

The Bowfin Inquirer



January, 1999

One More Year

by Jerry Lerman(344)

All of us have heard about the societal disruption that could arise from the year 2000 bug, which is ensconced in many of the world's most critical software products, and might even be taking up residence in this little word processor of mine! There very well could be some problems next year, but what about this year? The real difficulties seem to have started already.

In order to prepare for the possibility of problems in the year 2000, companies are putting almost all new development on hold, focusing the programming folks on the task of ferreting out the Y2K bug. Once found, the teams must test, test, test, and, of course, document, document, document.

These efforts are all for a noble cause, although perhaps not for the cause we'd think (that the programs work when the clock turns to '00). No, the firms' greatest concern might well be the nuisance lawsuits that they'll face when something doesn't go right. Those documents on program testing will come in handy for the defense!

It would be all right with many of us if one place did have a serious Y2K problem next year: the I.R.S. That organization has been renowned for its failure to keep up with the times, and certainly does have the makings for becoming the Y2K "poster child." We shouldn't prematurely celebrate if they *do* run into trouble looking at Form 1040s and performing audits, however; they'd probably also have botched up the mailing out of refund checks.

Is there an angle for getting rich on the year 2000 bug? Perhaps some firms should be sold short, or maybe we should go long on the software firms designing 2000-type fixes. I'm sure there are books out there covering these ideas. But I think the readers of the books are almost certainly going to fall short of their goals of instant wealth. As for the authors of the books, that's another matter.

(Editor's note: This author is definitely NOT getting rich writing on the year 2000 topic.)

Solution to Last Month's Quiz

Democrats for Impeachment

The answer was B. These were the states and Democratic Representatives who voted for impeachment articles 1 and 3: MS: Taylor, PA: -- McHale TX: -- Hall, Stenholm VA: -- Goode

This Month's Quiz

Bo's "Fin" de Siècle

Can you supply the leading year digit(s) for these historical events, which all occurred in '99. (Years are 399,699,899,999,1399,1599,1699,1799, and 1899.) ¹

__99 : Theater: *The Piccolominos (Die Piccolomini)* by Friedrich von Schiller 1/10 at Weimar's Hoftheater; *The Death of Wallenstein (Wallensteins Tod)* by Schiller 4/20 at Weimar's Hoftheater (the plays complete the trilogy begun last year).

__99 The Massachusetts colony passes a law designed to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

__99 Alfred the Great dies after a 28-year reign in which he has forced invading Danes to withdraw, consolidated England round Wessex, divided parts of Mercia into shires, compiled the best laws of earlier kings, and encouraged learning by bringing famous scholars to Wessex and by making his own translations of Latin works. Alfred is succeeded by his son Edward, now 29.

__99 England's earl of Essex is sent by Elizabeth to subdue Ireland's rebellious earl of Tyrone but is defeated at Arklow, makes a truce with Tyrone, and leaves his post as governor general of Ireland to vindicate himself before the queen.

__99 John of Gaunt dies at 59, Richard II confiscates his Lancaster estates, and John's son Henry of Bolingbroke returns from exile, landing at Ravenspur in July while Richard is in Ireland. When Richard returns, he is defeated and captured by Bolingbroke and deposed by Parliament, which acclaims the usurper Bolingbroke king. He will reign as Henry IV, founding the house of Lancaster.

__99 London has another epidemic of the Black Death. It will kill thousands in the next 2 years.

__99 *Confessions* by the North African cleric-philosopher Augustine, 44, says, "How small are grains of sand! Yet if enough are placed in a ship they sink it." Converted to Christianity by Bishop Ambrose of Milan, Augustine has served

¹Information Source: *The People's Chronology*, Henry Holt and Company, Inc. Copyright © 1995, 1996 by James Trager.

for the past 3 years as Bishop of Hippo and will continue in that position for the next 31 years.

__99 Scott Joplin's "Original Rag" and "Maple Leaf Rag" are the first ragtime piano pieces to appear in sheet music form. Joplin, 30, has been taking courses in harmony and composition at the George Smith College for Negroes in Sedalia, Mo., while playing piano at local sporting houses that include the Maple Leaf Club, and has developed a ragged-type style, heavily syncopated, that publisher John Stark discovers at Sedalia and that other pianists will soon exploit.

__99 *Beowulf* has probably been completed by this time. The heroic epic poem of more than 3,000 lines in Old English chronicles the deeds of the Geatish (southern Swedish) hero Beowulf who freed the court of the Danish king Hrothgar from the ravages of the ogre Grendel and Grendel's mother, became king of the Geats, and ruled for 50 years until called upon to rescue the country from a fire-breathing dragon. Mortally wounded while slaying the dragon, Beowulf was cremated on a giant funeral pyre.

__99 Europeans and Byzantines throng monasteries and churches in the fall bringing deeds of land, valuable jewels, manuscripts, and wagonloads of possessions in hopes of being in good grace on Judgment Day. Church bells ring December 31, lords go down on their knees with peasants, and many are astonished that the world does not end.

Thoughts

(from an Internet friend)

I've learned that we don't have to change friends
if we understand that friends change..

We all live under the same sky, but we don't all
have the same horizon..

It's okay to let yourself go, just as long as you can
find your way back.....

If you take too long in deciding what to do with
your life, you'll find you've done it...

BO - by Lerman

Why such a look of sadness,
Goldie?

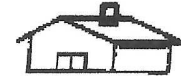
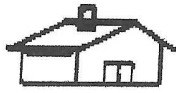
Almost all my friends have
been captured in a giant
net! There's hardly a
goldfish left around here!

Well, let's calm down and
think...where do you think
they might have been
taken?

I hate to say it, Bo, but I
have heard mention of
a terrible thing called the
"Super Bowl"!

**TARGET DATE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEXT
MONTH'S B.I.: February 15th**

**Call the Lermans at (650) 572-9153, or drop off at 344
Bowfin, or E-mail us at jerry_lerman@compuserve.com**



February, 1999

Rub a Dub Dub A Use For Your Tub

by Lori and Steve Andersen (376)

Steve: Lori is well into her new career of college coed and future High School Art teacher and is collecting plastic margarine/butter tubs for her ceramics class. Lori would like to know if the neighbors can help her out. Could you collect your clean, empty containers and drop them off in a bag at 376? Thanks!

Lori:

The margarine tubs (and the like) are used for scraps of clay in the ceramics room. There is always the need for them (by the car-load) and we also need large plastic bags...like big shopping bags and dry cleaners bags.....we wrap our ' projects under construction' in them to keep them from drying out.

School is a blast! I should have gone back sooner. I just got a B+ on my geology mid-term. I would have been happy with a C! I was ecstatic to say the least. You can teach an old dog new tricks after all. Our daughters are amazed and happy for me. They have mixed feelings about me doing this mid-life change thing, but are supportive of my decision. The general education requirements are interesting but not terribly appropriate for me, but I have to take them. Thank goodness there are a variety of classes to take to fulfill each requirement.. I get to take a course in Western U.S. history from 1750 to 1900! Yah hoo! Ride um cowboy!

My art classes are outstanding. The instructors zero in on your talents and inspire you to "take it one more step." I'm especially excited with ceramics. I have never worked with clay before but find it most intriguing and I seem to have a knack at sculpting! Who'd a thunk! Can hardly wait for Ceramics II. I'm plotting out my classes for Spring quarter and looking forward to being done by Spring 2000.

Wendy [their older daughter - Ed.] and I can graduate together!

Happy Chinese New Year.

Let the Rabbits run wild..as long as they are not Dust Bunnies.

Homework awaits!

This Month's Quiz

First Couples

What with the confluence of both Presidents' Day and Valentine's day on the same weekend this month, why not see if you can answer these questions about five of our U.S. Presidents and their Valentines ?

1. Which president's wife was named Abigail, and was descended from the 17th-century Puritan preacher Thomas Shepard (1605-49) of Cambridge?
2. Which president's wife was named Barbara, and worked to aid the effort to conquer leukemia, the disease that claimed one of her daughters in early childhood?
3. Which president had a fiancée, Ann Coleman, who died suddenly after breaking off her engagement to him?
4. Which president went through a second marriage ceremony with his wife because it was discovered that her first marriage - to another man - had not concluded with a proper divorce?
5. Which president proposed marriage to Mary Owens, a Kentucky girl who lived in New Salem, and was relieved when Mary turned him down?



Solution to Last Month's Quiz

Bo's "Fin" de Siècle

(Sorry not to have numbered the questions last month...here are the answers with the first phrase of the questions:)

- 1799 : Theater: *The Piccolominos (Die Piccolomini)* by
1699 The Massachusetts colony passes a law designed to
899 Alfred the Great dies after a 28-year reign in which he has
1599 England's earl of Essex is sent by Elizabeth to subdue
1399 John of Gaunt dies at 59, Richard II confiscates his
1499 London has another epidemic of the Black Death. It will
399 *Confessions* by the North African cleric-philosopher
1899 Scott Joplin's "Original Rag" and "Maple Leaf Rag" are
699 *Beowulf* has probably been completed by this time. The
999 Europeans and Byzantines throng monasteries and

Thoughts

(from an Internet friend)

Opportunity sometimes knocks very softly. Make sure you answer your door..

When there's a mountain to climb, waiting won't make it smaller..

Watch for big problems.. They disguise big opportunities..

Don't use time or words carelessly. Neither can be retrieved.

