

Vanish With the Rose #57

from Nicki Lynch, P.O. Box 3120, Gaithersburg, MD 20885. Internet: lynch@access.digex.net

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www.smithway.org/mimosa This is written solely for the members of the 96th mailing of KAPA.

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August has been incredibly busy. It started with Worldcon and ended with the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair.

Things started happening just before August, but it all came together during that month. In July, the Australians e-mailed us for help with their progress report for next year's Worldcon. The American couple who had been helping them had not contacted them in a while, and when they did, they quit the committee. So they got hold of us to see if we could arrange to get their progress report printed and delivered to Baltimore. We contacted our printer and he said here would be no problem. So the printer got a copy of the progress report and arranged to deliver the nine boxes to our house the day before we were scheduled to leave. We also picked up several boxes of envelopes to mail out the reports not handed out at Worldcon.

Just before Worldcon began, David and Diana Thayer visited us for a day. They flew in from Texas to spend a day with us and do some sight seeing before the con began. While we were waiting for them to arrive the boxes from the printer came in. Since there were so many boxes, we could only carry half at a time to Baltimore. Fortunately, we're only an hour or so from there, so Richard came back one of the mornings to pick up the rest of the boxes.

So the first day of the con (Wednesday), we got the Thayers pointed off in the direction of Washington, D.C. and we headed to Baltimore, hoping to see them later. (We did.) We got to the hotel and were told our room wasn't ready and to come back later. So, we went to the convention center to pick up the con stuff and find the Australians. We easily found them and off loaded the boxes to them. I had time to look around a little before making my intro type panel, while Rich were back to try and get a room. It took several tries, but we finally got a room in the Omni. In looking back, Rich said we probably should have gone to the Marriott, as we wouldn't have had a five block walk. We got to a few parties and trudged back to the hotel that night.

Most of the convention activities were held in one wing of the Baltimore Convention Center. The upper floor had registration and much of the programming as well as tables for clubs, those bidding for Worldcon, and those running the upcoming Worldcons. There were also computer terminals set up for people to keep in touch. On the lower level was the huckster room, art show, fan history display area, voodoo board, and major event space (for the Hugos and Masquerade). Part of the fan lounge (consisting of overstuffed chairs and several couches) was also set up there and part was set up in the Hyatt, which became a big mess. Since the area was open in the convention center, no fanzines could be sold from there. The room in the Hyatt was very small and had very little room for fanzine sales. There was also a great deal of confusion as to where the fan programming was that was scheduled for the "fanzine lounge". I was told it was in the convention center and most people assumed it was in the Hyatt. Since

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it was a five block uphill walk, it wasn't easy to run from one to another if you guessed wrong. So what little there was of fan programming suffered quite a bit, even though Rich's interview with Bob Madle went well.

Thursday, I had two media type panels. The first was on obscure films that are terrific. Well, I wasn't sure what I was going to say and it didn't turn into a TV panel, as I had hoped. The two men also on the panel (the fourth person didn't show up) were really into movies, so I just sort of asked questions. The second panel was on the TV series *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*. The woman from England on the panel saw tapes of it because her husband is an expert on vampire literature and media. It was a very lively panel (especially about a vampire show) and I had a great time talking about it. It's a fun series. Both the panels I was on were standing room only. Several of the panels I attended were also that way, except for the one on who in the SF world should be suggested to be on a U.S. stamp. In the U.S. a person has to have been dead for 10 years before they can be on a stamp. The panel came up with ten names and they were submitted to the Post Office by the Worldcon committee.

Friday was Hugo night. I had panels to see and things to do before getting ready to attend. We skipped dinner in favor of snacking on the buffet provided before the Hugos. We also were late in getting out to the seating, so we sat near the photographers. We were really surprised when we were announced as winning the Hugo for fanzine. It was pretty exciting. We went to as many parties as we could, starting with a quick one in the room of Cris and Neal Kaden. I left my Hugo with them, rather than carry it around all night, while Rich carried his. We went to the Hugo nominees party given by the Australians (the only party they gave) and it was pretty good. We got to the perennial Japanese party, which is always fun, and a bunch of others. It was a great night and we had a good time.

The one controversy I heard (there were probably more) was on the parties given by the committees bidding for the next Worldcons. The parties were really over the top. They featured lots of food and the rooms were substantially decorated. It was estimated that several thousand dollars were spent each night in food alone. Because of the substantial money spent on the bids by Boston and Philadelphia (Philadelphia won the bid for 2001), people are going to look hard at what it takes to run a Worldcon bid and win. We talked with several of the Boston people before the bidding ended and they were not happy with the excesses that the bidding had come to. One positive thing was that they had no animosity towards the Philly people and planned to work there if Philly won. After they lost, Boston gave away most of their decorations and T-shirts. It was just amazing how much there was, although the flamingos, their mascot, were very quickly. The only ones left were the giant ones made of chicken wire and crushed paper. I suggested taking a pair of them home for the lawn, but Rich said they would never fit in the car. The next day I saw one of the giant flamingos in a van. Apparently, someone else had the same idea.

