

Visions of Paradise

#154



Students from my 1st period homeroom



A group of my sophomores

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All pictures were posted on
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Out of the Depths

Whatever Happened to the Science Fiction Book Club?

I joined the SFBC for the first time in 1967 and my initial selections were Roger Zelazny's **Lord of Light** and Harlan Ellison's anthology **Dangerous Visions**. In those early years, nearly all the choices in their monthly catalog were science fiction, with an occasional fantasy to break the monotony. There were always so many good choices that it was possible to maintain a science fiction book collection *entirely* through purchases from that club.

But now? I am sitting with the most recent SFBC catalog. Its cover is from David Weber's latest *Honor Harrington* novel **Mission of Honor**, but when I scanned the contents of the catalog, it seemed that sf books were in a definite minority of books offered within. All I saw were endless fantasies and contemporary and near-contemporary thrillers about vampires and such. But was that observation a fact or perhaps my prejudiced view of books I had no particular interest in? So I went through the entire catalog and categorized each book in it. There was considerable overlap, but I tried to select which genre each book fit best. Here are the results:

Genre	Total	percent of overall total
Fantasy	65	44%
Science Fiction	50	34%
Contemporary & near-contemporary thrillers	23	16%
Horror	5	3%
Media/comics tie-ins	3	2%

While I am not surprised that fantasy and contemporary & near-contemporary thrillers total 60% of the books offered, 34% is actually a higher percentage of science fiction than I would have guessed before I began my tallying. However, most of the books in all categories are not new to the catalog. So considering only new books, the following are the only sf books which I believe appeared in the SFBC catalog for the first time:

Mission of Honor	David Weber
Ship Breaker	Paolo Bacigalupi
Deceiver	C.J. Cherryh

Can a science fiction fan still maintain a collection exclusively through the SFBC? It is unlikely that all three of the new sf books would appeal to each reader (I personally have no interest in the Weber military sf book), so 2 books per catalog seem a fairly skimpy amount. Thus, as the amount of published science fiction continues to grow (in total numbers, albeit as a smaller and smaller percentage of the overall genre market which grows even faster), the amount offered through the SFBC does seem to be shrinking.

How long will it be before the owners decide to rename it the *Fantasy Book Club* to better reflect their main concern?

*

The last worldcon I attended was in 1981, the only one I attended with my wife who was totally bored the entire weekend. While I have yearned to attend another one, it has never seemed fair to do so. I've been fortunate to receive copies of all the Program Books through friends and APAs that I've belonged to.

Other friends have encouraged me to join worldcons for the purpose of voting for the Hugo Awards, but as the cost of Supporting Memberships has escalated, it never seemed worthwhile to spend \$40-50 just to vote for the Hugo Awards and receive a few Progress Reports, when I was fairly certain I would get a copy of the Memory Book for free.

Until this year. Aussiecon is providing a bundle of electronic versions of most Hugo nominees. That includes novels and novellas, a package which itself is worth the \$50 cost. So I joined a week ago, and this morning I downloaded the bundle of nominated novels. Since I will be retiring from my job in one more week, I anticipate actually having time to read the Hugo nominations this year, and hopefully vote before the deadline next month. That would be my first Hugo vote in nearly 30 years, not that I expect it to have any influence on the outcome. I wonder if I'll feel more disappointed in the award results when I actually participate in them?

I've been considering reading more e-books rather than keep filling up my house with paper books, but I have not yet determined the best format for doing so. I am not enamored with the Kindle, because it does not seem as if I would actually have possession of a book, rather paying for access to a book which would be "stored" at Amazon.com. I want an e-reader which enables me to keep a copy of the book I purchase on my computer. Is that asking too much, or too antiquated a need? I'm not sure, but right now that is one of my requirements for an e-reader.

I've never been one to jump on new technology, so I'm waiting patiently for the new e-readers to work out their bugs until I make a purchase. While it will not be overly-convenient reading the Hugo-nominated works on my computer, that will do until I work out exactly how I want to enter the e-reading era.

