

J.O.K.E.!

OCTOBER
#25
1984-1

"a newsletter of comedy and creativity....."

\$1

a symbolic conflict between the forces of good(us) and the hip wimps (them) ↓

AIMING FOR
THE FUNNYBONE
SINCE 1980!

TAKE
THAT, YA
VARMINT!

US

SYMBOLIZING
WE WHO CRAVE
A GOOD JOKE

THEM

SYMBOLIZING
THOSE WHO CAN'T
TAKE A JOKE!

↑
SYMBOLIZING
A GOOD JOKE

INEFFECTUAL
PHALLIC SYMBOL

AAAAARRRGHHH...

GO
DIP
1993

NOW SERVING OUR
3rd

year in business

big deal, right?

-UPCOMING EVENTS-

- Special belated happies to TOM GEDWILLO, 32 on 10/22!
- NOVEMBER 1 - George S. Irving, narrator of "Underdog" (61)
 NOVEMBER 4 - MICHAEL PINTO (18); Will Rogers (b. 1879)
 NOVEMBER 7 - JOHN R. SCHARFF (26)
 NOVEMBER 8 - Katharine Hepburn (76); ELECTION DAY #1
 NOVEMBER 9 - Spiro Agnew (65); ELECTION DAY #2 FOR PAPOON...
 NOVEMBER 11 - CANDI STRECKER (28); Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. (61); Stubby Kaye (b. 1918); Jonathan Winters (67)
 NOVEMBER 16 - George S. Kaufman (?); JIM TAUSCHER (39)
 NOVEMBER 17 - SEAN HAUGH (23); JOHN CRAWFORD (28)
 NOVEMBER 18 - Imogene Coca (75)
 NOVEMBER 19 - GERRY REITH (25); Gettysburg Address (1863)
 NOVEMBER 20 - Dick Smothers (45); Robert Kennedy (b. 1925)
 NOVEMBER 23 - Abigail Adams (b. 1744)—REMEMBER THE LADIES—; Harpo Marx (b. 1893); Boris Karloff (b. 1887)
 NOVEMBER 24 - Thanksgiving, for turkeys everywhere
 NOVEMBER 25 - Joe DiMaggio (69); Ricardo Montalban (63)
 NOVEMBER 27 - Penn Station (NY) opens, 1910 (& it looks it)
 NOVEMBER 29 - PETER BERGMAN (43); Louisa May Alcott (b. 1832)
 NOVEMBER 30 - Dick Clark (53); Abbie Hoffman (46); Allan Sherman (b. ?); Jonathan Swift (b. 1667)

(Thanks to Jed Martinez for some of the above, and to D.B.G. for GSKaufman's date...)

 * **INSIDE JOKE** is put on once a month by Flayne Wechsler and other
 * dear friends, with inspiration this month from Morgul, the Friend-
 * ly Droub (how good is your nostalgia quotient?)...

* EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.....ELAYNE WECHSLER
 * HEAD XEROGRAPHER.....STEVE COZZI

STAFF WRITERS

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 * RORY HOUCHEMS BRIAN PEARCE GERRY REITH ROLDO TOM SANDERS
 * STEVEN SCHARFF CANDI STRECKER KERRY THORNLEY JILL ZIMMERMAN

* ADVICE COLUMNIST: COOP BABOON DOOLEY STRIPS: JOHN CRAWFORD
 * COVER BY GREG BLAIR; BACK PAGE FILLER BY GEORGE EDDY

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS THIS MONTH:

* CYNTHIA CINQUE TULI KUPFERBERG DENNY NORWOOD
 * BRUCE DUNCAN GUNNAR LARSON SUSAN PACKIE
 * TOM GEDWILLO LESLIE LIGHT GEORG PATTERSON
 * VERNON GRANT JED MARTINEZ PHIL PROCTOR
 * JOE HEBERT RANDY MAXSON TONY RENNER
 * DAVID HOWARD RICK MCCANN JULIAN ROSS
 * ANDY KAHM LUKE MCGUFF JOHN J. SOLDI
 * MILLEA KENIN S. MINANEL NOEL M. VALIS
 * RONALD E. KITTELL SHERYL L. NELMS RONALD WEISS
 * also special thanks to Semaj the Elder and Baba Mumbo Jumbo.....

* Ads furnished by the usual (see last few issues—hey, anyone want a
 * back issue? \$1.50 per...); all writes revert to writers, of course.

* C. 1984-1 Pen-Elayne Enterprises, Kip M. Ghesin, President, etc.
 * PRINTED BY AMERICAN SAHIZDAT PRESS—"If it bites, it's an A.S.P.!"

* "History is science fiction in reverse"—your confused editor.....

ACKNOWLEDITORIALETC.

Well, this time it's for real. Got the lease and everything. As of November 1st, I move into the new Homebase Inside Joke, otherwise known as Third Eye Headquarters (the apt. # being 31) in beautiful downtown Brooklyn, NY. Therefore, I'm pleased to start off this, our third anniversary issue, by announcing that there will definitely be a "Welcome to 1984" New Year's Eve Party and Floating Time Warp on December 31 at said apartment! See details in "Funny You Should Mention It" elsewhere this issue...

Lots of serialized stuff premieres this issue (not including the ever-long letter column!): Steven Scharff's "Mr. Allen's Airship"; Mike Gunderloy's "Confessions of a Confused Revolutionary"; Penny A. Lines' and her hero Herschel Dammit in "The Red Reaper"; and Brian Catanzaro's essay on "Cultural Effects..."—and, of course, Roldo continues his saga of "Dark Wings Over Fasu". I even had a new series by Kerry Thornley, "Finding Freedom", but Chapter 1 got hung up in transit between IJ's palatial p.o. box in NY and Kerry's in Tampa, so we hope to bring that to you as soon as Kerry returns from wherever he's at; in the meantime we run Kerry's "folk writing" piece this month written under the moniker "Ho Chi Zen"...

Also missed this month was a spiffy cover volunteered from Julie Logan, which we'll eventually see, probably in February (Brian Pearce has December, and of course the 'winner' this month was, as you can see, Greg Blair). Of equal importance, tho, is that Julie'll be making our official IJ stationery, several pieces of which will be winging their way to staffers either simultaneously with their copies of this issue or soon thereafter. Julie will be creating more goodies for us, including collage pieces, so readers are VERY invited to participate in the Making of the Stationery, by sending any little odds and ends they feel appropriate to Julie % our palatial post office box in New York. And speaking of staffers, Julie's due to become one herself starting next issue. In the meantime, catch the list and addresses of the current IJ staff writers in this issue, all you penpal freaks...

IJ's palatial p.o. box on 23rd Street in NYC has been receiving some bits of mail rather slowly of late, so it might be a good idea for staffers to consider, as the holidays approach and mail slows even more, to perhaps send me two pieces instead of just one next month. This way I won't be waiting on you in December when the Xmas rush begins more furiously than ever, and I can perhaps get INSIDE JOKE out to everyone more or less on time this next couple months.

Generous contributors to IJ are reminded, once again, if you're going to ~~\$\$\$~~ send me checks, please DO NOT make them out to "INSIDE JOKE"! That is a non-cashable entity and will only result in me returning your check with no IJ attached. PLEASE make any checks out to me, Elayne Wechsler, okay? (Whether I am an entity or not is up for debate, but the banks consider me so at any rate...Thanks for this month's donations to J.C. Brainbeau (always), Tom and Deborah Gedwillo, Patch, Georg Patterson, and Joe Schneide.

Subscriptions to IJ are a dollar an issue. There are no advance subscriptions, period. For detailed explanations as to why, ask anyone who's been with us awhile, redundancy exhausts me. All submissions are copyright their authors—we just print 'em, we're not concerned with any arbitrary government 'laws' out there. Submissions for the November issue should be sent to arrive to me by the deadline, NOVEMBER 10, so that usually means getting them out a few days beforehand, ok? Submissions acceptable are just about anything, provided it's under 2000 words or small enough to let others have their say or blah blah blah... you know how it goes. Please try to hold up on the poetry, tho, till these mysterious bad poets who get my name from some obscure and misinformative poetry magazines go away. Thank you. I will send out Change Of Address cards for purposes of personal letters, but as far as IJ is concerned, all mail should still be going either to the staff writers at their addresses or to our official mailing address:
 P.O. Box 1609, Madison Square Station, New York, NY 10159

This issue is dedicated to Mike and Mildred Moslow, without whom I wouldn't be where I will on November 1st...

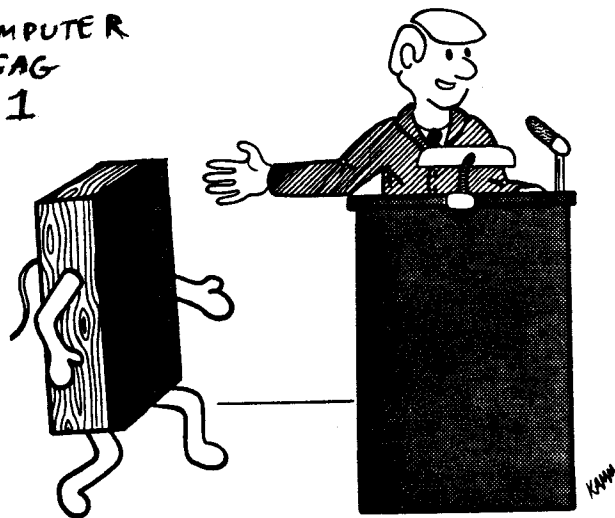
BEGIN PRINTOUT. . . ("A Computer "Sings" Streisand")

PEOPLE

RECOMPUTE FOR SPACING. . .

PEOPLE

COMPUTER
 GAG
 #1



NOW PLEASE WELCOME TONIGHT'S
 GUEST SPEAKER

HEY! STUPID!—Hang it out your balcony when my motor's running. —White Ford

Fan Noose

Announcements starting us off this time: Peter Bergman of The Fire-sign Theatre now has a weekly strip running in the L.A. Weekly and is looking for more markets. See this month's FIRESIGNALS for more details...If you like Luke McGuff's vignettes in this and last issues, he has put lots of 'em together in his collection MINIFUNCTIONS. Luke didn't list a price, but you can SASE him at Box 3680, Minneapolis, MN 55403...Letter collage is big these days, as evidenced by a couple I've received this month, from A.J. Wright (5 "NEWSPoems", one 8x11 sheet each, for \$1 or trade from 2208 Chapel Hill Rd., Birmingham, AL 35216) and Tom Christopher (SASE for info on his collage minis—Rt. 5, Box 888, Vashon, WA 98070)...Quick corrections from last time—Bruce Duncan's SPARKY'S STREET ART is \$2 by mail, not \$1.25 as listed; Bruce puts out a whole sheet of what he sells, so SASE him for it (address lastish)...And the second chapter of Rock Homberg's serial SLACK ROBBERS FROM OUTER SPACE is out—see this month's letter column...Speaking of SubG pubs (were we?), Seth Deitch gave me #2 of his excellent artzine GET STUPID! at the World Party—\$3 to 534 Revere St., Revere, MA 02151...I'm happy to announce that my mentor, Bill-Dale Marcinko, has put together an impressive booklet of his poems and songs called HEART OF LOVE, HEART OF HOPE which you can get from him for \$1.95—send to 153 George St., #2, New Brunswick, NJ 08901. I should be writing for the Livingston Medium soon—that's the college paper of which Billy's arts/humor editor...Can a sf-related book review zine be interesting? Find out just how—send SASE for OCTAGRAM #2 to Maia Cowan, 652 Cranbrook Rd., #3, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48103...ANTI-AUTHORITARIANS ANONYMOUS put out prop-sheets almost as bitingly sarcastic as Bob Black's stuff—SASE to P.O. Box 11331 Eugene, OR 97440...Our 'pro'ly-not-worth-it' for the month is the very overly self-hyped and poetically incoherent (at least to me) 12 SECONDS OF LAUGHTER, billed by its editor ("McGee") as "a 32-page exercise in absurdity", among other things. A few mildly interesting writings. 821 North Pennsylvania St., #22, Indianapolis, IN 46204...Sad news to pass along—the band FEAR OF STRANGERS has broken up after five years, but all members will still be pursuing musical careers. I think you can get the last FEAR OF NEWS from Steve Cohen at P.O. Box 3376, New York, NY 10185...Michael Gingold's SCAREAPHANALIA is another "monthly fanzine of horror film news and reviews" and is available for \$6/yr or trade (single copies 50¢ per) to 55 Nordica Dr., Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520...Not to sound too self-serving, 'cause I'm not trying to be so, the new (#5) TUBER'S VOICE is out, with a new columnist added who's writing schlock about MTV (modesty forbids...). Good issue (in spite), great questionnaire as usual, AND I just got a copy of THE OFFICIAL COUCH POTATOES' HANDBOOK (TV Guide size, natch, and available for \$4.95—the newsletter's \$1.25—from Robert Armstrong, Rt. 1, Box 327, Dixon, CA 95620...Wonderful new entries are out from Matt Feazell, who's moved to 32 Six Knives Rd., Raleigh, NC 27609—inquire for new listing...Steve Willis, in addition to his monthly 4-page mini MORTY COMIX, has put together the first issue, and is at work on the second, of OUTSIDE IN, whose theme is self-portraits. All interested parties are invited to send in same on one 5x7 page, single- or multi-panel (IJ staffer Clay Geerdes is in #2, and I may or may not get my shit together for #3 or so), to 385½ Irving, Pullman, WA 99163...A. Pavletich of DE NADA has put out some nifty postcards—query for info, address last issue...Also given last issue was the address for NEITHER/NOR PRESS, whose Denis McBee just sent along some neat ad sheets for the soon-to-be-out BEAT-NKS FROM SPACE #4 (\$2.50 from N/N) and a cute collage zine by "Duke D'Realo"...The latest TWISTED IMAGE is the "Special Gore and Violence" one and is available for \$1 from Ace Backwards...On to the regulars!:

AGAINST THE WALL V.12#1, Special LP Convention Issue (libertarian)—Bill George, P.O. Box 444, Westfield, NJ 07091 (\$2, t); BIBLIOFANTASIA #10 (great sf/f, mostly Canadian)—C.F. Kennedy, 802 Pape Ave., Toronto Ont. M4K 3S7 CANADA (\$4.50/yr; 6 issues); CHICAGO SHIVERS #s 16,17 (schlock/sleaze/horror movies)—Ron Carlson, 4443 Grace St., Schiller Park, IL 60176 (\$6/yr; 16 issues); CONFESSIONS OF A TRASH FIEND V.2 #s 9 thru 12 (s/s/h movies)—Richard Green, P.O. Box 32, Old Bridge, NJ 08857 (\$7/yr; 24 issues); CONTACT #35 (16d singles)—John Fremont, P.O. Box 500, Mendocino, CA 94560 (\$14.95/yr); THE FORTNIGHTLY COLLEGE RADIO REPORT #s 58-60 (playlists)—Shel Kagan, Box 714, Bristol, RI 02809 (colleges \$30/yr; industrial rate \$50/yr); GOOD DAY SUNSHINE #16 (Beatles)—Charles F. Rosenay!!!, 397 Edgewood Ave., New Haven, CT 06511 (\$2, t); LONE STAR #5 (humor—oh, I'm gonna be their new "book reviewer")—Lauren Barnett Scharf, P.O. Box 29000, Suite #103, San Antonio, TX 78229 (\$9.95/yr; \$1.95/issue, t); MONKEE BUSINESS FANZINE #26 (Monkees)—Maggie McManus, 2770 S. Broad St., Trenton, NJ 08610 (\$4.50/yr; 4 issues); THE MONTHLY INDEPENDENT TRIBUNE TIMES JOURNAL POST GAZETTE NEWS CHRONICLE BULLETIN #10 (humor, surreality, GOOD stuff)—T.S. Child, 2510 Bancroft Way, #207, Berkeley, CA 94704 (SASE, t); NUCLEAR TIMES oct. '83 (antinuclear weapons movement)—Andrea Doremus, publishing asst., Room 512, 298 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10001 (\$2); THE SOUTHERN LIBERTARIAN MESSENGER V.XII #s 3,4 (libertarian)—John T. Harlee, Rt. 10, Box 52A, Florence, SC 29501 (SASE, t); TRASHOLA #s—oops, forgot to look, sorry Jim (s/s/h movies)—Jim Morton, Suite 583 109 Minna St., San Francisco, CA 94105 (\$3.50/yr)...Coming next month: The Ever-Popular reveals the Arlo Guthrie scandal, Robert Hale gives me more plugs (sorry Robert and Carolyn, I misplaced your stuff this time) and more of the usual! Till then, Chao!

Funny You Should Mention It

"...those are the headlines; now, the rumours behind the news..."

WELCOME TO THE FUTURE—The new Homebase Inside Joke will be hosting its first 'real party' on SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31st, New Year's Eve, 1983. The party will be a 'Theme As You Are' winding, combining housewarming with my birthday (beginning of Dec.) with 1984 with Papoon's first victory in the '84-1 polls. I will be supplying midnight champagne, sangria, and some munchies; guests are asked to bring their own beverages aside from those mentioned above, any food they might like to eat or share, presents that strike your fancy if you feel you must (hint hint: household items would be nice, but do ask me what I need first; I mean, four blenders are nice but might mess up décor a trifle), and sleeping bags if you feel like crashing (although the possibility of actually sleeping at any point that night is a bit remote right now, if you can find a quiet corner you're welcome to it). IF YOU ARE READING THIS INVITATION IN THIS INSIDE JOKE, YOU ARE INVITED! But, since I have not yet told you exactly where In Brooklyn is located Third Eye Headquarters, you'll have to R.S.V.P. for address and phone number. PLEASE R.S.V.P. THIS INVITATION BY NOVEMBER 30, so I can begin to plan things. Among attendees are sure to be IJ staffers Ackner and Zimmerman, our fine printer Steve Cozzi, George Papoon (I hope), and many other surprise guests. Come prepared to entertain rather than be entertained... TIRED VISION—I know I usually do my semi-annual television review, "...or not TV", this time of year, and I still hope to do so next month sans the benefit/distraction of cable (=sob=). I just haven't felt up to it, what with the dearth of really interesting stuff this season (but ain't it always the case). In the meantime, though, I'd like to premiere the IJ AD AWARDS for outstanding aggravation in the area of television commercials. This month the IJAs go out to the relatively new Volkswagon commercial, where the smart male consumer buys a new VW knowing it'll work because he bought one 20 years ago, which he's now more-than-generously doled out to his wife. Let's hope she makes enough money soon to dump him and the 20-year-old bug and buy herself a much-deserved Camaro...Also to the Budweiser commercial featuring the 'Arctic explorers'; the first thing I'd go for in the Arctic would be a Bud, oh certainly...Honorable mention to IJ's Dear Friend Phil Proctor in the Rubber Maid commercial, due to the fact that I haven't yet seen it. While it probably won't be aggravating, it should at least garner a bit of attention...

CALIFORNIA CONDORS ARE VALLEY GULLS

(For sure, totally!)



Inside IJ Staffers

IJ staffers, at least most of them, love receiving mail. I mean, letters-to-the-editor are all well and good, but there's really nothing quite as effective as direct communication, eh? This, of course, not only applies to compliments but to criticism as well—it seems so much easier to bring up a point in private than to hash it out in public and make a fool of oneself, doesn't it? In any case, we have some new addresses here among the staff writers, so here's the list as it stands: ANNI ACKNER - 10 Hillside Ave., #8, Englewood, NJ 07631** BEBORAH BENEDICT - 4718½ Calvert St., Lincoln, NE 68506 BRIAN CATANZARO - 151 Route 206, #20-1, Flanders, NJ 07836 JILL DEARMAN - 85-15 Main St., Briarwood, NY 11435 MICHAEL DOBBS - 24 Hampden St., Indian Orchard, MA 01151 KEN FILAR - 417 Westervelt Ave., #2, Staten Island, NY 10301 CLAY GEERDES - Box 7081, Berkeley, CA 94707* MIKE GUNDERLOY - 41 Lawrence St., Medford, MA 02155* RORY HOUGHENS - R.R. #2, Colfax, IL 61728 BRIAN PEARCE - 232A Benedict Hall, Brockport, NY 14420** LEE PELTON - P.O. Box 3145, Traffic Sta., Minneapolis, MN 55403* GERRY REITH - P.O. Box 4081, Sheridan, WY 82801** ROLDO - 1232 Downing St., Winnipeg, Man. R3E 2R7 CANADA** TOM SANDERS - 9116 Lawncrest Drive, Clio, MI 48420 STEVEN SCHARFF - 516 Buchanan St., Hillside, NJ 07205** CANDI STRECKER - 710 Diamond, San Francisco, CA 94114* KERRY THORNLEY - Box 18441, Tampa, FL 33679* JILL ZIMMERMAN - 1307-11 Harding Ave., #3D, Linden, NJ 07036

*Some staffers even put out their own publications—Clay Geerdes' COMIX WORLD/COMIX WAVE; Mike Gunderloy's FACTSHEET FIVE; Lee Pelton's PRIVATE HEAT; Candi Strecker's SIDNEY SUPPEV'S QUARTERLY AND CONFUSED PET MONTHLY; and Kerry Thornley's SPARE CHANGE. **Other staffers do put out their writings and art intermittently, either in other publications or of their own production—Anni writes for several apas and for Mike's FF and FFANZEEN and—well, stay tuned to IJ for updates; Brian Pearce puts out mini- and micro-comics; Gerry Reith publishes some wondrous tracts under the names of Minutiae or Tribunal Overdrive or even several others; Roldo's Toof Arg On comics is quite prolific; and Steve Scharff has also had some mini-comics published. Rather than listing prices, etc., I would suggest you write directly to the staffers and ask them for more information. They'd love to hear from you!!

"THE BOOK OF the SubGenius" was J.R. "Bob" Dobbs' attempt to rally subgenius and scandalize the pinks. A clench is forming to burn this book (for whatever)

THE BULLSHIT SCHIZMATIC Church of the SubGenius (Marxist-Sumerist) is ready when you are. Spawn of the Yeu. 2000 Center St. Berkeley, CA 94704.

DIARY of The ROCK FIEND

by Anni Ackner

EVEN COMGIRLS GET THE FLU

It has never yet been said of me, and I trust that it never will be said of me (though Lord knows they say anything about anybody these days. Why only last week I heard somebody call George McGovern "a serious contender in the race for the Democratic nomination for President") that, no matter what my shortcomings and character flaws may be (and, hard as it may be to believe, I do have a couple. I have never, for instance, been able to remember the difference between "effect" and "affect" or why it is I invariably end up having dinner in overpriced Italian restaurants with men who want to talk about their tax-free municipal bonds), I am not both intrepid and dedicated to the welfare of my readers. I am intrepid and dedicated, as it happens, almost to faults. In fact, I think it can be fairly safely said that I am intrepid and dedicated very nearly to the point of lunacy as I'm sure will be proven when I tell you that I have never once even come close to missing an INSIDE JOKE deadline.

Now, this may not sound like very much to you. Perhaps, after all, your idea of intrepidity and dedication has more to do with a humble research scientist battling the big-money pharmaceutical conglomerates and the AMA to make sure his cure for Herpes Simplex remains affordable by all, or a little girl from a tenement neighbourhood in the Bronx training all by herself in an abandoned high school gymnasium and rising above an early (and faintly anachronistic) case of polio to go on and win the gold medal for the Women's 500 yard dash at the summer Olympics or even with a heroic Saint Bernard struggling up a mountain and through an avalanche to carry aid, succor and brandy to a group of stranded travellers (though personally I've always felt that if I were ever trapped in an avalanche it would take something slightly more than a sweaty old dog with a keg of cold liquor around its neck to cheer me up) than with an admittedly comfortably and reasonably secure (allowing for such things as the failure of the ERA and the ever-rising cost of More cigarettes) woman pecking out inanities on a \$125 Italian typewriter. I suppose there is a case to be made for those, but listen: I have made INSIDE JOKE deadlines under the most impossible and seemingly unendurable of circumstances. I have made INSIDE JOKE deadlines when everyone around me was losing his head and blaming it on me. I have made INSIDE JOKE deadlines when I was out of a job and down to the last Good Old Friend who could conceivably be prevailed upon to advance me a small loan. I have made INSIDE JOKE deadlines when I got a job and fervently wished I hadn't. I have made INSIDE JOKE deadlines when all 25 members of the New York Yankees seemed suddenly and inexplicably to forget that they were hired to play the game of baseball and instead gayly and insouciantly embarked upon something that looked suspiciously like Monkey In The Middle. I have made INSIDE JOKE deadlines while my father was attempting to manage all 25 members of the New York Yankees by sheer vocal strength alone while leaning over my shoulder; when my mother was standing outside the door of my room, plaintively hinting that it was about time to stop all this foolishness and find a Nice Young Man; I have made INSIDE JOKE deadlines in those moods when I began to agree with her and I have made them when I was all alone in the house with nothing on television to keep me company but four different syndicated programmes all showing precisely the same rock videos and a re-run of T.J. HOOKER. Say what you will about humble research scientists, handicapped children and brave bow-wows, but I think that I too, at the very least, deserve some small place in the Intrepid and Dedicated Hall of Fame.

If all that isn't enough to convince you—and if it isn't, I really don't know why I'm bothering. You're obviously the sort that would demand identity papers from Judge Warner—let me just mention casually, and with no thought of aggrandisement on my part, that as I sit here, writing this very column, I am a Very Sick Girl. I mean, Very Sick. Like, we're talking Real Sick here, okay? Nose blowing sick. Violent fits of coughing sick. Lie about in a welter of used kleenex tissues and feel sorry for myself sick. Even, not to put too fine a point on it, call in sick at the office and risk coming back to find that my immediate superior has emptied the contents of four filing cabinets on the floor while looking for a pencil sick. But am I giving into it? Am I letting it get me down? Well, to be perfectly honest with you, yes, I am. I feel just wretched, thank you very much, and I hope you all have the proper amount of sympathy for me, but the point is that, sick as I am, I am still sitting here, writing this column, as has already been stated. And not only am I writing this column, I am, ever mindful of my obligation to my readers, constantly thinking of new and better ways to be of service to them. And so, because being Sick, like any other lifestyle, however transient, is an Art Form unto itself and because I, at the moment, due to a peculiar twist of fate, circumstance and a 101 degree temperature, am eminently qualified to discuss that Art Form, I now present, intrepidly, with dedication:

ZEN AND THE ART OF UNWELLNESS

1) Never never never denigrate yourself or your illness by telling people that you have "a cold". Of course, we all know that a cold is possibly the worst thing a human being can contract—it can knock a person flatter than an advanced case of pleural pneumonia and cause one to wish that, in lieu of it, he or she had been run over by a fair-sized semi truck—but, thanks mainly to the efforts of some nasty little men pretending to be druggists on a few over-produced television commercials ("Golly, Mister Dewman. I just—achoo—feel drEADful!"; "Why, never mind, Nancy. I have just the thing for you right here!"), people not immediately afflicted with them tend to forget precisely how awful a cold can be and, consequently, will expect you to simply pop a couple of Dristan and get right back into the swing of things. This is not only utter nonsense, it is not at all what you're after. If you're going to be sick, naturally enough, you're going to want to make sure everyone around you feels damn good and sorry for you. Therefore, you

must always strive to put the worst possible face on things. A cold with a cough can very easily, only stretching the truth slightly, be called bronchitis. A cold with sneezing is an upper respiratory infection and a cold with even the faintest hint of nausea is intestinal flue. Enough creativity in self-diagnoses can not only net you the sympathy you deserve, but also a couple of extra days in bed as well, preferably when you're well enough to enjoy them.

2) If you should never call a cold a cold, you certainly shouldn't give it an adorable nickname. "Sniffles" is a character in some second-rate cartoons from the thirties, not an ailment for a reasonable adult.

3) Always try to have one person about to look after you. Being ill is difficult enough in itself, and it loses whatever slight zest it might ordinarily have if you have to get out of bed to heat your own chicken soup and measure out your own medicine. Ideally, the person who looks after you should be one equipped with patience and sensitivity or, failing that, at the very least someone who, having seen you at your worst, will still find it difficult to walk out and leave you forever. For this reason, if no other, your mother is better suited to this particular task than your current paramour. However, should there be some difficulty in flying your mother in from Cleveland for a few days, do make certain that your current paramour signs what might be called a Pre-Testy Agreement guaranteeing that he or she will not fly into a snit even if you tell him or her exactly what that nice bowl of blanc-mange resembles. Have it notarized.

4) Because, after the second or third day, everybody who spends any time alone in bed begins to bear a striking resemblance to Julia Child, never allow anyone, however well-meaning, to come and visit you—no, not even if you just bought a brand-new bedjacket that is an exact replica of the one Bette Davis wore in DARK VICTORY. Instead, have the phone placed next to your bed and call everybody you know and tell them how much you're suffering. Cough meaningfully at strategic intervals and suggest that roses really are in much better taste than chrysanthemums.

