

\$1.00

#59

.....A NEWSLETTER.....

# INSIDE JOKE

....OF COMEDY AND CREATIVITY



# Upcoming Events

- APRIL 15 - **DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO IJ #60**; Titanic sunk (1912); Harold Washington (b. 1922)  
 APRIL 16 - Charlie Chaplain (b. 1889); Spike Milligan (70); Wilbur Wright (b. 1867)  
 APRIL 17 - KERRY THORNLEY (50)  
 APRIL 18 - San Fran earthquake (1906); Clarence Darrow (b. 1857); Hayley Mills (42)  
 APRIL 20 - Harold Lloyd (b. 1894)  
 APRIL 21 - St. Hector's Day (Patron Saint of people who don't know what's so great about digital recordings)  
 APRIL 22 - Earth Day; Nikolai Lenin (b. 1870); Jack Nicholson (52)  
 APRIL 23 - Roy Orbison (52); Shirley Temple (60); Bernadette Devlin McAliskey (41)  
 LAST WEEK IN APRIL: Reading is Fun Week; Professional Secretaries Week  
 APRIL 24 - Library of Congress (est. 1800); Shirley MacLaine (54 in this life)  
 APRIL 25 - Edward R. Murrow (b. 1908); Marconi (b. 1874)  
 APRIL 26 - Shakespeare (b. 1564); Chernobyl (1986)  
 APRIL 27 - Secretaries Day  
 APRIL 28 - Kiss-Your-Mate Day  
 APRIL 29 - Alfred Packer Day (since 1968)  
 APRIL 30 - MATT HOUSEHOLDER (33); Alice B. Toklas (b. 1877)  
 MAY 1 - Joseph Heller (54); Judy Collins (48); "Calamity" Jane (b. 1852); Mother Goose Day; May Day  
 MAY 3 - Pete Seeger (68); Lumpy Rug Day; NPR Anniv. (est. 1971); James Brown (54)  
 MAY 5 - Michael Palin (45); Karl Marx (b. 1818)  
 MAY 6 - Orson Welles (b. 1915); Sigmund Freud (b. 1856); Rudolph Valentino (b. 1895); Nat'l Nurses Day  
 SECOND WEEK IN MAY - National Bathroom Reading Week

*continued on page four, naturally...*

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* INSIDE JOKE is put on hexaweekly by Elayne Wechsler and tons \*  
 \* of dear friends, despite it being the End of an Era with this \*  
 \* price hike, and emanates from beautiful downtown Brooklyn, too \*  
 \* far a ride back from Madison Square Garden (no relation to \*  
 \* Mad. Sq. Station) at 11pm on a weeknight after having seen the \*  
 \* circus once again...  
 \* EDITOR-IN-RESIDENCE.....ELAYNE WECHSLER  
 \* PRODUCTION ASSISTANT.....STEVE CHAPUT  
 \*\*\*\*\*

## STAFF WRITERS/ARTISTS

\* ANNI ACKNER=====ACE BACKWORDS=====DEBORAH BENEDICT=====KEN BURKE  
 \* ==TOM DEJA=====MIKE DOBBS=====PRUDENCE GAELORE=====GARY PIG GOLD==  
 \* RORY HOUGHENS=====e.e. ligi=====J.P. MORGAN=====LARRY OBERC  
 \* ==SUSAN PACKIE=====ROLD=====STEVEN SCHARFF=====DAVID SERLIN==  
 \* KATHY STADALSKY=====DORIAN TENORE=====KERRY THORNLEY=====PHIL TORTORICI  
 \*\*\*\*\*

## FRONT COVER BY ACE BACKWORDS OTHER CONTRIBUTORS THIS ISSUE:

* R. BAIN	TODD KRISTEL	ANDY ROBERTS
* JOSEPH BENEVENTO	TULI KUPFERBERG	K.L. ROBERTS
* DAVID CASTLEMAN	MICHAEL LENETSKY	TOM ROBERTS
* BRIAN CATANZARO	GLORIA LEITNER	MIKE SCHAFER
* SUSAN CATHERINE	MICHAEL MACCARINO	PETER SHERMAN
* EUGENE FLINN	JED MARTINEZ	DANA SNOW
* PATRICIA FLINN	MARK McDONALD	LARRY STOLTE
* BJORN FNORD	LUKE MCGUFF	STEVEN SWEENEY
* VERNON GRANT	MAX NUCLEAR	VALERIE UTTON
* MARY ANN HENN	MICHAEL POLO	ALAN VANDENBURGH
* WAYNE HOGAN	M.C. REED	SIGMUND WEISS
	and "KID" SIEVE	



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## ACKNOWLEDITORIAL

Well, as this is the time for bad financial tidings, I have yet another. Starting April 3, postal rates are going up again. The bastards'll have us by the throats for 25¢ for the first ounce and 20¢ for each additional one domestically, and they're not telling me yet what the damages for Canadian mail will be (I think it's to be set at 30¢ for the first and perhaps 21¢ for each thereafter).

I thought I had a choice—I don't. The price of INSIDE JOKE has to go up. I just can't afford to lose \$200 printing 150 copies of an issue plus \$98 for 150 stamps, every eight weeks. But I hesitate to hike IJ's price up too much, because frankly we try to be above the kind of bilking that's going on courtesy our venerable United States institutions.

So, starting with IJ #60, our next issue, INSIDE JOKE will cost \$1.50 per issue. Advance subscriptions will go up to \$12 for a year's worth. Contributors other than staffers will have the option of being swell folks and paying the \$1.50 or kicking in 65¢ worth of stamps for the 3 oz. mailing (Canadian contributors have to kick in 71¢ worth of American stamps; internationally I'll still take 3 TRCs per issue as subscription). For the time being, sample/first-time issues of IJ have to stay at \$1 each, because we're listed in too many places as being \$1; gradually, this should change to \$1.50 as well.

I truly am sorry about this, readers, but I have no choice. As I've mentioned, I'm already losing over \$2000 a year just putting out IJ. I'm willing to take something of a loss, because I do this for the love of it, but I'm no longer willing to be that much of a sucker to Post Office and copy shop whims. I know you understand, and I hope to still see you around next issue!

On to happier news—by all accounts, the IJ party seemed to be a rousing success once more, and I thank all attendees for making it so: R. Bain, Dorian Tenore, Winnie Bartilucci, Tom Deja (Tom and Winnie gave a dynamite Bob & Ray-type floor show), Karen Valinotti (winner of the Grand Door Prize, a year's worth of free IJs), Anne Bernstein, Susan Knapp, Richard Onley, Mike Lenetsky, Felicity, David Serlin, Laura, Jed Martinez, Mari Thelander, Peter Sherman, Steven Scharff, Daza, Doug Pelton-in-absentia (he called in), and special thanks to Anni Ackner, houseguest extraordinaire, without whose help Steve and I would never have been able to organize things so well. The completed Gerber, featuring such diverse fictional characters as the Godzilla family, Steven Spielberg, Donald Trump and Spike Lee, is included herein, and I'm already looking forward to next year's blowout!

Also in this issue, with any luck (read: space), is my semi-annual TV review/update; the debut/intro of our newest staffer, Kathy Stadalsky (welcome!); the conclusions of stories from both Joseph Benevento and Patricia Flinn (Pat's husband Eugene also has a tale herein); continuing artwork from Tom and Ken Roberts (who have sent me enough "Homo Patrol"s to last a couple years!), Brian Catanzaro (who sent a ton of "Multiple Choice" spots), Susan Catherine (whose "Lunch Counter" series should run nearly forever) and the usual (Tuli, Wayne, Vernon, etc.); too much space taken by Jed in his Animation Update (but how could I cut out all that valued info?); the first of, so she tells me, a four-parter by Pru; and what I hope is not the last piece from Ligi (just as I hope Carol and J.P. both return with writing next issue). No real More Than I Need To Know erotica warnings this time, but I've a few MTINTKS for Ken Burke (graphic violence), Larry Oberc (grossness with insects) and Larry Stolte (making fun of fat women, or the Gary Schandling Award). I'm sure nobody else gives a shit, though...

