


The collected (but far from complete, as the first 7 months are lost in the mists of cyberspace) weekly epistles of Jules O'Shaughnessy to the LD listserver, responses (if any) thereto, plus any miscellaneous correspondence deemed relevant.

Feel free to write us yourself, if you're so inclined. 

Most recent update -- 11/12/97

9/18/97 -- to the listserver

All right. So this message is a day late. But Nostrum did go up yesterday morning.

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/6298/index.html>

We almost didn't make it though, due to technical glitches on the index page; we had to revert to all text because a gif whiffed on us. Meanwhile, the Nostrumite, my so-called webmaster, has been in a state of permanent depression, having volunteered to count absentee ballots in New York City and having to watch Rev Sharpton fall from the fray at his very fingertips. The N doesn't have much to say in support of Rev's policies vis-a-vis Ruth's, but he desperately wanted to see Rev vs Rudy just because neither of their hair styles actually exist in a state of nature, a first for NYC politics. Also, the N enjoys endlessly correcting people that it should be THE Rev and not just Rev, so he's going to be denied four years of correcting clerical grammar.

It's a jungle out there, folks. Sticking with the R names, as Red used to say, Good night and God bless.

Jules (Wondering if Anyone Reading This has a Clue to Who Red Skelton Is) O'Shaughnessy

Date: Thu, 18 Sep 1997 11:52:58 -0400 (EDT)

From: Richard Sodikow <sodikowr@voyager.bxscience.edu>

Subject: Re: Good grief, it's Thursday

How nice that someone knows how to combine literacy, humor, current events, and nostalgia. I get just a bit tear-eyed, and not just for Red Skelton.

Thanks, Jules.

RBS

Subj: ...

Date: 97-09-18 20:39:34 EDT

From: ianmarlier@mindless.com (Ian Marlier)

Reply-to: armadillo.smith@mailcity.com

To: juliecbs@aol.com

From Nostrum 32: "Are the newbies that showed up at the first meetings throughout the entire continental U.S. really as clueless as they look?"

As one of said newbies, the short answer from my point of view is, **HELL YES!**

Not that you didn't know this already.

And where is the homemade ice cream place at Yale, so that yours truly can go fetch nourishment, of a sort, for the good people on the team after he has been summarily dragged out in the ld room and verbally executed?

- Ian, Boston Latin's know-nothin, newbie senior

Ian

Unfortunately, we here at the International Nostrum Headquarters don't check our mail as often as we ought to, so we missed your missive until after Yale was over. I would suggest that under normal circumstances this would be a shame, because the Mite and I pretty much pigged out over the Chocolate Banana and Chocolate Mounds flavors for the entire weekend. However, given the duration of the tournament, I'm sure you found time to visit every store, museum, restaurant, public utility, government office, brothel, and lawyer's office in a six mile radius of New Haven, and were able yourself to sample these wonderful delicacies.

Jules

Subj: red

Date: 97-09-19 01:48:33 EDT

From: OSCARRAUL

To: JulieCBS

yes,

some people on the list do know who red is.

:)

enjoy the nostrum ---- keep up the good work . it truly is worth the effort

oscar villalva

Oscar:

You are not the first person who stood up for Mr. S. as not having been forgotten by the hoi and the polloi. In fact, old Freddie the Freeloader has generated more mail (2 letters!!!) than any other subject so far mentioned by the staff at Nostrum. We here at headquarters find this rather amazing, but promise that we will do our best to continue to support any and all veterans who pass away on our watch.

FYI, Burgess Meredith is now really dead too as of a couple of weeks ago. If, like us, you thought he had died in 1967, you were wrong. I bring this up because I don't know who the comedian is that suggested this, because I only heard about it second hand, but I would strongly support a pay-call phone number 1-900-WHO-DEAD to answer questions about exactly which celebrities are still with us and which aren't.

Jules

In a message dated 97-09-23 13:25:23 EDT, you write:

<< Subj: Untitled

Date: 97-09-23 13:25:23 EDT

From: friedmanm@yorktown.org (Marcia Friedman)

Reply-to: friedmanm@yorktown.org

To: juliecbs@aol.com

dearabby,this is very addictive...i need to work sometimes...what should

I do? >>

Marcia:

Nostrum Syndrome as a medical condition has lately been turning up throughout the country, and was recently identified as a unique disease in the August '97 New England Journal of Medicine (pp 37-48). Symptoms range from the inability to defend human rights in under four minutes, to forgetting your OO but remembering where you left your keys six years ago when you were in a Denver motel with your Uncle Fritz and his weird friend Alexi, selecting the one Extemp topic that requires you to defend Fuzzy Zoeller's chicken jokes, and staying miraculously awake during Dec rounds. To date no cure has been discovered, but the symptoms can at least be addressed through the ingestion of large doses of vitamins C & E and avoiding opossum by-products.

