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What's in YOUR wallet...
er, Dream?

By Amanda Hall,
*Master of All Work Pertaining to the Social
(And Some Not So Social)*

Famous people are constantly making cameos in my dream. I thought this was a normal occurrence until I outed myself one day at work.

"I usually dream of falling from a tall building, though I never quite hit the ground," one coworker commented.

Heads nodded and a few murmured, "Oh, mmhmm. Yep. That one."

"I usually have a dream that I am running, but I can't quite move," another coworker noted.

"Oh, sure," the peanut gallery tittered, looking at each other with knowing eyes.

At this point, I decided to chime in. "Oh, yeah. Sure, sure. And, isn't it weird how famous people appear in your dreams constantly?" Instead of unison head bobs, I swear I heard a record scratch.

...continued on page 6...

Get Your Praise On
God in the Inner City
By Amanda Hall

See Page 7

Steam Engine Nation

By Japheth Pennybaker

See Page 6

Letter from the Editor

This month marks the second anniversary of the introduction of this newsletter. Since inception, this newsletter has been read (via the internet) in at least ten different countries and has received submissions from two dozen cities in four countries. Thirty-two different people have directly submitted material to one or more of the twenty-one issues. Approximately 110,000 words have been written within the pages of this newsletter, and many more are sure to come.

In order to commemorate this mile-stone, I've introduced *Babble-ON's* first Readers' Choice Awards (see page 10). Please take a moment to vote in each of the categories for your favorite pieces. If you don't see one of your favorites on the list, please feel free to write-in a nomination when you email me your vote.

Thanks to everyone for their interest and participation in this newsletter and congratulations to the Readers' Choice nominees!

Here's to another year of *Babble-ON!*

dan@fritzcomics.com ☒

Problem Hole

By Srida Joisa

“3rd Grade”

Here's another one from the Internet.

The owner of a motel with 100 rooms wants the room doors numbered in order from 1–100. She asks you to buy numbers and hang them on the doors. Now you must go to the store and buy all the digits you need to make the numbers.

How many of each digit, 0–9, must you buy?

See next issue for the answer! Also, see page 10 for last month's answer! ☒

The Criminally Comical Trials of Mattlock

By Calderwood and Fritz



T-Shirt Nostalgia Corner

By Susan Fritz

No Fear “The guy who dies with the most toys still dies”

Hyper Color ☒

Haiku

By Susan Fritz

Lost sock on the ground
Sock, mate, reunited
Winter is coming ☒

Know Thy Flags

By Nate Herr

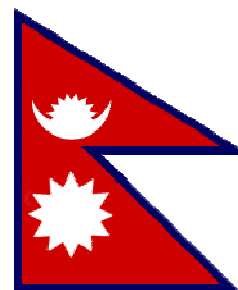
This is the first of what I hope will become a regular article in *Babble-ON*. I love world flags, and I think you should, too. Here are two of my very favorite flags to start.

MOZAMBIQUE:



Adopted: 1983. The green represents agriculture or fertile land, the gold represents the country's natural resources (one of which is gold), the red represents the struggle for independence (a theme that comes up in other flags, such as ours), the black represents the African continent (go figure), and the white represents peace. The main reason the Mozambique flag is one of my favorites, though, is because of the official country emblem located in the red triangle. The “hoe and AK-47 overlapping a book” I assume represents knowledge, farming, and stabbing people with a bayoneted assault rifle. These are things to look for next time you travel to Mozambique. Bonus note: The star is there, I think, because Mozambique was originally a Marxist state after their independence.

NEPAL:



Adopted: 1962. I love this flag, because it is the only one that is not rectangular. The two pennants represent two rival branches of the Rana family who ruled Nepal into the 1960's. The upper pendant is actually slightly longer than the lower pendant, and the top one has a moon on it, while the bottom one has a sun. These are now said to represent the hope that Nepal will last as long as the sun and the moon (it would probably suck to last *longer* than the sun). The previous flag was actually exactly the same, except there were people's faces on the sun and moon. The crimson is Nepal's national color, and the blue represents peace. ☒

Tower of Babble-ON's

"Before-and-After" Corner

By Susan Fritz

“Mohegan Sun Flower Seed” ☒

**Psych Consult
You Cruise You Lose**

By The Freud Brothers: Sigmund and Roy

Tom Cruise is an A-HOLE. Let's forget for a second he bounced on Oprah's couch like Anna Nicole Smith in the front seat of a semi. Let's forget he took a page from Affleck/Lopez and publicized his relationship with Katie Holmes on the "I'm Not Gay Tour 2005." Let's even forget that he basically plays himself in every movie (cocky, yet loveable protagonist that must go through some pains to get the girl/money/career/relationship with his brother/hooker/win in the courtroom with a killer smile and overplayed hand gestures). Let's forget all of that and look at Thomas Cruise Mopather (good idea on the name change, Mo) as the subject of a psychiatric case conference.

Schizophrenia, Paranoid type 295.30— *precipitating factors* Paranoia. Inappropriate affect. Hallucinations.

The man believes that aliens live in the core of the Earth and this world is heading for an alien showdown (See Battlefield Earth). He believes that medication is evil incarnate, and he believes vitamins are the answer to all psychiatric issues. I've been sucking on Fred Flintstone for three days straight, and I don't feel any happier. Now I know how Wilma feels.

Narcissistic Personality Disorder 301.81 — *precipitating factors* Grandiose sense of self, preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, requires excessive admiration. Get off my TV, TOM CRUISE!!!!

Anti-social Personality Disorder (formerly sociopathy) 301.7 — *Precipitating factors* Aggressive behavior. Lack of concern for others. Inability to feel empathy. Deceitfulness. Failure to plan ahead. Failure to conform to social norms. Tom has openly lambasted Brooke Shields and others for their pain. He attempted to whack Matt Lauer in the torso with a machete. He is widely understood to be Chanda Levy's real killer.

Paraphilia – Exhibitionism 302.4 – *Precipitating factors* Behavior involving exposure of one's genitals, sexual acts to strangers. *Extra/Entertainment Tonight* anyone? ☒

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.☒

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

What is the significance of the front page? Does it reflect voluminous submissions? Does it reflect outstanding writing? Or does it reflect who is sucking your cock tonight? Because, at my last count, your wife and gay lover (Susan Fritz and Brett , respectively) were tied at eight cover stories a piece, more than double any other contributor. It can't be volume of text: your two highest contributors (James and Srida) only have three combined. It can't be quality of the text: Fishman, Chad, and N8 only have one each. Koob and Amanda have three each, though their contribution status is variable. Lauren, Marisa, Colin, and Steve all only have one as well. Bryan and Grant have two. So, I think that all the aforementioned people can assume that either something is not up to par with their work or you are playing cock-favorites. Now, Susan I do understand. As your beautiful wife, a phenomenal writer, and a consistent contributor, she deserves to have exposure. Now, what kind of exposure is Brett giving you that you are consistently sharing your wife's spoils with him? And, I noticed a lull in Volume 3 of Brett covers until this week. Did you two have a fight? Did he not bring a condom? Did he insist that YOU be the pirate and he be the maiden this time? Honestly. I notice that the letter to the editor is always taking up room on the cover. Hmmm.....who writes that I wonder? It is, after all, a typical place for such a thing. If I were Srida, I would be writing this letter right now. Wait, I am. Not Srida. Writing this. Do I need to contribute more to get on the cover? Higher word counts, graph king? Does this word count? How about these? Now? Now? Cock. Dung. Vibrator. Stalin. Bee Pollen. Wieners. 101 102 103.....Damn you and your fascist rag.

