

The Benevolent Order of Scurrilious Monks

Abbot's Report

Winter Solstice, 2012

Our Abbot's recent request for news for this *Report* was met with an unexpected bonanza of information. He claims very little authorship in anything you are about to read. It is, almost entirely, a copy and paste job. His word processor is telling him that every single word in this document is misspelled.

Life In New Orleans is Boring

Brother Costello (David Roe) is happily celebrating his 3rd xmas home in the St Roch, an up and coming neighborhood just outside the Quarters. He shares a corner lot garden with 4 other gardeners, and is happily enjoying the seasonality of his produce. Baking, cooking, and bicycling are the routine.

In the past year, he has worked as a back ground actor on HBO's *TREME*, *Angry Little God*, *Spike Lee's new joint*, *The Butler*, *12 Years A Slave*, *Barefoot*, *Seth Rogen's flick*, *Unnamed Diablo Cody project*, *Now You See Me*, *Hot Flashes*, *The Campaign*, *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter*, *COBU*, *USA's Common Law*, and was featured as the victim's father in Discovery's *Disappeared*.

He is the entertainment director for BuffasBar.com, booking all the musical acts, and hosting open mike nights on Wednesdays, and a Sunday NOLA themed movie series.

<http://www.nolasynchronicity.com/>



On Saturday nights, he plays with a roster of musicians including rennies, Kenny Klein and Craig Broers, and regularly performs with Jerry Jumonville (formerly of Delany, Bonnie & Friends, arranger, and sax player for Harry Dean Stanton and Bette Midler in *The Rose*). My favorite Jerry story is that when I informed him that in the movie *FESTIVAL EXPRESS*, he is clearly seen playing in the train car with Buddy Guy, Jerry Garcia, Bob Weir, Janis Joplin, Rick Danko AND

Richard Manuel, he proved the adage- "If you remember the 60's, you weren't there." He had to be shown the footage.

Drummer Freddy Flambeaux Staehle opened for the Beatles in Shea Stadium. Later, he played with Ringo on Harry Nillson's final album. In between, he recorded with Al Hirt, touring in Sinatra's jet, played the seminal drum tracks on the first Dr John albums, and hung out in LA dives with the likes of Chuck E Weiss, and his side-kick Tom somebody or other.

The Royal & Dumaine Hawaiians are a fun musical side project, playing with 2 guys that have Hawaiian roots- the steel guitar player's mom taught at Scofield Barracks Elementary where DR later attended. The other uke player has family on Kauii and builds some of the band's instruments.

Our city hall is as messed up as ever, the murder rate is out of control, but the new levees held, and so far, global weirding has been kind to NOLA weather-wise. Looking forward to The Age Of Aquarius, 12th Night, Ranger Ric & Jackie's annual Carnival visit, and all the other fun stuff 2013 has to offer.

Brother Doctor Visits Hospitals!

In Late November and early December, Brother Doctor, (Danny Lord) spent 12 days in the Memorial Hermann Hospital in the Woodlands, not far from Houston. A week or two earlier, he had been in a hospital in Minneapolis. [Mary Ann Aparecida](#) (Mariflora Nightengale) was at his side throughout much of the Texan adventure. He was humbled and overwhelmed by the support that came his way from all over the country. A humble Danny is hard to imagine but I can assure you, this was the truth. Danny has affected people's lives wherever he has gone and people called to tell him about how much they love and care for him. [Clark](#) and [Rio](#) get kudos for insisting that he go to the hospital. Gracie the goose stayed with Laurie Watson in Toon Town. [Taso Stavrakis](#) has offered to let him care take his property in Minnesota when the weather becomes bearable. He may have made a valuable connection with a booking agent in Minneapolis. On December 2 he had a cardioversion. Wiktionary says that a cardioversion is "The treatment of cardiac arrhythmia, either with medication or by use of a machine (a cardioverter) that delivers a controlled electric current." It increased his vibratory level and shocked his heart back into a regular rhythm. He enjoyed getting some more of the drugs that killed Michael Jackson but he will try to avoid taking them regularly. He was released on Dec. 7. A week later, he performed magic and comedy at the retirement party of Brother Lee's (Ashley Nichols') parents. They retired and sold their gaming corporation after a record breaking year at the Texas Renaissance Festival that saw 606,761 people come through the gate. Danny is now back in Toon Town with his goose. He sends his sincere and heartfelt gratitude out to all of his beloved friends. Our friend Suzan Stewart has also been having heart problems. She recently took two ambulance rides in one week to a hospital in

