

THE MARTIN FAMILY

CARMENSTRASSE, 48

CH-8032 ZÜRICH

SWITZERLAND

June 4, 2011

Dear Reader

I hope that this week finds you healthy and happy. Here in Switzerland, I'm celebrating Nazy's return from Lebanon.

"Well?" Nazy asked. "Whatever did you do while I was away?"

"Hmm," I replied, somewhat miffed by the unspoken implication of the query.

"What 'unspoken' implication?" Nazy asked, reading my mind (again).

"I detect a bit of skepticism about my ability to find something to do while you are away."

"Of course not, Dan, I know exactly what you did."

"Really?"

"You sat in your study in front of your computer. Then when your butt got tired..."

"Excuse me?"

"... you checked the list of activities that I left..."

"Which volume?" I (attempted to) interrupt.

"... and then you watered the plants or recycled the newspapers."

"See!" I interjected triumphantly. "I had no trouble finding something to do."

In fact, I did a lot while Nazy was away. For example, in addition to cooking for myself...

Spousal interrupt: "Cooking?"

~~...cooking for myself~~, eh, warming up previously cooked food for myself, I wrote a blog entry....

http://danmartininternational.com/danmartininternational/Blog/Entries/2011/6/1_Business_Transformation.html

Spousal interrupt: "Sitting on your butt in front of your computer."

... and I *began* the process of repopulating *The Martin Family Aquarium* following the ecological disaster that occurred during our trip to Slovakia. As a first step, I augmented the school of **neon tetras**. My next (poignant) step involved selection of a successor to Fiona,

the angel fish that had reigned over the denizens of the tank - until the water turned to smelly jello. One fish couldn't replace Fiona, so I got...

"Radavan and Ratko," I said to Nazy.

"Are you out of your mind?"

"How about: Hosni and Bashir?"

"You sound like Calvin from the comic strip, Dan."

"Since you probably wouldn't like Pol and Pot, would you approve Kate and William?"

Kate (foreground) and William appear in the photo. The spotted fish in the background is as big as a Los Angeles-class nuclear attack submarine. His name is "Kramden" because he acts as the sewer system in the aquarium. Kramden, needless to say, survived the catastrophe: he revels in ecological disaster.

Recall that Nazy was visiting Darius in Beirut this week. She helped him settle into his new apartment with the calm, capable confidence that only a mother can offer.

Spousal interrupt: "*Only* a mother?"

Correction: "... that only a mother *or wife* can offer."

"It is," Nazy explained, "a very nice apartment, but the furniture arrangement wasn't ideal. Darius was complaining that his asthma has reappeared."

"Asthma?," I asked. "Isn't that usually caused by cats or dust? Did he have a cat?"

"No cat. He had cleaned up, but his 'broom' wasn't rigid enough to move dust and he didn't think he had a vacuum cleaner.."

"He 'didn't think' that he had a vacuum cleaner?"

"Did you know that we have a vacuum cleaner, Dan?"

"Of course I know Nazy. I even know where we keep it."

"Do you know how to replace the dust bags?"

"Dust bags?" I asked.

In Beirut Nazy rearranged the furniture to 'open up the apartment' (In the process, she found the vacuum cleaner.) She fixed the mildew-encrusted, balcony-placed washing machine and showed Darius how it worked.



Kramden, William and Kate



Beirut Taxi: The Rumples Seat

“Did you tell him that it wasn’t necessary to dry clean his socks?” I asked.

“Don’t be silly, Dan. Do you remember how long it took for me to teach you to use the washing machine?”

“Of course I remember,” I thought. *“I delayed it as long as I could; I couldn’t believe that you thought I was that dumb.”*

Darius was thrilled with the changes as he explained when he called. “Mom did all these things that never even occurred to me, Dad. The apartment is great!”

“Aren’t you going to China in a few days...”

“Yes, but I’ve sublet my apartment. I’m sure it will be great when I get back. Oops, the lights went out.”

“I thought you had a generator.”

“I do, Dad. But it only provides 5 amps.”

“That’s roughly two thirds of a D-cell..”

“Right. When the electricity goes off, the generator kicks in, but if I’m using more than a single light bulb, the circuit breaker pops and i’m out of electricity.”

“So you have to turn everything off and reset the circuit breaker. Right?”

“The breaker is in my neighbor’s apartment. So I have to call my landlord and he has to call my neighbor..”

“Why don’t you call your neighbor?”

“... this is Lebanon, Dad.” Darius replied.

“I guess that answers the question.” I thought.

Nazy and Darius spent one day visiting Sidon. They saw several ‘grottos’ (cave complexes with stalactites and stalagmites) and a park with the famous Lebanese Cedar Trees. A full collection of photos from Nazy’s visit to Lebanon is available at

Upon her return, Nazy reviewed ‘The List’ that she had left for me:

“You didn’t water my air plant, Dan.”

“Of course not, dear. I aerated it.”

Take care and Cheers,



Cedar Tree