

# A Mark of Excellence

Volume 4, Issue 1

25 September 2000

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MARK!

In honour of Mark's birthday, the fan club was able to send a donation of \$75 to **CHPHP** (**C**hildren **H**elping **P**oor and **H**ungry **P**eople), Mark's charity of choice. For more information on CHPHP, check out their website, [www.chphp.com](http://www.chphp.com)



Birthdays are special to people like me when they are celebrated by people like Mark.

Not because he is one year older, but because it marks one more year of enjoyment of his work by us, the fans. And because he has stepped through the door of his own future that no matter what, I hope is his best year yet.

Can he top or match "Lamar", "Griff", or any other of the roles he has done with a wonderful human, dimensional quality to them? I vote yes knowing that I have another year to cherish the man and his work.

Mark you make me happy to remember birthdays, and for yours, I wish the happiest one yet! -Trish Smith

Hi Mark, I wanted to wish you a Happy Birthday before I forgot. I love you so much .I wish I could celebrate it with you. May you live long and

forever healthy, I LOVE YOU MARK!!  
Your biggest fan, Christina 80)

Dear Mark

Congratulation to your birthday and many success for your career and your private live. That we still see many movies/films with you. Many greetings from Germany your German-club member Inge Raum

Dear Mark,  
I wish you:

"Walls for the wind  
And a roof for the rain,  
And drinks beside the fire-  
Laughter to cheer you  
And those you love near you, And  
all that your heart may desire!"  
Sincerely -p.s.h.

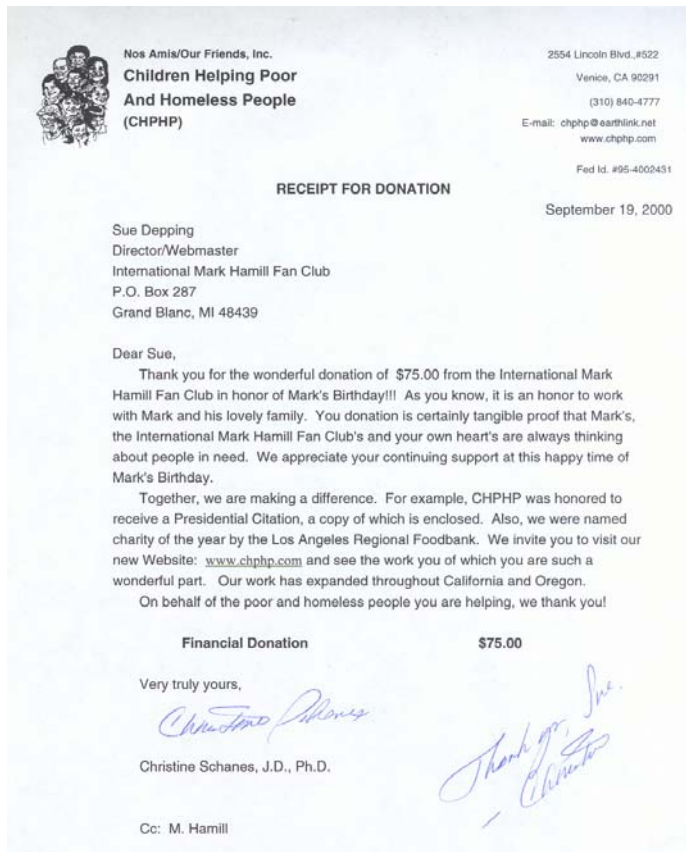
"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made." - Psalm 139:13-14

This day is special because YOU are special. Wishing you all the best for a Happy Birthday!  
Sincerely, Michelle

Happy Birthday, Mark!! My family and I send our warmest wishes to you, as well as our gratitude for how wonderfully you've entertained us over the years. Not only are you a fine actor, you're a terrific human being as well, and we wish you all the best! On a more personal note (\*grin\*), I would like to make a suggestion: that you celebrate your birthday "hobbit-style".

