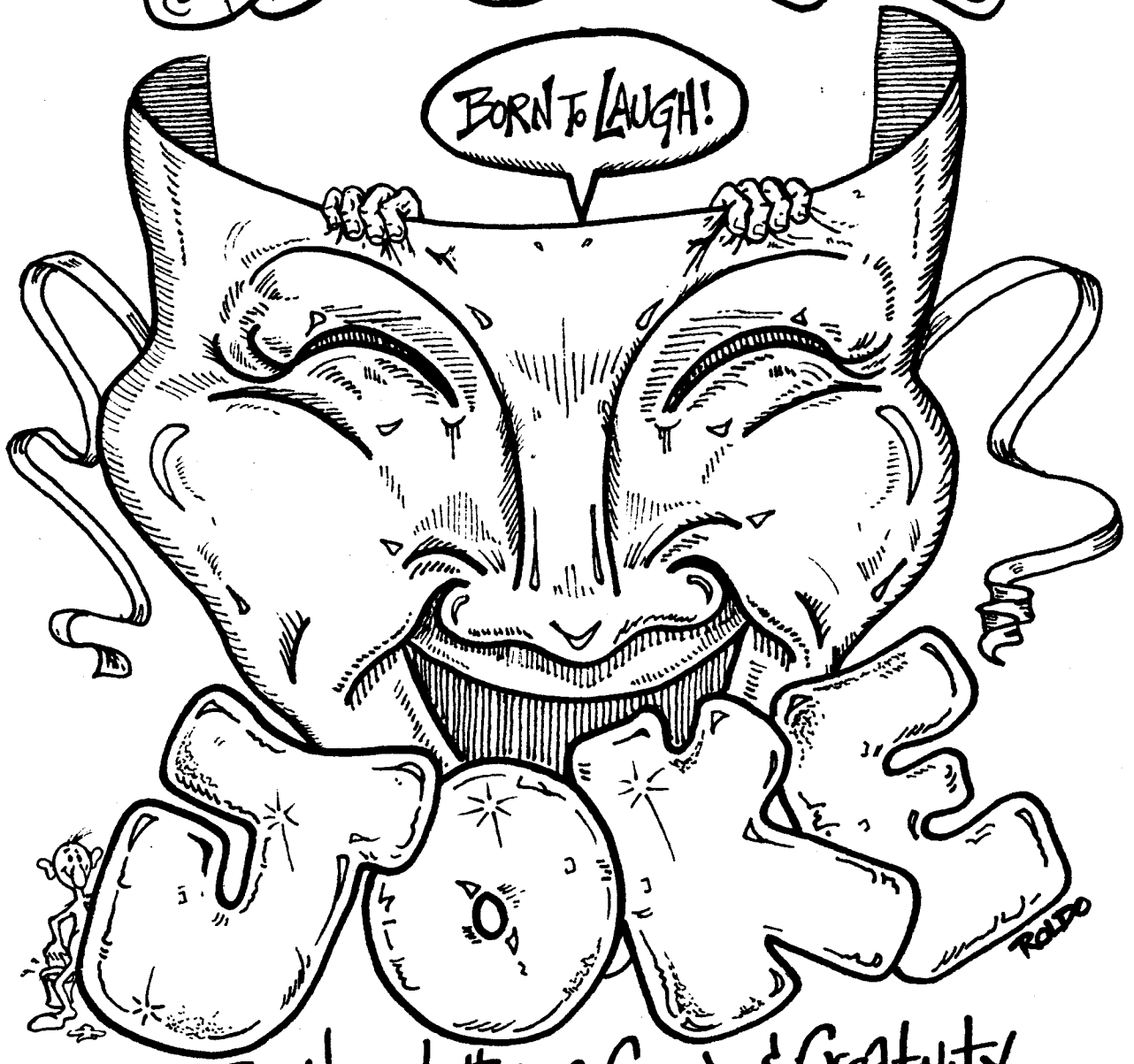


\$1⁰⁰

NO. 36

WISPO

BORN TO LAUGH!



The Newsletter of Comedy & Creativity

-UPCOMING EVENTS-

If you have any special days you'd like commemorated, please forward them to me & I'll note - thanks!

- MARCH 1 - JED MARTINEZ (31)
First Typewriter Manufactured (1873)
- MARCH 2 - Tom Wolfe (54); John Irving (43); Lou Reed (43)
- MARCH 3 - A.J. WRIGHT (33)
- MARCH 4 - Theodore Seuss Geisel, a/k/a Dr. Seuss (81)
- MARCH 6 - BRIAN PEARCE (20); Ring Lardner (b. 1885)
- MARCH 12 - Jack Kerouac (b. 1922); USPOrifice est. (1789)
- MARCH 14 - Albert Einstein (b. 1879)
- MARCH 15 - Buzzard Day - Hinckley, Ohio
- MARCH 17 - DALE ASHMOY (33)
- MARCH 18 - First Electric Shaver (1931)
- MARCH 19 - Philip Roth (51)
- MARCH 20 - B.F. Skinner (b. 1904)
- MARCH 21 - Johann Sebastian Bach (b. 1685)
- MARCH 22 - Chico Marx (b. 1891)
- MARCH 23 - Fannie Farmer (b. 1857)
- MARCH 24 - Rene Descartes (b. 1596)
- MARCH 25 - Elton John (38); Gloria Steinem (50)
- MARCH 26 - Bob Elliott (62)
- MARCH 28 - GENE WECHSLER (26)
- MARCH 30 - Vincent Van Gogh (b. 1853)
- APRIL 1 - Rusty Staub (41); Lon Chaney (b. 1883)
- APRIL 2 - Max Ernst (b. 1891); Hans Christian Anderson (b. 1805); First Movie Theatre Opens (1902)
- APRIL 3 - Washington Irving (b. 1783)
- APRIL 5 - Bette Davis (77)
- APRIL 6 - PHIL AUSTIN (44); Harry Houdini (b. 1874)
- APRIL 7 - William Wordsworth (b. 1770)
- APRIL 8 - Mary Pickford (b. 1893)
- APRIL 9 - Tom Lehrer (57)
- APRIL 11 - CAROLYN LEE BOYD (30?)
- APRIL 12 - David Cassidy (35)
- APRIL 13 - Samuel Beckett (b. 1906); Thomas Jefferson (b. 1743)
- APRIL 14 - First Webster's Dictionary (1828)
- APRIL 15 - First McDonald's Chain (1955); Titanic Down (1912)
- APRIL 16 - KRISTIN PROCTOR (8); Wilbur Wright (b. 1867); Charlie Chaplin (b. 1889)
- APRIL 17 - KERRY THORNLEY (47)
- APRIL 18 - San Fran Earthquake (1906); P.Revere's Ride (1775)

* INSIDE JOKE is put on hexaweekly by the always hurried but none-
* theless well-intentioned Elayne Wechsler and lots of dear friends,
* and emanates from the wilds of beautiful downtown Brooklyn, home of
* many famous divorced people the world over. Good gosh, I miss my
* production assistant—only two more lifetimes 'till spring...
* EDITOR-IN-RESIDENCE.....ELAYNE WECHSLER
* HEAD XEROGRAPHER....."UNCLE WIGGLY"

* STAFF WRITERS
* ANNI ACKNER ALIX BISHOFF MICHAEL DOBBS
* KEN FILAR TOM GEDWILLO MIKE GUNDERLOY
* RORY HOUCHESS SUSAN PACKIE GEORG PATTERSON
* ROLDO CANDI STRECKER KERRY THORNLEY A.J. WRIGHT

* FRONT COVER BY ROLDO-----BACK COVER BY PHIL TORTORICI

* OTHER CONTRIBUTORS THIS ISSUE:
* ANDY AMSTER ALICE ERNLICH LUKE MCGUFF
* CAROLYN LEE BOYD VERNON GRANT LAWRENCE OBERC
* CYNTHIA CINQUE DAN HOWLAND AUDREY PARENTE
* TOM CORNEJO TULI KUPFERBERG MICHAEL PACKER
* JOHN CRAWFORD PETER LABRIOLA STEVEN SCHARFF
* SUE D'ONYM RANDY MAXSON LAWRENCE WHITNEY

* Ads furnished by J.C. Brainbeau, Factsheet Five, Neither/Wor Press,
* and the Church of the SubGenius
* PRINTED BY AMERICAN SANIZDAT PRESS—"If it bites, it's an A.S.P.!"
* c. 1985 Pen-Elayne Enterprises, Kip M. Ghesin, Pres. in Absentia;
* all writes revert to righters, or something like that; Writers'
* and Artists' Guidelines available for SASE, if you really must...

ACKNOWLEDITONIALETC.

Welcome to our latest experiment in reproing photographs, my display (somewhere near the middle of this issue) of pictures taken of IJ-type folk during my recent vacation in California and our gala New Year's Eve Eve party. Unknown at this point how things will turn out, but if the pix aren't quite clear and/or you'd like your own copies of said reader's fab faces, please ask and I'll make up some personal prints and send them out. Do specify the prints you'd like by number, and check the page before the display for a key as to who's who...

You may notice a couple folks in the party pictures wearing IJ caps. These nifty gifties have been sent free to almost all the staffers, and I'm currently awaiting arrival of my reorder so I'll let you know next issue how much I'll charge non-staffers who want to purchase the chap-peaux. Shouldn't be too much, as I ordered in quantity.

Ah, and speaking of staffers (when the queen d' segue is on a roll, she's on a roll, what can I say?), Robert Wollard has departed, reason unknown, but Alix Bishoff has joined—or Prudence Gaeior has joined, or something like it. Alix's official intro-paragraph will appear next time, as well as a re-listing of all staffer addresses to date in case any of you feel like writing direct (and do, they love to get letters), but I'll refer you to her acceptance note in this issue's letter column for an explanation of sorts...Steven Scharff, who will be doing our cover for #37, takes time out of regular column writing to offer up a song parody for now (and thus appears under "Other Contributors"), and Deborah Benedict has had to bow out due to illness (Get Well Soon, DeeBee!). Other than that, all present & accounted for in the edit box, although I would remind folks to mail things a bit early if you can, as A.J.'s piece (mailed 1/31) didn't arrive until 2/10, and this does tend to throw us off a bit.

Also missing is part 2 of Norman O'Grunion's piece, the pseudonymous author of which also forgot we keep strictly to deadlines, I guess. Perhaps that will appear next issue, who knows.

I'd like to thank the folks who have taken "advantage", so far, of our relatively new advance subscription policy—17 takers at last count, which should stabilize our readership (and maybe even boost it) a bit more in issues to come. Remember, advance subs of up to \$8 (one full year, as IJ comes out 8 times yearly now) will be accepted provided the giver realizes these subs are NON-REFUNDABLE. If there is an "X" appearing on your address sticker on front, next to your name, this is the last issue you will get without sending me more money (I put X's even on copies for people who just send a buck at a time, to avoid any confusion). Also, as you no doubt know by now, the postal rates have gone up once more, and this time 2 oz. worth of an IJ costs 39¢ to mail out—therefore, if you've contributed art or writing and wish to pay for this (or a future) issue in stamps instead of the dollar (which is your privilege as a contributor, the option of paying less by sending in stamps), please send in 39¢ worth instead of 37¢, okay?

And, once again, PLEASE, if you elect to send a check, DON'T MAKE THE CHECK OUT TO "INSIDE JOKE", because I can't cash it then. Make it out to me - thanks! (For new folks: as you now know, one issue of IJ costs a dollar—that and the above info comprise our sub policies.)

Writers' and artists' guidelines for IJ are still available for a self-addressed stamped envelope, in case you have any questions about what's proper and not proper to send in to me. I will usually return anything too inappropriate, but I noticed that a few of this issue's contributors have kind of stepped over our usual border between acceptable and questionable taste. Mind you, it isn't the mentions of sex or violence or defecation that necessarily offend ye editrix (and, after all, it is my publication, so I consider myself perfectly within rights to reject bits over which I get queasy or embarrassed)—it's when they're gratuitous and explicit that bothers me. Please try to veer away from G&Es from now on, folks. Protruding nipples are, in my humble opinion, really not necessary in the context of your art (even on men, lest someone accuse me of sexism). If you're unsure, ASK.

Lordy, I mentioned all those nice folks sending me advance subscription money above and I didn't even thank the above-and-beyonders for their generous donations that keep us in print! Thanks to Deborah Benedict, J.C. Brainbeau, Luke McGuff and John R. Scharff for this issue's generosity. I always need more \$\$ to help with IJ, so if you want to contribute and you don't want your donation to count towards an advance sub, please tell me so I can 'separate' the money.

Our next (strict) deadline, for IJ #37, is the Ides of March, March 15. With any luck, #37 will be the last issue sans a production assistant, as correspondents and friends of Mr. Chaput will be glad to hear, I hope, that he's returning in May and will (again, I hope) be helping out around Homebase, Apt. Third Eye with this newsletter and other household chores. Future deadlines, for you calendar freaks, include April 30 for IJ #38, June 15 for IJ #39 and July 31 for #40. Deadlines hold for staffer contributions, artwork including covers and back cover art, letters, poetry, prose, and almost everything else with the exception of money, which I accept any time. Send it all to: P.O. Box 1609, Madison Square Station, New York, NY 10159

This issue is dedicated in memory of singer Rollin Smith, pseudo-singer Barbara Cowtell (the family's matriarch), and especially the late great Carol Wayne; also, we'll miss you, "Coach"...

You know, I think there's a purpose in our being here.

Oh, I agree!

I think we're put here to love each other and work together for a better world.

THWIPP!

I was thinking more in terms of a midnight snack.

CRUNCH CRUNCH

Fan Noose

Some long overdue, proper (larger than blurb) plugs start us off this issue, as I pay tribute to MICKY MALICE MAGAZINE, as unique in its own way as I like to think IJ is in ours. Editor Maxwell Malice (220 S. Lori Lane, Bloomington, IN 47401) welcomes input and contributions to this inventive hodgepodge of clever collage, fiction, reviews, artwork, even a few ads (including plugs for MW's own radio show, do check it out if you're in the area!) Lots o' fun and well worth the 50¢ MW's charging...On the other hand, I'm still trying to figure out THE JONATHAN SWIFT COMMEMORATIVE NEWSLETTER, and perhaps that's as it should be. The SNL, as editor Pete Moss calls it, is a scant two pages (one side), and it seems a bit much to charge subscribers a whole dollar for it, but Pete is genuinely nice and interesting, you're liable to learn a bit about the San Francisco area bike messenger culture (a world unto itself), and the writing's more than tolerable. Pete even has two distribution centers—San Francisco Delivery Service #314, 109 Minna St., San Francisco, CA 94105 and 19 Willow Rd., Lawrenceville, NJ 08648. Unknown who gets to bike the newsletters from San Fran to Jersey...At long last, at least for those of us who've been waiting in almost breathless anticipation, the latest issue of IJ staffer Candi Strocker's wonderful SIDNEY SUPPEY'S QUARTERLY and CONFUSED PET MONTHLY has arrived! This issue's subject (V.5, #1) is entitled "God Don't Like It Too", and runs down some of the wackier preacher-types in the Bay Area and elsewhere. Contributor Bruce Townley also has some nice bits about food, and there's always more fun stuff scattered throughout this highly-recommended mag. Hoanah! Send Candi tons of money (though I suspect a dollar will do) to 710 Diamond St., San Francisco, CA 94114...If you've ever read THE MONTHLY...BULLETIN (plug below in our "regulars" portion), you know Denver Tuscon's writing. Denver has just started a one-page mag of his own, entitled GONE!, and the quality of the writing, art, etc. easily equals TM...B. Nice surreal stuff, check it out. Knowing these guys, it's probably free. I'm beginning to wonder what it is in the Bay Area air that inspires all this creativity—this makes 3 in a row I've plugged so far! Write for info to Denver at 2491 Ellsworth St. #21, Berkeley, CA 94704...Haven't yet read the ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN NEWS NETWORK BULLETIN, but I did skim through its contents, most of which are, predictably, news clippings and other reports on various anarchic activities. They seem a bit one-true-wayish, but it's nice to see these issues getting coverage anyway. Nice international news too. They sell a yearly subscription of \$10 and monthly back issues are available for 75¢ plus SASE each. Since the AANN emanates from Canada, I'm not sure how US money works into this, so you might want to ask. P.O. Box 915, Stn. F, Toronto, Ont. M4Y 2N9 CANADA...I hope I'm just misreading this, but according to the inner cover(s) of the latest STARHEAD COMIX put out by Michael Dowers, this double-issue (\$2 worth), #9, is their last. I sure hope not, there's a lot of nice comic art within, from old names as well as new. Always a quality product here. Mike also puts out smaller minis similar to what Clay Geerdes does with his Comix World, so do inquire if you're into this—3615 Phinney N., Seattle, WA 98103...Another nice, slick, talented underground comic is now making the rounds—BOYS AND GIRLS GROW UP is edited by Tom Campagnoli and Amy Crehore (P.O. Box 5718, Richmond, VA 23220), and at \$2.50 for this very well put together book (and considering it only comes out once a year), it sells out very quickly, so act fast if you want a copy for your very own...Somewhat promising (especially now that David & Cathy Mruz' ANTHMANIA is on hiatus for the next year and a half) is the one-page (actually, four pages when folded in) GET ANIMATED!, which the preview issue assures will not only "report the [animation] news from around the world and review the latest productions (along with the hundreds of subjects, new and old, available on home video) but...will offer a fresh look at the new world of animation and what the future holds for it." I hope editor John Cawley expands the mag's size somewhat, especially as he's asking a \$7.50 yearly sub price for 6 bi-monthly issues, but I've high hopes for this, as it's got good people behind it (including one of my fave maves in the subject, Jerry Beck, who winged the newsletter my way) and rather attractive ad rates. The first issue's due out this month, so inquire of John at P.O. Box 1582, Burbank, CA 91507...Closer to home, staffer Steven Scharff has his work in a couple minis, a reversible collaborative effort with the fondly-remembered G. Raymond Eddy called IMMORTALS and the 24-pager JUST ANOTHER 8-PAGE WONDER mentioned last issue—for further info write Steve at P.O. Box 5004, Hillside Twp., NJ 07205-5004...It took me long enough to figure out that EMOTIONAL VOMIT, Mike Schaffer's intermittent collage-mini, has an underlying theme to each issue. The latest, #10, has UFOs as its tie-in, and is quite a scream. Fun stuff to scatter about the bathroom—send 50¢ to 75 Fairview Ave., #3B, New York, NY 10040...Buck Moon, perennial underground editor since the halcyon hippie days, has resurfaced yet again, this time with an amusing little bit called the SAN FRAN SYNTHESIST. This is the latest incarnation of Buck's AWESOME, and portends good things in the future. Do send him an inquiring SASE—oops, maybe not this time, as Buck neglected to affix his address anywhere on the actual newsletter. Ask me for it personally and I'll put you in touch...Katlady, a/k/a the effervescent helen katz, has subtitled her sixth issue of THE WHOLE SHMEER "A Week in Lion: the continuing saga of a gentile in a goyish land." The issue consists solely of newspaper articles, which, while they are amusing in that vague, Subg way, don't seem to fill out the rag nearly as well as Kat's own writing. Here's hoping she writes some more stuff soon, but in the meantime, if you want to keep up with the state of the state (of Utah), write helen at P.O. Box 7742, Salt Lake City, UT 84107...The second issue of BIG MAG, the brainchild of Chicago-area Subg "Pope" Michael Flores, continues to prove the first issue wasn't just a brilliant fluke. This here's one of the only "real" magazines circulating among the alternate, and not-