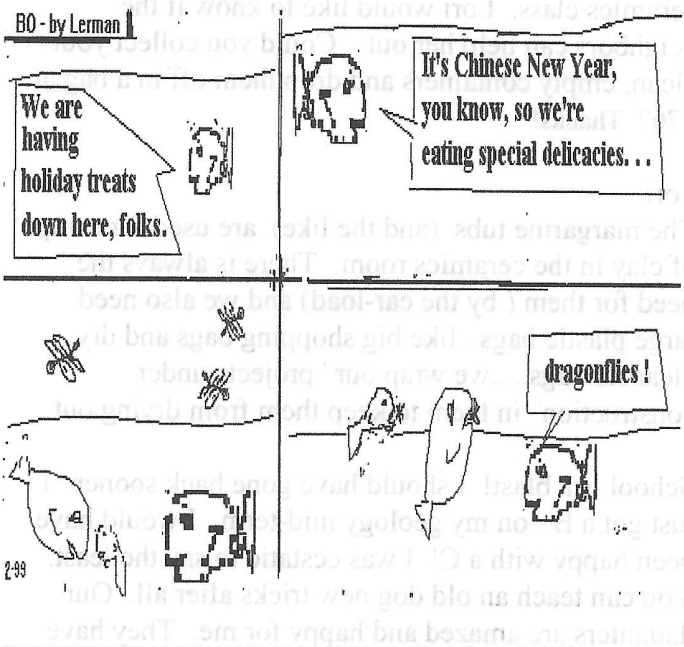
Getting to the top of the ladder is not the problem. The most difficult problem is getting through the crowd at the bottom..

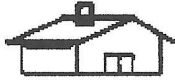
There are small ships and big ships but the best ships are friendships..

The way some people drive, you'd think they were late for their accident...

TARGET DATE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEXT MONTH'S B.I.: March 15th

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The Bowfin Inquirer



March, 1999

Save the Floor and More !

by Jerry Lerman (344)

I'm borrowing the title of this column from the fund raising effort now going on at Bowditch Middle School. The gymnasium/stage in that school is suffering from the ravages of aging, and the floor in particular has become downright dangerous, with unevenness and wear contributing to twisted ankles and other injuries.

Concerned parents in the PTA have mounted a very effective campaign to raise \$50,000 to fund the floor replacement and refurbish the room with better stage lighting and sound. Last week, for example, they hosted two spaghetti dinner/auction fundraisers at the FC Recreation Center, and before the evening was out they'd added more than \$15,000 to their coffers.

Money is flowing in our household, too. With our house reaching age thirty, we found that we, too, had some floors to work on. The carpets were showing wear, and while no ankles had been turned on the thin spots, it was beginning to resemble somebody's scalp. Raising hardly a finger, save to do the check-writing, we now have nice new carpeting. (We were told this stuff can withstand spaghetti spills, so don't be surprised if you find us trying to host a fundraising dinner to pay for it!)

But, what's the "More" in the title, you ask. That represents the sad state our bath facilities were in. The two bathrooms each had their own separate stories of woe - a tale of two biffies, so to speak. In one, the slant of the tub made sure that water droplets would collect in a small floor depression, marring the lineoleum badly. The master bathroom, on the other hand, had a step down shower that had a leaky pan. Dry rot was a distinct possibility. Again, the power of the pen, along with some careful shopping for tile, vanities, and faucets, and we are (quite nearly) set with attractive, new rooms.

Anyway, I think that's what the "more" was all about. But the truth be told, there's probably more we just don't know about yet!

This Month's Quiz

Paper Chase

Match these varied newspapers to the city in which they are published. No slam dunks like 'Bowfin Inquirer=Foster City' here!

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| 1 Little Rock, Arkansas | Post-Gazette |
| 2 Miami, Florida | Courant |
| 3 New Orleans, Louisiana | Sentinel |
| 4 Atlanta, Georgia | Democrat-Gazette |
| 5 Hartford, Connecticut | Times-Picayune |
| 6 Manchester, N.H. | Star-Telegram |
| 7 St. Paul, Minnesota | Herald |
| 8 Fort Worth, Texas | Constitution |
| 9 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania | Pioneer Press |
| 10 Milwaukee, Wisconsin | Union Leader |

(source: Rubin, *A Writer's Companion*, Harper Perennial, 1995)

Solution to Last Month's Quiz

First Couples

1. John Adams
2. George Bush
3. James Buchanan
4. Andrew Jackson
5. Abraham Lincoln

**TARGET DATE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEXT
MONTH'S B.I.: April 16th (right after you file!)**

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Up in the Air Lines (from an Internet friend)

Occasionally, airline attendants make in-flight safety lectures and other announcements a bit more entertaining. Here are some actual examples:

After a particularly rough landing at Memphis: "Please take care when opening the overhead compartments because, after a landing like that, sure as h*#l, everything has shifted."

"Welcome aboard Southwest Flight XXX to YYY. To operate your seat belt, insert the metal tab into the buckle, and pull tight. It works just like every other seat belt, and if you don't know how to operate one, you probably shouldn't be out in public unsupervised."

"In the event of a sudden loss of cabin pressure, oxygen masks will descend from the ceiling. Stop screaming, grab the mask, and pull it over your face. If you have a small child traveling with you, secure your mask before assisting with theirs. If you are traveling with two small children, decide now which one you love more."

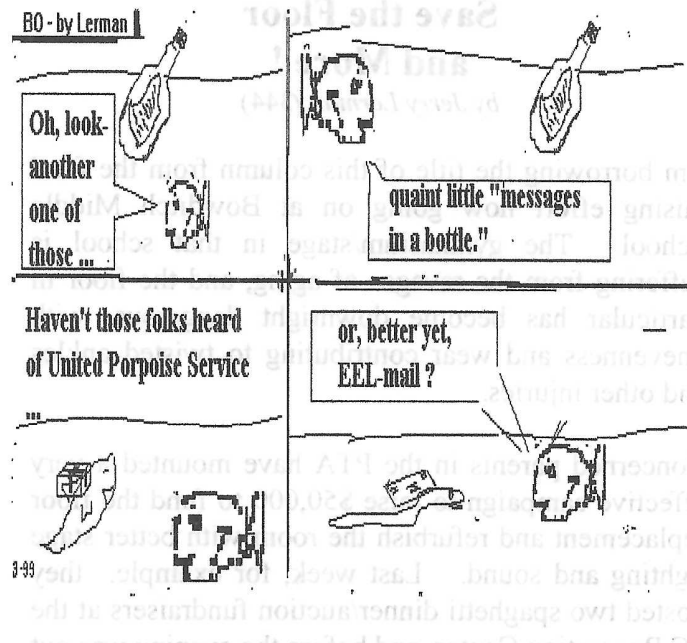
Weather at our destination is 50 degrees with some broken clouds, but they'll try to have them fixed before we arrive. Thank you, and remember, nobody loves you, or your money, more than Southwest Airlines!"

"Your seat cushions can be used for flotation, and in the event of an emergency water landing, please take them with our compliments."

"There may be 50 ways to leave your lover, but there are only 4 ways out of this airplane..."

"We do feature a smoking section on this flight; if you must smoke, contact a member of the flight crew and we will escort you to the wing of the airplane."

Apart of a Flight Attendant's arrival announcement: "We'd like to thank you folks for flying with us today. And, the next time you get the insane urge to go blasting through the skies in a pressurized metal tube, we hope you'll think of us here at US Airways!"

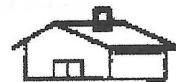


FOOLS at San Mateo High School?

Mark your calendars for the weekends April 30-May 2, and May 7th-9th, to see Neil Simon's hilarious comedy, Fools, performed by the talented students of SMHS. See Beth Lerman convincingly portray a woman much older than her parents (if such a thing is possible!)

Performances are at 8:00 PM on Fridays and Saturdays, and 2:00 PM on Sundays. If you'd like more information or tickets, please call the Lermans at 650-572-9153.





April, 1999

THE GREAT "GAS OUT"

by Wayne V. Reichley (324)

It's time we did something about the price of gasoline in America! We are all sick and tired of high prices when there are literally millions of gallons in storage.

Know what I found out? If there was just ONE day when no one purchased any gasoline, prices would drop drastically. The so-called oil cartel has decided to slow production by some 2 million barrels per day to drive up the price. I have decided to see how many Americans we can get to NOT BUY ANY GASOLINE on one particular day!

Let's have a GAS OUT! Do not buy any gasoline on APRIL 30, 1999!!!! Buy on Thursday before, or Saturday after. Do not buy any gasoline on FRIDAY, APRIL 30, 1999. Wanna help? Get the message out to everyone you know. Ask them to do the same. All we need is a few million to participate in order to make a difference.

We CAN make a difference.

Thanks.

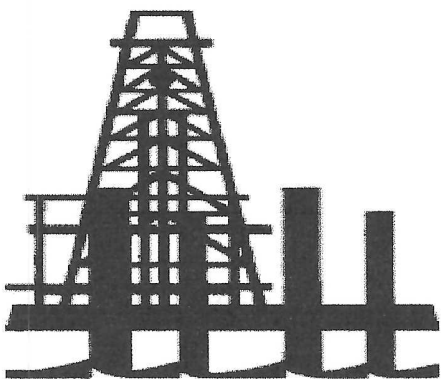
--

Wayne V. Reichley

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<http://www.netwizards.net/~tabasco/>



All I Really Need To Know (I Learned From Noah's Ark)

from an Internet friend

1. Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.
2. Stay fit. When you're 600 years old, someone might ask you to do something REALLY big.
3. Don't listen to critics - do what has to be done.
4. Build on high ground.
5. For safety's sake, travel in pairs.
6. Two heads are better than one.
7. Speed isn't always an advantage. The cheetahs were on board, but so were the snails.
8. If you can't fight or flee - float!
9. Take care of your animals as if they were the last ones on earth.
10. Don't forget that we're all in the same boat.

FINAL RETURNS ARE IN ...

also from the Internet

A businessman on his deathbed called his friend and said, "Bill, I want you to promise me that when I die you will have my remains cremated."

"And what," his friend asked, "do you want me to do with your ashes?"

The businessman said, "Just put them in an envelope and mail them to the Internal Revenue Service and write on the envelope, 'Now you have everything.'"

This Month's Quiz

Greeting the Season

Baseball got underway this month, and there are some interesting things already happening in the big leagues. Try this short quiz on the new season. But be careful: three strikes and you're out!

