

INSIDE JOK

• A NEWSLETTER OF COMEDY AND •
• CREATIVITY! •

#44

\$1.00

AHA!

oops!

ZISH

THE ADVENTURES OF

FISSION CHICKEN®

ARE NOT IN THIS ISSUE

'86

©

J.P.
MOR
GAN

ACKNOWLEDITORIALETC.

So, did anybody happen to be home watching game shows around Feb. 4, 5 and 6 and see *Sale of the Century* where they gave away this gorgeous 1986 white Porsche to some guy named Gene Wechsler, in addition to tons of other gifts from three days' work/play? Well, wonder no more—mucho congratulations to you, brother mine, and just

-UPCOMING EVENTS-

- MARCH 15 - DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO IJ #45, plus GALA IJ PARTY-FOR-A-THOUSAND-REASONS, BYO, 8pm or so, Apt. 31, call (718) 435-7281 for directions, details, etc. (Please RSVP ASAP and all those initials)**
- MARCH 17 - DALE ASHMUN (39)**
- MARCH 19 - Patrick McGoohan (57); Philip Roth (52)**
- MARCH 20 - B.F. Skinner (b. 1904); Fred Rogers (58)**
- MARCH 21 - Johann Sebastian Bach (b. 1685)**
- MARCH 22 - Chico Marx (b. 1882)**
- MARCH 24 - Fatty Arbuckle (b. 1887); Mom (older than me)**
- MARCH 25 - Elton John (39); Gloria Steinem (51)**
- MARCH 26 - Leonard Nimoy (?); Bob Elliott (62)**
- MARCH 28 - GENE WECHSLER (27 and a Porsche already!)**
- MARCH 30 - Vincent Van Gogh (b. 1853)**
- APRIL 1 - Official IJ Holiday—April Fool's Day; Lon Chaney Sr. (b. 1883); Rusty Staub (42)**
- APRIL 2 - Max Ernst (b. 1891); Hans Christian Anderson (b. 1805)**
- APRIL 5 - Bette Davis (78)**
- APRIL 6 - PHIL AUSTIN (45); Harry Houdini (b. 1874)**
- APRIL 7 - Wordsworth (b. 1770)**
- APRIL 8 - Julian Lennon (23); Mary Pickford (b. 1893)**
- APRIL 9 - Tom Lehrer (58)**
- APRIL 11 - CAROLYN LEE BOYD (31?)**
- APRIL 12 - David Cassidy (36)**
- APRIL 13 - Thomas Jefferson (b. 1743)**
- APRIL 14 - Paul Krassner (52)**
- APRIL 15 - DOROTHY RAPPAPORT PACKIE (b. 1915)**
- APRIL 16 - KRISTIN PROCTOR (9); Spike Milligan (68); Charlie Chaplin (b. 1889)**
- APRIL 17 - KERRY THORNLEY (48)**
- APRIL 18 - San Francisco earthquake, 1906**
- APRIL 20 - Harold Lloyd (b. 1894)**
- APRIL 23 - Roy Orbison (50); Shirley Temple (58)**
- APRIL 24 - Shirley MacLaine (52 in this life)**
- APRIL 25 - Edward R. Murrow (b. 1908); Marconi (b. 1874)**
- APRIL 26 - William Shakespeare (b. 1564)**
- APRIL 30 - MATT HOUSEHOLDER (31); Alice B. Toklas (b. 1877); DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO IJ #46**

- *****
- * INSIDE JOKE is put on hexaweekly by Elayne "Yahoo, the P.A.'s"
 - * Finally Home to Help Out With Mailing This" Wechsler and some dear
 - * friends, and emanates from beautiful downtown Brooklyn, home of the
 - * much-robbed Chase Manhattan Bank featured in "Dog Day Afternoon"
 - * (fascinating, these little facts dredged up about Brooklyn, huh?).
 - * Writes revert to wrighters, or something like it.
 - * EDITOR-IN-RESIDENCE.....ELAYNE WECHSLER
 - * PRODUCTION ASSISTANT FINALLY BACK-IN-RESIDENCE.....STEVEN CHAPUT
 - * (DEAD)HEAD XEROGRAPHER....."UNCLE WIGGLY"

STAFF WRITERS/ARTISTS

- *****
- * ANNI ACKNER-----DEBORAH BENEDICT-----ALIX BISHOFF
 - * --RORY HOUCHEMS-----PETER LABRIOLA-----GARY LIGI--
 - * J.P. MORGAN-----LAWRENCE OBERC-----SUSAN PACKIE
 - * --GEORG PATTERSON-----ROLDOL-----STEVEN SCHARFF--
 - * KERRY THORNLEY-----PHIL TORTORICI-----A.J. WRIGHT

COVER BY J.P. MORGAN - INSIDE BACK COVER COURTESY OF LUKE MCGUFF

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS THIS ISSUE:

- *****
- | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| ANDY AMSTER | VERNON GRANT | ROGER MORRIS |
| JEANNE ANDERSON | NANCY KANGAS | STACY SOLLFREY |
| D.A. BEAST | TULI KUPFERBERG | DORIAN TENORE |
| TOM CORNEJO | ARABELLA LYON | BOB WARNER |
| TOM GEDWILLO | JAMES MACDOUGALL | SIGMUND WEISS |
| GARY PIG GOLD | RANDY MAXSON | and "KID" SIEVE |

Ads furnished by J.C. Brainbeau, Not Available Comics, and the Church of the SubGenius

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Writers'/Artists' Guidelines available for SASE; Back issues available for \$1 each

promise me you'll let me ride in it sometime, okay?

Of course we have it on tape. I've become semi-addicted to my VCR. I'm not sure I want a cure, if you know what I mean.

By the time you get this, IJ Production Asst. Steven Chaput will be back home at Apt. Third-Eye here in Brooklyn, and he has agreed, tentatively, to put together our special Sex-n-Smut issue of INSTIDE STROKE only if and when reaction becomes overwhelmingly in favor of such a venture. It has to be this way—I probably couldn't look at the stuff long enough to type it! Kip M. Ghesin has also made it known that s/he will have a hand in this misbegotten venture. We, I keep wondering how I get myself into these things...

Yes, Virginia (and all you other states), there WILL be another Gala IJ Party, this one on Saturday, March 15. Coincidentally (or not-so-), this is also the deadline for our next issue, #45, with a nifty cover by Margo already waiting and which will hit your mailboxes, if we can stick to our timing, right before yours truly hits the hospital bed (I'll save what little morbidity there is for next issue, natch). But, until such time, why not have a blowout—especially with so many things to celebrate! I mean, baseball season is finally coming back, along with spring (if we're lucky), the Ides of March, St. Patty's Day, the P.A.'s return, etc. etc., so please give us a call (collect, if you can't afford the bucks) if you're at all interested in attending, okay? We're here at the HELP-AT-1 Hotline; that's (718) 435-7281...

A brief word about deadlines, while I'm on the subject. Unfortunately, the service at the Palatial P.O. appears to be getting worse, so I'd like to make the following proposition (oh dear, no, that's not what I meant...c'mon, folks): If you have had habitual trouble making our deadline (and you few know who you are, I guess), you might consider sending me a number of pieces (4 or 5 or more) at the same time, thereby clearing yourself of the pressure of last-minute timing, and I'd of course let you know when your "stack" was running out. Or, if you know you'll be late in a specific month, or cutting it short (and "short" is defined as mailing your submission out the day before or the day of the deadline, since mail isn't reaching me for a span of just about a week, in some cases), call me and we'll arrange for mailing to my office (Fed. Xcess or the like). By the way, my office address is the one you might think of using if any of you out there send me packages via UPS, since UPS doesn't deliver to p.o. boxes and I'm not at Homebase IJ during the day to accept packages. This situation may change depending on the working hours of M. Chaput, but I thought I'd let you know the options.

The wonderful news on the staffer front is the re-emergence of Alix and/or Prudence from a bizarre situation while in England of never having had her mail (including some neat IJ submissions) reach any of its destinations. She's back in the States now, though, so the only problem we anticipate is—well, the U.S. Snail...

The only staffer remiss this time is Mike Dobbs, who will return next issue, along with Anni's letter-to-the-editor when this flu epidemic passes over...There are, though, a goodly amount of letters this time, in addition to lots of first-time-to-IJ contributors like Dorian Tenore, Sigmund Weiss, Roger Morris, Gary Pig Gold and the members of Dr. E.V. Ignacio Ligi's Portland Pataphysical Outpatient Clinic, Lounge, and Laundromat, and the return of Randy Maxson and Andy Amster's Celebrity Home Computers and, oh, why spoil it all? Oh yes, and welcome as well first-timers James MacDougall and Nancy Kangas, both fine editors in their own right...

And speaking of editors, if you happen to run a one-page sheet, one of those I can't really consider an "equivalent" publication-for-trade with IJ (due to inequities in size, postage, etc.), our policy has now changed to the extent that I will trade for your publication if you send me the pub + a 39¢ stamp, okay? All other editors (those I do consider "equivalent"), no change, we still trade either 1-for-1 (for less frequent publications) or all-for-all (for you monthlies and bi-monthlies and even a few quarterlies). For everyone else, subscriptions are \$1 per issue, with advance subscriptions (NON-REFUNDABLE) of up to \$8 for a year's worth of issues. If your name has an "X" beside it on the mailing label, your subscription has expired, so renew now and beat the Christmas rush (!). Anybody sending in a submission for next issue has the option of only having to 'pay' a 39¢ stamp for #45. Next deadline is, as I mentioned, March 15 (you can bring your stuff in person if you come to the party—see, money-saving incentives even!) and other upcoming dates are April 30 for #46, the Bedside Manor Issue (more on that next time) and June 15 for #47...you get the idea...We also have covers for the next two issues, so I'll be soliciting them again come summertime (ah, summertime...easy for you to say...). Submissions include stories & articles of not more than 1900 words or so, artwork in everything from spot illos to full-page "inside back cover" entries, letters to the editor and anything else I haven't mentioned yet, to be sent before the deadline to us at P.O. Box 1609, Madison Sq. Station, New York, NY 10159. Thanks to J.C. Brainbeau and Paul Fericano for helping to keep this issue less in the red than it would have been had it not been for their generosity (does that make sense?)—donations are all gratefully accepted!

This issue is dedicated to Frank Herbert, in memoriam. It is not, under any circumstances, ever, dedicated to L. Ron Hubbard.

ADDENDUM: "Whozits" have taken a vacation (they hate winter), but should be back next issue, if I can think of something funny to draw about. Forgot to mention welcomes to Jeanne Anderson and Arabella Lyon (no relation to Camille) as well this time...but the nicest welcome is our newest staffer, Gary Ligi, agenting for the above-mentioned members of Dr. E.V. Ignacio's clinic—his autobio appears on page 3 or 4, depending on how much space "Fan Moose" takes up, and we'll present here in either one or two entries from said clinic members, depending of course on space. Welcome, Gary!

Fan Noose

Already garnering much-deserved alternate media praise is THE NUCLEAR DEVIL'S DICTIONARY, James T. Farrell's tribute to Ambrose Bierce and George Orwell and a brilliant expose of contemporary Nukespeak. Scary stuff, terribly clever puns, and a referential must for just about all. More than reasonable at \$7.95 to Usonia Press, Box 19440, Diamond Lake Station, Minneapolis, MN 55419...NEW ART FOR A DANGEROUS AGE (N.A.D.A.) raises some frightening questions, well-researched and thorough essays on Modern Amerikan Living (if you call that living), though a bit negative and short on solutions other than awareness (and goodness knows that's a lot in itself). Check it out yourselves for a mere SASE to Dave, 195 Garfield Place., Apt. 2L, Brooklyn, NY 11215... Also kicking about "my neighborhood" is Bob McGlynn of the Brooklyn Anti-Nuclear Group, who also coordinates the FRIENDSHIP COMMITTEE WITH THE INDEPENDENT EASTERN EUROPEAN AND SOVIET PEACE GROUPS—for worthwhile information write him at 528 Fifth St., Brooklyn, NY 11215...Fan Club Announcement of the Month goes to Tom Gedwillo, who's looking to get in touch with fans of the bizarre British "youth comedy" THE YOUNG ONES (reviewed in IJ #42). Send a SASE to 854 Y Street, Lincoln, NE 68508 for some neat intro bonuses...There's a DEVO club going strong too, and their newsletter BEAUTIFUL WORLD is a first-rate publication. Send a buck for it to Debbie David, P.O. Box 664, Flushing, NY 11355... One-page music-oriented sheetzines are certainly proliferating these days. Along with Gary Pig Gold's PIG PAPERS (#24 just out—free from 70 Cotton Dr., Mississauga, Ont. L5G 1Z9 CANADA), Roy Harper publishes OUTER SHELL (SASE to P.O. Box 7053, St. Petersburg, FL 33734)...From across the Atlantic comes a fanzine geared towards RPG (role-playing game) participants called SOUND AND FURY. Editor James Wallis lists it for 50p from Manor House, Little Bealings, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP13 611 GREAT BRITAIN, so judge the American/Canadian overseas equivalent yourselves...I tend to use the category "creative zine" in my listing of regularly-published small press work to basically describe things I'd rather not pigeonhole except as publications that reflect approximately the views and eccentricities of their individual editors/contributors, sorta like how IJ is a semi-persona of mine. A nice new example of a creative zine is Erik Kosberg's BETWEEN THE LINES, definitely worth checking out for a buck to 3013 Holmes Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55408...Hoosier SubG Rev. Maxwell Malice [104] East Kirkwood Ave., #25, Bloomington, IN 47401 proudly introduces DYSTEOGRAPHY, "a no-nonsense coloring book," \$1 for some nice graphics here...Another art-predominant output is the quarterly BAG OF WIRE EXPOSE—hell, maybe you'll comprehend it. A dollar from P.O. Box 441230, W. Somerville, MA 02144...The latest EMOTIONAL VOMIT (50¢ from Mike Schafer, 75 Fairview Ave. #3B, New York, NY 10040) has a religious bent—the mini-sized collage booklet is subtitled "God—Am I Alive?"... And there must be something contagious about this, 'cause our own staffer J.P. Morgan also just came out with a "Special Religious Issue" (#4) of his FUDGONG mini-comic (50¢ from P.O. Box 78, Keansburg, NJ 07734)...For the lockdown on new releases in the comic arena, as well as news about other small press pubs, send a SASE to BobX (P.O. Box 740611, Memphis, TN 38124) for his XEX GRAPHIX plugzine...The latest from Margot Inasley's Dolphin Moon Press is the Nick Aumiller/John Strausberg mood-comic ISOLATION—for DM's complete catalog, send a SASE to P.O. Box 22262, Baltimore, MD 21203...Talk about specialization—editor Chuck Shepard will only send out his 4-page strange-news-compilation zine VIEW FROM THE LEDGE to those who send clippings. "To those who won't send clippings, it's not available at any price. Sorry." Well, I guess he told us. Send what you will to P.O. Box 57141, Washington, DC 20037...On the other hand, the resurfaced Tuli Kupferberg is quite willing to mass-distribute his latest artwork newspaper, IN MEDIA'S FECE (love the title, Tuli!), to anybody who sends him a dollar at 160 Sixth Ave., New York, NY 10013, and I have a few extra copies too, if you'd care to "buy indirect"...The new BEATNIKS FROM SPACE, #6, seems to have moved farther from the beat and closer to space—maybe it's just me, but I couldn't get a handle on or find a point to much of the rambling writings this time. If you'd like to check it out yourself, tho, please do, as Neither/Wor Press deserves your support regardless—BFS subs are \$10/4 issues from Denis McBee, Box 8043, Ann Arbor, MI 48107...Issue 3 of THE BLOTTER (thanks for the lovely plug, folks!) features the usual high-quality writing, but seems to be reverting to a sf/fantasy bent again, so editor C.F. Kennedy (233 Woodbine Ave., Toronto, Ont. M4L 3P3 CANADA) is surreptitiously soliciting "reality-based" submissions. Check out the pub first, though, by sending him \$1 or \$3.50/6 months...And #14 of THE UTNE READER (thanks also to Utne staffer Helen Cordes for listing us as one of her three favorite alternative mags of '85!) looks at bioregionalism, among other things, but the big news is a first-time-published article by Noam Chomsky about all the news that's not deemed "fit to print" by the NY TIMES. Required reading for anyone who still believes truth is what they read in the papers. Utne's also looking for suggestions on a name change (hey Eric, how about THE ALTERNATIVE PRESS READER?), and subs are \$4/issue from P.O. Box 1974, Marion, OH 43305...SPACE TIME CONTINUUM AND YOUR POCKET WRENCH is the only creative zine I know about which publishes issues in reverse order—check out January's "Pea Soup Edition" (#4) and February's Free Gift (#3). Don't ask me, ask David Serlin, 7824 Kismet St., Miramar, FL 33073. No price listed, but it's worth at least a buck. SPACE TIME welcomes, as do most of the publications listed in this column, submissions from readers...Just out is DREAMSHORE #26, and if you think "Kid" Sieve is wordy here, read her 4-page essay on recent TV butcherings of "Alice in Wonderland" and "The Wizard of Oz" (editor Jan Byron may in fact be rethinking her agreement to make the Kid a staff writer, but "Kid" hopes not). This issue and its predecessor (which features a lovely essay, "The Triumph of Thought," by Susan Packie) are, as always, full of lovely stuff about

the essence of Sense-o-Wonder, loads-o-larls too, and it's no secret this is a pet zine of mine (I mean, #25 is even partly dedicated to my actual pet, Gypsy the Feral) and worth more than the 50¢ Jan charges (send to 618 S. Mitchell St., Bloomington, IN 47401)...PROCESSED WORLD explores processed food in its latest issue (#15), and contains great writing and graphics and much relevance. Send \$3 for "the magazine with a bad attitude" to 55 Sutter St. #829, San Francisco, CA 94104... The latest WARNING, "Alaska's underground music information publication," covers the zine scene (thanks for the kind plug, guys!), an Alaskan MTV competitor, and even cult movies, and is still \$1 to editor Bill Bored, P.O. Box 102993, Anchorage, AK 99...And, as promised, Revo has brought out the cassette issue (#5) of SURREAL ESTATES. I haven't had time to listen yet, but I assure you that audio is Revo's specialty, so you can beat me to it by sending \$1.50 to Box 23061, Knoxville, TN 37933...Which brings us back to doe—I mean, to the regulars: BABUSHKIN'S DIGEST V.2 #s 1,2—L.D. Babushkin, P.O. Box 128, Rosendale, NY 12472 (irreverent creative zine; free but send SASE or donations [checks payable to "L. Bush"]); GOOD DAY SUNSHINE #30—Charles F. Rosenay III, 397 Edgewood Ave., New Haven, CT 06511 (Beatles; \$2.50—hope the convention was a great success, Charles!!!); JET LAG #s 60, 61—Steve Pick & Joe Williams, 8419 Halls Ferry Rd., St. Louis, MO 63147-1809 (local & nat'l. music scene; \$1); META-SCOOP V.3 #1—B.W. Sowell & D.H. Armstrong, 1004 Live Oak St. 101, Arlington, TX 76012 (New Age creative zine—this issue has a fascinating essay connecting AIDS and voodoo; \$10/year); THE MONTHLY INDEPENDENT TRIBUNE TIMES JOURNAL POST GAZETTE NEWS CHRONICLE BULLETIN #37—T.S. Child, 2501 Bancroft Way, #207, Berkeley, CA 94704 (creative zine; send stamps please); PHOEBE #9—James MacDougall, 511 Routes 5 & 20, Waterloo, NY 13165 (creative zine; 55¢/issue or \$6.60/year); THE SOUTHERN LIBERTARIAN MESSENGER V.XIII #9—John T. Harillee, Rt. 10 Box 52A, Florence, SC 29501 (libertarian; SASE as they never list price). See you in the funny papers!

CELEBRITY HOME COMPUTERS

#5



Dr. Ruth's

Inside IJ Staffers

Gary Ligi, half of the Yossarian Universal News Service, sent in his introductory autobiography just in time to make this issue, so we'll welcome him once again, representing either himself, Dr. E.V. Ignacio Ligi (no relation, he says), or the patients at the Portland Pataphysical Outpatient Clinic, Lounge & Laundromat, and get on to his bio:

GARY LIGI
P.O. Box 40710
Portland, OR 97240-0710
12-11-46

A true child of the silver screen, Gary Edward Lawrence Ligi (b. Dec. 11, 1946 in Astoria, NYC) was named in honor of that slow-talking Jones, Gary Cooper. His brothers were named, respectively, after Dennis James and

Randolph Scott. Sister Joyce Ann was, of course, conceived to bring order and give advice to the Ligi household, but the family drifted apart.

G.E.L. Ligi became interested in identity-pyramiding during the early 1960's, and for a time was employed as a used-soul salesman at ARCS Research & Design Co. (a former subsidiary of Pope, Evans & Robbins) on Grand Concourse in the Bronx.

In 1970, at a ceremony performed by Darwin D. Grimm (pastor of Griffin Community Baptist Church and part-time rural butcher) on the back lawn of the Willie S. and Inola Rogers residence in Pickens, South Carolina, then Gordon Lightfeets Ligi took a vow to honor and obey the former Frieda Jean Rogers, a noted West Coast painter who is now called Jean R. Ligi, Jean Naughty, Marge Chagall, Sushi Rothenberg, Gorgeous O'Kief or simply Jean. The "S." in Willie Rogers' name, for the record, does not stand for "Shakespeare."

