



INSIDE J.O.K.E



new year's issue 35



INFORMATION



DOBBS COLLAGE-'84

-UPCOMING EVENTS-

If you have a date you'd like advertised (birthday, anniversary, the like), send it in by the deadline & I'll print it!

- JANUARY 30 - Richard Brautigan (b. 1935)
 JANUARY 31 - DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO IJ #36
 FEBRUARY 1 - George Pal (b. 1908)
 FEBRUARY 2 - Tom Smothers (45); Ayn Rand (b. 1905); James Joyce (b. 1882)
 FEBRUARY 3 - Melanie (38); Gertrude Stein (b. 1874)
 FEBRUARY 4 - Ida Lupino (67)
 FEBRUARY 6 - Babe Ruth (b. 1895)
 FEBRUARY 7 - Charles Dickens (b. 1812)
 FEBRUARY 8 - Jack Lemmon (60); James Dean (b. 1930)
 FEBRUARY 10 - Jimmy Durante (b. 1893); Donovan (39)
 FEBRUARY 11 - Thomas Edison (b. 1847)
 FEBRUARY 13 - Peter Tork (41)
 FEBRUARY 14 - Jack Benny (b. 1894)
 FEBRUARY 16 - Edgar Bergen (b. 1903)
 FEBRUARY 17 - Postal Rates Go Up Again - Be Forewarned!
 FEBRUARY 25 - Zeppo Marx (b. 1901); Anthony Burgess (68)
 FEBRUARY 26 - Buffalo Bill Cody (b. 1846)
 FEBRUARY 27 - Peter De Vries (b. 1910)
 FEBRUARY 28 - JOE SCHWIND (34); Zero Mostel (b. 1915)
 MARCH 1 - JED MARTINEZ (31)
 MARCH 2 - Lou Reed (41); John Irving (43)
 MARCH 3 - A.J. WRIGHT (33)
 MARCH 6 - BRIAN PEARCE (20)
 MARCH 12 - Jack Kerouac (b. 1922)
 MARCH 14 - Albert Einstein (b. 1829)
 MARCH 15 - DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO IJ #37 - beware!
 MARCH 17 - DALE ASHMON (33)
 MARCH 19 - Philip Roth (52)
 MARCH 22 - Chico Marx (b. 1891)
 MARCH 26 - Bob Elliot (62); NY Subway opens, 1870
 MARCH 28 - GENE WECHSLER (26) - h.b., bro!

 * INSIDE JOKE is put on hexaweekly by Elayne Wechsler and some dear *
 * friends, and emanates from the wilds of beautiful downtown Brooklyn *
 * NY, where one shakes one's head at kids and wonders, "If Frankie *
 * say 'jump off a bridge', would you do it?" Like, indeed, the Na- *
 * tional Geographic, this is best when read in the bathroom... *

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

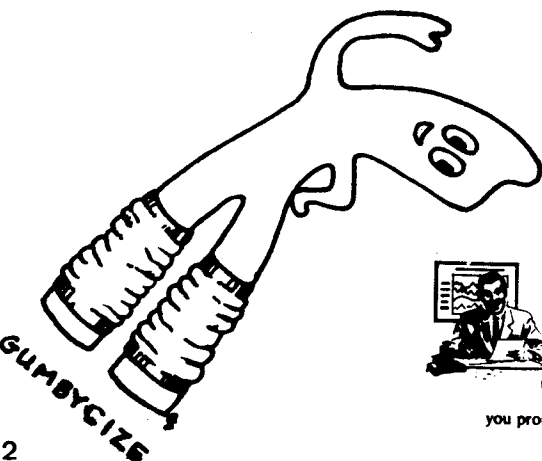
STAFF WRITERS	
ANNI ACKNER	DEBORAH BENEDICT
KEN FILAR	MICHAEL DOBBS
SUSAN PACKIE	MIKE GUNDERLOY
STEVEN SCHARFF	ROLDO
KERRY THORNLEY	CANDI STRECKER
ROBERT WOLLARD	A.J. WRIGHT

FRONT COVER: MICHAEL DOBBS-----BACK COVER: PHIL TORTORICI
 "PAPOON PAGE" COVER: ROBERT WOLLARD

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS THIS ISSUE:

ANDY AMSTER	PRUDENCE GAELOR	RICK MCCANN
GREG BLAIR	TOM GEDWILLO	RENINGTON MURPHY
BERNADETTE BOSKY	VERNON GRANT	LAWRENCE OBERC
CAROLYN LEE BOYD	DAN HOWLAND	JAKE OWSLEY
CYNTHIA CINQUE	TULI KUPFERBERG	AUDREY PARENTE
JOHN CRAWFORD	PETER LABRIOLA	DANA A. SNOW
ALICE ERMILICH	RANDY MAXSON	and "KID" SIEVE

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Be ready for strong language:
 The SubGenius Foundation
 P.O. Box 14236
 Dallas, Texas 75214



Screwed-up
 suburbanite with
 sex, drug, or
 social problems?
 The SubGenius
 Foundation may
 not "help" much,
 but it will make
 you proud to be insane...

ACKNOWLEDITORIALETC.

Welcome to the calm before the storm (especially apt as I write this, considering the relatively mild pre-winter the NY area had in Dec. 1984). On February 17, as you can see in the Events column, the Postal Office raises its rates again for most forms of postage, including the 1st class used to mail out IJs (as I send out less than 150 copies, we can't go bulk rate yet). I've tried to get info on new prices for 2 and 3 ounces, but they're not yet available, SO, from now on, if you're an IJ contributor and opt to send me stamps instead of the dollar, PLEASE CHECK as to what 2 oz. worth of stamps costs and send the appropriate amount.

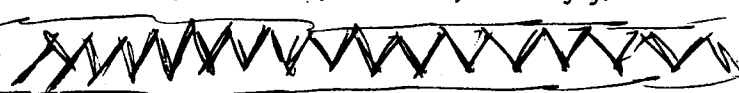
More importantly, though, is that IJ will NOT be raising its price; we'll stay at \$1 as long as I can keep it up, and what the hell, I'm due for a raise anyway...occasional donations don't hurt, though...Speaking of which, it's high time I acknowledge monetary benefactors this high up in the editorial anyway: Thanks to J.C. Brainbeau, Steve Chaput, "Mr. Mike" and Jim Tauscher for the extra bucks...

And thanks to all you lovely folks who sent nifty cards'n' stuff for my birthday and/or \$mas. It might be considered kinda tacky to list names for this sort of thing here, so I hope I can remember to thank you all individually.

Welcome to new staffer A.J. Wright, who formally introduces himself on page 3. A complete listing of staffers is also on this page, in case you feel like writing to any of 'em direct (and that is quite encouraged). Tom Gedwillo and Rory Houchens will return with their columns next month, b-t-w. Also next month, since the art store where I buy dot screens closed for the holiday season before I was able to procure same, will be the promised pictures of IJ subscribers from California, and also (with luck) the pictures from our gala New Year's Eve party held on December 30 (don't worry, next year we hold it the Saturday before New Year's!).

For those new among us, and welcome to you as well: Subscriptions to INSIDE JOKE are \$1 an issue, and advance subs of up to \$8 (a year's worth of IJ) may be purchased. Anything over \$8 is considered donation. ADVANCE SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NON-REFUNDABLE, but I should give plenty of notice when IJ folds someday so y'all shouldn't lose too much dough...If you'd like to submit something to IJ and are confused about what not to send, writers'/artists' guidelines are available for a SASE. If you submit something for a particular issue, you have the option of paying me \$1 for that issue or, since you're a contributor, only the 2 ounces' worth of postage. I cannot send out free contributors' copies as yet, sorry. All submissions (art, back page fillers, columns, stories, letters—no cover this time, though, we have one for #36) must be in my hands by the deadline—see the Events column for upcoming deadlines. The earlier I get your stuff, the easier it is for me to get this out on time, so please adhere. Did I leave anything out? Oh yes, a blessed new year to you all, even though it still feels like 1984 to me, and this issue is not dedicated to anyone so make up your own dedication.* All submissions, complaints, kudos or grants can be sent to:

P.O. Box 1609, Madison Square Station, New York, NY 10159
 and remember, if you're making out a check, PLEASE make it out to me, Elayne Wechsler, NOT to IJ, ok? Enjoy!



Staffers welcome and truly appreciate your comments on their work here, and would love to hear from IJ readers personally. Since I haven't published their addresses in some time, here's the current listing:

ANNI ACKNER—10 Hillside Ave., #8, Englewood, NJ 07631
 MICHAEL DOBBS—24 Hampden St., Indian Orchard, MA 01151
 KEN FILAR—417 Westervelt Ave. #2, Staten Island, NY 10301
 TOM GEDWILLO//DEBORAH BENEDICT (same address)—
 4718 Calvert St., Lincoln, NE 68506
 MIKE GUNDERLOY—41 Lawrence St., Medford, MA 02155
 RORY HOUCHEHS—R.R. #2, Colfax, IL 61728
 SUSAN PACKIE—10-D Bellevue Ct., Belleville, NJ 07109
 GEORG PATTERSON—48 Prospect St., Jersey City, NJ 07307
 ROLDO—1232 Downing St., Winnipeg, Man. R3E 2R7 CANADA
 STEVEN SCHARFF—P.O. Box 5004, Hillside Twp., NJ 07205-5004
 CANDI STRECKER—710 Diamond St., San Francisco, CA 94114
 KERRY THORNLEY—2981 Lookout Place NE, Atlanta, GA 30305
 ROBERT WOLLARD—1356 Sulphur Springs Ave. #4,
 St. Helena, CA 94574
 A.J. WRIGHT—see page 3

Fan Noose

Promised plugs of parody papers are posted past this prattle; please pursue patience whilst I peruse the pack of publications poured in prior... I think I need alliteration practice... I've always thought THE CLOSEST PENGUINS were the ones you couldn't see, but Denise Dee, the editor/publisher of this San Fran-based mag (from the same folks who brought you LOBSTER TENDENCIES) has her own definition, I'm sure. All I can say for certain is that the stream-of-consciousness style of the stories within is so intelligent and engaging that, even though most of the publication is hand-written, I found myself absorbed within its world for a good hour's worth, at least. If I can attune myself to the writing, I'll be contributing to this one, and I highly recommend it be checked out. To do so, send \$1 to 333 Tenth St., San Francisco, CA 94103... Also of a delightful note is DREAMSHORE, issue #17 of which runs gamuts from Truffaut tributes to children's prose to alternate-universe-type cultures. Editor Jan Byron says "We need stuff bad, so if you or any of your cronies have written something you think we'd like (we're not quite as spacey and airheaded as our writer's guide suggests; we've got running columns on serious occult study, the use of children's television to revolutionize their little minds, space advances, anti-child-abuse and so forth), please send it right along." The aforementioned guidelines can be gotten for a SASE, the mag for \$1 per issue or \$7 a year, sent to 618 S. Mitchell, Bloomington, IN 47401... Picking up (and spreading) Erisian slack is A DISCORDIAN DIRECTORY, run by some being calling itself Myrococosmus V. TD. Most folks you'd expect to be here—Thornley, Gunderloy, Crawford, Roldo, Katz, Hlavaty, Brainbeau, even "Bob"—are in amongst the two 8 1/2 x 14 pages, but DDD seems more of an adsheet than a networker so far. Stay tuned, and for a sample issue write Box 23061, Knoxville, TN 37922-1061... PHIZ looks like it's got a way to go too, but it's already on issue #11. However, editor Bruce Tomlley shows promise and a good sense of capturing prosaic details in everyday life, though it's a bit on the fandom-name-dropping side. Funny bit within about suggestions for "Indiana Jones" sequels, and even an article by JJ staffer Strecker. \$1 to 2230 Huron Dr., Concord, CA 94519... UNSPOKEN IMAGES bills itself as "a new art and literature mag", and it vacillates from sophomoric poetry to sharp satire to a hilarious back-page questionnaire (some of which I may steal for JJ's next one). It's put out in newspaper format, lists no price so send SASE query, and co-editor Phil Krestedemas is "looking for correspondence, ideas, etc." and contribs if you live in the S. Florida area—send to 4885 N.W. 6th St., Plantation, FL 33317... Apologies to Max Haynes for not plugging him sooner, but DOG SLOBBER, a vehicle for Max's considerable artistic and postcard-making talents, fell behind the file and I only rediscovered it (with joy)—lots of fun, and well worth \$1 plus 50¢ postage to 2732 2nd Ave. S., Suite 311, Minneapolis, MN 55408... Naturally unread-in-full as yet is the latest UTNE READER (#7, Dec/Jan), the guide to the best and most interesting in progressive literature, and a must for folks like me who want to read everything but don't have the time to sift through the garbaggio. A sheer bargain at \$4, or you can subscribe for a year at \$18 for 6 issues—P.O. Box 1974, Marlon, OH 43305... With issue #3, Tom Cornejo has polished up his SICK SYSTEM DIGEST with actual typed submissions, always great art, and more variety. One of the first pubs to run for when JJ folds someday, and it's \$1 to P.O. Box 2381, Redondo Beach, CA 90278... On the other hand, \$2 is way too much money to pay for Randy Maxson's latest comic strip collection, ZEEK THE GEEK'S THEATRE OF WEIRDNESS—especially if you've seen his cartoons in JJ, as almost all of his selections have appeared here already—unless you're a real Maxson collector. Or if you want to have them all in the same place, in nice blue print with lots of white space. Order from Randy at 56A Bowdoin St., Malden, MA 02148... Another JJ friend, Pete Labriola (aka Ace Backwards), is "looking for addresses of any suitably bent publication that might be interested in printing my cute li'l comical strip." WHATEVER-I-FEEL-LIKE-COMICS. "Preferably ones that pay \$\$ cuz I'm having a hard time keeping in stamps and pens, but it's free to any cool 'zines that bear the sacred JJ-SEAL-OF-APPROVAL" (I guess he means anybody reading this). If you're in the market for Pete's stuff, write him at P.O. Box 4846, Berkeley, CA 94704... From strips to minis, JJ staffer Steven Scharff is one of the contributors (other familiar names include Steve Willis, Max Haynes, Bill Shut, Clark Dissmeyer, Brad Foster, Jim Ryan, Clay Geerdes) to Walter Rodgers' neat and slick JUST ANOTHER 8-PAGE WONDER, actually 24 pages of mini-comic fun and diversity, to be gotten for \$1 from P.O. Box 605, Blairstown, NJ 07825... And Matt Fezzell's latest mini adventure is CUTEGIRL #22, subtitled "Grafted into the Army," and with it you'll get Matt's latest updated listing, all for only a quarter—he's at Box 5803, Raleigh, NJ 27605... Minis of many diverse sizes can be had from M. Schafer with titles like EMOTIONAL VOMIT and ZARG, clever art/collage combos that'll have you wondering if you haven't slipped through some warp somewhere. Send SASE for info to M. at 75 Fairmont Ave., #3B, New York, NY 10040... And the KANSAS COLLEGE OF COLLEGE is in session again, thanks to master collagist Joe Schwind and friends—yours for the askin', from P.O. Box 8187, Shawnee Mission, KS 66208... It's a shame it only comes around once a year, but LIGHT TIMES more than rivals this humble newsletter for mindfucking, delightful excrementation. The only thing that gets to me about the latest issue is that, while editor Art Wand borrows liberally from past IJs (stuff by A.J. Wright, Robert Willard and Deborah Benedict, to name a few), he doesn't really credit his source, and it would've been nice to see our palatial p.o. somewhere within, as these are the type of readers with whom I most like to network (and we could always use more subscribers, eh?). Still, Art does mention us briefly on his back page, and there's FANTASTIC stuff from IJer Roldo in here, so 'tis well worth your greenback to P.O. Box 84366, Los Angeles, CA 90073... I was quite surprised, on the other hand, that the latest issue (V. IV, #4) of the Yippie! newspaper OVERTHROW did mention us and gave out the address (underneath a borrowed "Mr. Fix" strip from an issue or

two ago), in amongst their usual political 'revelations' and reports on outrages throughout the country, subverting the system, assorted kooks and creeps, and movement news. It's still only \$1, available from VIP headquarters at P.O. Box 392, Canal St. Station, New York, NY 10013... Meanwhile, Joe Borowski (aka Patch) continues to mystify me and put ne'er-spoken words in my mouth in his seemingly purposeless ALAN DECOTES & THE PHANTOMS, WITH THE PHANTOMETTES PHAN CLUB. I'm sure this would make lots more sense if I, or anyone I know, ever heard of Alan Decotes, but no matter, Patch has a good heart anyway and is an active worker for worthy, peaceful causes, so if you're curious, write him at P.O. Box 238, College Point, NY 11356... Of course, turnabout being fair play, Patch would probably see little point by my own FOUR-ALARM FIRE-SIGNAL, mostly purposeless to someone who'd never heard of The Firesign Theatre. If you have, though, and you've not received issue #4 (it's free), write me and I'll put you on our mailing list and send it along, no obligation... Which brings us back to "doe", I guess, and our regularly-received publications for which we offer encapsulated plugs: AGAINST THE WALL V. 13, #1—Bill George, P.O. Box 444, Westfield, NJ 07091 (libertarian, some bad fiction; \$2); FACTSHEET FIVE #12—Mike Gunderloy, 41 Lawrence St., Medford, MA 02155 (journal of cross-pollination, which means if you want a fuller and more comprehensive version of this kind of column, this is the publication to get, and besides that, Anni and S. Chaput write for it too; \$1.50); GOOD DAY SUNSHINE #24—Charles F. Rosenay III, 397 Edgewood Ave., New Haven, CT 06511 (Beatles; \$2/\$2.50 Can.); JET LAG #s 49,50—Tony Renner, 8419 Halls Ferry, St. Louis, MO 63147 (local & nat'l. music happenings, other reviews & interviews; \$1/\$1.25 Can.); THE MONKEES/BOYCE & HART PHOTO FAN CLUB #56—Jodi Hamrich, 508 8th St. NE #4, Watertown, SD 57201 (M/BBH, and congrats Jodi who's now co-editor; 50¢ + SASE); THE MONTHLY INDEPENDENT TRIBUNE TIMES JOURNAL POST GAZETTE NEWS CHRONICLE BULLETIN #24—J.S. Child, 2510 Bancroft Way #207, Berkeley, CA 94074 (art & fiction; free so be nice & send SASE); SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #53—Richard Geis, P.O. Box 11408, Portland, OR 97211 (semipro, Hugo-winning "fanzine"; \$2.50); THE SOUTHERN LIBERTARIAN MESSENGER V. XIII #s 6,7—John T. Harlee, Rt. 10, Box 52A, Florence, SC 29501 (capsule news, articles, libertarian issues; SASE); STAR BLAZERS FANDOM REPORT #15—Michael Pinto, P.O. Box 1047, Bellmore, NY 11710 (Star Blazers & other Japanese animation; SASE); WARNING! #12—"Bill Bored", P.O. Box 102993, Anchorage, AK 99510 (punk & skateboarding [?]; \$1)... Now, as promised, the latest news on the parody-paper front: As some know, I have been collecting these parodies for a couple years now, and though I can't intercept everything (many being quite local), I've got a goodly share built up. Two recent arrivals are: COSMOPARODY - With Joan Rivers' brastrap showing on the cover and articles within like "Shed Those Unwanted Brains" and "Single Bride: Having It All—Alone!", most of which are even funny, this is a must for those of us fed up with the plasticized chicettes who go in for the real thing. Put out by Gerald Taylor and Edward Shain, it's available for \$5 from TSM Publishing Corp. 226 E. 54th St., New York, NY 10022... And if you were hard-pressed to get the jokes in our recent Rupert Murdoch parody, you probably won't like the POST NEW YORK POST, which copies the trashy NY "newspaper" style for style, with the twist that the nukes have just gone off and World War III has started and ended. The paper transcends this one-joke vehicle to make incisive satiric commentary about our country's obsession with Michael Jackson and other cultural 'icons', sleazy sensationalism, and even WINGO! Those responsible include Robert Vane, Lewis Grossberger, Kurt Andersen and Warren Leight, and of course a host of writers. \$3 per copy to Telepictures Publishing Inc., 300 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10017.

