--FREE!

Meet new entrepreneurs as well as seasoned successful business owners to gain exposure into new markets and exchange business referrals.

All programs take place at the Bank of America Building, 6 East Trenton Ave., Suite 5, Morrisville, PA

To register, please click:
<http://www.newbusinesslearningcenter.com/registration/>

Or call:
215.801.8031 in Pennsylvania or 856.439.9036 in New Jersey.

C. Upcoming at the Princeton Center for Yoga & Health:
FREE Introductory session on our Mindfulness Based Stress
Reduction program on Wednesday, May 28, at 7:30 p.m.

We are in the midst of our 6th MBSR program at PCYH. These first MBSR groups reported remarkable life affirming changes--from reduction in blood pressure, better sleep and coping mechanisms in dealing with serious illness and loss to more easing into life transitions, more efficient and effective use of time, and more satisfying and effective interactions with family and co-workers. Or, as one participant delightedly noted: "I learned that my thoughts are not real!"

Location:
Princeton Center for Yoga & Health, Montgomery Professional Center,
50 Vreeland Drive, Suite 506, Skillman, NJ

For more information, call 609.924.7294 or email:
pcyh@mindspring.com

D. Pennsbury High School presents
LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS

This will be an encore fundraiser performance to help take the
production to the International Thespian Conference.

All tickets are \$10 and available at the door of the PHS
East Campus Auditorium, 705 Hood Blvd, Fairless Hills, PA.

One performance only!

Friday, June 20, at 7:30 p.m.

MY TWO CENTS:

I recently saw GUYS AND DOLLS put on this school . . . if
LITTLE SHOP is anywhere near as good (and I understand that
it is), you'll be in a treat if you can catch this performance.

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PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers
back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it
a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#606

5.12.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I celebrated Mother's Day for the first time without having either of our mothers around . . . they were of course missed, but we certainly felt their presence the entire day.

In the morning, we had a private ceremony to honor both my parents . . . we conducted it in the woods behind our house, overlooking a lovely brook . . . we then read some prayers (see Section 12A), lit a candle and spread their ashes.

From there, we went to the ceremony where Cynthia's both parents are buried . . . and then we went for a delicious dinner to her sister Joyce and brother-in-law Marty's house . . . we met for the first time the latest addition to the family, Zoe (whose mother is Marty's daughter) . . . that's Cynthia holding the baby:



B. On the night before, on Saturday, we joined friends Barry and Jodi for dinner, movie (see Section 4A) and ice cream--our kind of evening!

First let me comment on the dinner . . . we went as we often do to YaYa Noodles in Skillman, NJ . . . the food was fine, but service left much to be desired--as is often the case there . . . the only saving grace was the fact that the place has two of the best busboys we've ever seen: Bardo and Jaime . . . they have great smiles, and they always make us feel welcome there . . . we strongly believe that they should be waiters, if not there than at some other place that would be lucky enough to employ them.

I'll also remember the evening for something I learned from Barry . . . when we asked our waiter where our food was, he replied with the following word: soon . . . Barry said that he also uses that same word often when dealing with customers who ask when something will be ready . . . he says you can't really argue with it and what you wind up doing is actually thanking the person who told it to you.

After the great movie, we went across the lot to Friendly's . . . it was good to see an old friend there, waiter Mike Rubel . . . he had been a BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD winner back in February, 2005, and we were pleased to find that he had returned back to work at the restaurant . . . he hasn't lost his ability to make customers feel special.

C. During the week, I was pleased to be able to attend the YWCA of Bucks County's 17th annual "Salute to Women Who Make a Difference" Awards dinner . . . my nominee, Natalie Kaye, was one of

those who received much-deserved recognition . . . under her leadership, the Women's Center at Bucks County Community College has become a vibrant place where students, faculty and staff come together to share and learn.

As Dr. Jim Links, the College's president, noted in his introduction [keeping with the Stars theme for the evening]:

Natalie is:

Seriously

Totally

Admirably

Relentlessly

Special

I couldn't agree more!

That's Natalie holding her award with yours truly on the right:



A second highlight of the evening was the chance to hear Bianca Ryan, YWCA's special guest, sing . . . if the name sounds familiar, it was because she was the winner of the premiere season of AMERICA'S GOT TALENT . . . Simon Cowell, best known for his role on AMERICAN IDOL, was so amazed at her vocal range and ability that he proclaimed during a television interview that "Bianca Ryan is potentially one of the best singers I have ever heard in my life" . . . she blew me away!

D. During the week, I got to attend two different events at Bucks that I found worthwhile:

* On Tuesday, there was a jazz faculty concert . . . Jeff Baumeister, Robin Haffley, Mike Hoffman, Tom Lawton, Paul Nagle, Mark Pultorak, Madison Rast, and John Sheridan all performed . . . and was I ever

impressed with their talent.

My only regret was that I wasn't able to attend an evening concert that featured improvisations by Tom and Jeff, a Chopin Scherzo performed by Edward Ferdinand, a Mozart aria sung by Rochelle Milhous and accompanied by Edward, and the BCCC Concert Choir under the direction of Rochelle in a premiere of Steve Bresnen's composition "Gloria Patri," which was also accompanied by Edward . . . I heard the event was event.

* On Thursday, Dr. Henry D'Silva gave an informative presentation to our teacher's union on a group called Bucks Voice for Health Care Reform . . . its mission is to help build a fair and just national health care system . . . for more information, please click: <http://www.buckshealthcare.org>

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Cara Schollenberger--a longtime teaching colleague of mine at the College.

I just heard some good and bad news about her . . . the good news is that she will be leaving Bucks after 19 years to take a full-time teaching position at Kutztown University . . . the bad news is that she will be having to step down from her leadership position as recording secretary of our teacher's union.

She has done a fantastic job over the last several years and as such, will be sorely missed . . . in addition, I have team taught with Cara and have personally observed what an excellent teacher she is.

Our loss will be Kutztown's gain!

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2. FYI

End preapproved credit offers. Register at: <http://www.optoutprescreen.com>

or call the toll-free number: 888.567.8688.

Either method covers you for five years. You can also opt out permanently by phone or by mail using a form found on the website. "Not only will you nix the offers, but you'll be reducing your chances of identity theft," says Beth Givens of the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse.

FYI, part 2

* John in Pennsylvania [on the Martin P. Sutton Scholarship]:
Thanks for highlighting the scholarship. We are hoping to increase the amount of the scholarship. Contributions are still coming in.

* Marianne in Pennsylvania [on same topic]:
Did you hear that we raised over \$25,000?

MY TWO CENTS:

Contributions are still being accepted; if interested, send a check payable

to the BCC Foundation to:

Bucks County Community College Foundation
c/o Martin P. Sutton Scholarship
275 Swamp Road
Newtown, PA 18940

* Shelley in Pennsylvania, daughter of my longtime friend and chiropractor Dr. Wendy Attadgie [with a REQUEST FOR HELP]:
See below for the link for the Walk, which took place on Sunday at the zoo. There are some great photos of the event. They are still accepting donations to the organization--Friendship Circle Bucks County. Thanks for your interest and support.

<http://fcpawalk.kintera.org/faf/r.asp?t=4&i=269689&u=269689-214172167&e=1687177279>

* Kevin in New Jersey:
Thanks for your newsletters. I find them very enjoyable and informative.

When I saw your recent letter about 3 penny opera, it reminded me of your love for theatre. I thought I should contact you right away. By the way, I also saw 3 penny, didn't like it, not my cup of tea.

However, although I don't usually promote shows, I'm telling all my friends about THE BAKERS WIFE at the Chester Theatre: 908.879.7304. It's being directed by the same person (Scott Hart) that directed BLOOD BROTHERS. The show is well-directed, acted and produced. It's a gem that will put a smile on your face and lighten your day.

If you choose to go I'd recommend reserving seats immediately. There is only 1 weeks left in its 4 week run and every show has been sold out. There are only 2 shows left (Friday and Saturday only), and they will be sold out. If you do go, best seating seems to be on your left when you walk in. Get there early to pick up tickets a 7:30, and then you'll have a better choice of the general admission seats.

Disclaimer: I am not in the show nor do I get big dollar commissions. I hope you get a chance to see it.

* Janet in New Jersey (with a CAR FOR SALE):
2002 Subaru LL Bean Edition Fully Loaded Outback: \$10,200
Practical, Classy and Fun!
Clean, Good Condition, Well Maintained, Dealer Serviced
Original Owner, one driver
109,650 miles, Light metallic green
No Accidents
Parking lot scratches, original paint
Leather seats, 3 liter, 6 cylinder
Handles like a dream in all weather
Good Gas Mileage
Number one safety rating in class
Heated front seats, windshield, mirror, fog lights,

AWD, Automatic, AC, Power Steering, Power Windows, Power Door Locks, Tilt Wheel, Cruise Control, AM/FM Stereo, Cassette, CD, Front/Side Air Bags, ABS 4 Wheel, Leather, Power Steer, Sun and Moon Roof, Alloy Wheels, Roof Rack

Will meet serious buyers only. Pictures available.

973.647.2500 in Denville, NJ
Janetoasis@aol.com

* Greg in New York:

Thank you for your support of my recent running of the Boston Marathon, the oldest and one of the most prestigious races in the country and for your contribution to the Lance Armstrong foundation. This contribution is going to be used to make strides towards making cancer a curable disease, eradicating the third largest killer in the world.

A marathon is a long way to go, and despite some physical ailments, I was thinking of all of the support I received that pushed me to finish the race in 4 hour 39 minutes. I had a great time at the race and I am extremely thankful for your support which resulted in an aggregate contribution of over \$3,500 toward the Lance Armstrong Foundation. I hope that you continue to support finding a cure for this deadly disease.

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3. You can't win

A woman walks into her boss's office with this complaint:

"All the other women in the office are suing you for sexual harassment.

"And since you haven't sexually harassed me, I'm suing you for discrimination."

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4. Reviews

A. YOUNG @ HEART is my favorite documentary of the year so far; in fact, it is one of the best films of this nature that I have seen for quite some time . . . it is about a group of elderly men and women who come together to form a vocal choir that attempts music by such performers as Sonic Youth, the Clash, the Ramones, and James Brown . . . you'll both laugh and cry and at the end, be inspired by what growing old can become if you don't give into it . . . I particularly liked the one music video from SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE, "Stayin' Alive" . . . rated PG . . . I urge you to see this by yourself and/or also with your parents, children, grandchildren, etc.

B. THE GREAT DEBATERS is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #587 follows:

THE GREAT DEBATERS is the best film I've seen in a long time . . . Oscar winner Denzel Washington both directs and stars in this uplifting drama about a debate coach who takes a Texas college team from a small, segregated town to national acclaim and a match against Harvard . . . though the formula is familiar, THE GREAT DEBATERS nevertheless caught my attention from the opening minutes right through the closing credits when you find out what happened to the participants . . . Forest Whitaker also stars, along with Jurnee Smollett--an actress methinks you'll be hearing more about in the future . . . rated PG-13.

C. I thought I was pretty good when it came to getting around on the Internet, but was I ever pleasantly surprised to learn that I could still learn a great deal . . . and did by reading THE ABOUT.COM GUIDE TO ONLINE RESEARCH (see also Section 8) by Wendy Boswell.

You'll also learn, too, regardless of your level of computer sophistication . . . the material is very readable and oh-so-informative . . . for example, to find the weather for where you live, just go to google.com and type-in weather: then your five-digit zip code . . . you immediately are taken to a very visual listing that will provide all the information you need by just looking at it (and not having to click further).

You'll get many tips that I've never seen elsewhere; e.g., this one deals with how to deal with bibliographies:

There's EasyBib (www.easybib.com/), a free automatic bibliography composer; Cornell University Library's excellent in-depth article on how to prepare an annotated bibliography (www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill28.htm); and writer Diana Hacker's informative how-to tutorial (www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/p04_c08_s2.html).

And you'll also find websites galore on such topics as finding crime statistics, weird news, comparison shopping, job hunting, specific diseases, and everybody's favorite, time wasting.

Lastly, if such terms as "blogs" and "RSS feeds" still throw you, you'll no longer need to fear them if you just spend a little time this most informative guide . . . I'd tell you more, but it would take away from the time that I still want to spend on trying just some of the things I've learned from Boswell's book.

D. Heard a taped copy of SELLING THE INVISILBE: A FIELD GUIDE TO MODERN MARKETING by Harry Beckwith and was pleasantly surprised that I liked it as much as I did, in that the title did not "grab me" . . . nor did the fact that it was written in 1997.

However, that said, it soon became obvious that Beckwith (founder of Beckwith Advertising and Marketing) knows his stuff . . . his many examples were relevant to me and would be to just about anybody else's business or individual career.

For instance, he points out that:

* You can't thank your customers too much. And you're probably not doing it enough.

To rectify this situation:

* Send twice as many thank you notes as you did last year.

Though this might sound basic, the reality that most of us don't do such things . . . he also gives this great suggestion:

* Write an ad for your service. After a week, if the ad is poor, it's time to look at your service--not the ad.

Among the many other tidbits I gained from SELLING THE INVISIBLE were the following:

* Just don't think. Better to think differently.

* Even your best friends won't tell you certain information, but they will talk behind your back. So have a third party do surveys.

* Phone surveys reveal more information than in-person surveys.

* Never ask, "What don't you like about our company or service?" You're asking somebody to admit they made a bad decision on choosing you.

* Study each point of contact to improve your company; e.g., business card, receptionist, signage, etc.

And perhaps my favorite:

* In an argument, remember these three words: Maybe he's right. Carry this with you in an envelope.

Even if you have to dig some to find SELLING THE INVISIBLE, your effort will pay off in the fact that you will gain many usable techniques that you can apply to your business or service . . . in your life, too, such as this final idea for improving the lot of all children:

* If a child ends school on a positive note, it will carry over to the next morning and day.

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5. TV alert

A. I don't typically watch ER, but may check out its season finale on Thursday at 10:01 p.m. on NBC because of two of the guest stars on this episode: Steve Buscemi and Stanley Tucci.

B. Sidney Poitier became the first black Best Actor winner in the 1963 drama LILLIES OF THE FIELD, a drama about a handyman who helps five nuns build a chapel . . . Friday at 9:30 p.m. on TCM . . . best of all is the fact that when you watch a film on TCM, you won't be disturbed by commercials.

C. DARK BEAUTY stars Elizabeth Berkley as a suspected black widow . . . Saturday at 9 p.m. on Lifetime.

D. Reba McEntire hosts THE ACADEMY OF COUNTRY MUSIC AWARDS on Sunday at 8 p.m. on CBS for the 10th time . . . Trace Adkins, Taylor Swift and Carrie Underwood are among the performers.

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6. What is it?

Schwarzenegger has a big one.

Michael J. Fox has a small one.

Madonna doesn't have one.

The Pope has one but doesn't use his.

Mickey Mouse has an unusual one.

George Burns' was hot.

Liberace never used his on women.

Jerry Seinfeld is very, very proud of his.

We never saw Lucy use Desi's.

So: Do you know what it is?

Answer: A last name.
(Get your mind out of the gutter!)

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7. Websites

A. Moving can be such a hassle . . . yet it is something we all typically go through--at least several times in our lives . . . if you are having to move in the near future and/or know somebody who is please click:
<http://www.movingscam.com/>

You'll find a most informative article, "How to find a reputable moving company," along with recommendations, customer, reviews, etc.

B. In need of a laugh? (And aren't we all?) If so, please click:
<http://www.hulu.com/collections/46>

You'll find a collection of some of the funniest commercial parodies from SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE . . . be forewarned that you may have to wait for some of them to download, but you'll be glad that you did.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:
<http://www.blaineworld.net>

From time to time, I speak to groups throughout the country on a variety of topics . . . should you wish to book me for your next meeting or convention, see "Speaking" to your left for more information.

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8. Computer tip

To search for movie showtimes:

1. Go to:
<http://www.google.com>

2. Type-in:
movie: name of movie you want to find, followed by area code

3. For example:
movie: young @ heart 08502

This is sooooo neat . . . methinks you'll want to use it from now on . . . I know I will . . . you also can easily change your desired location once you receive the initial listings.

SOURCE:
THE ABOUT.COM GUIDE TO ONLINE RESEARCH (see also Section 4C) by Wendy Boswell, p. 269

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9. Punny jokes, part 1 of 2

1. A vulture boards an airplane, carrying two dead raccoons. The stewardess looks at him and says, "I'm sorry, sir, only one carrion allowed per passenger."
2. Two fish swim into a concrete wall. One turns to the other and says "Dam!"
3. Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly, so they lit a fire in the craft. Unsurprisingly it sank, proving once again that you can't have your kayak and heat it too.
4. Two hydrogen atoms meet. One says "I've lost my electron." The other says "Are you sure?" The first replies "Yes, I'm positive."
5. Did you hear about the Buddhist who refused Novocain during a root canal? His goal: transcendental medication.

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10. A quote I like

Never be ashamed to admit you were wrong. You're only saying that you're wiser today than you were yesterday.--attributed to A. Whitney Brown, Emmy-winning writer and comedian; also to David Gilpin, senior pastor Hope City Church in England

MR. CURIOUS HERE:

I haven't been able to track down who to cite as the original source for the above quote, so if you know and/or can find our, please let me know.

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11. Thought for the day

Actually, make that two thoughts . . . see below for what Cynthia and I read at our service for my parents (see also Section 1A):

* Do not stand at my grave and weep

Do not stand at my grave and weep
I am not there; I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that blow,
I am the diamond glints on snow,
I am the sun on ripened grain,
I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you awaken in the morning's hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circling flight.
I am the soft starlight at night.

Do not stand at my grave and cry,
I am not there; I did not die.

SOURCE:

The above is a popular poem largely considered to be written by Mary Elizabeth Frye (1904-2004), though others have claimed credit for it too . . . for more information, please click:<http://www.businessballs.com/donotstandatmygraveandweep.htm>

* A life is like a song we write

A life is like a song we write
In our own tone and key
Each life we touch reflects a note
That forms a melody.

We choose the theme and chorus
Of the song to bear our name,
And each will have a special sound
No two can be the same.

So when someone we love departs
In memory we find
Their song plays on
Within the heart
Of those they leave behind.

Author unknown
(if you know who wrote this and/or the source, please let me know)

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12. Advance planning department

A. THE SEARCH FOR A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP is a program being presented by Somerset Medical Center's Sleep for Life Program . . . Thursday at 11 a.m. at Somerset Hills YMCA, Basking Ridge, NJ . . . FREE; to register, please click:
<http://www.somersetmedicalcenter.com/body.cfm?xyzpdqabc=0&id=8&action=register&ref=2737>

B. I'm planning to catch FOR THE LOVE OF JULIET, a comedy in its final weekend run . . . it is being put on by the Somerset Valley Players in Hillsborough, NJ and stars James Houston--one of my favorite local actors--who recently informed me via email that:
I have been moved by your thoughts/words, and I personally am dedicating this run to you and Cynthia.

My one-word reaction: WOW!

Tickets are just \$14; \$12 for seniors and students . . . for reservations, call 908.369.7469 or click:
<http://www.svptheatre.org>

C. This coming Sunday is Welcome Day Newtown, PA. It's billed as a street fair with flair! It comprises three blocks of State Street with an arts festival, music and dance, performances, giveaways, kids fun zone, food court, games, and pony rides. The event is scheduled for Sunday, May 18th from noon to 5 p.m.

For more details, please click:
<http://www.newtownbpa.org>

D. Don't miss this year's 20th Annual Tyler Tasting Party on June 6 from 7-11:00 p.m. at Bucks County Community College, Newtown, PA. Guests will have the opportunity to sample food and spirits from over 40 of Bucks County's finest restaurants, bakeries, wineries, and breweries. New this year will be dancing under the stars in the Tyler Gardens to a 17-piece orchestra. Tickets: \$125. To order your tickets, call 215.968.8224.

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PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#605

5.5.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I went with friends on Saturday to the Temperance House in Newtown, PA, for dinner . . . we started by taking part in what the restaurant bills as a tasting party; i.e., ordering from "Temp's Tapas" that included Brushetta, Filet Cristini and Clams Casino . . . they were all tasty, though a bit overpriced in our opinion . . . we were still hungry, so everybody else ordered cups of soup . . . I chose a delicious chicken pot pie.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.temperancehouse.com/>

From there, we went to the Kelsey Theater at Mercer County Community College in West Windsor, NJ to see THE THREEPENNY OPERA . . . while the show wasn't our favorite (in large part because of the depressing plot), it did feature excellent performances from both Tom Orr and Elizabeth Rzasa . . . we also liked Tom Chiola's rendition of "The Ballad of Mack the Knife" . . . and Lou Woodruff, as usual, did a fine job in conducting the orchestra.

Performances run through May 11 . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.mccc.edu/~humphrew/whatsnew/3pennyopera.htm>

On the way home, we stopped at Thomas Sweet Ice Cream in Princeton, NJ . . . though under new management, we continue to enjoy both the ice cream and friendly service . . . in addition, the store has the best hours of any such establishment in the area; i.e., it is open until 11 p.m. during the week and until midnight during the weekend.

For more information, please click:

<http://thomassweet.com/>

B. During the week, I got to see another show: LI'L ABNER at the Bucks County Playhouse in New Hope, PA . . . I guess it just wasn't my week for musicals . . . this production did nothing for me, largely because the story was just not very funny . . . Louis Palena did manage to distinguish himself in one of the leading roles . . . however, the accompanying taped music was very tinny . . . and throughout the evening, there seemed to be a problem with the sound system; it kept crackling.

I was also disappointed that the playbill didn't have information on any of the cast members.

This show runs through May 18 . . . for more information, please click:
<http://www.ticketbiscuit.com/buckscountyplyhouse/EventSpotlight.aspx>

C. One event I did get to enjoy very much was a talk by Dr. Dan Gottlieb, an author/psychotherapist and host of "Voices in the Family" on WHYY 90.9 FM in Philadelphia . . . he spoke at Barnes & Noble in Princeton, NJ about one of the best books I've read lately, LETTERS TO SAM, as well as about his latest effort, LEARNING FROM THE HEART.

There were many tidbits of wisdom I gained from his talk; among them:

- * The longer list of people you love, the happier you'll be.
- * We shouldn't shelter children; rather, we can be models for them.
- * The world would be better if all who felt vulnerable could wear flashers that said, "I'm having a problem." (Much like drivers put on such flashers.)
- * Listening is harder today because things go faster. Kids today, for example, can't meditate. It is our responsibility to help them slow down.
- * Research has shown that kids that have dinner 3-4 times/week with their parents are 70% less likely to do drugs.
- * My 11th Commandment: Thy should not take oneself too seriously.
- * The question shouldn't be: Were you loved enough? The question should be: Did you love enough?

For more information, please click:
<http://www.drdangottlieb.com/>

D. I get great joy in sharing good news about my friends and colleagues . . . in particular, a lot of them seem to have been in the news lately for some pretty fine reasons:

* My favorite chiropractor, Dr. Wendy Attadgie shared this article about her daughter Shelley:
<http://www.emailthis.clickability.com/et/emailThis?clickMap=viewThis&etMailToID=1450501816>

* My longtime teaching colleague at Bucks County Community College, Lyle Rosenberger, will receive a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia . . . he was profiled in a front-page story in the PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER NEIGHBORS section:
http://www.philly.com/inquirer/local/pa/bucks/nabes/20080427_Historic_preservation_efforts_win_him_acclaim.html

* And I just received the following press release about Donna Giovannetti, my favorite New Jersey consumer advocate:

MERCER COUNTY'S DONNA GIOVANNETTI
ELECTED PRESIDENT OF CAMCA

TRENTON, NJ--County Executive Brian M. Hughes congratulates Donna Giovannetti of Mercer County's Office of Consumer Affairs for being elected President of County And Municipal Consumer Agencies of New Jersey (CAMCA).

"I am proud that Mercer County employees are driven to give their best at work, in addition to sharing their knowledge, their skills, and their leadership abilities with outside organizations," said Hughes. . . .

"I'm truly honored to be elected president of CAMCA," Giovannetti said. "During these difficult economic times we will be challenged with many new consumer issues and scams, hopefully my position as president will enable me to offer solutions on a statewide level. I look forward

to this challenge."

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

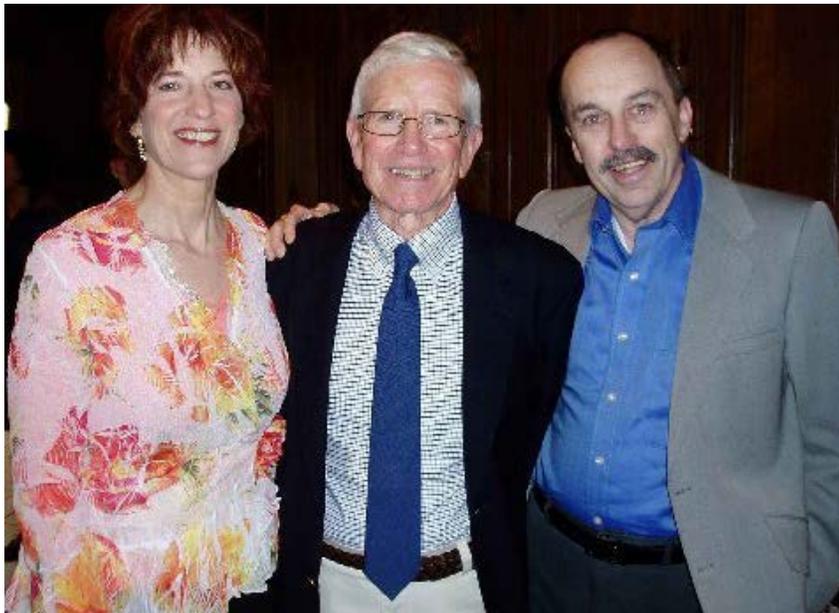
This week, it goes to Marty Sutton--another longtime colleague of mine at the College.

Marty was honored on Saturday at a reception for his 43 years of service as both an administrator and faculty member . . . the event, attended by nearly 200 people, also served as a fundraiser for the BCCC Foundation with proceeds going toward the establishment of a scholarship in Marty's honor.

To date, some \$20,000 has been raised . . . contributions are still being accepted; if interested, send a check payable to the BCC Foundation to:

Bucks County Community College Foundation
c/o Martin P. Sutton Scholarship
275 Swamp Road
Newtown, PA 18940

That's the man of the honor (below), flanked by Cynthia on the left and yours truly on the right:



SPECIAL KUDOS to Marianne Keppler for heading the committee that made the event the success that it was . . . she was ably assisted by the members of her committee: Joe Walsh, Tony Wolf, Jim Richard, Sr., Phyllis Miller, John Petito, and MaryEllen Lohin . . . Jim Freeman and Karen Gloetzner also helped out significantly during the party, as did Deb Sedik who took pictures . . . and Jeff Baumeister's Quartet provided tuneful entertainment throughout the day.

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2. FYI

To stop junk mail, get off the lists. Go to the Mail Preference Service registry of the Direct Marketing Association:

<http://www.dmachoice.org>

and click on "Remove my name from those lists." Online registration is free (or \$1 through the mail) and is good for three years. This move alone should cut down on 80% of your unsolicited mail within four months.

FYI, part 2

* Carol in Pennsylvania (with a REQUEST FOR HELP):

Since you are a success with Match.com, I'm asking for advice about writing a profile. Any suggestions which would hopefully produce some "normal" men? (I know you weren't searching for men, but maybe your new bride can offer some suggestions.) Had you tried any other websites such as eHarmony or just Match? Also, any methods you use to screen out a good catch?

* Bill in Pennsylvania:

Do you think that the new reality series "The Farmer Wants a Wife" should have been called the "Farmer and the Belle" (a slight attempt at humor . . . Farmer in the Dell, etc.) Of course, they could always call it "Hayseed Honeys."

* Pat in Pennsylvania:

Please explain about what you wrote last week:
the growing staffing crisis that is threatening
the quality of higher education across the United States.

What does this mean? No one is becoming a teacher? Or they are not paid enough so they can't get teachers? Or? Also, I'm confused: Assume higher education means college level?

ANSWERS:

At the higher education level (anything over high school), many colleges are hiring more part-timers and less full-timers--largely in an attempt to save money. Many are concerned with this for two reasons:

1. Studies show that students learn better, for the most part, with full-time faculty members. They also get better advising.
2. Part-time faculty members get significantly less money than their full-time counterparts for doing the same work. In addition, they get no benefits.

* Kathy in Pennsylvania:

STARMAN--one of my faves as well. You should try SOMEWHERE IN TIME with Chris Reeves and Jane Seymour. Very romantic!

MY TWO CENTS:

I'd like to ask all readers to keep such recommendations coming, along with jokes that you have enjoyed (and not seen elsewhere), reviews, recommendations on books to read, things to see or do, etc. . . . I often appreciate such emails, and I'm sure that others do too.

* Jean in Pennsylvania (a member of my unofficial Joke Advisory Board), commenting on one that I had sent her for possible inclusion:
Horrible joke. I cringed. Not funny at all.

Here are some silly suggestions:

How did Minnie Mouse save Mickey from drowning?
She gave him mouse-to-mouse resuscitation.

If George Washington went to Washington wearing a white winter coat while his wife waited in Wilmington, how many Ws are there in all?
None. There are no Ws in "all."

What do you get when you cross an elephant with a kangaroo?
Big holes all over Australia.

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3. Service

My friend had just eaten the worst meal in his life and had to say something.

"Is everything okay?" the waitress asked.

"No," he replied. "The chicken is so tough, you can't cut it with a knife."

"I'm so sorry," was the response. "Can I bring you a different knife?"

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4. Reviews

A. You don't have to be a comic book fan to love IRON MAN, a terrific action film about a billionaire industrialist who changes the direction of his company after getting kidnapped . . . it has it all . . . there's great acting from Robert Downey Jr. as Tony Stark/Iron Man, Jeff Bridges (not playing his usual good guy) as the villain, Gwyneth Paltrow, and Terrence Howard . . . the special effects won't overwhelm you . . . there's some humor throughout . . . and even a touch of romance . . . also, the ending is as good as it gets . . . rated PG-13.

B. P.S. I LOVE YOU is now out on DVD . . . it's a romantic comedy that is surprisingly touching, though you will need to suspend your belief to enjoy it . . . Hilary Swank loses her husband, a charming Gerard Butler, to cancer and falls apart until she discovers a series of love letters he penned before dying . . . with the help of these letters, as well as the support of family and friends, Swank manages to pull her life together again . . . rated PG-13.

C. I'm not "into" yoga . . . but after reading WHERE ARE MY ANKLES? by Deborah Rummelhart, I just might check it out if just to see if it can do all that it did for the author.

Specifically, Rummelhart focuses on Iyengar Yoga and how it helped her deal with a bad back, mood swings, short temper, and stress.

Parts of the book had me chuckling, such as this one passage:

* I had recently gotten engaged, and was about to be transported to another planet: the weird and wacky world of wedding planning. Initially, I thought, Well, we'll just have a simple short ceremony, and then we can all go home. What I was unaware of was that there's a whole bridal industrial complex out there dedicated to ensuring that the maximum amount of time and money get spent on weddings. "You should plan on budgeting between \$5,000 and \$20,000 for your wedding gown," chirped the straight-faced saleslady at a shop where I'd gone to look at wedding gowns. Excuse me, I felt like saying, but you seem to have misunderstood. I want to buy a dress, not an automobile. My score: Frustration 1, Equanimity 0.

Yet many other sections got me thinking about not just yoga, but life in general--such as when Rummelhart talks about what it means to be fully present:

* So I started walking toward him [B.K.S. Iyengar]. Eventually, I had a moment to speak with him. I looked into his eyes. It struck me that he was more alive, more deeply aware, and participating more in this physical life than any of us standing around him. He was totally aware of everything that was happening in this particular moment. Part of his mind was not wandering off, preoccupied with past experiences or future possibilities. All of his attention, his intellect, his emotions, his awareness, was focused on the person he was talking to. Mr. Iyengar was teaching us how to be in the world, that we were sent down here to experience this world as deeply as possible, and that we are to use

all of our attention, mind, body, and emotions to be as deeply involved in this life as possible.

Or there's this passage that I also liked:

* If one lives a very full or harried life in the United States, it is not easy making time for a yoga practice. I have a full-time job, and I also want to have some love and fun in my life, and find ways to get out into nature regularly. For fun and love, I decided to be acquired by a horse. Horses are the ultimate in high-maintenance companionship: they need to be fed twice a day; they need their stalls cleaned out twice a day; and they need to be exercised at least once a day. They need new shoes every eight weeks and shots every six months, and if they notice that you have any extra time and money lying around, they will figure out a way to relieve you of the burden of both. But horses are also very loving, and offer a great way to get out into nature. My horse has brought a great deal of love and joy into my life. Shortly after I acquired my horse, I met and fell in love with my husband.

There are three useful Appendices at the end, providing additional information on how to find a certified teacher, medical references and suggested readings.

This is a perfect gift to give any yoga fans . . . or to anybody else who might benefit from both a book and practice that can help you get started on virtually anything . . . as Rummelhart notes:

* The thing is, doing one yoga pose is like eating one potato chip; you can't stop at just one. One pose generally sparks a desire to start another pose, and this snowballs until--lo and behold!--you've actually completed a half-hour of yoga practice. I've learned from my practice that terminal laziness is best approached by persuading yourself to take one very small, easy, comfortable step in the right direction. Once you take that first small step, the others will follow.

D. Heard THE PRINCE by Niccolo Machiavelli, one of those books that I've always meant to read . . . but just never got around to do so.

Now I finally had the opportunity (as a result of being able to listen to it while driving) and am glad I did--particularly because of its relevance to what's currently happening in politics . . . also, as a result, I now have a better understanding of the term Machievellianism . . . or that any means, however unscrupulous, can justifiably be used in achieving political power.

Though originally written in the 16th century, THE PRINCE is still remarkably up to date . . . the examples used by Machiavelli feel like they come from today's headlines . . . also, they pertain to many situations wherein power is utilized--both in business and in the political arena.

There were many quotes that got me thinking; among them:

* Hence it is necessary for a prince wishing to hold his own to know how to do wrong, and to make use of it or not according to necessity.

* We have not seen great things done in our time except by those who have been considered mean; the rest have failed.

And this final one:

* If men were entirely good this precept would not hold, but because they are bad, and will not keep faith with you, you too are not bound to observe it with them. Nor will thee ever be wanting to a prince legitimate reasons to excuse this nonobservance.

I found it interesting to learn that Machievelli wrote this book after he was fired as Secretary to the Second Chancery of the Signoria . . . methinks that had he been around now, Tim Russert and/or other political commentators could well be out of job.

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5. TV alert

A. Fran Drescher and Gabriel Byrne star in CAMELOT on LIVE FROM LINCOLN CENTER on Thursday at 8 p.m. on PBS . . . stations and times often vary, so check local listings.

B. 30 ROCK's season finale airs on Thursday at 9:31 p.m. on NBC . . . Edie Falco returns in a guest starring role and also look for an appearance from Matthew Broderick.

C. Celine Dion's rise to superstardom is chronicled in CELINE, a biopic at 8 p.m. on Sunday on WE.

D. Melora Hardin (Jan in THE OFFICE) plays a stepmother in MOM, DAD who helps her new extended family grow closer together . . . Saturday at 9 p.m. on LIFETIME.

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6. Evolution

A little girl asked her mother, "How did the human race appear?"

The mother answered, "God made Adam and Eve, and they had children and so all mankind was made."

Two days later the girl asked her father the same question.

The father answered, "Many years ago, there were monkeys from which the human race evolved."

The confused girl returned to her mother and said, "Mama, how is it possible that you told me the human race was created by God, and Daddy said they developed from monkeys?"

The mother answered, "Well, dear, it is very simple. I told you about my side of the family, and your Daddy told you about his."

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7. Websites

A. Here's a story on sportsmanship that you'll have to see to believe:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hp2sQYsNpPs&NR=1>

Make sure that you share it with any student athletes you know.

For the actual home run, please click:

http://youtube.com/watch?v=xVIKtI7yd_s

B. If you're looking for inspirational, famous, romantic or even humorous quotations, please click:

<http://www.yuni.com>

Trying it out, I came up with this one that I liked:

If I know what love is, it is because of you.--Hermann Hesse (1877-1962), German-Swiss poet, novelist and painter

I also liked the FREE e-cards, as well as the collection of short stories.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blaineworld.net>

Feel free to mention it to your friends, relatives, colleagues, etc. and encourage them to sign-up for BLAINESWORLD, the free newsletter you are now reading . . . all they have to do is check "Special Offer" at the bottom of the homepage.

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8. Computer tip

You can teach yourself to do almost anything; i.e., provided you look online for instructional videos.

There are several websites that make finding this information easier . . . among the best:

<http://www.howcast.com>

Titles include "How to tell if your boyfriend's a psycho," "How to play a basic bar chord," "How to clean your dog's teeth," "How to tie a windsor knot," and what you always wanted to know, "How to turn old underpants into a bra."

<http://www.wonderhowto.com>

Titles include "Make origami buckyball," "Play 'Train 45' on the banjo," "Make organic baby food," "Learn about how the world is always changing," and what you always wanted to know, "Hot wire and steal a car."

<http://www.ehow.com>

Titles include "How to perform the captivity trick," "How to get rid of wedding day jitters," "How to remove wallpaper," "How to green your home," and what you always wanted to know, ""How to tell if your toe is broken."

NOTE:

This website also provides step-by-step instructions on how to do things, so you might now always get a video here.

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9. Actual signs

Here are some actual signs seen around the world:

Sign in London department store:
BARGAIN BASEMENT UPSTAIRS.

Outside a farm:
HORSE MANURE: \$1 PER PRE-PACKED BAG; 25 CENTS
DO-IT-YOURSELF.

In a laundry on each washing machine:
PLEASE REMOVE ALL YOUR CLOTHES WHEN THE LIGHT GOES OUT.

In a London office:
AFTER TEA BREAK STAFF SHOULD EMPTY THE TEAPOT AND
STAND UPSIDE DOWN ON THE DRAINING BOARD.

On a church door:
THIS IS THE GATE OF HEAVEN. ENTER YE BY THIS DOOR.
(This door is kept locked because of the draft. Please use the side door.)

Outside a photographer's studio:
OUT TO LUNCH; IF NOT BACK BY FIVE, OUT FOR DINNER ALSO.

Outside a disco:
SMARTS IS THE MOST EXCLUSIVE DISCO IN TOWN. EVERYONE
WELCOME.

In a cleaner's window:
ANYONE LEAVING THEIR GARMENTS HERE FOR MORE THAN 30
DAYS WILL BE DISPOSED OF.

In a health food shop:
CLOSED DUE TO ILLNESS.

In a safari park:
ELEPHANTS PLEASE STAY IN YOUR CAR

In a hotel during a conference:
FOR ANYONE WHO HAS CHILDREN AND DOESN'T KNOW IT,
THERE IS A DAY CARE ON THE FIRST FLOOR.

In a farmer's field:
THE FARMER ALLOWS WALKERS TO CROSS THE FIELD
FOR FREE, BUT BE AWARE THAT THE BULL CHARGES.

On a repair shop door:
WE CAN REPAIR ANYTHING.
(Please knock hard on the door--the bell doesn't work.)

In an office building washroom:
TOILET OUT OF ORDER. PLEASE USE FLOOR BELOW.

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10. A quote I like

Will and I could hardly wait for the morning to come to get at something that interested us. That's happiness.--Orville Wright (1871-1948), co-inventor of the airplane

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11. Thought for the day

Our bank account

A 92-year-old, petite, well-poised and proud man, who is fully dressed each morning by eight o'clock, with his hair fashionably combed and shaved perfectly, even though he is legally blind, moved to a nursing home today. His wife of 70 years recently passed away, making the move necessary. After many hours of waiting patiently in the lobby of the nursing home, he smiled sweetly when told his room was ready.

As he maneuvered his walker to the elevator, I provided a visual description of his tiny room, including the eyelet sheets that had been hung on his window.

"I love it," he stated with the enthusiasm of an eight-year-old having just been presented with a new puppy.

"Mr. Jones, you haven't seen the room; just wait."

"That doesn't have anything to do with it," he replied.

"Happiness is something you decide on ahead of time. Whether I like my room or not doesn't depend on how the furniture is arranged . . . it's how I arrange my mind. I already decided to love it.

"It's a decision I make every morning when I wake up. I have a choice; I

can spend the day in bed recounting the difficulty I have with the parts of my body that no longer work, or get out of bed and be thankful for the ones that do.

"Each day is a gift, and as long as my eyes open, I'll focus on the new day and all the happy memories I've stored away. Just for this time in my life old age is like a bank account. You withdraw from what you've put in.

"So my advice to you would be to deposit a lot of happiness in the bank account of memories!

"Thank you for your part in filling my memory bank. I am still depositing."

He then urged me "to remember the five simple rules to be happy:

1. Free your heart from hatred.
2. Free your mind from worries.
3. Live simply.
4. Give more.
5. Expect less."

And as I left the room, he said, "Have a nice day . . . unless you already have other plans."

Author unknown

(if you know who wrote this and/or the source, please let me know)

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12. Advance planning department

A. Brendan Mulvey, still another colleague of mine from the College, is appearing in DEAR WORLD. at the Bristol Riverside Theatre from now until May 18 . . . for more information, please click:

<https://secure.aveight.com/brtshows/show5.html>

B. If you're a past or present faculty member at Bucks County Community College, please do join us at Faculty Federation's end-of-year party on Thursday at Il Sol in Newtown, PA . . . stop by anytime between 2 and 5 p.m.

C. Lou Woodruff (see also Section 1A) directs the Mercer County Symphonic Band in its annual spring concert on Thursday, May 15, at 8 p.m. in the Kelsey Theatre of the West Windsor campus at Mercer County Community College . . . you'll hear swing marches, traditional marches, contemporary composers, classical pieces, along with movie and show tunes . . . best of all, you'll get to see Betsy Sell and Marta Kaufmann--both staffers at Bucks County Community College and accomplished flutists--perform.

D. Women's Drum Birthing Retreat
Friday, May 30, at 7 p.m. through Sunday, June 1, at 5 p.m.

A drum is a powerful tool, which can be used for honoring Spirit, healing, clearing and generating energy. Do you yearn to be part of a sacred circle of women who bring their hearts together in an ancient way to create, play, eat, dance, laugh, share and support each other?

Cost: \$375, which includes all materials to make a 17" round, Sacred Medicine Wheel Drum with an elk skin head, cedar frame, and a beater.

Place: The retreat will be held at Snake Dancer's home in historic Landenberg PA, which overlooks panoramic views of the White Clay Creek Preserve.

To register, contact: Cyndy "Snake Dancer" Paige. 155 Coopers

Hawk Lane. Landenberg PA 19350; 610.274.3109; email:
snakedancer@rhythmoftheearth.com

For more information, please click:
<http://www.rhythmoftheearth.com/>

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PS. Please join me in honoring all mothers on Mother's Day this Sunday . . . and if you're fortunate enough to have your mother still in your life, cherish that fact.

Also, continue to pray that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . and make it a great week!

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BLAINES WORLD

BLAINESWORLD
#604
4.28.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I had the pleasure of celebrating my cousin Grace's surprise birthday party last Saturday night . . . the bash featured a boat cruise around Manhattan, and my cousin David is to be commended for arranging the lovely evening.

Everything was superb: the boat ride, the food, the dancing and even my cousin Blaine's picture-taking . . . see below for the shot he took of (l-r) my cousins Peter and Blanche, Cynthia, yours truly, and my cousin Joan:



B. Last weekend, I also attended the annual Pennsylvania Higher Education Spring Conference at the Crowne Plaza in King of Prussia, PA . . . on Friday night, we got to hear Congresswoman Allyson Schwartz (D-13 in Pennsylvania) . . . she spoke about the upcoming national election and what is needed to move this country forward . . . I then moderated a lightning rod, which was an exchange of ideas from leaders of the 10 colleges who were on attendance . . . on Saturday morning, we heard about the Faculty and College Excellence Act . . . this is a nationwide initiative on the part of the American Federation of Teachers and other organizations to address the growing staffing crisis that is threatening the quality of higher education across the United States.

C. During the week:

* I attended an informative "Media Event," held at Bucks County Community College . . . this year's topic was "Crime and Punishment: Covering the Police Beat" and featured informative presentations by Bill Moushey of THE PITTSBURGH POST GAZETTE, Erin O'Hearn of Channel 6 Action News and J.D. Mullane of THE BUCKS COUNTY COURIER TIMES.

KUDOS to Tony Rogers, the College's excellent journalism professor, for arranging the program.

It brought back memories of when I was a student host of a similar program at Rider University, back when God was a little girl, and I was thinking of a career in journalism.

* And still on memory trail, I attended a session at the College for those contemplating retirement next year . . . being there was almost a surreal experience . . . I kept thinking that it seemed like only yesterday (actually, some 31 years ago at the end of this spring semester) that I began my college teaching career at Bucks.

D. OK, OK . . . in case you haven't figured out the answer to the question that I raised last week, here's the difference between a left- and right-handed pencil (as mentioned at a recent meeting of the Bristol Rotary) . . . take any pen or pencil you're writing with, and put it in your right hand . . . pretend you're writing with it . . . look at the writing; you should be able to read it . . . put that same pen or pencil in your left hand . . . when you attempt to read it, you'll see that the writing is upside down . . . that's the difference; i.e., the writing is reversed.

YOU CAN STILL GET THE ABOVE PENCILS:

Just drop me a note: Blaine Greenfield, 15 McElroy Lane, Belle Mead, NJ 08502 . . . put down the words "PENCIL REQUEST" in the lower left corner of the outer envelope, along with my name and address . . . then please include a stamped 6.5 x 9.5 inch envelope with your name and address on the outside of that inner envelope, along with \$1.13 postage.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Brian Kurtulik--a retail sales representative with Verizon Wireless in Bridgewater, NJ.

Cynthia's phone was not working all that well . . . so we went to have it fixed or replaced . . . Brian told us that we could do that, but if we waited another two weeks, we would both be entitled to new phones . . . he thus saved us a few hundred dollars.

When we went back to get our new phones, we naturally asked for Brian . . . he was again most helpful, proving us with excellent service . . . we were impressed that he had us up and running in less than 30 minutes.

If you're a Verizon customer or want to become one, you won't go wrong by working with Brian . . . he can be reached at brian.kurulik@verizon.wireless.com.

CHANGE SUBJECT DEPARTMENT:

Here's something you might not know . . . if your company has a corporate account with Verizon, you can save (as an individual user) some 15% on your monthly bill . . . check this out the next time you're in a Verizon store; e.g., if your company does have such an account.

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2. FYI

Tommy John in 52 WEEKS (see also Sections 4C, 10 and 11) compared golf with baseball . . . methinks that his following answer provides useful advice for others, too:

In baseball, we tend to think a guy is good if he throws the ball 98 miles per hour. But it doesn't necessarily mean you can get batters out. In golf you can hit the ball 350 feet, but if you're in the woods you can't find the light of day. So, the guys who generally win in golf are the guys who can keep the ball in the fairway, shape their shots, hit it high, hit it low-do the things you have to do. That relates to pitching because you do the things you have to-curve the ball, take a little off, put a little on. By doing that, you become a better golfer and a better pitcher.

FYI, part 2

* Joyce in New Jersey (responding to something that Em in Minnesota wrote last week):

I have know Cynthia all of my life. That is because she is my sister. We

recently had a nice talk about her life and her relationship with Blaine. I can see how happy she is and she feels so blessed having met Blaine. They truly are the perfect couple and they complement each other. He has been a wonderful addition to our family, and we love him.

* Nancy in Pennsylvania:

The best news is that I gave my son "The Easy Way to Stop Smoking" book that you gave me without any great hope of it working. He had totally stopped by the time he was 1/3 of the way through the book! He was so excited that he bought another copy of the book (he didn't want to give up his copy) and sent it to his brother. I can't thank you enough. I would recommend it for anyone. He even suggested that nonsmokers read it!

THE OFFER REMAINS:

If you'd like a FREE copy of THE EASY WAY TO STOP SMOKING by Allen Carr--sent with my compliments--just send an email to my assistant Bridget: hughesbr@bucks.edu . . . put STOP SMOKING BOOK in the subject line . . . in the body of your email, include your name, snail mail address, email address, and phone numbers . . . I only ask that you keep me informed of your progress . . . or of the progress of anybody else you give the book to . . . and, also, that if you get it for yourself or for somebody else that the book gets read within 30 days of receipt.

* Chuck in Pennsylvania who just so happens to be THE GUY that I always contact for buying used cars:

I just set up a new website last weekend for anybody who might be interested in me helping them buy a used car:

<http://www.thecarcafe.net>

Or feel free to give me a call at 215.499.5364.

MY TWO CENTS:

You won't go wrong if you deal with Chuck . . . I bought my last two cars, the Subaru followed by the Toyota Avalon, from him and couldn't have been more pleased . . . not only did he save me several thousand dollars, but he made the whole car-buying experience virtually stressless.

* Shelly in Pennsylvania (for anyone interested in a house at the NJ shore):

We have one on the market! A mere block and a half from the beach (just cross Atlantic Ave.) in Ventnor. Off-street parking for at least two cars, a LARGE fenced yard with a BIG storage shed. FANTASTIC neighbors (not intrusive, just really nice!). And, it's a LEGAL DUPLEX!

The main unit: Three bedrooms, 1 + 1/2 baths, nice deck with ocean view off master bedroom, pantry, sunroom . . . very sunny and bright!

The bottom unit: Two bedrooms, full kitchen and bathroom, separate entrance. We put in new siding and new windows throughout, and are selling at less than what we paid for it--bad timing for us, good for the buyer. If anyone's interested, please contact Carol Shaw at Prudential . . . her cell phone number: 609.432.1986 or take a look at it online: http://www.prufoxroach.com/search/search_results.cfm?newstruct=yes&displaycount=20&searchName=&displayPhotos=1&quickform_type=street&quickform_value=richards%20ave&searchTab=1

* George in Pennsylvania:

When someone looks at the discounted rate for an airfare advertised on the Internet, it pays to read the fine print.

Example: A fair may be advertised at \$ 79.00 one-way.

However, when you go to book it, you may get a much higher rate. What they do not tell you is that the fair is \$ 79.00 each way plus all the taxes and airport fees. Instead of advertising \$ 158.00 round trip, plus tax and airport fees, they advertise \$ 79.00 one way.

If you're booking a one way ticket, sometimes it pays to look at a discounted round trip ticket.

Example: I was going to pay \$ 210.00 for a one-way ticket. However, when I booked the ticket round trip, the price was \$ 179.00. You need to check with the airlines to see if there is any issues with not using the second part of the ticket.

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3. Mother

Ivan tells his shrink, "Last night I dreamed you were my mother."

"How do you feel about that?" asks the psychiatrist.

"I haven't had time to think about it," says Ivan. "I overslept this morning. Then I remembered I had an appointment with you, so I gobbled down a Coke and a cookie and came straight here."

"A Coke and a cookie?" the doc replies. "You call that breakfast?"

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4. Reviews

A. Do what you can to find *THE VISITOR*, an independent film that so far is my favorite of the year . . . it's the story of a disillusioned Connecticut economics professor whose life is changed by a chance encounter in New York City . . . there he encounters a couple living in his apartment as a result of a real estate scam . . . he befriends them and, in doing so, is taught to embrace life as he learns to play the African drum . . . he also falls in love . . . Richard Jenkins, a veteran character actor (probably best known for his work in *SIX FEET UNDER*) has this first major starring role . . . I hope it won't be his last . . . I also hope that he receives an Oscar nomination for his work here . . . Haaz Sleiman as the man he befriends and Hiam Abbass as the man's mother are both equally excellent . . . rated PG-13.

B. Forget all the awards that were won by *THERE WILL BE BLOOD*, now out on DVD . . . although Daniel Day-Lewis is superb as the oil man who dominates the film, I found it both boring and overlong--and violent, too . . . rated R.

You'd do much better by renting *STARMAN* . . . it is a science fiction film that will even appeal to those who don't like that genre . . . Jeff Bridges in an Oscar-nominated performance plays the title character, an alien that has come down to Earth on a peaceful scouting mission . . . he is befriended by Karen Allen (an actress that I wish had been in more movies), and their relationship will tug at your heart . . . the accompanying soundtrack is also excellent . . . rated PG.

C. Reading *52 WEEKS* (see also Sections 2, 10 and 11) by Dave Hollander feels like it would be if you got to sit down for a beer or cup of coffee with a whole bunch of your favorite athletes to shoot the breeze.

The author spent a year tracking down and then interviewing such notables as Mike Richter, Steven Nash, Ricky Henderson, Bill Bradley, John Wooden, and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, to name just a few . . . he also conducted the last interview ever recorded with George Plimpton.

Some of what was said had me laughing out loud; e.g., when Chuck Wepner was asked about who he gave a negligee to before the Ali fight:

* I bought her [my second wife] a powder blue negligee, and I gave it to her the night before the Ali fight. I said to her, "Phyllis, I want you to wear this to bed tonight, because tonight you're gonna be sleeping with the heavyweight champion of the world." So I came back to the hotel after the fight, and she's sitting on edge of the bed in the negligee, and she says, "Do I go to his room or does he come to mine?" She had a pretty dry wit. In the meantime two of my girlfriends were at the fight sitting right beside my wife.

I also got a kick out of reading what Mariano Rivera thinks about when he pitches:

* I don't talk to the ball, but deeply in my mind I say "You know what, this pitch is gonna be a strike. Ball, you better get there." As a pitcher, we do that sometimes. You're in a situation and you say "I have to go to the corner. Don't move from there." [Mark] Fidrych was verbal--he was saying it. I don't say things. I just keep inside."

And then there I was amazed to find out that Lawrence Taylor never bothered to lift weights . . . as he notes:

* When I first got in the league I thought it would be about physical strength, and I lifted hard. You know I was lifting over 400 pounds. But as I developed as a player, after my first year or so in the league I found out it wasn't so much physical strength as it was mental fitness. So instead of lifting I tried to beat people with my mind--be in places, follow the ball, know where the ball is going to go, see the play before it's run, and understand the game of football. I tried to win the game with my mind rather than winning it with

my physical abilities.

This is a great book for any sports fan . . . you'll only regret that you weren't the guy getting to have these conversations!

D. Heard I THOUGHT MY FATHER WAS GOD, edited and read by Paul Auster . . . this is a collection of stories that came as a result of a call to listeners of National Public Radio's WEEKEND ALL THINGS CONSIDERED . . . more than 4,000 were submitted.

I couldn't really tell whether they were fact or fiction; it really didn't matter . . . after taking me a while to warm up to them, I quickly became interested in what others had to say about such subjects as Animals, Families, War, Love, and Dreams.

Some stories were mundane, but many others were quite moving . . . in particular, I was touched by the one involving a small boy's realization that his mother has pawned her wedding ring so that she can buy him a school uniform.

As the author notes: [I was most interested in] stories that defied our expectations about the world, anecdotes that revealed the mysterious and unknowable forces at work in our lives, in our family histories, in our minds and bodies, in our souls. . . . I was hoping to put together . . . a museum of American reality."