M. Ligi holds a B.A. from Clemson University (1970), and M.A. (1972) and M.F.A. (1981) degrees from the University of Arkansas. He has also studied at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Portland Community College, and MIT. His poetry, prose, scripts, and invective have appeared in more than 300 publications in the U.S. and abroad.

He is currently employed by the Division of Assessment & Taxation, Department of General Services, Multnomah County, Oregon, where he goes by the name of Elio Vincenzo Ignacio Ligi, Operations Supervisor/Collections and Administrative Specialist. He has recently requested NASA no longer consider his proposal to become the First Cynic in Space.

Okay, so Dr. E.V. and Gary are related. Don't look at me, I can't keep track of these types of things anymore.

DIARY of The ROCK FIEND

by Anni Ackner

THE PRE-NUPTIAL AGREEMENT OF THE BLUES

Isn't life just a fabulous compilation of merriment and mirth sometimes? Aren't there days when you simply can't help walking about the streets with a huge, silly grin plastered to your face—rather like that normally seen on second-term Republican senators who have just chopped \$2 million out of the budget for a new, federally-funded low-income housing project—helpless with delight at the thought of the wonders and excitements to be had just for the living? And don't all of life's little twists and turns and surprises, and the curves they often throw us, make you want to laugh and laugh when you think about them, and then go off somewhere and do something to really show your appreciation for the joys of living, like drinking yourself into a stupor and lying down for a tiny nap in the middle of a nice, comfy interstate highway? I know that I, myself, curmudgeonly old soul that I am, have lately been the helpless prey of what you might call The Big Chuckle, and if it can happen to me, who managed to survive relatively intact through the Nixon administration, the Viet Nam War years and the advent of MTV, the Almighty knows what it can do to a normal person.

It isn't, needless to say, the ordinary, everyday curiosities that are capable of bringing that lousy cheerful smile to my face. I am—and I say this with all due modesty—capable of gazing unmoved at the sight of an entire mob of otherwise intelligent adults attempting to shove themselves into a restaurant that resembles a Quonset hut as seen by John Ringling North, for the privilege of eating \$75 lamb chops because a gentleman from the TIMES intimated that they were particularly good \$75 lamb chops. I can sit without a murmur and listen to any amount of speeches by Edward Koch—a bald fellow who is currently mayor of New York—provided that he does not talk about the city budget, the city transit system, or the little foibles of his dear friend Donald Manes, and, such is my resistance to The Cosmic Snicker, I did not even crack the merest hint of a grin when confronted with the news that the Yankees planned to give Tommy John a tryout during spring training. (Okay, maybe I did, a bit. I mean, there are limits.) No, it takes more than your standard-issue oddities to get this witty, acerbic commentator on the American scene going, and, in fact, there really is only one thing with the capacity to do it on any consistent basis (for which I am most fervently grateful—reputations such as mine are not built on the repute's unfortunate tendency to pass for Minnie Pearl in her off-hours).

The only thing in this benighted world of ours with the sheer, ludicrous power to cause me to lose control of myself entirely, pack up my troubles in my old kit bag and smile, smile, smile is—you figured we'd get around to this eventually, didn't you?—the way in which I periodically find myself in situations that call for areas of expertise heretofore alien to my more cherished ways of thinking. It isn't, of course, that I normally go through my days harbouring the delusion that I know everything there is to know—the only person I can think of offhand who normally goes through his days harbouring the delusion that he knows everything there is to know is Harlan Ellison, and look at the shape he's in—but I do like to believe, as often as possible, that I know as much as I need to know to avoid the sort of faux pas that leads one to spending the night in out-of-the-way places in the company of 25 people in pirate outfits. Far more frequently than I might ideally like, however, something comes up that forces me to learn entirely new rules in the middle of the game, as it were, lest I discover certain portions of my anatomy being kicked merrily around the dirt portion of the infield.

Recently, My Other Sister, who, previous to this, had not evinced any interest in anything she could not keep in a cage or subject to a battery of psychological and emotional tests, surprised us all by becoming engaged to be married (that she may possibly be keeping her husband-to-be in a cage and subjecting him to a battery of psychological and emotional tests is clearly her own business), a circumstance that has caused my mother and father almost hysterical joy and the rest of us who are, by luck, chance or unavoidable happenstance, involved with My Other Sister, to become suffused with bemusement and subject to violent attacks of the Cosmic Snicker. Aside from the fact that suddenly being cast in the light of "Linda's older sister—the bridesmaid" (as opposed to The Sister To Whom I Do Not Speak, who has become "Linda's other older sister—the maid of honour," which gives her precisely the same amount of joy an aging benchwarmer who has been waiting patiently for the retirement of the star third baseman might feel upon being informed that the spot is going to a rookie phenom from Triple A) is not entirely flattering to the ego—even such a small one as mine—my new station in life—to say nothing of My Other Sister's—has called, even in so short a period of time, for my evolving and assimilating a whole new set of behaviour patterns. Fortunately, I'm a quick study, fast on my feet, have a willingness to pass on all my painfully acquired expertise to those of you (and engagements are a positive epidemic these days, with even Our Beloved Editor falling victim) (*Imminently*,—ed) who may be in the same predicament and, for a change, need an IJ column in a bit of a hurry and so, in the name of all these things, I now present:

ANNI'S RULES OF SURVIVAL AND ETIQUETTE FOR PROSPECTIVE BRIDES, GROOMS AND THOSE WHO CANNOT THINK OF A GOOD EXCUSE TO GET OUT OF TOWN TILL IT ALL BLOWS OVER

1. Prospective brides, grooms and other interested parties should realize, right from the start, that no one gets exactly what he or she

wants in a mate, and act accordingly.

Most women, given a choice, prefer a man who either is (a) suave and sophisticated, able to order wine in a restaurant and look good in a tuxedo, a la Pierce Brosnan, the younger Cary Grant, and 33% of all British actors; (b) older and mature and witty and worldly-wise, as in James Garner, Walter Cronkite and 33% of all British actors; or (c) cute and cuddly and slightly mussy, as if in need of looking after, such as Dustin Hoffman, Richard Dreyfuss and 33% of all British actors. (Men take note: Guys like Tom Selleck and Sylvester Stallone are pretty much the men that men think women think are sexy, which is not the same thing at all. Those of you who spend your odd hours working out in a gym in order to impress women should be advised that a substantial proportion of us will pass over a gentleman who looks like he presses benches for a good time for the one who looks as if he sleeps in his suit.) What most women get, however, is a nice, normal, average sort of fellow with absolutely nothing wrong with him except that he looks like a nice, normal, average sort of fellow and sounds as if he graduated from the University of Georgia instead of Oxford. Life is like that. And because life is like that, it is not considered chic for the bride-to-be, even though she may love her affianced very much, and even in jest, to refer to him as "Bozo," "Bigfoot," "Dumbo," "Pee Wee" or "the Elephant Man" when introducing him to her friends and family. By the same token, if one wishes to remain on friendly terms with the engaged couple, it is decidedly not politic to ask the future bride if she found her beloved on sale at Woolworth's or if that is his real hair, and it is never, ever wise to discuss one's fiancé's sexual proclivities with one's girlfriends, particularly if you suspect his name might be listed in the Guinness Book as holding the world's speed record for certain activities.

(Additional Note: The writer wishes to make clear that the lack of instructions for men in the previous section is not due to sexism on the writer's part, but simply to the fact that there has never been a woman in the world who understood what men saw in or wanted from certain types of women; ergo, the writer can't, in all fairness, explain how to avoid the pitfalls that occur when men don't get it. However, it is probably not a good move to buy one's lady love a tee-shirt that reads "Titty Bitty Committee.")

2. Gifts are a large part of any engagement, and they should be chosen carefully, and in good taste.

A diamond ring is, of course, traditional, and many women want them, as a sign of the love of their affianced, as a symbol of their enduring union, and as an excuse to pick their noses with the third finger of their left hands in front of their girlfriends. Still, there are some women who don't care for diamonds, and it is always smart to ascertain this before you purchase the ring, for if you give your precious one a diamond, and she happens to feel that diamonds make her look like a bad imitation of Joan Rivers and would rather have an opal or a ruby or a couple of grams of cocaine, you are not only going to be out a sum that rivals the yearly budget for the state of Minnesota, you are liable to be in very very deep bodily waste for a very very long time.

Incidentally, gentlemen, there has never been a woman born, up to and including Andrea Dworkin, who did not love to receive flowers at her office. We are all suckers for this, and never so much as when we become engaged. Long stemmed red roses are always welcome, as are orchids, lillies and gladioli, but you can probably get away with a bunch of ragweed, as long as it comes in the middle of the day when all the other women with whom she works can see it and turn green with envy. Honestly, this is a don't-miss ploy, and if anything will save the engagement after the purchase of the wrong sort of ring, this will.

Ladies, even if he's fond of neckties with hula dancers or tiny little hockey players painted on them, this is not the time to start buying him new clothes. Save that for after the wedding, when the most drastic thing he can do is divorce you, and who wants to stay married to a chap with hula dancers on his tie anyway? However, this is probably the only time in your association when, if you're that sort of person, you will be able to buy him boxer shorts with big red hearts on them. Before the wedding, he will find this charming and funny. After the wedding, he will find it demented. He will be right.

By the way, no matter how sensitive he is, how much of a "new man," or even if he likes to spend his weekends browsing through Burpee seed catalogs, do not, under any circumstances, send him flowers at his office. He may love you for bringing him a nice bouquet at home, but he also, invariably and inevitably, works with at least one Chuck Norris type who will intimate that your dearly beloved is a pussy for having flowers on his desk. It is not amusing to spend an evening with a junior account executive who is trying desperately to prove he is not a pussy. Really, it isn't.

Members of the wedding party and other acquaintances, make sure you check before buying an engagement or shower gift. An engaged couple who winds up with 23 Cuisinarts will be able to cope. An engaged couple who is presented with a nice, big African fertility goddess when they have just done the living room in Danish modern will not.

3. Choosing the place for the wedding reception is important.

No matter how much money you have to spend, and how many people you must squeeze into the hall, do not have your wedding in the sort of place that also rents out for less notable matches of the World Wrestling Foundation. Just don't, that's all.

4. Bridal showers and bachelor parties should, ideally, be cheerful, happy events.

This used to be easy enough to arrange when bridal showers were calm, sedate affairs highlighted by cookies, little sandwiches, and the building of a hat out of gift wrap and greeting cards, when the worst thing that could possibly happen was a difference of opinion between the groom's mother and the bride's sister-in-law over the plac-

continued next page

Continued from previous page

ing of the silverware, but these days, when bridal showers are likely to be held in places like Chippendales, the really clever shower-giver makes sure all the bases are covered, and does her homework well. Hell hath no fury like that of a woman who accidentally discovers that her future husband picks up spare spending money by dancing on a table in a G-string in front of 200 ravening females.

5. Finally, it always behooves you to remember that the people who you wish to be in your wedding party are, presumably, your friends and loved ones and should be treated at least slightly better than you'd treat someone who dropped by to have a look at your last year's income tax returns.

In effect, this means that we try not to make fools out of our wedding party by making them do silly things, don't we, boys and girls? If our bridesmaids are a touch on this side of Reubenescque, we do not dress them in lavender chiffon dresses with spaghetti straps and low, low necklines. We do not, no matter how much we may like the coordinated, flowery look, insist that our ushers clothe themselves in tuxedos of rose, peach, orange, mocha or any colour likely to cause them to be confused with the chorus of LA CAGE AUX POLLES. We do not force our mothers to take breakdance lessons in preparation for the reception, we do not hire a band for the reception that contains the word "Mello-tones" in any part of its name, and, most of all, we do not hold our reception in the middle of some beach during the winter, so that our wedding party has to stand and freeze to death and get sand in its formal attire while your yoga instructor reads selected passages from the Bhagavad-Gita. We simply don't.

An adherence to these few, easy-to-follow rules will ensure you an engagement that is pleasant, fun for all concerned, and won't mortify anyone who might later try to send your betrothed those pictures of you taken long, long ago during a tailgate party at the Superbowl, which is always a plus. It would be awfully good if everyone went along with this but, unfortunately, not everyone does and so, I shall have to cut this short while I go have a chat with My Other Sister concerning some lavender spaghetti straps. I mean, I have an idea that it wouldn't be considered at all proper for her to show up at her own wedding sporting a swollen nose, do you? I mean, really.

Sikh Humor

by Cahill Gibhergeron

For more than 6 million years Western Man has struggled with the phenomenon of laughter. What are its causes, and what biochemical secret of the human organism does it attempt to manifest?

Is it true that man is the only animal capable of frivolous enjoyment? Or might it be only man is capable of suppressing the bestial need to release nervous energy in a manner that does not result in more carnage than the hunter can consume at a single sitting? The debate continues to rage, but history seems to indicate that periods of intense nationalism, increased productivity, and serious dedication to purpose are invariably ages of genocide, starvation, and surgical experimentation.

The writings of Aquinas and Descartes support the modern consensus that most heretics burned at the stake during the medieval era were "howlers and cacklers, the demeaning *homo hyenas*, groundling scum whose gyrations and snarling lips revealed a flesh and bone given over in their entirety to Satanic revels" (Aquinas, *The Suburbs of Heaven*, V. VI, Chap 66).

Even today the "civilized" world remains clearly divided between the grimacers and grinners, the Tom Landrys and John Maddens, the William Buckleyes and Kurt Vonneguts, the Helen Reddys and Cyndi Laupers.

The gulf between science and philosophy grows ever wider, and there are now fewer people on the planet literate in their native languages than at any time since the trilobites ruled the world. It surely doesn't help the image of science or civilization to have roughly 2/3rds of a given population sniggering each time it hears its species referred to as *homo* this or *homo* that.

Think for a moment how difficult it must be for an elementary school science teacher to stand in front of a class of miniature Beelzebubs and have to talk about *homo erectus*, *homo sapiens*, *homo faber*, and *homo ludens*, which we all know means "Man the Player" and not "The Faggot's Cough-drop."

For we are all mature adults—are we not—and we are as adept at facing the concept of *homo annihilatus* with a straight face as we are when overhearing the neighbor's son ask to stick his finger in our daughter's belly button.

Over the years since my own amused youth, I have repeatedly written the Smithsonian Institute, the National

Geographic Foundation, the National Institute for the Advancement of Science, as well as the Royal Academy of Science in London, to suggest that the cause of science and the advancement of learning might better be served by naming lifeforms, geological formations, astronomical observations and chemical substances with words found in living languages, preferably words that are actually spoken by people in the street.

I was not much thrilled with Gilbert Grosvenor's acrid response that he saw "little to be gained by giving Man the scientific label of 'Upright Mammalian Biped Who Thinks, Constructs, And Thirsts for Enlightenment and Entertainment'." My concept was closer to "Wise Dude Got Feets."

There are those among you, I know, who would prefer to hold on to Latin. Humans have traditionally attempted to resurrect the dead by speaking its name or preserving the words. Consider how entire eras seem to shimmer in our minds when we say: Hiroshima, Masada, Jonestown, Bhopal, Julius Caesar, "No man is Long Island."

But we also recognize that ultimately no good comes from clinging to the past, especially as we hurtle into the future in an age where our fellow citizens overwhelmingly elect a President who can call truth "just somebody else's pack of lies," and who gets thunderous applause when he proclaims, "Even our Founding Fathers knew justice is a moving target. Why else did they write the Constitution?"

It is not enough for us to move from Latin and Greek to German, as has been the tendency in modern education with the term "gifted children." German is the most rigidly totalitarian modern language, rarely admitting the construction of new words from beyond its borders.

Particularly disturbing is that the word "gift" still means "poison" in the root tongue, but yet parents fail to see the grim irony in shapping at those who would offer a joke for or about their disabled and damaged offspring, even as they demand their tykes be grouped in public schools with other poisoned children, who are even less prepared to purse their lips when Mrs. Trice starts talking about homos than we are.

For, to succeed on Earth, one must learn how not to laugh at the silly and pretentious structures and thoughts from which we have built our fashions and cultures. To persist in a code of knowledge that deprives the rompers and frolickers from equal opportunities to become dull and serious is not mere folly, but inhumanly cruel as well. It is patently sick, not Sikh.

Sikh humor is one of compassion and political action. Our humor is designed to make us laugh while the wicked cringe. Ours is a giggle of joy and wonder. We can speak the truth of others who do not want to hear how we have learned but do not submit, that we mouthe but mock, and we cower before no one.

In 1984 when the greatest comedians in Punjab gathered at the Golden Temple in Amritsar to chortle about the blind insensitivity of the Indian Hindus, our guffaws were heard above the roar and chatter of Indira Ghandi's machines of death. We pointed our fingers at her assault troops and stuck out our tongues and bared our asses, and even as we lay on the ground in that crimson sea of injustice, our chests ached with pleasure as we spewed our boisterous blood, and when the sun went down, still an occasional tee-hee or snigger or snort could be heard from the audience and performers.

For we knew soon enough the spirit of our smiles and smirks would sail the jet streams of the world and settle into bodies where we would once again find new jokes to tell and to titter at. For we are Legion, and even if the sky should boil, the heavens will find us convulsing in jubilation, and the moon and the stars will twinkle at our shrieks and shouts of merriment.

Cahill Gibhergeron, also known as Ma Swarni Cyrano, Poona Puta Vidi Vidi, Singh Sahib Kirbal Nanook, and David Alan Coho, was recently released from Damasch. He is a part-time shape changer.

This column was conceived and executed at The Portland Pataphysical Outpatient Clinic, Lounge, and Laundromat, Dr. E. V. Ignacio Ligi, Director. The Clinic is dedicated to the discovery and dissemination of imaginary solutions to imaginary problems and is in no way affiliated with the National Endowment for the Arts or any other government agency.

T'Other Man

by Susan Packie

"Is my entire Cabinet asleep?" an irritated President asked his second-in-command.

"I don't know, sir, but I just dropped in on the Senate and the House of Representatives, and they're all way off in slumberland."

"This is crazy! Get my secretary in here, and call my trusted advisors."

"I'd like to, sir, but..."

"They're fast asleep, too, aren't they? Do you think there could be something wrong with the air conditioning system?"

"I don't think so, sir. It was thoroughly checked last month."

"Could this be a Soviet plot to destroy the country? Have the air checked for occult gases."

"None will show up. I believe you're making too much of this, Mr. President. This is just a regular work session."

"I realize the taxpayers feel this is how their government works—with its eyes closed—but we at the top are supposed to know better! Now find out what is really going on."

The Vice-President scurried out and the President rang up his wife. And rang up. And rang up. No one answered the telephone. Finally, after the tenth try, a groggy voice on the other end mumbled, "Hello?"

"Hello, let me speak to the First Lady."

"Eve's long gone...Oh, you mean—I'll see if I can, uh, wake her."

"She's asleep? That does it! Throw a bucket of cold water on her face and get her down here."

"Who's calling, please?"

"The President. You're fired."

The President's daughter shrugged her shoulders and went in to wake up her mother. In forty minutes, she was facing her beloved husband.

"I demand to know what's going on around here."

"Oh dear, you don't keep up with the times, do you? It's all T.M."

"T.M.? You've been sleeping with someone else? Who is he? I'll kill him!"

"No, we're practicing Transcendental Meditation—T.M. It helps us think, work, and relax better."

"I'm sure it helps you relax better, but think and work! I'm not so sure of that."

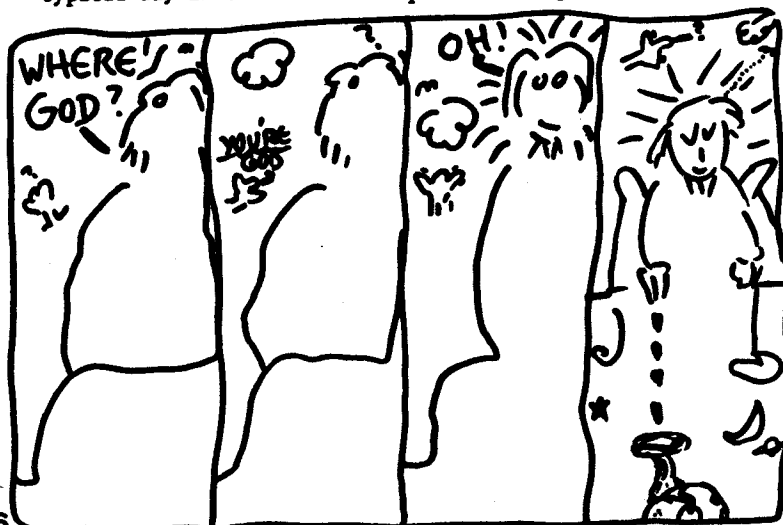
An aide came in with a pile of papers that needed scrutinizing and either approval or rejection. The President nodded off.

"What's wrong?" the aide gasped.

"T.M.," the First Lady whispered.

The confused aide backed out slowly. That kind of thing might be okay in Hollywood, but in the Oval Office? She'd have to find somebody else besides Timmy Martini!

The Cabinet and Congress meditated on. Another typical day in the nation's capital had begun.



