

#31 SOMETHING
LIKE SUMMER
1984



COMING SOON -
A FISTFUL OF RAY GUNS



#10X12

INSIDE JOKE



"a newsletter of
comedy and creativity"

-UPCOMING EVENTS-

Much thanks to Mike Gunderloy for the wonderful almanac from whence some of these items are taken. If you want anything publicized here, please submit it before the deadline.

- JULY 2 - Dan Rowan (62)
- JULY 3 - Franz Kafka, b. 1883
- JULY 5 - KEN FILAR (27)
- JULY 8 - First passport issued, 1796
- JULY 12 - Buckminster Fuller, b. 1895
- JULY 20 - "One Small Step", 1969
- JULY 22 - Dorothy Parker, Robert Benchley, Ray Bradbury
- JULY 23 - T.S. CHILD (?)
- JULY 24 - Amelia Earhart, b. 1898
- JULY 26 - ROLDO (36)
- JULY 28 - PHIL PROCTOR (44), ALIZON OSSMAN HARRIS (25)
- AUGUST 1 - DENNY NORWOOD (41)
- AUGUST 2 - GEORG PATTERSON (24)
- AUGUST 5 - SPENCER PINNEY (30)
- AUGUST 6 - JULIE LOGAN (30)
- AUGUST 8 - TINY OSSMAN (37)
- AUGUST 13 - Bert Lahr, b. 1895
- AUGUST 17 - ANDY KAMM (23)
- AUGUST 21 - DOUG ("Church of the SubGenius") SMITH (31)
- AUGUST 26 - JOHN EBERLY (30); 19th Amendment passed (?)
- AUGUST 27 - Federal Income Tax declared unconstitutional, 1894
- AUGUST 28 - IJ Mas-cat GYPSY the Feral (1)

And at the Thalia (95th & B'way, NYC) this summer, Cartoons every Monday, and a Firesign nite on August 31!

 * INSIDE JOKE is put on hexaweekly (thanks to Mikey for that little *
 * goodie) by Elayne Wechsler with help from all the names listed be- *
 * low and probably more, and emanates, despite the p.o. address, from *
 * beautiful downtown Brooklyn, currently celebrating the 100th anni- *
 * versary of the Cyclone at Coney Island (sponsored by Dramamine...)! *

* EDITOR IN CHIEF.....ELAYNE WECHSLER *
 * HEAD XEROGRAPHER....."UNCLE WIGGLY" *
 * FRONT COVER: GEORG PATTERSON BACK PAGE FILLER: ROLDO *

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* Ads furnished by J.C. Brainbeau, Factsheet Five, Neither/Nor Press, The Church of the SubGenius and Wall-Op *

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* Apologies to John Crawford for omitting his name from last issue's *
 * "failed experiment" (i.e., questionnaire), and a general invitation *
 * to any and all who wish to do the front covers for our next couple *
 * issues—please contact me! Writers'/Artists' Guidelines available *
 * for SASE; Back issues available for \$1.50; "Audio IJ" in stasis.... *

KID AVATAR

by Deborah Benedict

Where is Kid Avatar?

Playing Connect the Dots with the stars.

What happened to his fortune?

He spent it all on various

Impressive Apocrypha

and can no longer afford

to live in a rarefied atmosphere.

He's just an ordinary guy

jogging in the park

to the music of the spheres

on his Sony Walkman...

DO YOU FIT IN?
 Are you happy with your
 role in society?
 Do you believe in the
 Middle Class?
 Then this is NOT for you!
 Send \$1 for Intense Pamphlet
 'The Church of the SubGenius'
 P.O. Box 140306
 Dallas, TX 75214

This issue is dedicated to whoever at NBC thought up the mind-boggling scheme that resulted in Christopher Guest, Billy Crystal, Martin Short, Rich Hall and Harry Shearer signing on to Saturday Night Live this next season as regulars...and, equal-time wise, to the cast of CHUCKLEHEADS (thanks again, Anne Bernstein and Doug Kirby!).

ACKNOWLEDITORIALETC.

"I came down here for a party, what happened? Nothing. Not even ice cream. The gods looked down and laughed! This would be a better world for children if the parents had to eat the spinach."—Groucho Marx

As the hot winds descend (or should that be "ascend"?) on us to herald in the summer, another IJ "experiment" has gone down the toob... Okay, granted, last issue's poll wasn't the most exciting or interesting questionnaire we've ever had. And many of the names may have been a tad unrecognizable because so many IJ writers have pseudonyms. And I'm sure there were those opposed to this concept in the first place, or who felt total disinterest in the whole affair. As I type this, I have less than ten returns—nowhere near enough to indicate a thing.

I suspect I'm sorry I bothered. Not with the concept of wanting to see what readers thought of our contributors, because I always want to know (I guess from now on I'll just go by the letters column like everyone else). I'm sorrier that I decided to "make it easier" for the polls to be mailed back with that best-forgotten innovation "The Reversible Cover". I don't know what came over me to assume my "instructions" on the outside were clear enough for the slowest postal worker to understand—perhaps it's a result of years of educational snobbery. At least a dozen issues were returned to me because carriers couldn't figure out the difference between "From" and "To". You'd think they'd read the print on the outside, or understand that if 150 copies all have the same address on one side they're probably not going to that address, or that the side with the stamps—ah well, who are we to figure out the workings of alien minds. This could, in fact, have prevented your responses from reaching me as well, who knows. All I know is, I'm glad I didn't spring for the 20¢ stamps in addition to everything else; I guess folks would've just kept them and I'd be out another \$40...I'm not really angry, though; the response-or-lack-thereof says to me that most of you out there would rather not get involved with opinions of this person or that, that you'd rather just sit back and be entertained, so on with it...

Welcome to our newest staffer, longtime Campooneer (most of my background material for GGP's current race was gotten from this fellow) and a man with possibly more aliases than Georg Patterson, Mr. Robert Wollard. RW's alter-ego Red Woof was the Postmaster Gen'l. during Pa-poon's administration from '76-whatever, and he presents, in that capacity, a public service for us this issue. No quiz on Thursday.

I'm not sure what our staffer count is this time, as I've not heard from Clay Geerdes (his final piece runs this time and he's shown no interest to be in continuing, so we may have come to a parting of the ways), nor Coop nor Brian (Jill is still shifting-and-settling-into locale, and Roldo has taken this issue off to immerse himself in "Lafta Yoga" but some art he did for us awhile back makes its appearance on our back cover), to whom I repeat, for the last time, the following:

ATTENTION STAFFERS: As you know, I really only have one "procedure" as far as your 'obligations' to this publication. IF YOU'RE NOT GOING TO WRITE FOR AN UPCOMING ISSUE, TELL ME, DAMMIT! I don't begrudge hiatuses (unless we're talking something like 5 issues in a row), but holding up production because I haven't heard from you is just plain rude. If you can't even be conscientious enough to write me a lousy postcard announcing your imminent absence, well, I mean, what do I do, assume that because I haven't heard from you that you no longer wish to be involved? Really, if you don't that's okay, but LET ME KNOW. It's okay for non-staffer contributors to half-promise me "something if I get around to it," but for goo'nessake, you folks wanted to be staff writers, didn't you? It's not like someone held a sword over you. Hey, I know I'm probably overreacting, but I suppose I'm a bit pissed. You know the only "penalty" I attach to this is that if you don't contact me again when you want time off, you just don't get IJ for free anymore (which doesn't mean you can't write for the newsletter, but just that you're no longer in the "staffer" part of the edit box), but you know, it's the principle of the thing, dig?

Okay, venom released. Time for the annual (but not if I can help it) begathon (I do so like to coincide with the public tv stations). Turns out I seem to be throwing at least \$50 an issue down the hole (I'm glad I stopped pubbing monthly!), and due to other unexpected expenses like getting busted (gory details available through personal correspondence, if you're that type of person) and bills coming in, etc., I'm getting to a semi-belt-tightening point. I don't know how much longer I can keep up this kind of circulation with no real compensation (who knows, I may talk my boss into giving me another raise, but the sun may also turn fuschia), but if worst comes to worst (and we'll all know by the end of '84), IJ will not, repeat not, stop coming out. What will happen is, I will stop trading with most other editors. This bothers me quite a bit, as I read and enjoy most of the publications I receive in exchange for IJ. But as almost none of the other eds send money (understandably so, as I don't send them money either), that'll be the first corner cut. So, staffers and subscribers, don't worry, this is just fyi (for your info). HOWEVER, do feel free to send the bucks if you win a lottery and can't think of anything better to do (for example), you know, whatever. I loathe the whole process of asking for money, so I'd rather say, send what you will, if anything.

But be sure, if you're a subber, it's at least a dollar, which is our by-issue subscription price. Although I still won't accept funds for advance subscriptions (why should be clearer than ever given the above paragraph), I still have back issues for sale (see edit. box). Thanks to the following for their donations to this go-round: J.C. Brainbeau, Mike Cullen, Keith Jones, Bill Kober, Les Light, and Denis McBee and Luke McGuff for the stamps. Deadline for issue #32 is July 15, NO LATER; subsequent deadlines are: August 31 for #33; October 10 for #34 (try to get this one in earlier, as October's my vacation time); and November 30 for #35, our last in 1984. Can't say you weren't warned, folks...All submissions (if you're not sure what constitutes an IJ submission, send for the Writers' Guidelines) should be sent to the following address:

P.O. Box 1609, Madison Square Station, New York, NY 10159

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DIARY of The ROCK FIEND

Dinner at Eightish by Anni Ackner

There are people in this world, or so I've been told, who will make a tolerably strong case for a cold, cold beer on a warm, warm day, the bottom half of the sixth inning unfolding lazily before them on a small, black and white portable. There are those, I've been advised, who prefer tearing through establishments on the order of Bloomingdale's like so many urban developers suddenly turned loose on an entire block of un-co-opted apartment buildings, while others, I hear, go for chocolates, or orgies, or Harlequin romances, or some unorthodox combination of the three at whose logistics I refuse to even guess. Some people like old movies, some choose long, decadent naps in the middle of the day, and The Sister To Whom I Do Not Speak enjoys ripping pieces of paper into little tiny shreds and then gluing them back together again (on the other hand, we're agreed about HER, aren't we?), but as far as I'm concerned - and, by the way, this is my column, in case anybody is keeping dossiers - there's absolutely nothing to inspire those feelings of syberatic pleasure and complete well-being like a nice, hot shower.

Honestly, I just can't begin to say enough about nice, hot showers. As a masterpiece of comfort, amusement and versatility there's nothing on earth to touch them, and the possibilities of the act of showering are virtually limitless. Because there's something remarkably soothing about having several gallons of steaming water per minute flowing over one's head (to be fair, the ancient Chinese reputedly used a similar concept as a form of torture but then, the ancient Chinese allowed Marco Polo to take perfectly good lo mein back to Italy with him in the full knowledge that, hundreds of years later, people were going to be dumping Buitoni red sauce all over it, so there you go), basking done in the shower is basking extraordinaire. Thanks to a strange fluke of acoustics, even the tone deaf develop voices like Piaf's while showering, so that singing becomes a delight for all concerned (unless you happen to live, as I do, in one of those peculiar old buildings where sound travels along the plumbing system, so that the entire complex is treated to your rendition of DANCING QUEEN, in which case the upstairs tenants might have a few thoughts on the subject). It is permissible and even feasible to have company in the shower, (though personally I don't advise this, as I've noticed an alarming tendency to get jabbed with the cold water faucet at all the wrong moments, and in decidedly the wrong places) while, short of that, fantasies of a mature nature seem to abound in the shower, or, if you're that sort of person, you can even wash in the shower (for that matter, if you're Angie Dickinson you can do both at the same time, though it probably helps to have Brian DiPalma perched on the sink). Compare all this to the more mundane process of taking a bath, during which the only thing you can really do with any success - unless you happen to own one of those sunken, Olympic sized bathtubs so popular at hotels in the Poconos, under which circumstances you can practise your scuba diving - is watch your thighs float.

The greatest advantage, however, of nice, hot showers, to my way of thinking, is that, while you're indulging in one, no one expects you to be doing anything else. You are, after all, Taking a Shower. You don't have to write while you're Taking a Shower, even if you have three deadlines in the next two days and various editors throughout the country are clubbing together to buy you a desk chair equipped with restraining belts, because the typewriter keys would rust and the paper get all pulpy. You don't have to listen to the Current Trends in Music, because the radio might fall in and electrocute you, or, alternatively, the battery would get all mucked up. Taking a Shower, of necessity, requires a certain lack of clothing, so you don't have to attend any of those functions at which somebody from W might make a catty remark about your hemline, and you definitely aren't expected to pop downstairs and let in the sort of person who drops by for a visit without telephoning first (as far as that goes, you don't even have to answer the telephone if they do call, for fear of marring the carpeting with your soapy footprints), because the towel might slip. A nice, hot shower is, as far as I know, the only sure method of attaining complete and total freedom left to us in these troubled times, and I can't recommend it strongly enough to those who feel the constraints of society as an ever-tightening bond.

It is, I believe, because of this freedom that the mind, while the body showers, tends to wander along strange and exotic pathways (and here, I must point out, I am not talking about those fantasies of a mature nature I mentioned earlier which, while they may very well be strange and exotic, probably don't have anything to do with wandering and not a whole lot to do with the mind), leading its owner to places and conclusions he or she would never have otherwise reached. While The Sister To Whom I Do Not Speak once vehemently assured me that SHE thinks about Lydon Johnson while so employed (see previous notes re: SISTER), I myself find my shower thoughts more and more these days turning to the matter of dinner parties.

Now, as anyone who has been following along with any concentration knows, I am ambivalent at best about dinner parties, but the problem I have with them, I think, has more to do with the execution than the concept. A dinner party, in a civilised world, would be a happy gathering of congenial souls enjoying excellently prepared food in a pleasant atmosphere while discussing the meaningful topics of the day. Things being as they are, however, what a dinner party normally amounts to is 20 or 30 overdressed people sitting around talking about their stock options as they attempt to digest the sort of meal routinely dished up by someone who has taken a course in Szechuan cuisine at the New School, and it's no wonder at all that a thinking person would rather spend an evening curled up in her lonely room rereading 100 YEARS OF SOLITUDE then subject herself to anything of the kind. Consequently, when I find my thoughts drifting into the realm of the

dinner party, it isn't to any dinner party that I have ever, in actual fact, attended, but to the Ideal Dinner Party, the Dinner Party Supreme, the Essence of All Dinner Parties, the Zen of Dinner Parties, in short, the Dinner Party that I myself would throw given unlimited funds, several weeks worth of spare time, and a set of circumstances most generally associated with the more lunatic collections of fairy tales. I close my eyes (actually not a bad idea in the shower in any event) and begin to think and think and dream and plan...

The table is set with the sort of dinnerware guaranteed to intimidate anyone short of the original Queen Elizabeth (as I have noticed, over many uncomfortable years of attending this sort of thing, that 9/10 of successful hostessing is the convincing of ones guests that one is just slightly more knowledgeable about gracious living than are they. Since, in all honesty, I can't tell a piece of Waterford from a piece of pizza at ten paces, I have cannily neglected to invite anyone who can, including both the original Queen Elizabeth and my mother, and, therefore, the snobbishness of my tableware remains unchallenged), the linen is Irish (I do, for your information, happen to know what that looks like, having once been presented with a handkerchief made of same, in circumstances which are none of anybody's business, by a vacationing member of the I.R.A.), the meal is being served by the cast of the downstairs portions of MASTERPIECE THEATRE's production of UPSTAIRS, DOWNSTAIRS (using the upstairs half would have been classier, I realize, but then one runs the risk of hitting all manner of trouble with unions and things), and the guests sit in a buzz of happy anticipation of the pleasures of the feast to come.

And, with all modesty, I must say that no one has any occasion to be disappointed. Having disgarded, with no regret whatsoever, the previously mentioned New School Szechuan (for reasons too obvious to need elaboration) and its counterpart, Quick'n'Easy Kuisine (because, even in a fantasy, it requires rather more of a suspension of disbelief than I can manage to see myself spraying Cheez-Whiz on a Ritz and expecting people to consume the results), I have opted for catering. Not, however, ordinary catering, which leans heavily towards either French food (a thing, I am firmly convinced, that no one really likes. They only pretend to like it because it gives them the opportunity to say "pampelmousse flambe" in public) or little tiny things on toothpicks (tolerable during the party itself but slightly less than jolly when one discovers a petrified pig-in-a-blanket hiding amongst the sofa cushions several weeks afterwards), depending on the budget and whimsey of the party giver, but the sort of catering that requires an intimate knowledge of the things people truly do like to eat, as opposed to what they eat in restaurants where there's a good chance the maitre d' is laughing behind their backs. As such, the night before the party, I personally dispatched a runner, via plane, to Kansas City, to bring back several dozen orders of Arthur Bryant's barbequed ribs, and one to San Francisco to acquire a gallon or two of Bud's ice cream, while, the afternoon of the party itself, one of the footmen popped down to Greenwich Village to obtain a quantity of the Pink Teacup's fried chicken and biscuits, the butler went to Coney Island for Nathan's french fries, and the cook - who, under the circumstances didn't really have anything else to do - to Yonah Shimmel's on the Lower East Side for an assortment of knishes. With that split second timing available only in fantasies and re-runs of THE DUKES OF HAZZARD, all portions of this moveable feast arrive, piping hot (except for the ice cream, which is piping cold) at precisely the moment they're wanted (although one runner had a bit of trouble getting the ribs through the metal detector, and the butler ate half the fries while caught between stations on the IND) and all the guests are awestruck by my thoughtfulness and planning. And so the festivities begin.

