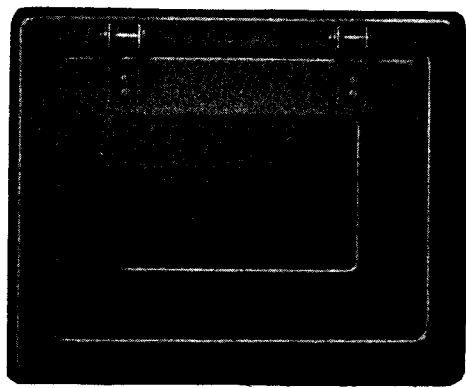
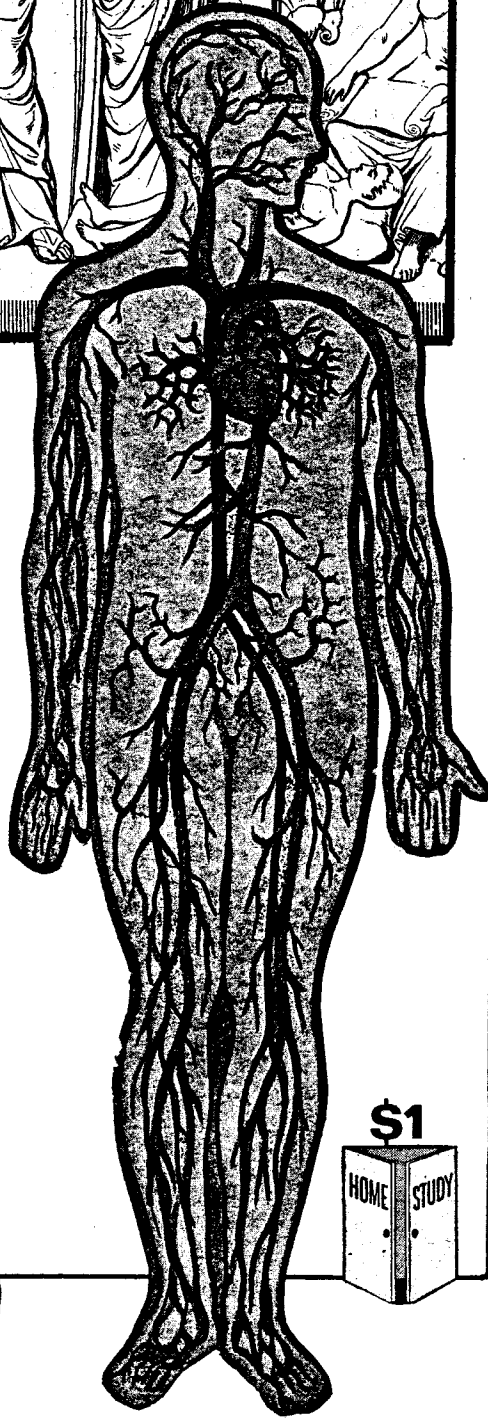


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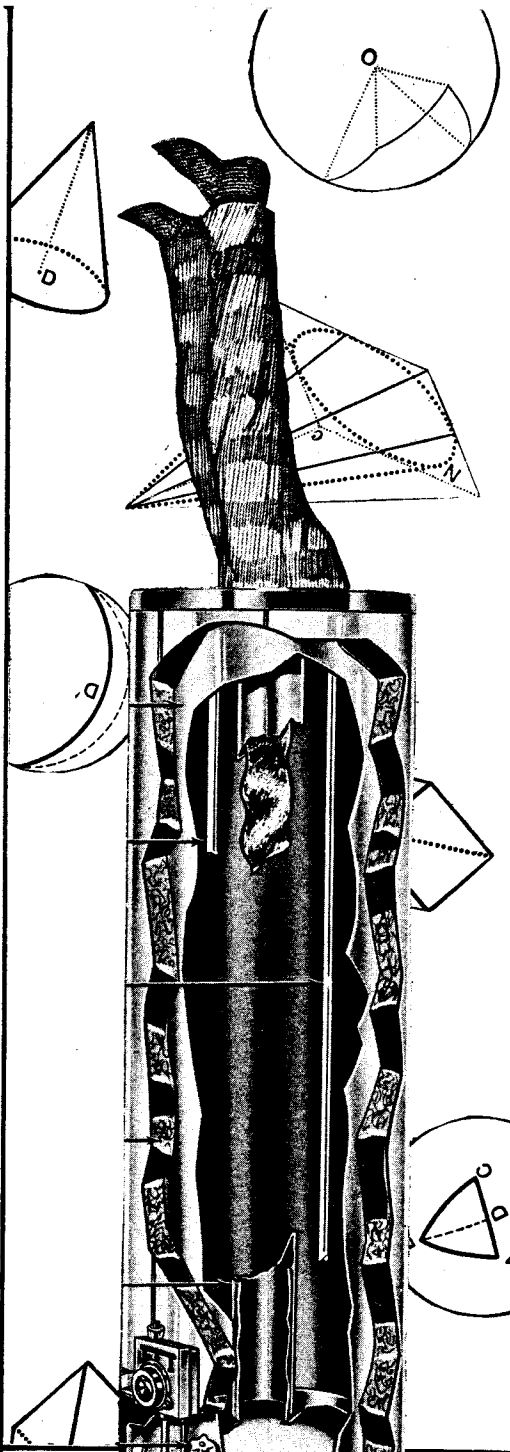
JOKE



A newsletter
A comedy and
creativity



#49



ACKNOWLEDITORIAL

As I write, it is unknown whether or not the Mets will make it past Boston, but let's just assume everything turned out for the best; shall we? Meantime, it has come to my attention that some copies of our last issue did not quite make it to their destinations. If you paid for and never received a copy of IJ 48, or if your copy was hopelessly mutilated beyond recognition, please let me know and I'll send another. As far as I know, a problem of this magnitude has never happened before to us, and I can only conclude that Phil's back cover (the reference to the porn police? *Fahrenheit 451!*) bothered the post office or the FBI...ain't it wonderful being involved in subversion?

-UPCOMING EVENTS-

Many thanks to Tom Gedwillo for some of the stranger events listed below. If you'd like something commemorated in this section, send it in by the deadline—I'm always looking to celebrate the unusual...

OCTOBER 31 - DEADLINE FOR THE BIG ONE, YES, THAT'S RIGHT
IT'S IJ #50 OUR GALA GOLDEN/SIXTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE;
DETAILS IN EDITORIAL BOX AND EDITORIAL AT RIGHT...

OCTOBER 31 - Also Hallowe'en, National Magic Day (in honor of Houdini) and an official IJ holiday

NOVEMBER 1 - Author's Day (established 1928)

NOVEMBER 3 - John Montague, inventor of the sandwich (b. 1718)

NOVEMBER 4 - Will Rogers (b. 1897)

NOVEMBER 5 - Guy Fawkes Day - Smash a state today!

NOVEMBER 6 - JOHN P. MORGAN (29)

NOVEMBER 7 - JOHN R. SCHARFF (29); Joni Mitchell (43)

NOVEMBER 8 - RICK McCANN (37); Katharine Hepburn (79)

NOVEMBER 11 - CANDI STRECKER (31); Jonathan Winters (70); Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. (64)

NOVEMBER 12 - Elizabeth Cady Stanton (b. 1815)

NOVEMBER 13 - Felix Ungar leaves home, remember?

NOVEMBER 15 - Pinky Lee (b. 1916)

NOVEMBER 16 - JIM TAUSCHER (40)

NOVEMBER 17 - SEAN HUGH (26); John Crawford (31)

NOVEMBER 18 - Imogene Coca (77), "Steamboat Willie" cartoon released (1928)

NOVEMBER 19 - PHIL TORTORICI (32); Dick Cavett (49); late IJ staffer Gerry Reith (b. 1958)

NOVEMBER 20 - PETE SHERMAN (?); Chester Gould (b. 1900)

NOVEMBER 21 - Magritte (b. 1898)

NOVEMBER 22 - SUBGENIUS DEVIVAL, NYU—ASK ME FOR DETAILS

* INSIDE JOKE is put on hexaweekly by Elayne "All Business This *
* Time" Wechsler and dear friends and emanates from beautiful *
* downtown Brooklyn and/or the Palatial P.O. Box in Manhattan, *
* of which I've just figured out that, for some unfathomable *
* reason, large (9 x 12 and over) envelopes take weeks to reach *
* me...so mail early and try to mail submissions in regular or *
* legal size (#10) envelopes, which take mere days—thanks! *
* EDITOR-IN-RESIDENCE.....ELAYNE WECHSLER *
* PRODUCTION ASST./FIANCEE-AT-LARGE.....STEVE CHAPUT *
* PRINTING DEVOLVER.....DEBBIE DAVID *
* FRONT COVER BY JOE SCHWIND *
* STAFF WRITERS/ARTISTS *
* ANNI ACKNER=====DEBORAH BENEDICT=====ALIX BISHOFF *
* ==MICHAEL DOBBS===== RORY HOUGHENS =====PETER LABRIOLA== *
* GARY LIGI===== J.P. MORGAN =====LARRY OBERC *
* ==SUSAN PACKIE===== GEORG PATTERSON =====KERRY THORNLEY== *
* =====PHIL TORTORICI=====A.J. WRIGHT===== *
* OTHER CONTRIBUTORS THIS ISSUE: *
* TIM ARNOLD VERNON GRANT MICHAEL MCINNIS *
* D.A. BEAST WAYNE HOGAN ROGER MORRIS *
* LARRY BLAZEK MARY ANN HENN SHARMAN RUSSELL *
* KENNETH BURKE MARGOT INSLEY DANA SNOW *
* DAZA TOM JAMES st. EVE *
* ADAM EISENSTAT TULI KUPFERBERG DORIAN TENORE *
* GARY PIG GOLD LYN LIFSHIN SIGMUND WEISS *
* IN is a proud subscriber to and advocate of *
* the Yossarian Universal News Service *
* Ads furnished by Beautiful World, J.C. Brainbeau, the Church *
* of the SubGenius, Twisted Image, Wall-Op and Yossarian Univ. *
* Copywrite 1986 Pen-Elayne Enterprises - Kip M. Ghesin, Pres. *
* Back issues available for \$1 each *
* Writers'/Artists' Guidelines available for SASE *
* And remember, if there's an "X" next to your name, it's time *
* to renew! *

ACRONYM KEY - MTINTK = "MORE THAN I NEED TO KNOW"

Really, though, how we can possibly be the subversives when the headlines proclaim our government's 1) use of propaganda and lies (in a "scare Khaddafi" campaign) that outshines the Nazis; 2) admittance that the CIA was actually in contact with Nicholas Daniloff in Russia (maybe they just exchanged greeting cards?); and 3) voting in of an obvious bigot who sanctions physical harassment of peace-loving citizens and won't sell his home to "certain kinds of people" as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court is beyond me. Ah, but fall is in the air, who can concentrate on such trivialities? Yes, I'm off to visit all you folks in the Bay Area (at least the ones whose addresses and phone numbers I have) to party heartily on Hallowe'en, while Steve stays home to sort comics and finish up on INSIDE STROKE (see his Update elsewhere this issue). And when 'tis fall, young writers' thoughts apparently turn to television—herein are contributions from Daza, Ken Burke and Pru directly or indirectly tube-related, and yours truly has taken on that medium (with my semi-annual new TV season review) and radio as well. Mike Dobbs has been keeping an eye on pro wrestling, and for those of you more inclined towards the golden arches than tv dinners, nutritionist extraordinaire Deborah Benedict has some unappetizing news in her long-awaited 2-page review of McPoison's Happy Booklet. Anni settles in suburban PA, Michael McInnis rides the Boston rails, and Adam Eisenstat really gets around. J.P. does up movies again, and Rory and Gary talk music. Ho Chi Zen fires more at us, A.J.'s Rudolph wonders where he went wrong, and D.A. smashes illusions of the mind. Larry gives us bad poetry, Susan minimalist art, and Dr. Ligi some mass hypnosis. Tons o' fun poetry here too, including the return of Lyn Lifshin, and Rodney ends his serial with more of the same graphic violence and blatant innuendo and PDA, thus prompting an IJ caveat lector for the second time in a row for substance above and beyond MTINTK. Honestly, children, if you can't word-play nice, I'm going to take your toys away. And while I too miss Roldo and Steve Scharff, both of whom will undoubtedly return next issue, I'm not sure I could've fit everyone in this time at once! Don't fret, though, even though we probably won't return to 2 ounces until after the gala, I still have no intention of raising IJ's cover price (though donations are always appreciated!).

Speaking of the next issue, it will of course be our Sixth Anniversary/Golden Gala #50 and all that, with a spiffy cover by Deborah (so I'm told) and surprises aplenty. Past staffers Mike Gunderloy, Brian Pearce and Tom Sanders have already sent in submissions for the reunion and we're hoping for more. Remember, we want to make this really special, so everyone who sends in an original submission gets a free issue, and staffers (present and past) have the option of receiving two issues if they'd like (but PLEASE let me know by the deadline, staffers!). Note that operative word "original"—NO free IJs will be sent to people who send me reprint material (although, if I print it, you do have the 2-ounce-stamp option). As I've tried repeatedly to explain to potential contributors, I'd rather you do something 'specially for us than something you're going to farm out to 6 or 7 different places, ok? This goes for every issue, but doubly so for #50.

Also next time will be our first IJ Questionnaire in years, which I implore readers to fill out and return by mid-December. I'm considering, as part of the questionnaire, putting in an uncaptioned illo and asking you to write your own captions (we've done this in the past to great success), so if anyone cares to submit a suitable illustration, please try to get it to me ASAP—since I only have room for one, I'll probably go with the first good prospect I get. Make 'em able to be reduced, though...

Nobody answered the call for a front cover this issue, so we have a Joe Schwind original from the backlog file, and I again send out an urgent plea for front covers starting with #51. Mandatory info is the name [INSIDE JOKE], price (\$1), and preferred info is the subtitle ["A Newsletter of Comedy and Creativity"]. I'll fill in the issue number, but if you want that in your handwriting you can draw a bunch of numbers on a separate piece of paper and send that in to me simultaneously.

And just a reminder for those who'd also rather draw their own headlines than subject pieces to my transfer letters or typewriter—you're not only allowed, you're encouraged!

I never feel I give enough thanks to those who help me out in the ways I most need it—not just the writers and artists, but donors of extra \$\$ (thanks again, J.C.!) and stamps, and fellow editors kind enough to plug IJ in their publications: do remember, however, that in mentioning subscription information, I can't cash checks made out to "INSIDE JOKE;" they must be made out in my name. Banks are funny that way about fictitious 'zine titles.

Non-fictitious entities may send checks or cashes or m.o.'s up to \$8 for a year's subscription, or \$1 per issue, but advance subs are NON-REFUNDABLE. I don't send out free contributors' copies (except for #50), so if you send me a submission, either kick in the buck or send me 2 ounces' worth (39¢ US, 40¢ Can.) of stamps to cover mailing costs. If you're an editor of a comparable zine we can trade either one-for-one or all-for-all depending on your frequency, and I trade with one-sheets and mini-comics if they also send a 2-ounce stamp along. The deadline for letters, prose, poetry, art, and all sorts of neat stuff for #50 is Hallowe'en, October 31; returned questionnaires and other submissions have a December 15 deadline for #51 (our first issue of the new year), and for those who set their calendars up early, the deadline for #52 is January 30, 1987. We'll be waiting at P.O. Box 1609, Madison Square Station, NY, NY 10159. This issue is dedicated in memory of comedy writer George Gipe and radio/tv actor Frank "Yeeees!" Nelson.

Fan Noose

As some folks have asked for a slightly more detailed plug for their publications, I've dispensed with our "regulars" section this issue and will instead intersperse monthly, quarterly, etc. zines with the new and infrequent pubs—hope I've got the room! A few announcements first: Darlene Tottle informs us that the wonderful slick mag she edits has now been asked—er, I mean, has now decided to change its official name to COMEDY & Entertainment Magazine. C&E #4 should be out any day now, and an issue will probably go for around \$3 or \$4. It's well worth it. Darlene also writes, "We're always looking for interesting articles and information and especially more humorous pieces to expand COMEDY. Please feel free to send any ideas or articles—and encourage your readers to do the same. We pay upon publication and rates range from \$50-200 (a full page comes to between \$100-150)." Here's a great way to break into doing IJ-type stuff for real money, as I sense these folks are open to just about anything (within reason) that's funny—for information write 5444 Bay Center Drive, Suite 215, Tampa, FL 33609...Look for another new zine out in November (it appears to have been a banner year for small-press pubs!)—this one's called NIGHTMARES OF REASON, but, as editor Michael McInnis cautions, "Despite what the title may suggest all is not gloom and pain. I am looking for satire and other offbeat (if y'all scuse the overused cliché) material. Drawings, fine art, comic, poetry, fiction, nonfiction and just every other type of thing you might want to think of." Sounds a lot like us, so do write him for info at P.O. Box 278, E. Cambridge, MA 02141...By the way, just about all the zines mentioned here welcome contributions, and the editors thereof are all jes' folks and certainly friendly enough to answer inquiries. Most of them trade as well, if you're an editor with a mind to exchange publications...Out of the Great White North, WHO REALLY CARES really does; this mixture of punk (read: depressing/suicidal) poetry, comics, excellent essays and political news is well put together by editor Stephen V., who sells the zine for \$1 (so much the better if you can get Canadian bucks, I guess); write her at 46 Louisa St., Ottawa, Ont. K1R 6Y8 CANADA...From a question to an absurd exclamation—MURDER CAN BE FUN looks at those kooky sickos in society, reviews strange mail-order staph, reprints some definitions from Ambrose Bierce, and talks about offbeat books & movies—editor Johnny Marr does it all for a 50¢ asking price, to P.O. Box 640111, San Francisco, CA 94109...Those old enough to remember the Church of the Latter Day Punks have new reason to rejoice—Carly's little brother Paul Sommerstein is now publishing the energetic NO NAME PRESS, which consists of band reviews, other hardcore stuff and some nice essays (my favorite was "Prefab Urbanity")—John promises more variety when he gets more submissions not his own, so write him at 611 Lawrence Ave., Westfield, NJ 07090...It isn't hard to conclude that there are creative and non-creative forces in the Subgenius ranks, just like everywhere else. An unfortunate example of something that misses the mark is the DOBBSTOWN WRASSLING FEDERATION REPORT, which is even less than the name implies. Just lists of made-up wrestling matches, period. It's a shame, because Craig Roll—um, I mean "Etonian Shurdlu" has some well-done computer-generated graphics and they seem wasted here. You can talk this guy into doing Subg computer stickers instead by writing to 222 Church St., Apt. 1E, Philadelphia, PA 19106...On the other hand, THE MIND BLASTER is pure, unadulterated ranting hellfire BULLDADA, and the Rev. Mark Johnston (P.1) deserves a bleeding head if anyone does. Send him a buck and praise "Bob"!—Buck Route, Box 111, Hinton, WV 25951...And Chicago-area Subgs Pam Smith and Mike Flores take on the psychotronic scene (I guess "psychotronic" is what they used to call trash kultcha) in their Film Society's official newsletter, IT'S ONLY A MOVIE, \$1.25 or \$8/year for 12 issues to 54 West Randolph St., Rm. 606-E2, Chicago, IL 60601...And another zine on much the same subject also covers the comics scene—BUFF-O from Klaus D. Haisch (1729 E. Tabor St., Indianapolis, IN 46203) and presumably sells for a dollar...Teacher Gene Lehman lives at 31900 S.E. Chin St., Boring, OR 97009, and I can't think of a more appropriate town name for the author of some of the dullest essays I've ever read. Packaged under the title GRAMMAR FOR GROWNUPS, Lehman analyses parts of speech and tells useless anecdotes about his teaching days, and I can see why his students must've been turned off English forever. I thank "Bob" I never had a prof like this when I was going for my college majors...Excellent writing complements the striking artwork in MS. ANTISOCIAL—yes, from the same folks who brought you (Mr.?) ANTISOCIAL, Tom and Ken Roberts. Some of it is hysterical—send more than the requisite \$1.75 to Tom at 333 S. East Ave., #209, Oak Park, IL 60302...The evocative art of the folks at Dolphin-Moon Press can go either way sometimes, and while it succeeds with the moody pseudo-religious tale in ISOLATION #2, it goes beyond MTINTK in the terribly offensive porn compilation STICK DETERMINATION. For a price list on D-M productions, write editor Margot Insley at P.O. Box 22262, Baltimore, MD 21203...Like Robert Michael, whose CRAZY ADULT was plugged herein last time (issue #3 will be out in time for next IJ's column), Jim Woodring has an artistry all his own, which he combines with bold handwriting and unusual collage in the newest issue of JIM, the only problem with which is that it comes out too seldom—to get a copy send a buck to P.O. Box 10075, Glendale, CA 91209...Now that Alan Rosenthal and Cathy Crockett have settled permanently in their Toronto dreamhouse, CAREFULLY SEATED might at last come out more often. Their interim issue ("#4.5") is personal news and fannish prattling, but they're capable of

much better and will probably do so in the near future. Inquire if you will at 349 Montrose Ave., Toronto, Ont. M6G 3G9 CANADA... As IJ readers might guess, staffer Ace Backwords is at his best when he's spewing, and he spews nothing as well as TWISTED IMAGE, back, with luck, to stay in a photocopied format. All those Bay Area crazies come along for the ride, and if you know 'em, Love 'em and can't live without 'em, send a buck to Ace at 1630 University Ave., #26, Berkeley, CA 94703...You haven't actually seen me rank on porn yet, but here goes—the newest supposed MENSA pub ANROCITY consists of nothing but advertisements for some sleazy Japanese strip joints. It's a Journey Through the Japanese Tenderloin, and there's not even any original writing...it's ALL just ads. Don't even bother sending \$1.50 to Hank Roll (perhaps he's a cousin of Craig, since both fall so short of creative output) at 2419 Greensburg Pike, Pittsburgh, PA 13221 unless you're into this stuff, and even then think twice...Jay Harber, however, has plenty to say for himself in the latest NOTES FROM OBLIVION (14), and his insights and thoughts should inspire many to start corresponding with him at 626 Paddock Lane, Libertyville, IL 60048...Poetry has always been an intensely personal method of communication also, and COPPERHEAD from Ami Pate, 1236 W. 13th, Eugene, OR 97402 combines it with art and minifictions to create a nice 8-page free-for-the-writin' zine...Did I mention 8-page freebies? I'd be remiss if I didn't add that THE MONTHLY INDEPENDENT TRIBUNE TIMES JOURNAL POST GAZETTE NEWS CHRONICLE BULLETIN has almost caught up to us (they're at 46 now) and is still the best subway reading around! Editor T.S. Child advises sending 2 first class stamps or 50¢ to 2510 Bancroft Way #207, Berkeley, CA 94704...And getting back to poetry, the latest OPOSSUM HOLLER TAROT (28) from Larry Blazek features familiar names like Susan Packie and Sigmond Weiss—also only 50¢, to Route 2, Campbellsburg, IN 47108...After too long a wait, Jan Byron has announced, with the publication of DREAMSHORE #29, that the publication will be sporadic from now on. Still, any Dreamshore is better than none, fellow children, so do send your non-linear dollars to 618 S. Mitchell St., Bloomington, IN 47401...Some people dream through role-playing games, and they shouldn't be caught without their SOUND & FURY. Editor James Wallis (see letters page) is active in DragonAid as well, and if you would like info on that and other RPG stuff, write him at The Manor House, Little Bealings, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP13 6LL UNITED KINGDOM...Some like to dream in the New Age, like the people at F.L.A.M.E., and their latest META-SCOOP has just started a series of articles on numerology. Sub rates are \$10/year to B.W. Sowell and D.H. Armstrong at 1004 Live Oak Ste. 101, Arlington, TX 76012...My own fantasies tend towards baseball, and Dale Jellings talks of Hawk Harrelson and errors all 'round in the latest BASEBALL OUR WAY—send a SASE to him at 3211 Milwaukee St., #1, Madison, WI 53714...Some dream of a better-run world than the one we have now, and libertarians like John Harilee and Rick Henderson are among them, with John's SOUTHERN LIBERTARIAN MESSENGER (\$5/year to Rt. 10 Box 52A, Florence, SC 29501) and Rick's DEREGULATOR (\$8/year to P.O. Box 17343, Raleigh, NC 27619) being two of the more comprehensive and cohesive newsletters in the movement...Heading a movement all his own is Jewish anti-counter-revolutionist L.D. Babushkin, and his self-made BABUSHKIN'S DIGEST is still one of the funniest radical small pubs for the money—which is a reasonable donation of your choosing to P.O. Box 123, Rosendale, NY 12472 (and look out for Babush's Yom Kipper issue in which all sorts of folks state public atonements!)...Just this side of the moon that revolves in retrograde, PHOEBE's always on the move pointing out all the little oddities in our lives and newspapers. Lotsa strangeness for 55¢ to James MacDougall, 511 Routes 5 & 20, Waterloo, NY 13165...On to the world of music: As mentioned last time, the all-art issue of BEAUTIFUL WORLD is out and yours for \$1.50 to our esteemed printer-devolver, Debbie David, P.O. Box 1675, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10011...GOOD DAY SUNSHINE's 34th is also a special issue, in that it's mostly photos of the Fab Four in Boston in '64 (real nice pics), and it's available for \$2.50 from Charles F. Rosenay!!!, 397 Edgewood Ave., New Haven, CT 06511...With another Fab Four—er, Three out performing in a reunion concert now, the time is again right to get all the best news from the MONKEES/BOYCE & HART PHOTO FAN CLUB—#66 also has a "Where Are They Now" on the Monkees' family members, concert reviews and the usual contest and other offers; send 50¢ and a long SASE to Jodi Hammrich, P.O. Box 411, Watertown, SD 57201-0411...The usually St. Louis-based JET LAG's publisher, John the Mailman, takes us with him on a musical tour of Europe in #69, and the always on-target Brett Tibbles analyses flag-worship; plus music reviews, natch, & all for a buck to Steve Pick & Tony Renner, 8419 Halls Ferry Rd., St. Louis, MO 63147 (and thanks for the plug, gentlemen!)...If you'd rather take in the independent music/tape/radio scene a bit closer to home, SOUND CHOICE does its normal commendable job, including a fascinating insight into why one bothers publishing by editor David Ciuffardini in response to a misguided letter, and an overview of the Jello Biafra porn-poster story. Well worth shelling out \$2.50 to P.O. Box 1251, Ojai, CA 93023...In case anyone's forgotten MTV's still out there, issue 13 of OUTER SHELL has reminiscences and analyses from a variety of writers, including editor Roy Harper; don't let the size fool you, one-sheets like this are jam-packed with tiny type and great reading, and all that for a SASE to Box 7053, St. Petersburg, FL 33734...And the same goes for one-sheeter Gary Pig Gold and his PIG PAPER, #27 of which is dedicated to Bobby Fuller (remember him?) and features Ace's artwork and Ken's commentary; also a SASE (but try to enclose some Canadian change if you have it to make things easier) to 70 Cotton Drive, Mississauga, Ont. L5G 1Z9 CANADA...Lastly and far from leastly, we all get to fill out a bullshit SRI Int. survey (see

reveals this year's crop of "blacklisted news items." If you're not getting time by now, you truly are missing "the best of the alternative press," and it's a bargain at \$4.00 to P.O. Box 1978, Marion, OH 43305. See you in the funny papers!

"Kid's column for a bit about SRI) along with the worthwhile staph for which THE UTNE READER is well-known in issue 19, as various writers speak of idealism or the loss thereof and Project Censored

DIARY of The ROCK FIEND

by Anni Ackner

DISMEMBER OF THE WEDDING

The problem, I have often thought, is that I simply have too damned many sisters. Sisters, I am well aware, have great literary and historical precedent, to say nothing of political validity—what female among us, for instance, has not, at some point in her life, wept her way through *LITTLE WOMEN*, that classic tale of four sisters' almost hysterical (in all senses of the word) devotion to each other? (Do me a favour—if you haven't wept your way through this saga, please don't write me a letter about it. Something tells me I might be better off not knowing about any exceptions to this particular rule.) Who of either sex has never pondered the lives of the Brontës, the Mitfords, the McGuires and which one has not called a woman "sister," either in political solidarity or in an attempt to get her to remove her car from our designated parking space?—but in the wonderful world of Real Life, sisters are far less often the people who lend comfort, support and love in times of stress than the people who borrow your \$200 cashmere sweater and use it to clean the oven.

Now admittedly, my sisters are a bit more, shall we say, unleavened than most. Not everyone, after all, is blessed with one sister to whom she has not spoken in nearly 10 years, even though they shared the same house for most of that period, a sister who, until recently, dwelt almost exclusively in the attic, working on mysterious projects that seemed to rely heavily on steel wool, aerobics records and loud, thunderous crashes, and who now resides in a small, pleasant apartment furnished exclusively with barbed wire. And hardly anyone else can claim that she also, in addition, possesses—in the loosest sense of the word—another sister who, in between probing into perfectly normal people's ids and superegos with her sharp little nose, doing amusing things to dairy products in her Donvier, and rotating her "Baby on Board" stickers, has a particularly annoying habit of attaching bits of needlepoint to anything moving slower than 35mph, which makes television viewing in her presence virtually impossible. It might fairly be argued then that my thoughts on this subject may be ever so slightly tinged by my own unique—it is devoutly to be hoped—experience; still and all, it is not to be denied that sisters, as a group, are responsible for the genesis of some of the most colossal pains in the neck this side of a convention of Herbalife salespeople.

Isn't it sisters, when one gets right down to it—and here I write solely as a woman who has sisters, rather than one with brothers, or from a masculine point of view. I am sure that those of you in other circumstances have your own tales of horror to tell (Ackner's Theory of Relativity states that no one is related to anyone bearable); and they should be told but, unfortunately, I am not in a position to tell them—who come along, just when one has spent three or four years developing a working relationship with one's parents and getting the toys precisely the way one wants them, and immediately become cuter, more lovable, and more apt to receive Barbie's entire beauty shop set than one is oneself; or, conversely, isn't it sisters who are always hanging about being older than one, breaking one's crayons and getting to wear any especially nice outfit years before one finally gets one's hands on it? Is it not sisters who monopolize the telephone, inform one's father that one has been spending one's evenings in the back seat of a Ford rather than at meetings of the Young Women's Anti-Drug League, scratch one's original Beatles records, steal one's boy-friends, and, ultimately, is it not sisters who go lollygagging about getting married and thereby forcing perfectly nice people to put on uncomfortable pink dresses and go marching down all manner of aisles in the guise of bridesmaids? I mean, really.

