

INSIDE JOKE

A NEWS LETTER OF COMEDY CREATIVITY COMEDY CREATIVITY COMEDY

* GARDEN & FIELD ISSUE

International

MAY
no: 1996

THIS
ISSUE...

**I.J.
TIME CAPSULE
DUG UP BY RAMPAGING
N.Y. BOTANIST**

→ REPRINTED HERE IN ENTIRETY!!

EXTRATERRESTRIAL LIFE

• the extraordinary true story of intelligent plants from **BROOKLYN**... by our CALIFORNIA EDITOR E.W.C.

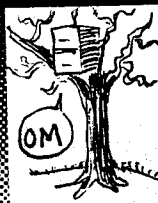
BACKWORDS PLANTING

by
ACE GARDNER

HOW TO photocopy
CENTRAL PARK'S
natural BEAUTY!
by DEBORAH XEROX

DR. IGUANA RUNS

FOR OFFICE AS CHAIRMAN OF
NATIONAL ZENARCHY PARTY
RUMORED HIDING IN FILE
CABINET, SPEAKS IN PARABLES
FROM A TREE.



YOSSARIAN bulletin amended by **SUBGENIUS
MINISTER** during tree dedication ceremony at the
WHITE HOUSE. READ this **EXCLUSIVE** report telling
how "**BOB**" DOLE predicts the T.V. fall schedule of
new shows proves subversive programming is good for you!



PRICE: 1996.50 DOLLARS. 1987 A BARGAIN AT ONE DOLLAR!

ACKNOWLEDITORIAL

Welcome to spring 1987, baseball season and all that good stuff—and in honor of the renewal of life going on around us, I'm pleased to announce that starting with our next issue, we will once more attempt to go HEXA WEEKLY. The scenario is as follows:

Upcoming Events

APRIL 20 - Harold Lloyd (b. 1894)
 APRIL 23 - Shirley Temple (59); Roy Orbison (51)
 APRIL 24 - Shirley MacLaine (53 in this life)
 APRIL 25 - Edward M. Murrow (b. 1908); Marconi (b. 1874)
 APRIL 26 - William Shakespeare (b. 1564)
 MAY 1 - Judy Collins (47); Joseph Heller (53)
 MAY 3 - Pete Seeger (67)
 MAY 5 - Karl Marx (b. 1818); Michael Palin (44)
 MAY 6 - Orson Welles (b. 1915); Freud (b. 1856)
 MAY 10 - Fred Astaire (88)
 MAY 11 - Salvador Dali (83)
 MAY 15 - L. Frank Baum (b. 1856); Brian Eno (?)
 MAY 16 - VAL WECHSLER (29); Studs Terkel (75)
 MAY 19 - Ho Chi Min (b. 1890); Pete Townshend (42)
 MAY 22 - Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (b. 1859)
 MAY 23 - Anton Mesmer (b. 1734)
 MAY 24 - Bob Dylan (46); Brooklyn Bridge (104)
 MAY 25 - BILL-DALE MARCINKO (29)
 MAY 26 - Harlan Ellison (53)
 MAY 27 - Dashiell Hammett (b. 1894); Golden Gate Br. (49)
 MAY 29 - G. MICHAEL DOBBS (33); T.H. White (b. 1906)
 MAY 30 - Mel Blanc (79)
 MAY 31 - Fred Allen (b. 1894)
 JUNE 1 - Marilyn Monroe (b. 1926)
 JUNE 3 - Allen Ginsberg (61)
 JUNE 5 - Laurie Anderson (40)
 JUNE 7 - Thurman Munson (b. 1947)
 JUNE 8 - DORIAN TENORE (24)
 JUNE 9 - Cole Porter (b. 1893)
 JUNE 10 - STEVE COZZI (32); CHARLES F. ROSENAY!!! (29);
 Judy Garland (b. 1922); Maurice Sendak (59)
 JUNE 11 - Gene Wilder (52)
 JUNE 16 - Stan Laurel (b. 1895); Joyce Carol Oates (49)
 JUNE 17 - M.C. Escher (b. 1898)

* INSIDE JOKE is put on, temporarily bimonthly, by Elayne
 * Wechsler and many dear friends and emanates from beautiful
 * downtown Brooklyn, about which nothing witty can be written
 * at 6am (you try it sometime). Print run approx. 200.

* EDITOR-IN-RESIDENCE.....ELAYNE WECHSLER
 * PRODUCTION ASSISTANT/FIANCÉE-AT-LARGE.....STEVE CHAPUT
 * XEROSKELETON.....DEBBIE DAVID

FRONT COVER BY DATA

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 * J.P. MORGAN===LARRY OBERC===SUSAN PACKIE===STEVEN SCHARFF
 * ==DAVID SERLIN==KERRY THORNLEY==PHIL TORTORICI==A.J. WRIGHT==

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS THIS ISSUE:

* ANDY AMSTER	GARY PIG GOLD	JOHN OHLINGER
* TIM ARNOLD	ADJA GORBACH	MICHAEL POLO
* NICK AUMILLER	VERNON GRANT	HANK ROLL
* VINNIE BARTILUCCI	MIKE GUNDERLOY	st.EVE
* D.A. BEAST	JAY HARBER	MIKE SELENDER
* LARRY BLAZEK	MARY ANN HENN	DANA A. SNOW
* NINA BOGIN	WAYNE HOGAN	CANDI STRECKER
* BRIAN CATANZARO	KIT	DORIAN TENORE
* TOM CHAN	TULI KUPFERBERG	JAMES WALLIS
* TOM CORNEJO	LYN LIFSHIN	SIGMUND WEISS
* JAY DEFELICIS	JED MARTINEZ	ROBIN LYNNE WIDMEYER
* TOM DEJA	ROGER MORRIS	ROBERT WILSON-WHEATLEY
* ADAM EISENSTAT	ERIK NELSON	and "KID" SIEVE

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 the Yossarian Universal News Service

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 * Writers'/Artists' Guidelines available for SASE

Our Esteemed Printer (EP) returns to her old copy shop once a quarter to print her own work. These dates (in mid-June, mid-September, mid-December and mid-March) coincide with what will be the printings of our odd-numbered issues (53, 55, etc.). For our even-numbered issues, things get a bit trickier—our EP must run these off 10 or 20 at a time, as she's been doing the past couple bimonthlies, surreptitiously at her new shop (at great personal risk). Ergo, those IJs take at least three weeks to achieve our normal print run of 200 or so, and will probably be mailed out piecemeal (staffers getting priority, then subscribers, and lastly trades) as have been the last couple issues.

Therefore, for even-numbered issues, I will not be waiting on submissions, letters, artwork and so forth, as they must be out six weeks between the quarterly (odd-numbered) runs. Issues 54, 56 and so on will be laid out even as the previous IJ gets mailed out. And while I have enough backlog to fill several issues without even getting new stuff, since I can't wait on submissions for even issues they may indeed turn out shorter than our recently humongous undertakings (a blessing in disguise!).

Got all that? Okay, here's what it means: Starting with the two upcoming issues, I'm urging you contributors (especially the staffers, who are more bound to deadlines) to submit work to IJ (with the exception of letters, naturally; comments will continue to refer to the last two issues, almost like a "real magazine") on a two-issue basis if at all possible, so I can start work on even issues while odd ones (some may say, they're all odd) are going out. I now operate a nifty copy machine at my own "Conspiracy job," which makes quality reductions and masters (unfortunately, it doesn't copy two sides), so the mechanical aspects of putting IJ together will be sped up; but I do ask that, until we all get the hang of this new 2-issue odd/even schedule (just think back to the gas crisis, if that will help) you try not to make your stuff too dated, unless you speak to me about it first.

Depending on luck and circumstances, all this is subject to change, but that's how it is for now. And remember, deadlines should clue you in more to the date I hope to receive your stuff than the day you should mail it to me (and note, #10 legal-size envelopes will always reach me faster than 9 x 12 manilas).

Now that that's all out of the way, Steve and I would like to thank all of you who attended our Annual IJ Everything-Party, and promise another Countdown To Cookie-Puss same time (approximately) next year. Thanks, too, to the folks who participated in the annual Gerber (round-robin story), which appears elsewhere this issue under a suitably palindromic title. And I'm sorry I didn't remember to hand out extra questionnaires for inclusion in the second part of our response report on page 23, but I was busy with the stupid little hot dogs and chicken nuggets...

And speaking of things in this issue, several things—like Deborah's expounding on the word "passivity," my essay on satire and more than one or two worthy bits from all participants—won't be in this time because of space limitations. I can't afford to put out a zine of more than 32 pages, because the postage then goes above 56¢. Which brings me to a suggestion of which I'm not too fond but which I want to throw out anyway for your opinions: As IJ has not weighed in under 3 oz. in a long time, would it be fair to now begin asking one-shot and mini-comic trades, and of course all "other" (non-staffer) contributors who've opted to send me stamps—as is your right—instead of the dollar subscription, to start sending me 56¢ (3 oz.) worth instead of only 39¢ (2 oz.)? Based on your response, I won't be implementing this until issue 54 at the earliest, but if you think it's a bit much to ask I'll leave the whole thing be. (Oh, and for Canadians that postage is 40¢ for 2 oz., 58¢ for three.) Of course, if the day ever comes when it looks like we might be going back to 24 pages, postage changes would/will revert to the 2 oz. cost.

Appreciations to our newest staffer (see page 3 or 4), any and all those who've contributed money (esp. J.C. Brainbeau) or stamps to The Cause, and the many enthusiastic folk who've sent in enough front covers to give us a backlog well into next year! I'm also grateful to those (like "guest returnee" Candi Strecker) who've made their own headlines—it saves me lots of icky work with transfer lettering, which I don't do at all well.

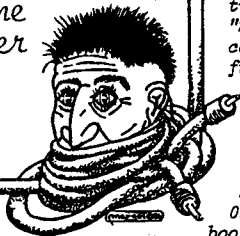
The deadline for IJ #53 is May 15, and for IJ #54 it is June 30 (subsequent deadlines can be calculated hexa weekly from there). Please try to be prompt, and do try to keep written submissions under 1900 words (approx. one page of reduced type). If you're a new reader (welcome!) and aren't sure what submissions are acceptable or MTINTK (More Than I Need To Know), send for the Guidelines or ask me. Issues of IJ (including sample issues) cost \$1 each; I trade with editors of like zines either all-for-all (if you publish regularly) or on a one-for-one basis (if you're sporadic). As mentioned above, non-staffer contributors and one-shot/mini-comic trades are submission/publication + 2 oz. in postage (39¢ US, 40¢ Can.). Stamps are not acceptable for advance subscriptions, which are NON-REFUNDABLE and which I usually don't like to accept in excess of \$8 (about a year's worth of IJs). If you're into checks or m.o.'s, please make them out to my name, not to INSIDE JOKE, which does not have its own bank account. If an "X" appears next to your name on the address label, it's time to renew; and if you'd like back issues (at \$1 each) or nifty IJ caps (\$5 each), they're available in abundance.

Send watacha got to me at

P.O. Box 1609, Madison Square Sta., New York, NY 10159
 A lot of mighty interesting people, like Jules Bergman and Bill Baird and Robert Preston and Randolph Scott, are no longer with us here on this mortal plane &c, but the one I shall miss the most (in fact, the first time I remember crying at hearing of a celeb's death since the assassination of Lennon) is and will always be one of my heroes, Danny Kaye. This issue of IJ is dedicated to him.

Fan Noose

by
Elayne
Wechsler



Lordy I hate starting off with an apology, but it can't be helped—there just weren't enough hours in my commuting day to read all the zines I'm pressed by our deadline to review for youz, not even the new ones. So if you'll promise to bear with me, and who knows why, I'll begin by sincerely thanking those good folks who've given us a plug and/or printed stuff written by me (the latter is so identified in the plugs below as "SBM")—while there's no accounting for taste, I'm grateful...First off, a couple announcements: If you too would like a GIVE AIDS TO THE CONTRAS bumper sticker, send \$ (\$3 for 5, \$10 for 15) to Aftertaste, 10 Round Hill Road, Lexington, MA 02173...Wayne Hogan has chapbooks for sale, and you can get

this Falling Water Farm Press list by sending him a SASE to P.O. Box 842, Cookeville, TN 38503...And Dolphin Moon Press (that's Margot Inaley and Nick Aumiller, among others) have just pubbed their D-M Newsletter to bring friends up to date; for a peek send a SASE to P.O. Box 22262, Baltimore, MD 21203...After the initial plugs of things new to IJ, I shall be listing all other publications in the "regulars" column, which this time consists of the name of pub., editor and address, subject matter (if any) and price, and how highly I recommend it/how much I like it, that sort of thing. Obviously, my opinions are highly subjective and not shared by all of you, and honestly, I wouldn't be trading with any of these zines if I didn't find merit in each one, but you can be pretty sure that anything that gets 5* (the highest on my arbitrary scale) is something I feel right in "pushing" on you. Let me know if you think this temporary system should become more permanent—and, as always, if you'd like to know more about any of these worthy ventures, please ask and I'll gladly go into more detail...A sad note, first—SPACE-TIME CONTINUUM AND YOUR POCKET WRENCH will probably cease publication with their next issue (#13 just came out), but I think the editors are all defecting here, so you'll still be able to read their stuff. For more info, see the autobio of our newest staffer elsewhere on this page...I'm pleased as punch to announce that the first issue of our UK "sister publication," INSTANT KARMA, is actually out at last, but it does perturb me quite a bit that editor James Wallis, at age 20, is a much better editor than am I (at 29), even fixing up the article I wrote for him so it comes out ten times funnier than when I penned it. Many IJ favorites are reprinted within, for those of you who would rather see a "best of" than get IJ back issues, and there's also newer stuff from James and his British cohorts. James sells IK in England for 80p, so if you're on this side of the Atlantic send him lots of IRC's, I guess, at Flat 5, 139 Hainault Rd., London, E11 1DT, ENGLAND...It's always nice to find another Discordian lurking in the woodwork, and Kenn Day's KALLISTI KOMICS has a lot of nice collage work and metaphysical and wisdom from Ho Chi Zen and continuing stories for the yearning Erisian in us all—recommended and available for \$1 (be sure to Fjord it) to P.O. Box 19566, Cincinnati, OH 45219...Elissa Rashkin has moved to Manhattan and started publishing a mini-zine called ENOUGH HOPE, the latest incarnation of her Hamsterama and way cool—send a SASE to her at P.O. Box 20375, New York, NY 10025...Sean Wolf Hill bills TIME WORM as "the magazine for misfits," and if you think our layout's crowded and print's small, check this out, it's worth laboring through. Sean's also planning a cassette issue soon—write him for info at 37 E. Hudson St., Dayton, OH 45405...Local papers don't always carry the comic strips and editorial cartoons you really want to read and paste on your fridge, and now FUNNY TIMES attempts to fill that gap admirably—it's available for free if you're lucky enough to live in Cleveland; otherwise send \$11 for 24 issues of this bi-weekly newspaper to Raymond Lesser (but make checks out to FT, I think), P.O. Box 18792, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118...JAVA is a very impressive creative zine, presumably quarterly but the issue they sent me was old—aw, what the heck, it's good, patronize it anyway. The essays are especially keen—send a buck or two to Ann Wood, P.O. Box 7461, Columbia, MO 65201...The only reason I'm mentioning GENESIS 2, "An Independent Voice for Jewish Renewal," in these columns (it being an actual small press periodical rather than a zine) is because it's now being edited by Lawrence Bush, a/k/a L.D. Babushkin (address below). I'm giving this to my parents to perhaps get them to think more progressively (though I have my doubts on that count)...Whatever an "anarchosyn-dicalist" is, a bunch of them calling themselves the local chapter of the International Workers Association put out a quarterly newspaper called ideas & action. The fact that they sound faintly communistic bothers me not at all; the fact that they use lowercase letters in their title does, but there's lots of labor-type news within, and it's a nice adjunct to Processed World (sort of a PW for the blue collar working class), since they're published in the Bay Area as well and seem to know one another. Each issue is \$1.50, to be sent to P.O. Box 40400, San Francisco, CA 94140...The folks who put out the QUIMBY QUARTERLY For the Arts seem to have

spent quite a bit of money on pretention, but then, I'm not much for photographs of people holding dogs or putting bananas on their heads. This kind of stuff would go over real well in SoHo, so if you're that kind of person, send \$2 to S. Thomas Szymersky, P.O. Box 281, Astor Station, Boston, MA 02123 and if you live in the Boston area, do send them stuff...Also pretentious in parts but really good in others is the literary mag NO, a bit steep at \$3 for mostly poetry but it looks nice—write for info to Ann Meyer or Brad Johnson at 826 W. Belmont #3F, Chicago, IL 60657 (Ann is, by the way, a neat Larson-type artist)...At last, the second issue of (R)EVOLUTION is out, in which I shoot my mouth off about corporations and other people shoot their mouths off about other stuff and everyone is bound to learn something from this "journal of 21st century thought," available for \$2.50 from Dale R. Gowin, P.O. Box 306, Onondaga Station, Syracuse, NY 13215...And also out at last (I think they publish yearly) is the psychedelically indescribable dadazine LIGHT TIMES, featuring a wonderful cover by Roldo and lots of stuff you can't appreciate until you read. Blow your mind and send a buck to Art Wand, P.O. Box 84366, Los Angeles CA 90073 and do Make Light Of It!...Once again, fellow editors, please don't feel I'm slighting you but I hope to be back on track next issue. A few "regular" zines have changed address, frequency of publication and so forth, so I'm only going to type this once, alphabetically by zine name: THE ATROCITY V.II #1—Hank Roll, 2419 Greensburg Pike, Pittsburgh, PA 15221 (monthly), "The Absurd SIG" of MENSA; 50¢ + "long stamped envelope;" 2*); BASEBALL OUR WAY V.III #5—Dale Jellings, 3211 Milwaukee St., #1, Madison, WI 53714 (bimonthly or sporadic, baseball; SASE; 2*); BEAUTIFUL WORLD #7—Debbie David, P.O. Box 1675, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10011 (quarterly, "DEVOzine" and more; \$1.50; 4*); BITCH #15—Lori Twersky, San Jose Face, Suite 164, 478 W. Hamilton Ave., San Jose, CA 95008 (monthly, "the woman's rock mag with bite;" \$1.75; SBM; 4*); THE BLOTTER #8—C.F. Kennedy, 233 Woodbine Ave., Toronto Ont. M4L 3P3 CANADA (bimonthly, creative zine, this ish dealing w/ "Success & Failure in the 80's;" \$9/year or \$1.50 per; 4*); BOLD PRINT—Kyle Hogg, 2008 Stuart Ave., Basement, Richmond, VA 23220 (bimonthly?, poetry/creative zine; SASE?; 2*); BUF-O V.3 #1—Klaus Haisch, 1729 E. Tabor St., Indianapolis, IN 46203 (monthly, creative zine; \$1; 3*); DUCKBERG TIMES #28—Ronald D. Baker, P.O. Box 382, Alexandria, VA 22313 (biweekly!; "newspaper of music, media & art;" \$1; 3*); FACTSHEET FIVE #21—Mike Gunderloy, 6 Arizona Ave., Rensselaer, NY 12144-4502 (quarterly, "Journal of crosscurrents and cross-pollination;" \$2; 5*); JET LAG #74—Steve Pick/Tony Renner, 8419 Halls Ferry Rd., St. Louis, MO 63147 (monthly, music; \$1; 3*); LACTUCA #5—Mike Selender, P.O. Box 621, Suffern, NY 10901 (quarterly, literary zine; \$3; 3*); LIVE FROM THE STAGGER CAFE #4—Luke McGuff, P.O. Box 3680, Minneapolis, MN 55403 (quarterly, creative zine; \$1; 3*); LOOKOUT! #25—Lawrence Livermore, Box 1000, Laytonville, CA 95454 (bimonthly or so, political/creative zine; \$1; 4*); MAGIC BULLET #3.2—169 W. Huntington St., Philadelphia, PA 19133 (bimonthly?, creative dadazine; 39¢ SASE; 3*); META-SCOOP V.4 #3/4—B.W. Sowell/D.B. Armstrong, 1004 Live Oak Ste. 101, Arlington, TX 76012 (bimonthly, metaphysical newszine; \$10/year; 3*); THE MIND BLASTER V.1 #2—Mark Johnston, Buck Rt., Box 111, Hinton, WV 25951 (quarterly, SubG zine; \$5/4 issues; 3*); THE MONKEES/BOYCE & HART PHOTO FAN CLUB #70—Jodi Hamrich, P.O. Box 411, Watertown, SD 57201-0411 (bimonthly, strictly Monkees/B&H; 50¢ + long SASE; 2*); THE MONTHLY INDEPENDENT TRIBUNE TIMES JOURNAL POST GAZETTE NEWS CHRONICLE BULLETIN #51 (it's a tie!)—T.S. Child, 2510 Bancroft Way #207, Berkeley, CA 94704 (monthly natch, creative zine; 50¢ or 2 1st class stamps; 5*); MURDER CAN BE FUN #5—Johnny Marr, P.O. Box 640111, San Francisco, CA 94109 (quarterly, sick/creative zine; 50¢; 3*); NOTES #6—Sam Helm/Ginnie Fleming, 495 W. 186th St., #5E, New York, NY 10033 (bimonthly or so, fanzine; \$1; 3*); OUTER SHELL #18—Roy Harper, P.O. Box 7053, St. Petersburg, FL 33734 (biweekly, one-sheet musiczine; SASE; 3*); OVERTHROW Spring '87 (V.IX #1)—P.O. Box 392, Canal St. Station, New York, NY 10013 (quarterly, Yippie newspaper; \$1; 4*); PHOEBE V.3 #10—James MacDougall, 3220 N St. NW, Suite 333, Washington, DC 20007 (quarterly, "the newsletter of eccentricity;" \$1; 4*); THE PIG PAPER #29—Gary Pig Gold, 70 Cotton Drive, Mississauga, Ont. L5G 1Z9 CANADA (monthly?, one-sheet musiczine; SASE w/ Can. postage; 3*); THE RUBBER FANZINE V.II #2—Rudi Rubberoid, P.O. Box 2432, Bellingham, WA 98227-2432 (quarterly, rubber stamp art; \$1; 4*); SLIMETIME #5—Steve Puchalski, 1108 E. Genesee St., #103, Syracuse, NY 13210 (monthly; sleazemovie review zine; SASE?; 3*); SOUND CHOICE #6—David Claffardini, P.O. Box 1251, Ojai, CA 93023 (bimonthly, musiczine & more; \$2.50; 3*); THE SOUTHERN LIBERTARIAN MESSENGER V.XV #10—John T. Harillee, Rt. 10, Box 52A, Florence, SC 29501 (monthly, libertarian news 'n' views; \$5/year; 3*); THREADBARE Rag—P.O. Box 20815, Seattle, WA 98102 (sporadic, SubG zine; \$1 + 50¢ postage; 2*); TWISTED IMAGE #8—Ace Backwords, 1530 University Ave., #26, Berkeley, CA 94703 (quarterly?, creative & slightly rudezine; \$2; 3*); As always, most editors accept trades, and some list overseas & Canadian rates, so do ask. *Whew—see you in the funny papers!*

(Questionnaire Results cont'd. from p. 23)

I don't really have the room to reprint all the marvelous copy you've all furnished for future IJ ads, but I assure you that as you read this, st.EVE and Virmie B. and I are hard at work consolidating said words of wit and wisdom to formulate actual ads for IJ, which we will then proceed to place in other zines with which we trade. Mind you, I've little reason or desire to go looking for new subscribers; we get plenty as it is from many friendly and much-appreciated plugs. But folks have been bugging me, so it'll finally be done, and if anyone wants a copy of the IJ ad sheet to 3 plaster somewhere, send me a SASE and you'll get yers...



DIARY of The ROCK FIEND

by
Anni Ackner
TOWER OF RABBLE



My Fellow Americans:

I have spoken to you from these historic pages many times over the past few years and I think you know that I always tell you the truth. Because of this, many of you have no doubt been wondering why I have chosen to keep silent during this time of crisis and uncertainty. Perhaps I have lost some credibility with you; perhaps you have been saying to yourselves, "Why doesn't she come forward and tell us precisely what's going on?" The risk I ran in staying silent for so long was that you might lose your faith in me, yet it was a risk I felt, in this instance, was justified.

Well, the fact of the matter is that I was waiting for the report of the independently appointed IJ Commission before coming before you. I wanted to have all the facts at hand, and time to digest those facts, before issuing any statements. I felt that there had been enough cloudiness, enough muddling of the issues in this instance and, in fairness to you, I wanted to have everything completely straight before me, before I came to you. The IJ Commission Report has been out for a week now, I have read it and studied it and mulled it over, and I have come to the following conclusions:

According to the report of the IJ Commission—that is, Mr. Bunny, Mr. Zen, and Ms. Neptune—it has been proven that certain jokes, anecdotes, bits of humour and small moments of whimsy, all of them apparently written by me, were, indeed, sold to a group of comedic terrorists stationed on the West Coast of this country. I have no recollection of ever authorizing such a sale, nor do I have any recollection of writing said jokes, anecdotes, bits of humour and small amounts of whimsy. Nevertheless, the findings of the Commission indicate that I did so, and so, I can only conclude that this is, indeed, the truth.

Such a sale was never meant to be construed as an attempt to buy the freedom of Our Beloved Editrix, Elayne Wechsler, who currently languishes in the hands of these terrorists where, it is reported by hostage negotiator George Tirebiter, she is forced daily to read paragraphs full of gratuitous sex. It has always been our position, and will remain our position that, however fervently we may desire peace with the West Coast, we will not now, nor will we ever, negotiate with terrorists. Unfortunately, it appears that the sale was seen in that erroneous light and I can only say that, in view of the facts as presented by the Commission, it appears that I made a mistake.

As to the matter of whether funds from the sale of these jokes, anecdotes, bits of humour and small moments of whimsy were diverted to Pennsylvania to aid that band of revolutionary freedom fighters, The Organization of Witty, Acerbic Commentators on the American Scene Who Are 33 Years Old, Female, and Live Within Two Blocks of a Fire Station in Berks County, again, I can only say that I have no recollection of ever initiating the idea of such diversion, nor authorizing such diversion. It is true that the plight of our friends in Pennsylvania is one very near to my heart, but I have no memory whatsoever of ever suggesting that funds be diverted, without the knowledge or consent of the readers of INSIDE JOKE, for their support. Nevertheless, according to the IJ Commission report, such diversion did take place.

In relation to this, there is the fact that 22 million dollars collected in the sale of the previously mentioned jokes, anecdotes, bits of humour and small moments of whimsy appears to be missing. In the weeks to come, I personally will appoint a special task force to investigate the disappearance of these funds, its connection with the Pennsylvania freedom fighters, and

Inside IJ Staffers

As the much-beloved SPACE TIME CONTINUUM AND YOUR POCKET WRENCH puts out its final issues, IJ is lucky enough to welcome members of its staff into our little family. Next month you'll meet staffer-to-be Carol Escobar Magary; but for now, our newest staff member's name should be familiar already to IJ readers—here he is to introduce himself:

DAVID SERLIN
Box 107—Jones Hall
Ontario St. & Park Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19140
11-10-67

A large pink stork deposited the infant David Harley Serlin in the loving arms of his parents in their ramshackle abode in Thousand Oaks, CA on the princely date of November 10, 1967. Some four years later the family relocated to the splendiferous vistas of South Florida, an event that so moved the young vulnerable tot into an unsightly career as a writer. In September 1985 David, genius co-conspirator Phil Kretsedemas and Club-Marsh-Mason-Not-Seals advocate Carol Escobar Magary started the irreverent dadaist/literature mag Space-Time Continuum and Your Pocket Wrench. Currently attending Temple University in Philadelphia in hopes of earning an English degree so he can wear courderoy jackets with elbow patches and smoke a pipe, David writes (a lot), plays piano, composes music, makes grilled cheese sandwiches (a lot), and is working on his first novel, Hot Kamchatka. David loves mail, especially from those who knit bulky sweaters in their spare time.

MR. PRESIDENT,
I WANT YOU TO MAKE
A STRONG, FORCEFUL SPEECH—
AN INCISIVE, DECISIVE, DEFINITIVE,
ASSERTIVE, AGGRESSIVE SPEECH.
A SPEECH THAT SHOWS THEM THAT
YOU ARE DEFINITELY IN CONTROL.



REVOLUTIONARY BLUES by Adam Eisenstat

white
I'm happy
I'm white
I'm happy
I'm got a job
I'm happy
I'm and a pappy
I'm white
I'm happy
I'm feel good
I'm feel good

Somewhere each day, a sun does set
A soul slips on, and time is met
There's wonder of, and feelings strong
As someone goes, does go along.

- Robert Wilson-Wheatley

my own role in their affair, which, at the moment, I do not remember, and I will report back to you at intervals on its findings. In the meantime, I ask all of you to pay particular attention to anyone you know who subscribes to this publication and also just bought him or herself a new fur coat or swimming pool. Please disregard anyone you know who subscribes to this publication and just opened a small Swiss bank account under the name "The Ack." I know that I will.

You know, when you get to be my age, it's likely that you would have made a few mistakes in your life, but if you're any sort of person you go on and learn from those mistakes, and emerge the better for them. Let us go forward now together and work for a better understanding, a stronger comedic policy, and a lot less asking of nosy personal questions.

Good night, and God bless you.

AIP—Reading, PA, March 11, 1987: When questioned today about the INSIDE JOKE Staff Writers and Artists decision to freeze funding to The Organization of Witty, Acerbic Commentators on the American Scene Who Are 33 Years Old, Female, and Live Within Two Blocks of a Fire Station in Berks County for six months, Anni Ackner responded that she could not reply to the question because she was out of typewriter ribbons.

2842 Northeast Rodney Way

by Ligi

Ernie is the original survivalist, the man who made his fortune in 1960 with a tee-shirt that said: "I survived the New York World's Fair" and never looked back. The Cuban Missile Crisis, the Warren Commission, Vietnam, Kent State, Altamont, Biafra, Watergate, Hurricane David, The Kansas City Regency Hyatt House, PCBs, Three Mile Island, Jonestown, Mt. St. Helens, The Falklands, Tylenol, Grenada, McDonald's, KAL007, Andy Kaufman, AIDS, Jerry Falwell, Larry Flynt, the 1984 elections...the list of Ernie's "I Survived" tee-shirts reads like a litany of bad taste. Still, Ernie makes a point when he asks whether the phrase upon which his empire was built is any more offensive than the "I ♥..." construction which has enabled world-class pornographers to turn this nation's automotive bumpers into a high-speed dog & pony show.

Today, Ernie is the principal share-holder and Chairman of the Board of DESIGNS FOR DISASTER, a multinational corporation with annual sales in excess of \$14 billion, but in some ways, Mr. E. remains the sociopathic fourth grader who shocked an entire community in 1952 when he wrote a book report on Erskine Caldwell's *Tobacco Road*. "In this grim book," the feisty eight-year-old began, "the notable Mr. Caldwell has done well to portray the American Way for the noseless hairlip it is, an immoral black hole of grasshoppers which suck the life from the worthy ants and leave their corpses in corncribs to be gnawed upon by rats." Not content to make note of the lad's agreement errors, fail him, and let it go at that, Mrs. Featherston felt obliged to turn Mr. and Mrs. Ernie (not their real names, of course) over to the House Un-American Activities Committee. They were deported to some other country from which they were supposed to have emigrated shortly thereafter. Ernie never heard from them again.