We didn't get to the masquerade Saturday night as that was one of the few nights we planned a big dinner with friends, rather than picking up people during the day. We went to a barbecue restaurant in Harbor Place. The convention took place in the heart of Baltimore - the Inner Harbor. Baltimore is a seaport and

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the Inner Harbor area is a small bay where the downtown starts. A number of years ago the harbor area was renovated into a shopping and convention area and is very popular. One of the major aquariums in the country is located there. The major league baseball team has their new stadium there and the local soccer team also has a stadium there. In fact, their first soccer game was played during the convention.

By missing the masquerade, we missed one of the more bizarre happenings. The Master of Ceremonies tripped on stage and knocked a table of awards, as well as himself, off the stage onto the floor. Fortunately, he was not hurt and the broken awards will be replaced. I'm sure the masquerade was as spectacular as usual and I'm sorry to have missed it. However, with the classroom style of seating, rather than a raised theater seating, I would have had a hard time seeing much.

By Sunday, you could tell things were winding down. People were leaving and everything in the convention center was being packed up and carried off. I helped lick envelopes for the Australians and they mailed the progress reports they hadn't handed out that afternoon. The convention center had a booth run by the U.S. Postal service and it was even open on Sunday, which is unusual. (The postal people didn't know what to think of the con on the first day, but by Friday, they were dressing up in funny hats and looking at the various club tables. Fans also enjoyed having a post office open in the convention center and there was a steady stream of business.)

We finally got to the con suite on Sunday after the con ended and all the parties had donated their leftovers to it. It was packed with people and food. We caught up with friends and all the daily zines.

I had a good time at the con, I usually do. I managed to get a few of the free books (including hardbacks) that were available. One of the books I got for free I had been looking for. I also found a number of other books I wanted. I spent some time talking with people in the Green Room (where the program participants go to relax before their panels). Many of the pros treat it as a con suite and spend a lot of time there. I talked with the guest of honor - C.J. Cherryh - there for a while. She seemed to be having a good time, but she was tired.

Rich had a good time, but he found a lot more wrong with it than I did. He didn't feel that the parties were as much fun as they had been due to the crush of people. It was hard to hear in most of the parties and very few chairs. He was very disappointed in the fan lounge and decided not to put any *MIMOSA* out for sale there.

We were not particularly impressed with our hotel - the Omni. The room was OK and the restaurant, which was also a sports bar, was better than most sports bars are. There was just something that said, "I really don't care about the guests", in that hotel and I can't put my finger on it. One thing that struck me was that the elevators whistled whenever it stopped at a floor, probably for blind passengers. I remarked to Rich that I thought the hotel was carrying this year's pirate theme a bit too far by piping people on and off the elevator!

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So Worldcon was over for another year and much earlier than usual. This left us with the rest of the month of August to find something to do. Fortunately, that was not hard. We had the Kadens visiting us for several days after Worldcon. We showed them around Washington and had a good time.

My company had Employee Appreciation Week the week after Worldcon. During this week, the company sponsors a number of activities for the employees to do as a group.

On Saturday the company sponsored a day at a local amusement park; the company paid for parking, park admission and dinner for any employee and a guest who cared to go. We aren't interested in amusement parks, so we did go. Those who did go had a good time and saw they only rain we had for the rest of August.

On Monday, the company bought us breakfast - bagels and cream cheese along with orange juice (we already get free coffee and tea). There was also a blood drive, run by the Red Cross and the first of the week long contests began. We were divided into teams, depending on what we work on (for example, I'm a software tester, so I was with the testing team) and the teams competed in various games for points. At the end of the week, the three teams with the most points win prizes. Each team was encouraged to have a theme and show Team Spirit by decorating their area in the theme. My team's theme was "Life's a Beach When You're a Tester"; we all brought in beach things, like towels, sunglasses, books, and other things one would use at a beach. Several people brought in the big beach umbrellas and one of the team went totally overboard with her decorating. Each team was also given a large T-shirt to decorate. On Monday, we also welcomed a new member to our group.

On Tuesday, we played Nerf Golf, which is a child's version of golf using a soft ball and plastic clubs. The plastic holes were set up around the company suite and people really had a great time hitting a ball around. Even the upper management got involved.

On Wednesday, we collected canned and boxed food for a local food bank, continued playing games outside, celebrated Team Spirit Day by decorating our work space and went to a minor league baseball game in the evening. (Well, we did a little bit of work that day.) The outside games didn't turn out well when someone stepped on a hornet's nest and several people were stung. Fortunately, no one was allergic to the stings, although one woman was stung several times on the neck and decided to go to her doctor. The Team Spirit was great as every team had their area fully decorated. Our team had lots of beach stuff; we even had the Beach Boys playing on the radio! Another team had a Medieval theme, complete with costumes (nothing too elaborate) and a "castle" made by putting gray pieces of paper on the top of their cubes to look like the walls of the castle. They had a beautiful large stuffed dragon that guarded a "drawbridge" as well. The operations people had circuit boards stuck every where and the actuarials all dressed as famous dead people (I guess because they create all the tables on life expectancy used by insurance companies). It was fun, but the minor league baseball game in the evening was probably the highlight of the day.