Springfield, Missouri. The first was after a collapse in a Walmart and the second was from her apartment at 2 o'clock on a Tuesday morning.

Brother Jack Benny (David Casey) Reports from Haiti

My third consecutive volunteer work trip to Haiti was filled with back-testing labor, breathtaking mountain views, and the instant camaraderie that only seems to come from strangers meeting and joining together in common cause. My plan was to join members of the Vermont Haiti Project and to help continue the construction of the Duchity Organization for Vocational Education's (DOVE) main building. Other members of our group would be installing a solar array that would provide the center with electric lights, the power for a water pump and a cell phone charging station.

Our first two days were spent driving all over the capital city of Port-au-Prince in search of tools, rechargeable batteries, conduit, electrical wire, and other materials that would be unavailable in the remote region surrounding Duchity. The security at the city's big hardware stores was tighter than Miami Airport: rifle toting security guards checked all entrants with an electric Wand before allowing them through a prison style, steel-barred gate. Riding through the teeming streets of this urban swelter in the back of Despagne's (founder of DOVE) well-used pick-up truck was street surfing at its finest: dodging packed "tap-taps," beverage vendors, motor bikes, and countless burdened pedestrians giving the word merge new meaning. As daunting as negotiating these crowded streets was, I'm thrilled to report the heartening progress I've seen in PaP in the course of the last two years: most of the tent cities are gone, the majority of rubble has been cleared, and the vibrancy of commerce, no matter how humble, permeates the atmosphere.

The six hour drive to Duchity on a main highway (a two-lane road, no shoulders) was hot but breezy in the back of the truck. We stopped in the southern port city of Les Cayes, to purchase building materials for our main project, a 2,000 sq. foot concrete roof. It was here where I spent a good part of the \$3,500 generously donated by many of the people reading this. We purchased rebar (\$1,200), cement (\$300), gravel (\$200), and sand (\$200), leaving \$1,600 (plus my personal funds) to pay labor costs. The road from Les Cayes to Duchity winds to an elevation of five thousand feet, abandoning the Caribbean humidity for invigorating mountain air.

For five days, I worked with six Haitians framing the roof's concrete bed, supporting it with metal poles, bamboo, and small tree trunks, and hand-cutting and setting the rebar. I spent three of those days singing "cutting metal in the hot sun, I fought the rebar and the rebar won." I'm proud to report that cutting half inch rebar with a hack-saw for three days straight (one blade) did not reduce me to tears; on the other hand, it did increase my appreciation of power tools. The guys I worked with were old-school craftsmen who build by hand and use ingenuity in the absence of Home Depot abundance.

The "roof-raising" day that followed consumed every ounce of energy provided by the 26 workers involved. The pay range for these local workers was \$5 - \$25; many of them would not have another chance at a cash-paying job for weeks. Three women spent the day delivering five-gallon buckets of water (balanced on their heads) to

the mixing pit. Two men stood shin deep in the pit, all day, combining the cement, sand, gravel, and water then shoveling it into a never ceasing stream of empty buckets hailing back down from the roof. The freshly mixed concrete made its way to the roof by way of a 12 man bucket brigade. I spent the day filling gravel buckets then emptying them into the pit; the words ase/enough and plis/more became a part of my permanent Creole vocabulary. My other job, along with two lads 1/3 my age, was to haul 92 lbs. bags of cement from the storage room to the pit. Please take a moment to picture all 130 lbs. of 5'5" me lurching 40 yards under 92 lbs. of cement. The local rooster did not wake me the next morning.

