

Notes from the Club Car 51

for KAPA mailing 97, springs forth once again from the brain and fingers of G. Patrick Molloy (with the help of his trusty, if somewhat outdated, Macintosh Powerbook), who can be reached at P.O. Box 9135, Huntsville, AL, 35812, phone (256) 830-4471 email mephan@advicom.net. The font this time is Avant Garde

Well, the holiday season has come & gone. I hope yours was everything you wished for. Mine was different in a number of ways.

Since I couldn't make it to see my family Thanksgiving weekend (among other things, they moved the dinner up to Louisville, where one of my brothers is living), and two of Naomi's siblings couldn't make it home due to work obligations, we decided to save Naomi's family a lot of hassle for relatively few people, and invite them out for Thanksgiving dinner. We decided on one of the buffets at the Opryland, and made arrangement to meet them there.

On top of this, Naomi offered to spring for Wednesday night in Nashville, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of our meeting. She made all the arrangements, and didn't tell me where we would be staying. Imagine my surprise when we went to the Opryland Hotel to see the Christmas light display, and she instructed me to pull into the registration area! I didn't know they offered room rates within reach of mere mortals, but apparently they have a pre-Thanksgiving special with amazingly reasonable room rates. We ended up with a room in the Delta section, with a balcony overlooking the atrium. We had a wonderful dinner at **Beauregard's**, and took dessert back to our room to eat on the balcony while exchanging presents and watching the boats go by. We did likewise the next morning with beignets and café au lait. It was a fantastic stay, and a very romantic way to spend our 10th anniversary.

Later that weekend, we also went to Bowling Green for Annette Carrico's annual Thanksgiving party. Most of the regulars, including several current and former KAPA members, were in attendance. Usually Annette's parties are very informal affairs, with lots of mingling and party food such as nachos, chips & dips, etc. This time she surprised us by setting her table and serving a more structured, though still informal, meal of soup and sandwiches. It was wonderful!

Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, we hosted our first guests in the Lynn Hickman Memorial Slan Shack, when Rocky & Sue Halleron visited Huntsville for a weekend. We are still a long way from where we want to take the place, with painting being the most obvious need. But it is furnished enough to host guests, and Rocky in particular seemed to enjoy being our "beta tester." On Saturday, we split up, with Naomi & Sue going to the art museum and a few other attractions, while Rocky & I (along with Sunn Hayward) went to the Space & Rocket Center. I was able to arrange for free passes, so we did the whole museum (except for some of the outside attractions that were closed for the season), plus an Imax movie and the bus tour of Marshall Space Flight Center. The four of us also went out to a couple of nice meals, and drove around Huntsville and Decatur looking at Christmas lights. We visited both ends of the

spectrum, from tacky plastic lawn ornaments, to elegantly decorated Victorian-style homes. It was a fun weekend, and we really enjoyed hosting them. The invitation still stands for any other KAPA members who would like to visit!

Christmas was also very strange. Huntsville got hit with a major ice storm on the 23rd, which virtually shut down the city. They even closed the malls two days before Christmas! I woke up several times that night to the sound of tree limbs crashing to the ground. Fortunately, none of them hit the house or the power lines. Since things were still thawing out the next day, I decided to hold off making the trip to Bowling Green until Christmas day. I drove up there Christmas morning for the annual family get-together and gift exchange. I-24 from Nashville was still a mess, and Naomi's family had work conflicts once again, so she stayed in Huntsville to take care of the menagerie and keep an eye on the place.

The neatest and most surprising gift that I got this year was an original painting of Stonehenge by my sister, which she did from one of the photographs we took there. Janice is a fantastic artist, in my opinion, and I've always wanted one of her pieces. I've got a great place picked out for it in my dining room. After visiting with the family and staying the night, I headed back to Huntsville on the 26th.

For New Year's eve, we again journeyed to Bowling Green for the annual WKUSFS gathering at Annette's. The turnout was a little smaller than usual this year, but a good time was still had by all. The next day we went to Clarksville to visit Naomi's family, where we ate lots of Japanese food and finally got to exchange Christmas presents with them.

We've been to several movies since the last mailing. No time for detailed reviews, but at least a few sentences and my completely subjective rating. As usual, there may be spoilers if you haven't seen a movie that I'm reviewing.

Babe: Pig in the City (★) I'm being generous in giving this movie one star. It was monumentally disappointing. A dark, disturbing, and dreadful movie that had none of the charm of the first movie. One bad thing after another befalls our hero, causing me to sink further and further into my seat. By the time it was over, despite the "happy" ending, I felt completely beaten down. I honestly can't understand why Roger Ebert and others have given it such good reviews. Did they see the same movie?

Rush Hour (★★★) The latest Jackie Chan movie was more fun than I expected. Not quite as formulaic as his last few, and the contrast of him and Chris Tucker kept the pace moving and the story interesting, with lots of humor interjected.