so-alternate, presses today, and the editorial, while a bit self-aggrandizing, does make a nice point about the ability of an all-round, non-specific magazine's ability to succeed in a large city like Chicago. The best thing this issue was the interview with, and story by, Studs Terkel. Mike's got good connections, and uses them well, creating a very worthwhile and entertaining publication. I'll ship the fashion and the-ad rates, but it's nice to see Doug Smith writing outside of the Stark Fiat, and there's always nice surprises with this sub. Next issue Mike promises (threatens?) to review other underground publications, so I'm not sure yet whether he'll give us a nice plug or even design to mention us. Still, the mag's well worth checking out at \$1.95 an issue—54 W. Randolph, Room 606E2, Chicago, IL 60601...And that brings us back to the regulars: AGAINST THE WALL V.13, #2—B111 George, P.O. Box 444, Westfield, NJ 07091 (Libertarian, #2); CONTACT #47—Elliot Leighton, P.O. Box 9248, Berkeley, CA 94709 (singles, #3); A DISCORDIAN DIRECTORY #27—"Mycrocosmus V. TD", Box 23061, Knoxville, TN 37933-1061 (Discordian networking & plugs, SASE + 25¢ or 2 for \$1); GOOD DAY SUNSHINE #25—Charles F. Rosenay III, 397 Edgewood Ave., New Haven, CT 06511 (Beatles—this issue devotes itself exclusively to hype & news about McCartney's "Give My Regards to Broad Street", #2); JET LAG #51—Tony Renner, 8419 Halls Ferry, St. Louis, MO 63147 ("mainstream" & independent music, largely concentrated in the St. Louis area; #1); THE MONTHLY INDEPENDENT TRIBUNE TIMES JOURNAL POST GAZETTE NEWS CHRONICLE BULLETIN #25—T.S. Child, 2510 Bancroft Way #207, Berkeley, CA 94704 (some of the finest surreality and fiction around, running the gamut from the ridiculous John E. to the sublime Tom Cornejo, Denver Tuscon, Blaster Al, etc.; SASE); THE SOUTHERN LIBERTARIAN MESSENGER V.XIII, #8—John T. Harlee, Rt. 10 Box 52A, Florence, SC 29501 (news & articles, nice opinion pieces, SASE); WALLPAPER V.3, #8 and V.4, #1—Amy Sweeney, P.O. Box 3324, Trenton, NJ 08619 (poetry and short pieces—Amy's changed format to a smaller mag due to rising costs and it now costs \$5 for 12 issues [unused money refunded if the mag folds], but there seems to be just as much copy so really not too much lost in the cost here). That's it for now—see you in the funny papers!

WE LIVE AGAIN AS WE ARE
LIVING TODAY AND AS WE
HAVE LIVED IN
PREVIOUS LIFETIMES.
If you buy that you are one in a
million but of those born after
2000 A.D. If there be a 2000
A.D. only one in a million will
question that radical statement

We heretofore make no sense
arithmetically and no sense
after making no sense spiritually.
Wing a SASE to the world's
ONLY radical, the all religious
POPE — J.C. BRAMBEAU
Box 2243
YOUNGSTOWN — OHIO, 44604

ALL THE LONELY PIZZAS, WHERE DO THEY ALL COME FROM? by Carolyn Lee Boyd

Khalib the pizza boy
junk food missionary to the free world
knew it was his destiny to guest on
Johnny Carson with his message of
pizza as the perfect microcosm of all that
is, was, and will be
The Big Cheese
(which stands alone)
Your Piece of the Pie
Spinning dough on one finger
he was master of the universe
cooking day after day in the hope that someday
someone would dine worthy of his special pie —
double onions, green peppers, and triple anchovies

A block away
Minnie the Hot Dog on a Stick Girl
tangoed in her tutu
(even in below zero weather)
in front of Rockefeller Center
Just a farm girl from Idaho
A gypsy on Third Avenue had once told her
that the head hoover spot with the Rockettes was
probably in her cards for five dollars
and definitely in her cards for ten.
While she waited for fate, she got a free lunch
of Khalib's special of the day in exchange for
an hour's worth of twirling pizzas on her feet
in front of his emporium
It was a carbohydrate collaboration
and even as they opened up Khalib and Minnie's
Pizza On A Stick Palace
(not a total success)
never were their little dreams far...

That is, until one day when a natural foods truck
sped out of control, breaking both of Minnie's
legs and making rubble out of the Palace.
Khalib did tell all the tragic details on the
evening news and Minnie did a very slow rendition
of her dance for the cameras, but somehow it
just wasn't the same as Johnny Carson and the
Rockettes.

DIARY of The ROCK FIEND

by Anni Ackner

FOLLIES OF 1985

As I hope you are aware by now, I try to make a habit of telling the readers of this column The Complete Truth about myself, at least insofar as I understand it - which isn't always especially far, at that, particularly when it comes to things like how I invariably manage to choose the one dress out of a whole rackful of identical dresses in a department store whose hem in guaranteed to come down the first time I attempt to wear it, and why it is I keep ending up at intimate dinner parties with the sort of people whose sole topic of conversation involves the superiority of one variety of silicon chip over another - so it should come as no great shock to anyone who has been following along with any attention when I admit, with next to no reluctance, that I am a something less than avid follower of Events in the News.

Of course, I don't mean to imply by this that I am utterly Out of the Know, a semi-illiterate boob who sits huddled in her dank little room watching game show after game show, spelling out the words in US magazine, and fantasizing about romantic encounters with Art Trebec. I do manage, I submit with all due modesty, to keep abreast of some of the major happenings in this complicated world of ours. I do, for example, know beyond a shadow of a doubt the identity of the current president of the United States - he's that elderly chap with the peculiar haircut - I have a pretty fair idea of which one is the Senate and which the House of Representatives, and sometimes even why, and I can spot New York Mayor Edward Koch at 10 paces, provided he doesn't happen to be standing next to Frank Purdue, but the point is that, cognizant as I am of these people and the others of their ilk, I find it next to impossible to keep up with all their myriad comings and goings, and the implications said comings and goings have for the future of Civilization As We Know It. For one thing, all their myriad comings and goings normally generate, to my untrained mind, the zest and heady excitement of your average bar mitzvah speech and, for another, what with getting frequent correspondence from the Publisher's Clearing House people and sewing up wandering hemlines and whathave-you, I have enough problems of my own without worrying about what the folks over at the head of state are doing. I mean, it's a matter of priorities, isn't it, and when it comes down to a choice between reading the newspaper or finding out whether they've canned that poor Dr. Morrison from St. Elsewhere because he hasn't got a proper medical degree, well then, a person's got to do what she's got to do, that's all.

Having said that, however, I must confess that, for some reason or another, I found myself getting all caught up in the recent discussions between the United States and Russia held in Geneva, Switzerland. I really haven't got any solid explanation for this uncharacteristic phenomenon, but I suspect it may have something to do with the fact that, unlike most items considered newsworthy by the majority of the media, which are generally reported and debated upon and editorialized about until one knows more about them than any of the actual participants, and certainly more than one had any desire to know in the first place, this particular summit conference had very little actually said about it, or, more specifically, while there was plenty said about the conference itself, not much was brought up about what really went on behind the closed doors of the thing. This had nothing to do, I gather, with any new-found reticence on the part of the reporters, but occurred simply because the participants themselves declined to say anything. Now, this is certainly their right, and I respect it and, more than that, I enjoyed it, partly because there is a definite amount of pleasure to be gained from seeing the likes of Barbara Walters reduced to talking about the bus service in Switzerland, but primarily because it left a greater amount of room than usual for speculation and the free play of the imagination on the part of any Thinking Person who happened to tune into the news while waiting for THE BEST OF CARSON.

Rather unfortunately, however, and entirely by coincidence - at least, I hope it was entirely by coincidence - the conference happened to coincide with The Sister To Whom I Do Not Speak's annual Homage To Rodgers and Hammerstein, during which we are all treated to the gentle strains of every adorable little ditty the Esteemed Pair penned during their illustrious careers drifting down from the attic at 200 decibels above the pain threshold and, this, I'm afraid, had some small effect on this Thinking Person's speculation and free play of the imagination concerning what was really going on over in Switzerland, so that the whole business got a bit muddled, and came out sounding, frighteningly, like:

OH, GENEVA!

(With absolutely no apology to Richard and Oscar.)

Scene I: The street directly outside the conference arena. Reporters from all the major newspapers and television stations throughout the world are standing about, awaiting word of the goings-on inside and trying to remember why it is they didn't volunteer for correspondent duty in some place with a congenial climate, like Minnesota. BRIAN GUMBLE and TOM BROKAW bump into each while attempting to wrest a can of Sterno away from a passing street person. They greet each other, and have a conversation.

GUMBLE (sings. To the tune of "Oh, What A Beautiful Morning"):
There's a bright sheet of ice on the sidewalk,
There's a bright sheet of ice on the sidewalk,
The weather's so chilly Alaska seems hot,
And I wish that I'd made them just send Willard Scott!
Oh, but it's cold in Geneva!
Oh, but it's cold every day,
I've got the horrible feeling

My face has just frozen this way.
BROKAW (sings): Well, I can't feel my toes or my fingers,
Well, I can't feel my toes or my fingers,
There's no information to put on T.V.
And even Mike Wallace is laughing at me!
Oh, but it's cold in Geneva!
etcetera

Scene II: Inside the conference room. The Russian and American diplomats are engaged in a calm, rational discussion of the capabilities of each country, and how they can best aide each other.

THE RUSSIANS (sing. To the tune of "Everything's Up To Date In Kansas City"):

Everything's up to date inside the Kremlin,
We've gone much farther than you'd dare to go.
We've got a big computer there that works just like a Bic,
One flick and say goodbye to Buffalo!
Yeah?
One of our bombs is big and black and sturdy,
As cute a bomb as you would care to know.
You would swear that we were bluffing when we tell you that it's real,
With thirty thousand megatons of fine Siberian steel
But kid Chernenko one more time and find out how we feel -

THE AMERICANS:
We've gone much farther than you'd dare to go.
We've gone much farther than you'd dare to go!
Everything's up to date inside the White House
We've gone much farther than you'd dare to go.
Our president's a movie star mandated by the folks
Who knows no more than a leader oughtta know!

THE RUSSIANS:
THE AMERICANS:
We've got a bomb located in the heavens,
George Lucas and Steve Spielberg run the show.
You might think that we are crazy with our taxes and our loans,
And think our people hate us when they protest and they moan
But see how much you're laughing when we call on
Indy Jones!

Scene III: Back at the White House. The president is reading a telex from the chief ambassador to the conference. Suddenly, in a fit of frustration and nerves, he flings aside the wire and begins to sing (to the tune of "I'm Just a Girl Who Can't Say No"):

I'm just a guy who can't ease off -
Patience is something I lack.
I always say "Show them who's boss"
Just when I oughtta kick back.
When the Russians go invade a place
I know I oughtta turn the other cheek
But as soon as they invade a place
I wanna nuke the suckers for a week!
I can't resist a power toss
When it gets dumped in my lap
Something inside of me snaps!
I can't ease off.

Scene IV: Inside the conference room. The diplomats are on the verge of fisticuffs. Suddenly, a hush falls over the room as, from the center of the table, a figure rises. It is that which used to be astronaut David Bowman! He looks sternly about at the assemblage, and begins to sing (to the tune of "The Cowboy And the Farmer Should Be Friends"):

Oh, the Russians and the U.S. should be friends!
Oh, the Russians and the U.S. should be friends!
One of them takes a Star Wars stand,
The other one wants Afghanistan,
But that's no reason why they can't be friends!
Global power folks should all be allies!
Global power folks should all be pals!
Sit back down and stop all this fighting
You act nice or I'll go get HAL.
Oh, the Russians and the U.S. should be friends!
Oh, the Russians and the U.S. should be friends!
Better not fight for supremacy
You saw what happened to Discovery
And there's no reason why you can't be friends!
Global power folks should all be allies! etc.

Having been shown the error of their ways, the entire cast rises, joins hands and sings:

Oooooohhhh, Geneva!
Where the snow comes blowing down the lane,
Oh, Geneva!
With its cuckoo clocks
And chocolate blocks,
We discovered fighting's so insane!
But when we saaaaaaay
Detente
You know we maaaaaay
Recant
Tomorrow.
We're gonna nuke old Geneva
Old Geneva, okay?
We may.
Today.
Oy vey!
Oh, Geneva!

Curtain.

On the other hand, perhaps it's just as well that I normally

don't pay too much attention to the news. The Sister To Whom I Do Not Speak has just reached THE KING AND I in her programme, and I've gotten very curious about this cabinet post switching that seems to be going on in Washington right about now, and well, maybe I should go watch the Cosby show or something, huh? What do you think?

This column is respectfully dedicated to M.C., who knows why.

TALK SHOW HOST CONFIDENTIAL *by Michael Dobbs*

The closet-sized newsroom and the studios smelling of cigar smoke and stale beer were not what George had expected. Nothing the Empire School of Broadcasting had showed him in his fast-paced ten weeks of training had prepared him for an actual career in radio.

As he stood at 12:55 staring numbly at the clicking teletype spew out the one a.m. news report, he thought back to the evening he wrote down the toll-free telephone number from the television commercial and enrolled in the radio school.

"In our classrooms in July, on the air in September," the commercial's announcer effortlessly intoned. And George bought it to the tune of \$2,000.

The ironic aspect of George's situation was that he certainly was no loser stuck in a dead-end job. George had his Master's in Business Administration and had a promising career going in a brokerage firm.

George was not happy, though. His marriage had soured after five uneventful years. His parents had urged him to take up a hobby, jog, learn how to cook Chinese—anything to fill the void the divorce had caused.

What his parents did not realize is that George did not consider the lack of a wife a detriment. On the contrary, George felt a certain freedom now. His wife would have died to have spent the money on a broadcasting school, of all things.

George had always wanted to be on the radio...as a child he grew up with the great disk jockies of the Sixties...Don Imus, Cousin Bruce, Murray the K...he knew that he wanted to be like them.

He had never been silly about it, though. Unlike some of his other star-struck friends, George never pretended to do intros to records or make up commercials while in the shower at home. No, George's admiration only fully became known the day he told his amazed superior he was quitting in two weeks.

The teletype wheezed to a stop, and George ripped the one a.m. report. He glanced at the newsroom clock, and noted with a slight disgust the report had not cleared the wire until two minutes past one. Although he had been taught the absolute importance of time at Empire, the station management cared little if the one a.m. newscast was late.

George walked into the main studio where a tape of beautiful music was quickly approaching the end of its reel. Potting down the tape, he popped a cart into the machine and switched on his mic.

"W...X...Y...R...your entertainment and news source," announced the tape with dramatic material flourish which was beginning to sound a tad fuzzy because of repeated use and age. George began to read the news.

He was good. Using his voice to impart opinions, George sounded not unlike the smooth announcer on the Empire ad that had enticed him to the school.

At the end of the news, George put on a commercial, changed the tape and switched it back on. Mantovani and his 101 Guitars, or was it Strings, thought George.

George was not really a disk jockey. He was the dog watch engineer for YR. He read the news, made sure the tapes played correctly and gave the morning crew everything they needed...a fresh pot of coffee, the morning papers and whatever else the program director instructed in his nightly note. Sometimes George cut a commercial; sometimes he transferred PSAs to carts.

George was pissed off.

This was not what George had expected. This was not what George had left his brokerage job for...but this was real-life radio...a beautiful music station by night, soft rock by day in the 33rd largest broadcast market.

George was paid \$5 an hour, which was, by market standards, one hell of a princely sum, especially considering no one knew his name and his experience had been limited to an intern position during school to a small station.

But George was still pissed.

He wanted to be a d.j. and he wasn't.

George went back into the news room and watched the wire idly. The machine typed out five lines of X's followed by several code words. A test, George thought, of the Emergency Broadcast System. He grabbed the operating log to make his official notation of the test transmission, and noted with a growing fascination the printed announcement kept making the ridiculous statement that this was not a test. The announcement was the real thing.

A nuclear attack of some sort. An invasion. A national emergency. George knew exactly what to do. He walked quickly into the studio, turned off the tape just in the middle of a terribly drippy song and switched on the microphone.

"Folks, my name is George Peterson and I've just been informed that the United States is under attack. I know that I should turn the station off so you can tune into the designated emergency station in our area, but fuck it. Right? I mean, what is the fucking use? We're all going to be charcoal shortly, so why not go out with a little fun."

While George had been speaking he slipped a PSA into the cart machine, and after his introduction he punched the button and flew into the production room where the station's records were kept. He pulled an armload of them and ran back, taking the first album from the pile and cueing up the first cut. He didn't even know what it was.

"Ah yes folks," George said, "let's go out rocking...and here's

Kool and the Gang...Yeow...get your feet moving and put your hand to the radio..."