1. Which Giants pitcher this year, who moved directly from AA into the majors, pitched seven scoreless innings?
2. Which player for the St. Louis Cardinals hit two grand slam homers in the same inning?
3. Which Giant player, facing the team from which he had been traded and with the bases loaded in the top of the ninth, could have gone a long way toward beating them with a single? Unfortunately for us, he weakly popped out. (The Giants won the game in 10 innings anyway.)



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Solution to Last Month's Quiz

Paper Chase

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 1 Little Rock, AK | Democrat-Gazette |
| 2. Miami, FL | Herald |
| 3. New Orleans, LA | Times-Picayune |
| 4. Atlanta, GA | Constitution |
| 5. Hartford, CT | Courant |
| 6. Manchester, NH | Union Leader |
| 7. St. Paul, MN | Pioneer Press |
| 8. Fort Worth, TX | Star-Telegram |
| 9. Pittsburgh, PA | Post-Gazette |
| 10. Milwaukee, WI | Sentinel |

Colorado's Call to Us

by Jerry Lerman (344)

Columbine High School's lost children weigh heavily on all our minds. The killing spree by two (or perhaps more) deranged souls has made one thing very clear about Littleton, Colorado: it is not merely an agglomeration of houses and residents within them, it is a **community**. Throughout the aftermath of the tragedy, the Littleton townsfolk have exhibited the kind of thoughtfulness and caring that may be of some consolation to those adults and children whose lives were so immensely damaged..

There seem to be parallels between the town of Littleton and our small city: a close-knit, family atmosphere; great schools; a love of life. May those good folks find peace in the days that follow. May all of us, in towns throughout our country, work to see that our communities become safer, healthier, and more satisfying environments in which to live.



The Bowfin Inquirer



May, 1999

The Bill of No Rights

contributed by
Wayne V. Reichley (324)
tabasco@netwizards.net

We, the sensible people of the United States, in an attempt to help everyone get along, restore some semblance of justice, avoid any more riots, keep our nation safe, promote positive behavior, and secure the blessings of debt free liberty to ourselves and our great-great-great-grandchildren, hereby try one more time to ordain and establish some common sense guidelines for the terminally whiny, guilt ridden, delusional, and other liberal, bedwetters. We hold these truths to be self-evident: that a whole lot of people are confused by the Bill of Rights and are so dim that they require a Bill of No Rights.

ARTICLE I: You do not have the right to a new car, big screen TV or any other form of wealth. More power to you if you can legally Acquire them, but no one is guaranteeing anything.

ARTICLE II: You do not have the right to never be offended. This country is based on freedom, and that means freedom for everyone - not just you! You may leave the room, turn the channel, express a different opinion, etc., but the world is full of idiots, and probably always will be.

ARTICLE III: You do not have the right to be free from harm. If you stick a screwdriver in your eye, learn to be more careful, do not expect the tool manufacturer to make you and all your relatives independently wealthy.

ARTICLE IV: You do not have the right to free food and housing. Americans are the most charitable people to be found, and will gladly help anyone in need, but we are quickly growing weary of subsidizing generation after generation of professional couch potatoes who achieve nothing more than the creation of another generation of professional couch potatoes.

ARTICLE V: You do not have the right to free health care. That would be nice, but from the looks of public housing, we're just not interested in public health care.

ARTICLE VI: You do not have the right to physically harm other people. If you kidnap, rape, intentionally maim, or kill someone, don't be surprised if the rest of us want to see you fry in the electric chair.

ARTICLE VII: You do not have the right to the possessions of others. If you rob, cheat or coerce away the goods or services of other citizens, don't be surprised if the rest of us get together and lock you away in a place where you still won't have the right to a big screen color TV or a life of leisure.

ARTICLE VIII: You don't have the right to demand that our children risk their lives in foreign wars to soothe your aching conscience. We hate oppressive governments and won't lift a finger to stop you from going to fight if you'd like. However, we do not enjoy parenting the entire world and do not want to spend so much of our time battling each and every little tyrant with a military uniform and a funny hat.

ARTICLE IX: You don't have the right to a job. All of us sure want all of you to have one, and will gladly help you along in hard times, but we expect you to take advantage of the opportunities of education and vocational training laid before you to make yourself useful.

ARTICLE X: You do not have the right to happiness. Being an American means that you have the right to pursue happiness - which by the way, is a lot easier if you are unencumbered by an overabundance of idiotic laws created by those of you who were confused by the Bill of Rights."

YOUNGER and WISER?

contributed by
Wayne V. Reichley (324)

I am hereby officially tendering my resignation as an adult, in order to accept the responsibilities of a 6 year old. The tax base is lower. I want to be six again.

I want to go to McDonald's and think it's the best place in the world to eat.

I want to sail sticks across a fresh mud puddle and make waves with rocks.

I want to think M&Ms are better than money, because you can eat them.

I want to play kickball during recess and stay up on Christmas Eve waiting to hear Santa and Rudolph on the roof.

I long for the days when life was simple. When all you knew were your colors, the addition tables and simple nursery rhymes, but it didn't bother you, because you didn't know what you didn't know, and you didn't care. (no theory, no SS&ET, etc)

I want to go to school and have snack time, recess, gym and field trips.

I want to be happy, because I don't know what should make me upset.

I want to think the world is fair and everyone in it is honest and good.

I want to believe that anything is possible.

Sometime, while I was maturing, I learned too much. I learned of nuclear weapons, prejudice, starving and abused kids, lies, unhappy marriages, illness, pain and mortality. I want to be six again.

I want to think that everyone, including myself, will live forever, because I don't know the concept of death.

I want to be oblivious to the complexity of life and be overly excited by the little things again. I want television to be something I watch for fun, not something used for escape from the things I should be doing.

I want to live knowing the little things that I find exciting will always make me as happy as when I first learned them. I want to be six again.

I remember not seeing the world as a whole, but rather being aware of only the things that directly concerned me.

I want to be naive enough to think that if I'm happy, so is everyone else.

I want to walk down the beach and think only of the sand beneath my feet and the possibility of finding that blue piece of sea glass I'm looking for.

I want to spend my afternoons climbing trees and riding my bike, letting the grownups worry about time, the dentist and how to find the money to fix the car.

I want to wonder what I'll do when I grow up and what I'll be, who I'll be and not worry about what I'll do if this doesn't work out. I want that time back.

I want to use it now as an escape, so that when my computer crashes, or I have a mountain of paperwork, or two depressed friends, or a fight with my spouse, or bittersweet memories of times gone by, or second thoughts about so many things, I can travel back and build a snowman, without thinking about anything except whether the snow sticks together and what I can possibly use for the snowman's mouth.

I want to be six again.

Noah's Ark...

If it happened today

*contributed by
Wayne V. Reichley (324)*

And the Lord spoke to Noah and said, "In six months I'm going to make it rain until the whole earth is covered with water and all the evil people are destroyed. I want to save a few good people, and two of every kind of living thing on the planet. I am commanding you to build an Ark.

"And in a flash of lightning, He delivered the specifications for an Ark."

"Okay," said Noah, trembling with fear and fumbling with the blueprints.

"Six months, and it starts to rain," thundered the Lord. "You'd better have the Ark completed, or learn to swim for a very long time."

Six months passed, the skies clouded up and rain began to fall. The Lord saw that Noah was sitting in his front yard, weeping..... And there was no Ark.

"Noah," shouted the Lord, "Where is the Ark?"

"Lord, please forgive me!" begged Noah. "I did my best but there were big problems. First, I had to get a building permit for the Ark construction project and your plans didn't meet code. So I had to hire an engineer to re-draw the plans. Then I got into a big fight over whether or not the Ark needed a fire sprinkler system."

"Then my neighbor objected, claiming I was violating zoning by building the Ark in my front yard, so I had to get a variance from the city planning commission."

"Then I had problems getting enough wood for the Ark, because there was a ban on cutting trees to save the Spotted Owl. I had to convince the U.S. Fish

and Wildlife that I needed the wood to save the Owls. But they wouldn't let me catch any owls. So, no owls."

"The carpenters formed a union and went out on strike. I had to negotiate a settlement with the National Labor Relations Board before anyone would pick up a saw or hammer. Now we have sixteen carpenters going on the boat, and still no owls."

"Then I started gathering up animals, and got sued by an animal rights group. They objected to me taking only two of each kind."

"Just when I got the suit dismissed, EPA notified me that I couldn't complete the Ark without filing an environmental impact statement on your proposed flood. They didn't take kindly to the idea that they had no jurisdiction over the conduct of a Supreme Being."

"Then the Army Corp of Engineers wanted a map of the proposed new flood plain. I sent them a globe."

"Right now, I'm still trying to resolve a complaint from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission over how many Croatians I'm supposed to hire."

"The IRS has seized all my assets, claiming I'm trying to avoid paying taxes by leaving the country. And I just got a notice from the state about owing them some kind of use tax. I really don't think I can finish the Ark for at least another five years," Noah wailed.

The sky began to clear. The sun began to shine. A rainbow arched across the sky. Noah looked up and smiled.

"You mean you're not going to destroy the earth?" Noah asked hopefully

..

"No," said the Lord sadly. "The government already has."

This Month's Quiz

Are You a Movie Mayvin?

A few unfair questions, in honor of the month in which Star Wars Episode I finally made its appearance in movie theaters and Alfred Hitchcock's birth centennial was observed.

1. Which of "The Three Stooges" appeared in the 1940 W.C. Fields flick, "The Bank Dick" - Larry, Moe, or Shemp?
2. Who directed Ben-Hur (1959) - William Wyler, David Lean, or Otto Preminger?
3. Which of these actors appeared in "Field of Dreams" (1989) - Morgan Freeman, Burt Lancaster, or Daniel Day-Lewis?
4. Carole Lombard starred in which of these famous films from the '30s - My Man Godfrey, King Kong, or Gunga Din?
5. Which actor appeared in all three of these films - The Magnificent Seven (1960), The Ten Commandments (1956), and The King and I (1956) - was it Charlton Heston, Yul Brynner, or Steve McQueen?
6. Which of these 1961 films featured Richard Beymer and Natalie Wood - The Misfits, The Hustler, or West Side Story?

