

Coming Home

Oh, God, the full-faced moon is smiling at me
in his pink sky, and I'm alive, alive (!)
and driving home to you and our new refrigerator.
A skin of snow shines on the mountain beyond Burger King
and this garden of wires and poles and lighted signs.
Oh, I want to be new: I want to be the girl I saw
last night at the mike, sex leaking from her fingertips
as they traveled down to pick at her hem.
She was younger than I've ever been with hair cropped,
ragged clothes, and face as clear as a child's.
She read as though she were in bed, eyes half closed,
teeth glistening, her shimmering body written
beneath her dress. She held every man in the audience
taut, and I thought of you. Now I'm coming home
dressed in my sensible coat and shoes, my purse
and a bundle of groceries beside me. When I arrive
we'll open the door of our Frigidaire
to its shining white interior, fill the butter's
little box, set eggs in their hollows, slip meats
and greens into separate drawers, and pause
in the newness of the refrigerator's light
while beside us, through the window,
the moon will lay a sheet on the kitchen floor.

— Elizabeth Tibbetts (Zach's mother)



What are you currently working on inside Papyrus?

Michelle Balkan – At Papyrus, I am currently working on the user interface for GPL with artist Brian Mahony, and several of the engineers (John Wheeler, Brian Berry, and Roy Fleck). In the past two months I have learned how to create and edit the user interface screens in GPL with artwork that Brian Mahony has created and the use of various UI tools. In learning that process I also had to learn how to use MS-DOS prompt, ALPHA channels, HEX Numbers, and the Papyrus Font tool. And finally (yuck) I've learned to use Version Control. We are also in the process of trying to deal with the issues that arise when dealing with localization. In addition to the above I have been attempting to document the various steps it has taken me to learn the whole process. (I'm writing a book!!!!!! Not officially...it's more like just my notes, converted into something that can be easily understood by anybody. So anything that I've missed mentioning here will probably be there.)

Ingrid Capozzoli – I'm working on Mosport, Canada for Grand Prix Legends.

Lou Catanzaro – Right now, I am working on concepts and designs for the NASCAR 3 interface.

Kasson Crooker – GPL sounds, & a consistent top-spin forehand.

Ken Driskell – Converting Tools from DOS base to Win95 base. Putting up NASCAR decor.

Tom Faiano – Gearing up for NASCAR3; will mainly be doing scheduling/tracking, some UI work, track visit coordination, and whatever else...

Paula Gaete – I have a new position of Executive Assistant to Adam and Steve Jackson in a new office space that I love on the Charles River side of the building. I have great neighbors! I was assigned the responsibility of monitoring the products closet – so if you need to purchase Papyrus games – let me know. I'm also working on a Marketing project with Joanna for the Daytona 500 in February. I enjoy being a member of the Workplace Improvement Committee; we are in the process of setting up a new Library and Lounge.

Morgan Hastings – I'm working on the Brabham and Eagle car for GPL.

Dani Henderson – Every day I work on something different. No two days are the same!

Tony Johns – This week? I'm somewhere on the project team for NROS. I've also recently done some clandestine work with Rich and Matt on the N3 spec.

Dave Kaemmer – Primarily I've been working on the physics model for our upcoming games—now I'm working on a portion of the collision code, so that cars can hit things and have spectacular accidents.

Erica Kohnke – I'm working on keeping up with the press requests for SODA and GNS, and building hype for Grand Prix Legends and NASCAR Racing 3, even though it's so far away! Everyone is banging down the door about it already. I'm working on a reviewer's guide for NROS, which is kind of a confusing concept to some of the more mainstream press, and of course, more stickers for presskits and just plain fun.

Matt Marsala – NASCAR Racing 3 & N2 Multiplayer Tradeshow.

Leslie Sanders – I've been feverishly working on the licensing for Grand Prix Legends and have begun the licensing processing for N3. I've also been working on securing a CART license and tip-toeing my way through the dangerous minefield of securing a Formula One license. In addition, I'm also working on building a much-needed database for Licensing.

Ryan Smart – N2 remastering (adding NROS and patches to release version). 3Dfx patch (managing/integrating code drops, delivering product to testing). N3, in bits and pieces.

Julie Sparks – I'm working on the textures for the driver of the GPL car, figuring out where to hang racing stuff, and taking care of the newsletter.

Eric Tran – I am currently working on GPL (Mosport). My job is to build the track geometry.

John Valvano – Right now, just getting geared up for GPL and Reno Racer, the next two exciting adventures that will hit testing in the short near future.



What are you currently working on outside Papyrus?

Michelle Balkan – Outside of Papyrus I am learning about life with two new kittens. Their names are Bristol and Loudon. They've been gradually 'un-decorating' my Christmas tree as the holiday draws near. They really like the gold strands of beads the most. :) In addition to that I've been working at home handcrafting many of my presents for Christmas this year. I started doing this in July. And I'm almost done.

Ingrid Capozzoli – The never ending renovation of a Victorian townhouse.

Lou Catanzaro – Creating "The Freaks," a series of bizarre creatures from the twisted depths of my mind's dark places.

Kasson Crooker – A splashdown CD EP that will come out in January and symbion project CD that will also be out by January.

Jill Dolan – My course: Legal Issues in HR.

Ken Driskell – Volunteer Fridays to help preschoolers use a computer paint program.

Tom Faiano – Nothing really right now; plan to take a photo class at H_____ next month.