He has succeeded . . . my only criticism has to do with the narration . . . Auster handled the stories from male readers just fine . . . I would have preferred a member of the opposite for stories from female readers.

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5. TV alert

A. If you're not yet tired of reality shows, check out FARMER WANTS A WIFE . . . it's all about 10 big-city girls out to work the land to win the affection of a 29-year old Missouri farmer . . . according to Alex Strachan, Canwest News Service: "No cliché is left unturned, no sensibility left undisturbed in a show so tacky, so silly and so representative of everything that's wrong with reality TV that it's actually fun to watch, in a cheap-thrills kind of way. It'll be a big hit!" . . . Wednesdays at 9 p.m. on CW

B. NBC begins its summer concert series on TODAY with a concert performance on Friday . . . look for it to run in the 8:30-9 a.m. time slot . . . for information on other concerts on NBC featuring such performers as Mary J. Blige, Donna Summer and Kenny Chesney, please click:
<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/24371189/>

C. THE SHELL SEEKERS is an adaptation of Rosamunde Pilcher's best-selling novel . . . it stars Oscar winner Vanessa Redgrave as a woman who reflects on her life as she nears the end of it . . . Saturday at 9 p.m. on HALLMARK.

D. Every Wednesday and Sunday in May, TCM commemorates the 10th anniversary of Frank Sinatra's death with a prime-time block of programming featuring his music and film work . . . the salute begins on Sunday at 8 p.m. with FRANK SINATRA: A MAN AND HIS MUSIC, an Emmy-winning 1965 concert, followed by the 1943 musical HIGHER AND HIGHER.

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6. Praise

There was a little old lady, who every morning, stepped onto her front porch, raised her arms to the sky, and shouted: "PRAISE THE LORD!"

One day an atheist moved into the house next door.

He became irritated at the little old lady.

Every morning he'd step onto his front porch after her and yell: "THERE IS NO LORD!"

Time passed with the two of them carrying on this way every day.

One morning, in the middle of winter, the little old lady stepped onto her front porch and shouted: "PRAISE THE LORD! Please Lord, I have no food, and I am starving. Provide for me, oh Lord!"

The next morning she stepped out onto her porch and there were two huge bags of groceries sitting there.

"PRAISE THE LORD!" she cried out. 'HE HAS PROVIDED GROCERIES FOR ME!"

The atheist neighbor jumped out of the hedges and shouted: "THERE IS NO LORD; I BOUGHT THOSE GROCERIES!"

The little old lady threw her arms into the air and shouted: "PRAISE THE LORD!"

"HE HAS PROVIDED ME WITH GROCERIES AND MADE THE DEVIL PAY FOR THEM!"

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7. Websites

A. To obtain the latest gas prices in your area, please click: <http://autos.msn.com/everyday/GasStations.aspx?m=1&l=1&zip=19054&x=22&y=16>

Even if you save a few cents, it may be worth it . . . related to that idea, consider getting a AAA VISA card . . . I get an additional 3 cents off on each gallon of gas at certain stages.

B. You can see Madonna's latest concert on Wednesday night for free . . . and you'll be seeing it live, too, by clicking: <http://music.msn.com/inconcert>

No time has been specified, but I imagine it will be sometime after 8 p.m. . . . the show will also be archived for a limited time.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click: <http://www.blainesworld.net>

In the unlikely case you missed it, go to the homepage and see my greeting (by moving your cursor over the picture of my face on the right) . . . then make sure you follow my eyes as you move your cursor to one of the headings on the left.

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8. Computer tip

You can do a free reverse phone number lookup with Google . . . it's both fast and pretty easy . . . to see for yourself, go to: <http://www.google.com>

Then type in any number you want; e.g., 215 968 8000 (hyphens are not needed) . . . that one will get you the main switchboard at Bucks County Community College.

For more information, please click: <http://websearch.about.com/od/dailywebsearchtips/qt/dnt0703.htm>

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9. What I want in a man (a woman's list as she ages)

Age 21:

1. Handsome
2. Charming
3. Financially successful
4. A caring listener
5. Witty
6. In good shape
7. Dresses with style
8. Appreciates finer things
9. Full of thoughtful surprises
10. An imaginative, romantic lover

Age 32:

1. Nice looking
2. Opens car doors, holds chairs
3. Has enough money for a nice dinner
4. Listens more than talks
5. Laughs at my jokes
6. Carries bags of groceries with ease
7. Owns at least one tie
8. Appreciates a good home-cooked meal
9. Remembers birthdays and anniversaries
10. Seeks romance at least once a week

Age 43:

1. Not too ugly
2. Doesn't drive off until I'm in the car
3. Works steady--splurges on dinner out occasionally
4. Nods head when I'm talking
5. Usually remembers punch lines of jokes
6. Is in good enough shape to rearrange the furniture
7. Wears a shirt that covers his stomach
8. Knows not to buy champagne with screw-top lids
9. Remembers to put the toilet seat down
10. Shaves most weekends

Age 54:

1. Keeps hair in nose and ears trimmed
2. Doesn't belch or scratch in public
3. Doesn't borrow money too often
4. Doesn't nod off to sleep when I'm venting
5. Doesn't re-tell the same joke too many times
6. Is in good enough shape to get off couch on weekends
7. Usually wears matching socks and fresh underwear
8. Appreciates a good TV dinner
9. Remembers your name on occasion
10. Shaves some weekends

Age 65:

1. Doesn't scare small children
2. Remembers where bathroom is
3. Doesn't require much money for upkeep
4. Only snores lightly when asleep
5. Remembers why he's laughing
6. Is in good enough shape to stand up by himself
7. Usually wears some clothes
8. Likes soft foods
9. Remembers where he left his teeth
10. Remembers that it's the weekend

Age 76:

1. Breathing.
2. Doesn't miss the toilet.

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10. A quote I like

Dave Hollander in 52 WEEKS (see also Sections 2, 4C and 11), interviewed legendary basketball coach John Wooden. He wrote: One of your most famous quotes of many famous quotes is, "Be quick but don't hurry." What does it mean?

Perhaps even better was Wooden's explanation: When you hurry you're more apt to make mistakes. But you have to be quick. If you're not quick you can't get things done. Those that hurry, in so doing, will get off-balance. And balance is perhaps the second most important word we have. It has to be physical, mental, and moral balance in everything. So when I say be quick but don't hurry that means you've got to stay under control and you've got to execute quickly, or you might not get it at all. I think many teams hurry to try to make up when they get behind and when you hurry you oftentimes fall farther behind. You've got to still just play your game but you've got to be quick.

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11. Thought for the day

Little League
by Dave Hollander

My father loves to tell this story.

For kids who are either too young or not ready there is something below Little League. It is a vast wasteland where neither parents nor children are sure what to do but they show up anyway, play their roles, pay their dues, and together acquiesce to the structured ennui. Some places call it "T-Ball" (they hit off of a stationary "T" not a pitcher). We called it the "Farm Team."

Not much happened in those games. The strongest kid was usually the pitcher. He rarely got it over the plate and, when he did, the batter rarely hit it.

In the last inning of one game a miracle happened: somebody hit the ball. A lazy fly ball was hit to me in left field. To everyone's shock and dismay, I had my back turned to the batter and home plate, looking up at the sky. The shrieks from parents and teammates screaming my name caused me to turn around just as the fly ball fell untouched a few feet from me and the winning run scored.

Afterward, my father delicately inquired as to why I wasn't paying attention to the game. Untroubled by it all, I explained to him that, at that moment, a flock of birds had flown overhead and I turned to look at them. "Dad," I said "I can catch a fly ball any time, but I will never see those birds again."

Right then and there, if he wasn't sure before, my father knew I'd be a different case.

SOURCE:

Reprinted with permission of the author from 52 WEEKS (see also Sections 2, 4C and 10) by Dave Hollander, a book I really liked as evidenced by the fact that I cited it four times in this week's issue.

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12. Advance planning department

A. I'm presenting on "Networking to uncover the hidden job market" at a Job Search workshop for veterans . . . if you qualify and/or know somebody who might be interested, the date is May 1 from 5-9 p.m. at Bucks County Community College . . . I'll be the first speaker . . . there's no charge, but you need to register by calling 215.968.8490.

B. On Saturday at 2 p.m., the West Windsor Township Human Relations Council and the West Windsor-Plainsboro African American Parent Support Group will present a free screening of Michael Moore's SICK," Which explores the health care crisis in the United States, in the West Windsor, NJ Library . . . following the viewing of the film, there will be a brief presentation and open discussion . . . light refreshments will be served . . . for more information, write to hassansyed@yahoo.com or aapsg2007@aol.com.

C. Prize-winning union-themed play this Saturday night:
Organizing Abraham Lincoln
A play by Lonnie Carter & Rich Klimmer

Winner: First Prize
Playwrights' Center/Guthrie Theater 2-Headed Challenge Commission

The play tells the story of graduate teaching assistants organizing at the imaginary Abraham Lincoln University. Many of the TUGSA organizers whose successful union struggle inspired this prize-winning drama will be present for a discussion following the show.

TAUP is proud to present a unique cultural evening. Inspired by actual events that happened here at Temple, this will be a union benefit for families of Philadelphia hotel workers.

Saturday, May 3 at 7:30 p.m.
Rock Hall, Temple University
1715 North Broad Street, Philadelphia

General admission at the door: \$15
Students, Seniors and Unemployed: \$5

For information: 215.204.7641

D. A one-of-a-kind piano will be used in a unique fundraiser at Bucks County Community College on May 6. The 500,000th piano made by Steinway & Sons will be played in a concert featuring the world premiere of Prof. Steven Bresnen's "Gloria Patri," performed by the BCCC Concert Choir. Funds raised will be used to buy four new Steinways for the college.

The concert will be held at 7 p.m. in the Music and Multimedia Center on the Newtown campus. For more information, call 215.968.8425.

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PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#603

4.21.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I were apart this past weekend for one of the few times time since we met . . . because it was the beginning of her spring break, she took off to Lennox, MA to attend a mediation/dance retreat at Kripalu . . . that's perhaps her favorite locale for some much-needed rest and relaxation . . . she deserves it, if for no other reason than she has to contend with me.

B. I only regret that I couldn't join her . . . but hey, somebody had to take care of the cats . . . so in addition to doing that and pining away, of course, I caught an Actor's NET production of CYRANNO DE BERGERAC at The Heritage Center in Morrisville, PA.

KUDOS to Cheryl Doyle, the director, for making cuts in the play . . . even so, it ran well over three hours--far too long for my liking.

The first hour seemed like it could have been completely eliminated . . . it added little to the story of a guy who can't explain his love in words and must enlist the help of another.

George Hartpence as Cyrano was superb in a very demanding role . . . he was both funny and dashing, and I was impressed with his sword-fighting ability . . . Carol Thompson, his real-life wife, was also excellent as Roxanne--the woman he always loved . . . and Tom Orr, one of my favorite local actors, brought a smile to my face every time he appeared on stage as the foppish Compete de Guiche.

CYRANNO ended its run on the next night . . . however, next up for Actors' NET is the musical BIG RIVER . . . for more information, please click:

<http://actorsnetbucks.org/>

C. During the week:

* I attended an informative presentation on "The Enduring Value of Sports," given by Craig Masback (director of business affairs for Nike

Global Sports Marketing) at Princeton University.

Much of what he had to say dealt with the issue of drugs in sports . . . but as he noted, "Steroids are not a golf or baseball problem . . . they're a societal problem."

* And I spoke on "Positioning: How to Differentiate Yourself from the Competition" to the Bristol (PA) Rotary . . . in doing so, I demonstrated one way I do this; i.e., by distributing left- and right-handed pencils.

QUESTION/SPECIAL OFFER:

Do you know the difference between the two? Regardless of your answer, you can obtain these two pencils by dropping me a note: Blaine Greenfield, 15 McElroy Lane, Belle Mead, NJ 08502 . . . put down the words "PENCIL REQUEST" in the lower left corner of the outer envelope . . . then please include a stamped 6.5 x 9.5 inch envelope with your name and address on the outside of that inner envelope, along with \$1.13 postage.

See below for a picture taken after the presentation . . . that's me in the center, flanked by Rotary VP Frank Peters on the left and Jim Sell, a Rotary Board member, on the right:



SPECIAL THANKS to Mark Cater for having provided this picture . . . he is a professional photographer who does excellent work; for more information, please click: <http://www.markcarterphotography.com>

D. CONGRATULATIONS to Cynthia's sister Joyce and her husband Marty on the birth of their granddaughter Zoe Emre Dahan . . . may she bring as much joy to their lives as having me in their family does!

***** **BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD** *****

This week, it goes to Eric Goldner--a former student and computer whiz.

Eric is currently helping me with several software problems I've been having . . . he is extremely knowledgeable, as well as resourceful.

The highest compliment I can pay a past student is to someday hire him to work for me . . . Eric thus enters a select group of individuals that numbers less than 10.

Should you want to have Eric help you with any software issues, hardware problems and/or installation, programming, etc., email him at: egoldner@gmail.com . . . feel free to mention my name.

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2. FYI

Donna Giovanetti, ace division chief for the Mercer County (NJ) Division of Consumer Affairs sent this warning that may seem basic to some . . . but that unfortunately has tripped up too many others--including at least one loyal reader:

MERCER COUNTY CAUTIONS RESIDENTS ABOUT "ADVANCED FEE" CHECK SCAM

TRENTON, NJ--Mercer County Executive Brian M. Hughes and the Mercer County Office of Consumer Affairs joins the state Division of Consumer Affairs in warning residents to be wary if a stranger asks them to transfer funds from an overseas account with promises of a financial gain.

"This is just the latest in a scheme to rob unsuspecting people of their hard-earned money, and I urge people to follow heed the warning that if a deal seems too good to be true, it probably is."

According to the state, more than 60 complaints from "advance fee" scam victims have been filed last year. The advance fee scam, sometimes called the Nigerian scam, involves a con artist who typically claims to be a foreign government official or former official who needs assistance in transferring funds to the United States. The con artist asks that the person being contacted provide their bank account information and also advance their own money to help facilitate the transfer of funds. In return, the con artist promises a large payment to compensate the person for their efforts.

Victims may receive official looking documents from the scam artist to gain trust. When the victim agrees to assist, the scam artist may send an authentic-looking cashier's check written for more than the agreed-upon compensation. The victim is instructed to deposit the cashier's check in their personal account and immediately withdraw the money in excess of their compensation payment. The victim then wires these excess funds to the scam artist.

Several days or weeks later, the bank notifies the victim that the cashier's check is fake. The consumer is expected to cover the funds they unwittingly "returned" to the scam artist. A variation of the scheme includes a bogus job offer where the "recruiter" asks the victim to provide their social security number and provides a cashier's check as an advance against the first paycheck. Ultimately, any funds provided to the con artist are lost and no transfer of funds or promised payment occurs.

Consumers should never give bank account and other personal information to unknown callers or in response to an email, the state warns.

Consumers who receive advance fee fraud emails, but have not suffered a money loss, are best served by adding the sender to their email "block" list and forwarding the emails to their Internet Service Provider. Consumers who have lost money or have mistakenly given personal account information

to the scammer can contact the Mercer County Division of Consumer Affairs at 609.989.6671.

MY TWO CENTS:

If you live in Bucks County (PA), you won't go wrong by contacting Mike Bannon, director/chief sealer for the Consumer Protection Office; 215.348.7442 . . . folks living in other areas should contact their local consumer officials.

FYI, part 2

* If you know of any current student at Bucks County Community College who may qualify, please forward this information:

The Dean's Academic Scholarship is open to all returning students this coming fall semester. Part-time students are also eligible!

It covers tuition and fees for full- and part-time students.

Criteria:

1. You must be a legal resident of Bucks County.
2. You must have at least a 3.5 GPA. The higher, the better.

If you qualify and would like me to nominate you, please send me the following information on or before 4.29.07:

Your name

Your student ID number

Send it to:

bginbc@aol.com

and put in subject line:

Dean's Academic Scholarship

ALSO:

There are scholarships for entering students, too . . . so if you know anybody in this category, please have them contact me at once.

* Kevin in Pennsylvania:

Have you ever seen Mrs Hughes? She's verrrrry funny. Search for her on YouTube.

GREAT MINDS THINKING ALIKE:

I also found her funny. Even better than YouTube is her actual website where you can actually see her perform:

<http://www.mrshughes.com/>

* Mike in New Jersey (with a REQUEST FOR HELP):

My name is Michael Venanzi, and I am a sophomore at Rider University majoring in business marketing. Marketing has always been my field of interest simply because it fits my personality of being a great public speaker and an excellent listener. For the last four years, I have been working for a privately owned pharmacy where I have gained a great deal of knowledge about the pharmaceutical industry. As I enter my last two years of college, I have come up with the conclusion that I wish to become a sales representative for a pharmaceutical company after graduating in 2010. In the meantime, I am up for gaining as much knowledge as possible by being a marketing intern and truly getting a glimpse of what the marketing industry is really like. If you know

of anyone that needs an intern, please forward this information to them. My email address is venanzi@rider.edu.

* Joan in Pennsylvania:

I heard on a talk show during all my spare time this week that SMART PEOPLE was filmed before JUNO, but just released second. So Ellen Paige's JUNO performance was really a take-off on this other film.

* Em in Minnesota, one of the first readers of BLAINESWORLD, responding to my request for an update on what she's been up to: I just changed my email address and Blaine asked me to write something for the newsletter. I met Blaine online, chatting through AOL back in the "stone ages" of about 1996-'97. He'd talk marketing, which I loved learning about, and I'd talk about having found the love of my life online. While I could grasp the marketing chatter, he could NOT understand the love I was feeling. I remember thinking how sad this was for him. In '99 I packed up my life in California and moved to Minne*snow*ta, and married my soulmate, affectionately known to me as My Jeffie. I'm sure Blaine probably thought I was nuts! :)

I've been a subscriber to BLAINESWORLD, I believe, since its inception. And what a delight it's been to watch his and Cynthia's relationship grow! I do believe he now knows what I was talking about all those years ago . . . isn't that right Blaine?

MY ANSWER:
Yes!

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3. Emergencies

During a company-held workshop on emergencies, our instructor asked, "What would you do if you received a letter bomb?"

One guy knew: "Write 'Return to Sender.'"

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4. Reviews

A. LEATHERHEADS aims to be a screwball comedy, along the lines of those from the 1930s and 1940s starring Katherine Hepburn and Rosalind Russell . . . and the premise is a good one; i.e., about the birth of pro football in 1925 . . . yet somehow it falls flat, despite engaging performances by George Clooney, Renee Zellweger and John Krasinski . . . I also liked the score by Randy Newman . . . rated PG-13.

B. Out on DVD is SWEENEY TODD . . . here's what I had to say about in BLAINESWORLD #588:

[my] feeling about the film can be summed-up in two words:
miss it!

I haven't changed my opinion . . . however, if you're looking for something much more enjoyable to rent, catch LITTLE MANHATTAN . . . it is a touching tale of urban puppy love,

set to New York backgrounds . . . you might only recognize the adult actors (Cynthia Nixon and Bradley Whitford), but the kids (Josh Hutcherson and Charlie Ray) are the real reason for watching this film . . . rated PG, but don't let that discourage you . . . any age will enjoy this charmer!

C. If you're looking for the perfect book to put the current election season in perspective, get hold of *IDIOTS, HYPOCRITES, DEMAGOGUES, AND MORE IDIOTS* by Paul Slansky.

The author, to quote the subtitle, takes a look at *NOT-SO-GREAT MOMENTS IN MODERN AMERICAN POLITICS* . . . regardless of your political affiliation, you'll laugh at such comments as those made by:

* President Bush: Our enemies are innovative and resourceful, and so are we. They never stop thinking about new ways to harm our country and our people, and neither do we.

* President Clinton [railing against excessive drug profits in 1993]: The prescription drug industry is spending one billion more dollars a year on advertising than they are developing new jugs. Er, drugs.

You'll also learn the truth behind the stories that you may have read, such as the following:

* With Gary Hart's presidential hopes evaporating in the wake of his having been found alone at home with nonwife Donna Rice, the *National Enquirer* unearthed a photo of her sitting on his lap. "The attractive lady whom I had only recently been introduced to dropped into my lap," Hart explained, adding gallantly, "I chose not to dump her off."

And, lastly, you'll shake your head in amazement at the stupidity of some rather famous folks--including former presidents such as this one:

* Nixon thought he could use Presley in his antidrug efforts. "I think you can reach young people in a way no one in the government can," he said, and Elvis quickly agreed. "I can go right into a group of hippies and young people and be accepted, he said. "This can be real helpful." Then, having buttered Nixon up, Presley got to his own agenda: "Mr. President, can you get me a badge from the Narcotics Bureau? I've been trying to get a badge from them for my collection." Nixon told an aide, "I'd like to do that. See that he gets one," prompting an excited Elvis to surprise him with a big hug. But then, Presley had a right to be joyous--the federal drug agent's badge he'd tricked Tricky Dick into giving him protected him from then on from any airport searches.

Unreal!

And so is much more of this book that I thoroughly enjoyed . . . you will, too.

D. Heard the CD version of *ULTRAMETABOLISM: THE SIMPLE PLAN FOR AUTOMATIC WEIGHT LOSS*, written and read by Dr. Mark Hyman.

Although I've read many diet books over the years, this one made a lot of sense because it didn't just automatically tell you

to eat less and exercise more . . . rather, it explains the concept of nutrigenomics--the science of how food talks to our genes.

It also showed me the folly of skipping breakfast, citing the example of a Sumo wrestler . . . he will typically not eat anything upon awakening, then exercise for several hours . . . by the time he eats dinner, he eats too much because he has starved himself throughout the day . . . and he does this just before going to sleep (another no-no).

This is one of just many ideas that caught my attention . . . among the others:

- * No bug will ever go near an opened tub of margarine.
- * Processed carbs are empty carbs.
- * Carbs should come from whole, unprocessed foods. If you eat these, you will lose weight.
- * My grandmother said: Buy fresh, eat fresh.
- * That led to my saying: If it has a label, don't eat it.
- * Artificial sweeteners create the need for more sweeteners in your body.
- * Eat early and eat often. Graze, don't gouge.
- * Chocolate can be good for you, but it must be dark with a high percentage of cocoa. And only eat a few squares.
- * Follow this principle: Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and dinner like a pauper.
- * Your plate should like an impressionist panting with plenty of color.
- * Try to get up to 10,000 steps a day. Also, get a pedometer.

Perhaps best of all, Dr. Hyman provides an informative website . . . it can be viewed at:

<http://www.ultrametabolism.com/>

There's lots of free useful advice there that goes beyond what was in the book.

This fine program is available for purchase or rental . . . if you want to get it, please click:

<http://www.achievementlibrary.com/>

Above is the tape rental club I belong to; i.e., the Achievement Tape Library . . . this a great way to hear CDs and/or audio cassette tapes, view videos, etc.--all for a fraction of what it would cost to buy them . . . call the head of the firm (Paul Arroyo) directly at 1.800.735.3660 and mention my name . . . that way, you'll be sure to pay even higher prices . . . NOT.

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5. TV alert

A. GREAT PERFORMANCES has Anthony Sher starring in PRIMO, a one-man play, as Italian chemist Primo Levi who recalls his hellish Holocaust experiences . . . Thursday at 10 p.m. on PBS . . . check local listings because PBS times and stations often vary.

B AMERICAN EXPERIENCE: ROBERTO CLEMENTE, a profile of the late baseball great and humanitarian, airs on Friday at 3 p.m. on PBS; repeated on Sunday at 9 a.m. . . . check local listings because PBS times and stations often vary.

C. STORM CELL stars Mimi Rogers as the person who saves the day when a twister hits . . . Saturday at 9 p.m. on LIFETIME.

D. CELEBRACADABRA premieres on Sunday at 9 p.m. on VH1 . . . seven celebs, including C. Thomas Howell and Chris "Kid" Reid, train as magicians in the new reality show.

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6. Help needed

A psychiatrist gets a frantic call. "You've got to help me, Doctor," a woman says. "My husband thinks he's a big opera star. He sings every night at the top of his lungs! Aida! Rigoletto! Traviata!"

"Send him to me," the shrink says. "I'll see what I can do."

A week later, the woman calls again. "Doc, I don't know how you did it! He's not singing nearly as much. Did you cure his delusion?"

"No," says the psychiatrist. "I just gave him a smaller part."

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7. Websites

A. To find the best in how to videos, do it yourself ideas and useful tutorials, please click:

<http://www.5min.com/>

5min's vision is very simple: Everyone is an expert at something, so come on and share your skills. You can also learn from others; e.g.:

- * How to upload the smart way;
- * How to make a prom corsage;
- * How to unlock your iPhone for any SIM; and
- * How to make a balloon puddle.

B. What would you do if you were stuck in an elevator for 41 hours?

It happened to one guy . . . to both read and see more, please click:

http://news.aol.com/story/_a/video-shows-man-in-elevator-for-41-hours/20080421133609990001

Methinks you'll also like the accompanying classical soundtrack, so put on your speakers when viewing.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view

it, please click:

<http://www.blainesworld.net>

Prepare to be amazedif you think you're the only one who views my webpage, think again . . . in fact, even as you're reading, well . . . to see for yourself how many others are also reading, look at the counter at the bottom left.

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8. Computer tip

Has this been happening lately? You're suddenly getting lots of "bounced" emails with subjects like "DELIVERY FAILURE, " "Undelivered mail returned to sender" and even some "Out of the office" notices . . . but when you open the email, the original sent message was a spam message. What's worse, it looks like you sent it. You might just get a few of these bounces. Or you might get a few hundred.

If this has unfortunately been happening to you, please click the following link for more information:

<http://secondwheel.googlepages.com/backscatter>

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9. Evening rounds

It was a small town, and the patrolman was making his evening rounds. As he was checking a used car lot, he came upon two little old ladies sitting in a used car.

He stopped and asked them why they were sitting there in the car. Were they trying to steal it?

"Heavens no, we bought it."

"Then why don't you drive it away?"

"We can't drive."

"Then why did you buy it?"

"We were told that if we bought a used car here, we'd get screwed. So we're just waiting."

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10. A quote I like

Compromise: The art of dividing a cake in such a way that everybody believes he got the biggest piece.--Sherry Rothfield

MR. CURIOUS HERE:

Anybody know who Sherry Rothfeld was/is? If you can provide any more information about this person, it would be much appreciated.

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11. Thought for the day

Be forewarned that the following tale is a bit on the longish side, but methinks well worth your time:

Three questions
by Leo Tolstoy

One day it occurred to a certain emperor that if he only knew the answers to three questions, he would never stray in any matter.

What is the best time to do each thing? Who are the most important people to work with? What is the most important thing to do at all times?

The emperor issued a decree throughout his kingdom announcing that whoever could answer the questions would receive a great reward. Many who read the decree made their way to the palace at once, each person with a different answer.

In reply to the first question, one person advised that the emperor make up a thorough time schedule, consecrating every hour, day, month, and year for certain tasks and then follow the schedule to the letter. Only then could he hope to do every task at the right time.

Another person replied that it was impossible to plan in advance and that the emperor should put all vain amusements aside and remain attentive to everything in order to know what to do at what time.

Someone else insisted that, by himself, the emperor could never hope to have all the foresight and competence necessary to decide when to do each and every task and what he really needed was to set up a Council of the Wise and then to act according to their advice.

Someone else said that certain matters required immediate decision and could not wait for consultation, but if he wanted to know in advance what was going to happen he should consult magicians and soothsayers.

The responses to the second question also lacked accord.

One person said that the emperor needed to place all his trust in administrators, another urged reliance on priests and monks, while others recommended physicians. Still others put their faith in warriors.

The third question drew a similar variety of answers. Some said science was the most important pursuit. Others insisted on religion. Yet others claimed the most important thing was military skill.

The emperor was not pleased with any of the answers, and no reward was given.

After several nights of reflection, the emperor resolved to visit a hermit who lived up on the mountain and was said to be an enlightened man. The emperor wished to find the hermit to ask him the three questions, though he knew the hermit never left the mountains and was known to receive only the poor, refusing to have anything to do with persons of wealth or power. So the emperor disguised himself as a simple peasant and ordered his attendants to wait for him at the foot of the

mountain while he climbed the slope alone to seek the hermit.

Reaching the holy man's dwelling place, the emperor found the hermit digging a garden in front of his hut. When the hermit saw the stranger, he nodded his head in greeting and continued to dig. The labor was obviously hard on him. He was an old man, and each time he thrust his spade into the ground to turn the earth, he heaved heavily.

The emperor approached him and said, "I have come here to ask your help with three questions: When is the best time to do each thing? Who are the most important people to work with? What is the most important thing to do at all times?"

The hermit listened attentively but only patted the emperor on the shoulder and continued digging. The emperor said, "You must be tired. Here, let me give you a hand with that." The hermit thanked him, handed the emperor the spade, and then sat down on the ground to rest.

After he had dug two rows, the emperor stopped and turned to the hermit and repeated his three questions. The hermit still did not answer, but instead stood up and pointed to the spade and said, "Why don't you rest now? I can take over again." But the emperor continued to dig. One hour passed, then two. Finally the sun began to set behind the mountain. The emperor put down the spade and said to the hermit, "I came here to ask if you could answer my three questions. But if you can't give me any answer, please let me know so that I can get on my way home."

The hermit lifted his head and asked the emperor, "Do you hear someone running over there?" The emperor turned his head. They both saw a man with a long white beard emerge from the woods. He ran wildly, pressing his hands against a bloody wound in his stomach. The man ran toward the emperor before falling unconscious to the ground, where he lay groaning. Opening the man's clothing, the emperor and hermit saw that the man had received a deep gash. The emperor cleaned the wound thoroughly and then used his own shirt to bandage it, but the blood completely soaked it within minutes. He rinsed the shirt out and bandaged the wound a second time and continued to do so until the flow of blood had stopped.

At last the wounded man regained consciousness and asked for a drink of water. The emperor ran down to the stream and brought back a jug of fresh water. Meanwhile, the sun had disappeared and the night air had begun to turn cold. The hermit gave the emperor a hand in carrying the man into the hut where they laid him down on the hermit's bed. The man closed his eyes and lay quietly. The emperor was worn out from the long day of climbing the mountain and digging the garden. Leaning against the doorway, he fell asleep. When he rose, the sun had already risen over the mountain. For a moment he forgot where he was and what he had come here for. He looked over to the bed and saw the wounded man also looking around him in confusion. When he saw the emperor, he stared at him intently and then said in a faint whisper, "Please forgive me."

"But what have you done that I should forgive you?" the emperor asked.

"You do not know me, your majesty, but I know you. I was your sworn enemy, and I had vowed to take vengeance on you, for during the last war you killed my brother and seized my property. When I learned that you were coming alone to the mountain to meet the hermit, I resolved to surprise you on your way back to kill you. But after waiting a long

time there was still no sign of you, and so I left my ambush in order to seek you out. But instead of finding you, I came across your attendants, who recognized me, giving me this wound. Luckily, I escaped and ran here. If I hadn't met you I would surely be dead by now. I had intended to kill you, but instead you saved my life! I am ashamed and grateful beyond words. If I live, I vow to be your servant for the rest of my life, and I will bid my children and grandchildren to do the same. Please grant me your forgiveness."

The emperor was overjoyed to see that he was so easily reconciled with a former enemy. He not only forgave the man but promised to return all the man's property and to send his own physician and servants to wait on the man until he was completely healed. After ordering his attendants to take the man home, the emperor returned to see the hermit. Before returning to the palace the emperor wanted to repeat his three questions one last time. He found the hermit sowing seeds in the earth they had dug the day before.

The hermit stood up and looked at the emperor. "But your questions have already been answered."

"How's that?" the emperor asked, puzzled.

"Yesterday, if you had not taken pity on my age and given me a hand with digging these beds, you would have been attacked by that man on your way home. Then you would have deeply regretted not staying with me. Therefore the most important time was the time you were digging in the beds, the most important person was myself, and the most important pursuit was to help me. Later, when the wounded man ran up here, the most important time was the time you spent dressing his wound, for if you had not cared for him he would have died and you would have lost the chance to be reconciled with him. Likewise, he was the most important person, and the most important pursuit was taking care of his wound. Remember that there is only one important time and is Now. The present moment is the only time over which we have dominion. The most important person is always the person with whom you are, who is right before you, for who knows if you will have dealings with any other person in the future. The most important pursuit is making that person, the one standing at you side, happy, for that alone is the pursuit of life."

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12. Advance planning department

A. I'm presenting on "Networking to uncover the hidden job market" at a Job Search workshop for veterans . . . if you qualify and/or know somebody who might be interested, the date is May 1 from 5-9 p.m. at Bucks County Community College . . . I'll be the first speaker . . . there's no charge, but you need to register by calling 215.968.8490.

B. FRIDAY, MAY 2 FROM 4:30-6:30 p.m. at Barnes & Noble Princeton
EDUCATOR WORKSHOP: Dr. Dan Gottlieb, author of LEARNING
FROM THE HEART: LESSONS OF LIVING, LOVING AND LISTENING

Pre-K-12 Educators, Librarians and Media Specialists are invited to a special workshop with psychologist, radio and television personality Dr. Dan Gottlieb which includes a discussion of the message carried

in his latest book. Refreshments, prizes, and goody bags given to eligible attendees. The school with the highest attendance wins a special prize. Pre-registration is required by emailing crm2646@bn.com and 2 professional development units are given to all eligible attendees.

Though the workshop is primarily for educators, the general public is invited to attend and be seated in the back . . . Gottlieb, by the way, wrote the very touching LETTERS TO SAM (reviewed in BLAINESWORLD #544).

C. Jean in Pennsylvania:

St. Anne Ukrainian Catholic Church resumes its weekly Pyrohy (Pierogies- homemade) and Kielbasa Sale on Wednesday, May 7. To place an order, call 215.343.9809 from 9 a.m. to noon on any Wednesday, starting May 7. Pick-up from 12:30 to 3 p.m.; evening pick-up available from 6 to 7 p.m. only if requested when placing order.

Cost is \$5.50 per dozen for pyrohy and \$3.50 per lb. for kielbasa.

PS. Don't forget that Wednesday is Administrative Professionals Day, formerly known as Secretary's day . . . it is meant to recognize the work of secretaries, administrative assistants, receptionists, and other administrative professionals.

I'm particularly blessed to work with many such fine folks, including Bridget Hughes, Jayne Venanzi, Mary Kuna, Joan Grow, Kathy Gift, and Darshelle Miles . . . MANY THANKS to you all!

Also, please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . and make it a great week
!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#602

4.14.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I had a blast this past Saturday with friends . . . we went to Duck Sauce (215.860.8879) in Newtown, PA, and, as always, had a splendid dinner . . . the restaurant features fusion-style items . . . whatever you do, don't miss the pecan ribs . . . they're as good as we've ever had anywhere else.

From there, we went to the Newtown Arts Company's tuneful production of OKLAHOMA! at the Newtown Theatre . . . Bill Weir and Elizabeth Rzasas were both excellent in the leading roles, and we also liked the scene-stealing work of John Rasiej . . . the latter actor had us laughing every time he was on stage . . . and Mary Liz Ivins did a fine job of directing the show.

The next Newtown Arts production is LOVE, SEX AND THE IRS, slated to run June 12-18 . . . for more information, please click: <http://www.newtownartscompany.com>

Our evening concluded with ice cream, naturally, at the Zebra-Striped Whale (215-860-4122)--also in Newtown . . . we always enjoy the ice cream there, as well as the experience of just sitting in the very attractive store . . . and we appreciated that we weren't kicked out at the normal closing time of 11 p.m.

B. On Sunday, we journeyed to South Jersey to the home of our friends Steve and Karen . . . they were hosting a brunch for several of us who were involved with the Marketing Education program at Rider University back in the early 1970s.

There was sooooo much food . . . though everything was delicious, we most enjoyed the Yamberry Muffins . . . for that recipe, please click: <http://wondertime.go.com/life-at-home/article/yamberry-muffins-recipe.html>

These were as tasty an item as we've had for quite time; they're also a good source of fiber.

It was nice getting together with old friends . . . we were disappointed that our professor and mentor, Dr. Al Sternberg, wasn't able to make it because he suffered a minor stroke just a few days earlier . . . we were all glad to hear that he's already out of the hospital en route to a speedy recovery.

Molly Kervick was another person who was missed . . . she, too, had some health problems (in fact, a lot of health problems) and just recently got out of the hospital after spending far too much time there . . . we were happy to hear that she's now undergoing rehab at her home.

C. During the week, I attended an informative presentation at the Mary Jacobs Library in Rocky Hill, NJ, on the making of documentary films . . . film makers Tom and Linda Spain, joined by Monica Lange, discussed their 15-month adventure making a two-hour special for PBS that traced the history of the Hudson River . . . I was amazed to learn that they shot some 50 feet of film for every one foot of film that made the final print.

I also heard some good news . . . friends Barry and Jody Sysler became grandparents for the first time, welcoming Holden Andrew Sysler into the world . . . CONGRATULATIONS!

D. \$1,000 REWARD (increased from \$500!):
Yes, your eyes don't deceive you . . . help my brother and me find a buyer for our mother's apartment in Floral Park, NY, and this amount is yours . . . see below for more information:

A SPECTACULAR RENOVATED 1 BEDROOM, 1 1/2 BATH. LARGE LIVING ROOM, SLIDING GLASS DOORS AND BALCONY. SUNNY GOLF VIEWS. SEPARATE DINING ROOM / DEN. HUGE MASTER BEDROOM. INCREDIBLE OUTFITTED CLOSETS. HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE. BUILDING # 1. INCLUDES INDOOR PARKING. \$569,000.

You also get access to all stores downstairs, including a bank, restaurant, movie theater, supermarket, cleaner's, drugstore, health club, etc. . . . golf and/or tennis memberships are also available at a very reasonable extra cost . . . and there are both indoor and outdoor pools . . . for more information about the overall community, please click:

<http://www.northshoretowers.com>

To find out more about the apartment, call Annette Kroll at 718.631.8867 . . . make sure you let me know if you or somebody you know contacts Annette, so that if there's a sale as a result, I can get you your \$1,000. . . this is no joke!

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Natalie Kaye and Ivan Winegar--the real stars of OKLAHOMA! (see also Section 1A) at least in my opinion.

They both danced with great enthusiasm, sang on key and delivered their lines with perfection . . . it was a real thrill to see them on stage, though that said, I must admit to being prejudiced in that they're our good friends.

This was the first time that Natalie, programming coordinator of the Women's Center at Bucks County Community College, and Ivan, a nurse, have performed together on stage . . . I'm hoping it won't be the last!

2. FYI

John Gray in WHY MARS & VENUS COLLIDE (see also Sections 4C, 10 and 11) provides this useful advice on how men can get points from the women they love:

Men get more points from giving hugs than for being a good provider. When I discovered scoring system, I began giving my wife four hugs a day; once when I first her in the morning, one when I say good-bye, one when I return, and one before bed. By finding her to give the hugs, I get an extra point each time for finding her. I score eight points just by giving four points.

By showing some interest and asking a few questions about her day, I can easily earn another ten points. Every time I ask about something with an awareness of what she was doing, I score a point. A man gets more points when his questions are specific. Rather than saying, "How was your day?" asking, "Did you get what you wanted at the marketing meeting?" shows real involvement. He will always get points for showing interest and asking about her day, but when he asks specific questions like how the appointment with the doctor went or how the pitch went at lunch, he gets more points for knowing what goes on in her life and being interested in the outcome. If he calls her during the day occasionally to ask how something went, he gets even more points. . . .

Another simple way to earn points is for him to find her first when he arrives home or to stop what he is doing if she arrives later, and to greet her with a hug. He gets a point for the hug, a point for initiating the hug, and then another point for stopping what he was doing to make her a priority.

FYI, part 2

* Warren in Pennsylvania:

Congratulations on reaching another milestone! 600 and still going strong!

* Alicia in Pennsylvania:

I went to see MENOPAULSE this past weekend, and laughed until my sides hurt. There were several men who also went and said they also enjoyed it. It only runs until April 27th, so if you don't want to miss it, you don't have much time left.

For more information, please click:

http://www.menopausehemusical.com/main.php?page=show.details_g4&getshow=36

* Pat in Pennsylvania:

One very powerful and easy way to remember someone's name is to say it out loud three times when you meet them. No joke. When you meet someone and they tell you their name, be honest with them and tell them that if you say someone's name 3Xs out loud, you will remember it. And then slowly say their name 3Xs and maybe even pronounce it different ways to get their feedback to make sure you are saying it correctly. Seems to work all the time. But remember, you need to actually say it THREE times OUT LOUD.

* Dana in Pennsylvania:

You may have read these before, but in case you haven't, these are some great tips for . . .

Handling Telemarketers

Three Little Words That Work!!

1. The three little words are: "Hold On, Please . . . "

Saying this, while putting down your phone and walking off (instead of hanging-up immediately) would make each telemarketing call so much more time-consuming that boiler room sales would grind to a halt.

Then when you eventually hear the phone company's "beep-beep-beep" tone, you know it's time to go back and hang up your handset, which has efficiently completed its task.

These three little words will help eliminate telephone soliciting.

2. Do you ever get those annoying phone calls with no one on the other end?

This is a telemarketing technique where a machine makes phone calls and records the time of day when a person answers the phone.

This technique is used to determine the best time of day for a "real" sales person to call back and get someone at home.

What you can do after answering, if you notice there is no one there, is to immediately start hitting your # button on the phone, 6 or 7 times, as quickly as possible. This confuses the machine that dialed the call and it kicks your number out of their system. Gosh, what a shame not to have your name in their system any longer!!!

3. Junk Mail Help: I LOVE THIS ONE!

When you get so-called ads enclosed with your phone or utility bill, return these "ads" with your payment. Let the sending companies throw their own junk mail away.

When you get those pre-approved letters in the mail for everything from credit cards to 2nd mortgages and similar type junk, do not throw away the return envelope.

Most of these come with postage-paid return envelopes, right? It costs them more than the regular cents postage IF and when they receive them back.

It costs them nothing if you throw them away! The postage was around 50 cents before the last increase and it is according to the weight. In that case, why not get rid of some of your other junk mail and put it in these cool little, postage-paid return envelopes.

And then there's this from Andy Rooney's 60 MINUTES:

Send an ad for your local chimney cleaner to American Express. Send a pizza coupon to Citibank. If you didn't get anything else that day, then just send them their blank application back!

If you want to remain anonymous, just make sure your name isn't on anything you send them.

You can even send the envelope back empty if you want to just to keep them guessing! It still costs them 50 cents.

The banks and credit card companies are currently getting a lot of their own junk back in the mail, but folks, we need to OVERWHELM them. Let's let them know what it's like to get lots of junk mail, and best of all, they're paying for it . . . twice!!

Let's help keep our postal service busy since they are saying that e-mail is cutting into their business profits, and that's why they need to increase postage costs again. You get the idea!

If enough people follow these tips, they will work. I have been doing this for years, and I get very little junk mail anymore.

YES, I KNOW:

Rooney did not actually write the above passage . . . yet I thought it was nevertheless fun and thought you would do so, too . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.snopes.com/politics/business/telemarket.asp>

* Allen in Pennsylvania:

My website has been redesigned and is now much more user friendly. Please follow the link and check it out. While you're there, sign the guestbook!

<http://www.allenhoey.com>

MY TWO CENTS:

Make sure you check out some of Allen's poems, available by clicking "Sample Poems" on the left.

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3. Beautiful

Our favorite restaurant has a waitress whose nametag reads "Beautiful."

"Is that really your name?" I asked her.

"No," she admitted. "But If people are going to holler at me all day, I can at least be called something I like."

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4. Reviews

A. SMART PEOPLE is a dark comedy about the life of a widowed and self-absorbed literature professor who has alienated the rest of his family . . . only after he meets one of his former students is he able to begin taking the steps necessary to move forward in his life . . . I thought the scenes of academic life were very realistic; however, overall, I didn't enjoy the film and as consequently would not recommend it . . . there were very few laughs . . . Dennis Quaid was fine as the professor, as was

Sarah Jessica Parker as his girlfriend . . . I was less impressed with the work of Ellen Page (see also Section 4B) she gave almost a repeat performance of her previous film . . .and Thomas Haden Church, so funny in SIDEWAYS, didn't have enough to do here . . . rated R.

B. JUNO is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #588 follows:

JUNO is a quirky comedy about a teenager who decides to have sex and then becomes pregnant as a result . . . it grew on me and now, thinking about it afterwards, I liked it and would recommend that you see it too . . . the accompanying soundtrack is great, as is the cast--ranging from Ellen Page in the title role to J.K. Simmons (so good in the SPIDER-MAN) movies . . . there's also an ending that moved me, but nice guy that I am, I won't give away.

In addition, the dialogue was great; e.g., to cite just a few snippets:

* Juno MacGuff: [commenting that the repercussions of pregnancy have forced her into] "dealing with things way beyond my maturing level."

* Vanessa Loring: Your parents are probably wondering where you are.
Juno MacGuff: Nah... I mean, I'm already pregnant, so what other kind of shenanigans could I get into?

* Mac MacGuff: Did you see that coming?
Bren: Yeah . . . but I was hoping she was expelled or into hard drugs.
Mac MacGuff: Or DWI . . . anything but this.

* Juno MacGuff: As far as boyfriends go, Paulie Bleeker is totally boss. He is the cheese to my macaroni.

* Juno MacGuff: You should try talking to it. 'Cause, like, supposedly they can hear you even though it's all, like, ten-thousand leagues under the sea.

* Juno MacGuff: You're like . . . the coolest person I've ever met--and you don't even have to try?
Paulie Bleeker: Actually I try really hard.

Rated PG-13.

C. John Gray has long been one of my favorite authors when it comes to writing about relationships . . .from his MEN ARE FROM MARS, WOMEN ARE FROM VENUS to his latest, WHY MARS & VENUS COLLIDE (see also Sections 2, 10 and 11), he continues to give sound advice that can be applied in countless situations.

This latter book's subtitle tells you right away what you will gain by reading it; i.e., you'll learn about IMPROVING RELATIONSHIPS BY UNDERSTANDING HOW MEN AND WOMEN COPE DIFFERENTLY WITH STRESS.

Although some of the material has appeared in other material written by Gray, I still found it worthwhile to be reminded that:

* Women admire a man who can stay cool and calm. Women are also pleased when men fix things. Yet when a man offers his quick fixes to her emotional accounts of the day, she interprets his efforts as a dismissal of her feelings. She needs him simply to listen and ask more questions. The more she feels heard and understood,

the better she is going to feel.

Moreover, women will find it equally beneficial to be reminded about what men often need in a relationship:

* Likewise, when a woman minimizes her interruptions of a man's focused activities, she helps him to keep his stress levels down. Leaving a man alone and ignoring him is sometimes the best way to support him. Understanding that these tendencies are based on our brain differences frees us from taking things personally and reveals practical ways to support our partners in coping better with their stresses.

I am continually amazed that the author has an uncanny ability to see things from the perspective of both sexes . . . and others, including women, have told me that he really knows his stuff . . . as for instance when he observes:

* Needing a partner is not a weakness. It is why we partner up. Men and women just have different primary needs. Men need to feel needed, and women need to feel they are not alone. Just as a woman is happiest when she feels she is getting what she needs from her partner, a man is happiest when he feels successful in meeting his partner's needs. This is an important distinction. We certainly need each other, but for different reasons.

Now if I can only remember to look back at this book from time to time, if just to be reminded about all that I have forgotten . . . Chapter 8, "How to Stop Fighting and Make Up," by itself makes WHY MARS & VENUS COLLIDE a worthwhile purchase and/or gift for anybody involved in a relationship . . . that you get so much other great advice is like having your very own counselor!

D. When I was a kid, I couldn't get enough of the game of baseball . . . I watched games on TV and went to them, and I also read everything about the subject that I could.

For some reason, I lost interest in it sometime around my teenage years . . . maybe it was when my mother threw out my collection of baseball cards (including one signed by Sandy Koufax!) or perhaps it's when I discovered that girls were frankly more interesting, but I also forgot many of my childhood memories . . . that is, until I came across BASEBALL: A HISTORY OF AMERICA'S FAVORITE GAME by NEW YORK TIMES sports columnist George Vecsey.

What a joy it was to hear this book over the past several days as I drove to and from work . . . it reminded me of the days when I followed both the New York Yankees and Brooklyn Dodgers, but it also gave me a mini-history lesson about the Black Sox 1919 scandal (and why it happened), along with an appreciation of what it was like to have to play in the Negro Leagues.

I also liked hearing about how baseball became popular in the United States . . . and learning that Abner Doubleday really had little to do with the game's development.

It was fun hearing about Babe Ruth and Jackie Robinson, but equally interesting to learn about the role of such executives as Branch Rickey and my personal favorite, Bill Veeck.

And I got a kick learning why Ricky Henderson had so many doubles in his career . . . it seems he could have stretched many of them into triples, but held off on doing so in order to then be able to steal third (and add to his all-time steals record).

I don't know if BASEBALL will get me to return to the ballpark anytime in the near future . . . yet I'd still recommend the book to any fan--past, present or future.

My only criticism is that the book is a bit choppy . . . it goes back and forth in history, whereas my preference would have been for a straight chronological approach.

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5. TV alert

A. SAMANTHA WHO? has returned on Mondays at 9:32 p.m. on ABC . . . this funny comedy, starring Christina Applegate, is about a woman who has no memory of her past life after she was in an accident.

B. Another very funny show, 30 ROCK, returns on Thursdays at 8:30 p.m. on NBC . . . in this week's episode, Tim Conway guests as a TV legend.

C. If you've never seen MONK on its regular cable station (USA), you can see repeats on Sundays at 8 p.m. on NBC . . . this funny show is about a freelance detective/consultant who must also deal with his own obsessive compulsive behavior . . . Tony Shaloub is outstanding as the main character.

Repeats of another USA show, PSYCH, follows at 9 p.m. on NBC . . . this one is about a novice sleuth who gets hired by the police after he cons them into thinking he has psychic powers that help solve crimes.

D. SWEET NOTHING IN MY EAR is about a married couple whose relationship begins to suffer after their 4-year-old loses his hearing . . . Jeff Daniels and Marlee Matlin star . . . Sunday at 9 p.m. on CBS.

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6. Treatment

A psychiatrist congratulates his patient for responding well to treatment and showing improvement. The patient says: "Improvement?"

"Six months ago, I was the Pope. Now I'm an absolute nobody."

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7. Websites

A. From time to time, youtube.com actually has useful information . . . for example, on how to fold a bag without using a clip:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhSgTq4wRT8>

I wonder if it's as easy as it looks . . . if anybody tries this, let me know.

B. Youtube.com is also a great source for finding "classic" music performances, such as "My Sweet Lord" performed at a tribute to George Harrison two years after his death:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VvH6fxP5hMo>

On one guitar, Eric Clapton; on the other guitar, Harrison's son. On the piano, Paul McCartney; on the first set of drums, Ringo Star; and on the second set of drums, Phil Collins. On the guitar, Tom Petty. And playing the organ and doing an incredible job on vocals, Billy Preston.

And if you liked this, catch the clip of McCartney (on the right) singing "Something" while playing the ukulele:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RwKTXyF_6B8&feature=related

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blaineworld.net>

If you've never seen pictures of yours truly or my friends and relatives, click "Blaine's Best" on the left and then "Pictures" . . . make sure you have your sound on, too, if you wish to hear what's arguably the greatest song of all time.

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8. Computer tip

To squash preapproved credit offers, register at:

<http://www.optoutprescreen.com>

or call the toll-free number: 888.567.8688.

Both methods cover you for five years. You can also opt out permanently by phone or by mail using a form found on the above website. "Not only will you nix the offers, but you'll be reducing your chances of identity theft," says Beth Givens of the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse.

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9. What gives?

We have friends whose teenagers weren't happy when their house was put up for sale. It meant the kids had to keep their rooms clean for prospective buyers. After realtors stopped coming by, the kids got suspicious.

"I've been cleaning my room for six months," complained our son. "When is this house going to sell?"

My wife laughed. "Oh, we meant to tell you—we took it off the market three months ago."

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10. A quote I like

Many couples will treat a stranger or guest with greater consideration than each other.--John Gray, author of WHY MARS & VENUS COLLIDE (see also Sections 2, 4C and 11)

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11. Thought for the day

I REALLY liked John Gray's WHY MARS & VENUS COLLIDE (see also Sections 2, 4C and 10), as evidenced by the fact that what follows is the fourth time I have referred to it in this newsletter:

One approach [for women] that works most of the time is to ask for his help in specific terms. Men love projects. Projects are specific. They have a beginning and an end. He can determine what he is going to do, how he is going to do it, and most important, when he is going to do it. Men will often do what they consider is most important first. When given a project to accomplish, he also senses that his efforts will not be taken for granted. All these ingredients help to give him energy and motivation. Here are some examples of how a woman can ask for a man's support in specific instead of general terms:

If she is tired that night, she can say, "Would you please make dinner tonight, or pick up some takeout?"

If there are piles of laundry, she can say, "Would you help me fold this laundry tonight?"

If she doesn't feel like cleaning up the kitchen, she can say, "Would you do the dishes tonight, please? I need a break."

Or if she wants help with the dishes, instead of just expecting him to pitch in, she can simply say, "Would you bring over the plates?" or "Would you wash the pots and pans tonight? I would really appreciate the help." . . .

When my wife and I go food shopping at the farmer's market, I have my defined job-paying each vendor, pushing the cart, and carrying the heavy bags. Likewise, when I help with the dishes, I like to plant myself in front of the sink and wash dishes while others bring plates over, put things away, and clean tabletops. When I have one clear thing to do without a lot of decisions to make that involve my partner, I am more energized. Having to ask your partner each time whether this food should be kept, and remembering where she wants things to be put away, can be a bit exhausting for a man, who thrives on doing things alone, particularly if he is already tired.

When he has one clear thing to do, without a lot of decisions to make that involve his partner, a man is energized.

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12. Advance planning department

A. Here's your last chance to see some of my favorite local performers:
* Tom Orr closes his run in Cyrano de Bergerac at Actors' NET in Morrisville . . . the production stars the amazing George Hartpence (aided and abetted by the lovely and talented Carol Thompson as Roxane). A lot of work has gone into this production, including George's set and the

costuming of the large cast. It will be well worth the 2 ½+ hours to see this seldom-produced classic. You will get to see him in a role that is a departure from the usual. (He plays Cyrano's antagonist complete with hair and beard that are reminiscent of an 80s hair-band). It runs through April 20. For more information, please click:

<http://www.actorsnetbucks.org>

* Our friends the Dowburds, Chic and Joni, close their run in WONDERFUL TOWN next weekend:

At Bucks County Playhouse:
April 25th and 26th at 8 p.m.
April 27th at 2 p.m.

Tickets prices are:

Adults: \$18; Children (under 18): \$12.50

Senior Citizen: \$12.50 at Sat, Apr.12th matinee only

Tickets can be ordered by phone at 267.733.8876 or by email at: NVMTtkts@aol.com.

