

(HIDING ON THE) BACKSTREETS 8

is what I seem to be doing in my job, nowadays. Instead of working on the nice NIST campus in Gaithersburg, we're 20 miles out of town in Glenwood. I thought this Bruce Springsteen song was appropriate. This is a zine for KAPA 43 (the last one should have said it was for 42 and not 41) and is done by Nicki Lynch of P.O. Box 1270, Germantown, MD 20874.

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Obscure Press #275

Winter seems to have caught up with us with a vengeance on Monday. I had a dentist appointment and got to work late only to discover people ready to leave. The roads had gotten worst as I got farther from Gaithersburg and ice had formed on my side mirror by the time I got to Glenwood. So, about an hour later, the NIST project leader came in from meetings and said, "Go home." So we all left. Unfortunately, we had planned on having a birthday lunch for one of the women there and that was canceled. Oh, well.

This morning, around 6:30 A.M., the project leader called and said not to go to Glenwood and not to bother going into the Institute, as there was nothing to do there, other than sit in the library or cafeteria. Since Dick has today off (he has a scheduled day off every two weeks), I stayed home rather than fight the icy traffic conditions.

It's been about two months now since I began working at the National Institute of Standards and Technologies (NIST), formerly the National Bureau of Standards (NBS). I'm a computer scientist working on a project with the National Security Agency (NSA). For those who've read Tom Clancy's books or follow spy cases, you know that NSA is a super secret agency involved in keeping government secrets secret. They are also known for their crypto. NSA and NIST have several joint computer security projects and this is the latest one.

I'm involved in the implementation of the Computer Security Act of 1987. In that Act, all the governmental departments and agencies that run sensitive data or have sensitive systems must have a computer security plan to safeguard their data. The NIST/NSA part of the data call is to look over the plans and return constructive comments and recommendations on the plans.

Since this has never been done before, it's a sort of blind leading the blind project. The people working on it are a mixed bag of talents (from a lawyer to a career NSA person to a 30 year NSA/CIA computer security expert) with few being actual computer programmers. However, no one has done this sort of work yet, nor are there established guidelines or standards. Those will come out of this exercise.

I've learned a lot about computer security in a short amount of time, but I really want to become good at it, not just spout second-hand knowledge. To that end, I hope to be sent to seminars and conferences once we finish with the data call.

In answer to the anticipated question - sensitive data deals with Privacy Act information, such as personal and payroll. It can also be data that is unique or would cause severe problems if it was tampered with.

So until this is done, in mid-to-late-June, I'll be out in the far reaches of civilization, which isn't all that far in Maryland. We've built up quite a number of great-to-good eating places for lunch. One place, the Olney Ale House is close to legendary.

Dick heard about it from me and several people at work, so he wanted to go. We finally stopped by for dinner on a Saturday night and had a 45 minute wait before we were seated. But, it was worth it. The place is first class in food and atmosphere. Dick wants to go back for lunch some day he's off. Since I don't work too far away, we could meet.

We got a second cat, Mouse, and he's quite a character. He hid under the hide-a-bed for the first few days, then moved downstairs under the kitchen table. Probably to be closer to the food. The resident cat hated him and hissed and growled at him constantly.

It took time, but she has accepted him and he's slowly becoming a member of the family. He has his place to sleep on the couch and greets me every morning when I get up. Mouse still hides when he hears strange noises, but has gotten more bold about getting underfoot. He discovered yarn balls one day when the Siamese hopped up in my lap while I was crocheting. She looked over the balls of yarn I had, picked the largest one and pushed it to the floor to the waiting Mouse. He nudged it tentatively, then went full-tilt at rolling, jumping, running and generally unrolling the ball. All over the living room. He was distressed when I picked it up. I wanted it for crocheting, after all. I gave him his own ball of yarn and he likes it.

He discovered that I had other balls of yarn around and unwound one around the living room while I was at work one day.

When it comes to people, Mouse is my cat. He's a little afraid of Dick and doesn't let Dick pick him up, while I have no problem. Dick still has Sesame as his cat and she sits on my lap, too. Mouse isn't a lap cat yet. He's too lively. We decided that he's having the kittenhood he skipped in the vet's clinic. He's even grown since we got him, even though he was over a year old.

