

D'Clutter Bug

News from Bill & Laurie Kunkel

And the Deities Laugh

October 2005

Volume 1, Issue 2

What's the old saying? Oh yes, "Man proposes, God disposes."

I had no sooner put the last issue of *D'Clutter Bug* to bed when I met with my new social security disability attorney who said moving in 2005 wasn't an option.

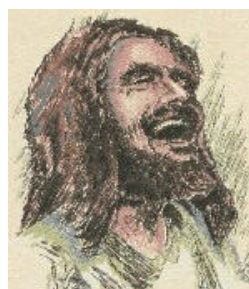
Then he admitted that it was a possible option, based between slim and none, if I can have an emergency hearing based on a new psych evaluation. "But," I was cautioned, "don't get your hopes up to high." So, that led us to

where are we going to live until then? Our lease is up here in December, and there is no way we are staying in this slum any longer. (See page 3.)

Another friend offered us a temporary solution: we have our sale as planned and move everything we were planning to move to Michigan into a one-bedroom mobile home that they have in a lot across from them that they keep as a guest house (sounds a little like *Yes, Dear*) and pay the lot rent and the utilities.

It will be tight quarters and it will mean some changes in our lifestyle (including establishing new boundaries), but it will also allow us to have more money to send to Michigan to pay for the mobile and lot rent there.

Who says the Deities don't have a sense of humor??



Everything is always okay in the end. If it's not, it's not the end.

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Moving Sale...Most Everything Must Go!

By the time you are reading this, ghods willing, we will be starting our moving sale.

We're keeping this fairly informal. In other words, if you (or a friend or three) are interested in anything, just give us a call or drop me an email, and we'll come up with a time good for both of us. Prices are reasonable,

and we have some bags/boxes to carry away your goodies. Packing donations are welcome.

What's going? Well...

- Upright Freezer
- Place setting for 8
- Canning Jars
- Gadgets & Gizmos
- Table & Chairs
- Entertainment Center
- Artwork
- Clothes & Hats
- Planters
- Plant Stands
- Storage Containers
- Non-Fiction Books
- Most Fiction Genres
- Baskets
- Lamps
- Holiday Decorations
- Queen-sized Captain's Platform Bed
- Hardware/Electrical
- Odds & Ends
- Much, Much, More.

Colophon:

- *D'Clutter Bug* #2 is a random 'zine by Laurie Kunkel; 289-202 Steelhead Lane; Las Vegas, NV 89110; elfkunkel@aol.com.
- *Laughing Jesus* by Ralph Kozak; All cartoons by Bill "Potshot" Kunkel, unless otherwise noted; Earth Flag is from EarthFlag.net.
- This ish can be found on eFanzines or in SNAPS #7.

It's Not Easy Going Green...

Lately, Bill and I have been thinking about our effect on the planet.

It really came into focus after watching the fifth episode ("Off the Grid") of *30 Days*, about "two 30-year-old professionals who are friends and typical Americans—i.e., ravenous consumers of fossil fuels such as gas and electricity—go 'back to the future' and move to an 'eco village' in Missouri to live in a former 3,000 bushel grain bin, and sustain themselves on a clean power such as solar and wind, recycle all their waste (both food and human), live in a car-free culture, grow and eat only organic foods and conserve their water use with solar showers and rain-catch systems."

We finally tracked down the website mentioned on the show (www.earthday.net) and took the quiz. I scored an 11 and Bill scored a 13 (he's flown this year, and I haven't), much better than the American av-

erage score of 24.

Even after we buy our antique camper van, we still scored the same (mostly since we still plan to utilize the bus and our feet as much as possible, given the price of gas). We were dismayed that when we move—to a more rural community—our scores will both rise to 15.

Fortunately, we do have ways to reduce our score. We're planning to



add rain gutters to the mobile and add rain barrels. If the park rules allow, we plan on building a rain garden in our lawn (less to mow and weed!). We're going to be using

a push mower instead of gas.

We'll also be putting in our own garden and compost bin, and we'll be able to get our food locally—not trucked in from California or Arizona or anywhere else over 200 miles away. We're also going to continue our cut down of meat/dairy meals.

