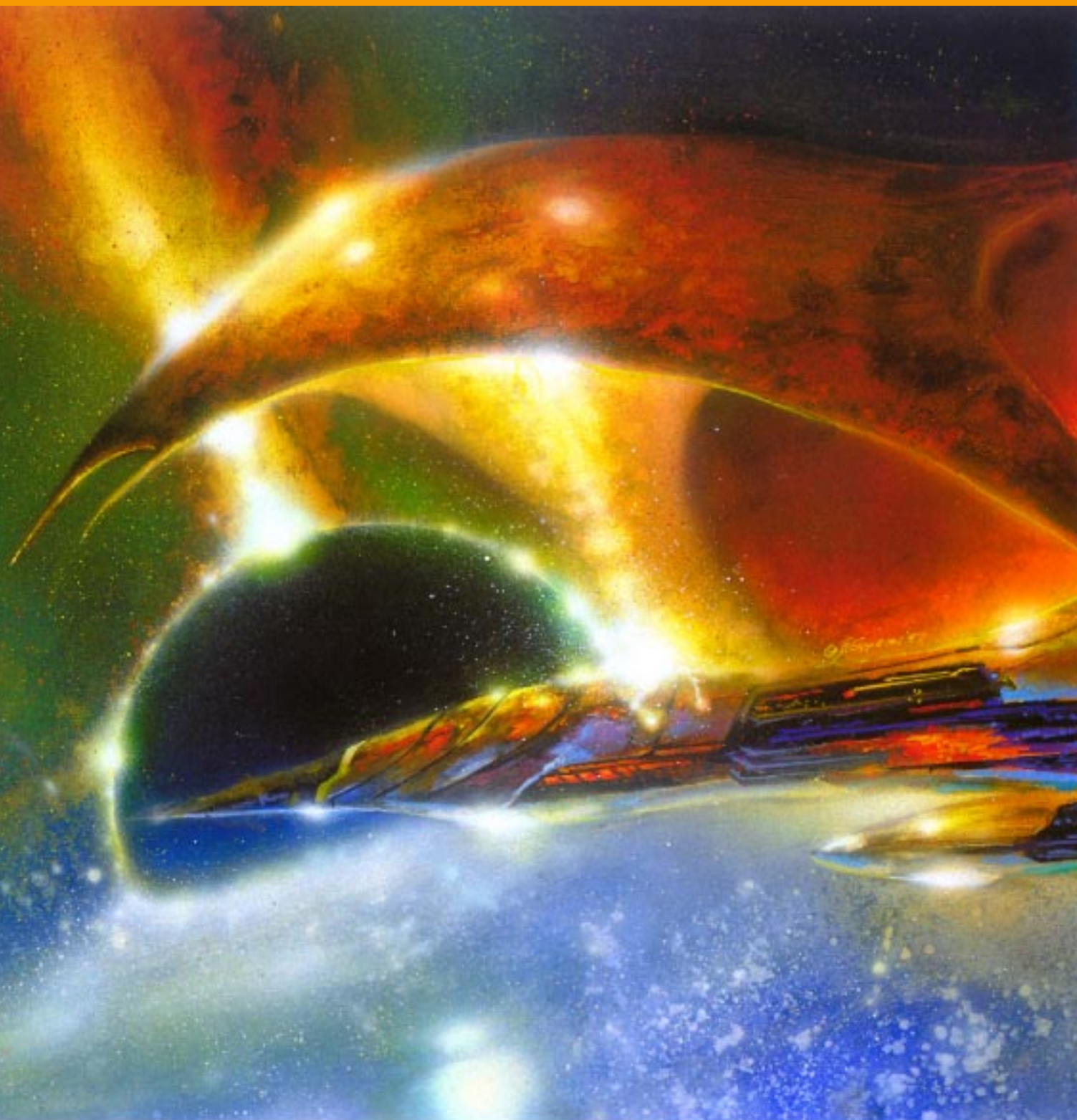

CHICON 2000

the 58th Worldcon

Progress Report 4

August 1999



Now we know the way to go...



SAN JOSÉ IN 2002

A bid for the 60th World Science Fiction Convention®

Thursday, August 29, through Monday, September 2, 2002

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A Note From the Chairman

Well, it has been an interesting few months. At a time when most Worldcon bids are just gearing up for the last lap, we've been playing musical chairs.

As most of you know, a few months back our intended main hotel, the San Francisco Marriott, decided that they no longer wanted our business. Fortunately, most of us are software geeks, and we believe in backups. We had a backup main hotel in San Francisco (the Argent, formerly the ANA, which we used for ConFrancisco), and we had a whole backup site in San José. Being unsure at the time which was the better option, we decided to give fandom the choice. We filed a second bid for the San José site, announced it to the world, and sent all of our pre-supporters a postcard telling them what was happening. We thought it would be fun.

And so it should have been, except just recently, the Argent told us that they had sold our space to another group with more money. Without the Argent, we do not think the San Francisco site is viable for a Worldcon, so, with considerable regret, we have withdrawn it from the vote.

That leaves us with the San José site. Happily, the more we have looked at it over the past few weeks, the better we have gotten to like it. Other people who have checked the site out like it, too. Ben Yalow, one of the most respected con runners around, described it as "a better site for almost everything, and much cheaper than the San Francisco site." What is so good about it? Here

are some examples:

- Lots of hotel space within a block (300 meters/ 1,000 feet) of the convention center, including two with direct air bridge connections;
- Much cheaper prices than San Francisco (rooms from \$79 to \$120 in today's prices);
- A Convention & Visitor's Bureau that has been very helpful and is very keen to get our business;
- Wide, flat sidewalks and excellent disabled access; and
- An IMAX theatre and technology museum right across the street.

Of course, San José doesn't have quite the same tourism opportunities as San Francisco, but the cities are less than 50 miles apart. If there is enough interest, the Worldcon may even be able to lay on special events for people who want to go sightseeing.

As I said, it has been interesting, but we have what we think is an excellent site for a Worldcon in San Jose. We look forward to seeing you there in 2002.

Kevin Standlee, Chairman, Bay Area in 2002



For more information, please check our website.

