

Notes from the Club Car 47

is produced for KAPA mailing 93, by G. Patrick Molloy, P.O. Box 9135, Huntsville, AL, 35812, email mephan@advicom.net, phone (256) 830-4471. **Note the new area code!** The old one will still be in effect until early September, but I'm trying to get the word out as early as possible during the 6-month overlap period. The font is New York.

So much to write about, so little time, as usual! It's been a busy couple of months, so let's get right to it.

Over the Valentine's weekend, Naomi & I took an overnight trip to Atlanta to catch the last day of a major exhibition of works by Pablo Picasso, on loan from New York's Museum of Modern Art. It was a fascinating retrospective, arranged in chronological order, that also detailed the events in his life that so influenced his art. Some of his most famous works were on display, and it was really great to get a chance to see them all together like this. The tape recorded narration that went with it was excellent, and really complemented the printed material. One advantage of catching the exhibit on its last day was that the companion book, on sale in the gift shop, was deeply discounted!

Then came ConCave. It was great seeing several of you there. For those who missed it, I think it was one of the better ones. It was certainly the largest one, with somewhere around 350 attendees crammed into the Park Mammoth Resort. The Art Show was enhanced this year by the addition of newly-designed panels that Gary crafted over the past year. They were designed to slot together and were held in place by long bolts. The panels we finally threw away last year were basically just pegboard screwed onto uprights. We almost had more art than we could display, but we managed to squeeze it all in. Naomi & I hosted a party on Friday night to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the founding of the WKU Speculative Fiction Society. Since our room adjoined the Art Show, we decided to open the show for viewing (and bidding!) during the party. Since it was a full food party, we posted a door guard (hi, Sue!) to make sure nobody took refreshments in or unpurchased art out. We not only increased the visibility of the show and got some bids, we even made some immediate-purchase sales that night. It was a good party and ran pretty late.

The auction on Saturday night had over 110 pieces in it. We managed to finish in exactly 2 hours. Many thanks to KAPAns Joel for auctioneering, Betsy for running, and of course, Naomi, my co-department-head, for everything (including keeping me sane the whole weekend)! The only

downer was Ken Moore's appalling behavior during the auction. I don't want to elaborate, but let me just say that he will never auctioneer for any art show that Naomi or I am in charge of again.

There was more than just the Art Show, but I didn't see a lot of it. Things seemed to run smoothly, though Gary did complain of a shortage of volunteers in the con suite. By the way, Betsy, he was very grateful for you and Jackie signing up for the early-morning shifts, and for your doing such a wonderful job cleaning the place up. He said it was amazing!

The Strange Event of the Year this time around was the lack of carpets in the hallway. It seems that during the last inspection by the Best Western folks, the Park Mammoth management was told that they would have to replace the carpeting with something that met Best Western standards. So they promptly tore out the old carpet at the end of last summer, and have supposedly been looking ever since for carpet that meets these standards. Either they can't find a supplier, or it costs more than they want to pay. Regardless, you would think they would have arranged for the new carpet before tearing out the old one, but that would take planning! So we were treated to bare concrete hallways all weekend long, which made the normally loud, echoing hallways much worse. This has also apparently really cut into their business over the winter, and I can't say I'm surprised. People have just been turning around and leaving when they get a look at how crappy the place looks. They even had to lay off a large portion of the housekeeping staff due to the lack of guests (though they were all brought back for ConCave weekend, thankfully).

Despite all that, it was a fun weekend as usual. We stayed over for the Dead Dog Party and the traditional pizza feast. On Monday morning, we packed my poor Honda to capacity and beyond, and headed home, hoping to make it back to Huntsville in time to pick up the skunks from our vet's office, where we had boarded them for the weekend. Just south of Franklin, Tennessee, however, my right front tire suddenly went completely flat, as I was in the left lane passing another car.