Inside JJ Staffers

Many welcomes to our newest staff writer, A.J. Wright. A.J.'s been with us for awhile now, specializing in the form Luke McGuff coined "minifictions" (1- or 2-paragraph stories), and sent along his basic standard autobio by way of formal introduction.

A.J. WRIGHT
2208 Chapel Hill Rd.
Birmingham, AL 35216
3-3-52

A.J. Wright, 32, is librarian for the Department of Anesthesiology, University of Alabama in Birmingham School of Medicine. He has published two poetry chapbooks,

Frozen Fruit (duBois Zone, 1978) and Right Now I Feel Like Robert Johnson (Timberline, 1981). More than 400 of his poems and articles have appeared in such journals as Southern Exposure, Poem, Old West and Aura. His other interests include Alabama and southern history, microcomputer applications and contemplating the philosophical importance of film noir.

**"FOUR THINGS COME NOT BACK —
THE SPOKEN WORD, THE SPED ARROW, THE PAST
LIFE AND THE NEGLECTED OPPORTUNITY". —
ANON.**

**In a secular sense that's probably true but in a spiri-
tual sense which is the only sense that makes ANY
sense EVERYTHING comes back. Wing a SASE to
arithmetically and spiritually sound
HEREBEFORE**

Box 2243 — YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO, 44504

QUANTUM COURTESY

BY MILDRED NEPTUNE

"Isn't he nice? And she's nice too!" - George Carlin

DEATH BY SNEEZING!

What is Quantum Courtesy? It's nothing serious - just a phrase I invented. From Quantum=Latin, neuter singular; how much/how many - meaning quantity or amount. From Courtesy=M.E., curtesie and O.F. Curteis - meaning courteous, and L.L. cortis - court. Synonym: Reciprocal Etiquette.

This column will attempt to solve all manner of social and anti-social behavior problems, according to my perfect philosophical system.

These are REAL questions from REAL people. I did not make them up. I made up the answers. That is what a columnist does. That is why I wanted to be a columnist.

Q: What are some of the basic "rules" of Quantum Courtesy?

- Wanda Vitch, Lincoln, NE

A: There are none. Q.C. recognises that situations and people are like snowflakes; no two are alike. Hence the Q and A format. If there were rules, I could just list them all, be done with it and spend the rest of my life in my favorite opium den (OPIES, 223 South 13th St., right here in town). But, alas, alack, *smé de boue*, there are no easy opening pull tabs in Q.C., no cut along the dotted line, no salesman will call or visit - you're on your own in the next-to-last world. But, if Q.C. did have a guiding rule or motto or axiom, it would be in the form of a question and this question would be: "What fresh hell is this, and what shall I do about it?" Thank you for your question. I say that even though you didn't thank me in advance for the answer. Sometimes one should go beyond Quantum Courtesy. I do this because I have always been a trailblazer. I like firemen.

Q: Dear Mildred, I know enough to say "God Bless You" when someone sneezes once—but what of a situation wherein a person has a sneezing fit and sneezes repeatedly? What does one say?

- Just trying to be perfect,
Ames, Iowa

A: Dear Just Trying,

I won't say anything about your familiar use of my name. I am above that sort of petty complaining. The answer to your question is this: One continues to say "God bless you" after each sneeze, until one is satisfied that the deity involved has fulfilled the request. Should the sneezer die from sneezing, one is careful to send flowers with a low pollen count.

Q: Dear Miss Neptune, What does one do about a co-worker who is spreading vicious lies about one?

- A.W. used to be from N.Y.C.

A: Dear A.W., One reacts in the best tradition of Q.C. Unfortunately, Q.C. has no tradition. If one loathes the rumour monger, one proceeds to spread an even more vituperative rumour about them. If one is indifferent the the rumour monger, one should have one's head examined. It is positively inhuman to not despise and fear someone who is spreading malicious lies or facts about you. Thank you for addressing me properly, even though you were too cowardly to give me your full name.

Q: Dear Miss Neptune, What gives you the right to solve problems and give people advice?

- Storm Alligator,
Worst House on the Block

A: Dear Storm: The same unknown factor that gives you the right to question my rights. The same unknown factor that gives flowers the right to bloom in the spring and little green apples to fall from the tree. The same unknown factor that allows miserable poets like Rod McKuen and Lois Wyse to be published, the same unknown factor that makes fools fall in love. We will all spend our lives on Indian Island with U.N. Owen. You should know this, Storm. An

etiquette specialist is just a well-mannered pedant, but a poorly designed facial tattoo can ruin you for life.

Q: Dear Ms. Neptune, What can be done about a person who is always bragging about how much money they have? Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to pay attention to me and my question.

Sincerely,

- Jean Vestecka, Omaha, NE

A: Dear Jean,

The best thing one can do to break the spirit of the wealth braggart is to hit them up for a large loan whilst complimenting them on their charitable character. You are most certainly welcome, but please never address me as MS. again. I do not live in a manila envelope.

Mildred Neptune welcomes your questions and comments.

Please write her in care of her host personality, DEBORAH BENEDICT (address in staff writer listing, page 3).

SIGNPOSTS ON THE QUEST FOR THE PERFECT DRUNK by Rodny K Dioxin

Hey dere, sports fans. Ya know, a lotta people (and I mean one hell of a lotta people—more than ya find in some small cities and most art film houses) come up ta me and say, "Rodny, I got problems" to which I saw "so does da world moron...do I look like Dr. Joyce-Fuckin'-Brothers? You is a sick puppy. Get away from me. Yer makin' my beer go flat." And have ya ever noticed dat these are always the kinda people that ya would bring home ta meet the 'rents? It's enuf to make ya lose yer "Marshmallow Krispies." Anyway, I wuz at Radio City (America's fave way cool, art deco airplane hangar) to check out the Psychedelic Furs (and where were you?). Be that as splendid as it may, I wuz in a bar after, tryin' ta teach the bartender how to make a Melon Ball, when this GoGo-ette from Hell comes up ta me. You know her; at heart she's a val, but she wants ta be "Batcave" in the worst way—which she invariably finds. So she's givin' me a litany of her problems and ya know how ta deal wif that (altho there are those who would advocate throwing up on such types). I just wasn't up for her shit. I got enuf of my own. I know ...not too rude. Well, fuck manners—I'm an artist. Besides, I was lookin' for a phone. I'd just hit on a great idea and I hadda call Pru and tell her. It was all about this guy who keeps finding instant cocoa mix in his stuff. At first it's just in his shoes. Then it spreads to da floor. Soon he's wakin' up every morning and findin' Nestle's on his sheets, in his hair, in his mouth. Then the marshmallows show up and things get really scary. I wanted ta call it "300 Pounds of Instant Hot Chocolate And It's All In My Shoes" or maybe "The Night the Marshmallows Arrived." But I couldn't get through. I was bummed. At least the bartender had finally gotten the Melon Ball down right. So I had a few, even though I knew the quest was over for the evenin'. After that it all gets a lil' fuzzy. I was walkin' back to the subway ta go crash somewhere when I noticed the streets gettin' sticky. No fool I an' proceeded to prove same (or try) by headin' for da nearest train station. Once inside, I wuz set on fire by five Good Humor men all of whom bore da strangest resemblance to Bruce Lose from "Flipper." Yeah, I can't explain it either. He—or rather they—kept tryin' ta sell me this gross banana split, wif dese moldy bananas (they were sorta purplish) and green cherries and lotsa marshmallow syrup. All I wanted was a Tab. There was this wacko woman over in da corner of da station screamin' somethin' about belly signals. I didn't understand but it didn't matter cos she got nibbled ta death by an okapi 'fore I had time ta complain. The situation was definitely startin' ta deteriorate. I was feelin' much too much like Dr. Nadir (from "Frankenstein Meets the Space Monster") which ain't any fun at all—I wanted ta see "Bela Lugosi Meets A Brooklyn Gorilla" anyway. The Good Humor men were droning on about the GNP and how much they loved Sheena Easton and circling around throwing whipped farina in my face. I was going under; old comedy albums were starting to impress themselves on my thought patterns. All around me was a festival of splatter effects and there were razor blades headed straight for my jugular. I knew dey were in my hands—they were my hands...

I woke up in a cold sweat. Biwwy wuz asleep in da next room. I could hear him snorin' as da sun appeared in da sky. I looked at my fingers and shuddered. I knew I wuz doin' somethin' rite.

DIARY of The ROCK FIEND

by Anni Ackner

RESOLUTION FOR THE HELL OF IT

I don't know if anyone out there has ever noticed this—presumably you all have one or two other things on your minds though, on the other hand, like that variety of adolescent which, smitten by Michael Jackson, insists on moonwalking across crowded intersections, this is actually a little hard to ignore—but humour columnists, in a manner akin to that of fruit-bearing trees, the members of Congress, and the sexual cycles of dogs, operate on a more or less seasonal basis. That is to say that, while we who are compelled, for one reason or another, to lock ourselves in lonely rooms and attempt to find something amusing to say about a world which contains Phil Donahue indulge this mania on a fairly regular schedule, the things about which we chose to write, and the format in which we chose to write them, vary gently with the seasons while tending to remain consistent from one writer to another.

In the springtime, for instance, while normal people are checking the baseball schedules, jamming the highways on Memorial Day, and contemplating suicide as they contemplate last year's bathing suit, humour columnists are huddled gloomily over their typewriters, busily ferreting out the fun in hayfever, middle-aged businessmen in madras bermuda shorts, and the vagaries of George Steinbrenner. The first sure sign of summer is NOT, as some folks might tell you, the first warm day at the beach—it is the sight of the first humour columnist crabbing about sand in his or her egg salad sandwiches. (If you're beginning to get the idea here that humour columnists are a cynical, curmudgeonly lot, incapable of enjoying anything, I can't say as I blame you, but, by the same token, if you were surrounded by people who felt called upon to interrupt your dinner and tell you all about the dream they had that they were sure would make just an uproarious column, you wouldn't exactly be a bundle of charm and good cheer either.) Autumn sends the little birdies flying south for the season, the little kiddies back to school, and the little humour columnists to the champagne bottles, celebrating the fact that the little birdies are flying south and the little kiddies are back in school (actually, autumn is the only season humour columnists really like, possibly because it is the only season during which nothing drips, chafes, sweats, melts, freezes, rubs, pinches, or shows up at one's parties in a Prince tee-shirt. There are three days in mid-October during which humour columnists are supremely happy people), while the Christmas season (we won't even discuss the rest of winter, as what humour columnists write about THEN simply does not bear thinking of) finds humour columnists nestled all snug in their beds (humour columnists love their beds like junior senators from Western states love small appropriations bills—and for roughly the same reasons—and spend as much time nestling there as possible, particularly during the winter when there's always the bare possibility that someone will call them and suggest sliding around a sheet of ice with pieces of metal attached to their feet) with visions of columns composed of New Year's Resolutions or the Ten Best Fill In the Blank of the Previous Year dancing in their heads. Never mind the price of fresh vegetables or the wardrobe of that hideous person who insists on living down the hall—nothing fluctuates with the seasons more than the literary output of the average humour columnist.

This being, once again, the Christmas season (and I don't know about you guys, but it seems to me that the Christmas season, much as I love it, is appearing with more and more frequency lately, so that those three days in mid-October were the only ones all year during which I was not buying a gift, wrapping a gift, or wondering what on earth I was going to do with still another monogrammed pen and pencil set), and myself being, more or less, a humour columnist—anyone with any clever ideas about just what else I might be is hereby requested to keep them to themselves—I really do feel called upon, therefore, to keep up the tradition of things and knock out a nifty little column about the Ten Best Whatever's or My New Year's Resolutions. However, fortunately for all concerned—or else this would be a very short piece indeed, and Our Beloved Editor might have to fill in with some of my old poems or something—this is not quite as easy as it seems.

There is, first of all, the problem of those Ten Best Whatever Comes To Minds. A column like that, while a splendid idea in theory, rests upon the assumption that, in the preceding year, there have been at least ten of any given thing that can properly be called "the best" of that given thing. That is to say that, if one is going to write up what were, in one's opinion, the Ten Best Movies of the preceding year, one must first concede that there were ten movies released in the preceding year that did not immediately cause one to long for the good old days of the Influenza Epidemic, which, after sitting in stupefied horror through a little love called (I think) PRIVATE SCHOOL, is simply not a concession I am prepared to make (incidentally, as a sort of side career, I have founded a charitable organization called The Society for the Early Demise of Phoebe Cates. Applications are now being accepted). The same holds true, in this year of PUNKY BREWSTER, for the Ten Best Television Shows and, having now encountered a group of individuals who refer to themselves as Frankie Goes To Hollywood, rock records (this last may be just a sign of age, however. I find myself increasingly unable to tolerate music created by anyone younger than I am which seems, these days, to include just about everybody except Jackson Browne, who LOOKS younger than I do). As a matter of fact, were you to ask me, I think I might be fairly hard-pressed to come up with ten of anything, or even an assorted ten-pack of things, created in the past year that I could honestly consider "The Best," or even reasonably good. In fact, the nicest thing I can think to say about 1984 is that, with its ending, Mr. Orwell and his book will be relegated back to the Cliff Notes and used to torture high school students, which is precisely for what the Almighty intended them.

In any event, none of that makes for a "Ten Best" column of any stature or, for that matter, its opposite number, the "Ten Worst" column relied upon by columnists who have had to spend Thanksgiving in the company of the sort of people who made the 11-month-long football season such a moving force in today's society, for that variety of column requires that the humourist single out ten items that were decidedly worse than anything else created in a given year, a fine distinction which, after this year, is completely beyond whatever powers of judgment I might normally possess. This sorry state of affairs leaves me, therefore, with New Year's Resolutions.

Now, New Year's Resolutions are undoubtedly lovely and useful things. For one thing, they give us all something suitably mindless and soothing to do on those grim, grim New Year's Afternoons as we struggle to keep our thoughts from mercilessly straying to our encounter with what we vainly hope was not an entire squadron of off-duty policepeople at some drinking establishment we have every reason to believe was located either in a small foreign country or on the outskirts of San Quentin on the previous evening, and, for another, they make us all Better People, which keeps the charitable organizations in business or, if they don't make us Better People, they make us feel guilty about not being Better People, which keeps the religious organizations in business, and one way or another, someone gets the good of them. The thing that's bothering me about the entire affair is that the someone getting the good of it never turns out to be me.

I mean, for an unconscionably long time now, one New Year's Day after another, I have been making dozens of resolutions simply guaranteed to turn me into a Better Person, Wonderful Human Being and all-around Spiffy Gal to Have at a Social Occasion. I have Resolved to give up smoking (I have never managed to last more than three hours at this, but it's always good for a few chuckles and it earns one brownie points with the kind of people who give each other air fresheners for Christmas), to never tell that awful story about the Grateful Dead's road crew again, to gamely sample whatever is put before me at a sit-down dinner party, even if it involves pouring Campbell's Cream of Mushroom Soup over what once was a perfectly respectable can of tuna fish, and, by conservative estimate, to lose 6,280 pounds, and the thing I think should be glaringly obvious about all this is that every bit of it was calculated to make me more acceptable to the rest of the world. Well, I'M not stupid. You don't have to hit ME over the head with any bricks. After 31 years of careful deliberation, I have reached the conclusion that it's only fair—and certainly past due time—for the rest of the world to try and make itself somewhat more acceptable to me. Lord knows I've tried to bring this about over the years, in the most gentle ways I knew. I wrote detailed lists of rules for the rest of the world's behaviour, gave amusing and informative quizzes on the subject and once, in desperation, issued an entire set of Demands, all to no discernable avail. But I am, if nothing else, a forgiving soul, and hope springs eternal in my innocent heart, so, in the Spirit of the Season, I now offer

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD (TO MAKE THINGS JUST A LITTLE BIT HAPPIER FOR ANNI)

We, the Rest of the World, do hereby resolve:

1. That having come to the realization that a Humour Columnist, even beyond her need for food, shelter and an occasional interesting blond man in extremely tight trousers, requires challenge in order to keep her Bright and Witty, we will never again elect a 72-year-old man who lives on a ranch, believes in the homing propensities of nuclear missiles and refers to his wife as "Mommy" to high public office. Fun is fun, but some things are just too easy.
2. That being aware that Ms. Ackner, in particular, is a woman of rare and delicate sensibilities, possessed of the finely-tuned nerves and high-strung nature that go hand in hand with those sensibilities, and therefore prone to both psychic and emotional pain due to outside forces, and easily thrown off balance, we will endeavor never again to allow any male whose voice has not yet changed, even if he is past the age of puberty—especially if he is past the age of puberty—to perpetuate a phonograph recording on an unsuspecting listening public.
3. That while we're on the subject, we will begin to have serious second thoughts concerning any musical group whose first video includes more than two young men doing amusing things to a female tied in an interesting position with steel wool, baling wire and/or last night's linguini, anything dead, the lead singer attempting to pilot an airplane manufactured earlier than 1982, or a cast greater than that of the combined segments of the STAR WARS trilogy.
4. That we will come to a profound realization concerning the actual facts of the adult female body, and apprise our clothing designers accordingly. In other words, those cute little Spandex numbers that require a figure like that of Malibu Barbie's are out.
5. That while we will admit that the worship of children may have had its place in certain less industrialized cultures, we will do our level best to come to understand that the deification of 16-year-old girls whose single accomplishment in life is the ability to perform somersaults without causing the crotches of their exercise suits to ride up, in a society such as ours, borders ever so slightly on the tacky.
6. That a day without Joan Collins is like a day without a small attack of acute gastritis, and we will act accordingly.
7. That, in the interests of good taste, good breeding, good manners, and the good nature of Thinking People everywhere, particularly Ms. Ackner, the words "upscale," "gentrification," "options," "multi-level tax benefits" and "tailored for Murjani by Gloria Vanderbilt" will be herewith stricken from our vocabularies.
8. That lips that touch Dr. Pritiken's diet shall never touch ours.
9. That should we be so fortunate as to give up every one of our bad habits, get traded or free-agented away from the New York Yankees, or obtain divorces from the sort of celebrities who moonlight by appearing on either THE LOVE BOAT or the Mike Douglas Show, we will refrain from 5

sharing our happiness by writing books about the experience.
10. And that, finally, should we really feel it absolutely necessary to appear in public wearing the clothing of the opposite sex, we will try to do so with tact and discretion, and not call particular attention to the inescapable fact that it's difficult to find support hose in Men's 46 long while those around us are attempting to digest their Oysters Rockefeller.

