

Restless #1

from Nicki Lynch, P.O. Box 3120, Gaithersburg, MD 20885. Internet address: trad_quilter@yahoo.com To see issues of our fanzine, MIMOSA, check out our website at www.jophan.org/mimosa Rich's Eurodiaries are also linked to that site. This is written solely for the members of SFPA.

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Hello and it's good to be back. It's been a while. I think I know just about everyone, but let me briefly update you since we last met.

When I was in SFPA eons ago, SFPA was a popular apa with a long waiting list with a shadow apa of the waitlisters. The South was booming with fanzine activity and we were doing CHAT for the Chattanooga SF club. I joined and was active for a number of years before Rich joined. At some point I dropped out to pursue other activities and hoped to keep up with everyone via Rich's mailing. Well, I never seemed to have the time to read his mailing and haven't kept up. Oh, well. But I didn't forget SFPA.

We moved to the Washington, D.C. area about 10 years ago and I've been moving along on a career in fits and starts. I've gotten to the point where I've given up on the career idea and just have a job. Currently, I'm a software tester for a daily accounting for 401(k) package for a company which was acquired late last year. I like software testing, but not particularly what I'm doing now. So I'm looking to change as soon as I find something else I want to do.

On the fannish front, we continued MIMOSA, which we started in Tennessee, after moving here and picked up a few Hugos. We also dropped back in fan activity to attending a few conventions and just being club members in WSFA, due to time and financial considerations. We have two cats and survived a fire in the townhouse next to us, which lead us to move to a single family home once the townhouse was repaired.

As things went along, I concentrated on KAPA and, dropped out of the other apa I was in, SAPS. While my interest in KAPA hasn't waned, the mailings have. Currently, I don't believe KAPA's next mailing has come out yet, despite the deadline being early May. So, wanting to return to the amount fannish writing I used to do, I decided to rejoin SFPA. Should KAPA continue, I don't see a problem contributing to both.

Where to begin a zine. Rather than at the beginning, I'll just go back to June 2000, as we had some adventures that month.

Rich was in Eastern Europe on business in May and has the report on our website. I was home and mostly worked and dealt with the credit card companies until he got back. Rich returned on Memorial Day weekend, which was chilly and rainy. On that Saturday, a co-worker and I went to Legacy 2000, a media convention run by fans (!) for *Highlander the Series*. They put on a very nice con, at least as well run as any media con I've been to. For dinner, I met with a local fan I don't see very often and we discussed the latest WSFA news – Joe Mayhew's illness.

At that time, the news about Joe being in the hospital was spreading and we thought it was a series of mini strokes. How we wish now that had been the case! As everyone probably knows by now, Joe died June 10th of CJS, a relative of Mad Cow disease. A sad end to a fine fan and friend. At least he had won one Hugo and knew he was nominated for another this year. I intend to vote for him as his work this year was wonderful. We also have a cover for the next MIMOSA that is a collaboration of Joe and Ian Gunn. Ian had started the piece, but died before he could complete it; Joe asked Karen if he could finish it. She said go ahead.

We attended the memorial service June 17th, which was at the end of a busy week. Joe's memorial was held at St. Barnard's and was well attended. As one fan said to me, when she died she was going to leave instructions that her memorial was to be held on a weekend so lots of people would be able to attend. The gathering after the memorial felt like a con suite and someone said it was like the con that Joe didn't get to run at the cancelled Disclave. It was a fitting tribute to Joe and, I hope, the first of many.

By contrast, an elderly friend of mine died about a month earlier and had very little in the way of notice for a ceremony at Arlington on a Tuesday. I knew she was in the hospital, but didn't know she had died until a

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mutual friend called about her notice in the paper. It was disappointing that the family didn't go through her address book and call all the locals she listed. Let that be a lesson to those of you with elderly parents! All their friends would like to know. As she encouraged me in quilting and introduced me to the local guild, it would have been nice to say good-bye. I did, however, contact her son and am currently finishing the quilt she started for her second granddaughter, having completed one for the first. I know she wanted them each to have one as a keepsake.

The week before Joe's memorial was a busy one. We went to an show opening at the Corcoran Museum and a concert at Wolf Trap as well as the regular WSFSA meeting.

The Corcoran Museum is a rare place in Washington, a museum not part of the Smithsonian. Therefore, one must pay to see the exhibits. Since this is the case, the Corcoran gets a number of prestigious exhibits that the Smithsonian wouldn't. Several months ago the Corcoran had an exhibition by Anne Lebowitz, which we got to see for free at the opening for museum members.

