

#43 - \$1.00 -

INSIDE JOKE

A NEWSLETTER OF COMEDY AND CREATIVITY

ANARCHY'S COMING
SOMETIME MAYBE....
HUH, JOHNNY? HUH?

AHH!
SHUTUP
AND DIE
SIDNEY!



The Garbage Patch Kids™
craze has the nation going ga-ga
over these homely but huggable
little shits.

**THE SID VISCIOUS & JOHNNY ROTTEN
GARBAGE PATCH DOLLS**

— Ace Backwords — ©-9-85

Fan Noose

"Outermost of the moons of Saturn is the tiny satellite called Phoebe. This small heavenly body would not be regarded as significant but for one thing; it rotates and revolves in retrograde. In other words, it spins the wrong way. It is to this ideal that this newsletter is dedicated," states editor **James MacDougall** of **PHOEBE**, "The Newsletter of Eccentricity." I briefly touched on this last time, as I hadn't had a chance to read it yet (wouldst believe I'm now all caught up in small-pub reading!?), but did want to take this space to expound upon & extoll it somewhat more. **PHOEBE**'s a comfortable little zine featuring various eccentric items-of-the-month, novelty gift ideas, noteworthy movie and book reviews, and even a regular "Report on the Funniest Planet in the Universe" by J., an alleged alien anthropologist (who admires alliteration). The cost is 55¢/issue (\$6.60/year)—why not get in on things by writing J. Mac. at 511 Routes 5 & 20, Waterloo, NY 13165?..Even though more than a few friends feel otherwise, I never could understand the point of personal letter columns. Oh, I don't mean, for instance, here in **IJ** or in **Kip's FALAFA**, which actually discuss what goes on in the publication. I'm talking about litanies of car repairs and namedropping parties and academic and sex lives. In short, diaries for public consumption. While the phenomenon may resemble supermarket tabloid reportage, the key difference is that most readers (esp. first-timers) don't even know the diarists involved. I find it almost impossible to summon up enough interest (and put aside discomfort at near-voyeuristic eavesdropping) to care about the mundane meanderings of complete strangers, whether or not snippets of their everyday lives occasionally bear similarities to mine. I wouldn't dream of subjecting people (even the ones I know) to my diary, at least while I'm still alive. But huge segments of zine fandom eat this stuff up, and if you've an appetite to scan it yourself (after all, I can hardly be expected to make an unbiased judgment!), you might wish to sample **CORPUS COLOSSUM** (Al Sirois, 45 Livingston Ave., Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522) or **NOTES** (Sam Helm, 495 West 186th St. #5-E, New York, NY 10033)—which, to be completely fair, has some actual writing too, by luminaries like Jeff Grimshaw and our own Anni Ackner), offered in exchange for "the usual," like a personal-letter-to-complete-strangers of your own...I mean, even **Bruce Duncan** has resurrected every last note anyone has ever written to and about him (including the stupid little Post-It notes I scribble when I send out **IJ**!) and turned it into a near-useless record of one-way correspondence called **HERE WE GO**, ostensibly having something to do with his sadly demised **TELE TIMES**. Why, Bruce? No, forget I asked, I might see this review in print someday. (Could this be why so many fans are obsessed with "Do Not Print/Do Not Quote" jargon? I'm beginning to understand...) Better you should send a **SASE** to Bruce (Berkeley Inn Motel, Room 414, 2501 Haste St., Berkeley, CA 94704) for his catalog of other goodies on the area's "marginal" society, such as the stupendous poetry collection of Julia Vinograd, called **STREET MYSTERY** and available for \$1...Another Bay Area poet, Yossarian Universal's Paul Fericano, founded the Stoogist movement; and his "5¢ STOOGIST MANIFESTO," put out by his Poor Souls Press (P.O. Box 236, Millbrae, CA 94030), for all its incisive commentary ("The moment a genre substitutes the misery of its genesis for commitment of the real is the moment of that genre's fatality. That is to say, the moment art wallows in self-indulgence is the moment art annihilates itself."), doesn't nearly begin to exemplify Stoogism like his poetic perfection, available in \$4-5 books like **COMMERCIAL BREAK**. The man deserves every grant he can get!...Other future-minded literati have gathered together to spread their word and that of past greats like Emma Goldman and Aleister Crowley to chart the course of (R)EVOLUTION. Fascinating and thoughtful political passion; subscription by donation to P.O. Box 306, Onandaga Hill Station, Syracuse, NY 13215...**SPASTIC CULTURE** fascinates as well (if for the logoperson alone!); it also has political collages, intriguing music interviews and real nice artwork, all for \$1 to **Mickey Duplex** at Box 1243, 2000 Center St., Berkeley, CA 94704...Meanwhile, up north, Gary Pig Gold's **PIG PAPER** one-sheets (**SASE** to 70 Cotton Drive, Mississauga, Ont. L5G 1Z9 CANADA) put the "sty" in "style" with a little of everything (**Ace Backwards** strips, **Flintstones** rock, etc.) in a punkish format on colorful paper; and **Dave Geary** puts his strange photographic collage notions to paper in some bizarre stories, indeed, like **A BOY AND HIS GOPHERS**, **HAIRCUTS OF THE FUTURE** and **THE GIDDIEST GIRL GOES SHOPPING**. Send a buck for all three booklets to 701 7th Ave., Saskatoon, Sask. S7K 2V3 CANADA...Marching to a different but familiar beat is the first gala (color) issue of **DOO DAH**, the mouthpiece of the **Bonzo Dog Band** Fan Club. Needless to say, a must for **BDB** aficionados (\$7/year to **Dean Cole**, 336 Hoover Ave., Bloomfield, NJ 070030, as I suppose **Kip's Four-Alarm FIRE SIGNAL** (#7 just out, available for free c/o **IJ's** p.o. box) is for **Piresign Theatre** fans...I've a few announcements before continuing: **Bill Miller** is preparing to release a new comic book line (**Nature Magic**) featuring **JONTAR**, which he describes as "an international crime drama adventure fantasy." You can order advance copies at \$1.50 per or \$4.50 for 3 from 602 N. Jefferson, Watseka, IL 60970...**Asa Sparks**, editor of the **SACRED COW SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP** (SIG) of **American Mensa**, wants to remind potential subscribers (\$6/year) that the **SACRED COW SIG** isn't for **Mensans** only—write him for info at 604 Pumpkin Dr. SW, Decatur, AL 35603...Also in 'Bammy, **Lang Thompson** announces **BIZARRE DISCOVERIES**, "a zine of forgotten cultural artifacts," for which he seeks strange lists—send contributions by the 31st to 2111 University Blvd. E., Apt. 33, Tuscaloosa, AL 35404. **Lang** expects his next **PUNHOUSE** networking list out by that time...For you mail-art fans, **Alan Barysh's Rabbit Suit Productions** (P.O. Box 33127, Baltimore, MD 21218) sponsors two postal art shows coming up—do write for more info, as I've not the room to go into detail...And **Revo's SURREAL ESTATES #4** exists in mind only—now that's surreal—but

#5, available just about now (\$1.50 to P.O. Box 23061, Knoxville, TN 37933-1061), takes the form of a cassette...Comeback congrats to **Ron Baker's DUCKBERG TIMES** "Newspaper of Alternative Media, Music & Arts" (P.O. Box 382, Alexandria, VA 22313), a (free?) sampling of stufh from all 'round our little press world (thanks for the plug, Ron!), which will go monthly starting 1/86; and to **Denise Dee's** fantastic stream-of-consciousness **THE CLOSEST PENGUINS**, personal writing with style and simplicity and worth, which is out of danger and unfolded, and will be pubbing bimonthly from now on—join the goy for \$1 to 625A Natoma, San Francisco, CA 94103...The **COUCH POTATO GUIDE TO LIFE** (Better Living Through Television) is the latest Tuber book, TV Guide-sized and available for \$5.95 to P.O. Box 249, Dixon, CA 95620...Subg Rev. **Vinnie Bartilucci** (45 Newburgh St., Elmont, NY 11003) cranks out **NOTMEMO** 45 rants and pamphlets from the **FKBBSHOWaPS** (Finest Kind Bargain Basement Salvation House of Worship and Pro Shop) like veritable **Hellfire!**, so send him a couple bucks and **HEAL** your **MAILBOX**...Unfortunately, the central **CHURCH OF THE SUBGENIUS** is not doing as well, with sacred scribe **Ivan Stang** having **NO SLACK**, and if you must know the whole sordid story he's sent out **Sacred Formletters** with Subg Pamphlet #2 ("ETERNAL SALVATION—OR TRIPLE YOUR MONEY BACK") from P.O. Box 140306, Dallas, TX 75214-0306, Praise "Bob"!!...**Roldo** & (good) co. at **FreeKluck** have produced **SNAFU #5**, a sure bet even if you're not a **Discordian**, and only \$2 from 1232 Downing St., Winnipeg, Man. R3E 2R7 CANADA to blowdry your mind...Another jam has come together at **Dolphin-Moon Press** (P.O. Box 22262, Baltimore, MD 21203) in **GUEST CHECK COMIX** (\$3.50) and **PIPE CONFIRMATION** (\$1.50)—tell **Margot Insley** I sentcha...The latest **NANCY'S MAGAZINE** bills itself as the "Mood Issue," and where else can one find a lengthy history of polyester, recipes, poetry and short stories, book reviews and even "Nose Caps"? Thrilling diversity, worth much more than the \$1 asking price to **Nancy Kangas**, 2269 Market St. Box 241, San Francisco, CA 94114...THE **BLOTTER** is also much more than "just another little magazine." **C.F. Kennedy's** successor to **BIBLIOPANTASIAC** is imbued with the high literary quality for which he's come to be known. Issue #2 is out already (which leads me to believe **C.F.**'s back on a regular schedule), and only has one gratuitous nude woman (in the centerfold story, natch). Canadians get a price break too, as they only need send a 34¢ Can. stamp, as opposed to \$1 from us in the US, to 233 Woodbine Ave., Toronto, Ont. M4L 3P3 CANADA...**"Page Three"** of the one-sheet **WEST VIRGINIA SURF REPORT** sheds light on young **Tom Edison**, a search for an old friend and selling secrets to the Soviets—many laughs for a mere **SASE** to **Jeff**, now at 3858C West Ave., Greensboro, NC 27407...On the other hand, **D.O.V.E.'s** third issue sinks into the quagmire of teenaged angst, and is recommended for only the terminally depressed or suicidal. C'mon, **P. Vinyl** and folk, lighten up. I'm sure there's still lots of quality to come from these well-meaning punks at P.O. Box 4-1698, Anchorage, AK 99509...On a more positive note, the struggle for peace through consciousness-raising and guerilla theatre continues, as reported in the latest **NO BUSINESS AS USUAL** news. **NBAU's** motto still strikes me as dumb (it's far from catchy and doesn't even rhyme, grating on the ears with awkwardness), but their hearts and heads are in the right places. For more info, write them at 3309 1/2 Million St. #127, San Francisco, CA 94110...And the most famous East Coast politicos, the **Yippies**, look at **Jerry Rubin** **Then & Now**, **Reagan's Nazi** ties, **Guatemala**, **Jamaica**, **porn vs. censorship** and more in the latest **OVERTHROW!**, still \$1 to P.O. Box 382, Canal St. Station, New York, NY 10013...And now that we've broken the **Fan Noose Verbosity Record** (I can't believe I read the whole thing!), we finally come to the "regulars": **BABUSHKIN'S DIGEST** V.1, #11—**L.D. Babushkin**, P.O. Box 128, Rosendale, NY 12472 (irreverent creative zine; **FREE** but send **SASE**); **FACTSHEET FIVE** #16—**Mike Gunderloy**, 41 Lawrence St., Medford, MA 02155 (best "journal of cross-pollination" around!; a bargain at \$2); **GOOD DAY SUNSHINE** #28—**Charles F. Rosenay III**, 397 Edgewood Ave., New Haven, CT 06511 (**Beatles**; \$2); **JET LAG** #59—**Steve Pick/Jo Williams**, 8419 Hall's Ferry Rd., St. Louis, MO 63147 (St. Lou music scene; \$1); **META-SCOOP** V. 2, #511, 12—**Barbara Sowell/Deb Armstrong**, 1004 Live Oak Lane, Arlington, TX 76012 (New Age journal; \$10/year); **MONKEES/BOYCE & HART PHOTO FAN CLUB** #s 61, 62—**Jodi Hammrich**, 508 8th St. NE #4, Watertown, SD 57201 (**NBAU**; 50¢ + **SASE**); **THE MONTHLY INDEPENDENT TRIBUNE** **TIMES JOURNAL POST GAZETTE NEWS CHRONICLE BULLETIN** #s 35, 36—**T.S. Child**, 2510 Bancroft Way #207, Berkeley, CA 94704 (the best little 8-page creative zine going; **FREE** but send at least an **SASE**, **T.S.** and **Denver** deserve it!); **SOUTHERN LIBERTARIAN MESSENGER** V.XIII, #7—**John T. Harillee**, Rt. 10 Box 52A, Florence, SC 29501 (libertarian, lots this ish re porn vs. censorship; **SASE** I guess); **UTNE READER** #13—P.O. Box 1974, Marion, OH 43305 (alternative press digest; **IJ** excerpt on pp. 66-67 in the "Women & Humor" section; \$4 and thanks again, folks!). When—I need a vacation. See you in the funny papers!

BACKWARDS HALF MOONS
by **Stacey Sollfrey**
he steps on my foot
slicing me out of the space between me and
my clothes

lifting me over myself
like one of those space age bottle yum
commercials
overextending his ultimate flavor
till it hits me like a medicine ball
giving me something to hold onto
so that no matter where he steps
I can always feel myself backing into
the point where the tip of reduction
can meet everything else

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Inside 17 Staffers

Good news and bad news, as seems the usual: Tuli Kupferberg has not responded to numerous requests for an autobio or even a birthdate (or even an acknowledgement of existence), so not having fulfilled the bare minimum, I'm afraid he cannot be counted as a staffer (tho I'll still feature his cartoons within, at least for the next issue or so). However, Larry Oberc, whose work has graced these pages for oh, about a year now, has joined up. So here's his autobio, along with that of J.P. Morgan, which got misplaced last time:

JOHN P. MORGAN

185 Seabreeze Ave., #4
E. Keansburg, NJ 07734
11-6-57

As a child, John had ready access to the delights of the world-famous Keansburg Boardwalk, doubtless an important factor in forming his astute world-view. After escaping

from an evil dungeon called Keansburg High School, our hero made his way to the canyons of New York City, where he attended Parsons School of Design. Three years of vile cafeteria food later, John crept out into the world with his portfolio and met with such fame and success that he felt compelled to take on a long line of menial, low-paying factory jobs in order to retain his humility. John was also reputed to have been in contact with extraterrestrial aliens, but the aliens told the newspapers and nobody believed them and it affected their credit rating and everything.

Man, it's like this:

born: September 27, 19855

education: yep, twice

goals: I never really wanted to be much of anything. So far I've been successful.

a day in the life: 6AM: wake up, usually hung-over

8:30AM: arrive at work, become a reference librarian

12 Noon: usually wandering through bookstore at Harvard Square

8PM: begin a notorious evening of beer drinking

12 Midnight: usually passed out

question: Whatever happened to all of the good-looking hippy girls? Let me know.

Well, Larry, taking "good-looking" as a rather subjective term and therefore discounting it, as far as I know all the hippy 'girls' turned into women and are here! Right, gals? Welcome to our new staffers!

LAWRENCE W.G. OBERC

58 Anderson St., #1

Boston, MA 02114

9-27-55

WHIZITS by Elaine in "I HATE WINTER" (w/ apologies to C. Schultz)

I've got on two pair of socks, jeans, leg warmers, a shirt and Whozicart...



C. 12/27/85 The Elaine Enterprises

...a scarf, a hat, earmuffs, and Solid State Boots!



I'm all set for winter. There's only one problem -



©

I can't move!



©



4



DIARY of The ROCK FIEND

by Anni Ackner

SCHTICKS AND STONES

One of the major problems with being a witty, acerbic, sophisticated commentator on the American scene—aside from the occasional SIXTY MINUTES investigative team knocking on one's door at inappropriate hours and all those invitations from the White House, I mean—is that, periodically (and rather more frequently than one would wish), one finds that one has dug oneself into a fairly sizeable hole. That is to say, I've been writing for this august publication for a good number of years now (or a mediocre number of years, depending on your point of view) and, because of this, as far as The Season to Be Jolly goes, I've just about run out. The trouble is that, at this time of year, when one is a witty, acerbic, sophisticated commentator on the American scene, one is expected to air one's views, for good or ill, on the Holidays but, thanks to my long association with INSIDE JOKE, my views on this particular topic have already been so thoroughly aired as to have passed into the realm of Public Record, like findings of the Surgeon General, and Harvey Fierstein's sex life. If you've been paying attention (and I hope, for your sake, that you have. Some of this stuff has been incorporated into the New York State Civil Service exam), you know how I feel about Christmas, Chanukah and New Year's Eve every bit as well as I do, and rather better than my mother does. There is simply nothing further to say on the matter.

And yet, because it is the time of year that it is, and because I am as programmed as the next witty, acerbic, etc. to respond to the responsibilities of the profession, no matter how hard I try, no other idea I've had for a column seems to suit this month (that my ideas for columns may never seem to suit is a topic for debate, preferably one to take place sometime during Ethiopia's next flood season. In Ethiopia). Despite my best efforts, all I have been able to come up with over the last several weeks are half-ideas, bad ideas, snippets, bits, pieces, and tiny little notions that are barely fit for parentheticals, let alone entire, overwritten columns. It's not an admission I really care to make—I do have a reputation to maintain, after all, however seedy it may be—but there it is, in all its shamefulness.

Just to show you how sorry a state it is to which this season has got me sunk (and, not incidentally, to fill up my allotted space, which was either going to be used for this or somebody named The Unknown Critic's retrospective of the first two years of PUNKY BREWSTER), let me give you a kind of random sample (considering the nature of most of this, it could scarcely be anything but random) of the stuff that has been floating around my mind for the last couple of weeks as I slaved to write a column that didn't automatically repeat everything I've said in my last two or three December/January columns. If this sounds tedious, and rather like a cheap shot to you, well, I can't actually say as I blame you, but, if you bear in mind that PUNKY BREWSTER stars a little sprout with the antic handle of Soleil Moon Frye, who behaves accordingly, it will all be that much easier to tolerate. And so, having wasted as much time and space as is humanly possible, I now unavoidably present:

A LITTLE KITCHEN MIDDEN OF BITS THAT WILL
NOT MAKE 11 COLUMNS, OR
DROWNING IN THE STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

As much as I feel I've exhausted the topic of Christmas, it occurs to me that there is one fact of it I have somehow neglected to mention, and that is the yearly spectacle of the office party grab-bag. As nearly as I can figure it, the office party grab-bag was invented as an attempt to avoid the embarrassment of some people receiving unsuitable gifts from their co-workers while others did not by replacing it with the embarrassment of everyone receiving one unsuitable gift from a co-worker who, for reasons far too obvious to need enumeration, usually remains anonymous (and, if he or she is really smart, locked in the little middle managers' room). This custom persists year after year, in office after office, despite the protests of people who truly do feel that they would rather receive coal in their stockings than another liquor dispenser in the shape of a small male child relieving himself, but this year, in my particular office, it has been given the added filipp of a requirement that all gifts purchased must be "comical." In my dazed state (which is the only state I can summon while working for 24 men, none of whom knows how to dial a telephone), my first thought was something along the lines of a collection of the essays of James Thurber, though more sober reflection indicates that, given this crowd, I might do better with JOKES FROM THE JOHN. What bothers me most of all, however, is not so much what I'm going to be forced to give as what I'm going to be forced to get. Again, given this crowd, I know beyond the shadow of any doubt that somewhere in that grab-bag there is going to be a three-foot rubber penis and, more than that, I am going to be the one who is going to get it. This will not be due to any malicious intent on the part of the 24 men (or even the six harassed women who scuttle about the office at irregular intervals trying to avoid photocopying things), but simply the fact that items like three-foot rubber penises have always been neurotically attached to me. Honestly, if there's a three-foot rubber penis anywhere within a five-mile radius, there's a better than even chance that it will end up in my possession before the evening is out. Some people have mice; I have three-foot rubber penises.

