



Book Tour Photo blog

October 23, 2006 By [Shawn Decker](#)

Shawn's MY PET VIRUS Book Tour Photo Blog

Well the book tour is over. But thanks to digital photography, the memories will last forever. Or at least until my computer crashes again and I lose everything. Good thing I got MySpace here to back me up! (A bad joke.)

Here are a few of the highlights, not touched upon in previous entries, of a book tour that kicked off here in Charlottesville and took me to NYC, DC, San Fran, Albuquerque, LA, Ann Arbor, Chicago, Richmond, Philly and Rehoboth Beach. If you and I crossed paths on this tour, please post a comment and share a story, so long as it is a glowing one about the author of MY PET VIRUS, of course.

The first jolt came when the local Barnes & Noble put up a poster for the book event. Like cheeseballs, Gwenn and I took many pictures. And then returned to take more once I was displayed in the window. I wanted to go inside and put my hand on the glass, like on the book cover, but Gwenn convinced me that this was crossing the line.

After the grand send off at home and at the University of Virginia, Gwenn and I went to NYC. We crashed with our Supersnack NYC AIDSWalk teammates and friends, Zach and Angela, and met the mascot of team Supersnack and fundraising tool extraordinaire, Greta the Wonder Bunny. Another team Supersnacker and fellow Waynesborian, Ben, joined Gwenn and I before the book event, and Ben snapped a photo of yet another window display of MY PET VIRUS.

The editor and PR genius of the book, Ken Siman, was thrilled that more than six people came to the NYC event (about 50 were there, thanks guys!). I told him to never doubt a positoid again.

Once NYC's balls were officially rocked, Gwenn and I hopped a train to DC. It was so nice to travel that way, and I just listened to my iPod and took a long nap. Our friends Michael and Tom greeted us at the train station, we'd see them again at the end of the book tour in Rehoboth Beach, where they hosted a book event at their shop, Detail. At Olsson's in DC, I read a passage from the chapter, Ric Flair & Me, about my childhood encounter with "The Nature Boy" Ric Flair. This picture never gets old for me.

From there it was off to San Francisco, where I was honored to be the first ever book event at the recently opened Books Inc store. Here you can see me signing a book for yet another Supersnacker, in a photo that was definitely not staged.

San Fran was crazy busy. I read at the Athenian School, and there was another book event in the Ferry Building at Book Passage. Danny, you around? Post about what a great book event all the other lame SF'ers missed due to apathy.

While having lunch one day, I had a spooky moment when I saw what appeared to be John Lennon in my hot chocolate. This is particularly telling, since one of my Godparents.. a huge factor in MPV's birth.. was among the first on the scene when JL was assassinated. I think this was John's way of saying that I'd written a decent book.

A campus book tour appearance took us to the University of New Mexico, where Gwenn and I had condom demonstrations and played with fake penises with the greeks. While in Albu, Gwenn and I set up shop at a great place called the Flying Star Cafe. We had two meals there, both good.

Before we left town, I did a book event at Borders. By this point, I'd been asked about my as-yet-unanswered challenge of John Grisham at just about every appearance. When I snapped this photo of the mountains, I wondered if John Grisham was following me around the country, secretly keeping track of my every move?

I'm not sure where this picture was taken. At some hotel when we weren't crashing with friends to save money so the tour could get us to more cities. This scene has been repeated hundreds of times since Gwenn and I started speaking at colleges through [Campuspeak](#) in 2000.

After Albuquerque it was off to LA. My book appearance there happened to fall on freakin' Yom Kippur! So my substantial Jewish fanbase wasn't able to flood the Borders to see me. On the plus side, I did get to see some characters (Jenny and Degen the writer) from the book, and Steve from the Hemo2Homo Connection [blogged about my visit](#).

Steve and I also agreed to come out of retirement, and we're going to be giving a Hemo2Homo Connection movie review of *Running With Scissors*. (Augusten Burroughs blurbed my book, and Hemo2Homo fans are wondering if I'll be able to be impartial in my review of the movie. Stay tuned to find out!)

From LA it was on the red eye to Ann Arbor, the home base of Borders. When we got to the hotel, Gwenn grabbed a newspaper. "Hey, your book event is listed!" Then she said, "Oh, shit..." "What?"

Turned out Jim McGreevey, the former governor of New Jersey, was reading in Ann Arbor, too. The same night. At the same time. McGreevey was fresh off his appearance from Oprah. Even though I didn't stand a chance, I wrote a rallying blog entitled "McGreevey VS. Decker in Ann Arbor... TONIGHT!"

I never posted the results. Until now.

In a shocking turn of events, I arrived at Borders to find none other than Jim McGreevey milling about. Of course, I had to get a photo with him for this blog. When I introduced myself, he said, "Oh, I know who you are!" He didn't *really*, but my face was plastered all about Borders, and I think the store clued him in to the book event that was taking place. (He was signing some copies of his book for Borders, before going around the corner to where his reading was taking place.)

The photo here will undoubtedly start the beating of the drums for a McGreevey/Decker ticket in the 2008 presidential election.

Even though my Ann Arbor reading was a modest success, I had a little more juice left, so I gave an impromptu reading in Starbucks for a couple of pals who got lost on their way in from Detroit. (This is not just a staged photo, I read the whole book in a stirring, 13-hour performance.)

By this time, I think I was feeling a bit loopy, so Gwenn drove the whole way from Ann Arbor to Chicago (about 4 hours). I was obviously starting to fall off my game, as I confusedly signed Paul, a

personable Borders employee. After we flew home, we drove to Richmond to speak at VCU (Virginia Commonwealth University). A professor saw the POZ with Gwenn and I on the cover, read the excerpt of MY PET VIRUS, and tracked us down. (She was stunned that we only lived an hour away, in Charlottesville!)

After a few days home, it was off to Philadelphia for a book event and to sign some MPV's at the 58th Annual National Hemophilia conference. I wrote extensively about this appearance in my previous entry. Oh, here's a photo of my thinblooded friend, Mark, who was chiefly responsible for my appearance at the conference.

From there, Gwenn and I drove to Rehoboth Beach to do an event sponsored by Camp Safe of Rehoboth and Lambda Rising. Our good friends hosted event at their shop, Detail, where I picked up a cool piece of artwork that says, "Please Groom Responsibly". (I thought it was fitting advice for a thinblood like me.)

That's Michael of Detail with Leave It To Beaver playing behind him on the TV. You can see Gwenn getting ready, with Gus the Boston Terrier looking on. Gus and his sister, Phoebe, have been pals for quite awhile, and they napped with me during my stay in Rehoboth, which was supposed to be the last event until a last minute visit to Sacred Heart University was arranged.

Gwenn and I had spoken there in 2003, and that is where we discovered TiVo. Allen, who works at SHU, gave Gwenn and a demonstration, and that fall in '03 we asked for TiVo for Christmas. When I signed Allen's book, I wrote, "To the Godfather of Little TiVo". (In MPV, I refer to TiVo as Gwenn and I's child.)

I hope to have dates and locations for future book events soon, but in the meantime I'll probably start blogging about boring, everyday life stuff. As always, I love to hear what you think of the book, and I am still thrilled after one month of publication that it is really out there.

Positively Yours,

Shawn Decker