Jules O'Shaughnessy, MD, OBE, SJ, ETC

to the listserver

Date: Wed, 24 Sep 1997 11:15:10 -0400 (EDT)

From: JulieCBS@aol.com

Subject: If it's Wednesday...

Nostrum gets yet another weekly episode (#33):

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/6298/>

The Messerschmitt Tournament, which began 15 episodes ago, is finally coming to an end, thus making it the second longest tournament on record (after Yale '97). Since the Nostrumite and I were both in New Haven this weekend, we had plenty of time on our hands to knock out this episode, so for once we didn't almost not make it (I can't assess how the negatives in that phrase compound). Nonetheless, the Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over the New York Times outing Goethe this Sunday. Not that the Mite gives a pickled herring over whether the Faustmeister was gay or not; in fact, that is his point. What's the big deal? What difference does it make? Young Werther will remain just as sorrowful. As the Mite so aptly pointed out, this may mark the difference between the US and Germany. Goethe gets outed, and the entire populace goes into a state of permanent depression, but in the US, when Walt Whitman got outed, what did we do? We built a mall on Long Island and named it after him, presumably as a place where gay people could go to do their shopping unmolested.

America. What a country!

Jules

Subj: Nostrum

Date: 97-09-24 15:06:43 EDT

From: MacHawkins

To: JulieCBS

I just wanted to thank you for a hilariously real depiction of the debate universe. I look forward to it every Wednesday (sometimes Thursday when the Nostrumite is grumpy, I guess).

For whom do you debate?

Mac Hawkins

Asst. Debate Coach

Isidore Newman School

Dear Mac:

Sorry to take so long to reply, but the Mite and I only check the Nostrum pipeline once a week, when we post our latest episode. The thing is, the Mite maintains 17 different e-mail addresses, including three at hotmail, whatever the limit is at AOL, his work (he's got a new part-time job at a meat-packing plant -- don't ask, but at least he's not directly involved in the packing of the meat), and a couple of loose ones he can barely remember. He tends to get them all confused, and then he comes running to me to figure them out, while I only have this one which I consult religiously, if you consider it religion to go to church once a week, and that only begrudgingly. But I digress...

Anyhow, thanks for your support. The Mite and I don't debate anymore, I'm afraid, but we do judge a bit, if the money is right and the food is decent, and the bus ride isn't too long, and the God lord willin' and the creek don't dry. Although with the Mite working at hot dog central these days, our judging days may be limited.

See you on the circuit.

Jules

Subj: hi

Date: 97-09-25 20:15:52 EDT

From: Airamgal

To: JulieCBS

Hi!

hey thanks for all the soap editions. Is there any way that you can add more than one installment per week. I love it and can't get enough

Thanks a lot

Maria

Maria:

I mean, seriously now, we barely get one episode out, and with the Mite now working at Hot Dogs 'R Us, who knows if we'll keep that up.

You realize, of course, that Bernstein & Sondheim, Rodgers & Hammerstein, and Lerner & Loewe -- talk about your big guns -- all wrote Broadway songs called "Maria." Sort of (I think the L&L actually has "they call the wind" in parentheses, but let's not split hairs, especially considering that the Mite is now spending a lot of his time splitting hares). Anyhow, if, as has been suggested, O'Shaughnessy & Nostrumite ever make a musical out of Nostrum, maybe we'll write a song called Maria too. Of course, there are no Marias in Nostrum yet, but there's always room for a couple more debaters. Maybe we could make her a policy debater. For V of I. I mean, somebody's got to--

Wait a minute. Why should we tell you what's going to happen next? Thanks for your support.

Jules.

To the LD listserv

Nostrum continues -- and the Messerschmitt Mess o' Forensics finally ends on the flight home from Miami -- at

<http://www.geocities.com/athens/forum/6298>

We almost didn't make it this week, primarily because right before I logged on to post the new episode I was setting up the VCR to record this week's Voyager (the Nostrumite has a serious thing for the character referred to in one of the ads as "Part Borg, Part Human, All Woman"), when lo and behold, Jeopardy came on, and one of the categories was Hittite Hodgepodge. Whoa! This was obviously not celebrity week. So that killed an unexpected half hour. Of course, even the fact that he knew that Ramses II was Egyptian (I mean, let's face it, my cat knows that), the Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over his new job at the meat-packing plant. The good news is that at least he's management. The bad news is that apparently animals are herded in one door of the plant in a literal menagerie -- cows, pigs, sheep, armadilloes, peccaries, you name it -- and come out the other end as hot dogs. The Mite's job is to make sure that the weight of the menagerie going in equals the weight of the hot dogs going out. Usually they lose about 5% in the processing, but two days ago they gained 20%. This is not good, and the Mite had to put in a lot of overtime trying to get to the bottom of it, to no avail. Which meant that he wasn't able to read as much as he wanted of the pirated copy he received of the manuscript that purports to be a translation of the journal of a trader who preceded Marco Polo traveling to China (the Mite knows a couple of people in publishing, if you're wondering how he gets special privileges). You might have read about the controversy over this book, where some readers have questioned if our traveler could

