

Things I am Thankful For

By Lauren Shafenberg

My mom does this cheesy thing at Thanksgiving. Come to think of it, she tries sneaking it in at other family gatherings, too. She will get this very after-school special look on her face and look around at all of us, and we know what is coming. "I want to go around the table," she says in this breathless, dramatic voice, "and have everyone say what they are thankful for."

I always end up saying something equally cheesy, like, "I am thankful that we are all here together." Who ever says that and really means it?

But when I really think about it, there is a lot that I am truly thankful for.

Sure it is superficial, petty, and insignificant stuff, but it still deserves my thanks!

I am thankful that I have never gone to or really felt the need to go to a shrink. Oh, I am sure that I have got issues that some shrink would love to get their little, clinical hands all over, but I just don't see the point. I think psychology is, for the most part, made up by people who are trying to define their own issues, and, most of the time, the only real therapy people need is to be told to grow some sack (I apologize to any psychologists or the

...continued on page 5...



Letter from the Editor

For those of you who are wondering about the title of this publication, allow me to give you a little history. The Tower of Babel is an endeavor referenced in *Genesis* as a project that was impressive to the point that it demonstrated that if humankind could build it, then they could do anything. I feel very much that this newsletter embodies this concept of endless achievement.

Also, this newsletter has a bunch of babble in it. I know my articles are like that. The connection to the title is self-evident.

So, maybe everything isn't so complex, is it?

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Lil Poison:

Superkid or Jedi Knight?

As posted at www.gotfrag.com

By James "Fiend" Schneider

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BabbleList of Distinction

This month's *Grimmelshausen Contributor* award winner, counting the current issue's submissions:

SUSAN FRITZ, BABBLE-ON-IAN

Eccentric yoga instructor and actress, Susan provides plentiful, random materials for your reading digestion. Her pieces range from entirely absurd stories to sarcastic social commentary. *Babble-ON* salutes you!

Note on the Grimmelshausen Award: Grimmelshausen distinctions are awarded to *Babble-ON* contributors who have submitted over 10,000 words. The award is named after Johann Jacob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen, the 17th Century German author of the picaresque (and very lengthy) novels of the Simplician cycle, among other works. ☒

Pope of the Month: Pope Benedict XVI

By Fritz and Hall

No other Pope in the history of Catholicism has been as great of a 16th Pope as Pope Benedict XVI, the successor to Pope John Paul II. Take my word for it.

Normally, this section is devoted to “honoring” dictators throughout the world, both past and present. But we often overlook our supreme leaders in the religious community. These heroes of the cloth often go unsung. And so, back to the new Pope....

Prediction for the Papacy:

Pope Benedict discovers newfound religious support in New York City after declaring that Eggs Benedict is the holiest of meals, followed by three Hail Bloody Marys. Sunday brunch takes on a whole new significance. ☒

Past Dictators

Name	Country
Papa Smurf	Smurfland
Superbus	Rome
Musharraf	Pakistan
Qadaffi	Libya
Karimov	Uzbekistan
Taylor	Liberia
Milosevic	Yugoslavia
Saddam	Iraq
Mugabe	Zimbabwe
Pinochet	Chile
Ceausescu	Romania
Pol Pot	Cambodia

Problem Hole

By Srida Joisa

“Frickin’ Bees”

You and your masochistic buddy are riding bikes.

Because you guys are stupid, you try to do something stupid.

You and your buddy stand 100 miles apart in a straight line. Yeah, I know you guys are crazy. Each on his/her own bicycle. And then you start riding towards each other at the exact same time and crash head to head.

You bike pretty fast. You bike at 40 miles per hour. But your buddy is psycho and bikes even faster. He bikes at 60 miles per hour. Ah, but then there’s the bee. See, just as you both start, a bee sits on your nose and flies at 1000 miles per hour in-between your nose and your buddy’s nose. The bee always flies straight and as soon as it touches your nose, it immediately starts flying in the opposite direction toward your buddy’s nose at the same speed. And then back and forth again and again and again until, SQUISH, it’s dead when you all crash.

How far did the bee fly before it died?

See next issue for the answer! Also, see page 6 for last month’s answer! ☒

Tower of Babble-ON’s

“Before-and-After” Corner

By Susan Fritz

“**Sock** Monkey See Monkey Do” ☒

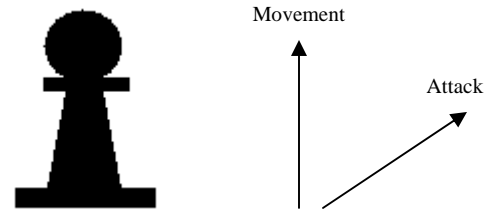
Chess-Whiz

By Dan Fritz

Welcome to the inaugural edition of Chess-Whiz—kind of like the non-gastronomical version of Cheez-Whiz® on a cracker. Similarly, I’m going to feed you tasty little tidbits of the basics of chess. By the end of this series, you will know how to set up the board, how all of the pieces move, and maybe even a few basic strategies. Granted, my lifetime record is probably 50/50, but at least I can get you started.