We won't be walking as much, but we will be able to start riding bikes without fear of being run-over. (Before I'm lectured, I checked with my orthopedic surgeon, and he cleared me to ride.)

We're switching to more natural fabric clothing as pieces need replacing, and I'm experimenting with more natural methods of cleaning. We've discovered that we enjoy the Seventh Generation products—our clothes actually feel clean after they are washed.

We've switched to rechargeable
("Going Green," continued on page 8)

Everything I really need to know about life I learned by reading banned books.

The Proud Owners of a '78 Camper Van

Bill and I have purchased a 1978 white Ford Econoline 350 1-ton conversion van.

The cargo area has a U-shaped seating area which converts to a king-sized bed and there is storage under the seats. There is a really cute sink—I just have to figure out how to make it work; a refrigerator to check out; and a few small cupboards.

The back axle will take two tires on both sides, great for long journeys so that if one tire blows, I shouldn't lose control.

There is work to be done on the van, and I have to do some leg work

on getting it registered, but nothing too impossible.

Of course, we have had some difficulties, which has made Bill wonder if the vehicle is cursed.

The first difficulty was that I miscalculated the gas capacity, and the place where we could have last stopped for gas on a long drive was closed. Thus, we ran out of gas in not quite the middle of nowhere, just, according to the NHP dispatcher, a \$175 tow to the gas station (\$150 for the hook, plus the mileage).

A lot of words were said, and there was something going on with Bill

psychologically (I think it is actually the road—that road always causes him to have a breakdown of sorts.) Anyway, by the time the tow truck driver arrived (and I was watching for him and never saw him until he was in front of us, backing up), I had already vomited beside the van.

I was so upset that the driver started off by calming me down—pointing out that things happen for a reason and that what was important wasn't the material—money, gas, etc.—but that we were safe and together. He continued with how minor things, like running out of

("Proud Owners," continued on page 8)

Fighting the Slum Lord

In the interest of truth, we are actually fighting with the Slum Lord's assistant.

Back in August, during a stretch of 110°-plus days, when the night temps were only dropping down to the 90°s, our AC decided to act up.

The first call yielded a maintenance man who informed us that the filter we were using (a Purfilter Gold) was only good for air conditioner units that were a year old or newer. Purfilter was not amused to hear that.

It went out again the next night, and we ended up asking for repairs for 3 days.

On the fourth day, the AC went out at 5:50PM. Since the office closes at 6, I quickly called the office, asking for help.

According to Jackie, the girl at the office, I swore at her and created great stress for her and she was going to have me arrested.

The repairman did show up at 5:59PM, and he wanted out of our

place fast. He told Bill to bang on the fuse panel anytime it happened until the power came back on.

That didn't strike me as safe or sound, so I called Nevada Power and asked them. The woman who answered agreed that it was not a sound plan, but if we opted to do it, and we saw sparks, smoke, or anything, we were to call the fire department at once.

Well, Bill banged it as shown several times—each time the power went out faster and faster. At 8:15PM, he banged it, and saw sparks. At

that point, we called 911, packed up the cats, and grapped out bags. (At that point, we hadn't started getting together our emergency kit.)

The fire department came, and called Nevada Power and the complex office. The repairman was then called, and had to come out at

11:15PM to fix the problem. He fixed it and was gone by 11:35PM. Bill commented that it could have been much easier on everyone, had he just fixed it earlier in the evening.

For the past six months, we have had difficulties with our commodes in both the Master Bathroom and the Hall Bathroom.

We have had maintenance in to snake the toilets several times, and each time, the problem is solved for a day or so, and then we are back to plunging after each time a solid waste is

flushed.

Under the previous management, they had said it was likely our toilets needed replacing. Under the new management, the ability to get a person in to look at the commodes is virtually impossible.

("Slum Lord," continued on page 9)

Just bang on the fuse panel, until the power comes on!

Only in English, could "fish" also be spelled "ghotio."