have truly seen what he saw, or be so interested in affairs 'de coeur,' as you might say. The translator, quite a legitimate fellow, it would appear, claims that perhaps he just made a mistake or two in his translation, but the Nostrumite strongly feels that the reference to heliports should have been a dead giveaway to one and all that something was amiss.

Anyhow, I recommend that you avoid hot dogs for the next few months.

Jules

Subj: Nostrum

Date: Wed, Oct 1, 1997 6:02 PM EDT

From: "armadillo"

To: juliecbs@aol.com

Nostrum....this is a very minor point, but you guys kinda sorta in a very minor and completely pointless way screwed up...But, as an eery amount of my life is built around pointing out minor and insignificant screw-ups to people, I must mention it none the less:

Specifically, you forgot to erase the "1" from the "Next installment due:" line. So it reads October 18, instead of October 8

But anyways...

The Armadillo, aka Ian, sez:

"um...exactly"

Dear Ian (aka the Armadillo):

Things at Nostrum World Headquarters have not been going well lately. The Nostrumite came home today from a long day at the meat-packing plant, threw his briefcase at the cat, collapsed onto the couch and uttered vulgarities which I won't repeat, as a prelude to his announcement, "Lips that touch meat will never touch mine again."

Turning assorted mammals (and the occasional marsupial, not to mention a 5% allowance for insects and other items that sort of fit in with those vulgarities I didn't wish to mention) into hot dogs has made the poor fellow an unwell man. And then what happens? Someone sneaks into the web site when we're not

looking and, first of all, claims to find an error (we are shocked, shocked, at the possibility -- if you were really good at errors, you'd go back and reread the whole thing and realize that these characters are about as stable as a U238 isotope -- but that's neither here nor there). What bothers us, however, is not our humanity, nor that the word Nostrum is now spelled Notrum, nor that there is such a thing as an avery minor point (we were always Tex Avery fans ourselves, if that's what you're getting at), nor that crossword puzzles no longer have to define eery as a variation of eerie, nor that nonetheless has divorced its three components into separate entities, but that someone of your obvious abilities to point to the errors of others wasn't able to recognize that it is not a 1, it's a \ (some day we'll have to explain to you how to read source HTML).

The good news is, the collected letters of Jules the Apostate will not print your name or the e-mail address of your glass house. We're not mean, only realistic.

I'm sorry, Ian, but you're playing in the big leagues now.

"um...exactly"

Jules

Subj: Re: Re: Nostrum

Date: Thu, Oct 2, 1997 7:02 PM EDT

From: "armadillo"

To: juliecbs@aol.com

Umm...sorry? I meant no offense. Really. I just lead a boring and insignificant life and have to put some excitement into it somehow.

In any case, I love Nostrum, particularly when it is spelled with an "s" in it...I was just getting my yucks...really...

And thank you to yourself and the Nostrumite for confirmation as to what exactly is in those "hot "dogs"" people keep trying to stuff down my throat...

Ian

Re: Re: Re: Nostrum

Ian:

There's too many Res in this message.

We here at Nostrum Headquarters have to admit that we were feeling a little down after answering your last message, because, well, we got a little carried away. It's not that we don't appreciate criticism; far from it. The Mite and I spend pretty much every waking hour criticizing each other. It's just that, well, your message, like so many others we see, was lacking in the basic grammar of which we know you are capable, and we do feel it is important to draw a line in the virtual sand early, before the entire art of the written word goes out the window.

And, of course, no life can be considered either boring or insignificant, if measured against the existence of the Nostrumite. He's now wearing a tie every day, and loving it. The job is going to his head, or at least his neck.

He's driving me crazy.

Jules

Date: Fri, Oct 3, 1997 5:25 PM EDT

From: Airamgal

Subj: Re: hi

To: JulieCBS

Julie-

Hey... I would be sooo honored to be added to your cast of characters-- just thought that you should know though. I have had various songs with the name Maria sung to me since I was like five. My friends know that if they start singing that one "Maria Maria Maria, I just met a girl named Maria...." they will become **SERIOUSLY** hurt. My teachers seem to think it is amusing to torture me with the song (and their voices) by singing that song any time they see me!

