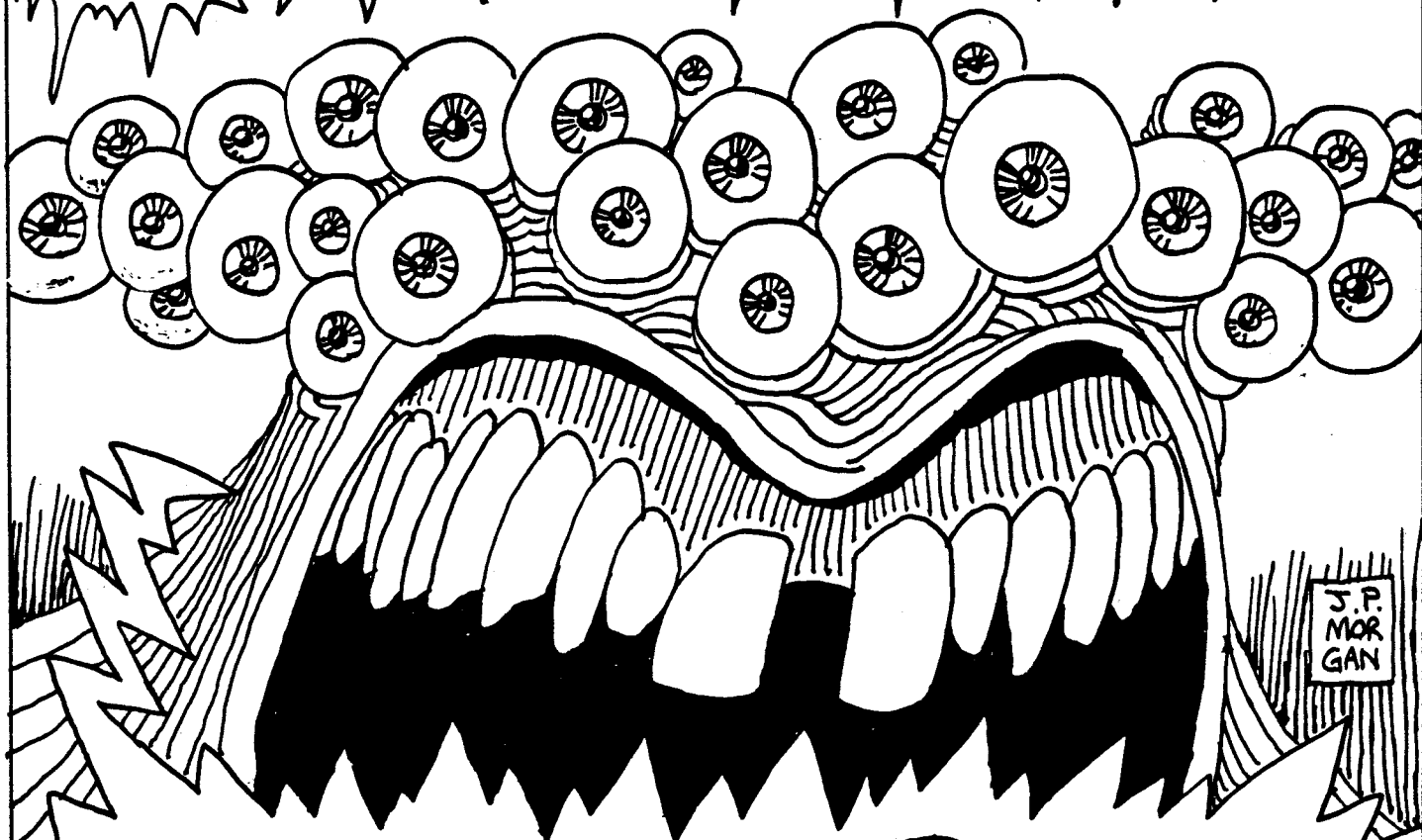


INSIDE JOKER!

A NEWSLETTER
OF COMEDY AND
CREATIVITY.

\$1.00

#54



J.P.
MOR
GAN

LAUGH!

Upcoming Events

Let me know if I've forgotten any special dates, folks—I try to remember them all, but can't always, so apologies beforehand to anyone I've missed!

- AUGUST 15 - DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO IJ #55
 AUGUST 17 - Mae West (b. 1892)
 AUGUST 19 - The Mysterious Mr. Mike (?); Orville Wright (b. 1871)
 AUGUST 21 - DOUG SMITH (34)
 AUGUST 22 - Dorothy Parker (b. 1893); Ray Bradbury (67)
 AUGUST 23 - Gene Kelly (75); Keith Moon (b. 1947)
 AUGUST 25 - Walt Kelly (b. 1913)
 AUGUST 26 - Marion "Mom" Chaput (65), 19th Amendment Passed (1920)
 AUGUST 27 - Martha Raye (71); Federal Income Tax declared unconstitutional (1894)
 AUGUST 28 - Presumed birthday of Gypsy the Feral (4)
 SEPTEMBER 1 - Lily Tomlin (48); Edgar Rice Burroughs (b. 1875)
 SEPTEMBER 2 - ANDY AMSTER (30); MIKE GUNDERLOY (28)
 SEPTEMBER 4 - Paul Harvey (69)
 SEPTEMBER 5 - JODI HAMMIRICH (26); John Cage (b. 1912)
 SEPTEMBER 7 - Buddy Holly (b. 1936)
 SEPTEMBER 8 - Sid Caesar (65); Peter Sellers (b. 1925)
 SEPTEMBER 11 - Ken Kesey (54); O. Henry (b. 1862)
 SEPTEMBER 12 - ACE BACKWORDS (31); H.L. Mencken (b. 1880)
 SEPTEMBER 14 - Margaret Sanger (b.1883)
 SEPTEMBER 15 - CAROLYN MACDONALD (29); Robert Benchley (b. 1889); Agatha Christie (b. 1891)
 SEPTEMBER 18 - Greta Garbo (82)
 SEPTEMBER 21 - Chuck Jones (75); H.G. Wells (b. 1866)
 SEPTEMBER 23 - Bruce Springsteen (38)
 SEPTEMBER 26 - T.S. Eliot (b. 1888)
 SEPTEMBER 27 - LARRY OBERC (31); American Indian Day
 SEPTEMBER 29 - Gene Autry (80)
 SEPTEMBER 30 - DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO IJ #56 (7th Anniversary Issue)

 * INSIDE JOKE is put on hexaweekly by Elayne Wechsler and some
 * dear friends for the sole purpose of entertaining our reader-
 * ship. Any republication or other use of the pictures and ac-
 * counts of this zine without the express written permission of
 * Major League Baseball is fine with me, but since writes do re-
 * vert to the appropriate names listed below, do ask.

EDITOR-IN-RESIDENCE.....ELAYNE WECHSLER
 PRODUCTION ASSISTANT/FIANCE-AT-LARGE.....STEVE CHAPUT
 ONSET.....MANGO BEAK II

FRONT COVER BY J.P. MORGAN

STAFF WRITERS/ARTISTS

ANNI ACKNER=====ACE BACKWORDS=====ALIX BISHOFF
 --KEN BURKE=====TOM DEJA=====GARY PIG GOLD==
 E.E. LIGI=====CAROL MAGARY=====J.P. MORGAN
 --LARRY OBERC=====SUSAN PACKIE=====DAVID SERLIN==
 DORIAN TENORE====KERRY THORNLEY====PHIL TORTORICI====A.J. WRIGHT

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS THIS ISSUE:

AL ?	JAY HARBER	CRAIG ROLL
ANDY AMSTER	MARY ANN HENN	MIKE SCHAFER
NICK AMILLER	STEVEN HESS	MIKE SELENDER
R. BAIN	WAYNE HOGAN	CURT SIMMONS
LARRY BLAZEK	KIT	KATHY STADALSKY
WAYNE BRENNER	TULI KUPFERBERG	LARRY STOLTE
JIM BUTLER	JONATHAN LEVANT	ELKION TUMBALÉ
BRIAN CATANZARO	ROGER MORRIS	NÓEL M. VALIS
JOEL DAILEY	EDWARD MYCUE	SIGMUND WEISS
RODNEY DIOXIN	SHERYL NELMS	ERIC WILSON
ADAM EISENSTAT	ERIK NELSON	ROBERT WILSON-WHEATLEY
ADJA GORBACH	MICHAEL POLO	A.D. WINANS
VERNON GRANT	ANDY ROBERTS	MARK WISNIEWSKI
MIKE GUNDERLOY		and "KID" SIEVE

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 Writers'/Artists' Guidelines available for SASE

ACKNOWLEDITORIAL

By the time you receive this issue, the deadline for the next will most likely have passed. This doesn't really worry me, as I have made a habit of listing deadlines in advance in this editorial column and staffers should be keeping track, and with our still-severe space limitations we certainly have enough backlog to last us 2-3 issues if nobody else ever sent us anything, but I do want to offer my regrets in any case. Our deadlines, if I can at all help it, will NOT be moved, and IJ will continue to come out, well, when it comes out.

Many of you may be getting this issue, as with the previous one, over a month late. At the risk of being redundant, I want to explain what's going on "behind the scenes" which has led to these delays: Our Esteemed Printer (EP) is only able to get away with making a few copies per day at her "Conspiracy job." My priorities in sending out IJs are 1) staffers and selected VIPs, 2) subscribers (readers who've sent in money and contributors who've sent in \$ or stamps with their submissions) and 3) trades. We have an enormous amount of trades, far more than that with which I'm comfortable. As a result of my belief that it would be unfair to refuse to trade with a like-minded publication, I find myself in receipt of music zines, libertarian zines, poetit and artistic zines which are, in all honesty, my lowest reading priority, since I'm neither a poet, artist, libertarian or interested in that much independent music (and let me say here that while I don't think an abnormal crush on Phil Collins makes me a bad person, music zine editors out there who consider this a significant personality flaw are more than encouraged to request of me that we discontinue exchanging zines. In fact, any zine editor out there who feels IJ doesn't quite measure up to their own effort and has been too polite to admit it to me, don't worry about sparing my feelings—do come right out and drop me from your list if you're not getting anything from my zine. Just let me know; I can deal with honesty much better than I can with vicious remarks behind my back). I do try to limit trades, and will not be straying henceforth from my one-for-one policy with zines that publish irregularly—when the editors of these zines send me their latest issue, I will trade them the IJ in which that issue is plugged in "Fan Noose," period.

I hope this policy isn't too harsh, but I have to cut back somewhere. I simply can't handle the volume anymore, folks, and I won't let our EP compromise her position to accommodate us. Trade copies will continue to go out up to a month late. Also, seeing as how I'm barely keeping my head above water as it is, I'd like to request that fellow editors refrain from over-mentioning IJ in their zines for the time being. I am always flattered when IJ is plugged, but I'm truly not looking for any new subscribers now! These things usually happen in cycles, though, and I'm sure all will be solvent in a short while and we can again seek new blood when it stops seeking us (many new folks are still hearing of us by word of mouth anyway).

In addition, I'm taking steps to see if we can get some sort of actual funding (say, a grant from somewhere of \$3000 a year) so I can consider paying our EP over the table to print IJ up all at once, like we used to be able to do before present circumstances dictated otherwise. I think after 6 1/2 years and mentions in neat places like Utne and Factsheet Five, we've put forth a good enough track record that we might have a real chance at this. As always, I'll keep you informed.

I have taken the extremely tacky liberty of altering some of the language in a few submissions herein to reflect non-gender-specific references. For example, where I have not used "he or she" or "it," I have employed the Jungian terms "hir" and "s/he" when referring to subjects whose gender is neutral or nebulous. I apologize if this results in awkward reading, and would implore contributors to either be gender-specific on purpose or eliminate "sexist" grammar whenever possible (I put "sexist" in parens because I'm aware that many people consider it perfectly grammatical to have "number agreement" instead of "gender agreement"—the pronoun "he" to refer to "each" instead of the pronoun "they," for instance; I prefer the latter or any of the above terms I employ). If anybody has a problem with this, s/he may just send in hir work and I'll do the structuring for hir, in the same way as I tend to "clean up" mistakes with apostrophes and such. Hey, if one can't use one's college English degree for something...

Welcome to Gary Pig Gold formally—see the combined new staffer -Pigshit "obit" within. I will list staffers' addresses next time when some return to college and others settle in...Speaking of the latter, oh inquiring minds out there, I know you want to know: the date is officially set, and as of June 12, 1988 I will be a married-type woman, but you'll probably still have to make IJ checks out to "Elayne Wechsler".

Those checks, as well as submissions, letters and other neat stuff like certain herbal—well, substances—can be sent just about anytime to our address listed below. The deadline for IJ #55, featuring a Roldo cover, was August 15, but I'll probably be accepting letters and such up until I lay out the thing; the deadline for IJ #56 is September 30, and that will be our 7th Anniversary Issue, for those who keep track of such events. Yep, we will have been publishing seven years by that point, shaky or no, and with Eric on our side we should make another 4 or 5 at least.

Which reminds me to remind you that advance subscriptions to IJ are NON-REFUNDABLE, and anything about \$8 will be considered donation, since I feel like a shit taking money more than a year in advance, especially considering our present straits. Thanks to Vernon Grant, J.C. Brainbeau and Don Leighty for their donations. Every bit helps. Single issues of IJ (including back issues—we're

(continued next page)

out of a few older ones, but we still have most of 'em available) are \$1 each, or all-for-all trading with editors of like zines, one-for-one tradings with irregularly published stuff, trade-plus-3 oz. stamp for one-sheets and mini-comics, and of course, for contributors other than staffers, you have the option of sending me the dollar or 3 oz. in stamps (56¢/58¢ American if you're from Canada) for one copy of the issue in which your stuff in it (do please send cash for any extra copies, since it's hard enough, as I've outlined, even getting you that first copy as it is). Send what thou wilt to us ("Elayne Wechsler" or "INSIDE JOKE" on addy): P.O. Box 1609, Madison Square Station, New York, NY 10159. This issue is dedicated to Ernest Chaput.

Fan Noose

by Elayne
Wechsler



Before I begin, I'd like to again urge that any publications looking for contributors let me know so I can refer you to our many enthusiastic artists and writers who read this column. As with last issue, I'll so designate zines searching for submissions with an "SS" if I remember...Also, naturally, a gracious thanks once more to all the zines kind enough to mention us, and to long-time IJ friend Paul Buhle for an unexpected and delightful aside in his book *Marxism in the United States!*

...I'm absolutely thrilled to finally be trading with one of my Short-Duration Personal Savior types, Paul Krassner, who, besides being living proof that the demise of the "60's mentality" has been grossly exaggerated by the conservative/main-

stream press, is one of this country's best political satirists. Paul's 8-page publication, THE REALIST, is as alive and potent as ever—issue 104, for example, covers the hilarious roast given Harlan Ellison by "friends" and admirers to cover Ellison's legal costs in a ludicrous suit brought against him by a comic book writer with no sense of humor. The pub costs \$2 per single issue, \$23 for 12, to Box 1230, Venice, CA 90294...A combination of witty collage and vicious satire marks SMURFS IN HELL as one of the best relatively new zines around. Editor Robert Carr usually starts with an underlying theme ("Guns, Drugs, Anarchy" or "It Can't Happen Here") and carries it to such sick and absurd proportions that you find yourself trying to keep from laughing on public transportation—and failing. GOOD SHIT—\$3 an issue (2 for \$5, 3 for \$7) to 2210 North 9th St., Boise, ID 83704...Bob Konshak puts out short essays on the state of American kultcha in his one-page SPEW AND REVIEW. Issue 28 shows a bit too much fascination with Tina Yothers and Madonna (it could be tongue-in-cheek, granted) and mistakenly blames unhappily married couples on marriage, love and commitment instead of some of the dorks who get married these days (present company excepted, ahem), but it shows promise—I assume it's available for a SASE from 1490 East Ryan Ave., Maplewood, MN 55109...The talented couple of Eric and Kathy Mayer have published the first issue of their new zine DEJA VU, full of tales by good writers which lean toward the personal. I'm sure they're looking for more contributors, and the zine is \$1 to 1771 Ridge Rd. E., Rochester, NY 14622...Lots of new music-oriented zines cropping up of late. Cheryl Cline (whom many know from her keen essays in BITCH) and Mark Rhodes bicoastally expound upon rock & roll and stuf in their first SHAKE!, a quarterly which you can get for \$1 from either Cheryl (2230 Huron Dr., Concord, CA 94519) or Mark (5795 La Pinata Blvd. #A-1, Greenacres, FL 33463)...THE LITTLE RHINO GAZETTE's pseudonymous editors K.K. and Couzin lean so heavily towards independent music they wind up pooh-poohing we folks who happen to like 60's and 70's rock (really, ladies, we're not all bad people!), but it's got some nice essays as well, particularly Ray Nelson's "Going Underground." Absolutely worth the \$1.50 (or \$8/year for 6 issues) to Undercover Publications, P.O. Box 14139, Arlington, TX 76094-1139...And for headbangers in the Boston area, SCREAMING SKULL offers reviews, angry (though a bit knee-jerk) political rants and the right BAAAD attitude—editor Pete Winston's looking for contributors, and the zine is \$8 for 4 16-paged issues to P.O. Box 241, Groton, MA 01450...The trendy indie scene in NY forms the basis for Bob Z's SELECTED OOZE and BAD NEWS, which cover noise and bad poetry (at least judging by the tape of ran-dumb sounds he so kindly sent me) but also have some nice essays on anarchy (or is it anarchism?) and art by the usual folks like John Crawford, Luna Ticks and Ace Backwoods. Each zine is \$2 to Artists & Writers Underground, c/o Sarris Book-marketing, 125 E. 23rd St., #300, New York, NY 10010 (make checks out to Bob Z)...It may be more than I need to know, but MAGNET SCHOOL, "a sexographic magazine," takes a healthy, feminist approach to erotica, and is probably available for a SASE (it's a 4-pager) from "Lisa LaBia", P.O. Box 3222, Traffic Station, Minneapolis, MN 55403...On a totally unrelated plane desnite its title, COME-UNITY calls itself "an alternative, independent journal" (big deal, we all are) and deals mostly with civil rights and fights around the ST. Pete area. Issue #112 of this quarterly

does, however, reprint a Noam Chomsky piece from The Progressive. It's available for \$5/year from Margo Yazell, P.O. Box 41532, St. Petersburg, FL 33743...John Ohlinger would like me to plug his BASIC CHOICES, INC. cassette list, available for a SASE to him at 1023 Drake St., Madison, WI 53715-1609, which includes "Give A Damn," a 45-minute interview with Mike Gunderloy (nobody wants to interview me 'cause it wouldn't net as much money, but I betcha those quarters can add up real fast!)...Welcome back to some old friends: Nancy Kangas has moved to Ohio (from SF?) and her latest NANCY'S MAGAZINE is as delightfully indescribable as ever (my fave essay: "The Provincial Personality")—issue #7 is the "power" issue, and you can get it and the upcoming "Dewey Decimal Free For All" for only \$2.50 to P.O. Box 02108, Columbus, OH 43202...And THE MILL HUNK HERALD quarterly is still around (tho this is the first time I've heard from them in years), a sort of blue-collar PROCESSED WORLD. They've grown much more overtly political, not surprising given the decline of heavy industry (although they seem to blame them fur'ners rather than domestic economic politics for this), and in addition to the usual working-class essays and poems there's some nice Great Peace March stuff in here. A whopping 68 pages for only \$3, to Larry Evans, P.O. 916 Middle St., Pittsburgh PA 15212...Paul Sommerstein's NO NAME PRESS #3 has tons of reviews (Paul's raving writing style may remind you a lot of the SubGs' Doug Smith; it's that good) and one of my all-time fave columns, "Prefab Urbanity"—good to see you back, Paul! He's only asking 75¢, but send him a buck for it, to 611 Lawrence Ave., Westfield, NJ 07090...Joe Schwind is the guest artist in XEROLAGE 8 (he's THE master of xeroxed collage!) with his look at "Heavy Equipment," a/k/a Project Smart Plow (I won't spoil it by explaining further). I believe the publisher sells this for \$2.50 but I'd suggest getting a copy from Joe directly at P.O. Box 8187, Shawnee Mission, KS 66208...The enigmatic KALLISTI KOMIKS' #9 contains essays on Art Noir and power in relationships, good comics, book reviews and incomprehensible essays in addition to a nice editorial by Kenn Day—send a fionded dollar to him at P.O. Box 19566, Cincinnati, OH 45219...Mike Walsh's EXPRESSO TILT has the most wonderfully snide letter column since Natlamp, good stories, much raunchiness and other perversions, typeset nicely on newsprint that really comes off in your hands, for \$1.75 to 737 Wharton St., Philadelphia, PA 19147...And hey hey, DOO DAH's back! The official Bonzo Dog Band Fan Club newsletter, 8 1/2 x 14 with card stock covers, many pages and a plethora of extras that fall out when you open it up, is simply incredible. A must for Bonzoids and a real 4-color treat even if you're not into the band. They don't list a price that I can see, so send them all your money—well, okay, send 'em 2 or 3 bucks—care of Dean Cole, 336 Hoover Ave., Bloomfield, NJ 07003...And I couldn't very well mention Bonzo without mentioning Devo, could I? Spud stuff and so much more (I even indulged in a Max Headroom essay) abounds in Debbie David's BEAUTIFUL WORLD #8, and #9's due out in a couple weeks—only she and I know how she does it! Only \$1.50 for spiffy layouts and everything, to Debbie at P.O. Box 1675, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10011...which brings us back to duh Regulars—zines we tend to get at least once per every IJ (ratings are COMPLETELY arbitrary): THE ATROCITY V.II, #s 5,6 and special MENSEA NY Gathering issue—Hank Roll, 2419 Greensburg Pike, Pittsburgh, PA 15221 (MENSEA absurdist zine; 2¢; \$8/12 issues); BASEBALL: OUR WAY V.III, #s 8,9—Dale Jeellings, 3211 Milwaukee St. #1, Madison, WI 53714 (baseball stats and observations; 2¢; \$1 or \$9/10 issues); BITCH #16—Lori Twersky, San Jose Face, Suite 164, 478 W. Hamilton Ave., Campbell, CA 95008 (women & music; 4¢; \$1.75 or \$15/12 issues; SS); BOLD PRINT #7—Kyle Hogg, 2008 Stuart Ave., Basement, Richmond, VA 23220 (creative zine; 3¢; SASE?; SS); BUF-O V.3, #3—Klaus D. Haisch, 1729 E. Tabors St., Indianapolis, IN 46203 (creative zine, heavy on comics; 3¢; \$12; SS); CIRCULAR #s 11-13—Carol Schneck and Charlie Nash, 1565 Washington St. #9, San Francisco, CA 94109 (justaposed photography & stuf; 3¢; SASE and grab 'em while you can, 'cause they're taking a hiatus); DUCKBERG TIMES #35—Ron Baker, P.O. Box 382, Alexandria, VA 22313 (DC-area indie music newspaper w/ comics too; 2¢; \$1; SS esp. art); GOOD DAY SUNSHINE #39—Charles F. Rosenau!!!, 397 Edgewood Ave., New Haven, CT 06511 (Beatles; 3¢; \$2.50 or \$8.50/year; SS); IT'S ONLY A MOVIE V.II, #s 6,7—Michael Flores and Pam Smith, 54 W. Randolph, Rm. 606-E2, Chicago, IL 60601 (psychotronic media; 3¢; \$1.50 or \$10/year); JET LAG #77—"John The Mailman" (note change in editors), 8419 Halls Ferry Rd., St. Louis, MO 63147 (music; 3¢; \$1; SS for record reviews); LAUGH TIME U.S.A. #2—Maxwell Miller, P.O. Box 42303, Philadelphia, PA 19101 (jokes; 2¢; \$1 or \$10/year; SS & will pay \$5 for jokes used in their "Round-Up" section); LIFE OF CRIME #2—Elissa Rashkin, P.O. Box 20375, New York, NY 10025 (creative zine; 3¢; \$17; SS); MAGIC BULLET July/August '87—A. Craig Dickinson, 169 W. Huntingdon St., Philadelphia, PA 19133 (creative zine; 3¢; SASE); THE MONKEES/BOYCE & HART PHOTO FAN CLUB #72—Jodi Hamrich, P.O. Box 411, Watertown, SD 57201-0411 (M/B&H, 2¢; 50¢ + SASE); THE NEW SOUTHERN LITERARY MESSENGER V.3, #5—Charles Lohmann, 400 S. Laurel St., Richmond, VA 23220 (poetilit zine; 2¢; \$2; SS); OUTER SHELL #22—Roy Harper, P.O. Box 7053, St. Petersburg, FL 33734 (one-sheet music zine, this one's "Definitions of Rock"; 3¢; SASE); QUMBY ARCHIVES #14—P.O. Box 281, Astor Station, Boston, MA 02123 (artwork of varying interest and quality; 1¢; 50¢); SLIMETIME #s 8,9—Steve Puchalski 1108 E. Genesee St. #103, Syracuse, NY 13210 (psychotronic films; 3¢; 50¢); THE SOUTHERN LIBERTARIAN MESSENGER V.XVI, #2—John Harlikee, Route 10 Box 52A, Florence, SC 29501 (libertarian; 2¢; \$5/year); THREADBARE Ragazine #7—P.O. Box 20681, Seattle, WA 98102-1681 (SubG bulldada; 2¢; \$1 + 50¢ postage or \$5 + \$2.50 postage/6 issues). Remember, prices quoted are for US mail; if you live in Canada or overseas best write to the editors in question and ask them about their terms. See you in the funny papers!



DIARY of the ROCK FIEND



by
Anni Ackner
ANKLE'S AWAY

There is one thing—and, I assure you, only one thing—to be said for a sprained ankle as opposed to, say, a nice clean break along any of the various and assorted bones in the leg: no one, in the history of recorded medicine, has ever been able to write "Not much of a plot, but boy, what a cast!" on an elastic ankle brace.