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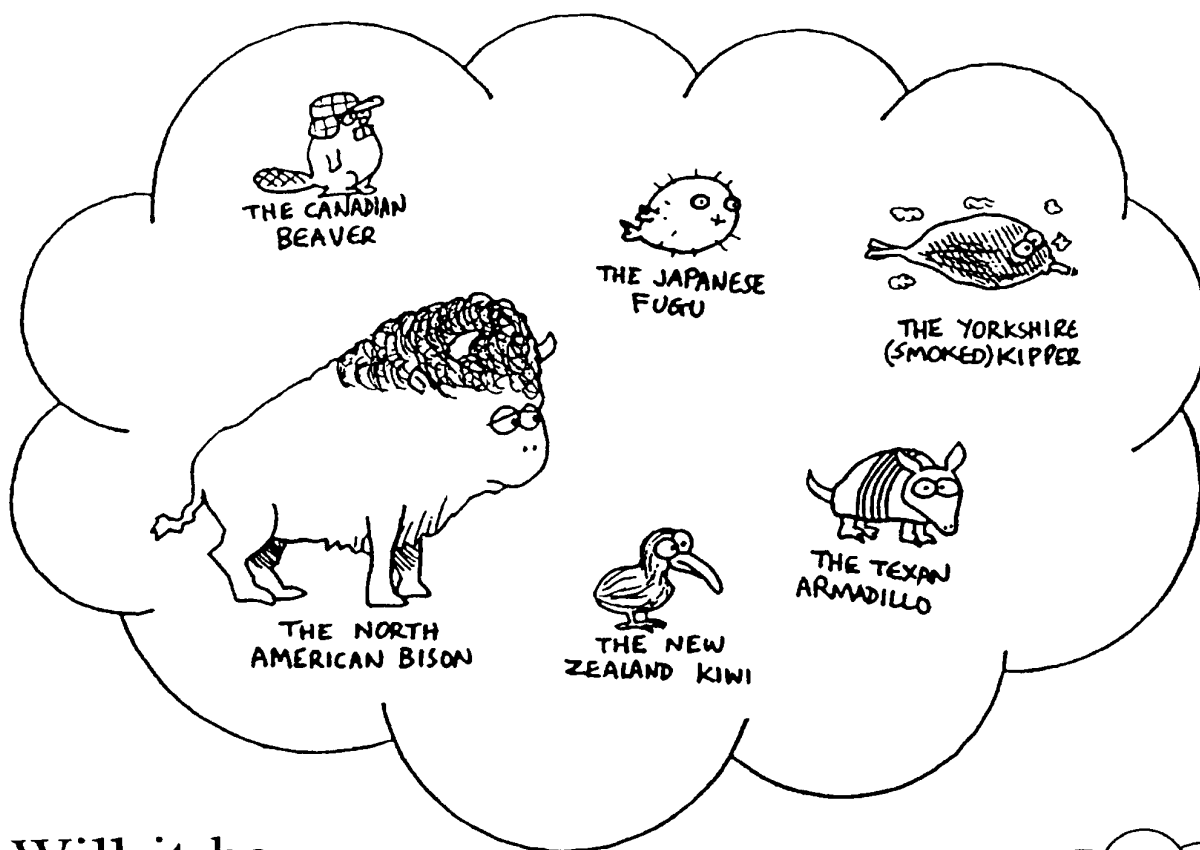
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As everyone should know by now, the editor's religion forbids perfection and is required to maintain an obligatory mistake count. Though heavy, this burden is assisted by byte-gnomes and cyber-elves who delight in all sorts of mischief (but only to help the editor of course, thank you, all!). Thanks is also given for the mail carriers who carry this zine to your home and to the Wizard of Odd for bread and space and much, much more.

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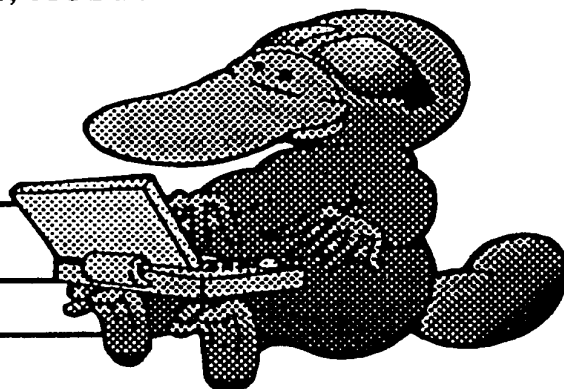
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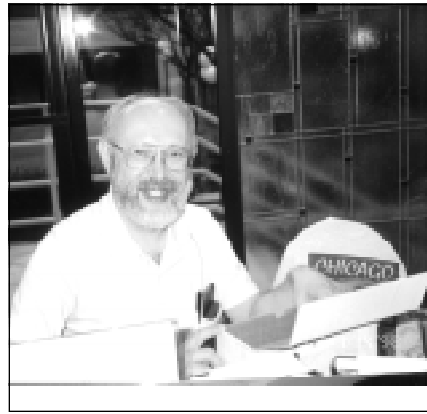
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Surfin' Their Lives Away

A popular convention panel topic is science fiction's dubious record as prophecy. "Why didn't writers predict personal computers? And how could they ever have predicted personal helicopters?" Such questions are always good for ironic chuckles, coupled with assurances that, pace Jules Verne, the genre's task is not to map the course of future technology. But sometimes our modest desire to shrug off the seer's mantle is too humble. One of the stock examples of the failure of foresight is the Internet, that suddenly ubiquitous presence in our daily lives. Yet science fiction did, in fact, foretell the Internet, or something very like it - only as a vast, intrusive evil rather than a benign bringer of prosperity and uplift.

The quasi-Internet that appeared in stories from roughly the 30's through the 60's was omnipresent, delivered information in an instant, made possible pushbutton communication and dominated large areas of commerce. And, often if not invariably, it was seen as an instrument of tyranny, whether human, as in Orwell's 1984, or cybernetic, as in countless tales of supercomputer despots.



(Most frightening of all were stories whose authors evidently supposed that humanity would be better off under benevolent despotism.)

To a large extent, the negative prognosis was the effect of an error. The writers assumed that any sophisticated communications and information network would have to be maintained by a central authority that would be in a position to "see all, know all and control all". It turned out in reality that a diffuse system with scarcely any center could do the job better. The annoying and threatening aspects of the Internet - data thefts, spam, viruses - stem from decentralization and lack of control, the precise opposite of the disease that was anticipated. The old paranoia about being "connected" now seems rather quaint. Far from worrying about "Big Brother", politicians and commentators outdo themselves in enthusing over the Internet's vital, beneficently revolutionary role in education, commerce, relationships and just about every other area of human endeavor.