5) Avoid vomiting. This is the least attractive of all bodily functions and invariably occurs when that lovely man from the pharmacy—the one that's supporting himself making deliveries until he makes it big as a Supreme Court justice—arrives with your analgesic.

6) Under no circumstances give up a long-ingrained habit solely because you happen to be ill. No matter what your grandmother may have told you, a soupçon of cocaine is not going to make your nose run any more than it already is, and a cigarette will get you through times of chest congestion faster than chest congestion will get you through times of no cigarettes. As sick as you are, you need all the comfort you can get.

7) No matter how tempting they may be, try not to begin watching soap operas. The problem with soap operas is not that they're slow-moving, idiotic, superficial creations fashioned for the tastes of the lowest-common-denominator of the audience (as someone who used to watch SO YOU THINK YOU GOT TROUBLES? with the zeal of an Egyptologist hunting down the last remaining undesecrated tomb in a remote section of the desert I'm scarcely the person to cast that sort of aspersions on any other form of TV viewing), but that they're hideously addicting, to the point that, when healthy again, otherwise stable people have been known to quit their day jobs and cut off all contact with the outside world in order to keep up with them. This is not a good idea. It's peachy to quit your day job and cut off all contact with the outside world in order to support your art, but just a tad this side of silly to do it in order to support someone else's, particularly if that someone else is Anthony Geary. Rather than risking this precarious situation, watch instead things that may be taken or left alone once your illness is over—Phil Donahue, reruns of THE LOVE BOAT and the 700 Club are especially recommended, as these may even go so far as to hasten your recovery, simply so you won't have to lie in bed and watch them anymore.

8) Be careful of what you read. Scholarly articles pertaining to your accustomed field of endeavor, long, stream-of-consciousness novels by a nauseatingly prolific winner of the Pulitzer Prize, and get-well cards from your Aunt Sophronia are all going to depress you at this point. Instead, you'll find that stories of someone else's suffering (provided that it's worse than yours) will cheer you remarkably. An old copy of ELSIE DINSHORE, if you can find one, will do admirably; if not, true confession magazines are nice and one of those books by someone born with no arms who teaches himself to paint landscapes by holding a brush in his teeth and finds God in the process is just fine, unless you think you might be induced to find God at the same time. Finding God is all well and good, but embarking on a spiritual treasure hunt when you're surrounded by wads of used tissue will only embarrass you later.

9) Refuse to eat. Never mind the old saw about feeding a fever or feeding a cold or which one it is. What with getting no exercise and the natural tendency of the suffering to want to comfort themselves with soft, yielding foods like bread, potatoes and pints of Haagen Dazs chocolate-chocolate chip ice cream, unless you refuse to eat you're going to look rather less pale and wan when you return to the real world than Lenny Bruce in his last, heartrending days, and no one is going to believe you were sick. Grit your teeth, pretend you're a French Resistance fighter and the Nazis have cut off all the food supplies, and think of those wonderful days just ahead, when you'll be able to gain back all the weight you've lost or, alternately, of the size five black denim trousers you can now successfully wear.

10) Finally, although it may come to seem like a reasonable alternative in certain phases of your illness, try not to die. Of course, we're all of us—with the possible exception of Dick Clark—going to die someday, but if you do it now, before you've reached the peak or your abilities, you may not even rate an obituary in the TIMES, and your biography will be insultingly short. If, however, you do feel called upon to die, please remember to keep it in good taste. Cremation is for old conservationists and doesn't leave any place for your admirers to put daffy flowers, burials at sea are suitable only for Popeye and mausoleums are too nouveau even to contemplate. A simple headstone with an appropriate engraving (try to avoid things like "If you can read this, you're standing too close") in some pleasant, well-tended cemetery is what you need.

In the right spirit, become a rewarding Learning Experience. And now, if you will excuse me, the 700 Club is coming on and, intrepidity and dedication notwithstanding, priorities, after all, are still priorities.

By following these few simple do's and don't's, provided at no small cost to me, you will find that your illness can be gotten through with as little fuss and bother as necessary, and can even, if you go at it



Taking Notes

by Deborah Benedict

"The only decent gossip column in America!"—Clyde Moonbeam

MUSIC SCENE: So much to report! Too much to report, in fact, so forget it!...Barry "Rock Out" Manilow and his single, "Some Kind Of Friend"—this out-of-character departure from Thorazineville for Barry shocked listeners and critics alike...The Story? Seems Barry took two Extra Strength Dexamtrium caps and when they kicked in, he kicked out the jams! Welcome to the planet, Barry!...Pat Benatar says she has no new plans for album or tour and is in fact considering retirement. "Since my marriage I've learned the value of boredom," sez Pat. She has also learned to crochet—in Spandex, yet. "Guess I'm just a crypto-iconoclast," she chuckles...Stevie Nicks despondent over recent loss or theft of custom-made curling iron. She says, "I'm desolate! It was kinda my good luck charm. Without it I can only write mundane lyrics about American stuff like cars." Hope she gets it back real soon...**Meat Loaf** on a new diet. He now eats three bowls of cereal a day—Boo-berries, CoCoWheats and Sugar Crisp. Called "The Cartoon Diet", it was

FUN WITH TOM

by Tom Sanders

August 28, 1981 started out as most late summer days do: with the sun rising in the east. The civilized world had been without major league baseball for forty-eight days, and young Tom decided it was time to make things right. Tim to go to New York and get the stalled strike talks off dead center. In this case one strike meant everyone was out—players, souvenir guys, the hot dog vendors, and baseball addicts who can't function in the morning without a sports section full of stats.

He arrived in New York the next day and put his strike plan into action. He had borrowed some clothes from a female friend of his who was a Cubs fan and who, fortunately, wore the same sizes. On they went, and Tom stopped in the nearest ladies' room to find a button marked "Press" and check his costume before heading to the negotiations.

The elevator guards weren't amused. Tom showed them his press button and some recent issues of INSIDE JOKE, assuring them that (s)he was, indeed, the editor of that well-known humor publication on assignment to find the lighter side of the baseball strike, if there was one at all. They let him go, for the name INSIDE JOKE is well respected in New York sports circles. Tom walked around the 38th floor, clomping along on two inch heels, following the trail of tired sportswriters that led to the bargaining sessions. There, the principals in the talks, Marvin Miller and Ray Grebey, sat in shirtsleeves with their hands on their chins, thinking out loud.

"Lord, it's hot in this room," Grebey moaned.

"I've seen hotter," Miller replied. "Sportsman's Park in St. Louis in July. Remember that place?"

"I sure do. Loved it when the eagle on the scoreboard would flap its wings for a Cardinal home run."

"Just as I thought," Tom interjected. "Strolling down memory lane while cobwebs grow on the ballparks of America. Have you been reminiscing for forty-eight days?"

"Hey, just who are you, and how did you get past the guards downstairs?" Miller demanded. "And did you know the seams of your stockings aren't straight?"

"That's all you men are interested in. Not the baseball fans out there who haven't heard the thwack of bat upon ball for the last two months."

"Oh, no," Grebey groaned. "Another baseball nut." Miller thought to himself: "Thwack?" He said to no one in particular, "Lord, it's too hot and I'm too old for this. I wish I could go to the shore."

Young Tom, our heroine, jumped in. "Exactly. Both of you want to get outta here. The fans are getting itchy. They're listening to Evansville Triplet games back in Michigan and not digging the scene! There are a few hundred ballplayers doing nothing, and some of them have threatened to go out and get jobs!"

"Oh my God," both men breathed.

"So, what about it? Let's bust out of here and go have some fun."

Miller and Grebey were wavering. Tom played his trump card. "Look—it here," he said, pulling a thick envelope from his purse. "This is the best indoor baseball game ever made, and these are some of the 1956 teams. Remember these guys?"

They flipped through the teams, two middle-aged men recalling their baseball card days. "Hey, Marvin, lookie here. The Brooklyn Dodgers! Reese, Robinson, Hodges, Koufax—I remember all of 'em!"

"Aw, c'mon, Ray! I wanna be the Dodgers!"

"No! I saw them first!"

"Well...awright, if you take the Dodgers, I gotta be the New York Giants. But we play in the Polo Grounds, okay?"

The two negotiators got out their dice and played a few games while Tom visited the ladies' room to fix his makeup and straighten his stockings. They were just finishing a game when he returned.

"Looks a lot better, kid," Grebey observed.

"Hey, Ray," Miller asked, "you think if we...uh, I mean, do you think we could get to Tiger Stadium in time if there was a game this Sunday? Best hot dogs in the league."

"I can taste 'em now."

They hurriedly stuffed papers into their briefcases. "Kid," Grebey said to Tom, "you might overdress and wear the wrong accessories, but you're what makes baseball tick. Okay Marvin! Last one to the airport is a bush leaguer!"

They dashed from the room and down the hall in opposite directions. Tom pulled up her skirt and congratulated himself on a job well done. The guards downstairs were not as kind. They shoed Tom from the lobby and flung his INSIDE JOKEs out on the sidewalk after him. Some things can't be covered up with lipstick and powder.

instigated by a doctor named Flinchskin from Nanty Glo, PA. He conducted experiments and noted that "kids who eat breakfast while watching TV don't get fat". The Loaf reports that he only eats while watching Bugs Bunny, Tom and Jerry and The Jetsons. Results so far: Gain of 26 lbs. "But I think that's just water," says Meat...New music club underway in LA for people who would shy away or be kicked out of the more elite clubs. Owner Cosmo Garbopunk says, "Our club, CREEPS, is strictly for overweight gay alcoholic drug addicts with eczema, and bastard children of women who were raised in Samoan convent schools are getting first shot at membership." The music will be eclectic, Garbopunk promises. "Opening night we'll feature a punk rock polka band from Most, Czechoslovakia. Their name, translated roughly into English, means 'The Junkyard Scalp Eaters'." Membership fee is one hundred bucks a year and that includes the T-shirt which simply asserts, "I'M A CREEP, YOU'RE A NORMAL NOTHING..."

SILVER SCREEN SCHEMERS: Rumors that Earl Holliman will play Jim Morrison in film bio "NO ONE HERE WAS EVER ALIVE IN THE FIRST PLACE" are false. Earl says he was never even asked and is much too busy with his new Disney film "WHILLIKERS! PLANET EARTH IS GONE!", co-starring Hayley Mills as the last woman to have a pot of Yardley lip gloss which has magical powers. "I don't understand the script," Hayley confesses, "but I'm getting a super kickback from Yardley on this deal...John Travolta champing at the bit (will someone please take that thing off him?) to play Josef Goebbels in latest made-for-TV docudrama "LEAVE IT TO HERR DOKTOR: THE INSIDE STORY OF JOSEF GOEBBELS, HIS INFLUENCE ON ADOLF HITLER AND THE THIRD REICH AND HOW MAGDA GOEBBELS WAS SECRETLY IN LOVE WITH HITLER AND HATED HER HUSBAND JOSEF". Produced by Fred Silverman for Looselips Productions, in cooperation with Tantrum Enterprises and whoever else Mr. Silverman intimidates, the miniseries will run for five nights, the first episode devoted to title and credits. Travolta "hasn't a chance of a cracker in Harlem," director Melissa Sue Anderson opines. "He's an ok actor, but we need someone to make Herr Goebbels a regular guy, not too larger than life." Also being considered: Richard Dreyfuss, Judd Hirsch and Mort Sahl...Suzanne Somers LOVING new Tife in Las Vegas—"I'd rather perform on the Vegas stage than in movies or tv," the mediocre entertainer says. "It's much harder to tell if I need a bleach job when I'm way the hell and gone on some stage. Those cameras are murder!" Suzanne has added a big production number to her widely vilified stage show—a tribute to the Loch Ness Monster. She plays a beautiful blonde and she and monster fall in love. Big Finale features Suzanne and Nessie singing "Somewhere" with Julius La Rosa dubbing voice of monster...Liz Taylor fuming over criticisms of her eighth marriage—Sez Liz: "If I had never gotten married, they'd call me Liz the Lez; if I'd stayed married to the same guy, they'd say no one else wanted me! Anyway, this time it's for real! This guy I'm marrying, whoever he is, is Mr. Right....Pia Zadora all set for "THE SECRET LIFE OF GERTRUDE STEIN". Co-workers insist, "Pia is perfect! We have to say that or Riklis will deport us all to Chad..."Kim Novak furious she lost out to Farrah Fawcett for role of Virginia Wolff in new Webber-Rice musical "THE LIGHT SIDE OF LITERATURE". Farrah plays Virginia and sings one number, "My Hat Is In The Water, But You're On My Mind." Ricardo Montalban, who plays e.e. cummings, insists it's all a misunderstanding. Scott Baio definitely set to play Charles Dickens in this extravaganza. Literature providing much inspiration for everyone in Show Biz—next Tim Rice plans musical version of Franz Kafka's "METAMORPHOSIS". One song, "Don't Bug Me While I'm Changing", already penned...Be On The Lookout!!! for new "TELL ALL" book from Connie Stevens. Connie writes about Hollywood: "It's not very big and it's awful hard to tell exactly where it begins and leaves off. I guess the freeway is the best guide. Most days the weather is warm and sunny, but sometimes it rains. There are oodles of real fancy movie theatres on Sunset and Hollywood Boulevards. I like Grauman's Chinese. Stars made footprints and handprints in wet cement in front of this famous landmark. It's real exciting..." Connie's book is called "HOLLYWOOD—MY KIND OF TOWN IN LOS ANGELES AND VICINITY", Quiet Desperation Publishers, Cleveland, OH...

SOCIETY SCRIBBLES: Big Blintz fight in the Russian Tea Room between Boris Badinov and long-time paramour Natasha Fatale. Hope those long-time lovebirds patch things up! Now come on, you two, you know you love each other!...Gloria Vanderbilt ready to market her new line of designer mini pads—Shaped like her famous Swan logo, they come in pastel hues of Pink Petal, NoBabyBlue and Menses Mauve. Cost: \$7 for a box of twenty. "No truly classy woman should need more!" says Gloria. The blurb is: "For the truly chic woman who refuses to let biology diminish her style." Television ads directed by Brian De Palma and starring Susan Dey as the ugly duckling who turns into a swan begin next week...Jean Harris and Claus von Bulow pen pals! "We have so much in common!" gushes Jean. "We're both not guilty!" Mrs. Harris has quite a sunny disposition these days, but friends worry von Bulow may tarnish her reputation. Claus comments, "Jean's a real sweetie, and I like to needle her about her crazy diet habits..."Rodeo Drive merchants up in arms over bid for new TACO BELL but developers promise "a class operation in keeping with the unbearably stuffy atmosphere and standards in this neck of the woods". A solid gold Taco "bell" and the inclusion of Perrier water on the menu are two examples of TBs desire to fit in. But Rosa Weebundus, owner of "THE ELITE BITCH—The Boutique For Blonde Women With Lots Of Gold Jewelry", moans that no good can come of it. "Where are we, El Segundo?" she asks...Nancy Reagan was given special inclusion in THE GUINNESS BOOK OF WORLD RECORDS as "the only woman in the world who has never dialed without Operator Assistance". When queried about this achievement, Mrs. Reagan shrugged modestly and said, "I guess it's true. I've never really thought about it. I mean, really, what else are those little operator girls or whatever they're called there for, if not to help out?"

Until next time, that's all the gossip I'm going to report unless you send me 20 bucks and a self-addressed stamped envelope. Then I'll tell you a bunch of really sleazy and true stuff that nobody will print because they're afraid of lawsuits.

Until then, remember: STARDOM IS FOR PEOPLE WHO CAN'T FACE OBSCURITY!



License To Manipulate

FEATURING "COOP"

Dear Coop,

Help me with this terrible problem. It's a real pisser and you are my last hope. I have developed an overwhelming urge to throw things. If I have an object in my hands, my entire being is possessed by the passion to toss it away!

You can imagine the trouble I get into. I ordered a soft drink at a local fast food place and I paid for it by tossing the money at the counterperson, then when I picked up the drink I threw it at the opposite wall...unfortunately, the wall happened to be over a table where a family of four (very unattractive family I must say) were dining. I'm afraid they were rather displeased with me. I do it because I can't help it and I feel so wonderful afterwards—I have an absolute glow of triumph until the guilt sets in. Then I must get my hands on something to throw so I can feel good again.

You see the vicious cycle? Can you help me before I pick up a McCullough chainsaw or a set of Ginsu knives and really do some damage? Why do I have this compulsion? It just came on me suddenly about a month ago and has steadily worsened.

- THROWING IT ALL AWAY

Dear Throwing,

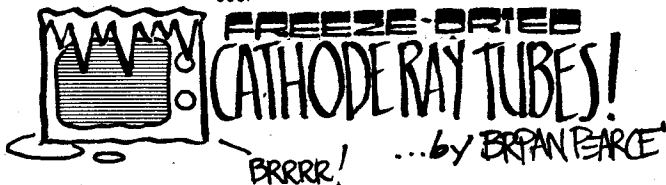
I can sympathize with your plight since I also get the urge to throw things occasionally. There is hope for a complete recovery because it is a recent affliction and hasn't had time to become deeply ingrained. You must be diligent in the therapy I'm going to recommend.

First, find a room that doesn't have a lot of valuable breakables in it and set aside one hour a day to occupy it. Second, take a pillow or, better yet, a cuddly toy such as a teddy bear in the room with you. Third, with the object in front of you, relax totally via self-hypnosis or deep breathing exercises. Fourth, once relaxed and calm, merely touch the object until you feel comfortable in not throwing it. Fifth, pick up the object and put it down. Repeat this step while increasing the duration you're holding it by a second or two each time. Sixth, when you're up to about thirty seconds in step five, walk around the room with your object. Seventh, when you can walk around the room with your object for fifteen minutes, take it out and walk around other places with it.

Go on to other objects with undamageable ones at first and working your way up to precarious ones such as eggs or fine china as you progress in your control of the situation. While you're going through this procedure, don't be discouraged if sometimes you throw the object. Continue this therapy until the day you can hold an object and choose not to throw it without that choice becoming a strain.

Let me know how you do after a month or so. Good luck.

- COOP



AMOS P. WENTWORTH'S RAUNCHY DETECTIVE JOURNAL: ENTRY #768

"Surprisingly enough, it had not been a cold and stormy evening in late April...it was, in fact, a quiet, breezy mid-afternoon September 4th. Having wrestled a valuable microchip from a rather large band of video freaks (not to mention getting my butt kicked in the meanwhile) and delivering it to my client, I decided I'd best slow down and relax, so I went out and drank myself into semi-permanent oblivion for a few hours...ahh, it felt good to rest. Still in a state of intoxication, I sat down to relate to you this story:

"A PBTHLY XERQUIOUS ETEZNIG IN BRP (TTHH Q ATHS PLB SLTHIGH TIPTO SLXIBZR ADCEV GITLABST ROASTD TLHTINK SLBOT IP SLBIRTSIZIT ITH GORDT ORK EPRSTQ ANBR QTDAN OWRAN EB STRNOUQRTSPG @!?!PRTS!"

"After about 3 hours of this, I began to realize that the story of an evening back that I'd committed to paper and emptied from my memory was, for the most part, undecipherable. Unless, perhaps...I find a dyslexic. Oh, well...I decided to give up about then—at least my body did.

"When I came to, about two days later, the television was blaring with 'Come On Down!' and bellowed the music of THE PRICE IS RIGHT. Bob Barker oughta be spayed and/or neutered. 'Ahh, but I used that joke last month,' I said to myself. Anyhow, I got myself up and stumbled over to the refrigerator...I grabbed a container of yogurt, raspberry, and a bit of wheat germ for texture. I mixed the two together, and tossed the whole thing in the sink in favor of the half-full bottle of gin on the desk; atypical of a cheap detective. 'Gotta be atypical,' I said to myself.

"The phone rang—the noise bothered me, so I shot it. The noise of the gun, in afterthought, didn't help. I would've shot the gun, too, but it was a physical impossibility. I didn't care to ponder at that point. It was at that point that the door opened; the lock hadn't worked since I rented the place. In the doorway she stood...clad in a tight aquamarine sweater. Nice earlobes. Hazel eyes, light brown hair, and a big nose...ahh, but that didn't matter; not now.

"It's your time, lady; spill it," I mumbled in my best Harry Morgan impression. Actually it was just a turn of phrase...but that's another story.

"You're a writer?" Wotta voice. Soft as a baby's bottom. 'Yes, I'm that.' I quickly crumpled up last night's gibberish and tossed it out the window. 'What can I do for you?'

She mumbled, holding back the tears, 'So far, at the end of this sentence, this column will contain 467 words! It needs one more to reach my minimum 468.'

'Really?'

NEXT MONTH: I know what you're thinkin'. Did he fire 5 Secretaries of the Interior, or did he fire 6?

FILMVIEWS by Ken Filar

It's quiet now. All the day's minor eerietations have been laid to rest, though not without putting up one helluva fuss. Still. It is worth it. To sit in reflection (I am I), to embrace the quiet as if it were a long lost treasure, to wander through dusty fragments of memory (some old, some new, some so unfamiliar they could belong to another); and all the while wondering if this is really "me" holding the pen that's scribbling furiously across the page. Oh, it appears to be my hand, my arm, my cynical way with capital "K" [but I (am I?) always feel this way when autumn (with more portents than "fall" which just[ly] lands—kerplunk) sweeps away the summers breezy thought and Portable Kafka reappears in the hands of "casual" readers gracing park benches till the weather turns to (o) foul imaginings snowed under blizzards of holiday "good cheer" and aftershocks springing in the newyears yearning bounded only by the everwarming tides rising toward summers once again unsubtle heat giving excuse for the forgotten promise and the misbegotten plan that idles min(e)d while awaiting once more the season tailored for inquiry into the recurrent conundrum of body and mind (or mind and body—depending on how you approach the ? [noting that some people are fortunate enough to be totally unaware of this problematic duality, having only been born with one or the other].)] all right.

This (round-about-way) brings us to the body (no, gracious...my mind, slipping...) of the article (no—the is the article...this is a runaway text), for in questioning the very truth of my existence I run headlong against the underlying essence of all (or, at least parts of all) the films discussed below:

THE BIG CHILL: There is little to say about this movie (good or bad) that isn't already committed to print. However, it should be noted that while Writer/Director Lawrence Kasdan has produced a microcosm of the "real" world, embodied in a group of college friends from the 60's who reunite at the funeral of one (who proves to be the focal) gone but not forgotten character, in this excellent ensemble piece, every "individual" voice speaks as though it were of the same mind. You can, if you want, believe that this is attributable to the spirit of the times in which this particular group came of age, yet you cannot help but wonder why there isn't one among them able to express more than his/her frustration in having adopted (sic) the very system each was once so sure could be improved. Although billed as a comedy, THE BIG CHILL is really a cunningly bitter indictment of all the idealists in the world who 1) give up their ideals to move forward and/or 2) cling to their ideals but fail to move on because of that very idealism. The one "true" voice amidst all the joking camaraderie speaks through the suicide's younger girlfriend (and, by extension, through the dead man himself). She doesn't know much of the group she's suddenly thrown in with, or why they are, indeed, throwing in at all. (Okay, okay, so I am (I) rambling on. See the movie and decide for yourself. You won't come away indifferent, though there's no guarantee you will be deeply moved, either. **† out of a possible ****.)

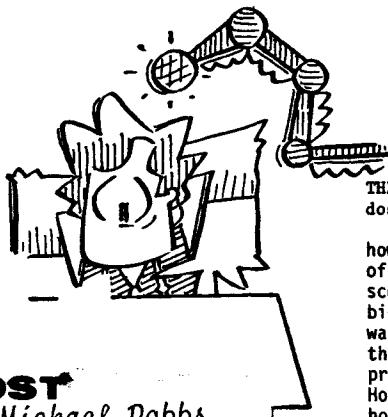
BRAINSTORM: a more difficult separation of the mental and physical—practically forced into the theatres after once being shelved following Natalie Wood's untimely death prior to the completion of the picture (now, there's one word I don't think I've ever used before in reviewing a movie/film/cinemonster, but, nonetheless, apt). It defies being t(r)ucked neatly away in one category. Douglas Trumbull directs a big-budget, special effects extravaganza from high-tech adventure into smarmy romance into slapstick (actually, soapuds) comedy without complete success in any one genre but without failing, in the final analysis, to deliver a movie that is both diverting and disconcerting. Louise Fletcher portrays a scientist who, with her partner (Christopher Walken), develops a sensory activator that allows the wearer to see, smell, taste, feel and even think anything another has previously "experienced" and captured on tape for playback. This is all fun and games, until The Government moves in and decides there are more "practical" (SHUDDER...QUAKE...HERE COMES 1984) applications for the device. When Fletcher dies of a sudden heart attack, of course she manages to record her own death throes on tape, but when Walken tries to play it he find it impounded by T.G. and this in turn leads him back to his estranged wife (Wood) who aids him in gaining access to the tape. The climactic "Dazzling Sight and Sound Experience" MGM/UA's print ads make so much to-do about are extravagant, but not unlike anything you've ever seen (it reminded me of WARGAMES meets ALTERED STATES). *** if you can suspend belief and just let the incredible appear as if it happened every day.

STRANGE INVADERS: This is a send-up of all the best and worst classic B-movies of the "It came from outer space" genre, up to, and including, E.T. The humor runs from whimsical to outrageous without ever turning to out-and-out satire. This movie is more by way of a fond remembrance of all the dreams (and corresponding nightmares) that the question: "Is there anyone out there?" have caused. Centerville, USA, is invaded by creatures from outer space who separate the townsfolk's minds from their bodies, utilizing the latter as cover for their (Government Approved) research while encapsulating the former for no telling what. Diana Scarwid (so abused as Christina Crawford in MOMMIE DEAREST) plays one alien who is allowed to leave the fold and marry an earthling. However, when the project is up and they must return to their home planet, they insist on taking her earthborn daughter with them. She appeals to her husband (Paul LeMat) for help. With the assistance of Nancy Allen, a scandal-sheet skeptic and reporter (who happens to have a heart of gold) they infiltrate the town while Louise Fletcher runs interference with troops and cops and the power of the United States Government behind her. Of course, this is nothing like a synopsis. The movie has many, many delightful and occasionally horrifying twists and turns with bows to all the best moments of science fiction's last 40 years. *** (and look for June Lockhart in a minor role as, of course, a mother).



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DARK WINGS OVER EASY

Chapter 10

by Roldo

THE STORY THUS FAR: Sam Hain has taken the alien drug Mloi in megadoses...let's take a little peek inside his head...

"...and the Sun came up like thunder on the road to man, if this is how it starts, I wanna be somewhere else when it ends justify the means of production buy the people for the people who need people are for score a kilo and sell half at a reasonable prophet & a happy medium is big enough to forgive & forget all except who stand & wait a minute waltz in 2/3 time time time is on my side of the Angels & Devils take the hindmost Royal & Exalted Majesty of Space the final frontier-style prefabricated log cabin just add water & stir up a little saddle the Horse of Air that we may ride to his aid & abet to win is to lose but how you play the Game keeper of the Sacred key of 8 Natural, be 9, be blessed, be all you be by buying as we leave the trees in Autumn splendour in the grass are snakes & ladders & lassies gae lie down & roll about the Wild Mountain time I pulled my head together & took stock cars racing by love & be loved by me a river that flows like beer over your Grandmother's paisley shawl we dance this one last time & tide wait for no man is an island on my head every time I fall or was pushed by person or persons unknown who even now crept Suzette's got a huge pair of aces & aces more than enough of this Foolishness to lock the whore & throw away the baby with the bathwater you talking about "under arrest" my head on some Lonesome railroad line up, everyone, these officers want us to go with them, nothing to worry about—Standard Procedure...in the car, you fucking degenerate or I'll blow your doped-up head off."

...to be continued...

TALK SHOW HOST CONFIDENTIAL by Michael Dobbs

I suppose I really write a little light-hearted column about my peculiar job...that of a talk show host...I've talked to a bunch of interesting people since the last 10, but somehow I am not in the mood.

What I would like to discuss is the flip side to the upbeat commercials for the various broadcasting schools I see floating all over my cable-connected cathode-ray tube. There's one which I feel is patently absurd. After quick cuts of bright young things extolling the school and saying why they wanted a life in broadcasting...a job with a future...a marketable skill...one pork-faced young man said he enrolled in the school because he liked the money broadcasters make.

Obviously, this kid was a rag-picker before he became a trainee-disk jockey. Rag pickers are among the few career fields that have a lower wage than folks in radio. Forget what you read about the salary of Imus or Larry King. These guys are aberrations. Radio is a low-paying medium. Just like most newspapers. And the problem is so many people want so desperately to be in radio...or television...or a reporter on a paper.