*

School's out for summer ... School's out forever!!! While there are certainly negatives to this fact, one positive about it is that now I can spend a lot more time reading. Considering that my Books-to-be-Read list include 298 works of fiction and 45 works of nonfiction, as well as the bundle of Hugo nominees which I recently downloaded from Aussiecon, that's a **lot** of reading. I've scanned the unread books and made the following list of *Essential Reading* which I hope to tackle first:

<p>Science Fiction and Fantasy: Vacuum Diagrams / Stephen Baxter Sea-Kings of Mars / Leigh Brackett Stories of Your Life / Ted Chiang Year's Best SF 26 / Gardner Dozois Best SF #13, 15 / David G. Hartwell and Kathryn Cramer Time Travelers Never Die / Jack McDevitt Cauldron / Jack McDevitt Northwest Smith / C. L. Moore Federation / L. Beam Piper Galileo's Dream / Kim Stanley Robinson Julian Comstock / Robert Charles Wilson Anathem / Neal Stephenson</p>	<p>Historical Fiction: Jerusalem / Cecelia Holland Cider House Rules / John Irving The Last Witchfinder / James Morrow Empress / Shan Sa Ivanhoe / Sir Walter Scott</p> <p>Nonfiction: The Creators / Daniel Boorstin From Stonehenge to Samarkand / Brian Fagan Terry Jones' Barbarians Under the Tuscan Sun / Frances Mayes Full Circle / Michael Palin The Search For Modern China / J Spence The Distant Mirror / Barbara W. Tuchman</p>
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Any suggestions where I should begin?

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Now that I am official retired, and have more time to devote to **VoP**, it is time to broaden the zine from strictly a perzine to a combination perzine/genzine. With that in mind, I am soliciting lead articles and reviews. Taral Wayne has already sent me a series of articles on the history of *furry fandom* which will be appearing in alternate issues.

Anybody else who wishes to contribute should contact me first to see if their article/review fits **VoP** before they put time and effort into something I cannot use. This is not a faanish publication, so I prefer articles which fits into the broadest range of sf / fandom / historical fiction. I cannot promise you money or worldwide fame, but I've got a great group of readers, including the members of FAPA, and I am certain you'll find a happy home here for your musings.

The Passing Scene

June 2-4: This was another last event for me, my 14th Valedictorian Dinner. I was invited by Hua, although the salutatorian Neelam wanted to ask me as well. It was a nice event, and I chatted with both girls much of the night.

I've had visits from several former students recently, as they come to the Math Lab for the last time before I retire. Shiva came Wednesday, while Preeti—who virtually lived in the Math Lab for three years when she was a student and is now in medical school—came three times to sit and chat with me. I assured her we will still be able to get together outside of school in the future, which I think reassured her a bit. (

June 7-11: I was busy at school three nights in a row this week. Monday night was the annual *Target Teach* celebration; Tuesday night was the Senior Award ceremony; Wednesday I had my “exit interview” with the Board of Education president, followed by the annual PTHEA Executive Committee dinner. After the dinner, I attended the Board of Education meeting (which I found out about that same afternoon!) to receive a plaque as a retiring Distinguished Faculty member. Unbeknownst to me previously, I also had to speak so, in my own words, I was “brief and largely incoherent.” (

June 12: Yesterday was possibly the most amazing day I’ve ever had as a teacher. It started innocently enough with Emily distributing the “Sabella tee shirts” to 60+ of my students, who wore them all day. Several teachers commented to me about seeing so many Asian kids walking the halls wearing the shirts. Almost immediately afterwards, another 20 kids who had not ordered the shirts the first round signed up for a second order of them.

Then I sat in the Math Lab with Jessica, Sana, and Pooja, three girls I have grown very close to this past year (whose pictures follow this column). We chatted until nearly 6:00 when the joint Game Night with Asian-American Club and Indian Culture Club was scheduled to begin. When I entered the cafeteria, I was stunned to see that what I thought was a Game Night was actually a surprise retirement party by my students for me! I don’t really understand why I deserved it, but it was absolutely wonderful and very touching. Over 80 students were there, all dressed semi-formally, with catered food and a series of planned events: a video of students and teachers speaking about me; spoken tributes by students either singly or in small groups; and a memory book in which they wrote some amazing things for and about me.

At the end, after I gave an impromptu talk for about 20 minutes, nearly every kid there wanted a picture with me, although fortunately many were in small groups so it took about 30 minutes to finish all of them.

I don’t know how I can possibly thank Simon and Neelam for organizing the whole affair, and Neelam for working tirelessly on it. She is an amazing girl whom I really grew to appreciate during the ICC show. It’s too bad she is so brilliant that she does not need to come to the Math Lab where we could chat more often. When I hugged her at the end—yes, there was a lot of hugging in violation of school policy (—we agreed to exchange email addresses so we can definitely stay in touch.