A couple minor notes before I get to the mandates: Every April Fool's Day (IJ High Holy Day), parody newspapers are put out in towns throughout the country. If anyone out there is able to get a hold of one, I'll pay purchase and postage costs, as I collect the suckers...Also, for the first time I'd like to actually endorse a presidential candidate in these pages: IJ hereby throws its nebulous support to Bill "Spaceman" Lee, Candidate for Pres on the Rhino Party ticket (we would've endorsed Papoon, but I think he's fallen asleep again)...

Thanks to J.C. and Pru for their donations this month—I could use a few more ads, though (business card size is still \$5 each), plus I'm still selling IJ Top Ten Lists (\$2 each by mail), caps (\$5 each) and back issues (still only \$1 each, but they'll go up as postage costs rise so get 'em while you can!) except for #20, as I've temporarily run out of that issue.

Speaking of running out, I hereby state for the record (and it will be written into our Writers'/Artists' Guidelines when I re-type them) that I CAN ONLY AFFORD TO SEND OUT ONE INSIDE JOKE PER CUSTOMER, since I don't have the money to make more copies. If you want more than one copy of an issue, you're perfectly welcome to photocopy as many as you'd like from your copy, okay? Other rules—The deadline for IJ #60 is April 15; for IJ #61 it's May 31. INSIDE JOKE is a by-subscription-only publication, because if we can't spare extra copies for paying subscribers we certainly can't spare copies for trading, y'know? Advance subs are NON-REFUNDABLE and if there's an "X" by your name on your mailing label it's time to renew. New prices are listed above; if you care to complain (not that it'll change anything), we're at

P.O. Box 1609, Madison Square Station, New York, NY 10159.

I'd wanted to dedicate this issue to the memory of Martin Speckter, the creator of the interrobang (!), but what with Andy Gibb and Johnny Wad and, oh, everyone passing away so suddenly, I just know it's my duty to dedicate this IJ to Divine; RIP.



# DIARY of The ROCK FIEND



by  
Anni Ackner  
MY FAVOURITE THINGS

I've said it before and I will, almost undoubtedly, say it again (having reached the age when it becomes advisable to discreetly not remember just about everything one does after 7:00pm, there's a fairly good chance that I will say pretty nearly all of what I have already said again): Being a Witty, Sophisticated, Acerbic Commentator on the American Scene is in no way all that it's cracked up to be. I have, on numerous occasions in the past, discussed the problems of having nothing about which to write (usually most prevalent during those times when speculations about Michael Jackson's plastic surgery are featured prominently on the covers of more than three glossy magazines), the problems of having plenty about which to write, but discovering that the reality of the world is vastly more amusing than anything your feeble imagination could possibly create (also, curiously enough, most prevalent during those times when speculation about Michael Jackson's plastic surgery are featured prominently on the covers of more than three glossy magazines), and the problems of working for editors who sincerely and charmingly believe that little elves come out at night to clear for those poor, struggling writers whom editors decline to pay, but far, far worse than any of these are the problems caused by the Ugly Rumours that periodically circulate around those of us who make what passes as a living by attempting, with admittedly varying degrees of success, to be Funny.

Now, one does not reach my previously stated age (which is, for those enquiring minds that want to know, somewhat older than George Michael but appreciably younger than everyone concerned with the Grateful Dead—which, I realize, is rather like saying that one is somewhat younger than certain glacial formations in the Antarctic, but let it pass) without having taken her share of knocks and learning to roll with the punches, and it's true enough that I can, under normal conditions, manage to take most of your ordinary, standard issue Ugly Rumours in my stride. For instance, when it began to be banded about in some circles that I was nothing but a late-20's adolescent moaning away about my teenaged fantasies, did I run away and hide for shame? I did not! Rather, I marched out firmly, with my head held high, proudly clutching my autographed 8 x 10 colour photograph of John Lithgow like the honourable emblem it was. And when I heard it circulated among certain parties that Fran Liebowitz and I were naught but the same person, did I scream and pitch the righteous fit to which some thought I was entitled? Perish the thought! I simply bided my time and made it a point never to show up on the David Letterman show looking as though I had just spent the last couple of years keeping light housekeeping under a laundry mangle, until the whole unsightly business blew over. And when...well, you get the idea. The point is that I am not the girl to be easily unhinged by the sound of my name being taken in vain and, if I do say it, I think I'm tolerably good at withstanding the slings and arrows periodically tossed at me by the sort of person who, I am sure, thinks Richard Belzer is a Great American Humourist. However, even a calm, collected sort like myself has her breaking point, beyond which it is unwise to push, and I am very much afraid that I have recently reached mine.

Oh yes, troops, it's come to that. You can say I'm juvenile, you can say I'm untalented, and you can even say I'm Fran Liebowitz, and all you'll draw from me is a slightly superior smile, but the one thing you cannot say about Anni Ackner with any feeling of impunity is that she's one of those terrible people who simply does not like anything in the whole entire world.

Shocking, isn't it? I mean, of all things! In the first place, such an allegation—which has been kicking around quite a bit lately, and which only goes to point out ever more forcefully that you should never, ever open any letter that comes with drool marks on the envelope—puts me right in the company of fellows like Andy Rooney, and a lady does have a reputation to maintain, however sordid that reputation may be, and, in the second place, this accusation is completely and totally unfounded, with not even a grape nut of truth to it.

Well, all right, I know how it looks. I know that I haven't precisely become known for my adorable little essays on All Things Bright and Beautiful. I am aware that, when people gather about me at parties, it isn't generally to hear me extolling the praises of the newest line of Hallmark greeting cards, and that raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens don't usually head up my Christmas want list (incidentally, I could use a couple of season tickets to Yankee Stadium); nevertheless, none of this means that I don't care for anything in this hurried old world of ours. On the contrary, I am fond of quite a few things and—although I don't feel any particular need to justify myself to the kind of person who spreads this variety of gossip (and who also, by the way, invariably seems to be the kind of person who borrows your copy of *When Rabbit Howls* and then moves to Bombay)—because I do feel that you, my loyal supporters, deserve some comfort and explanation in my hour of darkness, I shall now delineate some of them for you. Of course, I hardly need tell you that the things that

warm the cockles of my heart aren't in the ordinary line of, say, lovely hankies edged in lace and paintings of doggies playing pool on black velvet, but, rather, are of a more specialized sort, worthy of both soothing my more eclectic tastes and filling up a couple of typewritten pages because, well, you'd worked that out for yourself already, hadn't you?

In any event...

WHO COULD ASK FOR ANYTHING MORE?

OR

*The Sun in the Morning, the Moon at Night, and a  
Blank Check to Pass Those Idle Hours in Between*

Although there are many, many small, unappreciated things that make life meaningful and joyous for me, among my very, very favourites are:

1) Toilet Plungers: Have you ever really stopped to think about the humble toilet plunger? Surely it is one of humankind's greatest creations. Unadorned, basic in design, no moveable parts, simple enough for even the most uncoordinated to use and, best of all, it does precisely what it's intended to do, with unequalled success, at least 85% of the time, which is a great deal more than you can say for, say, Minuteman Missiles, the democratic process or, for that matter, most men.

2) Snickers Bars: In a world chock full of disappointments, where one's favourite political candidate fails to garner as many votes as "Undecided" in a state most notable for corn fields and unemployment, where one's favourite television programme is cancelled to make room for a new vehicle for MacLean Stevenson, and a \$5.00 pair of Calvin Klein panty hose is liable to develop an anag as one attempts to put them on, a Snickers bar presents a soothing lack of surprises. I've never met a Snickers bar I didn't like. A Snickers bar has never turned on me, run up my phone bill, taken money out of my purse without asking, or voted for a state-wide abortion control bill. A Snickers bar wants only to serve and, as their advertising is quite correct in boasting, they really satisfy. A Snickers bar invariably hits the spot. The United States Olympic Ski Team would do well to take a lesson here.

3) Diaphragms: Actually, I don't care much about diaphragms one way or the other but, as far as I know, they're the last inanimate objects left on earth on which no one has ever attempted to put a picture of Spuds McKenzie, so I thought they deserved some kind of special mention.

4) The Academy Awards Broadcast: Some people like the Academy Awards Broadcast because they enjoy seeing their favourite performers up close. Some people like the Academy Awards Broadcast because they find it exciting to guess which actors and motion pictures will win the major awards, and some just find it all campy, silly fun. Me, I like the Academy Awards Broadcast because it reassures me, year after year, that if I haven't got anything else in the world, I have better taste than Cher.

