

Nice Distinctions 18

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This is Discordian Regimentation #118, a Church of the SuperGenius publication. In Wile E. we trust.

It's that time of year again, and here is the latest Nice Distinctions. As usual, most of it first appeared as posts on livejournal, where I am **supergee**.

LJ has been so much fun that I decided to branch out. Some people dissatisfied with aspects of lj, such as the occasional wower uprisings because someone fantasized about teenagers exploring one another or used a nursing-mother icon on which there might be a bit of areole showing, decided to start a new network called **Dreamwidth**. A number of my friends moved over, and since one can have the same username on both and post to both simultaneously, I now belong to both. (Hey, I'm poly.)

I also joined Facebook, under my official name, and made contact with many old friends. It's enjoyable in some ways, but it is proudly and insistently viral, like some virtual Social Director ordering everyone to join in on the mandatory fun. For instance, if you sign up for a Cause, it will ransack your Friends List and try to recruit all of them in your name. I also avoid the games and quizzes because I am old & cranky.

I have no desire to join MySpace, which considers sounds and blinking lights on one's userpage a feature. Web anthropologist Danah Boyd reports that many MySpacers are uncomfortable with the excessive literacy of Facebook. Let's see: Any other networks?

Oh, yes. I can easily imagine a Fifties *Galaxy* story where the Authorities give the people a communications device with an imposed 140-character limit so nothing

reasonably complex and thus dangerous can be transmitted, and Sheckley or Dick or whoever gives it a viciously satirical name like Twitter. The punchline might be that, despite the enforced lack of intellectual content, it could still serve as a conduit for revolutionary messages. (I'm not on that one either. Twitter is for people with shorter attention spans than mine, and it scares me to learn that there is such a demographic.)

So we had an election, and the good guys won for a change. The Republicans gave us two new media stars, vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin, and Joe the Plumber, who may accurately represent the working-class people who trust the Republicans. (Looking ahead, some proposed a 2012 ticket, Palin and Plumber—Dumb and Dumber, which may have run aground with Palin's decision to leave the governorship a year and a half before the end of her term, on the grounds that to do otherwise would make her a quitter, that making as much sense as many things she said during the campaign.)

I started out wondering:

Suppose for a moment that the mass media are not mindless tools of moneyed interests, and thus of the Republicans. (It's possible.) Is there an alternate explanation of their coverage of McCain?

I believe so. They are investing a lot of money in electoral coverage, and they know they need an exciting contest to maximize ratings. McCain started out with problems because the Republican marriage between the fundamentalists and the rich white guys is coming apart, and if they let us know every time McCain did something stupid, like referring to the Iraq/Pakistan border, the election would be a predictable rout. Perhaps this is nothing more than an obvious, rational business decision.

Pity it's our lives they're messing with.

Towards the end, the Republicans decided that it was time to take the gloves off, which may not be the best policy when one is flinging feces.

After the election, I was enthusiastic, a condition that has not yet ended:

Obama won, and I believe he will be able to do a lot to get us out of the mess the Bush gang put us in ~~which was so bad it made the American people willing to vote for a black person.~~

I rejoice in Obama's victory, both because he deserves it and because he'll be good for the country, but before it could give me too much faith in the American people or the democratic process, there was the word that Proposition 8 won in California.

When I was young, the First Amendment was explained to me this way: The government can never make it illegal to be Jewish. Not only will we never have a dictator doing it, but it couldn't be done by majority vote either.

Well, we've had some progress since then, and we Jews might even be able to win such a vote (though I wouldn't put any money on the Muslims or the atheists). We still need the principle, though: There are areas that should remain matters of private choice, and the more of these we can have, the better. If we need an official government sanction for marriage (and we probably do), it should not be restricted to couples with different sorts of naughty bits, any more than it should be restricted to couples of the same apparent race, as it was in many jurisdictions when I was growing up.

I hate politics; I would love to have as little involvement in the lives of strangers as possible. But I'm realistic. My favorite Heinlein quote (and I love many of them) is, "Man as a social animal can no more escape government than the individual can escape bondage to his bowels." (And I would add that the market should perhaps be compared to the kidneys and bladder, likewise nasty but necessary.) Even Alan Greenspan has admitted that the stock market has to be regulated. (My Rand! My Rand! Why hast Thou forsaken me?) We will need to spend government money on infrastructure repair (which will also help get us out of Bush's economic disaster). Medical decisions will be made by pencil-pushing bureaucrats, so I'd rather they were more or less accountable government ones than employees of insurance companies who want to make the denial of health care into a profit center. And so on.