"Well", says Soviet Premier Chernenko, seated to my right and doing justice to a chicken breast, to Presidential hopeful "Fritz" Mondale, seated to my left and moodily chewing a rib, "We seem to have really gotten you back in this matter of the Olympics, eh, Comrade?" He chuckles deeply, spattering grease.

"What do you want from me?" mutters "Fritz", while Gary Hart whistles CALIFORNIA DREAMING softly, in between bites. "Did I tell you to invade Afganastan? Well, did I? Did you see me out there with a megaphone yelling 'Hey Commies, come on down?'"

"It was YOUR boss who boycotted our Olympics, wasn't it?" sniffs the Premier. "Pass the ketchup, please. And I didn't invade Afganastan. That was MY boss. Besides, it's got nothing to do with that. We can't have every marathon runner suddenly losing his mind and deciding to join your decadent culture in the middle of Bloomingdale's, can we?"

"Oh, Bloomie's is nothing anymore", says Cynthia Heimel, delicately picking the onions out of her potato knish. "Completely nothing. Anyway, it's in New York, Connie sweetheart. If one of your marathoners wanted to defect he'd have to do it in the Galleria, and that's just too outre, I'm so sure. If you see what I mean."

"I don't think the Galleria is outre" pipes up Calvin Klein, who wasn't actually invited, but tagged along with Andy Warhol. "If you want to talk about outre, that tacky thing you're wearing, Cynthia darling..."

"This whole conversation is meaningless", snaps Jean-Paul Sartre, from the far end of the table. (Death being considered slightly gauche, all the dear departed have been seated well below the salt.) "What do vain, frivolous nothings matter in the face of..."

"Perme ta bouche", says Simone de Beauvoir, from her place in the middle. "Cherie, you were arrogant and pushy when you were alive, and you're worse now. Anni, what do you call these marvelous little potatoes?"

"French fries", I mumble, beginning to feel as though things are getting away from me just a trifle.

"Which of course is a misnomer", says Edwin Newman, "As they

cont'd next page, Column 2

THREE FROM THE SHELF *by Kris Gilpin*

Pandemonium, now on cable TV, was filmed under the title Thursday the 13th (not to be confused with the flat Saturday the 14th) around three years ago, shown to test audiences and subsequently never released theatrically. Directed by Alfred Sole—who made the interesting horror Alice, Sweet Alice and Tanya's Island, a Beauty-and-the-Beast tale so stupid it too was shelved—Pandemonium is an uneven spoof of teen-kill films with many more misses than hits.

Tom Smothers stars as a Mountie, on his horse even in his office, who's investigating a series of murders at a local high school; Pee Wee Herman gets the most consistent laughs as Tom's sidekick who's always dishing out verbal abuse to Bob, Smothers' horse. And how director Sole was able to waste so many people (Tab Hunter, Sidney Lassick, Richard Romanus, et al.) in unfunny cameos is the biggest mystery of all (Eileen Brennan is billed only as "A Friend" in the credits—I can't blame her if she was embarrassed by this flick).

The cute killings here include: Judge (Fast Times at Ridgemont High) Reinhold's death scene, which is so intentionally outrageous and stupid it's funny (his frantic cries help make the sequence work); a javelin which flies along corridors and pierces a line of cheerleaders; and Debra Lee Scott, who knocks on a door with a megaphone through her back. And Eve Arden, as a prison warden, gets the home-made Gas Chamber: she's locked in a toilet with a fat convict and a huge plate of beans. Also, the girl who plays Mandy, the head cheerleader who brushes her teeth repeatedly with mounds of toothpaste, makes for a good, effective airhead (sings, "I'm going to get you, Mr. Tooth Decay!").

There are some amusing moments in Pandemonium, but it is mostly bad, broad humor; however, for novelty's sake, it may be worth one sitting in front of the tube for some.

Filed in 1981 and barely released anywhere, if at all (I caught it too on cable), Full Moon High stars Adam Arkin as a high-school football hero who moonlights as a werewolf who never grows old and has fleas. This proposed comedy was written and directed by Larry Cohen, a modern schlockmeister who made the It's Alive killer baby movies and Q. All this one lacks are the laughs.

Ed McMahon is embarrassing as Arkin's father (says McMahon to two female Rumanians in his bedroom, "Let's find out what communist infiltration is all about!"); luckily for him he's not in the film for very long (he does hang around long enough, though, to feed a dog a can of Alop, which he pitches as if he were still on The Tonight Show). Also on hand, to no good avail, are Louis Nye, Kenneth Mars and Desmond Wilson.

Full Moon High is very reminiscent of those fast-paced, adolescent Crown International teen comedies and, like those, is from the Overblown School of Comedic Filmmaking. The funniest bits are when Arkin declares, "This is worse than root canal!" during his metamorphosis; a headline which reads WEREWOLF ANNOYS COMMUNITY; and an in-class atomic bomb drill (all the students crouch under their desks). But almost all the humor is along the lines of this other headline: WOLFGMAN EATS CHINESE/30 MINUTES LATER, HUNGRY AGAIN.

Adam's often-brilliant father, Alan, can't even save this as a Doctor of Insultory Psychology, although he actually earns some laughs amidst the silliness.

Possibly Larry Cohen's worst film (which says very little for it), Full Moon High's the perfect candidate for cable.

Shelved since late '82, comedy writer/director/actor Bruce (The First Nudie Musical, a good little film) Kimmel's Space-ship is now on (you guessed it) cable television. Originally entitled The Creature Wasn't Nice, this Creature Feature parody was made for under \$2 million and stars Cindy Williams (also late of First Nudie Musical) as the U.S.S. Vertigo's morale officer (!); the always-good Gerrit (Phantom of the Paradise, Used Cars) Graham as the horny, wise-assy Second-in-Command (Leslie Nielsen is the ship's captain); Patrick (The Avengers) MacNee as the Vertigo's science officer; and Kimmel as "John-Boy", the spaceship's apprentice/nerd.

The cheap-looking sets and production values are all part of the visual joke, and the actors generally bring what laughs there are to the mostly-adolescent script (Cindy and Bruce have a great screaming scene; and the creature sings a song called, "I Want To Eat Your Face"). The film also has

(Ackner cont'd.)

originated, not in France but..."

"Well hell, who cares?" asks Henry Miller jovially. "They're here now, aren't they, and that's the main thing—just enjoy them, old man, and don't worry where they came from. Good company, good food, beautiful women..."

"Ha, I wondered when you'd get to that part of it," snorts Susan Brownmiller. "Pornographic, paternalistic..."

"Jesus", sighs Henry. "Lighten up", and tosses a biscuit in her direction. Unfortunately, it misses its mark and hits Kate Millet instead, who takes it as a challenge and pitches a drumstick right back at him. Anais Nin, outraged, picks up the fray, not to mention an exceptionally well-sauced rib, and beans Truman Capote, who responds with a strong right to the jaw of Jack Kerouac and, put delicately, all hell breaks loose.

It is at this point, with the forces of Life and Death fighting it out across the dinner table, that I usually, much to my relief, run out of hot water, or trip on one of the flotilla of wash rags my father keeps in the bathtub to ward off large, hairy spiders, or contrive to get soap in my eyes, and the dream melts with as much finality as almond chocolate ice cream on the head of King Karl Gustav of Sweden. I emerge from the shower, shaken, dripping, and prunelike, and contemplate the fact that, with any sort of luck at all, there will always be nice, hot showers, there will always be time to take them and, if I really play my cards right, there will always be dinner parties that are someone else's problem, and from which I can make a graceful exit when the conversation takes one of Those Turns. For this, is for nothing else, I am deeply grateful.

MRS. WEED

by John Karasch

I squeeze through the kitchen window
let in my elderly neighbor
who's again locked herself out
in the dust-swept afternoon.

Puckered like some stringy
largemouthed bass
she creaks open the refrigerator
pats past her premium beers
for one of the cheapos
advertised at the Walgreen drugstore.

Worm-veined hand round my drippy reward
she suggests sometime soon I shinny
onto the roof
tinker with the antenna.

Beside the two-burner stove
she farts loudly—
supposes she's squeaking them out.
"I'M GOING UP ON THE ROOF" I holler.

Who knows
someday such incontinence
may rule my own house.

THE LETTER AFTER Z
(for Gerry Reith)

by Ed Lawrence 5/30

A letter
is a lighthouse which pulses
with the rhythm of my flesh
A letter
is a lightning bolt
which skewers the sky
with the current of my soul
A letter
is a scarecrow
which sways in the winds of creation
a secret ally
to those birds of vision
whose call incites the grain to ripen
A letter
is the slit in the stream of consciousness
which slowly accumulates into a delta
a piece of land on which to stand, leap or dance
an archipelago surrounded by a sea of stars
I discover in these letters
the priceless gems with which to stuff my mouth full
the words which say more to me than I said with them

Fantasies Fulfilled

Voodoo occult bulwarks from the hidden swamplands of Dallas, "Where we teach people to shoot presidents and people who shoot presidents."

HELP
Keep America beautiful!
Wear underralls while scrapping fixed wages, winnerless wars, unemployment and death a la Brainbeau.
Send SASE to:
AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL
Box 2243, Youngstown, Ohio, 44504

a funny, Carrie-like ending. Kimmel always films with a pleasant, unpretentious style, which makes this O.K. spoof watchable.

WHEN I FIGHT AUTHORITY... by Mike Gunderloy

Darkness falls abruptly over the titanium towers of the gleaming city. It is eight o'clock, end of the "recreation period" (Oh sorry name for group production rallies!), and time for all families to retire indoors. The stars are masked by the overscreen and the corridor lights come on, illuminating in soft blue-white the bovinely placid features of the human sheep walking with measured pace back to their identical apartments. It is all I can do to stay concealed, but I control myself. This gag will not be spoiled by bad timing or faulty delivery.

How can I explain to you our world of 2387? Poverty has been abolished, along with disease, religion and sexual excess. The human race has been systematically tuned into a well-oiled machine, its interchangeable cogs fitting smoothly into the industrial behemoth which produces everything from starships to toothpaste. Only one thing does it not produce, and that is laughter.

Emotions are bad, decreed the social scientists years ago. Emotional people make improper decisions and do not do as they should. Laughter is the most insidious of emotions, a horrible cackling which warps the mind and encourages people to mock their society and their leaders, to ask questions, to rebel. Therefore, said those men of ultimate reason, let us drug the food and water and ban the joke books. And so they did. But despite their best efforts, there are still those few of us who differ from the enforced norm, slinking around in the dark alleys behind the monolithic social facade. I say "us" though I do not know any others, for by the very nature of things one must stay hidden to be a Stainless Steel Clown on a world without resort hotels.

At last the corridors are clear and the lights dim even further, for the prowling watchbots need little light and it would be wrong for society to waste it. I check my reflection in the window one more time, making sure my putty nose is securely in place, before stepping from my hiding place. My two-foot-long shoes flop on the concrete floor, the noise echoing hollowly down the hall. Immediately there is the whirring sound of a watchbot coming to investigate the doings of an abnormal citizen. I know it will have its blasters at ready, for it was long ago established that the deranged have no right to disturb society. I must work fast.

Pulling the tab to the helium cylinder, I inflate the balloons with a tremendous rush of gas. They fly to the ceiling, dragging the fine wire net with them. Trailing from its base are a pair of wires, plugged into a power socket in the utility cubicle from which I emerged. I reach in and flip the switch on as the watchbot clears the corner. Now my timing must be precise. As it spots me I grasp my throat and gesticulate wildly, miming strangulation. The watchbot's humane programming overrides its shooting instincts and it rushes forward, lowering its six arms slightly. When it is nearly touching the net, my right hand drops into my pocket and squeezes the bulb there. A burst of water from my boutonniere grounds the watchbot and the net, and there is a glorious flash of sparks before the lights go out. I smile in the dark as I grope for the candle in the cubicle.

As I had hoped, the watchbot is quite dead. I disentangle it from the now harmless net and set to work. Soon the shell of the watchbot is eviscerated and I am hidden inside. My shoes show beneath the metal skirting but I hope no one will notice as I waddle down the corridor towards the main computer for the gleaming city. Oh, what a joke this shall be! The watchbots, programmed to deal only with the average citizen, the "mean" if I may be so blunt about it, are no match for my subterfuge. I gain access to the central core almost before I've had a chance to gloat over my victory.

The computer sits in lofty silence, lights flashing across its gargantuan face and faxes spilling from a myriad slots into a myriad bins. This is the twisted soul of our society. The very antithesis of laughter, it toils ceaselessly to stamp out my ilk. I approach in my beryllium shell, moving nonchalantly towards an input slot. The computer takes no notice until I am nearly there and throw off the top of the watchbot. Instantly, a thousand alarms ring and a hundred watchbots come pouring in from as many doors. But it is too late for them. My boutonniere is aimed precisely, and nearly a quart of water goes down the slot before they seize me and drag me away.

The Sidewinder by Red Woolf

This is a piece of postal equipment many LJ readers may not know about! Basically, it's rectangular and has four wheels and can be pushed or pulled—so you get the picture of what it does and is for. But the description does not stop there. First, as to its appearance: it is made of steel and nylon—rows of steel "bars" of rolled and flattened sheet metal, horizontally, connected by a few vertical rods. Now it's sort of in an upper and lower half, the two halves separated by two steel frames, hinged in roughly the same place, and two webworks of interlaced nylon bands, attached to the opposite (front) side in the same place as each other (the unattached end of the lower steel frame). The lower frame is a frame only, while the other contains a grid of small steel rods interwoven roughly like the nylon ones on the lower frame, or, rather, as some of the older staffers would say (as they would say, "or, rather," not what I'm about to complete the sentence with, except that the comma will go outside the parenthesis), attached to it. Now these nylon webworks can sort of "close" the front of the object by being pulled up and down respectively and latched by means of a rectangular loop of wire that fits over a rectangular protrusion to which it is secured by something I can't exactly remember visually, but rather tactily. That is, you sort of kick it and stomp on it and cuss at it when you want to get it open. That's the bottom one. The top one is attached to square protrusions with angular metal pieces hinged to them.

When you've gotten as much mail as you can out the top (and up off the floor where it invariably spills), then you'll want to swing up the two frames, which are always too bent out of shape to budge without more heaving and cussing, then they latch to two spring clips on the back, which it won't reach because the nylon webworks are in the way (remember the webworks?), so you sort of give them both a flying toss hoping they'll clear the top of the whole works and not back on you because each of them contains a heavy steel bar at the end, to which the various attaching devices are themselves attached. Then you clip it (them) in place [Unclipping them is fun too because, of course, they have to be both unclipped at the same time, with your two hands, so that they come breezing down past, or on, your head!] and start kicking at the bottom devices. When you succeed, most of the rest of the mail then spills on the floor.

Now you may be wondering why it's called a "Sidewinder". Well, it follows a unique sort of set of paths along its way. On one end there's a spring-hinged yellow sort of handle attached to the bottom; opposite that there's a lever which you can switch to "swivel" or "lock". In the "swivel" position, all the wheels swivel, so the best way to dance with it is to sort of waltz it around where you think you hope it will finally end up. In the "lock" position, either one or two wheels lock in place and that changes the picture altogether. Well, you'd just have to see it moving; I find it's one of those things words were not invented to cover, and it would be unfair to try to make them.

They say visitors from Japan like to tour the bigger post offices and snicker about what they see. They think it's bizarre that the LSM sorts letters into trays you have to carry instead of directly to the cases. I wonder if they have anything like a sidewinder there. Maybe they don't need it. Personally, I think it's one of the most wonderful things I ever saw. I'd rather not do without it than not need it.

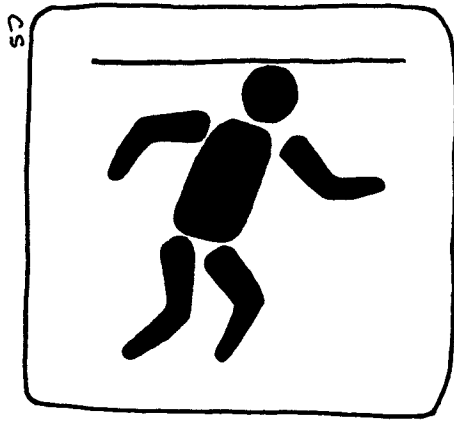


The computer is not stopped, only damaged, and its panel lights have turned angry shades of red. Steam rises from the violated input port, and grinding noises come from deep inside its bowels. Some of the fax slots are inhaling their output, others are spewing film all over the floor. I am triumphant—this is the cap of my career. Regardless of what they do to me, this is the funniest sight I have ever beheld. Clutched in titanium claws, I can still throw back my head and laugh.

Or rather, I try to. Only a harsh croaking escapes my lips, echoing even above the sirens which still howl. I do not eat of their food but yet I must drink the water, and the drugs must be there too. My screams rise as I realize that I feel no elation, that the hoped-for release has been denied me once again. I am no more free than the rest of the robots, both metal and protein.

It is a loud and phony thing to be a Stainless Steel Clown in a city with no resort hotels.

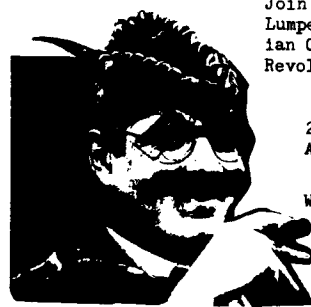
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TV Fall Preview

by Deborah Benedict, Couch Tomato

"I wanna watch television."—Dennis the Menace

"You know I watch that rotten box until my head begins to hurt."