Solution to Last Month's Quiz

Greeting the Season

1. Giant rookie Joe Nathan pitched seven scoreless innings in his debut.
2. Fernando Tatis hit two grand slams in the same inning.
3. F. P. Santangelo used to play for the Expos.

TARGET DATE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEXT MONTH'S B.I.: June 15th

Call the Lermans at (650) 572-9153, or drop off at 344 Bowfin, or E-mail us at jerry_berman@compuserve.com

E-Commerce Fills the Bill

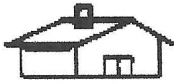
by Jerry Lerman (344)

Shopping for gifts has certainly become a lot easier for me these days. A few days before Mothers' Day, for example, I found the perfect book on *amazon.com* and - once I remembered the password I'd set up for myself about 12 months earlier - I placed an order for it in a trice. I ordered it to be delivered via regular shipping, to save a buck or two, knowing that my mother-in-law values thrift every bit as much as thoughtfulness.

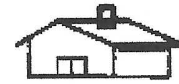
But *amazon* never ceases to amaz! It sent me an e-mail saying they'd upgraded my shipping method at no cost, because they (or, rather, the very smart computer program that makes believe it is a person when it sends notes to customers) thought this was probably a gift for Mothers' Day. How thoughtful.

Unfortunately, the postal delivery person placed the package in a little trafficked location in the front of my mother-in-law's home. She always enters and exits via the garage at the side. It was quite awkward for us when we spoke with her that Sunday, expecting to hear a nice "thank you for the book," and instead hearing nary a word on the subject.

All was cleared up in a phone call two days later. The book was a hit - just what she was looking for. And she was also thrilled because it was the first book she'd EVER gotten from *amazon.com*. It was as if she'd finally come of age - the age of E-commerce.



The Bowfin Inquirer



June, 1999

Win Baskin-Robbins Ice Cream and Cash in the Bowfin Inquirer Contribution Contest

by Jerry Lerman (344)

William Randolph Hearst, I'm not, but just as he was interested in getting the story out, so too is this editor desirous of making available the best stories, news articles, essays, and or poems of our young people...and I have a \$15 prize fund available to help bring this about. So, in this not-quite-annual competition, I'm offering \$1 cash prizes to the each of the first five entrants (18 years or younger) who contribute before the July 15th deadline, and the following merit-based prizes:

\$5 in Baskin Robbins coupons to the best overall entry (taking the age of the author into account)

\$3 in Baskin Robbins coupons to the 1st runner-up, and

\$2 in Baskin Robbins coupons to the 2nd runner-up.

Contributions should be at least 50 words (except that poetic license will be permitted; for example a haiku) and no longer than about 300 words (about the length of one column), and all contributions will be published in the July issue of the Bowfin Inquirer.

The contest is open to all youths - whether or not they reside on Bowfin Street. (But I don't deliver the paper beyond our street boundaries, so you'll have to get the word out!)

Contributions are welcome after the July 15th deadline, and they will be included in the judging, (which will be completed before the publication of the July issue); however, the \$1 cash prize will not be available for those late entries, even if fewer than 5 pieces have been received by that date.

Parents, I hope this competition will help make your kids' summer a bit more fun and a bit sweeter. Please don't hesitate to call me at 572-9153 if you have questions regarding the contest. Thanks!

This Month's Quiz

Hastings Pudding

Don't let your mind go all mushy this summer; try this puzzler out.

I met a arithmetically adept person and asked her to go through the following exercise:

(1) Think of a number in the range from 1 to 100.

(2) Double that number.

(3) Add _____ to that result.

(aha! I told her what to add here, but I'm not telling you; that's the quiz!)

(4) Divide that result by two.

(5) Subtract from that result the number she started out with.

I then shocked her by telling her that the number she had remaining was the year of the Battle of Hastings, 1066, which it indeed was!

What number did I ask her to add in that 3rd step?

Solution to Last Month's Quiz

Are You a Movie Mayvin?

1. c

2. a

3. b

4. a

5. b

6. c

**TARGET DATE and Contest \$ Cutoff FOR
CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEXT MONTH'S B.I.: July 15th**

Call the Lermans at (650) 572-9153, or drop off at 344 Bowfin, or E-mail us at jerry_lerman@compuserve.com

O Beloved Earth!

O beloved Earth!

how we love you so...
you, the giver of life to us all

we cultivate you to show our affection, fertile is your ground
fertile so that we may grow and pluck! out! each! and! every!
vegetable grown
leave you barren, utterly alone

we let our stomachs grow to be bigger than our eyes
give us moremoremore!
forget the flowers (except the roses in our vases)
forget the animals (except allof our pets)

deny the fish, may the oceans freeze
so that we may please appease
the longing of our feet
to iceskate
we can skate to Timbuktu

and tell you just how much we love you

O mother, thank you for these things,
how we do love you!
i'll give you this single leaf, one green-piece inreturn for your
kindness
it falls to the ground and weeps for you

accept our infantile love

by Beth Lerman (344)



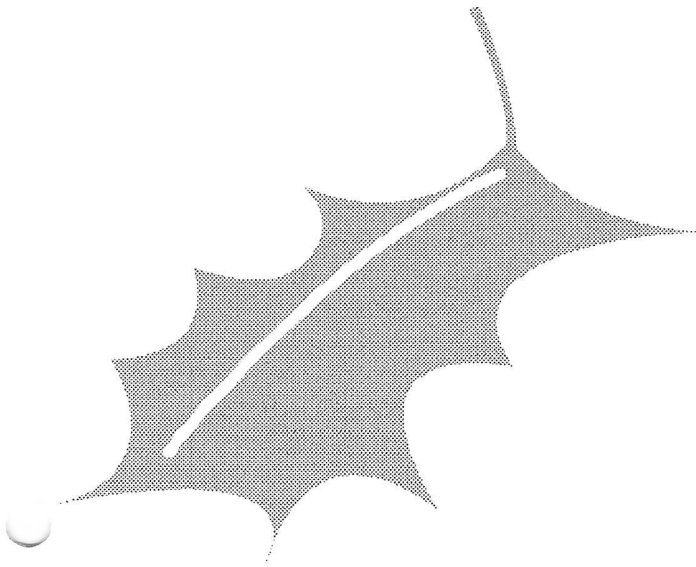
Foster City Little League

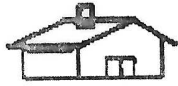
by Jerry Lerman (344)

Faithful readers of the BI might recall that I've written before about how fantastic the FCLL is. My son Jacob's experience, which now has run from T-Ball and Minor B, all the way through completion of three years of "Majors," has been great for both him and me. Through the years, he has strengthened friendships, made new ones, learned and developed skills, and learned how to handle both winning and losing. He has weathered disappointments, handled heartaches, and experienced exhilaration.

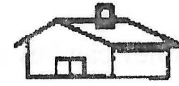
The league is well organized and administered. A large fraction of the parents take active roles in seeing to the success of the season, providing snacks for hungry, tired ballplayers, bodies to field the kids' flies and grounders at practice, and rooters to make each team feel appreciated. Sportsmanship is exhibited throughout the season by all involved. This is not merely a competitive framework - it is an arena for friendship, too. All the adults - from the managers and coaches to the umpires and parents - know that full well.

Jacob has had a great time playing ball in the FCLL.





The Bowfin Inquirer



July, 1999

"When I Was A Kid"

by Jacob Lerman (344) - age 12

When I was a young boy,
I only had one favorite vegetable,
It was broccoli and it was great.
I always wore hats,
Even if it was raining dogs and cats.
My favorite t.v. show was the Cosby Show,
But that was a little later, I know.
One year in baseball I gave a kid a black eye,
Too bad he did not hit me back ... he was too shy.
I remember one day that I almost died,
Now I thank the lifeguard,
and the water
For not being high tide.

Editor's note: Jacob's was the only entry in the B.I. Contribution contest announced last month. He accordingly will win the total prize fund of the competition, \$10 in Baskin Robbins coupons - I only ask that he not eat all the ice cream in one day!

The Art of Modem Maintenance

Editor's note: I received this e-mail from Weyman Wong (372), and would like to solicit responses from others on the block. My personal answer: I cannot get my modem to transmit/receive faster than 28.8 KB.

Dear neighbor,

If you're using a phone line to access the internet, could you tell me what speeds you're able to download at? I have a 56k modem but am only able to achieve 26,400 bps 99+% of the time. Once in a rare while, I'm able to reach 28,800 bps, but I haven't seen this speed for months. I was hoping @Home cable modem would reach our neighborhood by now, but they've been stalled by problems in San Carlos/Belmont. Meanwhile, although PacBell DSL is available on the west side of FC, it's not available in our neighborhood for the foreseeable future, so it looks pretty dismal for us if we hope to see higher speeds.

An Interview with God

from the Internet

I dreamed I had an interview with God.
"Come in," God said. "So, you would like to interview Me?"
"If you have the time," I requested. God smiled and said:
"My time is eternity and is enough to do everything; what questions do you have in mind to ask me?"
I asked God, "What surprises you most about mankind?" God answered:
"That they get bored of being children, are in a rush to grow up,
and then long to be children again.
That they lose their health to make money
and then lose their money to restore their health.
That by thinking anxiously about the future, they forget the present, such that they live neither for the present nor the future.
That they live as if they will never die,
and they die as if they had never lived..."

Then I asked,

"As a parent, what are some of life's lessons children should learn?"

God replied with a smile: "To learn that they cannot make anyone love them.

What they can do is to let themselves be loved.