Because, as I said, I am afflicted with at least one—and probably two—too many sisters, and because one of these sisters recently chose, against all logical arguments to the contrary, to commit marriage and, against still more logical arguments to the contrary, invested me with the Bridesmaidhood, I have more experience than I might comfortably like with these matters, and because I know that many thousands of you out there are or soon will be in similar positions (in keeping with the current tone of the country, marriages or, more to the point, big, old-fashioned weddings, are up 35% along with, not entirely coincidentally, MBA degrees, purchases of stock options, and the incidence of Reds discovered hiding under beds), it seems only fair of me to point out the pitfalls of the situation to you, lest you be seduced into thinking that what happens in books of wedding etiquette—pleasant tomes that resemble, as far as truth and accuracy go, nothing so much as those autobiographies written by certain of the Watergate defendants—has anything at all to do with what happens when a sister chooses to wed, and suffer therefore. God knows, I've already suffered enough for all of us, and several of the less lucky inmates of Soviet mental health establishments, and so, in this spirit—none dare call it "sisterhood"—I give you:

WEDDING BELL BLUES

or

Ceremony to be Held at the Temple of Doom

For the sake of convenience, the first paragraph in each numbered block denotes what the wedding books claim happens, while the second denotes what actually befalls anyone who is not inti-

mately acquainted with Caroline Kennedy.

1) A rehearsal will be held the evening before the wedding, followed by a light buffet supper.

The bride, the bridegroom, the bridal party—consisting of eight bridesmaids, eight ushers, the maid of honour, the best man, the mothers and fathers of the Happy Couple, and a four-year-old flower girl with a slight bladder condition—several dozen assorted relatives, and the 300 closest friends of the bride and groom, all of whom give startling evidence of being directly descended from Max Headroom, will all gather at the bride's and/or groom's apartment and mill aimlessly about for a couple of hours before general consensus is that (a) no one knows where the church/synagogue/banquet hall/City Hall/grassy meadow in the state park is and (b) if the priest/rabbi/minister/judge/justice of the peace/old college friend who once read all the way through the Bhagavad-Gita hasn't shown up by this time, he or she has probably found some more amusing way to spend the evening, at which point someone will open up the liquor, the best man will get drunk and pass out into the gazpacho, the Mother of the Bride and the Mother of the Groom will get into a heated argument concerning the whereabouts of a butcher shop on Pitkin Avenue 35 years ago, the flower girl will disgrace herself on the rug, three ushers will corner the groom's sister in the linen closet and make her hysterical, the bride will find some reason to call the groom a pig, the light buffet supper—generally consisting of taco chips, onion soup dip, an odd and faintly malodorous ethnic delicacy, contributed by the bride's maternal grandmother, and the aforementioned best man-ridden gazpacho—will end up either on the walls or in the bathtub, and the bride's unmarried sister, rumoured to be involved in something vaguely illegal, or maybe even artistic, will embarrass the groom's sister-in-law by remembering her from a Gay Rights rally in 1978. The only thing actually Rehearsed will be a plot by all the groom's friends to have 200 pizzas sent to the Happy Couple's honeymoon suite in the Poconos.

2) Suitable gifts will be presented to the bridesmaids and ushers.

You are going to be the proud possessor of either a gold-plated floating heart on an elasticized S chain or a pair of cuff links in the shape of scarabs. Which item you receive will have less to do with your gender than with what the bride's uncle in the jewelry business happened to have overstocked that week.

3) On the morning of the wedding, arrangements will be made for visits by the female members of the bridal party to the hairdresser's.

At about 4pm, or roughly three hours before the wedding—which ever comes last—the bride will suddenly shriek that Mr. Pierre is going to be furious with her, bundle everyone into two VW microbuses and an aging MG, and rush them to a shopping mall 25 miles away, in which is located one of those emporia that is invariably known as Hair Today, wherein Mr. Pierre will do his utmost to give all concerned that coveted Don King look.

4) Limosines will carry the bridal party to the church/synagogue/banquet hall/City Hall/grassy meadow in the state park.

One limosine, driven by the star of the local little theatre group's production of *ARSENIC AND OLD LACE*, will turn up and collect the bride, the maid of honour, the best man and a neighbour from down the hall who just happened to be taking out the trash, and speed away with them. The groom, his parents and the flower girl having somehow commandeered the two microbuses and the MG—now redolent of Adorn—the rest of the party will be left to its own devices, and will ultimately form the best-dressed collection of hitch-hikers on Interstate 80.

5) The bride and her attendants will dress at the church/synagogue/banquet hall/City Hall/grassy meadow in the state park.

Well, sure, if you count ten overheated women all standing in their underwear attempting to apply mascara in front of one shaving mirror while a photographer merrily snaps pictures as "dressing," then okay, the bride and her attendants dress at the wherever. As an interesting sidelight to this, it is an established fact that, on this occasion, at least one person is going to break a bra strap, and no one is going to be in possession of a safety pin, meaning that, in effect, one person is going to march down the aisle feeling as though she has been eerily transported back to her junior high school prom, and will never speak to the bride again. All things considered, her position is enviable.

6) The room in which the ceremony is to be held will be tastefully decorated with flowers.

The room in which the ceremony is to be held will be tastefully decorated with two naked basketball hoops, a sign that says "Go Cougars!", 300 metal folding chairs, one terrified vase of dahlias by the altar or podium and, in the case of a synagogue, The Boutique Judaica, from whence two of the most sterling members of the Sisterhood will be dispensing monogrammed Sabbath candles in order to raise money for the annual B'nai B'rith tour of Israel.

7) As rehearsed, at the first sounds of the music, the bridesmaids will enter the room in which the ceremony is to be held, in cadenced step, led by the maid of honour, followed by the flower girl, and, finally, the bride.

You have one of two options here. Option 1: There will not be any music at all, because an organist or even a tape recording costs a certain amount of money and all the available cash has been invested in velvet matchbook covers. Option 2: The bride and groom have chosen to proceed down the aisle to the strains of Their Song. Their song is "Sussudio." In either event, as there was, of course, no rehearsal, there is no planned entrance, every-

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

one is harbouring the delusion that a cadenced step is something used in interior decoration, and no one will move from the entrance to the room until the maid of honour decides that it might be the better part of intelligence to get the show on the road before they roll in the coffin for the Spiegelman funeral, and resolutely starts down the aisle at what might fairly be described as a jog trot. Shocked into action, the bridesmaids will take off after her in a bunch like so many pink race horses breaking from the gate, but will not be followed by the flower girl, who by this time should be off in a corner, watering the flowers in a rather arcane manner. The ushers will long since have repaired to the groom's car and be busy tying tin cans to its bumper and papering it with "Just Having Sex" signs, the best man will have fidgeted to such an extent that his cummerbund is now serving as a sort of overweight turtle-necked dickey, and by the time the bride finally puts in an appearance, dragging her overwrought parents behind her (her mother looking as though, in the words of television history, her girdle were killing her, her father calculating the cost of overtime rental on the chairs), half the guests will have come to the conclusion that someone left someone else at the altar, and will have gone to the movies instead.

8) These days, it is customary for the bride and groom to write their own vows.

As a matter of fact, this is absolutely true, a state of affairs that has done for love poetry pretty much what William Rehnquist is threatening to do for Chief Justices of the Supreme Court. As a corollary to this, it is also customary these days for the bride's unmarried sister to have to battle to stifle a coughing fit when the bride announces, in front of the assemblage, "My angel, I wanted to give you my heart, but you are my heart."

9) The bridal party will be given complete instructions on how to reach the reception hall.

The limosine driver will wave his hand vaguely in the direction of Mecca and mutter, "It's over there somewhere." "Over there somewhere" will be a minimum of 55 miles into the next county, on an unmarked two-lane blacktop with no lights. The entire bridal party will get lost and end up asking directions of three gas station attendants who bear suspicious resemblance to those chaps from DELIVERANCE. Consequently, the entire bridal party will be late for the reception and miss all the hors d'oeuvres.

10) The wedding reception should be a time of good food, celebration and rejoicing for all.

And Sylvester Stallone should retire from motion pictures and open up a meat-packing plant. Wedding dinners are notoriously skimpy because caterers work on the assumption that guests will have gorged on the hors d'oeuvres beforehand—that is, the hors d'oeuvres that you missed while you were driving across some backwoods miniature golf course—so the wedding party will be forced to keep body and soul together on half a grapefruit, two lettuce leaves covered in mystery dressing, a bowl of watery chicken broth, one nearly transparent slice of what is jocularly known as roast beef au jus, two broccoli flowers and half a baked potato. Any attempt to keep starvation at bay by filling up on the wedding cake will be severely handicapped by the fact that the wedding cake is drenched in something that might be marzipan, might be molasses, or might be that stuff they put inside of Roach Motels. Music will be furnished by Mitch and the Mellowtones—in which case no one under the age of 50 will dance—or Grandmaster Mel the Magic DJ—in which case no one over the age of 14 will dance but, whatever is provided, there will be a Bridesmaids and Ushers Dance and you will be paired up with the one person in the party who most reminds you of that person in the second grade who used to make cooties on you. Later on, the best man will be discovered dancing with himself on top of the cash bar, the bride and groom will commence the intimacies of their wedding night under the head table, and flower girl will fall asleep with her head in what's left of the wedding cake, the groom's father will join her, the bridesmaids will spend a long and profitable evening discussing the tackiness of the bridal gown and the bride's father will receive the bill for the affair and burst into tears, to be followed by three guests at the Spiegelman funeral who happened to wander into the wrong room. You will know the festivities are over when the bride throws her bouquet, which will be caught by Sylvia, a distant cousin of the groom's brother-in-law, who resides in a Lesbian commune in Oregon.

You see, then, what some of us are forced to go through simply for the sake of family relationships. You see, then, why some of us are kept awake through bleak, bleak nights by the realization that we still have one more sister and she possesses a boyfriend of frightening steadiness and apparent seriousness of intent. You see, then, why some of us are going to have to stop writing right this minute and send a little telegram to said boyfriend detailing that sister's unfortunate run-in with the Mann Act several months ago. You do, don't you?

Vampire Sorority Babes rodny dioxin

(last time: Keri wrote a story. It came true. She didn't like that much. Seibenheller is Chloe. Podgorny is a shitbag. Kermit's pissed off. How much more can one take? Your minimum daily

requirement of rude is on the way...)

Assorted pieces of highly expensive lab equipment shattered on the floor. St. Jerome, not all that long back on this side of the grave, was dancing on one of the lab tables and singing a rather atonal song he'd just written.

"I call it 'The Death of Kermit the Marine Merengue' and I see big things for it. Top 20 at least."

There was no one else in the room. Zog had gone off to supervise the battle between Podgorny and Kermit at the airfield. Jerome would've agreed, had anyone cared to ask him, that being resuscitated by Zog was a fine thing indeed. He'd found being dead a major drag. Since he was low man on the corpse totem pole he'd gotten most of the shit jobs to do, like typing up memos to central supply and emptying the ashtrays. Maybe Zog just wasn't herself the day she'd brought him back (after hand-picking him out of her Necromancer's Catalog of Recently Stuffed Bad-ass Dudes) but there were more things wrong than just a tendency to slip into inappropriate babble. He just didn't have the fighting spirit that he'd once had. His nose was cold and clammy and all he really wanted to do was listen to salsa on a cheap stereo and grill some steaks on the Weber Grill.

Zog was getting pissed. In fact, that's why she'd left him behind. It had seemed one of her better plans at the outset. Kermit the Marine was the only force standing between her and total domination of the planet. St. Jerome was the one foe that Kermit feared. Plus, he was reported to be a major babe with some serious equipment and the life of a demon-queen gets pretty lonely. So she did the work only to find out that she'd gotten herself stuck with a guy who not only didn't have a clue as to what was going on half the time, who would be no help against Kermit, but one who was about as likely to slip it to her as the average house plant. Jerome knew all this but there was nothing he could do about it. Not that he cared to. Resurrection had brought about a major lifestyle change. He was even thinking of taking up racquetball.

"Or perhaps bowling. I wonder if Zog will like my song. I hope she gets finished with that silly Kermit person so we can get out of here." Jerome had seen a lovely Chevy station wagon the other day. He wanted to move to Connecticut. He resumed his dancing, this time to the tune of "The Hartford Cha-Cha-Cha."

"Okay. We're about to land," said Kermit, getting up off his knees. "Where's my damn ammo belt, you wuss?"

"Under that seat there. And wipe your mouth off," said Friendly, handing him a tissue.

"I'm ready to kick some butt. How 'bout you?"

"You know that's not really my thing."

"We never have any fun anymore. Remember those nights out on the pier? Man, those were some fights."

"Look, I know this is all a stroll in the sun for you, but my sister's in the middle of this. Whatever's waiting at the airport is your problem. I've gotta get up to campus and find Rika."

"Okay, okay. After I engage at the landing site, you dust off and head over to the secondary target."

"Dust off? This isn't our helicopter, you know. It's a fuck-in' chartered Lear. I'll just hop a cab."

The plane touched down. Friendly got off. Kermit got off. They unloaded a small mountain of ordnance. Kermit just stood there waiting for something to happen.

"Well, I'm off to find my sis. Don't shoot too many innocent bystanders. Unless it looks like fun."

"Fuck off, sow. And try not to getcherself skragged." From the edge of the field, a man in a white lab coat saw a figure walk away from the plane, headed for the highway. He moved to intercept.

"Hello, friend. My name is Basil Podgorny. Do you know what this is?" he asked, extending his bucket towards Friendly.

"A bucket of puke. No thanks, I'm not feeling airsick."

"Oafish marine! This is my pet, Renfield. The great Zog has ordered you dead and this will be the instrument of your destruction. He works very well on coeds. Let's see how he does on fags."

"Coeds?!? You must be the scum-puppy we're looking for then. Guess you offed Chloe too. Zog and Jerome wouldn't be too pleased if they knew that. Fortunately, you won't live long enough for that to be a problem." With that, he kicked Podgorny in the balls.

"What a cheap shot. Zog was right, you really are one tough no-fo. But I've still got Renfield. Say good-bye, Kermit."

"Why not? Goodbye, Kermit." Friendly kicked the bucket holding the mutant bloodsucking slime creature into the woods. He then rested his black alligator-skin boot on Podgorny's neck. "By the way, the name is Friendly and if I find out you've done anything to my sister, I'll come back, dig you up and kill you again." He stepped down harder and, just before Podgorny blacked out, pumped a slug into his skull. "Shitbag homophobic wimp."

"Oh Offisa...Are you bein' a bad boy?"

"Rika! Where the hell are you?" Friendly tossed aside his gun and picked up his phone. "Are you guys alright?"

"Holdin' it together. Sounds like yer into some heavy action." "Your late buddy Podgorny. It's not pretty but neither is life."

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE, AGAIN

"Tres philosophical. Ya comin' out?"
"Be there in a bit. Hang tight. Luv ya, kiddo."

"Man, he gets to have all the fun." Things were going down and Rika was just sitting. That happened too much. She was especially upset that Podgorny had gotten his and she hadn't been the one to give it to him.

"Instead of bitching about it, whyncha get off yer cute little ass and do something?"

"Like what, oh Keri Voice-of-Wisdom?"

"Look, you don't really think that Podgorny was running this operation, whatever the hell it is."

"No. That's just too impossible."

"So let's crash his scene and see who's there."

As usual, the campus was deserted. There was either a football game or an Olympic Fuck-off or something going on. No one saw them, although it's unlikely that anyone would have asked them why they were skulking across the campus in fatigues and carrying a nasty-looking array of martial arts weapons, had they seen the two.

"Are you ready for this, Keri?"

"I was born ready, babes."

"Oh, tres glib."

"Yeah, yeah. Whyncha knock off the small talk and mutter a few invocations or something?"

"I'm hardly an adept. I'm just doin' my stuff...oh, calm down. I'll do what I can."

Rika stopped under an alder tree. The fog was low and wisping through the branches. She pricked her thumb with a sai, traced a design on the bark, on the ground and on her and Keri's bellies.

"What language is that?"

"Shh." Rika finished her casting, wrapping a leaf around her finger. "It's Hungarian, ya jamoke. Now let's do it."

They slipped into the Science Hall and headed down towards Podgorny's lab in the basement. Outside the fog was getting thicker.

"Something pretty pig's at work around here, Keri. It's even a little foggy in here."

"Don't sweat it. Kermit's at the airport. Whatever it is, he can deal with it. Or he can just kill it."

The door said "BIOHAZARD: KEEP OUT." Of course they went in. It was Podgorny's office complex. The first lab was completely trashed. From a couple of rooms away they could hear tuneless singing and the sound of smashing glass.

"Well, that certainly sounds like something."

"Yeah, it kinda sounds like me trying to clean up a lab."

"You got a better idea, sweetie?"

Keri didn't, so they headed for the sounds of boring destruction. Halfway through the second lab they heard a much more interesting sound. It was as though someone or something had just ripped the roof off a nearby room; no mean trick, seeing as they were in the third sub-level. The no-talent singer was now apparently screaming in terror.

He sure enough was. And there was a hole the size of a large pizza blown in the ceiling. A pulsing lump lay in the middle of the floor, draining the blood from a lab rat or two. Standing in the far corner was a benign-looking old man wearing hospital greens. It was Jerome, of course. He was crying, screaming for help and tap-dancing.

"Jeez, Rika. Is this it?"

"Yep. That's the Pod's little pet. And he's mine now." She pulled out two sai, tapped the blades together three times and flung them at the bloodsucker. "Burn in hell!" It didn't wait that long, igniting on contact and flaming away, leaving only a small ochre stain and a smell of scorched Gatorade.

"Actually, I was talking," said Keri, "about the wuss in the corner. You don't think he's in charge here?"

"Not too damn likely. Better check, though." Rika walked over to the now-calm Jerome. "Hi. Are you okay? My name's Rika. What's yours?"

"I don't recall. Zog never got around to telling me."

"Zog?"

"Yes, she brought me back from the dead to help her kill Kermit the Marine and also screw her sideways. Silly, really. All I want is a nice martini, maybe a BMW to live in and a sheepdog to take me to ballgames. That's a wee bit confused but so am I. Can I be your friend? I just wrote a song called 'Zog's A Tool Blues'."

"Hardly a pretty picture, luv."

"Offisa babes, howzit goin'?" Keri grabbed him and gave him a kiss that went down to his ankles. "I'm Keri, Rika's latest."

"A pleasure. My, my...you've certainly fallen on some hard times, Jerome. I guess dying will do that to a person."

"You know this guy?" asked Rika.

"Oh my, yes. We were quite an item once. Till he had me tortured for a few weeks. Then Kermie had to kill him. Thought that would be it but I guess someone else had other ideas."

"Apparently she's called Zog."

"Who is she, Jerome?"

"The dark queen of dreams."

"Very poetic and useless. You always were something of a waste of genetic material."

"What should we do with this chump, Rika?" Keri thought that char-broiling his liver might be appropriate. Or at least fun.

"He's not worth the effort it takes to ignore him."

"Hey look, sis, he may be a vegoid but he was my vegoid once."

"Please don't fight about me. It gives me a rash and that

would clash with my polo shirt. Not to mention my new golf bag. Of course, if Kermit kills Zog I guess she won't be able to buy me any more toys."

"Kay-rist, this guy's pathetic. This is the kinda thing that could sour ya on men for weeks."

"Too true, honey," Friendly said, lighting up a smoke.

"Speaking of men, guess I'd better give Kermie a buzz and see how he's getting on."

Things had finally gotten going for the planet's favorite marine. After Friendly had snuffed Podgorny, the slime-beast had gone berserk and tried to bleed a tree. Kermit lobbed a couple of frag-grenades but it had only taken minor damage and gone screaming back towards the campus. Hours seemed to pass. Actually it was only a couple of minutes, but tell that to a man with places to go and people to kill. Kermit had just levelled a stand of elms when Zog popped in next to him.

"Perhaps I should pull your intestines out through your navel and stuff them in your ears."

"Charmed to meet you, I'm surp. Care for a '45 slug up your butt?"

"No thanks. Never before dinner. You are Kermit the Marine, then?"

"Ya need proof? I could rip one of your arms off."

"How sweet. It's a shame I have to kill you."

"Afraid you've got that backwards. You could tell me your name before I blow you to bits."

This jolly shop talk went on for awhile as the two of them jockeyed for position.

"Why you making my life difficult, anyway? Me and the Officer are supposed to be going up to the dinner theater tonight. Just knock off the B.S. so's I can kill ya and go grab a shower."

"Your romantic plans hardly mean jackshit to me. I'm going to rule the world. Once I atomize your ass, that is."

Kermit had had just about enough. He went for a knife. It was done in a flash. Zog had stripped the shiv from his hand and used it to pun his right foot to the sod.

"Shit, you're good," said Kermit as he pulled his foot free.

"Can I trust you not to shoot my brains out while I cauterize this fucker?" He pulled an acetylene torch out of his pack.

"You're not so bad yourself there, kiddo. Don't screw with that thing." Zog knelt down and spat on Kermit's boot. Not only did the wound heal but the boot was repaired.

"Bitchin' trick."

"Honey, you ain't seen nothin' if you like that."

Kermit liked it. A lot. He was starting to think that wasting Zog wasn't his idea of fun. So what if she was gonna skrag him hard. It would be a cool way to exit.

"You don't have to worry, Kermit. I have a feeling that there are much better things to do with you than blow your brains half-way to Minnesota and back."

"Looking inside my head, eh? Anything else you can look inside?"

"Yeah, and I like what I see." She gave him a smack on the ass.

"So when do we start dominating the world?"

"Oh, the hell with that. I figured we'd just work on each other."

"Well, ain't that a kick in the head."

"Whatcha mean?"

"Kermie just called me. The bitch has dumped me. For Zog! That hog has saved the planet without firing a shot. He told me to take GERMS and Jerome and everything else and give it the five-way fold. I mean, hell! Who's gonna be Attila the Hun now?"

"I feel for ya, Offisa. Really I do. But I'm just your sister. I don't think I qualify."

"Ever cute, Rika. Besides, GERMS is breathing down my neck. Something about Bulgarian blood cults. What the hell do I care? That was never my scene. Maybe I'll just take Jerome and move to Connecticut. Get a jacuzzi, some hot and cold running delivery boys..."

"C'mon, Rika. Let's go for it. What a fucking gas. We can trash this blow-hole dump, get paid to drink and clean up the faith to boot. What more could ya want?"

"You got me, kiddo. Let's fuckin' do it till it screams."

No more screams. At least not in these woods. Halfway between nowhere and somewhere. That's usually where you find any story, evdn one that's going someplace else. As were Keri and Rika. No one there to see them off from the airport. The way they wanted it. Going through the metal detector, they set off the buzzer with the Kappa Nu pins they'd received. Honorary membership for solving the campus murders. Keri ripped hers off, tearing her leather jacket slightly, and tossed it into an ashtray where it sunk slowly in the sand. Rika carefully took hers off, put it in an envelope and slipped it to the guard who was running the X-ray machine. There was a little note scribbled on the outside. The guard pocketed it and smiled.

"I saw that."

"I know. I'm just staying in practice."

"When'd you become such a fuckin'—"

"Don't even say it."

"It's gonna be a long trip, eh?"

"Yeah. Don'tcha love it?..."

-END-

Distractional Analysis

by Dr. B.F. Ligi,
Pataphysician-in-Residence

Well, did everybody do his or her homework? I asked you all to try some structured breathing exercises in the workplace and one or two guided-imagery routines at home. How many of you were able to achieve the feelings of extreme heaviness or tingling in the fingers? Fifteen, sixteen? That's splendid. Does anyone have anything to share with our group?

Michael Jackson? Hah, ha, ha. That's great. I'll try that on my daughter. Can any of you remember the TV award ceremony where Reagan gave M.J. the award for letting "Beat It" be used in a drunk driving commercial?

Talk about a stressful situation. Here's the President of the United States, the most important leader in the universe, and here's this effeminate linthead whose hair looks like it's dripping potato-chip grease—and I apologize to any blacks or liberals in attendance who might find my representation of the facts distasteful—wearing a white sequined glove and shaking the President's hand with it. What a breach of etiquette! If this were Iran or the Soviet Union, that little jigaboo would have been dragged off the Camp David and had his offending appendage lopped off at the shoulder, but we are a civilized nation, led by a civilized leader, and, as a result, the President simply smiled at the *faux pas* and consented to have his picture taken with Mr. Jackson, turning the entire unfortunate affair into a campaign plus. That's what I call managing stress.

I realize that some of you have been disappointed by the first three sessions of Stress Management, perhaps because you expected this seminar would help you eliminate the sources of stress in your life, but that isn't the purpose of these classes. Let's face it, there's few legal ways to eliminate sources of stress in our environment, which is why this course is called Stress Management. And we all want to be managers, don't we? So we can live long, happy lives filled with creature comforts beyond any blue-collar worker's imagination. So we can earn big bonuses for taking advantage of Japanese automobile import restraints. So we can buy real estate far from ground zero. So we can eat whatever we want and job to keep the weight off, or not job and live a sedentary life—supported by the most expensive medical care system ever devised by the minds of men. So we can buy tins of sardines in mustard sauce and send them to emerging African nations to help cut the infant mortality rate below 20 per minute. So we can manage whatever we want. And all we have to do is believe in the Little Engine That Could, just like the President, and remember always to whisper in our sleep: "I think I can! I think I can!"

I used to know a guy who had a very simplistic way of dealing with stress. He believed in nothing and had, for a very long time, been receptive to the viewpoints of every living thing. His favorite saint was Francis of Assisi, and he had taken Francis for his confirmation name, but everyone called him Frank. He took long solitary hikes into the wilderness and talked with the birds and the small rodents with hairless tails. He believed the latter, small burrowing creatures called voles, had served as the original object for some dyslexic scribe who had created love out of the same four letters that could spell a rat.

My friend—I had known him since childhood—was tremendously bright, far brighter than I am at 44. He had a measurable IQ of 183 at age 8. But, for all his intelligence, Frank never learned to manage his stress and spent his entire ludicrously short life trying to eliminate it.

I can remember one time when he and I were having a roast beef hero outside Bloise's Deli, and Wild Bill Taylor drove up in his squad car and yelled out the window: "Get on with you, punks, or I'll run you in for loitering on general principles."

Wild Bill Taylor was a crazy cop. He'd been booted off the motorcycle squad for forcing Mayor Wagner's limo onto the shoulder on Riverside Drive and issuing a citation for a faulty brake light. His squad car had a skull and crossbones painted on both the hood and trunk, and there were dozens and dozens of Dick and Jane figures stenciled on the right quarter panel, just like fighter pilots used to paint Zeros and Messerschmidts during double-u, double-u, two. He once lined up 12 kids in Astoria Park and shot each of them through the kneecap because they wouldn't tell him who had knocked up his daughter, and Wild Bill Taylor didn't have a daughter. He had never been married as far as I know, and it's common knowledge that police officers never have daughters until after they are married.

Now if you want to consider the sources of stress and how intractable these sources are, I ask you to acknowledge the existence of police officers like Wild Bill Taylor.

At any rate, my friend Frank just reached into his back pocket, pulled out a .38 and shot Officer Taylor six times in the head. I was astonished, of course, since I was only 14 years old at the time, like my friend Frank, and I had been taught from a very early age that it was not right to shoot policemen, not even policemen as obviously psychotic and dangerous as Wild Bill Taylor.

"Now what did you do that for?" I asked Frank.

"To shut him the fuck up," Frank said, curtly. "And it worked too, didn't it?"

"Sure looks like it," I said.

At the time I was unable to refute Frank's logic, but now,

looking back on that incident of 30 years past, I can point out that Frank's life from the moment he killed Wild Bill Taylor became a short violent nightmare of pain and high blood pressure. Frank died at Jonestown, by the way, and his body was made into cat food two years later because no one would claim the body.

So now you can see why we're here. Any questions?

Okay, I want everybody to relax. Take off your glasses.

Loosen your ties and your bras. Rest your feet flat on the floor, and sit up in your seats so your entire skeletal system can sink into itself like a BMW FM antenna.

That's better. Let your hands relax where they fall on your thighs. I would prefer if those hands were unclasped, but I can accept whatever position your hands are most comfortable in, although, I confess, I would rather you not, as the young lady in the back feels she must, keep your hands raised over your heads with your middle fingers jutting in a Rockefeller salute. Such a display takes so much energy, and adds to the pressure of the fight/flight response. It's counter-productive. Believe me.

Notice how your skull is resting comfortably on the pivot of the top of your spine. You feel just like one of those rear-deck dolls you see when you're tailgating a low-rider, don't you? Admit it. Isn't that better?

Let your mind go blank. Remember, there is nothing we have to do, nothing we have to think about. The reason we are here is we've all decided we really need to manage our stress. It's more important than bowling, more important even than our ten o'clock coffee break. And as you listen to the sound of my voice, for those of you who are still listening to the sound of my voice, you may stare at the blank sheet of paper at the front of the auditorium, and think of that blank sheet of paper as your mind. We are not here to write anything on that piece of paper. So put away your imaginary spray paint cans and Outliner markers, and relax and let go, as you feel yourself sink deeper and deeper into a state of total calm and total peacefulness.

Some of you are still listening to my voice, so I am going to count from 1 to 10, and as you hear each number, you will feel your muscles stretching, and you will feel happier and happier as you relax and let go, deeper and deeper, as you feel all of your anxieties and fears slipping away from you like slugs through a goose. Each in your own way, and in your own time, you can feel yourself getting better and better.

1. Feel the muscles in your feet go limp. Forget about odors. Forget about pain. Your feet are the miracle to carry you to where the golden bird eyes open in the violet stone.

2. Consider your calves. You are probably city folks. Your calves are between your knees and your ankles and they do not low in the meadow. Feel the muscles elongate. If the bombs began to fall this very minute, there would be no way to outrun them, so relax and let go.

3. Your knees have grown numb now. Your feet are distant memories you no longer think about. You can breathe through your nose again. If you got on your knees and prayed to your own special God this very minute, no one would hear you, but it doesn't matter, because you don't give a shit. If you are still listening to the sound of my voice, imagine the person beside you is saying you don't give a shit, and later, when you return to work, you will find some stupid error the person beside you has committed, and you will prove to him or her how he or she actually does give a shit, as you force your neighbor to grovel to protect his or her meaningless job. You realize that your job too is meaningless, but if you are still listening to the sound of my voice, you are thinking that your supervisor has called your job meaningless, and you will find a way to get even for the slight, each in your own way.