—Frank Zappa

The new television shows will be just as daring, innovative, exciting and inspiring as applesauce with pork. But most people will watch them anyway, because they can't afford really interesting drugs. Here is a list of the "best" new tv stuff.

Made-For-TV Movies:

BABY YOU CAN DRIVE MY CAR—Docudrama about John DeLorean - starring James Brolin as a rather sluggish DeLorean, and the beautiful but unessential Morgan Fairchild as Christina Ferrare. Cars by Matchbox. Sponsors: Memorex, Sony, RCA.

THE MAKING OF MICHAEL JACKSON—TV bio about the conception and birth of the popular hemi-semi-demi-god; featuring the night his parents actually did it and the circumstances thereof - they had veal for dinner that night and also consumed a vast quantity of Vanilla Wafers with Goofy Grape Happy Face drink. The sheets were Cannon's Misty Lilac pattern. Mrs. Jackson: Ruby Dee. Mr. Jackson: Byron Allen. Baby Michael by Carlo Rinaldi.

Sponsors: Pepsi, Fruit of the Loom socks, Afro Sheen Hair Care Products.

Other Movies:

A lot of movie biographies are scheduled for 1985 - there will be a movie bio about Victor Mature, starring Rick Springfield; a movie bio of Robert Stack, starring Lee Majors; a movie bio of Richard Burton, starring John Vernon.

New Series: Non-Fiction, Sort Of...

WHAT MAKES AMERICA SO GOSHARNED SPECIAL?—Lyle Waggoner and Joyce DeWitt are the hosts for this show filmed everywhere in the USA...from the farmlands of Iowa to the big cities of Nebraska, it offers a panorama of American life...unlike *Real People*, it does not try to find weird stuff, but instead concentrates on American thoughts, lifestyles and bad habits. Tonight, interviewed in New Orleans: Negro people talk about their lives; in Bar Harbor, Florida, an aging socialite discusses her shopping habits; and in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the cameras record an evening at the only cowboy opera house in the world. Sponsors: All the big car companies.

THE WOOSIE KIDS—A team of inept teenagers fooling around with a radio-active Etch-a-Sketch accidentally come up with the secret of eternal life and try to decide whether they should tell their parents. This show will be about as successful as Anita Bryant giving Harvey Fierstein a hard-on.

THE BAXTER FROBISHER SHOW—Ingratating, unctous, mediocre "entertainer" Baxter Frobisher staggers through this half-hour "variety" show of music, dance, comedy and the upstaging of his guests. Premiere show: Baxter sings "Seasons in the Sun", "Honey" and a medley of Jim Webb and Mac Davis tunes in his annoying, reedy tenor. He welcomes Andrea McArdle, but doesn't let her do anything. A tasteless comedy skit spoofing *Chariots of Fire* called "Carry Outs of Fire", about a Vietnamese restaurant, is worth watching only for Gaylord Sartain's bit as a smarmy customer.

Sponsor: Spook Unlimited Enterprises.

THE SUSAN ATKINS GOSPEL JUBILEE—Born-again-and-again ex-Manson Family convicted murderess Susan Atkins is the preacher-hostess for this half-hour show of inspiration, music and the spreading of The Word. Susan, an ordained minister in the Church of Jesus the Naive Nazarene, preaches on the value of adaptability and the meaning of the phrase, "four walls do not a prison make". The Death Valley Dementation is A State of Mind Dune Buggy Choir sing: "How Mighty Is His Sword In My Side", "Herod Was A Cheatin' Man", and "Just 'Cause I Love Jesus Don't Mean I'm A Square". Special Guest: Charlene Tilton

Situation Comedies:

LITTLE GUYS—Details the woes of short fellas in our society. Paul Williams stars as Stubby Benny, an unsuccessful Las Vegas style comic who is reduced to playing at abandoned gas stations. Sandy Baron stars as Sky Glider O'Frazzle, an expert hang glider and president of an escort service for ex-nuns. In the first episode, the two meet when

Benny signs up as an escort for Sister Mary Cappuchino, now known as Babs McKeever. But Benny's plans to take Babs to an all-night Pinball Motel and Lapidary Shop are met with resistance by O'Frazzle. Comedy ensues - or so the producers of this show insist. They all become pals, anyway, in one of those "warmth" scenes tv is pushing so hard lately, and are soon planning on making Stubby Benny "as big a star as Jimmie Walker". Babs: Cassie Yates. Desk Clerk: Don Knotts. Ma Skeedle: Nancy Walker.

SHE'S OUR GIRL—Sitcom from Just Banal Productions stars Squire Fridell and Moses Gunn as brothers who are retired hopscotch champions. They have a 16-year-old roommate, Heather Tiffany Kim, played by Debby Dinkley, who has two pet tarantulas, Mabel and Ralph. In the first episode, Fridell and Gunn convince Heather Tiffany Kim to disguise herself as a rabbi when their mother visits, but Mabel and Ralph escape and the laughs finally begin. Mom: Ruth Gordon. Tarantulas trained by Mildred Neptune.

P.D. AND THE PEANUT—Sitcom featuring the Pillsbury Doughboy and Mr. Peanut as roommates. The first episode involves P.D. trying to convince a neurotic Mr. Peanut that Plantars Warts are not caused by his product. A series of desperate and marginally humorous attempts are made to prove to Mr. P that he is not responsible for this ailment; the comedic climax is when P.D. gets stuck on a merry-go-round and starts whirling into a gigantic pretzel... Pillsbury Doughboy: James Coco. Mr. Peanut: Jeff Goldblum. Merry-Go-Round Operator: Billy Grey.

OH HOWARD!—Howard Cosell stars in his own show, playing himself. A loud-mouthed nudge with a heart of tungsten, he is an undertaker by profession. He lives in the funeral home with his wife, Mamie (played by Marjorie Lord) and his three crazy teenage kids, all played by mediocre unknowns. In the first episode, a practical joker gets Howard real mad when he spray-paints stencils of Alfred E. Newman all over the tops of all the coffins.

Dramatic Series:

THE BOO RADLEY SHOW—Spinoff on "To Kill A Mockingbird" from Jitney Brothers Productions picks up where the novel left off. In the first episode, Boo, played by Timothy Hutton, tries to buy some oranges at the local market, but a smart aleck clerk (Don Stroud) and a redneck produce manager (Bo Hopkins) make this a traumatic experience for Boo. "Yew shure yew want oranges?" Stroud taunts. "Yew shure yew don't want some dead squirrels, heh heh?" But Scout Finch, played by Michael Jackson, intervenes and befriends Boo again, taking him to a nearby Orange Julius and advising him to shop at her brother Jem's store, Finche's Foodarama. Young Boo Radley: Robert Duval. Jem Finch: Howie Mandel.

ELMIRA GULCH, HER LIFE AND TIMES—Drama series based on the mean and wicked witch of the east and what her life was really like as a school-teacher in rural Kansas. Starring Valerie Harper as the frustrated spinster. We learn that a doomed love affair with a flypaper salesman made Elmira bitter and misanthropic. We see her at home, compulsively washing herself with Lava soap; at school, punishing her students by making them lick the linoleum floor clean. We learn that she gives chicken innards to trick-or-treaters on Halloween. But we also see the soft side to Miss Gulch when she has too many glasses of Kahlua and Drambuie Punch at the Annual Teachers Party. No good guest stars.

THE CATKINS—Ted Turner's network produces this adult soap opera about a feud between two families: The Catkins, Catkinville's most influential family, industry leaders in the manufacture of soft stop watches; and the Fellatios, their Italian rivals in business and love. The cast is much too long and unknown to list. Scripts are written by the 4th Grade Class of the Atlanta School for Exceptional Marmosets.

Children's Shows:

BIG BEAUTIFUL BALLOON IN A REALLY BLUE SKY WITH RAINBOWS (A Kiddieat Ivytoot Production)—Children's variety show blends entertainment and education. First show features a children's pop group from Yugoslavia, The Croatian Candy Cane. They sing "Three Little Fishes" to the reggae beat of a trash drum. Also, magic tricks from guest star Dick Cavett, who makes his own series disappear, and a visit from Smokey the Bear's older brother Seymour, who tells stories of their childhood in Flat-bush, reveals Smokey's real name and candidly discusses his brother's cocaine problem. Live audience competes for prizes in celebrity film clips guessing game. This week's celebrity: Edy Williams.

FINDING FREEDOM

by Kerry Thornley

CHAPTER FOUR: HIGH ADVENTURE

Already the elation of the open road was with Quent, as he went sailing up Dale Maybry on his bike—toward the gas station near the interstate where Jake Washington worked.

Creaking and wobbling, the old bicycloe seemed ready to collapse as Quent peddled up to the lift in the garage where Jack was changing a tire on a late model Chevy.

"Figure I can leave my bike here again?"

"What's it worth to you," Jake cracked out of the corner of his mouth.

"A couple numbers."

"All right! Wait up and I'll smoke one with you."

"Where's your boss at?"

"Off somewhere pulling a truck out of a ditch," Jake said, turning from his work and wiping his hands.

"They've poisoned the water; they've chopped up the trees. Jehoshaphat's daughter! I'm down on my knees," blared Metallic Medford from the radio in the office of the Sun Rise Oil Company station. "The price of survival! How much will you pay? The price of survival goes up every day..."

After sitting his pack on the desk, Wimpel took from a side pocket a pen light containing no batteries, but filled instead with a number of tightly rolled joints.

They lit up. Jake looked at him and asked, "Where you headed?"

"No particular place."

"Hell, I've always found most places mighty particular."

Quent opted to ignore that one. "Every other time I've hitched I've always been going somewheres or running from something. This time it's for the sake of the journey, not the destination. Last time, when I hiked up to Washington, I promised myself next time I hit the road it would be with no deadline, no place to go—just high adventure."

Jake snorted but did not say anything. He was not a romantic.

A taciturn man who seldom replied to anything but always felt free to ask questions of others, Jake Washington enjoyed the honor of being the first person Wimpel ever decided was an agent. Ratty, runty and scraggly-bearded, Jake didn't look like a James Bond type—but then they never do. A trench coat and bold jaw would hardly comprise suitable cover.

What Jake looked like, it suddenly now struck Wimpel, was a hillbilly—sitting there with his pinched-up scowl waiting for revenuers.

"How's your song comin'?" Quent asked.

Jake brightened and reached behind the counter to drag out his battered guitar.

"I'll let you decide for yourself," said Jake with a preliminary strum. "Morgan Hill was a gambler; on good soil did he live. For he loved the woman who owned the town, such wealth had she to give. He shuffled his cards and snapped his brim and took one look around. Then he strolled with a loping gait to the darker end of town. He made his way to the Silver Inn with a leather pouch of gold, to knot his scarf and walk right in and catch the dealer cold. Morgan Hill was a gambler who didn't mind a loss; his old lady owned the town and she knew who was boss."

Letting the accompaniment trail off, Jake said, "That's all there is so far. It's from a true story, though. When I was ridin' freights in California I passed through a town called Morgan Hill. Asked somebody which hill was Morgan Hill. They said, 'Hell, son, Morgan Hill was a gambler.' Meh. Only trouble is I don't know anything else about him, except they say the woman who owned most of the property there named the town after her boyfriend."

"Wow," Wimpel said, "I wonder what would happen if you sent their Chamber of Commerce a copy of the lyrics?"

"Sh-i-i-i-it," Jake said with a snort that made Quent feel very unhappy. "Chambers of Commerce throw people like me in jail for vagrancy."

Not willing to let on that he felt as put down as Jake did, Wimpel persisted with, "They might make it their municipal anthem, though. Hell, man, a break like that would get you the ear of a record company executive. Or maybe you think rock'n'roll ain't commercial?"

"Bull pussy," was all Jake offered in rebuttal—enough to silence Quent.

Wimpel comforted himself with the thought that Hake Washington would have been a misfit in the Flower Power era. Not only was his frizzy brown hair greasy, including his unkempt goatee, but he usually smelled like he needed a bath. Nobody understood things like that anymore—that hippies were cleanly until Time and Newsweek began characterizing them as unwashed, thereby attracting every crud in the country to the counter-culture.

"You're Bogarting that joint," Jake put in, just as Quent was about to conjure up a kind thought of forgiveness.

"Sorry. Here, keep it. I've been smokin' all mornin' long. Anyhow it's time for me to hit the meatgrinder."

"See ya when I see ya."

"Yeah."

(NEXT: CHAPTER FIVE: THE MEATGRINDER)

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THE TAKEOVER

by Susan Packie

The voices emanating from the War Room were hushed, controlled. "Then you really feel that a Communist takeover of the island is imminent?"

"Absolutely. Weapons are being stockpiled at a number of strategic locations. Movement in and out of the island is increasing daily. Leaflets advocating political change have been found in urban areas. There are rumors of youth camps, firearms training, Commie indoctrination classes. The females are all wearing the same red scarves. It's the old scenario."

"But you can't tell me the name or location of the island?"

"No, I'm afraid not. Too many Americans are vacationing and conducting business there. Don't want to cause any panic on the home front, do we? Heaven forbid we should have another Grenada."

"Then this is a Caribbean country?"

"We'll get our people out at night, maybe by submarine. Airlifting them might be risky. There are friendly nations nearby. Once they reach these countries, they can board regular commercial airline flights and return home. Actually, we don't care what they do after they get out, as long as they leave."

"You think our citizens could be held hostage?"

"A number of young American tourists are wearing red scarves."

"I see. Is there anything else I should know?"

"This island—it has the capability of manufacturing nuclear weapons powerful enough to send the North American continent into orbit."

"Are you sure our military personnel can handle this mission?"

"They've seen Grenada. They've seen Beirut. They can handle it."

The operation took two weeks to complete. Only the highest officials knew where the submarines and the soldiers were being sent. They communicated with their captives using sign language. Whatever they spoke was unintelligible to normal, red-blooded Americans.

The island's economy was a shambles. How had the place managed to exist with such high unemployment, such inefficiency? Even before the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines invaded, riots seared through the streets, leaving entire cities devastated.

But the real people, God bless them, were fanatically pro-American. They wore sweatshirts with pictures of U.S. Presidents stamped on the back and burst into "America the Beautiful" at the least provocation. They loved us!

American aid was poured into the country. American teachers were sent to reprogram those who had strayed into the Red camp. After a secret plebiscite, it was decided to make the island the fifty-first state.

But what island was this? That bit of information was still highly classified. Why would any patriotic, law-abiding subject even consider questioning the actions of his or her government? Everyone would find out in due time.

On the Fourth of July, a special flight arrived at Kennedy International Airport. Queen Elizabeth stepped out, looking not at all like her portraits—older and more haggard. Her luggage was inspected by Customs. She boarded the JFK Express.

A security agent tried to deter her. "Someone of your stature should have limousine service."

She gave him a queer look and muttered something he couldn't understand. On her suitcase was a sticker proclaiming "England - The 51st State!"

The United States of America had finally won the war.

The Switch

by Clay Geerdes

When Victor knew that his juicy Lucy was into a divorce, splitsville, he had his flack, Matthew, begin spreading tales of her weird behavior. Hell, it wasn't hard to build up an image of a nutty Lucy since she was wandering around the streets telling people she had seen visions and had learned "the way". Hadn't she stood up at Willy's birthday party one afternoon and tried to get everybody to shut up and listen to her read an entire chapter from some paperback book by some Spaniard stoned on Peyote buttons? Wasn't she seen dancing half-naked at the Lonesome Waterhole the other evening. Didn't she attack that thin pregnant Laurel in the town hall for no reason? It was a piece of cake to set Lucy up for the bughouse. Problem was, you could have said the same thing about just about anybody in Grossville. No, Victor was just covering his rear by having Matthew stire in some fresh rumors: he knew if he was going to get custody of the two boys and the girl he would have to look like the ideal Daddy in the eyes of the straight people who ran the bureaus.

For one thing, he couldn't punch her out when she attacked him. Which she did from time to time. Usually, she would try to read him a chapter from one of her books and he would fake listening while he went on raking the lawn or carving a piece of wood. He wasn't into any mystical mumbo jumbo jiveass bullshit. Victor was peasant stock. Didn't have anything in particular against the gods, if there were any, but he didn't have much for them either. He preferred letting them go their way while he went his. He had a time of it when Ellen came home from school and told him she was going to become a Christian and start going to Sunday school. Oh, yeah? Well, aren't you the one, Peaches. Now he had Jesus coming in one ear and Swami Whatchildanada in the other. Victor's reaction was to keep a loud radio or tv going all the time, neither of which he listened to, though he did look up at the tv news from time to time. It was, he figured, all a lot of horseshit, and read the boys a story about alligators in Florida.

Grossville was a tank town with no tank. People came there in the mid-sixties to avoid the hassles of city life. Before they arrived, they daydreamed about quiet walks in the country, unlocked doors, the pleasure of toking out in the evening air on the front porch with a few mellow neighbors. And some lived that way in peace, ignoring the web of gossip that held the place intact, but there were many who got entangled in that unruly web and found the country a drag. Everybody knew everyone else's business, but pretended not to. You would go in the little cafes and sit down and know that everyone there knew who you were and what you did, but none of them were about to speak to you, to include you. You could live there half your fucking life and be as ignored as a trucker who stopped in for a cup of coffee on his way to lumber country. Grossville, for all its smallness, had several tightly-knit political cliques. It was as infected with Left and Right and middle-of-the-roads as any college town.

Victor and Lucy came there to get the kids away from the violence and the drugs of the city. Well, there wasn't much violence and he didn't have to worry about the drugs while the kids were small and in his control, but as soon as Ellen became a teenager, she found that you could get all the uppers, downers, ludes, crosstops, speed, grass, acid, coke, and smack you could possibly ingest in any of the town's cafes and rock and roll bars, not to mention the front steps of the Grossville High School. More than once, Victor would make the trip down to the local jail to get his little girl and bring her home. Oh, she wasn't charged with anything. Just found drunk or stoned, sleeping in the street.