There are shadows in the sunlight, to be sure: "Web addicts" and porn rings and the cracker underground. But those are minor, remediable blemishes, rendering the glo-

Thoughts of Chairman Tom

rious future all the brighter by contrast. There are moments, though, when one begins to think that yesterday's paranoids had the right idea in general, regardless of their mistaken apprehension of details.

The Internet and the World Wide Web are a marvelous convenience. I have almost forgotten what it used to be like to endure newsprint-stained fingers, to search frantically for the name of a half-remembered restaurant, to despair of locating a book that had disappeared from the shelves at Barnes & Noble or to trade a dozen telephone calls in order to exchange some simple piece of information with a colleague. To the extent, though, that the Internet fundamentally alters the way in which people live and learn and work and deal with one another, its impact leaves much to be desired. It may truly be more pernicious than a digital Colossus.

Students are among the most oft-proclaimed Internet beneficiaries, and the government is currently spending billions to make every classroom in the country "Internet-capable". Let's imagine that it reaches that goal and surges beyond, to the point where the World Wide Web is an integral part of teaching. What will that mean for education?

The Web will, according to its boosters, serve as a gigantic repository of facts. Compared to paper libraries, it will have two purported virtues: a larger quantity of data and superior indexing. Unfortunately, the former quality is wholly, and the latter largely, an illusion. The information on the Internet is, without doubt,

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more up-to-date in many areas than that in the average high school library. It is not, however, more extensive. Billions of words appear on Web sites, but those represent a minuscule fraction of the content of the world's books. Moreover, what is digitally accessible is an almost-random selection, heavily weighted toward titles in the public domain and sometimes skewed by peculiar agendas. The student who wishes to learn about, say, the American Civil War has far less to choose from on the Web than in the library. If his subject is more obscure, the gap rapidly widens.

Within the Web's truncated universe of knowledge, research is marginally easier than among rows of books - sometimes. The ability to pinpoint particular words is helpful, but so is the intelligence of a human indexer. For the beginning scholar, who scarcely knows what magic words will lead to pertinent text, the latter surely has the edge.

The real issue, though, is not the Web's quality as a research tool but its effect on how impressionable pupils think and learn. More than pure information, a child needs knowledge (ordered, accessible, usable information) and the techniques of reasoning, both of which are best fostered by sustained attention to coherent argumentation and narrative. The Web's fast-moving,

TV-like properties are, at least in the present and foreseeable state of technology, detrimental to the development of both knowledge and reason. Data race by in snippets, and one can scarcely avoid the temptation to leap from one search engine "hit" to the next, looking for The Answer to whatever question has been posed. After a dozen years of that kind of demi-intellectual pinball, the victim will know only how to look, not how to think, and will probably be too old to embark on the task of scrapping his old mental habits and imbibing new ones. A generation that learns primarily from the Internet will lack the capacity to maintain or improve the Internet, not to mention the other complex and delicate mechanisms of civilization.

Happily, the result probably won't be so dire. Grand educational schemes have a way of dwindling to minor pockmarks. In fact, given the natural rebelliousness of youth, Web capability in every classroom may lead to less surfing on electrons and more of the real thing. Perhaps the future does belong to sunscreen.



Volunteer Form

Please complete this form as fully as possible, and return it to Chicon 2000, Attention: Volunteer Coordinator, P.O. Box 642057, Chicago, Illinois 60664. Alternatively, you can e-mail the information to volunteers@chicon.org. Please bear in mind that most positions at the convention will not be filled immediately, so you shouldn't be surprised or offended if you hear nothing more for a while.

Name _____

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Date of Birth _____ (optional unless you were born after August 31, 1982. Note: Anyone who will be under 18 at Chicon must have parental permission to work on the convention.)

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Check the areas in which you are most interested, and attach a description of your pertinent fannish and other experience.

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An Interview with the Editor Guest of Honor –

Jim Baen

by Jeremy Bloom



I could give a lengthy biographical introduction to Jim Baen, Chicon's Editor Guest of honor. But it's so much more fun to let him tell the stories himself....

Jeremy Bloom – To begin at the beginning, what got you into SF in the first place?

Jim Baen – The very first SF story I read was at the age of nine: *Firehunter*, by Jim Kjelgaard (although I didn't realize it was SF then). Almost as a tip of the hat, one of the first collaborative things I did was ask David Drake to write a sort of parallel novel and publish them as a double. It was what happened to the tribe that deserted Hawk and his girlfriend. Nothing good, let me tell you.

I first read a totally Science Fiction story at the age of 11. It was "Against the Fall of Night" by Arthur Clarke, and it really knocked me over. That got me into reading the stuff, and I was fairly intense about SF from the age of 11 until my late twenties, as a reader. After a misspent youth, if you will, I decided to go into publishing.

JB – But your first job wasn't actually SF at all, was it?

Baen – No, it was with the Complaint Department at Ace Books. They really needed somebody halfway smart in there.

Baen – [laughs] Yeah. And I qualified.

I took it on condition that if I held that job for a year I would get to move up to editorial assistant. After the year an editorial spot opened, and they really didn't want to give it to me – I had become valuable. They wanted to promote me to #2 in the complaint department. I told them "no", and then I told them "Hell, no."

Finally I became the number 2 gothics editor. I forget who was the Number 1, but she knew a lot about gothics while I knew nothing at all. And we both worked under Evelyn Grippo, who was the one who bought the H. Beam Piper literary estate for the price of a funeral.

My first acquisition was actually the first pick I made out of the slushpile: "Whispering Island", by Nel McFather. "A dream of tropic delight becomes a maelstrom of terror on Whispering Island." That was my first blurb, although they changed "maelstrom;" it was too intellectual.

JB – So you learned the ropes of editing –

Baen – What I really lusted for there was the Science Fiction Editor's job, but there was no way Pat LoBrutto was going anywhere. When

JB – Halfway?

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The Chicon Art Show

by Todd Cameron Hamilton

The Chicon Art Show is going to be a mix of something old and something new. You will of course see the old traditional stand-bys that we have come to know and love from World Con art shows mixed in with some new ideas and technologies that will hopefully streamline the paperwork and make standing in line for hours a thing of the past.

We will again be located in Lower Wacker Hall as we were for the previous two Chicons only this time we will also have the auctions there as well, so

that we do not need to transport the art any farther than we can fling a badger.

The entire art show, from the paperwork to the security and auctions, is being handled this time around by one large group so that we can avoid some of the communication problems that have plagued shows in the past. All of the Senior Art Show staff for Chicon has at least 15 years of experience with art shows including 4 veteran artists and one former ASFA president.