I spent the remainder of my days in Duchity engaged in all sorts of manual tasks. They included hauling buckets of fine gravel to pave an eighty yard walkway, hand sifting the sand for the finer concrete used to plaster walls, hauling that sand to a mixing pit, carrying buckets of rocks to provide a base for the floors of four dorm rooms, taking down the framing bed, and removing hundreds of nails from the used lumber. During my down time, I sat and straightened those hundreds of nails- nothing goes to waste in Haiti. I returned to Haiti with hard, sweaty work as my goal; I got my money's worth.



Volunteers contributed \$10 a day for our food which was purchased, cooked, and delivered by a local mother. I started each day with a cup of salt tea (fights dehydration) and a cup of locally grown coffee. Beans and rice were a daily staple, bolstered with an assortment that included boiled potatoes, yams, carrots, and plantain (also fried). We also enjoyed stewed chicken legs, short ribs of beef, salted fish, spaghetti, papaya, bananas, hard boiled eggs, sweet potato-cabbage soup, fresh squeezed citrus juice, peanut butter and rolls. The water I drank for my entire stay was purified with Bio Sand filters. I slept on a mattress in the men's dorm and showered with half a bucket of cool, cistern water.

The people of Duchity, especially the children, were welcoming and curious. White faces are a rarity in this remote, mountain community. Here, folks live much the same way their ancestors did; Americans would refer to their homes as huts and ponder a life where food is cooked over a fire, clothes are scrubbed by hand, and walking

is the main mode of transportation. Each year when I return home, I am confronted by thoughts of an existence without electricity, running water, automobiles, refrigeration, air-conditioning, flush toilets, television, and the internet: the daily "givens" most of us take for granted. I cherish my good luck of being born in a land of plenty; but, more importantly, it strengthens my resolve to help those who were not.

DOVE's vocational center in Duchity presents an inspiring way for me to contribute to a people in need of so much. After the completion of the main building, construction will begin on three facilities that will provide training in auto-mechanics, welding, and furniture building. These hands-on shops will support the school while giving its students real life job skills. This project embodies every reason for my return to Haiti for years to come: to be able to make a small but real difference, to demonstrate goodwill, to inject cash directly into a grateful economy, to work with locals for the betterment of them and their children, and to embrace Dr. Paul Farmer's idea that "the only true country is humanity." This place, this work, gives my life a unique resonance and depth of purpose. Yours for a better world, David Casey (Cocoa Beach, Florida)

News Briefs

From Brother Hermes (Doug Kondziolka) I visited with Arsene and MMM in Austin after my sojourn to Toon (Tune) Town. Played Petanque. Introduced a college buddy of mine to Arsene's petanque world.... and stopped by Lee Ramey and Reed Russel's place on the way home (They're married, you know).

From Brother Hollywood (Julie Mondin) Hi Brother Donald - Here's some news from the City of Lost Angels - I just did a Priceline commercial, small part, but got to meet Captain Kirk, which was really cool - he is a sharp man, very serious on the set. Currently dating an aging rocker from Foghat, who produced and also played bass on the great tune "Slow Ride" among a few others. Also saved a tiny kitten from a short & miserable feral life on the streets..... little feline was crying and apparently abandoned by mama, so I decided to take the kitten home "until I found a permanent home for her" - after bottle feeding the 3 week old tiny thing, I had several offers from friends to adopt her, but she loved me so much - she really thought I was her own mama.....so.....now I am. Saving the world. One kitten at a time. That's all. for now.

From Brother Mutha (Al Olson) I am looking for old site photos or photos of notable events. I am also looking for people who got involved in renfests in the 70's or early 80's to tell their stories for the book, *The History of the American Renaissance Festival or, Where have all the Hippies Gone?* You can mention that I am making great progress, and have picked up collaborators like Jules Smith, Jr, Kevin Patterson (Phylliss' son) and yourself.