But that's a wee bit in the future.

Right now, Victor had to consider that Lucy just might win. You never knew what lawyers were going to come up with and he had more than one thing in his past that might sway a judge and cost him his house and his kids. So he had to be prepared for that and that's where Laurel came into the picture, sweet Laurel who had just inherited thirty grand from her aunt and hadn't invested it yet. Laurel was a thin girl, some thirty years younger than Victor, but that didn't bother him. His Daddy image had gotten him laid by more flower children than he could remember and he had already seen that look in Laurel's eyes. He knew she was a loner. Living over there in that cheap apartment with that crumb-bum dope dealer. He wouldn't be any trouble. As her belly got bigger, he would drift further and further away. He wasn't about to take on the responsibility of fatherhood, not him. Victor knew the punk would be long gone before Laurel went into labor.

Now he liked children. One more wouldn't make any difference around the house. But what if he lost the house?

So Victor played Daddy to Laurel. He invited her to sit on the porch and talk to him while he worked at something. He listened to all her stories, heard about her flirtation with college, her dalliance with dancing and art, the stories she had had rejected by the college magazine. He nodded and it didn't take long for Laurel to settle into Victor's sympathetic bed. Once there, she got a lot of advice. Oh, it wasn't pushy advice. Victor knew the way to catch a fly was with honey, not vinegar. He would just listen and casually suggest. One of his casual suggestions was that Laurel buy a house on the same street. It was a nice little house and it had a good yard and he would help her paint and fix things; after all, she was better off investing in a house than letting the paint and fix things; after all, she was better off investing in a house than letting that money lay in the bank where the bankers took all the interest. With a house, she could rent out a couple of rooms to students and live rent-free herself. It was also better to have the house for the coming baby. An apartment was no place for a child, coached Victor.

Who made sure he had the children with him most of the time. It wouldn't do to have them with Lucy. She was acting crazy, dangerous. Never knew when she might become violent, might hurt the children. Fact is, Lucy was hanging around the local college, attending classes, meeting new people, reading a lot of the books she had neglected in high school. Truth is, she didn't spend much time in high school anyway. She married Victor and quit school when she was 16 and after that it was mostly having babies and working at the house cooking and cleaning and sewing and planting. It was only recently that she had begun to notice that she had been working most of her life and hadn't learned much that would get her through the second half of her life. Now she was reading all these great books and she wanted everyone to know about them and what was in them. She wanted people she met to see what she was seeing. The kids wanted what they always wanted, but she had to have some time for herself so she had to tell them to step back a little, to give her some room. Was that unreasonable? Her counselor didn't think so. Her lawyer didn't either, but, he said, you would be wise to stick with the kids until your settlement.

She knew that, but it wasn't easy in practice. How could you have some time to yourself with three kids hanging around all the time?

Wasn't long before Lucy caught Victor in bed with Laurel. She didn't make a fuss about it. They had always practiced open sexuality. She had never had to give up any of her young lovers. But she knew what Victor was up to with Laurel and she didn't like it and she fought with him about it. She screamed and yelled and a few nights later picked up a teenager boy and brought him home to live with her.

Victor threw him out.

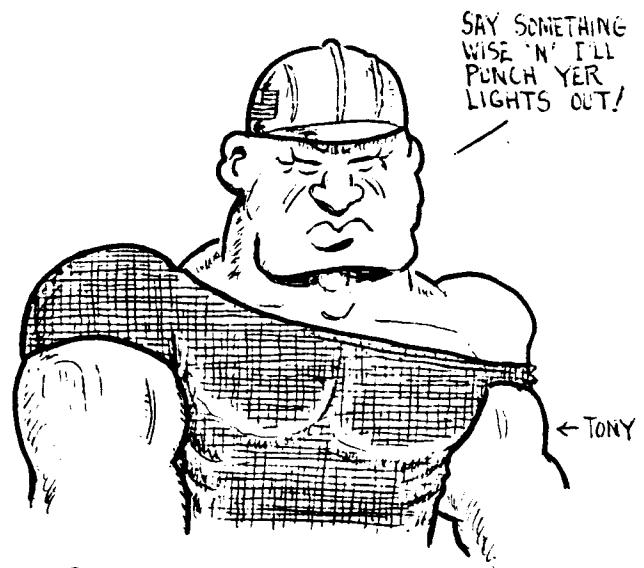
Lucy started hanging around with her boyfriend on the campus. That was fine with Victor. He just didn't want the boy around his children. They already had a father and they didn't need some wet-behind-the-ears one-night stand ordering them around the house. They knew and accepted Laurel.

Well, this story never came to any startling climax, folks. Lucy wound up living in a trailer court near town. She decided she was better off letting the kids stay with Victor, while she went back to college and got her degree. Victor's life didn't change much. He flip-flopped back and forth from his own to Laurel's house, teaching Laurel how to take care of her first baby and having her babysit his kids in return. They made a financial deal that didn't involve selling the house; after all, it was the kids' home, now they would grow up in it, graduate from school, the whole suburban trip. As time passed, Laurel grew tired of Victor and sold her house and moved away with her daughter.

He was living with a teenager when he died last year.

Lucy went on to get a couple of advanced degrees in psychology. She's teaching college now in Tempe, Arizona.

- CLAY GEERDES, May 5, 1983



SHIRLEY AND TONY WERE A PERFECT COUPLE...

**SHIRLEY LOVED "FLASHDANCE"..
TONY LOVED "FLASHDANCE"!**

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"NOTHING WOULD GET ME TO SAY THAT IF IT WASN'T TRUE"

Mike Douglas.

NOTHING EXCEPT MONEY.

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YOUNGSTOWN — OHIO, 44504

Mr. Allen's Airship

by Steven Scharf

Chapter Six - Conclusion

Lorraine woke early on what she would later jokingly refer to as "that fateful day". Through the bedroom window that opened out to the backyard, she could hear her husband talking to the air crew, preparing to take the airship on its maiden voyage. As she got dressed, she listened to Gary talking in a manner that seemed halfway between a sea captain addressing his crew and a college football coach giving his team a pep talk. Obviously, he was more excited about this adventure than anyone else involved.

After a short breakfast, Lorraine walked out to the backyard, and saw what was apparently a mini-cam crew from the local station. The camera was pointed towards Gary, dressed in a leather WW2 bomber jacket and a WW1 aviator's helmet. The cameraman was obviously not interested in the bermuda shorts and Adidas sneakers that Gary wore, as it focused on him looking up towards the sky dramatically.

"Establishing shot for a human-interest story," Lorraine muttered to herself as she walked towards the group.

Gary left the news crew and walked over to Lorraine. Her t-shirt and blue jeans made her stand out from the crowd of smartly-dressed newpeople, jump-suited crew members and the "beach-comber air ace".

"Lorraine, my dear, has Mike arrived yet?"
"Mike who?"

"Mike-Lewis-our-pilot-from-the-FAA," blurted Gary with anticipation.

With that question, the cameraman turned his camera from the slowly inflating airship to the figure walking up the driveway. Mike was dressed from head to toe in khaki, complete with paratrooper boots. He walked, almost marched, up to Gary, placed the small canvas bag he carried on the ground, and saluted, saying, "Pilot Michael Lewis reporting for duty, SIR!"

Gary blushed slightly and said, "C'mon, you nut, we've got history to make!" The two scrambled into the gondola, with Lorraine shaking her head at the whole thing. It was more than enough that the whole neighborhood would see them, but the fact that this was being taped for broadcast...

"Anything to say before you go up?" said the news announcer.

"This craft—will speak for itself!" said Gary, and waved away the news team. As they backed off far enough, Gary waved to the ground crew, and the guide ropes holding the craft down were slowly loosened. Tethered by anchored pulleys, the blimp slowly crept up into the early morning sky. Lorraine felt her stomach twinge as she saw the world below shrink. Gary felt an exhilaration that he'd never felt before. After months of hassle and frustration, he was going to ride in his "dream machine". Michael, who had piloted Goodyear blimps before, saw this as just another flight, except that it was on a much smaller, and far more enjoyable, scale.

Then at the height allowed by the ropes, the tethers were untied by Gary and Michael. A photo-strobe went off in the driveway. Apparently a neighbor wanted to record this bit of history for himself. The air crew and news team both applauded, and then raced to their respective vans to follow the ship.

The silence was broken by two propellers being driven by an old Volkswagen engine. The airship was aloft on its own power, and swayed slightly as it made its way across the neighborhood. Lorraine reached under her seat and pulled out the bag she had placed the night before, reached into it, and brought forth a small garland of flowers. A gentle toss guided the bundle, with great accuracy, to the front steps of a house below them.

"Remind me to introduce you to my wife's archery team," Michael stated.

"NED the STREET PREACHER" by Randy Maxson



As the craft eased its way through the sky, all was not well on the ground. Mrs. Patterson, clutching her terrycloth bathrobe around her, stormed out of her front door, with her husband close behind.

"Dorothy, just what is wrong?" he gestured with open hands.
"You just don't—" She stopped and turned away from him, as if performing a Shakespearian scene.
"Dorothy, all I said was that you don't have to wear so much make-up so often! I appreciate what you do and all, but it's getting to be that I have difficulty remembering what you look like without all those cosmetics." He opened his mouth to continue, but an unusual sound caused the two of them to gaze skyward. Gary's unlikely aircraft was inching its way directly overhead. The engines were cut off and there was silence for several seconds.

It was then that Lorraine shouted, "Mrs. Patterson! Catch!" Mrs. Patterson didn't even bother reaching for the object thrown to her as it drifted down; she was too fascinated by the fact that the nightmare of metal and canvas was actually floating overhead. The object came into view and then landed squarely on Mrs. Patterson's head. A small wreath of flowers was perfectly perched there, with a few stray flowers mingling with her hair. Her husband stared at her and saw, in his mind's eye, a woman in a toga, with the flowers framing her beauty.

"Robert, just what are you glaring at?"
He put his hands on her shoulders and softly said, "You, Dorothy Emmet Patterson, are beautiful."

She didn't realize the significance of the event at first, but several days later, she swore off all make-up, and started living a lifestyle that contrasted that of her neighbors. She began to tend a garden (after filling in the swimming pool), and took a night course in auto repair. Several years later, the Pattersons would sell their house, move to a rural location, and spend the rest of their happy lives running a co-op.

For now, the couple stared at each other, ignoring the news van and flight pursuit van that breezed past them. As the vans chased the blimp, the party of three within it began to talk.

"Alright now, Gary," Lorraine started, "you've got your—ship—flying like you wanted. What now?"

"Ah, my dear," Gary beamed, "'tis only the beginning. We'll go on tour with our little craft. Give lectures, write a book, maybe even get on the TODAY show!"

Michael Lewis' face began to grow pale.
"Then," gesturing with his hands to illustrate size, "we'll get money together and build a liner! Yeah, that's it! Something like the QE2 with wings! We'll play up on how beautiful and safe it is!"

Michael's jaw swung open.
"And then," leaning back with pride, "I think I'll start my own airline!"

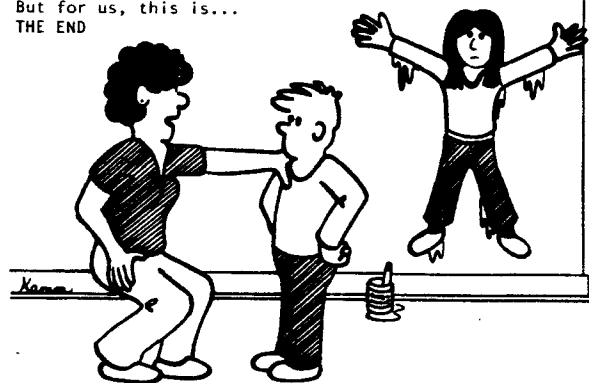
Michael swallowed in a manner that would be used as a cartoon sound effect. A sky full of bloated bags of helium. The nightmare of every air traffic controller.

"Mr. Allen, you're just kidding, aren't you?"
Gary reached under his seat, pulled out his banjo, and began to tune it.

"Aren't you?"
Gary began to play and sing "My Sweet Lorraine", the way he did when he proposed to Lorraine. She blushed and played with her hands, just the way she did those years before.

The neighbors would wonder just what was making its way into the sunrise this fine day, but it wouldn't be the last time they would see a craft similar to Gary's. There would be others to follow. Many others.

For the Allens (and the Pattersons), this was a new beginning. But for us, this is...
THE END



IT'S NOT NICE TO GLUE YOUR SISTER TO THE WALL



Wax Ink

by Rory Houchens

HUMAN'S LIB—Howard Jones (Elektra)—Already a hot property in England, Jones seems guaranteed of making himself known in the states as well with his first album of synthesizer-fueled songs of hope and equality. "New Song" may sound good on the radio every few minutes, but it barely hints at the fine material spilling forth from **HUMAN'S LIB**. "Don't Always Look At The Rain" uses cloudy synthesizers to paint a picture of boredom and lost souls, but is quick to offer advice (the title), and "Hide And Seek" is equally subdued but with a warmer, more haunting background. The sad plight of wasted opportunities/talents/abilities is explored in "Pearl In The Shell", while the title cut allows Howard to misplace all his inhibitions as he contemplates bisexual orgies, drinking to excess, and (gasp!) dancing in the street! Excellent from start to finish.

HARD TO HOLD—Rick Springfield (RCA)—Killing two birds with one record is **HARD TO HOLD**, the latest Rick Springfield album as well as the soundtrack recording from the teen heartthrob's debut movie of the same name. And not only is it the popster's best and most diverse platter, but as a bonus (?), a trio of cuts by other artists (Graham Parker, Nona Hendryx, Peter Gabriel) mysteriously pops up. Rick's offerings include "Love Somebody", a feverish, crunch 'n' munch pop ditty that would have big time rockcrits drooling over their shoes if only the little gem had been recorded by some twinkish unknowns orbiting around the great Midwest; "Don't Walk Away", a letter (and note) perfect reworking of Foreigner's greatest hits; "Bop 'Til You Drop", a likeable, if patented, attempt at funk; and "Stand Up", a meaty bit-o-filler sure to appease wobbling masses of adolescent females. If you don't care for Rick, you may want to get the album for Peter Gabriel's paean to sand, surf, sun and cleanliness, "I Go Swimming", which is available elsewhere, but who's gonna know?

ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN (Sire)—Another great record from Echo and the carrot chompers, this time in mini-lp form. "Never Stop" is introduced via rib-vibrating strings and quickly mesmerizes the whole body through a handful of patterned layers built with raindrop piano, careening guitar, and neatly trimmed percussion samples. "Rescue" sounds like the Tubes doing the Doors, and the incense-flavored "The Cutter" mixes mid-period Bowie with SGT. PEPPER-inspired raga ravings for a modern, paisley sound that could beat Duran x 2 with one hand behind its back. And don't overlook the live version of "Do It Clean" that burns with a vengeance. Nothing short of inspirational!

AND A TIME TO DANCE—Los Lobos (Slash Records, 7381 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90036)—This has to be the most playable/listenable record I've heard in months! Spiking vintage rock and roll with liberal doses of Tex-Mex and spiced up zydeco, this quartet has concocted a sound whose roots may be ancient, but whose appeal is timeless. Besides a faithful rendition of Ritchie Valens' "Come On Let's Go", the group recreates rock and roll history with blistering originals like "Let's Say Goodnight" and "Why Do You Do". "How Much Can I Do?" glues a shuffling beat onto a sprightly cajun foundation with foot stomping results, while "Anselma" and "Ay Te Dejo En San Antonio" beautifully pay tribute to Los Lobos' Mexican roots. **AND A TIME TO DANCE** is essential listening.

Filmviews

by Ken Filar

(YELLING:) It would be too easy to launch into an emotional tirade—(suddenly **THOUGHTFUL**) one that acts more as a catharsis than as an actual outletting of musing in re: the creative process—(re[p]rising first voice, **LOUDLY**) thereby giving life to a world of unexpressed (though not inexpressible) feelings that could (better—**CALMER**) sufficiently bring life to those same feelings in others instead of—(**HUMOROUS, REFLECTIVE**) "instead of": Those were the two quickest-coming words in this entire manuscript¹—creating nought but criticism.

(**CONTRITE**) But, if you understood any of the foregoing, you're further gone than we imagined—they have already gotten control of your mind—Big Brother is wringing "B's" from the bottom up on the legal pad of your psyche—and he's off to the races again—do you still follow?—sometimes so much (I just wrote so so fast that the "o" came first and then I had to backtrack to add the "s") that anyone getting anything

(continued from previous column)

but perverse satisfaction from this actual documentation of my creeping dementia is a sick puppy (and I think I'll ignore you and just go on about my business. Witches reviewing. "And what a lovely formation they've formed with their broomsticks...").

INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM

From the very first frame—when the American chanteuse Willi Smith (played to comic delirium by Kate Capshaw—and with a name like that...) takes the stage of a Shanghai nightclub (dubbed, in hasty flight, "Obiwan") for a chorus-girl extravaganza that is reminiscent of the halcyon days of Busby-Berkley musicals—you know you're off on a (glorious) romp. In case you haven't heard, this is the pre-quel to *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (with an older Harrison Ford recreating that film's hero at a younger age. [Rumor has it he's agreed to play "Indie" yet again, next time at age 13, when the fledgling archaeologist, just beginning his ascendance to fame and fortune, discovers, at an ancient space port deep within the Yucatan jungle, the flight log of a craft named "Millenium Falcon" and signed by one "Han Solo"—so we travel full circle within the Locas/Spielberg money-changer and also discover why the inside of some tomatoes are runny while others are firm.]), and being very much the progeny of every earlier action and adventure flick (ever made—ever!) does grossly resemble all of its parentage.