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Richard was planning on attending the game, but there were two problems - He had a meeting at 4:30 and the game started at 7:30 and I got the tickets (the company paid for an employee and a guest) on that day. I had no way to give him a ticket except to leave it at home for him. He was going to be late, so I had the choice of waiting around at home and getting there very late or to leave him the ticket at home and catch a ride with someone from work to meet Rich at the game. I got a ride from work and met Rich at the game. However, it wasn't that simple.

I and my co-worker got to the ballpark in plenty of time, but the parking lot was full. So he drove around until he found a parking spot in the field next to the stadium. Fortunately, there is plenty of open space around the stadium. When we got in the stadium, we realized that there was going to be a problem with all of us sitting together - the place was packed and we had general seating! This meant there were no seats set aside for us. It was also Cub Scout night and every troop in Maryland must have been there. We looked around for a while and finally managed to find several other people from the company. Then the question was where should we sit? The reserved orange seats were moderately filled, but not completely. One of our people talked with the ushers and they said we could sit there until someone with a ticket for that space showed up. So we had the top row of reserved seats directly behind home plate. No one claimed them all evening, despite the game being sold out and standing room only.

Rich got there late and had me paged when he saw the enormous crowd. (Several co-workers mentioned it to me during the week.) It was a good game and we stayed through the main attraction at the end - the Flying Elvies. They are a troop of Elvis impersonators (or re-creators as the M.C. put it) who parachute out of an airplane dressed as Elvis in lit up jump suits. (They play a pivotal role at the end of the movie - *Honeymoon In Vegas*.) There was also the "world's second best Elvis re-creator" who sang on the field before and after the game and from the stands between innings. In minor league baseball, there are activities with the fans as well as watching the game. So, the Flying Elvies jumped out of a plane and landed safely on the darkened ball field after the game was over. It was quite a night.

Thursday, we had an all-hands meeting with the president of our division in the morning, who ended his talk by giving everyone polo shirts with the company logo, and I helped with the ice cream social in the afternoon. We got pints of ice cream and toppings from Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream. There wasn't much left after half an hour. We also had a piñata, which had a variety of toys and candy in it.

Friday, things were winding down and not as many people as usual contributed to the potluck lunch. It was a small, but nice variety of foods. As part of the committee responsible for the week, I brought desserts - two cakes and a platter of cookies - I bought at the grocery store. I didn't have time to cook. We had so much food and so few people, that only half of my cakes had been eaten. So I took them home for the local SF club meeting that night. We also brought a sheet cake to the meeting to thank the WSFA members for their support. A good time was had by all.

Just as that week ended, the Montgomery Country Agricultural Fair was beginning.

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Saturday, I brought my quilts to the fair grounds. I stood in line and noticed a woman who looked like a local fan I know. Turned out it was and we had a great time talking and looking around the Fair afterwards. I entered a miniature quilt in the quilt exhibit part of the Fair and two baby quilts in a special event they had for that year's theme - the Year of the Quilt. The special event was a "You Be The Judge" contest, where Fair goers voted on their favorite quilt. There were five categories where prizes would be awarded. After the Fair, the quilts would be donated to the Linus Project, which collects quilts, afghans and blankets for children undergoing cancer treatments. So, I knew I'd never see the quilts again. It was hard parting with them, but I can made the quilts over again. I do have photographs of them. I got an unexpected bonus when I entered the baby quilts - for each quilt I got a free pass to the Fair, a big generic Fair ribbon and four leaflets of quilt patterns. One of the patterns was a quilt I'd seen in ads for batting, but the ad said the pattern was unavailable. Apparently, it was! The free pass was to be used on the night when the awards were handed out.

Richard and I went to the Fair on Tuesday night. It was a hot evening, but we that didn't stop us from going to the Fair. We did our usual thing by starting the evening with dinner at the Dining Hall run by a local church group. The same group serve lunch and dinner to the public all during the Fair. The price is reasonable and the food is good. It was so hot this year, a city bus with the motor running was parked in front of the Dining Hall to provide a cool spot for senior citizens.

One feature of the Fair we always look forward to is a sculpture of the featured farm animal done in either butter or ice. It's a humor thing. This year it was an ice sculpture of a cow, but the small "house" that usually keeps it fresh all week must have had problems. The sculpture was melting and had almost lost a leg.