We will first examine all six different pieces and their capabilities. Today’s lesson is: **The Pawn**.

The pawn is the basic unit on the board, and it looks like this:

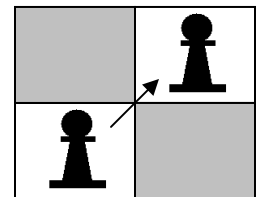


Movement: Pawns may move *one* space *forward* (or up to two spaces forward if they are moving from their starting position and the field is clear in front of them.)

Attack: They can only capture units that are *one* space *diagonally* in *front* of them.

Usage: Most people tend to underestimate the pawn’s importance, because you start with eight of them, and they are limited in movement. However, the pawns as a collective are one of your biggest weapons. They are good as front runners in an attack, and they are also good at **defending** other units. As a front-runner, their value is clear—you want to force the enemy into a trade where they capture your pawn and you capture one of their better pieces. By “defending,” I mean that they are in a position to capture an enemy unit if and when it captures the unit they are defending. With a good defensive matrix of pawns, at the very least you’ll come out even when trading pieces.

DIAGRAM: If “up” is “forward,” the pawn on the bottom row is defending the pawn on the top row. ☒



The Criminally Comical Trials of Mattlock

By Calderwood and Fritz



Five Minutes Under the Influence of Gin

By Susan Myhr Fritz

Each of the following was written minutes before the *Babble-ON* deadline and during the consumption of a weak, homemade Cosmopolitan. The editor, Daniel L. Fritz, is responsible for the initial topic of each short article; the writer, Susan M. Fritz, its content. Reader discretion is advised.

Mini-Article #1

Topic: Popeyes Chicken/Little Nicky

Wow, right off the bat a tough one. Of all the topics in the world, he gives me the one about meat and a really bad movie. Okay, then. The first thing that comes to mind when I look at the word “Popeyes” is related to the way it physically looks as a sign. It’s pretty ghetto, true, but the first and subsequently only thing I can think of after looking at it is “Pope yes.” So, I have to say that every time we pass one—which, incidentally, isn’t very often. I mean, seriously, Popeyes is nearly as rare as Arby’s in these here parts. Not that I’m looking, either. After all, I am no chicken eater, and my life goes on without those sides of biscuits and gravy our dear editor so oft craves. Pass the tofu!

Another thing I can say quickly about the subject is that it’s very topical, seeing that Pope J.P. just kicked the bucket (of chicken). Oh, I have to comment on *Little Nicky* really quick. We saw this movie in the theaters, so what does that say about us? The funny part was where Adam Sandler got the big bucket of Popeyes chicken. The end.

Mini-Article #2

**Topic: Which is better: the Charlie Brown Christmas Special
or the Charlie Brown Halloween Special?**

Could I make these doozies up, folks? How does one spell doozy? Like that? Shoot...Well, hands down for me is the Christmas special. Not only because it has the cute little “Charlie Brown” tree, but also because I watched it more growing up. Nothing beats those kids howling into the air singing “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing” while lispny Linus tells the Christmas Story. Crap, I guess you couldn’t write a cartoon like that anymore these days. It might offend someone who prefers the squiggly cartoon lines of *The Critic*.... But seriously, the story has a simple, pure message, and anyone who can’t recognize that the message is truer today than it was when Lucy first clinked those nickels in the jar is smoking too much dope. Until we got our real-looking artificial tree sometime in middle school, my mom always migrated towards the Charlie Brown tree at the roadside tree guy. At first it drove me nuts. “Can’t we have a *nice* looking tree for once?” I’d scream. But now I have to say that I tend to pull for the underdog tree most of the time, too. It’s just disguised as smaller and less attractive, because “character” is sometimes disguised. The end.

Mini-Article #3

Topic: Burning ants as a child.

Holy crap! Who is this maniac I live with? First of all, this topic was clearly chosen to provoke my sympathetic sensibilities to all living things (except for mosquitoes, which are okay to kill, especially when they are in the middle of sucking the blood from your arm—even though the damage is already done). Burn an ant? Listen, sister, I actually have a clear recollection of *playing* with ants in my front yard at 2718 Clover Drive. Incidentally again, I have lived on many tree or nature related streets: Forest Avenue, Beech drive, Spruce Street, Seaview Avenue, etc. Anyway, I remember other kids claiming that the ants bit them, and they loved to step on them or round them up and spray some pesticide on them. Not me. I’m no Mother Theresa, but these ants seemed to like me enough to crawl on my hands without any problem. Then again, it helped that in Montana we didn’t have any deadly fire ants to speak of. They were just your run of the mill tiny ants.