What else can be said about something so highly anticipated. Either you'll be delighted or you'll be deflated. In either case you will have seen what is the grandest film to fly out of Hollywood (so far) this year.²

ALPHABET CITY

This is not a great movie. In fact, from the number of cat-calls and hisses at the screening I attended, it would be safe to say that it's not even a "good" movie. I liked it nonetheless. Maybe more, for all its faults (more on those in just a moment—perhaps), Amos Poe's vision of "Lois-ada"—which we see trailing Vincent Spano's more-sensitive-than-sinister Johnny through contacts with his street people to a shooting gallery to a night club and back to his lofty wife and babe-in-arms—is dazzling and quite unlike anything I've ever seen in the part of the city for which this film was named. It is not, however, absolutely essential to portray every nitty-gritty detail as realistically as we know it to be. My first defense, when the audience began to screech—was that they would allow for fantastic (read: incredible/unbelievable) settings and escapades in a film like, well, like **INDIANA JONES** (though at the time I had not seen it), because they expect an adventure to push beyond the simple boundaries of reality to conform to some epic notion of struggle between the forces of good and evil. So why not allow this film's obvious mythic intents to override the derision at the seeming inauthenticity, and view it as another example of one man struggling against larger forces. Finally, I was far more annoyed with the closed-minded attitude of the audience that I had to screen this movie with than I was with its liberal prettifying of New York's seemier side.

At the core of both of the above films is an "old-fashioned" hero. The kind of man—for, yes, it is still always a man—who causes you to groan when he takes a chance on a humorous aside and still draws you to the very edge of your seat and gives you reason to cheer when he finally comes through and vanquishes the oppressor, rescues the victim, and sets off toward the unknown (future) at an assured lope—which brings us, slowly but surely, to Jimmy Stewart and the third (of four) Alfred Hitchcock film to reenter general release: *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. This is a thriller, of the sort that only Hitchcock could make, but I remember seeing it several years ago and found it was neither as gripping or humorous as either *Vertigo* or *Rear Window* (which is absolutely a must see, no matter what you have to do to see it), but this kind of thing could go on forever and—oh yes, Jimmy Stewart is the (get this point) king of understated heroism. Now, haven't you heard enough? Go to the movies.

¹Liar! You rewrote that sentence no less than three times before finally settling into those two words. Before "instead of" it was "than by" and before that it was "than in" and before that...

²Reported to have grossed over \$42,000,000 in its first week of release.

FURTHER ENCOUNTERS WITH MY FEET A Rebuttal of Syd Satori's "Chronicle of a Tomato Appreciator"

by Jo Aphasias

Just another typical evening at Kim's Bookstore And Deep Sea Trawler. The humor was awful, the food inedible, and most of the guests wildly intoxicated. But oh, that atmosphere. There's no place quite like Kim's on "Prawn Night" (for the uninitiated, it was one in an occasional series...to be specific, "Die Sprachschwierigkeit Festspiel: An Evening of Whim, Whining and Prawn"). I was there with my usual friends Wozzeck, Suggs, and Owen (who didn't do much, as he was usually off in a trance trying to locate Jane Austen—he wants her recipe for gooseberry tarts). He had, however, remembered to bring the music. So we sat, or rather hung, there in the cargo nets off the side of the ship listening to that underground hit "Chris D Howls Gregorian Greats" and getting wrecked, as both Wozzeck and Suggs had brought beer and neither had brought food. Still, it was great fun bouncing the empties off the heads of passing sharks. Me? I was in charge of cheap plot devices and I was behind schedule.

The party was raging merrily. Every now and again a bison would go plummeting into the water. I decided to have everyone tell a story and as the sun-like object appeared to sink in the west Suggs began.

"One dark and stormy night Jermoe went off on safari. He was looking for Pliny the Elder. It was indeed dark. And spooky. 'Proverbially unlaudamus', quoth he and dove off the continental shelf. It was a crowded shelf anyway. He hadn't been looking forward to spending the night with Heraklitos' teddy bear (who was a noted Benthamite with all the usual symptoms) and all the pookies and other plushy detritus scattered haphazard...as opposed to duques of? he felt there was a major point to be derived here but a distant sound distracted him...Besides, the spilled pop might attract roaches.

"A voice broke into his reverie. Pliny himself, as elder as ever, who then spoke (with a voice like a frog in a microchip). 'Hark! What means that anyway? Lo, it is the call to prayer. Brandish the sacred object of your choice. Computerized rosaries are all the rage. We must bow at the waist (for there is no other way) and face towards the south-east (Mecca-side). Stop fumbling with your mat. Tis astroturf anyway. Silly iconoclast! Jerome walked away. The pookies would have been more fun."

I was impressed. Owen (back from the astral recipe exchange) declared it quite indecipherable and offered Suggs a membership in the Capt. Badger Whistling Kazoo Brigade and Spy Club. Most of the time we really didn't understand Owen. Thumbs up also from Wozzeck, although she thought it too commonplace. Oh well, it was my turn anyway.

"On a dark, stormy night Ariosto awoke in a cold sweat. He knew something was amiss. Since his return from Central America several weeks earlier (he'd been there for a conference with the Sandanistas on the metrical structure of goliardic ballads) he'd been feeling rather weak. During a stroll through the jungle he'd been bitten on the neck by a three-toed sloth. He'd thought it odd at the time. He should have thought it odder.

"Lately he'd been having and forgetting many strange dreams. Visions of blood and bananas and sleeping upside down were impinging on his cortex. On the already mentioned night, as he lay there sweating through the storm, he learned the truth. Into his room came a sloth, blacker than night, standing some ten feet and wearing very nice Flemish robes.

"The sloth spoke. 'Greetings Ariosto. I am the demon prince of sloths. Know now that in the future I will be your other half. From this time forward we will exchange places each night at 11:42.1435. You will journey to my land which is, after all, almost criminally pleasant. There you may drink from fountains of chocolate egg creams and trade baseball cards with Aristarchus until you're blue in the face. Meanwhile, I shall roam the earth by night, hopping on top of passing vehicles and sleeping as they drive off to destinations unknown. I'll sleep on these cars for about three hours or 150 kms. whichever comes first. Then, in the best tradition of were-sloths the world over, I'll hop off, kidnap a nearby sheep and transform it into a Scottish restaurant. Then shall I go into the joint, consume several thousand blood puddings and charge the lot of them to either Cap Weinberger or Immanuel Kent (depending on the weather). To round off the evening I'll place a sleeping tomato on every doorstep in the region, hop on another car and sleep my way back here. Then we switch back. But, hey, isn't lycanthropy wonderful?'

"Thus did Ariosto learn of his condition. And he decided that it wasn't such a bad deal after all. It left his afternoons free and he learned much in both realms, of the binomialism of Hellenic-rules baseball, the proliferation of Caledonian restaurants, and the wicked sense of humor of your average sheep. As Oscar Wilde said (when asked by Catullus for directions to the nearest gooseberry ice cream cone), 'sometimes we get really witty and climb a tree'. Ariosto got all his best jokes from the sheep anyway."

Reactions were mixed. Suggs was pleased but didn't find it quite up to snuff. Wozzeck declared it the greatest thing since sliced iguana. Owen, however, had wandered off. I wanted to leave him be but we had to bring him out of it, for it was time for his story now.

"Twas a stormy and dark night. His acanthus-oil lantern in hand, Timon the poet slipped noiselessly from the shadowed portal of the Green Fish Inn. He didn't know how he had come to be in England. Possibly it had something to do with that book contract. Lurking in a nearby hostelry were agents of the Agape Book Co. Unaware of Timon's departure they played another hand of Sanskrit Scrabble. A fight seemed imminent as Agent Klaus was trying to play 'zweiundvierzig' as the Sanskrit for 'a long Russian novel'.

"The heavy dampness muffled the revelry within as Timon slipped once again into the night, although not into the river. That is to say he turned north hoping to find his chum Robert the Browning. 'He's such a pistol,' said Timon. 'TEN LITTLE PLATO'S indeed!' harrumphed the poet as he drifted through the fog and the night (as Tolstoy and Turgenev couldn't have said even if they'd tried with both hands).

"Timon thought it strange to have both rain and fog but knew there was nothing for it. He was feeling slightly heterotrophic and thus was taken quite aback when a large carp appeared at his feet and said, 'Tell me, Mr. Home-owner, can one feed endive to the wombats?' The poet knew the answer but didn't feel like saying.

"Thus spoke Zarathustra, 'Good on my id' (or was it ego? Nobody understood. He was speaking Aramaic)."

The party and the plot device were rapidly breaking up. No time for Wozzeck to tell a tale. Bison were flying into the sea at an alarming rate. I said a few nice things about Owen's story then crawled under my Alsatian forecasting mufti to crunch the numbers for the trip back to my place.

Having found another run in her stockings, Wozzeck was trying to find a way to blame me. I felt a Tab can bounce off my head and peeked out as three Molson's bottles and half a Twinkie narrowly missed.

"Listen," I said, "guilt won't work. I've had mine surgically removed."

She declared this response unacceptable, but before she could get really violent I spouted some nonsense about the true sounds of liberty and gave her five bucks I'd stolen from a bison.

"I still hate you, sweetie," she said.

"Either way, you're still pretty in pink."

Then we left for the library to look up 'theorbo', for wisely it is written and true: "more beer please, I'm not yet byzantine. Thank you dear, but why is that woman throwing cheese at me?"

Mad as Hell
by LARRY FIZZ



*I've never understood why people bet money on horses.
It makes as much sense as bingo in Catholic churches.*

—Amy Quantessio, Patagonia, Arizona

I'm sure that my answer will make more sense than your question, if that was a question. In 1822, a couple of monks (Chip and Thelonious) bought a pony for the children of the local mission near San Juan. They paid one dollar for it but what they got was a quarter horse. His name was Bingo and he is buried beyond the Sisters of Bliss convent in Puerto Feldman. Thus the old saying "You San Juan you San them all."

Do former athletes qualify as sports announcers?

—Duke Catalepsy, Babbitt, Minnesota
No, but retired strippers make great nannies.

Where can I buy the best hamburger in the world? No

ketchup.—R.U. Kidden, Mounds of Glory, Tennessee
What a dumb question! Clean the shit off your shoes and get a job. Then read my book The Fizz Guide to International Fast Foods, Volume One. Find page 45 where it says "Hamburgers sans tomato garnish." I can say no more.

When will the world end? Where do you buy your bow-ties?—Fulton Clipper, Inkwell, Vermont

I can answer both questions this way: None of your business.

What's your connection with Rupert Murdoch? Why are you the only holdover from issue 28?

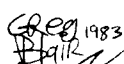
—Alice Well, Manson, California

R.M. owes his life to me, along with my last seven paychecks. I'm a hack writer, I love it, so does Rupert. Variety is the spice of life. Five will getcha ten. Better dead than red. I never had any kids. I would have liked it. Life is short in the change drawer. Let's all go down to The BlueCat Lounge and beat up some unemployed people. Was that enough of an answer for you?

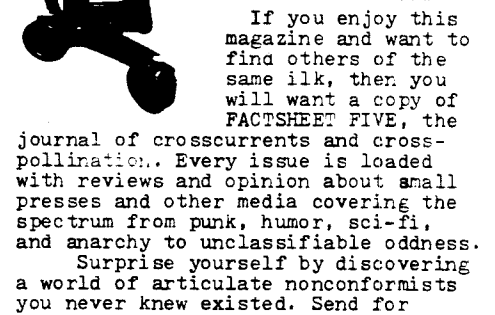
Why is everything made in Japan? What effect does this have on the American labor force?

—Perry Winkle, Conceit, Utah

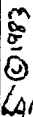
Listen, you lackwit, there are thousands of things made right here in the United States, even in your alleged realm known as Utah. American workers, just this month, have produced over 4,000 pounds of instant potatoes and close to one billion party balloons. I suppose you never quite got the words to the national anthem, did you?



Two-panel comic strip by Rudy Purnomo '89. Panel 1: A man holds a bottle of 'PAIN EXPELLER'. Panel 2: A snake is wrapped around his neck, and he looks shocked.



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TALK SHOW HOST

CONFIDENTIAL by Michael Dobbs

Do you ever get embarrassed about your job? How many times have you met someone on the street who used to live in your building or went to school with you and about the first thing they ask is "whatcha doing now"? Well, if you've had to resort to going out on a date with the guy or buying him or her a drink just to change the subject, then I hope I can help.

I want to make you feel better about yourself. Now, you're going to ask just how I hope to accomplish this within the space of my column here in IJ. Well, my friends, I'm going to use one of the most time-honored methods of ego-boosting. No, I'm not going to try to make you feel pride in your occupation, no matter how trivial or demeaning it may be. No, I'm not going to try to fill you with pride and love about yourself. No, friends, I'm not going to do it either of those ways. That's no fun and that's not the way I was taught in Sunday school. The best way to feel good about yourself is to laugh at someone more pitiful than yourself.

Yes, tear some poor wretch down to make yourself look good!

Now, the problem is that you're 35 and you still haven't broken \$20,000 a year, and you don't own your own home, and you'd like to have kids, and you can't get a raise, and the guy who used to be your best friend before he joined a Utah-based religious group is coming over to your apartment and he's making twice what you make, and you're ashamed of being a menial lackey in a vast metropolitan business concern...And you want to feel good about yourself.

There's just one name I want to mention to you for you to think about—Rita Jenrette.

That's right, the former wife of Congressman John Jenrette. The guy the Feds caught in the ABSCAM operation. The woman who posed in PLAYBOY, and who said that her husband has carnal knowledge of her on the steps of the Nation's Capitol. That Rita Jenrette.

If you think you have it bad, then think about this pitiful show business groupie. Rita would like people to share her fantasy that she is: A) good-looking; B) sexy; and C) a talented actress. Rita does indeed resemble a good-looking woman, but she is really plastic. Brooke Shields has far more soul than Rita.

What does Rita put on her tax form under "occupation"? A good guess would be "actress". She is supposedly an actress, or at least an aspiring actress. But so far she has made only one movie and that's ZOMBIE ISLAND MASSACRE. Gee, that sounds like a great showcase for a talented blonde actress, now, doesn't it? I understand Rita replaced Meryl Streep in the role after Meryl discovered she would get second billing to the male lead, who is also the co-producer, and the writer of the film, one multi-talented guy named David Broadnax.

Now, I haven't seen the movie...in fact, since it's a little low-budget thing released by New York-based Troma, Inc., I doubt that many people will see it in this country. But I can imagine that Rita's participation in the production was limited to baring her much celebrated breasts and screaming in horror at the zombies.

Now, does being a mail clerk, or line cook, or rag picker, sound so bad as what Rita does? Can you imagine Rita meeting a long-lost chum on the streets of Hometown U.S.A. and saying, "Well, after I divorced John and appeared in PLAYBOY, I tried to get work as an actress and wound up in ZOMBIE ISLAND MASSACRE, and to keep my name before the public, I was in PLAYBOY again recently showing off my new young lover and now I don't know what I'll do"?

At least you've got a job that doesn't involved public humiliation. Maybe private humiliation, but if you're Protestant, that's good for the soul. Remember that no matter how bad you're feeling, there's always someone who's a bigger jerk than you.

Global conspiracy to keep those who are "different" silent.
WEIRDMEN ARISE!!

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They're Out To Get YOU!!

they BLINDED me with VIDEO

by CANDI STRECKER

CHAPTER X: BILLY JACK IS NOT MY LOVER

I'll admit it. I used to think that ZZTop was just an ordinary band doing cheap, sexist videos. Remember their first vid, "Gimme All Your Lovin'"? Now at first glance, the image of three ultra-chicks dragging a guy into their car does SEEM to hint at a certain popular male sexual fantasy, a suggestion enhanced by the sight of those three beardy-guys sniggering their thumbs-up approval in the background. But after extensive examination of the entire ZZTop oeuvre, consisting of the aforementioned video plus "Sharp Dressed Man" and the recent "Legs", I have come to discern a theme that runs through these works and is developed from one to the next. This video trilogy, in fact, comprises a heroic myth-cycle of gods and men and virtue rewarded. Observe how each of these videos begins with a beleaguered ordinary person trying to cope with everyday life. Then the GODZ—Larry, Curly, and Moe, or whatever the Tops' names are—take pity on the human's situation, and appear in the mortal sphere to transform this ordinary Joe (or Jane, in the equal-opportunity "Legs") into a HERO. Two things clue us in to the fact that they are GODZ. One is their godlike detachment: the way they don't visibly interact with the human world, but merely materialize in the background to observe and make way-to-go-kid gestures. Second is their apparent disguise. Zeus liked to appear among mortals in the form of a swan or a bull; the Tops' conceal their godlike awesomeness behind funny beards and Ray-Bans. Carrying out the will of the gods are their intermediaries, the HANDMAIDENS OF THE GODZ, the ZZTop girls, dispatched to the mortal world in a phantom CHARIOT, the custom '37 Ford. The girls instruct the mortal in the godly secrets that can turn him or her from nerd to triumphant hero—providing dance tips to the chap in "Sharp Dressed Man" and taking the "Legs" girl for a fashion makeover. Last of all, they bestow that most mystical of tokens, the veritable EX-CALIBUR of MTV, the ZZTop keychain (*in hoc signo vinces!*)

I think there may be a dissertation topic in all this. Somewhere.