Well, actually, there is one other thing about Christmas. I've developed a real antipathy over the years for those civic and charitable organizations that send worthy members of their organizations

out into places like Penn Station and the Port Authority during rush hours to entertain the commuters with Christmas carols on their way home. Now, I like Christmas carols about as much as the next person (with the criteria that they be sung by actual human beings and not chipmunks or doggies or Bruce Springsteen), and I don't really mind that these civic and charitable organizations seem to choose their carolers on the basis of willingness, volume and manic enthusiasm rather than any innate ability to carry a tune, but somehow, while fighting my way through a crowd of people who are labouring under the delusion that if they don't get onto this particular 166 bus at this particular moment an evil spell will descend upon them, forcing them to remain trapped in midtown Manhattan forevermore, the sound of thirty-five members of the Mothers Against Drunk Driving Choir struggling valiantly through "Good King Wenceslas" is enough to make me wish for the immediate re-emergence of Bernhard Goetz.

Since a Christmas column obviously isn't going to make it this year, I've been scanning the headlines looking for inspiration (which normally works about as well as scanning the western side of Greenwich Village for heterosexuals) and, while I didn't find any, I did make a startling discovery concerning the murder of "Big Paul" Castellano. As a matter of fact, it strikes me that what I have discovered is so patently obvious that I'm surprised no one else seems to have picked up on it but, public-spirited citizen that I am, I'm more than willing to share it with our law enforcement officials. To be blunt, I know who ordered the assassination of the Mafia chieftain. It was the headline writers at the NEW YORK POST, and I think the F.B.I. ought to begin investigating them immediately.

The only other thing that struck me in the newspapers over the last couple of weeks was all this talk about tax reform and balancing the budget by 1991. For a short while I considered doing something along the lines of "Anni Ackner's Tax Reform and Budget-Balancing Bill," which would give large tax breaks to any Occidental who swore not to inflict home-cooked sushi on a hapless dinner party while imposing graduated taxes of 10% of the income and up to be levied on every cute dog owned by a duly elected public official, but I gave up the idea when it was very gently pointed out to me, by several former friends of mine, that anyone who thought Graham Rudman was a synthesizer band from England was perhaps not the best person qualified to write such a piece. This lack of knowledge doesn't appear to have stopped any of the people in Washington, but I decided to bow out anyway, on the grounds that, say, Tip O'Neill wasn't coming around telling me how to write for IJ. On the other hand, given the way things are going, I might be better off if he had.

As a final act of desperation, I spent some time thumbing through PEOPLE Magazine's annual "25 Most Intriguing People of the Year" issue which, in case you ever happen to be in this position, I can recommend quite highly as a time-killer in the dentist's office, if only because it lets you know, irrefutably, that there's an entire magazine staff full of people who are in a more uncomfortable and unnerving condition than you are yourself. PEOPLE has always had a fairly broad definition of the word "intriguing" anyway, and this year's crop, to my admittedly naive eyes, seems especially frolicsome. I suppose, if you like pandering sleaze, you could make a case for Rupert Murdoch's being "intriguing," and certainly the man who discovered Joseph Mengele's bones has a more, er, unique job than the majority of the rest of us (I'd love to know what he got out of his office grab-bag). Princess Diana does nothing for me one way or the other, but if you're that sort of person I expect she's intriguing enough, and I'm intrigued by the fact that someone thinks there's anything at all left to say about Rock Hudson, but what really got under my skin this time around was the inclusion of Michael J. Fox. Of course, before anyone goes writing me letters, I ought to point out that I have nothing against Michael J. Fox—he's a cute little guy and he did a competent job playing a suitable role in a clever movie and, truly, I wish him all the luck in the world and hope he gets to shave real soon now—it's just his labelling as "intriguing" that rather disturbs me or, more accurately, I'm disturbed by the idea that people all over the country apparently do find him to be so. Personally, I want to know who these people are, just for safety's sake. Has anyone thought to do a poll on why people find Michael J. Fox intriguing? Has anyone even searched these people out? Taken names? Administered psychiatric tests? Look at it this way—given the state of the country today, and the voting process, one of these fine Novembers you could wake up and discover that someone who thinks Michael J. Fox is intriguing has just been elected to the highest office in the land, and then what are you going to do? What is he or she going to do when confronted with Mohamar Khaddafi, who really is a smidge too intriguing to be easily tolerated? I mean, it's enough to send a thinking person skin-diving in a bowl of egg nog. I mean, really.

Having now seen precisely the way it is with me at this moment in time, I'm sure you're all just as pleased as I am that by next issue the Christmas season will have passed, and I can get back to my regular dollops of cutting prose, pithy wit and mad mad forays into the nether regions of whimsy. With this in mind, my Yuletide gift to you this year is to get out of this particular column before I do any more irreparable damage to my reputation. Do say you like it and it's just what you wanted.

And to all a good night.

QUANTUM COURTESY BY MILDRED NEPTUNE

"It is all too easy to preach 'go with the flow.' The main problem is identifying what the flow is, here and now." - John C. Lilly
"Hysteria is the appropriate response to modern life."

- George Benedict

"Civilisation is a religion."

- David Byrne

Such a strange assortment of queries this month—I feel quite overwhelmed (and over whelped) by some of your questions and suggestions—Miz Scarlet, I don't know nothin' bouth birthin' babies! But I will endeavor to answer all as honestly and semi-humourously—even if I really don't feel like it.

Dear Miss Neptune—

I would like to know what your political philosophy and/or affiliation is.

Thanks,

Holly Gram
Silly Putty Valley, California

Dear Holly,

I am a member of the Nag-Gnostic sect. We are a cheerfully cynical, calmly hysterical karass of sardonic viragos. Our philosophy is very complicated, unnecessarily obtuse and difficult—mainly to keep out dillettantes and other bacteria. But essentially, I believe that if you dislike or fear something, study it. If you still dislike and fear it, bitch about it. If that doesn't work, get off your ass and change—either IT or YOUR ATTITUDE. We humans are essentially shrill and reactionary types who clamor for justice without ever really knowing what justice is. That is why governments were invented. All governments are parental structures that humans can use to depend on and blame their dependence on, pennecontemporaneously. The wonder of politics, the magick therein, is the general belief that we choose our structures and our "leaders." If I believed this, I might have a political stance. But, as it is, I have only voted a very few times and did that for the thrill of punching a metal object through cardboard. I was clean out of bubble pack insulation and had to do SOMETHING. Who did I vote for? Never you mind. Voting is bullshit, but it is sacrosanct, private bullshit. I will probably never vote again as I have laid in a good supply of bubble pack for the years ahead. As God is my witness! I have no political affiliation, because my social activities are sufficiently decadent to get me in trouble with the FBI, CIA and local gendarmes. I don't need a bad political rep as I compensate for it in other, more entertaining ways. Do I think it matters who is president or premier or prime minister? Only for a little while. And why do all those leader type jobs start with the letter "P"? Could it stand for Patriarchy? Thank you for asking. Don't do it again. Ever.

Dear Mildred,

How can you ever be really really sure that someone else really really loves you?

I really really need to know.

Love,

Nikki Brink
Lincoln, Nebraska

Dear Nikki,

You can't. In fact, you can never be really really sure if YOU love somebody else, really really and truly, cross my heart and hope to drop the pilot. There are, however, several "clues" that might lead you to either faith or doubt. Some of them are: Phone number and address—a person who really really loves you will usually be quite generous with this information and will hope that you will use it to "keep in touch" as the Hallmark saying goes. A person who declares their love, yet refuses to divulge their place of residence or vocation, and phone numbers thereof, should be regarded with a suspicious eyeball. Remembering your name—Generally speaking, a person who loves you will remember your name and will actually use it when speaking to you. My mother always told me to never trust people who don't interject their phrases with my name. This only applies if they are speaking to me at the time, of course. Inquiries about you—A person who really loves you will inquire after your well-being, your activities and your opinions.

These are three of the more basic signs that someone loves you. It is very difficult because people who don't love you may also volunteer their address and phone numbers, use your name in conversation and

ask, "How Are You?"

Just because they don't say "I love you" doesn't mean they don't. But in general, it is safe to assume that a person who insists he or she loves you and does not follow through on the three big deals listed above is lying or, at the most, self-deluded. Also, people who love you usually do not threaten to cause you harm, desert you in your time of need or make caustic remarks about your appearance.

Another way to tell if someone "really really loves" you (what a charming way you have of putting things) is to have them followed by detectives, questioned by friends and compatriots, and finally torture them for the truth. This is only for the very insecure and is not recommended if the doubttee is a difficult or temperamental type. Where they once might have loved you, torture will have erased all wisps of their affection. My best advice is that people are best taken at face value until proven otherwise. Then you can beat the shit out of them.

Dear Miss Neptune—

I know you think, or wish, to be immortal, yet like anyone else, you will surely die. My question is—How do you prefer to die?

Very Truly Yours,

Johnnie Hall
Iowa

Dear Johnnie, you little snool—

I will not die, not me, not ever—But when I do, I hope to die of a brain fever brought on by too much sex!

Dear Miss Neptune,

I watched a wonderful show on PBS called "The Creation of the Universe." In it, the guy said that the BIG question was, "Why is there something instead of nothing?" I wonder if YOU, in your wisdom, might have a p.o.v. on this?

Sincerely,

Hugh B. Larfing

Dear Hugh,

Yes, of course I have a p.o.v. about why there is something instead of nothing, but it's pretty goddamn unnerving. I am not sure that there is something instead of nothing. Since we don't know what nothing IS, not really—not scientifically—although we do perceive it emotionally (as in the statement, "I feel nothing."), I am not so sure that all this stuff, all this "something" which we call the world might not be nothing. If indeed solidity is an illusion created by the electromagnetic field around it, and if that electromagnetic field is invisible, how do we know there is anything there at all? No, I don't mean to suggest that life is "a dream" or that what we see are illusions—or even that we are hypnotising ourselves into seeing things. But what if something is nothing, at least compared to What Else Might Exist??? What I hate most about my point of view on this subject is that it reduces me to an idiotic state where I wound as if I don't know what the hell I'm talking about. But I DO. It's something that needs to be understood viscerally. We don't know what nothing is, so this could be it. My friend, R-----, says that we don't know what death is either, so this could be it. And when you die you actually get born. But see, life is full of tricks like this—intellectual shadowboxes to hide in. It is fun to play with these things, but bear in mind, it won't protect you from the wind chill in a blizzard or fill your belly when you're hungry. Although these things are nothing, really, compared with the something I know. The great problem is that being human, just surviving, is work. Maybe there is what might be called Another Something. This is this something, then there is another. This is little something, then there is big something. WHY is there something instead of nothing, IF there is something instead of nothing? I don't know—and I'm not sure I want to know, if there is a reason. Probably there are oodles of reasons. Maybe everything is the same thing, in different forms. Maybe everything is music. To deaf people, silence would be music. I have a suspicion that the Creator of the Universe had a very difficult childhood, and this is just his/her way of compensating for it.

Dear Miss Neptune,

That wasn't a very funny answer and I think you are getting too deep and profound and talking shit about the universe when you should be helping people with their problems. Whaddaya think of that, wise-guy?

Huh?

Over your shoulder.

Dear Huh,

At the core of the universe, at the center of the Z particle that started it all, is a glowing white light—a fuzzy, dancing sphere of Absolute Hilarity. I don't need to worry about being funny—or anything else, as long as that white light emanates its energy—and I have no concerns about that, because hilarity is the only perpetual motion machine. Put that in your snipe and poke it.

That's it for this time, kids. Holiday cheer should have passed most of us safely by now. For the new year, I should like to wish all of you—as the fine individuals that I know you are—and collectively, as the evolved and happily mutated karass that I know you are—the following Good Things That Life Has To Offer. They are, in no order, warmth when it's cold, coolth when it's hot, food when you're hungry, good drugs when you're not, sex when you're horny, sleep when you're tired, whites when you're exhausted, reds when you're too wired, self-esteem and respect, blind adoration from your peers, health, immortality and freedom from your fears.

Remember, no matter how shitty and mean and loathsome this world and its people can and will be, there are always comforts to be sought—bad television shows to mock, irritating celebrities to skewer, social conventions to rip to shreds and so forth.

To paraphrase Oscar Wilde, "Some of us are standing in the gutter, but we're looking at the stars...and some of us are kneeling in the gutter or lying face down in the gutter, not even bothering to get up to look at Halley's Comet because—well, we know that, with our luck, we will still be here when it comes around again."

The theme for 1986 will be—"LESS IS NONE."

**IF EITHER PARTY "WINS" DON'T WE ALL LOSE
INCLUDING THE REST OF THE WORLD?**
Aren't we all in the red camp for supporting
winnerless wars, inflationary fixed wages, blue
collar work inequity and no afterlife?
Is it such a disgrace to do your share of the important
tasks in this world? To end red rule send SASE to
unemployment and free ride ending
EVEN AGE WORK FORCE
Box 2243 — YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO, 44504

ORANGE DOORS

Anthea Trepchine

Last time: Prudence and Bunny, after much squabbling and fighting, managed to extricate themselves from the dreaded hotel and beat it out onto the streets towards Yona's place which they had just reached when we lit out for parts unknown (do you know your parts? there'll be a quiz next week...). It is not true, however, that Halley's Comet had just crashed into the city releasing swarms of evil mutated wombats who had elected Steve Severin to be the next Pope and proceeded to dismantle the entire military industrial complex. But don't you wish it were?

"Oh hi Bunny." Yona, for who else would it be, got down off the sofa and went over to Bunny and kissed him on the cheeks. Then she hugged Prudence and said how nice it was they could both come and asked if they were hungry or thirsty or anything.

Prudence was definitely all of those but she could also tell that something was wrong. This didn't look anything like a party. Well, okay, there was lots of food on the big table over by the windows, and a big punch bowl filled with something purple that had ice and flowers floating in it. But no one was enjoying any of this party-ness. There was not a reveler to be seen. Just the three of them. And now Bunny and Yona were sitting on the floor talking very soft and she had her arm around his shoulders and it looked like he might be crying. Prudence didn't know what to do so she went over and investigated the big punch bowl. She was pleased to discover it was grape juice, or at least that it had grape juice in it. So she took one of the big clay cups with the faces on them and filled it and sat on the window-sill looking down into the park that was nearby, drinking her punch and eating a big sandwich she'd found on the other table, which she couldn't identify but liked anyway (the sandwich that is, although she didn't mind the table--she just wouldn't have wanted to eat it for lunch).

Yona came over and sat down by Prudence. "I'm real sorry about all this. I'm sure it's not quite the day you'd planned."

"Oh it hasn't been that for hours," said Prudence between bites of her sandwich. Yona, at least, seemed to be cheering up a bit. Bunny was lying on the floor staring at the carpet and scratching his head. Prudence had never been able to tell whether that meant he was sad or was trying to think up some brilliant plan. "And, party or not, this is still a lot more fun than sitting around watching Kimmy paint her toenails pink." Prudence and Yona then went off on a long talk about toenails and whether one should paint them (Yona favored spray paint) and how silly some people were, all of which really had nothing to do with why Bunny suddenly leapt up and ran over to them talking so fast that neither could make out a word he was saying.

Prudence gave him some of her punch and when he calmed down a bit he started speaking again, this time at a speed that they could deal with. But, still, nothing he said made any sense at all, or at least much less than usual.

"Bunny, you're not making any sense at all," said Prudence, who felt it was a good thing to point out these sorts of social gaffes.

Yona gave Bunny a big cup of punch and told him to calm down while she explained everything. "I wasn't going to involve you in this. It's not your concern really. But, I guess there's not much choice now. Although I s'pose you could just leave. Then again..."

"Oh tell her already," said Bunny looking up grumpily from his cup, feeling a trifle upset at losing center-stage, even if it was to a friend. "There's nothing to be embarrassed about. Prudence understands all about stupidity and other important things like that."

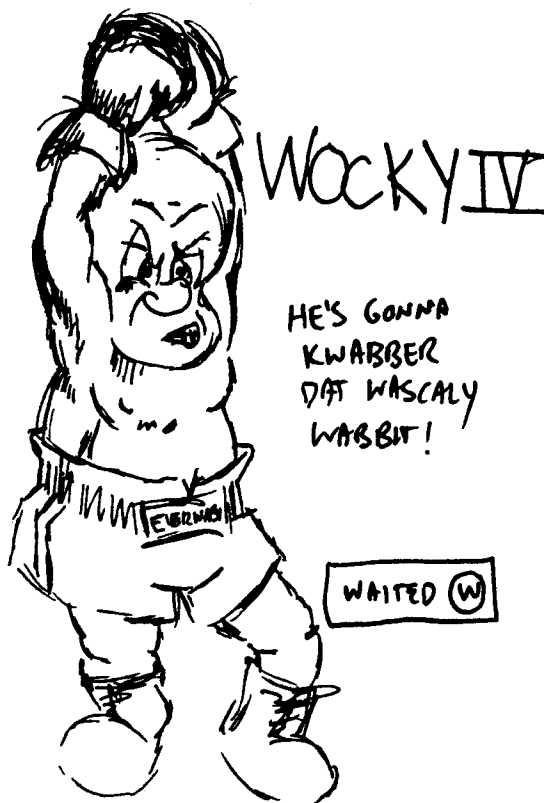
Prudence wasn't sure she liked that last comment but decided to let it pass so Yona would start telling the story, then noticed that she already had.

"...back to the days when we were in the store together. Brooke was working in the store as the walking Christmas tree. He was always real mean to us, throwing us around and doing favors for the Cabbage Patch kids (who were totally from obnoxious) and saying nasty things about us when we weren't looking. But he lost his job when he tried to carve up our pal Biff-the-Cow into little plushy hamburgers.

"So that was that. Or so we thought, and who could blame us? But I was sitting here this morning waiting for the guests to arrive and no one had shown up. Then I noticed that the phones weren't working. So I couldn't even call and check on all the people who hadn't shown. I tried to amuse myself for a while by imagining all sorts of things that might have happened but none of them seemed too likely, not even that my whole room had been swallowed by a rogue dragon who'd gotten tired of hiding in trees.

"I'd just gotten up from the couch and checked out the window to see if there was a flying Whoonitais on the front porch keeping people away (but there wasn't) and put on my new Ray-bans which I'd gotten as a present from Steffi, my room-mate (she's off on vacation now but she said it would be okay if I had a little party--well, she never said I couldn't), when the bell rings. I ran over to the door, sure that it was all my friends waiting to surprise me. But all I saw when I opened it was Brooke, slumped against the doorframe, grinning like an idiot.

"He was slumped against the doorframe, clutching a half-empty bottle of gin, obviously crooked and wearing old army fatigues and an orange bathrobe. 'No one's comin ta yer goddamn party. I stole alla invitations.' I demanded that he explain himself and he



whipped out all these plans and diagrams for this mailbox-shaped suit he'd built. So not only was he drunk, he was also out of his mind nuts. Just what I needed, right?

"Brooke was mumbling something about how he was gonna get us all, one by one, and ship us off to the cabbage patch. That'd show us, he said. Only thing I could figure it would show us is how fast we could all lose our collective lunches. But I was getting a trifle worried that no one else would show up and this nutbar would sit around my room all afternoon and eat all my food and stain the carpet. Then I remembered that your invitation had been hand-delivered by Steffi and I got worried that you would come and that we'd all be shipped off to the cabbage patch and I knew you'd never let me live that down.

"But before any of this could happen Brooke just reached down and grabbed my glasses and took off. It was ridiculous. He was so slow. If I'd jumped right I could've knocked him down and got the shades back right there. But I was so stunned all I could do was sit down on the rug and start crying. I could hear him going up the stairs laughing at me and that just made it worse. At some point I crawled over to the sofa and cried there for a while. Then I just got mad and I didn't know whether to laugh or cry or throw up or what. And then you guys got here and that's where we are."

Prudence was stunned, didn't know what to say. She reached into the pocket of her cords to make sure her Jabba-the-Hutt shades were still there. Pleased to discover that they were, she turned to Yona and gave her a kiss on the forehead.

"Oh enough of this already. We've got planning to do. We've got to find this bum and get those glasses back." Bunny was feeling in a pretty take-charge kind of mood. He had a plan and he just knew that this, this at last, was the adventure he'd been waiting for. "First thing we do is stock in supplies for a long expedition. Then we hit the libraries and get books on how to build things. See, I figure that we can lure Brooke out into the open with a giant Cabbage Patch kid..."