So.. if your debater goes crazy at the sound of that song, well--- I am sure someone else out there will be able to relate, and I know that I will be relating.

Luv you guys,

Maria

Maria:

How do you stop a wave upon the sand?

All right. Never again. We promise to never bombard you with cliches, either in person or in Nostrum

(although we reserve the right to teeter on the brink of cliché on a regular basis). You might wish to change your name either to Jenny, which seems to be Kurt Weill's favorite, or Joanna (or Joanne), the Sondheim pick hit, if West Side Story no longer blows your whistle. As you can see, the Mite and I are BIG musical fans (he can hum all the songs from Flora the Red Menace, while I can whistle all the airs from that infernal nonsense Pinafore).

Anyhow, just between us, the next new character, aside from the clerics coming up Wednesday, has the first name Disney. Which means that, counting Cartier, we now have two characters named after stores on NY's Fifth Avenue. We're considering naming our next new character either Flatiron or Roy Rogers.

Jules

We did not answer Ian's next message:

In a message dated 10/3/97 6:18:15 PM, you wrote:

>armadilloes

OK, ok! I get the point! But since you ARE suggesting my kind is stuffed into hot dogs, couldn't you at least have spelled our name right?

Ian, aka the Armadillo

BTW - Just kidding...

The conclusion we came to in the Nostrum think tank was that this young gentleman is just spending too much time indoors thinking about Dan Quayle.

It is time to move on.

10/10/97

To All -- An explanation

We did not publish this week due to a death in the family. A young northeastern debater, for reasons we will probably never understand, decided to take his own life. We were just too shaken by this to even consider trying to be funny.

We will be back next week, as usual. We appreciate your bearing with us.

Jules

To the LD Listerver 10/15/97

We're back with a new episode, at the usual stand:

<http://www.geocities.com/athens/forum/6298/index.html>

We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite's job is still doing okay (in fact, he now is reporting a 10% overage per week, a modern-day loaves and fishes but in his case with cows, pigs, hippos, etc. -- how X pounds of menagerie can walk in one end and X + 10% come out as hot dogs on the other end is beyond me, but it doesn't seem to bother him as long as his bonus is connected to the surplus), but he's nonetheless in a state of permanent depression over the recent new acquisitions by the Disney Corp. First T. Sue, then Henry Kissinger. What's next? The Vatican? The Pope? The Spice Girls? Will Eisner never stop?

It's a jumble out there....

Jules

To the ld listserver:

The latest episode of Nostrum (do you think that guy writing the debate novel has half as many characters as we do?) is now available at the usual stand:

<http://www.geocities.com/athens/forum/6298/index.html>

We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression because he bet Vestavia to win in LD at the NYC and when I told him going into the sixth round to cover himself with Manchester or Valley, he just laughed at me. Fortunately he has the lucre to cover his losses because, well, those debate bookies in the Bronx are tough, and they were there collecting even before all the plaques were given out. According to the Mite, the reason he lost was that he misread the Racing Form stats because he was so upset over Mason And Dixon not getting nominated for the National Book Award. What's wrong with these people, he keeps asking me. How do I know? I keep answering him. Do I look like Michael Korda or something?

Anyhow, you'll be happy to hear that the M is still employed at the hot dog factory, but the mystery of the overages continues. If you don't remember it, for every ton of meat that walks in on the hoof, an average of one point two tons rolls out as wieners. The M is working with his MIS department to come to terms with this, and he tells me they print report after report, filled with facts and figures and analyses, and each report weighs about twenty pounds and stands half as high as the Mite himself (which of course isn't all that high, unless you actually happen to be the Mite), but nowhere do they seem to be able to figure out this modern-day loaves and fishes, or as the M calls it, the miracle of the frankfurters.

I'll keep you posted.

GTT (not),

Jules

To the LD listserv:

Re: An episode only an LD-L member would understand

Yes, indeed. Nostrum finally visits the ld-l in the latest episode, #37, at

<http://www.geocities.com/athens/forum/6298/index.html>

We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression, and rightly so: he lost his job at the hot dog factory. It turns out the reason that more pounds of hot dogs came out the end than herds of assorted mammals went in the front because the paper that was supposed to be recycled was being added to the frankfurter mix rather than the local landfill operation. It was the Mite's job to solve this mystery, and his solution was to run more reports. Every time he ran a new report, more paper was generated, and more pounds of hot dogs were created, and more reports were generated, and the hot dogs kept tasting less and less like mammal by-products. Finally one of the professional weiner tasters that the company keeps on the premises recognized the flavor as computer paper. And the Mite was out on his kiester. And if that wasn't bad enough, then the stock market had to crash. At least there was some good news in that, because, first of all, the Mite doesn't own any stock, and second of all, he has hatched what he considers to be a foolproof plan to beat the market in the future. Think about it. Hillary Clinton turned 50, and the market crashed. Look at the history books. When Hillary Clinton turned 40, the market also crashed. So the Nostrumite, who knows cause and effect when he sees it, reasons that anyone selling short when Hillary Clinton turns 49 1/2 is in for a killing. Eat your heart out, Michael Price.