B. Bucks County Community College will be having its annual "Media Event" event on Wednesday, April 23, at 10 a.m. in the library auditorium of the Newtown, PA campus . . . the event is free and open to the public . . . this year, the topic is "Crime and Punishment: Covering the Police Beat" and features journalists Bill Moushey of THE PITTSBURGH POST GAZETTE, Erin O'Hearn of Channel 6 Action News and J.D. Mullane (my favorite local columnist) of THE BUCKS COUNTY COURIER TIMES.

C. Everyone is invited the celebration of Mart Sutton's 43-year career at Bucks on Saturday, May 3 in Tyler Hall and Gardens . . . guests are being asked to contribute \$50; \$25 for the celebration and \$25 towards a scholarship in his name . . . for more information, please contact Phyllis at 215.968.8061 or Mary Allen at 215.968.8627.

D. Susie in New Jersey:

VIVA VAGINA IN MAY AT MATTISON PARK IN ASBURY PARK, NJ

Mattison Park and The Provincetown Fringe Festival in Asbury Park present VIVA VAGINA directed by Marjorie Conn and inspired by Eve Ensler's Vagina Monologues.

Performances are at Mattison Park at 649 Mattison Avenue in Asbury Park on Tuesdays, May 13, 20 and 27 at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$10. Food and drinks will also be available.

Call Mattison Park for reservations at 732.807.3435.

VIVA VAGINA is a performance piece created for 9 women with special surprise guest stars every week. These are our personal stories in the form of monologues, dialogues, poems, and skits. This theatrical collage is a celebration of our sensuality, sexuality and who we are as women with outrageous humor, complexity, poignancy and complete realism. Enter into this forbidden zone with us. We will peel off the layers and you will see what is at the heart of every woman.

On any given night you may see any or all of the following: Andrea Phox, Anna Oleinik, Anne Berkowitz, Charlita Williams, Cheryl Fitzmaurice,

Christine Emmert, Dr. Geena, Ku'uipo Latonio-Radice, Lesley Castellini, Lorraine Stone, Marie Cathleen, Marjorie Conn, Sharon Lucas, Susan Marco, Susan Pellegrini, and Vivian Taormina.

All the material is original, written not only by the performers themselves but also by invited playwrights. We will also be switching parts every week.

Come celebrate with us.

PS. Opps, I jumped the gun last week . . . Passover doesn't start until this Saturday, so please again accept my wishes for a happy holiday--if you celebrate it--with your family, friends and other loved ones . . . which reminds me of the following:

NEWS FLASH

A group of leading medical researchers have published data indicating that Seder participants should NOT partake of both chopped liver and charoses. It seems that this combination can lead to Charoses of the Liver.

Hopefully, by the time you're reading this, you have filed your 2007 tax return . . . even if you're retired, disabled or in the low-wage category (and usually exempt from filing), you must do so this year to receive an economic stimulus payment of up to \$600 from the Treasury . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.irs.gov/irs/article/0,,id=177937,00.html>

Also, please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . and make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#601

4.7.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I were glad to welcome my daughter Risa and her fiance John (more well known as JP) back to New Jersey . . . they're staying here at least until October, at which time they will be married, and possibly beyond--depending on the job situation.

Risa was fortunate to be able to stay with her company, White House Black Market . . . she continues as a manager in the Westfield, NJ location, starting on Thursday.

JP wasn't able to transfer to another Wachovia location in New Jersey--or at least not right away . . . so he is presently looking for a position, ideally in the financial industry.

He was a financial specialist with Wachovia Bank in Florida for three years and, previously, he had two years experience as a credit counselor.

He's a good guy, if I do say so myself . . . but then again, I'm prejudiced.

HELP REQUESTED:

Should you have any ideas/thoughts/suggestions/leads for JP, please share them with me . . . or feel free to contact him directly; his email address is: jjwu16@yahoo.com.

B. It seems the shows at Kelsey Theatre on the campus of Mercer County Community College (West Windsor, NJ) are getting better and better . . . this past weekend, we went with friends to see SINGIN' IN THE RAIN--put on by Maurer Productions OnStage . . . and were we ever delighted.

If the title sounds familiar, it's because you might well have seen the original 1952 film version . . . it has lovingly been

recreated here on stage, almost scene by scene . . . there's even rain here, too, which will remind you of the great dance sequence that featured Gene Kelly.

Michael Stephens, Nicole Farina-Machin, Vicky Czarnik, and Jim Petro were all excellent in the leading roles . . . the latter (playing the Donald O'Connor role) is quickly becoming one of our favorite local actors, in that we've previously enjoyed his work in such other shows as DAMN YANKEES and MAN OF LA MANCHA . . . this was the first time he's ever tap danced on stage; you could have fooled us.

John Maurer did an excellent job of directing the show, and we also liked the 17-piece orchestra led by musical director Israel "Buzz" Herman.

We were fortunate to catch SINGIN' before its limited run concluded; however, should you want to see something else at Mercer, you most certainly won't be disappointed . . . for more information, please click:
www.kelseytheatre.net

C. We were saddened to attend the funeral of Lisa Michelle Zwiren, our good friend Janet Straight-Arrow's daughter . . . the service was a moving one, and we liked what one of her friends had to say: Your soul, like your name, doesn't go away.

We also learned from her father that there's now a test to see if you're at risk from blood clots . . . so if you're prone to that condition, ask your doctor about this.

And even the funeral director taught me something . . . afterwards, when we were loading some of the flowers into our car, he told me to empty the water onto the grass . . . that prevents be any leakage in your car . . . basic information, I realize, but something I have too often forgotten to do in the past!

D. During the week, I got to hear Hillary Clinton at a rally in Fairless Hills, PA . . . though I'm still not sure who I will vote for, I was impressed by some of her comments . . . among them were the following:

- * You can wring your hands over what has happened or you can roll up your sleeves. There isn't anything Americans can't do.
- * There is no justification under the sun for the oil companies to be getting tax breaks.
- * Fiscal responsibility is a Democratic core value, and I will bring it back.
- * I will sign the bill that President Bush has vetoed twice to begin stem cell research.
- * I want to get back to where you can a loan for college at a low rate of interest.

I also got to hear some good some good news--make that great news--about a person I greatly admire . . . Natalie Kaye (who ably heads the Women's Center at Bucks County Community College), was just named as one of

the "Women Who Make a Difference" in the annual competition sponsored by the YWCA of Bucks County . . . what made this even more meaningful to me was the fact that I was one of those who nominated Natalie . . . she will be recognized at a dinner on May 8 . . . stay tuned for details.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Jonathan Clements--columnist for THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

He has written over 1,000 "Getting Going" pieces, which have provided great advice to both my students and me personally . . . his column today was one of the best he has ever written . . . entitled "Parting Shot: What I Learned from Writing 1,008 Columns," it mentioned these three key points:

1. If you have money, you don't have to worry about it. This isn't guaranteed. There are lots of rich folks who agonize constantly--and needlessly--about their finances. Still, if you save diligently, you should reach the point where monies are relatively rare.
2. Money can give you the freedom to pursue your passion. Ideally, you want to spend your days engaged in activities that you find absorbing and satisfying, that you feel you're good at--and where you feel you're doing good.
3. Money can buy you times with friends and family. You don't just need a reason to get up in the morning. You also need somebody to come home to at night.

MY TWO CENTS:

Unfortunately, Clements announced today that he is leaving THE JOURNAL to take another job . . . when I hear more about his new position, I'll post that information . . . in the meantime, to read some of his valuable advice, please click:

<http://jonathanclements.com>

In particular, see the Q&A section on the very left.

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2. FYI

New CPR guidelines

New York: In a major change, the American Heart Association said Monday that hands-only CPR--rapid, deep presses on the victim's chest until help arrives--works just as well as standard CPR for sudden cardiac arrest in adults.

Experts hope bystanders now will be more willing to jump in and help if they see someone suddenly collapse. Hands-only CPR is simpler and easier to remember and removes a big barrier for people skittish about the mouth-to-mouth breathing.

"You only have to do two things. Call 911 and push hard and fast on the middle of the person's chest," said Dr. Michael Sayre, an emergency

medicine professor at Ohio State University who headed the committee that made the recommendation.

Hands-only CPR calls for uninterrupted chest presses--100 a minute--until paramedics take over or an automated external defibrillator is available to restore a normal heart rhythm.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.americanheart.org/handsonlycpr>

SOURCE:

Taken from an Associated Press article in THE COURIER TIMES, which can be found online at:

<http://www.phillyburbs.com/pb-dyn/news/94-03312008-1511798.html>

FYI, part 2

* Jean in Pennsylvania (with a chance to get on TV):

Are you a FEMALE college-age (18-25) student at Bucks County Community College who's a registered Democrat in Pennsylvania who plans to vote April 22? Or do you know somebody who fits that criteria? CBS News is looking for a few such women to interview in a focus-group setting next week (sometime April 14-18).

If you fit this profile and are interested, contact Jean Dolan, BCCC Public Relations, at dolanj@bucks.edu or 215-968-8094. Include your name, age AND phone number. Thank you.

* Bob in Pennsylvania (with a paid Marketing intern offering for a student or recent graduate) . . . please feel forward to forward this information to others:

GENERAL:

The Silver Lake Nature Center exists to provide educational programs about nature and the environment to the public. The position is grant funded and for a full-time position (40 hours) for a minimum of 12 weeks and a maximum of 36 weeks (preferred). The pay will be \$8.00 per hour with free lodging (possibly shared with others, but at least a private bedroom); without housing, the salary will be \$10. The job does require weekend work. Position to start anytime between April 1 and June 15, 2008.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES WILL BE TO ASSIST WITH THE:

1. Preparation of marketing materials such as fliers, brochures, and website
2. Production of quarterly newsletter
3. Development of a marketing/fund raising event
4. Development of material and displays to promote the Center at local festivals
5. Development of a marketing/fund raising event

SECONDARY RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Conduct other educational programs for schools and the public
2. Care of building, grounds and equipment
3. Maintain and disburse "loan boxes" requested by teachers
4. Work on unrelated projects when there is a serious need

SKILLS NEEDED:

1. Experience in web design, graphic art, and/or marketing
2. Skills with computer programs such as MS Word, Publisher, and Frontpage
3. Understanding of the service industry as a business
4. Ability to live and work closely with others

PHYSICAL ABILITIES NEEDED

1. Be able to walk 1 mile at least once per day
2. Be able to use hands to utilize the computer
3. Be able to lift and drag items no more than 50 lbs.
4. Be able to hear to understand instructions and to communicate with the public
5. Be able to read and write in English
6. Be able to manipulate equipment to collect and record data

QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Currently attending a college/university or a 2 or 4 year degree
2. Background in marketing or related field preferred
3. Background in nature or environmental education desirable.

Send cover letter, resume and three references to Robert Mercer by email, (ramercer@co.bucks.pa.us), mail (Robert Mercer, Silver Lake Nature Center, 1306 Bath Rd., Bristol, PA 19007) or fax (215.785.3228).

* Pam in North Carolina (with suggestions for our upcoming trip to Asheville):

If you are in Flat Rock, a tiny little town, go to Carl Sandburg's home. It is an interesting tour. It is right across from the play house. Brunch is great at the Highland Inn on Sundays. YUMMY. I like to stay at the Woodfield Inn, which also has a great brunch. Both are near each other and have the most wonderful desserts and food.

I also like dining at the Orchard Inn in Saluda, which was Perry Como's favorite restaurant. The view is amazing for dinner outside on the patio, approx. 4000 feet in the air. The most breathtaking mountains you have ever seen. The food is divine as well. It is a 10 on the romance scale. So if you need points with your wife, this is the spot to go. This place is hard to find so get directions; it is on top of a mountain.

If in Asheville, I would not bother making the trek to Harrods casino. To me it is a long drive to get to a smoky place. But after you have been to Vegas, it seems lackluster. You have to go to Biltmore House at least once. The farmers market is fun there, too. Great cheese and fruit selections. If you want to, pick up some and have some wine in the hotel. . . .

You also need to check out Biltmore dairy ice cream, which is across from the entrance to the Biltmore. One of my favorite gift shops is right as you go in the entrance to Biltmore on the left side. Easy to miss, but I love going in there.

* Julie in Minnesota:

I just finished reading BLAINESWORLD and found the comments on memory retention interesting. I have one of those memories that doesn't try to retain information. I've never practiced a certain technique or done anything special to improve my memory. It's just always been there.

People comment on my memory often. it's really both a blessing and a curse. I think I would be much better off if I could selectively forget.

I'd enjoy hearing your opinion or if in your investigation whether you have any knowledge on why people have different levels of memory retention. Sometimes I wonder if it has something to do with my sensuality. I do think I experience the world with all senses, if that makes any sense, but again, nothing I've ever done consciously. So is memory retention genetic? Influenced by environment? Hereditary?

* Mary in New Jersey:

I enjoyed reading your review of Peggy Noonan's book. I have not read it and probably will not after seeing her on Meet The Press on a recent Sunday. She appeared even further out into the ozone than I believed!

I want to remark about her desire to upgrade the "title" of the "good nuns." I grew up alongside Peggy Noonan in the same town. She was in the public school system, and there were no nuns teaching there! I was in the school down the block where the "good nuns" were teaching (well that's what they were claiming to be doing), and I would like to say that their "title" suits them and should stay as it is.

I have encountered many, many nuns in my life and not one comes close to being as loving as my mother in her motherhood. The title for priests, on the other hand, absolutely needs to be "downgraded." I have also encountered many, many priests in my life and not one deserves the "title" of Father except the Holy Father in Rome.

I used to cringe each time I addressed a priest as Father. I seemed to instinctively know they were not deserving. Thanks for listening. I just had to put my two cents in this time.

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3. Choices

Even with a thousand games, dolls and crafts to choose from, my friend at the toy store still couldn't find a thing for her grandson.

"Maybe a video or something educational?" I asked.

"No, that's not it," she said.

We wandered the aisles until something caught her eye: a laser gun with flashing lights and 15 different high-pitched sounds.

"This is perfect," she said, beaming. "My daughter-in-law will hate it."

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4. Reviews

A. You may have to dig some to find UNDER THE SAME MOON, but your efforts will pay off . . . this is a heartwarming family drama about a mother who works illegally in the U.S. to obtain money so that she can send for her son, who is being raised in Mexico by his grandmother . . . many complications ensue, but you always retain the hope that there will be a reconciliation . . . the accompanying soundtrack is great, too; in particular, I liked the song about Superman ("He has no social security and no green card") . . . this film will also get you thinking about the much-debated issue of illegal immigration . . . rated PG-13.

B. Out on DVD is THE KITE RUNNER, the movie based on the bestseller by Khaled Hosseini . . . it is a historical epic set in the 20th century about two childhood friends and what follows in their adult lives . . . it's not an easy film to watch in spots, particularly those depicting what's it like to be in Afghanistan under the

Taliban . . . yet that said, I'd recommend that you rent it--if just to see what life is about in another part of the world . . . rated PG-13.

C. James McBride's *THE COLOR OF WATER* is one of my all-time favorite memoirs . . . his latest, *SONG YET SUNG*, isn't quite in the same class--though I nonetheless found it interesting.

The novel begins with a slave breakout in the swamps of Maryland's eastern shore . . . what follows is a tale of both violence and hope among slave catchers, plantation owners, watermen, runaway slaves, and free blacks.

In doing so, McBride introduces a wide range of colorful characters . . . they all move the plot along, though personally, I would have preferred more emphasis on fewer individuals.

I enjoyed the time travel aspect of the book and especially the dreams of Liz Spocott, a beautiful runaway slave; for example:

* She dreamed of Negroes driving horseless carriages on shiny rubber wheels with music booming throughout, and fat black children who smoked odd-smelling cigars and walked around with pistols in their pockets and murder in their eyes . . . and colored men dressed in garish costumes like children, playing odd sporting games and bragging like drunkards--every bit of pride, decency, and morality squeezed clean out of them.

That passage also points out another reason you'll want to read *SONG YET SUNG*; i.e., because McBride writes as well as any author you'll ever come across . . . among the many other passages that caught my attention were the following:

* Denwood thought about it for a long minute. He disliked making deals with slaves and free blacks. It happened to him in too many ways, mostly internally, because in making deals with them, they became more human to him, and in doing so--try as he might to resist the feeling--they became less slave and more man to him. He could not make a deal with a pig, or a dog, or a piece of pork. But if a man says to another man or woman, "I'll give you this for that, then who are you dealing with? An equal? Or chattel? But he had no choice. She was enemy or friend.

* Men, she thought bitterly. They run the world to sin and then wonder why the world wakes up every morning sucking sorrow.

I ordinarily gloss over acknowledgments at the end of a book, but in this case, I'm glad that I did not . . . McBride in his Author's Note explains how this novel was inspired by the life of Harriet Tubman . . . make sure you don't miss that part.

D. Heard *THE ART OF THE LONG VIEW*, written and read by Peter Schwartz.

The book's subtitle caught my attention: *PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD* . . . I thought to myself, "Wouldn't that be a great thing to do?"

Schwartz, one of the nation's leading futurists, actually answers my question--showing how it can be done through the use of scenario-building . . . this enables managers to:

* "invent and then consider, in depth, several stories of equally plausible futures" so that they can make "strategic decisions that will be sound for all plausible futures."

I liked the examples that were given, including many from his work at Royal Dutch/Shell . . . the one describing the thought behind a new natural gas field offshore from Norway helped make the whole scenario concept much clearer to me . . . those involved at the time had to consider whether the U.S.S.R. would continue to be an enemy of Western Europe and not ship its own low-cost natural gas to that market.

This informative book was first published in 1991 and revised in 1996 when it came out in paperback . . . I'd be curious to see a 2008 edition.

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5. TV alert

A. SECRET TALENTS OF THE STARS airs on Tuesdays at 10 p.m. on CBS . . . celebrities demonstrate their alternate abilities in a variety of fields in this new reality contest, which features George Takei singing country music, Marla Maples doing gymnastics and Danny Bonaduce riding a unicycle.

B. If you only had six months to live, what would you do? Diane Sawyer sits down on PRIMETIME with terminally ill computer-science professor Randy Pausch, who has become something of an Internet sensation for his "last lecture" . . . Wednesday at 10 p.m. on ABC.

IF YOU WANT TO SEE THE WHOLE LECTURE:

You can do so by clicking:

<http://download.srv.cs.cmu.edu/~pausch/>

You'll find it about halfway down the homepage.

C. THE MEMORY KEEPER'S DAUGHTER stars a trio of feature-film actors--Dermot Mulroney, Gretchen Mol and two-time Oscar nominee Emily Watson--in an adaptation of Kim Edwards' best-selling novel . . . Saturday at 9 p.m. on LIFETIME.

D. NIGHT OF TOO MANY STARS: AN OVERBOOKED BENEFIT FOR AUTISM EDUCATION is being hosted by Jon Stewart . . . he is being joined by Will Ferrell, Steve Carell, Tina Fey, Stephen Colbert, and others in this live fundraiser . . . Sunday at 8 p.m. on COMEDY CENTRAL

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6. Oral exam

The psychology instructor had just finished a lecture on mental health and was giving an oral exam.

Speaking specifically about manic depression, she asked, "How would you

diagnose a patient who walks back and forth screaming at the top of his lungs one minute, then sits in a chair weeping uncontrollably the next?"

A young man in the rear raised his hand and answered, "A basketball coach?"

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7. Websites

A. Lose those packaged inserts that come with prescription drugs? Or maybe you just want to find out more about something you have heard about? All the information you'll ever need can be found by clicking:

<http://www.dailymed.nlm.nih.gov>

Methinks that with the 3,778 currently approved drugs that are listed, you'll always be able to find out warnings, precautions, adverse reactions, overdosages, etc.

B. To see the campy "Obama Girl" video that has garnered some 20 million hits, please click:

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=1mzsBJK3hAg>

It stars Amber Ettinger, a New Jersey girl from Burlington County . . . but she is just lip-synching the words; they were actually sung by Temple University senior Leah Kauffman.

Obama has said the video upsets his daughters: "You do wish people would think about what impact their actions have on kids and families" . . . be that as it may, I still would cast my vote for her; i.e., if she were running!

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blainesworld.net>

Thanks to the efforts of my Lori Hansen, my talented webmistress, there's now a Search capability should you want to find something in past newsletters . . . it is sooooo neat!

To see for yourself, go to Newsletters on your left and then Past Issues . . . at the top, you'll see a box to "Search Newsletters" . . . let's say you wanted to find a joke that dealt with a pharmacist . . . when you type that word in, four possibilities will appear--almost instantaneously . . . choose whichever one causes you to smile the most.

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8. Computer tip

What I said last week about finding anything quickly also applies to other documents (other than what you find on the Internet) . . . so if you're in Word, AOL or virtually anything else, to find a particular string of words:

Go to the top of your computer screen and click Edit, then

Find on this Page. Put in the words you want to find, and you'll be all set.

As an example, let's say you remember something about my requesting help for my future son-in-law but don't remember where you saw it . . . yet you do remember that it involved him working at a bank . . . you could use the above technique and type-in "bank" . . . you'll then be taken to every instance where these words have been used.

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9. Public service information

If you're going on vacation, then you surely need a vacation autoresponder. Can't think of what to say? Consider using any of the following:

I am currently out of the office at a job interview and will reply to you if I fail to get the position.

You are receiving this automatic notification because I am out of the office. If I were in, you very likely would have received nothing at all.

Sorry to have missed you, but I'm at the doctor's having my brain and heart removed in preparation for promotion to our management team.

I will be unable to delete all the emails you send me until I return from vacation. Please be patient, and your mail will be deleted in the order it was received.

Thank you for your email. Your credit card has been charged \$5.99 for the first 10 words and \$1.99 for each additional word in your message.

The email server is unable to verify your server connection. Your message has not been delivered. Please restart your computer and try sending again. (The beauty of this is that when you return, you can see who fell for it, perhaps repeatedly.)

Thank you for your message, which has been added to the queue. You are currently in 352nd place, and can expect to receive a reply in approximately 19 weeks.

Hi, I'm thinking about what you've just sent me. Please wait by your PC for my response.

I've run away to join a different circus.

I will be out of the office for the next two weeks for medical reasons. When I return, please address me as 'Lucille' instead of "Ted."

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10. A quote I like

It's so simple to be wise. Just think of something stupid to say and

then don't say it.--Sam Levenson (1911-1980), American humorist and writer

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11. Thought for the day

New reality TV show

Six married men will be dropped on an island with one car and 3 kids each for six weeks.

Each kid will play two sports and either take music or dance classes.

There is no fast food.

Each man must take care of his 3 kids; keep his assigned house clean, correct all homework, complete science projects, cook, do laundry, and pay a list of "pretend" bills with not enough money.

In addition, each man will have to budget in money for groceries each week.

Each man must remember the birthdays of all their friends and relatives, and send cards out on time.

Each man must also take each child to a doctor's appointment, a dentist appointment and a haircut appointment. He must make one unscheduled and inconvenient visit per child to the Urgent Care (weekend, evening, on a holiday or right when they're about to leave for vacation). He must also make cookies or cupcakes for a social function.

Each man will be responsible for decorating his own assigned house, planting flowers outside and keeping it presentable at all times.

The men will only have access to television when the kids are asleep and all chores are done.

There is only one TV between them, and a remote with dead batteries.

Each father will be required to know all of the words to every stupid song that comes on TV and the name of each and every character on cartoons.

The men must shave their legs, wear makeup daily, which they will apply to themselves either while driving or making three lunches.

Each man will have to make an Indian hut model with six toothpicks, a tortilla and one marker; and get a 4 year old to eat a serving of peas.

Each man must adorn himself with jewelry, wear uncomfortable yet stylish shoes, keep their nails polished and eyebrows groomed. The men must try to get through each day without snot, spit-up or barf on their clothing.

During one of the six weeks, the men will have to endure severe abdominal cramps, back aches, and have extreme, unexplained mood swings but never once complain or slow down from other duties. They must try to explain what a tampon is for when the 6-yr old boy finds it in the purse.

They must attend weekly school meetings, church, and find time at least

once to spend the afternoon at the park or a similar setting.

He will need to read a book and then pray with the children each night without falling asleep, and then feed them, dress them, brush their teeth and comb their hair each morning by 7:00. They must leave the home with no food on their face or clothes.

A test will be given at the end of the six weeks, and each father will be required to know all of the following information: each child's birthday, height, weight, shoe size, clothes size and doctor's name.

Also the child's weight at birth, length, time of birth, and length of labor, each child's favorite color, middle name, favorite snack, favorite song, favorite drink, favorite toy, biggest fear and what they want to be when they grow up.

They must clean up after their sick children at 2:00 a.m. and then spend the remainder of the day tending to that child and waiting on them hand and foot until they are better.

They must have a loving, age appropriate reply to, "You're not the boss of me."

The kids vote them off the island based on performance.

The last man wins only if he still has enough energy to be intimate with his spouse at a moment's notice.

If the last man does win, he can play the game over and over and over again for the next 18-25 years . . . eventually earning the right to be called Mother!

Author unknown
(if you know who wrote this and/or the source, please let me know)

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12. Advance planning department

A. SBDC (Small Business Development Center) programs:

* Human Resource Problems?

Thursday April 10; 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at The College of New Jersey.

Meet one to one with Jessie Phillips, NJ Department of Labor, to solve your employee challenges.

* Applying for a Mercer County Loan?

April 10; 6-8 p.m. at the Credit Union of New Jersey, 1301 Parkway Avenue, Ewing.

TO REIGSTER (or for more information:)

Call Kathy Kathy Anderson at 609.771.2947.

B. Winners of multiple Emmys and other awards, documentary film makers Tom and Linda Spain and Monica Lange will present a program on the making of documentary films at the Mary Jacobs Library, 64 Washington Street, Rocky Hill, NJ, at 7:30 p.m. on April 10 . . . the three will describe their 15-month adventure making a two-hour special for PBS titled AMERICA'S FIRST RIVER; STORIES FROM THE HUDSON WITH BILL MOYERS.

C. I'm speaking to the Bristol Rotary on "Positioning: How to Differentiate Yourself from the Competition" on Wednesday, April 16, at 12:15 p.m. . . . location: Gabrielle's Restaurant, 5301 Emille Road, Levittown, PA.

D. Craig Masback, former CEO of USA Track and Field, will address the Princeton University Club about "The Enduring Values of Sports: Facing Up to the Challenges of the 21st Century" on Thursday, April 17, at 7:30 p.m. in Dodds Auditorium, Richardson Hall. Free and open to the public.

PS. If you're like me and you celebrate ALL holidays (more food and gifts that way!), here's hoping you have a happy Passover this coming weekend . . . and that you get to enjoy a bunch of chocolate-covered macaroons.

To get you in the mood and/or to understand what the holiday is all about, please put on your sound and click:

<http://revver.com/video/193542/manischewitzville/>

Also, please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#600

3.31.2008

In this issue:

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I are on the way to achieving our goal; i.e., to be financially self-sufficient when we retire . . . this newsletter that you are reading, BLAINESWORLD, will be our meal ticket. (Finally!)

After entertaining suitors for many years, we just sold the publication name, right to come out with future issues, subscription list, etc. to a publishing firm that shall remain nameless for the time being . . . don't worry, though . . . we only did so with the understanding that I shall remain as publisher for at least the next year, and that I can now bring Cynthia on board as Editor . . . the two of us will also retain full editorial control.

Afterwards, everything remains negotiable . . . what this means to you: little change in the immediate future . . . on or before April 1, 2009, though, you can expect at least one thing to happen; i.e., that I'll be able to come up with something else to surprise you with . . . after all, lest you forget, this Tuesday is April Fool's Day . . . so in case you haven't figured it out already, you've been fooled.

However, should anybody wish to make a serious offer for BLAINESWORLD, who would I be to say NO?

B. And can you believe you're now reading Issue #600? BRB.

Baaaaack, hoping you didn't miss me too much . . . I just checked the first issue, dated 10.13.1996 . . . here was something that was included in it:

Hallmark offers this tip on how you can look years younger: "Hang around with very old people."

The newsletter was called STUFF then and was sent out to some 30

folks . . . the circulation is now over 840, but that said, keep spreading the word . . . new readers are always welcome . . . all they have to do is send an email to: bginbc and put the word SUBSCRIPTION in subject line.

AND FOR THOSE NEW TO BLAINESWORLD:

It is a weekly newsletter that comes out typically on or before Wednesday . . . there's no charge . . . you'll get some jokes, hopefully not tooooooo risqué; websites; reviews, etc, along with information on upcoming events . . . I also try to make this missive a sharing experience, so your emails, thoughts and suggestions are always welcome--and often published . . . I even welcome jokes or inspirational stories and quotes, particularly if you have not seen them plastered around the Internet.

C. Cynthia and I had an enjoyable weekend, as usual . . . on Saturday, we went with one of favorite Bucks County realtors (Sue Russeck; 215.688.1381) to look at 55 and over communities in both Washington Crossing and Newtown . . . we remain interested in Traditions in the former town; in the latter, we saw two McGrath properties: Delancey Court and the Villas . . . both were interesting, but we do have a concern about when and if they'll ever get fully developed . . . and all things being equal, we'd probably prefer living in Washington Crossing if we stay in the area . . . from there, we went to one of our favorite restaurants in Newtown: Il Sol . . . as always, we had an excellent meal . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.ilsoltuscangrill.com>

We then caught a movie. (See Section 4A.)

On Sunday, we saw BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS at the Villagers Theatre in Somerset, NJ . . . it's a comedy/drama based loosely on playwright/screenwriter Neil Simon's own life . . . as with all the productions there, the casting was just about perfect . . . Matthew Weinstein as Eugene, the young Simon character, was excellent . . . and so was Catherine Rowe as his mother . . . the good news is that this production runs through April 13; for more information, please click:

<http://www.villagerstheatre.net/>

From there, we were joined by Cynthia's sister and brother-in-law for dinner at perhaps our favorite restaurant: Pheasant's Landing in Hillsborough, NJ, the site of our first date . . . the food there, as always, was outstanding . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.pheasantslanding.com/>

We then came back to our place, the official residence of "the Greenfields of Belle Mead," for dessert.

D. During the week, I was invited to attend a meeting with other union presidents of Philadelphia-area schools . . . we got an update on the status of the Clinton endorsement (by the American Federation of Teachers) . . . we were told that she does plan to stay as a candidate until at least the convention, and that she's still slated to speak at the AFT conference this summer in Chicago . . . the highlight of my evening, though, was the chance to exchange a few brief comments with Edward J. McElroy--our fine national president . . . we talked about the excellent biography of Albert Shanker that we had both read . . . and I told him how much I enjoyed seeing his name mentioned in it several times.

A REQUEST:

Please don't consider the above as any sort of personal endorsement of Clinton . . . personally, I have some major problems with her as a presidential candidate . . . so I'm still waiting to see what happens in both parties over the next several months.

Also, I was quoted in the local Bucks County paper on plans to make Bucks a smoke-free campus:

<http://www.phillyburbs.com/pb-dyn/news/113-03262008-1509523.html>

THE OFFER REMAINS:

If you'd like a FREE copy of THE EASY WAY TO STOP SMOKING by Allen Carr--sent with my compliments--just send an email to my assistant Bridget: hughesbr@bucks.edu . . . put STOP SMOKING BOOK in the subject line . . . in the body of your email, include your name, snail mail address, email address, and phone numbers . . . I only ask that you keep me informed of your progress . . . or of the progress of anybody else you give the book to . . . my only request is that you get it for yourself or for somebody else that the book gets read within 30 days of receipt.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Mary Navroth, CPA . . . she has been my accountant for the past several years and always does a fine job.

I've always been impressed by her thoroughness, as well as by her responsiveness . . . whenever I have a question, it gets answered--seemingly within a few hours.

I also like the fact that I can handle the work on my return via both mail and fax, and that I don't have to spend time meeting with her; i.e., unless I want to do so.

You won't go wrong having Mary Navroth handle your tax returns . . . should you want to contact her, she can be reached via phone: 215.493.8689 . . . or email: marynavroth@aol.com.

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2. FYI

To remember names, my opinion is that the best method is this one developed by Harry Lorayne and cited in AGELESS MEMORY (see also Sections 2, 4C, 10 and 11):

It is, of course, the universal memory complaint: "I'm introduced to someone and minutes later I've forgotten his or her name." Well, that just isn't so. You haven't forgotten the name--you didn't remember the name in the first place. I'll take it a step back: you probably didn't hear the name in the first place! Information, any information, has to register in your mind if it's to be remembered; you need to be originally aware of the information. It's another simple and obvious idea. Why in the world would you expect to remember something that you haven't "registered" in the first place?

Tell you what: I'll give you five rules for remembering names. If you really apply these rules, I guarantee that you'll better your memory for names by about 20 percent. Then I'll teach you my system, which will take care of the bulk of the problem, the remaining 80 percent.

Rule # 1: Be sure to hear the name. It is not embarrassing to say, "Sorry, I didn't get your name." Remember that a person's name is his or her most prized possession, so making sure you hear it is flattering to him or her. So be sure to hear the name. That's basic. The rest of the rules will simply enable you to apply this rule.

Rule # 2: Try to spell the name. "Oh, is that L-o-r-r-a-i-n-e?" No; it's L-o-r-a-y-n-e." Try to spell it and you'll be corrected if you're wrong. Do it with Jones or Smith, it doesn't matter, because you're showing an interest as you make sure you've heard the name right in the first place.

Rule # 3: Make a remark about the name. If it's a name you've never heard before, say that. If you think it's a strange name, it's all right to say so. "What an unusual name!" Or, "Oh, I went to school with a Clark Carpenter; is he a relative perhaps?" Any remark will do-and again, you're showing an interest.

Rule # 4: Use the name during your initial conversation. Only where apropos, of course, you don't want to sound silly, but do use it as you speak. "Why Jim, I never thought of it that way!"

Rule # 5; Say the name when you say goodbye. Don't say, "I'll see you later," or "I'll see you later, my friend"; instead, say, "I'll see you later, Ms. Gordon."

FYI, part 2

* Ivan in Pennsylvania (with a GREAT OFFER for FREE TICKETS):
The Newtown Arts Company is performing Oklahoma at the Newtown Theater from April 10th to 16th (with Monday evening off). We expect the show to be well attended. Therefore, we need a lot more ushers, and anyone who volunteers gets a free general-admission ticket on another night. If you volunteer more nights, you can get more tickets. Please contact Ivan Winegar at 215.917.7223 or via email: nurseman65@verizon.net.

* Jenno in Pennsylvania (who is partnering with his sons and Skip Goodnoe at Anchor Automotive to provide this great offer for those anywhere near Wrightstown, PA):

How To Get \$499.00 Worth Of Auto Repair Services
For Only \$87.50?

Membership Has Its Privileges--Limited Offer

When you join our Car Care Club, you'll be one of our privileged clients that will get to enjoy hundreds of dollars in savings over the next year. The Car Care Club Card is filled with the following car care products and services: 4 FREE Oil Changes (A \$159.80 Value), FREE Air Conditioning System Check (A \$43.75 Value), FREE Pair of Wiper Blades (Up to a \$34.00 Value), FREE 68 Point Safety Check (A \$43.75 Value), \$60.00 off of 30,000 60,000 or 90,000 + Mile Service Packages, \$40.00 off Front or Rear Brake Service, \$30.00 off Exhaust System Repair, 50% off labor on Computerized Wheel Alignment (You Save \$43.75) and 50% off labor on Transmission Flush & Fill (You Save \$43.75).

That adds up to a savings of \$499.00 over the next year! But even if you didn't use all of the services on the card, the four FREE Oil Changes alone are well worth the limited introductory price of \$87.50. (After the 75th

member, the regular price: \$99.95 applies).

You're not limited to using your Car Care Club Card on only one car. So even if you're driving a newer car and may not need all of the services on the card, you can give it to your spouse or a friend and let them use it to save money on any repairs they may need.

So, if you want to save hundreds of dollars over the next year, stop by our shop, Anchor Automotive at 773 Durham Road, Wrightstown, between the hours of 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, or Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Or if you'd prefer, you can give us a call at 215.598.3251, and we'll reserve a Car Care Club Card for you at the special introductory price.

* Sue in Pennsylvania:

I finally found a supplement for fibromyalgia/pain . . . it takes 2-6 weeks to know it works.

Enzymatic Therapy to End Pain; 90 Tablets

A unique herbal combination that provides comfort from pain to energize you for the entire day . This well-tolerated formula combines a unique triple-action herbal blend of cherry fruit extract, boswellia and white willow bark, developed by Jacob Teitelbaum, M.D. A board-certified internist and recognized expert on pain.

Stock# ENZ-02799

Price: List, \$29.95; Sale: \$19.50

From:

<http://www.ritecare.com/cgi-bin/cart.pl>

* Neil in Vermont:

Raphel Marketing is dedicated to help businesses improve their marketing.

We publish and write books by business people for business people.

We also do direct marketing programs, marketing consulting, loyalty marketing programs, and web design.

Our goal is to help businesses establish a clear identity and communicate that identity to their customers. Our website is:

<http://www.raphel.com>

and our telephone number is 802.751.8802.

MY TWO CENTS:

These fine folks publish THE RAPHEL REPORT, one of my favorite marketing newsletters . . . if you're interested in that topic, you MUST sign-up for a subscription . . . best of all, it's FREE!

* Jim in Pennsylvania, writing to me about his latest book:

Stop Living Paycheck to Paycheck

Learn how you can first, develop the mental fitness and mindset to attract wealth into your life, how to overcome the negative, self-limiting programming you've been carrying around and teach your conscious mind to see the opportunities that surround you. Then, learn specific strategies that you can use to increase the income in your household, starting with little or no money, online or off-line, with or without a lot of business experience. This book is for anyone who wants to give themselves a raise whenever they want. Available in

bookstores nationwide.

Or for more information, please click:

<http://www.paychecktopaycheckbook.com>

* Terri in Indiana:

Always enjoy BLAINESWORLD and look forward to it every week. I read this week about your experience at Cheesburger Cheeseburger in SC. If you are ever in Naples Florida, please try it again, though it is called Cheeburger Cheeburger not Cheeserburger. They have the best cheeseburgers and get a "Frings" basket. It has fries and onion rings together. We have never had bad service or bad food there. They also have the wall of fame for those that eat the 20 oz. burger. On a visit to his grandparents, my son ate one and friends sent us the picture years later from the wall.

* Ellen in South Carolina, the winner of last week's BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD:

I was in the middle of a website conversion last week. My new website is up and running at:

<http://ww.ellenjolley.com>

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3. Bravery

A man and his wife walked into a dentist's office.

"Doc, I'm in one heck of a hurry! I have two buddies sitting out in my car waiting for us to go play golf.

"So forget about the anesthetic and just pull the damn tooth and be done with it.

"We have a 10 AM tee time at the best golf course in town and it's 9:30 already. I don't have time to wait for the anesthetic to work!"

The dentist thought to himself, "My goodness, this is surely a very brave man asking to have his tooth pulled without using anything to kill the pain."

"Which tooth is it, sir?"

The man turned to his wife.

"Open your mouth, Honey, and show him."

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4. Reviews

A. 21, the movie, will hold your interest . . . inspired by a true story, it's the story of how a group of the brightest college students in the country took Vegas for millions by a practice known as counting cards . . . I liked it, but found it hard to believe that only Vegas was hit--and seemingly the same casino over and over . . . I would think that it would have made more sense to try different casinos throughout the country . . . Jim Sturgess was fine as the leading card

player . . . Kevin Spacey was the Fagan-like ringleader that leads the way in the first half of 21; he then disappears until almost the very end Laurence Fishburne, usually one of my favorite actors, was wasted in his role as the vicious casino employee who attempts to get to the bottom of all the losses . . . rated PG-13, though this is one time that I think that the rating is wrong . . . methinks that it's only appropriate for older teenagers.

B. ATONEMENT is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #586 follows:

The coming attractions for ATONEMENT had me looking forward to the film with great excitement . . . and when I read some reviews, I was even more enthusiastic about seeing what looked like an epic love story . . . what I saw was something that had me close to walking out within the first half hour.

The story about an upper-class British family in 1935 started ever so slowly; in fact, I found myself nodding off during the first hour . . . things got slightly more interesting afterwards, but the problem was that I cared little about any of the characters . . . Keira Knightley almost looked like she was bored by her role . . . only James McAvoy--almost always watchable--kept my interest . . . rated R.

IF YOU ALSO LIKE McAVOY:

Rent RORY O'SHEA WAS HERE, one of his first starring roles . . . he is superb as one of two young men who band together to savor life on their own terms . . . you'll do much better renting this movie!

C. I typically have difficulty remembering three things: names, faces and the third thing . . . geez, I can never remember that third thing.

So that is why I was excited to come across AGELESS MEMORY (see also Sections 2, 10 and 11) by Harry Lorayne . . . long recognized as the world's foremost memory-training expert, I've been following his career for some 40 years and have read just about all his other books.

Yet this one had particular interest to me, in large part because of its appealing subtitle: SIMPLE SECRETS FOR KEEPING YOUR BRAIN YOUNG . . . and who wouldn't be interested in that premise?

I certainly was, but soon realized that I had to change my thinking around so as to not fall into this common trap:

* A man called and said he had "the worst memory in the world." He desperately needed my help. The first thing I told him was that he'd have to get in line behind all the other people who've told me that they have the worst memories. (What a great excuse "bad memory" is: Don't depend on me for anything 'cause I'll forget." The fact of the matter is that every time you say, "I have a bad memory, " you put another hole in that sieve of your memory--and give people past fifty a bad name! My goal here is to get you to brag about your great memory; and each time you do, you'll plug up one of those holes and tell the world that older can be better.)

All you need to do is follow this key suggestion:

* Sure, what we refer to as "memory" may get less and less reliable as we age. I know that when I'm not applying my systems, I sometimes fumble over words and familiar things may fall into that "senior moment"

abyss. But that never happens with any information, any word, any name, any number, and anything that I'm interested in. That's my point.

Lorayne even relates his ideas to organizing your desk:

* It's a cliché rule, but one that surely works. The rule is DO IT NOW. My sub-rule is, try not to let a paper go through your hands more than once. Because if you do, what too often happens is, you drop the paper somewhere on your desk with the thought, "I'll take care of it later." It gets covered up with other papers and you never see it again! It's forgotten. Take care of it now; then you can't forget it.

Lastly, I liked how the author got me thinking throughout the book with some intriguing exercises at the end of each chapter . . . perhaps my favorite was this one:

* A rich Arab dies and leaves his seventeen camels to his three sons. The camels are to be divided as follows:

Half to the first son, one-third to the second son, and one-ninth to the third son.

The three sons can't seem to work it out without chopping up some of the camels!

A wise old Arab happens by on his camel and solves the problem immediately--without cutting up any camels.

Do some mental exercise; try to figure out how the wise old Arab did it.

Answer:

The wise old Arab simply adds his own camel to the 17, bringing the total number of camels to 18. Then, the camels are divided as follows:

$\frac{1}{2}$ of 18 is 9 camels for number one son.
 $\frac{1}{3}$ of 18 is 6 camels for number two son.
 $\frac{1}{9}$ of 18 is 2 camels for number three son.

After each son takes his allotted camels ($9+6+2=17$), the wise old Arab's camel remains. He mounts it and rides off into the sandstorm.

D. Heard JOHN PAUL THE GREAT, written and read by Peggy Noonan.

It's the inspiring story of Pope John Paul II, born Karol Jozef Wojtyla, who reigned as the 264th Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, from 1978-2005 . . . in learning more about him, I was impressed by his leadership, diplomacy, humility, and holiness.

If anything I would have liked more of a traditional biography; i.e., one that traced his life from birth to death in a straightforward chronological manner . . . at times, the book veered a bit too much to my liking when it brought in Noonan's background via varied mystical musings; e.g., when she says her rosary when an altercation breaks out.

What I did like was the author's attempts to be honest in her appraisal on John Paul . . . she talks of all the good that he did, but also points out the bishops and cardinals:

* (simply) do not understand what a mother and father go through, when their son is sexually violated; how it scars the child, steals his soul, breaks his heart. They TRY to understand, but they fail. They don't even seem to understand how the scandals happened in the first place. When the first priest violated the fist child and they didn't throw him out--that's how it started.

And this, Noonan acknowledges, is:

* inescapably part of John Paul's legacy . . . the unhappiest portion of what he left behind . . . (and) part of what his successor will now have to heal.

Unfortunately, it could well have been avoided--according to an old nun--had nuns and priests worked closely together . . . in fact, according to the author:

* NOTHING helps the world more than good nuns . . . and now's the time, she believes, to upgrade their titles--from "Sister" to "Mother." For that is what they are.

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5. TV alert

A. CANTEBURY'S LAW continues on Mondays at 8 on FOX . . . it stars Julianna Margulies as a tough defense lawyer who takes liberties with legalities . . . her personal life also involves a marriage that is falling apart and a missing son.

B. I'm thinking that if I watch and actually pay attention to all the dance shows on TV that maybe, just maybe, I might be able to replicate my one great performance in a contest (when I came in tied for second in a twist contest) . . . still another program, STEP IT UP & DANCE, premieres on Thursday at 11 p.m. on BRAVO . . . this has Elizabeth Berkley hosting 12 hoofers who are competing for a \$100,000 prize . . . in the opener, guest judge Mel B. critiques the performers' rendition of a Spice Girls routine.

C. ROCK DOCS profiles "The Night James Brown Saved Boston," which was a 1968 concert at the Boston Garden that helped ease racial tensions after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. . . . Saturday at 9 p.m. on VH1.

D. Saturday at 10:45 p.m. on IFC is the time to catch WAITING FOR GUFFMAN, Christopher Guest's hilarious mockumentary about a fussy theatrical producer who tries to stage a musical in a small Missouri hamlet.

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6. Theology

During these serious times, people of all faiths should remember these four religious truths:

1. Muslims do not recognize Jews as God's chosen people.

2. Jews do not recognize Jesus as the Messiah.
3. Protestants do not recognize the Pope as the leader of the Christian world.
4. Baptists do not recognize each other at Hooters.

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7. Websites

A. If you love to travel and want to see many amazing views in this country, please click:

<http://www.UntraveledRoad.com>

This website was put together to provide images and excellent information about great travel designations . . . there are over two hundred thousand photographs.

B. Don't even begin to think you have a day at the office until you click:

<http://glumbert.com/media/baddayoffice>

It will make any job you have had, do have or will have look good!

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blainesworld.net>

To see past reviews of the over 700 books that I have read and generally enjoyed, click "Blaine's Best" on the left, then "Websites" . . . go down to letter O and click the second part of that section.

If you'd like to rate my reviews (e.g., if you've found them to be helpful):

1. Go to:

<http://www.amazon.com>

2. At the top, click search "books."

3. Then find any book I recently reviewed; e.g., I AM AMERICA by Stephen Colbert. It is about the 7th from the top on the right side.

4. If my review has been helpful, and I hope that's the case, click YES.

5. Who knows? Doing so may help me move up in the amazon.com ratings. I now am a Top 500 reviewer; actually, I stand at #347.

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8. Computer tip

To find something quickly on any webpage, go to top of your computer screen and click Edit and then Find on this Page . . . so, for example, let's say you're reading this issue and know you read something about "remembering names" . . . to find that mention quickly, do as I suggest and just type-in the words that you are seeking . . . you'll be immediately taken to the first reference and then, as desired, to every other mention that you want to find.

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9. College life

Halfway through the semester, two parents get a first letter from their daughter (who is away at college):

Dear Mom and Dad,

Thanks so much for sending me away to college. Life is great here. though there have been a few minor problems.

The first week, my dorm burned down. However, all turned out well when a classmate invited me to stay in his dorm.

Since there were no extra rooms, he suggested that I stay with him. He's a real nice guy, so I said that sounded like a good idea.

We hit it off real well and shortly thereafter, we began dating. And you'll just love him, though he's of a different religion. He's also of a different race; however, the good news is that everybody says we make the cutest interracial couple they've ever seen.

Our friends are also excited over the fact that we will be having a baby, and that's something else I wanted to share with you. I'll tell you more in my next letter, but I have to run now to get my tongue pierced.

Love,
Your daughter

PS. None of the above actually happened. What I did want to tell you was that I failed my first chemistry exam, and I wanted you to put things into perspective.

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10. A quote I like

Remember this: GETTING OLDER IS MANDATORY, GETTING BETTER IS OPTIONAL.--Harry Lorayne in AGELESS MEMORY (see also Sections 2, 4C and 11)

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11. Thought for the day

Many years ago, when I started to do my own research [on how to better your memory]--and this anecdote should prove my point--there were quite a few "listening" courses available. They ostensibly taught how to listen properly, and a little bit about how to remember what you heard. I checked out quite a few of them. They ranged in cost from \$150 to \$500, but no matter how much they cost or how many lessons were involved, they all ended basically the same way. After they were done with all of the great-sounding technical terms, they boiled everything down to two pretty common words: pay attention.

SOURCE:

AGELESS MEMORY (see also Sections 2, 4C and 10) by Harry Lorayne, a book I really liked as evidenced by the fact that it's now been cited four separate times in this week's newsletter

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12. Advance planning department

A. Samantha Power, Anna Lindh Professor of Practice of Global Leadership and Public Policy, Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, Harvard University, speaks on: "War Crimes and Genocide Today: What Can One Person Do?"

Sponsored by Woodrow Wilson School.

This coming Friday, April 3, at 12 p.m. at Bowl 016 in Robertson Hall, Princeton University.

B. Our friends the Dowburds, Chic and Joni, open up in WONDERFUL TOWN this weekend:

At Neshaminy High School:
April 4th and 5th at 8 p.m.
April 11th and 12th at 8 p.m.
and April 12th at 2 p.m.

NOTE: The Dowburds will not be in either performance on the 12th.

At Bucks County Playhouse:
April 25th and 26th at 8 p.m.
April 27th at 2 p.m.

Tickets prices are:

Adults: \$18; Children (under 18): \$12.50
Senior Citizen: \$12.50 at Sat, Apr. 12th matinee only

Tickets can be ordered by phone at 267.733.8876 or by email at: NVMTtkts@aol.com.

C. If you're a Tom Orr fan, like I am, here's an update on some of his upcoming performances:

This weekend I open in *Cyrano de Bergerac* at Actors' NET in Morrisville, starring the amazing George Hartpence (aided and abetted by the lovely and talented Carol Thompson as Roxane). A lot of work has gone into this production, including George's set and the costuming of the large cast. It will be well worth the 2 ½+ hours to see this seldom-produced classic. You will get to see me in a role that is a departure from the usual (I play Cyrano's antagonist complete with hair and beard that are reminiscent of an 80s hair-band). It runs from April 4 to 20.

And speaking of departures, May 2nd through 11th at the Kelsey Theatre at Mercer, I will be starring as Macheath (Mack the Knife) in another seldom-produced classic, *The Threepenny Opera*. 3 penny is one of the most influential musicals of the 20th Century, far ahead of its time. It opened in 1928 and is the story of the amoral Macheath and his gang of criminals and prostitutes scandalized many people. It is an extremely dark Black Comedy with operatic/jazzy music that influences many modern composers. Tom, the nice guy, will become a womanizing, thief and killer!

Hope to see you at one, the other or both! All the information you need is right here:

<http://www.actorr.com/next.htm>

D. In an ongoing effort to raise funds for a BCCC scholarship, Language and Literature Professor James A. Freeman will read excerpts from and sign copies of his latest novel, LIARS' TALE OF TRUE LOVE (PublishAmerica, 2007) at 1 p.m. on Friday, April 11. The free event takes place in the Orangery at the Bucks County Community College campus in Newtown . . . for more information, please click: <http://www.bucks.edu/releases/FreemanReadsApril11.html>

PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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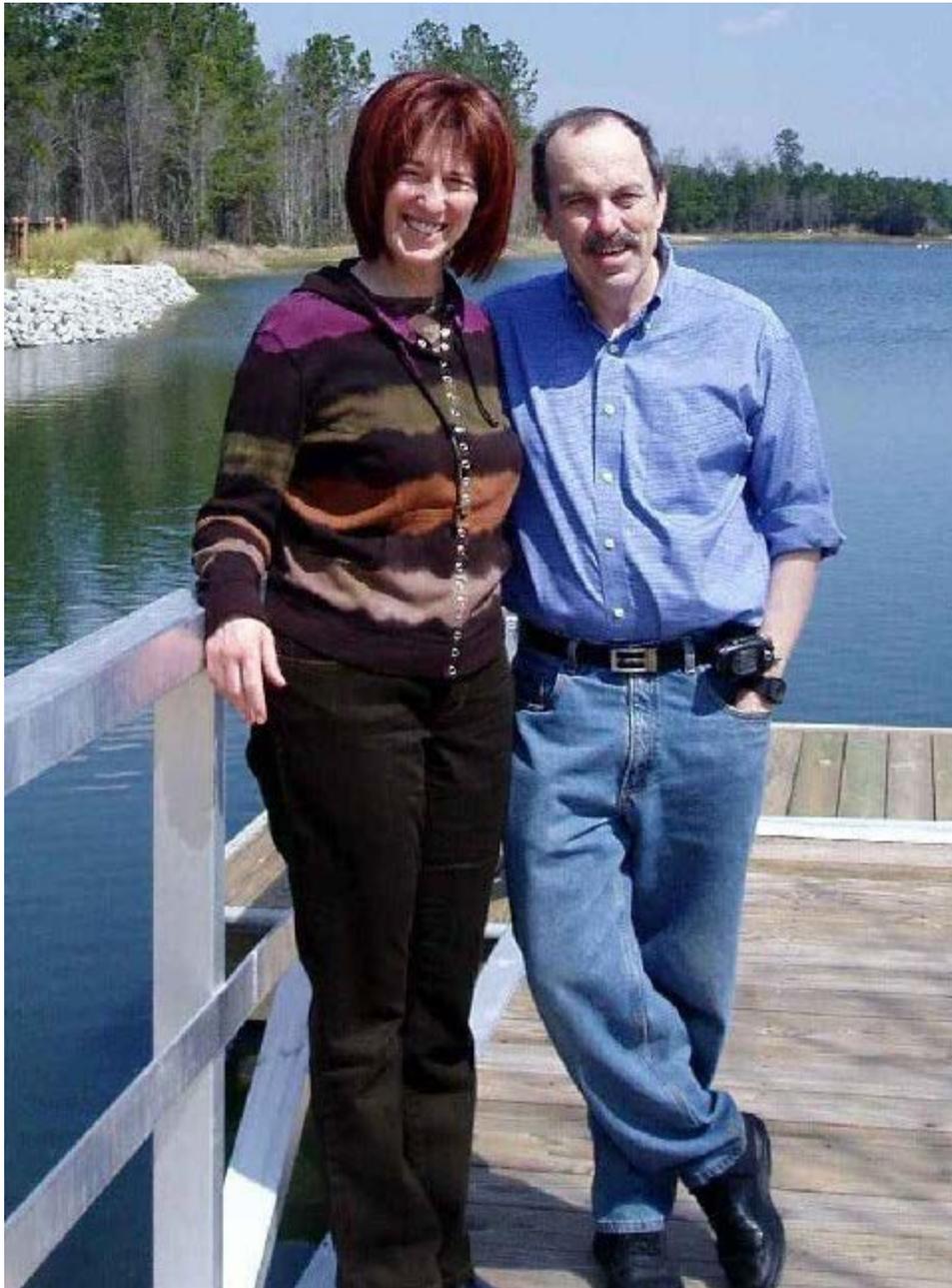
3.24.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I visited the Hilton Head, South Carolina area this past weekend in our continuing quest for the place we will call home when we retire next year . . . overall, we were impressed--and particularly with a development called Hampton Lake . . . it was breathtaking, as can be seen by the picture below of the two of us (taken outside of the clubhouse):



Just imagine: All homesites overlook water or magnificent trees--and many have both . . . for more information, please click: <http://www.hamptonlake.com>

Pratt Reed was our gracious host; if you visit, do try to have him show you around.