That Mr. E. survived his childhood and early adolescence at all can only be blamed upon Divine Providence®, a registered trademark of DESIGNS FOR DISASTER, INC. Little Ernie was not happy with life, even before he began being shuffled from one green-walled institution to another, but while other children were busy expressing similar displeasure with their states of existence by threatening to hold their breaths until they turned blue, Ernie's first unsuccessful suicide attempt, at age three, found him carefully measuring two tablespoons of CN Plus® into a small paper cup. Upon regaining consciousness in Astoria General Hospital, the dissipate tot responded to Dr. Bizarro's questions regarding why he had swallowed the poison ("Didn't you mistake it for cough syrup?") by stating that his favorite story was "The Pied Piper of Hamelin." "Excuse me?" the old doctor had asked.

"Why?" the child responded. "Have you done something wrong?"

Dr. Bizarro went on to win copious awards from the Institute for Package Design and to amass great wealth by developing the childproof cap, while Master E. grew older, continued to fail at suicide, made his fortune, went to college, got drafted, deserted in Vietnam, and, with the assistance of several Islamic terrorist organizations, returned to the United States with a new identity. Whereupon, he rented a Post Office Box in Portland, Oregon, and became a denizen of the street. So it should come as no surprise that while DESIGNS FOR DISASTER has grown from a bedroom endeavor in Long Island City, N.Y. to have offices in 36 countries and all 50 states, Ernie remains content to have his post office box in Portland, Oregon, the besotted and bespattered city to which he immigrated in 1981, a bedroom community for nearly half a million professionals who work in Seattle or San Francisco.

He also runs the Portland Pataphysical Outpatient Clinic, Lounge, and Laundromat at 2842 Northeast Rodney Way, where I am employed as Chief Resident Pataphysician. My name is Lawrence Nada. And like Mr. E., I used to be someone else. I used to be Emilio Ciani, in fact, a clean-cut kid whose middle-class family wanted him to grow up to be a psychologist.

Perhaps the clearest indication of who I really am comes from my response to Mrs. Trice, my kindergarten teacher at Public School 84. She was going around the room, asking everybody what he or she wanted to be when he or she grew up, which was a fireman or a nurse, depending on whether you were a he or she, with a few soldiers, mommies, daddies, teachers, and presidents thrown in for good measure. These kids all came from families like mine, where the mothers were housewives and the fathers worked as machinists or draftsmen or warehousemen or garbage collectors.

When it came to my turn to express my fondest hopes for the future, all I could say was: "Cruel." Which is why, no doubt, I studied medicine for ten years.

I had originally intended to change my name to Moliere when I joined the staff here, but when I discovered how a certain Dr. Bizarro had forgotten to remove a hemostat from a certain Lawrence Nada's abdomen after an emergency appendectomy performed in Kew Gardens in 1936, I had no choice but to assume Larry Nada's name.

By 1938, Mr. Nada had apparently had the bad taste to seek a second opinion in Flatbush regarding his prolonged intestinal distress. He went so far as to write to the Editor of the *Daily Mirror* to voice his suspicion that he was getting the run-around by a bunch of country-club nincompoops (his word, not mine), and in the uproar that followed, Mr. Nada succumbed to massive head injuries when he was run over by a Sanitary Supplies, Inc. delivery truck. At least Moliere has several plays to immortalize him, and Alfred E. Packer has a memorial cafeteria in Washington, D.C., but who would Larry Nada have to keep his memory alive, if not for me? One of the most important missions of the pataphysician is to keep imaginary souls alive. In fact, our most startling discovery to

date is that it is possible to transplant the soul of a baboon into a human with no ill effects.

Nobody knows what real Ernie's name used to be, and the last time I asked him why he calls himself Ernest Hemingway, he blew his left earlobe off with a shotgun, saying, "Just no good at cleaning this thing," by way of explanation. Ernie's sense of humor used to be something inside him, like a soul (if you will), but since few people were willing to accept that irreverent sense of humor during Ernie's institutionalized formative years, Ernie externalized his perverse and twisted means of perception, until it became an entity unto itself, a gnome, a hideous dwarf invisible to all but Ernie himself, a gnome by the name of Alfred Jarry.

Jarry was a real person, like all the rest of us. He was born during the last quarter of the previous century and died in the first quarter of this one. His was the world's longest-running suicide. As a teenager, he computed exactly how much absinthe and ether he would have to ingest and inhale each day to die on the Feast of Saint Mary when he was 33 years old, the same as Jesus. As a child, he had written a puppet show which later became the cornerstone of the *Theatre of the Absurd*. The play was called "King Ubu." It was a satire about how civilized people stopped paying attention to what a writer is trying to say when they label his output "Art." Ernie has a stupid joke that he likes to tell people who are uninitiated in the ways of pataphysics:

Ernie: What do you call a guy without arms or legs who hangs from the wall?

You: Gimme a break.

Ernie: Art. (Pause.) Get it?

Perhaps I should explain what the Portland Pataphysical Outpatient Clinic, Lounge, and Laundromat does. Most simply put: we provide imaginary solutions for imaginary problems. Sounds easy enough, doesn't it? But you'd be surprised to find out how many people believe their problems are not imaginary, because they suspect that imaginary problems are in some way less important than "real" ones. They'd rather spend 50 bucks an hour on deep relaxation therapy than drop by and ask me whether or not there is free will. Whether or not there is free will is a question expressing an imaginary problem. If there is no free will, for instance, then the decision to choose between good and evil is no more important than choosing between grits and cream of wheat for breakfast. I, myself, have never seen the least indication free will demonstrated in common human behavior, and I've dealt with the problem by resolving never to eat breakfast. It works for me.

But some people grow quite upset when you suggest that their annoyance with a spouse's snoring in REM sleep pales in contrast to African starvation, Agent Orange contamination, or even the deaths of 2,500 poor Hindus in Bhopal, India. Recently, in fact, while lecturing on how AIDS quite possibly is caused by the combined effects of fluoridation and having sexual relations with a Cabbage Patch Kid, I was severely beaten by several burly grandmothers outside the Jantzen Beach Toys 'R Us®.

Ernie's wife's name is Sylvia Plath. She's a former Rajneesh who claims to be the only female American writer to have asked for a third cup of Koolaid at Jonestown.

"And I looked around, and everybody's passed out," she said. "I mean, what a bunch of party poopers."

Obviously, Ernie's diseased brain was smitten by the idea, and he married the young wench that very afternoon. Sylvia runs the Ground Zero Soup Kitchen, with help from Stephen Crane, an Independent Insurance Agent, and Louis Pasteur (who says: "It's Louis, rhymes with Jewess, Pasteur, rhymes with Pasture, but my friends call me Doctor Joe."), a born-again alcoholic who now believes that we're God to come back to earth today to separate the worthy from the beasts, all he would have to go on is who has gone to war with water and who has not.

Water, according to the teachings of Alfred Jarry, the patron saint of pataphysics, is the lowliest liquid on earth. Why else would man have chosen it, among countless natural solvents, to scour his pots, wash his linens, and flush his wastes? Which explains why all good pataphysicians recommend their patients drink only distilled spirits. Spirits, distilled or otherwise, are what is sorely missing from our modern world, and if that isn't a saying from Chairman Mao, it should be.

Where was I? Oh yes. I was about to share with you a letter from Mr. E. himself, who has presently removed from Portland, leaving operations here in the hands of E.F. Hutton. Mr. E. believes you should never trust a going concern to anyone you could or might have faith in. Ernie has witnessed one disaster after another where family members or close personal friends and business associates have terminally and irreparably damaged a very good thing. "What else does Genesis have to teach us," Mr. E. is fond of asking, "if not that even your own ribs will betray you?" Therefore, the guiding light of DESIGNS FOR DISASTER is always searching for people and firms he despises or fears to run his businesses. Last year, he turned the operation over to the Vatican, and from that association the Portland Pataphysical Outpatient Clinic, Lounge, and Laundromat brought aboard Father Darwin D. Grimm, Monsignor of the Church of the Oven of Peace®.

Ernest Hemingway is presently on a round-the-world mission of mercy, recruiting members for the Suicide Commandos®, the crack non-violent protest team which has lost more than 200,000 members during the past five years from mass hunger-strikes, Koolaid parties, airline crashes, single-vehicle accidents, and slit-ins. The Suicide Commandos have as their mission a pataphysical mandate to call attention to the truly horrible catastrophes in the real world so that civilized people might fully appreciate how

(cont'd. on next page)

imaginary their own problems really are.

Ernie took over the Commandos[®] in 1982 after listening to a National Public Radio broadcast on the problems of disease and hunger in central Africa. One statistic caught his attention. That statistic was this: "Nearly 20 African children are dying of starvation, dehydration or disease throughout central Africa every minute."

"Sylvia," Ernie said, taking a long pull from his bottle of MD 20/20, "did you hear what they just said?"

"Couldn't it wait, Ernie?" Sylvia said. "I'm doing a crossword, Ernie. I'm having a hell of a time with it."

And while Sylvia finished the puzzle, finally realizing that the answer to the clue with which she was having the most trouble, "Gregarious mountaineers?" was "SOCIALCLIMBERS," more than 600 tiny Africans died of thirst, hunger and/or dysentery.

"Six hundred?" Sylvia asked, astonished. "In thirty minutes?"

"Yes," Ernie answered, "it is possible the original statistic read on the news was a typographical error, I suppose, or perhaps Susan Stamberg read it incorrectly, but according to my calculations, 20 dead children per minute works out to 1,200 an hour, 28,800 per day, 864,000 per month, for a total of 10.5 million dead babies a year."

"Dear Bossa de Nage!" Sylvia said, "that's almost as many dead babies as there are Americans out of work." This exchange took place, you must remember, during the height of the Reagan economic readjustment, when the only thing that seemed to trickle down to the lower and middle classes smelled faintly of urine, though Mr. Reagan and his friends assured them it was not really urine. "We prefer to think of it," presidential advisor Edwin Meese liked to say, "as the nectar of self-sufficiency and fiscal responsibility."

"Yes," Ernie said, "it is, isn't it? And it's almost as much as Wayne Newton earned in Las Vegas last year."

"Isn't there something we can do to help?" Sylvia asked.

Just then Louis Pasteur spoke up. "Whuffo we needs to help? Seem like to me they be starving and drying up and dumping they brains out okay on they own. We go in there to hep em, the necks thin you knows Reagan gone send em some atomic bums, which be what gone bring on the nukular wither." Dr. Joe looked over at me and said: "Ain't that right, Larry?"

"Well, Dr. Joe," I began, "I think Sylvia was suggesting we should do something to save the little children, not to help kill them, but you're quite accurate in your assessment of the situation. Even if we were to go in to help, the results might be the same. What's your assessment, Mr. E.?"

"Well," Ernie said, taking another pull on his bottle, "it seems the major problem we are faced with is that the children are dying of natural causes. There is nothing worse than having to try to help people who are the victims of callousness and bad weather only. If we could find bee-droppings in the area, I'm sure the Old Wrangler would push for military and economic aid..."

"Military and economic AIDS? Well, I swan," Dr. Joe said, "I didn't know they had that kind AIDS. I knowed about AIDS for Families with Despondent Chilluns, and White House AIDS, but—"

"Oh, hush up, Dr. Joe," Sylvia said sternly, "this is no time for jokes. We need a plan to stop this holocaust before it—"

"Spreads to South Africa!" I said, snapping my fingers. Those assembled stared in disbelief, but I pressed on. "Don't you see? As long as all we're talking about is tiny black children in an area of the world dominated by communist ideology, we'll never get support to save the kids. The government will only point to the needs of tiny black children within its own borders, which it is firmly committed not to help. But," I went on, "if we can convince the New Right that venture-capital concerns are at risk, if we can show that repressionists and slave-owners may fall prey to the African Apocalypse, then we might stand a chance. What do you think, Ernie?"

"Well, it's probably a long shot, and it may take a couple of years before we can make it work," Mr. E. said, tossing his bottle aside, "but here's the plan..."

Three Tales of Video Angst

by David Serlin

I cringe when my grandmother gets a hold of the new TV Guide. She stares amorously into its crinkled letters in various shades of smudging newsprint, and she licks her finger before turning every succeeding page. Her tongue must display the entire fall schedule.

She immediately snatches a pen and begins to study the approaching week's indicated programs, intent on locating the shows of highest interest or personal intrigue. Monday, 9:00pm is a bevy of sumptuous viewing pleasure, and she circles the entry of a National Geographic special, responding to her own query of validity with, "Yeah, that looks good." It doesn't matter that she circles two or three programs in the same time slot—her unique powers of perception need only a few minutes to colonize another channel.

Grandma continues circling fascination-ringing television shows for half an hour or so. Usually, she rechecks her predicted visual symphony because her rationale for watching often differs later in the week from earlier in the week. Game shows take congressional priority, next to cooking shows and the odd sitcom to fritter the time away. Occasionally an afternoon movie, the product of having caught the handsome face of a star from the Thirties while changing channels. She's pretty spontaneous when it

comes to things like that. Otherwise, her schedule is her career, and she wholeheartedly abides by it.

I engage Grandma in conversation to draw her away from the TV for a while. She rests her hands in her lap, peels the glasses from her face, and blows her nose into a mutilated tissue. She recounts, with flawless insight, visions from her childhood, and her idiosyncracies flow like aircraft turbulence. She is more entertaining than David Letterman, better looking than Vanna White, and more real than any Spielberg special effect could ever aspire to. She is one of the few remaining truant minds of a generation uninfluenced by television.

Sometimes I fantasize about secretly pulling out the plug or removing a fuse so Grandma will not be so entirely obsessed with the television, but I realize that it's not for me to decide these things. For now I can only leave her between intermittent visits, staring vaguely at the large television screen.

The screen was as wide as a canyon, filling up the entire surface of his eyes until they both reflected into one another. He danced down his anxiety and grappled with the red-tipped phallus that paraded scores of enemy craft across his field of vision. He struck them down with a fiesty exuberance, their steel Commie carcasses plummeting to the green vistas below.

They crowded around this pilot, dipping and jimmying with every callous-causing explosion, crackling speech bleeding from the overhead speakers. It swallowed them whole, every rag-tag delinquent, every pimply-faced metalhead, every straight-laced crooner complaining that the lines at the Marine recruiting office are too fucking long. They laugh a lot. They look like paste. They haven't shaved in days and it piles up in thick black sprouts on their faces like mold on yogurt. The rapid pyrotechnics burst out like sound upon a newborn infant's ears, eyes dart and flex and tear in the corners.

There is no comparable place in America to the arcade. City streets wallow in pungent apathy, school violence raps its knuckles on graffiti-piled desktops, houses crack and shame stuffs into the mailboxes. Blue skies belie what is already there. Toys for tots.

You get really stoned on good sens buds and go play and watch your brain drop off into the cold basement. "Everybody must get stoned." Black man in green second-hand army coat and ski cap with frilly pom-pom wretching and cursing; businessman on lunch break with short-cropped hair and quarters invincibly piled up; a ratty blonde wig, gold geeth, gas, lights bemoan Las Vegas, paint peels and giggles, human beings plugged in to new age storybooks.

He keeps pretending what the targets are. He imagines them as Moscow or Iraq or South Philadelphia. They shift around like terrorists, but he knows the pattern. Everything must be obliterated from the screen. Everything, everything. Mom waits in the car with the air conditioner running. She's doing her lipstick in the rear view mirror. She wants him to stop wasting his Saturdays in the arcade.

Everything.

He was just about to get into the car when he turned about face. "Have you decided on anything yet?" he posed to his amiable companion, who questfully perused the vertical tiles of the available videotapes at the 24-hour convenience store. He buried his arms with potato chips and a half dozen fermented brews and called to her as she knelt before the lucite case.

"No, no, just a second," she held him back from further prosecution.

"C'mon, you've been staring at the box for about fifteen minutes. Just pick anything."

"You really want me to pick out anything?" she dribbled in lackadaisical housewifese. "Don't you wanna watch something good?"

"No, I don't care anymore; just get anything."

"Well, I can see you're going to be a lot of fun tonight."

He readjusted the sculpture of edibles in his arms and announced a heaving sigh. He rolled his eyes until they swarmed in the direction of the horizontal lines on his plaid shirt and suddenly came back to focus.

"Well, just get, like, Urban Cowboy or something."

"Urban Cowboy? I don't wanna watch that...here's Manhattan..."

"I don't want to see that art garbage. I just want to be entertained."

"You can be entertained by art garbage, not just by some cowboy on a mechanical bull..."

He noticed that the ill weeds of their own conversational garden were starting to implant in the ears of the other customers, so he motioned with his hand in a downward way, as if to push them both into the center of the earth.

"What about Kramer vs. Kramer?"

"Brother From Another Planet?..."

"Terms of Endearment?"

"After Hours?..."

They looked down at their shoelaces for further titles, and gradually they resurfaced until they met each other at the eyeball.

"Get whatever you want, really."

"No, I don't care, we'll get what you want to see."

"It's your decision. I like any movie."

He smiled a gaping barbeque smile. "We don't even have to get anything if we don't want to."

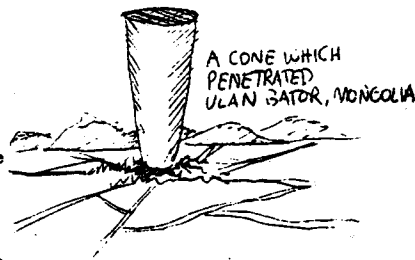
"Are you sure you don't mind?"

"Absolutely."

So they went home and made love instead.

A VISIT TO GRANDMA'S

Part Two by Prudence Gaelor



MASS-PRODUCED a poem by Dr. Fanny Stoll and Sigmund Weiss
My family chair is broken splintered by over-use
My callouses are comforting the doctor, I presume.
"Here we go again," says Reagan, "on another peace dance."

Prudence sat down on the bed and swung her suitcase bag beside her. She pulled out a coloring book, a box of crayons and some colored pencils before she got to what she wanted.

"What timing, Pru! I just ran out of Skeletor pictures. I left you a few pictures of Orko, though," Pink Bunny said.

"You colored ALL the Skeletor pictures!" Prudence exclaimed as she flipped through the pages of her He-Man and the Masters of the Universe coloring book. "You didn't even save me ONE!"

"Well, there are still a few pictures of Orko, and I think there may be one of He-Man. No, I take that back, it's one of Ram-Man."

"I HATE ORKO!"

"Grandma's that bad, huh?" Pink Bunny said, changing the subject.

"Positively beastly. Of all people, why did Edna the Ancient have to be MY grandma? It's just not fair!"

"It'll be alright, Pru. We're only going to be here for a few days," Pink Bunny said, putting his arm on Prudence's shoulder.

"You don't know what you're saying. It's not going to be alright. She plans to take me to the movies later. I'm supposed to be resting for that now. Everybody's gonna see me with her, I'll be ruined." Prudence started to cry.

"I don't know, Pru. Things might not be so bad. Let's see... um... I know! We'll tell everybody that sees you that she put a spell on you, turning you into a zombie, forcing you to go to the movies with her, against your will."

"Do you really think that will work?" Prudence asked.

"Sure it'll work!"

"I don't know. I just don't think people will buy it, Bunny."

"I know, you'll go in disguise. We'll dress you up so that no one will recognize you, and..."

Pink Bunny was interrupted by a knock. Through the door they heard Edna the Ancient say, "Prudence, it's time to get up. You have fifteen minutes before we go to get ready."

"Fifteen minutes! Oh, Bunny, what'll I do? I'm doomed!" She started to cry again.

Pink Bunny hopped off the bed and started pacing around the room. Prudence saw his attention wander to a lamp on the dresser. It was a white and gold monstrosity, with a little boy, or was it a girl, and a vine-covered column terminating in a white globe which was decorated with little glass balls, which made the globe look like it had a bad case of acne or some other tumorous disease. Next to the lamp were a silver, plastic figure of a knight, a rubber frog with a battery in its mouth, and a strange cow-like thing that had the neck of a giraffe, the horns of a giraffe and the ears broken off. She could tell Pink Bunny was impressed. She heard Pink Bunny mutter something about people who collected pieces such as these not being all that bad. Prudence, however, refused to be impressed out of spite, deciding that these were not collected by Edna the Ancient after all, but were gifts. Pink Bunny switched on the light and all the little balls lit up.

"Hey, Pru! Look at this!"

"Bunny, can we please stick to the issue at hand? For a CHANGE?" Prudence snapped.

"Well, you don't have to bite my head off! Besides, when have I ever let you down?" Pink Bunny retorted. "I always come up with a plan," he added smugly.

"Oh yeah! Like telling everyone that she has turned me into a zombie will really work..."

"It might..."

"Sure it will! Nobody's gonna believe that."

"Then go in disguise!"

"And disguise myself as what? Pray tell, Bunny, what shall I disguise myself as? A flying whoonitsis?"

"Actually, I was thinking more along the lines of an antelope."

"An antelope? Don't be stupid! Everybody knows that antelopes aren't allowed in to the movies."

"Precisely! And if you can't get in, no one will see you."

Seeing his point, Prudence conceded to Pink Bunny's plan and they immediately set about trying to disguise Prudence as an antelope.

Pink Bunny started pulling clothes out of the duffel bag while Prudence dumped the contents of her suitcase on the floor. There was nothing the color of an antelope and all their efforts served no purpose except to create a large brightly-colored mess. The only thing that came close was the puke grey shirt which Prudence was wearing. The shirt was originally pastel pink, like many of the clothes Prudence's mother bought for her. But once, accidentally, it was washed with a navy blue bathrobe, and it had never looked the same since. Prudence tried to duplicate the effect, but the effect was always temporary and after a washing or two the clothes always returned to their original pastel colors which she tried so hard to avoid.

Needless to say, they were quite disappointed. Prudence wandered off to the corner to feel sorry for herself, leaving Pink Bunny to rummage through the pile as if to recover a hidden treasure.

"Hey, what's this?" Pink Bunny exclaimed, holding up a faded black piece of fabric.

"What's what," Prudence asked, not looking.

"This!" Pink Bunny said, waving the fabric in the air.

Prudence darted over and snatched the fabric out of his grip. "Gimme that!" Quickly, she tried to pull off her pants over her shoes, causing her to stumble and fall to the floor. Luckily, her fall was broken by the mound of clothes and, undaunted, Prudence kicked off her sneakers and pants.

Her shirt aside, her sneakers were her "most favoritest" article of clothing she owned. They were black hi-top Converse which were faded and scuffed with wear. It took an hour-long tantrum at the shoe store, along with the requisite period of sulking, to acquire these.

"They're basketball shoes," said her mother.

"But they're way cool!"

"You don't even play basketball. Besides, these are much nicer. Look at these," Claire continued, holding up a pair of bright yellow sneakers emblazoned with the smiling blue face of a Smurf. "They have them in three colors—blue, yellow and pink. We could get all three and you'll have a pair to match all your clothes. Wouldn't that be nice?"

"But all the guys have these..."

When confronted with the question of the identities of the "guys," Prudence realized that there was no use for reason and pulled all stops, releasing a wail of frustration that must, surely, have been audible three counties over. An hour and a half later, Prudence was seen yanked out of the mall, but proudly sporting a new pair of black Converse hi-tops.

The black fabric turned out to be a tube skirt, tattered and torn, which Prudence quickly donned. Imitating the women on The Price is Right, Prudence spun around making fluttery motions with her hands. "Do you like it, Bunny?"

"Isn't it a little big on you?"

"Yes, but do you like it?"

"It's great. You realize, of course, that it doesn't make you look anything like an antelope."

"This is true," Prudence admitted quietly.

"However," Pink Bunny continued, "if you roll your eyes back you would look just like a zombie, especially now that your eyes are all red."

"Really?" said Prudence, rolling her eyes back.

"Yeah...Wait! I've got an idea." Pink Bunny hurled himself into the pile of clothes. For an instant, Prudence lost sight of him as he blended in with the clothes. The clothes began to shift and for a very short while, they began to take on an almost liquid characteristic which reminded Prudence of the Milky Way bar she melted in the microwave. Then, almost as abruptly as he jumped in, Pink Bunny emerged from the pile, three crayons in his paw. He rushed over to Prudence and pointed one of the crayons at her eye. "Now hold still!" Pink Bunny drew red, green and black smudges under Prudence's eyes to give them a hollow, sunken effect. "Okay, now roll your eyes back," he ordered, lining under her eye in red. "That's it! Perfect! Pru, you have got to see this!"

He took Prudence by the hand and led her to the mirror. "Tell me, is this it or what? Although, it has the most effect when you have your eyes rolled back."

"Yeah, but it hurts to keep them rolled back. Will I have to keep them that way the whole time?"

"No. But if you see someone who might recognize you, be sure to roll them back."

"Okay."

"Now let me see your walk."

"My what?"

"Your walk. Let me see your walk. Walk like a zombie."

Prudence rolled her eyes back and staggered about the room.

"How's that?"

"Perfect. Another thing, Pru, to make your performance truly realistic is to slacken your jaw and drool a little."

Prudence stopped in her tracks. "Should I gnaw on somebody's leg while I'm at it?"

"No. There's no need to get excessive. Relax! If you remember to do all this, there's no way they'll let you in the movies."

Prudence was practicing her zombie imitation, eyes rolled back, staggering and drooling, when Edna stepped into the room. Prudence stopped, wiping her mouth on her sleeve. "Now don't you look precious. Are you ready?"

"Almost," Prudence replied. "I still need to get on my shoes and socks."

"Who's our friend?" asked Edna, glancing towards Pink Bunny.

"This is Pink Bunny," replied Prudence, pulling him close.

"I think he should come with me," Edna said, reaching for him.

Prudence backed away, tightly clutching Pink Bunny. Edna drew closer. "I think he should come with me," she repeated, wrestling Pink Bunny from Prudence's grip. "Get your shoes and socks, it's time to go. Don't worry, I'll take care of him," she continued, motioning to the stuffed pink rabbit she held in her arms. Then Edna, with Pink Bunny in her grasp, left the room and shut the door behind her. (Concluded next issue)

WHY DO GHOULS FALL IN LOVE?

BY MILDRED NEPTUNE

"Screw all this 'channel your energies' crap!"

- John Carradine, *The Howling*

"It takes a genius to teach a fool; a wise man can be taught by anybody."

- Philby Stodge a/k/a Philip Slater

EXPOSITION: To celebrate our union, Elvis and I threw a big monster mash bash at my castle in Tierra del Fuego. There's a bunch of people in the main dungeons and I'm concerned because they're not respecting my spiders! I do believe I saw Leatherface chow down on Yvette—a favorite Black Widow of mine. I've had her for a year now, and got her up to a fighting weight of 6 ounces! And now, it appears he's just popped her into his naw like she was a Cheez Ball! Naturally, I intervene and inform these ill-mannered louts that spider eating is verboten.

"I've been to your cave dozens of times and I've never eaten any of your moles!" I remind Leatherface. He sticks his tongue out at me, and there is Yvette, none the worse for wear, but eager to be back in her mommy's care. I gently pluck her from Leatherface's tongue, which resembles a pizza made out of all the Jello flavours. Poor Yvette! It's tough enough for a cobweb-weaving spider to walk anyway, and impossible when her legs are covered with puree of monster!

I give Yvette a quick spritz of Möt to cleanse her, then I place her back in her web. I assume she will exact her revenge when she deems it wise. There are lots of guests here, but the only ones worth mentioning are my boy Elvis, my jailbird from the Cracks of Doom Penitentiary; Aristotle Cool, Werewolf, Man of Letters and inventor of a correspondence course called "How to Spend Your Leisure Time;" and Aristotle is here with his "friend" and "companion," Fernando Francisco Besocara, a chicken-eating ghoul from Pasadena, California. My usual synophants and slaves hovered 'round me adoringly—Artemis, Reba Behemoth, the most powerful woman in the Underworld, and the Lovely Rebob Sisters, once known as the Fates. The usual crowd of misfits and misanthropes and missal-less maniacs!

I'm sitting next to Elvis on the sofa I converted from an old iron maiden. Next to him is some humghoul dipping a Wheat Thin into the California Dip. He asks, "What kind of Californians did you use for this dip, North or South?"

I tell him, "It's a very special blend of Rodeo Drive merchants and Wilshire Boulevard executives. You like?"

He assures me it's the best paté he's ever had!

"I dunno," says Sredni Vashtar. "I like this simple paté de fois gras."

"Oh, that's not for eating, you little beast!" I said affectionately. "That's for me to tell fortunes in!"

"Why not use your Tarot cards?" Elvis inquires. I love it how he's always so interested in everything I do, every breath I take, he'll be watching me.

"Well, I sure could!" I say. "Hey everybody! I'm gonna tell fortunes, gonna read the cards!"

But Brother Aristotle and his companion moan loudly and I can hear murmurs of "oh, shit," and "why us?" I get pissed.

"Hey, you nippleheads," I yell. "It's my party and I'll scry if I want to!" A mixture of groans and giggles followed my little joke. I shoved the Tarot cards into Elvis' hands and urged him to shuffle them until they felt right.

"They feel pretty good right now," he said. Who am I to disagree?

I did a simple 78 card spread, the formation of the Andromeda Galaxy spread, taught to me by Zontar the Thing from Venus. Well, I had some help from Zorkon the Space God.

"What's in my future?" El wanted to know.

"Looks fabulous, babe. Here you got the Empress and the 3 of Cups smack dab above your chosen significator card, the Devil, you lucky man!"

"I wish I had the Devil as a sig card," Aristotle pouted.

"Try being born and re-born in Saturn, try being a double Capricorn," Elvis advised rightly.

"Can I help it if I'm a Moon Child? With Scorpio rising?" he pleaded. We were all supposed to commiserate with Aristotle, victim of the stars.

"Why don't you tell his fortune?" Reba Behemoth suggested.

"Perhaps his future will bring him some kind of glory—and he can stop being so goddamned insecure and self-absorbed!"

"Great idea! Thanks, Reba," I said.

"No way," said Aristotle. "You can't just be a regulation vam-

pire, can you? Oh, no. You have to dabble in spiritualism and occultism, too. Well, Sir Thomas More said to treat the fool according to his folly, and so I shall, Mildred. I reject your very benevolent gesture to read my fortune. But if, at any time, you should discover the Chicago Cubs will win the pennant, please let me know!"

I laughed at Aristotle. Stupid of me, really. I should have displayed my wrath and turned him into a Reebok shoe. But I chose to make light of it, a dangerous move with Aristotle because he takes everything so seriously, he brags of his misery, he likes to live dangerously. When you be making light of something that somebody else be making dark of, then all you get is a bunch of shadows and the world becomes an infinite landscape of funhouse mirrors. Which can be fun, if the price of admission did not rob you of your strength to endure such cosmic hijinks.

