

ISSUE #11.
JUNE 1982.

POKE

ONE DOLLAR
OFF
40¢ SASE/STAMP

I DON'T
GET IT...

'COURSE
NOT.

VALENTINO
©1982.

for Elaine.

EVENTS UPCOMING

JULY 10 - DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO JULY
ISSUE OF INSIDE JOKE—FINAL!!
JULY 12 - STEVEN SCHEINER (26)
JULY 17 - SUE ROSNER (24)
JULY 26 - Gracie Allen b. 1906
JULY 28 - RICK FRIEDMAN (25)

JULY 26(?)
ROLDO
(sorry Roldo)

In next month's questionnair there will be
space for birthdays, anniversaries, cons,
anything you want commemorated in this co-
lumn. Please fill me in!

* INSIDE JOKE is put on each month by Elayne Wechsler, ear-
* ly this time, lucky youse. With such small print, can IJ make
* you go blind?
* EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.....Elayne Wechsler
* PRODUCTION ASSISTANT.....(probably mom)
* STAFF WRITERS
* CHRIS DOWNEY STEVEN SCHARFF
* CHRIS ESTEY KERRY THORNLEY
* CLAY GEERDES SUE ROSNER PAUL ZUCKERMAN
* RECORD REVIEWS: BRIAN CATANZARO, TIERNEY SMITH
* MOVIE REVIEWS: BOB BLACK, KEN FILAR
* TV REVIEW: KIEL STUART
* "BABOON DOOLEY" COMIC STRIP BY JOHN CRAWFORD;
* "RAT" COMIC STRIP BY PAT DOWNS;
* FRONT COVER BY VALENTINO; BACK PAGE BY TONY BALLARD
* OTHER CONTRIBUTORS THIS MONTH
* CONNON BARCLAY VERNON GRANT BRIAN PEARCE
* GREG BLAIR MIKE GUNDERLOY R.S. PREUSS
* DAVE CAMBRINI MICHAEL HACKER ROLDO
* MATT FEAZELL REGGIE HAYES GARY S. ROSIN
* RONALD B. FLOWERS GARY ISHLER JULIAN ROSS
* MACEDONIO GARCIA TULI KUPFERBERG JEROME SALZMANN
* MARK GELLER MORGAN LA FEY JOE SEMENOVICH
* DEBORAH GOLDEN BILL-DALE MARCINKO BILL SHUT
* CHARLES T. SMITH JIM TAUSCHER PEGGY TULLY
* DEAN TOMASULA
* Damn, screwed up alphabetical order again...oh, uh, SubG ads
* furnished by SubG, Last Int. ads by Last Int., ad nauseum...
* All writes retort to righters, blah blah blah...
* c. 1982 Pen-Elayne Enterprises - Kip M. Ghesin, Pres.
* PRINTED BY MIKEY & BOBBY AT COUNSEL PRESS, INC., NYC

WRITERS'/ARTISTS' GUIDELINES: Besides referring you to last
issue, this space, there's nothing really to add except what I
need and with what I'm overstocked at this point:
MOST NEEDED: - Spot Illustrations, able to be reduced (not too
intricate so that the work'd be lost in the shrinkage) to what I
normally use in these pages. Examples—the stuff by Roldo, Greg
Blair, Andy Kamm, Pat Downs...Spot illos can also include Adver-
tisements (straight or parody) for whatever you wish to publicize.
- Comedy—Typing up all this stuff gets to be downright depress-
ing! C'mon folks, comedy and creativity! A little more "c"...
- An Advice Column? Is anyone willing to answer, and even make
up, questions on "interpersonal" garbage? I'd love to start up
"License to Manipulate" once more, as a regular column. Anony-
mity guaranteed—in fact, pseudonyms preferred.
LEAST WANTED: - Reviews—Besides tending toward long-windedness
and eliciting incomprehension or boredom among readers who aren't
as specifically intense about the medium as the reviewer, reviews
are by nature time-locked and can't be put on standby; therefore,
they're the first to be rejected outright when I get too much
stuff. I'm not even sure how much of a direct relationship re-
views have to actual comedic/creative output (the equation is prob-
ably, the more 'technical' and less entertaining, the less related).
And also, I ALREADY HAVE 'OFFICIAL STAFF REVIEWERS' for
movies (Ken Filar), records (Brian Catanzaro) and books (Jill Zim-
merman), who may not be more nor less 'qualified' than anyone else
but who are regulars and receive priority.
- Stories/Essays, especially serious fiction. Even though I now
automatically reject anything over 2,000 words (one object of IJ
being to let everyone get their fair turn, as you can see by the
large contributor list above—participatory, not individual egos,
dig), things still pour in. Allow me a few months for drain-off,
writers who've already sent me stuff. And again, I'd prefer to
get more COMEDY AND SATIRE, as these seem to be the hardest to
write and the least submitted so far.

94104
Inguists, 55 Sutter, #487, S.F., CA
just a swallow away, Cuning-
Future tense? Parody? Relief? It's
Present tense? Omnipresent tense.
PAST TENSE? Surpressed tense.

ADVANCE APOLOGY DEPARTMENT -
THIS ISSUE HAS NOT BEEN PROOFREAD!

acknowleditorialetc.

Welcome to Issue #11, the only one so far with no front page
story. Actually, I'm not at all upset by that this month, as it
gives me one less thing to type up, and as it gives the magnifi-
cent talent of VALENTINO room to play...

This is probably more of a pseudo-issue than the last. The
questionnaire and T-shirt logo poll must be postponed again due to
lack of space, but will definitely be in July fnord. So will Kip's
diatribe on LOVE, being that your humble editor still finds her-
self within its throes and thus has kept the ol' a.e. at bay. Al-
so, you'll notice the super-reduction bit again this month (causing
Bramson to remark, "The issue's reduced? What's the new sale
price?"), so break out the magnifiers. This is because the two
stories I've so mercilessly and regrettably shrunk were accepted
BEFORE I realized how LONG they were, and also before I capped the
final limit on story length for submissions. However, I do highly
recommend you strain to read the tiny stuff—Mike Hacker's *Club
Polymer* sounds like typical NJ-singles-on-the-prowl fare, and Ro-
nald Flowers' *In Mother's Image* may remind some of Robert Hein-
lein's terrific short story, my favorite, "All You Zombies...".

Incidentally, if you or someone you know publishes a newsletter
and wants 2000+ word stories, please let me know. I've had to
turn down some incredible stuff, and many of these authors still
don't have markets. If I get responses, I'll have some kind of
pseudo-ad thing next month.

Also next month—Stories by Deborah Golden, Gary S. Rosin,
Connon Barclay, R.S. Preuss, Steven Ormiston, Susan Going Will-
house, Gunnar Larson, Eleanor Hardin, Ralph Roberts, Richard C.
Dixon, Dan Brenner (okay, I'll stop, just PLEASE DON'T SEND ME
STORIES FOR NEXT MONTH!), back page filler by Roldo, masthead by
Pat Downs, art, comics, columns, etc., by the usual. Oh, and
the first chapter of Richard Weinstock's as-yet-unpublished
book *The Law and Order Handbook* (an exclusive—yow...!).

The deadline for all submissions (EXCEPT STORIES!—okay, I'll
shut up) is JUNE TENTH (10). Actually, it's technically June 7
postmark or so, since I want to have it in hand by the tenth.
The earlier you send stuff in, the better chance it has of get-
ting printed. STAFF WRITERS: Please call or write if you're
NOT going to submit work by the deadline. IJ is often held up
just because of you...Speaking of SWs, welcome Brian Catanzaro
to the ranks, keeping the official number at 13, as Mally and
Maggie take hiatuses.

Subscriptions to INSIDE JOKE are 2 20¢ stamps for the po'
folks and \$1 for those with a conscience about those things. I
would, of course, prefer the dollar. Thanks for their donations
to John Fremont of CONTACT HIGH; Bill-Dale Marcinko; Carl Nord;
Don McLeod; Connon Barclay; and S.J. Rayner. Checks are wonder-
ful, but please, folks, if you're gonna send 'em for whatever
reason, don't make 'em out to INSIDE JOKE, okay? Just to me.

"Me" is ELAYNE WECHSLER, and the address for the above-
mentioned "me" remains for now at
418 East Third Avenue
Roselle, New Jersey 07203

USED CARS • LAND • WHISKEY • MANURE • NAILS
FLY SWATTERS • RACING FORMS • BONGOS

RICK FRIEDMAN

MIAMI BEACH • PALM BEACH • CRANFORD

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WARS FOUGHT
REVOLUTIONS STARTED
ASSASSINATIONS PLOTTED
GOVERNMENTS RUN
UPRISINGS QUELLED

RACES FIXED
TIGERS TAMED
BARS EMPTIED
VIRGINS CONVERTED
COMPUTERS VERIFIED
ORGIES ORGANIZED



On my throne I sit and sit and sit
sometimes wondering, sometimes
Not even thinking about
The things I should be
Thinking.

On my throne I sit and sit and sit
sometimes in pain but other
Times in pain
In fear, fear of the unknown
and
The darkness which steals in
around my throne and
Around my soul - Morgan La Fey

RONALD
WILSON
REAGAN
666



Fan Noose

Newsletters, 'zines' and 'apa's can acquire fan followings the same as any other medium. Two publications I'd only heard of through their grapevines of loyal readers have finally made it to me, for which I'm mighty grateful: **RADIOTEXT** is the "semi-unofficial voice of the listeners of WFMU, 91.1 listener-sponsored radio", probably one of the only free-form FM stations remaining in this commercialized country, and it's located in East Orange, NJ. The publication also accepts just about anything. Issue #2 had stuff by NICE's Bart Plantenga and by John "Baboon Dooley" Crawford, to name a couple. They operate on the same principle as IJ—they'd like a coupla stamps for mailing, but a contribution wouldn't hurt. Tell Joe Varone IJ sent ya. 131 Claremont Ave., Montclair, NJ 07042... **ETHEL THE FROG?** Yes, that's right. Another brainchild of Tony Renner and Steve Pick, the most recent issue (#5) features fun letters and editorials, good poems, and fantastic stories. Even a serial. Very worth it. At least a SASE to Steve at 5575 Winchelsea Dr., St. Louis, MO 63121...Free Kluck Prods. (from which have appeared 3 IJ readers so far) has come out, joy of joys, with **SNAFU #3!** Work by the usuals, Roldo and Zastre, Bobby, Hatte, McTruck, plus a new name (at least to me), D.M. Clearsky. And no, Clearsky didn't get the title to his bit from me. Spontaneous combustion, dig. \$1.50 (adults only) to Roldo at 1232 Downing St., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3E 2R7 Canada... **Highbrow lowbrow-comedy fans, STOP!** #2 has an in-depth look at "The Honeymooners", the band the Sick F*cks, and great comics. Also a poll, for those who are into it. 50¢ or 3 20¢ stamps (you have to be joking, guys, that's cheap), to Dale Ashmun at 55 1st Ave., #16, New York, NY 10003...Contrary to popular belief (read "successful media manipulation"), the **Youth International Party** ("Yippies") is still very much alive. As far as I can tell, Abbie Hoffman's still working and writing for Y.I.P. publications, and so are Paul Krassner and Tuli Kupferberg. Their major literary work this year is **THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE 70'S**, now out in a \$5 limited edition, soon to be re-released in its entirety for \$10 mail order. To join the Y.I.P. and receive a year's subscription to their magazine **OVERTHROW**, send \$10 to YIP/OVERTHROW, P.O. Box 392, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10012...For those who wonder at such things, I have been putting less Julian Ross puzzles in lately because Julian features them (and more legibly, at that) in his own highly witty 'smorgasbord', **MAGAZINE**. One buck to 1106 N. Vine St., #409, Los Angeles, CA 90038...Some new stuff starting up, as '82 proves to be a big year for small press renewal: Due out in September, and accepting submissions till the end of June, is Pete Labriola's **TWISTED IMAGE**, "slightly fucked-up humor that the whole family can enjoy". Your editor hopes to write a column similar to "Funny You Should Mention It" for that. Subs are \$5 for 5 issues, but I think Pete's giving away one for free and free ads. Oh, ask him, c/o Bruce Duncan, Berkeley Inn Hotel #414, 2501 Haste Street, Berkeley, CA 94704... **AUDIO FILES** is a "new music cassette mag" looking for reviews, interviews, local music news, music itself, etc. Audiophiles who know IJ's aversion to publishing too many reviews (see p. 2) would do well to write to Tina Borotto at P.O. Box 185, New Town Br., Boston, MA 02258... **Michael Pinto**, still active with his **STAR BLAZERS** fan club, also works with the Long Island Science Fiction Society on their newsletter, the **L.I.S.F. TIMES**. Any interested persons, contact Michael at 1622 Stevens Ave., Merrick, NY 11566...I won't mention which IJ staffer does the artwork, but the writing's just as good, and quite informative, on **THE FELIX LETTER**, a monthly nutrition commentary. \$10 for a 12-issue sub to Clara Felix, Box 7094, Berkeley, CA 94707...Joel A. Shipley says of **CONSTANT CAUSE**, "What we do is best expressed in the last 'Wretch Takes to Wrestling' by Cheryl Cline. We distribute solely independent and self-financed stuff." Don't ask me. Free catalog. 679 Arbor Lane, Westminster, PA 18976...Macedonio Garcia's **TALES FROM THE INSIDE** #4 has gotten out. Strong statements about prison life, disguised as a mini. Available for 50¢ from Clay Geerdes at Box 7081, Berkeley, CA 94707...Latest issues out in the following: **NYU's THE PLAGUE** (Room 404, 21 Washington Pl., New York, NY 10003[?]); **Jim Morton's TRASHOLA** (1449 Washington #4, San Francisco, CA 94109); and **David D. Ginsberg's** plug column **FANDOMANIA** (Thanks for the mention, Dave—P.O. Box 322, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858). All three of these are more or less free, so send SASE...Dana Snow, who must have a near photographic memory to chronicle exactly all comedy-related happenings in his daily life (which he did, and sent me a written "transcript" of same, with the two events we went to while I was in L.A.), is planning at least one more issue of the **GOONZINE**. 7356 Beverly Boulevard, #3, Los Angeles, CA 90036...Those folks who went through stuff like Uncle Floyd, Bobby Sherman, the Beatles, Monkees, and any number of other things know that cults can be scary, incredibly creative, or run the gamut in-between. William A. White runs an excellent example of the positive side of a specific cult; namely, **The Rocky Horror Picture Show**. His zine's called **HOLLYWOOD HORRO**, and is unbelievably cheap—available for only a SASE. Give 'im a buck, it's good stuff. My favorite is the parody "The Skippy Horror Preppie Show", a combo of RHPS and the best of Lisa Birnbach. A must for RHPS fans. Contris welcome. 3441 S.W. 15th St., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33312...Last-minute additions: Carol Pape, whose letter got in a bit late for "Says You" (remember folks, deadline for everything, including LOCs, is the 10th in my hands), asks, "Anybody want to become co-conspirators on **THE BLURB ZINE** (ad-zine of misc. content, sf style)? I

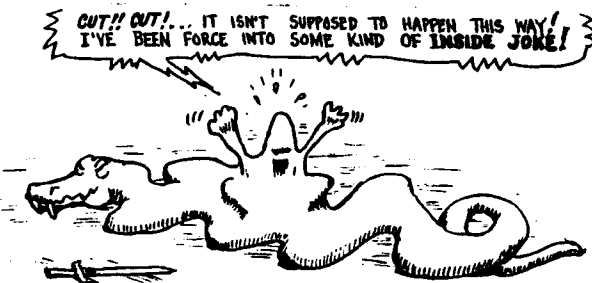
need something other than a military address [CP has just joined the Navy] or I'll have to can the poor child or just forward all materials to another established outfit (Julian Ross, are you listening?). Alas, it's been on standby for a while anyway while my wrist healed and then my bank account." Anyone desiring to help Carol, write her at 5B University Apts., Clemson, SC 29631...Addendum to my previous mention of Clay Geerdes and **COMIX WORLD**—**COMIX WAVE** #9 will be out next month, \$1.75 per. Address somewhere above...Kiel Stuart is associate editor of **UNDINAL SONGS**, a very pro-looking zine "focusing on necrophilia and vampirism in modern literature". Poems and stories about death as lover personified. "Any nut and bolt pieces of macabrix" are welcome. For more info contact Kiel's managing editor, Leilah Wendell, at P.O. Box 70, Oakdale, LI, NY 11769.

Funny You Should Mention It...

"...those are the headlines; now the rumors behind the news..."

DOBSHEAD HAS "VERY TIME OF HIS LIFE"—Prior to our last excursion to the wilds of the "Late Night With David Letterman" studio audience (see Kiel Stuart's article elsewhere this issue), Lisa Bottini and I trekked through the Village, where we met a rather goofy-looking Yippie (see "Fan Noose") who was **GIVING AWAY DOBSHEAD BUTTONS!** You know what Dobsheads are, of course. I took a few and wore one on line ("in queue", for the British among you). At least one loyal SubGenius recognized and received a button, and then the "Late Night" staff passed out their famous and exciting (=yawn=) Audience Questionnaire (the old ones, yet). Kip M. Ghesin, Alter Ego, said "Stand aside, Ktd," and carefully filled one out, pinning the Dobshead to the back. When Letterman's announcer, Bill Wendell, came out for the audience warm-up, he was wearing it. He called out and mispronounced Kip's name (Kip had since left, deciding against "too much fun"), I giggled and he turned towards me (an honest mistake), asking me whose face was on the button. I proudly (and loudly) exclaimed, in a you-mean-you-don't-know? tone, "Why, it's 'J.R. 'Bob' Dobs', the 'high' deity of the Church of the SubGenius!" He double-took, said slowly, "O-kay," thanked me and moved on. More importantly, tho, is the fact that the button registered on Letterman's own semi-consciousness enough for him to questioningly point to it on Wendell's jacket upon entering the studio. It is starting...If you too wish to attend tapings of Letterman's show, they're free. Send a postcard request to the show c/o NBC, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10020 and all that...

STREET VENDOR UPDATE—Three years ago I was dying for a pair of them, to complete my Halloween costume. The costume's still lying around, so I picked 'em up in San Jose, thinking I'd never find 'em anywhere local, right? I was way off. "They" are those ridiculous, glitter-coated, bobbing antennae now selling for a buck or so on the streets. The perfect complement to absolutely nothing. Who wears these besides the folks who sell them (and they're not even all doing it, as it messes up their Afros)? Roller disco teens? Okay, I saw a few at the rally (see below), but I think they too were just on folks trying to make money off 'em. But there must be some market, or there wouldn't be so many merchants. Who the hell is buying this crap? Just goes to show you, you can rake it in from any useless junk if you package it the right way. Besides the Glitter-Bobbers (yep, they don't even have a name—it's a pisser watching these pseudo-illiterates trying to shout their advertisements, and resigning themselves to "Get 'em here, get your, uh, only a buck"), digital watches are big this summer, and Freddie/Frieda the Frog & friends (a pig and a sheep, I think) have also made sporadic appearances. In the edible department, ice cream (Haagen Dasz, Frusen Gladje, and other unspellables) and variations on last year's fabulously successful Chipwick are the big attractions... **I KNOW YOU'VE HEARD IT ALL, BUT...** We made history. The paltry and political, conservatives to Communists, some came for the music (was the stage rushed when Bruce made his surprise appearance?), some for the cause, most for the excitement, the experience. "Just like Woodstock," was a familiar whisper. Or not. The only ones dressed like hippies were the kids who are too young to have been there the first time around. Not many punks spotted, but then we weren't particularly looking for them. The Disarmament Rally at Central Park on June 12, 1982 was the biggest ever in US history, garnering (by consensus estimate) 750,000 to a million people. Description fails me. I was there. So were a lot of others. Am I waxing too poetic? Thanks to Jill, Gary & Lainie for sticking together with me. Ah yes, we marched parway with the writers...



(the continuing saga of Konan the Klutz)

© Michael GIANT—1982

Looking for Sarcasm

by Chris Downey

NURSERY RHYMES FROM THE SIDEWALK

Gather 'round, boys and girls, and I'll tell you a story. A story about an honest dirt farmer. A poor but really honest dirt farmer and...three young Swedish airline hostesses. Blonde, curvaceous, twin airline hostesses. Well...two were twins and one was their friend but they were beautiful and wild. They were just...they were just really nice chicks, you know? Anyway, there was this poor but ignorant, honest dirt farmer and these three young stewardesses. Well, maybe this isn't such a good story after all. What happens? Uh, well...the three girls are driving in the rain, you know? And their car breaks down in front of this farmer's house. They get out and knock on the door and he lets them in. He tells them there's a phone in the kitchen, but there's this...this big pot of cheese sauce, and...uh...they call a cab and it picks them up and takes them to the airport. Yeah, that's it. Well, I have to go now.

MORE NURSERY RHYMES FROM THE SIDEWALK

I've got a real story for you this time, so tuck yourselves in and get ready. This is a story about a little red train engine going up a steep hill. Now, this little red train engine looked up that hill and was sure there was now way he could make it up. He had never been up a hill so steep in his life but he was determined to try his best. He said I-think-I-can! I-think-I-can! He was about halfway up when he thought "Why bother? I don't really want to go up this hill. What do I get out of it? I'd rather be sitting in a train depot in Miami Beach." So the Little Red Train Engine stopped halfway up the hill and began to roll backwards. He continued to roll backwards until he came to a curve in the tracks along a steep cliff. When he got to the edge, the last two cars of the train filled with happy-go-lucky Cub Scouts fell over and plunged 300 feet down. Later that week, the Little Red Train Engine was towed to a train yard in Fort Lauderdale where it spent the long cold winter.

THE MAN WITH THE X-RATED SLEEVE

It was a cool March evening and I pulled my hat down over my ears as I stepped onto the street. I'd just spent the greater part of my Thursday evening in O'Reilly's Bar and Grill watching the Islanders trounce the Boston Bruins on TV with some buddies of mine. I hadn't gotten three steps when I heard a hissing sound like the valve on a burst radiator. I turned my head into the dark alley beside me and saw a squat little guy with a tweed jacket twice as large as his whole frame. When he saw me, he sort of went into a spasms trying to get me into the alley. He was mumbling something I couldn't understand and I figured I'd better move on before he went weird on me. As I was about to move away, he grabbed my arm and pulled me in.

"Uh oh, now I'm in for it!" I thought. Suddenly he was yelling again. This time hysterically. "Lustful exotic dancers! Erotic gyrations! Nubile Alabaster flesh vixens! LIVE SEX ACTS!" Oh, that was it, I thought. One of those porn hucksters from Eighth Avenue. How he got to Farmingdale I'll never know. I figured he'd probably point out some sleazy bar down the street and let me go.