5) Sony Walkmen: Yeah, I know they're toys of the Yuppie Class, and I know they're bad for your hearing, and I know they're dangerous in traffic, and I even know they're probably one of the major contributing factors to the decline of decent conversation in our society, but I also know that they're the one thing in the world, short of a limited nuclear war, that will effectively block out that fellow on the crosstown bus who is frantically trying to interest me in his recent communications with the Imperial Ambassador from the Planet Simplesse, and for that they have my eternal and undying gratitude.

6) The Current Anti-Drug Campaign: Once upon a time, I used to have to waste much valuable time—sometimes hours of it—finding out, through the tedious process of trial and elimination, wading through reams of useless conversation, whether or not someone was a pompous, self-righteous boor, and even then I wasn't always able to tell with any degree of certainty until it was far too late, and I was trapped in the middle of one of Those friendships. Nowadays, however, the combined forces of the White House, the White House's wife, the media, the advertising agencies and the Current Social Climate have very sweetly eliminated this problem for me, because, in the words of that lovely man who sells me potato chips, I gar-ron-tee that anyone who comes to a party wearing a "Just Say No" tee shirt, or who rings up to chat about the latest statistics correlating teen-aged drug use and Satanism, or who knows all the words to "Users are Losers" is going to be a pompous, self-righteous boor. You can go to the bank on it.

7) Mr. Ruth Westheimer: I have never met the husband of the estimable Dr. Ruth—although I would dearly love to—but I rest secure each night in the knowledge that he's got to be one in a million. I mean, really.

8) Cigarette Lighters: They're handier than matches, more efficient than rubbing two sticks together and, as detailed in another column, a great deal safer than stove burners, besides which, they fit neatly into a jacket pocket (which you definitely can't claim about a stove burner) and, in a pinch, they can be pressed into service as kitty toys, but what I most admire about cigarette lighters is their dexterity. Always one jump ahead of you, the cigarette lighter you are positive you left on top of the refrigerator will be discovered sunning itself on the window sill, the one you thought you had trapped in the medicine cabinet will have easily made the Great Break for Freedom and be reposing on the kitchen sink and, most astonishing of all, after a frustrating hour with nothing to light your lonely cigarette, you will give up in defeat, prepare for sleep, and find that 212 of them have crawled into bed with you to keep you company. It's absolutely amazing.

9) Jackie Collins: It isn't that I like her books, you under-

(continued next page)

stand—although, for anyone with even a touch of literary masochism, there is a kind of fascination here, like that to be garnered from staring, glassy-eyed, at a couple of months worth of George Will's columns—but there's this sort of theory I have that bad books, not unlike Shirley MacLaine's past lives, are always more or less hanging around in the atmosphere, waiting for some unwary soul to walk by. When they spot a live one—or, more accurately, a dead one—they jump down (I assume they take lessons from cigarette lighters), somehow insinuate themselves into your mind, and force you to write them. The way I figure it, Jackie Collins personally saved me from having to write Hollywood Wives and how could I not love a selfless act like that?

10) Anarchosyndicalism: To be perfectly honest with you, I don't even know what this is, but I have discovered, through trial and error, that if you sit in a corner of a crowded room and mutter it over and over to yourself, people will not only tiptoe quietly away and leave you alone, you will probably end up with complete possession of the brie. Works every time.

So there now, you have proof positive of the folly of paying attention to unfounded gossip and outright slander. You can see for yourself that my nature is as warm, loving, and full of good feeling as the next person's—and I don't want to hear one word about the next person being Morton Downey. Is that understood? Not one word—and I hope and trust that you'll hold this little example firmly in mind the next time you hear some piece of nonsense about a poor, defenseless, Witty, Sophisticated, Acerbic Commentator on the American Scene. Even if you hear the one about me and that fellow who claimed to be from Marcourt Brace Jovanovich. Really, hold that thought. Really.

## The Convict by Andy Roberts

I'll start back from as far as I know:

My grandfather was a much-heralded WWI flying ace who had been decorated for bravery by the President of the United States. Considered a rube by the people he thought were his friends, he nevertheless amassed a considerable fortune in the production of kelp. He had always been an old man in my memory, but strong—with prominent tendons and corded wrists. He had an unruly shock of white hair, like a rooster's comb, that continually fell over his forehead. This is what I remember when I think of my grandfather.

My grandmother was born in a one-room schoolhouse in Maine and later moved to Montana. She returned east to study and to earn a teaching degree and eventually moved back to Montana to educate the poor unfortunates on Indian reservations (she was of the class that took pride in a social conscience). Periodically, an urge to escape the reservations would seize her and she would make trips to New York, San Francisco, New Orleans and Boston—where she met my grandfather, fell in love, and was introduced to the pleasures of world travel. Consequently, the teaching was abandoned, a more appropriate past construed, and the social amenities were worked upon. She took great pains to conceal her naivete, but in my mind she is always connected with schoolhouses—schoolhouses and rattlesnakes.

From my mother I inherited guilt and weak vision and a love of fine literature. She also had a musical ear and taught herself to play the piano at the age of nine; she plays only rarely now but with great panache and dexterity. I myself am tone-deaf. She loved to dance and would jump at the chance whenever she got one. She was gorgeous, in a merciless sort of way—in her presence men tended to gulp their drinks. But my mother is a practical woman and for all intents and purposes runs the family business. She's the brains of the operation. She wears the pants in the family.

My father is a dresser. In his younger days he was considered quite a ladies' man. He still keeps a collection of love letters in a bottom drawer despite frequent protests from my mother. He has photographs of his past girlfriends and is not shy about them—his taste in women runs toward the bizarre. "I find beauty in all women," he would explain.

With a well-established moneymaking business (we export kelp to Japan), an ideal upbringing was possible for a writer. This was my choice, for on his thirteenth birthday my older brother was chosen to inherit the family business. I had no interest in practical matters (I loved only to read) and upon reaching my maturity announced that I would become a writer. This was well-received and came as no surprise since I had shown some previous talent in this area.

Every convenience was made available: I had a large room to myself with a writing desk, typewriter, pens, pencils, paper and bay windows overlooking the green hills of our estate. Our library was well-stocked and kept up to date with the latest literary talent, travel was made possible, world events were discussed—in short, every accommodation was offered.

I seized the opportunity and, making the most of my inspiration, churned out stories at an alarming rate. Everyone said I showed great promise and success as a writer was virtually assured. Unfortunately, my talent never matured and I was forced to desperate measures.

I'll admit it, I'm a convict. I have been accused and convicted of plagiarism. My trial was a sham. Great scholars testified that I threatened the very fabric of society, that by my devious machinations had undermined the foundation of modern literature. I was a scourge, a scurrilous breed, a menace that was not to be tolerated and must be dealt with accordingly.

Oh, how I burned in that courtroom! Menace, what menace was I! My books were hardly noticed, they made no impact on the world.

# Inside IJ Staffers

While I'm saddened that the earth of Alabama seems to have swallowed up A.J., I'm very happy to welcome by-now-IJ-regular Kathy Stadalsky to fill the empty spot on the staffer roster. Here's what she has to say for herself:

KATHY STADALSKY  
860 Hollywood Ave.  
Sheffield Lake, OH 44054  
September 21, 1959

Kathy Stadalsky (born Kathy Helms on 21 September 1959 in Abilene, Texas) lives in Sheffield Lake, Ohio with her husband (Bob, God of Ohio), daughters Anna and Maggie, dog Duke, numerous tropical fish and an ungodly number of houseplants (some of them legal).

Because of her habit of participating in MTINTK sports with Bob (God of Ohio), Kathy is expecting her third and last child on or about April 7, 1988.

In her spare time, Kathy writes short stories, reads just about anything, and writes letters to those who write letters to her, in addition to numerous other activities of a more domestic nature.

Known to get bent out of shape at the smallest things (her latest pet peeve is the word "boka" or "bokay," both of the word "bouquet"), Kathy was voted Most Likely to Cause a Riot or Be Arrested for Political Troublemaking by her senior class in 1977. To date, neither prophecy has come true, although Kathy is still hopeful.

Kathy's main goal in life is to have at least one of her books banned by the pope or any other religious entity bent on saving our world from literary subversion. Her ultimate dream would be to have her book banned by an entire country.