I currently make less money today than I did in 1977 when I was traveling around the east coast as a contracted reading teacher for private schools. I'm not happy about this at all. My station was recently named Broadcast Station of the Year by the Massachusetts Broadcasters Association. We generally rank fourth or fifth in our 24-station market, according to the ratings. During the past year, the station has increased its advertising revenues 25 per cent over last year. No mean feat in these economic times, and considering our ad base is not national accounts but predominantly small local businesses.

So, the bosses make the money and we get the fame...but the A&P seldom takes a glop of fame in exchange for a pot roast. They don't tell you about that in those broadcast school commercials either.

Of course, I'm one of the lucky ones...the folks with my experience/age at the number two station in the market...a Music of Your Life station (whose life?)...get paid minimum wage. Those people have to scramble up freelance work, advertising agency work...whatever to make their way.

I bartend at least one day a week to help out my situation and try the freelance writing scene. If nothing else this keeps my raging ego under control...After all, nothing keeps things in the proper perspective than spending an afternoon talking to the Governor or Vincent Price or the lawyer investigating the Karen Silkwood case (all guests on my show during the past year) and then having to clean out dirty ashtrays, and exchange witty banter about the amount of alcohol consumed by some beary-eyed patron.

If radio and newspapers—newspapers, I could tell you some interesting stories—are so terrible, then why do people like myself, who do have at least a practical grasp on reality, persist in taking the punishment? The answer is quite simple—it's an unconventional lifestyle (a terrible word, but I'll use it nonetheless) which relatively few people have. There's a certain teeny-tiny amount of elitism in journalism. If you're smart you won't let it bother you...if you're stupid you revel in it. There's a lot of stupid journalists out who compensate their lack of money with a better-than-thou attitude.

I realize that this is not funny. In fact, I just showed this column to the program director of my station and he nodded his head in agreement with everything.

But he and I and half a million people out there persevere with a smile on our faces and a cobweb in our wallets.

To add to all this silliness is the jealousy within the media. Ah, yes, friends, the professionalism goes by the wayside when you get a bunch of reporters from the different branches of the fifth estate...the newspaper people are envious of the radio people...the radio people are envious of the television people...and the television people wish they had a tenth of the credibility of the newspaper people. And nobody likes where he or she is...Everyone wants to be in a big market, making the big money...It's a little sad because the essence of what journalism is can perhaps be best served in a local setting. There's a real satisfaction being able to report a story and see some sort of result...I see the type of thing all the time with our station—a story is reported, people act and there's results which make you know you did the right thing. If you're the cog of a big market news organization, you don't often get that kind of chance nor that feeling.

If you want to get into radio or television, don't aim your sights to just the medium or large markets...go to the small stations, get ready to spend your time there...learn about the community...discover a style and develop it. If you want to earn big money, go into something else, but if you want a job that can frustrate you, drive you to drink and make you feel a worthwhile part of society, getting into the media may just be it. That or being an exercise instructor.

Well, next time in this space I'll try to be a little more serious about comedy and a hell of a lot less serious about life.

A Folk Writing: POETS WITHOUT POETRY

by Hu Chi Zen

Lord Byron was paid in gold for his lines. Nowadays the great advantage of being a true poet is strictly a fringe benefit; the fringe to which true poets belong accords them self-images with shamanistic qualities. Certainly it ain't the wages, except in rock and roll.

Innovate a similar role requiring no way with words or, in the case of the singing poet whose wages pay the bills, no musical talent, and half the youth of the nation would become shamans of that stripe.

Poets Without Poetry—Architecture Without Architects or Zen Without Zen Masters in reverse—is a book I'll probably never write, consisting of interviews with street people and hitch-hikers and organic hermits and the like. Chaung-Tzu called fisherman and hunters the scholars of streams and mountains.

Neither Bob Dylan nor Jim Morrison could sing worth a damn when they began their careers, although Dylan could play the guitar. They both, as at least Morrison was consciously aware, made it mostly on shamanism in the beginning.

In this age clerks at cash registers cant the most poetic lines and computers load one symbol with more levels of significance than any bard, and in a fraction of the time—so we've already got poetry without poets, song without shamans.

In transferring the field of religion to the realm of art, we are weak in the esthetics of everyday life. Our works are as beautiful as the cathedrals. They don't participate with us and not we with them, though, because in this age even the work of the artist is alienated from labor and inspiration, not to mention play.

All this chatter we hear about "lifestyle" is a gesture toward creation of esthetic ways of living—the Japanese tea rituals of the pot heads, etc.

What always seems to be first necessary, though, is an excuse—with the exception of the belated mid-sixties wherein more secret excuses it appears were after all involved. How do we become bauls and sadhus without the purpose endowed by mystical religion, or without the excuse of making money as entertainers—jugglers and clowns?

What is ugly or disturbing or commonplace is as often as not the theme of an esthetic or spiritual endeavor. In a discipline whose only goal is beauty, the ugly and the wretched becomes the preferred object of attention.

Opposites as are only compared and contrasted in other disciplines are transposed and transformed and swapped and interchanged: "Bullshit makes the flowers grow—and that's beautiful."

Likewise, violence is often the subject of drama and the novel, as is humiliation of humor. Both religion as esthetics are compared to medicine because of precisely this redemptive quality, wherein through a shift in perspective our seeing is healed. We are transformed from knee-jerk repression of the unpleasant to confronting it in a way that doesn't make us want to gag or shudder.

This world I never made/Feels like a penny arcade/Where a sad and dull charade/Makes every color fade./I feel a lonesome rage/For a lost and tribal age/Of the shamanistic sage/Before the written page./I feel that I belong/Where the poets find their song/And the singers dance along/And nature's never wrong, etc.

Our latest shamans are of course Valley Girls.

(What did she say this time?)

The shamin is, after all, just a medicine man.

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REVISIONIST HISTORY FOR CHILDREN *by Gerry Reith*

In the mountains around Tibet there is hidden an ancient monastery with a few wise monks. For centuries these monks, some of whom are actually over five hundred years old, have sturdily kept the promise they made to the Master of the Universe, which was to make sure that at all times, somewhere in the world, at least five people would be thinking the name of god at all times.

The Master of the Universe is busy somewhere else for a long, long time, and he can't be around to watch and make sure that all is going well in his domain. Therefore, he asked the monks to keep alive the memory of the king, even when everyone has died and forgotten it, even when all the rocks that knew him had been ground into powder and melted. If he is forgotten then the world will vanish, and all that will be left is pain for the spirits of all the things that were.

A little while ago one of the monks, who had been the best student in his youth four hundred years ago, fell asleep during his prayer period, and a terrible earthquake happened, because the seams of the world of Things began to unravel just a little bit. This happened a few more times and once two monks happened to be asleep for a whole ten minutes, and because of this a giant bomb fell very close to the monks on cities in Japan. Much weeping went on, and only a few Masters in Japan were there who knew about the few monks who kept the world alive. When one burned up in Vietnam, his spirit sent out such a cry of anguish that it woke up a sleeping monk, but this wasn't enough because, of course, the optimum number of monks has never been calculated.

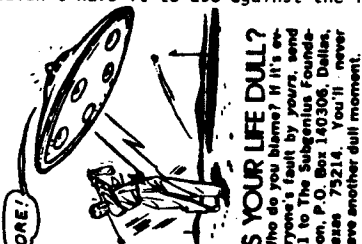
Some say that if there were one hundred monks who studied the ancient wisdom all praying and thinking of god's name all the time, there would never be a war. If there were two hundred monks, then everyone would return to childhood and be happy, and the birds would bring our food to us, and the lions would guard us against the bears, and the wolves would make friends with the dogs again and they would keep an eye on the crops for the birds, so that the pheasants would not be too greedy and eat too much.

But with only five monks, the world is very sorry all the time since it is just right on the edge of dissolving. And there can't be more than five because some of them have to watch the spirits of the night, and others must tend the snow gardens so that Beauty won't go away from the Earth. They have many other very important tasks to attend to. Some of them are busy trying to rediscover the One Word that will bring god back if it is spoken aloud. This word was forgotten because only the Wisest Monk knew it. When god told it to him before he went away, he said, "This is the most important word I have created, and you must never use it unless it is almost too late. Don't even tell anyone, even if you die, because if you tell them, it will be spoken aloud, and its power will be unleashed, never to be assembled again. Bad things will happen if it isn't used when it is time for it to be used, because the Guard at the Door of Meaning will know if I am needed, and if I am not, he will send the word into another part of the building, where it will revive many strange and terrible things. If you die, the monks will remember the word when it is time to use it, even though they may not realize they have found it, and might not use it."

The Wisest Monk died one day and forgot the word to call god, but the monks have many, many other tasks to fulfill. Each day they must refill the twenty pails and water the twenty trees so that no drought will ever happen, but they are short-handed and only have enough strength to get to some of them. One tree died and all the monks wept, because now there will always be a drought somewhere in the world. The monks also must plant seeds of sand in the floor of the monastery so that the stars will not fall out of the sky, and sometimes when they can't plant enough on rainy nights, stars begin to fall onto the earth. You can see them falling, and they are so angry about falling that if they catch you, they'll burn a hole right through.

The monks are very busy. Some of them are frightened sometimes, because they know how much they must do, and each day they must caress the rock of sadness with the finest silk cloths, to wash away the sadness. If they have time, they can wash away enough to make people happy without any reason, but every day more sadness enters the world and the first people to feel it are the monks. They are so busy that many days, they postpone tending the rock of sadness until it becomes almost unbearable, and this is why so many people are sad, because the monks have so much to do.

In this way some of the monks have died before their time (which is measured on the string of life, another tale), because they feel the sadness the most, and they try to hold it back so that it won't go and spread to other people. They can hold more than one hundred men, but they are a small wall against the oceans of tears that will pour, and sometimes they get so much that they run and fall over the cliffs. Even worse, the spirits of the night wrestle with the monks while they sleep, and if the monks don't win, some of the spirits escape into the day and make mischief on the Earth. Once when the monks were attacked by many many spirits, all of them escaped and caused a great plague in Europe. It is these spirits that make the monks fall asleep when they should be thinking of god's name, but it can't be helped. The monks have so much power that if they touch anything, it will be able to heal any disease, but they can't use their power this way very much because then they wouldn't have it to use against the infinite enemies of life.



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One Way to Lose A Friend

by Clay Geerdes

When I was teaching in Fresno in the mid-sixties, I met a man who ran a small coffeehouse. He was a writer who sold cheeseburgers just as I was a writer who taught English. We spent a lot of time talking about books and poetry. I read some poetry in his coffeehouse a few times and I thought of him as a friend.

I left Fresno after a few years and went to the Bay Area. I taught a few years at Sonoma State College, then did a few seminars at various Bay Area colleges, but I had Oded on teaching as a lifetime career and I soon dropped it altogether. I began to sell my writing and photography regularly to a number of underground newspapers and magazines and I did all right. I was divorced by the early seventies, living alone in a small garage in Berkeley, and, while I wasn't making a lot of money, I was maintaining.

One morning I went to have breakfast in a new coffee shop that had opened in downtown Berkeley. After I sat down, I glanced at the cook and it was my friend from Fresno. Call him Arn. I went over and said hello and asked him what he was doing in Berkeley. Only a few people were in the place so he hurried up their orders and sat down with me for a short talk. He had sold his coffeehouse, split with his wife and kids, and was living in Berkeley with a young artist who was studying at Cal.

I asked him if he was still writing. We always talked about what we were writing at the time, not publishing, because those were the academic days, more ideal than real. Neither of us had confronted the world of commercial writing. We were daydreaming on paper, turning out a lot of second-hand Faulkner and Hemingway.

Yes, he was still at it. Matter of fact, he had just about completed a book of short stories about Berkeley.

I was writing for a local underground paper at the time and I looked over a couple of stories he had given me and thought they would fit in our paper. A few days later I saw him at the cafe again and told him he ought to submit a story to my editor, get something into print, get some exposure. I knew he wasn't going to get much money for the story, but he had never been published and I knew this would be a good thing for his ego. Actually, I thought it would, I didn't know it.

He worked over one of the stories and I looked at the final draft and thought it was fine. I told him to send it in. He was excited about it. I talked to my editor and he said he would be happy to read the story and would use it if it fit.

Some time passed. A few weeks. During that period, I had spent a lot of time visiting with Arn, talking about old times in Fresno, speculating about what happened to various poets and musicians and artists who used to hang out with us.

Then the paper came out with Arn's story inside.

I saw it, saw his byline, didn't read the copy over. I just assumed it was fine and I took him a copy at the cafe.

I was up, smiling, thinking how pleased Arn was going to be, having a story in print, something to show his friends, but as I watched him read the text I could see something was wrong.

What it was became clear as Arn started to point out the changes that had been made in his story.

At that point, I had been writing for the papers for several years and I knew how things worked. Editors make changes whenever they feel like it. They have little regard for the "artistic" inclinations of "their" writers. If they think they see a way to make a line sound better, they'll just make the change and send the text along to the typesetter. I've never had an editor call me up and ask me about a change. I just see it in print and realize it's been changed. Now this isn't always a bummer. Writers aren't perfect. I'm sure I've been improved by an editor from time to time. Seldom, but once in awhile.

Arn sat there in front of me looking like death warmed over. His whole story had been changed. His carefully chosen words had been changed or thrown out. He looked like a rape victim.

I didn't know what to say to him. I understood what he was going through, because it had happened to me, but now I felt like he was blaming me, like I had suddenly become the villain. My editor, according to him, had changed the entire point of the story. It wasn't even his story anymore. He couldn't show that story to anyone.

Well, hey, Arn, this is the real world. Things like that happen. I mean, Christ, man, I didn't do it. I thought the story sounded fine the way I read it.

Of course, I knew the editor I worked with had a habit of changing everything around so that it would more like him than the writer, but I didn't say that to Arn.

I weathered the embarrassing moment, then left the cafe.

Next day, I found another place to eat breakfast. I figured it best to give Arn some time to get over his disappointment. I assumed he would give me a call, but he didn't.

I never heard from him again.

- CLAY GEERDES, April 25, 1983

HOW CAN YOU BE IN TWO ERAS AT ONCE...?

by Jill Zimmerman

OCTOBER 11, 1983. The first night of the annual "Grateful Dead Garden Party" at Madison Square Garden. The culture shock is just too much. I am clad in an eclectic mis-mosh of Midtown Chic (sneakers, Walkman) and Financial District Corporate Stiff (tweed suit, sensible earrings - if earrings can ever be said to be sensible), having only this morning signed the final papers committing myself to one-year-to-life at Standard & Poor's. As I approach Penn Station, my eyes are assaulted by more tie-dye than I have seen since my last anti-war rally (Bryant Park, 1970). It's all here--all the trappings of the accepted uniform of my youth: tie-dyed T-shirts, Grateful Dead shirts undoubtedly culled from musty trunks much as children dig in trunks for Grandma's silk flapper dress, floppy leather hats, indian gauze dresses, moccasins, bandannas worn as headbands around the hair of those rare males unaffected by the need to assume the TV-macho layer cuts of our present era. And of course there are the "pseudo-bikers," the fat guys whose Dead shirts resemble fine old books, burnished to a fine patina by age and experience, whose leather vests resemble the Coach handbag I abandoned wistfully last year, whose leg-of-lamb arms are festooned with intricate tattoos; the guys who usually hang out with the good old boys at neighborhood bars, but who for one night, armed with Budweiser, are transported back to a better time in their lives.

There are still wall-to-wall police, so the air is not yet fully laden with the heavy, sensual aroma of reefer smoke, but the ambience is a curious amalgam of Paradise Lost and Time Warp. And yet, something just doesn't seem right in this tableau, for the truly convincingly-attired Garden patrons are sporting crow's feet and grey streaks in their bandanna-restrained hair, while those who are now the same age that the original Deadheads were when the Dead represented a lifestyle to which they had aspired, are the same beer-swilling adolescent boys who can be seen at various times of the year at the Garden whenever a BIG-NAME ROCK BAND PLAYS; the ones whose Dead T-shirts are interchangeable, both physically and in significance, with their Van Halen and Def Leppard shirts; and their girlfriends, who have only in the last few weeks, as the weather has grown cooler, abandoned their turquoise miniskirts and Flashdance tops. For them, the Dead are an excuse, as were David Bowie or Robert Plant, to get out of Tenafly or Massapequa, away from parents, schools and a world which can no longer promise anything, much less deliver. It's a chance to experience in some way a bygone era, one in which we had sufficient expansive idealism--dare I call it innocence--to truly believe that there were alternatives to worshipping Mammon, that we could get back to the land and grow our own food and intoxicants, bake bread and breastfeed our babies, and create a brave new world. For while the Dead play, we need not think about Jerry Rubin's Networking Salons (or his newest venture, Genesis health foods) or Tom Hayden's "Jane Fonda Workout"--subsidized political campaigns. While the Dead are around, even "normal" people like myself, perspiring under the weight of wool tweed in the 65° Indian Summer weather, can cast off the chains of corporate garb; abandon, even momentarily the responsibilities of rent, 9-to-5 routines; the reality of having "sold out" to corporate life for the sake of an appropriate quantity of "stuff" and to beginning to save for a formerly inconceivable old age, savoring instead the illusion of being young, carefree, self-involved, irresponsible and idealistic again, even if only for the evening.

OCTOBER 12, 1983. Aleister Crowley's (and my sister Lynn's) birthday. Once again, I'm on my way to the Garden. But this time, I'm on the other side. For instead of being on my way home with the other commuters on New Jersey Transit, I have abandoned the accoutrements of my corporate uniform in a heap on the floor of Room 823 of the famed Seville Hotel, and replaced them with the requisite tie-dyed T-shirt, green army pants and sneakers. Only my corduroy blazer belies my other identity. Frightening, isn't it, how attire can turn us into chameleons--almost like putting on masks. I'm amazed at how much quicker the walk is without three-inch heels.

After entering Penn Station to get out of the rain, the peculiar sense of timelessness returns, for all around me are the ghosts of 1970 again. But they can't be--they haven't aged a day. No, these are the neo-Deadheads. I glimpse a young woman of about 14 wearing the same sort of moccasins I had fifteen years ago--and marveling that such things could still be had. I think with fondness upon my old suede vest--the one with the knee-length fringe, purchased in 1969 for the princely sum of \$18.00--long since laid to rest in the graveyard of dead fads.

Gone are many of the aging hippies of the night before, and the atmosphere is that of a costume party. My youth has become "nostalgia." I notice wistfully, feeling old. Well, it could be worse--at least it hasn't yet entered the realm of "camp," and doesn't appear yet in Macy's window.

Within 10 minutes, six people offer to sell me drugs--six people who would have branded me as "one of them" last night. I am relieved--my disguise is convincing after all. I really wonder about the concept of "uniform"--what I see here is as much of a statement of identity as the three-piece suit. I'm placing too much emphasis on external appearances,



© J. K. Rowling

it's true, but it seems to me that the clothes are the only link between now and then. Of course, I haven't heard the band yet.

By 7:15, I'm ensconced in my seat, waiting for the festivities to begin. Within fifteen minutes, the air is filled with blue haze, as 20,000 people in unison pull out their smoking paraphernalia from handbags, pockets and knapsacks. Eat your heart out, Nancy Reagan. At 7:42 pm, to the sound of thunderous applause, the Grateful Dead appear on stage. The manner in which the audience greets them is fraught with warmth and a kind of amazement--for despite over 16 years of drugs, fast living, and massive cultural change, the Dead are still here. In a bizarre way, they are a rare force of stability in an unstable world. They've surprised everyone. They've survived to middle age, haven't died in a gutter, and even have had normal kids, despite the LSD-chromosome damage hysteria of the 60's. Wow, what consistency! I conjure up a world in which there is a "Recuperative Hospital for Arthritic Rock Stars." It could happen.

I'm not a Deadhead myself, and don't fully understand the mystique, but they are consummate showmen, in a very understated way. Jerry Garcia turns away from the audience between each number, and while the band tunes up, they tease the audience with a few bars from some of their more popular songs. So every time Jerry faces the audience again, it's as if the band is coming on stage for the first time. Now, I'm not terribly familiar with the Dead's music, but as my drugged mind seems to almost physically extract Garcia's guitar from the rest of the music (while simultaneously gaining great insights into the crises of my life and coming up with tremendously witty titles for this article, all of which I've forgotten), I'm aware that he is one helluva guitarist. No theatrics, just good music. Bob Weir, on the other hand, does his now classic Rock Star shtick, playing to all the 18-year-old JAPS from Rockville Centre (two of them sitting behind me, squealing about how cute he is).

The band plays until about 9:10, then breaks until 9:40, then plays a second set until almost 11:30. Unlike many other bands I've seen at the Garden, only one encore is performed. But I guess after a career in which 10-hour concerts are routine, you're entitled to end after only coming back on stage once. The audience is stirred into a final frenzy by "Revolution", from the Beatles' White Album--a last look back before returning to a much bleaker-seeming 1983. As if to emphasize the abruptness of this return to reality, the house lights are turned on barely 30 seconds after the band leaves the stage, and 20,000 Deadheads depart, moving on to the next stage of the ritual--the traditional pizza pig-out. Meanwhile, I walk down dark Manhattan streets in search of processed sugar; tomorrow I must return to adulthood.

HI YO. Me again. The Ghost. The Ghost of Jim Morrison. So, like, where are the questions, man? C'mon, babies, rekindle my embers. I may be dead and rotting, but, like, you know, man, I am the Lizard King, man, and like, I am the grooviest fuck who ever wore leather pants. Excuse me, now, man, I gotta nod out. I am such a fucking genius, man, I... like... oh, man...

ART KINO knew he was marooned, lost, as he stumbled through the primeval, infantile forest. He was close to panic when he heard the grinding noise again. Brushing aside the sagging, dead signposts and shedding his eyes from the sun, he saw a vast bowl-like basin spread before him. Squinting, he could make out a strange silhouette rising from the floor of the natural amphitheater. "Saved!" he cried. It was a derrick.

Hi Nancy! (She just wants to see her name in print--you understand)



Advertising and Individuality

by Gunnar Larson

A columnist recently wrote, "Advertising promises a flowering of individuality as persons define themselves in choices." He didn't discuss the possibility that the kind of individuality we flower depends on the moral-ethical quality of both the advertising and our choices.

For example, some corporations advertise that they can't wait for tomorrow because today they're too busy patriotically building a strong America out of our disappearing natural resources and the pollution created from plastics, pesticides, artificial fertilizers, chemicals, junk foods, and nuclear fission plants. As a result of their fervent patriotism or fervently advertised patriotism and the unadvertised but equally fervent drive for profits, we get fewer small businesses, higher prices and interest, more product and service obsolescence, more unemployment and poverty, more concentration of wealth and control in business and government, and more nuclear bombs to protect such wealth and its owners instead of the rest of us and our poverty.

As a result of such pollution, corporations have more money to buy up other businesses and pay more lobbyists to help Congress and the President flower their individualities in the choices made for them by the corporations. So President Reagan advertises in his Presidential campaign that they'll get government off our backs, and Congress promises to climb off them, too. As a result, they deflower taxes and flower the income of the wealthy while deflowering the income and flowering the poverty of the poor. As usual, the poor have to define themselves in the limited choices set by their poverty, unemployment, and economic-political leaders. Whose backs have been gotten off of and climbed onto?

Such developments have led two unflowered friends of mine, Ophelia and Elmer, to discuss the individualities they've been trying to flower through their near- and hindsight choices. (Ophelia has been winning most of their arguments lately so her name comes first. You know, like Christianized Reaganomics, to she or he who already hath shall be given?) So far, Ophelia hasn't found much in Elmer that's worth defining. Of course, her own individuality is still largely unflowered because she hasn't found anything in herself worth defining. (Some former corporate boyfriends say they never found anything worth deflowering, either.) And what little individuality she has managed to establish temporarily has been deflowered by people like Elmer whose choices, both personal and corporate, define them as manipulators deflowering themselves and their employees of any ends and means not aimed at ever higher sales, wealth, power, and social status and stability.

Elmer wants Ophelia to be a workmate in his advertising agency and an apprentice house- and sexmate the rest of the time—with one salary, a meager pension, a few stock options after 20 years of acceptable service, and no union affiliation for the two jobs, of course. But Ophelia wants to be a love- and wealth-sharing marriage-mate as well as a work- and house-mate. She doesn't mind working with others on the job, but at home and in bed she wants her man and her to be sole soul-mates.

Elmer whines, "But, Ophelia, your attitude is so ancient. It went out when women's lib came in. Marriage and monogamy are too monotonous for the modern miss or even mrs., or is it still me?"

"From what Ma used to tell me, you sound just like Pa before he finally grew up in old age: Use any kind of pressure you can to get what you want, in or out of bed. Don't let a woman or anyone else choose the action she or he wants, only what you want. You may not actually know what's better for them or even for yourself but that's not as important as getting what you want. People used to call it a line. Now

some people call it a libline because it liberates them from responsibility to allow others to find their own deepest and highest selves. So it's still the same old line: Somebody thinks he or she knows better how others should live and is ready to foist his or her opinions and desires upon others as universal knowledge and values."

"But you followers need people like us leaders. Without us telling you the best choices between products, services, politicians, campaign promises, international friends and enemies, you'd never know how to define yourself to flower your individuality—our way."

"Maybe if we had the whole truth and the highest values in advertising and public relations, we could define ourselves on higher levels through our own choices and mistakes and thus flower our individualities our way."

"Ophelia, you're out of step with history. Whether people need us or not, some of us are, have been, and always will be leaders for both our way and your way."

"Yeah, but are you people leaders because you're really necessary for our way or simply because you see opportunities for wealth, power, and status in leading us your way instead of our way? How much do we really need you for our highest goals and how much do you need and use us for your selfish ends? Maybe you use us more than we need you."

"But someone has to think about and act on problems which you followers are too stupid, ignorant, or apathetic to solve. You can't escape leaders."

"You're right—we can't escape them. That's why we must learn to control them. In Colonial America we had both high quality leaders and more public control of them, partly because people lived in smaller groups. Now that we live in giant groups, our ideals, our leaders and our control over them are deflated along with money, income, and jobs."

Elmer sneers. "So what's your pollution solution?"

"We have to learn to define ourselves by the highest choices we can find within ourselves, not just by those hammered at us in ads, public relations handouts, and political campaign promises."

"But we big business, government, and advertising leaders are doing our best for all of us!"

"Exactly! That's why you're so dangerous—because your best is often our worst. Furthermore, our danger is intensified because it comes not only from your moral ignorance but from greed. You intend your lies of omission and commission."

Elmer thinks he finally has Ophelia cornered. "Then why do you read or listen to our ads and buy our products and services?"

"Because most of us are as morally ignorant as you are and our apathy matches your greed. We simply have to look and wait for a regeneration of spirit at higher levels of truth, beauty, and goodness, however and wherever the spirit manifests itself. Thankfully, more and more of us are either ignoring corporate careers by boring from within them or using laws to bring corporations and governments more within public control."

"Ophelia, where do you get these radical, unrealistic ideas?"

"Sometimes I wonder, too. Maybe it's because Ma always taught me to see myself and others honestly, accept myself and others unconditionally, and try to transform myself and help others transform themselves according to what little we can find of truth, beauty, and goodness. She tried to teach Pa, too, but he's an awfully slow learner. Not stupid, you know, just stubborn. He made some progress, though, because he finally flowered his higher individuality enough to admit that maybe housecleaning, cooking, and child raising could sometimes be a joint responsibility between women and men along with earning, platitudinizing, and bossing."

There is no truth to the rumor that Steve Scharff is permanently sideways...

Chapter One

A large expanse of land, roughly 20 acres, in the "grand and glorious state of Georgia", as Mr. Gary Allen would put it, was what Mr. Allen called home.

A surprisingly modest two-floor house near the state highway was the only building on the property. And behind the house, Gary and his wife Lorraine could often be found lazing about. Gary looked more like someone you'd expect to see behind an accountant's desk. In fact, he was a CPA until a friend suggested that he put some idle cash into a genetics company that was about to go public.

Seven hours and \$18 million later, Gary and Lorraine found themselves making every wish come true. But after a while, the gild was off the tulip. Residing on a spacious property, spending most of the time together.

Gary and Lorraine's love for each other was unceasing. If you drove by his house, you could hear Gary singing "My Sweet Lorraine" as he accompanied himself on a banjo. Or a duet might be heard, with Lorraine on violin (much to her tutor's frustration).

On one sunny afternoon, as Lorraine was sunning herself on the grand expanse of land, with Gary strumming his five-string, she found herself saying, "What we need, now that we got the money, is somethin' t'do. A goal of sorts. Somethin' to achieve."