Then we looked through the exhibit halls. My quilt didn't win anything, but did get placed in a display case, which kept it clean. The friend I ran into won a Grand Champion award for a beaded necklace she entered. The vegetables looked pretty wilted in the heat and the flower arrangements looked even worse. Since none of the building are air conditioned, anything perishables was rapidly spoiling. The non-perishables, such as quilts, clothing, cross stitch, etc. still looked pretty good. The exhibits were fun as usual and we had a great time.

Thursday, I got a call at work - I had won an award in the "You Be The Judge" contest and could I show up to receive it? Of course! Rich wasn't interested in going to the Fair again; he had things he wanted to do at home, so Sheryl went with me. She hadn't been to the Fair in years and she could get in free as I had two free passes. So, after dinner, we went to the Fair.

The awards were to be given out in the Activities Tent which we were told was "opposite" the dining hall. We weren't sure we were in the right place as they were setting up for a cake judging contest, sponsored by a cake flour company. I asked the woman registering cakes and she said the quilt awards would be given out after the cake judging started. So we sat back and waited.

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After making the introductions and talking about the contest (which is a separate event from the cake and pie judging at the Fair itself), the "You Be The Judge" contest awards were given out. I received the Pioneers of the Fair Award. The people who have been active in the Fair for a long time are considered Pioneers. I guess a fannish equivalent would be the First Fandom people. I was very pleased to get an award, especially since it was a gift bag of quilting things. I got two books, two patterns, several quilt pattern flyers, a small snipper, several yards of assorted fabric, a quilt pin, and a year's subscription to a quilt magazine as well as a small plaque. Since the losers in the cake contest would be cut and served when the contest was over, Sheryl and I decided to look around the Fair and get some cake before we left.

The exhibits were just as interesting the second time I saw them and the perishables things looked even worse. In some cases the vegetables had been removed entirely. The ice cow sculpture was now just a melted torso. We spend some time looking at the farm animals on exhibit as well. Most of the animal judging had happened earlier in the week, but it was interesting to see the various animals.

When the cake judging finally came to an end, we were there waiting. The tent was also filled with people who were ready to eat the cakes that hadn't been judged the best. The top three cakes were announced and two of the three winners were there to receive their prize money. The first place winner wasn't there; she arrived about ten minutes later to receive her prize. We were surprised that the winning cake was a coconut cake. (The recipe was in the local paper a few weeks later.) The people with the top cakes picked them up so we didn't get to taste them, which was unfortunate. In talking later with the M.C., she said one of the cakes had sausage in it! It was a breakfast cake and didn't place in the top three.

Still, those cakes not chosen as one of the top eight were pretty good. While we didn't get to taste all of them (only half of the cake was cut and served - the bakers picked up the other half), the ones we did were pretty good. The Italian Creme cakes was wonderfully light and tasty and a peach brandy bundt cakes was terrific! The recipes from last year were available and this year's will be available next year.

It was a full month and it was nice to rest in September.

On to the comments on KAPA 95.

OO Pat

I thought the date was longer than usual. If this works out, how about making this apa come out 5 times a year instead of 4 or 6? It's just a thought.

Apple to Windows and a Few Other Computers on the Way! Betsy

ct me re the quilt tops your sister found. Is she quilting them herself, or is she having someone else quilt them? If the material is old, it may need some special handling. ** ct me I don't know that *Highlander: The Series* was canceled so much as the creative team felt it was about time to move on and ended the

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series. And Adrian Paul wanted to do movies. He's going to be in the *Highlander IV* movie, whenever it happens. The spin-off series, *Highlander: The Raven*, starring Elizabeth Gracen is not a great replacement. **ct me *Gone with the Wind* was in the theaters? ** re *Titanic* One of my quilting friends' husband is a major Titanic fan. He belongs to some club and has done a lot of research on it. While they enjoyed the movie, he was dissatisfied with the errors made. I also understand the family of one of the crew - someone who was portrayed as a coward and taking bribes - has taken offence and is suing the film company.

Sawdust and Caviar Tony

Oddly enough, a revival of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* is playing in Washington, DC. ** I think you need to relax and be thankful you don't live in Washington. We've heard it far most than anyone else.

BlueGras no. 39 Guy

So how was Buconeer for you? We only saw you once (or was it twice) during the con. ** ct Naomi If you love animals, the last thing one wants to be is a veterinarian. (There are several vets in fandom, if you want true life stories.) You see the worst of people, those who abuse their pets while claiming to love them. You also see very sick animals all the time. How about being a pharmacist? It's in the medical field, with lots of responsibility, but no patients. ** You know, Guy, you can personalize your spell checker so that it recognizes words like "fanzine". ** ct me *Buffy* tends to be grimmer since the creator of it has more control over the TV series than he did the movie. However, TV does have limitations as it's not as bloody as he would like, so I've read. See the article from the *Post* in this zine. ** ct me The guy near you in *The Mask of Zorro* must have been a relative of the people we moved away from in the same movie. It looked like a father and daughter. After every scene, she's say, "who was that and what are they doing?" and he'd tell her. This was even during the previews. After about ten minutes of this, we moved. Fortunately, the theater wasn't too full and we could find other seats. ** ct me Already the questions about Ken Starr and his methods are coming under scrutiny. Today it was revealed that he was in with the Paula Jones people before he asked to expand his investigations - leading to Monica. ** ct Pat re London You'd have to visit Michael Jackson's abode to see the remains of the Elephant Man - he bought them a number of years ago. It was in all the papers and is constantly mentioned as an indication of how weird he is. I've never seen any mentioned of how he has the bones displayed, if he does. Ick.