I was going to again list staffer addresses and urge interested readers to correspond with staffers outside of the limits of IJ, as they all truly love hearing from you and some of them even write back, but as Kathy herself is moving shortly after the birth of her third, and several others are perpetually in transit, I'm going to hold off on that for a couple of issues...

## UPCOMING EVENTS cont'd. from p. 2

- MAY 10 - Fred Astaire (b. 1899); Golden Spike Day (1869)
- MAY 11 - Salvador Dali (84); Mort Sahl (61)
- MAY 12 - Limerick Day; Yogi Berra (63)
- MAY 13 - Blame Someone Else Day
- MAY 14 - David Byrne (36); Native American Day
- MAY 15 - Brian Eno (40); L. Frank Baum (b. 1856)
- MAY 16 - VAL WECHSLER (30); Studs Terkel (75); Billy Martin (60); Lowell Weicker (57)
- MAY 17 - Dennis Hopper (52)
- MAY 18 - Visit Your Relatives Day; Reggie Jackson (42); James Stephens (37)
- MAY 19 - Pete Townshend (43); Grace Jones (36); Ho Chi Minh (b. 1890); Malcolm X (b. 1925)
- MAY 20-28 - Cartoon Art Appreciation Week
- MAY 20 - Eliza Doolittle Day; Joe Cocker (44)
- MAY 21 - ANNE BERNSTEIN (27); "Fats" Waller (b. 1904); Alexander Pope (b. 1688)
- FOURTH WEEK IN MAY - International Pickle Week; Public Relations Week
- MAY 22 - Arthur Conan Doyle (b. 1859)
- MAY 23 - Friedrich Anton Mesmer (b. 1734) (44)
- MAY 24 - Bob Dylan (47); Brooklyn Bridge (105); Frank Oz
- MAY 26 - Harlan Ellison (54); Al Jolson (b. 1886)
- MAY 27 - Dashiell Hammett (b. 1894); Golden Gate Bridge (50?); Vincent Price (77); Christopher Lee (66)
- MAY 29 - MIKE DOBBS (34); T.H. White (b. 1906)
- MAY 30 - Mel Blanc (80); Michael J. Pollard (49)
- MAY 31 - Fred Allen (b. 1894); Peter Yarrow (50);  
DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO IJ #61

No, I was not innocent, but was I guilty? Could I help it that in my mind sentences flowed through the rhythms of Dickens and Poe and I was compelled to put them to paper? Could I help it that every word I wrote had been written before?

I still remember the prosecutor's plea: "Your Honor, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I give you a plagiarist, pure and simple—of this fact it has been clearly shown. Samples of his 'work' have been produced and quoted and shown to their original sources. There can be no doubt as to his intentions. The plagiarist is a menace, he is a pestilence on the wellspring of human creativity, and I ask you, ladies and gentlemen, that you find this man guilty. And, Your Honor, I implore you, that in the name of decency no leniency shall be shown." The jury was swayed and the verdict handed down.

I have been sentenced to twelve years hard labor—locked in a cell to produce original fiction. I am not allowed to read. My cell is bare, I have one adornment—a crude landscape painted by a fellow prisoner (perhaps overly fond of Cezanne?)—I have one window, it lets in a little light, sometimes I can see birds through the bars. And so, being an excellent and obedient prisoner, I begin: "It was a dark and stormy night..."



LIBERTY, LIKE CHARITY, MUST BEGIN AT HOME"  
 — James Bryant Conant (1893 - 1978).  
 When liberty prevails for everyone as it will under  
 Brainbeaism there won't be any need for charity  
 because everyone will be working as in past and  
 future herenows. Send S.A.S.E. to inescapable, year  
 'round paying 20-60 Even Age Work Force Plan or  
 simply EVEN AGE — Box 2243  
 YOUNGSTOWN — OHIO, 44504



WILL SHATTER MEETS SID  
 VICIOUS SOMEWHERE ON  
 THE DARK SIDE OF THE  
 MOON

My, how time flies.  
 Last night we rented  
 out the "Sid & Nancy"  
 video. Has it already  
 been 10 years since  
 poor ole Sidney bought  
 the big one?

That same night I was reading in the Sunday Chronicle about the latest heroin death, one Will Shatter of the late, great seminal (what the fuck does THAT mean? Quick check of the dictionary: "Seed or semen, source") San Francisco punk band Flipper.

Many thoughts came tumbling down the ole subconscious regarding these two cosmic occurrences and, lucky you, I'm gonna share a few with you.

No, this isn't any lame NEWSWEEK "End of An Era—Punk Rock Phenomenon Ten-Year Retrospective." Leave that kind of bullshit for the paid hacks. But verily, the writing is on the wall. In the Will Shatter article he was referred to as "the old man of punk" ... a veritable Methuselah, dead at the ripe old age of 31 (my own age, as a matter of fact). So there you have it—punk rock book-ends; Vicious dead at 20 and Shatter dead at 30. And me in the middle with 10 years of garbled history passing under the bridge.

There are moments that crystallize time, that make you stop and ponder just where the hell you're coming from and where you're going. My youth is spent. That first virgin bloom, fresh-faced, innocent, eagerly discovering a world without perceived limits. All the people, places, and madness that went rushing in front of my eyes. And how they're all gone. And you can never get it back. The closest you can get it re-reading the yellowing letters you keep stacked underneath boxes of moldy shit. You read the one from the girl who turned you down (thought you'd never recover from that one), marvelling at the faded memory of insane, unhar- nessed passion between the lines. All that's left is a ghost.

And there's the stacks of old punk leaflets, advertising for bands and clubs long disbanded. The Lewd at the Mabuhay. Flipper at the Elite Club. Crucifix at the Tool & Die. All gone.

People always downplay "nostalgia," as if it's nothing but sen- timental mold of the mind. Not so. Look; this present moment is just a split second of fleeting sensations—me banging on the typer, a Flipper record on the box. But I got 31 years of back- logged shit still stewing in my brain cells. Now and again it pays to do a little house-cleaning, sorting through the boxes of memories and trying to make sense of all these half-digested images. The Ghost of Punk Rock Past.

I flash on 1977. I had a pony-tail and a backpack, hiding out on the back streets of San Francisco looking for hippies and flower children. Finding instead four greasy homos with leather jac- kets and short, Martian-looking haircuts, playing Lou Reed covers in their back alley clubhouse behind the Chronicle building. The band was called Crime. Something new was happening. The first call of arms of My Generation. The post-Vietnam generation. (This is history here, so listen up.) A big, black Cadillac was always parked outside the Crime clubhouse, totally out of place amongst the lowlife scum squalor of the skid row alley. No doubt it was some bigwig recording company exec sniffing out a big killing by being a step ahead of the hulking masses. The eternal entrepreneurial quest for The Next Big Thing. Mercifully, no pin- striped asshole made mega-bucks off of Punk.

Will Shatter lived a stone's throw from this garbage dump. He felt at the time that the world was coming to an end, so why not smash up the Cadillac's windshield, get on stage and scream and spit and throw beer bottles and shoot heroin in your arm and go out with a BBAANNGG!!

But whattaya know. It's 1988 and the world's still chugging along. Minus one Will Shatter, of course. Actually, I always thought Punk was the perfect soundtrack for the Apocalypse. (But what do you do for an encore?)

We were the Blank Generation—disgusted with the American dream, yet stumped for an alternative.

Consider this: In 1955 there were eight murders in Oakland. In 1987 there were 145. The Apocalypse is gonna be a lot more drawn-out, painful and dirty than the nice clean instantaneous nuclear mushroom that people have deluded themselves into be- lieving.

Our only protection was shielding ourselves with layers of cynical humor. Fortunately for us, life turns out to be a Big Joke after all. And even when the joke is on us, it's still kind of funny.

So raise a glass to Will Shatter and Sid Vicious. Mutant seeds of the Blank Generation. Kamikazis for the Nuclear Age.

## IZZY ON DRUGS (A Sharp Report on the Loud Bang Theory)

by Roldo

They found me in the corner, right where I'd left me. They didn't believe me when I told them I couldn't talk. It would seem that no matter what void you come back to there's always something to confront.

Somebody was droning on about "the workers." I sug- gested that one way to make ends meet is to reduce the middle. She gave me the kind of look most people re- serve for the leftovers of a bad meal. I considered sprouting feathers, but after digesting the idea, I let it pass.