In laughing at Aristotle, I provoked his angriest demon, Harkodian Pondrella. Harkodian was Aristotle's personal Demon of Dread, and had been storing up all kinds of fear molecules right next to a bunch of anger molecules. Lucifer once made a money talking bet with the Mad Arab that Harkodian had the power of a cobalt bomb! That his brain was manufacturing explosive chemicals and could go off any minute! And now, here he was facing me, Mildred Neptune, Maiden with Wrought Iron soul.

"Harkodian," I began warmly, "are you gonna be wising off at me? Or are you gonna be the nice little demon we know you can be, if you play your molecules right?"

Harkodian started hyperventilating. He was a pulsing magenta red, anyway, and when he began to eat the air, rivers of electric blue sped through his skin. He looked like an aerial map of Arc-turus. I liked him straight off, despite his surplus of anger molecules. Hey, I got a few of my own, know what I mean?

"So. You're basically saying you don't want me to read your very own personalised Tarot card fortune, is that right, boys?" I asked them. Harkodian was leaning against Aristotle's knees. He was only 3 feet tall. I felt someone should take their picture, a real father-son tigger, you know? Fortunately, Artemis was there with her Nikon. Suddenly, Aristotle cleared his throat and pushed Harkodian away quite roughly. "Now, now!" I said sternly. "No violence in my house, unless it's during dinner!"

"I just wanna say a few things to you," Aristotle said, staring at me like a State Trooper's headlight. Harkodian rolled over and his voice was that of Elmer Fudd. "Bewawe," he said. "Awistotwe has aww awwee mowecues now."

I winked at him. "Thanks for the info, Hark."

"What's on your mind, wolfbane breath?" I asked, skating on ice so thin Zeus could use it to shave his beard.

Aristotle, seeing the dangerous condition of the ice, laughed resignedly. "Wolfbane breath. That's a new one." He chuckled. Harkodian began to giggle. Aristotle picked up the bowl of paté de fois gras. "Here," he said, handing it to me. "Tell me my fortune, O Wise Oracle of Time, Space and Wrigley Field."

"She tells fortunes in paté?" Harkodian was shocked.

"She tells fortunes in cards, hands, feet, food, sidewalk cracks, crystal balls, rubber balls and debutante balls. Hell, once she read a totally accurate fortune from the wrinkles in Waxe-text! Paté is kind of ordinary, really."

"Heh, heh," Harkodian snorted. "It's your paté and you'll scry if you want to!"

Even Elvis, previously engrossed in a love scene between Gage and DeSoto on THE NEW! EMERGENCY!, laughed at that one.

Well, thank Pan! Back to our usual domestic bliss, with everybody getting along fabulously simply by agreeing with everything I say, and obeying my every word. It is a wonderful life, Frank Capra was right.

Fernando Francisco Besocara suddenly came to life. "What a stimulating evening it's been! I'm famished! Got any hamburger? Got a frying pan?"

Aristotle came over all stunned and amazed. "Hamburger? But you're a chicken-eating ghoul! And a frying pan? But even if you ate hamburger, you'd want it raw, wouldn't you?"

In the meanwhile, Artemis had gone to the fridge and found a nice juicy hamburger patty (wrapped in Waxtex! Oh, lucky me!) and a good cast iron skillet once used by the Donner Party. Fernando jumped up. "Oh, goody joybells!" he sang, and grabbed the meat and the frying pan.

"What the hell are you doing?" Aristotle the Petulant queried.

"Hey," Fernando said saucily. "It's my patty and I'll fry if I want to!"

And he did. See how evolution can happen right before your very amazed eyes and you say, "Oh, it's just the hash," or, "Golly, that were crazy. Jeepers." I've even heard folks say that it was Satan! Possession by the big chief Bogeyman hisself, using a po' ole human to do his bidding. There's lots of reasons for evolution and plenty more funny old methods, and we could spend eternity talking them down to sand. Then we could take that sand and make a mirror and look into it forever. And what would that accomplish? Can evolution be instigated in a creature who lives in a mirror? What about Dorian Gray? Was that evolution or was it a disease, a result of poor hygiene? Oscar insists it's both. A disease will evolve unto its own ideas of perfection. And so will a chicken-eating ghoul.

Now, I will whet your already swollen appetites with previews from my next episode. Mildred visits Bobby Fischer. They play chess! Who wins? Elvis gets jealous. Mildred gets obsessed! Thrill to it all in the next exciting adventure of: Calamity Jane and the Pariah Kid Get Real Logical. Until then, my friends, remember this: He that is not reborn in Christ can kiss the whole megillah goodbye!

Relatives

can be stuffed cabbages
thin leaves cooked soft
fibers just strong enough
to keep rice-mush
and the ground up bowels
of some creature
from spilling out

8 - Mike Selender

THE MAD GIRL TAKES BATTERIES OUT OF HER RADIO TO NOT HEAR HIS VOICE

leaves the house
so each call won't
be some hook that's
jerking her so when
she tries to tear
away she loses
parts of herself
as what held digs
in deeper - Lyn Lifshin

THE CONTINUING SAGA OF DR. IGUANA

THE SEARCH CONTINUES.

by the Rev. Kenneth K. Burke

Welcome to NOTEBOOK JAMBOREE! Artists have sketchbooks (which they sometimes publish and make a few bucks off), I have my notebook. What follows is a series of departmentalized selections from my current crop of musings that is suitable for reading at the breakfast table, on a long bus ride, or even while you're reading a book. So, c'mon gang, get ready to make those eyeballs dance, it's time for NOTEBOOK JAMBOREE!

QUALITY OF LIFE IN BLACK CANYON CITY, AZ Department

A friend of mine gave me a manual aluminum can crusher as a sort of gift for helping him move to a new apartment. It's a very handy device: you place the empty soda or beer can in the jaws of the crusher, pull down the handle, and the can is compacted into one quarter its former size, which makes the cans easy to store until there is a sufficient quantity to justify driving thirty-five miles into Phoenix where they can be sold for recycling.

After a particularly vigorous night of drinking canned sodas, I took the empties out the next morning to where I had the crusher mounted on one of the posts of our carport and began to crunch the cans with quick, soul-satisfying pulls on the lever, throwing the compacted aluminum into the trashbag that was at my feet.

One of the retirees who inhabit the area was taking his morning stroll, took notice of my activities, and inquired demanding, "Young man, just what are you doing over there?"

Since I thought it was quite apparent that I was crushing cans, I answered sarcastically, "I'm getting in shape to vote in the upcoming election."

The old man looked at me, rubbed his chin thoughtfully, and said, "Y'know, that's just what I thought you were doing."

DEFINITION OF A YUPPIE: Someone whose best opening lines in a singles bar concern personal computers and software.

I READ THE NEWS TODAY, OH BOY! Department (Beatles headlines, tabloid style)

ELVIS AND THE BEATLES! THE TRUE STORY BEHIND THEIR HISTORIC SPITWAD FIGHT! "He always seemed to have so much more spit than we did, and we're a quartet!" complains Paul.

PAUL SPEAKS OUT! "Ringo still owes me five bob!"

"Why I wore a Kotex on my head." **JOHN LENNON REVEALS STARTLING CHANGE IN PHYSIOGNOMY!**

RINGO STARR TELLS ALL! "The reason the Beatles kicked Pete Best out of the group and replaced him with me is because Pete wouldn't let Paul and John put their names on his songs, and I would."

BILLY PRESTON REMINISCES! "John used to blow his nose into my check before he paid me."

RESULTS OF NATIONWIDE POLL ANNOUNCED! Three-way tie in fan's choice of favorite Beatle: Pete Best, Tony Sheridan and Murray the K.

YOKO COMES CLEAN: "I woke up one morning about 7:25, had a nice breakfast, and thought to myself, 'Hmmm, I don't have anything else scheduled, today would be a good time to break up the Beatles.' Then I met John, convinced him I actually cared for him, and the rest was one big performance-art success!"

JOHN'S SHAME-FACED ADMISSION! "NO, NO, NO! It wasn't 'Give peace a chance,' it was 'Give peas a chance.' Yoko and I were very much into roughage and fiber..."

BRIAN EPSTEIN'S PROCTOLOGIST: The fifth Beatle?

GEORGE'S ASTOUNDING AMBITION! "To play guitar at the Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band reunion. Then I know the gods would smile."

CAPITOL/EMI RECORDS REVEAL HOAX! "There never were any actual Beatles—the guys who made all those records are the same guys who did 'Jingle Jangle' and 'Sugar, Sugar' and billed themselves as 'The Archies'."

SHAGGY DOG STORY

My friend Gary went off to an electronics convention in Las Vegas and left his god Mahute with me. Mahute is properly identified as an Australian Shepherd mix (which you'll find right next to Tom Collins and Bloody Mary mixes at better liquor and grocery stores everywhere), but he's the type of dog that you'd generally refer to as a "mutt" or a "Heinz 57" (as my dad used to say). I'm not sure if it's Mahute's breed or lack of same, but he has some odd quirks. The most curious of these is his fondness for white bread.

Mahute will half-heartedly eat Liv-a-Snaps, spit out Milk Bones, and totally ignore the presence of rawhide chews, but bring out a piece of white bread, and this dowdy seventy-pound, ten-year-old, stiff-jointed ball of unkempt fur will dance around the living room on two feet like a pedigreed toy poodle in full bloom of spirited doggie adolescence! But, it must be white bread. Mahute will not touch wheat, rye, or pumpernickel, and if you offer those varieties of bread to him, a look of soul-melting disappointment will spread across his face as he turns away to voice his disgust and frustration by collapsing against the side of the couch, loudly and pathetically.

It does no good to explain to him about the relative merits of

whole wheat or multi-grain breads containing little or no preservatives; it doesn't bother Mahute one iota that there is enough residual bleach in a slice of white bread to thoroughly clean and sanitize your average bathroom sink, or that most of the fiber in white breads are so broken down and emulsified that upon ingestion the bread virtually turns to stagnant immovable paste in the digestive tract. Mahute is just a dog, and he knows what he likes, and to him, the stalest, most moldy, chemically redolent piece of white bread is better than the freshest, healthiest, most delightfully aromatic piece of pumpernickel or rye.

Mahute is also quite adept at sniffing out the differences between lite beer and regular, plain tortilla chips and nacho-flavored, generic dry dog food and Purina Dog Chow, and store brand ketchup and Heinz (he seemed to prefer the former over the latter in each case). And, though through his acute canine senses he makes subtle judgements that would lead casual observers to believe that Mahute has a strict sense of aesthetic guidelines, he cannot seem to use these factors to his advantage in the area of sex. Indeed, he cannot seem to determine which of my two female dogs is spayed and which is not (Sheba is, Loki isn't), and as a result, Mahute spends the majority of his time violating Sheba's prim sensibilities with his embarrassing cold-nose invasions of her privacy, provoking her to retaliatory violence with his thrusting senile vigor.

When Gary came home to claim his pet, I told him of Mahute's strange predilections and the tensions they were causing with the opposite sex. He responded, "Looks like a case of 'Like Master, Like Mongrel;' I had the same problem in Vegas."

And to think that I was the one who laughed at the idea of group analysis for pets and their owners.

COMMERCIAL

Announcer: You know, there are so many tasty, wholesome snacks put out by trusted, reputable firms designed specifically for pets as a reward for when they do something clever or intelligent, but until now there's never been a snack specifically formulated for pets that do something stupid. That's why we've come out with STUPA-SNAX, THE PERFECT TREAT FOR BAD DOGS.

STUPA-SNAX smell like beef, cheese, chicken, liver, and garlic, all the things that dogs love, but after the first bite and swallow, they begin to taste like soap, cigarette ashes, sulphur, and three-day-old coffee grounds, all the things that dogs hate! Watch how it works.

(SCENE: Owner, pet, and a big mess on the floor.)

Owner: (Angry) Look at this mess on the floor! Who did this? Who messed on the floor? Did you make this mess on the floor?

(Dog feigns innocence. Owner smiles to himself and reaches for a box of STUPA-SNAX.)

Owner: Oh well, let's let bygones be bygones. Would you like a treat, boy?

Dog: WOOF-WOOF!

Owner: Well, here you go.

(Dog greedily gobbles down the STUPA-SNAX. Suddenly the true nature of the "treat" floods the animal's senses and bitterly washes over its taste buds.)

Owner: That'll teach you to mess on the floor and deceive me. I hope you've learned your lesson, because if you ever do that again, I'll give you another STUPA-SNAX!

Dog: Whimper! Yike!

Announcer: (Smug laugh) Ha ha, with STUPA-SNAX they learn their lesson quick! Better than obedience school, a whack on the nose with a rolled-up newspaper, or a heartfelt 'Shame on you.'

STUPA-SNAX, for when your dog does something stupid.

(END SCENE: Same owner and pet. Dog drinking furiously out of his water dish.)

Owner: Awww, I'm sorry, boy. Let me make it up to you. Here, have a Milk Bone.

Dog: GRRRRRRRRRR!

Owner: No, really, it is a Milk Bone, honest! Down, boy!

Help....

Dog: GRRRRRRRRRR....

(Scene FADES OUT behind superimposed box of STUPA-SNAX.)

DR. IGUANA'S TV GUIDE

DIALING FOR BOWLING - Variety Sports

Earl Anthony and Theolonius Monk host this new participation game show where contestants are called and asked if they are planning to go bowling. If they answer yes, the winners are given gift certificates which can be redeemed for long-distance phone calls, which are to be used to contact distant friends and relatives to ask them if they are planning to go bowling, who irrespective of their answers are given copies of the "Dialing for Bowling" home game, which consists of some rolled coins and the phone number and address of their local bowling alley and a package of one-size-fits-all sani-guards to wear over their feet with rented shoes.

THE NEW PERRY MASON - Drama

Perry dies, but his fighting spirit of justice lives on as he communicates his wants, needs, instructions and plea bargains through a popular right-wing TV evangelist who, by night, is also a slick, street-wise private detective accompanied by a sleek L.A. fashion model who is working on her Master's degree in psychology by helping Mason/the preacher/the detective cope with his recurrent bouts of schizophrenia. TONIGHT'S EPISODE: Perry is informed by the powers-that-be that he does not have a license to practice law in limbo, and that he does not rack up any bonus miles on his airline's frequent flier plan for out-of-body experiences. Also, Della Street has Paul Jr. beat the young evangelist within an inch

ployer. (NOTE: The network may pre-empt this program to show the NBC special "Jack Paar Tries To Explain Just Who The Hell He Was.") That's it for now, folks! Look for future editions of NOTEBOOK JAMBOREE in The Continuing Saga of Dr. Iguana!

of his life when the minister tells her something intensely personal about Perry and Della's relationship in an attempt to convince Ms. Street that he really has been in contact with her late en-

TALK SHOW HOST confidential



AUTHOR'S NOTE: It should be noted, gentle reader, the following column was the result of two events—the casual reading of the latest issue of the horror magazine *FANGORIA* and the remark made by a co-worker that carrying a lunchbox to work (in my case, a Popeye lunchbox) was considered very chic and positively Yuppie. With this preface, please read on...

George woke up as he always did, having the urgent need to relieve himself. This morning, though, as he stumbled to the bathroom and hurriedly lifted the lid, he knew something was different. Indeed, he remembered. He had not only drunk himself into a stupor the preceding evening, he had killed two six packs of Pielis. Not one only, mind you, but two, which has the power to flush all poisons from your body. If quack doctors ever learned of the effects of Pielis' Real Draft, the brew could be used for all sorts of therapy.

Therapy was on George's mind, you see. His head was splitting and his vision was blurry. Although his initial reaction was to go immediately back to bed with a cool Rolling Rock and a handful of aspirin, George knew his job would evaporate if he missed another day. His body screaming its displeasure, he managed to shower and swallow some coffee before stumbling out the door.

George's car was a bland but functional American-made sedan of fairly recent vintage. In it, George kept a supply of plastic coffee mugs emblazoned with the logos of his favorite donut restaurants, the latest issue of *SWANK* magazine, a box of condoms intended to impress his younger brothers, roadmaps to places he would like to go someday, and a plastic madonna his mother insisted on gluing to the dashboard when the car was new.

George worked at a supermarket. He stocked shelves, did janitor duty and, if he could get to work often enough, stood in line for a promotion to a full-time deli position.

George did not have a steady girlfriend, but he dated and among his peer group was considered something of a stud. He did, unlike many of his friends, not only have his own functioning car, but lived away from home in an apartment of his own. George even bought a VCR, which made his apartment the social center of his group.

George was relatively happy. He knew that when he wanted more money, he would tend bar down the street during the holidays to get some. His goal in life seemed to be ill-defined, and he liked

it that way. His mother wanted the best for her son and was perplexed that George didn't want to go into business for himself or join the Army or become an Amway dealer.

George was happy, though. He had a car, a job, friends, an apartment and little debt. He was attractive enough to date and could actually work himself into being enthusiastic about being an adult.

All of this would change, though. The first hint was at lunch.

George made it his payday habit to go down to the Tic Toc Cafe and eat homemade hard-boiled eggs and drink a quick beer or two. As he entered the bar, he ordered his usual mid-day drink, a Stroth's Light. George liked Rolling Rock as an eye-opener, Stroth's Light for lunch during the week and Pielis for hard-core relaxing.

His glass, glistening with moisture in the subdued light of the bar, looked like a thing of beauty to George as he reached for it. A paycheck in his pocket, a weekend free of responsibilities and a beer in his hand. This was living.

The Stroth's Light did not taste different, but George had a reaction that he usually didn't experience unless he had consumed several pints of Night Train wine. He became profoundly sick.

He spent the rest of his lunch break being ill and trying to stage a quick recovery. His deli promotion was within his grasp if he could avoid getting in trouble. He got back to work as soon as he could.

At work that afternoon, George noticed that his hair was no longer in the style he normally wore. George had a hair style that charitable people would call "casual." He washed it, towelled it dry and parted it on the right side. He noticed, though, that his hair was different.

It was swept back and blown dry into place. George couldn't believe it. He first noticed it when the baggers at the market started teasing him about his new style. He was amazed.

George usually did his shopping after his shift on Fridays, and he suffered another odd incident. He bought practically nothing of his usual purchases. Gone were the Tater Tots, the Swanson Frozen Dinners, and the Dr. Pepper. In their place were tofu, fresh vegetables and pre-cooked backs of ribs. George seemed to have no control over his choices.

Not until George swung by his local video store did he realize that something profound had indeed happened to him. Instead of heading off to the pornography, he seemed drawn to movies such as *ABOUT LAST NIGHT*, *OUT OF AFRICA* and *KRAMER VS. KRAMER*.

"This is goddamn Yuppie shit," he growled as he gathered the tapes against his will, and yet, he rented those. He had intended to rent the nude female boxing tape that was just in, but he was compelled to rent these mega-hits.

George didn't realize how complete a transformation he was experiencing until he went home and cleaned his house. Staying up to midnight, he cleaned and rearranged and went through his closet. His sleep was fitful as he struggled to understand what was happening to him.

In the morning, he spent as much money as he could on new clothes and bought a membership at a racquetball club. He had never played any sport before, besides basketball, that required him to hit a ball with another object. He liked tennis, golf and racquetball. He liked bowling. He kept telling himself that as he accepted the money from the pawnbroker as he sold his beloved ball.

He never wore any jewelry, with the exception of a Saint Christopher's medal, and he couldn't believe that he was actually buying a gold chain.

His friends, who gathered at his home every Saturday night for booze and video, couldn't understand what they saw. George tried to explain that he was no longer in control of his life, but they didn't believe him. They had seen other people slowly change into snobby trend followers. George, they thought, was no different.

George settled back with a Pielis. It made him sick. He didn't know what to do. He was becoming a Yuppie. He hated Yuppies. He hated their slavery to trends and styles. He hated how they would go into debt for things they didn't need. He hated their food. He liked eating the flesh of dead animals and vegetables that were tamed by processing. He hated their language. He hated their kissing of everyone and their use of the words "dear" and "love." He hated their shops—self-conscious emporiums of cute. He hated their rediscovery of R & B music. He hated their discovery of Springsteen. He hated how they made Ed Wood movies "chic."

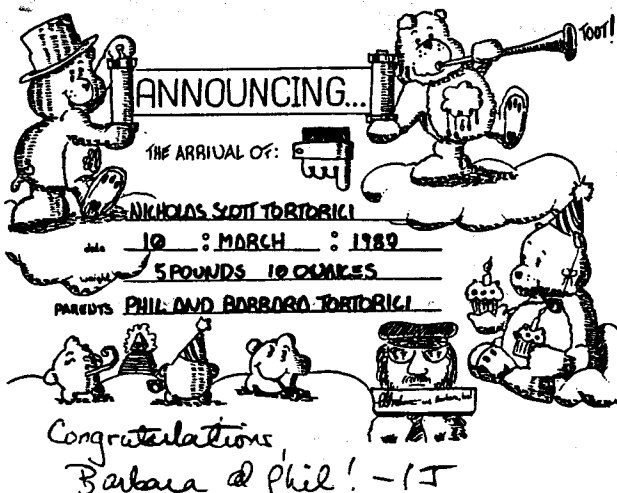
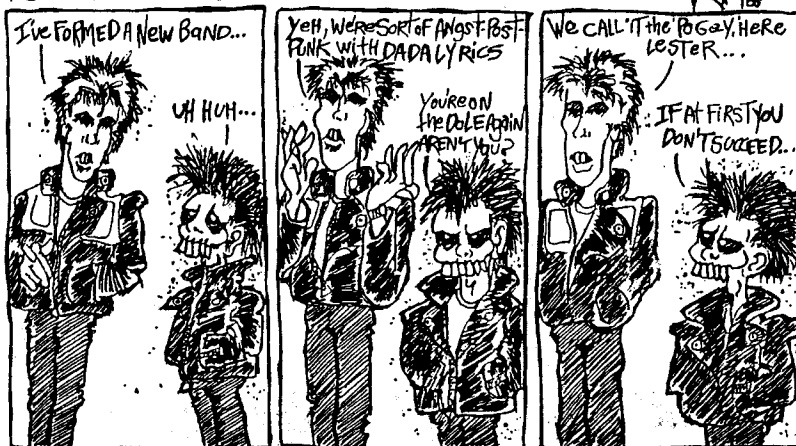
It was only when he found himself reaching for a bottle of mineral water that he knew, through some fluke of nature, he had been turned into a Yuppie. Perhaps the cleaning fluids at work were to blame. Perhaps George had become infected with some sort of mystery virus. Perhaps his mother had said a novena to Saint Jude about her black sheep son. His Yuppieness might be an act of God.

The Perrier didn't even give him the mildest of buzzes. He was despondent. He knew that his complete transformation was only a matter of time. He would soon tire of his job and go into some sort of consulting work. He would start seeing a different kind of woman and have different kinds of friends. He would begin looking for a different car and a different apartment.

There was just one thing to do. George had to kill himself. He went to the kitchen where the gas oven and kitchen knives presented opportunities. He couldn't use them. Yuppies don't commit suicide. They go into years of analysis.

George stumbled through life from that point on with only the vaguest of memories of being something else than Yuppie. His mother was happy and his therapist was happy, but George just couldn't manage anything more than a momentary feeling of pleasure. And that was only when he rented the nude female boxing tape.

EDIBLE TRANSCENDERS®



THOUGHTS ON EXTINCTION
by Michael Polo
The Tyrannosaurus Rex
Never really cared for sex
Since so few of them survived
Getting hickies on their necks. 10

BACKWORDS LOGIC

by Ace Backwords ©1987

Watching POLTERGEIST on LSD

I had to ask her again, "What IS this?" She said, "It's 'Poltergeist.' It's just a movie." Terrible things were happening on the TV screen. A family lost in another dimension of psychic space. Explosions and crashes.

Outside, looking through the window, things were even weirder. The parking lot was exploding. I immediately knew: the bomb was dropping. This was it!

I looked over at Molly Morbid sitting on the couch. "This is it," I said. "I always kinda knew we'd go out this way."

Molly shrugged. Or was that a smile? She seemed to...understand.

A tear was running down my cheek. Wind whipped across the living room. Weird vibrations. This lightning bolt zapped my eye with electricity. The light bulb...YES!...it was the crack into the other dimension! I couldn't take my eye off that bright white light. And it was an evil dimension. Satan. Crackling through me a ray of light. The crack in the cosmic egg.

Finally pulling myself out of the lightbulb, the TV suddenly made sense: the little girl was lost in another dimension. She had slipped through the crack. Into where? Why, the spirit world, where everything was insane and impossible.

Outside the window the parking lot was being sucked into the core of the nuclear hurricane. Sucked like by a giant vacuum cleaner. People were screaming and running by, trying to catch their hats blowing in the wind. Yelling.

And the TV. It all made perfect sense now. This was the Evening News reporting on the nuclear holocaust in progress. It was going up all across the world. I fastened myself into the living room chair, preparing for takeoff, gritting my teeth! I could hear it rumbling outside and I could see it on the TV screen. The Apocalypse. The little girl was crying! Her mother tried to help her! An angel of God explained it to her. The cosmic secrets...on the other side.

"What IS this," I said.

"It's just a movie," said Molly. She looked almost blase. Wasn't that just like Molly. She took even the Apocalypse in stride. But she was glowing. We were both ready to watch it blow...and I'll see you on the Dark Side of the Mooooooon...

I was lying on the rug for some reason, fondling Molly's shoe, when...

I had to GET OUT OF THERE. NOW!!!

I was riding my bike down the hill. Trying to get there. But where? I couldn't think.

I was going down, down, down. I had to get back to Molly's before it all went up. It was my only hope. There were tears in my eyes as I pedalled down, down, down into another dimension....

DON'T KNOCK IT TILL YOU'VE TRIED IT

by Susan Packie

"Guide, are you sure this Teotihuacán pyramid is the same as it was two thousand years ago?"

"Of course I'm sure. Why do you ask?"

"I was wondering about that man on the top."

"Drugs for sale, drugs for sale."

"That is the Pyramid of the Sun, and the man standing on it is trying to reach the Sun."

"You mean he's trying to get high?"

"Exactly. The man is the only survivor of the region's original five thousand inhabitants."

"How does he support himself?"

"As you see."

"Why isn't he arrested?"

"Are you satisfied with your hotel accomodations?"

"They're luxurious!"

"Are the restaurants to your liking?"

"I don't think I've ever eaten so well."

"Do the discotheques amuse you?"

"No city in the world has better."

"So don't knock the drug traffickers."

"You mean—"

"Money from the sale of drugs paid for all that."

"I think that's just terrible, when children are starving, the poor sleep in gutters, unemployment and underemployment are rampant, and violence is increasing."

"Of course, you could stay in that shantytown out by the garbage dump, beg for food, and contract dysentery."

"I see your point, but why are you so enthusiastic about drugs? You make it sound as if you have decided they will save the world!"

"So the pharmacists say."

"I mean narcotics."

"So the pharmacists say."

"I mean illegal narcotics."

Before the guide could respond, a police officer was tapping him on the shoulder and asking him if he had a bag to sell.

"Do you sell handbags to the police?"

The police officer reeled off and the innocent tourist knew.

"If it is legal to sell drugs here, I can see how you would have so much trouble understanding a country where it isn't."

The guide just smiled. Teotihuacán had been top banana in the region for a thousand years—much, much longer than the country's northern neighbor had been around. Its name meant Place of the Gods. The Pyramid of the Sun, with a height of more than sixty meters, was the largest monument erected in pre-Columbian Mexico.

"Drugs for sale, drugs for sale," the last of the indigenous inhabitants continued to chant.

So they had to be doing something right!

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Bernard Rosenberg.

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WEST 19TH STREET OBSERVATION

by Steven F. Scharff

As I sat on a milk crate in an alley tying my shoelaces I noticed two men walking towards each other obviously intent on different destinations.

A leather-jacketed young man with shaggy black mane and a well-dressed older man with stark white cropped hair.

A passing delivery truck, giving off a very loud backfire, blocked my view temporarily.

When the truck passed

I saw the older man had hit the sidewalk covering his head with his arms.

The young man stared probably in surprise or in amusement.

The youth helped the older man to his feet brushing off the dirt from his long grey coat and saying "Welcome to Manhattan!"

The older man stared back, took from his vest pocket a small leather case, and from it extracted a business card which he put in the youth's hand.

As he began to walk once more towards his destination he said to the youth in a thick Irish accent, "Look me up next time you're in Belfast!"

Stuck by Larry Oberc

So there I was, standing in front of the Desmonds' house, looking into the ditch where the pipe was sticking out. My brother was somewhere in the middle of that pipe, and he was talking to me.

"No shit, man!" he said. "I think I'm stuck for real this time!"

"What the hell are you talking about?" I yelled into the pipe. "You've crawled through that thing a million times before and never got stuck. What makes this time any different?"

My brother was out to get even. That's all there was to it. I decided to play his game.

"What are you going to do if it starts raining?" I yelled into the pipe. "I mean, what with you being stuck and all?"

"What are you talking about?" my brother yelled back, wondering what I was up to.

"Well," I said, "it's starting to get pretty cloudy out here. Looks like a storm might be headed this way. Remember the way that storm hit last summer? The way it flooded all those ditches? From the looks of things your ass might be floating down a river somewhere in about a half an hour or so."

"You're bullshitting me, right?" asked my brother.

Last week Keith Skinner, a two-hundred-pound five-foot-three-inch fifteen-year-old attacked me. He ran up behind me, grabbed me by the neck, slung me to the ground, and stood there looking at me like I was something he was glad he didn't step in by accident. Runcurs were his belly button popped open last summer. Blood and guts everywhere. In its own way, the attack on me made sense. Skinner was brain-damaged from an exploded belly button and didn't know what he was doing.

My brother must not have known what he was doing either, because he saw the trouble I was in and decided to help me out. He ran up to Skinner, jumped on Skinner's back, and hung there looking like he didn't know what to do next. Skinner lost his balance and fell backwards, landing on my brother. Me, I saw my opening, and took off running. The last thing I saw of my brother, he was trying to get away from Skinner.

"No, man," I yelled into the pipe. "It really does look like rain out here."

"No it doesn't," said someone behind me. I turned around. It was Mrs. Desmond.

The Desmonds never said anything to me or my brother about his crawling through the pipe in front of their house. They probably didn't like it, but my brother crawling through that pipe was probably so strange to their way of thinking they didn't know what to do about it. Now the way I had figured was this—there had to be a law out there against crawling through those pipes. After all, you never saw nobody else trying to do it, and if my brother was breaking a law, well, I wasn't about to become an accomplice.

"Who's in there?" asked Mrs. Desmond, her fingers wringing each other like they were trying to rip each other off.

"No one," I said, trying to look innocent.

"I'm not shitting you, man!" my brother suddenly yelled from inside the pipe. "There's a bunch of crap in here that wasn't here the last time I crawled through."

"That's your brother in there, right?" asked Mrs. Desmond. Her hands were going wild, dancing with each other.

"Yes," I said, trying to look concerned, trying not to laugh, "yes, it is. You see, Mrs. Desmond, he went crazy! He was just walking along, talking to me like I'm talking to you now, then, out of nowhere, he jumped into that pipe! I tried to grab him, but he was already halfway into the pipe and kicking all over the place!"

"What are you going to do to get him out of there?" asked Mrs. Desmond. If her hands were flames they'd be all over the neighborhood.

