




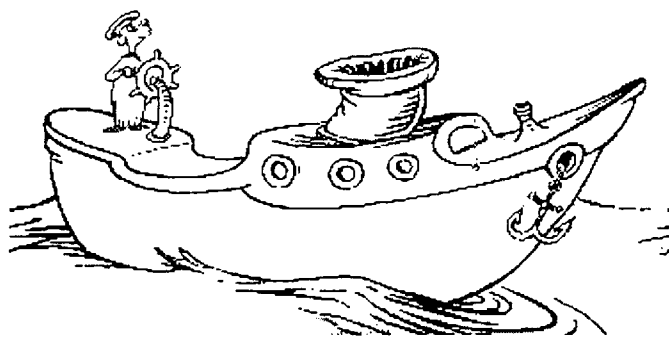
## Sailing The Abnormalcy #28

A mailing for KAPA #96 by Bryan Porter.

 351 Sam Ridley Parkway, Apt. P-10  
Smyrna, TN 37167

 (615) 459-6039

 bryan.porter@nashville.com



Hello once again. Not much going on in my life lately. Work is about it. I haven't been to any conventions and I haven't done much. But, there's a reason I haven't been doing anything. By overcoming "stuffitis" and not spending any money I didn't have to (well, I should say "we") Beth and I have been paying off debt like crazy. By the time you guys read this, I'll have written the last check on our credit cards and the only outstanding debt in our life will be student loans.

At any rate, the eventual goal is to be debt free, have an "emergency fund" of six months expenses socked away, and to have enough non-perishable food and essentials stored away to get by for up to a year. Paranoia? Survivalism? No, just preparedness. As a good friend of mine (who already has most of the above in place) pointed out, "*A personal / financial disaster can hit anybody, and I could go for a year without going to a grocery store for anything except a few minor items. My diet would be boring, but I could get by. You'd be surprised how much money you could save that way if you absolutely had to.*"

Another reason for all of this is that Beth is getting ready to quit her job preparatory to starting her final semester of Nursing school. In the past six months, we've already managed to get rent & expense money for about a four-month period set aside. As mentioned above, I'm working hard on making it six. It's amazing how much slack you can find in your budget when you really go nuts on it.

The slack, unfortunately, came at an expense. I've only gone to 3 conventions this year, and the stretch from this year's RiverCon to next years ConCave is pretty long. I've avoided buying books and CD's (oh, the pain!), cut *way* back on my comic book purchases and so on and so on. I've also avoided purchasing "toys" as much as possible. I've been drooling over the idea of buying a CD-RW drive and starting the process of converting certain irreplaceable cassettes to CD-R. Ah well, it can wait.

Now we haven't cut out *everything*. Beth and I still go out to eat at least once a week. We still go to the movies on a regular basis. *Antz* is worth seeing. I never thought I'd see a movie with Woody Allen and Sylvester Stallone. I really enjoyed the "Boy meets girl, boy likes girl, boy changes underlying social structure, boy wins girl" story. *The Avengers* was simply awful. John Carpenters *Vampires* is a total waste of time. I sort of enjoyed the book it was based on, John Steakley's *Vampires*, and Beth wanted to see it so we went. Bad idea. The first fifteen minutes of the movie follow the book pretty well and then it takes off for the Bad Movie Zone. It was like a bad western with Goths In Black as the bad guys. I used to enjoy a good vampire story – there are very few of them but they do exist. Unfortunately the genre has been taken over by Kids In Black (kibble, aka "goths"), many of whom think that dressing in black and smoking clove cigarettes makes them cool. Most of them haven't learned that jaded and cool are *not* the same thing. (Hmm. A lecture on cool from a guy who still buys comic books and goes to SF & anime conventions. There's something wrong here.)

Hey Naomi, since I know you were such a big fan of the movie adaptation of *Starship Troopers*, (hey, put down that axe...) I'm sure you'll be happy to hear that the guy responsible has turned his sights on Zelazny's *Amber* series.