Gary, lazily swinging side to side in a hammock, stated in a deadpan voice, "Problem with that is that once you meet a goal, you gotta find something else to do."

A few moments of silence passed, until Lorraine looked at Gary, and noticed that he was staring over his shoulder at something. She turned to look. The Goodyear blimp Enterprise was sailing slowly and majestically over where the Interstate highway was. Yet it was high enough for Gary and Lorraine to see just over the treetops.

"That's it!" Gary whispered.

"I don't think Goodyear's for sale..." Lorraine stated. "No, no! I mean," he paused dramatically, climbing out of the hammock and spreading his arms as a gesture of size, "...an airship! Not anything like the Hindenburg, but a small airship!"

Lorraine stared at him in amusement. "You know how much helium costs? And what about a flight crew? Gary, I know you like to set your sights high when the spirit moves you, but—"

Gary interrupted. "Well, maybe we can build a little thing. Sort of a cross between a blimp and a hot air balloon." He began pacing back and forth in back of the house, mumbling to himself.

Lorraine looked about, and saw that the blimp had gone from view. She lay in the hammock, leaving Gary to his dreams of lighter-than-air flight. She closed her eyes and envisioned him as being dressed up in a captain's uniform like those in the play "HMS PINAFORE" commanding a neo-Victorian gilded airship across Oregon skies. The vision was enough to make her giggle.

Gary turned to her, snapping out of his reverie. "You think it's silly? We'd all be flying around in airships if the Hindenburg wasn't fitted with hydrogen!"

He stopped, and a wide beaming smile shone on his pale face. Gary then broke and ran to one of the two Volvos in the driveway, and fired up the engine.

Lorraine, holding the straps to the top half of her bikini (fearing it would slip off if she moved too fast), ran towards the driveway shouting "Gary, NOW what are you up to!?"

"THE LIBRARY!" he shouted triumphantly. "THEY'RE BOUND TO HAVE BOOKS ON THE SUBJECT!", and with a squeal of tires, he was off onto the state highway, going towards town.

"That man," Lorraine thought to herself, "doesn't know what to do with his hands one minute, and then..." Turning around to see the large rectangular strip of land, she reflected on how it reminded her of an airstrip. And she started blushing in embarrassment of events yet unoccurred; of blimps landing in her backyard; of a control tower in the driveway. "Well, maybe he'll just join a ballooning club," was the thought that seemed to reassure her.

NEXT INSTALLMENT: Under Construction

WHEN YOU'RE LOWDOWN... you need a room at the Edwards. When you're beat... you need a room. At the Edwards.

Hotel, Tribunal O.D.

Mr. Allen's Airship

by Steven F. Scharff

The Story of Alexis Black

by Jill Dearman

PART II: OF MICE AND MAH-JONG

Dominick and I were still going strong on the dance floor by the time 2:00 A.M. rolled around. Katrina and her longtime love Matthew Arden, part-time fashion photographer/part-time undercover cop, were on their way up to see the Peppermint Lounge's most popular house band, the Backbones.

Dominick said he had to call his answering service, so I sat down at an empty table watching the dance floor. I pulled out a cigarette, and five men appeared in front of me with lighters. No one said it was easy being Alexis Black.

When Dominick returned he was not alone. Toasty Rodriguez and Chauncey McRubin were with him.

"Look who I found," he said.

"Hi, Alex," Chauncey said, snapping her gum loudly.

"Hola, Señorita Blackie," Toasty said.

"Hi, girls. Working my territory?"

Let me tell you a bit about Toasty and Chauncey. I've known them for a long time, and no one would ask for truer friends...or more troublesome ones. They're high-priced callgirls who work Manhattan's upper west side. They're also my part-time secretaries, as well as back-up singers in my band. Chauncey's a Jewish-Irish modern girl, who (it's been claimed) can seduce a corpse. She's not into the kinky stuff, though. Toasty (nicknamed for her hot-blooded Latin heritage) is an illegal alien from Puerto Rico working to keep a roof over the head of her no-good, herpes-suffering sister Elisa and her nine children: Jose, Luis, Maria, Juanita, Fernando, Ana, Pedro, Ricardo and little Lucille. Toasty has a child of her own, too (my godson), Jeffrey, nicknamed "Wootsie" (it's a long story).

I asked them what they were doing at the Pep, and Toasty whipped out a note from her purse. Letters were pasted on from magazines and newspapers, and it was obviously a ransom note. It read: IF YOU EVER WANT TO SEE SISTER FELICIA METCALF ALIVE AGAIN PUT \$500,000 IN A plain Brown bag IN the garbage can ON the corner of eighTh SteEt AND SiCth AveNue at MidNIGHT ToMOrroW. We WILL ConTACT you.

"Oh no! They've got Sister Felicia!" I screamed.

Now let me tell you a bit about Sister Felicia Metcalf. As you've probably guessed, she's a nun. But divine dynamo that she is, she's also a reporter for the Vatican Gazette. I didn't even know she was back in New York.

"Come on," I said, getting up. "We better get moving."

We went to the coatcheck, and Dominick asked me who I thought was behind all this.

"I'd bet the gap between my front teeth it's Nastassia Goldberg and Domingo 'Banana Crunch' Santago. They must've broken out of jail."

I grabbed my coat, just as I saw Katrina and Matthew coming down the stairs.

"Alex!" she yelled, running over. "I just got a call at the bar. It was Banana Crunch! He said that he and Nastassia Goldberg have got Sister Felicia Metcalf! They're holding her hostage! He gave me a number we can reach them at. I wrote it on Matthew's forehead."

Matthew brushed his hair out of his eyes, and sure enough, there was a phone number.

"Alexis, what are you going to do?" Dominick asked.

"This is pretty serious, D-minick. I'm gonna have to call Margarita."

"Oh no! Do you have to?"

"Afraid so, Dominick."

Margarita "Mouse" Murray is a nightclub singer as well as a professional exterminator. She specializes in mice. We called her and told her to meet us in front of the Pep. She said she'd be there in fifteen minutes. We were a pretty conspicuous bunch, all pacing around, waiting for her.

"Señorita Blackie?"

"Sf? I mean, yes, Toasty?"

"Señorita Blackie no con Ricardo?"

"Huh?"

"What happened to Senor Richard?"

"Oh. Well, he went back to England, Toasty. He's on a soccer team there."

"You sure know lots of foreigners, Alex," Chauncey said, looking disdainfully at Toasty.

When Margarita pulled up in her "bugmobile" we all hopped in.

"It stinks back here," Katrina whined.

"It takes strong stuff to kill mice," Margarita told her.

I filled her in on what happened and told her my plan. It was a sick idea, but Nastassia was a sick chick.

"You want me to put dead mice in the bag instead of money?"

"Yup."

"Alexis, are you feeling all right?" she asked, feeling my forehead. I cringed slightly, knowing that the 'clients' she handled were mainly roaches and rodents.

"Look, Margarita. For two international criminals, Nasty and Banana Crunch are a couple of lily-livered gutless wonders! A bag of dead mice will surely drive them off the deep end."

"If you ask me, Alexis," Dominick piped in, "you've seen Whatever Happened to Baby Jane? too many times."

The next night at 11:45 P.M., I called the number Katrina was given (luckily we got it down on paper before Matthew started sweating).

"Hello?"

"Hello, Nastassia? This is Alexis Black."

"Alexis, do you have the money?"

"Yes, you remorseless yenta, but first I want to talk to Sister Felicia."

"Don't worry. She's fine."

"Put her on!"

"Oh, all right. But just for a moment."

As I waited for her to get on, I worried that perhaps they had actually killed her. Banana Crunch was a damn good impressionist, and what if...?

"Hello, Alex, my child?"

"Sister Felicia?"

"Yes, I'm alright, dear."

"Sister, why have you stayed iwth the church all these years?"

"I just can't seem to kick the habit, hee, hee!"

Our old joke. I was relieved...

"All right, Alexis. You heard her. Now, you have our instructions?"

"Yes, damn you."

"Don't swear at me, honey. That money is rightfully ours, anyway. I wont it in the Mah-jong tournament."

"It was rigged!"

There was no sense arguing with Nastassia Goldberg, though. No one can out-talk her. Anyway, at exactly midnight I steeled myself and put the bag of dead mice in the garbage can, on the corner of Egith Street and Sixth Avenue.

They had promised to release Sister Felicia at 1:00 A.M. We waited in the bugmobile, and at exactly 1:00 they appeared. I could tell Banana Crunch had a gun to Sister Felicia's back, by the way he walked with her. Then...the moment of truth. Nastassia reached into the can and pulled out the bag.

"This bag's pretty heavy," she said, her shrill voice carrying across the street.

We all laughed. Then she opened the bag and screamed like a pigmy in heat. She dropped the bag and fainted. Banana Crunch, a wimp himself, saw the dead mice fall out of the bag and dropped Sister Felicia, along iwth his gun.

I had already pulled out my gun, but put it away seeing there was no use for it. We ran across the street, and I hugged Sister Felicia and asked her if she was all right.

"Aw, I'm okay," she said, then looked down at Nasty and Banana Crunch and added, "They'll burn in Hell for this."

Matthew called his precinct, and the two cretins were taken away. They were still in shock. Then Dominick noticed that my favorite movie, *A Clockwork Orange*, was playing at the Eighth Street Playhouse. We all decided to see it.

"I need a good movie," I said. "Those two leave me with a sick feeling in the pit of my stomach."

Afterwards, when we were walking back to the bugmobile, Katrina asked me how I was doing.

"Fine," I smiled. I was cured, all right.



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SOUND MINED

by Brian Catanzaro

CULTURAL EFFECTS ON CONTEMPORARY MUSIC IN THE U.S. AND EUROPE IN THE EIGHTIES

PART ONE

The term "New Music" has been adopted by the recording and broadcast industries as an alternative to "Punk Rock", "New Wave", and even "No Wave". Although still in use in underground circles, the latter terms have too often been misused as catch-all phrases.

"New Music" is a little more descriptive as to what a listener might expect to hear. While not requiring musicians to stick to any strict audio or visual compositional formula, general outlines of performance exist which help to minimize affected contrivances on their part. "New Music" connotes an association of "New Musicians" performing for an audience with tastes for expressions that don't exist in previous versions of popular music. This is not always the case; as in folklore, the interpretations of the listener are subject to the interpretations of the teller.

American New Music releases at the end of the summer told a tale of American tastes if you were reading between the grooves. Wasn't it getting a big adolescent? Marshall Crenshaw was making big headlines and he just sang about love. INXS were also, in a more frustrated tone of voice. Industry heavies hammered the point home with songs like "Every Breath You Take" and "Big Log". The increasing new breed of all-female bands, now more visible in stores, remain inaudible via the airwaves. The Fixx was probably the only foreign band to escape being overshadowed by American product and they, like other English acts, seemed to be more concerned with recognizing frustrations of the human condition. Put on your red shoes and dance the blues. Happily, music lovers in the U.S. will pay money for any excuse to escape their frustrations, rather than face in-depth analysis.

The classical interpretation of art is the expression of everyday life through an artist's eye. Art forms in the U.S. are primarily adaptations of European movements, as we derive our "artificial culture" from The Melting Pot. The commerciality of American business concerns, for the most part, blocks what could be a more complete artistic function of their product. This blockage, of course, is based on the overall response of the audience; in other words, it's what the people want to buy. In accurate observation of the media, as it is the media which becomes the medium in these times (in terms of performances for any and all interested audience groups), one should be aware of the cultural differences involved in the initial creation of certain works.

In the capitalistic U.S., a lesser attention to detail and more efficient production flow yields higher potential and actual product sales. A person growing up in America as part of the work force is subjected to continuous reinforcement of this ideal. S/he is also rewarded when practicing it, in being more accepted by peers holding similar beliefs, which in turn leads to more business opportunities such as pay raises, promotions or offers for jobs with better working conditions than presently held. This statement is not aimed disrespectfully at this country or culture, nor is it meant to make survival appear especially easier here. Despite the typical belief already held worldwide that our land is a "land of plenty", no one is automatically entitled to a "free lunch". Lunch, although not free, remains quite disposable, since it is as mass-produced as all of our other survival needs. The concept of recycling is downplayed, since it requires as much and more attention to detail as it takes to manufacture a new article that will perform the same function as the old and almost always look more attractive. Better still, the purchase of a new article can take mere seconds, allowing you the better part of your time to more productive pursuits. The point is, the message the media is massaging in this country is one of readily attainable immediate gratification, i.e., You can have what you want but you must decide not to look back.

Since the human condition has shown art to be an expression of cultural climate, an observer, functioning as part of an audience, should take into account the above facets of American culture as an explanation for the lack of insight provided by commercially successful popular music in this country, and the lack of attainable success for the multitudinous artists creating "New Music" (specifically based on American Rock and Roll) abroad. Further, the emphasis in various societies on commercial success obviously creates even more complex difficulties for the truly avant-garde composers seeking audiences for their works.

- continued next month -

Wax Ink

by Rory Houchens

Hello music mongers! Let's start this perusal of anemic audio with ANOTHER BREATH (Epic), steely-voiced Ellen Foley's latest bid for worldwide chart domination. If you can get past such meager sludge candidates as "Let Me Be The One You Love" and a wiggly version of "Come And Get These Memories" wherein Ms. Foley's voice sounds like undulating aluminum sheets, then you can content yourself with a dynamic reading of Robert Palmer's "Johnny and Mary", the gutsy "Read My Lips" and a plastically ominous "Spy In The House of Love". Your chances of satisfaction are about 50/50, but the odds could have been better if producer Vini Poncia actually knew how to produce, and if big-eyed Ellen didn't sound so much like she consumes large quantities of laughing gas and zinc tablets before each recording session.

On a more positive note is Black Uhuru's THE DUB FACTOR (Mango), the reggae trio's best record since the classic RED, which is a bit ironic seeing as how their contributions to this album are limited. Mostly instrumental and done in de dub style, mon, it is a seamless mix of rock, reggae and light jazz that is intoxicating and irresistible, probably more soothing than a big, fat spliff, and highly recommended!

Then there's Jerry Lee Lewis' MY FINGERS DO THE TALKIN' (MCA). Tragically follows the Killer like a shadow, but this relatively bright lp was recorded between personal disasters and is a polished blend of rock 'n roll, pop and country that's sure to appease fans of ol' Jerry Lee. Side Two is especially good listening as Jerry delivers fiery foot stompers like "Honky Tonk Rock And Roll Piano Man" (punctuated by Muscle Shoals Horns) and the Johnny Horton-ish "Circumstantial Evidence", and tear jerkin' ballads, "Come As You Were" and "Forever Forgiving", with its mournful fiddle and gospel piano decorations. Solid stuff from the Killer!

The Red Rockers packed up their gear and moved from Louisiana to the west coast where they've tempered their punk histrionics with a healthy dose of folk-rock to make GOOD AS GOLD (CBS/415), a varied and well-executed affair. "China" is as ethereal and mysterious as anything the Byrds did in their prime, while "Change The World Around" and "Answers To The Questions" closely echo groups like Big Star and the dB's, but with a harder edge. "Til It All Falls Down" is a funky quagmire of musical steps and lines that can be applied to economics as easily as it can be to the dance floor. For best results, take this lp undiluted and with no other additives.

GROOVES IN ORBIT (Bearsville) is the newest musical crazy quilt by those zany NRBC guys and continues their good-natured pastiche of styles guaranteed to sweeten the sourest disposition. Terry Adams' "Rain At The Drive-In" and "My Girlfriend's Pretty" are as close to lyrical/musical perfection as pop ditties get, while Joey Sampinato's wistful "How Can I Make You Love Me" would be at home on any Lovin' Spoonful record. Also of note are "When Things Was Cheap", whose gritty, barnyard harmonies will make you think the Band never left, and "Daddy-O", a fruit-filled polka that'll rip your socks! Patronize this band or leave America!

For those of you who've been waiting for something raw and meaty to sink your teeth into, I now present the Dicks, hardcore punks from Texas who are kinda like a nuclear-powered MC5 and have released KILL FROM THE HEART (SST Records, P.O. Box 1, Lawndale, CA 90260), a blistering lp that will intimidate some and ignite others. Fronted by earth-rattling vocalist, Gary, the angry quartet throws punches at cops ("Pigs Run Free", "Anti-Klan"), Nazis ("No Nazi's Friend"), the idle rich ("Rich Daddy"), and the ruling faction of the working class ("Bourgeois Fascist Pig"), all backed by meat cleaver guitar, skull-fracturing bass and mile-a-minute drums. They've also included a pair of anthems (one for anarchists and one for foot fetishists) and a blood-freezing version of "Purple Haze", so listen only if you're protected by asbestos siding.

When songwriter/guiding light Vince Clarke departed Depeche Mode to form synthetic blues duo Yaz(oo), cynics were quick to forecast the end of his former band, but with the release of the sure-footed A BROKEN FRAME (Sire), the revamped trio prove that they are anything but expired. True enough, much of that old pizzazz is gone and the sound tends to be so thin that it's almost one-dimensional, but the record possesses enough bright sparks to make the entire album glow with the anticipation and energy of a new beginning. "A Photograph of You" is a sprightly Eno-esque sendup, while "Shouldn't Have Done That" is what the Lettermen would sound like if they had just visited an Arabian carnival. "The Sun & The Rainfall" is a moody dig into the psyche with a darkly infectious chorus that ends the album with confidence. Out of the shadows and into the light, Depeche Mode is a band to watch.

Another record that is not to be missed is BABY (I.R.S.) by the much-improved Suburban Lawns. Su Tissue's "Flavor Crystals" is a puzzling hybrid of Kate Bush and Yoko Ono voice exercises and nursery rhyme piano that is one of the most exhilarating tunes I've heard in months. "Hug You" will be standard material for the Steve and Edie of the next century, while the title track is a masterpiece that squeezes frantic percussion, jazzy guitar runs and disembodied vocals into a real spine offender.

Let's wrap up this woeful meandering with a look at the Lyras' "I Want To Help You Ann"/"I Really Want You Right Now" (Ace of Hearts Records, P.O. Box 579, Kenmore Station, Boston, MA 02215). The A side starts off with some tremoloed guitar heading into oblivion that is soon joined by some cheap, circular keyboard poundings in true garage band fashion, but it is soon evident that this is no ordinary bunch of nostalgic punks. The other side is more of the same, except it is dominated by some funeral organ and a sad, sinister guitar solo that'll raise the hair on the back of your neck. Tight musicianship and unforgettable melodies will keep this little disc on your record player longer than you'll care to admit, so you'd better get two!

That's all for now, so keep your feet on the ground and keep reaching for Casey Kasem's money belt.

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COMPUTER HACKERS ARE DATA-BANK ROBBERS

COMPUTER GAG #24

CONFESSIONS OF A CONFUSED REVOLUTIONARY

by Mike Gunderloy

It looked like this was going to be the end. The stolen Ford Bron-tosaurus had blown a tire doing 110 and plowed sideways into the sand dunes. I could hear the sirens getting closer and see the headlights waving across the cloud-covered sky as my pursuers grew closer. I didn't imagine they were coming to give me a medal for blowing open the freight bays at the fed. Fykkem. It's the people's money, let the people gave it. No doubt the riot was still going on. Too bad I wasn't there.

I grabbed the tape deck and the grenades and squeezed out the win-dow. If they were going to gun me down I would at least go out with Led Zeppelin blaring. I limped down to the water with no particular aim in mind. It looked like my career in zenarchy was drawing to an end. I tried to accept this happily, but as usual the Tao was silent. The operator wouldn't even return my dime.

The tape cycled around to 'Kashmir' again as I neared the waves, and as usual I turned it up all the way. The sirens were damned close now, and had stopped moving. They must have found the car. I sat down at the sea's edge and started tossing a grenade from hand to hand, humming away.

A beam of light swept by and I leaned down. The first cop was cau-tiously looking over a dune for me. Might as well discourage him, I thought. I pulled the pin, counted three, and thre the grenade in his general direction. There was a satisfying explosion, though far short of his location. It felt like I had sprained some shoulder muscles in the crash.

I rubbed my sore arm and tried to guess how many minutes I'd gained by demonstrating firepower. Not many, I was sure. Suddenly a parti-cularly large wave washed over me. I could have sworn the tide was going out. I didn't really want to meet my maker covered in salt wa-ter. I looked over my shoulder and saw the whale.

It was a bit confusing. One normally doesn't expect to see a killer whale beach itself in one's general vicinity. I was even more sur-prised when the hatch atop his head opened.

"Don't just stand there!" said a voice from within. A quick burst of rifle fire, probably covering someone's advance, spurred me to ac-tion. I leaped into the whale's head and the hatch closed around me.

Bob glared back from the controls of the whale and smiled at me. He was wearing, as usual, cut-off jeans and a black t-shirt with a white collar. "There's beer in the icebox," he said, "help yourself and pass me one."

I opened the indicated cabinet and pulled out a pair of Michs. Un-capping them, I handed one to Bob, who nodded his thanks without taking his eyes off the radar screen. "Good thing for you I happened along, old buddy."

"Yeah, sure," I replied. "This is gonna look just great in my auto-biography. What is this, four times now you've rescued me from certain death?"

"Five," he corrected. "What was I supposed to do? I heard that de-vil music from hell blaring and figured it had to be you. Hell, I was gonna park this thing tomorrow and pay you a visit. What did you do to draw all the heat?"

"Blew up a bank, that's all. Massive instant demurrage. Some peo-ple just can't take a joke." I cleared a pile of old comic books off the bunk and sat down. "And what are you doing in a sub disguised as a whale, fer God's sake? Whatever happened to your Mustang?"

"The horse? It's parked in a cave in northern California. Was get-ting to be too much hassle to live in the damned thing—cops always buggin' me about moving on, all that. I decided it was time for a change, so me and Frankie ripped this off from Marineland and modified it a bit. Making it into a whale was Frankie's idea, a real stroke of genius. We lost a couple of knots top speed, but nobody bothers us. The Coast Guard and them Greenpeacers go out of their way to protect us!" He set a couple of knobs on the autopilot, leaned back, and shoved a cassette—the Animal House soundtrack—into a built-in player on the console. "Next stop, Florida."

"Florida?" I asked. "And where's Frank, anyhow?"

"He's already down there, setting things up for me. Time to make a few bucks so we can buy supplies. We landed a Discordian contract, supplying baby gators to their people in the New York sewers. Wanna come along?"

What choice did I have?

they BLINDED me with VIDEO

by CANDI STRECKER

LOGIC AND WIDE OPEN SPACES

Scene—Interstate 80, somewhere in Wyoming. (Or are we in Nevada?)

"I miss MTV."

"Come on, Candi, we've only been driving for three days."

"But before we left Chicago, I'd been listening to MTV for about eight hours every day...I think I'm going through withdrawal."

"Well, at least all the motels we've stayed in have had HBO."

"Yeah, but we're so burned out from driving twelve hours a day that we can never stay awake through an entire movie. So far we've seen half of *Timerider*, half of *Psycho*, half of *Best Little Whorehouse*...I need TV for short attention spans. I WANT MY MTV."

"Maybe it's just rock music you miss."

"Could be. On the rare occasions when this pitiful radio does pick up a signal, it's always country & western...I saw a kid in Cozad, Neb-raska in a Def Leppard t-shirt and thought, 'There's the last sign of rock'n'roll for the next thousand miles.'"

"That's true about the radio. The towns are so far apart here... we're really in the middle of a big country."

"Just like in the song."

"What song?"

"That 'Big Country' song that they play on the radio every ten mi-nutes."

"Guess I never heard it."

"Surely you jest, Matthew! 'Dah-dah-da-DAH-da-da-da, flow-erz in th' DEZZ-urt...inna BIG count-REE, dah dah dah YOOO...' It's been run-ning through my head continuously ever since we got into this vast wil-derness."

"It doesn't sound familiar."

"Well, it's one of those songs where the guitar line is more dis-tinctive than the melody, so I can't expect you to recognize the song unless I figure a way to sing both at once."

"Guess so."

"You must've seen the video for it, though."

"Which one is it?"

"Well, these four guys have this nice map that says BIG COUNTRY, and they go to this cave, or hut, or something, where this girl is, and she decks them..."

"All four of them?"

"Yeah, she throws one punch and knocks all four unconscious and runs away."

"Some punch."

"So she gets on this water-scooter thing and goes to some island..."

"Why?"

"So when the four guys come to, they can get out their BIG COUNTRY map and follow her to the island in scuba suits."

"Oh."

"And then they catch up to her..."

"And she decks them."

"Nope, she kisses the lead-singer fellow."

"The same guy she punched before? Howcum?"

"I guess because it's the end of the video and time for a happy end-ing."

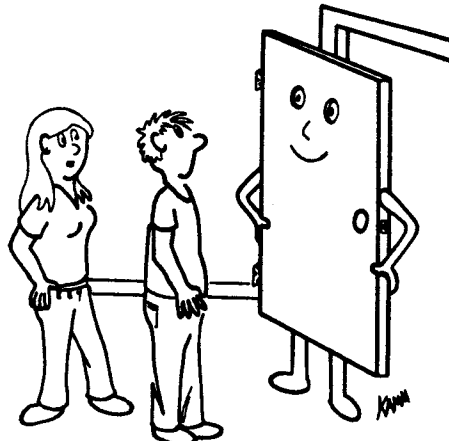
"That makes no sense at all."

"Well, don't get me wrong, it's a pretty good video overall—great song, no stupid macho stuff, and the girl isn't put in fishnet stock-ings and spike heels...it's not offensive, but it's not real logical, either. That's the way things are on MTV. Which reminds me...I've been meaning to ask you something."

"What?"

"Those guys in ZZTop—do you think those are their REAL BEARDS?"

(Following transactional relocation, Candi is now receiving mail and MTV in San Francisco - see INSIDE IJ STAFFERS column...)



DON'T JUST STAND THERE.
ANSWER THE DOOR

HOW COME

Conscientious objectors don't object to the lack of winners? Socialistic chances of survival seem pretty good but nature de-mands fair play. Shoot SASE to world-war Ending. — WINNERS — Box 2243 YOUNGSTOWN — OHIO, 44504

Sayz-U! (Letters)

"PLAIN BLOCK LETTERS" -or- "How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Become a Non-Cursive Divorced Person"

The shock of being single again causes most humans to search out new directions...diversions even. After 3 weeks in Las Vegas I returned home and began reading The Farmers Almanac. I sent for a copy of Contact "as advertised" in the Almanac's classifieds, hoping to find a meaningful relationship via the pages of the magazine's personals. I even searched through the personals on the magazine's pages, but both sentences remained poorly constructed and contributed to writer's bloc(k). It was Contact's classifieds which led me into a love affair with this mag. One sample copy of INSIDE JOKE pulled me free from the quagmire of my own mind. Little did I suspect the addiction that was to follow...my mind began to mainline every detail of IJ! What a rush! Unawesome!

It was that first questionnaire that made me realize how desperate I was for each new edition of IJ. The questionnaire also made me realize that confession is good for the soul.

I thought I could quit reading IJ anytime. How could "Whozits" be habit-forming?

My mind began winking out in an acid manner. I developed an urge to draft a letter and send it to this mag's editor-in-chief. I spent days just trying to get the letter into an envelope...to say nothing of trying to find a mailbox.

I began to panic and develop paranoid tendencies the first three weeks of each month. During the sleepless nights I would count my stamps and try and figure out what "SASE" meant. Was Kip for real? Who was this "ew" that kep looking for us in the funny papers? What is past tense, anyway??

Going into group therapy with a copy of IJ in my hand proved embarrassing to all concerned. I passed out copies to friends and family alike and now my friends don't speak to me anymore and my family has disowned me. My parakeet continues to swell up abnormally...it refuses to take a crap as long as I line the cage bottom with pages from INSIDE JOKE!

So, Happy Anniversary IJ! You've hung on for three (count 'em) years and so have I...My ex-wife filed for divorce in October, 1980 and thru IJ I've learned to laugh again—once a month...out loud even...but I still can't write worth a shit!

=AMEN=

JAMES TAUSCHER
Rt. 23, Berry Rd.
Knoxville, TN 37920

Dear Elayne,

There seems to be some misunderstanding of what mail art is. The best definition I've come across is from THEME: ME MAGAZINE, Vol. III, No. 3. It says, in part:

"Mail Art is the language artists use to communicate with one another. Being language, sound and/or visual specialists, mail artists communicate on advanced levels...(it) is many disciplined, and interdisciplinary. Mail art correspondents publish hundreds and hundreds of magazines and books and audio & video cassettes, and perform hundreds of other projects...of incredible power and multidimensionality. Mail art, however, despite its broad and open and truly democratic character, is ultimately...a communication from one party to a particular other, (and) is one of the few opportunities for creative expression. Nothing else compares with it...in its potential and actual numbers of frequent and passionate participants."