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Beer Gut

by Larry Oberc

"Boy, he really looks good!" said Sue.

"I know," said Nancy. "After he started lifting weights again he lost his beer gut."

"Too bad more guys don't take care of themselves," said Sue.

"You see any of the crowd here?" asked Nancy.

"Well," said Sue, "Bill's in the other room, and Betty was talking to some guy in the hall."

"It's still early yet," said Nancy. "There won't be anyone here until later."

"That's the way these things usually go," said Sue, glancing at her dress to make sure it was fitting right.

"You see Chuck yet?" asked Bill.

"Yeah," said John. "I was in the other room a couple of minutes ago."

"He didn't look that bad," said Bill. "Considering the way he used to look."

"I was out with him last week," said Betty. "He was really a nice guy."

"I didn't know him that well," said Ben. "But from what I've heard..."

"He used to have a beer gut," said Betty, "but he lost it."

"Is that right?" asked Ben.

"Is that Chuck's mother over there?" asked Sue.

"It sure is," said Nancy. "What do you think we should do?"

"Let's go over and say hi," said Sue.

"Do you think we should?" asked Nancy.

"It'd be the right thing to do, considering what happened," said Sue.

"I guess you're right," said Nancy.

"They say the truck came out of nowhere," said Bill. "He probably didn't even know what hit him."

"Yeah," said John. "That's what I heard too."

"And he was really getting back in shape, too," said Bill.

"Yeah," said John. "The last time I saw him he didn't have a beer gut anymore."

ON THE TRAIL

by A.J. Wright

We found the first footprint in the toy department of Woolworth's. This initial incarnation, like a diamond in a fist of coal, caught us unprepared, and we could only giggle at it there in front of us.

A few mornings later the second footprint, like a breathless word, appeared on my doorstep already faded as if through years of wear. I shook my head and smoked another cigarette.

The next day a friend told me about a dream of his in which he followed a trail of footprints away from his apartment building and through a dark wood into a shower of blinding light. Theory was still beyond me.

Leaving the doctor's office a month later, I had to follow a path of footprints to my car. I drove home puzzled by this new vision.

Sightings accumulated. At times footprints seemed to be following me. Friends told me again and again about their sightings old and new. Tiny articles began to appear in the back pages of newspapers and magazines I read. Finally, in desperation, I quit my job, gave away my possessions and set out in pursuit. The whole world suddenly bloomed with footprints. When I came upon the first fingerprints in a remote desert area, I knew I was getting closer.

QUANTUM COURTESY

BY MILDRED NEPTUNE

"The greatest mystery of life is how we appear to other people."

- Deborah Benedict

"Personality, too, is destiny."

- Erik Erikson

Dear Readers - or should I say Dear Enigmas - because that's the true story - and inquiring readers, like yourselves, want to know the true, untold story. But how can you know a story that is untold?

Inquiring minds want to know. You want to know. I want to know. Too bad we can't. But let's try, anyway. Not much else is really going on, is there? Baseball season is months away—or was when I wrote this—we are already wearying of figuring ways to silence Khaddafi, and in the words of my dear friend Artemis Aki, "Life is napping."

So let's play connect the dots with our neural synapses! Who are you? said the caterpillar. And dear reader, does anyone really understand you? Besides yourself and whatever personalities you are currently playing host to in the cocktail lounge of your psyche. How do you appear to other people? When you regard them are they really who they seem to be? When they explain something to you, are you really grasping and comprehending what they mean, or are all of us doomed forever to drifting on a raft of subjectivity in an existential Sargasso Sea?

These are the things I ponder whilst waiting for the bars to open. Can these questions even be answered? Of course! ALL questions can be answered—it's the easiest thing in the world to invent an answer. If the answer is pleasing, then we can call it the truth. If the answer is displeasing, we can call it a taxi, and hope it is chauffeured away to a sleazy seaside dock where it is surreptitiously thrown into the cold and murky water. With a cinderblock tied 'round its neck.

Why is it assumed that truth will be painful and unpleasant? I don't know. If I had to make up an answer for that question, my answer would be this—We think of "truth" as a "serious" thing and the opposite of silly...we assume that silliness makes us feel good, but seriousness makes us feel somewhat somber, therefore truth must make us feel somber, therefore it can't make us feel good, therefore it must be serious and probably painful.

But it isn't! Truth can be FUN. And who are you, anyway? Do people see the truth of you and react with pain? Maybe. Possibly. Sometimes.

Are you being your true self and people are not seeing it or knowing it? Does this cause you trouble? Heartbreak? Loneliness with attendant long nights watching tv shows, wondering if those people are who they seem to be to you? Can we ever really know one another? Is categorizing one another a good way or a bad way to know one another? Is it only in the early stages of falling in love that we turn to one another and exclaim with delight, "I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU MEAN! I'M LIKE THAT TOO!"

Or, is it possible we can do this every day, even with strangers? Is there really a brotherhood/sisterhood/personhood of humans? Do we really all belong to one big soul or are we essentially alone, unknowable, urged by mighty conglomerates to reach out and touch someone only to discover no one else really wants to be touched?

If you tell me you believe this, tell me why. Here is why you believe this, or that, or all the things I haven't mentioned.

That's the kinda person you are. Who are you? Oh, you're that kind of person. There are others? Are there?

My muse, Johnny Hollywood, just jumped down from her perch on the shelf of Undentable Objects. She sits on my typewriter sign (LIFE IS A HAMBURGER). Her tiny chin rests on her tiny hand. She is clucking at me.

WHAT? I ask her. "You're not being funny, Mildred. They want you to be funny. Talk about funny stuff like the people who wait for the bus by the library—you know what you call them. Talk about the time you showed that midget guy how to—"

I interrupt her. "Johnny, don't wisecrack me. I am being funny right now. It's just that I'm being funny for a parallel universe. Ok?"

"Ok—but don't say I didn't warn you. I still think it would be better if you did the letters first, then wrote your famous essays." A mocking tone there. Goddamned little muses, why didn't they stay at the fair?

"Go back up to your shelf, Johnny. If you keep quiet, I'll buy you a new GoBot tomorrow."

"But I'm a muse—I'm not supposed to keep quiet, I'm supposed to inspire you."

"Sometimes the best inspiration is silence. So go." She goes. She likes GoBots too much to argue. Is she what she appears to be to me? Have I got her figured out? Just because you invented somebody doesn't mean you understand them.

So, what do I believe? I believe in the truth, whatever it is. I don't know what it is—I feel I'll know it when I see it. But I be-

lieve in a silly truth. That's the kind of person I am. I believe in a silly truth because it seems more pleasing to me than a painful truth. That's the way I am. Do I appear that way to others? I don't know because when I ask them, they don't know what the hell I'm talking about.

Our letters this month seemed rather strange to me, but maybe that's not the way they really were. They just seemed that way to me. What they were really we may never know.

Dear Mildred,

Recently at the funeral of my Uncle Bemis, I was overcome by a paroxysm of laughter upon the realization that if you rearranged the letters in funeral you can spell real fun. The horrible irony was that Uncle Bemis left me a huge fortune. Nevertheless, decorum deserted me completely and friends and relatives looked on in shock as I chortled and cackled throughout the somber salmon-coloured slumber room wherein my Uncle rested. It got so bad, I found myself holding onto his casket for support, laughing directly into his face. Needless to say, I have alienated the entire Bemis family and the dark rumour is that they will attempt to wrest my fortune from me. Have you any worthy advice or comments for me?

Preston Podley

Pithy-On-Pot, Great Britain

Dear Preston,

Advice? Comments? I don't know, but that's one hell of a funny story. As for your relatives, tell them old Uncle Bemis would have liked it that way. Then, take the money and move. To America! Near me.

Dear Miss Neptune,

I hope you can help. I am still prostrate with embarrassment. Last night, I went to meet my future mother-in-law and upon extending my hand and saying what I was going to say (I am honored to meet you, blah, blah, blah)—oh, how can I explain this—well, I forgot that I had this eensy beensy ladies pearl handle revolver in my hand—so careless of me! And when I extended my hand in greeting—well, the gun went off! And I killed her. Have you ever heard of such a disgraceful faux pas? My fiancée is raving mad at me, of course! "Now that Mummy's gone, who will manage the wedding and keep my awful sister Monica from bringing her rotten brats?" he said last night—and we had the most hideous fight.

I know I should have holstered the gun—I usually do—but I was so nervous and beside myself at the thought of meeting Brandon's mummy—what shall I do now???

Panting for an answer to this gruesome dilemma, I am

Miss Betty Comes

—soon to be Mrs. Brandon Brindleslip
Kamoniwananaiya, Hawaii

Dear Betty -

First off, don't get married and change your fab name! It's too wonderful! Second, well, dear, accidents will happen! You can't let it ruin your life. If Brandon can't accept an occasional faux pas from his beloved, what kind of man could he possibly be? Obviously, he wants to fight about it and my guess is he will throw the whole incident up to you, through the years, through the years. Oh yes, every time you make the slightest, weeniest little goof—like, oh, I don't know, accidentally leave your curling iron on when you go to Barbados for two weeks, returning to a heap of ashes—little things like that will only remind him of your past mistake. Your marriage will be hell, unless you have him reprogrammed and lobotomized so he won't remember a thing.

In the meantime, I'd stay away from him until he apologizes for being such a boor. Good heavens, everyone makes a mistake! As for sister Monica—should you decide to marry, let her bring the brats to the wedding—and you can get forgetful again and shake their little hands too!

Dear Mildred,

What happens to people when they die?

Corey Green

Lincoln, Nebraska

Dear Corey,

What happens is this: You go to a big big room. It looks like a movie theatre, only it's really really big. There are some people in it. You sit down. Pretty soon the theatre is full. The lights dim and the show begins. First there is a Road Runner cartoon. Then the "real" show starts. It's called LIFE ON EARTH and it's a big epic film of everybody down here—including people you know—who are still living. You watch and get pretty darn fascinated with it—then you start laughing because you realise it's goshdarned funny! After a while there's an intermission and you go and get popcorn and cherry coke. You watch the second half of the film—it's even funnier than the first half. Then it ends. Then you get to go out and play for as long as you want.

That's it for now. I have to go and discover the west and the east poles—I know they're out there! I got me a compass and a Rand McNally Road Map, a backpack filled with Ginseng Rush Soda and Yogurt Chips. I'm wearing Birkenstocks and a lightweight but warm parka from Land's End. I'm ready for action, I'm ready for adventure—I'm ready for anything except discomfort and failure. I feel so good, so confident and up, that I could listen to an entire WHAM! album and it wouldn't upset my equanimity a bit. So there!

I am not going to name the East and the West Poles the "East" and the "West" poles—oh no—I am going to name them Jack and Diane.

And then I'm gonna write a little ditty about them!

That's my metaphor for now!

Vaya con dios, muchachos—and remember—you can't prove you're wonderful to people who aren't!

THREE BEATS TO THE WIND: OUTRIGHT FREAKISH BEHAVIOR

by Steven F. Scharff

It had been over two years since I gave up the weed. After deciding that it wasn't for me, and being told by several folks that it was bad for my aura, I simply gave it up. Then my brother, home from the Air Force, takes me to a friend's apartment.

I can't explain the place in mere words. No matter what weather or circumstance it is outside, in that one room in the apartment it's always July 17, 1968 (that's the date I decided on). While in the midst of making up for lost time and listening to assorted psychedelic music, some of the hemp of which we would later partake was brought out for examination.

Since I often use a pendulum for scrying over photos and maps, I decided to use it over the pot. It was madly spinning clockwise (a very favorable sign), so I knew we were in for something.

Another person present told us he had brought along some hash, but I decided not to partake of said substance.

As we slowly became stoned, I decided to write down some of my fleeting thoughts, something I'd neglected to do when I was younger. Looking back at my notes, I began to wonder where some of these little brainstorm came from (including the title of this piece).

Here's what I found myself writing down:

Pick up a drinking glass that has a red and yellow design of flowers. With the light hitting the Pepsi within, the image sent to my weed-riddled brain was one of Mickey Mouse in a gypsy costume, leaping up in a sweeping, circular kick, clutching a tambourine.

Use a pendulum (sic) to determine (sic) i-gosity* of the dope. Freaky stuff that helps me develop a state of mind that will realize the number of things that I keep procrastinating about without any remorse at all!

Now, what will be realized here isn't very much, save for the recollection of long-denied thoughts and images. Mutated trademarks and cartoon characters from other planets come and go like blank-faced strangers in a train station rush hour.

How long this situation will continue to exist is apparently not very long. Especially since I'm writing this while sitting on the floor as others sit on the sofa at my feet, trying hard not to kick me in the face as we all share the tiny room in this Brooklyn apartment as we all suffer the effects of this industrial-strength dope. A friend of Marty's (the man whose apartment we were at) have (sic) brought with the extra stash I had "inspected" via pendulum (sic).

Now they're smoking it. Hashish and \$200-per-oz dope in a glass carb made for joints.

I myself cannot partake of this because

A) I'm driving

B) I'm stoned enough

C) I shouldn't be doing this in the first place.

I'm now in a half-regretting mood, since this might mess up my aura (again!). But if I didn't, I'd be out of mesh with the others here with me.

Really ripped man. Ripped.

26 January 1986 1:04 am

I'll probably not use pot again, but it's nice to know that my mind still has some of that bizarre creativity floating around in my subconscious to leave me wondering.

*"I-gosity" is a word my brother brought back with him from South Korea. Pronounced "eye-go," this interjection is on par with our own "Shit!", but is mild enough to be used by little children without getting their mouths washed out with soap. I-gosity is an indescribable word that means something so "heavy" that you'd have to be there to appreciate it.

INVITATION TO DANCE

by Prudence Gaelor

"Dance with me."

"Dance with me," she repeated. I turned my head and looked up at her. She was of about average height, thin. Her hair was disheveled and her makeup was a bit harsh, but besides that she wasn't bad looking; or at least no worse than any of the other women here - and they all seemed to be with dates anyway. Not that I was here to pick anybody up, Shadows wasn't that kind of bar. Shadows was more like a club with a bar on one level and a small, always overcrowded dance floor on another. As was usual with places like this there was inadequate ventilation and you could barely see the person next to you from all the cigarette smoke.

I looked into her eyes which were the most remarkable thing about this girl. They were a very dark brown almost black, like little caves in her head - daring you to enter, yet you knew there was danger inside. That and they were the coldest eyes that I've ever seen. I stared at her and she arched an eyebrow as if inquiring if I was from this planet and if I spoke English.

There was something regal about her. It might have been the way she stood there very vertical with shoulders thrown back, or her air of command. I never had nobility so I decided to sport her.

I stood up from my seat; she was more on the short side of average. I thought how good that was because if I got bored with her I could always look over her head and watch the other women on the floor.

As I stood she had pivoted and she started towards the dancefloor. She didn't look to see if I was behind her. I thought of how funny it would be to let her walk on by herself just to see her reach the floor only to turn around and find herself alone. I was almost going to do that but something made me decide to stick with her - maybe my sense of adventure rose to her challenge or maybe it was the way her ass moved under her tight skirt. I'm not sure.

I half walked/half ran three steps to catch up with her. "I'm Dave. My name is Dave, Dave Harper."

She turned. There were those eyes again. "Why are you telling me this?" She sounded irritated.

I tried to find a reason for the relatively common action of introducing yourself to someone you've just met. "Well, I thought you might like to know with whom you're dancing." I had deliberately used correct grammar trying to phrase that just right so I would sound intellectual instead of stupid.

"We're only going to dance," was her terse reply.

"Don't you want to know who you're with?" - like forget the grammar.

"Why? We are only going to dance. I demand no more and I expect no less."

Now if anyone else had said this to me I probably would have laughed in his face and walked away in disgust. But this girl had staying power. It was as if her every word and her every movement evoked a challenge.

She turned around and continued towards the floor. She obviously thought I was going to follow her. She was right.

The music was so loud down on the floor that you had to yell to be heard. The dj was playing the Furs' "Love My Way". For some reason I found that ironic. We reached the dancefloor and she began to dance.

"Who are you?" I yelled.

"Why?" she countered.

"I just wanted to know who you are. What's your name?"

"What difference does it make? I could lie to you and you would never know the difference." Her attitude was that of shut up and dance.

She wasn't going to tell me her name but I was determined to learn something about her. Maybe I could impress her and she'd decide to open up to me.

"I'm an actor. I currently am playing the lead role in Hamlet at the Arena." This was a lie. I'm no actor and I hate everything ever written by Shakespeare. Actually I'm a computer programmer but that isn't very impressive.

She didn't respond to this so I figured she didn't hear me so I repeated it, adding that I really liked the Furs and that she was wearing a nice skirt.

She stopped dancing and looked up at me. "So what?"

"So what? Don't you care about who you're dancing with?"

"Look, I don't want to know who you are or what you are. I only want to dance - get it?"

"No, I don't get it. I don't see why you don't have the courtesy to even pretend to be interested in who I am. Huh, why?"

"Because you had to ask."

The song ended and she began to make her way back to the bar. I stood there and debated whether to follow.

Have a day.



SNIDE CRITIC REVIEWS

4

by J.P. Morgan

Greetings, troops. Here submitted for your perusal are four highly cerebral, unbiased critiques of cinematic art, with the recommendation that you catch two of them at the local midnight movie house. (I mean THE ALCHEMIST and THE RE-ANIMATOR, which you're very unlikely to see on HBO, for reasons that will soon be apparent.) Ready: Here we go... NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 2 - FREDDY'S REVENGE

Great subtitle! Wes Craven, who directed the first Freddy opus, is absent here, which is a shame. This sequel lacks the startling slides into killer-nightmare territory, and oddly has scabby Freddy Krueger inducing some poor lad to kill "for" him. Huh? Fred seemed to do all right by himself before. Other big problems are some dull acting, pedestrian shock/dream scenes, an absolutely god-awful mock "rock video" (with fetid music) that the young hero/victim stages in his bedroom, and a big Freddy attack scene where he openly attacks dozens of kids at a pool party (a BIG mistake—the first film's unpredictable, one-on-one attacks were what made it so creepy)! However, Robert Englund's gleeful-berseker portrayal of knife-fingered Freddy goes a long way toward saving this film. But please, bring back Wes Craven for the next sequel! THE ALCHEMIST

If you're into Grade-Z films, see this! Occult pot-boiler concerning a reincarnated girl, a cursed-immortal alchemist (there's a funny bit where he eats an entire bear), and his elderly daughter, and a really dumb hitch-hiker. Film plods along at a yawn-a-minute pace, taking the girl and hitch-hiker forever to get to the alchemist's house. A different, evil, alchemist sends three easily-killed demons (who all resemble Freddy Krueger with egg-white eyes) to get the girl. Everything from non-acting and out-of-focus shots to indifferent editing and clunky dialogue conspires against this movie: the alchemist shouts to his daughter to close the door...there's a quick cut of the door closing, but it's open again in the next shot. The kids attempt escape in an old black van that features a door covered obviously with construction paper and electrical tape (to conceal a real-life logo?). The evil alchemist is cut in half when the gate to Hell vanishes—his upper torso hits the ground and gushes blood, but when the kids walk through the stone arch later, it's gone. (Somebody behind me said, "Hey, is his ass still in Hell?") The good alchemist's disintegration is crappily composited—but why go on? This could well be a classic Badfilm; when the lights came back on, the entire audience was hooting and groaning!

THE RE-ANIMATOR

A winner! This loose adaptation of an H.P. Lovecraft story breezes along with humor and swell gore. Medical student Herbert West has a formula that, when injected, revives the dead; but due to decomposition, brain damage, and whatnot, the reanimated corpses are mighty unhappy. They jump up, smash things, tear people apart, and just generally act unsociable. A bad doctor wants to steal the formula! Herbert cuts off his head with a shovel! (The bad doctor's, not his own.) He reanimates the separated head and body! The head says, "You bastard," and the torso knocks out Herb and takes the head and formula away! The torso holds out the head to attempt cunnilingus on unhappy girl! Wool! See it when it comes around again. JEWEL OF THE NILE

This really doesn't belong with the above three pictures, but what the heck. When ROMANCING THE STONE came out, I liked it a lot more than INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM. This new film isn't bad either; it's not as snappy as the first, but it has another evil despot (this time in India), a real spaced-out rightful ruler (is he a holyman or a shithead? You decide), Danny DeVito (he wants to steal the Jewel Of The Nile, which turns out to be the spaced-out holyman's religious title), and a funny escape by jet fighter (which never leaves the ground). Unfortunately, somebody sings an incredibly putrid opening theme, and a smarmy closing number is inflicted by Billy Ocean. Oh well. You know, a really spectacular future sequel could be made...see, there's this senile B-movie actor who takes command of a big nation, fronting for the military, stealing from the poor,

SAVAGE SAYS: THERE'S NO FREE LUNCH

by Dorian Tenore

Having been gainfully employed these past few months at the happy, snappy Arts & Entertainment Network (it really is happy and snappy, too—what are these people on?!), I can now afford luxuries like food, clothing, and some occasional fun and merriment. The latter I've been finding in the form of several off-Broadway shows—like in February, when my significant Vinnie and I will be off to Philadelphia to check out Tomfoolery. I'd say that's about as off-Broadway as you can get. (Any Tom Lehrer fans who began drooling at the sight of this can see the show at the Walnut Street Theater from February 8 - March 1. Call (215) 574-3550 for the sordid details.)

