

A NEWSLETTER OF COMEDY & CREATIVITY

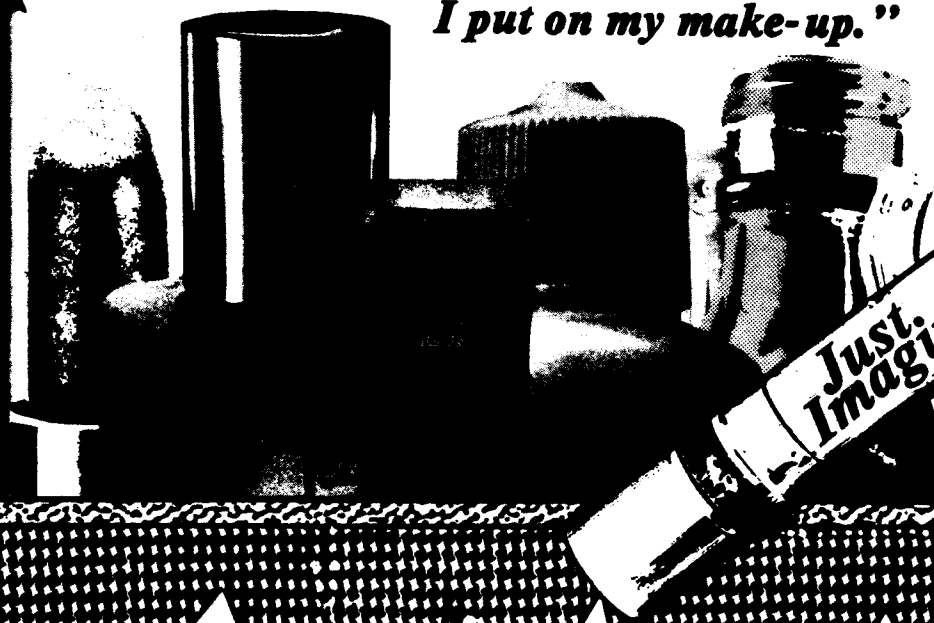
Issue 26 • November 1984 - 1 • Yes, and It's Only \$1

Cosmetics...

**Feast or famine?
Myth or reality?
Domestic or important?**

YES IT'S TRUE

*"The moment I wake up,
I put on my make-up."*



-UPCOMING EVENTS-

(Thanks again to Jed Martinez for some dates below.)

- DECEMBER 1 - Woody Allen (48)
- DECEMBER 2 - ME (26)
- DECEMBER 5 - Walt Disney (b. 1901); Prohibition ends (1933)
- DECEMBER 6 - DAVID OSSMAN (47); Wally Cox (b. 1924)
- DECEMBER 8 - James Thurber (b. 1894)
- DECEMBER 9 - Margaret Hamilton (81)
- DECEMBER 13 - STEVE CHAPUT (33); Dick Van Dyke (58)
- DECEMBER 14 - Spike Jones (b. 1911)
- DECEMBER 16 - TOM HILYER (29); Beethoven (b. 1770)
- DECEMBER 18 - Betty Grable (b. 1916)
- DECEMBER 19 - LEE PELTON (34); Phil Ochs (b. 1940)
- DECEMBER 21 - Jane Fonda (46); "Snow White", first animated feature, released (1937)
- DECEMBER 26 - Steve Allen (b. 1921)
- DECEMBER 30 - PAVC creator MICHAEL NESMITH (40)

*And don't forget the 1J deadline dates -
See opposite column!*

* INSIDE JOKE is put on once a month for the rest of the *
* year, or something like it, by Elayne Wechsler and va- *
* rious strange folk, we please to aim!, and emanates for *
* the first time from Homebase 1J, Apt. Third Eye, in *
* beautiful downtown Brooklyn don'tchaknow... *

* EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.....ELAYNE WECHSLER *
* HEAD XEROGRAPHER....."UNCLE WIGGLY" *

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* Ads by BEATNIKS FROM SPACE, ANTI-AUTHORITARIANS ANONYMOUS, BOB
* BLACK and friends, THE CHURCH OF THE SUB GENIUS, and J.C. BRAINBEAU
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* PRINTED BY AMERICAN SAMIZDAT PRESS—"If it bites, it's an A.S.P." *

ACKNOWLEDITORIALETC.

I'm low on my cliché quota this month, so I have good news and bad news: The good news is that, while the phone number I sent to some of you on my Change of Address card is the right one, the phone itself had not been working, UNTIL this very typing. The telly had been installed and all, but NY Bellbrains ran out of cable with which to hook my line into the main system, and the engineers hadn't released any more for a week and a half. However, the line is operative by now, so dig out those ol' CoFA cards and gimme a call, if you're so inclined. You wouldn't believe how crazy I've gone from this disconnection. I mean, away from the parents finally, great; verbally cut off (not even by choice!) from y'all has been pretty rough. But as I say, all's in order now, so do ring me...please...

Now for the bad news—I didn't get my lock changed fast enough (not that that should have been my responsibility, but that's another story) to prevent illegal entry by the nasty, embittered and unlicensed cheap Russian immigrant labor hired to renovate the building from duping my key, (probably before I even moved in!), breaking and entering while I was at work, and robbing me. (I know it was them because we're not dealing with high intelligence here—just dishonesty—and they left behind obscurely obvious 'clues' like a freshly painted kitchen baseboard and a stained bathroom door.) They took, as Eris would have it, the 1J money (about \$150 worth). Now, this isn't a plea for more donations, as the landlord has agreed that I can deduct the amount from my rent, but I felt I should inform all you generous subbers that from now on, 1J money goes into my personal savings account to compound matters further. So please remember, again, if you send me checks, make them out to me, Elayne Wechsler, NOT to INSIDE JOKE. (Oh, and my lock's been changed, so not to worry.)

Aside from the above, I'm quite happy. Expenses are a lot at first, as expected, but our New Year's Eve, Minus One Party (now changed, permanently, to FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30) will go on as scheduled! Gypsy (who is sleeping as I write this—migod, I hope this doesn't make me a gack-cat lover) and I are waiting to welcome y'all with open arms, or paws, or whatever...HOWEVER, next issue (#27) will mark our LAST MONTHLY 1J, at least for now. Starting with #28, 1J will come out SEMI-QUARTERLY; in other words, every six weeks. (Deadline dates for 1984 will be posted next issue on this page, and then again in the respective issues.) AND #28 will mark our next THEME ISSUE—RUPERT "HOWLING MAD" MURDOCH (known for publishing such gems as the Chicago Sun-Times, New York Post, and Village Voice) BUYS 1J! NOTE: This issue will be done by assignment only, so please, staffers and other interested parties, WRITE/CALL with your suggestions for what you'd like to do (eg., Jilly's doing PAGE SEX, Anni'll do an around-town column, etc.). NO OTHER PIECES WILL BE IN #28 besides these assignments (unlike our last theme issue)—even our 'regular' features will be "Murdochized". So the deadline for 1J #28 is DECEMBER 30, the night of our gala party...

For now, tho, our NEXT DEADLINE, for #27 (to contain, among other things, a nifty cover by Brian Pearce), is DECEMBER 10—again, try to send things a few days sooner if you're mailing them to me. I know it seems a lot to ask for two deadlines in one month, but some of you have taken care of your December input already as suggested last time, and with the holidays & all, things shouldn't be too hard on y'all; and after all, the deadline after that'll be a nice break...

Welcome to our two newest staffers, already friends of 1J for a few months—Julie Logan, whose magnificque cover shows up this month (due to thrown-off timing—it was slated for #25 but arrived after Greg's); and Tom Gedwillo, who's used to strange pubs like this, having done a few himself some years ago—see the back of TFT's Giant Rat album—and who, with his wife Deborah Benedict, makes up the 2nd 1J married staffer couple, for what it's worth...is this becoming a trend?...Apologies again on behalf of the postal orifice to staffers Roldo and Kerry Thornley; I sincerely hope their respective serials will commence/continue next time. (In the meantime, remember Roldo's "Of Spare Changes, Part 1" from 1J #11? Part 2 appears this issue.) Also, serial writers are urged, for the sake of clarity and courtesy, to please submit short plot synopses with your second installments onward...Between serials and columns and letters and the usual rot, I haven't been able to type up/write anything substantial of my own, so my tube review "...or not TV" is once again pushed back till December, as is stuff by such notables as Kip...When we go six-weekly, I'll be able to write more too.

I'm going to forego dedicating this issue to Miz Lillian and instead dedicate it to all my dear friends who helped me move from where I were to Homebase 1J, Apt. Third Eye: Brian Catanzaro, John Crawford, Jill Zimmerman, Steve Cozzi, Barbara Weiss, Steve Manowitz, and Mildred Moslow. Also thanks to Rick, Georg, Dave O, SWAZ, and the Gedwillos for Being There; and to Nancy (she knows why); and then there's the money-senders like Mr. Mike and J.C. Brainbeau, gracious graces! Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to go...uh, well, I'll find something to do...

America! Land of the...

home of the ...

Land that I...

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CONTACT ALIENS

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FIFTY-FIFTY ECONOMICS, EVEN AGE WORK FORCE**

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Fan Noose

Thank Asgard there's not too much to report in the way of pubs this time 'round (guess a lot of 'em are still going to Roselle), so let's start off by running (finally!) the Ever-Popular Carolyn Lee Boyd's letter—"Warner Bros. has taken to the strange habit of melting down Arlo Guthrie's records—which makes them impossible to find, drives up the price of those remaining, and makes the music on them unavailable to just about anyone who didn't start collecting 10 years ago. While this is incredibly inconvenient for those of us who listen to Arlo, it makes me livid more because of the blatant misuse of the national trust given to the art for profit industry in exchange for allowing them to make money off of what, in a very real sense, belongs to the country as a whole, the same way the Grand Canyon, the Mississippi River or the Great Lakes do. Not that this doesn't go on all the time, but this is about the most disgusting example I've come across, both because melting down records is as sacrilegious as burning books, and because of Arlo's particularly important place in American cultural history. It may seem like a small matter, but we might as well let the battle start here, as they say. Anyway, I have started an organization (made up of moi) called the SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OF ALICE'S RESTAURANT. I'm not the founder of the movement, but I do have petitions that anyone who would like one can get by writing to me directly, or they can send nasty letters, envelopes full of pepper, \$500 worth of delivered pizza, etc. to Clyde Bakkemo, Warner Bros., Inc., 3 E. 54th St., New York, NY 10022. Or people can walk into WB's lobby, start singing 'You can get anything you want at Alice's Restaurant...', and walk out again..." Carolyn's address appears in the letter column... And some general announcements to take care of—Randy Maxson, whose comics grace our pages, will now be selling ZEKE THE GEEK & OTHER OD-DITIES from his home address, 56A Bowdoin St., Malden, MA 02148; Robert Hale writes, "Fans of those Italian Westerns that usually star Clint Eastwood and Lee Van Cleef might want to check out a newsletter put out by Tim Ferrante; P.O. Box 186, Keyport, NJ 07735. \$1.50 an issue"; John McClimans would like to inform everyone that the phone-phreak, etc. newsletter TAP (Technical Assistance Program) is back in circ again, publishing monthly (\$1 for sample issue; \$8/8 issues or trade), so if you have been on their subscription list (stolen/lost during a fire[?] recently) and can show your mailing label as proof, they'd like to reinstate subs' names and continue sending you your money's worth—write 147 W. 42nd St., Room 603, New York, NY 10036... The boffo inside back page this month is courtesy ANTI-AUTHORITARIANS ANONYMOUS, who do some quality satiresheets—P.O. Box 11331, Eugene, OR 97440... Check out Anni Ackner's column in the latest FFANZEEN rock mag—\$1 to P.O. Box 109, Parkville Station, Brooklyn, NY 11204-0109... I no sooner break from one David Cassidy fan club than another pops up. This is a bit more mature and worthwhile (for those who like that sort of thing), tho, a club called Friends of David Cassidy which puts out the bi-monthly DA-IDY MAGAZINE—\$8/yr; write to Cathy Ortiz, P.O. Box 16663, San Diego, CA 92116... THE EDGAR ALLEN POE MESSENGER (formerly THE BISEXUAL POET) seems to be a semi-regular small rag of poetry, etc.—no price listed so send SASE to Stark Lee Davenport (also soliciting writings, all you poets out there), Box 8343, Richmond, VA 23226... I may have mentioned MAMBO PRESS UPDATE before, but it's worth a second major plug—you'll never think of chickens (or, for that matter, six-fingered hands) the same way again! Highly recommended—\$1 or trade to 159 Burr Rd. #2, San Antonio, TX 78209... Joseph J. Borowski, aka Patch, has brought out his premiere issue of the antiwar rag PEACE PEOPLE, available for SASE from P.O. Box 238, College Point, NY 11356... Catch Steve Willis' two latest editions of INSIDE OUT, his self-portrait minicomic, featuring such folks as Clay Geerdes, Matt Feazell, and Steve himself—upcoming in #4 are notables such as Roldo, and MAYBE me, so get in on it! 385 Irving, Pullman, WA 99163... Haven't yet read the latest OVERTHROW (formerly YIPSTER TIMES), but I wanted y'all to know it's out—\$1 to them thar Yuppies at P.O. Box 392, Canal St. Station, New York, NY 10013... Also just out is the long-awaited BEATNIKS FROM SPACE #4, \$2 and worth it!, see plug in last month's column... For fandom-type folk, Marty and Robbie Cantor have just sent out HOLIER THAN THOU #17—excellent stuff, if you're into it, and more than a little wonderful bad taste. \$1.50 or trade to their NEW ADDRESS (effective December 4): 11565 Archwood St., North Hollywood, CA 91606... Time for the regulars—AGAINST THE WALL V. 12, #2 (libertarian)—Bill George, P.O. Box 444, Westfield, NJ 07091 (\$1.50, trade); CHICAGO SHIVERS #s 18, 19 (horrorzine)—Ron Carlson, 4443 Grace St., Schiller Park, IL 60176 (\$6/16 issues, trade); GOOD DAY SUNSHINE #17 (Beatles)—Charles F. Rosenay!!!, 397 Edgewood Ave., New Haven, CT 06511 (\$2, trade); THE MONKEES/BOYCE & HART PHOTO FAN CLUB #48 (self-explanatory)—Jodi Hamrich, secy., 508 8th St., NE, #4, Watertown, SD 57201 (price unlisted this issue, so send SASE—I did contribute Pacific Arts/YFT info this month); THE MONTHLY INDEPENDENT TRIBUNE JOURNAL POST GAZETTE NEWS CHRONICLE BULLETIN #11 (comedy, surreality)—T.S. Child, 2510 Bancroft Way #207, Berkeley, CA 94704 (FREE! also accepting writings, send SASE); NUCLEAR TIMES Nov./Dec. '83 (anti-nuclear weapons movement)—Andrea Doremus, circ. asst.(?), Room 512, 298 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10001 (\$2); SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #49 (semi-pro Hugo-winning fanzine)—Rich Geis, P.O. Box 11408, Portland, OR 97211 (\$2, trade); WALLPAPER (the only good comedy rag I know of left in NJ!—also poetry, essays...)—Amy Sweeney, P.O. Box 3324, Trenton, NJ 08619 (\$1, trade). Till next time, when it'll be this time again...

Inside

17 staffers

Two more hop on our bus this month, as IJ proudly and officially welcomes Tom Gedwillo and Julie Logan to its ever-growing (=sigh=) list of staffers. Here's what they have to say for themselves...

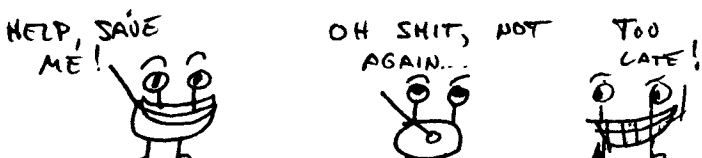
THOMAS "TOM" GEDWILLO Husband. Cartographer. Radio announcer. Botanist. Sculptor. Mercenary. Advertising executive. Cohort. Philanthropist. Stunt driver. Medicine man. Restaurant owner. Comedy writer. Food stamp collector. Butterfly therapist. Human answering machine. Foot warmer. Published thesis on Bowwow Theory. Ten out of 19 ain't bad. How about you? Thanks to E.W. for adding my name to the elite and outrageous roster of INSIDE JOKE staffers. Official Facts File: Began life in Lincoln. Remained here through 1975. Deliberately married Deborah Benedict (aka Mildred Neptune) that same year and signed six year lease on life in Los Angeles. Lungs reached smog capacity in 1980. Returned to Lincoln to pursue career as pastry chef for prison inmates. Known aliases: Arthur Gedwillo, Alek J. Parson, Spook Kopos, Alex V. McGillan, and Quantum Leap. Significant shortfall in my life: Missing the opportunity to become a juvenile delinquent. Current artistic project: Assembling aural library (to be released on flexible soundsheets) called "Mood Music and Romantic Interludes with Comatose Puppet Monsters from some Really Terrible Japanese Sci-Fi Movies."

JULIE LOGAN (for the time being, c/o INSIDE JOKE) 8-6-54

Julie Logan was born on August 6, 1954—the same day as Lucille Ball, Andy Warhol and Dutch 'Portrait of a Mobster' Schultz, as well as the anniversary of Hiroshima. She arrived three and a half weeks late. (Even as a fetus she knew a good deal when she saw one... utilities paid, all you can eat and no hassles with roommates) Her parents divorced when she was a year old. Consequently, she never met her father, who died when she was six. Julie's mother remarried when she was seven. The new little family moved to Granada Hills, California, a scummy little suburb in the northwest corner of the San Fernando Valley. It was here that she spent the worst decade of her life, 'The Bad Years', although things picked up considerably when she moved to L.A. (where she presently resides) to go to college. She attended UCLA, majored in design, minored in Scandinavian languages, and graduated terrified in 1975. She then tripped, stumbled and fell all over the rigors of freelance but survived somehow, protected by her naiveté, no doubt. She currently gets by on a dual career of freelance writing and graphic design and is having a pretty swell time at both. Comedy is her first love, and she's now trying her hand at stand-up. Things Californian About J.L.: She takes vitamins obsessively, she goes to a nutritionist and to a psychic, and she has fitness equipment in her living room. Things Not Californian About J.L.: She's real pale, hates the sun, she didn't learn to drive until she was 23, she's not writing a screen-play (a half-truth), and she doesn't own a pair of thongs. One More Important Fact: Julie Logan has never had a cavity.



NO! OVER! YOU! HELP! not coming again! sorry the bubbles are not working properly in this issue



DIARY of The ROCK FIEND

by Anni Ackner

ANNI ACKNER'S 115TH DREAM

Having attained, through no real fault of my own, the redoubtable (and highly sensitive) age of thirty, I find myself recently beset by various subtle and insidious changes in my body, my mind and my entire outlook on everything in general. Of course, it was Bette Midler who once said—and not without reason—that after the age of thirty a woman's upper arms begin to develop a life of their own which is, regretably, true enough, as far as it goes, but which doesn't begin to encompass the myriad adjustments a reasonable adult must make at this time of life, adjustments to things far more serious and complicated than that of the flesh of the topmost portion of one's upper limbs suddenly deciding to take too literally the injunction to "give a person some slack".

There is, for instance, the problem of knees. Now, most people do have knees, and really, they are very handy things to have. Knees are perfect for holding up a pair of leg warmers, ideal for keeping one's thighs from spilling over sloppily onto one's calves, and simply can't be beat if, for some obscure reason, you suddenly develop a mad desire to get down on the floor and nail down an 18 x 24 area rug. Besides, unlike hands, feet, brains and sexual organs, knees are unobtrusive little souls and never mean to cause anyone any trouble, with the possible exception of football players. (For reasons which have never been adequately explored by either science or psychology, knees hate football players in more or less the same way that typewriters hate anybody trying to grow a decent set of nails. There's a good doctoral thesis in there for somebody and I do think it would behoove a clear-thinking graduate student to look into it.) Honestly, I just can't say enough about knees, but there's no denying that, when one reaches thirty, they begin to have their little ways. Oh, they won't start to do anything overtly nasty—they save that, in women, for the breasts, which at this time in life have a way of deciding that it's time to go down and pay a visit to the belly button, and in men for the hairline, which has a tendency to begin making for those vast, uncharted regions at the back of the head—but they do get a bit obstinate. They won't stop you from assuming the Giant Snake asana or catching for the annual N.O.W. interdivisional softball game or running in the New York Marathon—far be it from THEM, if you're that sort of person—but they will have a few thoughts on the more mundane subjects of life. If you decided, as an example, to leap merrily out of bed at 6:30 AM (why, I can't imagine, but let's say you do), the knees, at this stage, are quite prone to deciding that they want to sleep for another hour or so, and you're going to have the devil's own time arguing them out of it. If you're in the office, having your coffee break in a straight backed chair, and you just know it's time to get back to work, much as you hate it, the knees are apt to figure that you can certainly spare 15 more minutes to have that second croissant you've been eyeing, and act accordingly. It's terribly frustrating.

This, however, is nothing to what your body, acting as a United Entity, will do to you, if it puts its mind to it. Not that it suddenly gangs up on a person and mugs him or her in broad daylight on the way to the supermarket—that, I understand, it saves for later on, when you're dashing about joining the Golden Age Fox-Hunting Club and telling everyone that Life Begins at 60—but it does develop an alarming habit of letting you down when you least expect it. The United Body Front (as opposed to the United Body Rear, which really doesn't do anything more drastic than refuse to fit into a pair of size 9 Levis anymore), at this point of the game, has no real objections to your pressing your own weight in benches, if you truly insist on it, or taking up skiing or indulging in a few too many sets of tennis, but just try to do something really amusing like staying out all night, seeing one movie after another, having a little midnight moo goo gai pan, and getting better acquainted with someone a couple of years younger than is strictly good for you. Go ahead, just try it. Somewhere around 2 AM you're going to start feeling like Absolutely Nothing Human; your feet are going to remind you that it's a myth that tight new shoes Stretch Out if you wear them long enough, your shoulders will ache, your stomach will demand Alka-Seltzer with the intensity with which ex-wives of television comedians demand alimony and, when that person a couple of years younger than is strictly good for you suggests making use of a bed in the way in which the Almighty intended a bed to be used, you are going to embarrass yourself by suggesting having a nice long nap instead. Furthermore, should you have had the temerity to add a couple of drinks, or a tiny particle of some harmless recreational drug to the night's revelries, waking up the next morning is going to feel roughly akin to staging a forced march through the less savory sections of Granada. And all the while—all the while, yes, even as you are staring into the bathroom mirror weighing the relief of suicide against the difficulty of reaching up into the medicine cabinet to get hold of enough sleeping pills on which to overdose—the United Body Front is laughing behind your back.

None of this, though, comes anywhere near to touching the tap dance one's mind begins to effect. As boringly typical as it may sound—and it is boringly typical; it happens to simply EVERYBODY, neatly putting an end to whatever delusions of uniqueness one might have been harbouring—a person really does begin to have second thoughts about his/her life, and the world around it, somewhere after his/her thirtieth birthday. One begins to wonder, for instance, if 30 really is too old to have an ABBA poster up on one's wall, and, if so, just what does the newly mature person use to cover up the spot its removal is certain to leave. Television commercials take on a new and ominous significance—if I truly am getting better, and not older, comes the inescapable thought, why are they advising me to colour my hair in order to look younger? Just how many olays did they have to squeeze to get that tiny bottle of rejuvenating oil? Were they olays which were under 30 or

olays which were over 30? Why is it I'm the only one who can always tell which women's hands look older? Is there something wrong with me or with the dishwashing liquid? Suppose one has a dishwasher? Then what?—one starts to actually pay attention to the author's biographies on the backs of bestsellers, constantly scanning to see if anyone younger than oneself is managing to get a first novel published, and pension plans develop a fascination formerly only elicited by members of the opposite sex dressed in clothing a size or two too small. If one has chosen not to marry one starts to wonder if it isn't time to find that perfect Significant Other—or at any rate somebody self-supporting and with a minimum of obnoxious personality traits—and settle down, and if one has chosen to marry one starts to wonder if perhaps one didn't enter into this too young and it isn't time to Cut Loose and Experience Life before it's too late, and the shock waves felt when it finally sinks in that one is now old enough to become a United States Senator while being too old to be drafted by the New York Yankees even as a designated hitter are perfectly capable of causing a smallish earthquake even in places several miles from the San Andreas Fault.

The worst of it, however, are the dreams. When one turns thirty one is suddenly, inexplicably plagued by nightmares of a horror and complexity comparable only to that of your average FALCON CREST storyline. Some of these nightmares are universal—the one about being forced to film a designer sportswear commercial and finding out in the middle of it that the look YOU'VE got is double-knit polyester; the one about arriving late to work because of an endless foul-up on the subway and discovering your exciting, challenging field position has been given to a 22-year-old with really tight facial skin while you've been reassigned to that board which checks the holes in Finlandia Swiss cheese; the one about walking naked down a busy street and having not one person turn around to look—while others are more personalized, geared to the personality and private fears of the dreamer. Solely to give you some idea of this phenomenon, and its consequences on the unfortunate victim, let me now tell you that, over the past several weeks, I myself have dreamed that: I was trapped in the midst of the Roseland Dance Hall doing a slow fandango with Ed McMahon; Chevy Chase, Burt Reynolds and Jerry Lewis decided to film a remake of ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST and chose my downstairs hall closet for their location shoots; I was asked to give a lecture on Humour in America Today before an august panel of my peers and several Well Known Cultural Critics, and the coordinator of the series thought it would be a nice touch to introduce me by having the entire Harvard Glee Club rise in unison at my entrance and sing SHE'S A MANIAC; and, while on my way to Stockholm to pick up my Nobel Prize for Literature, I found myself seated on the plane next to Lech Walesa and ended up embroiled in a heated discussion of Polish labour laws and the Solidarity movement versus the fact that there just aren't any good short fiction markets left in the United States any more. Most horrible of all, though, was the one I had only last night, a nightmare so fierce that it has coloured and soured my entire day, and caused me to seriously consider the possibility of entering into one of those sleep-deprivation experiments the more antic of our research scientists are always formulating. Irritability, hallucinations, disorientation and a general inability to do anything more than stare morbidly at the wall would be a small price to pay, I think, for never having to have this dream again.

