

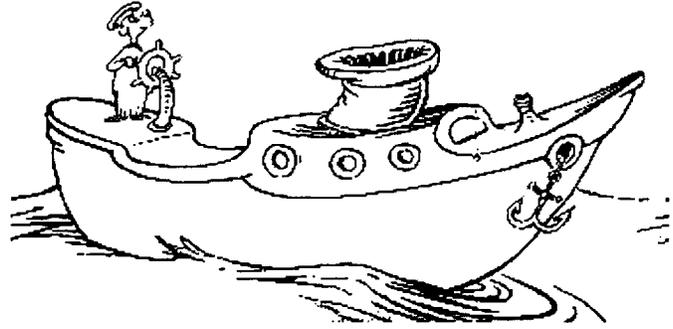
Sailing The Abnormalcy #30

A mailing for KAPA #99 by Bryan Porter.

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

 (615) 459-6039

 bryan.porter@nashville.com



Greetings once again. Once again it's time to hack out something I can send in before deadline.

(too late) I'm sitting in the scenic Days Inn in Morristown, Tennessee at the moment. I'm spending the week in East Tennessee (I was in Johnson City the last few days, which is about as far north and east as you can go in this state) showing one of my counterparts a procedure that I had the pleasure of piloting. Translation – I got to be the first person to install the equipment in a real live field environment using half-written instructions and trying to find all the gotchas. Oh well, someone's got to go first.

Beth is currently spending the week with her brother out in Texas and they will be driving back from Lubbock later this week so I suppose the timing is fortuitous since we're both out of town for a week at the same time. Not that the cats will view it that way, but I'll try to get home long enough to check food and litter tomorrow before I have to run up to Albany, KY for more installations.

Speaking of Beth, she recently graduated and is waiting to get on the schedule to take the NCLEX examinations. She already has a job waiting for her at Centennial Medical in the ICU ward as soon as she passes the boards and is officially a RN. The original worrywart ("I don't think I did very well on that last exam.") didn't find out until she saw the graduation program that she was the top of her class and Summa cum Laude.

Apparently I am jinxed. It's the truth I tell you! I walked into my Cookeville location a week ago. I'm standing their talking to the guy who was my boss 4 years ago about a printing problem he's having when I see a popup message on his screen: "COOKEVFA is on battery." The fuse that covers the server room blew. While I was fixing that the UPS in Rockwood died. When I went up and replaced the UPS the power supply in the old server there gave up the ghost.