Closer to home—at Sheridan Square, to be exact—I caught The Ridiculous Theatrical Company's The Mystery of Irma Vep. As usual, this production sprang from the cheerfully warped mind of writer-director-star Charles Ludlam, who looks almost as cute in a bouffant wig and tight dress as Divine. Anyway, Irma Vep has more howls than your average werewolf epic. Ludlam and his partner-in-drag, Everett Quinton (he designed the costumes, too) play ALL the parts (I haven't seen so many quick costume changes since Peter Sellers' heyday—or maybe the last "Dynasty" episode) in this uproarious tale of Lady Enid, new mistress of "mandecrethst" (as splay-toothed stableman Nicodemus Underwood calls it), who finds herself hounded by werewolves named Victor, weird family legends, vampires, and Jane the sinister housekeeper.

As if that weren't enough, hubby Sir Edgar Hillcrest, the famous Egyptologist, has a crush on his latest find, the remains of She-Who-Sleeps-But-Will-One-Day-Awake. "It's terrible to marry an Egyptologist and discover that he's hung up on his mummy!" laments Enid. Our friend...Irma hilariously spoofs all those Gothic melodrama/romances, from Rebecca to Dracula to The Mummy to Shakespeare—and believe me, Ludlam's and Quinton's campy acting is all hamlet.

Finally caught up with Jewel of the Nile on the big screen. This time Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner, and Danny DeVito are Morocco-bound, like Webster's Dictionary, and find themselves tangling with a sheik who got the ideas for his little empire's costumes, architecture, and torture methods from Turner's romantic/adventure novels. Jewel's a little more dependent on elaborate action sequences (including a wild chase between several trucks and a fighter jet that Douglas can't figure out how to get airborne) and isn't quite as witty as Romancing the Stone was, but it's still wild 'n' woolly fun. Douglas and Turner still sizzle together, and few people can match DeVito for manic comic rage. For example, when he's raving at Douglas about his ordeals in prison: "Lotsa guys there volunteered to be my proctologist!!" Holland Taylor's back as Turner's publisher, and she's still got a way with a line: "(Douglas') favorite author is the guy who wrote 'Pull Tab to Open.'" Other welcome additions are The Flying Karamazov Brothers and Avner ("...The Eccentric") Eisenberg as The Jewel—not a stone, but a gentle-humored holy man who can walk through fire and make live butterflies from stone and stuff. Go see it and enjoy!

RUBBERY SHRUBBERY

by Stacey Sollfrey

trees grow sideways
close to the ground
choreographing our feet
making our faces dance
so that they never touch down long enough
to turn around

building up a vast nuclear arsenal to...oh, never mind...

Well, that's it for now, folks...be sure to tune in next issue when we review RAMBO SAVES EL SALVADOR, SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN MARKETING EXPERTS, and the \$40 million EASTER BUNNY: THE MOVIE. 'Til next time, when we'll see you...at the movies! (INSERT THEME SONG & COMMERCIAL PLUGS.)

If You Look Far Enough ...

by Roldo

Project Janus was the brainchild of Dr. Donovan A. Rafferty, but it was his eye that had seen it through the bureaucratic maze to its completion.

He had just one eye, had Dr. Rafferty; the other was lost in a laboratory accident long past, its former lodging now covered by a black patch, with the equation $0=1+(-1)$ written on it in delicate white lines.

CAN YOU IMAGINE

Simon, Duff, Friedman, Schlafly and Porter working for a living doing working class work? Neither can I but stick around for awhile and send SASE to worldwide work-sharing unemployment - ending even age work force plan or simply **EVENAGE** Box 2243 Youngstown, Ohio, 44504

Practical Cryogenics as an Ecological Necessity

by D.A. Rafferty, M.S., Ph.D., K.S.C.

Jaxon University

The major problem facing life on planet Earth is not that there are too many people, but that most of them are incredibly stupid. This problem is completely compounded by the Self-Multiplying Law of Stupidity: that stupidity will stupidly define itself as normal rather than accept itself as stupid. Therefore, rather than work towards the eradication of stupidity as the root source of all problems, the human race insists on treating it as Glorious Tradition and forcing its perpetration upon the people.

War is not a problem; it is a symptom of Stupidity. Racism is not a problem; it's a symptom of Stupidity. Violence, crime, dumb laws—every social plague is not a single problem unto itself, but a facet in the Jewel of Stupidity, a cell in the great Body Idiotic.

On that level, you actually are either part of the problem or you're part of the solution. Either you know you're stupid and you try to overcome it, or you accept the norm and let your mind atrophy into the accepted.

Now, do I hear a moaning chorus of "what can we do?"? Well, for a start—don't ask me, ask yourself. That's how you start.

Meanwhile, let me ask me, "What can we do?"

Oddly enough, one immediate solution is presented by the recent discoveries in the field of cryogenics. Unfortunately, in typical human style, this science has been not only mis-applied but actually considered in a completely opposite manner than an intelligent species would view it.

The present use of cryogenics is to put a sick person into a form of "suspended animation" by freezing until a cure for what ails 'em is found, when its most obvious use is to put all the stupid people to sleep until the Planet can be cured.

Yes, what I'm suggesting is a mass freezing of the dangerously dumb. The planet is overcrowded, polluted, aggressive, and seemingly rolling to Hell on a series of high-tech hand carts. All because of stupidity. It seems only logical to lower the odds against to increase the chances for.

Now I seem to hear a chorus asking: "But how do we decide who's stupid?" That's easy. First, we freeze everyone who asks that question. Second, we ask for volunteers—anyone stupid enough to volunteer for such a crazy idea is definitely ice-fodder. There's a thousand simple methods. Why, eventually, freezing will become fashionable and fashion is the very garment of Stupidity.

Also, as the eminent philosopher Jacobovski has stated, "There are always two possibilities."

If freezing the Stupids doesn't work out, we can always freeze anyone who's had enough and leave instructions to thaw them when Evolution has sorted the Whole Mess out, as it eventually will.

The remaining orb was a cold blue circle in a red-etched ball, peering from a cave of wrinkled flesh under a cliff of thought-rigged brows, hung over by a brush of white fur that added the final touch to the strange sensation of wolves and winter that haunted anyone who fell under its gaze.

At the moment, that eye was scanning a crowd of anxious faces attached to the fidgeting bodies of a group of media persons gathered for the official and first Moment of Truth in Project Janus, when Dr. Rafferty would engage the computers linking the network of orbiting observatories that had been over a decade in preparation and allow Dr. Rafferty to see, with his own one, cold, glaring eye, further into space than even the photo-computer exploration ships had seen and sent their sightings back to Earth. But first, Rafferty would address them.

"Ladies," he mumbled, his eye darting from face to face, as if eager to discover any challenge to his deliberate anachronism, "and gentlemen. In a manner of minutes, the series of orbiting deep space observatories will come into conjunction and I will look into that viewer," his eye flickered briefly in the direction of a nearby apparatus, "and I will see, quite possibly, the other side of the Universe."

Held by the wolf-cold, pale blue eye the crowd sat silent until Rafferty growled, "Questions?" at them.

A well-groomed young man, with the serious expression that was still enjoying an artificially extended vogue among the less questioning youth of the Second Century, rose briskly. "Dr. Rafferty," he intoned in his best modulations, "the cost of this project has run into so many billions of dollars, not even your own computers—which are acknowledged as the finest and most complex ever created—could determine the exact amount. Just how do you justify such vast expenditures when money is so desperately needed for defense of our hemisphere and rebuilding our economy to see something that, we're told, will last less than 15 seconds?"

The eye fell on him like an avalanche.

"Wonder," rumbled Rafferty.

"Pardon?" said the young reporter, and his voice only trembled slightly and hardly cracked at all.

"Wonder," re-rumbled Rafferty, "and that is justification enough for any act of science, as long as it causes no suffering to the innocent."

"And what," retorted the young reporter, his prepared and polished poise showing strain, "of the threat of war, and of inflation and unemployment? These are the most important realities, these are—"

"These are social fictions!" roared Rafferty. "It's politicians who cry the danger of war and the rich who control the money. The politicians whose power comes from convincing the masses they must be protected and the rich whose power comes from controlling the economy. For fifty years, I've played their game to have this one moment of wonder, and I know all their secrets. In 78 seconds, by that clock, I will see further than any human eye has ever seen. I don't need them anymore. And I'm sick of them."

Rafferty strode from the podium and stood by the viewer, making minute final adjustments on its control board, oblivious to all else.

Project Janus' public relations director, Ms. Helen Gloss, stepped to the mike.

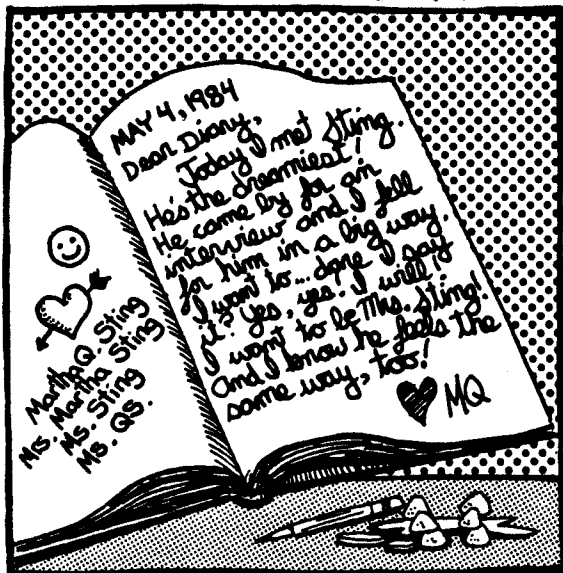
"While Dr. Rafferty is looking directly into the viewer, the rest of us will be able to see what he sees on the screen." She indicated the glowing 20 by 20 foot wall pulsing gently behind her. "Counting down from 12-11-10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1..."

Rafferty's eye stared hard as an image began to form on the glass lens of his viewer, while on the giant screen the pulsing light contracted into form.

For a moment, a long and silent moment, there was the special silence of awe, then softly the rumbling chuckle of Rafferty slowly rising in hysteria, followed so shortly by a ragged chorus of oaths, then screams from the assembled as the image on the screen became recognisable as a 20 by 20 foot, wolf-cold pale-blue eye from which the focus of sanity was swiftly draining.

...(You Can See Forever)

MARTHA QUINN'S DIARY



(Sorry about the sloppy layout, Rory - unintentional, assuredly - ed.)

Wax Ink

by Rory Houchens

ORIGINAL MASTERS—Jethro Tull (Chrysalis)—It's probably true that Jethro Tull will never hold the spot in rock history that they richly deserve. Unlike most bands who are able to hide their mediocrity in their beginning "unknown" years, then improve prior to or during their stay in the limelight, the Tull (as I've heard them referred to by those "in the know") started rock and roll life quite competently and reached their peak with *AQUALUNG*, their fourth album. Ironically, their weaker material (by their standards) that followed brought them massive American and European airplay, while their classic early records lounged in semi-obscure. Led by composer, cynic, flutist, codpiece aficionado and Scottish madman Ian Anderson, Jethro Tull mixed jazz, rock, baroque classicism and old English folk music into an original and unmistakable style that is well represented on *ORIGINAL MASTERS*. Half of these twelve tracks come from the band's golden years, 1968-71, and include "Aqualung," a ground level portrait of a lecherous bum; "Sweet Dreams," wherein a Svenigali-like character urges his young protegee to undermine his/her parents' authority, and advises the juvenile to "live the rest of your life in a day;" the scathing "Locomotive Breath," about a poor sap heading into oblivion; and the ebullient "Living In The Past." The "commercially successful years" are covered by the pastoral "Songs From The Wood," the oft-times overblown "Too Old To Rock 'N Roll, Too Young To Die," veiled political/social statements "Skating Away On The Thin Ice Of A New Day" and "Bungle In The Jungle," and a brief excerpt from the complex epic *THICK AS A BRICK*. *ORIGINAL MASTERS* is a worthwhile introduction or refresher course and is recommended, but for the full Tull effect, listen to *THIS WAS*, *STAND UP*, or especially the flawless *BENEFIT* and *AQUALUNG* lp's—these four (at least) are a vital part of modern pop music.

RECONSIDER BABY—Elvis Presley (RCA)—This album was released to show all those nonbelievers once and for all that, yes, Elvis could sing those blues. Made up of unreleased masters, alternate takes, B-sides and just plain old album cuts, *RECONSIDER BABY* (sketchily) traces the King's love for and involvement with the blues via unvarnished recordings from 1954 to 1971. "Tomorrow Night," the oldest cut here, is (almost) eerily a cappella and sports enough echo to fill the Astrodome, while "Reconsider Baby" struts along with swaggering sax and tinkling barroom piano as Elvis gets down and begs for mercy. "One Night (Of Sin)," which when censored would become the big hit, "One Night (With You)," sounds like an intimate, late-night jam session with some of the Big E's grittiest vocals ever. The three tunes that close out side one, "When It Rains, It Really Pours," "My Baby Left Me" and "Ain't That Loving You Baby" (which has some mighty tasty percussion work), are nothing short of amazing, and I would bet stack up to anything currently rumbling around on any radio station anywhere! Pressed appropriately enough on blue vinyl.

THE RHYTHMATIST—Stewart Copeland (A&M)—Sting hangs around movie sets, rehearses his "new" band in posh French chateaus and glides along on a well-publicized, well-received tour, while Police founder and top-notch "rhythmattest" Stewart Copeland roughs it in Africa lugging around tape recorders and a camera crew, generally working himself to a dusty frazzle, and who winds up on all the talk shows and magazine covers? And what about poor Andy? Well, there's no reason for Stew-baby to fret because *THE RHYTHMATIST* is a driving, often dazzling record. Using basic "musical snatches" from such exotic locales as the Congo, Buckinghamshire, Kenya, Burundi, Zaire and Tanzania, our junior ethno-musicologist adds his own distinctive percussion, keyboards, guitar, bass and occasional vocals for a sound that might be described as pop primitivism. "Coco" starts off dark and moody before giving way to synthesized horn-like flourishes, the spell being quickly broken by the pulsing jauntiness of "Kamba." "Gong Rock" and "Franco" are involved, upbeat tunes with an abundance of beats and quirky melodies, while "Serengeti Long Walk," an ersatz travel brochure set to music, gives Stew the opportunity to demonstrate his glib, yet bug-eyed

ferocious, talking vocals.

OLD WAYS—Neil Young (Geffen)—Ol' Neil's been trying to get back to the country for years now (not that his own particular brand of music was ever very far from it), and on *OLD WAYS* he jumps in with both feet. So, in what may have been a premeditated move to hold on to (most of) his pop/rock audience and snatch the ears of country/western fans to boot, Neil has hooked up with two of the most uncanny-like artists (and two that are probably the most familiar with pop/rock listeners) wallowing in that genre, Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson. The classic "The Wayward Wind" is given a majestic treatment with strings and a handful of acoustic guitars, and "Once An Angel" has a nice chorus and masterful pedal steel work from Ralph Mooney, but "Misfits," a putrid, futuristic fable, just about turns the stomach. The sprightly "Get Back To The Country" has fine fiddlin' by champ Rufus Thibodeaux and some hokey jew's-harp from Terry McMillan, but little else, and "Are There Any More Real Cowboys?", a trademark Young tune, is marred by Willie's unstable vocals. "California Sunset" and "Old Ways" are respectable ventures, but the best cut is "My Boy" where Mr. Young isn't Neil the Rocker, or the Punk, or the Cowboy, but just plain, old Neil. What's next for our hero? Jamaican rap?

HEART (Capitol)—After a string of chart-toppers like "Magic Man" and "Barracuda," Heart's metal-edged soda pop began to fizzle, but they took time out to catch their breath, and have produced what just may be their best work. "If Looks Could Kill" busts jaws with a vengeance, and a strong chorus pulls Bernie Taupin "These Dreams" out of the muck. "The Wolf" and "All Eyes" rock out tastefully, all excess amounts of fat already trimmed, and the Jefferson Airplane/Starship-inspired "What About Love" (which even has backing vocals by Mickey Thomas and Grace Slick) gets better and better. Not to forget the excellent "Never," which is a prime example of the perfect pop single. Great stuff.

WALLS HAVE EYES—Robin Gibb (EMI America)—Years before the Bee Gees struck disco gold with *SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER* and the Gibb twins became big brother Barry's lackeys, Robin was THE voice of the group. (Successful) habits die hard, and snazzy, danceable rhythms still remain throughout, but *WALLS HAVE EYES* goes a long way in recapturing the magic of the Bee Gees' earlier years. "Heartbeat In Exile" slowly, but fondly, mimics "Jive Talkin'," and "You Don't Say Us Anymore" is an Oingo Boingo-ish slab of techno-rock. "Remedy's" bouncy, compressed chipmunk chorus insures maximum listener pleasure as does the whole of the heartfelt "Like A Fool" and the tearful "Gone With The Wind." Fits comfortably under the skin!

9012LIVE: THE SOLOS—Yes (Atco)—Live albums allow the artists a rare chance to exhibit their musical expertise away from the confines of the studio, so a lot of "in concert" platters usually include the ego-soothing solo or two somewhere amidst the more stringent musical numbers. Not wishing to be pegged "thoughtless relics," those forward-looking Yesmen have decided to release a live album that consists almost solely of solos! So along with energetic versions of "Hold On" and "Changes," you can be amazed by Tony Kaye's rapturous keyboard solo, "Si;" Jon Anderson's puffed marshmallow vocal solo, "Soon;" or even Chris Squire's lethargic bass solo on "Amazing Grace." Those of you not under medication or therapy are directed to sample Trevor Rabin's shimmering guitar solo on "Solly's Beard" (proving he more than compensates for the departed Steve Howe), or the monumental "Whitefish" where Chris Squire and Alan White play Star Wars with bass and drums. Is a special award in the works for these guys?

FIRST AND LAST AND ALWAYS—The Sisters of Mercy (Elektra)—The music perpetrated by the Sisters of Mercy falls somewhere between classic psychedelia and polished garage rock with a hefty dose of Cramps-like ghoulishness thrown in for sinister, good measure, so when listening to this lp, don't expect a party. "No Time To Cry" sounds like the Byrds after taking part in black mass, and the shadowy "Black Planet" could serve as the scenario for a science fiction movie. The title track could pass for scaled-down Blue Oyster Cult with a graveyard chorus, and the blood-freezing "Some Kind of Stranger" would make a dirge sound like a nursery rhyme. Enter at your own risk, and please wear black.

FLASH—Jeff Beck (Epic)—No matter how many vocalists, session musicians or guest artists you get on a Jeff Beck album, the one thing that everyone's waiting to hear is Beck's guitar playing, and on *FLASH*, his virtuoso prowess steals the whole show. On "Gets Us All In The End," Beck's laser beam guitar cookie cuts geometric shapes while vocalist Jimmy Jall squeals like a die-hard Loverboy fanatic. On the instrumental "Escape," Jan Hammer's fashionable Fairlight programs form a sinewy foundation for Beck's whining axe work, and Rod Stewart contributes vocals to his old mate's bell-ringing plucking on the exceptional "People Get Ready." Jeff himself does the sleepwalking singing on "Get Workin'" and "Night After Night," a pair of average funk burgers, the latter laced with some "cat climbing walls" six string dressing. Twang on, Jeff!

HUH?

by Susan Packie

They're here again: those people who so willingly cleaned our Johns, built our railroads, and staffed the lower echelons of industry are back demanding equal pay, benefits, and, even worse, positions with responsibility and dignity. You'd think we were a charity!



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ORANGE DOORS

Anthea Trephine

previously: Well, last time we discovered no Popes, no wombats, and no evil mutants. However, we did follow Bunny and Prudence to Yona's apartment. Much verbiage was spilled over the wonderful decor then Yona told a long story about a psychotic who swiped her ultra-mega-hip shades. The three of them were just about to do something when my typewriter was side-swiped by an Amtrak express out of Baltimore, killing nine and leaving fifty otters homeless.

Prudence wasn't sure just how much trouble they'd have with this Brookie person. "Maybe," she thought, "he'll be comma-toes." That was something Bunny'd taught her, where a person brought his toes up towards his head until he was shaped like a comma, and then froze that way. Anyway, if that was the case all they'd have to do would be walk in, grab the glasses and run like hell. Oh yeah, and hold their breath. Or perhaps it was breaths. Prudence wasn't sure but she didn't want to ask Bunny, who was busy trying to explain why they had to arm themselves.

"Well, one can never be too careful. No telling when someone might wake up and throw you out a window or worse. Still, maybe we don't need to. After all, we've already got six arms between us which should be enough. Unless Brookie has a pet octopus."

"Gosh, I'm glad you're here," said Yona as she patted him on the head and went into the next room to look for a suitable weapon. The best she could do was a can of bug spray. Prudence said that would be fine. Bunny was going to take a bowl of potato salad but Yona said it might be a bit unwieldy so he chose a loaf of Italian bread instead. Prudence took Steffi's skateboard, adjusted her shades and led the way out into the hall and up the stairs.