Love,
Anonymous Prick



What Life is All About

(Part Five)

By Srida Joisa

It's an incredibly beautiful day outside. It happens to be pouring rain below where I am, but up here in the airplane, the world looks pretty frickin' spectacular. I'm also a bit sleep deprived and delirious, so you'll have to ignore the fact that the following article could get written in broken English. Oh well.

One odd thing about flying: the water tastes weird. I'm not sure I remember this from before, but for some reason I'm particularly dissatisfied with the way bottled

... continued next page...

Complex Thoughts, Simple People

By Amanda Hall

What is greater than God, more evil than the devil, the poor have it, the rich need it, and if you eat it, you'll die? This riddle was supposedly given to kindergartners and Stanford graduates. Legend has it that 80% of the kindergartners got the answer right, whereas only 17% of the Stanford grads prevailed. The answer is “nothing.”

This riddle is supposed to illustrate the concept of simplicity. Now, this riddle, of course, assumes that you believe that God is the greatest and the devil is the most evil. Perhaps you do not believe in either of these entities, but I won't insult your intelligence by saying that you wouldn't know these ephemeral beings are connected with these adjectives, no matter what your beliefs. Hell, I know Lucky the leprechaun runs excessively, and the Trix rabbit is cuckoo. I don't live in a cave. The point I am trying to make is that we lose our simplicity as we get older. Life is so obvious and easy when penciling in snack time between nap time, and play time is your biggest worry. And, perhaps this was a more innocent, less complex epoch in our lives. But, is that to say that our thoughts were less valid because of this lack of confusion? Wouldn't it actually mean the opposite, that we did our best, most lucid thinking when we were free from all of this clutter?

As a child, I remember pondering my own existence and wondering how I came to be. I remember postulating what would have happened to me if my parents never met. Would I be half of who I am? Would I exist in two people? Or would I have never been a twinkle in my parents' eyes? I used to give myself the chills when I thought about my life. I am wistful of these times, times when clear thought opened a gate to deeper understanding. Now, I think about how I can weasel out of my second job and ways to justify watching *The Apprentice* while drinking Mai Tais. That's about the extent of it. And, if you ask me a question, I may think, “What do they want to hear as the answer?” “What factors go into the answering of this?” “How can I use that stupid high school calculus that has yet to come into play in my lifetime?” The question may have been, “Do you want fries with that?” Still, we pause and think. We pause our lives for unnecessary confusion.

I want to shake the cobwebs from my mind and *Carpe Diem*. I want to do a spring cleaning on my brain and wash out all of those complexities that make clear, straightforward thinking an impossible task. I want exercising my mind to be new and exciting for me. I want to enjoy all of the energy and enthusiasm usually reserved for a kindergartner. I want naptime. ☒

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>

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

water tastes up here. I think it's the same water (the bottle logo looks familiar although I can't remember the name now), but it really tastes odd. If I happen to kick the bucket from water poisoning, well, there you go. You had a couple of days' forewarning.

PART 4: POWER

Life is all about power. You probably know what I'm talking about generally, but I think I want to explain it further, because I'm constantly surprised by how universal some of these oddities seem.

For instance, when people in America talk about power, the first thing that usually comes to mind is the President of the United States. He's a politician that clearly has the most power. He can send troops to go and kill other people anywhere in the world. He can take vacations whenever he feels like it. He's got his own 747 that he can make go anywhere he wants it to.

And he's often got full control over his interns.

Sometimes we hear the President referred to as the Leader of the Free World. I really have no idea what that means, but it sounds really powerful. I mean, you're leading practically everyone except for China and Castro. And China is starting to do what the President says anyway. Saddam thought he could get away with ignoring the Bushes, but now it's pretty clear he was wrong.

Let's relate power back to our own lives for a second. I think that's more important. Power and the struggle for it are so embedded in our lives that we hardly notice its effects in everyday life. The power I'm talking about isn't just at the Presidential level in a political arena. It's about what we do everyday. Especially when we're kids.

Think back to when you were first growing up. There was usually a group of kids playing in the neighborhood and you probably joined them. Maybe a group of boys playing hide and seek or cowboys and Indians. Or maybe a group of girls riding bikes around the park.

But there was probably a leader in that group. The tallest girl. Or the fastest boy. Or maybe just the kid that had the best mom who would always have great snacks to eat at her house!

That kid had a lot of power. And life was good if you were a) that kid or b) always around that kid.

Some people might characterize that kid as charismatic. She was the one who always made friends the fastest, and those friends always stuck to her the longest. But charisma is a different topic. I'm focusing on the power that kid had over all the other kids.

To be fair, that power was often temporary. If the leader did something stupid (like move away or ride his bicycle into traffic on a dare and get hit by a car) then the group usually picked a new leader. Not by vote of course, but by the same qualifications that picked the first leader. Or at least similar ones.

Let's talk about today. When you go to work (as most of us do), we see power and influence everywhere. Who decides when we get to leave work? Who decides when we get to take breaks? Who decides when we're going to happy hour? Who writes the paychecks?

That guy—the guy who does all that stuff, he's got power. Most of us want to be that guy. We may not say it out loud, but we want to have that power. Some of us probably really want to tell everyone else what to do. Some of us do that already whenever we get a chance. Some of us really just don't want anyone else saying what we have to do. It's not about bossing other people around—it's about making sure no one bosses you around. That's still power.

Dilbert is a great comic about power in the workplace. Who do you think has the “most” power in the comic strip? I'd definitely say Dogbert. He kicks ass. It's especially cool, because he's not some stupid grunt worker like Dilbert.

A quick side tangent—do you remember arguing with your mom or dad about something mundane when you were a kid? And you might have said that great phrase, “Well, I'm not going to do it! YOU'RE NOT THE BOSS OF ME!” I like that phrase. I think there's got to be some basic “bossy” gene out there that all humans have developed to create these passive voice sentences that are complete classics. That phrase is also about power. It's too bad that your parents really were your boss and pretty much told you what you had to do. But at least you were dreaming of escape even then.