June 16-18: Tuesday was the last day of classes, and after my 8th period AP Statistics class ended, I was sitting in my classroom with Jean chatting with Oanh, when a girl returned to the room crying! I took her to the Math Lab and sat with her awhile before I realized she was crying because it was her last class with me. Several girls had cried at my retirement party as well, which was flattering but very disconcerting.

Soon afterwards, I had a bunch of sophomores hanging out in the Math Lab who took a group picture (on the bottom of the front page). It was sad spending time with them for the last time. ;

We had our annual Math Department end-of-the-year barbecue at our house, and we had a good

time eating and chatting. Briane, Diana and I all wore the now-infamous Sabella tee shirts—89 of which are now being worn by students and teachers—so they took a picture of the three of us which is posted as my profile page at Facebook.

June 21-24: Fei Fei arrived Tuesday afternoon for my retirement dinner, so I picked her up at the airport and took her home where she was staying for two nights.

Wednesday morning was graduation, and both Neelam and Hua gave nice talks. Afterwards, I said farewell to my students, which is always a sad occasion, but for obvious reasons is even sadder this year. Many of them have since become friends on Facebook, so we've been sending messages back and forth and doing some chatting, which is nice and eases the transition from teaching into retirement.

Immediately following graduation was the retirement banquet. We had 2 math tables this year because several of my family members sat at mine: besides Jean, my brother David and me, there was Fei Fei, Andy, Mark & Kate. Also sitting with us were Briane, George and Mary, the three teachers Jean and I are the friendliest with. I was the emcee, as usual, so I started with a monologue listing the actors who would play everybody on the faculty for a fictitious movie. After dinner, Mike spoke about me in a more flattering way than I deserved, after which I roasted all my friends. Several people told me I was funny, which was certainly a relief!

Afterwards, Jean and Andy went with Kate & Mark to their new house to work, while I spent the afternoon and evening at home chatting with Fei Fei. Thursday morning I drove to PHS at 7:00 with our carpooler Nancy, while Jean and Fei Fei slept later and arrived at 9:30. I spent the morning sorting out and cleaning the back room of the math lab, until Jess (who is a junior) arrived to meet Fei Fei, whereupon we all went to the cafeteria to eat leftover food from the previous night's Project Graduation.

The Math Department surprised me by showing me a large plaque stating "Bob Sat Here" followed by many flattering things, which they are mounting on the wall above my desk in the math lab. Not only are the students flattering my ego, but so are the math teachers!

At 2:30 I drove Fei Fei to the airport for her flight back to Palo Alto, then I went home. Already I began getting friend requests from former students on Facebook, nearly 30 in the past week, which made me happy. I hope to be able to keep in touch with many of them through FB, so we'll see how that goes.

Friday morning I promised to phone Briane and George every week. They are the two teachers I do not want to lose as friends, along with the students I hope to keep in touch with. Jean and I also tentatively invited several people to visit this summer, students and teachers, so for at least the first few months I should not miss school too much. (



Jessica and Sana at graduation



Pooja

Wondrous Stories

I consider a book great for two possible reasons: it can be great in the artistic sense (characterization, thoughtfulness, sense of wonder, world-building), or it can be great fun. In my opinion, no current writer's books are more consistent fun than those of Jack McDevitt. His *Alex Benedict* series is my favorite ongoing series, well-developed mysteries based around historical events in our future. I did not expect to enjoy his contemporary sf mystery *Time Travelers Never Die* as much, but I was totally delighted by the book.

Its premise is simple: a scientist invents a portable time machine, then vanishes. His son Shel, also a physicist although nowhere near as brilliant as his father, finds the device and along with his friend Dave begins searching through history for the missing physicist.

The best parts of the book are the visits to famous historical locales, such as the Library at Alexandria, and encounters with influential people, such as Galileo and Socrates. The first third of the book details the search for Shel's father. When that is resolved, the second third is pure travelogue, but as a lover of history I found it delightful. The third portion concerns another mystery involving Shel himself, which has an unexpected but satisfying conclusion.

Besides the main plots, there are several individual scenes and threads which are small highlights. Such as the running thread about the missing plays of Sophocles, or the encounter with Cesare Borgia. These segments alone would be worth reading the entire book for, even if it were not as much fun overall as it is.