"Who's out there?" asked my brother, hearing Mrs. Desmond.

"Man," I said, "man, man, man, you better get unstuck in a hurry, man! There's something headed your way!"

"What do you mean there's something headed my way?" asked my brother.

Mrs. Desmond was looking into the pipe, looking at me scared. If she looked any more worried something bad was going to happen.

"I think it was a rat," I said, "or at least a big mouse. I tried to stop it, but it got away. It jumped in that pipe before I had a chance. Maybe that stuff you found in there is a nest or something, man."

I smiled at Mrs. Desmond, hoping she'd settle down, wishing I could offer her a drink or something. But she was staring at the pipe, thinking about that rat heading home to its nest, and my brother being stuck in the middle.

"Are you sure it was a rat?" asked Mrs. Desmond.

About fifty feet up the road, in front of the Burns' house, my brother crawled out of the other end of the pipe and jumped to his feet. The rat story worked and he could tell by the way I was grinning that it was pure bullshit. Mrs. Desmond almost fainted when he walked up and asked what we were looking at. She scrambled for the safety of her home a few seconds later.

A week later, the city laid pipes in the ditches and tossed dirt over the mess to stop my brother from upsetting the neighbors. There wasn't an open pipe anywhere in the neighborhood. But my brother, he knew when to move on to new challenges. There was this great telephone pole in front of the Desmonds' house, and he climbed it every chance he could trying to figure out which of the wires were live.



SNIDE CRITIC REVIEWS J.P. MORGAN

I don't know, dear readers...sometimes even a self-appointed critic has an off-day. Sure, you might think it's easy, poking fun at megabudget Hollywood flops, jeering at their no-budget rip-off copies, heaping scorn upon cheap special effects, wooden dialogue, stupid ad lines...well, sometimes it's just not that simple! Months and months can pass without seeing the release of any promising new films—films that your Snide Critic feels justified in writing imitation-Michael-Weldon reviews for. Alack, alas! The only such film I've seen recently is THE KINDRED; I knew I was in for dubious entertainment when the opening credits listed five (five!) screenwriters and two directors. A real snoozefest, it concerns weird DNA experiments in a dank basement. Lots and lots of close-ups of the dull nonactor yuppie cast, who never seem overly alarmed by the monsters. Ridiculous scene: Baby monster somehow hides inside a watermelon, and attacks woman in car. If you missed this film, that's one up for you. (Oh! Hey, remember Leslie Stevens of OUTER LIMITS fame? The poor guy is one of the screenwriters!)

Well, there's my only new review. Now what? I could write about how Channel 13 has been showing Marx Brothers films for the past couple of months; I could compare it to manna from heaven, and rave on about Harpo and the ship's Punch & Judy show, or Groucho singing "Whatever It Is, I'm Against It!", or Chico deciphering Harpo's charades, or Harpo kicking his legs in the lemonade vat, or Chico selling horserace tips to Groucho, or Groucho pitching woo with Margaret Dumont, or...well, hell, what can one say anyway? The Marxes were so far ahead of their time that nobody's ever caught up with 'em. Seeing their films, and then flipping the channel to the latest mis-incarnation of SATURDAY NIGHT LIFE...well, never mind, throw the dross a bone, let's not discuss it. (Well yes, let's—I honestly believe that the continued survival of SNL has nothing to do with ratings; it is an unwelcome presence, like a dead fish, or a fart. Why is it still on the air? Because it's a programming device—to tell us "what's-supposed-to-be-funny," rather than actually entertaining us...like prime-time sitcoms.)

What else? Well, they came out with NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET PT. 3...but I just haven't had the heart to see it. The first Freddy film was a terrific, scary classic; the second one really stunk. Now, the third one apparently features kids fighting back—who needs this shit? They did it with FRIDAY THE 13TH, they did it with PSYCHO...just keep grindin' 'em out like sausages (with lots of fat & sawdust), squeezing out every last possible cent, 'til everyone gets tired of the stupid things, and I don't wanna write about it...wait, I remember now! I wanted to tell you about Lou Ferrigno's HERCULES! Caught it on Channel 5, and it was plenty fun: El Cheapo animated robots made of model tank kits, lame acting, and wait till you see Lou beat up a bear and throw him into outer space! And this film reminds me to tell you about Michael Weldon's new book—I think it's called THE PSYCHOTRONIC COMPENDIUM OF STARS. He mentioned it on WFMJ...it's supposed to be due out this year, and I'll be looking intently for it!

Hmm, column still looks a little sparse...what else? Rodny the Dioxin's letter, that's what! Rodny, Rodny, Rodny—my point about the recent spate of costly cinema flops was not that a lack of audience dollars indicates a commensurate lack of filmic quality; rather, I meant to illustrate that most movies, more now than ever, are intended as programming devices (like the TV shows mentioned above) and/or Pavlov-response profit machines. It's all become a big mishmash or numbnuts rightwing-military-MTV pulp, and cutesie-pukie pseudo-emotional Spielberg/Lucas pap...and so the Snide Critic cannot help but to sneer and scoff at such things when they fail. HOWARD THE DUCK - \$35 million down the drain, ha ha! HIGHLANDER - Nobody wanted to go see a two-hour music video, chuckle chuckle! OVER THE TOP - Could Stallone's career possibly be over? Awwwww...Well, you get the idea, yes? And another thing, Mr. D: you write great, and I was relieved to hear you weren't leaving IJ...but how can you possibly, with your bare face hanging out, maintain that TERRORVISION is a "classic"? The film is loaded with apparently retarded "actors," who make one wince with every line they speak; asinine, unfunny sitcom humor that would be better suited for SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE, MTV, and other such zombie entertainments; the garish, puke-colored sets are no help at all. It's too deliberately "wacky" and self-conscious to be even an entertaining Badfilm—it just sits there and sucks weasel glands. The B-52's-like theme song by the Fibonaccis was the only vaguely enjoyable thing in the whole film! The Snide Critic didn't dig it, capish? But seriously, Rod...I would sincerely appreciate it if you would see fit to describe any amusements you have gleaned from TERRORIVISION...cause from my corner, it looks like it was made by slugs or Republicans or something.

Geez...that's it...I guess I just don't have anything to write about. I was going to mention that Spielberg's upcoming HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS reportedly concerns a cute Sasquatch who moves in with a cute middle class family, and that I hate it already, but you knew that...I just won't write a column this issue, that's all.

Sorry if words are blurry on some pages, folks -
it's my office copier, not Debbie! -aw

LITERATE T-SHIRTS



Zenarchy STORIES

by Ho Chi Zen
A POOR MAN'S LAMENT

Explaining the uses of the Yiddish adverb *nebekh*, James A. Matisoff tells the following story in Blessings, Curses, Hopes and Fears:

There is a joke about a group of Jewish prisoners being led off to a Czarist jail, while a few horrified Jewish women look on. As each prisoner passes the ladies, they ask him what he has been arrested for. The first says that his crime as a passport violation. The women wail and say, "*Oy, nebekh, far a pas!*" ("Oh, poor man, for a passport!")

The second one says that he had tried to evade military service. Like passport violations, avoidance of military service in the Czarist armies was by no means frowned upon in the Jewish community, and the women all wail again, "*Oy, nebekh, vegn priziv!*" ("Oh, poor man, because of military service!")

The third prisoner goes by, and is asked the same question. He replies with wry humor,

"*Ikh bin nebekh a ganev!*" ("I, poor man, am a thief!")

REMARKABLE CONVERSATION TIPS

In Meetings with Remarkable Men, George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff describes a kind of discussion resembling somewhat the Zen *mondo* technique that used to go on between his father and a friend:

"This procedure, as was evident when I later understood it, was an extremely original means for development of the mind and for self-perfecting.

"They called it *kastousilia*, a term derived, it seems to me, from the ancient Assyrian, and which my father evidently took from some legend.

"The procedure was as follows:

"One of them would unexpectedly ask the other a question, apparently quite out of place, and the other, without haste, would calmly and seriously reply with logical plausibility.

"For instance, one evening when I was in the workshop, my future tutor entered unexpectedly and, as he walked in, asked my father, 'Where is God just now?'

"My father answered most seriously, 'Got is just now in Sari Kamish.'

"Sari Kamish is a forest region on the former frontier between Russia and Turkey, where unusually tall pine trees grow, renowned everywhere in Transcaucasia and Asia Minor.

"Receiving this reply from my father, the dean asked, 'What is God doing there?'

"My father answered that God was making double ladders there and on the tops of them he was fastening happiness, so that individual people and whole nations might ascend and descend.

Every Story Tells A Picture by A.J. Wright

The most important artifact you notice as you first explore Miranda Blank's apartment is not the slender wooden sculpture dominating the foyer. That massive symbol is impressive enough, as is the jungle of succulent house plants that seem like guardians of a strange new world. And they are.

No, what you notice first is not the overabundance of books, old books and new books, Swedenborg next to Spillaine—that kind of juxtaposition. You live with this indiscriminate cultural bombardment every day; why notice it here?

But you do observe immediately the photograph above what Miranda Blank has labelled, in my presence, a couch—a new wave piece of furniture not constructed for human seating. In the black and white picture, a young girl of perhaps nine or ten is seated in a straight-back wooden chair, which has been placed in the center of a huge, windowless, otherwise empty room. She is wearing sunglasses and long blonde hair frames the face. On the wall behind her hangs a huge photograph of an eye—"Someone's third eye," Miranda says. In each hand the young girl holds a brightly lit fluorescent light tube.

You assume at first that the child is an earlier incarnation of Miranda, but she denies this accusation vigorously. Miranda claims she once met the little girl near the Chick-Fil-A in a shopping mall in a distant southern city, but Miranda has filed other stories about this icon as well. At various times the girl has been Anastasia's granddaughter, a homeless orphan, a midget lighting designer and Miranda's long-dead mother. These permutations are apparently endless; I'm sure many exist of which I am unaware.

No matter. The most important element of this photograph is not the identity of the girl, despite our incessant curiosity about her. But we must keep rising above this question of ego to consider the confusion of light represented here. Now. In the photograph. In ourselves.

"These questions and answers were carried on in a serious and quiet tone—as though one of them were asking the price of potatoes today and the other was replying that the potato crop was very poor this year...They very often carried on conversations in this same spirit, so that to a stranger it would have seemed that here were two old men out of their senses, who were at large only by mistake instead of being in a mad-house."

A CHALLENGING CONSOLATION

Perhaps Gurdjieff's most devoted disciple was the Russian composer, Thomas de Hartmann, who, with his wife, wrote Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff. Telling of the first establishing of Gurdjieff's Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, he reports: "A large room was found. Mr. Gurdjieff bought a piano, not a good one; he said, 'Anyone can play a good one.'"

LAO TZU'S DREAM: A Zenarchy Story from THREADBARE (Box 20815, Seattle, WA 98102)

Lao Tzu dreamt that he was a moth. Upon awakening he discovered that his pillow was missing.

THE AWAKENED MASTER

According to Koichi Tohei in Ki in Daily Life (distributed in the U.S. through Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.), there was a virtuous Zen priest who asked himself every morning when he awakened: "Is your master up?" He would then reply to himself, 'Yes, he's up.' He repeated this from time to time during the day."

CONFUCIOUS SAY

"When the Tao prevails in a state, one may be strong and bold in language as well as action. When the Tao does not prevail, one may be strong and bold in action but must speak with reserve." - The Analects,

Wax Ink

by Rory Houchens

LIVE ALIVE—Stevie Ray Vaughan & Double Trouble (Epic)—Folks like Stevie Ray and Robert Cray have done a lot to make a form of blues music more acceptable to noise snobs and pseudo-intellectuals; sure, Vaughan tempers his indigo offerings with a little soul, some meat-grinding rock, and a few heartfelt Hendrixisms, but everything is built upon a sturdy blues foundation that is as faithful as it is palatable. On this double album, Stevie and cohorts sink their teeth into more than a dozen numbers that have been soaked in blue sweat.

"Say What!", a punchy tune reminiscent of contemporary B.B. King, kicks off **LIVE ALIVE**, followed by the more traditional "Ain't Gone 'N' Give Up On Love" (featuring some of Vaughan's most strenuous guitar playing) and the funky "Pride And Joy." Fierce covers of Stevie Wonder's "Superstition" and the shuffling "Willie the Wimp" (about the guy who was buried in a coffin dressed up like a Cadillac) beg for really massive radio airplay, and "I'm Leaving You" and "Cold Shot" should pacify the most uncompromising blues fan. Red hot!

MORALLY BANKRUPT (Slime Recs., P.O. Box 880312, San Francisco, CA 94188-0312)—Just when you thought it was safe for your ears to go out alone again, some thrash remnants like Morally Bankrupt show up and make aural curfew mandatory once more. Covering a broad range of topical subjects (including phone sex and paranoia, natch), these piledriving punks are perfectly in tune with the hearts and minds of young America—wait, make that the whole population of the USA—nay, the world in general! They recognize the plight of Yassar Arafat and the PLO, link AIDS to the CIA, and pay tribute to the beloved skateboard, all without missing a beat. They address mental health on the chilling "Attics Of My Mind," explore romantic horizons on the wistful "Brain In My Head," and pay their respects to heavy metal with the tear-jerkingly realistic "Bob The Trashman." And in a brilliant attempt to show where they're coming from (and, perhaps, going to), these musical masterminds dish out tried and true renditions of the theme songs from **ROCKY AND BULLWINKLE** and **THE THREE STOOGES**. And, dear friends, could anyone ask for more?

NETWORK—Robert Fripp (Editions EG)—The silver sticker on the front of this record proudly proclaims "Remixed-Remastered-Rekindled," and truer words were never written 'cause the music on this five track sampler fairly jumps right out of the speakers at you! Representing Fripp's solo work between King Crimson (roughly 1979 to '81), this essential EP offers just a taste of some of the most thoughtful and engaging sounds recorded during the past few years. The first side showcases Fripp's first solo album, **EXPOSURE**, with "North Star," a sublime slice of pop that uses everything from pedal steel guitar to synthesizer and includes the diverse talents of Brian Eno, Phil Collins and Daryl Hall. Frippertronics are put to good use on "Water Music I," the brief introduction to Peter Gabriel's beautifully somber "Here Comes The Flood," wherein the world is destroyed by torrential rains. The music acquires a harder edge and a more experimental atmosphere on side two where the cyclic Frippertronics are augmented by drums, bass, and—on "Under Heavy Manners" (Fripp's catalog of ism's)—the highly-strung vocals of David Byrne. Great on its own, **NETWORK** serves up a very appetizing introduction to the innovative (past) work of Mr. Fripp that deserves a lot more attention.

"God Loves A Hell Of A Man"—A Picture Made (Beam Recs., c/o Eric Harris, 705 9th Street West, Pittsburg, KS 66762)—The quartet known as A Picture Made find themselves musically somewhere between the classic folk-rock of the mid-sixties Byrds and the quaint splendor of R.E.M. Their debut single sports a tight, unobtrusive beat and a cool bass line underscoring Eric Harris' guitar than jangles like a pocketful of loose change, while Bryan Plumlee applies his suitably unexcited vocals. Very impressive, but I have two gripes: the 45 features

14 only one song (played on both sides); and anyway, it's too dang short. Hopefully an album will soon be coming.



WORLDBROKEN—Saccharine Trust (SST Recs., P.O. Box 1, Lawndale, CA 90260)—Totally improvised and recorded live, **WORLDBROKEN** is something like the after-effect of pouring ether onto a flame. It wallows in punkish scumge; struts atop no-frills, atomic blues; meanders into the psychedelic ozone; reconstructs popular noise; and glues pithy words onto jazzy sound like nobody's business. Keep your ears open for "II Samuel Chapter 4" and "Estuary."

STILL WARM—John Scofield (Gramavision)—Guitarist extraordinaire John Scofield's playing is usually just a bit too slick for my tastes. Much of his recorded work seems to be little more than an elaborate display of his rather considerable talents with no room left for any real emotion. But with **STILL WARM**, Scofield has constructed a satisfying showcase for his musical proficiency and backed it up with some genuine feeling. "Still Warm" Fondly mimics Pat Metheny's lush, "lost-in-a-cloud" sound, while "Rule Of Thumb" and "High And Mighty" generate a little more middle-of-the-road heat a la Lee Ritenour. More original are "Protocol," a pulsing, intricate piece of funk; and the excellent "Gil B643," a slow, shadowy number with Scofield's most exotic and cerebral playing. **STILL WARM** boasts not only exceptional musicianship (including Omar Hakim, Darryl Jones and Don Grolnick), but a wealth of impressive material as well.

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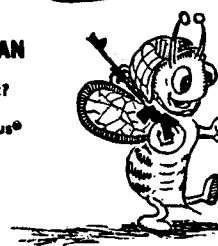


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"All the news to give you fits"

CHICAGO HEIGHTS, IL (YU)—President Reagan made a surprise speech here at the Bloom County High School cafeteria after Air Force 1 took off for Washington without him.

Vowing "swift and firm retaliation" against the terrorists who highjacked his airplane, kidnapping his wife and top cabinet officials, Reagan was unable to list any of the highjacker's demands, but expressed his appreciation to the people of Chicago Heights who had allowed him to sleep in the high school cafeteria and fixed him a meal of free cheese and crackers.

Protestors outside the school, claiming they were from the National Meadow Party (NMP), argued the President's impromptu visit was evidence that the nation's aging leader "is just another old fart who suffers from Alzheimer's disease."

Spokesprotestor John-John "Cutter" Kennedy pointed out that had the President not overslept he would have easily caught the late-morning flight, and that national news networks did not even report the President's absence when the plane arrived on schedule in Bethesda, Maryland.

Counter-protestor Dr. Benjamin Spoke, 85, however, chided the NMP members for stereotyping all old people on the basis "of a single maladjusted film and TV extra."

Spock called for a public apology from the NMP, noting that "not one person over 40 volunteered to assist in the care and feeding of President Reagan, a fact that should not go unnoticed by our younger brethren, whose minds seem presently as clouded as those of the leaders who are working so desperately to destroy us all."

WASHINGTON (YU)—Nancy Reagan is bitter over reports that John Poindexter, Oliver North, and John Secord have formed a group called NTSquaredS, or Not The Three Stooges. The three men have all invoked the Fifth Amendment during questioning in the Nancygate investigations, and the first lady says she is considering filing suit for copyright infringement should the trio formally release its rumored a cappella number entitled: "Just Say No!"

BORING, OR (YU)—During an anti-drug appearance at Sinkhole Elementary School, Nancy Reagan called for an end to former President Richard Nixon's support of her husband's handling of the Iran/Contra arms question. "The last thing we need," the first lady told a fourth-grade class, "is for the press to connect that scumbag with the present situation, and anyway, Ron hasn't done a single thing since the Hinckley incident," alluding to her husband's assassination in 1981.

HOBOKEN, NJ (YU)—Dozens more bodies have been found here at the public library's Frank Sinatra Collection in what authorities are now calling the grisliest mass burial site thus far unearthed in the Western Hemisphere. Since the initial discovery two days ago of the ring-finger purportedly belonging to James T. "Jimmy" Hoffa, the labor leader missing for more than 7 years, the remains of nearly one-quarter million people, mostly from poor Italian families, have been found. Police decline to speculate on a motive.

WASHINGTON (YU)—The National Chamber of Commerce, referring to a government report that shows a strong link between the rising unemployment rate among blacks and the steady growth of business, urged the President today to push for a constitutional amendment that would make it a federal offense for blacks to find work.

According to William Forehead, a Chamber logician, "It's a partnership we've overlooked. In this case, racial intolerance is strictly a business issue: if blacks can't get hired, business will skyrocket. It's another unique facet of the free enterprise system."

President Reagan is hoping his approval of such an amendment will focus media attention on his civil rights record and bring its current obsession with the Nancygate scandal to a fortuitous close.

ADDIS ABABA (YU)—The Ethiopian government, accused by other nations of withholding food from its own people, has once again refused to acknowledge that half of its countrymen are dying of starvation. "Starvation my ass," quipped General Electric de la Chevy Vegas, in charge of food hoarding. "Our country is participating in a national experiment in mass-dieting. Needless to say, it has been a tremendous success."

So successful, in fact, that the government has signed an exclusive contract with an American advertising agency to market the revolutionary diet worldwide. The diet consists of chewing on empty Red Cross boxes while humming old Karen Carpenter tunes, enjoying lots of fresh air and sunstroke.

BOGOTA (YU)—Junk food addiction has become the number one health concern in this city of drug producers. "People eat such shit," said Minister for Health Jane Fondue, "that their brains turn into little brown pellets, like hamster feces. It's a national shame. You can't build a dream for the future on brains that look like hamster feces."

Henceforth it is illegal to eat junk food in Colombia, a small country in Central America with incredible dreams.

CORKGUN, England (YU)—Anglican Bishops from 38 countries met yesterday to decide on this year's location for its annual "Let's Get Religious" retreat. After very little discussion and quite a few barroom brawls, the advisory board chose Club Med for its "ideal climate, native authenticity and various recreational activities which are beneficial to the meditative spirit."

Hoping to embark on their pilgrimage early next month, the

I WEAR A BAND-AID ON MY SLEEVE

by Robin Lynne Widmeyer

I fell in love
and skinned my knees.
Tears trickled down my face.
It stung at first
and then it healed.
But now there's a scar
in that place.

My heart was hurt.
I'm careful now
of love's bloody sacrifice.
Please understand
why I hesitate.
I don't want
to skin my knees
twice.

LOBOTOMY BY LOBSTER!



BIBLE II

by Mary Ann Henn

The Bible has God say
"Oh, my rebellious
children, come back
again, to ME
and I will heal
you from your sins."
Newspapers aren't as kind
and loving
don't say it in the same
way but the list
of sins is very
similar.



Bishops must first convince their wives to stay home by reminding them that Club Med is situated in a "dangerous rebel stronghold somewhere in blackest Zimbabwe."

ROANOKE (YU)—The Institute of Salemography in its annual report concludes that the influence of this strange name (a Biblical contraction for Jerusalem) has been and is more significant than heretofore thought.

In the past year, a Salem, West Virginia, man was finally charged with 1983's downing of flight KAL007, an incident which brought the world to the brink of nuclear disaster as two aging leaders struggled to place the blame for the destruction of a civilian Korean airliner carrying American surveillance equipment worth billions of dollars.

A Salem, Washington, woman confessed to the Atlanta Child Murders. A Salem, Bolivia, business leader admitted he was Adolph Hitler. Two children in Salem, Spain, held a busload of Japanese tourists hostage for nearly a week while demanding the local school board place bloodwurst sandwiches on the cafeteria menu. Terrorists in Salem, China, strafed their own positions in the Yellow River Delta with American-built F-16 fighters; and a delegation from Salem, Salem Star Cluster (The-Breadfruit Constellation), was awarded Superbowl XXXII.

GRATELEY, England (YU)—Police detained more than 300,000 youths who used their heads to ram police vans after being barred from holding a rock music festival at Stonehenge.

Stonehenge, the 4,000-year-old ring of 72 stones about 75 miles west of London, remains closed to tourists.

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WHO'S YOUR FAVORITE CLOWN
by Larry Blazek
an unfunny clown
made people disappear
nobody laughed

"THE FRENCH, THEY ARE AN ODD RACE"

by Tom Deja

(in which Our Hero comes across an advert that promises far more than he wishes to see)

It has been six months since I moved into the City. In this time, I must confess that I have become somewhat jaded, and very rarely will a sight shock me or worry me in any way. What is more frustrating—at least to the outside observer—is that these incidents of shock are not actually very menacing on the surface. Still, the proper vision will send me into a faint.

Take, for example, the case of the Foreign Movie Poster.

I have walked to work ever since the move, a walk that contains several construction sites on its venue. In keeping with the New Yorker compulsion not to let any surface remain uncovered, the boards that keep out the curious are plastered over with movie posters, night club adverts and the like. Apparently, people reason better posters and handbills than graffiti and political posturings.

One film poster that popped up recently is one for a French flick called *One Woman Or Two*. The graphics show a large photo of Gerard Depardieu holding up a smiling Sigourney Weaver. This pleased me. For one, I worship at Sigourney Weaver's feet. Secondly, I identify with Depardieu. Like me, he is a tall blonde man who is not by any definition movie-star handsome. Because of my identification with him, I reasoned, this film is the closest I could ever get to actually making love to Ms. Weaver myself (especially after her marriage to a geeky little guy who, to be fair, gives hope to all us not-attractive nice guys out there with a deficit somewhere—talent, in his case).

As I passed the poster by again and again, I began to notice a second, smaller photo on the bottom half of the poster. This picture featured Ms. Weaver (showing a nice bit of leg that has made her every male intellectual's deepest desire) pulling Mr. Depardieu rather violently away from a third figure who was smiling broadly. This third figure was Dr. Ruth.

After I regained consciousness after this revelation,

FITFUL DREAMS OF A HEAD CHEESE MAN

by Adam Eisenstat

Cretins of mercy
peons of penance
mail order brides
and the whole warped shebang
pop tarts
talk makeup and mixdowns
how quaint
as blueeyes Sinatra
says thanks for the bombs
Cassandra in congress
gets killed by the reds
Mary holds forth
on the things that she loathes
outlines of icons of idols of old
angels on pins
worth a gob in the hand
embrace you though limbleless
to the crusts of yer eyes
leave all your homilies
at home on the couch
to meld with the poison
of cathode remorse
decorum's an anchor
it drops to the floor
spotless by standards
of people we dread
like tickets in bakeries
stance, posture, pose
phoney ain't static
so stay here and drink
lanterns of whimsy
are lighting my way
through the lattice of cleavage
keep your drool to yourself.

I began to feel distinctly ill. Were they, in fact, pushing this film as a love triangle comedy? Knowing the French, who have tried every paramutation of the romantic triangle up to and including bestiality and pedophilia, this was not a far-fetched assumption. My mind began to recoil at the same film to which I had earlier looked forward with benign interest.

It is mentioned in the book *Son of Golden Turkey Awards* that Leo B. Mayer said the secret of a good romantic pairing is that "...you have to think if you would like to watch these two people making love." Understand that I have no problem watching Sigourney Weaver making love with Gerard Depardieu. My problem is in watching Dr. Ruth making love to Gerard Depardieu. Granted, I'm sure Dr. Ruth is probably very good—she wouldn't be the tops in her field without some experience. It's just that the concept has a tinge of freakishness about it. Their height difference alone should illustrate this.

Knowing the French, of course, the pairing of Dr. Ruth and Sigourney Weaver is entirely plausible. This, in its way, is even more frightening. Never mind the destruction of the fantasy image I had built up around her (Sigourney, not Dr. Ruth) and all the Freudian connotation inherent within. Sigourney is just as tall as Gerard, and that on top of the still-puritan sensibilities of the American cinema on which I was brought up makes such a scene not only freakish but kind of tacky. It would be far too much for me.

My mind a morass of strange images, I now consciously avoid this poster. The implications there are scarier to me than the most hardcore slasher film. That is my curse. I will still probably seek out the film, but my distaste for what was implied will cast a pallor on the whole experience. Some people wouldn't let this bother them. It still gnaws at my neurotic subconscious like a particularly vicious rat.

Why have I rambled so on this subject that is probably of very little interest to you, the reader? Simply to tell you this: If you think you see something out of the corner of your eye, do not investigate it. There are some things man, and overactive imaginations, were not meant to know.

Commercial McClue-In

by "Kid" Sieve

Ah, Unisys and government—the power of corporate sleaze. So, is the glass half empty or half full? Did you know, according to Shearson Lehman/AmEx, that expanding horizons and seeing new possibilities is what capitalism's all about (hey, pay attention, I can't see your flags...come on, wave 'em higher)? Yeah, sure, that and exploitation, greed, deceit and evasion, that's what capitalism's all about too...

A word to the wise—Be ye forewarned about the new "hard-hitting" phase of the 3-year anti-drug propaganda campaign produced by an advertising "task force," the Media-Advertising Partnership for a Drug-Free America. If you think the name's nauseating, you can't begin to imagine how horrible the commercials will be. You think "Mommy, don't" is bad? You ain't seen nothin' yet. According to NY Ager, the slimebags "decided to focus on marijuana and cocaine"—the crack problem, the real dangerous (i.e., non-recreational or highly addictive) stuff will be all but ignored. Yes, friends, pot is once again dangerous and deadly. I feel like a New-Age Communist; isn't it gleeful fun?!

Aspartame Update: "Scientists have new evidence that low doses (emphasis mind)" of aspartame "increase the likelihood of seizures in animals already prone to such abnormal brain activity." I've no idea how you test for abnormal brains, but most people I know have one anyway, so watch that NutraShit intake, y'all...

AdWeek (henceforth AW) and Advertising Age (AA) are indispensable to anyone who, like me, wishes to skewer the commercial biz and what it represents, and are also readily available to me in my "Conspiracy job." I like AW more (AA seems a bit too fascist for me, with its support of the above-mentioned anti-drug frenzy and proud display of overtly sexist print ads as if they were fine art worthy of acclaim—besides, I despise PARADE writer Jim Brady), but they both come in handy for my purposes, so let's check out the 3/23 AW and the 3/16 AA:

Some of Pepsi's spots are so good they scare me, until I remember how much money they're dishing out to make 'em. Noteworthy are the new Michael J. Fox vignettes and the "2001" takeoff (which AW synopsis as "Pepsi goes astray...Space chase ensues...One grips the cola...Other grabs opener...Stalemate"), and AW also mentions a July kickoff for a new one starring David Bowie and Tina Turner. "Pepsi had wanted," the article continues, "to invite Bowie, Turner and Mick Jagger for a commercial after the 1985 Live Aid concert, but Bowie and Jagger declined to get involved in any corporate sponsorship at the time." Except, of course, for the corp-sponsored Live Aid (and I was about to remark, foolish me, that perhaps they had more important things on their mind at the time).

AW's "analysis" mentions how condom ads (what wimpy evidence there exists of any) aren't targeting gays, just mostly straight women. Well, of course. The assholes—that be made such a damn fuss over breaking taboos against sexual responsibility (network TV believes the only way to sell-with-sex is to make it naughty and a no-no; responsibility implies, I suspect, that sex can actually be merely good clean fun), they're not about to take another giant step and admit gay people exist and have responsible sex as well! Says Lewis Brenner, a senior vp at Ansell-America (which makes LifeStyles condoms), "The danger (of AIDS), the threat, is in the heterosexual population." Tell that to the majority of people who've died from and contracted AIDS thus far.

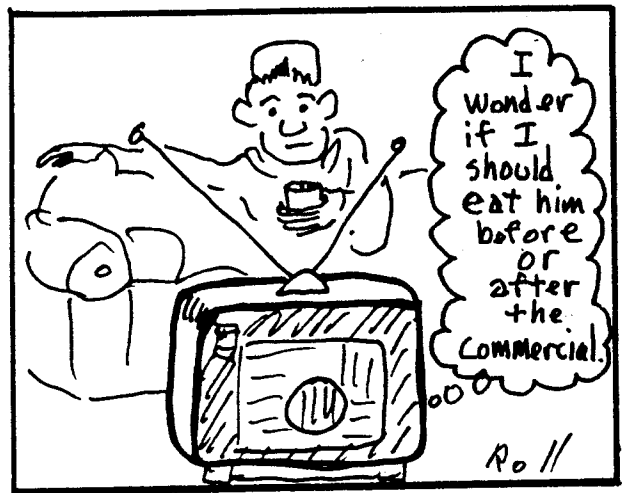
Keep an eye out for the first-ever "scrape and see" magazine ads, a clever gimmick by Crest to get you to read a commercial message underneath the silver coating (a la lottery tickets). Be not fooled; you won't win a prize.