Some of my best friends love politics, and they're looking forward to the next four years, glad that we can't let up now. Some are even

saying that we will "hold Obama's feet to the fire," even though we're the side that's against torture. I'm hoping for a lot of improvement, but I will always be the kind of sci-fi guy who dreams that human ingenuity will eventually get us to the point where we have minimized poverty, oppression, suffering—and politics.

Obama had a Supreme Court vacancy to fill. The cynics said that he noticed that the Republicans desperately need Hispanic support if they are not to wind up like the Native American Party, so he picked one of them and waited for the Republicans to harm themselves by savaging her. (It is their nature.) The idealists said that he picked a highly qualified, experienced jurist who had, among other things, saved baseball. I embraced the power of And. Then we heard...

The Case against Sonia Sotomayor

- Some people can't tell how to pronounce her name just by looking at it.
- Although she is a Hispanic woman, her first name is not Maria.
- Unlike white males, she has a race and a gender.
- She has empathy. (Presumably the ideal judge is a psychopath, though in a pinch we could settle for a person with autism.)
- She once said that being Hispanic helps her understand things better, a far more racist statement than any white judge has ever made.
- She is large, also not a consideration with male judges.
- Nevertheless, her picture, like that of Jessica Valenti, inspires unwholesome thoughts in Ann Althouse. (Having been raised Freudian, I am tempted to think that all Ms. Althouse needs is the love of a good woman, but I'm sure it's more complicated than that.)

Meanwhile, from the other side of the field, the people who are pissed off that Obama still hasn't instituted the dictatorship of the proletariat are saying that she's really conservative.

A person who would be a terrorist if he had darker skin and/or a different religion shot an abortionist *in church*. I suggested moderation:

We aspire to be better than they are

Which is not saying much.

We do not need to waterboard the terrorist assassin or lock him in a secret prison. This is America, and the ordinary workings of the law should suffice.

We do not need criminal syndicalism or other such charges against the radical clerics and Fox pundits who inspired this loathsome crime, though we should remind them of what they have done and make clear that decent people won't associate with them.

Lenny Bruce's version of lowered expectations was, "Vote for me; I don't wet the bed." Many of the Obama reforms strike me as America finding ways to stop wetting the bed (torture, gag rules, etc.). For instance, in another radical shift from the Bush approach, we are honoring those who died in the name of the country, instead of sneaking their coffins back to the United States in the dead of night.

The people who want rich white guys to run everything are going to protect us from the filthy elitists who use mustard that has a French name, and some of it has been amusing. One group decided that they should hark back to the American Revolution and the Boston Tea Party. Unfortunately, they did not consult a dictionary of vulgar slang before referring to themselves as *teabaggers*. Others began *going Galt*, or Oliver Willis calls it, Ayn Rand cosplay, vowing to deprive the Black Muslim Socialist's government of all the money they would be productively earning. (In many cases, this would have the same effect as refraining from having sex with beautiful and famous actresses.) It reminds me of the guys in the 80s who were going on an Art Strike. If they'd really wanted to deprive us of their talents, they'd have gone on a Manifesto Strike. And Arlen Specter, who prosecuted Ralph Ginzburg for moderate lewdness, tried to shame Anita Hill out of telling the truth about Clarence Thomas, and wanted to impeach Bill Clinton after he was out of office, has realized that he is not nasty enough to meet the new standards of the Republicans.

ICFA Report

It was the 30th International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts. Having been to almost all of them, I was still looking forward

to almost all of it, except thinking of an original opening sentence for my report.

As usual I was accompanied by spouse Bernadette Bosky and cohusband Kevin Maroney, and once again the conference was meeting in Orlando, where the facilities continue to give pleasure. The conference opened with an excellent panel discussion of its theme, Time and the Fantastic, by Farah Mendlesohn, Steven Erikson, Guy Gavriel Kay, Ted Chiang, Scholar GoH Maria Nikolajeva, and GoH Robert Charles Wilson.