You've Got Mail (★★) Predictable story, shallow characters. A cute idea, especially updating a story that has been told before (**The Shop Around the Corner**, with Jimmy Stewart, being the most recent incarnation) to include the modern twist of an internet relationship. Somewhat disappointing, however.

Antz (★★) Excellent animation. The main thing I had against it was that it was a blatant rip-off of...

A Bug's Life (★★★) Also pretty good animation, even if the ants were depicted with only four legs. An amusing story.

Prince of Egypt (★★★) Also very good animation, though I can't say I really enjoyed the movie. Very serious subject matter; not your typical cartoon.

Elizabeth (★★★★) The previews looked great, so we were really anticipating this movie. Imagine our dismay when after several weeks in release, there was no sign of the movie appearing in Huntsville. So one weekend we decided to head to Nashville to do some shopping and take in a couple of movies. We went to the new Greens Hills cinema, which is a terrific complex. The movie itself, which covers the ascension of Elizabeth I to the throne and her first few years as monarch, was very well done. The way she grew into her role, starting out naive, tenderhearted, very unsure of herself and listening to all her advisors (good and bad), and then covering her becoming one of the most powerful and beloved rulers of all time, was really handled quite well. Quite dark and very violent - those were dark and bloody times, though. I highly recommend it as the first part of a double-feature with...

Shakespeare In Love (★★★★) The other movie we saw on our trip to Nashville. I didn't know what to think going into this, but I was hooked! The story is a highly speculative (alright, completely fictionalized) account of Shakespeare's writing of **Romeo and Juliet** (which actually starts out as "Romeo and Ethel, the Pirate's Daughter). The romance that Shakespeare gets entangled in is the major influence on the evolution of the story, and we can see the play changing, almost in real-time. The intricate camerawork, as scenes flow from the stage to "real life" and back again, is something to behold. One of the few movies in recent years that I wouldn't mind paying full evening prices to see again.

Waking Ned Devine (★★★★) A delightful tale of a small Irish town, and what happens to its residents when they discover that one of their own has won a major lottery. The only complication is that the winner died of shock upon hearing the news! But that doesn't stop them from trying to claim the prize...

That about brings me up to date. Time to head into the...

Mailing Comments

Guy (Bluegras) — Glad you made it through the hurricane okay. The Mississippi flowed backwards? How strange, and scary! It must be weird living in a place that is visited by hurricanes on a regular basis. Unlike the tornadoes that visit our neck of the woods regularly, at least you usually have several days of warning that one may be coming (as opposed to the several minutes we get if we're lucky). Hurricane damage is usually much more widespread, however. If you ever want to travel a little farther north, you're welcome to take refuge here in

Huntsville. Ω yct Tony: I don't think the scandal will blow over that soon, especially now that the House has gone against the will of the people and voted out articles of Impeachment. Although I am confident the Senate will not vote to remove him from office, the fact that this is dragging out even longer will hurt the Republicans in 2000. I think people will remember, and the House will go back to the Democrats. The Senate may well, too. Who knows what impact it will have on the Presidential race. Ω yct you: Sorry to hear the train trip back from Worldcon was a "miserable experience." Care to elaborate? I'm always interested in hearing other people's Amtrak experiences. Ω yct me: yeah, I too was really expecting Orlando to win, until I saw the huge numbers of people voting at the door. What really surprised me was to find out afterward that Philadelphia carried a slim majority of mail-in votes as well. ∞ I'm glad you liked **Contact** better upon seeing it again, though I still disagree with most of your negative comments.

Nicki (*Vanish With the Rose*) — It was nice reading of your experiences and viewpoint on the Worldcon. I think you can understand why we never made it to the fanzine lounge. ∞ I agree that the amount of money spent on bidding is getting way out of hand. But it's like politics — what can you do to tone down the amount spent on a campaign? I wonder if there would be any backing for a low-key, low-budget Worldcon bid? If fans got behind the idea and it actually won in a competed year, it would send a message that you don't have to break the bank to win a bid. But I'm probably dreaming. ∞ We also skipped the masquerade in favor of dinner with friends at Harbor Place (Pizzeria Uno), including a couple of the Australians. ∞ I'm glad to hear that the Post Office booth did well at the convention. I think it's a great idea. ∞ Sunday, when I saw you & Rich at the con suite, was also the first time I made it there the entire weekend (despite our being in the same hotel!). I was impressed with the quantity and variety of food, even if a large part of it was party leftovers. ∞ Are you planning to attend Worldcon next year, after serving as FGoH's at NASFiC? Ω The Employee Appreciation week at your workplace, and all the associated activities sounded like a lot of fun. Not the kind of thing I'm ever likely to see working for a government office. Imagine the outcry of people complaining about "wasting taxpayer dollars," blah, blah, blah. (We get letters to the newspaper like that whenever Redstone Arsenal workers get a snow day!) Sometimes I envy the freedom that private companies have. ∞ You got to see Flying Elvises? Wow! Ω It sounds like the fair was also a lot of fun, and congratulations on the award! ∞ I liked your description of the poor ice cow sculpture. Some "before-&-after" pictures would have been great. Ω yct me (OO): It seems to me that the bi-monthly schedule would be easier to remember than whatever I'd come up with for 5 mailings per year. Ultimately, however, it is up to the membership. Ω yct Betsy: I believe the **Titanic** officer you refer to is First Officer Murdoch. I heard that his descendants were not happy with his portrayal in the film. The scene of him taking a bribe was completely fictitious, though even in the film he later threw it back at the would-be briber. As for the "coward" part, I assume you are referring to him committing suicide. There was at least one eyewitness account that I read of him killing himself after the last boat had left. One thing that didn't come across very well in the film was that he made sure that every boat he launched was full to capacity, as opposed to second officer Lightoller, who strictly enforced the "women & children" rule, even if that meant that boats were launched half