Good Night, Princess

Tonight, on September 20th, Laurie and I received some heartbreaking news. From the age of 15 through 17, we were the sole guardians of a sweet girl named Crystal. Laurie had known the child since she was 8 through the Episcopal Church they attended.

Crystal's family weren't much, but there was no shortage of them; they had yielded mostly generations of crackers with meth labs in the house and momma dressing up like a "hoochie" for a night out. Booze, coke were always trailing through the house on the persons of "friends." The paternal grandparents decided the children would have to be taken away when the father went to jail and momma was cruising for a new meal ticket.

Crystal's position in the family as big sister was always tenuous. Her younger sister has CF and was spoiled relentlessly by the grandparents, apparently based on the idea that her poor little frame could give out at any time, whereas Crystal was radiant with health, her pretty cheeks always red from blushing or laughter.

It was decided that Laurie and I would become her guardians, after dad got paroled and his dealer kept looking at her oddly. (Crystal was the only child the grandparents allowed to return to her father, deciding she could take care of herself.) Laurie, on being told that Crystal was either going to kill herself or her father, took her to the teen psych unit. Dad was presented with two options: voluntarily turn her over to us, or have her enter the system.

We got her going to school—she soon looked forward to it, in fact, since the school was literally next

door to our gated community and she was a natural at the social dynamics of HS—and her grades even went up. The school was doubtful that she would graduate but we got her on a regimen to do just that.

At the age of 17, Crystal went back to live briefly with her mother, but she was already in love with a nice kid who was absolutely nuts for her. (They had met at an Episcopal Youth Event that she was chosen to attend as a reward for her hard work.) Soon they were married and when we turned around they had a baby girl.

They were living in Florida, but the hurricane scares convinced Crystal that her husband was right and they should move to the safety of his home town in Wyoming. They just set off a couple of days ago. Crystal was driving and the Felicity was in her special seat in the front while hubby caught some Zzzs in the back seat. Then something happened—we have no details yet—but there was an accident and the car rolled, instantly killing Crystal and Felicity, whom she had craved more than anything for as long as we knew her. The husband was thrown from the car and is in slowly improving everyday. As of print, we have no prognosis as to his state.

Laurie, who is an excellent driver, taught Crystal the skill and shepherded her thru the process of getting a license at age 16. When she got to drive our LeBaron convertible, she would laugh the entire ride, her hair trailing in the wind as she



Crystal at age 16

described in detail the car she would one day buy. If she had a flaw in her driving technique, it was a typical teenager's tendency to speed a little. She was 20 when she died, but she still had a lot of teenager in her.

Again, I don't have the details and they are as moot as the mode

of burial (already an interesting subject. Crystal herself violently opposed cremation since she would be wearing her best dress for the funeral "and I don't want them to burn it!").

When I was young, I knew I could never have a child. I could never have something so dependent on me, someone about whom I would worry night and day. And yet I wound up with a beautiful teenage daughter. It could have been a sitcom. We gave her a Sweet 16 party. She had her own room, her own TV and VCR, a Walkman and an old Mac that still had AOL on it and the young lady who once insisted that she had never enjoyed reading or writing a single word in her entire life soon littered her room with magazines and engaged in Deep Conversations, typing IMs furiously on that old Mac.

There is the consolation that she will never be sick, she will never grow old, know the pain of loss or be ground down by the struggle for survival in a weak economy. She will never find herself at odds with

(*"Good Night, Princess," continued on page 9*)

“...In Sickness and Health...”

In September 2000, I was diagnosed with Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS). FMS is a widespread musculoskeletal pain and fatigue disorder for which the cause is still unknown. Fibromyalgia means pain in the muscles, ligaments, and tendons—the soft fibrous tissues in the body.

With the Fibromyalgia, I ache all over. My muscles feel like they have been pulled or overworked. Sometimes the muscles twitch and at other times they burn. In the morning, to get out of bed, I often have to use a walker as the pain and stiffness are so bad that I am as likely to fall flat on my face as I am to reach the bathroom safely.

