

*The Gotham City Journal*, KAPA 46 edition, October 1989  
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Yes! She will get a zine together for KAPA 46! If it kills somebody or something, there will be zine-sign, my OE.

The observant among you may have noticed a new zine title. The unobservant will have looked back at the header after reading the previous sentence, so now you all have become aware that this KAPA mailing does not have the title I have been using before. There is nothing wrong with "Connected Spaces," but I've been watching Batman lately, and I wanted to use Gotham City for something. Look, I had this idea for a neat zine title, and it was too good not to use. Maybe we will stick with this one for a while, maybe not. In any event, there will be editions of *The Gotham City Journal* for a little while.

I had a new life experience recently. One fine Wednesday morning, just after I arrived in my parking lot at Vanderbilt, I locked my keys in my car. This sort of thing is no big deal, especially if your spouse, who has keys to your car, is within ready reach to get you back into the car. Failing that, it is nice if the dealer from whom you bought the car is within ready reach, since this individual can also procure more keys to your car, just knowing the key number that he has on file. Locking your keys in your car is a little bit bigger deal when neither of the above options is available, and every important notebook and textbook that you need for the long upcoming day at school are all together, inside that blue backpack which is sitting securely *inside* the car out of which you have just locked yourself. Oh, yeah. Beside the blue backpack, on the floor of the back seat, is the purse wherein are contained your everyday keys and the spare set of car keys that you had made when the car was last over at Hunt Ford. I had my jacket on, and I had remembered to put my office keys in the jacket

pocket before leaving the house, but that's all I had with me.

Well, there is always campus security. I remember hearing at one time or another about people who locked themselves out of cars and campus security got them back in. There is an 'emergency phone' off to one side of the lot. I walked over to it and picked up the receiver, which automatically called Security. This very nice lady asked who I was, what was up, which parking lot I was in, and said she would have the Security man meet me by that very same phone. [I apologise, since this story is probably here in a lot more dreary detail than it merits, but the experience was a new one for me and not one I would care to repeat. Besides, I know already that lots of you schmucks are not contributing to this issue of KAPA, so I have to be verbose and make it look a little better. So there - anyone who is bored can skip this and go *write something* for the next issue. Also, I am being paid by the word, and one day these will all be worth millions.] At any rate, the cop showed up, pretty quickly. As he stuck this long stick down the door of my car, we talked about the fact that he personally owned a Ford Taurus, partly because he had been told that they could not be 'Slim-Jimmed.' he also mentioned that power windows mean a lot more stuff inside the driver's door, which means that you can't jam that stick thing in there too much, or it messes up those power windows. It took him a while, and a lot of pulling the stick back out and bending it this way and that, and trying even the back door once, but, yes, he did eventually get the door open. While it is not nice to learn that your jimmy-proof car isn't really, it would take a very smooth crook to stand there and jim and jam for that long.

I do not read every page of every notebook that I carry to school every day that I go. I do not even always wind up using the textbooks. I could, in fact, get through a day of school without them, by taking notes on loose paper in my office. There is nothing like being locked

securely away from all of that stuff, in the backpack, in the car, to make you realize just how important it is that the stuff be at hand, in case you want to look something up, or have a sudden need to cross check material that was covered in a previous class. It would have been a very, very minimal day without my stuff. I would have had to get through my Seminar in Algebra class without my tape recorder, which means the few notes I did manage to take would have been more nearly meaningless. I would not have had my Topology pen in my hand, I would have had to take notes in Topology class without some of the many colored pens that are handy when Hughes whips out the multi-colored chalk. And so on. Corlis had a new life experience. It was a good experience, because it was a new one. It would not be a good experience if repeated. I do not intend to do so. Forever after I am going to keep a set of car keys in my office on campus -- somebody can always get me in there.

Gary did a clever the other morning. One evening, he was working on the Mercedes a lot, so he took off his wedding ring, to keep from getting it messed up. The next morning, he went around looking for something. I did not know quite what was up, but in the midst of getting dressed, I figured out that he was looking for something. After a couple of minutes, I weasled it out of him that the wedding band was nowhere to be found. I helped look. The bedroom floor - no ring. Pants he had been wearing - no ring. In my red bathrobe, I go outside to look around in the grass - no ring. OK, it wasn't a school day, so I said I would wait until it warmed up some, and then I would go out and examine the grass minutely. The time came that Gary had to leave for work - still no sign of the ring. He left, to go get in his car. A minute or so later, he came back in the house, and showed me the pretty gold ring on his left hand. "Where did you find it?" I

said. "Oh, it was right there, on my ~~left~~ hand," he said.