Another sad ant story I’ve never quite gotten over is that my dad and sister and I were walking on what seemed like miles of pavement by some airplane hangers where my dad worked at the MT Air National Guard. They had F-16s back then, which were about as cool as you could get. We were just walking along, and I spotted the hugest ant I’d ever seen. I thought it was cool and was about to bend down and look at it, maybe pick it up, when my dad put his huge booted foot on it and squished it. That was really upsetting. The end. ☒

What Life is All About

(Part Two)

By Srida Joisa

Greetings! After finding out that my in-flight movie will be *Neverland*, starring Johnny Depp and Kate Winslet, for the 15th time, I decided to speed up publication of the next installment of the “What Life is All About” series. This time we’re looking at something so obvious, it’s really quite stupid. Well, maybe not stupid. Maybe just so obvious it doesn’t strike most people as even worth mentioning.

Enough meandering. Let’s get started.

PART 2: FAMILY

Life is really all about family. Some of us are more fortunate than others in that we have more or less family members, we spend more or less time with our nuclear family members, we spend more or less time with our extended family, we like our families more or less. But life is definitely all about family.

Parents

When we’re first born, life pretty much has to do with our parents. Sometimes it’s Mom and Dad, sometimes it’s just Mom and occasionally it’s just Dad. Other times it ends up being a grandparent or two or maybe an uncle and an aunt. But you’ve got to have parents of some kind. We tend not to make it too far without parents.

Sometimes our parents are really awesome. They pay attention to us, they do exactly what we say, and they scold us when we do stupid things like slobber all over the electric sockets in the house. Sometimes they even beat the crap out of us—and it’s a good thing.

They feed us good stuff at least when we’re not sure what the difference is between chocolate

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...*What Life is All About*, previous page...

and pureed corn/spinach/carrots/rutabaga. They often feed us good stuff even when we don't like it. Yes, spinach is good for you. I know you hate it and would rather starve, but you're going to finish it. And don't try to feed it to Fido. He would choke on it and not be able to play with you anymore.

Oftentimes, even if we think our parents weren't great, they were usually okay. They might have spoiled us a bit so we ended up stuck up and disconnected from reality, or given us a bit too much candy so we ended up fat, or given us too many video games so we ended up nerdy, or given us too many beatings so we ended up raging all the time, or given us too few beatings so we ended up raging all the time, or given us too much time in front of the TV so our brains ended up rotting and we worked at McDonalds flipping burgers for 30 years, or maybe they just tried hard and sucked at being great parents but were able to manage to just become good parents.

Sometimes parents suck. I don't like writing about them. We all read about them in the paper. They aren't what life is all about. They're all about why we need to change the world so all parents can become what life is all about. And that way life can rock for all kids just like it rocked for most of us.

Most of us remember a handful of very vivid times we hated our parents. That time they wouldn't let you buy that absolutely wonderful pony to keep in your backyard. That time they wouldn't let you buy Mortal Kombat 15 with its super-blood-and-guts-and-gore rating. That time when your parents wouldn't let you eat McDonalds even though it was the greatest lunch a kid could have at the age of 5.

Thank God our parents didn't mind us hating them. We might have ended up even more spoiled, fat, nerdy, stupid, or raging if they had done what we demanded.

Later in life we developed a real connection with other family members. Maybe it was again with our parents. Or maybe it was with our uncles or aunts or grandparents or someone else. Maybe even our siblings.

I'm talking about the first real forays into asking difficult questions like, "Why is mommy pregnant?" "Where do babies come from?" "Why does the news man have such a big head on TV?" "Do you really get cooties from girls?"

We start asking questions and looking for different types of answers.

Aunt Marie spends the time with you to explain exactly why all women are cursed, and Uncle Bob spends the time to explain what the heck is going on late at night. Or maybe it's the girl next door who demonstrates.

Then we grow up some more and start asking real philosophical questions. You know what I'm talking about. It's those questions that get your family really flabbergasted. "So, if God is good, why does he damn people?" "If God is omniscient, doesn't He already know what's going to happen? So how can I have free will? He already knows what I'm going to do!" and so forth.

Oftentimes, we ask these questions to family members who can answer them. That might not be Mom and Dad. It might be your cousin. Or maybe your Uncle or Aunt.

Or maybe you just don't care and never ask these questions out loud. But you're still wondering deep down inside. Life's never perfect. You always wonder why it's not.

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Family helps answer those questions from time to time. Family sometimes also helps you forgot those questions from time to time. When everyone gets together and tries to have a good time. There's a huge lunch or dinner, sometimes there's singing, sometimes there are sports or games or just a bunch of chatter. It's not perfect always. Sometimes, just like with friends who aren't real friends, there's a show to put on. You've got to smile when Aunt Marge tweaks your cheek even though you're 27 years old and have no real cheeks to speak of anymore.

But Family can also be a good escape from the perils of the world. Family creates a home where we can oftentimes come back and recuperate from the relentless attack of the outside world.