4. You really don't give a shit, because you can no longer distinguish my voice from the voices of those around you, your fellow workers, your supervisors, your governmental leaders. You only thought you did. You really want to be happy. You want your upper thighs always to feel the way they do now, relaxed and tingly. You can feel my tongue just above your knee if you are an attractive young woman, if you are still listening to the sound of my voice. If you are not an attractive young woman, you can feel the delightfully cold tongue of a young kitten on your thigh, and you will never tell anyone what you are feeling, because they would never understand.

5. You are getting better and better at relaxing and letting go. You are the wonder that makes this great system of representative democracy flower and flourish. You are all right, and you can feel your pelvic region collapse and relax onto the face of whatever you believe in. You don't have anything to worry about at all.

6. Aren't we having fun, relaxing and letting go? Your spine is a cord of string cheese. Your mother mutilates cucumbers. But you don't care, you are so relaxed and free of stress. You can hear the Lord's Prayer in several languages, in numerous dialects in each of those languages, and each time the penitent gets to "for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever," you do not care that this is not the Catholic version of the holiest of male prayers. Remember: the Pope is a Polish priest who supports the communist trade union. Relax and let go.

7. Remember your unclasped hands? Imagine that either your left or your right hand is getting heavier or lighter. Can you feel it? Which hand has the sequined glove on it? Michael Jackson. Michael Jackson. Can you beat it? Relax and let go. 7

CONTINUED ON - YES, YOU GUESSED IT - NEXT PAGE

And if you are an amputee, and you don't have a right hand or a left hand or either hand for that matter, or even if you have suffered a spinal injury and you can't feel a thing from the neck down, you can see that you are in a meadow or by the seaside or in the mountains, and even if you are a total basket case, hooked up to tubes and bladders, you have nothing to worry about, because you are sinking deeper and deeper into the trough of deep relaxation. You are a little thirsty, but don't worry about it, because

8. The helpers are mixing the Kool-Aid. Be patient. Don't let the urges and drives of everyday stressful situations disturb your happiness and contentment of this blissful moment as you feel your chest muscles loosen, and the huge network of shoulder and neck muscles relax and let go. You will know the kingdom or queendom of whatever heaven of bliss you can imagine, each in your own way, if you'll only relax and let go, deeper and deeper.

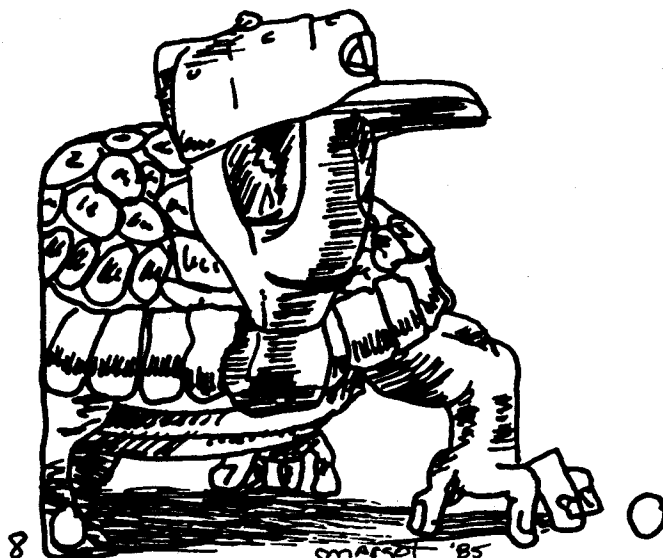
9. And now, if you continue to relax and let go, each in your own way, you may begin to feel a tingling in your fingertips, if you aren't an amputee and haven't voted for the opposition party to whatever party it is that isn't the opposition party, but you don't really give a shit, even if you can't hear the sound of my voice, and even if you can, even if you're deaf, dumb, and blind, like the star of the first rock opera, you have to admit, the Kool-Aid will surely be a welcome break from the bullshit I've been giving you for the past twenty minutes, and did you know that your mother may still be alive, if she isn't already dead? And what about your father? Wasn't he a real bimbo too? Admit it. You feel guilty that you thought so. Both your parents were complete idiots. But was that your fault? You bought Coke, didn't you? Wasn't it the real thing? You once owned a Buick, didn't you? Something to believe in?

And just let yourself admit, if it doesn't bother you, and even if it does, if you are still listening to the sound of my voice, or even if you aren't, that you really don't give a shit. People who give a shit, after all, have high blood pressure, and are going to die before their times, aren't they? You don't want to die before your time, do you? Of course not. You are important, which is why you have sunk into a state of relaxation so deep you can imagine people looking over the edge of a box in which you are resting, relaxed and letting go.

10. Here's the Kool-Aid. Drink it down slowly, and relax, deeper and deeper, forgetting all the cares and troubles and problems of the world.

And now that you are so slowly relaxed that you can't remember why you ever kept your eyes open at all, or if your eyes are still open, you may feel them beginning to feel heavier and heavier, like strips of limp Sizzlean, so heavy, so fat and lazy, and 50% leaner than average bacon, if you are still listening to the sound of my voice, or even if you aren't, you are very happy, I'm sure that you were able to take these classes free as an in-house benefit program offered by your employer in the private or public sector, because unless you are really in trouble, and many of you are really in trouble, whether or not you can hear the sound of my voice, my private practice isn't really available to any but the most terrible of cases, and god knows there are many terrible cases, and I only take the most terrible of cases, so unless you've got an absolutely terrible case, unless you are a very attractive young woman, if you can still hear the sound of my voice, or even if you can't, and if your right or left hand feels heavier or lighter, unless you are a single or double amputee, have a double dose of the Kool-Aid my assistant is offering you, unless you have more than \$50 thousand in savings, or even if you have \$25 thousand in savings, which you will later this afternoon transfer into an account for which I will give you a deposit slip, after this session is completed, whether or not you've finished your Kool-Aid, as you relax and let go, deeper and deeper...

(Session to be concluded in IJ #50)



EVENTS CONT'D.

- NOVEMBER 23 - Harpo Marx (b. 1893)
- NOVEMBER 26 - TONY RENNER (26)
- NOVEMBER 27 - Turkey Day; pass the stuffing!
- NOVEMBER 28 - William Blake (b. 1757)
- NOVEMBER 29 - Firesign Theatre member PETER BERGMAN, who invented the term "love-in" (47); King Tut's tomb discovered (1922); Louisa May Alcott (b. 1832)
- NOVEMBER 30 - ABBIE HOFFMAN (48); Bette Midler (41); Jonathan Swift (b. 1667); Mark Twain (b. 1835)
- DECEMBER 1 - Woody Allen (51)
- DECEMBER 2 - Ye editrix ELAYNE WECHSLER (29)
- DECEMBER 5 - Prohibition repealed (1933); Walt Disney (b. 1901); Joan Didion (52)
- DECEMBER 6 - Firesign Theatre member DAVID OSSMAN (50); Wally Cox (b. 1924); Joyce Kilmer (b. 1886); Kahlil Gibran (b. 1883)
- DECEMBER 8 - James Thurber (b. 1894); Jim Morrison (b. 1943)
- DECEMBER 9 - Margaret Hamilton (b. 1902); John Milton (b. 1608)
- DECEMBER 10 - Human Rights Day, Emily Dickinson (b.1830)
- DECEMBER 13 - Fiancé-at-Large STEVE CHAPUT (36)
- DECEMBER 14 - Spike Jones (b. 1911); Nostradamus (b.1503)
- DECEMBER 15 - DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO IJ #51

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PRUDENCE DOES HER LAUNDRY,
or, PRUDENCE GETS A BATH

by Prudence Gacior

"WHALES! Everywhere, WHALES! Hannibal, why did you bring all these boats into the Rockies? And why all these Whales?!!!!...No, I don't want any olive ice cream. Do you have any pink flavor or some kind that takes like psgetti?...I am not a telephone...MILLIPEDES!.....I am not a tractor. I am a U-Haul.....Tomorrow we get our wings. If you put tractors end to end you just have a bunch of tractors, but if you put a bunch of U-Hauls end to end you make a train.....no. No. NO! NO, MR. BEAR, DON'T EXPLODE!.....OH

CONTINUED ON THE DREADED NEXT PAGE

YUCK!"

Prudence rocketed off her bed, slammed her head against the floor and shrieked at the top of her head, "I WANT BUNNY!" "GODDAMMIT TO HELL! PRUDENCE IZVESTIA GAELOR, IF YOU DON'T SHUT UP ABOUT THAT STUPID RABBIT I'M GONNA SOCK YOUR BUTT SO HARD YOU'LL HAVE TO GO TO THE DENTIST TO GET YOUR TEETH CHECKED! NOW CEASE YOUR WHINING AND GO TO SLEEP!"

"Wench," Prudence muttered under her breath as she threw the new, stuffed rabbit her mother gave her against the wall. She walked over to her desk and took a brand new pair of scissors out of her school box and proceeded to saw the toy's ears off. Then she took a sock out of her drawer and put it over its head. She got dressed, pulled a raincoat out of the hall closet, got a flashlight down from the closet shelf and snuck out the front door.

Outside, Prudence zig-zagged down the hill of her front lawn, hiding behind bushes and trees until she had made her way to the street. Without looking either way, she ran across the street and leapt over Mrs. Weir's azalea bush. There she hid, praying that she hadn't been seen by Edna the Ancient, whom she hadn't expected to find walking her cat at this late hour. Everyone knew that Edna was weird, and some of the bigger kids said that she was a witch that late at night would sniff out little kids to take home to put in her stew. Thus, Prudence held her breath to the point of nearly passing out, while Edna untangled her cat's leash which had gotten itself snagged on a small shrub. It was for this reason she held her breath and because if Edna saw her she might tell her mother. While untangling the cat's leash, Edna's eyes strayed to something shiny that was caught in the bushes. She reached over and pulled the shiny thing out. Much to Prudence's horror, it was her flashlight which she had dropped when leaping over the bushes. Edna inspected the flashlight, shook it and flicked it on. She turned the light toward her face. She blinked a few times, flicked it off and put it in the bag she had slung over her shoulder.

After what had seemed forever but was closer to fifty seconds, Edna and her cat continued down the street and rounded the corner. Prudence exhaled and gulped down large quantities of air before she got up, dusted herself off and took off in the opposite direction. She sprinted for the sixty yards between her and the dumpster at the end of the street. There were huge wooden gates surrounding the dumpster. With some effort, Prudence managed to spring the latch and she had to use her whole body to swing the gates open enough to allow her in and a small amount of light. Prudence didn't have enough strength to open the top of the dumpster, but the little hatch on the side was open and, using the ledge as a foothold, Prudence was able to hoist herself through the hatch into the dumpster. The air inside the dumpster was heavy with a strange, putrid sweetness and it was so dark that she decided that she would have to find Pink Bunny by feel.

For the next forty minutes, Prudence sifted through the garbage. She found one worn sneaker, a pizza box with a knife in it and a walkie-talkie with its side dented in and its wires dangling out like entrails. She had cantaloupe seeds in her hair and coffee grounds in her Keds. She was certain that she was too late. Someone else must have come to the dumpster earlier and gotten Pink Bunny. She started to cry. Then she started to throw things. She hurled the garbage at the walls surrounding her. Her arms and hands seemed to gain a life of their own; her hands grasping anything within reach, and her arms giving them the spring to fling that which was in her hands full force against the inner walls of the dumpster. As one can imagine, this created quite a bit of noise, for while the sneaker made only a small thud, the walkie-talkie hit the walls with a large thwack.

The tantrum, however, abruptly ended when Prudence cut her hand on a large piece of broken glass. Her crying died down to a quiet snuffling while she inspected her cut, pumping and prodding the sides, worrying blood forth. It was in this moment of quiet that she heard the garbage behind her shifting on what she thought was its own accord. She turned around to see something emerge from beneath the rubbish. It flung some garbage out of its way and muttered, "It seems that these places where refuse collects can be nasty, dangerous places indeed!"

"Bunny!" Prudence shrieked as she lunged forward and took him in her arms.

"Prudence! What brings you to this odorous region you call Out-In-The-Trash?"

"I've come to take you home. I don't think Mummy will mind too much if you were to wash every once in awhile."

"Do I have to? You know how I hate—"

"Yes, you must and you must tonight; if there is any way that you will get to stay it will depend on your coming clean. We might not be so lucky next time and it won't be out in the trash where you're sent but to the landfill."

"Yes, I see. Well, bring on the hot water. I can take it."

Together they groped their way to the open hatch. Prudence helped Bunny through and steered him onto the ledge, which he then jumped off and landed on the ground. Prudence followed Bunny's example and did the same. Stealthily, they made their way back to the house, criss-crossing the lawn and dodging behind trees and bushes just as the army men did in all the war movies that they watched on late night television. When they had ascertained the door, Prudence drew her finger across her throat, motioning Bunny to button it. Bunny ceased his relentless babbling, but only for a moment, and then continued to express every distant tangent and

non sequitor that popped itself into his brain. Once Prudence asked him what he was muttering and Bunny, with an unforseeable ferocity, said, "Hush, I'm doing science!" Prudence didn't care to ask what he was muttering about this time, but instead decided that he was saying his last words before his bath. Knowing that Pink Bunny had a sense for the melodramatic, Prudence played along. She grasped Pink Bunny by the arm and escorted him to the laundry room, pretending that she was a warden escorting a convict to the electric chair.

Although at first he fussed about the bright light, Bunny's spirits lightened when he found himself in the familiar surroundings of the laundry room. He sat on the washing machine telling Prudence of all of the wondrous things he saw while he was in the dumpster, while Prudence climbed on top of the dryer to get to the shelf with the laundry soap on it.

"Did you know that Marbits are the third listed ingredient on the box of Count Chocula? What are Marbits, Pru? Do they taste good? Do we have any of this cereal and can I have some? I would like to try it. I have never tasted a Marbit before."

Prudence thought about that for a minute. "I don't know what Marbits are, but I think I had an aunt named Marbit once." Bunny then tried to imagine the process it would take to round up all the Aunt Marbits in the world so that they could grind them up to put them in his cereal. He wondered if anyone complained and then he wondered what would happen if the world ran out of Marbits. Would the cereal company set up a special baby farm and name all the babies Marbit? Or would they choose another name so that the third listed ingredient would be Julies or Lauras? His train of thought was interrupted when Prudence dropped a box of detergent on his head. Pink Bunny looked inside the barrel of the washing machine and took four deep breaths in rapid succession. "Are you sure this is what we want?"

"Positive." Prudence pointed to the back of the box. "See? It says here that this won't bleach your clothes." She turned the knob on the washing machine and the barrel filled with water. She spilled approximately four handfuls of the powdery detergent into the machine.

"What's bleach, why don't we want to be bleached?"

"Bleach, Bunny, is what happens when white gets all over your clothes and won't come out."

"Yes, we certainly don't want that." He eased himself into the barrel. "Ouch, this water's hot!"

"Yes, it will get you clean! Now promise me you'll scrub, and don't forget behind your ears. When I come back, I expect you to be clean."

"Where're you going?"

"I could use a bath myself." Prudence closed the lid of the washing machine and put the box of detergent over the top of it so that Pink Bunny was trapped inside. "There, now he'll get clean." She wandered down the hall to her bathroom and barely turned the faucet on so that she wouldn't make a lot of noise filling up the tub and waker her mother. It took a long time for the tub to fill and by the time Prudence had taken her bath and had crawled into her pajamas, the wash cycle had long since finished and Pink Bunny was sitting in the bottom of the barrel sulking. Not only did he have to take a bath, but because Prudence was afraid that he might wake Mummy up, she forbade him to sing any bath songs. She wouldn't let him sing even one, not even his favorite one about the little boy bathing in the river and the water moccasin.

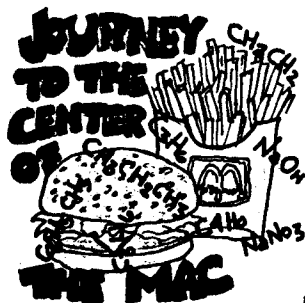
Prudence removed the box of detergent and lifted the lid. Pink Bunny didn't say a word but glowered at her from inside the machine. When she went to pick him up he tried to bite her. Undaunted, Prudence grabbed him by the ears and slung him in the dryer. "You'll feel much better when you're warm and dry, Bunny." She ripped five sheets of Bounce out of the box and threw them in the dryer next to Pink Bunny. She closed the door, set the temperature and turned the dryer on.

"I assure you I will not feel any better," Bunny shouted after Prudence as she left the laundry room.

Prudence went into the den and turned on the T.V. She did not want to hear Pink Bunny going, "OW OW OW OW OW," when the dryer began to get hot. She went into the kitchen and poured herself a bowl of Nerds cereal. She chose the strawberry flavor. She remembered how Mummy didn't want to buy it for her and how she had to throw tantrums every day at the breakfast table until Mummy had given in and bought her a box. She took the cereal with her into the den and munched it dry while she watched the test pattern on channel four for the forty-five minutes it took for Pink Bunny to get dry.

When Prudence pulled Pink Bunny out of the dryer, he wasn't in much better spirits, although he looked infinitely better and reeked of Bounce instead of garbage. Prudence tried to convince Pink Bunny of how much better he looked but all he did was growl. Prudence decided to let him sulk, and didn't try talking to him any more. She went into her room and crawled into bed.

Pink Bunny went into the kitchen looking for Count Chocula. There wasn't any; Prudence had shifted her allegiance to Nerds cereal. Pissed off, he slammed the cabinet shut. The sudden noise woke up Prudence's mother and she started yelling. Suddenly contrite, Pink Bunny booked his way into Prudence's bedroom. He climbed onto the bed by using the legs of Prudence's stuffed spider, Ivan, which had a permanent place over her pillow, as vines. Pretending that he was George of the Jungle, he swung up onto the bedspread. Pink Bunny tiptoed around Prudence's pillow. He kissed her on the bridge of her nose and snuggled under the covers with her.



BY DEBORAH BEVEDICT

If we are all good girls and boys, he'll turn up pitching for the Mets or the Cubs, instead of ending his career in a pussy team like the Padres. The thing of it is, Goose is right—McDonald's is poisoning the world. So here's to Goose—when he mouthed off, he got 'em right in the strike zone.

"It is ridiculous to call this an industry. It is not. This is rat eat rat, dog eat dog. I'll kill 'em, and I'm going to kill 'em before they kill me. You're talking about the American way of survival of the fittest." - RAY KROC

"Ignorance is a challenge to the nutritionist, but what does one do about opinionated ignorance?" - CARLTON FREDERICKS

The McDonald's Corporation has published a cutesy-pie little booklet called: McDONALD'S FOOD: THE FACTS. Unfortunately, they did not know that their consumer-friendly pamphlet would fall into the hands of "Kid" Sieve, who, with her customary wisdom and clear vision, sent it to me with the sensible request that I do a true analysis and tell you all what is really in them McCorps vittles. I am prouder than Godzilla to do so.

The booklet is a sprightly little thing, printed in cheery reds and sunny yellows on high-quality medium gloss paper. It runs to 38 pages and must have cost McCorp a tidy sum, which they no doubt assume they'll get back in "good faith" money from their gratified customers. Throughout this tract are attractive kitchen calendar-type drawings of McFood—even a honeybee is displayed on page 21, assuring us that McCorp honey comes from real bees. Familiar faces appear on the cover and inside the booklet—a nicely drawn series of homey old friends—Arm & Hammer Baking Soda, a jar of Vlasic dills, and a mess o' brand names most folks have come to know, trust and bow before—SARA LEE, KRAFT, QUAKER, HEINZ, HUNTS, and get out the hymn books, COCA COLA. They did a damn good job on this booklet; Larson E. Whipsnade would have been proud.

But unfortunately for McCorp, their fanciful and pretty presentation cannot eclipse the power of such words as dioxane, butane, propane, mutagen and carcinogen—which are the real words behind the euphemisms. Since most people don't have access to the truth about things like BHT and TGHQ, here I come to save the day, jes' like Mighty Mouse. Here are the chemical, biological FACTS about McDonald's Food Facts.

It occurred to me that there were no photos in this booklet and I have a theory about why. I suspect that flashes from a camera would serve as a catalyst for the chemicals in the food. Who knows what would happen? Prolly the world would blow up. The tone of the booklet is one of parental concern and excruciatingly patronising HONESTY. We at McCorp really really want you to know that our food is nutritious and you needn't be ascairt, little chilluns, to eat it all up. We are sick of it being called JUNK FOOD and you can huff and you can puff but you won't blow our house down cause we is rich and we is powerful.

The first thing you find in this booklet is a reassuring note from our fearless founder, Ray Kroc—who bit the big one a couple years ago and all the Padres wore black armbands and all the flags at McDonald's "restaurants" went halfway down the pole. The nation, we are told, mourned for this man, whose last name pretty much onomatopoeitically mimics what he served the public for over 20 years. Kroc lets us know that he's always believed in the basics, the kind of good, nutritious food people eat at home, blah blah blah. Then there is a note to our valued customers, as if 4-year-olds could read this! Herein, McCorp preens and struts about how totally swell they are to list their food ingredients and with the confidence that befits an industry giant, they dare to challenge other restaurants to do the same! Whoa, HIGH NOON! A showdown, no less! My response is simple—McDonald's, get over yourself! You're a restaurant? Come off it. Do you think of McDonald's as a restaurant? Like Lutece, Antoinnes or even Benihana? When you pass a McDonald's, does your brain click with this I.D.—"Oh, lookee thar, a restaurant." Does it? Nah. I'll tell you this, it ain't in no Michelin Guide I ever seen.

McCorp then brags about how they've built an "INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION" on a "SOLID FOUNDATION"—their "classic" 100% beef hamburger and the World Famous Fries. Easily done! Both things have enough preservatives in them to serve as a foundation for the Vatican.

And no, I will not put those dinky little trademark signs every time I write the name of one of their products.

Next part of this booklet lets us know that the McBurger and the French Fries are the All-American Meal—another cheap patriot-

PREFACE

This article is dedicated to Rich "Goose" Gossage. Once a pitcher for the Sandy Eggo Padres, Goose is now on suspension for who-knows-how-long because he did a Bad Thing, according to the Kroc family, owners of the ill-named ball club and also owners of McDonald's. Goose did what Cervantes called "speaking the truth and shaming the devil." He came right out and said that McDonald's was "poisoning the world." So they kicked his butt outta that club.

If we get lucky, he'll stay out and he'll go back to the Yanks, or maybe

ic appeal. Don't you know that old brother Omar in Libya just loves this sort of shit? Then they hip us to their ONE HUNDRED PERCENT BEEF NO FILLERS AND LESS FAT THAN THE BEEF YOU BUY IN THE SUPERMARKET!!! Wow. And do you know they are right? Yep. That is 100% USDA—the A there stands for AMERICAN—and that beef don't have no excipients or fillers, just pure American beef that has been fed American Corn, treated with American D.D.T., American Grains (also thus treated), American Synthetic Hormones, American Food Grade Plastic Roughage Pellets, American newspapers mixed with American sulphured molasses, American feathers and wood, and some of these yum yums have been treated with sodium chloride. No, not sodium chloride/SALT, but sodium chlorite/BLEACH, like Clorox, you know? The FDA sez that toxicity depends upon concentration. Har de har har. Most mooly cows who get the McDeath Ray are fed STILBESTROL, known to most of us as DES. This is a popular carcinogenic synthetic hormone that makes cattle BIG and lots of women DEAD from usually reproductive organ cancer. It's the kind of chemical a research oncologist likes to have on hand when he gets in the mood to see how many tumors he can make grow in caged rats. Antibiotics are routinely added to animal feed and they are not eliminated by cooking. Repeated, prolonged ingestion can stimulate hardening of the arteries and heart disease. Then there are the tranquilisers that help the poor bovines gain weight and make people who ingest lots of them act like the characters in INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS.

Oh yeah, pesticides are used directly and indirectly on cattle. DDT tops the charts.

The flour for the McBuns is ENRICHED! Now before you go to singing 'bout the Wells Fargo Wagon comin' down the street, remember this—they MUST enrich the flour because they bleached all the good stuff out of it. They took perfectly nutritious wheat flour and did so much to it, all they had left was wallpaper paste. So on come the synthetic vitamins—and on come the dough conditioners. If you've ever made your own bread, surely you're familiar with having to open the cupboard to get out your bottle of stearyl 2—lactylic acid. This is a fatty acid that occurs in tallow—hard and greasy animal fats. Oh, it's safe—as safe as fat can be. Why don't they use eggs, the best dough conditioner money can buy? Maybe because eggs are more perishable than stearyl 2—lactylic acid. McCorp maybe doesn't wanna pay for this—hey, they'd have to pass the expense on to you, right? Damn white of them not to do this.

McCorp also uses PROTEASE in the buns. Probably you've seen this listed lotsa times and wondered about it. Pro-tease, eh? Like a protein molecule wearing a G-string and pasties? Well, protease is an enzyme and it's usually used to tenderise meat. Why they need it in the buns is anyone's guess. I got to thinking about this too—McCorp gets the buns from local bakeries in the neighborhood and since these bakeries can provide fresh buns every day, and since, as McCorp is always reminding us, they sell, as Carl Sagan would say, BILLYENS and BILLYENS of burgers, WHY DO THEY NEED ANY PRESERVATIVES???? I don't use preservatives in my home-made baked goodies. They get et up in a coupla days.

Calcium Sulfate is added to the buns because everyone needs their calcium, yes they do. But calcium sulfate is PLASTER OF PARIS. Most of you smarty-pants types out there know that if you want to kill rats and turn their internal organs into a petrified forest, feed 'em calcium sulfate. Oh yeah—it's a sulfated mineral, which means it destroys any other minerals and vitamins it hangs out with. Sulfates are the Billy Jacks of processing chemicals—they get in there and they just go BERSERK.

McCorp cleverly defers its pickle ingredients to the VLASIC and HEINZ people, just in case anyone notices that there are polysorbates and sodium benzoate in the pickling juice. Polysorbates have this neat feature—they contain dioxane, aka dioxin (hi Rodnyl). Sodium benzoate is reported to be "generally recognised as safe" (GRAS) for 0.1% in food. It can cause allergic reactions.

THE FRENCH FRIES - these are from Russet Burbank Potatoes and they are cooked in a mixture of beef and vegetable oil...read that as LARD and SHORTENING. McCorp assures us that they will be using only Veg Oil to fry their Filet O Fish and the McNuggets; the fries will probably continue to be bathed in lard and hydrogenated oils. McCorp makes a case for the importance of linoleic acid found in fats. I am here to give these bozos a lesson in nutrition. I know all about linoleic acids, Primrose Oil and lipotropic fats. I know that linoleic acids are destroyed by hydrogenation and the poor little linoleic acids that survive the hydrogen bomb are mutated into abnormal toxic fatty acids which are

1. antagonistic to the normal fatty acids;
2. unacceptable to human physiology.

Even if the linoleic acids were not destroyed or mutated by the hydrogenation process, it wouldn't do you a bit of good ingesting them with the cholesterol from the lard! When McCorp talks about cholesterol being present only in "animal foods" they want you to assume their French fries are cool cause we know that taters are not animals—but they are soaked in lard which is pure animal fat and crummy with cholesterol.

Dextrose is used to enhance the natural color of the fries. Dextrose is corn syrup; it's sugar.

Sodium Acid Pyrophosphate is added to help the fries retain their natural color, but since when does food need cosmetics? SAP, as it is known in the trade, is a kissin' cousin of phosphoric acid.

Bacon - a real good source of sodium nitrate, aka Chile Salt-peter. Nitrates combine with stomach saliva and food substances

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE - REDUNDANT, ISN'T IT?

(secondary amines) to create nitrosamines, a really powerful carcinogen, another oncologists' dream.

Barbecue Sauce - mostly sugar, corn syrup is its first ingredient plus it contains dextrose (more refined corn syrup), sucrose (C & H real cane sugar) and food starch-modified, a real interesting item. Among the chemicals used to modify starch (we cannot list them all) are propylene oxide (a propane derivative); Succinic anhydride, derived from succinic acid (a fabulous neural paralyser); 1-Octenyl Succinic Anhydride which must be limited if combined with aluminum sulfate—a chemical popular for waterproofing anti-perspirants, antiseptics and detergents. A real jack of all trades. Another famous food starch modifier is sodium hydroxide, known to its pals on the block as LYE or CAUSTIC SODA. The DFA managed to ban more than 10% in household drain cleaners. But it's still in some food starch modifiers. Trouble is, there's no way of knowing what chemicals go into any food starch modifiers. Suffice to say that ALL food starch modifiers are on the FDA's top priority list for re-evaluation. The barbecue sauce also contains sodium benzoate, which you learned about in the pickle section. MSG is present in the sauce and most of you probably know of its dangers. It causes brain damage in young rodents (our dear Rodney K Dioxin is a perfect example, aren't you hon?) and it fucks up the brains of other baby animals. MSG is on the FDA list of additives needing further study. It has strange effects on both male and female reproductive systems. MSG came into a lot of publicity awhile back as the culprit for migraine in the dreaded "Chinese Restaurant Syndrome." Many people are allergic to MSG.

As for the smoke flavorings in the sauce, it does not give the method or source, but you must assume that since FDA scientists feel smoke flavorings have "uncertainties which require further study" we ain't talking about Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm.

Potassium Sorbate is in the Big Mac sauce as a preservative. It's GRAS but it is caused allergic reactions in real humans. EDTA—aka ETHYLENEDIAMINETETRAACETATE (say it real fast 3 times)—is also used here as a preservative. It is on the FDA list for possible harmful effects...The Mac Sauce also contains more hydrolyzed vegetable protein, in case you felt you didn't get enough from the fries.

I don't even want to get involved with their birthday cakes. Call me a chicken. Make cluck cluck noises at me. I don't care. When I see three of the basic ingredients listed as "practically non-toxic" in my reference book, I want to have Ronald McDonald arraigned on charges of child abuse.

The breakfast pastries have more of the same preservatives and chemicals that you have come to know so well, especially more of the modified food starch. And it's always good to see a mutagen show up in a bakery product. A mutagen is a chemical that changes genetic material during cell division. Potassium Bromate is a mutagen used in the McBuns as a dough conditioner. I also note that there's calcium chloride (may cause premature ventricular contractions, skipped beats) and ammonium chloride—yes, the same chemical used in freezing mixtures, batteries, safety explosives and dyes. It's also used to keep snow from melting.