If anyone at Dean Witter is reading this, keep in mind that the Mite is looking for a job and can be reached through this e-mail address.

Jules

"If you were smarter, I'd be funnier."

Nov 5, 1997

To the LD listserv:

It's quiet out there. Too quiet. I know you've got new novices this year, and you've been trying to explain "the life" to them. But have you shown them Nostrum? What are you waiting for? For that matter, have you shown Nostrum to your coach? Well, maybe you'd better not show your coach. Anyhow, the latest episode, number 38, is ready, at

<http://www.geocities.com/athens/forum/6298/index.html>

We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression now that he's out of work again. Last weekend he went to the mall to do some research, and came back a nervous wreck. Apparently they have a George Washington Barbie Doll at F.A.O. Schwartz for \$75 that simply defies analysis, even by the Nostrumite. The thing is, there's the old Barbaroo, all duded up in the formal

attire usually associated with the father of our country, and the Mite can't figure out why. I mean, has the old Barbaroo dumped Ken and gone on a Presidential kick? If so, why couldn't she settle for Bill Clinton, like every other woman in America? We're sure that Bill would have obliged, as he has for every other woman in America. Anyhow, there's an enormous disconnect here between Mattel and old dollar-bill face, and the Mite has retired to his reading chair with Flexner -- unabridged -- to try to get to the bottom of this.

We'll keep you posted.

Jules

"Where is Parson Weems when you need him?"

Parker Conrad - 11/06/97 05:56:10

My Email: conrads@msn.com

What do you do in forensics, if anything?: LD

Great Page. What school did you guys used to debate for, and what are you doing now? (Besides funny web pages).

Dear Conrad Parker:

It's come to this. No one writes us anymore, and we've resorted to answering squibs in our guestbook. We will of course publish this correspondence on our epistles page, if for no other reason than to beef up our private life.

We're glad you like the page, although lately the Nostrumite has been less than participatory in its preparation, what with the au pair case and everything. When you're unemployed, you'll watch anything on TV, and if he's not watching Court TV, he's watching all those Geraldo Rivera types out there who comment on what's happening on Court TV. This too shall pass, I guess. He was also pretty involved in the death of Diana, but was shaken back to reality when they started offering that Franklin Mint doll that wasn't the right size that you could dress her in your surplus Barbie outfits.

Needless to say, the Mite lives a rather cramped existence.

As for our forensic experience, we dabbled in just about everything, primarily because we hardly ever took tin. In fact, we never took tin, although the Mite does have a ceramic cocker spaniel he picked up as an octofinalist doing LD at Newburgh a few years back. The Mite is mighty shaken that Newburgh now has given plaques for two years running, but there was some satisfaction in knowing that the plaque had the wrong date on it. Anyhow, our real life is pretty obvious to anyone who's been following our letters, although of course one or two things I have made up. We do some judging now and then (I think the Mite judged you once -- he doesn't remember your name, but the face is familiar).

Anyhow, thanks for your support.

Jules.

To the Id-listerserver:

Re: Murtson, the Etaped Paos Arepo

Episode 39 of Nostrum: The High School Debate Soap Opera is now available at

<http://www.geocities.com/athens/forum/6298/index.html>

In this episode we begin to take on what the subscribers to this listserver quaked at completely, viz., animal testing. We're twice the man you are!

Meanwhile, we almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over this whole Louise Woodward business, and I for one have no interest whatsoever in au pair girls unless I'm paying for their dinner and a movie. Which started the inevitable fight between us, first about the relevancy of the case to the Mite's obviously narrow private sphere, but eventually leading up to whose turn it is to clean out the unstable elements in the refrigerator. I mean, when it comes to slob, the Mite takes the cake; no, the Mite is the cake, except in our refrigerator, cake, Coke and cukes are indistinguishable because he absolutely refuses to clean up after himself.

But you don't want to hear about our little domestic problems, now, do you?

Jules, the Felix Unger of his generation

Oscar Wilde once said that no man can live with a woman without falling in love with her.

Oscar Wilde never lived with the Nostrumate.