Beth and I went to *Carmen* at TPAC recently. I've never been a big fan of opera, but Beth really enjoys it and I'm starting to find that I enjoy it as well; the music more than the stage show. Which is why *Carmen* is a perfect example of what I like *and* don't like about opera. The music is *wonderful*. The story leaves me cold. To enjoy a story I have to have someone to empathize with. That's hard to do when the main characters are a manipulative bitch and a weak-willed twit. They both come to a bad end, and they both deserve it.

We also went to the Ryman Auditorium with Beth's parents to see *Bye Bye Love*, which is a musical adaptation about the life and career of the Everly Brothers. I was primarily attending because they wanted to go, but the show was better than I thought it would be. It focused on the early years of their career and glossed over the breakup entirely, but the music was well done. It was intertwined with a humorous storyline involving three high school teenagers who are huge fans of the Everlys. My favorite line was a quoted interchange where Billy Joel supposedly said to Paul McCartney upon first meeting him that the Beatles were the primary influence on his choice of going in to music. McCartney's response: "That's funny. That's exactly what I said the first time I met Phil and Don Everly."

✓ The only thing wrong with the show was the traffic. By chance we wound up going on the same night that the Nashville Predators, our brand new NHL franchise was playing their very first game. The Nashville Arena was packed and there was no parking to be had for blocks around. We finally gave up on parking near the Ryman, drove north of town, parked and called a taxi.

Since the last time we talked, I hit another milestone. As of Sept. 30, I am now 30. *Sigh*.

The roads in Tennessee are driving me crazy this year. I found out from a friend of mine (a geologist who works for the Tennessee Dept. of Transportation) that TDOT received a huge increase in funding this year and they're just going nuts with it. This year they've been living up to their nickname – Total Disruption Of Traffic. Orange barrels as far as the eye can see.

Here's a UPI item (with personal comments inserted) I rather enjoyed:

"BAIL TO THE CHIEF: Hillary Clinton, desperate to find something external to blame for her husband's political problems, now says bigotry against people from Arkansas is behind the ongoing attacks on the president. "I think a lot of this is prejudice against our state," she complained in an interview with the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette newspaper. "They wouldn't do this if we were from some other state." The first lady previously claimed a "vast right-wing conspiracy" was behind Clinton's legal and political problems. (UPI) ...Face it, Hillary: the only outside thing to blame is Bill's zipper."

Last time around I mentioned that I was reading David Wingrove's *Chung Kuo* series. Since then I have finished the series (7 volumes) and it was worth reading. As I said before, the characters keep shifting back and forth. People I thought I was going to like turned out to be scum and vice versa. I thought I was being set up at the end of book six when it looked like he was heading for a *deus ex machina* ending but it was something of a fake-out for the ending in book seven.

The last time I was in Atlanta I found a Japanese restaurant, *Umezono*, which serves the best Japanese food I've had since I came back to the US. It's a small place I found almost by accident and I knew it was going to be good when I walked in. The staff was speaking Japanese, at least half the customers were Japanese who were living in Atlanta, and the tv in the corner was playing NHK. And hey, Guy, you'd like the place. It's tucked in behind a strip joint. I didn't go in so I can't comment other than that the place exists.

And now, on to...

