

Notes from the Club Car 53

for KAPA mailing 99, produced by G. Patrick Molloy, P.O. Box 9135, Huntsville AL, 35812, phone (256) 830-4471, email gpmolloy@hotmail.com.

Probably a short mailing this time. Naomi & I are preparing to take a trip to the Canadian Rockies to visit some of the National Parks in the area. I'm really looking forward to the trip — despite having been to England, France, and Australia, I've never been to Canada! I'm sure I'll be writing about it in the next mailing.

Plans for the wedding party are progressing. Contracts have been signed with the Opryland for the room where the ceremony will take place, and for the reception at Beauregard's. I've made most of the reservations for the honeymoon in Australia. Everything seems to be going as planned. Our main worry at this point is that we will have far too much food for the number of guests that show up. We have no idea if the date being right after Thanksgiving will help or hurt attendance (this is starting to sound like convention planning...) Actually, we're finding this considerably easier than convention planning, though quite a bit more personal. Invitations won't go out for a while yet, but rest assured you all will be invited!

Not a lot else going on here at home lately. The guest house is currently rented out to Naomi's brother, Jonathan, while he attends classes at UAH, so it is temporarily unavailable to visiting guests. I'm glad we were able to work something out so that he could have affordable housing. He has also agreed to watch the house and the pets while we're off in Canada. That's a great relief, as the skunks really hate being boarded at the vet's.

The Space & Rocket Center, which is almost within sight of my house, has embarked on a project to build a full scale vertical replica of a Saturn V rocket. This will be the tallest structure in Huntsville, and probably *will* be visible from my house. They are on a fast-track construction schedule to have it completed by July 15, in time for the 30th anniversary of Apollo 11. Though I expect it will look spectacular, it is somewhat ironic that we will celebrate this anniversary by building a fake rocket, instead of, say, launching a return to the Moon or a mission to Mars. Long-range plans call for building an adjoining gantry, which will have a restaurant in the top two levels. It should be quite an attraction when it's complete.

About the only other thing to mention are the movies we've been to see. No real clunkers this time around, as I enjoyed all of the ones we've seen recently. Here they are, in no particular order:

Rushmore (★★★) We didn't see this one until it was in the second-run theatre. It's a strange story about a boy in an exclusive private school who excels at every activity except his classwork; his bizarre crush on a teacher, and his resulting misadventures. Hard to describe, but an enjoyable, somewhat dark, flick.

Life Is Beautiful (★★★★★) After hearing all the hype about it at the Oscars, we had to go see this film. It deserves all the awards it got and more. A deeply touching film about a man who uses his almost clown-like sense of humor to enjoy life, and to court and marry his sweetheart. This happy story takes a tragic turn when they find

themselves being taken to a concentration camp during WWII. He then continues to use his imagination and humor to shield his young son from the horrors going on around them.

The Matrix (★★★) As Nicki would put it, this is another "aliens have secretly taken over the world" story, except that we don't realize it because we're all in a worldwide virtual reality that keeps us from seeing what the real world is like. Neat special effects, somewhat predictable story that was nonetheless well-paced and interesting.

The Mummy (★★★☆) An updated version of the old Boris Karloff classic with jazzy special effects. The critics panned it, but I thought it was a lot of fun. It did not take itself too seriously, and I think a lot of critics missed that point. There was a lot of humor thrown in that did not distract too much from the story, but instead kept it lively and entertaining.

A Midsummer's Night Dream (★★☆) A decent remake of the William Shakespeare classic, set in Victorian times. The dialogue style did not match up with the period, and that was a bit jarring at first until I got used to it. A fun enough film, but not the best interpretation I've seen, despite the all-star cast.

Entrapment (★★) A high-tech spy thriller with more than the usual number of twists. We're never quite sure who the heroine, played by Catherine Zeta-Jones, is working for, as she teams up with Sean Connery in an attempt to pull off the biggest heist in history at the close of the millennium. Fast-paced and glittery, but the story and the characters were not particularly believable.