Anyhow, before I get down to cases, not one but two new episodes of Nostrum, the high school debate soap opera, are now available at

<http://www.geocities.com/athens/forum/6298>

So now, an update. Like I said, we went to Disneyworld. One would expect that this would be a happy occasion, even given my feelings or lack thereof for the Mite's new girlfriend, but one would be wrong. First of all, we all shared a single motel room together; 'nuff said there. Second, the motel was not just off the grounds, it was practically off the planet. We had nearly an hour's drive every morning, and given the philosophy that you should be at the gates before the joint opens, this makes for some pretty early alarm calls (and just try to get the Nostrumate out of the shower -- just try!). Then it turns out that a certain person has a predilection against what she calls vomit rides, which means no Space Mountain, no Twilight Zone, no Star Tours, and even no Carousel of Progress, for God's sake, because somebody once got killed between the walls and what if it happened again? Good grief! Which doesn't leave much, let me tell you, and since the Mite was too goo-goo eyes to leave Kathie Lee outside with a Mickey doll for company while he and I actually went and had some fun, well, the fun quotient was low indeed. And then we hit rock bottom: on the third ride through It's a Small World (yes, you read correctly, that was "third ride"), the thing broke down. Our boat was dead in the water for over half an hour, during which the song continued its endless saccharine loop, and all the little multicultural Stephen King dolls kept bouncing up and down and up and down -- and a certain person, rather than screaming for mercy, actually claimed that this was the most fun she had ever had at Disneyworld

Enough is enough, even for the Nostrumite. Thus were planted the seeds of discontent, and on our last night, when he and I were sort of feeling like a blow-out at Pleasure Island, when it was suggested that one last ride on It's a Small World would be the perfect ending to the vacation, it all fell apart. The Mite ripped off his Mickey Mouse ears, threw them to the ground and stamped on them, all the while ranting about camaraderie and joie de vivre and it isn't all that small a world no matter how you slice it, as is his wont, and the winner of the K.L.Gifford Look-alike Contest was appalled that the boy had it in him, and that was, pretty much, that. I mean, it had to play out for the rest of the night and the flight back home the next day, but by the time we landed at JFK, we were back to male bonding again, and the Nostrumate was history.

For now, of course. I know that sooner or later the real thing will come along for one of us. But, please God, don't make it a K.L.Gifford type. Me, I think I'd rather marry Frank Gifford, given my druthers, except for his lousy taste in women.

Anyhow, we didn't get to Emory after all, which was sort of disappointing, because we always like to watch those big-time policy coaches judge a few rounds of declamation, but which was also why we got to write an extra episode or two (we did get ahead a couple of installments, which is nice to know, so that if the Mite and I are, say, sent by our Commander-In-Chief to bomb Iraq, or Kenneth Starr's house, we'll have a few weeks' work available on the backburner). We will be at Harvard, however, and we look forward to looking up some of those who have written us fan mail, to find out if they're as mentally unstable as they seem. And speaking of fan mail, our new bulletin board is, well, very much what you'd expect from me and the Nostrumite. Come check it out; we know you'll want one too.

Keep the faith.

Jules

Life returns to normal, and Nostrum returns with a mere single installment at

<http://www.geocities.com/athens/forum/6298/index.html>

We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over staying up way past his bedtime Sunday night to judge sextuple-octos or whatever it was in Lincoln-Douglas at Harvard, aka the Ice Box. If he had been smart like me -- like I? -- where is Anita Loos when you need her? -- he would have gotten himself put into the speech pool. The Mite does not enjoy judging for more than fifteen hours at a stretch, and finds that his decision-making abilities are inevitably corrupted as a result. In the case at hand, he thinks he picked up the side that best supported liberty, equality, justice, bombing Iraq, Ben & Jerry's ice cream and Monica Lewinsky's beret. Me, I did lots of HI and Duo, and talked to a bunch of Speechies who actually claimed to be fans of Nostrum. Ah, fame.... Ah, sources for new story lines....

Jules

Whoa! A double dose of Nostrum? And on Tuesday, no less? Are we being too good to be true? Find out at

<http://www.geocities.com/athens/forum/6298/index.html>

We almost didn't make it this week because we were in a state of complete catatonia, induced by watching too much of the Olympics. Or more to the point, watching too much of too many commercials occasionally interspersed with too much goofy color commentary and, very very occasionally, an actual Olympic event. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over the fact that the two of us sat there on the couch like Beavis and Butthead for what seemed an eternity, and after the eight hundredth time even we tired of watching the clip of the Herman-ator tumbling off the mountain during the slalom. And anyone who is tired of watching skiers fall down and go boom, is tired of life.

Yeah, I know. Someone said something like that before we did. We seldom make a literary reference without being aware of it. We even know who said it about what. But who cares anyhow?

See. Complete catatonia. Leading to snide and stupid in one swell foop.