The album played, and George cued up the next cut...the Who's WE WON'T BE FOOLED AGAIN.

"Now dig the immortal drums of the late Keith Moon in this monument to the song-writing skills of Mr. Pete Townsend..." The song played...

"Now I'd like to play some instrumental tracks by the number one selling instrumental group in the world...the fabulous Ventures," George practically screamed as his voice was quickly drowned out by the lead guitar of Nokie Edwards...

And on through the night, George played the tunes. He ignored the telephone, which never seemed to stop ringing, and he ignored the teletype's bells, which heralded an important story. He just kept playing his music.

Dawn came as a shock to George, who thoroughly had expected to have been vaporized way before the sun came up. While a Buddy Holly song pulsed through the station, George decided to check the teletype. The newsprint was piled over the top of the machine, and George cleared it off to read the most recent transmission.

It was gibberish. All gibberish. At least, George thought, I won't lose my job.

THE WAY IT REALLY IS, OR THE SUN'S TRUE NATURE *by Prudence Gaelor*

Don't let anyone tell you that the Sun is your friend.

The Sun is a lie. He is your worst enemy. He is an evil lord who with an army of stars burst through the Anti-symmetry Barrier. He has enslaved our universe and exerts his dominion on our planet.

The Earth is a spectrum. Violet is the color of our upper atmosphere, blue is the sky, green is the grass, orange - clay, red - lava. The brown soil is a spectral line. And lastly the yellow is characterized by potatoes, yellow topaz and gold. There is little gold on the Earth because the Sun sucks it up through straw-like solar rays (sunbeams) which is also why the Sun has a golden color.

The Sun is a cruel and harsh leader. Those who are ambivalent to him are tortured with burnt and poisoned skin. Those who worship him he "blesses" by tainting their skin gold. This taint slowly diseases and ruins the flesh of the Sun's acolytes. But they are so blinded by the dark light of the Sun that they are oblivious to the harm being done them.

In the time of year which we call Summer he represses us with unbearable heat of such intensity that we loathe to venture outdoors. Many die in this time of great heat by strokes and such. However, the Sun cannot abuse us in this manner all of the year as he must display his power to the other hemisphere so as to keep them in line. But so as for us not to forget his supreme powers he unleashes a bitingly bitter, sharp wind in the season we named Winter. This way by Spring we greet the Sun's returning warmth.

You may wonder how I know this. The pansies told me. That is why they are so sad. They remember the times before the Sun. They told me that the dinosaurs did not all die off on the Earth. They foresaw the coming of the stars and built rockets in an attempt to fend them off at the Anti-symmetry Barrier. The bones of the dinosaurs that we found are of those dinosaurs who died prior to the sending of the rockets.

Cows and horses then took over the plains, and the big cats the forests and mountains. They were proud and strong and they nobly fought the Sun. Yet the Sun came and the Sun struck them down. He forced them to crawl on four legs and made their tongues unintelligible to all except to those of their own race. The cows and horses constantly mourn the days past. But those in the forests have a little more reprieve from the Sun and constantly plot revolution. In defiance of the Sun they sport yellow coats and occasionally they attack the cows and horses because of their wimpiness. "They're such dweebs!"

The clouds are our allies. At times when the Sun's rule is unbearable and whenever and as often as they can get away with it, they shield us from the Sun. Sometimes they will send down water to rinse the gold out of the air and back to the ground.

But if the Sun is so cruel why do we humans adore him so much? There is a reason to this devotion. When we were just prototypes, he subjugated all the other races and coaxed us into being what we are now. For this reason we unconsciously feel obligated to do his bidding. This also insures against revolt. Although if we were to destroy him, all the other stars would run away because they are such cowards.

All the same - he established our dominion over the other races. He didn't, however, do this because he's a nice guy, but because he's a vicious nasty alien from another planet who wishes to humiliate the once-great races of our planet. 5

Filmviews by Ken Filar

When faced with the unpleasant task of writing—in general and with this column the immediate cause of my plaint—I oft look to escape (by slipping into a temple darkened by 20th century idolatry, a/k/a cinema). It would be pointlessly redundant to point out that movies are "mindless entertainment" for only a few (idle dreamers) within the industry and an even fewer (starry eyed) critics outside it believe FILM serves a more noble purpose than mere escape from tedium or, at best, cathartic release from invisible (but known) oppressors. (What the hell do I mean? You may well ask. And well you may ask, what the hell do I mean?)

I don't even know if I know what I mean. I mean, once I set out the question, I tried every way that I could to get around answering it. First, I considered scrapping this theme entirely and starting on a "Best of" list for 1984, but then I looked at it and thought it a bore. I found myself staring out the window for 45 minutes and decided to go out for a slice of pizza. When I came back I sat down and looked at the "Best of" list and figured out how to keep it from being boring, but then decided to save it for next issue to incorporate it with my Oscar projections. Finally, the only recourse left was for me to come back to and reconsider the impudently pesky question and how best to answer it—or at least not be bested by it.

Actually, if you look closely, you'll see that in fact there is no "question," though implicit, if not stated, in the first paragraph is the supposition that all movies are little more than entertainments meant to distract us from our cares and woes (and there I go, stooping low, why hi cliché), and thus the "job" of reviewing them is no better than that of the court jester. Ultimately, a viewer can only be Average Joe who goes to movies for the same reasons that everyone else goes: To be duped into believing what's on the screen long enough to get from the titles to the credits. If the filmmakers have done a good job, he will say it's "good" and maybe even tell others to see it. If the job is only half done, he may doze off and forget he even saw it, or worse, tell others that it is a waste of time.

Here, then, before you go over to Nod, are the movies I've seen over the past six weeks, along with some abbreviated comments that will hopefully persuade or dissuade or ultrasuede you into or out of seeing:

A PASSAGE TO INDIA—A lot of hoopla's been made over David Lean's newest epic and good money is betting on it to grab a lion's share of Oscar nominations (though, hopefully, not the actual awards). If you go expecting a grand travelogue, you will surely be entranced by Lean's vision of India (for this is not the pathetic India of "Ghandi" but, rather, the India that served as jewel in the crown of the British Empire when Indians were little more than shadowy background figures waiting for direction) for it is keenly interested in the shape and the spectacle of the country. And, though the tale is very much one of individuals, Lean has directed his adaptation of this novel in a way that the very air pressing in about them is of more importance to this film than the internal motivations of the characters that are perspiring in the oppressive atmosphere Lean makes them partner to. This is a movie that should be seen. But that's all. There's really no underlying substance to give weight to all the hue and cry being put up over **A PASSAGE TO INDIA**, but it is wonderful that Lean has returned to filmmaking after an absence of over a decade. For visual splendor he's tops. For effecting emotional voids he's also one of the best. Maybe now they'll let him make **STAR TREK IV**.

THE TERMINATOR—Arnold Schwarzenegger has finally made a movie you can sit through without worrying about whether the steroid emissions bounding off the screen are going to make the audience dash out of the theater and into the nearest gymnasium looking like for dumb bells or you know. I mean. A lot of cranium vapidation (more commonly known as "Lou Albano Disease") seemed present in the Conan(s) and whatever else he flexed his biceps at the camera for. But now he's really done it. **THE TERMINATOR** is a genuine movie. It's a movie's movie. It may even wind up on my year end 10 best list (but I told yuse befor yud hafta wait till next mufn). It is, though, without question, the best sci-fi cum thriller to come from Hollywood—ever. Well, to qualify the ever, I sat and thought about it for almost 10 minutes and couldn't come up with one film in the same category that was as memorable. Then again, if I can't remember any others, maybe it's an entirely new category. I don't believe so, though I actually suspect there may have been some sort of alien steroids pumped into the air as I was viewing this movie and brainwashing me into believing that this was a great film. It may really be pap. But for pap like this I'd gladly risk looking like Lou Albano.

STARMAN—What? More otherworld visitors? Okay. So Jeff Bridges' big scene comes near the beginning of the movie when he's writhing around Karen Allen's living room carpet trying to overcome post-clone trauma. (Wouldn't it just be easier to take up smoking?) Seems his spaceship crashed and he took the form of her recently deceased husband. Then took her on the road. And fell in love. With her. With America (the beautiful). Then he got to Arizona and was picked up by his pals. But he was sad to leave. An ET with heart. And soul. This was an okay-doekey movie.

THE FLAMINGO KID—Matt Dillon finally comes back to earth to play a "normal" teenager with "typical" coming of age angst. Torn between loving his respectable (if poor) father and emulating a sleazy but respectable car dealer and **THE GIN RUMMY** KING of a swank Long Island beach club, Dillon spends most of his last summer out of high school trying to decide whether to go to work (and make a lot of money) or to go to college (like his parents want him to do—that's a good boy). This movie isn't as flashy as Gary Marshall (Happy Days, Laverne & Shirley) is wont to make, which it to its credit, I think. It stays in the realm of the human but still manages to wring a smile out of anyone who was (or could yet be) a struggling adolescent trying to

make it before discovering there's no light at the end of the tunnel.

STRANGER THAN PARADISE—I missed Jim Marmusch's movie at the last New York Film Festival. Big mistake. Everyone who saw it said it was fantastic. I finally got to see it. I don't know what everyone saw that was so fantastic. It was dour. It was bleak. Sort of a cross between Woody Allen's **INTERIORS** (where every setting is stark, the action is almost slow motion and everyone speaks lines as if their next word will be their last—but don't get me wrong; I love **INTERIORS**) and a grainy black and white home movie. You see, there's this guy in a nondescript apartment in an unidentifiable section of a city (called New York—though it's the first time I've ever seen a movie that used New York as its locale and I did not recognize a thing. Not even the fire hydrants. Maybe that's the way home movies are in other parts of the country. It's a mystery to me) who has a visit from his cousin. Then he and a friend drive to Ohio to visit her. Then they all drive to Florida and hang around a not particularly attractive coastal motel for a couple of days. Then there's some other stuff that happens but I don't want to give away the whole movie. See, it moves really slow. If you know everything that's going to happen, you might not go and see it. But you should. All those critics who voted it onto their 10 best lists must have had some basis for admiring it. I'm just starting to believe that I've been deprived of some critical faculty (and maybe it's only Lou Albano disease). I spent most of the film feeling like one more member of this wacko family who had been condemned to sit down and watch these three pedal their cycles to hell. Me, I'd rather go sailing.

BIRDY—Now this is one of the 10 best movies of 1984 (at least in my book). I never read William Wharton's book, though I've had a paperback copy for four or five years. Now, however, I don't think I could begin to read his tale of one (Nicolas Cage) physically and one (Matthew Modine) emotionally battle-scarred halves caught between the harsh reality of growing up in Philadelphia (which may explain, on the whole, why W.C. Fields loved it so much), and the truly amazing belief Birdy has that he is a bird. And bird is the word. Birdland. It happened down in Birdland. In the middle of the club...What? Where was I? Alan Parker is, I declare, the most astonishing (ly surreal) filmmaker. In each of his films—from **MIDNIGHT EXPRESS** to **PINK FLOYD'S THE WALL**—he has explored areas in cinema that were only hinted at by Godard and plummed emotions from actors with the intensity of Truffaut. I mean, the man can swing. Down those stairs. Lose your cares. Where? Down in Birdland. See it now. See it often. And forgive me Weather Report, Manhattan Transfer, et al.

L'HOMME BLESSE—If you think you want to see a movie about the coming of age of an adolescent homosexual who is in love (dangerously bordering on obsession) with a ruthless bastard vagabond, then see this film. You could do worse. The director has credentials. It's not obscene. It's not even erotic. In fact, at best, it is only disappointing.

1984—About the only thing about this movie that is disappointing is the Eurythmics dynamite title track (you oughta have heard it by now: Sex Crime) was left out of the movie. I don't know why, but it is the mysteries of filmmaking that make me all the more enamored of the creative process that must go on somewhere. Don't ask me where. I just know it's somewhere. This is not just one of those myths that I dreamed up myself late one night. It's absolute and true. I read it in Rona Barrett. Or **Hollywood Wives**. Or somewhere. No matter. John Hurt suffers superbly as Winston. Richard Burton is a noble and genial menace as O'Brien. The sets are grimy grim. The feeling you'll have a hard time shaking—whether you've read the book or not (though if you have you'll find the adaptation to be flawless)—is *deja vu*. Like this is a nightmare you've had before. When you were depressed and knew that there was nowhere in the world to go but down. And you woke up but the feeling of depression lingered long after you regained consciousness. So you trashed your television set and said "I hate Big Brother!"

THE FALCON AND THE SNOWMAN—I'm not exactly sure how to categorize John Schlesinger's latest. It's not really a mystery because—based on a true story that was much in the news a few years ago (I remember reading about it—fascinated)—the outcome is known. Likewise, though built around episodes, it is not really an adventure or a thriller because it is too patently obvious (when not grossly stupid). It might be, as one critic declaimed, a "scathing social satire," but even that doesn't say much about our society...unless you happen to be a well-connected, upper middle-class white teenager disillusioned with the way America's headed...That's not you or me, though, right? Right. It's also not a "buddy" picture because Timothy Hutton (Falcon) and Sean Penn (Snowman) are never so much together as when they're apart. I mean **BIRDY** was beautiful because of the way the two leads played off of each other. Here, the characterizations are most affecting when either actor is left alone. Together they seem little better than a pair of bumblers (Stan and Ollie slicked up for the 80's). I couldn't help but wonder what connected them at all—they displayed no comradeship. Someone commented, on the way out of the theater, that "the song at the end [written by Pat Metheny & David Bowie and sung by Bowie] was better than the movie" and suggested buying the 45. I'd agree. Save four bucks.

MARIA'S LOVERS—This is the first "American" film by Soviet director Andrei Konchalovsky. I put American in quotes because while it is a story about a bunch of horny Pennsylvania bumpkins, it evokes, in tone and texture, European cinema. Natassja Kinski, as ever, is beautiful if vapid, the perfect virgin whore. She is loved by many men, but the one she marries turns impotent—though only with her—and finally, frustrated, flees (so she turns to another to give up her virginity and get pregnant). Really. It sounds pretty schmaltzy, right. Maybe. But **MARIA'S LOVERS** is beautifully photographed and the post World War II period keenly rendered. Overall this is a well rendered and moving

melodrama. It is the kind of filmmaking in which Europeans seem to have it all over Americans (who are more often interested in turning a buck and consequently turn out visions that are meant to appeal to the youth market). This is not meant as an indictment of American directors—I've been praising the same "youth oriented" flicks throughout this column—but for gracefulness and tenderness this movie does it all over them.

ZENARCHY STORIES

by Ho Chi Zen

Says Gary Snyder, "Three-fourths of philosophy and literature is the talk of people trying to convince themselves that they really like the cage they were tricked into entering."

HUNG MUNG, TELEVISION PERSONALITY

One of the characters to appear in the writings of old Chuang-Tzu is Hung Mung, whose name means Primal Chaos, for which reason he was adopted as a Chaoist Sage by the Discordian Society—a nonprophet irreligious disorganization about which you will learn more and understand less as we continue these writings. As such, he is also a Zenarchist Immortal, for Zenarchy is to Discordianism much as Zen to Buddhism.

In Chuang-Tzu he is visited by another character called Knowledge, whose inquiries he answers by laughing and slapping his knee and shouting, "I don't know! I don't know!" Great Knowledge persists in questioning Hung Mung, however, who finally condescends to enlighten him with an appropriately chaotic, rambling speech. Being Knowledge and therefore in a position to recognize a true word when it is given, the seeker bows down to Primal Chaos and honors him as a source of wisdom.

Not claiming to know anything, Hung Mung reveals everything to informed curiosity, for he is the Yin-Yang of the electron dance at the foundations of material existence. In becoming acquainted with this sage who does not know anything and does not care that he does not know, we learn everything worth knowing in the entire universe.

If you wish to visit him yourself, that can be arranged. Get stoned and tune your television set to a channel that isn't broadcasting any programs. His gleeful dancing image will become more and more visible the harder you look for it. Besides that, having no sponsor Hung Mung is never interrupted by commercials.

ZEN JUDAISM

Of the same tradition as Hung Mung and Ho Chi Zen is Rabbi Koan, who brings to Zenarchy the sect of Kosher Zen. For much of what Zen sages have named "a special transmission outside the scriptures" of Buddhism, seems to have been discovered independently by the Hasidic Jews of Eastern Europe, steeped in the oral traditions of the cabala.

As every reader of Martin Buber is already aware, the Hasidic Zen Master, called a Zaddik, is fond of telling all kinds of Kosher Zen stories.

For example, once such a Rabbi entered the sacred meeting house to find his disciples playing checkers. "Ah, ha!" he exclaimed. "Do you know the rules to the game of checkers?" Too taken aback to answer, the young men maintained a guilty silence, whereupon the Rabbi said, "Very well, I will instruct you in the rules to checkers. The first rule is that you can only move forward. The second rule is that you can make only one move at a time. And the last rule is that, once you reach the back row, you can move in any direction you please!"

Another Hasidic tale concerns a student who undertook to fast from food and water for a week. On his way to visit the Rabbi during the last hour of the last day of the fast, he went by a well. Overwhelmed by temptation, he drew up a bucket of water. But just as he was about to touch his lips to the drinking ladle, another consideration took over: to yield to thirst would undo a whole week's worth of privation. So he walked on to the meeting house without breaking his fast, but as he entered the door his Rabbi looked at him and shouted, "Patchwork!"

In *Flight of the White Crows* (Macmillan, 1961), John Berry reminds us that Chuang-Tzu says the true sage is absent-minded: "The absent-minded man cannot remember his bad deeds; he cannot remember his good deeds. He forgets to be elated at not remembering the one, and he forgets to be chagrined at not remembering the other. He cannot remember who he is, or that he is. He takes everything that is given him and lets it go. He has no roof, no floor, no walls. Infinity finds him irresistible."

INDEPENDENCE MEDITATION HALL

"What others do and do not do," said the Buddha, "is not my concern—what I do and do not do, that is my concern."

"Oh, Followers of the Tao," said the Zen master Rinzai to his disciples, "since ancient times each of my predecessors had his own method of training his students. As to mine: just be independent, go your own way whenever you wish. Have no hesitancy." This is called banishing the Buddha from your home. Said Rinzai, "The one word I dislike most to hear is 'Buddha'."

