

# California Breeze

## Postcards From the Edge

Sometimes the weather is not so perfect for visitors to Southern California. It can be downright unpredictable, as it was the week Mom and Dad visited. I picked them up at the airport on a humid, misty day, and while they were here for the four days, we got rain, sunshine, warm days, and cool, breezy nights, but all in all, it was a good week for them to be in Los Angeles. After spending almost a week in Houston relaxing with kids and grandkids, I had other things in mind for them. We browsed Rodeo Dr., wishing we had a few thou to buy some little trinkets; we toured the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, where Dad bought a scotch glass (for his milk at lunch); spent an afternoon at Universal Studios Hollywood (it won't be the same anymore after you see how movies are done!); and took in an evening performance of a disappointing Bea Arthur play (thank God we got free tickets!).

It was actually a very nice few days spent with the folks, and the meals we had at the restaurants I chose were a treat. (One of my favorite parts of vacation!) I tried not to wear them out with driving around, and running from site to site, but when we were in the car, I took them through nice neighborhoods, so they could enjoy the blooming bougainvillea trees, the myriad of colorful flowers, and the shady trees that canopy the streets of nice homes. Entertaining the folks is not like entertaining my friends. The pace is slower, and with all the places to go and things to see, the real emphasis is on spending time with each other. Since we live so far apart, and as the years go on, just spending time as fam-

ily members is an important investment. No one is getting any younger, shark cartilage or no shark cartilage, and since we never know how much time we have on this planet, isn't it important to spend time with those we love, and to tell them that we do love them? Mom and Dad looked great, despite the increase of character lines in the faces, and even though they have slowed a bit over the years, I was struck at how they didn't look like they both had passed into their 70's. Of course, I never want to *look* like I'm getting older, I just want to keep fooling myself!

One other thought I had after the vacation: How much I have grown to like Los Angeles, despite its size and the problems we face, like all major cities. It's got a lot of beauty, both natural and man-made. It's a city chock full of things to do and places to go. That's exciting, if you have imagination and the desire to experience different adventures. I enjoyed showing some of the best L.A. has to offer to visitors, from Beverly Hills to Pasadena, from the beaches to the mountains, from *cafes* to clubs.

Vacation is over, so it's back to work and a "normal" week. But I now try to take little vacations, daily. What I mean is that I like to stop and take notice of beauty around me, like quiet, sunny mornings with the birds singing, crystal clear views of the local mountains after a storm, smiling faces of good people around me. These activities keep me from getting too wrapped up in the stress of daily priorities. There are plenty of roses blooming right now to stop and smell, so I plan on doing so.

Thanks for coming out, Mom and Dad, it was great to see ya! Hopefully it won't be another year before we hook up again.

# Dead Men Don't Sing

## Chapter Three

*"If you would understand the invisible, look carefully at the visible."—from the Talmud*

Inspector O'Donnell squeezed and folded his six foot, six frame behind the black upright piano and quietly listened to the two arguing voices that echoed up from below the choir loft.

Slowly approaching the staircase came a tall, lanky, drowsy-eyed man and his much shorter, nattily-attired antagonist. The Tall One: "If you won't tell me what we're lookin' for, how can I find it? I'm always inna dark."

The Short One: "Listen, if I find it, I'll let you know. If I don't find it, I'll let you know. Besides, you're always in the dark. You can be standing in the heart of the blazing sun and you'd still be in the dark. You know why?"

"Uh, why?"

"Because you're a moron. You've always been a moron, and you always, always will be a moron. Didn't Bossman tell you lately that you're a moron?"

"Hey, knock it off! Bossman likes me. So, quit it."

"Oh, he just feels sorry for you. Pities you. Look at ya. You're a plebeian. Your suit would look better on a scarecrow leaning into the wind in some poor farmer's field. You walk like a Neanderthal, and smell like one, too. Don't you use soap when ya bathe? Ya do bathe?"

"Hey, stop it! You think yer so big, using big words, and stuff."

"But you never had any desire to improve yourself in this world. Like it or not, other people judge you by how you look and talk. Look at me—\$2500 Armani silk suits. I'm educated, I read fine literature like Updike and Malamud. I listen to fine music—Vivaldi, the Duke, Django."

"Yeah, and yer a showoff."