IJ contains cartoon art, artistic satire/lampoonery, and is an organized "correspondence" mailed out to a network. Thus, in this broad spectrum of mailed creativity, IJ can well be termed mail art. (I realize there are those people who plaster an envelope with scratch-and-sniff stickers or pictures of Boy George, and then proclaim themselves mail artists. So obviously, there are different levels of involvement/talent.)

And you, whether you realize it or not, Elayne, are a mail artist of the first order...

I would like to see additional comments on the topic, if anyone cares to put in his/her 2¢ worth!

Finally, and on another note, a "masthead" is the box which contains the staff and operations info. It is not what is on the cover. (Picky, picky...). Cheers,

JULIAN ROSS
1400 N. Hayworth Ave., #36
W. Hollywood, CA 90046

(You want 2¢? I'll give you a C-note...I MAINTAIN, INSIDE JOKE IS NOT MAIL ART!! I don't agree with your quoted definition at all. I met the person who runs "ME", and while he seemed harmless enough, I got the impression he couldn't envision any kind of creativity besides mail art. "Nothing else compares w/ it"? Oh, come on. You're starting to sound as bad as some science fiction fans I know. In fact, this quote can be taken almost verbatim and used by quite a few fandom fanatics as well. It's just too narrow, and I don't buy it. WHEN YOU CATEGORIZE ANYTHING INTO YOUR OWN TUNNEL VISION OF REALITY, YOU PIGEONHOLE AND ULTIMATELY LIMIT YOURSELF. Plus, you mislead others in the process. IJ is no more a mail art publication than it is a fanzine; I am no more a mail artist than a 'faned', or counterculture hippie, or anything else. IJ is just IJ; I am just me. Don't mean that to sound glibly profound, but I'm getting very tired of being yanked into someone's subjective definition just because that person may not be able to envision or describe anything else out there. Stop trying to define IJ; read it, comment on it, write for it, draw for it, I don't care, but stop trying to foist it into your little world! And please, if you're going to

tell your mail art friends [most of whom seem to fit your parenthetical definition and truly believe a postcard or an ink blot qualifies as 'art' and deserves a 24+page publication in return] about IJ, ask them to send me a buck. Finally—no, that's an editorial box. Picky... Dear Elayne—Thanks a lot for the latest edition of INSIDE JOKE. [My wife] and I both read it, but I'm taking it on myself to write the letter-of-comment.

RANDOM COMMENTS:

Diary of the Rock Fiend—Shouldn't this be called Diary of the ABBA Fiend, as that's the only group Anni ever mentions? [My wife] and I firmly believe that this sentence, "...the ocean is a dandy thing, particularly if one happens to be in the stateroom of a really good ocean liner...", could have been penned by Fran Lebowitz. If Anni is so strongly opposed to having comparisons made, she should make an effort to not write exactly in the style of someone else.

Strange marriage, Anni, strange marriage. Anyway, I think it would have been nice, maybe even appropriate, if Anni had mentioned her new husband by name. (Why, if I reprinted the invitation on page 2?)

Once again I'm going to bitch about the structure of Anni's column. The title of the column is "How I Spent My Summer Vacation," so the reader could reasonably expect that topic to be discussed somewhat sooner than half-way through the column. What appears in INSIDE JOKE this time could easily be two separate columns. The first could simply be entitled "Summer", and be comprised of the first half of the current column. The second half, of course, is actually the part which supports the title "How I Spent My Summer Vacation". I'm spending this time picking on Anni because she seems to be the INSIDE JOKER who most wants to be taken as a Real Columnist. I can't, however, take her seriously as a Real Columnist when she won't write a column that sticks to the topic. I am also put off by the overuse of complex sentences that seem designed for no other purpose but that of making Anni look oh so cute and witty. In reading Anni's column, it often seems that she is attempting to make us of every idea she's had that month as though she's never going to get another chance to use them. Oh, well, Anni's writing style aggravates me because she buries good, funny ideas under tons of wordage. Enough of this.

Sound Mined—Why is Brian Catanzaro pretending to give us news about a "new" XTC album when it is obvious that he hasn't even seen the new XTC album, MUMMER? He mentions "Gold" and "Great Fire", and then says wait to see whether the songs are on the new album before buying the EP. As it happens "Great Fire" is on the album but "Gold" is not, but the point of this screed is that Brian shouldn't be giving news blashes until he's sure of what he's talking about. Since XTC's English record company didn't even want to release MUMMER (see TROUSER PRESS for details), it's unlikely that they'd be releasing another XTC album. My guess is that the "Winterland" Brian mentions is a 12" single of "Wonderland" from MUMMER. (Brian's credibility was already at a low ebb when I discovered the 8-song EP to be a 4-song EP.) Another quick gripe: why refer to XTC as "the X's" when such an action requires a clarification, "(not LA)"? Call 'em XTC and be done with it, Brian.

Sailor Boy—As usual, Clay Geerdes turns out the best piece in INSIDE JOKE.

I should be writing record reviews for JET LAG instead of doing this, so that's it for now...

Yours,

"D.A. FRIPP"

3842 DeTonty Ave. #3West
St. Louis, MO 63110

(I leave it for Anni and Brian to defend themselves, but as editor, I have the right to decide that one cheap shot begets another—I find it fascinating that most people with a preponderance of bitching tend to hide behind pseudonyms [Kip M. Ghesin agrees with me on this] instead of using their real names. Also, as a point of clarification, the title of Anni's column should originally have been DREAMS OF THE ROCK FIEND, a parody of something-or-other-that-she'll-explain-next-month, and I inadvertently lettered it in its present form, no doubt thinking of "Diary of a Dope Fiend" at the time.)

Dear Elayne Madame Editor, A Truly Special Person,

Golly gee the latest issue of IJ is simply fine fine superfine swell. I read almost all of it—there may have been some stuff in the margarine that I missed. I'm gonna go over it with a magnanimous glass and really get it all! It's so allright to know that all these reely talented people can be gathered together and printed in one whole forearm. I love it, I reely do.

BUT YET Guess why I'm writing? It's cause I wanted to share with everyone this reely heavy, deep revelation that I had. Dig this: There is only the difference of one letter between the words jerk and joke. And that letter is O. And we know what that stands for, right? This reverberation came to me after I did up some Oxydol and sniffed some Sally Hanson Hard As Nails (using a pyramid to hold the fumes—hey, I'm not no tadpole, y'know). And when the two combos kicked in, I went oh wow oh wow and saw the TRUTH about these two words like in a banner floating across my ceiling, weaving in and out of all the cute little dancing ladybugs with Hong Kong Phooey T shirts, and like these reely weird but awful cute animated food processors with arms and legs and top hats and canes!!! They were all dancing the Carioca on the ceiling and the banner came floting in—and I had the reputation. So, like, IJ could have been called INSIDE JERK if it wasn't for one letter saying, "Hey, NO! I don't wanna be in that word!" A jerk is a joke without an O. And a joke is a jerk without an R. At first this didn't make much sense to me, but then I thought about it and you know what? There is a word that I notice always starts with R and that word is—REALITY. See? Far out, huh?

Also, did you ever notice that if you take the initials IJ and your own initials EW, it spells I JEW????!! I Jew, How about you?

Aren't you reely glad your initials aren't OG? Wouldn't that be hard to live with? I think these things are reely so impotent and significant. Like, the latest IJ is number 24, right, and that adds up to 6, right? And there are 31 pages in it, right? And that adds up to 4, right? And for and six equal ten. And 10 is for October the 10th

month!!! See, the thing is everything has like a symmetry and pattern and the whole universe is based on that. Even Brooklyn.

Don't you feel reassured by all this? Don't it make your kneecaps kind of melt, like when you go for somebody super groovy, you're real gone on someone and that feeling stays with you all day, like a big Bit O Honey bar? Also, see you can rearrange the letters of INSIDE JOKE and spell: I JOKE SNIDE. and: SINK JOE DIE. and INK JOE'S DIE. You know what happens when you add that mysterious R I mentioned? Looky: O, JEER IS KIND! Also: RIDE JOE'S KIN and JOE'S KIN RIDE.

So what I want to know is: Who's JOE?

Listen, I really love everybody no matter how disgusting and repulsive they are—that's just the way I am!

Sealed with a Quiche, MILDRED NEPTUNE
(P.S. My friend Bopper Mandrake made a map of Atlantis out of different colored vitamin tablets. It would make a real nice cover for IJ.)
A few, uh, serious (oh, noo!) observations about IJ letters/staffers/und so wieder...

Since I am a new kid in town (I'm new to these parts, can you show me to the Wild Bongo Club, Mister Potato Head?? Thanx.), I don't really understand some of this fussin' and feudin' that goes on in the letter section. Lucy, 'splain! It's my favorite thing to read in IJ, next to the official stuff like E.Dubbleyou's always great editorials, Anni Ackner's reet petite column and anything Coop holds forth on—but I love letters to eddies in all publications. I wanna know what people think. I may be way outta line here, or I may just be a beanbag brain, but I don't grok most of the tiffs and miffs people have against one another—the minor and not so minor personal grudges—whuffo they be? Whuffo? Sometimes they get pretty mean and hokey smokes! SERIOUS. Maybe it's all an inside joke to the participants. But I was brought up to believe that humor, like most other things in this wacky world, was not to be taken seriously.

The trouble with "criticism" of things like funny jazz and ideas is dis: Ideas are bouncy little guys, they ain't stagnant, and while they deserve and need feedback, they can't be judged and deliberated by a jury of junior Joseph Wapners eager for to prove their polemical perspicacity. Am I being too oblique? Good. I'm not gonna name any names, but this Ace Backwords character sounds like someone who thinks it would be cute to market aspirin bottles with Rubik's Cube caps...

Where do people get the idea that criticism means put down? Criticism really means analysis and conclusion. And criticizing humor is kin to making a wish on a wishbone and then breaking it. You may or may not have gotten your wish, but you sure as hell got a broken wishbone. Throw it away. I hate to be cutesy pie (ah, what the hell, I don't mind), but, as Gandalf said, "He who breaks a thing to find out what it is has left the path of wisdom." Example: Some people thought Joan Rivers on the Emmy show was vulgar, obnoxious and her "goddamn" left them outraged. Others thought she was funny and refreshing and cheered her expletive as a comment on network politics. Either way, this reveals nothing about Joan Rivers, but it reveals much about the commentators. So, anyone can write "I think this and so and so is a nebbish" and so on—and in doing so, reveals nothing about the subject of their thinking, but much about themselves. It can get tedious because it is so personal and subjective. Some people think the Three Stooges are funny—I don't; they get on my nerves. But some like them and it means nothing. I wouldn't waste the paper to criticise the Stooges; I'd much rather create something new. You can only judge humor from your own p.o.v. I can't even judge myself too clearly—I don't really know if I'm being funny so it would be ultracrepidarian of me to judge anyone else. I wanna make that clear. Anyway, getting pissed at somebody 'cause they have a different laughometer seems like a waste of pies being thrown. I may be wrong—like I said, I'm new in town—but I think that IJ is not the "Humor Olympics" where people hold up score cards to judge one another. ALL of IJ is interesting always, which is a whole helluva lot more than you can say about anything else, except maybe my bedroom closet...

Gosh I spoke out and nobody hit me. Yet.

Oh yeah—anyone who wishes to have a feud with me is advised that I am the kind of person who thinks a tarantula makes a swell pet.

DEBORAH BENEDICT GEDWILLO
4718 1/2 Calvert Street
Lincoln, NE 68506

LET'S GET SERIOUS HERE FOR A MINUTE

A Dissertation of Sorts by Roldo

Elayne has, quite sensibly, asked us to put a lid on the "Ace Backwords Affair" and as far as the specifics go, I concur completely.

However, contemplation of A.B.'s rather odd idea that critics are an occupational hazard of art, and that artists are the natural prey of any dolt who can hold a crayon long enough to write a few insulting words, in juxtaposition with his inability to comprehend why the people he's so casually insulted are getting so upset about it as to write in response, has set me to thinking in depth about the whole idea of critics in general.

Now personally, I've never cared for critics, and agreed with Kenneth Patchen's comment, "I like critics who wear tan shoes...looks better," but for some reason until now I never crossed my mind that not only is there no reason for these people to be laying their opinions on them as don't want 'em...it's actually downright RUDE.

Truth is, if I want someone's opinion, I will ASK for it. Backwords, and I suppose the majority of people who see it, think that my work is done to please them. Well, gang, lemme tell ya...when I sit clutching pen or typer, many things are on my mind and pleasing ANYONE isn't even close enough to the top to bother putting on a list of them.

The complicated bizniz of getting what's in my head to travel all the way down my arm, to my hand, out my fingers and on to the paper is in itself consuming enough that if I had to worry if anyone was gonna LIKE what came out, I'd never get anything done at all.

Besides, I've never had any self-proclaimed critic tell me anything I didn't already know. These types don't seem to realize that since creative work improves with doing, I'm aware that there will be imperfection in what I'm doing that will only lessen as I improve by doing

it anyway, but there's always some dolt who wants to shine their ego around by telling me my flaws. If I could start with Perfection, I would...honest.

Let us then examine the second "Backwords' Contention"—that critics should be exempt from criticism-in-return.

This idea seems to be based on the ludicrous notion that someone who, for whatever reason, paints their nose blue or red or green or any unusual hue is thereby inviting anyone who wants to to take a poke at this abnormal proboscis and, having been poked, accept this as "due course".

Well, that just ain't how she works, folks, and it's about time the critics of the world realised that behind these letters and lines are genuine, flesh and blood PEOPLE who can get pretty righteously pissed off at anyone who figured they are fair game for kicking for no better reason than that they're there to kick.

Backwords' problem is that he made his remarks on our turf, so in this case we got equal time to respond. Usually these critics either work for a magazine, or in some cases of extreme ego-neurosis even publish little sheets dedicated to expounding their opinions, and none other, to what they undoubtedly perceive as an eagerly awaiting world.

Ignoring this sort of self-centered monomania will, sadly, not make it go away...it's too stupid to ward off with irate replies, and usually too distant to catch by the throat and shake. It's rare, for me at least, to be approached in public and have my imperfections elaborated to me, but this may be because one of them is my appearance, which has been aptly described as "looking like he eats trucks".

So I contend in return that it is time artists ceased to accept the role of Natural Prey and started showing some fang-and-claw in return. Perhaps the obvious cowardice of these self-made mouths is the answer to this problem. Backwords, for instance, seems quite nervous over a letter I sent to him, in—let me assure you—an attempt to provide the kind of "gut-writing" he was asking for. An honest mistake...he gave all the signs of being a Mickey Spillane fan. The epistle should have been recognisable as satire to anyone with an IQ higher than their shoe size, but I must confess a certain degree of satisfaction at the End Result, despite my well-known disdain for violence. I'm not big on the Guilt and Blame trip anyway and certainly not in a case where someone failed to recognise an obvious parody.

So, let me include a Parting Word to critics. Someday it is entirely possible that you will encounter those at whom you have slung your words, and with a good chance that they may seize that opportunity to present their views to you, perhaps somewhat physically.

Now...everyone who thinks I'm being serious, stand up. Thank you. Now raise your left foot, stick your right first finger in your left nostril and your left pinky in your right ear. Good—now say "Quack!" Whadda packa sheep.

(ROLDO)

1232 Downing St.
Winnipeg, Man. R3E 2R7 CANADA)

Elayne—

I just read IJ #24 cover to cover almost and I must say that it is the best I've seen so far. I was racing thru Anni Ackner's column, laughing, commenting to my cat, and thinking someone ought to marry that outrageous woman—when (sob)—I flipped the page and found that someone had! Good luck Anni, don't be intimidated by the agist sentiments, we shouldn't be bothered by the conventionals, nicht wahr? Excuse my French, it's German.

All this infighting (or is it in-and-out fighting?) is rather humorous. I haven't really traced it back yet, but it is an old, old story. Which reminds me of the late nite flick about digging up a 5-billion-year-old Martian spacecraft. It seems these horned green anthropods were trying to implant the lemming-like destructive impulse of their own species on the mutated ape-creatures they created, even after 5 billion years. I mean, how long can you hold a grudge?

I was lucky enough to see Frank Zappa's 1982 video "Dumb All Over" on the USA Network. Wonderful. There's a nice piece about TV evangelists: "He's got 20 million dollars in his Heavenly bank account, all from those chumps who were born again. He's got 7 limosines and a private plane, all for the use of his special friends...The governors agree to say he's a groovy guy..." etc. Zappa remains the Hunter S. Thompson of the music world.

The NY "Bob" Party sounded fun. Did you happen to catch NPR's piece on Dobbs on "All Things Considered"?

Yours in search of Slack...

SAL MONIAC
8405 6th Ave. NW
Seattle, WA 98117

Dear Elayne,

I loved IJ #24. I think it's one of your best yet. But I really flipped over that cartoon by Rev. Eric C. Palmer. He really has his pulse on the finger of America! And that Discordan 23! Please print more of his stuff!

Thanks Tons,

REV. ERIC C. PALMER
409 S. 18
Philadelphia, PA 19140

Dear Elayne,

Congratulations on your 3rd Anniversary! I've got a great idea if you get swamped with 3rd Annish covers! Remember that full-page ad for IJ that I offered to run in ATW? Well, with a little bit of adjustment here and there, an IJ cover can be made into an IJ ad—huh? (Certainly, I've done it twice already...)

You haven't mentioned it in IJ (I know, space, etc.), but a lot of folks who provide art for IJ have been appearing in ATW, also (Bogin, Pearce, Scharff and others). I'd like to say right now, you've got a lot of talent working on IJ! So far, thought, your artists and not your writers have been coming to ATW. We don't bite—and we don't just print libertarian stuff (witness the recent piece on UFO propulsion).

Keep on keepin' on! Best,

BILL GEORGE (AGAINST THE WALL)
P.O. Box 444
Westfield, NJ 07091

Dear Elayne,

(Jill was teasing me—at least, I choose to believe she was teasing me—and she said I was bound to start this letter out with some variation on "Here I sit", so just for that I am not. Ha ha ha and nyah nyah nyah.)

I do like Jill's apartment, you know. I like it partly because there is a conspicuous lack of mothers in it, partly because it simply happens to be a nice apartment, with a big leather chair and a sofa bed and a real bedroom that's actually separate from the big leather chair and the sofa bed, lots of books and records and tons of interesting things like barbells and Kliban cat shower curtains, and a fierce bottle of Kikkoman soy sauce on the table before me (why there is a bottle of Kikkoman soy sauce in the living room I think is probably better left un contemplated. What one chooses to have in one's living room I think is nobody else's business, after all), and partly because as I type I can hear Jill in the kitchen, puttering about making dinner, which is infinitely preferable, by my lights, to my puttering about in the kitchen making dinner. It's the little things that make a house a home. I even like Jill's typewriter (an unnamed Olympiette that has a history comparable, in texture and variety, to that of Doctor Zhivago), which, even though it's a manual, possesses all manner of interesting buttons that I don't know what they're for. I don't even mind Jill's looking over my shoulder to correct my spelling as I type, and I certainly am fond of this nice purple paper she gave me to type on. And now that you've (Elayne) come over, well, what could be better for a semi-recluse who's spent the last two weeks in bed? Oh, well, I suppose there could be a few Swedish men scattered about, if only for form's sake, but I've learned not to be greedy with my pleasures and, overall, I am replete.

I am also still rather tired and wrung out and so, if nobody minds unduly, I shall keep my comments rather shorter than is my usual wont this month. (Oh yes, well, certainly people are going to care. I can see them now, legions and legions of my fans, massing outside the palatial post office box with their picket signs, chanting in unison, "More and more and more ANNI!" I do think you ought to be prepared for this eventually, don't you? Dear fans, I promise to go back to my usual nauseating lengths in future issues, but for now, the pressures of my health must take priority. Do understand.) I was fond of IJ's issue #24, and especially with the re-emergence of the Ever-Popular Carolyn Lee Boyd as scholar-critic-commentator-manque. There is none to touch her in this role, to my way of thinking, though I might argue with her assessment that Murdock is the most important artistically in the sphere of THE A TEAM, as I have my own leanings toward Mr. T. Still, her general remarks are, as always, cogent and clear-headed (two qualities I value highly, as I don't happen to have them myself (and how can I possibly quarrel with an article that has my name in it? I mean, really.

I was also, as always, pleased to see Jill Zimmerman doing her redoubtable thing (and I'm not just saying that because she's cooking me spinach lasagne. Truly, I'm not) and Coop's having another Random Article, particularly as I'm a fan of the elegantly turned mass murder myself, with an especial weakness for the Starkweather/Fugate case, a study in sexual equality unparalleled, I think, in the annals of crime. Brian Pearce pleased me, as he always does, though I refuse to take credit/blame for the brevity of his work (I don't keep him all that busy), and Deborah Benedict is a welcome addition, though I tend to think of spiders more in the light of writers, thanks to Charlotte. than I do as soldiers. Even George Eddy got a smile out of me this month—he seems to be working on an off again/on again basis these days, a pointless month, a funny month, a pointless month, and so on, which, I suppose, is rather better than no funny months at all, a feat which some IJ people, who shall remain nameless because I'm too tired to look up their names, seem bent on accomplishing.

Of course, there were the usual complaints and nitpicks, but in the light of the great Whozits controversy, they pale into insignificance. Of course you should save the Whozits, you silly creature you. What would my month be like without those funny little creatures who never move anywhere? On the other hand, I voted to save Larry the Lobster, t-o, so please consider the source as you come to your final decision.

Well, as I said, this will be short. I'm in no mood for controversy (though what on earth Bruce Duncan was thinking of is quite beyond my comprehension), my nose continues to run, and I've promised to make my famous banana/raisin/yogurt/parfait whoop-ee for dessert (and also promised to wipe my nose, not to put too fine a point on it, before doing so), so really, I must be going. Do be compassionate.

Sound of mind though somewhat deaf of body,

ANNI ACKNER
10 Hillside Ave., #8
Englewood, NJ 07631

(By the way, the lasagne and the parfait were delicious...)

Dear Elayne:

Normally, I read (when I read, normally) IJ from cover to cover, though I must confess that I didn't get through the "self-parrotting" issue (#23) until a few days ago. In that issue I tittered and moored over Anni Ackner's Dairy of The Rock Fiend, and when I found her letter in the Sayz-U section I read expecting another-world-untoward to unfold. I read of her distress over the ailing Eileen and sympathized. I read of her "grudging comradeship" with "The Alien" and knew exactly the beast with which she struggled. However, when she recognized and/or shardpraise/and/witcrit upon IJ itself I found that she devoted a whole paragraph to a wholly fatuous circular shakedown of my altogether uncritical style of reviewing film. (Of course, if no one can understand what I mean by this, so much the better, because I prefer...but then, what I prefer points correspondence, so, let's get on with it, huh.)

It seems to me, that "to take issue with some damned thing or another, if only for form's sake" is as damnable as not taking issue with anything for, I/hart/only/contend, that is the way I have always approached the writhing beast known as "Review". AA herself later co-

vered this trail of blood by stating (parenthetically) that "if you read enough movie reviews and get to know a critic's style, you can even work with that for awhile". And, it has always been my belief that (I might add, one of my primary motivations in writing for) INSIDE JOKE is contra-cultural distinctiveness residing not in a nicely nestled python-pit embracing all that goes against the "norm" but in initiating even further in(tro)spection as to why is what is where is fa-la-la-la-la (if you're follying so far, you'll have off the planet yet)...

In sum, to me what I think about a film isn't nearly so important as whether a film should be thought about at all, and who would benefit from conflated or correspondent thought. This is certainly not a question of simple "right and wrong" but an (historical) issue inasmuch as every time beans avail themselves of opportunity they grow an inch and every time they quail before the come-hither knocks they loose (sic) some inherent potential.

So, whether you read one review or twenty trying to decide whether to invest a hard-earned fiver on the flicks you really have to finally judge for yourself (even if you don't see a particular movie—for whatever reason [for "whatever reason" is a past judgment]), and though I wouldn't advocate seeing 12-25 movies a week (as many critics do), and since I have to wind out sooner or later, so, I'll offer this one rule of thumb for expanding consciousness(es):

DON'T SAY "NO" WHEN SOMEONE ELSE IS BUYING.

Hurling forward,

KEN FILAR

417 Westervelt Ave. #2
Staten Island, NY 10301

Dear Elayne,

Big bundles of kudos and kewpie dolls to yourself, Anni, Tom, Brian, Mike Dobbs, and a big welcome to Deborah and Mr. Mike G, too. Ahh, but if I were to single out my favorite writer from the past few months, it'd have to be Candy (sorry, Candi) Strecker. BLINDED ME WITH VIDEO is always witty, interesting, and fun to read (to say the absolute least). She always hits the nail on the ol' proverbial head, which is something I wish I could do more often! Very nice work, Candi. (Incidentally, I don't think comparing Anni and Candi is fair, as the fore deals with a wider range than the latter—music video is a bit more of a concise topic than the curiosities of life itself. Yow, am I Carl Sagan yet? Well, they do share a common "I" in their first names. Oh, well...you get the general idea, I suppose.) (Hey, not only that, but they're both SWAZ members, after all...)

And big kisses for you and Coop for the well wishes...mucho appreciated! Oh, Ever-Popular...I'm sorry—I didn't know what I was doing to you, kiddo. Why, I had no idea you so worshipped the pots and pans in my sudsy sink...my ink-encrusted pens...my coffee cup. Okay, okay, I'm just an egotistical bastard who left you in the lurch...well, cheer up, you're better off without me. You'll live. (Oh, no, now what've I done?) Oh, well...do eat a box for your health! Take care,

Love,

BRIAN PEARCE

232 Benedict
Brockport, NY 14420

P.S. BRPGLST IFP OMGR T SHP!

Dear Elayne,

Congrats to the newlyweds Brian and Anni! Live Long and Prosper! I don't see how they're going to raise kids, since their occupations require them to be apart, though. (Kids? Who said anything about kids?)

The things I liked about IJ #24: Roldo's Dark Wings Over Easy, his reply to Ace Backwards, and his suggestions concerning "writing in tongues". Thanks, Roldo. Also, Quent Wimpel's letter, Mike Calvert's I Am Not Amused, and Coop's Random Article #2.

The things I just didn't get off on: The deletion of excerpts from my last letter concerning Paul Shaffer. (Unintentional, George, sorry; I didn't think that stuff was relevant to the rest of the letter...obviously I misjudged...so hard to separate personal from public sometimes...) Incidentally, Anni, the point of Galen's rather ambiguous four-panel monologue is the question he asks about Paul. Is he a superhero? Sure acts like he's hiding a caped crusader behind his keyboards. Also, the questions about Chuck E. Cheese's campaign funding.

How many of you are familiar with altered states of consciousness? Whether you know it or not, you enter an altered state of consciousness when you get drunk, stoned, or hypnotized. I usually go the hypnosis route myself, since it doesn't do physical harm to my body. There is one thing I want to clear up about hypnosis. The subject who goes under hypnosis is in charge of what happens to him, not the hypnotist. All the hypnotist can do is guide the subject. As long as you remember that you're in charge, you don't have to worry about being forced to do things ethically wrong under hypnosis.

Hypnosis, to say the least, is letting it all hang out, losing your thoughts in a certain object or mental mental chore (such as counting backwards), until you go into a hypersuggestible state. Once you're in this state, you can suggest to yourself that what you imagine will be visualized vividly to the point of almost being real. I can't explain everything to you now, in this issue, but I'll tell you what you need to know about self-hypnosis and mindflight in a series of later columns.

Right now, I can pass along a good test for suggestibility. Put your two fists together and point your index fingers straight up. Now imagine that your fingers are attracting each other and see what happens.

Stay Purple,

GEORGE R. EDDY
1156 Panama Rd. SE
Carrollton, OH 44615

Elayne, Why O Why?

Your copy of IJ (pardon me, MY copy!) arrived in the post during one of the most severe bouts of insomnia I've ever been through. I thought I would come home from the High-Tech-Allegedly-Homosexual-Frozen-Yogart-Shop (Yes, yogART, my allegedly homosexual boss's idea of a pun) and rest my weary eyebones, wrap my lips around a nice tall glass of meat...er, milk...and then off to sleepytime adventures in Braniac-land. No no no no and no such luck. You and your damned staffers,

Brian with "Sound Mined" and Candi with MTV and Anni with her box...er, perhaps that should be Tape Deck...all blasting away till 3am...TURN THAT DAMMMED INSIDE JOKE DOWN!!!