Moving on to a somewhat more serious topic (at least if you think death and mayhem is a serious topic), I think the bombing of the World Trade Center was about power as well. It was about a bunch of things, but one of them was power. Let's skip what I think was trying to be said. Let's just focus on the results.

Clearly America, and probably many Western countries felt like they lost a lot of power on 9/11/01. The “supreme” Western power had its two tallest buildings demolished by a handful of well-trained, dedicated, suicidal people. So, do ya think we felt powerless?

An interesting example of how life is all about power is within sports. Athletes have an incredible power in our country. Many kids grow up wanting to become professional athletes. They live cool lives. They get to play sports for a living. They get to be on TV and make lots of money. And they get to do whatever they want after they retire from their sport. All of that is true. It's also true that sports athletes didn't have this much power 50 or 60 years ago. I'd say the television increased athletes' power significantly. And why is that? Well, we'll have to look into that in the next installment.

But in the meantime, I think you'll agree that Life is All About Power. ☒

Hit Me Just the One Time: Check Please

By Arthur Miller

Well, my last contribution was such a rousing success (I believe at least four people read it, and I received only one death threat) that I decided to share my thoughts on another classic piece of literature. I was grappling between the prolific *Superfudge* and the always entertaining *Ramona Quimby* when my dear friend T.S. reminded me that he enjoyed *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte. I, of course, reminded T.S. that he is the man that wrote:

I grow old . . . I grow old . . . I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled. Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach? I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.

So, we don't really give his opinion much credence up here in the Afterlife. I just pal around with him, because he loses at poker and seems to attract T-n-A to our corner of this place. Go figure.

In my previous article, I touched on a contemporary of mine (JD Salinger) that, in all truth, got extraordinarily lucky in his first go around being published. I mean, I dare anyone reading this whose maiden name does not use the "sometimes Y" rule to name another Salinger work. BUZZZZZZZZZ. Time's up! Don't you think a genius could repeat their success? Would we really revere Shakespeare as much if he had been the guy who wrote *Julius Caesar*, *Pussycat's Revenge*, *Walking with My Mother*, *Man*, *This Collar Itches*, and *Prose for Dummies*? Doubtful. So, why do we afford JD one chance to touch the stars and be forever suspended in the Heavens?

I have devoted enough ink and venom to JD, and my purpose is not to give him another plug. It is rather to point out a trend that seems to happen: one hit wonder authors. Why is it that we study them? Look up to them? Canonize them as though they cured leprosy with their words? Don't you think that an author should have to do more than write one readable book before they are dubbed "classic?" I mean, imagine a doctor performing his first operation, pumping his fists, dropping his instruments to the floor, and shouting, "Good night, Cleveland!" If he never returned to the operating room, he'd be an impotent moron not a beloved genius.

Now, this begs the question, are these authors one hit wonders because of society's lack of interest in exploring the litany of compelling material available, or are they thus because they could not produce at a prodigious level again? I have two words to answer that question: *Salesman* and *Crucible*. These plays were not mass marketed and yet I am a celebrated author whose works are usually studied at least twice if one takes Honors English throughout high school. Besides Willy Shakes (his nickname at the poker games...also because he shakes when he discards), who else is revisited throughout your time in high school? Remarque? Harper Lee? Charlotte Bronte? Emily Bronte? William Golding? Do I have to sit here and rattle off every loser that sits at the "pimple table" when lunch is served around here?

Perhaps, Nathaniel Hawthorne and F. Scotty might be circle jerked more than once in your substandard schools, but are you telling me that we exist as an elite four? Perhaps...and that's alright

...continued in right column...

...continued from left column...

with me. My poker table is way too popular anyway. We let T.S. play as our fifth, though we usually do not afford poets this luxury. I mean, most of the time Hawth holds them down while I give them wet willies. Sometimes, Shakes and F. Scotty pants them or short sheet them.

This behavior is not to discount poets. I am a voracious reader of poetry and believe that poets are a creative lot, but it's much easier to spread the genius around when you are doing it one page at a time. Oh, and poets are the best lovers. Just look at this Dickinson poem:

WILD nights! Wild nights!
Were I with thee,
Wild nights should be
Our luxury!

Futile the winds
To a heart in port,—
Done with the compass,
Done with the chart.

Rowing in Eden!
Ah! the sea!
Might I but moor
To-night in thee!

She is one hellcat in the sack, let me tell you.

In conclusion, I have but one point amongst this sea of words: a man worth his salt leaves enough in the shaker to last the whole meal, not just the appetizer. When they induct Kajagoogoo and Biz Markie into the Rock N Roll Hall of Fame, I may have a change of heart. Until then, *Jane Eyre* is the 18th century's answer to "I'm Too Sexy." ☒

Chess-Whiz

By Dan Fritz

Welcome once again to Chess-Whiz. This month, we cover a sly move that will make your opponent cry like a little baby. It's called **forking**.

In Figure 1, your opponent has positioned his pieces thusly. When it is your turn, move forward and threaten both pieces at the same time (Figure 2). Since he cannot move both pieces at once, you have ensured (barring being checked) that you will capture a big piece.

You can actually fork with any piece. A particularly good move is to check the opponent's king with a knight while threatening another piece. The king must move (since you cannot block a knight's check), and you will have captured the opponent's other piece. ☒

FIGURE 1

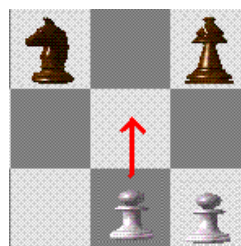
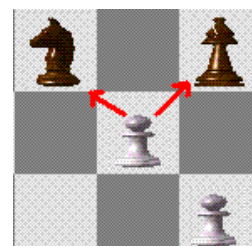


FIGURE 2



... *What's in your Wallet, p. 1...*

I felt like I was back in Mike Peters' basement and had just suggested playing Yahtzee instead of Spin the Bottle. I wondered how to retract my statement and realized it was too late. I have just come to terms with the fact that I am the only one with an All-Star line-up when the lights go out.

It's quite ridiculous, really. They are constantly popping by. It's as though my mind is the *Love Boat*, and I am Julie. "Welcome Aboard, Jack Nicholson. Drinks to your left!"

I've gone horseback riding with Christian Slater, babysat for Whitney Houston's daughter, and directed a play in which Chris O'Donnell was doing a piss poor job of acting. I rode on a tour bus with Tom Hanks, got my hair done with Jennifer Garner (the bitch convinced me to cut it short!), and went antiquing with Madonna. I wish I could choose the line-up, but, much like the Pacific Princess, I am relegated to the stars that agree to appear.

Let me quickly tell you two of my favorite dreams. In one, I am going to Burger King with Erik Estrada. In the dream, we are buddies, and I like to jab him about his past acting gigs. I keep needling him with, "What are you going to order, Ponch? You going to get a Whopper, Ponch? Is that what Ponch likes?" Erik goes from irritated to highly agitated, finally yelling at me in front of everyone. "My name is Erik, Amanda! Not Ponch! Stop doing that!" This verbal flogging does not seem to faze me. "Whatever, Poncherelli. Get a Whopper."