This one pitifully small comfort aside, however, there really isn't very much good to be gotten out of a sprained ankle. For one thing, even though the pain from a sprain has been known to put big, strapping third basemen on the 21-day disabled list and cause perfectly nice girls from Pennsylvania to utter the sort of black, black oaths more frequently heard on the tongues of big, strapping third basemen, practically no one takes the thing with the proper amount of seriousness. Should one have the good fortune to break one's ankle, for instance, it is a well-known fact that one automatically gets to lounge about some nice hospital, sometimes for weeks at a time, totally unbothered by the cares of the workaday world and scratching peacefully under one's cast with a wire hanger while kind medical personnel willingly ply one with heavy psychotropic drugs. Sprain an ankle, on the other hand, and one is whisked willy-nilly through X-Ray and then banished to one's home with a pair of government-issue crutches, the aforementioned elastic ankle brace, and instructions to take a couple of aspirin if one feels any "discomfort" (on a doctor's scale of measurement, discomfort comes immediately before death but after suffering the sort of dental check-up Dustin Hoffman received in *Marathon Man*), while all one's co-workers, casual acquaintances, and creditors ring up to endlessly bother one with the news of the day. And that's another thing right there. Break an ankle and all the world will commiserate with you, implore you to rest, rest, rest, and regale you with charming little anecdotes concerning friends and relations who fractured bones and were incapacitated for years, but go and sprain an ankle and suddenly everyone knows someone who did the exact same thing, and went water-skiing the very next day, and what on earth is the matter with you? I tell you, it simply isn't fair.

If you have gathered from the preceding musings that your faithful Witty, Sophisticated, Acerbic Commentator on the American Scene has spent the past couple of weeks with her foot on a pillow, muttering to herself and developing a deep and unnatural relationship with Sally Jessy Raphael, I must commend you on your perspicacity. The details of the mishap that caused me to be in this annoying and unpleasant position are hardly important (though I do feel compelled to point out that anything you might have heard about a hotel room in Memphis and several of Tammy Faye Bakker's former cosmeticians is grossly, grossly exaggerated); suffice to say, then, that I have not been having a very good time, and generous contributions to the Fund for Temporarily Crippled Female Humourists Who Wear Glasses, Wyomissing, PA chapter (not to be confused with any other organizations with which rumour has it I may be affiliated) will be greatly appreciated.

Never let it be said, however, that the time I have spent fastened down to my bed of pain (or, more precisely, my rocking chair of pain) has been idly frittered away in watching television and phoning out for pizza. On the contrary, Ms. Raphael and the moderately monumental tower of square cardboard boxes that currently decorates my den notwithstanding, I have used this time of enforced physical inactivity to pursue the many scientific and intellectual studies and investigations that my normally busy sche-

dule precludes. As a result of this, I have reached several conclusions and made certain discoveries of an interesting and informative nature which, ever mindful of my obligation to you, the reading public, and in the spirit of it being an ill wind that doesn't blow me at least one idea for using up column inches, I now set forward as:

OBSERVATIONS AND EXTRAPOLATIONS ARRIVED UPON
IN THE COURSE OF SLAUGHTERING TIME
OR

COLONEL MUSTARD IN THE BEDROOM WITH AN ELECTRIC TYPEWRITER

1. I'm not entirely certain that this is any great cause for concern, but I now have incontrovertible proof that Right Guard will kill those big brown ten-legged bugs twenty-four out of twenty-five times.
 2. Although, due to the advent of the Home Shopping Network, the day of the Ginsu Knife and the Jolly Flamethrower appears to be past, it is comforting to note that Craftmatic Adjustable Beds is now giving away a free Pierre Cardin Designer Alarm Clock/Telephone with each and every purchase.
 3. Speaking of telephones, the surest way to make one ring is to immerse one's foot in a basin of warm water and Epsom salts. The surest way to make one ring and have it be a computerized "voice" inquiring after the state of one's life insurance is to immerse one's foot in a basin of warm water and Epsom salts directly after one has stepped out of the bath and before one has had a chance to put on one's clothes.
 4. Among the many and varied things one loses after the age of puberty, perhaps the most poignant is the ability to make a paper airplane that actually flies. And, with the narrowness of vision that sometimes comes with encroaching age, one will probably go through two or three reams of perfectly good copier paper before one fully realizes this.
 5. The only thing inside an old tennis ball is more tennis ball.
 6. There are 62,345,000 holes in the average piece of needlepoint canvas. This is inversely proportional to the number of seconds it will take you to attempt to flush the thing down the toilet should you actually try to make anything out of it.
 7. While it is a well-documented fact that, in certain parts of the country, it is possible to view WHEEL OF FORTUNE three times a day, it is less well known—and far more frightening—that, given the right conditions and the wrong cable system, it is possible to view THE NEW NEWLYWED GAME, virtually without interruptions, 24 times a day.
 8. While we're on the subject, the most popular celebrity contestant on game shows is currently Susan Rutan of L.A. LAW. She is closely followed by Richard Moll of NIGHT COURT, Tempestt Bledsoe of THE COSBY SHOW, the ubiquitous and extremely pale Ed Begley, Jr. of ST. ELSEWHERE, and Alf, of Melmac. Of these, Richard Moll is the least embarrassing to watch, but Alf has the best wardrobe.
 9. Cherry pits will not float in half a can of three-day-old Diet Coke.
 10. Finally, with all the best will in the world, and no matter how difficult it was to get tickets to STARLIGHT EXPRESS, crutches do not go with a Norma Kamali dress. No, not even if you tie ribbons on them.
- Sprains being, as they are, tiresomely tedious things from which to recover—a bad one, according to my doctor, a gleeful little man who is, at the moment, busily engaged in building a hot tub out of tongue depressors and rubbing alcohol, can lay a person up for weeks—there is every possibility that I will have even more time to continue my studies, and to pass the results along to you, but for the moment, I'm afraid you shall have to content yourselves with these few. As aware as I am of my duty to share my observations, Sally Jessy Raphael is just about to interview three former child actors who are now, coincidentally, all suffering from Epstein-Barr Syndrome, and we do have to maintain our priorities, even, or especially, in times of extreme physical duress. I mean, we do, don't we?

Male Operator com-x

Brian Koberger

AT THE MESSAGE CENTER,
MALE OPERATOR—I'M SORRY,
THAT PERSON IS
IN A MEETING...



YOU'RE COMING IN
FOR A LANDING?



OK SIR, PULL INTO
THE NORTH PARKING LOT,
PUT DOWN YOUR FLAPS
AT THE LOWER LEVEL



NO, NO, SORRY SIR,
IT WAS JUST A JOKE!



Zenarchy

STORIES

by Ho Chi Zen



EVERY DAY IS A GOOD DAY

"Every day is a good day," comes from Yun Men, a Chinese Zen master. In answer to his own koan: "I don't ask you about before the fifteenth day; try to say something about after the fifteenth day."

In The Blue Cliff Record Yuan Wu comments: "Half south of the river, half north of the river. We don't keep old calendar dates here."

Yun Men was once sent by his own master to see Hsueh Feng, of whom he asked: "What is Buddha?" Hsueh Feng replied: "Don't talk in your sleep."

For eighteen years, Hsiang Lin served as Yun Men's attendant. Yun Men would call his name and Hsiang Lin would answer, "Yes?" Yun Men would say, "What is it?" This went on for the whole eighteen years until one day Hsiang Lin awakened. Said Yun Men on that occasion: "From now on I will no longer call on you."

We don't ask about ordinary people; try to tell us something about Buddhas.

Everybody is good.

"Killing others is not as good as killing yourself. As soon as you make a principle," warns Yuan Wu, "you fall into a pit."

Every day is a good day. Yuan Wu comments: "Whose house has no bright moon and pure wind? But do you know it? The sea god knows its value, he doesn't know its price."

Anyone who could explain the matter as I have, he would also have said, has already stumbled past it.

"Where there is not any Buddha and you alone are the Honored one!" he wrote, "for the first time you've amounted to something."

In Golden Wind: Zen Talks by Eido Shimano Roshi are translated these lines from a poem in The Gateless Gate: "With no hang-ups in your mind, Every season is a good season!"

GOOD REASON

"Why is it necessary to bow at the end of a meditation period?" a student asked Ho Chi Zen.

Ho replied: "To thank God that it's over."

A FREAK THROUGH AND THROUGH

In The Sixth Patriarch's Sutra (The Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra) Tripitaka Master Hua tells the following story, in his commentary, of the Second Patriarch of Zen "who feigned insanity to lessen the jealousy of his rivals." Nonetheless, his enemies reported Patriarch Hui K'o to the government "accusing him of being a weird inhuman creature." Master Hua says:

"Are you human or a freak?" asked the Magistrate.

"I'm a freak," replied Master Hui K'o.

"The magistrate knew that the Patriarch said this to avoid causing jealousy, so he ordered him to tell the truth. 'Speak clearly,' he demanded, 'what are you?'"

"The Great Master replied, 'I'm a freak.'"

"Governments can't allow strange freaks to roam the earth, and so Hui K'o was sentenced to die. Now, isn't this the way of the world? ... 'Come and kill me!' he said. The executioner raised his axe and swung it towards the Master's neck. What do you think happened?"

"You are probably thinking, 'He was a patriarch with great spiritual power. Certainly the blade shattered and his head was not even scratched.' No. The axe cut off his head, and it didn't grow back. However, instead of blood, a milky white liquid flowed onto the chopping block."

TOO MUCH

"Confused, a thousand books are few:

Enlightened, one word is too much."

—Tripitaka Master Hua, quoting a Zen proverb in The Sixth Patriarch's Song, p. 141 (Sino-American Buddhist Association, San Francisco, 1977).

WASHED IN THE BLOOD OF THE BUDDHA

Many years ago I read in a book about Soto Zen that the closer one gets to Zen the less one hears about *satori*, enlightenment. Goal-oriented Westerners misinterpret Zen writings by assuming *satori* is an equivalent of Christian salvation—only somehow a little more elusive.

Here's what Taisen Deshimaru, a Soto Zen master, said about *satori* in Questions to a Zen Master (E.P. Dutton, 1281):

"Until death there can be no total *satori*; that happens in our coffin.

"If I answer, 'Yes, I have *satori*,' that is not true *satori*."

"If you ask somebody, 'Are you good?' and the person answers, 'Yes, I am,' it is pretty likely that the person is not so good as he claims to be; otherwise, the answer would have been more modest: 'Not so very,' or 'I have no idea...'"

"Ask a madman if he's crazy, and he will tell you he isn't; on the contrary, he is absolutely in his right mind..."

"The same holds true for *satori*..."

"When the body is put into its coffin, the body itself is an illusion."

"When we understand this, our life gains new strength and we no longer need to be afraid of anything or delude ourselves with decoration."

"Our life becomes peaceful and we have true inner freedom. That is the meaning of *satori*."

Inside The Staffers

As I surmised last issue, Gary Pig Gold has more or less been an IJ staff writer for over a year now, and we just never made it official before, which is why I reserved a spot for him to join up and get a nifty IJ cap when I announced our temporary moratorium on new staffers last issue. Until such time—if any—that the mysterious Roldo returns from self-imposed hiatus, Gary is our residential Canadian, so be nice to him, you know how they are (heh heh). Also, as he is cognizant of our severe space restrictions of late, Gary decided to combine his introductory autobiography and his column into one entry, so here he is:

GARY PIG GOLD
70 Cotton Drive
Mississauga, Ont.
L5G 1Z9 CANADA
5-30-55



R.I. PIG

What began as a day of fun and frolic for six booth-tanned West Torontonians ended in tragedy early this morning with the fiery crash of a single-engine Subaru beside a cornfield in upstate Rhode Island, Vermont.

Dead are quasi-legendary clone musician/funzine editor "Gary" Pig Gold, 32, of no fixed hairstyle, and a quintet of unidentified beatnik accomplices who were en route to take apart the annual Bill-Dale Marcinko Squash Toss, which is held once every three years. An investigation is planned for after brunch.

Gold, who often spoke in pantomime under the name of Date Danish, began his long and industrious career around the arts of public service at the tender age of sixteen months, when he suddenly found himself on the road again with the once-populated country and western revue of Tylin Whaler and his Missed Her and Misses Too Tidy For Me Band, who should be best dismembered for their 1962 chart-stopper "When My Heart Gets In Your Hair." Quickly disillusioning himself under the bright lice of fame and fortune, Gold soon afterwards announced the first of several retirements, during which his first, and fattest, work of autobiographical fiction, "Somewhere Between Ohio And Oblivion," was published. Later adapted into a stressful moving picture starring Ron Crusty and, in her wide-screen debut, Lynn Gymsticks, Gold's provocatively tedious tome can be found filling the shelves of used boot stores to this very day.

Several other best-forgotten sellers followed, including "Deli Eyes," "You Take Art—I'll Take Spam," "If You Can't Take A Joke, Take The Bus," and his controversial collaboration with Bea Arthur, "The Postcards of China," before Gold buckled under public pressure and returned to the concert stage with the musical aggravation with which he would find the most excess, Those Fabulous Frumbles.

With their self-smiled, daring yet doltish brand of "trong-rock," the Frumbles circumcised the globe several times atop such ball-busters as "Sugar Brides," "The Genuine Juice," "My Succulent Spear," "Up Late," "Strip And Fall," "Mood Slave," "Beer On Sunday," "I Must Have Slept Through It," "Hip Reader," "Eyes For Thighs," "Smash The Dash," "Twist Your Face," and the seasonal "All I Want For Christmas Are Your Two Front Teeth," before suing themselves into the Where Are They Now pile following their seven-LP dust opera, "Hot Tub Music." Gold again retired, adding yet another trade paperback to his list of overachievements, the socio-pseudo-political "Tap Dancing On My Eyes With Golf Shoes (or Dried Consumed On My Pant Sleeve)," which won the coveted Golden Spheres Award for obnoxiousness in the over-six-hundred-page category.

Despite his unnerving professional success, Gold's private life was awash in tragedy, heartburn and skiing mishaps. Although marred only once, to the late heiress apparent of the PTL misfortune, Dottie Matrix, a union which ended in two abortions, Gold's midsection had been linked to many a society tart over the years. A much-publicized fling with poet-financier Carlotta April carried on beneath the scandal sheets for several hours, and a patent is still pending following her death by misadventurous flagellation last autumn, which in turn inspired Gold's final worldwide hit, "Your Walrus Hurts The One You Love."

Retired yet again at the time of his passing, Gold had most recently been observed cruising the well-to-do boulevards of suburban Westchester County, Oregon behind the wheel of his mobile Precision Sharpening Service van, merrily ringing its rooftop chimes twice a block as hordes of transplanted yogurt yuppies trustingly burst forth will dull, gladiolus-encrusted hedge-clippers and power mowers. Ironically, in this seemingly futile avocation of his final breathing weeks, Gold was believed to have finally found true happiness and perhaps even The Meaning Of It All Over after a roller-coaster life rife with more than its fair share of both tragedy and parody.

He is survived by two rhythm sections and a herd of defense attorneys. No memorial services are planned, or indeed recommended. However, it is believed that his closest personal friend, Elaine "It's Just This Little Chromium Switch Here" Wechsler, has awarded Gold an honorary, posthumous position on the staff of her newsletter of comedy and nativity, INSIDE JOKE.

Cash donations, in U.S. funds only, may be sent in lieu of wreaths and lawsuits to the Gary Pig Gold Fair Play For The Fugs Fund, care of your local Dairy Queen.

A DIP IN THE PLASMA POOL

by Dorian Tenore

IT'S A BIRD, IT'S A PLANE, IT'S A GUY IN LATEX - IT'S M-M-M-MAX!!!

Prologue: "WLIR been berry, berry good to me!" as Chico Escuela might say. For the uninitiated, WLIR-FM, 92.7, is a new-wave music station on Long Island that's difficult to tune into without a) a state-of-the-art stereo, or b) a wire hanger in your radio antenna (so next time you're rummaging through Joan Crawford's garbage, you know what to look for). Once you're able to tune in, though, it's worth the trouble. Since the 1970s, WLIR has been introducing innovative artists like The Cars, Robert Palmer, The Cure, and, before their music turned into teenybopper fodder, Duran Duran to a jaded listening public. The public responded so well that some of WLIR's hits were snapped up by Top-40 radio, where they became so popular they were overplayed to death.

WLIR's fearless dj's, including the fun-loving Larry the Duck, Dennis McNamara and Malibu Sue, also play novelty records like "Fred From Jupiter," Total Coelho's "I Eat Cannibals" and Julie Brown's "The Homecoming Queen's Got A Gun." In fact, their music mixes often include snippets of dialogue from movies and from The Firesign Theatre's recordings—yippie! Every Thursday, a new "Screamer of the Week" (the week's best new song) is voted in by WLIR listeners.

This is where my story begins! (About time, eh wot?)

One bright Thursday morning, two seconds before the ol' clock-radio started blaring, I suddenly realized that, God help me, I hadn't yet gotten in my WLIR Screamer vote for The Replacements' "Alex Chilton." Since U2 had been winning for the last several weeks, I was anxious to see someone else get a chance. Thus, when WLIR's New Wave riffs blasted me out of bed at 7:35 AM, I leapt out of bed and staggered to the phone like Pavlov's dog responding to the bell. After a few rings, a cheery female voice greeted me with "You're a winner."

Huh? Turned out I'd called in the middle of a contest and I was now the proud owner of two tickets to that afternoon's taping of THE MAX HEADROOM SHOW, Cinemax's talk show version (not ABC's new anti-establishment adventure series). But hey, "either way it's fine with me," to quote Randee of the Redwoods!

And so it was that after work, my beloved and I attended the videotaping of MAX HEADROOM. Typical of anything connected with New York celebritydom, the location is pretty inconspicuous; in fact, Vinnie and I might never have found it if we hadn't finally looked up and seen the skinny yellow banner reading "Max Headroom" over the plain metal door (much to the disappointment of the cab driver, who was planning to retire on the fare we were racking up circling the block during our search).

Once inside, we found that the nondescript exterior did nothing to keep the fans away—the long line was four-thick, and populated with everyone from gum-snapping teenyboppers to 3-piece-suited yuppies out for cheap thrills. (The thrills are cheap—free, in fact—but more about that later.) Shortly before taping time, 5:30 PM, we were seated. The combination of the modern sound-stage and equipment (including, besides the cameras and cables and such, one giant screen composed of nine TV monitors, and other TV monitors scattered hither and yon, including one suspended from the ceiling for Max's guests to converse with. Also, each of Max's guests gets a different wildly-designed chair) with the auditorium's Greek-type columns and arches left over from whatever the place used to be was appropriate for a host as unique as Max.

After about 30 minutes of derivative music videos from unknown groups on the monitors, we were treated to the Live Audience Warm-Up. This is where a stand-up comedian (usually unknown) comes out and gives the audience a chance to yuk it up, thus getting more relaxed and hopefully more appreciative of the main attraction. I don't remember this comedian's name, but it wasn't his fault; he was really pretty funny, with a repertoire including topical humor ("Yeah, the PTL—that means 'Pay The Lady'") and some low-key audience heckling. He also showed us the light-up "Applause" signs above our heads, at whose signal we were supposed to clap madly (like we needed prodding!).

With that, a familiar head filled the monitors. Someone was asleep at the "Applause" switch, but we clapped, hooted 'n hol-lered anyway. Yes, the "computer geek" of the hour, Max Headroom, had finally materialized! And yes, fellow Matt Frewer fans, the

witty Canadian heartthrob whose handsome features endure pounds of makeup on Max's behalf does the show live, except for the occasional prerecorded asides between guests. Alas, Frewer is only seen in the Max makeup on the giant screen and the guests' TV monitor—he performs from behind a "blue screen," which enables the graphics people to project all those dizzying animated backgrounds behind him on every show. But Frewer/Max's booming, cheerful wiseguy voice was definitely live and always in character. The rare flubbed line was handled with the usual Max-imum professionalism ("Shit! You didn't hear that!").

Each Max Headroom taping has three guests for our hero to sass in his inimitable part-fawning, part-heckling, part-ignoring (like when he interrupts a guest to talk about golf, for instance) fashion. The ones with a sense of humor go along with the irreverent spirit of the show; the ones who make the mistake of taking it all seriously become hopelessly lost. First guest was Mick Jagger's main squeeze, Texan model Jerry Hall, looking purty as a pitcher in a little black dress. "Mmm," crooned Max admiringly, "I'd love to lasso you, bitch!" (Since this is broadcast on cable, ol' Max gets away with such language.) Jerry smilingly went along with the jokes, but she had an air of preoccupation about her. Finally she 'fessed up that today was the 10th anniversary of she and Mick's becoming "an item," by which time he was supposed to decide whether or not to marry her. It wasn't clear whether he simply hadn't decided at all or had decided "no," but she considered the fact that he gave her a necklace instead of an engagement ring as an anniversary gift to be a bad sign. Ah, the turbulent lives of the rich and superficial! To make up for Mick's callousness, the TV crew surprised Jerry with a cake. We in the audience pouted over not being offered any, but that's show biz.

Guest #2 was craggy character actor Harry Dean Stanton, who obviously thought he was on "The MacNeil/Lehrer Report" as he tried valiantly to spout his political views. Little did Stanton know that trying to discuss serious topics with Max Headroom is like trying to discuss Ingmar Bergman with a Porky's fan. Much as I appreciate a good rousing political argument now and then, this time I felt like joining Max in his cheeky exhortations to "Lighten up, Harry Dean!" And Max's heckling only got worse when Stanton pulled out his guitar and started to warble a Spanish protest song (rather well, too). Stanton was mighty pissed when Max started mouthing the words and making faces behind him. However, he wasn't too miffed to sing a country-western tune for the appreciative audience after Max/Frewer went off the air for a break.

But it was Emo Phillips, the Dutch-Boy-tressed comedian who talks like a dim child and dresses like a '60s acidhead, who managed the amazing: he left Max speechless! Max's zingers seemed to be flying right over Emo's ethereal little head, until Emo sweetly devastated him with, "Hey, Max, why don't you get a job as a Pez dispenser?" Even better, when Max's guest monitor began to rise up to the ceiling at the end of the interview, Emo stuck up his hand—higher and higher—for a good manly handshake. (Wonder if he knew Max is supposed to be armless?)

Having enjoyed this taping—and hoping we could sneak behind the scenes for a chance to grovel at Matt Frewer's feet—we came back the following week, using the complimentary tickets given us by the nice folks at the stage door. We were glad we did, since we got to witness two of Max's finest moments (three if you're a gross-out fan—Max did a skit in which he threw up). First guest and First Son Ron Reagan, Jr. was likable enough, providing Max with chances to make fun of Reagan Sr. and Amy Carter ("I'd like to share a mint julep with that bitch!") and to try to smoke out Ron Jr.'s Secret Service bodyguards from among the rest of us riff-raff.

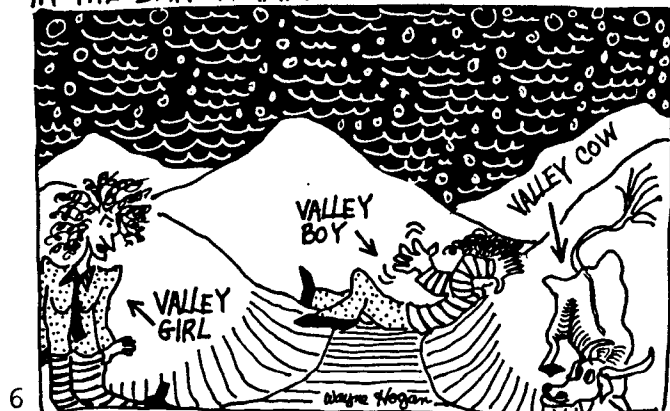
But the real fun came when Dr. Ruth came on! Cute enough to get her own Saturday morning cartoon show (imagine the toy line with which they could come up!), the little Molly Goldberg-accented sex therapist talked to Max like a mother, telling him how much more "attwattiff" he'd be if he were a little nicer to people instead of hiding behind smart-aleck remarks. Then she said, "Tell me, Max, since you haff no arms, how do you masturbate?" I tell you, the audience collapsed in a heap of laughter! Even Max was slightly taken aback until he declared something to the effect of, "I have flunkies do it for me!" (Probably those college-kid interns...)

Paul Shaffer of "David Letterman" fame was a hoot, too. The show provided a piano and set up a monitor for Max on the piano bench. Shaffer sat next to him and voila! a "duet!" (This pleased the Max Headroom fans who've been begging their hero to play the piano again ever since his Cinemax Christmas special.) It couldn't have been easy for the "computer-generated" host to play using only his shoulders, but he carried on with his usual aplomb.

The shows from these two tapings are scheduled to be shown, as we were told, "sometime between July and November." If someone sees any of the aforementioned episodes described in the TV Guide before I do, by all means let me know! If you'd like to be in the audience yourself, the studio is at East 76th Street between First and York Avenues in New York City. Remember, look for the yellow "Max Headroom" banner! The tapings are on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 5:30 PM and 7:30 PM. Try to show up at the studio about an hour ahead of time, to beat the crowds. Even if you don't make it in, you'll be given complimentary tickets for the next taping so you can rudely push your way to the front, like a real New Yorker!

(ED. NOTE: The premiere "Original Max Talking Headroom Show" aired on Cinemax July 23, 25, 27, 29, 31 and August 2 and 4, and the second show is due to air August 8, 10, 12, 14 and 16.)

LIFE BELOW SEA LEVEL IN THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY



HILL EYES

by Mike Selender
Jack Pine lashes
surround a grass mound
holding up
a cornea of sky
an iris of clouds
reflects
grazing sheep
a langouring mass
rings
the slopes
what comes down
lifts up
light descends
on Queen Anne's Lace
Star Thistles
rise
thru earth tones
falling

INERTIA

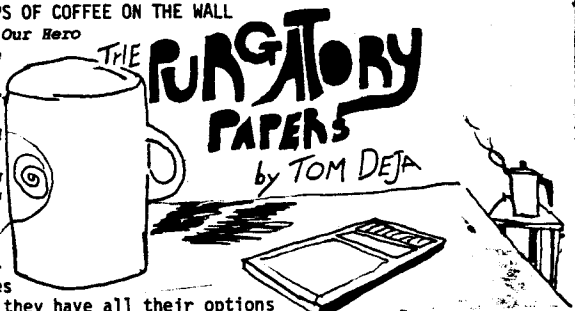
by Adam Eisenstat
Every day I fight the demon inertia
who masquerades under
a variety of names and disguises:
depression, listlessness, exhaustion
apathy, angst, dread.
He is a rusty wedge in my discipline.
Schedules and lists
that look so precise on paper
crumble under his heavy hand.
I have no fear when I'm
stranded in the cozy aspic of his
languid charms
no fear
as I helplessly watch
energy played to a nub
time strangled
the rest put on a limbo shelf.
A decisive victory
is out of the question.