empty or more. Murdock saved many more lives. Ω yct Bryan: I remember J.J. Johnson quite well, though I regret that I never got to know him very well. Among other things, he arranged for the video services at ConFederation, which included wiring the two hotels together for the convention video broadcasts. He was murdered by a carjacker, probably as a result of his kind heart and an attempt to help someone he saw as less fortunate. The last I heard, they had made an arrest, but I never heard if they got a conviction. That was several years ago. Ω yct me: I'd be interested in hearing why you don't expect to be getting another Hugo for a while. I know that the internet-based fanzine (I can't remember the name) has been getting close (beating you on the first ballot, at least). Do you think that is a foreshadowing of things to come? I really don't think electronic-only fanzines should be eligible, but that's another can of worms I don't want to open right now. Ω Where do you get your impressions of family planning clinics? They are where many (perhaps most) low- to middle-income women get contraceptives, as well as annual checkups and many other health services. Abortion is offered as an absolute last resort (and a very expensive one at that), certainly not as a convenient form of birth control. Alternatives are discussed and encouraged, and at the ones I've personally known of, adoption service numbers are posted prominently in the waiting areas. Your impressions sound like the propaganda spread by many of the extremist groups such as Operation Rescue, and I'm somewhat surprised you bought into it. ∞ There is a strong difference of opinion, even within the medical community, on what constitutes a human life. Ω Is the Goodwill Used Book Sale the one I went to with you and Rich several years ago during a TDY trip? It was an impressive sale, as I remember.

Bryan (*Sailing the Abnormalcy*) — Downtown parking in Nashville has been a problem for a long time, and the new arena has magnified it. For a city that steadfastly refuses to consider taking any kind of real mass transportation, such as light rail, beyond the study phase, they haven't planned very well when it comes to parking all the cars people are forced to use. Ω Welcome to your 30's! I'm on the verge of leaving mine. Enjoy it while you can. Ω yct Guy: on the Eurostar between France and England, you never even see the Channel. The tunnel portals are quite far away from the water. I would think crossing on a ferry would be much scarier, especially as bad as the weather can often be. yct Naomi: It wasn't that Starr wasn't "allowed" to resign (and take a lucrative job at ultra-conservative Pepperdine University), it's that he suddenly got a lot of pressure from the right, when they thought their never-ending persecution of the President might come up empty. Ω yct me: You yourself use the phrase "pro-choice." Doesn't it logically follow that those who oppose a woman being legally able to obtain an abortion are on the opposite side of this issue and thus "anti-choice?" I don't see how you can accept one phrase and not the other. That is why I reject and refuse to use the term "pro-life," because it implies that those who favor legalized abortion are "anti-life," which is absurd. Neither was I implying that all anti-choicers are right-wing. I was referring to the right-wing faction that wants to diminish women's role in society and the economy back to the options they had in the 50's, pre-Roe. This does not imply that all anti-choicers hold those opinions. Ω I'm surprised you haven't already been sued by the Scientologists over your humor piece. They don't have much of sense of humor when it comes to their founder.

Naomi (*Transitional Phases*) — Glad you were able to make at least a token contribution. I know first-hand how busy you've been. Sorry the postcard didn't xerox better.

Jodie (*Kentucky Nuggets*) — An.... umm.... *interesting* article you included from Chris. By the way, I heard a brief interview with him on NPR on my way to work on January 14. They were interviewing writers and reporters around the country about how the Clinton trial was playing in their home towns. Apathy was the almost universal response, despite the Republican's and the media's non-stop attempts to whip up interest. Ω It sound like things have really worked out great for you and Andy to be closer to your grandchildren. I'm sure they will cherish the experience, too.

That about wraps it up for another edition. See you all in #98!

pat