Do watch and listen for any commercials written by the new underkind of creative copywriting, Joy Golden, whose Laughing Cow cheese ads are about to make the transition from radio to TV and are a scream. (I personally think the unseen female narrator in the "Stuart" spot is the same one who bemoans, in a local ad, how customers for her dealer-husband's "car that sells itself" should

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ask him lots of questions anyway, even though they knew they were going to buy the vehicle, because it's hell living with "a man who has...lost...his...confidence..." She's laying in bed as she says this, hubby asleep at her side.)

Seems those patriotic-pabulum "Made in the USA" spots aren't exactly having their desired effect (awww). Can you imagine? How dare consumers prefer things like content and price (or quality, like me) over country of origin? Much expensive American clothing is badly made as compared to inexpensive foreign stuff because you pay for union salaries, brand names, management salaries, overhead and so forth. (I know I should probably be more politically correct in that foreign-made goods often come out of sweatshops, but really, it's one evil vs. the other, and I'm on a budget.)

There's a neat article in AW about how Mita Copiers' new ad was done. It's a definitely lunatic and wonderful commercial—did you know the vacuum cleaner crushed by the elephant was made of Styrofoam (where else do you learn these things?)

In its sampler, the magazine mentions the Peugeot spot wherein the car crashes through a window in a French boudoir (proving that "the French know about other things that can be done in a bedroom"). I'd give a lot to figure out the origin of the myth about the French being superb lovers. I wouldn't know; I buy American.

And in case you cared, the next big cult series, *The Charmings*, was actually developed by Coca-Cola Television. Hope that didn't ruin it for you.

AA reports on an upcoming nostalgia campaign by Schlitz sure to nauseate every baseball fan after a few between-innings viewings ("It's Schlitz, or it's not 195" whatever); something to which I'm looking forward, Jonathan Winters (formerly a spokesman for Hefty) doing spots for Ruffies brand trash bags (Winters is still one of the most underused creative geniuses in the advertising or any other showbiz industry); and my fave this time, the scrapping of pro-Reagan propaganda ads created by former short-term White House communications director and ex-Nazi John Koehler, who left with the parting shot, "With everyone absorbed in this Tran thing, nobody seems to remember the incredible accomplishments of his first six years." Gosh, silly us. Let's all take a moment to remember racism, sexism, Bitburg, Lebanon, Libya, misstatements, disinformation...stop me if you're getting bored...

Awards time: This month's "Good Going" prize, suggested by S.H. Otis, goes to the Regina Electrikbroom takeoff of a Folger's coffee commercial, which begins with an announcer in a post restaurant whispering into his mike, "We've replaced the fine coffee they serve here with sand and clamshells..." and is so funny I can't believe it's on the air. Honorable mention, for DecBee's sake, to Spuds Mackenzie—I myself don't care for this contrived canine, but to each her own.

The "Feh" awards of this issue go to 1) Columbia Records for the most annoying teenager since the guys with whom I went to high school; and 2) (of)Fendi for their portrayal of a woman so overcome by lust for a (presumably nude) male statue that she runs to the museum and strips in front of it. Don't ask me what that has to do with perfume.

No desire nor inclination to repro the AW "10 Most Popular Commercials of 1986" poll, since you've probably read all about it by now anyway, but Will Vinton, whose California raisins came in third, probably doesn't care that megabucks fast food and soft drink sloppy-sentiment ads beat him out. His *Claymation* extravaganza, coming to a theatre year you (if you're lucky), will blow everyone out of the water...

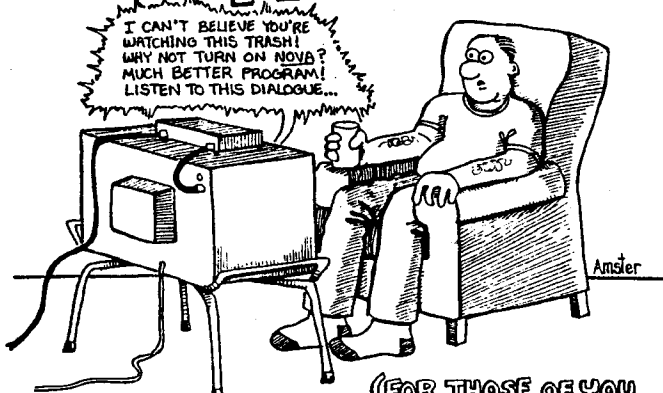
Gotta go, Father Guido's pushing wine cooler and I just developed an inexplicable thirst for passion fruit. Keep watching the skies...

THE RETURN

by Mike Selender

Getting off the plane, she comes running. Hair flowing, as we embrace. The little boy I hardly knew catches up, shouting: "Daddy Daddy, I only had two cavities!" 17

OUR NEW TV WITH A BRAIN!



(FOR THOSE OF YOU WITHOUT ONE)

"IT ISN'T THE SISTINE CHAPEL, BUT ITS NOT A BAD PAINT JOB" — Rep. Dan Lungreen, R. - Calif. amid House debate on a compromise immigration bill. — For a really good paint job — one that will end all illegal and most legal immigration send SASE to world-wide unemployment and free ride ending year 'round paying EVEN AGE WORK FORCE PLAK or simply EVEN AGE — Box 2243 YOUNGSTOWN — OHIO 44504

"THE BIG BLONDE AND THE TWO BIG BEARS GANGED UP ON ME"

by John Ohlinger

(This manuscript was found hidden in a crease of a knurled log next to the home of the world-famous Baby Bear. It was discovered many years after the home and the nearby woods had been turned into a shrine of the now-prominent religious group known only by its enigmatic initials "BBB":)

The big blonde and the two big bears ganged up on me. Yes, they did! Oh, now it's my turn to tell me side of the story of what went on. But I'm afraid of the ridicule if my story gets out. So I'm going to bury it here near my rustic home in hopes that some kind and sympathetic historian will discover it long after I've gone to the great honeypot in the sky. Maybe in that far distant day my version of the great religious myth "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" will at long last get the friendly attention it deserves.

Why did my father and mother, but especially that huge yellow-haired girl, hog all the spotlight while I was forced to live in the shadows and watch them take all the bows? I was included in the title of the story and mentioned in the tale itself only as a way of completing "the rhythm of three." "Goldilocks and the Two Bears" just wouldn't have sounded right. So the third bear, me, the Baby Bear (oh, how I hated that name as I had to "bear" it in later years), was added, but just for balance, not because it was recognized that I played any important part in the fairy tale. Yet, if the truth were known, and now it may be, my anguish and frightened anger form the fundamental but hidden meaning of this myth that had such influence on the development of the now world-sweeping religion, BBB.

What really happened that day when Goldilocks wandered into our little cabin in the woods? In the official version I had gone with my parents, Mama Bear and Papa Bear, for a little walk in the soft morning sun while our porridge was cooling. Then in comes Goldilocks, finds no one home, bounces on the three beds ("three beds," by the way, shows what a fairy tale in the worst sense the official version is. Actually, my folks slept in a big double bed and I had this inadequate little crib to lay in), and eats up the bowls of porridge while they are still hot.

What really happened is this: My mother and father had gone out for a walk and left me behind, strapped to my undersized crib. They did that a lot! Goldilocks strolls in, stretches out on the big double bed, begins to slurp up the porridge, when my folks return and surprise her. She dumps the hot breakfast food on me (I always thought it was not an accident), and jumps up to greet them. They recognize her as the now grown-up daughter of the author of all the fairy tales that had made the other animals famous. They embrace her and persuade her (still ignoring me) to go for a walk to a nearby honey grove, so they can talk her into getting her mother the author to write a story about them and their undying love for each other. Meanwhile, I'm forced to lay there, sticky porridge covering my face and hands. Is it any wonder that I sputtered in anguish and stuttered with frightened anger?

This true story—the real facts behind what happened that day—has been suppressed in order to give a false public meaning to the initials of the fastest-growing religion in the world, BBB. Most new members are informed upon joining that "BBB" stands for "Bears and Big Blondes." The official message of peace of the religion that supposedly symbolizes how big people from vastly different and apparently opposing groups can ultimately get together and live in collective harmony. But the original founders of the church (who were eased out once it began to attract members) had meant something entirely different. The two co-founders were a couple of roving troubadours who were passing by the window of our bedroom when I was sputtering and stuttering. The high-pitched but hauntingly beautiful (I did have a lovely voice even then) "b,b,b" sounds thrilled them so that they decided to form a new cult to worship its beauty, not realizing the sounds were really expressions of bad feelings strained through the hot porridge on my mouth and in my nose.

So when you come right down to it, BBB (now a very big business) is truly a tribute to impotent rage, not to the beauty of a strange new sound or to the harmony of the big people in a world looking desperately for peace.

(The historian who found this manuscript is John Ohlinger. Only the species have been changed to protect the innocent.)

Urban Folklore

(A TALE FROM THE BLACK CAT CAFE)

by Don Lucknowe

On a dusty shelf behind the bar of the Black Cat Café is a dusty bottle which rubs shoulders with some of the liquors that only the really old regulars or over-enthusiastic newcomers ask to drink, and that only the regulars have ever sampled. The shelf is all old bottles, some dusty and untouched for years, others clean but with faded labels and the dates, if you can read them, promise you that none is younger than fifty years to the day. The bottle of which we are talking is a glass so deeply red almost black and the thin layer of dust is so much a part of it that fingerprints don't show on it and rubbing can't shift it.

Bedtime Story

by Dana A. Snow

I used to tell my mother bedtime stories. They tended to go like this:

Once upon a time, many years ago, in a galaxy far, far away, there were three pigs...

a Mommy Pig, a Daddy Pig, and a Baby Pig. Then a Prince came along and said, "Mr. and Mrs. Pig, may I marry your daughter?" and the Daddy Pig said, "That depends. Can you support her in the manner to which she's accustomed?" and the prince said, "Well, I suppose I could fill one room in the place with mud!..."

So the Daddy Pig said, "You can't marry my daughter 'cause you're a smart aleck!..."

So the Prince went off and married Snow White and they had seven kids. The Prince became suspicious because six of them were dwarves...

The kids were named (COUNT ON FINGERS) Surly, Belchy, Sickly, Slappy, Shecky, Horny and Harold...

and they worked in the movies "Under The Rainbow" and "Time Bandits" as stunt dwarves...

and they lived happily ever after. NOW, GO TO SLEEP, MOM!!!

The regular patrons of the Black Cat, the ones who sit silent in the corners to watch the night's moving and listen to the night's talking will sometimes, on special days, gesture to the bottle and when it is handed to them (and it will only be shown to patrons of many visits; seekers of new experiences are denied the mysteries, rituals and sacred secrets of the Black Cat Café) will hold it for a moment and lift it to the light of one of the cheap bulbs; or some use their own candle. By the faint light they can see a little silhouette within the bottle, squatting on the bottom, unmoving, unchanging, unidentifiable but tangible and real. There is a label on the bottle, a little white piece of gum-backed paper with a scrape of unreadable and much-faded writing in purple ink on it. The rumour among the oldest of the patrons is that the handwriting belongs to the person who created the Black Cat Café, but this is no more than a rumour. This is not to be the story of the bottle or of the thing inside it, for those are tales of much discussing and for nights with full stomachs, bottles of mellow musing and soulful jazz; but a story about the wood.

On that night it was, as it so often is, a young man out to impress and prove himself and who had come to the Black Cat Café almost by accident; except nobody ever comes to the Black Cat Café by accident. It was quiet in the Café with most of the regulars at home observing the night of the goddess; I'd known her for years and she didn't mind a little levity from me so I'd gone down to the Café for the solitude. The young man was the type who wouldn't have known of the goddess's night and was a little drunk so a little abusive and he wanted to see and feel and know it all, and when Three Fingers (who didn't believe in the goddess) gestured towards the red/black bottle, we knew that something would happen. The newcomer watched the ritual as Three Fingers fumbled for a candle, lit it and then lit his joint from the greenish flame. He took a drag, took the bottle, felt its weight and slowly lifted it to his light, gazing deep through it to the flame to catch every angle of the silhouette. Time stood, as it always does at moments with the bottle, completely still.

Abruptly and with a cry from Three Fingers, the pleasure-seeker snatched the bottle and raised it high up to one of the dim bulbs hanging from the ceiling. He peered hard, squinting, and then turned back at us with a look of puzzlement covered by contempt. Nobody moved but the look was returned with many years' interest. Slowly he gripped the bottle by its neck, as if expecting a movement or attack of some kind, and in a lazy movement swung it down. Gracefully it fell, propelled by his arm, and struck the polished wood of the bar (and nobody has ever even guessed what that wood might be, so perfectly formed it is, but we believe the Black Cat itself had something to do with it) with a hollow ring of endless time, and bounced up slightly to leave a dent the shape and size of a mouth about to shout in the perfect surface. The bottle, still in one piece, fell to the floor with a dull ring, where it spun for a moment until Three Fingers flicked it up with his foot and caught it between the palms of his hands, the slap of flesh to glass to flesh cutting the silence. The young man stared for a moment, his hand frozen at the point where the bottle should have shattered and whatever the thing inside fallen to the floor, then turned and left. He couldn't come back, we knew that. Three Fingers started to put the bottle on the bar when slowly, as we watched, the dent it had made in the wood just flowed, flowed back like a mist into shape until the bar was flat and perfect again. Three Fingers was about to give the bottle back to the bar keeper when I asked for it and, breathing, held it to the light from the stub of his candle. I passed it back to him and he looked too. It may have been the shock from the ring of bottle on wood that had made the thing in the bottle change its squatting, tangible position slightly, but you'll never get me to believe that.

The Talonization of America

•••by Candi Strecker

There's a moment in one of the Three Stooges' films—the one in which they're running a Mexican beauty salon—when Curly grabs a lady's hand to give her a manicure, sees her long fingernails, and recoils in horror with a cry of: "Myaaa-aaa-aanghh! Look at those lunch-hooks!" I wholly sympathize with the simple stooge's impulsive reaction to a lady with a set of claws, but Curly and I seem to be out of step with the rest of the world. These days, a great many girls no longer just want to have fun; they want to have matched sets of ten vicious talons. Technological advances (plastics, you know) have brought eagle-claw-hands within reach of anyone willing to spend a chunk of money and put up with the functional inconvenience of being unable to use one's fingertips. The growing popularity of these dagger-nails so perplexes me that I've been biting my own nails in frustration trying to come up with an explanation for it.

Judging by the vast numbers of nail-workers setting up shop in every remotely yup-scale neighborhood, the faux-fingernail business is absolutely booming. Simple manicures are a thing of the past at these one-stop fingernail emporia: their main business is crafting acrylic augmentations that are bonded on to one's natural nails. At \$35 to \$50 dollars a set (yes, that's five bucks per pinkie), these establishments add new meaning to the phrase "making money hand over fist." When you think about what the nail consumer gets for her money, it's a decadent level of expense: ounce for ounce, salon fingernails must cost about as much as cocaine. And beyond the basic "nail sculpture," there are even more expensive extras in which to indulge. There's nail art (3-tone paint jobs for that '57-Chevy look, or teeny decals of rosebuds), nail jewelry (bitsy rhinestones embedded in the artificial nail), and the acme of nail frippery, the single solid-gold nail. The salons proclaim that one makes the perfect gift, but I would imagine that it looks a bit peculiar in its box.

The budget-conscious can buy similar products for mucking up their fingernails at home. Best known, through heavy TV advertising, are "Lee Press-On Nails." The original "glamour-length" line was recently supplemented by a shorter version called "active-length." I like the way this implies that the original longer nails were intrinsically an inactive length. It brings to mind all sorts of candidly-descriptive names for them: lethargic-length! stupor-length! comatose length!

But it's not the expense of the nails that bothers me most. Vanity pushes every one of us to drop a bit too much cash on some unnecessary necessity—shoes, haircuts, or leather jackets. The aspect of ladyclaws that really bugs the bejeezus out of me is their impracticality. No, that's almost too mild a word; when fingernails obstruct opposable-thumb activity, it's tantamount to assuming a voluntary disability. Neither cost nor impracticality matter if you're shooting your video for MTV this afternoon and simply must look like the Dragon Lady for a few hours. But most of us spend our days opening doors, operating keyboards, dialing phones, and performing the many other everyday acts that hands can do. Glamazon talons are such an obstruction that even simple tasks can require complex accommodation. Ponder, if you will, the mystery of how these gals get their contact lenses in and out. Or consider how different life would be if one was simply unable to make a fist. And for pete's sake, how—yeow!—do they masturbate? (By developing a strong backhand, perhaps? And while we're on the subject of sex, how would you gentlemen out there feel about getting a "friendly hand" from someone equipped with five tiny ginsu knives?) Human fingernails evolved to protect our delicate but useful fingertips. Ironically, fabricated nails hinder useful actions like poking, picking, and placing, while the nails become the delicate, exposed part of the hand. At five dollars a fix for every chipped nail, it's not surprising that those who wear artificial daggers go to a lot of trouble to protect them.

I wonder whether a woman with voodoo nails actually thinks they will help her impress men. Does she fantasize that someday she'll be sitting on a barstool when a dream guy will rush across the crowded room, mesmerized, to whisper in her ear, "Miss—I couldn't help noticing your fingernails. They're—you're—beautiful!" It'll happen soon as hell freezes over, you bet. I don't think there are many guys out there (other than the odd fetishist) who pay any attention to fingernails at all. There are other extremes of body-enhancement that at least do turn men's heads. The wasp-waist shaped by a corset, the cantilever effect of a push-up bra, the way stiletto heels make legs look longer—men DO notice these things, I've caught them in the act. Likewise, it makes sense to frame and shadow the shape of one's eyes, for the eyes are, proverbially, the "windows of the soul." But fingernails are just, well...the fingernails of the soul. If men notice them at all, surely the nails must be the very last part of a woman's body they notice. If everything else about a woman appeals to a guy, then I doubt that fingernails gnawed down to nubbins are going to cancel out the attraction.

So if women don't wear these nails to please men, we're left with the possibility that they do it solely to please themselves. I even have a theory about this: that fantasy fingernails satisfy the need to bring a tiny element of perfection into one's imperfect and compromise-filled life. Because that's one thing that synthetic nails are, for at least a brief moment: absolutely perfect, all matched in shape and length and color, lacquered and decaled and overglazed exactly the way one wants them to be. It's funny, but the things we do for vanity are almost always acts of shoring-up, of making the best of a bad situation, of hiding or

THE UNITED STATES POSTAL EXAMINATION

by Roger Morris

1. Which of the following reasons is why you would try to avoid Karl Malden?
 - a. Because he thinks his nose is a giant wooden horse, so he therefore hides soldiers who hate mailmen in it.
 - b. Because if you ever got too close to him while he sneezed...well, you know what might happen..
 - c. Because he has been on "The Streets of San Francisco" so long he has contracted AIDS.
2. Most metropolitan zip code books are:
 - a. pleasant-smelling;
 - b. too damn big;
 - c. equipped with a set of beetle nostrils.
3. While in the process of trying to breed a human to a moth, most onlookers are:
 - a. amazed;
 - b. in the mood to spend the night in an institution for the criminally insane;
 - c. willing to try it themselves.
4. If you were delivering a giant package that had every man in Delaware whose first name was Frank in it and they all got out and ordered you to pee into your car's exhaust pipe, which of the following procedures would be correct?
 - a. Explain to them that they have the wrong guy because you just got through doing the same thing for a whole bunch of guys named Ralph.
 - b. Tell them you are sorry, you thought they said pants instead of exhaust pipe.
 - c. Derive great sexual satisfaction from it.
5. If the CIA ordered you to work for them, which of the following assignments would you volunteer for?
 - a. Sneak into Russia and secretly remove those dark patches of skin from Gorbachev's forehead.
 - b. Manicure a Cuban yak's hoof.
 - c. Revise the game of "Spin The Bottle" into "Spin Ghadhafi's Torso."
6. Which of the following reasons is why many of the President's helpers are called aides?
 - a. Because they aid the President.
 - b. No one knows how to spell "assistant."
 - c. They are trying to get the gay vote.
7. Which of the following is the correct zip code for Maputo Mozambique?
 - a. 8Z004
 - b. 07221441016228635
 - c. 82
8. If you just finished delivering your last piece of mail and suddenly got an uncontrollable urge to eat the tongue of a live shark, would it be because:
 - a. you have a very serious mental disorder?
 - b. the dog that bit you yesterday had rabies and rabies always make you hungry for shark tongue?
 - c. your father was the Creature from the Black Lagoon and he always liked shark tongue too?
9. If there was four feet of snow on the ground and you had a whole bunch of mail to deliver, would you:
 - a. quit your job;
 - b. deliver the mail;
 - c. throw the mail in a ditch and tell everyone you delivered it?
10. Which of the following would you think best prepares you for your job?
 - a. Running naked through the Ecuadorian Ballet with a man named Maynard Zick.
 - b. Transplanting a mule's head onto your foot.
 - c. Removing eighteen percent of your brain.

Send your answers, along with your name and address, to your local Post Office.

camouflaging an unalterable reality. No dress can give you Vanna White's body, no make-up can give you Madonna's eyes—or whom-ever's eyes and body you've decided are your standard of perfection. But hands are different. They don't age as tellingly as the rest of the body, and they don't vary that much between individuals. Out there at arms' length, one can look at them in a detached way, and almost believe that one has hands every bit as perfect as some soap-opera queen's. One's life suddenly has in it one thing that is absolutely perfect (albeit perfectly useless). Is that worth fifty dollars and a measure of inconvenience? Maybe for them it is.

by Erik Nelson

In action how like an anvil!
The beauty of the canned world!
The paragon of animal by-products!
And yet, to me, what is this
quintessence of disgust?

To meat, or not to meat?
O, this too too salty flesh!
There is a deviled ham that
 shapes its ends,
Rough-chew it how we will!
A little more than skin and less than...



The big topics in fandom these days are, of course, the Black and White Comics Bust and the debate on ratings systems/censorship. Well, I'm in favor of one of those and I'll defend my right to not say which—okay, I 'fess up! I think that the dozens of small publishers who jumped onto the B&W bandwagon got just what they deserved. I can't shed any tears for the retailers or dealers either, since most of them made unnatural profits from kids naive enough to pick up these supposedly "hot" comics. I have been in and around comics collecting (and fandom) long enough to have seen these cycles before. The last big one was in the mid-60s, when already-existing companies and newly-created ones all tried to cash in on the superhero craze brought about by the BATMAN TV show.

I don't think I have to spell out my opposition to a comics rating system, or to censorship in general. I wouldn't have become a librarian, or joined the NY Library Association Intellectual Freedom Round Table, if I thought people (even kids) had to be protected from the written (or drawn) ideas of others. Parents must take responsibility for their children's upbringing, and not expect someone on the editorial staff of a large corporation to do it for them. It has been said so often in the LOC pages of various fanzines lately that it is becoming trite, but it still holds true: If something offends you, DON'T buy it/read it/watch it/or listen to it! Grow the f**k up! Okay? Okay!

SPLAT (Mad Dog Graphics; \$1.75 U.S./\$2.75 Canada), Remember all those nasty things I said about BGWs? Well, here we have an item that is suitable for the format. The material in this book would have been at home in the undergrounds of years past (in fact, some of the contributors got their starts there). Like the under-grounds, and like many humor books (of which SPLAT is one of the most recent of several), all the material isn't what the mainstream calls "pro," but then many of these artists don't desire to be mainstream. The cover is an incredible piece by Ken Macklin which makes me smile whenever I look at it. There is a nice interview with S. Gross which reprints some of his more infamous

The second issue of IT'S THE MARTIAN! is now available (for a 6 x 9, 56c-stamped envelope to St.EVE, P.O. Box 1675, New York, NY 10011), and well worth it. Believe it or not—and I for one was surprised—this issue is even better than the first. St.EVE has really gotten into the swing of things as the plot is advanced and characterization develops. Even the art is improving, with facial expressions being very effectively done. This is way beyond fan-nish cartoons, and worth far more than the meager pittance asked. Highly recommended.

ELF-THING (Eclipse Comics, \$1.50 U.S./\$2.25 Can.) is another in the long line of B&W spoofs of other comics. This takes on both elves and swamp-things (or, rather, the various creatures that have shambled out from those dismal places in the history of comics). I'm not familiar with either writer Frank Marino or artist James J. Friel, but both are fairly talented newcomers. The influences on the team include the obvious old Lee/Kirby Marvels (with the cover an obvious homage to the King), but they also give a nod to Lewis Carroll and Walt Kelly along the way. Everything (no pun intended) is handled quite well in the first issue, but I hope they don't carry this along for too long (I don't recall if this is only a mini-series or not) or go off into not-so-predictable directions. Recommended, with the caveat that some things won't be clear to those unfamiliar with comics fandom and the cliches in which it deals.

Trolls, witches, a very stupid golem and a hero on a quest—
what more could you want?...Huh? Okay, it does have a dragon!
Happy? (This month's fave!)

NOT RECOMMENDED: Any humor title (and the word humor should be in quotes) by Blackthorne Publishing. I hold these people responsible, in part, for the B&W glut. (By the way, this caveat does not hold true for their comic strip reprints [Dick Tracy, et. al].)

Oh, and if you'd like me to review any comics material, just send it to me c/o IJ's palatial P.O. Box. That's it for now, and watch for the 'MAZING MAN special, out any day now!

Notary Soj'ac

A TRUE ANECDOTE...

(1-8-87) PRETTY FUNNY...I WAS WATCHING "LADY FRANKENSTEIN" (AT 4 A.M.), AND RIGHT AFTER IT ENDED, CHANNEL 9 HAS AN EDITORIAL--STRESSING THE IMPORTANCE OF ORGAN TRANSPLANTS (COMPLETE WITH VARIOUS SHOTS OF SURGERY)... AND THEN THE EARLY MORNING NEWS SHOWS REAGAN, RISING FROM HIS PROSTATE SURGERY... HMM...

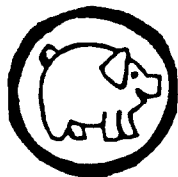


The ends of progress
convergence of methods
divergence of means
opening outward
expecting to grow
limited only by
the ability to dream -
building higher than p
supporting more weight

while extending the point
to perspective infinity -
based on transient
visions which shift
now to assume all
in relative importance.

- Jay DeFelicis

9/10/86



PIGSHIT

By Gary Pig Gold

"MY LITTLE TOWN"

"Don't Look Back," some warn. Some suggest that if ever you MUST retrogress, you'd be advised to "Look Back In Anger." Yes, for eons now, as every mortal poetic soul from The Shangri-Las on up have insisted, "You Can Never Go Home Any More."

Yet once again, I've spat squarely into the eye of logic and naively attempted the improbable; for one night recently, my reluctantly sentimental sidekick Malibu Marty in tow, I set out from the grease, grime, and grim Greek gore of downtown Toronto and boarded a shiny new commuter train bound for points west. Destination? Port Credit, Ontario. My Home Town.

Ahh yes, Port Credit. Once humble trading settlement at the foot of the miry Credit River where, hundreds of tears ago, our forefathers shafted Indian natives into swapping useless trinkets for vast expanses of virgin farmland and squaws. Immortalized in seldom-heard song by the incomparable Joe Mendelson Joe ("there's one place that I miss, and I do regret it/it ain't Port Credit") and the subject of a mockumentary 16mm flick that won me the coveted Most Humorous Award at the Peel County Film Festival back in '72.

Port Credit: site of my first childhood encounters with Annette, The Beatles, and Mister Ed, and the town wherein I strummed away my adolescence mastering bar chords, California-scheming of teenage pop superstardom...yeah, I couldn't WAIT to get the fuck outta that gosh-forsaken burg.

However, in the decade since I first fled Port Credit on American Airlines Flight 235 for Surf City USA, the town has somehow stuck to me unshakably, not unlike the proverbial pooh to the blanket, and in retrospect seems to have exerted an almost otherworldly pull upon my life and its tangle of trysts'n'trials. "No One In Port Credit Gets Out Alive," Marty's pal Pat once joked in a not-altogether-incongruous reference to the best-selling Jim Morrison bio. But I thought I HAD managed to escape, my psyche relatively unscathed by the curse of the small-town thinking of small-town minds. So if that be the case, why waste an otherwise potentially frolic-filled Monday night travelling back to my childhood haunts, to pick through the landscape of my so-called Wonder Years?

"This stop: Port Credit," the loudspeaker barked in the dark. Marty and I glowered at one another by reflex, and through the lamest of smiles I managed to quip, "Well, here we go!" as the train lurched to a halt. Looking north from the station I noted the neat streets of bungalows still nestled amongst the pines, and in unsettling contrast just south of the train tracks, the jumble of sooty highrises which I remember suddenly springing up like nervous boils right around the time of the Manson slayings.

Our first port of call lay in this direction—due south—where our oldest friend Doug still lived, after twenty years, in a claustrophobic two-bedroom apartment with his widowed mother, meticulous collection of Joe 90 and Godzilla memorabilia, and latest in a long line of ill-tempered cats. We'd neglected to warn Doug of our once-in-a-blue-moon visit; good thing, too, for if we had, he'd have no doubt insisted we bring along checks or cash totalling at least \$4300.00 (Doug, how shall I say this, was repeatedly coerced into bank-rolling his friends', and FRIENDS of friends', post-secondary school flights of fancy into the worlds of rock'n'roll, television production, and Swedish art-film importing/exporting).

After a few stunned moments of silence spent cooling our heels in the lobby, Doug eventually buzzed us in and up to his fifth floor alternative universe, where I was both relieved and dismayed to see this thirty-three-year-old's life breezing by in much the same ordered and totally uneventful way it always had. And always will. Lo and behold, a few gray hairs and a smart new sofa (a sectional birthday gift from doting son to ailing mother) were the only minute changes I could detect since our lives last crossed. Consequently, with little do to or say after we'd exchanged phone numbers and theories on Sigue Sique Sputnik, Marty and I were quickly on our way, leaving Doug waving goodbye eerily from his doorway, Captain Scarlet puppet on hand.

Next stop was the once-majestic Newport Hotel, which still overlooks the once-picturesque Port Credit Marina. I actually rented a room in the Newport once centuries ago, thrilled to be able to wake up in the early morning and gaze off my balcony onto a scene reassuringly like the "five passengers set sail that day for a three-hour tour" sequence off "Gilligan's Island." But on this particular night, nine years and countless default hearings later, the Newport is but a toothless hag of its former elegance: the desk clerk looked too much like a dirty-video arcade bouncer for comfort, and the shabbily-lit hallways upstairs were bathed in the unmistakable aroma of stale perfume and Lysol.