He stopped there for he realized that Prudence and Yona, who had been chuckling softly all through his speech, had now commenced to hysterical laughter and had fallen over onto the floor. They were both rolling their eyes and pounding on the carpet. Bunny was glad to see Yona happy again although he'd rather it weren't at his expense.

"Well, I'm glad somebody's having fun. But getting back to my plan..."

"Oh do be quiet Bunny, I'm trying to think," said Prudence who knew there was an easy answer somewhere nearby, although she hoped it wasn't in the three-bean salad. "I know, we need the tel'phone book." It had occurred to Prudence that Brooke might live nearby (mailbox suits being notoriously non-mobile) and she knew that you could check on where people lived by using a phone book.

"See, there he is. 'Partment 5D, right in this very building. Let's go."

Bunny felt that they should take at least a week to scout out the approaches and formulate brilliant strategies. Prudence was having none of that. "If we leave you in charge," she said, "we'll never get anything done."

to be continued

Halftime View *by Susan Packie*

Eerie lights flickered across the ceiling of the dark room. Mme. Inconnue caressed the air surrounding the crystal ball with her long, bony fingers, her eyes tightly closed, her maroon lips moving slightly as if she were speaking to some unseen entity.

Finally she spoke to her hushed audience of reporters and politicians. "It is all becoming clear. The future is falling into place in front of my eyes. The crystal ball is yielding up its secrets."

"Tell us what the President's second term of office holds in store for us," a reporter eagerly requested.

She grimaced. "I see an elderly man with two hearing aids and an artificial heart paddling the bottoms of criminals, welfare cheats, and drug abusers. He is threatening to send them to bed without supper."

"I see the disabled being forced to pick up garbage in parks and subways to remain eligible for their Social Security checks."

"Yes, yes. We assumed that. But what about appointments? Who will take Secretary of State Shultz's job, now that he is Ambassador to El Salvador? Who will be Vice President, now that Bush is bushed?"

"I see Jesse Jackson traveling in Air Force One all over the world, conferring with heads of state, arranging for the release of prisoners, reopening talks with the PLO, arranging for the annexation of Israel by Jordan."

"I see another Jackson attending funerals and fund-raising dinners. It is...Michael Jackson!"

"The Vice President is Michael Jackson?"

"Would I lie to you?"

"What about the President's family?"

"I see Patti Davis and Maureen and Ron Reagan climbing up snow drifts in Alaska. I think they have been exiled. I see Nancy Reagan giving birth in a gesture of contempt for pro-abortionists. The baby is an imbecile."

"Is that all?"

"No. I see the President throwing away his hearing aids, muttering that he never understood what people were saying, anyway."

"Is there nothing good in sight?"

"Of course there is. 1988 is just around the corner. Maybe."

OVERHEARD BEFORE PASSING

(A TRUE LIFE ADVENTURE) *by Raldo*

"The essence of sleight of hand is distraction and misdirection. If someone can be convinced that he has, through his own perspicacity, divined your hidden purpose, he will not look further." —Page from Capt. Strobe's Notebook

("Cities of the Red Night" by William S. Burroughs)

The guy kept talking but I was finding it hard to tune into the actual words. I was fascinated watching his hands, which he didn't move often, but the sheer size of them held my attention.

Now anything that looked so much like ten kailbasas poking out of loaves of pumpernickel bread and covered with bits of old bearskin with tufts of thick hair clinging to the rough leather could move so gracefully was amazing, and when he wrapped one of those mitts around his beer glass it was obvious that years of practice at controlling the inherent strength kept him from crushing anything that found itself in that grip.

Eventually, though, I shifted my attention not to his words directly but to his voice.

It rolled slowly out of his mouth, past the hirsute adornment of beard and moustache like a 78 rpm recording of heavy machinery played at 45, growling and rumbling almost hypnotically. I found myself contemplating what the voice could do with some of the old blues tunes I used to play. It's hard to pick out individual words with that kind of voice, but with a bit of work, I managed.

"At the end of World War II, the guys who actually controlled international politics got to noticing that now Atomic weapons were part of the Game, the actuality of war was gonna be a bit of a problem for keeping the average citizen in line, at least as far as large scale, global conflicts were concerned. Now back then, Presidents and Prime Ministers and such were allowed to believe they actually were

making decisions and running things...Now, of course, they're satisfied with the semblance of Power and, since Nixon anyway, they've been content to take orders like everyone else. Back then, tho', they still got their directions through "advisors" that they thought were working for them. Well, the advice sent along was that it would be "for the best" if the East and West set up a mutual enmity to keep up an ongoing threat that could be used to keep their respective people in the state of anxiety and fear that keeps them controllable. Now, that's not their only ploy, o' course...the cops see that crime never gets too low, and the Money department can always lay on the ol' Economic Repression if things really get out of hand, like they did in the Sixties, when folks hit on the idea of dropping out of the economic system altogether...ideas like "voluntary simplicity" can really toss a spanner into the economic control plan...it doesn't take Sherlock Holmes to figure anyone who can cause a recession can "cure" it and vice-versa. But a few thousand years of cultural imprinting aren't just erased in a decade and They didn't have much trouble with it. After all, They control the media, and They weren't troubled by Youthful Enthusiasm, so They could take their time. The difference between Alchemy and chemistry is Slow Heat, y'know. Oh, early on They put subtlety aside, like at Chicago, but busting heads on one side, and offering easy money on the other through Grants and such, was all part of their S.O.P., which is, after all, nothing more than running Both Sides Of The Coin and keeping everyone's attention away from the Edge."

"The Edge?" someone at the table asked. "What's 'the Edge'?"

"If the two Sides of the Coin are the Extremes, then the Edge is the balance between them...it's like you're offered "A" or "B" as choices and told from birth that that's freedom...and that Idea is constantly reinforced by the example of people who don't have that choice so that you feel "privileged" to have what's really an imposed limitation designed to keep you from ever considering "C" or "D". And if you do, of course, you risk social ostracism since most of society is programmed to be satisfied with the illusion of freedom..."

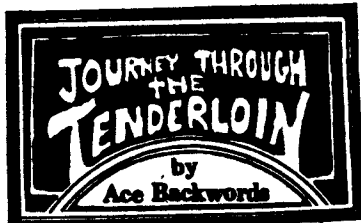
At this point, the pressure in my bladder from the several "Checkered Demons" (dark beer and Tequila) I'd consumed reached critical mass and I was forced to leave the table and risk the unsavoury public facilities. Of course I'd compounded the problem by delaying the inevitable, but I got back as quickly as possible.

Not quickly enough, though. The Mysterious Stranger had split.

I asked, naturally enough, but it came as small surprise that the jolly boozers had no idea who he was and were actually happy that he'd left so they could get back to discussing sports, unemployment, and how Bad Things Were All Over.

Me, I felt an overwhelming need to get home and horizontal, but before turning in for the night, I did pause briefly to put a round from my trusty Colt "Army" replica black-powder pistol through the screen of my television set...a little low and left of centre, but I wasn't feeling all that fussy.





CHAPTER 5—"SEARCHING FOR THE DREAM GIRL"

The last time I saw Charlene before she disappeared I warned her, "You don't know what you're getting into. You could regret this for the rest of your life. You know what you are? You're a prostitute!"

All she would say was, "I know, Chris, you can be a real jerk. I'm making \$500 a week. Where else is a 17-year-old girl like me gonna make that kind of money?"

I swear, sometimes girls can be so dumb. They don't know WHAT they're getting into! They don't even know what to do for their own good!!

I was all set to explain this to Charlene when that jerk Rick butted in and told me to get lost. Personally, I think this whole mess is his fault—Charlene getting messed up in pornography and everything.

I rented a little room in this flophouse, the fabulous Empress Hotel. What a dump. That place should have been condemned 20 years ago. But it was located in the Tenderloin District. Where all the strip clubs were. Charlene worked at one of those sleazy clubs. The problem was, I didn't know which one. I had to somehow find Charlene, and talk some sense into that dumbbell before she REALLY messed up her life.

Out on the streets it was pretty bad. San Francisco's fabulous Tenderloin District. What a zoo. Be sure to stop by, all you tourists of the depraved. It seemed like everybody hanging out on the streets was either a derelict, a prostitute, or a loud negro.

The first place I tried to get into was a joint called "Busty's T & A."

"GIRLS! GIRLS! GIRLS!" blared the sign. "TALK TO AN ACTUAL NUDE GIRL—25c"

I asked the cash register guy if Charlene was one of the girls, girls, girls. He told me to get lost if I didn't have any I.D. Isn't that a kick? Charlene's old enough to work in these dives, but I'm not old enough to pay to get in. I told the guy I didn't want to buy a ticket. I was just trying to locate a friend of mine who might be working in their crummy joint, and I was wondering if he'd be so kind as to give me any information regarding the whereabouts of my friend. She was 5 foot 8, with golden blonde hair, and long, long legs...

The guy said, "Kid, we got blondes. We got redheads. We got blackheads. But you don't got shit if you don't got I.D."

A most unreasonable fellow. I tried to make my position clear, but before I knew it I was surrounded by three menacing gorillas who persuaded me to take my search elsewhere.

Across the street was another girly club, "Dial-a-Doll." I thought I'd play it smart this time, so I went in undercover. I pulled my jacket collar up around my face and said in a real low masculine voice, "TICKET, PLEASE."

The cash register guy said, "How many tokens you want?"

I said, "Tokens? How many you got?"

"Huh?"

"I'll take 25c worth," I said.

"They're 25c apiece," he said.

"Right."

"You gotta buy at least \$2 worth of tokens to get in."

"Surely." I started fishing in my pockets for money, found a wadded up dollar bill, and a bunch of nickels, dimes and pennies. I accidentally spilled a lot of the pennies on the floor. You ever do that when you're trying to whip change out of the pockets of a tight pair of jeans? Finally I managed to count out \$2 on the glass counter, and the guy gave me eight tokens.

I lurked around the place for awhile...observing. The place was jammed with businessmen hustling from booth to booth, checking out the merchandise or getting more tokens. It became clear: You had the choice between watching X-rated movies or live girly shows. All in the privacy of your very own booth.

I nonchalantly slipped into a booth. I locked the door tight. It was dark and clammy in there, and smelled strongly of ammonia or some kind of liquid cleanser. I sat down on the seat—right onto something wet and sticky! YECHEH! I tried to wipe whatever it was onto the wall. An empty roll of toilet paper was hanging from the wall.

I took out my tokens, dropping half of them on the floor. They were rolling all over the place. Damn these tight jeans! I put a token in the slot. Nothing. Put in another. Nothing. This damn thing's a rip-off. I felt like smashing it. I put in another and the TV screen finally started lighting up. A beautiful woman was lying on a bed. But the sound was turned up full volume. She was moaning in ecstasy, supposedly, but it sounded more like she was shrieking in agony. High-pitched, piercing shrieks. I fumbled around frantically looking for the volume control, pressing all kinds of buttons and yanking all kinds of slots, but I couldn't turn down the horrible shrieking noises.

I stumbled out of the booth in a daze, my hands over my ears.

Everybody was staring at me. Or was that just my imagination? I staggered into another booth. It was dark and peaceful in there. I put a token in the slot. A curtain slowly lowered, revealing a glass panel. On the other side of the glass was a naked black girl sitting in another booth. She looked like a zoo animal in a cage. It was a small cage. More like a closet. The naked girl was holding a telephone. I noticed a phone in my booth so I picked it up.

"Hello there, honey," she croaked into the phone. "I'll do anything you say."

"Hello there," I said. "My name's Christopher. Christopher Nicholson. How you doing there in the booth?"

"I'm really hot for you," she said. The curtain started closing.

"Put in another token."

I put in another token and the curtain reopened. She was still lying there in the nude with the phone. It was like a candy machine—put a quarter in the slot and get the girl of your choice. Comes in a wide variety of flavors.

"What am I supposed to do?" I asked into the phone.

"Whatever you want," she said. "Most guys just want me to press my ass up to the window."

"Oh. Listen, have you seen a girl working around here? Golden blonde hair, long legs?"

"What's wrong with my legs, honey?"

I started to say something, but the curtain was closing. I was all out of tokens.

I first met Eugene McKean at the Turk Street Burlesque Theatre. What a dive that was. And what a most unpleasant chap he was. He deserved that place. The Turk Street Burlesque looked like it had been thrown together overnight. If you leaned on the walls, they looked like they would fall down. It was dirty and dusty, and the seats were falling apart. They were beat-up old seats like you'd find in the most beat-up old movie theatre.

On stage some girl would be showing off her body. The Eagles would be booming out of the sound system. And McKean would be stumbling around trying to find something to write about in his "column."

I use that word advisedly. I'm not sure if his alleged literary efforts could even be considered writing. But write he did. And he even got paid for it.

"Here's my latest column, kid," he said. He handed me a copy of the sleazy porno rag he worked for, THE SAN FRANCISCO LUST REVIEW. His column was called "Screw Loose." It was not very good. "But it pays the bills," he said.

"I can't believe you write this crap," I said.

"Bey, I was gonna be a great writer and an artist, but I ended up a hack pornographer. That's life, kid."

"That's YOUR life," I added.

"Don't get so uppity, kid. We'll see what you're doing when you're my age. I've been through enough of this Youth Generation crap to last a lifetime. You'll see. You'll sail out just like all the jerks from my generation did."

"Did anyone ever tell you you're a cynic?" I said.

"There's two kinds of people, kid. Cynics and idiots."

Like I said, a most disagreeable guy. I sat down in the back row and waited for the next dancer to come out. I had a hunch Charlene was working in this club.

"Still looking for your girly, huh kid?" asked McKean, sliding uninvited into the seat next to mine. He smelled of tobacco and some kind of whiskey. Knowing him, the cheap kind.

"What's it to you anyway?" I sneered. "You just think I'm a fool, so why should I tell you anything?"

"Because I think I've found your girly," he said.

"WHAT?"

"Yeah, now keep your shirt on. Don't cum in your pants or nothing."

"Where is she?"

"Well, let me just say, your epic struggle to find your True Love has genuinely touched my jaded old heart. Ever since you told me about your search for your girlfriend, I've been keeping my eyes open as I made the rounds through Sin City."

"You found her?"

"Yep. The girl of your dreams. You say she's young and blonde with long legs and looks about 18, right?"

"Yeah, that's her. Where is she?"

"I found her working over at Frenchy's Bookstore. C'mon, I'll introduce you."

We got up and made our way to the street. Frenchy's was about a block away. The whole block was filled with nothing but porno houses and sex shows. Derelicts on the street, prostitutes on every corner. The whole way over, that jerk McKean is singing, "Matchmaker, matchmaker, make me a match..."

We stormed into Frenchy's. Porn mags and "marital aids" were hanging everywhere. A few perverts were milling over the merchandise.

"Boneybuns? Boneybuns? Where are you?" called McKean. "True love is ca-a-alling..."

"Where is she?" I repeated, anxious as hell. "I don't see her."

"She's over there," he said, pointing to the wall. "The girl of your dreams."

He was pointing at one of those life-sized inflatable love dolls hanging from the wall—a frigging inflatable love doll! Her mouth was gaping open in an obscene O shape. I guess that's where you're supposed to stick your thing.

"There she is!" announced McKean. "The girl of your dreams. Honeybuns McSuckoff. With real, simulated blonde hair and life-like orifices with vibrating grip action. Better than the real thing. There's your dream girl. If you want dreams, that's what this place is all about."

I didn't even say anything. I just turned around and stormed out of there. I was so mad. It was just a big joke to that asshole.

"You're wasting your time, kid," he called out. "Go back home."

Boy, was I mad. I went stomping down those sick streets. I went stomping back to my hotel room and stomped back and forth in my room. I couldn't stop pacing back and forth. I was so mad. That jerk. That fool. Real love meant absolutely nothing to him. Women were just hunks of plastic. That was sick. This whole place was sick.

Then I remembered the porn paper he gave me. It was stuffed in my back pocket. I took it out. THE SAN FRANCISCO LUST REVIEW. Live sex

toilet paper, I thought. That's all his crap is good for. I was all set to rip that rag to shreds when I noticed the photos on the preceding page. It was a nude layout of a blonde girl with long legs. It was Charlene.

reviews. Hardcore action. Girls, girls, girls. I ripped through the pages. Nothing but photos of naked girls and stupid articles about sex. I opened it to his stupid column, "SCREW LOOSE" by Eugene McKean. That great writer. Big frigging deal. I'll use that for

(-to be continued-)

RETAIL CLERK COMIX (A TRUE STORY) by Steven F. Scharff



SUPERIOR MUTANTS!

Vengeance on the Pink Boys, Mediocreitins and normals who brought this crumbling technocracy is condoned by the anti-religion of the future. The Church of the SubGenius is an empire of

"unpredictables" on a rampage of strangeness. Indulge your abnormality! Insane priesthood ordination and weird-ass propaganda \$1.

P.O. Box 140306
Dallas, Texas 75214



YOSSARIAN
UNIVERSAL
News Service



ALL THE NEWS TO SAVE THE CITY

HOBOKEN, N. J. (YU) — Dozens more bodies have been found in the public library's Frank Sinatra Collection in what authorities are now calling the grisliest mass burial site thus far unearthed in the Western Hemisphere. Since the initial discovery two days ago of the ring-finger purportedly belonging to James T. "Jimmy" Hoffa, the labor-leader missing for 5 years, the remains of nearly one-quarter million people, mostly from poor Italian families, have been found. Police decline to speculate on a motive.

HOLLYWOOD (YU) — Talk-show host Johnny Carson was arrested outside a popular downtown restaurant last night for allegedly exposing himself to the usual crowd of non-paying customers.

According to several amused bystanders, Carson apparently drove his Bentley up onto the curb, stepped out, unzipped the front of his trousers and mumbled, "Here's Johnny," before collapsing into a monologue on the sidewalk in front of Grauman's Chinese Burger King.

When police finally arrived on the scene, Carson was about to deliver the punch line to another "Rock Hudson joke" and had to be forcibly restrained from acting out both parts. He was later booked and released on his own American Express card.

Carson, who is rumored to have strong connections in the sinatraworld, was unavailable for comedy.

PRETEND THAT THIS IS IN QUOTES
MORALITY ASKS US WHAT??????????
WHILE WE DEMAND TO KNOW WHAT IF

by Stacey Sollfrey

we dont want to know
we just jump on trampolines
to listen to their reverberations
so we can each sound
and place it on the canvas
board



© VERNON GRANT - 1985

RUMINATIONS OF
"HORNLESS HARRY"
THE
HIP HIPPO AS HE
SURVEYS THE PUNK SCENE
IN HARVARD SQUARE ...



Zenarchy STORIES

THE HUNG MUNG TONG KONG *by Ho Chi Zen*

"Talk softly and carry a bit shtick!" Is Ho Chi Zen's advice to social revolutionaries. His big shtick is the Hung Mung Tong Kong (Primal Chaos Secret Society Congress).

Whenever Mr. Zen speaks, softly or otherwise, the millions of members of this living S.N.A.F.U. hear every word he says.

For in 1976 Ho Chi Zen was investigated simultaneously by every agency and secret society in the intelligence community. Somewhere along the line someone installed an electronic eavesdropping device on his person.

Result: Radio Free Zenarchy.

Not only did these various organizations investigate Mr. Zen, they also wound up investigating one another. So Ho gave the Kong its present name and crowned himself King thereof—though many continue to insist he is just a big monkey, and not Kong King at all.

Yet the Tong Kong is the sanga (order) through which Zenarchist enlightenment usually takes place. Unfortunately, everyone hit over the head by this shtick is sworn to secrecy, so Ho Chi Zen has difficulty convincing outsiders the Hung Mung Tong Kong exists.

As for any who are members, they cannot even admit as much directly to Mr. Zen—because he does not possess a security clearance and has not been initiated into any of their secret societies.

Ho has learned to regard this existential paradox as a problem for meditation. Orthodox Zen koans seem quite tame by comparison.

As for readers who don't believe Ho Chi Zen's tale of the Hung Mung Tong Kong, he says, "Belief is not required in Zenarchy. Just shtick around! You'll find out."

RED EYE!

When Ho Chi Zen found himself caught up in celebrating the American Revolutionary Bicentennial by means of all manner of rumor proliferation and mudslinging muckraking, he wrote in his journal: "I admit I am a scandal monger. To be a revolutionary is sometimes to wander the streets of some Paris—dirty, talking to oneself, wearing baggy old clothes, barely subsisting economically, red of eye and totally awake to every possibility."