Paula Gaete – Getting ready for the Holiday Season and awaiting the two month Winter visit of my stepson. Renovating the boy's bedroom. Also preparing for Basketball season, going to Cub Scout meetings and helping out with 2nd grade homework. (I need a dictionary.)

Morgan Hastings – Joyful iconoclasm. Praise Cheeses!

Dani Henderson – Outside Papyrus I don't do a whole lot of anything. Outside of an occasional trip to the video store I'm pretty boring.

Tony Johns – I'm working on getting our new house box-free and teaching my daughter the "Winnie the Pooh" theme song.

Dave Kaemmer – Raising three kids! My two daughters are still not too excited about racing, but I'm trying...

Erica Kohnke – I'm working on my thesis in poetry at Emerson College. If all goes well I'll have my Master's by June (ha ha). For the thesis, I need fifty pages of final versions of my poetry of the last four years. It's a pain because I have a hard time separating the good stuff from the clinkers sometimes, but my thesis advisor is patient. I do a lot of travelling for my job and just for fun, and it's good because it keeps my mind fresh, and it's bad because I'm never sitting in front of my Mac SE at home, working on the book!

Matt Marsala – Beefing up my monkey collection.

Leslie Sanders – I'm gearing up for ski season and the torturous 5-hour drive to Sugarloaf Mountain in Maine. I'm also taking skating lessons at the local MDC rink.

Ryan Smart – A LARP – vampires, angst, intrigue, and really dirty secrets... that kinda stuff. Riven.

Julie Sparks – Feverishly cross-stitching, sinfully baking, laboriously cleaning, and dorkily listening to AM 1430 or my revolving Christmas oldies. Am I a geek or what? Oh! I forgot the "drinking Earl Grey" part. Come visit my geeky Earl Grey web page at <http://www.obscure.org/~dew/Tea/EarlGrey/EarlGrey.html>.

Eric Tran – What I usually do outside of Papyrus is that I used to hang out with friends, going to see movies, and singing karaoke with them.

John Valvano – Outside of Papyrus I am working on my new marriage. Not that marriage is something to be worked on. (But, I do have to take the garbage out more often now.)