Thursday got off to a good start with one of Fiona Kelleghan's typically thorough and incisive papers, this one on Robert Sawyer. Kelleghan has edited, and written a splendid introduction for, a reprint anthology of *The Savage Humanists*: Sawyer, John Kessel, James Morrow, and others with a collection of tales that eschew the comforts of religion and those of much popular sf. They are some of the best writers the field has to offer, and the selections are representative, but perhaps that much brisk, bracing pessimism, all in one place and unrelieved, leaves one with a feeling of *Savage Humanists Ripped My Flesh*. The session also included a paper by Donna Hooley on (of course) Brian W. Aldiss. I keep wanting to hear our Permanent Special-Guest Scholar discussing our Permanent Special Guest, but usually there's something else in the way. Not this year, and the paper, on *HARM*, was quite good.

The GoH, Guy Gavriel Kay, spoke on an intriguing new idea: Privacy is so important that when we write fiction, we should respect not only the privacy of the living, but even that of the dead, not including them in our fiction, and even making up imaginary countries in which to set historical work, to make clear that there are no actual dead people in it. I have my doubts. For one thing, there is no way I would want to give up the necro-libels of James Ellroy, who could be said to have made the Kennedys, and certainly J. Edgar Hoover, more interesting than they are in nonfiction. (I am happy to report that the final volume of the American Underground trilogy will be published this September, with the same title as a longer-awaited work, *Blood's a Rover*.) On the other hand, insofar as this theory has led Kay to create his marvelous works, it is obviously a Good Thing.

(Perhaps the ICFA is becoming a place for major writers to make impractical suggestions. A few years ago GoH Geoff Ryman suggested Mundane SF, the idea that sf should eschew its most famous tropes—faster than light travel, habitats in space or on other planets, alien contacts, alternate universes, personality uploading—on the grounds that they have been done to death and wouldn't work anyway. One could certainly make both cases against FTL (especially without time dilation), but I would bet that at least one of Ryman's impossibilities will turn out to be like "They write about rockets flying in space even though there's no air to push against." Still, it is also the sort of rule that should not be made a law of the genre, but can be a creatively inspiring restriction to the individual.)

After lunch was a most enjoyable panel on fan fiction by three of the people who always have fascinating stuff to say about it: Robin Anne Reid discussed the first *Star Trek* femslash, *Demeter*, by Jane Land; Eden Lee Lackner considered the vexed question of plagiarism in an area where the characters are taken from other works (the prose is supposed to be one's own); and Barbara Lucas opened my mind to what a wondrously multimedia, multigenre, cross-platform work the communally created *Shadow Unit* is.

Friday I began with a session on foreign writings. Aaron Dziubinskyj discussed time in Latin American literature; Edward Fiorelli teased out fantastic elements in a mimetic masterpiece, Giovanni di Lampedusa's *The Leopard*; and Robin McAllister traced the theme of the Perspective of Eternity from Macrobius to Borges.

Another friend I keep wanting to see papers by and running into schedule conflicts is Sharon King. As with Donna Hooley, I finally got to see her presentation and it was worth it: a slide show on Fantastic Underwear. It was the Sharon session, as Sharon Sieber then gave us a look at nonlinear time in the Fantastic.

Bernadette's paper studied Peter Straub's *Mr. X*, contrasting the Lovecraftian view of confronting the past as dangerous and the approach from the Blue Rose books that it is constructive. In it she quoted Gina Wisker, who gave a paper at the same session, in which she made Daphne Du Maurier sound much more interesting than I would have

guessed, while Rhonda Brock-Servais discussed Time and the Gothic.

My favorite paper of the whole conference was one by Anna Wilson on the medieval mystical writings of Margery Kempe, pointing out that they are time-travel self-insertion fanfic. It was called "The Blessed Mary (Sue)."

We concluded with a thought-provoking paper by Jen Gunnels and Michael J. Klein on predictive social science like Asimov's psychohistory and who would own and control it if it could be made practical. (Me, I have a fondness for Paul Goodman's idea that it's a good thing the social sciences don't work or those in power would use them on us, but we should be alert to the possibility that they can be made to work like unadjectived science.)

Once again the conference was socially enjoyable. For instance, we hung out with Peter Straub and (for the first time) Kit Reed.

Next year the conference will be on the theme of Race, and the GoH will be Nalo Hopkinson. Perhaps she will give us an impractical suggestion. (F/SF book covers with people of color on them? Nah, that's beyond Science Fiction, somewhere over in Supernatural Fantasy.)

If I am ever tempted to doubt the stupidity of David Brooks, let me remember that he complained that the conservative movement hasn't addressed the rise of inequality as if that were something other than a tautology.