"What you need," she asserted, "is religion. You've got to have something to believe in!" I told her I'd be leaving soon enough. As soon as the bus came, I'd kiss this scene goodbye and not look back.

Aside from my record as an all-round rapper, I was stuck for a line. There must be a cue from somewhere, but if you wait too much it could get heavy. Best to skip the parry and go straight to the thrust. Fancy footwork don't cut no rugs when you can't reach the floor. There are any number of non-sequiturs waiting to counter-serve cliches and even when the cows come home, you can only milk this sort of bull only so far.

### SOME MIGHTY GOOD LICKS

by Wayne Hogan

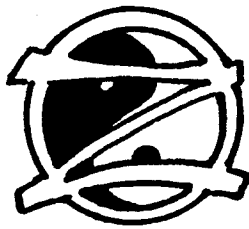
If you're Julliard-trained and you hold 'em just right, you can get some mighty good licks from a paira chopsticks.

## Flying Objects

by Larry Oberc

Things keep on attacking, flying objects, sitting on a porch, drinking a quart of beer, telling blue jay stories, time was walking down the driveway carrying bag of empty beer cans to the dumpster, saw white fluff, walked past it, tossed the bag in the dumpster, stopped, leaned over to see fluff, two blue jays swooped low, ducked, ran back to house, jays swooping from opposite directions, screaming, inside catching my breath, shaking, figuring out fluff, baby blue jay done me wrong, others telling jay stories, mean fuckers, those jays, but nothing like red winged black birds, hang out round ponds, fly fast, get up in your face yelling, flapping those wings like blood, splatter splatter, they tell me there are cockroaches in New Jersey that can fly, lady next door to where I was living moved her fridge, wanted to clean behind it, flying roaches jumped her, got her by surprise, leaping up off the ground, swarming, people kept their windows shut, didn't want no flying roaches getting inside, my brother is allergic to bee stings, I'm not, he gets stung, swells up bad, I never get stung, bee gets in my house I got it dead, a quarter shot of whiskey tossed just right, soak it good, let it sit a minute, it'll fall, drop on floor, step fast, flies move too fast, trick is pull the shades, get it dark, open fridge door, let that fridge light shine, fly buzzes by, heads in, checks out the light, close the door, time it, shut, ten minutes, open door, fly zapped out, knock out of fridge, toss on floor, step, my sister opened her mouth once, she was bitching about grass- hoppers, they were bouncing around us, three four feet off of the ground, a strong grasshopper leaped up, landed in her mouth, she freaked, swallowed it, blamed me for it, for making her walk through a field of grasshoppers, last time I was in a plane we hit light- ning, flew to 20,000 feet, don't need to know that, that we're at 20,000 feet, pilot says we're moving 525 mph, don't need to know that either, stewardess offers me a drink, nope, not this flight, land, brother meets me at the airport, pulls a tall boy out from under his coat, he's never flown before, this was my first flight, he knows how he would feel, the cop at the door smiles as I take a long swig, he doesn't like to fly either... 5

# Zenarchy STORIES



by Ho Chi Zen

RAJNEESH ON KOANS

In view of his reputation as a cult leader who collects Rolls Royces, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh has written some surprisingly good books on meditation. The following quotation is from the Introduction to *Meditation: The Art of Ecstasy* (Harper & Row, 1978):

*Meditation cannot be done by thinking. This is the dilemma—the greatest dilemma. Every seeker will have to come to this dilemma. Somewhere, sometime, the dilemma will be there. Those who know say, "Jump, do not*

*think!" But you cannot do anything without thinking. That is why unnecessary devices have been created—unnecessary devices, I say, because if you jump without thinking, no device is needed. But you cannot jump without thinking, so a device is needed.*

*You can think about the device. Your thinking mind can be put at ease about the device, but not about meditation. Meditation will be a jump into the unknown. The device is necessary only because of the training of the mind; otherwise, it is not needed.*

*Once you have jumped you will say, "The device was not necessary; it was not needed." But this is retrospective knowing. You will know afterward that the device was not needed (that is what Krishnamurti is saying: "No device is needed; no method is needed." The Zen teachers are saying: "No effort is needed; it is effortless"), but this is absurd for one who has not crossed the barrier.*

*So I say that a device is artificial. It is just a trick to put your rational mind at ease so that you can be pushed into the unknown...*

*Zen teachers have used the koan method. Koans are puzzles that, by their very nature, are absurd. They cannot be solved by reason. You cannot think about them. Ostensibly, it looks as if something can be thought about them: that is the catch. It seems as if something can be thought about koans, so you begin to think. Your rational mind is put at ease. Something has been given it to be solved...but the thing given to it is something that cannot be solved. The very nature of it is such that it cannot be solved because the very nature of it is absurd.*

*There are hundreds of puzzles. The teacher will say, "Think about a soundless sound." Verbally, it seems as though it can be thought about. If you try hard, somehow, somewhere, a soundless sound can be found. It may be possible. Then, at a certain point (and that point cannot be predicted; for everyone is not the same), the mind just goes flat. It is not there. You are, but the mind—with all its conditioning—is gone. You are just like a child: conditioning is not there. You are just conscious. The narrowing concentration is not there. Now you know that the device was not necessary, but this is an afterthought. It should not be said beforehand.*

## NEAREST AND DEAREST AND CHEAPEST

Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh says (in *Meditation: The Art of Ecstasy*): "Satori happens to almost everyone. It may not be interpreted as such, you may not have known it to be satori, but it happens. And this happening is the cause of all spiritual seeking. Otherwise spiritual seeking would not be possible. How can you be in search of something of which you have not even had a glimpse? First, something must have come to you, some ray must have come to you (a touch...a breeze...), something must have come to you that has become the quest."

"There is a haiku," says Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, "that tells a story something like this: a monk is crossing a street and a very ordinary flower is peeking out from the wall—a very ordinary flower, a day-to-day flower, which is everywhere. He looks at it. It is the first time he has ever really looked at it because it is so ordinary, so obvious. It is always to be found somewhere, so he never bothered to really look at it before. He looks into it ...and satori happens!"

## THE LOUDEST AND CLEAREST ANSWER OF ALL

Moulinikyaputa came to the Buddha with many questions. "Do you want a solution or answers?" the Buddha rejoined. When Moulinikyaputa thought about it and decided he wanted a solution, the Buddha told him to remain silent for a year and "Then I will give you the answer."

Rajneesh tells us in *Meditation...*, "Sariputra (the chief disciple of Buddha) was sitting nearby under a tree. He began to laugh. Moulinikyaputa asked, 'Why is Sariputra laughing. What is there to laugh about?'

"Sariputra said, 'Ask right now if you have to ask. Do not wait for one year. We have been fooled—this happened to me, too!—because after one year we never ask. If you have remained totally silent for a year, then the very source of questioning drops. And this man is deceptive! This man is very deceptive,' Sariputra said. 'After one year he will not give you any answers.'"

"One year went by and Moulinikyaputa remained silent: silently doing meditation and becoming more and more silent outwardly and inwardly. Then he became a silent pool, with no vibrations, no waves...The day that he was to ask came but he, himself, forgot.

"Buddha said, 'There used to be a man called Moulinikyaputa here. Where is he? He has to ask some question. The year has passed...' Buddha called to him and said, 'Why are you looking around? You are the man. And I have to fulfill my promise. So you ask, and I will give you the answer.'"

"Moulinikyaputa said, 'The one who was asking is dead. That is why I was looking around to see who this man Moulinikyaputa is. I, too, have heard his name, but he is long since gone.'"

## OBJECTIVIST ZEN

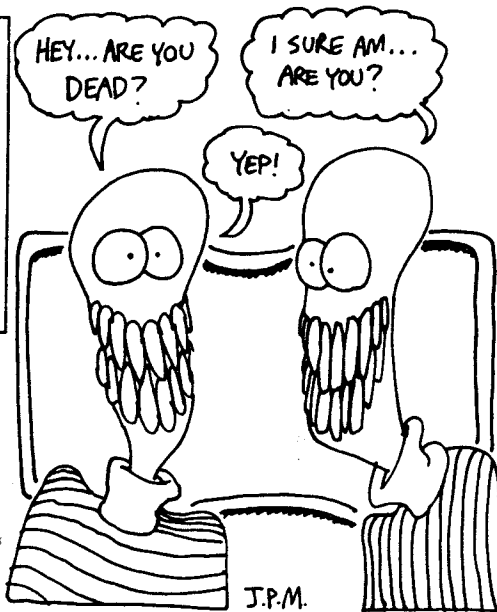
Once at a lecture a student asked, "Ayn Rand, if you are so rational then how come you smoke cigarettes?"