I used to have a very good memory; however, the incapacitating fatigue I experience daily not only makes moving around and living a normal life—shopping, visiting, going out to dinner—impossible, but I find that it has also affected my memory and places me in a fog more often than not.

Ironically, despite the exhaustion, getting my body to stop hurting long enough to drop off to sleep is difficult. My mind is aroused every two-to-three hours because my muscles are stiffening and my brain is receiving and processing that pain. When I wake up, I feel as though I've just been run over by a Mack truck, hardly a refreshing sleep.

I also suffer from migraines and tension-type headaches. I'm sensitive to odors, loud noises, and bright lights. I also find that as my stress and depression levels rise, I feel worse.

I applied for disability based on Fibromyalgia, osteoarthritis, and manic/depressive bi-polarism, but I was initially rejected.

I am now waiting for my hearing. As far as we know, the hearing is likely to be in May; hence the move to the one-bedroom for five months. (If we stayed here, we would have to go monthly—which would raise our rent to \$825, a raise of over \$100 a month.)

I currently take about 25 pills a day—a combination of prescription pain killers, anti-depressants, and vitamins and minerals.

How do I explain every detail of every day being effected, and give the emotions a sick person goes through with clarity?

The difference between sick and healthy is making choices, or consciously thinking about things the rest of the world doesn't. Healthy people have the luxury of choice, a gift most people take for granted.

But, in my case, Fibro rules my life and my decisions.

There is a wonderful example on the “Spoons” website (www.butyoudontlooksick.com/spoons.htm) that describes what a person with a chronic disease goes through.

Christine (the creator of the Spoons site) used spoons to illustrate her day and calculate the amount of energy it takes to do things to explain Lupus to one of her closest friends. Her example is on the site I listed above and I always recommend people visit that site if they want to understand my decisions better.

For example, my 3-hour trip to the DMV, sent me to bed for the remainder of that day, and the next.

The absolute hardest thing that I

have had to learn is to slow down and take things easy and not try to do everything.

I have to make choice: do I want to take care of errands, or do I want to declutter? Do I want to spend the day in bed, so I can go out at night to a fan gathering, or do I want to go grocery shopping and miss the fun?

Some days are worse than others—some days even the idea of getting up and out of bed is beyond my ability. It is at that point that I pray I have nothing I must do that day.

Some days are better than others and I get up and know that I will be able to do my FlyLady Zones, and still be able to rest.

However, the one thing that I do know—every minute of every day—is that the Fibro will never go away.

And I can never forget about it.

I am fortunate that list making comes so easily to me. I list what I need or want to do, consider the weather and my pain

level, and then create my plan for the day.

Being able to spend time with friends is a gift—one that I don't think people truly appreciate.

It is not only a gift of my presence, but of my time, my health, myself. If I am somewhere, it is because I want to be—it is an active choice that I make.

I do know that I am not my disease, but I also know it is such an intangible part of my life that separating myself from it isn't an easy task. I only hope the people who care about me are willing to make the effort to understand that sometimes I have to say “no” even when I really want to say “yes.”

The difference between sick and healthy is making choices, or consciously thinking about things the rest of the world doesn't.

My Spiritual Journey

In 2002, I found myself in the midst of a spiritual crisis.

I was a practicing Episcopalian, but under the auspices of the new bishop, I found myself not receiving spiritual succor but political pandemonium.

I determined that I was seeking genuineness and integrity; a chance to demand the best of myself. In addition, if possible, I wanted to acknowledge the masculine and feminine aspects of the Creator.

I found myself reading, praying, and writing my thoughts down.

I sought out guidance from spiritual leaders I trusted to the Belief-O-Matic quiz on Beliefnet.com.

The Belief-O-Matic, by the way, scored my beliefs as 100% Hindu; 84% Mahayana Buddhism; 81% Neo-Pagan; 80% Unitarian Universalism; 78% Mainline to Liberal Christian Protestants; 76% Theravada Buddhism; and 74% Liberal Quaker.