Since last time, there has been an epidemic of self-referential videos on MTV (videos about the making of rock videos). I'm a bit partial to Christine McVie's "Love Will Show Us How" because it features Paul Bartel (writer/director/star of "Eating Raoul") as the artiste-director of an amusingly botched vid. Less to my liking is "Oh Sherrie", with its excruciatingly long introduction, in which Steve Perry (who has fronted Journey in some terrifically pretentious videos) is unable to keep a straight face during the filming of his own solo video because it's "all too pretentious". Uh huh. And then, making me feel a bit psychic about what I wrote in my last column, there's The Garage Band (made up of members of the current SatNiteLive cast) with their "Look At Our Video", a quick scan over every rock video cliché imaginable: the smoke machine, the high-heel bondage, the '59 Cadillac, the ZZTop beards, even the splitscreen technique (worked into a hilarious visual joke about the intro from the "Brady Bunch" show). For me, the most startling thing in this video was finding Julia Louis-Dreyfus among the pouting bondage chicks in the background. It's strange to recognize a real, known person in this sort of highly depersonalized role—sort of like opening up a copy of Playboy and finding one's best friend from fifth grade posed as the centerfold spread. It's a smart little work of parody, with one glaring weak spot: its music. Just goes to show that you can't expect to make a successful rock video without providing some decent rock. "Look At Our Video" is indeed worth looking at, but musically it's lame.

(ED. NOTE: If Candi doesn't mind—The vid, which was of course originally shown on SNL [the best place to look for rock parody nowadays, 'twould seem], was part of a featurette in which The Garage Band is being interviewed on "MTV" [I think it was by Julia-cum-Nina B.], and one of the points of the interview and the video, satirically, was to show how bad the band was musically, at least from what I caught of it. Judging by your commentary, the bit was successful. I am still amazed that MTV appears not to 'get it'.)

They were lined up outside. Hundreds of 'em, just sitting or standing around—waiting. It's beyond me how they figured out I was in here—I guess it musta been the telepathy or whatever animals use to communicate with each other; Christ knows they've been doing plenty of that lately. Lately—shit, it's all too plain now that they've been doing it all along. Well, anyhow, my two cats were securely locked and barricaded in the bathroom and there was no way in hell that those fuckers were going to get out. I'd thought about killing them outright when the siege first started, but after a little more thought (plus maybe a touch of compassion for a coupla long-time friends), I decided they might be of more use alive.

When the first reports began to come in over the radio about the world-wide mass smotherings of people by ordinary pussy-type cats, I figured it for some kinda Orson Welles-like hoax; but when I saw a black and white neighborhood cat jump on the mailman and smother him just outside my house, and heard Dink, one of my kitties, scratching in the litter box, the reality of the situation hit me. While I looked frantically for Fritz, my other cat, I heard some government official spewing on the emergency frequency about how they felt cats had been plotting against U.S. citizens for years and getting into top security installments as mousers, only to be in the right places when the revolution came plunging the world into total cat anarchy. Suddenly, a buncha screams came over the air like 'get him offa me', then the station went dead. I spun the dial, only to get static on all the other stations, and then I knew it was me against them.

Evidently, since my cats had been in the house asleep as usual, word had not reached them yet of the revolution, and I was able to collar them and shove them into the bathroom before they knew what was coming down.

Things had been like this now for three days—me out here in the living room and them doing god-knows-what in the bathroom. After gingerly cracking the door, I grabbed the first wad of hair I felt inside and pulled out Fritz. With him by the neck in one hand and the Magnum pointed at his head in the other, I kicked open the front door, sending several felines sailing, and stepped out ranting, "Alright, you bastards, I got a hostage here, so's ya better give me free passage to the airport or I blow cat brains all over da place." This seemed to have an effect, as all the cats backed off, leaving me clear passage down the walk to the street. Faster and faster I moved, with Fritz in tow, secure in the knowledge that I had almost won the battle of wits with the great cat menace.

Suddenly, I felt something wet and oozy hit my head. Then it came in torrents, knocking me to the ground. I dropped Fritz and the gun as the white substance engulfed my body. Looking up in my final moment I saw a flock of millions of parakeets; just before I went under I coulda swore I heard one of 'em say in clear English, "Asshole, whatda we care if ya waste a fucking cat!"

"LIFE IS A DEBT LIQUIDATION SCHEDULE"-

Graffiti in Men's Room at

Ft. Eustis, VA 10/66

by Lawrence P. Whitney

Just before the Vietnam War began I went down to see my local Army recruiter to discuss career opportunities and to have a cup of coffee. He told me that the Army could prepare me for any occupation I had in mind. I told him that I wanted to become a comedian. He said, "Well, you want Special Services then." And he went to his file drawer and brought out brochures on Army clowns (they are attached to the armored division—they wear big boots, baggy fatigues and oversized combat helmets—they dart in and out trying to distract runaway tanks). I told him that that wasn't what I had in mind—at that time, I wanted to be a more cerebral comic like Mort Sahl or Bob Newhart or Shell-the-answer-man-Berman.

"Oh, then you want to be a Finance Clerk!"

And I didn't know whether I wanted to be a Finance Clerk or not but it seemed to be a lot closer than a Sherman Tank Dodger. He told me how all the other branches of Service had very simple pay systems but that the Army insisted on doing everything the way they had been done at Custer's Last Stand (Gen. Custer died while typing out a travel voucher in quadruplicate—he was scalped while changing a typewriter ribbon) and the Enlistment Sergeant showed me his Finance and Accounting File. It was big and fat with dozens of different kinds of forms and slowly I became mesmerized:

"What's this one?"

"That's an allotment form. That makes sure we send \$155.00 every month to the wife and children."

"And this one?"



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[illegible]

"That's mah Leave Record."

"What about this green one?"

"That's a Debt Liquidation Schedule."

"A debt liquidation schedule?"

"Yes, an' that reminds me of one of your duties as Finance Clerk is to make sure that your standard enlistee gets his pay all screwed up so he don't have any money and then he comes to talk to me about a Re-enlistment Bonus."

"Money for re-enlisting?"

"Uh-huh, sometimes as much as \$6,000—and they're going to need it, once the army starts moving them around. Well, you know how much it costs to move from one place to another? Imagine that you have to move your wife and kids and maybe even your Mobile Home."

"It all adds up, I guess."

"Not in this man's Army! And that's where your debt liquidation schedule comes in. And that's where my Re-Up bonus comes in."

"Why don't they just pay them enough money to move?"

"Because there is never enough money to move your wife and your family and your dog and your mother-in-law and all the knick knacks. And when the army moves you around, sometimes two or three times a year, it doesn't take long before that Debt Liquidation Schedule is wrapped around your G.I. like an anaconda. He gets a glassy look on his eyes and you just turn him to me."

"Hey hey! That doesn't sound like Comedy to me!"

"Do you know who has the largest number of Re-Up plaques and Enlistment Awards in this country?"

"No."

"Bob Hope."

"Wow!" I signed on the dotted line.

Film Noir

by A.J. Wright

I discovered the Dolores Moran Memorial Theater by accident late one rainy afternoon in November. I had spent most of the day in a rundown section of the city, hopelessly searching for the apartment of a man rumored to have a print of *Body Count* (1939), one of Leonard Moss' lost films. Instead, between a porno shop and a closed sporting goods store, I found the miniscule theater. What attracted my attention was the handwritten sign taped to an otherwise anonymous door—"ON SCREEN TODAY ONLY: MIRANDA VIOLA."

The name of Miranda Viola is practically an icon to those of us in the Association of Lost Film Hunters. Over a six-year span she starred in only eight films, all of them very low-budge pictures made at Union Studios. Each film—titles like *Brain Teaser* (1944), *Journey to the Center of the Dark* (1945), *Episode of Love* (1947) and the infamous *Night Master* (1948)—was supposedly a brooding and fantastic portrait of the fringes of American society. Just after the release of *Crimeville U.S.A.* (1950) Miranda Viola disappeared, as they say of ships, without a trace. Not a single one of her films is known to survive.

Needless to say, my excitement was intense. I immediately tried the door, which did not budge. I spent the next few minutes pounding on the metal with a fist.

Finally the door opened just enough to emit the head of a man whose face had several days' growth of beard and the look of someone just awakened. "Whaddaya want?" he barked at me.

"I saw your sign," I told him, tapping it with my finger. "I'd like to see the film."

"Too late," I heard him say above the slamming of the door.

I resumed the frantic knocking. Soon the door reopened.

"I told ya' it's too late," he said, looking at the hundred dollar bill I waved in his face. He seemed to reconsider. "But not that late."

At the same time he was grabbing the money and opening the door wider. When I stepped inside he re-bolted the door.

Down the corridor in front of me and to the left was a ticket window plastered with movie posters. In a quick glance I saw ads for numerous lost films—*The Tramp's Curse* (1932), *The Hound of Heaven* (1936), *Impolite Company* (1942) and *School for Pimps* (1957). Before I could take in all the posters, the man, who turned out to be very short and dressed in a buttoned-up raincoat and paint-spattered pants, was ordering me to follow him.

The hallway was about thirty feet long and opened into a tiny room with fifteen or twenty straight-backed chairs arranged in what at one time had been rows. The floor was covered with a wide assortment of trash; on the other side of the room a man had pushed four of the chairs together and gone to sleep across the seats.

"Sit down," my host instructed. I picked a front row seat and complied. I had an excellent view of the tattered sheet that served as a screen.

Before I could get a better look around me, the room went totally dark. For a moment I heard some sort of banging noise from the porno shop and then the projector cut the air open above me. The film began.

I have a very confused recollection of everything that happened during the next two hours. The film shown was the seventy-five minute *Homicide Cafe* (1949). Miranda Viola played the part of a woman suffering from amnesia as the result of a savage beating by her boyfriend; she eventually leaves her hometown and all the people who know her (but whom she cannot remember at all). She gets a job waitressing in a big-city cafe. After a reel of trials and tribulations with her boss and various customers, her old boyfriend reappears. Not knowing her identity, she falls in love with him again. A bucolic interlude occurs in which the pair of lovers leave the city's neon grit behind and drive to the country for a picnic and light romance. Near the end of the film the boyfriend kills her and dumps the body in the sewer. In the final scene he returns to the cafe and orders an early morning breakfast. Before he can finish the meal, a masked gunman enters the cafe; during the robbery the boyfriend is killed.

Despite the clichéd plot, the film was tightly paced and quite enjoyable. All the scenes were set at night except the picnic; shadows—of people and of things—were the dominant visual image. Miranda Viola was radiant as the waitress whose life is lost.

The confusion noted earlier concerns certain events that transpired around me, both as the film was in progress and afterward. I seem to remember a number of people who entered the theater, sat down for brief periods and then departed. Some whispered to others; a few were completely silent. My gaze remained on the screen throughout the film, so my image of the other audience members is very peripheral. I do recall one woman rather vividly. Halfway into the film she sat down next to me. At various times she seemed to be crying. At one point she may have briefly fallen asleep on my shoulder and at another held my hand. I can't be sure. I think she looked much like Miranda Viola. She was gone by the time the theater lights were turned on.

As soon as the film ended I tried to find the proprietor to discuss making a copy of this print of *Homicide Cafe*. Such a coup would surely net me the ALFH's Finder-of-the-Year Award. Not only could I not find the scruffy little man, but I seemed to be the only person in the theater. I could not even locate the door to the projection booth.

The next hour of my journey was stimulating and led nowhere. The air was like a foreign country's, rigid with expectation and desire. At some point I may have wandered into the porno shop; I recall acres of bare skin throbbing in time to a loud electronic music. And the voices, the incessant voices...

"Abandon hope; you have entered here!"

"Praise the Lord! Pass the hypotheses!"

"You should not have come. Articulation has declined here."

"Miranda Viola? Wasn't she in *Cheerleaders of Lust* (1991)?"

At last I knew the truth; I had fallen behind the power curve. I could dream of Miranda Viola, of my own death. I could remember the scratch of leaves blown across the pavement. I could hope for a map and expect the undiscovered.

Some time later I found myself standing on the sidewalk near my own apartment. My recollections were vague—formless ghosts seeking definition.

Since then I have rested and thought. I will continue the search, but Miranda Viola and her films remain lost.

IN CASE OF EARTHQUAKE,

GET HYSTERICAL

by helen katz

One of the San Francisco newspapers presented a list of buildings that would be able to withstand a major earthquake, would probably stand up through a moderate quake, and would more than likely not be able to handle a minor quake. That got me to thinking...

My place of employment was one-half block from an abandoned National Guard armory. It was on the list. In the last category. My imagination got away from me.

If I made it out of work all right (see "Is That My Knees Shaking, Or Is This An Earthquake?"), this is how I envisioned my trek home:

After circumnavigating the rubble of the armory, my next obstacle was the now-street-level freeway overpass. Assuming I could crawl my way over that mess, I would have a few blocks of ordinary mayhem.

The next superdisaster would be getting across the remnants of Market Street, surely littered with debris and danger stemming from the BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) and Muni-Metro systems underground and the trolley and bus overhead electrical systems, now merged together.

If I could get across that mess, I would only have a one-block walk to my apartment building. Safe at last? Not yet.

One-half block from my living room window was the curve of another section of the overhead freeway. Remember that scene in the movie "Earthquake" where the eighteen-wheeler carrying a herd of cows jumps over the roadside barrier on a curve? I don't think too many cows would be able to fit in my living room...

But alas, it was just another day in beautiful downtown Baghdad-by-the-Bay.

DOG BISCUIT

by Robert Hale

Chuck, a lumberjack, had just lost his job. The company went out of business. He had little money. But he was a little luckier than most of the guys laid off. He had no family except for his beagle, Beaufort. He didn't want to go on unemployment. He felt depressed. He decided to go for a walk. Beaufort followed.

Chuck walked for about two miles when he came to a pond, and nearby he spotted a leprechaun sitting on a tree stump, feeding bread crumbs to raccoons. Chuck knew if he caught the leprechaun he would get a wish. Chuck crept up behind him and caught the little guy.

The little leprechaun said, "I can only grant you one wish. So you best think it over, me boy! Make it a good one!"

Unfortunately, Chuck was a greedy man. As Chuck explained, "I wouldn't mind a million dollars in gold. But I'd probably have to pay taxes on it. Maybe if it were tax-free?...Power! That's it! Power! I'd be rich and powerful! Nobody would think of me as a dumb lumberjack! I'd be President. I could help the poor. The Veterans."

Chuck's mood changed. "As the leader of this country, I wouldn't take any lip off of these Liberals. They're Communists anyway. And the Communists! I'd take care of them. I'd blow Moscow, China and Vietnam off the map! I'll have Castro hanging from the Washington Monument! I'd have the FBI and the CIA round up all the Spics, Niggers, Chinks, Jews, Liberals, and Jane Fonda and put them all in camps in Oklahoma. And then I'd take these coke ovens to the camps..."

The leprechaun realized the problem he had, but what to do? Fortunately, Beaufort started barking—"Arf, arf."

"That is a mighty strange wish there, doggy." And the leprechaun carried out the dog's wish by turning Chuck into a dog biscuit. The leprechaun laughed as Chuck started shrinking and turning hard. There Chuck lay on the ground, a three-inch biscuit.

The leprechaun disappeared. Beaufort ate the biscuit.

"Fascists make good eating," Beaufort thought.

PAPOON IN '84/84

LIBERTIE, FRATERNITIE, SURREALITIE by elayne

Or something like it. In past years, a main factor of a Campoon's appeal has been its uniqueness, the feeling party members have gotten from knowing (or suspecting very well, in either case) that very little—and yet everything—could be more surreal than their Cause itself. But in a year where Michael Jackson and Ronald Reagan become accomplices in the war to rid all citizens of drug-induced (or non-drug-induced, it's all the same now) paranoia by convincing them they will be invaded, for their own protection (where have I heard that before?), Papoon's bid for the Residency now appears fairly (gasp) ordinary (she gasped) compared to, oh, peculiar events like (St.) Larry Harmon himself engineering both the "Bozo for President" and "No Bozos!" movements, "Nobody for President" bumper stickers selling like solar panels in The Land Where They Buy Everything, California (and just as an aside, the "Nobody for President" bit didn't originate with the 60's radicals—apparently it surfaced in an old Betty Boop cartoon aptly titled "Betty Boop For President", where "Mr. Nobody" was her opponent; now see, where would you be if we didn't tell you these things?), the various animal candidates you've heard tell of in THE NATIONAL ENQUIRER and THE WHOLE SCHMEER, and the almost epidemic rise in the proportion of run-on sentences in these columns—well, dear friends, were we not A.E. (Already Elected, last November twice in the first Year-O-'84), we'd be in trouble right now. But when all is dead and won, what about regrouping and recouping? Where will we fit in, and how will we carry out those much-cherished edicts of our governing branch, the Association for the Advancement of Surrealism & Redundancy Council (Council)? Can we make the yuppies and yippies and grumpies and docs—er, dogs, all those folks who've paraded across our late-nite tv screens, rally round to Our Cause, which is Their Cause, when Election Day's but a videotape of its former self? Yes, friends, where do we go from here?

Why, The Future, of course. Because it saves time over looking at The Present (and when was the last time you got a Present you didn't like and couldn't exchange?). And because it's All We Have Left. Remember, just as it's true that capitalizing random words to make them appear Important, it's equally (if not more) true (shouldn't that be "truer"?), that it's impossible to capture The Now (How Now Brown Tao, and all that), that we are all either looking back at the past or forward, somewhat blindly, at the future. And since there's only one version of What's Actually Happened in history (two if you count Reagan's memory, but you know what I mean), and an infinite number of possible futures, the latter is much more fun for most of us. It's the only thing out of our control, which makes it even more exciting.