We happened to be downtown (downtown means in the District of Columbia) that night (several months ago) at an event sponsored by the British Embassy. The British aerospace industry was holding a conference in the area, so the British ambassador had a reception for them at his residence (which is a little smaller than a stadium). Rich and his contractor had invitations, so there the four of us were, eating cold shrimp and hot egg rolls and trying to find the person with the Champaign tray. (While we're not as adept at stacking food on small plates as the veterans of many of these events are, we get out share of the goodies.) Since the reception ended early in the evening, the contractor asked if we'd be interested in going to an opening at the Corcoran. He is a member and had passes we could use. Since the Lebowitz opening was big news, of course we were interested. So, the four of us hopped into his date's car and drove over to the Corcoran. After finally finding a parking spot, we entered the crowded museum.

I'd never been there before. It's a huge building in the classic style that has an ultra modern backend. The whole first floor was given over to people, food and a small jazz group playing music, with the exhibit displayed on the second floor. We munched a little on the dessert type foods provided for the attendees (which was one draw for us as the Brits had no sweets) and got in line for the exhibit. After a wait, we got into the rooms with the photographs. I thought the photos would be the usual size in frames. They weren't; they were large single photographs (about 4'X4') that were sharp enough to pass for paintings. In fact, one person was asking no one in particular if these were drawings or paintings as they looked too painterly to be photos. They were indeed photos. It was a wonderful exhibit and when we were offered the opportunity to attend the opening for the Norman Rockwell exhibit in June, we jumped at it.

So that Wednesday, we were at the Corcoran, a little damp from the steady misting of rain, but looking forward to it none the less. Our friends weren't there yet, so, after showing the invitation, we got nametags (which was different from before) and snacked on the food. Instead of the light refreshments that had been served before, there was a full buffet complete with salmon cakes and coconut cake. The drinks were also free, where as last time it had been a cash bar. So we ate and hung out looking for our friends until the director announced the exhibit was open. The first time we had been there, the place was packed with people and it was a long wait to see the exhibit. This time, there were about one-third the number of people and no wait. We figured that since Rockwell wasn't as popular as Lebowitz, the crowd wasn't as big. So we went up the stairs with the sparse crowd to enjoy the exhibit. And we did.

The exhibit was very well done and featured not only many of the original paintings he did for the *Saturday Evening Post*, but the actual covers were in a gallery of their own sorted by decade. The show also had some drawings he did as well as quotes from him and his contemporaries. It was interesting to see how his style had changed over the years, not something apparent to me earlier. I also discovered how much humor was in his work, which isn't apparent when you see an individual work now and then. We had a wonderful evening, capped off by a free copy of the exhibit book, which wasn't given out last time.

The next day we were going to Wolf Trap in Virginia for the "Russian Fireworks" concert, a night of Russian music topped off by the "1812 Overture" with live cannons. Rich called me during the day and had an explanation for why our friends weren't there – we were there on the wrong night. Sure enough, when I looked at the invitation again, the date was the same as the Wolf Trap concert. We hadn't noticed and the people at the

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Corcoran had graciously let us “crash” the party. Since we are adults and were properly dressed, they didn’t mind we were a little early. The event was sparsely attended and a corporate sponsor was footing the bill, not the Corcoran. I must confess this raised the Corcoran in my eyes and we should consider becoming members if we can swing the annual dues. It would be worth going to the openings even on the correct nights.

So, feeling a little chagrined at the evening before, we left for the concert. Remember the rain the day before? It had been light and no problem. This time it was a torrential downpour with lightening and thunder and a major problem. The rain started when we crossed into Virginia and didn’t let up all evening, although it did lighten up. We were a little late when we reached our soggy seats inside the open air amphitheater (being undercover didn’t keep the interior of the building dry), but we must have been more comfortable when the people packing the open lawn area. It was amazing how many people were wrapped in plastic or had small tents on the lawn, determined to hear the concert. Despite the weather, every seat in the hall looked to be taken except for the two next to us. I don’t know if the people with the seats were faint-hearted or the seats were unsold.

Anyway, the concert started a few minutes late and had to compete with the sound of rain dripping from the roof and thunder in the distance. As this was a classical concert, that was a bit of a problem, but not too bad. The whole concert, including the “1812 Overture” with live cannons, was pretty good. For the final number, the brass section was split into two sections and stationed in the audience area, with the cannon next to the hall. The best “1812 Overture” with live cannons as far as I’m concerned is done annually by the Army band in mid August with the big cannons, choir and a lot of fan fair down at the Washington Monument. However, it was a good concert despite the rain and the crowds.