En route the hell out, we heard the computerized thud of contemporary electro-pop and followed it through a set of swinging doors into something called the Marco Polo Lounge, where a blank TV screen hung on a black velvet wall above the heads of two

overweight women babbling about Joan Rivers. Elsewhere through the smoke, a young trucker-sort who looked suspiciously like my Grade 11 pal Rick Barnes sat pouring quarters into a table-top PacMan machine, a DJ read Stephen King paperbacks as he robotically spun the latest dance mixes to an empty floor, and a woman bartender mumbled something that sounded like either "last call" or "fast fall" every five minutes.

"I need a drink," said Marty, and who could blame him? I nursed a ginger ale myself before asking my partner-in-memory-lane if he'd like to take a walk by our high school.

"Only if we don't have to pass my old house on the way," Marty pleaded, his pupils instantly flushed with unbridled terror. "I don't think I'm quite ready to handle THAT yet..."

"Drink up," I smirked, before we set out for Port Credit Secondary School. "Better not waste any more time here in the Marco Polo if we want to pass Marty's old house on the way," I thought to myself.

It was well after midnight when the large brick structure of our high school rose Leavenworth-like in the distance. As we crossed the empty parking lot and approached those all-too-familiar front doors, we could almost hear the cries of misspent youth and schoolbells in the air. But as we peered through frosted windows down the empty tile halls, I bet Marty a Big Mac and large fries at the McD's up the highway that the students in the custody of PCSS today care more about Porsche payments and investment folios than saving the sorry state of the ecology or the Top Forty.

Behind the bleachers out back where Craigie Orchards once stood, a maze of duplex townhouses has been erected. I secretly snickered at how, on the exact spot someone's state-of-the-art kitchen now sits, I used to spend untold hours under the apple trees, sampling forbidden fruit of ALL sorts.

"Shit, the tons of cheap wine I used to throw up in that orchard..." Marty cackled, shattering my listless lustful lull. "It's getting cold. Let's head home," I snapped.

Three blocks away Marty started to grow suspect. "Why are we going THIS way?" Another block. "There's a quicker way to the train station, you know..." Two more streets. "Hey! This is MY old neighbourhood!" Marty's voice was shaking almost as much as his hands.

"Well, seeing as we've come this far, we might as well take a—" My companion cut me off in mid-vowel with a terse "Turn around. Head back. RIGHT NOW," but it was too late. At the crossroads, just up ahead, within plain view by the creek and the bus stop, was the unassuming little house Marty spent his first twenty-five years inside. Years filled with more fun and fear, triumph and tragedy than even I dared to imagine.

We crept closer, until the cheap lime-green clapboard and rag-tag shrubbery were but a shudder away. I watched Marty stare ashen-faced at his front door for what felt like an hour and a half before I gently placed my arm on his shoulder and turned him towards the train station at last. We walked in wrenching silence for a few minutes, until he suddenly stopped dead in front of a home I didn't recognize. "Marty, what's wrong?" I asked.

"See that house with the living room lights still on? That's old Mrs. Toner's place. And I bet that's her oldest son's car in the driveway. He used to come and visit her every other night on the way home from the night shift.

"You know, I promised I'd say goodbye to Mrs. Toner before I moved to Toronto, but you remember how I had to leave so quickly, so I never got a chance to."

Placing myself a step ahead, I said, "Look, you know, it's after two in the morning, and..." Marty was already halfway up the Toners' walk. "They may not remember who you are, and it's awful late..." Marty was now rapping on the front door with determination. I only had time to tear off my hat and swallow hardly before the porch light flashed on. A middle-aged man asked who we were through a locked screen-door.

"Excuse me, but I'm an old friend of Mrs. Toner's. I used to live across the street years ago, and I was just in the neighbourhood with my friend here and thought I'd stop by to say hello when I saw your lights on. My name is Marty. She should remember who I am."

The door remained dead-bolted as the man disappeared back inside. I thought I heard a siren in the distance.

But damned if Mrs. Toner herself, the very picture of robust rosy-cheeked health at eighty-nine years of age, shuffled forward to edge open the door and let us in out of the blowing snow. And the first words out of her puckered mouth? I swear to God they were "Marty! It's been nigh-on ten years now! You never came to say goodbye when you left your old house."

Like guests of great-grandmothers everywhere, we were sat on crocheted chair covers, fed English fruit bisquits with milk, and slowly guided through dusty old photo albums wherein were glued the fading images of figures much too dead to matter. To any soul under fifty, that is. As her son stood stoically behind, Mrs. Toner thoroughly delighted us with story after story. However, one such tale caught both Marty and I clearly and sharply in the back of the throat:

"You boys remember the Martin family next door? Well, their boy George—he was their only child, you know—called me this past Christmas. My, but I haven't seen hide nor hair of that boy in YEARS, which was odd, you know, as he was always such a happy, outgoing, and LOUD boy. Much like yourself, Marty."

(cont'd. on next page)

"Well, it seems after Greg graduated from high school, he went out east to college to study...oh geez, I can't even remember what. But his marks were always very very good, and he'd come home early every summer to work in the Parks Department.

"And it must have been in his third year away out east that he met this girl...oh, shoot, what was her name? Anyways, he brought her home this one summer and everyone—but EVERYONE—just absolutely fell in love with this...whatever her name was. Such a lovely, pretty girl. Oh Marty, you should have seen her hair! So soft and so pretty and so long.

"Off they went back to their last year at school. Greg was going to work for his father when he graduated, and everything seemed so fine and dandy. Then suddenly Greg landed home without so much as a word one winter, which I thought sure was peculiar. Here he was home in the middle of his school year, without a word of it to anyone—ANYONE—and I never saw hide nor hair of him. Except I knew he was still back home because his car...my, such a lovely car!—just sat and sat all winter long in that driveway.

"Well, it must have been close to a year later that Mrs. Martin dropped in one afternoon to borrow some...oh, shoot, I can't remember what. And I asked her about Greg. And that poor woman just about cried, 'Oh, Mrs. Toner. I'm so worried about Greg. He was going with this girl'—the one I had met the two summers before, you know—and they were so, so happy. I've never ever SEEN Greg so happy! He told me that they were very much in love with one another, and that they were going to be married and live together up near here. And I was so happy for Greg. Mrs. Toner, I was happy for them BOTH. Greg had never had a girlfriend before, not even in high school. And he was SO happy."

"But Marty, it seems according to Mrs. Martin that this girl just up and left Greg one day for no reason. No reason whatsoever! And after they'd been so happy together and made so many plans!

"And after that, Greg quit school. Just up and quit school and never went back, just before he was to graduate, and with such good marks too! And that boy just came back home. Took to his room for goodness knows how long, and Mrs. Wilson even thinks he started in with the drugs and the booze. And he took a job at the dry cleaners, I hear, and just let everything slide. That boy just went to SEED, Marty! I bet if I ever saw him again I couldn't even recognize him! And he was always such a smart, outgoing, and LOUD boy. Just like you, Marty."

"Well, it's been, oh, five or six year since Greg's been home, and except for that one call at Christmas, I haven't seen hide nor hair of that boy. NOBODY has! Absolutely nobody. I hear he just goes to his work and comes home. Sits in his room. Such a shame. A SHAME! His parents are just absolutely heartbroken. We're ALL heartbroken! He was always such a smart, outgoing boy."

Somehow, I still to this day cannot find words to adequately measure the damper this sad sad story suddenly slapped onto an already sordid evening. I remember staring for a goodly while at my feet, having run across several Greg Martins myself since leaving Port Credit for the big big city.

But to find one waiting to die in my own innocent sheltered little home town—that was almost as unnerving as recognizing a tad too much Greg Martin in some of my very own affairs over the years. I could only continue staring at the carpet.

Then, as if on cue, Mrs. Toner broke the spell—heaven knows SOMEONE had to—by locking leers with the crestfallen Marty and booming, "Well, enough of Greg...at least, Marty, YOU must be doing so much better than THAT!"

And God bless that wooden-jawed old woman, for Marty slowly lifted his eyes and, smiling what I'm convinced must be the biggest and most sincere smile of his entire life, positively beamed, "YES, Mrs. Toner. I'm doing JUST FINE!"

It was close to 6am when we finally made out way back to the station. Standing on the platform amongst all the early-morning newspapers, coffees, and attaché cases, with the pine-treed bungalows to the north and all those apartment buildings still to the south, I couldn't help but notice Marty still proudly wearing this newfound secret little inner grin of his. And I couldn't help but appreciate, after all these years, how positively proper a smile looked on Marty's face. Maybe you really CAN go home after all!

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A BEAR FART AND A SALOON?

A SALOON IS A BARROOM— BUT A BEAR FART IS BARROOM!



IF JOHN RITTER HAD GONE INTO WESTERNS!

As for me...perhaps Paul Simon sang it best:

In my little town I meant nothing—
I was just my father's son
Saving my money, dreaming of glory,
Twitching like the finger on a trigger of a gun.
Nothing but the dead and I am back
In my little town.
(fade to end)

Animation Update

by Jed Martinez

If you're interested in the publications on animation I mentioned last issue, perhaps you might also be interested in collecting actual artwork from cartoon shorts and features. Here are three places that specialize in such art:

T.S.'s GALLERY, 780 Seventh Ave. (at 51st St.), New York, NY 10019 has a section exclusively devoted to cartoons. Called "The Art of Animation," this section features animation cels from Walt Disney Productions as well as from two Warner Brothers veterans, Chuck Jones and Friz Freleng. Two years ago, Chuck Jones also exhibited a selection of oil paintings depicting some of his characters as drawn by other artists (Daffy Duck as done by Toulouse La Trec, Porky Pig as done by Matisse, etc.), along with an assortment of pencil sketches, line drawings, watercolors and lithographs. (As an aside, Mr. Jones has presently written and illustrated his first children's book [although grownups might enjoy it as well], "William, The Backwards Skunk," available now in finer bookstores.) An easy way to locate T.R.'s is to go to the Winter Garden theatre (where the NY production of "Cats" is currently playing) and go directly behind it. The gallery's entrance is next to the exit doors of the theatre.

For more colorful artwork, there's GALLERY LAINZBERG, 200 Guaranty Building, Cedar Rapids, IA 52401. Every few years this gallery puts out a catalog of some of the finest artwork in the world. This year's latest catalog is their best ever, with many full-color pages illustrating their wares, including animation cels and drawings from Walt Disney Studios, Warner Bros., Ralph Bakshi, Don Bluth, Italy's Bruno Bozzetto, and many others.

Out on the West Coast, we have MUSEUM GRAPHICS, P.O. Box 743, Costa Mesa, CA 92627. Most of the animation art they have is in the form of animation cels, model sheets, rough sketch drawings and background artwork. Among the studios from which the artwork comes are Disney, Warner Bros., Filmation and Hanna-Barbera. Besides cartoon art, Museum Graphics also sells comic strip artwork (from the early 1920's, with strips such as "Krazy Kat," to the 1970's, with "Broom Hilda" and others), special books, programs and guides, and even rubber stamps (some of which depict comic book illustrations). Catalogs from Museum Graphics are put out several times during the year, with all illustrations in black and white. If you write to them, ask for Jerry Muller (tell him I sent you).

There are other places that also sell animation artwork, but these are the three best places with which to do business, either in person or by mail (the exception to postal transactions being T.R.'s). Check them out!

FOOTNOTES TO LAST ISSUE'S COLUMN:

- By the time this issue is published, so will be the annual 'Animation issue' of MILLIMETER, the magazine of movie and TV productions (although its cover says February on it, it usually doesn't come out until late in the month or in early March). This year's issue features articles on animation in TV commercials, a look at cartoon mice (from Disney's Mickey and MGM's Jerry to "Basil of Baker Street" from today's Disney studio and Fievel Mousekewitz of Don Bluth's studio), and a sneak preview of an autobiography by Chuck Jones, to be released in 1988. The issue costs \$7 at most newsstands, and is sure to be a collector's item in the near future.

- Due to overwhelmingly positive response to ANIMATION NEWS, as of its July/August issue AN will become ANIMATION MAGAZINE. You can get in on a charter subscription for \$9.95, and receive the May/June ANIMATION NEWS plus 6 issues (one full year) of ANIMATION MAG (after July 1, all subscriptions will cost \$15). Their address is P.O. Box 25547, Los Angeles, CA 90025 (please make checks out to "Expanded Entertainment").

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WOULD YOU DENY  
EXISTENCE  
To those who will be born if we  
have abortions?  
You and I wouldn't exist if it  
were not for the abortions of our  
pre-existence and there were  
plenty. Wouldn't the Chinese  
swarm the earth if they didn't  
practice some kind of control  
including abortion?  
If the biologists created a  
BILLION FETUSES  
shouldn't they be destroyed?  
Not biologists-fetuses.  
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ending war, inflation, un-  
employment and death are a  
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~~~~~

Questionnaire Results

Thanks again to everyone who participated in our IJ #50 Questionnaire, and as promised in last issue's first installment, this time I'd like to list some interesting responses garnered by my frivolous question on childhood games, tackle the "sex" question once and for all (?), and talk a bit about ads.

I remember a college linguistics course where we were studying idioms by determining the different names people gave for the same things in different regions of the country, like hero/sub/hogie and so forth. The topic out of which the class got the biggest kick was childhood games; that class provided the inspiration for this question in the first place. While many people mentioned board games as among their most vivid memories (like Fascination, Mousetrap, checkers, Yahtzee, card games such as blackjack and "66," Candy Land—which brought back a flood of nostalgia from yours truly—and the ever-popular Monopoly, which even made it to Britain with London street names, at which James Wallis and his sister "used to play endless games...which could last weeks"), I guess I primarily had outdoor activities in mind, whose basic rules and even names seem to vary from one area to another. For instance, Anni Ackner remembers:

"We played potsie (hopsotch), ringolevio (a game which may be peculiar to Brooklyn—it's a convoluted form of Hide and Seek), punchball (a sort of six-man baseball using a Spaulding pink rubber ball, which we called a "spauldeen." The spauldeen was also used for Chinese handball, Kings and Queens, catch, and the solitary ballgames, which generally involved bouncing the ball up and down while passing one's leg over it—a skill I never mastered, incidentally—and chanting something; "A my name is Anni" and so forth through the alphabet is the one I remember being most popular. The whole thing goes, "A my name is Anni and my husband's name is Al, we come from Alabama just to sell you apples," and the trick is that you have to pass your leg over the bouncing ball not just on the principal "A" words, but on words like "and" as well, making it quite complicated, especially when one gets to "I". This chant was also employed for jumping back and forth over cracks in the sidewalk. Anyway, the spauldeen was the king of Brooklyn toys. Very few of us could afford a real baseball or football, or even a yo-yo, but a spauldeen at the time cost a quarter, and everyone had one. It was an absolutely splendid ball, high bouncing, sturdy, and just the right size to fit into an eight-year-old's hand comfortably, but I bought one a couple of years ago—at 79¢—and the quality's gone down considerably. They just don't make things like they used to, rattlesnake (a peculiar pastime in which a line of children walked slowly through the streets dolorously intoning "R-A-T, T-L-E, S-N-A-K-E spells rattlesnake..." I can't think why we did this—I doubt that it was very much fun—but we played it at least once a week), Red Light-Green Light, and a complex variety of the Hand Jive that required five or six little girls standing in a circle—and the thing I most vividly remember doing is making little animals out of the coloured modeling clay you used to be able to get at a dime the box, and then making up stories about them. My bed was situated so that the foot of it was under a very deep windowsill, which made a perfect stag, and I would spend hours telling myself long, involved continuing stories. I got so I didn't even have to touch the figures—I just looked at them and thought things up about them. I think I did this until I was 11 or so." As I grew up in much the same type of neighborhood as Anni, her response was one of my favorites—and, having been a day-camp counselor for about 10 years or so, I can fill in her blanks on Rattlesnake, for anyone keeping track. The game consisted of the "leader" of the hand-holding line walking under the link created by the held hands of the last two in the line, to be followed obviously by everyone else; then the last—or second-to-last, I guess—person wound up with their arms crossed; and it would go on crossing under all the links until everyone in line had their arms crossed; then the first and last person would cross their arms and come together, completing an outward-facing circle, and the whole line would chant the line once more, jumping up and down. Scary the details one can remember sometimes, isn't it?

Deborah Benedict recalls Hide and (Go) Seek (wasn't the "go" optional in the game's name?) as being "very important to me, especially after I became a SPY vs. SPY aficionado," and she also speaks of "a game alternately called "Tribes" or "Fort," where we played on a vast field of tumbleweeds and large rocks. Tumbleweeds stick together real easy; you can build caves out of them. Yes, caves. Anyway, we would choose up sides, elect a leader and act out a symbolic dispute." Brian Catanzaro brought back memories of "Elimination Frisbees. Someone throws the Frisbee into the air. Anyone can go for it. If they drop it, they're out; catch it, the one who threw it is out. Everyone stands in a circle and we throw it back and forth. Aim has to be fairly good, unlike Dodge Ball." Which, I guess, is why I was such a whiz at the latter when I was a kid (as well as in the variety of Dodge Ball we used to call Bombardment, which usually took place in a gym which was divided in half and was played side vs. side instead of using a circle), whereas I never could get the hang of Frisbees. Brian does admit, however, "The fondest game-playing memories come from the way we chose different games or toys as recurring summer themes: playing cards...mini-tape recorders, bike hikes, fireworks, 45's...these were only a few. Diversification is the appeal." And questionnaire responses were nothing if not diversified—games like baseball and Kick the Can received a ~~few~~ votes, as did H&S; other people mentioned marbles, tiddlywinks, Red Light

and its "cousin" Giant Step (I always thought they were related, anyway), kickball and ringalevio (or however it's spelled). I'd love to know the rules to "Hungarian Water Magac" (trick answer, TS?), "Annie Over" (is that like Red Rover?), "Categories" (similar to Charades, perhaps?), "Pepper" and "Tick Tock Tickety Tock," if anyone would care to enlighten me.

Of course, there's a few in every crowd, and some IJ readers seem to have had violently disturbed childhoods, citing such past-times as stripping the opposite sex, S&M Barbies, Demolition Sleds, "Defenestrate the Pope," Army, and doing experiments on neighborhood pets. And I thought I had an abnormal youth.

I've chosen to ignore any complaints about the lack of sleazy material and/or erotica—not the same thing in my book, when either of the two is in "my book"—from people obviously obsessed with sex, and choose instead to reprint two responses I found interesting, one with which I agree and one which—well, let me give you that one first:

"Is the age/lifestyle group that reads PIGSHIT or other articles with 4-letter slang titles the one who buys IJ consistently? Do they make it financially possible to publish? Most fine contributors are in their teens, from what I've seen. (The writer then posts the following examples:)

a) Pere Ubu; b) Public Image; c) Scraping Foetus Off the Wall

"If you never heard of these bands before, which would you pick to audition by name? Which band would most IJ readers have picked blind? Would the image of 'Scraping Foetus' have appealed to most? 'Scraping Foetus' is a distortion to excess, for no other reason than to promote further distortive responses. It is as unrealistic, in terms of social function, as 'My Angel Baby' (Toby Bean), and aesthetically acceptable to a very small deviant population. I'm talking about editorial selectivity (Your Pal), not censorship (The Enemy) and not offensive language (although I do find it a bit insulting). Does the practice of boldly-printed 'curse words' as titles enhance the credibility of the other contributing writers? Is it a non-marketing concept to occasionally make IJ offensive to the average person, purposely limiting the amount of interest in it, and limiting its growth so you can keep it manageable to your personal ends?"

Well, I think we have different opinions on what does and does not offend, as does seemingly everyone else who contributes to IJ. Language is a tricky thing. For some, one word or phrase will serve to embarrass or offend, even if that word is used in a context totally unrelated to that word's actual meaning. For others (and maybe I flatter myself when I count myself among this second group), only a phrase which conjures up a definite descriptive image constitutes More Than We Need To Know. I don't think anyone's vocabulary should consist solely of "shit" and "fuck," just as I get annoyed at the over-usage of "y'know" or "really" or whatever phrase tumbles automatically from the lips when the brain doesn't feel like working to capacity. But slang expressions in and of themselves no longer take on the meanings of "defecation" or "fornication" or so forth (for further clarification, I refer you to any number of George Carlin albums). A word or phrase bothers me, personally, when its connotation is either racially/sexually derogatory ("aunt," "gook," etc.) or absolutely detailed in its description ("feeling her up," "giving him head," etc.) and the description itself is MTINTK. As I advise writers to excise this sort of thing from their work before sending it to me (and do it myself if they have not, because there are ways of politely inferring something is taking place without blurring it out so crudely all the time, and the storyline does not suffer), that was probably the last time you'll see such expressions in these pages.

Band names, however, can hardly be compared to this sort of vocabulary, because band names are specifically designed to call attention to the performers. I should think quite a few people appreciate the message they believe a name like "Scraping Foetus" implies—black humor, the ability to instantly shock and shake up a complacent and bland mass market, and perhaps even a sense of absurdity or uselessness. While it's not a name I would have chosen had I a band to label, I do think it's more than simply gross for gross' sake. And I think judging bands by the names they choose to call themselves is kind of pointless and misleading anyway; I think "Public Image" is a silly name, but their music isn't as bad as their name after all. I may be into Genesis, but I don't go around reading the Bible!

INSIDE JOKE attracts readers of all ages, from teens to octogenarians, and of all lifestyles, from runs to prisoners. I won't even presume to know a median age, but it might be more accurate to guess at the "Baby Boomer generation" (the mid-20's through the 30's) than adolescents. And I don't know about other readers, but I think your intended insult of labelling as "deviant" people who don't share your particular tastes is very callous (notwithstanding the curious fact that more than a few IJ mutant-types wear epithets like "deviant" as a badge). I may be averse to IJ printing MTINTK stuff, but I don't think porn mags are deviant.

I'm more inclined to agree with Deborah Benedict: "I feel that practically every other publication in the world already publishes enough sex/sexuality, prurient stuff and that IJ should be more concerned with the more complicated and mysterious aspects of our universe and various natures. The interior life. Sexual satire and its many branches are probably the easiest thing to do—so I prefer IJ as a challenger, sort of a literary Starship Enterprise, to go where no man (or woman) has gone before..." Please let this be the last time I reiterate I find nothing wrong with things that go on behind closed doors; I simply don't wish to peek into those doors in IJ. I fully encourage people who are into these sorts of things to write to places like Yellow Silk or any number of small press zines that are more than happy to publish it.

(cont'd. back on page 3, sorry) 23

One Evening by D.A. Beast

"What do you think of a girl who would go to bed with you on the first date?" she asked.

I thought about it for awhile, maybe too long for her to feel comfortable, then I replied, "I think I like her a whole lot—a whole lot."

I could have said a lot of things. Like how I was feeling something very special about her—like how I hoped she might be feeling something very special about me. But I didn't. I wanted to say, "We live in a screwed-up world that condones the starvation of 25,000 children per day, allows the senseless murder of thousands per day in stupid religious wars and power plays for real estate, and yet frowns upon two people feeling something special, something beautiful, and acting upon it. I cannot, as a thinking, feeling human being, follow the rules and regulations of such a society, and I hope you may question them yourself." I wanted to tell her that she had nothing to feel guilty about—what we felt and did was not wrong in a wiser society.

But I said none of those things, and I was not sure why, except I was afraid that maybe she would be like all the rest. Only curious, only interested in a goal known only to her that did not include me. A visitor in a world full of visitors, where loneliness earned its reputation strangely—in a crowd.

After I took her home, I began to realize even more how deeply our encounter had affected me.

We had met only hours before in a club where I hang out. It's a place where, for years, I had been seeking, without success, only one thing—someone to love, who would love me; perhaps happiness. We had hung out for awhile (I knew only her first name) and I had taken her

home early (by her request). When we went to part, with plans for me to call again the next day, it had turned into something more. No one really started it—it had just happened, and I asked her if she had to go home so soon, and she said "no."

We went to my place instead, and things happened from there for no particular reason except I was so alone and she must have been too. And then she asked me THE QUESTION, because I guess she felt guilty because of what she had been taught—because of the way things were and always had been and they were wrong and neither one of us knew how to deal with it...or our individual pasts that kept standing in the way of the future...except, for awhile...we were happy. That much I knew.

The next day, I called because of the loneliness I felt when she was gone, the loneliness I was somehow hoping she felt too, because that was all that was needed to make it more, to make it what every person hopes for but seldom ever finds.

The phone rang.

And rang.

Then someone answered.

And said she was gone. Not coming back. Just visiting...

And I hung up.

There were no words to finish what I had to say.

There was a loss I felt very deeply, and somewhere out there—even now—I think maybe someone else, at least for a moment, felt it too. But what one learns from birth so often wins in the end, and I guess maybe it did this time too.

And two people lost an awful lot that could have been because something that could never ever really be wrong was just too much to handle for someone who hadn't lived long enough to know how terribly wrong "alone" was.

On (and Under) The Road by Mike Gunderloy

(INSIDE JOKE is pleased to present, in this and subsequent issues, more excerpts from Pope Sicile I's soon-to-be-published autobiography HOW I GOT THERE FROM HERE, a/k/a Fear and Loathing in Bakersfield. Any resemblance to Reality is purely hallucinogenic. - ye editrix)

The bug was making a good 70 miles an hour up the highway despite the heavy load that totally filled the back seat, thanks to the minor alterations I had made to the engine a few months back. The Draft was still an impossibility in the minds of most people back in those first months of 1980, but I had always believed in Being Prepared. I might have made a good Boy Scout if only I had had a bit more respect for authority.

A liquor store materialized on my left a few miles north of the California-Oregon border, and I looked at the dash-mounted chronometer. 2:27 PM, it said, and I decided that I might as well get the latest from the Evaders' Hotline, though I doubted that the news could be any worse than it had been late last night when I packed up and left, shortly after discovering that May 17th had come up No. 6 in the Lottery. (Why couldn't I have been a day more premature? I had wondered around San Jose. May 16th had come up 323rd. Ah well, such is life.)

I locked the car (no sense in leaving those extra gas cans unguarded even for a moment) and switched on the concealed alarm as I walked over to the pay phone. I put a dime in and dialed the old familiar 1-800-555-2323 and retrieved my money whilst waiting for the recorded message to begin.

"...and good luck," was the first thing I heard, then some static. After a few seconds the recording began again: "Hello, this is the Evaders' Hotline. Bad news for all of you boys and girls in yellow out there. War was officially declared by an emergency session of the United States Congress at 4:32 this morning. Both the Mexican and Canadian borders are being heavily patrolled by selected units of the Marines, and the National Guard is carrying out a random door-to-door search for evaders. This may be our last message to you for some time, as we are relocating to a safer place. Oh, and our sources indicate that the hawks have the President heavily drugged at the moment and are planning to hold a 'proper war' and 'teach those guys a lesson'. We suggest that you get underground as soon as possible, tune to the Civil Defense frequency, and good luck."

I hung up and whistled "So long Mom, I'm off to drop the Bomb" as I walked back to the car. At least, I thought, I heard about this in an opportune location. Getting underground would be no problem at all in this area.

Twenty miles up the road I turned off on an old dirt track. It didn't look like it had gotten much use lately. Not really surprising when you consider how hard it was to get gasoline for recreational travel lately. Thank Goddess we had started hoarding six months back.

My right front tire went flat about eight miles in, but I decided that it would be a waste of time to change it when I was so

close. Besides, I had two spares along. Another five miles saw me arrive at South Ice Cave.

It was, I was glad to see, the same inconspicuous hole in the ground that I remembered. A few minutes of scouting around was enough to find a glen that the Volks could be parked in, out of sight of the road. It was a bit far to carry all of that gear, but it was the best I could do.

By nightfall everything of importance was in the cave, including me. I had even strung some of the wire I had along out the mouth of the cave to act as a radio antenna.

Before dousing my one lamp, I took another look around my new home. It was a room about twelve feet in diameter with a three-foot ceiling, and it had taken a good ten minutes to crawl back to it. It was, if not warm, at least reasonably secure. I turned out the lamp, huddled under the sleeping bag and blankets, and listened to the radio news.

I don't expect that many of you ever tried to find an all-news station in Southern Oregon before the advent of socialized radio as we know it today, but suffice it to say that it wasn't possible. I kept roaming the dial from the weather to the farm news to the CD frequencies to early-sixties rock, hoping to find something besides patriotic propaganda and assurances that there was no cause for alarm. At 12:27 the next morning, most of the stations stopped broadcasting, but the CD frequencies became very active.

I shan't bore you here with yet another rendition of the story of the One-Day War in 1980. I'm sure everyone has had enough dramatic stories about the neutron-bombing of Iran (no, of course we never stockpiled those weapons!) and the "sudden" Sino-American alliance. It was some time around the pre-emptory strike on Irkutsk that my food started to run low, and I came back out into the open air just as the President (formerly Secretary of Defense) came onto the airwaves to announce the Three-Power settlement.

It was, in retrospect, a beautiful day, with a particularly nice sunset, but I didn't admire it much then. I was busy with a few illicit tools making a few changes on the ID of one Peter Wise (name changed from Weishaupt six generations back), like giving him a May 16th birthday. When I was done, I changed the tire on the car, and started to drive into town. Two miles out, I reconsidered and turned back. This was a good hideout, and I might need it later. Half of my supplies were carted laboriously back into storage, and then I decided to bed down for the night, figuring that showing up in town at 3am would be bound to attract unwanted attention.

In the morning, I drove into La Pine and started job hunting. Well, actually, Peter started job hunting, as he was (lo and behold!) 27 years of age. The market was good in La Pine, what with most of the youth of the country working for the gummint instead of being unemployed, and he soon found a job driving a delivery truck for a dairy.

Peter's new employer commented on his youthful appearance, and wanted to see some ID "just as a formality." He was convinced, and Peter could hardly resist quoting one of Herb Gold's favorite expressions: "We are too young to be as old as we are."

He did resist, though. This was no time to attract any attention. Time enough for that in a few years.

And so began one of the most boring periods of my lives. There was the incident with Fred Simmons' daughter and the geese, but more about that another time.

(Er, you don't really want to see this, do you? I mean, I do believe it's better than last year's round-robin, what with its changing realities and all, but everyone still seems to be turning into aliens, if you know what I mean. Maybe at next year's TJ party I'll introduce a rule saying a character can't all of a sudden turn into something else, because that's just as sloppy as reality-shifting. In any case, Anni Ackner did the first bit, I tried—probably in vain—to clean all loose ends up at the end, and the folks to blame in between are, in no particular order, Tom DJ, John P. Morgan, Carol Pincheffsky, Jailbait Segal and Dorian Tenore. Author changes are indicated by a change in type-face, as with last year's "gerber." The title is Anni's)

RATS LIVE ON NO EVIL STAR

On the day that Edward Mallory rammed his Trans Am into an oak tree in Charabiri Park—actually, the only tree in Charabiri Park—he suffered a concussion, two fractured ribs, a Revelation, and, for that matter, the experience didn't do the tree a whole lot of good either.