Spooks

In Philip Roth's brilliant novel *The Human Stain*, a professor notes a couple of student names for which there appear to be no students, and asks if they are "spooks." The word is taken as an obscure racial slur, and hilarity and irony ensue.

To me the term signifies "semantic spooks," a Korzybskian concept I learned from Robert Anton Wilson, words that people react to whether or not they refer to anything. For instance, one hears about "the interests of society." That is sometimes a useful concept, when it can be translated to benefiting individuals, such as providing a fair legal system for all of us. Other times, though, Society is a ghostly entity served by other ghostly entities, such as the Institution of Marriage, which must be preserved as exactly

what it has always been (except of course when it wasn't).

Dan Savage has occasionally said interesting things (perhaps when the moon is full), but much of the time he tells us that fat people are disgusting, no one is really bisexual, and women don't particularly like sex. (I know many individuals who are counterexamples to all three.) Now, in the possibly mistaken belief that relatively more black people than white people voted for Proposition 8, Savage has invoked another spook: The Black Community, which has a duty to support same-sex marriage.

Ain't no such thing as the Black Community. There are Black people, some of whom are intelligent while others support the rich white guys who obviously hate them. In this, shockingly enough, they resemble white people.

A bumper sticker some drivers could use.

MY OTHER CAR IS THE SHORT BUS

Could some of the worst and most ridiculous public figures have started off as put-ons and satires? How about Ann Coulter or the PETAmanes? I have sometimes thought that Fred Phelps had to be a Homintern conspiracy, intended to take homophobia to an obviously ridiculous extreme only to run into the corollary of H.L. Mencken's statement about underestimating the intelligence of the average men that says it is impossible to make some views so extreme that *someone* won't take them seriously.

(So Phelps said Misterogers was burning in Hell because he was a beloved figure who didn't use his fame to attack the queers. But couldn't you say the same about Jesus? Not one word! Couldn't he have said "It is easier to pass a camel through a needle's eye than for a *fag* to enter Heaven"? The imagery even works better for buggery.)

Oh, and PETA, if you are a put-on, here's a suggestion: The Vegetarian Freedom of Conscience Act: Butcher shops have to hire vegetarians who won't do anything to help the sale of meat but have to be paid anyway. Sort of like that law the other defenders of LIFE want.

Right-wingers apparently managed to believe that waterboarding is simultaneously so horrible that it will make even the Islamo-

fascist supervillains talk and a no-biggie that only liberal girlie-men would be bothered by.

Second acts

Derrick Coleman, who was a sodden under-achiever as a pro basketball player, is now doing good things with the money the teams pissed away on him.

Curate's Egg

Parts of Malcolm Gladwell's current best-seller, *Outliers*, are excellent. There's a chapter on Korean Airlines crashes that is what we read Gladwell for: fascinating new explanations of cultural phenomena. (It is at best tangentially related to the book's theme.) Also good stuff about the specific background (Jewish, garment trades) that produced lawyers for the Wall Street takeover madness, a nonastrological explanation of why successful hockey players are born in the early months of the year, and the toxic culture the Scots-Irish borderlands exported to America's South.

There's also the Important Theme. *Malcolm Gladwell Talks about a Lot of Cool Stuff* would not hit the top of the charts, so the book reveals that Hard Work and Good Luck and Cultural Factors influence success. There's a dead straw man here, and the knife through where its heart would be has Gladwell's fingerprints on it. No!!!! Success is not entirely a matter of genes!!!! It's a shortish book anyway, and without the equine necro-flagellation it would be even shorter.

The discussion of Elementary Algebra should have been vetted by someone who remembers it. "The program asks the user to punch in a set of coordinates and then draws a line from those coordinates on the screen" To where? Doesn't say, though the picture indicates it's the origin. The whole thing is explained abysmally, and in the interests of consistency it includes a possessive *its* with an apostrophe in it.

Animal species tend to drive out their weakest members, and *Homo sapiens* has not yet transcended that aspect of our heritage, as exemplified by bullying. In a recent example a group of elementary school animals called one of their number "gay" until he killed himself.

We're not supposed to do that sort of thing, and then we're supposed to outgrow it, but of course not all of us do. One Return of

the Repressed is the public mockery of losers on shows like *American Idol*.

Recently, on a similar British show, a plain, dumpy middle-aged woman named Susan Boyle appeared. Panel and audience alike awaited the communal ecstasy of derision, but when she opened her mouth, out came the voice of a Goddess.