"Maybe we should sing some fierce marching songs," suggested Bunny as they padded up towards the fifth floor. Yona reminded him that tradition was all very well and good but they were trying to maintain the element of surprise, so he agreed to just hum quietly to himself. Maybe, he thought, Brooke was actually an evil wizard who had converted his apartment into a dank grotto filled with all sorts of vile experiments and demons and maybe even a Whoonitis or two. Bunny stopped as he was starting to scare himself. And anyway, they were now on the fifth floor, looking down the hall at seven doors, all orange and with a variety of letters on them.

"Sure am glad I brought my glasses," said Prudence. Even behind her Jabbas all the orange was making her a mite queasy. "Let's just get this over with."

Prudence was getting nervous. Fortunately, Yona took charge at that point. Bunny objected by Yona told him to pipe down, that she certainly wasn't going to trust her beloved shades to anyone who couldn't tell the difference between an Insectoid and an Insecticon. "C'mon, we're nearly there. I can smell 'em." Prudence had never heard of anyone who could sniff out Ray-bans before but then she didn't know all that much about bears. As they walked up to door 5D Bunny remarked on how it didn't seem to be locked either.

"Doesn't anyone around here know the first thing about security?"

"Maybe they've all got disintegration fields," said Prudence who really just wanted Bunny to hush. He did, as he found that an interesting point to ponder. So interesting, in fact, that he sat down in the hall and began nibbling on his bread and didn't even notice that Yona and Prudence had gone on into Brookie's apartment.

"Golly, what a dump," said Prudence. And indeed it was. There were piles of laundry everywhere, boxes of food on the tables, the chairs and the floor, half-eaten bowls of Count Chocula, banana peels, yogurt cups, and a couple of crumpled Pringle's cans. That was just what she had to walk past to find a clear spot to stand. There was, however, no immediate sign of Brookie. "I can't see your glasses anywhere Yona."

"Not to worry," Yona put down the D-Con and started mumbling something under her breath. As she did this she swept all the trash near the door into a big pile. "Now watch this. It's an old Albanian trick." Prudence stepped up onto the table, toppling a small tower of Snak-Pak cans and little airplane booze bottles in the process, so she could get a better view over the mounds of laundry. Yona said a few more words in Albanian (at least that's what Prudence guessed it must be), closed her eyes and reached into the pile. And pulled out one very sharp looking pair of sunglasses.

"Hey that's great," said Prudence, jumping down on top of a box of HoHos. "Dya think I could learn to do that? Huh?"

Before Yona could answer there was a loud cough and one of the inner (and non-orange) doors swung open. There stood Brookie in an faded green t-shirt that read "I'm With Stupid" and a pair of paisley boxer shorts. He was clutching a bottle of cheap wine and looked like he hadn't shaved in days. Yona and Prudence started pelting him with cheese logs, a bad of which they'd found under their feet. One landed in Brookie's mouth when he yawned, drawing his attention. His eyes (Prudence would later remark on what a lovely shade of red they were) slowly opened.

"Warrayewtwo doin here?" he slurred. Then he stopped, scratched himself, took a swig from his bottle and collapsed face first into yet another pile of laundry. It was at this time that Prudence noticed two things. First, that all the piles of laundry actually were made up of clean clothes, and second, that Bunny was nowhere to be seen. The second, at least, wasn't surprising.

"We should blow outta here," said Prudence sprinkling a few more cheese logs on the now-quite-out-of-it Brookie.

"Yeah. Well, but we gotta do something. It's the code of the mountains, y'know..."

Prudence had to agree. Something like shade-napping couldn't go by without retribution. Prudence suggested shaving all Brookie's hair off or stealing his Count Chocula but neither of these struck Yona quite right.

"Wish Brookie here had some Tab about. I'm not much good for ideas without a can or two." Prudence inspected the refrigerator but to no avail. She was going to suggest that maybe they should order out when Bunny came jogging into the room.

"I do believe I've got it," he said, using his half eaten bread loaf to pole himself to a clear spot on the floor, a thing that was in short supply in Brookie-land. "Y'see, what I think is...well, it's like there's this truck see (the kind they deliver grapes in and such) and it drives into this giant eighty foot tomato. But momentum is still conserved!!"

Bunny was obviously very pleased with himself. Yona and Prudence hadn't the slightest idea what he was going on about, but they didn't mind. They were used to it. Bunny went on to explain that this basic elementary principle would enable them to build a disintegration beam out of a loaf of Italian bread, a jar of Bolivian olives and two styrofoam penguins.

"Possibly you could replace the olives with a jar of quince jam, but I'd have to do more research on that."

All this talk about quinces and such got Prudence thinking about lunch, which she'd never quite gotten to finish. She certainly didn't want to eat anything in Brookie's. "No telling where all this has been." Yona quite agreed, although it looked to her like it had been at the bottom of Mr. T's work-boots or someplace equally nasty.

In fact, seeing as how it was already well past dinner time, food seemed like such an urgent thing-to-do that Prudence would've been quite happy to just leave Brookie as he lay. But Yona insisted so Prudence got her crayons and the two of them colored Brookie's face orange (Bunny having once again gotten interested in his bread). Prudence agreed that it was a pretty rotten thing to do to anyone, even though orange improved Brookie's face "oh at least a zillion percent."

Prudence went out into the hall and practiced doing circles on Steffi's skateboard around where Bunny was sitting. Yona had decided that one more flourish was needed so she piled all the clothes into one big pile in the middle of the room, right on top of Brookie's phone and TV set and topped it all off with three cans of plastic resin. "It's something Steffi keeps for artwork and suchlike things," Yona explained.

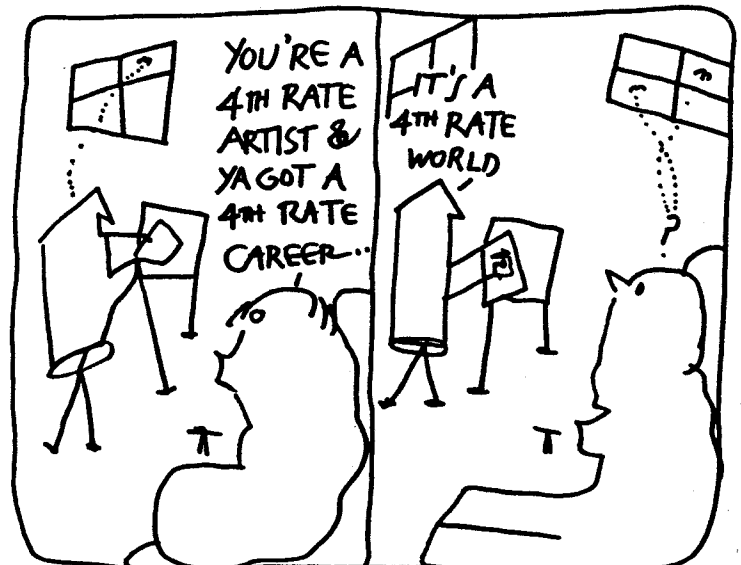
They all went downstairs to eat. By this time her phone was fixed so Yona called everyone and they all came over and had a pretty wild time. Later, after just about everyone was gone and they were sitting under the window singing songs about the moon, Prudence got to thinking about her room and how much it probably missed her. Yona said not to worry, that all she had to do was to get on the train tomorrow and there she'd be. Bunny was trying to explain his new invention to a house plant who didn't seem to be getting the point. It was very late, so late in fact that it was early and Prudence wanted to go to sleep before it started to get bright again. Yona showed her where Steffi's bed was and said it would be okay to use it. There were purple sheets with stars on them and the blanket had a mountain with lots of little animals walking up and down. Prudence climbed in and started to drift off.

"Where's Bunny?"

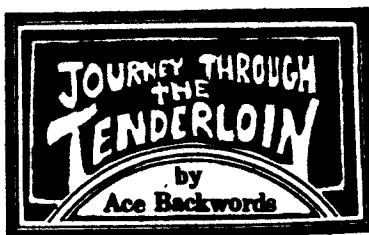
"I think he fell asleep next to the plant. Don't worry. I'll see that he gets to a couch. You sleep now."

"Aren'tcha gonna?"

"Sure. But first I've got to make a quick call."



CAN'T BUY ME LOVE... But You Can Sell Your Soul



Those damn photos! I looked at them for a very long time. There were six of them on the page. Each photo was designed to show off a different part of her body. You got to see a lot of her body.

I looked at the photo of Charlene showing off her butt. This is a wonderful thing, I thought. Women's bodies are part of the Wonders of Nature. These photographs are celebrations of the natural beauty of the human animal.

Bullcrap.

These photographs are degrading smut and that "girly" staring back at me—staring back at any man with a couple bucks—wasn't some faceless Playboy bunny. That "girly" was Charlene Hamilton, high school senior, Class of '81, and a close personal friend of mine.

It bugged me, it really did.

THE SAN FRANCISCO LUST REVIEW. What a rag! THE LUST REVIEW office was located in the warehouse district of San Francisco, on the second floor. On the first floor was a tomato can factory. Very spectacular operation, believe me.

Eugene McKlean was upstairs in the back at his "office." Actually, it was more like a closet with a desk crammed into it. McKlean was "hard at work" writing his latest porn column. That's the kind of dumb jokes he was always cracking. He really thought he was clever, this guy.

I stood in the doorway. There was no room to sit down.

"Did you see this?" I said, holding up a copy of the latest LUST REVIEW.

"So what?" said McKlean. "My latest column. And I hope you read it, too, because that is some of the best damn journalism this side of THE NEW YORK TIMES."

"Not your column, lamebrain," I said. "I'm talking about the photo layout on the next page. The blonde there. That's Charlene."

"Oh really?" He grabbed the paper from me and examined it with interest.

"Listen," I said, "I thought you were going to help me locate Charlene. And here she is, sitting right in front of your face."

"So I ain't Sherlock Holmes. Sue me, why don't you."

"Yeah," I sneered. "And you're the one always going on about how street-smart you are."

"Shit. If I had any smarts do you think I'd be stuck out on these damn streets? Street-smarts? That's a contradiction in terms if ever there was one."

"Do you know who took these photos?" I asked. "I'd like to talk to him."

"Well, maybe he wouldn't want to talk to you, kid. Maybe I don't want to talk to you. What do you think I am, a Boy Scout leader or something? Eugene McKlean, Helper of Youth. 'Do you have a problem that needs solving? Come to McKlean, he'll find the whore of your dreams.' Did it ever dawn on you that I might be trying to get some work done here?"

"It says here, 'Photos by Patrick Davis,'" I said.

"That could be a clue. I don't know, but I've got a hunch that maybe, just maybe, those photos were taken by Patrick Davis. This could be just the breakthrough we've been looking for, Watson, by jove."

This Eugene McKlean could really be a wiseass, if you know what I mean.

"Okay, if you don't want to help me I'll go," I said. I got up and started leaving.

"No, wait," he said. "Don't be so hasty. I'll help you. No kidding, you really amuse me, kid. I haven't seen somebody like you in years. Plus this could be a great angle for my next column: 'YOUNG KID SEEKS LOVE ON STREETS OF SIN!' There won't be a dry eye in the house. 'I WANT TO HAVE LINDA LOVELACE'S BABY,' SOBS TEARFUL TEENAGE ROMEO!"

I got up and headed for the exit. He really thought I was some kind of fool. Just as I was at the door he grabbed me from behind and put his arm over my shoulder, real buddy-buddy style.

"Listen kid, don't get me wrong. I don't mean to make fun of your plight. Your soap opera touches me deeply, and I mean that from the bottom of my heart."

"What heart?"

"Oh now, that hurts. That really hurts." He put his hands to his chest and grimaced. "I've got feelings too, you know."

"Well, geez, I just wish you would stop treating me like I was a complete idiot or something."

"I never said you were a complete idiot. Why, at the very least you're only a partial idiot. And I mean that sincerely. Hey Patrick, c'mere, I want you to meet somebody."

"What's up, McKlean?" This hippy-looking guy came out of an office. He had a camera hanging from his neck.

"So, are you the guy who took these photos?" I asked, holding up THE LUST REVIEW.

"Yeah," he said, admiring his work. "Nikor 75mm lens with a 1/250 sec exposure—"

"Listen, your model is a friend of mine. I'm trying to get a hold

of her. Do you know where she is?"

"Obey," he said. "All information about models is strictly verboten. Confidential. Do you get my drift?" He turned to McKlean. "Shit, the last guy in here was some irate father. He threatened to shove my Nikon up my ass if I ever took another photo of his daughter."

"Occupational hazard," said McKlean. "Didn't that blonde babe say she was working at the Pussycat Galore?"

"Yeah—wait, no. I think she was working at The Bachelor Brothers Theatre or one of those high-class places."

"Okay, kid," said McKlean, heading for the door. "I got a few chores I gotta take care of down in the Tenderloin. You can tag along if you want and I'll help you find your girly. Ah, sweet youth. A lovers' rendezvous. This should be good for a couple of laughs."

The Bachelor Brothers Theatre was a very plush joint. Wall-to-wall carpeting and high ceilings with chandeliers, even. There was several different theatres in the same building.

"This is sort of the Playboy of porn shows," informed McKlean. "First class all the way. I'll give you the tour of Disneyland."

One room was filled with nothing but X-rated videocassettes for sale. It was just like a record shop, except instead of Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin there were cassettes of weird sex.

Out in the hallway the P.A. system announced: "NOW SEATING FOR THE HARDCORE ROOM."

"What's the Hardcore Room?" I asked.

"That's the room over there," McKlean smirked, pointing to a curtained doorway. "A sensory experience of epic proportions. Private booths. Mirrored walls. Psychedelic lights. Your most wild fantasies realized. And only 5 bucks."

We walked by the video room. The girl on the screen was making loud noises.

"What's that door over there?" I asked.

"That's under construction," said McKlean. "Top secret. God only knows what thrills the Bachelor Brothers are cooking up. Rumor has it it's going to be the fabulous Aquarium Room. They're going to fill the entire room with water and the customers put on snorkels and skin-diving suits and swim around amongst gorgeous naked mermaids. And of course there's the fabulous eight-on-one Octopus Special."

We walked into another large room where a strip-tease show was in progress. A naked girl was onstage, lit up by the spotlight; she looked about 10 feet tall. Maybe Charlene was in here somewhere, I thought.

"Listen, I gotta take care of business," said McKlean. "Stay out of trouble."

I sat down and watched the show. Rock and roll boomed out over the loudspeakers. The Cars were singing "I like the night life, baby." Even though it was still the morning, it seemed like the middle of the night in there...

I really don't want to talk about what was going on in that room. It really kind of bugged me...the way the men were buying the women and doing stuff...it really bugged me. I asked a couple of the dancers if Charlene worked there, but they wouldn't talk to me unless I gave them dollar "tips," which I didn't have, being broke and all.

"Money talks, bullshit walks," said one of the women. "Hands off the merchandise."

Finally Eugene McKlean came back. "Enjoying the show?" he asked.

"Not hardly," I said.

"Bad news, kid. I asked around. Your girly doesn't work here."

"Shoot!" I said.

"C'mon, let's blow this dump."

Stepping outside the theatre I was momentarily blinded by the sun. Instant daylight. We stood on the sidewalk, beneath the flashing neon signs.

"What a weird place!" I said.

"Oh, you get used to it," said McKlean.

"Maybe YOU get used to it," I said.

"I'm sorry you didn't find your girlfriend. It's really hopeless, kid. There's hundreds of girly clubs in this town. You'll wear your dick to a frazzle before you find her. Now if you take my advice, you'll get your ass on the next bus to New Blovia, Nebraska, or wherever the hell it is that you're from, and get back home."

"So that's your advice, huh?"

"Yep. 'Course, anyone dumb enough to take my advice deserves whatever they get. I don't even take it myself."

"I think I'll look around the City a little longer," I said.

"Suit yourself, kid, but you're looking for a needle in a haystack. You're really wasting your time. Don't be a chump. Take it like a man. Besides, there's nothing more pathetic than some guy running after a dame. You're letting your dick drag you all over town."

You're really pathetic, you know that? You'll probably never even find your girly, and if you do find her, did you ever consider what the hell you're gonna do about it, anyway?" He was waving his arms in the air. "C'mon, let's get some coffee."

We turned and started to go when a cab pulled up to the theatre.

And—you guessed it—who walks out? None other than Charlene Hamilton.

"Charlene?" I said.

She turned, kind of startled. She was wearing very tight blue jeans and high heels, and a very expensive-looking fur coat.

"Christopher? What the hell are you doing here?" She didn't look pleased.

"I was just taking in a show with my friend Eugene. What a coincidence meeting you here."

"Small world," she said. "Listen, I can't talk. I've got to go to

Continued next page

work. Some of us have to make a living, you know."

"Can I see you after work?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Jesus, Christopher, I don't want to go through this again. I've got a boyfriend. I'm living with Rick. Can you grasp that?"

"Well, sure. But that doesn't mean we can't go out for coffee some time."

"Sure. Let's do that. Some time."

"I mean, just because you got a boyfriend and all doesn't mean you can't talk with me or nothing. I just want to talk with you some time."

"About what?"

"Just stuff. I mean, you've been a very good, uh, friend to me, and I really appreciate it. I really appreciate you."

"That's great, Christopher. And I really appreciate your appreciation."

"And I appreciate that you appreciate my appreciation," I added.

"Wow! That's great dialogue!" McKlean butted in. "Where's my notebook? I should be writing this stuff down."

"Mind your own business, asshole!" huffed Charlene. "Christopher, I gotta run. Do me a favor, huh? I really like you and all, but geez, would you go back home? Now good-bye."

I watched her disappear into the theatre. I stood there on the sidewalk, outside the fabulous Bachelor Brothers Theatre. The Disneyland of Live Sex Shows.

-to be continued-

use the first line as the title

I was cut loose and slapped by the edge of a collapsed phone stinging steel

laced with the dirty edge of the palpated tip

of a jumped rope conversation

talking over the undercurrents of misunderstanding

over the same underd theme

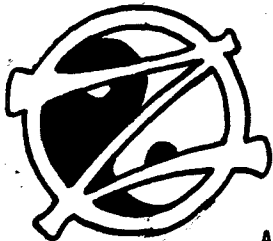
never letting the other know that we've zeroed in on whatever it is at the same time

as the other plays the role of doubter and scene stealer

focusing all misdirected attentions

on the other side of doubt

- Stacey Sollfrey



Zenarchy STORIES

by Ho Chi Zen

A CALIFORNIA GENTLE MAN

Having shared the dedication page of a couple of books with Gregory Hill, I guess I ought to introduce him—for he is first among void-cluttering Discordians, holder of a Paisley Belt in Zenarchy and a Grand Zenarch besides.

Although Greg Hill and I attended the same high school, we did not meet until New Year's Eve of 1958. Discovering that we shared a penchant for absurdist humor and satire, together with a mutual loathing for brute authority and blind obedience, we quickly became friends.

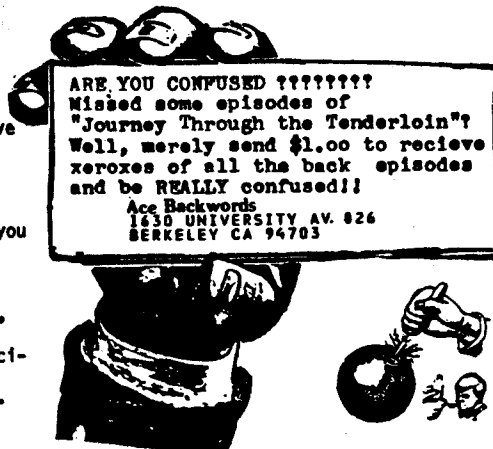
Sitting in a bowling alley one night with nothing more to do than drink coffee with ice cream in it and discuss philosophy, we became engaged in an argument about the nature of order. Was it something actually to be discovered in the surrounding universe? Or was it merely a projection of the human mind?

In any case, we agreed, what was needed was not a deity to explain what precious little order might be perceived in the natural world. Instead, we humans require a supernatural explanation for all the disorder in nature and among the best laid plans of mice and men.

Greg then happened to recall that the Greeks had a deity for precisely this phenomenon. Eris was goddess of confusion, strife and chaos. When the Romans kidnapped all the Greek gods and goddesses, they renamed Her Discordia. So we there and then decided to create the Discordian Society, intended to satirize all mortal attempts to impose order—from churches to fraternities and political parties.

A heady concoction became this answer of ours to organized religion—namely, disorganized religion. For membership was conferred haphazardly, and it was easy to join without our knowledge simply by nailing a declaration of Discordianship to a telephone pole.

Many years later we realized that somewhere along the line we had acquired a zealous missionary, a virtual Discordian St. Paul. Not only did we discover Erisians everywhere



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we turned, but we also began encountering terrible rumors—including at least one letter to the editor in the Los Angeles Free Press—that a number of individuals have been persecuted, murdered and otherwise messed over in the name of Discordianism. Since our whole purpose was to combat with satire those very tendencies in other organizations by creating something we thought no one could take seriously, we have found this news disconcerting.

While the identity of our fanatical adept is a matter of controversy I'll not broach at this time, I think he was our fifth convert, acquired when Greg and I sojourned to New Orleans in the early Sixties in search of adventure. Speaking for myself, I think we found more than we needed—but with a delayed time fuse.

As for our fifth convert, there is a Discordian dogma called the Law of Fives: everything worth knowing happens in fives.