Transitional Phases 37 Naomi

Richard had his first (and hopefully only) bout with poison ivy this summer. ** ct me Glad you liked the recipe. I put up a recipe a day at work. A few months ago I discovered something interesting in the rec.food.cooking newsgroup on Usenet. Someone had started a series of stories, supposedly by a senior citizen, about small town life that ended in a recipe. Posted by buffy_lyer, the stories are funny and the recipes are OK. The poster never comments or gives a name; it's become quite a mystery. The series really took off when the author and her friend won a small lottery and decided to tour America and gather recipes for a cookbook. The last ones I read had Buffy and her friend Sheryl Ann (who is totally out of control) in Northern California. I've been putting up a few of her adventures at work, but can't put up the

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Hotel California ones - the recipes had pot in them! If anyone with web access is interested, go to www.dejanews.com and search for the past postings. ** ct me I can't imagine what sort of alternate spelling I would try and how I would I know if they were even related to me? There are no living relatives who were around then. ** ct me Will there be a Disclave? That's a question that keeps coming up at the club meetings and the con chairman says he's working on it. He doesn't have a hotel or guests yet and it's almost November! We sat with several people at the last Third Friday meeting and talked about an alternate to Disclave for next year. I have a feeling that some sort of convention will happen in this area, but not a Disclave. My feeling is that the name will be retired for a while. ** ct me Hollywood has been big into hype for years. So what if they have a big advertising budget? The technique of "four walling" - heavily hyping a low budget movie so it has a big opening weekend before word of mouth gets out on how bad it is - has been around for a long time. *Titanic* had an extra unexpected push in that it was suppose to fail big time. The movie was over budget and the opening had been pushed back. That, combined with being doing by James Cameron who's not well liked in Hollywood, started the tongues wagging. I read for weeks how *Titanic* was supposed to fail before it came out. I think that gave it a push for people to see it, and they liked it. Once a movie is a hit, the studio pushed how successful it is to get others to see it. It happens. ** ct me I heard an article on NPR about "critics" that seem to like everything. I guess they are for real. There are people with no taste out there as well as those who can't bear to say anything bad. One of the local TV stations has a critic who rarely gives a bad review. Have you also considered that since the "review" is out of context it might not be positive. I remember Siskel giving a movie a poor review, but the ads made it sound as if he liked it. ** ct me I can understand studios not wanting to give out tapes of new movies. They have enough trouble with pirate tapes without releasing one themselves. Siskel had emergency brain surgery; I've never heard it called a "bypass". ** ct You saw a lot more in *The Full Monty* than I did. I don't recall much involvement by females other than to give them the idea and showing up at the show. If there were scenes where the women were discussing striping with the men, I missed it. I did find the accents difficult as well. The movie had nothing to do with women and everything to do with men. It was about them finding new respect for themselves through their initiative and drive. However, if all the roles were recast as women, none of this would come out. ** ct me If the NRA didn't give classes in gun safety, who would? I'm not sure the police have the time or the manpower. ** ct Guy Hotels are in the business of renting rooms. Even if the committee had denied someone a room, they could just go through the usual channels. Isn't this what the Hostility Suite did at Rivercon a few years back? I don't think the last few Disclaves made their room commitments. ** ct Guy It's interesting to see how many stories about the McDonald incident there are. When I saw her on TV a few years ago when it was happening, she was in her fifties. Seems to me Guy is younger. Every once in a while, the topic is discussed in rec.food.cooking. I understand there are several websites with information on the McDonald's coffee incident. As I recall, she was holding the cup between her legs and was parked, taking the cover off when it spilled and burned her. She had burns on her thighs and pubic region requiring skin graphs. What I don't understand is why she didn't go after the car company for not having a cup holder in that model. I guess McDonald had deeper pockets. I've read a number of articles on how America has become a nation of whiners, so it's fairly common knowledge. ** ct Guy The Amazing Randi is a respected magician who performed for years before taking up the banner of debunking Yuri Geller. As a magician

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he knows how the tricks are done. I've forgotten the details of how the whole thing between them started. I'm thankful there are people who buck the tide of ignorance and try to give perspective to some of the nutty ideas out there. They get little recognition. The networks will run pseudo-science shows on the Bermuda Triangle and cross circles, but not on people who debunk them.

The Muunie Bin #3 Sue

Well, at least you made it in. ** Thanks for the pictures!