After deeply inhaling a puff and then exhaling it with a satisfied sigh, she said, "None of your business."

## Tex Mex Shoot Out

TULIPVILLE, Netherlands, Antilles (YU) — Gummam raked a Tijuana Fats restaurant today killing six plastic surgeons and injuring 15 others. A caller to the state radio station WTUL identifying herself as a member of the Revolutionary Army of the Lama, Halt, and Blind (RALHB), claimed responsibility for the attack. Officials in Tulipville say this is the first they have heard of the RALHB and have requested Coinsteipro assistance in apprehending the terrorists.

Yezarian Universal!



## AN OUTRE INTRO

by Deborah Benedict

My name is Isis Pandora.

I am one of the new orphans.

I live in the stars

and the nebulae.

I live in a web

sparkling with spider tears.

I live in the violet arc

of a rainbow.

I live next door to you.

I wish I had my own TV show.

I wish I was Queen of the Hop.

I wish I was a Jivaro in the Amazon Jungle.

I wish I was a beggar in Calcutta.

I wish I was the Goddess of Air and Light.

I wish I was a Tasaddy Tribesman.

I wish to grow greedy and fat.

I wish to be humble and small.

It is hard to know what is right

anymore so I simply

wish for everything.

I want to be like the humans.

They want everything.

So I do, too.

My name is Isis Pandora.

First child born of an Invader

and an Earthling.

I want what you want.

Whoever you are.

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

## Metaphor Misuse Cited

## Killer Storm Deals Top News Bureau Crushing Blow

DHAKA, Bangladesh (YU) — United Press International filed for reorganization here today in the wake of a massive hurricane that killed between 2 and 200,000 Bangladeshis without warning and left editors and bureau chiefs wondering about the value of anthropomorphism.

UPI has long been known for its ability to spice up the news by attributing sentience to inanimate objects and mindless natural phenomena. During the 1963 Atlantic hurricane season, for instance, professional metaphor watchers found more than 3,000 instances in 6,000 columns such as of reporting in which storms were shown to "stalk" the coast-line, "strike defenseless cities with a deadly one-two punch," or "sack and pillage residential neighborhoods."

The Dhaka storm, however, developed and struck so quickly that UPI people were unable to find words to describe it, and as a result most news consumers bought their reports from the Associated Press, leaving UPI with a critical cash flow problem.

YU News Service

## Are You a Weirder?

With there were others like you?  
Maybe There Are!

If you have it together enough

to own a dollar bill, send it to:

The Church of the SubGenius®

P.O. Box 140306

Dallas, TX 75214

It will change your life

## Can't help but chuckle at

## International Crimes?

You'll laugh all the way to the

fully-equipped survival shelter

when "Bob" lets you in

on the real joke!

HELIOS OUTLINE OF

DESTRUCTION: \$1



SOME ultra-appreciative back-slapping, especially being raised towards the tender age of ten aboard one boat? Because, don't you see it, it was hardly HIS fault father and *momma*, despite fine-figured paycheques-in-triplicate, couldn't afford that splendidly semi-detached which threw up the hill under the giant neon cross of Oh Lord.

The woman, off the other hand, was of radiant face and regal profile, who not only dressed in red but was damned PROUD to. Raised on a mountainside in some distant lamp, she travelled in circles far out of the wonton grasp of us meek mortals, coiled constantly in the finest of cars, and dropping with the most in shivering style. From before she can forget, life had been laid out before her in kind order: like a lily-edged paramilitary itinerary, ever week, ever month, ever year pre-ordained and pre-packaged for their convenience. Or soap was thought.

The boy spent his adolescence inside a plexiglass guitar, humming strum days away until night fell and it was time to practice teen abandon on his neighbors' daughters in the nearest storm culvert. School quickly blamed but a necessary weasel; a space where licks 'n' cards were quickly swapped between bells, and secrets lay forever stashed amongst the orange rind rows upon rows (upon rows) of green metal lockers. Grazing, as did we all, hour upon hour (upon) out rippled old class windows, he envisioned nothing save bright lights, velvet waists, and a sea of clutching arms, all to the electric wash of ten top tunes. All elders dismantled, "He must've caught that off the AM radio," but it was too late to stop now, wasn't it?

The girl, however, could soon slyly scheme past all the down-pats and glimmer as she purposely peered out HER windows half a would away. You know, something deep behind her hot brown pupils said that out across that shining ocean MUST sit a city where the regimens could be tossed for good; where one could catch first-class flights of fancy, following intuitions out of institutions. So while all around grinned and toiled and stuck on schedules, dressing down the proper company, little did they sense the merry betrayal brewing behind her red-jacketed lips.

Come twenty, the blank space between chapters having suddenly seriously been yanked from its binding, the young are ceremoniously tossed from their nets, bursting forth to act decisively atop dreams and desires nurturing for many a day.

On up stage climbs a meticulously-casual frame tied to an amp, hair polished yet rooster-topped, teeth terrified yet ecstatic. As floods flash up, cheers from familiar green pails jump about the ceiling, fervor pounding a regular 4/4 round yon rink. An hour which seems but a second later, crushed inside cold yellow dressing holes, the young man sits surrounded in admiring voices, thrusting pens and Kodaks, shouting support and whoopingly crazed cackles as the substances are abused accordingly. Having finally found friends he never knew he had, he summons then dismisses at will til, beckoning his leaving near dawn, he pauses to laugh sideways at his brand new hat which, he discovers, no longer fits his scalp.

Meanwhile, out of the golden temple den and into the deepest corner of the manicured gardens flees a figure in urgent agony, draped in unwanted white and pursued by unshowered blight. The selfish, notorious mockery of it all bursting from every pore, the young woman literally tears off her suit of dolls and screams to all that can steer clear off her steadfast refusal to continue performing the rude role that imprisons so. Her cries float upward towards the full of the moon as moot circles of gawking faces pull cautiously backwards.

An hour which seems more an eternity later, collapsed inside warm aqua enclosures, she sits surrounded by chattering voices clutching passports and Kodaks, having finally found friends she never knew she never needed.

Now thirty, both tales shall conclude, the final pages having turned, the need for further volumes obviously oblivious.

Atop a far-flung island, deep under the rugged landscape of God's Own, sits the slump ashen-raked figure which is practically unrecognizable from its former incarceration. His instrument collecting dust beneath dreams heaped in the diet-lit corner, cheers cruelly caked in ache receding grey over blue northern skies, the hands once pawning and fawning crane no longer, having meticulously since picked all they could off his weary bone. The eyes shine no more; the velvet has turned 50% cotton, and the radio is bitterly tuned to perpetual zip. All family and friends moved on by to newer successes, the man can sometimes barely cue up the cassettes of former glory. Speakers shorted out of order, all that can now be heard is the monotonous slip of rain across his widow.

Yet, just downtown from here, can be found the eternally buoyant figure of a woman skipping in her new-found elements without hardly a care worth happy in her whole wild world. Righteously rewarded for steel-jawed courage with a city bursting in opious opportune, she alone creates and dictates each rich oil tapestry upon the future mightily stretched as a canvas from horizon to shining horizon. Boldly moving along to newer successes, she can sometimes still conjure up the butterflies of uncertain stomachs. But wrapped roguishly forever in brazen red, she now sees the unlimited panoramas of uncountable lives and loves spreading outside her window.

## SOME THOUGHTS ON THE WINTER OLYMPICS *by David Serlin*

It has been said that comedy is merely the magnification of human vanities to exaggerated proportions. During the month of February, they were about nineteen inches high. Yes, the Winter Olympics had come once again to give me an overload of information, patriotism, and validations for why I never watch television. The program often reminded me of lectures given to me by my mother. I knew that I was about to be subjected to a conversation, the type of which are usually resolved in about three minutes. Instead, I was given a repetitious summary of my crime from various viewpoints, a history of the incident, and theories for my mental retardation from the moment I climbed head-first out of the womb.