In recent years Gregory and I have remained in communication while going our separate geographical ways. Today he lives in San Francisco on what he calls "the future site of the beautiful San Andreas Canyon" after the earthquake fault so named.

Our personalities, as always, relate to one another in a Yin and Yang fashion.. Greg is the confirmed skeptic and I am the erratic believer. He is the Wise Clown and I am the King of Fools. Greg's the observer; I'm the activist.

In some very genuine sense he is the perfect Zenarchist, who treads the Middle Way between concern and detachment. Although a renowned master of the Galloping Mindfuck, Greg never seems to lose his sense of balance or his compassion in the game.

"I used to think I was fucking around with Eris," he said to me once. "But now I can see that Eris is fucking around with me."

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT ERIS

Damned little.

What follows is from Gregory Hill's Principia Discordia, or How I Found Goddess and What I Did to Her When I Found Her:

The Romans left a likeness of Her for posterity—She was shown as a grotesque woman with a pale and ghastly look, Her eyes afire, Her garment ripped and torn, and as concealing a dagger to Her bosom. Actually, most women look pale and ghastly when concealing a chilly dagger in their bosoms.

Her genealogy is from the Greeks and is utterly confused. Either She was the twin of Ares and the daughter of Zeus and Hera, or She was the daughter of Nyx, goddess of night (who was either the daughter or wife of Chaos, or both), and Nyx's brother, Erebus, and whose brothers and sisters include Death, Doom, Mockery, Misery and Friendship. And She begat Forgetfulness, Quarrels, Lies, and a bunch of gods and goddesses like that.

One day Malaclypse the Younger consulted his Pineal Gland and asked Eris if She really created all of those terrible things. She told him that She had always liked the Old Greeks, but that they cannot be trusted with historical matters. "They were," She added, "victims of indigestion, you know."

Suffice it to say that Eris is not hateful or malicious. But She is mischievous, and does get a little bitchy at times.

Our heartfelt condolences to staffer Susan Packie on the recent loss of her mother, Dorothy Rappaport Packie. Susan's tribute follows. She describes it as "a dream I have had on numerous occasions."

My mother and I, alone on a beach, being pounded by enormous waves. I try to grab on to her, to pull her to safety, but she is swept out to sea. No, father, she was neither a bastard nor a bitch. She was my life preserver, and now she is gone.

WHAT WILL THEY THINK OF NEXT?

by Tom Gedwillo

The recent revival of the "original" formula Coca-Cola (now referred to as Classic Coke) shows the power of the public voice, or more likely the marketing strategies of corporate Amerika. I can't believe that the soda executives in Atlanta completely retired the concept of "old" Coke. The speed with which it was re-introduced leads me to conclude that they planned to bring it back even before the "new" Coke was put on the shelves. There are tens of thousands of other products that have not had the fortunate sales history of Coke, let alone two lives. In a nineteenth-century building in Naples, New York exists the International Supermarket and Museum, a final resting place for packaged goods that never made it home in your grocery bag. Consider these products that almost joined the ranks of Hamburger Helper, Pop Tarts and Cheez Whiz: Touch-of-Yogurt Sham-poo (it required refrigeration); Gorilla Balls vitamin-enriched malt candy; I Hate Peas, a potato and pea recipe in french fry form; AfroKola ("The Soul Drink"); Male Chauvinist "awfully arrogant" aftershave; Snack in the Mouth freezer pops; Top Coverage hair-colored spray paint for bald spots; Baker Tom's Baked Cat Food (actually baked in an oven); Sillyclean mirror cleaner; and Gimme Cucumber hair conditioner.

In another category are the products that, like so many one-hit wonder recording groups, were around just long enough to be forgotten. Remember Silly String? An aerosol can that extruded a pinkish plastic material that resembled bubblegum-colored linguine? Cleaning it up was the fun part. We were also blessed with Fizzies, and of course the real trick with those was putting them into an already carbonated beverage. The country was full of adolescent Mr. Wizards playing with fruit-flavored Alka Seltzer thanks to that. General Foods bombed with several Jello products. 1-2-3 Dessert Mix separated into three different forms of gelatin, with one like chiffon, another sort of like Jello as we know it, and the third a totally new life form. Jello Spoon Candy was an instant pudding that ended up with a crunchy, candy-like surface. To tell you the truth, I really miss these things. But back in that building in New York, there are products that we never had a chance to sample, and I suppose we have our health to thank for that.



BIG DEAL!

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Welcome To My CHAMBER by James MacDougall

What does the inside of a writer's head look like?
It probably looks a lot like the writer's room.
And the fundamental differences between humorists and normal people are never more apparent than when a normal being comes to call on the humorist.

Knock knock.

"Come on in," I call.

My guest opens the door, then takes a few tentative steps into my room. My guest is apparently afraid of stepping on something.

"I just want to finish this page, then I'll be ready to go," I say, without looking up from my typewriter. "Have a seat." I gesture towards the bed; there are no other chairs in my room.

The level of clutter in my room has risen to cover all available flat surfaces. This includes my bed. My guest carefully perches on a corner of the bed which is miraculously free of debris.

"Make yourself comfortable, move some of the stuff so you can sit." My guest scans the room and finds no place not already filled to capacity. "Where can I put it?"

"Set some of the stuff on the floor."

My guest is incredulous. Some people cannot conceive of setting anything besides their feet on the floor.

"Look, if you set stuff anywhere else it'll probably slip off onto the floor anyway, so why not save a step and set it right on the floor? The floor is nice and stable, things never fall off of it."

"I'll stand," my guest says. My guest begins a closer inspection of some of the items in my room. This is probably a mistake.

"How can you sleep with this dangling over your head?" says my guest, pointing to the huge plastic spider hanging from the wall.

"What? That's just Cutesie," I exclaim. "Give her a squeeze."

"Huh?"

"Squeeze her."

My guest squeezes the spider. It gives a pleasant squeaky noise, like a rubber duckie.

"See, that's Cutesie. When I squeeze her she cheers me up."

"But it's a spider!"

I don't comment.

My guest continues the inspection of my room, probably searching for something normal.

"What's this?" My guest is pointing to my knick-knack shelf.

"That is a Turd Burd," I explain. "It was a gift; I wouldn't dare buy one myself."

"Is it really..."

"Yep. That little figurine is crafted from a 100% genuine horse chip. I think that is probably the world's dumbest object, but I'm still looking for something worse."

My guest swiftly puts the Turd Burd back, before I can mention that it's coated for sanitary reasons.

"This is cute," says my guest. This time it's a little statue, a tiny frog sitting on a big frog.

"Yeah, I like that," I say, "but I haven't decided whether I think it's obscene or not. The little guy doesn't seem to be doing anything, but the big frog does have an awfully contented look on her face..."

My guest swiftly puts the statuette down.

"Now this isn't real, is it?" My guest is holding up a bag of tutti-frutti popcorn.

"I'm afraid it is," I say. "I bought it because I couldn't believe anyone would sell tutti-frutti popcorn. Actually, they couldn't sell it. It was old when I got it—at a reduced price, of course. That was two years ago. I still haven't had the nerve to open it."

My guest swiftly puts down the packet of popcorn. It is clear now that my knick-knack shelf is not the place to look for something normal. My guest notices, probably with some relief, that I have a United States map Fun-tacked to my wall. Surely there isn't anything strange about this.

"What are the pins you have all through your map for?" asks my guest.

"I've plotted the locations of some of the country's most eccentric activity. Partly to keep track of all the fun and partly to give me ideas about a big nationwide tour I may take someday."

"Hmm," says my guest apprehensively, taking a closer look at the map. "You have Decorah, Iowa marked. How come?" Clearly my guest cannot imagine what could possibly be going on in Decorah, Iowa that would attract the likes of me.

"Trolls," I answer, as if that were explanation enough.

"Trolls?" responds my guest, indicating that this is not explanation enough.

"Trolls," I repeat. "The biology department of Luther College in Decorah has been looking for signs of trolls for several years."

"You're kidding!"

"Not at all," I say. "It's like the search for Bigfoot. Only trolls don't have big feet."

My guest turns to the map to give it more careful scrutiny. "What happens in Elma, Washington?"

"Slug races," I say, as if that were explanation enough.

"Slug races?" says my guest, starting the cycle all over again.

"Slug races," is all I say, daring my guest to ask for an explanation.

I recognize the look on my guest's face. There is nothing in this room relating to the world this person knows. Frankly, I don't know how to help.

"Try the books," I suggest.

My guest seems encouraged. Books are solid, ordinary, dependable things, right?

A quick perusal of the titles changes this perception.

"The Rotating Spaghetti Fork? How to Regain Your Virginity? The Collected Poems of William McGonagall? Who was—"

"McGonagall was the worst poet in history. Really God-awful stuff. Lots of fun."

Dismay crosses my guest's face.

"You got the wrong shelf," I say reassuringly. "Try that book-shelf there."

My guest examines one of the books to which I point. "Mushrooms of Canada?"

"Yes, they've discovered a carnivorous variety of mushroom, carnivorous in the same sense as a Venus Fly Trap, that is..."

"These are your normal books?"

"I'm afraid so. On a relative basis, at least."

My guest backs up, wedging into a corner. My guest scans the objects I have hanging on my walls and somewhere between my autographed picture of Big Bird and my Dinosaur Hunting License makes a decision.

"Look, I have a terrible headache," she says. "Maybe I'll call you later, okay?"

I barely have time to say good-bye before she is gone.

"This has been happening far too often," I say to myself. Then I 15
put another sheet of paper into the typewriter.

FOR the GOOD of ALL

by Arabella Lyon

The Parisian police force was the best looking in the universe. There was no doubt about it; for a few centuries, the Verusian force in the Antares star system had been in serious contention for the honor, but then, the species Globorani won equal rights to the Intergalactic Supreme Court, and Antares had been required to integrate. Globorani may be adept tool users, but slime molds, smelling of methane, have no appeal to any interspecies standard of beauty. So, now, the Parisian police force was indisputably the most attractive.

Gloriosa, Goddess of the Solar System, High Commander of the Martian Madmen, Speedometer of Mercury, Vortex of Venus, and President of Earth, of course, was guarded by the Parisians. Every morning, she was woken by their captain, a devilish brunette whose sardonic smile and forced courtesy gave Gloriosa the correct defensive approach to the day. Immediately after his departure and before her subjugation to the day's work, a breakfast of Colombian coffee, canal elixir, and green cheese was delivered. On the tray was her daily dose of testosterone. Her power in the universe was very dependent on that little white pill. Never an attractive woman, she accepted the hairy chest, the gravelly voice, the moustache as part of the office. She actually liked the larger muscles, the extra energy, and the increase in competitiveness. However, lately the higher doses of testosterone, required by the declaration of war, were sending her into rages. Just yesterday, she had taken off her stiletto heel and pounded dents into the conference table. Thanks be that only Mao Tse Garcia was in the room.

The conference started well enough. Then she said, "Mao Tse, we really have to work on ending this war. If those rabid dogs from Canus succeed in blowing up our Jupiter installation, we'll never be able to replace it. Why, it cost 650 quadrillion dollars fifty years ago. What would it ever cost now? We need to find out."

The petite Minister of Peace responded, "Goddess, High Commander, Speedometer, Vortex and President, I've been in constant communication with that cur, Gurring Wolfe. After our forces vaporized the water supply on the agricultural planet Yeast, he acceded to peace talks monitored by Bivalents."

"Any monitors from a two-star system are bound to be fair. I hope you said so."

"I said I needed to consult with Your Solar Highness."

That was when the testosterone took over. All the cool staff management skills, hypnotised into her subconscious, were overcome. The shoe came off; the table was damaged, and she shrieked, "Am I the only person in the universe? Can't I delegate anything? Can't you manage this pissy little war yourself?"

Mao, whose diplomacy was reputed through five solar systems and whose humility had upheld him through three regencies, flung himself flat in front of her. "A thousand pardons. Your servant is unworthy. Pray let me live long enough to redeem myself," he beseeched.

The rage seemed to burn off some of the accumulated hormone, so Gloriosa simply sat until she felt magnanimous. Mao cringed on the carpet. While his position was abject, his Machiavellian mind was preparing to remind the Goddess of the two revolutions that he had undermined, the three assassins who he had revealed, and if necessary, to divulge the existence of eight items of blackmail, stashed in a Swiss bank. Unless death or demotion seemed inevitable, he avoided discussing blackmail; from prior experience, he knew that damaged the working relationship. He was still straining for a benign means of revealing its existence when Gloriosa, returned to some semblance of balance, spoke: "You may redeem yourself by ending this expensive war. No Bivalent monitors; try for Clairvoyants or, if you must, Equalizers."

After Mao backed his way out, she had the Court Physician adjust the dosage. One can't let one second-rate war interfere with running a solar system. Subsequently, Gloriosa was in a much saner state of mind several days later when the Minister of Peace petitioned for an audience with Her Solar Highness, Purveyor of Peace. In fact, since he obviously had made progress with the Cani, she wedged him into her afternoon schedule—after the Minister of Agriculture reported on the Martian drought and before the Minister of Trade tried to explain the disappearance of a gold shipment from Jupiter. He had to be in on it. Gloriosa thought that crooks like Trade made a ruler real grateful for allegiant deputies like Mao.

Still, when she saw Mao snake along so low to the ground, Gloriosa knew the settlement was not advantageous. He would have crawled if the war had ended honorably, so she stood silently and let him explain.

"Goddess of War and Peace, Arbiter of All Treaties, your humble servant begs your acceptance of this negotiated settlement with the Cani. Forty-eight Equalizers met for forty-eight hours and unanimously balanced and proportioned this equity. The Cani will withdraw all claims to the waterless planet Yeast. We will withdraw all thirty-three colonists from the moon of their fourth planet. All prisoners of war will be returned; the right to legal suit is waived by all parties. Furthermore, for the next two years, both sides agree that all generals and all leaders, cabinet level and above, will take estrogen to maintain a blood level of 1.2 times the normal of each species' female. All exogenous testosterone will be tapered and stopped. Spot checks will occur at the Equalizers' discretion...Glorious Goddess, please accept this settlement as the best an unskilled servant can arrange." Mao banged his forehead three times on the floor to signify his sincerity.

Gloriosa's testosterone level was high but within therapeutic range; she was able to control her initial outrage. After all, Warvard, Inc., that had vaporized Yeast's water, would replace it for a trillion dollars. She always knew that the Cani wouldn't tolerate colonization of their moon. But how in Heaven's name was she to rule a solar system without testosterone! True, women had done it in the past, but

nowadays, even men took extra testosterone. It's just outrageous what a leader has to do for the good of all...Oh well, with the extra estrogen, she could go back to sleeping with the captain of the Parisian police. That thought made her smile, and her smile elated Mao. As a diplomat, he always took estrogen; now with the others on estrogen, he could control the solar system.

THE BLUE BEYOND by Sigmund Weiss

My dear Lady, when we arrive at the Blue Beyond I will introduce you to the Footman at the gate as Miss...? what's your name?...You know, when you arrived onto this bus I had been sitting on a rear seat, and noticing that softness in your eyes, the tenderness of your small lips and your trailing black tresses, I became enamoured of you. So I changed seats and moved alongside you. Of course, the Footman in the Blue Beyond, where we are going, must have received previous knowledge of who we both are. I am certain that both the Footman and the Driver of this bus know our names, but they persist in their silence. Between where we are and the Blue Beyond, all is silence. Only what our minds think, each of us knows about the other. Up there, everybody is too busy praying in silence, so no one communicates with the other. Anyway, very few people are capable of thinking anything worth saying. Now that we no longer exist in that world we previously existed in, we have plenty of time to understand each other. I remember being married to a girl who looked just like you. We always had arguments. I'd say something, she'd disagree with me. She'd say something, I'd disagree with her. We'd get into such heated arguments, finally realizing that we were both expressing the same ideas, only each of us differently. Now, where we are, nobody speaks to each other, just thinks back and forth. I get a feeling that you are agreeing with me. Since we are both agreeing with each other, I feel terrible. Up there or down there, whichever way one is looking, secrets were plentiful as sand. I'm scared. I'm even scared to think. I like thinking to be individual, to make me feel like I am thinking something others are not thinking. I'm afraid that when we arrive at the Blue Beyond we'll all become like dolls, so similar in appearance and behavior that we will bore each other to death. Don't you think so? I guess I better stop thinking. Don't you think so?

THEIR DESTINY by Bob Warner

The God of War, wearied after countless bloody campaigns, staggered and fell upon the smouldering, pockmarked earth at the feet of the God of Peace.

"I'm so tired," said the God of War. "Have pity on me because of My great travail!"

"Remove Your hand," said the God of Peace, "from My white robes, which You are staining with the blood of Your eternal butchery. Pity, You say? I'm to pity You? You, Who continually sow the seeds of death and destruction over the world? You're an abomination to all who have tasted Your senseless wrath. And I must reap the harvest of Your deeds. There is little enough to work with, after You have finished."

Somewhat rested, the God of War pulled Himself up to His full height and laughed the laugh of new carnage.

"Hah!" He said, dashing His hands together in the rumbling sound of battle. "If it were not for I, You would soon be out of a job!"

The God of Peace shrugged and smiled wanly. He clasped the hand of the God of War in a firm gesture of friendship and understanding. After all, They were bound by Destiny to perform eternal mutual chores, like them or not.

The God of War, weary though He often became, was obliged to continue His duty of rending Mankind asunder.

And the God of Peace, Who often grew equally weary, was compelled to follow after and dutifully pick up the pitiful pieces.

BUTT BUNTING

by Stacey Sollfrey

Why is it

that whenever people walk
one foot always has to have a moment
of standing behind everything

Commercial McClue-In by "Kid" Sieve

Well, there but for the Grace of W.R. go those "consciousness-raising" commercials about the federal deficit. Notwithstanding the fact that I haven't witnessed (Entertainment Tonight couldn't resist grabbing an exclusive to show bits of The Ad That Was Banned From The Networks) something so lavish yet pointless since "Heaven's Gate," I can't even figure out what's so controversial—aside from Grace's gall in implying that the responsibility for the deficit lies with We, The People and not with a mismanaged and bloated government/military machine—but might I suggest that, if they're so well-meaning and concerned, Grace take all the money (and this conservative corporation has plenty, judging by the ad itself) they'll save from not paying ad revenues and use it to do their own little part for deficit reduction?

Are my eyes getting worse, or is that actor on the Firesign Theatre-inspired "I'm not a doctor but I play one on TV" spot named Peter Bergman? The superimposition only lasts a moment.

I don't know if the Pontiac "When's the last time you were excited?" ads are local (NY) or national, but I already consider the Andy Warhol spot a classic.

I find it extremely hard to buy the notion of grown men and women acting all goopy and giddy at the mere mention of all those Famous People Who Really Eat Kellogg's Corn Flakes. ("Wow, Robby Benson!") Incidentally, you may wonder who compiled that ponderous tome used as facade reference in said commercial, and I have my suspicions, based on my own adolescent experiences, that it's culled from old Tiger Beat celebrity interviews. Just a hunch, mind you.

Thanks, all ye letter writers, for your nice response to this column's debut last issue. I've been toying with the idea of commercial mindfuck expose for awhile, trying to find a comfortable format, and I feel as if I've succeeded to an extent. I always appreciate any suggestions you have, as well, and our first two 'trouble spots' have been volunteered by Dorian Tenore and Carolyn Lee Boyd:

1) WHEN CHER "GETS TOUGH," THE WEIRD TURN, RETCHING (CB)—"Don't you just hate" the after-holidays health spa ads where women who've never been overweight in their lives talk about "fat ankles"?! I swear, Cher is the only woman in existence who could see her feet when she was 9 months along! Give me a break with this motto "get tough"—get real. Me, I'd rather be fat than stupid, any day.

2) MASTERCARD, I'M PRETENTIOUS (DT)—I always assumed these types of "people" just plunk down cash or diamonds or at least American Excess wherever they go, dahling. What does a poor child (or adult) think, I wonder, when watching these wealthy mannequins parading their assets across the tube? -sigh- Probably the same thing s/he thinks when viewing them on Lifestyles of the Rich & Useless...

3) HELL BIG BROTHER, PART II—If there was one thing for which a NY-area viewer could be thankful at reaching the 31st of January, it was that the most insidiously sctaaary commercial I've ever seen has run its course. The ads (I counted at least 3 variations) open with Mr. or Ms. Average Citizen (AC) saying, with gleam-in-eye, something like, "I'm not going to declare such-and-such on my taxes; who's gonna know?" CUT TO extremely serious-looking conservative Yuppie type standing in front of one of those computer-filled rooms straight out of all those 1950's mechanical-intelligence-takes-over-the-world flicks (back when computers really were monstrous in size), sounding remarkably like a machine, remarking sternly, "WE ALREADY KNOW. New York has new ways to find tax evaders, and tougher penalties." (I understand there's talk of bringing back the rack.) "So we're offering you" (a Once-In-A-Lifetime Bonus, no doubt—how magnanimous!) "Tax Amnesty—if you pay up before January 31. No questions asked" (no lies told?)—here his voice takes on mock portent and slows down—"NO PROSECUTION. YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE, AND SO DO WE." CUT BACK TO Mr. or Ms. AC mysteriously absent from the spot on which he or she spoke just "moments" before—implying that AC is now in the slammer. The punny tag line? Just what you'd expect from those kooky klowns at the IRS—"Amnesty. It'd be a crime not to miss out." Giggie guffaw. One bit even had the guy "bragging" about evasion to his dog (okay, I may talk to my cats, but it's usually on the order of "I Love you" rather than, "Hey, I cheated on my taxes today!"), then after Mr. Taxman/machine does his spiel the scene CUTS BACK TO the dog, alone, whimpering for its master...how touching. It's incredulous to me that these are the things that are allowed to exist without protest these days (while meaningless commercials like Grace's are carefully censored, for fear they'll make people think). Never mind the libertarian argument that equates income tax with theft of private, earned property (with which I've no complaint); I'm talking, as usual, mind-control...control that partially succeeded. Over \$200,000 was collected thanks to this campaign, and people were actually quoted as saying stuff like "I figured they'd catch up with me sooner or later, so I thought I'd pay now," and meanwhile Uncle Sammy now has records on thousands more ACs to do with as they will. It's simply not fair to run scare tactic commercials like this, especially when you yourself are a bureaucracy so rife with ineptitude and incompetence that you couldn't possibly back up your threats with action... oh, I can't go on, I make myself too sick over this asininity. I just keep hoping there are still enough thinking people out there who continue to question authority and mistrust, and not be intimidated by, this Orwellian shit.

