

Kathy's Big Trip -- A running Email Log:

Hi,

Kathy has officially started her multi-state "walk-about" (well actually its more of a drive-about). Her itinerary includes Tennessee, Missouri, Texas, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Oregon, Washington, and perhaps, she says, Alaska. All this in a Toyota Camry with her friend Matt Nebel.

She says she will check-in periodically to let us know she is alive and well. If things get rocky, she says she is keeping bus-fare aside to return to Illinois. We've got her cell, and Matt Nebel's cell number to contact them if there are any family emergencies.

This is supposed to be a multi-month grand tour. I wish them well -- but I know from experience that road trips often end up shorter than our imaginations would have them (break downs in cars, relations, or funds are all possible contributors). But I'm not terribly surprised that Kathy has chosen this in lieu of working after school ended. She's an adventurer and always wants to experience the world. She's also a very practiced mooch -- and may end up getting lots of free places to stay from friends and acquaintences along the way. Good luck, kiddo.

Jon

----- 6/9/2004

Hey everyone, just wanted to let you know I'm alive and well. I can't figure out how to email individually (sorry Dad, I lack your technical genius), so I'm just posting here. Sprint is worthless, and works absolutely nowhere I go, but if I know mom and dad they're worried sick about me.

I had an absolutely fantastic time at Bonnaroo...that will be seriously difficult to top. But we're on the road again, stopped in St. Louis right now. We'll be in Kansas City by tomorrow night, and then off to Denver for a couple of events. Things are going really well (except for some minor sunburn...I know you told me so Dad). My skin problems have even begun to disappear. So pet Stridey for me and please post your email address at home so I can mail you directly!. Love you

guys and take care,

Kat

----- 6/15/2004

Hi,

Got a card from Kathy for fathers day -- Its got a rather pugnacious looking woodchuck on the front, with the words: "Oh, Yeah? Well, my Dad would chuck more wood than your dad would chuck, even if your Dad could chuck wood, which I doubt! Inside it says, Happy Fathers Day to a Dad we always brag about.

Pretty much sums it all up, huh?

She sent the card from Denver, and seems to be having a great time. She said she misses Stridey the most.

Jon

----- 6/21/2004

So here we are in Salt Lake City...the pervasive Christianity of this town makes it one of the less interesting stops. And I must say that the Great Salt Lake smells like something huge crawled in there and died. But other than that, it's been fun. Camping in the desert and mountains has been absolutely gorgeous. I'm trying to mentally block the idea of tarantulas and rattlesnakes, but other than that this environment is perfect. It's a beautiful thing to be able to spend all day in the sun with so little sweat; the dry climate really suits me. We're leaving after this weekend however, to head north to Washington state for the Phonenix festival, an art and music festival that involves music acts from all my favorite genres and performance art from a wide array of cultural backgrounds. Combined with the scenic northwest, this should be a memorable fourth of July.

I hope you guys are all doing good. How's the Texan transition going for Matt? And how's my snuggly baby Strider pup? I don't think I've ever gone so long without hugging my doggy, and I'm going through some painful withdrawals.

Tell him I still love him just as much, and give him lots of puppy

kisses for me. I miss you guys and I'll keep you updated on how our expedition is going.

Lots of Love, Kat

----- 6/23/2004

I'm glad you liked the card...it made me chuckle. We spent last weekend camped in the Uintah mountains for an outdoor show, met some nice Utah folks...experienced my first hailstorm in a while. We've slowly made our way across Idaho to Oregon, and are now camped just outside Portland in a gorgeous national forest. Portland seems like a pretty, efficient sort of town; so far I rather like it.

Matt's been engrossed in The Elegant Universe so far on the trip, and has been greatly enjoying it, so I browsed the shelves for another theory book. I've settled on Chaos by James Gleick...something I think I might remember seeing on your shelves, Dad. I just blew through the first hundred pages in about an hour...it's riveting! I also look forward to tackling Briane Greene's new book afterwards, as does Matt. I'm curious, though, since Chaos was written 1987, how the more recent developments in superstring theory coincide or conflict with chaos theory's growth...any insight, Professor Dad?

This weekend promises to be exciting; we're off to the Phoenix festival in southern Washington, then into Canada for a brief sojourn in Vancouver for the week after. So far the camping has been lovely and economical, and some great, affordable festival popping off every weekend. The only thing lacking, perhaps, is Chinese food. It's an expensive habit I've been having to forego (sigh).

Wish Matt luck in his Texan metamorphosis, and hug Stridey till he almost pops for me.

Love and miss you guys, Kat

----- 6/30/2004

Hi Kat,

Glad you are having fun in the northwest. It's good the camping life agrees with you; it is a way to get to know the country-side, and you

have probably met some interesting folks at the camp grounds. If you haven't already done so, think about keeping a daily journal. Your adventure may make for one more good stories in the future.

I took a quick tour of the internet info on M-theory and Chaos-theory. Both appear to be alive and well at present. The current belief is that perturbation theory breaks down when modeling the "very small dimensions" and so Chaos, or dynamic systems with non-linear relationships that cannot be modeled by linear-approximations, becomes an important factor in thinking about strings.

Here's an interesting article - not a lot of techy talk, just a fun read, and reasonably current: <http://www.sfweekly.com/issues/1999-02-10/feature.html/page1.html>

Hope all continues to go well. Matt W. is now an official Austinite, he rented a two-bedroom, two-bath apartment 20-minutes from campus, by bus. He's got a 9-month lease (August-May) at \$720/month. I'll be helping him move around the 3rd of August, I think. He's got all his stuff in storage just a couple of blocks from his old Wrigleyville apartment for now.

Stridey says Arf. He and I are driving down to my mom's over the 4th -- I'll be returning Monday the 5th.

Love, Dad

----- 7/1/2004

Happy 4th everybody...I know it's the 6th but today was the first day I was able to get back to a consistently working server. We spent the fourth-weekend up in the Cascades at the Phoenix Festival, which was absolutely amazing. Camped at the bottom of Mt. Adams, we were treated to free food and water, live poetry, comedy, and art installations, as well as some of the best music I have heard anywhere in a long time. I even got to see my favorite modern poet, Saul Williams, speak and perform some of his work. This alone was enormously inspiring to me; his work gives me a lot of faith in contemporary poetry, much of which is wandering, self-indulgent, thinly-veiled sophistry in my opinion. It was very motivating to meet a perceptive and eloquent man like him. As for writing, I have been doing a lot of that, including a journal.

There were some seriously hysterical art installation "Theme Camps", as they were called. My personal favorite was the "Chickenhed Ranch", a very abstract theme camp that was so absurd and nonsensical that it went full circle into piercing satire and irony. Major events sponsored by the Chickenheds included a Sunday morning rake worship service (no typos), an impromptu volunteer marching band and flag-team parade (no skills necessary), and eighties' pop karioke. The proprietor of the Ranch helped me put together a package of bizarre gifts for Barby's birthday, which I'm sure she'll love, as she shares my off-the-wall love for the patently ridiculous.

Musically as well I was very inspired. The jungle music out here is light years ahead of anything I've heard elsewhere. Matt, an aspiring jungle producer himself, was dumbst ruck, and may not ever want to leave here. (Jungle is a high speed form of electronic music featuring an accelerated broken-beat and very low, driving bass lines, by the way. If curious for examples, check out www.bassdrive.com <<http://www.bassdrive.com>>) Overall, it was an awesome experience, and we met a lot of cool people. Also, we were highly lauded for our wicked dance skills. Even people from the SanFran Bay area, an area known for its dance scene, told us we "really stood out", which was cool. They had some phenomenal turntablists and outstanding lyricists as well, which are artforms I'd like to explore personally.

The political climate out here is refreshing as well...its so loudly, unabashedly, rabidly anti-Bush that I would think a Republican would be crazy to show his face. Also, people tend to share a greater general awareness of politics at large including ecology and workers' rights. I find myself considering with a great deal of interest the prospect of working for one of the many organizations based in this area that I support.

So everything is still going well, and we expect to head into Canada for a bit, to camp, go to another festival, and visit a girl named Meghan we met this weekend. We seem to be extending our stay in this area a little bit, since both of us really like it so far. I am eager to head a little further south as well though, and investigate California as well. It's been

absolutely amazing and fun so far, and I'll keep you guys posted.

I enjoyed the article you sent me, too, Dad. I can't wait to get to Border's in Seattle and get another book. I'm very hooked on the subject matter. Ironic, isn't it? All those years I spent fighting the idea of math and science, and now I've grown into quite a strong curiosity about it all.

I am, however, going through absolutely painful Stridey withdrawal - I've never been away from him for so long and I miss him like a fat kid misses cake...he would have had an amazing time at the Phoenix Festival. There were probably a hundred dogs there, all allowed to run completely free, even in the dance areas. He would have made so many doggy friends!! Tell him I still love him lots. You guys, too, of course...you may not be soft and furry, but you're still very lovable.

Take care, and I'll talk to you soon.

Love,
Kat

----- 7/6/2004

Well, we ventured up into Vancouver for the week to visit some friends we made at the Phoenix festival and to see if Canada is the Utopian paradise touted by Michael Moore (the maker of liberal films like *Bowling for Columbine* and *Fahrenheit 911*). It was decidedly interesting -- had a sort of blended sense of the English and the American, with a dash of Asian thrown in. A highly international city, it seemed; we only stayed Wednesday through Saturday, but managed to see quite a bit of the city and get to know some nice Canucks (boy do they say 'eh' a lot).

We went to a party in Seattle on Saturday night and found ourselves eagerly accepted by the dance crowd here. I was quite delighted and flattered to be acknowledged by the female dancers as outstanding and asked for pointers (hey, I'm human and susceptible to ego-stroking). On a dance note, we've structured our plans to include the national B-Boy summit in L.A. in our plans. It's a week long, city-wide set of how-to shops, battles, performances, and parties, all accessible with a single pass. I absolutely can't wait, as this is an event I've long hoped to attend.

Seattle seems to be a great town. My friend Kelan warned me I might become attached to it, and he was right. The people and the dance scene combined with the overall aesthetic and attitude of the area are very much in line with what I'm looking for. I'm still highly anticipating getting to know California, however. We're trying to time it just right to get there around the beginning of August and spend most of the month there. One of my priorities is to visit my good friend Sal, who is stationed in L.A. and ships out for Iraq around the 16th. It would seem criminal to be so close to him and neglect to see him before he leaves.

The car is still running good, though due for another oil change, and we have perfected the art of campfire cooking. Oh, on the subject of food, I must say the gelato in Vancouver rivaled even the ice cream of Scotland for sheer dreaminess. I could have eaten an entire pan...arghh...(drooling). So good. So anyways, I digress. Things still go very well and I've seen lots of things to write about and think about...but I miss you guys and desperately yearn for puppy kisses.

So lots of love and take care, Kat

----- 7/12/2004

Hi Kat,

Enjoyed your emails -- keep 'em comin'. Just thought I'd let you know all is well with us.

Love, Dad

----- 7/12/2004

So far we've been unable to escape the magnetic pull of the "enchanted Pacific Northwest," as one festival flier puts it. The music scene here is so rich and complex, it's difficult to find anything comparably exciting elsewhere. This last weekend we attended "Stomp in da Woods 2", a three-day forest preserve campout festival, which boasted some excellent music and a beautiful Cascade mountains campsite. We're getting to be known in the Seattle-Portland scene, and people are joking we'll never make it back to Chicago at the rate we're going. The people here are a lot of fun, and

we fit in pretty well.

This weekend we plan on attending a drum'n'bass show in Seattle, as well as a weekend campout live music/poetry festival just north of there. Both look like a lot of fun, and we'll probably be pretty tired afterwards. We won't have long to rest, however...the Autonomous Mutant Festival begins the 27th and runs through August 4th. AMF is a what could be called a cultural jam -- a do-it-yourself fest comprised of music, art, performance, political dissidents, and general kooks all freely displaying all talents/opinions in a wide spectrum of mediums. This promises to be the wackiest and most diverse fest we've yet attended, and I expect to have some funny stories by the end of it.

At the campout this weekend, we were camped next to the most adorable six week old black Lab puppy named Louie, who was extremely playful and painfully adorable. I told him all about Strider while we played with his tennis ball. I'm not entirely sure whether or not he understood me, but he cocked his head at me and wagged his tail encouragingly, and that's good enough for me. Puppy kisses and hugs, of course, and tell Stridey that lil' Louie says hi and wag wag wag.

Miss you guys, talk to you soon.

Love, Kat

----- 7/19/2004

Sorry it's been a little bit since I wrote - I've been roughing it for the last week and a half, so this is the first time I've managed to get to the internet since I last wrote. Things are still going good. I just left the seventh annual Autonomous Mutant Festival, which was quite an experience. Located in the backwoods of northern California just off Mt. Shasta, the AMF was a sort of comprehensive collective that stressed resourcefulness, creativity, and involvement. Entirely free, including food, campers were expected to bring their own supplies, produce no more than a certain amount of waste, take turns contributing time to the kitchen, and dig one's own repository for solid waste. Activities included workshops on creating your own clothes, dance music all night every night at a number of stages (erected out of twine, canvas, forest wood, and run on gas generators), a circus, a nightly running film festival showcasing new art films and social and political documentaries, and several pirate

radio stations.

The people were as varied as the entertainment, ranging for anarchists to hippie survivalists to Frisco urbanites, but things were suprisingly harmonious and ran entirely on a barter economy or just generosity. Nights were a bit chilly thanks to the mountain air, but apart from that we were rather disappointed to leave today -- we'd been generally quite comfortable living there. Also, I don't think I've ever eaten so healthily in my entire life. Those vegans get creative with their cooking.

So now we're in Redding off of I-5, heading south toward San Francisco for some events this weekend. After that we plan to take the Pacific Highway Coast drive and finally show Matt the beaches of the Pacific Ocean! My tan from Tennessee is starting to fade, so I figure I should spend some quality time in the sun. Hopefully we'll still reach L.A. before the 16th, so I can visit Sal before he ships out.

Wish Matt luck in his Austin endeavors for me, and tell Strider that I've never missed anything so much as his sweet, sweet puppy lovin. Hope you guys are doing good and miss you all.

Love,
Kat.

----- 8/05/2004

Hey Kat, we were just beginning to get edgy, so it was very nice to come home to your email today. Dad and Matt left yesterday for the 1200 mile drive to Austin. They stopped last night outside Tulsa after 12 hrs and 690 miles. I expect to hear from them soon...from Brian Sobicinski's place in Austin. Matt 's apartment is available for movein starting tomorrow. Dad's flying home Sunday. Stridey's sure missing him, but I've been faithful to his 2-a-day walk and meal schedule, so he's hanging in. All of your adventures have been followed closely by the family...the grandmas, Matt, Dad and I. Take care of yourself, we miss ya.

Love, Mom

----- 8/06/2004

Hey guys, good to hear that Matt's move was successful. His place

looks nice, but I know how bad it sucks to move into a thrid floor walkup! I bet that was fun. I didn't know Kev had joined Brian down in Texas...what's he doing there? I don't have much computer battery right now, but I just wanted to touch base and say hi.

We're near San Francisco right now, a beautiful but expensive city, and we will probably be cutting across Arizona and heading back east in the near future. I'll write again after this weekend. Love and miss you guys and kiss the crap out of Stridey for m e.

Love, Kat

----- 8/12/2004