Friday was a light evening in that we only had to attend the WSFA meeting, which was a sort of wake for Joe. The previous meeting had had the same atmosphere when we knew Joe would not be recovering. Joe’s memorial was announced and directions to the church were given out. While it could have been a very quiet evening, we knew Joe wouldn’t have wanted it that way. So, fans made jokes and told Joe stories. WSFA will not be the same without him.

Saturday morning, we all met again, much better dressed, to say good-bye to a friend. The weather cooperated with a bright day. It was a lovely church and the fans filled most of the side chapel, spilling over into the main part of the church. Unfortunately, the pastor didn’t know Joe as Joe’s involvement there had been before he arrived, so he had to rely on notes written by others. A large self-portrait of Joe was set up and some of the walking sticks he carved were propped against the railing. In the church basement after the service, a collage of Joe’s family pictures was on one wall. It was interesting to see his parents and siblings as well as Joe in his younger days. We’d only known him well during the last 10 years, so it was a treat to see him as a child and young man. As we left, we were urged to sign the large self-portrait for the family, which we did.

Late in June, we hit the road for the first of three trips into the Midwest. The first leg was out to Cincinnati for the annual Midwestcon. It was the 51st Midwestcon (June 23-25, 2000), but the 50th anniversary of Midwestcon. We had a good time no matter how you figure the date.

Held in a different hotel than last year, the Hampshire House was OK (the lobby had real books in two sitting areas), but it’s real advantage was location, location, location. A Half Price Book Store was behind it and Borders was a block away. Likewise, food was also close, which was good as the hotel restaurant wasn’t open much on the weekend. The consuite, the heart of Midwestcon functions, was small and filled quickly with fans. There were so many people that an actual fan had to be brought in to move the air around. It was also hard to hear people talk when the room was filled with people, as it often was. So, people went to the few parties there were.

As usual, Worldcon bidders in the con circuit made a stop at Midwestcon. This year, only two bids were there – Charlotte and Boston, both for ’04. Irvin Koch ran the Charlotte party, which featured barbecue and wrapped treats both nights. People wandered in and out of the sleeping room, which was on the same floor as the consuite and not much bigger. Boston ran a party on Saturday night in one of the rooms facing the indoor pool with food by Naomi. The room was a little bigger, or felt that way, and the party was well attended.

We were fortunate again this year to have an uneventful drive to and from Cincinnati, despite running into pouring rain all through West Virginia and some of Maryland on the way back. At the rest stop entering

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Maryland, the rain was coming down steadily when we stopped. One of the people waiting inside the building said I could probably get a lot for my umbrella. I noticed a man with a small dog on a leash standing outside, sheltered by the overhang. The dog was looking out at the rain and seemed content to stay there until it let up. Unfortunately, the man had a different idea, as he suddenly left the shelter to walk to his car without an umbrella. The dog was looking the other way and was startled by the tug on the leash. The dog tried to pull back, but was just too small, and was resisting to no avail all the way to the car through the rain. He really didn't want to get wet!

Our first night at Midwestcon was mostly greeting other people who came in early on Thursday. I had my annual expedition for Cincinnati-style chili, this time at Skyline. I've been alternating between that and Gold Star, but for my taste, Skyline has the edge. Rich, as usual, had two plain hot dogs. After planing to meet Joyce for breakfast, we got to bed early.

The next morning, the three of us ate breakfast in the hotel restaurant, which was almost empty. The food was pretty good and we didn't lack for attention. After that we checked the consuite for people just coming in and then left along with several others for fannish pursuits – book stores.

Just a short walk from the hotel (down a steep driveway) was a mostly empty strip shopping center with a Half Price book store and a Plus Sizes woman's clothes store among the few stores there. Both were heavily patronized by fans during the weekend. I'd heard about Half Price Book stores and was pretty impressed by it. The Washington D.C. area could use a few of them. The used book stores in Montgomery county tend to be places that could use a good book sale to clean out the paperback books that have been there for decades. I feel Half Price Book store's policy of donating books not selling to charities was a great way to keep books circulating to those who might not otherwise have books while keeping the store stock fresh. If I had known the hotel was next to a Half Price Book store, I would have tried to bring a shopping bag of books (and a few CDs) to trade. As it was, the car was packed with a mimeo and stuff we were giving to the Smiths.

We decided to have an ice cream lunch at Graeter's ice cream store that was just beyond that shopping center. It was delicious and worth the walk. As afternoon loomed over us, we decided to hop in the car and look in Borders again. We had been to Borders the evening before and Rich decided he needed to return. So we did.