CLUTTERING THE VOID

Unlike nature, Zen Buddhism loves a void. For, as Chairman Lao observed, it is the empty space in a cup or a bowl or a room that makes it useful. So it is with us. By cultivating a certain vacuity we prepare ourselves to receive the truth.

Because of this ruthless simplicity, Zen can be studied without encountering a great deal of complication. For many people of both East and West that is the basis of its appeal.

Yet there is another side to Zen. An examination of its historical background reveals as much mythological and ceremonial clutter combined with reverence for tradition as is to be found in any other religion. Taoist emptiness and Buddhist sunyata (void) are so unusual that they have been exaggerated in Western eyes to make Zen look at first glance free from symbolic baggage entirely.

When an American visitor was being shown by a Zen abbot about a monastery, the abbot kept bowing to statues of the Buddha placed about the temple grounds. In exasperation, the American said at last that he thought Zen was more liberated than that. "Hell," he added, "I'm freer than you are. I can spit on these statues if I want to!" Grinning and nodding, the abbot replied in his imperfect English: "Okay! You spits. I bows."

In fact Chinese and Japanese Zen devotees chant Buddhist mantras, pay homage to images, possess an elaborate tradition of symbols and quarrel over the evolution of their order.

Zenarchy is the same way. Not only is the gist of the matter simple enough to defy the most eloquent, there is also already an abundance of clutter—complex traditions and quaint mysteries. They are, however, optional and you need not pursue them if you are not that kind of Zenarchist.

No responsible worldview leaves its trivia buffs with nothing to do or without quandries to ponder. For example, note this anacronism: the Hung Mung Tong Kong was not discovered and named by Ho Chi Zen until 1978, although he first began noticing it two years before that; yet in the 1970 Great Speckled Bird interview an Eye-in-the-Pyramid magic clanger on Mr. Zen's front porch in Atlanta's Chinatown is called the Hung Mung Tong Kong Gong.

Besides that there are all kinds of mysterious sideshows to be discovered meandering in and out of published references to Zenarchy—such as the Discordian Society, the Twelve Famous Buddha Mind School, the illuminatus! Trilogy and the Erotic Terrorism Committee of the Fucking Communist Conspiracy.

So keep it simple or clutter the Great Void with the Discordians and their ilk. Because, whether you spits or bows, nobody is keeping score.

CYNICALMAN LIVES!



NOT AVAILABLE COMICS
Matt Feazelle • Box 5803 • Raleigh NC 27650
Send For Free Catalog

TALK SHOW HOST

CONFIDENTIAL *by Michael Dobbs*

Sequel time, folks...It's SON OF UNANSWERED QUESTIONS...

Is Andy Rooney ever happy about something? Really happy? Does he ever smile a nice, unaffected smile?

There are a number of holiday items which continue to confound me: Does anyone eat ribbon candy? As an adventurous child I once bit into a piece hoping to subject my sweet tooth to yet another pleasure. Little did I suspect the stuff was inedible! And what about all that Christmas hard candy with "spice" flavors?...everyone buys it and then, sometime around January 15th, the moms of the world spend half a day trying to pry the hardened mass from their candy dish...Does anybody really like those Danish butter cookies sold in a fancy tin which always seems to wind up as a last-minute present? They are advertised as being different flavors, but the ones I get never taste like "chocolate" or "coconut"—they taste more like "dust bunny."

What would happen if you decided not to send in your \$39.95 for the miracle AM/FM pocket radio which works by solar energy and, instead, track down the office of the company that is selling them? The other night while watching an old Ken Maynard movie on the Nashville Network (that answers one of the other great unanswered questions, "Who watches the Nashville Network?"), I saw an advertisement for the aforementioned radio, and I wondered if I could avoid the three to four week wait and drive to Stamford Conn. and ask the postmaster who held the post office box in question. I wondered if I could then just drive on over and pick up one of these things direct. If I were successful, I think I could revolutionize the television sales industry.

I also wonder about the Midol commercial in which one woman advises another that she takes Midol "before, during and after my period." Isn't that drug abuse? Does Nancy Reagan know? Some of her best friends may be abusing Midol. Wouldn't that just be perfectly white and Republican?

What happens to the kid who decides that he doesn't want to play with G.I. Joe or Masters of the Universe or any number of robot figures—he wants to play with the figures based on insects (the Sectors, I think)—will this kid grow up to be Charles Manson or worse?

Does anyone notice the difference in NANCY since Ernie Bushmiller died?

How does one become a black velvet painter? Are there night courses for that style of art here in this country or do you have to go to school in Mexico? Which are the most popular subjects? I think that with careful marketing you could make a fortune with black velvet paintings—the key is a regional approach. Here in the Northeast, make sure you stock dual portraits of Martin Luther King with Jesus and plenty of Kenny Rogers with Jesus and Willie Nelson with Jesus, if you go down South. Unicorns are big with adolescent girls, but barbarians with women in chains will help you get into the lucrative male teen market.

Wax Ink

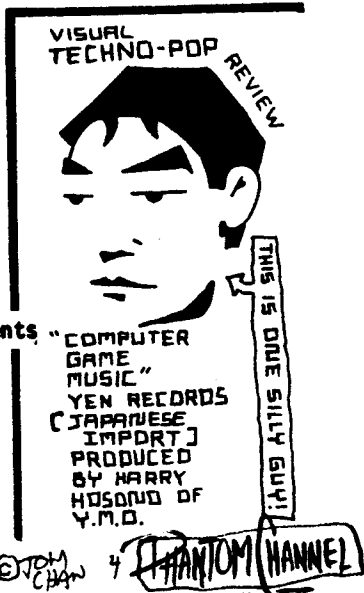
by Rory Houchens

BACKWORDS AND FORWARDS—Aztec Camera (Sire)—Even if the songs on this nifty little release were less than top-notch, it would be worth having just for its unique packaging. The cover is decorated with black and white photos and colorful graphics; open it up and there are more graphics, photos, a brief band history, discography, and "teen mag. info" →

REMEDIAL EDUCATION

by Susan Packie

Welcome to Reading 001
Anyone without
A sharpened pencil
Eraser
And a four-subject notebook
Please leave
Oh good
Only one person is left
On a piece of paper
Please put down
The Social Security numbers
Of your parents and grandparents
You can't do that?
Oh well
Please add up the birth dates
Of ten family members
And put that down
You're an orphan?
Moving right along
Today's reading assignment
Will be War and Peace
You can't finish it
In one hour?
Why do I
Always get the illiterates?



FASTRONOMICS

by Sarah Mowney

In one of the "Fraggle Rock" adventures, there's a vignette where Uncle Travelling Matt, the Fraggles who explores "Outer Space" where the "Silly Creatures" live, sends a report on fast food, which he has discovered cannot actually outrun a tomato or a rutabaga.

But, all jesting included, let us call this phenomenon by its true name: slave food.

Consider the message underlying (and I use that term in the fullest possible sense—"under" as in "under-handed;" "lying" as in "through one's teeth") the slickness of McDonald's advertising.

While children are cajoled by the semi-deified persona of Ronald McDonald, adults are lured to ingest these gastronomic horrors on two levels—blue-collar and white-collar.

The blue-collar campaign is based on economic necessity. "Take the family to McDonald's, where you can get your hard-earned money's worth," it cries, "where smiling humanoids will treat you with fawning courtesy as if you were actually rich and powerful."

The white-collar pitch is a bit more of a curve ball. These are based on scenes where a would-be Yuppie is encouraged to consume plasto-food in order to impress some authority figure with his canine obedience. The bottom rung on the ladder to gracious dining.

Slave food. Pure and simple as bullshit.

An old aphorism says "you are what you eat," but a contemporary philosopher and poet suggests:

"Perhaps it is more truly said,
You're not what you eat—you're what you're fed."

QUESTION:

When I send a SASE all you send back is four sheets of more ads. They give the must-be-adopted solutions but don't explain the adoption technique — what goes?

ANSWER:

The time is not yet ripe. Until that day arrives don't do a thing (like Neogen) — just sit back and worry (like me). For the four latest from the greatest send S.A.S.E. to:

BRAINBEAUSM — Box 2243
12 YOUNGSTOWN — OHIO, 44504

THIS COUNTRY

Needs twice as many actors, advertisers, salesmen, bankers, brokers, doctors, teachers, preachers and professional athletes so they can all do THEIR SHARE OF BLUE COLLAR WORK EVERY OTHER YEAR.

Send SASE to unemployment and free ride-ending even age work force or simply
EVEN AGE — BOX 2243
YOUNGSTOWN — OHIO, 44504

(birthday, color of hair & eyes, etc.) for each band member. What's so unusual, you ask? The record itself is a mere 10 inch EP while the eye-catching cover measures a svelte 10 by 12—wide enough to house the disc, but a full foot from top to bottom of spine so it can be neatly and indiscriminately shelved right alongside full-fledged 12 inchers. The music is equally striking. Four live cuts testify to the guitar prowess and songwriting skills of young Roddy Frame, including the mesmerizing "The Birth of the True" and "Backwords and Forwards," the tale of a man striving to survive the pressures of family and peers. Also included is the group's strolling, acoustic version of Van Halen's "Jump" complete with spine-wrinkling guitar rave-up. Recommended.

NEW AFRICA—Various Artists (Celluloid Recs., 155 West 29th Street, New York, NY 10001)—This sampler album introduces the potent roster of new African music being released by the excellent Celluloid label. It includes one track each by Foday Musa Suso's Mandingo (Foday is a member of Herbie Hancock's Rockit Band) which sounds a lot like King Sunny Ade, and the legendary (and currently imprisoned) Fela Anikulapo Kuti, whose politically vicious "Government Chicken Boy" should delight radicals and upstarts the world over. One whole side is devoted to the music of Toure Kunda, a trio of Senegalese brothers who squeeze rock, reggae and traditional music from their homeland into their upbeat songs. But the one cut I get caught playing over and over is Manu Dibango's "Abele Dance." From the man who brought us "Soul Makossa" in 1972 comes "Abele Dance," an irresistible mix of sly vocals, synthetics, rubber band guitars, and Dibango's own delicious sax work! Great stuff!

CRUSH—Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark (A&M/Virgin)—I've always been more intrigued by OMD's theories and work practices than by their music, but on CRUSH, they've offset their infatuation with electronics with some down-to-earth, groovy tunes. "So In Love" is perfect pop from its tinny piano intro right on through to its unforgettable falsetto chorus. "Bloc Bloc Bloc" profiles modern man as "Women III" does modern woman, and "Crush" handily juggles tape loops, brass and vocals for the lp's most experimental track. "The Lights Are Going Out" and "La Femme Accident" both celebrate a post-Roxy Music renaissance, the former at a shadowy, snail's pace, the latter with some electric tick-tock rain-drops.

"I'm Yours"/"Uranium-235"—Michael Marquardt (Shadow Prods., P.O. Box 943, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010)—What's this? Roger Whittaker meets the ghost of Nick Drake during a mush feast? Not quite. "I'm Yours" is strictly easy listening/adult contemporary with tinkling piano, tastefully strummed guitar and Mr. Marquardt's spongy vocals. The music isn't too bad, but the lyrics ("I lied, I cried with pride", "I'm sweet with deceit as I haunt the street") are in need of first aid, or perhaps amputation. "Uranium-235" is a little more musically glandular, but the lyrics, once again, take a nose dive for the bottom of the barrel (stuff like "radiating testicles", "though each ate less than a gnat/we became oh so very fat", and various messages to key politicians). Nice picture sleeve, though.

THE PROCESS OF WEEDING OUT—Black Flag (SST Recs., P.O. Box 1, Lawndale, CA 90260)—I do believe that Black Flag (the hardest working band in show binnis?) had planned to do an all-instrumental album before the rate-a-record mess (and I'm not talkin' Dick Clark's American Bandstand either, brothers and sisters) began, but that whole fiasco has now added another dimension to their wordless project. Not only does it allow the band (minus vocalist Henry Rollins) a chance to show off their musical chops, but it puts the pure-hearted, unblemished, "clean music" saviors to the test—it's easy for them to find cover art and lyrics "objectionable", but how are they going to interpret an all-instrumental work? Anyway, the four cuts that make up THE PROCESS sound very stream-of-consciousness, almost improvised, and will just about strip the paint from your walls. "Your Last Affront" begins with Kira Roessler's subdued yet jazzy bass before Greg Ginn's gonzo guitar steps in with assault and battery on its mind. The title cut is like a free-form fall with bass, guitar and Bill Stevenson's staggering drums zooming all over the place. THE PROCESS OF WEEDING OUT has a little Frank Zappa freak out, some Steppenwolf heavy metal boogie, some psychedelic mind travel, and one of Raymond Pettibon's most inspired covers. Get a copy and start 1986 off right!

The Argument *by Lawrence Oberc*

I was standing on Susy's hand and she was screaming words my dog wouldn't imagine, much less say. Everyone in the bar knew what was going on, but when this redneck-looking country boy, raised on pinto beans and suffering from the side effects, walked in—well, we just knew that he'd not only defend God and country, but Susy as well.

"He's going to kill me!" screamed Susy, her other hand now under my other foot. "Help!"

The redneck-looking country boy walked up, tilted his cowboy hat to the left side of his head, and said, "Don't worry yourself non, Ma'am, Jimmy Boy's here." Then Jimmy Boy looked at me with the eyes of a mean dog gone crazy.

"Jimmy Boy," I said, "ain't nothing here to bother you none. This is between me and the lady."

"I ain't nobody's lady!" screamed Susy. "Help me, Jimmy Boy!"

Me, I was in almost an apologetic mood over the whole thing. Just because I was standing on both of Susy's hands, and she wanted to get loose so she could pull a knife and surgically remove a very important part of me—well, shucks, it wasn't all that bid of a deal. On the other hand, Jimmy Boy, well, he wasn't concerned about my safety at all. He was looking at Susy, this kind gentle lady, probably a virgin at that, pinned to the floor by a pair of ten and a half sized work boots. I could tell—you see, I got this hidden sense that warns me I'll be in pain in the near future—that Jimmy Boy was going to make a move any second now, and this other hidden sense, of a similar nature as the first sense, told me the odds were the move would be sooner than I thought.

"Jimmy Boy," I said, "you better hang on a second here. You don't want to go and do something I'd regret. You see, what we have here is a simple misunderstanding between Susy and a very important part of me. What happened here is this here commotion started because I accused Susy here of overcharging Billy Joe, a good friend of mine, for a quicky the other night. Now Jimmy Boy, I don't know how much you pay for a quicky, but Billy Joe, well, he payed Susy here forty bucks. What we have is a basic disagreement about the cost of living. Susy here, she don't understand that a guy just can't get by paying those kinds of prices. You see, all she talks about is this inflation stuff. What she don't understand is there's this other stuff called depreciation. Now what I think is Susy's depreciated, and what she thinks is she's inflated. That there, Jimmy Boy, is what this whole mess is about."

Jimmy Boy was getting all confused, and Susy, she was looking at me with a bad case of suspicion. She knew I was up to something, but what it was she couldn't figure out. The rest of the bar, they were taking bets. Some were betting on whether or not I'd lose that part of me I was so concerned about; others were betting on whether or not Jimmy Boy would get violent; and still others were betting on whether Susy was inflated or deflated. Money was still being kept out of sight because the bets were pretty complicated. Right now there was just a lot of discussion about the issues.

Johnny, the bartender, was getting bored. He looked around the bar, saw all of the confusion, then said, looking at Susy, me and Jimmy Boy: "So what are you all going to do?"

"What do you think I should do?" I asked.

Everyone looked at Johnny for an answer. Whatever Johnny decided, well, that'd be it. There wasn't no fooling around when Johnny made up his mind about something.

"This might take a big of figuring," Johnny said, pouring himself a beer. Johnny's theory about figuring was that figuring could be done best if you were drinking at the time. Some people said that Johnny did too much drinking. Others said he did too much figuring. Either way, people paid attention to what Johnny had to say.

Ten minutes later I was still standing on both of Susy's hands. Susy, she was keeping her eyes on Johnny to see what he decided. Jimmy Boy, he just stood there and looked around the bar. He knew he'd look pretty stupid if he started a fight now. Besides, he was getting restless and you could tell what he really needed was a beer. But Billy Boy knew now was the wrong time to ask for one, what with Johnny figuring and all. Me, I just wanted to sit down. A guy could only stand in one place for so long. Especially

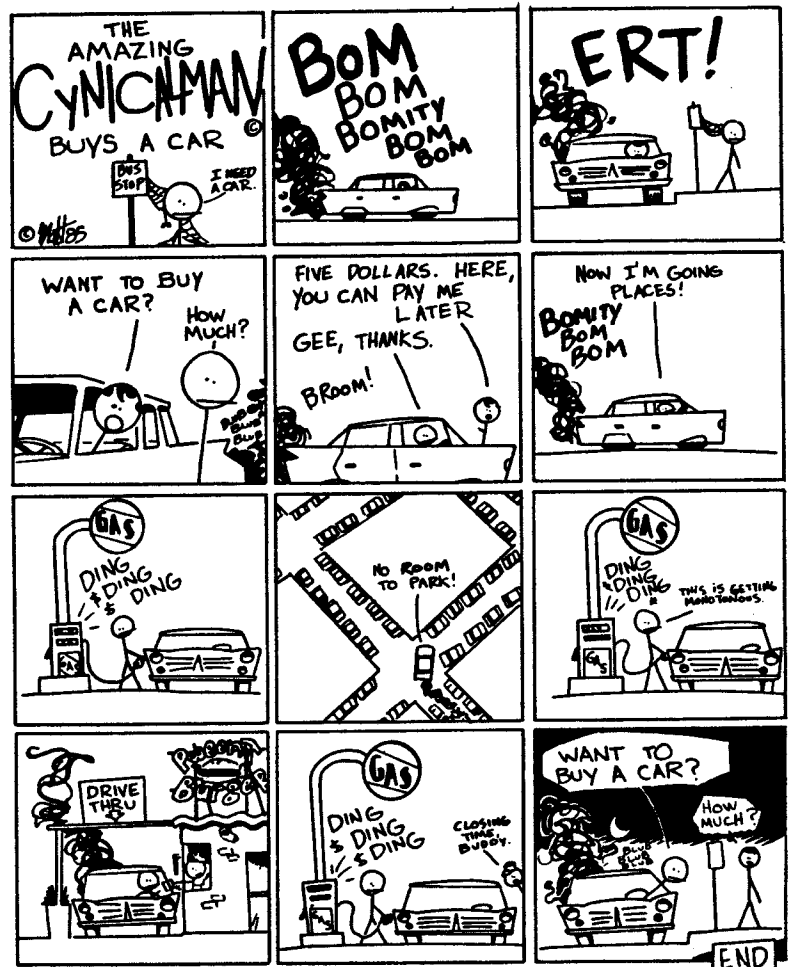
Living on the Fault Line *by A.J. Wright*

Last week two friends of mine (I'll call them David and Charlie) set a new world record for stacking hardbound science fiction books and will have their common names duly entered into the next edition of the Guinness Book of Worthless Records.

Saturday afternoon under a clear blue sky David and Charlie went to work on the patio and stacked 786 books on top of one another before the edifice took a quick nose dive back to earth. During the entire achievement, their friends milled about, drank beer and speculated on the possibilities.

The newspaper reporter who had been present to certify the event had been gone for over an hour when someone pointed out that one of the books used in the feat was George McDonald's *Phantasies*, which every true student of the imaginative fiction genres will recognize as a fantasy and not science fiction.

a useless memory must really be something to write about
imagine the fun it must be
concentrating off to all those horse powered gas tanks
- Stacey Sollfrey



when he has to keep his balance on two moving objects, namely Susy's hands. When Johnny finished his third beer his eyes did a quick sweep around the bar.

"Well," I said, "what is it?"

"I'm still figuring," said Johnny, pouring himself another beer.

Five minutes later Jimmy Boy stormed out of the bar. He looked like he needed a beer worse than anyone I had ever seen. Johnny was on his fifth beer and figuring real hard. You could tell by the way his eyes were starting to turn red. Susy was nodding out and looked like she was going to go to sleep any second now. She didn't even notice I wasn't standing on her hands anymore. When I finally walked out of the bar Susy was snoring real loud and Johnny was pouring himself another beer. I guess he was trying to figure out whether Susy was inflated or depreciated.

Commercial McClue-In

by "Kid" Sieve

I see where Elayne has completed (for now) her teevee review for this season. Seems to me there's more material ripe for our special brand of commentary to be found in your basic ad media. I've wanted to do this for awhile, but never seem to have pen and paper handy when I think about it.

