

The Storm Front

Back to the Future

The Day the Reunion Stood Still

by Chris Von Sonn

Los Angeles, 11:00 am, Saturday the 15th of August I packed for the journey northwards for the 10 year reunion of my high school class. Of course I packed my best suit and silk tie to perpetuate a non-spoken impression of wealth and success. Needless to say, I knew I would be styling.

11:10 am I finish packing and head off to my mom's house with a quick stop at Taco Bell for a couple chicken burritos and an ice tea with lots of ice. Mmm, good. And cheap too!

12:00 pm (ish) I arrive at my mother's house (who lives 15 minutes away from the lovely Burbank Airport). She takes me to the airport at 12:40 and we arrive at 1:00. I check some

luggage and get my boarding pass (which is number 6. This low number is very important as all previous Southwest Air passengers will attest), and head to the bar. I consume a cranberry juice and a soft pretzel.

I get my shoes shined for the big event and board the plane.

I land in Sacramento on time and meet my uncle who drives me to my grandma's house. I eat again.

After a shower and a shave I dress in the cool double breasted suit and silk tie (I decided not to go for the french cuffs and pocket silk). I go to the Red Lion, get and hide the name tag with my senior portrait (for those of you



Chris -- as he was 10 years ago

who have the '82 year book will understand why I hid it). At first I see no familiar faces and then, just like in the movies, I see Susie Benson waving me to her table. After the appropriate amounts of hugs and kisses. We start to catch up. Wonder where people are. What people are doing. Who's married. Who's an utter failure.

And that got us to Cramer.

Who, thank God, never showed.

Then Larry MacKibben

On the Roads of America

The Trip -- Day One

by Roger Hanna

The drive back was, as Eric would say, a "hoot." We found a company called

AutoDriveway, which links cars that need to be transported with people who need to transport themselves. While they expect you to drive a direct and expedient route, we were able to pretty much ignore those requirements.

We were supposed to take I-80 the whole way to Philadelphia. NOT! We did take it, however, to Sacramento. The '89 Chrysler 5th Avenue is not a bad car for a major road trip. While the mileage wasn't great (around 30 mpg), it

Please see "Class" -- page 6

Please see "Drive" -- page 6

Inside

2 It's been a "Theatrical" Summer

3 Truly Accurate Horoscopes

4 What are Roger and Chris doing here?

5 "Wild" Will on vacation

And lots of other fun stuff

Verily, Indeed

I'm so cultured, I feel like yogurt.

For the first time in my life, I've participated in the "Grand Slam" of the local Shakespeare plays. I've seen the two "Shakespeare in the Park" plays in William Land Park, the "Fair Oaks Shakespeare Festival" and the "Elk Grove Shakespeare Festival." Ok, so the Ashland people aren't exactly shaking in their boots, worried that the migratory patterns of the hordes of tourists they feed off of will change. But I did get to see some very nice outdoor performances.

The season began with "The Tempest" performed in Land Park. This is a really nice venue. There is a big grassy area in front of the stage, but you have to arrive very early if you want to sit there. Tina and I got there two hours before the show and had to settle for the second row of benches. But we didn't mind.

Part of the fun of these outdoor shows is watching the crowd. We brought a picnic (they encourage it) and had a rather nice bit of food: chicken pepper salad, home-made brownies with dried cranberries, bread, other snacks, and a tasty Gewurtzminer. But we were outclassed by people near to us who had candles and dinners more complex than any I've ever made at home. We applauded the group in front of us when they unpacked all the fixings for strawberry shortcakes. I still believe they had a bottle of champagne but were afraid we'd demand some if they brought it out.

Oh yeah, the play. It was very well done. The sound and lighting were good considering we were outside.

Two weeks later, I returned to

Land Park with my Aunt to see "A Comedy of Errors" produced by the same troupe. They put on an incredibly funny show. The cast came through the audience begging and stealing food from people. When they got to the stage, there was a moment or two of confusion while they passed out scripts and traded parts. Then they launched into "The Taming of the Shrew." After a couple of minutes of this, someone came out of the audience, showed them his program and explained that they were doing the wrong play. Great bedlam ensued while they cleaned up the stage, and started "Comedy of Errors." But every time the principle characters left the stage, the rest of the cast broke back into "Taming of the Shrew." This tended to end with one of the major characters chasing everyone off the stage while screaming "We are not in Padua!!" We basically saw two plays that night. The only drawback to this technique is that it makes for a long evening. But the time just flew. "Comedy of Errors" was absolutely hilarious with a wonderful manic intensity. Even though I, basically, knew the story, I was entranced the whole time.