Have a great birthday, Mark -- and a wonderful year, too! Love,  
Jeannie xoxo

## Notes from the Editor...



abled the fan club to **triple** the donation amount sent last year!

In addition to a letter thanking the fan club for the wonderful donation, there was a signed copy of the 'Hollywood Hearts' 2000 calendar.

Late last month, I took a much-needed break from work, and flew to NYC to spend some time with my older son. We share a number of the same interests, one of which is watching

certain Saturday morning cartoons. Knowing there is a 'Rocky and Bullwinkle' exhibit currently at the Museum of Television and Radio, we went there one Sunday afternoon. Once the feature presentation was over, we headed to the MTR Library. There, visitors can choose up to 2 hours/4 programs to privately view, from their extensive collection. I immediately did a search and struck 'pay dirt': the commercial Mark did back in 1975 for Kraft Roku Blue salad dressing! Once I saw the commercial, I remembered seeing it air 'way back when', thanks to the setting. It was made to look similar to a old-fashioned ice cream parlour, and at the time this aired, I managed a Baskin-Robbins Ice Cream store.

Special thanks to those members that bought 'I'm Stuck on Mark Hamill' badges! Your generosity en-

abled the fan club to triple the donation amount sent last year!

## 'Mark's Done What?!?' and Future Watch

Several videos Mark has done work on have just been released, or are due to be released within the next couple of months. They include 'Batman Beyond: Return of The Joker', 'Scooby Doo and the Alien Invaders', 'The Night of the Headless Horseman', and 'Sinbad: Beyond the Veil of Mists'.

Did you catch Mark on 'Son of



the Beach' last month? Much earlier that day, he did a phone interview with Howard

Stern.

He's also done work on an episode of 'Hollywood Off-Ramp'. It was scheduled to air 25 September on the E! channel.

Want more info on '.com' sent to your e-mail addy? Visit [www.tvi.net/newdotcom](http://www.tvi.net/newdotcom), and sign up for their e-newsletter! Mark recently taped more segments for this informative se-

# Blast From the Past

Sylvia Christina Hartstra-van Kan

## The Night the Lights Went Out in Georgia

Released in: 1981



The movie finds its origin in the 1980 song with the equivalent name. It tells the story of Travis (Dennis Quaid) and Amanda (Kristy McNichol) Child. They are on their way to Nashville to make it as country-and-western singers. Amanda, 16 year old and very ambitious, is not only Travis' manager, but is also a talented songwriter. Travis, a young man in his twenties, is a more happy-go-lucky person, who loves to sing, but who gets involved over and over again in romantic scrapes and drinking.

Mark Hamill plays the role of Conrad, a young, caring and helpful police man. Mark's role isn't a big one, but he plays it convincingly. This movie, shot between 'The Empire Strikes Back' and 'Return of the Jedi', didn't bring Mark the recognition as a versatile actor, who could do more, than wielding a lightsaber as a super space hero. It didn't earn the audience's big admiration in the beginning, but it's certainly worthwhile to watch.

At the opening scene a pick-up car stops at a motel and a very furious farmer is dashing into the reception building, yelling and screaming. He forces the owner to tell him in which motel room he can find Travis, who has had an affair of one night with his daughter. Travis, hearing the noise at the door, orders his sister in the adjacent room, to pick up their belongings and get herself ready to leave. He pushes the girl in his bed into the bathroom, grabs his clothes and runs naked out of the back door. Amanda threatens the furious farmer with a Magnum before she hops in their camper and drives off to the reception. Travis ducks in the back of the car and they are on their way



again.