That home is usually really special. It's not always the same place, but sometimes it is. It's really defined by at least one of two things. One, it's the place your family, however you define it, resides. And/or two, it's the place where you feel more at peace and more comfortable than any other place.

You may not always feel the most at home at the place you called home when you were going to high school or middle school or elementary school. But sometimes you do.

You may not really enjoy Mom's cooking anymore. You may not like the fact that your family does the same thing it's done year after year after year for the same holidays. But there's definitely some sort of certainty and peace and calmness from experiencing exactly what you expect.

One of the things I think makes a home and makes family wonderful is the fact that you can (hopefully) really just be yourself in front of your family. It's similar to what you are in the company of true friends, but we usually have known our family members for longer than our friends. Our family often knows little quirks about us that aren't part of our friendships. Sometimes the reverse is true. But oftentimes, we are the most relaxed in front of our family.

And being relaxed is What Life is All About. ☒

Taco Bell Presents: Quotable Sauce Packets

Submitted by Susan Fritz

Willing to relocate

It's okay...you can say it, I love you too.

Mi salsa es tu salsa

Of all those sauce packets, why me, why now?

Does a Grilled Stuft Burrito qualify you for the car pool lane?

My sauce is an honor student at Taco Middle School

Do you add sauce left to right, or right to left?

You had me at taco.

IM A HOT T R U 2?

If you throw this, would it be a flying saucer?

When I grow up, I want to be a waterbed.

Bike tires scare me.

Heads...

...Tails

☒

...*Things I am Thankful For, p. 1...*

recipient of these services who are reading this—just being honest). Don't get me wrong—there are some real crazies out there who do need the help of a psychologist, but most people are just whiny.

This brings me back to my mother. My mother has worked in Hospice (care for terminally ill people) since I was born. You could not have had a bad day in my house. If I tried to talk to my mom about some of these wussy things people go to shrinks to talk about, my mom would tell me, "Well, today I admitted a woman to our program that is 27 and is going to die in a week leaving behind two small children. She is in horrible pain, because her body is being ravaged by cancer. So, I guess your life isn't that bad, is it?"

So, I guess I should really be thankful for mom and her ever-so-gentle way of telling me to get over myself. She is the one who gave me the motto that I now live my life by, "Suck it up!"

I am thankful for white trash—the best and cheapest entertainment in the world. All one needs is to make a stop by the local Wal-Mart, amusement park, or truck stop—sit back and enjoy the show. I love the mullets, the ill-fitting tube tops, and the Loony Toons t-shirts. The devotion these people have to "Taz" is phenomenal. I am thankful to Jerry Springer for televising the plight of the white trash to the whole world. I am thankful for the *Lincoln Journal Star* and their "White Trash Section." It is actually called "Celebrate" or something like that, but take one look through it, and you will see why we have given it that nickname. It comes in the Sunday paper, and it is the highlight of my weekend. Every Sunday, my husband and I scan it for gems such as pictures with captions like "Congrats Buddy on your parole. We never gave up! Love, Billy Joe and Mitsy." I love it when people pay to have pictures of their dog and thank the animal for all the good times. I am thankful that the white trash never bother with such trivial things as dental care, dressing appropriately, or birth control. I was at Wal-Mart one day and saw a woman wearing flip-flops, a silk nightgown, and a fur coat. It was fantastic! Godspeed, fur coat lady!

I am thankful that pirates seem to have made some sort of come back. Arggghhhh, me mateys, arggghh!

I am thankful for music. Especially Motown. I am like the whitest, white girl from the whitest state in the union, but I love my Motown. My parents introduced me to this art form when I was very young. There is nothing like it. I remember jamming out to the The Temptations and The Commodores. I remember the heartbreak with the DJ at my first dance when he told me they didn't have "Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch." When I was in seventh grade, I did a whole science project based on Motown. My hypothesis was that if you play Motown to plants, it makes them grow better than any other form of music. I can't really remember the result. But that reminds me, I am also thankful for science projects.

I would be remiss if I did not express my gratitude for my favorite food: Circus Peanuts. Thank you to the inventor of Circus Peanuts. Thank you for taking sugary, orange goodness and molding it into something that looks like a peanut. Thank you for all the wired nights and sugar withdrawals. There are some that hate the Peanuts. They argue they are a vile and disgusting creation. Bah! Circus Peanuts are little pieces of heaven on Earth.

I am thankful that my brother-in-law backed out of the Great Cadbury Egg Battle of 2005. The bet was that I could not eat 15 Cadbury Eggs in an hour. I still think I could have done it, but my

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brain would have been sugarized, and I would have been vomiting for months. Most importantly, I would probably never have been able to eat a Cadbury Egg again. That is a punishment I wish on no man. So thanks, Murr, for looking out for me. I am glad you wussed out.

I am also thankful for the movie *Overboard* with Kurt Russell and Goldie Hawn. It changed my life.