B. We also enjoyed seeing a Del Webb/Pulte Homes development called Sun City . . . that had some 6,000 homes and best of all, there are some 100 activities that residents can participate in . . . Aaron Fisher was our friendly host for this visit; he can be reached at: 1.800.978.9781, ext. 8616 . . . Gary Smythe, his colleague, did a fine job in helping us make all our arrangements for the trip (which included a great rate at a nearby Hampton Inn); his number is 1.800.978.9781, ext. 8553.

We next went to another Sun City community: Riverbend . . . this one has custom built homes with lovely wooded, lagoon and marsh views . . . it certainly did not come across as shabby!

C. While in South Carolina, we went for our first time to a Cheeseburger Cheeseburger restaurant . . . it was located in Bluffton; 843.706.9716 . . . we liked how the hostess explained the menu to us . . . in addition, we liked the pictures on the wall (of all those who managed to eat a 20-ounce hamburger in one sitting) . . . our food, though, was a disappointment . . . the onion rings were cold, and we had to send them back . . . the hamburgers were cold, too, as well as overcooked . . . the only reason we didn't send them back was because we had to leave to catch the movie mentioned in Section 4A.

We had a much better experience at Jack Frost Ice Cream, also in Bluffton; 843.705.5669 . . . they had a wide variety of very tasty flavors, and the owner (Dave Folts) made us feel welcome.

D. During the week, I viewed WELCOME TO NOLLYWOOD--a documentary about the emerging Nigerian film industry--at the Princeton Public Library . . . what makes Nollywood so unique is that all films are shot on digital and released direct to consumer . . . what made this showing so unique is that it also featured an informative introduction and then post-screening discussion led by Simon Gikandi, a Princeton University English professor.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Ellen Jolley--a realtor with RE/MAX Island Realty on Hilton Head Island.

She was the person who showed us the various developments cited above.

She was both knowledgeable and friendly, and she helped make our trip a success . . . also, we were most appreciative of how she took us around the Island on Easter Sunday just to see what it looked like (even though we weren't interested in any of the properties there).

If we decide to buy in South Carolina, you can be sure that we'll work with Ellen . . . she can be reached at 843.301.5875.

And SPECIAL THANKS to Sue Russeck, our local RE/MAX realtor, who helped us find Ellen . . . should you want to buy or sell real estate anywhere in Bucks County, PA, you won't go wrong with Sue . . . her number is 215.688.1381.

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2. FYI

If you ever need to hire salespeople or any other employees, go to directly to where they work . . . this is exactly what competitors do when shopping at Gap, as described in PUNCHING IN (see also Section 4C) by Alex Frankel:

In fact, Gabriela told me that when another clothing store wanted to find good salespeople, they sent in fake customers to our store. If you did an exceptional job, they might give you their card and encourage you to call them.

FYI, part 2

* Deidre in New Jersey:

Central Jersey moms have a new place to go to connect: a forum-based Web site that's developed a great energy and following since its launch in October. Now, more than 6,000 users strong, it's generating more than 100,000 page views a month based on the lively conversations on everything from current events to what's for dinner.

You'll find moms talking about religion and politics, green initiatives, Election 08, the Spitzer scandal. And, of course, there's the mom-focused conversations about toddler tantrums and infant sleep problems. Each week, the site runs contests for many great giveaways: Disney vacations, spa treatments, skincare products and dinners at local restaurants. Log on today and join the conversation:

<http://www.centraljerseymoms.com>

Many readers graciously responded to my recent questions about buying a mattress (and specifically, a Tempur-Pedic one), as well as to whether to buy at a Sleepy's or some other retailer . . . here were just a small sampling of the many emails I received in response:

* Nonie in New York:

I have to tell you that we just recently bought a memory foam mattress, which was a knock off of a Tempur-Pedic. I absolutely love this mattress. Although I am sure that the original may be much better, it doesn't matter. This is the way to go. I have had back pain when I sleep too long on my day off, but when I sleep a little past 6 a.m., I now have no aches or pains. Also, I bought my last bed from Rock-Away bedding. Not sure if they have them where you are, but I was very pleased with the service.

* Jean in Pennsylvania:

Mattress shopping is the most difficult. They are notoriously priced differently and with different model names for each store, so comparison shopping is next to impossible.

I tried to buy a mattress from Sleepy's. I just needed a twin for my son, and asked them to waive the delivery charge since I could take it home in my station wagon. Instead of a delivery charge, they wanted to tack on a PICK-UP charge (\$60 for delivery, \$30 if you picked it up). I left and went to JC Penny instead, which was much more reasonable.

* Ginger in Florida:

We bought a day bed for Michael's mom when she needed to have someone stay overnight in her apartment and be close enough to get to her easily. We went to Sleepy's and we explained that we couldn't bring her in and she was very particular. We asked if we could send it back if she hated it. We agreed to pay for the delivery and the cost of picking it up. They said there would be no problem. I think they were on Lexington, three blocks away. We should have gotten that in writing because, of course, she didn't like it. We called them to come pick it up. They said they don't take returns. She ended up calling a charity to pick it up. No amount of negotiating would make them change their mind. Never again; all promises are now in writing!

We went from a Queen-size to a King and hated it. Not everyone feels the same. We're back to a Queen.

* Melanie in New Jersey:

We purchased our new bedroom set and mattress at Flemington Department Store when we moved into our development 5 year ago.

This store (located in Flemington, of course) is quite an amazing store. It looks like a discount department store when you walk in, but in the back they have everything from lamps to furniture to carpeting, etc.

We have a king-size bed. but I didn't want any fancy pillow top or extra width mattress. We purchased a nice firm mattress. I can't remember the name, but it's a famous brand and they had good prices. It's the best mattress I ever had, and I still love it after 5 years.

* Craig in Pennsylvania:

Last year, Lynn and I purchased a sleep-numbered bed that allows you to adjust the firmness on each side of the bed separately. It wasn't cheap, but it was a good investment. And definitely worth checking out.

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3. Previous employment

The applicant was asked, "Why did you leave your last job?"

She replied, "It was something my boss said."

"What did he say?"

"'You're fired!'"

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4. Reviews

A. DRILLBIT TAYLOR is a moderately funny comedy about three high school students who keep getting beat up by bullies . . . things get so bad that they hire a supposed tough guy (Owen Wilson) to keep an eye on them . . . it's certainly not profound, but I did find myself laughing in spots . . . and as long as you don't view it with high expectations, you'll find yourself having a surprisingly good time . . . rated PG-13.

B. AUGUST RUSH is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #554 follows:

Saw AUGUST RUSH, a schmaltzy drama about a talented orphan who finds his parents as a result of his musical talents . . . the music is OK and so is the acting (except for an over-the-top Robin Williams), but I just didn't get into the story until the very ending . . . the film finally comes alive then, but not enough so that I'd recommend that you rush out to go see it . . . rated PG.

A much better DVD to rent would be TOOTSIE . . . considered by some as one of the funniest comedies of all time, this film is about an actor who can't get a job as a male . . . so he decides to disguise himself as an older woman to get a daytime soap opera gig . . . he's hired on the spot and becomes an overnight sensation . . . Dustin Hoffman is superb in the title role, but he is matched scene by scene by such other talented performers as Jessica Lange (who won an Oscar for best supporting actress), Dabney Coleman, Teri Garr, and Sydney Pollack . . . Pollack also directed . . . rated PG, though probably most

appropriate for anybody over the age of 12.

C. I've always admired the work done by UPS drivers . . . in addition, I've always been impressed by how well employees at Starbucks go about getting coffee to the vast numbers of people who enter their stores each day.

Other businesses come to mind, too, including Gap, Enterprise Rent-A-Car and Apple stores . . . they're all covered in Alex Frankel's PUNCHING IN (see also Section 2), an engaging and unauthorized look at what it's like to be a front-line employee at these various organizations in America.

Frankel went undercover to get hired by each one, then spent time doing such tasks as folding endless T-shirts, selling iPods and completing a management training program . . . what really caught my attention was how he attempted to find out how these firms then tried to turn thousands of job applicants into new hires and eventually loyal--even fanatical--workers.

For example, at UPS:

* . . . we were given only a brief lesson in how to treat customers. It went something like this: If a customer is angry at you or upset that a package has not been delivered, tell them that you are sorry. Do not confront them or engage them.

That was one extreme . . . at Gap, things were different:

* On my first day, I had a gnawing sense of not really knowing what to do, but I received constant advice that I needed to be doing something. "A little secret," said one coworker. "Don't stand around, or management will say, 'Why isn't he doing anything?' " My first day was a blessedly abbreviated four-hour tour of duty; I wandered around aimlessly and tried to avoid both the eyes of my managers and the questions of customers before I was set free.

I also liked the so-called advice that others gave Frankel, including this from a coworker at Enterprise:

* Another guy shared his own method of selling insurance to unsuspecting customers and regaled us with stories of selling "trips": "Dude, I'd like, rattle off a bunch of stuff and, like, totally confuse them, and then I'd, like, say, 'So, you want full coverage?' And they're like 'Okay,' " said Allan.

Lastly, all was not so perfect for the author . . . he interviewed for a job at Whole Foods, but did not get it . . . probably because he had difficulty with the online application:

* The test consisted of statements and a choice of four answers--"strongly disagree," "disagree," "agree," or "strongly agree"--for each statement. Trying to guess which answer would get me invited in for an interview as quite difficult. Statements bobbed and weaved in unpredictable directions and included the basic and the absurd:

You have confidence in yourself. Your stuff is often kind of messy. You like to have exciting fun. It is maddening when the court lets guilty criminals go free. There are some people you really can't stand. You are somewhat of a thrill-seeker. You are always cheerful. You like to stir up excitement when

you are bored. It is easy for you to take advantage of others. You are not afraid to tell someone off. You can wait patiently for a long time. Realistically, these days, companies do not expect much loyalty from employees. You deserve to be better off than you are. You like to be alone. Slow people make you impatient. You love to listen to people talk about themselves. Your behavior gets out of control at times. You've done your share of trouble-making. You think about your feelings and try to understand them. You would rather work on a team than by yourself.

Overall, PUNCHING IN is a great book to read or give as a gift for anybody entering the workforce . . . it will also make others presently employed rethink the wisdom of leaving their current job for something that often isn't as wonderful as it may look.

D. Heard the recorded version of THE HP WAY: HOW BILL HEWLETT AND I BUILT OUR COMPANY by David Packard

I found it fascinating to learn how these two college friends decided to start their own company in 1939 out of a one-car garage in Palo Alto, California (that has now become a historic landmark: the birthplace of Silicon Valley) . . . from those humble beginnings, Hewlett-Packard has grown to become one of the world's most admired technology corporations.

What made this book stand out for me was the fact that in learning about the HP history, you also found out what Hewlett and Packard both did to make their company one where employees would actually enjoy working at . . . they did this by holding such beliefs as the following:

- * A guiding principle at HP: Get the best people, stress teamwork and get employees fired up to work there.
- * Personal communication was often necessary to back up written communication.
- * Much of the success was from management by walking around.
- * Individuals need to be treated with consideration and respect.
- * People need the challenge to be their best, to realize their potential and to be recognized for their achievements.
- * Personnel's job is to support management, not to supplant it.
- * The betterment of our society is not a job to be limited to a few; it is a responsibility to be shared by all.

After reading THE HP WAY, my only regret is that more organizations don't get founded by such progressive thinkers as Bill Hewlett and David Packard . . . though both dead, their legacies live in the continuing success of the Hewlett-Packard Company.

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5. TV alert

A. AUTISM: THE MUSICAL details the efforts of educator

Elaine Hall in a documentary that covers the six months she spent helping five autistic children create their own musical . . . Tuesday at 8 p.m. on HBO and repeated throughout the week . . . for a listing of other show times, please click:

<http://www.tvguide.com/tvshows/autism-musical/tv-listings/293076>

B. WHO KNEW? WITH MARSHALL BRAIN looks at how robots have replaced humans on the assembly line when the inquisitive host visits car factories in Utah and Alabama. . . he also crashes into the air-bag industry to learn how they inflate and then later observes how money is printed . . . Thursday at 9 p.m. on NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC.

C. MASTERPIECE has a show on Sunday at 9 p.m. on PBS that methinks will be a winner . . . to quote TV GUIDE:

A marvelous new adaptation of Jane Austen's SENSE AND SENSIBILITY follows two sisters who are opposite in temperament as they each search for their perfect beaux without the benefit of eHarmony in 19th century England.

PBS times and dates often vary, so check local listings.

D. DANCE ON SUNSET premieres on Sunday at 9:30 p.m. on NICKELODEON . . . it not only offers easy (or so "they" say) step-by-step tips on all the latest dance moves, but also features music from hot acts like Ashlee Simpson, Janet Jackson and Sean Kingston.

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6. Shopping

The supermarket had a sale on boneless chicken breasts, and I intended to stock up. At the store, however, I was disappointed to find only a few skimpy pre-packaged portions of the poultry, so I complained to the butcher.

"Don't worry," she said, "I'll pack some more trays and have them ready for you by the time you finish shopping."

Several aisles later, I heard the lady's voice boom over the public-address system: "Will the gentleman who wanted bigger breasts please meet me at the back of the store."

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7. Websites

A. To see how easy it is for people to find out much of your personal information, please click:

<http://aclu.org/pizza/images/screen.swf>

At the end, there's useful information on how to prevent identify theft.

B. If you'd like to experience the joy of feeling young again, catch the Zimmers (a group of senior citizens) sing the song "My Generation" by clicking:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zqfFrCUrEbY>

For the original version by The Who, please click:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0XknwXqLDo>

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blaineworld.net>

THIS IS TRUE is one of my favorite online publications . . . it's a weekly syndicated newspaper column by Colorado humorist Randy Cassingham. TRUE reports on bizarre-but-true news items from legitimate newspapers from around the world (never "tabloids"). Each story ends with commentary by Randy--a tagline which is humorous, ironic or opinionated.

To subscribe for FREE from my website, go to "Blaine's Best" on the left, then click the dropdown menu and find THIS IS TRUE.

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8. Computer tip

To cut down on junk mail, squash preapproved credit offers. Register at:

<http://www.optoutprescreen.com>

or call the toll-free number: 888.567.8688.

Both methods cover you for five years. You also can opt out permanently by phone or by mail using a form found on the website. "Not only will you nix the offers, but you'll be reducing your chances of identity theft," says Beth Givens of the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse.

SOURCE:

USA WEEKEND, 3/7-3/9/08, p. 13

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9. Kindness

One afternoon, a wealthy lawyer was riding in the back of his limousine when he saw two men eating grass by the road-side. He ordered his driver to stop, and he got out to investigate.

"Why are you eating grass?" he asked one man.

"We don't have any money for food," the poor man replied.

"Oh, well, you can come with me to my house," instructed the lawyer.

"But, sir, I have a wife and two children with me!"

"Bring them along!" replied the lawyer.

He turned to the other man and said: "You come with us, too."

"But I have a wife and six children," the second man answered.

"Bring them as well" replied the lawyer.

They all climbed into the car, which was no easy task, even for a car as large as the limousine. Once underway, one of the poor fellows says: "Sir you are too kind. Thank you for taking all of us with you."

The lawyer replied: "Glad to do it. You'll love my place; the grass is almost a foot tall."

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10. A quote I like

Friends are quiet angels who lift us to our feet when our wings have trouble remembering how to fly.--Anonymous

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11. Thought for the day

A pastor's story (longish, but definitely worth your time)

Some years ago, I walked into my office after a Sunday morning service to find a sandwich bag on my desk containing three chocolate brownies. Some thoughtful and anonymous person who knew my love for chocolate had placed them there, along with a piece of paper that had a short story written on it I immediately sat down and began eating the first brownie as I read the following story:

Two teenagers asked their father if they could go the theater to watch a movie that all their friends had seen. After reading some reviews about the movie on the Internet, he denied their request.

"Aw dad, why not?" they complained. "It's rated PG-13, and we're both older than thirteen!"

Dad replied: "Because that movie contains nudity and portrays immorality as being normal and acceptable behavior."

"But dad, those are just very small parts of the movie! That's what our friends who've seen it have told us. The movie is two hours long and those scenes are just a few minutes of the total film! It's based on a true story and good triumphs over evil, and there are other redeeming themes like courage and self-sacrifice. Even the movie review websites say that!"

"My answer is 'no,' and that is my final answer. You are welcome to stay home tonight, invite some of your friends over, and watch one of the good videos we have in our home collection. But you will not go and watch that film. End of discussion."

The two teenagers walked dejectedly into the family room and slumped down on the couch. As they sulked, they were surprised to hear the sounds of their father preparing something in the kitchen. They soon recognized the wonderful aroma of brownies baking in the oven, and one of the teenagers said to the other, "Dad must be feeling guilty, and now he's going to try to make it up to us with some fresh brownies. Maybe we can soften him with lots of praise when he brings them out to us and persuade him to let us go to that movie after all."

About that time I began eating the second brownie from the sandwich bag and wondered if there was some connection to the brownies I was eating and the brownies in the story. I kept reading . . .

The teens were not disappointed. Soon their father appeared with a plate of warm brownies which he offered to his kids. They each took one. Then their father said, "Before you eat, I want to tell you something: I love you both so much." The teenagers smiled at each other with knowing glances. Dad was softening.

"That is why I've made these brownies with the very best ingredients. I've made them from scratch. Most of the ingredients are even organic. The best organic flour. The best free-range eggs. The best organic sugar. Premium vanilla and chocolate."

The brownies looked mouth-watering, and the teens began to become a little impatient with their dad's long speech.

"But I want to be perfectly honest with you. There is one ingredient I added that is not usually found in brownies. I got that ingredient from our own back yard. But you needn't worry, because I only added the tiniest bit of that ingredient to your brownies. The amount of the portion is practically insignificant. So go ahead, take a bite and let e know what you think."

"Dad, would you mind telling us what that mystery ingredient is before we eat?"

"Why? The portion I added was so small, just a teaspoonful. You won't even taste it."

"Come on, dad; just tell us what that ingredient is."

"Don't worry! It is organic, just like the other ingredients."

"Dad!"

"Well, OK, if you insist. That secret ingredient is organic . . . dog poop."

I immediately stopped chewing that second brownie, and I spit it out into the waste basket by my desk. I continued reading, now fearful of the paragraphs that still remained.

Both teens instantly dropped their brownies back on the plate and began inspecting their fingers with horror.

"DAD! Why did you do that? You've tortured us by making us smell those brownies cooking for the last half hour, and now you tell us that you added dog poop! We can't eat these brownies!"

"Why not? The amount of dog poop is very small compared to the rest of the ingredients. It won't hurt you. It's been cooked right along with

the other ingredients. You won't even taste it. It has the same consistency as the brownies. Go ahead and eat!"

"No, Dad . . . NEVER!"

"And that is the same reason I won't allow you to go watch that movie. You won't tolerate a little dog poop in your brownies, so why should you tolerate a little immorality in your movies? We pray that God will not lead us unto temptation, so how can we in good conscience entertain ourselves with something that will imprint a sinful image in our minds that will lead us into temptation long after we first see it?"

I discarded what remained of the second brownie as well as the entire untouched third brownie. What had been irresistible a minute ago had become detestable. And only because of the very slim chance that what I was eating was slightly polluted. (Surely it wasn't . . . but I couldn't convince myself.)

What a good lesson about purity! Why do we tolerate any sin? On the day of the Passover, the Israelites were commanded to remove every bit of leaven from their homes. Sin is like leaven--a little bit leavens the whole lump (1Corinthians 5:6, 7). Faith and sin don't mix.

Author unknown
(if you know who wrote this and/or the source, please let me know)

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12. Advance planning department

A. Cathy in Pennsylvania:

Attend the Weekly Prayers for Peace Vigil of Pax Christi from 6:30-7:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 27 at St. Ann's Roman Catholic Church, 1253 Lawrence Road in Lawrenceville.

B. Janet in New Jersey:

Join us Thursday Evening, March 27, 2008, 7-9 p.m.

BE THE MEDICINE: ONGOING GROUP for Medical, Psychological, Chiropractic, Acupuncture, Nutritional, Energy, Body workers, Coaches, and other Healing and Integrative Therapy Professionals and ALL who would like to live their highest truth. With Janet StraightArrow, Woman of Medicine, Medical Intuitive, Energy Healer.

We began with a great group of people two weeks ago; join us as you can.

18 Bank Street, Suite 300, Morristown, NJ (Rt. 202 S. off the Green)

Parking lot across the street is free, leaving after 8 p.m.

For more information, please click:
<http://www.oasisforthesoul.com>

C. This Weekend:

Saturday, March 29, at 8 p.m.

David Brahinsky & Friends
12th Annual Singing for Our Souls Sing A Long

David provides the song sheets, and you add the voice in songs that touch the heart and mind to stimulate the soul's growth. Selections will include folk music, songs by contemporary musicians, and songs David wrote based on the words of Lao Tsu, Whitman, and others.

Princeton Center for Yoga & Health
Montgomery Professional Center
50 Vreeland Drive, Suite 506
Skillman, New Jersey

For more information, please click:
<http://www.princetonyoga.com>

Or call 609.924.7294.

D. Cyndy in Pennsylvania:

I am birthing a new Drum and Sacred Sound Healing Circle in West Chester, at the Creative Healing Arts Center. This is the culmination of a dream to have a West Chester circle for my friends who are finding that Landenberg, although beautiful when you get here . . . is a bit of a drive for some.

We will meet on Saturdays, March 29, April 26 and May 17 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.. The donation for the Spring Session is \$100.00. If you cannot afford this, talk to me. If the circle has more value for you, and you can afford it, please offer more. This allows space for those who need to be there, but have less. You can register by emailing me.

Cyndy "Snake Dancer"
Landenberg, PA

<http://www.rhythmoftheearth.com>
snakedancer@rhythmoftheearth.com

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PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#598

3.17.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I attended "I'll have what she's having . . ." at Rider University . . . this was a showcase put on by Dance Project, whose mission is to support, encourage and empower New Jersey women dancers/artists/choreographers (over 40) within our community to create and perform works of art . . . we were impressed!

For more information, contact Christine Colosimo at the YMCA Princeton Dance Department . . . 609.497.2100, ext. 332
or: ccolosimo@ywcaprinceton.org.

And in case you're wondering why you won't see us either of us on email or in person this coming weekend, we're off to Hilton Head, SC, to continue our search for our where we'll live in retirement . . . to update you if you haven't been following our saga, though we very much like our home in Belle Mead, NJ, we don't wish to stay in this immediate area . . . we've also visited (and ruled out) The Villages in Florida and Raleigh, NC . . . after Hilton Head, there's Asheville, NC, in late May and then we may well wind up back where I used to live--Washington Crossing, PA . . . only God knows the eventual answer for us, and to date, she hasn't even shared any hints with us.

B. We're also looking forward to seeing Risa, my daughter, and her fiance JP . . . they're leaving Florida toward the end of this month, en route back to New Jersey where they'll be staying for the time being with Risa's mother Hilary, who has graciously made her home available to them.

I mention this for two reasons:

* To make room for the furniture that they will be bringing, Hilary is trying to clear space in her basement . . . as such, she is making the following items available for FREE:

1 huge desk that may be divided into 3 sections and an accompanying desk chair, as well as another large black chair (all great items that I can personally vouch for, in that I had used them for several years); and

2 nightstands, 2 lamps, child's dresser, 2 old TVs, carpet remnants.

Any of the above would be ideal for personal use . . . or feel free to obtain for a church, temple, non-profit organization, etc. . . . all you have to do is arrange pick-up from East Windsor, NJ.

For more information, please call Hilary at 609.426.1183 or send her an email: hlrygreenfield@yahoo.com.

* Risa has arranged for a transfer to a White House|Black Market in Westfield, NJ . . . however, JP will be looking for a job . . . he has a background in banking (most recently having been with Wachovia), so if you have any suggestions and/or leads for him, please let me know so that I can forward them . . . he's a good guy and would be an asset to banks or financial firms, and I believe he'd be receptive to considering jobs in other fields as well.

C. Recently, I had the opportunity to hear Michael Isikoff, a correspondent for NEWSWEEK . . . he spoke at Princeton University on "Investigative Reporting and the Presidency."

To nobody's surprise, he said this is an extremely secretive administration . . . but he balanced that comment with the observation that every administration has something it wants to cover up.

Among his other observations:

* I thoroughly reject the 9-11 conspiracy theories.

* No matter what, at the end of the day--regardless of the medium--there's interest in the public about what government is doing.

* Investigative reporting will continue, but the process and the media will change.

And my favorite:

* The Clinton camp is angry that nobody has come up with something to take Obama out.

A few days later, I then had the pleasure of introducing Lisa Ford . . . she was the keynote speaker at the annual "Meet the Author" Business Seminar at Bucks County Community College on the following topic: Exceptional Customer Service--Going Beyond Your Good Service to Exceed the Customer's Expectation

She did just that, too; i.e., exceeded everybody's expectations . . . Lisa was both funny and informative, as well as very thought-provoking.

Just to cite a few of the many points she made:

* When there's value in the relationship, price becomes a non-issue.

* Companies can boost profits by almost 100% by retaining 5% more of their existing customers.

* Ask the question: If there's one thing we can do to improve our service, what would it be?

* Consider: What is your weakest link? If it's a person, get rid of him or her.

* If you respond to email within 4 hours, that's a wow. Otherwise, you must do so within 24 hours.

* Don't use, "I can't." Instead use, "I can help you "

Her final point was the one I'll perhaps remember most . . . she asked all those in attendance to stretch out their right hand, then raise it high . . . she next said to touch your cheek with it (pointing to her chin) . . . as you can imagine, just about everybody wasn't really listening properly and so touched his or her chin . . . Lisa commented: People pay more attention to what you do than what you say.

D. CONGRATULATIONS to Kevin Jameson . . . he was chosen for inclusion in the summer catalog of Bucks County Community College . . . I also want to say THANKS to him for the very nice words that he had to say about me; see below:

Kevin Jameson ('78), national accounts manager for Honeywell Security & Custom Electronics, is also an author, singer, inventor, and motivational speaker. His career in the security industry includes a U.S. patent for a manual fire alarm device. Jameson says his associate degree from Bucks, coupled with mentoring from a business studies professor, helped open doors to success.



"Clearly, Professor Blaine Greenfield most influenced my life at BCCC and after. His ready acceptance of some of my more kooky ideas gave me the sense that anything was possible, and that I should try everything I wanted to try--at least once."

CONGRATULATIONS, also, to Mark Bostic on being named Regional Director of the Northeast Region of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) previously, he had been our college's staff representative for AFT Pennsylvania . . . and though in that post for a relatively short time, he had done a fine job.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Kathy Hamas--office manager/paralegal for the law firm of Brodie & Rubinsky in Philadelphia.

She has been of great help to our teacher's union at Bucks County Community over the past several years . . . she sets up meetings, gets us information, answers questions or gets them answered for us, etc.

In addition, Kathy is great on both follow-up and details . . . she's always pleasant, as well as enthusiastic, and Josh Rubinsky (her boss) is one lucky guy to have her as an employee.

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2. FYI

Patricia Diesel (see also Section 4C) in A SIMPLE GUIDE TO AN ORGANIZED LIFE presents this great technique for cleaning your garage that can also be any room in your house, closets, etc:

Finding friends

Go through the garage and figure out what you would like to keep, donate or discard.

It's not uncommon that people tend to use their garage as a storage area for their "stuff" they can't seem to part with. If this is the case, begin by sorting it all through and asking the question; is this a friend, acquaintance or a stranger? This technique is an emotional game developed by Judith Kolberg, author of CONQUERING CHRONIC DISORGANIZATION.

This means, a friend you would like to keep around. An acquaintance you need to revisit and then come to the conclusion that you can either keep, donate, or discard it. And the stranger is something you have no longer a use for. You can simply toss it and feel good about the decision.

FYI, part 2

I'd like to express my appreciation to the many readers who have already written to me about buying a Tempur-Pedic bed and/or to share their experiences in buying from Sleepy's . . . if you haven't written to me about that yet, I'm still interested in finding out more from you; e.g., if you have any knowledge about the topic . . . or have bought other mattresses, dealt with other retailers, etc. . . . my plan is to share this information with you over the next few weeks . . . in the meantime, here's just a small sampling of some other email I've received lately:

* Kevin in Pennsylvania (see also Section 1D):
Great no smoking ad I heard in Florida . . . see below, then listen to the one that says, "I don't care."
<http://www.tobaccofreeflorida.com/english/campaign/radio/>

* Jody in Pennsylvania:
Barry and I went to see No Country For Old Men since it had won the Oscar and best supporting actor. I was physically sick to my stomach

through the entire movie. I found it so intense and disturbing that I could hardly sleep that night. I have been encouraging people not to see it. Barry found it quite boring. Our nephew is a movie producer in Hollywood and is on the Academy Award committee for reviewing films. His response to my "How could this have won" was that unfortunately the Oscars have become a popularity contest. He prefers the Golden Globes and the Peoples Choice Awards. Having said that, he did say that the writing and acting were considered very good.

* Joan in Pennsylvania:

One minute each night In WWII, there was an advisor to Churchill who organized a group of people who dropped what they were doing every night at a prescribed hour for one minute to collectively pray for the safety of England, it's people and peace. This had an amazing effect as bombing stopped!

There is now a group of people who are organizing the same thing here in America .

If you would like to participate: each evening at 9:00 PM Eastern Time (8:00 PM Central, 7:00 PM Mountain, 6:00 PM Pacific), stop whatever you are doing and spend one minute praying: for the safety of the United States, our troops, our citizens, and for peace in the world.

If you know anyone who would like to participate, please pass this along.

Someone said if people really understood the full extent of the power we have available through prayer, we might be speechless.

Our prayers are the most powerful asset we have.

* Deirdre in New Jersey:

Central Jersey moms have a new place to go to connect--a forum-based website that's developed a great energy and following since it's launch in October. Now, more than 6,000 users strong, it's generating more than 100,000 page views a month based on the lively conversations on everything from current events to what's for dinner. You'll find moms talking about religion and politics, green initiatives, Election 08, the Spitzer scandal. And, of course, there's the mom-focused conversations about toddler tantrums and infant sleep problems. Each week, the site runs contests for many great giveaways: Disney vacations, spa treatments, skincare products, and dinners at local restaurants.

Log on today and join the conversation:

<http://www.centraljerseymoms.com>

* Arlene in Pennsylvania:

Free Food for Animal Shelter

Hi, all you animal lovers. This is pretty simple. Please tell ten (or more) friends to tell ten today! The Animal Rescue Site is having trouble getting enough people to click on it daily to meet their quota of getting free food donated every day to abused and neglected animals. It takes less than a minute to go to their site and click on "feed an animal in need" for free. It's in a purple box in the middle of the page. This doesn't cost you a thing. Their corporate sponsors/advertisers use the number of daily visits to donate food to abandoned/neglected animals in exchange for advertising.

Here's the website! Pass it along to people you know:

<http://www.theanimalrescuesite.com>

* Lynda in Pennsylvania:

Check out our website:

<http://www.mginews.com>

To quote from the homepage, this is:

Your Inside Source for News, Analysis, Opinion, Programming,
and Production in and about the Middle East.

* Robin in Pennsylvania (with an offer):

I'm a public relations generalist with a broad range of experience
garnered during 25 years of work with my own clients, and in
agency and in-house positions. As such, I've created and
managed successful strategic public relations programs for
a variety of professional services providers and public companies.
My services include program creation, media training and
interface, and all written materials, including press releases, media
pitch letters, newsletters, articles, brochures, annual reports, fact
sheets, backgrounders, and websites. If you could benefit from
senior level public relations services without incurring the cost
of a top level agency, please contact me, Robin Schoen, at Robin
Schoen Public Relations: 215.504.2122. Additional information
may be found at:

<http://www.robinschoenpr.com>

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3. Experiment

A dog is truly a man's best friend. If you don't believe it,
just try this experiment . . .

Put your dog and your wife or girlfriend in the trunk of the car
for an hour.

When you open the trunk, who is really happy to see you?

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4. Reviews

A. IN BRUGES is a dark comedy about two hit men who are
told to wait for their next assignment in the most well-preserved
medieval city in the whole of Belgium . . . they live the life of
tourists, discovering the sights, as well as the locals, a dwarf
American actor and even Dutch prostitutes . . . it kept my
attention from start to finish, particularly because of the acting
of Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson in the major roles . . . Ralph
Fiennes as their London boss was also effective . . . if you're
in the mood for something different, consider this film . . . rated R.

B. ENCHANTED is now out in DVD format . . . my review from
BLAINESWORLD #583 follows:

I was enchanted by ENCHANTED . . . it is a delightful combination
of a classic Disney animated fairy tale meeting up with a modern,
live-action romantic comedy . . . kids will like it, and so will their
parents . . . and grandparents, too . . . Amy Adams is the princess
who gets banished to modern-day Manhattan . . . it is there that

she finds true love in divorce lawyer Patrick Dempsey, but that doesn't sit well with her fairy tale prince or the evil queen (Susan Sarandon, intentionally over-the-top in a performance that's both funny and scary) . . . you'll have to see the film to find out what happens, but you'll be glad you did if for just one music number set in Central Park that I guarantee will have you smiling . . . rated PG.

C. I once was so disorganized that I couldn't find for three years an application to enter a magazine's "Most Disorganized Office" contest . . . fortunately, things have gotten better, but I still fall into bad habits from time to time . . . it seems that I'm not unique in this, either.

According to Patricia Diesel (see also Section 2), author of A SIMPLE GUIDE TO AN ORGANIZED LIFE:

* [citing the National Association of Professional Organizer]
One hour a week is spent on finding documents and 23 percent of adults say they pay their bills late because they lose them.

If you'd been there and/or done that, then you should read Diesel's informative book . . . it will give you many useful ideas that you can immediately put to use to deal with the various organizing problems you typically face any given day . . . for example:

* Items needed for the next day, such as keys, purse, brief case, backpack, should be placed, ready to take, at the door where you leave. To provide additional peace of mind, try putting things in the car the night before.

I also liked this one that seems so simple, yet for some reason fail to do as often as I should:

* If your piles are simply tasks that need to be done, why not try the 15-20 minute rule. Each day, dedicate 15-20 minutes to a pile and start paying some of those bills. Order those items that you wanted to purchase from the catalogs. Go through your magazines and only tear out the articles that you know you will follow up on. Maybe take the full 20 minutes to catch up on the reading you need for that upcoming project.

If I get one concept that I can apply from every book that I read, I consider myself ahead of the game . . . A SIMPLE GUIDE gave me many so many that I only regret space prevents me from sharing more with you other than this final one:

* The use of a timer can help you set limits for completing tasks and frame your time in a more manageable way. Choose your tasks for the day. For example, make phone calls for 30 minutes, file papers for one hour, and work on a project for 45 minutes. Set the timer for the allotted time. When the timer goes off, move onto the next task.

D. I've always admired Scott Turow as a writer, largely because he doesn't always keep to the exact same format . . . he's written several legal thrillers (PRESUMED INNOCENT being one of my favorites), as well as such nonfiction works as ONE L (an inside look at what life in law school is all about).

For some reason, I somehow had missed ORDINARY HEROES--a 2005 novel . . . so when I got the chance to listen to the taped version, I grabbed the opportunity--and was not disappointed.

This is the story about a retired newspaperman who discovers letters that his deceased father wrote during World War II . . . in doing so, he uncovers a host of family secrets . . . along the way, there's a love triangle, court martial and fascinating tale of investigative journalism.

This is not the page-turner that some of Turow's other books were . . . rather, ORDINARY HEROES unfolds at a more leisurely pace that nonetheless will hold your interest throughout.

The audio version I heard had an added bonus; i.e., an interview with Turow (who remains a practicing attorney) at the end . . . furthermore, the narration by Edward Hermann was as fine as I've ever heard.

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5. TV alert

A. A dozen new celebs--including Priscilla Presley, Oscar winner Marlee Matlin, Monica Seles, and Penn Jillette--appear on DANCING WITH THE STARS, which begins its sixth season . . . Mondays and Tuesdays on ABC; times vary, so check local listings.

B. Judy Greer (who caught my attention in 27 DRESSES) stars as a former geek who takes a job as a guidance counselor at her old high school in MISS GUIDED . . . Tuesdays at 10:30 p.m. on ABC.

C. Leonard Cohen joins John Mellencamp, Madonna, the Dave Clark Five, the Ventures, Little Walter, and producers Gamble and Huff as inductees on ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAME INDUCTION CEREMONIES . . . Saturday at 11 p.m. on VH1.

D. JOAN CRAWFORD: THE ULTIMATE MOVIE STAR is a documentary that airs on Sunday at 8 p.m. on TCM . . . it promises to touch on her films, her early days as a flapper and her ability to generate big box office.

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6. Never too late

A man and his wife were awakened at 3:00 a.m. by a loud pounding on the door. The man gets up and goes to the door where a drunken stranger, standing in the pouring rain, is asking for a push. "Not a chance," says the husband, "it is 3:00 in the morning!" He slams the door and returns to bed.

"Who was that?" asked his wife.

"Just some drunk guy asking for a push," he answers.

"Did you help him?" she asks.

"No, I did not, it is 3:00 in the morning, and it is pouring rain out there!"

"Well, you have a short memory," says his wife. "Can't you remember about three months ago when we broke down and those two guys helped us? I think you should help him, and you should be ashamed of yourself!" The man does as he is told, gets dressed, and goes out into the storm.

He calls out into the dark, "Hello, are you still there?"

"Yes," comes back the answer.

"Do you still need a push?" calls out the husband.

"Yes, please!" comes the reply from the dark.

"Where are you?" asks the husband.

"Over here on the swing," replied the drunk.

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7. Websites

A. If you want the latest information regarding taxes, please click:
<http://money.aol.com/tax?NCID=aolprf0003000000001>

This website contains news, forms, advice, and much more information designed to help you get through the tax season with ease.

B. I saw Amy Walker on the TODAY show and was blown away . . . you will be, too, by clicking:
<http://youtube.com/watch?v=3UgpfSp2t6k>

She's an actress who does an amazing 21 different accents in under 3 minutes!

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:
<http://www.blaineworld.net>

You'll notice that at the homepage, you can always sign-up for a subscription . . . see the "Special Offer" at the bottom . . . always feel free to share this information with your friends; e.g., if you'd like to encourage them to subscribe . . . you can also add other email addresses for your own subscription; e.g., if you'd like to get separate issues at both work and home . . . the price remains the same: FREE.

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8. Computer tip

Jean in Pennsylvania:
New virus called POSTCARD.

I checked this out on Snopes, and it is a real virus.

What follows is the email that's being circulated that is telling you to BE CAREFUL; I agree!

Subject: New virus

Hi All!

I checked with Norton Anti-Virus, and they are gearing up for this virus! I checked snopes.com, and it is for real!!

Get this E-mail message sent around to your contacts ASAP. PLEASE FORWARD THIS WARNING AMONG FRIENDS, FAMILY AND CONTACTS! You should be alert during the next few days. Do not open any message with an attachment entitled "POSTCARD," regardless of who sent it to you.

It is a virus which opens A POSTCARD IMAGE, which "burns" the whole hard drive C of your computer. This virus will be received from someone who has your email address in his/her contact list.

If you receive mail called "POSTCARD," even though sent to you by a friend, do not open it! Shut down your computer immediately.

This is the worst virus announced by CNN. It has been classified by Microsoft as the most destructive virus ever. This virus was discovered by McAfee yesterday, and there is no repair yet for this kind of virus. This virus simply destroys the Zero Sector of the Hard Disc, where all vital information is kept.

MY TWO CENTS:

I also checked it out with snopes.com and in doing so, will provide you with the link:

<http://www.snopes.com/computer/virus/postcard.asp>

Please ALWAYS do this when you forward such warnings to me, as well as to others; i.e., don't just put down that you checked it with snopes . . . provide the actual link.

Also, be forewarned that some people tell you that they checked it with snopes . . . they even provide a link that looks legitimate . . . but when and if you go there, you'll find that the information that you're given has nothing to do with what they're writing about . . . or worse, you'll be taken to another website site that contains a virus.

I know it's scary, but the best advice I can give you is to be very careful with respect to whom you trust online!

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9. Talking Pennsylvanian, part 2 of 2

You can eat cold pizza (even for breakfast) and know others who do the same. Those from NY find this "barbaric."

You not only have heard of Birch Beer, but you know it comes in several colors.

You know the difference between a cheese steak and a pizza steak

sandwich, and know that you can't get a really good one outside PA, except Atlantic City on the boardwalk.

You live for summer when street and county fairs signal the beginning of funnel cake season.

You know that Blue Ball, Intercourse, Paradise, Climax, Bird-in-Hand, Beaver, Moon, Virginville, Mars, and Slippery Rock are PA towns.

And the first three were consecutive stops on the Reading Rail Road.

You know what a township, borough and commonwealth is.

You can identify drivers from New York, New Jersey, Maryland or other neighboring states by their unique and irritating driving habits.

A traffic jam is 10 cars waiting to pass a horse-drawn carriage on the highway in Lancaster County

You know several people who have hit deer more than once.

You carry jumper cables in your car and your female passengers know how to use them.

Driving is always better in winter because the potholes are filled with snow.

As a kid you built snow forts and leaf piles that were taller than you were.

You also know someone who lives "down the lane."

You actually understand all this and plan to send it on to other Pennsylvanians or former Pennsylvanians!

And you also will send it to people that never lived in PA so as to confuse them.

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10. A quote I like

Apathy can be overcome by enthusiasm, and enthusiasm can be aroused by two things: first, an idea which takes the imagination by storm; and second, a definite, intelligible plan for carrying that idea into action.--Arnold Toynbee (1889-1975), British historian

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11. Thought for the day

I apologize (a piece that's sooooo touching)

This is for you because you are very dear to my heart!

So what if right now . . .

I apologize for all the mean things I might have said.

I apologize for all the things I did or didn't do.

I apologize if I ever ignored you.

I apologize if I ever made you feel bad or put you down.

I apologize if I ever thought I was better than you.

I apologize for everything wrong I've ever done.

I care for you. Don't ever forget that!

Through bad times and good, I'll always be here for you.

I'm writing this because what if tomorrow . . .

YOU WIN THE LOTTERY!!

Author unknown

(if you know who wrote this and/or the source, please let me know)

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12. Advance planning department

A. Janet in New Jersey:

Join us Thursday evening, March 20, 2008, 7 - 9 p.m.

Experience an Introductory Evening Class for:

BE THE MEDICINE: ONGOING GROUP for Healing Professionals--Medical, Psychological, Chiropractic, Acupuncture, Nutritional, Energy, Body Worker, Coaches, Astrologers, Service, and other Healing and Integrative Therapy Professionals and ALL who would like to live their highest truth.

With Janet StraightArrow, Woman of Medicine, Medical Intuitive, Energy Healer

At: 18 Bank Street, Suite 300, Morristown, NJ. (Rt. 202 S. off the Green)

For more information, call Janet at 973.647.2500 or 845.853.9998.

You can also click:

<http://www.oasisforthesoul.com>

B. The Princeton Chapter of Amnesty International will present Eric Fair, who will speak about his experiences as a contract negotiator in Iraq at Abu Ghraib prison in early 2004 . . . admission is free . . . on Thursday, March 27, at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Room at the Princeton Public Library . . . for more information, call Robert Fleming: 609.924.6253.

C. Susie in New Jersey:

The Provincetown Fringe Festival in Asbury Park presents SPECIES STEW: Everything You Never Wanted to Know About Interspecies Relations, But I'm Going to Tell You Anyway. This is a reading of a new play by first-time playwright Jackie Freitas and performed by Anne Berkowitz, Diane Jackson, Marjorie Conn and Susan Marco. Proceeds from all performances will benefit Greyhound Rescue Organizations that find homes for ex-racing Greyhounds.

Performances are at the Stephen Crane House at 508 4th Avenue in Asbury Park as follows:

Friday, March 28 at 7 p.m.
Saturday, March 29 at 2 p.m.
Sunday, March 30 at 2 p.m.

Seating is limited and reservations are strongly recommended at 732.807.4052. Tickets are \$5 and include complimentary refreshments. A reception with discussion will follow each performance.

Sponsor all 3 performance of SPECIES STEW: Everything You Never Wanted to Know About Interspecies Relations, But I'm Going to Tell You Anyway for \$25 and your name and other information if you choose (up to 25 words) will be prominently displayed in our program.

HOW YOU CAN BECOME A SPONSOR

Send a check for \$25 to C.A.P.E., Inc., 147 Webb Avenue, Apt 2, Ocean Grove, NJ 07756. Or you can pay through PayPal to connartists@yahoo.com

Include your name as you want it printed in the program and any other information up to 25 words.

If you have any questions, please call Marj Conn at 732.807.4052.

D. Brendan Mulvey, my talented colleague from Bucks County Community College, appears in DEAR WORLD at the Bristol Riverside Theatre, Bristol, PA, from April 28-May 18 . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.brtstage.org>

PS. If you're like me and you celebrate ALL holidays (more gifts and lots of great food that way), then here's hoping you have both a Happy St. Patrick's Day and Joyous Easter.

Also, please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . and make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#597

3.10.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I joined our friends Jan and Bill on Saturday . . . we first caught a movie (see Section 4A), then went for dinner at one our favorite places: Santa Fe Grille in Skillman, NJ . . . I had the ribs, one of the dishes I most enjoy there . . . Cynthia ordered the mole chicken fajita . . . both dishes were winners . . . though we passed on dessert, Jan and Bill said their brownie/ice cream combo was excellent . . . for more information, please click:
<http://www.santafegrille.com/>

The evening was somewhat bittersweet, though, in that it marked the last time we'll be seeing Bill for at least quite some time . . . he recently took a job in the San Diego area and, as a result, will be leaving this coming Thursday . . . we'll miss him!

That's the four of us below (l-r: Cynthia, yours truly, Jan, and Bill):



B. We presently have a queen-sized bed, but are in the process of getting a king-sized one . . . the other night, we began our shopping at a local Sleepy's.

***** PLEASE HELP DEPARTMENT *****

* Have you ever dealt with Sleepy's? And, if so, what was your experience?

Sleepy's says it doesn't discount on price; that true?

* Any store recommendations, other than Sleepy's?

* You familiar with Tempur-Pedic beds? If so, what's your reaction to them? Is there a problem when you first get them (with respect to smell)? And how long does this problem exist?

* What model to get; i.e., Original? Celebrity? Grand? Any other?

* They have an adjustable option. Is the extra expense worth it?

* If we don't get and/or you don't recommend the Tempur-Pedic line, what else might you suggest?

C. During the week, I attended an interesting discussion of GOOD NEIGHBORS, BAD TIMES by Mimi Schwartz, the book's author, at Barnes & Noble in West Windsor, NJ.

This true story is about the rescue of a Torah by Christians from her father's village of Benheim in 1938 . . . I particularly liked what Schwartz had to say about her 12-year quest for answers about what really happened . . . it got her to think about whether she willing be willing to rescue a Torah and, also, whether she would help another family if her family was in danger . . . she further acknowledged that "the book has

made me more of an activist."

I'm constantly amazed by the range of authors and programs offered by this particular Barnes & Noble . . . for example, this Tuesday, March 11, at 7:30 p.m., Julia Cameron (the best-selling author of THE ARTIST'S WAY) will be discussing her latest book--MOZART'S GHOST--a romantic comedy that's also a love story . . . for more information, please call 609.716.1570 . . . or for more event listings in your area and nationwide, please click: <http://www.bn.com>

D. I also got to visit the Silver Lake Nature Center in Bristol, PA . . . there I met with Robert Mercer, naturalist, and PattiAnn Cutter, environmental educator/public relations coordinator, about an exciting thing that they will be doing; i.e., hiring a marketing-type intern . . . this is a great opportunity for any college student (or recent graduate) interested in working some 25-35 hours per week for pay . . . in addition, the person hired would have the opportunity to live in free housing provided by the Center . . . I'll have full details in the near future, but if you can't wait, drop me an email and put the words NATURE CENTER in your subject line so I can get you more information as soon as it becomes available to me.

Should you want to find out more about the Silver Lake Nature Center, please click: <http://www.silverlakenaturecenter.org>

You'll find out about such programs as bird watching, fly fishing and a whole host of others--all of which appear to be very interesting . . . there are numerous activities for kids, too.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Bruce Baggot--an usher at the Market Fair movie theater in West Windsor, NJ.

He never fails to greet me with an enthusiastic greeting and his kind words always manage to enhance my movie-going experience.

I've had the pleasure of coming into contact with Bruce for the past several years . . . consequently, I've come the conclusion that United Artists is fortunate to have him as an employee!

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2. FYI

How donations stack up by income

Individuals in the top tax brackets are likely to donate more. This chart shows an annual breakdown, based on IRS data for 2004 (the last time such figures seem to be available).

Share this information with your accountants. Also, use it to review your donations and to consider whether you should possibly consider donating more--or even less. And whether what you put down will be a "red flag" for the IRS.

Adjusted gross income: Under \$60,000
Avg. total donations: \$2,128
Avg. cash gifts: \$1,737
Avg. noncash gifts: \$391
Pct. Non-cash gifts: 18%

Adjusted gross income: \$60,000-\$75,000
Avg. total donations: \$2,672
Avg. cash gifts: \$2,209
Avg. noncash gifts: \$462
Pct. Non-cash gifts: 17%

Adjusted gross income: \$75,000-\$100,000
Avg. total donations: \$2,804
Avg. cash gifts: \$2,257
Avg. noncash gifts: \$547
Pct. Non-cash gifts: 20%

Adjusted gross income: \$100,000-\$200,000
Avg. total donations: \$4,110
Avg. cash gifts: \$3,301
Avg. noncash gifts: \$809
Pct. Non-cash gifts: 20%

Adjusted gross income: \$200,000-\$500,000
Avg. total donations: \$8,720
Avg. cash gifts: \$6,766
Avg. noncash gifts: \$1,954
Pct. Non-cash gifts: 22%

Adjusted gross income: \$500,000-\$1 million
Avg. total donations: \$22,104
Avg. cash gifts: \$15,776
Avg. noncash gifts: \$6,327
Pct. Non-cash gifts: 29%

Adjusted gross income: \$1 million-\$5 million
Avg. total donations: \$75,490
Avg. cash gifts: \$41,821
Avg. noncash gifts: \$33,669
Pct. Non-cash gifts: 45%

SOURCE:
THE COURIER NEWS, 12.7.2007

FYI, part 2

* Kandi in Arizona:

I have to share my good news! Blaine it's been ONE YEAR on March 1st since that ugly green monster who was sucking the life out of me got fed!

Thanks for suggesting a workable way to kick "that awful butt" out of my life! That green thing is officially starved to death, and I feel great! It was so much easier than other methods! Another lesson on "perception" that changed my world. I will NEVER walk that smoky path again.

Thanks for caring enough to share that book with me. I am smoke free and feeling wonderful. Zero relapses! I hope your good deed comes back at you ten fold for every person you have sent the book too! I can't believe how easy it was, and that it has already been one year!! I sure don't miss

that monster!

Most appreciative to you! Thanks!

THE OFFER REMAINS:

If you'd like a FREE copy of THE EASY WAY TO STOP SMOKING by Allen Carr--sent with my compliments--just send an email to my assistant Bridget: hughesbr@bucks.edu . . . put STOP SMOKING BOOK in the subject line . . . in the body of your email, include your name, snail mail address, email address, and phone numbers . . . I only ask that you did what Kandi did; i.e., keep me informed of your progress.

* Cynthia in New Jersey (also see Section 1A)

Strap-Mate is great . . . never realized how I kept pulling on my bra straps to keep them in place. Not only does it keep the bra straps in place, but it also gives better support to the bra in general. Wish I had a pair for all of my bras. Great invention!

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT:

This was just one of the inventions that Lisa Gable, my good friend, has brought to the market over the past several years . . . this work enabled her to be named New Jersey's Outstanding Older Worker . . . for more information and/or to order, please click:

<http://strapmate.com/>

* Pat in Pennsylvania:

You may have seen this already? Not sure.. But if you have not, you simply MUST watch this video. I have been humbled. Be sure to watch it all the way through. This really IS one of the best things I have ever sent. Maybe a good motivational tool to show your students?

<http://video.stumbleupon.com/#p=ithct48cqw>

MY TWO CENTS:

As is often the case, I agree with Pat . . . the above is a fantastic video . . . it contains a presentation by Randy Pausch, a dying 46-year old college professor, delivered on OPRAH . . . I first reported on it in BLAINESWORLD #573.

* Alla in New Jersey (looking to find a NJ dentist):

Do you know a good NJ dentist in who accepts Aetna insurance?

* Marsha in New Jersey (on IN TREATMENT on HBO):

Beyond excellent. Best portrayal of a therapist and his clients and supervision thus far in any media I've seen. The half hour of focused human emotions and dynamics is so intense, without commercial interruption, it leaves you breathless. The emotional drama is raw, real, and some of the best acting I've seen. In summary, I would highly recommend seeing this series.

TO GET CAUGHT UP:

Here's the schedule of some past episodes that you may have missed: [http://www.hbo.com/apps/schedule/ScheduleServlet?](http://www.hbo.com/apps/schedule/ScheduleServlet?CHANNEL=All+Channels&ACTION_SEARCH=SEARCH&KEY=TITLE&VALUE=in+treatment)

[CHANNEL=All+Channels&ACTION_SEARCH=SEARCH&KEY=TITLE&VALUE=in+treatment](http://www.hbo.com/apps/schedule/ScheduleServlet?CHANNEL=All+Channels&ACTION_SEARCH=SEARCH&KEY=TITLE&VALUE=in+treatment)

* Sharon in New Jersey:

I happened to be in a doctor's office and one of the secretaries indicated her son was a part of the cast (of BEAUTY AND THE BEST). She was quite excited about the play, and I am glad it was a wonderful

production.

* Barbara in Pennsylvania (with a Florida condo for sale):
2-bedroom, 1 bath condo for sale in Delray Beach, FL. Corner unit in a quiet, over-55 bedroom community. Listed at under \$100K; will entertain all reasonable offers. Contact Barbara at teacherinhere@mindspring.com for more information. Please use "Delray condo" in the subject line.

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3. Relating to the common man

President Bush recently visited a Burger King so that he could relate to the common man.

He asked the kid behind the counter for a Whopper.

In response, President Bush was told, "You're the most intelligent President we had ever had and the most beloved!"