I found out recently that I have three or four of Vanderbilt's football players in the class that I am teaching. Aha! These three guys have a real excuse to not be in class most Fridays, because they are being transported somewhere. If I was hard-nosed about it, I could be really mean. I won't, because I am something of a soft touch. I told the handful about two of Western's women basketball players who passed a Math class that I taught at Western this past Summer where they had both failed the class several times before. My guys at Vandy seem to be pretty much with it, so I don't think I will have any trouble with them.

Monday morning, I went in to see my Topology professor, a young, good-looking, laid-back character named Bruce Hughes. I had a few odd questions, not directly about the material being covered in class. It was just details here and there, plus I found this one word that he misspelled on the chalkboard. When I asked him about the word, he spelled it out to me correctly (I knew it had been misspelled because I had looked up something about it in the textbook we hardly use). I asked him a marginal question - marginal in that it involved an example that he had mentioned in passing. The example turned out to be more involved than was readily apparent on the surface.

A few minutes into the trouble, I said something about well, wasn't this something that I shouldn't really be concerned about anyway. Mr. Mellow Goodhumor comes right back with 'Well, if you aren't, who is? Of course you should be concerned about this. Let's figure it out, I just haven't thought about this in a while.' Now, I personally did/do care about the question I had. I suppose that I expected to be put off, and was giving him the out if he wanted it. He did not. When we had both at the question for a total of 20 minutes or more, we agreed to go away, think about it some more, and see each

other later. For the first time in the six weeks or so that I have been in school at Vanderbilt, I had a notebook beside me on the seat as I was driving home. When I had to stop in traffic, I would pick up the notebook and stare at notes on my Topology question. I thought about it on the way home. Usually, I can't wait to quit thinking about school for a while. Two days later, when I went back to school, I had the problem worked out to a different angle. I talked to Hughes some more, and the problem is now all but gone. When I talked to him the second time, I also asked some questions about current material that was/is actually being covered in class, and he gave forth some really neat explanation that made three days worth of lecture suddenly hang together a lot better. Gee, I really do like Dr. Hughes.

Homology Theory is part of Algebraic Topology (which, yes, is about as hard as it sounds, but is lots of fun), which is what Hughes is teaching me this semester. Homology Theory studies things which are the boundaries of things which should be  $n$ -dimensional holes in space. This is any abstract space, not just the three or four dimensional physical world. The numbers, when there are numbers involved in this branch of Mathematics, do not even necessarily have to be numbers. They can be things that are bunched together in some fashion. When Hughes told us about the holes in class one day, I asked if that was what I was supposed to tell people when they ask me what I am studying, and he said yes. So there. I figured a reference to holes in space would get most people's attention. The business about the boundaries of the holes (how to find the boundaries, and some properties that they have) is some of the lecture that suddenly made sense after I talked to the prof. for a while.

My other two classes at Vanderbilt are nice in their own ways, but, momentarily, neither of them is as neat as Topology. One of the classes, a core requirement for the Ph.D. program, is called Real

Analysis. The "Real" has nothing to do with reality, except that most of the systems involved are systems of real numbers in so many dimensions. I found it very interesting when the graduate advisor said that there was no reason to take the sequel class to this one in the Spring. This class is interesting enough, I suppose, but it is not related to either of the two fields I am interested in for my Ph. D. The teacher reads/copies directly from the textbook, which is partially actual fault on his part, but also partially because he is trying very hard to use exactly the book's notation. Takac, this instructor's name, is middle-to-Eastern European, also young, and OK-looking. Fully half of the graduate teaching faculty in the Math department at Vandy are not native American.

