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we moved to Las Vegas and settled into apartment 1227 in the Canyon Lakes apartment complex at 2200 S. Fort Apache Road in 1982. Joy-Lynd and I have settled into a new domicile, a house on the far side of town, breathing heartfelt sighs of relief.

Motives for Moving

The apartment was a pleasant place to live, if a bit small for the amount of stuff we tried to stuff in it—Joy-Lynd has described it as 15 rooms in five, which probably covers the territory. In the first couple of years we were there we enjoyed the place, and made friends with a couple of our neighbors. But it was overpriced; it was billed as a luxury apartment, and all in all I suppose it fulfilled that description. On the other hand, it seemed to be a kind of temporary stopping place for most of our neighbors—including those we'd become acquainted with.

We started at \$800 a month rent, which was a tad steep for us, but we then anticipated that Joy-Lynd would be bringing in a good second income for us and we thought we could just swing it. But each year Canyon Lake upped our rent by \$20 a month or so, and as things have turned out J-L's income has settled to her SSDI stipend, plus an occasional tutoring fee, while with one thing or another my income, while decent, has not changed.

The first rumblings of our hunger for improved living space came along less than a year ago. Jan Staples, one of our friends from the Las Vegas PC Users Group, lives not too far from where I work. She pays less than we were, the neighborhood is pleasant (if riddled with speed bumps), and she offered to put Joy-Lynd in touch with a real estate agent who handles the area. We intended to put that off until the time itself approached; when the time did begin to loom, we took quick mental stock of the massive effort moving would entail, and felt inclined to continue putting it off for maybe another six months.

But this inclination was being eroded by some changes in the quality of services we were getting

A Moving Tale

Part II: Three Years Later

WHILE IN THE FIRST YEAR OR SO after Joy-Lynd and I arrived here in Las Vegas we basically wanted nothing to do with the concept of moving, ever again, the idea of finding another place to live did gradually begin to percolate after roughly our second year. Now, three years and a month after

from Canyon Lake's management (which had changed since we moved in) and by our increasing irritation at neighborhood children playing in the breezeway and lawn outside our apartment. We were turning into just the sort of irascible middle-aged complaining grownups I used to really resent as a youngster. Was I that bad as a kid? Surely not!

From a purely aesthetic point of view (literally), a newly built complex across S. Fort Apache Road now blocked our panorama of the mountain chain that forms the western edge of the valley in which Las Vegas is nestled. When we moved in, we were at a sparsely populated edge of the city. Now the burgeoning metropolis had surrounded us. (When we moved here, predictions were for La Vegas to hit a million population in something like 2007; now that number is likely to be reached in the next couple of years.) Like the pioneers of old, who felt crowded when they saw smoke on the horizon, we knew it was time to move on.

We needed... *Lebensraum!*

So, we began to ask around. A couple of people—friends of friends, connected with real estate—didn't pan out, and neither did the one we thought might be able to find a house in Jan Staples' neighborhood.

Auto Motive

One day, a Saturday, Joy-Lynd and I had driven across town to visit a couple of friends who had a booth in a flea market called the Outdoor Swap Meet. Dee was in an aquarobics class that Joy-Lynd was a part of for a while (as was Jan); William is a tee-shirt artist who has done several designs for Joy-Lynd. We were on our way home from there when our car quit in the turn lane at an intersection.

This car was Joy-Lynd's white 1976 Grand Am

which she had bought, used, from Raven (a friend from the fan circle) about two years ago. Current Grand Ams, albeit medium quality cars, are relatively compact in size; Victoria (the name passed on from Raven) was among the first crop of Grand Ams made, and much too large and heavy for me to push alone. A very kind gentleman offered to help me push it into a nearby parking lot adjacent to a 7-Eleven; in conversation afterward, he revealed that he was in real estate, with a local Caldwell Banker office. We mentioned that we were looking for a new place to live, and he offered to check his data base for us.

We didn't know it at the time, and the story is too miserable a tale to relish retelling, but Victoria was gasping her last at this point. Suffice it to say that AAA took her to the only auto place they dealt with that was open Saturdays and it cost us about \$300 to get her partially fixed without a guarantee for the work; they wanted \$700 to put her in warrantable shape. We intended to take her to another place, Dick's Auto, which Joy-Lynd had learned to trust, but Dick's is only open weekdays. As it turned out, on Monday evening we drove her home, complaining all the way (5 miles). The next morning she died before we could get her to Dick's Auto. We did get her to Dick's, with Triple-A's aid, but he said she was done for—and noted that if we had brought her in to him first he could have saved us the \$300 because she was unfixable. We had been taken by the other repair place.

