

I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year.

Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*, 1843

As we honour Christmas 2007 in our hearts, we think fondly of friends like you and the personality traits which you possess that qualify you to receive the alternative Inglis newsletter.

SNOWY (By Snowy)

Life is really great now because I have a new animal brother, Ponce de León. Toni and Ian are okay, but they get boring.

In May, my human brother John graduated from college and moved back to my place while he looked for a job and a place of his own. That was fun! John played with and petted me a lot. In August, he and three of his friends found a house. I was dreading his leaving, but Erin moved right in with "Pouncy!"

At first I was miserable because I missed John, and Erin's little cat scared me to death. But now I've gotten used to him, and he's a laugh riot! When Pouncy darts past me with lightning speed, I can't resist and run after him. Or I'll be resting and he'll pounce in front of me with that raised back and hilarious tough-guy look. Our favorite game is hide-and-seek; he thinks I can't see him in the dining room chairs, but I can.

In sad news, Burton's Keisha, my lifelong friend, died this year. But in November, Burton's family got another dog. I haven't met him yet, but I "hear" we have a lot in common.

Snowy (left) and Frankie tied for first place in the Large Ear Competition of the 2007 Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show



Pouncy inspecting Inglis Christmas treesucculent area

IAN

Ian's still defending criminals and presiding over the homeowners association where we live. Every day, in both of those arenas, he gets to use the Philosophy degree he got before law school. In fact, his general outlook resembles that of Gary Larson ("The Far Side").

This year *Tribeza* magazine featured Ian in an article titled, "I Walk the Walk." In it, he discussed how he lives downtown and gets around by walking — because he wants to, for exercise and enjoyment. The big news this year is, not once did anyone from Fishes and Loaves offer him a sandwich on his way home from work. We cannot think of an explanation for this unprecedented phenomenon.

This year he earned a chef's coat for his masterful and "imaginative" cooking. His chicken pot pie and scones with brandy-soaked currants are legendary. He continues to entertain us and his office buddies with his spectacular Ian-isms.



*Chef Ian preparing to make a lamb curry that was delicious before he added about a cup of **whole** coriander seeds, thus rendering it inedible.*



*Photograph from June 2007 article in *Tribeza* magazine with caption, "Ian Inglis's move into Austin City Lofts led to a new 'definition' of what constitutes a good walk." News: This year, no one offered him a sandwich on a walk.*

TONI

Still working neonatal and writing the Seton publication. This year I was elected Chair of the Austin/Travis Co. Mental Health Mental Retardation Board of Trustees as congratulators told me with a straight face, "You have such a sensitivity for this population."

I dramatically improved my life this year by taking Amtrak to Dallas once a month to spend one night with Talula, Burton and Melissa. I also get to catch up with my writing/reading because of all the relaxing, uninterrupted time on the train.

I mean, it's perfect. I walk two blocks to the Amtrak station.

When I get to Dallas, I jump on the light rail that takes me practically to Burton's doorstep. The seats on the train are huge, and the lounge car has tables where I set up camp with my computer, newspapers and books. To boot, it's cheaper than driving, and it goes through beautiful parts of Texas that you miss on roads.

But ... I would be remiss if I failed to mention the occasional Amtrak inconvenience, e.g., last year's Christmas trip to Dallas. Ian and I finally convinced Erin and John that the eight hours it would take to get to Dallas (rather than three by car) were really worth it — and fun!

Our first mistake was failing to calculate that being the holiday season, the train would be uncharacteristically full of "delightful" small children, "fun-loving" teenagers and parents coping by either a) arguing, b) drinking too much or c) both. Actually, the trip to Dallas wasn't bad. The trip back was ... something out of Guantánamo.



Toni, elected Chair of the MHMR Board of Trustees

Our train was scheduled to leave Dallas at noon and arrive in Austin at 7 p.m. However, due to a broken windshield in St. Louis, it would not leave Dallas until 5 p.m. because they had to get a second engine, and the second one broke down somewhere between St. Louis and Dallas.

Dead-stopped in Ft. Worth (just south of Dallas) at 7 p.m., waiting for freight trains which (of course) have right-of-way over passengers, Ian called our neighbor who walks Snowy in our absence to say we wouldn't make it back to walk her that evening. Ominously, she responded, "I've ridden Amtrak; I'll plan on walking her tomorrow morning, too."

Around midnight, our abject misery gave way to pure elation as we recognized the area north of Austin through the torrential rain outside our windows. "Won't be long now!!!"