So far we haven't gotten very involved in fandom here, mainly due to time and lack of knowledge - we didn't know how

fandom operates here. The local Washington meetings take place in private homes and you have to know someone to find them. There are no public announcements. The clubs is very informal, but does start with a business meeting. We've made several meetings after contacting the right people.

Another way of meeting fans is to attend cons. The next area con - BaltiCon - will be coming up, so we should be meeting people there. The con season isn't as full in this area as it is in the South. It does give us a breather for a while.

But enough of me, let's do mailing comments!

Mailing comments on KAPA 42

OO Pat Sorry to lose you as OE. I must admit was I a little disappointed and surprised to find only five contributors this time. With 13 people on the roster, I would hope for more. Please don't drop out as this is one of the few contacts I have with southern fandom. I suppose I could rejoin either MYRIAD or SFPA, but it just isn't the same.** Your life really has taken a few loops! Sorry to hear about you and Gail; it was just a no-win situation, but you probably made the best choice in the long run.

Home for Christmas me If I had been quicker off the dime, I would have known to name it "Christmas Eve in Washington," which was played quite a bit around that time.*** I'm not quite as happy with this townhouse as I once was because I learned that all the rest of the area townhouses have cable TV while the small section we live in doesn't. The reason is unclear as to why we don't. Depending on who you want to believe, it ranges to bad housing design to one person not allowing cable to run across their property. I hate being limited to 5 TV stations when there are over 20 over the air in the area alone.

Kentucky Nuggets #20 Jodie Interesting story about your Uncle Billy; we forget how important oral history is in our lives. ** As you can see from my zines, I'm gainfully employed and it looks like a good future at NIST. If we had lived in Virginia, I might have found an entry level computer programmer job easier, as that looked like they were in the want ads. People are always so amazed that there are no entry level jobs; if they had to look for a job from scratch, they won't be so snotty to those of us who spend a long time looking. However, the job I have doesn't involve programming and isn't going to in the future. ** Please do visit Washington, D.C.! I can't promise personal tours, but let us know and we'll try to get together. I'm familiar with the Maryland (Bethesda, Rockville, Gaithersburg) side myself. Not only is there lots of famous places to see, but the restaurants and shopping are terrific, too. ** ct J.R. I WAS in apas before getting word processing and it was a chore! I much prefer using a computer to typing on a stencil. I save a fortune in corflu for one thing.

The Alatuckian 29 *Pat* We were sorry to hear about your engagement breaking off, but you probably did it for the right reasons, although it may not seem like it now. *** Sorry to see you go as OE. Please don't leave!

Project New Horizon III *Rocky* I'll bet seeing Ken in a suit was a sight! *** Thanks and as you can see, the job department came out well indeed. *** Glad to hear everything was straightened out with the police.

Yo! #1 *Alain* Welcome and, yes, I do remember you. *** Congratulations on getting the rights to develop the rolegame. There seems to be a future in that. *** Sorry to hear that PoC is no more. Since you have an interest in fanzines, have you heard about the two cons just for fanzine fans (well, others are welcome, but aren't catered to) - Corflu and Ditto? Dick and I have attended the last two Corflu cons and, government and airlines willing, we will attend this year's Corflu in Minneapolis. We really enjoyed them. ** 'Fraid I don't listen to much in the way of filking, but I do like folk music. The Washington area has quite a number of folk music venues and I hope we can attend some concerts when the weather gets better. *** By the time I read your zine, I realized that your baby must have been born. Congratulations!! *** "American Pie" by Don MacCLean was about the death of Buddy Holly. Mick Jagger is alluded to in the lyric, but the "the day the music died" refers to Holly.

Well, that looks like about all for this mailing. Dick will be working downtown (in the District) got about four months on a project, so that will mean he'll have to get up earlier and get home later. It'll make it tougher on con going and living in general.

I'm looking forward to getting this project done and to get back to the campus in Gaithersburg. Unfortunately, I don't have an office there, as I was hired and sent out to Glenwood. The project leader keeps reminding his boss' boss that we're out there and will be coming back in June, but we still don't have any place to call our own when we do.

See you in sixty.

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