I was a cradle Roman Catholic. In 10th grade, while studying for Confirmation, a nun informed me that God hated me because of my size. That didn't make sense to me, as how could a God hate his own creation. The more questions I asked, the more dissatisfied I became. I was told to "fake it until I make it." I faked it—throwing myself into every activity to "make God like me."

When I was 19, and sexually assaulted, I found a copy of Margaret Adler's *Drawing Down the Moon* in the hospital waiting room. I felt like I had found a treasure. I tried to find other people who thought this way, and struck out. I opted to spend more time in nature and less time in church. I had to heal and until then I didn't want to hear

about the "evils of women" when a man had taken my maidenhood, trust, and security.

In 1991, I moved in with Bill. He was also a cradle Catholic who had decided on agnosticism. He had no problems with my practicing anything—but asked that I be true to myself.

In 1994, my mom began attending the Episcopal Church and teaching Sunday school. She started taking me to help her teach, and, while there were female priests, and my participation was welcome, I must admit I stayed for the children. They were so needy and desperate for anyone to care about them, I fell back into the "fake it/make it" syndrome—breaking my covenant with Bill. However, when he met the children, he understood: They needed me, and since I had found out the assault had eliminated my motherhood possibilities, I needed them.

In 1997, my father became critically ill. In preparing me for his absence, he reminded me of my paternal grandmother, and that, in her mind, God—and the Goddess—can be found easiest outside church. He also reminded me to be true to myself. On his death, I was devastated, and sunk into a depression that almost wrecked my marriage (we had filed for divorce) and my life.

In October 2000—38 months after dad's death—I had a closure with him that broke me out of the depression. I pulled out my copy of *Drawing Down the Moon*, reread it and rededicated myself to the God-



dess and God on October 21—what would have been Dad's 79th birthday.

From there, it was a matter of teaching myself. I have taken a very eclectic path and I combine the best of several beliefs to demand the best of myself. I also decided that, while I enjoy

prayer, I wanted to put action behind it.

This led me to the practice of magick to reinforce my prayers. I determined that I was—essentially—a Syncretic Witch.

Still, I was interested in the support of community, so I joined an online teaching Coven in August 2003. The High Priestess became too busy to supervise, and left the teaching of the Dedicants to the 1st Levels. When they resigned en masse, she closed the coven. I resumed studying on my own, but I craved interaction with others.

Or did I? I wondered how many *other* people were there under the "fake it/make it" principle (which I decided was at least 90% given the behavior *after* services).

What is it about religion that turns otherwise decent folk into egotistical, narrow-minded bullies who believe their way is the only way? Ironically, my Christian "friends" who have opted to avoid me, gossip about me, or are just uncomfortable with my decision seem to have forgotten what Christ taught: "Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you, and denounce your name as evil on account of the Son of Man." (Lk. 6:22)

Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint.

Pop Culture Round Up

By My Bed...

If one were to excavate the area next to my bed, they would find an interest treasure trove of books, magazines, catalogs, and miscellaneous detritus.

Books are numerous. I once had them sorted out into ones I've read and ones to read, but our bibliocats took care of that. I see books from all genres: mysteries, science fiction, chick lit, reference, biography, history, political thrillers, witchcraft, spirituality, and even a stray refer-

ence book.

We have determined that I really don't have a set genre that I read. My long time theory is I'll read anything that moves slower than I do.

Along with the books are catalogs; I am creating wish lists online for my favorite companies along with a list of which catalogs have wish lists. I generally only online shop now-through Ebates as I love getting a percentage of my money back on the things that I would buy anyway.

Then of course, there are the magazines. *Real Simple*, *Woman's World*, *Consumer Reports*, and *Entertainment Weekly* are visible from where I sit. I am relatively certain that there are more in the chaos.

There's also my boom box and CDs. In the CD player is the soundtrack from *Mamma Mia*.

My goal, as I continue to declutter, is that before we move I want to not have stuff next to the bed anymore. It's a good goal.

Everything happens for a reason, even if that reason is to make your life miserable.

On The DVR

I love the DVR and find it well worth the \$10.00 per month that Cox charges. I was spending that in video tapes by the time I replaced them and tried to add to them when I didn't watch fast enough.