Sailing The Abnormalcy #27 Bryan

My company is currently replacing all our PCS with Dells and Windows 95. There are boxes all over the suite and the PC person is incredibly busy. ** It sounds like you have a good boss. Appreciate him and let him know that occasionally. ** Both Xena and her "big brother" show *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys* were created by people who enjoy the Chinese and martial arts flicks. This was especially obvious when Xena visited the land of Chin. Have you seen the new series *Martial Law* starring Simmo Hung? I understand he's well known for this films in Asia and co-starred with Jackie Chan in a number of films. He's also on the heavy side and can do things that would amaze Guy for a someone who's not waif thin. It's fun if you're into those flicks. Rather than plot or character driven, it's fight driven. ** Anime was introduced to Southern fandom about 20 years ago. There were a number of people in Knoxville who were interested and brought tapes to Southern cons and showed them in rooms. Some people in KAPA might remember J. J. Johnson; he was very involved in what was then called Japanimation and I think was a fansubber. He was killed a number of years ago and I've forgotten the details. ** I've been to a few media cons and it's always struck me that they attract more females and minorities than SF cons. Many of the fans I know who've "crossed over" to true fandom, as it's called, were as well as several authors. I'm hoping fandom will catch up someday. ** Sorry to hear about your cat. When we lived in Chattanooga, one of our cats died of FIV. Stress will often trigger the virus. ** ct me Yes, *Buffy* is. See the article from the *Post*. There are a number of TV series that have strong writing, character development, story arcs, subtext, etc. so it's not unusual. How do you define sophisticated? ** ct me There are things done in open and then there's the conspiracy. What about the millionaire who sent out writers to drum up stories about Clinton and directed what he found to the far right for follow up? What about the "leaks" to the press that no one can seem to track when they look back? What about the people who popped up with the "truth" about Foster's suicide, people who claimed to have seen the body, but have vanished. Even Ken Starr declared it a suicide. Plenty of smoke.

Notes from the Club Car 49 Pat

I'm hoping we can make the DSC in 2000. ** What a great idea for your detached guest house! ** Riverton will be missed. That's another one I'm planning on our attending. Still, I agree with the Franchises that it's better to stop before it goes downhill. ** I thought crabs walked on land occasionally. ** Of *The Avengers*, after we saw it, Rich said it was a poorly done money and proof that the 60's are truly dead. I was very disappointed in it. I was also disappointed in *Six Day, Seven Nights*.** Considering that in all the things I read and heard about *Blade*, it was always mentioned that it was from a comic book.

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It even gives credit to the creator in the article in *Starlog*. This is the first I've heard of any sort of suit against the movie. If so, it's been extremely quiet. ** ct me Thank you and the book case we keep them on is quite full. We really don't expect to get another Hugo for a while. You'll have to ask Rich for all the reasons. ** ct me The quilting guild is both local and regional. It's based in Gaithersburg, but the members are from all over the county. There are several other guilds in the area and many quilters are in more than one guild. ** ct me Abortion clinics do abortions. They don't do counseling or offer any sort of alternatives. Family Planning also offers nothing but abortions. They also resent anyone who offers any sort of actual alternatives. "Woman's Power"? Is the ability to kill another human being the way to get power? One either feels human life is valuable or not.

Kentucky Nuggets Jodie

Nice essay on style. Even though she passed on several years ago, Jackie O is still very much with us. There was a recent re-dedication of New York City's Union Station's restoration which was a project of hers. I didn't realize that green is your favorite color. I don't mind while, but I don't buy or wear it often as it gets dirty so quickly. ** I had a great time being on a *Buffy* panel at Worldcon. By the size of the audience, a lot of others are fans, too. ** I always get a thrill when I come of the metro in Washington. It's just so amazing a place.

Well, that's it for comments.

By the time you read this we'll have attended the event we look forward to all year almost as much as World Con - The Goodwill Industry Used Book Sale. Held in the Fall at the Washington Convention, the sale features an incredible variety of books, paper and hardbacks at low prices. They also constantly replace books all during the sale.

It's amazing to see so many people looking over the books, magazines, records, CDS, and stamps as well as the variety of ways to carry them away. We usually bring a bunch of cloth and plastic bags to carry the books as we browse. People bring cardboard boxes (which are also available there), paper bags, and wheeled carts. I've even seen people with grocery shopping cards!

After several hours of looking, we find a place to sit and sort through the books. Then the waiting in line begins. It usually takes over half an hour in line to check out. We then finish with a dim sum late lunch at our favorite Chinese restaurant.

See you next time. N



BY RICHARD CARTWRIGHT

David Boreanaz and Sarah Michelle Gellar in WB's "Buffy the Vampire Slayer."

'Buffy': A Good Fang Going

*Transylvanians
In Babe-ylon on WB*

By LLOYD ROSE
Washington Post Staff Writer

The smartest horror allegory of teenage life since the movie "Carrie," "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" sounds as if its one joke would be the cutely oxymoronic title. But the joke is surprisingly deep and, like a lot of jokes, sometimes sick or scary.