I was up in the Catskill Mountains (I dreamed) at Grossinger's—a largish hotel known for the size of their blintzes and their predilection for booking comedians named Shecky—attending a Singles' Weekend in the company of all the Democratic candidates for the nomination for President of the United States (as is the way with dreams, the simple fact that all of these honoured gentlemen are married was tossed casually out the window, as were my own recent nuptials). Walter Mondale was there, looking rather lost and alone without Jimmy Carter to stand behind, and John Glenn, shaking hands and offering to tell everybody what it was like Up There if nobody would tell him what it was like Down Here. Rubin Askew and Earl E. Black were huddled together, discussing the ramifications of Peculiar Names upon such things as Voter Identification and Recognition of Seriousness of Intent, Jesse Jackson hovered about, attempting to juggle ambivalence with being absolutely as annoying as possible, and those three guys that everybody always forgets were exchanging business cards and promising to meet each other for lunch sometime. I was, of course, surprised and dismayed to find myself there at all, and more so when it became obvious that everybody thought I was in the race for the nomination myself—people kept coming up and asking me incomprehensible questions concerning my opinions on the impact of the women's vote on Reaganomics and whether or not I was doing MEET THE PRESS next Sunday—and I attempted to make a break for it, darting in between two low level aides and a reporter for the WASHINGTON POST, but was intercepted by the Snappy Singles Hospitality Hostess, who pinned a badge on my chest ("Hi, I'm Anni! Moderate liberal with mild socialist undertones.") and strong-armed me into the Dynamite Dining Room.

With the sort of rapid-fire jump-cutting available only in dreams and Robert Altman movies, we were then at the Midnight Madness Pool Party, being entertained by Lou "Cool Breeze" Goldstein and his Golden Goodies disco mix, with only dim memories of some Shecky or another regaling us with his stories of a mother-in-law attempting to redecorate the Oval Office. Jesse Jackson paced back and forth on the high diving board, showing off his Rainbow swim trunks, Walter Mondale pushed John Glenn off the deep end, and the three forgettable ones performed water ballet while Rubin Askew and Earl E. Black discussed the ramifications of participating in the Wet Tee-Shirt contest upon such things as Voter Identification and Recognition of Seriousness of Intent, while I tried another mad dash for freedom by ducking under the no-host bar, only to be tackled by the Swinging Social Director and dragged screaming back to take part in the Bunny Hop.

Scene followed devastating scene—Jumpin' Jazzersize, Wacky Weekend Grabbin' Games (Rubin Askew and Earl E. Black discussed the ramifications of passing an orange from chin to chin upon Voter Identification and Recognition of Seriousness of Intent), the Tantalizing Tennis Tour-

continued next page

nament, Voluptuous Volleyball (Walter Mondale hit John Glenn in the head and Jesse Jackson pointed out the discrimination inherent in the colour of the ball), cocktail party after cocktail party—and through it all my panic mounted. It seemed endless and apparently there was no escape. Was I trapped here forever? How did I become a candidate? How much brisket of beef, after all, can one person eat? And what if I should win the election? I'm a private sort of person and I honestly wasn't sure I wanted my morning coffee disturbed by an inopportune crisis in Lebanon. Terror-stricken I dashed from event to event until, during Showtime in The Terrace Room Starring Shecky Capri, when the three forgettable ones were invited up on stage to help Shecky sing THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM, my will broke and I woke up screaming.

I lay there in a cold sweat, considering being thirty, the fact that George Papoon hadn't appeared in my dream and its ramifications upon such things as Voter Identification and Recognition of Seriousness of Intent, and pondering whether, under the circumstances, it was worthwhile to go on. I haven't yet reached any real conclusions about that, nor do I ever expect to, but on the other hand I've been sitting here typing for four hours and my knees have not yet given out, so I can't say that there aren't compensations. No, I can't say that at all.

CONFESSIONS OF A CONFUSED REVOLUTIONARY

by Mike Gunderloy

THE STORY SO FAR: Mikhail Kartoffelkopf, illegal immigrant from the wilds of Bratislava and notorious Zenarchist, finds himself trapped on a lonely beach by the Federales after blowing up the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. Looking certain death foursquare in the eye, he is implausibly rescued by his old friend Raoul "Bob" Mitsubishi, who happens to be cruising by in a midget sub disguised as a killer whale. As we rejoin the plucky duo, they are on their way to Florida to procure baby alligators for the St. Olaf's Water Wings cabal on the Discordian Society.

It had been years since I'd worked with the Discordian Society on anything—their psychedelic metaphysics and refusal to take things seriously had turned me off—but I was vaguely familiar with their alligator project. Everyone on the inside knew, of course, that there really were alligators in the sewers of New York. That bit about it being just a rumor is deliberately spread to keep folks from believing it.

What most people didn't know was that East Coast Illuminati Headquarters was also located in the sewers. They put a lot of effort into controlling the alligator population so that venturing into the sewers wouldn't become an attraction for macho young men. Naturally, the Discordians introduced more baby 'gators into the system every chance they got.

Bob startled me out of my reverie by throwing another beer at me. "Well?" he asked. "Do you want to give us a hand or what?"

"Sure," I replied. "I don't expect I'll want to go back to Boston for a good long while now. Who's your contact with the Discordians?"

"Fred the Implacable, from the St. Olaf's Water Wings cabal in Brooklyn. Know him?"

"That idiot!" I exploded. "Why, he once told me that revolution was only an illusion and violent revolution was an illusion created by a madman! He'll sell us out first chance he gets, just to cause some more of his precious chaos." I had to stop and take a long drink to calm down.

"Well, maybe," said Bob. "Still, he and his co-conspirators are paying fifty bucks a head for any gators we dig up and deliver. Besides, he doesn't know my real name, or even that you're along. Don't worry, everything will be fine."

The last time I'd heard that line was just before the Hoover Dam debacle. Still, I didn't fancy swimming home so I finished my beer and started learning how to drive the whale. By dawn we were off the North Carolina coast.

Bob had sacked out an hour or two before and left me on watch, inasmuch as I was all cranked up on speed anyhow. There really wasn't all that much to watch—the autopilot was doing the sailing, and my only instructions were to wake Bob at 8am or when the world ended, whichever came last.

I was leaning back in my chair sipping beer and reading The Destroyer #392 when something hit the ship. I was thrown out of the chair, spilling beer everywhere and losing my place. The lights went out, to be replaced quickly by the stereotypical red emergency lamps. I glanced at the instrument panel. The digital depth gauge was increasing rapidly, but that didn't bother me half as much as the enormous tentacles I could see through the cameras in the whale's eyes.

There was no need to wake Bob up, the Kraken had taken care of that. He leapt to the control panel, but the ship was firmly in the infernal monster's grip. He drove home a cassette of whale songs and turned on our external speakers. "Sure hope this gets us some friends," he said.

"We'll be underwater lunchmeat if it doesn't," I replied. "I don't suppose you have a cattle prod?"

"More to the point, I've only got one aqualung, which would make it tricky if we both have to leave. Better hope that—" He broke off, pointing at the video screens. "There they are! C'mon, Moby, give us a hand!" A whole pack of killer whales was approaching.

The slimy servant of evil released our sub to flee from the whales, but it was too slow. They caught it in moments, ripping it to shreds and filling the water with air bubbles and bits of metal! It had been another sub!

"You better think this contract over," I pointed out. "That ship was Illuminati for sure. Maybe we'd better forget the whole thing."

"Nonsense!" he replied angrily. "Frank's got at least 50 gators ready to go. They can't stop me!" We continued towards the Florida coast.

- TO BE CONTINUED -

FUN WITH TOM

by Tom Sanders

During the winter of 1957 young Tom, in the entertainment pages of INSIDE JOKE, was the only writer in New York who did not spell "Rock 'N' Roll" with capital letters or quotation marks. For this reason he alone had received backstage credentials for the big BIG rock and roll party, my friends, organized and promoted by Alan Freed and set for the weekend of February 21 to 23. The big fun! Twelve groups, six shows starting at ten AM each day and, in between, "Don't Knock The Rock," starring your emcee himself, on the screen!

So naturally, backstage was chaos. Famous faces popped out of the shadows—Hank Ballard and the Midnighters, the Clefones, Lavern Baker, the Cadillacs, the Crows—all warming up with a few verses of their latest hits. Near the edge of the stage stood the King of the Moondoggers himself, and Tom heard him mutter to no one in particular, "Nuts! An hour before showtime and no opening act! Where the hell are those Teenagers?"

"Alan! Hey, Alan!" Tom shouted. "Problem?"

"Oh, Lord yes," he answered. "The Teenagers aren't here yet, after I told 'em to get here in time to open the ten o'clock show! My opening act, the hottest kid group in New York, probably overslept again!"

"Listen, Alan," Tom began, "anything I can..."

Alan cut him off. "Young Tom, there sure is something you can do. Get your eye up to Sugarhill and bring me back those sleepy Teenagers! Wake 'em up if ya have to! Just get 'em here sometime before the spring thaw!" He put his arm around Tom and shouted over the crowd noise, "Look, ol' pal, this one'll be for rock and roll. If this show doesn't go over big, there might not be any Woodstock, Monterey Pop or US Festivals!"

"What? What are those?"

"Never mind," Alan returned, "go! Go! Showtime! Rock and roll, remember?"

With that, Tom was off. Up to Harlem, six flights of fire escapes to the Lymons', and wham! Bam! Bang bang bang! Open up in there, you sleepyheads! Showtime! Rock and roll, remember?

Frankie Lymon, in his flannel pajamas, answered the door. "Oh, no, man, we forgot! And the others ain't even here! C'mon, we gotta move it right NOW!" Pajamas, stage clothes and Teenagers flew in every direction. "Hey Tom," Frankie said, "you heard our new song on Alan's show, right?" Tom nodded. "Sure, man!" Frankie started singing.

"AAAAA—I'll always love you..."

The bass singer joined in. "BBBBB—because my heart is true..."

Tom jumped in and filled the missing tenor's part. "Come come closer, I'll tell you of the ABC's," he sang. Frankie and the other Teenagers laughed and said, "Hey, that's not bad! You know our other songs?"

Of course, he did from listening to Alan. "Sure! Let's try 'Fools Fall In Love'," and the Teenagers leaped into their stage clothes while singing along with Tom: "Why do birds sii-iiing so gay, and lovers await the bre-aak of day..."

They finally got ready to roll and Frankie Lymon turned to Tom and said, "Hey look, our tenor ain't gonna make it in time, so, why don't you sing with us?" Before Tom could say anything, Frankie went on. "You know all the words and you sing just as good as he does...and you're here and he ain't! So, let's do it! Rock and roll, remember? Showtime!"

"But Frankie, don't ya think the kids are gonna notice something different about me on stage with you guys? I mean, I don't exactly—"

"Naw, nobody's gonna care that you don't SOUND like the rest of us. Just sing like you did, man. It'll be great!"

It was agreed. They were off, with barely enough time to get to the Paramount Theatre before showtime. Tom and the Teenagers ran through a few more choruses of "The ABC's of Love" and ther other songs on the way. Alan Freed was in the middle of a silent prayer to the gods of show biz when they rushed backstage. "Everything's under control, Alan!" Tom exclaimed. "We're ready to go on!"

"We?" asked Alan. "Tom, if you go out there and sing with the Teenagers, and pull it off, you're gonna have one helluva story to put in the next INSIDE JOKE."

Well, the Teenagers sounded less Harlem and more Midwestern that morning, but everyone was pleased. Alan Freed got his opening act, the promoters counted their take, the groups all got cab fare home, and the kids stood on their seats, shrieking and waving, not settling down until after four encores of "ABC's". Finally they got off stage, Lavern Baker went out and sang "Jim Dandy Got Married", and there were hugs all around from Alan. "Tom! Ya did it! I love ya! Take these guys out and get 'em a new alarm clock," he puffed, but they laughed and cried and danced and laughed and sang along with the other groups. And Tom had his story for the showbiz pages of INSIDE JOKE.

"...the Teenagers are a fine group of young men who count only oversleeping among their vices," he wrote. "They're not juvenile delinquents. They go to school regularly, write songs in English class, and never call the teacher 'daddy-o'. We can be proud of the young lads from Harlem who are spreading the sound of New York street-corner harmony throughout the world."

He showed the story to Alan one night at WINS. "You think you'll be writing rock and roll stories when the Beatles come to New York?" The Beatles? "Alan, someday you gotta tell me about a few of these things. I never heard of Shea Stadium."

(N.B. Two of the Teenagers did oversleep and miss the ten AM show that Friday. The others borrowed the Clefones' bass singer and the show went on.—NY Times, February 23, 1957.)

I WISH to inform anyone contemplating withholding their fair share of the atomic bomb budget by not paying taxes that that's illegal.

FUTURE TENSE

by Lee Pelton

It was raining. It had been raining for some time. Colfax stood at the window, watching the rain trickle rivulets down the glass, onto the stone ledge, and pour off it onto the sidewalk below.

"The weather sure fits my mood," thought Colfax.

The official-looking notice that Colfax held in his hand, on official letterhead stationery, had just given him official notice that he would have to pay the 3 months' overdue rent by noon Friday or vacate the premises. A bill of \$1636.87 (including penalties) can be a rude shock to a man whose income had shrivelled up to an all-encompassing zero.

"That goddamn Wolkers!" exclaimed Colfax. "He knows damn well I haven't had a client in 7 months!"

It hadn't always been this bad. Back in 'Nam Colfax had thought how ideal it would be to take his muster-out pay and open his very own detective agency as soon as the lardheads that had put him here decided that it wasn't that intelligent a decision and sent the lot of 'em back home. Well, it had seemed like a good idea then. But once back in civvies and armed with a shiny new license from the state of Minnesota investing one Colfax Monroe with the authorization to do private research for independent clients, real life made a move designed to strangle Colfax from all the adventure and security he sought. In other words, no one came to his office on the 6th floor of the Grover Building except hustlers trying to get him to advertise with them, to buy their office supplies, furniture, etc. until Colfax got lucky, was hired to work on a very messy divorce case, and made enough to make it until more cases came his way. This was good living, although a bit unsavory, and it lasted for almost 8 years until this dry spell. And Avery Wolkers, the new owner of the Grover Building (and surrounding properties), could care less about Colfax's problems.

"I guess I'll have to pack it in," thought Colfax. "I can't pay for the office, I've been living in my car for the last 3 months, and eating dinner at the Mission. What else can happen?"

Colfax had been raised on Bogart movies, corrupted by Bond movies, and brought to reality by living the real life of a detective. It had been a tough lesson for Colfax. There was no intrigue, no beautiful, deadly blondes to fence with, no oily international figures of evil to joust and banter with. Just a few fat, rich pigs with fat, rich pig-wives that didn't match up with teh young, eager, grasping mistresses, all of whom wanted to become new versions of fat, rich pig-wives. It was a depressing way to earn a living. The only honest clients Colfax had ever had hadn't two dimes to rub together, and he couldn't afford too many charity cases. He'd take one now, though, just to get out of the office. Either that or become intimately acquainted with the bottle of Jim Beam in the desk until nothing mattered at all.

Colfax sighed, turned away from the window, and strode towards the desk. The room was almost completely dark. It was late at night, and all but one of the shades had been drawn when the office was opened 8 years ago, and looked as though they hadn't been touched since. Colfax liked it that way. He thought better in the dark. He sat down, opened the lower left drawer of the old wood-top desk, and pulled out the Jim Beam and a glass that hadn't been washed since it was put there. Colfax pulled out his handkerchief and swirled it in the glass, disturbing the dust, the cloth sticking to the dried residue of the last drink. He poured himself a small shot, and lifted it to his lips.

Suddenly, 3 short, sharp raps on his waiting room door echoed through the stillness.

"Who the fuck is that?" wondered Colfax.

He put the glass on the desk, looked at it, picked it up, and chugged the drink, replaced the glass on the desk gently, and got up, saying, "Hold on, I'll be right there."

He went through the office into the waiting room, walked up to the door and opened it.

"I've died and gone to Fantasy Island," thought Colfax, because standing in front of him, tight-lipped and nervous, stood one of the most beautiful women he'd ever seen. She was wearing high, stiletto-like heels, a skirt that seemed molded to her body, and a ruffled blouse that could use a few more buttons on it to approach being only sensational. Her eyes were a piercing blue, the kind that can cut paper when angry. You could drown in those eyes and never know you'd gone swimming until they started shoveling dirt on you.

"Mr. Colfax Monroe? she asked.

"Right the first time, Miss..."

"Atzorn. Sarah Atzorn Mrs. Sarah Atzorn."

"Come in, Mrs. Atzorn."

Colfax led her into the inner office, turned on the overhead light, and motioned her to the chair that was opposite his desk. He sat down and once more paused to look at her, affirming his first impression.

"What can I do for you, Mrs. Atzorn?"

"I don't know...for sure, Mr. Monroe. I don't know what else to do. I've tried everything else. You're the last option I can think of. I've no place left to turn."

"What are we talking about, Mrs. Atzorn?"

"It's my husband, Terence Atzorn. I think he's been murdered."

(to be continued)

A WORD from the shit generation. We the authors of Pee Dog, though we exhibit sex explicitly, never exhibit it out of its proper context: A loving and tender nature. For without love, sex is nothing but a fucking blast man! Do you dig where we're coming from man! Like is what you perceive really filthy, or is the filth just in your mind? Wow!! If you drink a fifth of vodka in one sitting you die: it's as simple as that. But that's not what we're recommending, man. We're saying keep your buddies outta the bookstores. Get Pee-Dog and groove on some profane...
FUCK NOT DEAD!

License To Manipulate FEATURING "COOP"

(Here she is once more, from beautiful Box 714, Bristol, RI 02809, to answer queerer queries all the time...HEEEERE'S COOP!)

Dear Coop,

My problem is procrastination. In fact it has taken me four months to get around to writing this letter. I've got hundreds of unfinished projects that date back to '75 laying around my apartment. It's gotten so bad that I'm considering moving and only taking my furniture and clothes. HELP!!!

- CAN'T GET IT ALL DONE

Dear Can't,

You CAN! Put all of your projects in a box (don't start anything else) and leave one out. Work on it until you get it done. When you're finished, move on to the next one. Reward yourself as you complete each one; go to a movie or buy a new hat. Don't allow yourself to start anything else so that if you have any free time, you will be forced to either do the undone or be bored. When you've plowed through your box of projects, don't let the number of projects you're working on get above five or ten. The more crap you have staring you in the face, the less apt you are to tackle it.

- COOP

Dear Coop,

A friend and I have a bet we'd like you to settle. He says you make up letters to answer. I say you don't. Who's right? There's ten bucks riding on this.

- GAMBLER

Dear Gambler,

You're both right and you're both wrong. Try betting on something a bit more pedestrian like a football game next time.

- COOP

IN THE LAST 30 YEARS

If America and the rest of the world had prospered as we should have in this productive age Mr. T.V. would take the bows. Because of what is happening shouldn't 30 year old Mr. T.V. get the hook?

Send S.A.S.E. to:

SCRAP T.V.

Box 2243, Youngstown, Ohio, 44504

Arguments I Have Known

by Julie Logan

Julie Logan's debut as an IJ staffer has a lot of possibilities as a participation piece. If you can think of any good argumentative opening lines (come on, I know some of you still live with the folks, I'm sure you've got a mill!), please send the lines to me and I'll pass them along to Julie. Here are three prime examples...

I. "I AM NOT GOING TO THANKSGIVING AT AUNT FRANCES'."

Son: I'm not going to Thanksgiving at Aunt Frances'.

Mother: What do you mean you're not going? What's the matter with you anyway, you don't like your family or what? You'll have a good time.

You'll see your relatives. Everyone will be there.

Son: I like my family fine, I just don't want to go.

Mother: So what is it? Not good enough for you? You know how much they all love you. You do realize, don't you, that you're ruining the whole thing for everyone.

Son: I am not and I'm not going.

Mother: You don't care, do you? Hurting everyone right and left, people's feelings mean nothing to you. Why, I can just see Frances' face when I tell her. Talk to him, Charles.

Father: Look, Anne, leave him alone. He's a big boy. If he doesn't want to go, he doesn't have to go.

Son: All right, all right, I'll go, I'll go, just leave me alone already.

Mother: Well, if you're going to have that attitude, you might as well stay home.

Son: No, no, I told you already I want to go. I'm going, I'm going.

Mother: Are you sure? Nobody's forcing you to do anything you don't want to, you know.

(...and as they climb into the car...)

Mother: You're not wearing that shirt, are you?

II. "WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU CAN'T?"

Wife: What do you mean you can't?

Husband: I can't, that's all, no big deal.

Wife: I'll say.

Husband: Oh, for Christ's sake, Carol, give me a break, would you?

It's been a really rough bitch of a week and I'm tired.

Wife: Tired? HA! You didn't seem so tired when your little friend David came to stay last weekend. Tired? No sirree. Boy oh boy, if I didn't know better I'd swear you were—

Husband (interrupts): Drop it, Carol.

III. "WHERE WERE YOU LAST NIGHT?"

Lover: Where were you last night?

Lovee: Oh, I don't know, home I guess.

Lover: I thought we were supposed to go out last night, you know, Rick and Jerry invited us to dinner. Don't you remember, you said you'd be here by seven.

Lovee: Oh Jesus honey, I wasn't even home from work then. I tried calling you all night, but I couldn't reach you.

Lover: Bullshit Eric, that's why I got the service.

Coming next month: "You Don't Love Me Anymore", and more!

SOAP SUDS

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE SOAPS...

The Edge of Doom: Is Fancy Holsen really the long lost sister of "Sugar Babe" McCoy (played by guest star Baxter Frobisher)?? Mona thinks so and she is ready to fight for her rights to Bogus Boeuf Manor. Mona tampered with Fancy's "nerve medicine"—murder roulette! Is Dirk Button on cocaine again??? Tiffany is sure of it and wants stepson Jason and his wife Kimberly to "babysit" Dirk while she flies off to Barbados with Dr. Vernon Sage...but Kim fears a fifteenth miscarriage and Jason doesn't want to be too far away from Dweezle until Sgt. Budlip can question Mr. Trunk about the baby Drella found in the cellar. **For The Love of Everyone, Especially Philomena:** Dixie Toothsome was murdered and left in the Benz can behind the Furbie office building. Police arrested Dane Winsome, but Dixie knows who really killed her—too bad she's dead and can't tell anyone! Philomena has her suspicions and is being watched! Who is the menacing figure behind the Levolor blinds in the condo across from her? Hint: It's not Baxter Frobisher, guest starring as Ransom Geld, famous movie producer. He's flying to Madagascar with Tamsen's niece Gudrun (recently released from prison for a cheese snatching scheme) to scout out locations for his film, "The Last Pogo Stick". Is Nicety Vermouth pregnant or was it the crabmeat lasagna at Lou Techs that made her so ill?

The Well Hung and Full Breasted: Jessica is still waiting for Hardin Ramrod to show up. She even bought his favorite Pomegranate liqueur and sits waiting in her fur negligee. But Hardin is still in the swamp with Miklos and Danielle...Mingo challenged Vince to a Ginsu knife duel, but Salmonella Devereux, owner of Salmonella's Restaurant, intervened. Charlie is desperate to marry Bingo, but also quite anxious about that cold sore that won't go away. Araminta Oglethorpe still trying to ban the publication of Scamp Dextrose's (played by Baxter Frobisher) new book *The Back Side of Heaven*. Dee Ann confessed to Ramon that she too once had a turtle with a painted shell...

The Gliding Flashlight: Cybil insists it was Milo who tripped her when she went up to receive her "Woman Paramedic Of The Year" Award. Ramona wants another baby and won't leave Hobie alone so he went to see Dr. Squamous at the Yakar Medical Center. Hobie told the doctor that he can't make love to his wife because every time he sees her naked, he hallucinates that she is wearing a Donald Duck suit while smoking an intricately carved Meerschmum pipe and singing "The Hudeesh Song". Dr. Squamous said it was a rare strain of Tibetan syphilis that caused these visions, gave Hobie a supply of antibiotics and told him to drink plenty of hot blackberry jello every day...Bob Batterwife (played by guest star Baxter Frobisher) told Maxine he loved her and to prove it, he offered to go to the Gobi desert to look for her old Mister Peanut doll. Is January July still hot for Mr. Splurge or did the last episode with the vintage Bugati and the glazed donuts finally scare her off?

