

THE CIRCLE - NEWSLETTER

THE ONLY INFORMAL NETWORK OF U.S.F. ALUMNI IN THIS WORLD

This version of the Newsletter should bring you luck.
It's number 13.

There has not been a fall edition of the Circle Newsletter this year. I deeply regret this and I humbly ask you to accept my sincere sorry-feelings for this unfortunate non-event.

There are multiple reasons that may have caused this:

- † lack of informative & publishable material
- † lack of financial material
- † computer break down
- † just pure laziness of the editor
- † all of the above
- † non of the above, who cares anyway

BUT,

we're back on track now, because we have to send our

CONGRATULATIONS

to **Dai Takahashi**. Sun & Peace came into the lives of Dai and Mariko on September 9, 1993, with the birth of their first baby. YOHEI is reported to be powerful enough to wake up her parents at 2 a.m. and 5 a.m. everyday.

And more Circle Members spin-offs are being announced for the near future. Read all about it in a future edition of the Newsletter (whenever that may be...)

here's some moving gossip...

--- Gossip ---

He who makes a life of traveling, **Jan Melsen**, reports having met on an occasional trip that took him to California, Mexico and some other pieces of land that linger around over there, **Alejandro Rocha**, his wife Brenda and their son Andres.

Jeff Pochepan moved to Beverly Hills; full updated address to be found in the data-base

(check the zip-code!). Jeff is vice-president of Probelle Enterprises Inc, a company that is active in the field of Medical Facilities Design & Medical Equipment Export.

The Lord of Catering, **Wilfried Kainz**, claimed to be exhausted from combining his job with organizing the last Circle Reunion. So he relaxed his body at Club Med, somewhere in Italy. Wilfried failed to report what he did with his mind.

Viking **Petter Danielsen** visited Belgium somewhere a few months ago. Undersigned was lucky to be out of the country, so Petter had to settle for **Jan Melsen** for dinner and a glass of sparkling mineral water.

And **Christophe Lemaire** still travels throughout the States and to Ireland. During his last trip to Ireland, Christophe took a week of vacation and spent five days in France. In the beautiful French Alps he was initiated to the thrills of para-gliding, a form of hang-gliding, using a controllable parachute.

In the States he spends all his summer weekends racing sailboats.

And he learned how to swim; going wild when white water rafting. Christophe's full report, a real piece of Nobel Prize style literature, is available just a few pages from here.

Lars Johnson has been hopping the job-market. Last spring he left the Norwegian Banking, Insurance and Securities Commission to start a new job as a financial analyst with Orkia Finance.

The famous Nina D. got promoted into his old job at the commission (and that's already the third time she's been getting his old job).

Lars had a good time and enjoyed his new job at Orkia Finance for about 6 months. As a policeman who became crook Lars was in high demand and left for yet another company: Oslo Securities, doing the same work but with more emphasis on corporate finance. Although Lars claims to be working hard, his extra-curricular activities recently included participating in the Oslo version of Miami Vice.

Nina Danielsen is happy with her current job as advisor - International Affairs at the Commission. She vehemently denies all rumors that she now is after the job of a mister L.J. Nina reports also on a new disease striking most of the Viking population: moving.

The Danielsens themselves are moving as of January 17.

Anne Sorensen has moved as well, but stays within the city-limits of Oslo.

Camilla Grieg too thought it would be nice to change addresses.

Check the accompanying data-base if you really want to find out where these people are living now.

And for your information: everyone says hello.

Ramon Ortiguella has left Hannover Manufacturers and is working on some independent ventures, together with his brother. Watch the slight change in his Madrid address.

Someone once wrote "Alice doesn't live there anymore".

The same goes for some Spanish members. **Beatriz Glez-Coviella** and **Mariano Colmenar** are supposed to be somewhere in Spain.

But if you know where, or if you know what they are doing; please let us know.

Guess what's happening to **Alexander Fick** ?

Yes indeed. Alexander announces his new address as of March 1, 1994. Please refer to your previous data-base for his current address, because this change is already processed in the enclosed version.

Finally the big news: **Wilkin Tai** did not move.

But you'll find a correction of his postal code; as well as a new company address (same company, but they ... moved).

Wilkin is travelling the globe like mad: Hong Kong, Indonesia, China, Turkey, Thailand, India: Wilkin these days refers to his agenda to find out what country he is in.