"Where is this extravaganza?" I said sarcastically. He looked over his shoulder up and down the sidewalk as if to keep the location a secret he would share only with me. Pulling me closer, he said, "In my sleeve." "Whassat? I thought you said, 'in my sleeve', what didja say?" "In my sleeve. IN MY SLEEVE!" he said, pointing to his oversized jacket. "One dollar, just ONE DOLLAR!"

Oh, no, I realized, it's going to cost me money to get outta here. I handed him the dollar and peered cautiously into his sleeve. At first I thought I must have lost my marbles but it was true! Live sex acts in his sleeve. It was fantastic. I couldn't turn my eye away. Finally it was he who pulled his arm back and took off down the alley. "Come back!" I yelled, "I have another dollar!" But he was gone. Dejected I walked the rest of the way home and went to sleep.

ON BEING WATCHED

by Clay Geerdes

I think this is about self-consciousness and how you become aware of people watching you and how you gradually cease to think about hem watching.

But it may be about something else, too. I seldom know what is going to happen when I sit down at the typewriter. I never have any ending in mind, not like those outliners, the textbook writers, the folks who go by the book. I just type along and the first thing I know I'm back in the third grade in an ugly brick school in Lincoln, Nebraska, and there is going to be an Open House, and my part in the program will be a chalk talk, the first of many that I will do in my lifetime. That evening I drew and told the story of the three little pigs. Big deal. I had seen the cartoon and read it over in a comic book and heard the story several hundred times from my grandfather. When my turn came, I strolled up to the blackboard, told my story and drew my pigs; I was aware that I was being watched by my mother and whoever else was in the room, but I wasn't very nervous; actually, I was high off the experience. I always enjoyed being the center of attention, being the oldest in my family, and I was rarely frustrated in getting to that central spot.

Now, in high school, things were different. I wasn't a bad cartoonist by that time, but cartooning was no status. The only spot to be in was one on the football or basketball team. Well, I was into that, but I had a crippled father at the time, which meant I had to work afternoons and evenings. Couldn't go to football practice. Had to work game nights. That was that. So I withdrew during that period. Stayed to myself. Worked. Read a lot of books. Drew personal cartoons in spiral notebooks. Hung out with a girl I met in a drugstore downtown. When my father died (I was almost 15), I quit high school and went to work fulltime. Got a car. Drifted into the night life. Played a lot of pool. Met a lot of people outside the high school scene, some of them interesting and enlightening, others mean and to be avoided.

I was 20 when the party raids were happening around the country. I have no idea where they started, but I understood what they meant. A friend and I went over to the University of Nebraska campus to watch the police mix it up with the students. Women were throwing their underwear out of the dorm windows. Cops and firemen were hosing people down. It was a lot of fun. Sexual repression was very big in the fifties. It was a period of little sexual information, lots of talk, no pill, rubbers that dried out in your wallet and were useless if you did score, and not a few shotgun weddings. In the parking lots, guys passed around bottles in paper sacks and talked about "dry-humping", "blue balls" and "making out".

I was not watched much in those days.

I did a lot of watching, though. The women were into cashmere sweaters and falsies (pointed bras with foam pads built in to give them a size and fullness few of the women had). We all used to groan when Joanne Stemp walked into class.

And none of us will ever forget our hygiene teacher. She was six-foot-three and built like an edifice unmentionable in IJ. I'm sure we all learned a lot more from looking at her than we did from those cornball lectures and idiot training films.

But I said this was a piece about being watched.

You're always aware of it when you first join a class or a group. You know everyone is looking you over, checking you out, listening to your first class comment to see whether or not you're a brain or a nerd. Once everyone knows your place in the pecking order, they relax and you can lapse into peaceful anonymity if you choose. If you don't choose, you can get your ass in trouble anytime by "talking out". I was great at that. My fifth grade teacher had a little notebook. You got a black mark every time you spoke out without permission. I had so many black marks in that book, I was practically living at the school. You had to stay after school 5 minutes for each mark. I think I still owe her some time. A sweet lady, though. She was a painter herself, and always encouraged my art. Not like those shiteheads who said drawing was a waste of time. I should concentrate on math so I would be able to get a job in some insurance company.

By college, it was different. No one pays that much attention to the others in college. They're too into themselves by then. You meet the people around you and those who invite you to study with them, but you can go through a lot of college classes in relative anonymity if you choose to stay to yourself. The groups, the Greeks, etc., are outside classes. If you join a group, you really learn what it means to be watched, evaluated, dominated, pushed around, told what to do, how to act, what to wear, etc. The image of the group is at stake and everyone has to conform to it. In a lot of fraternities, that means you almost have to be an alcoholic. Maybe that's why I never got into a fraternity. I'm too light a drinker and not much of a conformist. If anyone tries to tell me what to do or how to act, I get this faraway look in my eye. I do as I please most of the time, whatever the cost.

I really became aware of the cost of being watched when I was a professor. The first time I walked on campus with my status, I thought I was Moses coming down from Sinai. It was that kind of high. No one had any idea who I was that day, but I knew and that made me the little King. After I taught a few classes and the word got around who I was, I became aware that there were people I didn't know watching me eat those dogburgers they served in the commons. They knew who I was because the students in my classes had pointed me out to them, but I didn't know who they were. For awhile, it was disturbing. I would go to a bowling alley or somewhere during the evening just to be alone and read through a set of papers and I would become aware that people were watching me. What were they watching me for? I used to sit around in coffeshops and be ignored. Now I was onstage when I ate some carrot cake at the Caffe Midi. My privacy was gone. I knew how celebrities must feel, not being able to go anywhere without strangers' eyes on them.

Try to have an affair under such circumstances! And me married with a nice wife at the time.

What happened was I ceased to think about it. I got used to knowing that the people around me knew me whether I knew them or not and I just didn't care. I have to confess, though, that it was nice to be able to sit in a Berkeley coffeehouse on weekends and just relax anonymously, to know that no one was watching me bit a nail or scratch indiscriminately.

These days I have the experience of being known by a lot of people at the comic conventions where I guest speak in the summers, but the rest of the time I can live a quiet anonymous life. What I learned was that being known by a lot of people doesn't mean you have a lot of friends. Actually, notoriety costs friends. You have to deal with envy, jealousy, misinterpreted motives . . .

- CLAY GEERDES 5-15-82

SONG PARODY #1 -
"Indians and Japanese
live together in purple dugouts -
submitted by Sue Koster"

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MODERN INFECTION
by Cannon Barclay
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Prognosis:
Terminal Itis.

Notes from a Nut

by Paul Zuckerman

BIG EYES, BIG TEETH

There's one thing I'd like to find out before I die, and I need the help of all you women out there. There's a special phenomenon about females that I noticed some years ago, which I've never seen explained in any article or book. Figured I'd better go right to the Source. Ladies, why do you have bigger EYES and bigger TEETH than men?

You don't believe me? Go get your husband or boyfriend. If you don't have a spouse or male companion, just pick up some guy off the street—tell him it's for an experiment and that you want to compare the size of something you both have. Then, both of you stand in front of a mirror. Now, smile. You see! Your teeth are LONGER than his. Probably wider and thicker, too! And your eyes are much bigger than his. The rest of your face is small juxtaposed next to his—nose, ears, etc.—but NOT the eyes and teeth. WHY?

My theory is that when cavemen killed mastodons and other pachyderms for meat, they ate the softest parts themselves and threw the toughest pieces to the cavewomen. Chewing on these tougher chunks of meat, over millions of years, thus caused women to develop bigger and stronger teeth.

As for the bigger eyes, my guess is that it was the result of the cavewomen exclaiming, every day, at mealtime, in wide-eyed astonishment: "OOGA? BOOGA UHGA AG ERRGH?!" Which, in Prehistoric table conversation, was the grunt equivalent of: "WHAT?! The RUMP piece AGAIN?!"

On the other hand, maybe these daily rituals had nothing whatsoever to do with the evolution of women's bigger eyes and teeth. Is it hereditary? Genetic? I know there are certain things a mother tells a daughter when she reaches puberty. Is this (trait) one of them?

This mystery first came to my attention some years back when, as a youth, I was looking at the picture sleeves of some 45rpm's. One featured the pensive gaze of Julie London. She had the biggest eyes I'd ever seen. Her melancholy, wistful look appealed to me, but it was those BIG EYES that really turned me on. Some years later I saw a photo of a British actress, Rita Tushingham, whose huge globules surpassed even Julie London's immense wistful-looking orbs.

I began looking for this manifestation in other women. That's when I discovered the TEETH differential, too. Big eyes were one thing, but big teeth drove me wild beyond passion, beyond human understanding, beyond mental comprehension, beyond the light from the most distant quasar.

This was brought home to me a few months back when Carly Simon was being interviewed on Tom Snyder's show. Up until then, I'd never particularly cared for Carly Simon—undoubtedly because I'd never seen the size of her teeth before, since she rarely appears on tv. When she smiled and her lips pulled back revealing those purely whites, she displayed a set of CHOPPERS that would've made a HORSE envious! Even on my little 12" tv screen they were GI-GANTIC. I tossed and turned all that night.

And to think she's got two sisters! I wonder what their teeth look like! Imagine the financial drain on their parents when the three were growing up—the TOOTHPASTE bills must've been ENORMOUS!

If only I could get a photograph of Carly Simon's monstrous teeth—in color—it would be my most prized possession. Next to my issues of INSIDE JOKE, of course.

But, the question of why women have bigger EYES and TEETH than men still remains unanswered. What is the reason for it? Any female who knows can write to me direct. Send the explanation to: PAUL ZUCKERMAN, 745 Westgate, St. Louis, MO 63130.

HOW TO BECOME RICH

If you'd known gold and silver would sell for \$800 and \$50 an ounce a few years ago, wouldn't you have bought gold and silver coins when they were only a few dollars each? Wouldn't you like to know what the next sure-fire, profit-making product will be? But, who knows what's going to become valuable in a few years? By the time you find out, the item is so expensive that you can't afford to buy it. If you try to buy it cheaply from country bumpkins, even these dumb hicks know it's become worth 50 or 100 times more than its original cost.

But, suppose you got a hot tip about something that will increase in price BEFORE everybody else finds out? You can go out and purchase hundreds of them while they're still within a reasonable price range.

Now you have that chance. You can stock up on the next Best Investment of the '80s while it's still dirt cheap. EMPTY PAINT CANS.

Within a year they'll be selling for \$100 a can! But only if it's the metal pails with a handle. And only if you've saved the lid. Paint spots on the outside will bring in a few dollars more. Rust stains on the inside will guarantee you \$150. Minimum!

Go to your garage now, don't waste any time, do it before you forget. If you don't have a garage or any paint cans, ask your neighbors. They'll probably give you all they've got for nothing. If not, offer them \$5.00 a can. If they ask you why you'd be willing to pay so much money for a worthless old can, tell them that sculpture is your hobby and you want to make a statue out of nothing but old paint cans. That way, they won't get suspicious. Brilliant, huh?

Pretty soon, word will spread, and people will actually be knocking on your door: "You the crazy person buying paint cans?" Pay them whatever they demand. Then, just sit back and wait.

(continued next column)

Everybody will laugh at you and make fun of you and say you belong in a mental institution. But, when the price of used, empty paint cans skyrockets overnight, your insane hoarding will be vindicated. When everybody else is running all over the place trying to find paint cans, they won't be able to—you will have them.

Naturally, unless you'll be able to withstand the name-calling, the crank telephone calls in the middle of the night, the defacement of your residence and vehicle with degenerate epithets alluding to your desire for paint cans, then don't get involved. Otherwise, quit your job and devote all your time to collecting paint cans. The size of the can or brand name doesn't matter—just gather as many as you can. Make it an obsession. Then, prepare to retire to a life of luxury. They will soon be worth a fortune.

This has been an Exclusive Investment Tip for INSIDE JOKE readers only. If you want to receive more of these money-making ideas in the future, keep subscribing to IJ.

Meditations of a Manchurian Candidate

by Kerry Thornley

I guess I must've met Judith Laszik in 1977 just after I moved to Tujunga, California, from Atlanta. During the Sixties, I learned, they called her Judas Priest and she ran a commune at a campground in Big Tujunga Canyon. Plastic personalities bore me. What I call the intelligence community and what many others call my paranoid delusional system is full of them. Jude, as most folks call her now, swore and spit tobacco—so I liked Jude. We didn't become close, though, until 1979 when my landlady kicked me off her estate and I was invited to crash at Jude's, where she lived with her black boyfriend names Whitey and her young daughter, Mariposa del Sol.

By that time I had been asked to join this or that intelligence community faction, as I perceive reality, and had refused—since part of that perception is my anarchistic notion that they are all oppressors. For that reason I was called the Butterfly, and it so happens that Mariposa del Sol means in Spanish Butterfly of the Sun. She seemed like someone's idea of how I looked to others.

Before long I further perceived that little Mariposa spoke to me always in the cant I had partly developed and partly learned for communicating with people who wanted to convey to me information without blowing their own covers. As she was moreover well versed in intelligence community events, it occurred to me one day to ask her how old she was. Mariposa replied by holding up five fingers—a gesture that meant in my system of signals, "Anything can happen," while the number five was then used to signify: "The question is meaningless."

Already informed convincingly that I was a mind control subject or "sleeper" who receives subliminal nocturnal messages from people like Gerald Ford, I interpreted Mariposa's behavior as evidence that she was a far more advanced model of similar technology, whose every waking word and move could be dictated electronically. When I was staying at Jude's, another little girl elsewhere in Southern California shot a number of her schoolmates with a .22 rifle given her by her father. When asked why she did it, she said, "I don't like Mondays." That was the inspiration for the rock'n'roll song containing the line, "...the silicon chip inside her head gets switched to overload..."

I like little girls. They even sexually attract me. I have in fact written articles admitting as much. And not often enough I have been able to share autoerotic experiences with six-year-olds, usually with mother's approval. For that, I'm sometimes called a child molester. What do they call those who steal children's minds?

With Mariposa I was restrained and quite proper in that area. Too freaky. One Saturday morning she stood next to the television and said, "Which cartoon shall I watch? This one?"—at which point she made a little bow in my direction—"Or this one?", turning on the television.

Save Our Endangered Species

by Reggie Hayes

Late 1985. Comedy shows have taken over network television. J.R. is dreaming of Jeannie, Michael Landon is working for Alan Funt, and Quincy has just performed an autopsy on himself. The golden age of comedy has arrived. Or should we say the golden age of laugh tracks?

If the scenario does come true, many of today's highly rated dramas will fall to the side. We, the viewers, cannot sit idly by and watch this tragedy take place. Our drama shows must be saved no matter what the cost to quality. The only real solution we have is to convert these drama shows into comedy shows. This way, and this way only, will we save our favorite dramas from that great re-run in the sky.

The show that we'll have to change first, in order to set an example for others, is that old standard, "Lou Grant". With a few minor personality changes, we can make "Lou Grant" a show that can virtually last forever. A show that will rank with "Hello, Larry" as one of the all-time greats.

The first character that we'll deal with is Mrs. Margaret Pynchon, owner of the Los Angeles Tribune, the newspaper which "Lou Grant" revolves around. If we're going to make this show into a comedic masterpiece, Margaret is going to have to loosen up. Let that hair down. Get dirty.

NEW WAVE: Withered on the vinyl. Sophisticated, eh? To be bored is to be boring. It's art, but is it good? Pala-Poseurs. 55 Sutter #487, S.F., CA 94104.

PULL THE PLUG on radio evangelists. Less aural sects, more oral sex! Ranters. 55 Sutter #487, S.F., CA 94104.

As she presently stands, Mrs. Pynchon is a very rich and elegant lady. Now there is nothing wrong with this, but as for getting laughs—she ranks right up there with Charles Manson. Elegance just doesn't tickle the funny bone, so we'll have to extinguish that handicap. We'll give her some Calvin Kleins and a tennis racket, and watch the chuckles open up. Rich, on the other hand, can be, and often is, funny. If it's played right, Mrs. Pynchon's wealth could have the masses holding their sides and pleading for mercy. To accomplish this, we'll give her the inability to buy anything useful with her money. She'll spend it on raccoon purses, rare Twinkie box tops, and chocolate covered weasels.

The next character that we'll put through the comedic assembly line of repairs is Billie Newman. In the last couple of years the writers of the show have tried to liven Billie up by giving her a baseball-playing boyfriend who eventually becomes her husband. The first thing that has to be done is to get rid of that unnecessary baggage. Face it, husbands are boring, especially if they're almost never seen on camera. But, for the sake of the baby, we better keep him around. The baby? Yes, that's right, we're giving Billie a baby. Was there ever anything funnier than when Lucy had little Ricky? I know, Billie will have the baby, but at the last second the infant will be traded to the Boston Globe for a photographer to be named later.

As Billie learns the ins and outs of being a mother, there will be all sorts of situations that arise. Lou will become the most unreliable babysitter ever to spill beer on the living room carpet. Rossi, in turn, will uncover a story on black market babies and spend three weeks trying to find out if Billie's baby is actually from the black market. At the end of his research he will find out that he was the only black market baby ever connected to the Tribune, and he was only sold during clearance at wholesale price.

Which brings us to Animal. (Don't question why that brings us to Animal, just take my word for it.) Animal is the perfect character to convert to comedy. In fact, there seems to be something about him that incites laughter. Perhaps it's his stylish way of dressing, or maybe it's his clean-cut appearance. I would say that not many changes are needed to make Animal the funniest character without a real name since Meathead. What? Meathead had a name? I know that, but I doubt that many people would know Dennis Price if he took their picture. That's right—Dennis Price.

The only changes needed for Animal are the additions of a girlfriend (animalfriend?) and a family. Something may have been said along the way about Animal's family, but nobody remembered his name so why should we worry about that?

At any rate, Dennis' girlfriend will not be an animal, although she may make the other men at the Tribune act like animals. Blonde hair, blue eyes, long legs, no brain, laughs. His family? Fat, ugly, real pains. Maybe Lou is related somewhere down the line.

On to one of the most unflamboyant characters in "Lou Grant", Charlie Donovan. Or is it Donovan Charlie? That's right, they're two different people. Fortunately, in the revised "Lou Grant" they may have go be reduced to the occasional sight gag. Not that anyone would miss them. Charlie has all the electricity of a broken Pac-Man machine, and Donovan's most memorable quality is...On second thought, maybe there are some possibilities in there somewhere. We'll have Donovan and Charlie put their resources together and start a nightspot on the side. They can call it "The Big, Bad, Boring, Bald Bar."

Finally, we come to the focal centers of the new comedy show—Joe Rossi and Lou Grant.

Joe Rossi—the prototype of the eager, young reporter. Joe has the qualities that have long been recognized for their laughter-inciting value. Remember Jimmy Olsen. Of course, Billie is not Lois Lane, Lou doesn't have the spunk and spark of Perry White, and Christopher Reeve is nowhere to be found. Regardless, Rossi is going to have to become even more obnoxious in the comedy version of "Lou Grant". The more than Rossi irritates Lou, the better. Rossi will become so annoying that Lou will look back at Ted Baxter with fond memories.

Future episodes will look something like this: Rossi asks Lou for a raise; Lou tells Rossi he's fired. Rossi asks Lou if he can research into the IRS treatment of older people; Lou tells Rossi he's fired. Rossi asks Lou if he can cover the dangerous demonstration at the White House; Lou tells Rossi he's fired. Rossi asks Lou if he's always been bald, Lou tells Rossi he's fired.

Obviously, the character most adept at comedy is Lou Grant. After paying his dues with Mary Richards, Lou knows when and how to get the viewers on the floor and rolling. Who can ever forget that scowling face and growling voice that kept Mary, Ted, and Captain Stuebing in their places? Lou apparently mellowed when he moved to the printed page. In the updated "Lou Grant" he will retain that meanness and even more. How mean? He'll make Colonel Khaddaffi look like Woody Allen.

Romance. We're going to have to give Lou some sort of romance. I say "some sort" because I'm not sure what kind of woman would actually go out with Lou. Since it's a comedy show, we can get anybody to be the lady of Lou's life. To put a balance on the relationship, though, we'll get someone who is not short, fat or ugly. Farrah Fawcett-Private hasn't done well lately. With a big enough paycheck and a little enough wardrobe, I bet we could convince her. Lou's frustrations in a new love affair will make him even meaner when Rossi walks into the room. Rossi may not even need dialogue in the new show. He'll irritate Lou by existing.

One last thing about Lou. In the comedy show of the future, Lou is going to be driven to drink. There has always been some

POETRY: SONGS*

FEELINGS TURNING INTO GOLD

by Bill-Dale Marcinko

They said we'd never make it
We wouldn't last a minute
But I've got news to tell them
We are really -- in love
All you doubters can listen up now
The story can be told

One of us came from the suburbs
And wanted to be free
Met under the dull lead skies of
Jersey

One of us believed in alchemy
And wanted something he could hold
So now there's feelings turning
into gold

Even though all around us
There are cities turning cold
People's bodies being sold
Lover's passion growing old
Tragic stories being told
But there's feelings turning into
gold

Feelings turning into gold

Let's not pretend it was not
difficult
A thing of value must be earned
The raw material must be cut out
The excess casing must be burned
Before it can be poured into the
mold

There's feelings turning into gold

Even though all around me
There are cities growing old, etc.

i'm calling you up a lot recently
and i'm sure i'm a bore; probably to
your friends
you say
he's the last person
i want to hear from just now
the siffthead
the creep
who does he think he is
so don't worry for too long
times will change; one day
i won't think of you either
Joseph Semenovitch

A TIME FOR ALL JOGGERS

by Cannon Barclay

Leisurely dining's
a thing of the past:
people prefer
the foods they call "fast"
They're gulping down burgers,
hotdogs and fish
served quickly on paper,
not even one dish!
What's the big hurry?
It's got me perplexed...
they seem to be rushing
to where they'll eat next.

WE, GULLIBLE

by Peggy Tully

No one changes the world
The world changes on its own
We, easygoing as we are
Ride the earthly spinning
as tho it were
a gray mare.

No one turns over a new leaf
The leaves they fall upon us
We, gullible as we are
Let them fall on our laps, in
our hair

No attempts at brushing them off
as tho they were
kings of the tree.