So, now we were in the market for a car as well as a new place to live. Meanwhile, Joy-Lynd and I had to share the use of my Chevette again, as we had before Victoria had come into our lives. We missed her, though in fact she had started to become more and more expensive to maintain. But from the beginning I had tended to translate Grand Am in my mind—as well as ear—to *Grande Dame*...

Darrel Simmons, our new real estate acquaintance, called and said he'd found a listing for a four bedroom house that fit our price scale. I was working; Arnie and Joyce let me take time to go look at it with Joy Lynd. I had the car; Darrell was to pick her up and bring her over. It was not far from the expressway I'd been using to get to work and indeed was about four miles closer to Arnie and Joyce's, or about half the distance I usually commuted.

My first impression, however, was less than positive. It was a two-story house on a dry and dusty corner in a dry and dusty neighborhood. After Darrell and Joy-Lynd arrived, and he was fiddling with a balky lockbox to get in, somebody driving by visibly slowed and craned their necks looking at the group of us standing at the door—it seemed with more than neighborly interest. The thought flashed through my mind that it might be some white supremacist types who, seeing Darrell, a large black man, at the door, might have thought it was he who was interested in moving in, and were thinking less than friendly thoughts...

When we entered, we found the first floor consisted of a spacious living room/dining room area with a setup for a wet bar (i.e., a sink). Around a corner was a kitchen (minus a refrigerator; we'd have to supply one); there was also a laundry room (we'd also have to supply a washer and dryer) and a very partially finished garage. The bedrooms were upstairs, all individually smaller than the rooms we'd had, and only accessible by a fairly narrow enclosed stairwell. There was a small, dry, weed-encrusted yard, too unfinished to call it desert landscaping.

It wasn't bad, though; we thought we'd go for the place. We would have to sign an application form (for which there was a \$45.00 non-refundable fee); the management office was going to have to check us out before we could actually make the deal. Joy-Lynd took me back to work; we'd go to the management office next morning.

Overnight, however, we began to have second thoughts—like, how would we ever get larger furniture, like our beds, bureaus, dressers, desks, etc., up those stairs? At the management office, instead of pursuing the house we'd just looked at, we decided to inquire about single-story places. They only had a couple, both pretty much compromises in size and value. They gave us an address to check out, but we couldn't find it (it turned out we were driving in the wrong direction), and by that time I had to get to work. So we dropped that opportunity altogether.

It was a few days later that Joy-Lynd learned from Jan that a woman she worked with had a house that she had been thinking about selling, but might go for a rent-to-own arrangement! We'd thought about the idea of renting-to-own. If we went for it, it would be the first time for me to try

for house ownership, though Joy-Lynd had begun such a process in her year or so in Pulaski, Virginia.

The location was across town, some 18 miles via the expressway as we later discovered (shorter by regular streets, but we never actually checked the mileage that way). It was in a small, ten-year-old development behind Sams Town, a hotel/casino we'd visited a couple of times. Sams Town is distinguished by an artificial park within a huge atrium. Artificial animated squirrels and woodpeckers adorn the artificial trees as artificial (and somewhat amplified) sounds of nature are piped in. There are paths through the park centering on a bar (seating "alfresco"); little bridges pass over streams of real running water (well, *something* had to be authentic!), and at one end of the atrium is a waterfall. A couple of times during the evening there is a light/laser and water-fountain show at the waterfall end, with impressively orchestrated music and a narrative concerning some Native American legend (which may also be authentic, I suppose). At the start of the show an animatronic wolf emerges from a cave near the top of the waterfall and howls. He then watches the show from his vantage point, and then, at the end, he howls once again and returns to his cave. All this was built about a year ago, though the casino itself has been around a while.

Anyway, we drove over one Sunday morning to meet Suzanne Maciulis, who owns the house. Joy-Lynd had worked up a little map from some street map software on CD, so the twists and turns within the streets behind Sams Town were easily negotiated, and we found the place easily. It is a single-story L-shaped pinkish-tan stucco ranch-style building, somewhat raised from the street, with desert landscaping. The sole vegetation in the wide front yard consists of some aloe and other desert plants (not cacti) dotted about in a bed of large river-bottom-rounded stones and some hard desert earth. The yard is surrounded by concrete sidewalks. Blooming oleanders encroach upon the right end sidewalk and a wide tilted driveway on the left. The L-hook appears to consist of a two-car garage; as it turns out, however, the garage has been converted into a finished room. The garage doors tilt open to reveal a shallow work bench area.