A mass mailing will be sent out in October with detailed information on the cost and sizes of panels and tables. You can of course contact us at the Chicon Web Site in order to make sure that you are on the mailing list if your address is different from the one that is listed with our

data base or if you are not in any of the myriad other lists we have colated for this purpose...or if you would just like us to send the information to a friend.

We are currently planning on having 5 auctions during the duration of the convention and our chief auctioneer is of course Dr. Bob and his band of renound.

If necessary, you may also send me a snail mail at:

Todd Cameron Hamilton
(Chicon Art Show)
1220 South Westnedge
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

We look forward to seeing you there and admiring your art.

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...continued from page 7

Judy Del Rey left Galaxy as Managing Editor, under Fred Pohl, I interviewed for that job. As far as I was concerned, that was like interviewing to be senator. I was still blinded by the glamour of publishing in those days... But I got the job.

JB – And you ended up as Editor of Galaxy. What brought you back to publishing?

Baen – In 1978 I was offered the job of editor at Ace SF, which was a step up. After a couple of years Tom Doherty and I had turned Ace into a power that was beginning to rival Del Rey. But they were “interesting times”, since Ace had gone bankrupt and been bought, and the holding company, Grosset and Dunlap, proceeded to get into trouble – over building their own warehouse – and sold off everything. So we left.

It was very pleasing to me to hear a few years later that the only profitable element when Berkeley acquired the G&D empire, was Ace SF. And it not only lasted, and still is there, but Berkeley folded its own SF imprint in favor of Ace.

I gloat. Hear me gloat.

JB – And then came Tor, with Tom Doherty, and now your own Baen Books. You’ve worked with some superlative authors, including Niven and Pournelle, Timothy Zahn, Lois McMaster Bujold and David Drake. Would you say there is a “Baen writer”, in the way that one could say there were “John W. Campbell Writers”?

Baen – There are a couple of common denominators. Baen writers are interested in the story. And in the SF aspect of it. We never will be guilty of writing and publishing SF because SF is what we can write that can sell. There may be some connection with marketability, but SF is what they want to be writing, by God.

There are some in the SF field who may be guilty of writing something that has as little to do with SF

as it can and still pass muster with the genre retailers. I will name no names, but they know who they are. We [laughs again] are the higher and purer kind. Of course, they think we’re a bunch of Neanderthals, and that’s okay. It’s also what makes horse races. I don’t have much interest in writing for the sake of putting words together prettily. We aren’t big on literary tricks and capers. Words are a tool.

I’m not trying to denigrate those who wish to write “art”, if you will. That’s a worthy, if solitary pastime, and sometimes you can get somebody to appreciate what you’ve done, but they’re a relatively rare breed, and unless you are extremely good you will count your audience in the hundreds, not thousands.

When the “New Wave” came along – if I wanted to read literary



experimentation, I’d read the real thing, like the Dubliners.

JB – Are you a James Joyce fan?

Baen – (laughs) No, I’m not. That one was Judy Lynn Del Rey. She had a Ph.D. in it.

JB – Which hat do you enjoy more, writer, editor or publisher?

Baen – Publisher. As publisher I have absolute control over acquisitions. That’s the heart and soul. Not the diddling with manuscripts. If you have an author you need to diddle with too much – unless it’s a new writer you’re trying to bring up – then you have to ask, what are you doing with him?

Editors acquire manuscripts. I like to think of myself as someone who acquires authors. And likes to

keep them. Which, to a degree, I have.

JB – You have been mostly successful at that.

Baen – It’s a bigger picture, and it allows for both a more profitable and healthier relationship with authors. My relationships with the authors affect every part of my decision-making process on books. I’m not just thinking about the current book I’m working on, but the one five books down the road.

I’m always scheming to raise authorial profiles, because I have gathered a group of writers – or they have gathered about me – who like working with Baen, who like the freedom and the personal interaction.

This is not to say I’m some kind of wonderful guy. But I’m not a corporation, I’m a person. And even a half-way decent person can be distinguished from a corporation.

JB – How so?

Baen – Any editor you work with is just as likely to be at another house in two years. So they have a disincentive to keeping faith with the writers, or thinking beyond the next dollar. Whereas in our case, the goal is way down the road with many books in between, each of which is a step on the staircase to heaven. Most people like being treated as people, which is why some of my relationships with authors are decades long, and some have been virtually exclusive for that long. Even if the person treating them as a person isn’t particularly socially adept.

JB – Are you accusing yourself of social ineptitude?

Baen – I’m socially adept when I work at it.

JB – And when you don’t?

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Baen – [laughs] Along with Larry Niven, I am not the person people would think of when they name “Mister Tact.” And this may be why I have a group of writers I work with – we become friends, and then I don’t have to worry about being socially adept.

JB – How about your own writing? Has your editorial career interfered with what might have been a full career as a writer?

Baen – I don’t think the writing avenue was ever really open. I can write comedy copy, but I don’t have whatever it is that makes for the freeflowing disgorgement of thousands and hundreds of thousands of words. It’s not because I can’t put sentences together. But I suffer from some sort of permanent creative block, a “writer’s block”, if it applies to those who have never written.

JB – You have done some –

Baen – Sort of. The closest I came to writing hunks of a novel was “The Taking of Satcom Station,” but the real author was Barney Cohen and it was his novel to which I gave a very heavy edit, and my name went on it. The tech in it is completely mine, and the momentum-sharing cable-linked space habitats are purely mine. [Twinned or multiple living environments linked by cables and spun for “gravity”, like two dancers that link arms and whirl around a common center.]

They were devised for a funny purpose. Barney wanted a chase scene up a stairwell in orbit. In my habitat modules you could take a stairflight up the levels and have a gunfight that way.

I also think it’s a sound way to develop space infrastructure. You can have virtually coriolis-free gravity that way. And I will say here and now that all this fufraw over space-sickness in zero-gravity environments [which NASA is spending billions to research] will be regarded as ludicrous when we start getting se-

rious about stuff. It’s plain as the nose on your face that we will use momentum to simulate gravity, because we need gravity. It’s not rocket science – there are any number of carnival rides that use the principle.

JB – But not the current space station. Baen – It’s a political space station. They called it Space Station Freedom, and then they kept cutting off pieces, so that now it’s either Space Station Fred, or maybe just F.

JB – You’ve used that line before.

Baen – I stole it, too. I think it’s Pournelle’s.

JB – You’ve been a big booster of space. Do you think that Science Fiction, as a genre, has helped shape the space program?