They stopped at the foot of the staircase, looking at each other. "And you're a goof. You drink cheap wine and hang out with smelly, sloppy strumpets in dark, damp dives. You voted twice for poor muddled and befuddled Ronnie Reagan. You drive an old Chevy Beaverwood stationwagon. Why Bossman likes you just blows my mind. Consider my mind absolutely, completely blown away."

"I'm gettin' tired of you always doggin' me."

The Short One shrugged and proceeded to climb the stairs. After a few slow steps, Short One turned to his cohort (even though he was two steps higher, he was still looking level into his buddy's eyes): "And would you stop with the belching? We're in a place of worship, not a circus tent! Show some respect."

"Quit telling me what to do. I know where we are."

"Moron!" Short One muttered under his breath.

They reached the loft and glanced around at the disarray, then desultorily shuffled through the scattered sheets of music on the floor. Dim as the lighting was, Short One picked up a sheet from a music stand and scanned it. "Hmm. J. S. Bach. Diatonic Modulation. 'Du Friedefurst, Herr Jesu Christ.' Did you know Bach's Chorales were harmonizations of existing melodies, used as portions of larger compositions—particularly of the cantatas and passions? Of course you didn't. If Dean Martin didn't sing it, you wouldn't know that if it slapped you in the face."

"Yeah, well, Dean Martin's great. Besides, girls like him. All this here junk is a mystery to me."

"No kidding? And I thought Bossman was sending you to Julliard."

"Oh? Who's she?"

"Never mind. Hey, now look at that gorgeous piano!"

As they began walking toward the glistening keyboard, Short One looked down and saw a bottle under the piano bench.

"What's this?" He stooped and picked it up. It rattled. "Hmm. 'Shark Cartilage, five hundred milligrams.'"

"What's 'shark cartilage'?" asked Tall One.

"I don't know. Maybe someone wants to devolve back to the sea."

"Sheesh. Sounds fishy to me."

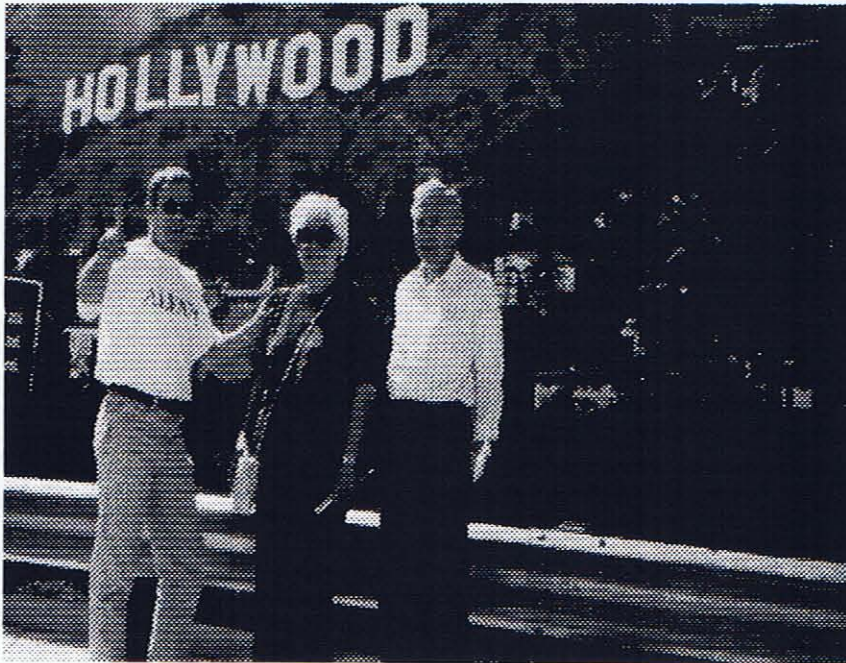
Short One shook the bottle again, and it rattled as if half full of hard candy. "Open it. I wanna see this shark stuff."

Short One twisted the cap and tilted the bottle into the cup of his hand. Constellations of glittering stars tumbled out and clattered into his palm. "Diamonds!" they both gasped.