4,926 CUPS OF COFFEE ON THE WALL

In which Our Hero
does some
routine
statistical
analysis and
starts
wondering
where his
share went

Every-
body likes
to think they have all their options
before them. There are opportunities presented to us and we must
act upon them as we see fit. However, I believe an opportunity
was denied me—hidden away, in fact—and I have not gotten what I
think I deserve. In short, I am being cheated.
It began with Dan.

My co-worker Dan collects and circulates little pieces of eso-
terica to his friends. One day he gave me a chart published from
some Midwest newspaper derived from the American Abstract. This



ONE DAY in the USA

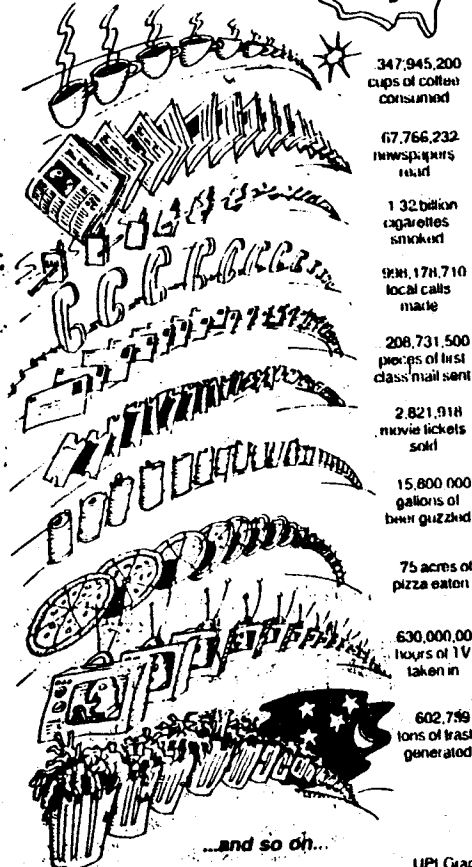


chart (published at left) (sorry about the quality, but the version I received from the author wasn't the best repro around) gives us the statistical averages of consumption on the average day in America. After studying this chart I realized I was being short-changed.

The chart says 347,945,200 cups of coffee are consumed by Americans every day. At last count there were 228 million Americans on this part of the continent. This averages out to a little bit over a cup and a half a day.* Assuming the average American starts drinking coffee at the age of fifteen, he/she is entitled to 547.56 cups of coffee a year. I had one cup of coffee in my life.

This means that according to my calculations I am entitled to four thousand, nine hundred and twenty-six cups of coffee. What I want to know is, who has been

Iced coffee and those middle European variants like cappuccino don't count. Iced coffee is considered a soft drink like iced tea. Rough, tough fighting people do not drink iced coffee. Cappuccino is another price range. It's become coffee for the upwardly mobile (and downwardly mature).

No, we're talking salt-of-the-Earth, bitter, eye-opening caffeine-addictive coffee. You know, the hard stuff.

You see, I wasn't notified of my option. It's the principle of the thing. If somebody called me on my fifteenth birthday and told me I was entitled to a cup and a half of coffee a day in perpetuity for life, I would most likely have leased my rights to somebody else. The only cup of coffee was muddy, overtly bitter and had about a fourth of a cup of creamer accidentally dumped into it. Evidently these folks couldn't be bothered to make me aware of my rights. They were probably too busy making Juan Valdez (you know, the guy who picks those coffee beans by hand) work his fingers to the bone.

This makes me all the more angry, considering that I now live in the grey area between independence and familial living. I could really use that coffee. Coffee is one of those things you should always have on hand. It's for the times when a coffee drinker comes to your house, just like needing an ashtray. I try to operate in a smoke-free environment, but if my friend Lorne shows up I better have that ashtray handy. It would be unfair to ask Lorne not to smoke and, besides, he bought me the ashtray. Society calls this principle common courtesy. I believe it's more like involuntary stockpiling.

Speaking of Lorne, the chart says Americans smoke 1.3 billion cigarettes a day. I've decided to bequeath Lorne my share. It is one of God's small mercies that I am not required to have cigarettes hanging around for guests. Since I'm neither a soldier nor a private eye, I'm safe.

Getting back to coffee, my friend Mike (who shares Dan's love of esoterica) tells me that only 51% of the population actually drinks coffee. This gets me suspicious. Why are half the population drinking so much? Have the taxpayers been paying money so the government can breed a cadre of ultra-consumers who scarf up all that java? Is it a plot to keep Juan Valdez' mind off all the trouble in surrounding South and Latin American countries? I'm pretty sure he must work 23 hours a day picking all those coffee beans for the American caffeine habit. Are the profits from this overindulgence being funnelled into a secret fund for the contras?

While I pondered on this, Maxwell House sent me a free brick of African coffee. They say it's a promotion, but I know a bribe when I see it! What's worse, they're evidently expanding their misdirection schemes by making the Kenyans work so hard they don't worry about apartheid! Do they truly think a measly brick of coffee would stop me from revealing the most insidious conspiracy known to man? Of course not. I'd want a large sum of money first.

I'm sending a copy of this issue of IJ to the Colombian Embassy. I realize that in revealing this insidious plot, the masterminds might be prompted to take drastic measures against my person. It is my wish that the Colombians will understand what is going on and stop Juan before things get out of hand. I may never find out, but those are the risks you take as a muckraking insanity fighter. Life's tough that way.

NEXT: The results of the Find-Tom-Deja-A-Sex-Symbol Search and why it is so important. (In other words, Sex. S-E-X. With horns and everything.) Be there.

*if you want to split hairs, the Average American is entitled to 1.5633333(etc.) cups of coffee a day.

Abnormality Potential!

Get ahead of yourself! Follow Dobbs to sex, girls, brain security, SES, all that neat stuff you've wanted religion you'll ever get a thrill out of. Tired of this sweetest-and-light comic crap? Come down to earth — way down. The Church of the SubCatholics puts no punches.

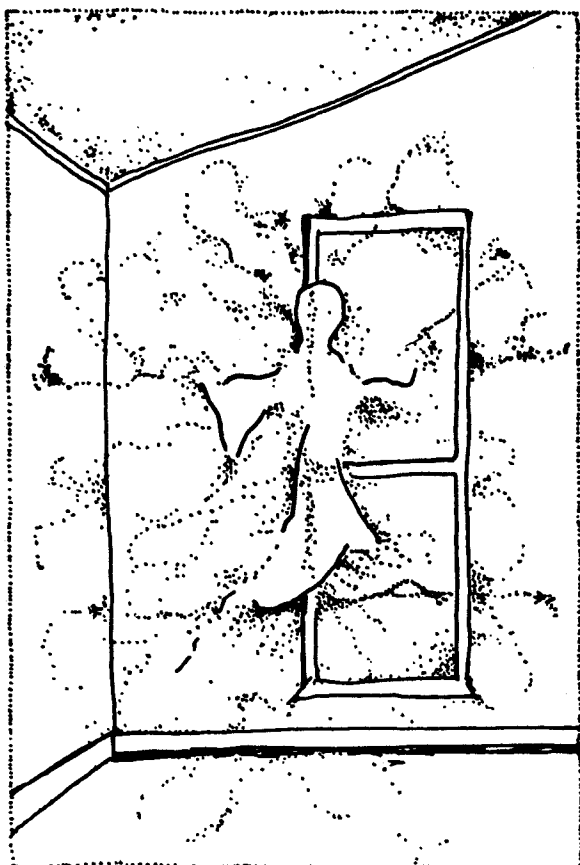
In no human world, a bogus religious cult based on unethical yokes and self-serving "Indigenous Humanism" may be the only sane answer.

Without pamphlets, charts etc. that you'll owe me for \$1.
The SubCatholic Foundation
P.O. Box 164396
Dallas, Texas 75214

MOSES PARTS HIS HAIR



drinking my share, so I can get it back. Now.



or hell. Chance rules out any other afterlife and who wants to come back as a lizard, rationally? Wing a SASE to Arrington and I'll send you a SASE back.

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HERBIFORES
YOUNGSTOWN — OHIO, 44504

A HAPPY MARRIAGE.
A healthy body and peace of mind are all pluses but are not the essence of a happy life.
Whether you have lived a hell on earth or a heaven on earth, the nature of things that each of us will relive this same heaven

TUMBALE 6-87

Survival Au Gratin

by Alberto Henry

"Carl Sagan and his buddies are a bunch of wimps." I was sitting at the bar at The Thunderpussy Lounge when the gentleman beside me launched into a tirade to rebut a Pro-Nuclear-Freeze advertisement during a pause in the action between the San Diego Chargers and the Seattle Seahawks.

"I don't know about you," the hale fellow went on, "but I'm one of those guys who says if it can be thunk, it's gonna get done. And all the meetings and protests and safeguards in the world ain't got a hemorrhoid's chance in a leech pond of preventing the shitstorm from coming with the cold and darkness streaming out its ugly ass."

The orator (I'll call him Sam) plunged ever deeper into obscenity, and as my editors wax litigious when street language peppers my writing, I must paraphrase Sam's subsequent comments as the need arises.

Sam says what we should be doing is planning for the future as if a couple of hundred megatons will be going off later this afternoon, tomorrow morning at the very latest. And that means planning to eat whatever we've got and to realize that eating is a necessity, not a luxury. We may all snigger at Mary Lou Retton hawking cereals and batteries, but a sure bet this nuclear winter is to purchase—in bulk—anything Mary Lou pitches for.

We all know the concepts behind the theory of nuclear winter, a theory derived, in part, from our study of the dinosaurs. The dinosaurs lived on this planet longer than any other high-level lifeform except the silverfish, the shark, and the salamander.

For thousands of years, discovery of fossils which did not support the Biblical concept of creation was punishable by marrow extraction, flaying and burning at the stake. In fact, it was not until after the American bombings of Dresden, Hiroshima and Nagasaki that Biblical scholars were able to offer credible explanations for the stories of Sodom and Gomorrah, and particularly the gutting-wrenching tale of Lot's wife.

As recently as 1964, the huge lizards of the Paleolithic Period were thought to be incapable of heating, ventilation and air conditioning, and even now there are skeptics who refute claims made by the current crop of city planners that dinosaurs invented the shopping mall and had developed a rapid transit system unequalled to the present day.

However, recent excavations at Dinosaur City in Alberta, Canada have uncovered what appears to be a climate-controlled military data processing center more than 30 million years old. Seated behind what might be considered Doppler radar screens at missile launch consoles were three fully evolved Saurians in complete life-support suits incorporating full body prophylaxis. Some researchers conclude that such evidence indicates these ancient egg-laying civilizations were engaged in biological warfare prior to the evolution of the rudimentary slime molds.

Until this find, scientists had begun coming to an agreement on a theory of dinosaur extinction which had as its cause a giant meteorite that crashed into what is now The Great South Bay on Long Island. The impact, and its consequent explosion, sent billions of tons of soot and debris into the upper atmosphere, effectively lowering the mean temperature on the surface of the planet to slightly below freezing for six to eight months.

Now that nearly 15,000 prehistoric Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles have been unearthed in the Dakotas—with each missile capable of delivering as many as eight separately targeted 10-megaton warheads—it may be demonstrable in the coming months that the Decline and Fall of the Reptilian Empire was the result of one of the earliest global nuclear exchanges ever recorded.

It now seems very probable that smaller lizards in the prehistoric era evolved slowly into the kind of upright creatures we human mammals are. It only stands to reason, my acquaintance Sam said, that such "puny" lizards would have become paranoid and megalomaniacal if they had any intelligence and would have no doubt developed elaborate air strike capabilities to counteract the elaborate air strike capabilities they had achieved earlier.

When pressed, however, Sam could not explain how dinosaurs took nearly 50 million years to achieve the same level of annihilistic sophistication Man has managed in less than one-tenth the time.

"Now, I don't want to suggest maybe the Liz's was Chinese, if you catch my drift," he did say, "but I think there's a good possibility that it's industrialization, no matter what the species is, that gets the ball rolling toward global extinction." Sam then cited the preponderance of evidence that showed the ancient Saurians to be agrarians whose major cash crops were hallucinogens. Additionally, the Stegosaurus were noted for having invented souvenirs, particularly ceramic ashtrays and hammered aluminum trays decorated with place names and mottos in glossy baked enamel. The Triceratops Dynasty distinguished itself by perfecting such delicacies as teriyaki on a stick and yogurt-coated prunes. In short, Sam stressed, the Great Lizards were much more laid-back as a genus than mammals, and the kind of mindless violence Man views as creativity and political and/or technological sophistication was probably seen as aberrant behavior in prehistoric times.

Although on the night of our encounter, I was predisposed to dismissing Sam's ramblings and ravings as the insecurities of a shiftless and misinformed lowlife, I have since incorporated many of his thoughts into my project.

My project is to determine the actual effects of a Nuclear Winter upon mankind and to posit Man's response to the adverse conditions. I must confess that when I first began studying this problem, I could not conceive of a highly developed Saurian culture and technology unable to sustain itself for up to a year without a new harvest.

In fact, I was unable to conceive of a human culture and technology unable to meet the same challenge. I can see now I was wrong. From every indication, a protracted period of darkness and cold would inevitably result in the extinction of between 15 and 20 thousand species of plant and animal. Man would disappear relatively early in this parade of annihilation.

Like most researchers my age, I had proceeded on the assumption that all dinosaurs were herbivores, carnivores, or omnivores, totally dependent upon the planet's ability to provide them with unplanted, unsupervised, and unprocessed foodstuffs. The thought of a Brontosaurus picnic with hundreds of the massive beasts peacefully munching Velveeta on Wonder Bread is anathema to the scientific mind.

Not even the Dinosaur City dig could sway my opinion that dinosaurs were simply stupid beasts, incapable of making important career decisions. It wasn't until I dreamt one night of my chance meeting with Sam that I understood how shallow and superficial my sense of superiority really was. In the dream, a Tyrannosaurus slumped on the bar beside me, bemoaning how his wife had kicked him out of the house after he lost his unemployment check on an ill-advised wager against the Chicago Bears.

"Just listen to that guy, will ya," said Sam, shaking his head. "It's hard to believe he was the toughest guy between here and Canarsie." And as I listened to Sam in the dream, I realized the greatest contributions to the world are not made by winners of Pulitzer or Nobel Prizes, but by guys named Sam or Dave you meet in a bar.

For it was Sam who suggested the dinosaurs died out because they couldn't stand their canned and frozen food. They had effectively eliminated from their society that kinds of creative dinosaurs who would have possessed the imagination and sense of challenge necessary to make the existing stores palatable until fresh food was again available.

And it was Sam who suggested that we, too, were doomed to extinction because most of us are too proud to subsist on a green bean casserole made with Durkee's Onion Rings and Campbell's Mushroom Soup, and the people who aren't too proud to eat such stuff can't afford to stockpile enough of it to make it through to when the soil is warm enough to plant again.

I have since decided that I am not, myself, interested in living in the New New Stone Age, but I am not so jaded as to deny my children and their children the opportunity to keep the species afloat.

I have willed them hundreds of thousands of cans of vegetables and meat, as well as thousands of recipes from BETTER HOMES AND GARDENS for busy eaters that I've always been too busy to try.

Alberto Henry, 45, used to hang turkeys at the Ralston Purina plant in Springdale, Arkansas, while working on a Master of Science degree in Inappropriate Behavior. He is currently unemployed.

BAD POETRY DELICATESSEN STYLE

by Sigmund Weiss

"Poor poet, poor poet," they say to me,
"you write so badly, unevenly,
your pen touching paper
lets come what may,
even if you have nothing to say.
You work over words day & night
which has no sense anyway.
When you think you're finished
you show your poem to poets you meet
who with their tongues slice it like

a knife
& the only thing
left for you to do is
go fishing where the fish bite you."

Dragging the Past by A.J. Wright

At precisely six o'clock on that May Saturday morning the D'Ensmore twins appeared together on the wide front porch of their crumbling two-story house situated on the corner of Fire Avenue and Water Street. Mary Helen held her audio cassette player/recorder clutched in the left hand; Mary Ellen had her equally cheap machine in the opposite extremity. Each of the elderly women trailed frayed extension cords behind them. In just a few moments the evangelical fervor of two different preachers broke the rain-moistened air wide open. "True stereo," Mary Helen had once called it. The Annual D'Ensmore Sisters Porch and Yard Sale and Holiness Revival was underway.

For much of the previous night the twins had worked hard to prepare the neighborhood for this event. Several large, hand-painted signs decorated the yard with both advertising and impenetrable expressions of apparently philosophical intent. Every utility pole within a mile radius announced the great ritual and offered free wisdom as well. The sisters had also festooned the porch, front windows and massive tree trunks with Christmas lights which now winked and blinked through the drizzle.

YOU CAN BE HEALED, one of the cassette players shouted, IF YOU BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF JESUS.

Soon various relics of ages past began to decorate the porch and yard. Mary Helen brought forth a silver tea service discolored by years of disuse. "We had this when Governor Weldon's first cousin and her husband ate here," she reminded her sister. "Yes, Sunday dinner," Mary Ellen responded, setting down the last of the four matching, seatless chairs she had carried out of the house. "That was 1938. We sat on these chairs, I believe."

"No, we sold those last year," Mary Helen corrected.

The house from which the twins carried these various implements resembled a domicile less than a vastly unorganized warehouse. A trail just wide enough for one thin person meandered through the rooms, which were piled almost floor-to-ceiling with furniture, books, clothing and just about anything else humans have been known to collect. One of the back bedrooms upstairs contained decades-worth of local newspapers. A roll-top desk in the parlor was stacked with hundreds of pages of Mary Ellen's never-to-be-published novel, "Dragging the River at Dawn." The various rooms were seeded with numerous icons of American popular culture the sisters had gathered on their endless forays through the town's yard sales and flea markets—toys, dozens of broken clocks and watches, matchbooks, key chains and the keys to several cities in other states. Perched precariously atop the grandfather clock in the downstairs hall was a thin metal lunch box bearing a George Jetson family portrait.

In two hours the sisters managed to carry or drag a number of items out of the house. All the while the pair maintained running commentaries on the historical significance of each piece, and even managed to chat with early customers.

BELIEVE, Mary Ellen's tape player admonished, AND YOU WILL BE SAVED.

By noon just about every square inch of the yard, porch and sidewalk had been covered and the growth was threatening the street and neighboring yards. A police car had stopped and Mary Helen served the two officers iced tea and non-script cookies. The yard and porch were crowded with playing children and bargain-hunting adults.

Sometime after dark the drizzle and the customers stopped. Bare places had appeared in the blanket of sale items. The twins, exhausted, had parked themselves on the porch between two of the working electric fans.

REPENT, Mary Helen's tape warned, THE END OF THE PAST IS NEAR.

Religious Differences

Islamabad, Pakistan

Anti-Evangelical Moslem rebels in Afghanistan attacked a popular resort area during the neo-Christian Fundamentalist festival of New Life Myopia yesterday, drowning nine crucifix-wielding fanatics who were attempting to baptize them in the al-Fatr river where they had stopped momentarily to relieve themselves.

Yossarian Universal

SELECTED PHENOMENON by Joel Dailey

—Have a seat, Professor Dogspotz.

—Thank you.

Professor Dogspotz waits for his eyes to adjust to the room's darkness. After several moments of uncomfortable silence, he discerns figures in suits and ties surrounding him in his chair. Cigarette smoke crowds the small room. A single lightbulb is aimed toward his position.

—Do you have any idea as to why you've been asked here, Professor Dogspotz? one figure asks.

—I have none, sir!

—He has none! Sirs!

Snorts of contempt travel around the room.

—I protest! It's true! I have no idea what you want of me! I received a directive to report to this address at this time and here, gentleman, I am! So please be so kind as to inform me. Why have I been requested to appear before you? And just who, exactly, are you?

—Let's get this straight, Professor. We ask the questions—you provide the answers.

—What is your name? Who is your superior? I demand to know!

—I repeat, Professor! We ask the questions here!

Beads of sweat appear on the Professor's brow. He swallows, loosens his blue tie.

—Alright then! Very well, young man! Ask away and let's get this over with as soon as possible! What would you like to know?

—Very good, Professor Dogspotz. We have been given to understand, through certain available information, that during the course of your last government-funded research project you stumbled upon a very unusual and interesting phenomenon. True or not true?

—A rumor, gentlemen. Mere rumor...

Contemptuous barks spilled from the faceless figures in the background.

—Professor, it is our job to check out the validity of such "rumors," as you call them. But you haven't answered my question, have you? Let me remind you, Doctor. Your project is federally funded, paid for by The People. They have a right to know. Now, please answer the question. Have you uncovered or created some unusual phenomenon or not?

—Now, gentlemen. We're civilized human beings here—

—Yes or no, Dogspotz. Cut the bull—

—You are blunt.

—My job, Dogspotz.

—Alright then. Let me tell you. Truthfully. The answer is No. Decidedly not.

—You lie, scumbag! We've got xeroxes of your journal! Ice him, Lester!

From the wall of faceless figures, a small giant steps into view. He reaches inside his striped polyester jacket, draws out a .357 Magnum, points it in the vicinity of Professor Dogspotz' head and fires.

The impact sends the interviewee wheeling backward to the cement floor, dead half a second after trigger pull.

The figure in charge spits into a corner.

—And all to protect some dumbass line of poetry!

Can you beat that, Lester?

Lester grunts as he returns cannon to holster. The other figures grunt as well.

—I tell you, men. These NEA Fellowship winners are a strange bunch of bananas! Guy buys the farm for a few words scribbled across a page!

Lester again grunts, as do the others.

—Well, check the list. Who's next before lunch?

OVERPOPULATION

by Mary Ann Henn

They say
the world, one day
will be so overcrowded that
each one of us will have
to stay

on her own plot
and at that rate—
(an awful thought
when I was counting on MY cloud
to sit upon, my harp to play!)—
not clouds enough, they say.

The Bus is off and rolling—to get YOUR copy,
send \$2 to Anni Ackner right away (address in
IJ letters column, of course)!

A VISIT TO GRANDMA'S

Part Four by Prudence Gaelor

"Hey!" Prudence exclaimed, barely peeking over the lip of the dumpster.

"What?"

"Not you, Bunny, Grandma Ed!" Prudence shouted. "Grandma Ed! Look what I found, Grandma Ed!"

"I can't make it out. What is it?"

"A sweater," said Prudence, holding it up.

"My! That's a nice one," Edna said, coming closer to examine it. "You know, I saw one just like it at the Amvet's. They wanted three-fifty for it but the color wasn't as nice."

"What color was it?" Prudence asked after a long pause.

"Burnt orange."

"Oh."

"Yeah, I know. Too bad, huh?"

"Yeah, too bad," Prudence agreed, shifting the garbage with her sneaker. "Did you find anything else?"

They had left the movie early because they both felt the Sleeping Beauty became so depressing after Prince Philip escaped from

the dungeon, and because they wanted to scavenge through a few dumpsters before it got dark. Prudence and Edna discovered they had this hobby in common while waiting for the film to start. There was a delay because of some problem in the projection booth. Apparently the projectionist had a seizure or something. The twenty-minute delay Edna and Prudence spent talking.

"Where did you find that great skirt? Your mama didn't buy that for you, did she?"

"No, she never buys me anything like this. I found it in a dumpster."

Prudence went on to tell Edna that after rescuing Pink Bunny from the trash she made it a habit to forage through the garbage. The whole idea came to her while she was waiting for Pink Bunny to dry. It occurred to her that a lot of neat things could be found in the trash if one would only take the time to sift through it all. And best of all these things were free.

Pink Bunny also realized that there was a lot to be gotten from the dumpster. One hot day, while they were sitting in the dumpster to avoid sun, he mentioned this to her.

"Did you notice how when all the kids go to tell each other secrets, they hide behind here to do it?"

"Yeah."

"And sitting in here you just can't help hearing all their deepest, darkest secrets?"

"Yeah. So?"

"Did you ever think of exploiting this for material gain?" Edna found this very interesting. "It's funny you should say this. I found my coat in a dumpster not too far from here," she told Prudence.

Pink Bunny, on the other hand, wasn't the least bit interested, and spent time watching a short, blue-haired girl kissing her tall, blond boyfriend, two rows down and to the left.

"You mean aside from the earring and the scarf?" Edna replied.

"Uh huh."

"No. How 'bout you?"

"Nope, nothing else besides the undershirt."

"Wow! You two really cleaned up!" Pink Bunny interjected.

"Let's go home and get a good look at your loot."

"Prudence, there's another dumpster down the street. Want to check it out? We're sure to find some neat stuff there."

"Great! Let's go!"

"Don't you think it's getting too dark?"

"Nah. We have plenty of light, Bunny."

"Um...Pru, may I speak to you a second?"

"Sure, Bunny. What is it?"

"You hardly ate anything at the movies."

"Well, what do you expect, you ate everything. You are such a pig sometimes."

"But aren't you hungry? Isn't it time for dinner?"

"I'm not really hungry. I'll eat later."

"Owwwwwwww!" moaned Pink Bunny, rolling on the ground.

"Bunny, are you okay?"

"Owwwwwwww," continued Pink Bunny, now thrashing.

"Bunny! What's wrong? Grandma Ed, come here! I think Bunny's sick."

"It's botulism, Pru. I'm sure of it. Owwowowowow! Owwwwww!"

"You silly-willy! You can't get botulism from Jujyfruits!"

"What do you know? You're not a doctor!"

"Okay. I'll ask Grandma Ed. She's a grown-up, she should know. Grandma Ed! Grandma Ed, can you get botulism from Jujyfruits?"

