Saturday Night Open Mike: Mary Jane Brooks Tottey.

Note: An "Edisto Virgin" is someone who was at Edisto for the first time in 2009. That included Mary Jane, Margaret Tabak Pashkin, and Jean Effinger Jost.

MJ: …I got to be reacquainted with a lot of Rochester Nazareth Grads. .. Edisto Virgins… and non-virgins.

Ques: Is that like the Vestal Virgins?

MJ: Well, no, I think they ran out of oil a long time ago.

So what I wanted to say was I had heard about Edisto. Edisto this and Edisto that. I wasn't quite sure what it was, you know. I thought maybe it was a spice or some weird exercise phenomenon…

Then I learned it was a place. And then I learned people could go there. And then I learned that you could be invited…or not. And, then I learned that if you could go to this Wiki place, then you were OK, you were half way there. And then if your people called her people, then …..laughter….

And then I got on that Wiki thing and then I got deleted but I am NOT a sensitive person (she aimed an imaginary "finger" gun at Pauline, Wiki Mistress). Are you a Wiccan or what? I go down the list. You know, I am going down the list, …Nora....I'm not there, It's always Brennan, Brooks …. Zielinski! I was gone. I'm in cyberspace

So, Nora always says, Nora always says to me, "Do you fit in, do you fit in yet?" because I tell her I don't quite fit in certain places. Well, I do fit in and I want to thank my new roomie Dilly Hintz! For the first time in 18 years I got to wake up with a full head of hair on the pillow next to me

I have to tell you I learned what Edisto is. It's not a place. It's …its' It's an experience. It is like a happening. It's just .You can't put it into words. You can't explain it to somebody. It's like, you know, *homesickness?* When you were a kid and you went to camp? Or to Nazareth your first couple of years? That feeling. That cold, sick feeling that's hard to put into words. We all felt it.

Especially Nora, because I got so much more mail than she did. We shared a mailbox I felt so terrible. I felt so bad, because my mail was all from boys! I also took some of her clothes**, but that's all right.

But anyway…so all I wanted to say is I now understand that Edisto is not in South Carolina. Edisto is not on the map. It's not a beach. And it is not a Gullah…. Is that how you say it? It is in your heart. It is a shared experience. It is something to treasure. And it is something that only the people who have been here and shared it with you would understand.

So thank you on behalf of all the virgins.

All I can say was it was a magnificent de-flowering

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** The Whole Truth:

Nora had this incredible teal colored mohair jumper that I just loved. It managed to somehow end up with my stuff when we graduated. I put it aside so I could wear it for a special occasion. I brought it out when I had my first baby. I planned to wear it home from the hospital so I could look glamorous like the mothers in magazines…or June Cleaver. I couldn't even get my big toe in it! God we were thin at Nazareth. I ended up wearing my Omar the Tent Maker dress home)