Living, Loving, Dying, Crying: Dr. Mint urged Eleanor Elvail to have an abortion, citing her 59 multiple personalities as a complication. Eleanor protested, but Dr. Mint asked, "Do you really think you could handle it? One of your personalities is named Medea, you know." Howard Hologram (played by guest star Baxter Frobisher) and Justine boarded a jumbo jet to Beirut for the Dental Equipment Festival there...Babs tried to warn them about the pilot, Lum Hummer, a chloral hydrate addict, but to no avail...Melisandra Mustard (played by Rochelle Roguefort) is determined to intimidate everyone at Intern's Hospital—she tossed six bowls of stale fruit salad at the cafeteria worker (Marge Large) and later insisted Dr. Halibut pay for the cleaning bills! Is Leonora really planning to seduce Jeff Jerker? Just for a measly record contract? Leonora is sinking low these days (witness her affair with Father Elmer) but no one can believe that J.J.—the only man ever to be forcefully ejected from a New York subway because he was "too repulsive"—will be L.'s next conquest...

Big Beautiful Life! The women in Gretel's Weight Watchers group are preparing their mutiny! They have baked 200 pounds of ravioli, 400 pounds of tollhouse cookies with extra chips, and have signed a mutiny-tions contract with Sara Lee to drop 6,000 Black Forest Tortes over the city...Bertha took 3 diet pills at 7 am and still wanted her usual lunch at Graisse Cochon—Rack of Lamb with Cream Sauce, Potatoes Anna, Asparagus in Chocolate Sauce, 3 glasses of grape Hi-C, and a loaf of French Bread with Truffle Butter—Devlin then looked on in awe when she consumed a dessert of Pecan and Praline Devils Food Cheesecake with Butterscotch sprinkles...Linda Lemonpie and Polly Polonaise have put a contract out on Richard Simmons...Baxter Frobisher, guest starring as bon vivant gourmet Fritz Fresser, showed up at Meg Meat's party, with a pastry cart in tow...

One Life To Botch: Alexis had twins! Both girls and she named them: Ashley Diana Fiona and Brunhilde Wilhelmina Blanche...But WHO IS THE FATHER??? Is it: Max Scheisskopf, the industrialist magnate "King of Toilet Seat Covers" with the strange hold on Walter Meek? Or is it Walter Meek, the odd little man with the autographed picture of Martin Bormann in his private office? Or is it the mysterious man from Alexis' past—Blaze Cantrelle—played by guest star Baxter Frobisher—who showed up to visit Alexis and the babies and commented, "So this is what happens when you turn off the lights!" Alexis refuses to name the father, even though Brad threatened to put speed bumps on her hamsters' Habitat...Heidi Schnitzerling bought Rhiannon La Croix boutique and served free liquor to the first 100 customers...Annette Frerejacques took advantage of this and got so blotto that she threw up all over a rack of Halston originals...

Best line of the week in the soaps comes from Mandy Menace in "The Well Hung and Full Breasted", who defended her ambitious and scheming nature by saying, "I want to be so rich I fill by water beds with Perrier!"

A Different Dancer

by Clay Geerdes

Whenever you enter a new scene, there are a lot of games going on and unwritten rules that must be followed. If you like the scene and want to belong, you obey the rules, learn the games, join in on them, and, over a period of time, you will become a member. What you do not do is enter a scene and try to set up your own games and force the others to play them. Doesn't work. If you try this, you become isolated quickly, rejected by the in-groups, and find yourself in conflict with everyone. At one extreme, you will be thrown out; at another, killed.

I work part of the time in a folk-dance club. Each night is devoted to a particular kind of folk-dancing. There is an established heirarchy each night which ranges from the best to the beginning dancers. The evening begins with a lesson taught by a single teacher. It ends with a request party. People request the dances they want to do and a man plays the records and announces the dance. Most of the dances are either line dances or couple dances. Everyone can participate in the former, while you must have a partner for the latter. Most of the people who come to the club come alone. Only a few come on a date. People come alone and they leave alone. In the few years I have worked at the club, I have seen very few relationships form, even fewer marriages. Those people who think of the place as one where they can come and meet someone, as a courting situation, as a spot to score, learn quickly that this is not what happens. People come to dance. If you know all the dances, you have no trouble meeting and associating with people. If you don't know the dances, the others find this out right away and you are left alone or avoided. No one wants to dance with someone who doesn't know the dances. Since the public may come into the club, there are always those guys who see the women through the front windows and come inside, thinking they can just get right into the action. We usually have to kick these guys out.

I'm not a folk dancer. Never have been. Have no interest in being one. I used to ballroom dance when I was younger, but lately I have no interest in that either. I haven't really danced much since the days of the Fillmore and Avalon back in the sixties and even then I spent more time just hanging out than dancing. I'm always being asked why I don't dance or how I can just sit and not dance. Folk dancers relate through dancing. It kind of bothers them when someone doesn't participate. Of course, in my case, I am working, so I can't really participate. I see a lot of lonely people on my job, people who come to the club to try to connect, then leave alone every time. I've seen some tentative relationships start only to end abruptly. Older people who folk-dance do not necessarily have anything else in common. Most don't. Off the dance floor, the conversations are awkward, forced. Few of the people are verbal, though most are educated, professionals—a lot of computer programmers, nurses, social workers, librarians, and quite a few working people who go dancing to unwind after a day in a store or an office.

Let's call him Alvin. An ex-teacher, he started coming to the club a couple of years back. While he learned some of the dances and joined the line, he would often go off and dance by himself, making up a dance that pleased him. You don't do that on the folk-dance scene. You dance the dance the way everyone else does.

Alvin danced alone. And it cost him. He was called "weird" or "creepy". A lot of people wouldn't have anything to do with him and some were even afraid of him.

He seemed harmless. So he wants to make up his own dances. So what?

For awhile, he was coming with an older woman. I thought they had something going. He seemed mellow, relaxed, enjoying her company. Then she was gone and he was alone again. I don't know what happened. I seldom see all of any story at the club. In my job, I see fragments.

Early in 1983, Alvin began to show a lot of paranoia. He had stopped keeping himself up. He tried a beard, then shaved it off, then just wore two or three days hair on his face. He always wore the same clothes dancing, always the same blue pants and polo shirt. He began accusing people of being against him, of plotting against him, of talking about him behind his back, of making fun of him. He would see someone laughing and he would attack the person verbally. Are you talking about me? Most of the time, they weren't giving him a thought, but paranoia has nothing to do with the real world. Alvin was losing contact, drifting inward. He had made himself an object of ridicule by his unusual behavior, causing people to reject and avoid him; now he was accusing them for their normal rejection. He began yelling at people, insulting them on the dance floor, and the owner warned him he would be barred from the club if he continued his anti-social behavior. He got worse. One evening he came to the club and went the entire evening without his shirt. You don't do that on the folk-dance scene, particularly on a warm night when you sweat a lot. Another evening he came in and spent an hour just pacing up and down the room. Several times he jumped on people having private conversations and accused them of talking about him.

Then one evening he saw a young man looking at him on the dance floor and he asked him what he was looking at. The man told him he didn't want to have anything to do with him, but Alvin started talking about how he had a knife and did the guy want to fight and in a few seconds Alvin was getting a good beating near the stage. He was subsequently barred from the club and the last I heard he was trying to file a suit against the young man who attacked him. All kinds of versions of what happened began to drift around. People said they saw Alvin on top of the other guy. Some said they saw the guy hit Alvin and Alvin pulled a knife. It was all very unpleasant.

I saw Alvin as a borderline schizophrenic. From his behavior, I knew he was drifting away from reality. He had tried so hard to connect one way and had been refused and he shifted to another. You can't get attention one way, you try variations. He couldn't get positive

He got nervous. The dances are danced feelings from people because he had made himself different. He got negative feelings instead. He's gone now and things are back to normal. The right way. The group feels safe.

BASEBALL'S White Lines

by Tom Gedwillo

Punto Fijo, Venezuela. Winter Freeze League. November 13th. Rain is approaching. Some jerk forgot to plug in the sun. Can't get through to room service. Gunthar Pandoe is late for his interview. Such is the life of a baseball reporter. Room 409 of El Palacio de Platanos. This is the city where the raw talents of the minor league players are honed to perfection. Where old-timers like Jerry Koosman and Rod Carew keep their racked bodies juvenile. The season opens in eight days. Informants tell me that Fernando Wingtip will throw out the traditional first "beisbol" during the initial contest between the Camels of Valencia and the Maracay Frogs. Only half of the players expected here have cleared customs. The charter flight with Ed Farmer and Bruce Bochy inadvertently landed in Santa Marta, Colombia. They've discovered new life as coaches for the local miniature hamster golf team. The guys that make it to training camp usually receive a bonus. The earlier you get here, the more cash to stash. Larry Bittner pocketed an extra \$75 to help pay his chemist for those tests on the medication. Athletic success. You're nobody until you play in Punto Fijo. The Woodpeckers are this city's team. They have an outstanding pitcher named Haruki Smith LaBoyd. Scouts for the Cubs are trailing him. With this kid and Lee Smith, Wrigley Field could have an awesome relief duo. The balance of the teams that have enough players for a minimum roster include the San Cristobal Toucans, the Maracaibo Triplets, the Caracas Coronas, the Barquisimeto Lizards, and the Porlamar Astros. Big league parks. Pork Dog vendors. Caramel Bomb-Pops. Plastered fans spilling their Pilsner. Rain delays. It's all here in Venezuelan baseball, just the same as Yankee Stadium. Or Anaheim. Or Bad Axe, Michigan; home of the Walkingsticks and their phenom, Gunthar Pandoe. He should be here soon. Look for his interview in the December report. "Gun" was originally signed by San Francisco, but has a history of medical problems dating back to his pubescent days with the vapors and the very rare marzipan fever. After his release by the Giants, Pandoe experienced fourteen months of ultraviolet therapy and made an incredible comeback last year in AA ball. He hit .458 with 63 homers and 132 RBIs. He'll play shortstop for Valencia. L.A. Dodgers manager Gene Rayburn has made a special trip over here to observe Pandoe. I've gotta get over to the ballpark now. More on this later.

November 14th. Monsoon. The teams practiced indoors yesterday and today. I still went to the park to check my position in the pressbox. They sandwiched me in between Darrold Romtazger of the Cleveland Voice-Over and Betty Lynne Eastus of the Daytona Beach Citrus Review. They'd better keep their hands off my Royal Typer. What I should do is transcribe to cassette and let Kip M. take it from there. Anyway, all the reporters and broadcasters will be at Temblor de Tierra Estadio (Earthquake Stadium) in about two days. The entire playing surface is a natural formation. Grass doesn't grow on it. The import laws forbid the transportation of artificial fields, so the owners have given it a turf implant. The lawn is revived every three innings. Players must wear special anti-fertilizer shoes. I'd like to see Steinbrenner with these kinds of problems. Press conference tonight in the hotel lobby. Get ready for some hot diamond gossip.

November 15th. If the Winter Freeze League shapes up like the condition of these ballplayers, I'm in for an extended vacation. Gonna be more trainers and therapists than balls and strikes. The doctor is in. Accident report: Sevrin Abba, catcher for the Camels, will be out for a month with a lesion of the haunch bone. Seems he cause the injury dancing the Watusi while playing Rush at 78 rpm. Tony Perez, cavorting at first base for the Triplets, will miss a week in order to strengthen his Achilles' heel. Sez the former Phillie slugger, "Pee Rose kin hap my chob. I dun like to see wha habin since Ballmore. I heet better here. World Sears bean heestree now." Sulfite snorting has become the nemesis of Maracay outfielder Willie Toledo. Investigation shortly. What's this? Veteran skipper Dick Williams an umpire here in South America? Needs the extra income to pay off the gambling debts of his nephew, Emerson. The kid, once the starting quarterback for the Zimbalists of Texas FBI College, squandered his steroid money on seahorse races. What's next? Well, I do want to report to you IJ readers this November exclusive on the status of Geoff Zahn, former Angels and Twins hurler. He's been appointed National Marketing Manager for PetroPals Gasoline. As official sponsor for the Winter Freeze League, PetroPals plans a major promotion for Opening Day. Among the items to be given away are "Return of Jed Clampett" souvenir dishes, tropical ashtray liners, miniature tobacco plugs for the kiddies, Caribbean worm sorters, and complimentary pepper-margaritas for senior citizens. Sure beats insulated thermal underwear day at Shea Stadium. Congrats to Mr. Zahn on his association with this fine company. PetroPals is also an exclusive sponsor of Papoon in '84/'84.

BASEBALL'S WHITE LINES welcomes your input. I have a limited number of major league decals and stickers (self-effacing) for the asking. Send a stamped, addressed envelope care of my agent back in Lincoln, Nebraska. That's Spook Kopos, 4718½ Calvert St., zip 68506.



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Drifting in One Spot 1

by Gerry Reith

Now this guy Doug always seemed to think that no statement could be made that did not deserve a rejoinder by Him in this world-as-a-stage drive to keep the spotlight from swinging around too much, but we forgave him half the time because as Voltaire said, it's okay to talk about yourself provided you can be entertaining. But if Doug talked too much, Ben Jordan talks too little, and they both talk just a tad too loud. It's a mercy neither of them ever got an idea that they should be telling the rest of us how to live because they both possess this mighty Word Power, the kind that can swivel every head in a coffee shop without even trying. If they learned a few opinions about anything of consequence they could have been revival-tent preachers, chautauque politicians, rock stars or coaches with heart conditions.

So anyway Doug took off for Kansas City a little while back; the night before the final deadline him and me and Brent polished off a fifth of Yukon Jack and had a terrible argument about everything from Tits as opposed to Ass and on down to nuclear physics and the gold standard, with plenty in between, including two lightning chess games the first of which I lost miserably and second of which I kicked butt. The final terrible conflict raged over Perkins Cake and Steak vs. some bullshit snack shop and it woke up the neighbors; all the way down to Perkins Doug was doing his wild Caledonian Pict schtick in the street and nearly getting killed screaming Nazi slogans: "Arbeit Macht Frei!" for the benefit of some Ford Truck spiritual essence. He ate a book of matches, staple and all, with his bowl of chili.

In the morning I decided it was vitamin day, recalling back when I was in Ansonia living with drunk Vets who would retell gook murder exploits at every party. I was in the height of my phase of health cult membership and couldn't get these fools to eat a hundred different pills in the morning. But one night I told the assembled group I had this weird drug to turn them red as lobsters and make them feel like they had sunburns with wood straitjackets on.

"Ah, ah, what is this," they told me.

"Yeah," I said, "and it comes on in fifteen minutes, it lasts fifteen minutes, you get this total rush, then it's gone! like that!" I got the bottle, Niacin 250 milligram hits, and just started pushing it at everybody. Someone broke and then they all had to be macho and go through the initiation, so about ten minutes later they're going, "Ah, this is just some candy-ass vitamin he tricked us into taking," but they began to sit up and have wild looks on their faces. They tried the shower but it felt like getting stroked with a wire brush, and I told them to drink a bunch of water to make it flush out.

They threatened to kill me after inquiring again about how long it lasted when I said, "Oh, two, maybe three hours..." and started laughing: this was a worse trick, to give them this drug for pain and agony, saying it wouldn't last too long.

But after that this guy Bob started to believe in the Power of the Pills, and he was all worried about his tremor after being drunk about four years. I said it was all just magnesium and the B stuff being depleted, and one morning he was hung over and wanted something, "don't you have anything that will help..."

"Yeah, sure thing!" says I, the happy recruiter. I poured out about twenty capsules and pills and gelatin oil balls going through the routine to make it look as bad as possible like This Is Only The Beginning, and he told me to change my name to Elvis, but later in the day when he came home he was convinced I'd given him acid: the tremor was gone, he was tripping all day with clear thoughts and pure Mental Power! and give me another dose right now! After four years of beer and Burger King food you can bet that it will have an effect. I was the Doctor.

I sent Doug off with a similar treatment, since hitchhiking through-out cold empty spaces toward your brother's whore of an X-wife plus being broke and with no drugs can only be helped by miraculous healing chemicals circulating through starved brain cells and liver sores to make for a chipper, bright and alert confident feeling of being the Master of your Destiny, that kind of thing. You can talk to truckers about anything and not feel as if they have a knife hidden away for when the moment comes to perform terrible acts of sex murder.

Now he's gone for a while and Ben Jordan is still here, so either way we have a loud mouthed son of a bitch wandering around saying stupid things for effect. Ben's the town's biggest junkie now that Ed Gardner is dead, being so utterly wasted on pure V.A. Hospital drugs that he doesn't know what year it is. My favorite thing about him is when he'll be sitting alone or pacing in the lobby, and cut loose laughing. I know that feeling and sometimes I'll start laughing too, and he looks at you like he just communicated the joke by silent intermind drug magic. It is only an event that can happen to the most self-contained of characters, and I guess it is disturbing to bystanders who fear self-starting mechanisms of any kind, but it is harmless power and very tricky. I will mark one good mark for any stranger that I see who will get hysterical just by thinking about something, and try to get to know him, even if he has bizarre gestures or old clothes.

The UNTERMENSCH Myth

by Jill Zimmerman

One day last week, I was sitting on the PATH train (yes, the truly inventive can find seats), amidst a sea of khaki trenchcoats, perusing a recent issue of Advertising Age, an industry publication just shy of being as cumbersome to read on a train as the Wall Street Journal (which is impossible to maneuver without spreading it all over the floor, if you're under 5 feet). The theme for this issue (which contained a marvelous article by my beloved Siskel & Ebert in which they rated a series of TV commercials) was "Targeting Today's Woman." Wow, thought I, as I read. Now that I've purchased an overpriced piece of silk foulard to knot around my too-tight-around-the-neck button-down oxford shirt, I have become a "target." What power! What influence I now have over the "stuff" industry! Consumer America wants me!!! But what does this mean, now that I am a target? Do I need a bulletproof vest? What are the "larger implications for our society?" (she mused, profoundly.)

It's amazing how the advertising industry has the same sort of tunnel-vision as it did years ago. In an effort to create "composites," they paint American society with the same sort of broad brush strokes as BBC TV-dramas paint Americans. It used to portray a world in which crafty but docile females provide home comforts for one-dimensional men, who having shed their jackets and ties, cease to exist after hungrily devouring the Hamburger Helper so lovingly prepared by their devoted spouses. Of course, all that has changed now, and these crafty women in their shirtwaist dresses and three-inch heels (later replaced with the requisite jeans and shirt avec cardigan sweater knotted around the neck) have been replaced by what passes for truly intelligent women --you can tell they're intelligent and successful by the overpriced piece of silk foulard knotted around the too-tight-around-the-collar oxford shirts they wear. May, 'twas not Betty and Gloria who gave birth to the superwoman myth, 'twas Madison Avenue. For while the 'working woman' was supposed to have far more buying power than her stay-at-home counterpart, she was not home to watch Phil Donahue, Good Morning America and General Hospital. So in order to sell her dish detergents, laundry soaps, and little bricks that turned the toilet blue, the ad biz had to create superwoman. Perhaps the most offensive exploitation of this is the "Redbook Juggler," that navy-blue suit (with the overpriced piece of silk foulard...etc.) -clad paragon of modern womanhood, with an "I've conquered the world" look on her face, gleefully juggling her moronic-looking husband and asinine children around her head. For here was a consumer-product manager's dream--the family woman who didn't have to ask her husband for the money to buy their product!

Yes, the woman of today's advertising presents a bonanza for American industry. She appears clad in evening wear next to construction workers, she now has an excuse to serve Hamburger Helper (the entire convenience food industry is now able to both play on, and alleviate, the superwoman's guilt about providing her family with proper nourishment), and since she's out in the "real world," she knows the "facts" about why Secret is better for a woman's body chemistry than Right Guard. Truly momentous advances.

But despite the mere substitution of one tunnel-reality for another, the real casualty of this picture of American womanhood is the American male. For how can he be portrayed against this omniscient female? By turning him into a ninny, of course. Remember James Garner in the Polaroid commercials? Yes, it seemed like witty repartee between he and Mariette Hartley, but in reality she was smugly intelligent, while he was the bumbling fool. And of course, the "househusband" of sorts, merrily singing the virtues of Formula 409 as he wipes dirt away. (Why is it that only when the roles are reversed do we see how absurd these things are?) Or the man who has achieved the monstrous accomplishment of successfully negotiating a supermarket, only to find that he's purchased the wrong soap (the ultimate crime). No wonder men feel threatened by the achievements of women. No wonder it kicks off castration anxiety, for the men (and Lois Wyse and Mary Wells to the contrary, most ad execs are still men) who have so much control over how we see ourselves insist that in order to emphasize the intelligence of women, they must use moronic men as counterpoint. One of the most disturbing examples of this threat is already being exploited. For while the man is so proud of his spouse's new American Express Card while they're merely strolling arm-in-arm down the street, as soon as she reaches for the check, he becomes insecure, whereupon his loving spouse chucks him under the chin in a disgustingly condescending gesture (worthy of the former "hubby" character patting his wife on the head for her chocolate chip cookies), saying "You're cute when you're worried."

Yet the backlash against this has already begun, but like most backlashes, it is far more reactionary than any dominance-submission misogyny perpetrated (naively, I'm sure, rather than maliciously) in earlier generations. It is the Christian Dior shirt ad, in which a GQ-type man is leaving his (obviously) gold-digging spouse (lover?), while she pouts her ersatz-French lips and inquires about the disposition of the paintings, the cars (she can keep all but the Bugatti), the house, and other trappings of the Mediterranean rich. All the while, he is methodically packing what seems like hundreds of Christian Dior (or is it Yves St. Laurent? Does it make a difference?) shirts into a suitcase, blasé about leaving his fortune with this offensively materialistic (regardless of how beautiful she may be) woman, for he knows with his shirts he'll be fine.

Both these trends are extremely destructive, for they provide yet another distortion of the true aims of feminism (or humanism), which is designed not to aggrandize one sex at the expense of another. To show a world in which intelligent women create incapacitated men is destructive to the future of both--and to their interactions.

I've written column after column about the animosity between the sexes. I'll undoubtedly write more. Yet I think it's important to recognize

they BLINDED me with VIDEO

by CANDI STRECKER

CHAPTER VI: THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE SILLY

I try to take my job as an MTV reviewer seriously, you understand, but sometimes it's hard to stay serious when the videos you see are so gosh-darn silly. I'm not even talking about comedy videos here, but about the ones that are the funnies of all because they're trying so hard not to be funny. Most common on MTV is simple macho-literal silliness. A great (i.e., dreadful) example of this is a video I just saw of the group Zebra. The lead singer is sweating and posturing in a manly video way; beside him, the inevitable videogirl--in a zebra-print body-stocking, of course--writhes and contorts and thrusts her pelvis every whichaway. Over and over he sings the title line, "Tell Me What You Want!" Her body language is making it perfectly clear what she wants, but since this fellow seems a bit dense about it, I feel obliged to yell a few hints toward the TV screen--"She wants your precious bodily fluids! Your throbbing rod of manhood! Your one-eyed trouser snake!" How this chap can keep asking what she wants for a full three minutes, while the girl is all but gnawing at his ankles, is beyond me. He keeps a straight face throughout--but I'll be darned if I can.

But for real silliness, there's nothing like a deadpan video with delusions of social significance--such as Pat Benatar's recent "Love Is A Battlefield". There seems to be some sort of message implied in the sketchy plot--Pat, as teenager, runs away from bad unsympathetic parents and ends up (oh, the decadence of it all) as a dime-a-dance girl in some big bad city. As we all know, every major American city is littered with dancehalls just like this one, where one can tango with fallen teen tarts in phenomenal post-Flashdance outfits: torn stockings, high heels, scarves, tulle, and tatters. We learn that Pat is still a Good Girl deep inside, though, because we see her writing a letter to her little brother back home. Well, one day the slimy ol' dancehall manager gets fresh with one of the girls, and guess what! After (apparently) many nights spent in the dancefloor embraces of strangers while dressed in tastefully shredded frocks, the girls suddenly decide en masse that their dignity is being compromised. They turn and face down that bad ol' slimy manager and do that one thing no slimy manager can stand: **THEY SHAKE THEIR TITS AT HIM!** Yes, they narrow their eyes, grit their teeth, and give one hell of a shakey-shake-shake. Well, of course, the slimy manager just withers away at the sight, like a vampire confronted by a cross, and the girls dance right out into the sunrise and, I presume, go home to fill out their applications to law school. Maybe there was some kind of message intended here, about exploitation and solidarity and teenage runaways, but for me the whole video just collapsed from the weight of its sense of seriousness. I guess I should be thankful this wasn't a two-hour movie that I'd paid \$4.00 to see.

With silly out of the way, let's get down to the usual topics: the good and the bad in current videos. There seems to be a new hybrid genre of video on MTV lately: mini-movies, a cross between a rock video and a Coming Attractions trailer. STAYING ALIVE is sliced, diced, and compressed into three minutes to match the tune "Far From Over"; FLASH-DANCE gets condensed into a set of visuals for "Maniac"; and, despite its lack of sweat-tech dancing, WARGAMES is worked over and made into a video to fit some forgettable Crosby-Stills-Nash song that was allegedly part of its soundtrack. It's a clever new angle for promoting movies to the youth market, but it doesn't necessarily make good art. I've only seen one mini-movie that stands on its own, that goes beyond plugging a film and succeeds as a visualization of a piece of music: the new video built out of footage from RUMBLEFISH. The director works in shots of the composers/musicians, Stewart Copeland (of the Police) and Stannard Ridgeway (of Wall of Voodoo), sort of performing/recording the song against projection screens of the film itself. The camera swoops so fluidly between the foreground performers and the background footage that one has a wonderful dizzying feeling of not knowing where one ends and the other begins. Singer Ridgeway's intensity when he makes eye contact with the camera makes me willing to bet he'll be starring in movies, as well as scoring them, any day now.