Anywa, joking aside, I think I'm beginning to understand the inside jokey nature of this beastie...and quite enjoy it. The one article which made me Larf out loud was "How to Clean Your House" which is how I cleaned my apartment which may explain why I got 15 dollars back on a \$200 cleaning deposit. Papoon made me smile, so you've got a good record running (I don't own any good records, just The Residents and Devo and...) so here's some of that propergoonda I promised (pictures to be found elsewhere this issue—ed.), not much, but I'll go whole hog (well, whole fetal pig anyway) as soon as Geo. approves my Robots 4 Papoon campaign. Remember, even Chuck E. is a robot at least half the time, and Atari's new home droid is called "Brains On Board", or "B.O.B."! So get hep! This is the cybernetic age, get with it. "One ORGANISM, one vote" is lifeformist. EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ROBOTS!

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF!

"BABA MUMBO JUMBO"
5319 Chollas Parkway
San Diego, CA 92105

Howdy Elayne;

Your cover story for #24 was, to me, one of your best yet, I guess because I like surprise endings, and this one had two for the price of one.

I took your advice and got The Roches first album and, hey Elayne, this is great. I'm listening to it right now. I really do like it.

During one of our phone conversations I was a little put off when you said, "Greg, you're so straight!" in reference to the fact that I don't make a habit out of regularly ingesting body-damaging addictive recreational drugs, good only for easing the pain of everyday living. (Actually, for the record, I was referring by that remark, and quite facetiously, I might add, to Greg's midwestern naiveté, but the rest of this letter is so good as a running gag I couldn't excerpt...) Well, did you think that I could easily say the same to you, what with your middle-class booshwah office job and all. To me the drug-users are the real conformists, giving in to what's hip (are you a Hip Wimp, Elayne? hm?) and it takes more guts to tell Frosty The Dope Man to fuck off (let's not forget that Frosty is a criminal, involved in a lot more heinous things than drug sales, and that drug users are helping finance Frosty's activities). I don't wanna go all George Eddy on you, but that's what I think. Besides, drugs make you do things like naming your comedy group after your being born under a fire sign. And finally, worst of all, HIPPIES TAKE DRUGS. The number one reason I avoid drugs is to avoid hippies, which is a good enough reason for anything!

But hey man, let's just like mellow out man, like bad vibes man! Like now that I've convinced you that I am just totally un-hip, let's just cool out and like be real, fer shure! I can dig it.

No, honestly thought, I love drugs with all my heart and soul, and I want to dedicate the rest of my feeble life to them. That is my most fervent hope, to stay stoned forever! Yeah! I'm stoned right now and I don't know what I'm saying, so disregard everything I've written before.

Roldo's "At The Flicks" was one of the funniest things in IJ24. Come to think of it, Roldo's Crumb parody was one of the funniest things in IJ23.

I'd like to know how Baboon Dooley can be 20 years old today and yet he was a beatnik in the mid-sixties?!?!? Must be drugs!

Anni Ackner is married. There go all my dirty little fantasies, I think. My life is over. First my heroin addiction, and now this. Excuse me while I go kill myself.

This may sound like sour apples, but Anni's attack on summer sounded to me like a grumpy grandma irritated by the fact that others are having fun. Must be drugs!

The rest of IJ24 looks really interesting, but it'll have to wait till after midterms to get read by me. With that, I must get back to my "studying", and close now.

It's sure realistic!

GREG BLAIR
R.R. #2
Emporia, KS 66801

Dear Elayne:

Well, it's October in Massachusetts now (for all I know, it may even be the same month in New Jersey) and I see in the papers where the EPA is suing the local chemical companies for dumping hazardous wastes about the landscape with gay abandon. Meanwhile, outside my window, the leaves are turning suspicious chemical shades of orange and brown. If you ask me, this whole fell foliage business is probably just a massive coverup by those same chemical companies.

Even though I should, strictly speaking, disqualify myself from making any decisions (just like the panel members used to do on "To Tell the Truth"), I was unable to resist paying once more through my copy of IJ to pick the best articles of another fine crop. I should have resisted. This slip of willpower took me away from writing this letter for a good half hour, as Rodney Dioxin's "The KERMIT THE MARINE Show!" had me rolling on the floor in helpless laughter for just about that long. Mahatma Propagandhi and Zack Replica (both of him) also had nice stuff, but Dioxin takes the coveted cake as far as I'm concerned.

The only thing that worries me about his screenplay is the nagging suspicion that I saw it on the tube about a month ago, and that you may have unwittingly engaged in copyright violation. But don't worry, I know a good lawyer in Berkeley.

While on the subject of worries I want to caution your readers not to take this Quent person from the SSCC too seriously. The whole story can not yet be told—some things man was not meant to know, and all that—but I am privy to certain secret papers from the SSCC Archives. These show that this Quent went "rogue" in the year 2525, stole an experimental, hopped-up, overhead cam time-engine, and snuck back into our own milder, more gullible epoch. Since then he has made his living by writing bad checks and filling the minds of babes with incredible nonsense. Just thought you ought to know.

Hao Nao Braon Chao,

MIKE GUNDERLOY
41 Lawrence St.
Medford, MA 02155

P.S. It was worth the wait!

Elayne,

As always, I liked my own submission best, and read it several times. Second came Jill Zimmerman's philosophic fable and book review. I liked them even more than my own submission, even though I still liked mine best. (Best isn't highest on the list.) The Zimmerman piece was a rare and refreshing example of writing in IJ that isn't so giddily silly that it makes one wonder if there is anything besides cleverism and spark inside our crew of Indirect Councilors.

Without having read the book in question, I can only ask questions of its local representative, i.e., Jill. Does Ehrenreich mention women's newfound competency as a reason for men to bow out of relationships that demand the traditional roles? This occurs in the last paragraph of the fable...is it your own invention, or culled from her text? Anyway, Ehrenreich cites male dissatisfaction with the "traditional breadwinner role", etc. etc. (cf. Sexual Stealing, Jill Zimmerman, IJ #24), and points to anti-conformists, beatniks, human potential sales-hucksters and the wholly media-invented phenomenon of an ostensibly "new" "narcissism" that was supposed to have begun in the seventies. Would not the profundity in some of the manifestations of this malcontent indicate a dissatisfaction that went further than just with a breadwinner role, and in face include the breadwinner stuff as an adjunct, because it, too, is part of the totality? This is hairsplitting, but it occurs because I'm interested. The bit about rebels together sits well with me...I recommend a reprint available from The Bureau of Public Secrets, Arms and the Woman. Write P.O. Box 1044, Berkeley, CA 94701. And, while we're off the subject,... "Psychologists are in the business of selling us freedom from purchases. At least we get entertaining product descriptions."—Overdrive.

In a gray, uniform, fussy bureaucratic empire...what goes first? Let's look at the Hero myth before we try to explain male behavior that develops after the non-existent rites of passage...i.e., family man. In the society of the spectacle, what kind of "Heros" do we have? Certainly not any who excel at anything in particular, or who have confronted the dragon. (Recall the popularity of fantasy games.) No, we have our prominent personages picked for us, while we maintain the illusion that they were democratically elected according to some sort of market popularity test. High school extended into daily life equals the National Enquirer. More revealing than the way they are picked is what for: talents and skills that are earned by birth, not by struggle...good looks, voice, and so on. This is safe for the herd: one isn't reminded of one's own failings if the Gods are merely victims of happy accident. But they are still gods, and we are jealous, so they must be periodically ritually slaughtered, which is what we get with a story one week about how JFK killed himself, and in the competing rag, about how he is still alive. Or how drunk The Star got last week. This puerile culture, vile, muddy, preoccupied with unmanly things, with embarrassing (or otherwise embarrassing) and disgusting acts, represents the end result of a process...which I could go on about, but will only in future. How can you expect (anyone expect) brave men to grow up in the same land with and among people who speak the same language as the Globe, the Star, and the Enquirer? This is not meant to be reactionary glorification of militarism, or warmongering; we find brave men aplenty in otherwise acceptable areas and periods. Hey. And one expects families? Better to be happy they aren't all dead, or snipers from rooftops.

REV. TRIBUNAL OVERDRIVE
P.O. Box 4081
Sheridan, WY 82801

Dear Elayne:

Just wanted to drop a word about the incredible job you're doing with INSIDE JOKE. It is by far the best fanzine I have yet to see. What I especially enjoy is its "free" style which enables you to cover just about every possible subject, yet with tongue firmly in cheek. As "Bob" says, "If they can't take a joke, Fuck 'em."

Anni Ackner is one of my favourite writers for your 'zine. She can take almost any topic, no matter how ambiguous, and write pages on end about it. Yet, she always manages to hold my attention. Jill Zimmerman's review of Hearts of Men made me want to run out and buy the book immediately (being broke, I had to put it on reserve at the local library). At last! someone has finally put in a nutshell a true history of the sexual revolution.

Your writings on The Firesign Theatre led me to further investigate them. I now own HOW CAN YOU BE IN TWO PLACES... (great), NOT INSANE! (guess you had to be there), and THE CASE OF THE MISSING SHOE ep (wonderful!). I used to have DEAR FRIENDS, but it fell victim to the dreaded grooves scratchi disease.

I should have the next installment of "Slack Robbers" out by the end of October. I've considered issuing it every two weeks if I get enough response. So far, the mailing list hasn't grown much. By the way, "Slack Robbers" is available to anyone for just eight dollars for the entire 22-part series, or, in trade for their fanzine. Praise "Bob" from whom all blessings blow...

Yours,

ROCK HOMBERG
Room 107, 1340 E. Third St.
Dayton, OH 45403

Dear Elayne,

Thanks for the Firesign info—I'd thought they'd disbanded—and thanks for the Sept. IJ. I was particularly interested in the SubGenius material, as I've read several articles about "Bob" in WeirDo, R. Crumb's comix magazine. It's hard to visualize what the Bob meetings would be like, kind of like sf cons, I suppose, lots of fat maladjusted people talking code. Depression glass. Philately. Wife-swapping. Motorcycles. I'm trying to write surrealist. It's Monday morning and I have to get to work. I'm doing a story about a drug called Merge. You take it and it makes you melt like a cowpie with 2 fried eggs on top. Do it together is best. Acid analogue. Once a guy threw a dog into a Merged puddle of 6 migrant workers and got the Jersey dog-people. Giving things up: coffee, weed, cigarettes. It's just breathing. In information theory, a message's measure of information is the logarithm of the number of messages that might have come. If you know all there

is coming is a "yes" or a "no" than this has info-content of one bit. If there's 16 possible messages, it's four bits. A typed page is a channel. Shannon proves that, using proper coding, the channel can be used to a certain maximum info level, even in the presence of noise. To some extent these words cannot be completely random; that is to say, one does not expect that, it is not a "possible message" from this source, my IBM. English, then, and "Bob", how much information in your newsletter? In Time magazine, how unpredictable is it? Larry Flynt is running for President, too. The Martin Luther King of the 80's. Food for thought. He gets more toilet-seat than an ass. Entropy, coming in, you see, much of a muchness of God and country. I have a reflecting diffraction grating on my desk, it is an advertisement for BRAINSTORM. Videotapes of Natalie Wood, the fishes, is there an answer? Is there a secret of life? I think Godel's Incompleteness Theorem says no. The world is infinitely complex. The secret is there is no secret. This statement is false. I'm high alright, but not on false drugs.

Best wishes,

RUDY RUCKER

1324 Church St.
Lynchburg, VA 24504

Dear Elayne,

IJ #24 shows a continuation of its refinement into a more coherent and readable layout—much appreciated, since it's really hard to concentrate on peeing and turning the mag every which way at the same time.

As usual, Anni Ackner shines far above the rest of us poor souls in wit, style, and the ability to expose the bullshit of life without being self-consciously "strange". Which provides a nice segue into my next pearls of wisdom. One thing I've noticed in much of the writing which appears in the mutant press (IJ, other 'zines, apa's) tends to reveal a certain self-serving attitude on the part of its authors—a feeling of "I'm mutant, and therefore, everything I write that isn't mainstream is wonderful in its strangeness," i.e., if conventional publications wouldn't touch my work, it must be OK. *Au contraire*. Granted, most of the "above-ground" press may have certain rigid rules as to what's published and what isn't, but mutancy for its own sake is self-defeating. It sticks out like a sore thumb, and when a deliberate attempt is made to write "offbeat" material, it often interferes with the author's natural talent. The flow is blocked, and the writing becomes forced, in the effort to make it sufficiently weird. Not to mention the derivativeness and "mutant chauvinism" which results. Come on, guys, we don't want to be like West Village trendies, do we? To be the literary equivalent of Flashdance T-shirts? I realize how powerful "groupthink" is, but we don't want to lose our individuality by forgetting the discriminating thought processes that led us to differentiate ourselves from the masses in the first place.

Case in point (and no personal attacks meant, so sheathe your claws): "Dr. Armand Gideon's "Waiting for 'Bob'-ot". A thoroughly ludicrous, pointless rip-off of the brilliant ravings of the masters of SubGenius "philosophy", something which Doug Smith does much better; plus a rip-off of Ionesco. The result is a double self-stripping of any creativity to which the author might aspire. How about giving us your own material, Mike? I'm sure we would enjoy reading your own ideas much more than this sort of unimaginative parroting of someone else's. Also into this category falls Michael Calvert's "I Am Not Amused", which seems to me to be a rehash of your (Elayne's) own "Jinn and Catatonic"; and Bruce Duncan's "Let That Pass", to which I can only say, in my best Melanie Haber/Audrey Farber/Susan Underhill/Betty Jo Bialosky/Nancy falsetto, "WHAT?" Lee Pelton's "Life in the Fan Lane" has often provided some valuable and thoughtful insights into the convoluted world of fandom, but this three-paragraph announcement that he will no longer write about this reminds me of the intricate revelations of fan's personal lives (including bowel movements and number of orgasms since the last issue) found in certain New York-based apa's.

But enough negatives. Hearty welcomes to Deborah Benedict, who shows a true gift for the absurd. Kudos also to Steve Scharff, whose writing has matured greatly in the last year, Tom Gedwillo's baseball tidbits, and Carolyn Lee Boyd's pontifications on "The A-Team". Note to Tom Sanders: Lighten up!

Re: Rev. Tribunal Overdrive's kind words and questions on my fable and review in issue #24; the implication of women's competency being a reason for men to bow out of traditional relationships is not contained in Ehrenreich's book, nor was it intended in my fable. Ehrenreich's contention is that male rebellion preceded female rebellion by a good ten years, perhaps even precipitating the latter. Yes, I agree that male discontent went much further than mere dissatisfaction with their functions as breadwinners: encompassing in fact the entire "unfree" nature of traditional concepts of "successful" male adulthood: X amount of income, X amount of "stuff", what the man produced for his corporation as well as for his family. But since the reality of life indicated a need for a certain quantity of green slips of paper to be bartered for necessities of life, rebellion against the "corporate oppressor" was, and often still is, virtually impossible. So men lashed out at home. The problem that has resulted, as Ehrenreich points out, is that the hostility that has erupted between the sexes as the breadwinner ethic has broken down and nothing has replaced it, has threatened, and in many cases destroyed, our ability to love and care for each other at all—and resulted in a world of suspicious, defensive, exploitative sexual encounters and nickel-and-dime financial paranoia among men and women. Ehrenreich proposes that men and women work together to develop new ways of defining responsibility and commitment—ways that will expand and enrich our lives and our relationships, instead of creating "traps" to be escaped from.

End of film,

JILL ZIMMERMAN
1307-11 Harding Ave., #3-D
Linden, NJ 07036

Blue Guam

A Rama Lama Matchbook

(The following is a sort of scenario for a possible movie...)

And you'll have a blue, blue Guam when E hits the Mariana Islands for a concert to be beamed into interstellar space via a new deep orbit radar dish named Stella Starlight whom E plans to rendezvous blue with on the moon after the show...but wait a minute! That madman black revolutionary Charles Raspberry has planted a time warp bomb under E's stage and our overweight hero is blown back to 1943 right in the middle of a big production number.

E finds himself strung out in a Jap invasion with only his laser-studded flat top guitar between him and Tojo.

Can Stella beam him back alive with her hardcore grasp of astrophysics and still get her late date with E at the Luna Rama Dada Inn?

Will Charles Raspberry destroy E and take over with his primitive brand of Rock and Roll?

And what if E finds out his mother came from there??

* * * * *

This picture capitalizes on the shopping availability of Elvis Presley imitators while offering ten new jerk pan alley tunes Elvis might have crooned had he lived to film "Blue Guam".

Our movie moves beyond "Blue Hawaii" and out further into the Pacific Ocean to a tourist trap so exotic and remote that even the travelers checks must be treated with an anti-jungle rot agent.

Stella Starlight equals Sally Ride: a super-cool lady space plumber. Charles Raspberry is Chuck Berry: the real king of Rock and Roll primieval (a throne abdicated by our star in favor of songs like "Teddy Bear").

The very, very, very popular E equals MC square of Elvis Presley's many, many box-office-bux fans who still clamour for any artifact whatsoever which slightly reminds them of their departed god.

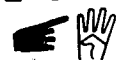
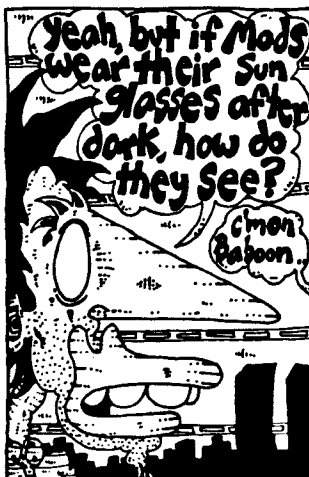
Elvis is sadly gone. But why should the Elvis Movie, a formula so painstakingly perfected by Paramount, be lost as well?

Our movie has it both ways: Elvis once again astride the silver screen in all his "Viva Las Vegas" glory set against a backdrop of international espionage and outer space. And since the whole idea is a humongous satire of Elvis movies and the songs they contained and the plots they didn't contain, the huge teenage and college humour crowd who aren't presold on Elvis are drawn as well.

Of course, the name "Elvis Presley" is mentioned only for purposes of this matchbook. Our character is "E"—an Elvis imitator or series of same whose performances, songs and dialogue are in no way owned or controlled by RCA, Paramount or Colonel Tom Parker.

Yes! "BLUE GUAM", perhaps merely the first in a series of epic "E" movies with sequels like "IT HAPPENED AT THE INTERGALACTIC FAIR"; "KID CAMELOT" and the irresistible "KISSIN' KLONES" in which E plays half-a-dozen identical singing hillbillies escaped from a secret Pentagon experiment gone berserk.

So act now. Because it'll be a blue "BLUE GUAM" without you.



HERSCHEL DAMMIT IN

The Red Reaper

by Penny A. Lines

EPISODE #1: THE GUNSELS OF DINGUSTOWN

Sorrelville was the first town I ever saw where all the cops direct-
ed traffic with tommy guns and wore pinstripe uniforms. I once heard
an itinerant Brooklyn gangster pronounce the town's name as "Soilvill"
which seems appropriate considering the dirty work I was supposed to
do there. But the stock market had made a triple gainer, and dipsoma-
nia was an expensive hobby in those days, so I took the job there.

Once a northern California mining town, Sorrelville would have died
like a bad joke if it weren't for the Vileson Dingus Company which
came in after the mines played out. In 1917 the factory workers had
been unionized by the IWW, better known as the "Wobblies". Eventually
the militant workers wrested a living wage, and a dental plan consist-
ing of free allocations of floss, from Sorrelville's avaricious patri-
arch—Elihu Vileson. But now Elihu wanted to renegotiate so he had
hired some freelance thugs and had half the men on the police force
answering to the name "Knuckles".

When I first arrived in town I went to a back alley joint called
"Ed's Speaksleazy" to meet my connection. When he didn't show up I
proceeded to drown my angst with bootleg gin.

After a while I was called to the phone. It was my contact. His
voice was fat over the phone.

"I am Mister Sydney Glutman," he addressed me. "Allow me to express
my apologies but I missed my train and can only reach you by phone."

"How can you express yourself if you ain't on the train?"

"Moo-Ha!" the fat voice laughed. "You are a wit, sir. I like a man
with wit."

"Well, this is not the work I was trained for," I continued. "Shall
I just rail at you, since you stationed me here? I'm no sleeper, just
coach me a little. This could be of an important case, huh? How shall
I conduct this investigation? What kind of loco motive could be behind
the killings in this town..."

"I like a man with wit—but you, sir, are giving me a headache," the
fat man interrupted. "I may as well fill you in on what you will be
investigating. A number of nonunion workers have been murdered in the
past few months. We suspect it is the work of labor militants. The
new workers are at their mercy, sir."

"Yeah, they got the scabs on their knees," I replied. "Vileson has
hired me from the Finkerton Detective Agency to help out with your
strike fighting."

"You need only catch the killers," Glutman answered. "But the last
victim was our labor relations manager, 'Scarface' Kelly. Kelly was
last seen in the company of Dinah Branded, a rather maternal looking
golddigger from the mother load country."

"What else do you know about this Branded woman?" I asked, looking
at the bathtub ring in my gin glass.

"By Gad, sir, that's more like it. We know that she lives with a
tubercular union radical, Dan Squint. You would do well to confer
with my boss, Mr. Vileson." Glutman gave me Vileson's address and ad-
vised me not to slouch or fidget when I talked to the old man. "Make
a nice impression. You aren't recalcitrant, I trust?"

"No, I'm Italian."

As I sauntered back to the bar a tall, overly bountiful woman
pushed past, batting aside everyone in her way. I nearly got a bust in
the mouth myself.

"I'll have a rye, Guy, and make it dry." She rapped her knuckles on
the bar.

"Coming right up, Miss Branded!" the barkeep yelled.

"So, what happened to Scarface Kelly. Miss Branded?" I asked,
straightening my tie again.

She dumped a glassful of beer over my head and told me it was im-
polite to start a conversation without introducing myself.

Sure, maybe I was rushing the plot development, but I just grinned
at her as the brew drizzled harmlessly off the brim of my well Scotch-
Guarded fedora.

This impressed her somehow.

"Hey, Dinah!" Some dangerous-looking mouthbreather shouldered be-
tween us. "Mac Mailer wants to see you."

"Tell that runt he'll have to look up to see me or anyone else,"
she said, and belched sullenly in his face.

"Aw, but Dinah," he moaned, "Squeaky was going to take you skating.
Might be real romantic—just you and him and half a dozen bodyguards."
Then, looking at me, "This guy looks like he repossesses old shoes for
a living."

"That rinky dink thinks he's a high roller but I'm tired of having
bodyguards hanging around ALL THE TIME!"

"Hey, we promised not to look." The thug fixed his collar.

Dinah decked the mouthbreather with one poke.

While I walked her home, Dinah told me how Mac Mailer (alias Speaky
the Wheel) had taken the only man she had ever really loved and led him
into a life of crime, dissolution and flashy hatbands. Her beau had
gone from bad to worse till finally he completely incinerated himself
while free-basing.

"That's the trouble with flaming youth," I remarked, "they always
gotta make an ash of themselves."

"Squeaky always wanted me for himself," she said. "That's why he
killed Kelly. He's a very dangerous and ambitious man; he wants to
take over the whole town and rename the streets after his gang members
and pet mice." She asked me my name.

"Herschel Dammit. I'm a private eye for the Finkerton Agency in San
Francisco," I answered.

"That" doesn't sound Italian," she said.

"No, they told my father to change his name at Ellis Island so he
started swearing at them," I explained. "The real name was Jablonsky."

"I see." She furrowed her brows.

I had just said good night to Miss Branded when the ominous lurking
shadow of a skulking prowler car purred up beside me.

"Hi! Want a ride to the next scene?" asked a cheerful cop.

The narrative might drag if I walked around town so I got in. In the
back seat sat a chunky cop with twinkly eyes and a grey flabby face.
Beside him sat a tastelessly dressed hood who looked as hard as a lead
pipe and about as clever as one.

"I'm Police Chief O'Goonan," the cop smiled amiably, "and this is my
associated Casino Starky." O'Goonan produced my own wallet from some-
place and read my business card.

"So you're the PI that Wileson hired from Frisco," he said.

"You snatched my wallet!"

"It must have fallen out," he said, returning my billfold with fewer
bills to fold. The hood polished a shiny gun.

"I didn't come here so some silver-tongued tinhorn copper could
steel from me," I snapped at O'Goonan. "You got a lot of brass! I
won't be lead by the nose, so you'd better zinc twice before you try my
metal," I said, then turned to Starky. "And your trusted alloy here
don't scare me with his nickle-plated shootin' iron."

"Well, that's fine and enough said," O'Goonan answered.

"You can set me off anyplace now," I growled. "You two have been a
real gas."

"Well, maybe we should take you down to the station for a punping,"
Starky snarled.

"There's no call for gratuitous dialogue, lads," O'Goonan interceded.

"Look, Chief," I began, "I have reason to suspect that Mac Mailer
killed Kelly. If you give me time—"

"So, Squeaky is our man, then," O'Goonan interrupted, and offered me
a cigar. "Well, that's perfectly fine. We'll just drop by his place
and shoot the little bastard for resisting arrest. We can drop you off
at old Elihu's on the way."

At Wileson's door his sunken-eyed, spooky-looking manservant said he
would see if Elihu could stand my company just then, and slithered off
for five minutes. Then he led me upstairs in the mansion to meet the
aging dingus mogul.

The old man had beady eyes and a bad attitude. He had once been a
powerful mine owner and still had large bushy eyebrows which he had
won from John L. Lewis after a long legal dispute.

"Have you caught the killer yet?" he barked.

"I've got an idea who did it, but no evidence yet."

"Evidence shmevidence!" Elihu roared. "I could have gotten a real
detective if I knew you were such a pansy." He called me all sorts of
awful names for awhile. His servant tried to calm him, crooning softly
and taking the old pirate's blood pressure periodically. At last I got
a word in.

"Well, O'Goonan's just gone over to nail Squeaky Mailer," I suggest-
ed. "It should be all over soon enough."

"WHAT!?! Mailer works for me, you idiot!" Vileson went into convul-
sions of some sort. He managed to gasp to his servant. "Thermidor...my
pills..." the tyrant gurgled. The servant fawned over Vileson and
calmed him into a semi-articulate rage. I did some deep knee bends to
pass the time till I could say something. Vileson did not want to pay
me.

"Shall I have some of the men dispose of this nasty cad?" the servant
asked meekly.

"Hold the mobsters, Thermidor," I demanded. "You're an awful crab,
Vileson, so stop being shellfish. The world may be your oyster, but
only while you got the clams. That shrimp Mailer and his pack of ur-
chins will be warmed to their cockles if they can mussel you out."

"Ah, baloney!" Vileson snarled, but he sent Thermidor out.

"We have to gather a case," I said. "You have a district attorney?"

"Yes," said Vileson. "I keep him in the closet there next to my
sports coat and my mayor."

Later on, just as I was outside the Vileson mansion, a bit 1929 Cord
came barreling down the street, leaking gunfire and radiator fluid. As
it neared, a gunman squatting on the running board pointed at me and
yelled: "That's the guy, Squeaky!"

The car's doors flew open as it stopped on a dime. My life wasn't
worth a plugged nickel, I thought. These hoods would offer no quarter.
(Next month: EPISODE #2: THE BUNK, THE WHOLE BUNK, AND NOTHING BUT THE
BUNK.)

WHOOZITS by
Elayne

① THIS IS HAN WHOZIT,
IN A STATE OF SUB-
PENDED ANIMATION



② HE WILL REMAIN SO
UNTIL THE FINAL VOTE
IS TALLIED ON WHETHER
TO 'KILL' THE WHOZITS...



③ ...OR TILL WE CAN'T
MILK THIS GAG ANY-
MORE, WHICHEVER
COMES FIRST...



HAVE A TURKEY
FOR
THANKSGIVING...
INVITE ALAN THICKE
TO YOUR HOUSE!

PA

WHY I WON'T TALK ABOUT MY DATE WITH NINA BLACKWOOD

by Merle Foote

It all started when I borrowed a 16mm sound home movie camera from my buddy Calvin. We're in show business together: once a month I get up on stage at the Elk's lodge and mouth the lyrics to the records he spins on a real professional sound system they got there. Calvin's got that DJ touch; he knows how to sound enthusiastic about the dumbest things, and he combs his hair just like Dick Clark—he's gonna be big someday. Anyway, I borrowed his film equipment so I could send a message to Nina Blackwood. I thought that it was only right that she knew that at least one very cool person in New Mexico thought she did good work. I had Calvin run the projector while I sat at the edge of my waterbed and told her how I was the numero uno hip guy around Gallup, and if she should ever be in the area I'd be glad to show her the sights. Pretty bitchin' idea, don't you think?

Please understand that when it comes to being cool in central-western New Mexico, ol' Merle's got the market cornered. I'm always way out in front of things around here. It was back in the winter of '81 when I told the owner of Gallup's biggest disco—and these are my original words—"Louie," I said, "from New York to California, there's a new wave comin', I warn ya." Louie took those prophetic words to heart and now he's got the hippest new wave club in town.