However, urgency will out. Commercials have become more than just catchy come-ons vying for your attention and hard-earned bucks for products you don't want or need on the whole anyway. They not only reflect the mores of "society" (defined as What Those In Power Want You To Believe You Think); many times they subtly (and not-so-subtly) dictate what those mores should be. With this column I hope to be able to pick apart some particular pet peeves from Promoland by casual analysis and even some grammatical trickery. I'd like to encourage readers to send in your "favorite" targets of contempt, and we'll see if we can't enhance our viewing pleasure just a tad. Remember, a happy viewer is a free viewer, and freedom's price is awareness. Think when you stare.

I chose the above title not only because of my fondness for alliteration, but because of other inherent puns—the "Mc" referring to the McDonald's brand of mass produced pap (as, for example, many people refer to USA Today as McNews), "Clue-in" describing the article's function, and, put together, punning on Marshall McLuhan, author of such observations as "The medium is the message," who most likely turns in his grave every time these messages manipulate us instead of the other way around.

A) Burger King—the Search for Herb series: I won't go into too much detail here, because I've already written "The Herb-ing of America" for Dreamshore; suffice it to say that if these odious ads haven't yet convinced you to go and start a Herb Fan Club, in praise of this mythical antiestablishmentarian who apparently knows better than to put that shit-burger poison in his rebel, 'abnormal' system (and is lambasted for being "strange"), you've probably been sucked in already. Aren't you hungry? Well, I'm not; I'm nauseous.

B) Michelob Light—the Having Your Cake and Eating It Too trick—A friend of mine likes to play with punctuation. Listen again to the lyrics: "Who says you can't have it all? Michelob Light," that's who. Even though they profess to be the ones assuring you you can "get ahead without losing your soul" (kinda makes you think... "gosh, I never considered the possibility there'd be a price to pay, but now that Mich Lite assures me I'm in no danger of a Faustian fate, maybe I should worry a bit..."). I don't want to go over old ground, as I recall Kip touched on this commercial a few IJs back, but I think it serves as an excellent reminder to us that we, in fact, are the ones who have said "you can't have it all." We know this to be a sensible and eminently logical viewpoint, and to have these dorks come along and totally disavow the very philosophy many of us fought so hard to establish in the 60's—the ethic of compassion, of prioritizing so that you acknowledge there's a price to pay for any gain, and the best course in the end is usually to benefit spiritually by helping others and/or gaining knowledge about the world around us—stings like a slap in the face. Have these Yuppie robots really "had it all"? Do corporate veeeps retain humanity? Do the very MadAve types who create this garbage know what it is to really give and take in life, to fulfill a happy medium? Somehow, I find it hard to believe. Who says? We do.

C) BMW—Propaganda Makes Perfect: The ad reads, "As long as there are people who can afford perfection, BMW will continue to pursue it." Until they come somewhat close to actually achieving pseudo-perfection, I assume (since they must be a long way off to have kept pursuing this apparently single-minded goal all these years). Ah yes, as long as there are snobs who care more about how much things cost than the things of true value in this world, BMW will keep raking them in. The Empty 80's, style without substance, triumphs again.

D) AT&T—Say What?: "The more you hear, the better we sound" is so wonderfully asinine and ripe for satire that I marvel no one's done a proper job on it yet! The funny thing about this message is that the idea AT&T wants you, the viewer, to understand is the underlying one, not the surface one. The surface message is the one that's interpreted, "We keep

Incident

by Lang Thompson

The UFO was a disappointment. I had been driving home from the grocery store one night last week when a cone of light the size of a sports car zippped from over the trees, hovered perfectly still in front of me, then flew straight up until I couldn't see it anymore. Big deal. I've read enough UFO books that I could tell that this was a standard sighting. Actually seeing a UFO was an anticlimax and rather dull.

A few days later, somebody knocked on my door and I opened it before I thought to check who it was. Standing there were two men dressed in black suits, black shoes and even black hats. I instantly knew I was in for trouble. These were the infamous Men in Black who often followed UFO sightings to discourage viewers from talking about their experiences. There are usually three so I assumed the third was waiting in the parking lot.

One of the men identified themselves as agents of an Air Force group, flashing an official-looking card, and said that they were following up reports of aerial disturbance. Another witness had been able to supply my license plate number and they were able to track me down. The way they talked indicated that they didn't really care if I believed them or not.

Before they could go any further, I stopped them. That night, I explained, my car had been loaned to a friend for a date. He hadn't mentioned any such an occurrence to me.

The Men in Black looked straight at me and I pictured them grabbing me by the throat and choking me until I told the truth. Instead, one of them asked me my friend's name and address. That caught me off-guard, so I gave them Frank's name and said that he lived in Green Forest Apartments. I hoped they wouldn't follow up on this.

Still expressionless, they thanked me for my assistance, turned and left.

Nothing else happened for a month, until I happened to see Frank on the way to class. He saw me first or I would have avoided him. We talked about nothing that I can remember for a few minutes until he said that some strange things had happened around his apartment. A large black car that no one recognized had been parking in the lot for an hour or two and then leaving. It was never at the same time, one day it would be three in the morning and another day at noon. Frank thought that they followed him as he drove to school one day but he wasn't sure. He hadn't seen them around for about a week now so he guessed they had left.

I told Frank there were some strange people running around and headed off for class.

propagandizing ourselves so much that, since you only hear all this wonderful stuff about us, from us, you're bound to only hear how terrific we are the more money we spend on these commercials to convince you," etc. The underlying bit is the play on words, which is supposed to convey "our sound quality is so far above the others that if you listen to all the different phone systems, the more you search around, the more you'll realize that ours is the best," which is the one that makes sense for AT&T to exhibit. They wind up, I think (and, again, only if you actually hear the message), putting down their own methods of propaganda by acknowledging them to be such. Of course we sound better, the more you hear from us. It's a simple case of repetition, of brainwashing. For a company to admit that this is what it's doing (but, lest we forget, this is also the company that came out and admitted employing psychiatrists to determine what people will "feel comfortable" and secure being told, or given) is nothing short of precious.

Well, you get the idea. I like to think I'm not the only one out here shouting back in fury at my television to drown out the insidiousness which is continually attempting to worm its way into my subconscious and block out coherent thought and action, and it would warm my heartburn if I were to be proven at least partially right by you folks out there. Please send in your ad annoyances, and maybe we can make a regular caveat out of this. Thanks!

Sleep apnea is a medical term for frequent and prolonged episodes when breathing stops during sleep. Even normally a person does not just fall asleep and then maintain a slow, steady rhythm of breathing. Any individual's breathing pattern accelerates and slows during rest. So some short periods of apnea are normal. What is abnormal is when they occur so often and for such long periods that the person begins to develop signs of disturbed sleep.

She is a woman living in West Virginia—one of the practitioners of West Virginia WitchCraft—and she has invaded my sleep. She says she comes through the Astral Corridors—whatever that means. She says it is much like the corridors of New York and that witches travel very fast. She says that technology has come to witchcraft and that all shall be as it once was, Blessed Be. I'd just like to get a decent night's sleep.

"This seems like a vendetta—" I was interrupted: "I hate those big Macho Italian words!!!" "A vendetta is a feud, you know, like the Hatfields and the McCoys?" Tangents, areas of mutual interests, something, anything in common. "Well, yahazz, I do like to sit on top of your head when you're sleepin' I can get you to do all kinds of thangs!"

I decided to dazzle her with science. I went out and bought a juicer. Twenty thousand dollars. The best juicer in the universe. Carrot juice, garlic juice, prickly pear, San Pedro Cactus, Canary Island Broom, Yohimbe, dimethyl sulfoxide, Siberian ginseng, datura stramonium, Queen Anne's Lace, celery, half a bushel of radioactive parsnips just for starters and of course: CHOCOLATE MILK. I felt better than I have for months, whistling through my ersatz alchemy text books; I was even thinking about buying a ticket to the Mega-Bucks Lottery. About eight o'clock I started to yawn most emphatically—hmm, maybe it was nervousness.

I awoke at sunrise with the book over my face. When I finally got my glasses on and my eyes focused, I took a good look at the walls of my bedroom, and there were the most exquisite mosaic of chemical diagrams, and all around the floor tiny hanks of reddish brown hair. She was gone. I could

by D.A. Beast

Dashing from the phone booth, I ran down the street like a maniac into the neighborhood bar.

"Hey," I yelled, "what's with the empty beer glass?"

Having had more than enough of philosophical conversation, I quickly made an exit into the street, where things were becoming unreal all over the place. Slips of paper were floating around and were attached to the sidewalk where fire hydrants, garbage cans, and—people?—had been moments before. I could see this was going to be the ultimate bitch of a day. Oh well, some things you just gotta stand by and watch, and this one seemed custom-tailored to watching and maybe even laughing at. I had already figured out it was just a matter of time before the whole thing (whatever THAT ever was) was gone and I was wondering when I was due to become a slip of paper and who was gonna bother reading the shit notes anyhow. There was not a lotta time to figure out patterns and stuff at this point. I guess a primary thought was whether or not clothes were more real than a person or even the ground (part of the sidewalk was gone—but why only part?).

I decided to walk a little ways out of town (if I got that far) and wait (and figure out why to wait). It was getting pretty dark for 2:30; I guess the sun was about ready to turn into a note too. I had no idea how far out this was going to go. One cool thing, I guess, was that I was still here. I sure hope I have time to finish this report but I'm not sure if anything will be left to read it if I do. I guess the best thing anyone could say about the whole situation was, "THIS WASN'T REAL ANYHOW!"



And yes, I guess I miss her.

HANDY MANDY

by Susan Packie

Handy Mandy could fix anything from bicycle tires to automobiles. Not only that, but she was strong. It was acknowledged by the needlework club that she did not belong. When the local marathon was planned to aid the oppressed of the world, it was agreed that only men could compete, since they alone had the necessary speed. Handy Mandy was not deterred. She secretly practiced every morning and when the fateful day arrived,

disguised herself in men's clothing and took her place in the starting line as Hans D. Mann the First. The whistle blew and off they flew, the women of the needlework club cheering enthusiastically. Clever Jack was in the lead, followed by Grease Monkey Gregory and Fly-by-Night Frank. Hans D. Mann was in the last rank. Around the turn they sped, with the men still ahead, but the runners were tiring, and what did they see

but Hans D. Mann taking the lead! One mile, half a mile, ten yards to go! now nothing could stop Hans D. Mann from stealing the show. Over the line! when Hans D. Mann's pants fell down, revealing Handy Mandy underneath! She was, of course, disqualified. The woman never saw. Handy Mandy now bakes cakes for church bazaars.

PLAYER

by Peter L. Scisco

If I turn my head and look over my left shoulder, I can see a large white plastic duck perched in a window across the street. Third window up, right side of the building. All of the other windows are empty, save for one directly across from me that frames the silver flicker of a television that I notice only when it is night.

"I wonder about that duck." This is my wife, standing at my back, peering through the screen. She puts her hands on my shoulders. It is Monday and she must leave for work soon. We trade smiles at the door. After it closes I listen for her feet on the stairs, then return to my desk.

I don't have a job. No, I should say that I don't have work. I do have a job. I invent. Every day I invent a new job. I have had hundreds: all different, all changing, each described in various ways, in whatever way I wish. Every day I have an answer.

"What do you do?" the woman asks me. We are sitting next to each other on the subway. The train is delayed and we have been talking. "I'm a transportation-design engineer," I say. She looks at my dirty sneakers. "Oh," she says. She doesn't think I dress like an engineer.

"It's quite exciting work," I say. It is important that she not doubt me. "In fact, my firm is involved in a project that we hope will take some of the strain off the subway, thus avoiding problems such as we're experiencing now."

"Really?" she asks. "That would be something. What is it? Moving sidewalks? More trains? Express shuttles?"

"Oh, no. Nothing so complicated as all of that. Actually, it has more to do with slingshots." I lean toward her, very serious. She is puzzled. "Slingshots?"

"And nets," I reply. "Our plan is to place several spring-tension catapults at various points in the city, ideally on the roofs of the tallest buildings, and from there jettison commuters to preselected landing areas, such as plazas and parks, located at convenient points of access." She is smiling. She doesn't want to provoke me.

"Because it requires no power but the potential kinetic energy contained in a tightly-wound spring, it's quite cost-effective and easily maintained." She shifts nervously in her seat. I have to finish. "Of course, the concept was a group effort, modeled on weapons from Europe's middle age. But I must claim credit for the name. We call it 'A Wing and a Prayer'." The train begins to move.

I am standing in front of a small clothing store. A "Help Wanted" sign has been taped to the window. I go in. A young man, neatly dressed, stands behind the counter. "May I help you?" he asks. I inquire about the sign and he gives me an application to fill out.

The form is the same as the last hundred I have filled out. For references I always use obscure government officials, like the Undersecretary of the Treasury. No one ever questions the names. The Washington D.C. addresses look impressive. For my last employer I write: "Ringling Bros./Barnum & Bailey Circus—fire eater. Responsible for swallowing flaming torches twice nightly." I sign my name. "Is the manager in?" I ask.

"He's out for the moment," the young man answers. He takes my application. "Have you ever had any retail experience?" he asks.

"Oh, yes," I reply. "In clothing, as a matter of fact."

He writes "experience" at the top of my application. "Who did you work for?"

"I was a trade rep for a new line of men's and women's underclothing," I say. "That was some time ago, and it wasn't exactly retail, but I'm familiar with such operations."

"What was the name of the line?"

"Tunderwear."

He writes "tunderwear" on my application. "I've never heard of that brand," he says. He's looking for an explanation. I cannot disappoint.

"Unfortunately, it didn't stay on the market very long," I say, taking him into my confidence. "Quite surprising too, for it was an idea fitted for the times, on the cutting edge, absolutely on target if we were to believe preliminary market surveys."

"You don't say," he says.

16 "But I do," I say. "With the interests of so many focused on health, cleanliness, freshness, and purity, it was positively the answer. And more than that, it was a new venture, a bold joining of two companies

with entirely different markets, a communal effort in a highly competitive field."

"Sounds unique," he says. "Who were the parent companies?"

"Tupperware and Fruit of the Loom." He stares at me, incredulous. "Think of it," I argue. "What could keep you feeling more fresh, more pure, than to lock away those potentially offensive, embarrassing body parts and their accompanying odors behind an airtight, resealable container? Just slip them on, pull the top on over your head, seal the rim with one firm squeeze all around and, to guarantee security, 'burp' the container with a quick push of your thumb. Dishwasher safe." I smile, all sincerity. "Just one problem."

He doesn't want to speak, but he must. "What was that?" he asks.

"Too bulky," I say. "You couldn't get your clothes on over them. They tended to make people look silly. They attracted too much attention. There was a definite lack of mobility, a certain gracelessness we could never circumvent. Basically, we just didn't see it coming."

He puts my application in a drawer underneath the register. "We'll keep you informed as to our final decision in filling the opening," he says.

"Thank you," I say. "I would really appreciate that."

The voice on the other end of the line is crisp, pleasant, efficient. "Hello," I say. "Classified? I'd like to place an ad, please. Yes, that's right. One week. In the 'Professional Services' column, please."

The phone book lies open on the table in front of me. I choose a name and address at random. "Harold Cruise," I say. "298 West Second Street. Yes, you can bill me there." I wait, sensing that what I have said is now being arrayed in quick electronic fashion; a screen flashes; a tape whirs.

"Yes, I'm here. OK, to read as follows: 'Seeking the Flame that Burns in the Loving Heart? Protect the Glowing Ember of Hope, Call (this is in all caps please) QUEST FOR FIRE DATING SERVICE, 255-3680.'" I resist the urge to chuckle. "Yes, that's all. Thank you."

"Another?" the bartender asks. I nod and he takes my glass and fills it from the tap. It is hot outside, but much cooler in the bar. I take off my dark glasses. "I see you have live music," I say. I point to a sign next to the door. "LIVE MUSIC," it reads.

He is wiping the tables with a white cloth. "That's right," he says. "From Wednesday through Saturday nights."

"What kind of music?" I ask. He is putting the chairs on the table-tops, getting ready to mop the floor. "Rock 'n' Roll, mostly," he says.

"I book some groups in the area," I say. "Glen Watkins is the name. Maybe you'd be interested in having some of them play here."

"Maybe," he says. He moves the mop up and down in the pail. "Who do you have?"

"Well," I say, "I have a group now that's real hot, they're cutting plastic for Near Miss Records right now, but by the end of the week they'll be ready for some live dates."

"Rock group?" he asks. He carries the mop and the pail into a small room behind the bar.

"Post-punk, neo-funk, boogie ska fusion," I say. "With some jazz overtones." He is in front of me now, wiping the bar absently.

"Johnny Stiff and the Cadavers," I say. "Their new single is 'Rigor Mortis Sets In'." No response. "Maybe you've seen their video," I say.

His hand stops moving on the bar. "They have a video?" he asks.

"Two," I say. I finish my beer. "Look, here's my number." I scribble it on a napkin. "You can reach me there anytime. But call soon, I've got other parties interested." I climb off the stool. "Take it easy," I say. I put my dark glasses on.

"Later," he says. "Thanks."

My wife should be home soon. Our cat is asleep on the kitchen table. I look out the window. A few people are passing on the street below, returning home from work. The large white plastic duck is still perched in the window across the street. The key turns in the lock, the door opens. "Hi, baby," my wife says. I cross the room and we hug each other. "Hard day?" I ask.

"Not too bad," she says. "Anything in the paper today?" She sits on the couch, kicks off her shoes.

I come out of the kitchen with a bottle of champagne. She lights up, grins broadly. "What does this mean?" she asks.

"I got a job," I say. "Let me tell you about it..."

A TRIP THROUGH THE SERLIN FAMILY TELEPHONE BOOK *by David Serlin*

There is no greater pleasure, I think, than growing up to find your parents, family and relatives to be as proportionally neurotic as you are. Imagine the oceans of saliva that dribbled from my mouth as I realized the oddities that lurked in their closets, or the irregular habits that these people who brought me up possessed. I think the credo, "Where did we go wrong?" was not entirely directed at me.

The little faded phone book that sits near our kitchen telephone is one treasured artifact because, of its scribbled and illegible contents, probably 35% of it is actually phone numbers. The remaining space is occupied by an intricate tapestry of addresses to non-existent people, messages left to no one, doctor appointments for the already dead, etc.

The first great feat of this book is obviously my mother's coding system, designed for easy reference but closer to the deciphering of hieroglyphics, i.e., people are listed by their first name rather than their last. She has even taken it so far as to list all of my friends under "D" for David. I once asked her if the bank telephone number was under "M" for money, or if our physician's number is under "S" for sick.

At the top of page 2, the second page of the "A" section (giving hundreds of extra pages to each letter index has always seemed frivolous to me), one may find a fragment of a poem in my brother's handwriting: "A problem man had not foreseen as yet/Time for flight, a blinding light/Nothing but a bright outpouring night." This could be the first shining example of the Dickensian poet locked within my brother, but my guess is that it's a heavy metal lyric. Moving into the "C" section, there is an amazing series of calculations and mathematical jargon used to figure out the exact amount of time necessary to heat frozen burritos at 425 degrees for 40 minutes and macszoni & cheese at 350 degrees for 25 minutes and have them come out at the same time, the incoming airline number when my aunt migrated to Florida last winter and, of course, atleast 17 phone numbers with no definitive point of origin. I have vowed to one day call these numbers and find out who these people are.

By far, my favorite morsel is the "J" section, in which my sister Joanne has been immortalized over a five-page spread. During the past few years she has moved several times, and as she relocated, an entirely new address and telephone number has cropped up somewhere in the section, and as no one in our family is unsentimental enough to erase or cross out the location of any of her previous lodgings, a complete stranger, asked to look up my sister's address, would have a difficult time deciding whether Joanne lived in San Diego, Houston, North Miami, Miami Lakes or Fort Lauderdale, as each one is undated and looks as prominent and recent as the next.