Suzanne is a very pleasant woman a little younger than I. Her health is fairly delicate—she re-

cently underwent a bone marrow transplant. She has fixed up the house to be as dust-free as possible, and all the water is filtered through some kind of treatment system—making it drinkable, which cannot be said for standard tap water in this part of the country. As she showed us the house she tended to be apologetic about one thing or another, but she was obviously proud of it, and rightly so.

The house is something like 2000 square feet of floor space, 700 more than we had at the apartment. As one enters the front door, there is a huge living room-dining area that the word spacious was coined for. A kitchen occupies a large corner of this area, toward the back, set off by a rounded counter/bar, complete with stools. There is a door to the finished garage space to the left on the near wall, and on the back wall between the kitchen and the left house wall, glass French doors lead to a concrete uncovered patio extending into the back yard. Beyond the garage door, the front left corner of the living area is occupied by a huge stone-faced fireplace with a wide mantel and a gas log. At center right from the front door there is a hallway leading to a large master bedroom with its own bath, and two smaller bedrooms opposite it. There is a complete hall bath near the hall entrance. The entire house, save for the tiled kitchen and the fireplace hearth, is lushly carpeted. Well, okay, the finished garage area has a thinner, utilitarian carpet. It also has a direct door to the outside, leading out to the covered sidewalk that leads from the driveway to the front door.

To make a long story short, we loved the place almost on sight, and soon made the agreement with Suzanne to take it. We also agreed to (say, leapt at) the opportunity to buy from her some of the furniture in the living room-dining area—a dining set (glass-topped round table, six swivel chairs) and a couch, all wicker-based. Also the bar stools, which have footrests, plush backs and tubular side pieces that make them very comfortable to sit in.

Now, Suzanne was prepared to move out entirely by the first of the month if we could cover her mortgage payments (\$700) plus \$300 a month, but there was no way we could handle \$1000 a month. She came up with the alternative of her staying on, keeping the master bedroom and sharing the kitchen with us, and we would just cover the mortgage payments. This we decided we could do. Joy-Lynd volunteered to give up smoking

indoors for the duration, and Suzanne gratefully accepted that offer.

And so it came to pass...

Slow Motion

There were still a couple of weeks plus before we had to be out of the Canyon Lake apartment, so of course, foolish mortals we, we began our packing at a relatively leisurely pace. I arranged with Arnie and Joyce to take a vacation week for the penultimate week of June, figuring that should be adequate. Hah!

I made it the next-to-last rather than the last week because generally speaking the last week of the month is one in which the magazine requires a great deal of our time. It didn't exactly work out that way this time, but that's another story for another time.

Joy-Lynd was meanwhile casting about for a decent used car to replace Victoria. Here again two or three possibilities failed to work out positively, but then she got a good lead via a friend she knew from the computer group. He knew a friend from AA who works at a used car company. This guy was able to get Joy-Lynd a good deal on a blue and silver Ford station wagon—a Crown Victoria. I don't know if it was the model name or something else that convinced Joy-Lynd, but she went for it.

She wanted to have Dick (of Dick's Auto) look at it, but the people at the dealership talked her into accepting a neighboring garage's okay that the car was in good condition, and, thinking she had 72 hours' refusal, signed the papers. Then while driving it around, she heard some nasty noises and took it to Dick's, who said it sounded like some kind of transmission problem. Back at the dealership they told her no way. She took it to a Ford dealership, who also told her it sounded that way. Furious, she went back to complain, and learned that Nevada law does not give one that right of refusal—once one has signed the papers, one is committed to the purchase. As is.

However, the guy who had arranged to help her with this sale agreed to have the car checked out and the problem fixed by someone else, at their expense... "We want your repeat business, after all." It turned out that the problem was something other than the transmission, but they fixed it as agreed.