Okay, so anyone who has read this probably thinks I am a little crazy. Maybe some of you really think I should see a shrink. But my craziness is something that I cherish, and the one thing I am most thankful for. Sure my husband, family, friends, my cat, and other crap like that is really high on the list, but I am very thankful that I may be a few greyhounds short of a dog race. I love that I spontaneously break out into dance in clothing and grocery stores, and that I invented the "Rhesus Monkey Kiss." I think rabbits have addresses. I dance with my cat to James Taylor's greatest hits (in case you are wondering, his favorite is "How Sweet It Is"). I name EVERYTHING! Cars, computers, plants, stuffed animals...everything. One time someone who was/is studying psychology told me that sort of behavior indicates that I am child like. You know what I say to that? Bite me, shrinky.

I am also thankful for unexplained outbursts of anger, like the one I just displayed. They are good for the soul. Emotional instability can be a good thing.

Sure, world peace, health, and being with family and friends are all well and good, but I think the next time my mom starts her roundtable of thankfulness, and it falls on me to say something touching and profound, I will just exclaim, "I'm happy dogs have noses!" That ought to end that pretty quickly. And then I can get to the turkey.

Oh yeah, I am also thankful for turkey.

Lauren Shafenberg was born in Colorado. After being run over by a bike at the age of two, she moved with her family to Michigan. Not because of the bike incident, her mom got a job or something. Before starting second grade, Lauren and her family moved to Scottsbluff, Nebraska. She has lived in Nebraska ever since, having moved to Lincoln about six years ago. She is married to Mr. Levi Shafenberg, who spends his time working and pleading with Lauren to stop "embarrassing him." ☒

Submission Suggestions

Your contribution can be anything that fits onto a sheet of paper.

Here are a few ideas:

Editorials	Reports	Philosophy
Reviews	Ramblings	Rants
Comics	Puzzles	Jokes
Quotes	Polls	Trivia
Drawings	Poetry	Recipes
Photographs	Short stories	News
Predictions	Advice	Graphs

Please send all of your submissions by the deadline to

dan@fritzcomics.com. ☒

Between the Moments of Bliss...

By Bryan Murray

Every so often certain current events get me riled up, and I'm not even in a bad mood these days. I really wouldn't call this a rant, but rather my view of a few specific topics that either make me dazed and confused or wondering if we just need to start civilization all over from scratch. I want to believe *Jurassic Park* can come alive!!! I'm just talking about the original movie...and if any of you watched the sequels, then you might make my list for next time.

- 1) **Burger King commercial with Hootie and Brook Burke.** The jingle is a little catchy, but the constant bombardment of TV. and radio made me feel like the "King" was stalking me. I usually wouldn't complain about Brooke yelling "COME AND GET IT," but even my fantasies had run their course due to this sad excuse for marketing. But what I don't understand is why doesn't Hootie sing the radio version, only the TV ads? I think Burger King finally pulled these ads after a disastrous campaign. This is why I will always prefer Wendy's. RIP Dave Thomas....you were a true genius.
- 2) **The Pope.** Oh yes, I will touch this subject so just relax. Maybe it's a Catholic thing, but did I care that he was sick? A little, but it wasn't ruining my day. Was I surprised he died? NO...he was 84 years old and was barely coherent. Did I respect the mourning of his death and his funeral? Yes...he was an icon of our lives. Did I like 24-hour coverage for the past 3 weeks regarding Pope-Watch 2005? NO. Don't you think it's a little hypocritical for networks to be making money off of a simple man that admitted to not owning any material possessions? For some reason the entire world was enamored with whether or not white or black smoke will ascend from the chimney. But isn't the whole election process quite cultish? Again.....maybe it's a Catholic thing that I just don't understand. He didn't have superpowers, but at least he could jam with the breakdancers. If you have never seen that footage, then you ARE missing something from your life.
- 3) **The Michael Jackson Trial.** How people can defend this guy is beyond me. Let me see here....he's been accused multiple times by different people of inappropriate behavior. Where there's smoke, there's fire, and while Michael needs to burn, he will somehow get off (no pun intended). That's just how it works. Robert Blake had his own wife gunned down and was acquitted even in light of direct testimony from the killers. Scott Peterson didn't have the same 1st person witnesses, yet he gets the death penalty? Oh, he deserves to die for sure, but you know the judicial system has run amuck with "D" quality stars can run through the system untouched. It might have been best for you, Mr. Jackson, to disappear after the *Thriller* album...freak.

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Problem Hole: Answers to Last Month's Problem

By Srida Joisa

"Hangin' yerself with a Rope"

Last time we dug a hole. This time we're burning some rope. You're cooking something. Maybe the arm of the Hole Digger for screwin' up yer hole. You want to cook it for exactly 45 minutes.