Featured Artist: Zachary Marong

WINSTON CUP 1998 SCHEDULE

NO.	DATE	RACE/LOCATION	TELEVISION	STARTING TIME	LAPS	MILES	TRACK SIZE	POLE QUALIFYING
1.	Feb. 15	DAYTONA 500, Daytona Beach, Fla. Defending Champion: Jeff Gordon, Chevrolet	CBS	12:15 p.m.	200	500	2.5	Feb. 7, 2 p.m.
2.	Feb. 22	GM GOODWRENCH SERVICE PLUS 400, Rockingham, N.C. Defending Champion: Jeff Gordon, Chevrolet	TNN	12:30 p.m.	393	400	1.017	Feb. 20, 2:30 p.m.
3.	March 1	LAS VEGAS 400, Las Vegas, Nev. Defending Champion: Inaugural Winston Cup event	ABC	Noon	267	400	1.5	Feb. 27, TBA
4.	March 8	PRIMESTAR 500, Hampton, Ga. Defending Champion: Dale Jarrett, Ford	ABC	1 p.m.	325	500	1.54	March 6, 12:30 p.m.
5.	March 22	TRANSOUTH FINANCIAL 400, Darlington, S.C. Defending Champion: Dale Jarrett, Ford	ESPN	1 p.m.	293	400	1.522	March 20, 2:30 p.m.
6.	March 29	FOOD CITY 500, Bristol, Tenn. Defending Champion: Jeff Gordon, Chevrolet	ESPN	1:10 p.m.	500	266.5	0.533	March 27, 3 p.m.
7.	April 5	TEXAS 500, Fort Worth, Texas Defending Champion: Jeff Burton, Ford	CBS	1 p.m.	334	500	1.5	April 2, 2:30 p.m.
8.	April 19	GOODY'S HEADACHE POWDER 500, Martinsville, Va. Defending Champion: Jeff Gordon, Chevrolet	ESPN	1 p.m.	500	263	0.526	April 17, 3 p.m.
9.	April 26	DIEHARD 500, Talladega, Ala. Defending Champion: Mark Martin, Ford	ABC	Noon	188	500	2.66	April 24, 3 p.m.
10.	May 3	CALIFORNIA 500, Fontana, Calif. Defending Champion: Jeff Gordon, Chevrolet	ESPN	11 a.m.	250	500	2	May 1, 3 p.m.
11.	May 24	COCA-COLA 600, Concord, N.C. Defending Champion: Jeff Gordon, Chevrolet	TBS	6:15 p.m.	400	600	1.5	May 20, 7 p.m.
12.	May 31	MBNA PLATINUM 400, Dover, Del. Defending Champion: Ricky Rudd, Ford	TNN	12:10 p.m.	400	400	1	May 29, 3 p.m.
13.	June 6	PONTIAC EXCITEMENT 400, Richmond, Va. Defending Champion: Rusty Wallace, Ford	ESPN	7:40 p.m.	400	300	0.75	June 5, 5:30 p.m.
14.	June 14	MILLER LITE 400, Brooklyn, Mich. Defending Champion: Ernie Ivan, Ford	CBS	1 p.m.	200	400	2	June 12, 3:30 p.m.
15.	June 21	POCONO 500, Long Pond, Pa. Defending Champion: Jeff Gordon, Chevrolet	TNN	1 p.m.	200	500	2.5	June 19, 3 p.m.
16.	June 28	SAVE MART/KRAGEN 350, Sonoma, Calif. Defending Champion: Mark Martin, Ford	ESPN	1:10 p.m.	111	216.5	1.95	June 26, 3 p.m.
17.	July 4	PEPSI 400, Daytona Beach, Fla. Defending Champion: John Andretti, Ford	CBS	8 p.m.	160	400	2.5	July 3, TBA
18.	July 12	JIFFY LUBE 300, Loudon, N.H. Defending Champion: Jeff Burton, Ford	TNN	1 p.m.	300	317.4	1.058	July 10, 4 p.m.
19.	July 26	PENNSYLVANIA 500, Long Pond, Pa. Defending Champion: Dale Jarrett, Ford	TBS	1 p.m.	200	500	2.5	July 24, 3 p.m.
20.	Aug. 1	BRICKYARD 400, Speedway, Ind. Defending Champion: Ricky Rudd, Ford	ABC	Noon	160	400	2.5	July 30, 3 p.m.
21.	Aug. 9	THE BUD AT THE GLEN, Watkins Glen, N.Y. Defending Champion: Jeff Gordon, Chevrolet	ESPN	1:10 p.m.	90	220.5	2.45	Aug. 7, 2 p.m.
22.	Aug. 16	DEVILBISS 400, Brooklyn, Mich. Defending Champion: Mark Martin, Ford	ESPN	12:30 p.m.	200	400	2	Aug. 14, 3 p.m.
23.	Aug. 22	GOODY'S HEADACHE POWER 500, Bristol, Tenn. Defending Champion: Dale Jarrett, Ford	ESPN	7:30 p.m.	500	266.5	0.533	Aug. 21, 5:30 p.m.
24.	Aug. 29	NEW HAMPSHIRE 300, Loudon, N.H. Defending Champion: Jeff Gordon, Chevrolet	TNN	1:15 p.m.	300	317.4	1.058	Aug. 27, 3:30 p.m.
25.	Sept. 6	MOUNTAIN DEW SOUTHERN 500, Darlington, S.C. Defending Champion: Jeff Gordon, Chevrolet	ESPN	1 p.m.	367	500	1.366	Sept. 4, 3:15 p.m.
26.	Sept. 12	MILLER 400, Richmond, Va. Defending Champion: Dale Jarrett, Ford	ESPN	7:30 p.m.	400	300	0.750	Sept. 11, 5:30 p.m.
27.	Sept. 20	MBNA GOLD 400, Dover, Del. Defending Champion: Mark Martin, Ford	TNN	12:10 p.m.	400	400	1	Sept. 18, 3 p.m.
28.	Sept. 27	NAPA AUTOCARE 500, Martinsville, Va. Defending Champion: Jeff Burton, Ford	ESPN	12:30 p.m.	500	263	0.526	Sept. 25, 3 p.m.
29.	Oct. 4	UAW-GM QUALITY 500, Concord, N.C. Defending Champion: Dale Jarrett, Ford	TBS	1:10 p.m.	334	500	1.5	Sept. 30, 7 p.m.
30.	Oct. 11	WINSTON 500, Talladega, Ala. Defending Champion: Terry Labonte, Chevrolet	ESPN	Noon	188	500	2.66	Oct. 9, 3 p.m.
31.	Oct. 25	DURA-LUBE 500, Avondale, Ariz. Defending Champion: Dale Jarrett, Ford	TNN	Noon	312	312	1	Oct. 23, 2:30 p.m.
32.	Nov. 1	ACDELCO 400, Rockingham, N.C. Defending Champion: Bobby Hamilton, Pontiac	TNN	12:30 p.m.	393	400	1.017	Oct. 30, 1:30 p.m.
33.	Nov. 8	NAPA 500, Hampton, Ga. Defending Champion: Bobby Labonte, Pontiac	ESPN	12:30 p.m.	325	500	1.54	Nov. 6, 3 p.m.