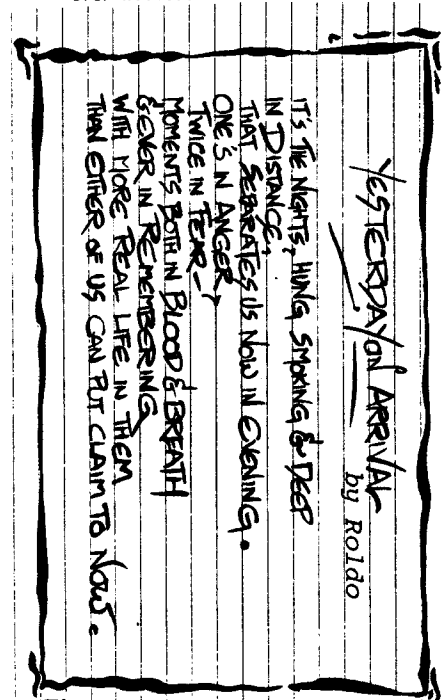
Yeah, sit back
Watch this naive planet turn
It faces the sun
Then hides in shame
And in the evening
Asks the moon for forgiveness.

No.

No one can alter the world
Alone it alters us
We, well-learned in laughing
things off
Laugh ourselves into blind
acceptance
as tho we were being snowed
by a clever salesman.

Tolerance of second best
Ignorance of all the rest
Keep telling yourself
No one changes the world,
your world

And no one
ever will...



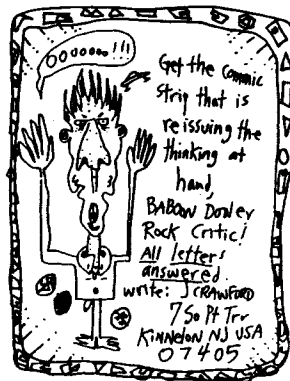
suggestions that Lou tips the bottle occasionally after a hard day at the office—we'll make it more than a suggestion. Having a boozier around has always drawn the laugh. It made Hawkeye Pierce a key spokesman for the Equal Rights Amendment, so it can't hurt. Lou can hide an extra bottle in his desk drawer—no one would dare look in the editor's desk. Except Rossi, who, in one of the future episodes, finds the bottle while looking for his misplaced typewriter. The ensuing confrontation with Lou will become the funniest thing since Roger Mudd went out to lunch one day and came back to find Dan Rather in his desk drawer.

That wraps up the conversion of "Lou Grant" from popular drama to rib-tickling comedy. In those few tiny adjustments, we've lengthened the lives of this lovable group of characters immeasurably. Of course, this is only the first step toward saving all of our favorite dramas. But at least we've started the tape rolling by putting "Lou Grant" back in the editing rooms of our hearts. (ED: The preceding is, of course, entirely academic now. As most readers/viewers know, "Lou Grant" has been cancelled by CBS, which refuses to cite Ed Asner's politics as the reason.)

IN CONCLUSION AFTER ACCIDENT

by Cannon Barclay

Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans upon his car and gazes at the ground the emptiness of ages in his jeans and on his mind: burden of the next sound strained, agonizing he looks around he needs to sum up what he has messed well I believe



©1992 John Crawford

Filmviews by Ken Filar

"THIS IS NOT A REVIEW!"

There are, at best, only two ways to reappraise a limited view of the world. The first, and by far the more difficult, is to forget everything you've learned about the way things are or ought to be. The problem is that you cannot forget indefinitely but must constantly remember to forget. By releasing yourself from notions to which you were previously attached you can at once discover things with the vitality and awe you felt as a child first encountering the world, and with your more analytical adult mind you may discover truths which childish inquiry never revealed.

The second, though easier for the mind to assimilate, is more difficult to achieve. Its basis involves some thing (in this case film) so astounding that you inadvertently forget to wallow in the critical mire you've boggled through before believing that to be the only way to understanding. Once released from (or simply forgetting) those preconceptions, a flood of unimagined possibilities fills the mind. As this exposure begins to recede into remembrances, new ideas grapple with old and time etches a new coherence—at least till the next such exposition.

(Now you're probably wondering—if you haven't stopped reading already—"What the Hell is he babbling about?")

In a word? *Diva!* This new movie by first-time director Jean-Jacques Beineix is a grave divertissement (en Francaise). It is entertaining and so well executed that you'll be hard pressed to say exactly what got you, but get you it will. Whether it's the somber black and blue tone that batters your vision of Paris: from cultured night life to sleazy street life, from hookers' homes to hotel suites, from picture puzzles of the sea to punks in parking garages. Or perhaps you'll be seduced by the operatic score, waltz into its ambient frenzy only to be driven around by the jazzy calm. Maybe you'll be sucked into the story which is just like every other love-mystery-farce ever filmed though it is so refreshing you'll believe it's a first.

Beineix shares credit for the screenplay with Jean Van Hamme, though most of the actors/actresses (Or would "actlets" be the proper genderless word for these budding hams, EW?) are credited for dialogue. This implies that the spontaneous energy of the ensemble working within the screenplay structured by Beineix et Hamme was as important to the movie as the story itself.

The story is about a young postman who drives a moped, lives in a parking garage, and adores a reclusive American soprano. She has never recorded because she believes the concert is a personal moment between her and her audience and not meant to be captured but simply experienced (much as the essence of the film could never be adequately captured on paper). He's followed her tour across Europe, though, and he has at least one such concert on tape. Unscrupulous bad guys know of the tape's existence and make offers and threats to get it, intending to release a bootleg recording. Meanwhile he is slipped a taped confession from the murdered mistress of a Parisian official who runs a prostitution/drug/white slavery ring and soon his thugs are on the hero's trail as are the detectives from homicide. Needless to say, the tapes get mixed up and chaos ensues on a scale normally reserved for Saturday morning cartoons.

It doesn't matter that the plot is predictable. The enjoyment comes not from the story but from the simple hopeful energy that sparks the viewer. I could tell you how the movie ends (if you haven't guessed already) and not deprive you of total satisfaction. It might even make you less conscious of the tale to be told and more attentive to the myriad of supporting elements which bombard the senses into forgetting everything you've ever known/learned/been told about viewing film. Once that bias is disposed of it is a delight to relax and discover that *Diva* est magnifique!

Originally the review was to begin with a clever (debatable beast) cliché, but after sitting through the movie twice no amount of textbook French would do justice to this gem. *Diva* is multifaceted and just when you think you've seen all the angles another flashes your way and dazzles you once more. Halfway through this reviewer longed for a videotape player and a tape of *Diva* to play again and again, the way music aficionados play and replay exceptional albums with the same diapason.

FEAST OR FAMINE?

Ground Zero Week drew national attention to a terminal possibility that most of the public seems willing—nay, eager—to ignore. The publication of Jonathan Schell's *The Fate of the Earth*, reprinted from a series of articles originally published in *The New Yorker*, earned front page praise in *The New York Times* and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, not for lambasting nuclear policy but for setting out all too clearly the probable consequences of continued arms escalation. Barbara Tuchman wrote an historical overview of man's inability to achieve peaceful solutions to relatively insignificant problems and scoffed at the very idea of a "limited" nuclear clash. Producer-directors Kevin Rafferty, Jayne Loader, and Pierce Rafferty released their pseudo-documentary film, *The Atomic Cafe*.

Pseudo-documentary for two distinct reasons. First, the entire movie was culled and collated from archive film presenting not serious education regarding the effects of nuclear devastation but laughably serious attempts to preserve the "American Dream" during the booming post-war era. Second, this cartoonish humor, in the face of what could be man's biggest nightmare, is so thoroughly entertaining that educational value might evaporate amidst the riotous laughter.

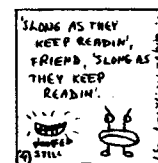
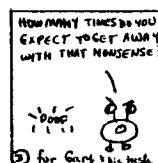
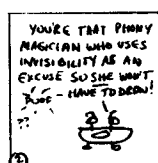
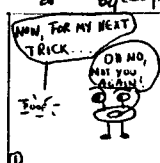
Not without reason, either. One segment features two young girls, life's answer to Tweedledum and Tweedledee, but for their very dead-pan presentation of essential foodstuffs every homemaker needs in the family shelter... "canned potatoes"... peals of laughter. (The question then arises: Are canned potatoes intrinsically funny, or is it all in the delivery?) The fact that this was all taken seriously when it was first filmed and shown is lost on no one, but like the GE film showing the Reagans marvelling over the electric wonders of tomorrow—today, this present-pleasure-from-the-past allows one to forget how incompetent that same person has proven to be in dealing with urgent issues (i.e., disarmament).

(First draft/Atomic Cafe review: It would be easy to turn a review of *The Atomic Cafe* into a diatribe against current nuclear policy... then this reviewer thought twice and deleted the aforementioned passage only bringing it up here to remind himself to stock to the film and leave others to stick politics where they will. Now it would be almost natural to launch into a discourse on the role of the reviewer and/or how his politico-socio-philosophy-psychoreligioso... ad nauseum background is either relative or irrelevant to his views on same, but that would be redundant. Besides, the movie is more fun!)

There are bits where experts talk about the possible effects of radiation fallout with such short-sighted utter sincerity that you don't know whether to hug them and chuckle over the fast one they've pulled or whether to punch them in the mouth. There is a long segment on civil defense training, including the now famous "Duck and Cover." Bomb shelters abound, and the boy who tries to ride his bicycle while dressed in a radiation suit proves once and for all that that particular garment is not only uncomfortable and unsightly but damned impractical.

Sure, there are segments showing bombs falling and mushroom clouds rising on the horizon. Interspersed as they are between Romper Room antics and mushroom(ing) mayhem they leave one awed by the spectacle yet unconvinced of the awesome devastation. This is simply too much fun to evince annihilation. It's hard to determine on which side these three filmmakers stand. It could very well be a straight documentary of our nation's nuclear hysteria three decades ago, or it could be a concerted effort to point out just how far we've come in our fear of the bomb. In either case Rafferty, Loader and Rafferty will have the last laugh, and that's what's really frightening.

WH GZITS by Clasp



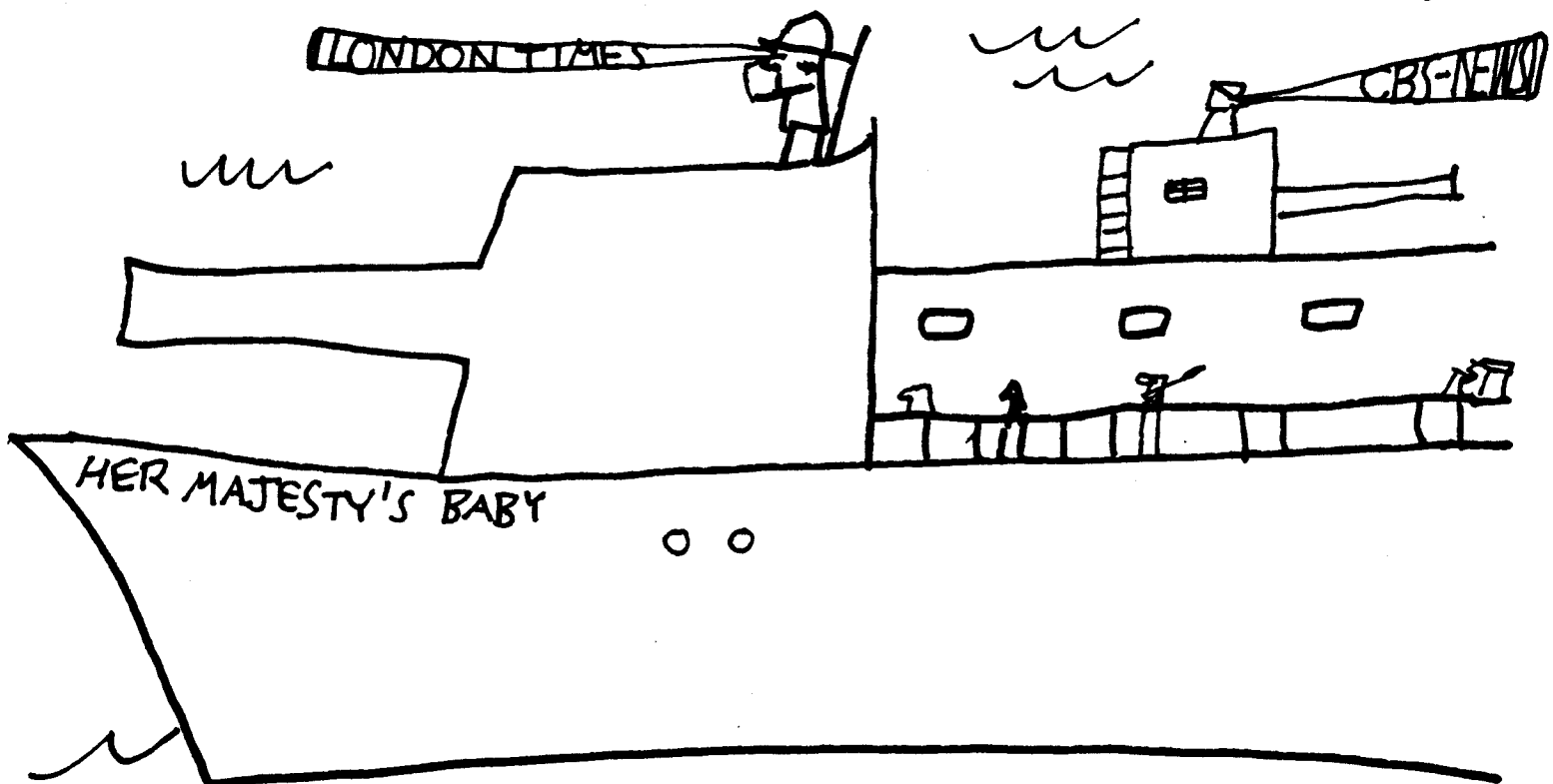
(TO THE TUNE OF "TRAMP, TRAMP, TRAMP, THE BOYS ARE MARCHING!")



FALK, FALK, FALK, THE FALKLAND ISLANDS!
1 WE'RE HER MAJESTY'S ROYAL SHEEP
AND AT NIGHT WE PRAY TO GOD P
MAGGIE WON'T STAY HER STAFF & ROD
SO SHEEP AGAIN MAY SAFELY GRAZE & SLEEP.

BOMB, BOMB, BOMB THEM FUCK'N GREASERS
ARGENTINEAN WOGS: ALL CREEPS!

9 STOP THEM LOWER FASCIST PIGS
LET THE HIGHER BOURGEOIS PRIGS
TAKE BACK THEIR RIGHTFUL PLACE ATOP THE HEAP!



(from the "over so soon?" department, courtesy Tuli Kupferberg - cw)

HER WILDERNESS

by Chris Estey

"This wasn't in the schedule. Where am I?" Yawning, he stands. "Was there a party last night or something? Don't remember getting drunk." He feels a draft. He notices he isn't wearing anything. Covering his crotch with his hand, he looks around the room.

No doors. Just dark walls, with no recognizable material. No windows. A pitch black ceiling, and a staircase spiraling upwards into it. It is cold. He checks his wrist for his watch, which isn't there. "Goddamn schedule; I've gotta get out of here." He leans against the metal staircase. "But where is here?"

"Did I get robbed?" He scratches his head in a contemplative gesture. "Stripped clean of everything after being knocked out, then dumped here?" He starts climbing the stairs. The gripbar twisting upward with the staircase is very cold. His sweaty hands rub against the icy metal as he cautiously steps upward.

Another room appears overhead. He steps off the staircase and into the surrounding dark. It's chillier here. "Last night must've been hell. Can't remember a wit of it."

"Where in hell am I?"

This room is a shade darker than the previous one. Nothing furnishes it either, save for the staircase in the center of it. "What is this place? A warehouse of some sort? God, it's cold." He continues scaling the stairs. There is no blockage between the floors, just continual elevation.

Another room. He sits there on the steps, rubbing his goose-pimpled flesh for heat. "No exits. No phones. No windows. What did I do last night?" He holds his sweating face in anguish, massaging his temples. Beads of perspiration cover him, even though there is very little heat in the room. "Work. Jill—God, Jill! I've got to call her! Probably worried sick about me." He looks around, peering into the dark. "No outlets as far as I can see. And, of course, no phone."

The next room is even darker, and colder. Shaking and shivering, he stumbles around in the darkness, trying to touch whatever might be in the corners where he can no longer sense something. Anything. Grabbing. Nothingness.

He continues to climb the staircase.

Stumbling, he enters another room. After checking the floor and walls for something to use, he gets back on the staircase. The gripbar is getting creaky. The steps are shifting as he walks upward.

Ice. All around. Stabbing him, slapping him, drowning him, feeding him, keeping his eyes open, throbbing in his stomach, bleeding through his spine. "Last night. Dinner. I came home. Yeah. I did. Jill served dinner and—"

He sobs, and pulls at the hair on his head.

Jill's face. Transfixed in the spiral above. It fades. He climbs toward it, but stumbles back down a few steps. The cold noisy stairs slap his body, his skin tingling with sharp incessant pain. "Jill?" He asks, "Is that you?"

Silence.

GODDAMMIT BITCH I'VE TOLD YOU ABOUT NOT ANSWERING ME WHEN I ASK YOU SOMETHING HOW MANY TIMES I GOTTA POUND IT INTO YOU

"Where are we?" He shouts into the void above.

The pain in his stomach is fading. "Pain? Stomach?" He touches his belly. "No wounds. It's inside. Dinner. Last night. Oh God."

It's no longer cold. A light shimmers downward, reflecting off the gripbar spiraling around him. He stumbles upward, trying to reach the beaconing light.

Something falls through the air and crashes on a step at his feet. Glass tinkles. He reaches down and picks up a piece of paper lying with splintered glass in a pool of liquid. He holds the slip up to the light, and reads the word:

POISON

Jill laughs far away, but her voice is carried by the now warm wind. He gasps, letting the piece of paper slip from between his fingers, and it flutters about the stairs like a wet white small bird. He stares straight up into the light, which is now enveloping him. His insides are crushed; his bones churned to meal; his blood burns up; his face and fingerprints are smeared away instantly.

He screams.

"That's it, Ted. His heart just stopped." Jill pulls the sheet over the head of the corpse of her late husband sprawled out in their bed. Ted hugs her from behind, his lips pecking at her neck.

"You flush away the rest of the poison?" he asks, turning her toward him. A long kiss, then she answers: "Yes. Now it's your turn."

She hands Ted the keys to her car, and he picks up the body from the bed. He throws it over his shoulder, as Jill opens the door to the garage. He unlocks the trunk and plops the sheeted frame inside, then closes the hood tightly. As he starts up the automobile, she waves and opens the garage door to the driveway.

She watches as Ted drives away. She hopes he remembered the kerosene.

He screams.

His fingers press through the light. He is sucked through. He wails as the nurse holds him steady, making the doctor's task of cutting the umbilical cord less difficult. The mother asks to hold him, her face thick with perspiration. Above his head is a rotating lamp, spinning a web of heat over everything in the hospital ward.

The Church of the SubGenes is impossible to categorize. A comment on and parody of the cult phenomena of our times, it has itself become a 'wild cult' — a cult of scathing satire particularly suited to the cynical mood of modern America.

Crammed with deviant propaganda for those who figure God must have a strange sense of humor, this 'occult novelty' is packaged as a series of distinguished yet utterly uncouth paraphrases. Not easy reading — if you get offended, you lose the game by default.

SONG PARODY #2 - "I'm a Preppie, you're a Preppie, he's a Preppie, she's a Preppie, if you like alligators, you're a Preppie too, be a Preppie, wear pink & green now..."

THE DEVIL'S DAY OFF

by Gerry Reith

During one of those hundred-year-long days that Satan will on occasion spend simply savoring the boundless opportunity this planet offers to rebels like himself it happened that he crossed paths with a contingent of roving Heaven's Angels. These were troublemakers of the worst sort, raze-the-village-to-save-it types, a bizarre little army created by god to throw a monkey wrench into the works as a randomizing element. They were the holy spirits sent out to raise hell and drive people away from Satan.

Now on this day, hoping to relax and enjoy the scenery, Satan had decided not to bring along those devilish high-tech gadgets that kept him linked to the databanks in Hell. Thus he was stranded much like Scotty or Captain Kirk, without the communications devices that enabled them to beam up or take x-ray photos, alone on an alien planet full of marauding hooligans who had no sense of law or decency.

"What are you fellows doing out today," said Satan, swallowing. The tallest had a gleam in his eye. He could tell Satan had no access to the databanks. "Oh, we've been out in the service of the lord," he said, chuckling. "We raped a pillaged a little, then we torched New York with an A-Bomb. All the humans are in a tizzy trying to figure out who or why." All the Heaven's Angels snickered.

"You faggots!" yelled Satan, "What about their lives, all those millions of minutes and hours they could have spent on something they wanted to spend them on!" He was enraged.

All the Heaven's Angels let out coarse guffaws. "Oh, isn't he mister morality today," "Listen to this," "The lord moves in mysterious ways," and so on.

Now Satan hadn't left his powers at home; it was just that he didn't have the information he might need to make the best use of them. This last outburst by the Heaven's Angels so incensed him that he exploded and threw a huge fireball at the group. Their earthly bodies were burnt to a crisp within nanoseconds. Since they feel the same pleasure and pain we do when they take on earthly guises, they were not amused to melt like wax near the fireplace and go through combustion and so on. In fact they were hopping mad.

Satan knew he had blown it the instant the fire hit them. Now they were free spirits, with even more power than before because they were disincorporated and no longer restricted. Satan couldn't even tell where they were.

Just then his skull cracked open like an egg and all his earthly limbs were torn from his body. "Fuck!" he thought. "You bastards!" A pack of dogs appeared and ate all the flesh off the bones. Then all was quiet.

Later still he gathered the bones together with spirit powers or whatever and used them to pack raw dirt close around the bones themselves, which he then breathed life into. He set out again down the road, but he had a raging headache from all the esters and effluents from the dirty water which he had to use for blood. When he pissed it out he was dehydrated and hungry, and he had those aches and pains generally associated with metempsychosis from scratch.

Soon he came to a house. As he walked up the path past the daisies and marigolds he wondered what he would say to the people inside. He arrived on the doorstep and knocked.

"Yes," cried a woman inside, "who is it?"

Satan sighed to himself. "I'm going to have to be straight with you ma'am. I'm the devil. I just want a glass of water."

He heard her laughing on the way to the door, then saying, "Oh, Sammy, how you tease me so," while she opened the door. Her first glance produced a scream of fright, followed by a trance spouting fit of speaking in tongues. He knew what she was saying because he knows all tongues. Most of it was true gibberish, but the point of it all was that she was a devout christian.