You've got a lighter and two ropes. You know if you burn either rope by lighting one end, both ropes will burn for exactly 60 minutes. But these ropes are f***ed up. They don't burn evenly. You cannot make any inference about how much time has passed based upon how far the ropes have burned. All you know is once either one of the ropes is finished burning exactly 1 hr has passed.

How do you use your lighter and the two ropes to time exactly 45 minutes?

Answer:

You know that the rope will burn in 60 minutes from one end to the other. What happens when you burn it from both ends at the same time? It'll burn down to nothing in 30 minutes. So, how do you get to 45 minutes?

Who says you need to burn both ropes the same way? What happens if you burn one rope at both ends and one rope at one end? You know that when the one burning at both ends is done, the other one will have 30 minutes left to burn. So, why not light the other end of that rope? It'll burn down in half the remaining time, which means that it will burn down in another 15 minutes. That's 45 minutes total! ☒

Lil Poison: Superkid or Jedi Knight?

As posted at www.gotfrag.com
By James "Fiend" Schneider

Victor Deleon III (Lil Poison) is "Superkid" according to his father, also Victor Deleon (Sic Vic). "He just needs a cape." What may sound like the pride of a typical father, is in this case well merited. At only six years of age, his son Victor is the youngest professional console gamer in the world.

"I used to play a lot of Dreamcast games after I came home from work," Sic Vic recalls. "And he would cry a lot so I'd just put the controller in his hands and he'd stop crying." One particular Star Wars-themed title, Jedi Power Battles, featured a split-screen campaign mode, Vic explains. "All of a sudden I just noticed that he just picked it up. We started playing together and we actually beat the game."

It was a clear sign that Lil Poison was special and that his native intelligence, problem-solving capabilities, and memory were advanced, to say the least. Vic knows many parents who would start their children on Easy, but not him. Plus, Lil Poison would not be challenged. From Star Wars games to sports games to Halo and now Halo 2, Hard was the only setting suitable.

Vic may have gotten his son interested in games, especially Jedi ones, but it was his own 16-year-old uncle Gabriel (Poison), who took Lil Poison on as his Paduan. Lil Poison exclaims, "My dad stinks." Poison is a well known gamer himself, gaining recognition

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...Between the Moments of Bliss, from previous page...

- 4) **American Idol.** A great, fun idea for the first few seasons, but it has run its course—otherwise known as “jumped the shark.” (see www.jumptheshark.com if you don’t understand). How can you continue a show that reached its climatic peak during the Clay vs. Rueben face-off? I admit I haven’t watched it at all this year, because the contestants have no personality. In an effort to capture another week of ratings, the phone numbers were “wrong,” so they re-played the show with the correct numbers. At that point, it didn’t matter who they kicked off, because 1) they pretty much know who the top 2 performers are anyway, and 2) the show is rigged. I’m still pissed that Clay lost.
- 5) **Pink.** Faded red. A mistake in the laundry. A sorry excuse for a color, too. I don’t care if pink is considered “the new black.” It’s ugly. What’s worse is when you see grown men wearing pink shirts. This is not the 1980’s, and you’re not Don Johnson (*Miami Vice* reference for you slow ones out there). I think I’ll refer to any man I see wearing pink as “Nancy.” That reminds me, the editor of this newsletter is a Nancy, too. I think he wears pink pajamas...but I digress. Pink will always be a secondary color. It’s not bold—it’s an afterthought. Guys who wear pink are asking to be passive and want that sweater tied around their waste to be torn apart violently. Why am I opposed so much to pink? I think really its because my very good friend from college is expecting to have a baby girl this week, and I’ve lost him forever to the family thing...it’s no secret his wife has already told him he won’t have time for anything else once the kid arrives. But as he told me recently during an argument we had, “At least I’m still married.” Wow, that was quite a shot, kind sir. I couldn’t argue that point with him as my relationship failed miserably in the bowels of Texas. But back to my original point....I hate the color pink.

These are probably the most random five thoughts I’ve ever had, but for some reason they all struck a chord with me this week. Runners up include Britney Spears (cough *whore* cough) and Sprint PCS (so you really think I’m going to pay \$150?). After reading today’s CNN on-line, I think my next topic will be about appendages found in fast-food, also known as the white trash lottery. ☒

Do you want to be a published, international celebrity? Send in a submission to *Babble-ON!* All submissions are due the Friday before publication. See the website for details.

<http://www.babbleonline.com>

...Lil Poison, from previous page...

in Halo: CE and continuing to be a force in Halo 2. Lil Poison looks up to his uncle Poison and took the gamertag as a sign of respect, and perhaps the relative maturity of someone who would outgrow the tag I’m5YearsOld.

Vic is level-headed when it comes to violence in some video games and the inappropriate language of fellow gamers. He will not let his Lil Poison play excessively violent games like Grand Theft Auto. “I’d rather him play a game like Halo and learn teamwork, learn to be patient, and memorize where things are, than him running around with his friends with a fake gun or a fake knife. I don’t go for that.”