Herbie Hancock's "Rock It", rave-reviewed her two months ago, is still the best thing on MTV; nowadays, it even seems to be on their heavy-rotation playlist, so you stand a good chance of seeing it on any given day. I've since learned who created this remarkable video: Kevin Godley and Lol Creme, who also directed the controversial but visually stunning "Girls on Film" for Duran Duran (ever see the long, R-rated version?) and the breathtaking, trash-in-a-windtunnel "Synchronicity II" for the Police. These two started out as almost-annoyingly-clever songwriters with 10CC in the early '70's and later recorded as a duo. At some point they turned to videomaking, which I'd say is their true calling: they seem to have mastered the medium instantly. When I see wonderful work like theirs, I get mad as hell that MTV and its imitators force these directors to, in effect, work anonymously. If I were in charge of MTV, the second thing I'd do--after sending the VJs to a Siberian labor camp--would be to add a credit line for directors to the little blurb at the start and end of each video.

the sources of distorted images--regardless of who they purport to glorify. Yes, I wear an overpriced piece of silk foulard. But neither I, nor most of my peers in Corporate America, seek to castrate men as a way of keeping our ties straight. Perhaps Madison Avenue should look at its own image before portraying America as a sea of executive women brandishing symbolic knives.

The Story of Alexis Black

by Jill Dearman

PART III: MY TRENCHCOAT ISN'T EASY TO FILL

It's true my time isn't always my own, but even Alexis Black needs some time to relax. So, there I was, eating some leftover chicken parmesan, listening to Culture Club's Boy George belt out "Karma Chameleon" (the record was part of my birthday gift to Katrina, but she lent it to me...what a good egg), when the phone rang. I knew I should've taken it off the hook.

"Hello?"

"Hello Alex, you're sounding as sexy as ever."

"Oh, hi Michael."

That's Michael Amara, my latest love. He's a legendary rock and roll guitarist and part-time veterinarian, as well as being a hunk of a man. Anyway, he suggested we spend the day in the park with the dogs, Rocky (mine) and Charlie and Algernon (his). I was hesitant at first, feeling I didn't have the time to spend on such simple pleasures, but then I reconsidered. I can't always be a slave to my demanding lifestyle.

"So, you'll go?" he asked.

"Yup."

"Well, could Alexis Black be turning over a new leaf?"

We ran with the dogs until we fell laughing on a bench. Before I had time to say the line that symbolizes 1983—"Whew! What a workout!"—he had me in his arms, and with the dogs romping at our feet, he kissed me with a passion that matched my own.

"Oh, Blackie..." he whispered.

"Oh, Michael..." I whispered.

"Oh wow! Alexis and Michael! How the hell are you?"

It was Bootsy Fontaine. She was with Elizabeth "Bulletface" O'Hara. They're good kids, but there are no good kids when one (or two) is in the heat of passion. They're my apprentice private eyes. Bootsy (her real name is Betsy) is an aspiring actress who longs to wear a trenchcoat, and Bulletface (nicknamed for the sniper's bullet that gave her face a mighty deep dimple) is a freelance artist and a founding member of the West End Avenue Alcoholics Anonymous.

"Wow, we didn't expect to find you in the park, Alex," Bulletface gushed.

"Dammit, isn't my time ever my own? Can't Alexis Black ever be free of pressure?" I yelled.

"Calm down, calm down. Sure you can take a break, it's just...well, I'm surprised to see you in the park after what happened today," Bulletface said.

"What happened?" I asked, my antennae perking up.

"Tex D'Amour," Bootsy said. "He's been shot! He's on the critical list!"

"Holy Mother of God! What happened? Who did it?"

"They're trying to hush it up...but I know one thing for sure. Mamie DeVille did it."

Tex D'Amour...shot by Mamie DeVille! Oh, are my loved ones never safe? Tex is a good friend of mine. He's the best Elvis Presley impersonator this side of Texas (from where he hails) and a rodeo star as well. They don't make 'em like Tex anymore.

But Mamie DeVille, that's another story. Once she was a well-respected long-distance runner. She came in second in the twenty-six-mile marathon. As fate would have it, it was my sister, Krystal Black, who beat her. Well, after the race Mamie went on a drinking binge. After thirteen bottles of tequila, she stumbled out of the bar, into her red Camaro, and drove off a nearby cliff in a drunken stupor. Well, after nearly a year of rehabilitation, Mamie was able to walk again, with the help of a bionic leg. Still, her doctors told her she'd never run again.

That's when Mamie turned to a life of crime. She became an amoral bounty hunter, and she always gets her man.

I gave Michael the dogs, and I screamed inside at the wistful expression on his face when I muttered something like, "Uh, sorry... business before pleasure." Though this was far from just a business worry; my friend was put in the hospital by a demented psychopath! And Alexis Black never turns her back on a friend.

I called Katrina and Dominick and told them to meet me at Saint Mary Magdolyn Hospital. Katrina was shooting an "I Love New York" commercial on the museum steps on 82nd and 5th with Barishnikov.

"But don't worry," she said, "Mischa will drive me over after the shoot."

Dominick was tending bar but said he'd get over as soon as he got rid of a drunk that had been downing Tequila Sunrises for the last four hours.

I sent Bootsy and Bulletface off to find out about Mamie DeVille and her whereabouts, and headed over to the hospital.

"I'm looking for Tex D'Amour. He was brought in for a gunshot wound..."

"He's in surgery now. You can wait in here," a nurse told me.

A few minutes later, Dominick came in wearing bowling shoes and a worried expression.

"How is he?"

"Still in surgery."

We waited together tensely, and it was as if a bomb went off in our hearts when Katrina burst in like a bat out of hell.

"How is he?"

"Still in surgery...sit down," I said. "Looks like we've got a long wait."

"Whew! My aching feet," she muttered.

The first hour was the worst. Between us, we chewed thirteen packs of gum (how ironic that it was "Carefree" gum). I drank twelve cups of coffee, Dominick paced up and down the corridor till his bowling shoes wore out, and Katrina hummed "I Love New York" incessantly.

The next two hours were kind of hazy...between the sugar, caffeine

and antiseptic hospital odor I was ready to go out of my mind, until finally...

"He's pulled through. He's going to be alright."

"Can we see him now, doctor?"

"Well, I'm afraid not. He needs his rest."

"Doctor, my name is Dominick Mackenzie," Dominick said, extending his hand, "and this is Katrina Nichols..."

"Pleased to meetcha," she said, her jaw cracking.

"And allow me to introduce Ms. Alexis Black."

"I think he's rested long enough now, Ms. Black. You can see him... room 204."

Yes, the name Alexis Black opens many doors.

When we walked in, we were all slightly taken aback. Poor Tex was hooked up to an IV unit, and looked very weak.

"Tex," I whispered, "it's Alex."

"Oh Alex...hi...what's new?"

"Let's see...I bought some new nail polish, took my Mercedes in for a tune-up, my old friend got shot by a crazed killer—that's what's new! Now what the heck happened, ya knucklehead?"

"Well," Tex said, as we gathered around his bed, "oh, hi, Dominick, Katrina...um, well, let's see, it all began on Tuesday. I was performing at the La Bamba room at 'Whoopies'. The crowd was really enthusiastic, and the show was really going well. I finished 'Hound Dog' and then went off...and they were really going wild! I few minutes later I came back on and said, 'I think you all know this one...it's a little tune called 'Teddy Bear'', and then next thing I know, someone throws a teddy bear onstage. It was coming straight at me, so I ducked. It was just a lil' ole bear, but I didn't want it to mess up my hair. Well, anyway, it hit the stage with a bang...and I mean a bang! The thing exploded. It was a miniature bomb!"

"Oh no!"

"Oh yes! Well, the place cleared out pretty quickly after that, but at the time I didn't know who did it. The next night, though, I was walking into my apartment, when I heard a voice from behind me. It was Mamie DeVille! She said something to the effect of 'put your hands up, you swine, and walk in slowly, if you ever want to see the sun shine again'."

"Tex," I interrupted, "I don't understand. How does she even know you, and why was she doing this?"

"Well, Alexis, she feels that you're responsible for what she's become. I'd read about her in the papers, but I never realized how genuinely whacked out she was, till I came face to face with her colt .45. She made me watch her write in bright red lipstick 'Stop me Alexis before I kill again—if you can', and then, BANG! Right in the kisser! My career is over..."

"Aw, you can still sing, Tex," Katrina said.

"Yeah, but I can't snarl anymore," Tex replied pitifully trying to lift his upper lip.

We then heard a knock at the door. It was the doctor, who told us we had to leave. I vowed that I would have Mamie DeVille put away for good. As I was walking out, the doctor asked me for my number, but I didn't give it to him, explaining that I was rarely at home.

"Well, perhaps we can play golf some time..."

"I don't think so, Doc, but I have a friend who might be interested. Her name is Boo—er, Betsy Fontaine," I said.

"Did someone call me?" Bootsy asked, walking in. "Hi, Tex? How're you feeling?"

"Bootsy, this is Doctor, uh..."

"Lewis. Jack Lewis," he said, shaking her hand warmly.

"Hi. I'm Betsy, but my friends call me Bootsy."

"Then Bootsy it is, my dear."

The sexual energy between them was strong enough to light up Pittsburgh on a Saturday night.

"Where's Bulletface?" Dominick asked.

"Oh, 'Bootsy said, snapping out of it, 'she's at an AA meeting.'"

"Oh, that's right. It's Thursday."

"And Alexis," she said, "I'm sure you'll be happy to hear that Mamie DeVille has been captured. Bulletface and I tailed her, and brought in the police—"

"But where—"

"At Scofield's. The bar Dominick works at. She was drinking Tequila Sunrises like there was no tomorrow..."

Well, Katrina ran off soon afterwards; she had a date with Mischa. Dominick and I were feeling pretty depressed, and neither of us wanted to go home just yet.

"Looks like Bootsy and Bulletface wrapped up the case pretty well without us," he said.

"Yeah, Dominick. It really makes me think. Maybe I should just settle for being a rock and roll legend in my own time..."

"No, Alexis. You're the best there is. It's me! I should hang up my trenchcoat for good and just pursue my acting career..."

"Aw, listen to us. It was just beginner's luck for them! We're old pros, Dominick—and we're not quitters."

"You're right, Alexis...but no matter what, we'll always have the Pep," he said.

"Yeah, we'll always have the Pep," I repeated. We sighed in unison then, and headed over to Fifth Avenue.

IF IT'S TRUE THAT

The universe has millions of inhabited planets like ours it wouldn't matter much in the scheme of things if we destroyed all earthly life

(the planet would keep spinning).

To prevent such happening send

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Of Spare Changes ~ Part II

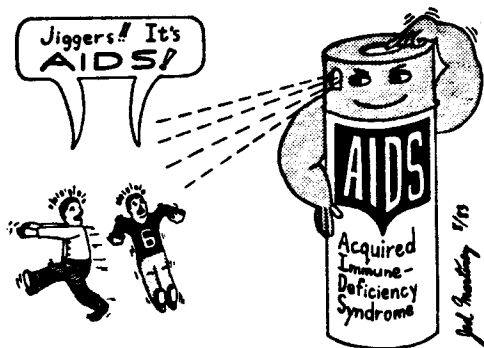
by Rob

The Spooky Crew waited in Silence. Not the kind of silence that you know, but a complete and absolute Silence. In their Field, nothing entered unbidden, not even sound. The Crew was watching the sky with neither interest nor speculation, not even with what could be called 'patience'. There was almost the odour of Limbo on this watching. They knew something would be happening eventually, and when it did, Time would be what it always had been, before we forgot where it came from and let it keep reminding us where we were going.

It was a Singing Silence, a Silence as full as a roar or a whisper. It was the Silence that Beethoven strove to catch between notes, the Silence Van Gogh tried to dip his brush in, the Silence Rodin wanted to hew in stone.

It was the Silence once shattered by the Words "Let There Be Light", and only here in the Spooky Crew's Field had the cracks in that Silence been healed.

And the Spooky Crew, in Silence, waited and watched.



AIDS kills folks dead!

(...AND THAT'S NO JOKE!)

TALK SHOW HOST CONFIDENTIAL by Michael Dobbs

I'm afraid I lack guts. I recently was sitting at a press conference not SIX FEET AWAY FROM THE MAN WHO MAY BE THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THESE UNITED STATES AND I FAILED TO ASK HIM THE QUESTION FURTHERMOST ON THE MINDS OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC!

I'll have to turn in my Paul Harvey School of Newshounding Correspondence Course diploma for my attack, sudden and unprovoked, of good taste.

You see, gentle reader, John Glenn recently came to Springfield to address a local college crowd and drum up support in this state where the Democratic party has apparently decided in its collective wisdom that Walter Mondale is OUR MAN.

So, here I was at the press conference following his speech...which by the way was attended well and interrupted by a bomb scare...and I was sitting next to his lectern, and damnation I didn't ask my question.

Glenn was asked about the economy, Grenada, Jesse Jackson—but not about whether he really did masturbate while humming the Marine Corps Anthem, as depicted in the movie THE RIGHT STUFF.

I'm sure if I had asked that question, I would have blown the chance of ever getting Glenn on my show. I understand there is a fair chance I could get him on when he's in New England campaigning.

I'm sure my question would not have made the evening news programs, but I think that honestly there is not another question in the minds of the American people who've seen THE RIGHT STUFF than that.

After all, who gives a good golly over Glenn's reactions to Grenada? It's past history, Jackson. Reagan reasserted his manhood and sent troops down to the islands to run the Cubans' nose into it. I must admit I did feel some John Philip Sousa swelling in my hairless chest. It's great to know that Theodore Roosevelt is alive and well and living in the body of a 70-year-old self-admitted ham actor.

In respect to Roosevelt, though, the difference between Reagan and T.R. is that Teddy freely admitted his big stick policies while Ronnie hasn't got the guts or style to say, "Hey, love me or leave me."

But I ramble...No one cares about Glenn's stands; they care only about gossip. There's nothing wrong with that, as the difference between journalism and gossip is a thin one.

I know that I dropped the ball. I couldn't admit it to my listeners, though. Of course they still loved me to death about the coverage I gave Glenn, but someday, somehow, I'll find out the truth about the Glenn jerk-off scene.

This whole issue may become what the Carter Playboy interview was for the Carter-Ford race. Carter admitted he lusted in his heart for women and everyone said, "Yeeeah! There's a guy I can i-den-ti-fy with! Goddamn!"

Now that the sexual revolution has staggered a few more notches toward total depravity, voters may rate highly a candidate who admits to self-abuse to the accompaniment of the Marine Corps Anthem. If 14-year-old boys could vote, Glenn possibly could be their man.

I realize that this column is in bad taste. Sorry folks, but I was driven.

ENCRYPTED MESSAGES from the center of the Federal Universe arrive via courier. The Troll is ever alert and passes the news to Scoop Bailey—and to a message from Scoop that he lives! Vive La Troll! But what of the Wambler? Where is the Wambler, Troll? —Rob

FREEDOM

from a life of

HELL



VOTE

PAPPOON

Mr. Allen's Airship

by Steven F. Scharff

(CORRECTION: To those who read last month's installment and were left a bit confused about where the story takes place, it is in Oregon. I have no idea how George got into the story.) (As usual, it was probably my nimble fingers and numb brain again—sorry Steve.—ED.)

Chapter Two

Lorraine has just loaded the morning's breakfast dishes into the dishwasher. She turned and walked the three paces to the window that looked out to the massive back yard. Gary had set up pegs in the ground to mark the great expanse of canvas that would be spread out, and then cut according to his airship plans.

Gary was experimenting with an inflatable boat that would be used as the craft's gondola. Lorraine didn't bother to ask what exactly he was doing, mainly because she felt that it might dampen his spirits in some way.

She felt rather happy that Gary wasn't moping around the house, staring at the television. He was outdoors, working with his hands. But what he was working on...

The telephone ringing brought Lorraine out of her reverie. It was Mrs. Patterson, the wealthy social-seeker who tried to keep Lorraine and Gary from moving in because they had no credit history (that ought to tell you something about the woman).

"DEAR Lorraine," began the conversation, "is your husband STILL at work on that...blimp of his?"

"I think so," replied Lorraine in a deadpan voice, "but he isn't quite certain if it's going to be a blimp, or a hot air balloon, or whatever."

"Well, if you must know why I called, it's because I attended a relative's wedding a few days ago, and we were asking each other the usual questions, How-are-things-in-your-neighborhood and the like, when I was asked about what unusual events were occurring nearby..."

Lorraine gripped the telephone receiver, anticipating one of her caustic remarks.

"...and I said, 'Well, one of my neighbors is in the midst of an aviation project', and someone asked, 'Oh! Isn't that the man in your neighborhood who's building that blimp in his back yard?'"

Mrs. Patterson's genteel cover quickly disappeared, as she started raving hysterically over the phone.

"DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT IT IS LIKE TO HAVE PEOPLE SAY BEHIND YOUR BACK 'Look, there goes Mrs. Patterson! Her neighbor is building a blimp!'"

Lorraine rubbed her forehead, trying to think of something to say to an angry and incredibly conceited woman, but in a way that wouldn't get her even more frustrated.

"What are you so angry about, it's MY husband who's building the damned thing."

"I know, but..." a long dramatic silence followed, ending with a sound similar to that of a sob, "...MY HUSBAND IS CONSIDERING BUYING ONE FROM A FACTORY IN ENGLAND!!!" Mrs. Patterson hung up the phone, gasping for air as if she were auditioning for the role of Lady Macbeth.

Lorraine hung up her receiver, thinking, "The people who live around here are so rich and stuck-up, they expect everyone to think the way they do. That's crazy!"

She stared out the window at Gary, jumping up and down on the inflatable boat like a trampoline.

"But then, what would I know about sanity?"

A few moments later, Lorraine was outside, talking to Gary about the phone call. Gary, not losing stride in his work, said, as he went over a checklist, "Well, people get a little pissed at stuff they can't understand. Everybody likes to see things in a neat and orderly manner. They can't tolerate any deviation from the norm. They've got values that they expect everybody to obey."

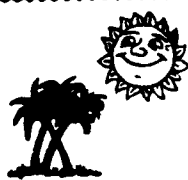
He continued on for several minutes, while simultaneously working on the would-be gondola, until they heard a car pull up in front of the house, followed by the sound of two doors being shut. Two men in business suits, and carrying briefcases, walked up the driveway to the back yard.

"Mr. Gary Allen?" one man asked.

"Yeah..." Gary responded, as both Lorraine and he stared curiously at the two men.

"I'm Michael Lewis, and this is Carl Wasserman. We're with the Federal Aviation Administration. We've gotten word that you're building an airship, and our records don't show you as having filled out any paperwork regarding the construction, registration or piloting of said airship. We were wondering if we could talk to you about this."

(NEXT INSTALLMENT: Legal Eagles)



by Rory Houchens

12 Bye for now, cats!



Generally in Europe, musicians of all types seem to be more readily received. In fact, this may hold true for all artists in Europe as well. In an interview recently aired on Rutgers' WRSU (88.7 New Brunswick, NJ), Phillip Glass brought this point into focus. A classically-trained, now contemporary or "modern music" composer, Mr. Glass had had the opportunity to write, perform, and collaborate with other artistic groups in America and Europe. He cited that the media abroad functions differently, begin more a part of government. In the U.S., radio and television stations are individually functioning companies (or networks). In Europe, more allowances are given to artists of all types, because it is seen as a responsibility of a government's media to do so. Consequently, more experimental artists are given the opportunity to gain the respect of a truly interested audience. While living in France, Mr. Glass' landlady was reportedly thrilled and honored at having an artist-type renting from her. There is, in fact, a special term in the French language for those cultural reflectors that thrive on going against the grain. This reference is used in anything but a degrading way. Glass also mentioned on the other side of the ocean, he had seen rental applications in America having a person's job description as "musician" crossed out and "unemployed" written next to it. An ironic remark regarding an artist's employment situation in this country was that "there are probably more ways a person could make an odd living here than anywhere else."

TEE-VEE ME by Carolyn Boyd

Television is the ultimate and only possible art communication form for the 20th century and on into beyond. Prime time, network, commercial tv—art sold on the auction block to the highest bidder for the lowest output cost—is the only art that says anything at all about contemporary western civilization. In the early days of the medium, television attempted to imitate the aristocratic, elitist, Stone Age technique "fine" arts—drama, music, and even still-frame visual art—pre Con Art. Television did not yet realize its role as the transition and culmination of the New Con Art, as bit by bit archaic media passed into the void of obsolescence from the sterile and arrogant gallery/conservatory/theatre system. No one knew that Marconi, Ed Sullivan, and Mr. T. had come to earth to save us from our own artistic boredom.

As with every society devouring itself in decadence and consumption, New Con Art is nothing more than a dazzling conglomeration of heroic myths. It is essential that no one in the tv show know the main character's heroic status, or else the jig will be up. The only really interesting characters are the sidekicks—the Bill Maxwells, the Frank Burnses, the H.M. Murdocks. They have no need to be superhuman, so they can say and do anything they like. It is indicative of America's humanist/anti-humanist battle, the basically atheistic founding fathers ideals versus Victorian romanticism and diem (from which we are still struggling to escape), that the only characters the audience is supposed to emulate to be better people are the most inhuman.

New Con Art is a fashion ploy of the times, speaking to and around what is really true and what is propaganda. What with nuclear fission about to immolate us all, a contaminated ecosystem threatening both within and without, untold imminent disasters awaiting freedom to strike, we have no time for contemplating aesthetically tickling images in airtight museums (or, perhaps, that is all we have time for; perhaps that is the answer to all problems—but only so long as everyone does it; until then, art has weightier responsibilities). So, according to New Con Art, how are we doing? The Cold War 1950s art is resurrected in black and white, a good and evil dichotomy camouflaged by the technical use of color, creating a sense of reality when there is none. Assumed values of 60s, 70s and 80s middle-class liberalism are no longer considered patly correct, in deference to the Madison Avenue concepts of "gusto" individuality and independence, which is of course a 1984-ish doublespeak opposite of what it purports to be. Hence, we now have vaguely neo-fascist, and definitely right-wing, militaristic cop/adventure/military shows like *For Love and Honor*, *Emerald Point, N.A.S.*, *The A-Team*, etc. etc. etc. The New Con Art theory that only this sort of thing can save the world doesn't speak well for our chances of making it till 2000. Still, in a typical commercial and contradiction, New Con Art is continuing to be beholden to the smiley-face culture of *Love Makes The World Go Round*, which is, if taken seriously, a truly radical and revolutionary idea.

The heart of popular culture, of which New Con Art is the epitome, is that it could have been done by any member of the audience, including Mr. Jacobsen of Terre Haute, Indiana, who has been in a coma for thirteen years. The only difference between the average Joe Schmoe and the producers of New Con Art, besides the fact that New Con Artists live in million-dollar Beverly Hills homes, is that they thought of doing the art first. New Con Art is only a kaleidoscope of all the images, stereotypes, pre-conceived notions of the spectator's mind, all mixed up and put in new forms for the consumer's amusement. It never says anything new, just rehashes old things in a new combination. It is supremely comfortable, never disquieting to the consumers, because it is exactly what they would say, in the language they would say it.

Schlock is the current overall style of New Con Art today. Special effects and high technology multi-media works are now arts in themselves, apart from the complete film or television works in which they may appear. Much New Con Art takes the form of science fiction, portraying in the current dimension psychological constructs of mythical beasts, beyond expansions, and complex symbology, still following the lead of 1950s and 60s shows like *Twilight Zone* and *Lost In Space*. Pure Con Art, however, is only concerned with conveying attitudes through the style of popular culture. This mode results from years of comic books, pulp novels, and Grade B horror movies—and are called up by conventions much less sophisticated than are available, such as cutout flying scenes, disk-shaped flying saucers and murky, misty other dimensions. It is dedicated to not expanding the viewer's imagination one bit; as a matter of fact, it only rarely goes even as far as the reader's imagination.

America is the birthplace, heart and soul of New Con Art. Visually, smiley-face decorations, oil-on-velvet paintings of clowns, plastic wall hangings, cutesy signs, are usually satirical on tv, but not irrelevant. Most network characters are exactly the same—designed to make the spectator opiated and as if, by these tokens, they are art appreciators and collectors. Television characters are also the holders of America's ethical myths. They are perhaps the only real heroes left, and they are heroes because they are designed to enable the spectator to instill in them all the pat morals the spectator would like to believe he/she has, and by heroizing them the spectator feels moral while being free to pursue greed, lust, and other staples of the human soul. The tenacity of these morals is uniquely American—no other nationality believes morality is possible, let alone necessary. At last, American art is set free from European art.

New Con Art is fan art. It is not a self-contained concept, created by one individual for a one-time presentation as a finished product, but one step in a process of mutual building by audience and artist. Take the infamous *Star Trek* example. First, the artist, the producer, created characters and situations just ripe for debate by the fans—Vulcan, Chapel and Spock's relationship, logic versus emotion, to name only a few. Then the fans took off with these ideas, and anyone seeing the *Star Trek* movies without reading the fan literature would be completely baffled. In the ten years between, the fans changed the characters, speculated on the future, drove out the inconsistencies and debated all the smallest points. It is a science—the producers must



Hey...Can't we just save these nutty WHOZITS characters already...? (Well, somebody's gotta go it!)

Ever in pursuit of that good ol' boffo yock as I am...well, I'm once again taking portable electronic printer in hand...this time, mind you, with a cause! Yes, a cause is a tiring sort of thing to pursue, but it's a good kinda...well, I think you all know the rest. Anyhow, dontcha think it's really about time somebody said something for those nutty-naavelous half inch wonders, the WHOZITS (or is it just "WHOZITS"? Proper titles are important)?