Anyway, you ever notice how you spend four uninterrupted years not giving Women's Giant Slalom even a passing thought, and suddenly during the Olympics you're an expert on every single event, including the exhibitions? Like I said, I'm sitting next to the Mite on the couch, and he's making statements like, "That form is not good, look at that elbow," or, "Five six, skill, five eight, artistry," and you've got to wonder about the magic of TV on self-deception. The only sport no one seems to be an ad hoc expert on is that combination of cross-country skiing and riflery. I mean, why not have riflery with every event? I'm sure Michelle wouldn't have minded drawing a bead on Tara at some point during the festivities, for instance. Not to mention what Ms. Harding would have done four years ago if she had had the artillery.

And meanwhile, don't forget to visit our bulletin board. I'm getting tired of writing all the bulletins myself.

Jules

Yeah, right. Actually, we love a thousand meaningless listserver e-mails a day -- sort of takes our minds off the xxx spam we usually get. Anyhow, the latest episode of Nostrum, the High School Debate Soap Opera, is now available at

<http://www.geocities.com/athens/forum/6298/index.html>

And I'm sending a copy of this message to the CX-line person, on the hopes that it will be passed along to those people too. The fast ones, that is. Our Nostrum mail box is too filled already to actually subscribe to the CX-L, but is that any reason to deprive those teeming millions of this peculiar entertainment?

Anyhow, we almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over the fact that the Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts has accepted a few francs under the table to fund a Disney chair for cultural exchange. This from the same country that refused to visit EuroDisney because they didn't sell wine in Cinderella's castle? The same country where every intellectual worth his Derrida spent every waking hour belly-aching over the Americanization of the glories of French culture? The same country where eventually some Arab sheiks had to come in and bail out Mikey Eisner and change the name to Disneyland Paris (a city which, we hasten to point out, has a booming Disney Store on the Champs Elysees, patronized mostly by American tourists)? What are these people coming to? And to think, without them, we never would have bottled up the British at Yorktown, and George Washington would have been hanged at dawn...

Anyhow, as a tribute to our Gallic cousins, we offer a unique episode this week. The episode itself -- which even we admit is pretty boring -- discusses modernism; that's rather French right there. But what we've done is used Babelfish, an on-line, automated translation service, to translate the episode into French, and then used it again to translate the French version back into English. The results are, well, interesting. We are especially pleased by the rendering of the name of Bill O'Connor, our heroic albeit partnerless polician.

And yes, we did steal the idea from MT. He's our other hero, right after Dickens. Except on Tuesdays and Thursdays, when it's the other way around.

Jules

It has come to the attention of the Nostrum Antidefamatory League that our name has been inexplicably tied to a thread on the LD Listserv arguing the benefit of seductive forensic attire.

It makes us wonder.

The Nostrumite and I have been judging for skatey-eight years, and never once has either of us worn either a short skirt or even a snug sweater, although I did catch the Mite in what may have been lifts once, but one does make allowances for short guys, and he does turn rather a shapely ankle if the moon is in Pisces and the shadows fall just right. Our hope is that in the future, if the pugilists of the LD-L wish to say nice things about us, they 1) do so by getting our name right, and 2) don't amend us to another discussion of a more vituperative nature. After all, the one thing we don't have here is the ld-line-item veto.

Jules

The Manhattan Lodestone (a magnet school) and the Original Vaganza (all other Vaganzas are just extra) Tournament are coming into focus in this week's episode of Nostrum at

<http://www.geocities.com/athens/forum/6298/index.html>

We almost didn't make it this week. I was so inspired by Bill Gates as a pitchman for Big Berthas on 60 Minutes that I ran out and took up golf for half an hour. What a stupid game! I went to the local driving range and froze my kiester off hitting balls everywhere but in the air. Golf is definitely not a game for forensicians. I'll stick to bowling, like our cousins on the sea.

Meanwhile, the Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over the article in the Sunday Times about Philosophers replacing Psychotherapists. Philosophical Therapists? There's a concept for you. "The problem with you is a little too much teleology." If you read the article, you know this is serious. Philosophers are banding together to put some muscle on medical insurers so that their clients can get coverage. For what? Fear and trembling? Failure to understand the math in Rawls? Not getting the jokes in Rousseau (you didn't know there were jokes in Rousseau? Tsk-tsk). What is this world coming to, when instead of interpreting your dreams, they start interpreting your hermeneutics?

How we ever get these episodes out I'll never know.

Jules O'Shaughnessy

Nostrum Apparently Achieves First Bogus Award

We think -- but we're not sure -- that the perpetrators of this site have given us their top 2% award. Considering their English and our Korean, this strikes us as rather strange, to put it mildly. But every other page in existence has one of those awards, so why shouldn't ours? We've proudly pasted it on our home page.