From Brother Francis (David Doyle) I think, therefore I am. Should I fail to send confirmation of this condition after December 21, 2012 and before January 1, 2013, you may surmise something else. On December 21, there is a planetary aspect involving Saturn, Pluto, and Jupiter.

The aspect is in the form of a Y: It is called a Yod, Hebrew letter Y. In Hebrew, Yod means "hand", as in the hand that points, rather than

the hand that grasps (a different letter). In astrology, the Yod formation is called the "hand of god" aspect. Saturn, Pluto, and Jupiter were last in this formation on May 18, 1989. [Abbot's note: 2 days after an important Weenie Roast] They were in the same signs then - Scorpio, Capricorn, and Gemini - as they are in now.

From Brother Where Art Thou (Al Craig) I committed to buy a Monastery for the Order if I won the \$350 million Power ball.....but I didn't win. But if I win in the future, there will be a Monastery with the most amazing grill that our creative minds can come up with...
From Brother Geek (Joni Massengale) I guess my wintering in Texas is kinda news.

From Bro Ro Mo (Ron Moses) My dear Abbot, here's wishing you a Very Merry and a Totally Happy Holiday season. I have been off the radar for some time, however, I may return some time soon. Peace and Joy, Bro Ro Mo

From Brother Sew What (Christine Consi Simeone) Well, I had a new grandson. It's Michael's child. He was born on 10-11-12. Is that something you could use? His name is Silas. And this makes 4 grand babies for me. Oh and I don't know if I made it an official thing but I suppose my Monk name is Brother Sew What. It's all I can come up with.

Brother Goddess (Keridwyn Hershberger) has still not fully recovered from the fire that destroyed her home on Labor Day of 2011. She needs \$4,000 to dig a well. So far, \$222.22 has been donated to the cause. If you can help, please visit this web page to donate: <http://devonshire.chipin.com/devonshire-incense-and-soap-company>

From Brother Mama Woman (Toni Lamberti) life is sweet here in the holler. (Toni's message was succinct but she neglected to mention some news that our Abbot chooses to include here:) Brother Mama Woman's daughter, civil rights activist, attorney, radio host and legal columnist Yetta Kurland, has announced her candidacy for New York City's Third District City Council seat. She recently picked up the backing of the 8,000 member Communications Workers of America Local 1180. Yetta has been active over the past year in defending Occupy Wall Street protesters and if elected, she promises to support proposed legislation to provide paid sick leave for every New York City worker, increase affordable housing and small business ownership in her district, and represent the interests of the 99 percent. If you would like to volunteer to help in Yetta's campaign, go to www.yettakurland.com

Our Abbot enjoyed a visit with Brother Bonehead (Norman Wylde) on his way from the Catskills to the Ozarks in early October. Norm is building a beautiful new two story home on his 5.5 acre *Dreamland*, near a lake, not far from Binghamton, NY. He and his lovely wife, Donna, treated our Abbot to dinner in a fancy restaurant where we discussed a business opportunity involving providing a place for dogs to run around in circles. Our abbot is very grateful for Brother Bonehead's gracious hospitality.

Brother Whimsey is Expecting!

Brother Whimsey (Joanne Flynn) and Nick Nicolo Newlin are expecting a donkey! And the donkey is expecting! In January the blue ribbon winning Mammoth Jenny named Rosa will arrive at Imagine

Acres in Brandywine, MD in a box stall, traveling from Illinois. She is with foal, or as Nicolo likes to put it, "with a baby inside her." This means that Imagine Acres will experience its first equine birth, and we will have not one but two donkeys. Rosa will be here in time for Obama's inauguration which leaves open the possibility of parades and fame, or at least a good photo opportunity! All monks and side-orderlies are invited to come pet the new donkey, and possibly ride her, if the donkey agrees to it.



Brother Chutzpah has been everywhere!