As of September 27, 2005, our DVR contains the following television programs: Seven episodes of *Starting Over*; three episodes of *Robot*

Chicken; two episodes each of *Daily Show*, *The Judge Judy*, and *Medium*; and one episode each of *Bernie Mac Show*, *The Cold Case*, *Commander-in-Chief*, *Dr. Phil*, *Everybody Hates Chris*, *Harvey Birdman*, *House*, *Intervention*, *Mission Organization*, *Numb3rs*, *Rome*, *Two-and-a-Half Men*, *Weeds*, *Wife Swap*, and *Wild West Tech*.

Meanwhile, movies haven't been

forgotten either. Right now we have *Hangman's Curse*, *Looney Tunes: Back in Action*, and *This Boy's Life*.

Time to get watching, and the first up is *Starting Over*, since Bill's not totally interested in it yet. It is one that he will watch once the relationship boot camp is over, and the women and their egos are in the house.

Quantum Particles: the dreams of which stuff is made.

The outside of our new van.



The inside of the van (ignore the tires) the refrigerator is behind the tires, and the sink is to the left.

Going Green...

(Continued from page 2)

batteries, and when we move, we'll be able to recycle again. (Apartments in Vegas are exempt from all recycling, mores the pity. But, given that most of the people in our complex don't know how to use garbage bags, perhaps it's just as well.)

Another easy switch for us to make was from regular bulbs to compact fluorescent bulbs. There isn't any of that annoying flicker that helps trigger my migraines.

I've been having fun figuring out how to repurpose things I like, but

can't use for their original purpose. For example, a canister set I really like, but don't use for flour, sugar, and such, are now in the bedroom holding onto a variety of things. For example, the smallest one holds the cats' brush, combs, and clippers. The largest holds my reflexology socks, wooden massagers, and lotion.

I'm learning a lot from the program *Design Remix*, which takes items sitting around and repurposes them—for example, a coffee table can become a Murphy desk; Christmas lights can be used to light a shadow box.

It also means that, as I declutter, I am trying to get the stuff into the hands of people who might need the items with which we're parting, rather than sending them to land fills.

The most difficult, of course, is reducing packaging waste. I've started making a lot of my own convenience food. It's healthier, and has less packaging. Then, of course, there are the stumpers: Hershey's Kisses are not only in plastic bags, but each is then wrapped in foil with a paper tag. That's a lot of waste for a bit of chocolate.

You know you have a drug problem, when you are doing crack in rehab. (Bill Maher paraphrase)

Proud Owners

(Continued from page 2)

gas, are in the great scheme of things unimportant and that we need to focus on people and how we treat them and to be good to them and to focus on the Earth and all of creation.

He continued his monologue with what is manmade is temporary and full of flaws, but that which is important is perfect as the Creator of the Universe is perfect.

Bill leaned over, his eyes amused, but questioning, by the fact that we had a philosophical tow truck driver. The driver kept repeating everything and I think we were both puzzling out the conversation. He left us at the gas station, and only charged us \$50.

The next day, I went to the DMV and picked up the temporary registration and my handicap placards. When we next took out the van—two days after the gas incident—things went well on our errand and we decide to fill up the second gas tank. After the fill up, the car wouldn't start. I knew it wasn't the battery, as we still had lights.

We called our friends hoping to get a ride, and I hastily arranged with the AM/PM manager for the van to stay in the far corner of the parking lot overnight.

Our friend showed up—in the two-seater car—and, while I told him that it wasn't the battery, he proceeded to try to remove the clamps on the posts to trade out the battery. I finally made him listen to me after he set off a giant sparking arc (and he has a pacemaker!) with his pry bar, and I started lowering the hood down even while his hands were under it.

He took home Bill, and then came back for me. The mechanic picked it up on Friday morning and quickly determined it was the starter-, which was my guess, since the battery was good and the alternator had just been replaced four months earlier.

I had told the mechanic to not only take care of the starter, but to do the tune-up and the belt replacement. Normally, he doesn't charge us labor, since Bill did so much for him and his wrestling program, so it was a bit of a surprise to see over

\$300 in that slot.