## Mailing Comments

Vanish With the Rose 56

Nicki

I agree with you that *Deep Impact* was pretty good. I didn't think so much of *The X Files: Fight the Future*. As a 2-hour tv episode it would have been pretty good. As a theatrical release, it wasn't much. I still sorta-kinda enjoy the series. Sometimes it's fun to watch, and sometimes it just reminds me of the people I know who actually believe that sort of thing. ☐ Not owning a cell phone myself, (a pager is bad enough) I'm curious – why don't they receive unwanted calls? Certain people at work keep hinting that I should get one. I hint right back that Pepsi can supply me one if they want me to have one. Otherwise they can page me and wait till I can reach a phone. ☐ yct Naomi re seat belt laws – I've never understood seat belt laws for adults. For minors sure, but if an adult wants to risk their neck that's their business. It could easily enough be sorted out by insurance companies adding "You don't get a dime from us if you're in an accident and you weren't wearing your seat belt" rider on the car insurance. If you don't want that restriction, you pay more for your insurance. But then, we live in the South where we have laws where I can be ticketed for having a child in my car without a seat belt but I could stack a dozen of them in the bed of a pickup truck and go tearing down the highway without fear of penalty. ☐ yct Pat re NRA - The 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment reads "A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed." . The problem is that the pro-gun nuts want to pretend that everything before the comma doesn't exist, and the anti-gun nuts want to pretend the whole thing doesn't exist. Or, as they like to say now "It's anachronistic and doesn't apply to the modern age." Which is the ACLU's stated reason for not defending a part of the Bill of Rights with which they disagree. In reality, it seems pretty straightforward to me. Private citizens of this country are allowed to purchase and carry firearms, subject to reasonable restrictions. The problem comes in deciding what is reasonable. But this is Yet Another Topic where opinions aren't likely to be swayed on either side. Most people have already made up their minds and the application of fact won't make any difference (hmmm. Does that include you Bryan? Maybe.) Anyway, I do happen to be of the opinion that private citizens should be allowed to own firearms. I also think they should be held strictly responsible if they are improperly used. But then I'm one of those wackos who thinks that people should be allowed to commit suicide if they want to. Essentially, I believe that people should be allowed the maximum personal freedom possible with the caveat that they will be held strictly responsible for their actions. Use a gun to commit a crime, and you'll either go to jail for life or die yourself. ☐ On a more pleasant topic – congratulations to you and Richard on yet another Hugo for the collection. Are you running out of places to store them yet?

Apple to Windows and a Few Other Computers On the Way!

Betsy

You and Naomi are kidding about David Copperfield, right? ☐ Your campout sounds like fun. I hope everything goes well.

## Saudust and Caviar Tony

Welcome back Tony. I recall you were in the process of leaving Kapa when I first joined back in issue 68. ☐ Everyone knows that Bill Clinton lied. Most of them don't care whether he lied or not. They don't care if he slept around on his wife. They don't care that he's apparently incapable of using his intellect to overpower his own genitalia. They wouldn't really care if he was freebasing heroin and watching snuff films in his leisure hours. What they really care about is whether he's in the party they like and whether or not they think he's doing good for them. If you took the exact situation that we have now – an economy that's doing reasonably well, high employment, minimal inflation, etc... and the same situation in office – a President sleeping around on his wife and getting caught, (lying under oath, no less) but reversed the political parties, the vast majority of the people in this country would switch sides instantly. The Republicans would be talking about his right to privacy and what a great job he's doing as President and the Democrats would be out there screaming for the head of a sexual harasser who has disgraced the Presidency and the Constitution he swore to uphold. Oh, and yes, I do realize that I've just insulted the integrity of every person who holds a strong opinion on this matter. They can get over it. I'm right, whether they want to admit it or not. ☐ The Glenn subject, as you say, is a bit different. I do believe it's a political payback – the most expensive political junket and retirement gold watch package in history. Someone was told to come up with a scientific justification for it and they did. The fact remains that it has generated plenty of good publicity for the space program and that's A Good Thing. If it generates popular support and interest in one of the only government programs to ever pay for itself, then I'm willing throw a few of my tax dollars at it. ☐ Fascinating article about NASA's cooperation with *Armageddon*. I haven't seen the movie and I don't know enough about lighting systems to get everything in the article, but it was an interesting read.