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BUSCH SERIES 1998 SCHEDULE

NO.	DATE	RACE/LOCATION	TELEVISION	STARTING TIME	LAPS	MILES	TRACK SIZE	POLE QUALIFYING
1.	Feb. 14	NAPA AUTO PARTS 300, Daytona Beach, Fla. Defending Champion: Randy LaJole, Chevrolet	CBS	Noon	120	300	2.5	Feb. 10, 1:30 p.m.
2.	Feb. 21	GM GOODWRENCH SERVICE PLUS 200, Rockingham, N.C. Defending Champion: Mark Martin, Ford	TNN	1 p.m.	197	200	1.017	Feb. 20, 1 p.m.
3.	Feb. 28	LAS VEGAS 300, Las Vegas, Nev. Defending Champion: Jeff Green, Chevrolet	ESPN	1 p.m.	200	300	1.5	Feb. 27, TBA
4.	March 7	STIHL OUTDOOR POWER TOOLS 300, Hampton, Ga. Defending Champion: Mark Martin, Ford	ESPN	1 p.m.	195	300	1.54	March 5, 1:30 p.m.
5.	March 15	BELLSOUTH MOBILITY/OPRYLAND 320, Nashville, Tenn. Defending Champion: Steve Park, Chevrolet	TNN	TBA	320	190.7	0.596	March 13, TBA
6.	March 21	DIAMOND HILL PLYWOOD 200, Darlington, S.C. Defending Champion: Randy LaJole, Chevrolet	ESPN	1 p.m.	147	200	1.366	March 20, 2:30 p.m.
7.	March 28	MOORE'S SNACKS 250, Bristol, Tenn. Defending Champion: Jeff Burton, Ford	ESPN	2 p.m.	250	133.25	0.533	March 27, 4 p.m.
8.	April 4	CDCA-COLA 300, Fort Worth, Texas Defending Champion: Mark Martin, Ford	CBS	1 p.m.	200	300	1.5	April 2, 1:30 p.m.
9.	April 11	GALAXY FOODS 300, Hickory, N.C. Defending Champion: Dick Trickle, Chevrolet	TNN	1 p.m.	300	108.9	0.363	April 10, 1 p.m.
10.	April 25	BUSCH SERIES 300, Talladega, Ala. Defending Champion: Mark Martin, Ford	ESPN	Noon	113	300	2.66	April 23, 3 p.m.
11.	May 9	UNITED STATES CELLULAR 200, Loudon, N.H. Defending Champion: Mike McLaughlin, Chevrolet	TNN	1:15 p.m.	200	211.6	1.058	May 8, 2 p.m.
12.	May 17	CORESTATES 200, Nazareth, Pa. Defending Champion: Elliott Sadler, Chevrolet	ESPN	1 p.m.	200	200	1	May 16, 2 p.m.
13.	May 23	CARQUEST AUTO PARTS 300, Concord, N.C. Defending Champion: Joe Nemechek, Chevrolet	TBS	1 p.m.	200	300	1.5	May 21, 3 p.m.
14.	May 30	MBNA PLATINUM 200, Dover, Del. Defending Champion: Bobby Labonte, Pontiac	TNN	1:10 p.m.	200	200	1	May 29, 2:15 p.m.
15.	June 5	HARDEE'S 250, Richmond, Va. Defending Champion: Mark Martin, Ford	ESPN	7:40 p.m.	250	187.5	0.75	June 4, 3 p.m.
16.	June 14	TBA, Fountain, Colo. Defending Champion: Inaugural Busch Series event	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	1.5	TBA
17.	June 28	LYSOL 200, Watkins Glen, N.Y. Defending Champion: Mike McLaughlin, Chevrolet	TNN	1 p.m.	82	200	2.45	June 27, 2 p.m.
18.	July 5	DEHARD 250, West Allis, Wis. Defending Champion: Randy LaJole, Chevrolet	TNN	1 p.m.	250	250	1	July 4, 11 a.m.
19.	July 11	MYRTLE BEACH 250, Myrtle Beach, S.C. Defending Champion: Elliott Sadler, Chevrolet	TNN	8 p.m.	250	134.5	0.538	July 10, 5 p.m.
20.	July 19	KENWOOD HOME & CAR AUDIO 300, Fontana, Calif. Defending Champion: Todd Bodine, Pontiac	ESPN	3 p.m.	150	300	2	July 17, noon
21.	July 25	SOUTH BOSTON 300, South Boston, Va. Defending Champion: Randy LaJole, Chevrolet	TNN	8 p.m.	300	120	0.4	July 25, 4:30 p.m.
22.	July 31	KROGER 200, Clermont, Ind. Defending Champion: Randy LaJole, Chevrolet	ESPN	8 p.m.	200	137.2	0.686	July 30, 5:45 p.m.
23.	Aug. 15	BUSCH SERIES 200, Brooklyn, Mich. Defending Champion: Steve Park, Chevrolet	ESPN	2 p.m.	100	200	2	Aug. 13, 3:30 p.m.
24.	Aug. 21	FOOD CITY 250, Bristol, Tenn. Defending Champion: Jimmy Spencer, Chevrolet	ESPN	7:30 p.m.	250	133.25	0.533	Aug. 21, 6 p.m.
25.	Sept. 5	DURA-LUBE 200, Darlington, S.C. Defending Champion: Jeff Burton, Ford	ESPN	1 p.m.	147	200	1.366	Sept. 4, 2 p.m.
26.	Sept. 11	AUTOLITE PLATINUM 250, Richmond, Va. Defending Champion: Steve Park, Chevrolet	ESPN	7:40 p.m.	250	187.5	0.75	Sept. 10, 3 p.m.
27.	Sept. 19	MBNA GOLD 200, Dover, Del. Defending Champion: Joe Bessey, Chevrolet	TNN	1:10 p.m.	200	200	1	Sept. 18, 2:15 p.m.
28.	Oct. 3	ALL PRO BUMPER TO BUMPER 300, Concord, N.C. Defending Champion: Jimmy Spencer, Chevrolet	TBS	1 p.m.	200	300	1.5	Oct. 1, 3 p.m.
29.	Oct. 17	GATEWAY 250, Madison, Ill. Defending Champion: Elliott Sadler, Chevrolet	CBS	Noon	200	250	1.25	Oct. 16, 2 p.m.
30.	Oct. 31	ACDELCO 200, Rockingham, N.C. Defending Champion: Mark Martin, Ford	TNN	2 p.m.	197	200	1.017	Oct. 30, 1 p.m.
31.	Nov. 15	JIFFY LUBE MIAMI 300, Homestead, Fla. Defending Champion: Joe Nemechek, Chevrolet	CBS	12:15 p.m.	200	300	1.5	Nov. 13, 3 p.m.