My personal favorite offender in McCorps Cornucopia of Caustic Chemicals is the BISCUIT DRESSING. Now mind you, was I to make up a batch of biscuit dressing, I might first make me up some roux, flour and butter; and add to it some seasonings, some beef or chicken soup stock. Tastes real good. Doesn't be too unhealthy. But McCorp, say hey, they decided they need: Partially Hydrogenated Soybean Oil, Lecithin (Oh, look, a good guy!), Artificial Flavor, TBHQ (a preservative), Artificial Color, Methylsilicone. We know about the partially hydrogenated crap. We don't know what might be in the artificial flavor and color, but odds are it's a coal tar derivative. (Carcinogenic) Methylsilicone is exactly what it sounds like—silicone (synthetic resin) treated with methyl, the monovalent hydrocarbon, aka methyl alcohol. I would love to tell you why it's necessary in the biscuit dressing, but Jezebel whizzers, I don't know! Maybe I'll figure it out. Now we come to the TBHQ. This is Tertiary Butylhydroquinone. This antioxidant is finally available after years of pressure from food manufacturers. Its base is butane—derived from petroleum, a raw material found in motor oils, but most commonly used in Bic and Cricket lighters. This is either as a solo act or in a duet when combined with the preservative anti-oxidant Butylated Hydroxyanisole (BHA) and/or Butylated Hydroxytoluene (BHT). Toluene is a coal tar derivative, a light liquid hydrocarbon used in making dyes, explosives and as a solvent. Both BHA and BHT are in a lineup with the carcinoma cops. BHT is banned in Britain. In the USA, TBHQ must not exceed 0.02% of its oil and fat content. Death has occurred from the ingestion of as little as 5 grams. Ingestion of a single gram (1/30th of an ounce) has caused nausea, vomiting, ringing in the ears, delirium, a sense of suffocation and collapse.

And I'll tell you what worries me, friends and neighbors—it's that bit about not exceeding 0.02% of its oil and fat content. The first listed ingredient in the biscuit dressing is oil and the second, lecithin, is a nitrogenous fatty substance. So we don't know how much of a proportion of TBHQ is in the biscuit dressing. So I guess the best advice is, go very easy on this shit. In fact, if you gotta have biscuit dressing, come to my house. I make better biscuits, too.

Oh, by the way, seems that the methylsilicone is in the biscuit dressing to help the stuff resist oxidation! As if any self-respecting element would go near something with TBHQ in it!

The Canadian Style Bacon (eh?) is a sodium nitrate product—just as groovy as sodium nitrate, and we also get two other kinds of sodium, phosphate and erythorbate, plus two kinds of sugar, dextrose and corn syrup. Somehow I don't think our fine Canadian neighbors had this in mind when they designed their first smoke-house.

The cheese is from KRAFT, so it's only got one carcinogen in it. Sorbic acid. Well, maybe we better call it a potential carcinogen because tests have shown that sorbic acid has to be taken in really huge amounts to cause squamous cell tumors in rats. We humans is much tougher than rats. We're bigger and we also eat more. 'Specially when the food is fast and cheap.

Most people favor Chicken McNuggets as their fave controversial McFood. It is hard to resist a morsel made mostly out of chicken skin and bleached white and corn flour. That's 72.8 milligrams of cholesterol in one gram of McNugs. You should only be doing about 100 mgs of cholesterol per day, which means if you do McNugs, you can't eat much else. Because this booklet came out before the new SHANGHAI McNUGGETS (stop laughing, that's what they're called!) I can't tell you what's in the new sauces, but I would venture to guess that it's more of the same chemical stew we found in the barbecue sauce. The new McNugs are well named—the consumer is getting shanghaied. Don't forget that with the McNugs, you get more modified food starch, bicarb of soda, sodium acid pyrophosphate, sodium aluminum phosphate and migraine's pal, MSG.

You know what rankles even more than all these shitty, dangerous chemicals being in this food? What rankles more is not McCorps' phony stance about their nutritious food, no, what really hurts is that none of their food tastes GOOD. It's bad-tasting food. How some people can eat and like McNuggets I will never know. I tried 'em once and they tasted to me like cotton balls seasoned with Accent and lots of salt, coated with parchment loaded with lots of salt and fried in linseed oil.

You can get more polysorbates, by the way, from the McDonald Choclaty Chip Cookie. These are made by KEEBLER, a giant in the synthetic cookie industry. Legend has it that only real gone junkies eat Keebler cookies...

The chocolate syrup for the milkshakes offers you more sodium benzoate or potassium sorbate, take your choice.

We cannot even discuss COCA COLA without risking a lawsuit. Suffice to say—just for the fun of it, it adds life and the cherry stuff is outrageous. But it's not the choice of a new generation.

I was shocked to discover that the dehydrated onions contained only dehydrated onions and I wondered who the hell was asleep at the switch. Why didn't they need to add some anti-oxidants or moisture retarders or something nice and toxic? It seemed so uncharacteristic, like Prince making a decent record. But then I noticed that the onions come from a subsidiary of McCormick Foods, a pretty conscientious company.

DIET COKE has NUTRASWEET and my advice is AVOID IT. If you are not a victim of phenylketonuria (PKU), NutraSweet (aspartame) will still cause you to produce METHANOL during digestion. As you metabolise the NutraSweet, METHANOL is released. We don't know too much about METHANOL. So far its rap sheet includes the following info: it is a toxic chemical and spent some time in juvenile hall when it was younger. Apparently it was beating up everybody in the neighborhood, but did show a preference for unborn babies. Way to go, Methanol, way to go.

This probably seems like a very long analysis, but truthfully, I have only scratched the surface and reported to you the most obvious and glaring trouble spots. Some of you may say, Well, shee-it, it won't hurt you to eat at McDonald's every now and then. And probably it won't, unless you are a sensitive individual. But the fact is, as Bram Stoker called 'em, the "TEEMING MILLIONS" eat at McDonald's much more frequently than every now and then, and in fact, many people eat there several (that's three or more) times a week. A vast percentage of these people are little; they are children. They are growing up (or trying to) ingesting all manner of toxic chemicals, mutagens and synthetic compounds originally created to tan leather or preserve wood. Who knows what is going on in their bodies and brains? The real sin, tho', is McDonald's mediocre straddling of the line between good and evil, their assumption that because people accept something that means it's acceptable! Their easygoing, friendly and smarmy attitude—they even have a quiz in their brochure asking me if I have Monosodium Glutamate or Aspartame on my kitchen shelf! Hell no, I DON'T. And never will. They want to be sure I've had my ferrous fumarate today—no, I've had my ferrous gluconate, because a fumarate source of iron is not as efficient as gluconate. Besides, most iron used in baking by INDUSTRY GIANTS is inorganic iron, which is simply no good at all.

I regret that I didn't have the space to discuss the sodium/fat/cholesterol contents of the McFood, but trust me when I say most of them are astronomical. I firmly believe that a child raised on McFood on a thrice-a-week basis will have arteriosclerosis and attendant coronary artery disease by the time he is 14.

At this time, space prohibits discussion of the actual cooking procedures—what happens to chemically-treated beef when it is left sitting in an active microwave oven for two and three hours. And we haven't space to get into what might be in and on the paper that the burgers and sandwiches are wrapped in. Lots of companies put preservatives in the wrappings and containers, not in the food. And those ingredients do not have to be disclosed.

Perhaps these things can be discussed another time.

lot. In the meantime, dear readers, you really do deserve a break today, so get up and get away from McDonald's!

I am informed now that other fast food "restaurants" will be revealing the ingredients in their food. I will be all over them like a cheap suit, you can take that as fact and drive it off the

4-Color Fiend

by Steve Chaput

Well, the promised review of *The Encyclopedia of Super-Heroes* is not included this time around. I couldn't find a copy on sale, and I've been taking enough books out of the library because of college as it is. I'll try to get around to it eventually. I did come across another book of note:

THE COMIC BOOK HEROES (Will Jacobs & Gerard Jones; \$11.95 US)—Jacobs and Jones are those wacky guys who brought us the incredible book *THE BEAVER PAPERS* (which all of you should have immediately bought) as well as being semi-regulars in a few comic fanzines (*Amazing Heroes*, for one). The thrust of this book is on the heroes of the Silver Age (commonly recognized by fans as about 1957, the updating at DC of several of the Golden Age characters), through the sixties and seventies (with the period of "relevance" in books like *Green Arrow/Green Lantern*), up to and including the emergence of direct-sale books and the increasing prominence of the independents.

The authors have done quite a bit of research, including interviews and obvious hours of reading hundreds of comics (but then, who doesn't?). Fortunately, even while doing a serious overview aimed at a general audience, there is a lot of humor in the book—some of which may be aimed at people more familiar with comics than the general reader, but most stemming from the premises of the comics reviewed.

As someone who started buying/collecting comics at about the same time that the Silver Age began, some of my favorite chapters deal with DC (then National) and the forming of *The Justice League of America* (currently being killed off to make way for a group that will sort of act as Superman's back-up) and the very early days of the Marvel Age of Comics (early *Fantastic Four*, *Spider-Man*, etc.). I'll probably pick up this book when it goes on remainder (I'm reviewing a library copy), and would recommend you at least take a look at it.

Being not only a sucker for gimmicks but a completist (as far as some comics characters are concerned), I've picked up a few of the 3-D comics that have begun to spring up over the last couple of years. I'm not going to review them all individually, or even list the ones I've gotten, but I do have a few comments to make.

WHY??? It wasn't a great gimmick when it cropped up back in the fifties, as evidenced by the fact that it died out within a short period of time (as did the concurrent output of 3-D films). The interest of some collectors willing to pay rather large sums for the old comics, and the nostalgia of some fans turned pro, brought about the issuing of a couple of passably interesting (and admittedly well-done) books. Since these books sold so well, almost every independent publisher has rushed into print (at least as fast as Ray Zone's schedule permits, Zone being *THE 3-D* artist/production designer in the market today) a comic featuring their hottest character or a book designed to work up fan interest in a new character/comics line.

For whatever reasons the market is currently absorbing this output, I don't think that it will last. Letters of comment and cartoons in the major fanzines all point to a backlash or fans tired of it. While the present flash-flood of mutant funny-animals may not have completely petered out (how soon, oh lord, how soon?!), I think we have seen the 3-D book once again nose-dive to the well-deserved obscurity of comic book curiosity.

The only book in the current *LEGEND/LEGEND* Spinoff series that is of any real interest (evdn the killing off of the current *JLA* is dull and poorly handled) is the current *COSMIC BOY* series. Finally, plot threads/continuity problems left over from *CRISIS* are being tied up. A must for old-timers and fans of the Legion.

"SMITH BARNEY — THEY MAKE MONEY THE OLD FASHIONED WAY — THEY EARN IT". —

When you envy John Houseman for his agility, forceful speech and youngish good looks — that's old age. To be young again we will have to change our evil ways. As in past and future herenows (let's hope)

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ANOTHER PAGE IN THE DICTIONARY OF ART:
IMPRESSIONISM VS. EXPRESSIONISM



THE MINIMAL by Susan Packie

The canvas was given a place of honor in the art gallery—in the center of the room, where no shadows would fall over it, no streams of light fade it, no messy hands smudge it. The critics were going wild.

"This canvas represents the height of minimalism! Note how carefully the paint is not applied, the sense of space, the faint illusion of color."

"It takes many years to attain such a degree of excellence—study, hard work, a little serendipity. The person who created this masterpiece must have had a gifted teacher."

When the judging was held, it was awarded first place. When the museum's director dropped by to select purchases, it was immediately snapped up for the tidy sum of one million dollars. It would be given its own room and be protected by its own private guard when the exhibit at the art gallery was over.

Other artists would come in and try, always unsuccessfully, to imitate it. But it was inimitable. Something about it always eluded the syncophants who wished to replicate it.

"Aye, this is as difficult as copying a Michelangelo or a da Vinci work."

"More difficult, more difficult, because there are no guidelines. With other painters, you can almost trace the pictures and then fill in the spaces with colors. Here—who knows?"

"I tried photographing it, but couldn't even do that. It's positively eerie."

"Who created this *chef d'oeuvre*?"

No one knew. It was so minimal, it hadn't even been signed. Everyone assumed the artist who had painted it was extremely modest. Even when it won first place, he or she had not stepped forward to accept the applause and the praise.

The day after the paintings were judged, a short pudgy man with goatee and mustache waddled into the art gallery, picked up the blank canvas, and waddled out. He still had no idea what he was going to paint on it.

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LITTLE SISTER

by Larry Blazek

Little sister doesn't look through my window there's nothing there she cares to see and she respects my privacy

Little sister doesn't like the winds that blow there's something there that shouldn't be but she doesn't mind me being free

Little sister doesn't lie she's a fall of snow in a mountain where it's poison-free we'd join her there if we wished to be

Wax Ink *by Rory Houchens*

DIRTY WORK—Rolling Stones (Rolling Stones Recs./CBS)—I thought ye olde Rolling Stones were beginning to wheeze a bit too much twelve years ago on IT'S ONLY ROCK 'N' ROLL, but like death, taxes and dandruff, they've become just another fact of life. DIRTY WORK, their heart-rending tribute to household drudgery, shows joints creaking and muscles sagging, but wait, put away those wheelchairs! The near absence of Bill Wyman's trusty bass, the resemblance of most of the guitar solos to bad meat, and Ron Wood's overpowering smarminess (hurry, call Mick Taylor) all help to make this lp one big, fat, lukewarm experience. "Winning Ugly" sounds like Boz Scaggs exorcising Huey Lewis (heavy on that polyester), and "Too Rude" is some gauzy reggae with a couple hundred guest vocalists that does an admirable job as filler. The sleazily autobiographical "Dirty Work" is a poor excuse for a melody, sounding more like a death rattle but containing the album's only substantial guitar solo. I won't bother to describe the ultra-mediocre "Fight." On the plus side, there's the smooth "Harlem Shuffle" (which, unfortunately, threatens to wear thin quicker than cardboard shoes), and the sung-by-Keith "Sleep Tonight" which sounds like Dylan from NEW MORNING. The scraping "Mad It With You" almost makes the mouth water for EXILE ON MAIN STREET just as the searing "One Hit (To The Body)" does for STICKY FINGERS. More like meatloaf than steak.

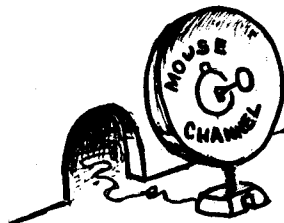
WELCOME TO THE REAL WORLD—Mr. Mister (RCA)—What makes MR. Mister so likeable (besides the dumb name, of course) is their ability to inject a little heart and soul into what could very easily be just another batch of pop pablum. "Broken Wings" is a sort of rough jab at pop existentialism and "Kyrie" is one of those anthems bursting with hope, goodwill toward all of mankind, and a grabby chorus. "Uniform of Youth" wears a hearty yet fashionable musical coat, while both "Black/White" and "Into My Own Hands" dig deep for some of the album's most impressive work. Pretty good for four really white guys on a really big record label.

PICTURES FOR PLEASURE—Charlie Sexton (MCA)—Charlie Boy is not only being touted as one of the hottest guitar players since the Vaughan brothers exploded out of Austin, TX, but one of the youngest to boot (seems he's just traded in his rubber pants for leather ones). And one thing's for sure—Charlie's got a good head above those fleet fingers, 'cause PICTURES concentrates on songs rather than hyperactive, overextended guitar rave-ups that are good for some flash, but little else. "Beat's So Lonely" is a terse, jagged commentary on fame and relationships with a completely unexpected crazy quilt guitar solo. "Restless" is at once understated and mesmerizing with programmed drums and spare keyboards that go right over the top, and "Space," a zigzag declaration of personal independence, sounds like prime Bowie with some hustling, buttered popcorn guitar.

OUT MY WAY—Meat Puppets (STT, P.O. Box 1, Lawndale, CA 90260)—Arizona's Meat Puppets must surely be one of the most talented and diverse groups around. On any meaty record, you're likely to hear psychedelia, hardcore, country & western, arty jazztones or anything else you can think of, all executed with sincerity and conviction. OUT MY WAY, a six-song, twelve-incher, serves up spark-flinging ZZ Top-isms ("She's Hot"), Byrdsian euphoria ("Out My Way"), acid-country injections ("Mountain Line"), and a planet-hopping version of "Good Golly Miss Molly." Highly recommended.

WHITE CITY—Pete Townshend (Atco)—Pete's had his hands in as much musical garbage as anyone else who's been cranking out rock for twenty-plus years, but he always manages to redeem himself as he does here with WHITE CITY, a record (that's subtitled "a novel"?), a "longform" video, and soon to be a party game from Parker Bros. The lp starts off robustly with "Give Blood" which urges people to part with their plasma (?), jumps to the fresher-than-eggs "Brilliant Blues," then tumbles into the sticky jumble of "Face The Face." Other standout tracks include the angry, muscular "Secondhand Love," the thickly-bristled "Come To Mama," and the QUADROPHENIA-inspired "I Am Secure." Pete gets a big thumbs-up for this baby!

HONEY!...
GET THE CAT!...
THIS CRAP HAS GOT
TO END!!!



© VERNON GRANT—1986

THE HEAD ON THE DOOR—The Cure (Elektra)—The Cure has usually exhibited such disdain for current musical trends and even "normal" song structures that I have thought they are what John Cage would sound like had he been born forty years later and inclined to rock. Their best work to date, PORNOGRAPHY, was full of bleak confusion, dark imagery, and enough unorthodox sounds to drain the blood right out of your veins. It was quite unsettling when I began playing this record and heard what sounded like the precious pop of the Thompson Twins! "In Between Days" does in fact not only sound light, but almost happy. "Kyoto Song" introduces the odd instrumentation, but the smiles persist, and not until "Six Different Ways," with its stair-step piano, string-like synthesizers and scattered drumming, is the old Cure sound even hinted at. "Push," "The Baby Screams" and the alienated "Sinking" are all top-notch tunes capable of dragging the listener around a twisted, murky dungeon. Not the group's best, but they're still in there pitchin'!

FALCO 3—Falco (A&M)—Falco's latest big spinner of Europop may not be exactly aesthetically fulfilling, but it is appealing nevertheless. "Rock Me Amadeus" and "Vienna Calling" rely on snazzy editing and snappy inserts to spruce up rather feeble song lines, but wind up as near-addictive tunes. "Tango The Night" dances out the schmaltz and "Nothin' Sweeter Than Arabia" wallows in slick disco-lease, while Bobby Dylan's immortal "It's All Over Now Baby Blue" is done up in grand cocktail lounge style. Spiffy confections for all!

BACKWORDS LOGIC *—by Ace Backwords—8/15*



MOST SOLDIERS

Returning in one piece say they were lucky. Did they win something? For a war-ending concept that produces winners, send a SASE to WINNERS LOSERS or simply WINNERS Box 2243 Youngstown, Ohio, 44504

INVENTIONS OF THE IMPOSTOR, RUDOLPH HESS

September 23, 1986

by A.J. Wright

Every night between ten and eleven o'clock I am allowed to write in my diary. In the early years of my imprisonment, I never dared to dream of such luxury. The days were skeins of loneliness broken only by the guard who slid the breakfast tray through the opening in the door and retrieved it fifteen minutes later; the same process was repeated at the noon and evening meals. I saw no real faces, not even my own; I had to rely solely on remembrance and imagination for such images. One memory in particular haunted me for a long time, perhaps weeks—I cannot remember. When I was a young boy, maybe eight years old, my parents and I relocated to another part of the city. On the morning we moved I was in the front yard helping my father load boxes when the school bus passed. One of the girls I knew was sitting by the window and waved to me. I never saw her again, although I have spent much time imagining what she might have looked like as a woman. She is almost certainly dead by now; I have probably outlived everyone on that bus.

Now I have the diary in which to give some sort of life to these phantasms. Most of my writing is devoted to what might have been, since what was, what is—indeed, what will be—are so well known to me already. What would have happened if we had not moved that morning? Would that young girl have become the wife, the mother I can only imagine now? What would have happened if I had not fallen under the spell of Our Great Leader at such an early age? Would I have developed the skepticism that was arrested until years after my capture? What would have happened if I had never learned to fly?

Yes, these questions are endless, and I manage to answer only a few of them during each session. The others have to wait, perhaps never to be answered even in the diary. This burden is difficult, but is lifted every night when the guard arrives to take the evening's inventions to the incinerator. I am so glad to be cleansed again, over and over.

THE CONTINUING SAGA OF DR. IGUANA THE SEARCH CONTINUES.

by the Rev. Kenneth K. Burke

Most chronic television watchers know about the mid-1960's series *The Fugitive*, starring David Janssen in the title role. For those of you who haven't had the opportunity to view this fine dramatic offering, I'll recap the premise briefly.

Dr. Richard Kimball (Janssen) arrives home late one night to find his house burglarized and his wife murdered. Suddenly, a one-armed man runs from the house. Dr. Kimball tries to stop him, but is overpowered.

Kimball is then put on trial for his wife's murder, and unable to convince the jury that her death was perpetrated by the one-armed man, he is unjustly convicted. Later, a terrible train wreck allows Kimball to escape on his way to the penitentiary.

Determined to find his wife's real killer and the only person who can prove his innocence, Kimball dyes his hair and wanders from town to town in search of the one-armed man. Assuming different identities and taking odd jobs, he narrowly eludes capture by the obsessive Lt. Gerard, who swears he will not rest until Kimball is put behind bars.

Generally, the world of network T.V. has a blatant disregard for the fates of their shows, and oftentimes characters of suddenly-cancelled programs are left in a never-ending limbo. In this aspect, *The Fugitive* was a unique and important precedent in network T.V. for the simple fact that it had an ending! Yes, Kimball finally did tie all the loose ends together, catch up with the one-armed man, and exonerate himself in the eyes of the law.

Okay, you know all that already. What you probably didn't know was that there were several other endings proposed for the show by its producers, writers, and even the network before they settled on the one we all saw. Included here are just a handful of the proposed alternate endings for the classic ABC-TV series, shown during the mid-1960's in both black and white and color, *The Fu-*

gitive, a Quinn-Martin production.

...Lt. Gerard catches Kimball and tells him that he believed his story about the one-armed man all along but that letting his murder conviction stand was considerably less expensive to the state than trying him on charges of medical malpractice as had been originally intended.

...The one-armed man killed Dr. Kimball's wife not in a burglary as it was originally thought, but as revenge against the doctor for a vaccine that Kimball injected into him as a child that cleared up his acne but caused the inoculated arm to drop off.

...Kimball actually did it! He tried to cover up his crime by acting exceptionally brutal and sadistic because "no one would ever expect a doctor to act with such savagery," but those who saw him play bridge knew that he was capable of unspeakably ruthless acts.

...Richard Kimball was the one who actually died. His wife killed him and then disguised herself as her husband. The one-armed man saw her dressing in her husband's clothes and yelled out, "Hey, Butch!", a remark she has been trying to make him pay for with his life ever since. Her slender wrists easily slipped out of those handcuffs shown in the opening train wreck scenes of the show each week.

...Kimball and the one-armed man were Siamese twins joined at the shoulder; Richard got custody of the arm. Unbeknownst to the doctor, his wife had once been dating the two of them at the same time, literally behind his back. Later, when the twins were separated, Kimball's brother would visit secretly only to be taunted by his former lover: "Sure, I loved you more, but I had to have a man with both of his arms," a remark for which the one-armed man later killed her.

...Kimball could have proven his innocence any time he wanted to, but he was compiling notes and experiences for a research paper he was doing for the A.M.A. entitled "Why rural Americans will let a nervous felon intimately examine them when they are ill but won't open up to their own family doctor."

...Lt. Gerard could have caught Kimball any time he wanted to, but he had developed an intense sexual attraction to the doctor and wanted to prolong the heady feeling of courtship for as long as possible. In the last episode, Gerard confesses his feelings to Kimball, and the doctor reciprocates.

...Not only was Kimball really guilty, but he killed everyone who ever befriended him on the road. You never saw those people in any other episode, did you?

...Kimball is convinced by a psychiatrist to accept his guilt and give himself up just as Lt. Gerard completely clears the "fugitive" of his crimes. Now in a different mind-set, Kimball goes back out on the road trying to gather evidence to prove that he actually did kill her.

...Lt. Gerard and Richard Kimball's wife were the out-of-wedlock parents of the one-armed man. Fearing the exposure of his illegitimacy amongst the hip upper-class crowd with which he ran, the one-armed man killed his mother after a swank fraternity party where she was drunk and began to let the secret slip. Gerard chased the doctor not because he wanted to capture him, but because he wanted to use him as a way to get in touch with his son so he could give him a good talking to, believing all along that there's really no such thing as a bad boy.

...Kimball wakes up one morning in his own house, the smell of bacon frying in the air, kids playing and making happy noises, and his wife, alive and humming cheerfully, in the kitchen. It has all been a dream and Dr. Richard Kimball is in reality Jim Anderson of *Father Knows Best*, ready for another day at the office.

...Kimball catches up with the one-armed man, discovering who his adversary really is. Kimball then decides to turn himself in to Lt. Gerard, even though he did not commit the crime. He just doesn't have the heart to turn in his old pal, Dondi.

...Kimball is completely exonerated in the eyes of the law and the media when it is discovered that the doctor treated hundreds of patients on the road for free and not once did he ask for their Blue Cross number.

...Lt. Gerard died years ago. The man chasing Richard Kimball is an agent from Time-Life Books who wants the doctor to pen a guide for cross-country joggers. When Kimball is cleared, Time-Life asks for their cash advance back.

...In the last episode in which no one is caught and nothing is resolved, Quinn-Martin's house narrator, William Conrad, steps before the cameras and announces, "Richard Kimball, a man falsely accused and unjustly tried, will have to run and keep on running, for I am the real murderer!" His belly jiggles up and down as he laughs hysterically. Kimball runs desperately in the background, a "fugitive" to the end.

...Kimball chases the one-armed man all the way back to his house. As he bursts through the doors ready to beat a confrontation out of his tormenter, the lights go on and everybody yells, "Surprise!" All his friends and family are standing around, including his wife, Lt. Gerard, and the one-armed man, smiling, drinking, and singing "For he's a jolly good fellow." Mrs. Kimball explains that it had all been a joke, a ruse to get him to take some time off and get some exercise. "You really were working entirely too hard, Richard." Stunned, Kimball takes a drink and smiles wanly as his friends continue to sing, but the music and the look on the doctor's face suggest something has snapped inside the mind of Richard Kimball, and though he was not capable of killing his wife before, he certainly is now, and it's only a matter of time now until he does!

CREATIVE WRITING by Larry Oberc

I'm an authority on bad poetry. I've filled hundreds of envelopes with the stuff and sent them off to literary magazines all over the country. Some of those poems were actually published. So I speak with authority when I say that you too can write bad poetry. And right here, today, I am going to show you how.

First of all you need a catchy title. Nothing fancy, just a few deceptive words that can mean anything. Let's use the word "Hitchhiker," for instance. The word fills the mind with images, the imagination is turned loose, the thoughts scream as they fill the void that existed before the eyes registered the word "Hitchhiker!!!" Yes, a very fine title indeed!

Next you need another character besides the hitchhiker. How about a large furry dog with bright white teeth? You know, the kind of dog you wouldn't argue with. So the first line of the first stanza could start with the words "Your dog..." which implies ownership of the mutt by the hitchhiker.

Now you need some action. So far you have two characters, a hitchhiker and his god, but they aren't doing anything. You also need some kind of a conflict to arouse the reader's interest. So let's let the first line read "Your dog shit" which creates a major conflict seeking resolution.

A setting is essential to any respectable poem, so the rest of the stanza should deal with this in a constructive, precise manner. A great starting place would be to define just where the action took place. The second line could read "on the back seat" with a third line following which says "of my car."

Something very interesting is going on in this poem. We have two cases of ownership established. The hitchhiker owns the dog, and you, whoever you are, own the car. The characters, conflict, and setting are firmly developed and the reader is ready to see what is going to happen next. Alas, it looks like we need a new stanza.

Dialogue always gives the characters a more human appearance, so the second stanza could begin with the word "Sorry" said by the hitchhiker. This allows the reader to empathize with the hitchhiker. In fact, I myself am beginning to feel downright sorry for the poor guy. I mean, like, here he was, just hitchhiking along with his dog, not out to bother anyone or hurt anything, and his dog done gone and shit all over the back seat of some fool's car.

Suddenly I realize that I don't like the driver of the car. Why did he have to start giving that hitchhiker shit? Did he really have to point out the fact that the dog had shit in the car? Wasn't it obvious enough without actually having to say anything about it? At this point the poem has only one obvious conclusion. The hitchhiker must be left alone and the driver of the car should be treated like the bastard he is. The poem should look like this:

HITCHHIKER

by Lawrence Walter George Oberc II

Your dog shit
on the back seat
of my car.

Sorry, you said,
not bothering
to clean it up.

THE POT BROOM WHISTLE

by Sigmund Weiss

In a desolate out-of-the-way place, I met this ugly, untidy old runt of a man. His sudden appearance startled me and I looked fearfully at him, thinking perhaps he had a knife or a gun. I prepared myself for an escape.

"Can you bring me a pot, a broom and a whistle?" he asked.

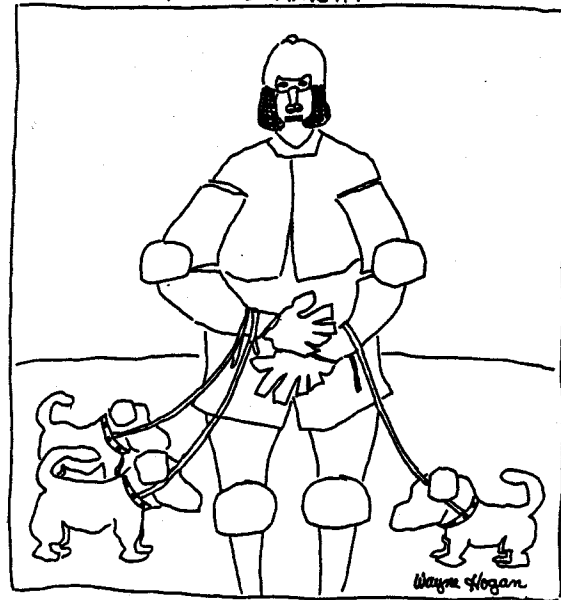
"What for?" I inquired, stifling a laugh.

"None of your business. It will be best for you to go home and get those things right away."

Walking away, I said, "You are a silly old man."

"Not so fast! If you do not bring me those things it will go badly for you."

ANOTHER THREE-DOG KNIGHT



an individual can do. When the end comes
WILL YOU BE READY?
WILL YOU EVER GET SLACK?

Don't you feel responsible for trying to help this endangered planet? NO?
Good.
The fact is, it's too late. There isn't a god-damned thing you as

By then I was a good twenty yards away and yelled: "Bullshit!" In that moment of my remark, I felt a hard kick on my behind and fell to the sidewalk, screaming. Rising, I saw the old man walk in the opposite direction, stick his tongue out at me and grimace, holding his nose. With a sense of fear, I ran, yelling, "Go to hell!" and, as I did so, I felt myself lifted up, twisted around and around. I became dizzy, unable to figure out where I was. When I landed, I found myself in a sewer.