4) AND SPEAKING OF GEORGIE BOY...—Remember how Animal Farm told us "Some pigs are more equal than other pigs?" Well, Equal is indeed "one of the reasons," G.D. Searle tells us, "why some things taste better than others." Searle's artificial sweetener aspartame, marketed under the trade name (and if you don't know I hope you have nice home movies of the planets you've been visiting) NutraSweet, "has been

linked" (and most of us can see through that euphemism) "to dizziness, headaches, blurred vision, behavioral and emotional changes, seizures and possibly brain damage," according to sources like the American Holistic Medical Association. Moreover, NY Newsday recently reported that "two top Chicago prosecutors failed to move on a 1977 request for a grand jury inquiry into the G.D. Searle Co.'s handling of test results" on aspartame, "then joined the law firm representing Searle." Something smells rotten behind the little red swirl. I mean, when it gets so bad that I can't even enjoy NutraSweet-sponsored ice skating championships any longer...Yet, for all these coverups, what irks me more are the "there's nothing wrong with sweetness and light, even if it kills you" commercials—the newest one pitifully attempts to assure skeptics that "if you've eaten a banana and milk together, you've had NutraSweet." No, I haven't, I've had a banana and milk, not your foul chemical. I mean, the same kind of difference separates carbon dioxide from carbon monoxide, know what I mean? And that horrid radio spot—with the kid taking his Flintstone Vitamins (flavored with 100% NutraSweet—oh no, 75% just won't do) and remarking to Mom, "Let me get this straight" (and let me break in here for a mo' and ask you, seriously, have you ever known a normal kid to begin a conversation this way when not reading a script?), "You say the Vitamin A in Flintstones is good for my eyes?" Mom concurs. (Lotsa lines for Mom.) "And the calcium is good for my teeth, right?" Again Mom agrees. "What's the NutraSweet good for?" Oh, dizziness, headaches, blurred vision, etc. etc., and lots of shady dealing to boot, dear. For further information, send a SASE to the AHMA at 3100 N. Hillside, Wichita, KS 67219. NEXT ISSUE we take on MTV (excerpting from Elayne's upcoming column for the Tuben's Voice, the Couch Potato newsletter), Dow, Pepsi, and the ever-ubiquitous Beatrice—plus, whatever ya got...

COWBOY RON'S ARTS

The SubGenius
Foundation heals
ruined members
of a
crumbling society!

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

Be ready for strong language.

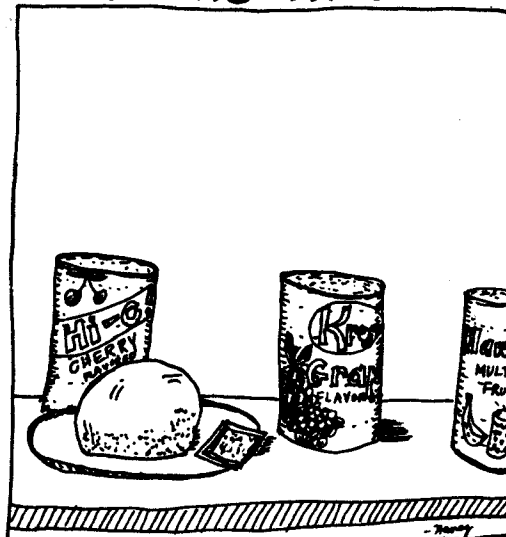
The SubGenius Foundation
P.O. Box 146306
Dallas, Texas 75214

The scorn-church for strange people.
\$1 for morbid but hilarious and
thought-provoking intro booklet.
Nothing like it anywhere.



AND HUMANITIES
POSTER BOY

Riddle Time



THERE SHOULD BE
A no nonsense plan to end war,
inflation, unemployment and
death. There is one but DO
something. Send SASE to:
4 WAY HEREBEFORE
Box 2243
YOUNGSTOWN - OHIO, 44504

ANSWER ON
NEXT PAGE



PIGSHIT

By Gary Pig Gold

GREAT UNSUNG HEROES OF ROCK'N'ROLL, PART ONE

All in all, Xmas 1985 wasn't too very shabby, I'll tell ya: Channel 9 in Toronto began running late-night "Lou Grant"s...WITHOUT commercial interruption. I got taken out for an absolutely scrumptious Yuletide salmon (salmon!?) dinner at the Ramada Inn (not nearly as horrendous as one might think), and, best of all, I FINALLY got my stereo back from the repair shop!

So as soon as the salmon had settled, I dashed towards the coveted PIG Archives in search of that special disc with which to inaugurate my Kenwood KR-7070's homecoming. "Proctor & Bermgan's Christmas Album"? Naw...too obvious. My new Hulk Hogan picture disc? Not just yet. Lindsey Buckingham's freshly-deleted "Go Insane"? Save THAT one for ushering in 1986!

Then, logically sandwiched between Kim Fowley and The Fugs, I stumbled upon my long-forgotten cache of Freddie & The Dreamers records. "FREDDIE & THE DREAMERS?!!" you're undoubtedly snickering from behind your Simple Minds CD. Refrain from pooh-poohing me just yet, however, for soon after slapping on Side One of their British "Best Of" LP, it hit me that this was far from being just another dust-covered compilation of nostalgic Merseybeat ditties I was listening—and DANCING—to. Hell, this was A-R-T (or, at least, K-I-T-S-C-H) at its most exalted heights.

Freddie Garrity and his madcap band (Derek Quinn, Roy Crewdson, Bernie Dwyer, and the John Cleese of the bass guitar, Pete Birrell) burst out of Manchester, England atop a milk wagon in 1963, had a handful of international Top Tens, made a few movies, toured America, and quickly vanished (along with too many other fine combos) when things got too serious circa "Sgt. Pepper." Today they're faintly recalled as just another pudding-haired division of British Invaders. Yet in the grand tradition of O. Henry, Spike Jones, and "Green Acres," one need only peer beneath the Dreamers' goofball surface and an entire wealth of stinging satire and social commentary will reveal itself...not to mention, coincidentally, some of the most skilled musical gymnastics this side of Stan Kenton.

Best remembered for his million-selling fluffernutter "I'm Telling You Now" and his Buddy Holly-pogo'-ing-on-Vivarin dance craze "The Freddie" (thrill to Mike Douglas attempting this particular Sixties step on page 370 of Michael Ochs' "Rock Archives"!), Mr. Garrity's albums and European B-sides feature desecrations of such past classics as "Short Shorts" and "See You Later, Alligator," the

likes of which the Mothers of Invention in their prime would NEVER have dreamed possible. And whilst Raymond Douglas Davies was still busy re-writing the Big Bill Broonzy Songbook, the Dreamers were waxing wistful yet acidic odes to "Playboy"s, "Silly Girl"s, and other rarely-sung-about facets of Life on Carnaby Street. And, I ask you, what other band at the height of Beatlemania would re-write "Auld Lang Syne," give it a syrupy-sick arrangement straight out of the Ray Conniff Singers, sing the two melodies in counterpoint, call it something dumb like "I Understand," and be awarded a gold record for their troubles to boot? Not even Herman's Hermits!

Personally, for me Freddie & The Dreamers' crowning achievement was a little-known song they featured in the otherwise useless 1965 film "Seaside Swingers." This 5-minute, 40-second masterwork, slyly entitled "What's Cookin'," is still a marvel to hear today, schizophrenically shifting as it does from bouncy showtune to march tempo to fantasy-sequence to cool swinging jazz as an absolutely lunatic male chorus repeatedly hails Freddie as "the King of Cheese Soufflé." Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band, eat your hearts out! (...and I used to think "Good Vibrations" was a multi-tiered stroke of genius...)

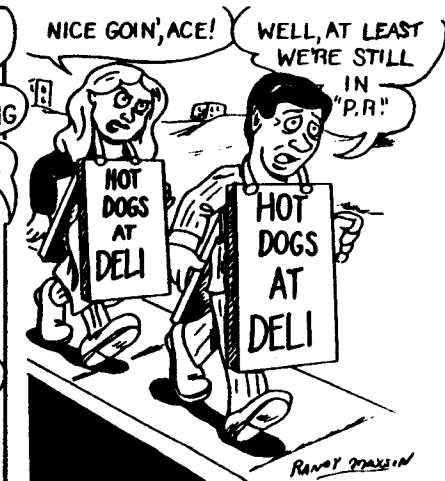
And as if their musical accomplishments weren't sufficient, the Dreamers packaged and toured it all within a bizarrely choreographed framework utterly unique to the era. Imagining how innocent viewers of "Shindig" or "Hullabaloo" twenty-odd years ago must have reacted as Freddie and his quintet, looking more like mobsters run amok in a novelty shop than a pop group, bounded slap-hazily across their screens keeps me chuckling to myself late into the night sometimes. Or, in the words of their debut LP's liner notes, "Freddie has managed to sing while cavorting about the stage doing the splits, being hoisted up in the air, and descending into a smoke-filled pool clad only in bathing trunks and flippers. What the band is doing is bringing back some of the atmosphere of the variety theatre, when an act was expected to be visual as well as musical." Freddie as Grandfather of the MTV Age? Roll over, David Lee Roth, and tell Duran Duran the news!

Today a makeshift Dreamers still tours the British supper clubs, and Freddie's still doing the Freddie alongside Pete Birrell (while Mike Douglas languishes alongside Tom Snyder in TV purgatory). Sorrowfully, the band's original EMI and Mercury discs command little space in the history books or record convention booths, though fortunately they still crop up at classier garage sales and church bazaars.

But for THIS Pig at least, and I believe any other discriminating connoisseur of merry mayhem, musical or otherwise, it's Freddie & The Dreamers every time I'm in search of a novel way of digesting Christmas salmon!

ANSWER TO "RIDDLE TIME"—
ROLL WITH THE PUNCHES

RECENT NEWS ITEM: Soviet Union seeks U.S. public-relations firm to improve Soviet image...





YOSSARIAN UNIVERSAL News Service (YU)
PO Box 236, Millbrae, CA 94030/Fericano
PO Box 40710, Portland, OR 97240/Ligi

"All the news to give you fits"

WHITEWATER, KAN (YU) - Thousands of fans of actress Elizabeth Taylor gathered outside the home of Mrs. Betty Rubble, a retired stonecutter, in the hopes of catching a glimpse of Mrs. Rubble's frying pan.

According to a neighbor, Mrs. Ella Fitzgerald, the face of Elizabeth Taylor appeared yesterday in a frying pan of bacon grease which Mrs. Rubble had forgotten to wash with the breakfast dishes. "I've seen it," said Mrs. Fitzgerald. "It scared the shit out of me."

One miracle has already been attributed to the "bacon grease face." An elderly man was reportedly cured of his ability to play the harmonica after he was hit in the mouth with the frying pan.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Wichita has sent a team of priests to the house for the purpose of determining the religious worth and authenticity of the bacon grease.

WACO, TEX (YU) - Reliable sources reported today that a team of vacationing anthropologists has accidentally discovered an ancient Indian community living directly under the streets of this Texas town.

"We are the lost tribe of Spielberg," Chief Boy George Lucas told the visiting anthropologists. "Our ancestors have lived beneath this town since the beginning of silent films."

Dr. Indiana Jonestown, leader of the group that had momentarily stopped in Waco to refill their canteens, was both relieved and delighted. "Thank God we found water in this sinkhole," he confessed. "Most of us were pretty thirsty."

As for the significance of finding a lost tribe that was once believed to be extinct, Dr. Jonestown theorized, "If we hadn't found water when we had, I think all of us would have been in serious trouble."

CHICAGO (YU) - City officials have reached an agreement with the Chicago Cubs over whether or not Wrigley Field should install lights for the purpose of night games. In place of lights, both sides have agreed to allow all players (and some fans) to wear the increasingly popular coal miner's helmet instead of the usual batting helmet. "It's so simple and so unique," said one city official, "that it's hard to believe nobody ever thought of this before now."

CARSON CITY, Nev (YU) - A wealthy cattle rancher has asked the Navy to base the USS Retribution and 13 escort vehicles on his 600-acre ranch here. "I just want the Navy to know," explained rancher Ben Cartwright, "that if none of them big-city folks don't want that battleship, I do."

There was no immediate response from the Navy on Mr. Cartwright's request, but a sailor stationed in San Diego says the Navy is considering all serious inquiries.

Other sites requesting the Navy's fleet include Benghazi (Libya), Disney World and the planet Rolf (in the Sinbar Galaxy).

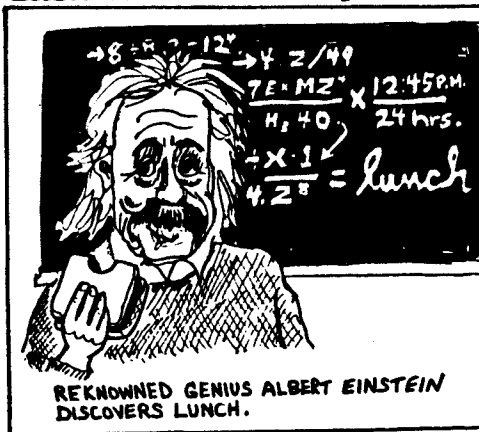
WASHINGTON (YU) - President Reagan made a final attempt to dispel rumors that he may have misappropriated public funds when he decided the coin-flip for this year's Super Bowl. He also tried to play down accusations that a "trick silver dollar" was used, with two "tails" and no "heads."

During a rare news conference yesterday, Reagan dismissed charges that the silver dollar was part of the budget deficit, but did admit borrowing the coin from his good friend, Frank Sinatra. "Frank Sinatra has given me his word," Reagan told reporters, "that the silver dollar I used was as genuine as his reputation; and that's good enough for me."

When pressed for more details, Reagan revealed he would spend the next few days learning how to saw a woman in half.

Sinatra, attending a group-arrogance session at Alexander Haig's house, was unavailable for comment.

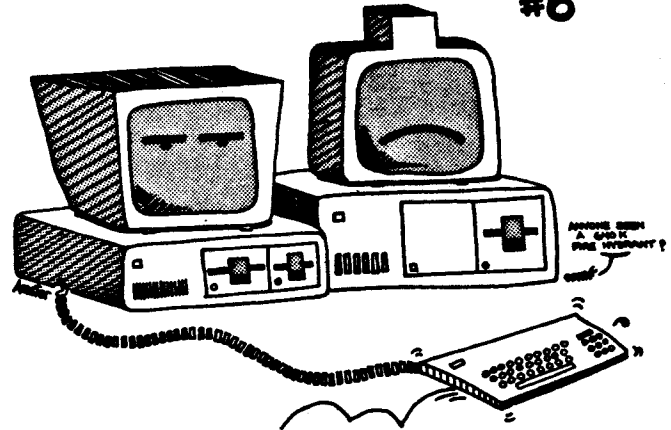
BACKWORDS LOGIC - by Ace Backwords-6



Well miss you, "Little Ricky" Nelson...

CELEBRITY HOME COMPUTERS

#6



GRACE JONES' AND MR. T'S COMPUTERS WALKING THE DOG

THE END STARTS THE BEGINNING...

by D.A. Beast

...Incredible how one day can move into the next... reason can cease to exist and then you stand and wait and wonder... If life springs from a dream, how many threads will be severed when the sun ceases to exist? I touch my hand and it is real, but perhaps only because I always expected it would be.

I cannot find my home.

I cannot remember from where I came.

Lightning in a storm. Momentary interruptions that alter a life forever... and then nothing is left... except to wait for the circumstances that inevitably must come again...

Like the lightning in the storm.

We are fused forever in the threads of time.

NOT THE END



"HACKER DUCK"

IF YOU CAN'T DRINK, DON'T DRIVE



LIGHT FINGERS

by Stacey Sollfrey

I reach into the store
like Carrie did at the end of that movie
hanging my knuckles on the wall
stiffening my hands
while still being able to open my fingers
wide enough
to push away any imprint of information
the curve of a cardboard box
can let through

I'M THE LAST OF THE HIPPIES

by Jeanne Anderson

I'm the last of the hippies
travelin' round like the gypsies
with an earring in my ear
my music loud so I can't hear
got a tattoo on my arm
that really matches all my charm
I ride around on my Harley
with hair that's long so I can't see
I wear a torn-up leather vest
and I think that I'm the best
people give me dirty looks
guess they been readin' too much books
I went to school in my younger years
and put pressure on my peers
I rode my motorcycle down the halls
wrote dirty words on the walls
Oh, first I got detention
then put on suspension
what I got was no surprise to me
it wasn't an A, B, C or D
yes my grades were all a flop
so from school I decided to drop
then out the door I went
now on the road is where my life is spent
yes I'm the last of the hippies
and I'm still living in the 60's
I move around from space to space
in a fast and steady pace
I don't look too fancy, I don't look
too crude
but I'd have to admit that I'm one
far-out dude
I don't have fame or wealth
but I'm in good health
and I'm happy just being me
the one, the proud, the hippy!

Nothing Like Edison

by Roger Morris

The human mind is capable of conceiving and achieving all kinds of magnificent things. Take, for instance, the invention of airplanes, automobiles, computers, laser beams, the harnessing of electricity, the technology to take a man to the moon and all kinds of great new medical breakthroughs that have saved countless lives. All of these things are truly amazing and prove that we are blessed but at the same time the mind of man is equally capable of dreaming up some of the most ignorant and ridiculous contraptions of all time. A very good example of this would be the invention of the stork trap. I'm sure many years of research and development were spent on this project, but I'm afraid it has all been a waste because no one seems to really want a stork.

Another unusual device that has definitely not taken the music field by storm is the wooden trumpet. Its inventor claims it will totally revolutionize the Indonesian tribal love song and bring a whole new spirit of patriotism to the national anthem of Lithuania. Unfortunately, the inventor of this instrument is a complete idiot and doesn't have the slightest idea as to what he is talking about.

Duh!

© Mattes

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The latest thing in bizarre inventions is most likely the rectal vacuum. This device has only been on the market for a few short weeks now and experts already agree that it will be a giant flop. It seems most potential customers are unsure as to how or why the instrument is used. One sure thing about this product is the intense pain one must undergo before any relief is rendered.

I realize we are discussing inventions, but the most unusual discovery that has been made within the past twenty-five years has got to be the discovery of cats that chase cars. It is agreed by cat connoisseurs everywhere that this unnatural urge is the direct result of a brain tumor caused by a deterioration of the ozone. Unfortunately, these cats were not very good at chasing cars. It seems that every last one of them was run over and killed.

As long as the human mind continues to devise new things like blue coffee, nasal magnets, vegetable helmets, fur postage stamps and invisible pornography, we will always have something good to laugh about.

Sayz-U! (Letters)

(Do forgive this tiny type style I'm to use for my replies to the following letters, but my Letter Gothic element fits my typewriter at work and my Script element fits ol' Lilith at home [and my Script element for my work typewriter broke & the replacement hasn't come in yet], so I have to make do with what I have. By next issue, I hope to have acquired all sorts of neat elements for Lilith, and I'll be doing IJ at home pretty exclusively [it's getting harder and harder to get away with this here at the 9-5 grind], so things should be rectified.)

Elayne,

It's been one of those weeks so far, which follows as naturally as Vidal follows Gore, since it has also been one of those years. Exactly where some arbiter has written down the precise definition of "one of those years," I'm not quite sure, but I know it must be written somewhere. Burned in wood, etched in stone, molded in plastic like those nifty Creepy Crawlers we used to bake back in our late 60's childhood. Er, adolescence. All of which is to say I'd just as soon this be Friday as Wednesday. Enough. Fuck the Libyans, Abu Nidal, AIDS, the local mayoral elections, and anything remotely related to Mardi Gras, the latter having sneaked up on me again before I had a chance to vacate the premises. I've had it. Call me at the millennium.

(I don't know whether to feel robbed, honored, or psychic. First, Berke Breathed featured a "Bill the Cat Assault Gun" in his "Bill the Cat Christmas Catalog." This reminded me of the "Cabbage Patch Machine Gun" I was offering in my pre-holiday catalog back in September. Then, I was in the French Quarter last weekend, and I noticed that someone has come out with "Miami Mice" t-shirts. Oooh, universal one-ness, cosmic consciousness, not an original idea to be had for money, sex, or boxtops.)