In *Hasidism and Modern Man* (Horizon Press, 1958), Martin Buber asserts, "Uniqueness is thus the essential good of man that is given him to unfold. And just this is the meaning of the return, that his uniqueness may become ever purer and more complete; and that in each

NOSETRALGIA

IN THE 60's, IF YOU STEPPED IN SHIT, YOU SAID
"OH SHIT!" & WIPE IT OFF.

IN THE 70's, IF YOU STEPPED IN SHIT, YOU SAID
"I CAN RELATE TO THAT." & BOUGHT NEW SHOES.

IN THE 80's, IF YOU STEP IN SHIT, YOU SAY
"AH! REALITY" & BEAT IT, WITH ELABORATE RELISH.



Rads '89

new life the one who has returned may stand in ever more untroubled and undisturbed incomparability. For pure uniqueness and pure perfection are one, and he who has become so entirely individual that no otherness any longer has power over him or place in him has completed the journey and is redeemed and rests in God."

Said Rabbi Nachmann, "God never does the same thing twice."

A most colorful and dynamic Zaddik was Rabbi Zusya, who said, "In the next world I shall not be asked, 'Why were you not more like Moses?' I shall be asked, 'Why were you not more like Zusya?'"

LOOKING FOR THE PIPELINE

"The search for a Pipeline, an exclusive hot line to Heaven in the world of appearances," said Rabbi Koan, "is a pilgrimage doomed to frustration. Trying to find an institution that is incorruptible, a person that always embodies the good and the true, a book, a teaching, a place to live, a lifestyle that contains all the answers—this is not only to court disappointment, but to leave nowhere open for surprise."

"How much more gratifying to explore the depths of one's own being—to take every trial as a reminder to seek contemplative calm. And to see every inspiring person, lovely place, or exciting lifestyle as a finger pointing to the power within ourselves."

"One day, suddenly, we stop seeking holy ground. For holy ground is always, sometimes inconveniently, under foot. Search for truth in the tree tops and you will stumble over it among the roots protruding in the pathway."

ISLAMIC ZENARCHY

Another rich source of stories for the care and feeding of Zenarchy are the Sufi tales of mystical Islam. In fact, this tradition resembles Zenarchy more than Zen, because, as James Kritzeck says in an essay included in *Sufi Studies: East and West*, edited by L.F. Rushbrook Williams (E.P. Dutton, 1973): "When approaching these tales the reader should be forewarned that he is not going into the orderly realm of Zen paradox. It would be truer to say that he is going into a messy rooming house, where people specialize in forgetting and remembering, snooping and tattling, looking askance and stealing from closets. It is not a realm in which it is wise to seek, still less to pretend to, too much accuracy."

Many tales of the dervishes are about a character of the same level of historical reality as Ho Chi Zen and Rabbi Koan and Hung Mung, named Mullah Nasrudin. They range from vulgar jokes to exquisite parables.

Once, for example, Mulla Nasrudin journeyed to Mecca where, when night fell, he found himself a place to repose in a vast horde of pilgrims. Unused to such throngs, he came afraid he would lose his identity in his sleep, so he tied a rag around his ankle. During the night, a prankster removed the rag from Mulla Nasrudin's foot and tied it to the ankle of the man sleeping next to him. When Nasrudin awoke, he looked around in bewilderment. Seeing the rag on the other man's foot, he said to himself, "If that's me, then who am I?"

PURE LOGIC

Many Sufi tales point indirectly to the mistakes we tend to make constructing our logical maps with insufficient attention to the territory of observable reality. Once, for example, Mullah Nasrudin entered a horse race mounted on the slowest of oxen. When those around him objected that an ox cannot run, he said, "Why not? When it was only a calf I saw it run faster than a horse. Certainly it can run even faster than that now that it is grown!"

CAUSE FOR ALARM

Once a wandering dervish jolted a Sufi from meditation to warn him that a nearby monkey had picked up a knife.

"As long as it's a monkey and not a man," the Sufi said dryly, "there's certainly no reason to worry."

YOU HAVE BEEN PROGRAMMED
You can peel away the layers of crap that make reality in the last 20th Century.

Be fooled by false appearances no longer! Wake up! Your soul raised hell in past lives. Let it keep doing so and stay sane in an insane world — or vice versa. The Ancient Truths are less new. The New Age isn't all it was cracked up to be. It is! LEARN WITH some intelligence. Direct your extraordinary SLACK. Mastery through madness: answers the most embarrassing question!

NEWS LEAK

by Susan Packie

"Psst. I got the latest leak for you. The President's wife is taking ballet lessons."

"Hey, you should write for Ripley's Believe It or Not. The woman is in her sixties!"

"Well, that's what she says. Anyway, you have to print in your newspaper that she has taken up dancing."

"Why would a White House aide be so eager for me to start a rumor like that going around?"

"Because during the next four years there are going to be a lot more falls, dizziness, and unexplained bruises."

"So I'm to say her efforts to be a ballerina are to blame? How many people do you think will swallow that?"

"How many people voted for her husband in the last election?"

"Okay, I'll do it, but just between us, what's with her these days? First she loses all that weight, then she starts disappearing for weeks at a time, and now she can't even walk in a straight line."

"It's the stress of being First Lady. It happened to Pat Nixon. It happened to Betty Ford. Now it's happening to Nancy Reagan."

"Yes, but look at all the First Ladies who thrived in the position! How can you point to the pressures of the job?"

"Well, I suppose I phrased that wrong."

"Oh, I think I see now. You mean the pressure of being married to anyone like Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, or Ronald Reagan would cause even the strongest wife to totter a little."

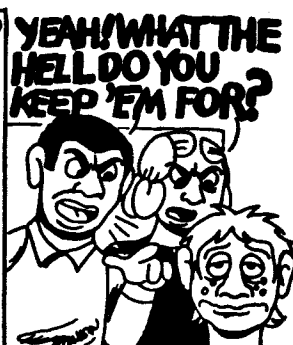
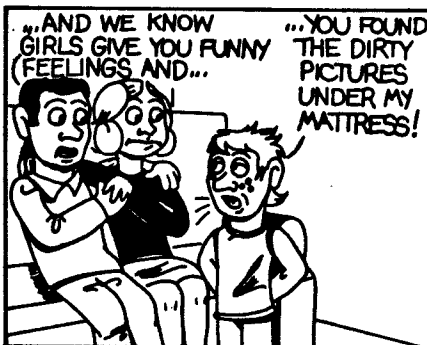
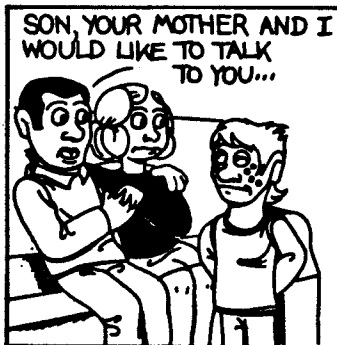
"I said the First Lady overexerted herself during her ballet lessons."

"At the Betty Ford Dance Clinic?"

"Her husband has a bit of trouble putting one foot in front of the other too, and no one has ever suggested he was drunk or on something."

"Well, I know she's not studying dancing. You say she doesn't indulge. That leaves only one thing. Does the President beat his wife?"

But the White House aide had already dashed off to write up another news leak. The First Lady had fallen out of bed once again. No one could possibly misinterpret that. Right?



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THE

UNDERGROUND

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Beyond The Land Of Beastly Cheeses

by Rodny K Dioxin

"the sun is up, the sky is blue, it's beautiful and so are you..."

Once there was this plush rabbit and he was called Pink Bunny by his friend Prudence which was all that counted anyway. Pink Bunny lived in Prudence's room and especially liked it over in the corner where all the plants were. That was where he liked to stay when Pru, as she was called, was out looking at the world. The parts of the world she especially liked were dusty shops full of strange things no one understood, and old libraries. She would come back in and tell all sorts of wonderful things to Pink Bunny. But he didn't like to go out. It was always too bright and often hot and all too frequently mean. Of course, things could get unpleasant around Pru's as well. The other animals didn't like him and were forever tormenting Pink Bunny. One day they hung him up in the shower. Pru was quite upset and from then on she left Pink Bunny in her book closet when she was away so that the other animals would leave him be. This suited Pink Bunny just fine and he liked being in there, especially the way it smelled of pencil shavings and old books and gumballs. It was always nice in the book closet and at night Pru would take him out and they'd sit by the lake and feel very small, which they both were, and look at the moon and Pru would tell him about the world and they'd watch for moat monsters. Pru so wanted to see even one.

"I had this dream about them," she told Pink Bunny one nite. "They were rather charming."

One day, they (meaning Pru's parents—as it always seems to) noticed that they had a very pale little girl indeed. This didn't please them one bit and as they couldn't find a warranty (after all, she was their daughter and there must have been some paperwork for that sort of thing) they decided to take her to the doctor. Pru was very excited as she'd read in a big book somewhere that doctors were very smart about nature and things like that.

"Maybe he'll know about moat monsters. That would be so wonderful." Pru and Pink Bunny were lying on the grass by the lake. There was very little moon and Pru could just barely see her toes in the grass. A cool breeze was coming off the water. "Winter's almost here, Pink Bunny. I can smell it. And I've just got to find those moat monsters before then 'cause that's when the lake gets all hard, like cheese."

"I have often noted," said Pink Bunny, "a marked resemblance between snow and cottage cheese."

"Except snow tastes better," added Pru who was always very sure of herself.

"Without a doubt. Therefore, if you're going to be asking this doctor about moat monsters I implore you to take me along as it's a subject on which I've been spending no small amount of thought of late."

The next day was all grey and windy and with a definite snap to the air. The trip to the doctor's proved quite fun. The doctor himself, however, turned out to be not at all helpful on the subject of moat monsters, Pru thought. He only wanted to talk about balancing food and playing in the sun and he made Pru leave Pink Bunny in an old filing cabinet. The doctor said a lot of things but none of them was about moat monsters so Pru didn't really listen. Then he wanted to talk to Pru's parents so she collected Pink Bunny and went to sit on the hood of the car while they all smiled at each other a lot.

"That wasn't fun at all." Pru considered whether she felt like pouting and decided that she did indeed.

"Well, I learned all sorts of interesting things," said Pink Bunny, feeling very smug.

"Oh, do tell me. Is it about moat monsters? Is it?"

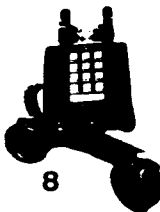
"Indeed, and it does serve to confirm my latest theory which I've been putting together for a while now. As it happens there was a skull in that file cabinet, name of Otto, and quite a past master on subjects such as moat monsters and such. It turns out that moat monsters don't really come from around here. They're from a place called 'another dimension'. Water isn't what they like best but they stay there because it's out of the way and apparently they're also quite fond of conversing with the fishes. But mainly they stay in the water because it's a gateway back to where they come from. In winter water turns hard, you know, into something known in scientific circles as 'moatzarella' apparently. The moat monsters can travel thru this to a place that's all made of this hard water. That isn't their home, though. Actually, I'm told that although the place is delightful it's been taken over by a group of creatures called Smoky Bars who do nothing but print up bus transfers and punch holes in bowling balls. So the moat monsters simply get on the first bus and just go home."

"That's wonderful. How can I ever thank you, Pink Bunny? I've got to go write this down before it goes away."

Here Pink Bunny hesitated for he knew more than he'd told Pru. For Otto, you see, was planning an expedition to get rid of the Smoky Bars and Pink Bunny had already agreed to go along, having long had the desire to go exploring and to live in a place where the water was hard and tasted better than cottage cheese.

Pru was trying to be brave about it all, but it wasn't easy. First there was Pink Bunny. At least she understood that. It was important. But she'd still miss him. And then her parents had started sending her to this day center or something where they made her play out in the sun and go to bed early and stay out of dusty old shops that sold things no one understood.

"I'll miss you Pru," said Pink Bunny because there was nothing else to say. She put him on her pillow and went to sleep after they had one last look at the moon through the window. He was gone in the morning, off to fight good fights. The lake was solid and Pru wanted to go skating. Then her parents came in and said she could because, alas, the new day center or something had burned down. So Pru went back to staying up with the moon and poking around in old stores and libraries and looking at the world and life really was a hoot after all.



IF FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD, WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE ANNETTE?

A Salute to the Queens of the "B" Movies

by Tom Gedwillo

GALE STORM—"Easter Egg Orgasm," "Teacher Lays the Rules," and "My Husband the Corpse." Ms. Storm now operates the largest Vodka distributorship in Riverside, CA. Her favorite male lead was Lionel Atwill.

JANE FRAZEE—"Beautiful but Broke," "Burbank Zoot Review of 1940," and "Long Chains, Short Memory." Jane (real name Priscilla Swimp) was discovered while singing for the Fred Mercury Dance Band in South Pasadena. She passed away while no one noticed in 1957. Favorite mail lead - Lionel Atwill.

JOAN DAVIS—"Electrocution by Desire," "Colonel Mustard's Blues," and "Strange Jungle Slaves: The Johnny Weissmuller Story." Ms. Davis is not related to Nancy Reagan. Favorite musician - Lionel Hampton.

TOBY WING—The poor man's Jean Harlow. Remembered for her only film "You Look Good Doin' That." The rest of her life remains a mystery.

ANN SAVAGE—Actually fantasized about being the real Carmen Miranda, Ms. Savage (birth name Cleo Altoona) stirred the blood of many matinee audiences with such screen gems as "Two Hot Tacos," "Fruits of Passion," "Detour from Death," and "Your Open Legs Crossed My Mind." Favorite male lead was Elisha Cook, Jr.

MAMIE VAN DOREN—"Sex Kittens Get De-clawed," "Sex Kittens on the Town," "Confidential Secrets," "Twin Props from Casablanca," and "Men to Go." Mamie is currently the night hostess at the Siren Lounge in the Modesto Holiday Inn. Favorite male lead - John Derek.

LOUISE ALLBRITTON—Often compared to Carole Lombard, appeared in musical comedies such as "The Butler Babysits," "Shallow Thoughts from the Deep South," "B-Side Myself," and "Golden Trail of Honey." Once lived next to the original Orange Julius on Sunset Blvd.

Other queens of the B's and their best (?) movies...

LUPE VELEZ—"Love in the Jailhouse"

LORI NELSON—"Suture: The Filament Monster"

MARIE WINDSOR—"Crib Wife"

SLYVA KOSCINA—"Unchained Herculean Melody"

JUDY CANOVA—"Dude Ranch Lowdown"

JEAN ARTHUR—"Apartment Luncheonette"

PEGGY CUMMINS—"Forty Gun Appetite"

HEDY LAMARR—"Keep it on the Street"

Scrapheap 4

by Mike Gunderloy



The bullet ricochets off the rock an inch from his tail and the rat leaps high in the air before running under a pile of garbage. I curse and reload without pausing in my slow march down the corridor. Dim pools of light center under the few lamps still barely working. The tracks are rough under my feet and up ahead I can make out the rusting hulk of a derailed subway car, its doors gaping ominously open.

There are not a lot of us left in Boston. When society collapsed, it did so pretty drastically. The plagues got most everyone. I guess they used the bomb too, 'cause there's this thick grey cloud overhead most of the time, but I never found out where. Things must have been pretty quick. When I came back from the wilderness that first time there were just corpses everywhere. Rats too. Gunfire over the river somewhere. I broke into a grocery and high-tailed it out of town.

Six months later I'm back but the corpses are gone. Only bones now. The city is falling apart. I like it down here in the subways. Somewhere there's still a generator limping along. When the lights go I'll have to bust into a store and get a flashlight, or maybe move back upstairs and see if I can find some other survivors. I'm pretty sure there are some. I hear gunshots now and then. But I haven't looked for them and if they've looked for me they haven't found me. It would only remind me again how many people I lost.

I climb into my trolley-cum-house and drop my pack on a bench. I rummage around until I find some matches and light the Coleman lamp. Harsh white light casts shadows everywhere.

Dinner is canned ham, pretzels, instant coffee made over sterno. Why should I give a damn about nutrition now? The garbage goes into a plastic bag. I'll cart it out in the

MY JOB and welcome to it ~by Candi Strecker

CHAPTER 2: ALL THE DRUGS YOU CAN DRINK

I knew that M--- R--- was going to be a strange place to work when I walked in for a 10 a.m. job interview and found most of the office staff lying on the floor, as if a cloud of sleeping gas had just come through the ventilation system. The cause turned out to be not toxic chemicals but mathematical proofreading, a stupefyingly dull occupation. I was soon to learn first-hand how the eyes ceased to focus, how the mind refused to hold its concentration, after just two hours of it. At break-time I often joined the others who slipped to the floor for a fifteen-minute nap.

Of course the problem wasn't that we needed more rest, but that after a stretch of stationary deskwork we needed a counterbalancing dose of activity. But in an office environment you can't quite get up and do jumping jacks between the desks. Even though a goofy, casual office like this one might allow floor naps, noisy exertion was simply out of the question. In most offices the only activity that is universally permissible is getting up and strolling to the coffee machine.

And that brings us to the heart of the matter: in those long-ago days of 1978, in that particular late-hippie-era college-town environment, drinking coffee was just...Not Done. I doubt if there was one coffee-drinker for every ten of us there. We looked on the habit as a peculiar, archaic one, an obsolete carryover from a benighted era. In that office, herb tea and Postum ruled. With neither caffeine nor the exercise of jumping up for refills, I don't know how we found the energy to get anything done.

In the years that followed, in a new state and on a new job, I crossed over the line from Red Zinger to Mocha Java and joined the coffee achievers. (More like under-achievers, in my case, but the buzz of caffeine seems to go as well with temp-worker slack as with the Urban Professional state of mind.) Like millions of others, I now operate according to the Universal Caffeine Clock:

8:30 a.m.: Oh, Gawd, I'm Just Not Worth Shit 'Til I Have My First Cup.

10:30 a.m.: I Think I'm Going To Need Another Cup To Get Through This Morning.

1:30 p.m.: After Lunch I Always Feel So Sleepy Unless I Have Some Coffee.