Just at that very moment, the train came to a dead stop, and the conductor announced overhead that our "engineer had expired."

I of course imagined a runaway train with a dead driver slumped over the wheel, when Ian patiently explained to me that no, that in Amtrak-speak the engineer had driven the maximum number of hours allowed under union contract.

There we sat at a dead stop on the tracks for another hour and a half waiting for the new, unexpired engineer to arrive, apparently by horse and buggy. This truly was torture — like someone holding a frozen mug of Belgian ale just out of reach.

Finally, at 2:30 a.m., more than 14 hours after the train was supposed to leave Dallas, we arrived in Austin. The sky was white with lightning, and the rain was pelting down so hard that we couldn't walk home, even though we were close enough to **see** our place. (There's that cold, elusive Belgian ale again.)

After 45 minutes waiting for a taxi, Ian gave up and waded home, risking death by lightning, to drive back, soaked, to pick up the rest of us. I never knew a bed could look so delicious.

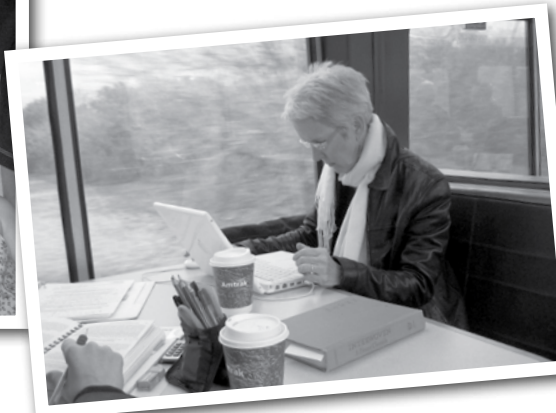
Even though we could have flown to Europe and been less tired and irritable in the time it took us to get from Dallas to Austin, all in all, I wouldn't trade my monthly Amtrak trips for anything.



Ian and Erin, all smiles on the way to Dallas, oblivious of what they were in for



Mischievous Talula after decorating a "napping" Ian in Dallas



John, catching up on his reading, sitting beside random "delightful" small child

BURTON, MELISSA & TALULA KNIGHT (By Burton)

It's been a good year. Melissa is still doing nursing and I, arborist work. We welcomed a wonderful year-old dog, Frankie, into our home and a departing neighbor's cat, Azriel. Talula started kindergarten in the same elementary school my dad (John Knight) attended, one block from our house.

The highlight of my year was a fishing trip to the Wind River Range of Wyoming's Titcomb Basin. On day hikes I was surrounded by dizzyingly high rocky mountaintops mantled with glaciers smaller than the giant oceans of ice that gouged out the huge chasms of space all around us millions of years ago and receded into smooth U-shaped basins lined with tortured granite.

Huge boulders left precariously perched next to endless trout-filled, mirror-surfaced pools connected by icy cataracts of melt water — the landscape was so riddled with odd-jutting features that walking 20 feet in any direction completely changed the view. And that's just the ground.



Dinner!

The sky was a constant Valhalla-like drama of brilliant sunshine, fair white clouds, bruised gray storms, fog, snow, hail, rain, wind, shafts of light and lightning — all sweeping up through the basins from below and hiding everything for hours at a time. What a shit hole.

I fished for dinner off a rock at the lake with a magic lure. Before this lure, there were no fish. But with this shiny piece of bent metal with five red dots painted on either side, a sucker bit every few minutes, everywhere I went.

In deep water or shallow pools, fish the size of small salmon jumped out of the water to catch the lure in mid-air as I reeled up to cast again.

As I'm living this long-overdue dream, I hear the distinct sound of two voices — a young couple camping, having what

amounts to an ugly impasse in paradise. At that moment I realized that as much as I love my wife, I was glad to be alone. This trip was about my relationship with the earth, which in order to cultivate, everything else had to be left far behind.

As I enjoy this time of year with my family, I know it's time spent embracing other parts of your soul that make it so special. Merry Christmas.



Wyoming's Titcomb Basin — a real shit hole



Left: Talula, center, on her first day of school

JOHN

As Snowy said, John graduated in May from Texas A&M with a degree in History and Philosophy which has richly prepared him for his occupation: bus driver for Austin's Capital Metro. Hey! It's got full benefits, plus he gets to use his Philosophy degree every day while driving Austin's indigent and psychiatric population around town.

I take the bus when I'm not riding my scooter. I love it; it gives me a chance to feel normal.