While the title and the cast are scrolling on the screen, we see Amanda and Travis driving through the country-side. Amanda is talking about Nashville. She wants to get there, to make her brother's career as a country singer. Travis is trying to get rid of his hangover and is angry with his sister, be-

cause she used the Magnum. Luckily the gun isn't loaded. Drinking and singing they reach their next stop, a very small wayside restaurant. Amanda feels terrible by the drinking. When she comes back from the bathroom, she sees her brother surrounded by some local beauties. Immediately she's on the alert and asks the girls if they know a doctor to cure her brother from a nasty infection. The girls back off and leave. As Amanda's dog, a cur, starts upsetting the other guests with his odor, Travis picks her up and drags her outside.

In their hotel room Travis is rehearsing, using Amanda, with a terrible headache, as his audience. He has written a special song about her. Amanda expresses her worries about his way of living, it scares her and she is afraid that she will lose him. She's asked a talent agent, Mr Hawkins, to come over and listen to her brother at a show in a local bar. He shows interest and Amanda is sent to their hotel room to get the tapes with all Travis' songs.

During his performance Travis is insulted by some of the younger guys. Some farmers, who are enjoying the singing, start a fight. The situation gets completely out of hand, when the furious farmer from the first scene suddenly turns up.

Travis runs off, catching up outside the bar with his sister, telling her to come to their next stop with the camper. He is leaving with the bus. Amanda first gives Mr Hawkins the tapes and then leaves.

While driving, Amanda starts crying and stops along the road. A police car stops behind the camper and the police man (Mark Hamill) asks her what's wrong. He shows concern, when he sees that she is crying. Amanda tries to scare him off by her rude manners, but at last she tells him she's an orphan, is looking for her brother and doesn't have a drivers' license. The policeman tells her to follow him. He will help her to find her brother.

At the bus station Travis has fallen asleep on a bench. As the local deputy, Seth, discovers him, he beats him. Travis hits him too and is arrested. Seth pushes him in the police car. At the same moment, Amanda and the police man park their cars near the bus station. Conrad asks his superior what has happened and sees Travis in the back of the car. When Seth has left, Amanda finds her brother's hat and wants to get him out of jail immediately. She is furious. Conrad has to calm her, telling her, she will make things worse for her brother. She has to wait until the next morning. Together, Amanda with the camper, they go to Conrad's house outside the town. She may park her camper near the house. As Amanda argues, that she'd better stayed at the bus station, Conrad says, that she would end up in jail too, for ille-

gal parking and sleeping in public.

The next morning Travis appears before the judge. He fines Travis for being drunk in public and resistance, and orders him to pay \$300, or forty days of hard labor. Amanda, accompanied by Conrad, watches her brother in court, but stays calm, until she hears the verdict. Con-



rad takes her outside the court building and Amanda start arguing with him again. She tries to explain to him how important it is to get Travis out of jail, so they can get to Nashville to get that record contract. She says Conrad goodbye and leaves with the camper.

At a local bar she tries to find a job for Travis, but the owner, Andy Webb, has already been informed by Conrad, who is, in Andy's word, a nice and kind guy. Andy will pay Travis' fine and Travis will work for him as a bartender. It's not the job Amanda had in mind, but she accepts it. Travis becomes rather popular as a bartender and gets along with his boss Andy, pretty good.

One evening, Melody, a local beauty and the girlfriend of Seth, the deputy, visits the bar. As Travis starts talking to her and gives the drink Andy has made, she tells him she knows, why he is working at Andy's.

Amanda sees her brother's interest in the girl and calls him over to her table. As he wants to get back to the bar, Melody is gone.

Melody starts to visit the bar more frequently and she and Travis start flirting with one another. When Seth is called to settle a fight between two farmers, he sees his girlfriend there. He warns Travis to leave Melody alone.

Travis neglects the warning and takes the girl home. He expects to be invited, but Melody tells him, he better should listen to Amanda. She grants him a kiss, but she goes inside her house and shuts the door. When Travis returns to their room, Amanda tells him she wants to leave for Nashville, but Travis wants to stay for awhile.

