

40 Years in the Desert

The Further Adventures of Matthew Saroff, Itinerant Engineer

Remember, if you are caught with this, you are instructed to eat this to prevent this document from falling into the wrong hands. I recommend that you delicately saute *40 Years in the Desert* with butter, garlic, and parsley.[†] Actually, there's no need to eat this, just cook it, and don't reproduce this without my permission. After all, I did take time to put in that stupid © symbol at the end, so please respect it.

There has been some big news in my life: **I'm getting married!!![‡]** On October 30, I tie the knot with Sharon May. We met last year at Pennsic War, an SCA event, and she decided I rated further study.

In the courtship that followed, I discovered something important: A woman who knows what she wants, and decides to seriously go after it, is **really really scary**. What followed was a campaign whose meticulous planning rivalled **Sherman's March Through Georgia** (of course, Sherman never gave Georgia a warm fuzzy feeling (hurl now should you feel the need)).

I am looking forward to marrying her, but this wedding might kill me. It's amazing how a simple lifelong commitment requires almost as much preparation as the **D-Day Landing**[§].

I am still not entirely clear on what Sharon gets out of the deal. I consider myself very fortunate. I get a beautiful woman and two nice cats (almost as nice as *Lavi* and *Tudza*[¶]). So I'll be living with four cats up to no good[¤] and a lovely lady who describes herself as having, "All the subtlety of a Sherman tank in a glass factory."

Interestingly enough, for her birthday I took her to tour of a glass factory, and she didn't break **anything**. If you are in Corning, NY visit the Corning glass works there. Highly recommended[§].

This missive is coming to you from Erie, PA[¤]. I have started a new contract with GE Transportation Systems doing structural engineering on locomotives. Most of my work on is GE's AC locomotives. Over the next few years, AC propulsion should be supplanting DC propulsion. The advantages are better traction, efficiency, and reliability (no brushes in the traction motors to wear out).

I also got a chance to ride on GE's AC prototype locomotive (the GE 2000). It is a wicked neat experience.

On the **cheap coffee** front, it's 15¢ a cup. I think that I'm spending less than \$6.00 a week. There could be a SMALL CHANCE that I have a little caffeine dependence problem.

There is another coffee issue, my work coffee cup says, "**Single man seeks single woman for anything any time anywhere**". Sharon is **not** amused. Maybe I'll give it to the someone who needs it more than me[£]. Then again, maybe I'll just be the SOB that you all know that I **can** be and keep it.

Erie is a fairly typical mill town. It has a few historic buildings and the flagship from the 1800s Great Lakes fleet, the *Niagara*. There is an interesting history behind the ship being here. It was scuttled in the late 1800s. It was refloated and fully restored a few years back, and its home port is Erie.

I went to the Air Show in Erie on July 17. It was OK, but not up to the level of the Houston air show. I just **loved** the \$3.00 hot dogs and \$2.50 cokes. They had a really neat aerobatic demo from a sail plane though.

I was told that last year's show was better. The Navy had some F-14 aerobatics. It got canned this year because it was too close to the crowd. Apparently some **whimps** objected to the concept of 35 tons of hot metal and jet fuel slamming into the spectators.

My Erie address is 239 Scott St., 1st Fl., Erie, PA 16508. My phone is (814)453-3238(h) (814)875-6053(w)(w/voice mail). My Texas address is 1795 N. Fry Rd., #215, Katy, TX 77449 (I still live in the same place, this is my Mail Boxes Etc. box) Phone: (409)885-3988. While at GE, I also have an internet address: saroff@engr.dnet.ge.com.

Please note that my Erie address, will be in effect November 1 when I move out from my current roommate[¶] and in with Sharon. If you want to send me a letter,

send it to me at the Katy Address. If you want to call me use the Texas #. The answering machine will have up to date information about my phone number.

I am planning to go to **Arisia**. It looks like I'll actually be **paying** to go. ****ECCH!!**** It does boil certain points of my anatomy that my membership fee will, in some small part, go to paying for the **\$&@ÅµhÑR!!** cellular phone for the **\$&Åh@RÑ!!** ego of the **µhÑ\$J&@Å!!** con chair[¤].