Much of this book reminded me of Robert Silverberg's fiction, since he also loves intertwining

his fiction with historical people and places. **Up the Line** is perhaps the book which came to mind most frequently, which is high praise since that was my favorite time travel book ever. I recommend **Time Travelers Never Die** for its storytelling, its cleverness, and its glimpses at history.

*

I do not receive review copies of books from publishers, probably because I do not publicize my review blog to them. But for some reason about a year ago Wildside Press sent me a copy of their original anthology *Cat Tales*, edited by George H. Scithers. Recently I was looking for some easy reading, so I took that book with me. My expectations were not particularly high, but I am a cat lover, so how bad could the stories be? Especially since one of Scithers' requirements for the stories was "to avoid cats coming to a bad end on stage." That was fine with me.

Overall, the stories were delightful. While the book's subtitle was "Fantastic Feline Fiction," relatively few of the stories actually fell into a sub-genre of the fantastic, which did not affect their overall quality at all. Nor were the stories upbeat—in fact, I would put the majority in the downbeat category—but the delightful cats made up for that. Highlights include:

- Nancy Springer's "American Curls," a mystery about an old lady with 90 cats who is mugged for no apparent reason;
- Fritz Leiber's "Kreativity for Kats," which is about precisely what the title describes;
- Sandra Beswetherick's "Angelique's," in which a wandering lover is lured back to his former girlfriend by her cat;
- Pat Esden's "Black Pumps & A Skanky Tom," which told of a down-and-out drunk living in a trailer park whose cat leads him to clues about a particularly gruesome murder, but the police do not believe he is a reliable source of information;
- Shereem Verdem's "Dragon Dreams," about a veterinarian and her two cats who slip into an alternate dimension where they provide medical assistance to a dragon whose baby is having trouble trying to crack its shell;
- K.D. Wentworth's "Cat Call," which is a murder mystery told from the point of view of the cat, which actually solves the mystery and then somehow tries to point out the clues to his rather clueless owner;

Fred Chappell's "Creeper Shadows" is the longest story in the book (over 17,000 words, where no other story is longer than 8,000 words) and also the most substantial one. It is a medieval-type fantasy involving two mysteries. The first involves a pair of twins who only share a single shadow, while the other involves a man whose voice has been stolen from him. The style of the story seems to fall into the sub-genre of Vance's *Dying Earth* influenced stories, but it is well done and very interesting, a fine capstone to the collection.

Now here's the real creepy part about this book: halfway through it, I had decided that it was enjoyable enough that I intended to purchase the sequel **Cat Tales II** from Wildside Press. The next day in the mail came an envelope containing that very book! Unordered, without any chance of the publisher having seen my review of the first book since it had not been written yet.

What is going on here? Buy the book; you'll enjoy it, but be prepared for supernatural effects to

follow.

Halcyon Days

Lloyd Penney

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May 7, 2010

First of all, my apologies for not responding quickly to the previous issue of *Visions of Paradise*...time has not been my own lately, and I have finished off my six-month contract with The Law Society of Upper Canada, so the job hunt starts again. Gotta catch up, so here are comments on *VoP* 151 and 152.

151...I think most of us get sick to one degree or another in March, just as winter is finally starting to break up for the year. Yvonne and I are fighting off mild colds, but we're not letting it slow us down. Now that we're in May, we're busy again, going to conventions, and planning new projects.

Your mention of H. Beam Piper's **Little Fuzzy** reminds me that author John Scalzi has not just added to the *Fuzzy* series of books, but has actually rewritten the first *Fuzzy* book, and has called it **Fuzzy Nation**. I am not sure if it's out right now or not, and Piper fans may have some difficulty with this, but the *Fuzzy* books were in public domain, and I am not sure how Scalzi thought to rewrite the book; I guess he could legally do it.

I am not sure if there are any Cliff Simak books I haven't read, so I wouldn't mind a checklist to see what else I could find. There was an author who could tell a spell-binding story in 130 pages or so, as opposed to the 1000-page doorstops some novels are today.

My loc...my Aurora nomination has been topped by a Hugo nomination. The last month or so has been a little weird, being notified but not being able to tell anyone other than Yvonne until the British Eastercon, where the nominees were announced. Reaction to my nomination has been mixed, but that won't stop me from enjoying this accomplishment. I am up against Fred Pohl for Best Fan Writer...how weird does that sound? Fred is in his mid-80s, and Jack Vance is in his 90s, so it is never too late to be nominated for a silver rocket. John Purcell wonders where I get the jokes? Some people relay them to me via e-mail, so I just pass them along.