Notting Hill (★★★★) Oh, no, not another "romantic comedy!" This one, however, works. Julia Roberts and Hugh Grant star in an admittedly-unlikely story about a world-famous movie actress and a Mr. Nobody bookshop owner meeting and falling in love. The interplay of her with his "real world" friends, especially his flatmate Spike, was hilarious. This one was good enough to go see twice.

And then, of course, there's...

Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace (★★★) By now most of the hype over this film's release has started to settle down. We went to see **The Phantom Menace** on opening day. No need to camp out in line or anything of the sort, since our theatre sold advance tickets. After seeing the film, we watched all three of the other **Star Wars** films that weekend, then went back to see **Phantom Menace** again, in order to study the connections between them all. My overall impression is that it was a good film, though it could have been so much better. Lucas continues to weave an intricate pattern of connections throughout the films. I'm anxious to see the next two installments, to see the rise of the Empire, and what it was that turned Anakin Skywalker to the Dark Side. The main problem I had with Episode I was the character Jar Jar Binks. I know he was intended to provide comic relief, but Lucas really went too far with him. His mannerisms and speaking style were characteristic of the way blacks used to be portrayed in movies in the early part of the century, and it is somewhat disturbing that Lucas didn't realize this. I really hope Lucas does not bring Jar Jar back in Episode II. I was also bothered by the way the Trade Federation was portrayed. These characters sounded and acted an awful lot like the

old "yellow peril" propaganda films about Orientals, the Japanese in particular. All in all, I enjoyed the film, and it was interesting to see some of the early history of the Jedi. I started to give this film a higher rating, but the more I thought about it, the more it bothered me that it was so tainted by (hopefully unintentional) racist overtones. I do hope for better things in the next two installments.

That's about all that has been happening in my life, so on to the...

Mailing Comments

Jodie (*Kentucky Nuggets*) — First and foremost, let me pass along my sincere wishes for Andy's speedy recovery. News of his heart attack came as quite a shock, but we also heard from Joel that he is on the mend. I'm sure your love and devotion have been a major help. Ω A very touching story about Mrs. Jayne. She obviously influenced your entire family in so many ways. It was surely a rare and treasured friendship. I can't even remember my first grade teacher's name.

Guy (*Bluegras*) — Angola prison now has a museum? Not exactly my idea of fun family entertainment. Ω yct Bryan: I agree that Al Gore is one of the smartest men in Washington, and is probably the most qualified candidate for President. I just hope the stigma of being too closely associated with Clinton doesn't rub off on him too much.

Nicki (*Vanish With the Rose*) — It sure was a snowy winter for you folks. We escaped with a pretty mild one. Ω yct OO: actually, the cover for #97 was one of my clip-art creations. Ω yct me: If your system is supposed to be 24x7, I'm surprised they don't have a generator on-site that kicks in when the power goes out. That's how our Control Center is configured here at NASA. ∞ Concerning the Irish lottery, no, they run it pretty much the same as most U.S. states run theirs. I don't want to give away too much more of the movie, but let's just say the winner went missing, and was later found with the ticket in his hand, but he had already printed his name on it. By the way, the Irish Lottery folks issued a statement saying that the events depicted in the film could never happen in real life, But it's still a fun movie. ∞ Is that case you mention about a store owner going to jail the one in Boston? I never heard how that case came out. ∞ So when are you leaving for Australia? We're leaving the Sunday night of NASFiC (August 29). Just wondering if we might be on the same flight! Ω Your descriptions of the new SF shows on the Sci Fi channel don't make me want to seek them out. I think I'll pass.

Tony (*Sawdust and Caviar*) — yct me: The Republicans have lost seats in the two elections since '94, so I expect that trend to continue and for the House at least to go back to the Democrats in 2000. The Senate and the White House are anybody's guess.