"No!"

"See! You're probably sick from making a pig of yourself."

"OWWWW! I WANT TO GO HOME! OWWOW OWW!"

"How's he doing?" Edna said in a whisper.

"He wants to go home," Prudence replied, also in a whisper.

"Well, then, what are we waiting for?" They lined Edna's bag with the undershirt and gently placed Pink Bunny on top of it. Edna balled up the scarf and stuck it under his head. Prudence covered him with the sweater.

Edna sat down on the bed, a comb in hand. Prudence, in her p.j.'s, sat on the floor, her back towards Edna. Edna promised to tell her a bedtime story while braiding her long, dark hair.

Edna and Prudence had hurried home as fast as they could without jostling Pink Bunny. They were worried about him, but they were mostly afraid he would yak in Edna's bag. But, once they were inside the apartment, their concerns were nullified as Pink Bunny made a miraculous recovery, leapt out of the bag and shouted, "What's for dinner? I'm starving!"

"You know, Prudence, I can't think of any good bedtime stories!"

"I know one, Grandma Ed. Let me tell you a bedtime story."

Prudence, with the aid of Pink Bunny, told Edna about the flying whoonitsi raid on the village of the marshmallow vampires. When the story was through, Edna tucked in Prudence and Pink Bunny.

"Have you given any thought to what you'd like to do tomorrow?"

"Can we go to the Amvet's? I'd like to find a skirt to go with my sweater."

"We can do anything you want."

"Can we have grilled cheese sandwiches for dinner again?"

"Of course," Edna said while turning on the lamp with the little glass balls to serve as a nightlight.

As Edna turned to leave the room, Prudence called out, "Grandma Ed? I love you."

"I love you too. Good night." Edna turned off the overhead light and shut the door behind her.

"You know, Bunny, Grandma Ed turned out to be pretty neat." And on that thought Prudence drifted off to sleep.



PHILOSOPHIE

THERE WERE, OF COURSE, many different ways that he could choose among to express his feelings. He could say, for instance, "No, I don't just listen to records or bands because some self-proclaimed contingent of brilliance thinks they're cool. I listen to records or bands that sound good to me, that stimulate my mind. I hear a song on the radio, maybe, and it appeals to me so I go out and hunt down the album and previous works by the same artist." He could say herely that, yes, or he could add: "But, also, I have a few friends who for reasons of their own choose to follow the ways the fashions; and these friends will often proselytize to me the latest in ultracool bands; and more often than not, because few artistic trends are completely hollow if the people behind them care at all, more often than not these bands will be so good, so worth listening to, that I'll take the advice of my friends sound unheard and get a tape of the latest rave." You should do what you like, he thought, you should just always do what you like & not worry too much about anything else except to make sure that you're never being unnecessarily mean to someone, don't just strike out because you're angry at something else, for God's sake. "Listen," he said, "sex is great and disease is bad, and if you had control of it, you wouldn't want to give someone AIDS unless they were raping you, hey? That's an analogy." An analogy, he thought: sometimes it's easier to get the point across that way.

- Wayne Alan Brenner

July, 1987

Egg-Sucking Study Set

Single Parent Subjects

TEMPE, ARIZONA (YU)

- Researchers at the New

Institute of Man today re-

leased their findings in a

four-year project studying

the effects of one-egg

omelets upon the cholest-

terol levels in single par-

ents. The \$2.3 million

project is expected to

provide answers to three

fundamental questions

soon to be posed by a

companion project now

underway at the Dow

Jones Center for the Dc-

forming Arts.

Yossarian Universal

MANY OF US
Won't see the next eclipse of the sun but all of us could see the recent one for the next million years and longer if we scrapped war, inflation, unemployment and DEATH 'A LA BRAINBEAU. In this birdbrain's opinion THERE IS NO OTHER WAY. Send SASE to must-be-adopted 4 WAY PEACE PLAN Box 2243 YOUNGSTOWN - OHIO, 44504

THE CONTINUING SAGA OF DR. IGUANA THE SEARCH CONTINUES.

by Kenneth K. Burke

BASEBALL - A Recollection

I have to confess that although I mark the changes of the seasons by the start and finish of the major league baseball schedule, I find that I watch remarkably few games. The time element involved in watching baseball has discouraged me from consistently viewing the game. As I've gotten older, I've become increasingly impatient with warm-up pitches, throws to first base to hold the runner, batters stepping out of the box so they can either get a signal from the third base coach or spit, and pitchers "taking their time out there."

In a way, baseball is somewhat analogous to an old-fashioned strip-tease show: you know something is about to happen, you just don't exactly know what, when, or how long it will take before it gets to the good part, or even how good that will be. In the meantime, a lot of tension is built up through time-consuming posing and parading of sheathed equipment that may or may not be brought into play. So, both sports have their share of critics making poignant observations riddled with saucy lowbrow wit.

This is not to say that I am off baseball entirely. I love a well-turned double play, difficult one-handed catches in the outfield, power hitters that fool everyone by bunting for a base hit, and catchers who throw runners out trying to steal a base. And, when a pitcher whose arm has seen better days is on the mound for a second-rate team, and he is using all his wits, guile and experience to shut down one of the big money superteams, well, you'd better not make too much noise while the game is on, because for that moment, I'm a fan all over again.

But mostly, my attention span is too short to wade through all the hours of wasted motion, stalling and delays that are an indispensable ritual of baseball. I have even wanted to suggest that the networks employ the computers that ad agencies are using (to eliminate the natural pauses and breaths taken by their announcers so that they can put more copy into their recorded commercial messages) for the baseball telecasts to make the games shorter and faster-moving for the viewer.

Though I criticize the game severely, I must say that I really do want to like baseball and that I feel a slight twinge of guilt over not liking it more, because deep down in my heart of hearts, I know that I owe the institution of baseball a debt of gratitude. Baseball was one of the very few things my dad and I had in common. Oh, it's not like we hated each other or fought a lot, but my father was born and raised in the deep south, and since he moved to the Detroit suburbs to make that "good money" in the factories, I was raised in, educated in and reflected the views and attitudes of the north. I read well, spoke without a southern accent, knew nothing of hunting, fishing or farm life, and was ambivalent over the prospect of working on cars. (Horror!) The only things I can remember my dad and I expressing similar interests in were baseball, Bowery Boys movies, and my mother's cooking. There was a vast cultural distance between us that was mystically bridged when we watched or listened to the Detroit Tigers play baseball.

My dad and I really got into the games, rooting, cheering, jeering, laughing, cursing, and enjoying just being together. We were both intensely loyal to Al Kaline (the most complete player we ever saw), both rejoiced in pitcher Denny McLaine's cockiness, and both were too shocked to speak when McLaine's connections with gamblers were later revealed. We liked "guts" baseball, lots of stealing bases, hit-and-run plays, and the suicide squeeze. We loved clutch-hitting Gates Brown, a story in himself, but we had mixed feelings about slugger Willie Horton, who only seemed to hit his patented tape-measure home runs when no one was on base or when the Tigers were several runs ahead. We both took delight in hating with a passion the intentional walk, proclaiming it to be the single worst tactic in baseball. It amused and angered us to no end when a manager would signal to his pitcher to intentionally walk a batter to load the bases so they could get to a supposedly weak hitter and then have that batter foul off 237 straight pitches before he either 1) forced the pitcher to walk him and bring in the winning run; 2) hit a little dribbler to an infielder, who choked on the play and let the ball go through his legs, knocking in the winning run; or 3) smacked a line drive up the alley, driving in the winning runs. And, whenever the intentional walk was employed and invariably failed, we would shake our heads in sad amusement and gloat, "Don't they know that play never works!"

1972 was the last hurrah of baseball as an interpersonal catalyst for my dad and me. I was growing up and moving on to other things. That's when Billy Martin blew into town. Billy Martin forever earned the glowing respect and idolatry of the entire Detroit area by taking a Tiger team replete with has-beens, rookies, fringe-utility players and wheezing old-timers, and brilliantly manipulating them into the American League Championship Playoffs, where we all knew they had no right to be. We loved Martin's fire and vigor, and we flattered ourselves to think that Billy Martin managed the same way we would if we were allowed.

THE COUNT

by Noël M. Valis

Hard times have fallen upon him. His hair's gone gray; the palsey in his hands, mottled And arthritic, makes it difficult to hold His victims. There is an air of general decay He much regrets. He doesn't like The modern cut. He'd rather be Somewhere else. And worst of all, He's found a girl, a proper Catholic, God forbid. (He hasn't, more's the pity.) Who doesn't even Think he's real, who hasn't got the slightest Notion who he is, who's slowly slowly killing Him with ice cream mounds Of sweet devotion. Who's got Him mowing the lawn, shopping For groceries, attending midnight mass, And even rinsing the toilet bowl. Where Is his verve, that wild pizzazz to drain The dark and sleep the dawn? His teeth are Loose and ache at night, but not To bite desire. And furthermore, His line of work has gone Completely out of style. He thinks he should Retire, and leave it to the younger men, Who've modernized the whole damned thing And taken out the glamour. Or so he says, Mornings when he shaves And sees his image Bouncing back, just An ordinary man, Suffering From the usual Mid-life Identity crisis.

"Bob" can help you find cheaper dope, better sex, and larger welfare checks.

If you think you're strange, try the SubGenius Foundation's limited out what STRANGE! Send \$1 for Intense Pamphlet The Church of the SubGenius P.O. Box 140306 Dallas, TX 75216



Only the broad-minded need apply.

Thought you were 'ordinary'? WRONG. Tap your secret Abnormality Potential. Take control through liberated weirdness. This one isn't for everybody.

Also, by bringing the Tigers to the top of the American League's Eastern Division, Billy inadvertently set up one of our finest moments of watching baseball together.

The night the Tigers clinched their divisional pennant, my dad and I were watching TV when the station cut away to the Tiger locker room, where champagne was spraying, players were whooping, and George Kell was trying to get a few on-camera interviews from some of the Tigers' key players. Most of the interviews were of the ordinary, run-of-the-mill, just-glad-to-be-here type, but then announcer Kell got to Tiger shortstop Eddie Brinkman. Though he had only hit in the .230's, my dad and I concurred that his scrappy playing style easily made him the Tigers' most valuable player that year, so we made an effort to listen closely to what he had to say. When Brinkman made it to the announcer's side to be interviewed, he was lathered in champagne and brimming with competitive satiation. George Kell asked him how he felt and Eddie responded (before his words could be bleeped), "Great, just great! Not so much for me, but for all the fucking guys, y'know. They really worked their asses off for this one and they sure as hell deserved it." George Kell maintained a strained smile on his face and hurried Eddie off-mike as he wished him good luck. As Kell was interviewing another player, the camera pulled out to a long shot, and you could see Eddie Brinkman gesturing frantically off to the side, and he seemed to be tearing his own hair out of his head in penance as he mimed to the camera, "I just realized what I said! I'm sorry! I'm sorry!" Then he grimaced comically and slunk off-camera.

My dad and I whooped with laughter until we were too weak to sit erect. The incident became the house joke between my dad and me for months, and it is the only time in memory that I can recall sharing a really big laugh with him.

Dad and I drifted apart. My life took me to so many different places, and his only seemed to stay the same. We had so very little common ground, yet whenever we were stuck for something to say in each other's presence, he'd pipe up, "What about those Tigers?" and the ice would be broken. Baseball, especially in the later years before my father's death, was probably the only subject we could take in, discuss, or even argue heatedly over that would make us feel as if we were still somehow on the same side in life.

These days it's hard to watch a baseball game without reflecting on how inferior the experience is when compared to those long-ago afternoons of watching the Detroit Tigers with my dad. Whenever the telecast is interrupted with one of the seemingly hundreds of beer commercials that are shown, it occurs to me that I never sip a beer without observing how insubstantial the taste is when stacked up against my memories of the cool amazing flavor of the brew that I sipped from my father's bottle when I thought he wasn't looking. Nevertheless, I am thankful to baseball for giving me some of the few strong memories of my father that I now have, and someday I will express my appreciation by actually sitting all the way through a game's telecast without once saying to the TV screen, "c'mon, c'mon, get on with it!"

Word Problems by David Serlin

Just this weekend I was introduced to a book about linguistics—the study of language, sounds and words, and their relationship with each other. I was amazed by some of the ideas about language—truly a tool we take for granted—and I thought about the subject with intense interest.

For example, the book stresses the importance of realizing that words are merely symbols for real things. They are the verbal equivalent of symbols that represent items—a "\$" for money, or a skull-and-crossbones for poison. I have read that the oldest surviving words in the English language are: apple; bad; gold; and tin. Not taking into account our early ancestors' preoccupation with money, these words that we regard as simple are basic to an understanding of the English language. There is no ambiguity about their meaning; they are all composed of simple sounds and are, by definition, bare elements of civilization.

So now, at the peak of our technical and cultural prowess, we have words that consist of jumbled meanings, or multiple meanings, or just completely vague meanings altogether. We have raised our language to a level of almost tragic obscurity.

Try, for example, to explain the word "pretentious" or "pretension" to a friend. The dictionary will define it as "a claim made, indirectly or by implication, to some quality, merit, or the like." But to fully translate the definition, in our era of performance art, new age music, and independent filmmaking, wouldn't one have to be familiar with these cultural phenomena? And to fully make use of the word in a daily context, wouldn't one have to be a bit pretentious oneself?

As our culture expands, our language slips away into tiny collections of jargon, slang, and words used for special occasions or unusual circumstances. In the brightest lights, the visual difference between "gleaming," "glittering" and "glimmering" amounts to semantics. Reaching into the vast storehouse of the dictionary for the right word is a ridiculous exercise, because no doubt we will choose a word that drifts away from our exact sentiment. No wonder one of the best-selling dictionaries is made by Random House—an ironic name, indeed.

When did the conciseness of language meet the inventiveness of human will? At what point did this occur? In the spirit of etymology, and the pursuit of freelance literature, I humbly offer some possible explanations for two words that we use. Note that these are not definitions for the words, nor are they the original contexts of the words. I leave that type of historical reconnaissance to the Oxford English Dictionary. What follows is my own conception of what might have given language the impetus to fracture and expand as it has already come to do.

INDEPENDENCE

The definition of "independence" now embraces such ideas as free will, political struggle, and financial resourcefulness. The word itself came to be intensified through an internal conflict of its own.

The third "e" from the beginning felt that the word was too overcrowded with "e"s. It demanded that the word reconsider its choice of spelling. It felt it might be time to assert its own grammatical autonomy.

"Why do you feel threatened by your new responsibility?" demanded the "p," who felt its position in the word weighed heavily in its success. "Don't you enjoy the harmony in the word's construction?"

"No!" the "e" shouted. "What hope is there for me in the scheme of things? How do I appear in the face of existence? I'm just living up to traditions and stagnant values."

"Don't listen to him," gloated the second "d." "'Anarchy' used to be a much more violent word before they got rid of him."

"Hey! My life was worth more than just that! The 'u' in 'fluorescent' is a free letter! It doesn't even get pronounced! That's what I call living!"

"I'm sorry, 'e'," the "p" spoke again. "There will be no outbursts in this line while I'm in charge of the third syllable. Do you understand me?"

"Yes," the "e" said softly. Suddenly, it screamed, "No! I want to be an 'a'—I want to be an 'a'!! 'Independence'! 'Independence'!"

After several similar incidents, the third "e" was liberated from its position. It was later confined to spend eternity wedged between "interchang" and "able." By coincidence, "interchangeable" is one of the most commonly misspelled words.

ENOUGH

The word "enough" was initially, in a form of medieval extraction, spelled "enouf." People would pronounce the "o" with a long, drawn-out sound, which continues today. However, the true meaning of the word was not reckoned with (as in, "Hey! Enough of that shit!"), or, "Enough! My wine glass is full to the brim!") until a bloody power struggle between the letters occurred around 1245 A.D. (After Dictionary).

"Yargle," the "f" belched (it had just spent a fortnight in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and was feeling very drunk and obnoxious).

"Yargle," the "f" began again, "pray me tell o pretty letter 'u,' what path is thine in life? T'werst goal dost thou strive?"

"What say you, rambling drunkard?" snapped the unusually silent "u." Since the majority of people who pronounced "enouf" ignored "u"s sound altogether, it sat in dejection and misuse. It grew so forlorn that any personal questions about it came as a grave insult. "Quarrel thyself with hyphen mark yonder," said the "u," lest you instill an argument before thee!"

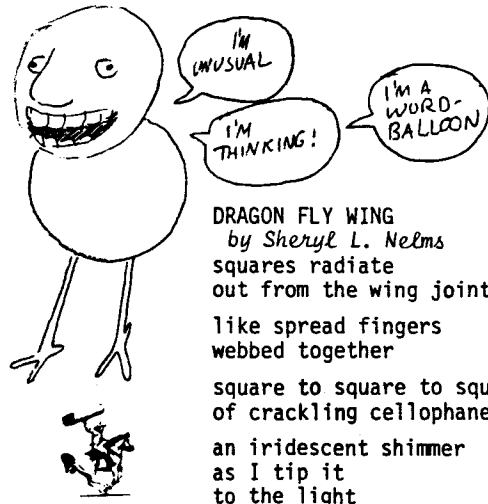
The "f" staggered forward, almost toppling over the diminutive "u." It looked down at the "u," much closer to the ground than itself, and mumbled, "Daren't start thy grieves with thee, little 'u,'" it began, "I should bind thy pincers as the cripple's limbs!"

The "u" felt all the cumulative hate and anger for its horrible vocation in life swell from deep inside, and it slammed with all its might against the filthy, fermented "f." It hit the "f" with such force and fury that, consequently, it knocked it into unconsciousness.

"Leave be it!" gasped the other letters, who had been watching the violent proceedings. They saw the "u" kick and bludgeon the "f" into near oblivion. They were appalled at the "u"s behavior. "Stop, stop!" they pleaded.

But the "u" could not be satiated. Its bloodthirsty streak had swelled and multiplied, and it continued to beat the "f" until it collapsed of physical exhaustion. When it stood back up to see what it had done, it was amazed. It had beaten the "f" so badly that the once young and healthy "f" had become a "g" and "h." The "u" had knocked the next two following letters out of it. "Enough," as it were, was scarred for life, and has thus taken on the connotation of serious excess.

When asked to reveal their association with the incident, "through," "though" and "sigh" were unavailable for comment.



DRAGON FLY WING
by Sheryl L. Nelms
squares radiate
out from the wing joint
like spread fingers
webbed together

square to square to square
of crackling cellophane
an iridescent shimmer
as I tip it
to the light

MISPLACED GODHOOD
by Larry Blazek
When Hendrix died
I thought it odd
that he'd never
become a god
to stand aside
from fortune's wheel
Jimi's back
he's made a deal
can't play guitar
and he isn't black
but he's around
Jimi's back



The Long Shot by Susan Packie

I confess. I'm guilty. I did it because nobody in this rotten world has ever given me a chance to prove my true worth.

The problem was always that I'd been saddled with losers—bums who would make me look bad. No way could I get into stride with those big dummies always on my back.

They weren't just big dummies, they were cruel big dummies. All I had to do was slacken my pace to scratch where it itched or smell the flowers or some such thing and I'd be severely chastised. Words I could have endured, but those beatings left scars on my body and soul that will never fade.

Of course, I reacted by refusing to do anything those brutes commanded me to do. This only increased their anger, but it made me feel a little better.

But this last time, I pulled a fast one. I saw that days nerd coming at me and I decided right then and there that I wasn't going to take it any more. I was going to rebel, throw off my chains, show the world what I could do on my own.

I ditched the idiot. I said, Today I'm going to make it under my own power. Today I'm going to win, and win big.

I saw my competitors, all with big dummies calling the shots, and I knew this would be a piece of cake. Without my idiot, I could have surpassed them even if I had been blindfolded.

I held back at first, let them think I didn't have a chance, then when the goal was in sight, I lef loose, charging forward as if someone had jabbed my rear end with a red-hot branding iron.

When I won, the others protested because I hadn't been held back by a big dummy, but I was content to have proven my point. I didn't even bother to pick up my prize, just leapt the fence and sped back to the barn.

Jockeys should stick to spinning discs!

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Hitching

by Larry Oberc

So there I was, standing on the entrance ramp to I-75 off of Richmond Road just outside of Lexington, Kentucky. Me, I was going to Cincinnati, running away from home, all at the tender age of 15. I hadn't had a haircut in six weeks, it was almost three inches long, and my head was full of Zap Comix, underground newspapers, and the feeling that something had to be right somewhere. Cincinnati was as good a place as any to go looking for something being right.

My thumb danced as the cars drove by. That was the first mistake, that thumb dancing. I'd learn how to look bored, apathetic, tired, like I'd been on the ramp for days instead of only a few minutes, as the hitching went on. But my thumb was dancing, and I was looking ahead to the future, to Cincinnati, to things going right.

I wouldn't be in Lexington, Kentucky if my old man hadn't be of kicked off a few months before. And my hair wouldn't be as long as it was if that hadn't of happened. And I wouldn't be heading to Cincinnati if things didn't feel awfully fucked up. And I wouldn't be standing there, trying to look cool, remembering what the Chicago Seed said about keeping your thumb up once a cop saw you hitching so you wouldn't look like you were trying to bullshit your way out of the rap, a sort of "I'm just standing here hitching folks, not doing nobody wrong innocently." The secret was not to provoke, not to give THEM an excuse to knock the shit out of you.

The lights started flashing. The car pulled over. I stood there. The cop got out of his car. He walked over to me. He decided I wasn't a threat. He shrugged. Said: "Where you going?"

"To Cincinnati," I answered.

"How old are you?"

"Old enough."

"Do you have any ID?"

"No."

"Get in the car."

"What?"

"Get in the car."

The Seed said never give them an excuse to kick your ass. I got in the car. We drove into town. Downtown. The cop stopped outside the police station, led me inside, said: "Runaway. Found him on I-75. See what you can do with him." Then the cop walked outside, leaving me alone with the meanest nice person I've ever seen. You'd turn your frog into this dude.

"Where you from?" asked the grey-haired old man.

"Here," I said. The Seed said always say you're heading to the town the cops grab your ass in. That way you're always home, whether the cops know it or not.

"Your family live here?"

"They sure do."

"They got a phone number?"

I gave my phone number to the cop. He looked at me, trying to see whether or not I was bullshitting his ass, and dialed it. My mother answered the phone. The cop told her they had her son waiting for her, that her son was heading to Cincinnati. She said something I couldn't hear, the cop nodded, said: "He'll be ready to go when you get here."

When my mother got there, she walked over to the cop, nodded, he nodded at me, told me to go home, and we left. We drove home in silence. No one said anything about the deal.

A month later I decided to hitch to Chicago with a friend of mine. My mother gave us a ride to I-75, figuring we'd back off. We returned home three days later with tales of the Windy City. But things were still fucked up. And my mother knew better than to give me a ride to the interstate again. There was no telling if I would come back. No telling if things might not work out better elsewhere. And nobody wanted to take chances.

WHAT IF DR. RUTH WERE AN ART

THERAPIST? by Carol Escobar Magary

DR. RUTH: Textually Speakink, you are on ze air.

CALLER: Um, hi, Dr. Ruth? I'm kind of embarrassed to admit this—I sometimes...well, I'm a minimalist.

DR. RUTH: Zere is nothing wronk with minimalism if it does not interfere with a normal art life.

CALLER: Yeah, but my girlfriend says that she doesn't get enough pleasure out of my sparse lines and monochromatic themes.

DR. RUTH: Vot you need to do is use longer brush strokes. Is your brush always firm and erect?

CALLER: Uh, I think so.

DR. RUTH: Gut. A limp brush is no fun, even for the Impressionists.

CALLER: Thanks, Dr. Ruth. Everyone here at the coffee house listens to your show.

DR. RUTH: You are vewy welcome. I luff you callers! Textually Speakink, talk to me, Greenwich Village.

CALLER: Okay. I'm a 24-year-old woman and my problem is that I like really enjoy doing performance art but my fiance, who's 26, told me that I'm too exhibitionist. And so I said to him, "Really, it's only for a privileged few," and he said, "Well, ever since you went multi-media you've been posturing for every pseudo-intellectual who comes your way," and I said, "Just because your ability to perform lately has been less than inspiring," and he said—

DR. RUTH: Vell, I think that you and your fiance both need more Dynamic movement. Tell me, ven you are performing, do you reach the height of pretentiousness quickly or only after a few minutes of visual stimulation?

CALLER: Actually, most of the time I fake it.

DR. RUTH: Then there is your solution—you need integrity! Work with your partner on mutual aesthetic responses and tell each other your surrealist fantasies.

CALLER: Oh, thank you so much, Dr. Ruth. I think your show is fabulous in making art relevant to the bourgeois.

DR. RUTH: Hee-hee, thank you for callink. Textually Speakink, your angst is on ze air.

CALLER: Hi, my name is Nancy and I'm a cubist, more in the tradition of Picasso than Braque, and I need your advice. I haven't gotten my Blue Period in about two months and I think I might be passé.

DR. RUTH: Have you been using any form of conceptualization?

CALLER: No, not since the sixties.

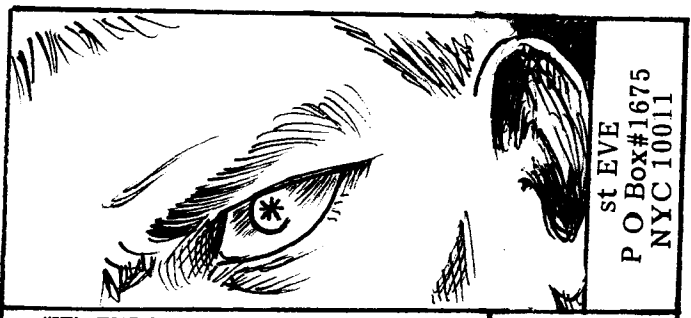
DR. RUTH: Ach, vot is wronk with you young artists today that you are not using conceptualization? Do you think it is unwomantic? Please, you must use some sort of artistic control if you do not want to become passé. Does your husband want to be Dada?

CALLER: No, but he tells me to use Duchamp.

DR. RUTH: Duchamp is not an effective method. Have your doctor draw you a diagram, okay?