## BlueCras 39 Guy

Oh my God, they killed Kapa! You bastards! ☐ So, did facing your phobia work out for you? Until the events I mentioned last issue (“the second most frightening experience of my life”) I haven't had a phobia that I was aware of. My new one is fairly specific – if I'm alone and trying to go to sleep – say I'm staying in a hotel – and I have any discomfort in the chest (more common with digestive problems of late – acid reflux I think), even if I *know* it's indigestion I find myself unable to sleep from anxiety. Beth has a horrible fear of being trapped underwater. Going over long bridges is a challenge and if we ever go to England and decide to visit mainland Europe we'll have to fly or take the ferry. The channel tunnel is her greatest fear made manifest. ☐ yct “Work is merely work. This is *KAPA!*” Yeah, yeah, yeah. I usually manage to scratch something out every other month. Out of 28 issues since I joined, I've missed a total of 3. Not a great record by the standards of the ~~obsessive-compulsive~~ perennially faithful Guy, but it will have to do. ☐ Great story of Gary being tricked. I'd love to have seen the look on his face.

## Transitional Phases 37 Naomi

“At least the 'zine will be mercifully short.” 11 pages later ... You don't know how to write a short zine Naomi. Not that this is a bad thing. ☐ You appear to be right about the situation on Woodmont Blvd in Nashville. In the past couple of months an amazing number of “For Sale” signs have cropped up on that stretch of road. ☐ Re our earlier discussion of Miyazaki films and you wondering what Disney would do with the title *Laputa: Castle In The Sky*. Well, Beth bought me the tape of *Kiki's Delivery Service* for my birthday and the next movie to be released will indeed be *Laputa*. However, Disney has sidestepped the question entirely by just calling it *Castle In The Sky*. Oh, just in you plan to

buy *Kiki* and you are an “anime purist” BV is also releasing it subtitled with the original soundtrack and dialogue, letterboxed no less. ☐ You’ve got to feel for the guy who build the castle in Triune. He bought land and built it in the middle of nowhere. Hwy 96 runs near it, but even when they widen it (they start on that soon as well) it wasn’t nearly close enough to cause problems. 840 will pretty much ruin it, which is a shame. Despite opposition, 840 *is* needed here. Besides allowing me a convenient way to get to Knoxville from Smyrna (selfishness is rearing its ugly head here) without having to plow through backroads and state highways, it will eventually allow trucks of nuclear waste from Oak Ridge to avoid driving through the mess of interchanges that is downtown Nashville. Besides, the traffic will come whether you build for it or not. ☐ re the tax code. Anything would be better than the thousands upon thousands of incomprehensible pages we have now. As far as I’m concerned, we should be able to implement a tax code that any reasonably literate person could read and understand on a basic level in a single day. ☐ The fact remains that, politics aside, a NRA safety class is one of the best ways for someone who wishes to own a firearm to get started correctly. ☐ It’s my understanding (correct me if I’m wrong) that the President can instruct the Attorney General to fire a Special Prosecutor anytime he wishes. Also a lot of people forget that Starr tried to resign from this mess early on. He was not allowed to do so. Yes, I think he overstepped himself, but being the Resident Conservative (Well, economic conservative, social moderate with a few loose gears) I have to keep this from becoming entirely one sided. ☐ re James Randi. “Talentless debunkers who can only gain importance by tearing others down” ? Hardly. The man was a well paid professional magician for many years. He’s also a long time member of CSIOP (The Committee for Scientific Investigation of claims of the Paranormal). He was invited to join because he is a rational man who also happens to have the kind of background necessary to spot fakers like Uri Geller and other sleight-of-hand artists who are capable of fooling scientists with their tricks. He’s also the one who brought the fraud known as “Psychic Surgery” to the public’s attention. He’s never “torn down” anyone who calls themselves a stage magician (like Copperfield, Penn & Teller, etc.) because they make no pretense to being anything other than what they are – tricksters with stage presence. He only defrauds people who claim to have paranormal powers by asking them to demonstrate their abilities under controlled scientific conditions. To date, no one has been able to do this successfully.

The Muunie Bin 3 Sue

There’s nothing wrong with a handwritten ‘zine. ☐ How’s the landscaping class going? Are we going to be treated to a new lawn next time Beth and I come by? ☐ Ack! Photos! They look great except for the big fat geek standing behind Naomi in the group shot.