In my other favorite dream, I am dating Al Gore. We are walking down the street, and I am clinging to his arm. I watch as onlookers gawk at us, and, in the dream, I know why. "Can you believe it?" I say, in an excited voice. "I didn't even VOTE for him!" We then flash to a doctor's office where we are getting blood tests. As I watch, Al calmly is flipping the pages of some magazine (I forget which one, but *Highlights* is a good guess), I become frustrated that I am waiting so long for the doctor. I finally turn to Al and complain, "You know, Al. Even though you lost the election, you were STILL the Vice President. Can't you make this process a LITTLE speedier?"

Sweet Dreams.

*Sadly, nothing in this article has been fabricated. ☒

iPod Could Be a Device for Spreading Terror

By James Schneider

Call me an alarmist, call me someone who works on the War Desk at Fox News; Call me both these things, but I think the iPod could be a device for spreading terror.

Think about it. Nearly everyone walking down the street has the tell-tale white earplugs dangling from their skull. Wires protrude visibly outside, yet the device itself is often tucked away in a backpack. The casing is metal, hard metal. You switch it on.

On 7/7 four men disrupted Britain's mass transit system in terrifying fashion, as four near-simultaneous explosions ripped through nearby sections of London. Three homicide bombers, armed with rucksacks packed with explosives, boarded subways;

...continued next page...

Steam Engine Nation

Excerpt from *Ye Olde Newsletter circa 1800*

By Japheth Pennybaker

It pains me to etch these words as I dip my quill with trembling hand, but the silence has lived too deep and sorrow borne too long by my brow. Scant are the words that have thus far projected forth the ideas that I am now to dally.

I have watched quite far from the shores of noble this proliferation of the degradation of our society: the invention of the steam engine. This contraption is nothing more than a decadent excuse for sloth and apathy. This steam engine is now being installed on ships and a new "indolence-inciting" collection of metal and screws called a locomotive. Our dark skinned friends to the south refer to hysteria as "loco." Perhaps this etymology should be looked upon as a portent to the future that surely awaits us if we continue down this path of convenience and laziness.

Our children will not know the labor of a good, old-fashioned wagon party, and gone will be the days where a man had to paddle to traverse the river delta. No longer will one have to think, let alone act. Soon, these flights-of-fancy inventors will be concocting more paths towards wonton and debauchery. Imagine a day where horses are replaced with sticks that transport one through underground, instantaneous burrowing to the other side of the world. Or what about a book that reads itself. In two score, we could see devices that would eradicate keys; instead, our fingers will be molded to our old door keyholes thereby allowing only the tenant to pass through its arches.

The prospect looms large, kin folk. I urge you to rise up and stand strong against industry and technology. For your great-great-great grandchildren will grow lazy and fat, and they will be the size of giants (5' 8" and 140 lbs!!!). They will not toil and sweat but will become the forsaken.

Join me and the other townspeople for a march on Washington to lobby President Adams and Congress and urge them to cease and desist of any development of these horrid inventions and to allow these men to know that we care deeply for our future generations. Thank you.

(Since we must take our paddle boat instead of the 3 times daily steam ship to the capital, we will be leaving two weeks early. Bring limes and oranges, just in case.) ☒

...iPod, from previous page...

another boarded a double-decker bus. Their work left 56 dead, nearly 700 wounded.

On 7/21 a similar, copycat attack rocked the UK's mass transit again. No one died, yet terror still ensued.

The terror in Britain is real. Police have given the "shoot-to-kill" order for would-be suicide bombers, meaning it's headshots, not body-crippling, we-will-take-you-away-to-Scotland-Yard-esque shots. This policy has already accounted for the death of one man, who was followed by officers to a station, wearing a bulky coat, then shot five times.

Watching the panic ensue both on Sky News, our sister network, and on our air, I noticed that each station was reporting sure-fire signs that someone was a human bomb. These bore similarity, and I took note: Someone wearing a heavy coat that's out of season, someone who is sweating profusely or wearing copious amounts of body-odor masking perfumes, someone who has a large bag or backpack, and someone with wires protruding from them.

On Friday, New York City cops began to fight mass transit terrorism by conducting random bag searches. The searches, however random, are likely to be informed by common sense as much as anything else. Therefore, bearded Middle Easterners wearing backpacks might get searched more than white little old ladies; as it should be, perhaps.

But what about the scores of people carrying iPods; it's almost a pandemic. Just look around you, if you're in a city, and you'll notice that nearly everyone on the street is sporting the portable music device. iPods have become as commonplace in 2005 as cell phones were a few years ago. They've become an accepted part of life, which no one questions or gives second thought to. Slightly less than the status symbol they once were, the shiny, now sometimes colorful, devices give hours of listening pleasure to millions upon millions.

One could argue that an iPod is practical, because it stores so much music. What music though? Tuning in to MTV, even late night when videos are on, is an exercise in futility. Besides Kanye West's "Diamonds," there's little to fill your iPod with in terms of current music. Old school stuff? OK, maybe. Still, I'm not ready to take the plunge—my MP3 CD player holds 200 songs. I can burn a new MP3 CD anytime I want. That's enough shuffle for me.

I hope I'm just being paranoid or alarmist, but I fear that terrorists could put bombs inside iPods and carry them into subways and buses. I can't imagine a quick-and-dirty search of an iPod would involve cutting the metal case open and checking for C-4. If the cop is wrong, the \$200+ device is ruined. Factor in just how many people take the subways with iPods, and you aren't gonna search close to all of them.

Compared to airplanes, in which passengers undergo the kind of checks that can prevent another 9/11, mass transit is intended to cram millions of people into tight quarters, ferrying folks to their destination as quickly as possible. It's, therefore, an easy soft target for terrorists.

Beyond the suicide bomber scenario, let's think about human interest for a second. Now, an iPod is a shiny \$200+ object; people have been killed for their iPods. It's not quite a status symbol, as I said, but who wouldn't mind having one (aside from the scenario of being a Pod person, kind of like an alien species to me).

Say a terrorist leaves an iPod, packed with explosives, sitting on a subway bench. Who among us wouldn't at least consider taking the item? Even if you would think it stealing and not do it, you probably know human nature well enough to say that someone is ganking the device.

Man picks up device, pockets it, flips on the black-and-white display... BOOM.

So, be wary, be cautious, and be ever vigilant. If you see something, say something. I hope I'm wrong. ☒

Get Your Praise On: God in the Inner City

By Amanda Hall

It was the Friday before Easter, and my good friend and coworker, Eli, invited me to his church for a Friday night concert celebrating Day of Atonement in the tabernacle (as described in the Old Testament). As a Russian Orthodox girl from the suburbs, I envisioned a tabernacle choir as soft harmonies sung by young men in white shirts, crisp ties, and stoic faces. I eagerly accepted his invitation to enjoy a pre-Easter concert and relax to these soothing sounds.