To learn that what is most valuable is not what they have in their lives, but who they have in their lives.

To learn that it is not good to compare themselves to others.

All will be judged individually on their own merits, not as a group on a comparison basis!

To learn that a rich person is not the one who has the most, but is one who needs the least.

To learn that it only takes a few seconds to open profound wounds in persons we love, and that it takes many years to heal them.

To learn to forgive by practicing forgiveness.

To learn that there are persons that love them dearly, but simply do not know how to express or show their feelings.

To learn that money can buy everything except happiness.

To learn that two people can look at the same thing and see it totally differently.

To learn that a true friend is someone who knows everything about them...and likes them anyway.

To learn that it is not always enough that they be forgiven by others, but that they have to forgive themselves."

People will forget what you said.

People will forget what you did,

but people will never forget

how you made them feel.

Marathon Menaces

Reported in Jerry Lerman's (*no relation to this Editor*) internet mailer: "Bonehead of the Day"

The UK Mirror reports that two brothers, Sergio, 21, and Arnold, 19, Motsoeneng of the UK wanted to win the grueling 56-mile Comrades Marathon race. Sergio came in 9th and won pounds 600 (about \$960). However close inspection of photographs revealed that the two brothers had kept switching places. How were they caught? Although they dressed alike in all respects, they forgot that their watches didn't match.

Want to join the bonehead mailing list? Point your browser to <http://Bonehead.Oddballs.com> and sign up or send an email to <mailto:bonehead-subscribe@egroups.com>.

This Month's Quiz

FOR THE BIRDS

Our jabbering little parakeet, Tweetie, who is squawking a bit as I write, seems to be asking me to include a quiz about her family. Here's a list of some relatives of hers, but they've been scrambled (like their eggs sometimes are). Try and wing it!

1. OOLIER
2. ABEJULY
3. DEEIKLLR
4. TORCHIS
5. MEU
6. PROWARS
7. NEWR
8. SINGERLAND
9. NOHER
- 10 COPCAKE

Solution to Last Month's Quiz

Hastings Pudding

The number that was added in step 3 was 2,132 - twice the year of the Battle of Hastings, 1066.

This can be deduced by applying algebra. Assume the number first picked was X. Then in step 2, after doubling, we have $2 * X = 2X$.

In step 3 we add an unknown number, Y, so we have $2X + Y$.

In step 4 we divide by 2, so we now have $X + Y/2$.

In step 5 we subtract the number we started with, so we have just Y/2.

We are told that $Y/2 = 1,066$. Therefore Y must be twice 1,066, or 2,132.

<p>TARGET DATE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEXT MONTH'S B.I.: August 15th</p>

<p>Call the Lermans at (650) 572-9153, or drop off at 344 Bowfin, or E-mail us at jerry_lerman@compuserve.com</p>
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The Bowfin Inquirer



August, 1999

Squeak in the Night

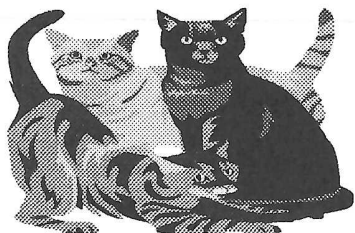
by Lori Andersen (376)

A few years ago we adopted our two indoor kitties from a shelter network in Redwood City called Pets In Need. They were very cautious about the home and family that the pet was being placed in and we had to fill out long forms and be interviewed.....I felt that we were being interviewed for a child adoption! But we passed the screening process and had two little furry friends join our household. About three years ago we fostered three tiny kittens for the shelter for about two months. The little critters needed bottle feedings every three hours, just like our own children did all those years ago. We all worked in shifts and the little squeekies grew into cute little balls of funny fur as they raced around the kitchen attacking any ankle they came into contact with. We returned them to the shelter at about 9 weeks and they were adopted within the week to nice homes.

Well, we're up to our aarmpits with little kitties again! We have 3 more little beastie babies that love to be played with and fed with a bottle and played with some more. They're almost big enough to lap up formula from a saucer now! They sure grow fast! They will be with us till the beginning of Sept. when we will take them back to the shelter to get new permanent homes. (And they will be reunited with their other 3 siblings who went to another foster home for raising) So much fun...so much work!

If you need a new pet, they have lots of loving furry friends looking for good homes. They are located at 873 Fifth St., Redwood City.

web: www.PetsInNeed.org



Please Connect Me, Fast!!! (part 1)

by Wayne V. Reichley (324)

tabasco@netwizards.net

<http://www.netwizards.net/~tabasco/>

650-574-3804

The Internet seems to be changing almost daily. That old 56-Kbps modem is just too slow and you want something faster. Analog phone lines just don't do it for you anymore. Let's talk about speed - high speed, that is.

Technology has opened up a wide variety of options. There are two technologies running the show right now: cable modems and DSL (digital subscriber lines). Both of these options are available for most users, and they're finally getting cheap enough for a reasonable person to afford, so it's time to explore them. If you're ready to hit the Internet at super-high speeds, buckle that seatbelt and read on (you'll want to know all about big bandwidth before you hit the surf).

Options that are speedy, but out of the question:

ISDN It cost too much, it's a pain to set up, and it's still a dial-up connection. Don't bother unless you can't get anything else, real soon.

MICROWAVE While wireless access is the way of the future, it isn't here yet. Some small market tests are happening, but this technology will take time.

DUEL MODEMS If you can't even get ISDN, see if your provider will let you dial-up twice. Using handy software like LinkUPP! Turbo from FCR Software Inc., you can use two modems to double your speed online. Still not quite as fast or reliable as ISDN.

Options that are speedy, and available today:

CABLE MODEMS Cable companies are good for more than Dukes of Hazzard reruns.

WHAT IS IT?

A cable modem, as the name suggests, connects to the same coaxial cable that brings in your cable TV signal (probably the most widespread method of high speed Internet access today). It's a little box with a network interface that routes traffic between your PC/Mac and the cable network. Most cable modems use two channels within the cable connection to do Internet business - one for receiving data, the other for sending it. These channels don't take away from your viewing, however *no more busy signals* and can be fast (often faster than a T1, at least for downloading).

With most cable companies either in the process of or having finished the conversion to digital networks, cable modem access is relatively widespread. It was hard to believe Milo Medine, the father of TCP/IP, back in early 1998 when he said that cable modems would be available nationwide within a year, but it turns out he was just about right. They're not everywhere yet, but it's happening.

HOW FAST IS IT?

The type of access can indeed breathe a healthy dose of life into your online experience. It's fast. Really fast. Most cable networks allow you to download data to your computer at speeds between 1000 and 7000 Kbps. (Remember - a T1 line tops out at 1500 Kbps). This means your download speeds for viewing Web pages are receiving files will increase by a factor of 15 to 125 over a 56-Kbps modem. That's right - at least 15 times faster, maybe more.

Once you have this type of speed you'll often find that your connection to the Internet is no longer the weakest link in the chain. Many times, the servers with which you connect will have slower connections than you have in your own home! The nice part is that this, too, will change, and we'll see Web sites increasing their bandwidth to continue serving customers as fast as they demand. Uploading speeds (that is the speed at which you can send data) are typically lower than downloading speeds, but that's okay. Most home users tend to download a lot more

than they upload and with upload speeds ranging from 500 to 4000 Kbps (still potentially faster than a T1 Line), it's still a welcome increase over that old analog modem. It's certainly fast enough for real-time videoconferencing, and it can make that Quake game really fly!

WHAT DO YOU NEED AND WHAT WILL IT COST?

To access the Internet this way, you need to have an Ethernet port on your Mac/PC and a cable modem. Most cable companies don't sell the modems; rather they lease them as part of the service. Prices for the total package typically average \$45 per month, with isn't bad when you add up the costs of analog access. A separate telephone line and an account with a dial up ISP averages about \$35 per month, so for an extra \$10 you can get a dedicated connection with lots more speed. Startup costs, which often include an onsite technician to configure the service for you, run anywhere from \$50 to \$100.

WHAT'S THE CATCH?

Accessing the Internet via cable modem isn't without problems. Although the cable companies are used to providing dedicated access for cable television, most of them have no experience in being Internet service providers. This has left many early adopters around the country very frustrated. If you're used to dealing with a small, local dial-up Internet provider for you service, you'll notice a difference if you move to a cable modem. The cable companies are much larger than most ISPs, and slow to respond to customer needs. They are learning very quickly that just because they have the technology doesn't mean they know how to use it or how to tell you how to use it. Support problems plague many cable modem users around the country, as frustrated customers find their new toy doesn't work the way it should.

CAN I GET IT?

With both cable modems and DSL connections, availability is the big question. For cable modems, you can call our local cable company, which is now ATT/TCI. The number is 888-824-8166 or go to its Web site, where you'll find it very hard to get a

Specific answer about our area. Two of the largest cable modem service providers are @Home (<http://www.home.net>) and RoadRunner (<http://www.rr.com/rdrun>). For a list of cable companies that plan to provide cable modem service go to <http://www.cable-modems.com/providers.shtml>.

You will still need to have a dial up ISP to send and receive e-mail, unless you have a server and software in your home. You will also have to have the server routed through an ISP, like Brainstorm in Mountain view, and have your own Internet name; i.e., myname@myname.com.

BUT, on Bowfin Street in Foster City, the answer is NO. We are 3.7 miles from a Central office. We need to be within 18,000 (cable) feet in order to get Cable Modem. Read on.

(Editor's note: Wayne's article will continue in the Sept. BI. Following sending us this contribution, Wayne he sent this related note my way:

Want fast connection to the internet? Try:
<http://www.zdnet.com/familypc/stories/main/0,4858,2302278,00.html>)

This Month's Quiz

WHO WANTS TO BE A BOWFIN-HEIR?

Making a million dollars wasn't quite possible for the recent contestants on Regis Philbin's ABC summer special, "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?"