Here is news from Brother Chutzpah (Cindy Wexler) Since summer solstice, I've been everywhere - literally. It was the America the Beautiful tour 2012! I drove from Texas to Oregon (via the grave site of Billy the Kid in New Mexico, Hoover Dam, Red Rock Canyon



outside Las Vegas, Death Valley, Modoc National Forest, and Crater Lake). Once in Oregon, I settled in for about three weeks with Donna Murray. We worked Oregon Country Fair - maybe my favorite weekend of the year! After an appropriate recuperative period, we visited Mt Hood, Columbia Gorge and Portland and Eugene before it was time for me to head home to Texas. My return took me through 90 miles of gorgeous BLM forest between Crow and Reedsport Oregon - true Church of the Trees driving. Then Pacific coast until I reached the Redwoods - more awesome communing with the primeval forest! Went to Yosemite, and had lunch at Brother Nom de Plume's sister's restaurant, *Maddy's Cottage*, in Ridgecrest California.

I traveled historic Route 66 on my way home - Needles, Flagstaff, Albuquerque, Amarillo, with a final stop at Cadillac Ranch, before heading south. One final amazing historic tree in Comanche Texas, home of the Fleming Oak. There's more - After a short respite at home I flew to Michigan, visited Maryland Ren Fest, worked Labor Day Weekend at Michigan Ren Fest and visited Moses's beautiful daughter Chelsea pursuing her career as shepherdess.

News From Brother Nom De Plume

Brother Nom de Plume, aka Old Unca Crusty, lives in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. He recently published his first poetry chapbook. "Words Are My Paint" is a book of hymns from the First Church of The Last Resort. This collection of poems and drawings was culled from a series of notebooks, journals and clipboards, collected and obsessively filled for 4 decades. One of the featured poems, 'The Ice Cream Mantra' was recently selected for inclusion in the latest edition of "Who's Who In American Poetry".

Brother Nom de P is as far underground and outside of the margins as a writer can be. Born in New York City, the son of an Irish immigrant, then raised in Southern California, he has traveled from border to border and coast-to-coast most of his adult life. He has worked in a wide variety of esoteric jobs and had several careers.

A former Entertainment Director at the Texas Renaissance Festival, (1987 & 1988), Brother NdP was most recently a spokesperson and Promotional Writer for TIGERS-The Institute of Greatly Endangered and Rare Species for 15 years.

Unca Crusty has also worked as a voice-over artist, a major market radio personality and an independent writer/director of short dramatic and educational videos. He has produced, directed and performed in everything from classical commedia del arte, to live action-adventure stunt shows.

He is the writer/director of 'No One Ever Told Me That', a bilingual automotive educational video that won the Bronze award at the 1993 Houston International Film Festival. This rare gem was co-produced in collaboration with the late, lamented Johnny Griffith, a Master Mechanic and the former site maintenance director at TRF.

Brother NdP won the 2009 Eric Hoffer Award for Excellence in Independent Publishing for his book "GATTORNO: A Cuban Painter For The World", which also won First Place in the 2009 New England Book Festival Fine Art Genre & First Place at the 2008 London Book Festival Fine Art Genre, plus Honorable Mention at the 2008 New York and San Francisco Book Festivals.

www.artbyantoniogattorno.com

Brother NdP is currently collaborating, with Brother Mutha (Al Olson), on a new book detailing the history of the American Renaissance Festival. It will be an in-depth account of the emergence and growth of Renaissance Faires in the U.S.A, chronicling the owners, artists and entertainers. NdP's primary contribution will be an article comparing and contrasting the Vaudeville circuits with the Dirt circuit. The following is an excerpt from the work in progress.

"The founder of the Pantages Theatre Empire and the founder of both the Minnesota and the Texas Renaissance Faires, seem to be cut from similar cloth. Pericles Pantages, who opened his first theatre in 1914 and had a tremendous admiration for the legendary king of Macedonia, legally changed his name to Alexander the Great. George Coulam, who opened MRF in 1972 and TRF in 1975, came to be known as King George, a moniker he's worn proudly and well for 4 decades."