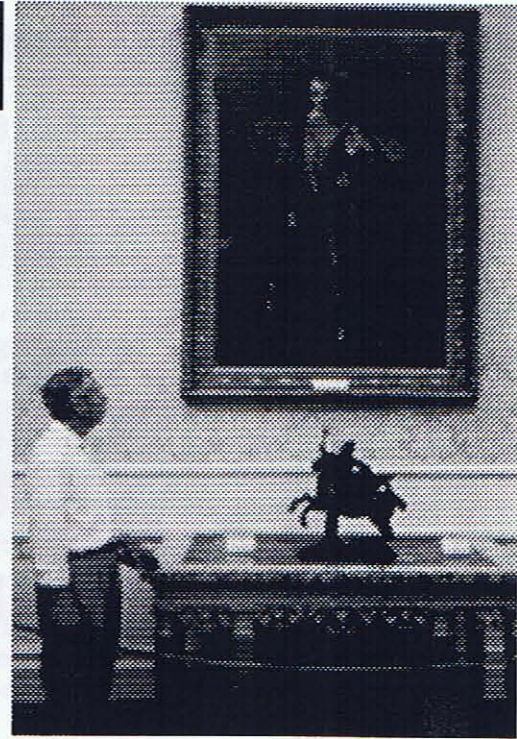
Suddenly, O'Donnell jumped out from behind the piano and gave a lusty basso profundo yell, his face contorted like a Polynesian mask. The two men stepped back with a torn shriek, their minds being yanked in several different directions. Then the tall one quickly pulled out his .45, but before anyone could take another breath, O'Donnell lunged at them, wrapping his grizzly bear arms around both of their necks. That violent momentum pushed the three men forward, crashing through the loft's railing. They flipped in a long arc down, down, into the puddled darkness and pews with a sickening thump.

Dusty light fractured the dimness through the stained glass windows, the sun firing millions of drifting motes into floating stars. All was quiet and still.

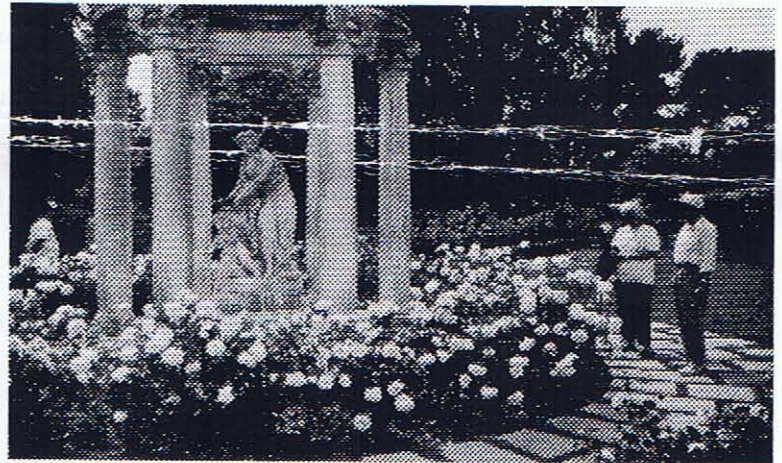
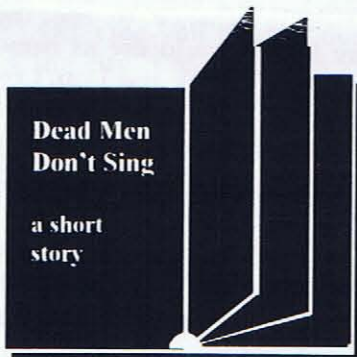
# P·I·C·T·U·R·E T·H·I·S



Mom, Dad, and Mike have gone "Hollywood"!



Dad checks out the "Blue Boy" at the Huntington



White Roses in bloom at Huntington Gardens, San Marino

Oops! In last month's chapter of "Dead Men Don't Sing", I forgot to credit the author, who was Jim. This month's chapter three was submitted by Bill. And chapter four should come from Mom, with Lynn being requested to write chapter five. With the female authors coming on-line next, it should be interesting to see the direction this story takes! So, stay tuned for what happens next for Detective O'Donnell as he investigates the murder of the choir director!!



Lynn—May 4th

John—May 21st

## John Starry-Eyed Over *Comet*



How about that comet! I first spotted it the evening of March 26, right above Polaris (the North Star). It was an incredibly fabulous sight! A bright pinpoint of light could be detected at the core with a ball of gas surrounding it, with a tail extending a few degrees at a 1 o'clock position. It was bright enough to see with the naked eye, easily. But with binoculars it was positively glorious! I was going to call all the family about it, at 10:30 that evening, but chickened out and only called Bill. Turns out he spotted it as well, and was just as excited as I was. I should have called all you others, after all, family is family—no one would have minded getting out of bed to witness what will probably be a once-in-a-lifetime event, right?

