

# THE MARTIN FAMILY

Carmenstrasse, 48

CH-8032 Zürich

## SWITZERLAND

March 6, 2010

Dear Reader,

I hope that you are well and happy. This was a week ‘filled with those events that alter and illuminate our time’: and we were there! [Note: Previous two sentences inserted especially for people who remember Walter Cronkite’s weekly TV show, You Are There, from the 1950’s.] Our week began with a telephone call from (gasp!) HP.

“Ah, ha!” I replied. “I no longer work at HP.”

“I know,” she replied. “But you are driving an HP car.”

“Not any more..”

“You are still using the HP license plate. And you were speeding on the A1..:

“My wife was speeding on the A1. I have transferred the car to my personal account..”

“You transferred the car to your personal account in *October*.”

“November.”

“But you didn’t get a new license plate. You must get a new one. **It is a Swiss Law.**”

Note: Being late with automotive administrative details runs in the family. I renewed my Tennessee drivers license 3 years late (in 1979); Melika renewed her California license plate 18 months late (2010); Darius didn’t get around to changing the oil in his car before the engine dissolved in 2009 after 65,000 miles; Mitra didn’t learn to drive until she moved to Los Angeles and Nazy is, well, an exception. However, everyone must comply with **Swiss Law.**

Now aware of the gravity of the situation, I sprang into action:

“Nazy, my dear,” I said. “Would you mind stopping at the motor vehicle ministry?”

Nazy agreed, but wasn’t particularly happy when she discovered that because of the delay, eh, because of **my delay**, the relevant forms had been discarded by the ministry. She had to make a few phone calls and then wait for the wheels of public servanthood to grind to a successful conclusion. (The wait was exactly why I didn’t want to handle the situation.) When she finished, she was given a choice of license plate numbers.

It wasn’t like making a Vanity Plate selection in the USA. In New Hampshire we chose - **BRRR** for the Taurus when we moved from Houston, **VAN-GO** for the van (after we returned from Holland) and **DAN-GO** for my Eagle Talon. Here, Nazy chose ZH 631 271. Wow! (Both 631 and 271 add up, digit by digit, to 10!) Now, if I can just figure out how to attach the plates to the car; there are no holes, bolts, screws or other mounting concepts.



I was less than delighted by the choice. “Couldn’t you find one with prime numbers?” I asked. My query was not well-received.

Unable to figure out how to install them, we carried the new plates on the back seat for our trip to Milan where Nazy would attend the International Eyeglasses, Ophthalmology and Optics conference. The drive was uneventful but also unusual: It was sunny in Zurich, but raining in Italy. On the way down, Nazy told me about the newest scientific research about recovering from injury..

“.. and you mustn’t coddle the hurt, Dan. You have to exercise and build the muscles, tendons, ligaments, bones, etc. back into shape.”

“Hmm,” I replied - thoughtfully.

Nazy planned to meet a leading eyeglass frame maker at the conference to present her product development idea. The meeting, scheduled for 10:00AM, would take place in the convention center which was a convenient 18 Metro stops from our hotel - or 90 minutes by car. An early start, not Nazy’s favorite morning activity, was mandated. Naturally, Nazy complained about my attempt to ‘rush’:

“The Metro will only take 20 minutes,” she claimed.

“35 minutes, my dear.”

“And then we’ll just walk...”

“... miles to the correct hallway.”

“You, Dan, are so negative!”

We arrived (at the final Metro stop) 24 minutes before the meeting. As I expected, the convention center was huge. We navigated an endless network of moving sidewalks as we made our way to the venue. Nazy, fashionably dressed in (very) high heels, noticed that her uncoddled, but jump-roped knee was aching.

“No problem,” I replied. “This exercise is good.” We arrived at 9:58, a fact that I noted with pride. “Now aren’t you glad that I got you here in time?” I asked.

At that point, Nazy’s mobile rang. The person that she was to see delayed the session by an hour. Deflated, I decided to walk through the exhibits where I saw lots of eyeglasses (the insider word is ‘spectacles’), several pieces of interesting test equipment and some exhibits that were a bit hard to fathom. [↗]



Nazy’s meeting was very successful, so we decided to take advantage of the (now) beautiful day. We stopped at the Duomo, the large cathedral in Milano. I’ve seen it several times - always shrouded in scaffolding. This time the scaffolding had been removed and the gleaming white marble was on display. It was a spectacular sight.





We had dinner at a great restaurant overlooking the main square. Somehow, I wasn't surprised to discover that we had spare time for shopping. That evening, Nazy consulted the concierge for sightseeing suggestions. We were directed to the 'classic canals of Milano'. Geographically adept readers will note that Milan is not close to the sea. Nevertheless, we were reliably informed that Leonardo di Vinci constructed an extensive network of canals during the late 1400s.

We discovered that the canal network was extensive - in 1499. However, the 2011 Milan canals were, eh, missing something.

"There is no water, Dan." Nazy, ever-observant, noted.

"That's not completely true, Nazy," I replied pointing to a puddle.

"A tree is growing in this canal," Nazy accurately pointed out. "And the floating restaurant is beached." [See photos at [www.seat26b.com](http://www.seat26b.com)]

"At least they don't have to worry about flooding," I replied. "But I don't think I'll be able to take the classic 'canal houses reflected in the water' photo."

In spite of the missing water, we were glad that we had come. The houses and shops surrounded picturesque courtyards. Nazy chatted with several artists, but moved into serious negotiating mode at the Olive Oil boutique. We left with a few liters of Extra Virgin, Sicilian, (Liquid) Gold.

In two weeks, The Martin Family (Zurich) will reach a major milestone - continue to check [www.seat26b.com](http://www.seat26b.com) for details And for a full photographic record of the trip check:

Take care and Cheers,