As for language, most kids are respectful of his age. He knows the words he should not say and avoids them, as well as people who say them. Vic hopes that teenage gamers erase the “R word” from their vocabularies. His first step is keeping his son from saying it.

The 53-inch TV, which sits in their Smithtown, NY home, absolutely towers over Lil Poison. He is about 3’5” and weighs in at 45 pounds. He may be a little guy, but he is an absolute beast in the gaming world.

When asked who taught him about video games, the six year old eagerly says, “Myself,” and then admits, “Poison. He’s my master.” Poison admits, “He plays just like me.” As such, they make an excellent 2v2 team, which startles a lot of people. Recently they beat out TSK at the Xtournaments (www.halotournaments.com), which Vic runs.

“They’re surprised by his age, they’re surprised by everything about him,” Sic Vic says. Poison echoes this sentiment: “They’re surprised that he uses Team Talk to tell people where the other players are. He can back up people, help them out. They get surprised by all that.”

Lil Poison has tried to play with kids his age, but just destroys them. While he is, himself, a master of tactics and shooting, his friends are running around and shooting into the air. His skill is advanced to the point where he can, and one might argue must, compete with much older players. On this, Lil Poison says simply, it “doesn’t matter.”

The recent news of Lil Poison being signed to an MLG contract has brought on many naysayers. Many people who have never met or played with Lil Poison are jealous and try to devalue his skills saying that he is only good for his age. His response is to challenge them 1v1. No one has accepted his challenge yet. “They’re scared of me,” he says thoughtfully. “They are afraid to lose!”

StK, Shoot to Kill, has taken Lil Poison under their wings, much like Poison did. In addition to being a member of the Xbox Live clan Team StK, the Poisons spend a fair amount of time scrimming with the current number 1 squad of Ogre 1, Ogre 2, Walshy and Saiyan. Lil Poison also plays as Baby Ogre 4 because “everyone’s afraid of the Ogres, and they are afraid of me.” Eventually he will change his name to StK Ogre 4. Poison says, “He’ll just grow into his next name.”

He has grown up before the eyes of fellow players as he attends MLG, AGP, Xtournaments; you name it. Walshy said that Lil Poison was “definitely a contender” and said he was probably a top-64 player. “I think it’s amazing,” Walshy says. “He’s six years old and better than most of the people who go to tournaments.” Lil Poison interjects: “And I almost beat you 1v1.” Walshy does an audible shrug: “Wasn’t tryin’.”

Lil Poison, in addition to being a contender, is an excellent first grade student, who achieves mostly E’s. He especially excels in subjects that involve memory, which Vic owes to videogames. Lil Poison is an excellent swimmer as well.

Despite being an amazing gamer who competes with pros on a regular basis, in many ways he is still a kid. He loves the sword, loves the glitches in the game, loves the idea of being a Jedi, learning from his “Master.” Superkid or Jedi, he is something special.

10 QUESTIONS WITH LIL POISON

Q. What part of the game do you like?

A. I just like it. It’s fun. Glitches.

Q. Do you standby?

A. No. No. I don’t like standby.

Q. Do you like Halo 1 or Halo 2 better?

A. Halo 2.

Q. Why?

A. Sword. I’m like a Jedi.

Q. Do you look up to any of the players other than Poison.

A. No, just Poison. And Walshy.

Q. What about the Ogres?

A. A little bit.

Q. Who do you think is the best player?

A. Me.

Q. Is Poison #2 or Walshy?

A. Walshy’s #1.

Q. What do you want to do in the future?

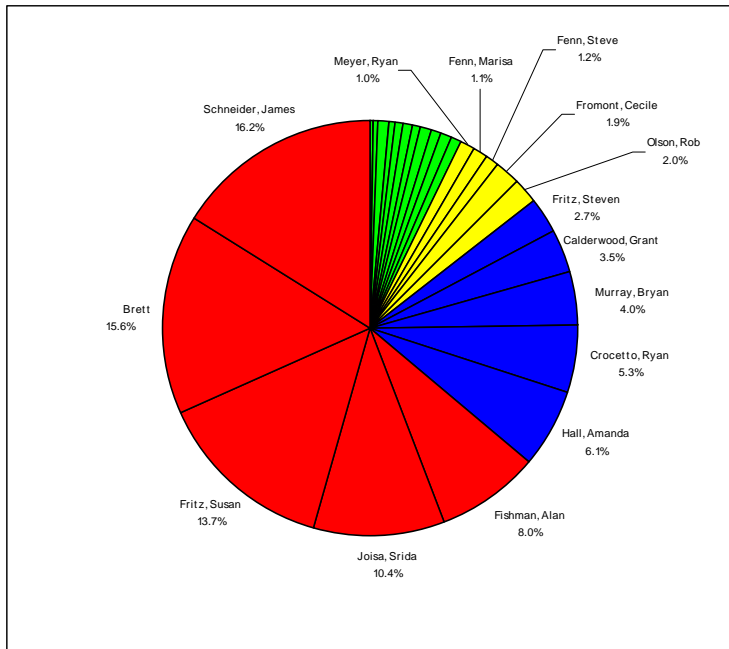
A. Make games like Halo.