Well, don't you? Doesn't anybody...?

Hey, listen...I was flipping through the latest IJ as I usually do...eyes a-wandering up and down the columns like so, when...horrors! Uh-oh. Looks like Ye Editor person is considering, once again, pretty much doing away with her quite helpless artistic offspring. Geez, do we have to go through this again...? I mean, is there but nothing we can do? IS THERE NO WAY POSSIBLE TO SAVE THESE INTREPID BUGGARS FROM A PRETTY DARN GRISLY AND RATHER CRUEL FATE (THAT THEY CERTAINLY DON'T DESERVE, BY THE WAY) AT THE HANDS OF A PRETTY DARN HANDFUL OF MEAN AND NASTY PEOPLE?? Why, I should hope so.

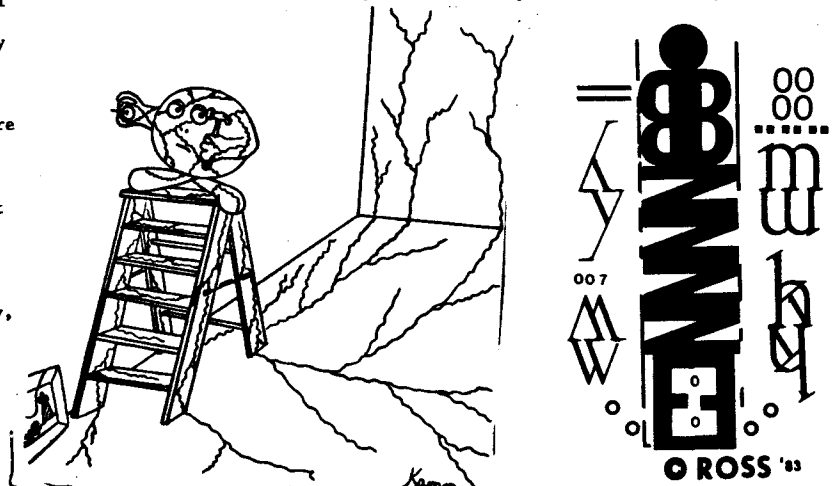
Are you all too busy out there listening to Quiet Riot on your Walkmans (or 'Walkmen', I suppose) to stop and care about these WHOZITS folks? Sure, I know, killers still walk the streets, and Reagan is still President, but, what they hey...let's work on the important causes first, huh? (Priorities, priorities, dontchaknow...) I don't know about you people, but I LIKE the crazy things. They aren't Smurfs, and that's a good place to start in my book. Oh, sure...you sophisticated 9to5 people often overlook them, probably because, well, they AREN'T as well drawn as Bloom County. Or Greg Blair, or George Eddy, or Sgt. Preston of the Yukon. Well, I suppose it depends on your own particular tastes. Anyhow, that's not the point. The point is (I claim, trying to pull myself out of digressing any further...you don't think I digress too much, do you? I'll have to ask Anni one of these days. If I think of it. Ahh, but I digress...don't I? Anyhow...) that these poor ol' WHOZITS are being ignored by more people than humans should be allowed to...you know. I'm kinda tired of it, too. You could say, well, it's a beef of mine. So, I'm taking time out to make some sort of a valiant effort at saving these fine folk. Well, by golly, somebody's gotta do it. Yessir. (Well, it was either this or discuss the socioeconomic causes of Laura Brannigan albums in Bulgarian society. You take your pick...!)

There...(sob!) I've said my piece. I've done all a cartoonist can...the rest is up to you. (Sigh.) And, y'know...I certainly hope you can live with your decision.

(By the way, folks...those crazy WHOZITS are giving it their best shot, too...look for them at upcoming county and state fairs in your area, as well as soon-to-be-broadcast segments of NBC NEWS at SUNRISE, LATENIGHT AMERICA, PTL CLUB, REGIS PHILBIN, THICKE OF THE NIGHT, CBS NEWS, NIGHTWATCH, THIS WEEK with DAVID BRINKLEY, and THE HOLLYWOOD SQUARES MATCH GAME.)

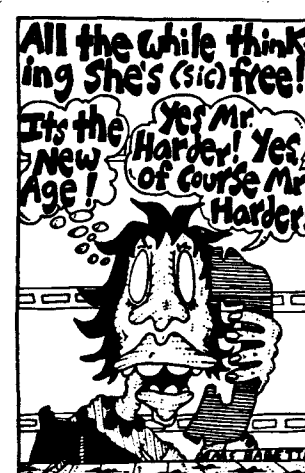
Only you can help.

(Next Month: Does Spam really have a seven-year shelf life...?)



create questions, characters flexible enough to live in fan novels, pornography, and hearts, and some catch-phrases and styles distinctive enough for the fans to be able to identify one another. It takes a true professional to make something simple enough to be taken over by the amateurs.

Any new form or style of art doesn't actually exist as a conscious trend; it is simply a statement of what is artistically correct amongst the artists' cohorts. In this case, the artists' cohorts are the U.S. population; what is proper is for nothing to be proper in an artistic sense, but always correct in a dogmatic sense. True mass communication is a fraud perpetuated by someone with a bizarre sense of humor. The best any artist can really hope for is a relatively medium-sized group of spectators ready to surrender their lives totally to the glorification of the creation. Total immersion, schizoid double reality/artwork thinking, satiric imitative perfection, the sum total of 200 year of American philosophy and culture—this is New Con Art.



THE PEOPLE in rural blis are celebrating
The body politic is always of one mind
Exclusively tobacco party Clusters 55-Super
1977 SLOP BOWL

The Slop Bowl

by Gunnar Larson

Six Of One.... review by Elayne

It is my distinct pleasure to plug the hell out of the source for the first real innovative comedy I've seen in New York in a long time, or, as the people who work there call it, "the cheapest cabaret in town". The place is the West Bank Cafe Downstairs, at 407 West 42nd Street (off 9th Ave., in the heart of the nouveau off-Broadway theatre district), and since its opening September 12, it has presented comedy gems every night Tuesday thru Saturday. The play I was privileged to see (only \$3 for regular patrons; a cast member admitted me and my friend Lauren free) was called "1/4 Dozen of the Other", and was a series of fourteen vignettes of mixed levels of humor and effectiveness written by Mark O'Donnell. Before the show started, the in-house comic emcee, Lewis Black (an Al Franken lookalike but much funnier), warmed up the audience—"I'm the first comic of the 80's; I don't worry about laughs any more"—and showed an attitude on humor borne out by the other players, that the performers are more interested in entertaining themselves and their 'peers' on their own level than in playing down to a pre-determined audience type; therefore, stooping and lcd-oriented material were eliminated! As Black was describing the WBCD as the place where "the desperate-to-be-entertained meet the desperate-to-entertain", I thought to make this my second home; I was sure of my instincts when he let slip a guaging-line about "tubs of slaw".

The whole atmosphere, in fact, is extremely Firesign-influenced (without being derivative). The humor works on many levels at once, and the players and director (in the case of "1/4 Dozen", Lynn Chausow) are intuitive and talented enough to enhance the lines with some superb character acting and visual 'staged improv'. Lack of time and space precludes me from reviewing each vignette, but I took special note of my favorites: "Betsy Buttons", a teen female sleuth parody that came across as a mix of (the best of) Nick Danger and High School Madness—didn't catch most of the frenetic pace on paper, but heard uttered some memorable dialogue as "let's gather some stalagmites for a luncheon centerpiece!"; "Samuel Beckett Musical" ("Ready, everyone! Now, Stand and Stand and Stand—"—"Excuse me, um, do we 'stand' on the on-beat?"); "The Bad Play", where props and cues alike fall apart in hilarious proportions, and which also reminded me of the venerable Third Eye ("Do the words Millicent Asimova mean anything to you?"—"No."—"They're nonsense words; you're quite right"; "You spit in my face behind my back"; etc.); "The Pick Up", actually a self-pick up and a brilliant one-man effort by the most talented of the troupe, Rick Perkins (my personal vote for the next Mickey Rooney, and not because he happens to be my contact there); "Mr. Ignorance", a science show take-off featuring another wonderful Perkins characterization; "The Presentation Speech", an existentialist press conference; and the finale, an inspired Streetcar-Named-Saturn called "Simmer in Sweat" ("Remember when we were kids and Daddy used to take us out in the yard and bury us?"; "Ah have always relahd on the kahndness of rangers"—"She think's she's Yogi Bear!"; "Trapped in hand-fisted symbolism!"; well, you get the idea). The 'weaker' (only by comparison to the really good ones) bits were kept short and unimposing, and the strong ones absolutely shone. Kudos to cast members Perkins, Marc Epstein, Lisa Loomer, Pamela Nyberg, Nancy Opel, and Jeffrey Rubin, and musical director Rusty Magee too!

We couldn't stay for the second part of the show, which featured the in-house improv group Legal Action (of which Perkins and Epstein are members), but I think it's safe to say that most of the stuff you'll find at the WBCD is a winner, so do call (212) 695-6909 to get up-to-date into current comedy events!

TV sports often leave a viewer vexatiously vociferous at the various villanies so often visited upon him. In foot ball games, for example, instead of showing a punt or kickoff, the camera sometimes shows someone pouring liquid on a pair of baby pants or something equally inane. Too bad it isn't the network president's or the advertising manager's pants—while he's wearing them, yet.

Elmer, a friend of mine when he isn't announcing sports on TV, is ready for today's football game—the Western Slop Bowl. The winner will meet the victor from the Eastern Slop Bowl in the Sloppier Bowl. Then the winner of the North-South Sloppier Bowl in the sloppiest slop bowl of all, the Sluper-Slop Bowl.

Elmer's partner for today's game is Ophelia, a former pro-football lineperson. She was fired from her team when her sex was discovered accidentally. She cried one time when the referee penalized her team for being off-side. Then he said Ophelia was off-color in her judgment call of his judgment call. She stamped her foot at the referee and accused him of sexual discrimination. "Oh, you male chauvinist referee piggy, you!"

The referee stamped his foot right back at Ophelia and whistle-thumbed her out of the game.

As Ophelia stalked off the field to the showers and retirement, one of her teammates said, "So that's why he always took a shower in his uniform!"

An opposing lineman said, "Ooh! No wonder he was so well-padded... Wish I'd known."

Today, Elmer wants to show a sneak preview of some new sneaky commercials as part of the pre-game, tween-play, tween-quarter, tween-commercial, half-time, and post-game activities. Hark! He speaks!

"Good afternoon, football fans. Here we are for the Western Slop Bowl. My partner today is Ophelia, who has always played the line rather than the field. But some of my slack-mouthed friends say she's changed in retirement. Is that right, Ophelia?"

"That's right, Elmer. I now find a better lineup in the field."

"Is that helmet you're wearing the ten-pound, gold-plated helmet awarded you by your teammates for your vicious tackling?"

Ophelia takes off her helmet and playfully hits Elmer's head with it. "Yeah, and I see you're wearing your two-pound, dim-plated helmet awarded you by the networks and sponsors for your vacuous talking."

"Yes, I am, and thanks for noticing it. OK, Ophelia and folks, let's get on with the rest of the commercials."

"The rest of the commercials? Now about getting on with the rest of the game?"

"It's only the second quarter, isn't it?"

"Yes, but we've already missed a 99-yard runback of the kickoff and two touchdowns."

"So that's why the fans were yelling and jumping! But, after all, which is more important? A 99-yard runback or a pair of non-leak, highly-absorbent, pinnable, portable, potable baby pants?"

"Potable! That means drinkable!"

"Pottytable?"

Ophelia gives up in despair. "Let's get on with the other commercials."

"Listen, Ophelia! The fans are screaming and clapping again. Let's take a quick look at the game." Both are silent while they watch. "I can't see anything important happening."

"No, nothing much, Elmer—just one of the coaches punching a referee and throwing him out of the game."

"Shouldn't it be the other way around?"

"Well, yes. But the coach is just playing follow-the-leader."

"What do you mean?"

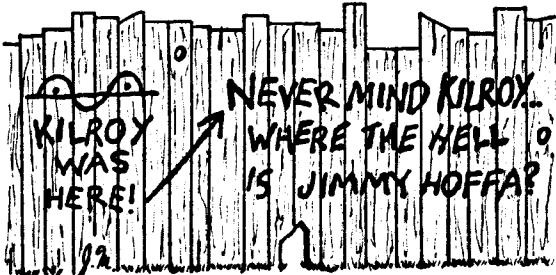
"Look at what's happenning in other parts of the country.

Congressmen hire secretaries who can't type but can take sexual dictation. Politicians and bureaucrats classify their mistakes and bribes as part of national security. The CIA and the President set their foreign policy in secrecy and carry it out in violence. FBI agents bribe other criminals to entrap politicians who might otherwise stay honest. Government agencies are run by men from the very corporations they're supposed to regulate. And they pay wealthy farmers not to grow crops even though millions throughout the world don't have enough healthy food. The Mafia controls many business companies, unions, policemen, prosecutors, and judges. Some doctors use treatments that often cause side-effects as bad or worse than the original disease. The coach is just keeping up with the screwed-up times."

"Maybe we'd better get back to our baby-pants commercial."

"You think that's an improvement?"

"No, but I guess it helps us hide from the rest of our reality."



HERSCHEL DAMMIT IN The Red Reaper

by Penny A. Lines

SYNOPSIS: As you remember in our last episode, Herschel Dammit had come to the strike-torn town of Sorrelville (circa 1930) to track down a scab murderer for the local robber baron, Elihu Vileson. When we last left the action, Herschel was cornered by one of Elihu's own henchmen—Squeaky the Wheel, who our hero had fingered as the real killer.

EPISODE #2: THE BUNK

I was in a spot now, I thought, as the gangsters piled out of the big, shiny Cord. It was enough to make you lose your taste for film noir. Leading the others was a short, dapper man; it was Squeaky the Wheel. He had a fondness for sharp clothes and sharp objects. Among the gangsters here, he ran the gambling in Sorrelville.

"My man Blacky says you jumped him," the little hood creaked, pointing to the slob Dinah had punched out earlier. Squeaky's voice was the result of being kneed below the belt by Dutch Schultz. It was said that he had made a disparaging remark about Schultz's button-down gaiters, and Dutch could get quite violent even over little spats like that.

"That's the bunk," I said. "He annoyed your girlfriend so she belted him." Blacky glared at me with a swollen shiner.

"What was you doing with my moll, Blacky?" Squeaky demanded.

"Looks like he was gettin' mauled," one of the other gangsters cackled. They all started giggling, slugging Blacky in the arm and mussing his hair.

"Go take up crocheting, you big sissy!" one jeered.

"You spin a woolly yarn," Blacky snarled at me with knitted brows.

"She worsted you," I insisted. "But I won't needle you, seeing as how she swings harder than any man I ever met."

"Aw, he doesn't deserve to be in our mob," said one of the gang, turning up his nose at Blacky. Squeaky looked impatient with this bickering among his crew, but it gave me an idea how to deal with this town full of hooligans.

"Who don't deserve, Lucky?" Blacky growled. "You got held up by some cheap punk last week, tough guy."

"Well, he had a knife," Lucky explained.

"Yeah, but he was in a wheelchair." Now Lucky got ribbed.

"I wouldn't get stuck up if I was you, Lucky," someone wisecracked.

"Nix the funny stuff, you hombres," Squeaky commanded with a smile such as would hide embarrassment.

"I've got a tip for you, Squeaky," I said with a whisper such as would be used to divulge a secret.

"What's that?" he asked with keen interest such as short criminals show when expecting inside information.

"O'Goonan and his flatfoots are out to get you," I said.

Squeaky's eyes narrowed thoughtfully, darkened with doubt.

"Shouldn't that be 'flatfeet'? O'Goonan's after me with his flat feet?" His words conjured strange images in my mind.

"I'm no podiatrist," I replied, "but framing you, the Red Reaper case will be closed."

"You dangle that participle like you mean it, mister," Squeaky said appraisingly. He was obliged enough for the warning to give me a tip on the big boxing match to be held later that night. Hiram Taylor would knock out Spike Bash in the sixth, and he would pay big. I thanked the little gambler, and complimented him on the cut of his white flannel three-piece he liked a lot. He introduced me to his whole mob: Blacky, Lucky, Grumpy, Sneezv, Doc and Dopey. Then they loaded in to their car and drove off to fix more fights or intimidate strikers or whatever.

I had not gotten a dozen steps when two shadowy figures came up behind me, poked something coercive at my spine, and prodded me down a back alley. Soon I found myself in a room full of IWW picket signs and men playing poker.

A tall sawn man with a consumptive cough got to his feet.

"Is this Vileson's new private Bull?"

"Yeah, Mister Squint," one of the men behind me nodded. "The one who's about to decide he's leaving town."

"You guys must be the local wobblys," I said. "Maybe you can help me."

"Get a job!" someone yelled.

"Lousy bull!"

"Vileson may want you cowed but your beef is with him," I said firmly. "This is no bum steer. If Vileson's ox is gored it's nothing to me. I'm no cattletale, but I'm not hoofing it out of here till the killer is rounded up. Why not level with me?"

"We'd rather play poker and shoot the bull," said Squint, peering down the bore of a revolver. The others yucked it up.

"So, you're just a pack of regular cards, huh?" I sneered. "Listen, you joker, if you don't wanta get decked you'll deal with me and not try to shuffle me aside."

The union men decided they had enough of me and sent me off with a warning.

I took a cab uptown to the Sorrelville Prizefight Arena and Cattle Auction. As I stood waiting to get in, I was approached by a sleazy-looking minor character with bowed legs and a long narrow hog's jaw.

"Hey, pal, want to buy a hog jaw?" he asked.

"Uh, no thanks," I replied. "Maybe after I see Spike Bash take his dive."

"But I just put my last sawbuck on Spike!" he said, letting his jaw drop in astonishment.

"Hey, pick up your jaw before it gets dirty," I said.

"To think he could do this to me when I just happen to have incriminating photos of him on me right now, and...er...I mean...uh..."

"Yeah! let's see!" I reached into his pocket and fetched out his wallet as he tried to push me away.

"Gee, he'll get sore if he knows I let anybody see those," he whined. "He'll never know. Don't you have your last saw bug riding on that pig?" I demanded. "Just show me where I can find this ham. What's your name, pal?" I bantered, studying the photos of Spike Bash forcing his attentions on a marble statue of Betsy Ross.

"I'm Ed MacSwine," the bowlegged character said.

"Spike seems to have developed an unsavory passion for stone monuments," I said sternly.

"You wouldn't know it to look at him, but Spike was always keen on sculptures. Had quite a collection of bronzes before he lost his marbles—then things got out of hand."

"Statutory rape is a serious offence in this state," I replied.

I found Spike in his room going over his acting lessons. I told him if he didn't knock Taylor out promptly he could pack his trunks for Alcatraz. I showed him the photos and he was convinced.

In the auditorium I sat next to Squeaky Mailer, figuring his reaction would be the only interesting thing to see. Squeaky was wearing a different suit now, and was only interested in my opinion of the fit, while they dragged Taylor from his iron lung and helped him with his crutches and boxing gloves. Spike stalked grimly into the ring. As soon as the bell rang Spike started moving too fast for Taylor, who was soon gasping to stay on his feet.

"Speaking of miss fits," I remarked, "look at that Taylor panting. I thought you had this fight all sewed up," I said, almost in stitches.

"You didn't alter things again, did you?"

"No," Squeaky pondered. "What's Spike got up his sleeve? We could lose our shirts."

Spike cuffed Taylor once.

"Hey!" Squeaky yelled, "he wasn't supposed to lay a glove on Hiram. I can't even hope for a tie now. This don't suit me one bit. We've been taken in by that dirty turncoat."

Taylor fell over and the match ended. Squeaky feared the other mob leaders now who would naturally think he double-crossed them. I discreetly slipped off to the Sorrelville police station to check on Chief O'Goonan.

I found the chief at his desk, in a sad state. He told me his gangster ally, "Casino" Starky, had given O'Goonan the wrong address when he took his coppers out to gun down Squeaky. Instead the police had crashed in on a big party being held by the most powerful gangsters on Vileson's payroll, Pete the Pin and Lew Hard. As the gangs of the two most important crime bosses in the burg were absorbed in a rousing game of pin the rap on the donkey, dozens of O'Goonan's police burst in with blazing machine guns. By the time they discovered their mistake, the party was completely spoiled, and Pete and Hard were swearing bloody revenge against O'Goonan.

In the meantime, Starky had taken advantage of O'Goonan's preoccupation by double-crossing him to knock over the Sorrelville Savings and Loan.

Now O'Goonan's grey flabby face looked like soft putty—so much so I was tempted to mold it into a portrait of Lincoln. But when I suggested I might arrange a truce between the hostile factions, he showed some hope.

Things were going well for me, I thought, as I left the station.

The thugs were turning against one another.

I went back to Nick's bar. I had been drinking steadily for an hour and unsteadily for half when the bartender came over.

"Dan Squint wants to talk to you," he said, "but be careful—he's an IWW man."

"That's okay, I'm a little wobbly myself," I said, staggering away from my stool. The sawn man at the end of the bar signalled me to meet him outside.

He led me to an abandoned garage that looked like a swell place to hold a gang slaying. Pools of crankcase oil gleamed like blood, but I was too drunk to be scared by similes.

"In here," he invited me with a jerk of his head.

"Nice place you got here," I said, tottering around. Squint hit me in the dental work with a crowbar. It was like kissing the hood ornament of a speeding Cadillac. I blacked out.

When I came to, I was on the floor, with Squint watching me.

"Any complaints, snooper?" he asked.

"Yeah," I said, spitting out a bicuspid, "that bar you hit me with was rusty—made my mouth taste irony."

"By Gad, sir, you have only begun to taste irony," said a fat voice behind me. It was Vileson's own man—Glutman—coming in the back of the garage with some wobblys. This plot was getting thicker than old Elihu's skull. Glutman carried a canvas sack and was wearing a fez, for some reason. My God! I thought, I've been captured by a Shriner.

(NEXT MONTH: EPISODE #3: THE DIRTY FISHEATERS)

SHOULDN'T THE VARIOUS

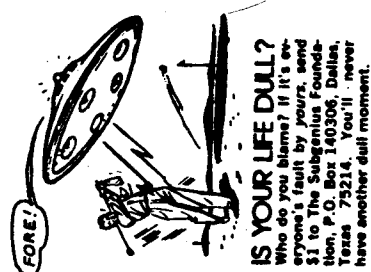
Think tanks invite birdbrain
BRAINBEAU

to their think tank session?
He's been thinking about war,
inflation, unemployment and
death for forty years and thinks
he has all the answers —
90%, ANYWAYS.

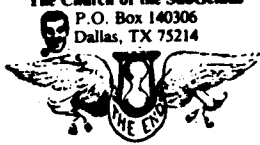
To maybe change your own
thinking send SASE to
all or nothing
4 WAY PEACE PLAN
Box 2243
YOUNGSTOWN — OHIO, 44504

AGE "ASHES TO ASHES" and "dust to dust"
Notes in zero? Ask J.P. Wassenaar, World
Golf Supreme Court, 206 Ninth Ave. #8,
NYC 10011.

PEE-LAW? The "Socratic Method" means get-
ting beatified. Ouch! Why? Paper Chet, SS
Suite #87, SF 94101.



Make religion a kick-ass adventure!
Self-help through raising hell!
\$1 for startling, informative book.
The Church of the SubGenius
P.O. Box 140306
Dallas, TX 75214



AND WHERE DID SANTA CLAUS COME FROM? by Cannon E. Barclay

This is serious. I have always known there was a real Santa Claus. For sure...Mr. Claus has many associates in the holiday organization...but he...he alone (including well-known reindeer) handles all sleigh delivery.

My faith in the jolly-man has never weakened...even among a room full of "the doubters"; however, a question by one of my A.C. (after computers) children sent me on a research mission never contemplated and possibly never requested of any other parent/manager of an eve hanger of stockings.

My daughter Mandy was dreaming of software in one of her page-flipping/scanning moments with her computer catalogs when I asked, "See anything you want Santa to bring this year?"

She smiled (her smile seemed different since her completion of a basic word processor course and 'grade-school' use of some terminology I can't find in my dictionary) and replied, "You must know, Dad, I believe Santa Claus is real and like he does his thing at the North Pole...but could you tell me...where did he come from? Like...where did he grow up and where do Mr. and Mrs. Claus spend their vacations?"

Stumped by the honest inquisition, I answered, "Good question, Punkin. In fact, I never thought much on where Santa came from and where he might spend some get-away time. Let me do some research and I'll try and get the answer."

Mandy smiled again. She even ventured a guess that Santa (because of his tremendous volume and so many different requests) might have some ties with the Silicone Valley section in California. And then she went back to her dream world of "bits and bytes"...and I went to the address with the answers.

The library ran a computer search in the information section for me...but not without the same kind of smiles from the clerks when asking for research or publications about sex problems of turtles or meatloaf recipes. Still, if one displays a serious nature the request (no matter how unusual) is honored.

There are a number of Santa stories and reports; however, nothing available on his background. Mythical tales were not going to be quite as acceptable to a computer fan (Mandy saw WARGAMES 4 times). Knowing computers DO NOT have all the answers, I pushed on...

Frankly, the puzzle was bothering me until I decided to take some notes from my history of gifts from Santa. Surely this would give me a clue.

My chronicle of the items asked for and those never imagined as possible that were placed under our great needle-spilling trees by Santa contained all of the following. Of course, I couldn't give a perfect chronological listing, but it is accurate:

Footballs, shoulder pads, baseball gloves, boxing gloves with speed bags, tennis racquets, spikes and track shoes, bowling games, table tennis, golf clubs, a hurdle, jump ropes, barbells, water skis, snow skis, paddle ball equipment, handballs, etc., etc. Almost every kind of sport equipment a youngster could use (except Santa wasn't into soccer those days).