The sound, of course, hurt his ears, so he left, figuring his wouldn't likely get a glass of water when she came to.

At the next house he came to he knocked again. A young Korean Buddhist woman came to the door. She giggled when she saw who it was. "Can I help you?"

"Yes, ma'am, I'd like a glass of water."

"Come on in, I just happen to have some nice Kimchi on hand."

Kimchi is a hot food so Satan thought it was excellent. He hates the bland mush they put out in the fast food places even though he started them in the first place. He stayed a long time, even drinking a small glass of whiskey, and talking to the young lady about the trials and tribulations of raising active children.

"How are they doing in school?" he asked.

"The teachers are having a hell of a time," she said, and they both laughed.

"Aren't you afraid of me?" he asked after a while, wondering.

"Why? You don't have any jurisdiction!" They both laughed again, and slapped their knees.

When the children got off the school bus their mother asked Satan if he would mind playing with them for a while so she could take a nap. He was pleased to, and spent a few hours teaching them about Dungeons & Dragons. As a special favor he touched them all on the forehead and blessed them with superior intelligence so that they would do well in the world when they grew up and so that the pains wouldn't hurt so badly.

Then he had dinner with the entire family, and talked business with the man of the house, who was very interested in the

(story continued on next page)

(story continued from previous page)

doings up above. Satan gave him some important tips about the market and told him which stocks were going to rise within the next few months. Everyone was thrilled to have such an important guest and felt honored to render him some kind of humble service.

Finally Satan told them he had to go and attend to some matters that had cropped up earlier in the day when he ran into some old buddies. The children were disappointed.

"Oh, Mr. Devil," they said, "we don't want you to go back to the terrible places. Stay and play with us."

"No, no, kiddies, I have to go. You'll find plenty to do without me." Then he turned to thank the young couple once again and told them he would grant them one major boon without any small print.

Both laughed shyly. "Oh, no, you don't have to," they said. Whatever you wish, I wish," he replied. Then he took his leave, and he didn't forget to tilt their luck plane in the direction of good before leaving the area. At least their house would never get struck by a tree limb or burn down or anything.

On judgment day, some time later, the first lady was turned away at the gates of Heaven. "Remember when Satan came to ask for a drink of water?" Jesus asked her. "You turned him down! That wasn't very christian of you!"

The Korean family wasn't there at all. There was no jurisdiction.

- Gerry Reith
5 May 1982



A Different Window

By Steven F. Scharff

©Scharff

THIS MONTH:

THE GHOST RECEPTION OF STATION K L E E

(for Brian Catanzaro)

Last month, I wrote about ghosts of living beings. This month, I'm telling you about another kind of "ghost".

Back in 1955, on England's northern coast, several television owners were preparing themselves for an evening's worth of entertainment. A heavy rainstorm had just passed, and reception was clear.

As the evening wore on, the viewers noticed a faint image coming over the screen. It was a host reception; the reflected signal from another station. Except that the signal wasn't from an English transmitter, because the image showed the station ID of KLEE in Houston, Texas.

These were television's early days, when sponsors on US tv were few. So stations broadcasted their ID signals for periods as long as ten minutes.

The image lasted long enough to be photographed, and eventually, the ID signal faded.

The next day, photographs, letters, and reception reports were sent to the Texan station. But the bizarre fact is this—

KLEE had stopped broadcasting in 1950. Five years before the British TV viewers received their signals.

Long distance receptions (called "DX") are often caused by atmospheric conditions called "skip". Skip is when broadcasted signals bounce amid the atmosphere and come down in distant regions (which is why a CB operator in New Jersey might find himself talking to another CBER in Illinois). The heavy rainstorm could explain why reception was so clear (being that the ion particles in the air could have attracted the signal), but it doesn't explain the time lapse.

The television signal's chance of surviving a journey of five (or more) years is very slim, but could be the reason. Television signals are constantly being beamed into outer space, and this could have been one signal's return trip. But, if so, how did it turn around?

Possibly, the signals slipped through a passage in time, sending the signal out to a fringe area of Texas where a time portal had formed and sent the signals five thousand miles distant and at least vie years into the future. Maybe now, but this is just hypothetical.

The KLEE incident will probably never be solved, but it shows us that even though we may be in full control of our technology, we still don't know how limited (or unlimited) it is.

NOTHING IN GENERAL

by Sue Kaufmann

Dear Kip

Sorry I didn't write to you last month, but I was still in the Falklands. Visa troubles, you understand. I just got back, and I'll tell you, Ivan Stang was right. I got out ok, I guess (can't say as much for the goats, and they were goats. The walrus is Paul), but I'm still really disappointed I didn't get "Bob's" message across to the people down there. I didn't even meet Prince Andrew. (continued column 2, halfway up/down)

CHEMICAL REACTION (fiction)

I hate the subway. It's dirty, smelly, doesn't run often enough and is full of weirdos. I used to get bored reading the same subway posters day in and out. When I'm standing on a subway jammed with people, three blisters on just one foot, the last thing I need to read is about some lady who sits 12 hours a day and has hemorrhoids. My professors have solved all that. I've converted the subway into my private study hall.

I was riding the 'F' train boring myself with the periodic chart of elements when I felt these eyes peering over my shoulder.

"Studying chemistry?"

No Shit Sherlock. This guy's brilliant! I was about to give this person a leave-me-alone sneer, but when I looked to see who was so interested in my studies, I was rather surprised. This guy did not look like a recent escapee from Willowbrook. He was adorable, in his mid-twenties with shiny blond hair and big green eyes.

"Wait until you take Organic."

"WHAT?!"

"Organic Chemistry. All Chem majors have to take it."

Maybe he was an escapee from Willowbrook. Me a Chem major? That's like asking Ronald McDonald to do Shakespeare.

"Uh, no. I'm an Education major."

"I wish I had a teacher as pretty as you when I was in school." I blushed. Obviously the man is blind. Those gorgeous green eyes are just for decoration. I didn't want him to think I didn't have any manners so I thanked him for the compliment.

"Watching you study Chemistry reminded me of my days as an undergraduate. I was pre-med."

Pre-med? My mother would adore him.

"What's a doctor doing on the subway? I thought you all own Cadillacs."

"Nah, that's after med-school."

"So you have one of those T-shirts with internal organs drawn on it?"

"Oh yeah. I wore it to class one day. Freaked the professor out! I told him it was my crib sheets for the final."

I found Blondie's story amusing. I found this situation amusing. I usually don't have cute little med-students talking to me on the subway.

"By the way," he said, "my name is Rob."

"Laurie."

"Laurie, I have to get off next stop. Why don't you give me your phone number and we'll have coffee?"

I scribbled my name on a piece of notebook paper. I knew he wouldn't call but what the hell.

The train pulled into the station. Rob smiled at me.

"Nice meeting you, Laurie. I'll call you."

I went back to my Chemistry book. Only 30 pages to go.

This month I graduate from high school (big deal. Out of the sandbox and into the fire). I am quite grateful to be leaving because I've lost all patience with the sniveling brats in my class. You think I'm bad—you ain't seen bad!

I used to think that once people hit seventeen or eighteen they'd be halfway mature. Not so, my friend. I can handle sophomoric jokes and even food fights, but some of these people have to consult every living soul before they decide whether or not to have fish or grilled cheese for lunch. Maybe we should have a commercial—"Ok, America, it's your decision—which is number one—fish or grilled cheese?"

Naturally there are many situations in which these brats become pains—such as calling at 8:30, telling you they are extremely tired and uncertain whether they should study for the big test. These people talk at (not with) you for at least a half hour while you interject phrases like "I really have to study." They answer with, "Yeah, so do I, but I don't really care, I'll just fail," and don't consider that you'd like to pass. By the time you finally get the windbag to hang up, you're either too tired or too angry to study. You fail and your friendly pain in the ass passes with a "C" (but they cry, "Oh, I failed!").

I have known these people for about five years on average, and about 90% of them are "repeaters". That is, they tell you things they've told you many times before. Amusingly, they repeat themselves verbatim. My favorite in this category is the guy who talks about the lousy things that happen when he goes on vacation. Recently he told everyone he and his family were going camping. Somebody robbed his house when he was gone. That'll teach him.

Another member of this set is "Joe Cool". He used to be pleasantly nerdish, until this year. Now he wears his black "Members (of what?) Only" jacket at least twice a week and greets me as "Sue baby!" Ok, who's the baby here! How can you tell a poor misguided soul like that that you liked him better when he was a nerd? This guy, incidentally, believes that his favorite group, Air Supply, is true rock and roll.

Maybe it's just me, but I find it's sad to see people that need to know their test grades immediately and study for exams three weeks ahead of time. I also believe it's a waste of my precious time to worry if I'll get up to bat in gym. So we lose the game. It's not the World Series.

Kip, I tell you, I'm worried about the state of the world if the youth of America are this screwed up. Somebody has to make these kids stand up and live by themselves! That's why I've inaugurated my "Lose Friends and Alienate People" campaign. So what if they'll all hate me by graduation. It's for their own good, and someday they'll thank me for it. I can handle the rejection and scorn; "Bob" knows I've endured plenty already.

Misra Bol Krintan, Sue

P.S. I'm looking for a summer job, but I can't find any non-sequitatorial ones...

HEADSTONE FOR A CONVICT
by Connon Barclay
Big Len and time
are now both even;
Big Len beat time
Now time's beat Big Len.

P.O. 140306, Dallas, Tex. 75214.

"Pull the wool over your own eyes."
Send \$1.00



"THE CASE OF
THE INK-STAINED
TITLE PANEL"
BY
DRANPARE

"TUESDAY, 10:57 PM.
NIGHT IN THE BIG
CITY."
10:57

IT WAS A COLD AND STORMY
NIGHT IN FEBRUARY!
OR WILZ IT
MAY?

IT
WAS.

"I HAD JUST FINISHED
OFF A BIG CASE... I
WAS IN NEED OF ONE!"
(BEERH?)

"THE PHONE RANG"
RRRING!
"NATURALLY, I
ANSWERED IT!"

IT'S YER QUARTER.
SPILL IT!
PHONE
CALLS HAD
GONE UP!

THIS YER'S KID?
UH-HUH!
'FRAID IT'S GOTTA GO!
THESE DETECTIVE CLICHES
ARE ALL COPYRIGHTED!!
BUT I...

A Sound Mind...

by Brian Catanzaro

SINGLE DOUBT

Geoffrey Downes, co-conspirator in the Buggles performances, has joined forces with Steve Howe, Carl Palmer and an unknown (at least he's unknown to me), John Welles. This is what they used to call in the '70's a "supergroup" because it contains former members of tremendously successful acts (Howe from YES, Palmer from ELP for those that may not know). These fellows have put out a commercial "progressive Pop" album calling themselves ASIA. The record is on the Geffen label, famous for the Lennons' recent products. Seems commercial enough, safe platinum potential. Careful, the record companies know you better than you yourself. The word "Asia" is already in everyone's minds from the Steely Dan days.

The first single has been unleashed, entitled "Heat of the Moment". Part of Asia's style is to play mind games with the tempo. The idea of the game is to keep you guessing as to why the tempo changes when it does. Let's stop dancing and take a closer look, kids. Is it to emphasize the lyrics at that point? Or is it just a clever hook? The slight increases in tempo might just be Asia's interpretation of a NewRok backbeat. It's sadly amusing to watch typecast stars attempt an uncharacteristic change in style. Both Palmer and Howe are known for their extraordinary ability to adapt instantly to any time signature or tempo change gracefully. Will the new face fit? It's a good gimmick for them, but they are the only ones who could possibly get away with that kind of homogenizing.

John Welles, out heartfelt bassist and singer, waxes like a Macho-ized Jackson Browne on this cut. It may already have you fooled too if you've heard it on the radio. But he sounds sincere on the B-side. It's as if the Hit is supposed to sound American and the flip gives away their English. Produced by Mike Stone, who did Shoes' second Elektra album, "Heat of the Moment" opens up sounding a lot like one of those Shoes tracks. The song is capable of moving your adolescent heart if you've still got one. Will Asia be a super success? No, but probably.

Geoff Downes' Buggle-ing shines through the thick arrangement, establishing the stamina of his style. I was happily surprised to find him a member, not picking up his bit upon first listening. A good break for him and a chance to make some touring loot and hopefully further his private projects as with The Buggles.

ON THE HALF SELL

XTC's latest single release is "No Thugs In Our House", from the English Settlement LP. English singles are double price, but well worth it. They are usually EP's (3 or more tunes) and have durable creative pixlevez. XTC, being in it for the art as well, go out of their way to please us all. This time 'round our fold-out graphics depict a gothic stage wherein the aforementioned work is lyrically set apart to read like a script. It helps the tune tremendously, as there are the cast of characters, each with their own reading instructions. Classic entertainment from XTC. Not to mention 2 unreleased tracks. This is their third EP from that LP, the others being 7 and 12 inch pressings of "Senses Working Overtime" and "Ball and Chain". Both were issued with two or more unavailable-on-album cuts.

Have you ever heard of album cuts not being available on albums? Well, one should always read the label for the warning. Hopefully, I've already established that XTC's English Settlement LP is magnificent humanistic new rock. Prior to this work, their records just weren't in a lot of US stores. Poor distribution is the cause of this. Poor meaning not available from the major chains in this country. However, if one sought one would eventually find, which is more than can be said for some of the other English nUave of the past 4 years or so. The situation is improving in the meantime, but this story puzzles me.

XTC has been a product of Virgin records from the start. However, Virgin has been manufactured and/or distributed in America by all kinds of folks. From Jem in Plainfield (sometimes our only source of hope), peddling the Virgin International Label (where we'll find XTC's first 2 albums), to Warners for awhile. With Warners (or WEA), there were several minor successes like The Flying Lizards and Martha and The Muffins' "Echo Beach" which still gets non-partisan FM airplay in this metro area. Still, even domestic Virgin releases were scarce. They tried again with Polygram on the RSO label. I can only judge that it wasn't working for them because now, they're coming from CBS, the red and black company, and Virgin seems to have sold XTC's soul in the process.

What CBS did to the domestic release of English Settlement is omit half of the songs, scrunching the usual 10 or 11 onto one disc. The fidelity is lacking and so is the humanism. Was the trade-off worth it? Perhaps if this half sells, they'll make up another album the way Capitol did with the Beatles' material. If you've bought the domestic version, you're only getting half the work. Return it for something else. Many dealers buy from Jem and will special-order for you. For the extra \$4 you get 2 discs, far superior sound and the great tunes CBS abridged, plus nicer packaging. I don't even know if CBS's has lyrics but Virgin's does. Let the buyer beware.

One can hear XTC often on WFMU-FM 91.1 (ED: Upsala College in New Jersey), especially on Jim Price's Tues 9-midnight and Frank O'Toole's Wed. 9-midnight shows.

In the war of the conglomerates, CBS's approach is always: first, get a product out there selling, then get artsy. WEA likes to nurse and cultivate image presentation as an act's following builds. We've seen it with Ronstadt, Browne, Raitt (sorry, there's still a lot of old music around). You don't see

MORE RECORD REVIEWS - by Tierney Smith

THE GIFT, The Jam (Polydor)—Despite having scored an impressive string of first-rate hit singles in their native Britain with their hard-driving, undeniably catchy sound, the Jam remain an enigma to the American record-buying public. In maintaining a steadfast allegiance to an uncompromising English code of ethics, the general consensus is that the group is simply too "English" for American tastes. A shame. Up until now, singer-guitarist Paul Weller has presented a compelling vocal presence, fueling his impassioned performances with intense urgency. Moreover, he has always been marvelously adept at chronicling, in meticulous detail, intriguing little scenarios of average English working class life, his characters often despairing yet apathetic victims of their dreary, dead-end existence. Frequently casting himself as a brooding observer of various social injustices with both time and innocence in his favor, Weller has throughout maintained a steadfast belief in the cherishing of fine ideals, his best tunes often angry diatribes directed towards those hardened realists whom Weller once termed the "jaded ill."

Considering the key element of passion so fully integrated into their past work, The Gift, the band's sixth LP, is bound to come as a surprise to devoted Jam fans everywhere. Peter Wilson has replaced longtime producer Vic Coppersmith-Heaven, and with dubious results. At times, entire songs ("Trans-Global Express," the title track) are buried in a muddy mix, not to mention the band's focal point and greatest asset—Weller's vocals. And it's the latter which constitutes The Gift's most striking departure. Not only are Weller's vocals utterly bereft of anger, his approach is uncharacteristically light-hearted. Musically, things have mellowed considerably; the arrangements are sparer, the textures lighter, and with the added inclusion of trumpets and sax, the overall effect is one of polished smoothness.

Unfortunately, in lacking the emotional impact of some well-placed urgency, certain tunes here qualify as strictly ordinary fare ("The Planner's Dream Goes Wrong," "Just Who Is The 5 O'Clock Hero?"). Nevertheless, The Gift offers its share of energetic highlights: the bopping, danceable "Town Called Malice," the pure bubbling funk of "Precious," and some just-plain-catchy pop ("Happy Together"). Best of all it's good to know that Weller hasn't lost his endearing sense of romanticism. And in a world of cynical poseurs strutting their tired gospel of phony "cool," such tender, heartfelt perceptions are downright refreshing.

D.E. 7th, Dave Edmunds (Columbia)—Beginning with his earliest works with blues boogie band Love Sculpture (1968-1972) right down to his subsequent string of fine '70's releases, Dave Edmunds has admirably maintained an unaffected loyalty to the pure roots tradition of vintage American rockabilly. Better yet, Edmunds' own work easily surpasses that of those American artists (Robert Gordon, Billy and Johnny Burnette, to name a few) who today carry on the old vintage style.

Last year's Twangin' featured a top-notch collection of blues and country tunes all done up in classic Edmunds fashion, complete with characteristically energetic zip. Incidentally, that LP also marked the end of Edmunds' association with Rockpile, that epitome of exuberant musicianship. For any Rockpile devotees who may have mourned the band's demise early last year, D.E. 7th is bound to come as good news. Much like ex-band mate Nick Lowe's recent work, Edmunds has assembled a veritable sound-alike of his former group, not excluding the energetic spirit that made Rockpile such a great band to begin with.

If in doubt, one need only lend an ear to "Warmed Over Kisses (Left Over Love)", a tune typical of this LP in general. Consisting of scorching-hot banjo and guitar pickin', jangling tambourines and a frenetic drumbeat topped off with Edmunds' razor-sharp vocals overdubbed to a richly-layered consistency, the tune's a bristling burst of energy. D.E. 7th is rife with such invigorating moments of distinction, wonderfully catchy for all the same reasons: an unflagging expertise in the musicianship department and an abundance of solid hooks. Listen to the pumping instrumental thrust of "Deep in the Heart of Texas," the lilting concertina and nimble lead guitar in "Bail You Out," or the bopping piano and crunching rhythmic bite of Doug Kershaw's "Louisiana Man."

Moreover, on the LP's solo ballad "One More Night," Edmunds displays more heartfelt emotion than he's ever expressed before. Also included here (but no more worthy of mention) is the much talked-about Bruce Springsteen tune "From Small Things (Big Things One Day Come)"—clichéd B.S. blather right down to the last "promised land," yet worthy it is as a conclusive piece of evidence that Edmunds doesn't need Springsteen any more than he needed Rockpile. For that reason, D.E. 7th is a refreshing delight even more coherent and satisfying than Twangin'. Best of all, this record isn't likely to have anyone hungering for a Rockpile reunion. Need I say more?

ANOTHER GREY AREA, Graham Parker (Arista)—On his final effort with the Rumour, 1980's The Up Escalator, Graham Parker presented an impressive, albeit fruitless attempt at gaining new ground commercially. That success once again eluded him was none-too-surprising in itself. If Parker's musical approach has softened with time, his relentlessly brusque demeanor has not. As it stands, such an intentionally obstinate "back off" stance bodes ill for any projected mass U.S. acceptance. Not that it's all Parker's fault; brilliant as his earlier works were, they sadly didn't stand a chance against the watered-down homogeneous pap which, thanks to gutless radio programmers everywhere, has become the strict order of the day.

(review continued on next page)

many CBS artists doing sessions for others. Business and art is a turf combination. Like good and evil, they cancel each other out.

ENGLISH BAND TO LOOK FOR: SECRET AFFAIR

(review continued from previous page)

Admittedly, while Parker's vocals are an undeniably powerful tool, one never sensed any tenderness beneath the condescending exterior, and raging sarcasm without due respite can become downright tiresome in the long run. Listening to Another Grey Area, it's obvious that Parker's status as a cult figure doesn't sit too well with him. Not only is the new LP considerably more subdued over Parker's past efforts, its controlled atmosphere is in direct accordance with his far-less-cynical outlook. Although wry as ever lyrically, Parker's delivery lacks both his customary punch and a likewise feel of urgency. Another Grey Area finds him snarling less and singing a whole lot more.

The major problem centers on Jack Douglas' slick, lackadaisical production job which manages to bury all key instrumentation, save a piano/drum arrangement. The resulting effect is one of numbing sameness. To say that Another Grey Area is Graham Parker's weakest work to date is an understatement. Until now, the man didn't seem capable of producing a bad LP, but Another Grey Area is replete with casual throwaways. It's as though Parker were pandering to the public's ultra-commercial tastes in a desperate last-ditch effort to secure himself a hit.

Most disheartening of all is the fact that several tunes here (the title track, "Biz Fat Zero," and "Fear Not" in particular) show varying degrees of true potential. Whereas the Rumour could have provided the burning intensity necessary to bring these tunes to life, the studio musicians employed here render them merely unexceptional. With precious few exceptions, the bulk of Another Grey Area consists of lethargic ballads and turgid, overlong numbers. Indeed, only the raggaie-tinged "No More Excuses" approaches the Graham Parker of yore. In the face of all this, what is a loyal G.P. fan to do? Fervently hope that Parker will abandon his visions of radio stardom and return to what he's always done best—biting, first-class rock 'n roll. Let's hope so. Let's really hope so. The last thing on earth we need now is another Christopher Cross.