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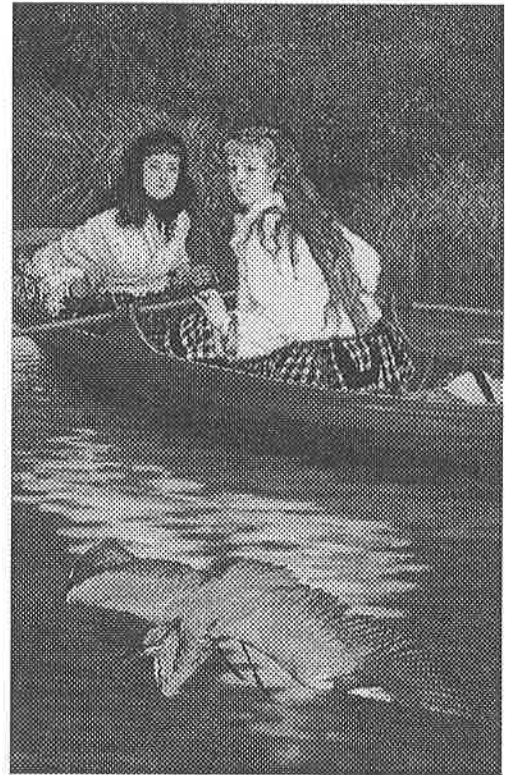
Another Woman on the Ipswich River, August 1996

I cannot tell you
I have chosen names for our children,
while you are still leaving another woman.

I want to pull my foot in,
dripping with cold stream water,
turn around in the boat,
and tell you
something good about me.

I'm careful to notice
what you are watching
from beneath the brim of your hat.
I try hard
to see it as you do:
A great blue heron takes flight,
springs from the shore,
spreads her wings wider than the stream.
Her toes point at us,
as she heads toward more secluded fishing pools.
Are you thinking about the escape you are making,
or the tiny grey feathers on the heron's long neck?

Although we laugh,
make up names for the shiny insects
that bobble on the surface of the stream:
Silver Buttons, Dancing Eyeballs,
I cannot wrap my arms around your neck.
You are still in this process
of leaving another woman.

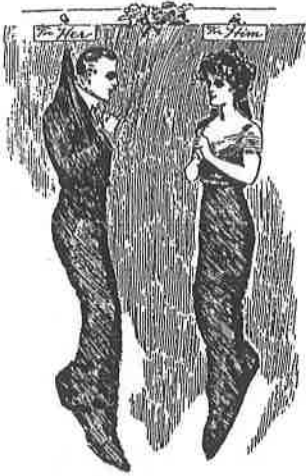


"On the Thames – A Heron" by James Tissot

Stiff reeds tilt
and bright red blooms
wave from the banks,
We sing songs we are just making up.
You show me the double shadow
trees cast on both the water
and on the deep gold belly of the stream.
I wish I could slide under this water,
between the shadows,
become just as beautiful to you,

Your eyes flicker blue and green
across the bright surface of the water,
to the heron,
head-cocked, from her new perch behind the reeds.
Your bare feet settle against the metal of the canoe,
your knees turn red from the sun.

Insects thrill to the late afternoon glow.
A dragonfly lands on your bare shoulder.
She is made of teal-colored foil,
and considers your skin for a long moment
before pushing off
with legs made of black thread,
she returns to shore,
leaving a quiet dragonfly word in your ear.



If you could have anything for Christmas (or whatever holiday you celebrate), what would it be?

Michelle Balkan – Sing & Snore Ernie, of course! :)

Ingrid Capozzoli – A trip to Italy.

Lou Catanzaro – World peace and understanding, spiritual enlightenment, a perfect synergetic relationship between humankind and nature, and to join Dale Earnhardt in a shot of Tennessee whiskey.

Kasson Crooker – A consistent top-spin forehand.

Jill Dolan – World peace.

Ken Driskell – Three happy kids. And maybe some quiet time for the parents.

Tom Faiano – Just to be with my family and friends....

Paula Gaete – Health, happiness, peace and prosperity for all my family and friends.

Morgan Hastings – I want a Red Ryder BB gun with a compass in the stock and a thing that tells time.

Dani Henderson – Outside of world peace, and everyone having a roof over their head and food in their bellies, and all that humanitarian stuff, I want a pair of blue Doc Martins.

Tony Johns – I'd have Lawrence Phillips put in jail instead of on the Miami roster; I'd miraculously triple the memory budget for N3; I'd do something so unique and helpful at Papyrus that I'd be awarded a ceremonial can of pudding; I'd wish for all talk shows to go away (except Rosie... she's goofy but harmless); and I'd wish peace and joy for everyone.

Dave Kaemmer – A full season of racing with Skip Barber! (With no hospital visits.)

Erica Kohnke – A massive computer to replace my ailing Mac SE, so I could goof off at home as well as at work. Oh, and a date with Steve Park.

Matt Marsala – An accurate schedule.