Actually, true procrastinator that I am, I am here to comment on IJ issues #41 and 42. Considering that issue #43 will arrive any day now, I'm beating the buzzer on a charge of grave robbing by a pinkie and a spade. Time is meaningless. The only thing that has meaning is an IRA, or so I've been told.

NUMBER 41: Happy anniversary and all that. Nice cover by Pearce and all that. I adored Mildred's "Quantum Courtesy;" the only thing worse than door-to-door sellers of salvation might be the inevitable computer salvation phone call. "Hello! This is Reverend Jim. You may have won life everlasting. Please stay on the line, and I'll have the choir fill you in on the details..." Nice to hear Anni finally found something more stimulating to read than Tolstoy. An issue weak on cartoons, but the inside back cover by Vernon Grant on "Aviary Child Abuse" was nice. I was sorry to hear J.P. Morgan didn't like "The Black Cauldron." I guess this only proves that I'm a cheap drunk.

NUMBER 42: Well, I'm sure Phil Tortorici feels very guilty for trying to pass off such filth on your back cover. Breasts, indeed! Maybe you could keep some black tape, and simply put little boxes over such things when they come in? It's been done, I know. How about using little pictures of Cowboy Ron, or better yet, Nancy? Ooo, I like it. (Aw, c'mon, guys. I'm not really Tipper Goreish about all of this, am I? I mean, I never said breasts were filth, did I? All I said was that they were "More Than I Need To Know," in other words, gratuitous. I mean, it's my newsletters, so it is my prerogative, isn't it? Now, pix of Ron & Nancy—that's obscene!) Amen to Anni and the record ratings. Good episodes of "Cynical Man," too.

Here are the latest cartoons. Do with them what you will. Until then (or until the mail comes and I'm behind once again), I'll remain ever more lately,

ANDY AMSTER
829 N. Carrollton Ave.
New Orleans, LA 70119

Dear "Says You" Readers—

As you all well know, I am a peaceful man. Yes, it's true, in my impetuous youth I made several ill-considered and hostile jibes on these very pages...and paid a bitter price for it too. I might add.

But those days are over. Today the IJ letter column has become—as Roldo so eloquently put it—"a forum where intelligent ideas can be discussed in a mature manner." Gone are the days of malicious feuds and insult-provoking name-calling...or so I thought. In the midst of reading IJ #43 with its myriad of nice articles, nice graphics and nice letters, I came across this letter from one Deborah Benedict where she refers to me as—and I quote—"Ace Bark-words."

Now I ask you—have I ever once made fun of her name? To add insult to injury, on that very same page, one Anni Ackner continues, in her usual vitriolic manner, to make cracks defaming my very personality. My initial reaction was to remain silent—after all, I have no intention of becoming the "Howard Cosell of INSIDE JOKE," seeking controversy and ridicule to achieve a dubious notoriety. My primary concern is to communicate and to express myself, not to lower myself to the level of childish quarreling and bickering. I've got better things to do with my time. Unlike some stupid jerk-heads.

Sincerely,

ACE BACKWORDS
1630 University Ave., #26
Berkeley, CA 94703

(=sigh= give me strength...Seriously, one can't always blame certain spellings on their authors in this newsletter. Lord knows I've made more than my share of typos! For instance, in last issue's "Fan Noose," I actually typed "goy" instead of "joy"—and if

you don't think that's embarrassing, wait till I start getting letters on that one....)

Dear Elayne and I.J. Readers of all Persuasions, yes, even that one—

NUMBER 43—already? FORTY THREE. Sheesh, how far you've come and thou art swell for it.

I liked the cover tres much—thank you, Ace. I think you're primarily a visual kind of creative artist, but do what thou wilt, be bop a lou bop.

Anni, my dear—evidently PEOPLE (pronounced here as PEE-OH-PULL) Magazine has redefined the word intriguing and it now means "moderately interesting." THEY never pick people I think are really intriguing—like Hieronymus Bosch or Elisabeth Bathory—oh no—always the little dipshit types with meato hairdos. Get real, I sez.

Anni, I would like it ever so ever if you would shed all vestiges of decent outward politesse and impale some of dese "celebrities" on your ever sharp verbal lampoon. 'Kay, babe? Fabulous, babe. LUNCH.

Who did WOCKY IV and when can I buy him/her a large Colorado Bulldog? (That would be dashin' Dan Howland, whom I promise I will someday convince to sign his wonderful work...)

My only comment about JOURNEY THROUGH THE TENDERLOIN is this—I don't believe it. I'm not really sorry—I think Ace had his trips and experiences and they was for real, and I also think Ace has himself some talent, too—I truly love his graphic, visual stuff...Oh, I know what it is—he's on the road, he's testing, finding out—the infamous artist in transition gig—he'll be hell on wheels when he lands.

I loved Scharff's RETAIL CLERKS COMIX 'cause I live it like every day.

Who is Stacy Solifrey? I like this person. Just letting you know. I never say anything about ZENARCHY STORIES because it would be superfluous. They is what they is—and then some. Kinda biblical and they don't brook no real critique or comment.

Michael Dobbs and I need to talk and commiserate. I utterly loathe Rooney and his constant kvetching. He is so petty and negative—he lives in a rarified atmosphere. I am working on a vicious letter to 60 MINUTES about him. I listen to his bullshit and I always end up saying to him, "Don't you understand anything? This is just the world, it's life, it's the way it is—your input, as it is, makes it even worse." He edifies nothing—he only reveals his onerous self—how would you like to wake up to that every morning??? What a narsty little man he is—no magick or joy whatsoever. As for the rest of Michael Dobbs—I liked it loads and have the same questies. Michael, you kinda remind me of Vonnegut. You have this in common—your complexity lies in your simplicity.

Rory—please do DREAM ACADEMY and do 'em nice. I haven't been so invaded by a piece of music as I have by LIFE IN A NORTHERN TOWN since I heard Sally Go Round the Roses by the Jaynettes. Aztec Camera are truly deep.

Sarah Mowney—I know her from when I lived in California—she lives in HIDDEN HILLS and she is a profound dame. What she says be the truth in all arenas of life—you is what you is fed. Oh my my...can you boogie, can you slide? Indeed, indeed and through the years, especially this one. You all need to be on the watchout for this kind of scam.

All in all, she confessed, I most appreciated KID SIEVE (Hiya, Kid, how 'bout them dichotomies, babe?) and her revela-words on tv common-ercials. Kid Sieve, you do be a vision in white—you is zactly right. Me and my thoughts was nodding like a springhead doggie in the back of a Chevy Bel Air, circa '56.

I like L.P. Whitney. Does he work at a health food store like me or is he just a knowledgeable guy? Also—D.A. Beast and THIS WASN'T REAL ANYHOW did me lotsa good—it's happened to me a lot lately, especially in like personal relationships...

Jed Martinez is right. Even people in Lincoln know 'bout Jasper Carrott.

Following the always wise advice and hopes of Roldo, I wish to discuss something in a MATURE manner, a Victor Mature manner, in fact and hey—name something better y'know?

Madame Editor Elayne suggests we "make fun" of her "prudery" attitude for "good" and I say, hey why not?

Because, let's get real—everything we do on this planet is almost always based on physical identification—boy/girl and so on. Very dreary shit, really. ("BEING ANY GENDER IS A DRAG"—Patti Smith) so I think we should all declare ourselves the same gender—and that gender will be called ANYGENDER. That way, any nude representation will be casual. "Yeah, that's ME" you can say. Any sexual encounter that deserves to be described will be US, all of US, equally and we can say, "It was good for us!" We won't even have to ask was it good for you too cause you are us. (I think. Possibly. Maybe.)

Get rid of exotic sexual division and you get rid of sexism. Get rid of sexism and you get rid of prudery and pornography at the same time! YIPES! Almost too good to be true—yet it is. In fact, it is too good to be true and it isn't. Ain't nobody quite that hip yet 'cept you and me, honey.

This is my longest and my most cohesive letter to INSIDE JOKE ever. And what does that tell you? It tells you that at the age of almost 35 I have decided to be as mouthy as I feel.

The fact is, I do enjoy and like every I.J. contributor and contribution and I truly feel all of you are revolutionary spirits and if I "criticise" it is as a lover, as a comrade who knows what you are going through. Being a human being is WORK—and being a funny one is close to a thankless job. Thank you all for being so funny in the face of utter tawdry LIFE.

Today I spoke with my mother—who is similar to the Oracle of Delphi—and she said that when you really love someone—their real es—

sence—not some easy image you invented, but them—then it is absolutely ok fine to DEMAND that they be the best whoever they is.

She said it was COOL because that is what the creator of the Universe demands—and we is all God, anyway. So I think maybe the word FEUD and other soft shit fade away here—in IJ Territory when we talk to you and say "Hey, maybe you could do this 'stead of this"...we is asking only for that person to be their ultimate best—and our request comes because we are asking the same from ourselves and we take such honour and delight in kindred-spirit-company. Don't you know that's true???? I do.

Angels fly because they take themselves lightly.

Torrents of love and energy to you all—

I am, as usual, knee deep in the hoopla,

DEBORAH BENEDICT
854 Y Street
Lincoln, NE 68508

Dear Elayne,

I wonder if the weird weather has anything to do with Halley's Comet? Whatever...The format of IJ #43 seemed tighter than usual; more dense with material. IJ gives you more for your money!! More great stuff like Sieve's "Commercial McClue-In," given additional credence by Mowney's "Fastronomics" bit...these two articles unmask part of why TV has become unwatchable: the continual attack on your brain by insidious, mentally-cloning commercials. (The other part is the programs they squeeze in-between between commercials, but let's not get into that.) (The kid replies, "I believe, contrary to this comment, that this is even more reason to keep watching television. Once you let your vigilance slip, once you stop fighting the insidiousness and shrug your shoulders and opt to use the "OFF" button permanently, you're LETTING THEM WIN, and that MUST NOT HAPPEN! TV is the most accessible power currently available to the masses, and we can either use it or be used by it. It doesn't go away when you switch off the dial, so it's our obligation to expose it while we still can, while there are still people, like ourselves, that we can reach." At least, I think that's what she replies.) Scisco's "Player" and Serlin's "Telephone Book" were both funny slices-o'-life. Swell surreal stuff with Da Beast's "This Wasn't Real Anyhow," and neat "Hitchhiker's Guide to the Universe"-type stuff in Bartilucci's "The Salesman." I think I'll stop pairing things now, and say that Ace's "Garbage Patch Dolls" cover was big laughs, as was the "Wacky" cartoon on page 7...Cornejo's bonker-box 'toon was completely accurate, like "Retail Clerk" by Scharff. All the regular stuff, "Rock Fiend," "Quantum Courtesies," "Orange Doors," "Zenarchy," et cetera, are shining examples of Continuity of Vision from our greatest writers. Right?

The "Inside Stroke" idea sure appeals to my prurient interests...why not? (Mainly because I'd be too embarrassed and uncomfortable to put it together—but perhaps I can convince our esteemed production asst. Chaput to do so...)

Don't forget your comet pills, JOHN P. MORGAN
185 Seabreeze Ave., #4
E. Keansburg, NJ 07734

Hello, Elayne!

...Well, as I said, I haven't even BEGUN to sufficiently wade thru the four 'zines you sent yet, tho out of the parts I've read, my faves so far are the Eddie Deezen interview, Tuli Kupferberg's "Ron's Imagine"...Upcoming Events"...Andy Kaufman Remembered," "Turtles on Speed" (the Amster comic I'd DIE to run in an upcoming PIG PAPER...) and, without a doubt, Anni Ackner's work is AMAZING! (particularly "Out, Out Damned G-Spot: a god-damned MASTERPIECE..."). I'm still working thru "Journey Thru The Tenderloin" too...

Take care,

GARY PIG GOLD
PIG PRODUCTIONS
70 Cotton Drive
Mississauga, Ont. L5G 1Z9 CANADA

Dear Elayne and fellow I-Jokers:

Thanks to the holidays I've had some time away from the employment arena and it's a good feeling to dust off the Olympiette and get into some writing. What's with these rock groups with double names? Duran Duran and now Mister Mister. It's like we didn't hear them the first time. The first time.

Issue 43 yielded some adroit compositions, and I especially enjoyed L.P. Whitney's "Ondine's Curse." But, like Mr. L.P. my man, did you seriously attend est training? I mean, sure there must have been a personal desire behind a commitment like that, but I used to work for Werner Erhard's cousin when I lived in Los Angeles, and I'm most certainly scared of that shit! But I'm glad that you're into Life Extension 'cause Durk and Sandy are real and there's nothing hard to swallow (yuk yuk) about their books. I also got a real kick out of Peter Scisco's "Player." Hope to see more from this talent. As always, Anni and Deborah held the whole issue together with their back-to-back masterpieces. Speaking of Deborah, she's aiming her verbal guns any minute now at Andy Rooney. He never smiles (you're right Michael Dobbs) and DeeBee has some astute observations this Rooney dude will find hard to refute. Kudos to Jed Martinez for including Whoopi Goldberg on his list of comedy albums. Judging from her performance in THE COLOR PURPLE she's going to be a major entertainment force for years to come. I wish her and Billy Crystal much success with the Comic Relief project. "Commercial McClue-In" by "Kid" was excellent and did a worthy job of exposing corporate hypocrisy. Matt's Cynical-man cartoon was relative to my transportation woes as I don't own a car and depend on the city buses to commute. Well done! Ace's cover didn't do much for me since Cabbage Patch Dolls have been satirized beyond overkill, and working in retail I can tell you that their time has come. GoBots and Transformers were the "in" toys this Christmas.

22 Splendid editing job as usual, Elayne, and I want to say that I'm

totally against a sex and smut issue of IJ. If you can't get it at home, why bother to read about it?

When life isn't the way you like it, like it the way it is...

TOM GEDMILLO
854 Y Street
Lincoln, NE 68508

Dear Elayne—

I apologize for the lack of printed placemat stationery, but this place hasn't got that kind of class. The Farmer Girl Restaurant, in Lake Worth, Florida is a pretty good use of former Ranch House Restaurant facilities. The cuisine is commercial Greek and generic favorites and since this is laundry night, and I think I'm coming down with a flu-like disease, I shall indulge myself in some American spaghetti, with meat sauce, and a handwritten L.O.C. (That's short for "letter-of-comment," another expression for letter-to-the-editor.—Ed.)

I like to eat at places where the retired hang out, and as I was driving by this one (there are no subways in Florida, except for the Sub Shop chain), I saw a large amount of expensive Detroit metal with out-of-state tags (Floridian for license plates) in the parking lot, so I get a floor show with my meal (a cheap night out).

Please pardon me while I scarf down some groceries. I think I almost have an appetite. I recommend the mystery custard at the salad bar.

That's better. I think someone has already marketed Garbage Patch Dolls—filled with real garbage. "Kids like funny smells..." the copy read.

INSIDE JOKE is fun this time, as usual. I am talking it up big among the few friends I have. My friend Dave, who is probably the absolutely most creative person I know, except for Space Ark's (a comic book) Ken Mitchrone, has been promising to send some of his stuff in to you guys but, I'm afraid, creativity and persistence have an inverse relationship. That's why I am published. My other friend, Bob, is no slouch either in the creativity department, but hasn't found an outlet for his writings, so I shall lend him all of my IJs and maybe he'll get hooked.

Anni, if you get a few more rubber penises, you've got enough props to do a remake of Flesh Gordon.

This is tough; all the blood has run down to my stomach, and I can't think.

There used to be kits available in art shops for people who wanted to learn black velvet painting—it was paint-by-number black velvet kits. No lie, bwana. I'd like to learn that but it would make the back covers for INSIDE JOKE very cost-ineffective.

I liked "Incident" and the record review of Black Flag. KISS and Wasp were in town two weeks ago, but I opted to drive down to Ft. Lauderdale to go to R-Donuts. This place is the topless dancer graveyard. I think I'll save my thoughts on that subject for "INSIDE STROKE". Can I please design the brown paper wrapper? The mention of the "clean-music" saviours in the review brought the above on.

"Player" was a weird story; I have known people like that. They are usually compulsive liars.

A random comment on Jasper Carrot: John Nathan-Turner (Dr. Who producer) used his automobile insurance claim form bit in the cabaret at a Dr. Who convention in Tampa last year.

Well, J.P., how's the cover? Never let anyone say I don't play requests. Barbara and I both like Anni's typewriter Boca Raton condo. It's located just west of the Boca West community off of Glades Rd. I have owned a 1932 Underwood, and Barbara used to have a 1953 Royal that her father had in law school. The Royal is back with her dad, I think, and she has now a 1985 electric of some sort with a cartridge correcting ribbon, courtesy of Santa Claus. I now own my grandfather's 1923 Underwood which types well and does nothing much more, but then, what else do I need? If Barbara gets out of paralegal school and lands a big job, we may throw in the electric typewriter as a deposit on a word processor and a modem. Technology is wonderful.

Ace's piece this time was a little unsettling to me. It must have struck a hidden, primal memory somewhere. Dr. Ruth does the same thing, too. I'll still keep reading it, though.

Did anyone see the Bob Newhart show on 20 Jan? Larry, Daryl and Daryl have got to be the most original television hook of the decade. Also the Spin magazine with Debbie Harry on the cover is a keeper. There are good punk retrospectives inside, commemorating its tenth anniversary. And on that (hardcore, feedback riddled) note I must say good night. Besides, I've run out of paper and I gotta put my laundry in the dryer.

Yours,

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

"A NUCLEAR WAR CAN NEVER BE WON AND MUST NEVER BE FOUGHT". "PEOPLE DON'T START WARS — GOVERNMENTS DO".

I know Reagan is very busy but don't his writers ever read this birdbrain's solutions that are right from the horse's mouth? As to who starts wars each one of us over ten years of age should share the blame and that share is one divided by the world population — we are all sinners. Any ten year old should realize that the lack of chance-selected winners makes wars suicidal and for young, healthy people suicide is a no-no. A nuclear war must never be fought but it can't miss being fought if we don't change our evil ways.

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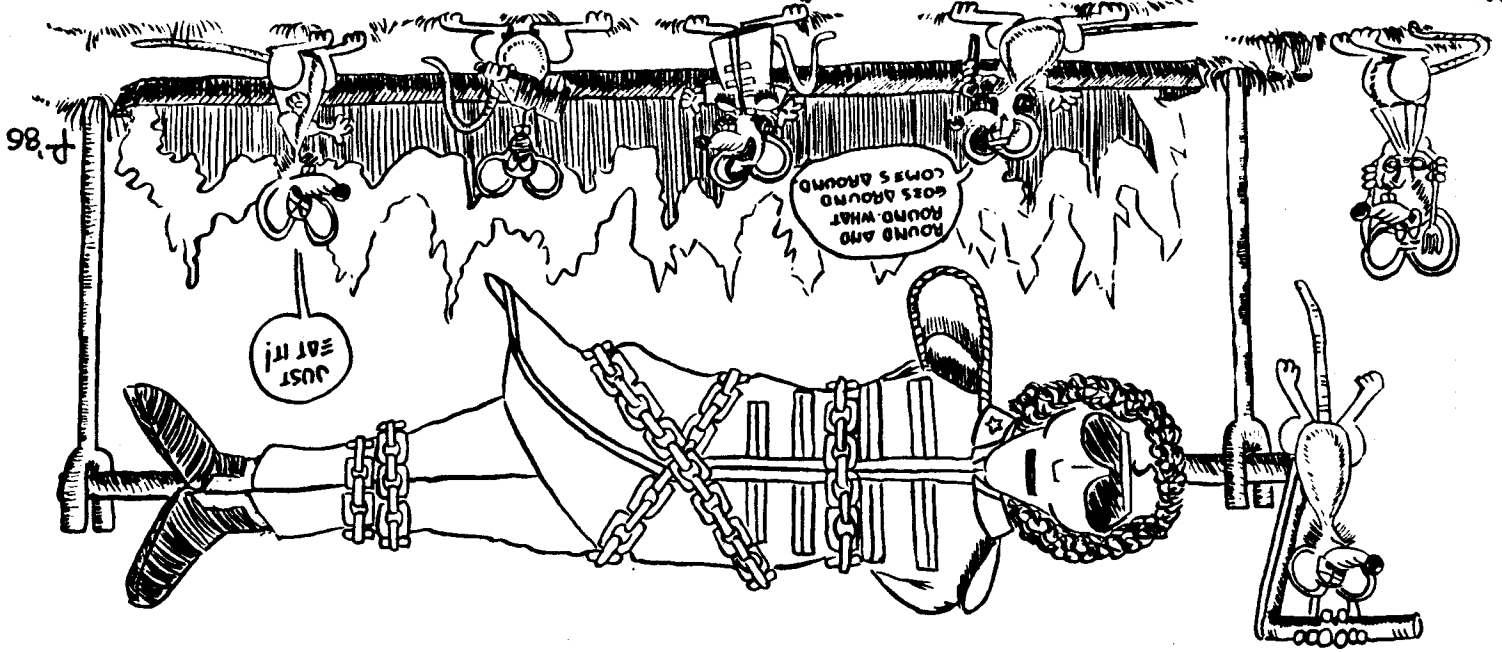
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