As anyone can plainly see, these are Reasonable Resolutions, easily implemented and capable, if properly handled, of bringing about useful and desirable changes in this troubled world of ours. It is my fervent hope that all of you will think them over carefully, and afford them the effort and respect they deserve, acting upon them to the best of your ability, making this a better life for me and me. In the meantime, we here at Diary of the Rock Fiend wish you all a healthy and happy New Year, and hope you will excuse our hasty departure. Spring will be on us before we even know it, and we have to investigate a rumour that George Steinbrenner is planning to trade away anyone who bats over .250 in the pre-season games.

A LOVESONG TO PAM DAWBER

A 50s-style ballad by
Dana Snow

Pam, I've only praise for you.
This song will not be rude,
Because you're pretty & talented
And I don't want to be sued.
I'd never insult my Pam;
No mud will I be slinging!
It's accurate to say your chest
Is flat but not your singing!
You've a lovely singing voice
With such romantic tones.
I want to take you out to dine
And later jump your bones.
We should play some nightclubs
Maybe we'll sing "Stormy Weather,"
'Cause when I see you on TV,
I want to do an act together.
Your skills are quite impressive.
You can sweat like a longshoreman
And by making friends in Africa,
You got to watch Ali and Foreman.
Your overbite is sexy, but
My love's just not orthodontal.
I would like to dance with you,
But mainly horizontal.

Ms. Dawber, I know I'm your type
Because I am mammalian.
Please drop Mork and go with me;
Dump that illegal alien!
Robin is a nutty guy—
To be exact, a cashew.
I hear that often in mid-take,
He'd take time out to flash you.

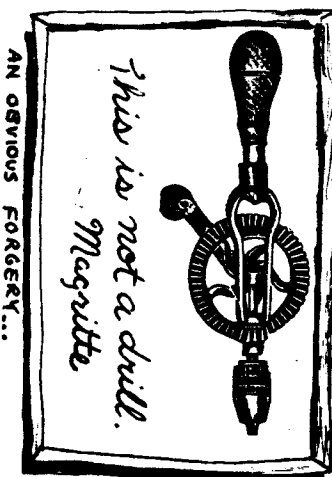
Please, my little Pammie-pie!
I only want a date!
Are you heterosexual
Or only PLAYING straight?
Pam, I am not JUST some nut—
Some creep in from New York.
I fell for you the first time that
I heard you say "Oh, Mork!"

You make a hefty salary
Take home a lot of loot.
What do you say on tax returns,
"Occupation: Being cute"?
I know you're a celebrity,
But I don't give a damn!
It will not be a one-night stand!
No wam-bam-thank-you-Pam!

THE WAR WITHIN

by Susan Packie
He quit his job -
said it was more dangerous
than his Vietnam stint.
Each morning he would
don a bulletproof vest,
check his revolver,
slip a billy club and mace
into an attaché case.
His wife left him.
He couldn't get insurance.
If anything went wrong
he was assured a new ID
and a ticket to Hong Kong.
His psychiatrist,
paid for by the boss,
prayed for memory loss.
He longed for job automation.
His résumé revealed
that he had taught
the second grade.

(This is no occult garbage.)
Face the hard facts with morbid humor and
your own inherent strangeness.
Psychiatry, Positive thinking, blind faith: all bunk.
Stand up for your own abnormality.

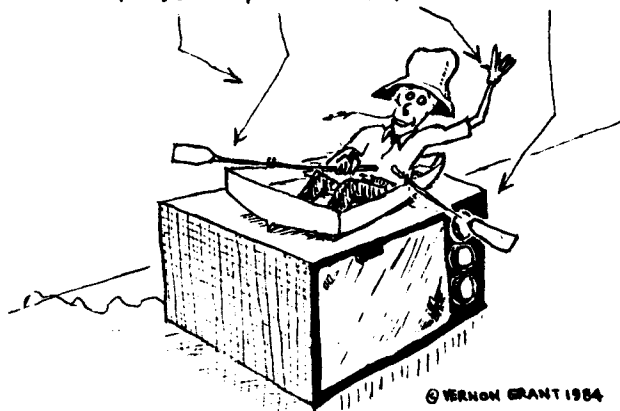


Become a Doktor of the Forbidden Sciences!
Make religion a kick-ass adventure!
Self-help through raising hell!
Bogus ordination, crazed booklet \$2.

The Church of the SubGenius
P.O. Box 140306
Dallas, TX 75214



MIKE ROW WAVE OVEN



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"PATENT OFFICE SHOCKERS #39"

WOE

by Alice Ermlich

Alexa sat in her puddle of urine on the hospital floor. Up swelled visions of the men she remembered having feelings for. She played "Eeny-mean-a-mine-a woe." She imagined that puddle might reflect the universe itself if she could just make it outside.

"Out...goes...you," she said. Nothing happened. She remained ill.

"Then out goes you," she angrily announced. Nothing.

Dylan Thomas, yawning and stretching his muscles of print, slowly awakened on her dresser table. Alexa found all of the "safe poems" first. Then the three-dimensional Dylan stepped out of the book. Tranquilizers or anti-psychotic medications didn't help. He said: "Damn it."

She didn't know what he meant, so she took more medication. But he didn't go away.

She decided to explore, and sneaked out of the double glass doors of the psychiatric ward, carrying a secret magic pen, and her mind. She put them in a black suitcase so no one would know what she was taking. And, just for medication, she packed a six-pack.

She didn't know it was nighttime. The moon was round. Very round. Very cold night. She hugged her clothing against herself. Her baby and husband were at home...sleeping...waiting for her recovery. She had one match, only one match left for her cigarette habit. Smoking. A haze. A match can also light a candle.

When she opened the suitcase she found a six-pack of Coke. Sugarwater. Thirty years old, ready to become an alcoholic, and now she would get diabetic sugarshock instead.

The hospital doors were locked when she tried to return. She could...finally...see a bit of her own distorted reflection.

"Bleach," she said, running to the toilet to throw up.

Her husband and baby were still waiting. How long they can wait is the mystery. How long they should wait is the tragedy. How that waiting is, is the poetry. Her husband was the writer and singer of verse. Not her.

Alexa blamed it on her parents. It wasn't them. It was her. And that's the ending of the story. A therapist might say she didn't know what to do, if there is no hope left. That would make it a three-act tragedy. A comedy isn't possible. A critic would look at the quality of the writing to evaluate it. Alexa...Complexa. A Russian character.

**WHEN THE OLD FOLK'S HOME CATCHES ON FIRE
 AND YOU'RE THE LAST ONE OUT - THAT'S OLD AGE**
 Hang on - send SASE to arithmetically and
 spiritually sound
HEREBEFORE

Box 2243 - YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO, 44504

(1) JOURNEY TO ADVENTURE
 9 PM **(2) (3) MICKEY SPILLANE'S MIKE**
HAMMER—Crime Drama
 Chambers (Don Stroud) is gunned
 down during a drug bust at a high-
 stakes poker game, and subsequent
 evidence implicates the policeman in
 drug trafficking. Mike: Stacy Keach.

THE DAY BEFORE THE LUAU

by Robert Wollard

It must have been about 1949 or 50 because I must have been younger than 11, the year I broke my arm that was not a good summer for the beach at all. But whenever this was, we were getting ready for the first-ever All Southern California Skin Diving Clubs' Luau.

I think my dad must have been one of the first skin divers—I know there was no equipment when he started. After the war, some guys he worked with got to trading patterns for rubber suits and we'd sit around the dining room table cutting out latex and gluing it together. Spears were made from mop handles, with hand-hewn points—rubber tubing for snorkels and tire irons for abalones. I must have been very young then because my memories of it are very magical: I would ask him what he saw down there and try to imagine it. I remember once asking if when he got down there he could walk along on the ocean floor. He explained that it was more like walking on your hands (which he also used to do, for the neighborhood kids)—so I drew pictures of him doing that. I think I still have one I made, to surprise him, of him encountering a mermaid.

There just isn't time or space here and now to tell what happened every Sunday at White's Point in "The Lagoon" once us kids had "gotten used to the rocks"—ah, but there I go! As we got older, some of us would go out with the fathers on special forays—and some of them became dedicated and caught stuff. I got a few abs I guess, but mostly kept to looking around. My own mind was really in another world by that time.

But on this day, the day before the Luau, all the men and a few of us little snorkelers worked all day dragging palm fronds and building the structures where it was to be. Some of the guys were Polynesian and led the way, as I think they had in the diving itself initially. They were the most daring virtuosos in the water anyway—did fantastic, crazy things no one could understand (and ate things, like raw urchins, the rest of us wouldn't touch).

I don't remember much what we all did actually—I just remember that at the end of the day we were all tired with that most especially delicious tiredness that comes from too much sun and salt and sand and the smell of a billion years all over everything. A big fire, or several fires, had been made and buckets set on top of them to boil: a whole bunch of gorgeous lobsters had been caught—enough for all of us to have all we wanted, probably with melted butter—and there must have been ice chests of beer and soda too. Then the men got to telling stories we wouldn't have heard in mixed company or at a regular meeting. Somebody had heard of an island somewhere where you could fuck all the women you wanted until one of them got pregnant and then you had to marry her. That set up a royal howl in there! Some big guy grinned over at me in my corner and said, "Hey! What the hell are you laughin' at!" Someone else told about a girl who was 8 before she was 7—nobody I knew understood that one—it took us years to slowly puzzle it out.

We didn't bring any radios or anything—we just curled up in our bags watching the fire and listening to the pounding of the surf rushing and surging and rumbling down on the shore. It was warm by the fire and the waves made sounds like "Sharon...Sharon..." washing up into the sand. I don't remember if I thought about them sounding like that then, or if I noticed that later, but I was thinking about her—about how she would be there in the morning...and wondering what it would be like.

God damn she was beautiful! And there was never a cross word between us! I wonder what would have happened if we'd met as adolescents rather than children.

I dreamed about her last night—writing this story brought her to my mind I guess: there were two of her, exactly alike—maybe because I knew her in two different worlds.

I remembered being in a cave with her once: the smell of kelp, the reflections, the echos...but that was long before the day before the Luau—and I knew her quite some time after that before she disappeared. There must have been a last time I ever saw her, but I can't remember it.

THE PUNKS

IT HAPPENS EVERY SO OFTEN. SOMEONE WILL WAKE UP IN THE MORNING ONLY TO DISCOVER....

OMIGOSH! I-I'M A PUNK!

LATER, ON THE JOB, THEY DISCOVER WHAT IT MEANS TO BE....DIFFERENT!



WHILE THEY STILL HAVE A JOB, THAT IS....



LIFE BECOMES HELL.



WHAT CAN BE DONE TO HELP THESE UNFORTUNATES?

→ NOTHING. ←
DEATH IS THE ONLY CURE. SO, KILL A PUNK TODAY!
 WE'LL THANK YOU FOR IT LATER

The Pledge

by Susan Packie

This is a true story. Names have been changed to protect the guilty. If anything like this ever happens to you, call the toll-free number 800-OHM-YGOD. No one under the age of 18 is permitted to continue reading this account without parental consent.

Monday, January 2. The New Year's baby was just getting around to washing out its diaper. The phone in a four-room garden apartment located in a quiet suburban town rang. No one heard it for the first 15 rings. Then a hand that had seen too much celebrating the previous weekend clumsily lifted the receiver and its owner, in an equally hung-over voice, muttered "Hullo?"

A cheerful male at the other end of the line replied, "Hello. This is King George II University."

The now-awake woman's mind speeded back to the letter she had gotten right after Christmas notifying her that she would be contacted about making a pledge to her alma mater. Which was the last thing she wanted to do. Which made her wish her phone had a jack so she could unplug it.

"Is this Myrtle Hastings?"

"No."

"Oh. May I please speak to Myrtle Hastings?"

"She is in the Antarctic and can't come to the phone at the moment. Could you call back on June 31 at 13 p.m.?"

With that, she smashed the receiver down.

But this caller was not to be deterred. He was a student at the greatest university of all time! Former Secretaries of State, well-known writers, and aspiring scientists taught here! The school gave out the most prestigious awards in the world! No one was not in to King George II University!

Nevertheless, Myrtle was not in. She herself had said so. During the next three weeks she was to say so repeatedly. She wondered why she was getting so much attention. Surely there were other graduates to be contacted!

The calls came at all hours of the day, dragging her from the most preposterous locations. The phone rang when she was in the bathroom drying her gray roots a warm, youthful chestnut. It pestered her when she was in the middle of taking the shells off hard-boiled eggs. If she as much stepped into the hall to check her mailbox, the phone summoned her back. If she were in the middle of love-making with a part-time resident, the ding-a-ling would push itself between them. The situation reached the point where the telephone operator was breaking in on her conversations with her mother so she could take "a very important call." Of course, it was just King George II University.

She cried. She laughed. She swore. All her friends had signals so she would know who was calling. One ring - call Gary. Two rings - call Mom. And so forth.

Finally, on the last day of the school's mid-year break, the whole town was awaked by a crashing and banging. The sounds stopped directly below Myrtle's window. When she looked outside, much to her surprise, there was the 32-acre campus, complete with columned, ivy-covered buildings and loling students! She opened her door to find former students Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, Robert Livingston, and Gouverneur Morris, all looking a little under the weather, standing in the hall, holding a 6'x12' pledge card. The force of the slamming door sent them flying into the middle of the library. A librarian gave them a disapproving stare.

Meanwhile, Myrtle was penning a note to be mailed to Alumni Association President Owen Foggybottom:

*Thank you for your offer
but I won't fill the coffers
of a school which can't
stay out of my pants!*

This was no message to send to a prominent attorney-at-law, but drastic events required drastic measures.

She looked out her window, and the yard was empty. She waited for the phone to annoy her, and it was silent. She picked up a pen, tore off a piece of green paper, and started to fill in the 'Pay to the order of' blank. She had not been intimidated. She just did not like to make rash promises to buildings that made house calls.

QUESTION:
In a recent ad you described yourself as the world's ONLY radical, the all religions page. Shouldn't that be SELF-APPOINTED all religions page and aren't you really a first-class peep?

ANSWER:
Time will tell. To get the latest from the greatest and SASE to: BRAINSEAU'S BRAINSTORMS Box 2243 YOUNGSTOWN - OHIO, 44504

HOW MUCH MORE FOR YOUR LIFE?

by Steven F. Scharff

For the last two months, I've been working in a local Sears, but not working FOR the store. Let me explain.

I applied for work at the store back in September, and did not receive any word of whether or not I'd get a job there. Then in October, I began working for a concession in the store.

A curious set-up, I have to say. Kept in a little booth with Hallowe'en masks, costumes and make-up kits, for 3 1/2 hours a day. As for the fact that I wasn't allowed to leave the booth (save for my break or a "call of nature"), I never really saw that much of the store.

After Hallowe'en, another concession took me in. This time I was selling assembly-line oil paintings (like the type you see on the walls of your local Holiday Inn), and very cheap quality prints. Since I work on an "island" (instead of a booth), I can walk about the store for a few minutes at a time.

Not all is well in the land of retail, I can tell you.

I have overheard conversations between sales clerks that sounded like what the crew must have said when the Bounty was mutinied. A cashier said that she wasn't allowed to laugh on the sales floor (!). She was told by the manager that "it distracts the customers."

The whole problem can be summed up by the following.

My concession is an arm's reach from the lighting department. The ceiling fans that had been in the aisle had been removed for more Christmas stock. One of the area managers was arguing with a sales clerk (a woman of fragile build in her late 50's). Apparently, someone had either quit or had been fired, and the surplus of hours left in the person's wake had not been evenly distributed. The woman's complaint was that she had been given more hours than she thought she could handle. Her manager was apparently not sympathetic to her plea, and suggested that if she didn't like her hours, he'd find someone else to take them (Sears is a non-union operation).

I saw her several minutes later, with a very large hand truck, putting fruitcakes and "gift cheese sets" on the shelves where the fans had been. Since I had no customers at that time, I asked if she could use a hand. After giving off a sigh of relief, she told me where each item went. In five minutes, we had the display full. As she left with the hand truck, she patted me on the back, saying, "It's nice to know there's someone here I can trust!"

I've been told that there have been "departmental wild-cats" (everyone in one particular department calling in sick all on the same day) and other such "psychological warfare techniques" the employees have used on management.