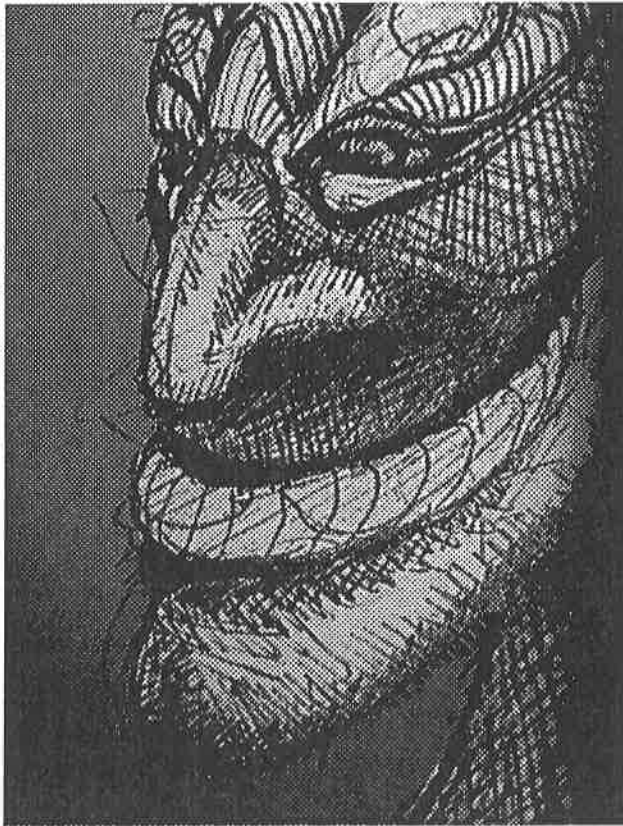
Leslie Sanders – Corny but true – that my entire family could celebrate Christmas together. . . although a new pair of skis (the modified super-cuts please) would help ease the pain of not having my family together.

Ryan Smart – 5 extra hours in the day where I feel energetic enough to spend time on my hobbies.

Julie Sparks – Enough money to create a totally kickin' Bed & Breakfast someplace in the country.

Eric Tran – If I could have anything for Christmas, I would love to go visit my family in Houston because I have not seen them for a long time.

John Valvano – Two movies – Endless Summer and Endless Summer II. I could always use another surf board or two. HMMM... a hood and boots for my wet-suit so I can surf during winter... that would hold me for the year....



Featured Artist: Zachary Marong

Lycanthrope

The twining of night is around us, my love.
Opulence shines like so many heady philtres,
digging under our muscles with fresh clean nails.
I rest my hand on your head like a web.
You have shown yourself to be my bird.
My dragon. My flying beast.

I do not know what this means.
I can tell you only that when your arms
pull mine about you from behind there is
a hint of something more deep, some song
that embraces the bestial moon and the
frenzied squabbling of blue-gray wings.

This is us.
I rest my hand on your head like a web,
and you acknowledge this movement with an
equally simple tiny shift — the slight
ripple of a shoulder, the remote brush of
cloth from the sleeve of your shirt.

I ask you where have all the angels gone
and you tell me stories of sailing silver
sky-frames over seas of mist. My fingers
press into your scalp with intuitive precision.
You speak of dashing between gatherings of
water droplets, perching in virtual treetops,
lowering your great scaled head to set one
magnificent bejeweled eye on lightening fields below.

There is a name for what passes between us,
what is unseen and moves as a cat between spaces.
I release my hand. I lay the tip of the shortest
finger lightly, so lightly, in the center of your hair.
The twining of night is inside us, love,
and you have shown yourself to be my beast.

And I do not know what this means.

– Julie Sparks

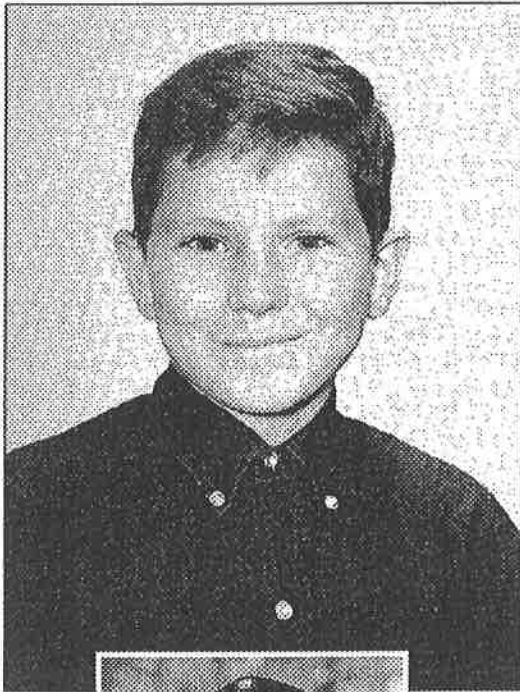
STRAY DOG

By Morgan Hastings

Hello, my name is Gustav,
(well, my full name is Gustav D'chien, but I decided that I should introduce myself on a first name basis
(I really shouldn't say my name, after all I'm not the subject of this story
(I think this might be a slight inferiority complex.)
I'm not even in this story
(which makes me mad, because I wanted to tell a story about me
(this might be a slight ego problem.).)
instead the writer wrote about something else that has nothing to do about me
(I told John
(John
(his whole name is John Gregory Alston.)
is the writer of this story
(that I haven't started yet
(actually, the story has already been written, I just have to finish what I'm saying.).)
to put me in a story and he even said he would
(what gets me is when people say they'll do something and they forget about it later
(although, some people don't do this
(like me
(actually, I shouldn't talk about myself. I should be more modest
(in other words, I shouldn't sound so egotistical.).)
but a lot of people do.).
John
(the writer I was talking about before)
does this all the time
(well, not all the time—just a lot.).)
but he disappointed me
(I don't think I should be too disappointed, since it's not my job to write stories, it's John's job
(along with a few other people)
to do these stories.)
and maybe the next one he does, he can put me in it
(oh, no! what if he doesn't make me look good?
(pardon me, I worry a lot.)
so maybe I should drop the idea of having me in a story
(come to think of it, John has been known to write very strange stories
(in fact, one of them was really short
(this might be one, but I still don't know yet
(don't worry
(like me).
I'll finish this soon.).)
and some of them are very obscure
(not to be confused with obtuse or acute.).).).
but it really doesn't matter.)
this is rather an informal setting
(unless you were reading this at a high society tea party
(I hate those things.).).

speaking of names, I think they're quite important
(I used to forget names all the time
(I still do
(I did get a memory enhancing book to help me, though.)).).
so if you are ready, we can start the story now.).
and this is a story about Sparky the dog:

Sparky was a happy dog.
Sparky was.