This was the first year I've been to the Fair Oaks Festival. Though this amphitheater has backs on their benches. Those are the most uncomfortable seats I've sat in. Helpful hint: bring a pillow to sit on. Anyway, despite the seats, I enjoyed a fine production of "As You Like It." And just imagine my surprise when I found Will's Dad's name (John Lewis) in the program. He played the banished Duke. Not exactly a major part in terms of lines. But whenever he's on stage, he's the focus of attention. And what a great speaking voice! The cast was strong and the pace was quick. The female lead was especially well done. Unfortunately, I've lost my program so I can't give her credit by name.

The final show in the

"Quadruple Crown" was "Much Ado About Nothing" in Elk Grove Park on Strauss Island. This was performed on a small island in the Duck Pond at the park. A fun location, but the ducks have a tendency to quack at the worst time. Right when Don Pedro finished a well delivered, touching speech at Hero's tomb and paused for dramatic effect, some mallard quacked loudly three times. The audience busted up. But the actors handled it well. It was an entertaining way to end the Summer. The Elk Grove Players have done a very good job every time I've seen them.

The original plan for that night was to have a Birthday picnic for Von Sonn and then see the play. Unfortunately, Chris was called back to Los Angeles suddenly by Aaron Spelling who wanted Chris nearby incase Luke Perry walked off the set of "90120." Oh well, we took pictures of the picnic for him.

This was a very artful Summer for me. Besides the Shakespeare plays, I saw Chess, The Sound of Music, Mame, and Cabaret at The Music Circus. My parents now have four season tickets there. Only "The Sound of Music" suffered from the dreaded Sacramento heat. I felt really sorry for all the nuns in their thick black habits. But they sang wonderfully and managed to look quite serene. All of the shows were excellent. Chess and Cabaret were wonderfully engaging (though the fog machine was used way too much in Chess, it was like being in San Francisco). Maria in "Sound" was played by the lady who did the voice of Belle in "Beauty and the Beast." My only complaint was that (even though she did a wonderful job) it was hard believe a Mother Superior who looked younger than Maria. Sam Harris (winner of Star Search) played a wonderfully disturbing M.C. in Cabaret and the girl who was Private Benjamin

Please see "Plays" -- page 4

Why Would I Lie?

Real Horoscopes

PISCES (Feb 19 - March 20): Your life just keeps getting better and better. You've finally stopped talking to your refrigerator and most of your imaginary friends have moved away. Unfortunately, your strangest delusion is true: George Bush is still President. But don't worry, Giant Space Hamsters are plotting his downfall and will soon come ask you to claim your rightful title of "King of the Hamster."

TAURUS (April 20 - May 20): You are the reincarnation of a powerful Egyptian ruler who died before he could pay for his tomb. Therefore, your soul is doomed to this existence until you pay the debt. Lucky for you, I house the spirit of the ancient contractor: send the money now or I'm going to start charging you late fees!

AQUARIUS (Jan 20 - Feb 18): It is not your job to rid the world of donuts. Tofu on the other hand, now there's a crusade you should really get behind. And while you're charging around on your white horse, see if you can do something about the Savings and Loan mess.

ARIES (March 21 - April 19): Put down those scissors. Didn't your mother ever teach you not to run in the house with them? Fine, be that way. But don't come crying to me if you put an eye out. In the mean time, avoid plaid.

GEMINI (May 21 - June 20): You're finishing the best summer of your entire life. I'm sorry to say that you've passed (or missed) most of your "peaks." But the good news is you don't have to be worried about being trampled by an elephant any more.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22 - Jan 19): There's really not much I can do to help you since most Capricorns don't believe in horoscopes. But, since I've got you, I just want to point out that this would be an inopportune time to take up skydiving: gravity's got your name written all over it this month.

CANCER (June 21 - July 22): I see fame, fortune, and dates (lots and lost of dates) in your future. Just being on the same planet with you is an honor. Please try to remember that us lesser intellects sometimes have trouble understanding your lofty thoughts.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22 - Dec 21): If you apologize now, I'm sure you'll be forgiven. But if you wait, then they're going to hate you. And while your listening to me (a rare enough occurrence), I think you

should be spending a lot less time in the bathroom. We all know what happened to Elvis in his, you don't want to end up the same way.

LEO (July 23 - Aug 22): Your not fooling anybody. We all know what you're doing. Cut it out or we're calling the police. Now would be a good time to work with the poor or clean you shelves. But don't give into the temptation to clean the poor's shelves.

LIBRA (Sep 23 - Oct 22): Ross Perot was seriously considering you for his Vice President. You should have called his 800 number. He was waiting. Oh well, maybe in four years. So try to stay out of trouble until then.