Eli ended his invitation with two comments. "Be careful walking from your car. Westchester Avenue is a rough spot." He also added, "Oh, don't be shocked. It's not traditional. We get real." I knew that few churches mirrored the traditional, ornate style of the Russian Orthodox Church, but what was "real?" In the Russian Orthodox Church, the stained glass windows rise thirty-five feet up to the gold encrusted dome ceiling. The chandelier echoes the one used in Phantom of the Opera, and icons, candles, and brass trinkets pepper the altar. The priest is bedecked in long, luminous robes and is armed with incense and a golden cross. He sings much of the service a cappella and recites traditional text very similarly from week to week. The congregation, dressed to the nines, follows the service with perfunctory responses, such as, "Amen," and, "Grant it, oh Lord." They act humbly, bowing, kneeling, and crossing themselves at scheduled times. This experience was my frame of reference.

As I drove up Westchester Avenue, I could see why I received a warning from Eli. The elevated train that ran above the street created an added darkness in addition to the night sky. Litter filled the walkways, and glass lay on the sidewalk below shattered windows. Some corners were inhabited by young men engaged in "close talking," a style that usually meant one thing. This area of South Central Bronx did not scream out, "God is here!"

I parked my car, made my peace with the possibility that it may not be there when I got back, and headed two blocks down to the church. I may have heard a, "Hey, Snowflake," or two, but I was surprised that people ignored me for the most part.

I entered the church with trepidation; I always felt nervous when entering a foreign house of worship. Would they be cold to a new face? Or worse, would they force me to shake stranger's hands during the service? (I disliked that.) What I glimpsed surprised me: hundreds of people in a secular-looking hall wearing street clothes. Had it not been for the sign outside, I would have been sure that I entered the wrong building. The room itself was simply square. No towers, brass, candles, or stained glass. I looked down at my pantsuit and felt foolishly overdressed. Most people had on jeans, casual tops, and minimal makeup. Many of the younger people had on jerseys, hats, and du-rags. About half of the congregation was Latino, the other half Black. All of these people seemed to be friendly, though, luckily, none were

...continued next page...

...*Get Your Praise On, from previous page...*

trying to talk to me and find out my purpose in their church.

The stage was simple; six microphone stands dotted the center, and an area for the band was pushed to the left. The band was warming up, and I noticed the drummer had all the bells and whistles (literally). The electric guitarist was strumming lightly and softly while making faces at a baby in the audience. Nobody was situated yet at keyboard, the place that Eli would occupy when he came out to direct the show.

Soon, fifteen people filed onto the stage and stood poised behind the six microphones. Eli emerged and began to warm up the keyboards. The singers, ranging in age from about fourteen to sixty, stood with anxious anticipation. Finally, Eli stopped the band and silence filled the packed hall for the first time. All eyes were on the stage as Eli began the first soft notes of the concert with the band following suit. The singers began the sweet sounds that I had anticipated. Sure, I may not have been right about the age, dominant sex, or dress of the participants, but at least I guessed the music right.

That was until a young man emerged from the fifteen. He grabbed one of the microphones, stood center stage, and began to rap...about God. The band exploded with music and the entire congregation was on its feet. The young man was about twenty and sang as though he knew Jesus personally. The crowd responded to his call and people lifted their arms to God. I watched as young kids in Du-rags joined in the singing. Older people barely able to stand swayed with the help of younger pillars. The crowd felt electric. My face hurt, and I realized that this pain was a result of my inability to stop smiling. The room was full of love. A maudlin sentiment, I know, but apropos for the experience.

The choir jumped from R&B songs to rap songs to songs with a Latin flavor. These expressions towards God somehow made everything seem alright with the world. "And it is well with my soul..." Between the songs, the minister would speak about the significance of the tabernacle and the high holy priest entering the room called "The Holiest of Holies" on the Day of Atonement. I had to laugh when he said, "I want you to feel God. I want you to let go. Get your praise on!" I was in another place, and, somehow, I knew that I would never look at God quite the same way again.

I watched Eli play the keyboard as his fingers tripped and slid over the keys with such ease. He shook his shoulders, bit his lip, and played as though it were the last night on Earth. He watched his wife singing a sweet solo about faith and beamed proudly at his daughter, who had joined the choir only recently. It was a family affair in church that night, and you felt as though you were a part of it.

When the concert was over, I approached Eli to congratulate him. He introduced me to all of his family and some friends with whom he was talking (including Alicia Keyes' manager). One of the students from the school at which I work, a particularly tough kid, walked over to me. He smiled when he recognized me and hugged me as though we now shared something important. I never saw this kid hug anyone, so this expression was somewhat shocking to me. I had only ever heard him talk about sex, drugs, and violence. Eli introduced him to Alicia's manager and said, "This is the kid I was telling you about. He has real talent." They engaged in a conversation about music, values, and good choices.

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...*Get Your Praise On, from left column...*

The following Monday, I sat down with Eli to talk about God, the church, the kids, the inner city, and his own experiences. Eli has been officially ordained, though he usually only ministers to young kids. Some people in the school may not believe this fact since Eli does not conform to the standard template some may have of a "Bible thumper." Eli has the most accessible, engaging way of talking about God and uses language with which young people connect (e.g. "Jesus went into Jerusalem and said, 'Oh, sweat! These people are buggin'!"). He knows the Bible inside and out.

A.H.: Eli, how do you prove God exists?

E.S.: (smiling) Jumping right in, huh? Well, I love that question. Just look around you. Everything is proof that God exists.

A.H.: Well, okay, but that's somewhat simplistic. I mean, what do you say to someone who doesn't believe in God? How do you minister to that person?

E.S.: I speak straight up, but I want you to understand...I am not here to convince people that God exists. I am sharing what wisdom I have; you have to be ready and able to understand it. I am not here to try and fight about this. If someone says, "God doesn't exist," it's not my job to argue. It's my place to share what I have and share in what others have to say. But, if someone IS looking for proof, it's all throughout the Bible. I could give you examples all day.

A.H.: How do you think ideas of God change between the inner city and suburbia?

E.S.: The idea of God doesn't really change. But, the way in which you receive God and show praise may change. In the end, it's all about love.

A.H.: Love is another pretty simplistic idea.

E.S.: (nodding) Yes, but the hardest idea to wrap our brains around. Check this out. The New Testament states all over the place that the two most important commandments for Christians are love God with all of your heart and love your neighbor. That's it. And yet, most people can't do that. I mean, the belief that you can be hit and turn the other cheek. Who doesn't feel anger, vengeance, and a sense of justice? Love may be simplistic, but it's not easy.

A.H.: You say that these are the two big commandments. Does that mean I can toss the other ones and not worry about them?