Rich Dengrove...I think every writer has to do some research when they plan a novel or even short story. Each has to have at least some level of logic, with fantasy novels having their own internal logic, and an SF novel actual scientific logic, with perhaps one or two tweaks.

152...I hope you're wrong about Fred Pohl being the favorite to win the Best Fan Writer Hugo, but I suspect you're right. Still, I hope I have some Australian voters who might help me place well, at least.

Retirement looks a short time away, and you're getting your due from the people who will miss you. As always, some politicians have agendas that will make them look good while attacking another group, and a popular group to attack are teachers.

I haven't heard from C.J. Cherryh lately, and I know that Jan Stinson ended her run of her Cherryh fanzine, but it is good to know that C.J. is still going. Again, I'd probably need a checklist and a timeline to know what I haven't read, and perhaps which order I should read them in, if that's necessary.

[I joined Aussiecon to get the bundle of Hugo nominated fiction, so I'll be voting for the award for the first time in nearly 30 years. So you can count on at least 1 vote besides your own. (]

Rich Dengrove
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March 19, 2010

I liked **VoP** 152. I didn't have much to say, though.

The Passing Scene. Too bad about that ESL freshman who still had to take the Algebra 1 course even though she learned the material in her home company. That is all part of the one-size-fits-all policy when one size rarely fits all. It's like the one-size-fits-all belt I received as a kid. It may have fit nobody. Fortunately, the time for the one-size-fits-all belt came and went so fast your head would spin. Now let's get rid of one-size-fits-all learning.

Wondrous Stories. I think I tried to read Cyteen and gave up. There was too much emphasis on run-of-the-mill characters and none at all on her ideas, some of which were really spectacular. Maybe if I had read farther, I would have stayed with it.

Ah, the traditional ocean covered Venus. I can understand why Zelazny wrote about it in the 60s. People wrote about a lot of old concepts then. The ocean-covered Venus, and the prehistoric Venus, date to the 1880s and 1890s. The idea was that Venus was following a parallel evolution as Earth, only just a little later.

Lloyd Penney
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June12, 2010

Many thanks for **VoP** 153. I think most of us have seen schools in chaos from time to time, but more and more, they are becoming more violent to the point of being deadly, and in Toronto police are permanently stationed in a handful of the worst schools. I hate to see this happen, but some children today are more dangerous than hardened criminals of the past. I certainly wouldn't want to go to school today; my own schools were dangerous enough.

Our schools here are fairly militant. The provincial government will take over the operation of a district school board if they regularly go over their budget as assigned. Only after a few years has the Toronto & District School Board come close to spending their budget, but to be honest, the schools need some flexibility, and they rarely get it. The school board nearly balanced its

budget by closing some schools, and selling the land. A previous premier had a very bad relationship with the province's teachers, and he was a former teacher himself.

I tried to read all the *Riverworld* books, really, I did. I got through **To Your Scattered Bodies Go**, and I simply couldn't get through **The Fabulous Riverboat**, and at last I gave up. Maybe I can try again, but I am not sure if I still have those books; I'll have to have a look.

Great list of zines, I get them all except for the Celtic zine, and Michael W. Waite's *Trial and Air*. Hint, hint, Michael, sure want to see it...

I'm not getting the usual jokes from Yvonne's brother-in-law, so I can't pass anything on to you right now...all I can say is that I saw a great t-shirt online. "If you can't be a good example, be a warning." I can think of several people I'd buy that shirt for...

Rich Dengrove
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June 18, 2010

I have several comments on **VoP 153**.

The Passing Scene. One of your favorite times of year is the Indian Cultural Club show? More Asians! Can't we have good old Americans? Of course, they are, in the tradition of my Jewish ancestors. What can be more American than immigrants coming here and seizing a better life. And I am sure, at some future time, they will become so much a part of the melting pot no one will demur that they are 100% American.

Believe it or not, the governor of New Jersey is considered a moderate Republican. I guess on social issues. He doesn't intend, as the Virginia Attorney General, Cuccinelli, to investigate advocates of global warming.

Wondrous Stories. In **The Fabulous Riverboat**, Samuel Clemens is protected by a towering Neanderthal named Joe. I gather Neanderthals weren't all that tall. They were burlier than we are, though. Even then, someone claimed that, washed, shaved and dressed, they could pass for humans on the subway.