Climbing out through a manhole, I ran all the way home, the filth clinging to my clothes and body. After showering, washing my clothes and hanging them up to dry, I felt sick and went to bed.

For awhile I slept soundly; then I heard a voice. "Ain't you forgetting something?" The more I tried to sleep, the rougher and stronger the voice became.

"What am I supposed to remember?"

"A pot, a broom and a whistle."

I dressed, took a pot from the stove, a broom from the closet, and not owning a whistle I bought one from a toy shop. Now that I had the three things asked for, I could not for the life of me remember where I had seen the little man. I stood still hoping to hear his directions, but heard only the usual street sounds. I then returned home and waited. In disgust, I took the pot, the broom and put the whistle into my pocket and went for a long walk, hoping against hope to find where I had seen the old man.

Reaching 42nd Street and Broadway, I met a friend of mine, who asked me what I was doing walking with a dirty pot, a worn broom and a whistle sticking out of my pocket. Not knowing just what to say, I replied, "The pot is for an old lady who can't get out of bed; the broom is for cleaning her room; and the whistle is for her to call me when her pot is to be emptied."

"You're a male nurse?" We separated, he walking south and I northwest. When I reached 69th Street and Eighth Avenue, I saw a crowd of people huddled together. Curious, I edged my way through the crowd, where I saw an old woman sitting on the sidewalk. Her face was being rubbed with wet towels, and smelling salts were being applied to her nostrils. Something about her seemed familiar. She looked at me. "Help me up."

With the help of others, I raised her. She gradually regained her strength, and asked of me, "Please, sir, walk me home."

She lived in a two-room flat, the toilet in the hallway and a sink in one of the rooms. I helped her undress and put her to bed.

"Do you need anything?" I asked. "I have to go home."

"Do me a favor and sweep my rooms. They are dirty and I lack the strength to clean them myself."

"Sure. Where do you keep your broom?"

"I do not have a broom."

I swept her rooms with my broom and dusted the furniture. "Well, I'll be going. You can keep my broom," I started to leave.

"Oh, my stomach!" she screamed.

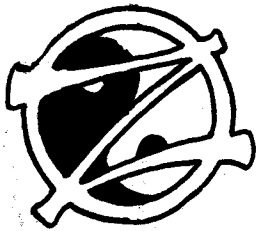
"Can I help you to the toilet?"

"I can't move. I feel weak, I'm sick."

I lifted her up, stuck my pot under her and went into the other room. She turned her head: "You ain't leaving me alone with filth in my pot, are you?"

I remembered the whistle in my pocket, gave it to her, and sat in the other room which fronted an inner court, looking out of the window. I cannot remember how long I sat, as I dozed off. When I awoke, I was startled by the sight of an old, small man in the courtyard, whistling and singing, "Any old pots and brooms? Any old pots and brooms?"

I looked into the bedroom. It was dark, dusty, empty of furniture.



Zenarchy STORIES

by Ho Chi Zen

ZEN, U.S.A.

If Zenarchy interests you in terms of instigating something akin to an American Zen tradition, then you will certainly want to read *The Zen Environment* by Marion Mountain (William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1982). Personally, I suspect if I met this woman on the road—hitch-hiking, say, through Big Sur—I'd either decide she'd recently escaped from a sanitarium or would become so angered over some damned fool thing she said or did that I'd wander off sputtering with rage. Her biographical book-length Zen story, though, was one I could not put down long. Not only is Marion Mountain an exceptionally gifted writer, she manages somehow to convey nearly inexpressible *dharma*s—such as the unity of *samsara* and *nirvana*—in easily understandable terms. She is a great teacher who happens also to seem to me like a borderline psychotic. Zen lunatics are nothing new, of course, to the Orient. They are always by all accounts, though, comfortably unlike anyone you or I ever met. Marion's nuttiness, like her Zen, is so goddamned American.

ENLIGHTENED MIND, ENLIGHTENED BODY

Says Holmes Welch in *TAOISM: The Parting of the Way* (Beacon Press, 1957): "In 1106 A.D. when the second reported autopsy in Chinese history failed to reveal internal organs that corresponded to the Yellow Emperor's description, it was pointed out that he had been describing the organs of a Realized Man (*chen jen*), where-as they had dissected a bandit chief."

THE TAO-JONES INDEX

For collectors of American Zen stories, this one is found in James K. Feibleman's *Understanding Oriental Philosophy* (Horizon Press, 1976): "In a lighter vein I report that my late Uncle Max was a Zen Buddhist of the Rinza school (without knowing it, of course). As evidence I offer a sample conversation: 'I think the stock of U.S. Steel is going up,' he said. Later in the same conversation he suggested that the same stock was going down. When I faced him with the contradiction, he assumed a condescending air, and explained patiently, 'That is what I was trying to tell you.'"

SO SLACK OFF ALREADY

Says Lu Yen in *The Secret of the Golden Flower*: "In what does this spiritual Elixir consist? It means forever dwelling in purposelessness. The deepest secret of the bath that is to be found in our teaching is thus confined to the work of making the heart empty. There-with the matter is settled. What I have revealed here in a word is the fruit of a decade of effort."

ZEN AND THE ART OF DIPLOMACY

"If you see the weakness of others and consider this bad and if you wish to guide such people with compassion, you must do so without speaking directly of their error so that you will not arouse their anger...It is not good to overwhelm another with argument even when he is wrong and you are right. Nor is it right to give up too easily when you have every reason to believe you yourself are right. Best is to end the argument naturally, without pressing the other or falsely claiming you are wrong. Don't let his arguments anger you and yours will not anger him. This is something to watch carefully."

- Dogen, Founder of Soto Zen

"THE FLIES — NEVER LET THEM SEE YOU SWAT". —
T.V. COMMERCIAL.

Such advertising keeps many people employed full time but that 3c fly swatter sells for 59c. To bring down prices while saving the advertising industry all of us between 20 and 60 should be on the production line our share of the time. Send SASE to year 'round paying EVEN AGE WORKERS — Box 2243 YOUNGSTOWN — OHIO, 44504

PICKLEMAN

by Tom James

Look!
Up in the sky!
It's a boid!
It's a plane!
It's Cousin Floyd!
No, it's PICKLEMAN.

...PICKLEMAN, strange being
from another time zone, who,
disguised as an IBM employee,
fights a never-ending battle
for truth justice and the
american way.

Hooray.

TALK SHOW HOST

CONFIDENTIAL by Michael Dobbs

Good evening; this is the first in a series of informative columns that will add new meaning to the confused world in which we live.

This initial offering is directed to parents—Mothers and fathers, do you have a problem with your child watching professional wrestling? Many parents do, you know, and their worrying is unnecessary. Professional wrestling can provide your child with many important lessons presented in clear and easy-to-understand terms.

I realize that your problems as a parent are numerous—after all, marketing alone is a serious challenge. Will your child hate you if you serve him strained lamb? My mummy did and to this day I can't stand to wear wool.

Making the right decision is selecting a disposable diaper is another concern. Should you get Mickey Mouse or Cabbage Patch designer diapers, or use old dishrags?

Questions, questions, questions...how about some answers? Certainly, my pleasure.

Television is an invaluable tool in child-rearing. Its hypnotic qualities can give a parent an important break from the constant demands of the little ragamuffins.

In recent times, professional wrestling has become a very influential force on television, and naturally children have been attracted to it, and naturally there have been many people, in the misguided effort of protecting our children, who have criticized professional wrestling.

Professional wrestling is your friend, as it can provide you with the time you need and can provide your child with solid instructional programming. Let me tell you some details...

In professional wrestling there are good guys and bad guys. You can't confuse them. Everyone is given a set of rules to follow, but the bad guys consistently break the rules and the authorities are impotent to prevent them. Isn't that the real world?

How many times have you been thoroughly reamed by an unscrupulous competitor or colleague? You were told that living by the rules is a trait shared by all in society. Spare your child the grisly revelation. Sit him or her in front of the tube and let him/her be taught by Dusty Rhodes, Hulk Hogan and other wise instructors.

What about interpersonal relationships? Friendship is so important, and professional wrestling can help your child develop good, meaningful relationships.

An afternoon of tag team matches can show the importance of having a best friend, someone on whom you can depend when the bad guys are double-teaming you. We all need someone in our corner.

Of course, you have to pick your friends carefully. Witness what happened when Paul Orndorff turned on Hulk Hogan; it was heartbreaking but it teaches a lesson. Your child will learn when he/she witnesses the breakup of a team—a chair over the head and a broken heart follows.

We all want to teach our children all about working and competition. Professional wrestling can lead the way. In the wrestling world, as in the real world, those who work the hardest and compete the best obtain the most material wealth. There are those who cheat their way to the top, and although they may gather riches, they are always hated by their peers and audience. There is nothing lonelier than the rich person who has no love, and professional wrestling illustrates this point very well.

What more could a parent want? Professional wrestling is the 20th century morality play that we need so much to guide us to a new era of ethical and responsible behavior. Thank you.

Commercial McClue-In

by "Kid" Sieve

Before we commence, I'd like to extend oodles of thanks (figuratively speaking, of course) to the lovely and talented Deborah Benedict for her in-depth insights into what McDonald's has been feeding us a Kroc of with their "nutrition information" booklets. Truly, I couldn't have done it myself. Mucho applause.

And now the news: Run right out and procure a copy of the September '86 Mother Jones just for the Tom Englehardt article on the selling of children's minds through half-hour toy tie-in show/commercials. They'll stop at nothing. Look for Tom's upcoming book *Watching Television* from Pantheon, which Elaine mentions as well in her television reviews this issue...

General Mills has supposedly inserted \$1 bills in a million Cheerios boxes. Presumably for the nutritional value, as there ain't much else you can get from a buck these days.

Coleco, well-known for its lack of a sense of humor, has won its suit against the Brooklyn-based Topps company, ordering them to stop production of Garbage Pail Kids cards. This is news to half the readers of IJ, who I know for a fact collect these gems, and since I recently saw the "all-new 5th edition" I doubt Topps is quaking in their baseball cleats. Stay tuned for the 6th?

Meanwhile, a man known primarily for humor, former SCTV director Don Novello, has been donning Father Guido Sarducci's vestments in the September 22 college edition of *Newsweek* in an ad for the priesthood ("Eat free in an Italian restaurant. Become a priest."), which the Oblates Mary Immaculate insists is for real. Those kooky clergy...

The same folks who sponsor the latest Utne Reader survey, SRI International, are now presuming to tell us Who We Are again with their bullshit Values And Lifestyle-Typing (VALS, an appropriate flaky acronym if ever there was one), which breaks down our entire population according to consumption habits and motivations. N.W. Ayer has taken this one step further, segmenting baby boomers into four distinct parts—The Satisfied Selves, The Contented Traditionalists, the Worried Traditionalists, and—don'tcha love it to death—the "60's in the 80's." Before you get really anxious that someone's finally found a way to type us uncategorizable post-hippie masses, don't fret, it's still the same old nonsense seen from the same old Yuppie-controlled p.o.v.'s (and I have enough ad-biz acquaintances at this point to verify that). I doubt any of you, for instance, would agree with Ayer's assessment of "60's in 80's" types as "often wish[ing] they could start their lives over again and always want[ing] things they can't afford"—makes us sound like just so many Conspic-Consumers, don't it? This is all probably the result of never having anyone from our neck of the woods of reality taking surveys (perhaps because we all know the inherent silliness of it all already)...

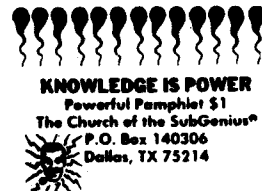
And finally, good news for fans of that all-time classic baad song, "Louie Louie." California Cooler has put the original band that recorded the song, the Kingmen, on the road for a series of free concerts across the country, now that they've recorded the immortal song for the company's "The Real Stuff" campaign (unseen as yet by yours truly). Where else do you hear news like this?

Thank you again for all the positive response this column has generated, and I'm still, as always, looking for suggestions from the readership of juicy targets to skewer and roast. Having no specific input from the peanut gallery this time, I'm flying solo again, so here are my picks:

AA, THE PRETENTIOUSNESS OF IT!—There has of late been a plethora of ads designed with the apparent intention of making us poor slobs who view them feel totally inadequate and whiny, as if there were some joke being played whose punch line is beyond our ability to understand—or some foreign movie every critic tells us we should like but we can't for the life of us get past the subtitles, or if we do the translations are still incomprehensible. Put this attitude together with MTV-style rapid-cutting imagery and you produce the most subtly annoying commercials I remember seeing since I was a kid and didn't get much anyway. There are four different types making the rounds now, each disturbing in its own unique way. The first, for Guess jeans, succeeds in recreating, at times exactly, the mood and scenes in Peter Bogdanovich's *Last Picture Show*, to the extent that it's a wonder Mr. B hasn't sued, as he'd surely win any copyright infringement question. Unless, as I surmise, he had a hand in directing this. The montage itself is meaningless, and nowhere is the product mentioned, not that Guess is important. The theory behind this soft sell is supposed to be that the viewer will be less annoyed if you don't shove your name in his face all the time, and the LPS images will keep his attention and amusement long enough for you to sneak your name in anyway. Of course, if you don't know what the Guess brand name is supposed to sell (and they never imply this either), I can see where this strategy might backfire. But never mind that, I find the commercials stupid enough.

Even more asinine, as I believe I've mentioned before, is the series of Calvin Klein Obsession perfume ads, which play like a real bad Ingmar Bergman parody or something. The characters are posed as if in an Andy Warhol nightmare, and say things to each other that make no sense, have no coherence, and yet are supposed (so the advertisers believe) to be evocative of emotions, perhaps to be emotions themselves, like jealousy and love and, um, blatant lesbianism (though not male homosexuality, I notice...maybe that's

DO YOU FIT IN?
Are you happy with your
role in society?
Do you believe in the
Middle Class?
Then this is NOT for you!



KNOWLEDGE IS POWER
Powerful Pamphlet \$1
The Church of the SubGenius®
P.O. Box 140306
Dallas, TX 75214

considered a sexual turnoff as much as lesbianism is considered a sexual turnon, especially ambiguous, almost androgynous lesbianism). I can't even describe the actions of these actors, as every action is really a pose and none of it has a purpose. At the end of the ad a bland actor face tells us something about Obsession, The Emotion, and we're supposed to believe this applies to Obsession, The Perfume as well, I guess. Totally odious.

A woman who no doubt emerged from this school of living mamequins in, one assumes, the same way Edie Sedgwick made a solo name for herself is the Soho-drenched "star" of the Anne Klein II apparel commercials. One early vignette had this dark-haired Yuppette acting as a photographer who catches the attention of the "star" she's snapping; another took place in a restaurant where she was the object of envious conversation among two women at a nearby table. The set-up line to her used to be (at least in the restaurant), "May I ask you where you got those clothes?" or something but has now been ridiculously shortened (in an effort, no doubt, to encourage the viewing audience to fill in the blanks and thereby pay attention) to "Excuse me, may I ask you a question?" Now, is this bimette clairvoyant or something that she just knows all these people are going to ask her the same question? Mine would be something like "Why are you such a bitch?", to which the response might very well be the same tag line she gives to all the other inquiring minds: "Anne Klein II." Okay, all this is bad enough on its own, but now the writers have made the Sohoette into a supposed jazz star! Yes, here's this studio, a pacing producer (female at that—rare in the recording industry, but a male producer wouldn't ask the Sohoette about her clothes now, would he?) wondering where she is—"oh yes, I know, she's a star" so we must take it for granted that this is now the Reality—and her fellow musicians kidding her when she shows up about eight bars into the song with jibes like "Where were you last night?" and "Must've been some party" and other such heptalk; then the producer stops the music and gives the set-up line, and the Sohoette purrs into the microphone, "Anne Klein II" in a sing-songy voice, hit the rim shot and final chord, and there's your Jazz Riff Song, as complete as you could ask for in this fantasy world of sleazy bitches with bad taste in clothing. Anne Klein clothes are expensive, too trendy to be comfortable, and utterly worthless. I've seen too many Soho sluts playing Cooler Than Thou to do anything but retch at the sight of these ads.

Moving up in order of accessibility to the fourth level of pretention, we have the Lincoln Town Car ads, which now come in two colors—stupid rich people who can't tell their expensive black cars apart, and stupid rich people who can't tell their white cars apart. In the black car ad, the Lincoln car is grey, I believe; I think it's black in the white car commercial. The writers seem to be implying that the only way to remember what your car looks like is to get one of a different color, or something. As fond as I may be of mocking rich folk, even I have problems believing this situation—I mean, none of them know their own license plates or key fobs? Or have any personal belongings within the car? Or haven't the ability to look for the car's brand name on the side?

WOULD I LIE TO YOU?—Then there's Joe Isuzu, for that other car company. Now, I'm just kidding, he's not really Joe. He's lying. Yes, a Jon Lovitz (whoever he is—I'm not ashamed to say I saw not more than ten minutes of SNL the entire last season, and not one second of the Pathological Liar everyone thinks is soooo cool. I did hear a Lovitz PL ad on the radio once, and couldn't stand the whiny, smarmy voice and the Bugs Bunnyesque "dat's de ticket" tag line) clone is now lying to you on purpose, so that you can laugh at the obvious lie and fall for all the subtle lies in between that go unnoticed as a result. A couple weeks ago the Village Voice did a marvelous piece on just this, and alas, I have that clip no longer, or I'd repeat it verbatim. Suffice to say that the commercials are not only brilliant because they're funny but because they take the whole point of commercials—to lie to you artfully in order to sell you something you don't need—and use it as their selling gimmick, much as Moonlighting makes fun of itself as a television show in order to get you to watch it (or Letterman as well, for that matter). Uncomfortable at all its levels.

It's getting so people are willing to place their trust in animated characters now, for nostalgia's & goodness sakes. Do you feel more secure purchasing insurance from Peanuts characters? Can you believe in a courier company staffed by Road Runners over one staffed by Coyotes (though both get quick energy from Hershey's Chocolate)? Do these made-up characters assure you more than the commercial which features a woman with a phone permanently stuck on her ear, or the one which employs a man to deliver a package to a spooky castle somewhere near Transylvania (I'm dying, pun intended, to know what's in that package!)? Just asking, beep beep...

And speaking of the "special fabric(ation)" made especially for television, next issue will take a look at a new entry into the New York area, which many of you already have in your necks of the woods—the Home Shopping Network. Stranger than Dr. Gene Soott! 17

SNIDE CRITIC REVIEWS

by J.P. Morgan

A miracle! A miracle! Here's a major summer release that the Snide Critic actually likes! And all the normal critics like it too! It's not a Spielberg/Lucas ripoff, and it's not an extended MTV video; it's not even about a flag-waving muscle-head and his gun! It's THE FLY

Hallelujah! Shake yo' feelers, clap yo' wings—this here's a dandy updating of the 1958 weird-science shocker. Jeff Goldblum (who played Sidney Zwiibel a.k.a. "New Jersey" in BUCKAROO BONZAI) is nerdy scientist Seth Brundle, inventor of the matter transporters (which resemble giant motorcycle engine jackets). Veronica (Geena Davis), a science magazine reporter, falls in love with him and is horrified as he's affected by the famous little mistake in transmission. The change is completely different from the original; instead of an instant fly-head, poor Seth's genes are intermixed with a fly's DNA...and he slowly mutates...

Before the heavy changes, though, Seth feels great—lots of energy, a huge appetite for sex (and increasing amounts of sugar); he wins a hooker after a nasty arm-wrestling match (Snap! AIEEEE...) and punches up a wooden beam...but his joy is short-lived. A few spiny hairs in his back, acne-like discoloration, progressing to leprous swelling of his entire body. His fingernails fall off—and later, so do his ears.

David Cronenberg has done it again, folks; if you liked the exploding head in SCANNERS, or the flesh gun in VIDEODROME, THE FLY is for you! Wanna see an inside-out baboon? Or maybe a hand dissolved by fly puke? Or the birth of a two-foot maggot? (Cronenberg plays the doctor in that scene.) How 'bout a pull-out-the-stops, super "Holy Shit!" duper climactic transformation into full-tilt Brundelfly? It's all here! But it ain't just a parade of barf-bag effects...made with touches of pathos and humor, this is possibly Cronenberg's most touching film, odd as that sounds. Newark Star-Ledger critic Richard Freedman (who likes and understands sci-fi and horror) said it's also "a credible love story... about our being prisoners of our bodies, whether as adolescents frightened by the changes wrought by puberty, or oldsters fighting the equally inexorable processes of decay and dissolution." Yep, he got good taste. And note that this is a Brooksfilm release! When you first saw BLAZING SADDLES or YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN, would you have ever thought that Mel Brooks would have a hand in THE ELEPHANT MAN or THE FLY? Brooks once said that inside every funny man, there's a serious man wondering if it's safe to go outside...

(But why the hell'd everyone bring their kids? When I went to the afternoon matinee, it was crowded with children 4 thru 12 years old! Wonder what the accompanying parents were thinking of...THE FLY is rated R, and it's really annoying to endure repeated questions [in cute piping voices] like "What's that?" or "Why did he do that?", and the continual opening and closing of the rear doors all through the damn film! Besides, I'm not sure what the little darlings made of all the blood & guts and fucking and whatnot...oh well, guess it's better for 'em than MY LITTLE PONY or TRANSFORMERS, THE MOVIE...)



Let's Make Fun of Films We Haven't Even Seen Dept.:

No, it's not very ethical, or even nice, to jeer at films one hasn't even seen...kickin' em while they're down and all that...but there has been such an abundance of BIG-ASS MEGABUDGET DUDS that it's practically irresistible! Certainly even the more easygoing among us has chuckled to see obvious bombs like LEGEND, HIGHLANDER, SHORT CIRCUIT ("L5 is Alive!") and HOWARD THE DUCK fall with a muffled thud, har har! LEGEND: a treacly sub-Tolkienesque tale of Badness versus Niceness, with Tom Cruise, Tim Curry, elves, unicorns, fairies, demons, and lots of dandelion fluff; in fact, early previews suggested the whole film was fluff...so they cut out the great Jerry Goldsmith score, installed a new one by Tangerine Dream, added a song apiece by Jon Anderson and Brian Ferry, chopped down the running time severely, and sure enough, it hit the theatres like a raw egg on the floor. HIGHLANDER: the stirring tale of an immortal young Scotsman who must behead his enemies throughout eternity, MTV-style. The herky-jerky camera work drove audiences up the wall and away from the theatres...and the songs by Queen over 13th-century Scotland didn't help, either. SHORT CIRCUIT: a, uh, charming tale of a hunter-killer military robot who gets hit by lightning and magically develops a lovable personality—and dances like John Travolta in SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER! Sounds great, huh? Did you see it? Didn't think so... HOWARD THE DUCK: With a \$35 million (!) budget, this must surely stand as this year's HEAVEN'S GATE of fantasy films! A saga of a 3-foot talking duck (who looks quite unconvincing in still photos) transferred from Duckworld to Earth... only to become manager of a supposed "punk" all-girl band named "Cherry Bomb" (punk? More like Rocker Barbie dolls!). This is meant to update the original Howard comic books; see, Beverly Switzer (Howard's girlfriend...?) was originally an artist's model, but here she's the leader of this bad video band (songs supplied by Thomas Dolby). There's also a Jekyll/Hyde scientist, car crashes, lasers, etc...but not even the Lucasfilm elves were able to salvage this big piece of quack—it lasted only two weeks before theatres everywhere dumped it and wisely replaced it with THE FLY (great film, folks!). I had to laugh when, almost a month later, Marvel Comics released their "special 3-issue series of the Lucasfilm blockbuster!"...okay. Did I mention other duds like LABYRINTH (a showcase for David Bowie's new videot look) (EDITOR'S INTERRUPTION: I adored LABYRINTH, and thought it an inventive and quality film which succeeded in all the places last year's RETURN TO OZ failed, so there!), or the quick fade of musclegun films like RAW DEAL or COBRA? What does it all mean, this failure of so many attempted audience-herders? Is it that special effects alone no longer cut it? Do Americans actually want better storytelling? Are the coke-nosed Hollywood yuppies bombing out? OR MAYBE people are starting to reject CONSPIRACY PROGRAMMING?? Wow, wouldn't that be something? Whatever it is, a colossal commercial flop is always good for a rude chuckle at THEIR expense!

ATTENTION! WARNING! DANGER! BOOK ALERT! Here is a vital document you must not miss: RE/SEARCH 10: INCREDIBLY STRANGE FILMS. It's what the title says; but no mere listing of movie reviews, this great book features in-depth interviews with Herschell Gordon Lewis, Russ Meyer, Larry Cohen, and other pillars of weirdfilm! Great articles on George Romero's LIVING DEAD trilogy, WIZARD OF GORE, GOD TOLD ME TO, and more! Genre articles on LSD films, Biker films, Beach Party films, Ed Wood's films, and others! Lists of important film quotes and personalities! This is one of the most vital books you can buy! You'll be glad you did! I got my copy (\$12.99 + \$3.00 UPS shipping) from Mark V. Zeising, Bookseller, P.O. Box 806, Willimantic, CT 06226. I got my copy three days after mailing my order! Wow! And he sells a whole bunch of science fiction, too. (Oops—if you want it parcel post, that's +\$2.00 instead of \$3.00, but I don't know how long that takes.)

And that's all, folks! May the Great Dictator in the Sky bless and keep you, and spare you any more ROCKY sequels! And don't eat any wooden popcorn.

A Sketch on the Orange Line

by Michael McInnis

I had been feigning sleep when the train I was on slowed entering Sullivan Station. It came to a screaming halt and stopped abruptly, throwing everyone on the car slightly forward then back again. The doors opened and a few people got on quickly. A fat woman in a plain blue dress entered last. She sat down with a heavy sigh across from me.

We lurched once and then were moving down the tracks gaining speed. Over the loud lulling din of the train's passage, I thought I heard a few faint squawks of a bird. At first I ignored the sound, trying to relax. But they began to get louder and come more frequently. I looked up and saw the fat woman saying "shhh shhh shhh" to a small red and greenish bird perched on her shoulder.

She cajoled the bird into being calmer by feeding it seed she had in her hand. The bird pecked at it then looked around the train. It pecked and looked for a few minutes.

"Is that a parrot?" a balding man, dressed casually, asked. He sat on my side a few seats down to my left.

The woman turned to him, putting the remainder of the seeds back in her dress pocket.

"Yes," she answered bluntly, turning back to her pet. The bird continued to jerk its head about.

The train slowed and came to a stop at Community College. Agitated by the extreme noise and the sudden braking, the bird fluttered on the woman's shoulder. She tried to calm it again. The few people in the car began to notice the bird. Some had put their papers down and sat on the edge of their seats smiling.

No one left or came on at the station. With another lurch, the train was going down the tracks, past the rail yard where the old prison used to be.

"Do you always take it for rides on the subway?" the man asked.

"Oh yeah, all the time. He don't like it much, but he puts up with it. He's such a loving bird, though. Loves to kiss." She started to pucker her lips and smack them together, making loud obnoxious kissing sounds. The bird jerked its head and looked at her. She repeated her kissing. After a few more looks around the car, the bird pecked her lips. She smiled and gazed around to see that everyone had seen the trick.

"Good Harry," she said, reaching into her pocket for more seed.

I smiled and looked towards the bald man, who sat intently staring at the couple with a broad smile. The train was starting its descent into the tunnel. As the string of cars became enclosed within the narrow confines the noise intensified, causing the bird to get excited again. It started to squawk loudly and pace on the woman's shoulder, digging its claws into the dress and her flesh.

"He don't like the tunnel," she said to the bald man, wincing from the bird's agitated pacing. "Too noisy and dark," she continued. "It screws up their sense of time when it's dark like that. They don't know what's on the other side of the glass."

The man tried to smile as he watched the bird pace on her shoulder. "Doesn't it hurt when he does that?"

"No. Well, a little, but not much. I get his claws trimmed. You know, just like when they trim a cat's claws. I won't let them declaw him. He'd have no gripping power. Couldn't land anywhere in the house. It's so cruel when they do that. Takes away from their natural ways."

I watched the bird trying to cope with the extreme noise. It had gotten so unnerved by the train's progress that I thought it was cruel to have brought the bird on the train in the first place. The noise had become so bad that I didn't hear the man had asked her another question.

"No, not anymore. He's been trained not to. If he does he'll come right back."

The train screeched into North Station. The fat woman gave the bird more seeds. But it didn't seem to want any more. It pecked nervously at her hand. While

Revelations in Kodachrome

by Dorian Tenore

I gaze upon a
Particularly handsome photograph of
You, dear.
(One of the many "fab pix" of your
Ever-beaming visage which you've thoughtfully
Helped me to accumulate over time.)
My eyes fall to your eyes, whose
Postcard-sky-blue hue has been
Captured perfectly by the magic of Kodachrome.
Ah, those orbs! Look at that devil-may-care,
Roguish but charming glint in them.
Funny how quickly that glint dulls when, on occasion, I
Don't happen to be talking about you, or at least anything
Even remotely related to that specific subject.
But, my, how your eyes light right up again
(As do certain other anatomical parts)
At the sight of feminine
Legs exposed and accented by
A short skirt, or concealed by tight jeans
(Ever wonder what comes between
Some girls and their Calvins? Then again,
Some people don't have to wonder, eh?
"Nudge, nudge, wink, wink," as you'd say).

Well, anyway I think I'll just glance at
Those smiling lips which
Kiss mine oh so well
And which practice frequently
If not always on yours truly.
Oh, I know you're only being "friendly!"
How could I even consider doubting it, when you
Assure me of that in
Your smooth-as-vanilla-pudding voice?
A voice which is also useful for asking me to almost always
"Pick up the check this time, would you, babe?
I must've left my wallet in my other pants, ha ha."

As my eyes make their way
Farther down your photograph
Your lean but sinewy physique, which is
A visual feast indeed as it
Moves so gracefully during
Touch football games with your friends and
When we sometimes dance at those clubs in the Village, and then we
Snuggle up and intertwine
though it would be nice if, more often, you'd
Act more like you're
Making love instead of making the Olympics,
After which your snore loosens the plaster
And why doesn't that body
Move so well when I ask you nicely
(Or otherwise)
To pick up after yourself and refrain from
Using my entire apartment as your personal
Laundry hamper-cum-garbage dump?

Hmmmmmm...

Come to think of it, who needs you?
Your picture is infinitely easier to get along with!

the train sat motionlessly humming, the bird appeared to calm down. A girl came onto our car and noticed the bird right away. She stood in front of the woman, effectively blocking my view of the pair.

