

THE MARTIN FAMILY

CARMENSTRASSE, 48

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SWITZERLAND

June 19, 2011

Dear Reader,

I'm confident that this week finds you healthy and happy. For us the week has been uneventful:

"So uneventful," I explained to Nazy, "that there is nothing to write about."

"Then it's an excellent opportunity for you to demonstrate virtuoso ability to climb over obstacles.."

"Excuse me?"

"Make nothing out of something."

"Don't you mean make something out of nothing?"

"Can you change the wine to vinegar?"

"You mean change the vinegar to wine."

"No, I said **do what you do best**. By the way, did you know that today is Father's Day?"

"Of course I knew."

"So where are you going to take me?"

"Where am **I** going to take **you**?" I asked. "You're not my..." I began. But then there was I a flashback - a revelation that enabled me to avoid marital disharmony.

Flashback May 2011

Nazy asked where I was going to take her on Mother's Day. "But you are not my Mother," I responded - completely certain of the accuracy of my statement. It quickly became clear that 'accurate' has, at best, a tenuous relationship with "appropriate". I had to scramble to achieve an accurate extraction from the hole created by an inappropriate comment.

End Flashback

Alert to potential doom, I shifted gears.

"Where, my dear, would **you** like to go for Father's Day?"

As it turned out, we couldn't go anywhere on Father's Day because we were hosting a party for visiting friends. And, on Saturday we were going to a house-warming at Angie's. On

Friday, we were booked to visit an engineering exhibition in Winterthur. Nazy's Art Class was on Thursday. On Wednesday, I had an appointment with my dentist (Vlad¹) and we were going to a concert. On Tuesday, we were booked to enjoy Lina's string quartet. On Monday...

"Didn't you say that nothing happened this week?" Nazy asked.

"No, I said that there was nothing to write about."

"Dan..."

"*Hmm*," I thought getting an idea.

At her art class this week, Nazy decided to work on something that would expand her capabilities. Something that mixed color and detail, something challenging. Something that would exude beauty. Something that would broadcast LOOK AT ME so loudly that even artistically ignorant Neanderthals would stop and and say: "Wow!". Unfortunately, it was so challenging that she didn't finish...

Spousal Frown

... because she was creating a masterpiece of beauty - a water color that will rival, indeed exceed, the pedestrian efforts of an avian enthusiast like the bird-brained James Audubon or the fruit-loopery of Paul Cézanne.

Smiling Spouse

"*Whew!*" I thought, unwilling to leave well-enough alone.

"On the other hand, both Audubon and Cézanne finished." I continued.

"I was going to bake a Father's Day cake for you, Dan," Nazy said as she set up her watercolors on the dining room table. "But now, I'll just finish the painting."

"*Now she'll prepare a Father's Day Feast of boiled turnips and...*" I thought.

"Would you check and see if we have collard greens and kale?" Nazy called, looking up over her brush.

"Of course, my dear. Shall I look into the rice cracker supply?"

The news in Europe revolves around the economic crisis in Greece which has the lowest rated government bonds in the world. As a result, the interest rate on Greek bonds is higher than normal credit card rates. Greece got into this mess by lying about national finances. The situation worsened as a result of lax tax collection and a bloated government that owns much of the country's "industrial" capacity. Currency devaluation (as the USA is doing) is the normal response. It won't work here because Greece is using the Euro.

¹ Vlad: The impaler.



"Snowy Owl" - Watercolor



"Still Life with Watermelon and Pomegranates" (1900-1910)
Watercolor and pencil on paper - 12" x 18 1/2"

So.. what will happen? Eventually Greece will default. The objective of the current bailouts is to delay the inevitable while replacing private debt with public debt. For some reason, the IMF wants to make sure that those who bought the risky high-yielding bonds will not face a loss on their questionable, eh, stupid, investments. Instead, European governments (mainly Germany) will take the hit. [I don't understand it either.]

The optimal way out of the conundrum is to sell Greek government assets - for example Crete. The British Museum would purchase the Parthenon to go with their Elgin marble. (This would only work if the British had money.) Problems in Cyprus could be solved with a land sale to Turkey. A province of 'the former Yugoslavia' want rights to the term "Macedonia".

On Friday, we attended an exhibition at ZHAW (Zurich University of Applied Sciences). Nazy's friend, Marcel, teaches at ZHAW so we went to see him and the energy-harvesting project that he had developed. It was graduation evening and instead of wearing traditional (boring) cap and gowns, the students wore Victorian dresses (women) and top hats/tails (men). This generated a question from Nazy.

"Why are these guys dressed like Chimney sweeps?"

Finally, Martin Family offspring are doing well. Darius is in China, about to leave for Bali. [I asked the normal question: "Do you have a visa?" and Darius offered the predictable response: "I don't need one for Indonesia. I think."] Melika is working on IPOs and other legalese - leaving barely enough time to dash around in her new car. Mitra is annoyed at her landlord who: "...decided to repaint the house. He began by chopping down all of our cactus." Note: A few years ago, after a major storm toppled the cactus, Stefan and Mitra replanted the pieces and the result was great. (See photo.) I'm a similar regeneration is in the cards after the stormy landlord.

Observation: It is very close to the summer solstice that marks the longest day of the year (Northern Hemisphere). Darius is in China/Indonesia, Mitra/Melika are in California and Nazy/Dan are enjoying Zürich. So: **The sun never sets on The Martin Family.**

Take care and Cheers,



← Mitra's Cactus



ZHAW Graduates