Baen – I think it very definitely shaped the birth of the space program, and is still an influence although not as great. It’s now a political football. Not to say anything bad about [NASA Director] Dan Golden, who has done a great job.

JB – Within his constraints...

Baen – I just think that the space program reminds me of a government agency.

JB – But surely it’s better than no

space program?

Baen – Well, it’s all right. But what a pity... I can’t think of a stage where they didn’t make the wrong choice. Way back in the beginning, the X Program was on the verge of going into orbit with the X-series, maybe by X-18. The X-15 was still breaking records up to the day they told it to stop breaking records, because it was showing up Spam in a Can.

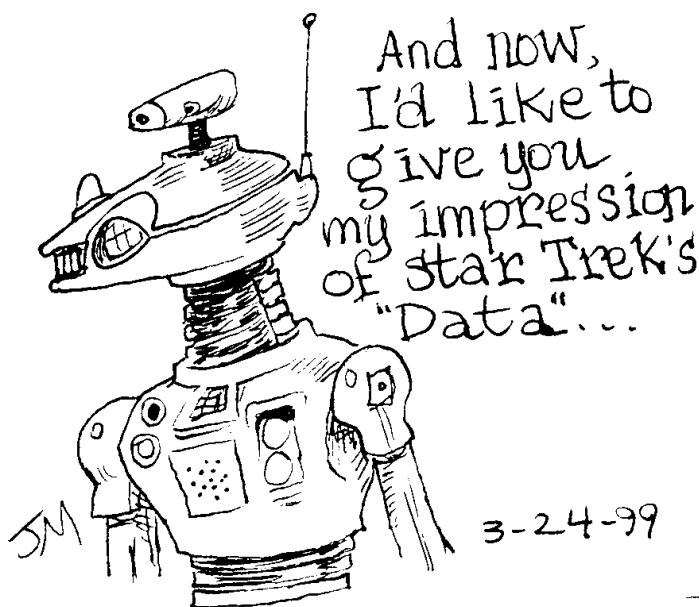
JB – And for those who don’t know that reference...

Baen – The Mercury program. The choice was a piloted vehicle that could go up and return, vs. basically a missile that goes up and comes down. The astronauts weren’t really pilots, they were payload.

By 1970 the X Program would have had experimental planes in orbit capable of return, but it was military [not NASA] and successful, so NASA killed it. We still aren’t back to where we would have been in 1970.

Then with Apollo we had two ways we could have gone. And for the sake of gaining a year, or two, we gave up an entire space infrastructure we could have had at no extra cost. We could have space station Freedom in 1967 or 1968. Instead we saved a year or two, and got nothing.

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JB – You’re not a big fan of the Space Shuttle program either.

Baen – The flying toilet bowl? When the shuttle became the designated next goal of NASA, the powers that were at the time wanted to make that decision irrevocable and static. So they went around looking for anything that could be either an alternative or an upgrade, and killed it. And they made it as expensive as possible to make changes to any other launching system.

One mode of competition that was real obvious was the [the Apollo Program’s] Saturn launcher. So after all the money they had spent on that, they drove a stake through its heart. Even ordered all the blueprints destroyed, so that you would have to start from scratch to ever do a heavy lift launcher again. There were other heavy lifters on the drawing board at that time that also disappeared. There’s a rumor that one engineer kept a set of plans, rather than shred them as he had been told. He kept them in his garage, against the day they might be needed. This is still just a rumor, but I heard it from someone who had reason to know.

JB – Many of your authors write SF with a military edge to it. SF seems to fall into two camps: “There will be war” vs. “There won’t be war”. How do you answer those who say that any technologically advanced race that contacts us will be so advanced that they will have long past given up such primitive nonsense as warfare?

Baen – [laughs] I think it will depend on the race. And the real answer is, nobody knows.

I don’t think you can argue from general principles to an absolute conclusion, any more than we can argue whether life exists on other planets. No matter how many positive statements of how “there must be aliens races because of the vast number of planets and stars and suns in the universe,” the bottom line there is Fermi’s paradox: “If they gotta be there, why aren’t they here?”

Maybe they aren’t there. We could be, rather than the poor schlubs on an undistinguished third planet, on the cutting edge of the life force in this reality. It’s a heady possibility, that the universe is urging itself from pure energy to matter to living matter toward aware matter. We’re not very bright yet. We’re an intermediate step. It wasn’t but an

eyeblick ago that your typical hominid was a chimp-headed clown-footed midget named Lucy. Given where we came from, I think we’re doing pretty well.

And our children will do better, and I believe our 20th power children will have speciated. The way the tiny little mammals that ran under the feet of the dinosaurs went on to fill the world after the last great extinction event, I believe Homo Sapiens will become the mother of species to the new universe. It’s entirely reasonable to assume that as we begin the great trek outward, humans will begin a set of transformations. You can see one version of that in Larry Niven’s “Ringworld”, or Wells’ “Time Machine” with the Eloi and Morlocks.

JB – Somehow, I doubt that I would get onto these kind of subjects talking with the average editor outside the genre...

Baen – I like to think you could talk to some of the editors IN the genre and not get onto these kind of subjects.

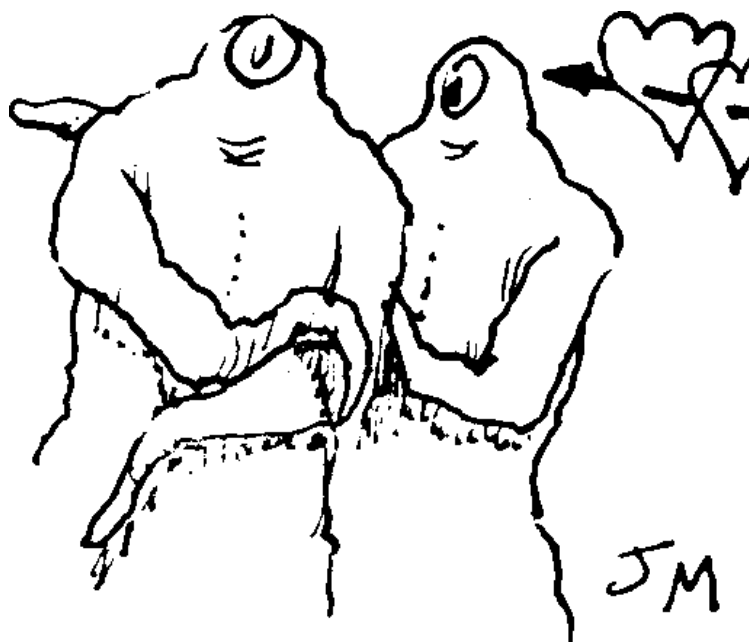
You can only be interested in so many things in this life, and these are the sorts of things that interest me, as opposed to I suppose whatever it is that interest most editors.