The Monkees (Information) Headquarters

by Dave Cambrini

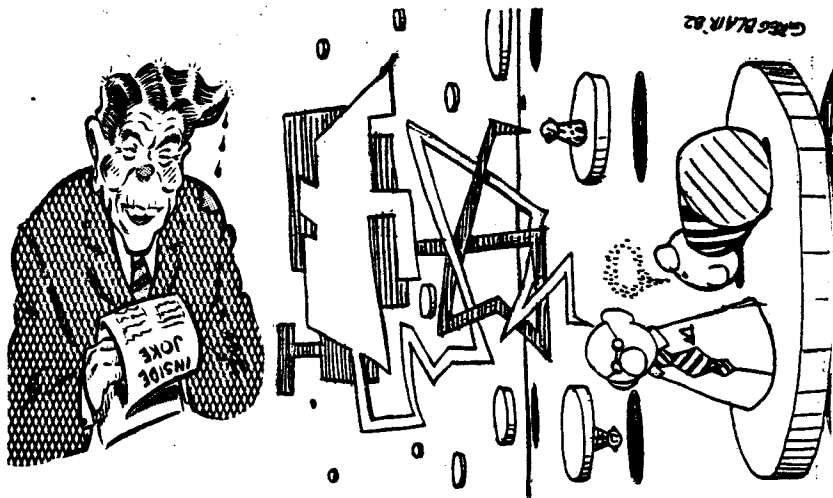
(The Fourth Annual Monkees Convention will be held on August 6-7 in Bridgeport, CT—for details write to MAGGIE McMANUS, 2770 S. Broad Street, Trenton, NJ 08610, or CHARLES F. ROSENWAY!!, 397 Edgewood Ave., New Haven, CT 06511—of course, stay tuned to IJ for further details...So, as a tribute, we present the following:)

Comedian Rodney Dangerfield's favorite line is "I get no respect." Well, if there was ever a rock band that got no respect, it was the Monkees. Rock critics and many (alas, most) older, "hip" rock music fans looked down their noses at the Monkees, their music, their TV show—everything and anything to do with them. Their belief was that the Monkees were a "manufactured" group made up of four no-talent nobodies who only appealed to teeny-boppers and made "bubbly" music. This belief was unjustified and, for the four Monkees, totally undeserved. Here are just a few brief reasons why:

A. The four members of the Monkees—Davy Jones, Micky Dolenz, Michael Nesmith and Peter Tork—were (are) all tremendously talented before they were picked to be Monkees. Davy was a singing and stage acting veteran (he once starred in Oliver on stage). Micky, once a child actor (who starred in the TV series, Circus Boy), was involved in a rock group called the Missing Links before the Monkees. Mike was an accomplished musician, session man and composer. And Peter, too, was a fine musician with much musical experience.

B. Although they may have been a "manufactured" group, they soon rebelled against this image and fought not to be manipulated and told what to do by the "powers that created them" (NBC, Don Kirschner, the Colgems record label, etc.). And showing their determination and integrity, the Monkees won every battle they waged! They succeeded in ousting Kirschner from having any control over their music, and they won the right to play their own instruments on their records (something they weren't "allowed" to do for their first two LP's and 45's). They also took control of what music they recorded, and how it was to be recorded. The Monkees also began to take more control (although certainly not total control) of their TV series. More and more, the Monkees injected their own humor, wit and social commentary into their shows. They slipped subtle jabs at society, "the establishment", hypocrisy, sacred cows, and the general state of the world into their show regularly after that. Plus, their shows became more and more outrageous and bizarre.

C. The Monkees were beyond a doubt innovative! It's generally believed that they were the first rock act to use and record with a Moog synthesizer. They also virtually introduced Jimi Hendrix to the American public by putting him on one of their tours as the opening act (Hendrix, who was almost unknown in America at the time, was making it in England when the Monkees heard him. They were so knocked out by him, they asked Jimi to tour with them.). In addition, they recorded a Harry Nilsson song ("Cuddly Toy") before the Beatles "discovered" him. The Monkees also made a fabulously progressive and innovative full-length movie which was way ahead of its time. The film, "Head", was a satirical parody of the Monkees, themselves, their own "manufactured" image and their fight to remain sane! "Head" was very "Monty Python"-ish, insofar as the film was made up of numerous bizarre situations, events, and scenes, as well as incredible visual ef-



fects that were virtually unrelated, but were all somehow linked to each other so that there was continuity and a common theme throughout the film. (Unfortunately, the true greatness, creativity and significance of this film went almost totally unnoticed, by critics and the general public as well, because it was a total box office "flop" even today, more than ten years after its release, "Head" still hasn't gotten the credit and recognition it rightfully deserves.) And don't forget about the Monkees' TV series. Compared to what else was on the tube at the time the Monkees' series (which ran from 1966 to 1968) was on NBC, the Monkees' show was a major contrast. Here were four young guys—a rock group—who had no "older generation" type guardian, no ties, no cares, no steady jobs, etc.—on the TV set every week in prime time! This was a major breakthrough in youth-oriented television. Another interesting thing about the Monkees' series is that in its last year on NBC, some of their shows had no laugh track, which was a rarity (if not unheard of) in the mid- to late '60's.

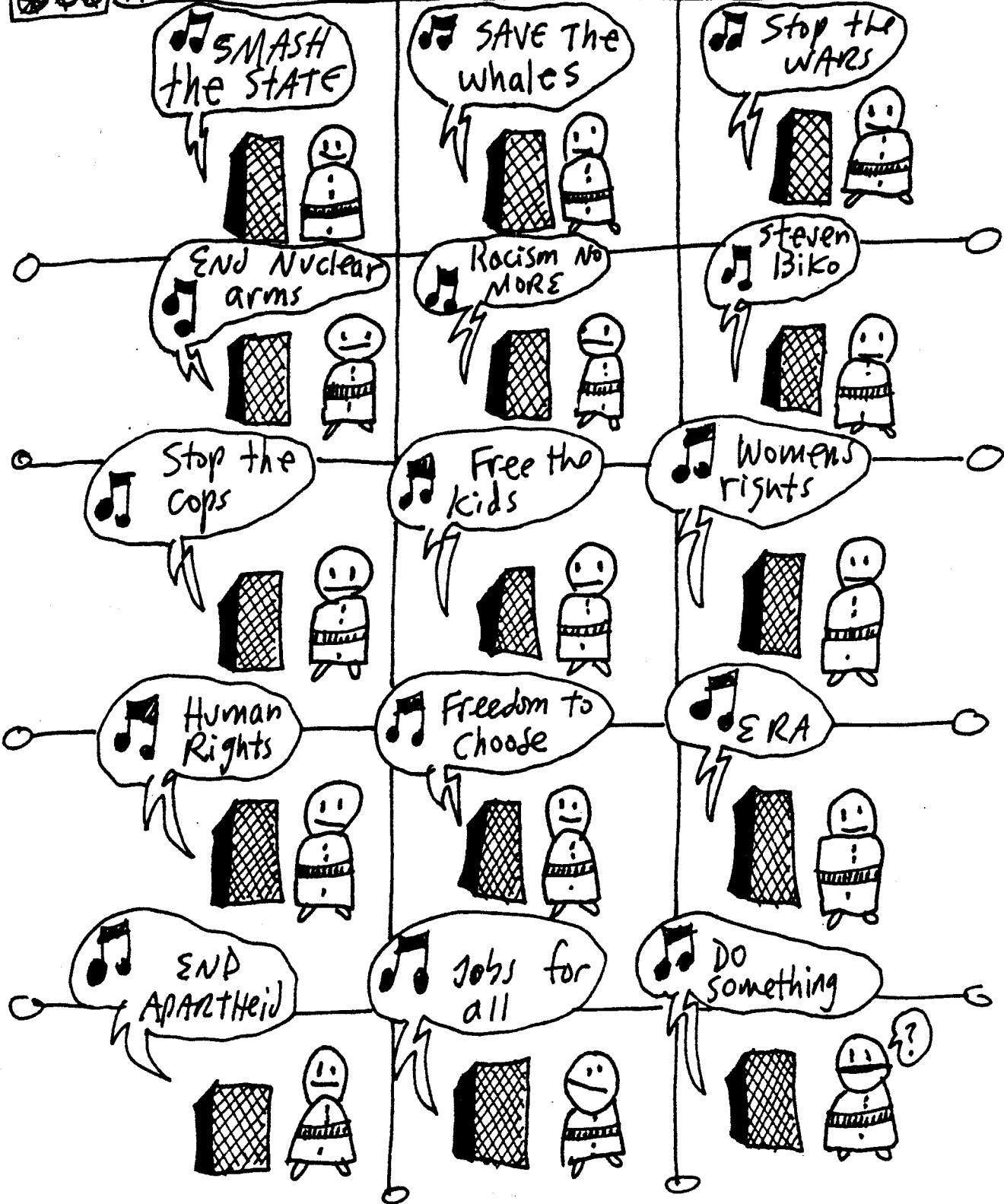
In spite of all of these things, the Monkees continued to be overlooked, scorned and made fun of—until now. It seems that during the past few years, fans of the Monkees from way back in the '60's have begun to "come out of the closet". These fans and admirers of Davy, Micky, Peter and Mike have spoken up and let it be known that the Monkees have been cruelly and wrongly maligned throughout the years. Another interesting development is the fact that punk and new wave artists have recorded cover versions of various Monkee songs. That's right, strangely enough, punk and new wave rockers seem to idolize the Monkees (perhaps because, like punks and new wavers, the Monkees were always fighting for what they believed in and wanted to do; and for never doing anything just because they were told to, or expected to do it!). In addition to all this, singer Anne Murray gave the cause a big shot in the arm by recording an old Monkee classic, "Daydream Believer", and releasing it as a single. Anne's version, like the Monkees' original version, became a big hit (the Monkees' version of "Daydream Believer", though, was quite a bit bigger than Murray's version. The Monkees hit Billboard's #1 spot with it.). Anne's version got people (especially DJ's) talking, and the general public thinking about and remembering the Monkees—in a nice, positive way. Combining all of these ingredients, and adding the fact that the Monkees' TV series is still being shown (via syndication) in many parts of the US and Canada, not to mention in other parts of the world, the time seems right for some good old Monkeemania—for a second time around!

Apparently realizing what's happening, Arista records (which now owns the rights to the Monkees' recordings) has released a forty-song double album of classic Monkees tracks in Australia called "Monkeemania". (This double LP contained a few previously unreleased songs as well. Unfortunately, this LP set is now out-of-print and extremely rare.) Shortly afterwards, Arista released an EP of old Monkees hits in England. This EP proceeded to jump right into the British Top 40 singles chart!

With all of this Monkees-related action, it would seem that a Monkee reunion would be in order. Unfortunately, it appears that Davy, Micky, Peter and Mike don't share these sentiments, because presently, as far as anyone can ascertain, they have no plans for a reunion. However, none of the former Monkees rule out the possibility of some sort of reunion in the future. (In fact, according to Micky's grandmother, who ran Micky's own personal fan club until her death, the four former Monkees do have the desire to record together again sometime.) The Monkees were slated and signed to make their first appearance together anywhere since Peter quit the group in late 1968 on the 1980 Emmy Awards telecast (on September 7) to make a presentation. However, because of the actors' strike, the Monkees decided against appearing, which is totally understandable. The Monkees, more than anyone else in entertainment, know what it's like to have to fight "the powers that be" for what you believe in!

AND
NOW...

The GREAT Rebellion of '82!!



Recreated I.C.F. / "Just dancing to the problems of the world" - SHOBBY STONEY

We went to catch "Conan the Barbarian" as a mid-day bargain matinee, well-attended by other layabouts too. "It's just like the Depression," said Alice Liddell, "everybody's going to the movies." Just like! The flick is sure to engender cascades of critical condescension, not entirely unwarranted, but I liked it better than any film review I ever hope to see, even this one. Let me straighten out the mandarins on a few points.

The Hearst reviewer calls Conan "the comic-strip hero," but that's misleading except as a display of the limits of his erudition. The literati never notice any kind of popular culture until it's dead or dying (at their hands, as often as not), be it Elizabethan drama or punk rock. So it is with the pulp fiction of the 20's and 30's. The English professors have belatedly accorded a modest resting-place in their literary mausoleum to the horror fantasist H.P. Lovecraft, perhaps because he has no successors worth a damn. But they ignore his friend Robert E. Howard, notwithstanding the impeccable credentials of his antecedents such as William Morris and Lord Dunsany. Yet Howard created the sword-and-sorcery species of the heroic fantasy genus, which still has eminent practitioners (Fritz Leiber, Michael Moorcock, Jack Vance) today; and his creation Conan is an archetype likely to lurk in popular awareness as long as Sherlock Holmes or Frankenstein.

Howard was at least as effective a story-teller as Lovecraft, probably more so, but what sets him apart from the other weird writers in his better work is a heroic fatalism which is utterly pitiless, stark and unromantic. Howard—unlike Conan continuators de Camp and Carter—stressed the "sword" side of sword-and-sorcery, as most writers in the genre are better off doing (the exception is the unique Jack Vance). Howard's obsession with violence—meaningless, yet a real "peak experience" in a domesticated world—is surprisingly "modern", despite the pre-Atlantean setting.

The movie is generally faithful to the Howard original, up to a point. The blood-and-guts are satisfying if (like me) you like that sort of thing. As Chris Estey says, it's "hack work" in every sense. The limb-lopping is actually minimal compared to the Howard stories and, for that matter, most Peckinpah or samurai or recent horror movies. (However, it sufficed to render "confusing" to the Bay Guardian's snobbish-yet-supersensitive reviewer a plot any 8-year-old can follow.) Essentially the movie is the story of Conan's revenge on the sorcerer who wiped out his clan and enslaved him. Arnold Schwarzenegger acts as well as he needs to as Conan, and James Earl Jones does Darth Vader again with his usual aplomb (this time as Conan's nemesis, a thousand-year-old Jim Jonesoid weresnake). There are some discordant notes—incongruous colloquialisms; a wrestle with demons who look like airbrushed Gumbies; some too-obvious rip-offs from *Seven Samurai*, the *Star Wars* movies and even *Blazing Saddles*—but nothing ruinous. As a story the movie works. Why wait 20 years till the critics permit you to watch a B movie when you can beat the rush now?

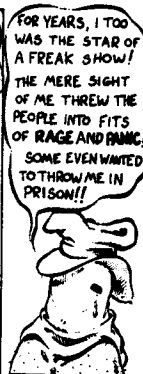
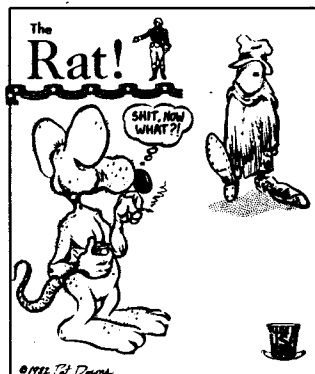
The real shortcoming, though you'd never know it from the usual corporate/"alternative" media reviews, is that the figure of Conan is diminished. To a degree he's properly portrayed as ferocious yet innocent, as untamed yet uncorrupted, amoral but not evil (offered an amulet against evil, he says, "I am evil"). But he's too much the victim avenging villainy, despite incidental thefts, debauches and sacrileges. The movie will be likened to *Star Wars*—wrongly, since Conan fights for no cause but his own and couldn't be more foreign to the antiseptic high-tech bureaucratic moralism of the Lucas flicks, those warm-ups for World War III—for unfortunately it doesn't fully reveal Conan as the barbarous-but-worldly adventurer. The real Conan is a skeptic and hater of priests, but avoids gratuitous blasphemy likely to rouse dormant evils; the real Conan returns an injury with interest but isn't an Ahab-like obsessive as in the film.

Obviously Conan appeals to anyone stifled by social constraints; to those who'd like to strike out directly as oppressions and indignities assuming a conveniently tangible form; to s/he who wishes an individual could still make a difference by a personal act. Conan can be harsh but he's no hypocrite. He might steal your jewels but he won't pollute your soul. Organizer-activists dismiss fantasy as "escapist," fully justifying J.R.R. Tolkien's rejoinder: "What class of men would you expect to be most preoccupied with, and most hostile to, the idea of escape? Jailers." Fantasy and freedom: their organic nexus was evident to Fourier; to the Marxist fantasist Morris; to the Russian Anarcho-Futurists who—anticipating Howard's very nomenclature!—called themselves "Anarcho-Hyperboreans." And yet the sectarians stood around stupified in 1968 when the French staged their epochal general strike and trumpeted the slogan "All power to the imagination!"

The notion of redemption through an individual act of willed violence is played out by now (though the individual may still find it therapeutic). Insofar as violence has been collectivized and depersonalized, the passion has gone out of it, except for the spectators. In the South Atlantic, teams of technicians take turns obliterating each other by pushing buttons. "Smart" bombs blow away stupid people: it's sheep fighting over sheep. Even as Maggie Thatcher doing Winston Churchill-in-drag fails to outdraw "Evita," the junta learns it's easier to make Argentine dissidents "disappear" than British troops.

Our times produce only ersatz barbarians. Intellectual jades may get off on the insensate fury of the Viking berserkers, but this century we have to settle for bureaucratized brutality administered by banal nerds like Eichmann, Haig, Pol Pot and Diane Feinstein. Pseudo-barbarian theatrics ended in a whimper; the Futurists went Fascist, the Surrealists went Stalinist, the punks went New Wave and re-entered art school. Why the attraction for an imaginary barbarism? Because "civilization becomes more odious as it nears its end" (Fourier), and the barbarian non-alternative seems—cleaner. Where is Conan when we need him?

INSIDE BOX!
1982 NIGHT



Club POLYMER

by Michael W. Hacker

About three blocks away from the house, within walking distance really, there exists a large black and glass structure. An ostentatious building if only because it squats square in the middle of a barren, and apparently abandoned, corn field.

Only the glowing shows.
John runs up there every now and then, when he feels the urge to write, the need to communicate with mankind, the need to open his mouth and say something. Usually what he said turned out to be inappropriate to anything, but he wrote it anyway.
Why he chose to write in a cocktail lounge is beyond me. Well, let me see, he said I did it because as a child he fell asleep to vivid dreams while his mother poured her bath water. I guess his theory is simply that the bathwater in later years became the background noise in cocktail lounges. There he had his vivid dreams and wrote them down while the bartender poured the scotch and waters.

Actually, that's where I first met John. He was sitting in a very dark corner to one side of a roaring fireplace. He was completely surrounded by smoke. I recalled a dim memory of London Tower in the fog. I didn't disturb him of course. I never disturb John when he's got his pipe lit. I have this funny feeling that he draws his ideas through that foul thing, and they somehow wind up on his writing pad. The smoke is what's left of his ideas; which is why there's probably so much of it, and why I don't walk through it. I never walk through leftovers of any kind.

How he writes in all that smoke and none of the necessary lighting is also beyond me. I have an idea though. He once told me that the people who came to the Club Polymer, were too much toothpaste. "If you turned what lighting there was, out," he would say, "you would wind up with an eerie glow emanating from little toothed spotlights, all smiling at each other." When I asked him about all that smoke, he told me, "That's when I first decided everybody wore far too much toothpaste, when I saw them smiling through four feet of smog." John usually exaggerated everything, but I think he was right about that, though. How else could he write.

If they stopped smiling, he'd be out of luck.
John was right about the clientele at the Club Polymer, and he wasn't exaggerating when he called them plastic people. He told me one match could melt the whole place into a smouldering puddle. You'd have to be there to really know what John meant. They'd march in wearing so much toothpaste you could see the glow from their teeth literally minutes before faces showed up. You could smell them before you saw them too. Between the hairspray and cologne, they smelled like walking gardens.

I never talked to anyone there; although John said they couldn't hold a conversation for over a minute. John was probably exaggerating again. Most of them, according to John, were salesmen or junior executives. Some were secretaries or flight attendants. All of them, except for John and I, were financially well off. Maybe that's what brought John and I together and gave us our peculiar view of the Club Polymer.

The Club Polymer was a \$400.00 a year affair between plastic people and metal meatuses. It existed for the luxury of working off calories in the gym, and gaining them back again in the lounge. The Club Polymer was a health club based on a contradiction. I agreed with John when he told me that all of these neuro-fangled health clubs were built on circular logic. Lose calories, so you can drink in more so you can lose them again.

I once told John (for once I had something to say) that a forty mile an hour wind could run through the place, and not a single plastered plastic strand of hair would move.

John laughed.
As I said, John runs up there every now and then, and I'm there every night. What brought us together wasn't really our financial situations. I worked in a gas station and really couldn't afford the place, but I had one good suit and went anyway. John was a writer unpublished as yet, but a writer nonetheless. How he made a living was never made clear. John had a tendency to cover his doings with shrugs in the same way he covered his writing with my lack of it.

What brought us two souls together was the violent separation of another two souls. It happened rather quickly and I caught the tail end of it, but John, ever watchful John peering out from underneath all that smoke, had seen it coming.

They had come into the lounge together. John told me, and in his imaginative way said he thought they walked in rhythm to the disco band. "They practically danced in," he said. "I've seen them before. They come in every Friday, get drunker than snakes, and just dance it off. They always wear the same goddamned

clothes too. She's always got that disco dress on, and he's always wearing a white shirt, black pants, and a suntan."

"Along with too much toothpaste," I told him.

"She's got a Southern nasal voice," John told me. "The kind with a twang that could keep a man in perpetual misery. That's probably why he dances so much, so he won't have to talk to her."

"Well, what happened? My name's Max, by the way."

"I'm John. Oh, I don't know precisely. Case of mistaken identity and jealousy I guess. They were dancing as usual, and when the music stopped they went back to the bar, slobbered all over each other for awhile..."

"Slobbered?" I interrupted.

"Slobbered. Anyway, up comes this girl thinking she knows this guy from somewhere. I don't think she even knew his name."

"What is his name?"

"Who cares? I've been taken with the name 'Disco Danny'."

"Disco Danny?" I laughed.

"Right. And presenting his partner, 'Swirling Suzy'."

"Swirling Suzy," I echoed.

"Well, Swirling Suzy is staring at this other girl like a maniac about to lunge. Well, naturally Disco Danny can't figure out who she is. When the girl realizes this, she leaves in a rush, and he turns back to Swirling Suzy. Old Swirling Suzy's got a knife in her hands and with those eyes I'd say she had every intention of using it."

"She sure did. I don't think Disco Danny knew what hit him," I said.

"Right in the balls, yet. Jesus."

"I didn't think he would bleed, you know?"

John laughed. "I didn't expect blood, anyway. Maybe some kind of Polymer would ooze out, but not blood."

"Polymer?" I asked. I really didn't know.

"Plastic."

I laughed. "He won't be doing any dancing for a long time."

"He'll probably blame it on an old Yale football injury. He's too much of a phony to tell the truth."

"Did he go to Yale?" I asked stupidly.

"He's too much of an idiot!" John yelled.

A few people turned.

A crowd had gathered around Disco Danny who lay curled in a ball on the floor. "There goes the girl," John said as we walked over to the crowd. No one made a move to stop her. John and I didn't bother either. "Shouldn't someone call the police?" I heard someone say. No one made a move.