The largest portion of the book is the "S" section, not because it lists all of the Serlin relatives as if it were the National Archives, but probably because more useless and trivial things in the universe begin with an "S" and can be conveniently fit in our family's phone book. There's our Sprint access number; beneath it, explicit directions on how to use it, and beneath that, our new Teltec number and further instructions not to use the Sprint number, instead opting to use the Teltec number, with which there are no accompanying directions, leaving the telephone user a stunned, trembling idiot. Nearby the Sprint fiasco is the hotel number when my sister stayed in New York last Christmas. Of course, it hasn't been tagged with any kind of discernable information, but in the vast complex of Those Family Things You Should Remember, it's been engraved in our collective brain—and it doesn't need instructions. Finishing up the "S" section is the name of a National Geographic Special that I enjoyed some years back; the number of one of my brother's friends, Steve, written on five separate occasions by five different people (it is the exact same number, naturally); and the phone numbers of a department store, fish market, and restaurant that are no longer in business, resplendent in their redundancy, all written in fresh-looking ink.

Yes, the whole sordid affair is stupid and childish and the quickest option would be to trash the whole thing and buy a new, clean, respectable address book, list everything alphabetically, and keep it far from those who would use its pristine pages for grocery lists and tic-tac-toe championships. But it's ours, and I can't think of a more befitting item to exemplify the family. Except, maybe, our medicine cabinet.

S
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by Vinnie Bartilucci

Like to travel?

Want to meet interesting people on far-away planets

without joining the galactic patrol?

Become a licensed Personal Small

Weaponry distributor today!

Set your own hours

On-the-job training

No previous experience necessary

Call 6262553498-83773 ext 6367875

for further information.

Now, who in their right minds would fall for an ad like that? Nobody, right? Unfortunately, I was not in my right mind when I read this ad in a copy of Lonely Singles Weekly. As a result, here I am, in a dilapidated one-man cruiser courtesy of the Galactibang Laser Company, 500 cases of free samples, a copy of "Handlaser Sales for Fun and Profit," and a chart of the fourth sector. (I've been assigned to the Ninth sector, but go figure conglomerates.)

Oh, well, it's not so bad. I have some time to catch up on my reading, and I've almost solved my Rubik's Tesseract. And every so often when I stumble across a planet, I drop in, give my sales pitch, and keep the home office off my back. It's been three weeks, but I think that rock is large enough to hold my ship. Yeah, fits nice. Wonder if this planet has an atmosphere? Computer? Methane and ammonia? Yuck! Where'd I put my Oxy-masc™? Oh, well. Grab manual, grab sample, open door.

WAAAAHOOOOOOSH!

Fee-yew!

Not much to see here. Better do the spiel anyway.

"Hello! I represent the Galactibang Laser Company, and I'm here to show you the advantages of owning your own...is anybody here?"

A brisk methane wind is my only reply.

Check manual.

"If, after your primary sales pitch, no response is elicited from the native population, continue your sale, as they may be shy or not understand your intentions."

Yeah.

"For example, our new VT-60 model has a range of over 23 klicks, while only costing... twenty minutes."

"So how many can I put you all down for?"

An ocean of caustic chemicals bubbles and burps, the wind increases its speed, but neither seems very interested in an order. Read manual.

"If, after your presentation, no orders are received, drop off a sample and copy of our catalog, and leave. Eventually life intelligent enough to appreciate our line will evolve on the planet, and our catalog will be there waiting for them."

"Well, I can see you're undecided, so I'll just leave my card and a sample of our newest handheld model, and you can call us."

Back in ship, take off. Wonder if there's anything good on TV?

The land of the newly formed planet is quite soft, and shifts easily. The thrust of even a one-man spaceship is most than enough to reduce that ground to powder, which the thrust of the salesman's ship does, creating an immense upheaval of rock and ash, which the handlaser is caught in. The laser flies for hundreds of feet, falling into the primordial soup of the oceans. It sinks for miles, strikes a rock, and fires.

Relatively little energy is needed to start a chemical reaction. The energy of a discharging laser is thousands of times greater than the energy needed to combine simple elements into organic compounds. Reaction after reaction take place in the oceans of chemicals surrounding the laser. From simple chemicals, to compounds, to primary life in 48 hours, evolving immediately to multicellular organisms. Amphibious in under three days walking the hills of this newly formed planet. Two days more, animals to primates, walking upright in six hours, losing hair overnight, Man by morning.

Lessee, seven-letter word for "Ancient myth common to all cultures." Boy, isn't this fun? I can barely keep from laughing. I've had more fun watching grass grow. I better find an inhabited planet soon. I'm falling below my sales quota.

SLIPPED DISCS

by Jed Martinez
"JASPER CARROTT IN AMERICA" (Rhino Records RNLP 817)

What comes to mind when you hear the words "British Comedy"? Monty Python? Benny Hill? Peter Sellers and "The Goon Show"? Peter Cook and Dudley Moore? All of them are uniquely qualified, but one more name should be included on this list... Jasper Carrott.

This talented comedian from Birmingham, England (who'll turn 41 in February) is very well-known in the U.K., but not in the U.S. For the last ten years, he's made his fellow countrymen crack up through many sold-out concerts, guest shots on the telly, and an assortment of record albums, released under the DJM label.

I, myself, picked up a few Jasper Carrott albums at a number of record stores in Toronto back in 1981. The funniest one of the lot was "THE UNRECORDED JASPER CARROTT" (DJF 20560), which was a live performance for ITV, conducted at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. To me, the highlight of this album was a segment that was not used in the TV transmission (but was taped, anyway) dealing with lighting farts. Well, I thought that George Carlin's piece on farting was funny, but Carrott's monologue literally had me on the floor.


After hearing several of Carrott's albums from England, I wondered to myself, "How come such a funny individual like him is not recognized in this country?" The answer, as I later found out, is not enough exposure to the American public.

Mind you, Jasper has frequented our side of the Atlantic before, resulting in a humorous observation of the differences between his country and ours. In 1984, he found himself starring at Caesar's Palace in Lake Tahoe... which turned out to be a big mistake. His 45-minute act was cut in half, a result of performing it at 2:00 AM in the morning in front of an audience of twelve or so gamblers. The show bombed, needless to say, but he did come away with a optimistic philosophy: "Anyone can make mistakes, but you are stupid only if you don't learn from them." And learn from them he did.

In 1985, Carrott made another trek to the U.S.; this time to the West Coast, where he brought his unique brand of humor to audiences in Santa Monica and San Francisco, with the former location the scene of the taping of his first American special, which was first broadcast on Cinemax last September. The show at the latter locale was recorded for Rhino Records, and is now available at most record stores.

"JASPER CARROTT IN AMERICA" (his first U.S. LP), should really be considered a primer album for those who are still uninitiated with Carrott and his brand of humor. He discusses some of the differences in language (we don't know that 'rubber' in England means 'eraser' instead of 'contraceptive' here; on the other hand, he didn't know the drug-related meaning of 'snow' when confronting a pusher in Central Park), differences in customs (such as how policemen in both countries deal with motorists, and how TV viewing and eating at fast food shops differ), and some surprising similarities in other customs (in this case, obscene gestures, which is ironic since the funniest gag in this album is a visual one; when going the wrong way on an American highway, he alerts the other motorists by raising two fingers in the traditional British gesture... with one of those two fingers playing a role in the traditional American gesture; in case you do buy this album, you'll need that set-up for the visual gag).

The highlight of this album is a piece he has done for almost his entire career, and his audiences are never tired of hearing it. It deals with automobile insurance claim forms, and the strange excuses that various motorists put down in explaining how their respective accidents occurred ("...I'd bumped into a lamppost which was obscured by human beings;"). When I heard the original version of this piece (first recorded in "A PAIN IN THE ARM", DJF 20518, back in 1977), I found it painstakingly funny; then, I'd heard the sequel to this piece on "THE SECRET POLICEMAN'S OTHER BALL" (Springtime Records, HAMA 6003) which included auto insurance claims from Australia, which was equally funny. So, imagine the disappointment I went through when Carrott




NEW YORK PUTZ

WEATHER:
Don't Ask!
STOCK MARKET:
Likewise!

Bus & Subway Fares Increased to \$1.00 on Jan. 1, '86

T.A. SAYS "NEW YORK, GET THE BUCK OUT!"



*Straphangers Give
⑤ Train
A Whole New Meaning...*

read some so-called New York auto insurance claims, which I'd thought were all new ones, but in reality were the Australian ones translated into American ('bonnet' in the U.K. and Down Under means 'hood' here). But the audience seemed to have enjoyed Jasper's monologue, regardless of whatever accent he'd used, so I took it with a grain of salt.

Other subjects dealt with by Carrott include gambling, video games, Jehovah's Witnesses, and what to do in the event of nuclear attack. All topics are presented in fun, as Carrott undergoes a number of off-beat impressions to convey his thoughts.

As I had said before, buy this album first, just so you'll get used to him; then try to locate an out-of-the-way record store that specializes in imports, and pick up his earlier DJM albums (or even his only single, "FUNKY MOPED"), and then enjoy yourselves. If you know enough British slang from watching countless BBC and ITV imports, then you'll know enough to enjoy the talents of Jasper Carrott.

MY CHOICES FOR THE TOP FIVE COMEDY ALBUMS OF 1985

1. "MAHVELOUS!"--Billy Crystal (A & M)
2. "WHOOPI GOLDBERG"--Whoopee Goldberg (Geffen)
3. "E = MC²"--Emo Philips (Epic)
4. "NEW JERSEY"--Joe Piscopo (Columbia)
5. "I HAVE A PONY"--Steven Wright (Warner Bros.)

LAST-MINUTE DARK HORSE CANDIDATE: "DR. DEMENTO PRESENTS THE GREATEST NOVELTY RECORDS OF ALL TIMES" (Rhino), Dr. D's six-record anthology.

MY HOMAGE TO THE MOOSE

As you know, this issue of "INSIDE JOKE" is dedicated to the memory of Bill Scott, a talented personality whose work at Jay Ward Productions will never be surpassed. Though he was an excellent producer and writer, he'll always be remembered for the voices he'd provided in numerous cartoons, with Bullwinkle J. Moose being his most memorable. Bill was a man who was more often heard than seen, although I thought his zenith came in the form of a cameo appearance on the short-lived NBC sit-com "THE DUCK FACTORY", where he sang a medley of themes from some Jay Ward cartoons at the Annie Awards ceremony for members of the animation industry (by a remarkable coincidence, Scott was President of ASIFA/Hollywood--an organization for cartoonists and their fans); June Foray, who was 'Rocky' to Bill's 'Bullwinkle' also made a cameo.

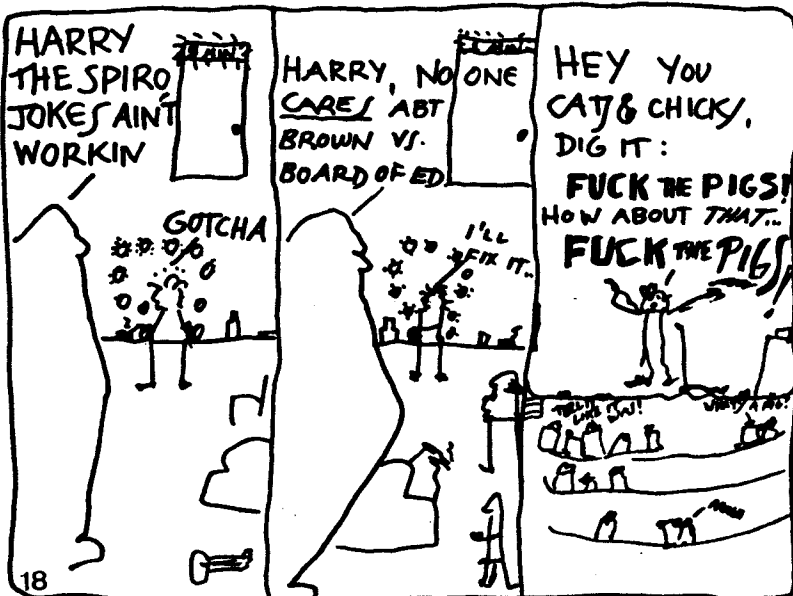
Many of you will probably be taping "Rocky and Bullwinkle" episodes on your VCRs, as a lasting tribute to Bill Scott (although collections of episodes are already available on tape and videodisc), but some of you might not have such equipment; but if you own a record player, you will still have a chance to hear the dulcet tones of Mr. Scott.

His voice can be heard on two 1985 comedy albums: Weird Al Yankovic's "DARE TO BE STUPID", where Al sings the theme to "George of the Jungle", and Bill provides the yell of triumph... and pain ("Watch out for that tree!"); and Joe Piscopo's "NEW JERSEY", where Rocky (Foray) doesn't know if he's talking to Bullwinkle (Scott) or David Hartman (Piscopo), because they both sound alike. It was, in fact, Piscopo's take-off of Hartman on "Saturday Night Live" that caused the popularity of the moose and squirrel to take a sudden upswing again (just as Eddie Murphy's impression of Gumby brought that greenish clay figure back into the limelight). Bless the nostalgic hearts of those who were brought up watching Saturday morning cartoons.

I believe that somewhere out there, there was also a soundtrack album of "ROCKY AND HIS FRIENDS" floating about. Somehow I recall seeing the jacket of such an album, but never actually hearing it, so I can't be too sure if this out-of-print recording contains the voices of Bill Scott, June Foray, and Paul (Boris Badenov) Frees; but if it does, whoever owns a copy has a real treasure on his or her hands.

Trivia buffs liked him; cartoon fans adored him; members of the animation community admired him... he was truly one of a kind.

And so, a fond farewell to the many voices of Bill Scott (including Bullwinkle, George, Mr. Peabody, Dudley Do-Right, Super Chicken, Tom Slick, Fillmore the Bear, Fearless Leader, Jean LeFoot, Gidney the Moon Man, Gruffy Gummi, and Mooseal)... they will all be missed, but I think Bill will missed most of all. To paraphrase a frequently used line, "Now there's someone you don't meet every day, Chauncey."



Duh!



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INTERVIEW WITH A COMEDIAN:

EDDIE DEEZEN

by Kris Gilpin

(Part II of two parts; Part I appeared last issue.)

KG: Who were your cinematic idols as a kid?

ED: Okay. It started with The Three Stooges; they are the greatest. I just got the new Three Stooges Scrapbook, but I'm saving it for a treat after Spinal Tap to read it; there's a lot of Curly Joe in it, who's worthless, but there's a lot of him in it because the kids (who wrote the new book) knew him, and they didn't know Curly as much.

I think Curly's the greatest comedian to ever walk the earth, and the most underrated; he's as good as Chaplin; people never realized. (I agreed with him at this point.) Yes, he's a dancer; his mannerisms! He's as good as the best of 'em, but because he's with the Three Stooges people think he's nothing; he's great, though. I worship him; I love the guy.

I'm into Martin and Lewis; I love early Jerry Lewis. Everybody says, "You look and act like Jerry Lewis," all the time. He's a teacher; I think he's great, genius, especially his early stuff; it got worse and worse year after year. The thing he put out last year, Hardly Working, is so bad it's embarrassing (I agreed with Eddie again at this point); he just gets too old to play the character anymore, but overseas they'll take anything he puts out, so he gets to do another one now. But I think the guy is great.

Laurel and Hardy were great; I used to love them. Everyone tends to say that Laurel was everything, but Oliver Hardy was brilliant; he was perfect in that character. He was hilarious; he thinks he's so much smarter than Stan, but he's dumber (laughs); the guy is just hilarious! Oh, yes, and the Marx Brothers, of course; I loved Groucho, but Harpo was better.

KG: Yeah, he was always my favorite, too.

ED: We have the same tastes (jokingly); you're a smart guy! Groucho was a great comedian, but Harpo was special. The fact that he didn't talk in a sound film; it was just so brilliant to do that. He brought humanity into their films, too. Groucho was like a no-sympathy guy; Harpo had humanity.

KG: What were your first loves; reading, movies, or what?

ED: Yeah, the earliest movies I remember seeing were the Elvis Presley movies, and the Walt Disney films. I remember going to the Lewis films when I was a kid; they would play the old Martin and Lewis ones, which I love. And the early solo Lewis films were good, too, up until about '63, and then later on I don't know how they got so bad, like Don't Raise the Bridge, Lower the River; it's like he deliberately tried to make the worst film possible; they were terrible. Three on a Couch was terrible. Nutty Professor is the classic, although I didn't like the character a real lot; he did bits of the nutty professor in The Big Mouth, too.

Also, I'm a Chaplin nut, too. Did you ever see City Lights?

KG: Yes; that's one of my favorite movies!

ED: It is the best silent movie ever made! You have great tastes, yeah! It's not only bittersweet, but it has some of the best comedy moments, too. When he swallows that confetti and all, and he thinks it's spaghetti; just brilliant. And the opening scene, when he's on the statue and they pull out; very stirring. He was an excellent filmmaker!

KG: Woody Allen reminded me of him for a long time, up until his recent films.

ED: Yeah; oh, his recent ones are terrible. Did you see Sleeper on TV the other day? Oh, I love that film, great film; the guy's hilarious.

KG: Any other stories you want to tell?

ED: Okay, they're not necessarily funny, but I want to talk about Grease when I first did it, the kind of person Travolta was. I would go up there and all the time he would make it a special point to come over and talk to me. I didn't have any friends; I was a scared little 19-year-old kid, all alone, and I'd be over to the side eating a snowcone or something. John would be surrounded by these fans and all, and he came over and said, "Hi, buddy! How's it doin'?" He called me his buddy all through it, just to show the humanness of the guy; he was such a nice person, and always totally friendly with me, just the nicest actor I ever met. I just wanted to say that he was a great guy.

KG: Right now I want you to talk about anything you want.

ED: Okay. Well, my dad used to beat me when I was a kid; I had a depressed childhood!

KG: (I laugh) Okay. Who are your favorite comedians today?

ED: I like Woody, but I don't like his recent stuff so much, like we've said. Steve Martin's films are terrible but, as a stand-up comic, he was the funniest I've ever seen, but he just doesn't make funny films that well. The Jerk was alright, but the character just doesn't carry in a film as well as in a nightclub, where there's just something funnier about it.

Of course, I love Belushi; that was tragic. Belushi was my favorite on Saturday Night Live, always; he was brilliant.

Robin Williams I was never that into; he never did that much for me. I'm not a big Richard Pryor fan; everybody else is, but not me. He

doesn't concern me much.

Chevy Chase I think is good; his movies aren't good, but on Saturday Night Live he was great. But he has never gotten a movie halfway worthy of him. He plays parts that Cary Grant should've played, like in Foul Play; they're Cary Grant-type roles, and they're not for Chevy.

KG: What are your favorite movies?

ED: Let's see. I love A Hard Day's Night with The Beatles, a classic. I saw the recent rerelease, and it was spooky; it was a half-empty theatre and there were no laughs all the way through; it was almost like going to a museum.

There is a movie called What's Up, Doc? with Barbra Streisand; I love that movie. Hilarious movie; I love that. I love American Graffiti; I think that's good fun.

My favorite Laurel & Hardy is The Music Box; it's perfect! My favorite Three Stooges is Three Little Bears, where they're on the golf course; nine out of ten Curlys are good, but there are a few bad ones. I love Punch Drunks, too; there's just something so magical about Curly.

Recently, like everybody else, I loved E.T.; I've seen it 3 or 4 times. I wasn't real crazy about Close Encounters; it didn't stir me as much.

KG: Is there a director you want to work with, but haven't yet?

ED: I don't know; to be truthful, I'm not that familiar with all the directors, so I couldn't say. It was a thrill working with Steven... Steven was a pleasure, and so was Randall Badat; they are the greatest people...

KG: Bob Zemeckis directed I Wanna Hold and co-wrote 1941. Were you considered for his third film, Used Cars?

ED: I went up for it, but...There was a long story where they had hired me for it but I didn't sign the contract, then I gave an interview to Variety and said that I was already in it. Sally Dennison and they got mad at that; they were upset that I had already given the interview to Variety before I'd signed the contract, and I wasn't in the film because of that; that's the story I heard. You see, they'd told me I was signed for it; they said, "Eddie, we're gonna put you in it." Sally Dennison's a great casting director and she said I was going to be in it, and Zemeckis and Gale gave it the okay, but they didn't like me telling Variety I was already in it, so they got mad. They said, "If you don't sign the contract, it's unprofessional to give that interview." I didn't know; I'd thought I was in it since they'd told me I was. I did actually audition after that, but it didn't go well. But I owe a lot to Sally Dennison; great casting director.

KG: Are there any types of films you haven't worked in, but have always wanted to?