CALLER: Okay, thanks Dr. Ruth. My sister and MOMA love you too.

DR. RUTH: Bye-bye. That is all for Textually Speakink tonight. Next veek ve vill read a letter from a 34-year-old man who sleeps with an artificial Dali. Until then, make good art!



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DROP IN THE BUCKET

Still a very forward guy
I ask please pardon me this try
Usually, what gets me in wrong
I cannot sing any other song.
- Robert Wilson-Wheatley

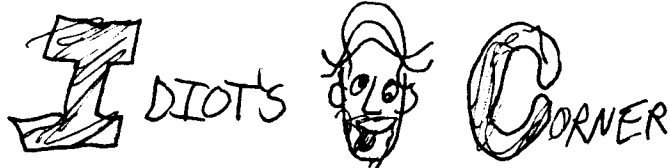


THIS IS TIMMY

HE LOOKS LIKE THIS BECAUSE

HE TOOK MARIJUANA AND BECAME

ADDICTED! DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO
YOU !!!



by Eric "Why Me?" Wilson

THE DEATH OF LYMON OSGHOFSKY

Lymon Osghofsky is dead...again. It's almost as common as Sinatra's several retirements. After nearly an hour of intense research, I've discovered the whole truth about Monsieur Osghofsky.

Lymon Rugrat Osghofsky was born on January 10, 1936 in Dajniek, Oxagonia. His brother later blamed Lymon for the subsequent invasion of that island country, located in the waters of Spain, by Switzerland ("Neutrality my ass," he said in 1971).

According to his father, Lymon's first work of art, entitled "Doggie," was drawn at the age of five. So abstract was it that Pablo Picasso bought it at the high price of \$15,000.

Needless to say, Lymon's poppa, a barfly and layabout, goaded his son into creating a whopping great 15,000 paintings between kindergarten and age 12. The duo sold 15 copies of "Doggie" and one piece of junk entitled "My Daddy" before the entire catalog was destroyed when Lymon's poppa became violently ill in the storeroom after a 27-martini lunch.

Shortly thereafter, Lymon and his mother left for London. It was February, 1948, and Lymon swore he would never paint again. He lied.

In 1957, Lyman at 21 began a long association painting for the British Dental Association; he was dismissed after submitting a poster showing Lenin raping the Tooth Fairy. The work was entitled "...And There Isn't A Father Christmas, Either!"

He anonymously designed pornographic cartoons for Playboy during what art historians refer to as his "smut period" (1957-1963). Osghofsky continued in his position at Playboy until 1967, when he was called by the Oxagonian State Parliament back to his

native land to help with the Neutral Revolution against occupying Swiss forces. They wanted him to paint art for anti-Swiss flyers. When he got the letter from his father, now a member of A.A., that clinched it for him; he had to go back.

"We can't stand these pompous bastards," the letter began. "Between the yodeling, the chocolate (frankly, Lymon, the French make better), and the god-awful cheese, the country is primed for a fucking revolt. Those goners even brought snow skis with them. We don't mind, but we don't even have mountains in Oxagonia!"

Anyone who was THAT stupid, thought Lymon at the time, doesn't deserve a government.

After a whopping great war, the Democratic Oxagonian State was declared. Now they needed a concrete document to PROVE it, but what? Lymon was once again called into service to write the Model Constitution, and to help him he called his friend, Bjorn Carlos McDolphin. Bjorn Carlos was the old man of Irish-Swedish-Spanish descent who was in the government on the minority vote. It took until 1970 to get it right on the money. The first draft looked like an incoherent mix of the American Constitution, the far-out French Declaration of the Rights of Man, and the Communist Manifesto. An interesting document to read, but hardly the model government.

The final draft was printed in all the papers before it was ratified by popular vote. One rather nasty clause included in the final document as a joke stated that women needed a permit to wear green baseball caps. "THAT'S DISCRIMINATION!" shouted out the Parliament floor Liberal leader Lena Zolfkragen. "It's a bloody Conservative clause, and should be vaoted (the way she said it) out of the document."

The protest was laughed out of the Parliament. "She's probably having another period," the state-run DAJNIEK MOUTH proposed.

During his prolonged stay in Oxagonia, Lymon painted 32 portraits, 16 landscapes (mostly of Parliament picnics), and 5 abstract works. One Parliament member was rather upset by what was painted of him.

"Why did you paint me as big as a hippo?" he asked Lymon.

"Simply because you are," Lymon answered frankly.

This injured this Liberal emotionally, and he smeared black paint all over the portrait.

"There!" he exclaimed. "What do you think of that?"

Lymon simply added a few more strokes, gave a picture a title, and sold it to a hotel—for \$15,000.

Lymon was soon deported to America under the Asshole Clause. Ironically, he had written the clause himself.

"Paul McCartney," began Lymon's opening speech for the 1971 Young Artist Festival, "never existed as a person. He's a myth, like Santa Claus. Nothing more than a phantasm of John Lennon's imagination."

"Tell that to the millions of fans," retorted one student.

It seems back then the Oz had been experimenting with L.S.D. when he got back to the States. "That guy on the records," the Oz replied, "was a guy named Irving P. Fleiderschicht. He lives in Leeds and has never set foot in Liverpool."

This was good for a laugh until the Oz pulled out birth certificates, hair clippings, and a picture. Needless to say a riot ensued, placing several abrasions of various sizes on the Oz's person.

The failure of the Young Artist Festival in 1971 prompted the promoters of the event to not hold one for awhile after the events leading up to the riot. The Oz considered the riot a whopping great success, but when the news reached him that there would not be a chance to repeat this "smashing success" for a long time, it prompted his first "death."

Lyman died in the fall of 1973 of a morphine overdose. Here's where the trouble began, because he resurfaced six months later, a millionaire after his agent had sold off his entire catalog at extravagant prices.

He died again in 1978 of wounds inflicted while hunting (the falcon was SUPPOSED to attack the duck; instead it went for Lymon's throat).

In 1980, it was a JELLO overdose.

In 1982, it was a flashback from his days of snorting PIXIE STIX that made his heart freak out.

Now it's 1987, and the cause of death is crack (that is, a crack on the head from the engine block of a semi).

It looks like he's dead to stay, but looks are deceiving in the case of the Oz. Sure, the witnesses said they saw guts fly all over the place (more guts, I might say, than I'll ever have), but that was the idea. He's done it before; he'll do it again.

Yesterday, I received an anonymous letter which read:

The Oz knows the fine art of fakery of death. He is the master. He is the ghost who walks. He is now an unsinkable force. Paul McCartney never existed. Women and men were once the same sex. Kill Peter Bergman.

Sounds like the Oz to me.

EPILOGUE:

NO FORWARDING ADDRESS, AZ (A&P)—The "dead" artist Lymon Osghofsky, according to the tabloid NATIONAL SCANDAL, is hiding in the cellar of Arizona resident Edgar J. Wackner, a famous psychic and holy man of the Oxagonia Pessimist Church.

According to staff writers, the man known as Wackner the Mental Case has been harboring the famous artist from the world since Lymon's death, apparently staged to make the price of Osghofsky's art go up.

Wackner, the author of the million-seller I Know This Book's Going To Sell, was unavailable to be interviewed at his home in No Forwarding Address, AZ.

MANY OF US WOULD RATHER
not work for a living but it has to be that
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Like Nobody's Business by Larry Stolte

"The business of America is business." A famous American said that; it was either Ronald Reagan, Calvin Coolidge, or Jimmy Hoffa. But in the Ailing Eighties, the pleasure of America is business, the art of America is business, the literature of America is business, the religion of America is business (whatever happened to the doctrine of Separation of Church and TV?), and the business of America is redundant. Everything in the eighties translates into bucks. Everything costs. It's the fee decade. This is not a "Lifestyles of the Down and Out" time and place.

Everyone thinks this is good for America, right?

Wrong.

As corporocracy surges and the vicissitudes of interest rates and stocks are watched by vigilant businessmen, there are a few people who get sick just thinking about it. These few are usually writers or painters or artificers who have been forced into doing trivial work for corporations to support their creative talents or to subsist. They may agree that business is necessary, but they want no part of it. And too much business, they think, takes away from the arts and literature.

This fear and hatred of business is called bizophobia. The typical bizophobe has been a cog in the machine of a corporation. He/She cannot understand normal people's unquestioning corporative obeisance and apathy (actually, lack of anger) for their forty-hour-a-week brain lock. He/She feels that you shouldn't do something you hate for the sole purpose of making a lot of microchips happy. Or, at the very least, you should make every attempt to extricate yourself and not just settle for doing some perfunctory task because everyone else does. Time is too precious.

Bizophobia is a recently discovered disease; many people haven't even heard of it. But it can strike at any time, leaving its victims with acute nausea; a few of its stricken are even living from the disease.

There is no cure.

What makes the bizophobe tick? How does he/she think?

To give you an idea of how the bizophobe's mind works should you think you've spotted one, we've listed excerpts from the *Bizophobe's Dictionary of Definitions and Descriptions* (c. 1986, Fullcourt Press) (de-alphabetized for effect).

Work: A slow, scarless lobotomy that knocks out 40 hours a week, 2,000 hours a year, and 90,000 hours in a lifetime (if the ulcers don't kill you at 30). Many persons fool themselves: "My work is important. Who would remove these staples if I weren't here?"

Company: Place where eternal cycle of meaningless activity (see Work) is performed. Building(s) is/are usually decorated in the Beaux Alcatraz tradition and smell(s) like the inside of a tuba. Ceilings in all rooms of the building are clad entirely with the ever-functional fluorescent lights (which would have caused Edison to reconsider), carcinogenic to the will and somniferous to body and soul.

Boss: A man or woman—scratch that—an asexual subhuman whose foot is to his mouth as his head is to his ass. S/He is your equal in every way except intellectually, creatively, physically, morally, psychologically and spiritually. In these instances, s/he is a mayfly's equal. Since s/he is in a position of authority, however, you find yourself saying things like, "You're right, I should lick those windows clean before I go home," or, "Well, I was going to get married on Sunday, but I'd love to colate cheese slices for the company Smoke-a-thon."

Corporation: The Order

Oligopoly: What happens when Hitler and Torquemada meet for drinks.

Chairman of the Board: A person who drops by the company when it's raining or the golf course has temporary greens. You wish he were more like other persons his age—dead. His dotage and senility are mistaken for eccentricity. Makes major multi-million dollar decisions for the company but can't remember on which set of appendages his socks are worn.

Company President: This idiot *sans savant* has an office large enough to build Boeings, which houses a large, American cherry wood bar with inlaid mirrored bronze. His company directive has you recycling staples to save money. His idea of light drinking is to get tanked at sunrise. Suffers from heartburn and liverburn. Loves to dance, particularly the goose step.

Front Office Receptionist: (Always a woman; companies never change. ERA is still a baseball term.) Greets all customers and answers phone. Has a prosthetic smile that couldn't be wiped off her face with a custom howitzer. Has been to Stepford. Her hair is permed by a man named Paco or Rico, who is the only person in the city who wears more lipstick than she does. She says things like, "Mr. Jones is not in—Mr. Bubbles is not in—Can they call you back?—Have a nice day—This message will repeat." She broke a fingernail once, but, just in time, they found a donor in La Jolla. A socialite died in a car accident, her pail was flown to the hospital, and a transplant was performed.

Accounting Manager: Before each conversation with this person, you have to hold a mirror up to his nose and mouth to see if there is any sign of life.

Company Jargon: May anyone who uses the words "interface" and "interject" be forced to have interspecific intertropical interminable interpenetrating uninterrupted interlocking intercourse with an inveterately insulted porcupine.

BACKWORDS LOGIC by Ace Backwards

HAPPY FACE

BOB JOHNSON IS DYING OF CANCER... HIS WIFE HAS JUST COMMITTED SUICIDE... AND HIS KIDS HATE HIS GUTS... BUT YOU WOULD NEVER KNOW... THANKS TO THE MIRACLE OF HAPPY FACE!!!



YES IT'S HAPPY FACE!! THE REVOLUTIONARY NEW FACIAL MASK... NOW IN THREE EXCITING VARIETIES... HILARIOUSLY HAPPY, GENUINE JOY, AND BLUSTERING BLISS!!



YES... NOW YOU TOO CAN BE ROWDY AND BE THE LIFE OF THE PARTY... EVEN WHEN YOU FEEL LOOSY!!



SO COME ON! JOIN THE LIST OF SATISFIED CUSTOMERS AND PUT ON A HAPPY FACE TODAY!



"THE GOLDEN AGE WAS NEVER THE PRESENT AGE" — Thomas Fuller.
The present age as in past ages is beset with winemakers wars, inflationary fixed wages, blue collar work for quilty, and meaningless death. The golden age

must wait until we scrap war, inflation, unemployment and death while adopting the concepts of Golden Boy — J.C. BRAINEAU
Box 2243
YOUNGSTOWN — OHIO, 44604

Shop Personnel: Casting extras for Wild Kingdom. Fellini would discard. All have bigger dreams, like passing a literacy test and then guessing the phrase "I wuz dum wunce" on Wheel of Fortune. A unity is formed between them as they are all working on a machine that will revolutionize the steak cleaning industry. These people will appear to move at times.

Personnel Department Personnel: Since these are the first people you see when applying for work, it stands to reason that they are the lowest life forms in the company. Their job is to hire the president's relatives for key positions in the company and to collect information off of applications and resumes for future sales to the CIA. They interview common people to kill time, asking the ever-inane question "Where would you like to be five years from now?", to which the proper answer is, "Sipping champagne on my penthouse balcony, firing missiles at your tombstone."

Necktie: This item was introduced during the Spanish Inquisition as a method of torture. Due to its extremely functional nature, it caught on in temporary times. Very useful as a noose when your boss is suicidal, and she/he's out of bullets.

Meetings: Like the Last Supper without the food. Circumlocution practice. You get as much out of them as if you listened through the Japanese headset at the United Nations.

Bigshot: See Successful Syncophant.

Computer Programmer: Will eat, sleep, or bathe only when the computer's down. Cannot converse with a human unless he's wearing a keyboard. Can't add 3 plus 5 in his head, but can write a program for building a nuclear warhead using an old toaster and a can of baked beans. Has never dated anyone of the opposite sex or the same sex or anyone who even has a sex.

Young Salesman: Fluorescent smile and fluorescent brain. Can sell and party with the best. Couldn't guess Ernest Hemingway's occupation even if it were a multiple choice question. He's a Cuppie—Cocaine Urban Professional. Wants to have a *ménage à baker's dozen* with the women at work. He's trying to reform his wicked ways, but never quite does—he's an aborted-again Christian.

Engineer: Has a poster on his office wall with the caption, "There's nothing like the glow of a young child's face when he fires his first handgun." Is a member of the Immoral Authority, and has an autographed picture of Mr. Ed (Meese) in a compromising position. He spends the first twenty years at the company trying to figure out what he does, and the second twenty trying to keep everyone else from figuring out what he does.

Drug Test (Urine test for drugs): A good way to discriminate against epileptics and others of that ilk. See Neo-Fascism. Don't see the Constitution.

Lie Detector Test: Another method of discrimination, using a machine that is as accurate as an extended weather forecast and as reliable as a twenty-year-old Plymouth. If you are ever asked to take a lie detector test or drug test, tell them you will take both of them at the same time. Then piss on the lie detector.

Modern Computers: Precursors to HAL.

Byte: What computers can do to the big one.

Philosophy of the Bizophobe: Lots of people can use your money when you're gone. These are the same people who used it when you were alive. You couldn't use it. Remember, you were too busy. But your time will be done once the rigors of mortis set in. Unless, of course, you decide that you'll have your remains flambéed to ashes of fine sand and poured into an hourglass. Finally, you will have used time wisely.

Schools of Poetry

by Sigmund Weiss

There are varied schools of poetry, including anti-poetic schools, and in addition there exist many non-schools of poetry, which to comprehend and follow results in confusion, disorder and misconception.

As for me, I plead ignorance and meaninglessness within this maelstrom of ideas to which I am subjected. All I know is that I am, and being, I live, and living, I become part of all that is, and in so becoming I write. But I do possess beliefs.

Among my own maelstrom of beliefs, the primary is that ALL THAT IS, IS PART OF THE SPIRITUALITY OF EXISTENCE OR LIFE. Beyond this concept, all other concepts about existence are only relative to Life; that one's reflections on Death are simply reflections on one's own ignorance. It is not necessary to dwell on one's ignorance as long as one is still alive, as what we do not know or comprehend has no meaning for us.

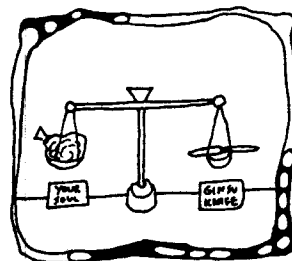
Yet to be faced with dilemmas determine's one's growth or lack thereof. If one faces such dilemmas head-on and reasons, utilizing logic as the sword by which one cuts into one's ignorance, that produces growth.

To return to this dilemma (schools of poetry), it is my belief that each individual possesses in him/herself his/her own school of poetry, stimulated by outer influences. Through our processes of living we create, each in our own way. When you set down techniques onto paper, you are setting down what other writers have already done or otherwise created in themselves. We all know that imitation works well for many, but an individual is actually alone in any concept. Though Nature is unlimited in its reproductive abilities, it is naturally limited in its mannerisms of reproducing. The tendency of many poets is to follow assiduously other writers in their techniques, and by so doing confuse themselves in their creative abilities. It is not illogical to imitate; we all know that is in the nature of all species, including humans. But it is illogical to imitate others against their own creative urge, since from and out of THE SELF is LIFE, and out of this LIFE OF SELF results fruition and the wealth that is existence.

Once the poet comprehends THE TRUE MEANING OF LIFE, ITS GROWTH, ITS REPRODUCTIVE CREATIVITY, that poet's writings will naturally fall into proper perspective flowering out of the nature of his or her own life.

"A SINGLE CONVERSATION
ACROSS THE TABLE WITH A
WISE MAN IS WORTH A
MONTH'S STUDY OF BOOKS" —
Chinese Proverb.

Forget the table and send a
S.A.S.E. to:
BRAINBEAU'S AD SHEET
Box 2243
YOUNGSTOWN — OHIO, 44504



TEAR OUT YOUR SOUL AND
GET A **Free** GINSU KNIFE!

Clift Note Founder
Finds Fault With Learning

HOBOKEN, N.J. (YU)—The founder and president of Clift Notes International told a boisterous Senate hearing Tuesday that his products are absolutely safe, and he chided some of his academic critics for being stupid and uninformed.

Referring to a panel of six literature and composition experts who had questioned the safety and effectiveness of Clift Notes cramming sessions, founder Montgomery Clift, 17, asked the senators: "If those guys know so much, why ain't they rich? I've earned \$40 million in the past two years."

Yossarian Universal

SPECIAL TO INSIDE JOKE:

Hairy Turtle, exiled by Drowning Man, finds himself stuck in an ever-growing garbage heap. The garbage is runaway Spam tins and dropout Treet cans wrapped in old newspaper. Hairy Turtle sulks in his tent surrounded by garbage. "How dare someone of equal rank deprive me of what is mine because he is stronger?" Drowning Man calls to Hairy Turtle, "Come forth from your tent!" But Hairy Turtle says, "I've had enough of being treated like garbage."

When the garbage reaches over the tops of his cowboy boots, Hairy Turtle says, "Well, I've had more than enough of this shit." So he turns it over, boxes it and sends it to Drowning Man. Drowning Man hires some flunky to bury it down South, in Mexico, the Caribbean. But nobody will take it. They've had their fill already, anyway. Suddenly someone offers to take it but Drowning Man grows suspicious and won't let them. "Why should they suddenly want my garbage?" he asks himself. "No, by golly, this garbage heap has become too valuable to do anything but return hom with its tail properly between its legs." The garbage heap has become the proverbial bone of contention.

"We had no more room in our dump," Drowning Man leered while going over his recent actions late one night. "Please come back. We'll give you a decent burial. We had no idea our garbage was so valuable that anyone would want it." At this last he nearly laughed out loud.

Hairy Turtle had even less use for the garbage than Drowning Man. After all, he was exiled. He felt like tying a bomb to the tail of that garbage and sending it to Drowning Man. So he did. He caught up with the barge in the Caribbean. The officials there ordered the garbage home although a citizen wanted it. Hairy Turtle swam out to the barge, climbed aboard and hid in the trash while planting the bomb. He felt there must be something valuable in the trash. "Else, why would Drowning Man not force someone to bury it for him? Maybe he plans to float on it. Why did he ever send it away, anyhow?"

"Bury that garbage," Drowning Man shouted with bits of coconut-cream macadamia nut pie on his face. "I don't want to see it around here no more." Damn Hairy Turtle, he muttered. He must have been responsible for that bomb.

His flunkies eyed the heap of Spam tins and Treet cans and said, "Yes, Sir!" But they had no idea where to put such a huge pile of trash. And they knew that there would be another one like it right behind this one. Suddenly one of the flunkies reflected aloud, "Hey, this is a test. Drowning Man wants to see what we do with this one. He's so smart he probably already knows what to do with it, or else he's got a solution worked out and a suitable place to bury it. He's not telling us. He wants to see if we can work it out for ourselves. I'll bet New Jersey or the East River. Naw, have to use too much cement."

"Hey, I know what," said a second flunky. "Let's load all this garbage up and dump it over by Columbus Circle 'round about midnight. Then somebody else will have to clean it up and we won't have to worry about it!"

"Great idea," agreed the first flunky. "Go get the line."

"Wait a minute, didn't we use this one before?"

"Yeah. It worked, too, didn't it?"

- Jim Butler



Commercial McClue-In

by "Kid" Sieve



Well, fellow freaks, get ready for the worst bad trip since the now-infamous Nike "Revolution" commercial (now that SNL is in reruns, I'm not sure it's even still running—do enlighten me if you have spotted "Rev-Nike" lately)—are you ready for, TIME MAGAZINE TO THE LYRICS OF "TURN, TURN, TURN"? Would I be sacrilegious enough to make this up? Like "Read Time And Understand," their last chart-stopper, this straight-from-the-Byrds-mouths co-opted anthem to hippie biblical harmony features intercutting of the most newsworthy events and people since their last commercial was made. It's not only disgustingly eerie, it's so goddamn slick, so establishment-glossy-perfect, so EVERYTHING THE HIPPIE "MOVEMENT" WASN'T that I would bypass recommending writing letters to network lease merchants and go right to carrying out bizarre acts of civil disobedience on your television sets. "Where have all the flowers gone?" To boutonniere in salesmen's buttons, every one...

There is some good news connected with this bastardization of everything once meaningful for profit, however. The Beatles, through Apple Corps Ltd. and Apple Records Inc., filed a \$15 mil suit on July 28 against Nike Inc. and its ad firm, Wieden and Kennedy as well as EMI-Capitol Records, in addition to demanding the offending commercial (you all know which one that is) be pulled off the air. "The rights to the song," Newsday's 7/29 edition reminds us, "are owned by singer Michael Jackson, but the suit claims that Nike used an original recording..." No comment from Nike, natch, and Jackson is said to be secluding himself away (what else is new?), highly upset and embarrassed that things have come to this and promising his pal Sean Lennon that this will never, never happen again.

Life is not without its bad side, alas, and I find NBC's newest public service campaign, "Tuned In To America," particularly insidious in that they've managed to corral spokespeople like Ralph Nader to implicitly represent them in so-called independent spots talking about the effects of television on the public or some such. But never, never talking about it in a threatening way or anything—oh no, only talking about what good it can do in this bright beautiful happy world. Despite my admiration for Nader, I am saddened to see him so used. NBC is, indeed, looking for credibility, but they are steering far clear of anything resembling controversy. And hey, as long as they're going for Nader, let's see if they pay attention to people like Alexander Cockburn or Noam Chomsky and let them on the air speaking on behalf of the American into which they're tuned. Let Michael Parenti on to tell America how the power of the media is concentrated in the hands of the few wealthy corporations that control just about everything else, including the manufacture of nuclear weapons and the handling of many other defense contracts, and how the only interest of the media is to maintain that precious Status Quo instead of truly educating or enlightening anybody, despite the power Nader and other liberals acknowledge they have without really challenging it. Honestly, the "America" into which NBC is "tuned" is about as fabricated as a beef commercial—you know, the one which proudly proclaims as to how beef is "real food for real people," implying that anyone who may not be into beef for health, religious or other reasons isn't real? Hey, you power-mad red-swirled assholes (notice, by the way, how everything's starting to be represented by some red swirl or other, from NutraShit to Beef to Milk—the latter two of which didn't used to be spelled with initial caps?), by your reasoning, three-fifths of the people reading this column are imaginary! As if I didn't have enough problems with my readership—thanks a lot!

Speaking of readers, thanks to Dorian for noticing at about the same time the rest of us were starting to wake up that David Leisure (the Isuzu "Lian") is indeed the actor who also stars in the phone company ads doing as good a Joe Friday impersonation as Dan Ackroyd summons up. Good for you, DL!

While we're on the subject of reality and lies, the new crop of Miller commercials, where the words "it's real, it's as real as it gets" are sung over a black-and-white surrealistic montage that manages to look more staged and surreal than even the AT&T "interview" ads, where the cameraperson pretends not to be able to keep the camera still while the "real person" extols the glory of Big Brother Bell. Disgustoid.

And no, Big Bro and the Witch-Hunters haven't left us yet—they have now appeared in the guise of Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America: "We in the movie industry are determined that this deadly fungus on the face of the nation simply has to be erased." Of what could he be speaking? AIDS? Certainly not; people of Valenti's ilk often believe AIDS happens to those whose moral behavior merits it. Communism, then? Nope, wrong era. Drunk drivers? Are you kidding?—I wouldn't doubt it if beer companies put up as much money to produce movies as they do for other forms of entertainment like rock concerts and baseball games. What could be the scourge of modern society this time again, then? You guessed it—get ready to sneak them joints in to your local movie theatres, folks, 'cause if you're anything like me, booing the screen won't be enough when you see the likes of Pee-wee Herman and Nancy Reagan (together, I wonder?) in a new series of anti-drug messages, "The Thrill Can Kill," to be shown before all feature films produced by the nine major studios belonging to the MPAA. This may ruin moviegoing for me completely, and if it weren't for the fact that more and more home videos will be inserting commercials into the beginning of their features, I'd be perfectly content to remain at home with the VCR. Hmm, maybe I'll just start reading books again.