Their investment business is booming and Wilkin has been made a Director in Templeton Singapore. Congratulations!

Being in the finance business, Wilkin fully understands cash flow problems and realizes that given his record, he has been flagged as a credit risk on the Circle Files for not paying his dues.

Let this be an example for all the "fee paid: **N**"-people !

- - - Lustrum Meeting In San Francisco - - -

Target date: 28 - 30 September 1994

Mark these dates in your agenda

From September 30 till October 2, USF is supposed to organize its first International Alumni Weekend. Let's hope we all get a free dinner.

The Special Task Force is already getting at full speed in organizing a fabulous Circle Meeting program.

Full details too follow soon in the spring. But the Force is already requesting that you make up your mind about your travelling & lodging plans.

As of today nobody has cancelled his or hers participation at this event; so it promises to be a well-attended reunion!

Circle Photo Book

I had asked everybody to thoroughly check and complete your data in the data-base and to

mail me a good quality black & white photo of yourself.

For the sake of having a good quality photo book I insisted on having black & white pictures.

For the sake however of having a photo book at all, I now must seriously insist that you people do send me a picture. So far only three (3) pictures have reached me.

Circle Membership Fee

I know that a more or less serious recession is striking your daily activities, forcing you to cut back on your budgets.

But how do you think I'm going to have a nice new year's party if you don't even pay your membership fees ?

Now that the last minutes of the year 1993 are ticking away, an astonishing 41,03% of the Circle Members have not paid their 1993 fee yet ! All these bad debtors are recognizable by the "N" mark in the date base field 'fee-paid'.

If you have a bad memory: the fee is 10 ECU and the time to pay is NOW.

Data-Base

As usual a copy of the data-base comes along with the newsletter. Several updates have been processed since the last edition.

One casualty is reported: Michael Horn fell out of sync as his last two newsletters were returned undelivered and the back-up address didn't reply.

Epilogue

This being the end of the thirteenth newsletter, it also announces the possibility of a fourteenth newsletter.

The CD plays that "a Chicken ain't nothin' but a Bird" and that "I'm ready to go", but before I just go to do that:

**MERRY
CHRISTMAS
&
HAPPY
NEW YEAR**

**... AND WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT
WHITE WATER RAFTING,**

or the joys of swimming...

To all of you, radical risk-taking dare-devil dudes out there, adepts of extreme skiing, bungee jumping, sky-diving, hang-gliding, deep sea diving and other foolish, breathtaking, neck-breaking adventures: if you think you've experienced all the thrills, defied death more than a reasonable amount of time and basically done it all, there is one more thing you ought to try: **white water rafting**. That is, going down a river on an inflatable raft with 7 other crazy maniacs, totally out of control, in the middle of class 5 rapids and waterfalls.

Well, I guess it wasn't all that bad, since I'm still alive and well to tell you about it, although I must admit that I can't quite remember what exactly happened at the most critical moment. Nevertheless, let me try to relate the events of the day as I recall them most vividly.

There we were, in the most northern part of the Appalachian mountain range, in Western Maine, in early September, camping on the shores of the Dead River with a few outdoorsy types, on the eve of what would become one of the most exhilarating days of my third summer in New England. I went to bed early that night, my head full of images of various accounts of what it is like to raft the Kennebec River, in nervous and anxious anticipation of the day to come, as the rain hammered away on the nylon roof of my tent.

The Kennebec River is the liquid monster we had set out to challenge, with Jimmy, who spends all his summer weekends guiding rafts for a commercial white water rafting company. Jimmy, 34, is an experienced white water rafting guide, and I had no qualms about entrusting him with my life, as his wife did, and knowing that he had conquered some of the most difficult rivers of this part of the New World. The day began, under a rejuvenating sunshine, as we piled up four fully inflated rafts, pyramid-like, on top of Jimmy's big old pickup truck, in the back of which we threw paddles, life-vests, and helmets. We then proceeded, all twelve of us, to climb in the truck ourselves, on top of each other, sitting or laying on the equipment, and off we went, as Jimmy drove the truck at fifty miles an hour on a dirt road. About thirty minutes later, we reached the Kennebec River dam, signed liability release forms (always encouraging...) and proceeded to carry the rafts to the river. At that point, the river was most inviting, showing none of its temper. I volunteered to sit up front.