NOTES FROM THE CLUB CAR 49 DAT

Another interesting account of your travels. I would like to check out The Inn at Spanish Head you describe. ☐ I promised myself I wasn’t going to get in to this conversation. I may yet regret going back on that promise. Ah well. Re yct Nicki “...right-wing anti-choicers.” I have a major problem with that term. The people who are opposed to abortion are no more “anti-choice” than you are “anti-life.” The vast majority of them simply believe that an abortion is the same as murdering a child. To them an abortion is no different than a mother saying a year after a child is born “You know, I can’t afford this. Having a baby isn’t as much fun as I thought it would be. Let’s just kill him so I can get out of this mess.” Yes, there are people on the “far right” who fit your description. There are the people who murder doctors and blow up clinics. They are no more typical of the average pro-life person than Charles Manson is a typical representative of the Sixties generation. There are also people on the “far left” (I’ve talked to them) who seem to think that any woman who “chooses” to keep a child or (gasp) stay at home to raise a child is some sort of traitor to her gender. Personally, I happen to fall into the pro-choice camp, but I don’t make the mistake of assuming the people who

oppose my viewpoint are some evil misogynistic puritanical creatures. But I'm a strange person anyway. Despite being pro-choice, my personal opinion is that a fetus is a human. However, we as a society have decided that a woman's right to choose whether she bears that child outweighs the child's right to live. My views on that subject are very similar to my view on capital punishment in that we, as a society have decided that our right to revenge ourselves upon someone for a particularly heinous crime outweighs the criminal's right to continue living. It doesn't really have much to do with deterrence or cost. It's revenge, and I have no problem with that. I have no illusions about what I support. There are no clean hands in the abortion issue.

Kentucky Nuggets 52                      Jodie

Looking at Sue's photos, I'm reminded of earlier comments by Naomi and myself. Jodie, in the group photo (bottom left) look at the guy on the far left. That's Sue's brother. The one I said looks like a strange cross between Andy Offutt and Allen Steele. Naomi seems to have thought so as well. What do you think? ☐ Interesting comments on fashion. I'm hardly qualified to comment, though. Before I married Beth my idea of fashion was to stick with basic muted solids in order to keep from embarrassing myself too much. However, I've never seen you at any event looking anything less than elegant.

End of Mailing Comments

I just remembered an interesting "experience" Beth and I had some time ago. Earlier in the year we tried to go to dinner at the Red Lobster in Murfreesboro. I say tried because it just didn't work out. We were standing in the bar having a drink while we waited on a table when I caught a whiff of a pungent odor. Then suddenly I felt my lungs burning and started coughing violently. A lady standing near us had just lit a cigarette and turned to say something about how she was perfectly within her rights to smoke at the bar – she thought I was commenting on her cigarette. Then whatever it was reached her and she started coughing. And then Beth and the rest of the people in the bar. It wasn't restricted to the bar, as they had to evacuate the entire restaurant. Within a few minutes I was feeling better, although short of breath, and we decided to go to dinner somewhere else rather than wait around to see what had happened. Anyway, a few weeks ago we decided to try dinner at that same Red Lobster. When we went in I asked the waitress and she just rolled her eyes before explaining. Apparently someone (they never discovered who) thought it would be funny to set off a pepper spray canister in an air vent. All I can say is that if what hit me was one spray diluted through an entire air conditioning system, I hope to never find out what the concentrated version is like.

Every year Christmas starts a little sooner. On the morning of Halloween, Beth and I were woke by a call from one of her employees at 5:30am – he was calling in sick for first shift. Neither of us could go back to sleep so we decided to have breakfast and go do the grocery shopping early. We walked in the door of Kroger and what do we see? A display of Christmas Oreos. Halloween decorations being taken down and replaced by Christmas decorations. *sigh*

A while back I was stuck in a hotel room unable to sleep (surprise surprise) and the following idea for a masquerade bit entered my diseased brain. I typed it up and emailed it out to a few people thinking they might enjoy it. A few days later I started getting email from people I'd never heard of, telling me they liked it. Then I received a copy of a newsletter from Nicki. (thanks again for sending that to me Nicki, I appreciate it) Surprise, surprise – someone had taken my little joke, pasted in some clipart and run it through. At least they kept my name attached to it. Anyway, I'll tack it on to the end.