JB – What else has interested you lately?

Baen – I very much enjoy shocking people with the true provenance of the human species, which must have gone through an aquatic phase.

JB – As opposed to the now-discredited idea that humans arose in an savanna environment?

Baen – Right. Lucy and Ramidus, two early human forebears, were both adapted to a semi-aquatic environment in my opinion, and the opinion of others. That’s why you have body fat adhering to your integument rather than to the torso; it’s also why you have a diver’s reflex, and why you stand up, along with much else.



continued on page 12...

JB – But scientists can be slow to admit they were wrong – like the anthropologists that belittled the idea that humans had entered North America before the Clovis Culture of 11,000 years ago, and for years refused to acknowledge any dating of sites from earlier than that, but now they have finally given in to the weight of evidence.

Baen – I think of them as “the rice bowl crowd”, because they have to go begging for grants to fill up their bowls. They can’t afford to look stupid if they actually admitted missing something that, once you see it, is obviously true.

I will exclude Professor Tobias of S. Africa, who did explode the savanna theory of human provenance. He has admitted there is nothing in the record that would exclude an aquatic phase.

Another idea I’m focusing on: How much money do you think we would focus on building a time machine with one purpose: to go back in time to preserve a whole tribe of the first men?

I say we should spend that money on the chimps. They are the first men. Everything we need to know about our primitive selves is right there.

We can know, for instance, that anything that a chimp can do was within the powers of the first humans, and it turns out to be quite a lot. We don’t have to wonder whether some australopithecine was up to something specific, if the chimps are already there. And we can learn a lot about pre-human social interaction.

They are a cadet species;

humans and chimps belong together in a proper diagramming of the relationship of species. We twain are one: they just took the wrong road about a week ago in evolutionary time.

In terms of evolutionary choices, you might say they took the NASA route. They speciated into a small environment, and got stuck. Our ancestors, on the other hand, were just chimps that got handed the keys to the kingdom.

But the chimps, and also the bonobos, the so-called pygmy chimps, are in danger of extinction. To keep them going would take, really, just a pittance. While I am personally somewhat conservative and somewhat libertarian in my political leanings, I do think that chimpanzees and bonobos should have the same respect and rights as any primitives.

I’m beginning to feel quite strongly about it. It’s a very hard-bitten, down-to-earth caring. It’s caring for our own. You look at them and you look

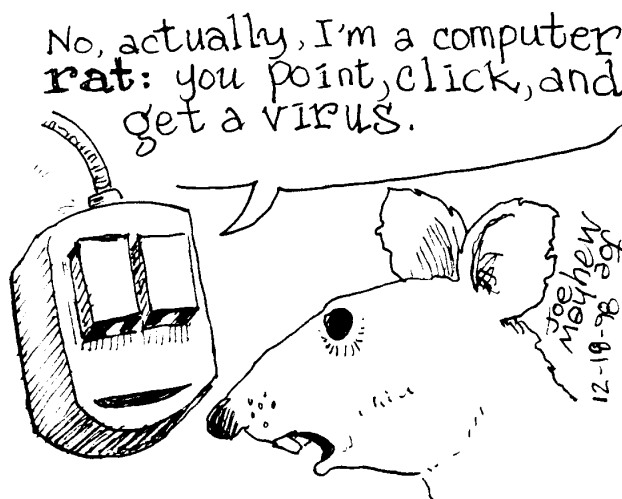
in your own eyes.

JB – In many regards you come off as being very cynical, yet in other regards you seem to have an enormous respect for the possibilities open to the human race, government screwups in the space program aside.

Baen – We have become so technologically powerful that it takes more and more work for governments to screw things up. Although somehow they manage....

Life has, despite arguments to the contrary, evidenced a progression from single celled animals to wonderful us, and there’s really no reason to suppose that this is some magic moment when a billion-year trend is going to flat-line out.

Far more likely is the perspective that Vernor Vinge has, with his idea of social singularity – that we are at the knee of an asymptotic curve that before very long will point almost straight upward. The sky’s the limit, really. ★



From Russia With Love

*Peter's Story: The adoption of
Peter Anthony Ilya Jencevice*

Editor's note: In the last several issues, we have had the sad duty to honor those among us who have gone to the Great Con in Sky. It is with unmitigated pleasure that we can rejoice with one of ours in a celebration of life!

by Mike and Linda Jencevice

Our journey began in July of 1997. We were in the park just outside Comiskey Park and we started talking about adoption. Marie and Kirby, some friends of ours, had adopted a little girl from China (they are currently waiting to adopt number three) and this gave us the idea that we could also adopt a child.

We started researching many different agencies and finally settled on European Adoption Consultants in North Royalton, Ohio. We signed our first paperwork in March 1998. But right after that Linda was involved in an automobile accident and broke her hand, delaying the process for several months.

In August of 1998, we had our home study. A licensed Illinois social worker came into our house and asked us a bunch of questions and walked around the house for about two hours. Needless to say, we had spent a couple of weeks cleaning, organizing, rearranging, and thinning out some of the



photo credit: Tom Veal

“fannish” references (We all know about those “weird science fiction fans” don’t we??). At first it seemed a deep invasion of our privacy but then we realized that it was completely worth it. We were going to adopt a baby and that was a big responsibility and everyone wanted to be sure we understood all the ramifications.

Imagine the worst paperwork nightmare, dealing with not one but three bureaucracies (state, federal, and Russian), and then multiply that nightmare by about a factor of five. We arranged for applications (several), references, fingerprints (twice), tax returns and financial forms (five years back), child supervision plans, employment letters, health re-

ports, pet inoculations, waiting list letters, passport and visa applications, house appraisal, powers of attorney, and probably fifty things I’ve forgotten to list. We sent the (almost) final paperwork to EAC on December 28, 1998 with the fond hope of receiving a referral for our child sometime in the near future.

On New Year’s Eve we received a phone call stating that a referral containing a video and a medical history was being sent to us, to arrive on January 2nd. However, the largest blizzard in 30 years in Chicago occurred on New Year’s Day. Linda was outside shoveling the sidewalks and street in hopes that Federal Express would be able to make it. How-

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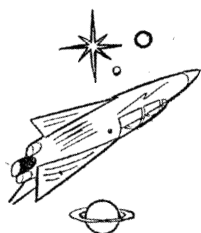
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ever, they couldn't. On January 4, 1999, we received our video of a small happy little boy. He was all bundled in a little outfit and was placed in a large crib with many other babies. Someone had shot the video through the bars of the crib. He was so very precious. We then requested a second video since we could hardly see very much of him. This one showed him undressed. He was the most beautiful baby we had ever seen.