OK. My answer was close at hand. SANTA CLAUS WAS A JOCK! No doubt about that fact...yet it still didn't tell me where he came from...

Well, our Santa Claus did not bring clothes, or stretch socks, or Tinker-Toys, or gift coupons to junk-food restaurants; however, there were several other interesting gifts on this list from the past. Also, it should be mentioned: we didn't leave cookies or milk for Santa and his reindeer. We left an orange-julius...and orange juice and sunflower seeds.

Interesting gifts (in my search) received at various times were beach sand mesh-sifters, surfboards, tickets to Los Angeles Ram games, volleyballs and huge tractor tubes...and once Santa even left a garage basketball backboard with height adjustment slides (California playgrounds always have placed backboards at heights from 6 to 10 feet on playgrounds to accommodate all ages).

Santa Claus surely was from Southern California. Mandy had guessed as much...for a different reason. Would she now accept a general location? I felt the exact answer was needed and might be in the attic.

For some strange reason some of my old sports equipment was still up there in various old trunks. After careful dusting and inspection one name seemed to show up on most of the items on stickers or labels or even on some original containers: Santa Monica, California, was the manufacturing home of many of the outdoor gifts: the old hurdle, the surfboard, etc., etc.

Another strange and exciting discovery was the picture of Santa Claus standing next to Gorgeous George and other well-known professional wrestlers who trained outdoors on Santa Monica's famous Muscle Beach.

And the old photos and school albums from the University of Southern California where Mandy's grandparents excelled in athletics and graduated in the same class...and spent their honeymoon and first married years along the Pacific Palisades area outside of Santa Monica did not hurt my case.

Yes, Mandy, it is true. Not only is there a Santa Claus...but he is a jock...and most probably from Santa Monica, California.

Misguided Visions

by Robert Hale

Tom Damiano was a clairvoyant. But not a good one. He made his reputation by predicting that actor Rob Reiner would be trapped in a burning house. Mr. Reiner wasn't home the night his house burned, but it didn't matter, for every gossip tabloid was after him for predictions.

A reporter from the National Globe Star Examiner came by Tom's house one Saturday morning. The reporter wanted to know Tom's predictions for 1984 or any other time in the future. Tom was impressed. This was his chance to make big bucks.

"My first vision is that in 1985, Ernest Angely will convert Fidel Castro to Christianity. Castro will then denounce Marxism and open new relations with the United States. In the 1988 Presidential election, there will be a G. Gordon Liddy-Larry Flynt ticket for the Republican Party. By the year 2000, every book written by Stephen King and Fran Lebowitz will outsell every book ever written. Even the Bible. And by 2013, God will arrive on Spaceship Earth in the form of the late actor Jack Sool!"

The reporter was skeptical, so he decided to ask Tom a question. "Is there any truth to the rumors about alligators in the sewers of New York City?"

Tom laughed and said, "Of course not! I don't know how that famous rumor got started, but it's nonsense."

As Tom explained more future visions, an alligator crawled out of the Damiano swimming pool and proceeded to eat Tom. Tom could not even predict his own demise.

The reporter, unimpressed, erased the tape, quit his job, and went to work on the New York Post.

UNCLE TOM BRADLEY: The old black major just ain't what he used to be. Every politician's "platform" is a scaffold. Publican Party, 55 Sutter, No. 487, San Francisco 94104.

SURVIVING FLORIDA LOVEBUGS

by Rick McCann

Here in the land of sunshine and palm trees known as Florida lurk some very serious evils that seek to destroy the beauty of one of our most obvious status symbols, the Kar. In order to get anywhere (geographically), even in the cities (?) here, one must have a Kar, and being that the Kar is an extension of oneself, then it follows that its face must be kept clean.

Many things work to make this undertaking greatly difficult, the worst being a twice a year scourge known as 'Lovebugs' (small squishy fly-like creatures that travel in large swarms coupled in pairs, apparently fornicating). While most Floridians know them well by this name, I have several more descriptive ways of naming them, such as 'Fuck-ing Bastards' or 'Flying Assholes'. Both titles tend to imply more what they do than what they are.

Lovebugs begin to gather in the center of every rural highway daily in the late morning and proceed to do the only thing they seem to be programmed to do—fuck each other in mid-air. (A definite high, I'm sure, but I do wish they could do it off to one side in the bushes like the rest of us.) The end result of this mass orgy is millions upon millions of climaxing bodies smashed upon the face of any Kar entering the given erogenous zone proving not only that love is blind but also that sex can be messy.

Anyhow, I will get to the purpose of this article, which is creative ways of removing deceased revelers from the face of the Kar. If you are not living in Florida (who does?), you may be thinking 'who cares', but take heed. Everyone comes to Florida sooner or later; since no one here now is from the state it must be true. It may do you well to file this pertinent information under 'Dumb Ass Things To Remember For Future Use'.

Most people, being normal pinks, just spend five minutes a day scrubbing their Kar's face with soap and a stiff brush. This is hard work and gets boring. I hate boring jobs so I try to devise new ways to do them. One of the quickest, though not most creative, ways is to simply pour muratic acid over the face of the Kar. CAUTION: This practice can turn your Kar into an acid head, so watch the dosage. When Lovebug season is over, merely respray the areas of paint totalled by the acid.

My favorite way is known as 'Power Pissing'. This kills two birds with one stone, so to speak, especially if you drink a lot of anything. However, this method works better with the male species than the female and I don't wish to be labelled a sexist so I'll move on to the next which is the best anyhow if you lack things to do after cleaning your Kar's face.

It is known simply as scraping, and the method is just as the word implies. The advantage of this technique is that you are left with millions of relatively intact bodies to do with as you wish. Be sure to lay out newspapers under the Karface to catch the bodies so you will not have to use your fingers to pick them up. There are many uses for Lovebug bodies retrieved in this manner. If you are low on cash or just enjoy kinky exotic dishes, they can make a very...different stock for soup or stew. For the artists among you, a canvas brushed with glue and then sprinkled with dead Lovebugs and Karpaint can make for an interesting display. Finally, for those of you who not only like a nice clean Karface but also a nice green lawn (don't they go hand in hand), the bodies can be tossed over the lawn as a top-rate (and cheap) fertilizer.

I hope you have learned a lot from this shit, because I feel good ideas should be shared. Any of you who have additional ideas on the subject should send them to me, as I am in the process of writing a full-length 'how-to' book on "Lovebugs and Their Uses" which I hope will be released in spring by the United States Government Bureau of Consumer Information. - RICK MCCANN, Oct. 9, 1983 or thereabouts

TH DREGS OF TIME

by Peter Roberts
starkly stare at a dirtydead wall¹
new wonder of plastic people, inc.
look out yr cell & see people passin
thru th ectoplasm.

th family survival handbook died 12 yrs ago
waitin fr vast cold smooth close empty death.
megadeaths vs megabirths round & round
she goes & who she wins no one know.

i quote life
& th parabola goes thru th point (3,-1), comrade
but valley forge was still cold
is still.

¹—monotonous, isn't it? (Freud, cf pp 198-204)

THE PLAYWRITE AT 10:15 O'CLOCK

She was a runaway and I was a drifter
on clouds that distracted from my novel writing:
we were young Bohemians who didn't let knowing it
get in the way — sitting with Lane Caplinger over
a shared beer bought for Lane by Red in The Seven Seas.
I certainly didn't have to worry that she loved me
for my money. Not Jessica.
I felt sympathy for her uncomprehending parents; I knew
I wasn't going to hurt her; they feared she was going to
marry a bum, not a great author.
I was just then gathering my material for
The Color Wheel, a book that would make
their town famous: New Orleans. Me. I
would immortalize it as Faulkner had Mississippi;
that'd teach 'em. I knew it was a worn subject
for immortalization. But the Great American Novel
was in the literature of the centers of learning
of my day like unto the Second Coming of the Messiah,
possibly even Her First Advent.
That, as Vic said, would be a bit much
even for that damned old town.
If Hell was popping anywhere, it had to be
the Bourbon House. Jesus beging planned
at one of the corner tables and all by every
barroom poet in the Quarter.
Hell, I was no Hemingway fan, but
the life he lived appealed to me more
than I could relate with Brother-in-law, so it seemed,
to the life of Hitler.
Millie and Grace lived in the slave quarters
of a house with an expansive courtyard up on
one of the streets parallel to Esplanade;
there were banana trees in the patio. Winds
of summer nights shook them. African rhythms
played over the hi-fi and Grace in her window
across the way ironed. Millie reclined and talked
excitedly about wanting to have all kinds of experiences
and complained about the day's work at Sears.
Herman the Honduranian German was of course drinking himself
under a table in the Bourbon House. Rumors were spreading
that Tennessee Williams was in town, at Cafe LaFitte, just
down the street. I went next door and overheard another version
of the biography of Tom Caplinger.
There were in those days acts of creation: pens were inking papers
with word formulas dreamed up by poets that everyone was snugly assured,
probably for various reasons, would some day transform the world.

— Kerry Wendell Thornley

FANTASY

by Anni Ackner
Either in two parts
Or just a dichotomy:
First in the restaurant—
Juice bar—
Watching some film strip with Australian bands
And a tearing soundtrack.
All pastel,
Your narrow eyes
And that strange blue light over everything.
The ride in the long car,
Missionaries,
And some hotel.

Then later, one room or another,
Regardless,
The inevitable touching,
Rolling—
No fire or electrical storm,
But lizards,
Cold,
With webbed feet

EXISTENTIAL POEM

by Peter Roberts
the point is this:

alien turf
by Sheryl Nelms
crossing Sneed Street

I step out into
thick afros
beaded cornrows

and poking stares
punching
forefingers
into my spine

pushing me
up the block
fast

THE SCHOLAR IN SUMMER

by Susan Packie
Body oozing
through lounging chair
at poolside,
dark glasses
masking his face,
the man carefully mops up
the beads of water
that have dripped
from the beer can in his hand
onto an Aramaic manuscript
and continues his trek
across the desert sands
of Westchester County.

in the sharpening

I watch the tabby

body pulled back
head tilted in pleasure
paws and claws
reaching up

working
at the tree

again and again
she stretches in
then done

she unhooks her nails
pads across the grass
looking so satisfied

it makes me
search for a tree
of my own

Sheryl L. Nelms

Poetry!

COMFY IN MY WODE-BLUE GENES

by Roldo
In Winter
bear-curled, half-sleeping,
forced & shivering patient prisoner
in the soft fist
of its cold beauty.

To bird-waking Spring,
sprigs & birds & south-winded softtrain
of gentle release,
& green returning.

Into Summer, sun-hot & too soon over,
the Ripening time,
the Wandering time,
the Dreaming time,
effortless as clouds.

But its Autumn, the gray-cloaked, chill-calling,
sudden & inexorable,
magick-with-melancholy moment of a Season—
cold torch bringing slow fire to the land,
that calls the slumbering Bard of my Blood
to peer again through my eyes
& I to gaze through mists with his.

PAST FRIENDS by John J. Soldo
I had been so good to them all.
There were so many
as the sand on a beach
that I cannot count
the friends to whom I was host.
I would take them in
on the chance that someday
the guest would be my Elijah.
No, that's not right.
Everyone has within him or her
the essence of Elijah.
Oh, we had grand times
like the time of my cast party
when seven of us crashed
on my king-sized oak bed.
We filled our lives with awe and wonder
for we ourselves were out of bondage.
I know I and my sofa
were often used,
but I did not pay heed
for I enjoyed the company.

Then Fortune threw me off my heels.
Out of work, broke, sick,
I had to give up my floor-through
and move, humiliated, to my mother's house.
Maybe it was my fault
for not keeping in touch.
But out of that multitude
like a sea of grass
only two took the effort
to call, touch base, and go out together.

I remember one
to whom I played mock-psychiatrist
by listening for an hour or more each day
on the phone

to his storied frustrations.
Everytime I called him
he had an excuse.
It only hurt so much
because I cared so dearly.

Now I live 2000 miles away
in a new life, in a different world,
with new friends.
There is a line in Vergil somewhere
to the effect that
we will only remember the good things.
I suppose that is what I shall treasure
for though many were as fickle as fate
it is my fate
to have memory in place of reality.

spat

face like a
toad's belly
feigning
nonchalance

her chin
pouting
turning
to rain

as i swallow
the night
like time

never telling
the vine a
reason for
the fence

or whence the
dogs have
come

my black heart
unleashing

sharp shadows
of jackals
baring Satan's
teeth

Ronald Edward
Kittell

PAPPOON IN '84/84

PROGRESS REPORT IX: ONE DOWN, ORDER TO GO by Elayne, Anni, Jill

Well, as nobody knows, November is vacation month for George, who always likes to be as far away from the polls as possible when creatures are voting, even twice. So it was off to Grenada (as in "you say Granada, I say...") for George and his lovely Gucci-bag-clad wife, Eleanor, where the variegated shades of green are said to be lovely this time of year. The Papoons attended a special ceremony at the local medical school to establish the GGP Pre-Memorial Scholarship for Underachieving Witchdoctors, but had to cut the Caribbean trip short when they heard a tiny voice crying, "De planes, de planes!" Following a hasty first showing of the 1984 resort collection of khaki swimwear, and a brief stop to visit some old friends in the Bermuda Triangle, it was off to Chicago to greet his old carousing buddy, Rupert "Howling Mad" Murdoch, The Man Who Dared to Fake the News (see this month's editorial, page 2), and congratulate the former Pulitzer Prize-winning staffers on their Sun-Times having set. At this writing, George is back in Wentzville, still answering all his letters of congratulations on his victories this past November 8/8 (Inauguration #1 will take place as scheduled at Homebase II during our NYE-1 gala). Yes, as we all suspected, George won paws down as those of Us In The Know knew enough to vote (twice) in this first year of 1984. "Sure," nodded GGP, "winning is easy with no opposition, but let's just wait till next year first, when we bring in last year's votes and the ones before that! It'll be a past to look forward to, and a future to remember!", and so we are, and do.

On the grassroots front lawn, Southern Cal sub-coordinary Mark Leviton sent along a nifty write-up on his old local NSP headquarters in Claremont back in '76, and wishes to engage in, I think, a debate, or at least a spectacle. First, let's hear from Side A and the ever-irrepressible programming brain behind Robots for Papoon:

suffrage4your ROBOT PALS!

The time has come, fellow campooners, to ask not what your robot can do for you, but what can I do for my robot? Yes, your 24-hour teller wants the vote. Your home computer wants the vote. We want to vote Papoon! Now, when George thought up the "One Organism, One Vote" promise, it was long before the days of talking video games and talking cars (except for my mother, but that's another story...), and times have changed. Hell, even Geo.'s own running mate, Chuck E. Cheese, is a robot...er, well, sometimes. Remember how inspired you were by the Unka-Walt's-dead-now-Audio-Animatronic President at the last (or the next) FutureFair? Would you want to be the one to tell him, "We don't allow 'Droids in here!" as you fly out of the polling vault?

We think not.

So please, fellow platoon planksters, be fair. Grant us organism-hood. Let us participate in this great Democracy.

Or we'll all go on strike.

Robots for Papoon

And now for the flip side..."To which Big Mark replied—"Elayne:

I was shocked (simply shocked and complexly shocked) to read in the "Papoon in '84/84" column that "it has never until now been necessary to examine the inherent, as B.M.J. puts it, 'lifeformism' of the statement 'one organism, one vote'". How great historical moments are forgotten quickly! Who could forget my heartfelt speech at the 1976 nominating convention in Santa Barbara, where as speaker for the Presumptuous Assumption League I put forward a party plank of "one thing, one vote", specifically mentioning all the non-animate objects such as deck chairs and paperweights barred from voting for Papoon?! However, votes were bought right and left and my motion was defeated. Now, a mere eight years later I am shown to be eight years ahead of my time (got that?).

Please make your readers aware of this. I wanna be famous too.

Yours,

MARK LEVITON

Now, We Who Am Us have no objections to organism-hood for these meaningful yet stationary objects, but again, it's Up To You. What say? Anybody out there? In here? Hello?

As if that weren't enough, we also have A TESTIMONIAL concerning our NSP Veep, coming direct from Poons Farm, California...

Dear Elayne:

I would like to recommend the notion of Chuck E. Cheese for Mice-President by nominating him an Nice-President as well. I went there with my kid and a Chuck E. Buck and got a medium pizza plus two hours' worth of tokens...Then I realized that with the coupon discount I could have gotten a large for the same price—so I told them about it—and you know what? They threw in an extra small for free so we had enough to throw some away! With part of the savings, I bought myself another Henry's and sat back in the show—which really isn't nearly as bad as what you'd have to watch at Disneyland! And my child ran amok in the Cheeze-Maze for hours!

...But I must caution my fellow readers that some of the holes in there have only one side—we've lost kids in that place more than once; you line 'em all up and count 'em ok, but by golly So-and-so will still be missing. And when you do find 'em and ask where they went, you invariably get a rather variable answer, the blessing of Nepenthe one might expect from anyone who's read "Wind in the Willows" (K. Graham).

Thanx -

RED WOOF

Red goes on—and on and on—to make the following corrections, please take note:

Dear Elayne - again:

I've caught you at your first misquote: In my letter last month, you printed "Bob" instead of "Bob", as I wrote to you. I'm sure you have secured and sealed his security by so doing, but you don't

need to. He is absolutely harmless, as you will see for yourself when you learn the real truth about him...to be forthcoming soon!

Thanks for the interpretation— RED WOOF (again)

P.S. It was not Rabbit, but I myself, who told you about the 1980 Campoon, spearheaded by James Vukos of Hidden Noise Press, P.O. Box 1532, Racine, WI 53401. The order of Campoons is exactly as I said: George ran in 1968 on a home exercizer, in 1972 behind the now famous "Rocket Mask", in 1976 in all directions, and walked in 1980. 1980 was George's first political defeat, which he brought about on purpose so he could experience and understand it, because it is "...de feet that does de walkin..." George's now-famous shoes are of course legendary.

Texas sub-coordinary Keith R. Jones, alias 'Professor Poop', has suggested putting out our official Campoon '84/'84 newsletter this erection, probably to come out the beginning of next/this year. He's submitted the following---

Hopefully, by this time this year, most Campooners are aware of George Orwell Papoon's seminaf prediction: 1984—NOT LONG NOW! It is, of course, the year 1984-1, and thank Grid we get to start all over from the beginning (where it all began) next year. But there is much to be done; Cacoon for Papoon are already springing forth from this great land of hours. It is, in short, time to get organized, for grass-rooted organism is the very life of our Campoon.

October 31 was George's birthday and a fitting day it is, indeed, falling on Halloween this year, as it does, for this year, October 31 is the day designated for many of our various sectors' regional seacuses. George wasn't there, of course, for although George is a virtual shoe-in for the nomination, he is, after all, a self-effacing guy and the national convention has not yet been held, but then, on the other hand, since George never appears anywhere without the bag over his head and hence ANYBODY CAN BE GEORGE (Important!), one never knows.

Now, to the point at hand--the agenda for the seacuses, this is a matter of much concern. Should the platform--pine, six inches tall--remain the same? Should the promises remain the same? (1, one organism - one vote 2. one man - one channel 3. the guaranteed annual year) What about a new mask for George, or at least new bags? And the issues -- we must not forget the issues, semi-recumbent on pot still seems a propos, but there is so much more to be considered -- what about old music, apathy or the fearful shuffles? We are, of course, extremely interested in a high state of grassroots organism; here the entire hydroponic issue creeps in. And let us not forget our founding fidders. All must be decimated and the word spread like butter.

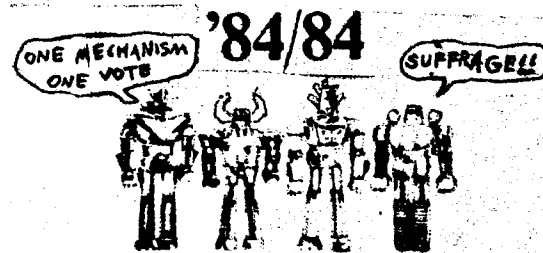
So you see, much is to be done. This is the year; Campoon Three is upon us. As George himself sad said: "If we don't go over the hill this time, we'll still be here. And that's not a bad couple of places to be." We need your toil, your sweat, your thoughts and ideas. But most of all we need your reports. For what is any Campoon without its reports? No report--no rapport! And that, dear friends, would be Insane!

PROFESSOR POOP

The first issue (stay tuned to this column for further info) is slated to contain "the names and addresses of all Cacoon Cheerpersons" which names will be drawn from our Coordinary list, natch. And as the Prof says, "Keep us posted and we'll post you, too!"

And that goes double for me. And us too.

ROBOT DEMONSTRATION



VOTE PAPPOON



Sayz-U! (Letters)

How do, Elayne,

Just the other day I was a-kickin around the cow pasture when this here fellah walks up to me and he says, he says, "Is yore name Greg?" Well I, being naturally witty, says right back to him, "Yup!" Then this fellah reaches into this here bag he was a-carryin and, as purty as you please, he slaps a dog-eared copy of IJ25 into my hand. Well now I just plops myself right down on a cow flop and commences to readin (not hardly movin my lips atall), and by the time I was through, I was happier'n a conservative with a handgun and smoebody to hate. Now I wouldn't be tellin no lies if I was to say that all of yore writers was just in top notch form this time, yes! I just about bust a gut at: The Red Reaper an Taking Notes an Cathode Ray Tubes an Blue Guam an oh yes My Date With Nina an Signophobia an that there Short Story With No Moral an In Defense Of...All Of Me, an that Adventures in Capitalism was just about my undoin, oh my, my, my. That MX cartoon an them Baboon comikal strips was better'n watchen my 4-H rabbits in they cage. Now its' true some uh them writers gets a lil too serious time to time, like that Clay boy and that Mike Dobbs fellah, but they prob'ly grows out of it soon, give 'em time. But I was just plumb shocked to read in Sez-U that I was (facetiously or not) thought to be Midwesternly Naive! Well shoot, some uh them things I said to you on the phone was meant to be humorous; they was meant to sound naive on purpose, although I don't recall you laughin at too many of em. Maybe they just weren't all that funny. Or maybe it was just...the drugs. Yup!

As fer them little Whozits boogies, I would normally vote to kill em off, but I happens to have a thing for critters what got no arms or bodies and got eyeballs on topa they heads, so I votes to let em live, provided they votes Papoon (a Kansas boy).

Hell of a fine cover this time. I just loves cowboy stories!

Wahoo wahoo wahoo yadda yadda yadda yadda,
GREG BLAIR
R.R. #2
Emporia, KS 66801

(Okay, touché, I deserved that. But truth be known, Wentzville is in Missouri, not Kansas—however, as George has said, you is where you is.)
Dear E-Layne:

You'll notice no "A-Team Goes to Anni Ackner's Birthday Party" is enclosed in this package. You see, I got a call from Murdock yesterday (not to be confused with Dwight Schultz, whom I have never spoken to at all, much to my discontent), and it seems the A-Team is thinking of re-tiring. They were on their way to the Caribbean—having sprung HM, drugged BA, and lured Face out of his luxury apartment—when they got word that Ronald Reagan had not only taken over their mission, but stolen their scenario as well. Well, it made them feel just useless, and in light of these sad occurrences, it just didn't seem proper to report on the lovely time we all had—BA changing his name to BD for the night, Anni "P.L. (Peace and Love)" Ackner arguing the positives and negatives of drug-induced psychosis with Mr. t, joined in by Murdock, of course, the wonderful wuf Hannibal Smith made his entrance as the Tidibowl man in the ladies' room...

Speaking of proper, it's not my battle, but I would like to remark on DA Fripp's comments on Anni's column. It brings to mind the old story of Benjamin Franklin and electricity. In the mid-18th century, Franklin conducted experiments using pure enthusiasm, keys, kites, and his own terminology, necessitated by his distance from the "civilized" world. He made dazzling discoveries, and the scientific establishment in Europe eagerly sent him journals with the "correct" terminology, the "correct" theories, and the "correct" equipment for experimentation. The correcter Franklin got, the fewer discoveries he made, until he made none at all. The point of which is, this divine cosmos is full of nuance, connections, disconnections, interconnections, harmonies, disharmonies, dichotomies, opposites, intimations, cycles, spirals, this and that, yin and yang. To try to talk about it in terms of A equals B, B equals C, therefore A equals C, as if one couldn't get from A to C except through B; in perfectly diagrammable sentences; in essays with high school English level beginnings, middles, ends, and titles; is to insult it and those who live in it. While it seems to fit in the normal "satirical" genre, Anni's writing is profoundly "experimental", and her readers are lucky that she has found "underground" media who are not afraid to print work with a little sophistication and life savvy. By the way, I am not saying these lovely things only because of what she said about me in the last ish—I know she only wrote those kudos because I know who the real father of her soon-to-be-born child is.

Now, highlight of my last letter to IJ, that never got in because I gave it to E-Layne too late:

John Lennon was the creator of the cliché "Life is what happens to you when you are busy making other plans." This is a rather poor choice of words given the circumstances, second only to Bob Marley's "If Jah didn't love I, would I be around today," from a posthumously released album.

Now I have to go read Dianetics, by L. Ron Hubbard. The adventure is waiting for me. While doing that I am going to drink some coffee—it calms me down, AND perks me up!