"Is that a minor bird?" she asked.

"No."

"Can it talk?"

"He says hello sometimes, when he feels like it. He don't feel good right now, though. The train's too loud for him."

"He's cute. What's his name?"

"Harry."

"Hi, Harry." She bent down towards the bird. "Hi, Harry."

The train had started and was causing the bird to squawk.

"Better watch out," the fat woman said. "The noise is making him nervous."

"Then why did you bring him on the train?" the girl asked.

"Because. Me and Harry never go out alone from each other."

Haymarket appeared out of the curving darkness; the train slowed. The fat woman got up when the doors opened, forcing the bird to alight then come back down upon her shoulder. She walked past the girl and out the door. Down the back of her dress were lumpy white and black streaks of birdshit. I started to laugh as the train pulled away, leaving her on the platform with the bird hovering about her head as she walked.

INSIDE STROKE: UPDATE

First, let me apologize to those of you awaiting your copies of IS. Not only is it not ready to be mailed, it isn't even completely typed and laid out yet!

As of the last week of September, I was still receiving material, and material originally planned has not come through (some with good reason, some not). I only have so much free time (working a full-time job and going to school for my master's), and frankly I don't have a regular publishing schedule, so a deadline does not mean much.

I also have to admit that I'm not enjoying this project at all. Oh, I do like a few of the submissions I have received, mostly the artwork (there will be a couple of pages of cartoons, as well as dozens of spot illos), but for the most part I'm disappointed.



WHY ROCK? WHY ROLL?

Just the other day I bumped into an old high school buddy on a commuter train, and after confirming our suspicions that yes, we DID sit beside one another in Grade 9 Chemistry (and good thing, too—his test answers were not only 98% correct, but were legible enough for me to copy!), we spent the next twenty minutes cross-examining, boasting, and B.S.-ing-in-general one another. This fellow now has a good, secure job in a downtown insurance tower, a wife, cat and condo in the suburbs, and undoubtedly more money (but less hair!) than I. And, like each and every other blast from the past I run across, his first question, delivered through a sneer that could melt the mayor of Carmel, was:

"You're not still in the [eyes squinting; upper lip curled] MUSIC BUSINESS, are you?"

I get this identical query constantly from old school chums, neighbors, relations (those still living and/or speaking to me) and Here's Why, they invariably say:

"But Gary, you were always such a quiet, CLEVER boy. (I should've gone into acting!) You had such a fine up-bringing [or so it seemed, as long as you ventured no closer to my folks' nice red brick bungalow than the foot of their driveway]. It's so sad you haven't been able to find any [glancing at my scuffed sneakers] REAL WORK."

Depending on my amount of spare time or frame of mind, at this point I either mumble, "Oh well, maybe someday something better will come along" and excuse myself, or attempt to explain that "playing in a band really IS a lot of REAL WORK," or (and the older and less patient I grow, this is my most common response) I zap 'em with a bright conversation-stopper like "Aww, why don'tcha just fuck off, okay?"

And so, for the benefit of all you old friends and acquaintances with whom I have yet to cross paths, as well as for those distraught readers among you who are also afflicted with pals in show business, I hereby state, Once And For All, why seemingly quiet, clever lads such as myself choose, against all apparent logic, to toil in the terpsichorean vineyard.

*THE HOURS: Early-to-bed, early-to-rise is one little homily I truly despise. Having always been a Night Person, perhaps because my dear mom got me hooked on The Tonight Show at the tender age of eleven, I have a helluva time shutting down my body or brain come dusk. Rock 'n roll hours suit my idiosyncracies to a "T": breakfast at 2 or 3pm, work evenings, dinner around 2 or 3am, and call it a night around 9 in the morning. Most everyone thinks, "Boy, what a lazy no-good THIS guy must be," but in the words of the immor(t)al Pete Townsend, "when they sleep I sing and dance."

*THE TRAVEL: Contrary to popular belief, you do NOT

I had expected the stuff sent to me to be up to the caliber of the material that Elayne normally runs, with the difference being some reference to erotica. I had also falsely hoped the recent events (the Meese commission, the Tracy Lord scandal, etc.) would act as a catalyst to some creative activity. What I have received is sexual fantasy/wish fulfillment.

What has happened to everyone's sense of humor???

I will continue to work on IS as time permits, and everyone who submitted something will receive their copy (this whole mess will be coming out of my own pocket, as only a few people were kind enough to send money and no submissions). As you can probably guess by now, there will be no future edition of IS. I am going to burn the masters as soon as I have enough copies to fill the demand.

- Notary Sojac

* * * * *

have to join the Army or Red Cross in order to "see the world." You can do it from the back of a Mercury Marquis wagon wedged between cartons of amplification equipment and "Sarasoda" California-style low-alcohol cooler ("THE Sparkling Citrus Cooler For Adults!"). Once you've mastered the art of living out of a knapsack and dealing with Holiday Inn and 7-11 graveyard staffs, you can thrill to the simple pleasures of whiling away the hours spotting Austin Mini's with out-of-state plates and comparing one cable TV company's selection of insomniac programming with another's. And I guarantee you'll NEVER get stuck in traffic at 4am!

*THE ADDITIONAL "PERKS": People in bars, clothing stores, and sometimes even Burger Kings are only too happy to ply the visiting celebrity with free drinks, T-shirts and Whoppers, if only to bask briefly in second-hand notoriety (or, more likely, sell you some new strain of crack). A quiet, clever chap such as myself can often connive untold quantities of freebies (especially shirts 'n burgers; booze I MUST avoid at all costs—even my first sampling of "Sarasoda," a sissy drink if ever there was one, resulted in my leaping atop a French fry stand after a show one night and attempting to lead the throng of bewildered diners in a medley from "Porgy and Bess"). Upon returning home, any leftover T-shirts (or jackets, sweat pants, or the ever-popular bath towels) are in turn given away to jealous loved ones...or sold on the black market upon discovering I'm \$1600 overdrawn again.

Notice my handy list omits the two categories you must all be thinking are the REAL reasons a Grade 13 Honour student would leave university half-way towards a B.F.A. for:

- *THE GIRLS and
- *THE MONEY,

otherwise known as

- *THE CHICKS and
- *THE BREAD.

Remember Tom Snyder's "Tomorrow" show, which for years was by some cosmic blunder allowed to fill the post-Carson slot on NBC before Letterman reared his ugly head? Every time Tom had a rock star on his program, he'd always ask stimulating questions such as "Where's all your groupies?!", "Yeah, but what about the groupies?!", and (to John Lennon, no less) "C'mon c'mon c'mon—let's hear about all the groupies!" Well, from what I'VE seen in my decade of rock 'n rolling, there's got to be AT LEAST as many female admirers clamouring around your average microchip sales consultant. Maybe I'm in the wrong band, but practically every girl who has introduced herself to me invariably comes complete with a linebacker-sized boyfriend who, after the show, usually introduces himself to me as well...by way of a knuckle sandwich up the ol' snout. (Of course, there's an exception to every rule: I have met ONE utterly fascinating young woman in the line of duty, but no sooner had we spent two illicit evenings together in some of Toronto's finer shrimp restaurants and wildlife preserves than she proceeded to pack herself off to a far-away college for three years. Where's Tom Snyder now that I really need him?!!)

As for "the bread," if any of you out there could possibly front me \$1600 for three weeks...

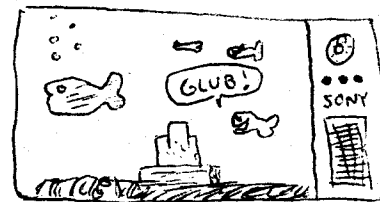
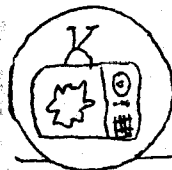
BOPPIN' WITH AMERICA'S FOREMOST BAD MARTYR ON THIS, THAT AND DOSE

by Adam Eisenstat

This city's a tomb!!!! screamed the egregious actions of this drill bit bitch and her bombast-bursting threshold of naught it cascaded down the fleecy spider webs of her rigid mouth and me, on radio parrying with Christians, supporters and citizens for decency for over two hours, TV in absurdist get up Mr. T air freshener earring goodwill pimp castoffs, public affairs show in Sunday best bobbing and weaving with some soft-spoken mound of banality defending the god-given right of the people to be spared from abstract genit'ia, newspapers too. Why? What? The source of this doggerel? Passed one of my patented multi-tiered political cartoon/collages featuring Khadafi and Idi Amin sitting on a couch watching nukes and dual head jobs on TVs, Christ, computer, firearm repair ad more underneath posted on an obituary. "I don't even know what it means myself," they quote me in the paper as saying. Tis art y'know biglegged muses sprinkling dithyramb stew at the foot of my spot, here take this it's yer size who me? I couldn't I, I take it asshole no one else wants it maybe you'll stir some brouhaha fade to sub-subterranean marketing passing out works, only samples of that which floats in the commodities realm stored in the warehouse in a corner of the undercarriage of my twin bed anyhow I gives some art to this festering (fill in with snarling images of pureed genitalia) in a flash just as I pass for you my lovely pseudo-punkette such a pretty promiscuous-looking lass possibly open to twisted-but-lucid ideas possessed of a little disposable income to buy my book (Collage of Mutations) head to the copy hut, my home away from home more people to well the pig man and sow come struttin in leaffing through me folder imbued by the way with valuable reams o' unpopular, ignored but potent verse 'n visuals only some of which I bestowed on this poor adolescent (horror of kiddie porn horrors she turns out to be 17) cuffed me against the machine pretty potent metaphor for ongoing information war and the McCarthyesque battle for hearts, minds and pen strokes imagine a time when they can regulate the muscles in your hands so certain things stay unwritten modified copiers see what they want. Back o' the paddy wagon, cuffed, elated (oh be another temporary cause tell the neighborhood every kid will want one) looking out as this prim little piece of punkposing pig shit and her fey-looking beau tell pig and sow how offended they are by good you've prodded my fragile and small mind you'll suffer by god off we go where? charges? rights? of course they need donuts and cokes at a) the donutshop and b) the coke shop them paddy wagons get hot in the summer downtown (the lights are much brighter there) we pass a stack of newspaper boxes some innovative pornographers tried to diffuse downtown (that's how they say it here had to be here) stacked in the pig barn garage. some lawyer man three piece suiter comes by look at this ernie the pig says to him I had a little fun yeah it's art my work y'know yeah it's art not for everyone but neither is camel filters and they never arrested them shit offical I ain't never give no one no cander I just cut up mags and papers and let some steam off the chuggin' valves a my mediated mind of word/picture hearth ernie pig man says to the desk Joe obseenity pronounces it seen like some georgia redneck no just a midatlantic redneck jail man printed and processed ohh gawd I knows dem nattering nabobs wield scepter of truth hey man got a cigarette whatchoo in for I used to do thirty percs a day kick it in with a little hycodan n shit dey new the knuckles was found they was all rusty n shit whatchoo in fer gotta cigarette baloney fig newtons chips n drink give me dem day of bread and water momma come and bail me out tv radio someone'll pay ha just amuse yoself I s'pose nattering nabobs wield scepter of truth goading, 4/4 beat it's all the bottom line not \$ more nattering nabobs wield scepter of truth as with pieces of whimsy fragments of history yet nattering nabobs wield scepters of truth so anyhew I got da press agent chained to a phone in the basement sliding light meals under the door tv newspapahs radio more tv newspapahs the band Bad Martyrs of course try to cap da deal off, grand slam of media barrage I figure you no if someone gives a party with the same bands everyone's seen more times than their bodies (don't go for christians I guess) 10 people show up scumbag petty hood brain-damaged alcoholic dive boss kicks us off early. too much screaming and shouting he said yeah fucking right 100 skinheads at \$7 a head can't be wrong we're banned altogether a few days later the scumbag finds out I made phone conversations of him making death threats to me re our pornographic nightmare performance wild scene man kind of like the pool cue concession at altamont 250-pound dancing girl boa dancer (constrictor that is) porn films on my stomach porn on the wall heavy porn/multimedia metaphor barrage crude rude and quasi-brilliant scumbag broke our projectors and hit one of the projectionists that's how gentlemen settle arguments I told a caller on the radio not this time-bloated tedium of courts and truly soulless soulless motherfuckers who write shit like party of the first part will hereby cease and desist from enacting lascivious actions in the public domain and wear staid clothes and eat big lunches in the sun and read about other people's soulless tedious struggles with bland behemoth bureaucracy in tall buildings made of all glass—law hangs on the tongue like a caramel-induced gob like a like a hey an angel on a pin is worth a gob on the ground. hey ho good to see ya Bob Hope caught yer act in saigon good show way to fire em up and tell me this much now or never how the fuck can people whine about nuclear holocaust when there's an ongoing spiritual/psychic holocaust at their very toes????????????

(More rockin' ramblin's available from Adam Eisenstat at 716 S. Linden Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15208. Send stamps and you'll get bliss or bliss.)

GOOD USES FOR DEAD TEEVEES



FISHBOWLS!

Journey Into Television: Down the Tubes

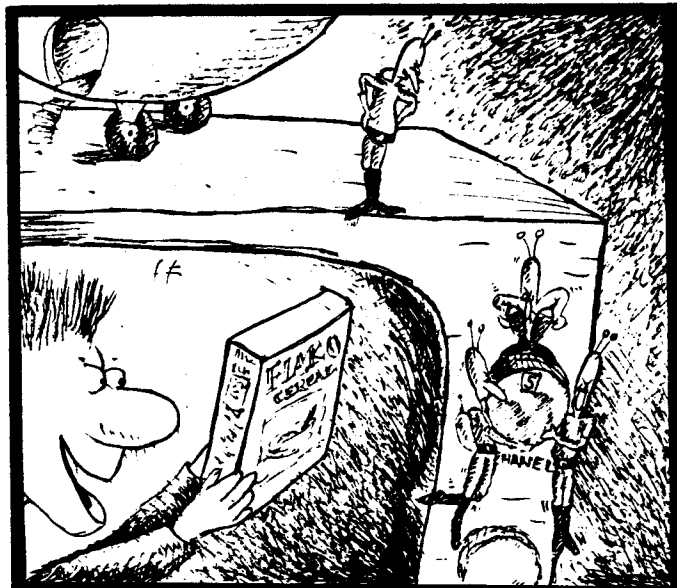
by Daza (illustration by Peter Sellmer)

It ripped down across the Lacisum hull, tearing like a mad beast as it were dry leaves. Fluids oozed from her belly and ante-chambers amidst the smoke-blackened pitch of night in an alien land. Still more eruptions, bursting bloodily through Staitra flames screaming upwards from behind the wrenching vessel, searching them out, finding the empty air that once they flew in as light as the smoke that now filled it.

A once crescent-shaped aircraft splintered, beaten down with relentless bestial fury, her crew blinded by its consuming fate, scattered onto the strange planet caring not whether escape could be found, knowing desperation in their appetite for survival.

It was then they noticed the Channel Selector. Turning the dial to the right five—no, three spaces transported them into the set of a regularly-scheduled program on location somewhere in 1959, another endless repeat.

Finding it impossible to conceal themselves in this black and white



production, the crew groped wildly for the Channel Selector. But it was too late; something was about to happen that would change their socks, forever.

A commercial break.

Undermining their faith in reality, voices bellowed and screeched; who could tell what they were saying? A film editor cut and stuck them in bizarre subliminal poses, a chorus of voices chortling to some simple beat in painfully boring harmony.

Rescue seemed beyond reach—a new dimension overtook the bewildered band...computer graphics! Multi-linear high resolution grids of garish colour embroidered around bold letters and still more painfully boring harmonies swept them onwards. As their grasp on sanity faded into the backgrop, further assaults assailed the airwaves...previews of movies at a theatre near you...exploding cars...tight clothes...loose pants...love me I'm cool jokes...the latest fashions...all to the steady pulse of a lust that would not quit. The message was clear, as clear and as subtle as a hammer falling on a baby's head.

There...out there, a vague form began to take shape, growing in size as it moved ever closer. Fat fleshy digits reached out over the scene and, in a burst of light, extinguished their world forever, never to be seen again...until May, when the repeats arose, back from the brink of last autumn's tasteless waste.

Once was not enough; abuse me again, please.

Seducing with the rhythm of last night's memories, dreams orchestrated by masked chaos rush.

Push me into the set, glassy eyes made clean in blinded white burned black. Empty sockets gouged, jelly gone, use me by remote control. I am yours.



Rejections

by Sharman Russell

Sharman Apt Russell
Route 15, Box 2560
Mimbres, NM 88049

Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.
201 E. 50th Street
New York, NY 14028

Dear Ashbel Green:

I am sorry for the delay in considering your publishing company for my first novel. Unfortunately, after much thought and consideration, I have decided that Knopf does not suit my present needs. However, I do think that your recent publications show promise—particularly the historical volumes and the recent work by Anne Tyler—and I hope to consider your company again in the future.

Best of luck in finding other novels to publish.

Sincerely,

Sharman Apt Russell
Sharman Russell
Rt 15, Box 2560
Mimbres, NM 88049

Dakota Gas
315 S. Hudson
Vermillion, SD 57069

Dear Mr. Williams:

I regret to say that your firm was not among the final candidates selected as recipients for my job application and resume. My decision was based on personal

THE BALLAD OF THE UNKNOWN MAILMAN

"by" Clifford Clavin,
ghost-written by Dana A. Snow
Until now, the mailman was an unsung
hero. Now he'll be a *SUNG* hero.
I deliver "get well" cards
To people who are ill
And then when they get healthy, I
Bring them the doctor's bill.
Sometimes I pick up foreign mail
Destined for distant nations.
When gals in bars ask what I do,
I say "Communications!..."

If someone says I read their Playboys,
I tell you "They lie!"
To me this is a sacred trust!
I'm not that kind of guy!
Little kids depend on me,
As do also their folks!
But if you ask me nicely,
I'll tell you the Party Jokes...

When ends my every working day,
I'm proud of a job well-done.
We deliver fast through rain and snow.
We're slower when there's sun...
And someday when I die,
Though you folks may think it's odd,
I want to be the angel
Who delivers prayers to God...

"TALK TO GOD IN YOUR POEMS"

by Mary Ann Henn

she said. OK. Here goes.
Dear God, I hate wind.
It puffs and blows and howls
around as if it knew it all—
as if it were You, or something.
If it could make the sun stop
shining, make us all go to bed
or wear sweaters, all year,
or not go biking, it would.
It pushes the clouds around
breaks branches off trees
roses off stems and whirls
paper all over. Does it do
that just to get attention
or is it You making Yourself
felt like some people I know
who are always trying to impress
someone else?

concerns that do not reflect your performance as a competitive business nor your overall rating as an employer. In this case, location was a primary consideration, and preference had to be given to those companies and individuals in southwestern New Mexico—particularly in the Mimbres area. This decision should not be considered a "closed door." I may be contacting you again.

Sincerely,

Sharman Russell
S. Russell
Rt 15, Box 2560
Mimbres, NM 88049



Deming National Bank
300 S. Gold Ave.
Deming, NM

Dear loan officer:

In these financially troubled times, it is, of course, very difficult to say no. I am sure you appreciate our dilemma. I know that, as a bank, you are eager to lend out capital, and though your advertised interest rates cannot conceivably be called generous, they are undeniably current. Regrettably, however, we in the Russell household agree that it is not possible at this time to apply for a home-improvement loan from you. We would be glad, of course, to reconsider the matter if later economic conditions are such that we feel assured the money would be repaid. We hope this will not greatly inconvenience you.

Sincerely,

S. Russell

...or not TV

by ye editrix

You can't get rid of me that easily readers; like death and taxes, a new tv season (more often three or four) is always beginning! As long-timers know, I don't review every new show in this column. I have no interest in soaps or Lawyers in Love or especially Hero Cop shows. I haven't had the patience for sitcoms that I used to, and you can pretty much tell the good from the bad rather quickly with that. Our asterisk rating system is from one to four and pretty self-explanatory, so on to the shows:

SATURDAY: Saturday morning cartoonland belongs, in terms of fun and quality offerings, exclusively to CBS this season. ABC has opted for mostly cutesy nonhuman morality plays, NBC has changed little from last year, and the syndie shows on the other stations (with the possible exceptions of Galaxy Rangers—Candy Strecker recommends this highly in the letters column but I found it a bit too sexist-double-standard for my liking, with the Bad Girl villain in the pilot far more exciting than the Good Girl Hero—and Defenders of the Earth) are pretty lame, many being nothing more than half-hour commercials for groups of useless and misleading toy products. Do, by the way, do everything you can to acquire Tom Englehardt's upcoming book *Watching Television* from Pantheon (as mentioned also by "Kid" Steve in her commercial column)—a brilliant excerpt on kidvid appeared in the September '86 *Mother Jones*, and is very worthwhile reading...Anyway, here are some better-than-average nuggets in the CBS lineup:

Wildfire (8:30am)—all times noted throughout this article are, of course, Eastern Standard and all that)—While not an excellent show, this is a pleasant series featuring a female protagonist who's less belligerent than She-Ra (and not available yet in toy stores, I don't think!) and not as wimpy as Rainbow Brite. The premise has a nice sense-of-wonder ring to it (fairy tale-type princess taken to safety from her fantastic empire as it falls into evil hands upon the death-in-childbirth of her mother the queen, spirited by wonder horse Wildfire into the dimension we call Reality and raised by a lone farmer of some sort, lives a double life as normal American girl and, when summoned by the horse and her loyal subjects, defender against evil in her native world), the scripts are bright in both senses of the word, and the animation isn't offensive and is sometimes startlingly good. A nice way to wake up. ***

If you aren't watching *Muppet Babies* from 9-10am, what the hell are you wasting your time watching? Okay, I know Jim Henson can buy his own planet by now, but you will never but never catch him faulting a show whose main theme is the use of imagination. And I still laugh out loud at some of the puns and situations. 4* **Galaxy High** (10am)—This is one of those shows in the Jetsons mold, but with the twist that every now and then an unexpected line or bizzarrier-than-usual character pops up suddenly and you say to yourself, "Did I really hear that right?" It's worth sitting through to hear these deceptive moments, trust me. *** **Pee-wee's Playhouse** (11am)—For the one or two of you who may not have already guessed, this has been voted IJ Show of the Year for 1986. If you're lucky enough to have caught Paul Reubens' Little Boy Weirld on HBO, this is more of the same—much more. Almost too much for normal senses; thank "Bob" our senses aren't normal! At last, a kids' show for us kids! Each show is a challenge to see how many different types of animation can be crammed into one half hour, and there's no morals, no point, no coherence, just incredible fun (even secret words!).****

CBS has also had enough wisdom to renew *The Twilight Zone*, now on Saturdays at 10pm, and if Lorne Michaels can once again shore up SNL (doubtful, but miracles have happened before in TV land) it should make an excellent semi-lead-in. Otherwise, **Life with Lucy** (ABC, 8pm) is as cruddy as you'd probably suspect. Lucille Ball is back. Gale Gordon is back. Whoopie. The same old tired formulaic writers are back too, and prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that everything—Lucy, Gale, scriptwriting, guest stars over whom Lucy-this-time-Barker swoons—is just terribly, terribly aged. †*

The Ellen Burstyn Show (ABC, 8:30pm) is the first of the "woman-oriented" shows I'm reviewing, and most of these shows, including this one, are pretty decent. In this particular one, Ellen's character is some sort of psych professor who teaches at home for some unfathomable reason, and Elaine Stritch plays her feisty mother, and a couple of unknowns play her (Ellen's) daughter and grandson, and the show is worth it for Burstyn and Stritch but not much more (a notable exception being guest star Jim Dale, who had me in total stitches with his brilliance one episode).**

Amen (NBC, 9:30)—Not bad either, if you can tolerate a half hour of Sherman Hemsley and one gospel song per episode.**

SUNDAY: The Lost Day. Read a book, or watch *Angela's Ashes*.

Our House (NBC, 7pm)—No, I didn't actually watch this, but I had wanted to check out the show which follows and accidentally caught a few minutes. I almost needed an insulin injection. †*

Easy Street (NBC, 8pm)—I should have quit with *Our House*. †*

MONDAY: I will most likely not be checking out *My Sister Sam*, although it has an excellent chance of succeeding, because its competition, *Amazing Stories*, still remains a favorite of mine. I'm sure Pam Dawber is as Pam Dawberish as ever, la de dah.

ALF (NBC, 8pm)—When I stopped having trouble with the preposterous premise of an Alien Life Form being able to speak perfect sit-

com colloquial English (for me, a BIG hurdle—I'm more from the Starman school when it comes to aliens...see review below), I fell for this show in a huge way. The creators of *Buffalo Bill* have employed one of that show's actors (Max Wright), providing him with a good character and snappy lines (of which this show is full). According to *Newsday* critic Marvin Kitman, this show rivals *Bullwinkle* at his best; I wouldn't go nearly that far, but it is wonderful to watch the interplay between Wright and the ALF (a Muppet/S&M Krofft type creature who acts like a well-meaning Howard the Duck), and the writing is crisp. ***

The Story of English (PBS, 9pm)—A show for which I'd miss lots of other neat shows on other channels. I'm hooked. I remember now why I took the majors I did in college (English and linguistics). This is my idea of heaven. Square, aren't I? ****

Designing Women (CBS, 9:30pm)—I did manage to tear myself away from *The Story of E* long enough to catch one episode of this, and it really isn't that much like *Golden Girls*...kind of. Okay, the similarities it bears (just about everything but the characters' ages?) may be too blatant to ignore, but the writing's just as good, and I laughed out loud a lot. Steve laughed too, but is less enthusiastic because it seemed less accessible to men. No matter, I think smart women will like it, even if the characters are a bit too Yuppie to be truly fascinating. **†

TUESDAY: *The Wizard* (CBS, 8pm) is a show I wanted to like so much it hurts. I adore David Rappaport (the head thief in *Time Bandits* if memory serves), and the premise sounded fun, all about a genius inventor who gets into predicaments or some such, but apparently the creators neglected to mention the Mandatory Child with a Handicap or Mandatory Dwarf Jokes or Mandatory Making Government Agencies Look Dumb When They Don't Really Need Help stuff. This is so rigidly done, every show is exactly like the last. No*

The only other thing I bother with on Tuesdays is *Moonlighting*, despite Bruce Willis. I never thought I'd like Cybill Shepherd over any co-star, but there you are.

WEDNESDAY: Two new CBS sitcoms looked too silly even for me to want to sit through (*Better Days* and *Together We Stand*), so do let me know if I've missed anything, won't you? I saw ten minutes of *Perfect Strangers* this past summer, and couldn't believe two enormous talents like Mark-Linn Baker and Bronson Pinchot are doing this drek. I'm still waiting for the first funny line.

Head of the Class (ABC, 8:30pm)—Here's another one with great promise that's just kept getting worse. Howard Hesseman is given seven or eight two-dimensional "advanced" brainy kids who act like Idiots, he teaches one or all some Lesson about Life, and even he Learns Something in the End. It worked for the first show, but, like *The Wizard*, all of a sudden every show was like a rerun of the pilot. None of the characters show the least chance of growing or learning from their mistakes, since they're the same old kooky komputer-whiz kutups the next show. The writing is still funny at times, but this show feels like the downhill end of a roller coaster, and I've been taken for a ride. Not fair. **

THURSDAY: Hurry up, you baby boomers you (and you know who you are, because we certainly admit to nothing!), and catch the lovely and real Linda Ellerbee before *Our World* (well, her world, maybe) gets mercifully moved or removed from under the weight of *Cosby* & Family Ties wholesomeness. This is a sort of history class-meets-MTV, and seems not so much educational as simply nostalgic for Images (not substance) in the same way *The Big Chill* was, so they tell me. If they cover the year 1939 or '14 or something instead of sometime in the '60s, maybe I'll change my mind. For now, not even Linda can lift this show. **

FRIDAY: I leave the set off till 9:30. You may have surmised I don't bother with the Dallas vs. Miami Vice crap, since both shows are pretty useless to me. I tried to watch *Sidekicks* but Gil Gerard kept getting in the way (literally, at times—as the man gained weight or what?) of Keye Luke, who's Keye Lukish, of course (** for this one I anyone is keeping score). HOWEVER---

Sledge Hammer! (ABC, 9:30pm) is MAGNIFICENT! It does to Hero Cop asinine shows what *Get Smart!* did to spy shows which took themselves too seriously. It has a slight laugh-track problem, but this becomes as nothing once you've seen a PERFECT parody of the movie *Witness*, almost scene for scene (all in a half-hour minus commercials). God this show is brilliant. ****

Starman (ABC, 10pm)—This is the only new show I'm videotaping. Partly because I know it hasn't a prayer of lasting long against the critics' choice Yuppie-show-of-the-year (*Lawyers in Love* to the hilt!), *L.A. Law*. Fuck that fantasy; gimme real fantasy. If you liked the movie, you'll love this. It captures the same sense of Innocence and wonder and, above all, gentleness. I am so drawn to it, I sit real close to the tv and sigh and clap my hands whenever the starman does something breathtaking...and the music is great, very appropriate, and the premise follows naturally from the film (allowing for a time-lapse discrepancy, of course)...also present are elements from every show from *The Hulk* to *The A-Team*, where a relentless government asshole vows to bring the starman and his half-Terran son in for observation and dissection...If you are at all a fan of the genre, this more than satisfies. ****

Well, there you have it, troops. Comments and opinions are, as always, welcomed and encouraged. Be seeing you at the start of the "second season," and remember, we don't have friends with names like "Killtron" and "Smashoid"...

Late-Breaker: Times for 6H & 7P were may have switched!

NEW YORK (YU) - A New York Times News Service reporter admitted today that her report on the recent unnamed hurricane in Bangladesh has been released yearly without change since 1965.

Gertrude Steinem, 34, of Melrose Park, said she believed she was merely continuing a New York Times tradition when she submitted a story copied verbatim from a May 27, 1981 edition of the paper.

Spokesmen at the Times were unable to explain how the same story could have appeared in print with 20 different by-lines during the past two decades, but they did admit that the yearly scouring of Bangladesh during hurricane season might have made it tempting for writers and editors to use prior accounts of the annual catastrophe in preparing their reports.

It is not true, stressed Managing Editor Allen Woody, that the Times prepares dummies for its daily editions two years in advance.

PITTSBURGH (YU) - An unidentified male caller phoned the local branch of the SPCA yesterday and informed officials of a plot by a neo-Protestant cult that was performing ritual sacrifices of "live, little crawly things stolen from the wallpaper of my bathroom." When asked if the man was calling about their recent ad in the newspaper, he hung up.

The FBI has entered the case, since any call to the SPCA is a federal offense.