I got the car over to the right shoulder as quickly as possible, and we got out to look at the damage. The first thing we noticed was that there was a hole in the sidewall, not in the tread area. It also looked strange that the rubber around the hole pointed in, not out, like a blowout would cause. About that time, a couple of officers from Commercial Vehicle Enforcement (the guys who operate the weigh stations and run down trucks who try to evade them) pulled up to render assistance. Since we didn't want to unpack the whole car to get out the T-tire (we would have then had to repack, drive to the nearest garage, and go through the whole process

again), we asked them to call a AAA wrecker. We continued to look at the tire, and Naomi started wondering if the tire had actually been *shot*. I reached around to the inside of the tire, and sure enough, there was a corresponding hole exactly opposite the other one, this one with the rubber pointed out. A perfect set of entry and exit holes. One of the officers looked at it, and agreed with our guess (they see that sort of thing with truck tires on a regular basis).

By that time a regular State Trooper had arrived on the scene, and he surveyed the area where the blowout happened, but could find nobody around or any other evidence. We figured it was a stray shot from a hunter, as opposed to an intentional shooting. But still, it could have just as easily gone through the side window or door and then through one or both of us, rather than only the tire. We considered ourselves very lucky. After getting towed into town and getting the tire replaced, we were running too late to make it back to the vet's office on time, so we ended up having to pick up the skunks on Tuesday morning.

Unfortunately, Naomi's black & white skunk Stinker had gone sharply downhill over the weekend. He ate almost nothing, and had developed a serious infection in one of the areas where he had received rehydration treatment. We took him home, not knowing how long he would hang in there. Naomi tried force-feeding him so as to get food & water in him without more needles. He responded very well to this treatment, regained his appetite and thirst, became cheerful and active, and we ended up not having to take him to the vet for a couple of weeks.

The Oscars have come & gone by now, and overall I was pleased with the results. I said last time that I thought **Titanic** deserved to get a bunch of awards, and they ended up with a record-tying 11 of them. It's amazing, though, that they managed to do so without getting any acting prizes. Still, the awards were well-deserved, and there were enough other winners so that other movies could claim partial victory as well. For once, I was not outraged by any of the awards this year, though disappointed with a few. I was most pleased with Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Dramatic Score going to **Titanic**, Best Comedy Score going to **The Full Monty**, and Best Original Screenplay going to **Good Will Hunting** (my outrage was last month when **Titanic** didn't get a nomination in this category). As usual, people complained that the show dragged on too long, but I really didn't think so. Heck, it's only once a year, and it's like the Super Bowl of the film industry. So why not enjoy it and quit complaining? I thought it was one of the better productions I've seen.

Later that week, Stinker suddenly took a sharp turn for the worse. He grew increasingly lethargic, and although we were still able to get food and water down him, they didn't seem to be doing much good. After checking a urine sample, our vet, Dr. Waite, found that Stinker had developed acute diabetes. This, in latent form, was probably what was behind his reduced immunity to infections and perhaps even his pneumonia. It had actually been Dr. Waite's first suspicion, months ago, but both blood and urine tests before had been negative. We put Stinker on daily insulin injections, but they only had a limited effect. By the end of the week, the infection that we thought had been conquered had in fact spread, and for the first time, he started to be in pain. He started spasming, and could barely walk. We took him in to the vet on Friday morning, March 27, knowing that it would probably be his last day. Dr. Waite agreed that there probably wasn't much that could be done, though he tried a stronger dose of insulin. He also gave us some tranquilizers to let Stinker get some rest. By noon, however, it was apparent that the medication wasn't working. We knew we would probably lose him that day, but we were hoping he could die peacefully at home rather than needing another traumatic trip to the vet. Dr. Waite prescribed a stronger tranquilizer & muscle relaxant, and allowed me to go pick it up and have Naomi administer the shot. Within seconds of receiving the shot, Stinker relaxed and fell into a deep sleep, which he hadn't been able to do in about 36 hours. We stayed with him all that afternoon. We had two additional doses to give him when the medication started to wear off and he started spasming again. After giving him the third and final dose, we said our good-byes, and carried him to Dr. Waite's for the last time. Since he had fallen into such a deep slumber at home, he did not have to experience the trauma of the car ride to the vet's office. His last conscious memory would have been of both of us petting him and telling him what a wonderful skunk he was.