3:30 p.m.: The Way The Afternoons Drag By Here, I Just Don't Think I Can Make It Without Another Cup.

I have become so infatuated with this particular high that I have found myself leaving job interviews mumbling, "Well, the job's terrible and the pay's worse, but they do have ALL THE COFFEE YOU CAN DRINK..." I have heard of offices that actually refuse to provide their workers with an endless supply of wretched-but-free coffee. Can there be a more self-defeating act of managerial stinginess? Imagine, refusing to pay pennies a day for that vital fluid that makes dull employees BRIGHT and ALERT and ENERGETIC, a veritable Good Worker Drug that is willingly taken! It occurs to me that if a group of office workers wanted to flex its muscles and make a show of solidarity, and interesting way of conducting a work slowdown would be for all those workers to forego drinking coffee or its caffeine cousins for a day.

morning so the rats won't home in on me.

After I clean up it's time for my evening entertainment. At first I made the mistake of hooking a shortwave up to batteries. All I got was pleas for help, reports of disease, people screaming. Fukkem. Now I've got stuff from better days to keep me happy. I dump the mail out of my pack and decide what to read first.

Getting into the main p.o. through the loading dock was simple - now the dead entertain me. I open a scarred envelope. "Al, I want you to come over next week and meet my folks..." I open a warm beer and finish Michelle's letter.

Later I will go to bed with the copy of Oui I brought home.

Wax Ink

by Rory Houchens

AGAINST THE GRAIN—Snakefinger (Ralph Records, 109 Minna St., #391, San Francisco, CA 94105)/**A THOUSAND LIVES BY PICTURE**—Tuxedomoon (Ralph)/**RESIDUE OF THE RESIDENTS**—The Residents (Ralph)—After a lengthy period of inactivity, Ralph Records, that spunky champion of everything musically abnormal, weird or just plain uncommercial, has taken stock of itself and re-entered the world of the living with a batch of platters guaranteed to tempt, if not satisfy, the most exotic of palettes. Three of these releases craftily corral unsuspecting album cuts (and in some cases, unissued material) onto one disc, thereby chronicling the careers of some of the most colorful Ralph artists in easily-digested lumps. Snakefinger's **AGAINST THE GRAIN** is a veritable cornucopia of sounds and styles, combining the finest moments of the guitarist's trio of solo lp's. Mr. Finger takes you through the gates of hipdom on the bong-slappin' "Beatnik Party," gets you a front row seat at the movies with versions of Nino Rota's "Shining Faces" and Ennio Morricone's "Magic and Ecstasy," pays tribute to WEST SIDE STORY with "Here Comes The Bums," and goes nature huntin' on "Kill the Great Raven" and "Yeti: What Are You?" Add to these superb covers of Kraftwerk's "The Model" and the Residents' psychodramatic "The Spot," and the previously unreleased "I Love You Too Much To Respect You" and you've got enough tasty tidbits to satisfy the fussiest of guitar fiends!

Few bands have equalled the degree of musical decadence and pop experimentalism pioneered by the likes of the Velvet Underground, David Bowie and Roxy Music, but Tuxedomoon has come close, surely closer than any other American band. Their pulsing rhythms strengthened by ominous synthesizers and decorated with thoughtful violin and saxophone inlays have made for some of the most adventurous music of the late 70's and early 80's, but they have yet to get the recognition they deserve. **A THOUSAND LIVES BY PICTURE**, nine examples of this group's mad magic, is a sampling of their two Ralph albums, **HALF-MUTE** and **DE-SIRE**, and contains not a single bad track. "What Use?" throbs with an urban urgency while "59 to 1" serves up a bleak, bass-driven funk, and "Dark Companion" sounds like the logical follow up to Bryan Ferry's deranged classic, "In Every Dream Home A Heartache." "Incubus (Blue Suit)" cooks with percolating percussion and programmed synths, and the mysterious "Jinx" with its swirling violin/cello tandem weaves a hot, sandy Moroccan tapestry that'll have you reaching for your favorite fez. Tuxedomoon tired of the lack of success afforded them in the good old U.S.A. and moved to more sympathetic Belgium, so you better get their records (especially this one) while the getting's good.

Not to be confused with the third chapter of the Mole trilogy (which will come later), **RESIDUE** is a collection of rare tracks, alternate versions and oddities that'll suffice until the final Mole disc sees the light of day, and along with that five year old copy of **NIBBLES** (Virgin import) makes a dandy encyclopedia of out of the ordinary noise. The best of these dozen tracks includes "Whoopy Snorp," a delightfully bent tune that first appeared in 1977 on a Los Angeles Free Music Society lp; "Boy In Love," a delicate slice of romance recorded during the **MARK OF THE MOLE** sessions; "Shut Up! Shut Up!," a song featuring Fred Frith on guitar that sounds like a bunch of Indians on acid (it was left off the **COMMERCIAL ALBUM** because the Residents found it too "trendy"); a remixed and edited "Diskomo," the group's dance version of musical themes taken from their **ESKIMO** album; and a slightly maladjusted cover of "Jailhouse Rock" that'll cause you to be scuffin' up your best blue sueded.

MINOR DETAIL (Polydor)—The quality of the material on the debut album by John and Willie Hughes' Minor Detail varies so much that it's hard to believe that all the songs here are the work of the same band. Their forays into synthetic pop ("20th Century," "We Are Winners") successfully ape the lamest characteristics of quasi-progressive, top 40 conglomerates like ELO and the Alan Parsons Project, and with the exception of the jaunty "Others Need You," make for the record's weakest moments. On the more positive side are "Why Take It Again" and "I've Got A Friend," a pair of near perfect pop exercises whose plaintive vocals and thoughtful arrangements could have escaped from some great lost platter made 15 years ago. Overlapping cushions of foggy synthesizers and distant vocals lend "Columbia" its exquisite eeriness, while the devastatingly beautiful "I'll Always Love You," with its simple piano lines and strong, solumn melody, ranks as the album's most outstanding cut. An uneven mixture of junk and jewels it may be, but **MINOR DETAIL**'s handful of gems warrants reasonable attention.

THAT'S THE WAY I FEEL NOW—Various Artists (A&M)—This thoughtful tribute to Thelonious Monk was instigated by Hal Willner, the same man who brought you the equally excellent homage to Nino Rota, **AMARCHORD**. **NINA ROTA**, and like its predecessor, this double album brings together a number of jazz and rock musicians interpreting their own arrangements of classic tunes. **NRBQ**'s "Little Rootie Tootie" effectively mixes Monk's jauntiness with their own good time rock and roll, Dr. John's spicy version of "Blue Monk" easily conjures up images of smoky New Orleans bars where boogie woogie and stride piano reigned supreme in the past, and the Carla Bley Band's rambunctious reading of "Misterioso" is part John Philip Sousa oom-pah-pah and part Mothers of Invention horn-fueled freak-out. Other selections include Todd Rundgren and Gary Windo's inventive "Four In One," Shockabilly's psychedelic "Crisis Cross," and Chris Spedding and Peter Frampton's masterful "Work." Great for Monk nuts and novices alike.

INFLATION BLUES—Jack DeJohnette's Special Edition (ECM)—Jack DeJohnette is such a reliable and versatile drummer (he can supply anything from the sophisticated lyricism of Max Roach to the mind-boggling polyrhythms of Elvin Jones, not to mention his own tricks) that his ever-growing importance as a composer is often overlooked. But with **INFLATION BLUES**, the third album by the magnificent Special Edition, his songwriting skills threaten to equal, if not overshadow, his

The Red Center

by A.J. Wright

(That area of the great Australian central desert where Britain tested nuclear weapons during the 1950s and 1960s is known as the "red center.")

Under the new moon we lie down together in the field of sand to dream ourselves a sleep. Nothing in these recent weeks could have prepared us for the temptations coming now; we are transforming the elements of ourselves. We shed the skin of our images in the earth, rising past the weight of footprints.

Here is the bright and blinding flash, a newer temporary sun, both heading toward us and radiating from the spaces once called fingers. We can no longer contain control and do not care. The winds roar into the past where we used to stand.

Deep across the ground the center is melting, like the face of a human figure not yet finished in the lost wax process. Our claims in this region become less urgent as the clues of personality disappear. We are now and forever shall be at the red center.

timekeeping abilities. "Starburst" starts off slowly with long, low notes from a trumpet and a pair of saxophones, but soon reaches the boiling point when the bass and drums turn on the heat and coax loud, quick blasts from the horns. Just the opposite is "The Islands" which begins with a freeform visit to a ghetto jungle but ends with an uncharacteristic, Albert Ayler-ish moan. DeJohnette takes a look at the plight of the common man on the title track, a sort of reggaefied dirge (with vocals), and takes a jaunt into neo-classical territory with "Ebony," a cool, pastoral travelogue that is the album's most satisfying number. Though categorized as a jazz ensemble, DeJohnette's Special Edition possesses a sound that anyone interested in modern music can appreciate, giving them a universal appeal that few other musical aggregations can boast of.

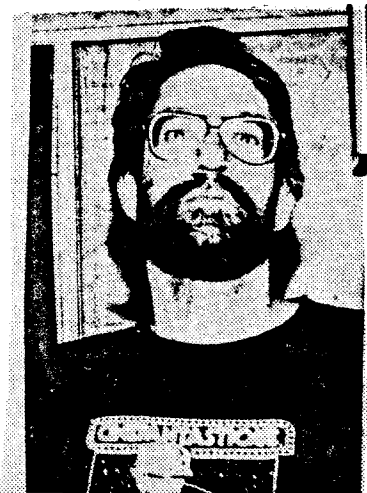
PICTORIAL KEY

Welcome to our first (perhaps last) IJ Pictorial, spanning the next two pages and covering ye editrix's trip to California this past fall plus our annual IJ New Year's Eve Eve Bash. Follow along in your books and keep track of the numbers of the pictures, in case you may want to order any specific ones to see what they really look like (I mean, I'll admit it, my repro capabilities with photographs are somewhat limited...). Heavens, there's even one of me in here...

PART I—CA: 1) The always gracious host and probable future sis-in-law, Valencia McDonald (surprised, Val?), and 2) her lovely and talented POSSLO and coincidentally my brother, Gene. So much for the family pictures, on to 3) Dana Snow, beside himself, or something Dali-like it. 4) Kris Gilpin, after I insisted photos were mandatory. 5) Julie Logan in front of a stunning display at the Museum of Neon Art, which she helps run. 6) Matt Householder and Demme, the householder cat. 7) One of the original San Francisco underground mag editors, Buck Moon, who bears an uncanny resemblance to the fellow on the small screen, 24-hour cable preacher Gene Scott. 8) Matt, Robert Wollard and Dave Osman at the Hallows'en in San Francisco Redundancy Party, hosted wonderfully by 9) Candi Strecker, here posed beside her inventively decorated television (you can see "Bob" through it, if you know how to look). 10) Alice Emlitch and son Orion, reposing in Santa Barbara. And lest you think I'm any sort of ace photographer, may I direct you, with apologies to those concerned, to 11) Pete Labriola, superimposed on a shot of Gypsy the Ferat, and 12) David Rice in a strange Berkeley bar, also double-exposed. Can't win 'em all—sigh—. Onward and back to New York, for

PART II: 13) Anne Bernstein and friend, whose name I've since forgotten, shame on me. Anne, who works with the fabulous CHUCKLEHEAD comedy revue and stage show in NYC, also brought 14) Susie with her. 15) John Scharff displays official symbol of Audio IJ, a whole lot more tangible right now than the radio show itself. 16) Staffer Georg Patterson gives some sort of symbolic greeting—don't ask me, I just live here. 17) Peter Sherman admires the bureau display, including our brand-new IJ Neon Lite-Up Sign, IJ newsbox coin-bank, and crystal ball snakehead, since given to American Samizdat head Uncle Wiggly. 18) Peter also brought a friend whose name has since escaped me—arrgh! 19) Staffer Steven Scharff shows off official headgear which doesn't seem to interest Gypsy much at all (no, the cat isn't drugged, he always looks that glazed). 20) Everyone also seemed to have a lot of fun with the toy Lamborghini police car—vrooom! 21) Lastly, ye editrix wishes happiness to all, and promises to march into the coming year (to a different drummer) with eyes wide—um...

As I said above, I've no way of knowing how these pictures will come out in final repro, but Uncle Wiggly and I have tried our best. Do let me know if you want this sort of thing to continue, or if you feel the noble experiment fell a little short. I'd like very much to run more of your pictures in the future, but only if you agree. Thanks!



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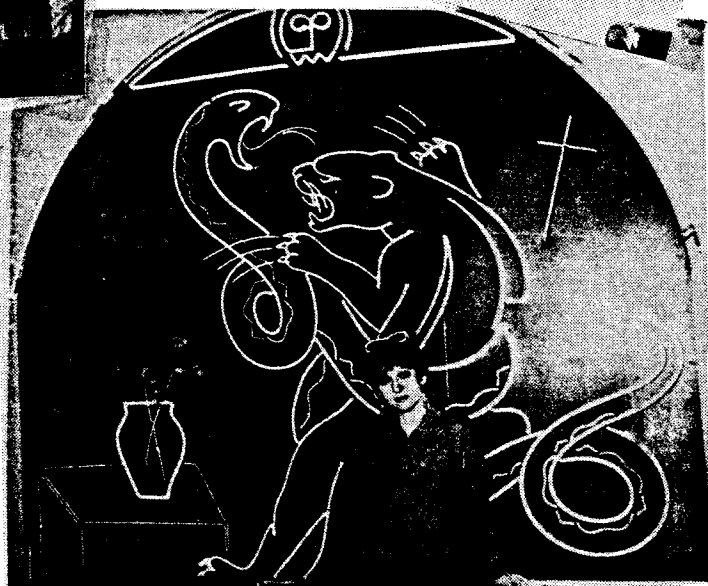
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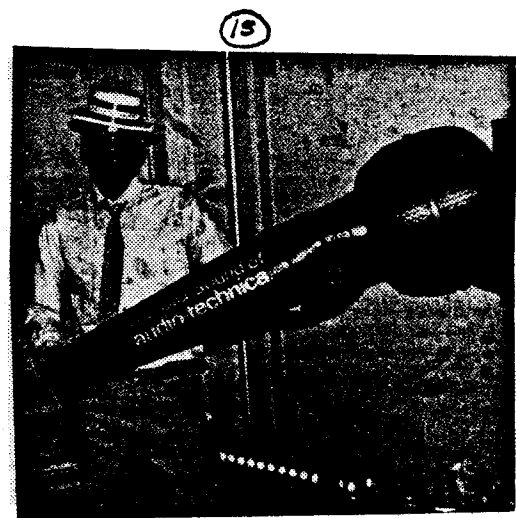


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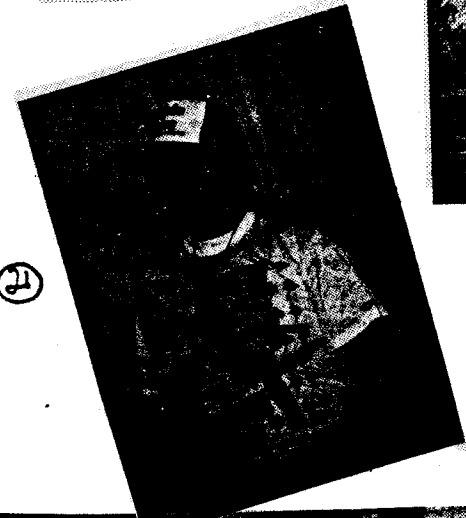
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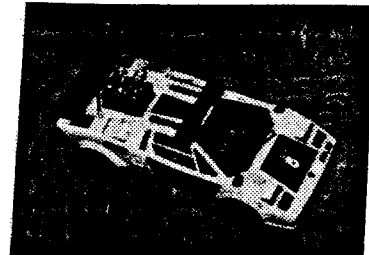
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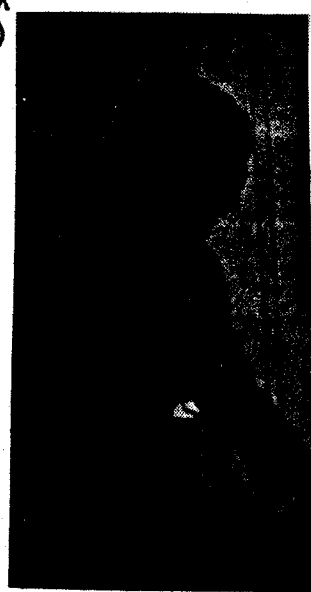


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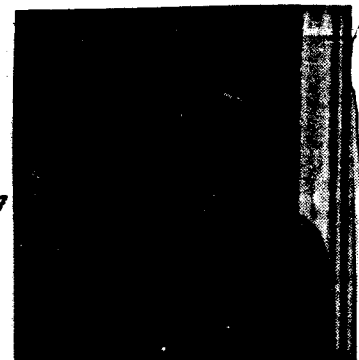
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Ascension by Tempest Fugit

The Angel Mercy smiled sadly upon Fatima, although the new arrival didn't feel anything but joy herself. After all, a moment ago she'd dwelt within the battered, time-worn body of a shriveled great-grandmother, unable to do much more than look fondly for the last time upon her nobly mourning brood, before the weakened eyelids closed and she was finally able to shake herself free even from freedom...

"Is anything the matter?" asked Fatima's essence, in the form of a shining, rosy-cheeked red-haired lass. "I feel wonderful, if you were worried. I mean, I feel like, well, like I've come home; do you understand? But I suppose," she continued, beaming, "you get people saying that all the time, don't you?"

"Actually, no, child," replied Mercy. "Many don't recognize the home within themselves even after they've made it here. For the inexperienced among us, it sometimes takes teaching."

"Goodness, it's been ages since someone's called me 'child'! I'd almost forgotten how wonderful it—"

"My dear, I'm afraid we mustn't tarry here, we've a bit of work to do before you can—"

"Oh my yes, how thoughtless of me, I didn't mean to keep you from doing your job, do let's go! Now, what do I do, answer questions?" Fatima innocently asked the Angel as they began travelling, somehow, forward (wherever that was). "I shall be happy to help in any way I can!"