HOLLYWOOD (YU) - In a precedent-setting legal maneuver, Frank Sinatra filed suit against himself today, charging himself with "gross mishandling of charisma and misrepresentation of imagined purpose." Sinatra is asking the courts to award him 3 billion dollars in actual damages and 6 billion dollars in pugilistic damages.

Friends of the dying entertainer admit that Sinatra has been under a bit of a strain ever since his voice cracked and broke three of his teeth during a recording session in 1952. "But he's dead serious about this suit, though," close friend Dean Martin told reporters, asking not to be identified. "Frank is actually trying to wake up from some horrible nightmare. It's the same nightmare he used to have after he agreed to let Sammy (Davis Jr.) be his friend."

Sinatra, undergoing an image transplant at Gerry Ford Hospital, was unavailable for comment.

ASUNCION, Paraguay (YU) - Nazi hunter Warren Beate Claus von Oldenbulow said from her bed at Our Lady of Hunger and Pain Hospital that she was set upon and beaten outside the residence of Herman Goerring by members of the Fish and Wildlife Department while waiting for a good shot at a trophy buck.

A spokeswoman for the Paraguayan FWD denied the charge, but pointed out that if Ms. von Oldenbulow was indeed hunting in Asuncion, she may be charged on a felony count of possessing a firearm on a game preserve.

The 1983 Paraguayan National Parks Act set aside nearly one quarter million acres of the country for conservation, including most of the Chaco region and the city of Asuncion, where nearly all of the world's 12,000 Nazis are known to live.

While a bill sponsored by President Alberto Stroessner to have Nazis added to the Hemispheric Endangered Species List remains in committee at the Paraguayan Bundt, it is still legal to hunt Nazis outside the preserve. The daily bag limit is one male between 60 and 72 inches, with a seasonal limit of six.

Nazi season closes Thursday.

FRANK, Idaho (YU) - Potato Farmer Galway Kinnell of Nyuk took the annual Idaho Spudfest's state-wide blue ribbon today for a crop of potatoes with the "most unusual shapes." Kinnell's potatoes, a 65-acre crop, all bear a striking resemblance to Friedrich Nietzsche's essay, "Schoppenhauer as Educator."

COPPOLA 1, Dimestar Zone (YU) - The 363rd DiAnnual Ugo Film Festival got underway yesterday in what many are saying is the intergalactic film event of both years.

Berkeley's favorite underground paper is back!!

I FEEL 97%
MORE STUD-LIKE
AFTER MERELY
ONE VIEWING!

TWISTED IMAGE



TWISTED IMAGE

1630 UNIVERSITY AV. #26
Berkeley, Ca. 94703



Film entries from over 250 planets—including Yabba, Sontag, Podhoretz, Mischa Auer 2, Texaco, Vigo and Zieg Warholtz, will be featured during the Festival's 2-day run.

Last night's premieres were highlighted by such diverse films as French director A.J. Foyt's sexual epic, "Le Zoom," Podhoretzian director Neo Sot's tragedy, "Scenes from a Yengla," and the critically misinterpreted "Sfrtoo Yip Nklitzik," from the Harpoonese master Ozzie Nelson Kurosawa.

A special film retrospective on the career of the late American actor Edwin Meese is scheduled for screening later today. Included in the tribute will be scenes from Meese's last film, "The One-Minute Attorney General."

NEW YORK (YU) - Poet Allen Ginsberg, who gained notoriety in the 1950's with the publication of his poem, "Lon Chaney, Jr.," collapsed and died onstage last night during a performance at St. Harpo's Church with the punk group Bozo Meets Godzilla.

According to lead guitarist Victor Mature, Ginsberg was in the middle of a song that required him to do something "really unusual" with an oboe when two large amplifiers blew up, propelling him through the air and across the stage where he landed on his head and broke into little pieces.

Mature said Ginsberg had done the same routine several times on the band's recent tour and never had any problem before this. Rumor has it that the band is now seeking the services of the late Archibald MacLeish.

WHEN YOUR MIXED FOURSOME
PARTNER SELECTS HER SEVEN
IRON ON A PAR THREE HOLE AND
YOU PULL OUT YOUR DRIVER -
THAT'S OLD AGE.
Such a fate could be yours eternally
if we don't or didn't manage to
mess up in this or that first here-
now. As you may have done for last

million years more or less send
\$ASE to arithmetically and
spiritually sound
HEREIN REBUNS
Box 2243
YOUNGSTOWN - OHIO, 44504



GIVE THE BUZZARDS A CHANCE

by Roger Morris

Down through the ages, mankind has always thought of the buzzard as an ugly and stupid animal. While it is true that buzzards are viciously ugly, it is not true that they are altogether stupid. In many cases buzzards are somewhat smarter than man's best friend, the dog. When was the last time you saw a buzzard chasing after a car or trying to hump on your leg? When was the last time you saw two mating buzzards "hung up"? If by some chance you do happen to see a couple of them "hung up," throw cold water on them, it should help.

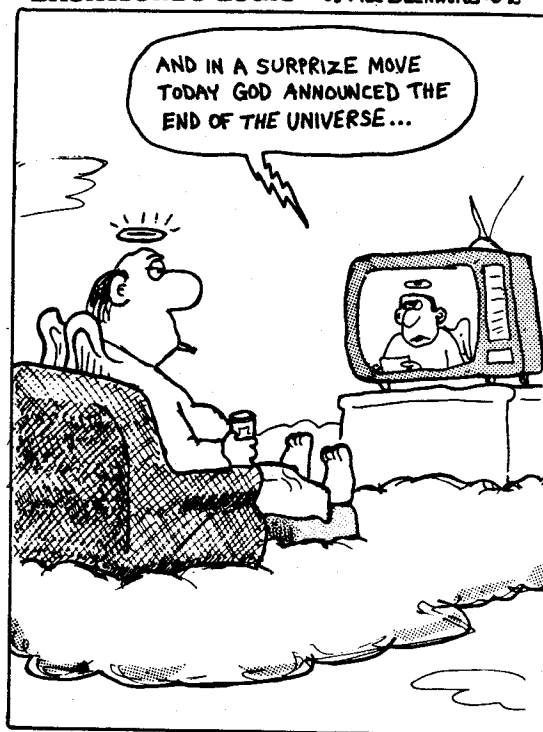
The hideous-looking birds also seem to be smarter than cats. Cats seem to have an uncontrollable urge to climb up onto car engines and wait for someone to come along and start the engine. After this occurs, the cat is usually cut to pieces by the engine fan; I have yet to see this happen to a buzzard. Cats also seem to enjoy covering up their messy little piles with sand or kitty litter. Buzzards, on the other hand, do not waste their time with this idiotic ritual. Buzzards do it from about two thousand feet up. Even if they wanted to cover it up, they could never go down and find it.

I will not say that buzzards are smarter than men, but I will say that in many cases their intelligence rivals that of man. Take, for instance, the human ritual of "chewing the fat." This ritual is performed by almost every human on Earth, many times a day, and it is evident that humans derive great pleasure from it. Buzzards, on the other hand, do not "chew the fat," they chew rotting flesh. This is not exactly the same type of ritual as "chewing the fat," but almost every buzzard on Earth performs this ritual many times a day and also derives great pleasure from it.

Another common practice that is shared by both man and buzzard is the choosing of a mate. The male of both species will do anything conceivable while trying to impress his most attractive counterpart. In most cases the male will end up making a fool of himself and will have to take some worn-out old battleax for a mate. About the only things that the females have in common is their screechy voices and hideous appearances.

Hopefully, the undeserved reputation of the buzzard as an extremely stupid animal will change as more and more people obtain them as house pets and realize the true value of this amazing bird.

BACKWORDS LOGIC by Ace Backwords-015



TRICK OR TREAT?

by Mary Ann Henn

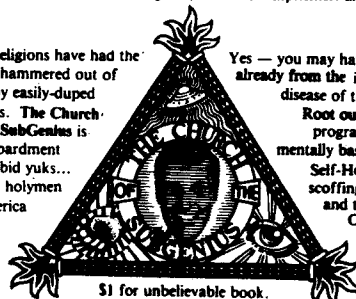
There they are the 8th grade gang
Big stuff we are exciting
Party tonight costumes masks
Jack-o-lanterns 8 PM and dark
We're on our way where?
No one really knows We're just
going trick or treating down
Bunker Hill toward town
Sliver of a moon up there Hey
Those carlights are aimed at us
We stop but not for long
We scatter I head down the alley
Behind the grocery store who's that
On the sidewalk Daddy What you
doing here we ask each other
Let's go home we answer
I curl up on my bed and wait for the cop
To knock We didn't even do
anything

MEMORIAL OF LOVE, ETC.
by Tom James
Excuse us we are changing
the tape we are vroom vroom
grape-colored sonic beings
floating by the guy who is
reading this poem
down by the flowers, down by the trees
down by the beautiful birds 'n bees.

RADICAL INSANITY.

a cult of screamers and laughers, scoffers, blasphemers and sinners

Most religions have had the 'grins' hammered out of them by easily-duped fanatics. The Church of the SubGenius is a bombardment of morbid yuks... the last holymen in America today.



Yes — you may have Snapped already from the information disease of the TV Age. Root out your false programming and mentally bash it to hell. Self-Help through scoffing, mockery, and the Casting Out of False Prophets.

\$1 for unbelievable book.
A Fanatical Attack on
FANATICISM

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



On our way,
at this point,
to tying the
all-time 15
page-count
record at
32! Wheew -
Thanks, all!

RADIO REPORT

by Elayne

Howard Stern is, to use his own term, "happening." In the oft-times fickle world of New York FM radio, where silly-talk DJs are just so much interchangeable horseshit, Howard has managed to rise above the flotsam and, in just a few short years, now plays to two markets daily (WXRK in NY and WYSP in Philly) from 6am to 10am and in nationally-syndicated form on Saturday mornings each week (do check your local radio listings for more information). He has been on Letterman and Comedy Tonight, recorded his own semi-serious heavy metal song, and regularly sells out his stage shows. Not bad for a man who used to be thought of as a Don Imus clone.

To hear Howard tell it on the radio, he's been painfully mis-cast, and I believe that's true: Howard is more or less nonclassifiable. He does a talk show with call-ins. He does hilarious comedy and parody bits. He's a freeform and often risqué ad-libber. He satirizes the current political scene, television, other radio stations (and his own), even his sponsors. He does what some people (mostly the Tipper Gorish ones) term put-down comedy, insult comedy. But he is harder on himself than on anyone else, constantly making fun of his physical shortcomings and inept childhood and sexual nonprowess, with an attitude of "Look, it doesn't matter if it's true or not, I'm here to entertain."

And it doesn't really matter. Look, I'll probably never meet Howard, and I've no intention of trying to go out of my way to do so—this isn't a radio groupie-type thing (in fact, Howard's made fun of that mentality too)—but hey, he says the kind of things that I talk about for the rest of the day, like we all used to do with the old Saturday Night Live ("did you hear what they said about...?"). Much of what he says is questionable, especially politically, but none of it is really meant to be taken seriously. It's all meant in fun, the epitome of the "fuck 'em if they can't take a joke" school of repartee.

Howard's been accused of being "radio's bad boy" by critics whose own abilities are suspect at best. Howard's been labelled as filthy-mouthed for mocking on society's obsession with sex, including his own, but never once has he violated any FCC rules about "no-no words" on the air. He even has a 7-second delay for screening listener calls. He's been called racist and sexist, but his second-in-command (for all intents and purposes, his co-host), Robin Quivers, is intelligent and erudite and amusing and just happens to be a black woman. Howard takes a bit of tuning into to get into the feel of his show, but once you're hooked you start wondering just what these critics' problems are with him.

This is not to say that I agree with everything Howard says, but big fucking deal, you know? It's not important whether his listeners believe he's right about Russia (he's rather anti-Soviet to my way of thinking) or fat women (he doesn't seem to take to them well and appears accusatory of them) or anything else. It's not as if he says his opinions are the only ones worth having—in fact, Howard's at his best when he has to remind some of the numbrained teenboy types in his audience that they're allowed to think for themselves, and practically explodes in frustration at the inability of his callers to carry on a coherent conversation when they get on the air and start whining, "Is this Howard? Am I on the air? Oh wow, man. Hey, how ya doin'?" and have nothing to talk about and never turn their radios down to eliminate the feedback...As I said, I don't care that Howard is more conservative politically or perhaps prejudiced towards the more zeftig among us, because it's just not gonna effect me that much. He doesn't harp on any one subject to excess, he moves around too fast for that, and when he feels he may indeed have stepped over the line of common humanity or "more than one needs to know" you will hear a subsequent veiled reference to having gone too far and pondering the consequences, usually in a comedic monologue or dialogue with Robin.

Robin herself tends to anchor Howard a little, but they play well off one another. She is the show's news reader, but the news she prepares and reads consists more of NY Post Page Six-type peculiarities, clippings that the more mutant among us tend to send to each other in the mails or paste up on the fridges, than any front page headline stuff. She does the news the way I'd like to, if I had her talent and access to a radio station. Nowadays when the line between news and entertainment becomes blurrier and blurrier every day, who's to say that Robin's subject matter is any more or less important than the top story at 6pm?

Howard is quick to acknowledge his writers and co-conspirators, among them Fred Morris (his producer, I believe) and Jackie "The Joke Man" Martling (whose jokes have appeared in publications like the Mensa-run ATROCITY and who does stand-up regularly in the NY area). In fact, on Howard's show even the interns and Shadow Traffic people achieve celebrity status. And I'd venture to say that more listeners patronize Howard's sponsors, of whom he makes constant fun in lengthy (often over 10 minutes) commercial spots during which he lets his stream-of-consciousness tangents take him just about everywhere, but always manages to get across the essential information the sponsor wants publicized, while making his advertisers (by the very fact of them "putting up with" his "insults") seem like really cool people. The insults, if they can even be called such, are so fantastically exaggerated (jokes about an Italian woman's back hair come to mind, but you kind of have to be there) that you wonder how anyone can take offense.

But people do. Gay groups have gotten on his case, but he's the only DJ I've ever heard speak of gays and lesbians regularly, whether mockingly or not, and he's even had gay "Dial-A-Date"s (a

INTRODUCING OUR NEW FEATURE:

WABZITS in "SHOCKING BUT TRUE REAL-LIFE QUOTATIONS" by Elayne

#1 - "Folks, we all know this nation's freedom was drafted under God." And the answer is—

—Dale Evans, with her version of the separation of church & state, endorsing Pat Robertson for President. A little Trigger-happy, ain't she?

regular Friday feature). Feminists have been taken aback by an almost childlike fascination he exhibits for "dirty" things, but when Wendy O. Williams guested on the show, she went far beyond any bounds Howard would normally breach and he sounded almost frightened of some of her lewd suggestions. He does go too far at times, methinks (as with his echoing the mass media standard of beauty as being skin-deep and of certain proportions at that, or getting too personal about people's sex lives), but that should be more my problem than his, don't you see? So okay, I'm not comfortable with this or that—there's the radio "off" dial. Just like on tv. I can always turn the show on again when he gets to a subject with which I'm more at ease. And something else his critics don't acknowledge is that almost everyone who phones in to Howard is totally anonymous—they might give a first name and general location, but any insults can't be taken personally, because call-in mass market radio by its nature just isn't that personal. Or, rather, it is personal (especially with Howard), but it's not specific. For all we know, these people are John and Jane Doe. We tune in not to hear our acquaintances and friends insulted, but to hear faceless callers get what they deserve if they act like assholes or set themselves up. (For example, if you decide you're going to debate Howard on the fat question, you ought to know you are getting in over your head. It doesn't matter if your opinions are valid, and that's not even the point. Howard's better at maintaining his viewpoint than any caller could ever be at changing it, because he's been doing it professionally for years. And it's not important anyway, because the listeners want to be entertained, not lectured to. Howard chips away at the pretensions of radio advisors like Dr. Ruth until you realize that their facades can be a hell of a lot more insulting and pretentious than his ever is.) This is a major reason I've never ventured to call him. I know I'd be anonymous, but I also know I've nothing particularly valid to say to a potentially threatening radio persona.

Persona is a key word here, because to all accounts, Howard is apparently very different off the air. This isn't really important either, because we only hear him when he's entertaining so that personality is the only one with which we need concern ourselves; still, it's rather special when the supposed "real" Howard creeps through and you learn that he really does love his wife a good deal, despite his macho braggadocio, which is as exaggerated as his insults. That kind of reality is nice to hear.

The problems occur when listeners, especially critics who are prejudiced against liking Howard even before they hear him, can't discern the difference between reality and what he does. Reality occurs when we turn off the radio, folks; even Howard acknowledges that he's here to make us laugh, to entertain, to get ratings. If you want something closer to reality on the air, try Abbie Hoffman's new show, Radio Free U.S.A., now playing in New York on WBAI (unknown whether this is nationally syndicated). If Howard can be said to be playing with you (and really, I don't understand why more listeners don't try to play back; it's not as if lies can over the phone can be easily detected or anything!), Abbie reminds you of how much far more dangerous people fuck with your mind. Yeah, he's still the same old Abbie, thank heavens, and he's positively inspiring to all us Yippies who haven't turned into Yups. On his premiere (Friday 3-5pm) show Abbie's panelists were "young" people (college-age; I don't think there were any high schoolers) who talked about the resurgence of campus activism. My mouth dropped when the Village Voice, once a bastion of freethinking liberalism, lambasted this show as tired and not reflective of the truth...almost as if to say they hoped activism wasn't coming back among the younger set, because look at what they've become...Well, Abbie's retained his individual credibility, and best of all, he's even seemed to mellow towards women-as-people in this age of post-feminism (or so they call it). I do sense a certain elitism, however, and would hope that Abbie doesn't blind himself in Village hipsterdom and neglect the fact that some of us out there may not be as famous as Paul Krassner or Peter Yarrow but still have a valid voice. I'm keeping my fingers crossed he decides to do a segment on the new small press world, and maybe I can get to see the show in person before, as the Washington Squares sing in Radio Free U.S.A.'s theme song, "they take us away."

Sayz-U!(Letters)

Dear Elayne,

IJ47 received and appreciated. It took only a couple of weeks to cross the Atlantic this time; an improvement on past times, me-thinks. Didn't understand the joke cover and article; I assume it's something to do with the much-maligned Devo, but they've got a very small following over here and those of us who do buy their albums know very little about the group or what they've been doing recently—if anything. Is a new album forthcoming or what? (*The best place to check is Beautiful World—ordering info, as usual, in "Fan Noose."*)

Anyway, the incomprehensible cover was nice to look at—pleasantly in the style of an American trying to be Japanese (cf also Scott McCloud). Inside was another story—well, several other stories, most of which were pretty good. Anni Ackner's column wasn't up to its usual heights of brilliance, ending up somewhere in the lower stratosphere instead of attaining orbital velocity. Actually, it was quite interesting, 'cos I'm sort of working on a sort of novel which is sort of about London and its forgotten landmarks and forgotten people; cutting through the tourist-ridden outer husk to expose the true heartwood of the great metropolis within. Anni seemed to be trying to do the same thing humourously and didn't quite make it. Ah well. Dum de dum.

"Double Standard" was very funny; I love true-to-life funny animals almost as much as I hate jerks who assume that the Government (any Government) Can Do No Wrong. At the moment our beloved leaders seem to be unable to Do No Right and every time we flip channels we just get reruns. Forgive me, I'm depressed.

SPAM! Aha! I once spent six weeks up at Loch Ness as a member of the Loch Ness and Morar Project (another story—I'll write you an article if you're interested) living almost entirely off Spam. Every night was a new experiment, to see if we could create something new out of the substance—Spam fritters were fairly popular, but barbecued Spam was the regular diet. Ah, the smell of Spam freshly cooked over an open fire on the banks of the Loch, gazing out over the waters...I can see you think I'm making this up. It's true, every word. Promise. Anyway, I may be going up to Ness again in October and I'll be sure to pack some pancake syrup this time.

Ace's inexperience is showing; he knows nothing about how to get a decent edge on a broken bottle. But that's another story...

M-M-M-Max Headroom! You don't know how glad I am to see that he's made it over to the States at last, where hopefully he'll attain the megastardom he's been yearning after for so long. You gave a nice review of the opening show; however, everything is not so hunky-dory as you make out. Oh Elayne, oh Elayne, you mean that you don't know? Max Headroom is not a computer-generated image. I realised this fairly early on in the series of programmes, but was stumped for what he really was, eventually putting a guess at some extremely detailed stop-frame animation work. Nope, I was wrong. The hideous, illusion-shattering truth about Max Headroom is that he's a guy in make-up. Yup. True. It takes four hours to put the make-up on each time, but that's cheaper than a few hundred hours developing a realistic computer image of a human face. The actor is the one who played Edison Carter in the hour-long episode. Max, incidentally, has appeared on a live UK chatshow (anyone heard of Terry Wogan? He's the BBC's answer to Johnny Carson), made a single with the Art of Noise (an incredibly pretentious pop group) and his second series has just finished. The interesting thing about the second series is that it was actually the first series of 12 or 13 half-hour programmes, chopped up and respliced so that the videos and clips of Max (same videos, same clips) came in a different order. They spliced in some utterly forgettable interviews with pop stars too—he did yawn while interviewing Sting, that's true, but talking to the likes of Roger Daltrey and Boy George was just so repetitive, bland and shallow that I was very tempted to switch off. Max Headroom has peaked over here; his two books aren't selling too well and other merchandise is going slowly. Still, enjoy him while he's around. Oh, and we haven't seen the Coke commercial over here yet, but he's doing voice-overs for a couple of things...can't quite remember what though...

I get fonder and fonder of "Commercial McClue-In" even though we see almost none of the same commercials over here. An interesting UK development is the recent proliferation of US commercials imported and redubbed so that the actors are talking in English accents—examples include Playtex bras and Odor-Eaters (imported here, complete with US spelling of "Odor"; we sensible people put an extra "u" in the word). I nearly got a job at McD recently (oh yeah, we get all the US McD commercials too) but was put off at the last moment by the thought of being ostracised from IJ. And what is this about NutraSweet? Over here people treat it as God's gift to fat people who like sugar. From the sound of your comments it seems to be a proven carcinogen or something. Can someone send me some literature about it? I'll swap for anything UK-produced and cheap. (*We, too, are trying to amass literature denouncing the evil aspartame, which apparently is not a carcinogen—yet—but just about everything else bad.*)

"4-Colour (sic) Fiend" was interesting, and it's nice to see someone else who is prepared to appreciate *Omaha, The Cat Dancer* in print. Issue 1 was banned in this country but issue 2 got through (hey, it's only got one sex scene and a humanoid female

cat masturbating, that's lightweight stuff. Joke, Elayne, joke.). I enjoy it because it shows the characters actually talking about their feelings and acting on those feelings in a human, approachable, understandable way—unlike, say, the X-Men where Chris Claremont has no idea of how to create dialogue that people could say out loud without being laughed at. Steve's taste in comics seems very similar to my own, but I disagree on one point—Alan Moore. Yes, the man is a genius. No, he couldn't write novels. I've read some of his prose and frankly it's not much good—introverted, convoluted, confused and a bit bland. Novels depend largely on plot and this is one of Big Al's failings (quote from an anonymous US comic scripter: "If Alan Moore could plot we'd have to get together and hire a hit man"); it's just you're so dazzled by his imagery that you don't notice. He thinks of great plot twists and so on, but the situations are often a bit—dare I say it?—clichéd.

Monkees—great stuff. The series is repeated over here every 2 or 3 years so every UK TV-watching kid since the late '60s has got a soft spot for the lovable quartet. Hell, I've got a couple of their albums and I was born in 1966, missing the fun bits of the '60s and '70s totally.

Lettercol... "Young Ones": yeah, yeah. I think that you guys have only seen part of the picture; you've seen the Young Ones but not the comic strip which is almost a companion series on the opposite network, using the same actors plus a few others, again in wacky plots with jokes about sex and many gratuitous obscenities but with different characters and situations each episode. The two series started at roughly the same time, part of the UK explosion of what was called "Alternative Comedy" and was designed to get laughs through its shock value—controversial plots, jokes about sex and personal hygiene and so on. It was a sort of Rolling Stones of comedy; parents hated it therefore kids loved it. Alternative comedy seems to have settled down a bit now; the actors are heading back to the traditional types of UK comedy show (sketches, impressions and surreal rather than shocking humour). Oh well. Wait a bit and the UK will do something original again; Monty Python, Young Ones—give it five years, okay?

Loved Deborah Benedict's grace; I'll have to use it. Try "Oh God, bless this bunch as they munch their lunch" sometime. As for credit cards, I have one but simply don't dare to use it because I know that if I started I'd be at least £100 in debt before I knew where I was. I find it hard to use my self-control with autocash tills anyway—"£10, £10...no, make it £15—well, £20—£30—AARGH!" Deborah seems like a nice enough person, liking Swampy and Charles Fort and even Chelsea Quinn Yarbro; but as someone who hasn't yet seen *Citizen Kane*, on principle I hate everyone who calls a sledge Rosebud. I knew that ending when I was about six, fer Chrissake! It's like revealing the end of an Agatha Christie story—lessee, her most famous is "The Mousetrap" (the world's longest-running play) and I've seen it, but I'd never ever reveal whodunnit, even though it's really simple to work it out by saying that it's almost impossible to guess the murderer. Come on, apply some lateral thinking and you can work it out without going near the theatre.

Hey, Candi, what's wrong with us tall people? I'm 6'4" and used to date a couple of girls (not at the same time) who were 5'0"...Oh, Elayne, I've just noticed that I've pinched your "Maiden Jappan" pseudonym—inadvertently, I assure you. My version is "Maiden Tai Wan" for the Personal Messages section of a local free advertising paper—it prints roughly 100-150 messages each week and a group of five of us (known as the Gang of 2½) put in roughly 70% of those messages each week, under a variety of false names. We're not supposed to put in more than three a week...still, it's fun, if irrelevant. Feel free to use my Urbane Spaceman handle as a swap, or Bugged Bunny if that strikes you as funnier. Coincidentally, one of the Gang of 2½ goes under the name of St. Eve when he's not referring to himself as Yuk Yuk...and he's American in origin. I wonder if they might be related..?

Anni's quite right, vampires are passé; everyone knows about stakes, holy water, garlic, crucifixes and so on. Werewolves are getting that way too but I think I'm still okay for awhile—have you ever tried to find a silver bullet while being chased by a large and hungry pseudo-canine? Being an atheist, crucifixes don't faze me at all, so I'm free to scamper around Leicester Square Underground (subway to you) station as much as I like. Actually, I've just finished writing an adventure for the Ghostbusters role-playing game, entitled "A British Werewolf in New York," which is probably hopelessly inaccurate about the locations used. Oh well. In terms of wardrobe my hair is a sort of lightish brown with a subtle silvery sheen to it...quite distinctive, although I'm obviously not really able to ask people about the alter effect. Arooooo...

Which reminds me, I know someone mentioned "Howard's Way," the soap opera. Actually the BBC describes it as a drama series, which gives you a rough idea of the Beeb's idea of drama. Personally it bores me stupid; the aforementioned Terry Wogan had the leading lady on his show last week and tore her character and the show to little tiny pieces—and she didn't mind! It seems that everyone knows it's dreadful except the people who watch it...

IJ48 was much appreciated, as always. Anni's back on top form. "On Carol" was extremely good; one of the best such pieces I've ever read. The thing without any title was interesting—I'm not quite sure if it was satirical or not; I assume so. Being a Zappa fan, I hope so. "Tenderloin" drags on. "A Strange Emptiness" was a good piece, communicating its message with a minimum

of fuss. Lots of film reviews—personally I thought ALIENS was more like Rambo Meets The Thing than Alien II but that's just me. Jim Kelley has got a lot to answer for. My own favourite bumper sticker? "Honk if you're an introvert." Dr. Iguana was pretty good; suitably crazed and just coherent enough to be enjoyable. McClue-In is a pun I still don't understand but "Kid" writes a good column. Narl Crag was amusing as a one-off but the sort of thing I don't reread in IJ. "Pigshit" meant little to me since we don't get the same reruns over here. "4-Colour Fiend" was informative but as a crazed comics fan I prefer more in-depth reviews. Still, they're good reviews for a non-comics zine. "Space Trip" was utterly forgettable (sorry, Sue. Fancy a date with a friend of mine, Ivan Uthaname?). "Sayz-UI"—lots of feedback on Max Headroom but none exposing the truth (see above), although I'm pretty sure I told Phil T (I'm James, his British penpal, by the way. Always nice to see someone confirming my identity in print).

Anyway, that's enough comment for now. On to other things. Congratulations on taking the bait and I'm already planning to come over to the US in 1988 to see you get hooked. Steve's a lucky guy. (Truth to tell, I'm luckier. The way things are going with certain parental units on yours truly's side, we may just say the hell with families and invite all IJ folk instead...)

...Basically I've observed that there seems to be a big gap between UK fanzines (quality articles and artwork written sanely on set topics) and UK apas (creation at its most manic and chaotic), so I'd like to set up something to fill the gap—something like a UK version of INSIDE JOKE. In fact, something a lot like a UK version of INSIDE JOKE. The name I've picked is INSTANT KARMA and now all I need are contributors of a standard halfway as good as IJ's... The sort of article I have in mind are some of Anni Ackner's pieces, which seem to be just as funny in the UK as the US, short fictions like "On Carol" and any other pieces that seem topical and/or amusing. Assuming you don't object to IJ suddenly getting a younger sister in a foreign land filled with commies, Libyan terrorists, lunatics, snobs, dope fiends, the Royal Family, Max Headroom and the Young Ones, I'd be very very grateful if you could print this letter or portions thereof in your lettercol... (Are you kidding? That sounds like last March's IJ party! Seriously, I couldn't be more flattered, and I urge everyone interested in "spreading the word" overseas to send in submissions for this new project!) Anyone whose work is reprinted will get a copy of the UK edition and I'll naturally send a copy of each issue of IK to Big Sister IJ in America.

Well, that seems to be all. Oh look, there's the bottom of the letter just a line below so I'd better sign off now before it reaches us.

Yours until touchdown,

JAMES WALLIS
The Manor House
Little Bealings
Woodbridge, SUFFOLK IP13 6LL
UNITED KINGDOM

Dear Elayne;

Good ish indeed, I loved it. Anni is superb when she "has nothing to write about;" most columnists should be so lucky. There were several real-life dark omens in her piece that I hope don't mean anything, though. Worry, worry... (Actually, at the risk of spoiling another inside joke, the end of Anni's column was intended as a veiled satirical reference to the almost obsessive deification on some people's parts of late IJ staffer Gerry Reith.) I would like to also single out "Commercial McClue-In" for special praise; it was well-written and balanced nicely between informing and amusing the reader. Good stuff!