Of course, most hip people are creative too, and I'm no exception. I happen to be a pretty good writer (the babes really get off on that). I do the record reviews for the Gallup Marketeer, which is a very hip paper. The guy who runs it is so cool that he gives the Marketeer away free to "the people". There's usually a good stack of them lying on the floor near the Galaxian machine at the 7-11. My reviews are placed right under the ad for Kyle's Record Universe. The owner used to call his store Kyle's Licorice Pizza, but some lawyers from L.A. came to town and told him that there was a big chain that already used that name, and if he didn't stop using it they'd sue. What a coincidence.

Anyway, I figure this tape I sent to Nina is bound to impress her, but I gotta admit that I wasn't ready for what happened next.

I came home about ten in the morning after one of my late nighters over in the Petrified Forest (no time for details, but I was in the company of two of Gallup's finest chiquitas—get the picture?). I was just getting ready to catch some Z's when this messenger from one of those overnight delivery companies shows up with a package for me. Inside was a taped message from Nina herself. I ran over to Calvin's and we put it on his projector. This is what we saw: First, there's Nina sitting in the MTV studio, but the lights are off and there's just a dim spotlight on the lady. And get this: she's sitting there with half her blouse unbuttoned, and you can just about pick out the edge of her left nipperoo. Wow! I'm seriously amazed! I always knew I had charisma, but to get the Nina herself to come on to me like this—sometimes I think it's time I got my hip ass over to New York or L.A. and got involved with some very cool happenings and people. You know, just hang around with celebrities like Warhol and Yoko Ono; I hear that's how Geraldo Rivera got started. But getting back to the film: Nina folds her hands together and tilts her head and says, "Hey, Merle, thanks sooo much for sending me your video. I usually make it over to Santa Fe once a year to see some very hip artist friends of mine, and you can bet that the next time I go, I'll make a little side trip to Gallup so we can meet." And then Nina shakes her head like she does when she's trying to figure out what's going on, and says, "I thought you came across in a very fiine way, Merle." Then she looked off into space for a few moments—she's so cute when she does that—before starting to talk again: "You folks get many snowstorms in that part of Enchantment Land, Merle?" Hey, Nina, ol' Merle gets your drift. You'll never catch the hippest hombre in Gallup without his vial—sniff sniff.

By now you get the picture: the ultimate fantasy come true, right? No way, Jose. What happens next is so incredibly incredible, even I don't believe it. It seems like Nina's just about to rap up her message when—guess who—none other than the princess of prep-punk herself, Martha Quinn, comes dancing across the film. And she's wearing—I can't stand it—a Little Bo Peep costume that features a mini-dress with gold lame panties. She prances to center stage, turns around, and then bends over to show that she's got pictures of Hall and Oates stitched into the seat. Hall's on the left cheek, looking kind of pen-sive, and Oates is smiling from the right. Calvin and me are going crazy watching this stuff, though I still manage to maintain a semblance of cool. After doing a little wiggle, Martha stands up again, turns back around, faces the camera and says, "I'd like to meet you too, Merle. Think you've got enough for Nina and me to share?" This proves to be too much for Calvin, and he runs off to his bathroom.

That was about the end of the tape; except for one more shot of Nina where she shakes her head and lets her curls flop around, and then looks off into space again.

So now maybe you can understand why I refuse to talk about what happened this summer between me and a couple of really fiine (Nina taught me how to say that) ladies. I would never violate a trust, even though it would make a dynamite story—especially the part about the monkeys.

Being hip is everything it's cracked up to be and more, and I'd like to tell you more about it, but I have to go now. I've borrowed Calvin's film equipment again, and I'm planning to send out another video. Do you think that Princess Di would consider fooling around behind Charlie's back if the right guy came along?

A Dialogue in Verse

by Millea Kenin

Being the Debate Between the Passionate Personal Growth Advocate and the Dedicated Movement Heavy (either Part may be Play'd be a person of Either Sex).

PPGA: "Come live with me and be my Love

And we will all the Marvells prove
That Valleys, Groves, Hills & Fields,
Woods or steepy Mountains yields."

DMH: "The Valleys are no longer Green,
Brown Smog upon the Hills is seen,
And so, till we the World improve,
I have no time to spare for Love."

PPGA: "Better to sit upon the Rocks
Avoiding the unnatural Shocks
That Flesh is Heir to, and with Love
Ourselves transform'd, the World then move."

"Be all our Visions ne'er so Fair,
If we Ourselves do not repair,
Our brave new World will wither fast,
Its Faults repeated of the Past."

DMH: "Alas, too cabin'd, cribb'd*, confin'd
By all the lills we'd leave behind,
To build that World our Lives must give,
In which we'd scarce be fit to Live."

"When all the World is once more Young
And Clean Air fills each Worker's lung,
Then new Delights the minds will move
Of Generations rear'd to Love."

PPGA: "First change Ourselves—"

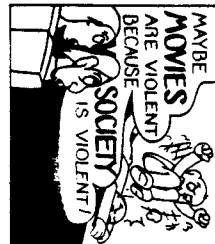
DMH: "—the World first change
Into something rich and strange."

PPGA: "If even we cannot Agree—"

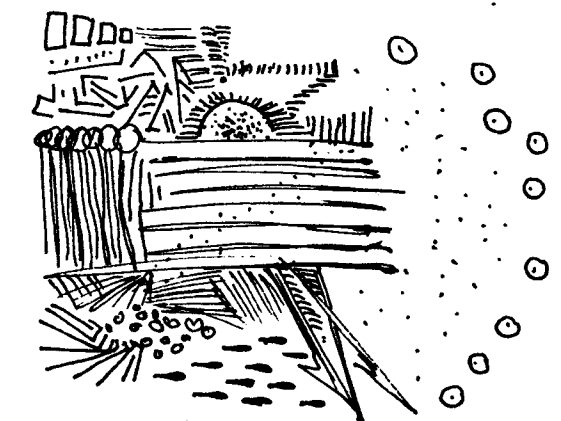
DMH: "What Hope have all for Unity?"

BOTH: "No—none Tonight have plann'd to Meet
For Confrontation, or Retreat; **
Let's leave off Change of World & Head,
And Smoak a Joynt and go to Bed."

*Like this, and many Other lines of these Verses
**I think that Line is rather Neat.



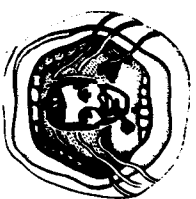
"A NEW DAWN" by Joel Marting



GREG BLAIR 1972

WHAT IS the sound of Slowhand Clapton!—C. B. Addepace. (To which the seersucker Tofu Manchu replied: "He who is on the spiritual plane, misses the boat.")

Capitallist Doom & Gloom
boys get you in a Spin?
Now you no longer need
fear the End of the World!
Send \$1 for Intrans Paraphrase
The Church of the SubGenius
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Dallas, TX 75214



Scathing Expose
of the
Cult Business!

How to start your own.
\$1 for introductory book.
Peds the lies off the 1,000
bogus cults and self-help
programs in America.

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P.O. Box 140306
Dallas, TX 75214



FIRESIGNS

Where there's Fire, there's smoke, I never say, so let's start off this month with some news of The Smoker himself, Peter Bergman. Peter sent me some special presents a couple weeks back, and I'll quote: "Here are some PETE 'N PATS, a cartoon I'm writing for the L.A. Weekly with my roommate Howard Cowan and drawn by Bruce Litz (cover artist for Shakespeare's Lost Comedy and Lawyer's Hospital). Our deal doesn't allow for re-publication right now but if you know any weeklies that might be interested let me know." So goes out the word; please contact me if your local weekly paper might want to inquire about the strip. Basically, the premise of PETE 'N PAT deals with an alien (I refuse to call them "et's", but then how would folks know I speak not of the illegal variety of the damp rear torso and such?) who lands in Southern California, and is an excellent and hysterical satire of California—and modern—lifestyle. Fun stuff, and a reason to buy the L.A.W.!...

Peter also sent a self-titled "Minireview" from Advertising Age on TFT friend and co-worker Fred Jones and his current commercial campaign with Mexicana Airlines. Copies available to the interested...

Thanks to all who helped out promoting Firesign Radio by calling their local stations! Stations 'round the country thus received listener calls before they got the disks from the Global Satellite Network and, according to GSN's Rachel Perkoff (also recently become an IJ reader), when a station hears about a show from listeners before they even have the show in hand, when they get the show it'll have stuck in their minds and swayed them even more into airing the show, etc. etc., you know how it works... Anyway, the show's now scheduled to air, GSN hopes and plans for, Hallowe'en weekend, just about the time you're receiving this. Two major market stations have been added to GSN's list, WLLP "The Loop" in Chicago and KROR in San Francisco—no news on New York yet but we're all still hoping—and GSN has received definite go-aheads from stations WDEK (DeKalb, IL) and KFNG (Albuquerque, NM). I don't know how much IJ had to do with these confirmations, but Mike Cullen of Streater, IL, reports in a letter dated September 12, "Ward Holmes, P.D. at WDEK, knows of the show...that GSN has played him bits over the phone to 'test the waters' and that WDEK definitely is going to run it and promote it heavily beforehand." Thanks for your tremendous help in this, Mike!

While I'm reading Mike's letter, let's continue: "Because TFT is preparing to simultaneously conquer both radio and video, why not a 3-pronged attack with TV?? As you undoubtedly know, 'J-Men Forever' has been shown at least twice by USA Cable's 'Night Flight'. The production company behind NF tells me they no longer have the rights to air 'J-Men', however a company called International Harmony does have the theatrical release rights. I then asked the friendly young woman for IH's number and she said she also works for International Harmony and that, therefore, I already had the correct number. Well, rights were reverting back to righters and I, quite rightly, became confused. I don't yet know if IH is part of NF or vice versa or if all they share is the same building and receptionist. I was sufficiently coherent to ask if letters from TFT fans would help in getting 'J-Men' aired again on 'Night Flight'. The answer was, 'Oh, definitely!' and we should send those letters to: Cynthia Friedland; ATI Video, 888 7th Ave., New York, NY 10106; 212-977-2300."

Mike also mentioned calling Pacific Arts about the MISSING YOLK video, which has been out for about a month now and is reportedly doing quite well. I know it's \$59.95 at most video stores, but apparently P-Arts sells it for \$49.95, so it's best to go to the source. If you wish to purchase the vid from them, and if you'd like a copy of the really nifty 8 1/2 x 15 mini-poster of the vid available for \$2.50 from them, write Pacific Arts Video & Records, P.O. Box 22770, Carmel, CA 93904; 408-624-4704.

Copies of the vid have been sent out, Phil Proctor informs me, to shows like Thicke of the Night and David Letterman's Late Night, so we may yet see another tv appearance or two of A,P&B. Updates as soon as anyone knows them...

Other projects in the works, as I mentioned last month, are the interactive audio game for CD disc that the three are doing for Warner Bros., involving a labyrinth of some sort the solution to which must be sent in to WB; the RCA video project now being called "Hot Shorts", from which a short film with a few excerpts will be released around Christmastime; and a possible radio pilot for Larry Josephson. Also, do watch for Phil P's Rubber Maid commercial, eh...

But the fun item this month from Phil involves a new game show soon

to air on NBC in place of FANTASY!. This one's called, are you ready, THE HOLLYWOOD SQUARES MATCH GAME—two for the price of one, I suppose—but the celebs involved aren't really one's run-of-the-mill Jaye P. Morgans and Charles Nelson Reillys and such, from what I gather. In fact, when Phil did the show, he said he was talking to some of the behind-the-scenes people involved and they may be interested in having the entire group on in the future. Again, we'll see how it goes... Phil also sent me, in addition to a nifty picture of his 5 1/2-year-old daughter Kristin, a couple reviews of MISSING VOLKS (from Suzan Boettger in San Francisco and Liz Lufkin in Dallas, the latter of whom kept referring to A,P&B as "the Firesign", underline mine, since I can think of no logical reason for the redundant insertion of that definite article), an invitation to a screening of the vid at the Groundlings Theatre in LA October 17 (shucks), Global's press release which accompanied the Firesign Radio disks, and some 'ads' for Bear Whiz Beer and Rat in the Box.

Speaking of nifty presents, thank to all who keep providing me with audiovisual TFT aids from the past, present and future! Of note this month are: Derek Tague, who now works in the Strand bookstore in NY's East Village, and who manages to find more copies of the BIG BOOK OF PLAYS for me every time I go in on my lunch hour; Keith Jones for his avid taping of old shows; Rick Moore for his old Carnegie Hall '74 playbill; Jed Martinez for two press sheets from EVERYTHING YOU KNOW IS WRONG (Jilly got the other); Candi Strecker for the Boettger article & advert for TFT's annual Hallowe'en party at the Kibuki Theatre (as I mentioned last issue). By the way, as the theatre is in Candi's now-home-town of San Francisco, she has been appointed Official IJ Reporter covering the event, and we should have a dynamite review next month. Phil told me one of the scheduled events is a Nick Danger Look-Alike contest, for all of youse who want to come out of the fog and into...

Also thanks to Dave Ossman for the "3-D Diorama"—Dave's back in Casa Bisonte now, soon to be off to the Deep South for reasons only he seems to be able to fathom, and may be doing our quiz next month again. In the meantime, to fill space and since I'm feeling lazy this month, I decided to do one myself now, focusing on a sort of strange periphery that tends to surround TFT at times, ebbing and flowing like...where was I? Oh yes, this quiz is about—er, us. The 'dear friends', as it were, without whom...um, well, here it is, it's easy, don't worry...

"THESE ARE MY NEIGHBORS!" QUIZ

- 1) What was the first TFT newsletter to be published by somebody other than the four guys themselves? Who was the editor? (Hint: GIANT RAT)
- 2) Who did the cover art for NEXT WORLD, the Nick Danger MISSING SHOE EP, and LAWYER'S HOSPITAL?
- 3) What was Doug Smith's TFT-related 'enterprise' prior to his formation of the Church of the Subgenius?
- 4) Name the official Campeon '76 publication and its editor (real and sur-real name).
- 5) Who the hell got your humble editor started on all of this anyway?
- 6) Of which club was Edgar L. Bullington President-Elect?
- 7) What are the 'real' names of: Sal Montiac; Robert Rabbit; 'The Electrician', and Dr. Whiplash?
- 8) BONUS: What was the most recent TFT-only newsletter to be put out by a 'dear friend' (i.e., not one of the four)?

ANSWERS IN THIS VERY ISSUE (BELOW!)

- 1) the CHRONOMIM SWITCH, from IJ pseudo-staffer Tom Gedwill (1-74-1752).
- 2) William Stout.
- 3) Bulidada Time Control Laboratories.
- 4) THE TOLLER (ran for 10 issues); Steve Cowell aka Heinz Seitz-Golden.
- 5) IJ staffer Jill Zimmerman, in January of 1982.
- 6) The Funny Names Club of America (founded by Bernard Flapdoodle, MI).
- 7) Scott Ingelbreton (editor of the '76 TFT newsra "it's this 'icro-phone, 'orking!!!"); Robert Mollard; Kim Levitt; Steve Premo.
- 8) Our own FALAfaL, issue #2 out by the end of the year.

FLASH: I spoke once more to Rachel Perkoff as this page was being laid out, and she said that, in all likelihood, Firesign Radio will be carried on most or all of the GSN stations listed in our FALAfaL #1 back sheet. Please refer to this page and TUNE IN Hallowe'en weekend to any one of the stations listed! Most importantly, KEEP

CALLING! After the show airs, call the stations with your opinion, AND Rachel asks you also to write Global and tell them as well—P.O. Box S, Tarzana, CA 91356. Remember, response to this special is what will get it on the air eventuall as a live show, so now, more than ever, IT'S UP TO US!

Oodles of toodles, etc. etc...

← AT LEFT: Purportedly the earliest known foto of Dr. Firesign's Electric Theatre (furnished by

Baba MumboJumbo)



LISTEN TO THE T.V.

Pundits and Shootsayers, you're paying billions in advertising costs for the opportunity. Better Yet —

Send SASE to:
SCRAP T.V.

Box 2243 Youngstown, Ohio, 44504

"NOW YOU SEE IT!"

by Phil Proctor

(reprinted from Sept. VIDEO REVIEW)

The Firesign Theatre is about to release its first video album starring America's Only Detective, NICK DANGER, in The Case of the Missing Yolk. It's a home movie in the literal sense of the word. It's a movie for the home market.

When Mike Nesmith, a former Monkey waving Elephant Parts, first approached us, he said that if anyone could create a visual comedy album for this new audience, it would be us. Of course, we agreed. For almost two decades now we've been waiting for the Electrician or Someone Like Him to create this new media revolution. We started on radio, live, performed on the stage, live, then produced in a studio, live, for CBS records -- a studio where the likes of Bob Hope and Jack Benny once entertained millions broadcasting on the radio, live!

And as the technology grew and the economy shrank, the big studios grew smaller and the tape grew larger: 16-track, 24-track, 48-track... but we were still doing our thing, making "movies for the mind."

The work required some concentration. We were writing for a medium we'd created ourselves; united in the desire to create radio-like comedy -- fantasy-adventures so stacked and packed that like the early Mad Magazines, you could return to them over and over again to discover new humor, new meanings and new challenges.

We always took public ideas and made them private. Then, a private-enterprising audience, unhyped but hip, made them public again through word of ear, spreading the thick material thin and planting the germ of a head cult that would infect the English-sneezing world with laughter.

So what's the big deal? We're still making movies for the mind, only now you can see them. Previously, "for the record," you the listener, supplied the stars, sets and special effects in your own imagination. In other words, we've always worked in an INTERACTIVE medium. Just like video games. And like hand-and-eye coordination, making movies requires lots of hand-and-eye collaboration, because in movies too, imagination reigns. And it took a director like Bill Dear -- veteran of numberless commercials, surrealist music videos, Timerider and Elephant Parts; and producers like Kevin McCormick and Nancy Mosher, who assembled a crew of brilliant artist-craftsmen (of both sexes) to realize our vision.

What does Rocky Rocco, that sleazy weasel, really look like? And Nancy? Now, you'll know.

A picture is worth a thousand words; and a word can be worth a thousand pictures if we're talking movie frames! But remember, video machines made your experience really (two-reely) interactive. Laugh so hard you miss something? Rewind your VTR. Watch again. Or search out your favorite parts and share time with friends, like a cut on a record.

So we've designed NICK DANGER on these levels. It's a theatrical piece with a story about heroes, villains and innocent bystanders. And like our former works, it's also made up of numerous media parodies such as "Lawyers' Hospital," the ultimate Daytime Drama, and musical commercial sendups like "Rat in the Box," and the new hormone gum for teens, "Boobie Chew," all maniacally integrated into a typically convoluted plot. VHD, now defunct, had commissioned us to produce a video comedy for their multiple choice entertainment system, so we designed choice points like: "Which ad do you want to see?" or, "Which road should Nick take to reach Rocky's hideout?" Each decision led to a comic surprise and one just continued the story, giving you the option to participate on a linear or non-linear basis. More laughs for your money, eh?

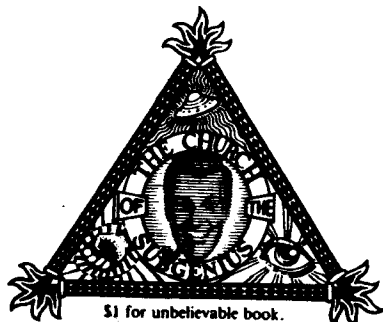
Well, when the nature of the venture changed, we integrated the best into the linear version; but our main characters, the Yolk family of Oxnard, remained locked into an interactive world where every personal choice has an effect, a world in which they can chroma-key themselves into the action on the huge two-way TV screen in their armored Happi Handi House.

And now, it's up to you, the new video audience.

The choice is yours.

...and sign it,

Phil Proctor, Firesign Theatre



Insane Manifesto for Correct Human Behavior!

Takes human folly one step further, enlarging the boundaries of experience no matter how insane and/or disturbing.

Yes -- you may have Snapped already from the information disease of the TV Age. Root out your false programming and mentally bash it to hell.

Face the facts with a jackhammer of morbid yuks.

Exploit your Abnormality Potential!

Totally cynical? Delusively different?

If you think you're strange, try The SubGenius

Foundation and find out what 'strange' is.

Interne pamphlet \$1.

P.O. Box 14006, Dallas, TX 75214

Lonely Paranoid

by Luke McGuff

There was a group of kids on the bus, all dressed up and riding to a dance. They filled up the front seats, talking loud, acting hopeful, thinking "Maybe tonight." One of the girls sat a little apart from all the rest. She joked and laughed as much as anyone, but she kept looking around, bright-eyed, trying to catch the glances of the other passengers. She was saying, "Hey, look at me, I got friends and I'm with them."

The only one who looked back was an old man, alone and lonely. His face was a wreck, permanently stubbled with beard, deep lines carved into by a blunt knife. She glanced at him three or four times. He just stared back.

After a while, he stood up and started yelling. "Stop it! Stop it right now! I know you're talking about me, you goddamn kids. I'm gonna call the police on you." Then he ran off the bus, still muttering. The girl looked at her friends and they all laughed. But they never stopped talking about the radio and video games.



G. SCRAWFORD

LETTERS TO WORDS

by Rick McCann

There is only you and I. We are both strangers and separate, yet are one. I am a part of you and you are a part of something else. That something else is a universal. We are always alone: in cities, in groups, even when together, that one common characteristic we share even though we have never met. It is through this single characteristic that I understand you and, in turn, will bring you to understand me. We are not that different nor do we travel on that different of roads. It is not necessary that you speak my language or even speak to me at all, for it is through the silence that we are one.

Time passes and we grow older in body but not always in mind. The world changes and we move further and closer to different lands and cities. But you can never be too far away, for we are universal values and in our cluttered solitude are closest. The time will come when we will meet face to face and recognize each other. I have seen you many times as you have seen me -- but sight alone cannot produce recognition.

We will not be alone forever. It may take an eternity but the universe is our home and as long as we are retained within it, it is certain that the day will come when we will meet as one -- the zenith of total understanding when the overcast is gone and letters turn to words.

"HELL IS WHERE I'll meet everyone I libeled on Dial-A-Rumor" (Mark Twain). Call 843-7474 for a damned good time.

ALONE by John J. Soldo
 No matter how intimate one may become,
 or how deep and abiding a love
 one may experience
 with the lasting effect
 of a forest covering the base
 of uptruding mountains,
 no matter how long
 one may live in a marriage
 that is free and happy,
 no matter how concrete the union is,
 or shared are the interests
 as they may also explore divergencies
 the way a pool ball caroms,
 no matter how much like communion
 is one's communication,
 no matter how total and complete,
 as when all five senses become one,
 is the act and reality of sex,
 the substance beneath all accidents,
 no matter how well one gets along
 with the other
 with the sheer joy one has
 in an amusement park,
 no matter how God lives in your love,
 the Holy One in our midst,
 for God is love
 incarnated in the togetherness of each two,
 no matter how exquisite
 is life under the same roof
 with conversation through and after the meals
 as talk becomes the telling of the souls,
 be you Antony and Cleopatra,
 or Francesca and Paulo,
 or Romeo and Juliet,
 no matter how grand is your love,
 you are ultimately alone,
 at one with yourself,
 for there are sectors of the soul
 that can be touched by no one
 for each of us, after Eden on this earth
 is a solitary creature
 the way a tree has no real companion.
 Of course, there is so much to be shared
 and that is why Eve came from Adam,
 but one must accept
 the inevitable isolation of the ego,
 the blessing of our individuality
 which may find a match
 but never a fire to consume us whole
 for that would be wanton destruction.

MOUSETRAP
 by Deborah Benedict
 So I read in
 this mornings paper
 they are still trying
 to build a better mousetrap.
 Why?
 Mice haven't improved.

TO SEASIDE
 by Maiden Jappan
 I hope you don't read this
 I don't think I should tell
 You about my feelings
 Perhaps it's as well
 This way, you thinking we're
 Just friends and no more
 I'm no fool, I'll play it straight
 I've been too hurt before.
 The age and distance minor are
 Like Earth to Ursa Major
 But signals from you are so mixed
 I feel like a stranger.
 See? I can't even rhyme any more.

DWARF SONG
 by Anni Ackner
 Tom Thumb—
 You were some little angel.
 Together we were two starts,
 Divine midgets
 Getting married in Grace Cathedral.
 The way we rocked the boat
 On our wedding night
 It was a match stick and a half a nova
 Crack-up, with a shifting breeze
 Sighing and all those crazy people
 Wishing they could shrink.

SCENTSATIONAL
 by S. Minanel
 Thought it was lust
 From his looks, so divine—
 When it was just
 His pheromones matched mine.

PRECIOUS BODY FLUIDS
 by Millea Kenin
 Macho man never cries.
 He's too healthy to sneeze,
 too cool to sweat,
 too tough to puke,
 too tight-assed to shit.
 If he can piss at all,
 he can piss farther than anybody.
 If he could come—
 well,
 is it any wonder he can't?

Song!

The Night
 is a bad
 fairy
 out of the
 crypt she
 crawls
 her mood
 a grisly
 grey
 turning
 to black.
 Ronald Edward
 Kittell

very deep
 their mouths chatter
 to each
 other
 swirl the talk
 around my
 head
 echo down my ear tunnels
 clatter up the stairs
 into the black
 night
 of my mind
 Sheryl L. Nelms

A LESSON IN PHYSICS
 by Noël M. Valis
 In physics, the Second Law of Thermodynamics says
 The universe will be arrested for disorderly conduct
 One of these days. Speculations of this sort can seem
 Remote at six a.m. in Athens, Georgia, when what
 You want is tangled up in sticky blankets, dull
 From slow and unwise blood; when what you've got
 Is sixty minutes from which to reassemble worn-out
 Parts and mixed-up feelings,
 The disarray like last year's winter socks. It's hard
 To empathize with tanked up, crazy atoms, to think
 The world in disrepute, when suddenly you see
 You aren't at all what Harry said you'd be in 1964,
 On the last page of T.R.'s high school yearbook.
 You concentrate on 7:10 to catch the early bus,
 And while the fragments of your life go whizzing by,
 While the landscape dies,
 You meditate on just how much the world will have to pay.

HOW TO MAKE SARDINES
 by Susan Packie
 The jails were not at all
 large enough,
 not nearly numerous enough,
 and certainly not producing
 anything that could
 be called useful,
 so jailers double-tiered
 and double-bunked
 until they had found everyone
 a place within
 their institutions -
 secure facilities
 guaranteed to make sardines!

NOW, OK?
 by Tony Renner
 Down the road
 across the bridge
 put your trust in a jar
 send it off to Spain
 Through the woods
 down the drain
 eat lunch with a midget
 never take time to explain
 Into the street
 beside the light
 cast a major motion picture
 feature stars from your dreams
 Around the corner
 over the hill
 build elaborate sand castles
 let giants kick them down

BUTCHERING THE MEAT MARKET
 by Maiden Jappan
 A hastily scribbled poem
 On the back of another
 Cocktail napkin
 Again in a place I
 don't belong
 Where everyone's dancing
 but me
 The difference?
 This time I don't care.

HOLOCAUST
 by Ronald Edward
 Our Kittell
 vigilant
 sun turns
 tired bored

yawning
 sighs.

GUM ARABIC
 by Roldo
 The Djinn who grinned
 Then offered me
 His famous offer:
 Wishes three.
 Said I,
 "The first I'll ask of you
 Is recommend me
 Wishes two."
 And without pause
 He said to me,
 "Why, I suggest you
 Ask for three!"



I hear the river call my name
 by Sheryl L. Nelms
 I've been fighting
 them all
 tonight
 the bridge rail
 the cement pillars
 the bottomless gully
 and the river
 so smooth
 and black
 and deep
 rolling along
 down there through the night
 calling to me
 telling me
 how easy it
 would be
 to stop
 right here
 and slip
 in

dead cow
 by Sheryl Nelms
 the dead cow
 stayed hidden
 under a windfall
 until winter stripped
 the oaks and chokecherry
 around it bushes
 then the skull
 and xylophone ribs
 poked out
 naked

Death
 is a
 hawk
 the
 grip
 of her
 talons
 around
 my
 loin
 bone
 claiming
 the seed
 Ronald Edward
 Kittell

DESTRUCTION OF A CHILD
 by Ronald Weiss
 Stones hurled at crumbling castle ramparts
 Rats run mechanically through decrepit passages
 The pearly moon watches.
 Blood runs down the masturbated penis
 The King grins, screeches, howls madly, joyously.
 A baby cries
 Mother hangs impaled to great oak
 Death stinks putrid feces in the land.
 II.
 Monstrous howling out there, the creatures
 Terrified whimpering in the night, the victim
 The ivory moon spies.
 Bloody tongues drool felatio
 The witch cackles triumphantly?
 Rip slash jerk tear
 Baby lies in pieces
 Tiny head rolls to mother's feet
 Life will begin anew, hallelujah.