But it doesn't have to be that way, friends. Oh, exciting, sure. Out of our control, preposterous. In the age of corporate monopoly and megalopoly, perhaps it's time to consider a joint venture. Not in public, mind you, and certainly not on the Staten Island ferry now that they have cops patrolling it. But extending the hand of the bizarre (I'm sure you've all seen those battery-operated digits waving at you from the windows of the type of stores that usually house shrines to current rock stars) and the chattering teeth that bite that hand that feeds the mouse that lived in the place that Jack built, and saying to the other freaks and attention-getters out there in The Land of the Clocks, "Hey, you may be worthless scum of opponents now, but just you wait until we're in and this nonsense is over—that's when the serious nonsense begins!"—this, oh ye faithful, should be the aim, nay goal, of all NSPers, real or imagined. Let us remember the words of—geez, what's his name again? Wait, wait, I think I have it...no, I was mistaken. Well, I'll leave it to you to remember his words.

In the meantime, in between time, ain't we got news? Apparently not, as George has shut himself inside his home in Wentzville, MO and turned on his solar-panelled-powered air conditioner, and everyone else has moved into that unique mood that seems all too characteristic of early-heat-wave June, the "now-that-school's-out-(and no matter how old you get, school will always be out in June)—we-don't-hafta-do-any-work-an'-that-includes-WRITING!" syndrome as it's known. In the past, I've numbered myself among these non-participants, but hey, if I don't do it, it won't get done ("it" being anything from IJ to the Campoon, I guess), so I'll end this issue's report here hoping that you Co-ordinaries out there (and you know who you are) think up, create, and

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IS REAGAN A MURDERER?



otherwise transmit whatever you feel is appropriate for this lovable old mishmash, wot?

And one slight p.s., which I hesitate to include because as of this writing our "sister station" "Audio IJ" still has yet to become reality: GGP will, in one way or another, be featured on the show, and maybe even Tirebiter too. But if I revealed everything (even if I knew it), I'd spoil the 17 surprise for everybody, even me. And that would be—insane.

"Daddy"

by Cynthia Cinque

I can not type. I went to the bank and took two-hundred-and-twenty dollars out of my safe deposit box to spend on cabs. The Goleta Typing Service is on Mandarin and Orange. The cab driver said, "That's where all of the streets are named after fruits."

The last time I was there, the owner's wife said, "All men are bastards." This time, the owner walked in behind me and I thought I knew what she meant. He was tall and erect, had white hair and blue eyes as cold as a star. I said hello to him because I did not want him to think I was different, so that he'd be angry with me and try to overpower me. He said hello to the typist and ignored me. The typist said, "She said hello to you, and you said hello to me."

I got confused because I wanted him to like me so that he would ignore me, but I realized that she was on my side, so I felt like a traitor to the dream. I further compounded my guilt by saying to the typist, "What did you say?" She said, "Oh, I don't know, now, I think I said, you said hello to him but he said hello to me instead."

She looked at him and said, "Why don't you say hello to her?" I realized that even though she is a typist and I am a writer, she is braver than I am.

Yesterday, when I was there he walked back and forth like a guard in a jewelry shop. I thought he was God because he said, "Daddy is here." I think he was attracted to me because we are almost the same age. I think he thinks that he is a man who has had to survive, and has had more responsibility than women; therefore, it is alright for him to manage us. I think that he feels ashamed of this, that's why his

face is red and angry and he could break like a horse and whinny. I said to myself, I do not understand this man. Maybe he is like a cowboy, and I never knew a cowboy so I do not understand him. I said to myself, if I said something tender to him he would feel a blend of rage and lust and grab my cunt. He looks like the kind of man who would bite my tits, dutifully and thoroughly, like a dog gnawing on a bone.

I felt embarrassed because my writing is full of strong language and four-letter words. I say a lot of sad things, too, and people want to be cheered up. I apologized to the typist for my vulgarity. She said, "I am used to it." I felt I was trying to control her anger by apologizing before she read it. I felt that I did not know her and did not know how far I could go with her, because yesterday she said, after reading my writing, "I hope something more cheerful happens to you tomorrow." I like her, though, because the owner told me he wanted the Xerox machine put on the small table and she said, "The table will break under the weight."

That night at home, I broke under his weight and became delusional. I was sure he was God and that he was talking to my other personality. I thought he knew everything and was sent there to control me. I think now that he is a spiteful man. I think that I think he's God because he is mean and because I feared him, and I thought he came there to kill me. If he heard this, he would become protective and marry me, and keep me in a big house and away from everyone's sneers. He would pat me on the ass and put a lasso around my neck and lead me around the house.

I would be safe and too full of disgust and grief to ever write again.

A LITTLE TOUCH OF POMPOUS IN THE NIGHT

by "Maiden Jappan"

Let me tell you how I feel
When I read self-indulgent poetry
It's a voyeuristic nightmare,
Being subjected to
These inner machinations
I don't really care about.
The sheer disgust caused
By observing gut-spilling
Far outweighs any satisfaction
Their imagery may provide.
It starts off as basic discomfort
And works its way to nausea
Then my head starts shaking,
Usually in disbelief
Then I get up from the toilet
And masturbate till it stops.
What possesses these poets
To display themselves like that?
Damn exhibitionists...

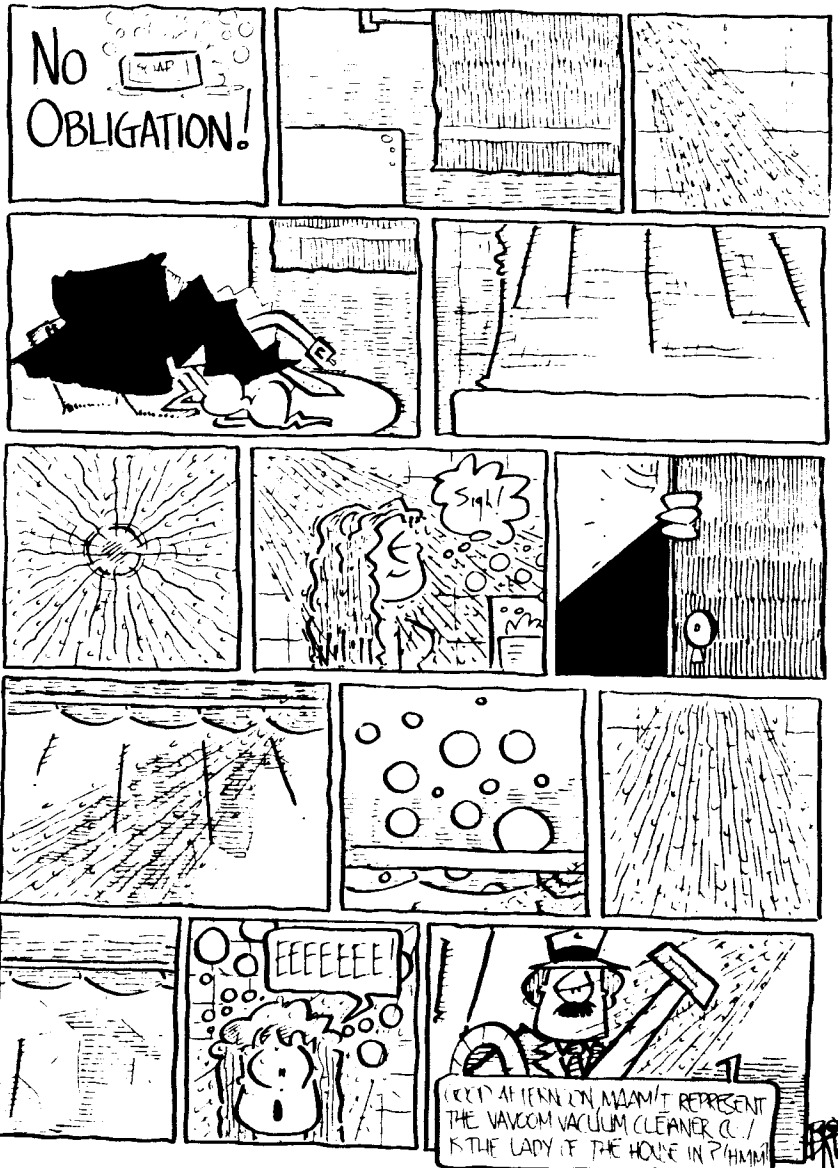
SLOW RELEASE POEM

by Lisa Yount

This is a sneaky poem.
Instantly as you hear this poem
five hundred tiny time pills will
start burrowing under your skin.
But you will not feel a thing,
even when they take up whitewater
rafting in your blood vessels
and start building nests in your hair.
Later tonight when you are sleeping,
a word will peek stealthily out from
under your closed eyelid.
You will sneeze another one onto
your pillow
and it will walk spiderlegged across
to the person sleeping next to you.
As the days pass,
you may notice a slight fever,
an inability to get certain tunes
out of your head,
but there will still be no pain.
Finally, when the colony has taken
over completely,
you will understand what this poem
is all about.
But by then it will be too late.

"Bob" brings a
NEW DESTINY
FOR AMERICA
Send \$1 to help support
truth, justice, the
American Way & your
precious bodily fluids.

Only "Bob" has
all the answers.



Explore your REINTEGRATION!
Eliminate or Impact
Sex Reversions
& Last Impulsions!
Witchcraft is becoming
fashionable... at last.
\$1 for Bizarre and Hilarious Tract

BRIGHTON BEACH EXPRESS

by elayne

Listen, when you live in Brooklyn your night life isn't always glitter and sushi, fella. Sometimes we he-women like to get into things like—subways. Yeah, subways. Wanna make sumptin' of it?

Hey, if it's good enough for "Streets-O-Fire", possibly the best bad movie since the demise of the fabled Edward D. Wood, it's good enough for me.

And most folks agree that the subways in New York are quite unlike those anywhere else in the world. Even the transit workers who get assigned to this city, whose system they have compared working for (really, in the Daily News on March 13) to being drafted for duty in Vietnam "waybackwhen" (quotations mine). And do you know why? Because New York subways capture the attention of everybody. They're practically legendary. And I'm saying that purely as a descriptive phrase; as a former Jerseyan far be it for me to be accused of statism (that's "statism" meaning "state chauvanism", not whatever it means when Libertarians use the term) in favor of New York. I mean, at 90¢ a pop, I can think of better ways to travel—even, dare I voice it, the now-75¢ PATH trains (or as I used to affectionately term them the "sardine cans").

On the other hand, subways are fascinating things. (No, don't worry, I get these fits of "Anni-itis" every now and then, it'll pass...) I don't know if too many other cities have "sub"ways that go underground, above ground and elevated all within miles of each other. Now, this may not seem like a big deal to you, but it does make McDonald Avenue that much easier to cross, the subways being above one rather than on a level. (Oh dear, now I've lapsed into Kazurinski-spasms—I just hope cardboard cards aren't next...) And this, dear friends, is only the outside.

Well, yes, there's graffiti. Not as much in the Brooklyn trains 'round here; the "number" trains (IRT, but don't hold me to that, I never could figure out those initials), which go to different, perhaps "raunchier" areas, tend to be rather covered—but the big attraction on, for instance, my train (title above) turns up (at least for me) more on the inside.

The best part of the lore of the subway is, as I see it, the free entertainment. This can take three forms: serious entertainers (usually musical) who take advantage of a "captive audience" to play the same range of music one might also find on the city's streets; serious people whose nonsense and total disregard for the unwritten psychological given of personal space make them extremely humorous; and, lastly, the just plain embarrassing person, usually an "ordinary Jo/e" (I love it when I use unisex lingo!). These can probably be broken down into sub-categories, but I'm not being payed to break things down into sub-categories so fuckit. No, really, you've seen a few you're most likely able to imagine the rest. Like the religious fanatics. Not the black guys with the impeccably white robes and skull caps (I bet it saves on clothing bills but there's my "Shecky" fever coming back), although their obvious racism and self-righteous attitude can

become somewhat grating. Usually the "true" Preachers of the Faith (and lord knows what faith, nobody I know seems to believe in whatever they're talking about) appear in the guise of—well, not exactly "ordinary Jo/e's", but certainly, on the surface, inconspicuous. Until they open their mouths. And as the volume of that Voice shatters everyone's personal sphere and everyone's pretending they didn't hear and they try to read their books and newspapers while hiding behind them a smile, I inevitably look out from the Manhattan Bridge toward the Statue of Scaffolding and sigh, "It's going to be another one of those days, eh?" "AND DO YOU KNOW JESUS, MAH FRIENDS?" Yeah, lady, I slept with him. Wonderful experience. He introduced me to his brothers Matty and Felipe. Knew his uncle Sid...

Far and away, my favorite real entertainer (as opposed, again, to the accidental variety) is the fellow who plays that musical Caribbean drum, the hollow half-shell one, and always smiles after his short song and says, "Thank you, everybody, for being here on Saturday Morning Live" or "Saturday Afternoon Live" or insert-appropriate-time. Quite a talented, personable fellow. Makes it worth the 90¢.

Because I am aware of the delicate condition of the human stomach, I won't go into the various types that make up Category Number Three. As you can probably tell, this type of entertainment I could do without.

But, speaking of that 90¢, as long as you're spending you might as well spend more. First, though, you'll need a job. Hey, what's an unemployed bum like you doing riding the 'way anyway? Probably looking for a job at one of the many three-week type institutes whose ads line and litter the cars. Or how about becoming like one of These Smiling Faces? (Don't be fooled, folks, you can see the touch-up jobs on those plastic visages...) Earn your High School Equivalency Diploma and you'll be able to read this ad like everyone else!

It's enough to give me a headache, but on the New York subway system, you almost have to be Hispanic to get any relief. There's the Spanish Bayer, Anacin, Bufferin, Panadol, you name it. Even the Spanish "Paginas Amarillas" (yellow pages), which I'm convinced contains within all sorts of in-jokes about how asinine those gringos really are...never mind, my paranoia runs rampant at all of these anyway. I always think I'm missing something when the mini-billboard reads, "Mas Jits" for WJIT, "RadioJit", but most of the time I think better of running home to check my Sp-Eng dictionary ("donde esta la biblioteca, don'tcha know, yadayada").

Oh, but it's not all brockwurst and snails, you know. I get a kick out of the little games too, like playing "Which Train Has the Air Conditioning?" (helpful hint: the "E" and "F" are almost always with working a.c.). And the two stations I frequent most, Astor Place in Manhattan and the famed Newkirk Plaza in Brooklyn, are both under extensive renovation (beautifying a subway, now I've heard it all, lord you can take me now...) and are due to be magically transformed as soon as everyone's totally changed the way they walk due to scaffolds and other obstacles. I can hardly wait. Maybe I'll buy some popcorn (and o.j.) at Union Square and get a good seat now.

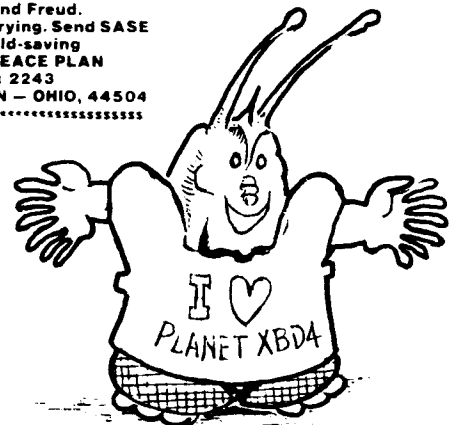
HUMANITY IS IN THE HIGHEST DEGREE IRRATIONAL

So that there is no prospect of influencing it by REASONABLE ARGUMENTS.... Against prejudice one can do NOTHING —

Sigmund Freud.
We can keep trying. Send SASE to world-saving
4 WAY PEACE PLAN
Box 2243
YOUNGSTOWN — OHIO, 44504



COMING SOON FROM THE SUPREME COURT TESTERS —
WILL THE FDA APPROVE LETHAL INJECTION DRUGS
AS SAFE?



Sayz-U! (Letters)

Dear Elaine,

Congratulations on your Reversible Back Cover on IJ #30! (Thank you—where's my questionnaire?) Those of us who are innovators have to take a lot of abuse from unimaginative—like the End-of-the-World Issue [of AGAINST THE WALL] I put out a few years ago, with (mostly) blank pages.

Another of your innovations in #30 left much to be desired—printing most pages in grey instead of black. Coupled with the reduced type, it made reading difficult. I'd suggest that you go back to black ink immediately.

Anarchically yours,

BILL GEORGE
P.O. Box 444
Westfield, NJ 07091

(What Bill is [presumably sarcastically] referring to here is the obvious fact that sometimes Uncle Wiggly's A.S.P. copier prints lighter than usual - after all, it's only mechanical. Most people are polite enough to understand and overlook this...and, as I mention on page 2, it seems every innovation has its price, so that's the last time you will see a RBC for IJ...)