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4. Reviews

A. MRS. PETTIGREW LIVES FOR A DAY was, for me, a very long day and one that I could have done without . . . it's supposedly a madcap comedy about a woman in London in 1939 who intercepts an employment assignment for a position she isn't qualified to take; i.e., to become a "social secretary" . . . over the next 24 hours, she guides her employer among the various men in her professional and social life . . . I don't think I laughed once during the entire film . . . Frances McDormand was OK as Mrs. Pettigrew; Amy Adams (so fine in ENCHANTED) was only fair, at best, in the other leading role . . . rated PG-13.

B. DAN IN REAL LIFE is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #579 follows:

DAN IN REAL LIFE is a pleasing romantic comedy about an advice columnist struggling to raise three daughters by himself . . . though it won't have you rolling in the aisles with laughter, you'll find yourself both smiling in spots and being touched in others . . . Steve Carrell is his usual funny self in the main role, and I liked the work of comedian Dane Cook as his brother . . . the always watchable Juliette Binoche plays the woman who comes between the two of them . . . it's a shame we don't see her in more movies . . . rated PG-13.

SAVE YOURSELF MONEY DEPARTMENT:

Whatever you do, don't bother renting NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN . . . despite the fact that it won the Oscar for Best Picture of last year, it's both very violent and not overly interesting . . . rated R.

That said, I think Javier Bardem deserved his Oscar for Best Supporting Actor . . . yet he's even better in THE SEA WITHIN, the winner of the 2005 Oscar for Best Foreign Film . . . it is the true story of a Spaniard who fought a 30-year campaign to end his life with dignity . . . though the premise may seem downbeat, you'll actually find yourself uplifted

after watching this one . . . rated PG-13.

C. I'm sorry that Stephen Colbert was not allowed to run for President . . . he would have injected some much-needed humor into the campaign, and you would certainly know how he stands on any political issue.

Take the issue of laws being passed that would require dogs to wear seatbelts:

* What's next, Massachusetts? Making dogs wear hard hats when they chase the ball? Or life vests when they swim in a lake? Or safety goggles when they spot-weld?

Colbert in I AM AMERICA (AND SO CAN YOU!) wrote this bestseller, according to the book jacket, over a three-day weekend . . . it contains his most deeply held knee-jerk beliefs on such topics as the American family, race, religion and even such sports as:

* Cycling: It seems a colossal waste to me to have a dozen cyclists, in peak condition, furiously pedaling their sleek carbon-fiber machines at mind-boggling speeds . . . and not a single one of them is carrying a takeout order of Chinese food. Because once you're past the age of 12, the only legitimate reason I can think of to get on a bicycle is to deliver someone's steamy container of moo shu pork. I say we limit the cycling events to professional delivery boys and bike messengers, and here's a thrilling twist I came up with the other night while watching THE ROAD TO PERDITION: Each contestant is carrying an envelope he's supposed to deliver to the judge. Inside that envelope: an order to shoot the cyclist dead. The spectators know what's in the notes--the athletes have no idea!!!!

If you don't get the chance to watch THE COLBERT REPORT, his highly rated television show, this book will help you fill the other 23 1/2 hours of your day . . . it will certainly have you laughing in many spots, such as when he considers the role played by your aunts and uncles:

* PRO: They have a hilarious childhood story about how Mom got that scar.

CON: They are under the impression you should still be excited to see them even after they stop bringing presents.

Be forewarned that you'll certainly find something offensive in I AM AMERICA, regardless of your political persuasion or sexual leaning . . . Colbert is tough on homosexuals, as well as on immigrants, and I even cringed at parts of the book . . . yet overall, you'll find yourself drawn to it as I was when I saw the cover and this one tribute on the back:

* A great read! I laughed, I cried, I lost 15 pounds! I cannot recommend this book highly enough.

The fact that Colbert wrote the blurb did little to take away my enjoyment, other than to say I was disappointed that I didn't lose any weight when reading it.

D. Heard LIVING FAITH, a spiritual autobiography read and written by

President Jimmy Carter . . . it helped me understand this remarkable man who has perhaps accomplished more since he left office--in large part because of his religious beliefs.

You don't have to be Baptist, either, to enjoy this book . . . it contains lessons from the Bible that apply to any faith, and you'll also enjoy hearing about the many experiences, friends and family members who have affected Carter's life.

For example, he credits Miss Judy Coleman (one of his former teachers) for teaching him that "We must adjust to changing times, but hold to unchanging principles."

And from a Pastor Cruz, he learned the following: "You only have to have two loves in your life: 1. For God; and 2. For the person in front of you at any particular point in time."

Lastly, I liked these guidelines he shared for praying: "When I pray, I ask: Am I pursuing the right goals? Am I holding to my personal code? And have I done my best?"

This was the first book I have read by President Carter . . . I'm now tempted to seek out some others he have written, particularly if I can hear his soothing voice do the narration.

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5. TV alert

A. Society's pet peeves are targeted in LEWIS BLACK'S ROOT OF ALL EVIL . . . to quote Black, "We pick two things from life. Two comedians are charged with explaining why, let's say, [in tonight's opener] Oprah or the Catholic Church is more evil. I ask questions and goad the comics" . . . Wednesdays at 10:30 p.m. on COMEDY CENTRAL.

B. Parker Posey (so good in many independent films that she was named "Queen of the Indies" by TIME) has her very own sitcom, THE RETURN OF JEZEBEL JAMES . . . Fridays at 8 p.m. on FOX.

C. Alyssa Minano and James Caan appear in WISEGAL, the story of a good woman gone bad in a Mafia-run neighborhood . . . Saturday at 9 p.m. on LIFETIME.

D. Paul Giamatti stars as JOHN ADAMS in a seven-part miniseries adapted from David McCullough's Pulitzer Prize-winning biography . . . David Morse and Laura Linney also star . . . debuts Sunday at 9:10 on HBO.

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6. Missing piece

A few days ago, I was having some work done at my local garage. A blonde came in and asked for a seven-hundred-ten.

We all looked at each other and another customer asked, "What is a

seven-hundred-ten?"

She replied, "You know, the little piece in the middle of the engine. I have lost it and need a new one."

She replied that she did not know exactly what it was, but this piece had always been there.

The mechanic gave her a piece of paper and a pen and asked her to draw what the piece looked like.

She drew a circle and in the middle of it wrote 710. He then took her over to another car, which had its hood up, and asked "Is there a 710 on this car?"

She pointed and said, "Of course, its right there."

If you're not sure what a 710 is:

[Click Here](#)

or if that doesn't work, please click:

<http://www.hotautoweb.com/cogifs/710.jpg>

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7. Websites

A. So you think you can do a better job of running our country (or any other one) better than the politicians currently do . . . if so, please click:

<http://www.NationStates.net>

To quote from the homepage:

NationStates is a free nation simulation game. Build a nation and run it according to your own warped political ideals. Create a Utopian paradise for society's less fortunate or a totalitarian corporate police state. Care for your people or deliberately oppress them. Join the United Nations or remain a rogue state. It's really up to you.

B. If you would like to send someone very special a virtual gift of flowers AT NO COST, please click:

<http://www.flowers2mail.com>

This website is easy to follow, and it allows you to give several different options when choosing flowers for that special someone. After picking out the flowers and choosing a vase, you will also be given the option of writing a note to that person.

The flowers are then sent via email to that person. Overall, this is a fun website that is easy to follow and is a great way to show that special someone just how much you care about them with the simple gift of flowers.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blainesworld.net>

In the unlikely event you've never seen this before, go to above and look at my picture (on the right) . . . take your cursor and shift to one of the categories on the left . . . make sure you look at my eyes as you do this . . . neat, huh?

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8. Computer tip

To make information clearer on your computer, go to Start in the bottom left part of your monitor, then Control Panel . . . next click Accessibility Options followed by the Display tab (at the top) . . . when you open that, check the "Use High Contrast" box . . . this will tell Windows to use colors and fonts designed for easy reading.

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9. Talking Pennsylvanian, Part 1 of 2

You'll be able to relate to this if you're from Pennsylvania, you've lived there or even if you know somebody who does. Methinks those even wanting to live in the state will be able to appreciate the following:

You've never referred to Philadelphia as anything but "Philly" and New Jersey has always been "Jersey."

You refer to Pennsylvania as "PA" (pronounced Pee-ay). How many other states do that?

"You guys" is a perfectly acceptable reference to a group of men and women

You know how to respond to this question:

"Djeetyet?"
(Did you eat yet?)

You learned to pronounce Bryn Mawr, Wilkes-Barre, Schuylkill, the Poconos, Tamaqua, Tunkannock, Bala Cynwyd, Duquesne, and Monongahela.

And you know Lancaster is pronounced Lank aster, not Lan kaster.

You know what a "Mummer" is and are disappointed if you can't catch at least highlights of the parade.

You know who "Punxsutawney Phil" is and what it means if he sees his shadow.

The first day of buck and the first day of doe season are school holidays.

At least five people on your block have electric "candles" in all or most of their windows all year long.

You know what a "State Store" is, and your out-of-state friends find it incredulous that you can't purchase liquor at the mini-mart.

Words like "hoagie," "crick," "chipped ham," "dippy eggs," "sticky buns," "shoo-fly pie," "lemon sponge pie", "pierogies," and "pocketbook" actually mean something to you.

The latter term is PA slang for purse!

(to be concluded next week)

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10. A quote I like

We all get report cards in many different ways, but the real excitement of what you're doing is in the doing of it. It's not what you're gonna get in the end--it's not the final curtain--it's really in the doing it, and loving what I'm doing.--Ralph Lauren, American fashion designer

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11. Thought for the day

Brighten your corner

We cannot all be famous
or be listed in "Who's Who,"
But every person, great or small,
has important work to do.

For seldom do we realize
the importance of small deeds,
Or to what degree of greatness
unnoticed kindness leads.

For it's not the big celebrity
in a world of fame and praise,
But it's doing unpretentiously
in an undistinguished way.

The work that God assigned to us,
unimportant as it seems,
That makes our task outstanding,
and brings reality to dreams.

So do not sit and idly wish
for wider, new dimensions
where you can put into practice,
your many good intentions.

But at the spot God placed you
begin at once to do,
Little things to brighten up
the lives surrounding you.

If everybody brightened up
the spot where their standing,
By being more considerate,
and a little less demanding.

This dark old world would very soon
eclipse the evening star,
If everybody brightened up
the corner where they are!

Author unknown
(if you know who wrote this and/or the source, please let me know)

PLEASE NOTE:

It sounds like it could have been written by Helen Steiner Rice (1900-1981), an American writer of religious and inspirational poetry . . . yet try as I might, I was not able to get absolutely confirmation that she was the actual author of this piece.

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12. Advance planning department

A. Take advantage of these exciting free programs and events planned for Women's History Month to provide great opportunities to enhance Student Engagement through Creative Learning Opportunities. All are offered at Bucks County Community College and are FREE.

"The Car Bomb Series: New Work by Selma Bortner," an exhibition in the Library from March 4 through April 7.

Wednesday, March 19, 12:00 p.m.

"The Myth of Beauty" series begins with screening of "Killing Us Softly" in Faculty Center.

Wednesday, March 19, 7:00 p.m.

"I Am Woman" performance by students celebrating "Women in Art: Women of Vision" through drama, dance and music. In Library Auditorium.

Wednesday, March 26, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

"Reading/Writing Women" poetry and literature readings. In Library Auditorium.

B. On Thursday, I'll be speaking at the annual Municipal Mediation Training session on "Dealing with Difficult People" at the Lawrence Township Municipal Court . . . I'm sorry that this session is not open to the general public; however, if you'd like me to speak to your company and/or organization on this or such other topics as Marketing, Time Management, etc., drop me an email at bginbc@aol.com . . . also, for more information, please click: <http://www.blainesworld.net>

and then see click "Speaking" on the left.

C. Michael in Pennsylvania:

Tickets available for August Wilson's THE PIANO LESSON

I have a number of tickets for the 2 p.m. on March 23 show of the Pulitzer Prize winning play being produced by the Arden Theatre in Philadelphia.

August Wilson died in 2005 after completing ten plays chronicling the African-American experience in the 20th century, decade by decade.

THE PIANO LESSON is set in 1936 Pittsburgh, where Boy Willie and his sister Berniece battle over the future of a treasured heirloom: a piano with unique ancestral carvings by their grandfather, an enslaved plantation

carpenter. He wants to sell the piano to buy land. She insists that the instrument carries too much history to cast aside. In a home haunted by memories, the issue of whether or not to sell cuts deeply and raises questions about honoring the past or moving into the future.

Ticket prices are just \$20 or 50% off face value. They're available to students, faculty and friends. Contact me by phone, 215.968.8164 or by email (hennese@bucks.edu).

D. Friends Natalie Kaye and Ivan Winegar will be singing and dancing up a storm in OKLAHOMA . . . it runs for one week only from April 10-April 16 at the Newtown Theatre in Newtown, PA . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.newtownartscompany.com>

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PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

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#596

3.3.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I had the pleasure of joining friends to see BEAUTY AND THE BEAST, put on by the Performing Arts Students of Notre Dame High School in Lawrenceville, NJ.

It was as good as anything we've seen on stage in quite some time!

The staging, the costumes, the choreography, the singing, the acting, the music . . . all were top-notch.

We were blown away by the size of the cast, close to 100 it seemed, as well as by the orchestra of well over 40 musicians.

Michael Neiderer and Chelsea Wargo were both superb in the two leading roles.

Afterwards, we enjoyed going to the gym to see all the performers greeted by their relatives and friends . . . we got a special kick out of watching little girls come up to Chelsea to have their pictures taken with her.

For more information, please also see the BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD (after Section 1D).

B. During the week, I got to hear Mara Liasson--NPR's national political correspondent . . . she spoke to an overflow crowd at Princeton University on what was happening in the current presidential races.

Among her comments that I found of interest:

* McCain in some respects is more extraordinary than Obama or Clinton because of his stances (in contrast to typical Republican parties).

* The general election has already begun; e.g., as evidenced by Obama talking about McCain's half century of experience.

* The debate in the future will be what now to do in Iraq, not what happened in the past.

* McCain has a lot of baggage: the economy, the war, etc.

* The national race promises to be very close.

* Nader will have a minimal effect.

* Richardson and Biden are only a few of many possible Democratic VP possibilities. Powell will not be in the mix.

* Romney might be the Republican choice; Huckabee won't be. Rice has already said she would not be a candidate.

C. On Friday, I was honored to have been asked to chair a panel at an informative conference, "Boomers & Beyond: Work Matters Over 60" at the College of New Jersey.

KUDOS to both Lorraine Allen with the Small Business Development Center at the College and Steve Gable, co-chairs for the event, for their role in making it the success that it was . . . in addition, special THANKS to the folks who participated in my session:

Louis Zaroni, WZBN TV; Robert Estok, Mercer County Community College; Marvin Schlaffer, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Rutgers University; and Lisa Gable, LG Accessories . . . they each shared their perspective on what it's like to stay active in the work force and frankly, what they said has gotten me thinking about what it is that I want to do next after my retirement from college teaching . . . their words also inspired me, as well as the others in attendance.

Perhaps the high spot of the day was what happened next . . . Lisa Gable was recognized by Experience Works as New Jersey's Outstanding Older Worker . . . her remarks in accepting the award brought tears to many eyes.

See below for a picture of (l-r): yours truly, somewhat covered up; Lisa Gable; Lorraine Allen; Jo Rinehart, regional director of Experience Works; and Steve Gable:



D. CORRECTION in last week's issue:

There was a typo in what I wrote about Kevin Jameson . . . his last name was given incorrectly; sorry 'bout that Kev . . . what follows is the correct information:

CONGRATULATIONS, also, to my longtime friend Kevin Jameson . . . he recently won Honeywell International's Automation and Control Solutions' President's Club Award.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Louis Gibilisco--director of the Performing Arts Department of Notre Dame High School for the past 18 years.

I don't know how he is able to have his students put on such fantastic productions, but he keeps doing it year after year . . . aside from BEAUTY AND THE BEAST this year (see also Section 1A), he was the man behind the scenes for last year's equally fantastic production of LES MISERABLES . . . and without even knowing the show, I'm already planning to return next year and every other year I'm still in the area.

His wife, Debby, always joins him every step of the way . . . she served as choreographer this year, as well as costume coordinator.

Making it a real family affair was the fact that they were joined by all three of their children . . . Jaime was on stage as a very funny Gaston, Jenna was the Carpet and Gigi was in the pit orchestra.

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2. FYI

When you take an idea that is viewed as unpopular by some, do what you can to give it a twist to make it acceptable to as many people as you can . . . for an excellent example, study how Albert Shanker did this with respect to merit pay--as described in TOUGH LIBERAL (see also Sections 4, 10 and 11) by Richard D. Kahlenberg:

At the July 1983 AFT convention, Shanker invited not only Reagan but also the Republican Governor of Tennessee, Lamar Alexander, the author of an innovative twist on merit pay. Alexander, with the help of Vanderbilt University's Chester Finn, proposed a career-ladder system, in which master teachers, who would be involved in developing curriculum and serving as mentors to young teachers, would receive greater pay. This career-ladder approach was more palatable to Shanker than traditional merit-pay schemes because it involved differential pay for different jobs, not bonuses for people doing the same job as others. Under the plan, master teachers would be identified by panels that included teachers and principals from different districts, to avoid the problem of favoritism traditionally associated with merit-pay plans, in which principals reward obedient teachers. And under the proposal, 87 percent of all teachers would be eligible for raises ranging from one thousand to seven thousand dollars a year, paid from new education funds that did not subtract from the pay of some teachers to reward others.

FYI, part 2

* Ken in New York, who also happens to be my brother--commenting on a passage from HOW STARBACKS SAVED MY LIFE (about how the author had once been given advice when employed at J. Walter Thompson to not send "praise memos"):

We replaced a manager in our offices in Albany--Ron Whateverhisname was. Dad wrote a requested letter of recommendation attesting to his honesty and competence, which was not the case. He was replaced by a woman who was just marginally younger, but a hell of a lot better manager and not a thief.

To make a long story short, we were sued for age discrimination and whatever else Ron's attorneys could think of on the basis of Dad's glowing tribute. Just about every employee we had was older than Ron--Gene Liparini, Norm Einziger, Tony Anari, Mike Weiss, Dad--the list goes on and on. Most were honest, your father the exception. (Just kidding!)

To defend would require sending our lawyer who was not cheap, being part of the Louis Nizer firm, to Albany and then putting him up for a few days . . . plus court costs, etc. . . . probably tens of thousands of dollars. And there was no guarantee of winning, even though we knew we were in the right.

It became expedient and a cost saving to the company to settle for a very substantial amount at the time . . . over \$15,000.

ALL this the result of Dad's trying to be a nice guy. By the way, writing a knowingly bogus letter of recommendation could also leave you open to a suit from the next employer as well.

DON'T PUT IT IN WRITING.

* Bob in New Jersey:
Have you looked into the Clearwater, Tampa Bay side of Florida?

* Jean in Pennsylvania:
THANKS for mentioning the Ukrainian dinner at St. Anne's. It might help this little church raise money, and the food is great. (My 80-year-old mother helps make the pierogies, which are for sale each week as well).

* Mark in Florida;
Below is my link to my new website for sportfishing charters:
<http://www.offthechartfishing.com>

Please review and give me your thoughts. I can pay commissions on any charter referral. Contact me with any questions.

* Lady Rose in Ohio:
Another great edition. Thanks for sharing.

MY TWO CENTS:
My pleasure; i.e., to share . . . by same token, I always encourage you and all others to do the same . . . feel free to share jokes with me, particularly if you have not seen them before, but also recommendations, websites, reviews, etc. . . . this missive owes much of its success to the many submissions that I receive each week.

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3. Dad in charge

One day my mother was out, and my dad was in charge of my brother, who is four years younger, and me. He was maybe 3-1/2 years old at the time and had just recovered from an accident, in which his arm had been broken.

Someone had given him a little "tea set" as a get-well gift, and it was one of his favorite toys. Dad was in the living room engrossed in the evening news, and my brother was playing nearby in the living room when he brought Dad a little cup of "tea" (which was just water).

After several cups of tea and lots of praise for such yummy tea, Mom came home. Dad made her wait in the living room to watch my brother bring him a cup of tea because it was "just the cutest thing!"

Mom waited and sure enough, here he comes down the hall with a cup of tea for Dad and she watches him drink it up. Then she says to him, "Did it ever occur to you that the only place that baby can reach to get water is the toilet?"

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4. Reviews

A. THE BAND'S VISIT is a quirky Israeli film about an Egyptian band that's slated to perform at the opening of an Arab cultural center . . . however, en route, it gets stranded in a quiet desert town . . . the residents there provide them shelter and food, as well as friendship . . . this is a slice-of-life story that's, at times, sad, funny, touching, and even thought-provoking . . . I did not love it as much as many critics did; however, I would recommend that you view it when it comes out on DVD; i.e., if you can't find it in the theaters . . . rated PG-13.

B. Not having much to recommend in terms of new DVD offerings out this week, I'm going to suggest you rent CHALK . . . this is a mockumentary about the world of public education . . . it takes a poignant look at the challenges faced by the teachers at a mythical high school . . . you'll relate to some spots that will have you laughing; others will have you giving credit to anybody who dares to stand in front of a classroom . . . rated PG-13.

C. Albert Shanker had always been one of my heroes . . . yet until I read TOUGH LIBERAL (see also Sections 2, 10 and 11) by Richard D. Kahlenberg, I had not known too much about him.

That's no longer the case . . . in fact, this excellent biography even increased my appreciation of Shanker who once told an interviewer:
* "If I didn't have to make a living, I would have done this as a volunteer."

What he did was head the American Federation of Teachers for well over 20-25 years . . . by doing so, he helped change the perception of teachers by having them recognized as professionals:

* A professional receives a liberal-arts education, then specialized training, and then must pass a rigorous exam before beginning to practice. She participates in an internship, is guided by mentors, and participates in reviewing the performance of colleagues. Once these professional responsibilities are met come the reciprocal set of rights:

greater autonomy and higher compensation. In Shanker's vision, policies like a rigorous national test, peer review, and career ladders were not just defensive moves against critics of public-school teachers, they were prerequisites to the professionalization of teaching.

TOUGH LIBERAL summarized Shanker's contributions to education in one of the finest concluding paragraphs that I've ever read:

* In one lifespan, Albert Shanker helped to create the institution of collective bargaining for teachers, giving them greater dignity and voice in how they would be treated. He then used that power to engage in a series of critical education reforms that proved instrumental in improving and preserving the institution of public education. Both accomplishments served the larger goal he cherished above all others: strengthening American democracy. His failure to convince fellow liberals to extend their support of democracy more broadly--to racial policy, international affairs, and their views of the labor movement--leaves open the question: what might society look like if we tried?

If you want to learn about Albert Shanker and the labor movement in this country, read this book . . . it will also make a great gift for any teacher.

D. Heard THIRSTING FOR GOD: THE SPIRITUAL LESSONS OF MOTHER TERESA, a CD program narrated by Dr. Lou Tartagla with personal insights from Father Angelo Scolozzi . . . perhaps best of all, it included parts of rare recordings that contain the actual words of Mother Teresa herself.

You'll find yourself inspired how this one person, filled with love, was able to touch the entire world . . . she was truly belief in action and even now, years after her death, you'll be moved as I was by her story.

As was noted, "She was an ordinary woman who did things in extraordinary ways" . . . she rarely took no for an answer, instead she continually pushed for what she thought was right--aided by God's help.

Among the many tidbits of knowledge I picked up from listening were these:

- * Don't give what you don't want.
- * All work is prayer is action.
- * It's not how much you do, but how much love you put into what you do.
- * We were created to love and be loved.
- * We need to love others as God loves us.
- * All life is precious.
- * To be a better husband or wife, smile at each other.
- * The family that prays together stays together.
- * Alcoholism and addiction need to be treated by caring for the soul.

You may have heard some of these ideas before, but methinks that hearing them come from Mother Teresa will make you view them in a completely different fashion.

This fine program is available for purchase or rental . . . if you want to get it, please click:

<http://www.achievementlibrary.com/>

Above is the tape rental club I belong to; i.e., the Achievement Tape Library . . . this a great way to hear CDs and/or audio cassette tapes, view videos, etc.--all for a fraction of what it would cost to buy them . . . call the head of the firm (Paul Arroyo) directly at 1.800.735.3660 and mention my name . . . that way, you'll be sure to pay even higher prices . . . NOT.

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5. TV alert

A. THE SECRET LIFE OF A SOCCER MOM offers stay-at-home moms the chance to work at their dream jobs (ranging from chef to police officer) . . . Mondays at 10 p.m. on TLC.

B. MEN IN AMSTERDAM introduces TV's newest high-concept cop, a detective who's immortal . . . according to THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, "The underlying theme here, once the fantastic elements are stripped away, is loneliness. . . . [It has] a true and very tender heart." . . . Tuesdays at 9 p.m. on FOX.

C. TERMINAL CITY, a Canadian import, debuts on SUNDANCE on Thursday at 9 p.m. . . . it is a series about women with breast cancer that also promises to be funny at times.

D. THE ESSENTIALS gets a contemporary cohost when cult-film favorite Rose McGowan joins Robert Osborne to discuss March's titles, starting with 1969's THE APARTMENT . . . Sundays at 8 p.m. on TCM.

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6. True crime story

Tired of constantly being broke and stuck in an unhappy marriage, a young husband decided to solve both problems by taking out a large insurance policy on his wife with himself as the beneficiary. He then decided to have her killed.

A friend of a friend put him in touch with a nefarious underworld figure who went by the name of "Artie." Artie explained to the husband that his going price for snuffing out a spouse was \$5,000.

The husband said he was willing to pay that amount, but that he wouldn't have any cash on hand until he could collect his wife's insurance money.

Artie insisted on being paid at least something up front, so the man opened his wallet and displayed the single dollar bill that rested inside.

Artie sighed, rolled his eyes and reluctantly agreed to accept the bucks as down payment for the dirty deed.

A few days later, Artie followed the man's wife to the local Super Wal-Mart store. There, he surprised her in the produce department and proceeded to strangle her with his gloved hands. The unsuspecting woman drew her last breath and slumped to the floor.

The manager of the produce department stumbled unexpectedly onto the murder scene. Unwilling to leave any living witnesses behind, Artie had no choice but to strangle this potential witness as well

However, unbeknownst to Artie, the entire proceedings were captured by the store's hidden security cameras. An alert security guard immediately called the police.

Artie was caught and arrested before he could even leave the store. Under intense questioning at the police station, he revealed the whole sordid plan, including his unusual financial arrangements with the hapless husband (who was also quickly arrested).

The headline in the next day's newspaper said it all:
"ARTIE CHOKES TWO FOR A DOLLAR AT WAL-MART"

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7. Websites

A. One way to block spam from entering your mailbox is to click:
<http://www.Spamgourmet.com>

This is an easy program that automatically blocks spam from coming to your email account. It is very simple to set up. Best of all, it's FREE.

B. Remember this name: Paul Potts . . . if he's not yet familiar with you, he will be after you watch this clip:
<http://www.maniacworld.com/Phone-Salesman-Amazes-Crowd.html>

It helped this former manager of a cellphone store win BRITAIN'S GOT TALENT and from there, his career has taken off to where he is now in the midst of a concert tour covering 65 cities across 13 countries.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:
<http://www.blaineworld.net>

In the unlikely event you ever miss an issue, you can find it by going to Newsletter on the left, then Archives . . . sometimes, it is fun to just go back and revisit a joke you may have forgotten or not even seen if you weren't a subscriber . . . for example, at random, I went to Issue #457 and found this one:

Signage

A hospital posted a notice in the nurses' lounge, saying:
"Remember, the first five minutes of a human being's life are the most dangerous."

Underneath, somebody had written: "The last five are pretty risky, too."

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8. Computer tip

You can enlarge type face, size of icons and text of certain websites in Windows XP by going to the Start menu on the bottom-left corner of the screen and then selecting "Programs," followed by "Accessories," then "Accessibility" and lastly, "Magnifier" . . . play around with the different options to see what's best for you.

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9. Unusual excuses (actually used by employees)

1. At her sister's wedding, an employee chipped her tooth on a Mint Julep, bent over to spit it out, hit her head on a keg and was knocked unconscious.
2. While at a circus, a tiger urinated on the employee's ear, causing an ear infection.
3. An employee's dog wasn't feeling well, so the employee tasted the dog's food and then got sick.
4. "Someone put LSD in my salad."
5. An employee's roommate locked all his clothes in a shed for spite.
6. "Stuck on an island; canoe floated away."
7. An employee was upset because his favorite AMERICAN IDOL contestant was voted off.
8. "I didn't think I had to come in if I had time in my vacation bank. I thought I could take it whenever I wanted."
9. An employee said he wasn't feeling well and wanted to rest up for the company's holiday party that night.
10. A groundhog bit the employee's car tire, causing it to go flat.

SOURCE:
Anthony Balderrama in CareerBuilder.com

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10. A quote I like

The worst crime a leader can commit is to go on playing by the same rules of the game when the game and the rules have changed.--Albert Shanker in TOUGH LIBERAL (see also Sections 2, 4C and 11) by Richard D. Kahlenberg

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11. Thought for the day

When the New York State United Teachers faced a challenge a challenge from the National Education Association, Shanker gave what teachers remember was the most famous address in his entire career:

Shanker's cadence slowed. He read the story ["The Most Unbelievable Thing" by Hans Christian Anderson], in which a king announced that he would give his daughter in marriage to the man who accomplished the most unbelievable thing. There was a tremendous competition, and on the day for judgment, everyone agreed that the most marvelous accomplishment was a handsome clock that depicted leading intellectual and spiritual leaders throughout history. The judges were about to pronounce him the winner when a thug carrying a sledgehammer arrived. With three blows he smashed the clock, and everyone had to admit that was the most unbelievable thing. Shanker said: "Our organization is a wonderful work of art. It has been put together. If destroyed, it will never be put together again. To each of us goes the responsibility of seeing that it is the clock that survives and not the sledgehammer." Shanker received an ovation that lasted for five minutes. Men in the audience had tears running down their face. "Keep the clock" buttons were printed up and passed around.

SOURCE:

TOUGH LIBERAL (see also Sections 2, 4C and 10) by Richard D. Kahlenberg, a book I REALLY liked as evidence by the fact that this is the fourth time I've cited it in this week's newsletter

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12. Advance planning department

A. The Lower Bucks campus of Bucks County Community College proudly presents the next installment in its faculty lecture series on Thursday, March 6, at 12:30 p.m. when Professor James A. Freeman will read excerpts from his LIAR'S TALES OF TRUE LOVE . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.bucks.edu/releases/LBCLecture-Freeman.html>

B. Mimi Schwartz reads from her new book, GOOD NEIGHBORS, BAD TIMES, on March 6 at 7 p.m. in Barnes & Noble, 3535 Route 1 South, West Windsor, NJ, on March 6 at 7 p.m.

C. FREE CONTEST GIVEAWAY (concludes):

Due to the popularity of past contests, I'd again like to extend an invitation to some lucky reader(s) to be my guest at the "Meet the Author" Business Seminar on March 12, 2008 at 8:30 a.m. in the Library Auditorium at Bucks County Community College, Newtown, PA.

Best-selling author Lisa Ford is the featured speaker of the 5th annual "Meet the Author" Business Seminar at Bucks County Community College. Her presentation, Exceptional Customer Service--Going Beyond Your Good Service to Exceed the Customer's Expectation, is based on Lisa's best-selling video training program.

To be eligible for the FREE TICKETS, submit your name by February 25 via email to my assistant: hughesbr@bucks.edu . . . in the subject line, put these words: FREE TICKETS . . . in the body of your email,

include this information: your name, how many tickets you would want (1 or 2), email address, snail mail address, and phone number . . . I'll then let you know if you're a winner on or before March 10.

Should you want to guarantee a seat or have your company purchase ticket(s) for you, here's the information that you will need:

Individual tickets: \$50 or take advantage of a \$495 corporate sponsorship and receive 10 tickets, reserved seating and the opportunity to promote your organization.

To reserve your seats today for this engaging seminar, call 215.968.8224 or to order tickets safely and securely online, please click:

<https://www.bucks.edu/meettheauthor.php>

D. Janet in New Jersey:

Now that I am in New Jersey, I am beginning to teach again.

I will start in Morristown, NJ at a new location and see how we grow from here.

Old and new students welcome to join us for this new adventure together.

FIRST CLASS BEGINS NEXT THURSDAY EVENING
COME AT 6:45; CLASS BEGIN PROMPTLY AT 7 PM-9 PM

This class is Two Thursday evenings a month. This class is definite and has space for more.

SEE CLASS DESCRIPTION BELOW.

CALL IF YOU ARE INTERESTED. Details and sign ups by phone.

SPECIAL PRICING FOR ONGOING STUDENTS AND CLIENTS.

Please call with questions.

Blessings, Janet

973.647.2500

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FOR YOURSELF AND OTHERS?

Advanced Teachings and practices for Healing practitioners and everyone ready and open to profound growth and experience. The high loving energy Janet brings assists us in our experience as we move into deep inner spaces and learning. The needs of the group will focus the teaching. Each week has its own focus and tools.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.OasisForTheSoul.com>

PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers

back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#595

2.25.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I went with friends on Saturday for dinner at what has become our favorite Chinese restaurant: Little Szechuan (609.443.5023) in West Windsor, NJ . . . we ordered a bit differently than we usually do; i.e., only appetizers for everybody . . . as is always the case, everything brought to the table was excellent.

From there, we all went down the road to the Kelsey Theatre at Mercer County Community College to see the Pennington Players' production of MY FAVORITE YEAR . . . my only regret is that you won't be able to see it since the run ended the next day.

Too bad, in that this was one of the finest shows we have ever seen at Mercer . . . it is the musical version of the movie you may have seen with the same title (starring Peter O'Toole) . . . it is a behind-the-scenes look at what had to be done to put on a live TV show in the 1950s.

William Kamps was fine in one of the leading roles, and a comedian by the name of Kyrus stole just about every scene he was in . . . however, we most admired the work of Michael Schiumo who played the O'Toole character . . . we've seen him in many other shows, and he is getting better and better every time . . . his powerful voice moved us in the song "The Lights Come Up" . . . and Lou Woodruff conducted the 14-piece orchestra with his usual flair.

Though you won't be able to see MY FAVORITE YEAR, please click:
<http://www.kelseytheatre.net>

You'll find details of upcoming shows that you might want to see . . . I know that we'll be at a bunch of them . . . lastly, SPECIAL KUDOS to Kitty Getlik and the rest of the Kelsey Theatre staff . . . they've installed a new online ticket-ordering system that enables you to get whatever seats you want right from your computer at home . . . I've rarely seen

this at local theaters . . . it is a welcome addition!

B. On Sunday, we went to the home of Cynthia's uncle and aunt for a Family Circle gathering . . . this is a get-together for all her relatives that typically takes place a few times a year . . . it is a lot of fun to see everybody and get together for some good food and conversation . . . we particularly appreciated the efforts of her cousin Debbie, who coordinated the planning and took care of all the food.

C. Cynthia was recently quoted in a PRINCETON PACKET article about her work as a Journey Dance instructor . . . if you'd like to see what she had to say, please click:

http://www.zwire.com/site/dav.cfm?brd=1091&pag=1027&dept_id=622067&ssid=14117&ssp=9

Even better, feel free to join Cynthia in the next dance class she'll be running . . . it begins on March 4 and runs on these other Tuesdays: March 11, 18, 25; April 1, 8, 29; and May 6.

Time: 7-8:30 p.m.

Location: Elizabeth Avenue School Gym, Somerset, NJ

Fee: Just \$40 for all the sessions

To register, call Ruthie Strohl at 732.873.2400, ext. 403.

Tell her you want this course:

MOVE YOUR BODY (AKA JOURNEY DANCE)

A transforming, freeing movement experience! You start with a short meditation, sharing and yoga-like stretches to warm up. Then using inspiring music from around the world, you are softly led into easy-to-follow movements. At times you follow, move intuitively on your own or you may choose to lead if you are comfortable.

You are encouraged to honor yourself and seek what you need at all times. It is a form of fun, joy, creativity, connection, and self-acceptance. The power of the dance and visualizations help you release old habitual ways of being and reclaim new ways of being in a truly experiential way.

You end with a relaxation experience feeling renewed, empowered and invigorated. All body types and levels are accepted. No yoga or dance experience is required.

D. CONGRATULATIONS to Joan Land, my cousin, on her recent promotion at Citigroup . . . as of January 1, she is doing Business Continuity, and her new title is Director.

CONGRATULATIONS, also, to my longtime friend Kevin Jameson . . . he recently won Honeywell International's Automation and Control Solutions' President's Club Award.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Joann Corn--a teaching colleague of mine at Bucks County Community College.

She is a past recipient of the Alumni Association's Excellence in Teaching Award for the excellent work she does in her various Science courses . . . also, she chairs the Advisory Council . . . and

in her spare time, she somehow manages to serve as 2nd vice president/grievance chairperson for our teacher's union.

It is in this latter capacity that I have gotten to best know Joann . . . she is both hard-working and enthusiastic, and she's a real pleasure to work with . . . one of the great things about her is that she never complains about anything that she has to do; she just does it.

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2. FYI

It may well be time to eliminate a second phone line at home, especially if you have a cellphone . . . I recently suggested that to a friend, and he didn't realize how unnecessary his extra line had become . . . you can also cut down on the number of faxes you send or receive by scanning documents, then sending them via email.

My same friend took another suggestion that saved him still more money; i.e., he contacted his phone company and asked whether he was getting the absolute best rate that was available . . . by mentioning that he had seen better (e.g., from cable companies), he was able to save even more money!

FYI, part 2

* Sue in Pennsylvania:

Check this out! It is a laundry ball to wash your clothes. It does not pollute the environment. Can do a minimum of 1500 washes. And is a huge savings on laundry soap. The estimated savings per year are \$200-700.

All you do is put your clothes in the washer along with The Laundry Ball. Start the machine and do laundry as you normally would. That's it!

"How it Works: Dirt clings to clothes because it is ionized, which means that the dirt has a negative charge which allows it to cling to the positively charged fabric. When The Laundry Ball deionizes the water and reverses the electrical charge, the dirt can no longer hold onto the fabric. It easily moves away from the fabric in the agitated water and is rinsed out just as if you were using detergent."

For more information, please go to:

<http://www.renewalenterprises.com/hopr.html>

* Mary in Pennsylvania:

I just finished THE REINCARNATIONIST [by M. J. Rose, a book previously reviewed in BLAINESWORLD #587] and enjoyed it very much; thought it was the best of her writings. The theory behind this was familiar after having read a lot by Edgar Cayce dealing with reincarnation, but I enjoyed the fictional spin. Cayce has written that we are always surrounded by our loved ones, and each time we return to Earth, we better ourselves. Your daughter could be your husband in another life . . . and often if we meet with someone and feel a definite connection (or instant dislike), it may have to do with previous relationships.

It's interesting to think about; hopefully, we don't know the real facts for a LONG time!

* Jean in Pennsylvania:

Are you looking for an experienced sales professional with exceptional interpersonal communication skills and a proven track record? Ken Dolan has more than two decades' experience in closing the deal, including outside sales and cold-calling. He's adept at turning a "no" into a "yes," and may be just what your company is looking for. He's also a BCCC alumnus and former student of the renowned Blaine Greenfield.

To request a resume or interview, contact Ken at 267.994.7480 or kendolan@hotmail.com and mention that you read it in BLAINESWORLD.

* Stephanie in North Carolina:

I am glad you made it to Pittsboro, even though you weren't impressed. You said you went to a convenience store. Did you see the corner general store/restaurant/antique shop? Great food, and local arts and recently expanded. I guess it is better in the summer when they have art fairs, etc. If you traveled up 15-501, you would have found a European antique store, and a bit further, a Carolina Ale House. Further still, you would have come across Fearington Village, which is a town in itself. It has gift shops, garden shop, book store, 5-star restaurant, and homes from townhomes, patio homes, to beautiful detached homes. Next time, you need to revisit that area.

* Jane in Pennsylvania:

If you are looking for a great funny Broadway show that you can take junior or granny to, try IS HE DEAD currently at the Lyceum theater on 45th street off Broadway. I saw it this week and laughed out loud. Go to the website:

<http://www.ishedead.com>

and you can get 4 tickets for \$100! A great buy. Also, you will do a mitzvah as my son-in-law is in it. Thanks.

* Dotty in New Jersey:

Thanks so much for your wonderful publicity. Sure, I'd love to be on your subscription list!

I have to point out a typo, however. My e-mail address is: watdot@patmedia.net

MY TWO CENTS:

Sorry 'bout that . . . for those who may have missed it, Dotty runs a great service that provides singing Valentine and other special occasion wishes . . . you can also reach her by phone at 609.683.0563

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3. Priorities

With fire alarms blaring at my aunt's apartment complex, she grabbed her favorite bathing suit and ran out.

"A bathing suit?" I said later. "Of all the priceless things in that apartment, that's what you chose to save?"

"Material things come and go," she said, "But a one-piece suit that doesn't

make you look fat is impossible to replace.”

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4. Reviews

A. I was disappointed in BE KIND REWIND . . . it got surprisingly good reviews and the premise was funny; i.e., two guys who work in a video store and find themselves with nothing to rent out because all of the films had become unintentionally destroyed . . . so they then come up with an idea to recreate a long line of films, including THE LION KING, RUSH HOUR, GHOSTBUSTERS, WHEN WE WERE KINGS, BACK TO THE FUTURE, DRIVING MISS DAISY, AND ROBOCOP . . . the recreations were funny, but I wish more time was devoted to them . . . little else about the film held much interest for me, though it starred Jack Black (a guy who usually puts a smile on my face) . . . rated PG-13.

B. I probably would have never seen DEATH AT A FUNERAL, had it not been for the recommendation of a reader . . . belated thanks; it was an irreverent British comedy that had me laughing from the beginning . . . a dysfunctional family comes together for the funeral of the family . . . you just knew things wouldn't go well from the very first scene when the wrong body was delivered . . . it had to be returned, naturally, and things only went downhill from there . . . I especially liked the work of Alan Tudyk, who played a fiancée who accidentally ingests a designer drug . . . Peter Dinklage was also quite good as the mysterious stranger who threatens to unveil an earth-shattering family secret . . . rated R, though I'm not quite sure why . . . it would be appropriate for most any child over the age of 12.

C. Imagine being able to learn a new language fluently, from scratch, in a week . . . or what it must be like to memorize and then recite more than 22,000 digits of pi (setting a world record in doing so).

I had no idea that either of these tasks would be possible until I read BORN ON A BLUE DAY, Daniel Tammet's fascinating autobiography . . . he was born autistic and had to suffer through much social isolation until he was finally diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome at the age of 25.

Yet he managed to find comfort and inspiration in his first true friend--numbers . . . as he notes:

* For as long as I can remember, I have experienced numbers in the visual, synesthetic way that I do. Numbers are my first language, one I often think and feel in. Emotions can be hard for me to understand or know how to react to, so I often use numbers to help me. If a friend says they feel sad or depressed, I picture myself sitting in the dark hollowness of number 6 to help me experience the same sort of feeling and understand it. If I read in an article that a person felt intimidated by something, I imagine myself standing next to the place, I recall my numerical landscapes and how happy they make me feel inside. By doing this, numbers actually help me get closer to understanding other people.

Yet even then, life has not been easy for him because of certain things that most folks take for granted:

* Certain sentence structures can be particularly hard for me to analyze, such as: "He is not inexperienced in such things," where the two negative (not and in-)

cancel each other out. It is much better if people just say: "He is experienced in such things." Another example is when a sentence begins: "Don't you . . . ?" as in, "Don't you think we should go now?" or "Don't you want ice cream?" Then I become very confused and my head starts to hurt because the questioner is not being clear if he means: "Do you want an ice cream?" or "Is it correct that you don't want an ice cream?" and it's possible to answer both questions with a yes, and I don't like it when the same word can mean two completely different things.

Even falling in love is like nothing else, according to Tammet:

* . . . there isn't a right or a wrong way to fall in love with another person, no mathematical equation for love and the perfect relationship. Emotions that I had not experienced in the years since my teenage crush I felt suddenly and strongly, for long and lingering moments, so profoundly that they hurt. I could not stop thinking about Neil, no matter what I did, and found it difficult even to eat or sleep properly as a result. When he asked me, in an email at the start of 2001, whether we could meet, I hesitated nonetheless. What if the meeting went badly? What if I were to do or say the wrong thing? Was I even someone who could be loved? I did not know.

If you'd like to see what it's like to be different, read BORN ON A BLUE DAY . . . doing so, you'll find yourself both inspired and moved.

D. Heard THE PASSION PLAN, written and ready by Richard Chang . . . it is a thought-provoking book about how to find your own special passion and then when you have, to be able to follow it to personal success.

I was inspired by many of personal stories that were included . . . in addition, I liked the easy-to-follow recipe involving seven simple steps that could be used to help you discover things you really care about, decide where you want them to take you and then what you need to do to develop a plan to get you there.

Nothing here was earth-shattering, per se . . . and you, like me, might have heard much of it before . . . yet that said, I liked hearing such tidbits as the following:

- * As one passion evolves, you may discover others.
- * If you're never discovered your passions, you need to keep yourself open to opportunities to discover them.
- * We need to make decisions based on the passions in our heart.
- * Sometimes, others can detect passions from our heart before we do. For example, if they say something like, "He's so happy when he is [doing something]."
- * You should not hesitate to let your passion show.
- * Your enthusiasm will only matter if it is authentic.

Chang's narration was heartfelt . . . however, had he chosen to use a professional narrator (or actor), it could have made listening to his book even more enjoyable.

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5. TV alert

A. Marianne Williamson is a spiritual activist, author, lecturer and founder of The Peace Alliance, a grass roots campaign supporting legislation currently before Congress to establish a United States Department of Peace . . . she guests on OPRAH on Thursday at 4 p.m. on ABC . . . check local listings because her time and station may vary where you live .

In addition, ABC launches OPRAH'S BIG GIVE on Sunday at 9 p.m. . . . it is an eight-part series inspired by the talk-show queen's segment that gives people money and asks them to use it to better other's lives.

B. GEORGE CARLIN: IT'S BAD FOR YA performs live from Santa Rosa, CA in his 14th HBO special . . . he targets aging, self-esteem, children, stupidity, and religious superstitions . . . Saturday at 10 p.m.

C. Craig Bierko (so fine in CINDERELLA MAN) stars as a recently divorced man in UNHITCHED, a sitcom about four down-on-their-luck thirty somethings that also stars THE OFFICE's Rashida Jones . . . Sunday at 9:30 p.m. on FOX.

D. DEXTER is supposed to be one of cable's best shows, but because I don't get SHOWTIME, I've never seen it . . . but CBS has now picked up the series' 2006 first season . . . it is about a forensics investigator by day, serial killer with scruples by night--"perfectly played by Michael C. Hall," to quote TV GUIDE . . . Sunday at 10 p.m.

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6. Dog for sale

A guy was driving around the back woods of Tennessee and he saw a sign in front of a broken down shanty-style house: "Talking Dog for Sale".

He rings the bell, and the owner appears and tells him the dog is in the backyard. The guy goes into the back yard and sees a nice looking Beagle sitting there.

"You talk?" he asks.

"Yep," the Beagle replies.

After the guy recovers from the shock of hearing a dog talk, he says "So, what's your story?"

The Beagle looks up and says, "Well, I discovered that I could talk when I was pretty young. I wanted to help the government, so I told the CIA, and they had me sworn into the toughest branch of the armed services . . . the United States Marines. You know one of their nicknames is The Devil Dogs.

"In no time at all they had me jetting from country to country, sitting in rooms with spies and world leaders because no one figured a dog would be eavesdropping. I was one of their most valuable spies for eight years running, but the jetting around really tired me out, and I knew I wasn't getting any younger. So I decided to settle down.

"I retired from the Corps (8 dog years is 56 Corps years) and signed up for a job at the airport to do some undercover security, wandering near suspicious characters and listening in. I uncovered some incredible dealings and was awarded a batch of medals. I got married, had a mess of puppies and now I'm just retired."

The guy is amazed. He goes back in and asks the owner what he wants for the dog.

"Ten dollars," the guy says.

"Ten dollars? This dog is amazing! Why on earth are you selling him so cheap?"

"Because he's such a bullsh*tter. He never did any of that stuff. He was in the Navy!"

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7. Websites

A. If you want traveling tips when flying on airplanes, please click:
<http://nwa.com/travel/tips/tips.html>

This is an excellent website sponsored by Northwest Airlines. It gives great advice regarding how to travel comfortably on an airplane, combating jet lag, flying during pregnancy, advice on what you need to know about blood clots while flying, various types of exercises which will help you have a comfortable flight, and finally, the best way to travel with children.

B. To gain a greater sense of how much poverty there truly is around the world, please click:
http://www.miniature-earth.com/me_english.htm

To get it to Play, then click the arrow on the left . . . doing so will make you thankful for the necessities we already have in our lives, and it will make you want to get involved in helping millions of people who are starving every day.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:
<http://www.blainesworld.net>

From time to time, I'm asked how many subscribers there are to this newsletter . . . there are some 843, and from what I understand, many pass each issue on to others . . . ALWAYS feel free to do that; i.e., forward this or issue in its entirety and feel free to encourage others to subscribe . . . you can't beat the price; it is FREE . . . subscribing is easy, too . . . all anybody interested has to do is go to the above webpage, then follow the "Special Offer" instructions at the bottom of the homepage . . . with your help, I think it would be neat if we could get the number up to 1,000 by the end of this year!

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8. Computer tip

If you need a quick math done and don't have calculator handle,

please click:

<http://www.google.com>

You'll get Google's built-in calculator function, which enables you to simply enter the calculation you'd like done into the search box and hit the Enter key--or click on the Google Search button.

So, for example, I did this the other day when I was totaling some checks I had to deposit into my checking account. It enabled me to check on my addition. (And can you believe there was a time in life when we did not have calculators?)

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9. Letter from Wal-Mart (sooooo touching)

Jan 15, 2008

After Mr. and Mrs. Fenton retired, Mrs. Fenton insisted her husband accompany her on her trips to Wal-Mart. Unfortunately, Mr. Fenton was like most men--he found shopping boring and preferred to get in and get out. Equally unfortunately, Mrs. Fenton was like most women--she loved to browse.

One day, Mrs. Fenton received the following letter from her local Wal-Mart:

Dear Mrs. Fenton,

Over the past six months, your husband has been causing quite a commotion in our store. We cannot tolerate this behavior and may be forced to ban both of you from the store. Our complaints against Mr. Fenton are listed below and are documented by our video surveillance cameras.

1. June 15: Took 24 boxes of condoms and randomly put them in people's carts when they weren't looking.
2. July 2: Set all the alarm clocks in Housewares to go off at 5-minute intervals.
3. July 7: Made a trail of tomato juice on the floor leading to the women's restroom.
4. July 19: Walked up to an employee and told her in an official voice, "Code 3 in Housewares. Get on it right away."
5. August 4: Went to the Service Desk and tried to put a bag of M&M's on layaway.
6. September 14: Moved a "CAUTION - WET FLOOR" sign to a carpeted area.
7. September 15: Set up a tent in the camping department and told other shoppers he'd invite them in if they would bring pillows and blankets from the bedding department.
8. September 23: When a clerk asked if she could help him, he

began crying and screamed, "Why can't you people just leave me alone?"

9 . October 4: Looked right into the security camera and used it as a mirror while he picked his nose.

10. November 10: While handling guns in the hunting department, he asked the clerk where the antidepressants were.

11. December 3: Darted around the store suspiciously while loudly humming the "Mission Impossible" theme

12. December 6: In the auto department, he practiced his "Madonna look" by using different sizes of funnels.

13. December 18: Hid in a clothing rack and when people browsed through, yelled "PICK ME! PICK ME!"

14. December 21: When an announcement came over the loud speaker, he assumed a fetal position and screamed "OH NO! IT'S THOSE VOICES AGAIN!"

And last, but not least:

15. December 23: Went into a fitting room, shut the door, waited awhile, and then yelled very loudly, "Hey! There's no toilet paper! in here!"

Regards,
Wal-Mart

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10. A quote I like

If your ship doesn't come in, swim out to it.--Jonathan Winters,
American comic and actor

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11. Thought for the day

St. Theresa's prayer
by St. Therese of Lisieux (1873-1897)

May today there be peace within.

May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.

May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.

May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you.

May you be content knowing you are a child of God.

Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise, and love.

It is there for each and every one of you.

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12. Advance planning department

A. Lorraine in New Jersey:

On February 29, , The NJ Small Business Development Center(SBDC) at the College of New Jersey will host BOOMERS and BEYOND: Work Matters Over 60. Co-sponsored by the Mercer County Office on Aging, Experience Works, Senior Living Institute, and the Mercer County Office for the Disabled, the program will include networking and panel discussions showcasing the turnabout of retirement for economic benefits.

This is a great opportunity for us to showcase not only our center's efforts in developing a Center of Learning for Senior Entrepreneurs but also all the phenomenal resource programs available for seniors and employers", shares Lorraine Allen, SBDC Regional Director.

The morning program will include a panel discussion of resource providers as well as a panel discussion of seniors working it . . . both in companies they started after 60 or employment they have sustained or secured. seniors interested in business, businesses interested in seniors and service providers for both seniors and business should attend for networking.

A SPECIAL RECOGNITION Award will be given to East Windsor's Lisa Gable, LG Accessories, 85, Featured in Inc's "8 Over 80", FoxNews New Jersey for Outstanding Older Worker Award Winner by Experience Works, Washington, DC.

To register, please contact: sbdc@tcnj.edu; 609-771-2947 or click: <http://www.tcnj.edu/sbdc>

B. FREE CONTEST GIVEAWAY (continues):

Due to the popularity of past contests, I'd again like to extend an invitation to some lucky reader(s) to be my guest at the "Meet the Author" Business Seminar on March 12, 2008 at 8:30 a.m. in the Library Auditorium at Bucks County Community College, Newtown, PA.

Best-selling author Lisa Ford is the featured speaker of the 5th annual "Meet the Author" Business Seminar at Bucks County Community College. Her presentation, Exceptional Customer Service--Going Beyond Your Good Service to Exceed the Customer's Expectation, is based on Lisa's best-selling video training program.

To be eligible for the FREE TICKETS, submit your name by February 25 via email to my assistant: hughesbr@bucks.edu . . . in the subject line, put these words: FREE TICKETS . . . in the body of your email, include this information: your name, how many tickets you would want (1 or 2), email address, snail mail address, and phone number . . . I'll then let you know if you're a winner on or before March 5.

Should you want to guarantee a seat or have your company purchase ticket(s) for you, here's the information that you will need:

Individual tickets: \$50 or take advantage of a \$495 corporate sponsorship and receive 10 tickets, reserved seating and the opportunity to promote your organization.

To reserve your seats today for this engaging seminar, call 215.968.8224 or to order tickets safely and securely online, please click:

<https://www.bucks.edu/meettheauthor.php>

C. Deborah in New Jersey:
FREE CLASSES FOR NEW VISITORS WEEK!

Are you ready to come out of your winter slumbers? With hints of longer days and anticipation of awakening, new growth, what better way to nourish your roots and come back home to yourself than to warm yourself in one of our energizing, healing and nurturing classes, a luxurious and therapeutic massage, and special weekend "mini-retreats"?