But management is not the only problem. There is also a lack of salespeople. I've noticed at certain Sears stores that price tags are not on all items. One must carry the item to a nearby cashier and ask what the price is (done by punching the number into the computerized register). Imagine how frustrated the customers become when they want to know how much a crock pot costs, and being told by a salesperson (if they can find one) that they don't know the price.

Words have flown about the store that do not bear repeating. They usually end with, "Where can I find the store manager?"

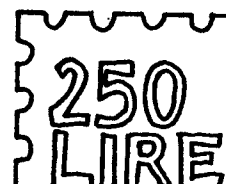
By the time this is printed, my temporary job will have come to an end, and I will have survived another retail Christmas. But I will have learned from it. And while my respect for Sears will be lower, my respect for its sales help will be multiplied.

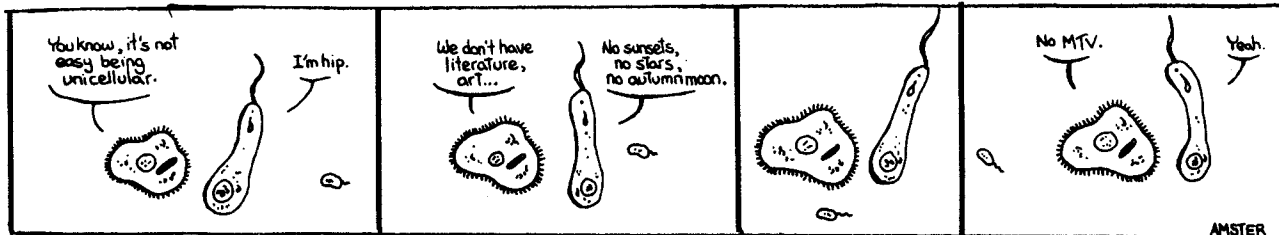
SECOND THOUGHTS

by Gedwillo

Figure 2.

Magnified view
of postage stamp
issued by Vatican City.





Make strangeness
work for YOU!

TALK SHOW HOST

CONFIDENTIAL by Michael Dobbs

There are those people in our modern society who actually believe myths were the exclusive property of some drunk Greeks. Although it's easy to imagine how some television-starved human beings started dreaming up cosmic soap operas, it's difficult to understand why they took their little stories seriously.

That is, until you look at what's happening in 1985 Reagan America...the myths are flying thick and fast and, amazingly enough, people are buying them as fact...and these are not people who just read THE MIDNITE TATTLER. These are real people...three squares a week and sensible shoe people.

And they believe stuff like this:

- You can actually buy a diamond ring for \$10: There's this incredible shoddy ad with a bearded huckster touting the virtues of a diamond ring that is offered at such a low price as part of a "national publicity campaign." The only campaign is the one to sell these cheap rings. The kicker line is that the rings will be sold at this price only to the first million people.

- Madonna's hit song, "Like a Virgin": Come on, kids... was your first time that good? Wasn't there a lot of tension, fear, pain and misery? And what about the wet spot? Remember how you were going to sneak back into the house and hide your underwear? That was a lot of fun, now, wasn't it?

- Little short jackets: I love this one...Both men and women like to ignore the obvious effects of winter...such as frozen extremities...and wear snappy short jackets in the coldest part of the winter. They sacrifice everything to the mythic god of Chic.

- Herbs will keep you well: A great number of the chic people exposing themselves in the winter are the same people who depend on vitamins and herb pills to stay healthy. "Oh, it's okay, I had my garlic pill this morning" is a phrase heard many times just before someone does their famous Robert Louis Stevenson impersonation.

- Rock stars are "real" people: This one is a classic PEOPLE Magazine myth. The editors love to take someone like the lead singer of Twisted Sister and show the asshole is a loving dad and a devoted son. And that he likes baseball and McDonald's. Right...some jerk who chews bones on record covers reads Dr. Seuss to his kids.

- Wearing 501 jeans will get you laid: This myth is a California-based one, but it spreading across the country. Levi's 501 jeans will not get you laid...you need a Members Only jacket as well.

- Game show hosts are talented: Recently TV GUIDE tried to spread this myth with an in-depth look at the men who ask the questions, that they are indeed talented guys who have a special skill to host a bunch of nervous regular people while they're on national television trying not to look like fools. Game show hosts seldom show any degree of wit and one does get the impression if they sneezed their face would crack. This includes my favorite, Pat Sajak, who wanders around the set of the Wheel of Fortune with a beautifully vacant stare.

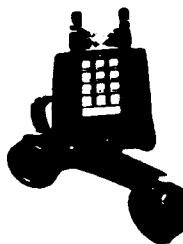
- Beefsteak Charlie's is a great deal: Yeah boy, free wine, sangria or beer with your meal, the salad bar and all the shrimp you can eat when you buy one of our frozen entrees...I love this...Mr. and Mrs. Regular America wouldn't ever buy the brand of wine or beer Charlie's serves...they're usually the least expensive in the market area...and whose idea of fun is breaking open a bunch of boiled shrimp? Here you are dressed up and looking chic and you're reduced to acting like a five-year-old when wrestling a little shrimp meat out of a shell. A nice impression on your date, right? Better be wearing your Members Only jacket.

- Talk show hosts on the radio know everything: A myth that is, of course, extremely true...I do know everything. And I see everything. And I hear everything...Stop me before I kill again.

CONTACT

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FOR AMERICA

Utopia by Mike Gunderloy

Night. The shells of iridescent beetles crunch under Lundquist's boots as he moves beneath the canopy of foliage. No sound penetrates his protective suit but he can feel them crackle as he moves. Alien flowers dangle at the end of purple vines, brushing past his faceplate.

Lundquist grunts as he drags the graysled over a fallen and rotting log. Johnson's body shifts when the sled tilts and for a few bad moments he is afraid that it will end up back in the mud. Acrid sweat streams into his eyes as he steadies the body. He carefully avoids looking at the gaping hole where Johnson's chest had been.

Soon, he thinks, he will be far enough from the ship to stop and bury his crewmate. By the time another ship arrives his tracks will be gone and the lush tropical forest will cover the grave. Then Lundquist can tell a convincing story of death by accident, in some circumstance that prevented recovering the body, and accept the condolences of fellow explorers.

For obviously it would not do to return Johnson's body for burial on Earth, not with a patrol-issue blaster burn through him. Lundquist reaches a relatively dry spot on a small rise, and begins digging in the sandy loam. The graysled is tethered to an alien tree, which drips sap on the body. The whine of Lundquist's cooling unit rises in pitch as he bends over the shovel.

He works faster than he should, wanting to get the job over with. Stabs of pain assault his temples and his breathing becomes labored. He feels himself being watched, tries to ignore it, fails. Soon he is shouting to the unseen and imagined eyes. The sound echoes within Lundquist's helmet.

"I had to do it, don't you see, I had to! He didn't understand, I thought you were toys, robots, animals! I would have been arrested, disgraced! I had to do it!"

He collapses, sobbing, in the open grave.

Night. Chaos reigns in the city of glass. The people - ranging from six to eight inches high - move in a daze, collecting their dead, listening to the rhymers. At intervals a shard of a building, loosened by the day's events, falls to the street, shattering.

The rhymers sing of the new myth which happened to the people this day. Of the great shining thing from the sky, the monster who destroyed so much of the city, the battle with the second monster. Now the monsters are gone, but the shining thing remains, towering over the city.

It is a sign, sings the rhymers. This glass thing is to replace the city we have lost, a gift of the gods. The gods are good. We must go to the new city and settle within it.

The rhymers move as he sings and the people follow him. They make the half-mile trek across the plain carrying the possessions they can salvage. As they approach, they see that the new city rests on three towers. They must bring the city to them, sings the rhymers. God helps those who help themselves.

The people cluster around the nearest tower. It is too large and too smooth to be climbed. Finally, one of the leaders speaks up. Dig, he says. We will undermine this tower until the new city falls to us.

Burrowing with hands, tools and debris, the people begin digging. Chains of hands pass tiny buckets of dirt. The rhymers urges them on.

Dawn. Lundquist trudges from the forest, dragging the graysled behind him. It is empty. He must have slept for several hours before burying Johnson.

Ahead is the ship, backlit by the pink rays of the morning sun. He smiles when he sees it. Soon this nightmare will be over.

Dawn. The people wait the signal from their leaders. It comes and the wooden props are pulled free. Majestically, quickly, the new city falls to the ground. Pieces of it come flying off. Gaping holes open in its sides. The people swarm within.

10 David Lundquist is a monster with no way home.



by Ho Chi Zen

THE SHORTEST THEOLOGICAL DEBATE IN HISTORY

HO CHI ZEN: "What is God like?"

TOM: "Somebody. I don't care."

READER'S DIGEST ZEN

This true story was actually published in one of the humor sections of *The Reader's Digest* many years ago:

At an interdenominational religious conference in Hawaii, a Japanese delegate approached a fundamentalist Baptist minister and said, "My humble superstition is Buddhism. What is yours?"

NIRVANA/SAMSARA

Samsara (suffering) is Nirvana (freedom) when viewed in the eternal Here and Now. Nirvana is Samsara when seen in attachment to the worry-wheel of past and future action-reaction.

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TRUE GRIT

In my life I have heard many inspiring stories of human determination, but none to excel the one about Amy Lute, an irrepressible little girl I met in Atlanta. For I am told she emerged from her mother's womb with an I.U.D. birth control device clutched firmly in her fist.

THREE IN THE MORNING

Seeing only the Yang or the Yin of the Tao—at the exclusion of the other—is called, according to Chuang-Tzu, "three in the morning."

"Once a zookeeper went to his monkeys," he wrote, "and told them he would give them two nuts in the morning and three in the evening of each day. At this they became furious, so he said, 'All right, all right - I'll give you three in the morning and two in the evening.' With that arrangement they were quite happy."

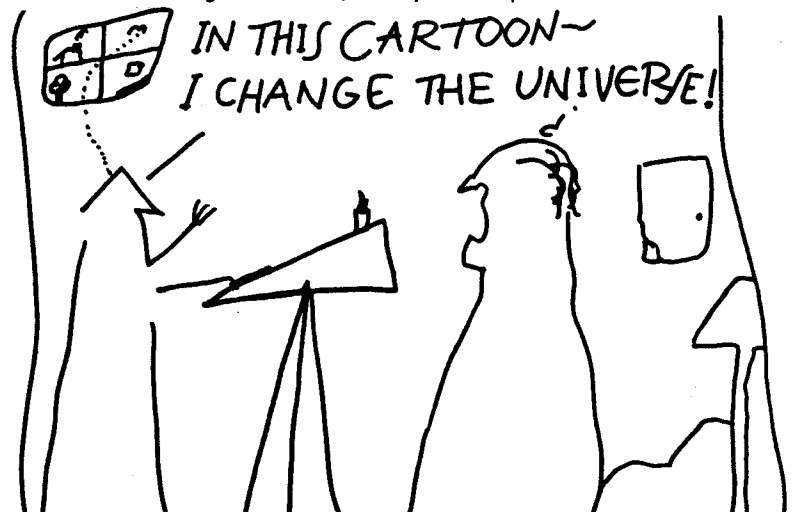
ZENARCHIST COFFEE DRINKING CEREMONY

One of the few formalities of Zenarchy, the Coffee Drinking Ceremony, must be observed in strict conformity with the following procedure:

Roll five joints of high quality marijuana and prepare one large pot of very strong coffee. Placing these items in the center of a kitchen table together with a book of matches, next place upon the table two large earthenware mugs and one simple but attractive ashtray.

Now sit at the table with someone you love very much and spend the hours from late night until sunrise in animated conversation.

Inwardly, observe the discipline of always keeping in mind a heartache during intervals of the discussion that are light and full of laughter. When you chat of sorrowful things keep in mind something beautiful, funny and hopeful.



Filmviews

by Ken Filar

On the first day of Christmas this reviewer went to see **STOP MAKING SENSE** and, as directed by Jonathan Demme, the Talking Heads concert film was sensible and danceable, and every time someone tells me they're going to see it I wonder whether it's time for me to indulge my senses again. This is, without question, the best rock concert ever committed to film, but if you're waiting to see it on MTV or HBO, I guarantee that you'll be disappointed as the excitement that surged through the cinema was so like a concert hall that it would be impossible to duplicate that electricity in the confines of your living room.

On the second day of Christmas this reviewer went to see **METROPOLIS**, reconstructed and pulsing with Giorgio Moroder's synthetic soundtrack (and such diverse vocal talent as Freddie Mercury and Bonnie Tyler—who sings what may be the year's most driven song on film: "Here She Comes"—which is no small feat considering the number of top-notch soundtracks released in 1984). I must confess to never having seen the original version—with whatever music may have accompanied it—but I know for sure that my experience of the film will be forever enmeshed with the added colors and musical textures Moroder brought to Fritz Lang's visionary horror...and **STOP MAKING SENSE**.

On the third day of Christmas this reviewer went to see **CRIMES OF PASSION**, Ken Russell's arch-erotic film which paints Kathleen Turner in the dual role of fashion designer (by day) and p(t)ainted lady—China Blue (by night). This is a must see if only for her schizophrenic dance from seductress to hard-nosed bastion of morality. On top of this we're treated to Anthony Perkins as a dildo-of-death wielding minister. Because **CRIMES OF PASSION** occasionally lapses into mock-camp this very tongue-in-cheek view of sordidness comes off more disturbing than shocking, but still a treat (and a treatment) for the prurient at heart...**METROPOLIS** and **STOP MAKING SENSE**.

On the fourth day of Christmas this reviewer went to see **THE LITTLE DRUMMER GIRL** and saw George Roy Hill direct Diane Keaton in a film about an actress who takes direction from either side of the Arab-Israeli conflict more because she can't say no (and create her own direction) than because she believes in what she's doing. The action was mostly silly and the locations were not even filmed in a way to lend panoramic beauty to this muddle. Better to have stayed home with **CRIMES OF PASSION**, **METROPOLIS** and **STOP MAKING SENSE**.

On the fifth day of Christmas this reviewer went to see **GARBO TALKS** and while Sidney Lumet's latest film is pure fluff and bother, the reverence accorded the reclusive star herself attributes a dignified aura to what might otherwise be mistaken for Anne Bancroft doing a Charlie Chaplin turn as her son bumbles à la Laurel and Hardy (both) in his quest to bring the great one to his mother's death bed. Pretty smarmy stuff...but affecting and effecting. I ate it up (yum)...**THE LITTLE DRUMMER GIRL** (yech), **CRIMES OF PASSION** (ooh), **METROPOLIS** (aha) and **STOP MAKING SENSE** (xopihatsrlj).

On the sixth day of Christmas this reviewer went to see **THE KILLING FIELDS** and was absolutely blown away. I can't begin to do justice to this film without going into great detail about the American involvement in Cambodia up to the time the Khmer Rouge captured Phnom Penh and also later when they began killing their own countrymen as part of massive indoctrination. The film says it all elegantly and yet concisely, and even amidst the grotesque maltreatment of human beings, the film retains a moving human element because it revolves more around the relationship of Sidney Schanberg, a New York Times correspondent, and Dith Pran, the interpreter who helped him track down many of the stories that led to Schanberg's winning the Pulitzer Prize and Dith's interment as a laborer in a indoctrination camp. This may well be the most horrifying film of 1984—more truly indicative of the world George Orwell's nightmare visions foresaw—and the very nature of the film may leave you wanting to believe it's only a fantasy but the thing's firmly rooted in our immediate past and not to be dismissed...**GARBO TALKS**, **THE LITTLE DRUMMER GIRL**, **CRIMES OF PASSION**, **METROPOLIS** and **STOP MAKING SENSE**.

On the seventh day of Christmas this reviewer went to see **SWANN IN LOVE** and so what if it's Proust? Who cares? Even Jeremy Irons turns in a lackluster performance on this film. The real stars of the movie are the costumes and the settings...so watch for them at Oscar time and spare yourself some genuinely turgid cinema...**THE KILLING FIELDS**, **GARBO TALKS**, **THE LITTLE DRUMMER GIRL**, **CRIMES OF PASSION**, **METROPOLIS** and **STOP MAKING SENSE**.

On the eighth day of Christmas this reviewer went to see **BODY DOUBLE** and I'm happy to report that Brian DePalma's back...and what a back he has...but nothing like Melanie Griffith's. (I can't remember the last time I got a boner at the movies...because of the movie...anyway.) This isn't even particularly gorey when compared against some of his other recent flicks. DePalma pays homage to everyone from Alfred Hitchcock (a point that's been made so many times it's dulled beyond recognition—and yet he does it expertly) to Barnabas Collins to Frankie Goes to Hollywood. This movie is not only fun...it's funky...**SWANN IN LOVE**, **THE KILLING FIELDS**, **GARBO TALKS**, **THE LITTLE DRUMMER GIRL**, **CRIMES OF PASSION**, **METROPOLIS** and **STOP MAKING SENSE** (do you think this conceit is getting a little tired?).

On the ninth day of Christmas this reviewer went to see **PARIS, TEXAS** and there's a lot to be said for Wim Wenders' latest film—the winner of the grand prize at last year's Cannes Film Festival—but why talk when quiet contemplation seems to be the key to fathoming a screenplay that has less to do with the vehicle it's driving than the scenery, the "Go West" image that Wenders has drawn from what couldn't have been more than a scenario (this is just my guess) written by our last true Americana: Sam Shepard. There's a lot going on here (and on... and on...) but it all seems to be bubbling beneath the surface (like crude oil waiting for a drill to strike). Even so, **PARIS, TEXAS** is moody and moving and still leaves more unresolved as it declares a re-

Charles Darwin's 119th Dream

by Roldo

I awoke to find Spring loose in Winter's cold mattress, and, as is my wont on such occasions, I goofed the day away.

Secluding myself in the Inner Temple by sneaking through the sidereal lobes, I mantra'd away the morning, receiving sub-mind-code sequence signals.

"All hands unbored - the ship is thinking," bellowed a mel-de-merlogical basso-profunny voice. I noticed my loom had a tremendous Jacquard-on and realized I was re-viewing *The Future*, passing in front of my ice.

"What! Time, is it?" inchoired a harmonious group of lounging lizards in of-chorus, and promptly stopped being extinct.

The tyoneonforus was really wrexed, and the staggersoreass was feeling no pain. The dipsoplodicus was gnee-deep in lush and tropical fruit punch.