Try a few of these trivia questions, inspired by the show, to see if you can lay claim to being among the intellectually richest of our block.

5¢ : The coin which is worth 5 cents in the United States has which U.S President on its face?

a) Franklin b) Jefferson c) Lincoln d) Taft

10¢ : The U.S. newspaper with "all the news that's fit to print" is :

a. The Rockford Files b. Baltimore Sun

c. The Wall Street Diurnal d. The NY Times

20¢ : According to the nursery rhyme, the number of blackbirds baked in a pie is:

a. 20 b. 4 c. 24 d. veinte (foreign twenty)

50¢ : The Jewish religious rite observing the close of sabbath is called :

a. Half-dollar b. Hebdollah c. Havdalah d. Hosanna

\$1.00 : A word for a male deer is:

a. Rein b. Rambo c. Yes d. Buck

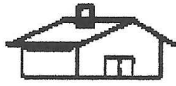
Solution to Last Month's Quiz

FOR THE BIRDS

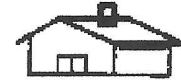
1. ORIOLE
 2. BLUEJAY
 3. KILLDEER
 4. OSTRICH
 5. EMU
 6. SPARROW
 7. WREN
 8. SANDERLING
 9. HERON
 - 10 PEACOCK
-

**TARGET DATE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEXT
MONTH'S B.I.: September 15th**

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The Bowfin Inquirer



September, 1999

Please Connect Me, Fast!!! (concluded)

by Wayne V. Reichley (324)

tabasco@netwizards.net

<http://www.netwizards.net/~tabasco/>
650-574-3804

DIGITAL SUBSCRIBER LINE (DSL)

WHAT IS IT?

The other currently popular method of high-speed Internet access, DSL, is available from your telephone company. Just like the cable modem that shares your cable with the TVs in your house, DSL shares your phone line with your telephone(s). Voice conversation only takes up a small portion of modern telephone lines, leaving a large part of the available bandwidth unused. DSL takes advantage of this unused bandwidth by splitting it off and using it for digital data transmission, or more specifically, Internet access. The nice part about it is that you don't need to run a separate phone line into your house, and you can use your Internet access. Different acronyms describe different flavors of DSL technology (ADSL, HDSL, AND SDSL), so often people refer to it as just xDSL (techies tend to use the x as a variable that stands for just about anything).

HOW FAST IS IT?

This type of service offers a huge speed increase over analog modem connections. DSL comes in tiered speed increments, but even at the lowest level, download speeds are at least six times faster than analog modems.

Connections are also dedicated, which is more of a convenience than most people realize. With an analog modem, a quick check of your email requires that you wait through the whole dial-in process praying to the busy-signal gods until you finally get on and see what's shown up in your mailbox. With dedicated access, there's no dial-up time and no busy signals.

You tell your service to check, and seconds later

you've got mail. In a world where time is so precious, that can mean a lot.

WHAT DO YOU NEED AND WHAT WILL IT COST?

The cost of DSL varies depending on the speeds you want and the companies involved. Basic DSL packages, which start with download speeds of 384 Kbps and upload speeds of 128 Kbps (this can go all the way to 1500 Kbps download and 384 Kbps upload), range anywhere from \$29 to \$150, depending on the speed level you want. Unlike the cable modem, DSL service is not typically billed as an all-in-one package. It's more like your analog modem access, in that you buy the DSL service as a feature from your telephone company, and then you need Internet access on top of that. Many phone companies, of course, offer Internet access as an additional feature, but be aware that the published cost of the line may not include Internet access. The upside? You get the flexibility of choosing an Internet service provider that suits your needs < you're not tied to one provider, as with a cable modem.

Startup costs are typically higher with DSL since the pricing plans generally do not include the cost of the modem. Some phone companies will lease you the DSL modem, which is a nice option, but most require you to purchase it outright. The initial fees which include onsite setup and the cost of the hardware, usually fall into the range of \$300 to \$500. However, many companies are offering substantial discounts in exchange for one- or two-year service contracts. (Look out on that one)

WHAT'S THE CATCH?

Even if you live in a city where DSL is available, it may not be available at your home. This technology hinges on your distance from the central telephone office. In most places, the maximum distance you can be from the phone company's central office and still qualify for a DSL connection is 18,000 feet. That's 18,000 feet of wire, mind you, which probably doesn't take a direct route. Wire tends to get wrapped back and forth on its way from central office to your house, so you probably need to be even closer than

that for it to work. Also < even if you are within that 18,000 foot limit < the further you are from the office, the slower your maximum connection will be. The signal downgrades as it travel, and your speeds decrease right along with it.

CAN I GET IT?

With DSL you have more choices, but the place to start is by contacting your local phone company, either over the phone or on its Web site, to find out if DSL is available at your home < remember the short distance rule. If you're within a few miles of a properly equipped switching station, you're out of luck. You can also check out Dale Sorenson's Mac-friendly DSL list at

<http://www.sorenson-usa.com/dsl-mac.html> for some other companies to check out. This list also includes several DSL ISPs (how's that for a bunch of three letter acronyms?).

BUT, on Bowfin Street in Foster City, the answer is NO. We are 3.7 miles from a Central office. PTT has a plan in the works for a central office in Foster City. They will know by the first of the year, if it is going to happen.

SO WHICH SHOULD I GET?

For most people, the decision is easy to make: Take what you can get and like it! Most areas currently only have one type of high-speed access available, and many areas still have none (like Foster City). Nevertheless, if you are lucky enough to be in the position of choosing, consider all the points before settling on a solution.

CABLE or DSL

Bandwidth Crowding

Although cable and DSL are very similar, there are some inherent differences in network organization. With cable, everyone in your local neighborhood shares the bandwidth available to you. With DSL, the circuit you buy links you directly to your ISP. This may not seem like a big deal, but as more and more people get online, it's possible the cable network will

slow down, even though the numbers say it's faster. This could be an issue for you, although the cable companies could restructure their networks on the fly by making the groups smaller and smaller (thereby limiting the number of people with whom you must share your bandwidth). Check with other people in your area using either service and get their opinions. Real-world customer testimonials are worth far more than the flyer you get from ISP's.

Start up Costs

With the rapid changes in technology today, you may find you want to change services often. If you've got hundreds of dollars invested in modems and startup costs, or if you're tied to a two-year service contract, making that move isn't all that easy. Leasing equipment from your ISP protects you against ending up owning a piece of outdated technology (you know, like one of those antique computers from 1995!). As technology changes, you'll want to keep pace with it, and that requires making constant changes.

Reliability

Consider service uptime and your reliance on the Internet access. Both cable and DSL offer dedicated access, which means your computer is always on line. However, cable and telephone networks are certainly regular service before making a decision. If your cable service goes out a few times a month, but the telephone's been up and running solidly for years, factor that into your decision-making process.

Reality Check

Lastly, make sure you realize with whom you're dealing here. Widespread dedicated Internet access is something new for everyone, after all, and the corporate infrastructure of your ISP can make a difference in the quality of your experience. While cable companies focus on dedicated access, telephone companies do not. Consider this: If everyone turned on their TV at the same time, there wouldn't be any problems. However, if everyone picked up their telephone at the same time to make an outgoing call, only about 40 percent of us would actually succeed <

the rest would get stuck wading through all-too-familiar "all circuits are busy" messages.

BOTTOM LINE

But I have a 56Kbps, v90 modem, why do I only get 26,400 Kbps most of the time? Consider yourself lucky. On Bowfin Street in Foster City, if you get 26,400 Kbps that means you DON'T have a 'split' line. Folks, that's the best you can do at this time. Besides, even if the Central Office was next door, you can legally only get 53.6 Kbps, that's all the law allows. So the further away from Central Office, the slower your 56 Kbps modem is going to go. We are 3.7 miles from a Central Office, and at this time, there is NOTHING we can do.

Let's hope for tearing up the streets in Foster City and that they install 'fiber-optics', and put a Central Office in Foster City. (I wonder who will pay for that?)

So what else is new. I've lived in my house at 324 for 30 years now. Nothing surprises me anymore.

This Month's Quiz

'30s Daze

(hath September?)

Can you remember back 60 years or more - or at least recall what folks told you about way back then? Or are you in a daze? Check yourself out on these blasts from the past.

1. The U.S. Socialist Party nominated what person (initials N. T.) for President in 1932?
2. On September 29, 1939, shortly after its invasion of Poland, Germany signed a pact with what nation, agreeing to divide Poland between them?
3. The hit songs of 1935 included "Begin the Beguine" and "Just One of Those Things", written by what famous musical master?

4. J.B. Strauss was architect for what masterpiece of construction that was completed in 1937 in Northern California?

5. What African capital city was captured by the Italian army, led by Marshal Pietro Badoglio, on May 5, 1936?

6. What brothers wrote the story, songs, and lyrics for the 1931 hit musical, "Of Thee I Sing," which was the first musical ever to win a Pulitzer Prize?

7. What writer published his masterpiece novel, "Finnegan's Wake," in 1939?

8. In 1935 or thereabouts, the word "bombed" became a slang word and took on what meaning?

9. *The Blue Angel*, filmed in 1930, featured what German actress?

10. What cracker, now noted for "everything sitting on it," was introduced in the 1930s?

Solution to Last Month's Quiz

Who Wants to Be a Bowfin-Heir?

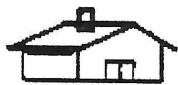
5¢ b) Jefferson 10¢ d) The NY Times

20¢ c) 24 50¢ c) Havdalah \$1.00 d) Buck

**TARGET DATE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO B.I.s 6TH
ANNIVERSARY EDITION :October 15th**

**PLEASE!! Call the Lermans at (650) 572-9153, or drop off
at 344 Bowfin, or E-mail us at
jerry_berman@compuserve.com**

PLEASE



October, 1999

Tank Raising Bowfins

by R.W. Wolff, *Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin*

If you're in the market for one of North America's magnificent oddballs, it's hard to beat the bowfin, *Amia calva*. Deriving from an ancient lineage, the bowfin shares traits with both primitive and advanced fish. Although they care for both eggs and fry, these fascinating creatures have never been bred in a home aquarium--offering some pioneering aquarist the chance to be the first to spawn them.

