

EXTRA! EXTRA!

New York, New York!
October 18, 2005

Jason was fixed prominently in his statuesque 'this-is-my-time-to-shine' pose. "Mommy, is that a girl?" "No honey, that's an Artist," was the imaginative reply of a passing mother to her young daughter. Huh? What the ... she was referring to our oldest son, Jason!

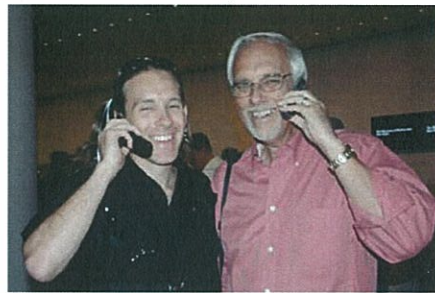
His attire, obviously acquired from a science fiction film studio outlet (had to be ... no real clothing store sells such stuff) was a long flowing all black jump suit/pants/dress outfit thingy. It had wide horizontal straps or bands crossing his midsection, which connected in the middle with bright shiny chrome plated spring clips (like the big ones you would find on the shoulder strap of a military duffel bag).

Accentuating his Matrix-The-Movie look were bold five-pointed silver stars and his hair was done up in two long pigtails, neatly tied off with narrow white ribbons. Yep, that young mother had nailed it ... her daughter had caught a glimpse of an Artist ... our artist, our family hippie, and our most lovable family rebel. (Rebel ... if there is a protest, march or movement in the California Bay Area, Jason will be there. He lives there, or should I say, he "thrives" there.)

Jason has always been ... how should I frame this ... a little different, marching to the beat of his own drum. When as a little bitty guy, his mother would say "leave your shirt tail out" ... he'd tuck it in. In his teen years if I said black, he said

white. Later, when I leaned right, he leaned left ... waaaay left!

And somehow in the midst of an anti-everything artist's lifestyle, he figured out a way to support himself. Graphic Design ... focused on social change ... toward a better-looking revolution. (Whatever that means!) My hairs have all turned gray; started the day he was born ... he's now 30 something! (Although I can't say it out loud ... he really does have a lot of my characteristics. He's my son all right, and now that he is no longer sixteen ... I love it!)



Like Father, Like Son

We were all milling about waiting for the arrival of the one last straggling 'Guest of the Artist' to finally show up. We were in the lobby of New York's newly remodeled Museum of Modern Art.

MoMA, as the museum likes to refer to itself, approaching its 76th anniversary has just completed a major renovation of its 640,000 square foot

facility. Its grand re-opening "Safety" theme includes a sampling of our Jason's graphic artwork.

Get this. There's our son's work, prominently displayed along with some of the masters like Picasso, Monet, Van Gogh, Salvador Dali and Andy Warhol. Err ... maybe I didn't say that quite right.

You see, Jason's work is not exactly displayed "along with" the masters. Ah ... actually, he's on a different floor from the masters. In fact, he's in a section assigned to special exhibits ... there for a three-month run. The big guys ... they get to stay on display indefinitely.

But wait! ... At least I can boast that he made it into the same building as the masters! And in the "Big Apple" no less. That's a big deal!

Moreover, the museum curator herself phoned Jason. You won't see Van Gogh or Monet bragging about that!

See, this whole experience is a big deal. Never mind that the exhibition comprises more than 300 design objects from all over the world, Jason's work will be there on display for tens of thousands of visitors to view. And that's a big deal, too ... in this family anyway!



Thirty of Jason's friends & family showed up at the MoMA to be a "Guest of the Artist."

This trip to New York, it was to be sort of a test run for Susan and me to see how it works to travel with all the extra ALS support medical gear. Apparently, extra carry-on baggage that is of a medical nature does not count as carry-on. Hmmm.

So here we go. Our regular carry-on travel baggage, my computer, Susan's camera bag, my breathing machine, and my type-n-talk computer. Too much ... yeah, you're right.

Add to all that the fact that my walking skills have diminished a little. You've seen the "little old man," cautiously waddling along at his own pace. That's me! Getting seated on the plane, we looked like a scene from an old I Love Lucy show. Fumbling ... dropping things ... tripping over our own feet. Can't you imagine the setting? The poor guy sitting right next to us finally got up in self defense and stood in the aisle while we got settled. Then to add insult to injury, Susan and I looked at each other and started to crack up.

Picture this. With the withering of my mouth and lips, muscle control has long gone. A burst of laughter means saliva spray and copious drooling. (I know ... yuck!) Ah-ha though! I know what to expect so a quick hand-over-the-mouth and I prevented a splattering of several horrified passengers. Oh no! The hand captured a handful ... saliva started to drip out of my hand to the airplane floor. (I know! YUCK again!) I glanced at Susan ... the burst of laughter started again! (Yes, it sounds crude, but you had to be there!)

And that guy sitting next to us? Susan apologized and began to explain my condition ... hoping for a compassionate understanding re-

sponse. To our unbelievable surprise, he was more than aware of our struggles. He shared with us that his uncle, a close uncle, had been diagnosed with ALS only six months ago. He is struggling with some of the same issues. Small world, huh.

Although I've been to New York several times, I always feel like a country bumpkin when there. This time was not much different. (Hmmm ... could it be ...?)

We concluded a little sight seeing was in order. Taxies, they're everywhere. We decided ... the subway was to be our means of transportation. What fun! We could do several stops; assured that walking was kept to a minimum, but still take a look-see ... and cheap, too!

I noticed that some of the subway gates are built as a simple little turn-style, the kind you go through at an amusement park or baseball stadium. Others are full floor to ceiling gates. That is, a rotating gate/door made up of closely spaced horizontal bars that barely slide past each other. You enter this type like entering a revolving door.

It appears to me that in the better parts of town, you find the simple little turn-styles. In the "hood," you find the full bar type revolving gates. (I know why that is. I've seen the movies where the bad guys simply leap over the single turn-style and jump onto a moving subway car. In the hood, there's lots of bad guys ... you need the full gates!)

The subway proved to be a bit of a challenge for this country bumpkin. We purchased unlimited all-day cards. "Good ... I'll keep it safe right here with my hotel room entry card."

So we're old pros at taking the subway, right? We're entering one of those full bar type revolving gates. (We're leaving the hood.) Susan goes first. Then me. But inadvertently I tried to run my hotel room entry card. The gate went part way and locked up! I was almost "captured" in this thing! I moaned, but was able to squeeze back out! (The commotion is causing a scene.) Susan's on the inside telling me to slide it again. I'm on the outside still fumbling with my hotel room card! (I haven't figured out what's wrong yet!) The folks behind me are clearly impatient. I turned and mumbled, "What's up!" and gave the "What's up" sign. (Hey, there's sign language for that, remember ... we're taking the class. And besides, we're in the hood ... they'll think I'm cool!)

Then one of New York's Finest notices the disturbance. Uh-oh, the officer wants to talk to me. Susan, she's trying to tell the cop what's up (talking through the bars). He's got this look on his face ... he wants to hear from me, not her! And remember, in the hubbub, I'm not talking too clearly. (It's the ALS accent, in its best form!)

Ground Zero was a must. Soho, it was so so. St Patrick's Cathedral, WOW!

Yes, on the return home flight we checked our luggage.

Next adventure ... the feeding tube. I have an appointment in about a week. Can't wait ... I think.

BTW (by the way), if you want to check out some of Jason's Graphic Design, you can go to his website ... www.justicedesign.com. Be prepared!