E.S.: (smirking) I love this question, too. I'm gonna get deep with you. Most people point to the Old Testament to fight the idea that God exists. They point to passages they find offensive. Well, you have to understand that God had a bigger plan. He was saying, I have redemption and salvation ready for you. Just wait for it. I'm gonna come down in the form of man, experience what you experience, take your sins on as Mine, and then you are going to live through Me. (Motioning with his hands) This means that the commandments in the Old Testament are no longer our guides. Christ is our guide. If you truly give yourself to Christ and believe in Him, you will be able to live through Him. You will BE the commandments.

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...Get Your Praise On, from previous page...

A.H.: Sounds like you can cop out and just accept Jesus and do whatever you want.

E.S.: No, no. This has to be true. You can't pull the wool over God's eyes. And, you have to accept that you will always sin and make mistakes. You have to understand how Christ saved us, though. He was tacked to the cross and punished, though He was free from sin. Therefore, He was taking on our sins. It's like, if my brother shoots someone. I confess and am punished for the crime. My brother, the responsible party, is free from punishment because I have taken it for him. But, it means little if my brother doesn't accept it. He then is given the consequences anyway. Kind of like people who don't accept Christ.

A.H.: That's quite an image.

E.S.: Oh, yeah, boy.

A.H.: Getting back to the idea of God in the inner city...

E.S.: We get down, don't we? A lot of people don't like it the way that we do it. They say it's sacrilegious. They don't understand what Jesus would have come across as, in today's terms. I mean, Jesus came from a poor family and spoke in a common, street-type language (as did most of the people from Nazareth). Why do you think some people were so opposed to Him, besides the threat He posed to their power? It would be like some young guy from the 'hood going out and doing these things. Rich, traditional church elders would not only reject it, they would be terrified at the prospect. Jesus spoke to people on all levels in all different ways. That's what we try to do in my church. The message is more important than the package it comes in. That's why we do a lot of it through music; it's so accessible to many different kinds of people. When we speak to these kids, we don't use "thee" "thou" and "therily." We don't use guilt or fear. I know you make fun, but it goes back to love.

A.H.: So, guilt and fear are not a part of it? Doesn't the Bible say to fear God?

E.S.: That means, to respect God, but as I said before, Jesus says that love of God and neighbor is the most important thing you can do. People tend to focus on the hatred and fearfulness as a tool. But, remember. Our greatest fears come from our greatest ignorance. People fear that which they do not know; if people were truly Christian, they would not persecute homosexuals or whatever agenda they are representing. Love your neighbor. Also, when you judge others, you bring judgement upon you. It's just a tool, and it's unfortunate that outside observers cling to these people as a reason to hate or reject God. Look at it for yourself before you reject it; that's like saying a movie was awful before you see it. I just hate to see people being anti-religion as a crusade against those who use it as a tool for hate. Those people are not really giving it a chance.

A.H.: It appears to me that people are more willing to accept God with a full heart in lower socio-economic areas than in other areas. Do you agree?

...continued in right column...

...Get Your Praise On, from left column...

E.S.: Well, that's hard to say because looks and truths are hard to pick apart. But, I'll tell you this. It's easier to see God when you have nothing distracting you. Sometimes, people may think that they are in despair and going through a rough time. This is actually their introduction to God. Their sadness and heartache may also be their salvation.

A.H.: Are you saying that you have to hit rock bottom before you can find God?

E.S.: Of course not. I'm just saying that things aren't always as they seem. People try to find meaning in everything and come up confused a lot. This is one of those examples of how God may work in mysterious ways. People in the inner city may have more reason to need some guidance, but they also have more reason to hate life. The fact that they can find some spiritual peace is pretty amazing.

A.H.: You've seen gang members come in...

E.S.: (laughing) Oh, yeah, boy. I have seen them come right off the street and throw down their knives and weapons and find a new life...

A.H.: And, what would they say if I asked them about God?

E.S.: Ask me. I used to be in a gang before I was seventeen. Honestly, Amanda, you wouldn't have recognized me. I did some crazy shit. (Laughing) It seemed like I was going to end up dead like some of my friends. In a godless ideal, it doesn't matter if you live or die, or if your neighbor lives or dies. Some well-off people may say that they are good, moral people, but they can't be sure they'd feel the same about the world if they were born into this society. Who will give you morals when your parents are in jail and your friends are drug dealers? It's not the same.

A.H.: Again, this begs the question, how can you be sure that religion is not just filling a gap, a hole?

E.S.: Well, of course it fills the hole, but who gave upper class people the love and guidance in the first place? I mean, you don't wake up one day and know right from wrong. Ethics and morals are taught. Whether it's a parent, a priest, a rabbi, a teacher, a neighbor....it's all God. It's all filling a hole.

A.H.: It still would seem unfair to me if I lived like some of these kids and had fewer supports and a harder life than others. I mean, why do some get to cruise through life and others live in poverty?

E.S.: It's impossible to talk about fair and logic when talking about spirituality. From my perspective, I see it kind of the opposite. I think it's unfortunate that some people have so much and are unable to see past this luxury. It's almost kind of a handicap. For example, you and I both share the death of a parent in our teen years, so you know what it's like when something becomes either clearer or more open to possibilities after something like that. You are blessed with this amazing presence in your life, and then it's snatched away. It's tragic to lose a parent so young, and yet you look at life completely differently

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...*Get Your Praise On*, from previous page...

after that. Suddenly your comforts are not there, but you also begin to question things that you may have taken for granted before. And these are the first steps to finding some higher understanding. Questioning, instead of answering. Everybody has an answer, a comeback, a reason. Few have an open mind, an inquisitive ear. Even if you disagree, know what you're fighting against!

Though I feel like I am answering a lot of questions now, and keep in mind this is my interpretation of things, you know, and by no means the ultimate truth, I am always questioning, always meditating, always talking to God. And you know what? He talks back. Rich or poor, you just have to be willing to listen.

Eli continued to speak to me about different aspects of God, the Christian religion, and faith. He explained that faith takes on a different meaning in the inner city, a different face. While he believes that people may not be more religious in the inner city, they tend to give God a different purpose. He also attempted to elucidate that necessity is not necessarily a bad thing. Like people need a parent, some people need God. While we did not touch upon other religions in the inner city—and it should be noted that many exist in force—the basic principle of spirituality came through in Eli's comments. Eli gave me one window (out of many) into the soul of an ex-gang member from the inner city and his views on God via Christianity. For this, I thank him.

This interview was a summary based on notes and not a transcription. ☒

BabbleList of Distinction

This month's *Grimmelshausen Contributor* award winner:

SRIDA JOISA, BABBLE-ON-IAN

A highly competitive businessman, Srida saw the opportunity to win an award and immediately took the challenge! He jumpstarts our brains with monthly puzzles and reminds us what "life is all about." *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. ☒

Problem Hole:

Answers to Last Month's Problem

By Srida Joisa

"8th Grade"

Here's something I found on the Internet.