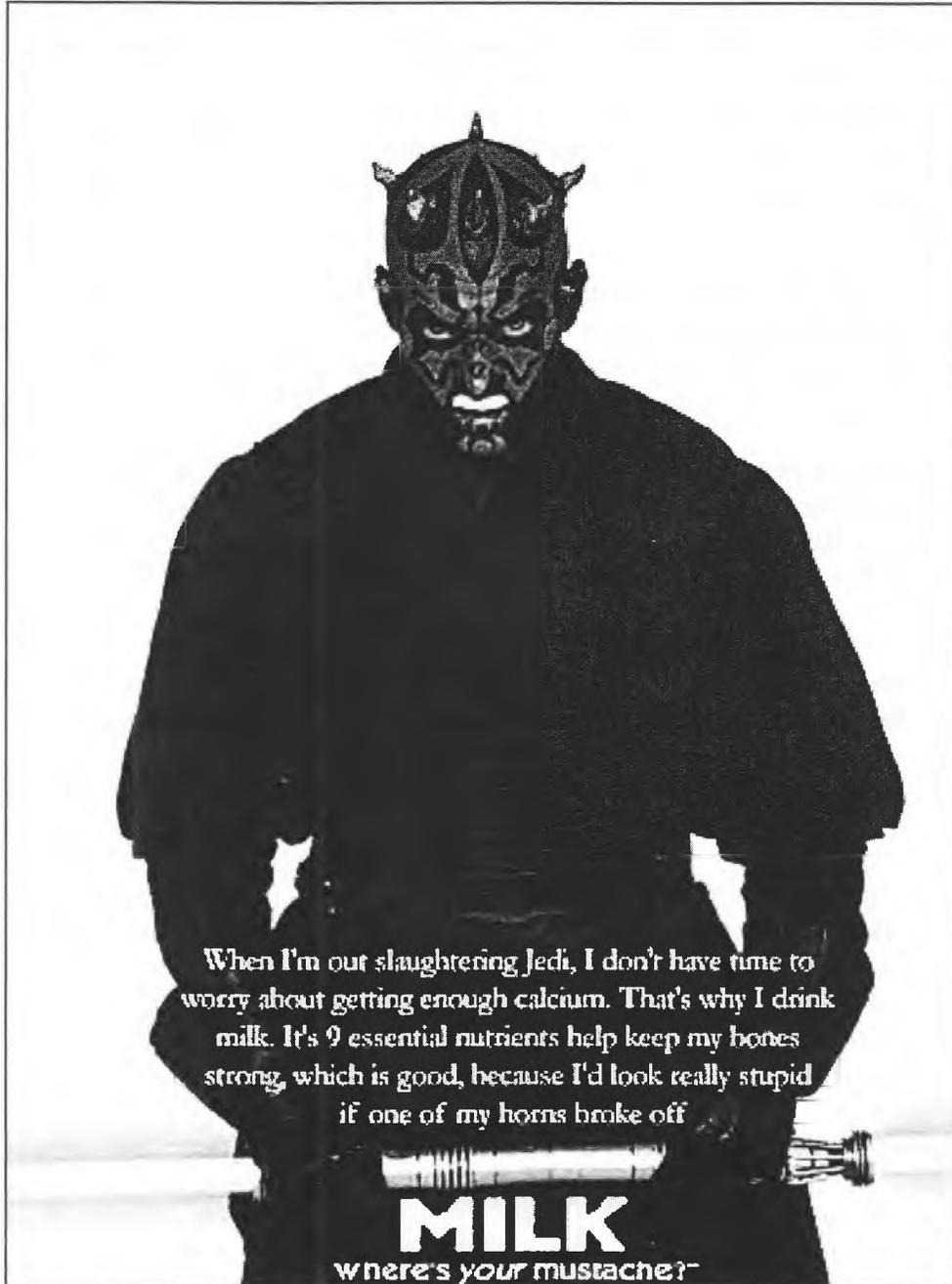
This is not to mention little niceties like driving three hours to a location to move a router only to find I can't get in to the room where it's located because the guy who has the key is on vacation. (Yes, I told them ahead of time I would be there and would need access to that office) I then had to climb up into the ceiling in the adjacent office and reach down into the locked office using an oversized pair of channel lock pliers with two broom handles duck taped to them as really long handle extensions to unlock the door. This is my life. I want a refund. ^_^ I'm too fat to climbing in ceilings.

Actually, I like my job. I just blow off steam by complaining. This is not to say that if one of the lottery tickets I buy every time I go to my Kentucky location actually pays off I won't send an email addressed to the "All Pepsi Cola North America Employees" distribution list with an attached movie file of me doing a victory jig out the door. I may or may not include the "turbo-mooning" segment.

I'm not sure about the rest of you but I know Naomi and I are both big fans of Terry Pratchett's books (Thanks for loaning me *Carpe Jugulum!*). Anyway, this quote in alt.fan.pratchett is attributed to him -

"I stroll along, talk, I sign books, people buy me drinks, I forget where my hotel is, I get lost and fall into some local body of water... done it hundreds of times. Going to a convention is fun!"
(Terry Pratchett, alt.fan.pratchett)

Of course, the big news among Kapa is the engagement of our very own OE and his every-perky sweetie. Yes, Naomi, I know I'll pay for that. Many congratulations to both of you. It was fun to get the call from Naomi telling me about it. It was especially fun trying to act like I didn't already know. Rocky is *really* bad at keeping secrets. He never actually came out and told me directly but he did everything but act out a wedding march and play charades.