The next night, I went over to Applebee's to pick up our dinner—a treat for a rough week—and looked over and discovered that the temporary permit was gone. I ripped the van apart looking for it, to no avail.

I called a mutual friend to see if he had a non-work number for the mechanic, but he didn't. I told him what happened, and he said he'd keep looking. I called Bill, told him, and at that point he announced the van was cursed.

On Monday, I caught the bus to the DMV, got a replacement, and came home on the bus—with the whole outing taking a mere 3 hours.

We scanned the paper, and cut out the copy of the permit. I then, since I had learned at that point that they were hot commodities, and took my red COPY stamp and stamped over the text twice. It is now taped in the window with four pieces of packing tape.

The original is safely tucked in my purse with the insurance certificate. I still have legwork to do, and a name to give it, but I think the worst is over.

Slum Lord

(Continued from page 3)

We called for assistance on September 14. After I gave Jackie the information on our location and need—including that we had had an overflow and flooding—twice, she said she would get the request out as quickly as possible.

She lied.

You see, we thought that would mean we have a working toilet by the next day. After Bill called on Thursday and was told the plumbing would not be forthcoming until the following week—even though she was told the other toilet was also not

working at 100%—she said she only submitted the work orders and she could do nothing.

I ended up calling Clark County Health District Environmental Health Department as this was quickly becoming a health issue.

Gracie from the Clark County Environmental Health Department called us Friday afternoon saying that Jackie had said the problems were taken care of and we had working plumbing. Since we had been home, and had no repair people in, this came as a surprise to us. We told her that this was patently untrue, and that we were quickly losing the use of the second toilet. She said she would re-call the office.

On Saturday, I walked down to the office, noted Jackie was not working, and filled out another

work request. I was reminded by the on-duty employee that only the AC and heat were fixed on week-ends, but

that she would make sure that maintenance received the work request.

We were being forced to leave our apartment and go to public places to use the restrooms there. The trek to the store is very difficult when

you have to go to the bathroom and negates the whole point of having indoor plumbing.

As it turned out, the repairman came by anyway—after he read the 2 page fax that we sent to the community manager.

The repairman informed us that we have redneck toilets, since the handle for flush-ing is not on the front, but on the side. Thus, more work is involved in the flushing process if there is solid waste involved. The process does work, and we haven't had any flooding, but remembering to follow it at 3AM is interesting.

We have learned is that our new community management really could care less about the apartments or tenants and that we really must get out of here soon. We are grateful we have learned how to deal with maintenance requests (call the 800 number), but I hate being merely a rent check and not a person. No improvements have been made since they took over, and, indeed, the place looks worse

"What you have here is a redneck toilet..."

Fighting for peace is like having sex for virginity.

Good Night, Princess

(Continued from page 4)

the child of her dreams, never become estranged from a loved one.

She will never suffer, but the rest of us will certainly miss her. That's the consolation: her candle would burn so briefly that its glow remained remarkable throughout her life. But that's not really consolation at all.

It's just sophistry.

I know that we'll never be able to smell burnt chocolate chip cookies without thinking of her. Laurie would freeze cookie dough, so it just had to be baked off. She'd slip downstairs around 2AM, and at 4,

awoken by the stench, we'd find her on the floor in the lotus position asleep. She was quickly taught to use the toaster oven, which shut off after the baking cycle completed.

In any case, if we're a little tardy on things, we're sorry, but the loss of the girl who lived her teenage years as my stepdaughter, the person who so engaged me that friends marveled at what a good (albeit unlikely) parent I had mysteriously become during the learning process, the girl who opened a heart that I thought as solid and unyielding as a maximum security prison is gone and life will move on but Laurie and I have grieving to do.

The most ironic thing is that the

philosophical stuff the tow truck driver told us (see page 2) that didn't make sense on Tuesday night, did make sense on Wednesday after we heard. He rescued us when the accident was about 18 hours old (according to the papers), he stripped the gears of the truck so that Laurie was wincing, he didn't charge us the full amount, and Laurie, who was watching the truck carefully to track where the freeway location, saw the tow truck turn right out of the station, but then watched it disappear. Could he have not been a regular tow truck driver, but someone sent from the Deities?