We can't wait for them to send us our cash stipend.

Nostrum wins second bogus award

All right, maybe it's not all that bogus. The lovely folks at Togald, which we think of as the name of some sort of Scandinavian tour guide, has marked us as one of their featured resources. Of course, they didn't tell us this, and we only found out by accident, although Togald was very apologetic about not getting the news to us in a timely manner. I guess he was out skiing and eating herring with Thor and the gang and just forgot to let us know.

Oh, well. It's nice to know the Nostrum Juggernaut keeps on juggling.

So what is Minnie, as in Minnie Mouse, short for?

A three-pronged episode of Nostrum -- there's so much happening that we can't fit it all into one simple episode anymore -- is now available at

<http://www.geocities.com/athens/forum/6298/index.html>

We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite was, for an hour or two, in a state of permanent depression over 1997 XF11, but he did some of his own calculations and estimated that, even if it did destroy the earth in 2028, the odds were that everyone would still be so involved in the ongoing Kenneth Starr investigations that they wouldn't even notice it. According to the Mite, there have been enough interns in the Clinton White House to last everyone's favorite special investigator until 2037; he also calculates that there have been enough interns in the Clinton White House to last everyone's favorite philandering Arkansan until 2046. No, what really got to the Nostrumite this week was that he accidentally committed the cardinal TV viewing error of the late millenium, namely, watching Baywatch without turning the sound off. I haven't seen such a glazed expression on the lad's face since CBS cancelled "Dallas."

We've got to start getting out of the house more often.

Jules

Nostrumite for NFL President?

Policy rules? Find out for yourself in the latest episode of Nostrum

<http://www.geocities.com/athens/forum/6298/index.html>

We almost didn't make it this week. Oh yeah, sure, the Nostrumite stayed up all Monday night watching the Oscars, and once again, as the envelopes were opened, he did not make a single correct guess. His record over the years has been impeccable, if impeccable includes totally wrong every time. But that didn't bother him. Nor was he upset when he turned to me and said that he and I are like the last two guys collecting the award for best subsonic editing of an unreleased short subject, with the music cutting us off before we even get started thanking our wives and parents and patron saints and the like. But that didn't bother him either. The sight of Joan Rivers schmoozing with Rosa Parks didn't even set him off (although one wonders if Ms. Parks took public transportation to the event -- she was there, really! I'm not making this up). No, what put the Mite into a state of permanent depression was unrelated to Hollywood; it was the announcement that the Beardstown Ladies have turned out to be frauds. It's like finding out your grandmother is Eva Braun. These old gals are writing investment books so fast that they're having fist fights with Stephen King over the paper supply at the local stationery store, and they're claiming that they're getting something like 27% returns on investment, whereas in fact they're underperforming the Dow and the S&P, and Seth B. Obomash's cat could pick better stocks by peeing at random on the NASDAQ page of the Wall Street Journal -- soon to be the AMEXNASDAQ, of course (and we don't mean Obomash's cat). So you can't trust anyone anymore, not the President, not the Special Counsel, not Leo DiCaprio who didn't even bother to show up not to accept the award he wasn't offered, not even these sweet little old stockbroker grandmothers.

The world is a colder place tonight.

Jules

Richard Brinsley Sheridan

Ok. Our last initials are BS (don't try to make more of that than coincidence), and as a lark yesterday we mildly changed our first 6 initials from JULIEC to R. One person noticed this; we were not surprised. We reprint his comment to us here:

Julie:

Have I missed something? I thought I was the only RBS currently on the list. Of course, I will defer to Richard Brinsley Sheridan, and if you are he, or if he is in your stable of writers, I will yield to his much earlier claim.

RBS

Okay, we admit that the Nostrumite is, in fact, not Mr. Sheridan, although the Mite is a graduate of the school for scandal, aka -- no, we won't go there. And we happily grant Mr. Sodikow full and rightful claim to his own initials.

As the season dwindles down to crumbs and coffee stains, we offer this quote about RB(Butler)S, who, it appears, was a great Parliamentary orator (we only knew about the plays, but who are we?). "The extravagances of his second wife, and the burning down of his theatre in 1809, caused him grave financial hardship, and he died in poverty." We pulled this off the biography.com website. This is all they tell us about any of his marriages, or any of his finances. What happened to his first wife? What did #2 spend the money on? Was there a more fiscally sound #3? Did his fall into poverty have the nefarious trappings we associate with the money-lenders and Parliamentarians in the Palliser novels? And what exactly was the cause of the fire? We here at the Nostrum Claims Department suspect foul play!

Oh, well, now we have a whole 'nother year to plan our next 4/1 blow-out.