For those who assumed commercials could never become Max Headroom-type "blipverts," I hesitate profoundly to relay to you the disturbing advent of what the ad world in its jargonized presence of mind refers to as "cross-promotional opportunities." Get ready for Double Commercials (DCs). This trend probably started with Newsweek, whose poster campaigns have featured their magazine as the place where other companies advertise, thereby achieving a strange mix of self-congratulatory name-dropping and attention-getting sensory confusion (imagine putting the word "banana" under a picture of an apple, or writing the word "red" with big blue ink—the brain needs time to sort out the conflicting images, but in the meantime, the viewer's attention is captured). It also contains elements which again point to the ad-MTV-ad vicious circle, as companies which own both a motion picture studio and a soft drink manage to interact people drinking Diet Coke with scenes from Roxanne (as on MTV a song is often used as a tie-in with a movie, and the video reflects both) or Pepsi finances Top Gun the way it has. Coming up—Cosby yet again, in a "global tie-in" to promote both Coke and his new Columbia (subsidiary of Coke) movie Leonard, Part IV. Yes, I hear you all clamoring for More Cosby... Those aren't as scary as showing the Cartier name prominently in a Buick commercial, though, as I don't believe the same corporation owns both products. This is the more dangerous type of DC by far.

I remember when Angela Lansbury was as cool as, well, as Cosby used to be. Now she's fallen for the "cereals must have calcium" bullshit too in her latest commercials for Total. Undoubtedly, she'll be enjoying hearty breakfasts also featuring Coke Foods' (yep, them again) new "calcium-fortified" Minute Maid o.j. "A Tropicana source," says the 7/27 AdWeek, "said the calcium-added trend has topped out" and they won't be following suit, thank goodness—and, after all, that's what it is, a trend. It has nothing whatsoever to do with nutrition. Calcium for breakfast? Dummies, that's what the milk on your cereal's for!

And Weight Watchers spokeswoman and sometime actress Lynn Redgrave's new lose-weight autobiography is entitled "This Is Living"—the same title, of course, as WW's slogan. Don't tell me this isn't a celeb totally under her corporation's thumb (and hey, after all, kids, she's lost so much weight she fits under their thumb now, ba dum bum).

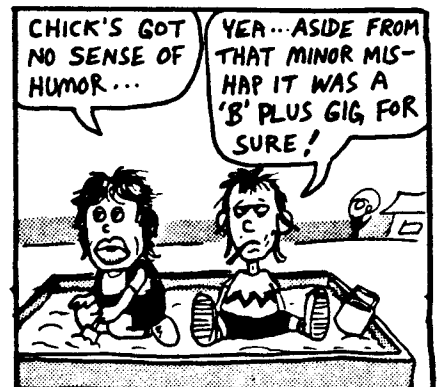
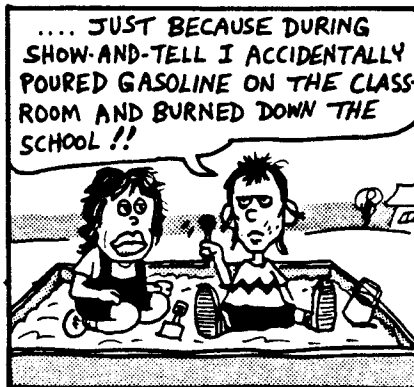
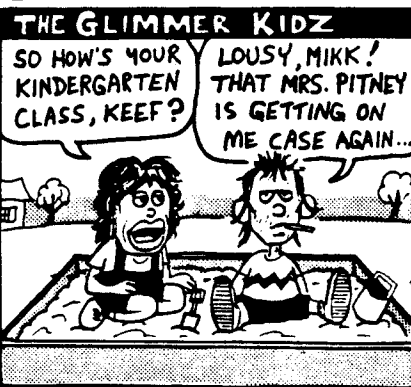
Things to watch—Those out there who, like me, shut off the radio or tv in disgust at commercials praising the virtues of the Armed Forces will definitely not like Young & Rubicam's new "Sentry" ad, which "reflects the ethos of needing to work for and believe in your country," according to the 7/20 AdWeek. "Ten years ago, that would have drawn laughs." So would Ollie "What A Fine Mess I've Gotten Us Into" North.

Oh, you did know I was going to do in Ollie this time, didn't you? The 7/20 AdAge ran a survey on which product their Yuppie readership believe Ollie would be best suited to endorsing, and despite the trumped-up nonsense about how everyone adores the fascist terrorist asshole (due to right-wing groups which had all those telegrams preprepared before the FTA ever took the stand and the media playing it up because the FTA's been the best ratings draw since Fawn Hall) the article is a scream. Several tongue-not-firmly-in-cheek suggestions: Oscar Meyer bologna, Chrysler ("I'm no longer singing American. I'm no longer promising quality. I'm no longer rolling back odometers. But you can trust me." Of course, superimposed underneath should be: "He's lying."), the "Ollie North Cole Slaw Shredder," and my personal favorites, birth control for women ("Hi there! Let's talk about another kind of contra—contraceptives. Like this new contraceptive foam. Soft. Feminine. Clandestine...") and men (AVO: "Ladies and gentlemen, Lt. Col. Oliver North for Contra Condoms. OLLIE: "Men. During these difficult times, do the right thing. Protect the highest-ranking member of YOUR body." AVO: "Contra Condoms. Because covering up is your best defense."). And, like Garry Trudeau, the ad agencies picked up on the FTA's lame threat to meet Abu "Boop Boop Ba Doop" Nidal one-on-one, terrorist vs. terrorist, offering up to \$20 mil to the would-be participants in a grudge match said to have the potential of outdrawing Hagler-Leonard. So a ray of hope shines after all, my friends; just when you think all is lost to winy Senators kissing Marine asses, this and the Ollie t-shirts, dolls, home videos and no doubt board games reassure that, in the end, it's just this year's Vanna White. All just another television show.

Hey you gals out there (men can skip ahead to the next paragraph, we know how squeamish you macho types get), Colgate will introduce in September a product called "New Again," a blood stain remover to be sold in the feminine hygiene departments of mass-market stores. I'm sure you're all with me, sisters, when I say loudly to these MEN types, "Prove it!" but this is already MTYNTH.

Teasers: David Bowie as the Nutty Professor, and Tina Turner as his creation? Dancing together badly? Them kooky Pepsians... "It's hard not to like a commercial as silly as the upcoming Deserex "classic cure" one where a statue comes to life, says the 7/27 AdWeek. We'll see, says the now-and-forever "Kid" Sieve.

The ubiquitous Sigfried & Roy con game has come to Coors spots, and it's so absurd I defy you not to laugh. Keep watchin'!



"BEEP...BEEP...BEEP..."

by Rodney Dioxin

It was a fifteen-thousand square foot loft. There were two electrical outlets. Clearly, her life had to become battery-operated. That was how she came to own the clock. It was just a little digital alarm clock, Japanese. Called "the wakey-wakey machine" in that characteristic just-like-English-but-it-makes-no-sense way they have of naming things in Japan. Cath had always wanted to go to Tokyo. She consoled herself with sushi. And Japanese electronics.

The "wakey-wakey" was her favorite. When it was time to get up, a gentle beeping would begin. Almost like a whisper. Slowly it would grow more insistent. Cath would roll over and punch the little button and shut it off, just before it got really loud.

One morning after a major drunk, Cath was standing under the shower feeling terribly profound, which was her way of dealing with a hangover.

"I wonder what would happen if I didn't shut off my clock?" she wondered. "I suppose the batteries would just wear out." She didn't think about it anymore. She dried herself off and had some miso soup for breakfast and went to work.

Eventually Cath moved out of the loft. Something to do with the landlord cutting off all the heat and hot water during the weekends. She moved into a nice new apartment with lots of nice new outlets. She was able to replace most of her battery-operated gadgets. But not the little clock. Nothing else was quite as cool, not even those robot clocks that stamped their feet to wake you up. The nice new apartment also came with some nice new neighbors and Cath fell in love with one of them and they went away for the weekend sometime that summer.

"Ohmigod! Wake up. Where's the phone?"

"Cath, this is a cabin in the woods. There is no phone. Go back to sleep."

"You don't understand. I left my alarm clock on."

"So?"

"I don't think there's a cut-off on it."

Back at the nice apartment, there was banging on the door.

"HEY! Turn that damn thing off!"

It was nine in the morning and the clock was beeping away like a stereo at full volume.

The police showed up around ten, shortly after the first window broke. They had problems getting in. Cath lived in a very secure building.

Bomb squads appeared between 11:15 and 11:30, with soundproof headgear. They were accompanied by the ambulance for Mr. Tanner across the street.

A rookie cop signalled from the door. He'd finally picked the last lock. The little alarm clock let out another whump of noise. He pushed the door open. WHUMP. The building collapsed in a pile of rubble.

Up in the cabin, Cath heard thunder. Rumbles in the distance. They were getting louder. She poured another drink and listened.

Sorry about any print smears, which are the fault of the reductions on the office copier rather than our excellent Esteemed Printer...and despite the space crunch, we made it under 30 pages this time, hoorah!

Unemployment

by Roger Morris

It was only a few years ago that I was an average working-class American citizen. I worked hard to earn my modest salary, but I enjoyed it. I was ex-President Ford's stunt double. Unfortunately, since Carter wasn't in need of a stunt double, I didn't keep my job long.

At first, this wasn't a big deal. I enjoyed being unemployed and out of work; it gave me time to think and catch up on some things I had been wanting to do around the house. After a while, though, I had caught up on all those things around the house and had done enough thinking to realize that I didn't want to stay unemployed. What I didn't realize was that all that thinking I had done made me about 2/3rds wacky.

I woke up one morning thinking I was Will Robinson and I had to stop Dr. Smith from trying to mate with the robot. I threw on my clothes and ran out into the streets of the city. I hoped Penny and her monkey-like pet Gloop would be somewhere near so they could help, but they were nowhere in sight. I figured the giant carrot had taken them captive and hidden them somewhere in a time warp. That carrot dude was bad about that. Little did I know, but Dr. Smith had taken Penny to the carrot dude in hopes of trading her for a trip back to Earth. That darn Dr. Smith!

I searched everywhere I could think of, but couldn't find anyone. I was beginning to get worried, but then I realized that I was not really Will Robinson. I was not lost somewhere in space, nor was I looking for a man trying to mate with a robot. What a relief that was.

After the traumatic experience of thinking I was lost in space, I could hardly function properly. I went downhill fast. I did nothing but draw my monthly welfare check and drink real cheap beer with a guy who claimed to be the ghost of a roach. I didn't believe him.

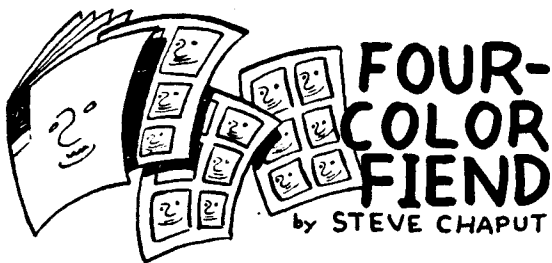
I was a pathetic alcoholic for about three years, I guess. From there I became a complete mental case. I don't remember what I did, but one day a bunch of people who said they would help me came and carried me off to an institution.

At first, I thought I had won an all-expense-paid trip to somewhere that resembled hell, but I later found out that I was having to pay for it. The place was simply full of crazy people. There were four men and seven women who thought they were Ben Cartwright. One Chinese guy even thought he was Hop Sing. There was this one dude who went around impersonating a warthog (for some reason, his inability to recreate the precise odor of this animal drove him mad). Other people thought they were inanimate objects like VCRs or mufflers. My personal favorite was the woman who thought she was a lampshade and would try to jump on people's heads whenever they got drunk.

Finally, after years of productive mental treatments, I regained my sanity. I was no longer a mentally deranged individual with no direction in life. I stopped imagining that I was Will Robinson, and no longer had the urge to live with an alcoholic who thought he was the ghost of a roach. I was cured. I was now ready to face the day-to-day pressures of life. I was then released.

I have now resumed my work in government. This time I am working for President Reagan as a skin prop, and things couldn't be better. I have plenty of work to keep me busy, and I have signed a contract to stay on as Mr. Reagan's personal skin prop even after his term in office is over.

Modern psychiatry is great, isn't it?



I'd like to start off by publicly apologizing to J.P. Morgan for not reviewing CRITTERS or SPLAT last time around. Both fine publications (CRITTERS from Fantagraphics, \$2.00; SPLAT from Mad Dog Graphics, \$2.00) carry his work. SPLAT will contain sporadic one-page strips now and again, while CRITTERS (beginning with #2) will be running a three-part Fission Chicken story. Go J.P.!!

I've been asked to review a few books (some that I've already read, some that I've gone out to buy, and others I will only mention in passing):

RALPH SMART ADVENTURES (Now Comics, \$1.50): I picked up the first issue of this book when it was in black and white and only a mini-series. Marc Hansen writes and draws this bizarre piece of work featuring the fantasy adventures and flashbacks of the title character. You see, Ralph is insane and committed to an asylum. Strange, but a lot of fun.

CONCRETE (Dark Horse, \$1.50): Paul Chadwick has created one of the most enjoyable and human comics in years. A man is captured by aliens and has his entire consciousness transferred into a rock-like body. Any similarity to *The Thing* is minimal and super-villains are nowhere in sight. The true delight of this book is the characterization of both Concrete and the supporting characters. One of my personal faves.

ILLUMINATUS (yep, that one!) (Eye-N-Apple Prods., \$2.00 US/\$2.95 Can.): Well, it took about twelve years, but it's finally here. Just in time for the black and white bust.

I haven't read the trilogy since it was first published, so I'd be hard pressed to say how exact it is, but all the major characters and events (read: conspi-

racies) seem intact. The art by Eric Burza is on a par, if not a notch above, many of the B&Ws already on the stands. Since the announced schedule is "irregular," it will be interesting to see how far it goes.

Well, that's all for now. Sorry to rush off, but it is almost midnight as I write this (*the day before we go to press, no less—humph! -ed.*) and a few of us have to work.

THE SAD STORY OF MRS. BREW

by Andy Roberts

The Brews lived in the South Bronx. Until Warren got clubbed over the head by a wino in an alley and the family moved to Florida. They lived in a trailer. Mosquitos were a problem.

Mrs. Brew had once smoked pot at a New Year's Eve party in 1967. She did not believe in abortion. Every morning she grilled waffles for her family and constructed plots for the children's stories she was going to write. She planned to strike it rich. Children's stories were big now, and Mrs. Brew planned to get in on the gold mine.

Her husband, Mr. Brew, was a real estate agent who never sold houses. He had meetings and wore suits, attended showings and talked business, but never brought home much of a paycheck. He was a good-humored drunk with a weakness for women, but was loved by his sons, and who could ask for anything more?

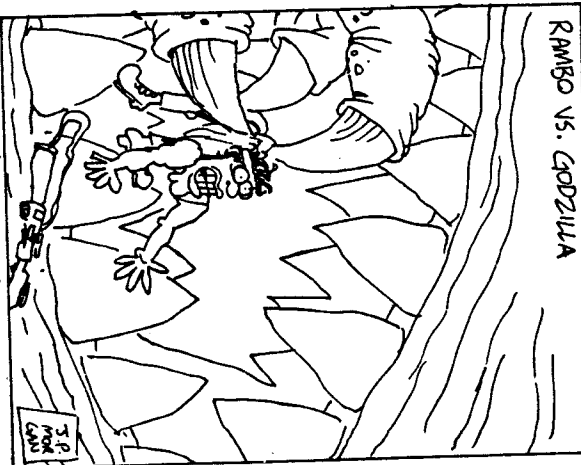
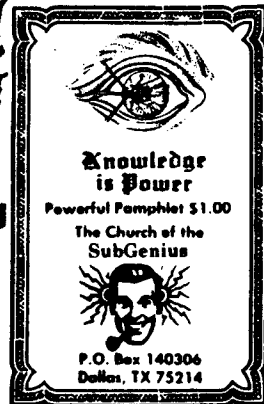
Things had been tight in the trailer. There was hardly room for twelve Brews. Warren slept in a car seat, baby Kate in a basket of clothes. But that was long ago and now (due mainly to the efforts of the boys) the Brews had a three-bedroom apartment in town. Mr. Brew went to work in his suits and his wife saw his sons off to school.

After the children were gone, and the baby was fed, Mrs. Brew thought of words for her stories. She started with just words, and if these sounded right, would link them, and in time, form a sentence. It was painstaking work and many a day to a phrase. Mrs. Brew called it poetic prose.

Her words for today were, "like velvet." "A low fog lay over the valley like velvet." Exhausted, Mrs. Brew napped until dinner.

Day followed day, and month followed month, and Mrs. Brew steadily worked on her stories. She had completed five by the end of July. These were mailed out in the mornings and apologies were received in the evenings—"Though the enclosed material has not worked out for A_____, we thank you for thinking of us and hope you will find a place for your work." "The editors have decided that your story is not right for E_____." "Thank you for submitting the enclosed material to us. After careful consideration, however, we have decided that it does not suit our present needs." "Some really good stuff, but..." "Sorry _____ didn't work out for us, though it has some good moments." "Very close." "We regret that we are unable to use the enclosed material. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to consider it."

Atas, amassing a thousand rejections, Mrs. Brew hung herself in the shower.



A man's beard
is his castle.
Like a moat defensive
'gainst the mugs o' less hairier lads.
A royal crown of things
This fortress built by shaving idleness.
This happy beard of man,
This precious coif set on
this chin of mine.
This blessed swarth,
This main mane
These facefull follicles,
This hair apparent.
- Erik Nelson

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BEWARE OF THOSE SMILING TEETH

by Curt Simmons

I hate people who smile. Now don't get me wrong, I am not a pessimistic person. I like to smile, laugh, and have a good time as well as the next person, but I don't like people who smile constantly. You know the type, they form the biggest smile they can possibly stretch across their faces, so that every tooth catches the gleam of the sunlight. If it's raining outside, they smile. If their lives are falling apart, they smile. If World War III breaks out, they smile... constantly.

I might understand this constant smiling, if these people had something in their mouths to show off. If a woman has a beautiful figure, she wears a skimpy swimsuit. If a man has big muscles, he wears a shirt that is three sizes too small. But a mouth? Come on, even those people who have had excessive dental work still do not have sexy mouths. I can just see a couple out on a date, and the boy says to the girl, "Gee, did you know that you have beautiful molars?" Give me a break. Now, I can appreciate fine dental work, but I have no desire to peer at one's teeth for any long duration of time. Constant smiling has no logic in it whatsoever, and it is perfectly useless.

Have you ever talked to a smiling person? I mean, have you ever talked to one face to face? Talking face to face with a smiling person has to be the most annoying and grotesque situation into which a normal human being can fall. There was a friend of the family once who was a smiler. Now, she was not just a normal smiler, she made a profession of it. A perfect shade of lipstick always covered her lips so that her glamorous smile would be brought out. She was a wonderful woman. I loved her dearly and I fed her table scraps whenever she came to visit us. I remember one of her visits vividly. She came through the front door of my parents' home and strolled across the room to meet me. I watched in stark terror as that great big smile of hers got closer and closer. She finally stopped approaching when her smiling face was only a few inches from mine. A quick greeting was said, and then she began to relate one of her long, drawn-out stories about Cousin Howard, whom I do not even know. As she talked, I tried to back away and put some distance between our faces, but she compensated for the loss of air space and eased in a little closer. The story rattled on and her smile never ceased. Eventually, streams of saliva began to run down from her gums and collect on her front teeth. She interrupted her story and wiped the saliva away with one swipe of the tongue. The saliva then collected at the back of her throat, and she sent it on its way with one small gulp. The story continued and I began to fantasize about grabbing her face and giving it a big shove, or maybe just screaming as loudly as I possibly could. But these feelings passed in a few moments, and I began to feel the first hints of insanity. My stomach made sickly, rolling motions and I began contemplating her death by some horrible means of torture. I finally excused myself and quickly retreated to another area of the house. This dear woman (God rest her soul) died a few years ago, and I attended her funeral. Her death was a sad (but glorious!) time, and as I walked by the casket, I could have sworn that the corners of her mouth were turned slightly upward.

Even though constant smiling is annoying and illogical, I have made an even greater discovery: smiling people are evil. Have you ever looked at a model closely? The beautiful model's glimmering teeth say, "I love you and I want you to buy these wonderful clothes I'm wearing." Now, take a piece of paper and cover up her/his smiling mouth. What do you see? Eyes. Yes, that's right, eyes. Now read them. While the model's teeth are saying, "I love you and I love these clothes, her/his eyes are saying, "I hate you, this job, the photographer, and especially these clothes." The eyes reveal all.

Watch a cat sometime. A cat stalks its prey with a fixed smile on its "harmless" face, but its eyes are waiting for the glory of a brutal attack. I have found most smiling people to be this way also. Their constant

smile says, "Hey, I'm your friend!", but their eyes say, "I'm going to take you for all you're worth."

Now, dear reader, I may sound slightly paranoid, and maybe I am to a certain extent. But I watch people, and I have learned to read between the lines—or the teeth, to be more exact. So, the next time you are confronted with those bright, flashy, never-ceasing teeth, and you are unsure of that person's real goal, read the eyes. They reveal all. I walked into a college class once, and the instructor entered with a grin that would make Joan Collins look sick. Her pearly white teeth said, "Welcome. We are going to have a wonderful time.", but her dark little eyes said, "I'm going to flunk you if I possibly can."

I dropped the class.

why i'm not a gag writer
by jonathan levant
how do you test catholicism?
—with a cath scan

what is a waterfall?
a water murphy bed

nietzsche believed in the lord... byron

and a vote against hiyakawa (remember him?) is an anti semantic vote

shoes lie with shoes in the orgy of the closet
and beget little missing stocking-shoes

(why did eve come from a rib?
that's the most phallic part of a man's body)

kept back in the school of hard knocks
—retarded pet rocks (who booked me in this toilet?)

not just absurd, but because
it was a belly laugh, you believed

LARRY'S COMIC ©1987, R. B. MIN



GUILT
by Edward Mucue
That words dream motion makes life
glorious, puts raw silk to silence,
we become pretty; the raw garnet nature,
the stubby cactus breathe a yellow and
blossom, and the wind cools the mind.



STOPPING UPTOWN ON A MOONLESS EVENING
in the style of Robert Frost's
STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

by Michael Polo

Whose house this is I think I know,
The folks are on vacation, though.
I hope my crowbar's prying edge
Will leave some marks that will not show.
My little flashlight cuts the dark.
This heist should be an easy mark.
The neighbors are all fast asleep
Or very drunk on Cutty Sark.

I take the furs they had in there,
The jewelry and silverware.
I take the stuff left in the safe
And all I leave is dusty air.

To take vacations don't make sense
But shortly mine will soon commence,
And miles to go to see my fence...
And miles to go to see my fence.



Senate Hearing, 1987

by Mike Gunderloy

It was a tad warm in the Senate chambers that balmy day in the late winter of 1987, or at least the 67° temperature mandated for all Federal buildings seemed warm after a week in the unheated cell. (Why waste heat on those subversives? was the prevailing opinion that year. Even Amnesty International was keeping quiet about it in view of the persistent rumour that the FBI was getting interested in their organization.)

It was even warmer where I was, directly under the lights of the TV crews on the witness stand. I was aware that the Kleig lights gave me the complexion of a three-day-old corpse, but kept snarling at the makeup man whenever he edged my way during the commercials. (WHAT will your neighbors think of YOU if you don't buy one of these red white & blue OFFICIAL eagle door-knockers? Only \$299.95 POSTPAID and you can keep watching this show instead of starring on it! Be AMERICAN and CONSUME!!!) I guess it was just my natural obstinacy that kept me from wanting to look my best before I was sentenced to the Labor Camps.

My attention was drawn back to the matter at hand when the Special Prosecutor, Joe McCarthy II (it wasn't his real name, but he changed it for the publicity) barked, "Answer the question yes or no answer the question" and stood there with the glazed eyes of a junkie waiting for me to respond in some way.

I must have looked a bit vague about it because he sighed heavily (I could see the Show Editor telling his mixman to cut that part out) and repeated "Are-you-now-or-have-you-ever-been-in-favor-of-or-associated-with-an-organization-in-favor-of-or-other-wise-connected-to-the-plot-to-fluoridate-the-water-of-this-nation?"

I just looked at him and shook my head, more in wonderment at the dumbass questions than in disagreement. A glare from the sound technician reminded me that this was being taped as well as broadcast and I replied verbally, "Naw, I guess not."

Oh! Joe launched into his next question and I considered my surroundings once again while I tuned him out. I looked over the audience, sitting there in their identical Government Issue suits in identical grey and waiting for me to say something controversial. Well, I wasn't going to—those who did say something controversial tended to get yanked off the air and sent to one of the less pleasant Labor Camps, like the ones in the oilfields of the Iranian wastes. Not me; I was determined to go for one of the cushy spots like the Pentagon Annex Clerical Labor Camp. I figured the way to do this was to be as noncommittal as possible, and then to break down at the last moment and Confess All.

Besides, I had caused enough of a stir by coming in in my natty grey suit with blue pinstripes! It had used the last of the ink in my last smuggled pen, and the left trouser leg was still all grey, but it had been worth it.

Joey Boy was finishing up with his summation of the question, so I turned to face him and frown in thought. He was now asking if I was ever notably against fluoridation?

The trap, or so I thought, was clear. In this plastic day and age of mass-marketed opinions, it was dangerous to have engaged in any sort of activism. Come to think of it, they had picked me up on charges of aggravated fandom. I was one of the last holdouts of that once-proud group, having lived in my mundane life as a file clerk for four years before accidentally dropping a copy of LOCUS in sight of an FBI man.