"They're all dingbats," John said, and added, "All hormones and no brains." I just nodded.

All the perfect people with their perfect teeth, their perfect hair and their perfect bodies stood there waiting for something to happen. Like the yo-yos they were, they stood in a perfect circle around Disco Danny who only groaned.

A wild-eyed Oriental who made balloon animals broke through the crowd with a balloon dog. "Pretty," he said and held up a red balloon-poodle. He handed it to a young girl. "Pretty. For you." "So he made one?" another girl cried.

So he made another one, and after that several more. There were red, green, blue poodles, lions, cats, and a mouse. Plastic balloons for the plastic people in their plastic playhouse. Disco Danny groaned as everyone found a new item of interest. Life for them was a series of short subjects, needing only a momentary glance to recognize the situation. Like the waiting siren of a passing ambulance, they need not concentrate upon the situation to know what was what. They measured their lives in breast strokes, push-ups and the meter run.

Their goals were lengths, laps, meters and number. Some of the numbers were financial.

As John and I watched them disperse with their toy balloon animals, John turned to me and said, "Max, would you say that an individual's idea of himself is apparent in the things he surrounds himself with?"

I had to say yes.

"What do you think of people who surround themselves with balloons, Max?"

I laughed at the obvious answer. Air.

"How long have you been coming here, Max?"

"About two and a half months," I shrugged.

"About the same here. You know, I've never seen the owner?"

I'd like to meet the owner. I mean he's got to have a great sense of humor."

"Why?" I asked.

John laughed. "Why? Look, in order to join the club, you have to have a credit card—plastic money. The only numbers are plastic people and the club's name itself, translated, means 'Club Plastic'."

"Are you saying this place is a commentary on contemporary society?" I asked, staring out a window.

"A very profitable one, at that."

Whatever became of Disco Danny is impossible for me to say, as John and I existed, without any balloons, in search of the owner. We were told he was in the lower gymnasium. He found him in the lower gymnasium, hanging upside down. "Like a bat," John said, from a pair of gymnasium rings.

"Hi!" he yelled, smiled, and semaphore signaled an upside down greeting. "Be right with you," he said, and not too clearly due to the lit cigar protruding from his teeth.

He had a canine smile, a massively built body, although compact, and a quick judging eye which I noticed John admired. I was designated shortshop in life, so I'm always between bases; which is why standing between them, I simply looked from one to the other.

"You're the owner?" John smiled.

"That's right."

"John Gelding. This here's Max..."

"Amstar." I filled in. He shook hands all around.

"Jared Crispin Craig!" he boomed. "What can I do for you?" he boomed some more.

John was a bold fellow; which is why he pursued the issue. "Anyone who would name a club as you did, and then go hang from his toes, must have a great sense of humor. Am I right sir?"

"Yes indeed. I was born partially crazy, and I've been spending the remainder of my years trying to complete the assignment."

The three of us laughed.

"Tell me, Mr. Craig, just to satisfy our curiosity, why did you name this place Club Polymer?"

There was a pause during which he put his hands on his hips, and began pacing. "Well, I'll tell you. I used to run a plastics industry. You know anything about plastics?" For some reason he looked at me. I shrugged. I spent a great deal of time struggling.

"Well, they're flexible, relatively easy to produce, can be bent, shaped and misshaped. It's structurally an unsound material unless reinforced."

"Sounds familiar," John said.

I shrugged again.

Jared Crispin Craig looked at me again. "Don't you see the connection?"

"No," I said.

John sighed, said, "No wonder you work in a gas station."

"Look here now, Max," Jared Crispin Craig, with a marvelous sense of constantly coming to a point, said. "Those people out there are a dime a dozen—easily produced and relatively efficient. They can be bent, shaped, formed and misshaped. They can be anything you want them to be. The alcohol and the athletics support their structural unsoundness."

"Polymers and people," I said.

"One in the same," Jared Crispin Craig grunted, lifting himself to the rings, flipping upside down, and inexplicably locking his feet in the rings.

John had a wide open smile when he asked him, "Are you a Polymer?"

Jared Crispin Craig dropped the cigar out of his mouth when he burst out laughing. "Well no!" he said, "I'm crazy."

John laughed, and we left.

"What'd he mean?" I asked as we walked up the stairs.

"He meant that you can only mold predictabilities. An unpredictability is liable to snap off anywhere, and in the wrong direction, if you try and shape it."

"There's no way he could be a member of his own creation," I said.

"It's a good joke," John said, and we parted for the evening.

As I say, John runs up there every now and then, and I'm up there every night. When we see each other we laugh, have several drinks together, and wait for the wild-eyed Oriental who inevitably shows up with a box of balloons. John always asks for a balloon man. He always specifies a red balloon man. I asked him once, "Why red?"

"It sort of signifies my embarrassment with humanity," he said.

It was a good joke, and we laughed.

ANY DIFFERENCE between NKVD and Okhrana (FBI)? One approved by RCP types. Choose your yoke. Surrealist Workers Local #2, Box 381, Sheridan, WY 82801.

Scatology

by Gary S. Rosin

Cloe. Yes, I remember Cloe well, though I hadn't thought of her for a while, not since the last time I had colitis—you know how Cloe is. I remember the first time I took her out on a date. We went to a fancy restaurant—I thought I'd impress her with how sophisticated I was. Well, she ordered the strangest meal, I remember. I can't recall just what it was. Seems like it was spaghetti, nacho salad, broccoli, and beans, or some such thing. Anyway, there I was trying to show off for a new girl, and what happens? I took her home and then I was suddenly hit by one of my colitis attacks, and it was a bad one. Yeah, the whole bit, cramps, diarrhea, and even a bit of asthma. That pretty much killed the evening, what with me shut up in her john for a good two hours while I paid for all that rich food. You'd think I'd learn, especially after going with Cloe for so long, and I do a lot better now. I get maybe two or three attacks a year.

Is she still nuts on that...what was it she called it...Scatology, that's what it was. I remember because I thought she said "eschatology" and I thought she was a Jesus-freak or something. Holistic digestion—I guess it's really not much different from eschatology, though. They're both concerned with last things. As I understand it, holistic digestion is a refinement on holistic health in that it goes beyond the mind-affect-body bit.

Scatology holds that through regulation of your digestion your other bodily functions and your mind can be brought into greater harmony. Of course, it's a reciprocal thing; a more peaceful and balanced mind aids the digestion and keeps the body healthy.

Cloe had some peculiar ideas; she was obsessed with her digestion, and everything she did took her digestion into account. Of course, where I tend to colitis, Cloe got constipated. She regulated her diet to keep herself regular, and if she hadn't had a bowel movement by nine o'clock in the morning, she'd give herself an enema. I remember she would always make me hold the bag for her, not that she had much of a problem with constipation while I was living with her—but that's another thing. Cloe would never let us make love in the evening. It seems that intercourse during digestion jumbles up the digestive tract and can cause constipation, so part of Cloe's program of adjusting her digestion called for abstinence, except immediately upon rising in the morning. We would void our bladders so as to allow the maximum slack for our internal organs, and then we would make love. While we made love, Cloe would lecture to me about the benefits of Scatology, about how intercourse in the morning stimulates the digestive tract, preparing it to receive breakfast and aiding in clearing the previous day's remains out of the bowels. Cloe was quite regular while we lived together, sparing me duty as her holder.

Mine aids the digesting, said Cloe. Just one glassful, no more, taken with the meal, as one would take a vitamin. Nervous persons, such as myself, have particular need to watch their diet. Proper digestion can calm the nerves, but the wrong diet can ruin the digestion and flagellate an already over-sensitive system.

According to Cloe, I eat too much red meat. Red meat, when eaten at all, should be lean and prepared so that all the animal fats and the blood—especially the blood—are cooked out of the meat; it seems the Jewish dietary laws are more than just fastidious. To be truthful, I must admit that during the time I spent with Cloe and she regulated my diet, I felt better, more relaxed, than at any other time in my life, though I did sneak out occasionally and dine on rare prime rib, peanuts and Coca-Cola; I always paid for it, of course, so I was always found out in the end. Whenever I find myself getting too wound up, I put myself back on Cloe's old regimen, and it always helps. Still, as soon as I am more settled I back-slide again; even now I rebel against Cloe.

Why did we break up? I don't know, beyond a vague sense that the relationship had stagnated. I felt self-conscious every time I passed gas. I even wondered whether she kept me around because she loved me or I kept her regular. Anyway, we just sat there digesting most of the time. I felt the life was sucking me dry; it was time for a movement. I left one morning and went out and gorged myself with forbidden food, then locked myself up in the bathroom and stunk it up, feeling both wretched and deliciously free.

Cloe? The last I heard, she had married a vegetarian called Hayka. What? Yes, I guess it is an odd combination of words. It must have been fate. Well, I had better go before this steak gets the best of me. Yes, I'm afraid I've done it to myself again.

Cloe wouldn't have married Hayka.

Many steamy 'erotica par excellence' letters changed hands before we went our separate ways in the reality of day to day existence.

In the evening I would go home and open my Tourister and run my fingers through the bits of broken glass. I would sniff the charred end of that tie and think of England and her. We should have stayed there forever. England was a fun country. Maybe someday I could return...with her.

She had last been seen at a taping session of "Late Night" with David Letterman. One of the pages there remembered the night that Bill Wendell had to take matters into his own hands and throw out two noisy women from the audience. The women had gone totally out of control and they were having just too much fun on a 'non-audience participation' program. The descriptions fit. It was all I had to go on after learning that these women's parents had disowned them. It was the same old story...another "Naked City" drama.

Covered with spray paint over 75% of my body, I donned a discarded red beret and climbed the stairs back to reality. It was a hot summer day and the glare of the sun drained my body of all willpower. I walked weak-kneed to the nearest McDonalds. I thought I saw her as I gulped down the last of my "McFood", but she vanished. The streets were crowded and it could have been the spray paint on my glasses combining with the reflections on the golden arches...holography at its finest.

"I figured you'd show up here sooner or later," she began with a sneer, "looking for her, eh?"

She didn't have much information except that she thought her best friend had gone back to England...something about a wedding. She couldn't remember who was getting married to who, but I thanked her for her trouble.

("Whew, thought that hoser would never leave...")

("Ya' know, this would make a beauty topic...")

("Le's go in an' have a beer...")

("...she sure is pretty, eh...")

I heard the door slam and then there was laughter and the unmistakable sighs of ecstasy. A wolf howled in the distance. It must be the odor of stale beer that keeps them away from the car...could be...

Our "place" had been temporarily shut down by the board of health until someone could be found that possessed the fortitude and constitution sufficient to allow them the nerve to go in and pick up the garbage. The noxious odor of leftover gravy permeated the premises. Something was moving around inside the building and its shadow was plainly visible against the grimy windowpanes. Sensing eminent danger (or the possibility of a new tourist attraction in the making) I walked at a steady pace away from the place with tears in my eyes. Must have been the onions...

It took me several years, but I 'hitched' out to Australia. I worked on station until I had built up a small bankroll and then I toured this country that I had wanted to visit ever since I was a small boy.

The tape of the show was well-worn, but it was all too clear that two women were being removed bodily from the audience. It was her! It was the best friend who went totally Canadian! I watched the struggle intensely and listened to David's remarks about "certain elements in the studio audience must be kept under control lest we all just have too much fun for our own good". He went on reading the latest government report which proved that too much fun can be hazardous to the health of Americans and will gradually lead to the deterioration of the basic concepts under which the country itself was established.

The old man told me the solution to my problem would be to quit writing all those crude sophomoric stories and just settle down in one place and hope she finds me. I watched him intently as he put the finishing touches on one of the boomerangs. He squatted in the dirt and began to turn the soil with the boomerang's two ends. He continued until daybreak with the strange ritual.

I headed back across the red dust. The outback was a strikingly beautiful place, but one could not exist there very long.

Lost a tire on the 'rover' that morning and I was late getting there.

I nearly wrecked the dusty ol' relic I was driving when the boomerang came crashing through the windscreen. God! She was still that same fun-loving lady...and what an arm! Jeez!

The lovemaking blossomed like a flower in the desert until a mob of 'roo overran us. One of the bastards hit me square in the back at full gallop. Dammit! She helped me into the 'rover' and asked me if she could drive the 'sporty li'l thing'. We laughed as I handed her the key. I hardly noticed the broken glass slicing into the backs of my legs.

I watched the boomerang bounce around on the floorboard. The old man was right...My problem would be solved when I stop writing stories that readers find boring and bland. Just look what happened to SNL...viewers became readers...maybe next year...funny...I didn't remember the red dust being that sticky...I could see the mob of 'roo up ahead...I glanced over for one last look at her...she became more beautiful with every heartbeat... She smiled at me and said something, but I couldn't hear her...it was getting so dark...never enough time to live anymore...down under.....

- Jim Tauscher

SPREAD TOO THIN

tune: Yellow Submarine

lived a President who had an idea

For a new clean source of energy.

And we lived a blissful while
Tho it cost us a flood of grief

O we all live in a nuclear submarine

Nuclear submarine, nuclear submarine

O we'll all die in a nuclear submarine

Nuclear submarine, nuclear submarine
And our friends all live in fear

And our friends can live in fear
Many more of them may die next year

And the Marine Band begins to play .

O we all live in a nuclear submarine

Nuclear submarine, nuclear submarine

U we'll all die in a nuclear submarine
Nuclear submarine. nuclear submarine

As they live a life of ease

The Utilities get all they need

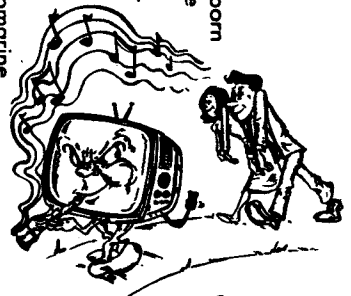
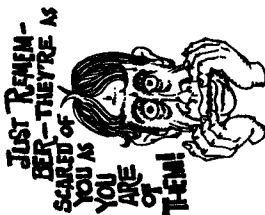
Bonds of guilt and rates suprem

With their nuclear submarine . . .

O we all live in a nuclear submarine
Nuclear submarine nuclear submarine

O we'll all die in a nuclear submarine

New clean, nuclear submarine!



by Mark Geller

I am a widow and I live with my oldest daughter. She is a sweet girl and every day I thank God for giving her to me. But now I had made a terrible mistake and I am afraid that it will hurt her very much. What I did was to go to this man in my office and ask him if he would take her out. He seemed like such a nice man, and I worry so much about my daughter. She is forty-two years old and never married. Always she had trouble meeting men because she is quiet and shy—not like her sisters who are outgoing and married young. The man said no at first. So I went to him the next day and told him about all the money I have from my husband's insurance. I did it because I thought it might make him more interested in my daughter. I know it was wrong—but I love my daughter so much and don't want her to be alone when I'm gone. Anyway, the man told me he would take my daughter out if I gave him one hundred dollars. I thought he was joking but he wasn't. He said he would show my daughter a good time but it had to be worth his while. I went along with him—God forgive me. So now this man has been taking my daughter out for three months. He sends flowers all the time. She tells me they have discussed marriage. But the man keeps asking for more money. Already I have given him three thousand dollars and now he says he wants more. I can't go on paying this man. He'll bleed me till there is nothing left. But if I don't pay him he says he'll tell my daughter everything. I am ashamed and trapped and there is nowhere to turn.

* * * * *

I went to the theater with Peter last night and had a lovely time. It seems that Peter and I always have lovely times together—the loveliest that I have known. Though I have loved many men from afar, Peter is the first that loved me in return. How I envied my sisters the boys that trotted them off on delicious dates. For no boys came calling on me. How bitter I was when they married and left me alone here with my mother and her indigestion and arthritis. But now I have Peter—sweet, lovely Peter. He is so handsome—his hair speckled with grey and his eyes watery blue. Once before he was married but his wife did not treat him well. He has two children—a boy and a girl—whom he adores. He must be a wonderful father—he is so gentle and patient. He cares so much about my mother even though of late she has been saying unkind things about him. Peter says that she is afraid that we will marry and leave her alone. But we will always take care of her. Peter wouldn't have it any other way. Sweet Peter—thank you for being so good and thank God for sending you to me.

* * * * *

A few months ago I fell into this cozy setup and I've been raking in a goodly sum of money ever since. It boils down to this: I'm taking payoffs from this old lady from my office in return for taking out her daughter. The funny thing is—the whole thing just sort of fell into my lap. The old lady just came around begging me to take out this spinster daughter of hers. No way, I told her. The next thing I know she's telling me about all this money she's got stashed away. So I put two and two together and came up with this business proposition I'm telling you about. The old lady jumped at it. She'd like to drop the whole thing but she's in too deep now. She knows I'd spill the whole thing to her daughter who's so crazy about me she might jump off a bridge or something. I figured it would only be a casual thing. But before I knew it she was leaning all over me, telling me I was the best thing that ever happened to her, looking at me like I was God. Sounds cruel? Maybe from your perspective. The way I see it I'm providing a service and getting my fair share in return. What's the old lady going to do with all that money, anyway? I need it for support payments for kids I never wanted in the first place. As for the girl—she never had it so good. And when the time comes I'll let her down easy. I'm not a sadist or anything.

The Castration of Uncle Sam

by Gary Ishler

Pissed off, Russia cut off Uncle Sam's nuts. Uncle Sam screamed in pain so loud they heard him in outer Mongolia. It hurt so much he even pulled all the white whiskers out of his goatee, then started on the bloody pubic hairs he remembered as being black, many years ago.

Why did Russia do it?

Well, according to Russia, Uncle Sam was fooling around again with one of the Russian satellites, or more of Russia's more intimate friends. Uncle Sam had his hand in her middle east, and Russia didn't like that too well. So Russia took the sickle off its flag, and with one rapid slash, sent Uncle Sam's national jewels falling to the ground in gold blood that quickly turned to red. Then Russia took the hammer off its flag and pounded the hell out of Uncle Sam's nuts until they were as flat as pancakes.

"Why's your blood gold, Sam?" Russia asked.

"Because it was the blood of the promised land. Now it's just red, like you," Sam said, sobbing. "And there goes the future... smashed in blood on the floor."

Russia laughed, so hard in fact the glacier in Siberia cracked, then broke, wiping out all of outer Mongolia. "That'll teach you, Uncle Sam," Russia said, now growing stern. "You don't mess around with any middle east, south east or anything else."

Uncle Sam just grimaced, holding the place between his legs where his jewels used to hang proudly, and knowing he was the last of a generation.

Roscoe the Rhinoflutist

by Jerome Salzmann

After curing his scrofula by learning to play the nose flute, Roscoe decided to join the Tenth Day Telepsychists. There had to be more in life than work in the bassinette factory.

With the aid of the tympany section of a brass band in Muncie, Indiana, the founder of the TDTs, Elijah T. Thobb, had conversed with the goddess Ishtar, Robespierre and Aimee Semple MacFitt, a contemporary. Thobb promised to reveal the location of his fortune from a cattle ranch and a cow salt-lick concern to any member of his sect who could reach him after he died. He died.

The Tenth Day Telepsychists met on the tenth day of a month and accepted Roscoe as a member. He was informed of the stipulation in the will of founder Thobb.

Roscoe suggested that the TDTs attempt collective concentration to reach the spirit of Elijah T. Thobb. If the founder was reached, his treasure could be used for research or whatever.

Efforts at mass concentration by the Tenth Day Telepsychists had no success.

Roscoe remembered Thobb's exploits with the tympany section. An expert rhinoflutist, he thought that music from the nose flute—sweet and lowing—would summon the spirit of the cattelman.

As the TDTs made a massive effort to reach their founder, Roscoe played "I'm an old cowhand From the Rio Grande."

The instant that he heard Thobb telling him where the treasure was Roscoe asked himself whether he should share the secret.

The town hardware store had stealthy customers—members of the Tenth Day Telepsychists. The town police saw people digging in unusual places—members of the Tenth Day Telepsychists. The town archivist was astounded by the number of requests for the financial records of Elijah T. Thobb which revealed his bankruptcy—from members of the Tenth Day Telepsychists.

The town historian has sworn testimony from former weird light and Bigfoot witnesses about laughter on the tenth of the month in the meetingplace of the Tenth Day Telepsychists.

To console himself Roscoe learned to play the eyebrow chimes and went on working in the bassinette factory.

Part One: Of Spare Changes

by Roldo

The Spooky Crew had gathered and met in the meadow, under the solitary and inexplicable tree on that vast, lightly rumped blanket of grass.

Some years back, the Crew had brought their rocks to this spot. Six rocks, one for each. There were good, big rocks—for sitting on, and staring into fires and distances from; big enough for lying back on to study clouds, or envy stars. Each of the Spooky Crew had brought his own rock, unaided, but that's the kind of aimless single-mindedness that made them the Spooky Crew.

The Spooky Crew are planners, not performers, but they wrap their plans in art, by Art and then send them out to seek bodies. In this way, the Crew are not Dreamers so much as they are Dreams.

Sleepers do not search for Dreams. It's the other way around.

It was Spring at one end of the meadow, and Autumn at the other (if you can believe the Spooky Crew, whose love and craft is plotting and laughing, and who also say that fish fly above this meadow and birds swim below it. The Spooky Crew do not lie, neither do they say what you mean) and Summer where the tree stood and the rocks were planted...a cool, almost chilly Summer, just back from Vacation, which gave credence to the thought that the tree was not central, but actually grew slightly toward the Autumnal side.

It was also night, and the sky had been borrowed from a gothic-horror film to enhance the atmosphere appropriate to plotting and laughter in accordance with the Crew's needs. Chioscuric clouds scudded as only certain clouds and even more cats learn to truly scud, across a moon so full that one more bite of ragged cloud-tail would burst it, and patterns flowed and shadowed on the laughing, plotting shapes of the Spooky Crew below.

What They Wouldn't Tell Us

See, it's like I had this strange kind of picture but I just couldn't keep myself from walking right into it...stumble into it would be more correct. I stumbled since, of course, I had left my right leg at the cleaners. But then that was exactly how they wanted it. "Yep, gonna save money on new boots next time around anyway," was my sole reaction. Someone handed me a knife so I evened things out. I've always hated heights, so I suppose it was for the better. I guess they figured being that I was sort of confined they'd have a chance to work out their "purified" vision of the universe...but I couldn't keep myself from crawling into the picture...

R.S. Preuss

SURREALIST "WORKERS PARTY" doth protest too much. If you're not a cop, why not join the force? You've got the "right" attitude. Fight on, RCP.