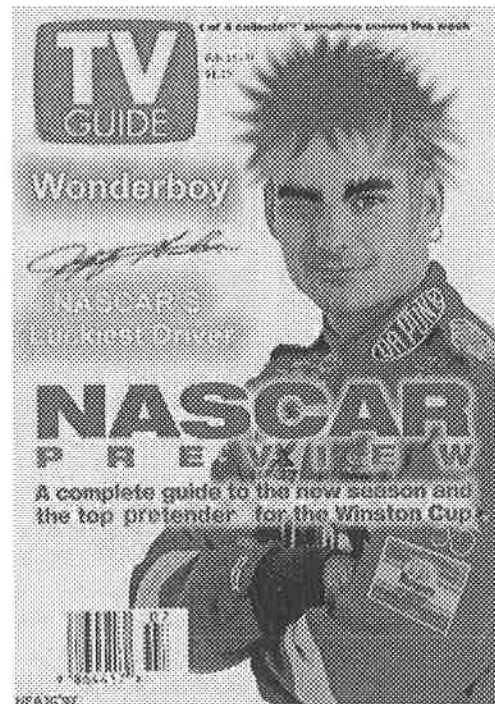
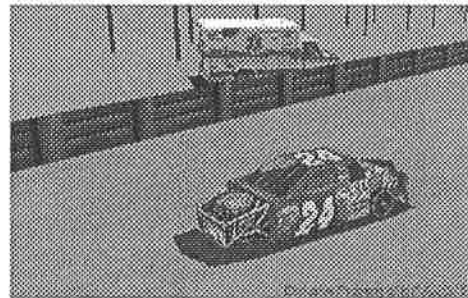


dale
earnhardt

FEATURED WEB SITE

NASCAR Fans Against Jeff Gordon
<http://home.klis.com/~brobertsjr/nfajg.htm>

They even have a screen shot from our game!



From the Front Lines of Parenthood

By Tony Johns

They said parenting would be frightening. I never really gave it much thought; being the youngest child not only of my immediate family but also of my extended one, I had very little exposure to small children and babies. So when my wife and I became parents just over a year ago, I was unprepared for just about everything.

But you know, things went all right for almost a year. Amanda was a very quiet child, not colicky or fussy. For the first few months, she didn't move too much. She just lay there on the floor or in her chair, basically inert, almost as if she were allowing me to get my bearings and get used to having her around. At the proper times, she emitted cute noises and made funny faces. I call this the infant survival instinct — not only does it remind you that they're there in those first quiet months, but it helps defuse frustration in later months when things get broken and parents become frazzled.

At about the nine to ten month mark, however, things started to change. Fast. Now, I'm no conspiracy theorist, but I'm fairly certain that changes like the ones that overcame Amanda are not simply a matter of growing up. No, my wife and I are solidly convinced that Amanda is now possessed by some sort of second personality. A personality so volatile, so unpredictable, that it keeps us in mortal fear just about all the time.

We call her DestrucTor, Harbinger of Doom.

Okay, so this sounds silly to you. I can imagine how the uninitiated might get a few grins out of this. But DestrucTor, Harbinger of Doom, is no fantasy. And if you spent as much time around our daughter as my wife and I do, you'd get the picture pretty quickly. Let me give you just a few examples of how my wife and I discovered that DestrucTor, Harbinger of Doom, had taken up residence in our previously quiet and unassuming child.

In the pre-DestrucTor days, Amanda's range of motion was limited to rolling around on the floor and maybe some docile crawling. DestrucTor, Harbinger of Doom, changed all that. Now, when you are following her around, she will occasionally prop herself up on her hands and feet and start moving in a kind of weird crab-like way. And the thing of it is, she's fast. She can be crawling slowly one moment, and the next be down the hallway, into the bathroom, and grabbing toilet paper off the roll (DestrucTor, Harbinger of Doom, is a connoisseur of fine toiletries) before you've had a chance to say, "Uh, wait..." And don't get me started on walking, either. There she'll be, sitting and playing with a toy block, and in the next fraction of a second she'll be across the room, pulling electrical cords from outlets, shaking end tables until all sorts of stuff falls off of them, and gleefully running into all sorts of obstacles. We're pretty sure DestrucTor, Harbinger of Doom, has mastered teleportation as well, because one moment she'll be in one part of the house, and the next she could be four rooms away.