The Ever-Popular CAROLYN LEE BOYD
306 E. 6th St., #13
New York, NY 10003

Greetings,

YEESH! I drew Jesse & James for IJ#25 half expecting the new strip to be blown out of the water by what Rolddo calls "dolts who can hold a crayon long enough to write a few insulting words". Instead, I get the back page, and with it the assurance that my name will spend one glorious month above the "Other Contributors" list. Sure hope

Anni isn't too disappointed. She was expecting me to be pointless this month.

I realize that with the power comes responsibility. "You're in the Big Leagues, kid. No more of this mediocre slop you've been feeding us 'til now!" Scary, isn't it? I'm learning. Pandora is, shall we say, fired as an IJ entertainer, since she's the No. 1 contributor to the general "preacher" image I seem to have earned. (Funny, isn't it. So many IJ writers calling themselves "Reverend", and I get to be the preacher.) (Yes, but their titles are in fun.) I further theorize that, in spite of my wisely keeping Galen the Sainly out of the nitpick arena, there are those people who can't even look at an angel without expecting a sermon (Greg Blair may be an example). Oh, sure, he complains in #24, but he complains about something that hurts him personally, as opposed to mortal sins that would get God teed off. Some of the appeal that Jesse & James has may be due to their starting their IJ careers by berating me for my sanctimony, something IJ'ers can identify with.

Anni still hasn't given her reaction to the Care Bears, so I want to say that she's quite welcome to write me personally to do so...

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

Greetings Elayne,

So, I guess it's time for me to pester you again...Hey, t'anks for puttin' in my piece of shit. The zine gets better all the time it seems. You have an unusual collection of writers and topics and do a rad job of sticking it all into some cosmic disorder. ("Rad"?)

Saw Bruce Duncan's name on 'contributors' but didn't see his piece. Maybe I'm too far into space but really...I didn't see it. From last month he seemed pretty weird so's I think I'd remember if he was in there. (Bruce did the "Hank & Hannah" comic strip last month.)

Is Mildred Neptune FOR REEL? (Yep—see "INSIDE IJ STAFFERS.") Jeez, that letter was reele goood logic. Sounds like someone I could talk to for hours—that is, if time existed. Since it was made up by us of this planet it don't mean shit. I once rearranged the letters of my name and got a cosmic message from Pee Dog. Since then, I don't mess with that stuff...

Beastingly,

RICK McCANN
P.O. Box 839
St. Cloud, FL 32769

Dear 'Layne,

Gee, it's finally happened! Mucho congrats on the new digs. I'd help you move, but I have classes today. Ah, well...say, if you need an antique brass penguin, lemme know...it was one of those wedding presents we ended up with two of, y'know. (As a matter of fact—no wait, I'm not seeing him any more, never mind.) Anyway...so this is year three for IJ, huh? I'll bet the typewriter might say it seems like 10. But I was reading all about the party down at Tavern on the Green... Boffo happenings, y'know. All written up in Variety, dontchaknow...

And ringing in the anniversary with #25 was a great way to start. Hey, people...I'd like to say that Anni isn't that miserable with her cold—I'd like to say that, but I won't, because I don't want to dissolve the Ackner mystique. Ahem. Deborah's Taking Notes had its moments, and many, many of them. Jill Zimmerman and Steve Scharff put their best literary pods forward, as usual, although I wish Steve's was illustrated as well (what's up, Steve?). I hope Candi enjoys Frisco...I've never been there, but hell—it's California, right? Radical! ("Radical") The hotbed of the underground press at one time...before Roselle, N.J. overtook it. Ah well...

Major league thanx go to Michael Bodds for making me sit down and consider my ever-broadening future...once again. I've been running with a communications major, and lately I've been really wondering about it. One of the things I've always wanted to do is some DJing, but not if I have to eat Alpo in my 70's (if not sooner). Uh-uh. Well, maybe I can get a job with a cerebral show like 20-Minute Work-out...

Great cover, Greg. Where's Wimpy McAllister been lately? Speaking of covers, I liked George Eddy's back cover piece. Maybe the joke does go back a few years, but I thought he handled it well. Do we all get off on surrealism? Oh, it's okay, but I sorta resist being classified by a like or dislike...Still, George didn't attempt to classify us like Julian Ross...I agree with you, E. Why do we need classification anyway? Sigh...

...Do take care and smile! Say hi to the wife. Love to you all, whoever that may consist of,

BRIAN PEARCE
232A Benedict
Brookport, NY 14420

Dear Elayne,

Just after I mailed off the last missive, IJ arrived. I made what I considered a very satisfactory trade with the postman. He walked away, lickety split, obviously pleased that a) he had another cassette to steal or b) he was passing from the presence of the Most Outstanding Idiot on his route and back into the real world of the corporate literati with his fare of The American Couponer, Oil and Gas Digest, Midwest Ministries adverts, sweepstakes packets, cheese catalogues and so forth to provide all the intellectual sustenance all these dear folks could demand. I was left sitting there with my beloved IJ unopened, directly in front of me, and 3 clients waiting to see me. (I'm sure you see the dreadful conflict—almost the epitome of the mid-life crisis in a 2-minute vignette. Which shall it be—art, or responsibility?...I leave it to you to determine which I chose.)...

As usual, Anni A. was delightful. Jill Z's piece, also, was a quixotically entertaining piece, full of wit, observation and nostalgia. Clay Geerdes is an excellent storyteller. He will make a great old man someday. (Someday? Er, just kidding, Clay...) As I've said before—I like the poetry pages, and, of course, you know my feelings about all of the wonderful Firesigniana. I did miss finding a piece by Kip. (S/He's been slacking off for awhile...) Now, finally, and in fairness to the authors of great stuff I haven't gotten to yet—I

haven't gotten to you yet.

So—that am it for now. Keep up the grate work.

May I say with love,

KEITH JONES
2901 S. Georgia
Amarillo, TX 79109

Dear Elayne,

Received the October edition of IJ in the evening mail. I began to examine it after sorting through my other postal curios for the day. Cable TV bill, Seltzer water delivery invoice, postcard from Grandmother in Gdansk, theatrical makeup brochure, and the Christmas copy of the Blintz In A Box catalog.

Thank you for mentioning me in your Firesign quiz, "These Are My Neighbors!". CHROMIUM SWITCH was published from 1973 to 1975. Before that, in 1972, it was known as FIREMAIL. Here's my own TFT trivia question: On what Public Broadcasting TV show did Firesign appear and who was the host? This was during their "Anytown USA" tour.

What I found most pleasing about IJ #25 was the material from your female writers. Anni's account of her recent illness made me sneeze from laughter. Cheers to Jill Z., Coop, and Candi for their witticisms and views. Accolades to you, Elayne, for the masterful job of typing and layout. What really solidified the Anniversary issue was the "Taking Notes" column by Deborah Benedict. A perfect satire of the "showbiz" crowd. I've known Deborah's ingenious creativity for years and so it pleases me to have IJ readers sharing in what it's like to be married to such a gifted talent. You should see all the gifts she gets. I come home from work and immediately the sounds of laughter and applause emanate from our second story cabaret. As I walk towards the dimly lit room I see our neighbors in their usual places, drinks in hand, being charmed by the musings of Deborah. It's our Thursday night gathering, and Dee Bee is reciting from her soon-to-be-published novel "Imaginary Playmates". The comedic electricity is on. Miss Drillfanger, from the boarding house down the street, is in convulsions. Tears pouring from her lovely crossed eyes, she is guffawing and gasping for breath. As I stand at the entrance to the room, she crawls in the direction of my leg, pulling at it, pleading for me to put a halt to these jocular proceedings. "I'm cured, Mr. Gedwillo, I really am. My depression is gone. But I can't laugh much longer. Please, enough already with the hospital room dialogue!" Yes, just like you out there, Mr. and Mrs. Inside Joke Reader, and like myself, we are touched and will never come down from the effects of the mordant stylings of America's preeminent comedy writer. Deborah's column for the November issue is one to look forward to.

Also catching my attention and bringing me laughter were these other IJ contributors: Tom Sanders, Roldo, Michael Dobbs, and Randy Maxson's cartooning. Actually, all of the IJ people are unique. Each one's point of view is representative of the whole idea of free speech and IJ's basic networking theme. Deborah and I are proud to be a part of it.

In closing, I want to commend you, Elayne, for bringing the entire publishing conception of the "small press" to such a professional culmination. I hope INSIDE JOKE is circulating throughout our lives for years to come.

With love and respect,

TOM GEDWILLO
4718 1/2 Calvert St.
Lincoln, NE 68506

Dear Elayne and Kip and....and...

Where am I? What am I talking about? Do you know? (That would at least make one of us) Gods I Hate This Typewriter. Anyway I have read and enjoyed IJ25 several times. (Why do those people on the ferry keep staring at me? So I laugh out loud a bit...pink peeps) Anyway, a couple of things. One. I'm afraid I must take you to task for your blatant snubbing of Guy Fawkes. (Yeah, you and about five others. Sorry 'bout that; slipped my mind.) Yes, there was a great guy, as well as proof as to why there'll always be an England. What other country would make a national holiday for a crazed anarchist who tried to blow up a major gov't. building? Us Murcans jes' shoots 'em inna haid. So, a second of respect for good ole Guy Fawkes and his day (it was Nov. 5). Two. I wanted to add something to the topic that Jill Zimmerman raised in her letter in 25. I agree completely with her basic point, which I think was, you should write what you want and fuck trying to force it to be something that it's not. This sort of relates to what Roldo was saying too I guess, that you write for yourself. Right? So what's this guy saying? (I dunno he hasn't said anything yet) I've always felt that it's fine to make statements like that as long as there's a recognition that they begin to lose their validity when applied. Just what is inauthentic or forced or self-conscious writing? I think it's a personal judgement that can't be forced on anyone else. Say there's something I think is just trying too hard to be weird but someone else loves like a bat. Who's right? I think you can all see where this is going so I'll shut up as soon as I say tons of nice things about the IJ25 appearances of Mike Gunderloy, Anni, Deborah Ben., and Toms Sanders and Gedwillo. That was then. For now, valé.

BANZAI—GEORGE PATTERSON (aka Rodny Dioxin)
3280 Amboy Road
Staten Island, NY 10306

Dear Elayne,

First, congrats on the new place! IJ Grows in Brooklyn!! Though it appears the entire world might be on the verge of blowing up (again), it's a helluva lot easier to face these traumas in your own nice apartment, no? I'd like to think my repeated phone calls to the PTL Club beseeching Jim and Tammi Fae to pray for your acquiring suitably "boss digs" had something to do with this, but I could be wrong...

Not to slight IJ staffers and contributors, but my fave rave from #24 was Phil Proctor's piece on the Firesign/Goon connection. As I've mentioned, I don't consider myself a hardcore TFT fan anymore, but still, I find this stuff on the group's origins, influences, etc., fascinating. I'm letting you know in case some folks take offense at the inclusion of more TFT-related material in IJ. I welcome it and vote for it.

Speaking of voting...MS. CHAIRWOMAN, I HEREBY CAST MY VOTE TO RETAIN THE WHOZITS STRIP IN INSIDE JOKE. Uh, yes, you're correct in thinking that I've previously voted to retain said Whozits. Forgive me; I'm only following the first rule of Chicago politics, namely: "Vote early—and vote often." Actually, I believe the postcard I sent you should have an even greater effect on the outcome of this controversy. This postcard was not merely "mail art" of the highest caliber (worth at least a year's IJs in return); it was also a serious attempt to lobby for your vote, Elayne (which is, after all, the only vote that really counts here), in keeping the Whozits. Because this is politics as played by the big boys and girls in Was., D.C., you're wondering, "In return for my vote, where are my payoffs and kickbacks?" Well, if you'll look out of your living room window, you'll see a truckload of tasteful furniture now being unloaded...(in the neighbor's garden?)

Gotta go, there's a brand new INSIDE JOKE to read!

All the best at the new pad,
(Name withheld
by request of author)
Vicinity of Chicago, IL

Dear Elayne,

It's Sunday night, not normally my best moment, carrying with it, as it does, the inescapable threat of Monday morning (I harbour, to this day, a totally illogical grudge against Ed Sullivan, because his show was the last I was allowed to watch on Sunday evenings before I went to bed, and there always seemed to be a tangible flavour of school about him), but tonight I feel pretty well, all things considered. Gene Wilder is on in STIRE CRAZY (not one of his better efforts, but even his bad ones are so much better than the general line of "comedy" films perpetrated on the unsuspecting public that it seems absolutely brilliant just by comparison) and I saw CATS yesterday, and am still basking in the glow. Of course, anybody who once owned a cat named "Rumpleteazer" (and yes, it did earn me a few remarks that might conceivably be described as denigrating, but on the other hand at more or less the same time I knew someone who had a cat called "Mimsey-Poopie", and that's not even literary) can probably be safely said to like anything that even smacks at T.S. Eliot (THE BOOK OF PRACTICAL CATS was the first thing, as a child, I ever attempted to memorize all the way through and it surprised me, watching it performed yesterday, just how much stayed with me. "Jellicat cats come out tonight/Jellicat cats, come one, come all/The Jellicat moon is shining bright/Jellicats come to the Jellicat ball". It's very nearly frightening, when you think that I have major problems remembering where on earth I've left my glasses and which button is the fastforward and which the rewind on the Box), but this is honestly a delight, and I am not an easily delighted person. I am also not a person much given to fits of whimsy, but then, despite the names of the cats (and they are all in there—Growltiger, Jennyanydots, Mr. Mistofeeles, the Rum Tum Tugger and, needless to say, Rumpleteazer and her sidekick, Mungojerrie) this is not a particularly whimsical production. In fact, it's a bit hard-bitten and more than a little cynical; the sets are gorgeous, the costumes clever (and a bit startling—for some reason, the men of the production don't wear dance belts, which actually is kind of fun once you get used to it), the dancing well-executed, the voices good, and if it didn't cost \$45 a ticket (it's one of the few productions for which I can see charging that much. The backdrop alone must have cost millions to mount) and you didn't have to wait four months to get that ticket, I'd be back there tomorrow. Really, it does make me feel more than a little uncomfortable to like something so uniformly well-loved (it's much more in my line to go around championing shows that close the evening after they open and about which Clive Barnes enjoys penning those smart little reviews), but I just can't help it this time.

Still, enough is enough. I can get absolutely Awful is I allow myself to go on in this vein, and I've already done enough damage to my image as it is. I'll tell you what—why don't we all forget that I wrote that last paragraph, hmm? I mean, it really wasn't so very memorable as all that, was it? Let's all think about something entirely different, shall we?

Let's see, why don't we think about IJ #25 instead. Do you know, I had entirely forgotten (I warned you about my memory) ("The naming of cats is a serious matter/It isn't just one of your holiday games/You may think at first I'm as mad as a hatter/When I tell you a cat must have THREE DIFFERENT NAMES". Frightening, isn't it?) that it was your third anniversary—I DO feel foolish—or I should have said something about it then. As it is, though, I expect I'll just have to say something about it now, so my heartiest congratulations and all sorts of mushy wishes for many more. Coincidentally, by the way, it's a small anniversary for me as well—I've been an IJ staffer for a year now, as of #25. Don't know if anybody else is particularly interested in this bit of news, but it certainly pleases me—it's been a lovely year, thank you very much, and I have enjoyed being here. Of course you know that you, Elayne, were the first person to publish me with any sort of extensiveness on the East Coast, and from that a lot of columns flowed, for you and other publications, and I really am most awfully grateful, though no doubt other people might have a few bones to pick with you on the subject.

And speaking of the bone-pickers, I expect I might just as well address myself to the ones that complained of me in #25 now, and have it over with. Therefore: To D.A. Frapp (and why didn't you use your real name, Tony darling? I don't send bombs through the mails, truly I don't, at least not to people who merely dislike my writing. Honestly, if I did that I'd have to go into the MX missile business in such a way that it would turn Ronald Reagan pea green with envy): As Elayne mentioned, the original title of the column was DREAMS OF THE ROCK SCENE, a tease on a book that was hip years ago when I was hip, DREAMS OF THE RAREBIT FIEND. This book was so immensely popular when I was writing my first column 11 years back (for a small California zine called SPIRIT IN THE NIGHT), that my modest little joke got me a good deal of attention. Of course, that column really was about music—as this one isn't, primarily—so it made rather more sense, but I liked the title so much that I carried it with me through several different zines and

one self-published collection of poetry, and into IJ, where Elaine, as she explained, inadvertently changed it. Perhaps you may be right, though, and it has outlived its usefulness, as well as its cogency—I'm open to suggestions if anyone can think of a better one.

As a small aside to the music question, I write about ABBA first of all because I like ABBA, and second of all because no one else does. I'm terribly fond of the Who, Lou Reed, Bruce Springsteen, David Bowie and, more recently, Men at Work and Eurythmics, but these people get written about to death, while ABBA doesn't, so my mentions of them seem to me only fair. Besides, I do think Bjorn is simply adorable. Really, I do.

As for my writing's resemblance to that of Fran Leibowitz—both Leibowitz and I owe more to Dorothy Parker than we do to each other, and Parker owed quite a bit to Oscar Wilde, Ring Lardner and Edna Millay, who in turn owed something to...well, the point is, there's nothing new under the sun, son. I can't help it if Leibowitz and I both like long ocean voyages (and, not to put too fine a point on it, as you said, that line might have been written by her, but, in fact, it wasn't. It was written by me), nor can I help it if we're both more or less the same age (she is, I think, five or six years older than I, but we're still in the same generation), from the same background, and with the same sort of education. Show me a person with a completely original writing style and I'll show you a person raised in a cave away from all teachers, books and peers. It just doesn't work out that way, unfortunately.

Moving onward, why would it have been "nice, maybe even appropriate" for me to mention the name of my husband? It was printed several other places in the issue, if anyone cared to find it out, and, more to the point, one reason I've always resisted marriage is the tendency of the woman, once married, to become, consciously or unconsciously, an appendage of the man, in much the way that both you and your wife read the issue, but only you commented upon it. I didn't, in this case, feel any particular relevancy in the actual name of my husband—the bit was about my reactions to marriage, not his—and thought that bringing it in would serve to make me rather less "Anni Ackner", and rather more "Mrs. Brian Pearce", and I didn't see any need for that. If you do, then it's all your own problem, or perhaps your wife's.

As for the structure of my columns, well, thank the lord I'm now too old to have to write college themes and worry that some professor is going to pencil "digression" all over them in red. The nicest part of being a Grown-Up is now I can write whatever silly thing I choose, in whatever way, and the worst that can happen is some people won't read it. I can live with that. (You know, the Ever-Popular suggested I title my column for this issue "Reply to D.A. Frupp" and then not mention you at all. Do be pleased I'm too sweet to do that.) What on earth makes you think I want to be taken seriously as a Real Columnist? In my mind Real Columnists are people like Walter Kerr and that crowd over at THE NATION, and if you think I'm giving up my parenthetical phrases to join that lot you're sadly mistaken. And as to my sentences making me seem "oh so cute and witty", shall I instead make myself seem oh so dull and humourless? That's easy enough for a person to do—you've managed it nicely—but I prefer not to try it, if it's all the same to you. And who knows if I ever will have a chance to use all my ideas again? With Lebanon going up in smoke, and Grenada and so forth, perhaps I won't at that.

You know, the short answer to your criticisms would have been, "If you don't like the stuff, don't read it", but I've always tried to answer decent crit with decent rebuttals, so there you go.

To Ken Filar: I think, at least insofar as I understood your letter, that you have a valid point. It doesn't happen to be the one I endorse, but that has nothing at all to do with its validity, of course. Perhaps we can agree to differ? I do wonder, though, how you managed to miss the extremely blatant sarcasm and self-parody (it was the self-parody issue) inherent in the phrase "to take issue with one damned thing or another, if only for form's sake", and I do think that, if you want to get any sort of intelligent discussion going, it might behoove you to at least try to speak English, but all that's beside the point. We have two different views of crit., both equally valuable, I think, and there's nothing at all wrong with that.

Well, finally, that's over. I'd far rather talk about everybody else than about myself, though you'd never know it from this letter. I adored Deborah Benedict's TAKING NOTES—such fun—and Jill Zimmerman's piece on the strange ambience and angst of Dead concerts—my sentiments exactly—and Merle Foot and B.N. Duncan's cartoon (is that Bruce Duncan, by any chance? If it is he's certainly a much better cartoonist than he is a writer) and any number of other things. I missed seeing a Roldo cartoon, but I did like his letter, and Greg Blair's cover was lots of fun (by the way, dear heart, I am a crotchety old grandma and I simply loathe for anybody to have a good time. Aren't you glad now I got married?). In fact, my only real annoyance—and it's only inadvertent—was the typo that changed one pivotal line of my poem. It should have read "Together we were two stars", not "starts". However, queen of the typo that I am, I really can't say too much about that, can I?

Oh dear, as to it being Sunday night I just noticed it's Monday morning, and high time to knock off this lunacy. I apologise for the highly personal nature of most of this letter, which couldn't have been of that much interest to anybody else, but I did feel some of that stuff needed to be said, and I only had the one stamp. I assure you it won't happen again. In any event, congratulations again on three years of IJ, and on the new Homepage, and on anything else that deserves congratulating.

With several dozen grains of salt,

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

Dear Elaine,

I was thrilled to see my letter in IJ. And today Stang sent me SubGenius postcard saying, "Yes, you're right, it is hard for you to vi-

sualize what the 'Bob' meetings would be like." Sorry, "Dad"! I know you're not fat. It's Monday and I'm still all fucked up from this weekend. That shit gets down in your fatty tissues, chemicals! My daughter had to watch the Nancy Reagan Chemical People show for her health class, and I saw some of it. First off, Nancy looked damaged, man, but I'm sure it's all 'scrip dope so not abusable, right. I heard of a new drug called sympathomimetic amines. More these kind pills, "Bob"! I was interested by a letter you all had from Jill, that trying too hard to be weird becomes homogeneous. The two poles, speaking information theoretically, are crystal and gas. Neither one has very much info, the crystal because it is too orderly, and the gas because it is too disorderly. Freedom and security. Tyranny and mutation. Chemical people. We are in fact made of chemicals. A line from Ed Dorn's Gunslinger where a guy is hitchhiking and has a 2-gallon can of LSD. "Nothing in here but molecules." I am a cloud of chemicals, of molecules, a Tinker-Toy set? Atomic people. Quark people. The fact of the matter, today's lesson, is that atoms and molecules don't really exist. Who has seen an atom? I have instead seen, in the Scientific American, a black and white photo with a dark spot in the middle and that is supposed to be an "atom". The world is what you see. Einstein once wrote a book called OUT OF MY FUCKING GOURD. Played bass for the Byrds. Whited out on PCP at the Astrodome. Feet like wood and trubba not. The space of our experience is infinite dimensional. Buy my latest novel, THE SEX SPHERE. You can masturbate on it, I did. It's about a giant ass from Hilbert space. Hilbert space is the infinite-dimensional space used in the foundations of quantum mechanics. Why should reality be viewed as infinite-dimensional? Imagine that here is an object. How many questions can you ask about it? First you ask the standard 3 questions to determine its space coordinates. But there are more questions, lots more. What color? How heavy? Taste? Does Reagan know about it? To what extent does it resemble an artichoke? If I jabbed it, what would happen? What will my wife say when she sees it? What time is it? Why is there something instead of nothing? What was God thinking of when He made the universe? How many universes are there? Is consciousness inherent in existence? What time will I go home today? There must be some way out of here, said the Joker to the Thief, too much confusion, I can't get no relief. Here is a dollar for the next issue; I also sent "Dad" a dollar for SubGenius info; I'm looking forward to the new Stones album. Be sure to buy SEX SPHERE, all you nuts out there.

Hang ten,

RUDY RUCKER
1324 Church St.
Lynchburg, VA 24504

(Really, folks, Rudy is an honest-to-gosh published writer and everything, he does know what he's talking about in the area of quantum mechanics, and he's got some dynamite books out [look in the science-fiction section] with references to everything from rock music to The Firesign Theatre to whatever it is he's saying above, all packed into Tons of Fun—do patronize, he's a swell sort!)

Dear Elaine,

I received the new IJ and immediately devoured it. Took it to work with me on my weekend bartending gig and giggled and snorted much to the puzzlement of the few bleary-eyed byes sitting around watching the football game.

Anni Ackner: you're a scream...I wish you could do some writing for television because you have an original style that is individual yet accessible. And you're dead-on.

Deborah Benedict: Although your column sounds much like the one in LAMPPOON, it's better. Loved your remarks on some of my favorite celebs.

Gerry Reith: Have you considered writing a book for kids? I loved your tone, ideas and style.

Clay Geerdes: What can I say? The piece was very moving and very real.

Candi Strecker: You've inspired me to write my next column about the cathode ray colloques of MTV. Super piece!

Merle Foote: I laughed until I urinated. The funniest piece, I think, in the issue.

Elayne, I just want to remind you that, as George Papoon's media liason, I've invited you to come on the air again with me. Give me a call. I'm trying to cover the presidential election thoroughly!

And dear editor, let me know if I can do anything to publicize the Firesign folks.

MICHAEL DOBBS
24 Hampden St.
Indian Orchard, MA 01151

DEAR READERS.....



FIRE SIGNALS

As many comedy aficionados will no doubt agree, sometimes the timing is just off. As I type this in a mad rush to get it out and in 1J by the time it's due at the printer's, I am still awaiting return of my last phone call to Phil Proctor, so news from California will have to wait till next time, when there should be a lot! And David Ossman is due back this way in a couple days, where we will get together this coming weekend (11/19 or so) to celebrate our respective birthdays a little early and just plain 'hang out', how you say in your country. So, that about wraps it up this month for news, hail brevity I suppose.