By dinner time, more people had arrived and dinner expeditions were organized to get fans out and back for the parties. We went with Dave and Caroline, Joyce, Faith, and Sam to an Indian restaurant we usually go to during Midwestcon. It was good, except for the cilantro in some of the dishes and the bug in the after dinner mint plate. During the dinner, Dave told a story on himself about how he went to an upscale restaurant in England and still had the napkin tucked into his belt when he left. He had stopped to comment on how good it was to one of the wait staff and only realized he had the napkin on when he noticed his reflection in the door. He quickly returned the napkin and the person said they wouldn't charge him. (I suspect that restaurants loose a number of napkins that way and they aren't annoyed.) When dinner ended, we left the restaurant for our cars, with Dave coming out last as he stopped to complement the chef. When he came out, several of us noticed, you guessed it, his napkin peaking out from under his shirt. We pointed this out to him. He was chagrined, but quickly returned it to the restaurant. Here he had told the story and it happened again!

Dave rode back with us while Caroline took a quick detour to pick up his surprise birthday cake. Dave's birthday is around Midwestcon so they have a birthday party every year at Midwestcon for him. This year was no exception. This year was to be bigger as Dave turned 50. Even though Dave figured it out in advance, he was still surprised at the thoughtful gifts from friends. Along with the wonderful chocolate cake from Maya's, Caroline also had a Dundee cake (fruit cake) and an apple pie. It all went pretty fast.

The next morning we had breakfast again with Dave. We gathered in the hotel lobby for the drive to Maya's. Along for breakfast was Tim (last name unknown), Howard, Bill, Dave and us. Maya's is an eclectic bakery/restaurant that has just wonderful food. It was hard to choose what to have for breakfast, but we managed to whittle it down and had a fine time eating and talking.

The Smiths, Dick and Leia, had arrived the night before and were in the con suite in early afternoon. Despite the big breakfast, we went to lunch with them at First Watch, a breakfast/brunch/lunch place in the Borders Books

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plaza. The food was excellent, even though I just had a bowl of soup. We decided to eat there before we left on Sunday morning.

We had brought a mimeo and some mimeo supplies with us for the Smiths and they arranged for someone to drive back with it. It was sad to see the machine go. I thought about all the fanzines that we produced with it and how reliable it had been over the years. I thought about doing my apazines by mimeo, but it's getting harder and harder to find the supplies for the mimeo and electrostenciler. We plan to contribute the rest of the mimeo supplies to Dick and Leia by the end of the summer.

After a slow afternoon and Mass, Rich and I joined a group going to Cookers, a restaurant across the street from the hotel (remember what I said about location?) that served American food. The group consisted of Jon, Joyce, Faith, Sam, Pat and Naomi and us. When we got there, we were informed of a 20 – 30 minute wait. We decided that was OK and persuaded Pat and Naomi to do the quick grocery shopping they needed for the Boston party while we waited. They left their food orders with us and took off. A while later, we were seated at a too small booth (for 8 fans) and gave the waiter (a Nicholas Gage look alike) our order as well as Pat and Naomi's. They arrived before the food and we squeezed around, with Jon sitting in a chair at the end of the table in the aisle. The food was good and we appreciated the waiter's hard work. The only caveat I have about the place is that it has only booths, which tends to limit the number of people at a table. The tables were also the highest anyone there had seen. Even Rich, the tallest there, had a hard time eating. I can't imagine being a child there, although there were a number of families there.

The parties were fun, with most of my time spent sitting near the dessert table in the Boston party. With desserts by Naomi, who wouldn't! The side of the room I was on had a table with a blueberry pie, Boston Cream Pie, Strawberry shortcake (a large star shaped biscuit filled with strawberries and whipped cream) with a bowl of strawberries and a can of whipped cream, and a cheesecake topped with lemon custard. The other side of the room had cookies, candies and an ice cream punch. I spent a lot of time talking with Sue, Corlis, and Anita as we ate and watched the world go by. Caroline, then Dave, claimed the end of the bed.

At one point, Pat wandered over and said that there was another blueberry pie that could be put out if the last piece was eaten. Then he went away. The four of us looked at Dave and Sue said, "You hear that, don't you, Dave?" Dave didn't know what she meant. Sue said, "Can't you hear the last piece of pie calling, *Dave*, *Dave*?" Dave listened, then he moved closer and listened. He concurred that it was indeed calling him and set about to find a fork. Having done that, he took the tin and ate the pie out of it. Pat came by a few minutes later bringing another pie cut into pieces.

Later, Pat came by again and noticed that the excellent cheesecake topped with lemon custard had one piece left. He said once that was gone, he had a chocolate cheesecake to put out. When he left, we all looked at Dave. Dave said he didn't hear that piece calling to him. After trying to persuade several others to eat the last piece, we hit on a plan. Sitting next to the cheesecake was a lonely piece of Boston Cream Pie (also terrific) on a raised plate. When Pat was not looking, I lifted the piece off its plate with the server and placed it next to the Boston Cream Pie. Next I turned the plate so the Boston Cream Pie faced out and hid the cheesecake (which was not as tall).