Mercy steadied her trepidation in the face of the neo-cherub's trust and spoke up frankly. "As you will then, child. You are perhaps already becoming aware that you have failed in life to accomplish your primary purpose."

This halted Fatima's spirit as she hovered and searched inwardly. How had she erred? She'd always tried to be a good person, a loving and tender soul, pure of intention and free of malice and judgment. She'd never coveted nor taken what she knew wasn't hers, that she could recall. Bless her, she knew there must be somebody or other still down there who bore her ill will, but she would not be able to say who. She looked again at Mercy as the thought crossed her consciousness that maybe the souls 'round these parts didn't take kindly to discriminate usage of herbal substances...

"No, I'm afraid that's not the problem," thought Mercy back to her. The Angel once again shifted forward, and Fatima tagged along perplexed. She felt they were nearing a center of great importance. The small one's companion continued, "I suppose I should reveal the problem to you; after all, I have not been instructed not to. You are being taken to see your Parent. You have not spread the Parent's Word, it seems, as effectively as..." As the Angel spoke further, the prememory returned, and Fatima knew again. Knew of the first one, the Male, sent and loved and callously murdered in the name of a false Truth; then knew of herself, the designated Female half of the One, who had lived a comparatively comfortable existence planetside, admittedly, and who had not apparently ventured far enough outside her limiting purview to help and preach and—but no, she knew she was not, would never have been, a proselytizer. She had always believed, and was not about to rescind that belief now, that Truth was not something to preach—that there were as many versions of Truth as there were beings—but something to live and display by example. And to the best of her knowledge and erstwhile ability, she felt she had done that.

Fatima softly interrupted Mercy. "Yes, I remember now. In a way, I've always known, always suspected. And yet, I was born in a world not yet ready for such revelations, such drastic alterations to belief systems built up throughout the centuries. And I was part of this collective system, so how could I know?" She sighed slightly. "Yet, I realize that is no excuse for having failed. I am ready, Parent, to accept Your judgment."

And the Parent spoke into her mind. "My daughter, you have succeeded as had the Male before you. In your self-judgment are you correct; you have not erred. The word of the Parent, the word of ultimate Good and Truth, must now be sought by each being unto itself. Thus has it ever been taught; and yet, in the time of the Male was it ever met with fear and violence. You have fared yourself little better, having encountered ignorance and denial in your own time upon the land. Yet did you lead a full and rich life, made richer by your giving and willing spirit, questing for knowledge and fulfillment for yourself and others. Because of you, many

UNTITLED by Michael Packer

...Then, suddenly, you find a crustation fossilized on the bottom of a green, wet, slimy, granite stone and you hold it up to your face and stand straight up and you think of how it could be a million years old and

you lose your balance from the rushing river and

fall back into the icy cold water and POW....

you're part of the Pepsi generation with your friends coming at you going strong

but you hold onto that rock and they pull you from the drink and you laugh and

get them wet and show them your million year old fossil on your

green, wet, slimy, granite stone.

GUSTATORY INTRIGUES

by Susan Packie

Wine country sloshes into mountains of cheese, drips down into pasta, over to olives, up to fresh yogurt before plummeting into a rice bowl. Waving grain blows onto tortilla lands, banana republics, spice islands.

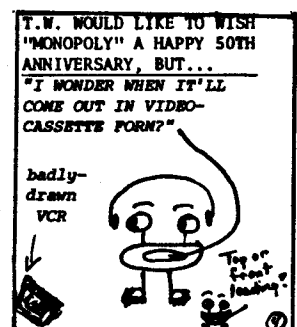
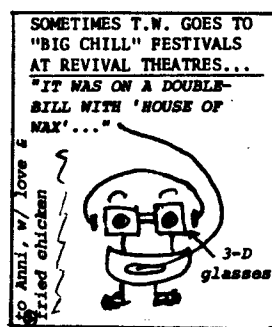
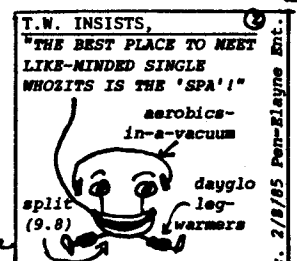
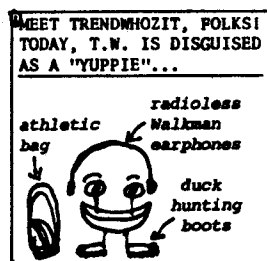
A world is reduced to a culinary treat. The chef oils his pan and turns up the heat.

I'M OVERLOOKING A FOUR-LOAF CLEAVER (for Roldo) by Steven F. Scharff

I'm overlooking a four-loaf cleaver That I've overlooked before One loaf is boredom The other is pain Third are the roses that wilt in the rain

No need explainin' The one remainin' Is somebody I abhor I'm overlooking a four-loaf cleaver That I've overlooked before.

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will once more seek and find, and with less anger and hatred than before. Your many worthy acts will make themselves better known in time; already do those you have left behind acknowledge your contributions. Welcome back, my child; in you am I proud, in you am I fulfilled."

And Fatima never looked back, for she knew those she had labored to teach by example were already looking forward. She floated up towards the warm, rich light, and Mercy, delighted and realized once more, flew by her side.



The Endless Story/The Hopeless Tangle by Lawrence Whitney

The cartoon/drawing of Bucky Fuller by DH on page 14 of IJ #35 reminded me that Buckminster Fuller used to be a member of the summer colony hereabouts, as did Zero Mostel and Robert Lowell; that is, of course, until they fell down the rabbit hole. Bucky even had a geodesic dome set up on one of the small islands in case a castaway happened to land and needed a place to stay free of black flies and teredo worms. Fuller's mind worked at incredible speeds and it was necessary to find a place far from the prying eyes of free-lance writers and social workers. Many people do not realize it but Buckminster Fuller and Wilhelm Reich were co-architects of the 'rabbit hole.' Not that they discovered it, but they remodeled it in such a way that made slipping down into it much easier to do. Marshall Dodge, who made his living exploring themes adjacent to it, never found it in Maine and finally had to settle for a writer's entrance in Hawaii. But even in Hawaii, the rabbit hole proved to be too seductive; Mr. Dodge never resumed speed.

I used to be very concerned for people who fell down the rabbit hole and never came back. I always expected one or two to come back and explode the myth about "the endless story/the hopeless tangle", but it never happened. And then I discovered—or rather, uncovered—an unknown law of life and principle of tv screenwriting: we are each other's bait. Individually we lure each other into the Cabbage Patch. Ordinarily, we would defend each other and protect each other and keep each other pure—but once inside the Cabbage Patch we become overwhelmed with the aromas of organic enzymes and mesmerized by the undulating patterns of fiber and chlorophyll. And the monotonous yet hypnotic sounds of chewing insects (we often hear in the PBS nature specials), so impelling to the ear, start an involuntary response—salivation, the grinding of molars, rapid-eye-movement, the hypersensitivity to sound, for the sounds of Farmer Brown in his hob-nailed boots with his twelve-gauge shotgun; is it any wonder that we become entranced by the pre-uterine murmurings of the rabbit hole, with their announcements of such a soft and warm and wonderful place filled with amber opaque light and the metamorpholyrical promise of rebirth into a land of milk and honey? "Pure silk and Sunny, that land of Milk and Honey," they seem to be imploding inside our brains.

I am not surprised when something happens, like wondering what has been happening to Diana Dors and then finding that nothing has just happened to Diana Dors. Fifteen years ago they came out with a poster GOODBYE CALIFORNIA which decried the upcoming earthquake and said "Goodbye to Steve and Butterfly McQueen" along with hundreds of other names associated with life in California. I am surprised now to see how many little rabbit holes there are by some many good-bye names. "Goodbye, Mama Cass; Goodbye, Jimi Hendrix; Goodbye, Chill Wills..." etc.

Well, if it all seems way too simple and way too exasperating, then imagine me at the end of my dream looking everywhere for Buckminster Fuller dressed in top hat, waist coat and tails fingering his geodesic watch and then being surprised suddenly when out he pops gnawing on a carrot squeaking: "Eyeh, What's up, Doc?"

I woke up in a cold sweat; across the hall, a young man who claimed that he was Miami Dolphin quarterback Dan Marino was having a nightmare called Soopah Bowl XIX, and down the hall I saw this little pink figure disappearing down the steps muttering, "B'deah, b'deah, b'deah THAT'S ALL FOLKS!!!"

THE OH-ZONE ©1994 by Peter Backwords and Bruce N. Duncan



Pseudo-Quotations "Suck!"

by Luke McGuff

Have you noticed that, more and more often lately, you'll be reading a story or article, eyes gliding along, when "all of a sudden" your eyes are staggered by a "pseudo-quotation"? That is, a word or phrase "in quotes" without a speaker being attributed. Just exactly who is the writer quoting?

I had noticed this "trend" growing for "quite some time," but what really "ticked me off" to it was some "ad copy" at work. I'll put it all in "caps" to make it easier to "see what I mean": YOU'LL CREATE A STIR WITH NEW GREEN GIANT STIR FRY ENTREES. Fair enough, the kind of "meaningless pabulum" ad agencies sell to their clients in the guise of "selling the product" to retailers who then hope WE buy it. (n.b., you'd be surprised how much advertising is aimed at retailers to get them to buy the product that is advertised to you to get you to buy it from the retailers.)

Anyway, that "simple, unassuming" sentence came back for "revisions": YOU'LL "CREATE A STIR" WITH NEW GREEN GIANT STIR FRY ENTREES. Now that really "pissed me off." I mean, "what the hell difference" did it make? Gave it a "folksy air," I guess.

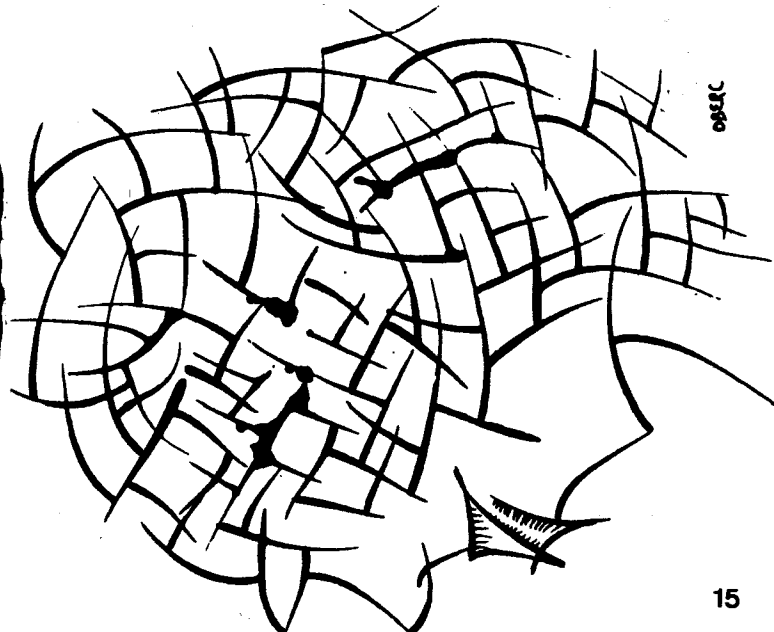
But the "first thing" I noticed about the pseudo-quotation "trend" is that these "pseudo-quotes" act as "disclaimers." As if the writer is trying to "avoid a lawsuit;" s/he could say it was "all in jest," perhaps. It's a "sly nudge and a wink" from someone a little scared to voice his or her own opinion.

Another "thing" about pseudo-quotations is that the writers are never "very good." They are being lazy, and "palm off" these pseudo-quotations as if to say, "Hey, I know this phrase or word is a cliché that was 'old in grandma's time' but I lead a busy life. I mean, we're talking hectic-city here, Jack."

Sure, one expects "lazy writing" from grocery check-out tabloids, sci-fi fanzines and other semi-literate publications, but I've seen pseudo-quotes in such "august" publications as Harper's and Time. Who's putting on whom, eh?

The problem with pseudo-quotations is that they exacerbate their own situation. It becomes a "shorthand," a "telegraphing" of the writer's intent. The writer has not thought seriously about what he or she really meant to say, what it was that was unique in his or her perceptions that caused the act of writing to occur. The writer has "copped out" by grabbing a "handy phrase," whether or not it was uniquely appropriate. We "get it"—we've seen that word or phrase elsewhere, in similar context. In fact, in this "media-saturated global village" it's very hard not to fall into such lazy traps. But such writing is the verbal equivalent of using a pliers to loosen a bolt. It works, sometimes, and sometimes it causes very little damage. But in the long run, it weakens the writer's ability to communicate and the reader's ability to comprehend.

Well, "what can I say?" H.L. Mencken or George Orwell could draw astute conclusions from this observation. All I can say (and perhaps this is "too melodramatic") is that this kind of thinking plays right into the hands of those who control the government. As people become more lazy in their thinking and communicating, they become more easily controlled (read "Politics and the English Language," by George Orwell). And we will see, more and more, government of the unthinking, by the charismatic cliché-mongers, for the well-heeled. Think about it.



Love Affair Beneath A Witch's Moon by Audrey Parente

The young woman's skin, red-brown as an earthenware jar, shone like glazed ceramic in the milk-white light of the Witch's Moon. She was leaning on the rail, fishing from the small pier which hugged the mollusk-encrusted shore of the Tomoka River.

At night, in early October, in Ormond Beach, Florida, fishing can be pleasant, but fruitless for a tourist. Oh, occasionally a silver tarpon will leap from the water, suspend itself gracefully in the warm, damp air for a moment, and then cause ripples in the white-glass surface of the river as it dips away. But by the end of a long tourist season, fish which survived the summer were too wise to be snagged by an unbaited hook dangling in the brackish water. It took special bait to catch anything this time of year.

This was just a peaceful, quiet time for Candy, before the last of the summer warmth gave way to cool tropical Autumn breezes. The summer romances had come and gone, as they always did. Candy faced another damp month alone, until the Hunter's Moon, with its new crop of tourists, the snowbirds, who would soon be raping the once beautiful Florida paradise.

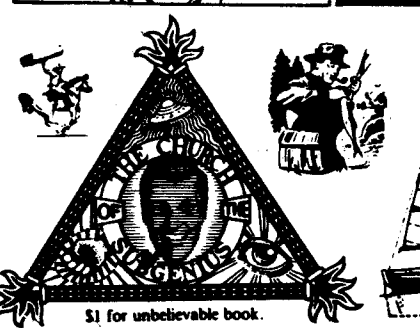
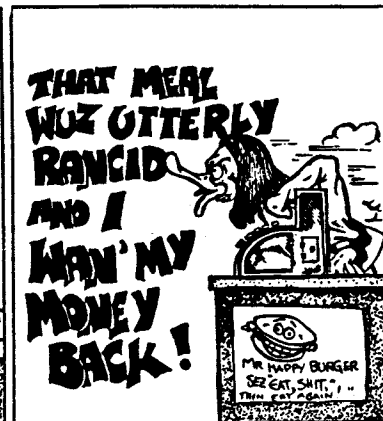
No one had rented the fishing equipment she hawked from her concession van for days, and she was fighting a gnawing hunger which always came with the lean and lonely times between tourist seasons. A small campfire by the van crackled hopefully while Candy gazed at the vast universe beyond the white Witch's Moon and listened to the desolate sounds of her own breathing and the grumble of her empty stomach. She rearranged her pole and sat with one leg Indian-style on the damp dock. The other leg dangled, Candy's bare toes causing the watery reflection of the Witch's Moon to undulate hypnotically.

At first, she did not notice the green hand, webbed between the fingers, grasp the rotten, protruding board at the end of the pier. Only when the lizard-man was on the dock, dragging its flat, flipper-feet toward her, did she shake off her mesmerized dream state and open her mouth to scream. The sound stuck in her throat. She was mute with fear as the reptile-man raised its damp hand and brushed her cheek. The man-creature tilted its head so only one eye searched her face for a response. Candy's fear ebbed as the surian carressed her shoulder, pulling her tattered sweatshirt, exposing part of her brown bosom to the white moonlight.

Leaning her head back, Candy allowed a pleading sigh of pleasure to escape her throat as the reptile continued its caress along her arm and took her hand, pressing it gently. Candy bit her lower lip and caught her breath in a gasp of passion as the gallant lizard bowed slightly, raising her hands to its lips.

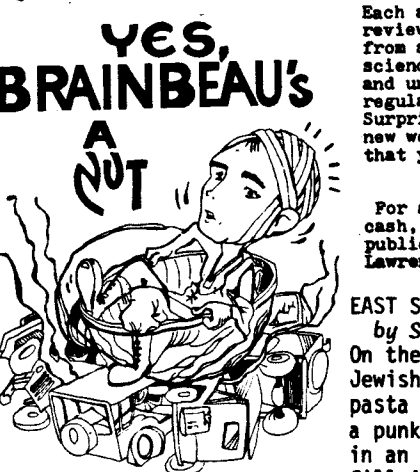
"I think I'm in love," Candy whispered with a sensual pleasure as she lifted the mallet from her tackle box. "With a fillet of fish," she added as she wacked her catch.

As I said, it takes special bait to catch anything between tourist seasons, especially beneath the Witch's Moon.