We took the videos to Dr. Ira Chasnoff who is a specialist in dealing with children adopted from foreign countries. He is an expert at viewing these orphanage videos and looking at the sparse and often misleading medical information provided by the orphanages there. We had to wait until January 17th to get an appointment with him. He viewed the videos and went over the medical reports with us. The orphanages in Russia must put misleading and often outright false information in these medical records because "healthy" children in Russia cannot be offered for "foreign" adoption and because they receive more government money to care for these "sick" children in their facilities. Dr. Chasnoff's evaluation was that Ilya Baranov (our child's birth name in Russia) seemed to be healthy with the minor exception of a heart murmur (which is no major problem – Mike had a heart murmur as a child and simply outgrew it); he seemed to be healthy although small for his age and underdeveloped (both as a result of orphanage life). These were not perceived to be major problems and we decided to accept him. He was born on July 10th, and the 11th was the birthday of Michael's father, Anthony Peter Jencevice. Thus it was decided to name him Peter Anthony Ilya Jencevice.

We received our court date on January 23, 1999, and the race was under way. We had to get our Russian visas, acquire our round trip

tickets to Moscow and baby's one-way ticket from Moscow (thanks to EAC and their "tame" travel agent for getting us a great deal at the last minute), buy all the donation gifts, pack within the limits allowed by Delta Airlines, and make plans for an adjustable trip if things had gotten messed up in Russia. Denise Solvig, a fellow co-worker of Linda, told her that Target was having a 50% off sale on infant and children's clothes. We were able to get all 15 outfits for "donation" to the orphanage for a lot less money than we expected. We also had to provide numerous other items, and Mike managed to do most of the shopping in two days and bring the gifts in "under budget."

We had been working on the nursery for quite some time and now we were putting the final touches. Yes, it is a Disney/Space adventureland. His room was designed with Disney and Space themes covering every wall and a lot of the toys as well.

We left on January 30th and we slept most of the way there because we were able to get a seat between us. When we landed in Moscow we went immediately to the passport area. It was a little frightening because there were men carrying submachine guns, but customs never searched our luggage. Mike, our EAC representative, was holding a sign that said EAC. We were escorted to a van and driven to the Hotel Ukrania. Driving in Russia is an experience you can never imagine. It was worse than bumper cars!

The hotel was beautiful. It was built in the 50's and had maintained a lot of the old world charm. The lobby was huge and wonderfully decorated and the ceiling had a mural of the Russian revolution. We saw wonderful little shops. We also saw men walking through the lobby with submachine guns.

Our room was a suite with a bedroom, parlor, bathroom, and entry way, with French style doors joining each room. Overall the suite was

very luxurious. However, the usual amenities were missing; for example, there were small slivers of soap and only one set of towels. The hotel misunderstood a wake up call for 9:30 am. and awakened us at 9:30 pm. But we went back to sleep quite easily.

The four hour van ride to Yaroslavl was uneventful. We drove through some of the most beautiful countryside we have ever seen. If you looked past the aged and worn areas you could see that, in their day, the small houses with little fences were very wonderful and beautiful.

We arrived at the Hotel Kotorosl and were escorted to our room. Unlike the other, it was very small and we shared the bathroom with another room. When we arrived at the orphanage, we were told we would have to wait for our facilitator and the Inspector for Health and Education (equivalent to a social worker) before we could go in. Then we were escorted into a music room with a lot of little tiny beautifully decorated chairs lined up around a large area rug and were asked to sit down. We looked at each other and silently agreed we would stand because the chairs would not support Linda's weight, let alone Michael's.

Then down the hall we saw a woman carrying a child heading towards us. We knew this was our little boy. Linda started shaking and crying. They handed him to Michael. Michael smiled down to him and he smiled back up at him and Linda knew in her heart that everything was going to be all right. All our fears and apprehensions disappeared. Michael handed him to Linda and she kissed him all over his face. He smiled and laughed and our hearts soared with delight.

We spent about an hour with him. As we were sitting there looking at him the Inspector asked if we wanted the baby. Linda was laughing and smiling so much all she

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could say was "Of course we want him." Then she was told "No, you don't understand, this is a legal question. Do you want this baby?" Linda immediately wrapped her arms around him and said "Yes, we want this baby!!!!!!" We were then told we were going to go and get his passport picture. We were asked if we had a diaper with us and to go and get it. We then discovered that he was only wearing underpants under his outfit.

We drove over to a small office where a photographer took his picture with a camera that had to have been from the 20's or 30's. We then drove back to the orphanage and were told we would go to court tomorrow morning. We were so excited we could hardly sleep that night.

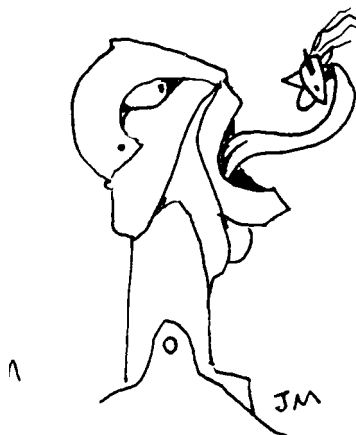
Early the next morning we left for court. Before we went in, Tanya (our EAC coordinator in Yaroslavl) explained to us what would happen and what we should say. We were very nervous and apprehensive, because the judge could still say no or enforce the ten day waiting period. We went into the small court room along with Tanya, our facilitator, the Inspector for Health & Education and a prosecutor. The judge was a very young man. After they read the decree and agreed to waive the ten day waiting period we were very excited. The judge and even the prosecutor wished us congratulations and their very best wishes.

We traveled around Yaroslavl getting all required paperwork completed. It certainly is a male dominated society. Linda mostly sat in the cold, cold van. Quite often Mike had to get out with Anya (our EAC escort and translator) and sign some paperwork which he couldn't understand because it was written in Russian. One of the buildings Mike went into had a door a foot thick with steel lined walls and gunports! However, on one of our stops - I believe it was Department of Vital Statistics - we both had to go in. We were escorted

to a beautiful room with painted silk screened light boxes on the wall, and signed the register book.