Somewhere soon afterward someone gave Joy-

Lynd a little hollow rubber dinosaur character that we learned later was based on one of the characters in the animated film, *The Land Before Time*. It has a real name, something like "Ducky," but J-L christened it "Baby," somehow thinking it resembled the baby brontosaurus in the rather rough adventure film of that name. I thought of the baby character (also called Baby) in the TV series, which was more of a little stegosaurus to my recollection—if not in appearance then at least in personality. In any case, this Baby rides in the space between the driver and front passenger, and the station wagon has become "BB" for Baby Buggy. Too cute? Well, think of it this way—Joy-Lynd and I both rather groaned when we realized that we who were once rather radical free spirits were now a middle aged couple with a ranch house and a station wagon... *Where had it all gone wrong?*

We did begin carrying stuff over to the new place right away, and got quite a bit done during my "vacation" week, with a little help a couple of days from LVPCUG friends with cars. One, Betty Evans, has a small pickup truck, with which we carried over some of our metal industrial-type shelving. Others—Jo Astin and Mary-Ellen Bly—stuffed their cars.

Then on a hot summer Friday afternoon, at rush hour time, Joy-Lynd and I were driving home after going in to the local cable company to have the cable service switched to our new address as of the end of the month. We smelled something funny and, soon afterward, the car stalled at one of the busiest intersections in town (Charleston and Valley View, for you readers who know Las Vegas). *Déjà vu...* Only this time it we were in the center lane.

When I returned to Joy-Lynd and the car after calling AAA, I found that she had discovered a real talent for directing traffic. She was standing behind the car, waving people to either side and, when some seemed to hesitate, afraid to enter a lane where other cars were approaching, she had the palm-up-with-one-hand, wave-forward-with-the-other technique down pat. When the Triple-A truck finally arrived I took over for her as she talked with the guy; I did all right, but didn't have her flair. By that time there were three other cars down with the heat further down the road, and our directorial expertise had become amazingly extended!

Once we were out of traffic's way, we called the

garage where the last work on the station wagon had been done, and they agreed someone would stick around for us while we had it towed in. Once there, after warming our heels for a while (nothing was cooling that day!), we learned that the drainage plug in the radiator had blown. They thought they could get a replacement for it for us right away, at a dealership, but when their bookkeeper (who'd volunteered to fetch it) returned with the part it turned out to be the wrong one.

We had to do without the car for the weekend. This time we concentrated on getting things packed to be ready for when we did have transportation again. But, as anyone who has ever moved can tell you, the more things one packs, the more things yet to be packed proliferate.

I returned to work during the following week, and Joy-Lynd found lots of things she had to take care of not only at home but out in the non-packing world. It was too hot for her to load and unload the station wagon during the day, but we managed to have something ready to go some mornings. Despite our best intentions, we only succeeded in packing, loading and making one or at most two trips in the evenings.

A couple of mornings, she got up very early to be there when the telephone guy came. Let me explain.

The local telephone company, once called Centel, was taken over by Sprint some time in the last couple of years and became a less friendly operation as a result. Among other things, they would not let us begin our phone service at the new place while we retained it at the old—a new experience for us after all these years of moving from place to place. We arranged to have the switch made the last Thursday in June.

However, Joy-Lynd called in a personal favor with Steve, a telephone installer she had given some Word Perfect classes to, and he came in early in the morning (6:30 a.m.!) a couple of times to rework the wiring for our two lines plus Suzanne's separate line. This installation work turned out to be quite an operation, as whoever had lived there before Suzanne had evidently been something of an amateur handyman and left a mess of wiring that had to be untangled and deciphered. Steve did a great job, setting up an outlet for a dual-line phone in the kitchen, two outlets for my line in the finished garage (to be my office), two for Joy-Lynd's

in the area of the living room that we set aside for her office space, another pair (one for her line, one for mine) in my office, on another wall (the idea being for shared calls), and, finally, plugs for our own lines in our bedrooms. When the official installer arrived Thursday morning, basically all she had to do was make the final connections to the outside lines.

Why two lines each in our offices? It seemed like a good idea at the time. One's for the phone, one for the modem... [Okay, for those reading this who are not yet computer literate, a modem is the device for a computer that allows users to use the telephone system to interact with other users on other computers. It does this by translating the computer's binary signals into tone signals and back. The word comes from modulate-demodulate, a fact that I invariably forget between times that I look it up.] We're not yet plush enough to get dedicated modem lines, but the second wall connection saves connecting the phone to the return plug in the modem. This was supposed to avoid the loud click and momentary dead spot we've experienced in the past when turning on or off the computer while talking to someone on the phone. Alas, we've learned that this effect remains.

Also, in my case, should I get a modem for my Macintosh system, in addition to the one on my DOS PC, I'll have a plug for it, too—and the phone's plug will return to the back of the computer. We all have to make sacrifices...

As the week wound down, I requested and got Friday off as another vacation day. June had the discourtesy to end on that Friday this year, withholding the weekend from us; we were supposed to be out of the apartment Friday night or at the worst Saturday morning.

We had professional movers come in Friday to take the heavy things—beds, bureaus, desks, etc.—all the stuff we'd worried about getting up the stairs at the other house. We were still clearing space around those things and getting things off and out of them when the two guys came, but things went reasonably smoothly, and they were very pleasant and efficient about their work. Nevertheless, the work, which we'd estimated at three hours (at \$65 an hour plus mileage) turned into half again as much, including the trip over to the new place and the unloading.

Saturday morning, after our first (pleasant) night

at the new place, Joy-Lynd and I returned to the apartment to continue what was now serious drudge work. I packed and loaded while she drove and unloaded. Several friends—Jan Staples, her friend Sam, Betty Evans and her husband Ron—came over in the evening, with two pickup trucks and a couple of cars among them, and whirlwinded massive quantities of the remaining *things* into bags and boxes...

And still, when they could jam no more into their vehicles, there was more to be done.

It was after 11 p.m. when their vehicles were finally unloaded at the Petal Avenue location. We went to Sams Town for a late supper that was, frankly, a bit disappointing. Mary's Diner, which advertises it's open 24 hours, was closed, and we had to settle for another restaurant where long lines and some kind of kitchen problem threatened to delay us for hours. Joy-Lynd, who can be very persuasive when she wants to be, succeeded in getting us in and served. I won't go into details.

Needless to say, although she and I rose early (5:30) Sunday morning, we were moving slowly. We had to unload our own cars, and we stopped to eat breakfast (at a Burger King) before we returned to the apartment, which at last was looking, if not empty at least emptyable. We thought we'd get the last of the stuff out that needed to be out that morning, drop the keys at the management office, and head across town for a celebratory brunch at Elizabeth's Little Kitchen—a favorite breakfast spot of ours that Raven and Ron (her S.O., not Betty's!) introduced us to a couple of years ago.

It was not to be. Elizabeth's closes at 2 p.m., and we were still working... I shuttled a couple of times between the apartment and our storage place (about two miles away) in the process.

We finally had the car loaded and everything out of the apartment that wasn't disposable trash by 3—or maybe it was 3:30 or even 4 o'clock when we stopped in at the office to leave our keys. (My recollection is perhaps understandably blurred.) The last trip from there to Petal Avenue was taken in a kind of exhilarated exhaustion and strong feelings of gratitude that we were quit of that place.

We didn't actually get over to Elizabeth's Little Kitchen, which is now 10 miles closer, until the next weekend.

Settling In

Four weeks later we are, of course, still unpacking and looking for missing stuff, and arranging and re-arranging boxes and furniture and the like. But the house is beginning to look like home. Joy-Lynd lost little time in getting the kitchen into shape, with the cupboards and drawers occupied (more of them, she once remarked, than one household should be entitled to), and nearly everything unpacked that belongs there. Priorities being what they are, the TV and its attendant stereo system were also among the first items connected and ready to run, cable attached, etc. The area around her office space still has a few boxes, but her desk and computer are all set up. My office is pretty much occupied with boxes, but I, too, have my computers set up, though the desk arrangement is still pending a lot of sorting out and locating of things.

My commute to work, although three miles longer than it was, is actually faster than before—with kindly disposed traffic lights and no highway delays, I can make the 11 miles in less than 15 minutes, where the previous eight miles generally required 20 minutes at a minimum.

We have begun to make a routine of sitting outside on the patio in the morning, she with her tea and a cigarette, I with my bowl of raisin bran, before the temperatures soar to their usual triple digits. We return in the evening when the stars are out. Each time we go there we check under the chairs for webs and critters; it seems the area is well populated with black widows and, worse, a spider called the brown recluse whose bite is even worse than the black widow's (you don't want to know what it does). We've heard there are scorpions around; so far we haven't seen any of them. There are also fire ants (back in Texas, in the 40s, we just called them red ants) and, I've been told, the valley also hosts a small black ant that is one of the few poisonous species in North America, or maybe the world. Sweet. I know it's all in my head, but I have a tendency to feel itchy when I come in from the patio.

Our third week brought us another bit of the downside of living in this area of the world: our air conditioning blew—on Friday! It had to be replaced, which meant that for the weekend and a few days more we tried living with windows open and fans running most of the time. I could deal with this better than Joy-Lynd could, but not a

not better—especially as the southwest was conveniently hit with a heat wave that very weekend! This means that the middle digit of the three was a one instead of a zero. Yeah, yeah... Fahrenheit. We don't talk Kelvin or even Celcius in these here parts, podnuh.

My office was, surprisingly, a tad cooler in the day than the rest of the house, though, normally, since the A/C ducts don't lead into it, it's a lot warmer. In the afternoon the sun begins to hit one wall of the former garage. Even before the A/C went out we hung some rattan-type roll-up shades from the roof of the adjacent covered walk; these block much of the direct light against that wall, and this has helped. I was especially grateful for it earlier this week.

Joy-Lynd, meanwhile, was having great difficulty getting through the days and with sleeping at night. Besides the fans and things, she took to using wet towels against her skin at night, and she bought one of those personal misters (which we were told were jumping off the shelves at Home Express). This is basically a spray bottle with a battery-powered fan attached. She also acquired an outdoor mister, which attaches to a garden hose. Both were highly effective.

Of course, I had to try to make a little fun at her expense, because one evening, while we were moving, we'd gone to a restaurant and sat out on its patio, where misters were in use (apparently common in this part of the country)—and Joy-Lynd had hated it. Well, for one thing, the evening had already cooled off considerably, and it was just that a couple of times a minute we'd all get kind of spritzed with water... It wasn't that pleasant.

In these circumstances, however, it was near life-saving. Speaking of which, I was taking my life in my hands making jokes about the misters with Joy-Lynd, who was in no particular mood for jollity during this period.

Happily, Suzanne was able to find someone who could get us a new air conditioner by Tuesday. They made a special effort—on Monday we had received a call apologizing that they didn't think they could get it to us until Wednesday. Thus it was a pleasant surprise to find, as I returned home from work on Tuesday afternoon, a big crane truck (required to remove the old unit from the roof and lift the new one up to replace it) in our driveway. The installation was complete by six or seven, but they told us the house had heated up so much that it wouldn't really be comfortably cool until 10 or 11 p.m. Joy-Lynd and I went out to eat, and by the time we got back, it was so much cooler than it had been that we both basked in it with great pleasure! (All of us did, I should say—Suzanne had of course shared the discomfort with us.)

I don't know how much the physical effort involved in moving took out of Joy-Lynd, exacerbating her already extant aches and pains, arthritis and knee damage and other things; she doesn't talk about those things much. I'm still recovering from minor strains incurred, and kneeling or bending over excites nerves that never much bothered me before. I'm sure this will ease up in time; I'm also aware that it'll take longer for me to recover than it used to take!

Our economic recovery will also take some time. We blew our savings and had to borrow in order to get all this done; it'll be a while before we catch up with the loans and get started on another nest egg. Another factor worth considering is what kind of deal we can make when the time comes to take over the actual purchasing of the house from Suzanne. We're keeping our fingers crossed!

Ross & Joy-Lynd Chamberlain

I missed you guys and gals ["*Sexist! Sexist!*"] the last couple of months, and there's no way to ~~ketchup~~ catch up. (I think it's going on supertime.) Nor does anything in the topic of Heroes and Villains really grab me to write about. Sure, I've enjoyed literature and illiterature involving larger-than-life people who somehow survive incredibly villainous plots against their lives and the lives of others. I also acknowledge being the kinds guy who really likes to see a happy ending and resents tales that don't so resolve themselves. At least let the villain get his proper comuppance! This does not mix well, of course, with many works of high quality as well as wannabes of that ilk ("Hey, let the bad guy* win this one! The critics'll eat it up! It's *different!*").

I just want Juliet to *live!*

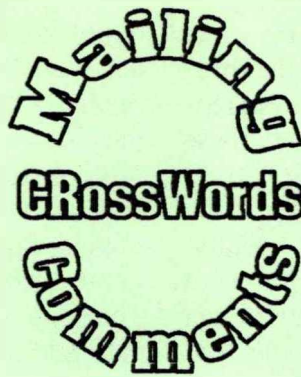
Implosion - Arnie - I remember *The Now Explosion* and have often wished somebody had taped it... (That was, of course, before Everyone had a VCR.) Reality whispers to me that it's just as well nobody did, or at least that I don't have it, because it might not really have stood up to time. But I really dug it at the time. I was also, well, okay, horny, in those days, but between partners as it were. And this was when the concept of bralessness had reared its delightful, uh, head, as a popular mode of dress. I dare say I was probably painfully obvious in my pursuit of checking to see whether any women that came into view were hip to the fashion, and as I recall, more than one of the young ladies filmed in *The Now Explosion* did in fact subscribe to that mode. I remember once, at an Insurgents gathering, when the discussion got around to the show, the question came up as to whether it ever had any nudity. The general consensus was that there hadn't been, but I piped up with a yes vote. I was semi-sure I'd remembered a flash or two in one of the bucolic scenes of young ladies romping through the forests and fields (most likely it had been simply my wishful thinking in retrospect). As everyone pursued the point I figuratively stepped back and reconsidered.

"Well," I said, "I know there's been some bralessness." For a moment there was silence as everyone stared at me, and then, suddenly, the topic changed.

Ah, callow youth—I should have been long out of that stage by then, but nooo...

PowWow - Joyce - Odd how your description of finding your Key to the Imagination through this door... the door to— The Hardware Store [*doo-da-doo doo, doo--da-doo-doo*] resonates, though in fact I've never really lingered there for longer than it takes to find and purchase anything. I suppose this is the mine that Tim Allen mines, in a way.

I venture most of us have had "secret" places as children, however; some hidden pocket in the environment where others apparently do not venture, generally with a— hm. Atmosphere? That'll do—an atmosphere about it; something in the light and shape that lets it be a comfortable place to hang out



by yourself a while; to relax. I think it's what, as adults, we seek as a den or, for them as can afford it, a beach house or a cabin in the woods. *sigh*

Rayflection - Ray - A delightful evocation of a summertime event, or more accurately, preparation for an event, but with its own special elements that separate it from the experience it led to. I look back and only seem to find somewhat comparable

occasions during my school years. Always as a kid, whose responsibility was as a participant in the "main" event, whether it be at a soccer match in western Massachusetts or a school play in Montreal or Nantucket, not as any kind of guide or overseer. We did have fun on these occasions—but it was never a case of trying to win a state championship or the like. Well—I think our soccer team may have reached some kind of semi-finals in our local league...

Dangerous Jade - Aileen - I'm slow, sometimes; it took me a while to figure out what was happening here, despite the clue in the title, "Our Virtual Canoe Trip." It makes me think of times when I was very young, camping out under a card table with an army blanket draped over it, a flashlight and some comic books (or even real, reading-type books) and maybe a sandwich and a glass of milk or soda. These occasions sometimes sort of mutated into a mini-version of the "secret places" discussed earlier in my comments to Joyce. It could have been more fun with more people, I guess, but awfully crowded...

Lost Trails - BelleAugusta - The fireworks over Texas—that is, those displayed when the casino opened—were the first major non-holiday display here that Joy-Lynd and I have missed since we came to Las Vegas, I think. Certainly the first out of any we knew about ahead of time. But as a youngster I never seemed to get to any large municipal fireworks displays; I don't even remember there having been any; we always got our own few small ones that we could afford, then legally sold at local stores or, at least, stands. Thinking about it makes me realize that I don't even remember the first time I saw the Really Big Ones at a large

public display. But I've made up for that since, including being there, in New York, for the Bicentennial celebrations and, later, for the incredible show when Miss Liberty was refurbished. Ooooh!

The Gates of Chaos - Eric - One of my favorite places to go in Texas was an arroyo we called White's Canyon. It was a couple of miles out of town on a rough road (partially blacktopped, then dirt once we passed the railroad tracks—two lines, the Southern Pacific and the Missouri Pacific; odd, I haven't remembered what the other line (MP) was for many years!), and then past a fence and across a field full of cow patties but rarely any actual cattle (we were then trespassing on somebody's land, but there, too, this never seemed to be a problem). Then, after some trees and greenery we came on it: basically an old river bed with rough, horizontally striated clifflike walls probably 20 or 30 feet high at the most, on one side; somewhat less on the other.

This was not a place for partying, or, rather, that we used for partying, however. Some of my friends and I picnicked occasionally, there, and we used it for such nefarious purposes as smoking cigarettes out in the open (we were, after all pre- and early teens and this was in the 40s). And once I brought my uncle, a geologist, there, and he found some things of interest to him in that context, like layers of fossilized leaves, and mica, and stuff like that.

There was a cave, too—about three or four feet high at its highest inside, maybe three feet high at the entrance, and I suppose 12 or 15 feet deep. It took us a while to gather up the courage to explore it, imagining some kind of wild animals feeling territorial about it. It was actually just an outlet for

an underwater stream, and was often very muddy after a rain. Just outside it, in a kind of rocky bowl, was a kind of shallow sinkhole of mud that was hip-to-waist high on us kids. We thought it was quicksand at first, but I finally clambered in, with a friend standing by to haul me out if I started to get sucked in, and found that it did have a floor of sorts. One had to climb up onto the edge to do this, but other than that I don't really remember too much about how it was situated to hazard any more substantial guesses about its nature. Uncle Bill may have told me more about it at the time, but I don't remember it if he did.

The last I heard about White's Canyon was that it had been converted into a garbage dump.

APA-tizer - Ken - See above to Eric. I don't think we had any worries about impacting the environment in our explorations of White's Canyon, so much as we worried about its impact on us. We kept our weather eyes out for snakes and things, of course, primarily to avoid them, but had anyone brought up the word *ecology* in our presence, we'd not have known what the word was. Indeed, I'm not sure I learned that until the late 60s or early 70s.

Since *Apa V* #21 I've had the opportunity to proofread your completed story of Fans Upon the Colorado, and a fine, enjoyable story it is, though I have to acknowledge that it was frequently difficult to capture a mental image of the magnificent surroundings you were traversing. The personalities came through very well, on the whole. I'd love to know what Don thinks of your portrayal of him, however.

Last night, Joy-Lynd and I went out on a rare movie night to see *Waterworld* at a nearby Century Theatre complex (on Lamb between Boulder Highway and Sahara), and were very pleased with it. The story hangs together quite well for an action flick, although there are a few holes in reality one might have to wade through to get there. I have to assume that the righteous people of the water-logged earth have all developed extremely good aim, for example, even at weapons they've never handled before, while it's historically relevant to this picture that bad guys rarely ever manage to hit the side of a barn, even with a machine gun. At least, they certainly avoid serious damage to major story characters, regardless of lack of cover and open accessibility of the target. And recovery from such serious damage as there is is truly remarkable, especially by the major villain. In this case, the side of the barn translates into the cast iron walls of the Atoll, and indeed the Smokers were able to put many noisy holes in that, but not to much effect until the machine gun gets turned in the wrong... but perhaps some readers of this opus have yet to see *Waterworld*, so I should not divulge too much. The action was excellent, and the characterizations

were sufficiently well developed to suit the action. I hope it does make a profit eventually for its makers.

On TV, I've taken to watching *Reboot* on ABC (Channel 13 here), Saturday mornings. It's the first Saturday morning series (as far as I know) to go to entirely computer generated characters and environments. It takes place in a slightly *Tron*-like computer world where BASIC is a dirty (well, at least very disparaging) word, everything happens in nanoseconds (really looong periods of time are minutes...), and a magnet is a serious danger to life. There are a couple of marvelous villains (one, called Megabyte, is a powerful shovel-jawed character with a George Sanders voice); and the hero is a young Guardian who must protect the world of Mainframe from them. There's a Kid, and his big sister, Dot, who owns a diner. Oh, and occasionally the User inserts a game, in which all the characters must participate. Yes, it's aimed at the younger set, and there's frequently a moral to the storyline, but often it's not the main thrust of the story. Recently they've been showing two episodes back-to-back (8:30 and 9 a.m.); in one, titled "The Great Brain Robbery," Megabyte has sent minions, compressed to near microscopic size (à la *Fantastic Voyage*), to take over the young Guardian's (sorry, I've forgotten his name) mind, but they accidentally get into the Kid's mind instead. At one point, as Megabyte, thinking he's got the Guardian, tries to scan his brain for the Secret to the Big Computer (or whatever), the Kid recites:

"I'm a little source code

Short and stout

This is my Input (indicating his mouth)

This is my Out." (points to his other end)

Childish? Yes—and absolutely appropriate for the character's age, etc. I was amused...

So long folks, 'til next time!

Ross