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A NEW
WORLD

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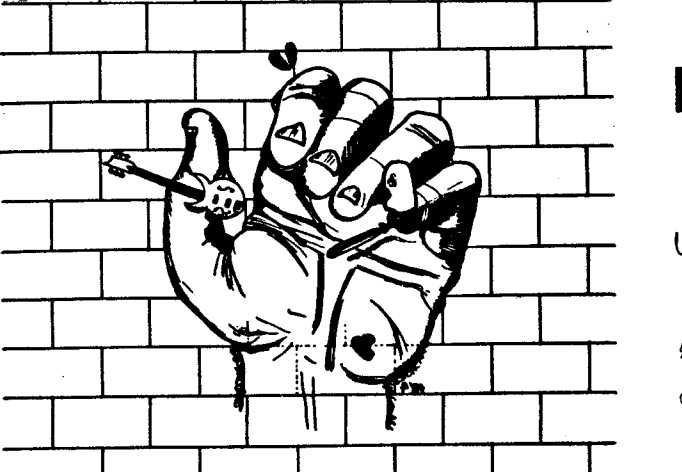


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EAST SIDE ARTIFACTS
by Susan Packie
On the Lower East Side
Jewish prayers over chop suey
pasta served with Carvel ice cream
a punk-rock band
in an empty Second Avenue theater
fill in the gaps
left by decaying tenements
and converted houses of worship
A pickle in a new jar



Blow it on a ONE IN A TRILLION JEEP ACCIDENT
HEAD INJURY INCIDENT

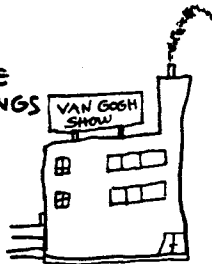
of survivors, losers and
MATCHING WINNERS.
To end wars (90% of 10/10
fire a 5456 at air-play winners
(men, women) winners
(chance) winners
WINNERS - Box 2243
YOUNGSTOWN - OHIO, 44504

IF WE SMIT OUR TROOPS
To all the hot spots where
co in Nicaragua it would still be
its service because our winner-
less army, navy and air forces
are just as socialistic as the
reds. Like them all we come up
with in times of armed conflict
are survivors and losers instead



WHEN VAN GOGH WAS ALIVE
HE SOLD ONLY 2 OF HIS PAINTINGS
FOR LESS THAN \$100 (TOTAL).

TODAY IN AMSTERDAM
THERE IS A MUSEUM
5 STORIES HIGH
TO HOUSE HIS WORKS:
BUILT AT A COST OF OVER \$1,000,000.

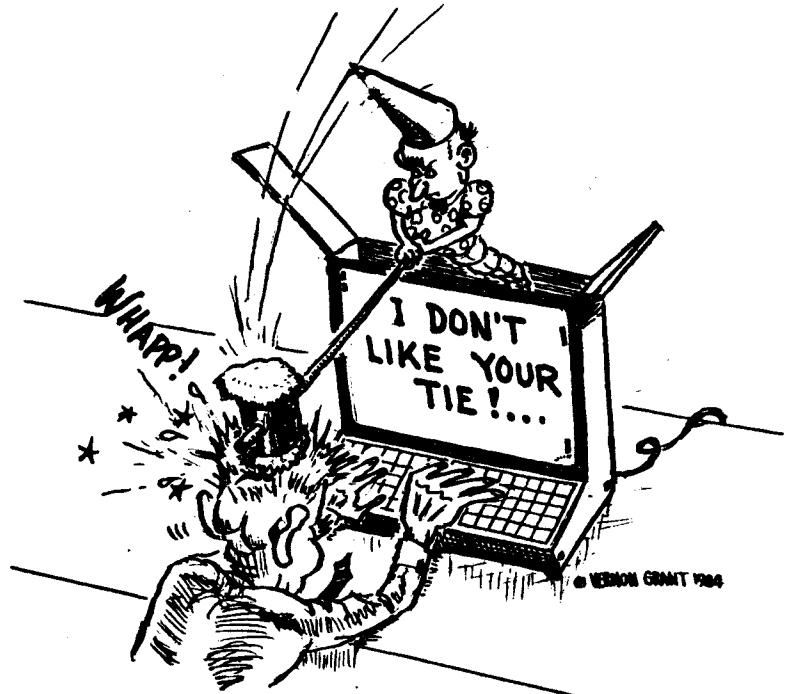


When he heard of this
Van Gogh, spun in his grave very fast
spattering the tomb
with brilliant yellow-orange
Delft & Japanese colors.

Tomorrow they're selling his tomb
For 1,000,000,000 guilders flat.



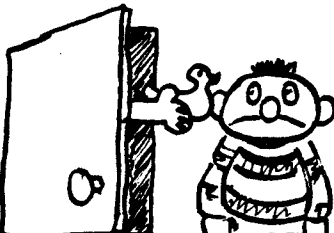
RADICAL INSANITY.



"IT WAS THE MOST USER-UNFRIENDLY-
COMPUTER I'VE EVER USED!..."

POORLY DRAWN COMIX... BACK PAGE FILLER... NOT DRAWN BY THE NUMBER "10" OR THE LETTER "W"...

ON SEPT. 13, ERNIE WAS
ASKED TO LEAVE HIS
PLACE OF RESIDENCE...



THAT REQUEST CAME FROM
HIS MOTHER.

WITH NOWHERE ELSE TO TURN,
HE ARRIVED AT THE APARTMENT
OF HIS CHILDHOOD FRIEND, BERT.

CEE BERT, OLD BUDDY
OLD PAL, COULD
I STAY AT YOUR
APARTMENT...



SOME YEARS BEFORE, BERT'S
MOTHER HAD THROWN HIM OUT,
REQUESTING THAT HE NEVER
RETURN...

CAN TWO MEN WHO CAN
COUNT TO TEN AND WHO
PLAY WITH RUBBER DUCKS
LIVE TOGETHER WITHOUT
DRIVING EACH OTHER
CRAZY?!!



NO BERT
YOU SEE IT WOULDN'T BE
FAIR IF YOU GOT ALL THE
COOKIES, BERT... TEE-HE-HE...

(A PRODUCTION OF THE COUCH POTATO WORKSHOP...)



The Fish Killer

by Lawrence Oberc

He was on the bridge when we got the call. We were cruising through the red light district trying to find a girl stupid enough to wave down a marked car. We were out of luck. They just stared and gave us dirty looks. We followed a pimp around for awhile but he just gave us the finger. We didn't have anything on him and he knew it.

When we got to the bridge he was shooting at the river. It made little white spots on the water. We watched him for awhile, then decided to move in. He wouldn't have looked so dangerous without a gun. We parked the car at the end of the bridge, pulled our guns out, and walked towards him. He was drunk.

"What are you trying to do, buddy?" I asked.

"Kill some fish," he explained.

A fish killer! The worst kind of wildman. We'd have to play it cool.

"Why?" asked my partner.

"To get in practice."

"For what?" I asked.

"My wife."

The only thing worse than a fish killer is a wife killer. I didn't trust a fish killer in the first place, but a wife killer was even worse. If you had a permit to kill fish you had a way out. But they didn't sell permits for wife killers.

"Do you have a fish killing permit?" I asked.

"A what?"

"A fishing permit," explained my partner.

"Sure do."

"Let's see it," I said.

He pulled out his wallet and reached inside. He handed me a fish killing permit. It was expired. His being drunk was another serious charge. Then there was the fact that he had been discharging a gun within the city limits. What we had here was a multiple offender. We had to take him in.

"I'm afraid that you're under arrest," I said.

"What for?"

"You've broken the law," said my partner.

"Sorry."

"Sorry's not good enough," I said, handcuffing the criminal's hands together.

My partner threw him into the back of the car.

We hit the streets.

"Think we should beat him up before we drop him off?" I asked.

"What for?" asked my partner. "He didn't give us a hard time."

"Guess you're right."

We drove him to the station. They led him away. A few minutes later we were back in action. A call came in. There was an exhibitionist out there and we had to find him. Or her. No one had given us an accurate description. All we knew was that there was a body running around out there with no-clothes on it. We looked all night but didn't find anything.

I went home to my wife the next morning. She wasn't sure about fish killing. After all, we had fish for dinner every Friday and neither one of us felt guilty about it. I guess she was right. As long as someone else was going the fish killing it was all right.

On Monday morning my partner and me got a call. It turned out our fish killer had become a wife killer. Right after he got out of jail he bought a shotgun. Then he went home and shot his wife. That's the damned thing about these fish killers, you never know what they're going to do next.

LATE? LATE!
I'm not the
kind of per-
son who
worries
about time!



The Doctors

by Cynthia Cinque

There was a kind of doctor that used to exist, and that you sometimes see now, but very rarely, and they are usually pretty old and they have a frayed look about them, and they are run-down at the hells and their hands are square and strong and blunt and perfect for squeezing boils and setting bones and probing for a bullet. They used to be treated with respect and everyone revered them and knew them and they had a special place in our community, and in our hearts, and they used to make house calls and charged very little and they were often grumpy and were ambitious about medicine, but they never played golf or wore leisure suits or married models or actresses with tits big enough to fit in their hands and they didn't care about being media stars and writing books about cellulite and depression and diets.

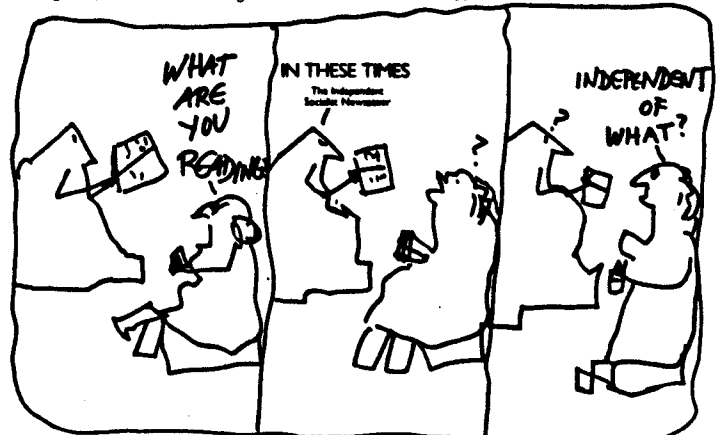
There was a kind of doctor like Doctor Weinstein when I was a little girl and had pneumonia and he came to the house with his dowdy wife who was a nurse and she set up a croup tent for me and stayed the night and I was four years old and she played with me and put her cap on my head and let me hold the stethoscope, and the time when my mother aborted, he came and sat on the edge of her bed and pressed the dead fetus and placenta out of her womb. He lived with his wife in an apartment and they didn't have children and he never went to synagogue and he had seen too much suffering to believe in God, and I remember him walking alone in the snow with his muffler and his galoshes and his black doctor's bag and his black hair silhouetted against the embarkment of snow. We loved you Doctor Weinstein and we loved your wife, though we never told you so and it hurts to think of you and brings tears to my eyes and you are probably dead and I wonder if anyone came to your funeral and I wonder if anyone knew, that amid the poverty and illness and pettiness and squalor...that you were a man.

II

I was working from three to eleven in a nursing home and an aging doctor that I did not know walked on the ward and he had a dour expression on his face and he did not look at me and I asked him if I could help him and he said he wanted the Physician's Desk Reference, and his voice was curt and he did not smile and I walked to the other ward and brought it, but when I returned he was not there, so I looked in some of the rooms and spotted his open black, doctor's bag at the foot of the bed of a female patient, and when I looked into the darkened room I saw him holding her hand and his face was sad and she was looking up at him and I stood there watching them, and I knew they knew each other when and she didn't even know him now, she was so senile and it all comes to this, senility, death, wrinkled skin and I felt his loneliness and longing and remembered his memories.

III

Doctor M. was a fine surgeon and we all knew it and we all respected him and he was fifty and handsome and dapper and he had an alcoholic wife with a red face and one night I was scrubbing on a case in one of the operating rooms and Doctor M. had a case in the second room and the third room was occupied by a doctor who butchered his patients and everyone knew it and no one said anything because he was wealthy and powerful and nasty and had a strange habit of sending lilies to his post-operative patients who almost always had wound infections and who almost always never recovered. He was an odd man. He knew he was incompetent and he knew we knew he was incompetent and he used to bring the nurses chocolates and hide them in his hands and say, "which hand holds the chocolate?", and I used to feel sorry for him and his presence and our silence used to hang over the operating room like a cloud and, as it happened, we were going about our tasks and suddenly we heard Dr. M. shout, "I refuse to operate in the same hospital with that fool. Get him out of here. If he doesn't leave, I will never operate here again, this cannot go on!" And it didn't.



Sayz-U! (Letters)

Dear Elayne,

Do please forgive, if you will, this hideous blue paper (upon which this letter was typed). I know there's really not much excuse for this sort of monumental bad taste (to say nothing of those little holes at the side), but perhaps it will help to mitigate the circumstances if you know that, as I type this, I am suffering through what I suppose is a television programme (well, it's on television, and it doesn't seem to be the first wave of a Martian takeover, so, rather against my better judgment, I have chosen to give it the benefit of the doubt) called (I think) JUMP (which I know was MY first inclination), and which purports to be about eight (or it might be ten - they move around a lot) lissome young people who somehow (they don't explain this, which is probably just as well) form a dance ensemble, rent their own dance studio at great personal sacrifice and - well, you get the idea. Now, if there's anything just flat-out guaranteed to give me the itch faster than eight (or is it ten?) lissome young people, it's eight (or perhaps ten) lissome young people who dance, and particularly eight (no, I'm sure it's ten - four boys, five girls, and one about whom I'm not altogether sure) lissome young people who dance to WAKE ME UP BEFORE YOU GO-GO, which seems to be the prevailing theme of the show and which, not incidentally, gets my vote for the Archie Andrews Award for Excellence in Song Lyrics. I mean, I have nothing really concrete against young people hanging about being lissome, if they have nothing better to do (and, judging from the current national figures on teenaged unemployment, they haven't), but do they have to do it on network television? Do they have to do it while wearing legwarmers? Do they have to call themselves things like "Chelsea" (Chelsea is a darling name for towns in England and gentrifying sections of New York City, but it leaves something to be desired when attached to a creature who may, presumably, have to grow up and have a credit card someday)? Of course, you might properly point out that, if this sort of thing bothers me so much, it is possible to change the channel, but, you see, the only things on opposite it are a Pink Panther movie I have seen so often that, ROCKY HORROR fashion, I have begun tossing appropriate objects at Peter Sellers; the second half of DYNASTY, which always depresses me when I realize that, yes, the rich really are different from the rest of us - they seem to get a lot more sex, for one thing - and Merv Griffin, which tonight stars everyone who isn't on DYNASTY, so you see the problem. Besides, ST. ELSEWHERE comes on immediately afterwards, and if I start switching channels now I might accidentally miss something and never find out if they're going to sack Dr. Morrison. What it all boils down to, I suppose, is that, while they didn't precisely blind me with video - I'll leave that to Candi Strecker - they may have warped my colour sense a little, hence this paper. Have pity on me.

As an effort to get my mind off things - and as a tolerably smooth segue from Candi Strecker, I think - I shall now begin to detail my reactions to the last IJ (and I'd better have at least a few, considering that Yog Xipkode chewed up my last efforts along these lines, a matter I gather was of small import to the rest of the world). First of all, I really must congratulate you on garnering A.J. Wright as a staffer. As I believe I've mentioned before, I've admired his work and - through people won't believe this - its conciseness for some time now, and I can scarcely think of anyone I'd be happier welcoming aboard. I shall look forward to his work eagerly, even though I've always been a little shaky on the philosophical importance of film noir.

As for the rest of it, well, do you know, I think Alice Ermlich might just make a writer some day. She seems to have the makings - and here I'm going on the assumption that she's perhaps 16 or 17 years old. I base this on the fact that I wrote WOE (under a different name, but everything else exactly the same) when I was 16, and so did everyone else who ever fancied herself a writer (I don't really have enough experience to know if 16-year-old male writers write it as well. Perhaps they have a standard one of their own) - the poetically-styled woman-in-a-nuthouse story is a real killer when one is 16, particularly if one has just read I NEVER PROMISED YOU A ROSE GARDEN. This is not to say that she shouldn't have written it - on the contrary, it's a good thing she did, and got it out of her system now, so she can go on to better things, as I believe she will. She seems to have some talent, and the fact that she's writing at all is a good sign (rather than just sitting around talking about writing, as so many people do), and I'll be interested to see how she progresses. Of course, if Alice Ermlich is 43 I'm going to look like a damned fool writing all this but, on the other hand, so is she, writing a story like that at her age.

Prudence Gaelor is frightening as hell, and awfully good with it. Mildred Neptune's Quantum Courtesy is just what this world needs to set it on a proper course to civilised behaviour, Audrey Parente's NATIONAL PROFLIGACY was interesting (even if I did have to look up "profligacy"), and I loved the little portrait of Bucky Fuller (D.H. = Dan Howland, perhaps? Why don't you people ever sign anything?). For that matter, and as always, most of the cartoons were good, though I have to admit, Elayne, that Whozits was indecipherable. Not that I couldn't understand it - I couldn't read enough to understand. I don't think this has anything to do with the quality of the printing - in my opinion, Uncle Wiggly does an excellent job, service above and beyond the call of duty, as it were, and the rest of the issue was perfectly clear - but simply that the letters were all run together into a blur. I think you're either going to have to use a finer point on your pen, or else learn to write bigger, for my sake. I enjoy Whozits, when I can figure out what's going on. (Well, at this point I still have doubts on my ability to letter to save my life, so I'll try to remember to type the captions until I think of something bet-

ter, or take a course in comic strip lettering, or something. Sorry.)

Not that she's twisting my arm or anything - she's not, you know, not at this distance, and I don't even count those peculiar phone calls in the middle of the night - but my favourite thing in #35 were the Ever-Popular's poems. Of course, one of the fringes of knowing a poet is that one gets to hear her work before anyone else does, and so I'm familiar with this particular two, but I've always liked them, and it was a kick to see them in IJ. Now can I have my dog back?

Well, that should be enough good stuff to convince everyone of my seriousness of intent. For the bad, well, I can see why Pete Labriola is having trouble selling his cartoons, if the one in IJ was a representative sample. Worse than pointless, it was just plain silly, which is rather more than I can say about Steve Scharrf's piece about life in Sears. All his observations were absolutely true, to which I can attest, having worked in retail department stores, but all of them have been said a thousand times before, and if you can't shed some new light on a subject, why on earth do you bother? Actually, that's a problem I find with some of IJ's writers in general (and I'm not going to mention any more names - two people hating me in one letter is enough) - they aren't precisely bad, you know, just uninspired, unoriginal, almost not worth the reading. Fortunately, you have enough good writers to balance the boring ones out, but still, it's a shame to see this sort of thing in IJ, one place I look for original writing. Hopefully, the dull ones will live up or fall away eventually.

Notice how neatly I'm staying out of the whole John Eberly brouhaha.

ST. ELSEWHERE, mercifully, has just come on, posing delicate questions of how much to operate on a person with neurofibromatosis, and whether or not Nurse Rosenthal should continue to see her married lover, so I believe I'll have to stop now and give it my complete attention. Do you suppose that if I wrote to Dr. Auschlander, he could tell me what to do about visual disturbances caused by a surfeit of adolescents?