It's time for another special Free Classes for New Visitor's Week at PCYH! [Princeton Center for Yoga & Health in Skillman, NJ]

Is there someone with whom you've wanted to share the wonderful gifts you've received from your classes at PCYH? This is the perfect time to bring friends, family, your co-workers, hairdresser, accountant, teacher, pet-sitter (even someone you just met!) - to sample classes at the Center. And, as a special thank you, when you bring a friend new to the Center during this week, you get a class for free!

Free Classes for New Visitors Week
March 3-9

New Visitors to the Center sample classes to see which programs suit your needs. See Free Classes Week Schedule.

Returning Friends: bring a friend new to the Center this week and get a free class!

Here at PCYH, our goal is to offer you tools to take into your everyday life and for just plain fun . . . and you'll find lots of opportunities here in 2008!

At PCYH, this new season is filled with meditation, yoga, drumming, dance, self-discovery, chanting, healing, bodywork and much more. It is filled with remarkable people, events, and opportunities for improved minds, bodies, and spirits.

This season, we bring back our very successful Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and add our new pilot Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy program. Our first groups reported remarkable life affirming changes--from reduction in blood pressure, better sleep and coping mechanisms in dealing with serious illness and loss to more satisfying and effective interactions with family and co-workers.

Here PCYH there are so many offerings to help members and friends explore new realms of wellness for mind, body, and spirit. See a listing of our upcoming programs under Workshops to Share below.

Register for the upcoming classes and programs today--and come together in the warmth of good company!

For more information, please click:
<http://www.princetonyoga.com>

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PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD
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2.18.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I couldn't celebrate Valentine's Day together because we both had to work . . . yet lest you think I forgot her, I had a group called the Tritones come to her work to serenade her . . . that's (from l-r) Cynthia, Dotty Westgate, Heather Robbins, and Jan Gottlieb:



The Tritones started because two of the women wanted to sing "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy," so they looked for a third. They had such a blast that they decided to keep singing!

They've now done Singing Valentines for four years. If you'd like to see them, they'll next be performing at in Kingston Methodist Church in Kingston, NJ on March 15 . . . the program will feature sing-alongs and an open mic segment. . . admission is just \$5 and refreshments will be available . . . for more information, please call Dotty at 609.683.0563 or email: watdot@patmedia.net

You can also contact Dotty to have the group sing at luncheons, bar mitzvahs, senior citizen facilities, etc. . . . if she can't get all three group members together, she sometimes goes out solo for singing birthday, baptism and anniversary greetings . . . she'll collect information about the intended recipient and use it in the song, changing words to fit . . . the result is always great fun.

Non-Valentine greetings start at \$75, depending on location and extras.

B. Cynthia and I continued our search for our retirement destination by visiting the Raleigh, NC area this past Friday to Monday . . . actually, we were there until Tuesday due to the fact that our scheduled flight back had mechanical trouble and had to be canceled.

We had a nice mini-vacation, though in doing so, decided that this part of the state is probably not for us . . . that's perhaps a shame, too, in that the Carolina Preserve community in Cary (run by Del Webb) was quite attractive and featured several homes that we very much liked.

SPECIAL THANKS to Christina MacCormac, the RE/MAX realtor/broker who helped make our arrangements for the visit . . . though she wasn't able to join us, she hooked us up with Stephanie Bertsche, a broker friend of hers, who showed us around nearly the entire day . . . Stephanie was both knowledgeable and helpful.

Should you ever be interested in that part of North Carolina, I'd have no hesitation in recommending Christina . . . her direct number is 919.868.4310; email: christina@christinamac.com

The next day, we were much less impressed with a side trip we took to a small town called Pittsboro . . . somebody had told us that it was very "artsy" and that we'd like it . . . so we drove there and in the center of town, we saw a few little shops and some boarded-up ones . . . we then went to a convenience store and when we asked the guy who worked there where the stores were, he said a few miles down the road there was a Hardee's (NOT a good sign) . . . nevertheless, we drove around some more to the Hardee's and found it with nothing else nearby . . . across the street, there was another convenience store . . . I stopped somebody getting gas, and she told me that there's not much else to see in Pittsboro, but if I wanted to do some shopping, I could go up the road some to find a Wal-Mart . . . that was enough to convince me that it was time to turn back to our hotel.

C. When not looking at various properties, we found several fine places to eat . . . our favorites included Bentley's at Crossroads in Cary (919.854.0644) where we had great steaks and very pleasant service from Ellie . . . we also enjoyed yogurt parfaits at the Jack Sprat Cafe and Bar (919.933.3575) in Chapel Hill . . . if you ever go there, ask for a server by the name of Florencio; his smile and enthusiasm will brighten your day . . . and I even got Cynthia to try Hooters (919.469.2900) in Morrisville . . . it was the first time she had ever been to that establishment and despite her initial misgivings, methinks she at least enjoyed the food . . . we both had wings that were quite tasty, and we also liked their curly fries . . . Carolann, our server, was very friendly.

My favorite meal, however, was at Tony's Bourbon Street Oyster Bar in Cary (919.462.6226) . . . my flounder was good, as was Cynthia's seafood combo . . . the service left something to be desired, yet that was because a large party that came in just before us . . . the manager managed to put a smile back on our faces by giving us complimentary desserts; we all ordered an Oreo ice cream pie that more than made up for the time we had to wait.

And truth be told, we didn't mind waiting around since we were joined at dinner by Clay MacCormac (Christina's husband)--a former student and longtime friend . . . it was great to be able to catch up with him . . . that's the three of us below:



D. Personally, I received good news when I heard my sabbatical proposal for next spring was approved by the Bucks County Community College's Board of Trustees . . . my plan is to run two smoke cessation programs on campus, as well as two at an off-campus location in conjunction with the BUCKS COUNTY COURIER TIMES.

As noted in Dean Annette Conn's analysis to the Board, "Professor Greenfield's proposal, that is, to market smoking cessation, is directly related to his teaching discipline at Bucks. He did, in fact, run a successful program on campus last year, as the testimonial letters affirm. Since Bucks is in the process of exploring a smoke free campus, this activity will assist our students and employees in complying with changed conditions. It will also be a learning experience in marketing and implementing a marketing plan. One attractive aspect of this proposal is that the program should be replicable by other individuals or organizations for future use on the campus. Helping College community members stop smoking is also, as Professor Greenfield points out, a valuable end in itself."

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Megan Chavis--an employee of AnimMall Pet Adoption center in Morrisville, NC.

Cynthia and I met Megan when we were shopping at the Morrisville Outlet Mall . . . we sort of wandered into her store and became immediately interested in the concept behind it . . . to quote from the literature that was out on display:

AniMall is a mall-based pet adoption center, located in the Morrisville Mall near RDU. Local animal shelters and rescues hold adoption events in AniMall to find forever homes for their adoptable animals.

AniMall is welcome to all pets that need homes. We feature

dogs, cats, guinea pigs, rabbits, rats, hamsters, gerbils, and reptiles.

When we went, several adorable cats were the featured animals . . . they stay in the store for a few weeks and if not adopted, go back to their foster homes . . . and isn't that a neat concept? (You can "try" out a pet, and if it isn't for you, you can easily return it.)

We were especially impressed by the love Megan had for all the animals at the Center . . . she also was most gracious, taking quite some time to explain the concept and then allowing us the opportunity to interact with the cats.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.animall.org>

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2. FYI

According to Timothy Ferris in THE FOUR-HOUR WORKWEEK (see also Sections 4C, 10 and 11), probably most of us are busier than we need to be . . . to help simplify things, he suggests the following technique:

Check email twice per day, once at 12:00 noon or just prior to lunch, and again at 4:00 p.m. 12:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. are times that ensure you will have the most responses from previously sent email. Never check e-mail first thing in the morning. Instead, complete your most important task before 11:00 am to avoid using lunch or reading email as a postponement excuse.

FYI, part 2

* Debby in New Jersey:

When you sent me the easy way to stop smoking book for my friend, you asked that I update you on her progress. So here goes . . .

I gave Amy the book before Christmas, but told her she didn't have to start reading it until after the holidays. In January, when I asked her about it, she said she hadn't started because she was in the middle of another book. I reminded her she only had to commit to reading one chapter a night and that she wasn't to stop smoking.

Two weeks later, when she started the book, she called me. She couldn't thank me enough for giving it to her. She was a third of the way through and couldn't wait to stop smoking. When I saw her a few days later, she was half-way through and was down from 20 cigarettes a day to 4. By the next week, she had finished the book and thrown the rest of her cigarettes in a dumpster.

She was so excited, felt great and free and that new opportunities would open up to her as a result of no longer being a smoker. She has gotten her sense of smell back but always feels hungry and has gained 10 pounds. She is coming up on her three-week smoke-free landmark, supposedly an important one according to the book.

I am so excited for Amy. Her mother had been a smoker and died of lung cancer when only in her 50s. Amy also has the build and stature of women susceptible to osteoporosis. She is in her late 40s

and had never even tried to stop smoking before despite knowing of the health risks. Now she wants to give the book to friends who have stopped smoking but are miserable without their cigarettes.

Thank you so much for making this book available.

THE OFFER REMAINS:

If you'd like a FREE copy of THE EASY WAY TO STOP SMOKING by Allen Carr--sent with my compliments--just send an email to my assistant Bridget: hughesbr@bucks.edu . . . put STOP SMOKING BOOK in the subject line . . . in the body of your email, include your name, snail mail address, email address, and phone numbers . . . I only ask that you did what Debby did; i.e., keep me informed of your progress.

Please only request the above if you're willing to read at least one short chapter per night . . . by the same token, do the same if you're requesting a copy for somebody else . . . it only works if there's a real commitment to give the book a shot.

* Shai in Pennsylvania:

I hope you continue to experiment with and enjoy South Asian Cuisine. Glad you had a good experience recently!

OFFERS AND/OR REQUESTS FROM READERS:

* Jean in Pennsylvania:

March 1, 3 to 7 p.m.: Ukrainian Dinner (eat in or take out)

Dinner (\$8 eat in/\$8.50 take out) includes:

1 Holubschi (stuffed cabbage), 2 pyrohy (potato/cheese), kielbasa with sauerkraut, rye bread, beverage, and dessert.

A la Carte items are also available, including all of the foods above plus holushki (battered noodles) and pyrohy (sauerkraut).

St. Anne Ukrainian Catholic Church in the Activities Center
1545 Easton Road, Warring ton, PA

Contact for more information: Helene , 215.343.3948; or
Gretchen, 215.343-2714.

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3. Spelling test

TEACHER: Glenn, how do you spell "crocodile?"

GLENN: K-R-O-K-O-D-I-A-L

TEACHER: No, that's wrong

GLENN: Maybe it is wrong, but you asked me how I spell it.

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4. Reviews

A. I liked DEFINITELY, MAYBE because it is a romantic comedy/chick flick that any guy can enjoy, too . . . it's also different than other such films because there's no "set" formula;

i.e., you can't predict every joke as it's happening . . . in fact, there aren't even a lot of scenes that make you laugh out loud; rather, you'll find yourself smiling about the tale of a 30-something Manhattan dad in the midst of a divorce who is trying to explain to his 10-year-old daughter about what his life was before marriage . . . the premise is just a tad bit convoluted, yet that did not stop me from enjoying myself . . . Ryan Reynolds and Abigail Breslin are believable as the father and daughter, and I also liked the work of all the women (Elizabeth Banks, Isla Fisher and Rachel Weisz) in his life . . . rated PG-13.

B. You'd think I would learn . . . I didn't like writer-director Noah Baumach's Oscar-nominated THE SQUID AND WHALE; his follow-up, MARGOT THE WEDDING was even worse--or at least what I saw of it . . . it's a supposedly funny and honest dissection of family life, starring Nicole Kidman, Jennifer Jason Leigh and Jack Black (in I think the only thing he's ever been in that did not make me laugh) . . . I was so bored with it that I stopped watching after about 20 minutes . . . it's now out on DVD; miss it . . . rated R.

You'd be much better served to rent BREAKING AWAY, a delightful coming-of-age comedy about a rivalry between townies and college kids . . . it stars many actors soon to be famous, including Dennis Quaid and Daniel Stern . . . in particular, I thought Paul Dooly as the father was absolutely fantastic . . . he had me laughing in every scene he was in, including this one featuring just a sample of the smart dialogue that's throughout the film:

Dad: What is this?

Mom: It's sauteed zucchini.

Dad: It's I-tey food. I don't want no I-tey food.

Mom: It's not. I got it at the A&P. It's like . . . squash.

Dad: I know I-tey food when I hear it! It's all them "eenie" foods . . . zucchini . . . and linguini . . . and fettuccine. I want some American food, dammit! I want French fries!

Steve Teisch, the director, won the Oscar for Best Screenplay written directly for the screen . . . rated PG.

C. The premise behind the book's title had me looking forward to reading THE FOUR-HOUR WORKWEEK (see also Sections 2, 10 and 11) by Timothy Ferris . . . just imagine if that was possible!

After reading the book, I'm not sure that it is--but it certainly would be fun trying . . . and even if I couldn't quite get there, I do plan to make use of some of the many fine ideas that the author suggests . . . such as this one, dealing with the best time to make calls to people:

* When I was in data storage sales, my first gig out of college, I realized that most cold calls didn't get to the intended person for one reason: gatekeepers. If I simply made all my calls from 8:00-8:30 a.m. and 6:00-6:30 p.m., for a total of one hour, I was able to avoid secretaries and book more than twice as many meetings as the senior sales executives who called from 9-5. In other words, I got twice the results for 1/8 the time.

I also liked and plan to try someday this technique for packing when traveling:

* The overpacking impulse is hard to resist. The solution is to set what I call a "settled fund." Rather than pack for all contingencies, I bring the

absolute minimum and allocate \$100-300 for purchasing things after I arrive and as I travel. I no longer take toiletries or more than a week's worth of clothing. It's a blast. Finding shaving cream or a dress shirt overseas can produce an adventure in and of itself.

Lastly, THE FOUR-HOUR WORKWEEK got me to think--always a good sign that a book is making an impact . . . I had never quite thought about it, but Ferris is definitely right when he contends:

* People don't want to be millionaires--they want to experience what they believe only millions can buy. Ski chalets, butlers, and exotic travel often enter the picture. Perhaps rubbing cocoa butter on your belly in a hammock while you listen to waves rhythmically lapping against the deck of your thatched-roof bungalow? Sounds nice.

I'm not quite sure that last activity would be my first choice of the things that I'd like to do with my life, but I must admit that it opened me up to many other such possibilities!

D. Heard the taped version of THE KENNEDYS: AN AMERICAN DREAM by Peter Collier and David Horowitz.

This was a controversial NEW YORK TIMES bestseller when it was published in 1984, and I can see why . . . it tells the story of a dysfunctional family over three generations, centering around the elder Joseph Kenney and his wife Rose Fitzgerald . . . it then moves on to tell how his sons Jack and Bobby moved into the limelight via their careers in elected politics . . . and the book concludes with an account of Teddy's troubles, as well as those of the younger Kennedy children.

Along the way there was adultery, drug usage (particularly by Jack during his presidency), alcoholism, and a variety of characters who mostly come across as not very lovable . . . perhaps only Lem Billings, JFK's best friend and subsequent family advisor, comes across in any sort of favorable light.

My main criticism of THE KENNEDYS had to do with the last part . . . many of the younger Kennedys were portrayed in a negative fashion and though they may have had their difficulties while in school, several settled down and went on to careers in public service . . . consequently, I could have done without some of the dirt that seems to have been found.

Yet that is probably what gives this book its appeal, so I'd recommend it if you want both the good and the bad about the Kennedy family . . . in addition, the narration by Joseph Campanella was outstanding and added to my enjoyment of listening to this tale about a dynasty that had to face so much tragedy over the years.

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5. TV alert

A. "Company," Stephen Sondheim's Tony-winning Broadway gem, is on GREAT PERFORMANCES on Wednesday at 9 p.m. on PBS . . . check local listings because the time and date may vary in your city.

B. I'll watch AMNESIA, NBC's new game show, if for no other reason than to see how Dennis Miller handles the hosting

responsibilities . . . also, I liked his response in TV GUIDE when he was asked to give an idea of a question: "We blindfolded [a contestant], who had said something akin to '[my] mother makes the best shepherd's pie.' And then [we] wheel out five shepherd's pies and they have to taste them, with their mom standing behind the one [she cooked]." . . . Fridays at 9 p.m.

C. HISTORY OF THE JOKE has Lewis Black hosting a documentary that searches for the best joke . . . comics George Carlin, Robin Williams and Kathy Griffin are among those interviewed . . . Saturday at 10 p.m. on HISTORY; repeated on Sunday at 2 a.m.

D. Jon Stewart hosts THE 80TH ANNUAL ACADEMY AWARDS on Sunday at 8:30 p.m. on ABC . . . my hope is "Falling Slowly" from the movie ONCE captures the Original Song statue.

AND JUST IN CASE:

I don't get out the next issue before this coming Monday, don't miss A RAISIN IN THE SUN . . . Lorraine Hansberry's historic 1959 play about a Chicago family striving to rise above tenement life stars Phylicia Rashad, Sean Combs, Sanaa Lathan, and Audra McDonald--all reprising their roles from Broadway's Tony-winning 2004 revival . . . Monday, February 25, at 8 p.m. on ABC.

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6. Tough gig

A magician was working on a cruise ship in the Caribbean. The audience would be different each week, so the magician allowed himself to do the same tricks over and over again.

There was only one problem: The captain's parrot saw the shows each week and began to understand how the magician did every trick. Once he understood, he started shouting in the middle of the show:

"Look, it's not the same hat"

"Look, he is hiding the flowers under the table"

"Hey, why are all the cards the Ace of Spades?"

The magician was furious but couldn't do anything; it was, after all, the captain's parrot.

One day the ship had an accident and sank. The magician found himself on a piece of wood in the middle of the ocean with the parrot, of course.

They stared at each other with hate, but did not utter a word. This went on for a day and another and another.

After a week the parrot said: "OK, I give up. Where's the boat?"

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7. Websites

A. If you'd like to see a YouTube for ideas, please click:
<http://www.bigthink.com/>

It mixes interviews with public intellectuals from a variety of fields, ranging from politics to law to business, and it allows users to engage in debates on issues like global warning and the two-party system.

B. There is now a website that enables citizens to thank those who are fighting for our country overseas . . . to access it, please click: <http://www.gratitudecampaign.org/fullmovie.php>

The message is quite powerful; i.e., we all need to say thank you to these brave men and women.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click: <http://www.blaineworld.net>

If you'd like to see my opinion on books that I've read or heard on tape, click "Blaine's Best" to the left, then the second paragraph under letter "O."

THANKS to the efforts of readers, I'm now #348 on the list of amazon.com's top reviewers . . . if you'd like to help me move up, please click: <http://www.amazon.com>

Then at the Search option at the top, find any book I've recently reviewed; e.g., THE EDUCATION OF AN ACCIDENTAL CEO by David Novak . . . look to the right to find my review (it is probably near the top) . . . if you found it helpful, click "YES" when asked that question . . . that's it!

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8. Computer tip

Last week, I mentioned the need to be careful when using a public computer; e.g., in checking your mail from a library, at a Kinko's, etc. . . . here's something else that you should ALWAYS do: delete your Cookies (computer-generated copies of websites you've visited) . . . to do so, open a new Web browser page and select "Tools" from the top of the toolbar and then "Internet options" . . . under the "Temporary Internet Files" selection, click "Delete Cookies."

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9. Insight

At Saint Mary's Catholic Church they have a weekly husband's marriage seminar. At the session last week, the Priest asked Luigi, who was approaching his 50th wedding anniversary, to take a few minutes and share some insight into how he had managed to stay married to the same woman all these years.

Luigi replied to the assembled husbands, "Well, I've a-ried to treat-a her nice, spend the money on her, but best is that I took-a her to Italy for the 20th anniversary!"

The Priest responded, "Luigi, you are an amazing inspiration to all the husbands here! Please tell us what you are planning for your wife for your 50th anniversary."

Luigi proudly replied, "I'm a-gonna go and get her."

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10. A quote I like

Service to me is simple: doing something that improves life besides your own. . . . Service isn't limited to saving lives or the environment either. It can also improve life. If you are a musician and put a smile on the faces of thousands or millions, I view that as service. If you are a mentor and change the life of one child for the better, the world has been improved.--Timothy Ferris in THE FOUR-HOUR WORKWEEK (see also Sections 2, 4C and 11)

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11. Thought for the day

Emphasize Strengths, Don't fix Weaknesses.

Most people are good at a handful of things and utterly miserable at most. I am great at product creation and marketing but terrible at most of the things that follow.

My body is designed to lift heavy objects and throw them, and that's it. I ignored this for a long time. I tried swimming and looked like a drowning monkey. I tried basketball and looked like a caveman. Then I became a fighter and took off.

It is far more lucrative and fun to leverage your strengths instead of attempting to fix all the chinks in your armor. The choice is between multiplication of results using strengths or incremental improvement fixing weaknesses that will, at best, become mediocre. Focus on better use of your weapons instead of constant repair.

SOURCE:

THE FOUR-HOUR WORKWEEK (see also Sections 2, 4C and 10), a book by Timothy Ferris that I REALLY liked as evidenced by the fact that this is now the fourth time I have cited it in this week's missive

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12. Advance planning department

A. CORRECTION FROM LAST WEEK:

Bonnie in Pennsylvania:

I must have really had one bad proof reading day when I emailed the info on Mudcat Moan.

The date is February 23, 2008. I have no idea how that happened except for a slip of the fingers on the keyboard.

Thanks for the listing. Hopefully, if anyone is interested, he or she will check the website and see the correct date.

MY TWO CENTS:

Mistakes do happen . . . as I've previously said, I personally am an enthusiastic typist, just not a very akkkkkurate one . . . what follows is the correct listing:

Mudcat Moan
February 23, 2008

7 p.m. until 12:00 a.m.
Line dance lessons start at 7 p.m.
31 E. Cleveland Avenue, Morrisville, PA 19067
We will provide soda, ice tea, water, ice and snacks available with admission; \$7 per person. Anything else you must supply yourself.

For tickets, call 267.987.5433; for more information about the band, please click:
<http://www.mudcatmoan.com>

B. Natalie in Pennsylvania:
Dr. Emil Matarese will be speaking on "The Power To End Stroke." This will take place on Tuesday, February 26, from 12:30–1:30 p.m. in Founders 141 at the main Newtown campus of Bucks County Community College.

According to Dr. Matarese, "This will be a presentation on the high risk of stroke that faces all African-Americans, regardless of their age. Between the ages of 35-54, an African-American male has a four times greater risk of stroke when compared to a white male. Even young women are at risk, especially if they smoke or take birth control pills. We must learn to recognize the signs of stroke so that emergency treatment can be offered in an attempt to reverse the devastation of this disease."

C. Lorraine in New Jersey:
On February 29, , The NJ Small Business Development Center(SBDC) at the College of New Jersey will host BOOMERS and BEYOND: Work Matters Over 60. Co-sponsored by the Mercer County Office on Aging, Experience Works, Senior Living Institute, and the Mercer County Office for the Disabled, the program will include networking and panel discussions showcasing the turnabout of retirement for economic benefits.

This is a great opportunity for us to showcase not only our center's efforts in developing a Center of Learning for Senior Entrepreneurs but also all the phenomenal resource programs available for seniors and employers", shares Lorraine Allen, SBDC Regional Director.

The morning program will include a panel discussion of resource providers as well as a panel discussion of seniors working it . . . both in companies they started after 60 or employment they have sustained or secured. seniors interested in business, businesses interested in seniors and service providers for both seniors and business should attend for networking.

A SPECIAL RECOGNITION Award will be given to East Windsor's Lisa Gable, LG Accessories, 85, Featured in Inc's "8 Over 80", FoxNews New Jersey for Outstanding Older Worker Award Winner by Experience Works, Washington, DC.

To register, please contact: sbdc@tcnj.edu; 609-771-2947 or click:
<http://www.tcnj.edu/sbdc>

D. FREE CONTEST GIVEAWAY (continues):
Due to the popularity of past contests, I'd again like to extend an invitation to some lucky reader(s) to be my guest at the "Meet the Author" Business Seminar on March 12, 2008 at 8:30 a.m. in the Library Auditorium at Bucks County Community College, Newtown, PA.

Best-selling author Lisa Ford is the featured speaker of the 5th annual "Meet the Author" Business Seminar at Bucks County Community College. Her presentation, Exceptional Customer Service--Going Beyond Your Good Service to Exceed the Customer's Expectation, is based on Lisa's best-selling video training program.

To be eligible for the FREE TICKETS, submit your name by February 25 via email to my assistant: hughesbr@bucks.edu . . . in the subject line, put these words: FREE TICKETS . . . in the body of your email, include this information: your name, how many tickets you would want (1 or 2), email address, snail mail address, and phone number . . . I'll then let you know if you're a winner on or before March 5.

Should you want to guarantee a seat or have your company purchase ticket(s) for you, here's the information that you will need:

Individual tickets: \$50 or take advantage of a \$495 corporate sponsorship and receive 10 tickets, reserved seating and the opportunity to promote your organization.

To reserve your seats today for this engaging seminar, call 215.968.8224 or to order tickets safely and securely online, please click:

<https://www.bucks.edu/meettheauthor.php>

PS. Happy President's Day to you and yours . . . it is a federal holiday in the United States and is celebrated on the third Monday of February; i.e., the 18th this month . . . although it has become a great weekend for sales, especially on cars, it was originally designed to recognize Washington's Birthday . . . to learn more about George Washington, please click:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/gw1.html>

Or also:

[http://familyinternet.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?](http://familyinternet.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ&sdn=familyinternet&cdn=parenting&tm=442&gps=265_474_796_398&f=10&su=p284.8.150.ip_&tt=2&bt=1&bts=1&zu=http%3A//www.mountvernon.org/)

[zi=1/XJ&sdn=familyinternet&cdn=parenting&tm=442&gps=265_474_796_398&f=10&su=p284.8.150.ip_&tt=2&bt=1&bts=1&zu=http%3A//www.mountvernon.org/](http://familyinternet.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ&sdn=familyinternet&cdn=parenting&tm=442&gps=265_474_796_398&f=10&su=p284.8.150.ip_&tt=2&bt=1&bts=1&zu=http%3A//www.mountvernon.org/)

If you'd like to learn more about any of the other Presidents, please click:

[http://familyinternet.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?](http://familyinternet.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ&sdn=familyinternet&cdn=parenting&tm=73&gps=132_541_796_398&f=10&su=p284.8.150.ip_&tt=2&bt=1&bts=1&zu=http%3A//www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/)

[zi=1/XJ&sdn=familyinternet&cdn=parenting&tm=73&gps=132_541_796_398&f=10&su=p284.8.150.ip_&tt=2&bt=1&bts=1&zu=http%3A//www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/](http://familyinternet.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ&sdn=familyinternet&cdn=parenting&tm=73&gps=132_541_796_398&f=10&su=p284.8.150.ip_&tt=2&bt=1&bts=1&zu=http%3A//www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/)

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Also, please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . and make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#593

2.11.2008

***** see Section 12D for FREE CONTEST GIVEAWAY *****

In this issue:

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I continued what has become a twice-a-year tradition for us . . . when it is her sister's birthday in February, we take her sister and brother-in-law out for dinner . . . they then return the favor on Cynthia's birthday in October.

So on Saturday, we all first caught a movie (see Section 4A) and then went to Taj Palace--an Indian restaurant--in Montclair, NJ . . . keep in mind that I'm typically not a big fan of Indian food; in fact, this was only my second visit to such an eatery.

This time, I must admit to being pleasantly surprised . . . I had chicken tikka, which is a relatively plain dish that was excellent . . . Cynthia enjoyed her tandoori chicken, which was marinated in yogurt and mild spices . . . in addition, we both very much liked papadom--a thin and crusty bread.

We also liked the decor . . . for more information, please click:
<http://www.tajpalacerestaurant.com/>

B. On Sunday, we went with several friends to an old favorite: Duck Sauce (215.860.8879) in Newtown, PA . . . I hadn't been there for far too long a time, so it was good to again receive owner Tony Huang's friendly greeting.

We all shared a bunch of items . . . though they were all superb, I feel compelled to comment on the barb-b-q pecan ribs . . . these remain the ABSOLUTE BEST I have ever had anywhere else . . . the orange beef dish were equally delicious.

C. We had been in the area, earlier in the day, looking at homes in a 55-and-over community (Traditions) in Washington Crossing, PA . . . Cynthia and I both liked what we saw, largely because the

area has always been one of our favorites . . . in fact, I had previously lived right around the corner in the Heritage Hills development.

I'm not sure where we will eventually wind up, but all of a sudden, the above has become a distinct possibility--probably even surpassing The Villages in Florida . . . our realtor and friend, Sue Russeck (215.354.1001; cell, 215.688.1381), has been given the go ahead to keep looking for us in this and surrounding developments.

And wouldn't that be a kick if we wound up back in Bucks County, only a few minutes away from the College?

Yet while that remains a viable option, we'll resume our quest to explore other areas of the country this coming weekend with a visit to Raleigh, NC . . . so if you don't see us online and/or around for a bit, you'll know why . . . details on that trip to follow next week.

D. My Tuesday night Marketing class is going well . . . last week, the students visited their client: Zebra Striped Whale (215.205.2227, also in Newtown . . . they met with Tom Donahue, one of the owners, and heard about how he with his wife Shari have made their store "the place" to go for ice cream in the area.

With that background and some taste testing of the product, the students were then told about their semester-long project; i.e., to come up with ideas to increase the catering of ice cream events to the local community.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Joseph Delbo--a 4 star CSR at my local Blockbuster in Hillsborough, NJ.

As many readers know, I've become a big fan of blockbuster.com . . . you get any movie you want delivered to your home, then get another movie at a local store every time you return your original film . . . you can also make your return via mail; however, you don't get an extra rental that way.

I've gotten to know Joseph by virtue of the fact that I always go to the Hillsborough location to make my exchanges . . . it is the locale closest to my home, but equally important, I get the chance to have Joseph help me out.

He is both friendly and knowledgeable . . . consequently, I believe that Blockbuster is lucky to have him work for the company . . . and that said, I should mention that just about every other employee at the Hillsborough store is equally helpful.

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2. FYI

David Novak with John Boswell in THE EDUCATION OF AN ACCIDENTAL CEO (see also Sections 4C, 10 and 11) wrote about the following technique that methinks can be used in many other businesses, too:

All our "above-store" people now go through customer-mania training as well. Among the lessons we teach them is "turn left first," which means that whenever they walk into a restaurant, they should first turn left and go talk to customers, rather than turning right to go to the back of the store. This is a great way to make customers feel appreciated and to find out all sorts of information-how new products are being received, whether they feel like they're getting good value for their money, what they think we're doing right, and what they think we could do better.

FYI, part 2

* Annmarie in New Jersey:

First off it's nice to keep up with you and Cynthia through the weekly newsletter. You have certainly each found your perfect match. I always have to smile at all the different things you are doing. I can see that you are a different and happier person since I first met you in your previous life. Please tell Cynthia I said hello and that I think of her as I read of your adventures.

Regarding duct cleaning . . . yes, you should have it done. The regularity of that need however is well disputed. A professional would be best to tell you how often your system needs to be done . . . some factors include: age of system, type of system, how you run the system, pets in the home, etc.

My rehab property desperately needed service so I went researching. There are two basic types of duct cleaning companies. First are the "pretenders" who come in with a portable vac system and clean out each register and return. Not much power behind these systems. The "real deal" companies come with a panel truck filled with what looks like the world's largest vacuum cleaner. It is only with the power of this professional system that you get a thorough cleaning. Now besides cleaning out, you may wish to have them spray a product through that kills any growth and bacteria.

I have a recommendation for you for the duct cleaning. Although they are located in Hainesport, I believe they travel all over. He probably wouldn't remember my name because someone I had working with me on the last property made the arrangements with them. The property he worked on was on Mayapple Lane in Willingboro in case he asks. Here is their information:

Induct Air Duct Cleaning
Hainesport, NJ 08036
TEL: 800.211.0034; 609.265.0775
<http://www.inductclean.com>

* Sue in Pennsylvania:

I would highly recommend it [duct cleaning] being done. I used someone in Bucks County at my old house and do not remember whom it was. But it should be done around every three years. It is not very expensive. I think it cost around \$120. It really helps allergy sufferers. I would not recommend being home during the process.

* [a different] Sue in Pennsylvania:

I am really surprised you liked MICHAEL CLAYTON as much as you did. I thought it might have been one of the worst movies I have ever seen, largely because I did not understand what was happening from the beginning to the end.

* Barbara in Pennsylvania:

I'm a bit disappointed with your moral decision on the ending of THE BRAVE ONE. I was surprised with the ending, but agreed nevertheless. I also enjoyed seeing the two "animals" on the train blown away. I won't ride the subway or elevated anymore. (Too many animals on there.)

I enjoyed seeing the moron who shot his wife killed. I also enjoyed her getting her just reward by killing the animals who destroyed her life and took her "love" from her. I'm for the good guy winning!

Vigilantes don't bother me; attackers do. I'm tired of seeing the same faces doing the same crime, and their families crying fowl. If I sound prejudiced, I guess I am. I hope you don't think less of me for being honest. I just don't want to end up a statistic.

* Donna in New Jersey:
SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION is one of my favorite movies! I've seen it at least ten times!

I've been to Piccolo Trattoria in Hopewell . . . pretty good. The Pasta Fagiole (soup) is very good. It's very sad that many of my favorite Italian restaurants have left Chambersburg. So I'm looking for some new ones.

There's a new one in Pennington, Barone's Tuscany Grill, that I still have to try. Sal DeForte's moved from Trenton to Parkway Ave in Ewing. Food is still good, but the atmosphere is not the same.

Hope all is well. Thank you for resending #590, I don't know how you find the time to do everything you do!

OFFERS AND/OR REQUESTS FROM READERS:

* Greg in New York (my cousin's son):
Everyone has been touched in one way or another by cancer. It is the 2nd largest killer in the United States and finding a cure has become the goal of my athletic hero Lance Armstrong. Despite his seven Tour de France victories, Lance Armstrong is only now taking on his biggest challenge, eradicating this horrid disease.

Through the Lance Armstrong Foundation, I have been accepted to run the Boston Marathon on April 21st, 2008. This is both an honor to have been selected as well as a great cause. Anyone who knows me should be aware that I am an endurance athlete, having completed countless events including marathons, two full Ironmans, cycling the Tour de France route as well as cycling across the United States. Running and biking have been a great source of pride and joy in my life, and now I am thrilled to be given the opportunity to give something back through what I love to do.

The Boston marathon is one of the most famous 26.2-mile races in the United States. If you are not familiar with the race, it is one of the hardest races to qualify for due to the high demand for entry. The Lance Armstrong Foundation has granted me one of their coveted entry slots and in return, I have agreed to help raise money for their cause. I would greatly appreciate your support in my run by helping those who are dedicated to eradicating cancer.

The Lance Armstrong Foundation has set-up a website where you can make donations toward my goal. Any support you can provide would be greatly appreciated. The website is:

<http://www.livestrong.org/grassroots2008/gregland>

Thank you in advance for all of your help, and it is my sincerest hope that in the very near future no money will need to be raised to find a cure for this disease.

* Sandra Barnhardt, member of first Bucks County Community College graduating class of 1967 and retiree from BCCC in 2000, has designed a unique exercise program for the benefit of the senior population in Central PA. Now residing in Mifflintown, PA her classes are conducted in Juniata County and Snyder County. Her dream is to donate her program to BCCC for the benefit of the faculty, staff and students through Continuing Education.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.angelfire.com/pa5/sandrabeeman/index.html>

* Bonnie in Pennsylvania:

Your newsletters are all informative and interesting to read. I wanted to ask if you would list something fun, in that I thought some of your readers may be interested:

A Country Rockin' Band "Mudcat Moan" will be performing . . . and offering line dance lessons by Instructor Harry of "Country Dancing Feet." So come out and learn something new!

The music is what you hear on 92.5 WXTU today. You can see view a list of songs and pics listed on this website:

<http://www.mudcatmoan.com>

Everyone who attends has a wonderful time dancing and listening to the music.

Mudcat Moan

February 28, 2008

7 p.m. until 12:00 a.m.

Line dance lessons start at 7 p.m.

31 E. Cleveland Avenue, Morrisville, PA 19067

We will provide soda, ice tea, water, ice and snacks available with admission; \$7 per person. Anything else you must supply yourself.

Any other information or to get on our mailing list, email: mudcatmoan@gmail.com.

For tickets, call 267.987.5433.

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3. Proper grammar

Teacher: Millie, give me a sentence starting with "I."

Millie: I is . . .

Teacher: No, Millie. Always say, "I am."

Millie: All right. "I am the ninth letter of the alphabet."

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4. Reviews

A. THE DIVING BELL AND THE BUTTERFLY is a biopic based on the best-selling memoir of the same name . . . it is about the world-renowned editor of France's ELLE magazine, who suffered a stroke and was paralyzed at the age of 43 . . . by blinking one eye and with the assistance of several dedicated helpers, he manages to communicate with the outside world . . . his story is both amazing and heartbreaking, and the cinematography is breathtaking . . . don't be alarmed if the opening scenes seem to be fuzzy; they are intentionally done that way . . . this film might be considered by some to be depressing . . . I see it more as thought-provoking, in that it got me thinking about how I would handle a similar situation . . . rated PG-13.

B. NO RESERVATIONS is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #567 follows:

Remakes of films are rarely as good as the originals . . . an exception is NO RESERVATIONS, a romantic comedy based on a German film (MOSTLY MARTHA) . . . I enjoyed both.

This latter version is the tale of an uptight chef in New York City whose life is turned upside down when her sister dies . . . when faced with having to raise her niece, she is forced to learn that there's more to life than just what takes place in the kitchen . . . Catherine Zeta-Jones and Aaron Eckhart make for a winning combination as the two leading characters, aided by Abigail Breslin (so fine in LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE) as the child who also must be worked into their lives.

The accompanying soundtrack is great, which is no surprise considering it was scored by Philip Glass . . . and much of his music is in it, too . . . rated PG, and it is truly a flick that everybody in the family will like.

C. I hadn't known too much about David Novak, chairman and CEO of Yum! Brands, the home to KFC, Pizza Hut, Taco Bell, Long John Silver's, and A&W All American Food . . . that's no longer the case, though, since I've devoured THE EDUCATION OF AN ACCIDENTAL CEO (see also Sections 2, 10 and 11), the inspirational book he wrote with John Boswell.

Almost every page had an idea that could be implemented not just in the food industry, but in my teaching and/or in just about any other walk of life . . . as Novak notes:

* When I read business books or motivational books I find that if there is one thing I can take away with me, and more important, if it is something that stays with me, then it is well worth the price of admission. Obviously, that "one thing" differs from person to person, but if there is anything I have said within these pages that helps you define your dreams and then go after them, then it is well worth the effort it has taken to write this book and see it through publication. Whatever field you have chosen, whatever your aspirations may be, and however you choose to make them come true, I hope one day you achieve more than you can even imagine.

My problem, and it's a nice one to have I must admit, is that I took away many ideas . . . I regret that I can't share them all with you, but to cite just two:

* I fancied myself a writer, but under Tom I would rewrite test-market analyses six or seven times until I learned how to put forth a recommendation, explain the rationale for that recommendation, and summarize it all in a single page. I try to force myself to use this same discipline today. Limiting myself to a single page not only helps concentrate my mind, it almost guarantees clarity.

* The second thing I learned is that all the answers are in the building. Every company is filled with experts. If you want to learn the company's history, have a meeting with a twenty-five-year veteran. If you want to know what customers are thinking, talk to the people who answer the 800-number calls. If you want to know why the trucks aren't getting out on time, a route salesman who's trucks who's been at the job for a while is likely to know the answer.

THE EDUCATION OF AN ACCIDENTAL CEO had me laughing at spots, too . . . for example, when Novak showed how a floppy rubber chicken often had more value than a gold watch . . . it might not sound possible, but if you read this book, you'll see that it well could be the case where you work too.

D. I've read many of James Michener's books, but for some reason, RECESSONAL had never crossed my path . . . perhaps it had been because of the subject matter; i.e., life in a Florida retirement community.

Yet now that I find myself contemplating such a possibility, I was fortunate to come across a book on tape version of this tale when in my local library . . . though it was written in 1994, I still found it very contemporary based on my visits to several such locales.

RECESSONAL follows the story of a doctor who becomes the manager of the Palms . . . I quickly became interested in his life, as well as in the lives of the memorable characters he serves who have no intention of "going gracefully" . . . the subplot, involving a woman whose life seems over when she is in a terrible accident, was touching . . . that said, I won't tell you any more for fear I'll ruin the joy you'll have in finding out for yourself what happens.

The ending is just right, including this line: "We're all passing--honorably--away" . . . it was delivered with eloquence by Len Cariou, who did a marvelous job with the entire narration.

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5. TV alert

A. MODERN MARVELS profiles George Washington Carver, the 20th century scientist who developed more than 300 products with the surprisingly versatile peanut . . . even more surprising is the fact that never sought a profit from his discoveries . . . Wednesday at 9 p.m. on HISTORY; repeated at midnight.

B. CELENE DION: THAT'S JUST THE WOMAN IN ME features the singer in an hourlong concert that has her make time for two duets, one with Josh Groban and the other with Black Eyed Peas' will.i.am . . . Friday at 9 p.m. on CBS.

C. In Part 1 of a two-part season finale, Monk is framed for murder and then goes on the run . . . this tribute to THE FUGITIVE even features a six-fingered killer (instead of the other show's one-armed man) . . . Friday at 9 p.m. on MONK on USA; part 2 runs next Friday, 2/15, at the same time and on the same station.

D. Tired of the snow and cold weather? Join the crowd and, also, make sure to watch SPORTS ILLUSTRATED SWIMSUIT 2008, the look at the annual SI photo shoot . . . Saturday at 11 p.m. on TNT.

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6. To be young again

Two elderly gentlemen from a retirement center were sitting on a bench under a tree when one turns to the other and says: "Slim, I'm 83 years old now and, I'm just full of aches and pains. I know you're about my age. How do you feel?"

Slim says, "I feel just like a newborn baby."

"Really? Like a newborn baby?"

"Yep. No hair, no teeth, and I think I just wet my pants."

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7. Websites

A. If you are a high school student (or know of one) that is trying to find the perfect college, please click:

<http://www.cappex.com>

Instead of searching for colleges that you want to go to, cappex.com gives information on colleges that want you. In addition, there's a FREE option to apply for scholarships.

B. If you would like to put a smile on your face, please click here for an upbeat video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=omlrLgQO9O0&eurl>

Put your sound on and make sure you're alone because you'll most probably want to sing along!

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blaineworld.net>

I'll keep sending BLAINESWORLD to your present email address on record, but did you know that I can send a second or even third copy of this missive to some other address; e.g., work or home . . . should you want to take advantage of this option, just go to Newsletter on the left and then Subscribe.

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8. Computer tip

NEVER select the "Remember Me" option when entering a password on a public computer; e.g., in checking your mail from a library, at a Kinko's, etc. . . . doing so will enable all those following to get into your account(s).

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9. Wash and curl

A woman stuck her head into a hair salon and asked, "How long before I can get a wash and curl?"

The beautician looked around the salon full of customers and said, "About two hours." The woman left.

A few days later, the same woman stuck her head in the door and asked, "How long before I can get a wash and curl?" The beautician looked around at the salon and said, "About three hours." The woman left.

A week later, the same woman stuck her head in the salon and asked, "How long before I can get a wash and curl?" The beautician looked around the salon and said, "About an hour and a half." The woman left.

The beautician turned to her girlfriend and said, "Hey Juanita, do me a favor. Follow that woman and see where she goes. She keeps asking how long she has to wait for a wash and curl, but then she doesn't ever come back."

A little while later, Juanita returned to the salon, laughing hysterically. The beautician asked, "So, where does that woman go when she leaves?"

Juanita looked up, wiped the tears from her eyes and said, "Your man's house!"

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10. A quote I like

All of us are going to experience highs and lows on the emotional bell curve, but the truth lies somewhere in the middle. So don't believe your press notices, especially if they say you just came in first or last.--David Novak, chairman & CEO of YUM! Brands, in THE EDUCATION OF AN ACCIDENTAL CEO (see also Sections 2, 4C and 11)--a book he wrote with John Boswell

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11. Thought for the day

I REALLY liked THE EDUCATION OF AN ACCIDENTAL CEO (see also Sections 2, 4C and 10) by David Novak with John Boswell, as evidenced by the fact that this is now the fourth time that I have cited it in this week's newsletter:

I asked him [Magic Johnson] if he had always been a superstar, if he was always that much better than everyone else growing up.

"You know," Magic said, "I learned a lot back when I was in the junior leagues. My team would win, like, eighty to twenty every time, and I would score maybe seventy of those points. But at the end of the game, everyone was always angry. Not just the other team, but my teammates and their parents. I monopolized the ball so much that nobody else got to shoot, so no one was having any fun.

"I realized that I was going to have to get more people involved or no one was ever going to like me. That was when I decided I was going to learn how to become a great passer. We still won eighty to twenty, but I'd only score maybe twenty points and the rest of the team would score the rest. The parents liked me, my teammates were happy, everyone was working together. I had learned how to go from 'me' to 'we.'

"Later," Magic continued, "when I got to the Lakers, I told my teammate Byron Scott that I was going to help take him to another level, that he was going to make the All-Star team, and he did. I told Kareem Abdul-Jabbar that he was going to score more points than anyone in NBA history because I was going to throw him the passes that would get him there. When Kareem broke the record in 1984 by scoring point number 31,420, the first thing he did was come over and give me a hug and tell me, 'I owe this to you.'"

That really drove home to me this whole idea of synergy, of one plus one equaling three. If everyone knew his role and fulfilled it to the best of his abilities, then the whole would invariably be greater than the sum of its parts.

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12. Advance planning department

A. Be my guest when I present on the following topic: "Positioning: How to Differentiate Yourself From the Competition" . . . the rescheduled date is Tuesday, Feb. 19, at 6:30 p.m. in Room Penn 410 at Bucks County Community College.

ADDED BONUS:

By attending, you'll learn the difference between a left-handed and a right-handed pencil . . . I kid you NOT!

The presentation is FREE . . . however, please email me to let me know if you'll be coming so I can notify you if there's any change of plans.

B. Natalie in Pennsylvania with news about the BCCC Women's Center:
* On Wednesday, February 20, there will be a screening of "Standing on my Sisters' Shoulders," the award-winning documentary about women during the civil-rights movement in Mississippi, including a presentation by producer Joan Sadoff and Beneath Brown, an eyewitness to the period at 11 a.m. in the Library Auditorium, Newtown campus.

Also taking place at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 26, at the Lower Bucks Campus, 1304 Veterans Highway/New Rodgers Rd., Bristol, and at 12:30 p.m. Thursday, February 28, at the Upper Bucks Campus, One Hillendale Dr., Perkasie. FREE to all.

* Dr. Emil Matarese will be speaking on "The Power To End Stroke." This will take place on Tuesday, February 26, from 12:30 – 1:30 p.m. in Founders 141 at the main Newtown campus.

According to Dr. Matarese, "This will be a presentation on the high risk of stroke that faces all African-Americans, regardless of their age. Between the ages of 35-54, an African-American male has a four times greater risk of stroke when compared to a white male. Even young women are at risk, especially if they smoke or take birth control pills. We must learn to recognize the signs of stroke so that emergency treatment can be offered in an attempt to reverse the devastation of this disease."

C. Lorraine in New Jersey:

On February 29, , The NJ Small Business Development Center(SBDC) at the College of New Jersey will host BOOMERS and BEYOND: Work Matters Over 60. Co-sponsored by the Mercer County Office on Aging, Experience Works, Senior Living Institute, and the Mercer County Office for the Disabled, the program will include networking and panel discussions showcasing the turnabout of retirement for economic benefits.

This is a great opportunity for us to showcase not only our center's efforts in developing a Center of Learning for Senior Entrepreneurs but also all the phenomenal resource programs available for seniors and employers", shares Lorraine Allen, SBDC Regional Director.

The morning program will include a panel discussion of resource providers as well as a panel discussion of seniors working it . . . both in companies they started after 60 or employment they have sustained or secured. seniors interested in business, businesses interested in seniors and service providers for both seniors and business should attend for networking.

A SPECIAL RECOGNITION Award will be given to East Windsor's Lisa Gable, LG Accessories, 85, Featured in Inc's "8 Over 80", FoxNews New Jersey for Outstanding Older Worker Award Winner by Experience Works, Washington, DC.

To register, please contact: sbdc@tcnj.edu; 609-771-2947 or click: <http://www.tcnj.edu/sbdc>

D. FREE CONTEST GIVEAWAY:

Due to the popularity of past contests, I'd again like to extend an invitation to some lucky reader(s) to be my guest at the "Meet the Author" Business Seminar on March 12, 2008 at 8:30 a.m. in the Library Auditorium at Bucks County Community College, Newtown, PA.

Best-selling author Lisa Ford is the featured speaker of the 5th annual "Meet the Author" Business Seminar at Bucks County Community College. Her presentation, Exceptional Customer Service--Going Beyond Your Good Service to Exceed the Customer's Expectation, is based on Lisa's best-selling video training program. At this seminar, you will discover how to:

- * create a positive first--and lasting--impression on customers;

- * improve your communication skills so you can stay in touch with your customers;

- * make sure that new technology gives customers what they need;

* find new ways to keep your existing customers, while recruiting new ones; and

* eliminate the gap between current and world-class service. For more information about Lisa, visit her website:

<http://www.lisaford.com/index.html>

To be eligible for the FREE TICKETS, submit your name by February 25 via email to my assistant: hughesbr@bucks.edu . . . in the subject line, put these words: FREE TICKETS . . . in the body of your email, include this information: your name, how many tickets you would want (1 or 2), email address, snail mail address, and phone number . . . I'll then let you know if you're a winner on or before March 5.

Should you want to guarantee a seat or have your company purchase ticket(s) for you, here's the information that you will need:

Individual tickets: \$50 or take advantage of a \$495 corporate sponsorship and receive 10 tickets, reserved seating and the opportunity to promote your organization.

To reserve your seats today for this engaging seminar, call 215.968.8224 or to order tickets safely and securely online, please click:

<https://www.bucks.edu/meettheauthor.php>

PS. Here's hope that you have a Happy Valentine's Day and that you're as lucky as I am to be able to celebrate it with a loved one . . . also, please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers . . . peace resumes in Israel . . . and that you make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD
#592
2.4.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I met friends for dinner on Saturday at YaYa Noodles (609.921.8551) in Skillman, NJ . . . as always, the food there is quite good . . . however, the service is a whole different matter . . . it's adequate at best, and on this night, the place seemed to be too crowded for the diners on hand . . . so two different items we ordered did not come out as we had requested them.

From there, we all went to the Princeton Center for Yoga & Health (609.924.7294)--also in Skillman . . . we saw David Brahinsky & Friends in the Center's annual winter concert: "Canadian Spirits," which featured the songs of Leonard Cohen, Joni Mitchell and Stan Rogers . . . it was perhaps the best show I've ever had the pleasure of seeing David perform in, in part because I am a big fan of Cohen.

However, what really made the evening for us was the fact that Sarah Houtz handled many of the vocals . . . she is a singer, originally trained in opera, that I've been following for several years . . . she keeps getting better, too.

For more information, please click:
<http://switchedmusic.com/>

B. On Sunday, we went with other friends to an Introduction to Hypnosis workshop . . . it was presented by Gary Gewant, and we found it both engaging and informative . . . Gary even hypnotized all those in attendance . . . for more information, please click:<http://hyp4life.com/>

I left thinking that this well might be something that I'll want to pursue in my next life; i.e., becoming a certified hypnotherapist after retirement next year from my teaching at Bucks County Community College.

We then had dinner at The Cafe Metro in Denville, NJ . . . this is an attractive restaurant that serves up a variety of cuisines with a unique flare for organic and vegetarian fare . . . I liked my chicken with peanut sauce, and Cynthia enjoyed her scallops with a coconut coating . . . only our desserts were a bit disappointing; we probably should have ordered the vegan carrot cake that our friends both said was excellent.

For more information, please click:
<http://www.thecafemetro.com/>

C. Mark Sfirri, professor and coordinator of the Fine Woodworking Program at Bucks, was recently profiled in THE COUNTY PRESS . . . to read more about my talented colleague's background, please click:
http://www.countypressonline.com/WebApp/appmanager/JRC/Weekly?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=pg_wk_article&r21.pgpath=/CPO/Entertainment&r21.content=/CPO/Entertainment/ContentTab_Feature_1503407

D. MR. CURIOUS HERE:

Do any readers have experience with having the ducts cleaned in their homes? If so, is it something that should be done? How often? And might you have any recommendations as to firms in New Jersey?

I recently heard from somebody that she got ripped off by a contractor who did this work in her home, so I'm trying to avoid a similar experience.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Ni'asia Boatwright--patient care coordinator for Advanced Eyecare & Vision Gallery in Hillsborough, NJ.

She assists Dr. Tarbell, my fine optometrist, in many different ways . . . in doing so, I have always been impressed with Ni'asia's professionalism, as well as by her cheerfulness.

I'm not a big fan of going to any doctor, though that said, it is something that I realize I must do . . . Ni'asia makes my yearly visits more palatable than they might be otherwise.

I should add that all the others in Dr. Tarbell's office are equally helpful . . . should you want more information about the practice, please click:
<http://www.eyecare-nj.com/>

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2. FYI

I've mentioned before that if your computer isn't working, sometimes the best approach is to unplug everything . . . then walk away from the problem and come back to it after a period of time, say at least 15 minutes . . . the same applies to phones and other electrical appliances.

This approach worked for me recently . . . all my Uniden phones stopped working . . . it happened at exactly the same time and place (ordinarily a tip-off that something isn't right) . . . I tried a number of approaches to no avail . . . then, just before I was going to install a new system, I unplugged all the wires leading into the phone, and I also unplugged the wire into the wall . . . after waiting some 30 minutes, I tried my old system . . . and sure enough, it worked!

FYI, part 2

* Maddie in Maine:

It's always so nice to receive your wonderful online newsletter. I hope you and Cynthia are doing well. I just thought I would share with you that my daughter also trained with Team in Training for very much the same reasons and has successfully run several triathlons since. And, of course, did her fair share in raising funds for a very worthy cause.

Congratulations to Yael for her efforts. I wish her all the best of luck.

* Jerry in Pennsylvania:

When I had my 50 year old physical exam, My doctor told me that it would be a good idea to have a colonoscopy and gave me a referral. I did not do anything with it until I found out that my dad, age 78, was having one done. I figured if my dad could do it, then I should too. I mean if there was something wrong, they could start treatment right away. One person explained it like this, if there is something wrong and you don't know, and don't treat it, then you can DIE.