What's the 1's digit of twelve to the 100th power?

Answer: 6 ☒

The First Annual Babble-ONline Readers' Choice Awards

This month commemorates the 2nd Anniversary of the creation of *Babble-ON* and the Babble-ONline community. In order to commemorate the occasion, I am holding this awards poll to honor the best submissions we've seen over the past two years. It is my hope to hold this poll on an annual basis, every July.

The following is a list of submissions to vote for. You may vote once for each category. Votes will be tallied over the next month, and awards will be distributed accordingly. Write-ins are allowed. To place your votes, please email me at: dan@fritzcomics.com.

BEST MONTHLY SUBMISSION / SERIES

- "Urban Vernacular" by Amanda Hall
-covers the evolving language and culture of teenagers in the Bronx.
- "Wine Country" by Steven Fritz
-gives wine recommendations while providing tips and other tidbits.
- "Dictator of the Month" by Dan Fritz & Amanda Hall
-satirizes various dictators, both past and present.
- "Etymology with AI" by Alan Fishman
-gives an interesting history of selected words.
- "Popcorn Pundit" by Susan Fritz
-provides random, monthly movie picks.

BEST NON-TEXT SUBMISSION

- "Islam is the Bomb," Vol. 1, Iss. 1, by Chad Fritz
- "Squish," Vol. 1, Iss. 8, by Alan Fishman
- "Comic Corner," Vol. 2, Iss. 2, by Dan Fritz
- "Letters from Italy," Vol. 3, Iss. 3, by Garrett Calderwood
- "Mattlock," Vol. 3, Iss. 4, By Grant Calderwood & Dan Fritz

BEST ARTICLE

- "Ikea'd You Not," Vol. 1, Iss. 3, by James Schneider
-tells the story of an early-morning, furniture misadventure.
- "R.E.M. Crowd Lacks L.I.F.E.," Vol. 1, Iss. 6, by Dan Fritz
-conveys the scene at a R.E.M. rock concert in Dallas.
- "Koob's Korner," Vol. 1, Iss. 9, by Ryan Crocetto
-reports on the tragic death of 70's sitcom star "Rerun."
- "This Flesh is Legal Tender," Vol. 2, Iss. 2, by Brett
-pontificates on the human sex drive.
- "The Burning in of Music Sentimentality," Vol.2, Iss. 3, by Brett
-philosophizes about good music and its context within one's life.
- "Natural Born Thinker," Vol. 3, Iss. 1, by Susan Fritz
-eulogizes Susan Sontag and her intellectual contributions.
- "Politac-tac-toes," Vol. 3, Iss. 1, by Alan Fishman
-analyzes American political apathy and the two-party system.

All submissions were nominated (with the help of Susan Fritz) based on their ability to: 1) teach something and/or show concepts in a new light, 2) inspire emotion and/or make the reader laugh, 3) conclude at the appropriate time and/or leave the reader wanting more, 4) generate reflection, and 5) flow smoothly and artistically. ☒

THE TRAGIC TALE OF
MADELEINE ALBRIGHT'S CAREER AS A FASHION MODEL
IN 19TH CENTURY NEW YORK

(PART 3)

By Several Bored Office Pukes

In our last installment, Strom and Madeleine darted into a saloon to avoid the acrid fumes of a burning Irishman. There they encountered Wild Bill Hickok and the young Bob Dole. The three men vied for Maddy's affection, but she slipped out of the bar and into the hands of a gang of Mexican Greeks.

Madeleine tried to avert her eyes. "Are you talking to me?" she said without lifting her eyes from the ground. She tried to shuffle away.

"Mamacita, if you walk like that you will never be a supermodel in NYC!"

Madeleine's head snapped toward the Mexican Greek. She could feel her blood starting to boil. As she turned, her hair covered her face, and as the Mexican Greek came into view, with a flick of her head, her hair settled out of the way, head held high, nose pointing toward the sky. "How dare you, you Mexican Greek, lower than..." she trailed off. What she saw emerging from the alley was something she had only read about. A Greek Adonis glistening in the sun with milk chocolate colored skin and dark chocolate colored eyes and raw coco chocolate colored hair, all different flavors of the one thing she truly loved...chocolate.

"Hey Mamacita, my name is Castro, Castro District, and I am here to teach you a ting or too about being a model in NYC."

For what Madeleine would soon discover, Mexican Greeks ruled, with tight cheeks, the fashion runway.

Madeleine swooned, overcome by joy of modeling companionship, and also with disappointment at Castro most certainly being profoundly gay, and thus entirely off-limits to her chocolate fog of desire. What followed was a remarkable montage of model training scenes set to a background of "I will survive" and "Blinded by the Light," and at the end of the montage, Madeleine was a changed woman, a bigger woman, and a stunning woman. . . she was a fashion model.

"What comes next?" asked Maddy, but her question went unanswered, as Castro was making out with a man. "WHAT COMES NEXT?!" shouted Maddy.

Castro looked up from his diversion and shrugged, "Nothin' really, honey. There ain't no work unless you're French. I haven't worked in six years."

Dejected, Maddy left the fabulous male models to their sins of the flesh and set back out into the horse crap and mud of New York. She wandered for hours, staring at her feet, until she bumped into a huge tree trunk of a man with a wild look in his eyes. He wore small round spectacles, and his name was Teddy.

"Excuse me, Ma'am!" he said in an abnormally high voice for such a large presence. His mustache twitched in anticipation. "My, but you are too graceful a woman to be staring at your feet. What seems to be the matter?"

Madeleine, being somewhat dejected and modest at this point, simply shrugged her shoulders and stuck out her voluptuous lower lip.

"What you need is some good, American cheering up. I'm on Spring Break, and I haven't seen a woman in months. Would you

...continued in right column...

...Madeleine Albright, from left column...

care to join me for a drink?"

Madeleine's face brightened. "Well, I guess. But I don't even know your name...."

"The name's Teddy. Teddy Rosenberg. But people know me as Roosevelt, since my Jewish heritage can be a little shocking."

"Jewish!" Madeleine exclaimed. "I...I...I never thought of someone in NY being Jewish. This is the New World, Christian's only!"

"That is exactly the kind of attitude that makes me just want to sit down and cry," whined Teddy. He sat down, held his head in his hands and began to cry softly.

Meanwhile, across the street, Bob Dole was sitting with Strom Thurmond sipping on a bottle of whiskey and watching the scene unfold. "That guy has a good game," said an envious Bob Dole.

"He has her right where he wants her. What a beautiful woman... supermodel-esque," Strom said with a fake French accent.

Madeleine sat on Teddy's lap and pulled his head into her now ample bosom. All the training with Castro had worked out, for she now had a tremendous rack, the envy of most of the serving wenches at the Sunset Cabaret. "It will be alright Teddy. I would love to go to Sunday mass with you."