Sorry about the outburst. There are worse things in the world than **hypocrisy**. To the best of my knowledge no one in **Arisia** is **ethnically cleansing Bosnian Moslems or slaughtering Tutsis**, but some of the people there get **very very nervous** at the mention of a **grassy knoll**.

I'm beginning to think that there is a distinct possibility that **Arisia** may be hazardous to my sanity. Hell, I think that it's hazardous to **everyone's** sanity. That does seem to be the most logical explanation for some of the actions taken by the corporation over the past few years.

On the back page are some snippets to amuse you (*Can you say filler?*). If any of you have access to similarly useless information and stories, please send them to me for inclusion in a later issue of **40 Years in the Desert**.

Love is the Triumph
of the Imagination
over Intelligence^{*}

—H.L. Menken

He Works at FTP Software

A programmer finds a frog in the road. The frog says, "I'm really a fair princess. Kiss me, and I'll stay with you for a week." The programmer shrugs his shoulders and puts the frog in his pocket.

A few minutes later, the frog says, "OK, OK, if you kiss me, I'll give you great sex for a week." The programmer nods and puts the frog back in his pocket.

A few minutes later, "Turn me back into a princess and I'll give you great sex for a few years." The programmer smiles and walks on.

Finally, the frog says, "What's wrong with you? I've promised you great sex for a year from a beautiful princess, and you won't even kiss a frog?" "I'm, a programmer," he replies, "I don't have time for sex... But a talking frog is pretty neat."

Lost in Cyberspace?

Reported: Carl Sagan, who protested the use of his name for an Apple Computer model, is suing Apple after discovering that the code word was changed to **BHA** (for Butt Head Astronomer). —————— *Computer world, 18 April 1994, P 158.*

From an Anonymous Source

The juvenile sea squirt wanders through the ocean searching for a suitable hunk of rock or coral to cling to and make its home for life. For this task, it has a rudimentary nervous system. When it finds a spot and takes root, it doesn't need its brain anymore, so it eats it. **It's rather like getting tenure.**

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GE Cat Cartoon © The Estate of B. Kliban (He died the same week as Jim Henson) Used without permission. To the purists out there, I apologize for replacing the B. Kliban hand sketched GE logo with the official GE "Meatball". GE "Meatball" © The General Electric Corporation.

*"Love is the triumph of pheromones over common sense." -Daniel Saroff

†To those of you who actually know where this helpful pulp and paper cooking tip originally came from, you've known me for a long time, and you've heard my worst joke.

‡What's that I hear in the background? Is it the anguished cries of thousands of women! There hasn't been such an outpouring of grief since Rudolph Valentino's funeral. (It could also that I am just a little self deluded and think of myself as God's gift to women. (Actually I know that I'm not God's gift to women. I'm God's gift to my cats. **We all are.**)

§There seems to be a martial theme to all this.....hmmmmmmmm.

¶See last issue.

◊The natural state of cats.

\$OH NO!!!! I'm beginning to sound like that self-important pompous bag of wind John Divorak!!! **Yuck!!!**

¤Better known as "The Mistake By the Lake".

£Like the guy who originally gave me the cup.

µFor those of you who play SCA, it's Viscount Sir Bear the Wallsbane, but it's no big deal, they grow peers like weeds in Stormsport (Erie).

œI ran that paragraph though the old grammar checker. It was about 800 words of expletives. The grammar checker had a nervous break down. It just sits in the corner shrieking **Tekeli-Li Tekeli-Li**.

Matthew G. Saroff
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Katy, TX 77449

Address Correction Requested



I'm Looking for Information

I have a request for information from out of the blue: does anyone know where I might find a specific B. Kliban cat sketch. It's the one with the cat flying through the air like Superman. The only copy that I've seen is a ratty 4th generation Xerox® of the picture on an old version of my brothers *D&D* character sheets.

As always, if you have any suggestions how to improve this "publication", either substance or appearance, please call.

That's about it for now, but stay tuned for the further adventures of **Matthew Saroff, Itinerant Engineer.**