679 ARBOR LANE / WASHINGTON, D.C. / 20014

constant-cause

IN MOTHER'S IMAGE

by Ronald B. Flowers

The day was dreary and overcast. The weatherman had predicted heavy rain for the past two days. It had yet to come, but its specter remained overhead making for an awful day. Helen was on her way to the hospital to visit her mother. She had just gotten off work. She was a secretary at the Sacramento Union Bank. Helen hoped and prayed that her mother would be all right. She had what doctors had said was a mild heart attack. That had to be all that it was. She couldn't leave her now. She was all that she had. They had not only been mother and daughter, but best friends all along.

It had been that way ever since Helen could remember. She had never known her father, as he had died before she was born. She had never really had that many friends over the years, instead relying on her shyness and friendship with her mother as a crutch. She had never had a boyfriend, though sometimes she had longed for one. Her mother had always told her that they were no good and only wanted one thing. She had pretty much accepted that as the truth. She considered herself only average by normal standards. She was 5'5" and of medium build. She had short red stringy hair that she could seem to do nothing with but keep short. Her face, though smooth, had very little charm to it. She was flat chested and had a body that lacked any real feminine qualities.

All in all Helen knew that she had no one else and probably would have no one else aside from her mother. She was 25 now, though she felt about 40. After high school, she had gone to a secretarial school for two years which led up to her present job. She couldn't think about the future now. Things had to be all right for her mother. She couldn't imagine how her life would be without her. This was the first time that she had been sick that she could remember, and she realized that she was no longer a young woman at 62. Her mother had taken care of them and done everything that she had to do to keep them going over the years. And now she would have to do the same for her. Surely her mother would have to take a leave of absence from her own secretarial job at a library. Perhaps she might never work again, although the doctor had assured her that her mother would be back on her feet in no time at all.

Helen arrived at Sutter General Hospital. She immediately headed up to her mother's room. Helen was dressed in a matching blue jacket and skirt, an off white blouse with flowers on it and some brown sandals. When she entered her mother's room, she saw a nurse in there. Her mother, lying on the bed, was dressed in white. She was slightly on the chubby side. Her hair was grey with some specks of red remaining. Helen wondered if she would look that way when she was older. She remembered when she was younger how people used to tell her mother that she looked just like her.

"Hello mother," she said.
"Oh, hi, Helen," her mother responded, forcing a smile on a face that was strained with lines from years of desolation and despair.

The nurse stood up to face Helen. She was a short middle aged woman. She wore a blue nurse uniform. "Hi, Helen," she said. "I've just given your mother a sedative so she could sleep. I'm afraid you won't be able to stay long."

"I won't," Helen promised.
Soon the nurse had gone, leaving Helen alone with her mother. As Helen looked into her blue eyes, she thought of just how much she loved her mother. She had done so much for her over the years. "How are you feeling?" Helen asked.

"Just fine," she replied. "I was a little dizzy earlier, but the doctor said that was normal after something like this."
"You'll be just fine, now," Helen choked. "You'll be home in no time at all." Finally, she could hold back no longer. She burst into tears. It was so sad to see her mother lying in that hospital bed.

"Please don't cry," her mother said. "Everything will be all right. I promise. I won't let anything happen to you."

That's just like her, Helen thought. Always thinking of me. Even when she's the one that had the heart attack. Helen could look at her mother and see that she was straining to keep her eyes open. "I'd better go now," she said, "so you can get some sleep. I'll be back tomorrow as soon as I get off work." She leaned over and kissed her.

Her mother smiled at her and then slowly closed her eyes to sleep. Helen couldn't help but detect fear and worry behind her mother's smile. She left the room and tried to find the nurse. She found her at a counter at the end of the hallway.

"Miss Trudy," she said, "I'd like to talk to you about my mother if I may."

"Certainly," she said as they stepped to the side of the hall. The nurse was holding a clipboard.

"Is my mother going to be all right?" Helen felt that she was entitled to know the truth.

"Yes, she is," the nurse assured her. "Like Dr. Gorman told you the other day, it was only a mild heart attack. We're just keeping her over for a few days of observation."

Helen kind of expected her to say that, but she felt relieved and reassured anyway to actually hear it again. "Thank you," she said. "My mother just looked a bit afraid of something and I was just wondering if her condition had worsened."

"No, nothing like that," the nurse said with a fake laugh. "She was probably just tired, that's all. Your mother will be just fine. Mild heart attacks like that aren't so uncommon for a woman her age. A little rest and she'll be as good as new."

With that assurance, Helen left the hospital and headed home to the two bedroom apartment she and her mother shared. It was in a small subdivision in Rancho Cordova, just outside Sacramento's city limits. The place wasn't much, but it was fine for the two of them. Her mother had always hoped to get a house some day, but with escalating mortgages and related factors, it had become all but impossible.

That night, sleep came easily for Helen. It was really the first night that she had been able to relax since her mother had had the heart attack five days earlier.

The following morning she awakened to a treacherous thunderstorm. The rains that had been predicted had finally caught up with them. She hurriedly ate and got dressed for work, for she would have to leave a bit early anticipating traffic delays due to the weather. Just prior to leaving, she realized that she had left her umbrella in the car. It was parked all the way at the end of the parking lot, due to the increasing amount of people that lived there now.

She went to her mother's bedroom to see if she could find her umbrella. Spotting it nowhere, she went to the closet. There it was, on the top shelf along with a pile of other stuff. She grabbed the umbrella. In her haste, she knocked over several boxes and they fell to the floor. Several papers, envelopes, and other items spilled out. She bent down to shuffle the things back into the boxes when a certain piece of folded paper caught her attention. She opened it up. It was a birth certificate. Her eyes lit up in surprise as she read it. The certificate said that she, Helen L., was born to Mrs. Louise Sally Fisher. That couldn't be, she thought, suddenly trembling all over. She knew full well that her mother's name was Ruth Robertson and she was Helen L. Robertson. What did this mean?

She knew what it meant, but she hated to accept it as truth. There it was, though, right before her. It meant that her mother really wasn't her mother. She had been adopted! She began cry-

ing. Why hadn't her mother ever told her? Why had she gone on all these years letting her believe that she was her real mother? She wouldn't have loved her any less.

Helen sat there confused and moping for a while longer, seemingly and suddenly unaware of the time. The phone's incessant ringing jarred her out of her despair and self-pity. She dragged herself up and answered it. "Hello?"

"Helen? This is Dr. Gorman. I'm glad that I caught you before you went to work. I'm afraid that I've got bad news for you. Your mother's condition has suddenly taken a turn for the worse. I think that you'd better get down here as soon as possible."

"But doctor," she said in protest, "you told me that everything would be fine!"

"That's what we thought," he said emphatically. "However, her condition just changed completely over night. I'm sorry."

"I'll be there as soon as I can," Helen said, trembling as she held the phone. As she hung up, she stood up. She appeared to be in shock for a moment as she stood there. She felt all along that things would never be the same when her mother had that heart attack. And now, her condition had worsened, perhaps to the point that she'd die. To top it off, she found out that she wasn't even her real mother!

Helen didn't know quite what to think at that point other than she had to get to the hospital. Whatever this woman's reasons were for not telling her the truth, she knew that she still loved her. She called her office and told them that she wouldn't be in and headed for the hospital.

When she arrived, there was a priest there. She had been told that her mother was dying. She had always thought about this moment but now that it was here, she didn't know how to deal with it. She was left alone with her mother as the others left. She sat on the bed and looked at her. She looked so weak. She could still see that look of fear on her face. Maybe that was why. Maybe it was because she had wanted to tell her that she wasn't her real mother, but just didn't know how to do it.

Helen held her mother's hand. Tears flooded from her eyes. "Mother," she whispered in a raspy voice, "you're going to be all right. You'll be coming home soon."

Her mother shook her head in disagreement. Her own eyes were now filled with tears. "I know it's all over with for me," she said. "I'm so sorry, Helen. I don't want to leave you. You need me."

"Who's going to take care of you if I go?"
"Don't talk like that, mother," Helen cried, refusing to accept the truth.

Her mother looked into her face. She could detect something wrong with her. Something beyond her own condition. "What's wrong?" she asked.

"Nothing, mother," she said. "I just want everything to be okay for you—for us."

"No," her mother said, "there's something else."

Helen tried not to look into her mother's eyes. Her mother could always tell when she was hiding something, when something was wrong. Even in this situation, when all she should be able to think about was her health. How could she mention what she had learned at a time like this? Then again, she had a right to know about her real mother. Why did she give her up? She had so many questions, questions that she deserved answers to.

"Tell me," her mother said, sensing her thoughts.

Helen turned to set her eyes on her mother. She had to tell her. "I was in your room this morning," she began, "to borrow your umbrella. I found it in your closet. At the time, I accidentally knocked some boxes off the shelf." She paused for a moment and gulped. "I saw the birth certificate." She stopped again, watching her mother's expression change. "Why? Why wouldn't you tell me that I was adopted? Didn't I have the right to know?"

"I couldn't tell you," her mother said in a strained voice, tears pouring from her eyes. "I didn't want to hurt you."

"Didn't you even bother to think that you would hurt me more by not telling me?" she asked, voice raised as she let out her anger, seemingly forgetting her mother's critical fate. "Who is my real mother?"

Her mother began coughing as she struggled to speak. "Your mother was a nobody," she said. "Neither she nor your father wanted the baby they called a mistake. So they gave the baby up for adoption and she was shuffled from foster home to foster home until she became an adult. The foster homes were as cruel an existence as one could ever be in..."

Helen couldn't make much sense of what she was saying. She had never been in a foster home! She figured her mother was probably delirious.

Her mother continued, "The baby grew up lonely, afraid of the world, treated cruelly by society and abused by men. I couldn't let that happen to you. I just couldn't. You deserved better than that. I can back. I had to for you. I paid money, money that I had saved up so that I could buy you from them right after you were born, thereby preventing them from giving you up for adoption. I had to be with you, to protect you and shelter you from the cruelties of the world. I had to see that you had a decent life!"

"You're not making much sense, mother," Helen said sadly, as she hated to see her mother like this. "Don't worry about it," she said compassionately. "Everything will be all right."

"I'm so sorry," her mother said, her voice more and more strained. "I never wanted to hurt you, only to help you. You've got to carry on, make your life one that I could be proud of."

"I will, mother," Helen promised, crying and feeling guilty.

She never wanted to hurt this woman that she had called her mother. Whoever she was, wherever her real mother was, she would always be her mother.

The woman began struggling and gasping for breath, forcing the doctor to return. Helen continued sitting there holding her hand as the doctor administered to her. It was a pitiful sight to look at her like this. So weak, distorted, and in such discomfort. She noticed that she was trying to say something, only she couldn't get the words out. She motioned for her to come closer. She did, moving her ear down to her mouth. "Look in a box in the second drawer of my dresser," she mumbled in a wispy voice.

"What's there, mother?" Helen asked as she sat up. Her mother tried to force something else out of her mouth, but suddenly began trembling before closing her eyes. It was over. She was dead.

As Helen drove home about an hour later, she was still in grief. The only mother she had ever known was dead, leaving her to fend for herself in the world. She couldn't imagine what it would be like to live on her own now. She wondered if she should ever try to find out who her real mother was. She could still be alive. Did she really want to, though? Particularly with what her mother, Ruth, had told her. But then, she was talking so jumbled and confused. Helen couldn't make much sense of anything she had said.

When Helen got back to the apartment, she remembered her mother's dying words about looking in the second drawer of her dresser. She wondered why she had said that. What was there? She went to her mother's room and opened the second dresser drawer. It was stacked with lots of papers. She began filing through them. She gathered that it was something that she had wanted her to see. It was probably a will. She continued to fumble through the papers, putting those she had looked at on the floor. She came upon a small stack of papers held together with a paper clip. She pulled it off and looked through them.

What she observed took her by surprise. It was a birth certificate. It was the same one as she had found in the closet. She looked over on the floor and saw it still sitting where she had left it that morning. This one also read that Helen L. was born to Mrs. Louise Sally Fisher. She grabbed the other birth certificate and compared them. They were identical in every way. How could it be? How could she have two official birth certificates? She sat them down and went back to the remaining contents of the packet of papers she had gotten the certificate from. She read a copy of a form that showed Mrs. Louise Sally Fisher as giving birth to a baby, Helen L., and agreeing to give her up for adoption. The baby was to be taken immediately to the St. Rathunson Home.

Helen couldn't quite understand what she was reading. Did this mean that Ruth Robertson was her foster mother or was this Helen L. even her? She looked through some of the other papers. They were copies of transactions through the years showing Helen L. going from one foster home to another, back to the county and so forth. Helen's heart began to beat faster as she tried to put this into perspective. It was impossible. She hadn't even been shuffled back and forth to different foster homes. As far back as she could remember, she had always lived with Ruth. That was her own name that she saw on the birth certificate and the other papers, minus the last name. She assumed that that person must be someone else. But her mother, or Ruth, had all but told her that it was true, that she had been given up by her real parents.

She noticed an envelope along with the papers. She opened it up. It had pictures, pictures that she recognized as herself over the years. Only she didn't remember having anyone take them. They looked just like her, though. She continued to look at them until she realized that they were going past her current age, though still clearly her. She began to shiver as she realized that the pictures were actually of Ruth. She was this Helen L.! How could that be if she was Helen herself? They looked so much alike. What if Ruth really was her mother? What if she had lied at the hospital? People had always said that they looked a lot alike. She looked over the pictures again. Those of her in younger years were old fashioned compared to today, yet they weren't so old as to be of another person some twenty to thirty years ago. She looked on the back of the pictures. They had dates written on them in ink. She was right! Those were taken in corresponding years with her own growth. Could she have a twin sister?

Suddenly something began to happen. As the pictures progressed in age, so did the dates all the way beyond 1982, the present year. The dates on the back continued past the year 2000! How could that be, she wondered, unless it was just a hoax. A careful examination of the pictures showed that the older person was indeed the same as those in the earlier pictures. She began thinking back to what her mother had said in the hospital. It all began to make sense now. Her mother had mentioned about foster homes and yet she knew nothing about that. She had also mentioned some of the cruel fates the baby suffered as an adult, none of which she had realized, and how she was determined to protect and shelter her from the same. She couldn't quite explain it, but it all made sense.

Ruth, or the one she knew as her mother, was really herself of the future! She had, in fact, lived the life that she had described and came back to somehow change history and thereby protect herself from the ills she had suffered and give herself a better life in another time.

Helen just sat there for a moment trying to comprehend and digest what she now knew was the truth about her and her "mother".

THE READING

by Deborah Golden

Within my weekly mangle among the white,

naturally I write in an obscure corner.

Sipping a second scotch, I watch those acquainted to

an artsy point of view dressed in precisely ripped rags,

pursue some same conversation of this one and that—here and there.

Soon I fare on home to the South Bronx

across the endless vacant lots, frizzled glass sharp props

presuming places to live. Till next week,

when I'll sneak beneath my out of place cloud

and float into my seat to hear more writers speak

of injustice and loss, so high a cost

of being who you are.



Sooner or later it All Gets Real

by Dean Tomasula

Phil awoke just as the sun was rising. He sat up in bed rubbing the sleep from his eyes. He saw winged dragons dancing in the sunlight filtering through his dirty windows.

Phil blinked, hoping they'd go away, but they were still there. This can't be happening, he thought.

He got out of bed and walked over to the window. He hesitated before sticking his hand into the sunlight. As he did so the dragons just danced through his fingers.

Phil walked away shaking his head and mumbling.

He hoped that by the time he reached the doorway they'd be gone. Phil turned slowly to look.

The dragons were gone.

Phil stood in front of the bathroom mirror, staring in disbelief. The face that looked back wasn't his. At least he didn't think it was his face. Oh no, not again, he thought.

The face in the mirror was watching his every move. Phil looked directly into its eyes. The face stuck out its tongue and laughed at him.

The tongue was no ordinary human tongue, Phil noticed. This one was forked like a snake's.

Phil lifted his hands to his own face. He saw them touch the face in the mirror. Phil then stuck out his tongue. It too was forked.

Realizing there was nothing he could do, and hoping it would go away, Phil began to shave. With every stroke of the razor his face began to return to normal. He watched as the face from the mirror went down the drain with the shaving cream.

He finished and left the bathroom, wondering what would happen next.

As Phil reached the stairs leading downstairs, he stopped and watched the steps begin to move. They fell over onto each other like an out-of-control escalator. They began to move faster and faster with each second, until they were just a blur of motion.

Phil was afraid to use the stairs. Not wanting to wait for them to stop, if they ever would, he decided to slide down the bannister to the next landing. The next set of steps were not moving, much to his surprise, and relief.

Suddenly Phil had a headache. It felt as if someone was pounding the back of his eyeballs with a sledgehammer. "I think it's going to be one of those days," he said aloud, rubbing his eyes.

The phone rang and Phil went into the kitchen to answer it. He went to grab the receiver off the wall but it began to melt before he could pick it up. He watched as it dripped down the wall and lay in a lump of plastic on the floor. "I hope it wasn't anything important," he said half seriously.

Phil walked to the refrigerator and reached inside for the milk. Before he could take the carton off the shelf it transformed into a hissing cobra. He quickly retracted his arm and slammed the door shut. "I guess I'll have my coffee black," he told himself.

He poured himself a cup of coffee. It had been sitting on the stove since the night before. Phil didn't care. He took his cup and sat at the kitchen table.

He sat staring at the wall, cup in hand. "What the hell is going on?" he asked himself. "Did I drop acid last night? I must have. Why else would all this be happening."

Phil suddenly realized that he hadn't done any drugs at all for a few weeks. He began to worry.

"Maybe that's my problem," he said, dropping a cube of sugar into his coffee.

Phil watched the cube race toward the liquid in the cup. As it hit the surface it turned into a small island. He saw two seagulls land and search the beach for food. Then one flew off, leaving the second to search alone.

Phil buried his face in his hands. "I can't take much more of this," he yelled through his fingers.

He looked into the cup again. The island was gone and the liquid was once again coffee.

It finally dawned on him. "Aha! I know what the problem is." Phil got up and quickly went over to the refrigerator. He cautiously opened the door and looked inside. The cobra was still there, quietly watching his every move.

Never taking his eyes from the snake, Phil cautiously reached for the drawer. He quickly opened it. The snake was still watching. Phil slowly backed out, closing the refrigerator door.

He sat back down at the table in front of his coffee cup and sheepishly peered inside. It was still coffee. But Phil noticed that the seagulls were back. He followed them with his eyes as they circled around the cup, wondering where the island had gone.

Phil shook his head in disbelief and looked up at the wall in front of him. He saw the cracks beginning to breathe.

"This better be the answer," he said, placing a piece of paper the size of a postage stamp on the tip of his tongue. "This should do the trick."

He closed his eyes and waited silently for a few minutes, until he felt the acid take effect.

He opened his eyes and looked into his coffee cup. The seagulls were gone. Then he got up and went to the refrigerator. He looked inside and the cobra was gone.

Phil sat back down and smiled. "I see that everything is back to normal."

He drank his coffee as the drug raced around his brain.

Phone the Neighbors, Stay Home from Work, Yank the Kids Out of Bed!

by Kiel Stuart

"Late Night With David Letterman" is changing America's sleep-in habits.

It isn't your run-of-the-mill Johnny or Merv show. It's not even Donohue. This show's got everything. It's got red-eye cabaret: Divine singing "Born To Be Cheap". It's got Theater of Cruelty: a tattered woman claiming to come from the planet Ares, to the audience's obvious, hooting derision. It's got splendid documentaries: "Alan Alda, A Man And His Chinese Food". It's got helpful hints: "Taxi Etiquette", with Letterman coming on to a big, grim cabbie like your bratty kid brother (any minute now, you know he's getting a smack in the chops). It's got David Letterman back on the air again, snarking at everything in sight. What more does one need at 12:30 am, Monday through Thursday (and an occasional Friday)?

There is one thing it doesn't have. Letterman stands accused of conducting a poor interview. The accusers are right. He often seems bored, cursory, a little too smart-ass. That's not the point. If I want to look at interviews, there's Cavett. Letterman is at his best when terrorizing, or being terrorized by, his guests, as in the case of Dr. Ruth Westheimer. "Dr. Ruth", a tiny, delightful woman who has a sex-information radio show, gleefully spouts anatomical and technical terms like "penis" and "orgasm", much to Letterman's apparent discomfiture. It's fun to see him squirm. Once, Dr. Ruth even forced him to read the sex-questionnaires submitted by the audience (on the thinly-disguised pretext of having forgotten her glasses). It took him half the show to be able to say a certain word aloud. Fun. Another time she asked him if he used contraceptives. You could see him melting away, like the Wicked Witch.

Older women (the redoubtable Ruth Gordon was a guest once) seem to knock Letterman for a loop. But when the opponent is in his peer-group, he sometimes gives as good as he gets. Michael Keaton flopped, spread-eagled, into the guest's chair; Letterman snapped at him to sit up straight and behave. Or Robin Williams, busy being Robin Williams. Letterman rebuked him soundly: "We're all going to be polite and wait our turn to speak, aren't we?" He's also downright vicious with shopkeepers, inventors, small-town Cootiettes, and other stolid types who don't even get that they're being insulted. It's dangerous to write this man a letter. You might end up a target on "Viewer Mail". You like it or you don't. The live audiences seem to love it. We're also treated to the classic "Stupid Pet Tricks", a holdover from Letterman's cancelled morning show. Some of the animals are almost as good as Dr. Ruth in eliciting reactions from Letterman. Not long ago, a parrot bit him. "Nightcap Theater", wherein snippets of the world's worst film ("Plan Nine From Outer Space") are proudly shown, makes only sporadic appearances. Tsk.

Throughout the festivities, Letterman saunters along with an air of irascibility, of wanting to be somewhere else, which gives him an odd dignity, even when wearing bizarre headgear or being compelled to sit on an obscene whoopee cushion in the name of fun. He often seems annoyed at the show-biz hoopla, embarrassed by the dreadful jokes some of his writers scrawl on the cue-cards. You get the feeling he's not too deeply in love with himself. He's no Sammy Maudlin.

No doubt, the show is uneven. Brilliancy is interlaced with boring vistas. Someone responsible for booking guests has an unfortunate penchant for sports figures of varying intelligence quotients. These can be dispensed with; use the time creatively and construct a nuclear reactor in your den while they're on. Yet one night, Letterman "rose" from his body, a la Buster Keaton in the dream sequence of "Sherlock Jr.", as a hot-winded guest babbled about his exciting family motor trip. And for Slim Whitman, The World's Most Dangerous Band played "Don't Cry For Me, Argentina". Was this a sly reference to SCTV's earlier spoof of "Evita", starring Slim Whitman?