"You don't understand, I'm Jewish. I don't go to Mass on Sundays. We go to Synagogue on Saturdays."

"Sin! - agog! I am agog," screamed the now aghast Madeleine.

"Girl's in trouble," Strom said to Dole. "Blast him."

As Madeleine jumped down from Teddy's lap, the pair across the street pulled out their twin six shooters and let the lead fly. Teddy heard the click of the first Colt 45 hammer and rolled across the porch to behind a crate of good ol' Appalachia Jacks Virginia Chocolates. "You two better give up now. I've slain lions with my bare hands."

Strom and Dole walked across the street, guns a blazin'. Madeleine quivered, frozen, having jumped into a smelly pile of horse manure. She shook with rage....

"What in the holy hell is a synagogue?" she thought. Then she noticed the crate of chocolate, and her thoughts became a dull haze.

Strom and Bob Dole ran out of ammo and stopped to reload, flipping their revolvers open with a snap of their wrists, the shells twinkling through the air, steaming hot, and disappearing into the horse crap with a dramatic sizzle. Teddy knew an advantage when he saw it, and he leaped from behind the chocolate crate and rushed with inhuman speed at Strom and Bob Dole.

"Bobby, look out. He's rushin' us like a flapdoodle at a hootinanny!" Strom yelled.

"I'm Bob Dole!" growled Bob Dole, already frustrated with envy by Strom cramming firm bullets so easily into the chambers of his revolver.

Teddy was on them before they knew it, and, in a whirlwind of fists, he sent their guns flying. "Nobody shoots at me and gets away with it!" he cried. He landed catastrophic uppercuts on first Bob Dole's chin, and then immediately on Strom's, sending them both flying backward 15 feet, before they crashed into a horse trough and both fell head over heels backwards into the filthy water.

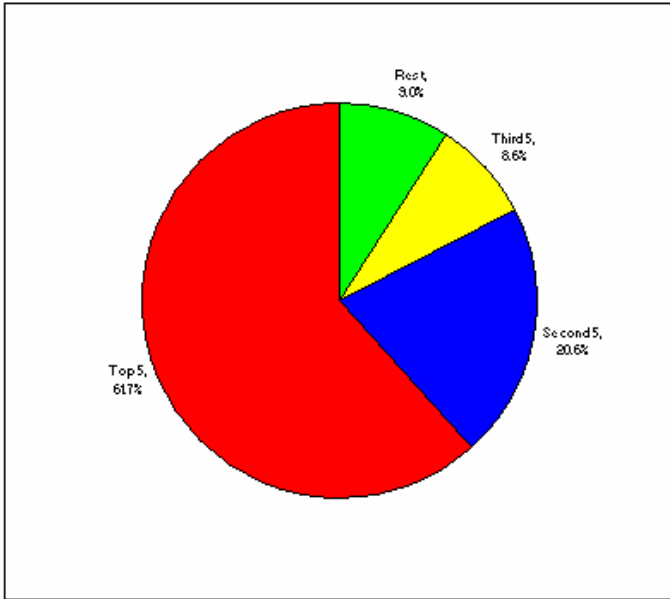
"Son of a yammerin' biscuit!" exclaimed Strom.

"I'm Bob Dole!" gurgled Bob Dole.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE

Note: These statistics are close approximations and do not include the current issue or the submissions provided by the Editor.

Words Contributed as a percentage of the total



As of last issue, the top five *Babble-ON* contributors (red) had contributed 61.7% of the written material, the next five (blue) had contributed 20.6%, and the next five (yellow) had contributed 8.6%. All remaining contributors (green) had accounted for another 9.0%.

Top tier contributors include: 1) James Schneider, 2) Srida Joisa, 3) Brett Martz, 4) Susan Fritz, and 5) Alan Fishman.

Current Trends:

Srida surged into second place with more plane-commuting-inspired steady contributions. The overall proportions remained fairly similar.

Predictions:

The word count of third tier contributors will steadily shrink over the next few months as more one-time contributors send in articles. The top two tiers will remain the same. ☒

Contributors:
 Grant Calderwood
 Matt Ellinwood
 Dan Fritz
 Susan Fritz
 Amanda Hall
 Nate Herr
 Srida Joisa
 James Schneider

Compiled by:
 Dan Fritz, Editor-in-Chief
 Sara Olson, Assistant Editor
 in Norwalk, CT
 for the July 25, 2005,
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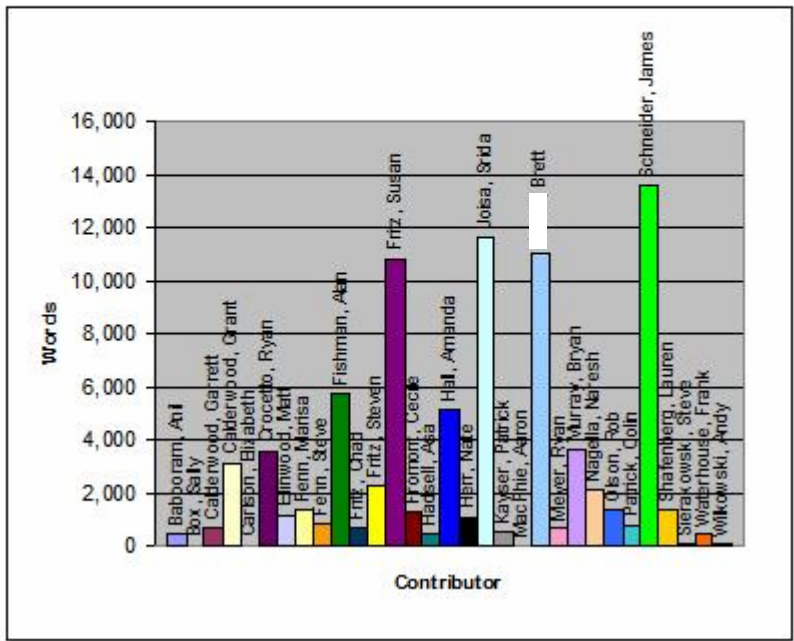
Awards
These awards could be yours!

For Total Words Contributed:
 1,000: **Little Scribbler**
 5,000: **Babble-ON-ian**
 10,000: **Grimmelshausen Award**
 Each additional 10,000:
Proust BabbleStar

For Exceptional Content:
Alfred, Lord Tennyson Platinum Seal of Excellence:
 To date, no one has won this.

Good luck, and keep the submissions coming! ☒

Words Contributed per contributor



Global Watch Map

BabbleON has attracted contributors and readers from around the globe. In addition to the U.S. writers noted on the map, there have been submissions from:

Brussels, Belgium,
 Venice, Italy, and
 Sydney, Australia.

Key: Red squares mark the residence of each contributor. ☒