We buried him that weekend in the backyard next to Bosco, Naomi's first skunk. A day doesn't go by that we don't think of him. We miss him terribly, but we're comfortable that we did the right thing. Even if we had managed to pull him through that day, he would probably have already suffered irreversible brain damage. And with active diabetes, he never would have been able to eat any of his favorite foods again, which would have made him miserable - he had the biggest sweet tooth of any skunk we've ever seen. Although he never seemed to fully recover from the pneumonia, he never really suffered until that last day, when all his ailments seems to converge at once. For the three years we had him, he was always treated as the favorite, and had the run of more of the house than the other skunks. However, since he fell ill in December, he had almost four months during which he was undoubtedly the most pampered skunk in the world, getting all of Naomi's attention and devoted care, and

being fed his favorite foods whenever he wanted. His time with us was too short, but we made the best of the time we had with him.

On a happier topic, plans for my trip to England with my sister are in the final planning stages. The hotel reservations are made, the rail passes have been purchased, and we are now to the point of deciding what to see and do (or more like what to eliminate from our long list of places and things we want to see and do). Naomi volunteered her time to make the arrangements, for which I am forever grateful. I just wouldn't have had the time required to deal with the hotels, airlines, Britrail, etc. I probably would have had to just turn everything over to a travel agent, and past experience has shown that you don't necessarily get the best deals that way.

I was going to end the main body of my zine there, but once again news from the real world has intruded. By the time this sees print, the latest in what is becoming a series of schoolhouse shootings, this time in Arkansas, will be old news, but it is fresh as I write this. I predict there will much wailing and ringing of hands and vows to never let anything like this happen again and talk of toughening juvenile crime penalties. But there will be no serious attempt to pass the kind of sensible gun control legislation that might have a real chance of preventing these kinds of crimes. How many more children are going to have to die before our gutless Congressmen stand up to the NRA and go along with the majority of Americans who favor gun control legislation!?

On that somber note, I'll move on to the...

Mailing Comments

Naomi (*Cover*) — Nice Valentine's Day tribute. The "92" was easy to find, but the "KAPA" was sure well-hidden!

Naomi (*Transitional Phases*) — Re-reading your account of Stinker's illness and treatments now, immediately after his death, is especially sobering. I don't think I need to add anything here — we went through it all together, and we know we did everything we could. I am proud of your commitment and dedication to his care. It bought him a few more months of being happily pampered, at least. His life was much too short, however.

- Pretty much full agreement on the movie reviews. I loved your use of capitalization in your review of **As Good As It Gets**. It sure had its share of clichés.
- Your Oscar nomination predictions about **Good Will Hunting** were pretty much right on target. If **Titanic** couldn't get

Original Screenplay (I still can't believe it didn't get nominated!), I'm glad Damon & Affleck got it. • So, what did you think of **Titanic**? It sounds like a film you hate to love. I'm not at all ashamed of how much I like this movie. I also think it quite unfair to classify it as a "chick flick" just because it centers around a romance, since it also has a higher body count than any "guy's movie" I can think of! • yct Guy: yeah, I thought his attempt to link the O.J. and Woodward cases was a bit of a stretch. Hey, all lawyers look the same to us "ordinary" people, right? ° Unless we start planning **now** to gradually shift the intervening deadlines, KAPA 100 will not fall close enough to either ConCave or Rivercon. We could celebrate at one or the other (pre- or post-100th mailing), but probably not actually collate. Maybe we could gather one-shots at ConCave, and distribute any leftover copies at Rivercon? ° Good comeback on both the Seiun awards and Guy's lack of DUFF participation. • yct Nicki: I personally felt like **LA Confidential** was not murmuring "Brilliant plot twists" in my ear so much as beating me over the head with it. • yct me: I agreed to allow Guy to put my name on his WigWam Village flyer, but not yours. If Guy made that presumption, I'll let him deal with you directly!