It's been a great spring for movies. Nothing serious mind you, but some great fluff. Nothing wrong with good fluff. Heck, *Titanic* was huge and that was the biggest fluff flick I've seen in years. The *Matrix* was an interesting diversion. Granted, half the cyberpunk authors (not to mention Ben Bova with *The Dueling Machine*) have gone down this road before, but they did a halfway decent job with it. *The Mummy* was a lot of fun. The beetles were a little gratuitous but otherwise it was exactly what George Lucas claims for *Star Wars* – an old-fashioned Saturday Serial with great special effects.

And of course, *Star Wars* – *The Phantom Menace*. The movie is taking a beating from critics but who really cares? It was a little slow at first, and the Jar Jar Binks character was grating on the nerves for the first half of the movie, but he grew on me later in the movie

(apparently they have underwater rastafarians on Naboo but no underwater ganja). The music was

wonderful and I enjoyed the movie and I plan to see it again. The biggest laugh in the film was the first time Jar Jar Binks did his little tongue waggle bit. I was there with Andy and Vanessa Bateman (Beth was already out of town and all 3 of us were free in the middle of the day) and Nesse leaned over and whispered "I'll bet he's popular with the ladies."

I get tired of talking about politics and yet the subject keeps forcing itself into my mind and onto the screen. What to talk about? Kosovo? Nah. I have to admit that there are days when I switch on *All Things Considered* and think "God, if I have to sit through one more story about the former Yugoslavia I'm going to be violently ill." Government investment in the stock market in the guise of "privatizing social security?" Not that privatizing it is such a bad idea but the way it was proposed was the worst idea I've heard in a long time. I'll save that for another day.

How about the fact that despite the claims of our esteemed President, "There's a budget surplus. Really, really there is" the national debt is still going up? Explain that one to me. Need proof? Go to the web page for the Bureau of Public Debt over at the Treasury Department. Don't be drinking anything when you look at their page titled "The Public Debt To the Penny" at:

<http://www.publicdebt.treas.gov/opd/opdpenny.htm>

It actually fluctuates up and down, but it steadily goes up. In the last year it's gone up \$91 billion, with \$12 billion of that being the last 30 days. But hey, it's not like it's real money, right?

But hey, at least he doesn't claim to have invented the Internet. If Gore invented the Internet then Quayle invented the spell checker.

Back on a more pleasant topic, I did manage to squeeze in a couple of conventions so far this year. I went ConCave, naturally, and it was its usual pleasant self. I also made it to another Anime convention - Anime Central up in Chicago. I decided on that one instead of Project A-Kon, not because I didn't enjoy A-Kon last year but because weatherwise, Chicago in April sounds much better to me than Dallas in June. I *really* don't like hot weather. It was the same weekend as Parthecon (Kubla Jr) here in Nashville. The fact that I would drive several hundred miles to attend a convention in a different city rather than stay here gives you an idea of the state of Nashville fandom these days.

One of the most amusing things at these things is the music video competition. You take footage from one or more series and edit it together to music. Simple, no? Like most things, there's an awful lot of garbage interspersed with enough gems to make it worthwhile. Someone stitched together a bunch of footage from *Bubblegum Crisis* to the opening theme from *The A-Team* and someone else put together a side-splitter using footage from *Gunsmith Cats* and *City Hunter* to the tune of Weird Al Yankovic's *Trigger Happy*. "I got an AK-47 and ya know it makes me feel alright. I got an Uzi by my pillow makes me sleep a little better at night. There's no feeling any greater than to shoot first and ask questions later. Yeah I'm trigger happy, trigger happy every day." (Yes, it's a surfer song). Oh, I forgot, guns are now officially the work of the devil and shouldn't be laughed at.

Anyway, Acen was a good convention, even if Chicago is the dingiest city I've ever seen. We drove past some beautiful architecture tucked away in some of the most depressingly drab concrete sprawl I've ever seen. If I ever agree to move to Chicago, someone check the closet for pods.

Okay, on to the MC's.

Mailing Comments

Kentucky Nuggets 54 Jodie

That was a touching tribute to Mrs. Jayne. Only the luckiest students get even one teacher like her in their lifetime. If they're really lucky the encounter her early enough in their education to really matter. She sounds like someone who really deserved the title of "Teacher."