I watch the Olympics as a true spectator, because I am neither fond of sports nor watching them on TV. I find the greatest amount of entertainment in watching the Olympics as an observer of the human race. It features men and women from all over the world, and I enjoy seeing what other nationalities do other than defend themselves against Western culture. The majority of them seem like honest athletes working towards the fulfillment of their country's honor—although, under the careful guidance of media overload, some of them seem to possess the gruesome, shiny Mary Lou Rhetton aura of smugness.

I will admit that I am terribly jealous of the athletes. I'm sorry; I am just incapable of doing any of that shit. I'm a flawed, worthless couch potato with no hope of ever climbing a flight of stairs without it resulting in child-bearing hyperventilation. To counter this deep psychological grudge, I abuse myself with the thought that these are merely the jocks I hated in high school. They may try to disguise it under patriotic smiles, shiny leotards, or the fierce grimace of determination, but they are the same assholes who always dated the prettiest girls, assumed the status of Congressmen when they ambled around campus, and were supported by school funds which reduced our Prom to a box of Fig Newtons and a rusty can of Strawberry Hi-C.

The Olympic games themselves appear to be much more highly evolved than the usual crop of Sunday testosterone struggles. They appeal to the physical interests in fitness and strength, as well as the aesthetic interests in form, style and ability. The Olympics combine the best of human resources and turn them into an elegant competition. In short, the kind of classic environment, steeped in tradition and perseverance of the soul, that only television could seriously fuck up.

It cannot be disputed that television has slowly prostituted the Olympic games into a complete and very conscious manifestation of an athletic "Entertainment Tonight." The actual games themselves represent only about 40% of the network's televised coverage; the rest is consumed with biographies, inane commentary, and Olympic winners from years past who can barely report on the scene, let alone procure employment from doing deodorant commercials.

Don't think for a minute that this biased my opinion of the Winter Olympics. By far, the advertisements proved to be the most consistently interesting aspect of the whole Olympic experience. Either they were directed at Yuppies (nothing new here, but the current crop of K-Mart adverts, with their "homey," neighborhoody, Volvo-ey approach to the family interaction that occurs in "American savings places" across the country, are diabolical); kids (toys, cereals, games, all pulsating to kiddie tunes that may as well have been Muzak for the id); death merchants (I have never seen such a variety of insurance warnings, financial planning advisors, and guilt/death mortuary stuff); and last, but not least, athletes. These Gatorade and Reebok ads were aimed at the growing couch potato faction who 1) vow to start a routine of sit-ups and jumping jacks the following morning, or 2) change little eight-month-old Jenny's name to Grtchznzya and forego toilet training for the uneven parallel bars.

What amazed me about the ads was how accurately they portrayed the late Eighties experience. There, before our very eyes, our lives were re-created, from our clothes and careers to our morals and grave adult concerns. Set against the backdrop of hundreds of athletes in physical declaration of their strength and ability, we look like shallow death-obsessed beings exhausting all of our resources and spending our bodies as if there were no tomorrow.

If there was any one highlight of the Olympic games this winter, I would have to admit that the plight of the skier Eddie Edwards was enough to justify announcer Jim McKay's profound deficiency for interesting speech. Embodying the true spirit of sportsmanship, Edwards arrived as the one-man ski team from Great Britain with a helmet tied with string, cracked boots and skis, and a totally uncompromising air of indifference. Eventually the other countries donated equipment to Edwards, but he proceeded through the competition (ranking 58th out of 58 contestants) as apathetic and funny as the government who sent him as their athletic emissary.

To me, this was the creative apex of the Olympic games and an excellent sign of the times. In our modern era, we cannot expect the laurel wreaths awarded to the ancient Greeks, nor can we expect to always be the best. Britain realizes this, and their humility undercuts the epic importance that television seems to give everything upon which it puts its greasy fingers. If we are looking for a symbol of optimism, Eddie Edwards is our best bet. 7

Incidentally, I thought Katarina Witt was pretty cute.

## ODE TO THE COMIC RELIEF TELETHON

by Dana A. Snow

The show was videotaped for me.  
My piracy's high-tech.  
I can't afford cable or charity.  
I'm living check to check.  
I'd do standup on their show!  
I don't mind! What the hey!  
I'd LIKE to do the noble thing  
That looks good on my resume...  
Do the comics really care

Or just like loud ovations?

And I am poor, so stop telling me  
I can make credit card donations!

I don't care 'bout the homeless.  
What's to be must be.  
I won't care 'bout the homeless  
'Til the homeless includes ME...

At the rate I'm going,  
That won't be very long,  
Unless they buy the rights to this  
And make it a hit song...

IN A RUT

by Michael Polo

At rutting time, a wild boar dreams  
To catch the piggy of his dreams.  
Much the same, an otter whines  
To clue in all his Valentines.  
The fervent bellow of a roe  
Is known to make his mate "let go."  
The mating call when humans meet  
Is not that simple or as sweet.  
Unlike the otters, roes and boars,  
A human says, "My place or yours?"

## Wax Ink

by Rory Houchens

KISS ME, KISS ME, KISS ME—The Cure (Elektra)—Everything you love about The Cure is here—pained/painful vocals, skewed pop tunes, mind-expando music, forays into demented romance—except you get twice as much, 'cause this is a body/brain/soul-enriching double album! "The Kiss" begins with some caramel-crunch guitar distortions as some poor chap finds himself at extreme odds with his mate; "Catch" jauntily sails along on skittering drums and synthetic strings as it dips out the *deja vu*; a nifty facsimile sitar permeates the smothering dream atmosphere of "If Only Tonight We Could Sleep;" the almost unbearably bright "Why Can't I Be You?" could probably rejuvenate anemic red blood cells; "The Snake Pit" gutter-crawls, ripping belly and vein; "Hot Hot Hot!!!" is a skim milk funk meltdown stitched with strut bass and fleeting operatic yodels; "Icing Sugar" aims to lasso the id to the sound of jungle drums and coffee house saxophones of 30 years ago; "Fight" suggests violence as an alternative to self-oppression. Another remarkable and essential Cure masterpiece.

EL CAMINO—Hilton Ruiz (RCA Novus)—Pianist Ruiz, a child prodigy, gave a piano recital at Carnegie Hall before he was out of grade school, began working with Latin soul bands before his teens, and graduated to backing jazz stars (Freddie Hubbard, Joe Henderson and others) before he hit 20. He now leads his own groups, mixing a number of influences and styles in both composition and execution. "West Side Blues" and "Come Dance With Me" are both driven by Latin percussion and rhythms, but the former is a smooth, cool ride on the summer night, while the other jumps with toe-tappin' energy. "Message From The Chief," dedicated to John Coltrane and Rahsaan Roland Kirk, boasts sparingly-used percussion and horns and an uncharacteristically light Ruiz piano solo, and clocks in at under two minutes; while the frenetically-paced, modal and atonal free-for-all "Eastern Vibrations" lasts nearly 15 minutes. Brisk stuff.

JARRE BY JARRE—FILM THEMES OF MAURICE JARRE (CBS Masterworks)—When it comes to film scores, the name Maurice Jarre ranks alongside the masters like Nino Rota, Ennio Morricone and Bernard Herrmann. On this lp, Jarre directs the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra as they interpret a handful of Jarre's movie themes. Included are the schmaltzy "Rosy's Theme" (from RYAN'S DAUGHTER), the delicate prelude from DR. ZHIVAGO, the breathtaking "Building The Barn" (from WITNESS), some alternating somber and invigorating excerpts from MAD MAX: BEYOND THUNDERDOME, and my personal favorites, the legendary "Lawrence of Arabia Suite" and the deafening, hammer-on-anvil, Nazi ballet music from Luchino Visconti's THE DAMNED. Not to be overlooked.

POPBOP—Richie Cole (Milestone)—No jazz snob or purist, alto saxist Cole covers a wide range of material and styles on the exuberant POPBOP. He starts off with a faithful, though slightly limp, version of Stevie Wonder's "Overjoyed," slides into a sparkling tribute to Eddie Jefferson entitled "Eddie Jefferson" (!), drops by the cocktail lounge during Tadd Dameron's kinda obscure "On A Misty Night," and goes cruising on the muscular "L. Dorado Kaddy." Not to be missed—another version of "La Bamba" (this one breathes new life into what has become an overused standard), a slow, Latin-tinged "Spanish Harlem," the theme from STAR TREK, and "Saxophobia," a slight though smile-inducing solo sax piece that shows "the way they played saxophone in the 1920's." Good for the open-minded.