Guy (*Bluegras*) — I'm jealous of your annual train trip, as always. I'm having trouble envisioning what you meant by "the foldout table doesn't face either seat." Huh? Are we talking about a Superliner standard (economy) room? The table folds out right between the two facing seats. Why couldn't you use it from one of the seats? • Was that not the same manual typewriter you had at DSC last year? You made it sound like you bought it just before the trip. Or did the first one bite the dust? • A rather bleak recap of 1997. I hope 1998 turns out better for you. • yct Naomi: yeah, **LA Confidential** won all the critics' nods. Unfortunately for them not everyone in the audiences agreed (myself included). It was an okay movie, but not one I'd bother to see again. ° You don't think the *Titanic* is a grave site? Tell that to the relatives of the people who died there, including those who were contacted by the ~~graverobbers~~ salvagers to see if they wanted to *buy back* their parents' possessions! • Gee, no mc's for my zine, or even a "raebnc"? I feel slighted!

Betsy (*Treading Water*) — Thanks again for all your help with the art auction at ConCave! So how do you like being a runner? • By the "new" astronaut, do you mean John Glenn? I think it's great that he's getting another chance to ride into space. I just think NASA should be more up front about why — as a reward for a lifetime of service to his country — and not try to reverse justify it by saying it's to do experiments on the effects of space travel on senior citizens or some such. There are plenty of astronauts who were forced to retire when they grew too old, so that excuse just doesn't cut it. • I really liked the cartoons and captions you

included. They gave me some insight to things about you I didn't know. Cute skunk, too!

Jodie (*Kentucky Nuggets*) — Thank you for including Andy's write-up of the Haldeman Post Office closing. It's a shame they decided not to replace your local postmaster when she retired. I gather that Haldeman is not an official town, but more of a community. • yct me re John Glenn. See my comment to Betsy. ° All these years of going to Kubla Khan, and you never heard about Khen being a wrestling fan!? Maybe he doesn't talk about it in front of certain people. • yct Bryan: I remember my father talking about Gorgeous George. I also remember a Gorgeous George from when I moved to Kentucky in the early 70's. It seems that name is kind of like The Dread Pirate Roberts (from **The Princess Bride**), passed down through the generations. • Nice observation on basketball "fashions."

Nicki (*Vanish With the Rose*) — I hope your cats are on the mend by now. I've never heard of a cat breaking its tail like that, but it makes sense. • yct Joel: Huh? I've never heard any pro-choice person say that having a baby, whether one keeps it or puts it up for adoption, is not one of the choices. It would be wonderful to live in a world where abortion is never needed, but that's just not realistic, and it will be around whether it is legal or not. Unfortunately, it's also been my observation that a lot of people who are against legalized abortion are also against making contraception and sex education readily available. • yct Jodie: what makes you think that Kentucky, more than any other state, has become a place where one needed to carry concealed firearms? Many states have concealed-carry laws of one sort or another. Many more have added such laws at the urging of the NRA as a backlash against the Brady Bill and the assault weapons ban (which were pretty tame attempts at gun control, but you know the NRA...). At least Kentucky requires you to take a class, unlike many states. • yct me: Tell me about unread books... ° Ironic to read over your comments about Disclave moving dates, in light of their being canceled. How do prospects look for future years? ° The number of entrants in Worldcon masquerades has gone down, but it doesn't seem to take any less time to judge them. From what I've seen, it seems the judges are spending all that time trying to figure out how to give everyone an award of some sort. Sort of like the Special Olympics, but with more sequins. • We'll definitely have to try to catch the **Star Wars** exhibit when we come up for Worldcon.

Joel (*Better Late...*) — yct Bryan: We have a new "tiered" seating theatre in Huntsville, too. My first impression was, "gee, this theatre is *tiny!*" The tiered seating is nice, though. There are a couple of floor-level rows up front which include some wheelchair spaces, but anyone in a wheelchair

who doesn't like sitting up front is out of luck. • yct Betsy: well, now you've met (at least I assume you did, since she was a runner and you were an auctioneer at the ConCave art show). So you can't use that excuse for short mc's now!

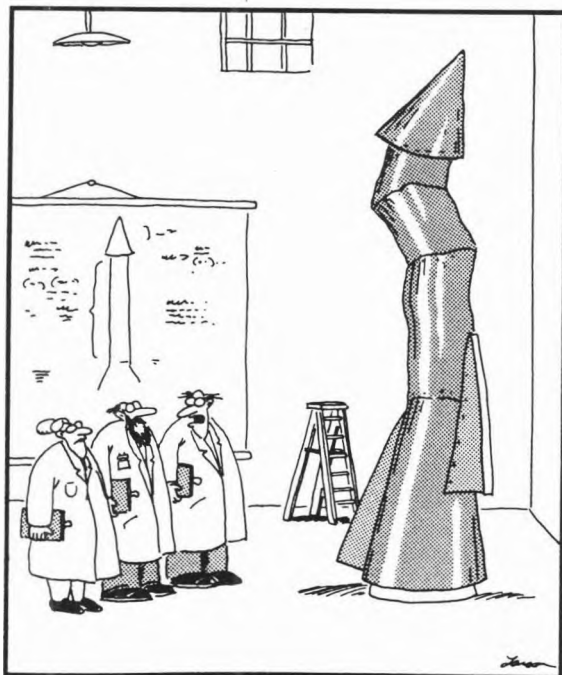
Bryan (*Sailing the Abnormalcy*) — *Twenty-seven* screens!?! Egad! Do they issue you a map to find your theatre? Is that the glowing pink neon palace near 100 Oaks Mall that can be seen from I-65? • The billboard you mention reminds me of a something my sister told me once. There is (or was) a natural foods store in Bowling Green that sells (or sold) organically-grown tobacco products. Go figure. • yct Naomi: don't worry about it. She & I swap **Simpsons** lines all the time, despite the fact that we haven't even watched the show for the past couple of years (not that we don't like it — we just can't find the time!) • yct Guy: Aaaargh! Why did you have to point that out about *Clementine* and *Ode To Joy*? Now that'll be stuck in my brain for days! • yct me: Yeah, James Randi is pretty cool. Isn't he the one that has a standing offer of something like a million dollars for anyone who can prove their "psychic" ability in a reproducible laboratory setting? The offer has been around for years, and nobody has collected. ° Think about it: Swamp = alligators, mosquitoes & quicksand. Wetlands = ducks, herons & turtles. Similarly for jungle vs. rainforest. ° The difference I see is "censorship" means you can't say something. "Arguing against bad speech" means you can say it, but we'll think you're a jerk for saying it, and tell you so. • Good question about Ken Starr. I think he came up empty with Whitewater, so he started looking around for something else to try to "get" the President with, all with the backing of the majority party in Congress (and over 30 million of our tax dollars). I've heard people starting to call his investigation a witch hunt, and compare him to Joseph McCarthy. As for Hillary's theory, no, there probably isn't an organized right wing conspiracy, but I think she is correct that there are a lot or sore losers who would like to undo the results of two Presidential elections. There has certainly been a well-orchestrated effort to continue to dig and dig, to find anything they can to smear him. This started before he was even sworn in, but has intensified since the Republicans gained the majority in Congress. One investigation after another has been launched by Congress, instead of concentrating on the job we elected them to do, and so far they have turned up nothing. But it really doesn't matter what the final reports say — it's the accusations that people remember. The flames have been fanned by the likes of Jerry Falwell and the rest of the so-called religious right with their hate-mongering speeches and video tapes. Then there's right-wing talk radio, where any rumor is reported as fact, and facts get exaggerated way out of proportion to reality. As for the media, they've played right into the conservatives' hands by overcompensating in response to accusations of

being "liberal." The result is that they have plastered the papers and airwaves with any hot rumor that comes along, and have shown a total lack of responsible journalism. Any time the GOP wants the media to turn up the heat, they come out with another round of accusations that the media is biased, liberal, and covering up for the President. I'm just sick to death of the whole thing, quite frankly.

Sue (*The Muunie Bin*) — Welcome! Glad to have you aboard. • Nice recap of the past year-&-a-half. Somehow I had missed hearing about your cat. Belated condolences. • It was good to finally hear about the wedding from your point of view. Thank you for letting us in on what it was like for you. • Aren't house prices in the South wonderful compared to California?

That about wraps it up for this time. Next time, I should have another England trip to write about. Take care, and I'll see you in #94.

Pot



"It's time we face reality, my friends. ... We're not exactly rocket scientists."



The boy who cried "no brakes"