BlueGRAS 42 Guy

Re my trip to Florida: You don't understand. I *despise* hot weather. I'll take January over July any day. Rather than go to Florida in the winter I'd rather they send me to North Dakota in the summer. I like snow. ☐ Yes, I lived in Japan from 1982-86. I doubt that I'll see any financial return from the attempt, but it is fun. Beth is now interested as well and actually has more time to listen to the tapes than I do these days. ☐ Nathan Bedford Forrest is definitely a mixed bag. On the one hand he was a tactical genius. The maneuvers he developed for use by horse cavalry are still studied and used by tank commanders today. On the other hand, he was a traitor who took up arms against his rightful government. (sorry, I don't romanticize the Confederacy). ☐ "Porter" in *Payback* was "cuddly" ??? I'd hate to see what he's like in the book. ☐

Vanish With the Rose 59 Nicki

You did have comments on my last zine. They were in with the comments on Pat's zine. ☐ The China technology situation has gone on through four presidents but was only discovered during the current tenure. Yes, if there was a problem in my workplace that carried over from my predecessor, and I knew about it and let it continue then I would expect to be blamed. However, most of what is being discussed now came out after I wrote my comments. I was referring specifically to the Loral / Hughes deal where they gave China improved technology for accurately launching (or targeting) missiles so they could launch their satellites cheaper. ☐ You are entirely correct about the value of the fetus' life depending on whether the mother wants it. Note the recent case where it was decided that a woman who tried to kill her unborn (barely unborn – she was about to give birth) by drinking herself half to death was not guilty of anything wrong, yet I distinctly remember a news story about a man convicted of murder for kicking a pregnant woman in the stomach. She lived, the fetus did not. Inconsistent, no? ☐ No, I'm sorry but I never noticed any quilts in Japan.

Sawdust and Caviar Tony Cannon

Ct Guy, so you're a "rightist libertarian". I (half) jokingly refer to myself as a "moderately liberal conservative." ☐ ct me about feminists "tarring, feathering and neutering" Thomas, & Packwood vs Clinton. The difference is simple – Thomas & Packwood are conservatives, Clinton is a liberal. They are willing to cut someone who is on "their side" considerably more slack. This little character flaw is not unique to the left. Conservatives are just as guilty of doing this. I do find it amusing that the Democrats who have blocked every attempt to scale back or eliminate the Special Prosecutor laws have suddenly done an about face when the SP is investigating one of them.

Notes FROM the Club Car 52 Pat

Again, many congratulations on your engagement. Someone (who shall remain nameless) has suggested that we find several tiny toy shotguns, paint them white and hang ribbons off of them for use as decorations. ☐ I meant to see *October Sky* but never managed to do so. I'll have to rent it when it shows up in the video store. ☐ The Japanese lessons are going okay. Slowly, but okay. More for lack of time than anything else. So far I'm not having too much trouble with the vocabulary and the

grammar isn't too difficult. The most difficult part about it is that it is an incredibly contextual language. The same word can have multiple meanings depending entirely on the context in which it is used. This is something that can only be learned through usage. From what little time I've spent with it, I think the written language is what is going to be my sticking point. There are *four* alphabets.