Being new, he gets the least desired routes. The one he drives made the news as a woman stabbed the driver John relieved in the head with a screw driver. It's also



Adam & Michael came to see John graduate. He dressed up for the occasion (cut-offs under the robe.)



full of "delightful" small children and "fun-loving" teenagers, not to mention crying babies.

One night at dinner just after he graduated, John announced he needed to purchase transportation. (He's never owned a vehicle.) After a couple of glasses of wine, Ian suggested that we sell him my scooter, and that I buy a new Yamaha Vino.

The next day Ian tried to back out, suggesting his idea had perhaps been a little impulsive and extravagant. John and I were having none of it. We both love our Vinos and the 75 miles per gallon we get.

Left: John with The Fabulous Grand-Mère Mrs. Jack (Roberta) Inglis

Right: John and Toni on their scooters, their Best Beloveds



ERIN

Erin and Pouncy are living with us while she completes the intensive part of the "alternate-entry" Master of Science in Nursing program at UT (for students with a baccalaureate degree in another field), where their entire basic nursing curriculum is squeezed into 15 months. After that, they take the licensing exam and work as an RN while completing graduate study. Students are not allowed to work during the 15-month intensive period, and staying with us will reduce her school debt by thousands of dollars.

Her favorite part of school is mental health, and for a class presentation, she used Daffy Duck. She was going to use Bugs Bunny, but alas upon investigation, Bugs was so mentally healthy he was uninteresting.

Daffy, on the other hand, presented the perfect opportunity to present a major personality disorder. See her presentation in its entirety.



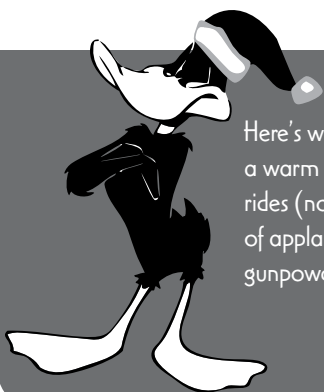
Erin with her best friend from medical school, Sae Jae, a psychiatrist in California



John and Erin at Coachella music festival in California

The people I've told about this presentation have consistently said, "Toni! Daffy sounds like YOU!" Though I started out 2007 as a happy-go-lucky, mentally healthy empty nester, I am now reduced to a shell of a person with features of every single mental disorder that Erin has studied. At the end of her mental health rotation, she concluded, "Toni, if you were a mouse, the trap would have snapped on you long ago."

More Erin news. Recall that Björk is Erin's idol/pagan poet/Best Beloved, and she hasn't toured for, god forbid, a decade. Making up for lost time, Erin had four out-of-body experiences this year as she watched Björk's 2007 World Tour gigs at Coachella (CA), Chicago, Austin and Las Vegas.



Here's wishing you a 2008 with plenty of cold Belgian ale, a warm bed to sleep in at night, a magic lure, cheap taxi rides (no gratuity), your name in lights and on top, and lots of applause. And don't go mixing uranium, nitroglycerine, gunpowder and gasoline.

Love,
the Inglises

10-26-07 mental health class presentation by Erin Inglis

Narcissism: Daffy Duck

As seen in the 1957 short, *Show Biz Bugs* [viewable on YouTube], Warner Brothers™ character Daffy Duck exhibits at least five narcissistic traits included in the DSM IV diagnostic criteria for 301.81 Narcissistic Personality Disorder, including:

1. *grandiose sense of self-importance*
"Boy! Listen to that! They love me!!" when the audience was actually applauding Bugs Bunny

2. *envious of others*
"What!? That rabbit's name over mine!! I'm the star! I'll just see about this." Daffy Duck was looking at a sign advertising Bugs Bunny's show that listed, in small print, Daffy Duck as a supporting act.

3. *sense of entitlement, i.e., unreasonable expectations of favorable treatment or automatic compliance with his or her expectations*
Yelling to his cab driver after being driven one block, "Twenty-five cents!? It's robbery, but I'll pay it! But you get no gratuity. It's enough that you've had the honor of having a celebrity like me in your cab!"

4. *believes that he or she is "special" and unique and can only be understood by, or should associate with, other special or high-status people*



After performing, Daffy receives no applause from the audience. He becomes furious, shouts "Ingrates!" and storms off the stage.

5. *requires excessive admiration*
Performing numerous tricks to gain the admiration of the audience, he danced an elaborate tap routine, trained pigeons to walk tightropes, tried to sabotage Bugs Bunny's fame by putting TNT in his xylophone, and finally, blowing himself up with a mixture of uranium, nitroglycerine, gunpowder and gasoline. He finally received massive applause for this final act.