Q. I heard you played with Bungie staff?

A. One time I played with Frankie. He’s bad at Battle Rifle. He said that to me. Then I beat him.

☒





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1,000: **Little Scribbler**
5,000: **Babble-ON-ian**
10,000: **Grimmelshausen Award**

For Exceptional Content:

**Alfred, Lord Tennyson
Platinum Seal of Excellence:**

This award is a very rare distinction, awarded only for indisputably masterful work.

Good luck, and keep the submissions coming! ☒

Words Contributed as Percentage of Total (see above)

As of last issue, the top five *Babble-ON* contributors (red) had contributed 63.9% of the written material, the next five (blue) had contributed 21.6%, and the next five (yellow) had contributed 7.2%. The remaining half (green) of the *Babble-ON* contributors had accounted for another 7.3%.

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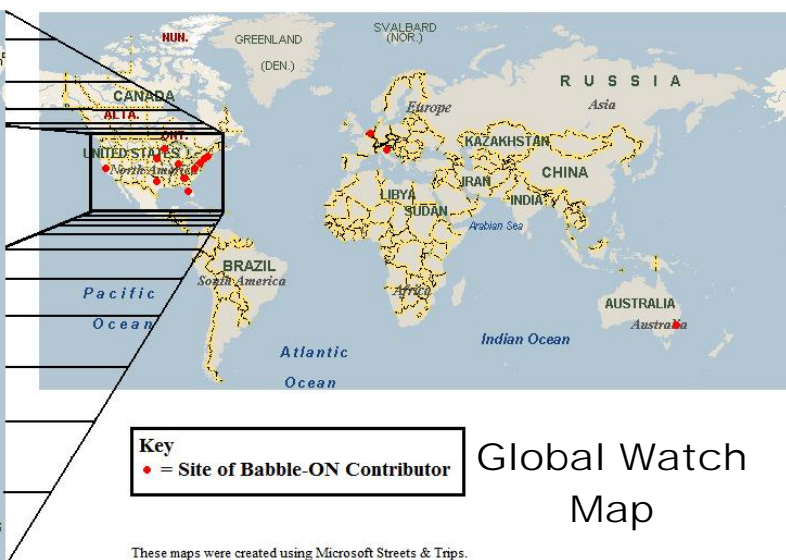
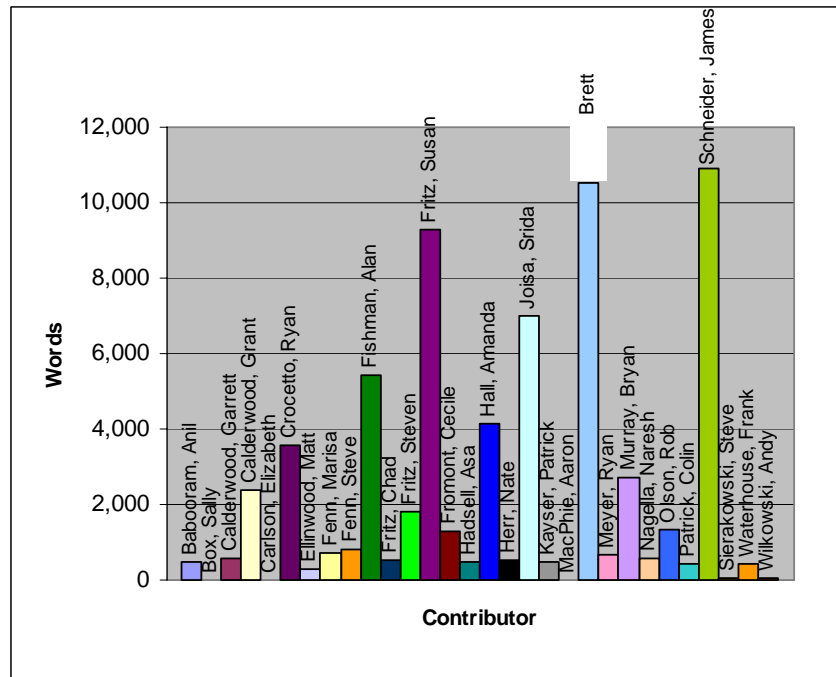
Current Trends:

As the top contributors continue to vie for the number one position, their share of the total words contributed continues to grow month after month. While the target of this publication remains to have at least one new contributor per month, this has not been keeping pace with the production of the top five writers.

Srida Joisa continues to gain ground with his steady submissions of the "Problem Hole" and "What Life is All About." ☒

Total Words Contributed

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Key
• Site of Babble-ON Contributor

Global Watch Map

These maps were created using Microsoft Streets & Trips.