J.C. PALMER ("RUDI RUBBEROID")
P.O. Box 2432
Bellingham, WA 98227-2432

Hiya Elayne,

I've only just started this letter and I can tell already it's gonna be a long one...see, I sat down yesterday and reread the last two IJs, plus your last letter, and took notes on things to write you about. Also, I marked in red in the IJs all the zines I wanna write off for in trade. Sooooo, these chores should keep me busy today. Looks like that'll use up my last few copies of this issue of the SSQ—a print run of 200. Maybe I'll have to print a few more. (I thought of a great slogan for the SSQ the other day whilst mulling that magical number: "One Out Of Every Million Americans Reads Sidney Suppey's Quarterly and Confused Pet Monthly." Sounds staggeringly insignificant when one puts it that way, but then again, it's the RIGHT one-out-of-every-million-Americans who reads it, so I guess I can be proud of my outreach.)...

Did you watch PEE-WEE'S PLAYHOUSE Saturday morning—nested like a truffle in a manure-pile amongst the other ghastly offerings in the new fall cartoon lineup? I'm amazed that he even got offered this air-time; somebody at the network musta done some market research that said PW had a high recognition factor or something. Me, I still think of him as a totally obscure guy, forgetting that a couple of million people musta seen his movie in the last year and so forth. The show had many cool things but everybody I know who's seen it says the same thing: "Geez—what a hyperactive show!" Well, whoever said Pee Wee had an attention span? Saturday night down at the Travel Lounge, everybody was doing Pee Wee gags like saying "I love my toys...but I don't wanna MARRY 'EM" and screaming in chorus every time someone said today's secret word, "door." Sooooo glad we got the first episode on videotape—think I'll fill up a whole tape with episodes, since I

have a sinking feeling that this show is too weird to live. Afraid that in a month or two it'll be replaced by Smurf reruns or something—but then again, who knows???? I don't understand whether real kids like this kind of show, or find it too strange. Anyway, how great to see a kidz show without the excessive moral messaging in most other kidshows. I half expected She-Ra to come on afterwards and say, "Now kids, don't REALLY try to make Ice Cream Soup like Pee Wee did..."

While we're on the topic of kidshows, I caught an odd new one yesterday in the middle of the afternoon—called ADVENTURES OF THE GALAXY RANGERS. You might wanna set your VCR to tape an episode some day and check it out. I'm not saying it's great—it's your basic stiff limited animation—but it's just a tiny bit better than it has to be. Kind of like Buckaroo Bonzai in the 23rd-and-a-half Century. The characters are a bunch of good-guy cowboys who wear sheriff badges, but they're really resistance fighters against the evil galactic empire...and they ride around on Robo-Steads. One of the characters is even a ringer for Team Banzai's Perfect Tommy. Many scenes taking place in bars that look like the bar scene bar in Star Wars. Occasionally madcap. Try checking it out if it's shown in your area...

Let's go get a carton of yogurt and start in on the INSIDE JOKE feedback. Issue 48 first, which had a lot of commentworthy material. Liked Anni's day-by-day diary of her mailbox contents—something I can readily identify with, as a person who for years has lived and died by the arrival of the daily mail. Michael Dobbs' TSHC parody of Paul Harvey amused me a lot. All thru the years I lived at home, Paul Harvey's surreally booming voice came into our home twice a day and was listened to by my mother with gospel reverence. So of course I'm set to enjoy any dig at him. Actually, I know a certain underground cartoonist who claimed he'd ghost-written some of Paul Harvey's "And That's The Rest of The Story" anecdotes, and he gave me the strong impression that his major form of research on these real-life-story features was the time-honored method called "making things up." Confirmed a suspicion I'd long had that P Harvey got his facts pretty much from the Twilight Zone...How wonderful to think that the twist-of-fate tales my mom piously quoted to me were written by a SubGenius person working as a freelancer.

Kenneth Burke got substantial mileage out of the concept of spraying bugs with random substances—one of those things that are funny but that I wouldn't go so far as to CONDONE OR EMULATE. (Be glad you're not doing a real mass-circulation magazine, or you'd be getting furious letters from the ASPCA [Cruelty to Animals and Insects] about this article.) And enjoyed Gary Pig Gold's appreciation of the intrinsic coolness of GREEN ACRES—the epitome of Lowlife Television. Altho these days I'm into ROUTE 66 myself. Also enjoyed Luke McGuff's description in the letters column about the regional ice cream ad campaign featuring painted cows that match the flavors. Wish we had those ads around here.

Speaking of ads, and speaking further of ads that mine the vein of warm cozy americanism, there's a set of killer ads on the air out here that I wish you could see—put out by the Safeway grocery mega-chain. (I think they're just found in the West, but maybe I'm wrong—maybe they have a foothold in the East too, and therefore maybe you've seen 'em.) Anyway, your usual shots of Workin' Folk, different sub-groups thereof in the different versions of this commercial—blue-collar hardworkin' folk, white-collar hardworkin' folk (a contradiction in terms, you say?), black HWF, Hispanic HWF, etc. etc. And the following anthem is sung heartily and hardworkin'ly in the background of each version: YOU WORK AN HONEST DAY, AND YOU WANT AN HONEST MEAL. The way I know this ad is insidiously effective is that every time I see it, I am speared with a jolt of guilt—realizing that because I am NOT working an honest day, therefore I DO NOT DESERVE AN HONEST MEAL. This ad probably wouldn't work in, say, Detroit or Cleveland or Pittsburgh where workin' folk are unemployed against their will—would probably make people FURIOUS there, would be taken as a real slap in the face. Then again maybe not—isn't it a basic principle in advertising that to motivate a consumer to buy a product, you must first make him feel flawed, inadequate, embarrassed? As in "Your breath stinks...but we're here to help with HALITOSISAWAY."

Comments on issue 47: Steve Scharff did an excellent job working a moment of overheard conversation into the cartoon DOUBLE STANDARD. He ain't no Frank Miller or John Byrne, but he got his point across very effectively. Prudence's "Absolutely Television" was pretty good as moth stories go. In passing, I'll say that James MacDougall's apology letter in IJ 47 showed a great deal of class, and my hat is off to him. So many people are so hell-bent these days in treating every difference of opinion in fanzine pages as a life or death matter worthy of feuding about, that it's a breath of fresh air to see somebody say in effect "whoops, I guess I shot my mouth off a bit on that one, let's just skip it."

Another IJ feature that I don't think I've ever bothered to mention but that deserves a word of praise is Phil Tortorici's back cover art. I don't always notice these covers when I'm looking at a single copy of INSIDE JOKE, but if one has a pile of IJs on one's desk to compare a few, they have a nice cumulative impact. His choice of obscure lines from songs which are sometimes equally obscure is always interesting. I'm waiting to see him visually explain the early-70s Genesis line "The winds of time were eroded by the reefer of constant change." Or maybe this one from the Waitresses' second album: "My goals are to find a cure for irony and make a fool out of God." And perhaps someday he'll

do a fully illustrated version of George Clinton's ATOMIC DOG? I especially liked one he did of an old old Roxy Music song (the name of which escapes me at the moment)...

Free Willie Nelson Mandela,
CANDI STRECKER
590 Lisbon
San Francisco, CA 94112

Elayne—

Re: old J.P. Morgan letter & your reply on brain-damaging commercials/TV: We must watch to maintain vigilance? Watch, and they win. We don't need TV, and if they get that message...actually, if you have no Nielson box, it makes no impact at all...

JAY HARBER
626 Paddock Lane
Libertyville, IL 60048

(When I spoke of maintaining vigilance, Jay, I wasn't presuming to suggest we The Viewers had the faintest chance of acquiring power over Them. It's much more important to know we're in control over our own impulses, those same impulses upon which advertisers constantly prey in order to get us to buy things we don't really need by focusing on our supposed inadequacies, desires to be loved and accepted, etc. [see Candi's letter above]. I still aver that They have more power if we fight back in our minds instead of pretending to ignore what's all around us anyway [tv commercials are only one form of advertising, which permeates just about everywhere] and letting the insidious messages seep into us unawares.)

Dear Elayne,

I'm reading the latest IJ on an Air India flight to London. It was either Air India or Air Kuwait and I just couldn't bring myself...

I never realized what a kick it is reading critiques/comments in letter form until this issue. I average 40-60 letters each issue of my GDS (GOOD DAY SUNSHINE Beatles zine), but they're usually targeted elsewhere. Debbie David's letter stopped me cold. I guess I'm just a fan after all.

For the record, I no longer produce Monkee Cons; haven't promoted one since '83.

Love Always,
Cheers,

CHARLES F. ROSENAY!!!
Somewhere In England

(Apologies for the mislabelling, Charles!!!, but you do still spell your name with three exclamation points and you can't figure out which sign-offs to use for your letters, so can you blame me? heh heh)

Elayne,

Here it is, 1986, and I'm still not used to the 80's. But with the help of your fine publication I am beginning to understand. Everybody else is lost as well! Some comments on the 80's and what I have learned from INSIDE JOKE:

THINGS I LIKE ABOUT THE 80's:

- Purple onions at Wendy's - How did I survive the 70's without them? One day, they were just there, on the salad bar. Put a pile of them on your morning burger and experience their mind clearing powers!

- VCRs - All your favorite shows, whenever you want to see them! Best of all, zip right past nasty commercials! Saves time and sanity!

- Bruce Springsteen Fever has died down slightly - In the 70's, college boys would expound for hours to me at work on "Bruce As God" or "Springsteen is real, he's from 'the streets'". In the 80's, he's dropped down for a deity to a mere archangel, right on the same rock cloud as Bob Seger, the Rolling Stones, or Led Zeppelin. But they still play his music too much on the radio.

- Super-Glue - It really does have 100 uses! Next time you get lousy service at a restaurant, but feel you have to leave something for a tip, Super-Glue a couple of quarters to the table. Super-Glue the wheels on the skateboard of the kid down the block! That'll teach him to ride up and down the sidewalk at 1pm when most normal people are sleeping!

- NutraSweet - Wow! This stuff is great! Makes diet pop taste just like real pop! I know for a fact it's safe, I'd fed it to my cat and she won't even drink milk! Besides, it's made with natural chemicals—like they say on teevee, if you've eaten crayons and paint chips, you've eaten what's in NutraSweet!

THINGS THAT BUG ME ABOUT THE 80's:

- Junior Mint boxes don't work as kazoo's anymore - What's the use of being a Toys-R-Us Kid if the simple fun of blowing on your candy box during a movie doesn't make ugly noises?

- Everyone is drunk in public - Back in the 70's, people would get high and float around harmlessly smiling and giggling at each other. Now it's fashionable to get very drunk and wander the streets looking for objects to ruin (small trees, dogs, street signs, etc.) or cars on which to throw up. If subhuman alco-teens would get blotto in their own homes (or, if they have to go out in public, act human), I wouldn't be such an old grouch.

- Patriotism as an advertising theme - I don't remember it being this bad even during the 1976 Bicentennial bullshit! What would the Founding Fathers think if they knew their ideals were being used to sell beer, cars, or get 6-year-olds primed to fight Comies among the banana trees (with GI Joe, Transformers, GoBots, etc.)? Would they care? I don't know. If George Washington were around today, he'd have his own talk show on late-night teevee, and Jefferson would own an appliance store.

- Forget birth control; what the 80's need is Smurf control! These cutesy little blue things are everywhere! Even the bookstore in which I hang out for hours reading comics and not buying

anything has a big display of "Smurf collectibles." Little rubber trinkets, for only \$2.96 each. I remember getting junk like this out of gum machines in a plastic capsule as a kid for a dime! Have parents grown more gullible, or have kids raised the shake-down to a new art form? The 70's had Scooby Doo, a god with a heavy addiction problem (Scooby Snacks) and a master who was a total slob!

- Kids are all such wimps. All they care about is getting through school and landing big-bucks jobs. I'd like to sneak on campus as a job recruiter and get to interview a couple of these cookie cut-oids for job with "Timco Inc.": "Gee, this resumé is printed on nice paper, I'd love to hire you, but you've never worked nights in a bowling alley. I don't know if you've got the depth for this job. Get a job at the car wash for awhile, and when your shoes get all hard and white from the soap, give me a call..."

I hope this ends some of my confusion, because the 90's are fast approaching.

Tonight I'm gonna party like it's 1999,

TIM ARNOLD
Box 6032
East Lansing, MI 48823

Dear Elayne—

It is 9:45 Sunday morning as I sit over a 99¢ breakfast special at the Patio Restaurant in Lake Worth. Barbara is conspicuously absent from this scenario, as she is working as a temporary paralegal for Beach Savings and Loan Association, nee Sunrise Savings and Loan Association, down in Boynton Beach, FL. Sunrise failed about 1982 or so due to mismanagement and bad loans to Third World countries who didn't sell enough drugs on the streets of America to pay off the interest (so help the American banking system; buy lots of drugs).

Due to my excursion to the World Science Fiction convention around Labor Day, my graphic contribution to this fine publication will be detained about two to four days, but I will send this ahead, to blaze the trail, so to speak.

The WorldCon was an educational experience for me and I am even more excited about cartooning than I was before. Elayne, as I talked up IJ among the fans, there were some who know of you still. (Oh dear, try as one may, one can never truly escape from one's awful past, can one?) I have a friend here in Florida who knows of Anni's musings through the apa to which she contributes, and my friend recognizes the names of several IJ staffers past and present. She is currently reading through all of the back issues I have of IJ to catch up on events.

For some reason, I haven't been able to sit and read IJ #48, but merely skim it, so my remarks may be cursory. Barbara and I both love Anni's column, and she reads it first out of all the items in IJ. Me, I start at the "Sayz-U," then go back to the beginning. Anni, I sympathize about the bridal shower. We just went to a cousin's wedding and reception, and there was an over-riding aura of tackiness to the whole pagan affair. The only good thing about the weekend was the fact that I got an article finished that I had been working on for some while. On mail, I like mail. I love mail. I like to see my post office box crammed full of neat stuff from strange organizations, people I don't know, and fanzines. I get on mailing lists just to see what junk mail I'll receive. If I don't get anything fun in the mail, it puts a damper on the day. That's why I love fanzines. That's part of the reason why I cartoon.

There are two side bars about postal things which are somewhat related to Anni's column. The first concerns junk mail and solicitations. I am working out the details of a guerilla campaign against junk mail (more later). The second consists of a mail diary special INSIDE JOKE issue. I imagine that the staffers get some pretty interesting stuff through the postal service. (Well, if they do, from what I understand, precious little of it comes from IJ readers. Next issue we'll again post staffer addresses, and please, if you're so disposed, staffers would love to hear from you personally, folks!) This seems like a good idea now, but now that I think of it, maybe it's not so good. It's the price I pay for spontaneity (know that I think of it, it sounds damn silly).

Onward: "Zenarchy Stories" once again made sense. Am I evolving or devolving? I don't know. Steve Scharff, I could tell you stories of the furniture finishing business, but they wouldn't make sense to anyone on the outside of the decorating business. I don't remember any funny retail stories, but I have a funny radio advertising sales story. I was a New York Italian suburban brat selling black radio to white southern businessmen. If that's not a sitcom, what is?

I am not hostile enough this morning to take on "Snide Critic Reviews." My interest in movies comes and goes. I am also training myself to avoid television. When I get my VCR, I will probably stop watching television altogether (at its scheduled times, at least). "The Crosswords of Code" looks like it will be an interesting concept.

"Commercial McClue-In"—I like the toys they create for the Ever-Ready battery commercials.

Hey, I can agree with Narl Crag. I like cute stuff, too. I try not to be that violent, though. I saw an article on "Green Acres" in the Village Voice awhile back. Same basic attitudes and opinions as Gary, here. I'll probably start taping these shows off of late-night TV, along with the George Burns and Jack Benny shows, when I get the VCR. George Burns got into some surrealism, too.

Steve, have you seen the Boris the Bear comic? If you are lucky, you might be able to find a copy of it somewhere. Boris slaughters all of the teenage mutant radioactive critters in this one. I think you would like it.

On the letters...Rodny Dioxin, I am surprised at you. I didn't realize you were into anything as mundane as science fiction. I read about that very same exhibit at Disclave in File 770. On that subject, in reading through some of the bigger s-f fanzines I find that when art shows are discussed, the art that is most mentioned in the articles is in the humoroidous vein. I find comfort in that.

J.P.: Have you seen a doctor about that ranting of yours? Better yet, get it down on tape before you forget it, for inspiration. While it would be futile for me to try to comment on what you have said, let me say that I am sorry that I had to work on Saturday, because I missed the debut of the Care Bears and Ghostbusters Saturday morning cartoons. On one of the local stations here in town, the WWII vintage Warner Bros. cartoons air at around seven a.m. I am going to have to get them on tape, too. They are real rude; I appreciate their cultural commentary.

As for Luke's letter, well, I understand how he feels about work. In the furniture finishing biz, I take great delight in taking an ugly piece of furniture, and being paid to make it uglier still. Then there is work that I won't do on principle, like over-restoring antiques or wet-look lacquer work.

The new Florida state motto, according to the Department of Commerce, is "Florida—Things Are Different Here.", or something to that effect. With Florida being at the bottom of the fifty states in education and social services, you can certainly say that.

Well, folks, I have finally decided to get religion and join the Church of the SubGenius. I have had enough of fundamentalism and now I am going to fight back. I read somewhere that the church was going belly-up due to lack of support so I hope I am not too late.

Oh, and one final thing. Remember the back cover I did about the key fobs? Well, I was serious—I do have a twelve-foot-long key chain hanging on the wall of our apartment, and I was hoping to get some more to add to the bottom. Not one key fob arrived. Talk about missing an inside joke. Sheesh.

It's a chaotic universe out there, and if there is an order to it, it's probably "At ease, men!"

Yours,

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

(AN OPEN NOTE TO IJ READERS:

It was a flying whoontsis, dammit. Not a Moth!!
PRUDENCE GAELOR)

Dear Elayne,

I wonder if the lateness of IJ 48 has as much to do with illness and mechanical difficulties as it does with Mr. Chaput being around (a bit distracted are you, Elayne? And who can blame you?). (Much as I'd like to agree, I'm afraid it really was a bout with skin poisoning and food poisoning simultaneously, which kept me out of work for a couple days, together with Debbie's wonder-copy machine catching on fire the evening we were to run off IJ, thus moving the "press date" back a week. It had all been laid out on time, honest. Besides, even Steve acknowledges that the only thing that can distract me when laying out IJ is baseball...)

Actually, what does it matter, as everybody putting out small press zines is always late (actually, in more than 2 years of this I did get PHOEBE out on time once; I wish I could remember how I did it).

This leads to some distress, since there's a time each month when all the zines you trade with are late, and you begin to wonder...has the whole small-press world turned on you, have you been forsaken? Does everybody hate your stuff so much they've all broken off trading and not told you? As a few zines trickle in through the mail this anxiety may or may not pass, until next month.

"Commercial McClue-In" mentioned the incongruous music in the Michelob commercials. I thought I'd point out what I think is the dumbest choice of music ever aired for advertising purposes. Have you heard the Burger King Chicken Tenders commercial? Have these people thought about what they are spending a lot of money to say about their product? "Ain't nothing like the real thing"? Indeed it ain't! But hey, what can you expect, this comes from the same brilliant people who brought us Herb (the might of America's advertising machine being brought to bear to sell one hamburger to one man). The whole chicken lumps war has gotten very, very dumb with McDonald's countering with the Shanghai marketing strategy. Ingenious. Could you please hold the McChopsticks and that pathetic sweet and sour sauce and give me some barbecue dip and some honey? What do you mean you only have Shanghai chicken dips! Ugh!! The only up note in the whole mess comes from the Colonel's with some rather entertaining bits of animation (give 'em hell, Harlan!). (I thought the animation was Will Vinton. Oh well...)

Cheers!

JAMES MACDOUGALL
511 Routes 5 & 20
Waterloo, NY 13165

Dear Elayne:

Greetings, as they say, from that ineffable blot on the highway that we like to call Wyomissing, Pennsylvania. Located between the quaint hamlet of West Reading—famous for its many resale boutiques, its adorable post office located on half the notions

counter in a cunning little dress shop, its complete lack of a supermarket, and Neal's Oyster House, world-renowned for its innovations in the way of seafood, including its fabulous 200 lb. fried clams and its acclaimed Totally Oyster-Free Oyster Stew—and the mysterious, magical Highway Fifth Avenue, that strip of land where, it is reputed, old shopping malls go to die, Wyomissing is best known for being one of the few communities in the world of under 10,000 people that can boast four separate motels, three of which have HBO piped directly into the rooms. Besides this claim to fame, of which it is justly proud, Wyomissing also hosts a Friendly's ice cream parlour, a gas station that routinely dispenses Goo Goo Clusters—an amazing concoction whose working ingredients are chocolate ice cream, marshmallow, peanuts, caramel and milk chocolate, heaven in a wrapper for 60¢—an A-1 Mini-Mart (a species of 7-11 that roosts, like the Goo Goo Cluster, in gas stations), Wynnewood at Wyomissing, that peculiar clump of white brick buildings wherein your humble narrator is currently making her home, and, actually, not a whole lot else. Well, they do tell me there is a library somewhere around here, but, frankly, I have yet to see it and I can scarcely credit its existence, as the only thing I have seen anyone read around here during my tenure is the READING EAGLE, which is the sort of newspaper from which David Letterman likes to read snippets at odd moments. I have, in all fairness, seen a library in Reading (farther down the road from West Reading, Reading is notably mainly for the Pep Boys, Manny, Moe and Jack, who have their headquarters, complete with large, plaster likenesses of themselves, on the principle street, and for the fact that 3/4 of the place is boarded up, the majority of the shops having long ago made the Big Pilgrimage out to the malls), but this is a little like saying that one believes in fairies because one once saw David Copperfield, so I tend to discount it as evidence.

Anyway, and to be perfectly honest, now that I have been here for nearly three weeks, I have begun to receive the slightest inkling of an impression—oh, just the tiniest—that I may possibly have made a mistake of rather disastrous proportions. I had, you see, expected a lovely small town—something on the order of wherever it is Dick Loudon has his inn—in which I might dwell in comfort and obscurity, harmonizing with the natives and taking long, brooding walks on the commons. What I found, instead, was a kind of warehouse community where shopping mall customers are stored when they aren't in use, which is rather disappointing. There are, of course, compensations—the Goo Goo Clusters, the giant mechanical animals (a penguin and a gorilla) that adorn Highway Fifth, the antic and amusing television arrangement (in which CBS is usually Channel 15, which one receives by tuning in Channel 13, except when it's Channel 10, and it's possible to pick up the Yankee games—even though this is Philly country—by tuning to either Channel 4, 5, 10 or 11, depending on who isn't showing something else that evening), the Sunday brunches at Elby's restaurant where, for under \$4, one is invited to gorge oneself on an all-you-can-eat buffet of scrambled eggs, sausage, bacon, cottage fried potatoes, fresh fruit, spiced apples, butter-milk biscuits, blueberry muffins, pancakes, and two kinds of donuts. Note Pœurri, a wonderful store in West Reading that sells everything to delight a rapid correspondent's heart—but I wonder, sometimes, it is enough? Well, we shall see about that, but, in the meantime, given all the free time that I now have on my hands—aside from the fact that there simply isn't that much to do around here, no one seems to work at a full-time job, so I am having some minor difficulty in finding something to do to support myself. I have the uneasy feeling that eventually I'm going to end up behind the counter at Arby's—I have no excuse for not writing you a nice IJ letter. And so...

I have to say right off the bat that Michael Polo's MANHATTANO was one of the only poem parodies I've ever read that seemed worth the trouble of writing, that actually made me laugh, and that knew enough to stick to the rhyme scheme and meter of the original. That last is so terribly important for making something like this work, and it's amazing how few would-be parodists realize that they're defeating themselves right at the start by not doing it—kudos to Mr. Polo. I hope to see more of his stuff in IJ.

I was also rather pleased with Lawrence Oberc's new story. It's the first one I've seen of his that didn't seem dated and anachronistic, and therefore is a great improvement over all the others. I hope to see more from him along these lines—there, I knew he could do it.

Thanks to "Kid" for taking care of those reprehensible Jördache "everything I say is important because I'm a teenager" commercials so neatly, though I did want to add that the thing that most bothers me about one of them is when the Mollyclone implies that she's "a little bit overweight." This would be fine, except that the actress/model happens to be quite a bit thin—if any of those impressionable young minds are actually paying attention to all this rubbish, I can see some cases of anorexia in the making. And speaking of people getting dressed up in animal suits, what does "Kid" make of the commercials for that wine cooler (I don't remember which one) in which all the semi-famous (Stephen Furst is the one that comes most readily to my mind; he's my favourite ST. ELSEWHERE actor) people appear in polar bear outfits? I think they're sort of cute, but then, I'm peculiar...

Aside from that, I was also fond of Gary Pig Gold's piece on television re-runs because, as we know, watching them is one of my favourite pastimes, and Prudence Gaelor's ON CAROL, though I do miss the Pink Bunny stories. Ace Backwards can print the last

chapter of his story on the front page of the New York Times for all of me, but, actually, I've never been sure that serials on any subject work over the long run, anyway, with a couple of exceptions. I do think, though, that you may be overreacting a little to Rodney Dioxin's—God knows, I'm fairly bored with the thing and probably won't read any more of it, but the "implied lesbian sex" is so mild and so understated that I can't really see that it's much of a problem, unless it gets more graphic as the story progresses. (Actually, I didn't consider it graphic either, just totally superfluous and irrelevant and, well, *MTINTK.*) Still, Rodney, there is a fairly successful play running called *VAMPIRE LESBIANS OF SODOM*, so this is scarcely an original thought, which is surprising from someone who is usually so inventive. Or perhaps it's just that I'd fed to the little pointed teeth with vampires. Can't we please have a werewolf?

But there, it's 4am, and I wanted to get up tomorrow and go play in another shopping mall. And the Fillmore reunion is on HBO in the evening—John Sebastian!—so I've got to be sharp for that. Send lawyers, guns and money—life is hard in the backwoods.

Life is a factory outlet,

ANNI ACKNER
Wynnewood at Wyomissing
855 N. Park Rd., #CC103
Wyomissing, PA 19610

Billy Blues

by Larry Blazek

"It's so eeeeasy to get yer sister preeeeegnant! When yer in the buuushes doin' druuuugs, oh yeah!"

"BLEEEEEEEEEEP!"

"Hey Don, what the fuck's goin' on up there?"

"It's the Censorship Bureau. They say you can't write songs that invite young people to have sex or take drugs any more."

The bloodshot-eyed blues singer inhaled deeply upon his pipe a few times, then began to pick out a new song:

"Baby on a bayonet
bullet in his brain
this is all we've learnt yet
pain, pain, pain
baby on a bayonet
bullet in his brain
tank on the railroad track
just to stop the train
Throw down your weapons
stand over there
remove your clothing
take off your underwear
jump down in the ditch
lay faces down
if you look, you will never
even see a frown
when we put
your baby on a bayonet
bullet in his brain
his bloody body's a banner
we are the new sane!
fair fighting, one-to-one?
that's not for us
our uncle has programmed out
love, care, disgust
each soldier obedient
to his country
lucky bloody baby
(see him wave?)
at least he's free....."

"It's a wrap. Go home, Bill."

"Hey, where's my case of JD and my fin?"

"We can't pay you like that any more, Bill; just sign this contract and accept this check for \$10,000.00, plus royalties..."

"I'm not gonna screw with no damn check and I'm not gonna sign no fucking contract! Look what happened to Elvis! An' I shore as hell ain't gonna put on a dress or get a fuckin' haircut...."

"This isn't like that at all, Bill! This is just an agreement to let us use your song! We've got a guy who wears a dress with a pink mohawk to sing it, no one's gonna hassle you or anything..."

"I can't cash no check, I ain't got no bank account."

"We can arrange to pay you cash."

Billy Blues, the anonymous composer of hundreds of popular songs, carefully read his contract. He signed and was paid cash; no one is sure what Bill ever did with all that cash. Some say he dropped it into a Salvation Army bucket, less the price of a case of JD and five dollars...

TRAVEL IN FLORIDA AND MAKE
BIG MONEY AT THE SAME TIME
waxing shuffle boards and
then send \$1 of that money
to WALL-OP, 2981 Lookout
Place, Atlanta, GA 30305
and get four very unusual
original wall posters!



EXECUTION

by D.A. Beast

Rob was standing across the street from the building with the ultra-modernistic one-way mirror plate glass front. It was late, after 3am, and the vision of that glass had been building in his mind all night, most likely a lot longer than that. He had gathered several heavy bricks together and his intention, to anyone who might be around to see (but who was not), was obvious.

The building, which just happened to be there, was about to share the same fate as the insides of Rob.

He picked up the bricks and crossed the deserted avenue to the scene of the execution, not even attempting to hide from the stark glares of the street lamps. He was feeling nothing to hide. Once across the street, he methodically lobbed the first brick into the delicate shell, marvelling as, in slow motion, a ten-foot high sheet of dark glass decomposed in a loud crash into nothingness.

It was impossible to tell what the building was feeling, but what Rob was feeling was a tiny venting of a powerful pressure. The crashing glass was the crash of broken affection he had given so often, only to have it crushed into the ground under a heel of non-caring.

The second brick a second later found its mark in the center of the next panel. The disintegration of that one brought to mind another rebuke of an emotion he had shown only to have it smashed back into his own being as not needed, not wanted.

He was not fortunate enough to never have known love; indeed, it was because he had that this outward destruction was taking place. He had known what the other side was like and had smashed that himself, before understanding, in stupidity, just as he was doing at this moment on another level.

The final brick finished off a third panel, as the street seemed to come alive with the sounds of dying glass walls.

Something was escaping from inside the building; massive clouds of air-conditioned cold hit Rob in the face and the screams (dying screams? on the alarm system?) pounded in his ears. There was no desire to run and, indeed, nowhere to run to, for this act was a futile catharsis to purify what no act of violence ever could purify—the starvation for some kind of affection, for caring.

Soon the cop cars would be there and soon Rob would be behind bars and in the morning, tucked somewhere in the paper that would hours later be blowing down the streets all over the city, would be a short article on how delinquents were constantly defacing the beauty of the city.

This IT
has been
hand-numbered
for your
protecti-uh,
I mean,
for my ease...
Sorry we're
a few days
late again,
but the

wonder-machine was full up doing Conspiracy
(i.e., "real world") jobs & we have to settle,
obviously, for getting it when we can! See
you for the Gala #50! - Gw

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