—Bill & Laurie

Observations on Snaps #6

Profane Revelations, C. Fuller

Thanks for the information on lithium. In noting your subhead on tirades, I'm not certain how this classifies as a tirade, though.

D'Clutter Bug #1, L. Kunkel

Well, so much for page 2. Apparently the conversion from MSPublisher to PDF may or may not go smoothly. The page is fixed on the eFanzine site.

I also realized that in my "Sorrow on the Gulf Coast" piece that while I noted the failure of the government to act, I did not specify that I also meant city and state—not just federal. If anyone thought I was merely singling out the President or FEMA, mea culpa.

Bat Signals, T. Cochran

Teresa, it sounds like you had a great trip. Your comments about obsequious staff was a little disturbing—where do you usually stay?

Having known several people from WV, I doubt that your small pub contained ALL of the freaks.

It is a good sign for the gay couple that their problem fitting in is less about the sexuality and more about how new they are to the area. It does seem to be like that in a lot of well-routed areas. I always wanted to live in a place long enough for it to be known as the "XXX" Place.

I can't wait to read your mailing comments—it's a fun way to get a discussion going.

Sidewinder, J. Daugherty

Mike Morford wrote in his *SF Chronicle* about the juxtaposition of Katrina and Burning Man. I am fast becoming a believer in positive anarchy. It is, in part, one reason we are attempting to reduce our

footprint and become more self-sufficient. We're also looking at trying to cut down on our need to suck at the teat of the power company and government. While we won't be able to go 100% off the grid, we'll at least survive a natural disaster.

I loved your Burning Man pictures—they gave me a good feel for your adventure.

Place Holder, J. Katz

I like the temporary 'zine name, Joyce. I'm just glad that you are doing better right now. I agree with you on the importance of both real and virtual/far-flung friends. With my Fibro, I can all too often be too exhausted to be out and about and "up" for visitors. And yet, I know that a friendly ear is only a computer screen away.

Midlife Crisis, L. Bushyager

Linda, just as an FYI, you might want to adjust the kerning on your address font, as it is really tough to read. I almost changed your email address in my database to "cd.com" until I rechecked Joyce's list.

You had some of my favorite Internet lore in your ish this time out. Your comments on the passage of time also hit a familiar chord. As a youth, time dragged. Now it is so fast, I can't keep up. There are days I wake and wouldn't be surprised to find out that it was the following week.

In answer to your query about going bi-monthly, I'd have to say that I really like the momentum of the monthly pace. As I write this on 9/21, I realize that I have one piece to finish, and I will have 4 pages completed. I have two blank pages in reserve, but four are complete. Granted, if the group goes bi-monthly, I'll just post monthly on eFanzines.

As part of my Flywashing, I've been trying to work on the fanzine at least 15 minutes a day. Some days, I can; some days, I can't. But I do like having the plan.

Softcore Fantasy Adventure, A. Katz

Arnie, how is it that I never knew you were know in fandom for your sexual magnetism? How could I have missed that obvious trait?

As you know, I too tend to polish my Shield of Humor with Satire Shine, Ironic Iridescence, and Sarcasm Sealant. Some days, my Shield requires a lot of polishing; other days, the Shield is not needed.

Barnesine, J. Barnes

Joelle, the longer you are in Fandom, and the more you spend time in Fanzines and meeting people at Corflu, Ditto, and Toner, you will find people with whom you resonate.

Be patient, by my count you haven't been around Fandom that long yet.

Der Fleigender Hollander, J. Taylor

I'm not reapplying for FAPA for roughly the same reasons you mention. I hadn't truly GAFIated, but I do admit that my activity prior to *D'CB*, and after *DoodleBug* was pretty minimal.

My plan for now is to stick with SNAPS, and put it on eFanzines to see what, if any, response I receive from greater fandom. After that, who knows what direction I may venture—after we move, of course.