Speaking of toy blocks, DestrucTor has kinetic powers. That's the only way I can describe it. How else can you explain the fact that I can spend twenty minutes cleaning up our front room, putting away the multitude of toys that inhabit our house (I've deduced that grandparents give all those toys to grandchildren in order to exact revenge on us. Their favorite torture implement seems to be electronic musical toys with extra-long-life batteries.), turn my back for a second or two, and turn around to find the floor completely littered with toys again? No *human* influence can wreak so much havoc so quickly. The same magical force has impacted our Tupperware lids, bowls, and dishes in the kitchen, as well as phone books, important mail, and other household items too numerous to mention. And don't get me started on her meals — let's just say our carpet is a food graveyard.

Oh yes, it's all the work of DestrucTor, Harbinger of Doom.

Flailing is another of DestrucTor's tools for parental torture. Whereas a few months ago we could feed Amanda her bottle with no resistance, today's DestrucTor-induced moods see her throwing every arm, leg, joint, and muscle into a frenzy during feedings. Her face turns beet red, her torso stiffens and wiggles alternately, and those flailing limbs are magnetically drawn to every nerve center on my body, resulting in not a few bruises and significant pain. And the accompanying banshee wail would strike fear into the most calloused of souls.

Now, if my wife and I had time to rest after a day of struggling with DestrucTor, it might not be so bad. But lately, DestrucTor has been wreaking a strange form of late-night mind control on us. Using a keening call reminiscent of the Siren song that nearly lured Odysseus onto the rocks (I'm sure that DestrucTor *has* to be related in some way to Greek mythology.), she lures us out of our beds and disturbs our slumber; but once we shuffle into her room, the wail has suddenly stopped, and we find her fast asleep in her crib. So we shuffle back, making the obligatory potty stop, and are nearly asleep when the siren song starts up again. On a good night, this only happens about three or four times.

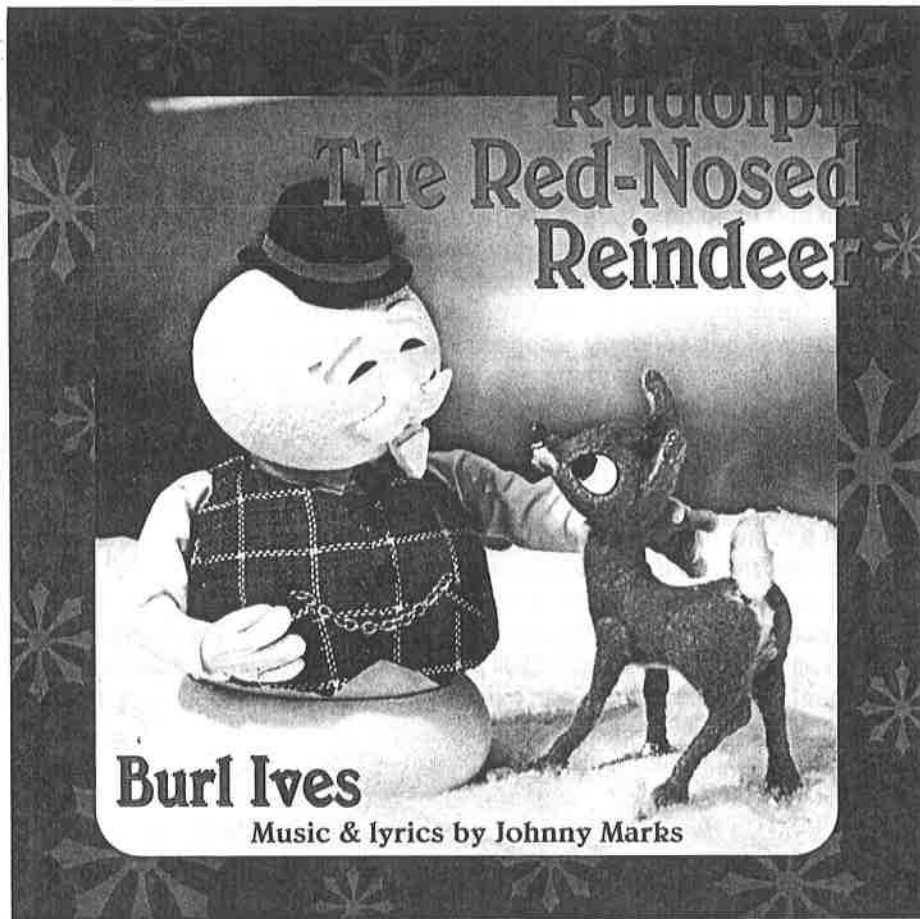
Probably the worst afflictions imposed on us by DestrucTor, Harbinger of Doom, are the variety of secretions our daughter now emits. And I'm not just talking the stuff in the diapers, either. We're talking drool that is akin to super-glue. Wherever it goes, it acts as an adhesive to bond food and other materials to the skin. When mixed with a runny nose... well, discretion is the better part of valor in this case. Suffice it to say that the description includes the word, "Hyaaaauuuurrrgh..."

Fortunately for my wife and me, DestrucTor, Harbinger of Doom, is but a temporary resident in my daughter's body. Eventually, say after about another year or two, DestrucTor will seek out another poor infant to take over. And from all reports, our daughter will again become the sweet, wonderful child we once knew. We can only grit our teeth and hope that we can survive. After all, once DestrucTor, Harbinger of Doom, goes on to new territory, we'll at last have peace.

At least until the arrival of The Intimidating Hormon-A-Tron.



Featured Artist: Zachary Marong



MISSING: DALE EARNHARDT

Last seen Christmas Eve, Dale mysteriously disappeared, leaving his Santa hat behind. Was he kidnapped by the jolly old elf himself? No one knows....