We finally finished all the running around and arrived back at the orphanage around 2pm. We spent quite a bit of time visiting with the caregivers. They wanted to know what we would feed him. They seemed a bit concerned when we brought out a two ounce bottle of Enfamil. (We received a lot of samples and had brought them with us just in case he was allergic to one of them.) They gave us a bottle of what they feed the babies. It was keifer, a liquid type of yogurt which tastes terrible. We dressed our little one in a diaper, onsie, green Pooh outfit, socks, shoes, 2 receiving blankets, a wool bunting outfit which belonged to Michael when he was Christened, a blue velour blanket and a bath towel. It was very cold outside: 26 below zero, not even taking into account the wind chill factor. After Linda had finished wrapping him up, the caregivers then completely unwrapped him and rewrapped him. They also put a red knit hat on him. They then gave him lots of kisses and their best wishes for us.

When we got back into the van, Peter was sweating so profusely that we immediately loosened everything, but we still kept him well covered.



ered. Within a very short time he was sound asleep. We started back to Moscow with the van dying every mile or so. It seems Sergei bought some watered gas on our way to Yaroslavl. We knew it was 26 below zero on the thermometer; we didn't want to know what the wind chill factor was, especially at 80 kph (about 50-60 mph). It was so cold that metal sucked out all our heat, especially from our feet so we put our suitcases on the floor with our feet on top which made quite an improvement. As we were stopping and going so much we feared that we could possibly get stranded and frozen to death and wouldn't be found until Spring. It was a good thing that Michael is so prepared because one time when the van stalled Sergie got out and discovered his flashlight was dead. Michael pulled out his Mini Maglite flashlight and saved the day (night actually). Since water is heavier than gas, Sergie was able to drain the water from the gas tank and (I'm glad I didn't have to crawl under the van a 26 degree below zero weather and drain water from a gasoline tank.) Of course Sergei came back smelling like gasoline and as soon as he was finished he stepped back outside and lit a cigarette! We half expected him to go "poof." We finally continued to Moscow without further incident. Thank you, Lord!

We finally made it back to Hotel Ukraina, Peter slept all the way back. When we arrived in our suite, Peter decided he had slept enough and wanted to be awake. All during that night and all the next day he slept in fifteen minute increments. He was VERY UNHAPPY!! He cried and cried and cried and cried. We called it the "Night of the Devil Baby." We wondered if we had adopted Satan's spawn! We had taken him away from everything he knew. He was with strangers, in a strange hotel room, eating strange formula, wearing strange clothes, attempting to sleep in a strange bassinet we had borrowed from Don in the EAC suite. Peter had several bouts of diarrhea as well.

On Thursday, we went out to the

US Embassy and waited for Peter's immigration visa. We were told to sit down with about thirty other American families who were all adopting while Mike from EAC went to all the different windows and ran around for all the paperwork. Other couples were not so lucky. We are very thankful for the people at EAC who made this a wonderful memory. The visa wait was fairly quick and we were back at the hotel by midafternoon with lunch in hand. When we saw other rooms at the hotel we were glad we had followed the advice of EAC and spent an extra \$40 a night to get the suite. We probably had 4 or 5 times as much space as a normal room. We would've been nuts in that cramped quarters for a week!

Peter could go from sound asleep to starving in 1.2 seconds. When he started crying, he set off another child, which in turn set off a third child. You have never seen anything until you see three new mothers all diving for the diaper bags and preparing a bottle at the same time!

On Friday, we decided to play tourist. Mike from EAC had agreed to take us sight-seeing. The temperature was in the high thirties, so we knew we could take Peter out without too much concern. We went to Red Square, The Armory, Saint Basil's Cathedral, and the Cathedral of the Assumption. We wished we had an extra couple of weeks to see more because we barely scratched the surface, but we needed to get back home with Peter. Ah, well, maybe we'll win the lottery someday and go back in style!

Saturday morning our flight left at 7:20 am. The driver from EAC (another Sergei!) picked us up at 5:30 and drove us out to the airport. He then parked his van right in front, helped us in with our luggage, and breezed us right thru the outbound Russian customs of-

ficer who never even looked at our luggage or papers. He departed as Mike tipped him the last of our disposable Russian rubles. Passport control gave us not even a second glance (whew! That was the last hurdle as far as Mike was concerned). As we waited to board our aircraft, we met another couple from Virginia, whom we had seen at the Embassy on Thursday, and their newly adopted child. We all agreed that we wanted to stay a little longer; however, it would be nice to get home to our beds, our cats and most of all to a place where we can read the signs.

Peter slept the entire flight to Zurich, Switzerland which lasted about three hours. Then we had a nine hour flight back to Chicago. We had purchased a seat for Peter but put all our stuff there because he refused to sit still on the second flight. Linda stood in the galley and rocked him all the way across the Atlantic. Peter became known as the "Baby from Russia" in spite of the fact there were other babies.

We landed in Chicago and since the INS people had been through this many times before it was relatively painless and quick. We were even waved through customs without ever slowing down. As we walked out of the International terminal, we were met by Brian and

we could see Randy in the background with the video camera going. We hugged and kissed everyone. Randy had arranged for a white limousine to take us home. so we rode back in the limo, sharing parts of our trip while sipping Coke and relaxing with special friends.

When we got to the house there were signs all over the door welcoming us home. We were met by Gloria, Bonnie and Patti (and two cats who were

v-e-r-y glad to see us after our week-long absence. There were also a lot of presents, a large sign welcoming Peter to his new home, and a large helium filled Mickey Mouse balloon. They had also decorated Peter's door. We were very happy to be back home.

On Sunday, less than 24 hours after our return from halfway around the world, a meeting of Q-Q3 was still scheduled. In our absence they had scheduled a baby shower with Peter as the baby guest of honor and everyone was there from the club. We had wonderful food and enjoyed sharing our stories and opening the many presents that people had brought. We were still exhausted and jet-lagged from the journey, but it sure was good to be back among the special people in our lives. ★

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\$28.00 for 6 issues (Sea Mail)
\$48.00 for 12 issues (Sea Mail)
\$90.00 for 24 issues (Sea Mail)
\$70.00 for 12 issues (Air Mail)
\$120.00 for 24 issues (Air Mail)

AUSTRALIA, ASIA & AFRICA

\$28.00 for 6 issues (Sea Mail)
\$48.00 for 12 issues (Sea Mail)
\$90.00 for 24 issues (Sea Mail)
\$80.00 for 12 issues (Air Mail)
\$135.00 for 24 issues (Air Mail)