## TALK SHOW HOST confidential

GM DOBBS

Every now and then I get an idea for a book. Now, currently my book idea of the past ten years (the authorized biography of Max Fleischer, the animated cartoonist) is at a publisher who is promising a contract any day. I know I'm not going to make a penny from the Fleischer book, but we all have to start somewhere.

I know the real money is in trendy nonfiction. Yes, I admire the hell out of novelists, but fiction is a beast reluctant to be mastered. Nonfiction is much easier, and *fad nonfiction* is the easiest yet. Just check out the number of nonfiction books at your local bookstore that are marketed like breakfast cereal. Those are the types of books you have to write in order to produce the books you really want to write.

So here I go with several proposals, and you can be the judge. Would they sell or would they flop? Would you like them or would you give them as presents to people you barely know? Let me know, as I actually would like to submit these ideas to people in the cold gray world of publishing, and I need your input:

LOST SKILLS OF SUBURBIA: Do you know how to start a charcoal barbecue fire? Do you know how to cook a steak on one? How about tapping a keg? Sharpening a pocket knife correctly? Wonder how long you should shave with the same blade? Well, these are some of the lost skills of the American suburban male. These and many other important aspects of latter 20th century urban life are now being forgotten in our rush towards the 21st century. Guys, how many of the previously-mentioned skills did your father teach you? Well, my father taught me a few, but I had to learn the rest on my own.

That's why I wrote this book. A decade ago, the FOXFIRE series preserved and reawakened the folkways of rural Southern America, and I would like to do the same for those of us who grew up in the Sixties and Fifties.

Do you know how to break into your own car? How about the secrets of mowing your lawn? And what about mulch? Quick, now, a dry martini is made of what two alcoholic substances? What does thumping a melon do and how can you tell if a pineapple is ripe? These and many other modern urban skills are explored in this funny but factual book. Profusely illustrated.

Okay, what did you think? Too cute or just enough off-center? The material will be factual, though, and I dare say many of us don't know the answers to many of the questions I posed.

Well, here's the other idea: THE SINGLE GUY'S COOKBOOK: "Guy" is a generic term here for the person who suddenly finds him or herself out on their own and cut off from the meal service known as "Mom." This is a survival guide for those whose idea of cooking is preparing a tv dinner or heating up Franco-American pasta-in-a-can. Recipes for beginners as well as shopping tips are described in humorous text and profuse illustrations.

Learn how you can save money by not using coupons and getting up 15 minutes earlier each working day. Find out how the wok your aunt gave you for an apartment-warming present can be used for a planter if Chinese food is not a favorite of yours. Discover if the amazing Ginsu knife really is amazing. All tips and recipes have been tested vigorously by various "single guys."

Well, let me know which you prefer and why, and remember, you've saved me thousands of dollars in a complex market survey!

A PLAN  
FOR  
BET-  
TERED  
TO-  
MOR-  
ROWS

(In  
which  
our  
Hero  
de-  
cides  
not to  
run  
for  
Presi-  
dent

and instead chooses to give out his sure-shot, can't-fail strategies to those who truly need)

For a brief time I considered running for President. Thankfully, Anni Ackner talked me out of it. She said—and rightly so—that everybody was running for President these days except Angela Davis, who was thinking about retiring anyway. It would be undignified for me to run against a cat, a badly articulated puppet and an Orville Reddenbacher clone.

With more thought, I decided it was better to be the kingmaker than the king. Kingmakers stick around longer than a meal at Del Taco. Kings tend to disappear fairly rapidly. Also, Squeaky Fromme tends to go for Kings, leaving kingmakers alone. It's better to be alive and cringing than dead and President.

This gives me no indication of what to do with my policies and campaign strategies, however. In the interest of my proposed kingmaking, I thought it would be nice to share these concepts with any presidential candidate who reads IJ. Use them at your leisure, but remember that you owe me. I rather fancy an ambassadorship, myself.

Getting elected is a simple enough process once you figure out to whom you should listen. One person I listened to is George Will. George Will said in Newsweek that the first candidate to promise to hang a picture of Glenn Close in the White House wins. While George is a staunch conservative (read: jerk, wimpazoid), he does hold the brains of many young conservatives in his hands. On top of that messy job, he hangs out with cool folks like Sam "Shut Up Or I'll Kill You" Donaldson and David "You Morons" Brinkley. This man has his finger on the pulse of the nation, which pisses off the nation because he didn't wipe it first. Yes, George Will does know what he's talking about, even if he wears a bowtie.

And don't stop there. Go to other respected newsfolks and get their opinions. If they express an interest in something, tell them you'll be right on it. Make promises. Just remember the first thing all politicians learn in life: you don't have to actually keep the promise. Good God, you're a politician. It's your job to be a shiftless, underhanded, amoral liar. If you're not, you don't deserve to run. If you are and aren't afraid to use it, you've got it made. If Kokomo wants a new amphitheater, tell them it's done. Stump Swallow, Michigan wants a personal appearance by Bruce Springsteen; tell them he's on the way. If Dog-Shoot, Georgia wants to have unrestricted access to guns, tell them Smith & Wesson is making a shipment now. Once you're in the White House, you can conveniently forget everything. After all, running the United States is a busy job.

While we're on the subject, let me tell you about image. While people expect their politicians to lie and cheat, they don't want it to be obvious during the campaign. Nowadays "character" is a big part of political life. We're not looking for a President, we're looking for a saint. I don't believe a saint would make a good President. They would just run around in their robes and haloes turning wine into water during State Department dinners. Unfortunately, I am in the minority. Just tough it out. You only have to act like a wuss for a few months, anyway. And that's what the country wants—a stout-hearted man to lead us tomorrow into yesterday for a better today, or some such nonsense.

Keep in mind, however, that image isn't all immaculateness now. This is a fast-paced, go-getting (read: immature) electorate now and we need a bit of a modern spin on things. The Presidency has been around for 212 years and it's showing its age. Take, for example, the concept of "the Presidential Cabinet." That phrase is just not "on." It conjures up visions of rotting wooden chests not opened for decades. Nobody cares about cabinets. They're too old-fashioned and are only good for hiding skeletons and booze. We don't want to hide skeletons and booze. Character, you know.

This modern go-getter of a society needs an alternative to the Cabinet. Something sleek and trendy would be appropriate. My suggestion is changing the title to the Presidential Stacking Unit. It's a modern, with-it sounding phrase that's catchy while pertaining to the general purpose of the place. It will also appeal to those slimes of the times, the Yuppies. As you can see, a simple change can show the American Public you are ready to lead us into the ever-complex, fast-paced world. Think of what you can do across the board. Yuppies don't like to support the Department of Health, Education and Welfare with their ill-gotten gains? Call it the Department of Right-Headedness or Welfare Aid (you'd have to have somebody like Willie Nelson head it, however). Department of Transportation sound stuffy? Replace it with the De-



## THE LOVE SONG OF J. ALBERT GORE

by Todd Kristel

Let us go then, you and me,  
Where the election is spread out on ABC  
Like a patient etherized by watching  
"Three's Company,"

Let us go, through tracking polls,  
The endless toll  
Of restless days in airplanes,  
And shaking hands for two-point gains,  
Debates filled with tedious argument  
Of insidious intent  
To lead you to an overwhelming question...  
Oh, do not ask, 'Why debate?'  
Let us go to the next primary state.

In the rooms the women depart  
Talking of Gary Hart

And indeed there will be time  
To wonder 'Do I dare?' and 'Do I dare?'  
Time to turn back and change your position,  
With a new campaign decision—  
(They will say: 'How his credibility is  
growing thin!')  
Your opponent staggers, his lead is  
getting slim,  
Your momentum grows, you think that you  
can win—  
(They will say: 'But how his funds are  
growing thin!')

Do you dare  
Disturb the speech you have rehearsed?  
In a minute there is time  
For decisions and revisions which in a  
minute you will reverse.

## LIVING IN A DIFFERENT WORLD

To a person from the East or West coasts, the midwest can be the most exotic place in the world. Sure, