

Kratophany

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Welcome to the special Change of Address issue of KRATOPHANY. Yes, I have indeed returned from the Frozen North to the city of my birth. I'm slowly acclimating to living in a place where "Z" rhymes with "ski" instead of "sled", but there are probably some Canadianisms still ~~exploratory~~ coloring my speech. (It's amazing how many New Yorkers have picked up accents while I've been away.) There were a number of reasons for the move, not the least of which was a desire to be closer to my parents (I'm an only child); but I'm going to miss the West Coast, and a lot of people there.

For those of you who have followed the saga of my previous moves, I'm sorry to say that this one went rather smoothly (discounting Susan and I not being able to start the car to get me to the airport, and getting on the connecting flight in Toronto with 3 minutes to spare because Air Canada almost lost my luggage, and the minor snowstorm the night I arrived ...). This time I took the precaution of finding a job before I moved (I went through a hectic week of nine interviews, arranged through an agency, in November); after four days of panic I found an excellent apartment; and, despite some Air Canada Air Cargo screw-ups, Susan managed to ship me 1045 lbs. (23 boxes) relatively unscathed (the boxes, that is -- I can't vouch for Susan, as one of the screw-ups, she told me, was Air Canada sending a single, somewhat aging man to pick up the stuff. You always wanted to be a stevedore, didn't you, Susan?).

I may as well tell what might be my last Customs story. (By the way, there were no problems with the computer, which I took with me on the plane.) In order to retrieve my 23 boxes from Kennedy Airport, I of course had to clear them through Customs. Customs condescends to have an officer at the cargo building from 9 to 12 and 1 to 4, Monday through Friday, so I had to take the afternoon off, my second week on the job. (I also had to take a subway, bus, and taxi to get to the Kennedy cargo area, but that is another story.)

Be that as it may, after I had cooled my heels for an hour waiting I was asked to come into a back room -- they wanted me to unlock my trunk. I did this the way I always do: with my nail file. The inspection was pretty perfunctory, as my stuff was clearly duty-free personal possessions. One of the guys felt compelled to comment, "Jeez, you must have the largest collection of

GALAXY Magazines in the world." They had picked 3 of my boxes at random to inspect, so naturally two of them were full of SF. A little later, when I was haranguing one of the cargo people about some of the screwups, this Customs guy, who obviously fancied himself a wit, said, "You should have teleported the stuff!"

I guess I was lucky they didn't open the box that had the large stuffed frog with the peach stuck in its mouth ...

Anyway. I am now working as a programmer-analyst for the Republic National Bank of New York.

I never expected to find myself working for a bank ... but then, I never expected to enjoy a job interview as much as the one at Republic. It started with the two project leaders interviewing me. "Have you had any financial or banking experience?" Mike Howard asks me. "No," I reply. Mike sighs. "Some-day," he says, "I'm going to get a yes answer to that question ..." After a bit, they took me in to see the head of the Systems Department, woman named Marta Amieva. She looked at me, and her first words were, "You know, you have beautiful hair."

I mean, it was not your normal interview. By the time we had all agreed that none of us would ever consider working for an (ugh) bank, it was just a matter of working out a starting date.

So, here I am. I share an office with my immediate supervisor and an opera singer (she works halftime as a programmer so she can eat). There's a fan who works down the hall, and a number of SF nuts. The computers are similar to what I worked with in Vancouver (DEC, mostly PDP 11/70's under RSTS/E, though there's a VAX sitting around too). And there's an unanticipated fringe benefit: My normal route home involves a transfer from the #7 IRT at 74th St. (which is an elevated station) to the IND (which is underground). The sole staircase leading to the IND is at the Manhattan end of the station, and I usually get there between 5:30 and 6:00 -- which means I have the daily pleasure of watching the sun set behind the magnificent skyline of New York, a sight which makes up in a small way for the aggravation of the rush-hour subway.

There have been some other noteworthy events since the last ERAT, but there's hardly any room left. I'd like to thank the Edmonton fans for having me as their Fan Guest of Honor. I'd also like to thank all the British fans who made my Seacon trip so enjoyable, especially Dave Rowe for a delicious dinner, Paul & Cas Skelton and Mike & Pat Meara for trying to teach a dumb American about beer, and above all, Cath and Dave Piper for their extraordinary hospitality. Maybe some Seacon stories in the next (and I hope longer) issue.

Logo by Tim Marion. Run off on Spiffy Ink Press, with the assistance of Jim and Cindy Freund.

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