Which brings us to Bjorni Jonsson. The instructor for my Seminar in Algebra class. A genius in his field. There are many elitist, obscure, Math sort of places that I could go and say that I am a student of Jonsson and people will say ooh and aah. The class is the only Algebra class at Vandy this Fall that is not already beneath me, yet this one is a bit too far above me. I tried to get out of it around the third week of school. I have never, ever tried to bail out of a Math class before. It was not easy. Jonsson, however, is a wonderful human being. He said to stay with it as long as I feel like I can get something out of it, so I have stayed. Some days make more sense than others. A lot of this class is students presenting proofs of stuff the teacher, or another student, has brought up. While there are general reference textbooks available on Universal Algebra (which is a kind of abstract Algebra), there well and truly are no textbooks about Clone Theory (which is a branch of Universal Algebra that this class is all about). The references that I have are a xerox copy of someone's Masters(?) thesis on the subject, and a bound copy of some lecture notes of Jonsson's. So, I take what notes I can, and I tape

record everything. Some time this Fall, or next Spring, I will be up closer to the caliber of some of my fellows. Then I'll go back and listen to some of the tapes again, and they will make more sense then. Until such time, my classmates know me, and they help some, so we'll be alright.

In the last month and a half, my driving vocabulary has gone down the toilet. I was lucky in arranging my class schedule this semester so that everything happens on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. On these three days, every week, I drive down to Nashville to school. My \$45 hunting license allows me to park in any parking lot labelled 'D.' There is one such lot reasonably close to the Math building in the Stevenson Center (the Science buildings at Vandy are jointly 'the Stevenson Center'), which always has plenty of spots still open when I get there soon after 8 a.m. When I get out of my last class at 4 p.m., I beat a trail as quickly as possible to my car, to get the heck out of Dodge before everyone else is trying to leave town. Generally, I am home back in Franklin, KY between 5:15 and 5:30. My point is that I drive on interstates, mostly inside Nashville, for well over two hours a day.

Everyone who lives in Nashville and owns a car and drives it in the city on a regular basis is completely crazy. It is worsened by a factor of three or more on days when it is raining or very heavily threatening to do so. Those people have comparatively little regard for their own safety, much less that of anyone else. As a consequence of the driving back and forth to school, I say and gesticulate (?) a lot of unladylike things while I am driving. I try not to yell too loud when Gary and I go somewhere together, but sometimes things slip out. One time, I drove down to Nashville on an off-school day with Naomi, and she says that "Bite this, Buddy!" would be more effective

coming from a male. I say it anyway. I say a lot of other things, too. There are a handful of bad (driving) habits that I have picked up from the driving to Nashville -- I used to be scared of the idea of crossing two or three lanes at once. Now I just do it, while muttering something to the effect of a devout hope that no jerks are in the way. I also drive too fast. I have not seen very many of Nashville's Finest on the interstate system while I have been on it, but I have seen one or two. I know exactly where the Metro Nashville / Davidson Co. line is, and exactly at what mile along the interstate the speed limit goes back up to 65 mph. I think that my Taurus automatically goes to cruise control at 74 mph just as soon as I get past that sign. The day after I get my first ticket, I will get a radar detector. Until then, I push my luck, but I try to keep from pushing it too hard.

My mother bought a house recently. She had been living in an apartment owned by my grandmother, but finally found a house in the right neighborhood, price range, and general age. One fine Saturday, Gary and I and my brother Mike and his girlfriend Selena helped Mother move out of the apartment into the house. This was an adventure. Gary and I had to go out to his parents' farm to borrow their yellow truck, only the keys turned out not to be in it. We came back into town to get the keys, and eventually got back to the moving. We did get virtually all of the stuff moved to the house in one day, but we were all exhausted. The following Tuesday was Mother's birthday, which was celebrated over at Mother's house. By then, it was actually starting to look like real living space. For the first time in a while, the little kids, Ana and Joey, each have their own rooms that they have to sleep in. I think they like it. Because the house has a backyard that is fenced in, Mother and the little kids are going to get a small (so that it can be easily transported across the Atlantic) dog. The little kids are really looking forward to that.



Contact review, such of it as I can remember. On Friday morning before Contact, I said something to my mildly geeky officemate Stan about going to a Science Fiction convention. He said something about he reads more Fantasy than SF. This was my first clue that he is not quite as bad as might seem at first shot. We talked some more, and I said something to the effect that the Guest of Honor of this convention was supposed to be 'Andy Offutt.' Stan came right back with 'He puts his name Andrew Offutt on his books, doesn't he?' I was blown away. I would not have ever expected this person to read much fiction, much less make the distinction between SF and fantasy, much, much less pick out a name like Andrew Offutt. Every now and then Stan does or says something that shows he's not half bad. More on him and my other fellow graduate students later.