Naturally, he had an audience for this mishap. There's precious little that goes on in Charabiri Park—or, really, in the whole of Herringbone Alley, of which Charabiri Park borders the end that doesn't border on Black River Road—that doesn't attract an audience, what with one thing and another. I was there, for one, although I can think of several places offhand—including the intensive care unit of any tolerably good hospital, my mother's house in Pennsylvania, and Hell—where I would have rather been, and of course Miss Priss, who does, after all, have Europa, her house trailer, parked not ten feet away from what you might call The Scene of the Incident (that is, the tree), and therefore could not have missed it had she wanted to, as I'm sure she did, and Slick, Miss Priss' gentleman friend. Then there were either three or four of Rose-Eileen's children—the one with the harelip and I forget which of the others—Clarence from down the South Side, some guy named George and a fellow whose name I never really got but who was known rather casually as Chubby, and we all sort of strolled over to survey the wreckage.

For a moment we thought that Edward Mallory had done his bit to relieve the housing shortage in the Alley, and we were all pretty sorry about it too, because we did like him, although we were never any too sure about that car, but then he sort of pulled himself out of the crushed door on the passenger side (the door on the driver's side now being located somewhere down by Rose-Eileen's front steps) and stood there grinning as though he'd done something particularly clever, rather than just trash a perfectly good, if over-decorated, automobile.

"Damn waste of a piece of equipment," Clarence offered tentatively, when no one else said anything. I did feel as though we ought to call an ambulance—what with Edward Mallory bleeding fairly heavily and going a bit sunken about the eyes and all—but then, ambulances are perilously close to police cars, and no one on the Alley calls a police car for anything short of nuclear attack, and even then we'd think twice about it, so I felt delicate about venturing the suggestion.

"There Is A Reason," Edward Mallory announced, in the tones of one who has just waged \$4,500 on Final Jeopardy in a subject in which he has studied extensively.

"Well, 'course there's a reason, you ol' asshole." Slick is from the Louisiana Bayou, a place where everyone is named Guidry and knows how to make crawfish etouffe, and he has a lovely accent, but there's no accurately duplicating it. "You stay up till 4 am drinking Ranier Ale and you see what you get."

"No," Edward Mallory said. "I mean, There Is A Reason."

Well, you won't blame me if I thought Edward Mallory had finally set off on that long sail on the banana boat, and you can see why I really was only seconds away from giving in and calling that ambulance after all—I think we all were. In fact, I noticed Miss Priss edging slowly towards the Alley—when suddenly, we were diverted by...

this smiling guy with a pipe who was hauling a large sample case with "ALUMINUM SIDING BY BTL." I suppose that we were all wondering what this dapper-looking guy was doing in this part of town, but he didn't LOOK like a cop and so we ignored him as politely as we were able and started to pay attention to Edward and his reason again. But this guy—who looked something like a picture out of the 50's equivalent of GQ—walked over to Edward Mallory and said, "Sir, y'know, a lot of good, high-quality aluminum siding on the driver's side and you probably'd never notice how that door, which is now co-habiting with one of your neighbors, is not living with your quite lovely car."

Now, this seemed to be, and I think I speak for most of the residents of the Alley, to be an incredibly SILLY, nay stupid, idea. For what reason could there be for the siding of the car that was now wrapping around the tree, when, in a month or two, the remaining parts of the car would be resold to, perhaps, the very aluminum siding company that was offering to work with it?

"Y'know, that might not be such a bad idea!" This was Edward Mallory musing to himself.

"I always knew that man was a little bit tetchéd," said Miss Priss to Slick.

"'Tetchéd' hell!" exclaimed Slick. "He's just concussed within an inch of his life, and perhaps a foot or two beyond."

"Y'know, it might be a good idea if we walked him over a few blocks away and called an ambulance," suggested the eldest of Rose-Eileen's kids with a note of hope in his voice.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you, son," opined the man with the pipe while grinning in a knowing sort of way.

"Why not?" There was a touch of bile in the kid's voice.

"Why not? It's very simple..."

...well, he hasn't told us his Reason yet," said the man with the pipe and the Pierre Cardin look.

The crowd stood, in a mixture of breathless anticipation as to what the injured man would say and fear that the aforementioned police would arrive, and the police never arrive in the Alley, except in cases of guerilla warfare, and even then they think twice about it.

"The Reason is so simple," said Edward Mallory, whose fiance left him for some jock named Killer only recently. He spoke in a soft whisper, voice trembling in awe. "I had to free the alien imprisoned in the Evil Tree of Zendor VI."

No one answered at first. Rose-Eileen's children shifted nervously from one foot to the other. The man with the pipe put one hand on a firm but sensitive-looking chin. South Side Clarence broke the silence.

"Whassamatta Ed? Did yer break ya head o' sompthin'?"

"No, and get me out of here!"

Miss Priss clung to the arm of her friend Slick. "Well, that might not be such a good idea, pal," he drawled.

"You can't just leave him in there," said the usually reticent Chubby.

The strange man chewed his pipe, as if in meditation. "Well, actually, yes. Yes, we can leave him in there. It's a Trans Am. He's got air conditioning, it's got a tape deck. He can stay in there for a few more hours without any problems."

"But he's wounded!" wailed Chubby.

"But he could be dangerous," said the man with the pipe. "We have the children to think about," he said, and pointed to the pack of brats that Rose-Eileen had birthed against her will. The children looked piteous on point. "He's talking alien invasions. I think he should be watched."

"NO," yelled Mallory in terror, "NOT HIM! He's one of them! And I can prove it..."

The man with the pipe puffed a thick grey billow, deep in thought. "And how, pray tell, can this fact be proven—not that I'm calling you a liar or anything, but of course we must be very careful in our accusations."

Miss Priss nodded. "Yes, what with the slander laws being what they are."

One of Rose-Eileen's children pointed with a chubby, juvenile finger. "We gotta get him an ambulance."

I dug into my tweed jacket and pulled out a Robyn Hitchcock tape. "Let him listen to this. It'll keep him occupied for a while."

We all moved about nervously for a second, except for Mallory. He stared at the tree slightly glassy-eyed. A cold breeze blew down Herringbone Alley. I drew my threadbare jacket about me, feeling the tweed grate my fingers. The man with the pipe coughed, then turned to Mallory.

"Well?" he asked expectantly.

"Well what?" Mallory answered. He groaned quietly.

One of Rose-Eileen's children—the grubby little girl with the stringy hair, reminds me of Lisa Bonet with a limp, you know—broke from her mother and ran down the Alley.

"About the aliens," prompted the man with the pipe. He put down his sample case and put his hands on his hips.

"Oh, yes," said Mallory. He coughed again, and a small trickle of blood came out his nose. "As said by Dr. Elmo Pentlwhistle, the aliens of the Evil Tree of Zendor VI all have a reverse polarity due to their ion charge being electron-based as opposed to proton-based. Due to this, their center of gravity is situated right in the middle of their mouth, forcing them to speak out of the side of their mouth." Mallory coughed, and the trickle turned into a string of blood down his right cheek. "Now, a lot of these aliens use certain utensils to offset this problem, and you—you are smoking a pipe. Thus, it all falls into place!!!"

We all thought this highly profound and intelligent. Off in the distance we could hear Rose-Eileen's kid shouting for an ambulance, but the elocution used in this explanation had us all thunderstruck. Mallory turned up the Hitchcock tape full blast. Eventually, Slick put his hand firmly on the man with the pipe's shoulder and said, "Who are you, really? If you're an alien, we don't like your kind here."

The alien grasped his chin and tore away the face mask. The face below made us all gasp.

"Roj Blake. Fancy meeting you here," said Slick.

"I've been...busy," Roj said. "You really should get that busted rib cage seen to, you know."

Edward Mallory coughed. The blood was now a steady stream.

"How," Mallory asked, between coughs which were getting more to be like death rattles, "do we really know you're Roj Blake? How do we know you're not an alien from the Evil Tree disguised as Roj Blake to fool us?"

This all took us relatively aback. I thrust my hands into my jacket. Miss Priss moved towards me. The children hugged Rose-Eileen's legs. Slick pulled out his cash and prepared to subdue this enigmatic stranger just in case he turned out to be hostile or Avon, whichever came first.

"Good question," Slick said menacingly.

"I can't be an alien, you silly folk," the Blake clone replied. He reached down and opened his sample bag, saying,

"Here's my Earth birth certificate, plus a history of my life. I always carry one for just such emergencies."

Clarence whipped the documents out of his hands and we all gathered around to check them out. "How do we know these ain't 25

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faked, mister?" demanded Clarence.

"He's for real," said Miss Priss. "Just look at that notary public mark. I've worked for quite a few of 'em in my time, I know a real one when I see it."

"Wait a minnit," said Rose-Eileen's eldest. "Look at the location."

We did. It said "Grover's Mill, New Jersey, 1938." The pipe clattered to the ground.

"You're one of them Ectroids from planet 10, ain't'cha?" Slick grabbed the pipe-smoking would-be fiend and wrestled him to the ground. "What's your game, buster?"

Before the stranger could choke out an answer, we heard a groan and a thump. Poor Mallory had finally lost his footing and lay in a heap on the dirt road. Rose-Eileen's eldest ran off in the direction of the nearest infirmary, with his mother in hot pursuit, screaming, "You little asshole! Yer gonna get us all in trouble, just like yer father got me in trouble..."

But Mallory was beyond help. In fact, he was looking worse by the second. He was...Jesus, he was moulting! His head was peeling like a banana, exposing a brillo-looking substance. Rose-Eileen's second-eldest got up the nerve to touch it. "It's Rasta dreadlocks!" she cried. Moreover, the skin was leaping away from Mallory's face and body. Underneath it looked like he had one hell of a tan.

Slick jumped as the formerly pipe-smoking stranger's Roj Blake visage peeled as well, but what his disguise revealed was a far uglier figure. His head looked like a squashed persimmon.

"Poos!" the stranger croaked. "Herringbone Alley is now doomed, because—"

"Because it's too late to stop us!" cried Slick, tearing off his thin latex mask, revealing a countenance that strongly resembled the underside of a tongue. Everybody stared in horror, except for the persimmon-like stranger, who was muttering indignantly about people who didn't mind their own business. The tongue-like horror gesticulated defiantly and raved, "You pathetic Feculators think you are so clever! Well, you aren't! We, the Smegmoids, have been on Earth for decades longer than you!" The Slick-cum-Smegmoid laughed maniacally, his gelid features twitching moistly. And then things started to get weird: Clarence pressed a button on his cheap digital watch; he then seemed to turn somewhat transparent, blurring into a large hazy wad of multicolored vapor, and solidifying into a new form, which appeared to be a cross between a hermit crab and a jellyfish. He was also an impressive eight feet tall. This vexed the tongue-like alien no end. "And just what the hell are you supposed to be? Who are you?" he screamed.

"My name is still Clarence," began the new alien. He was interrupted by the Rasta/Mallory, who had feebly raised his head to observe these new developments.

"Clarence," he gasped. "Clarence Zjklqkljrr! You should not have revealed your true form! There is danger here—great danger!"

"You bet there's danger," laughed the tongue-like Slick. "I'll kill you all!"

The Rasta scowled faintly. "Not from you! I mean a danger that supercedes all that has transpired thus far!"

And then the stranger's pipe, which had fallen unnoticed to the ground during his transformation, raised itself in the air and hovered about five feet off the ground. The contents of the bowl glowed with a hellish blue light, and a voice, a voice of psychic emanations rather than words, was heard coming from the glow.

I wasn't even paying attention at this point. It's more than a tad unnerving to find out of a sudden that the folks you thought you'd known inside and out, people you saw in the supermarket and Landromats and who knows what other burnt-out hovels that dotted the Alley, were actually not even from this side of the solar system, let alone Herringbone or Baton Rouge. Besides, I was at that moment preoccupied in ministering to Miss Priss, who had quite understandably swooned upon discovering the true nature of her erstwhile gentleman companion. There are some things, I suppose, that are left unrevealed even in the privacy of a house trailer.

The psychic emanations had stopped, and my head felt a lot better. Miss Priss was coming to but in a state of perpetual shock. Miss Priss was something of an innocent in the bad bad world of the Alley. I glanced over to Bob Mallory (since I had no clue as to the Rasta's moniker, I figured that would do for the moment), and was somehow unsurprised to see him sitting up, breathing normally and shaking his head in disgust at the other aliens. The Slick-tongue and Clarence Z. hung the equivalent of their heads, seemingly in embarrassment or shame. The aluminum siding persimmon stood frozen stiff. Chubby and Rose-Eileen's brood (what was left of them) high-tailed it out of there. It wasn't this messy business of ordinary folks suddenly all becoming aliens that had got to them; it was the growing volume of a police siren coming towards the neighborhood from—

From above?

The psychic resonance began again, just when I'd hoped my throbbing temples had regained a semblance of functioning normality. I decided I might as well listen to the voice intruding inside my head this time. It might dissipate my headache, but I didn't expect it to do very much for my shaky peace of mind.

"All right, kids," I thought it said, or it thought I thought, or something like that. "Finished with your childish games yet? Honestly, dressing up as natives and alien gods and imaginary video characters! One would think you've about gotten it out of your system yet."

"I told you there'd be danger," muttered Bob Mallory.

26 "And you—not another word until we get you back to base. I'm

more disappointed in you than I can say, Agent Mal're. You were given cover for the purpose of protecting the Tree, not freeing the prisoner. Be thankful I've been lenient enough to heal your self-inflictions. You won't be so lucky back at Base."

"But...what about my car?" whined Mallory apprehensively.

"You won't need it where you're going, pal," emanated the thought impressions. The cosmic paddy wagon—or was it a padded room?—descended now, apparently out of nowhere or from behind Miss Priss' trailer, and I heard a soft whirring sound as Mallory, Clarence and Slick were sucked up, or dissolved, or something equally nauseating, into its interior, looking none the happier for being so easily apprehended.

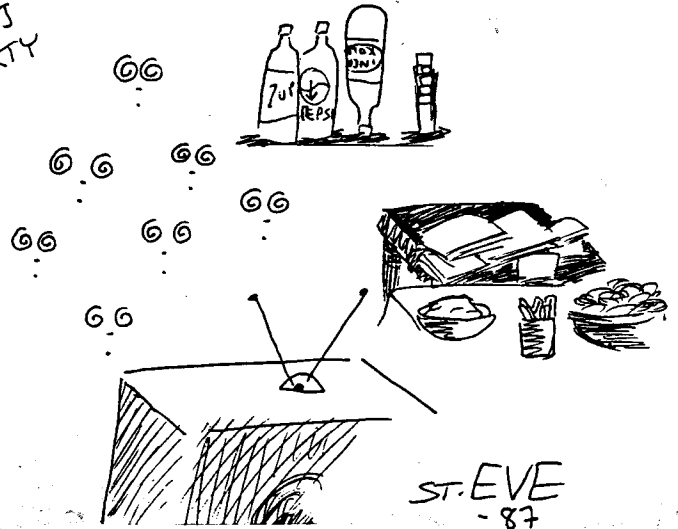
The aluminum siding persimmon had disappeared, the car unwound itself from the revived tree, and the "voice" spoke again. Miss Priss was still out of things, so I presumed the extraterrestrial cop's message was meant for me. I already thought I knew what that voice would say. It may be an ee-tee, but a cop's a cop, y'know?

The "voice" threw me for a loop, however. "Listen, Earthperson," it cajoled, remarkably politely, "how'd ya like to go your friendly galactic neighborhood security force a favor? Now, I'm sure you'd like to see things all back to normal 'round these parts, and frankly, so would we. We have no great desire to call attention to the activities of some of our more unscrupulous, er, agents. So here's the deal..."

The following spring, the only tree in Charabiri Park bloomed persimmons. I drove in my stripped-down Trans Am handing out the fruit to some of the Herringbone irregulars. Miss Priss, whose memory of Clarence, Mallory and especially Slick had been mercifully erased by forces which are left best unrecalled aloud, took two, as she'd recently gotten herself a new fellow from down Bayou country. I saved the most for Rose-Eileen and her brood, who had become remarkably well-behaved since The Incident (of which they, too, had no exact recollection, only a few bad dreams every now and then when they'd given their mother a little too much grief). I then cruised the Alley as usual, keeping an eye out for the welfare of the Tree and always ready with an answer for any smartass wont to tease me about my lack of a specific destination:

"There Is A Reason," I'd smile, and wink enigmatically.

I J
PARTY



Divorcee In Distress by Vinnie Bartulucci

Lolitty Whitebread was a girl with a problem. It's not easy to break up with a boyfriend, but when you've spent three years going around with Captain Biceps, savior of Titan City, a relationship takes on a more intense angle. For one thing, since the Captain wasn't keeping an eye on her, she hadn't written a really prizewinning article for her paper in months, relying only on her reputation to keep her job. But compared to her problem now, she wouldn't mind being a hotdog saleswoman at a pet show...

"Listen, pal, I haven't seen the beefed-out twit in months! He is NOT going to come save me!"

"Ah, dear Miss Whitebread, your pleas are useless! You are the key to my revenge! NYA HAR HAR!"

Lolitty wasn't even sure who this geek was, other than he was dangerous with that zapgun in his hand. After being a loved one/target for so long, she tended to tune out the danger and get on with the screaming. Boring as hell, but it really got the Cap horny. But Cap wasn't coming this time, and Lolitty was stuck with the nut with the gun. Hmm, wonder what he's like in bed, Lolitty thought.

Interest by Dorian Tenore

"How much did you get for your soul..." The jumpy rhythms of the Pretenders filtered through the Sony Walkman headset and into Rob Tolliver's appreciative ears. He liked the tune and that bitchin' guitar, though he couldn't see why Ms. Hynde was so pissed at black musicians—if she was so concerned about Africa's musical heritage, let her go back there. In any case, this was a welcome alternative to that Muzak droning within the North Side Savings Bank's beige plaster walls, especially during days like today—the first of February—when the line seemed even more endless than usual. Every time Rob looked behind him, there were even more people there than before. He wondered if they were really amoebas in disguise, all splitting and multiplying when his back was turned. The thought brought forth a short snicker as he wondered what his bio and psych teachers would have to say about that.

Yeah, good ol' NYU. If Rob hadn't needed to hand in his tuition in exactly two hours and forty-seven minutes, he wouldn't have been anywhere near the damn bank till payday—that is, sometime during the next decade. Instead of standing on this line, trapped among senior citizens eager to cash their government checks and get their interest posted in their passbooks (they always seemed to think that unless they did all this on exactly the first of every month, their checks and interest would instantly disappear, get beamed back aboard the Starship Enterprise or something), Rob could have—maybe even would have—been rehearsing the new tunes for Friday night, or something else semi-productive. Well, what the hell, at least the line was moving fairly quickly. Even now, yet another sour-faced customer was leaving his coveted spot at the front of the line, hurrying toward the siren call of some teller's resounding bell and flashing light.

Rob's blue-green eyes kept themselves occupied by glancing down the line of tellers, most of whom knew him by sight. And he wasn't such a bad sight, either. Iris, Amy, and Gilda, each of whom had cashed Rob's paycheck at one time or another, often giggled among themselves about what they'd do if that bulletproof glass window weren't separating them from "that hunk-and-a-half!" with the laughing eyes, the lean but sinewy five-foot-seven bod', the unruly, made-for-running-fingers-through chestnut hair. Anyway, Gilda had just left her window to check her customer's signature, and Iris was doing her damndest to keep from arguing with the cranky winner of the Methuselah Look-Alike Contest at her window, so Rob was unable to catch their respective eyes. Ted, the only male teller, gave Rob a friendly if preoccupied nod.

Then Rob glanced at the fourth teller down the row. If he hadn't already been standing still—save for his air-guitar practice—he'd have stopped dead in his tracks.

Amy's usual work spot was being occupied by a new face, a very pretty face at that, Rob noted as his hormones started to percolate. The new teller didn't notice Rob—she was too busy helping out some ten-year-old whose rich mommy and daddy had started a savings account for him—but Rob was doing enough noticing for the both of them plus a dozen peeping Toms. A comb decorated with a bunch of silk lilacs kept her long, thick, gleaming black hair out of her face. Long, delicate lashes framed eyes that would put Bambi to shame...large, dark, soft like brown velvet. Her high cheekbones, sensuous lips, and pale caramel skin made her resemble some young Egyptian princess. But it was her smile that really did Rob in. The smile that spread over her face as she handed the little boy his passbook and wished him a nice day was as warm and natural as sunlight after a brief spring rain. Sure, all the tellers told customers to "Have a nice day!", but this girl actually seemed to mean it. Rob was, as they say, hooked.

Suddenly, his body started to shake. It wasn't due so much to the great-looking teller as to that irate middle-aged matron urgently shaking his shoulder. Snapping out of his reverie and falling to Earth with a "thud," he whirled to face the woman and saw her lips forming the word "Go!" He yanked off his Walkman earphone as his legs, operating on automatic pilot, carried him toward the 7th Wonder of Tellerdom. Whoa! Couldn't go to her, she was helping that ten-year-old's mother, who'd slithered to the window the minute her kid's transaction was done. Rob grumbled a synonym for a biological waste product as he headed toward the fifth teller, Ellen, who had rung the bell in the first place.

"Rob, you maniac you," Ellen drawled. "How's the rock biz? I'm countin' on you to become the next Sting, you know."

"First I gotta work on being Rob Tolliver, Student-At-Large." Or risk the Wrath of Mom, he thought as he tugged the little green teller's check application from his jeans pocket and slipped it through the wide slot in the glass. "When are you people gonna admit defeat and get an automatic teller machine?"

"And miss out on these fascinating questions?" Ellen peered at the application. "Another tuition check already? Okay, Rob, you got the money with you, or are you making a withdrawal?"

"You kidding—from the incredible shrinking bank account?" He pushed a fat roll of hundreds through the slot. "Dad had another good day at the track."

"When doesn't he?" Ellen efficiently removed the rubber bands keeping the roll intact, then wet her fingers on her "water wheel" and began counting. When she was done, she placed the heavy ceramic wheel on the bills, which were impudently springing back into rolled-up roundness. She turned to the teller at the computer next to her—the one Rob had been trying to ogle discreetly for the last several eons.

"Hey, Ari, could you give me a double on this?" Ellen asked,

nodding toward the pile of cash.

"Sure," Ari replied as her customer finally left. Three graceful strides later, the beautiful Ari stood face-to-face (or at least face-to-glass-to-face) with a pleasantly stunned Rob. He tried to think of something devastatingly charming to say as Ari did a subdued double-take at the stack of C-notes. Her sudden smile, now tinged with mischief, did nothing to loosen Rob's knotted tongue.

She started counting the money. "What did you do, rob a bank?" That coaxed a grin out of him. "lose—it was the track."

"Oh, made a killing, did you?"

"Nope, my old man did."

"Steady Eddie Tolliver strikes again," Ellen chimed in wryly. Ari's face took on a quizzical look. "Who's Steady Eddie Tolliver?"

"My old man," said Rob nonchalantly.

"Also the best handicapper in the New York area," added Ellen, who often supplemented her income at OTB using tips from Steady Eddie. "You might've passed his column in the News on the way back from the TV listings."

Ari shrugged in apology for her ignorance. "I never did follow sports that closely. The only time I was ever at a racetrack was when my parents took me to Saratoga once when I was in grade school."

"Pretty classy," said Rob admiringly. Whether he was referring to the girl or the racetrack was unclear.

"It wasn't bad, at that—I did win ten dollars."

God, she's cute, Rob thought. "So how do you know about 'making killings'?" he asked her teasingly.

Ari smiled, and Rob's heart started breakdancing. "I learned about it from old movies—Little Miss Marker, the Marx Brothers, all the classics. My mother's like Rex Reed—she loves anything made before 1950."

"No kidding? How does she feel about colorization?"

"She says dismemberment is too good for whoever invented it—oh, rats!"

"Isn't that going a little too far?"

"Oh, ha, ha," she said with mock annoyance. "I just lost count. Sorry about that!" She quickly but neatly stacked the bills again, wet her long, slender fingers on the water wheel, and started counting again.

"Did my talking to you make you lose count? I could shut up if you want." Not that Rob minded the wait—she could take all year, as long as he could watch her do it.

"Oh, no—it's just that rolled-up bills are a little hard to count." Ari counted more slowly this time, placing each counted bill under the heavy wheel. Every so often, she'd briefly look up at Rob, her doe eyes twinkling. Just as Ari got to the last bill, Ellen's fist came down on the Formica countertop, accompanied by a shrill, "I don't believe this!"

"Again?" asked Ari in an incredulous but resigned tone.

"Again!" groaned Ellen. "Hey, Bea!"

Head teller Bea barely bothered to look up from the paperwork camouflaging her desktop. "Your computer's acting up again, right?"

"What else?" growled Ellen, throwing her ornery computer a glance that would have withered Clint Eastwood. In reply, the monitor blinked "OFFLINE - X = 14" in glowing green letters.

Bea sighed. "I really need this on the first of the month. Okay, Ellen, close up for a while."

"But I've still got a customer!"

"No problem," Ari piped up. "I'll take him."

(concluded next issue)

BRAINBEAUISM

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HIS HANDS

by Adja Gorbach

His hands were long, brown, indescribably graceful.

I loved them so much

I once added an extra finger in a drawing.

They shaped his magic.

They spoke his mind.

They lay with inner cleanness next to mine

A man is what he does daily with his
The feel of his hands matched the lo in his

They held the man.

They touched out his love for me, for others with strength.



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Brian Robinson



WHO ZITS in...STILL MORE SHOCKING BUT TRUE-LIFE QUOTATIONS!

Multiple choice this time, readers—choose your fave!

ENTRY #1 - Sen. Alan Simpson (R.Wyo, natch) to The Media about Reagan and "Iran-gate": "The continual babbling of asking the president what the hell happened...is actually kind of a sadistic little disservice to your country."

Ah yes, the evil Quest for Truth once more...Here's one from John Toner, chairman of the NCAA drug test committee: "If people take a substance to increase their awareness, they're subject to danger."

Yep, mustn't have all those kids running around aware, must we? Here's a precious comment from Adnan "Adman" Khashoggi, Saudi arms dealer and a personal friend of Baba Wawa, speaking on the Iran arms mess (what else?): "I think it's disgusting, shameful...they burned their friends and our covers, and now we have to go public and talk."

Could I make 'em up? Ah, yes, here's my personal fave, printed verbatim: "We haven't had the computer. If you have some sick minds out there in Miami, that's their problem." — Diego Garrido, a Braniff executive, on the airlines' ads in Miami's Spanish-language media that were intended to promote leather seats but, because of an idiomatic translation, urged passengers to "sit naked."

STEREOTYPICALLY OPPOSED STEREOTYPES

by Larry Blazeck
Sitting in a downtown bar listening to a two-bit band or someone reading bad poetry is not the woman that built America and made it unfree That mother stays at home cooking, cleaning, ironing making man children to feed into the slaving maw of an insatiable war machine They come back in a plastic sack with a note or, worse, alive but never quite whole The woman in the bar is never likely to have children if she remembers her birth control or, if she does it will be a daughter like her or a son that won't go The woman in the bar is good for a good time the woman at home makes and keeps the blood that flows

LET'S TALK CHEESE

by Wayne Hogan
"Say cheese, please." Chesterton said poets have been mysteriously silent on the subject of cheese. Well, I think this takes care of that.

PARTY INVITATION

by Dana A. Snow, "noted comedian"
I'm gonna throw a party And you all are not invited! It's gonna be a wild time From which all will be indicted! I'll hang up a big trapeze Helped by referees! Folks will trade housekeys Then devotees will get on their knees! The debauchees will seek to please And satisfy proclivities. No one there will merely tease. Just gasps and groans and "Golly gee"s. I start these parties with such ease, Because they're all B.Y.O.B.s Folks say I throw great jamborees Until the cops say "Holt it! Freeze!" So you are all invited And I hope you're all excited With all the rhyming that's inside it, Can you tell I used a rhyming dictionary to write it?

DAYDREAMING IN CENTRAL PARK

by Michael Polo
If the elephants had wings it would surely be a lark, But the truth is I'd feel sorry for the statues in the park.

Portrait of Ayn Rand as a young woman



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lope to:

Sayz-U!(Letters)

Dear Elayne,

Groundhog Day. At last—a lull between blizzards! For two weeks, I've felt like I'm living in one of those old tire commercials where the anthropomorphosed clouds kept huffing and puffing at quaking, wide-eyed drivers. Then again, when I think about the Michelin baby-in-the-tire commercials, I begin to get wispy and miss the clouds. Anyway, I went out this morning at 6:30 and found that the Boston Department of Public Works plows had buried my car beneath a six-foot drift of snow. How they managed this when it snowed only two inches is beyond me. So, "Oh, heck!" I called in sick, painted a bullseye on the snowdrift, and left it to the rude local drivers to knock the snow off when they (inevitably) strike my car. Rather than sulk and feel the day wasted, I flagged down a plow, gave the driver a map of Pennsylvania and \$20, and told him that if he stepped on it, maybe he could get to Punsutawney before that rodent Phil made an appearance. With little faith or experience in conspiracy, I am avoiding the Cable News Network and Entertainment Tonight, heralds of all things outrageous, trivial, and pertaining to the equinox. Phil, I hope you sunburned your furry fanny.

Quickly, a word about jet streams from a future teacher of earth science: don't trust 'em! Jet streams are incredibly fickle and flighty. One minute they move along the US-Canadian border, just as peaceable as a fig, not causing any problems for anyone at all. Then, without warning, they start jumping all over the place, waving up and down across the entire continent, bringing cold air and Moosehead down from the Yukon, hanging a louie at Louisiana (and who, really, could blame them?), and skipping up the east coast, carrying that infamous Gulf moisture and a bad case of jambalaya poisoning. Before you know it, Washington ("the nation's capital" and a fine place to take the Fifth) looks like Helsinki. Then that shameless jet stream hussy goes and performs the same act on New York and Boston. Sloppy seconds, indeed. Sure we need safe sex. But what we really need is some safe weather! No exchange of fluids, frozen or otherwise, perhaps preceded by, as a means of prophylaxis, the immolation of all weathermen with less than an 80% successful forecast average.

Liberace dies, and Ferdinand Marcos is doing jumping jacks. There really is no justice, you know?

A few belated comments on the last couple of IJs I received. Let me just scrape the dust off them. Hmm. I was wondering where George Bush had been hiding... IJ #49—My favorite was Anni's column on weddings. Having gone through one myself in recent months, I appreciated it even more; reading this before the wedding, however, would have triggered the flight mechanism, and the potential in-laws would have been seeking my extradition from Jamaica. Best cartoon of the issue was Wayne Hogan's postage stamp on art critics. (Aside to Gary Pig Gold: Did you get the cartoon I sent, did you print it, and why the hell haven't I seen a copy? Signed, Petulant Cartoonist.) IJ #50—I liked Deborah Benedict's cover—it made me feel like I was looking at Tolkien's Middle Earth after a visit by Pee Wee Herman. Nice cartoons by Roldo and (again) Mr. Hogan. The MTINTK debate rages on, and frankly, it's MTICTRA (More Than I Care To Read About). Rodny's stuff is occasionally annoying, occasionally amusing. I'm personally not in favor of any serial that isn't goddamned hilarious, but that's just me. You're the editor; set your policies, edit, print and comment, do whatever you want. HOWEVER, I think you overstep your boundaries when you start reviewing other mags (such as NOTES in this issue's "Fan Moose") using the same "Let's warn the public about the dangers of gratuitous talk about sex!" attitude. Using these standards, I suppose the "Valerie" episode on birth control will get a torching in IJ #52. The next step is a rating system for zines (based on MTINTK), and, by that point, the irony will be so thick you'll need waders to do the typing.