I am rather surprised at the lukewarm response I get when talking with most people about the comet. This is quite a rare occurrence. When was the last time you got such a splendid opportunity to watch a comet dance across the sky for a month and a half? Even Haley's Comet in '86 or '87 wasn't much to talk about, or even see, compared to this spectacle! Why aren't more people excited? Even the most jaded of us should still get thrilled at watching God's creation putting on such a rare show. It will be gone by the end of the month, to

swing around the sun and give the Southern Hemisphere dwellers the show before departing for the outer solar system, until it returns in 10,000 years or so.

It is still visible, low in the NW sky 'till about 10:30 or 11 in the evening, to the right of Venus, 20 or 30 degrees. It is still a marvelous sight. I watched it again Monday night, and caught it in my 4.5" telescope (the one Bill gave to me, just 'cause I'm such a nice guy). It was a cool sight, standing in the 2nd floor bedroom; I just lowered the top of a western facing window, and pointed the telescope in the right direction. Actually, binoculars give the best view, since the field of view under greater magnification is smaller and not as detailed when viewing a cloudy/misty type of object. Binocs show the entire entity just right and reveals nice detail. Monday night (4/15—an otherwise awful date) the tail could be seen to extend even longer away from the core, since it is getting closer to the sun and is heating up the closer it gets. One can almost imagine it moving through the heavens in its encounter, so

close it is to us. One also shouldn't imagine that looking at the comet will be like looking at a photograph; the actual image will be more faint. But after the eye has adjusted to the darkness, the sight will be spectacular, none the less!

Since I had the telescope out, I swung it over to Venus to view. Was I surprised to find that I could easily see the crescent of the planet, as it is making its journey around the sun and is almost between us and the sun! Even with the poor optics of the scope (the eyepiece, I mean) with several images splaying around before my eye, I could still plainly see the crescent! It's the first time I detected such a sight. I have seen the moons of Jupiter under magnification, but not the planet as anything more than a point light source. It was a remarkable evening for sky watching, fer sure!

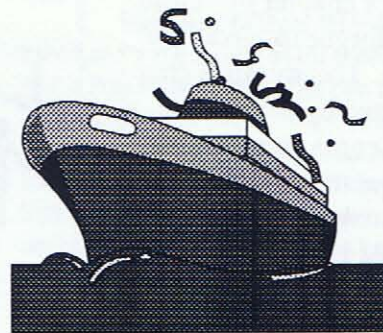
I hope everyone got a chance to see the comet. (I would use its name, but I'm at work and I can't remember the spelling—Hyatutake, or something.) Such occurrences do not happen often. So remember—keep looking up!

## HOUSTON HIGHLIGHTS

Having endured through two cases of chicken pox, one when we hosted Mom and Dad for a week, it turned out to be a minor disruption to our schedules for work and for home. Gregory went first, just in time for the arrivals of our out-of-town guests, but because we were going to stay close to the homestead anyway, keeping him home from daycare did little to alter our plans. They have seen all there is to see in Houston before, so the visit of Mom and Dad was one intended to just hang out around the house and enjoy warm weather, and the kids they haven't seen in a year. We were able to take them to Galveston to the Moody Gardens again to see a 3-D IMAX movie, which is an interesting experience, although the movie itself was less. But the trip to the island is always an enjoyable diversion to the sights and

sounds of the big city. Other than that, it was simply an opportunity for our kids to enjoy their other grandparents, and vice-versa.

Otherwise, we are settling in for a long, hot and dry summer, with no vacation plans made as of yet, besides tenta-



tive ones for Frinee and I to take a trip to Cancun, Mexico, the second week of August, just the two of us. Our last trip to the Yucatan Peninsula was highlighted by our accident aboard (as well as overboard!) a Honda moped on the black-top road in Cozumel, an island forty-five minutes by

ferry across from Cancun in the Caribbean Sea. This time, we will rent nothing and will walk or bus everywhere we go. Mex-

*(Continued on page 5)*

# News From the Home Base

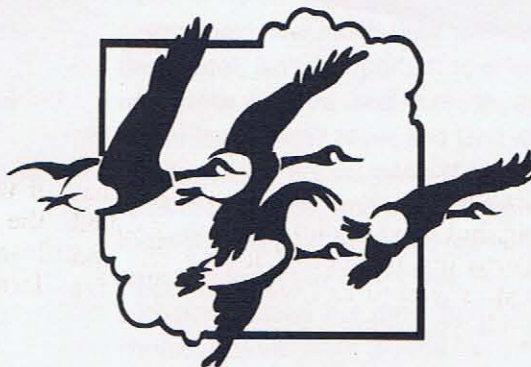
I guess you all have heard we had a terrific time visiting Greg and Frinee and company in Texas, and then Mike in Van Nuys and environs. We rested up in Houston and enjoyed the green grass and flowers and warm sun and marvelous company of the Schneider family. Such energy those young children have! I don't know where it comes from—they eat like little birds. We enjoyed the 3-D IMAX films at Moody Gardens in Galveston and a few meals out, and especially the great southwest cooking of both Frinee and Greg. We were well prepared for the whirlwind excursions Mike provided when we got to California. After having an America West flight from Phoenix to Burbank canceled, and then getting booked on the next flight 2 1/2 hours later, we finally found Mike waiting for us in Burbank, a nice, small airport where you board and exit the plane via the portable stairway (in the rain when we arrived). We didn't miss the fuss and commotion of the huge LAX facilities. We ate out at exotic places, like the Cheese Cake Factory on Rodeo Dr., Off Vine—an old but delightful cottage in the city, Cafe La Boehme, plus others, including Mike's place. It's a 2 family, one of several in a picturesque setting of pool, trees, and flowers on a Van Nuys side street. Very nice. Our hotel the *Beverly Prescott*, was gorgeous and very deluxe. It was at the south end of Rodeo Dr. at Pico Dr., just down the street from 20th Century Fox and CBS. We saw all the television and movie studios by driving by, but toured Universal City, with their studios, back lot, and a Disney-type atmosphere of exhibits, eateries, tram ride, etc. We were on the go almost constantly and loved it all, we saw so much. I really liked the Reagan Presidential Library (museum), and the Huntington Gardens/Museum in Pasadena.

Well, we are finally experiencing spring at home now. Our tulips and hyacinth are blooming, and I got the bike out of the shed today (May 3) and rode our in-town bike trails.

FYI: I just signed us up for AT &T's TRUE MESSAGE SERVICE. If we want to get a message to you in a hurry and your line is busy or your machine doesn't answer

while you're away, we can leave you a message with AT &T and you will receive it automatically when you pick up your phone. (I think that is how it works.) It might be handy if we are not going to be home and we want to tell you something.

So long for now—from Dad and Mother.



(Continued from page 4)

ico is an inexpensive place to visit for anyone in Texas, and is very much worth going to, especially to the Caribbean side of the country!

With it being close to summertime, I am wondering if anyone in the family has any interesting (or otherwise) vacation plans for this year. I know about the trip coming up to San Francisco for John and Melissa, but is anyone else going anywhere outside of their home state?

## and so on...

With just a few weeks left in our lease here in Van Nuys, Mark, Greg and I will probably start looking in earnest for new digs, somewhere in L.A. We will go month-to-month until we find a place, preferably a house, with a yard, and room for a dog...

I've been taking a Leadership training course at a local junior college, sponsored by Costco. It takes up four Tuesdays, and so far, I have found it to be a mixture of new and familiar ideas and concepts. But it should prove to be helpful in my dealings with employees at work. Too often people are put into positions of management without the proper training in dealing with personnel and personalities...

These are great times to be a Red Wing fan, but if you are a Tiger fan, you have a long, tough season ahead. My Padres are currently in first place, and the Dodgers, expected to run away with the pennant, are struggling...

**Happy Mothers Day to all!!**

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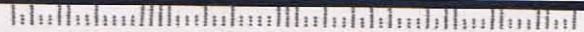


California Breeze



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## Laughter in the Pews

Here are some announcements taken from church bulletins:

1. Don't let the worry kill you—let the church help.
2. Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community.
3. The rosebud on the altar this morning is to announce the birth of David Alan Smith, the son of Rev. and Mrs. Julius Smith.
4. Wednesday, the Ladies Liturgy Society will meet. Mrs. Jones will sing "Put me in My Little Bed," accompanied by the pastor.

5. Thursday, there will be a meeting of the Little Mothers Club. All wishing to become little mothers, please see the minister in his study.
6. This being Easter Sunday, we ask Mrs. Lewis to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.
7. A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.
8. At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be "What is Hell?" Come early, and listen to our choir practice.

*(taken from a recent Ann Landers column)*



Keeping the Family Informed