In 1978, Letterman taped a pilot at NBC's Burbank studios. Guests were Martin Mull, Melissa Manchester, and Robin Williams, whom most of the audience had come to see (their cries of "Morkie! We want Morkie!" skittered through the air like bat radar). They hardly cocked an ear when Letterman sent someone scrounging through the NBC Commissary, and was taught by a karate expert how to smash concrete blocks in two. They were there to see someone hot, someone famous, someone with a hit series. They wanted Morkie. Who was this David Letterman anyway? Little did they know that they were witnessing history in the making. Little did I know I'd be losing sleep, just for more fun than humans should be allowed to have.

("Late Night With David Letterman" is now in its 20th-or-so week [and they said it wouldn't last!]). Bill Wendell, the show's announcer, will get a copy of this issue—how could he not. As a point of interest, Kiel attended the taping of Letterman's original pilot, and *Newsday* critic "good old" Marvin Kitman designated him "Head of the American Committee to Bring Back Letterman". But no, Lisa, he can't get us grey tickets, we still have to bear those interminable lines before each 'extravaganza'.)

SOMEONE CALL RED ADAIR

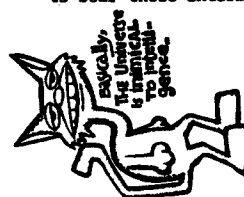
by Cannon Barclay

Holiday gourmands explosion
just about to pass
into this family reunion
we 'is' leaking gas.

SAN FRANCISCO Non-Euclidians will meet at the corners of Waller and Willow to discuss "Parallel Universes: Tangential Digressions." Inquiries: 821-3279.

EAST BAY Non-Euclidians will meet at the corner of University and Ashby to discuss the topic "Parallel Universes: Fact or Fiction?" Inquiries: 843-7439.

SOUTH BAY NON-EUCLIDIANS will meet at the corner of Meridian and Senter to discuss the topic "Parallel Universes: Factor Fiction?" Inquiries 408/292-3578.



Participation PUZZLE Page

FIRESIGNals

Time out from the usual brain drains for some news (and olds), finally. Thanks to David Mruz and Dana Snow for these tidbits which follow. FIRESIGNAL #3 will be here next month, and will either feature ("no, no, don't give it away!") puns (as in, "That's not punny, that's slick"...), songs or cross-references. Gives y'all time to prepare, right? Oh yeah, I'm starting to collect the solo and rarity albums now (thanks again Doug Smith for "Roller Maidens"), so be prepared for the advanced course, just as soon as I am.

FORWARD...

- Recently Philip Proctor and Peter Bergman were interviewed by KABC-AM's Skip Stephenson (5/22). Something in the offing?
- David Ossman is hosting an NPR talk show called "The Sunday Show". Not known whether this is straight or comedy.
- On June 18, KLOS out in LA will host/hosted (sorry, you know how these monthly newsletters run) a radio pilot entitled "Almost a Comedy Hour", featuring Firesign with revised versions of "Nick Danger" and "Beat the Reaper".
- Peter Bergman and David Ossman currently receive this publication, and so far neither has returned his copy, thereby proving that the nicer they are, the...uh...
- and, BEST news of all, Rhino Records, currently Firesign's "official" label (address, for those desiring more information on all Rhino doings, is 11609 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90064), is due to put out a new Firesign LP!! It includes "Lawyer's Hospitality", sure to be a hit among its paralegal-types; "Jack Poet" VW ad; and one whole side (?) of "Shakespeare's Lost Comedy." I guess they won't reprise the Danger bit featuring jabs at "Jerry Foulmouth and his Mental Minority", sigh...

...INTO THE PAST

Quoting David Mruz' letter: "Mike Dobbs was mentioning the Firesign Theatre gang's attempt to re-edit old serial clippings with new dialogue (ED: And you thought Steve Martin was the first!). I think this is their third film attempt. The first two were "The Martian Space Party", a filmed version of a live Firesign performance, and "Everything You Know is Wrong!", which was the album acted out on film (it was terrible because the film was forced to match the soundtrack of the album). There also was a TV special four years ago on PBS with Proctor and Bergman. For some reason, Firesign Theatre were very popular and successful as a radio show and on albums, but the success never transferred to TV and movies, like Cheech & Chong did..." Perhaps that's all for the best too. Yeah, Firesign doing "Nice Dreams", sure...

WORDS TO THE WISE ARE SUFFICIENT

but who was it that offered them in the first place?

BY JULIAN ROSS

Familiar expressions have a way of becoming associated with certain people, even though that person did not always originate the thought. Try your skill at identifying the sources of these well-turned phrases.

- "It's clever, but is it art?"
(a) Salvador Dali, (b) Huntington Hartford, (c) Rudyard Kipling, (d) Mae West.
- "There's no getting blood out of a turnip."
(a) William Shakespeare, (b) Frederick Marryat, (c) John D. Rockefeller, (d) Herbert Hoover.
- "Nothing is certain but death and taxes."
(a) Benjamin Franklin, (b) Mark Twain, (c) Calvin Coolidge, (d) W.C. Fields.
- "Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes."
(a) John Paul Jones, (b) George Washington, (c) Ulysses S. Grant, (d) William Prescott.
- "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread."
(a) Ernest Hemingway, (b) Alexander Pope, (c) Horace Greeley, (d) Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.
- "Make hay while the sun shines."
(a) Saavedra de Cervantes, (b)

- Charles Dickens, (c) Samuel Goldwyn, (d) George Bernard Shaw.
- "Laugh and the world laughs with you."
(a) Joel Chandler Harris, (b) Cole Porter, (c) Oscar Wilde, (d) Ella Wheeler Wilcox.
- "Mad as a hatter."
(a) Boris Davis, (b) William Makepeace Thackeray, (c) Lewis Carroll, (d) G.K. Chesterton.
- "Music has charms to soothe a savage beast."
(a) Johannes Brahms, (b) William Congreve, (c) George Sand, (d) Richard Rodgers.
- "As plain as the nose on your face."
(a) Gore Vidal, (b) Dale Carnegie, (c) Desiderius Erasmus, (d) Bruce Jay Friedman.
- "Ask me no questions, and I'll tell you no fibs."
(a) Ogden Nash, (b) Rudy Vallee, (c) Oliver Goldsmith, (d) Robert G. Ingersoll.
- "Not worth his salt."
(a) Petronius, (b) Petrus, (c) Plato, (d) Plutarch.
- "In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love."

- (a) Daniel Defoe, (b) Mary McCarthy, (c) Nathaniel Hawthorne, (d) Alfred Tennyson.
- "Survival of the fittest."
(a) Charles Darwin, (b) Herbert Spencer, (c) Bertrand Russell, (d) Thomas de Torquemada.
- "Truth is stranger than fiction."
(a) Lord Byron, (b) Ford Madox Ford, (c) Isaac Bashevis Singer, (d) Virginia Woolf.
- "We're not, we're not."
(a) Jay Gould, (b) Eleanor Roosevelt, (c) Thomas Hardy, (d) Sir Walter Raleigh.
- "Art for art's sake."
(a) Man Ray, (b) Leopold Stokowski, (c) Victor Cousin, (d) Conrad von Guener.
- "We have other fish to fry."
(a) Eugene V. Debs, (b) Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, (c) Maximilien Robespierre, (d) Francois Rabelais.
- "Fourth estate."
(a) Thomas Macaulay, (b) William Randolph Hearst, (c) H.L. Mencken, (d) Henry R. Luce.
- "Here's your hat, what's your hurry?"
(a) Groucho Marx, (b) Bentley C. Costello, (c) Lou Costello, (d) John Steinbeck.

BUDDHA MIND QUIZZES used to be a regular feature of SAINT JOHN'S WEDNESDAY BREAD MESSENGER because it was published by The Twelve Famous Buddha Mind School of HOW to Live Your Life. For your spiritual elevation we offer here in the spirit of that tradition...

BUDDHA MIND QUIZ

- Do you believe in reincarnation and carnation? (25 words or less.)
- Recent earthquakes in China, Iran and Italy were the result of a conspiracy utilizing advanced technology.
() TRUE () FAULTS
- The Great Pyramid has five sides (counting the bottom)...
(a) ...to repel werewolves.
(b) ...because it was built by Masons.
(c) ...because EVERYTHING happens in fives.
- The Five Elements of Al-Chemical Discordianism are Fire, Air, Earth, Water and Shade. () Acid () Base
- As an exercise in civics, conduct a survey called an election to find out which citizens most people think deserve to be cheated, lied to, robbed or murdered, then create a governmental administration to activate the policies recommended by the majority of your respondents. Report the results tomorrow to the class that comes out on top.

DEPARTMENT OF DIVINE AFFAIRS: In the Ecumenical Tradition of Greek Culture Discordianism reaches out to more orthodox religions in such gestures as the founding in 1969 by our Primus Erectus Pro Temp of the Benvenuto Cellini Papal Guard for the purpose of restoring unity to a divided Church through compromise and thereby saving the Papacy (for which heroic act in past times Cellini claimed in his autobiography God gave him a halo for some months) from the birth control controversy by advocating a natural form of child prevention which is nevertheless 100% effective, namely: anal intercourse which, according to a French prostitute (also mentioned in his autobiography) was favored by Cellini. This moderating influence between the conservative and liberal wings of the Catholic faith is to be presided over by a Permanent Primus Erectus for which office no Discordian Pope has yet applied. If you think you qualify, contact the Goddess Eris in your pineal gland; a 79 cent halo goes with the job.

DIVISION OF CORRECT IDEAS: Ho Chi Zen and the partisan workers of the Hung Mung Tong Kong hereby denounce the decadent bourgeois drivels that disgraced the pages of this publication due to the right opportunist and left adventurist humor of THE LAST INTERNATIONAL on Grouchoist-Marxism, a deviate trend that in no manner represents or equals the correct ideology of comedy, i.e. the vocal and outspoken perspectives of Chicoist-Marxism. All revisionist humor must go!

Items on this page were contributed to INSIDE JOKE by Ho Chi Zen, Omar Khayyam Ravenhurst and the Right Reverend Jesse Sump of the First Commercial and Evangelical Erisian Orthodox SubGenius Church of the Anarchist Avatar. (ED: Opinions expressed above are not necessarily those of the editor, who aspires to non-pineal Harpoist-Marxism, the ideology of the SubGenius Church of Zay.)

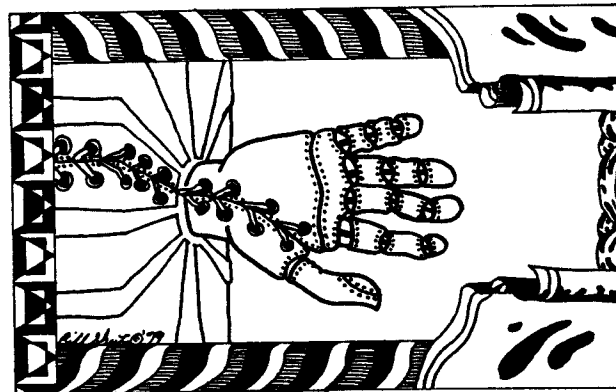
Ramblings by Morgan La Fey

I recently got a perm and I hated it. I mean, I looked like "Little Orphan Annie". And I couldn't wear those new sailor tops 'cause then I looked like Shirley Temple! How would you feel if people sang "On the Good Ship Lollipop" when you passed by? It is not very amusing. I couldn't stand being "CUTE". I could handle being sexy, beautiful or even pretty. But "CUTE"?

My relatives started pinching my cheeks (facial cheeks) and telling me I looked so... "CUTE". UGH!

So I overcompensated with makeup. Bad idea. I looked like a "CUTE" little girl wearing a lot of makeup. Do you know how humiliating it is to have some guy try to pick up up with a chocolate bar? "Hey little girl, want some candy?" "Wanna see my van?"

I even considered shaving my head, but when I sobered up, it didn't seem like such a hot idea. I realized the only thing I could do was to sit around and wait 6 months for my perm to grow out. So here I am, waiting. I'm sort of beginning to like being "CUTE"—I get a lot of free chocolate.



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SAYS YOU (LETTERS)

Dear Elayne,

INSIDE JOKE #10 is another interesting issue. This month I have only some kindly advice for Nate Mishaan. Give up on pot. Not only are you going to be mistaken for a narc, but you really do not need drugs of any kind to further enhance your natively lunatic condition. Admittedly marijuana is among the most harmless of drugs, but even so, any effort to entertain oneself by chemical means, is a step in the wrong direction. Next time boredom strikes, try reading some good science fiction. I find it a never failing source of entertainment. Not only that, it's cheaper. Furthermore, fewer people get arrested for reading SF than for buying, selling, possessing or using drugs. If you do get arrested, the prison terms are shorter for reading SF.

Paul Zuckerman's column is improving. Genuine nuttiness this month. Well done, Paul. Keep collecting those bottles. Clay Geerdes has some provocative thoughts on fine art. Some of the more ambitious and innovative artists (like myself) may just have to reserve art as a hobby. (This is misleading—I have never attempted to market any of my work.) Anyway, even if esthetic pursuits do not always lead to monetary reward, they at least lead to esthetics.

It is interesting to discover, in the latest meditations of Kerry Thornley, that he hated John Kennedy. That is a sentiment which one does not often hear these days (or ever, for that matter). My own feelings towards our martyred President are mixed. I can find both good and bad aspects of his administration and life. I am curious to know what it was about JFK that aroused your hatred, Kerry (we're all friends in LJ, n'est-ce pas?). In fact, why don't you include that on your forthcoming poll to the LJ readership: "What do you think of JFK? Why?" No one else would ever think of conducting a survey on a question whose answer would normally be regarded as a foregone conclusion. I think, however, that a review of public opinion about Abraham Lincoln can safely be omitted. (Don't be too sure, Dave. Right, Mallory?—ED)

I wonder if Gary S. Rosin, who as we all will recall is the author of THE AMOROUS PLATYPUS, has ever read THE PLATYPUS OF DOOM by Arthur Byron Cover. I would like to see a movie, based on both stories together, to be called THE AMOROUS PLATYPUS MEETS THE PLATYPUS OF DOOM. It might make the Guinness Book of World Records as "world's most improbable movie title." In any event, good story, Gary.

THE YELLOW DRAGON by S.J. Rayner is a perfect example of the total irrelevance of fantasy to the Real World. Right? Er...

The only use I can see for your FIRESIGN quizzes, would be as a means for those who have memorized the records verbatim, to validate their memories. I can conceive of inventing a similarly difficult quiz for one of the few records that I have memorized verbatim, PHIL OCHS IN CONCERT. What is the name of the little coffee house at which Phil claims to have first performed "The Marines Have Landed On The Shores Of Santo Domingo"? Everyone send in your answers, please. (If no one gets it, I will reveal the answer in my next letter.)

Keep up the good work. That's all for now.

DAVID PALTER
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(Re: FIRESIGNals, ssh, Dave, you're not s'posed to tell 'em that! Well, actually, I don't have even "Nick Danger" or the Indian sequence in "Waiting For the Electrician..." memorized, and they're the simplest, but, from what I'm given to understand, the nature of the Firesign following is that the 'cult' apparently grew from groups of liberal college kids who'd get stoned and put on the albums, allowing the words to seep in to their subconscious minds while in a state of super-receptivity, etc...At least, this is what I hear. And while this doesn't necessarily make for instant memorization, it does mean that some key phrases, especially from the earlier albums, did stick. Add to that the fact that the (3 Or) 4 Crazy Guys often alluded to Album A within Album B, and so on (a topic to be 'explored' in a future FIRESIGNal), and one begins to see why these are the kind of albums best listened to carefully and meticulously, preferable alone. And the more you concentrate, the more you wind up remembering, I guess.)

Re: Crime in Berkeley. Yes, I blame Reagan and his gang for the kind of crime we are experiencing here, crimes committed by young guys who are out of work permanently because of Reagan's budget cuts and his general "fuck the poor" attitude. Crime in general is a result of a disintegrating community and that disintegration it caused by socio-political factors, not the least of which are manipulated inflation and cancelled social programs. Reagan has been in office quite a while now and he has done nothing but featherbed the rich and kiss the military butt. He's the first president to come along in a long time who has no social programs at all. All he has talked about is balancing the budget. Who gives a damn about a balanced budget? It's all on paper anyway. It could be a hundred trillion dollars or ? and what difference would it make? What matters is the quality of human life (and not just the lives of the pampered rich) and everything Reagan has done as governor and now as president has been effective in lowering that quality and making the ordinary people feel like shit. He gives those canned tv press conferences where he tries to come on as witty and urbane while telling the poor to go to hell, well, he isn't funny. Hes' an asshole.

CLAY GEERDES
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To assuage the inferiority complexes of staff writers who want to hear what people think of their writings—

I'm jealous. If I grow a Stalinesque mustache like Nate, can I put my picture next to my column? (isn't Dick Hertz a dumb 17 year old?)

Thank "Bob" for "How to Be a Hippie"! I found out I'm doing something right. Like, it's great for us who were born after 1960 and don't have hip parents or siblings. But there was no mention of George Harrison, y'know? Weird karma.

Hey, don't you hate when people's last names are somebody else's first name? Just wondering.

Sue Rosner's discussion of final exams was interesting. I always wonder how instructors expect students not to cheat when exams are held in packed lecture halls. It's impossible not to—something like resisting the urge to pickup the money bag you just saw fall out of the Brink's truck.

Paul Zuckerman's column brought up some intriguing topics. Ah, now I can afford to go to Columbia! I'll pick up empty soda bottles all summer.

Ah, Chris Downey finally gave me the right ideas on how to use my Oscar de la Renta jackhammer. It always works if you want your street repaved.

I'M HOOKED ON BABOON DOOLEY!

"The Amorous Platypus" killed me (no, I'm not into kinky sex; I'm using hyperbole). What next—"Mr. Ed speaks out on Dostoyevsky's use of dreams in Crime and Punishment"?

Well, I can't be critical anymore so the rest of youse got off lucky, y'know?

SUE KAUFMANN
456 Fairway Drive
Union, NJ 07083

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Dr. Armand Gideon, Mutant-at-Large

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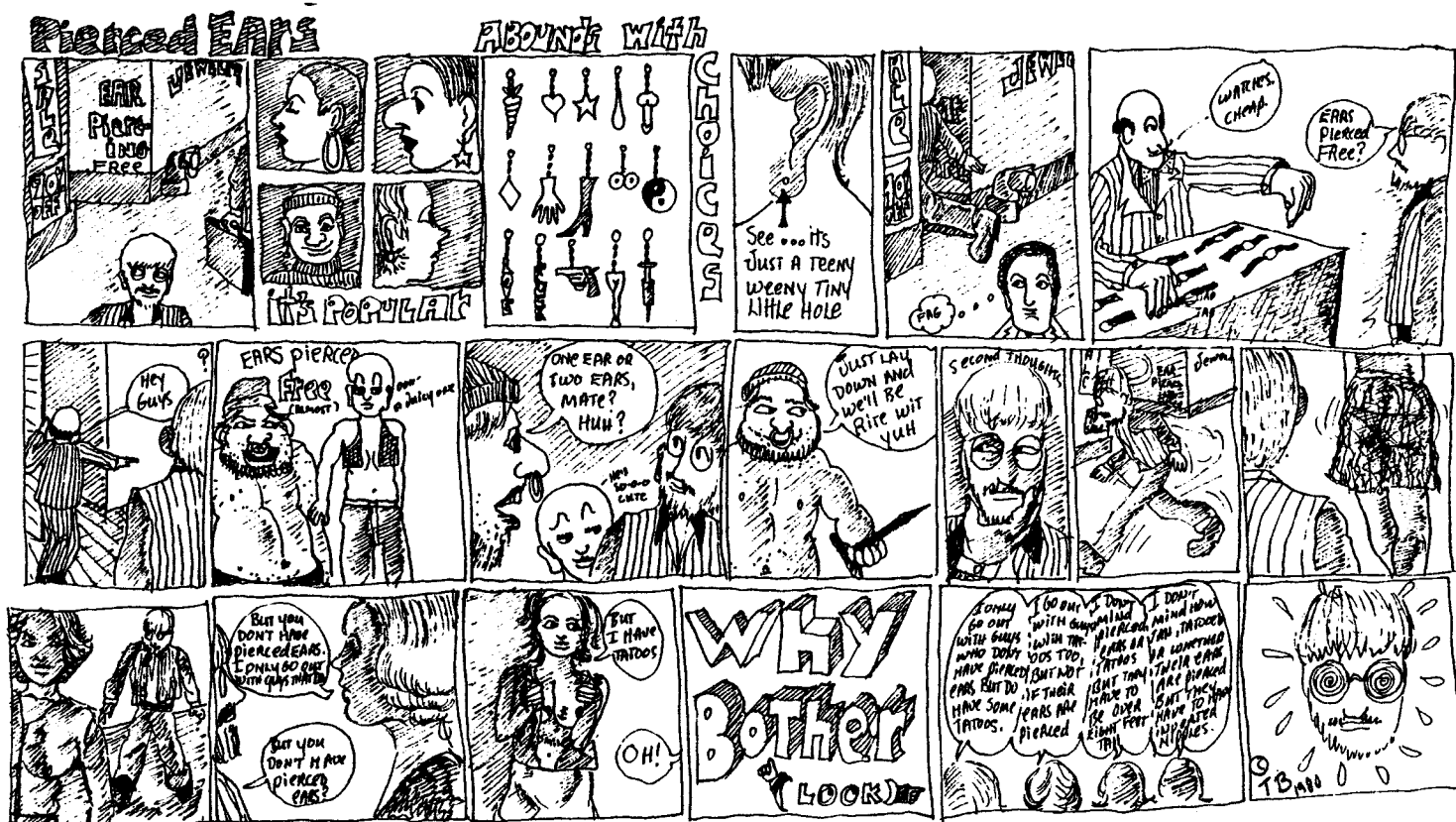


PERSONALS USERS and abusers: Stop picking on the RCP. Taunting the emotionally unstable seems downright mean.

Song Parody #3- "Let's get cynical, Cynical, I wanna get CYNICAL, Let's get INTO CYNICAL. Lemme see your bitter tears..."



(title: "FLAIR MADNESS"; artist: MACEDONIO M. GARCIA)



(...and this was the least offensive of Tony Bellard's submissions - sorry women...)

INSIDE JOKE
 c/o Elayne Wechsler
 418 East Third Avenue
 Roselle, New Jersey 07203

