



# Edge Notes



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**I need a lead.** But after kicking off the holiday break with a marathon of 9 episodes of the *Gilmore Girls* to wrap up Season 4 in prep for a Season 5 slumber party, I'm shot. I got nothin'. So, welcome to my sleep-deprived, caffeine-induced stream of what happened this year ... in yet another one-page nutshell. Oh, I should note, it seems last year's table-of-contents to the events of 2004 was a bit cryptic for some - so I'll see if my scribble can take a more direct route this time 'round ...

Inside, not much to report other than I have now successfully covered what remained of the oriented strand board and old linoleum with hardwood parquet. Oh sure, still have to finish the bathroom, texture and paint the walls, adhere baseboards, window frames and trim ... but at least we can walk around barefoot without having to muffle the pending "ewww" as we stepped across the construction surface.

Outside, the first big project of the year was creating a sweeping planter of concrete block around what the neighbors' dubbed the "West Corner." From the majority of neighbors we received smiles, waves and even an offer to contribute to the cost of planting. However, in true Francis Oaks fashion, at least one neighbor complained that the street was now too narrow and he couldn't see around the corner when driving his Jaguar.



The 'West Corner' before the plants went in.

In back, the "Circus Tent" is now complete with PVC tarps a-top the 15' poles so that cars, their parts and the occasional rat can be sheltered from the rain. Our other water-diversion project is an extension of last year's "Damn Wall." While not quite complete, considerable progress has been made on the soon-to-be solar-powered watering system. Our natural spring delivers approx. 600 gallons a day, 365 days per year. So, to take advantage of the free water, we bought a 600 gallon catch tank, two 80-gallon pressure tanks and two 2500 gallon water tanks. Tanks are now in their final locations and - once the solar system is up and running - we'll be able to irrigate the acre with our very own bacteria-infested spring water.



The 'Circus Tent' before the tarps went up.

Most of our work, we try to keep hidden from the neighbors. Not that we're doing anything illegal but we just don't need their "help." However, it was essentially impossible to hide the re-routing of our gas & electric. Trenches were dug across our driveway, the street and up the hill (our property) on the other side of Francis Oaks. What should have taken a month or so lasted closer to five (and we're still waiting for the gas to be switched). Of course, neighbors called the cops without bothering to check in with us - by which they would have learned that we had all the necessary permits. Several months into the project and days before PG&E was to hook up the power lines enabling us to fill in the trench and return the road to an almost pre-construction state, one neighbor made it a point to tell us that he would soon be having holiday parties and wanted to know when everything would be cleaned up ... he was, as he put it, "just looking for a little cooperation." This is the same neighbor who has been spotted by multiple neighbors standing on our wall in order to peer in to our backyard. I sincerely doubt he knows the meaning of the word "cooperation" but maybe someone will buy him a dictionary for Christmas.



The road before PG&E ran the power lines.

Speaking of gifts, Grady surprised me with a new Pentax \*IST DS digital SLR for my birthday, just in time for the annual SXSW jaunt. Robert Plant, Mavis Staples, Elvis Costello, Brian Wilson and others were all captured on memory card. Once again, Austin kicked off the concert year with great success.

The concert list for 2005 included Bo Diddley, Eels, John Wesley Harding, The Posies, and Jonathon Richman just to name a few. Of special note, the Robyn Hitchcock show at The Great American Music Hall in March where (thanks to a good word from my friend, Steve) Robyn introduced "I've Got A Message for You" with mention of the song 'being played at Kristy's wedding.' I admit it, I shrieked. Didn't know I could - but I did. Some of you might remember this song as the first dance at Grady's & my wedding. Also



Elvis Costello at SXSW 2005

worth a call-out, the Paul McCartney concert in November where I was accompanied by our 9-year-old nephew, Nick (my birthday present to him).

On the trip front, we once again joined the Johnson Parentals in Ashland but this year we added a second Oregon adventure - rafting on the Rogue River. Johnsons & Links, we were part of a motley crew of 22 (pirate reference, not metal) spending three days on the water. Yes, friends, family and random readers, I think it's safe to say we actually did something you could call sporting. Hey, we saw a bear ... that's got to count for something.



Uncle 'Chocolate Gallery' Tim & Grady

In car news (of course there's car news), we welcomed two more. The first, a 1986 Fiat 126 Bis that we have affectionately dubbed 'Lil' partly because it's part of her license plate number and partly because she's about 3/4 the size of a Mini. We were driving her around a bit until her water broke on the freeway so now she's resting in the garage until a hose arrives from Poland. The second, well ... we call him Pan.

## The story of Pan ... the condensed version.

**March 1997:** We see a Fiat Barchetta for the first time in Germany.

**August 2, 2005:** Al has a serious overheating problem.

**August 7 - 14, 2005:** The week of the rental car.

**August 14, 2005:** Grady asks if I can take Friday off.

**August 17, 2005:**

**6:00 am:** Grady leaves for 'Gilroy'

**5:35 pm:** I call Grady to say 'Coming home. Grady's at Peter's house.

**6:00 pm:** I get home. Grady says he left his shoes at Peter & Jenni's.

**6:40ish pm:** We arrive at Peter & Jenni's. I continue my rant about work.

**6:42ish pm:** Grady says he left his shoes, "in your Barchetta" I suddenly see the car.

"Oh my gawd!" "Shit!" etc. Jumble together.

**August 19, 2005:** Pan shows at the Concorso Italiano car show in Monterey.

Grady found the Barchetta on eBay (of course) and flew to LA on August 17 to pick up the car. He did, in fact, drive through Gilroy on his way back and would have stopped at the Outlets to get some more Swamp Sauce if the exit signs had been more clearly marked.



That about sums up the year and seeing as I have 2 days 'til Xmas, I better re-fuel and get wrappin'. In the words of Lorelei Gilmore, 'Coffee, Coffee, Coffee!' I'm out.

Merry Krimble ...  
- Kristy Duncan Johnson

New pictures will be posted on Playfaire.com after Xmas ... and you can still find us at dkunstler@aol.com (Grady) and kduncanj@aol.com (kd). Cheers.