Anyways, I decided to avoid the obvious trap and reply, "No, sir, actually I didn't care much one way or the other."

I thought his head was going to split off, he smiled so wide. Turning to the committee, he said, "Did you hear that, Mister Chairman? This man, nay, this slug, admits that he does not even care beeswax for his country! This man is an apathist!"

It took several repetitions to get the Committee Chairman's attention (he was the senior member of the Senate, having survived the purge of everyone but the Administration-trained seals by the simple expedient of having gone senile ten years before), but eventually he looked up from the Canasta game with the Vice-Chairman and nodded. "Obviously bad. Get rid of him. Bring on another of them pretty revolutionary women. Humph. Your play, Henry," and he turned back to the game.

The Special Prosecutor strolled over to the Revolutionary Police to give them the directions for the verdict, and I sank back to consider my blunder. Gone were the thoughts of a real bed and just forms to fill out every day; hello, sand in everything. Sand that glowed in the dark since the One-Day War of 1980. Ick.

I heard a commotion at the door and looked up. Two guys were arguing for the right to get in. I could hear them.

"I've got a birthday present for the special prosecutor!" said the first, hefting a large red-white-and-blue box. "And I have only a month to live and want to see a Hearing before I did!" said the second. "Besides, I am a doctor of Journalism!"

The voices were familiar. So were the fake beards. It was indeed Uncle O'Toole and the faithful Herb Gold. I suddenly felt a lot more relaxed, and began whistling "I Wanna Be Sedated" as I sat back to watch the fun.

There actually wasn't much action. O'Toole handed Uncle Joe the large box and said "Happy Birthday!" before ducking behind the nearest of the TV cameras. The box promptly exploded as Herb produced a Water Pistol and ordered everybody "Get down! I'm with the FBI—I mean, the FBI!"

Of course, everyone obeyed, stunned by the combined mess of the Special Prosecutor spread over every available surface and the sound of someone giving orders. The boys and I herded the whole kit and kaboodle into a side room, and then left out the front

WHIZITS by Elaine

in "Still Hazy After All Dese Yrs"

Just a quickie this time, folks, given the current People in Power's propensity for committing more crimes than they cause.....



Reagan was telling the National Law Enforcement Council of his administration's record in fighting crime and keeping criminals in jail when he suffered one of his now-frequent slips. He noted that in federal cases, the Comprehensive Crime Control Act had "eliminated parole and reduced the amount of time off for good behavior that could be granted a prisoner." He changed that quickly to "prisoner."

Heb not him! — 35

Waite Watcher Spots Former Soviet Bigwig

DES MOINES (YU) — There was another reported sitting of Konstantin Chernenko today during a routine test of the emergency Terry Waite Watch network. An unidentified shop owner in this Iowa city claims to have spotted the late Soviet President early this morning standing on the sidewalk outside his store dressed as a soybean farmer and selling little American flags for 2 rubles apiece. No other details were provided.

Yossarian Universal

THE REAGAN BEATITUDES

by A.D. Winans

1. Blessed are the rich
For they shall become richer.
2. Blessed are the poor
For they shall help the Rich become richer.
3. Blessed are the oil companies
For they shall inherit the earth.
4. Blessed are they that
Do hunger and thirst
For Reaganomics was created
For them
5. Blessed are the
Pure in heart
For they shall be known as the
Moral Majority

GONE

by Adja Gorbach

I live in a world
where the truth between people
echoes like the changing rays of sunset,
melting crimson into dark night tones,
sending empty sadness
bound by an aged love.

Gone!

Gone solid

is the spark of love,
eroded by saves of time
and bundled into bags
of civilized waste.

I cry.

BILE
By AL?
Two lovers in an open field
A happy healthy one
Four children singing merrily
A beauty in the sun
A rosebush in the springtime
Big mountains in the dawn
Alas I opened up my eyes
And all of it was gone.

Reagan plans to have contras trained in U.S.



door. Herb thoughtfully dropped the key down a sewer grate.

Zimmerman and Otto were waiting out in The Horse. Zimmerman started the motor as we piled in and I said hello to everyone. Otto handed me a can of Foster's and a .45, and we roared off into the sunset.

After a short discussion, we decided that the heat was on and it would be best to go someplace that no one would look for us. We headed for Palm Beach, renewing old friendships on the way.

It was Herb who summed up the silliness of the escape: "Those fucking sheep! They can't take you that easy, old buddy!"

We all laughed as the Horse sped down the coast.

Inbabnia by Mark Wisniewski

Edna Kontowitt led a life of peculiar occurrences. It was not uncommon, for example, for her to awaken on a given morning alongside a cold filet of scrod. Or, in her days as a file clerk, for her boss to mirror the floors in her office and require that she report to work wearing knee-length skirts. Or for a family of swallows to seek shelter in her bouffant.

Owing to these and other experiences, she has lost mental lucidity. Her life having reached its dusk, she now resides in a home for the aged. Keeping her buoyant is her belief that she is corresponding with Samuel Gompers—she writes him as often as three times daily. An example:

Dear Sam,

I am very sickly. I have stiff neck and this knee of mine is worse every day. This rest home is too hot and smells like winkee-tink to boot. I remember when bread was only a nickel. Chop meat sixteen a pound. Butcher was nice man, too. Good waltzer. Now no one dances nice. Could you visit please. Good luck in the election.
E.K.

Edna's senility was hastened by her marriage—to Ed Kontowitt. Though he himself was never committed, Ed was certainly "different." Psychiatry would have classified him in the helpless Miscellaneous category, because his paranoia and illusions of grandeur kept his mental state bouncing from schizophrenic to neurotic to, simply put, that of a man with intense emotional yearning for kohlrabi.

Before marriage, Ed was the type to keep to himself. Infatuation with the "M" volume of the *World Book Encyclopedia* consumed his childhood. His teenage years were devoted almost entirely to his coop of pigeons. During his courtship with Edna, he spent free time perfecting his skill at marbles, amassing thousands of cat's eyes and steelsies from the youth of his hometown, Kenosha, Wisconsin, by a deft combination of outright skill and timely exposure of his genitalia. In short, Ed had the background of the prototypical mass murderer.

"I once considered assaulting the extended family of Warren G. Harding with a coping saw," Ed conceded, during his engagement to Edna, to a priestless confessional, "but was discouraged by my high school guidance counselor, who by the way years later attacked LBJ with a ball-peen hammer."

No wonder, then, that a curious July day in 1952 found Ed and Edna walking through downtown Chicago, she wearing a sun dress and a pair of stockings rolled down to her ankles, he sporting Polycot leisure attire with shirt lapels past his shoulders, both chewing styrofoam.

After he and Edna married, Ed found employment as a stockboy for a manufacturing concern. Although he failed to climb the corporate ladder, he did take pride in his receipt of several stock options.

Ed's success spilled over into the bedroom, out of which he and the wife ran a small mail order distributorship of illicit Polaroid snapshots, and wherein they sparked the life of Ed Kontowitt, Jr.

Slapped immediately with the nickname "Eddio," this child was blanketed—nearly suffocated—with parental attention. Though well-intended, this attempt at love was ultimately ill-advised, for the psychological aberrations of Mom and Dad combined to produce in young Eddio a curious imbalance: the kid had deific omniscience, but he could not, by any means, communicate.

Because Eddio's genius was unmatched, he was the only human capable of understanding his condition, which he named Inbabnia. Because of the communicative void Inbabnia brought upon him, he could not share this awareness with others. From birth, then, his thoughts were sucked into an accelerating whirl of intellectual and philosophical innovation. The result: while kids in his Milwaukee neighborhood pointed, jeered and affixed wads of Beemans gum to his unblinking face, little Eddio pondered questions such as Does a deaf man shot from behind die in peace? and Can absolute symmetry be attained by an all-girl drum, fife and bugle corps?

Growing Eddio considered more pressing questions as well. By age three, he had devised a foolproof scheme for world peace. By four, he had constructed an infallible economic plan. Having no one with whom to share his discoveries, Eddio suffered acute depression manifesting itself in behavior that doctors labelled retarded. An isolated childhood followed.

On Independence Day, 1971, Ed and Edna Kontowitt unlocked their son, now seventeen and acne-struck, from their attic, taking him to their yearly meal out at the Polska Hause, renowned in Milwaukee for its all-you-can-eat kielbasa.

Despondent Eddio, strapped into a high chair by Edna, began calculating the average volume of the three cold pierogis placed before him when a buzz of chatter spread across the Polska Hause dining area.

At a table in the far corner of the room, Stanley Klodhopkowski, neighborhood cobbler, stood clutching his throat, his face red as borscht.

"Kielbasa!" wife Bernice Klodhopkowski screamed as Polska Hause management and clientele gathered round. "In his throat! Someone help! Who here is doctor?"

A hush swept over the dining area.

"What about chiropractor?" Bernice shouted.

Unnoticed by the crowd gathered opposite the room from him, Eddio kicked and flailed in angst, for he knew that sudden compression just below the sternum would dislodge the lethal sausage and save victim Klodhopkowski—and this in 1971, when Heimlich had

just begun cruising diners experimentally, applying damp cheese-cloth to the necks of choking victims.

So rather than project the hearty bite of kielbasa across the dining area into a steaming buffet tray, the crippled fate of scientific progress dropped Stanley Klodhopkowski, face purple as cabbage, to a crumpled heap.

This Fourth of July irreversibly dampened, Ed and Edna strapped Eddio in the back seat of their Buick La Sabre and drove to Kosiusko Park in Kewaskum, Wisconsin. Here a group of friends—couples with sub-average IQ's and unsightly children—had gathered, as was their annual custom since the Korean War, to share charred-crisp hamburgers, soft Ritz crackers and strained conversation.

Eddio, having been placed in a playpen with another couple's toddler and yet another's Giant Schnauzer, listened to the men and watched the women in an effort to absorb crude humor and the sight of lacy underthings simultaneously.

After realizing that he could not enjoy a social function without lusting, he fretted, then, fully aware that all else being equal, Nixon would win the '72 election, allowed his sardonic thoughts to weave through a political address that, in his calculation, would prevent Watergate and the subsequent decade of political ambivalence. An excerpt:

We live in a self-interested society. Never before has man cared so little about his fellow man nor so much about his own mirror image. Never have we seen such sales volume for the average hairpiece. In this country, the likes of altruism can be induced only by the most excruciating of tortures: twenty-four straight televised hours of live Jerry Lewis.

Times like these demand change in government, change in leadership. Times like these demand the election of Chester H. Rosplach.

Who is Chester H. Rosplach? Perhaps a good question today, but no doubt a giveaway on future political science exams. Chester H. Rosplach is an upstanding man with integrity, foresight and a rather large head. In fact, his head is oddly shaped as well. It seems that Chester's mother once dropped a Chicago Yellow Pages into his basinette, crushing his soft infantile skull into the shape of a mango. Now, after repeated corrective surgeries, it looks not unlike a Brazil nut. What does this have to do with political expertise? I need pose one query only: Have you ever seen Martin Van Buren's head?

Rosplach is a man of insight. Among his innovations is a plan to more effectively channel food energy to society's have-nots by replacing soup and bread lines with a program to feed bread crumbs to pigeons and then pigeon soup to society's homeless.

Rosplach is a man of compassion. In addition to being emotionally moved by photos of Bulgarian youths smiling while drinking from glasses of cloudy water, he is one of a scintilla of humans who openly weeps upon viewing a professional wrestler in a submission hold.

Rosplach is a man of economy. To reduce his personal air conditioning costs last summer, he sodded and mulched his roof.

Rosplach is a man of family. He believes in grandmothers, Boy Scouts and fresh, creamery butter, especially when all three are forced to interact on-stage at a stag party.

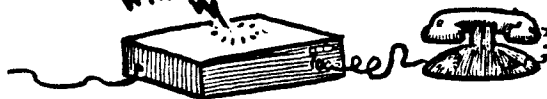
Rosplach, above all, is a man of principle. He neither smokes nor drinks. He does like the smell of leaded gasoline, however. And he's been seen in a narrow alley rolling dried rubber cement between his fingers...

Because he knew that this standard-setting exercise in political rhetoric was all for naught, Eddio never completed creation of this address. Nor, as Inbabnia dictated and history attests to, did he ever deliver a word. He did manage to escape the confines of the picnic playpen, detected by no one at Kosiusko Park Picnic Site #3 but the tongue-wagging Schnauzer.

Two days later Eddio became an entry on the Kewaskum Police Department Missing Persons List. Years later, after Ed Sr.'s death and Edna's submission to the rest home, the attendants of the annual Fourth of July get-together figured poor Eddio dead—a victim of a crazy hunter from Sheboygan, or perhaps a ferocious black bear strayed southward from a Canadian forest.

Today, in a Wisconsin farmer's dried and forgotten well, dwells a bearded but otherwise naked man who sustains his gaunt form with brook trout and elderberries. His best friend is an albino raccoon, who, too, is a victim of Inbabnia.

WHY ARE YOU CALLING AT THIS UNGODLY HOUR?
WHO ARE YOU?
WHAT DO YOU WANT?



"THE WORLD'S FIRST 'QUESTIONING MACHINE'"

A Room Full of People by Steven Hess

It was a quarter past eight on a Saturday evening, Hollywood, someplace with a view in the Hollywood Hills, and the room, the site of a big party, was empty of guests—only the small band played and practiced and tuned their instruments in anticipation of the arriving guests. One musician, a Scotsman, had left his sax at home and brought along his bagpipes instead. He huffed and he puffed and irritated the other band members to no end. Every time they'd get in the middle of a fine tune this Scotsman would start playing a song closely resembling the old Thrifty Drug Store jingle, that one entitled "Save Today At Thrifty." Finally, the Scotsman piped up once too often and the lady piano tuner, who accompanied the band everywhere they played, reached into her big handbag among her tuning tools and extracted a big, sharp knitting needle. She got a good grip on it and went charging at the bagpiper. And she speared him through the bladder of his bagpipes. Air went hissing and the deflated Scotsman, a temperamental sort, left the scene of the party.

The huge empty room, glass-sided on three sides, looked out over the twinkling lights of the city below. By a quarter to nine the empty room became half-filled and continued to fill with arriving guests until it was filled a short time later.

These arriving guests, so habitually rising to any occasion, have, not in the slightest, any idea of the purpose of this get-together. For many it appears the attraction is that of free drinks, for some it seems the prestige of being seen every place that matters (so this party must be someplace—the owner must be someone). Still, upon close inspection, without considering anything except what can be seen while observing this room full of people from a point overhead, it must be said that it is the drinks that are the catalyst for filling the room with people.

If there is a host or a guest of honor (there is a guest of honor, be assured, for he's the one who makes the ending to this story possible), he is unknown to the assembled guests. They're probably sure they were told but have simply forgotten (In fact, they never were told, as it is a great surprise)—they certainly haven't forgotten where the free drinks are.

The spacious room full of people is very crowded and the guests have trouble getting up to the bar for their drinks. Some are less than cordial as they worm their way to the crowded bar. Some wonder why adjoining rooms have not been opened for use. Some try the doors and find them locked. Our guest of honor has not yet arrived, though no one knows that since no one knows who that is.

It's an unusually hot summer evening in September and the Santa Ana winds carry the desert heat toward the sea and the guests are thankful they are enjoying the icy-cold air from the air conditioner. After a time, the room loses its touch of the arctic and eventually it grows stuffy and quite warm as though the air conditioning has ceased to function. Hot air enters through the ventilators.

Some begin to grumble of the heat and stuffiness of the crowded room, but still they continue to consume their free drinks and to be observed by those who must matter. Others consume their drinks without grumbling, in fear that they'll grumble to the wrong person and insult their unknown host. They don't want to insult him; not to his face, at any rate.

It is very hot now and a woman passes out, spilling her martini on a white sofa as she slides off onto the thick white carpet. Still, no one leaves though it is growing quite late. They revive the fainted lady with a wet towel and a brandy. And now she sits sipping a gin and tonic while holding a wet dish towel to her forehead.

Now, it is later, hotter and still full of people in the music-filled room. No guest of honor has arrived and no one has noticed that he has not.

Finally, it is time and the guest of honor, arriving riding in the back of a pickup truck, comes up the drive. And now he is ready to make his grand entrance.

"Ladies and gentlemen," announces the butler, "our guest of honor has arrived!"

No one listens or pays much attention. One man, far back in a corner, thinks they've said they're running out of beer, so he grabs four bottles from the bar and sticks them in his pockets.

The guest of honor, quite an impressive fellow, pauses at the front door. This room full of people will never forget him. They'll discuss him often at parties.

The guest of honor enters the room full of people, and, in just under three minutes, the guests have all vacated the room and left it all to His Honor.

He munches peanuts and mints, oysters and sardines—especially oysters and sardines—and has the whole room to himself.

It seems this party-giver had run out of excuses for giving parties and hired, for a guest of honor, a skunk.

It was discovered at this party that skunks do not mix well with a room full of people, but that it is a good way to bring an end to a long, dragged-out party.

Just before dawn, the skunk left the party and the room once again stood empty.

What's The Point?

Part Two by Kathy Stadalsky

[In Part One, we first met Humperdinck (the dog), at 5:58 a.m. (6:00, if you want to go by the clock). Clearly the most personable character in the tale thus far, Humperdinck has a propensity to get pissed and bite his mistress (Whitney), and/or howl. Next, we learned that Whitney—a rather brash individual—is cranky in the a.m., and somewhat forgetful: she hasn't paid her water bill in six months (and she was behind in payments before then). We also met Mr. James Alexander McAllister, 111 (God Help Us All), who loves to say "you see" and needs a ride to work. Not too bright, James isn't altogether certain if Whitney will give him a ride or not (she said "no" and hung up on him) because he's reading this book about the hidden meanings behind people's words and she might have really meant 'yes'...Part One ended with Whitney running back across the lawn in her see-through nightie (told you she was forgetful!) and throwing a fuzzy slipper at Humperdinck (who was drinking skim milk and grinning at her) before she ran up the stairs to get dressed.]

Robyn Hastings (32, 5'5", 144 pounds, formerly brunette a'so, brown eyes, liberal arts degree) opened her front door just as Whitney raised her hand to the bell.

"Can I use your bathroom?"

"Sure, of course," Robyn said cheerily as Whitney brushed past her and into the guest bathroom under the stairs of the three-bedroom contemporary (two and a half baths, family room with fireplace, built-in hot tub—excuse me, Jacuzzi—in the master-suite).

Randall Hastings (35, 6'1½", 200 pounds, currently brunette, blue eyes, Harvard MBA) sat at the breakfast table (not to be confused with the dining room table) eating an english muffin with butter (actually half-butter and half-margarine, which was the in-thing these days), and drinking a cup of decaf (another in-thing).

He frowned when Robyn came back into the state-of-the-art kitchen, thereby expressing his displeasure at Whitney's using their bathroom again—as she had every day for the last three months, since her water had been turned off for not paying her bill in six months (did I mention she had been behind in payments before then?).

Whitney came into the kitchen just as he opened his mouth to say something about it—which didn't much matter, he never got a chance to say anything because she always came into the kitchen at just that instant. (I warned you that things were a tad routine.)

"Hey, Randy, how you doin'?" Whitney went to the GE Brewstar-ter, took the cup Robyn was holding out to her, and poured herself a cup of coffee.

As usual, she frowned when she took her first sip. "Jeezus Criminey! When you people going to start drinking REAL coffee? This stuff is enough to piss off the pope, man!"

As he did every day, Randall ignored her, his lip curling contemptuously at Robyn's merry laughter. He hated being called Randy, and he was fairly certain she was aware of that fact. But he could never think of anything to say that wouldn't piss off Robyn, so he wisely kept his mouth shut. (He knew which side his bread—or muffin—was half-buttered on.)

Regina Hastings (aged 14, a smart-alecky little snot, who knew she was a Yuppie and was damned proud of it—in fact, she aspired to be the first Yuppie-Valley Girl), came down the stairs and stopped dead in her tracks.

That bitch (Whitney) was in her (Regina's) chair again, and she was going to say something about it today, no matter what her mother said to her.

Robyn, anticipating Regina's comments, turned to her and gave her THAT Look (it meant, if you want a BMW for your 16th birthday you'd best be shutting your trap, missy), so, as usual, Regina shut her trap and sat down in the extra chair.

"Hey, good morning, Geenie! What's new?" Whitney asked, as she always did, every morning for the last three months (can you say "delinquent on her water bill"? I knew you could!).

"Good morning," Regina replied very politely. She hated being called Geenie, and she'd bet her favorite Devo album that Whitney knew it, but her mother had THAT Look on her face again (the one about the BMW), so she didn't say anything about it. She wondered if she'd be able to hold out another year and a half. If that bitch (Whitney) didn't hurry up and pay her water bill, Regina was going to, like, die, for sure.

"Well, I guess I'd better clear out now. Hey, thanks for the coffee!" Whitney said, as she did every morning.

"Oh, anytime! You're always welcome here, you know that!" Robyn gushed, causing both Randall (not Randy, thank you very much) and Regina (not Geenie, you stupid bitch) to become highly nauseated as they fought the urge to contradict her.

And, as always, when Whitney went out, Moonshine Parker (also 14, and also an obnoxious little snot, who just so happened to be Regina's best friend) came in.

"Gawd, gag me," Moonshine remarked as she always did, causing Regina to snicker and Randall to silently second that, even though he personally found everything Moonshine did (Moonshine herself, for that matter) to be highly revolting.

(Moonshine's name, by the way, was actually Monica, which she didn't like, so right after she spiked her newly-purple hair, she renamed herself Moonshine, oblivious to the fact that she sounded more hick-countryish than valleyish.)

"Let's go, Regina," Moonshine ordered, wondering, as always, why Regina wouldn't do something with that plain brown hair and change her name to something more rad.

Sayz-U!(Letters)

Dear Elayne,

Greetings from Dover, NJ. I really am enjoying the "Garden & Field" issue [#52]. I like the hexaweeekly schedule for the catch-up time. That issue captured the spirit of IJ I originally became familiar with. Nice job folks! Now, the one that followed, with the flying teakettles, well, it did my heart good to see such creative imagery. Jung said the saucers were 20th century archetypal symbols brought to mind by fears of post-war high technology, but he didn't see the kettles!!... [IJ #52] has the best "Nep-tune" column and letter from Benedict, who I've been meaning to write but am prevented by a backup of personal mind-gunk I'm working on. So I am hoping you'll print this for her sake, or pass the word on...

(This gives me a chance to pass on a few more details about DeeBee for her many concerned friends and admirers. I received a photocopied letter from Deborah's husband, Tom, detailing her current condition, and I'm only excerpting here, so if anybody would like further clarification please contact me.)

DIAGNOSIS: Disseminated Multiple Sclerosis with upper spinal cord disintegration. **SYMPTOMS/CRITICAL PROBLEMS:** Numb, weak legs with flexor spasms and clonus (tremors); cannot walk without cane and assistance. Numbness, weakness in arms, with tremors. Pelvis is numb. Retrobulbar neuritis which sporadically affects eyesight. Jiggling of nerves in eyes produces double vision and blurring. This is called *mystagmus*. Speech difficulties, some slurring, problems with linear thinking. Her neurologist states that she has the most violent presentation of Multiple Sclerosis he has ever seen. Spinal cord at top, near cerebellum, is swollen 4 times normal and presents a mushy, disintegrated appearance. Protein and myelin particles were found in spinal sac at end of cord; considered a critical problem. New test forthcoming to determine extent of cord damage. Doctor says spinal cord is probable site of initial demyelination, which has spread to all extremities. Tom goes on to say that DeeBee "cannot really write. She sometimes misses letters and her script is sloppy. This is apparently a sometimes thing and will improve, we hope... People really are not too hip to the fact that every M.S. presentation is different and Deborah is easily hurt and angered by their insensitive and ignorant behavior. She has been, in the opinion of all who have been with her on this, extraordinarily brave, tough and kept her famous wit. However, a person can only endure so much and the drug [therapy] effects contribute to some serious despondency. ANY indication of concern, encouragement and understanding will be greatly helpful... we do not know how long this condition will continue and the request to you is patience for her inability to communicate, and also any signs of true friendship such as frequent notes or whatever, indicating that she is cared about... You may tell IJers everything to explain Deborah's absence, and if anyone cares to offer their support or concern, it would help greatly. She hopes to be back on IJ soon, and she loves you and IJ, and feels it's an important part of her life." Needless to say, we're all hoping and praying that DeeBee will get well soon.)

Life is just one bit inter-active coincidence. Robert Anton Wilson wrote a book on it, out soon or sooner. He gives a riveting lecture, if you can catch him sometime. He makes thinking a humorous, enjoyable quest. I think he reads INSIDE JOKE. (Well, probably not unless he and Kerry are on speaking terms again... Seriously, I'm sure at least a few of our mutual acquaintances read IJ; I've sent past issues to Bob Shea and Arthur Hlavaty and such. But I've no illusions it'd make a whit of difference or contain anything of significance to a writer such as Wilson.)

Well, that's about enough for now... Best to you both!

BRIAN CATANZARO
7 South Warren St.
Dover, NJ 07801

Dear Elayne,

I'll just comment on the principle items [in IJ #52], in order to save time, postage, lettercolumn space and such things. The Rock Fiend was okay; it was probably funnier to you guys but over here Irangate is fairly minor. We've been more concerned with our own little election; as usual the bad guys won with the result that Britain will continue to be Europe's only producer of nuclear weapons, radiation leaks and significant levels of acid rain. I don't know if I've mentioned this before but by the time I leave college (I hope to go somewhere for an MA after I finish my BA; so with involvement in more student union politicking it may be another five years) if I'm not either involved in politics myself to a significant degree and/or there isn't a satisfactory government running the country ("satisfactory" meaning anyone who isn't actively trying to destroy Britain, either economically or environmentally) then I'm emigrating as far away as possible. Mars would be ideal; failing that New Zealand if they'll have me.

Horrors! Pink Bunny KIDNAPPED! I'm gritting my teeth until the next exciting instalment. Which reminds me of a book I keep meaning to send to Pru (or Pru's agent) that I found in my sister's old book collection: it's a classic tale that goes under the name "When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit." I haven't read it but it looks pretty good.