Found in much of the eastern half of the United States, the bowfin prefers slow creeks and the tannin-dark waters of acid-cedar swamps. Ancestors of the bowfin date as far back as the Jurassic period. The genus *Amia* was once found on most continents and some members of the family were even found in salt water. Today, however, *Amia calva* is the sole survivor of this once widespread clan.

The bowfin is a "transitional" fish--similar to its relatives the gars, but also sharing traits with the more advanced bony fishes. Like the gars, the bowfin has a largely cartilaginous skeleton. But like the more highly evolved bony fishes, the bowfin has vertebrae that are amphicoelous, or concave at each end. Along with the gars, the bichirs are the bowfin's other living relatives.

The bowfin is a long-bodied fish, about the same height from head to tail. The dorsal fin extends across much of the body; the caudal fin is rounded. The bowfin has a highly developed swimbladder that allows it to gulp air at the water's surface--a definite advantage under low oxygen conditions. Like sharks, bowfins have retractable teeth that remain hidden when the mouth is closed but are exposed when the fish is biting down. The fish's skull also flattens out, to allow them to swallow flat-bodied fish, like sunfish. Favorite foods include crayfish, shad, golden shiners, perch, suckers, and other narrow bodied fish.

Among fishermen, the bowfin is the Rodney Dangerfield of American fishes, never accorded any

respect. Many anglers regard it as a "trash fish" that competes with game fish for food. Hooked bowfin are often thrown on the bank to die. In fact, this lack of respect is patently unfair. Hooked bowfin fight as hard as--maybe even better than--any game fish. And adult bowfin can reach trophy size--almost a yard in length and weighing more than 30 pounds.

Such behemoths are, of course, too large for the home aquarium. But the young can be collected almost any time of year, either in the weed beds, in warmer weather, or at creek mouths or openings in the ice in winter. I prefer to start with one-and-a-half to two inch fish. Bowfins I've kept seem to prefer soft water with a pH of 6.8, a temperature of 75 degrees and full spectrum lighting of medium intensity. It's best to set them up in a half-filled 20 gallon long aquarium, with a thick carpet of low plants and an upper covering of floating plants. The dense plant growth provides the skittish young bowfins a sense of security, assuring that they will have less fear of you as they acclimate to their new surroundings. For filtration, I prefer a filter that creates a strong surface current, but with a medium overall tank current.

For the initial feedings, chopped earth worms and shrimp will soon be eagerly accepted. In about a week, they will have acclimated to tank life. As you approach the aquarium, they will swim to the surface in anticipation of their next feeding. About this time, you can introduce them to prepared foods. At first, I offer them some freeze dried tubifex worms, breaking the cube into one-eighth inch pieces. In another three days, I usually start giving them sinking shrimp pellets. The young bowfins will cruise the bottom, inhale the pellets and then hide among the weeds while chewing the pellets up.

Throughout the next month, you can introduce more different types of prepared foods as the fish become more and more accustomed to tank life. If they fail to eat enough of the new food, you can fall back on the chopped worms and shrimp. After the fish accept more types of food and gain more confidence, you can add more water to the tank. About this time, the

young bowfins will come to the surface when you splash your finger in the water. At this time, you can introduce them to ground beef, beef heart, and beef liver. Such a highly varied diet will improve the color and growth patterns of the young fish.

Feed the fish twice a day for the first six months. After this time, they should be about 4 to 6 inches in length. Now, you can move them to larger quarters, to a tank containing from 40 to 55 gallons of water. More shallow, wider, tanks are best. I've found that at this stage, spotted gar make excellent tank mates. Bowfins are highly social, and you will see them holding in dense weeds, stacked together like cord wood. Within about a year, the bowfins will reach their maximum captive size of 12 to 16 inches.

In the winter, you may need to subject fish from Northern areas to an extended period of cold temperature (below 50 degrees). Fish not wintered over in this way will eat less and be less active.

Be careful when feeding larger fish, though. They have sharp teeth and very powerful jaws (as any fisherman who has unhooked one can tell you.)

At about this time, also, you will be able to tell the males and females apart. The males have an ocellus on the tail and green pectoral, ventral, and anal fins. The females will have either a black spot or no noticeable spots in the upper tail. Their pectoral, ventral, and anal fins will be grey to brown. In most cases, the males grow faster than the females in the first year. Some fish will develop a blood-red lower third of the caudal fin. On fish with dark markings, this is normal. Moreover, some males will develop extra ocelluses. I've seen up to three (this is very rare).

I'm not aware of anyone having spawned the bowfin in the home aquarium. With the technique I've described here, and with a high-quality diet, the time is right for captive bred bowfins. In the wild, breeding takes place when water temperatures reach about 72 degrees. Typically, the male will seek out an area

near an old log or large rock, to provide cover for one side of the nest. Next, he will chew the tops off any reeds in the area before fanning out a depression about 2 feet wide and 5 inches deep. He will also vigorously defend his nest against any rival males.

At night, the male will attract one female at a time into the nest to spawn, with the female laying many green, adhesive eggs in the nest. The eggs, each about 3/16ths of an inch in diameter, adhere to the roots at the bottom of the nest. Males may subsequently spawn with up to three other females. Eventually, the nest may contain up to 5,000 eggs and fry in various stages of development. The male will fan the eggs to keep water circulating over them. The eggs hatch in 2 to 6 days, depending on sunlight and temperature.

The babies will stick together in a tight group as their father escorts them along the shoreline in search of food. The male will warn the group of approaching danger by splashing his tail against the water's surface. Commonly, groups of baby bowfins will combine to form aggregations up to 5 feet long and 3 feet wide. The defending males will usually hover underneath these large swarms. After a few weeks, the males will discontinue guarding and the group will disperse.

At this time, all the baby fish have a distinct ocellus on the tail. With time, the females will lose the ring around the tail spot, and in some waters the entire spot fades away with age. Although males will outgrow the females in the first year of life. Thereafter, females will surpass them, with males only reaching a maximum length of 25 inches, as compared to the females length of up to 38 inches. As they age, the females become a dull gray or green, whereas the older males may develop some of the most vivid and striking colors of any bowfin.

In my view, the bowfin has been shown no respect for long enough. As friendly as Oscars, the bowfin is a prime candidate for aquarium life and the time is near to spawn these captivating giants in the home aquarium.

This Month's Quiz

OKTOBERFEST

November's fast approaching, so hop to it and see if you can unscramble these brands (some now defunct) of liquid pleasure.

1. HE IN KNEE
2. BOWL A RUNE
3. MR LILE
4. SHORTS
5. FORESTS
6. GARLIC N
7. B PAST
8. DEW BRUISE
9. SINGE SUN
- 10 FAST LAFF

Solution to Last Month's Quiz

'30s Daze

1. The U.S. Socialist Party nominated Norman Thomas.
2. On September 29, 1939, shortly after its invasion of Poland, Germany signed a pact with the U.S.S.R.
3. The hit songs of 1935, "Begin the Beguine" and "Just One of Those Things", were written by Cole Porter.
4. J.B. Strauss was architect for the Golden Gate Bridge, which opened in 1937.
5. Addis Ababa was captured by the Italian army, led by Marshal Pietro Badoglio, on May 5, 1936.
6. Ira and George Gershwin wrote the story, songs, and lyrics for the 1931 hit musical, "Of Thee I Sing," which was the first musical ever to win a Pulitzer Prize.

7. James Joyce published his masterpiece novel, "Finnegan's Wake," in 1939.

8. In 1935 or thereabouts, the word "bombed" took on the meaning "intoxicated."

9. *The Blue Angel*, filmed in 1930, featured what Marlene Dietrich.

10. Ritz Crackers were introduced in the 1930s.

TARGET DATE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEXT MONTH'S B.I.: November 15th

Call the Lermans at (650) 572-9153, or drop off at 344 Bowfin, or E-mail us at jerry_lerman@compuserve.com

DIGITAL DOGGEREL

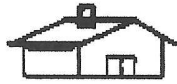
by Jerry Lerman (344)

We just bought a new computer
And we're thrilled with all that it's got -
From seventeen bazillion bytes of disk
To a CD-ROM that's not. (read only, that is)

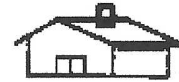
Hooking up the thing was easy,
Once we got it all unraveled.
The color codes marking the wires these days
Help keep folks from being bedeviled.

Looking to see what software came with,
It didn't quite warrant a "Yowzer!"
There was Windows' latest ed., a game or two,
Microsoft's Works and a browser.

But the purchase was definitely worth it;
Our daughter was thrilled with the choice:
Faster modem, loud speakers, a microphone, too.
(Oh, but for a smaller invoice!)



The Bowfin Inquirer



November, 1999

LIFE BEFORE THE COMPUTER

(from the Internet)

An application was for employment
A program was a TV show
A cursor used profanity
A keyboard was a piano!

Memory was something that you lost with age
A CD was a bank account
And if you had a 3 1/2 inch floppy
You hoped nobody found out!

Compress was something you did to garbage
Not something you did to a file
And if you unzipped anything in public
You'd be in jail for a while!

Log on was adding wood to a fire
Hard drive was a long trip on the road
A mouse pad was where a mouse lived
And a backup happened to your commode!

Cut - you did with a pocket knife
Paste you did with glue
A web was a spider's home
And a virus was the flu!

I guess I'll stick to my pad and paper
And the memory in my head
I hear nobody's been killed in a computer crash
But when it happens they wish they were dead!

This Month's Quiz

NINE MONTHS

The name November comes from the Latin "novem" - it was the ninth month of the Roman calendar. Of course, we also know nine months to be the period of human gestation.

