

The Swiss Family Martin
Missing Miss Mabel
Zurich, Switzerland

August 14 2011

Dear Friends and Family,

I hope that you are well and happy. Here, both Nazy and I are well and happy, but my electronic friend, the MacBook Pro is, eh, (under) **the weather.**

MacBook Pro

Because of the defunct computer, I had time to read a book called The Help that depicts relations between domestic help (i.e. the maids) and their employers in Jackson, Mississippi. The story takes place during the 1960s when the civil rights movement was just beginning. I read the book on Igor, my iPad. Igor loves to chat with Miss Mabel, the MacBook Pro. Miss Mabel, believing that she is "domestic help" tried her acting skills on me.

"Now why you done do that, Mr. Dan?" Miss Mabel belched as iced tea splattered its way into (and through) her keyboard.

"It was an accident, Miss Mabel," I responded.

"You is one clumsy and THOUGHTLESS.."

"Now, Miss Mabel, there is no need to lapse into upper case. I said I was sorry," I replied, aware that this computer "had a lip" on her.

"Mr. Dan, you needs learning."

And with that, Miss Mabel slipped into unconsciousness. I rushed her to the Emergency Room at Glattzentrum.

"The emergency room?" Nazy asked – in interrupt mode.

"Okay the Apple Store. After a quick triage, it became clear that a transplant was mandatory."

"That's melodramatic, Dan. They simply said that they needed.."

"A keyboard donor. I just hope that Miss Mabel gets along with her new keyboard."

"You should not personalize a simple machine, Dan." Nazy opined.

"You are really lucky that Miss Mable is comatose, Nazy. If she heard you, I would never be able to type your name again."

Luckily the replacement component arrived quickly. But Miss Mable remained in the ICU.

"But Nazy, they said three days." I moaned.

"They estimated three days.."

"Estimate. Promise. Said! It's all the same."

"It's not the same, Dan. Isn't English your native language?"

"Nazy! You could at least sympathize."

"Who poured the iced tea into the keyboard?"

"Spilled, dear. Not poured."

"Who? Dear?"

"I'm going to vacuum my aquarium."

"Don't pour.."

"Spill."

"... and do not make a mess, Dan."

"*Thanks for the very helpful advice,*" I thought. "Of course not," I replied.

Miss Mabel's disability had a significant impact on the weekly routine at **Casa Carmen**, the family residence. As you have undoubtedly noticed, this week's issue of The Weekly Letter (TWL) is late. It was impossible to post anything until the transplanted keyboard became functional. The web design software is installed on Miss Mabel's infirm (and slipped) hard disk. This letter was composed using Nazy's **HP** (gasp!) Pavilion Entertainment PC with a German keyboard. (The "y" and the "z" kezs are swapped, zou might think that these are underutilyed but zou would be wrong.)

August 13 was Street Parade Day in Zurich. People dress up in outrageous (and usually revealing) costumes to parade through the city listening to ~~music~~, eh, rhythm blasted through speakers the size of apartment buildings. These speakers feature sub-woofers that generate low frequency sounds and vibration loud enough to confuse Sperm Whales in the Atlantic Ocean and African Elephants in Mozambique. More locally, Tram Tracks have to be realigned following Street Parade.

When I went to my first Street Parade, I couldn't help but notice the svelte and trim young ladies prancing around in bikinis (or monokinis). This year was different.

"These people are ugly, Nazy."

"Don't be judgmental, Dan."

"If your butt is so wobbly that it settles into a resonance frequency while you walk, then you shouldn't wear short-shorts."

"Dan.."

"And if you're 75 years old, you should realize that the fierce scorpion that you had tattooed on your (six-pack) abs when you were 16 is all faded and wrinkly. Displaying that scorpion on abs that look like a varicose-veined map on Jell-O.."

"... while wearing your underwear and a feather boa..."

"... is not cool."



For some reason, many of our local friends avoid downtown during the street Parade. They find the **crowd** (which is thick) and noise (which is loud) rather distressing. We disagree..

“Disagree, Dan?” Nazy remarked as she pushed her way through the drunken crowd.

“What did you say, dear?” I replied. “I can’t hear you over the din.”

That evening, we watched the movie Titanic on Film 4.

“Well that was a real downer,” I exclaimed as the ship (and then Leonardo Di Capro) sunk to the bottom of the sea.

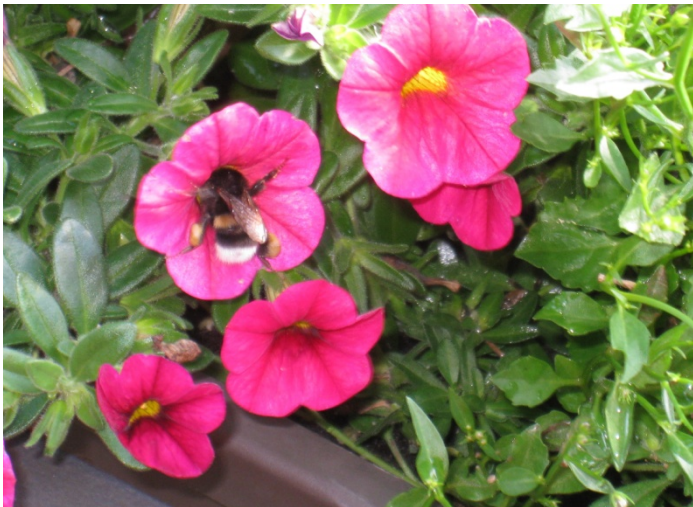
“You knew it was going to end like that, Dan. You’ve..”

“Read the book?”

“... seen the movie.”

“I know, but I just keep hoping that this time they’ll turn away from the iceberg in time.”

And, finally, on the home front, the weather continues to disappoint. We are buried, eh, submerged in rain. The flowers look bedraggled: long and stringy.



“That’s not quite true, Dan.” Nazy interjected. “We did have a day or two of sun. The bumblebees (unlike the ones at **Street Parade**) are enjoying the mini-petunias.”

“As long as they don’t enjoy me,” I replied.

“And we went for a nice long walk along the lake on Sunday. Remember?”

“Sort of. I seem to recall that we ran the last kilometer or so.”

“Well...”

“Serenaded by thunder and pursued by lightening.”

“But we made it home – dry and..”

“... puffing...”

“And you took the elevator. I walked up the stairs.”

“That’s because you are a showoff,” I replied. “*I would have sat down in the elevator if it wasn’t so small and cramped,*” I thought.

Take Care and Cheers,