Creator Joss Whedon—who also wrote and directed the "Buffy" movie of 1992, and wrote the creepy screenplay for "Alien: Resurrection"—doesn't have a modern slash-and-gore sensibility like Kevin Williamson ("Scream"). He's a Gothacist in the old style, interested in the eerie, the haunted, the uncanny. His stuff doesn't leap at you with a knife, it creeps up your spine.

While tickling you and making you laugh, of course. Horror movie cliches have long

been so familiar they're funny, and the only way to make them work at all is to get the audience's guard down with humor. At 16, Buffy is informed that she's the one chosen vampire slayer, and from now on her extra-curricular activities will be staking blood-suckers and vanquishing other nasties. With her friends and allies, she battles vampires, invisible killers, homicidal mummies, witches, sea monsters, teachers who are really bugs, salesmen who are *made of bugs* . . .

The show, whose third season premieres Tuesday at 8 on the WB network—Channel 50 in Washington—doesn't spoof itself and so collapse into camp, but it has a nice appreciation of the absurdities inherent in its whole premise. So the characters in "Buffy" have their own sardonic reactions to the weirdness around them, as if the wise-

See BUFFY, G7, Col. 1

Sanguine Youth in 'Buffy the V'

BUFFY. From *G1*

cracking Joel and the robots of "Mystery Science Theater 3000" had suddenly been transported *into* the movie they were sending up. The problem for the students of Sunnydale High is that, after they quit laughing, whatever awful thing they were laughing at is still there.

Sunnydale, Calif., as its name implies, is the cliché of a sunlit middle-class American small town. "Buffy" works against atmospherics, going for the contrasts implicit in a horror story setting that looks like the subject of a Beach Boys song. Impossibly fit, gorgeous teens stroll the halls. Buffy herself, in the person of Sarah Michelle Gellar, is a major babe, way too good-looking to ever be the nerd she's portrayed as. But nerd she is, child of a broken home (she lives with Mom), with a suspicious past (she burned down the gym of her last high school) and given to really dweeby acts such as carrying around sharpened wooden stakes in her backpack.

Buffy hangs out with two other supposed losers, the intellectual Willow (Alyson Hannigan) and dorky but handsome Xander (Nicholas Brendon). Their guide and mentor—Buffy's "Watcher"—is the bookish Englishman Rupert Giles (Anthony Head), who runs the school library. In one of the show's best recurring jokes, the library is the perfect place for this group of monster-batters to do all its meeting and plotting, since *no one else is ever there*.

Last season, Buffy's gang was joined by snooty Cordelia (Charisma Carpenter), the school's "popular girl," and thoughtful, offbeat Oz (Seth Green), who became a werewolf after getting bitten by his infant cousin at Thanksgiving dinner. Everybody parties at a club called the Bronze. When she's not there, Buffy is dutifully patrolling the Sunnydale cemetery, on the lookout for vampires, whom she thumps with a few karate blows, then jabs with a stake. She doesn't have much of a social life. She was in love with the good vampire Angel (David Boreanaz), but then he turned evil and she had to kill him. Love hurts.



Adolescence is hell and, looked at from one perspective, "Buffy" is as much documentary as fantasy. A witch mother jealous of her daughter's youth takes over the girl's body so she can join the cheerleading team. A girl is snubbed, ignored and looked through so often that she finally becomes invisible. Buffy nearly gets a Stepford stepdad (John Ritter) when her mother unknowingly dates a robot. The sexy new biology teacher turns out to be a praying mantis, as Xander discovers to his regret.

(Xander is the first to admit that he has terrible luck with women: He also fell for a 2,000-year-old mummy who crumbled to dust in his embrace, leaving her desiccated arms still clinging to him.)

The show is rooted in the vulnerable isolation of teenage life, the sense of living in a reality that is *incommunicable*. On the one hand, it seems ridiculously convenient for the plot that no one's parents are ever around when all these monstrous things are happening. On the other hand, that's exactly what life at 15 or 16 feels like. How could your parents help with anything really important? How could you even begin to make them understand?

Sunnydale High is squeaky clean by contemporary standards, peopled with teenagers to whom a kiss is still a big deal, who accept the authority of teachers and parents. There's drinking, but there don't seem to be any drugs. This is basically the same '50s adolescent world as in "The Blob" or "I Was a Teenage Werewolf," and for the show to work it almost has to be. Bring in some real-life horror like AIDS, and the monsters shrivel to papier-mache.

The adults in "Buffy" tend to be more clueless than villainous, though a swimming coach who turned the team into sea monsters echoed the mad scientist of "Teenage Werewolf." (Tracking the team through a sewer, Buffy mutters, "This'll be great for my reputation: 'She did it with the whole swim team.'") The teachers are basically well-meaning, and the first principal was a touchy-feely type who wanted to "relate" to the kids. Xander and some other students got possessed by hyenas and killed him, a lesson not lost on the nasty new principal, Mr. Snyderman (Armin Shimerman), who boasts that he is not a nice guy: "The last principal was a nice guy, and *he got eaten*." Snyderman and the mayor of Sunnydale seem to have some inkling that there are strange things afoot, but they are the only adults who really do.