ED: Well, this is a case of something I'm looking forward to in the future: George Bronstein, who produced Surf 2, wants to do another film with me; his dad produced At War with the Army, with Martin & Lewis, and he has the rights to it. He says he wants to do a remake with me in it, so I'm praying that comes through; that could really put me over! Bernie's said he's been talking to him about it, and they said they're working on the project; it'll still be a ways away, but that would be the one that could really put me over. I guess if Surf 2 does half-well they'll do it, but I'm anxious for that project to come about! George Bronstein is one of the nicest guys I've met in the business. (Carmel)

For now, though, I just want to stick to doing comedies—wild slapstick I love—where I can get exposure; I want to be the biggest comedian there is, number one, and I know it's going to happen, but I don't know when. I hope, though, that in '83 things come through for me and it happens; we were really happy to get Surf 2, and it was the first time I've really played a real heavy, too. We were so glad to get first billing! And in the end of the film my laboratory gets destroyed, and all the surfers pull me in on the back of a rubber duck—shows you the quality of the film (laughs). I get captured and end up in a straitjacket; it was fun, though.

KG: Has there been anything else new happening in your career?

ED: Well, they've started a Canadian fan club for me this year; I had a small fan club for me out here and there's one in Houston that have about 14 members apiece in them. I got a letter from Canada that said they have a fan club for me there with 19 members, so that was really exciting for me. I got the letter about a month ago, so I sent back a nice letter with some pictures, and I was very happy about that...

Another influence in my career is Daffy Duck! The greatest cartoon character in history. Bugs got all the attention, but Daffy is the most unacclaimed animated genius there is, the funniest in his time. I also loved the early Droopy cartoons, which Tex Avery drew; he was a genius. One reviewer even said that I look like Ralph Nader and acted like Daffy Duck; I thought that was the nicest review I ever had!

KG: What was your childhood like?

ED: When I was in school, I was in the glee club, and they used to make me move my lips but not sing because I'd throw everybody off; you've never heard me sing, you see. And when I was a little kid I was real hyperactive; the teacher used to literally tie me to my chair in first grade because I was always jumping around. I was always the bad kid, got into a lot of trouble; I got suspended a bunch of times.

Actually, I flunked kindergarten; I'm the only one I know who was in kindergarten for three years! I was just such a real goof-off.

Mom was my teacher in school, and I was so bad in school, a lot of the other teachers wouldn't even talk to Mom, they'd just go up to her and turn their heads away because I was in their class. My big gag in high school: I used to wear a phony water faucet on my head; you had to be there. And I was voted Best Personality in high school in my senior year. That's about it.

KG: Well, thanks a lot, Eddie! Any last words?

ED: Yeah, thanks for the food!

Sayz-U! (Letters)

Dear Elayne,

Well, here's some comments on the last couple Eye-Jays: #41—Swell cover from Brian (I see his stuff in the comics 'zines too)! Mildred's "God's Favorite Thinker" and Luke's "Second Jesus Impersonator" were my favorite this issue; great religious writings, y'know? "Diary of the Rock Fiend" was entertaining as always—the part about sushi a real laff. Astute consumer novelty observations from Mike Dobbs; Ace's "Backwords Logic" panels are just my meat! (Sure wish they appeared in my local newspapers...), and his "Tenderloin" series appeals more to me now: at first it looked like a bunch of nookie stories, but it's real Horatio Alger stuff (?).

Uh...Elayne? What-the-hell was that last panel on that dragon 'toon (p. 8)? Explain, please. (That wasn't a part of *Krystine's* cartoon; it was actually an ad for the *Vossarian Universal News Service* which just didn't print, because they sent it to me on dark reddish paper and that doesn't repro well—sorry.) Sarah M.'s "Crowley Diet" was enlightening, as was Steve's "Out-Aided," and I'm glad to see Cynicalman again. And thankew, Luke and Rick, for your kind words on my 'transmitter' page in #40.

#42—Good 'Miami' cover by Andy, especially "Miami Vicar." Is Oberc's drawing on p. 3 a musical passage? From what piece of music? (I don't think so—Larry has mentioned to me that his submissions are basically just random designs, but I'll put that question to you, LO.) Anni's record ratings were right on the mark, especially placing Michael Jackson in category "Iame." (Actually, it should be Mickey Jackson, now that he's got a Disneyland display. Appropriate, eh?) Anthea's Bunny & Prudence series feels good to my brain—more, please. Backwords Logic: Y'know, Ace's people resemble some weird little rubber people you might buy at Spencer's or Heaven or whatever—or Cabbage Patch dolls, grown up through a hard lifel (You mean like this issue's cover?) Aleister's "Christmas" poem: a spiritual epic. Same for Roddo's illuminated babblings. Hey Steve! Thanks for the "Pollster Panel" 'toon! It wuz neet! Page 13 (!) was well-assembled, with Oberc's "Knock Yourself Out" nuke-death vignette, a real scary Cornejo 'toon right beneath, Tuli's war train thing alongside, and a lil' Sub-Genius ad in the corner...oorg! (Thanks—I do do that on purpose from time to time, in case anybody thought it was coincidental. Can't do it all the time, if I don't get 'related' stuff, but it's real nice to see the efforts acknowledged.) I enjoyed the Whozits animation hospital; maybe Dr. Von Bladder could be a consultant. Tortorici's back covers seem to have a music video theme, yes? Hey Phil, why not draw one where Michael Jackson gets eaten by rats? It could be sensational! Eh?

Don't take any wooden condoms, JOHN P. MORGAN
185 Seabreeze Ave., #4
E. Keansburg, NJ 07734

Elayne,

It's the day after I received IJ 42 and I've already received two responses to your mention of Funhouse. Yikes!

About IJ 42: Great cover! The Zenarchy piece on cars was a little obvious except for the stuff about Ford & GM supplying both sides during WW2. Know where I can get more info on this? The rest of Zenarchy was up to its usual standards. A suggested addition to Anni's record ratings is "IT" (Intellectual Trendie). This is a person/group who follows current artistic/progressive trends such as African poly-rhythms, country-tinged rock (or an earlier manifestation was country-rock; such subtle distinctions make ITs and critics happy), Indian-based modal playing or various types of noise from feedback to scratching. IT is closely related to L.

I'd like to hear more about how those skills Candi mentioned were job-related. Makes me feel kinda left-out because the strangest job-related skill I ever got was being able to tell which household items were flammable or caustic (no, I wasn't a terrorist but a furniture mover).

An interview with Eddie Deezen? Now that's pretty obscure (but definitely welcome). Of course, I was a Harry Dean Stanton fan before he was even a cult figure (though I wasn't country when it wasn't cool).

Sorry, no comment on the stories but I haven't had time to read them yet.

Til later,

LANG THOMPSON
2111 University Blvd. E, Apt. 33
Tuscaloosa, AL 35404

Dear Elayne:

When are you going to full color covers? You can't do MIAMI VICE without pastels. All of us here in South Florida thank you, Mr. Amster, for such a neat cover.

I hope this back cover reproduces better than the last two. Of course I won't know until I get the next IJ, and then it will be too late. I can get the hint about the semi-gratuitous stuff, for crying out loud. I've been descended upon by Women Against Pornography three times this week (real bad for business) and Tipper Gore wants to have a senate investigation about smut in the small press.

And speaking of Tipper Gore and the rest of the Gore, Gore Girls I thought Anni's piece was up to snuff (I am not fond of that genre either). I concur with the rating system she proposed, and have a few thoughts of my own to add. Basically, on any of the newer music that is released, there should be a warning label stating who or where this artist ripped off his style from and naming the songs where the plagiarism is very apparent. Gosh, I could do a radio show about that and call it "Say, I've Heard That Song Before..."

I really enjoyed Chapter Four of Ace's piece. It reminds me of the time I was head over heels in love with the little Baptist girl, coming up on twelve years ago.

I took that 'Eighties Man' test, and found out that I rate only up to 1975.

The "Rambo" and "Beatles" cartoons were cute. I wish I could do gag cartoons instead of drawing strange, pointless cartoons.

"Knock Yourself Out" and "Skinning The Cat" were real good, too. I can identify with the Dave character in "Sands and the Glass" (these are the Days of Our Lives). Being a college-educated furniture finisher, myself, I wistfully think of how nice it would be to have an office, wear a tie, and actually have some intelligent (or at least attractive) co-workers to have lunch with for a change. There are times, when I am not running around like a speed-freak, when I can actually stop what I am doing, and look at a finished piece of furniture—one that I have transformed from junk into something very beautiful—and say to myself that I did that. A piece of me will live on for a long time in the work that I have just completed, and that is something that you can't receive from the nine to five. I have to remember to stop and look more often.

Television is a habit, or at this time a luxury, which I can ill-afford. I just can't seem to arrange my schedule to include much of the little buggar (though I do try to squeeze in *Prairie Home Companion*, except during college football season—Go Nofes!). I try to watch the movie versions of *Doctor Who* on Saturday night, when I can, which means I have to be home at eleven p.m. It is a good thing I am married—I don't know how I would explain to a hot babe that I gotta be home by eleven to watch TV. Maybe I'll get lucky and get a VCR for Christmas. (Hint, Barbara.) My taste runs to reruns of *The Gong Show*, or anything Chuck Barris produces, *Divorce Court*, and *The Peoples Court*. As much as I like the look of *Miami Vice*—and I do—I find it hard to stay awake that long on Fridays. Besides, I do not want to be anywhere near the TV when Dallas is spewing out of the tube (moving along on your living room floor). At least she doesn't read *Harlequin Romances*.

Well, that's about it for now...Thanks for making me a staff member—it has impressed the heck out of my science fiction-type friends—and I promise no more tits. I wouldn't want you to change the name of the mag to INSIDE STROKE.

Yours,

PHIL TORTORICI
P.O. Box 057487
West Palm Beach, FL 33405

(You know, the more I think about this hang-up of mine and the trouble it's led me into, the more I believe I should go all out to make fun of my attitude for good. What say, folks, should we put out a Sex-n-Smut Special Issue of IJ [we could even call it INSIDE STROKE]? Let me know what you think of the idea in next issue's letter column. It'd be totally separate from our regular issues, of course, but I do foresee a definite problem with me being able to type the thing up and lay it out without blushing and crawling under my little desk...)

Hullo Elayne—

The lack of verbal strife in the IJ letters section is a hopeful sign that we are attracting a more civil and (dare I dream?) perhaps even more intelligent readership. It is not even totally immodest to consider that my mock-war with Ace Backwords, which almost everyone now realizes was a pre-arranged put-on in the classic Andy Kaufman style (it was? goah—ew), was a contributing factor to this most agreeable trend.

Whatever the reason, it is pleasant to be able to read the letters without being annoyed by immature lack-wits too lazy and unimaginative to use any method other than gormless egos. These self-appointed "critics" are the literary equivalent of the sort of mentality that takes a rifle into a tower and blasts away at anything that moves while a four-year-old in his brain shouts "Look'a me! Look'a me!"

Even more encouraging is to not see other readers lured into word-battle with these insecure egotists. It is a true sign of developing intelligence when one finds oneself capable of recognizing that the slurs of these pitiable cretins are not even genuine insults (to give "criticism" its proper name) but rather pointless remarks made solely as a ploy to become the focus of a controversy.

I devoutly hope I've conquered my baser instincts to where I could simply ignore such trivial primate tactics.

Let us hope that this most propitious trend will continue and some day IJ's letters section will become a forum where intelligent ideas can be discussed in a mature manner. It is, after all, clearly represented as a publication concerned with Comedy and Creativity. For those who find these concepts beyond their limited tastes can always turn to the *Reader's Digest* or some similar source of rhetoric and banality. Surely we have had more than enough of this low-ball complaining by semi-conscious near-illiterates who avoid facing their own stupidity by passing the blame on to the creator of whatever passeth their understanding. One does not, after all, bark back at the neighbour's Pekinese.

Unless, of course, one happens to be in a whimsical mood.

Make Light Of It—

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

Greetings Elayne,

and I do mean season's. See, sometimes I do keep up with things. Just got the last IJ, good thing 'cuz I was almost outta kitty-pan liner, and I hate it when the cat gets pissed off. So, as usual there was some good stuff in there. ROCK FIEND DIARY was grate. That's gotta be the best censoring guidelines I seen yet except for none which leaves a lotta crap on the shelves (not to mention videos), but then how does anyone get rid of THAT crap?

JOURNEY THROUGH TENDERLOIN—What can I say. It's become my pet 'cuz I feel like sometimes Ace has been living (or at least writing about)

my life here. That last paragraph hit real close to my gut 'cuz I felt it and that's 'cuz it was real to me. Good writing tends to do that...Take care, take subways (FL ain't got 'em), and I'll see ya next ish.

Beastingly,

RICK McCANN, now D.A. BEAST
P.O. Box 2842
Winter Park, FL 32790

Good Morning Campers!

Here's my stuff for I.J. # Whatever the Hell It Is. I gotta rush forth and say how gladdened I am, Elayne, that you took notice of the fab gear show, YOUNG ONES. I don't know that I could do without "the boys" now that they are such an integral part of my life. I am very partial to Neal, of course, old hippie that I am—but hey, Viv is cute too—the best thing about THE YOUNG ONES is what is best about anything—that it is capable of anything, you don't know what will happen. Everything—from Viv's hamster to the rotting vegetables in the fridge—has a voice, an opinion. THE YOUNG ONES reminds me of the best times I had on acid. My life used to be like this all the time all the time all the time Uh...where was I? Tierra del Fuego? Nah...oh yah—England! THE YOUNG ONES is so good, so wonderful, so perfect for me and my mind, that I just know it will get cancelled and I won't get to see it again. They'll find out how much I love it and they'll take it away from me, just like they did with dark chocolate Milky Way bars. But I must say how much I love it and what it means to me. No, I never have a moment's trouble understanding the British; acquainted with the Goons from an early age helps with this. This show must be watched every time—to get into the rhythm and the characters—it's not a one-shot show. There are about 100 "inside jokes" on the show and the continuity is important, so if you've tuned in once and said, "WHAT!?!? THIS IS OUTRAGE!!!" don't give it up—let the boys worm their slimy ways into your heart. My favorite episode, so far, was the one where Rik didn't know what a tampon was, and held it up, playing with it—he thought he was being damned clever and amusing. And where else can one see four virgins denying their virginity? Even Mike is a virgin. Tho' he behaves like a know-it-all Lothario, he's not. WATCH THIS SHOW and if it's not on any of your tv stations, MOVE!

I'm not gonna say anything about Ace Barkwoods (that ain't a typo)—except that Anni said it best. I liked IJ 42's cover—except Mr. Amster forgot my fave, Miami Madonna MannaBes on MTV. I liked Anni's stuff, as usual—may I add TCBHMG—Tiresome Cover By Bad Heavy Metal Group—an epidemic these days. Roldo's stuff was splendid, loved your TV reviews, Elayne—'cept we part company on the scary stuff, which I adore. ALL the cartoons were very good and I didn't notice any nudity, but then, I grew up in California so...

Want also to announce that I am finally compiling THE POE ENCYCLOPAEDIA—a massive tome of everything Poe-pertinent, in collaboration with a fine Canadian illustrator, T. Roldo of Winnipeg. It may be finished by the time Halley's Comet comes round again. But let it be known that this Poe scholar is finally gonna show off, if anybody cares. No, the Rolling Stone poem hasn't appeared yet, even tho' I got paid for it ages ago. What can you say about a publication that now owns US magazine?

Let's face the face,

DEBORAH BENEDICT, Stuck On The
854 Y Street /// Border
Lincoln, NE 68508

Dear Elayne,

#42 of IJ just arrived. Ackner's piece would have done Zappa proud. YU has a rating system for records, too. We propose that all album jackets be wired with sensitive exploding devices that go off whenever an album is handled by a minor. But the system needs to be perfected. Many young people have already had their hands blown off and their faces punctuated with shrapnel after picking up albums by Mitch Miller, Tony Orlando and certain albums of Richard Thomas reading his own poetry. And these records weren't even wired.

Seems we're getting quite a few inquiries from individuals who mistakenly believe YU is a newsletter that anyone can subscribe to. YU was never that and doesn't plan to be. As you know, we're offering a service to publications—any size, any circulation.

Since we're growing, we're putting together more progressive packages for publications; dispatches can be ordered in several different ways, along with features and an exclusive option on certain material (first right of purchase).

We are, however, going ahead with our plan to issue YU Press cards to anyone. They'll be official Press cards, laminated with photo, clip and chain. There will also be a Press Kit: Press Card, Auto Press Card and Press button. The news is not something to be taken seriously. Especially today. Or is that the other way around?

Anyway, the Press Cards are a way for individuals to support us (those who want to, at least) and receive something that will identify them as "members of the Press"—YU's extension into the Sixth Estate (everything comes in threes). The cards will probably sell for a flat \$10 fee. Cheap, considering where the card is likely to get the holder whenever it's flashed or worn. But if people really want one, they'll now know how to get one. I'll send complete info when they're available...Merry Christmas. We like what you're doing and can appreciate the time involved in doing it. YU wants to be IJ's "official news service." So far we haven't seen any of our stories in IJ—just promos which are deceiving to individuals. This probably wasn't intentional, but until your readers see for themselves what YU is via our stories, the confusion is bound to continue.

Suggestion? Put YU on your masthead. Go ahead. Take a chance. Let the world know you're a subscriber to the only news service worth subscribing to. As far as Ligi and I are concerned, if IJ gives us a regular forum, IJ will get a lifetime sub to YU. Both of us are small press people, going back 20 years collectively. There are cer-

tain alternative publications we'll continue to support.

Take care and stay strong,

PAUL FERICANO
YOSSARIAN UNIVERSAL NEWS SERVICE
P.O. Box 236
Millbrae, CA 94030

(Thanks so much for clearing up all the confusion, Paul—even I was perplexed about what the arrangements should be around here. With any luck at all, the oversights have been corrected starting with this issue and the promos have been discontinued. As for the "masthead" bit, I take it you meant our editorial box, and hope the to-be-permanent plug is to your liking [if not, how do you think it should be worded?]. IJ is more than proud to rely solely on YU for "all the news to give you fits."

Also, readers might be interested in Paul's poetry 'branch', Poor Souls Press, which is mentioned in "Fan Noose." Hope I didn't screw up this plug, Paul!

Dear Elayne,

Of course, by the time this letter (and the accompanying column) get into IJ's own typeface, there will be no proof left of the fact that they are, in their own tiny way, historic documents, the first things written entirely on my new typewriter, The Tank, so I did want to point it out just for the record, and because I felt something ought to mark the retirement of my good, old Eileen. Poor Eileen—she gave me many years of faithful service, and it was decidedly not her fault that she was born a manual and so could no longer keep up with the pace required for my output. I really did hate to have to put her out to pasture—no more than did she, however—but she was retired with all due honours and formality, and we both rest assured that, should the need arise (as it did the first week I owned the Tank, when he had to go into the shop to be fixed—pray for warranties), she is willing and ready to be pressed into service again. For awhile I did think of giving her to some new writer who needed a good typer (and she is, after all, an Olivetti Lettra 23, the Queen of Manual Portables) but didn't require the volume I do, but, in point of fact, as selfish as it may be, I simply can't bear to part with her, and so she relaxes in indolent splendour in her case, which we both prefer to think of as her own little condo in some typewriter Boca Raton.

As to the Tank now, well, he is something. A massive reconditioned IBM electric, circa sometime in the late forties (though with entirely new innards), his real name is Thor, but he has earned his nickname because of his sheer size, appearance of hefty strength, and his unmistakable resemblance to a college linebacker. Every time I look at him (and it's hard not to; he does dominate a room, and particularly my tiny writing table) I can just hear a squadron of cheerleaders chanting "Tank, Tank, he's our man/if he can't do it, no one can!", while the crowd goes crazy. And he can do so many things Eileen can't do, as much as it pains me to admit it. He can tab, and has repeating keys, and you return his carriage by pressing a button instead of having to push the thing manually and, oh dear, but I can type so much faster on him than I can on Eileen. Besides, he's one of the few things left in this world that's older than I am, so naturally I have a great deal of respect for him. He's also the first male typewriter (it's quite easy to tell, if you know how) I've had in over a decade, so it's taken me a little while to adjust to his massive structure after being used to Eileen's more delicate lines—the first night I had him I woke up and thought someone had inadvertently parked a BMW on my desk. Still and all, though, this, my friends, is a TYPEWRITER, and I hope that he and I will do moderately great things together.