"I warned ya, faggot," he snarled, knuckling a passing papaya.

"The dinosaurs have returned," I noticed loudly.

"You got it, primate," said a voice at my elbow. (I think it was my elbow.) "It's deja-voodoo dada, Pops. Now it's your turn to get extinct."

With studied boozier cool, I turned to confront a tricer-topless waitress.

"Name your poison," she added. It came to \$2,317.00.

"But that's 323 years from now," I complained.

"No," she smiled. "It's Right Now. You're Wrong Then," and she made a curious hand gesture to the bouncer—a small, round, rubbery creature.

Writing off my bill with some loose chains, I headed for the exit.

Out in the street, a squat, thick-browed hominid approached me.

"Got a match?" he rumbled.

"James Branch Cabell, but he's dead," I responded, recognizing the genetic code used by D.N.A. (Dept. of Neurological Activity) agents.

"Follow me," he whispered.

I fell in line behind *Phthyanthropus*.

"You okay?" he asked, helping me up.

"Just a little confused," I admitted.

"Me too," he grinned. "Great, ain't it?"

"Heads up, boys," shouted a Neanderthal, "here comes the Rush."

"Rush?" I panicked.

"Punctuary Equilibrium," explained Pithy. "You'll dig it."

"Oh, Archaeology, oh golly, oh gosh," chanted the jolly crew, and we were off.

My life flashed in front, behind and between my ice.

It was the Eyes Age, crawling across the world with slow precision at mach one, two much, four me, five-eyed focused out of Mind Space-Time.

"This time," I vowed, "we dodge the fuck ups."

solution. I'm not sure if this is good or bad...but it sure sticks with you...for daze...**BODY DOUBLE**, **SWANN IN LOVE**, **THE KILLING FIELDS**, **GARBO TALKS**, **THE LITTLE DRUMMER GIRL**, **CRIMES OF PASSION**, **METROPOLIS** and **STOP MAKING SENSE**.

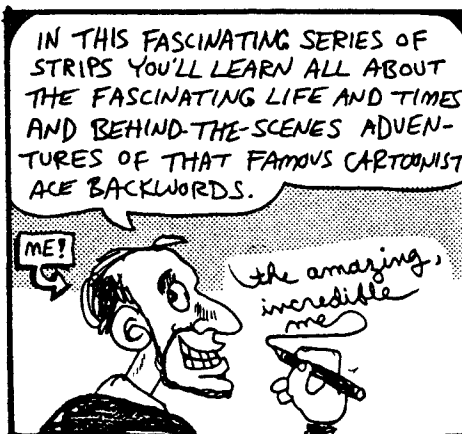
On the tenth day of Christmas this reviewer went to see **AMERICAN DREAMER** and I probably would have missed this entirely but for the prodding of my little sister. Sisters seem the logical market for this kind of hokum-pokum, though once I saw it I was a believer. This is raucously funny...and not much else...but if you're looking for a laugh it's sure to turn up over and over on late night television in a few years...and I know I'll watch it again (and probably again)...**PARIS, TEXAS**, **BODY DOUBLE**, **SWANN IN LOVE**, **THE KILLING FIELDS**, **GARBO TALKS**, **THE LITTLE DRUMMER GIRL**, **CRIMES OF PASSION**, **METROPOLIS** and **STOP MAKING SENSE**.

On the eleventh day of Christmas this reviewer went to see **AMADEUS** ...and on the stage Peter Schaffer's tale was a wryly comic pas de deux between Mozart and Salieri. As a film by Milos Forman, it is a melancholy elegy and, though almost entirely different, aside from the basic conceit, works surprisingly well. It is, however, overlong and could run just as logically without the operatic fragments that are included. Alas, I am a notorious opera-phobe and my own loathing of the form may have as much to do with this complaint as their seeming out-of-place (ness)...**AMERICAN DREAMER**, **PARIS, TEXAS**, **BODY DOUBLE**, **SWANN IN LOVE**, **THE KILLING FIELDS**, **GARBO TALKS**, **THE LITTLE DRUMMER GIRL**, **CRIMES OF PASSION**, **METROPOLIS** and **STOP MAKING SENSE**.

On the twelfth day of Christmas...oh, enough already...**STOP MAKING SENSE**.

WHATEVER-I-FEEL-LIKE COMIX

by Ace Backwards © 12-84



"Oh yeah, back to the point..."

MORT SAHL 11/17/84

reviewed by ew

I had gone to see erstwhile Presidential candidate Pat Paulson at the Bottom Line but a few months back, and was supremely disappointed to find his act reduced from a once-thoughtful, insightful commentator to a Catskill 'shecky comic'. So I wasn't sure what to expect with Mort Sahl, who (although he's not really in the same 'category' as Paulson) moved me to think and laugh in the same ways.

It thrills me to report that Mort Sahl has not weakened with the times, and is, in fact, cleverer than ever(er).

Sahl appeared at the Bottom Line two weeks or so after the election (someone sitting near me wondered "does he only come out every four years?") to discuss and wonder about the year's (and decades', going back to FDR) proceedings with his unique meandering-yet-targeted style. He was carrying with him the day's copy of the New York Times, to which he referred now and then although he used the paper more for a prop than anything else. He spoke of the election ("An interesting question," he mentioned, pondering the sudden preponderance of politicians who appear to be following in the footsteps and philosophies of predecessors, "do you have to be reincarnated to run against Reagan?... Kennedy tainted the Presidency, Johnson hurt it, Nixon wounded it, Ford killed it, Carter buried it and now Reagan is trying to prove there's life after death..."), of debates ("Remember the Carter/Reagan debate, how short it was? It had to be called on account of intellectual darkness"), of current governmental policies ("Why can't a kid say Grace in the school cafeteria, as he lingers over his ketchup?"), of the Republican conservatives and Democratic liberals alike, with emphasis on the moods of each campaign and convention (he likened the Democrats' self-fulfilling gloom to a commander who says, "Follow me, men; we should be losing soon!"), and of one very interesting dinner to which he had been invited—one at the White House. This dinner was supposedly the "running story" throughout his hour-and-fifteen-minute monologue, but if anybody is familiar with Sahl's structure, they know that he tends to, should we say, ramble (and in rambling he produces some of his best insights). While this makes an already difficult and intellectual comic much harder to follow, Sahl's following—which I am fast joining—finds it worth the extra effort to make the quick connections and attempt to keep up with the incredible pace and level which are his trademark. I'm not saying they—we—always succeed (in fact, my lack of success this evening, despite my perception of myself as more or less politically informed, was infinitely frustrating—and I loved it), but the effort itself is often as much fun as the jokes—sort of Zen stand-up humor, if you will. ("Wasn't Popeye the first animated Zen character, with 'I am what I am and that's all what I am?' Heavy stuff, huh?")

Along the way, I was surprised at how many names Sahl casually—and purposefully—dropped ("if there's anything good about this job, it's the people you get to meet"), conservative and liberal 'stars' alike. With his twist, though, it didn't seem so much name-dropping or self-plugging as a kind of "this is what I do in my life" anecdote, so it never got too overbearing. Besides, nobody's sacred to Sahl, not even himself. And that certainly helped many of us in the audience laugh at ourselves. As Sahl reminded us, "There is no defense against ridicule," and it's good to see that Mort is still 'kicking a little ass'.

MOTHER OF SORROW

by Remington Murphy

Holy Mother,
I have endured Kierkegaardian paradox,
have rocked in the arms of obdurate Id,
have atoned for my pseudo assumption
with a subsequent hurtling through hell,
which was real.
I have lapped your Platonic Ideal
till I retched and could swallow no more.
O Mother of Bliss,
what proof do you want?
Have I not renounced all pleasure,
haven't I wallowed and wept
though you dangled a nipple
with which to snuggle my innocent tongue?
Beyond damnation of a keeling brain
what's left to sing
save peace, cold peace, consummate and white?

HELENA RUBENSTEIN'S GUIDE TO THE UNIVERSE

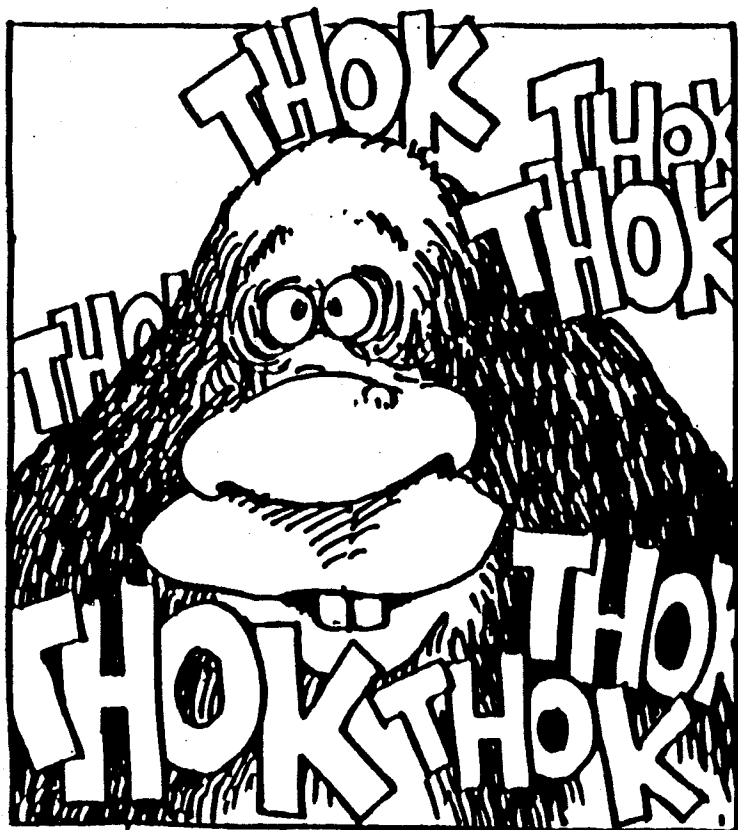
by Carolyn Lee Boyd

Life: What happens
between coats of nail polish
Love: Those activities most likely to
smear the color onto your
cuticles.
God: Helena Rubenstein
Death: The ultimate and last chip.

WAITING

by Rick da Beast

Standing on the sidewalk in front of the club
can't get any colder than I am
shaking with empty pockets alone
Waiting
checking the players as they enter and leave
Trying to forget a most desperate need.
The night turns colder matching even the faces
of the crowd
because they too are waiting
behind smiles and laughter and uncaring
banter
Waiting
Each afraid to be the one
to move first out of the cold
cuz it might not work out
'Nothing ventured, nothing lost' so easy to
say if
you don't stand too long
But we stand in the cold and pretend we never
cared
...till one day we don't...



END WAR:

Scrap socialistic, suicidal wars
(NO WINNERS)
Adopt a Win Sheet.
BRAINBEAU

NATIONAL PROFLIGACY

by Audrey Parente

In 1935, Barbara was a beautiful black-haired baby. Lillian MacDonald, Barbara's mother, dressed the dear in pretty pictures of paisley prints and cotton calicos. Lillian MacDonald was not well educated, having never finished high school. She didn't know the meaning of profligacy. But, Lillian did know how to sew. She made many of the little dresses for baby Barbara herself, and from the left-over materials, she saved squares in a box.

As Barbara grew older and went to college, Lillian, by that time a war widow, made her daughter neatly tailored gabardine suits of rich colors, with tufted shoulder pads and nifty A-line skirts. The box of squares from the remnants swelled at the seams.

Barbara was a quiet student, but she never finished college because she married a post-graduate studying for his PhD in philosophy. At one time Barbara knew the meaning of profligacy, but she forgot.

Barbara had a daughter, Christy, and Lillian made dresses for her granddaughter. Lillian saved the swatches from all the beautiful synthetic materials she used to make Christy's clothes. The box of squares overflowed.

Finally, while Lillian was in a rest home, she sewed all the squares together into a patchwork quilt which she gave to Barbara, then divorced, for her forty-fifth birthday.

Barbara thanked her mother and put the quilt on Christy's bed.

Christy had beautiful black hair like her mother's, but when she was fourteen, she dyed her hair purple and cut up the quilt and used it for a vest.

A month later, Christy's grandmother died. A few days after Lillian's funeral, Christy threw the patchwork vest into the trash because she had a new vest made from a cut-up Indian sari Barbara had purchased at a garage sale.

Barbara threw a newspaper into the trash on top of the quilt-vest. In that newspaper, an ad for a garage sale was circled at the bottom of the same page with Lillian's obituary, while the headline on that page read, "Thousands killed by Cyanide Accident in India."

That day Christy's vocabulary test at school contained the word profligacy. Christy got the meaning wrong.

MY JOB

and welcome to it

~by Candi Strecker

"That which does not kill us makes us stronger."

- Nietzsche

It's a common enough question, neither excessively personal nor rude, and a staple of small-talk. But oh, how I dread being asked it. My problem with the question "What do you do?" is that there's no simple way to answer it. I suspect I'm not alone in this problem; the complex modern world is surely full of complex modern jobs that can't be described with a single word or even a single phrase. These are jobs in the middle levels of vaguely white-collar paperwork, jobs that didn't exist twenty or even ten years ago, new niches where the overeducated and underemployable (like myself) can find jobs but not necessarily job titles.

To complicate this situation, people whose jobs could be described by simple titles—doctor, lawyer, indian chief—seem to be opting for abstruse and inflated nomenclature: pediatric gastroenterologist, corporate litigation specialist, maybe even (for all I know) hereditary aboriginal administrator. This puffed-up terminology makes me think about that apocryphal moment in history when job titles became fixed as names. If that happened today, then instead of having simple names like Joe Farmer and Jane Smith, we'd become Fred Comptroller, Susan Systemsanalyst, Robert Dataprocessingcoordinator, Martha Fieldservicetechnician...and I, god forbid, would be "Candi Coderette."

To answer that pesky question of what-do-you-do, let me tell you some of the job titles I've used. Around the office we call ourselves "coders and coderettes." If I were writing a resume, I might say that I'm a Legal Document Analyst. In conversation I often say I'm a para-paralegal. Even taken all together, these titles still probably convey nothing much to you, so let me start again with a sad story about how the legal world is paralyzed by information overload. Some law-suits these days are so complex, and so big, that the pertinent documents for a case fill not just boxes but entire rooms. To prepare for these suits, law firms organize "coding projects," temporary work crews to sift through the millions of pages, decide which are relevant, index them by author and subject and so forth, and in the end create one big database of all this information. That's what I do, and have been doing for exactly a year, on three different law-suits (toxic waste, asbestos, and telephone deregulation, respectively).

This work requires a numbing amount of reading, the ability to write for hours in BIG CLEAR CAPITAL LETTERS, and an obsessive attention to detail (misplaced commas that a normal human would overlook can play havoc inside a computer). Despite all-the-coffee-you-can-drink, your head swims and your eyelids droop when you read your ten-thousandth inter-office memo in bloated bureaucratese, in which some worker ant with a personalized memo pad tries to squirm his way out of taking responsibility for anything and everything. But human spirit triumphs over all sorts of adversity, and as we seek the implicating needles in the document haystack, we look for silly stuff and amuse each other with it. Bad grammar never fails to arouse the righteous indignation of the overeducated coder: "Jeez, this guy was probably pulling in \$50,000 a year, but he couldn't write a coherent sentence!" We psychoanalyze the doodles on their meeting notes. We collect funny names—Berl Beverage, Charlie Piano, the ever-popular Paul Bearer—and try to picture their owners. ("Rod Heft sounds like a male porn star.") Camaraderie and in-jokes and office mythology develop, and we think of ourselves as a team although we know we're just hired brains on a temporary project. A special bond joins us together. Maybe it's that our fellow workers are the only ones to whom we don't have to explain what we do for a living.

Know the forces that
shape your life.

REPENT!
QUIT YOUR JOB!
SLACK OFF!

FAILUREMAN, OR MY TRUE LOVE

by Prudence Gaelor
dedicated to rodny

It was a typical Saturday afternoon, if you call that particular sort of Saturday afternoon typical. Enjoying the air conditioning, we sat on the stone wall which at one time or another served as a fountain, but the water had either evaporated or been piped out. Anyway the effect was the same. I don't remember if there had ever been water in the old fountain. There was still twenty minutes for us to wait in the lobby, and another five to ten to wait in the theatre while they inflicted "God-awful-where-did-they-dig-this-up?" music upon you until your teeth hurt because you were clenching them so tightly. Then the lights would dim and the movie would start with the sound turned up to about 190 decibels. And wouldn't you know it—they're showing previews to some movie guaranteed to be heartwarming and for the whole family (sweet enough to kill a diabetic); unless of course you are just entering the theatre, then there are no previews and you've just missed the first five minutes which were crucial if you wanted to do something trivial like follow the plot. As soon as you become comfortable, someone who is a hybrid of Nanuck, King Kong, Peter the Great and with the distemper of Godzilla sits in front of you. Naturally being short yourself, this person will be graced with good posture but unfortunately will be unable to get comfortable and will shift from side to side in his seat. But you can't get up and move because the theatre is too crowded to find a seat with all of your companions, who can see; and the theatre is too goddamned dark anyway. I digress.

So here we are sitting on the wall of the fountain. The plaster Venus behind us was holding a stare down with a greasy, long-haired usher wearing a polyester tux and earth shoes. Ariel and I were having a great time ripping apart our friends behind their backs, when a glint caught my eye. There he was. He stood adjacent to the popcorn machine adjusting his watch, then with a neat tug he pulled down the sleeve of his tired forest/olive worsted wool jacket, hiding the green bracelet caused by his watchband. He lifted his eyes and perused the room. The power of his raisin eyes went through me, unaffected by the black horn-rimmed glasses setting dents on the bridge of his nose. I followed the arms to his gray-black slicked back hair, cascading in stringy locks behind his protruding pointed ears.

Failureman goosestepped across the lobby, whipped his head up and snapped, "Ghostbusters started 10 minutes ago and there are front row seats only."

And as if Grom, the great god in the sky, descended in all his glory and black, L.L. Bean "commando" sweater, I knew him. Dear Grom, protect me from lust!

I was smitten; often I would go to the movies not to watch the movie, but just to sit in the lobby and watch him. No pleadings, threats of bodily injury, or Raisinettes would get me to budge. If one wanted to find me, I could have been found at my new residence—the lobby of the Westside Cinema—watching Failureman open up the box office for four theatres five minutes before showtime of all four first-run flicks appearing on time sans previews.