The day before the exam was the worst. Starting at 5 p.m., I drank this mixture of powder and juice, and I took four laxative tablets. Not to be disgusting, but I spent hours in the bathroom. I was sore and tired. The day before the procedure is also a liquid only diet, so by the day of the exam, I was tired, drained and of course, very nervous. I did have one cup of coffee the day of the procedure and admitting this cost me an extra hour wait. You are NOT allowed to eat or drink anything the day of the procedure. You are also not allowed to drive that day, so you need to arrange a ride to and from.

I arrived at the procedure on time and I answered many questions to the receptionist and signed a few forms, and of course, gave

her the referral and my insurance card. She made me take off my jewelry, and I put it securely in my pocket. I then waited in the lobby until my name was called.

Another nurse took me to a dressing room, where I got naked and put on this weird gown that I could not tie it in the back. I then answered many questions in which I admitted to the coffee thing. This made me popular, and I was told I needed to wait an extra hour. They nicknamed me the "coffee guy." Many people walked by including the doctor and said, "Oh, you are the coffee guy. Finally, it was my turn, and they wheeled me in.

I cannot believe I trusted so many strange people. I did not know these people. I did not know what medical school this doctor went to or how he did in school. But yet, I trusted these people to do such an invasive procedure. The meds put me to sleep, and I was out like a light. I woke up a bit groggy a few minutes later in another room and finally heard my diagnosis. My colon is OK, but I need to eat more fiber. I figured that was good news.

Before I left the procedure, they gave me apple juice and took my blood pressure. Mine was very high, so they would not let me leave. This made me more nervous; hence, my BP did not come down. Finally, the decision to let me go was given, but only if I went straight to my personal doctor, which I did. My driver was nice enough to do that, and by the time I arrived at his office, my BP had stabled to a more reasonable level. Thank G-d. So I survived. My next one should be done in 5 years, and I'll be sure to comply to that timetable.

I urge you to get this done if you are 50. I must admit the whole thing is really annoying, A REAL PAIN IN THE YOU KNOW WHAT from the day before and the day of. It is now the day after, and I am basically back to normal. Starting on Monday, I will try to eat more fruit and vegetables and salads.

OFFERS AND/OR REQUESTS FROM READERS:

* Marianne in Pennsylvania:

For Sale:

Completely renovated house with three bedrooms, two full baths and a large backyard. Newly carpeted large master suite with walk-in closet, newly refinished hardwood floors on the first floor, all new eat-in kitchen, freshly painted throughout, new deck, detached garage, central air, newly paved driveway, all new plumbing and electric, near shopping areas, in Upper Moreland School District. Listed at \$287,000. Immediate availability. Contact Marianne at kepclan@comcast.net or 215.343.4072

* Sam in New Jersey:

My new website is up at:

<http://www.nj-traffic-ticket.com/index.htm>

It takes a folksy approach to marketing.

MY TWO CENTS:

Sam's your man if you need help with any New Jersey traffic or speeding ticket you'll ever get . . . I've known him since . . . well, let's just say for a lot of years . . . and he knows this particular field as well as anybody I know.

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3. The power of nonverbal communication

The Pope and Hillary Rodham Clinton are on the same stage in front of a huge crowd.

"Her Majesty" and His Holiness, however, have seen it all before, so to make it a little more interesting, the senator says to the Pope, "Did you know that with just one little wave of my hand I can make every Democrat in the crowd go wild?" He doubts it, so she shows him. Sure enough, the wave elicits rapture and cheering from every Democrat in the crowd. Gradually, the cheering subsides.

The Pope, not wanting to be out done by such a level of arrogance, considers what he could do. "That was impressive. But did you know that with just one little wave of MY hand I can make EVERY person in the crowd go crazy with joy? This joy will not be a momentary display like that of your subjects, but will go deep into their hearts, and they will forever speak of this day and rejoice." The senator seriously doubts this, and says so. "One little wave of your hand

and all people will rejoice forever? Show me."

So the Pope slaps her.

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4. Reviews

A. If you missed MICHAEL CLAYTON the first time it was in the theaters, you now again have the chance to catch it . . . you'll be captivated by this thriller about a "fixer" for a high-powered law firm whose job is to take care of situations that nobody else wants to handle . . . George Clooney, Tilda Swinton and Tom Wilkinson all acted up a storm and deservedly received Oscar nominations . . . I also liked the role of Sydney Pollack in one of the supporting roles . . . rated R.

B. THE BRAVE ONE is now out in DVD format . . . my review from BLAINESWORLD #572 follows:

I've seen many other films with a theme similar to the one in THE BRAVE ONE; i.e., wherein a person seeks vengeance and takes the law into his or her hands (think, most notably, DEATH WISH) . . . yet somehow THE BRAVE ONE maintained my interest from start to end, especially because of the excellent acting by Jodie Foster as the wronged woman and Terrence Howard as the detective who seeks to find the anonymous vigilante . . . though I had problems with the moral ambiguity of the ending, I still recommend the film to anybody seeking a well-done thriller . . . rated R.

C. I think I've read everything by Sandra Brown (i.e., since she turned away from her earlier career as an author of romance novels) and have always admired how she manages to come up with different story ideas . . . more importantly, every book just doesn't seem to be a rehash of a previous effort--and that's something I very much appreciate in an author.

Her latest effort, PLAY DIRTY, is the story of a disgraced pro football quarterback who has spent the past five years in jail because he bet on a game . . . when he gets out, has no prospects until he comes across a wealthy couple who want him to be the father of the child they can't have on their own.

While the plot might sound farfetched, Brown somehow manages to pull it together into a suspenseful novel that grabbed my attention from the beginning . . . and maintained it until the very suspenseful ending . . . along the way, she threw in enough football action that gave the impression that she knew what she was talking about with respect to that sport.

In addition, a compelling love story added to my enjoyment of this novel.

There were also many passages that contained realistic dialogue that helped move the book along . . . for example:

* "A piece of advice, Griff. During a business negotiation, once you've won a point, drop it. Don't mention it again. I've already conceded that you could keep the initial hundred thousand."

* "You know from the day you start that it can't last forever," he said. "Even if you go all the way to the pros, it's short term. Thirty is old. Thirty-five is ancient. And that's if you escape serious injury. You're never more than one play away from the end of your career. Or even the end of your life. Each time the ball is snapped, it's a tempt of fate."

And then there was this tidbit of suspenseful writing:

* Griff hadn't heard the approach of Speakman's chair and was startled to find him so close. Prison would do that to you, too. Make you jumpy. Linemen topping three hundred pounds used to charge at him bent on inflicting injury and pain, teeth bared behind their face guards, eyes slitted with malice. He'd been prepared for them and was conditioned to take their abuse.

You'll like PLAY DIRTY and will have difficulty putting it down . . . also, it will leave you anxiously awaiting the publication of Brown's next book.

D. Heard CITY OF LIGHTS by Lauren Belfer, a first novel about life in Buffalo, New York, in 1901 . . . it is the story of a headmistress for the Macaulay School for Girls who becomes entangled in the aftermath of a murder at the nearby power plant.

I've never been to Buffalo, but this book made me feel like I knew what it must have been like living there around the turn of the century . . . Belfer also gave me a feel for how society changed with the development of hydroelectric power.

What I enjoyed most was the introduction of President Cleveland into the action . . . he seemed so real that I kept comparing him to President Clinton for reasons that I won't reveal here for fear of ruining a key subplot.

CITY OF LIGHTS was different than most books I typically read . . . my only regret is that it seems Belfer wrote no other novel since then . . . what a shame!

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5. TV alert

A. February 1 marks the beginning of 31 days of Oscar-winning movies on TCM . . . for the complete schedule, please click:
http://i.cnn.net/v5cache/TCM/2008/31days/documents/31days_2008schedule.pdf

B. One of my favorites comedies, THE NEW ADVENTURES OF OLD CHRISTIE, begins its third season on CBS . . . Mondays at 9:30 p.m. on CBS . . . look for a March episode, in which Julie Louis-Dreyfus is fixed up with a much younger man named Timmy . . . "I didn't know whether to kiss him or smell his head. I did both," she admits.

C. Brooke Shields stars in LIPSTICK JUNGLE, a new series about gal pals written by Candace Bushnell (who was also handled similar responsibilities for SEX AND THE CITY) . . . Lorraine Bracco is also in the cast, playing a "harridan . . . with hideous and perfect menace," according to THE WALL STREET JOURNAL . . . it airs on Thursdays at 10 p.m. on NBC.

D. BERNARD AND DORIS is a fictionalized account of the 1987-93 relationship between heiress Doris Duke and the recipient of her fortune, butler Bernard Lafferty . . . according to TV GUIDE, " . . . there's plenty of emotional truth in the go-for-broke performances of Susan Sarandon and Ralph Fiennes" . . . Saturday at 8 p.m. on HBO.

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6. Diversity

The local news station was interviewing an 84-year-old lady because she had just gotten married--for the fourth time.

The interviewer asked her questions about her life, about what it felt like to be marrying again at 84, and then about her new husband's occupation.

"He's a funeral director," she answered.

"Interesting," the newsman thought.

He then asked her if she wouldn't mind telling him a little about her first three husbands and what they did for a living.

She paused for a few moments, needing time to reflect on all those years. After a short time, a smile came to her face and she answered proudly, explaining that she first married a banker when she was in her early 20s, then a circus ringmaster when in her 40s, later on a preacher when in her 60s, and now, in her 80s, a funeral director.

The interviewer looked at her, quite astonished, and asked why she had married four men with such diverse careers.

"Easy, son," she smiled. "I married one for the money, two for the show, three to get ready, and four to go!"

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7. Websites

A. Sue in Pennsylvania:

You might enjoy this:

<http://www.TheYearsAreShort.com>

In only 3 minutes, it made me realize a few things and actually changed my day. I hope it does the same for you.

B. In case you missed the commercials on the Super Bowl, please click:

<http://sports.aol.com/nfl/superbowlads>

Overall, I enjoyed most of them--and found several quite funny . . . feel free to share your reaction(s).

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blaineworld.net>

In case you've ever wondered what I do with the names of subscribers, please click Newsletter to the left of the homepage and then Privacy Statement.

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8. Computer tip

To make your computer run better, download Startup Cop Pro 3 at:

<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2177188,00.asp>

You can easily disable any program that starts when Windows boots, or specify exactly when a program should be launched rather than allowing Windows to randomly start it. In addition, it notifies you when programs attempt to add themselves to the startup process and can block them from doing so.

There's a very reasonable fee of \$7.97 to download, but if you're like me and you subscribe to the [pcmag.com](http://www.pcmag.com) Utility Library, there's no charge!

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9. You know you're a Floridian if . . . , Part 2 of 2

Sweet tea can be served at any meal.

An alligator once walked through your neighborhood.

You smirk when a game show's "Grand Prize" is a trip or cruise to Florida

You measure distance in minutes.

You have a drawer full of bathing suits and one sweatshirt.

You get annoyed at the tourists who feed seagulls.

All the local festivals are named after a fruit.

A mountain is any hill 100 feet above sea level.

You think everyone from a bigger city has a northern accent.

You know the four seasons really are: almost summer, summer, not summer but really hot, and February.

It's not soda, cola or pop. It's coke, regardless of brand or flavor, "What kinda coke you want?"

Anything under 95 is just warm.

You've hosted a hurricane party.

You go to a theme park for an afternoon and know when to get on the best rides. (Space Mountain during the Electric Light Parade!)

You understand the futility of exterminating cockroaches.

You can pronounce Okeechobee, Kissimmee, Ichnatucknee, and Withlacoochee

You understand why it's better to have a friend with a boat than have a boat yourself.

Bumper stickers on the pickup in front of you include: various fish, NRA, Nascar, and Go Gators.

You were 5 before you realized they made houses without pools.

You were 25 when you first met someone who couldn't swim.

You get angry when people say "Florida isn't really part of the SOUTH."

You've worn shorts and used the A/C on Christmas.

You know what the "stingray shuffle" is and why it's important!

You recognize Miami-Dade as "Northern Cuba".

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10. A quote I like

Children need models rather than critics.--Joseph Joubert (1754-1824), French philosopher

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11. Thought for the day

Colored pills

A row of bottles on my shelf
Caused me to analyze myself.

One yellow pill I have to pop
Goes to my heart so it won't stop.

A little white one that I take
Goes to my hands so they won't shake.

The blue ones that I use a lot
Tell me I'm happy when I'm not.

The purple pill goes to my brain
And tells me that I have no pain.

The capsules tell me not to wheeze
Or cough or choke or even sneeze.

The red ones, smallest of them all
Go to my blood so I won't fall.

The orange ones, very big and bright
Prevent my leg cramps in the night.

Such an array of brilliant pills
Helping to cure all kinds of ills.

But what I'd really like to know . . .
Is what tells each one where to go!

Author unknown
(if you know who wrote this and/or the source, please let me know)

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12. Advance planning department

A. Be my guest when I present on "Positioning: How to Differentiate Yourself From the Competition" on Tuesday, Feb. 12, at 6:30 p.m. in Room Penn 410 at Bucks County Community College.

ADDED BONUS:

By attending, you'll learn the difference between a left-handed and a right-handed pencil . . . I kid you NOT!

The presentation is FREE . . . however, please email me to let me know if you'll be coming so I can notify you if there's any change of plans.

B. Natalie in Pennsylvania:

PLAZA SUITE, put on by the Newtown Arts Company, runs from Feb. 14-Feb. 20 at Newtown Movie Theater, Newtown, PA . . . for more information, please click:<http://www.newtownartscompany.com/>

C. Donna in Pennsylvania:

I wanted to mention that my son Sam's band, NEXT IN LINE, is going to be playing at Puck in Doylestown on Feb 17th at 7 p.m. This is an all ages show and tickets are \$5.00. They can be purchased at the door. The genre is pop-rock.

You can listen to the band at :<http://www.myspace.com/nextinlinepa>

They'll also be playing Philafunk on March 9th in West Philly.

D. Carol in Pennsylvania:

My nephew, Bennett Dunn, is starring as Buddy Holly at the Media Theater in Delaware County, PA from March 3-30. He was in this role previously about 4 years ago on a 9 month tour across the USA.

For more information, please call 610.891.0100 or click:

http://www.mediatheatre.org_

PS. Gung Hay Fat Choy (may prosperity be with you) to all my friends who will be celebrating the Chinese New Year--the Year of the Rat--beginning on Thursday . . . on the Chinese calendar, this marks year 4706 . . . methinks that you could win a bet with most any Chinese man or woman if you asked him or her to name that date.

For more information about this holiday and/or to send somebody a New Year card, please click:

http://www.jackiechankids.com/files/Chinese_New_Year_Main.htm

Also, please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . and make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#591

1.28.2008

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-

1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I had fun at my teacher union's holiday party this past Saturday . . . first, we had dinner at Concerto Fusion Restaurant (215.428.2899) in Morrisville, PA.

That's the two of us on the left, joined by our good friend Linda Kanner on the right:



If you haven't been to this eatery yet, do check it out . . . it is very attractive, and the food is always great.

After a choice of soups, everybody was given a heaping plate of appetizers . . . included was a most unusual and tasty crab ragoon, wonton-wrapped cream cheese and crab meat served with coconut dressing . . . there was a choice

of four entrees . . . I chose the sesame chicken, while Cynthia had Bangkok basic shrimp with fresh mushrooms and asparagus . . . we enjoyed both these dishes, but best of all was the dessert: a trio of three different flavors of creme brulee . . . you MUST try this!

Man Wong, our host and the owner of the restaurant, added to our enjoyment of the evening by being there to personally greet us.

From there, we went down the street to see the Actors' Net production of GOODBYE CHARLIE at the Heritage Center, also in Morrisville.

This is a funny comedy, featuring a talented cast . . . Susan Fowler and Ken Ammerman had the leading roles, and Pam Linkin had us laughing in a small but key supporting role.

You can still catch the production, in that it runs through Feb. 3 . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.actorsnetbucks.org>

On Sunday, we went to visit a Del Webb retirement community in Manchester, NJ . . . we were very impressed with the model homes we saw, as well as by the whole Del Webb concept . . . Patty Skrocki, our sales associate, showed us around and answered all our questions, and we were most appreciative of her professionalism . . . in addition, we appreciated the efforts of Nancy Horton in making all the arrangements . . . should you want to check it out for yourself, call Nancy at 908.766.7050, ext. 208; email: nancy.horton@pulte.com . . . you'll even get a \$25 gas card just for visiting.

That said, we were not too enamored with the area . . . I think we were spoiled by the time I lived in Washington Crossing, PA and are probably looking for something similar.

MR. CURIOUS HERE:

Are we missing something about Manchester; i.e. is it nicer than our first impression? If you are familiar with the locale, would you recommend it as a place to live? And as always, keep us in mind for other 55 and over retirement communities--especially in North and/or South Carolina.

B. My classes at Bucks have gotten off to a fine start . . . as always, I require many of my students to read THE WALL STREET JOURNAL . . . it is a most informative publication that covers not only the financial markets, but also marketing, personal finance, etc. . . . in fact, as a result of reading THE JOURNAL, I no longer feel the need so read any business and/or other type magazine.

If you'd like to subscribe, I can get you a reduced rate educational subscription that includes FREE access to the online version . . . all you need to be is a student or staffer at Bucks or any other school . . . or know of somebody who is; e.g., you could have them subscribe for you.

Rates are as follows: 15 weeks, \$29.95; 26 weeks, \$49.95; and 52 weeks, \$99 . . . to subscribe, send an email to my assistant: hughesbr@bucks.edu . . . in the subject line, put down JOURNAL

SUBSCRIPTION . . . indicate how many weeks you want, plus your full name, address, phone number, and email address.

C. Please continue to send me mistakes that you pick up when reading this missive . . . typos are usually my fault, though sometimes they may happen because I've cut and pasted something that I received from another source--but that's still no excuse.

Other times, they may involve a link that was working when I tried it out (something I always try to do) . . . but if a lot of other folks try to then go there, you may not be able to get it to work when you try it initially; do try again in a few hours if that be the case . . . or the person who put it up may have taken it down, which often happens with stuff on youtube.com . . . still another possibility: the link may have been slightly changed . . . such was the case, I believe, with the following that I sent out last week:

How to handle irritating seatmates

If you are sitting next to someone who irritates you on a plane or train, follow these instructions:

1. Quietly and calmly open up your laptop case.
2. Remove your laptop.
3. Start up .
4. Make sure the guy who is annoying you can see the screen.
5. Close your eyes and tilt your head up to the sky like in prayer.
6. Then hit this link:

<http://boortz.com/mp3/archive/countdown.swf>

D. BEST WISHES to former congressman and Bucks County commissioner Michael Fitzpatrick who recently announced he will run this year for the state representative seat held by Democrat Chris King, D-142.

I'm hopeful that he gets through the April 22 primary and then is successful in the November 4 general election. He's always provided outstanding service to the residents of Bucks County (and to the citizens of the country when he served in the House of Representatives).

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Bev Stratton--office manager for Tony Loscalzo (215.968.5500).

Tony is the guy who has handled our wills and, also, helped us with estate planning . . . I've been impressed by his work, but also by Bev's role in the whole process . . . she helps set appointments, gets questions into Tony and then gets back to me with the responses, etc. . . . she is both extremely friendly and helpful.

It is a pleasure dealing with Tony and his office staff, which leads me to recognize the efforts of Karen Baranowski . . . she also works in the office, ably handling most of the bookkeeping responsibilities.

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2. FYI

Michael Gates Gill in HOW STARBUCKS SAVED MY LIFE (see also Sections 4C, 10 and 11), wrote about the following technique that perhaps we should all apply to our daily lives, too:

Not long after, I remembered how at J. Walter Thompson they had told me not to send "praise memos" because such positive missives could make them liable to a lawsuit if we had to fire the person.

In fact, once we had a special meeting at the corporation, in which the head of Personnel told us, "You will have to fire many people, so don't commit to them in print." We were encouraged to be as stingy as possible with any praise-especially any written positive comments. "They could come back to haunt us," the Personnel director intoned.

Now, at Starbucks I could freely, even sappily express how happy I was, and how much appreciated my Partners, I started writing notes to other Partners for being so kind and helpful to me. I wrote Kester thanking him for his advice and leadership, and calling him a "great coach." I wrote a note to Bianca, saying her sweet smile meant a lot to me when I saw a long line waiting for me to call drinks and make change. I wrote to Joann telling her how her quiet, patient competence had helped me make it through the experience of doing everything for the first time.

I wrote Crystal, saying, in too few words, how much I appreciated not only her giving me a chance, but also her making sure I then succeeded in the new world I had joined.

FYI, part 2

* Sue in Pennsylvania:

I do actually think of your father occasionally . . . and how his experience changed my life . . . he was a catalyst to helping me quit smoking . . . I have not smoked since reading the book you sent me . . . we are all so much more connected than we realize . . . so many thanks to you and your Dad.

BOOK SUE MENTIONS:

THE EASY WAY TO STOP SMOKING by Allen Carr . . . FREE copies are still available with my compliments . . . if you want one, just send an email to my assistant: hughesbr@bucks.edu and put STOP SMOKING BOOK in subject line . . . in body of email, make sure you include your full name, address and phone number.

* Vicki in Florida:

This [SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION] is one of my all-time favorites . . . that and PAPPILLION . . . I think I've watched SHAWSHANK no less than 20 times. THE GREAT ESCAPE is another good one.

Have I told you lately how much I enjoy your newsletter?

OFFERS AND/OR REQUESTS FROM READERS:

* Jean in Pennsylvania:

My daughter, Yael, is in training for a triathlon that will be held on April 6th, 2008. She has been influenced by someone she met who has leukemia and decided to help raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma benefit. The money

contributed to the Leukemia and Lymphoma fund is 100% deductible. I made my donation on line, as you can. Her site is: <http://www.active.com/donate/tntgla/yaelcanavan>

I am very fortunate to have good health and though I contribute in many ways to programs and issues I believe in, I could not think about preparing for the rigors of such training; granted she is much younger than I am. I do work out 30 to 45 minutes a day and would have to triple my time and energy to do Yael's 90 to 120 minutes. I know she feels strongly about her pledge to compete and bring in monies and she feels that her commitment is another positive direction in her already focused life.

* Milt in Pennsylvania:

Purchase the most unique building in the heart of the New Hope Borough. Owners retiring and moving out of state. Building includes main residence and rental apartment. Residence features great room with 23 ft. ceiling and skylights, 2 bedrooms, 3.5 baths, loft, den, office, remodeled kitchen with stone fireplace and separate dining room. Stone walls and wood floors throughout, three parking spaces, private garden and much more. Building zoned commercial/residential. Price \$625,000 Contact owner for more details and private showing. 215.862.9032.

* Marie in Pennsylvania:

I am sending this email to everyone on my email list to ask if any of you happen to have a personal connection of some sort with the Delaware Canal or know someone who does. I'm writing a book about the Delaware Canal, and I'd like to focus primarily on the humanity of the canal--the people who built, worked, and lived beside the canal. Anybody have a grandparent/great grandparent who was involved in the canal? Anyone know the families who lived beside the canal in the early years or have a historical house on the canal that has documentation about who lived there and what they did? Does anyone know or have photos of people who worked the anthracite coal mines (especially the Lehigh Coal Mine)?

Thanks,
Marie P. Duess
mpduess@comcast.net
v. 215.598.9616; c. 215.378.2205

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3. Poll results

The latest telephone poll taken by the Governors' Offices in Florida, California, New Mexico, Arizona and Texas asked whether people who live in those five states think illegal immigration is a serious problem:

29% of respondents answered: "Yes, it is a serious problem."
71% of respondents answered: "No es una problema seriosa."

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4. Reviews

A. Saw *THE SAVAGES*, a look at a dysfunctional family faced to cope with an estranged father who no longer can take care of himself . . . there's surprisingly some humor in the film, but it is also a touching and realistic look at a situation that many of us either have or will face in the not-too-distant future . . . Laura Linney and Philip Seymour Hoffman are both superb as the pair of siblings on the cusp of middle age, having to make hard decisions on what to do with their dad (Philip Bosco in a moving performance) . . . I wouldn't rush out to see this in the theaters, in large part because of the subject matter, but it definitely is worth catching up to when it comes out on DVD . . . rated R.

B. There's again precious little out with respect to new DVD releases, so let me take this opportunity to have you revisit *CROSSING DELANCEY*--or catch it for the first time if you've never had the pleasure of seeing it previously . . . it is a romantic comedy, starring Amy Irving as a beautiful woman in her early thirties who has had little luck with men . . . so her grandmother, Reizl Bozyk, contacts a matchmaker and she is set up with a local pickle maker (Peter Riegert) . . . I liked all their performances, along with the work as Sylvia Miles as the matchmaker and Jerrold Krabbe as an egotistical poet/writer . . . the accompanying soundtrack is also delightful . . . no rating, but I believe it would be appropriate for anybody over the age of 12.

C. Imagine having grown up meeting the likes of Ezra Pound and Ernest Hemingway, then going to Yale and becoming a corporate executive with J. Walter Thompson Advertising . . . along the way, you get to rub shoulders with Queen Elizabeth and Jackie Onassis . . . yet as you enter your 60s, you lose your job and develop health problems . . . plus, you are faced with a collapsing business, a new son and a divorce.

That all happened to Michael Gates Gill, author of *HOW STARBUCKS SAVED MY LIFE* (see also Sections 2, 10 and 11) . . . things kept spiraling downhill for him until one day he steps into a neighborhood Starbucks for a latte and to his surprise, is offered a job on the spot . . . having nothing to lose, he accepts it.

Gill is forced to start at the bottom, cleaning the bathroom . . . yet he quickly becomes accepted by Crystal Thompson, his 28-year-old manager, and the rest of the mostly African-American staff . . . how he grows to love both his coworkers and the job is the basis of this book that moved me . . . I smiled, at parts, and generally felt moved by the author's plight in others.

In particular, I liked the many stories that he shared . . . such as this one, told to him by his father told about James Thurber and Truman Capote:

* "Thurber treated Truman like an office boy, asking him to do the most degrading things. Thurber is virtually blind. He would have assignations with women in the afternoon, right here in this hotel, and then call Truman over to help him get dressed. One day, Truman, in dressing him, reversed his socks so Thurber's wife would know that he had been undressed during the day."

I also liked this passage, in which he described his mother:

* "O, glorioso!" she would exclaim. Mother lived her life with a kind of passionate decision to view each moment as an incredible gift that

she'd been presented with. Like a polite young child on Christmas morning, she always made sure she was thankful for, and not critical of, anything that was given to her in her life. She also was careful to keep all bad news buried.

Yet it was Gill's experiences at Starbucks that I found most interesting, in that they gave me insight into both his life and the company's corporate culture; for example, as evidenced by this tidbit:

* "Total availability" was Starbucks talk for being willing to go to work at any hour of the day or night. I had signed up for "total availability" when I first met Crystal and she had helped me fill out my job application. I had learned since that Crystal and every Starbucks manager really liked baristas who could be available around the clock. Many experienced baristas gradually asked for "no openings" or "no closings" or "no weekends." I felt that I might be able to do that eventually, but this year I knew I would have to offer flexibility. And I still felt that way. Especially since I still didn't really know what I was doing. I felt that Starbucks was still more valuable to me than I was to Starbucks. So I gave my life completely-physically, mentally, and emotionally--and promised, verbally and in writing, that I would be available whenever they needed me.

The ending to HOW STARBUKS CHANGED MY WIFE was particularly satisfying . . . I won't give it away except to say that it touched my heart . . . and the book made me take a completely different view of Starbucks to the extent that when I now enter a store, I can truly appreciate the hard work that goes into making the chain the success that it is.

D. Zig Ziglar's SEE YOU AT THE TOP was the first growth on personal leadership that I ever read . . . I still have my copy and refer to it from time to time.

Since then, I've read just about everything else the man has written and/or presented (via cassette and CD programs) . . . he has long been one of the individuals I've admired most and it has been one of the thrills of my life to have heard him a few times in person.

So when I came across ZIG: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF ZIG ZIGLAR, I jumped at the opportunity to hear it . . . it tells of his humble beginnings and quite candidly, tells of his failures too . . . he doesn't hold back and when he shares the story of his daughter's death, you'll be moved to tears as I was I was when I heard his rendition that obviously had him also teary-eyed.

I loved how he talked lovingly of his wife, "the redhead," who like him, "isn't perfect" . . . and that's a good thing because as Ziglar recounts, if she were, "she never would have chosen me."

I also got a kick out of how he realized that he had to move into a home in Dallas that he really couldn't afford at the time . . . however, to rationalize it, he broke the transaction into a cost per day figure (something he has shown me how to use in many of his other works) and as he notes, "Would you give \$1.70 a day to get a happier wife?"

Lastly, it was fun sharing the joys in his life, such as when he visited with the Pope . . . or when he was honored for the

help he has given countless others . . . I only regret that I have never had the opportunity to also express my appreciation.

This fine program is available for purchase or rental . . . if you want to get it, please click:

<http://www.achievementlibrary.com/>

Above is the tape rental club I belong to; i.e., the Achievement Tape Library . . . this a great way to hear CDs and/or audio cassette tapes, view videos, etc.--all for a fraction of what it would cost to buy them . . . call the head of the firm (Paul Arroyo) directly at 1.800.735.3660 and mention my name . . . that way, you'll be sure to pay even higher prices . . . NOT.

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5. TV alert

A. According to THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, "The quality of HBO's astonishing five-nights-a-week drama series, IN TREATMENT, announces itself early. Its capacity to maintain an unyielding grip on your attention becomes similarly evident fast, as does one's strong sense that the grip isn't going to weaken anytime soon. It doesn't." . . . stars Gabriel Byrne and Dianne Wiest . . . begins Monday at 9:30 p.m.

If you miss an episode, here are times when they will be replayed: http://www.hbo.com/apps/schedule/ScheduleServlet?CHANNEL=All+Channels&ACTION_SEARCH=SEARCH&KEY=TITLE&VALUE=in+treatment

B. Though Chris Daughtry did not win AMERICAN IDOL last season, his best-selling rock CD (DAUGHTRY) was the best-selling rock CD of 2007 . . . he and his bandmates perform several tracks from that record on SOUNDSTAGE on Thursday at 10 p.m. on PBS . . . check local listings because PBS times and stations often vary.

C. Two different movies look interesting on Saturday . . . at 9 p.m. on LIFETIME, Jeanene Garofalo stars in GIRL'S BEST FRIEND, a 2008 made for-cable flick about a dog-hater stuck traveling across the country with a Jack Russell terrier . . . it will be up against BRIDAL FEVER, also at 9 p.m., on HALLMARK . . . this one stars Delta Burke as a romance editor out to help her editor find "the One."

D. Go Giants! . . . I do admit being partial to the New York team (being a transplanted New Yorker) as it battles Boston in Super Bowl XLII at 6:18 p.m. on FOX . . . last year's IDOL winner, Jordin Sparks, performs the National Anthem and at halftime, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers roll out some of their greatest hits.

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6. Estate planning

When Bob found out he was going to inherit a fortune when his sickly father died, he decided he needed a woman to enjoy it with. So, one

evening he went to a singles bar where he spotted the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. Her natural beauty took his breath away.

"I may look like just an ordinary man," he said as he walked up to her, "but in just a few years, my father will die, and I'll inherit 20 million dollars. "

Impressed, the woman went home with him and, three days later, she became his stepmother.

Women are so much better at estate planning than men.

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7. Websites

A. MIT has created a website which allows anyone from anywhere in the world to take an online course for FREE:

<http://ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/web/home/home/index.htm>

I am simply amazed on how great this website is. Although you don't receive college credit for going through a class, you will find some 1,800 courses that contain lecture notes, exams and other resources that could significantly help anybody wanting to learn more about many diverse subjects.

B. If you are under a great deal of stress and in need to get organized, please click:

<http://www.gottakeepup.com>

It is FREE . . . and will remind you when you have meetings, birthdays, appointments, holidays, chores, and several other things that are needed to be done in an average week. Overall, this site is excellent and is easy to use.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blaineworld.net>

To see something neat, please look at my picture on the right . . . then drag your mouse to some listing on the left . . . when you do, make sure you look at my eyes.

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8. Computer tip

Just because you get an Internet rumor, it doesn't make it true. Even if you see the words: "I checked it out, and it is true." The same applies to: "Snopes said it was true," and you're given a snopes.com citation. (Some folks then give you a web citation that looks genuine, but when you check it out, you'll find out that it wasn't legitimate. Or they'll link you to Snopes, but when you go there, you'll find that the answer is just the opposite of the incorrect rumor!)

So my suggestion continues to be: If you see something on the Internet that you're not sure about, don't share it with anybody else until you've personally checked it out with:

<http://www.snopes.com>

And if you can't find any mention at Snopes, then methinks your best bet is to NOT believe the rumor!

That said, I recently was sent a few things that had validity. One was an old one; i.e., involving pancake mix that you may have that's been lying around . . . your best bet is to probably toss it . . . but don't believe me, please click: <http://www.snopes.com/medical/toxins/pancake.asp>

The other involved the need to keep grapes and raisins AWAY from dogs; on that one, please click:

<http://www.snopes.com/critters/crusader/raisins.asp>

Yet I also received some items that were simply NOT true . . . the first was a piece attributed to Andy Rooney . . . stuff he reportedly says get circulated around a lot, but is often false as you can see by clicking:

<http://www.snopes.com/politics/soapbox/rooney4.asp>

The same thing happens to George Carlin; i.e., stuff he allegedly says gets circulated on the Internet . . . however, if you check it out, you'll see that this is also false:

<http://www.snopes.com/politics/soapbox/carlingas.asp>

Lastly, and this is perhaps the most significant rumor . . . a friend swears that we should not vote for Barack Obama because he is a "radical Muslim" who will NOT recite the Pledge of Allegiance . . . she could not back up the assertion, so I checked it out myself and found that this is an untrue statement . . . see for yourself by clicking:

<http://www.snopes.com/politics/obama/muslim.asp>

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9. You know you're a Floridian if . . . , Part 1 of 2

Socks are only for bowling.

You never use an umbrella because you know the rain will be over in five minutes.

A good parking place has nothing to do with distance from the store, but everything to do with shade.

Your winter coat is made of denim.

You can tell the difference between fire ant bites and mosquito bites.

You're younger than thirty, but some of your friends are over 65.

Anything under 70 is chilly.

You pass on the right and honk at the elderly, but pull over for a funeral.

You've driven through Yeehaw Junction.

You could swim before you could read.

You have to drive north to get to The South.

You know that no other grocery store can compare to Publix.

Every other house in your neighborhood had blue roofs in 2004-2005.

You've gotten out of school early on Halloween to trick or treat before it got dark.

You know that anything under a Category 3 just isn't worth waking up for.

You dread lovebug season.

You are on a first name basis with the Hurricane list. They aren't Hurricane Charley, Hurricane Frances . . . but Charley, Frances , Ivan, and Jeanne.

You know what a snowbird is and you hate them.

You think a six-foot alligator is actually pretty average.

"Down South " means Key West.

"Panhandling" means going to Pensacola.

You think no one over 70 should be allowed to drive.

Flip-flops are everyday wear.

Shoes are for business meetings and church.

No, wait, flip flops are good for church too, unless it's Easter or Christmas.

(to be concluded next week)

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10. A quote I like

I was to learn that nobody at Starbucks ever ordered anyone to do anything. It was always: "Would you do me a favor?" or something similar.

SOURCE:

HOW STARBUCKS SAVED MY LIFE (see also Sections 2, 4C and 11)
by Michael Gates Gill

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11. Thought for the day

I REALLY liked HOW STARBUCKS SAVED MY LIFE (see also Sections 2, 4C and 10) by Michael Gates Gill, as evidenced by the fact that with he following mention, I have now cited the book four times in this week's newsletter:

Crystal overheard me and gestured for me to follow her back to her office--never a good sign. I had learned that she never criticized anybody in front of the Guests, or even other Partners. She would take you aside--one-on-one in her office.

"Mike, never refuse the bathroom to anyone," she said in a low, angry voice.

"But that old guy wasn't a customer, he couldn't afford-"

"He might not be a customer, but everyone who walks in that door is a Guest. That's what makes Starbucks different from anyplace else in New York. Haven't you noticed there are no public bathrooms in this city?"

For some reason, perhaps because I had just worked so hard to clean up such filth, I argued with her.

"But it's not Starbuck's job to provide toilets for the homeless."

Crystal did not say anything...for about thirty seconds. I could see she was furious. Her eyes seemed to enlarge with rage.

I shut up. Somehow, I had tripped over a land mine of emotion. I felt terrible and scared.

"Look." Her words were spaced; I could tell she was fighting herself not to yell at me. "In my store, in our store, we are . . . welcoming. Don't refuse that toilet to anyone, especially someone who really needs some welcome and not another person putting them down."

She had not said "not another white person" putting them down, but I read into it that way. But maybe I was being too sensitive. I understood that I had made a big mistake. Crystal, and Starbucks, didn't treat people like that.

I went back out front to try to find the guy, but he had gone. My rejection probably meant nothing to him-New York is an unfriendly city to someone trying to use a restroom. But I learned a valuable lesson that day. My old arrogance had come back as soon as I thought I had done a great job. How sad!

The next day, Crystal didn't even mention the incident. I was to learn that Crystal didn't harbor grudges. She let you know when she didn't like something you did, the moment you did it. And she never brought it up again.

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12. Advance planning department

A. Natalie in Pennsylvania:

Just in time for Valentine's Day, I wanted to let you know about a singles events in case know of any Jewish singles who might be interested:

Sun., Feb. 3 - Superbowl Party at a private home in Bensalem for ages 40-60--hosted by Jewish Single Encounters. Kosher food. Last year's party sold out with 50 people (equal number of men and women). Space is limited, so register early. RSVP necessary by Feb. 1. \$22. Contact Garry Miller for more info: 267.560.5441 or 609.332.7144 or jewishsingleencounters@yahoo.com.

B. Jim in Pennsylvania:

Free poetry reading series continues at Bucks County Community College

in honor of Black History Month

Gerald Stern brings his award-winning poetry to the College on Friday, February 8, where he'll read from his works alongside his former student, Ross Gay. The free event, part of the college's popular Poetry Reading Series, gets underway at 7 p.m. in the Library Auditorium on the campus at 275 Swamp Road, Newtown.

Stern is the author of fourteen books of poetry including "This Time: New and Selected Poems," which won the National Book Award in 1998, and most recently "Everything is Burning" published in 2005, both from W.W. Norton.

Gay, an African American who graduated from Neshaminy High School in Langhorne, is the author of the collection "Against Which" (CavanKerry Press, 2006). His poems have appeared in "American Poetry Review," "Atlanta Review," "Harvard Review," and "Columbia: A Journal of Poetry and Art," among other places. He teaches at Indiana University.

To learn more, call 215.968.8150.

C. February Autographing & Event at Barnes & Noble,
Princeton MarketFair Mall, 3535 US Route 1 South, Princeton, NJ:

Sunday, February 10 at 3 p.m.

Event: Author Discussion/Signing: JAMES McBRIDE: Song Yet Sung
Join us as bestselling author of The Color Of Water, James McBride, discusses his latest novel, Song Yet Sung, a powerful page-turner about a runaway slave and a determined slave catcher, followed by Q&A.

D. Be my guest when I present on "Positioning: How to Differentiate Yourself From the Competition" on Tuesday, Feb. 12, at 6:30 p.m. in Room Penn 410 at Bucks County Community College.

ADDED BONUS:

By attending, you'll learn the difference between a left-handed and a right-handed pencil . . . I kid you NOT!

The presentation is FREE . . . however, please email me to let me know if you'll be coming so I can notify you if there's any change of plans.

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PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

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#590

1.21.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I went with friends to Piccolo Trattoria (215.860.4247) in Newtown, PA for dinner on Saturday night . . . the food there is always excellent, and the portions are huge . . . in fact, we packed up our leftovers and have enough for a complete meal for the two of us.

I like the fact it is a BYOB place, and that it doesn't charge you extra for the salad.

We shared a very meaty lasagne, but enjoyed most our pasta bolognese . . . it was freshly prepared and the sauce was just right; i.e., not too heavy.

The place gets crowded, so our recommendation is that you get there early (as we did) . . . it also gets noisy and for some reason, they play background music that even serves to further drown out conversation . . . however, when we complained about this, the music was quickly turned off.

There's a second Piccolo Trattoria in Hopewell, NJ that we haven't checked out--yet . . . its number is 609.737.9050.

B. From there, we all went to see GUYS AND DOLLS at Pennsbury High School in Fallsington, PA . . . what a production!

It was as good as anything we've seen lately, including community and even professional productions . . . the large cast was energetic, and both the choreography and singing were top notch . . . likewise, the orchestra added to our enjoyment of the evening.

Kyle Lanning and Dara Orland shined as Sky Masterson and Sarah Brown, respectively, as did Shawn Caven as Nathan Detroit . . . Nicole Acevedo as Miss Adelaide had us laughing and applauding every time

she was on stage, and we Tyler Carrigan as Nicely-Nicely Johnson nearly stole every scene he was in . . . kudos to Jason Vodicka for his direction, as well as to everybody else involved behind the scenes.

I only regret that you won't be able to see GUYS AND DOLLS, in that the limited run ended on Sunday . . . however, we already have it down to check on the two musical productions that are slated for next year . . . to do so yourself, please click this website sometime in the fall:

<http://www.pennsbury.k12.pa.us/mb/phs06/default.htm>

BAD NEWS DEPARTMENT (for us):

We missed Pennsbury's earlier production of LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS . . . from what I learned, it was so good that it captured honors for best school musical in Pennsylvania and, as a result, the performers will be taking it on the road to national competition in June!

C. CONGRATULATIONS to Murray Raphel, my longtime friend/reader/mentor, on his 80th birthday . . . see below for the birthday greeting that I sent him for his party:

Some 20 years ago, I was covering the field of direct marketing for one of the industry's leading magazines. Due to a prior commitment, I could not attend one meeting, so I sent a student in my place. He told me that there was this guest speaker, a guy named Murray Raphel, who "was great . . . in fact, almost as good as you are." (Hey, I can only quote what I was told!)

Best of all, Murray gave the student an autographed copy of one of his books with instructions that the student should give the book to me.

I devoured that book, THE GREAT BRAIN ROBBERY, and immediately wrote Murray a thank you note. He wrote back and that begun what has become a long friendship.

Some 15 years ago, Murray invited me to hear him speak in Atlantic City. He then took me out to lunch and to see his office. It was like visiting Disneyland, in that I had heard so much about Gordon's Alley as a result of reading all his books.

One of the thrills of my life was to reciprocate; i.e., having Murray hear me speak when I was presenting to a conference in Atlantic City. I still remember his feedback and how I've used it in much of my teaching.

It has been my pleasure to have been associated with Murray. He has taught me a great deal, as well as my students. (For many years, his books were required reading in my marketing classes.)

I truly appreciate all his letters and emails . . . and perhaps most importantly, his wisdom.

Happy birthday, Murray. I look forward to your continued involvement in BLAINESWORLD--both in my newsletter and life . . . or maybe it's the other way around . . . that you will graciously continue to let me be part of Murray's World!

PLEASE NOTE:

For more information about Murray or Raphel Marketing, his company, please click:

<http://raphel.com/>

D. CONGRATULATIONS, also, to Tammy Lawlor--the lawyer who has been doing such a fine job in handling my parents' estate . . . she just had a lovely boy named Brian Thomas . . . both she and her son are doing well!

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Jose Lopez--pizza maker extraordinaire at Genteel's Frattoria Pizzeria (609.252.0880) in Skillman, NJ.

I often go here for lunch for pizza that is consistently excellent . . . the crust is thin, and the sauce is tasty.

On top of that, Jose always greets me with a smile. He's extremely hard working, too, seemingly being there just about all the time.

I've also had other food here and have never been disappointed. Jimmy Genteel, the owner, does a fine job running this place that is a pizzeria on the left and an attractive restaurant on the right.

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2. FYI

Years ago my friend Ken taught me a neat way to be of service to strangers. If I see one person in a group taking a picture of all the others, I offer to snap the picture so everybody can be included.

SOURCE:

THE FRED FACTOR (see also Section 4c) by Mark Sanborn

FYI, part 2

A few readers responded to Jean in Pennsylvania's idea [in last week's issue] to have a separate section for offers from readers; among them:

* Norean in New York:

I think that's a nice idea, but I like your newsletters just as they are. After all I have been receiving them since BLAINESWORLD #1.

* Warren in Pennsylvania:

I like Jean in PA's suggestion about an Offers From Readers section.

* Alex in Florida:

I sure think Jean in Pennsylvania suggested a very appropriate idea to you--namely that you gather together requests from your readers for you to promote their interests into a separate section, perhaps entitled OFFERS FROM READERS. Excellent idea for you and for them.

And, Blaine, while I'm writing . . . I have sent you, on two occasions, some information on the inspirational 09-11 Memorial that exists in Yardley, PA. To me it was most moving, elegantly executed, and I thought your readers, should they visit it, would find it so for

themselves.

Obviously you've not visited it even though it is at your doorstep. Ergo, you don't know what you are missing.

MY TWO CENTS:

Alex is right, as he often is . . . do check out the above, which I first mentioned in November, 2004 when I was hosting a radio show (and do I miss doing that!) . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.9-11memorialgarden.org/>

I recently mentioned that we are next going to investigate the possibility of moving to North Carolina . . . some feedback that I received on that idea included the following:

* Rita in North Carolina:

Let me sing the praises of North Carolina, especially the Greensboro area.

As you may know, I moved down here about a year ago to become the Dean for Continuing Education (i.e., adult degree programs) at Guilford College. The weather here is great. We have seasons, but without the extremes. Summer is no worse than NJ or PA and winter is no where near as cold. Last winter, I wore a raincoat about a half dozen times, my parka twice, and the rest of the time no more than a sweater or light jacket. This year is about the same. The sun shines about 300 days a year, although often there may be showers overnight or for an hour.

Greensboro itself has about 9 colleges within the city limits and if we count Winston Salem (about 20 minutes away) and High Point (about 15 minutes), the number is closer to 20 . . . so there are all sorts of cultural events . . . and you could probably get some adjunct positions pretty easily. Guilford College is the home of the Eastern Music Festival, a 6 week period of daily concerts, many featuring world famous musicians who come to campus to offer master classes to other musicians from around the country . . . and there are other, similar festivals for drama and dance around the area each summer, as well as a large major conference and performance venue that is easy to get into and out of (Cirque du Soleil usually comes every year in January, Springsteen, etc. . . . major performers).

Yet there is little traffic and even the downtown area is green everywhere. Charlotte and Research Triangle (Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill area) is about an hour away, the mountains about 1-1/2 hours, and the beach about three hours.

By the way, Greensboro also has its own airport--truly easy in and out, with convenient parking (you can easily walk from long-term to the terminal!)--and just recently, Skybus began offering direct flights to Wilmington, DE and LA, among other destinations, for \$10 each way for the first 10 seats sold on each flight! Otherwise, there are frequent US Airways direct flights between Greensboro and Philadelphia.

Housing is pretty cheap compared to NJ as well . . . since I haven't yet been able to sell the house in Pennington, I am currently renting a 1300 sq. foot apartment in a gated, luxury development--2 big bedrooms, each with its own full bath, kitchen with pantry, separate dining room with windows on two sides and a door to the covered porch for al fresco dining, a fireplace, laundry room, and lots of closet space--for \$820 a month.

Garages are available at \$50/month additional. There are quite a few new developments going up that are designed for 55+, with condo associations responsible for the landscaping and property care, clubhouse and pool--most are patio homes, but I have my eye on a very nice 2 story in a 64-unit development, midway and walking distance between 2 synagogues.

The biggest differences that I have found down here from Mercer-Bucks area are:

No NYC or Philly close by; DC, Charleston, and Atlanta are each about 4 hours away.

No really good bagel store. (Brueggers is the best they have; Panero's are NOT bagels to my mind!)

No kosher delis.

The pace of life is definitely slower.

People are friendlier and take the time to talk to each other.

People also tend to be more gracious and less nasty, abrupt, etc.

A whole lot more churches. (They say we don't get bad weather here because there are 400 churches in town and all that prayer . . .)

* Sharon in North Carolina:

As for 55 and older communities . . . believe it or not, many people retire to the Asheville/Hendersonville area of NC. It's in the mountains and the summer weather is gorgeous and apparently the winters are not too bad either. Maybe a few days here and there of cold weather and a bit of snow. It has really become a snowbirds' destination.

We're in Fayetteville, about 60 miles south of Raleigh & Cary. We're not as "cultured" as those cities and our summers are HOT. Cary is an up and coming city, and you will probably enjoy it. There are several bedroom communities of Raleigh as well that may suit you.

* A New York reader:

Stop looking for the perfect retirement community. You now live basically where you've been searching for . . . a great retirement spot.

Dear friends and family surround you. You have the enormous advantage of being quite near air transportation that can take you anywhere in the world without connection. Cynthia can easily access those interests of hers like Omega within hours. You have all the cultural advantages of New York City and Philadelphia at your doorstep.

It takes a friend of mine over eight hours from Lumberton, NC to get to New York to visit his kids . . . drive to Fayetteville, flight to Charlotte, change to LaGuardia and then cab. He has to go to Baltimore for health care.

As you're now getting older than dirt, you must also consider failing health. You really owe it to you and Cynthia to be near great health providers.

I'm not suggesting that Charlotte or Charleston don't have these facilities, but that a Columbia, SC, Lumberton or Dumbshit, GA might not. Don't bury yourself in the wilderness.

Take it from one who knows . . . I've had a home in Charleston, a truly gorgeous home and community. Few friends. Other than the Spoleto Festival in May (in NYC we have Spoleto 365 days a year) . . . virtually without culture . . . anti Yankee... a great place to live (indoors).

You're not a golfer, so a golf community will not do. I would pay to see your legs on a tennis court.

You want warm weather . . . rent a place for the winter. Travel. Enjoy life.

You've been looking for this Nirvana for quite some time. It may be right in your backyard.

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3. Hooked on phonics

Zach is 5 and learning to read. He points at a picture in a zoo book and says, "Look Mama! It's a frickin' elephant!"

Deep breath . . . "What did you call it?"

"It's a frickin' elephant, Mama! It says so on the picture."

And so it does . . .

" A f r i c a n elephant."

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4. Reviews

A. 27 DRESSES is a predictable romantic comedy, yet that said, I enjoyed it . . . Katherine Heigl plays a young woman who has been a bridesmaid 27 times . . . when her boss--the man she secretly loves--becomes engaged to her younger sister, she is faced with the prospect of having to get still another dress that she probably won't be able to wear more than once . . . Heigl is fine in the leading role, as is James Marsden as a reporter who covers the wedding scene . . . Malin Akerman, so fine in the remake of THE HEARTBREAK KID (though not as funny here because of her role), is again watchable . . . Judy Greer has a smallish supporting role, but nevertheless caught my attention in every scene she was in . . . and any film that uses "Happy Together" in the soundtrack deserves to be seen if just for that reason . . . rated PG-13.

B. There are no new DVDs that I can recommend that you rent, so instead go back and revisit 1994's THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION . . . this is a great film about a banker unjustly sentenced to prison for a crime he did not commit . . . he slowly earns the respect of his fellow inmates and even most of the prison staff . . . Tim Robbins and Morgan Freeman are superb in the leading roles . . .and James Whitmore's performance also moved me . . . though SHAWHANK was nominated for seven Oscars in 1994, it surprisingly did not win a single one.

The dialogue is as fine as I've ever heard in any film . . . to cite just two examples:

* Red [narrating]: I wish I could tell you that Andy fought the good fight, and the Sisters let him be. I wish I could tell you that--but prison is no fairy-tale world. He never said who did it, but we all knew. Things went on like that for awhile--prison life consists of routine, and then more routine. Every so often, Andy would show up with fresh bruises. The Sisters kept at him--sometimes he was able to fight 'em off, sometimes not. And

that's how it went for Andy--that was his routine. I do believe those first two years were the worst for him, and I also believe that if things had gone on that way, this place would have got the best of him.

* Red [narrating]: I have no idea to this day what those two Italian ladies were singing about. Truth is, I don't want to know. Some things are best left unsaid. I'd like to think they were singing about something so beautiful, it can't be expressed in words, and makes your heart ache because of it. I tell you, those voices soared higher and farther than anybody in a gray place dares to dream. It was like some beautiful bird flapped into our drab little cage and made those walls dissolve away, and for the briefest of moments, every last man in Shawshank felt free.

The film has a great ending . . . rated R.

C. Imagine having a postal carrier who greets you the very first day you move into a new neighborhood. He then offers to hold onto your mail if you're going to be out of town. He also moves advertisements that are stuck in doors and picks up newspapers scattered on sidewalks.

That's Fred, author Mark Sanborn's mail carrier. Sanborn was so impressed with him that he wrote a marvelous little book telling more about him: THE FRED FACTOR (see also Section 2). Its subtitle--HOW PASSION IN YOUR WORK AND LIFE CAN TURN THE ORDINARY INTO THE EXTRAORDINARY--describes what this factor is all about.

Can this be accomplished easily? Perhaps not. But in reading about Fred, I was inspired--particularly when I learned how he had mastered the most important job skill of the twenty-first century:

* The ability to create value for customers without spending more money to do it.

He continually does so by doing little things for his customers. As he notes:

* I want to go home at the end of the day feeling like I've taken care of my folks," Fred says. "I don't think of them as postal customers, but as friends who appreciate me for helping make their lives a little easier."

What I most liked about this book was how Sanborn gave plenty of examples of how anybody can become a Fred, regardless of his or her job . . . for instance, he mentions his own work background:

* I once worked with a hospital that was committed to improving patient relations. One little idea made a big difference: Whenever patients or visitors asked for directions, rather than simply telling them how to get where they wanted to go, the staff member personally escorted them, especially in cases where people were confused or perplexed.

THE FRED FACTOR got me thinking--always a good thing . . . when reading it, I kept making lots of notes about things I should start doing more often . . . one, in fact, I've already implemented; i.e., gotten the book to friends who I think might get as much out of it as I did.

D. Heard ASK ME AGAIN TOMORROW--read and narrated by Olympia Dukakis, the actress who became an overnight success in MOONSTRUCK (after 28 years of hard work).

Dukakis is brutally honest in telling her story . . . in doing so, I got a feel for what it was like growing up as a Greek-American and, also, about the difficulties she faced in helping to run The Whole Theater Company in Montclair, New Jersey, for 19 years.

I also was moved by her tale of alimentionation from and eventual reconciliation with her mother, who eventually developed Alzheimer's and had to be cared for by Dukakis and her family.

There's humor in the story, too . . . she tells of the time when her Oscar was stolen and how she eventually made over \$9,900 as a result of the theft . . . in addition, I was laughing out loud when I heard how she "borrowed" a cat to make some money from a commercial . . . all was going well until her mother walked in and asked, "Where'd you get that?" A quick response saved the day: "She always forgets!"

This is one book that I'm glad to have heard rather than read, largely because of Dukakis' outstanding narration . . . it left me looking forward to Part 2 of this fascinating woman's life, which seems to have been promised by the subtitle: A LIFE IN PROGRESS.

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5. TV alert

A. MILLIONAIRE MATCHMAKER is a new series about a third-generation matchmaker who helps wealthy Los Angelenos find compatible women . . . Tuesdays at 11 p.m. on BRAVO.