Good for her. I hope she makes lots of records and lots of people buy them. Meanwhile, many people are remarking on two aspects of the story that don't strike me as terribly surprising:

1. Sometimes people generally considered unattractive have real talents, and the latter should be more important than the former.
2. Those shows are the sort of thing the *SPCA doesn't let you do to animals.

Livejournal allows paid members to poll their friends. I offered this one:

The same government that tortures people for information punishes them for consensually and lustfully torturing each other. Why?

- It shows lack of respect for government policy;
- To support THE FAMILY, like that bill Senators Craig & Vitter sponsored;
- It might make people think our paid chastizers get a kick out of what they're doing, which they do;
- These people are arrogating to themselves the privileges of the State;
- Shut up, they explained.

I'm a First Amendment nut. I believe everyone has an absolute right to think for themselves. But of course intellectual freedom, like sexual freedom, includes the right to say No. (I also believe that freedom of religion should include freedom from religion for those who want it.)

The agenda of many progressive educators included forcing everyone to do their "fair share" of the thinking. But many people don't want to think for themselves, and in many cases this unwillingness represents accurate self-appraisal. A free society allows such people freedom from thinking.

Synchronicity

My lj Friends Page showed two consecutive posts (both locked) entitled "I Do Not Need This Shit." Both dealt with bank blunders.

Null-A or something

April 26 is the birthday of David Hume, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and A. E. van Vogt.

A list of books by Karen Armstrong includes *Buddha: A Penguin Life*:

I can imagine it now: Believing that the denizens of the Antarctic could benefit from the Four Noble Truths, Gautama arranged to be reincarnated...

Karl Rove threatens a shocking revelation

"There were people who never accepted the legitimacy of George W. Bush and acted accordingly."

He will Name Names. I fear that mine will not be one of them.

They never invite me to the services

Alan Keyes warns against "the cult of abortion centered on the ritual of child sacrifice."

Another reason the Postal Service deserves everything the Internet is doing to it

The local PO (a freestanding building) has a big sign proudly proclaiming that they're open 24/7. They lock the parking lot on weekends.

A teenager, offended by the Bad Words on the Web, attempted to start an Internet "No Cussing Club." The response was excessive, including death threats. Anybody who'd threaten to kill a kid over something like that is a motherfucking asshole.

Blessed are the peacemakers

The Pentagon said Monday it no longer includes a Bible quote on the cover page of daily intelligence briefings it sends to the White House, as was practice during the Bush administration.

"'"

Seeing words with gibberish like the above or â€™™ in the middle of them and wondering,

How did the geniuses of the computer world create a system that cannot deal with the apostrophe?

Not forgotten

Last issue I said good-bye to **Jack Speer**, charter FAPAn and gentleman of knowledge and wit. He was notorious as a nitpicker, but

he was good at it. My favorite: A loccer in my zine referred to a difficult relocation as “The move from hell.”

Jack said, “In that case you should have welcomed it.”

Robin Ann Hilp

When I joined lj in 2003, I knew a lot of people therein from zine fandom, alt.poly, etc. Soon I was surprised and delighted by the number of new people I met. One person who friended me seemingly out of nowhere used the name **meglimir**. When someone adds me to their list, I always check their lj and usually friend back (exceptions: journals in Cyrillic letters and one person who boasted of being considered “Ann Coulter without a spellchecker”).

I soon learned that she was an intelligent, compassionate, and witty person. (On Talk Like a Pirate Day, she said, “That’s not scary enough. Let’s talk like bankers.”) I also learned that she was battling cellular life on its own terms, freely reproducing despite human intervention. She put up a good fight, but the cancer won, leaving many of us saddened.

George C. Chesbro

I enjoyed the remarkably multigenre Mongo novels, and once I had the pleasure of meeting him.

A senator from my former state died, and I found myself channeling Lord Byron:

In all our nation’s storied realms
No nobler grave than this:
Here lie the bones of **Jesse Helms**.
Stop, traveler, and piss.

Del Martin finally got to marry the woman she loved after 50 years together. I’m glad she made it to the dawn of a saner age.

Nappy Brown

Don’t Hurt No More. (I also enjoyed “Little by Little” and “Don’t Be Angry.”)

Milt Davis

We don’t have a black teammate for you to go on road trips; therefore, you can’t stay on our team.