And the very first thing we're going to do is comment on IJ #42. Starting at the very beginning, Andy Amster once again has my kudos for an outrageously good cover—I'm no great fan of MIAMI VICE, which strikes me as a good excuse to play rock videos without having to pay a VJ (which, judging solely by the ones on MTV, isn't such a bad idea at that), so you can imagine what MIAMI VICAR did for me. All my usual favourites were here this month, the cartoons were good, and I enjoyed the IJ Trivia Quiz, even though I flunked (the only ones I got right were about me, Brian, the Ever-Popular and the IJ hats. Oh well...).

Oh, but now this really is unfortunate. Here I was about to say that this portion of JOURNEY THROUGH THE TENDERLOIN was the best one I'd seen thus far, and there goes Ace being mean to me again. I'll look an awful fool if I say something nice to him now, won't I, like one of those Pollyanna sorts that goes about returning good for evil until everyone wants to smash her. But it was a pretty good piece, at that, so what am I to do—a terrible dilemma. By the way, ~~Amster~~—(Oh no, would you believe the typewriter went down again? I do love him, but he seems to be turning into a bit of a lemon.) Anyway, as I was saying, Ace old sock, I do have a tremendous amount of love and respect for you, especially because of your decision to live on the West Coast which, by my estimation, is about 4000 miles away from here...

But I'd better stop and see what I can do to succor the poor Tank (short of throwing him bodily out the window, which was my first impulse). We may just see the permanent return of Eileen yet.

Brokenly,

ANNI ACKNER

The Hotel New Jersey

Dear E—

Sorry about missing yer deadline again...I'll try to pick up the pace. (Hey, no sweat here, it's just that from now on, if'n you're late, the bit doesn't get in. I can't hold up production for one person anymore, it's not fair. That's what the word "deadline" means.)

Best piece this time was the hilarious "80's Man" by Dobbs. Your request for more comedy seems to have paid off. The Rambo cartoon was great too. Do you think it would be okay if I reprinted that in another fazine I write for? (I don't know, let's ask J.P....)

E., I know my novel isn't your cup of tea, but I hope you'll bare [sic] with me and let me have my say. It's a sensitive subject but 121

feel I've handled it with taste and restraint. I keep picturing the kid as a teenage Dustin Hoffman...

Congrats on your UTNE READER piece. That's a really fine mag. One of my faves—always inneresting stuff in there. Just about the only "pro" mag that I know of that retains its "from-the-ground-up" feel.

Well, I gotta go.

I am not Ann Lebowitz, I am ACE BACKWORDS
1630 University Ave., #26
Berkeley, CA 94703

Dear Elayne,

As usual, there were a lot of goodies in the current IJ...a quick rundown is in order.

Ann's jab at rating records was appreciated...this is going to be more complicated than anyone, aside from Ms. Ackner, really can guess.

I'm not sure what to think about Ace Backwords' latest installment of JOURNEY THROUGH THE TENDERLOIN. While I can certainly sympathize with the main character, there is something lacking to the story to really make it special.

Mildred Neptune's column was quite funny and quite true, while Susan Packie's story a little predictable. SKINNING THE CAT was a treat, as was the interview with Eddie Deezen. By the way, SURF TWO can currently be found in the public domain videotape bins, selling for about \$10. Deezen is fine in it, but it's a really bad movie.

I really wanted SANDS AND THE GLASS to be funny, but it wasn't, and I thought Sarah Mowney had missed an opportunity. When her character made the rueful remark about identifying with the characters of HILL STREET BLUES and then remembering how he had been harassed by a cop, you have to realize that this guy hasn't grown up at all. There are good cops and bad cops in life and as an adult, one should be able to understand this relatively simple fact. It was impossible for me to take this guy seriously even though I'm certainly not a Yuppie. (I'm afraid I have to agree with Sarah rather than you on this one, Mike. Even though I myself have had friends who just happen to have been cops [a couple of whom have even been IJ subscribers], and even though I'm aware of the no-nos of sweeping generalizations, AND even though you P.A. and I disagree on the subject as well—still and all, I can't help but look at The Uniform as The Enemy. I mean, I can't watch cop shows either [except for Barney Miller reruns]. There may indeed be swell, wonderful people underneath the blues and badges, but once the accoutrements go on, I've found that most of the humanity evaporates. I think humanizing the role of the police by pointing out the obvious presence of a person in there, somewhere, comes dangerously close to letting down one's guard—and after my brief encounter with the same scum who killed Michael Stewart, I'd rather be stereotyping and safe than "liberal-minded" and sorry.)

Great graphics this issue as well...loved the "Beatrice" cartoon as well as the cat on top of the fridge on page 18. Cynicalman was excellent as was the front cover. Loved the IJ quiz...currently WHCT of Hartford is running UNCLE FLOYD every weeknight and I'd love to learn just how IJ came about more. (Well, perhaps someday in these very pages, if there's enough interest...)

Slack...

MIKE DOBBS
24 Hampden Street
Indian Orchard, MA 01151

THRILL SPORTS OF THE FUTURE: FLYING THE L.A. FREEWAY by Bob Warner

In 1958, Edwin L. ("Speedy") Firebird Invented the ultimate In thrill sports: Flying the L.A. Freeway. It was a very inexpensive sport, requiring no equipment whatsoever. In fact, about all it did require was that a participant be absolutely fearless, a latent suicide, and possess an I.Q. of 16 or below. The rules were very simple: (1) During peak traffic hour, dash out into the center of any lane of traffic; (2) stand with back to oncoming traffic; (3) stretch both arms high overhead, and wait. Usually, one did not have long at all to wait before he or she flew briefly, Superman-wise, for about fifty yards.

WARNING: For any sports enthusiasts who might contemplate reviving this ancient sport, statistics show clearly that it was strictly a one-shot thrill.

...or not TV by ye editrix

Part II—Not a heck of a lot to add, I find. I'm now being told by my television that the show to watch is Growing Pains, but honestly, I still have trouble even envisioning myself sitting down to a half-hour of Alan Thicke, so you all will have to fill me in on it.

Likewise, I made up my mind that I was going to try and watch my fill of Saturday morning cartoons at last, but couldn't seem to sit still for Hulk Hogan's Rock 'n' Wrestling (although I'm sure you wrestling fans out there would love it—alas, though, I can but assume) or Punky Brewster (a sickening enough show in live action). I did scope things like Ewoks and Droids and Gummi Bears, and while I certainly expected a bit more in the way of innovative animation from

Social Renegades! Superior Mutants!

The NORMALS form a vast conspiracy against the "DIFFERENT."

the likes of Disney and Lucasfilm, at least the plots are okay, for cartoons.

Galactic Guardians is the latest incarnation of the DC superheroes, and they've added favorite love-to-hate villains like Darkseid and company and teen heroes like Firestorm instead of the stupidity they used to have with those awful tagalong kids. It's neat, but it's always better if you've read the comic books and can figure out what's what every now and then. (In no way, however, does this mean you'll get internal consistency—it just helps with character.) Not bad, but they still can't beat Marvel Productions...

They've got to be the ones behind Spiderman and the Hulk cartoons, I'm assuming (I should scope those credits better, sorry), as those characters are patented and all—why, then, do I keep hearing the names Scheimer and Prescott echoing in my head? I could be wrong. In any case, Marvel Productions (for which I have a soft spot in my heart because Steve and I got to visit the place in California and meet a lot of animators, courtesy Valentino, and even got a glimpse of Stan-the-Man Lee) is responsible for such plot-filled gems as Dungeons & Dragons—aren't they in their second or third season already? It just keeps getting better, plot and animation alike, and it's funny to hear the voices of Ralph Malph and whatever character Willie Ames used to play.

Two of the most satisfying Sat. morning shows are live action ones—the repeat showings of the Land of the Lost series are just as So-Bad-It's-Hilarious as they were the first time around (poor David Gerrold); and CBS Storybreak features a live Bob Keeshan and animated tales anthologized out of things they used to call books. Storybreak is, bar none, the most quality and fun offering for kids around.

Okay, maybe bar one. God, I get so annoyed when sheer talent alone forces me to extoll Jim Henson, but he simply can't be overlooked. Muppets, etc. is a pure winner, from start to finish. It's not overly cutesy, it's just neat, and its underlying theme has always been "this is what you can do with your imagination." Imagination is what the show's about—how can you argue with that?

As for new weekday and -night entries, what can you say about a medium that cancels George Burns Comedy Week and retains Misfits of Science? The former would've been a hit in a non-graveyard time slot, but the only thing that'll lift the latter out of tv toilet-dom is, oh, you know, a basic plot or something.

I finally saw an episode of Miami Vice, the one that guest-starred Phil Collins. Phil was a piss, and it was nice to see him act (he hasn't done so since the London premiere of Oliver!, wherein he was the Artful Dodger, to give one an idea of timespan here), but it would've been nice to give him a plot too. I mean, what the hell do people see in this show? I've never been so bored in my life, even when Phil took his shirt off. Are there really folks out there who think this exciting? I'm sorry, I just don't understand anything anymore.

And Golden Girls (CBS, 8pm EST) really is as good as they've been reviewing, thank goodness. I'm already prejudiced in favor of female protagonists anyway, but it's even better when they talk and act like real people (even the somewhat surreal character played by Estelle Getty). Lotsa fun.***

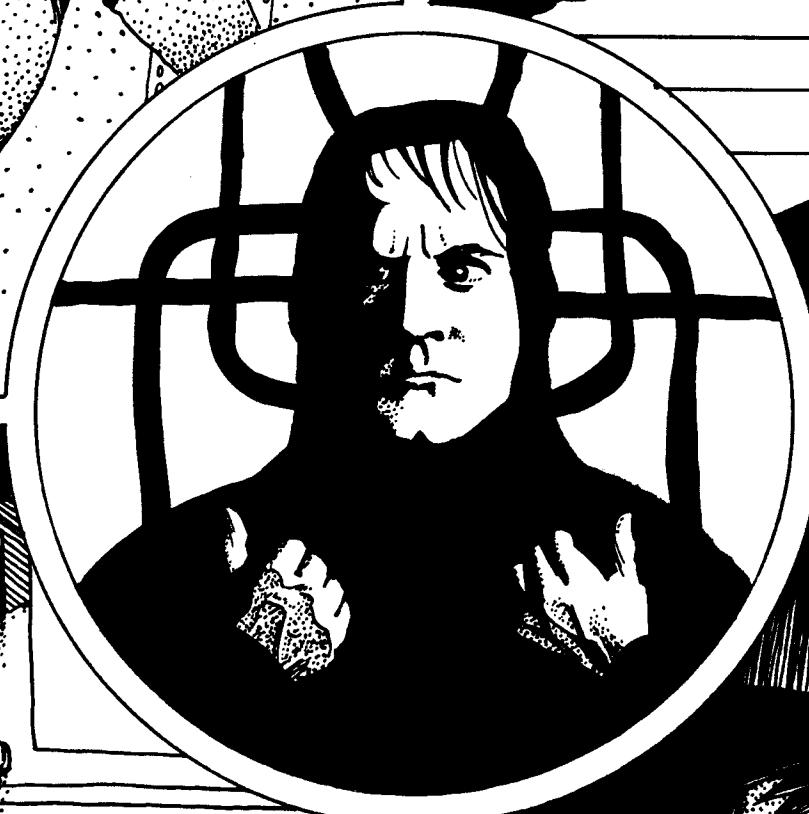
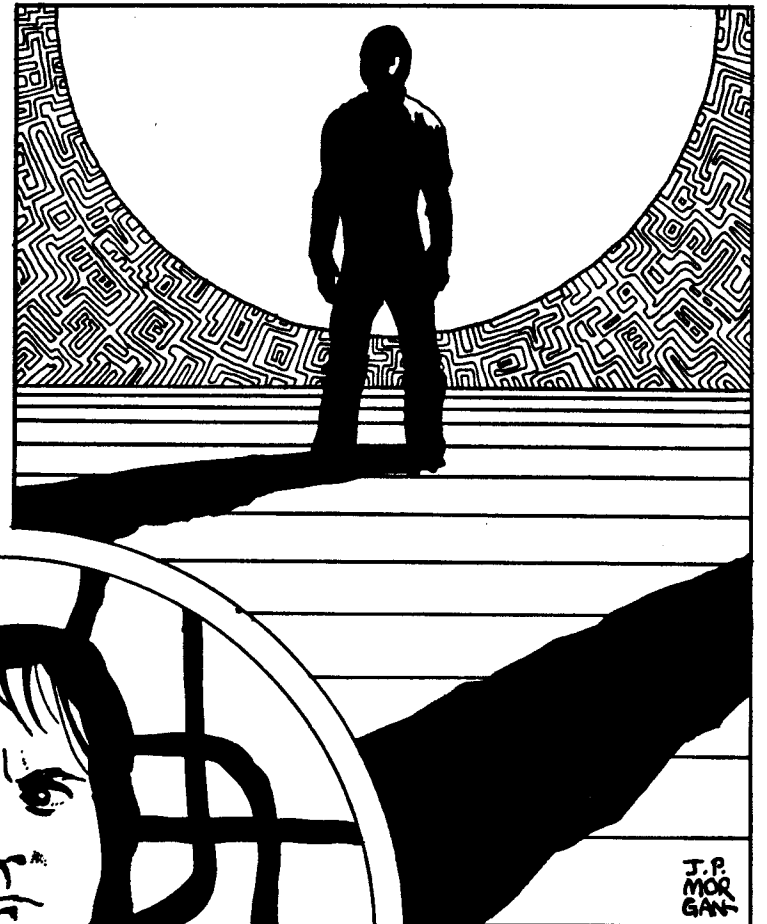
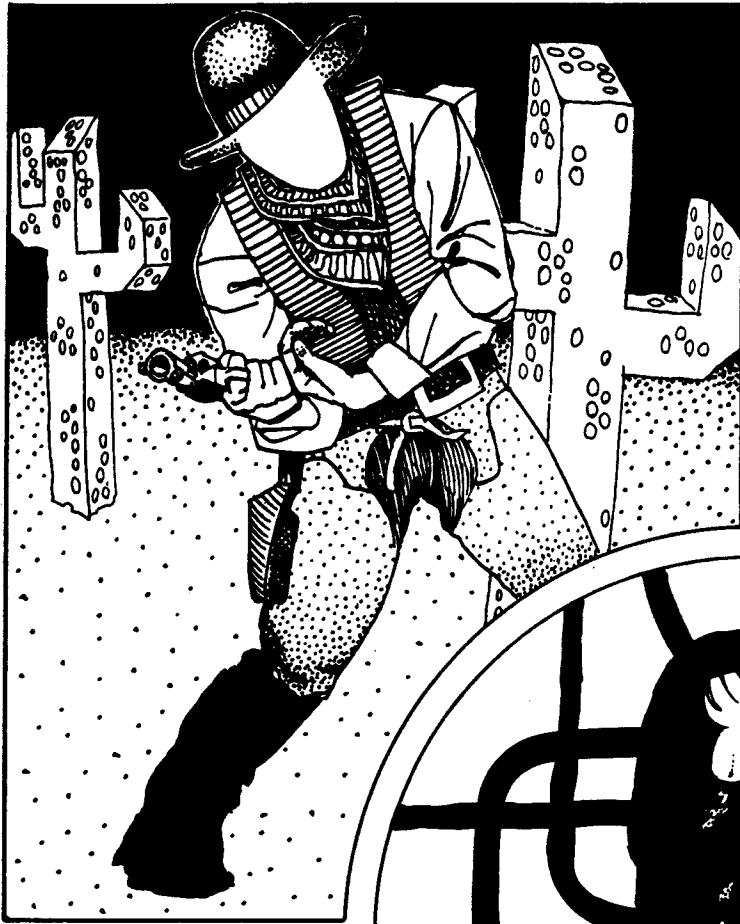
Valerie Harper's newie isn't slated to bow until March, but her old pal Mary Tyler Moore is, as just about everyone in the tube-watching country knows by now, off and running. Okay, off and jogging—ratings are pretty tepid so far. Which is a shame, 'cause this has every bit the potential the old MTM had. And it's got John Astin looking like Gomez again and acting weirder, and a character named Jo who reminds one quite strongly of a certain witty, acerbic, sophisticated commentator on the American scene, I need not mention names. Okay, it's got James Farentino as well, but I'll give it *** anyway.

Someone else must tell me how Foley Square is, because I'm watching the 2nd book of Tripods on PBS now, which is much more interesting, I'd warrant.

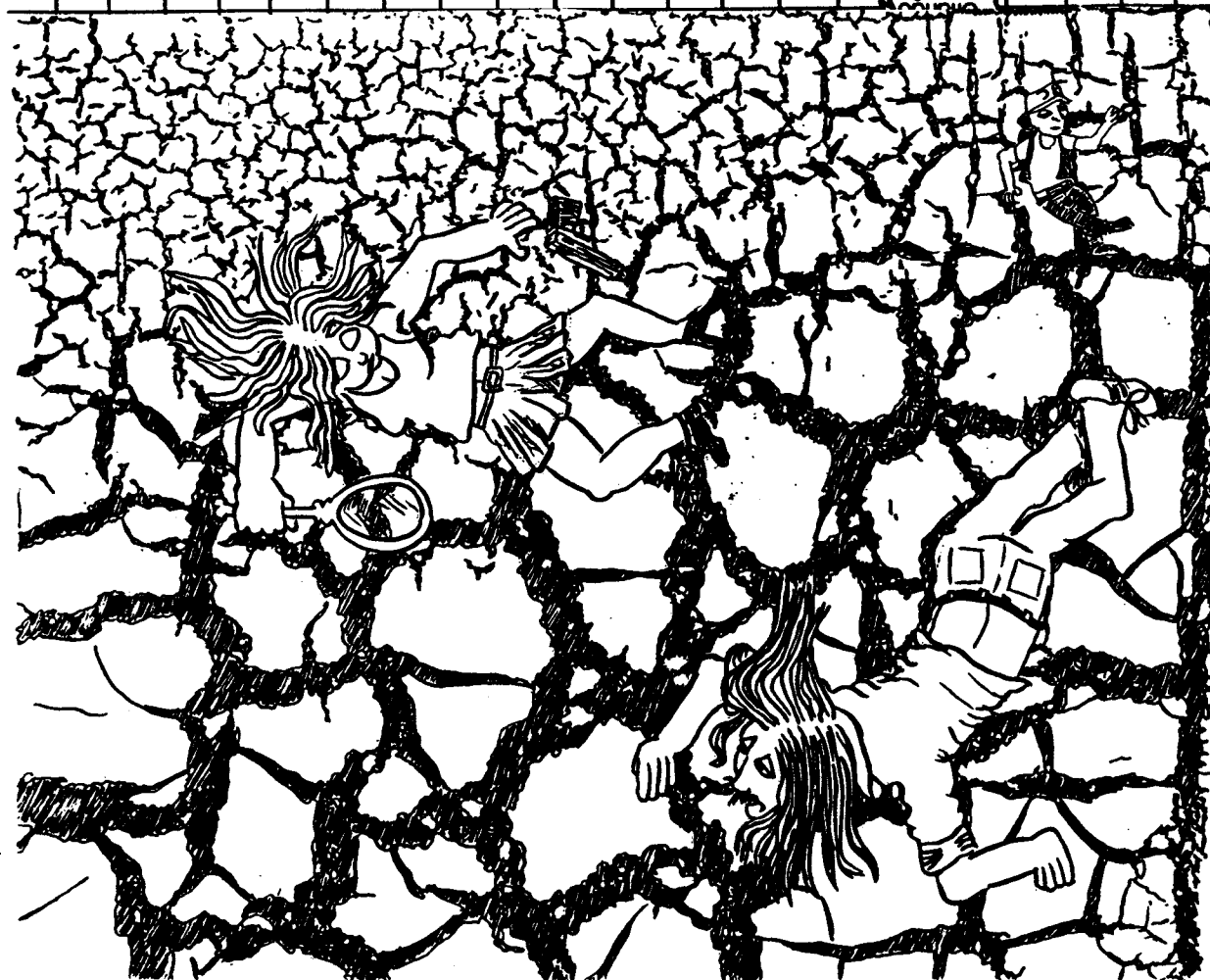
Tune in next time, where I'm bound to say something idiotic in favor of an old sentimental weakness, Love, American Style. And you thought having the Newlywed Game back was bad!

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A map of the state of Florida with five locations marked: Tampa, St. Petersburg, Sarasota, Fort Pierce, and West Palm Beach. The locations are distributed across the state, with Tampa and St. Petersburg in the north, Sarasota in the northeast, Fort Pierce in the central region, and West Palm Beach in the southeast.



AND CALL TO YOU, P's
ACROSS THE SKIES...