Anyway, that's about it for this time around. Upon re-reading this appears to be "Bryan gets grumpy and disagrees with everyone." month. Oh no – I turn thirty and suddenly I'm turning into a Grumpy Opinionated Old Farte/Fan. (GOOF?) I have sudden visions of being one of those people who sit in the con suite and argue politics (fannish and otherwise) till I have a stroke. Oh, spirit, please tell me that this future is what may be and not what will be!

A little too melodramatic? Oh well. Talk to you all again soon, I hope.

Pinky And The Brain Take Over Worldcon.

[Pinky and the Brain make their entrance on the Masquerade stage]

P: "Gee Brain what are we going to do tonight?"

B: "Normally I would have to hurt you for asking that question again, but tonight my plan is different.

"Consider this, my maladjusted friend: we are at a Science Fiction Convention. Not just any SF Con, but \*The\* SF Con. The World Science Fiction Convention. Now listen carefully: It is a little known fact that the fans of this genre run the gamut of social and financial class, from fast food employees, convenience store clerks and lawyers, all the way to respected professions such as engineers, computer scientists, even NASA directors! Most importantly, the people who run the computer systems of the major corporations of the world are almost without exception fans of science fiction. Why, these people have no idea how much influence they could wield on every level. Once I rule them, I'll use that influence to take over the world. But first, I have to take over Fandom."

P: "Right. And how do you plan to do that?"

B: "Simple. Tonight, we take over WorldCon!"

P: "Great idea Brain! \*Narf!\* Um, excuse me Brain, but doesn't fandom already have it's share of megalomaniacs?"

B: "Yes. They're called con chairs. Amateurs! They're no match for my intellect. They're too busy slandering each other and trying to find the cheapest source of Chee-To's for their con suite. I'll displace them easily."

P: "Right! I can see it now! We'll start our own convention. I'll buy the Chee-To's!"

B: "Shut up before I hurt you. Nobody gets real influence by starting their own convention. Instead, I'll start by writing a series of science fiction masterpieces. With my intellect, it should be child's play. Then, when I have established myself, I will start my own religion. It will be

based on alien intervention and higher planes of existence. With my established credibility, they will flock to my banner, and then I will use that influence to take over the world!!"

P: "Brilliant Brain! \*Narf\*! Um, pardon me, but doesn't L.Ron Hubbard already own that franchise?"

B: "Who?"

[Enter several lawyers]

L1: "Stop right there mouse! We have injunctions, subpoenas and lawsuits. How dare you use our great founder's ideas!?! Hand over all your assets now and sign this non-compete agreement or we'll tie you up in court so long your grandchildren will be testifying as character witnesses."

B: "But, but, but, I had no idea!"

L2: "That's doesn't matter. Now sign here. Use this pen."

B: "Oh, all right." He stops and looks at the ink on pen tip. "Hey, this looks like blood."

L1: "Yes, yes, whatever. Give me that and we'll be going now." He takes the paper and the lawyers exit.

B: "Oh, Pinky. Sometimes I despair of ever succeeding."

P: "Cheer up Brain. Let's go down to the dealer's room and see if they have any new buttons. And later, I'll nominate you for TAFF."

B: Looks up at Pinky. "Pinky, are you pondering what I'm pondering?"

P: "Gee, I think so Brain, but how are we going to get Jerry Pournelle into a leather mini and a pair of go-go boots?"

B: Slaps his own head. "You know, I'd ask for an explanation of how you come to some of those conclusions, but I'm afraid you'd answer me. Come along, Pinky. It's time to prepare for tomorrow night."

P: "What are we going to do tomorrow night, Brain?"

B: "The same thing we did tonight, Pinky: Try to take over this con!"