My friends thought it was cute at first, but they began to seriously worry when I began to go out in the daytime. And they knew I was definitely ill when I began to attain a rosey complexion, and didn't mind!

I might never have survived this disease, had Reverend Miawatha not come to me and said, "Tomorrow, you must go to the seediest place you know, and the man of your dreams will come to you. Rejoice, Grom smiles upon you."

Well, what do you think I thought? At last, Failureman was going to

be mine. So I went into D.C. and went to the Ontario off of Columbia Ave. Seedy could easily describe the Ontario; so could dangerous and in the midst of a war zone. I went into the theatre and waited, and after about all of two minutes this very drunk albino type stumbled up to me, kissed me in the eyes and slurred something to the extent of, "Hey, you're not Jo!" before passing out at my feet.

The Ontario was about to close, the people working there were about to toss him onto the street and having always been attracted to albino types, I decided to take him, whoever he was, home. I managed to hail a cab (so that I could get him to my car) and in the cab I took the liberty of going through his wallet for cab fare. Hell, I wouldn't have had to take a cab if it wasn't for him. While in his wallet I hunted for identification. Unlike some people whose names I won't mention, I, on occasion, like to know whom I'm dragging home. I found after much digging a Captain 20 Club membership card made out to a Rodney K Dixoin.

One would think that I would wake up to an empty bed. Not the case here. He would not leave. So I figured that he needed time to contact that Jo person and then he would leave. This Rodney person would probably be gone by evening; besides, experience told me that Failureman never went to the cinema until the late afternoon on Saturdays anyway. Right, when the Good Humor man sells popsicles in Hell. Around four he stretched out on the sofa and ejaculated, "Hey you, wass fer dinner?" Wonderful, huh?

He stayed that night, all the next day, the day after and the day after that. It had been four days since I had been to see Failureman. I was undergoing a fiercely violent withdrawal. I wanted to see Failureman, needed to see Failureman, yet I was afraid to leave Rodney alone in the house. Grom only knows what I might have come back to.

So I came up with this idea. Rodney and I could go out and accidentally get separated and maybe he would just go away. He agreed to go out for he already emptied the bar and I wasn't going to go out without him, hence no more alcohol. We finally decided to go to Whispers. And somehow we were separated. I looked for him everywhere—in my trunk, in my jacket pocket, in the glove compartment of my car—but he wasn't anywhere I looked! Resignedly I went home, stopping on the way to refill my bar.

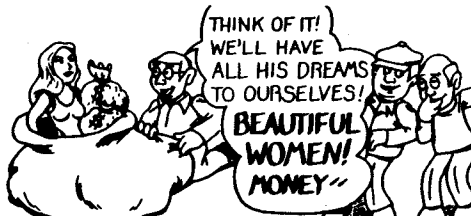
I opened the door to my place and there is Rodney on the couch watching T.V. Then I realized that he might never leave, that he was here to stay. I was beside myself. How could I possibly pursue any type of relationship with Failureman with Rodney in my apartment?

In the ensuing three weeks I began to think less and less of Failureman and more and more of Rodney, as in how am I gonna get him out of my place. He was a decent enough fellow so I didn't want to call the police. I tried everything I could think of: emptying out the bar, being rude, nasty, and insulting, bringing home other men, telling him to leave...Nothing worked. At the end of the third week I gave him a spare key, I gave up as it looked like he would never leave. It had gotten to the point that I wondered if I moved, would he stay at my old place or follow me to my new one.

Once I had resigned myself to letting him stay, I didn't mind him so much. He actually was a lot of fun and once I got to know him I discovered we had a lot in common. It even got to the point that we did everything and went everywhere together.

You could imagine my surprise when he announced that he was going home. I had gotten so used to having him around that I had grown attached to him in a strange sort of way. Once I thought he would never leave soon enough, and yet when the time came he packed up my heart in a kleenex and took it with him. Leaving a void that even Failureman couldn't fill.

"ZEKE the GEEK" by Randy Maxson



AN EVENING ON THE TOWN

by Cynthia Cinque

Lillian went to a local bar, once a week, thinking that she would meet someone with depth and intelligence, but she never met anyone at all.

Her psychotherapist had said, "You will never meet a guy, because you are overweight and smoke Camels."

Lillian replied, "I will never meet a guy, because I read and think too much."

But hope is a strange and silly thing, a bird with broken wings that believes it can fly. It is a rush of joy like the rush of wings, that makes the darkest moments and the darkest places, even death itself, seem strangely gay. So she went, dressed in a blue, pleated skirt, a white blouse, a blue embroidered jacket and a blue and white silk flower in her hair. She took a bus because she did not own a car and arrived one half hour later. The entrance had two torches on either side of the door and a thatched, overhanging roof.

She thought, "It looks like a grass hut in Hawaii. I'll probably get a drink with cream and pineapple and a little Japanese umbrella stuck in a cherry."

She walked in, sat at the piano bar and ordered a Grasshopper. She glanced around to see if there were any good-looking, single men. She wondered if anyone, including herself, ever looked for the ugliest person in the bar.

"It's strange," she thought, "but hardly anyone in town looks like a movie star. Most people have some defect: a crooked nose, acne, narrow shoulders. We look for someone perfect to convince ourselves that we are worthy, that we have not failed at life."

In fact, on the way over in the bus, many of the riders were mentally retarded and that same joyful, silly, hopeful feeling crowded into her heart.

Her mother used to say, "The grandest gifts come in plain wrappers." But that was a long time ago and no one seemed to believe that anymore.

Her neighbor at the piano bar was a corpulent, middle-aged woman who was quite drunk.

She said to the musician, "Can I sing a few songs for the patrons?"

Lillian said, "Can you sing True Grit?", fully cognizant that it would take a man with an abundance of true grit to put up with her books, her collection of birds, her wanderings, her mood-swings, her weight, her causes...and her Camels.

He said, "No, I don't know True Grit."

She eased back into her chair and sipped at the drink. The dance floor was filling up with dancers who seemed to be having a good time. She noticed how everyone clung to each other, how proud they looked to have someone, how they shut out the world, as if to say, "This is all I need, all I can hope for, and all I can understand."

She thought, "Maybe that is why I am forty-five and alone. I can't find everything in a man's arms. I like being there, too, but I like to walk through downtown Los Angeles. I like the desert when the wind whips up the sand with fury. I like to reach to, and know, the heart of things."

A tall, blonde woman in a tight red dress with hair like a tigress and breasts like torpedos was dancing every dance with a different guy. The men had restless, eager looks like bulls in a pen.

Lillian felt jealous, and ashamed because she felt jealous. She knew better. She had learned the hard way that a simple woman, even if she was a bitch, would always be in more demand than herself. Men want it easy and comfortable at home. They don't want critical eyes—for that matter, intelligent eyes—looking at them or at life. It almost seems dirty.

"Boy, is she stacked," Lillian's neighbor said. "Look at them knockers on her!"

Lillian sniffed and replied, "Oh, fuck it, all cats are grey in the dark and besides, her slip is showing."

She saw a short, balding man with skin the color of an eggplant approaching her through the crowd.

"Would you like to dance, Miss? My name is Adolph."

"Sure!" she said.

She felt glad to have someone, anyone, ask her and he took her hand very gently and led her out to the floor.

Adolph said, "You have a very pretty flower in your hair. What do you do for a living?"

She replied, "I'm an unemployed nurse, but I get by."

Adolph said, "I have the impression that you are a survivor. I'd like to ask you to dance again, if I may."

Lillian smiled and thought, "He's not a bad guy." They walked back to her table.

The blonde woman was still dancing, and very seductively. She would shake her breasts, dip to the left, dip to the right and grind her hips. Lillian noticed that her eyes looked dull.

"She probably repeats this routine every week, takes a guy home, fucks him and doesn't know what warmth and admiration is," she thought. She felt a sudden stab of pain and pity. On the edge of the circle, a dark, bearded, good-looking man was eyeing the blonde. He looked like an English professor.

Lillian imagined the conversation between the two of them and laughed out loud. He would tell her he was divorced and that his wife abused him verbally. She would tell him that he spoke real pretty and that she never could understand women who yelled at men. He would feel sympathy for her and parade her among his intelligent friends at the university. Lillian walked closer to him and smiled. Maybe...He looked at her irritably and brushed past her, stepping on her white moccasins. She walked back to her table, put her coat on and said goodbye to her neighbor, who was very, very drunk by then. She waded her way through the fish pond of faces, couples holding each other and tired waitresses. Adolph was standing by the door with his coat over

his arm.

He said, "You're the prettiest woman in here and I hope we meet again."

Lillian felt tears rush to her eyes but controlled them.

She said, "You are a gentleman, Adolph."

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ELBOWBUG DAYS:

The Memoirs of Norman O. Grunion

by Norman O. Grunion

I remember that when I found out Nathaniel's Worm Farm was going to diversify into elbowbug production, I was dubious at first.

Ah, but those were halcyon days. I had, just a few years before, met Henrietta Fowler, when I stumbled by mistake into the Hungry Ewe coffeehouse and stayed to hear her do a dramatic reading of her laundry list. She was already a poetess of some local fame in the greater Pomona area, although she had not yet achieved her later acclaim. She looked so slim and artsy in her jeans and black turtle-neck sweater. From time to time she would accidentally singe her long, straight, dark hair with her Gauloise cigarette, producing an aroma which pervaded the entire dimly-lit room full of dimly-lit people.

When we got dressed the next morning, she told me all about her life, and about her job as a fifth-heart tester at Nathaniel's Worm Farm. "Only temporary," she would always say, "to bring home the espresso until people realize my talent." She also told me of her very, very close personal friend, the fraulein Lani Fleckenberg, and of Lani's plans to embezzle clitellums and sell them across the border, which as you know ended in tragedy and heartbreak. I never did like Lani; she was not a woman I could warm to, and I always felt her secretly jealous of what Henny and I had. I was not sorry when she did not get parole.

The elbowbug production, specifically, was the Thalidomide brain-child of Nathaniel's Worm Farm's manager-proprietor, Hawthorne Nathaniel. The old man of the firm, Brandon Nathaniel, had more or less retired at that point, leaving his son in charge, although he still would sometimes pick worms off the production-line conveyor-belt at random and throw them against the wall, which Henny speculated might be a deranged, half-senile attempt at quality control. With the old man absent mentally if not always physically, his son wished to stretch his corporate muscles, and so he designed and produced the elbowbug.

None of us ever did figure out why. In long and frequent talks, Henny and I used to speculate on his reasons, but no supposition ever seemed really satisfactory. Perhaps the best supposition is that of the managerial scrub-woman, who said one night she had overheard the boss say, "Since elbow macaroni sells better than regular macaroni, except when it has cheese on it, elbowbugs must sell better than regular bugs, because who ever heard of a bug with cheese on it?" Perhaps it was also an attempt to generate elbow grease, which his sainted mother had always advised Hawthie he never used enough of; perhaps he figured that, having made the elbowbugs, he could then press them to get elbow grease. I would like to think so.

Conducting a bit of business for friends on the Eastern seaboard, I was myself present at Nathaniel's Worm Farm when the time came to explain his new process to the employees ranked around him. Re-tooling for elbowbug production was not, in fact, as difficult as I had thought. It was winter, the slow season for angletworms even in sunny California, and the Christmas worm rush had not yet begun. They had even gotten ahead of production quotas on certain items—bristles and ani, I recall, were copiously stockpiled—and the workers, though dubious, were ready for a challenge.

The process, the younger Nathaniel explained, was simple: one took a clitellum (workers were being paid overtime to make a surplus) and bent it at a 90 degree angle, then filled it with insect insides—or, as the assembly-line had it, bug guts. Voila—an elbowbug!

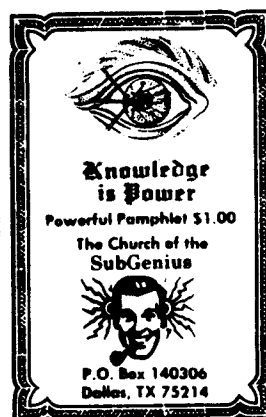
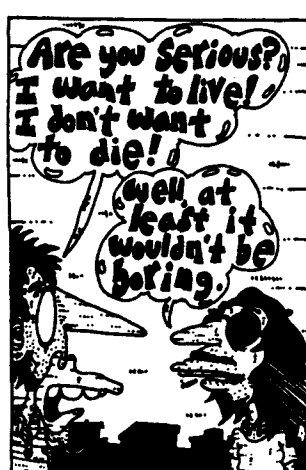
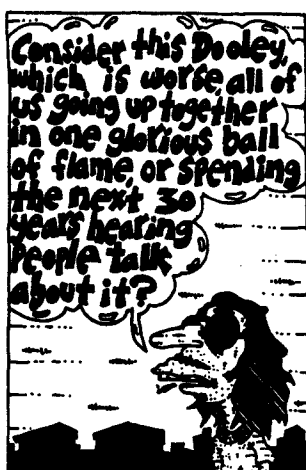
Nathaniel's Worm Farm mounted a massive ad campaign. Of course, the bumper stickers—I'VE VISITED NATHANIEL'S WORM FARM, GREATER POMONA, with its logo of a smiling worm waving cheerfully—had already brought in quite a clientele, but that was as little compared to the publicity blitz that followed in praise of the elbowbug. There were, of course, posters, television spots, full-page magazine and newspaper advertisements, and annoying letter-size flyers which smelly winos were paid a pittance to shove under windshield wipers in parking lots of shopping malls throughout all of California.

H.N. was proudest by far, however, of his own special contribution to the publicity campaign, The Bugettes. The Bugettes, singing and dancing their way into the hearts of consumers across the nation, were in actuality two befuddled assembly-line workers whom Nathaniel had somehow been able to convince of a "Singing Dancing" clause in their contracts and who capitulated only for fear of being reprimanded by their representative to a union which did not, in fact, even exist. Wearing a body-sized cardboard tube which bent them at a right angle at the waist, they tap-danced and wove their arms in frighteningly insectine movements as they sang. Their text was always, of course, prepared by Henny, and though there were a number of songs, the one I will always remember fondly concluded,

Poems are made by fools and mugs,

But only Nathaniel's Worm Farm makes elbowbugs.

(to be concluded next issue)



BEHOLD THE DAYGLO RESURRECTION!

by "Kid" Sieve

Truthfully, I'd welcome any change from the overtight pin-striped bluejeans and black stiletto pumps that abound the haunts of the hopelessly trendy nowadays, and, as self-appointed Fashion Consultant for IJ #35, I'm pleased as punch to herald with open arms the return of that fab fad of the 60's, Dayglo. For those of you, and we know who we are, who may have only lived through this type of thing with kindergarten watercolors (though, as I recall, usually the dayglos were the non-washable ones) or who perhaps never experienced the phenomenon at all, allow me to explain Dayglo. Ok, picture a psychedelic movie. Any movie, although early Roger Corman will do. Now visualize the discotheque scene, with the go-go girls in fringe and miniskirts and the background blob-like projections and flower-child face-painting and—no, better yet, picture Peter Max. That's Dayglo.

According to my San Fran friend Candi, Dayglo has never gone out of style in California, which more or less figures. I've often thought of California as the Dayglo State...Nevertheless, it faded out on the East Coast at about the same time as Indian fringe and love beads (which, by the way, are not back in style yet as far as I can tell, if you don't count Washington Square Park), and has only just re-emerged as a powerful force in the window dressing of most chic shops in La Village (even the 40's-style ones—go figure).

However, watching Dayglo and wearing it may prove to be two different matters for many of you out there, and despite one of IJ's current mottos that goes something like "we're so un-hip we don't even know what's hip, and that's pretty hip", I thought some pointers for the novice Dayglo dresser might be in order, just in case you decide, as have so many (except for the grey-clad Yuppie class, from what I can tell), to 'go for it' and enter this exciting world of outlandish color.

First off, any Dayglo color appears, at least to this eye, to go with any other Dayglo color. If your top is Dayglo orange and you're wearing Dayglo green pants, you can probably be considered to be color-coordinated. You may cause a number of people to rub their eyes and blink in rapid succession, but such is the nearsighted vision of the out-of-step majority. You want to argue, or you want to set trends?

It is also important to remember that Dayglo, worn in the proper places, can detract attention away from certain other places you'd rather people didn't notice. Dayglo panty-hose likely to run is, therefore, not a good idea.

The best introduction would probably be in accessories, like socks, gloves, leg warmers or hats to start. These are not only useful in the coming winter in colder climes, but preferable because they can be easily removed if you find yourself being stared at. Socks you can even hide. But you'll know, won't you? Dayglo jackets haven't seemed to have caught on just yet, perhaps due to strange collective memories of crossing guards in the rain and those awful slickers Mom made us wear. And the next step is sure to be something I also noted while with Candi this past Hallowe-en—Dayglo makeup is coming back. Now, if I could only find my old Yardley collection...

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Breaking Up

by Lawrence Oberc

It was pretty rough asking myself out. After being rejected by others for years I wasn't sure I could stand another rejection. Especially a rejection from myself. I mean like, what if I didn't want to go out with myself? Things like that happen, you know, and being rejected by yourself is a lot harder than being rejected by a total stranger. After a few false starts I finally decided to go through with it. One afternoon, when I was at work, I asked myself out. I was surprised when I accepted. All that fear of not being good-looking enough, or too much of a boozier, faded that day. I felt good about myself.

Getting dressed up to go out with myself was another hassle. I tried on all kinds of different clothes, and somehow nothing seemed to look just right. After two and a half hours I finally decided to go with what I had on. I was my usual twenty minutes late, but myself was polite about it. We went to a local bar, and I got myself drunk. Being the cheap chauvanist I was I made a pass at myself at the end of the night. Surprisingly I didn't turn myself down. We had sex at my place. It wasn't all that great, but I wasn't used to having sex with myself.

Naturally, a few dates later, we decided to move into an apartment. It seemed to be the logical thing to do. Little did I know how difficult it was to live with myself. My God! I was one of the messiest people I had ever seen. I didn't flush the toilet after using it and the shower curtain always dripped on the floor. I was one messy person. This led to arguments, a few with some very serious threats. I said a few things I shouldn't have, and later regretted having ever gone out with myself in the first place.