Pat came back into view, looked across the room and vanished back into the bathroom area. A few minutes later he reappeared with a cut chocolate cheesecake and headed for the dessert table. When he got there, he was shocked to notice the two lone pieces sharing a plate and said, mostly to himself, "There's still a piece left. Who moved that piece?" The chorus of laughter from us gave him his answer. He had no choice but to leave the chocolate cheese cake, which was quickly put on plates and eaten, even though there were no more forks.

After that, people started drifting off to bed. Since we had to get up early to drive home, so did we.

Sunday morning was overcast, but not raining yet, when we got to First Watch. We had a wonderful breakfast (any breakfast is wonderful when they leave a carafe of coffee on the table) and said goodbye to Pat and Roger, Steve and Sue and Dick on the way out. It was a nice weekend, as Midwestcon usually is.

One the way home we made out annual detour to Rio Grand, Ohio, to the Bob Evans Farm to see the quilt exhibit. Every year, the Bob Evans Farm (which is the original home site of the Evens family who own Bob

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Even Restaurants) displays quilts from local quilters in a month long display and the show always opens the Saturday of Midwestcon. For a dollar, one can see the quilts displayed in the restored family farmhouse and touch the quilts with a plastic glove provided. The viewers get to vote for their favorite quilt and the winner is displayed the next year. This year featured a spectacular Baltimore album quilt that I would guess is going to win. There is a small but steady group of people who attend the show and we had a nice time looking at the quilts. It's a pleasant stop along the way home.

We're getting ready for the second leg of our Midwest tour this year – Rivercon in Louisville.

Sadly, the 25th Rivercon will be the last Rivercon. Steve and Sue had done a wonderful job over the last 25 years and rightly deserve to retire from running this classic convention. It's sad to see another convention close its doors, but better to go out on a high note than peter out to nothing or be abruptly cancelled.

All the past GoHs were invited and, from the look of the flier, most of them will be attending. We haven't been back to many of the Southern cons since we moved, so it will be nice to get back for this one. On this leg of the trip, we will be visiting the National quilt museum in Paducah, KY and the home of Superman Metropolis, IL for a day.

We had a pleasant Fourth of July weekend as well. I wasn't able to take the Monday off (and Rich didn't) so it was a bit strange to work one day and sleep in the next. The cats were a little confused, but glad we were home.

On Sunday, we spent most of the day in Washington looking at the Folk Life Festival, which they have every year over the same weekends. Each year the Smithsonian features three areas of the world, bringing in people from the area to show off their crafts, foods and music. This year the Festival featured the Rio Valley, Tibet (with a visit by the Dali Lama), and the city of Washington, D.C. The D.C. exhibit was suppose to expand out into the various neighborhoods with representatives, but I'm not sure people really knew about it. The Tibet section was packed when we got there as the Dali Lama had just finished his visit. The Rio Valley had some excellent music and we had some of their barbecue for lunch. D.C. was the least busy, but there was a small exhibit of some excellent quilts.

We finished our day with a visit to the 300 Pianos exhibit. The invention of the piano happened 300 years ago and the Smithsonian had a wonderful exhibit to celebrate. They had one of the original pianos made by the inventor (whose name I can't remember). He was a craftsman in an Italian court and wanted to create an instrument that had more range than what they had. They had examples of what was available then and how the piano works. The exhibit has about 30 pianos including Liberace's and modern electric pianos. We really enjoyed it.

We continued our tradition of seeing fireworks twice over the Fourth. On Monday, we decided that even though it had been raining a bit, they might still have the fireworks in the town just north of us. So we hopped in the car and managed to find a parking spot in the local elementary school fairly close to where the fireworks were going to be shot off – the local high school. We walked up to the street the school was on and had just enough time to wonder how long we'd have to wait when the first firework went off. It was only 9 PM and not full dark, but I think they wanted to make sure they got them in before the rain came in. It lasted about 20 minutes and was pretty good. We stood through them, but I noticed there were people in the bleachers near where the fireworks were being shot. That was too close as far as I was concerned. Across the street was just fine.

On Tuesday the Fourth, we saw the fireworks here in Gaithersburg. We were invited to the NIST grounds by some friends to watch from there, which is another usual thing. There was no rain, but it was a little hotter. Fortunately, it wasn't as muggy as it's been in the past and we had a good time.

Well, all for now. Next time I plan to have mailing comments.

N.