VIRGO (Aug 23 - Sep 22): Your ATM hates you. In fact, all ATMs hate you and they're are just waiting to get you alone so they can suck you into a deposit slot. For the next week or so, deal strictly in checks or credit or you'll never be heard from again.

SCORPIO (Oct 23 - Nov 21): Shouldn't you be working on something instead of reading this? I think so. Get your butt in gear, the rest of your life depends on what you do over the next 20 months. But whatever you do, don't spend time alone with someone from North Dakota until at least October 5th.

Editorial

So, what's going on here?

Fifteen years ago, Elvis died, on his knees, in his bathroom. Not that it has anything to do with us directly. But one school of thought claims that an infinite number of monkeys, bashing away on an infinite number of computers equipped with Windows 3.1, Publisher, WordPerfect, a laser printer, and a hand-scanner will eventually produce a copy of The Storm Front. But they'll probably forget to mail it out since they'll be too busy arguing about who they want to play Hamlet.

Therefore, you should be very impressed that this particular monkey-descendant only took a couple of months to produce the fine publication you are now holding. But no man is an island (though some have been declared peninsulas). I had help from Roger Hanna, Will Lewis, and Chris Von Sonn. They generously contributed some excellent stories. Roger recently drove from Sacramento to New York and will be sharing his experiences with us over the next couple of issues. Chris attended his 10 Year High School Reunion: a frightening glimpse of the future for some of us.

While Will write to all of you from his dream vacation up North.

Some of you may have noticed (I bet Chris did) that the StormCo Publishing empire can now include pictures in our fine products. That's thanks to a wonderful new Niscan grayscale hand-scanner. But what good is a scanner without stuff to scan? Ok, it's a cool conversation piece and it still looks impressive, but it's just not fulfilling its potential. Everyone can thank (or blame) the Tina Halstead Photo Archives for some of these pictures. StormCo has secured the rights to use most of Tina's extensive collection. So be nice to me, or some silly picture of you might end up on the front page. Power, gotta love it.

If for some silly reason, you want to contribute something, seek professional help. No, just kidding. I'd love to hear from each and every one of you. Why do you think I produce this silly bit of fluff? To shame you into writing or calling me. But now you have a third option: contribute. Send me stories, editorials, pictures, money or just about anything. If I like it, I'll include it. If I don't, I'll include it anyway and rebut it. I can scan pictures that are up to 5 inches wide. Pictures work best if they don't have a lot of detail (gets lost when I shrink it down) and the background is not too busy.

"Plays" from page 2

on the T.V. series played Sally. This year, I noticed just how good The Music Circus ensemble was. Besides great dancers, they have six or seven really fantastic players who would have significant parts week after week. They performed wildly different parts week after week and they performed them very well.

All in all, it was a most wonderful Summer spent appreciating art. There's just something especially relaxing about outdoor shows. And it's not just that you can sneak in wine easier.



News from the North

A Letter from The Edge of The Earth

by Will Lewis

As is standard for plane travel for me, some problem caused a flight delay. Instead of arriving in Portland at 6:15, as was scheduled, I left Sacramento at 6:45. Was I mad? No. Was I irritated? No. I just resigned myself to the fact that this was standard fare for me, and there was not much I could do about it. Fortunately, I had a book and my portable computer, and didn't waste any time while waiting, waiting, and waiting. Did I ever tell any of you about my trip back from New York City last fall that connected through Denver and was 18 hours delayed? No. Well, that's a different story and will just have to wait.

I haven't been to Portland since I was seventeen (nearly 12 years ago). I don't remember much, but the one thing that is different in a big way is how dry everything is here. We are talking "major drought." No car washing. No lawn watering. No outside use of water after 10 am. We're talking serious! I thought Sacramento had it bad. We don't even know how to spell drought down there. (Ask Dan Quayle; maybe he knows.) Here a whole

language and culture is built around it. They're even starting to call Portland the "Sunshine City." No, I definitely remember a lot of greenness the last time I was here.

Good news, however. It is supposed to rain tomorrow. I guess someone knew I was coming. Shall I bring some back with me? Well, I'm glad we did all the outdoors activities Saturday and Sunday while the weather was good. It would have been a real drag if it had been raining. We went up the Columbia River Gorge yesterday and saw some spectacular falls and beautiful rain forests. Today, we went to a Wilderness area near Mt. Hood, and went on a rigorous hike uphill to a fire look-out at the top of Devil's Peak. Okay, maybe it wasn't too rigorous if compared to Devil's Peak in our neck of the woods, but it was not easy. On the way back, we stopped by a lake that is slowly being consumed by bog. What a weird feeling to walk on squishy "sponge." It was really pretty, but the smell was kind of gross.