Just wondering,

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

Dear U.S.A.,

Would it be convenient for you to please tone down the rockets red glare & bombs bursting in air a bit? We've just had an election here & you're making it rather difficult for us to get back to sleep.

Sincerely, Your neighbour, CANADA

Dear Elayne,

I had to laugh. Sal Moniac thinks Deborah Benedict "hates men." Phil Tortorici assumes that DeeBee is "sexist." He is wrong in stating that sexism is a "psychological disorder." If anything, it is social conditioning. Sal and Phil missed the whole point of "The Last Word." (Aside to Sal: Deborah doesn't use tampons. Toxic shock, you know. She has nothing to "toss off.") Her writing is merely satire. The old comeback/retort/witty reply. As for the issue of sexism, I think you'll find very little of it in INSIDE JOKE. Have a few chuckles, guys. The girl just wants to have fun. Deborah always finds the time to cook, clean, shop for groceries, change the cat litter, and still write smartass remarks. What a gal. She's so pleasant and cheerful and obedient. A hunk like me sure deserves it. I'm calling Mike Royko about this. He loves to hear about perfect marriages. Excuse me while I go pick out some lingerie for DeeBee to wear. I don't have to go bowling tonight.

TOM GEDWILLO
House of Laffs
Lincoln, NE 68506

EW:

as i type this there appears to be some bizarre scientific experiment underway to determine the effects of permafrost on the human brain. fortunately, i had mine removed years ago which is prob'ly why i enjoy "inside joke" so much and speakin of some (which we were doin' after a fashion) i gotta say dat i thought da latest ish wuz a whole site better'n da last one before it, wif da possible exception dat dere wuz nothin' fiction-wize from da Beast and dat da letters were kinda dullish-tho i did agree wif mosta what deebee sed concernin the unda-ground press or whatever we callin it dis month. i thought dat dere was a lotta serious weirdness an' still plenny a good just plain ole weirdosity ta go 'round and da returna greg blair on topa da whole deal an' it almost be more dan my little heart ken take. da only news on da lee veng update fer this month is that there ain't no news at all. ennyone knows what the boy is up to, do pass it along as us here at da hotline feel so left out. dis month's quick quiz: how many movies other than "purple rain" contain the line 'i would die for you'? write out your responses on an unmarked bill and mail it to me c/o da hotel gnu delhi along wif yer name and someone else's address scrawled illegibly on topa steve severin's phone number. da winner will be awarded a case of ethical relativism and the ability to spot a well-made vodka at five blocks. also (on an unrelated tangent) a question: if billy crystal and chris guest are so fuckin talented how cum dey're responsible for the single worst idea to hit SNL since the escape from the dreaded land of doumanian-namely "two white guys sittin 'round being gross"-wretched stuff-and why do they expect us to sit still for dis shit? well, enuf bitchin for dis time i guess...i gotta go get on line now for "the perils of gwendoline in the land of yik-yak" ...frankie say "better pissed off than pissed on" nostrovya,

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

(Not only are certain characters on SNL a bit of a disappointment, Rodny, but they've just canned my favorite cast member, Harry Shearer, who [I believe] is the only cast member to have been let go from SNL twice in its history. All's not beer & skittles in comedy-land...)

Dear Elayne,

Wow! Am I having fun yet? My elderly news director at work recently had a serious stroke...I've been working 9, 10-hour days...our format has changed slightly, but in a way which means more work for me...19

And, being involved with s-f fandom, I deal with "those" people.

Who is this Phil Tortorici character anyway? The man writes in disjointed sentences and incomplete thoughts. It's good that he lives in a P.O. box or I would look him up and give him a piece of my mind (he could use it). He does have good taste in music—I'll give him that much.

Well, it's eleven o'clock, the cafeteria's opened. I got my cheese danish, and my spouse is still missing. I am also out of LJ 35 to read. Until next time—

Yours sanitarilly,

PHIL TORTORICI
P.O. Box 57487
West Palm Beach, FL 33405

P.S. I hope you can use the artwork. These back covers are a joy and a technical exercise to do. I am seeing how many times I can repeat the elements in the juxtaphilistions and keep it interesting. I am also trying to improve my cartooning style—hence the illustrations of song lyrics.

There's a possibility that I may publish the series I do. Who knows how long it may go on?...

I'd like to keep writing to you but I am watching BET (the original Bill Cosby show) and my brain is turning to jelly.

Love,

Phil T

(And while I do love your back covers, Phil, I would ask for different artwork, perhaps, for the next few issues, to give other folks a shot at back cover art. Any takers?)

IMN&ICDWT Dept.

Firesign Blip 1

This first in a series of blatant self-plugs for my Firesign Theatre newsletter brings 'exclusively' to LJ readers (getting ill yet?) the news that (at least this part's interesting) TFT's "Three Faces of Al"bum has been nominated for a Grammy for Best Comedy LP of 1984. It's up against rather rough (a/k/a mainstream) stuff like "Weird Al" Yankovic and Rodney Dangerfield, so winning may not be a reality at this point, but a nomination alone serves to note the greater recognition the group is getting lately. It's also a feather in the cap of Rhino Records—the NY Daily News of 2/4 reports that this is the first time a Rhino album has ever been up for such an award. Which in turn, of course, is often a boost for continued association between a group and a record company...

On a more participatory note, I would like to begin a letters column in the next Four-Alarm FIRESIGNAL (#5, due out in mid-April), mainly for the purpose of discussing and sharing thoughts on the group's work. I'd like it to strike a kind of cross between the LJ letters column and my college Satire class, but of course you weren't all in my college Satire class (well, you were, Bill-Dale, but that's only .01%), so I expect it will turn out rather freeform. Feel free to think up and ask any number of questions on Firesign's work, how to locate things, literary or musical references—almost anything short of Lisa Robinson—and I'll put the questions to members of the group and print answers in the column. Do try to get the first of these letters in around mid-March or so, so I'll have plenty of time to talk to the guys about it. Also, street addresses will not be printed in this column unless specified. It seems past time for another exchange like this (Tom Gedwillo was, I believe, the last editor to do this successfully), and I'm enthused about it as are the members of the group to whom I've spoken, so write to me or them in re FALAfaL at the palatial P.O. box and start sending in your opinions and queries. And remember, -ear fri--ds, commu--cation is so importa--owadays!

A TRIP THROUGH THE FAIR

by Camille Lyon

"I took a trip down to look at the fair,

When I arrived I found nobody there..."

Cindy's face flushed as she stared up at the Monolith. She'd been dared, and it wasn't going to be easy, either way. Still too young not to be bothered by thoughts of impending humiliation should she chicken out, she also felt too old to risk vital organs, general well-being and the kind of nausea even mothers don't want to hear about all for the sake of proving something this utterly banal...Still, in a perverse sort of way, it could almost be said to be fun. And she was next on line, with no visible escape within the perimeter...

"Step right up, and I do mean UPI!" exaggerated the rotobarker in its freeze-dried monotone. "Believe me folks, it's full of stars!"

A teenage neobeat a few people behind Cindy threw an empty holocylinder at the mobile unit, which clanked to the flexiglass and was absorbed unnoticed.

"Well well well well," intoned the precording with equal emphasis on each of the four 'well's, 'who or what do we have here?' Its viewbox glistened towards her menacingly. "My, he or she is a young one, isn't it? Well, little boy and/or girl, are you sure you're ready for this scary a trip at your tender age?"

Cindy was too terrified to even inquire as to how the unit could speak in underlines. Somehow, one foot slipped forward—she'd later swear it moved of its own volition—and shot out in front of the other, which then seemed to bear the obligation of proceeding likewise. She turned to her right, and the platform reeled her in like so much kelp.

The mandatory fright-heightening sensory deprivation period dragged on for a twenty-second eon before the stars started coming out and winking at her. She could feel the ride turning upside down, and suppressed notions of crawling out of her suddenly-strapped-in position up to the ceiling to retrieve her stomach.

She thought she heard a taped overdub address her inquisitively, "What's up, Doc?" "SHHH," chimed in another familiar character, "be vewwy, vewwy quiet..."

"HEY KID, GOING MY WAY??" shouted a third spectre from nowhere. As this holo developed itself, the stars began giving way to a convex panorama of the Fair below. Somewhere in the unoccupied part of Cindy's brain registered the other rides, booths, attendees—the people! Panic flared anew as Cindy shifted her lax gaze away from the Monolith's inner psychodelia towards the forms on the ground below (above?). She felt very much like throwing up, if she could just remember how it was done...Why were all the people glowing like that?

"Aah, don't worry about them none," said the now-solid tri-dee. "Pleasetameetcha an' all that. Hey, I said don't worry," noticing Cindy stare hadn't yet returned, "I said they're okay. You're the one who's not."

That was what Cindy was afraid of.

The vision approached her cautiously, appeared to size her up briefly, and pressed the hitherto secret release button to unstrap the young girl. Cindy floated out, only marginally grateful.

"How-do-you-feel?" the tri-dee worded carefully. Cindy felt around for various limbs she was certain had become disengaged from her main torso in the past few seconds, and found them securely attached, with the exception of her little finger on her left hand which she didn't use much anyway. This finger was busily sniffing about the now-shrinking compartment that made up the main chamber of horrors-n-delight of the Monolith ride, and it didn't look like it was going to return.

"Leave it alone, and it'll come home, wagging—" began the tri-dee, who then giggled and restarted, "Oh, I'm sorry, I forgot to introduce myself. So, who-are-you?"

"M-me? I'm Cindy...uh..."

"Are you sure?"

If Cindy had wanted to be contradicted or questioned, she could have stayed at home and let her mother do it. She saw red, and started to sputter.

"Oh, don't get your engines hot, I believe you, kid. Cindy, huh? 'I'm Cindy', 'I'm Cindy', 'I'm'—yeah, it fits. Thanks kid, I'm Cindy." A tiny panel began sliding open from the bottom up on the far side of the chamber, and the vision was gliding right for it. Cindy panicked for the 50th time.

"Hey, wait! First of all, I'm Cindy!! I know I am, I've been Cindy all my life! And another—"

"Too late, kid, I'm Cindy now," and the holomage wavered and replicated, still spiriting outwards. "Don't worry, there's plenty of food and water, once you get the hang of it, and you'll make loads of interesting friends, and then when you figure out how the ins and outs of the place you can be whoever walks in here too! Mind if my mind and your mind—oh, never mind, I've always had trouble expressing myself."

Cindy winked out, but not before hearing another star remark matter-of-factly, "Case in point, Cindy Meyers..."

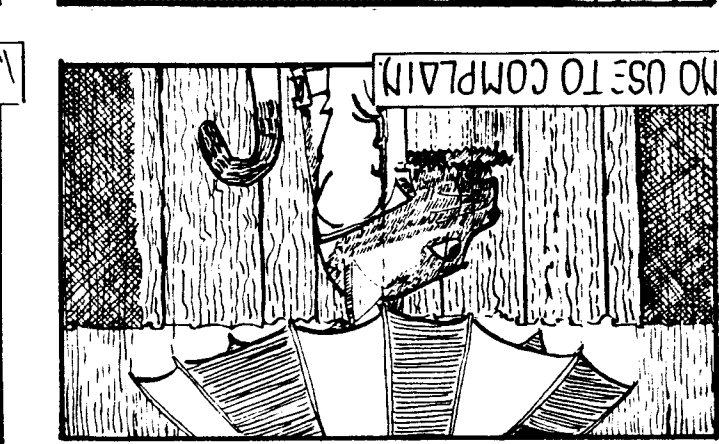
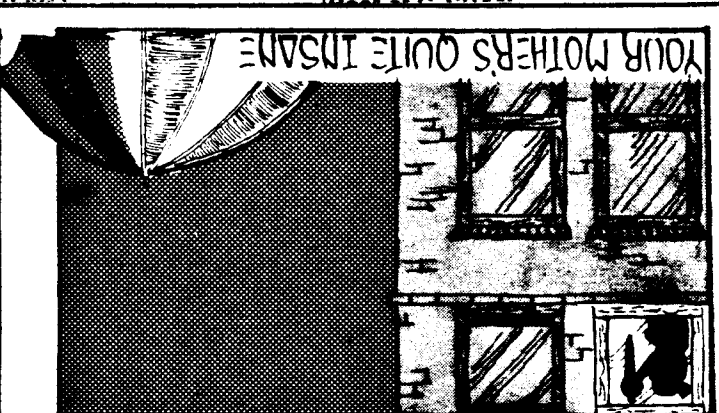
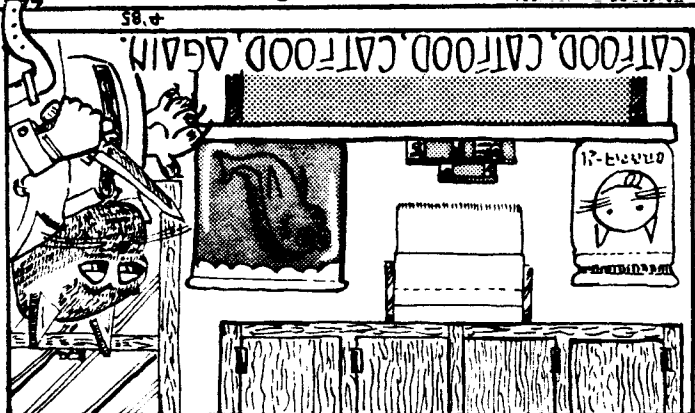
The room stabilized its size once more, and Cindy emerged feeling like the time the servodent dosed the nitrous too high. She suspected the feeling would wear off by the time she reached her next destination, the Jupiturbu, just ahead off the purple crosswalk. She couldn't wait to rendezvous with the other kids and collect her winnings from the bet. She could but name her price. Funny, though, she was sure she'd be asking for a novamalt before, but she didn't feel hungry anymore. On the other hand, she had a strange craving for a rechargeopack...

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Farrow. (PG) ★★★ present a tribute to Eubie Blake on stage at Carnegie Hall.

Lone Ranger Great Adventure 700 Club Scheduled topic: violence and rebellion among America's youth.

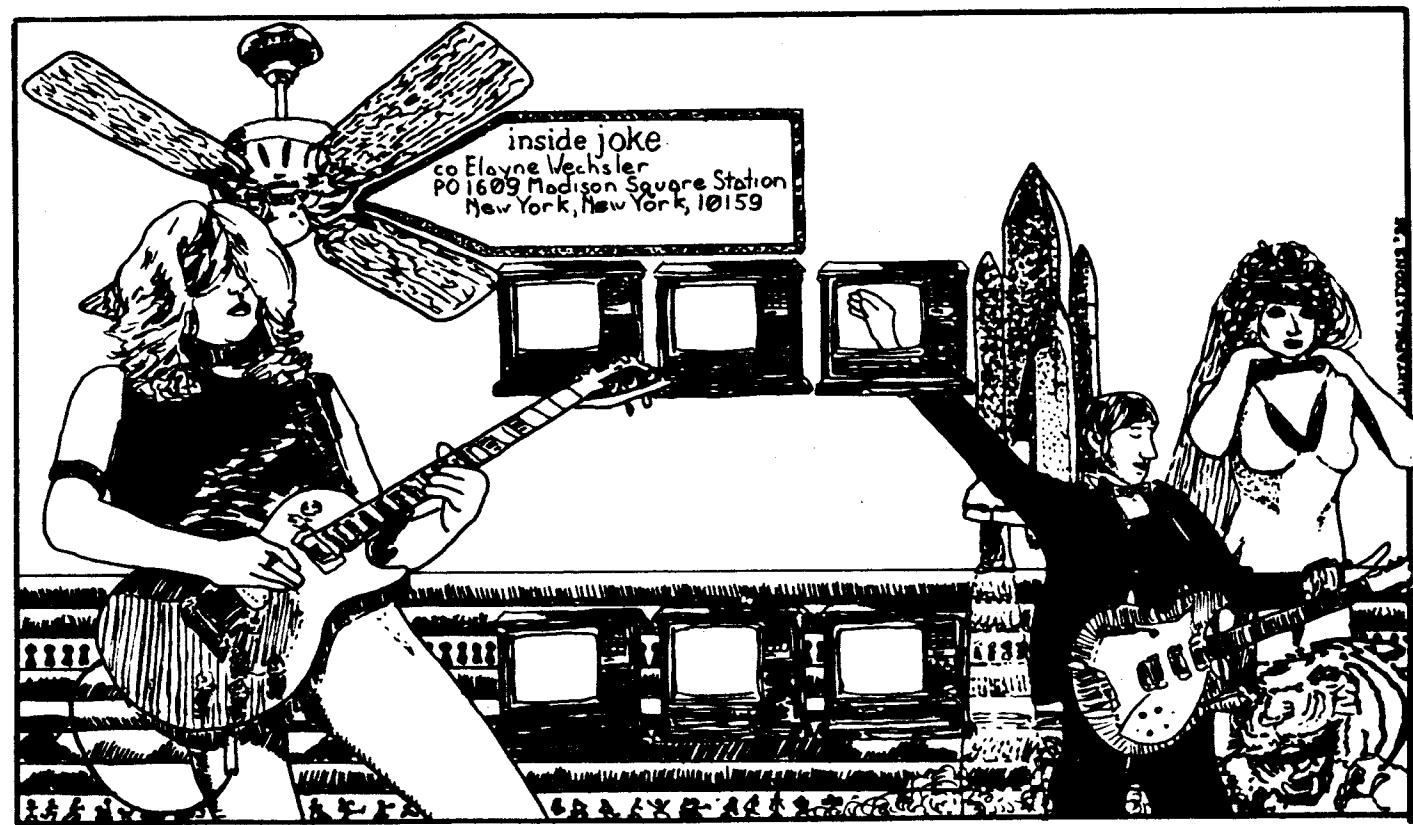
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"Children of the Corn" (1983), Peter Horton, Linda Hamilton. A young man and woman fight for their lives while a demonic cult of children murders the town's adults. (R) ★★★½ "The Lady in Red" (1979), Robert Corns ad, Pamela Sue Martin. (R) ★★★½

Wrestling Boxing

News Retro: '84 A look is taken at the important news events of the past year. NHL Hockey New Jersey Devils at Edmonton Oilers.



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