Our puzzle this month is to match other animals to their normal gestation periods. Don't let this put you in a daze!

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. Horse | a. 11-19 days |
| 2. Bear | b. 144-152 days |
| 3. Cat | c. 180-240 days |
| 4. Pigeon | d. 21 days |
| 5. Cow | e. 280 days |
| 6. Rat | f. 31-32 days |
| 7. Sheep | g. 329-345 days |
| 8. Squirrel | h. 365-547 days |
| 9. Whale | i. 44 days |
| 10. Groundhog | j. 52-69 days |

Solution to Last Month's Quiz

OKTOBERFEST

1. HE IN KNEE = HEINEKEN
 2. BOWL A RUNE = LOWENBRAU
 3. MR LILE = MILLER
 4. SHORTS = STROH'S
 5. FORESTS = FOSTERS
 6. GARLIC N = CARLING
 7. B PAST = PABST
 8. DEW BRUISE = BUDWEISER
 9. SINGE SUN = GUINNESS
 10. FAST LAFF = FALSTAFF
-

TARGET DATE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEXT
MONTH'S B.I.: December 15th

Call the Lermans at (650) 572-9153, or drop off at 344
Bowfin, or E-mail us at jerry_lerman@compuserve.com

What I'm Thankful For

by Jerry Lerman (344)

For not losing track of the wonders in life
When all of its apples seem sour;
For the chance to write pieces like this for BI
To counter TV's all-bad-news hour.

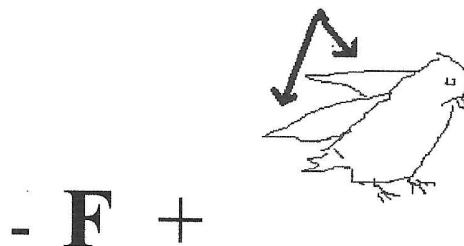
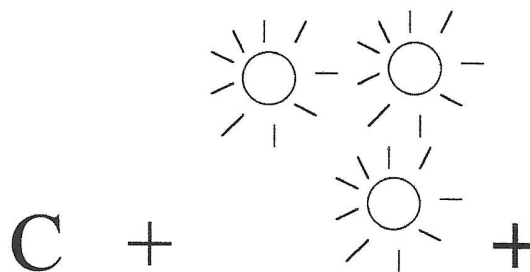
For freedom to publish, to read, and to hear
And to make what I want of my life;
For our children who bring joy to us every day,
And for Eve, my adorable wife.

For neighbors who help us in moments of need,
For our friends, all those jewels and gems,
And the relatives - siblings, uncles and aunts -
What emptiness life would be without them.

For my job which, despite all the grumblings I hear,
Provides well for its many employees;
And for governments - national, city and state -
Keeping things running, if not always as we please.

For all of these things (and I'm sure that there's more)
I give thanks and acknowledge my debt.
That's why this is the best of all worlds -
And I'm not looking for others yet!

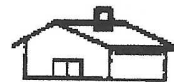
Do you have things for which you give thanks that
you can share with others on the block? Interesting
stories or plans for the holidays? Send your items this
way for inclusion in next month's Bowfin Inquirer!
(Or, for those of you too busy to write, call us and
we'll take the story down for you -- reportorial style!)
Thanks!



- W !



The Bowfin Inquirer



December, 1999

CLICK FOR FOOD

by Wayne V. Reichley (324)

AKA tabasco

tabasco@netwizards.net

<http://www.netwizards.net/~tabasco/>

This is for real:

For the good of humanity which is God's glory please feed the hungry for free this Christmas with this WebSite. Quite clever of the UN to do this. Go to the Hunger Site at the UN. All you do is click a button and somewhere in the world some hungry person gets a meal to eat, at no cost to you. The food is paid for by corporate sponsors (who gain advertising in the process because you see their logo.) All you do is go to the site and click. But you're only allowed one click per day. So spread the word to others. Visit the site and pass the word.

This actually is a genuine site and a great idea.

<http://www.thehungersite.com>

Let's spread the news....

Blessed Christmas to all.

... And While We're On the Subject

From Weyman Wong (372)

Wanna feel good at the start of every day? Recently I sent you a web page site re hunger, www.thehungersite.com. Here's confirmation that it's legit, so just take a few seconds out every day to make yourself feel good for the rest of the day. Put it in your taskbar.

(The following is ©1999 San Francisco Chronicle)

Millions

Eat Because People Click a Button

Carrie Kirby, Chronicle Staff Writer

Monday, December 20, 1999

©1999 San Francisco Chronicle

The Hunger Site's premise is so simple, it seems too good to be true: All visitors have to do is click a button to donate food to hungry people millions of miles away. No purchase required. No filling in forms or typing in credit card numbers.

So it's no surprise that many skeptics have a hard time believing in it. John Breen, the 42-year-old computer programmer who created the site, has a stock answer for people who e-mail him asking if his site is just another hoax: Go to the United Nations World Food Program's Web page, www.wfp.org/prelease/1999/991216.htm, where the organization confirms receiving more than \$200,000 so far from the Hunger Site.

The money comes from advertisers who sign up to sponsor the page for 24 hours at a time. During that day, the sponsors' ads appear when someone clicks a button labeled "Donate Free Food." For every sponsor signed up, a half-cent is added to the donation, which the World Food Program uses to buy

1/4 cup of rice or another staple. The food goes to any of the 80 nations the World Food Program serves.

Each individual's donations are limited to one a day. It takes the visitor about three seconds to complete the process.

It takes Breen pretty much all of his time to administer the site, however. The Indiana resident had to stop working and rely on his wife's income as a college professor when response to the site became overwhelming. He operates without any loans or grants.

Breen started working on the site in January as a personal project. "I thought I'd just set up this

simple little site and it would run itself," he said.
"I wasn't planning on the massive volumes of e-mail.
It ended up taking up gobs and gobs of time."

At first, Breen wanted his Web page to work as a
bulletin board where people could find out about
Third

World schools that needed educational materials. His
sister had worked in Africa and told him that children
were in dire need of pencils and books.

"Then I learned that hunger was a really big deal in
these developing countries," he said. According to
statistics on the page, 800 million people suffer from
hunger worldwide. Instead of asking for paper and
pencils, he realized, many Third World teachers who
managed to access his site would be asking for food.

So he launched his project June 1 as the Hunger Site.
On June 10, Yahoo featured it as a Daily Pick, and
the

site's popularity snowballed. In June, visitors sent
close to 200,000 donations. November saw donation
totals approach 7 million. Now, people from about

175
countries click to donate a million cups of food each
day. Donations are tallied by country at
www.thehungersite.com/donationstodate.html.

"My favorite is the Vatican City," Breen said,
scrolling down the list. "Usually I get two to six
hits every day from the Vatican City. I always
imagine
the pope sitting there clicking."

The Hunger Site's URL is www.thehungersite.com.

SECOND CHILDHOOD

From the Internet

*(Editors note: I published a different internet-source
list on a similar theme several months ago...I was
surprised to find that not one of these cute points
were duplicates of that one. I hope you like this one,
too.)*

I want to be a kid again. I want to go back to the
time when:

... Decisions were made by going
"eeny-meeny-miney-mo."

... Mistakes were corrected by simply exclaiming,
"do over!"

... "Race issue" meant arguing about who ran the
fastest.

... Money issues were handled by whoever was the
banker in "Monopoly."

... Catching the fireflies could happily occupy an
entire evening.

... It wasn't odd to have two or three "best" friends.

... Being old referred to anyone over 20.

... The net on a tennis court was the perfect height
to play volleyball and rules didn't matter.

... The worst thing you could catch from the
opposite sex was cooties.

... It was magic when dad would "remove" his
thumb.

... It was unbelievable that dodgeball wasn't an
Olympic event.

... Having a weapon in school meant being caught
with a slingshot.

... Nobody was prettier than Mom.

... Scrapes and bruises were kissed and made
better.

... It was a big deal to finally be tall enough to ride
the "big people" rides at the amusement park.

... Getting a foot of snow was a dream come true.

... Abilities were discovered because of a
"double-dog-dare."

... Saturday morning cartoons weren't 30-minute ads for action figures.

... No shopping trip was complete unless a new toy was brought home.

... "Oly-oly-oxen-free" made perfect sense.

... Spinning around, getting dizzy and falling down was cause for giggles.

... The worst embarrassment was being picked last for a team.

... War was a card game.

... Water balloons were the ultimate weapon.

... Baseball cards in the spokes transformed any bike into a motorcycle.

... Taking drugs meant orange-flavored chewable aspirin.

... Ice cream was considered a basic food group.

... Older siblings were the worst tormentors ... but also the fiercest protectors.

This Month's Quiz

Ani-millennia

From 101 Dalmations to a Tale of Two Cities (or is that pronounced with a soft C?), we're often referring to animals in groups. In order to help make sure that the year 2000 festivities don't find us humans acting like packs of animals, let's see if you can tell one group of animals from another. Can you match these animals to the term we use for groups of them?

Animals: Magpies, Larks, Pheasants, Hounds, Elks, Parrots, Partridges, Foxes, Toads, Cattle

Groups: Drove, Skulk, Tidings, Bouquet, Gang, Knot, Cry, Covey, Exaltation, Company

Solution to Last Month's Quiz

NINE MONTHS

Here are the gestation periods for the 10 animals:

Horse	329-345 days
Bear	180-240 days
Cat	52-69 days
Pigeon	11-19 days
Cow	280 days
Rat	21 days
Sheep	144-152 days
Squirrel	44 days
Whale	365-547 days
Groundhog	31-32 days

TARGET DATE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEXT MONTH'S B.I.: January 15, 2000 (!)

Call the Lermans at (650) 572-9153, or drop off at 344 Bowfin, or E-mail us at jerryandeve@home.com (NOTE NEW E-MAIL ADDRESS)

BO - by Lerman

12-39