Well, Gary and I got to Contact Friday evening, later than we might have because I had to stay in Nashville until 4. Friday night was OK, except that there were not very many parties. As far as I know, the Nashville in '94 party in Steve and Sue's room was the only one. It was a good party, opening out into the pool/pavillion area, just two doors down from the ConSuite. Saturday afternoon Gary was on a panel about fanzines. It was alright. Sometime during the course of Saturday, I met Lan Laskowski, this year's FanGoH at Contact. I'd heard of him before, but had never met him.

He's a Math teacher like me, which is neat. He just gets to them three or four years before I do. We had a protracted conversation late Saturday night, about everything under the Sun. For my trouble, I got introduced to Captain Morgan and Coke Classic, and a nice backrub. One of these days I should get an issue or two of *Lan's Lantern* in the mail. If he remembers. / The Contact banquet was OK. There were only three tables on the floor, but the head table was big enough to count for more. At least we did not share a table with Khen Moore. At

night went long and well. Rick Dunning was Fan Artist GoH, and his suite was next to Khen's, so there was plenty of party space. / There were also one or two other parties Saturday night, but I do not remember specifics. The dance by the swimming pool went well, even better after a few of the attendees scavenged tapes from their cars to improve the selection. It is really too bad that Tony's brother Tom is way too busy these days to do things like the dance for the con.

Sunday, a bunch of us went to the Evansville Arts and Science Museum (name?), which was pretty neat. It was Kids Day, which means the place was crawling with youth. Some of us just manoeuvred around them as much as possible, but some of our party cringed a lot. The convention ended well, in spite of the fact that I did not prominently post copies of the Hot Tub story that I had just read in the Weekly World News. I will, however, include the story with this KAPA mailing. When I discussed the article (?!) at a WKUSFS club meeting, mostly the girls thought it was pretty funny (I think it is hysterical), and mostly the guys sort of cringed in an odd way. Read it for yourselves.

I have babbled enough for now. I need to get this done, soon, for a lot of reasons. See you in the funny pages.

\*\*\* Mailing Comments \*\*\*

Better yet -- If I offend everybody and don't do mailing comments, I will get done a lot faster, and so on.

# Man loses testicle down hot tub drain

By DAMON RAY

Michael Aleman's honeymoon plunged into horror when his left testicle was sucked into a hot tub drain — and torn off!

"I've never felt pain like that. Never. Ever," the 24-year-old man, who has filed an amazing \$1 million lawsuit against the hotel that owns the tub, told reporters in Genoa, Italy. "The thing was over in seconds, but it changed my life forever."

The excruciating drama

*I've never felt pain like that. Never. Ever!*

unfolded less than eight hours after Aleman and his new bride, Antonia, tied the knot in Genoa's St. Christopher Church.

After arriving at their honeymoon suite at a crosstown luxury hotel, the loving couple decided to spend a little time in their private hot tub.

No sooner were they in than Aleman turned the wrong way. One of the tub's eight, bottle-capped drains sucked in his left testicle and held it fast. The tragedy was apparently caused by malfunction of the tub's pump system, which caused an unusually powerful suction through the drain.

"I felt like I had been hit by lightning," said Aleman.

"Of course, I screamed and made a quick move to free myself.

"But I slipped and that was all there was to it. There was blood in the water and I knew I was badly wounded.

"Oh, God, did I hurt."

Mrs. Aleman called for an ambulance before she fainted from shock. Paramedics tried but failed to retrieve Aleman's testicle from the drain.

They eventually took him to a Genoa hospital where doctors stitched up the damage and kept Aleman in a room overnight to make sure he was O.K.

The damage has temporarily deprived Aleman of anything approaching a normal sex life.

But he should be able to make love and even have children after his recovery is complete, doctors say.

"It was a hell of a way to spend my honeymoon but things could have been worse," said Aleman. "The drain could have been bigger.

"If that was the case I wouldn't have anything left.

"I shudder to think about it."

The hotel management refuses to discuss the case.



**EXCRUCIATING:** New husband Michael Aleman vows to never enter a hot tub again.

## STREETWALKERS BURNED ALIVE

Three prostitutes died at the hands of religious fanatics after they were tied to pillars in front of their Bangladesh brothel and roasted alive.

EXCRUCIATING