Transitional Phases 4 | Naomi

Practical jokes? You? Naomi whatever are you talking about? You're always the soul of seriousness and propriety. ☐ So, your doting parents like Pat more than you thought they did? Parents are funny that way. I know that if I were ever to be so stupid as to hit Beth, my mother would be first in line with a baseball bat to take me out at the knees. My dad would be right behind her. ☐ So your wedding is going to be a party where two people happen to exchange vows. Sounds like fun. And very appropo. ☐ I'm glad your job is working out. I was going to make some dumb joke about it being too taxing for you, but I would never sink so low. ☐ Be careful letting people know you can operate a computer. How do you think I wound up in my current position? Back when I worked in Beaman Bottling's Vending department I accidentally let my employers realize I wasn't intimidated by all the flashing lights or that scary command line prompt. I was immediately put in charge of coming in at 4:30am 3 times a week to run the backup on our decrepit TI minicomputers. This involved a couple of dozen 9-track tape reels (I *said* it was old and I wasn't kidding). The rest of the job just sort of crept up on me over the past ... Good God, I just realized I've been working for Pepsi for almost eleven years now. I started in Vending when I was 19 and now I'm pushing 31. Ack! Ack! ☐ Finally, someone who agrees with me on a Flat Tax. Say, 20% on everything over \$20,000 with a personal exemption of \$2000 per person in the household. (those are throwaway example numbers) And *no* other exemptions. Yes, the mortgage industry would scream, but they can get over it. People don't buy houses to get a tax break, they buy them because they want to own their own home. And that's another thing, the Property tax is one of the most idiotic things ever invented. It insures that you can never actually *own* a piece of property, you're simply renting it long-term from your own government. Blah blah blah. Rant time over. ☐ Did you ever actually make the chocolate mice? I know how to make them but haven't in years. They're cute but too much trouble to go to most of the time. ☐ You're right about anime taking a long time to make it over here - far too long to be considered for a Hugo. One of the best (and funniest) SF anime series I've seen in years is *Martian Successor Nadesico*. It's been out for several years in Japan. AD Visions optioned the US rights on it about a year ago and has yet to do anything with it. If you want to see it in this country, fansubs are your only recourse, and fansubbers as a rule take series out of circulation as soon as something is optioned by a US company. Fortunately I know someone who has the whole series already. ☐ You'll be pleased to know that Tennessee has started cracking down on the seatbelt laws. Not wearing a seatbelt has been upgraded from a secondary offense to a primary offense, which means that you can be pulled over and ticketed solely for not wearing your belt. A little bird told me that it has to do with government funding that will be withdrawn if we don't get our seatbelt usage percentages up to a high enough point. Standard government tactic #3 - Refuse to give you back your own tax money if you don't do things the way we want them done. ☐ re Beth and *Maison Ikkoku* - Yep. Rumiko Takahashi writes wonderful stories. I was going to say that I hadn't read any of the *Mermaid* stuff, but someone recently posted the first chapter of *Mermaid's Scar* in alt.binaries.pictures.anime. Very dark and somewhat grotesque. She's still worth reading/watching more often than not. Anyway, I've been starting Beth out very carefully. MI, followed by *Ah! My Goddess*, and *Kiki's Delivery Service*. She'll never be a raging otaku ("anime fanboy") but she at least understands why I enjoy it. ☐ The Nathan Bedford Forrest statue was vandalized recently. I think someone shot it but I couldn't swear to that. ☐ That was a very balanced view of the abortion situation you presented. It's a shame that the only Pro-Life types you are likely to encounter (and know their viewpoint) are the people who picket in front of the clinics. They are no more a typical representative of the average Pro-Life person than the

idiots who spit on vets and screamed “baby killer” were typical of the average person who was opposed to American involvement in Vietnam. They’re just the most visible. ☐ I like your reproductive licensing idea. Or maybe something like what was suggested in Robinson’s *Mars* trilogy where each individual person has a “birthright” of ¼ of a child. Two people can have one child and if they want more than one they would have to purchase someone else’s birthright. I can hear the screams now. “Oh, but then only rich people would be able to have children and that would be genocide against poor people.” And I’m sure someone would figure out how it’s racist and discriminatory against single parents. ☐ Don’t worry about offending people. I offend people on a daily basis and I haven’t been lynched yet. I’ve probably offended someone with something I wrote somewhere above, but that doesn’t keep me from expressing my opinions. It hasn’t cost me any friendships yet. Granted, I could never run for President ...

End of Mailing Comments

Well, this is already late so that’s all for this time around. Take care everyone and I’ll see several of you at Rivercon. Like Naomi I’m having to write this and send it off without time to wait a day or so, re-read and edit out anything too outrageous so this is very much a “whatever came out of my fingers at the moment” issue. Those are usually the ones that get me yelled at the most ...