The raft is built like a big oval-shaped rubber tube, with soft bottom, and with two inflatable tubes evenly spaced, positioned in the middle of it, attached on each side, that serve to reinforce the entire structure. Four people sit on each side, one behind the other, facing front, with legs tucked in on one side of the tube, arms on the other side, furiously paddling the dangerous waters. You can imagine how awkward the position is: there is nothing that keeps your feet in the damn raft! You can easily fall overboard at any time, if you're not careful to constantly counter-balance your weight with the paddling motion. Both persons sitting in front, however, do have a small foot strap. Of course, they are the ones that are the most likely to be thrown out!

After a few paddling exercises, to make sure the team worked coherently and to the

satisfaction of our guide Jimmy, whose paddle served as a ruder, we were ready for the big trip: 8 miles of mostly deceptively calm waters, hiding half a dozen rapids of various intensity. One name kept on resounding in my head, as I focused on synchronizing my paddling to Brian's, sitting on the other side of the raft: Magic! Magic fall, as it was referred to. The big hole.

Already, we were approaching the first rapids. In an instant, water was splashing all over, soaking us from head to toe, and filling the raft by the tens of gallons, making it less maneuverable. Surprisingly, the water was quite warm, and the excitement grew more intense, as we slowly approached Magic. The river was full of rafts of all sizes and colors, themselves full of excited tourists. There were also a number of kayakists and a few nuts who thought that going down these rapids in a canoe was the ultimate challenge. Good for them! I was beginning to believe that maybe I would be better off if I had stayed home, quietly sipping my vodka and tonic! But there was no turning back.

Suddenly, Jimmy directed us towards the bank, and we parked the raft underneath the branches of the trees overlooking the river, among a crowd of nervously agitated tourists, who had parked their rafts at the same spot. There is was, Magic, about one hundred and fifty yards downstream, and one could hear the thundering of the raging waters, and see the spray in the air. At the same level on the bank, I noticed a group of photographers, with their telephotos propped up on tripods, catching the instant of a lifetime as some of the rafts ahead of us were being swallowed by the white water. Too soon, it was our turn to head the raft towards the monster, and we started paddling rhythmically, driven more by fear than Jimmy's orders who would soon be covered by the approaching roar: "left and right, ahead! Come on guys, keep paddling, don't stop!..." Easier said than done!

Jimmy's advice heard the night before around the campfire were now coming back to me in a blur: "if you fall in the water, just face downstream and keep your legs up, so you won't hit the rocks..." Great! "...remember, you'll have about fifteen minutes to climb back on board or reach the bank before hitting the next rapid..." Sure, piece of cake, I thought. "...Make sure you stay to the right, otherwise you'll be thrown on the rocks to the left..." Yeah right! I bet these photographers were just waiting for this to happen!

Before I knew it, the raft was sucked in to the rapid. As I plunged head first into the huge hole of green and white water, I stared in horror at a huge liquid wall that had risen almost vertically in front of us. A fraction of a second later, the raft hit the wave in an brutal explosion of water. The face of the wave was so steep and the shock so violent, that it threw my body back and to the right, and I was forcefully ejected from our raft, as confused images of water, trees, arms, legs, and pieces of blue sky unfolded before my eyes, until I felt the soft, warm and turbulent water submerging my entire body. The raft had been propelled vertically into the air but had not flipped over. By some miracle, Brian, defying the laws of physics, managed to stay on board. Everyone else had been thrown overboard, and we were all trying to stay afloat, as the river pulled us down in its fury.

It took us all no less than ten minutes to climb back on board. One bloody nose, a lost shoe, earring and paddle was all the damage we sustained. We considered ourselves lucky. We eventually reached a recess of the river where the waters were dark and calm, and started to bail water out of the raft by the buckets. We had survived Magic. The rest of the trip would be a breeze.

Later that afternoon, after we had enjoyed the wild and beautiful scenery of the ride, we were able to attend a slide and video projection session, featuring the events of the day. We saw our panic-stricken faces on video, in slow motion, as we fell into the big hole of Magic Fall.

Moments later, the raft disappears completely behind a curtain of white water. One can only see a pair of legs, with white socks and tennis shoes sticking up in the air, upside down. I'll let you guess whose legs these were...