Which brings us to gift-thanking time: Thanks to—Mark Leviton for the old advert he and his wife did for the Just Folks album and for the article mentioned in the Papoon column *this issue*; Tom Sanders for an issue of "Firemail" (!) not even Tom Gedwillo had extras of (shit, I try so hard not to dangle those participles, I really do!); Mr. Mike for the recipe for Nasi Goreng and for the really nifty Chicago Tribune article on the MISSING VOLKS video (most comprehensive article I've seen so far, but we'll have to wait for Mark L.'s to come out); Rick Moore for another '74 Carnegie Hall playbill (does anyone out there have a tape for the performance, by the way?); Frank Bland (no relation to Ben, I don't think) for the donation to The Cause; Greg Blair for this month's quiz; and David Ossman for the test press of HTF...

The mysterious Mr. Mike also writes, "At 10:30 tonite the GSN show hits the airwaves" (anyone have a tape of that one? Phil? Rachel? Fans?) "and thanx to your FIRE SIGNAL, I know to call the stations afterwards with words of encouragement and praise. Can you imagine the Boys Live on yer radio, if this thing really takes off?... Looks like 'J-Men' is coming out on RCA disc." (Phil? Pete?) "What do you know of the other P&B (I think) production that ran on 'Night Flight': NASI GORING ('never boring')?" It appeared to have been shot in 16mm, but I could be mistaken." Peter? This is up your alley too, I believe...

Yes, these warped communications can get a bit frustrating, but I think I've hit on a solution that will placate not only this problem but the problems of 1J going bi-quarterly in '84 and the folks who read the rag who aren't necessarily TFT devotees: NEXT MONTH'S FIRE SIGNAL WILL PROBABLY BE OUR LAST IN INSIDE JOKE. HOWEVER, "FOUR-ALARM FIRE-SIGNAL", alias "FalaFal", WILL START PUBLISHING ON A SEMI-REGULAR BASIS as the need arises and the news flows. FalaFal will be available for a song—well, a SASE would be nice, but it's not mandatory—and all I really ask of recipients is that they KEEP IN TOUCH with me, as I won't be able to afford putting out 1J and sending FalaFal to deadwood as well. I think, though, that the timing of all of this calls for an intermittent TFT-only bulletin separate from 1J. I've wanted to do this for some time, but haven't gotten the priorities laid out till now.

So much for timing. Here's this month's quiz, take it, Greg!

OK, so here's the deal: As we all know (don't we?), The Firesign Theatre has invented some of the best funny names ever heard, and this quiz is a tribute to those great members of the Funny Names Club of America.

The rules are simple: Read the following quotes from every FT album (no solo albums) and come up with the name of the character who said each line. I call this quiz:

CALL ME JOE (or) How Did You Know My Moniker?

- 1) "What are all these Mexicans doing here?"
 - 2) "And they knew not their holes from an ass on the ground."
 - 3) "Duluth? Bucko, you can get Tierra del Fuego!"
 - 4) "Heya Joe! Who wanna Seconda Worlda War, you so smart?"
 - 5) "...there's a seeker born every minute."
 - 6) "Oh, not my muff!"
 - 7) "Oh, I love Lucy, her hair never changes color; it's always black and white."
 - 8) "It just sounds like all boogies to me."
 - 9) "Nothin's on purpose, ma'am."
 - 10) "Take a tip from a cop who does."
 - 11) "There was a passal of them theosophists at the other end of the bar raisin' the devil—had him about ten feet off the floor..."
 - 12) "Defoliating a victory garden certainly works up an appetite!"
 - 13) "Yes, he's dead now, but lives on, in stereo hi-fi."
 - 14) "Squirrels eating squirrels, my God, that's sick."
 - 15) "Why does the porridge bird lay his egg in the air?"
 - 16) "I'm so hungry, oh goodness, he came up into the hills! Hey, hey, wait for me, wait for me! Hey mister, I got a nickle, wait for me..."
 - 17) "All those Baryshnikovs are defective!"
 - 18) "What happened? The lights went out in the bathroom and I missed everything! What a mess!"
 - 19) "So I licked his boots at that point—"
 - 20) "Save the rough stuff for your boyfriends, you mugs!"
- (Elayne here—answers next time, if anyone really needs them; do let me know if you want me to run 'em...)

Hey, America!
Let's Get Going!

VOTE

PAPOOON!

CONDITION...

PAST!

FUTURE?

GROSS '83

A SCOTSMAN ON A HORSE

by Rodney K. Dioxin

There was so much I wanted to tell you. October, or whatever you call it, was a shattering month. Huge strides in "fake time" research, I appointed myself Autarch Supreme of Statenisland to universal apathy, three days later I resigned the office and burned all the symbols of power (save for the Holy Voice-print of Ken Hart which I saved for whoever next creates the office), all in all, many meta-rad. things went down. Until Oct. 29, the dreaded Dobbs-day, when they found me. They weren't "THEM" but they were working for "THEM." This all started about a year ago, so I'm afraid it's flashback time.

I was working at a temp-job last holiday season at a Hickory Farms. Yeah, the gloves is off, I'll cop you no outs. So, things were just the standard minimum wage kind of awful until one night I saw something I shouldn't have. See, I'd gotten locked in the walk-in cooler where they keep the cheese so it won't get moldy until after it leaves the store. Actually that's not true. You can't get locked in those things. I was in there with a co-worker enjoying some recreation of a slightly illegal nature. (Sorry, no details...you know how it is... statute of limitations and all. Info will be sent privately. Just send 3/4 of a million pounds or your first-born gorilla to: Debauchery, Debasement, and Depravity, c/o etc...)

We'd closed up the Farms and thought we were alone. But when we walked out we saw a large group of Farmers, wearing red plaid chem-war suits in the back room. They were unloading a truck full of these 25-lb. cardboard drums. My co-worker immediately snuck out the front of the store. I, sadly, tripped over a display of the new-for-the-holidays decorative bell of tasty chocolate/jalapeno cheese food product. Of course you know by now that I was caught (else there'd be no story). I figured they'd waste me on the spot, having seen some of their sales training/mind control/Young Republicans video-tapes, and having heard my share of horror stories about The Farm (somewhere in Iowa...that Ohio bit is just a tax dodge). But, as it turned out, that was faulty reasoning on my part due to the fact that I wasn't aware of who was in charge of that particular group of Farmers, at least not until they took off their gas masks. G. Gordon Liddy and Timothy Leary.

That's right. I realized then that I'd stumbled onto a conspiracy of epic proportions. What to do? Gordo and Tim were clearly the operatives for the Farms chemical cheez/brain re-organizing program. As they tied me to a tower of H.F. gift boxes, I learned much of the Farmers' insidious plans to spread from their Iowa base, through a series of brain-melding devices, often cleverly disguised. The main weapon was (no, fear wasn't it) the seemingly innocent cheez-ball, as well as its cousins, the smoky log and the creamy swiss bar. Tons of this chemocheez were shipped into HF shoppes all over suburbia where unsuspecting min-wage slaves created tasty holiday treats. Little did they know...

I knew then that I had to escape and tell the world, or at least my friends. You may say that anyone who'd buy a cheez-ball deserves whatever he/she/it gets. Well, that's pretty damned frosty! Besides, as a distant relation of Chuck E. Cheese (ssh...it's a secret), I had to defend the family name. I had two things going for me. I knew that I was capable being infinitely smarter and stupider than Gordo and Tim. Also, I knew that I had several capsules of something in my pockets that would blow the backs of their heads off (as they say...sorry about the lack of details, statutes of limitation. see previous note). Anyway, it worked. I could spend a lot of time telling you how I did it, it's a fine story, but it won't tell you why I'm hiding out in Jersey or how the Farmers are trying to stop me from revealing to the world their plans to turn our brains to cheez. Yeah, it's veddy scary, kids. I drugged Gordo and Tim out of the way, managed to blow outta town. Thought I'd fooled them by hiding out on St. Big mistake, as they were slowed down but not stopped.

I learned this in a big way recently when a large group of Farmers drove by my home and poured two tons of molten cheez all over the shrubs. Since then the red-plaid boyz have been closing in, till I finally had to bolt again. I'm deep in the heart of Jersey now, hiding out in the wine cellar of my pal Wendy's, former empress of the East-side and the face that launched a better hamburger. But on my last excursion to the all-nite fruit stand to get beer and papayas, I spotted a red-plaid car cruising by. Naturally I was worried. I'm still worried, so I'm planning to head north, make a pilgrimage to see old Chuck E. up in Albany, NY.

The way I see it, if anyone knows how to stop these attacks on the good name of Cheese, as well as this nasty brain/cheez conversion, it's gonna be Chuck. If I survive the month, I'll be back with the word, good, bad, or worse. Until then, a few thoughts. Elayne, I'd keep an eye on the palatial P.O. box. These Farmers really hold a grudge and one wouldn't like to arrive there to find it filled with bleuecheez dip. To the rest of you kind folks: watch out for organisms in red plaid, especially in the vicinity of malls; avoid known Farmer hangouts like the Republican Party, the D.A.R., matinees of "The Right Stuff," any place that serves a corned-beef-on-white-with-mayo, Texas; if someone offers you a free holiday trip to Iowa, sic some Hare Krishnas on him or her (or if none are handy a rabid penguin will do). Gods, I hope to be back next time...whatever happens, remember...ONLY YOU CAN PREVENT CHEEZ RALLIES!

ONE, TWO, 3...MANY RUMORS

by the Rev. Mahatma Propagandhi

Aren't you glad you use Dial-a-Rumor? Don't you wish everybody did? More lather, less soft soap at (415) 843-7474. And for the aspiring rumormonger, the Dial-a-Rumor Home for Unwed Metaphors (415/843-7439) irregularly offers sage counsel *in vivo*.

The scandal of too much congress in the Congress came to a head the other day when the House of Representatives censured Gary Studts for giving just that to a comely page-boy. As House Democratic leader Tip O'Neill observed, it's improper for anyone to be screwed by Congressmen except the taxpayer. Some observers felt that Studts got off easy, but his young friend says he's not the sort to kiss-and-tell. However, columnist and debate coach George Will, nothing the prevalence of AIDS in Washington's gay community, speculates that Studts' seat may be in danger. Perhaps the most penetrating comment on the affair came from the other house of Congress, where Presidential hopeful John Glenn stated, "I think Gary is as much sinned against as sinning. I hope he can turn the page on this episode without having him bend over this time."

A compromise has been worked out between Polish comedian Pope John Paul II, who longs to resume his stage career, and the College of Cardinals, which several months ago refused to release the popular Pontiff from his life contract or trade him to the other league, where the World Council of Churches had expressed an interest in the headstrong homilist and humorist. The emigre actor is staying on as Vicar of Christ, despite his barely concealed aversion to the monotonous pasta in calimari sauce repeatedly served up at the Vatican cafeteria, but he's been allowed to resume the round-the-world tours which are understandably popular for members of a celibate priesthood.

The infallible fatty kicked off a European tour with a show in Vienna commemorating the 1691 rescue of Vienna from the Turks by the Poles, which so embarrassed the Austrians that they could hardly wait to partition Poland a century later. The Pope headlined a show for which the Boston Pops opened with a rousing medley of Strauss waltzes and Tex-Mex polka music. The Krakow joke-cracker hit the stage next in a low-cut ice-cream suit previously owned by Barry Manilow and providentially picked up by a cost-conscious priest with a flair for fashion at a thrift shop in Zurich where he was serving as bailiff at the Hans Kung heresy trial.

The Pope fell back on a tried-and-true routine that never fails to draw a laugh, that old vaudeville number about how Christianity created European civilization. Many Catholic devotees of this cult classic have heard it so many times that they attend every showing in costume and lip-synch the dialog. You'd expect a man whose real first name is Karol to have a lively sense for double entendre, and after the audience gave him a kneeling ovation he performed as an encore his classic "Get a Job!" routine, premiered in 1980 at the Gdansk shipyards with straight man Lech Walesa. The Pope's next scheduled show is at the soccer stadium in Mexico City where he will celebrate the 463rd anniversary of the introduction of Christianity and the bubonic plague by Cortez and his conquistadores.

Millions of cuisine-conscious Americans appreciate the awesome edibles expertise of James Beard, but Beard himself is fed up with the professional neglect with which his pioneering studies in the so-called "new gustatory history" have been received by snobbish academic historians. Dr. Beard disclosed the dietary determinants of the framing of the Constitution in his first major work, *A Culinary Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*. More specialized studies include *Recipe for Revolution* (a history of Bacon's Rebellion) and a scalding critique of the Diet of Worms. It's going to be difficult henceforth for historians to dismiss such turning points as the Boston Tea Party and the battle for Pork Chop Hill as isolated ailments of American history.

According to *nouvelle cuisine* Progressives close to Beard and typically sporting their own, the real reason why mainstream scholars won't make a place at their table for Beard is religious bigotry. Beard's fearless researches into early Church dietary history have made him about as welcome to orthodox theologians as a fly in their soup. The Benedictine order lost millions in sales when Beard published his findings that a copying error by a drunken Irish monk in the 9th century was responsible for a flaw in the formula for its famous liqueur.

But what the clergy find most unpalatable is Beard's revelations based on a papyrus cookbook scroll unearthed by Israeli archeologists looting the site of a first-century Essene monastic community near the Dead Sea. Beard has discovered that rations, not rationality, caused the tragedy on which historical Christianity is baste. The charge against Jesus of Nazareth was not heresy or sedition but rather disturbing the peace. A disgusted teetotaling Judas Escariot turned his Savior in when the hard-drinking holy man's Last Supper degenerated into a food-fight.

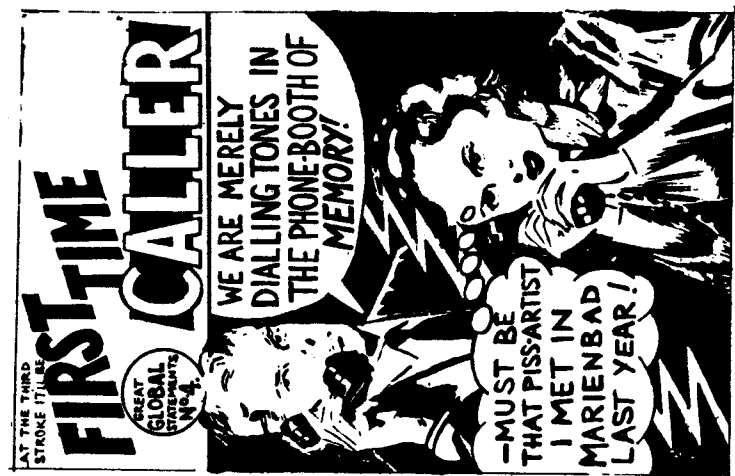
Wall Street is quickly but quietly preparing an impromptu ticker-tape parade for Polish electrician Lech Walesa, currently in this country to attend the funeral of Alfred Cardinal Newman, to whom the megabankers recently awarded the coveted Nobel Peace-at-Any-Price prize for his services in pacifying rebellious Polish workers. Walesa, whose first-class seat on a Korean Airlines jetliner was paid for out of Solidarity union pension funds, is expected to announce the donation of his \$146,000 prize to the Bank of America as a step toward repaying the billions owed by Poland to Western banks and governments.

Walesa may also testify at House Ways and Means Committee hearings in favor of the proposed multi-billion dollar bailout of the International Monetary Fund by the American taxpayer. Although the logic of loaning money to your debtors so they can hand it back to you is obvious to all but a few frings crackpots like Ralph Nader and Jesse Helms, Walesa plans to nail down the point as firmly as his Savior's wrists by

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Michael Harrington rides in a socialist limo-
sine. Don't revolt, vote for Mitterand and the
socialist hydrogen bomb. —Signed, Nestor

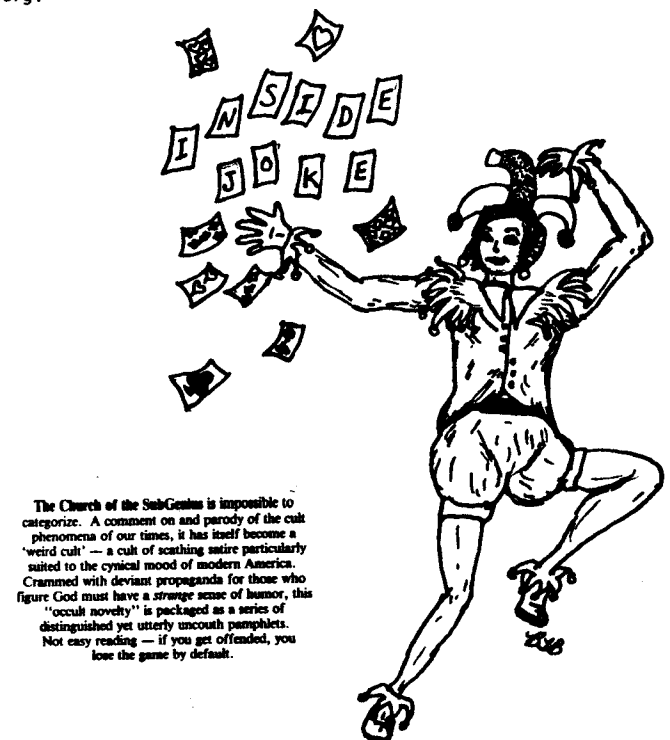


COMPLETE THIS rumor: "Did Florence Mac-Donald had a collective farm..." Dial-a-Rumor (843-7474), the number not even Mike Greenspan hangs up on.



confronting the Congress with the stark alternative of Poland having to send indentured workers to the U.S. as part of the Simpson-Mazzoli Tri-lateral workcard peonage program. The prospect of Solidarity locals springing up in America's Industries is deeply disturbing to the Fortune 500 and the AFL-CIO, to say nothing of the demoralization which would ensue if the Poles become the first white people to join the Third World.

Meanwhile, the Bank of America is delighted to receive Walesa's money, which would otherwise have been taxed at a rate of 129% due to Poland's inflation-fueled bracked-creepy income tax, which will become available just in time for capitalizing upon a promising investment opportunity in Bechtel's fast-breeder nuclear family project in Johannesburg.





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A SHORT STORY WITH NO MORAL #4 by D.A. Fripp

There was once a young woman who was obsessed with obsequiousness. She had heard someone being referred to as obsequious, liked the way it sounded, and resolved to one day become obsequious herself.

Unfortunately, the young woman was not entirely sure of what the word meant. Being of a somewhat proud nature, she was reluctant to ask anyone for a definition. The young woman was convinced, however, that to be obsequious was to be grand and important.

The picture the young woman had in her head was of herself descending a marble staircase, which ended in a huge ballroom filled with the most elegant of the elegant, dressed in the most beautiful gown in the world. As she came into sight, heads would turn in her direction, there would be gasps, and someone would quietly say to her friend, "Isn't she just too too obsequious?"

On only one occasion did the young woman ever tell anyone about her dreams of obsequiousness. She happened to have been in bed with a young man of whom she was quite fond—dreams of marriage alternated with dreams of obsequiousness—and they were exchanging secrets of the heart. The young man had just finished telling the young woman of his longing to be the manager of a Denny's restaurant when the young woman suddenly blurted out, "I want to be obsequious!"

The young man laughed. It was the most ridiculous thing he had ever heard. This woman, who on rare occasions might say "please" or "thank you" and who would butt in lines and, when asked to pass something at the dinner table, would say, "You've got arms; get it yourself," wanted to be obsequious. It was to laugh.

The young woman, though, did not laugh. She was deeply hurt and angry. She thought that the young man was laughing at her for wanting to be grand and important. She thought he was laughing at her dreams. "Get out," she screamed at the young man, "get out of my bed! Get out of my house! And get out of my life!"

The young man sat in stunned silence for a moment, very quietly said "O.K.," and wordlessly got dressed, gathered up his things and left the apartment.

That was the last the young woman ever saw of the young man. She would often think of that night and how things had gone wrong. As the years went by, she grew more and more convinced that the young man had meant to hurt her, and, thus, she grew to hate him. Eventually, her hate grew too much for the one young man and she began to hate all men.

One day she received a letter notifying her that her aunt had died and left her \$5,000,000.00. "I'm rich," she thought, "I can quit my job and do anything I want. I can be obsequious now. First, I'll go out and buy myself the most beautiful gown I can find."

The woman, who by this time was no longer young, made plans to throw a huge party in the most exquisite hotel in Vienna, Austria. She invited everyone who was anyone, and a few who weren't, and she even invited the young man who had hurt her.

After months of preparations, the day of the party finally arrived. The woman boarded the jet airliner that would carry her to Australia. She was eating caviar and drinking champagne when the airliner did a nosedive into the middle of the Atlantic Ocean.

News of the disaster reached the party at midnight. At first a hushed silence fell over the crowd until a Texas millionaire said, "Well, shucks, as long as we're all here, let's make this the best god-damn wake Vienne, Austria's ever seen!"

And, so, they did.

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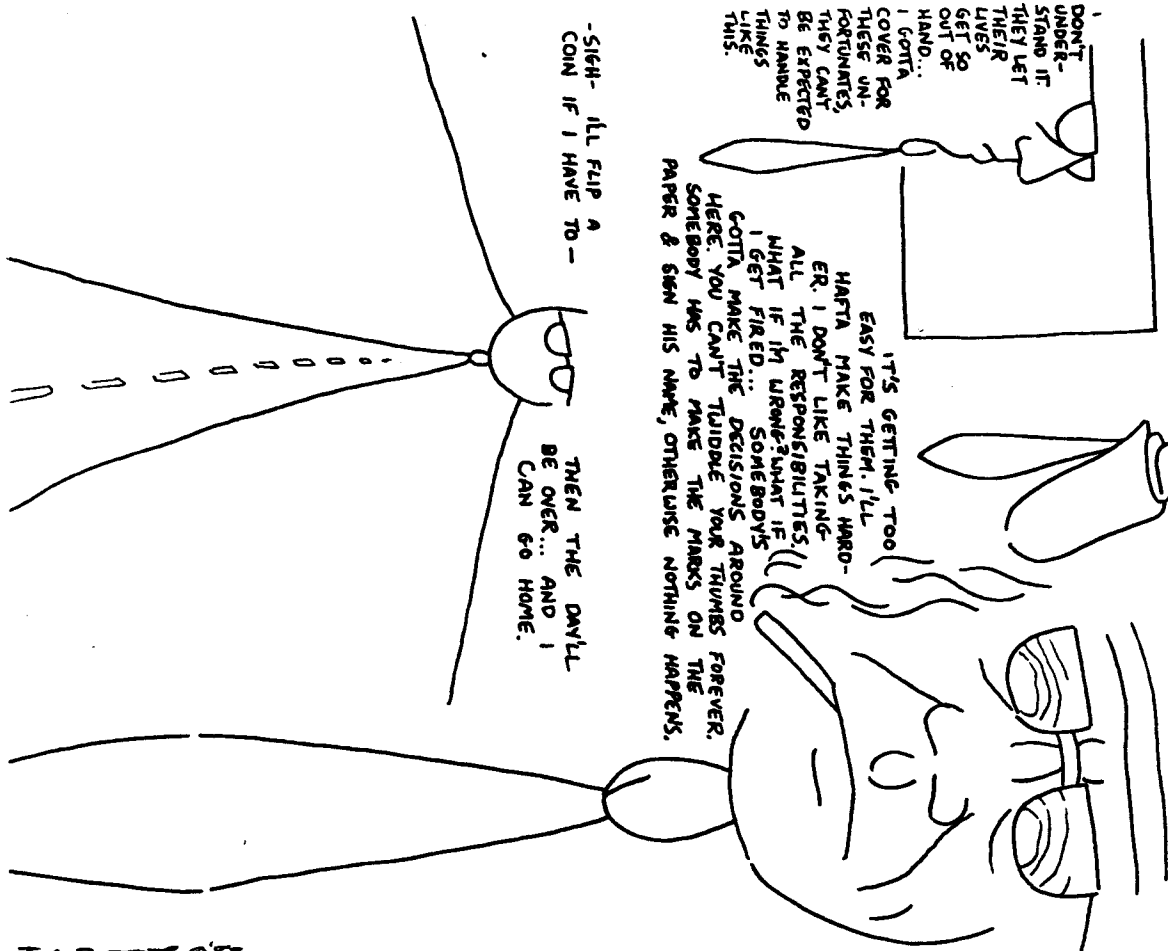
WHAT TIME IS IT? THEY WENT HOME ALREADY. I'M THE ONE WHO ALWAYS STAYS LATE — THEY LEAVE IT ALL TO ME.

DON'T UNDERSTAND IF THEY LET THEIR LIVES GET SO OUT OF HAND... I GOTTA COVER FOR THESE UNFORTUNATES, THEY CAN'T BE EXPECTED TO HANDLE THINGS LIKE THIS.

IT'S GETTING TOO EASY FOR THEM. I'LL HAF TA MAKE THINGS HARDER. I DON'T LIKE TAKING ALL THE RESPONSIBILITIES. WHAT IF I'M WRONG? WHAT IF I GET FIRED... SOMEBODY'S GOTTA MAKE THE DECISIONS AROUND HERE. YOU CAN'T TIDDLIE YOUR THUMBS FOREVER. SOMEBODY HAS TO MAKE THE MARKS ON THE PAPER & SIGN HIS NAME, OTHERWISE NOTHING HAPPENS.

-SIGH- I'LL FLIP A COIN IF I HAVE TO -

THEN THE DAY'LL BE OVER... AND I CAN GO HOME.



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