Snide Critic was a curious column. Why didn't the Morgan tell us all about "Pee Wee's Big Adventure"? (Possibly because it came out in this country long ago, by movie standards.) It opens here in August and the man himself has been doing a couple of late-night chatshows and interviews in hip magazines to make sure we

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all go and see it—I'm going to drag all my friends along! All the same, I still want to see the kids' show—I mean, Gary Panter and Mark Mothersbaugh! Unfortunately it's the sort of thing that none of the TV stations over here would think about, unless by some small chance the movie turned out to be a big hit. Oh, and J.P., I saw HIGHLANDER recently—on video, admittedly—and it was lots of fun. So there.

Pigshit was a fine piece of work. All there is to say about it, really.

On (and Under) The Road—well, I was derogatory about this style of writing in my letter that got published in that very issue, but this seems to be getting better. I won't cry for more yet, but I don't object to it.

Rats Live On No Evil Star... I was about to harangue the title, but I just noticed that it's a palindrome which makes it maybe not so bad after all. The story itself was... well... okay, it was better than last year's. I've decided that, if possible, I'm going to have to come across to the party next year and do my damndest to IMPROVE THE GENERAL STANDARD OF THE GERBER, goshdarnit! With your permission, of course, hostess mine.

Divorcee In Distress was short but excellent. This paragraph is actually being written after I went to hear Jim Shooter talking about the development of comics a couple of nights ago. Naturally he preached Marvel Comics all down the line, neatly sidestepped some searching questions about sexism and racism and likewise avoided a question about why (a) comics were still dominated by superheroics after so long and (b) why so much superheroic stuff is stodgy and bears so little relation to real people. I'd love to see a comic do something like this... no, come to think of it, LOVE & ROCKETS already did in their "100 Rooms" story, although that was pretty different.

To the lettercol. Look, why are people going nuts about ALF? I've watched it a couple of times and on the whole I'd rather be in Philadelphia. Honestly, it bores me. There are better things to watch.

Dave Serlin brought up the subject of Andy Warhol. Has anyone else heard the rumour that the whole thing of Warhol's death is a fake? There are stories circulating that he's gone underground, has recorded the entire media circus that surrounded his demise, is editing it into a film and will resurface in the not-too-distant future to amaze and annoy the world with this, his greatest work. It's a great rumour—can't remember where I heard it—and would be lovely if it's true.

BCNU,

JAMES WALLIS
Flat 5, 139 Hainault Rd.
London E11 1DT ENGLAND

Dear Elayne:

I have not read the entire IJ #53 yet. The cover is my favorite of all the ones I've seen so far, I don't know why. "...Or Not TV" was good, I like reading about TV. Married With Children cracks me up (the creators must've met my former neighbors in Trenton); I like Tracy Ullman but I feel that she doesn't repeat enough of her characters and is trying too hard to invent fresh ones for each show. My fave character? Tough to say, but the first three shows rang true with the sketches and a few other later ones drag a bit. Molly Dodd confuses me a bit; I like Blair Brown even if they have made her look a lot like a younger version of Bonnie Franklin. There is a soap opera feel to Molly that repels me; I hated the segment with the mother refusing to answer questions about her hospital tests, and I can't stand the subplot with the ex-husband. I'd like to see Molly less as a victim (everybody from the elevator operator to the garbage man picks on her and treats her as if she is powerless and inane) and more like a brave woman who is summoning up enough courage to not only face a tough world but find perspective enough to laugh at it as well. I like the show, but thus far I don't respect the character. The show is a quality concept, and I think that they need a little time to work into a good rhythm.

I'm still angry over the cancellation of OUR WORLD which I liked (although Linda Ellerbee sometimes rubs me the wrong way). I watched this program every week, even in reruns, and though I always thought of things that they could've added they always included things that spurred my thirst for contemporary history.

I missed not seeing an Ackner piece, though I suppose the ad counts as something. There were a lot more graphics this time out; I think it perked up the pages quite a bit. Thanks for doing such a good job retyping my baseball piece; I found a few mistakes on my originals that I was hoping you'd catch.

In the Letters column James Wallis has befuddled me. He didn't like the Honeymooners piece but he likes the People piece. (Perhaps the Honeymooners doesn't play in England, but hey, that's the home of Fleet Street.) I'm not sure why, and I don't know what he means by "being introverted and examining things from his own angles." I'd write him but he is one of the people who doesn't seem to be fond of answering his mail... What I was hoping for when my stuff started appearing in IJ was a whole community of people who looked upon letter writing as not an obligation, but a joy, as I do. The fact is, I receive four to five times more comment from my readership at Outer Shell than I do from IJ... When I saw the letters column of IJ I remember glowing, "All right! People who write letters," and my thoughts were filled with images of a full mailbox stuffed with witty, intelligent correspondence. I tried to initiate some; thus far the response has been disappointing. What can I say?

Keep rockin,

KEN BURKE
P.O. Box 8
Black Canyon City, AZ 95324

(While I do try to caution anyone just getting involved with IJ against any preconceived notions of what we're about, I am a bit surprised that Ken, and other staff writers, have received as little personal response as they have. Perhaps many letter writers out there feel that if they write something about the work of Ken or anybody else for these pages, it's the same thing as writing to that person directly. Although I can understand that viewpoint—initially one of the reasons I so wanted to produce IJ regularly was because it was a way for me to keep in touch with my correspondents without feeling guilty I hadn't written them personally—I don't know how many readers remember the subtle and important differences between "LOCs" [letters of comment to 'zines] and actual personal letters, and I would again urge that you guys go on and talk to each other more, okay?)

Dear Elayne:

Lessee, how 'bout we "critique" the IJ? Okay, here goes:
COVER: I like it! 'Specially the little dude sitting on the lower left-hand side. He looks like a chewbacca sphinx. Hey, I like that, "chewbacca-sphinx." I'm gonna have to write a story and work one of them into it somewhere!

ACKNOWLEDGMENT: I'll tell you, Elayne, I meant to mention this from the last issue and forgot, and this time I'm not gonna let myself forget again: this is one of the best parts of IJ, it's just really fun to read! Send submissions and joints, indeed! Shame on you, smoking that nasty stuff! (Wanna share?!!) (Alas, apparently nobody took that remark seriously...)

FAN NOOSE: Have I told you, by the way, that I think the title and drawing are cute? (This gives me another chance to mention that the nifty logo is courtesy Margot Insley.) In any case, once again, I was able to pull out some useful information and all about magazines I might wanna read. Thanks!

AD FOR ANNI'S MAGAZINE: I started reading it and didn't realize at first it was the ad you mentioned in the front. Wanna tell me why she decided that bootleg tapes are okay and drugs aren't? (I guess 'cause, last I heard, the cops weren't making mass arrests of people selling bootleg tapes through the mails.) I, personally, can do a whole lot more with drugs than I can with tapes!

THE PURGATORY PAPERS: Boy, I'll tell you, I'm sure glad Tom DeJa's out there keeping the status quo in line. I, personally, go through stages. Sometimes, I really get into coupons. Most times, however, I don't even take 'em with me—too big a hassle. Thank goodness Tom's out there to make up for me—this world would be in a helluva fix without people like him, wouldn't it?

EDIBLE TRANSGRESSORS: I have no idea why, but I liked it! (Too much dope musta fried my brain—or was it the CIA with their microwaves?)

INTEREST: was interest-ing! (Aren't I clever?)

THE CONTINUING SAGA OF DR. IGUANA: Ralph-dammit, once again I liked this! I wish he'd write something shitty so I could say it was rotten! I HATE to keep complimenting people!

MOSES PARTS COMPANY: I fuckin' loved this...I really really liked it—for some reason, it just hit me the right way and every time I see it I start giggling idiotically! I mean, the way J.P. Morgan drew Moses is perfect! Can he make a series outta it? Moses doing this, Moses doing that? Hell, I'll try to supply him with ideas for it! (He has done something of a series of Moses illos, and I'll try to keep running them in future issues.)

Wow, these cops just went flying up my street, really fast with their lights on but no sirens. Wonder who's getting busted in Yup-Land today? Hope it's the jerk at the end of the street—he's such an ass!

MARKETING THE RIGHT TO VOTE: I'd have to put this high on the list my favorite stories in this IJ.

A VISIT TO GRANDMA'S: Prudence Gaelor did this (made it To Be Continued) just to drive me nuts, didn't she? God, I feel sorry for poor little Prudence being forced to go to the movies with that old witch!

SEVEN SIGNS THAT...: Cute. 'Specially #7!

TALK SHOW HOST CONFIDENTIAL: This was so completely goofy it wound up being funny.

Incidentally, the Yossarian Universal News Service is great—I wish NEWSWEEK would pick it up—it'd be a helluva lot more interesting to read if they would. Oh well, screw 'em, guess I'll just have to keep reading IJ!

I always knew Uncle Ronny (y'know, the guy who pretends to be the president?) was on drugs. No wonder Nancy's so busy with her "just say no" program—she's working off experience!

Have you read the book "IT'S OK TO SAY NO TO DRUGS"? Elayne, this book is outlandish! It keeps stressing that a mature person can make up his own mind and do what he wants to do (rather than what his peers want him to do) and then it goes on to teach parents how to brainwash their kids and get them to do what the parents want!

The front of the book is all the brainwashing stuff and all. The back half of the book is short stories that you're supposed to read to your kid in order to get them to give the "correct" answer.

All the stories end with "WHAT WOULD YOU DO?", presumably intended in order to coerce the "right" answer so the kid can be rewarded with something.

Among the various lies propounded in this book:

1. Many of the stories have the kids refusing to take cigarettes on the basis that they are drugs. Likewise, beer and alcohol—even champagne at Uncle Ed's wedding!
2. Drugs are incredibly dangerous to your health and well-being. One puff on that "marijuana cigarette" (yes, they REALLY call them that!) and you're history man!

3. The people who do use drugs are depicted as being amoral baby-eaters who have nothing but evil on their minds and make a career out of turning innocent kiddies into raving maniacs who are addicted to drugs.

4. Not only do they want you to say "no," they also want you to RAT ON ANYONE YOU KNOW WHO USES DRUGS (including cigarettes and beer, etc.). Be it your best friend, your sister or brother, no matter who, rat on them. It's for their own good.

5. The book states outright that pot is addictive. HIGHLY ADDICTIVE. And smoking it leads you to cocaine, PCP, LSD and etc. Inevitably, in all cases. No matter what.

6. Finally, the book lists warning signals on how to know if your kid is addicted to marijuana or any other nasties, and one of the "surest" signs is when you ask the kid and he says "no"—denial almost always indicates guilt!!!

Oh, fuck it. I've gotta do up one of the stories for you. Honest to God, this is word for word what it says:

JUAN'S STORY

Juan liked Doug, but became worried when he heard that Doug sold marijuana to several kids at school. One day while they were in Doug's room, Doug told Juan he had a surprise.

"What is it?" Juan asked excitedly. "A new book?"

"No," said Doug. "Guess again."

"Baseball cards?" Juan asked.

"No!" said Doug. "I've got some pot! Want some?"

"No thanks," Juan said, looking him squarely in the eye.

"But it's free!" Doug said.

"No thanks," Juan said. Juan was disappointed. Doug had just been pretending to be his friend all along. All he had really wanted to do was to get him started on marijuana and make him a customer!

"No thanks," Juan repeated, as confident as ever. "I've got to go home now." And he went home and told the whole story to his father.

What would you do?

Elayne, the drawing shows Doug holding a whole fucking SHOEBOX full of pot! "WHAT WOULD YOU DO?" SMOKE IT, ASSHOLE! JUAN IS OBVIOUSLY RETARDED! NO ONE IN THEIR RIGHT MIND TURNS DOWN FREE POT —ESPECIALLY WHEN OFFERED BY THE SHOEBOX!!

"What would you do, Kathy?" I'd throw the author of this crap into a live volcano, that's what I'd do! (And I'd consider this here Doug more of a friend than propagandists "pretending to be" friendly all along when all they wanted to do was to brainwash... I also can't imagine, even as avid a reader as I am and engaged to a librarian, that the first thing a typical kid would come up with when told of a surprise is "A new book?" I mean, come on.)

Anyhow, the book is really great to read while you're smoking marijuana cigarettes and risking addiction to PCP and LSD. You'll be laughing so hard you won't have time to go out and murder seven people when the drugs turn you into a homicidal maniac!

Well, gotta go, be talkin' at school!

Love,

KATHY STADALSKY

14264 Prospect Road

Strongsville, OH 44136

Salutations!(big deal)

On suggestion of the FAN NOOSE column, I sent off for LIVE FROM THE STAGGER CAFE. It was indeedly bizarre, bordering on the insane in some places, which is why I plan on sending for the summer edition.

Categorically, here's just what I think of #53 (only my second x-cursion into the IJ universe):

- 1) EDIBLE TRANSGRESSIONS (Kit)—Lester's right, but George Michael is a prat AND a wussy boy (or is it "wussy boy"?).
- 2) SEVEN SIGNS... (the A.J. Wright piece)—Pretty good, but what's so subversive about a Danger Mouse puzzle?
- 3) THREE FIRECRACKER STORIES (Oberc)—Last time, in #52, it was [David Serlin's] "Three Tales of Video Angst." Do you do things in threes on purpose, or is this some type of fate?
- 4) A SERMON FOR OUR TIME (Packie)—Very good work on a topic close to my heart. I knew a guy who had green hair at birth (Sure. And Tammy Bakker should use more mascara...).
- 5) GODSCAM (Stolte)—Hmm, there's a thought.
- 6) OR NOT TV—I'm glad someone else likes TRACEY ULLMAN, MARRIED WITH CHILDREN, and MOLLY DODD. I happen to like MR. PRESIDENT, and MAX HEADROOM is the coolest (right?).
- 7) PIGSHIT (Gold)—Y'know, some people MY age write like that (the fan letter)!
- 8) THE BIG BOY (Hess)—SEWWNPURH.

I never saw INSIDE STROKE. (Neither did anyone else, alas.) It's a shame that it went down. If someone else wants to carry it on, print it up, by all means.

Until the next correspondence,
DO YOURSELF GOOD!

ERIC WILSON (a soul in parentheses)
Route 2, Box 58
High Point, NC 27260

EW:

Yes? Wot's dis? Back from da grave is I. Actually, I just spent mosta da last 3 months wif my head in a hydraulic drill press. Sure it wuz fun but we all need a change of pace now an again. An' thanx fer gettin my birthday onna calendar. No checks pleeze. Tho Chex would be cool. Jes' remember ta send sum milk too and watch out for dem militant cows.

Reasons to stay alive lately:

box: SOMEWHERE OFF THE COAST OF MAINE by Ann Hood, FORCED

ENTRIES by Jim Carroll

flix: THE UNTOUCHABLES, RIVER'S EDGE, PRICK UP YOUR EARS,

RAISING ARIZONA

showz: the Feelies, Tackhead, Michelle-Shocked, the Mekons,
Skinny Puppy, Wiseblood
comix: THOSE ANNOYING POST BROS., LOVE AND ROCKETS, CALVIN &
HOBBES

newz: death of da century—Dick Shawn
hideous beastly embalmoid of all time—Tammy Faye Bakker
more fun than havin yer brain ripped out thru yer
nose—Iran/Contra hearings

Of course, A VISIT TO GRAMMA'S is totally wayradcoolandbitchin but ya expected me ta say that. If I wuz Kathy Stadalsky I wouldnae go round makin idle threats gainst Ms. Gaelor. I know where ya life an Ron Post is my kinda guy. HEY! 'snot a threat. Jus' trynta pass along sum friendly advice. Also, Michael Polo is clearly an individual of high taste and discernment. And also, I think yer confusin SATAN'S BRAIN SURGEON (which did run in 50 but was only a one-episode deal) wif VAMPIRE SORORITY BLUES (which ran in three globally reviled episodes at some other time). Anywayze, I got no plans ta reprint SATAN'S IN SHQC (Spontaneous Human Combustion Quarterly) (which should ackshully be done sometime dis summer—ya could knock me over wif a brick) as it's already been given over to James Wallis for runnin in INSTANT KARMA. So buy it from him if ya can't buy it from EW and as for further adventures, well me an' Pru are about set for anotha skirmish wif Kermit the Marine an' there's no tellin wot me might get up to...No guarantees. No rules. No rabbits. Trix are for kids. Locas Tambien rule.

Next stop: Bugtown!

RODNY KUVASZ DIOXIN
46 Sutton St., #3L
Brooklyn, NY 11222

Dear Elayne:

Somewhere, and not too far away from here at that, the city government of a major Pennsylvania metropolis which shall remain nameless is celebrating Independence Day and the 200th birthday of the Constitution by denying such "subversive, left-wing organizations" (to quote the city's mayor, a jolly fellow primarily known for giving the go-ahead to firebomb a block of row houses, which resulted in the death of several children) as N.O.W. and the Gay and Lesbian Task Force the right to protest at the festivities for fear they might offend some of the visiting dignitaries. This is enough to make a Thinking Person wish to dump some tea into a large body of water (of course, at the moment the nearest large body of water is a rather muddy puddle at the bottom of the parking lot, but it's the thought that counts), but, unfortunately, such activity requires, of necessity, first of all, sufficient quantities of tea to make an Impression (I somehow don't think the two boxes of Celestial Seasonings Sleepytime I have in the closet would do it, and all the supermarkets are closed) and, secondly, the ability on the part of the Thinking Person to stand up for more than ten minutes at a time without excruciating pain, an ability that I, sadly, lack at this particular point in time, so I have had to content myself with watching the Yankees lacklusterly put away the Texas Rangers (a very uninspired game, but out here in Phillie territory we take whatever the networks are willing to throw us) and hoping for the rain that's been threatening all day to come and wash away all their fireworks. Not much, perhaps, but you do the best you can.

In any event, I'm a bit pressed for time at the moment, as I am struggling to get out the first issue of *Bus Nine From Outer Space* on some semblance of deadline (being forbidden to sit at the typewriter for more than two weeks has done horrendous things to my schedule—do sympathize), so let me get right on to IJ #53 (lord, 53 issues, and here I'm having trouble accomplishing just one—Elayne, you're a wonder). To begin with, I yield to no one in my tremendous admiration for Kenneth Burke, so it pains me more than a little to have to state that his last Dr. Iguana was way off the mark. Not that it wasn't well-written because, as always, it was, but, for one thing, baseball, unlike wrestling, would be nearly impossible to orchestrate, first of all because there are currently 720 major league players, to say nothing of 30 managers, 60 base coaches, and an uncounted number of pitching coaches, batting instructors, trainers and umpires, and getting all, or even a majority, of them to cooperate with you, which you would virtually have to do, would take such quantities of time and money as to render the thing unworkable and, then, too, since the Chicago Black Sox scandal of 1929, major league play is so well-monitored that it is not, for example, unheard of for a shortstop to get thrown out of a game because the ball got dirty while going around the infield (it happened just the other night, as a matter of fact), so you can imagine what might happen if word of a fix got out. Besides, it is not at all true that "the fans don't really care as long as they're sufficiently entertained." Fans live and die with their particular teams, and if you've ever seen disappointed fans swarm a stadium and completely destroy an infield, it becomes frightening to contemplate what might happen to the players if their fans learned that they lost the pennant because they were paid to lose it. I do realize, of course, that Burke's piece was meant to be a satire, but the essence of good satire—and the thing that Burke normally does so flawlessly—is that it has some basis in reality, however slight; that there is always the possibility that such a thing just might be. Lose the basis in reality and you lose much of the humour, and all of the point, and Burke is far too good a writer to fall victim to such a thing.

On a more pleasant note, Prudence's Pink Bunny story continues wonderful, probably the best "series" ever run in IJ; "Commercial McClue-In" and "Four-Color Fiend" were both excellent this time around (though I like those George Wendt commercials. Wendt's one of three reasons—the other two are Rhea Perlman and the marvelous and underused Kelsey Grammar—that I still bother to watch CHEERS

—and I think the commercials are awfully funny in a low-key sort of way. I particularly like the one at the wedding), and it's lovely to see Mike Gunderloy contributing again. I do wonder, in regard to Kathy Stadalsky's story, just what was the point (*ah, but it is continued...*), and Susan Packie's "A Sermon For Our Time" rather eluded me as well (perhaps the pain killers are getting to me), but overall, thanks to the usual goodies from the usual people, IJ #53 was another in your long lists of hits.

Well, I really must dash. Do please forgive me, but attempting to pilot a space-going bus with only one workable leg (I'm the one with the one workable leg. As far as I know, the bus hasn't got any legs at all, which is precisely what worries me) does take it out of one.

Editorially yours,

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

Dear Elayne,

The first thing that struck me about IJ #53 was Tom Deja's "The Purgatory Papers." There are three foods he forgot to include in his essential-for-happiness list: Kool-Aid Mountain Berry Punch, a good cut of brisket and Folger's coffee. (*Well, he does do the coffee this time...*) I like the third-person style of his staffer autobiography, too. "Interest" by Dorian turned out to be a welcome change of pace from all those lesbian creature stories that have abounded lately. Mr. Burke's "Baseball" was a good satire. He does dialogue so excellently. Good work. Dr. Ligi, I voted 1-007-555-1212 because my answer was maybe, as long as televoting has nothing to do with the Iran-Contra affair. Prudence's "A Visit to Grandma's" is too cutesy nice, although I can't criticize her writing skill in the least.

I would like to see another "Seven Signs" by A.J. Wright, mainly because it was so "wright" (pun intended). "Commercial McC" is a must-read for anyone into media. Gooodood column. On a more personal note, Elayne, the word "prime" in the fourth stanza of my poem should have read "primo." But then, I'm only being a prima donna so ignore me. Thanks for a great issue.

MICHAEL POLO
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Victoria, TX 77109

Dear Elayne Wechsler:

Congrats on Ish 53 of INSIDE JOKE! I really want to thank you for the "Fan Moose" column, it's led to some great art/craft dialogues/successes/ventures.

In these days of SubGenius/Slackseeking, I marvel at how all these "fits" get into your periodical...(*As you have probably surmised, given our severe space restrictions of late, I often wonder about that myself!*) Thanks for your time and keep up the amazing work.

ELKION TUMBALE
P.O. Box 697
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Elaymekins!!

As an official IJ staffer as of #53, I present you with the obligatory lengthy letter. First les critiques du les storeez, awrt, et zetra.

Tom Deja's "Purgatory Papers" were a frightening version of my University of Florida future...Did you know I'm majoring in Adversity—uh, that is, Advertising? "Commercial McClue-In" is invariably my favorite column, next to comedy goddess Anni's, of course. I realize that poetry in IJ is mainly economical space-filler, but I have never liked much of it; however, Noël Valis' "A Lesson in Physics" was quite good. I love Prudence and Pink Bunny. The movies with Grandma episode brought back memories of my 6th grade in-public-with-a-parent slouch, which accounts for my bad posture today. A trip to K-Mart was the worst, and I found the best hiding places. It never occurred to me that anyone who saw me in an uncool place like K-Mart would also have to be there. I guess I thought that he/she would have a "legit" reason, like "I'm only here so that my older sister can buy me my own Walkman." Meanwhile I would cower in the dressing room, afraid that my mother would tear back the curtain while I was still half-dressed, suggesting some new item, like Toughskins plaid bellbottoms...

Onward. The cartoon of Morris the Cat was hee-larious. In a sort of related point, what is with these celebrities whose supposed charm is their obnoxiousness?, i.e., Bruce Willis, Alex Keaton, David Lee Roth (I could start a book of statements beginning with "Why does the public like..." and never reach a satisfactory conclusion). I can see that maybe men find these smirking smarmies witty or something, but women find these sexist attractive? (*Yo, welcome to the reactionary Eighties!*) Actually, though, I don't see how a man could like Maddie Hayes—she is such an uptight and unpleasant woman I almost wish David Addison would tell her to kiss off, but I suppose that these days, romance is quick comebacks, constant repetition of what someone has just said, and turning arguments into male/female forum studies. (*Gee, that's what it's like in our home—oops, never mind...*) Oops, RESPECT has just come on the radio, I need to jam. One moment. Okay, back on the track. Have you ever had the urge to say the "k" sound for absolutely no reason?

I'm afraid that I'm not a very specific letter writer, I can tell you only what I liked and didn't like, which doesn't do anyone any good. It's just that comedy and creativity are harder to respond to than, say, political opinions, or personal philosophy. To me, comedy writing is either good, bad, or potentially good if worked on. To those in IJ who write the latter type of stuff, I would have to address personally about their writings with some suggestions, and even then I wouldn't feel comfortable in a teacher role. I hope I haven't implied that IJ is just substance-

CAROL ESCOBAR MAGARY
(Address in transit)
Gainesville, FL

But what is your general aim of IJ? Semi-serious politzine? Miscellaneous clearing house for generally allied columnists? I'd like to know! Gary Gold raves about it but I don't think I'm reading the same thing he's talking about! (As I've said many a time in these pages, but it does bear repeating now and again, I don't believe in pigeonholing IJ and saying it's this or that type of zine. It's just IJ, is all. If pressed, I'll mumble something like "it's a commune in writing" or such frippery, but I do agree that I'd like every reader to get something else out of reading it depending on where their heads are at. You've obviously come out of fandom, which has a particular fondness for categorization, but I think stereotyping does everyone in question a disservice, so I try to avoid it wherever it crops up.) Like your media review columns, but the other stuff is going to take awhile.

Oh yes, I DO TYPE!, but the unit is in for minor repairs.
See lotsa my confreres from OUTER SHELL in 'ere as well. So
maybe I will see some space in here SOMEDAY when yer freeze is
lifted... (The freeze is only insofar as accepting new staffers; I
always accept new contributors in general, despite our space
limitations.) Keep in touch. Do you do theme issues? (We had a
couple, but because of the large amount of backlog material and
the freedom I like to give staffers, we aren't planning any more
for quite awhile, if ever.)
Gratefully yours,
DOUG PELTON a/k/a ROCK SFRING

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(Must be me—for all I know, Toyah Willcox is the lead accordion player for Skinny Puppy...)

Yoesarian Universal