I was never terribly aware of Milt Davis as a cornerback for the Colts in the ‘50s, but he was a good one, and an intelligent man (he became a professor after he retired from the

NFL). The past (including the part I was born in) is, as they say, a foreign country. His obit is another reminder that it’s a primitive one.

Majel Barrett

The *Enterprise* is silent.

Harold...

Pinter...

dead...

Donald E. Westlake wrote a lot of incredibly funny stuff. I particularly enjoyed *Dancing Aztecs*.

John Updike wrote much excellent mimetic fiction for many years, but never did that one truly great one. I’m tempted to think of him as their Robert Silverberg.

Robert Anderson, the author of *Tea and Sympathy* and other plays, has died. Fifty years ago, when it first appeared, *Tea and Sympathy* was a play about an older woman bravely helping a teenage boy deal with his sexual confusion. Now it would be widely seen as a play about an older woman molesting a teenage boy. “Years from now, when you talk of this—and you will—wait till the statute of limitations has run out.”

My family and I went to Yankee games in the 50s. Once we sat out by the bullpen, and moderately successful pitcher **Tom Sturdivant** talked amusingly to the fans.

Philip Jose Farmer

He did not quite induce puberty in sf all by himself, but he certainly helped.

Famed historian and chronicler of African-American experience **John Hope Franklin** died. His autobiography, *Mirror to America*, offered an existence proof of intellectual development under the harshest sort of oppression. In it he managed to describe his dealings with stupid Caucasians in reasoned and measured tones. That calm may be even more remarkable than the book’s eloquence.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and **Marilyn Chambers**; it was a bad day for sex.

I don’t care what anyone says; I like a lot of what **J.G. Ballard** wrote, particularly the

condensed novels and other short work. (There is no truth to the rumor that Elizabeth Taylor has bought the remains for unspecified purposes.) Like William Burroughs, he wrote great stuff and had a vile worldview. Let's remember the good parts.

Abi Frost did some excellent zine writing, but then a lot of things went wrong for her. Again, remember the good parts.

The two things one remembers about former quarterback **Jack Kemp** are the fact that he prepared for a political career by setting the NFL record for recovering his own fumbles and the remark that he took showers with more black people than the other Republican candidates had met. Perhaps inspired by the latter, he had genuine compassion for minorities and the poor, but unfortunately he believed that the market could save them all by itself.

Bob Collins had the idea for an interdisciplinary academic conference that would mix sf/fantasy and canonical lit, which gave us the ICFA.

A. Langley Searles published *Fantasy Commentator*, an excellent zine about goodole-days sf.

One of the people I had the pleasure of "meeting" on livejournal was **Ranj Niere**, a gentleman of wit, knowledge, and, generalizing wildly from a single example, excellent taste in women. His lj was mostly known for lovely photographs of women and flowers, but he also used language. Most of my Friends List said nasty things about George W. Bush; Ranj wrote a nasty villanelle about him.

Also Parker Baratta, Forrest J Ackerman, Eartha Kitt, Bettie Page, John Leonard, Farrah Fawcett, Michael Jackson, Gale Storm, Sam Butera, George Kell, Brad Van Pelt, and Steve McNair

Nasty, Brutish, & Short

Mao Zedong lived long enough to be both Lenin and Stalin.

Paradoxically enough, Hank Steinbrenner demonstrates his legitimacy by being a bastard.

Eugenics turns disastrous when the State tries to enforce it. So does equality.

If John Donne is correct, I am diminished millions of times a day, and it's a wonder that there's anything left of me.

Comics homework

I can remember a time when your title would have been a Googlewhack, if there had been Googlewhacks back then.

The Onion pointed out an example of racial progress: African-Americans can now be accused of elitism.

I believe we are coming to the time when the homophobes and fetus fans are so marginalized they envy the Communists, but it hasn't happened yet.

There are only two industries that refer to their customers as "users."—Edward Tufte

Fundamentalists believe in a God who went, "Oh my Self! I have tragically blundered" when He realized He had made the penis convex and the anus concave.

Martha Stewart looks more Polish as she gets older.

Pat Boone did a harangue about the Lavender Menace. I assume it was an inferior cover of a Ken Hutcherson speech.

Last issue I said I was worried because John Mueller, a professor at Ohio State, holds the Woody Hayes Chair of National Security Studies. Martin Morse Wooster was kind enough to reassure me that he is actually a good political scientist and does not recommend sucker-punching other countries.

See you all next year,

Arthur