About **The Magic Labyrinth**, I remember it as being pretty bad. Farmer, it seemed, had long since lost interest in the *Riverboat* Series. As filler, he piled high the novel with long, paranoiac, strings of logic, which were both boring and annoying.

[Both **The Magic Labyrinth** and **The Dark Design** have fairly poor reputations, so I have been stalling before reading those two books. Part of me does not want to tarnish the joy of the first two books in the series with inferior sequels.

[My Asian students are absolutely wonderful, continuing proof of how immigrants are the lifeblood of this country. It was only one-and-a-half generations ago that my family came here,

so I am a big proponent of keeping the incoming gates open.]

On the Lighter Side

A Sunday school class was studying the Ten Commandments. They were ready to discuss the last one. The teacher asked if anyone could tell her what it was. Susie raised her hand, stood tall, and quoted, "Thou shall not take the covers off the neighbor's wife."

*

I had been teaching my three-year old daughter, Caitlin, the Lord's Prayer. For several evenings at bedtime, she would repeat after me the lines from the prayer. Finally, she decided to go solo. I listened with pride as she carefully enunciated each word, right up to the end of the prayer: "Lead us not into temptation," she prayed, "but deliver us some e-mail. Amen."

*

One Sunday in a Midwest city, a young child was "acting up" during the morning worship hour. The parents did their best to maintain some sense of order in the pew but were losing the battle. Finally, the father picked the little fellow up and walked sternly up the aisle on his way out. Just before reaching the safety of the foyer, the little one called loudly to the congregation, "Pray for me! Pray for me!"

*

One student's prayer: "Now I lay me down to rest, and hope to pass tomorrow's test. If I should die before I wake, that's one less test I have to take."

*

A new priest at his first mass was so nervous he could hardly speak. After mass he asked the monsignor how he had done. The monsignor replied, "When I am worried about getting nervous on the pulpit, I put a glass of vodka next to the water glass. If I start to get nervous, I take a sip."

So the next Sunday he took the monsignor's advice. At the beginning of the sermon, he got nervous and took a drink. He proceeded to talk up a storm. Upon return to his office after mass, he found the following note on his door:

1. Sip the Vodka, don't gulp.
2. There are 10 commandments, not 12.
3. There are 12 disciples, not 10.
4. Jesus was consecrated, not constipated.
5. Jacob wagered his donkey, he did not bet his ass.
6. We do not refer to Jesus Christ as the late J.C.
7. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are not referred to as Daddy, Junior, and the Spook.
8. David slew Goliath, he did not kick the shit out of him.
9. When David was hit by a rock and knocked off his donkey, don't say he was stoned off his ass.
10. We do not refer to the cross as the Big T!

11. When Jesus broke the bread at the Last Supper he said, "Take this and eat it, for it is my body", he did not say, "Eat me."

12. The Virgin Mary is not referred to as the, "Mary with the Cherry".

13. The recommended grace before a meal is not: "Rub-a-dub-dub, thanks for the grub, yeah God".

14. Next Sunday there will be a taffy-pulling contest at St. Peter's, not a peter-pulling contest at St. Taffy's.

*

Recently while going through an airport during one of his many trips, Former President Bush encountered a man with long hair, wearing a white robe and sandals, holding a staff.

President Bush went up to the man and said, "Aren't you Moses?" The man never answered but just kept staring ahead.

Again the President said, "Moses!" in a loud voice. The man just kept staring ahead, never answering the president.

Soon a secret service agent came along and President Bush grabbed him and said, "Doesn't this man look like Moses to you?" The secret service agent agreed with the President. "Well," said the President, "Every time I say his name, he just keeps staring ahead and refuses to speak. Watch!"

Again, the President yelled, "Moses!" and again the man stared ahead.

The secret service man went up to the man in the white robe and whispered, "You look just like Moses. Are you Moses?"

The man leaned over and whispered, "Yes, I am Moses and the last time I talked to a bush I spent 40 years wandering in the desert!"

*

There's this pious man who dies and goes to heaven. Every day he gets tuna sandwiches for breakfast, lunch and dinner. He looks over at the "other" side and sees people feasting on lobster, caviar, all sorts of gourmet food.

He says to God, "I lived such an exemplary life. Is this my reward—tuna sandwiches?"

God says, "You have to understand—I don't feel like cooking just for the two of us."

*