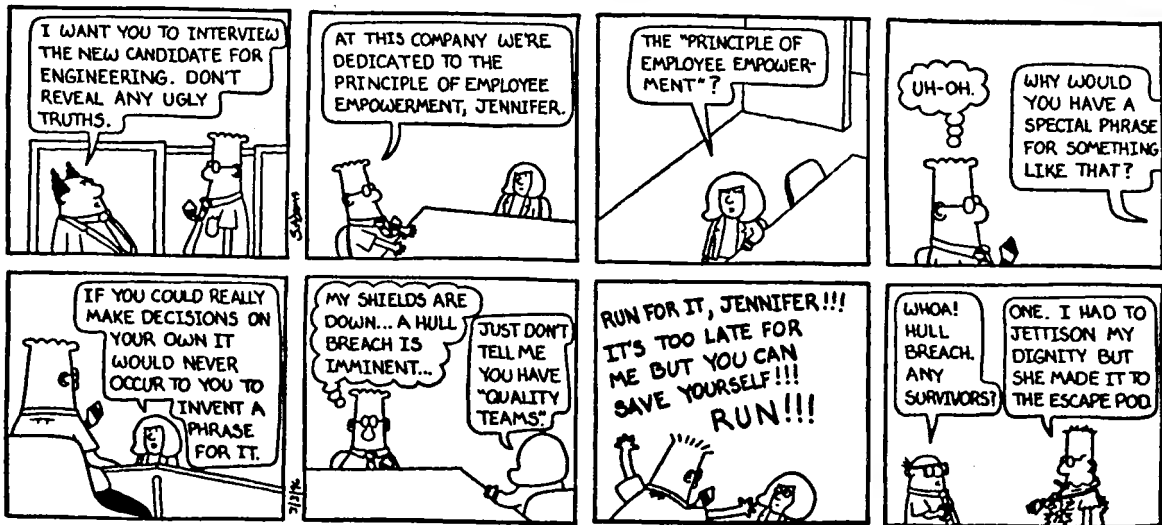
Naomi (*Transitional Phases*) — In my opinion you should send your back issues of *Transitional Phases* out with KAPA 100. I'd rather avoid postmails if possible. Since there will be a number of "old-timers" who will get copies of #100, your back issues would be a good opportunity to catch everyone up on what has been happening in your life. Hopefully it will be a thick enough issue that even multiple zines from you

won't dominate the mailing. Ω I'm glad you enjoyed your work with H&R Block so much. Things really seemed to fall your way, first getting recruited for tech support during the "pre-season", then landing a position at the Madison Street office. It's great that things worked out so well for you. Ω I missed the flaming tractor incident, though of course heard about it later. That's why I failed to mention it in my con report. Ω yct me: well, it looks like we will have a choice for the 2002 Worldcon race after all, namely San Francisco and San Jose. The bad news: they're both run by the same committee. Last I heard (and this was at least a month ago), negotiations had broken down with the San Francisco Marriott (déjà vu all over again!), so they were faced with two choices: put together a bid without their flagship hotel (as they did in 1993), or move to another city. In a stroke of pure schizophrenia, they decided to do both, and bid against themselves! I don't keep up with the fannish usenet groups, so I don't know if that is still the plan. I guess we'll find out something at Midwestcon. ∞ I don't think I can add anything to your passage on abortion rights. I hope we can put this behind us in KAPA and move on to other subjects.

Before closing, I feel a need to make a commentary about the fallout from the shootings in Littleton. It seems that perhaps, finally, Congress (at least the Senate) is coming to its senses and resisting the "no compromise" attitude of the NRA. The people are speaking up, and maybe some of our leaders will realize that the NRA position represents a tiny minority of the public, and that the vast majority want sensible gun control legislation. It may not pass this time, but perhaps we've seen the first chink in the NRA's armor.

That about does it for this edition. See you all (and I do mean *all*) in #100!!!!!!

Pat



© 1996 United Feature Syndicate, Inc. (NYC)