(Were I to have torched "Valerie" [had I bothered to watch it], it would have been for silly and meaningless writing, not for any mentions of that s-e-x stuff. As I understand it, it was pretty wimpy, but I think the show is rather useless anyway and wouldn't have expected otherwise. As for "Fan Moose," honestly, I've always reviewed zines according to my personal preferences, how else should I review them? Not saying what I think of them? Not giving IJ readers any idea of what they're about? Readers know my feelings on printing private matters in public forums ad nauseum by now, as you agree, and given the preponderance of this type of writing in fandom a review mentioning a MTINTK quotient in a fan-zine should come as no surprise. In fact, what has happened according to NOTES editor Sam Helm is that more people sent away for a copy of the zine from my "negative" review than from any other source that plugged the publication, so it worked out quite well for all concerned. I'm not about to stop speaking my mind about what I feel is bad or unnecessary writing in zines, but I certainly don't expect everyone (or anyone) to agree with me! And "Fan Moose" is, by its nature, already a kind of ratings system, in that any description of a publication will contain within it something of the reviewer's tastes, won't it? Look, I'm not saying there's no place for this type of thing [just that IJ ain't it], but people are going to get a much better idea of what's in something if I tell them why I don't [or do] like it.)

Michael J. Fox and Joan Jett in a domestic drama? Spare me. Well, I'm going. Until some other time, I remain, just a lad longing for the days of edible precipitation.

Best,

ANDY AMSTER
12 Elko St., Apt. 7
Brighton, MA 02135

Elayne,

Hi!

I happened to catch a Joan Rivers Tonight Show featuring Chuck Norris, Willard Scott the weatherman, the Bangles and, last but not least, Frank Zappa. Chuck Norris talked of his first films and his current film, *Firewalker*; Willard Scott and Joan Rivers exchanged gifts; while the Bangles sang their latest hit "Walk Like An Egyptian." But when Joan Rivers announced Frank Zappa, she began by saying he was the father of Moon Unit and Dweezil Zappa. "Can you imagine going through life with a name like Moon Unit?" she asked jokingly.

When Zappa came on stage he was highly insulted of course, and he asked Miss Rivers "not to mock the names of" his children. She very subtly turned that around by replying "I wouldn't mock your children."

Rivers then went on to say, "You're real smart, aren't you?" I'm paraphrasing her, unfortunately. "You recently appeared before a Congressional hearing," Miss Rivers continued, "and I couldn't help thinking to myself, 'Boy, ain't he something? Ain't he smart?'"

If you missed the Congressional hearing on C-Span and the news, Zappa was virtually irreverent without coming right out and insulting the committee members. But it was all they could do to get a straight answer out of him.

Obviously, Zappa was getting no chance for rebuttal from Miss Rivers. So he merely muttered seeming inanities. I wish I could remember his remarks, but while Rivers' remarks took the general tone of someone who is talking at you instead of to you, all the while expecting you to listen, his took the subliminal approach. Zappa sounded as if he were talking to a sleepwalker or a hypnosis subject.

Finally she asked him, "What's your opinion on AIDS?" Rivers wanted Zappa's opinion on AIDS as if it were a standard cocktail party joke. So Zappa says, "Well, okay. They say it came from some green monkeys in Africa. What I want to know is, who's been phaluking those monkeys?"

"Suddenly one November we are confronted with a previously unknown disease which kills 700 people. Three possible scenarios immediately come to mind. One: The disease came from Outer Space. Two: It came from a government laboratory. [Loud commotion from the audience. "Whoa!" Zappa exclaims. "Maybe it escaped!"] Three: It came from a laboratory in the private sector. There'll be a lot of money made by someone when a cure is discovered."

Later I saw Zappa again. He was interviewed on the Rock and Roll Evening News. Again he asked that intriguing question, "Who's been phaluking those monkeys?" It's a pretty good question and it comes from one of the straightest-looking cats on the rock and roll scene. I mean, he's no drug-crazed incoherent imbecile who can be written off the page.

Meanwhile, does anyone have any ideas on who has been fucking those green monkeys?

Best wishes,

JIM BUTLER
Box 2089
Kealahakua, HI 96750

Dear Elayne,

Greetings from the other side! The other side of the Atlantic, that is... (Comments on IJ #50:) The cover surprised me because at first glance it looked dreadful and since then I haven't been able to stop looking at it. Lots of little things I recognise, of course, and a few I don't, and a couple that surprised me... Dunwich—well, of course I know H.P. Lovecraft's version but Dunwich, the real Dunwich, the original Dunwich is a tiny little cliff-top village in Suffolk, not twenty-five miles from there I grew up, and there I've spent many happy hours. Weird.

Anyway, tippy-toing lightly past the Acknowleditorial and Fan Moose (nice new logo), the Rock Fiend was one of the best I've seen since I started reading—an absolute must for an IJ reprint, methinks! I scored a fairly respectable 27 points and was startled to find that I'm a yuppie. That explains a great deal.

"Fear and Loathing..." while the subject itself was of no interest to me, was an excellent example of any article that attempts to chronicle changing situations in the media—frenetic, hard to follow and leaving you with a feeling of "So what?"—the same feeling I get when my mother or sister try to explain Dallas, Dynasty or Eastenders (a UK soap) to me. Lie back, watch the video of "Rocky Horror" or "High Society" again instead.

Larry Oberc is getting himself a reputation (in my mind anyway) as someone who produces constantly above-average work but nothing really outstanding. "Dentists" was a good attempt at putting that feeling best described by the word "dentist" into words. For more in a similar vein, go and see the musical version of "Little Shop of Horrors," which should be very good, even if they have changed the ending and as a result removed possibly the best of the tracks that was in the stage musical.

"1984: Nuke 'em, Dan-o" was yet another attempt to be Hunter S. Thompson by someone who isn't even close to being Hunter S. Thompson. This one was fairly successful; the style was right but there was just a little bit missing (or possibly a little bit too much) that spoiled it. Not relaxed or rational enough, I fear, but a nice try.

"Distractional Analysis" was a good finish to what had started as an excellent article. "Satan's Brain Surgeon" was a bit sad to read because I'd read the Lettercol first and knew that this was Rodny's last bit as a staffer... Rory Houchens has shot up in my estimation immensely—anyone who puts "Wish You Were Here." 29

"Another Green World" and Lou Reed's "Berlin" as 1, 2 and 3 on their list has got to have taste. I don't own any of these albums, because if I did then I'd play them so much that they'd lose their specialness in the same way that Eno's "Here Come The Warm Jets," Tangerine Dream's "Poland" and everything by Laurie Anderson have already for me.

"Zenarchy" was very average this time; but that's probably just me. Nice bit from Steve Scharff, who has apparently reached more or less the decision that I have—that in the 1950s Orson Welles and Alfred Hitchcock collaborated on making a science fiction movie which we are currently living in. Excellent "Talk Show Host Confidential"—I wish I'd thought of a piece like that. Nice little bit by Susan Packie and the Yossarians excelled themselves—truth is stranger than fiction, except when they're the same thing.

Amusing "Pigshit." David Serlin deserves to be made a staffer solely on the strength of his piece "And Then On Tuesday I'll Fall In Love." "Kid's" piece well up to standard. Not the best Dr. Iguana I've seen, and Michael Polo shouldn't restrict himself to satirising styles—he does it very well, but his "Knock Knock" joke was pathetic and I'd heard it before. Nice to see Roger Morris is recovering from his fit of literary rabies. "McMack" shows potential. Nice to be namechecked in "Four-Colour Fiend." D.A. Beast's bit was great on atmosphere but not so hot on understating.

I get the feeling that I've seen the artist that Spencer Pinney talks about—she or someone like her paid a visit to my home town (Ipswitch) a couple of years back and produced a beautiful rendition of the Madonna and Child that lasted two weeks after she left, despite two or three heavy rain showers. The piece of writing was nice, quiet, underspoken and left an extremely pleasant impression.

I don't know what Daza is on but I want some!

On to SAYZ-U, and Deborah Benedict's list of questions. Okay, deep breath, here we go: (1) No, there isn't a "Big Bealing" as such, but in common with a lot of English villages, it is divided into two, Little Bealings and Great Bealings, which are separated by a small stream not more than 5 feet wide. They're quaint, quiet little Suffolk villages and how they got their name ("Bealing" means a boil) I have no idea. (2) Yes, Spike Milligan is still alive. Over Christmas the BBC broadcast four Goon Shows that had never been broadcast before. Due to other commitments I only heard one of them, and could fully understand why they hadn't been broadcast before—they weren't bad, they were just lacking. (3) Dunno what Viv Shanshall's doing; Neil Innes still potters around being silly but I haven't heard of Viv for a while. There appears to be a quiet Bonzo revival going on in the UK; most of their albums are available again and there's even a "Best of" collection (not the "Some of the Best of..." but a new one). (4) Who's Syd Barrett? (5) Who's Pete Best? (6) Who the fuck are Peter and Gordon? Please remember I'm only 20 and thus totally unaware of a lot of things which you people no doubt regard as vital parts of life in the UK because of prominence a few years ago. (7) The girls in Bananarama really are hopelessly banal. (8) Carnaby Street is now a tourist memorial to the '50s and '60s; it's a nice little pedestrian precinct with nice little shops selling nice nostalgic stuff to goggle-eyed visitors. Real Londoners go up to Camden Lock if they want that sort of market these days. (9) No Elvis cults or '50s revivals really, I'm afraid. (10) No, I don't read Clive Barnes. I read both Clive Barker and Julian Barnes, though—did you mean either of them? (11) British TV is, for the most part, pretty good but I wouldn't describe it as excellent. Both BBC and ITV excel at documentaries and the BBC does great historical drama, while ITV occasionally produces a pretty good blockbuster miniseries...I don't know who John's Aunt Mimi is; and there are three types of black slang in Britain. Firstly, regional slang which isn't particular to any colour or creed; black guys born in Glasgow talk the same as Jewish guys born in Glasgow who talk the same as EVERYONE born in Glasgow and nobody can understand any of them. Secondly, there's the Jamaican accent and slang usually used by rastafarians who try to pretend that they've been to the West Indies or were even born there—it sounds very funny (nay, hilarious) when superimposed on a rather conspicuous Cockney or West Country accent. Thirdly and worst, there's the genuine black slang that you talked about—but it's not native to this country, nor did a version arise here on its own. Nope, they just copied the way that they heard black actors talking in US TV programmes. If there is a genuine British black slang, I haven't heard it...

Something else of interest: a new TV series starring ex-Young Ones Rik Mayall, Nigel Planer and Ade Edmonson. It's called "Filthy, Rich and Catflap," and both it and the new Max Headroom Show have visibly improved since their inception. Max has now got more time to himself so when he's just talking as opposed to talking to someone, he's very funny. F.R.C. is still not as spontaneous as the Young Ones and relies a lot on the same gags each episode—Richie Rich is a failed actor who thinks he's a mega-celebrity and believes that everyone knows him, Filthy is his decrepit agent and Catflap is his violent and rude bodyguard; and things have gotten so bad that some lines are actually repeated almost word for word each show—things like references to the fact that it's only a "crappy" TV programme anyway appear built in, yet get a laugh every time. Worth a look. Just one... Alternative Comedy has spawned its own clichés and this series uses them all—bad language, farting, the police as fascist bastards, mindless violence and so on...

Anyway, that seems to be all...Don't touch that dial.

30 Boing boom tschak,
JAMES WALLIS
139 Hainault Road, Flat 5
London E11 1DT G.B.

Saludos Amigos!

May goodness and mercy and ridiculous rumors follow you the rest of your life!

IJ 51: I enjoyed Debbie David's stroll down Memory Lane with Martin and Tim. And I want to know why Lori Twersky has yet to be featured on ATTITUDES. Other than that, swell funnies, J.P. and long live Vernon Grant. And Mildred is not likely to forget Jorge Romberto Muerte Clemente and his scathing interpretation of Auf Wiedersehen. It is axiomatic that the most interesting stereotypes define themselves.

My dear "Kid" Sieve, my favorite commercial animal is Ike, the Lucky Dog. I think the bulldog is the most attractive and amusing canine. Ike and Spuds Mackenzie are great pals, by the way, and recently spent their time vacationing on the coast of Vesuvius. It is fortunate that the blood of Saint Gennaro liquified this year!

Today is a happy day. It is the first time I see the Cubs on tv! Is very nice.

I want you to know that I tried to watch AMERIKA but I failed. I dislike Kris Kristofferson almost as much as I dislike Bruce Willis and Michael J. Fox. I still dunno why everybody got so excited over it, it was just badly written fiction with good Japanese cinematography and mediocre American (with a C) acting.

Best thing on telly lately has been ALF guest-hosting Hollywood Squares. He had attitude up the yin yang, and boldly displayed his Melmakian gift for satire. He gets along well with Weird Al, though.

I accidentally watched Wheel of Fortune the other day. I lost the remote control box and was too lazy to get up and change the channel. Suddenly there she was, Vanna White the daughter of Snow White and Dopey. And then there was Pat Sajak, who used to be a weatherman on NBC Channel 4 in California when I dwelt there. Pat Sajak, offspring of David Letterman and a Kewpie doll. Then the contestants came on and I had to know if they were really real. So I watched Wheel of Fortune and solved all the puzzles before anyone else did! And I didn't get any fabulous merchandise or a brand new car! So I don't like this show. I won't ever watch it again, no matter what happens with Vanna's cheesecake photos.

The Reverend Kenneth Burke has written me a gracious epistle, requesting I expound on a certain word. The Reverend Burke is a man of great repute; I have heard it said that he is the cynosure of personal honor and integrity. So why he wrote to me is anybody's guess. I was much honored. His word is "POTRZEBIE." Sir Kenneth explains: "This word is usually associated with the MAD Magazine humor of the early to mid-1960's but has been out of use by them for quite some time now—perhaps you can give the word a modern meaning and slip it back into our national lexicon (which is just below our tri-state clavicle, if I have my continental anatomy straight)." Not only is the gentleman pretty smart already, but he's witty too. "POTRZEBIE" comes from the German expressive, "potz," which has no finite meaning, but merely embellishes other meanings; and "rebie," a slang version of rebel in some neighborhoods of Chicago, and also a slang version of rabbi (rebbe) in Budapest. This gives us a sense of meaning and purpose. REBEL! or, TEACH!—could serve for either, but it is most often used the same way the Japanese word Banzai! is used.

POTRZEBIE! yelled by a rebel is a warning, a battle cry. POTRZEBIE! in the other sense has the purpose and impact of a prayer.

The word has fallen into disuse because people and their appreciation of rebellion and teaching as opposites has become unfashionable.

I do not know if this will please the Rev. and Dr. Iguana—I was honored by his request and felt I had to do him the honour of a thought-out response—so I did my dubious best.

Thank you for permitting me to reproduce this letter and its half-baked ideas in your fine journal of jest, El-Ayne.

I am, as always, hungry like the wolf, and humble like Jesus.

DEBORAH BENEDICT

854 Y Street - the big old weird-looking house at the edge of town. the one with the big old neon sign that says "Elvis Lives."

Lincoln, Nebraska - This be the town Charlie Starkweather tried to kill off. He go crazy one day and kill a mess of people, he was a Wild Animal. He is buried in Wyuka Cemetery and it's a Cool Thing to have your photo taken at his grave.

68508 - this is a zip code. It adds up to 27, which is the date of my alleged birth. 2 plus 7 equals 9, which is the number of eternal mystery and wisdom and also the number of The Hermit

ALL MYSTIC STUFF BROUGHT TO YOU BY MILDRED NEPTUNE, MISTRESS OF THE ARCANES!

Dear Elayne,

Hello, buenos dias senorita, good afternoon, etc. Issue #51 was quite a humdinger, what with Anni's dreams and Prudence's visits and a truckload of other hazardous materials. I hope, now, the sizzling hot topic of censorship in IJ has been put to rest; the collective energy involved, if harnessed, would have been sufficient to pull 'Amerika' off the airwaves with 'Webster' to boot.

I imagine you're going to be embroiled in a painful dilemma over whom to dedicate the next ish (#52) to: Liberace or Andy Warhol. I think that Liberace should be so enshrined with the honor because he has done much for the 'shitik' kings of America (e.g., Letterman, Leno, Belzer, etc.), which, in my mind, is closer to the heart of IJ than Warhol's pre-Madonna pop commercializations...

DAVID SERLIN

Box 107, Jones Hall - Ontario St. & Park Ave.

(keep going...) Philadelphia, PA 19140

(Well, obviously, given the circumstances this issue would up being dedicated to neither, but I'd have sooner chosen Warhol over Liberace any day as embodying what I've always thought of as the spirit of IJ. I abhor schtick and all things "shecky" with a sort of revolting fascination; but even though Warhol could be tacky, he was one of the premiere inventors of the art, and if by satirizing pop culture he was destined to become a part of it, so be it. I could wish nothing less for IJ, given the money. No, no, I'm kidding...I think. Anyway, Andy was and is a patron saint of the spirit of IJ, whereas Lee just had kooky tastes in clothing and a boffo way with the pianoforte.)

Dear Elayne,

Is there a major typo on page 23 [in IJ 51], or did somebody actually list my stuff as their favorite IJ feature? No, seriously?!

I sure hope no one finds this as amazing as I do! This is doubly astounding since I don't have a regular feature (I mean, I wasn't even looking for my name! [And I'd thought I was the only one who scanned "Sayz-U" that way.]) Since I've only sent in 3 pieces I really hadn't thought of myself as part of the family yet. (The adoption papers must've gotten lost in the mail.—ew)

Who is this person, anyway? If I find out who it was I'll send them a free subscription to PHOEBE (a fair risk on my part, as I suspect they are already a reader of mine anyway).

On the other hand, I can't help but believe that I wrote the long comedy piece with pop cultural name-dropping that ran out of steam after the first paragraph. But then, that's part of my insecurities and not one of your problems.

What is not one of my insecurities is my refusal to tell you my birthday. Sure, we're all friends here, and I have seen to it that as few of my friends as I can arrange know my birthday. I don't like the things.

Going quickly through issue 51: Ms. Ackner was wonderful as always (hey, did any of you pass last issue's drug test?) even if the issue wasn't timely; this Jorge Roberto Muerte Clemente has some interesting insights, but as I told Ligi in a letter, I don't think I'd invite Clemente to a party; I can't get over how versatile Rodny Dioxin is, how he can write in a "voice" so unlike his own (compare "Dancing on the Jetty" to any of his letters); then to see how well Dioxin and Prudence Gaelor write from different points of view...Elayne, how do you attract all these talented folk?; will Tish write a sequel to "Of Mouse & Me"? the return of the mutant mouse and Fifi?; and Gary Pig Gold has a way of presenting viewpoints that are totally alien to me (before it was that Green Acres is good, now it's Ricky Ricardo is cooler than Cary Grant) and getting me to agree with him, how's he do that?

One last thing, if you get a lot of complaints about how anticlimactically the McMack story ended then please don't send me the letter column with my next IJ (again, part of my insecurities, and not one of your problems).

Cheers!

JAMES MacDOUGALL
3220 N Street N.W., Suite 333
Washington, D.C. 20007

Dear Elayne,

...For what they're worth, here are my reactions to the issue [IJ 50] you sent. My first reaction was confusion at the great multiplicity of symbols, words, and pictures, type formats, and tiny letters sometimes too small to read. The cover completely confused me and appeared as one big blur. But then, after sampling Mike Gunderloy's piece, I started on page 2 and went right through to the end, reading at least some of each article, and deciphering all the cartoons and ads. My favorite is Jay De-Felicitis' "The Products of Pop" on page 25, especially the last sentence! I also liked Deborah Benedict's predictions for 1987 very much, especially the first six...I plan to write to several of the addresses in some of the ads. When I had gone through all the pages of INSIDE JOKE, I went back and looked at the cover. It made sense! And I spent several minutes going over the various parts that seemed to fit into a whole. I've come to a tentative conclusion about what you're up to. I assume you're familiar with that crude sexist remark, "When rape is inevitable, lay back and enjoy it." You seem to be saying, "When infoglut is inevitable, fight back and make a pattern of it!"...INSIDE JOKE seems to, for me at least, make a design out of all the junk that's thrown at us through the media, so that it isn't so overwhelming and so it's easier to sort out the little good there is from the great proliferation of the bad, even in "bad" media like television.

Does the above jibe at all with what you're up to? (I'd be interested in knowing. At least it does seem to fit with what you say you're doing in the "Acknowleditorial" and in the letters column. (My only suggestion, incidentally, is to put the letters column close to the front instead of the back, to add to the feeling of continuity from issue to issue and to give newcomers like me a feeling of what has gone before.)...

In fellowship,

JOHN OHLINGER
Basic Choices, Inc.
1023 Drake Street
Madison, WI 53715-1609

(Well, John, your explanation of what we're about is as good as anyone else's [even mine], I guess! As for the letters column being in the back, I like it there because I think the original submissions [vs. letters] should receive more importance, sort of like, I speak first [editorial, Fan Noose], then staffers and other writers/artists do their thing, then we all get together and discuss where we're at. I do mention the letters column on page 2 oftentimes, so it sort of gets a plug at the beginning of each IJ anyhow. Still, I'd like to know what everyone else thinks of this suggestion—should we move the letters column up front?)

Dear Elayne,

Just to make things perfectly plain right at the start, the reason you're getting this in longhand and at a peculiar angle is because, at the moment, I am in longhand and at a peculiar angle, meaning that I am, much against my will, trapped in a reclining chair in my parents' bedroom, noticeably without Isaku the typewriter and, as though to add insult to injury, without my glasses as well. Moreover, it has been a day of extreme length and travail and, behold even that, Ed Begley, Jr. has just put in another one of his guest appearances (for the uninitiated, I should explain that, for the past several months, Ed Begley, Jr.—or, more precisely, the image of Ed Begley, Jr.—has taken to coming to me when I least want him, and following me about wherever I dare venture. Although not quite as tiresome as a similar experience I once had with Michael Jackson, this has been of longer duration, and it is slowly beginning to dawn on me that, precisely like a case of herpes, a case of Ed Begley, Jr., while it may subside for brief periods of time, has no discernable cure), this time under the auspices of PM MAGAZINE (a programme I never watch, but only happened to glance at tonight because my mother wanted to see it), at which point I explained to my mother what I have just explained to you, which in turn prompted her to go off into a long, dreamy story about the time LBJ appeared to her as the Angel of Death on an episode of M*A*S*H. Of course, my mother has recently gotten her hair cut into something that resembles a geriatric Mohawk, and we think this may, possibly, have done something to her short-term memory. Anyway, you can see that these are not optimum conditions under which to write a letter (incidentally, the primary reason I am in this predicament is that my father invited one of his office biddies home to watch a hockey game on my television. I have nothing against this friend—particularly as he brought along some lovely breaded oysters, and is willing to share—and I sometimes enjoy a hockey game, but my room simply isn't big enough to hold three people for extended periods of time, so you see), but I intend to press on in spite of it all. Three big rousing cheers for me.

It does help, of course, that issue #51 was such a very good one. Imagine two Pink Bunny stories in IJ! I think I liked "A Visit to Grandma's" slightly more than I did "Dancing on the Jetty," but really, they were both among the best entries in the series.

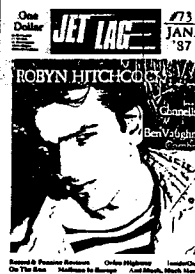
I also enjoyed Mildred Neptune's "I Made Elvis a Vampire!" As you know, I've been slightly less than enthusiastic about Mildred's vampire musings, but this particular bit was really prime. I don't mind vampires when someone manages to do something new and interesting with them and, whatever else you can say about it, turning Elvis into one certainly comes under the heading "new and interesting."

Oh dear, now I do have a problem here because, you see, if I say something nice about Kenneth Burke now, it is going to look as though I'm doing it just because he said something nice about me, when you know, Elayne, that I said weeks ago that his "Honeymooners" piece was the single best thing I'd ever read in IJ, and I meant to write you a letter about it then, only I didn't, and now there's the bit about PEOPLE, which wasn't as good as the "Honeymooners" one (but then, what could be?) but was still pretty good and, really, what am I supposed to do about all this? So just forget I said anything at all, okay? Really, just forget it. Well, I've had it with this. If these people are going to sit in my room, watching my television set (and, since my father always insists on trying to use the VCR remote to operate the TV, God knows the results they're having), I'm going to go in the kitchen and eat up all the scallops.

So there,

ANNI ACKNER
Headbanger from Hell
350 N. Park Rd., =CC103
Wyomissing, PA 19610

HEY, HEP CATS!!!

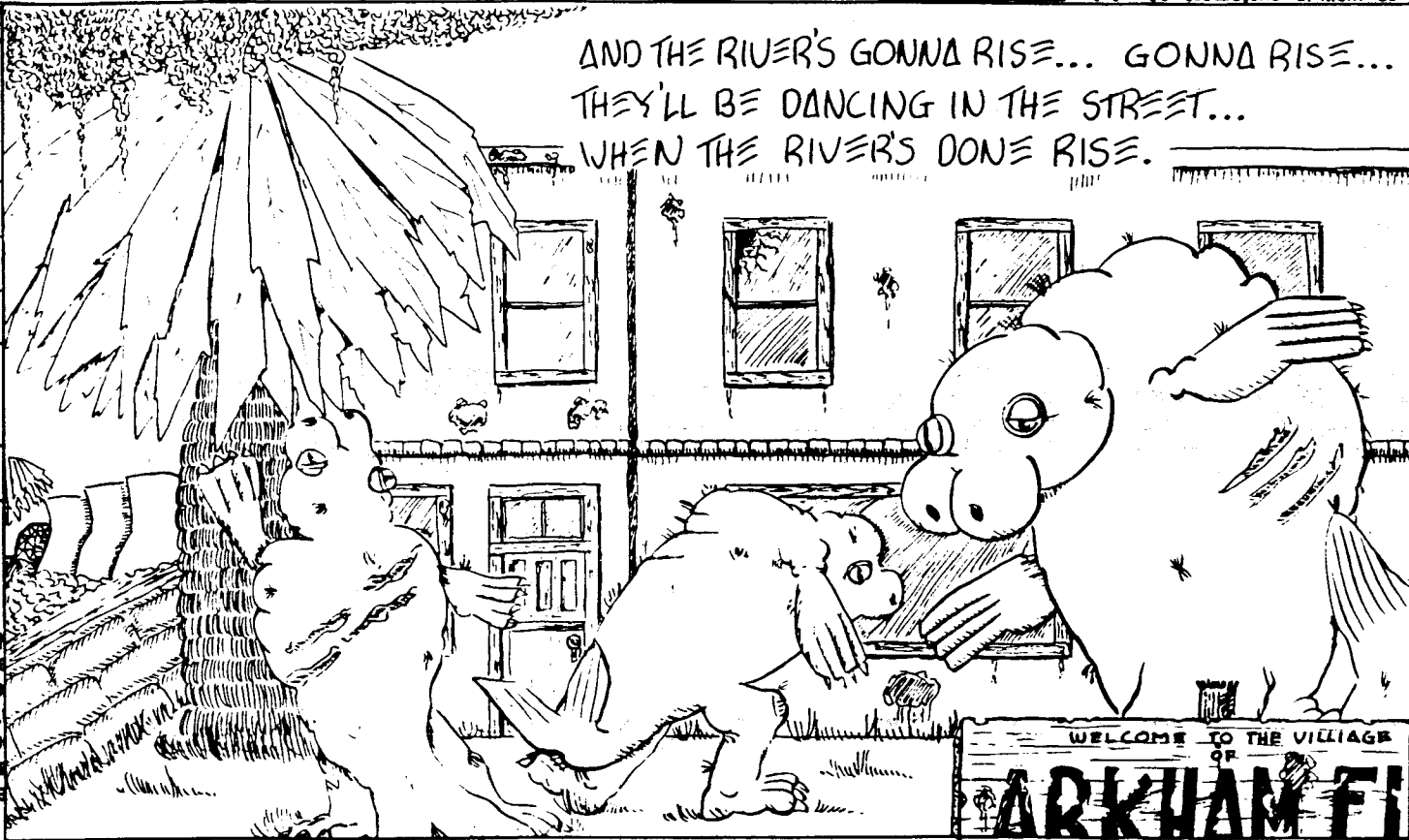


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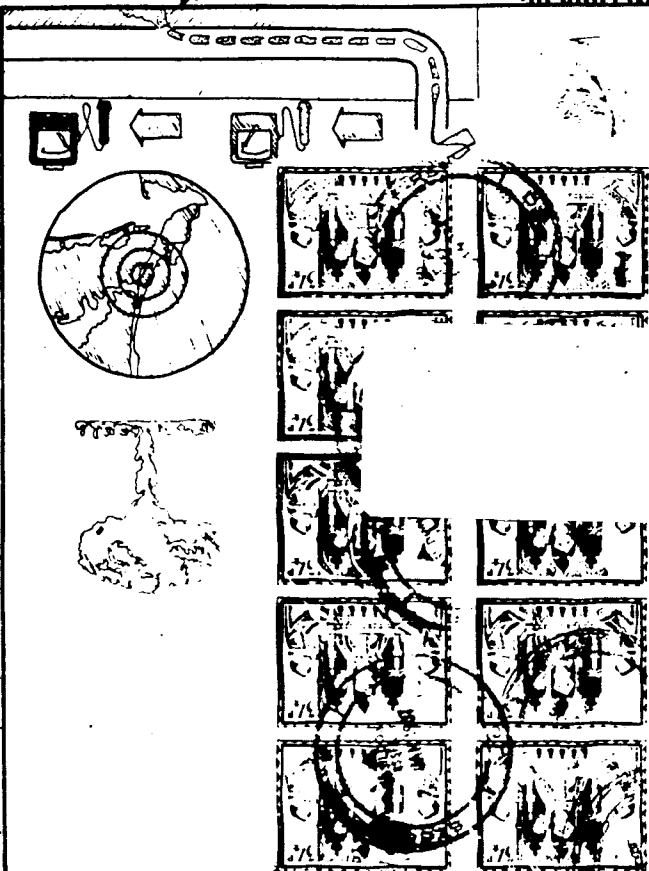
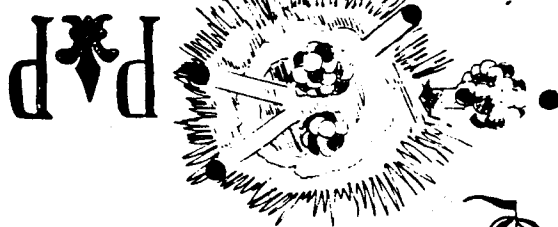
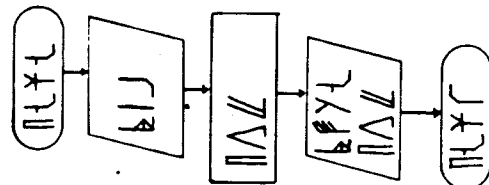


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WHEN THE RIVER'S DONE RISE.

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