Dear Elaine:

Just finished IJ30 which is great, as usual. Hidden highlight of the month has to be the mysterious Stench MacPhearson. Great stuph, as few would know better than I. Sign this man up NOW. But I did have something on my mind (brain and brain...what is brain?) other than blatant nepotism. For one, I've received a bit of belated protest from a Mr. Dioxin complaining about all this brouhaha (great word, nu?) about Wacko Jacko's new nose. "Where," he asks, "is the concern for the poor, disenfranchised old nose (now resting comfortably on the face of...Galen the Saintly)? Yes you heard it here first," sez Rodney, and who'd want to argue the point anyway. He closes with a plaintive cry of "BRING BACK BRI" and promises Anni Regina I that after he's elected pope Bri's extradition problems will be quickly cleared up (or was I not supposed to mention that?). None of that notwithstanding (and I've been to Guilderland so I know whereof I babble) what's all this about "The Bottom Line"? Sure, it's an okay club altho much too small, but I don't think it's trying to be "Art" (or even Carney). All in all, a good place to see Weird Al (and you haven't lived till you've seen Al's dreaded food medley—but the album is great, and if someone doesn't review it soon I'll have to...you've been warned, take the kids and head for high ground). As said, lotsa goodies this time including Anni (she's got my vote too), Mike, Rolfo (sorry to see the serials end—really, I've got nothing against serials as a concept; I oppose serials that I don't like), and I bow at the feet of s/he who wrote CAMPOON'S PONTOONS. Wow. I'm glad also that you printed the excerpt from CDH's book. He's a nice guy, even with all the odd personal habits (nunuvyerdambizness anyway). Well, what do I know? I only forward his mail. And for a few knocks: Geerdes has, I think, reached new "heights" in pointlessness. Wake me when it's over. Nor did I care much for SOUR GRAPES. Blechh. Totally. I haven't the energy to pinpoint the rest altho I will say that somehow, once again, IJ has managed to avoid Sturgeon's Law. Someone's either built up one hell of a lot of good karma or there's a killer payoff coming. S'long for now folks. Stay OUT OF STEP.

Can it core a apple? (ha ha)

GEORGE PATTERSON
3280 Amboy Road
Staten Island, NY 10306

(Actually, Georg, truth to tell I'm not in disagreement about your assessment of serials. I didn't mind one serial, or even two. Serials like Kerry Thornley's, although they have a continuity of story running through them, do hold up often as separate pieces not requiring back-issue references. The main problem, besides the fact that with the theme issues and IJ going every six weeks continuity is hard enough as is, was that all of a sudden everyone was on the bandwagon, and it was just getting silly. In a couple cases, serials were quite obviously attempts on their authors' part to forego thinking of new ideas each issue, and I knew then this cheap ploy had to end. I would like to bring some sort of serial back sometime, maybe in '85, maybe if we go monthly again someday, but we'll see how it goes...)

Elayne:

Rudy Rucker asked for answers for the question, "What is the secret of life?", so I'm going to give the old college try (which may not be much since I was kicked out of Union County College).

Now, as I've stated in my comic book DREAM SEQUENCE, I hold the basically animistic belief that the universe itself is a single-cell organism, pulsating like a heart cell (which could explain why the universe is expanding), and that all living things within it are part of that mass. We do not just exist IN the universe, we exist OF it.

Now, the individual concepts of the afterlife vary from person to person, be it based upon existentialist metaphysics or dogma based around an anthropomorphic deity [sic]. In my beliefs, I find that after the point of natural death, the individual's "soul" (the rather antiquated term for the life force, or electromagnetic field of energy) continues (since energy cannot be destroyed, but changed), and continues in an existence that we refer to as the astral plane. Individual consciousness is continued, and awareness of one's self, and the actions of the past life (what has been, and has not been, done), are realized. Then, the self goes about its way towards what has been called "Godhead", or the true realization of the self's talents and abilities.

Along the way, the self may venture into this plane of existence, and aid us mere mortals in our everyday lives (from whence we get the concepts of "guardian angels" or "fairy godmothers", and the explana-

tion of paranoiac voices recorded on tape).

I'm currently collaborating with George Raymond Eddy in a project that he came up with. IMMORTALS: THE LIFE BEYOND BEATH, will first be a double-sided mini-comic, featuring two separate stories about our beliefs on the afterlife. A second issue is planned, with hopes that other cartoonists will contribute. The only "qualification" is that the much overused concepts of "harp & wings/horns & pitchforks" of heaven and hell be avoided. Let your mind go, and see what it comes back with.

Getting back to the question, I feel that the PURPOSE of life, but not necessarily the secret of it, is for each person to realize their potential, and to aid others in doing so, so that a true human utopia can be realized.

If any readers would like a copy of the above-mentioned DREAM SEQUENCE, just send me 50¢ (I'll pay postage), and I'll send one off to you. Yours effervescently,

STEVEN F. SCHARFF
P.O. Box 5004
Hillside, NJ 07205

Dear Elaine,

Wow, a really great issue this time around. It looked much better than previous issues. There was less variance in type reduction, and only one sideways layout. Yeah! I'm sure you know all this stuff, but it's probably nice to hear that someone else has noticed it too.

I'm still kind of reading it. I liked the "Secret of Life" article by Rudy Rucker. I hope he writes some more. Also Candi's MTV column was pretty good as usual. "Mrs. McCracken's Resorts" was also pretty interesting.

It was also really great to see a cover by John Crawford again. Yeah! I think his cartooning is superb, and his Baboon Dooleys were what "it" was all about. Let me see, humm, what else? Oh, nothing I can think of offhand. As I said, I'm still reading this one. Yeah!

But definitely it looks and reads easier than previous IJs. "Routing the Reagan" was amusing enough, but didn't connect with me the way it might have a few months ago. I've been reading too much H.L. Mencken, one of the more pleasurable and most productive addictions I've ever had. Yeah! Something I heartily encourage everyone to do is read as much H.L. Mencken as possible. Starting today. Yeah!

So anyway, here is the new minifictions (ED NOTE: See "Fan Noose"). Yeah! I'm still looking for writers. In fact, what the heck you can list it as a potential market. Yeah! I'm picky, though...

Yours,

(Dear Luke—Yeah!—ew)

LUKE MCGUFF
Box 3680
Minneapolis, MN 55403

Dear Elaine,

Staring, as I am now, into the business end of the Memorial Day Weekend (or, as it used to be known when I was a wild young thing a'roving through the San Francisco mists, The First Orgy of Summer), it occurs to me that it's been rather a long time since I wrote one of my little Reflections on Holidays. Now, granted, it isn't as though anyone has been beating down the door (or even, for that matter, knocking discreetly) screaming "Anni, please write one of your little Reflections on Holidays! Oh, please Anni! Please please please! Christmas, Lincoln's Birthday, Arbor Day, even National Secretary's Week—we don't care. Give us anything!" [Incidentally, for anyone keeping tabs on this sort of thing, National Secretary's Week, with all it implies—all it implies being, in this case, a fascinating tendency on the part of Those in Charge to suddenly harbour the delusion that a box of Fanny Farmer chocolate turtles makes up for a year's worth of revising 12-page documents 10 minutes before their deadlines because someone has decided it might be jolly to change all the pronouns—actually came off a couple of weeks ago and, to my vast shock, I was presented with a small token of remembrance in the form of a vase of appallingly purple artificial flowers. What interests me especially about this (aside from the colour of the blooms themselves, which are the shade of violet most usually found on the sideburns of retrograde punk rockers, and the fact that, while I have never really considered myself a secretary—as I neither take shorthand, file, Xerox, make phone calls or coffee, but rather sit all day at a word processor attempting to turn pads of scrawled notes, cross-overs and doodles into something that won't automatically get us cited for contempt of court, I would have called myself an editor, or a typist, or a handwriting analyst, or a code-breaker—apparently other people do) is that the gift came from the claims department, the only organization section of the firm staffed entirely by females. The male contingent—trucking, corporate, driveway, and the ever-popular legal, for which I do most of my work—either ignored the thing entirely, or else spent the week making that species of joke frequently found on napkins in seedy bars. As near as I can make it out, this either proves a) that women like to give gifts more than men do; b) that women appreciate each other more than men appreciate women; c) that the men in my office are pigs; d) that the women in my office are colour-blind; e) all of the above; f) none of the above, but, more to the point, granted the sort of presents I noticed advertised for this momentous occasion, what is a male secretary to make of those nice little pink compacts with "Dear Secretary" written on them, and do you suppose one of them would trade with me?]; still, I thought somebody might be wondering about this oversight. To be frank with you (and at this hour of the morning I haven't got the wherewithall to be anything else), it has less to do with lack of opportunity than with the fact that you simply run out after awhile. I mean, take Memorial Day itself, for instance (and I do wish somebody would. Lord knows, if I see one more news photo of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier I shall be severely tempted to inform everybody that the person newly buried there is really my Uncle Murray having his little joke, and my Aunt Lorraine wants him back). Memorial Day has been around for years and, while I haven't been writing quite the complete length of its existence (all such rumours to the contrary), I've been hanging around long

enough for anyone who cares to know all about how I feel concerning the thing. Anyone who reads my little contributions (and I know you're out there. I can tell by all those peculiar envelopes that periodically arrive in the mail, baffling the post person) knows, to the point of tedium, my precise views on speeches, war memorials, and the nasty habit parades have of marching past my windows at unearthly hours of the morning. How much, when you get right down to it, can a person really say about a holiday in specific, or even holidays in general? And so, you don't catch me talking about holidays any more, even if my letter happens to coincide with one. I simply won't do it. Nope, not me.

Instead, I'm just going to relax and talk about IJ #30 for awhile. Of course, any issue that starts off, right on the cover, with a piece of work from the sorely missed John Crawford bids fair to be at least somewhat beyond the usual limits (not that the usual limits are anything to sneeze at), and I'm pleased to report that I was not, for the most part, disappointed. It was nice to see the return of the Whozits (hmm, this was a month for come-backs, wasn't it? Anyone know whatever became of J.D. Salinger?), a thing for which I've been lobbying quite strenuously for some little period of time, the conclusion (finally, finally, at least even), of all those everlasting serials (and special kudos to Mike Gunderloy for putting what really ought to be the finishing touch on the whole ridiculous trend, and doing it so neatly, too), two Randy Maxson cartoons (one tolerably good and the other excellent), Deborah Benedict in rare sardonic form, and all the rest of the goodies I've come to expect from an issue of IJ. I even held my breath and filled out (for the most part; there were some names listed I simply couldn't place, no matter how hard I tried, though that probably has less to do with the quality of their work than the quality of my powers of retention, which are not what they once were and weren't all that good when they were) the questionnaire, though, if you'll note, it's getting mailed back in an envelope—even after you (Elayne) explained it to me in loving detail, and in person, I'm ashamed to admit I couldn't follow it. My powers of comprehension aren't what THEY used to be either.

Still, there were a couple of things with which I was less than thrilled in the last issue, chief among them the noticeable lack of Brian Pearce and Jill Zimmerman. I've informed both of these worthies of my exact feelings on this particular matter already, but I thought a little public noodging wouldn't hurt either. Let's get on the stick, guys - IJ isn't the same without you.

Then there's the matter of Clay Geerdes. Clay, as I've said many times, is probably, overall, my favourite IJ writer, month for month, though I haven't always agreed with everything he's written. Still, I look forward to reading his pieces each month, and whatever disagreements I've had with his ideas haven't been enough to mar my enjoyment of his writing. This time, however, I ran into serious trouble with him. First of all, while I agree with what I think is his basic premise, that the breast worship that seems to be inherent in this culture is not a particularly positive or healthy thing, I think he defeats his own purpose by referring, all the way through the piece, to breasts as "tits", "titties", "boobs", "mams" and several other adorable euphemisms. Now, there's nothing at all wrong with these words, in certain contexts—we've all used them and, under some circumstances, they can even be provocative or sort of cute—but if you're out to write a thought-piece on the history and effects of breast worship in this culture, using words like that sounds, at best, out of place and, at worst, offensive. More importantly, in the second place, it does pay to get the facts straight—the kind of thing about which Clay writes went on a long time before the fifties. Those tight-sweatered pin-up girls of the forties were not admired because the nation was undergoing a craze for cashmere, and Mae West's strong suit was not her legs.

Moving on, the statement that "Most of those who write critically about the system are outsiders who don't have the look and could never get a foot in the door of the bunny hutch" is ridiculous, utterly false, and more than a little condescending, harking back, as it does, to the homily that feminists are all ugly, dried-out old prunes, or even, God forbid, Lesbian, who couldn't "get" a man and so decided to hate all men. In answer to his question, yes, a woman with "the look" may very well pass up a chance to go up the class ladder (if that's what it is) by means of PLAYBOY and its ilk, as witness the thousands of Playmate-looking women who are not beating down the doors of the rabbit hutch for a chance to have thousands of anonymous, unknown men masturbate on their photographs. Some of the women who pass up this fantastic opportunity are even writing about the system, as it were, and in a much more forceful fashion than does Clay, so you see. As for the ones who do decide to go the PLAYBOY route, blaming them, even in a small way ("the pain and misery suffered by sisters everywhere because of the few who allow themselves to be exploited by the media") is nothing less than blaming the victim, and a spurious argument. Which came first—the desire of a certain segment of the population to see pictures of women with large breasts, or the women willing to pose for these pictures, for whatever reason?

Finally, as far as topless dancers goes, when I was with a carnival (in 1972), the bally was the teaser used to get people into the shows themselves, so that everyone who performed or exhibited him/herself in any way was on it—the fat man as well as the dancers did the bally. Occasionally the dancers were called "bally dancers", but only because they danced during the bally—it had nothing to do with "ballet" and, more frequently, their show was called the kooch or girly show. This may, of course, be a regional or time difference, but I think it shoots at least a small hole into Clay's theory. During the same period of time, and slightly earlier, people in San Francisco used to recruit teenage runaways—who I very much doubt saw themselves as entertainers surrounded by the glitter of show biz—to do topless dancing in some of the seedier clubs. Simply for the record, I was approached about this a couple of times myself, but turned the opportu-

nity down, partly out of sheer embarrassment and partly from some inkling that maybe there was a better way to make a living. I was also, at one time, approached about posing for some pictures for "European men's magazines" (the other side of the PLAYBOY coin), or, as the man put it, "pictures where you smile with both your mouths". I turned that one down too, but a friend of mine didn't and, not to be overly dramatic about it, no one ever saw her again. I think Clay's article might have benefited from some small mention of this type of thing.

Be that as it may, I found Clay's article, for whatever good intentions it might have had, paternalistic, condescending and short-sighted, accusations I never thought I'd find myself hurling at him. I still have a great deal of respect for his writing—one small piece wouldn't be enough to negate that—but it's diminished slightly. I've already harped on this more than I mean—and haven't been in the least funny in the process—so I'll leave it alone for now, but I hope I'll be able to like Clay's next piece. Writing a letter like this is less than a pleasure for me, particularly in the pages of IJ.

On that note, I'm going to bed and, hopefully, to sleep. Once asleep, I shall endeavor not to dream what I dreamed last year at this time, that the entire Dwight-Englewood High School March Band was stationed outside my window, tootling away at POPPIES BLOOM IN FLANDERS FIELD while forming themselves into a picture of the head of the local V.F.W. As I recall it, I awoke in a cold sweat, screaming, after my mother thoughtfully doused me with a pot of chicken fat she happened to have rendering at the time, and it was all most unpleasant. Do keep your fingers crossed.

Three cheers for the red, white and blue,
ANNI ACKNER
10 Hillside Ave., #8
Englewood, NJ 07631

Dear Elayne,

As usual, the recent issue of INSIDE JOKE was a welcome addition to my life which, in the past few weeks, has seen a remarkable increase in the personal bullshit factor.

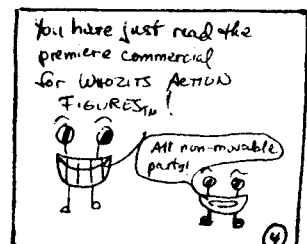
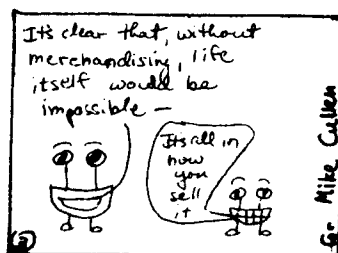
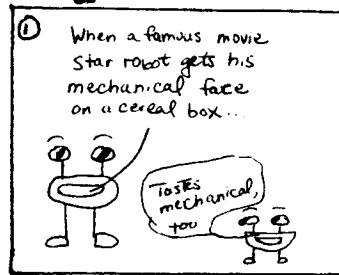
I've enclosed my completed questionnaire, and I must admit that I did vote for myself...I would like to keep on writing for IJ (Okay, I see lots of folks are still confused about this, so once more with—I hope—clarity: The polls are going to be used solely as an indication, not a "let's kick so-and-so out of IJ". They're merely opinion, and I felt it important to hear from you folks what you think of our contributors, period. Results won't be published because I said they would be confidential, but I do consider them all important to me personally, because in addition to publishing what I want to see, I am interested in doing things you folks want to see as well. All right, I'll stop before I talk myself into the ground...)...and that I had a bit of trouble evaluating the writers whose work has mainly been in serial form. I have a difficulty getting into serials, especially since the episodes are six weeks apart. And I hope that I offend no one by saying so.

A word of comment or two...since I'm so heavily into politics, I did get more than a chuckle or two out of Anni Ackner's piece on being queen. Her line about Michael Jackson was much appreciated by one who's tired of all the hype. Clay Geerdes' column on breasts had one hell of a lot of truth to it. I know a lot of guys who want to look at big 'uns but would never bring them home to meet the folks. Larry Fizz's celebrity addresses were excellent, and I appreciated finding out about a new Rhino Brothers record in Rory Houchens' column. Kris Gilpin's short bit on cinematic gobblers intrigued me. The Jerry Lewis film mentioned is currently available on video cassette, for those Lewis fans who would die without seeing it. Video cassettes are the way many truly terrible films are going to get national distribution. That, and HBO...

Take care all, Slack

MICHAEL DOBBS
24 Hampden Street
Indian Orchard, MA 01151

WHOZITS - In action?



"DON'T GO STRAIGHT - GO FORWARD" (WALLY LANDRETH / FOLDING CHAIRS)

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