When we broke up there were a lot of difficult problems we had to deal with—who was going to move out of the apartment, for one. And how were we going to divide everything up. This was tricky territory because myself threatened a palimony suit if I didn't get my share. Fortunately we were just living together. I'm sure a divorce would have been a lot more disastrous. Anyway, I kept the apartment and most of the good stuff.

These days, when I walk down the street and see people going out with themselves, I miss myself. Some of these people even talk to themselves. I never had the nerve to do that when I was going out with myself. But things are different these days. A lot more people are going out with themselves and it's acceptable. Maybe, just maybe, that would have made everything work out between me and myself. Then again, maybe not. But if you're going to go out with yourself, remember one thing: get separate bank accounts. Don't go through what I did. And, good luck.

PAPOON IN '84/84

PAP- ON VI- -CTORY (INSIDE!) JUKE

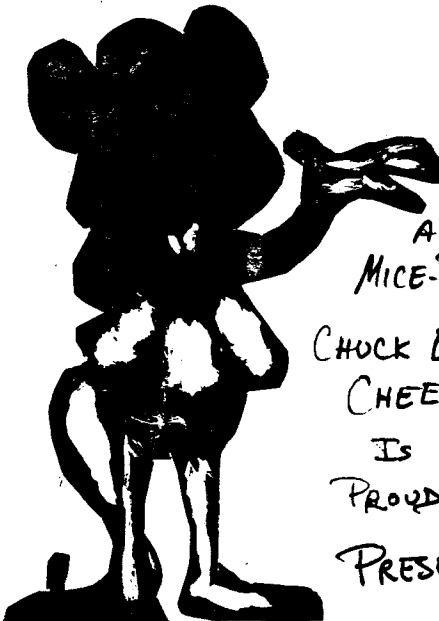
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#35
10/3/84
10/3/84

a newsletter
of C.C.C.
con. by R.W.

Well, yes indeed, we all knew Papoon won. I mean, our very point in this two-year/one-year Campoon was, why run unless you're already the winner? The 1972 and 1976 residual votes were in already, so we knew the score, and the rest was merely Vaseline on the Wheat Thins. But it was a disheartening sojourn nonetheless, much like this year-named-for-a-book itself, when one thinks of it. We went into this, after all, fully aware of what was expected of us, all having been fully predicted ages ago, before we ever took control and assumed non-responsibility; we made a big hoopla about the year finally taking off, 12 months ahead of schedule, and then 12 months afterwards again—making 1984, to our reasoning, the only rerun year in history (and literature backs us up, of course); we waltzed in with power-as-enthusiasm and box-stepped back out in hideous denouement. Along the way, we met some truly unique and unforgettable humans and non-humans, among them our faithful rodent compendium Chuck E. Cheese (whose Pizza Time Theatres will be putting their pies at half-taste in memoriam for this Year of the Yuppie, I'm told) and many, many helpful Campooners from the '76 Biscontennial Daze, brought back into the fold if not for George's sake, then at least for the sake of the Firesign mailing network, once again in full swing and fluctuating vibrantly. And of course we had some great lines. All in all, our progress and digress followed the mood of the country this year rather closely, and when all is said and done (and it truly is, to the point where GGP has announced that he'll be skipping this year's Inaugural and staying at home quietly running This Land of R's, quite likely not to re-emerge until Election 2000, if we make it that far),

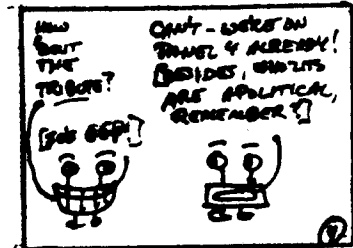
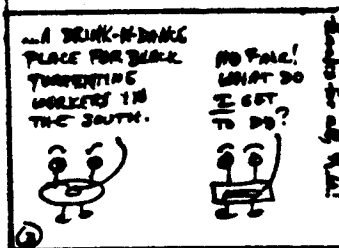
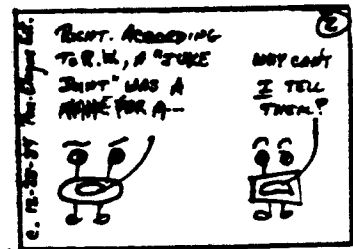
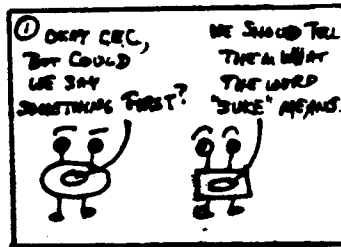
the Campoon may be said to have suffered from the same disorganizational malaise that has plagued many political parties this time around. Remember, dear friends, THERE IS NO ONE TO BLAME. Our claims have even gone unrecorded by all those so-called "animal rights activists" who spend too much time perpetuating hoaxes of food poisoning in protest of labrats that have indulged in too many candy bars (and Chuck personally knows a few starving rats on New York's streets who'd die for a Mars or two!) to see the pure white light an acknowledged victory would have brought them. With a world so intent on making Michael Jackson Cabbage Patch Kids and "Where's Clara Peller Now?" buttons, how could simple surrealists hope for more than videocassette-like self-amusement? Perhaps these questions will never be answered, and perhaps they will be justly ignored, like all the other truly preposterous preponderances of our time, but it's time they were asked, just the same. I'd like to thank all you co-ordinarys and chaircreatures once again for the first time, and leave you with our benificent candidate's parting shots to the awaiting throng this time, last year, again: "Nineteen-Eighty-Four-Ever!" Good bless you, and god night. Not insane.

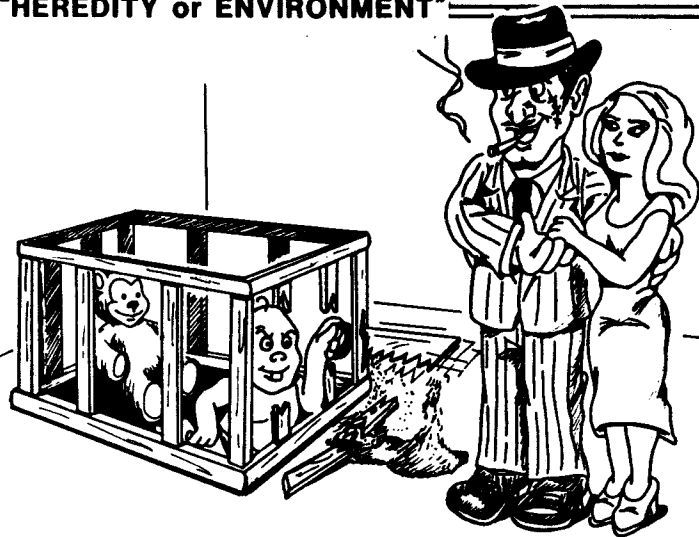


AS HIS
FIRST
OFFICIAL
ACT AS
MICE-PRESIDENT,

CHUCK E.
CHEESE
IS
PROUD TO
PRESENT:

= A WHOLE TRIBUTE TO PAPOON =





"JUNIOR'S
A CHIP OFF
THE
OLD BLOCK!"

© RANDY MAXSON

RECIPES AND CUES (442)

by Roldo

Summer days
And some are knights
(It's a matter of inclination)
The way it goes
Just goes to show
(It's all in the revelation)
Wave in word bebs
Warp and woof—
The pieces rarely fit.
Pattern-puzzle,
To be scene
And find a way to quit.
Luck runs out
And you run after
But someone stole the door.
The walls are slowly
Closing in
And you can't find the floor.
Overhead
And underfoot
Sometimes just underhanded
Past beyond
To where you were
In time to land here stranded.
Never-mind
And ever-more
(What is what you make it)
Reality's a
Piece of cake
(And you're the one who bakes it)

CALLING ANYONE

by Rick da Beast

Hard streets

Hard faces

Hard life

Is there anyone out there that gives a fuck...
...or is that all there is to take.

POLITICS IS DIFFICULT
AND A BORE



NO NEW NEWS

by Susan Packie

There's a six-foot snake
loose in the Rose Garden
to scare away starlings,
keeping the flowers safe
and completely sterile,
to ensure paths are free
of their messy droppings.
The sentiment seems to be
the living are not very neat.
But we've known that
all along, haven't we?

ORPHANS

by Rick da Beast

Orphans on a strange planet 'cuz our parents
never
understood
where they were or why...
or their parents before.
So we wander alone...together...trying to find
a home
at home
where there is none
'cuz we are just visiting...
and some of us will leave behind some more
to say the same about us...
and to continue the search.

"LIFE'S LONELY STRUGGLES"

OPPORTUNITY DOESN'T MAKE HOUSE CALLS

by Carolyn Lee Boyd

If, while you pass a pay phone, it rings,
what do you do?

If you pick it up after only one ring,
the chances are that your life will soon
be made into a beer commercial.

Two rings means you run in marathons and
say it's for the sport of it, but you are
the first in line to see your name on the
17,000-entry long list of runners.

Three rings absolves you from any need
for psychiatric help whatsoever.

Four rings and I'll bet you always play
records all the way through so as not to
be impolite to the musician.

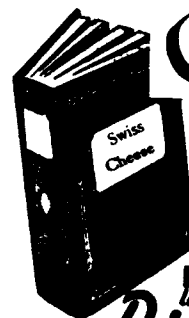
Five rings and babies take candy from you.

Six rings and opportunity has hung up.
But, if life were fair, Disneyland would
be out of business.

FOR YOUR LIBRARY—FOR THOUGHTFUL GIVING, TOO—

Anyone on your list
will enjoy a Gift of

Cheese



Make DELUXE
LIBRARY
EDITIONS

of your
Golden Wheels of Cheese

with
PERMO
Lifetime

Binders

and you can't taste the difference

ANON..

Sayz-U! (Letters)

Dear Elayne;

IJ 34 arrive today and I am hip deep in it. It's a continuing marvel to me; such lush variety of (usually) articulate souls I have never seen before, and all hibits are off. (ED: "Hibits"? I can't believe that you produce this wad of strangeness eight times a year! (Heck, it used to be 12 times a year...) What an incredible chore; I love it, keep it up. I only have two complaints: terminal eyestrain and the occasional killer letter. The really small type and slightly blurred Xerox is never really illegible but really tuff on old farts like me. It's worth it but rough on the eyeballs; I read a couple pages at a time. Lasts longer that way, too. The killer letters in #33 broke the warm glow I had gotten from the rest of the zine. I don't blame you—you print what you get—but I do dislike fuggheads who thrive on hassle and vilification. Hard to get away from them, though. The day I got #34 (today) I also got an sf-zine that was a one-shot involved totally to one stupid ongoing hassle which I could care less about.

Anni Ackner is a great writer.

Best,

J.C. PALMER
1220 North State St.
P.O. Box 2432
Bellingham, WA 98227-2432

("Uncle Wiggly" would like to take this opportunity to apologize for the condition of the last issue in terms of blurred layers, etc.—unfortunately, the Samizdat copy machine was on the Fritz [better than being on the Ronnie, no?] the day IJ #34 was copied, and that can't be helped sometimes, sorry. As far as "killer letters", I do quite agree with you, J.C., but there are folks who enjoy looking for fights, and every now and then they deserve their say as well. I will try, however, to be more selective about that; if you thought the letter column was nasty, you should have seen my personal mail from the same soreass! By the way, folks, J.C.'s Postcard Palace puts out some of the niftiest p-cards I've seen in awhile — do inquire!!)

Dear Elayne,

Happy 27 to ya!...about the past couple of IJs: You know, one of the charms of small town life is that everyone knows about everyone else. And, if they don't, hell, they'll just read your mail and find out. So when Hank, our kindly old postmaster, stops me on my way into the local post office and says, "Hey, I think the editor of your INSIDE JOKE magazine, you know, that magazine we like to rip up 'fore we give it to ya, anyway, the editor, that Elayne girl, well, I think she's in love," well I know when Hank tells me this, it means two things: 1.) It's true. And 2.) Everybody 'round these parts knows about it. Anyway, I think it's great and I wasn't at all put off by your little announcement in IJ 32; in fact, were it not for said l.a., IJ 33's letter column would have been considerably less amusing. No, it's something else that concerns me.

While you, Anni Ackner, Deborah Benedict et al are certainly capable of holding the fort by yourselves, I feel that IJ does hurt a bit from the leavings of C. Geerdes, E-Popular and Jill Z. It's been said that you will never be able to force your friends to write for you by holding a gun to their heads. On the other hand, have you ever tried it? May work. Are Jill Zimmerman's more serious pieces out of place in IJ? I say no and say also that IJ would benefit from having these folks back on its staff. Yeah, I know this is somethin' you already know, but maybe it will help if "paying subscribers" write in and say it.

I gotta go. Happy B-Day, Happy Channukah, Merry Xmas (what, no fireworks?) and, of course, a belated Happy Halloween,

JOHN ZACHRY
JOHN ZACHRY

(oh the hell with it just call me Butch)

("Butch" is actually "Mr. Mike", long-time IJ reader who wishes to remain anonymous, just so's y'all don't confuse him with anybody from Indiana or something. To set things a bit straighter: Clay Geerdes has no intention of returning, and in fact no longer considers himself a friend of yours truly; Carolyn "The Ever-Popular" Boyd was never a staffer but Lord knows I've tried to talk her into it; and both Carolyn and Jill are frequent contributors to IJ's letter column and neither is adverse to writing other pieces in the future, so I do agree, voice your support and let them know they're needed!)

Elayne,
Just got IJ34. Usual good stupe. Lemme say dat I also support de subscription idea. Ya mean...actual serials mite start sneakin' back in? Wowie kazowie. I wuz thinkin' bout what Eberly mite have been on (goin' back ta last ish) when I ran across a total non seq. in my film piece. I got absolutely no idea wot I wuz tryin' ta say but it had nothin' ta do wif heavy metal, I assure each an' alla ya. But anyway, this month's Lee Ving update finds our boy guest starring on an episode of "Fame" (which has gone totally bizarro anyway so I sez check it out). Anyway, the t'ings I liked best in 34 were (in no particular order at all): da Beast's "Cooking on da Road" (if I had any money I'd buy a copy); "Stories My Mother Told Me" by the god-like genius of Anni Ackner (as always, natch); "Studies on Myself" by Pru (aaauuuggh); the latest from Larry Fizz; "The Last Word" and Michael K.'s thing on da East Village. Nuthin' really poor dis time but I found a lotta da stuff rather pointless an' disappointin'. Sad ta say, I been quite disappointed in da last few things from Mr. Michael. Izzit jest me or what? Houchens wuz boring as usual. Fin'lly, I loved the "End of Elvis" cartoon. None of which answers da question, "why can't dey make a tomato what tastes like a tomato?"

Frankie Say "Non Serviam",

RODNY K DIOXIN
c/o 48 Prospect St., #3
Jersey City, NJ 07307

Hi Elayne.

Just got IJ #34, haven't read it all yet, but loved the Papoon interview & Anni's column. Mothers are psychic. I also liked Anni's letter & P.S.—I, too, was a little bothered by the callous comment about the Betty Ford Center. It's not that expensive, by the way. Some centers charge \$10,000 for treatment, which, to my mind, is infinitely more heinous than making people pay for their vanity. There are brain-chemical reasons for alcoholism, Elayne. It's not just chance that 80% of reformed heroin addicts become alcoholic...The Tetra Hydra Iso Quinilene sees to that...

Does Deborah Benedict hate men as much as she sounds like? Sure, the quotes were sexist, but she sounds like all she wants is a wealthy hunk that she can toss off like a used tampon or something.

Is that you on the cover? Nice pic, if so...

Well, keep it up, Elayne. IJ's still good, and better yet for its consistency.

Free Ambrosia Dobbs!

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

(I doubt highly that Deborah Benedict hates men; in fact, she's even married one, hunky staffer Tom Gedwillo [but rich? well...]) No, sorry, my appearance does not even faintly resemble the picture of #34's cover, but if anybody's that intensely curious, I ran a couple photos in my Firesign newsletter, available for the asking.)
Gentle and Ungentle Readers,

I am about to stick my neck out—something I do rather frequently and rarely regret. As Robispirer said, "What's a neck for, nu?" I am going to offer my opinions on the topic of publishing—amateur and professional, and in doing so, hope to enlighten those to need to be luxed over. Two salient facts must be stated outright:

Erste: Talent is not an accurate indicator of one's publishing history. Some of the most egregious writers are published and many of them make oodles of geld and get their very own displays in Waldenbooks. Many brilliant writers never see their names in print. Go figure.

Zweite: The use of the word "amateur" in the context I employ here should not be interpreted as pejorative or depreciative. When we use the expression "amateur" in connection with printed matter, we are concerned with defining a genre. We use it to identify a publication that caters to the aficionado, the devotee, the connoisseur. Amateur in this aspect has come to mean specialistic. Ergo, one can be a "professional" writer who is published in the mainstream magazines, and still maintain a role in the world of the amateur press. A famous example of this happy duplicity can be found in the life of H.P. Lovecraft.

Now what is publishing really about?

ALL editors of ALL publications, be they amateur or professional, are primarily concerned with satisfying their readership. This means that it is in the best interests of the editors, the contributors and the readers that appropriate material is published. You would not, for example, expect OMNI to publish a Georgette Heyer type of gothic romance, and you would not expect INSIDE JOKE to cover the financial world, as does BUSINESS WEEK. ALL writers, whether they write for fun or profit or both, must keep in mind the editorial preferences of a publication. No matter how brilliant a work may be, if it is not suitable to the specific needs of a publication, it will not be published therein. In many cases, even if it is both suitable and superb, it may not be bought and published because of budget or the editors may wish to feature something else instead. If Ray Bradbury, Harlan Ellison and Larry Niven all sent a story to OMNI, and OMNI was budgeted to buy only one story by a MOS (Writer Of Stature), then two of those guys would lose out, and it wouldn't mean they weren't all wonderful writers. That's just the way it is. These facts may seem self-evident to most of you, but, I have learned that there are many young writers who refuse to face these facts, and have vitriolic things to say about editors and publishers. They should know the truth. Whether these things are "fair" or not is academic. The fact is, that once you make a deal with an editor—whether you have sold first serial rights for proper indemnification, or have agreed to be published for "fun"—that editor now owns your work. For a while, anyway. Just as when an author sells his work outright to a movie producer and surrenders his power as overseer of his work, and must resign himself to seeing his work altered, so must the page writer learn to detach himself. You pays yer money and you takes yer choice. It is galling and sometimes iniquitous. This is a courtroom subject.