Sunnydale is a very odd burg. If you're the creator of a contemporary Gothic teen fantasy, it has everything you need: split-level houses *and* an ancient church containing a medieval relic. As necessary, Whedon has tossed in a deserted factory, a deserted mansion, a nearby college (for the evil, snake-demon-worshipping frat boys), an Army base, a magic shop, and a bar where the vampires hang out (complete with a sleazy bartender who wants to take "artistic" nude photographs of Buffy). So Sunnydale grows, independent of logic and zoning laws.

Like "The X-Files," "Buffy" has both a long-running story and episodic ones. Angel belongs to the long-running story. Though he died at the end of last season, Boreanaz's contract has been renewed. (It's hard to know

'ampire Slayer'

what they're going to do with Angel, who when he was bad was very, very bad: He killed Giles's inamorata, the Gypsy techno-pagan Jenny Calendar, played by Robia La Morte, and left her in Giles's bed at the end of a trail of rose petals.) Also renewed were the contracts of two other actors, whose characters were last seen fleeing Sunnydale in a fabulous finned '50s automobile: Spike (James Marsters, the wittiest actor on the show), a Cockney-accented vampire with a personal style modeled on Sting; and Drusilla (Juliet Landau of "Ed Wood"), also Cockney-accented, sort of, and extremely, extremely strange.

"I was dreaming," Drusilla murmurs sexily when Spike wakes her. "We were in Paris. . . . You had the branding irons." Drusilla is a few teeth short of a comb: At one point we see her sulkily trying to persuade an unseen bird to eat, and Spike has to explain to her that it's dead. Closeup of the bird on its back on the bottom of the cage. Drusilla goes to pieces. She doesn't like reality. Brutal, even sadistic killers, she and Spike have a tender romantic relationship: "My dark flower," he calls her. "My ripe, wicked black plum."

In the final episode of last season, Spike and Buffy team up, and he finds himself sitting in the living room with her mom (Kristine Sutherland). Awkward silence. "Do I know you?" she finally inquires politely of this new friend of her daughter's, and he responds, "Um, you hit me with an ax. Remember: 'Leave my daughter alone!'" Awkward silence continues.

"Buffy's" jokes and drolleries, and its fragile tone of humor and horror, are surprisingly consistent from show to show. The series has a talented roster of writers, including ex-"X-Files" producer Howard Gordon, but it *feels* as if Whedon polishes every episode. Altogether, "Buffy" is an odd, very personal fantasy; it's hard to imagine the show working with anyone else running it (it would go flat and annoyingly quirky, the way "Twin Peaks" did when David Lynch wasn't directing). Whedon is a television auteur.

He seems to have found himself in the medium. His film version of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" was hit-or-miss, though admittedly the hits—such as casting Paul Reubens (Pee-wee Herman) as a vampire sidekick—were right on target. And his screenplay for "Alien: Resurrection" had to jam his ideas into the "Alien" format, where they didn't quite fit. The "Alien" movies, though they have a female star, are predator-slasher horrors. With Whedon's screenplay, "Alien: Resurrection" was a fever-dream about female sexuality, full of awe, disgust, fear and desire, and Sigourney Weaver's Ripley was a goddess with cold



BY RICHARD CARTWRIGHT

Joss Whedon, founder of Sunnydale, Calif., seems to have polished every episode of "Buffy."

reptile blood in her veins.

The movies' response to feminism has been to create heroines—Ripley was one—who might be called "Boys With Breasts." Even though they were women it was okay, because they were *just like men*. But though Buffy batters bad guys with the best of them, she's all girl. She's emotional. She has bad hair days (which Cordelia is always quick to comment on). She worries about her boyfriend. She has a stuffed pig named Mr. Gordo. And with Gellar in the role, she's the sexiest nerd in history. Gellar's Buffy looks as if she might replace Diana Rigg's Mrs. Peel as The Woman Men Would Most Like To Be Beaten Up By. And Whedon isn't above the more traditional S&M images: Who can forget how Buffy looked after killing a snake-demon, her little black dress clinging to her lithe figure, broken manacles dangling from her wrists like saucy bracelets?

Yet for all the kinkiness, jokes and flirting with the ridiculous, the main impression one takes away from several viewings of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" is what you find in all the best horror films, an elusive melancholy. There's real pain in the show, and horrid injustices. Cruelty is common. The innocent suffer. There are no comforting moral lessons. There isn't even an *end*—Sunnydale is built over a mouth of Hell and so never runs out of monsters. When you think about it, there's a kind of genius in the idea of the town's high school being located over a Hell mouth.

After all, whose wasn't?