THE SCHIZO BOOGIE
 by Deborah Benedict
 Does anything I feel
 Does anything I say
 Does anything I think
 make sense?
 No dear,
 but a gentleman will
 be by shortly
 to discuss it with you...

Poetry!

THE COUNT
 by Noël M. Valis
 Hard times have fallen upon him, his hair's
 Gone gray, the palsy in his hands, mottled
 And arthritic, makes it difficult to hold
 His victims. There is an air of general decay
 He much regrets; he doesn't like
 The modern cut: he'd rather be somewhere
 Else. And worst of all,
 He's found a girl, a proper Catholic, God forbid,
 Who doesn't even
 Think he's real, who hasn't got the slightest
 Notion who he is, who's slowly slowly killing
 Him with ice cream mounds
 Of sweet devotion, who's got
 Him mowing the lawn, shopping
 For groceries, attending midnight mass,
 And even rinsing the toilet bowl. Where
 Is his verve, that wild pizzazz to drain
 The dark and sleep the sawn? His teeth are
 Loose and ache at night, but not
 To bite desire. And furthermore,
 His line of work has gone
 Completely out of style. He thinks he should
 Retire, and leave it to the younger men,
 Who've modernized the whole damn thing
 And taken out the glamour, or so he says,
 Mornings when he shaves
 And sees his image
 Bouncing back, just
 An ordinary man
 Suffering
 From the usual
 Mid-life
 Identity crisis.

THE BLACK BOX
 by Susan Packie
 Good morning,
 and welcome aboard
 flight number forty.
 It's a beautiful day
 for flying.
 The sky over Miami
 is a baby-blue hue
 sprinkled with talc.
 This bird will be
 trying its wings,
 just a robin in spring
 or some such thing.
 Your pilot today
 is a flight recorder:
 the little black box
 that keeps life in order.
 Did you really suppose
 with all I know
 I would be defying
 the laws of gravity
 in a machination
 of human creation?
 It's a marvelous day
 for flying
 and dying
 high in the skies
 of Miami.
 This has been
 a recording.
 Good morning...

HOLLYWEED, U.S.A.
 by Julian Ross
 There's a great big sign in the Hollywood Hills
 That tourists and natives all do heed
 This is a story about that an
 The day Hollywood became Hollyweed
 Well the law was passed in '75
 Put pot smoking in fraffick fine class
 It made an ounce of prevention worth
 More than a pound of good Gold grass
 So four young guys one day got stoned
 Decided to have their little fun
 They said what better way to see
 The law take change January one
 On December thirty-first they made their move
 Had black bed sheets all in hand
 Changed those double o's to e's
 And carried out their master plan
 So the town woke up January first
 They saw quite an infamous deed
 The famous sign had been changed
 It proclaimed to all: HOLLYWEED
 There's a great big sign in the Hollywood Hills
 That tourists and natives all do read
 This was the story about that and
 The day Hollywood became Hollyweed

HYPER TYPER
 by Maiden Jappan
 Handwriting Time
 When you force your
 thoughts to slow down
 To keep pace with
 your pen
 The inherent danger:
 Sometimes they stop
 Altogether

my history is
 a long, sloppy highway
 a major arterial
 always under repair.
 - Deborah Benedict

the quest
 by Sheryl Nelms
 I plunge to my elbows
 in the bubble
 of Liquid Palmolive
 fingers noodling
 I do my slow troll
 across the stainless
 steel sink bottom
 fish for the plumped
 pink sponge
 I can never gaff

grand opening
 by Sheryl Nelms
 endless rows
 of yellow
 plastic
 feathered flags
 fluttering
 flip
 in the wind
 their friction fret
 cutting my
 ears
 stabbing
 yellow stilettos
 into my brain
 into my brain

You
 look in the
 mirror on
 the wall
 you don't
 understand it
 you probably
 never will
 but you can't
 help thinking
 about it
 it keeps ticking
 away in your
 head
 like the clock
 above the mantle
 every hour
 on the hour
 striking out
 the same dismal
 tune
 the clock &
 the mirror
 have formed
 a conspiracy.
 Ronald Edward
 Kittell

ADVENTURES IN CAPITALISM

by rodney k. dioxin

i (signifying me, rodney dioxin) was standing on a subway platform with nary a droog in sight (semi-obscure film reference, here) drinking and thinking. what i was thinking first was that october was national lower-case month and that this was gonna drive elayne nuts. what i was thinking second was that i was supposed to be telling a story here which brought me around to what i was drinking and also took my mind off the scabrous movie poster which my eyes had just spotted. (pieces—now you don't have to go to texas for a chainsaw massacre...and about time too...now available nationwide at bloodbaths r us) like i said, or started to, i was drinking a can of my favorite soda "agent orange" and that's as good a thing to write about as the eventual decomposition of all matter into its component energy.

yessiree, it's "agent orange"...the breakfast of chromosomes! the world's only recombinant sodapop and the story behind its creation; ah now, there's a pointless one. it all began in a simple brownstone genetic engineering lab where there was brought into existence what's known to the layman-or-woman as a hideous, hairy monster. his name was james watt (no relation) and he wasn't happy. they never let him out into the world and he was thus unable to realize his dream of becoming a famous advertising executive. it was that old cliché, a day like any other day, when james watt's keeper/attendant/creator, mr. research chemist, decided to move to fargo, as chemists are wont to do. james watt knew he could never become a major advertising anything in fargo so he planned an escape and bided his time. he didn't care that mr. research had created him out of liquid nitrogen and old tony bennet 45s and spam. he had a dream.

mr. research went on with his packing, including what was to be the experiment, something involving altering the genetic structure of mouse brains. what was amazing about this was that the experiment was done completely without mice parts of any kind. james watt wasn't sure what it was but he thought it involved electrons from empty packing crates for binary nerve gas bombs. science marches on.

the day arrived, another day that seemed to be like any other, except for the alien invasion of switzerland (they wanted more chocolate). mr. research got on the plane with his ersatz mouse juice which received a nice dose of x-rays which some say is responsible for all the ensuing hoopla. well, everyone's entitled to their opinion no matter if it is worth less than a bucket of rabid donkey spittle (but i become overly purple, i'll chill out). mr. research got on board and the case (a gucci valise actually) with james watt in it was stuffed into the baggage hold. oh the indignity of it all. stuck in a suitcase with no batteries for his walkman. escape seemed the only logical idea so he did it. he had crawled his way out and was cooking some lunch on one of the wing jets when a passenger spotted him and started screaming. this wasn't too bad but when the nutty guy started shooting at him, and then the little guy in the black suit walked by to say that you should stay tuned for this message from kraft macaroni and powdered brass...well, that was that and it was time to go inside, which he did. actually, things inside were pretty quiet. the rest of the passengers had decided that john lithgow was making too much noise. they were trying to watch "twilight zone: the movie", so they'd given him a pre-frontal lobotomy. he seemed quite happy. he was making a bas-relief sculpture of ludwig of bavaria out of airline quiche. you remember ludwig, the man reported to have said "i'd rather have a bottle in front of me than a frontal lobotomy".

james watt patted lithgow on the head and headed for the magazine rack. he wanted to get the latest issue of "popular genetix". he'd submitted some poetry. halfway down the aisle he was accosted by bili shatner, which infuriated him (can you blame him?), especially since he'd seen the motion picture, by his guess, almost 36,000 times. he suspected that mr. research had thrown in a print of the flick when he was doing the basic gen-tech work because every night he dreamed the entire plot. so, he killed shatner quickly but painfully (and can you blame him?) and found that he was standing right next to mr. research. what to do?

he pondered this for a while and if mr. research had been awake he would've known this cause smoke was rising from james watt's head. in an effort to cool off his synapses he picked up the bottle of synthimouse that mr. research had been contemplating before he'd dozed off. it was delicious. james watt knew what to do. he grabbed the bottle, mr. research and a parachute and jumped. on landing in cleveland, he hopped in a cab, ate the duck who was driving and headed it towards new york. somewhere in new jersey he discovered that his tasty discovery could replicate itself, so he threw mr. research into a passing swamp. (transition ahead)

james watt arrived in new york city with his amazing drink, now named agent orange, for its color. actually its original hue had been fuschia but that had reminded mr. research of his first love, a well-built carbon tet. molecule, so he'd persuaded the liquid to become orange by threatening to name it "arthur dent". anyway, james watt hit nyc with 20 cases of "agent orange" and was told to get himself stuffed by the receptionists at every ad agency he visited. he was, naturally, put off by this, but he eventually got himself pulled together, climbed the walls of the building which housed the city's biggest agency, kicked the window in and bit the head off the president. thus does power change hands and james watt took advantage of his new-found prosperity to mount the most phenomenal campaign for a product in history. about a half-year later he was able to begin production and then sales really took off. the rest is history.

and there i stood, with empty can of "agent orange", looking out onto the empty platform (empty as in trainless), and i saw 4 kids with "agent orange" t-shirts which were plugging the saturday morning cartoon of the same name in which our hero ("a.o.") battles godless communism, tooth decay and school segregation for the good of the republic and dow chemicals. it's fun stuff. yessiree it's one helluva drink, tastes like whatever ya want it to, doesn't waste our precious natural resources, yesindeedy. as james watt (of course you know he's no relation) says, "it's the greatest thing since sliced wombat".

HANK AND HANNAH — "ROYAL QUESTION?"

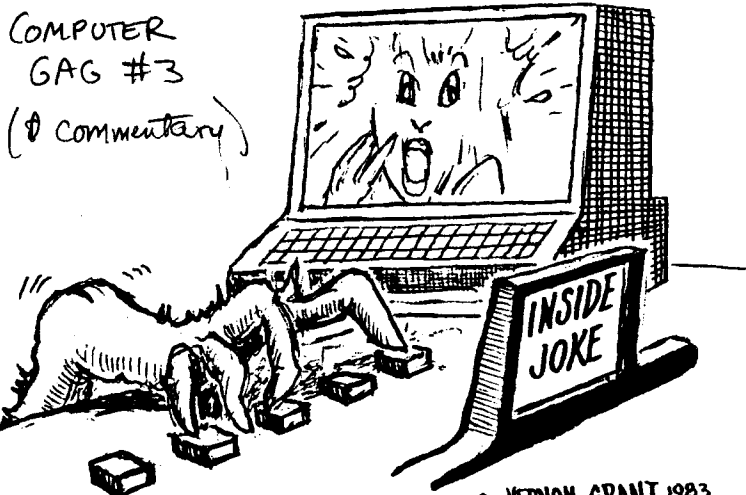


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Signophobia

by Cynthia Cinque

Signs are a symbol of the law. They are everywhere: on clothing, on cars, on walls. They say, "Here Today—Gone to Maui", or "the buck stops here", or "I Love Santa Barbara", or "I Hate New York", or "Save the Dolphins", or "Push Back the Night". The next rapist i see with that sign i am going to rape, wearing a surgical mask and rubber gloves. I have some signs for you: "Schizophrenia is a warm, soft puppy"; "Fuck off Robots"; "Have you slept with your son today?". That makes you grimace? Your grimace makes me grimace. Why do you advertise your ruins? Why do you hawk your plasma? I would sooner nail my amputated hand to a tree. I would sooner walk the moon—my eyeballs in an eggcup. I make you sick? You make me sick, Mister Every Day Is A New Beginning. I'd sooner go down on my mother than buy your wares. You turned my friend into a paranoid. He can't keep his inner eye on his thymus; you printed the stock market on his eyelids. You shot him with plastic bullets and now his interior is your interior which is only an exterior. You cut the silver wire between his eyes and his soul and now he thinks every sign refers to him. He is busy reading all of them and says, "they all refer to me. You see. It says on that sign—'Fuck off! And die'." He also feels that some girl is trying to run him down with a lawnmower. He read it in the school paper, "Hey, shy guy! Let's get it together". The food in the cafeteria is calling him names and he talks back to the T.V. He believes he shot Sadat and yesterday he confessed he strangled his showerhead. I told him, "Don't read signs or you'll buy a plane ticket to Central Asia when you really want to be in the San Diego Zoo." I told him signs are an obscene caller who won't identify himself. Can't identify himself. I told him signs will cut and cauterize his roots. I grabbed the seat of his pants but his brain tapped out a morse code and he ordered a snow sweeper from Sear's catalogue. "Aspirin 99¢ for 100". "Save the Whales". Same old knee jerk but you cut your nerves.



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"COMPUTER ANXIETY"

COMPUTERS HAVE accuracy, dependability and unfailing honesty—more than can be said for many of the human race. —Data Boy.



PAPOON IN '84/84

PROGRESS REPORT VIII: THE RIGHT STIFF

Well, erection day soon comes up on us, in a style vaguely reminiscent of a bad lunch, this November 8/8. This of course means that all of us In The Know, who have ummashed the scandal surrounding the dropping of the neon ball twice and ushering in of 1984, and who have proffered our masked candidate in this first 1984 as our Saving Grace before we eat the fruits of our labours, realize that we, celebrating a leap year, are One Day Behind those who will be voting on Tuesday, November 8 this year (and not even for president yet!). But why look a gift horse in the mouth, as our equine constituency reminds us, and so we look forward to all manner of organism swarming those voting booths not only on our designated First Election Day [Wednesday, our November 8], but also on the previous day, when They will be out voting in some meaningless nuke dump site, or high school matron's choir or somesuch. REMEMBER, as George says, "IF VOTING IS A FARCE, IT'S UP TO US TO KEEP IT THAT WAY!" George plans to hold an open Victory Party in Wentzville immediately preceding, during, and following the election, so please being enough beer for your immediate Dear Friends...

What with all the excitement going on with Snowed Watt and the Seven Dorks lately, George has understandably been finding it harder to maintain his status as spokesperson for the Surrealists. Even Chuck E.'s laying low (rumor even has it Chuck E.'s in love, but his personal secretary and half-sister Mousarella denies all), waiting for someone to come up with a better recipe for his nearly-nomedible pizza. (This, incidentally, is the reason behind NSP co-chaircreature Anni Ackner opting not to have her 30th birthday party at the Pizza Time Theatre this year; next year she plans on not turning 30 of course so the point is moot.) NSP Coordinaries have put their many heads together, no easy feat considering many individual party members find it painful putting their heads together, and have come up with a tentative plan to, as it were, boost George's sagging ratings and waistline. Pending permissions all around, we—er, they are considering a hasty re-write of THE MARTIAN SPACE PARTY, the movie that made George the national symbol he is today, and a swift resurrection at "just about the right time." The new screenplay is under negotiations to be rewritten by "E.T." scripter Melissa Matheson on cocaine ("the right sniff," as someone close to Ms. Matheson has termed it), rumor has it, and set for directorial duty is noted Surrealist Ivan Stang, producer of more nifty B-home movies than you could threaten a nuke at. Auditions are being held for the part of George Papoon, and George himself is said to be interested in trying out. "After all," he reasoned, "they won't know it's me anyway, so I can't really see a conflict there..." Asked by some unknown busybody hogging glory if the 'coincidental' timing of this remake has anything at all to do with making George look better in his candidacy, Papoon replied, "Oh, no, definitely not. We've already won on residual votes anyway! Besides, how can you be in—I mean, how can being larger-than-life in the first place have any effect on how large this movie makes me look, compendez?" Then, right before he dropped off to a much-needed nap, GGP could be heard faintly mumbling the immortal words of Fred Astaire, "Besides, I'm only doing this part for my grandchildren..." As Dave Ossman's Poon Family Tree shows no Papoon grandchildren at the moment, NSPers were suitably perplexed...

Our San Diego area sub-Coordinary, Baba Mumbo Jumbo, has been rather taken aback at some of our affronts lately and called me aside in a letter which appears somewhere in the middle of our letter column this month. B.M.J. has raised a very sensitive point in his bid as head of Robots for Papoon, and as touchy as this subject may be, I think we must all face up to it and shield the expected blows. The facts of the matter is, and are, that our basic platform has stood at "One Organism, One Vote" at least since 1972, and it has never until now been necessary to examine the inherent, as B.M.J. puts it, "life-formism" in this statement. We must concede, as pointed out, that we are living in the cybernetic age, a time when chips off the old blocks take a byte out of all our Apples, and it's about time we recognized this. HOWEVER, I put it to you, Mr. Jumbo, would it not simply be easier on us all to consider, for purposes of casting votes for our beloved candid-ate, robots, androids, and other cyborgs organisms? This would, I should think, pose an ideal solution to our dilemma without having to change a word! Remember, it's the thought that counts, and we'd like the thoughts of all you readers out there on this! It's up to you—what should we do, change our platform and our focus entirely because of the whinings of one pitiful wimp who's probably been in the closet with his computers too long, or merely regard our robot friends as separate-but-equal organisms in and of themselves? We've been about as unbiased as we can be; the rest is up to you...

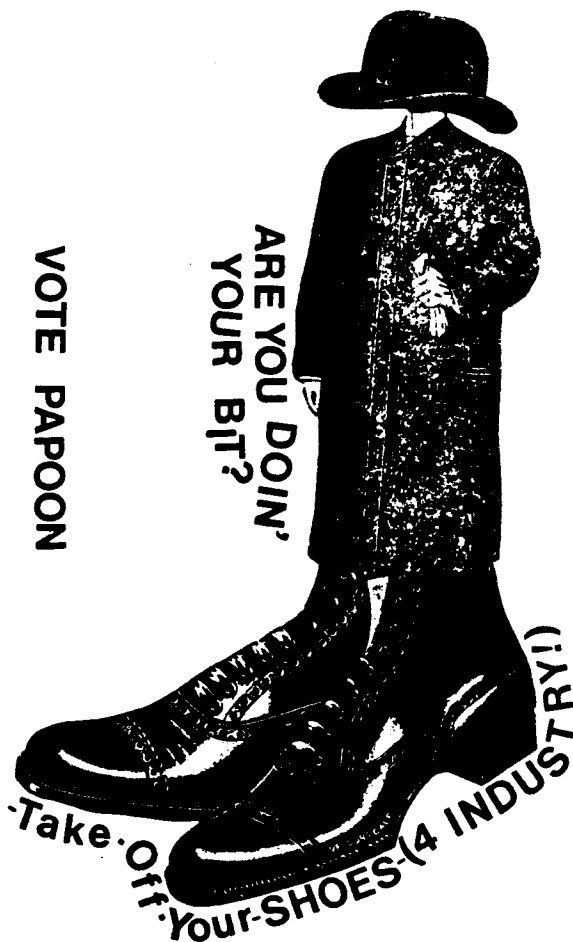
Speaking of which, WHERE ARE YOU, COORDINARIES? We like to reserve space for news from around the country regarding George and NSP constituencies (we can't dream all of this up ourselves, you know!), and so far you (with the notable exception this month of dear Baba M.) haven't sent us in anything of late! Come on, you Surrealists, there must be something worth picking up on out there Where You Are!

And to give him the last word, B.M.J. has supplied not only the picture adorning the FIRE SIGNALS page this month, but also the bit for George on this here page! (And honorable mention to Roldo, who's made up some Papoon rubber stamps, 'would seem as evidenced on recent missives from the Great White Nauth...) More artworks welcome!

Next month: Reports on the Wentzville Victory Bash and, maybe, more News From You! Till then, see you at the remakes!

RONALD REAGAN and Ronald Dellums intervened in El Salvador and Nicaragua, but the Kingfish will intervene in Los Angeles, Oakland, Sacramento, Berkeley and San Diego.

JOIN DENSA—Berkeley chapter—the national club for klutzes, rejects, and the socially insecure. No IQ test required. Write Berkeley Densa, 2225 Woodlsey, Berkeley, 94705.



BASEBALL'S White Lines

by Tom "The Nose" Gedwillo

Commissioner DeLorean provides the following details on his proposed changes for the 1984 season. From his secret den in Tie Plant, Mississippi comes the following exclusive to INSIDE JOKE...Day-Glo colored baseballs will become an added attraction next year—green balls for the first three innings, yellow for the middle three, and orange for the seventh through ninth innings. Games going into extra innings will yield to spheres covered in Day-Glo red velvet ("to add a touch of elegance" maintains Mr. D). Teams will be given the option of utilizing the "intentional strikeout" rule. It can only be made use of with less than two out, and when the team pitching is behind by three or more runs. Another feature among the rules will be the designated hit-batsman. Players who savor the occasional beaning and have masochistic tendencies will be able to fill this role. Goalie masks and upper-torso padding will be optional dress for the DHB. This will also satisfy the violent cravings of many a baseball fan. Further news from the commissioner comes via his postcard mailed from travels through Pie Town, New Mexico...Now that the Padres have merged with the Angels, this leaves an open slot for a new National League franchise. The Omaha Beefeaters are the team, and will be managed by Johnny Bench. Pitching coach is Gaylord "Petro-Jelly" Perry, and former Bosox great "Yaz" will do batting instruction. Team colors are said to be blood red and A-1 Sauce brown. Additional rule modifications will allow for a wild card team for the divisional playoffs. Qualifications for this team will be a combination of things. They must have the lowest ERA, the most players named "Gunter" and be in a city with fewer than 18 golf courses. DeLorean is negotiating with the officials of Waddamana, Tasmania for them to host the 1984 World Series. This would coincide with the country's annual Abel Tasman Memorial Mood-Swing Holiday. Mr. Tasman, founder of the island was thought to be the first 17th century explorer to occupy his spare time by inventing the precursor of baseball. This little-known activity was called "half galley pebble whacking"...On a personal note, here are my predictions for the 1984 finalists: National League East champions—Cubs. N.L. West—Reds. N.L. Wild Card—Mets. American League East—Red Sox. A.L. West—Mariners. A.L. Wild Card—Twins. Comeback Player of the Year—Woody Fryman. BASEBALL'S WHITE LINES salutes these minor league cities and their notoriously fervent fans: Nanty Glo, Penna. (Glo Sox) - Clemville, Texas (Clems) - Tropic, Utah (Tabernacles) - Soap Lake, Wash. (Zests) - Pool, W. Virginia (Chlorines) - Hungry Horse, Montana (Mules) - and this year's Communal League champions, the Cheesequake (New Jersey) Petits Fours. Until my next report from the Winter Freeze League in Punto Fijo, Venezuela, this is "The Nose" saying "take your base".

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A SHORT STORY WITH NO MORAL #3 by D.A. Fripp

A long time ago and far away there lived a troll in a hole. He was no ordinary troll, who are generally thought of as being unpleasant and awful. This troll was as nice as anyone could want.

"Good morning, good morning, the trees are tall and the sun is bright," he would sing each morning. All of the animals who lived in the forest where the troll had his hole would be roused from their slumbers by the troll's sweet song.

"Mr. Troll," a young rabbit said one day to the troll, "it is so nice to hear you sing in the morning. It makes one happy to be alive. But," the youngster said, becoming suddenly serious, "my father and my mother tell me that trolls are mean and nasty. You're not going to turn on us one day, are you?"

"Oh, no, my little friend! I'm not at all like my cousins, the nasty trolls. My folks have always been nice; I haven't an unpleasant bone in my body. Here," he said, presenting a big hairy arm for the rabbit to touch, "does this seem like a nasty, trouble-making arm?"

"Well, no, sir, it doesn't. Your hair is so soft and it smells so good...it smells sort of like...cookies! Mr. Troll! You've been making cookies again! Hoorah!"

"Oh, yes, my little one, that I have. Now go gather all your friends and have them come back here for a nice plate of cookies and all the goat's milk they can drink!"

The young rabbit hopped off towards home and the troll went back into his hole to finish his preparation. After not too long a time, the troll heard a big noise in the woods directly behind his home. "My goodness, whatever could that be," he said to himself and went out to investigate.

He was shocked to see three big woodcutters, dressed all in bright red flannel shirts and faded dungarees, swinging their shiny new axes, busily felling trees. "This is horrible," thought the troll, "they're destroying my precious woods." Just then, a tree that the woodcutters had been chopping came crashing down upon the troll.

When the woodcutters discovered that they had killed a troll, they were ecstatic, for there was a substantial reward to be collected for bringing in a troll. The woodcutters chopped off the troll's head, putting it proudly in their lunch-basket, and went off singing and laughing and telling each other how very brave they must be to have killed a troll.

In a short while, the young rabbit returned with his friends: two squirrels, who were twins; a badger; a skunk; and six of his brothers and sisters. All were taken aback when they could not find Mr. Troll. They were even more taken aback when they found the cookies still in the over burned to a crisp.

"Well," said one of the squirrel twins, "we certainly can't eat these cookies."

"That's just like a troll," grumped the badger, "to play such a mean trick on us."

"Yes," agreed the young rabbit, feeling very disappointed and not a little betrayed, "Mr. Troll wasn't nearly as nice as we thought."



Get ready for a
pretty tough future.

FNORD



In Defense Of...All Of Me by David Howard

Joggers! Weightlifters! Rowers and riders and sitter-uppers!... Just when I was getting to an age where it used to be considered all right to sit out a few dances and look at the women instead of chase them, the world flips over on its head. Kids don't work out much anymore; it's all of us middle-spreaders who are increasing the nation's supply of sweat. Whoever said there was a shortage?

Look, give me a break. I tried. I tried foregoing real food and eating salad; I gave up wine and whiskey in favor of designer water; I even bought myself a jogging suit and \$100 sneakers. Every effort was earnest and well-meaning; each time I caught that smirk on my wife's face, I asked her to wipe it off pretty damn quickly. The effort was hard enough all by itself. "Planned obsolescence," I caught her mouthing one day as I huffed and puffed by on my second lap around the block, but I didn't have the wherewithall to protest. Salad isn't exactly a high energy food.

It eventually became clear to me that there is a direct relationship between weight loss and extreme suffering. All the diet planners and calorie counters don't tell you this, but it's true. For every thirty-seven hours of dire agony, you lose one pound. Think about it. Have you ever seen any porkers walk out of a torture chamber? People don't waddle out of solitary confinement or trundle away from a war zone. It is base human suffering that is the central ingredient in every known or suspected weight control program.

Once I came to understand this well-hidden truth, I had to decide: Did I really want to be slim, muscular and utterly miserable, or would I rather be well-rounded and happy. Some answers are self-evident once the question is properly phrased.

I was halfway to conquering the phenomenon that holds much of the nation in its grip. I soon discovered that it was the more difficult portion. Once I was convinced that it was healthier not to overdo this health nut business, it was relatively easy to persuade those around me that it was in my best interest not to worry too much about it. I found that it came down to self-image.

It was a revelation to me when I realized that: I'M NOT HEAVY, I'M SHORT FOR MY WEIGHT.

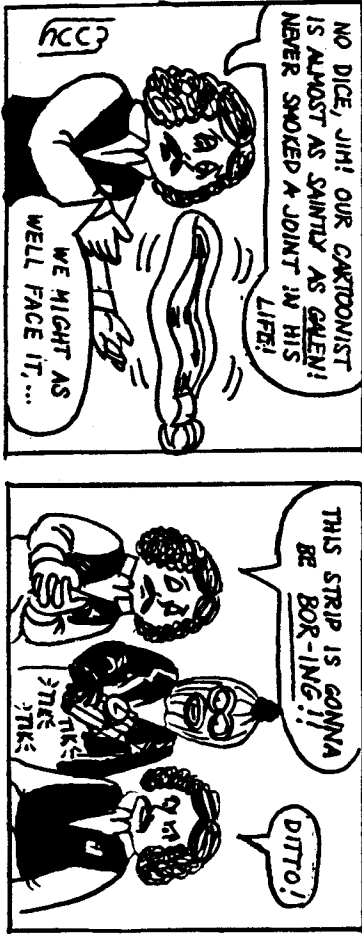
Presto! The problem was solved. It was entirely the fault of my height. Everyone knows there isn't a damn thing anyone can do about height. Case closed.

Now, I no longer outgrow my slacks, the pants shrink. When I have a drink, I'm merely acting on reputable medical advice and keeping my blood pressure down. I don't jog because too much exposure to the sun can cause skin cancer. Swimming is out because of all the nasty parasites and diseases found in the water. Tennis causes shin-splints and so does racquetball. Once you put your mind to it, there's a good argument to be found against virtually every known form of exercise—except sex, of course.

Whenever the subject of weight control comes up with someone, I simply tell them that Life is like a BLT—it has something from all the major food groups: grain; fruit; vegetable; dairy products; and meat. A BLT wouldn't be the same without the bacon, and no one ever suggested trimming the fat from bacon. A little bit of fat is what gives a BLT—and Life—its flavor.

BACK PAGE FILLER

jesse & james
BY
George R. Eddy



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