B. THE MOMENT OF TRUTH has folks trying to outwit a polygraph grilling . . . debuts Wednesday at 9 p.m. on FOX.

C. I don't know about you, but to me, the best TV right now involves the upcoming presidential election . . . remaining Republican candidates debate on Thursday at 9 p.m. on MSNBC.

D. THE RUSSELL GIRL stars Amber Tamblyn as a 23-year-old aspiring med student who finds out she has leukemia . . . Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio (an actress that I wish was more often on screen) plays her mother . . . Sunday at 9 p.m. on CBS.

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6. Worms

A minister decided that a visual demonstration would add emphasis to his Sunday sermon. Four worms were placed into four separate jars. The first worm was put into a container of alcohol. The second worm was put into a container of cigarette smoke. The third worm was put into a container of chocolate syrup. The fourth worm was put into a container of good clean soil.

At the conclusion of the sermon, the minister reported the following results: The first worm in alcohol . . . dead. Second worm in cigarette smoke . . . dead. Third worm in chocolate syrup . . . dead. Fourth worm in good clean soil . . . alive.

So the Minister asked the congregation: What can you learn from this demonstration?

Maxine, who was sitting in the back, quickly raised her hand and said, "As long as you drink, smoke and eat chocolate, you won't have worms!"

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7. Websites

A. For an unusual way to get the accurate time, please click:

<http://www.billychasen.com/clock/>

I understand that it works for all time zones.

B. If you're a fan of BILLY ELLIOT, the film or show, you'll enjoy this clip:

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=Lz1zHKEsD2Y>

It tells the true story about a young Arab man who is succeeding in his dream to become a ballet dancer . . . you'll find it inspirational, and it will make you want to see BILLY ELLIOT--either again or for the first time.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blainesworld.net>

In case you're wondering about what I do with your address (e.g., if you're a subscriber), please see "Newsletter" to the left on the homepage, then "Privacy Statement."

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8. Computer tip

How to handle irritating seatmates

If you are sitting next to someone who irritates you on a plane or train, follow these instructions:

1. Quietly and calmly open up your laptop case.
2. Remove your laptop.
3. Start up .
4. Make sure the guy who is annoying you can see the screen.
5. Close your eyes and tilt your head up to the sky like in prayer.
6. Then hit this link:

<http://boortz.com/mp3/archive/countdown.swf>

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9. Rules for paramedics

All your patients will die . . . eventually.

All bleeding stops . . . eventually.

If you drop the baby, pick it up.

"O's" (oxygen) are good; "Oops" are bad.

Don't taste it!

It's not your problem; it's the patient's problem.

And this one for the public, too: Drive with care or we'll be there.

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10. A quote I like

We have worked at full speed since May. And that is I'm persuaded the root and source and origin of all health and happiness, provided of course that one rides work as a man rides a great horse, in a spirited and independent way; not a drudge, but a man with spurs to his heels. (Writing in her journal about her life as a publisher and writer.)--Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), English writer

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11. Thought for the day

When the wind blows

Years ago, a farmer owned land along the Atlantic seacoast. He constantly advertised for hired hands. Most people were reluctant to work on farms along the Atlantic. They dreaded the awful storms that raged across the Atlantic, wreaking havoc on the buildings and crops.

As the farmer interviewed applicants for the job, he received A steady stream of refusals.

Finally, a short, thin man, well past middle age, approached the farmer. "Are you a good farm hand?" the farmer asked him.

"Well, I can sleep when the wind blows," answered the little man.

Although puzzled by this answer, the farmer, desperate for help, Hired him. The little man worked well around the farm, busy from dawn to dusk, and the farmer felt satisfied with the man's work.

Then one night the wind howled loudly in from offshore. Jumping out of bed, the farmer grabbed a lantern and rushed next door to the hired hand's sleeping quarters. He shook the little man and yelled, "Get up! A storm is coming! Tie things down before they blow away!"

The little man rolled over in bed and said firmly, "No sir. I told you, I can sleep when the wind blows."

Enraged by the response, the farmer was tempted to fire him on the spot. Instead, he hurried outside to prepare for the storm.

To his amazement, he discovered that all of the haystacks had been covered with tarpaulins. The cows were in the barn, the chickens were in the coops, and the doors were barred. The shutters were tightly secured. Everything was tied down.

Nothing could blow away. The farmer then understood what his hired hand meant, so he returned to his bed to also sleep while the wind blew.

When you're prepared, spiritually, mentally, and physically, you have nothing to fear. Can you sleep when the wind blows through your life?

The hired hand in the story was able to sleep because he had secured the farm against the storm.

We secure ourselves against the storms of life by grounding ourselves in the Word of God. We don't need to understand, we just need to hold His hand to have peace in the middle of storms.

A friend of mine sent this to me today, and I enjoyed it so much, that I wanted to send it to you. I hope you enjoy your day and you sleep well.

Author unknown
(if you know who wrote this and/or the source, please let me know)

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12. Advance planning department

A. At Princeton Public Library, Princeton, NJ:
Sunday, January 27, 2008
3 p.m., Princeton Rep Playlab Series
FREE

Blue/Orange by Joe Penhall In a London psychiatric hospital, an enigmatic patient claims to be the son of exiled African dictator, Idi Amin. As the drama unfolds, his story becomes unnervingly plausible. An incendiary tale about race, madness and a Darwinian power struggle by the British playwright, Blue/Orange won the 2000 Olivier Award for Best New Play.

For more information, please click:
<http://www.princeton.lib.nj.us/>

B. YOUR CHANCE TO WIN \$500! (I kid you not!!) . . . come to a presentation I'm giving on Tuesday, January 29, at Bucks County Community College . . . time: 6:30 p.m. . . . the topic: Four-mula 4 Success--the 4 Things You Need to do to Market Yourself . . . cost is FREE . . . for location, please email me at bginbc@aol.com.

C. At Princeton Center for Yoga & Health, Skillman, NJ:
David Brahinsky & Friends return in concert with

"Canadian Spirits: Songs of Leonard Cohen, Joni Mitchell and Stan Rogers" Joining David (guitar and vocals) for this concert will be Sarah Houtz on vocals, Joe Pepitone on bass and Guy DeRosa on harmonica. Join these gifted musicians who produce a rich and varied interpretation of these great singer songwriters. DON'T MISS THIS ONE!

Saturday, February 2, at 8:00 p.m.
\$15

For more information, please click:
<http://www.princetonyoga.com/>

D. At Bucks County Community College, Newtown, PA:
"Meet the Author" Business Seminar
March 12, 2008 at 9 a.m.

Best-selling author Lisa Ford is the featured speaker of the 5th annual "Meet the Author" Business Seminar. Her presentation, Exceptional Customer Service--Going Beyond Your Good Service to Exceed the Customer's Expectation, is based on Lisa's best-selling video training program. At this seminar, you will discover how to:

- * create a positive first - and lasting - impression on customers;
- * improve your communication skills so you can stay in touch with your customers;
- * make sure that new technology gives customers what they need;
- * find new ways to keep your existing customers, while recruiting new ones; and
- * eliminate the gap between current and world-class service.

For more information about Lisa, visit her website:
<http://www.lisaford.com/index.html>

Individual tickets: \$50, or take advantage of a \$495 corporate sponsorship and receive 10 tickets, reserved seating, and the opportunity to promote your organization.

To reserve your seats today for this engaging seminar, call 215.968.8224 or click here to order your tickets safely and securely online:
<https://www.bucks.edu/meettheauthor.php>

PS. Monday is Martin Luther King Day . . . to help remember his many contributions, check out some of his quotes at this website:
http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/m/martin_luther_king_jr.html

Here's one of my favorites: Life's most persistent and urgent question is, "What are you doing for others?"

Please also join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . and make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#589

1.14.2008

In this issue:

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I joined friends on Saturday for dinner at the Calaloo Cafe . . . it's an attractive restaurant that bills itself as "the Caribbean Getaway in Morristown, NJ."

They have a wide-ranging menu with portions that are quite ample . . . my sesame chicken was OK, though I would have liked some larger chunks of chicken . . . Cynthia enjoyed her seafood kabob, and our dining companions said their mesquite chicken dishes were tasty.

A baked banana dessert left something to be desired, though . . . there wasn't enough ice cream with it and what we could find was completely melted by the time it came to the table . . . also, the waiter wasn't very helpful in describing it . . . he had no knowledge of the item and when we asked him what ice cream came with it, all he could tell us were the two flavors of ice cream that had previously been served with it . . . that certainly was less than helpful to us in our decision-making.

For more information about the restaurant, please click:

<http://www.calaloo cafe.com>

B. On Sunday, Cynthia attended a workshop on the Feldenkrais Method at the Princeton YWCA . . . it was designed to help people of all ages learn to move more easily . . . to quote Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais (1904-1984), the movement's founder, the goal is to " . . . make the impossible, possible; the possible, easy; and the easy, elegant."

Cynthia said the session was most informative, and she is looking forward to the next one that is slated for February 17 . . . Jaclyn Boone is the instructor; she can be reached at 609.712.2960 or via email: feldenkraismethod@mac.com.

When she was attending that, I went with a friend to a free performance of SIGNS OF LIFE at the Princeton Public Library . . . this was

the first of the Winter PlayLAB staged reading series, presented by the Princeton Rep Company/Princeton Rep Shakespeare Festival.

It was a touching love story about two dreamers on a road trip out of New Jersey in pursuit of the life they can't seem to make together . . . Peter Aguero and Elaine Williams were both excellent in the leading roles, and Todd Reichart directed and narrated with distinction . . . afterwards, all three individuals stayed around for an informative talk back session, wherein the audience got to ask questions about what they had just seen.

Future productions include BLUE/ORANGE on January 27 and SHYLOCK on February 10 . . . for more information, please click: <http://www.princetonrep.org>

C. During the week, I attended a meeting with Josh Rubinsky--our teacher union's talented lawyer . . . he shared with me and the others in attendance the following quote that has already begun to help me better understand situations that come up in our daily interactions with the administration:

Absent contractual and/or statutory rights, the employer has the absolute right to be irrational.

Please feel free to share this with your friends and colleagues who may be having difficulty "understanding" their employers.

D. CONGRATULATIONS to Pete Dominick for having recently been appointed to serve as a member of the Board of Trustees at Bucks County Community College . . . in addition, he is doing his usual fine job in his new position as executive vice president of Bucks County Bank . . . for more information about this latter organization, please click: <http://www.buckscountybank.net>

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes to Mike Ross--a sales associate at Staples in Newtown, PA.

Whenever I go to that particular store, I actually will go the register that Mike is working out to have him ring up my sale (even if it means having to wait longer in line) . . . he always is most helpful, and he has a great smile.

Mike also has a whole bunch of stars on his nametag . . . when I asked him about them recently, he thanked me for noticing and then explained that Staples gives out these "super stars" to employees who get compliments from customers . . . it is no surprise that he has far more than any other employee in the store!

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2. FYI

Want to travel around the country for FREE?

You can as an RV courier. It's easier than you think. For more information, please click:

<http://www.walletpop.com/2008/01/10/how-to-get-paid-to-travel/>

This is NOT a joke!

FYI, part 2

* Jean in Pennsylvania made this suggestion after reading last week's issue:

In this issue, there are a LOT of readers asking you to promote their businesses/products/upcoming productions/websites. In the future, can you put them all in a separate section, such as OFFERS FROM READERS? It would make it much easier to scroll through.

MR. CURIOUS HERE:

What do YOU--other readers--think about this idea?

* Nancy in Pennsylvania:

I am starting to build a library for my Adult Basic Education (ABE), GED and Adult Literacy students. If any of your readers in lower Bucks would like to donate books, we would appreciate it. Kids' books are welcomed as well for our Family Literacy program. I'd be happy to fetch them!

Many thanks. Call: Nancy at 215.579.1924.

* Janet in New Jersey:

BE YOUR OWN MEDICINE

This is a newsletter that will help you tap into your best knowing to live happy and healthy. Information on tools and teachings from several sources and traditions in each issue to help you in mind, body, spirit, emotion, and soul medicine.

As we near 2012, time is moving faster and so is healing and awakening.

Sign up for this newsletter:

<http://www.oasisforthesoul.com>

You can also read articles and listen to her radio show on the home page of her web site.

Janet StraightArrow is a Woman of Medicine, Medical Intuitive, Integrative Energy Healer and Teacher. Janet has studied healing for over forty years and will bring some Ancient and cutting edge teachings and tools to you each month.

* "Bones" in New Jersey [when I asked him about his plans desire to have his skeleton used by a medical school]:

Donating your body is a simple thing. This is very helpful to medical schools and can easily be accomplished by contacting the medical school of your choice. (There are about ten in the eastern Pa/NJ area.) They will send you information for your lawyer to put into your will. At the time of your passing, the school is notified and whoosh! . . . you disappear, off to help a new generation of doctors learn anatomy or into some fancy research project. Or both.

My desire is a little more complicated. There is some serious prep that needs to be done to make a cadaver into a useful instructional skeleton. THAT is my present interest.

Most medical schools buy plastic replicas, but many educators feel

that is not ideal. So I continue to look for programs that make skeletons. That way, in our lust for guaranteed immortality (of a sort), many classes of doctors will find your bones useful and instructive. THAT is my dilemma . . . how are skeletons born? Ha!

* Jack in Pennsylvania:
Who said students don't have fun?



That's Ed Harvey on the left with the level, making sure my bra is adjusted properly . . . I'm in the middle, and you're on the right . . . this was from the time Lisa Gable, the inventor of Strap-Mate, came to speak to our classes, and we then did our marketing projects on her business.

* And if you want to get an update on Strap-Mate, please click the company's website that Steve in Pennsylvania so graciously provided:
<http://www.strap-mate.com>

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3. Simple math

Spotted near a Salt Lake City courthouse: "Love is grand.
Divorce is 50 grand."

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4. Reviews

A. THE BUCKET LIST was enjoyable, but not great . . . it's the story of two guys who put together a list of all the things that they want to do before they die . . . with Academy Award winners Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman starring, it was a film that I had really looked forward to seeing--but left me somewhat flat until the ending (when it somewhat all came together) . . . director Rob Reiner used what seemed to be a paint-by-the-numbers approach to putting it together; you could predict almost every scene.

That said, there was some good dialogue . . . I particularly liked when Freeman turns to Nicholson and tells him that there are two questions that you'll be asked when you get to heaven:

1. Did you bring joy to yourself?
2. Did you bring joy to others?

Rated PG-13.

B. There seems to be no new releases worth recommending for DVD rental, so do what I've been doing lately; i.e., catch up on some films that you may have missed and/or wanted to

revisit . . . for example, there's LOST HORIZON (the classic 1937 version, not the junky 1973 musical remake) . . . it is the James Hilton tale of a small group of civilians who crash land in the Himalayans . . . they are rescued by the people of the mysterious valley of Shangri-La, a land that provides a seductive escape from the clouds of the approaching World War II . . . Ronald Coleman, dashing as ever, stars, along with Jane Wyatt.

Sam Jaffe--and do you remember him as Dr. Zorba from BEN CASEY?--had a small but memorable role as the High Lama . . . he caught the essence of both the film and Shangri-La when he described it to Coleman's character:

It is the entire meaning and purpose of Shangri-La. It came to me in a vision, long, long ago. I saw all the nations strengthening, not in wisdom, but in the vulgar passions and the will to destroy. I saw the machine power multiplying, until a single weaponed man might match a whole army. I foresaw a time when man, exalting in the technique of murder, would rage so hotly over the world, that every book, every treasure, would be doomed to destruction. This vision was so vivid and so moving, that I determined to gather together all things of beauty and of culture that I could, and preserve them here, against the doom toward which the world is rushing. Look at the world today. Is there anything more pitiful? What madness there is! What blindness! What unintelligent leadership! A scurrying mass of bewildered humanity, crashing headlong against each other, propelled by an orgy of greed and brutality. A time must come my friend, when this orgy will spend itself. When brutality and the lust for power must perish by its own sword. Against that time, is why I avoided death and am here. And why you were brought here. For when that day comes, the world must begin to look for a new life. And it is our hope that they may find it here. For here, we shall be with their books and their music, and a way of life based on one simple rule: Be Kind! When that day comes, it is our hope that the brotherly love of Shangri-La will spread throughout the world. Yes, my son; When the strong have devoured each other, the Christian ethic may at last be fulfilled and the meek shall inherit the earth.

There were no ratings when this was released, but that said, I believe it would be most appropriate for anybody over the age of 12.

C. My students tell me that they often take courses and even do well in them without ever buying a text . . . so in an attempt to find out how this is possible, I came across HOW TO TALK ABOUT BOOKS YOU HAVEN'T READ by Pierre Bayard (a French literature professor) . . . I actually read it and in doing so, found out that my students probably are similar to those of the author:

* It is not astonishing that my students, without having read the book I am discussing, quickly grasp certain of its elements and feel free to comment on it, based on their cultural notions and personal history. And it is also unsurprising that their comments--however far removed from the initial text (but what, in fact, might it mean to be close?)--bring to the encounter an originality that they would undoubtedly have lacked had they undertaken to read the book.

Bayard in a witty fashion covers all sorts of non-reading: books we've never cracked open, those we've merely skimmed, books that we've never laid on but have heard about from others, and those that we read years ago and have long since forgotten . . . he uses examples from such

writers as Graham Greene, Oscar Wilde and Montagne and even, for good measure, brings in the film GROUNDHOG DAY.

He also gives useful advice; e.g., when finding yourself having to talk to an author about one of his books that you haven't read, you should:

* Praise it without going into details. An author does not expect a summary or a rational analysis of his book and would even prefer you not to attempt such a thing. He expects only that, while maintaining the greatest possible degree of ambiguity, you will tell him that you like what he wrote.

Lastly, I liked Bayard's suggestion on what to do if and when somebody doubts what you have to say about a book:

* If you have begun talking about a book imprudently and your remarks are challenged, nothing prevents you from backtracking and declaring that you've made a mistake. Our unreading or forgetting plays such a significant role that there is little risk in declaring yourself the victim of one of the any lapses in memory induced by or reading-non-reading-of books. Even a book that we recall with great precision is in some sense a screen book, behind which our own inner book is concealed. But in this particular case, is it really the best solution for the artist to admit his error?

You won't be recognized as a literary genius after having read HOW TO TALK ABOUT BOOKS YOU HAVEN'T READ . . . however, you will impress at least a few people . . . and you'll have a fun time along the way.

D. Heard the Nightingale-Conant CD program, THE 12 WEALTH SECRETS: HOW TO BE FINANCIALLY FREE FOREVER--written and read by Robert Stuber.

Though several years old (it came out in 1999), I still came across several useful ideas that are still relevant today . . . though I have heard most of them previously, they served as a good review for me . . . and would make worthwhile listening for those just starting to think about what wealth is all about.

A key was this observation: If you're comfortable with what you have, then you probably have what you need.

In addition, Stuber points out the following:

* To gain wealth, remember the wealth equation:
Wealth = earning, plus saving, plus investing, less debt.

* Pay off smallest debts first or, as an alternative, pay off the debts with highest rates of interest.

* When watching TV, think how much it is costing you in terms of lost opportunity.

* When you have passion for work, profits will follow.

* A busy signal is better than call waiting.

* Answering machines can be better than caller ID.

* If you save \$1 now, you also have all that \$1 now earning more money for you.

* More expensive products are expensive because of perceived value.

* Make gifts where value will be compounded; e.g., to train doctors.

* Warren Buffet will give all his money at his death, so it can now earn even more money.

This informative program is available for purchase or rental . . . if you want to get it, please click:

<http://www.achievementlibrary.com/>

Above is the tape rental club I belong to; i.e., the Achievement Tape Library . . . this a great way to hear CDs and/or audio cassette tapes, view videos, etc.--all for a fraction of what it would cost to buy them . . . call the head of the firm (Paul Arroyo) directly at 1.800.735.3660 and mention my name . . . that way, you'll be sure to pay even higher prices . . . NOT.

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5. TV alert

A. AMERICAN IDOL returns for its seventh season on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 8 p.m. on FOX . . . with the writers' strike continuing, you'll probably get more laughs here than anywhere else--especially given the fact that auditions run until February 6.

B. SOUNDSTAGE features a concert from Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers that also includes a few duets with Stevie Nicks . . . Thursday at 10 p.m. on PBS . . . since PBS dates and times often vary, check your local listings.

C. MASTERPIECE adopts Jane Austen's gentle parody of Gothic fiction, NORTHANGER ABBEY, on Sunday at 9 p.m. on PBS . . . again, check your local listings.

D. You may remember Bryan Cranston as MALCOM IN THE MIDDLE's oddball dad . . . he now plays a chemistry teacher who turns to churning out homemade crystal meth after being diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer . . . Sundays at 10 p.m. on AMC.

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6. Vacation time

Tom finally decides to take a vacation. He books himself on a Caribbean cruise and proceeds to have the time of his life--until the boat sank. He found himself swept up on the shore of an island with no other people, no supplies . . . nothing. Only bananas and coconuts.

After about four months, he is lying on the beach one day when the most gorgeous woman he has ever seen rows up to him. In disbelief, he asks her, "Where did you come from? How did you get here?"

"I rowed over from the other side of the island," she says. "I landed here when my cruise ship sank."

"Amazing," he says. "You were really lucky to have a rowboat wash up with you."

"Oh, this?" replies the woman. "I made the rowboat out of raw material found on the island. I whittled the oars from gum tree branches; I wove the bottom from palm branches; and the sides and stern came from a Eucalyptus tree."

"But . . . but . . . that's impossible," stutters Tom. "You had no tools or hardware. How did you manage?"

"Oh, no problem," replies the woman. "On the South side of the island, there is a very unusual strata of alluvial rock exposed. I found if I fired it to a certain temperature in my kiln, it melted into forgeable ductile iron. I used that for tools and used the tools to make the hardware." Tom is stunned. "Let's row over to my place," she says.

After a few minutes of rowing, she docks the boat at a small wharf. As Tom looks onto shore, he nearly falls out of the boat. Before him is a stone walk leading to an exquisite bungalow painted in blue and white. While the woman ties up the rowboat with an expertly woven hemp rope, he can only stare ahead, dumbstruck.

As they walk into the house, she says casually, "It's not much, but I call it home. Sit down, please. Would you like to have a drink?"

"No, no thank you," he says, still dazed. "Can't take any more coconut juice."

"It's not coconut juice," the woman replies. "I built a still. How about a Pina Colada?"

Trying to hide his continued amazement, he accepts, and they sit down on her handwoven couch to talk. After they have exchanged their stories, the woman announces, "I'm going to slip into something more comfortable. Would you like to take a shower and shave? There is a razor upstairs in the cabinet in the bathroom."

No longer questioning anything, Tom goes into the bathroom. There, in the cabinet, is a razor made from a bone handle. Two shells honed to a hollow-ground edge are fastened on to its end inside of a swivel mechanism. "WOW! This woman is amazing," he muses. "What next?"

When he returns, she greets him wearing "nothing but vines" strategically positioned and smelling faintly of gardenias. She beckons for him to sit down next to her.

"Tell me," she begins suggestively, slithering closer to him. "We've been out here for a really long time. I know you've been lonely. There's something I'm sure you really feel like doing right now, something you've been longing for all these months. You know . . ."

She stares into his eyes. He can't believe what he's hearing! "You mean . . .," he swallows excitedly. "We can really watch the EAGLES game from here?"

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A. Here's a great website--sponsored by Liberty Mutual--to look at with your children or grandchildren:

<http://www.befiresmart.com>

It consists of videos for parents, children, educators, and fire fighters, all of which explain ways to prevent and to fight dangerous fires that could happen . . . there's even a downloadable coloring book.

B. To see a computerized version of an old magic trick that will amaze you, please click:

<http://www.quizyourprofile.com/guessyournumber.swf>

It's simple to follow and only takes a few moments of your time, yet each time you play it (and I did twice), you'll be impressed that "your number" always comes up.

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blaineworld.net>

If you're new to the newsletter and/or have never met me before, you can see a whole bunch of my pictures (and of my family, too) by going to "Blaine's Best" on the left, then Pictures . . . make sure you have your sound on for arguably the best song of all time!

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8. Computer tip

If you miss an issue of BLAINESWORLD or other email for that matter, it's a good idea to check your spam folder from time to time . . . sometimes, mail goes in there that you might actually want to review.

I know this happens every so often with AOL . . . to find the spam folder, just go mail at the top, then spam folder.

Methinks that other email providers have a similar setting that you might want to check . . . at the same time, you can often change your requirements; e.g., with respect to what you want to let in, block, etc.

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9. Helpful tips to make life simpler, part 2 of 2 (continued from last week)

Avoid cutting yourself when slicing vegetables by getting someone else to hold the vegetables while you chop.

Avoid arguments with the females about lifting the toilet seat by using the sink.

For high blood pressure sufferers - simply cut yourself and bleed for a few minutes, thus reducing the pressure on your veins. Remember to use a timer.

A mouse trap placed on top of your alarm clock will prevent you from rolling over and going back to sleep after you hit the snooze button.

If you have a bad cough, take a large dose of laxatives. Then you'll be afraid

to cough.

You only need two tools in life - WD-40 and duct tape. If it doesn't move and should, use the WD-40. If it shouldn't move and does, use the duct tape.

Remember: Everyone seems normal until you get to know them.

If you can't fix it with a hammer, you've got an electrical problem.

Daily thought: Some people are like slinkies--not really good for anything but they bring a smile to your face when pushed down the stairs.

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10. A quote I like

Life is not worth living unless it is lived for others.--Mother Teresa (1910-1997), Roman Catholic nun who ministered to the poor, sick, orphaned, and dying for over forty years

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11. Thought for the day

Four boyfriends

Once upon a time there was this girl who had four boyfriends.

She loved the 4th boyfriend the most and adorned him with rich robes and treated him to the finest of delicacies. She gave him nothing but the best.

She also loved the 3rd boyfriend very much and was always showing him off to neighboring kingdoms. However, she feared that one day he would leave her for another.

She also loved her 2nd boyfriend. He was her confidant and was always kind, considerate and patient with her. Whenever this girl faced a problem, she could confide in him, and he would help her get through the difficult times.

The girl's 1st boyfriend was a very loyal partner and had made great contributions in maintaining her wealth and kingdom. However, she did not love the first boyfriend. Although he loved her deeply, she hardly took notice of him.

One day, the girl fell ill and she knew her time was short. She thought of her luxurious life and wondered: "I now have four boyfriends with me, but when I die, I'll be all alone."

Thus, she said to the 4th boyfriend, "I loved you the most, endowed you with the finest clothing and showered great care over you. Now that I'm dying, will you follow me and keep me company?"

"No way," replied the 4th boyfriend, and he walked away without another word. His answer cut like a sharp knife right into her heart.

The sad girl then told the 3rd boyfriend, "I loved you all my life. Now that I'm dying, will you follow me and keep me company?"

"No!,"replied the 3rd boyfriend. "Life is too good! When you die, I'm going

to marry someone else!" Her heart sank and turned cold.

She then said to the 2nd boyfriend, "I have always turned to you for help, and you've always been there for me. When I die, will you follow me and keep me company?"

"I'm sorry, I can't help you out this time," replied the 2nd boyfriend. "At the very most, I can only walk with you to your grave." His answer struck her like a bolt of lightning, and the girl was devastated.

Then a voice called out: "I'll go with you. I'll follow you no matter where you go."

The girl looked up, and there was her first boyfriend. He was very skinny as he suffered from malnutrition and neglect.

Greatly grieved, the girl said, "I should have taken much better care of you when I had the chance!"

In truth, you have four boyfriends in your lives:

Your 4th boyfriend is your body. No matter how much time and effort you lavish in making it look good, it will leave you when you die.

Your 3rd boyfriend is your possessions, status and wealth. When you die, it will all go to others.

Your 2nd boyfriend is your family and friends. No matter how much they have been there for you, the furthest they can stay by you is up to the grave.

And your 1st boyfriend is your Soul. Often neglected in pursuit of wealth, power and pleasures of the world.

However, your Soul is the only thing that will follow you wherever you go. Cultivate, strengthen and cherish it now, for it is the only part of you that will follow you to the throne of God and continue with you throughout Eternity.

Author unknown
(if you know who wrote this and/or the source, please let me know)

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12. Advance planning department

A. Jim in Pennsylvania:

If you're passionate about health (yours--as well as other people's) AND you'd like to earn money helping others with their health, then you'll want to read further.

It's an invitation for you to check out a new Health Coach Business Program created by the folks at Hilton Johnson Productions, Inc. (If you're not familiar with HJP, they're a well-respected training company which has specialized in training entrepreneurs for the past ten years.)

Frankly, Professional Health Coaching is one of the most exciting and unique business ventures I have seen in many years, and I'm happy to offer you the opportunity

to check it out for yourself on:

Thursday, January 17th at 2:00 p.m. ET (New York Time)

On this 90-minute class exclusively for my friends, you'll learn how you can become a Professional Health Coach and create an income stream of at least \$127 per hour (based on an independent study) working over the Internet and telephone.

FREE!

This is a two-part teleconference/web tour, and you must be on a PC and telephone at the same time.

To register for both parts of the presentation, please click on the following link:

<https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/341907189>

B. According to Joe Doyle, director of GOODBYE CHARLIE, "The show is shaping up beautifully. It should be a crowd pleaser."

For those not familiar with the play, it is George Axelrod's comic romp about Charlie, a womanizing man who is murdered and reincarnated as a woman to learn lessons in humility, life and love.

Shows run from January 18 through February 3, 2008 at the Heritage Center in Morrisville, PA . . . for more information, please click:

<http://www.actorsnetbucks.org/>

C. Cyndy in Pennsylvania:
SACRED CHANTING and TONING with Cyndy "Snake Dancer"

SATURDAY, JANUARY 26, 2008, from 10 a.m.–1 p.m.

Location: Landenberg, PA

Donation: \$40.00

To register please email or call 610.274.3109 by 1.24.2008.

Together we will explore the sacred sounds created by our original vessel--our voice. We will use our intent to connect with Spirit and fill our bodies with beautiful resonance. Energy never dies. As we put forth our sound, mingled with our love, the Earth and all her inhabitants rejoice. No vocal experience or expertise is needed. Dress comfortably.

D. YOUR CHANCE TO WIN \$500! (I kid you not!!) . . . come to a presentation I'm giving on Tuesday, January 29, at Bucks County Community College . . . time: 6:30 p.m. . . . the topic: Four-mula 4 Success--the 4 Things You Need to do to Market Yourself . . . cost is FREE . . . for location, please email me at bginbc@aol.com.

PS. Please join me in celebrating praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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BLAINESWORLD

BLAINESWORLD

#588

1.7.2008

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1. Reflections

A. Cynthia, my beautiful bride, and I celebrated the New Year with a group of friends . . . we first went to a special performance at the Villagers Theatre in Somerset, NJ, at which many of the regular performers sang a variety of songs from such past productions as MY FAIR LADY, THE PAJAMA GAME, GUYS AND DOLLS, DAMN YANKEES, SWEET CHARITY, 42ND STREET, and many others . . . our favorite number, "In Whatever Time We Have," came from a show we had never seen: CHILDREN OF EDEN.

I don't think we have ever viewed anything there that we did not like, and this show continued the streak . . . though it just had a one evening run, I suggest you check out such upcoming productions as LITTLE WOMEN, BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS and ANNIE GET YOUR GUN . . . for more information, please click: <http://www.villagerstheatre.com>

From there, we all went to Thai Gardens in Hillsborough--our favorite Thai restaurant in the area . . . the food, as always, was excellent and what's so great about this place is that the friendly folks there will prepare any item you want in whatever way you want it . . . for more information, please click: <http://www.thaigardenhillsborough.com>

Afterwards, everybody came back to our place to welcome in the New Year with both dessert and champagne . . . that's Cynthia and I (below):



B. On Friday, Cynthia had a bunch of other folks (primarily her coworkers) over for a pajama party . . . she had Chinese food delivered for dinner, then had everybody stay to watch WEST SIDE STORY.

I wasn't invited, though I was told that wasn't the case; in reality, I had mediation cases scheduled for that night . . . but I did manage to get there before the end of the movie and quickly getting into my Valentine Day's pajamas, I managed to crash the event at the end . . . it was fun, especially since I was the only guy there.

On Saturday, we met her nephew Benjamin for lunch at a place we had never been to: St. Jame's Gate Publick House (973.378.2222) in Maplewood, NJ . . . I liked my macaroni and cheese, Cynthia said her Caesar salad was OK and Benjamin said his St. James' burger was good . . . in general, portions were quite large . . . we liked sitting near the fireplace . . . and will return the next time we're in the area.

Next, we went with Benjamin to see SWEENEY TODD . . . our collective feeling about the film can be summed-up in two words: miss it!

At night, we met Joyce and Marty (Cynthia's sister and brother-in-law) and a few of her cousins for dinner at Yoshi-Sono--a Japanese

restaurant in West Orange, NJ . . . we've been there before and liked what we were served . . . so we stuck with our previous order, beef teriyaki, and were not disappointed . . . also, we all shared several very tasty appetizers.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.yoshi-sono.com>

We concluded the evening with dessert back at Joyce and Marty's house . . . the apple cake she served was simply out of the world, but then again, that describes just about anything either of them ever prepares.

C. Now that we've temporarily finished scouting Florida for our possible retirement locale, it is now time to move on to . . . the Carolinas . . . we will probably be going to North Carolina in February and then South Carolina in March.

I mention this in case you have any knowledge of either of those two states, particularly as it relates to 55 and over communities . . . housing, in general . . . weather . . . activities . . . or anything that you think we should know about . . . if so, please do share.

D. CONGRATULATIONS to Mark Sfirri, one of my many talented colleagues at Bucks County Community College . . . his 8-page cover story is in WOODWORK magazine, now out on the newsstands, and he also put together a 2-page gallery section that contains 8 dovetail boxes from his beginning Fine Woodworking students from Fall, 2006.

***** BLAINESWORLD BEST AWARD *****

This week, it goes Oksana Kors--a skilled massage therapist on the staff of Dr. Wendy Attadgie (my chiropractor who has offices in both Newtown and Southampton, PA).

I've now been receiving massages from Oksana for several months and have been impressed with the quality of her work . . . in addition, he has a most pleasant disposition . . . and she deserves special recognition for having recently passed a demanding exam for national certification.

Oksana is just one of several fine massage therapists employed by Dr. Attadgie . . . I've long been a fan of another one, Chris Williams, and only regret that her hours don't coincide with mine.

Should you want further information about massages and/or to schedule an appointment with my favorite chiropractor, please call Dr. Attadgie at 215.355.9337.

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2. FYI

Congress is looking at a requirement that physicians file all prescriptions electronically . . . I support such a move, especially given my handwriting . . . imagine, for example, if I were a doctor and you got a prescription for me . . . it is doubtful that you or anybody else could ever read it.

For more information, please click:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=17170228>

Yet even if this ever becomes law, I strongly urge you to check all prescriptions . . . mistakes too often get made, as evidenced by this letter sent to Dear Abby:

I am writing to you to alert your readers to ALWAYS check their prescriptions while they are picking them up at the pharmacy. I was given two new prescriptions today. I had already taken one twice when I discovered that the pills in both bottles were the same.

I immediately called the pharmacy and was told that a new pharmacist had made a mistake. Not knowing what the pills were supposed to look like, I never questioned that the prescriptions were correct. I am grateful that it was "only" the anti-inflammatory drug that got mixed up. The second prescription was a muscle relaxant.

Some pharmacies print (much too small) the type and quantity of the pills on the label. But to be on the safe side, always open and check the contents of your pill container while you are at the pharmacy.--Natalie in Pennsylvania

Dear Natalie:

I'm pleased to pass along your reminder because I have had a similar experience. It never hurts to check, and the optimum time to do it is when you receive your prescription.

FYI, part 2

* Sharon in North Carolina (with a FREE OFFER to readers):
The story of NFI Consumer Products epitomizes the quintessential entrepreneur's dream-building an exceptional and thriving company using little more than passion, ingenuity, and dedication. With no venture capital or investor backing, Richard Guy and his sister Betsy Horner went from selling nutritional supplements out of their parent's garage to presiding over a multi-million dollar enterprise that today distributes and markets health and fitness products in more than 35,000 retail outlets across the United States. Today NFI features a broad range of fitness, weight-loss, and health products that are sold through the Diet, Joint and Bone Care, Energy, Skin Care, and Pain Relief Categories.

BLUE-EMU®, the premier product of NFI, is an amazing topical formula that contains some of nature's most soothing ingredients to help relieve muscle and joint aches and pains. BLUE-EMU® consists of highly refined Emu Oil using a patented process to ensure the highest quality and potency of Emu Oil. When Emu Oil is applied to the skin, it quickly penetrates the skin to help control inflammation, pain and reduce swelling. The remarkable proprietary formula of BLUE-EMU® also includes Aloe, Glucosamine and MSM to maximize the soothing and deep penetrating effects of the Emu Oil and provide long term joint support for overall joint health. NFI Consumer Products also offers a menthol version of BLUE-EMU® in a cream and a spray for cool and fast acting pain relief.

For more information about BLUE-EMU® and other NFI products, visit our website:

<http://www.nfiproducts.com>

To receive free BLUE-EMU® sample/travel packets, call us toll free at 800.432.9334, Monday - Friday from 8 am to 4 p.m., and mention "Blaine with the Fibromyaliga Group."

PS. Blaine, I read in your newsletter that you had a basal cell removed. If you'd like, I can send Transdermis® Scar Therapy to help heal your wound. You'll find this Emu Oil product to be absolutely wonderful as well!

* Lisa in Pennsylvania:

I confess I haven't been up on reading my Blainesworlds for some time. My job and toddler are keeping me crazy (um, I mean busy). I save them all and every so often catch up on several at a time. I always find good information or something to just give me a much needed laugh. Thanks.

* Freddie in New Jersey:

Do you remember when you gave a mention to my mom's Holocaust tribute website? I thank you once again.

Can you please mention my new youtube.com clip in your next newsletter?

It's approved for any age, and I sure would appreciate it. My Ned The Toothpick boards have grown to over 1300 members, and it will continue to grow.

The clip explains it all, and it's all good.

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=gFKCQbODzXs>

* Curious in New Jersey:

Since you read all the time, maybe you can help me. I want to donate my body to some medical school that will use my 6'5" frame as a skeleton. I know this is done, but I just don't know where.

If you happen to come across some reputable med school looking for healthy bones (I take a ton of calcium daily), let me know. Many thanks!

* Darcy in Pennsylvania:

New Jersey resident Dan Cantor--a friend--has gone through a midlife career change (not crisis, mind you). He previously was in the corporate arena, traveling the globe. During his career, he visited many third-world countries, which has given him a unique perspective on the human condition. It is this experience that led him to start his own business, in the hope that he can "heal" the world, one body at a time.

Now, at almost 50, he has launched Dan Cantor Personal Training. His specialty is seniors, but he trains people of all ages and fitness levels. He also does nutritional counseling and speaks on the importance of fitness for seniors. To see his bio, visit:

http://expect2getfit.com/personal_trainer_Mt_laurel_nj.htm

To contact Dan directly, call 826.236.9416 or email him for a free consultation: dan@dancantorfitness.com.

* Bob in New Jersey:

I do not know how you rate your editions of BLAINESWORLD, but this one [#587] is a keeper. (I mean, it is MORE of a KEEPER than all of the other editions.) It is marvelous. The links are great,

the review is wonderful (I am buying the Reincarnationist, and I may buy a Kindle to read it on. That looks like fun!)

The recipes, the dogs, the photos, the leader quotes, Cosby . . . everything.

Thank you.

* Debbie in New York:

My 2 cents on the housing market . . . you might know this stuff but just in case . . . if you move to Florida, you should expect deep discounts as they are number 2 in the nation with respect to foreclosures . . . and the builders are in fear of defaulting on their current projects.

If you move to North Carolina, they are still in positive territory with respect to year over year increases in housing value . . . so you might not get the same discount but might get one anyway since your not buying until further into 2008 because the housing market in NC will fall as well . . . they just haven't caught up yet with the rest of the country.

My forecast for the housing market in the years to come: it's not going to recover for a long time . . . and here's why . . . between 2001 and 2006, the cost of housing increased 74% as opposed to the increase in income of 15% for the same period (according to the WSJ) . . . therefore, people paid too much for homes which they cannot afford . . . so until earnings increase, the only way for the cost of housing to go is down.

Furthermore, if builders want to keep building, they are going to have to get their price back in line with what people can really pay, which is less . . . long term, housing will not begin to appreciate until the cost of new homes becomes equal to existing homes . . . or the value of existing home goes down--either way it's going down . . . I rest my case.

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3. Menu choices

A cannibal was walking through the jungle and came upon a restaurant operated by a fellow cannibal. Feeling somewhat hungry, he sat down and looked over the menu . . .

Tourist: \$5

Broiled Missionary: \$10.00

Fried Explorer: \$15.00

Baked Democrat or Grilled Republican: \$100.00

The cannibal called the waiter over and asked, "Why such a price difference for the politician?"

The cook replied, "Have you ever tried to clean one? They're so full of cr*p, it takes all morning."

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4. Reviews

A. JUNO is a quirky comedy about a teenager who decides

to have sex and then becomes pregnant as a result . . . it grew on me and now, thinking about it afterwards, I liked it and would recommend that you see it too . . . the accompanying soundtrack is great, as is the cast--ranging from Ellen Page in the title role to J.K. Simmons (so good in the SPIDER-MAN) movies . . . there's also an ending that moved me, but nice guy that I am, I won't give away.

In addition, the dialogue was great; e.g., to cite just a few snippets:

* Juno MacGuff: [commenting that the repercussions of pregnancy have forced her into] "dealing with things way beyond my maturing level."

* Vanessa Loring: Your parents are probably wondering where you are.
Juno MacGuff: Nah... I mean, I'm already pregnant, so what other kind of shenanigans could I get into?

* Mac MacGuff: Did you see that coming?

Bren: Yeah . . . but I was hoping she was expelled or into hard drugs.

Mac MacGuff: Or DWI . . . anything but this.

* Juno MacGuff: As far as boyfriends go, Paulie Bleeker is totally boss. He is the cheese to my macaroni.

* Juno MacGuff: You should try talking to it. 'Cause, like, supposedly they can hear you even though it's all, like, ten-thousand leagues under the sea.

* Juno MacGuff: You're like . . . the coolest person I've ever met--and you don't even have to try?

Paulie Bleeker: Actually I try really hard.

Rated PG-13.

B. If you're a fan of Westerns, you'll enjoy 3:10 TO YUMA--an exciting remake of the classic 1957 film of the same name . . . it's the tale of a down-and-out rancher, well-played by Christian Bale, who agrees to escort a notorious gunman, an equally effective Russell Crowe, to a train that will take him to prison . . . there's a lot of action and suspense in this one, and it will maintain your interest until the very end . . . rated R.

C. Steve Martin became famous as a comic in the mid seventies and by 1978, he was the biggest concert draw in the history of stand-up . . . yet in 1981, he quit forever to my great regret.

His book, BORN STANDING UP, explains why this happened . . . in reading it, you'll gain an understanding of what makes Martin tick, as well as what being a comic is all about.

You'll also discover this is no easy job, particularly if you have little talent . . . as the author notes:

* At age eighteen, I had absolutely no gifts. I could not sing or dance, and the only acting I did was really just shouting. Thankfully, perseverance is a great substitute for talent. Having been motivated by Earl Scrugg's rendition of "Foggy Mountain Breakdown," I had learned, barely, to play the banjo. I had taught myself by slowing down banjo records on my turntable and picking out the songs note by note, with a helpful assist from my high school friend John McEuen, already an accomplished player. The only place to practice

without agonizing everyone in the house was in my car, parked on the street with the windows rolled up, even in the middle of August. Also, I could juggle passably, a feat I had learned from the talented Fantasyland court jester Christopher Fair (who could juggle five balls while riding a high unicycle) and which I practiced in my backyard using heavy wooden croquet balls that would clack against each other, pinching my swollen fingers in between. Despite a lack of natural ability, I did have the one element necessary to all early creativity: naivete, that fabulous quality that keeps you from knowing just how unsuited you are for what you are about to do.

In addition, Martin presents a lot of useful advice for any entertainer--or speaker, for that matter:

* Fats Johnson, a jovial folksinger who dressed to kill in black suits with white ruffled shirts and wore elaborate rings on his guitar-strumming hand, often headlined the club. When I asked him about his philosophy of dressing for the stage, he said firmly, "Always look better than they do."

Though BORN STANDING UP doesn't profess to be a book full of jokes, it does still had its share of sections that made me laughing . . . such as when Martin described some of the great opening lines he has heard:

* At the Mecca, in Buena Park, I saw the up-and-coming comedian Pat Paulsen, who opened with this funny line: "I've had a great life, with the exception of 1959, when, unfortunately, I passed away." (The best opening line I ever heard was from Sam Kinison. In the late eighties, playing the Comedy Store in Los Angeles, he said, "You're going to see a lot of comedians tonight; some will be good, some will be okay. But there's a difference between me and them. Them, you might want to see again sometime." But wait--maybe the best opening line I heard was Richard Pryor's, after he started two hours late in front of a potentially miffed crowd at the Troubadour in Los Angeles. He said simply, "Hope I'm funny.")

I was only disappointed that this book wasn't longer . . . it has me looking for a Part 2, in which Martin talks more about his career since 1981.

D. Heard DEAN & ME (A LOVE STORY) by Jerry Lewis and James Kaplan, the story of how Lewis teamed with Martin to become perhaps the most famous comedy team of all time . . . they performed in nightclubs, theaters and on television between 1946 and 1956, while also making 16 widely popular movies.

Then, somewhat tragically, they parted ways . . . and though both retained success on their own, many wondered what exactly caused the breakup . . . and what would have happened had they instead stayed together and/or at least reunited from time to time.

I'm sad that this never happened, but after listening to this account, I at least feel I have a better sense of what happened--in large part because of the Lewis' candor in telling the story . . . he doesn't mask the fact that he was much of the blame, and he goes out of his way to point out that Martin often didn't get the credit that he deserved.

As might be expected, there's a great deal of name-dropping in the book . . . but none of it is malicious and, in fact,

enhanced my enjoyment of DEAN & ME--one of the best showbiz tales I have come across in quite some time.

I also liked Greggy Jbara's narration . . . he did not try to imitate Lewis, per se; however, at times, there's a hint of his spoiled-child voice that have me wanting to rent a Martin and Lewis film in the near future.

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5. TV alert

A. Drew Lachey hosts DANCE WAR: BRUNO VS. CARRIE ANN, in which two teams of singer-dancers compete against other in an effort to find the ultimate performance group . . . Mondays at 8 p.m. on ABC.

B. Carson Kressley is an engaging host on HOW TO LOOK GOOD NAKED . . . it offers women of all sizes tips for always accepting their bodies . . . Fridays at 9 p.m. on LIFETIME.

C. Nikki Blonsky, so fine in HAIRSPRAY, stars in QUEEN SIZED--an original movie on LIFETIME . . . it is the true story of Maggie, an overweight teen who competes for Homecoming Queen . . . Saturday at 9 p.m.

D. For your kids, but you too . . . catch NICK NEWS WITH LINDA ELLERBEE . . . she's attempting to help build awareness of the election process among young adults, and methinks that should serve as a good introduction to what's happening; e.g., if you haven't been following the primaries . . . Sunday at 9 p.m. on NICKELODEON.

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6. The maid

The maid asked for a big pay raise. The Madam was very upset about this and asked: "Now Maria, why do you want an increase?"

Maria: " Well Madam, there are three reasons why I want an increase. "The first is that I iron better than you."

Madam: "Who said you iron better than me?"

Maria: "The Master said so."

Madam: "Oh."

Maria: "The second reason is that I am a better cook than you."

Madam: "Nonsense, who said you were a better cook than I?"

Maria: "The Master did."

Madam: "Oh."

Maria: "My third reason is that I am a better lover than you."

Madam (very upset now): "Did the Master say so as well?"

Maria: "No Madam, the gardener did."

She got the pay raise.

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7. Websites

A. THANKS to George in Pennsylvania for this website:

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/politics/election2008/candidate-match-game.htm>

If you take this test, it will tell you which presidential candidate most matches up with your views.

B. And, also, to Donna in New Jersey for this website on the Apple I-rack:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rw2nkoGLhrE>

Make sure you watch until the end!

C. BLAINESWORLD, the website, remains up and running . . . to view it, please click:

<http://www.blaineworld.net>

Should you want to invite your friends, relatives or colleagues to join you as a subscriber, just refer them to the "Special Offer" toward the bottom of the homepage . . . or as another option, forward this whole issue and tell them to either see above website or the offer at the very bottom of this week's newsletter.

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8. Computer tip

I've said it before, but this suggestion is worth repeating . . . when you can't seem to get it running (or running properly), turn it off . . . then unplug EVERYTHING and take out all the wires that are hooked into your computer . . . wait at least 30 minutes . . . during this time, I suggest you do something away from your computer; e.g., read a book, do some exercise, etc. . . . when you return to your computer, plug EVERYTHING back in and put back all the wires that you had unhooked . . . I don't quite know why this works, but it quite often does.

In fact, just recently I kept getting this error message: The computer could not get an Internet connection . . . no matter what I did, I couldn't get that connection; i.e., until I followed the above steps . . . shortly thereafter, I was up and running again.

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9. Helpful tips to make life simpler, part 1 of 2

Old telephone books make ideal personal address books. Simply cross out the names and addresses of people you don't know.

Fool other drivers into thinking you have an expensive car phone by holding an old TV or video remote control up to your ear and occasionally swerving across the road and mounting the curb.

Lose weight quickly by eating raw pork and rancid tuna. I found that the subsequent food poisoning/diarrhea enabled me to lose 12 pounds in only 2 days.

Avoid parking tickets by leaving your windshield wipers turned to fast wipe whenever you leave your car parked illegally.

No time for a bath? Wrap yourself in masking tape and remove the dirt by simply peeling it off.

Apply red nail polish to your nails before clipping them. The red nails will be much easier to spot on your bathroom carpet. (Unless you have a red carpet, in which case a contrasting polish should be selected).

If a person is choking on an ice cube, don't panic. Simply pour a jug of boiling water down their throat and presto! The blockage is almost instantly removed.

Save on booze by drinking cold tea instead of whiskey. The following morning you can create the effects of hangover by drinking a thimble full of dish washing liquid and banging your head repeatedly on the wall.

(to be concluded next week)

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10. A quote I like

You know you're in love when you can't fall asleep because reality is finally better than your dreams.--Dr. Seuss (1904-1991), pen name for Theodor Seuss Geisel, an American writer and cartoonist best known for his collection of children's books

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11. Thought for the day

Sometimes

Sometimes people come into your life and you know right away that they were meant to be there, to serve some sort of purpose, teach you a lesson, or to help you figure out who you are or who you want to become.

You never know who these people may be--a roommate, a neighbor, a professor, a friend, a lover, or even a complete stranger--but when you lock eyes with them, you know at that very moment they will affect your life in some profound way.

Sometimes things happen to you that may seem horrible, painful, and unfair at first, but in reflection you find that without overcoming those obstacles you would

have never realized your potential, strength, willpower, or heart.

Illness, injury, love, lost moments of true greatness, and sheer stupidity all occur to test the limits of your soul. Without these small tests, whatever they may be, life would be like a smoothly paved straight flat road to nowhere. It would be safe and comfortable, but dull and utterly pointless.

The people you meet who affect your life, and the success and downfalls you experience, help to create who you are and who you become. Even the bad experiences can be learned from. In fact, they are sometimes the most important ones.

If someone loves you, give love back to them in whatever way you can, not only because they love you, but because in a way, they are teaching you to love and how to open your heart and eyes to things.

If someone hurts you, betrays you, or breaks your heart, forgive them, for they have helped you learn about trust and the importance of being cautious to whom you open your heart.

Make every day count. Appreciate every moment and take from those moments everything that you possibly can for you may never be able to experience it again. Talk to people that you have never talked to before, and listen to what they have to say.

Let yourself fall in love, break free, and set your sights high. Hold your head up because you have every right to. Tell yourself you are a great individual and believe in yourself, for if you don't believe in yourself, it will be hard for others to believe in you.

You can make anything you wish of your life. Create your own life and then go out and live it with absolutely no regrets.

And if you love someone tell them, for you never know what tomorrow may have in store.

Learn a lesson in life each day that you live! Today is the tomorrow you were worried about yesterday. Was it worth it?

Author unknown
(if you know who wrote this and/or the source, please let me know)

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12. Advance planning department

A. Tom in New Jersey:
2007 was a busy year with one exciting show after another,

but 2008 promises to be bigger . . . starting with The Fantasticks, a show I have always loved and surprisingly have never done, directed by Barrymore Award winner Tony Braithwaite. It promises to be the most polished show I've ever been involved with.

Sure, every small theatre in the country has produced The Fantasticks, and you have probably seen a bad production of it. The challenging music and the simple, delicate nature of the story often make for an evening of overdone children's theatre. But there is a reason it is the "World's Longest Running Musical." It is a story of love and life that has universal appeal. I think our production brings new humor and energy to it. The cast is amazing! (And you know how much I hate to brag.)

Innovation Studio at the Kimmel Center
Broad & Spruce Streets, Philadelphia, PA
January 10 - February 24, Thurs thru Sun

For tickets and information, please click:
<http://fantasticksthemusical.com>

B. Deborah in New Jersey:

We have some very special programs coming up this season to warm body, heart and soul. I wanted to highlight two on the use of essential oils and polarity/energy practices with Clio Perez to support us during these dark and cold months.

Based on your feedback, we've rescheduled these additional workshops using the essential oils and other healing techniques.

Clio Perez returns with Natural Self Care: Gaining Emotional Clarity and Personal Power this Sunday, January 13, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
A great way to take stock of where we are - to decompress after the holidays - and to figure out how to channel our energy for the coming year.

Also, Natural Self Care: Essential Oils Sunday, February 3, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. As we find ourselves in the depths of winter, here are some easy ways to take care of ourselves and our loved ones.

For more information, please click:
<http://www.princetonyoga.com>

C. Cyndy in Pennsylvania:

I do have some more exciting news to share . . . I have become affiliated with Creative Healing Arts in West Chester PA, a beautiful healing space with many extraordinary practitioners, and I will be doing an Introduction to Consciousness Shifting Drumming and Sound Healing there in January and February. These Introductions are being offered to you on a love donation basis only. If enough energy responds, I will be available for a regular monthly circle at CHA in the Spring. Less of a drive for some of you! I will paste the dates and address of the studio below. Registration deadlines are January 23rd and February 20th. Please contact me directly at snakdancr@aol.com or 610.274.3109.

INTRODUCTIONS TO CONSCIOUSNESS SHIFTING DRUMMING
and SOUND HEALING FOR MEN AND WOMEN

Friday, January 25, 2008 - 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Friday, February 22, 2008 - 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Both of the above Introductions will be held at:
Creative Healing Arts
Your Center for Self Discovery
Westtown Business Center
1568 McDaniel Drive
West Chester, PA

<http://www.createandheal.com>

PS. Please join me in praying that we soon get our remaining soldiers back from Iraq and that peace resumes in Israel . . . also, make it a great week!

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