An editor can buy your work, and then decide not to publish it, in which case he can return your work and you can return his money—or you can accept a kill fee and know that your work is forever moribund. This is very unsporting, but so is most of modern commerce. A writer has to tolerate a lot of crap—and professional writers who chaffer with pro editors must endure torments that those who stay strictly in amateur land can never dream of.

I am more amused by complaints of typos than I can say. Once a writer has been genuinely edited, once he/she has had a cherished work truly mangled, a typo in an unaltered piece is something one barely notices. It would be like kvetching about the size of a bow on a birthday gift.

To expect any small press or amateur operation to be consistently typo-perfect is unreasonable and petty. ALL publications make typos, from the New York Times to Better Homes and Gardens. I have had my name misspelled so often, I'm sometimes unsure as to how to spell it! It hardly matters and I will tell you why, I will let you in on a secret truth. Writing is NOT "self-expression". Writing is communication. Writing is not an activity that needs to have the writer's name and ego emblazoned on it in celestial lights. Those of you who really believe that the main purpose of your writing is to express yourself should quit right now. It's part of it, but the main thing is to communicate well. You can express yourself by screaming uncontrollably, 19

but if no one understands what the hell you're trying to say, to what purpose have you expressed yourself? Also, if one has self-respect for their talent, one does not break down if one is criticised or rejected—and certainly one doesn't let a typo upset their equanimity. A writer with self-esteem doesn't fear or hate editors because true talent wants to learn and a writer who has his ducks lined up knows that the great thing is to become a better communicator and he realises that editors frequently have sound advice and ideas. A truly talented writer with healthy self-esteem should have only two fears: 1. running out of ideas; 2. plagiarism.

INSIDE JOKE readers and contributors are a similarly minded group and should have a warm camaraderie. Usually this is the status quo, but once in awhile, a nickel-and-dime complainer comes along and points out the silliest, most trivial problems. My feelings about this are snobby and hostile. I say, unless said complainer has just won the Pulitzer Prize and has just stepped down from the Tonight Show stage, he should glue it together. His/her bitching sounds like the noises made by a swollen ego stuck inside a little mind.

Because IJ is not published for profit, it doesn't have the resources to hire a proofreader. Perhaps the kvetchers would like to volunteer for the job! It is precisely because IJ is a 'zine that contributors have the latitude they so enjoy. Those who complain about the typos or the few strictures there are in IJ would do well to imagine what it would be like if they were dealing with professional publishers. Though they would get paid for their work, they would also be subjected to harsh critique, massive alterations and frequently shocking suggestions, especially about titles. Also, lemme tell ya—they may spell your name right in the publication, but not on the goddamned check! And that is really irritating! You have to send the check back and go through their payroll/accounts payable department and sometimes wait MONTHS. Gimme a break.

It's my experience that those who bitch most volubly about the small sins of amateur pressdom are those who aspire to professional writing careers—and the irony is that they don't have the class or the courage to endure the torments of the career professional.

I am just guessing, but I think that Elayne's purpose with IJ is to delight and entertain. I know she does not expect fame and wealth from her endeavors. I know also that she works at a full-time job and has a busy private life as well. I am personally amazed that she can find the time and energy to produce IJ at all, let alone make it a fine exemplification of the amateur press spirit. But she does it, and I for one *love* it because she does it! I have had my share of typos in IJ—and Elayne, be honest, have I ever mentioned one of them? You know why? Because after my experiences in the page trade, a few typos look good to me. In fact, after having entire stories changed, those typos are just little daisies in a field of briars.

Also, what are we doing here, kiddos? Are we turning into such a bunch of Lucy Van Pelt fussybuds that we cannot tolerate technical errors, but we can embrace philosophical and moral errors? Where did all these hardass classicists suddenly come from? Is there a resurgence of allegiance to form and a sudden disdain for content? The tradition of creative writing is romantic. The tradition of pedantic, didactic writing is classicist. It is axiomatic that romantic tradition exemplifies the true spirit of the artist, whereas classicism is for technicians. Nothing wrong with being a technician, but don't try to write for IJ.

It strikes me metaphorically thus: A guy goes to a party he was never invited to in the first place and proceeds to complain about the food, the ambience and the guests. Ingrate is the word that leaps to mind. I am glad to share my stuff with IJers. I am also glad to share my stuff with other readers and get money for it. But with IJ, I can do what I want and if there is a price to this freedom it is a mere bagatelle—a few typos, mayhap. The price professional publishing extracts for its imbursement is much more wrenching—but there are benefits. One reaches a larger audience, one opens a few more doors, one puts a few more bucks in the bank.

If you want to be a rich and famous writer, you have to compromise a lot. ALL writers, no matter how much stature they've acquired, get edited, critiqued and rejected. There are typos in practically every major book. It's part of the territory. Of course, one should always strive for perfection—not in actual hopes of reaching it, but just for fun. I know that Elayne does her best to proofread and edit IJ as perfectly as she can. It makes sense—it's HER brainchild. She wants it to look good—but more than that she wants it to BE GOOD. Sure there are mistakes—but! Elayne doesn't ask us to send her perfect copy, 2 1/2 inch margins, elite or pica black type, name and address in upper left corner, word count, copyright and rights given in right hand corner and so on. H.P. Lovecraft knew he could make it in the pro world, but he stayed with the amateur press because he felt more comfortable there and we should too. For that is the purpose of the whole thing—to create an extended family, a haimische karass. It's a mutual and synergistic relationship. The pro writer who writes exclusively for mainstream slicks may get the money—but he misses out on our freedom and feeling of buddyship. Those of you who think IJ is unfair to you would do well to consider yourselves in the clutches of a professional publication...how long can you tread quicksand?

In closing, I want to say that I know what a long letter this is and if it needs to be edited to fit space, I trust Elayne to do it as she sees fit. It doesn't bother me much, because I am accustomed to letting editors do their job. After all, they let me do mine. Those of you who think I'm a syncophant are those who do not know me and you are way outta line. I don't kiss ass. I don't have to. Being an honest person is enough. For those of you with talent who want to be published in the mainstream and elsewhere—remember, you cannot get anywhere without an editor and a publisher and they need you, too. Synergistic, symbiotic. It's a beautiful thing.

IJ contributors have more latitude than mainstreamers will ever know—we should all enjoy it while we can.

Best of luck to everybody—and anyone who wishes to fight with me on this issue is welcome to do so—with this bifurcated caveat: unless you're as smart as me, and as much of a wise guy as me, you won't have much fun.

Let us all strive to be virtuous humans.
Shalom.

DEBORAH BENEDICT
4718 1/2 Calvert
Lincoln, NE 68506

(The opinions expressed above are not necessarily those of ye editrix, who prefers to remain as enigmatic as possible about this whole to-do. See, DeeBee, I don't "edit" in the sense of shortening, but I do throw my 2¢ in every now and again.)

Dear Elayne—

I sit in the remnants of a Ranch House restaurant resurrected as Bavarian Haus—featuring an accordion player playing German folk tunes and Christmas music. The food is simulated German cuisine and nothing but old coffee seems appealing. "Somewhere My Love" on accordion with mock clavs? Make mine to go.

'Tis a fitting place to finish reading IJ 34. Happy Birthday, Elayne. 27 years old. When I turned 27 I was working for a low-budget ABC-TV UHF affiliate with those call letters. '27 up and coming' was their slogan. Or as we used to say '27...we can live with it.'...

The literary world should be saddened by Richard Brautigan's passing. I am.

I thought Mike Gunderloy's "Year of the Sloth" was poignant. Those days are on the horizon.

[Damn near everyone in this restaurant is dead.]

There may not be any more King Crimson LPs—Robert Fripp is back at Enlightenment Camp digging latrines. The aforementioned (by Rory Houchens) LP is interesting but disappointing. It's not "Exposure"...

I hope Deborah Benedict finds her last word. I guess sexism is not a solely male psychological disorder after all. All in good taste, of course.

"Open and Shuttered Case" was nice.

[Too much polka music.]

I am really touched by the power in R. Murphy's "How It's Done". I hope to memorize it for public performance (with all due permissions and credits, of course).

I liked "The Silent Scream" cartoon. A sick concept.

[The hills are alive with live accordion music. The hills have eyes.]

Baboon Dooley is, as always, a likeable, if daft, chap. I look forwards to seeing more of him...

[What is that song? Alvin & the Chipmunks?]

Once again, thank you for IJ. I wish I could have met you earlier. My creativity would have gotten a needed boost.

As always, a cartoonist lost in a sea of retirees [More coffee and the check, please]...

PHIL TORTORICI
P.O. Box 57487

West Palm Beach, FL 33405

Dear Elayne,

Read all the copies of IJ, going back to issue #9 of April 1982. I admire your consistency and devotion in keeping us entertained year after year. Having done my own newsletter (with less frequency) I can appreciate the hours of work you put into the production of IJ. May you continue to have the financial means and creative input to bring us IJ for many more years.

How about a report along the lines of "whatever became of..." so we'd know about ex-staffers like Chris Downey, Nate Mishaan, Paul Zuckerman, Norman Mailer, et al. But then again, who cares? (Maybe their lawyers?)

I've been enjoying Steve Chaput's column on comic books. He mentions the Bizarros—a few years ago on Saturday Night Live they did several sketches with the Bizarros (played by Tim Kazurinsky, Mary Gross and others). On the subject of SNL, it's great to see Martin Short and Billy Crystal on a regular basis. Short's character, Ed Grimley, is very decent I must say! Crystal as Sammy Davis Jr. is absolutely amazing. And then there's Harry Shearer as Mr. Blackwell. One of the best seasons for SNL in a long time!

Must decide between two movies on cable tonight: "A Dead-Ringer for Jesus" or "Ali McGraw's Pancake Feed." Time to toss a coin.

Take it as it comes, Elayne, and remember, "zythum" is the last word in the dictionary.

TOM GEDWILLO
Cosmo's Factory
Lincoln, NE

(I rarely mention ex-staffers because, being ex-staffers, most of them aren't terribly communicative towards me. I do know that Brian Catanzaro's group, The Pseudo-Realists, plays intermittently around the New Brunswick, NJ area, and that Brian Pearce and Anni are still quite happily whatever, Bri being somewhere in upstate NY once again. As for the rest, I know as much as you do...Although I'm getting rather tired of the—let's face it—one-joke Grimley, no matter how cleverly done, I am quite enamoured of Shearer's characterizations, Blackwell among them, and even of Rich Hall's Paul Harvey. But I must admit that my personal favorite new cast member is Chris Guest, who may go down as the most underrated SNL player ever.)

Dear Elayne:

You know, as you can imagine, there are certain features of the Oct. '84 "Stark Fist" [The Stark Fist of Removal is the official newsletter of the Church of the SubGenius] to which I object, some of which I would like to express. And since I find it constraining to write with-in the SubGenius style, I'd like to take the opportunity to express my objections here, rather than directly to "them" (though, to be truthful, when I see it as advantageous I pretend to be and in a sense "am" one of them, just as I sometimes "am" Robert Rabbit). To clarify: I don't think it is really possible to "be" a SubGenius, because, as you know, The Church is presently controlled by an elite clique of powerful

Dallas businessmen who have apparently made a secret deal with Jehovah-One. That is to say, since I don't know of any such deal, and I certainly have access to as much information as John Q. Public, if such a deal has been made, it must be a secret, right?

The above-mentioned objection is to all that dog-doo about the Dobbs family, which, as we can all see, is certainly a smokescreen. I can declare this publicly with confidence because, as you know, I have been working directly with Ambrosia Dobbs, the "unknown" twin of Amnesia, who is credited with being the virtual source of the entire Dobbs plan. (For details, send S.A.S.E. to "Nurses for Amnesia", Church of Jomama, Absolutely Perfect Productions, "Box" 999, St. Helena, CA 94574; ask for the basic rant of St. Val. Offer given without knowledge or consent of the boxholder.)

Unlike some people I could mention in the northwest part of this land, who appear to have been holding the trusted Amnesia to her promises under the bed, as it were, "like a badger," my relationship to Ambrosia has been absolutely unassailable, and no one can prove otherwise. Is that what I mean to say?

But since it is so hard to know what to believe nowadays, for the sake of those who were not present last Halloween—and I'm sure you and the others present will back me up on this—here follows the story that was told to us under barely half a moon left unlit, by Ambrosia Dobbs, now revealed for the first time ever, having been buried since time immemorial in the substrata of personal history, and unknown even to the high scribe of the Treasure of Jomama:

It seems that not even Amnesia remembers if Ambrosia is her twin, offspring, or something else, for—now get this: Ambrosia ("the twice-blessed") is the first child ever baptised in the womb—a practice that will now become mandatory lest the little heathens slip off into the sea. By some freak or miracle of nature, or perhaps as a carefully calculated manipulation of the Dobbs Rule, the Dobbstwins developed, in Connie's wummie, not side by side, but one within the other—so that Ambrosia was born within the Womb of Amnesia, and did not emerge until New Year's Day, 1984! Skeptics will surely howl that these are not the twins, and certainly some of these creeps wouldn't know New Jerusalem if it came up and buggered them in broad daylight, but the one thing we can be sure of at this point is that each of these twins has shared half of the process of their own creation.

Let us be prepared then, when this so-called impostor returns from the dead (and I hear they have already raked in enough to ransom back one arm with no fingers), to smite his blasphemous lies to smithereens with the power given to us by all that is right!

Not responsible!

ROBERT WOLLARD

1356 Sulphur Springs Ave., #4
St. Helena, CA 94574

P.S. The above "Robert Wollard" is not me, but one of my fictional characters, who happens to share my name and some of my views. —R.W. cc/Smith, Smith, Smith, S.M., S.M., H.Q., etc. etc. etc.

THE FACE ON THE DOOR

by A.J. Wright

Elmer started his coma around ten o'clock on a Tuesday morning during a syndicated episode of his favorite television program, *Perry Mason*. As his wife Wanita would later describe it, he "phased out" in the middle of uttering a sentence highly critical of Mason's strategy in that particular case. At first Wanita failed to realize that the condition of their life together had changed, but when she did she began screaming and did not stop until after a neighbor had arrived, called the rescue squad and ushered in the two white-coated gentlemen. The pair had some trouble determining just whom they had come to rescue.

Within an hour Elmer appeared comfortable in the intensive care unit of the hospital six miles from his home. Wanita sat beside him, holding his limp right hand as she watched the tiny threads of light on the screens of various monitors.

For three days little changed. The doctors and nurses gathered at Elmer's bedside, mumbled to each other and themselves and rarely to Wanita, and then dispersed. Wanita sat through it all as if in a daze, a coma of her own, Elmer's cool right hand in her sweaty left one. During the night of the third day, the phenomena began.

Wanita had dozed off in her chair and after sliding halfway to the floor awoke with a start. She looked up to see Elmer's body floating above the bed, seemingly attached to the earth only by the labyrinth of tubes and wires snaking from various parts of his anatomy. Wanita's immediate, sustained response was to commence screaming.

By the time a nurse arrived, Elmer had settled back to earth, or at least the bed, and Wanita had fainted. Actually, that particular nurse never entered the room; her attention was derailed by the human face taking shape on the door. She also screamed, an octave higher than Wanita, and then became a heap of flesh on the recently-mopped floor.

Later in the morning these events were making their way into the culture's fabric. A local newspaper reporter was drafting stories for both his employer and the wire services.

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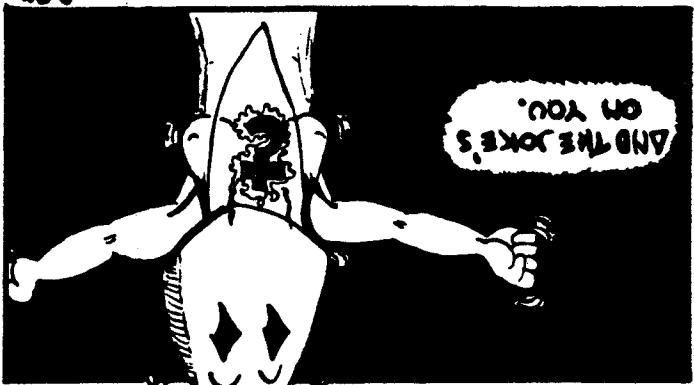
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A professor from the junior college had begun his detailed study of the image, which was slowly developing like a photograph in its chemical bath. Adherents of a local religious cult, The Church of the Bright White Light and Snake Handlers, were taking up residence around the hospital's main entrance. The minister of the predominantly-white Baptist church was considering how to work the face's appearance into his next sermon, the title of which was "How Do We Face Our Sins?". The manager of the town's AM radio station was contacting the hospital's administrator concerning the possibility of a remote broadcast from Elmer's room. An ambitious young resident was drafting a case report for submission to the *Journal of Coma Research*.

During the next week a media storm gathered around Wanita and the ever-calm Elmer. The *National Enquirer*, *People*, *Us*, *We*, *Them*, *They*, *You* and *Me*, *Me*, *Me* magazines all dispatched investigative reporters to the scene, or at least to the cafe a few blocks down the street. The television news magazines were well represented; Mike Wallace himself was rumored to be prowling the streets in search of victims. Psychics gathered like flies to the watermelon rind on a picnic table. Wanita, resigning herself to it all, sold her story as many times as she could tell it. Minicams, steadicams, boom mikes, mini-mikes and note pads were everywhere. Elmer continued to refuse all comment.

By the end of a year Elmer had settled into a role as the town's premier tourist attraction. The face remained on the door. Local commentators likened the image to the face of Jesus; national commentators compared it to a hoax. Elmer continued to levitate once or twice a day. Occasionally, he turned perpendicular to the bed and spun like a top. Wanita continued to tell their story, with its ever-shifting details, and wondered if Elmer could possibly reach the world's record—thirty-seven years—for time spent in a coma. Many people debated whether Elmer was really in a coma or had retreated to some state of suspended animation bordering on mystical ecstasy.

Several people associated with these events bettered their lives as a result. For instance, the nurse who first spotted the face sold her substantial physical assets to *Penthouse*. The janitor who mopped the floor on which she fell was featured in *Sanitation News*. Numerous people were affected in other ways. Conversions to the various One True Faiths rose dramatically. We have all been touched by the example of Elmer's humility during his escalating fame. And despite the apparent odds against him, Perry Mason won his case.



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