During the daytime Amanda goes to Conrad, who has a day off. They talk and when Conrad starts practicing his shooting Amanda shows him her Magnum. Amanda asks for some bullets and they practice together, while talking about



Travis's future. Conrad wants Amanda to live her own life and follow her own dreams and not take care of her brother only. As they leave some of the bullets he has given her are still in her revolver. In the mean time, Travis meets Seth again at the bar and

gets a second warning to leave Melody alone. Seth is outraged and dangerous, but Travis ignores the warning again.

Back in town Amanda starts to organize a show at Andy's. She wants Travis to sing, hoping he will pick up their old life.

Travis says he has a job to do. That evening she tries it again, when the bar is full of people. At last Travis sings, because he's asked by Melody. He loves the girl and sings a song for her. Amanda tells her brother Mr Hawkins, the agent, wants to see them. She wants to leave the next morning, but Travis refuses, he likes his work at the bar and most of all he wants to stay here, because of Melody. Amanda is very disappointed. Amanda sings two songs alone, beautifully dressed as country singer. Her



songs are a reproach to her brother, but also a warning: She will leave him one day.

While Amanda is singing, Conrad enters the bar and is very pleased. He clearly likes Amanda. When Travis tells his sister that he won't leave, she is furious and runs outside. Conrad goes after her and again they argue together about Travis. Conrad tries to express his feelings for her in a kind way, but when Amanda refuses to listen, still arguing about her brother, he grabs her

and kisses her. Then he leaves in a hurry, leaving Amanda behind.

Back in the bar Seth, the deputy, has entered and summons Melody to come with him. She reluctantly follows him, but Travis and Andy tell Seth, that he can't take Melody with him, if she doesn't want to leave. Seth hits Travis hard in his stomach and his face. He wants to grab Melody, but she tells him it's over. To her he is a monster, an animal. Seth realises that the other visitors of the bar and Andy will help Travis. He can't do anything else but leave.

After Melody has helped him, Travis starts looking for Amanda and tells her she was great. Amanda once more tries to remind him of the dream they once had, but Travis says, that she is the real talented one. He wants to stay with Melody. Amanda answers that she will leave in the morning. Later that night she listens to the tapes with the songs they made together. Travis goes back to Melody and brings her home with the camper. He stays with her.

The next morning when he awakes, he tells Melody he will go and look for Amanda, for she is his sister. The camper is followed by a police car. Seth, the driver, shoots at Travis. Travis loses control and the camper crashes against the rocks and stops in a ditch. Travis, hurt by the blow, lays in the camper. The police car has stopped too and Seth walks up to the camper with his rifle. When he opens the

door Travis grabs Amanda's Magnum and shoots, but Seth shoots him too. Travis stumbles out of the car, looks at Seth, who lays dead. He drags himself to the police car, but he dies, after the car has set in to motion.

Amanda, Melody and Andy lay Travis to rest on the little burial ground of the town.

Amanda is heartbroken, she has lost everything. Crying, she drives off in the camper. A police car with sirens and light stops her. It's Conrad. He tells her she can't leave this way. She is upset and he asked, who she thinks will take care of her. She doesn't know and doesn't care. She can take care of herself.

Then Conrad tells her to wait. He walks back to his car and takes off his uniform. In his underwear he walks back to the camper and tells Amanda to pull over. She doesn't have a driver's license, so he will drive. Amanda starts crying, Conrad comforts her, telling her that he will look after her in the future. Amanda calms a bit and says to him, they will have to find him some clothes. Conrad draws her close and tells her he has already put his clothes in the back of the camper the night before. He had carefully prepared his





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## The Last Word...

*A Mark of Excellence* is the quarterly newsletter of the **International Mark Hamill Fan Club**. Yearly dues are \$15 US, and include 4 consecutive issues of the newsletter, a membership card, access to the fan club area on the website, and special mailings as appropriate. For more information, please send a SASE to:

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Submissions, including photos or original artwork, are welcomed: final editing is the discretion of the editor. If you wish your photo or artwork returned, please enclose a SASE, and attach your name/address on the back of your submission.

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