We went to a brew pub Friday night when I arrived, one of hundreds of them that litter the Pacific Northwest. We sampled more yesterday, and even more today. It's all really good, and I'm hoping to find some of it bottled down south. We went to one restaurant in a tiny little town

to the east called Sandy that must have had twenty-some local brands listed on their menu. Amazing. And in a postage-stamp sized town.

Tomorrow, it's downtown. Kris and Rebecca are working, and I'm going to ride around on the local mass transit to see some of the metropolitan sights. Hope the weather stays calm while I'm out waiting at a bus stop.

It has been a nice trip. But, as with any vacation (or pseudo-vacation), it's never long enough.



Susan then,



And not so long ago

"Class" from page 1

showed with his high school sweetheart and wife of 9 years Paula (they won for longest married couple and will win every year from now until the end of time if they stay together). They now have two kids, a cardboard dog and a little weight gain. Larry seemed to joke about his weight a lot. Did I tell you that the hall was hot? Well, it was.

Then we had the extreme pleasure of meeting the Nazi waitress for the evening. For some reason she was nasty to us and stole our rolls in the middle of the salad. Finally, she introduced us to a new waitress. The new waitress who took over wasn't a Nazi, but she was roaming around with out a clue.

Dinner is served.

At our table there were 6 beef dishes, 2 chicken and 2 vegetarian (one of which was mine). Passable, but nothing to write about. It was a good thing I ate earlier.

After dinner we watched the "Senior Film." I place it in quotes because it was pretty poor. Anyway, after the film I was convinced there was too much cross-dressing and snuff to feel too comfortable with the room full of people I was now among.

Saw a few other people that were mutual friends; ie Cathy Finnely (who is born again), Brian Porter (who isn't) and Laura Henretti (who was celebrating her month wedding anniversary).

Someone who was a husband of a classmate I didn't even know tried to make me an AMWAY salesman. He was good - he didn't say AMWAY until the very end of his pitch. Smart move.

Then came the (gulp) dancing. Which I did only because I was dragged to the dance floor by three babes, including Susie. Needless to say, I made an ass out of myself on the dance floor. Thank God it didn't last long and

everybody thought that the DJ sucked.

Generally, a fun time was had by all. And our class had only one cowboy left... Anyway, only one decided to come.

**"Drive" from page 1**

is a spacious and luxurious craft.

We decided to take 50 to Tahoe rather than 80 to Reno; in Nevada we headed south. As night fell, we consulted our trusty Camp Site Guide from Tower Books and found a state park at a lake with hot showers and hundreds of sites. Or so our book claimed; we never trusted that damn rag again.

The park was a desert which was supposed to surround a lake. The lake, we discovered in the morning, had evaporated to the size of Eric's folks' pool. Once in the park, we weren't sure where the camp sites all WERE, since NOTHING was labeled. I pulled into what I supposed was a lakeside campsite, and we discovered the disadvantage of a big American car--there is no way to get it, once stuck, unstuck from the sand. "Okay, let's set up the

tent!" I said. Elissa thought I was kidding.

The whole night Elissa tossed and turned. It seems she was having nightmares about a ranger being mad at us that we had set up our tent wrong. If only a mad ranger had come by in the morning! Instead, at 7 am, it was 105 degrees. In the daylight we discovered the sizeable lack of lake before us. Nary a soul besides us ventured into this hellhole the night before.

Three miles on foot later, we reached the Ranger Station. The only signs between us and it, which we continued to hope would have a map of the park, were instead posted warnings. "While the fish in this lake pose no health threat, we advise that fisherman eat no more than one (1) fish caught every thirty (30) days." And, "Rattlesnakes are poisonous! Do not feed!" And my favorite, "Do not pet desert mammals. Many might carry the Bubonic Plague."

At nine in the morning, the Ranger Station was closed. There were no posted hours. It was Saturday, so for all we knew, we were doomed. But I saw houses surrounded by trees in the distance. Was it a mirage? I pointed them out to Elissa, but she was tired and decided to sit down and die.

So I walked to the first house, and saw two other life forms. Unfortunately, they were both angry-looking dogs. They charged. When they were a few feet away, a voice beyond them stopped them. "Killer! Fluffy! Halt!!"

"Excuse me, Sir." I regained my breath. "I'm hoping to find the Ranger."

"Oh," said the windblown man whose voice had saved me. "You want the next house."

I said thanks. He continued: "But be careful of HIS dog. A real nasty one, that!"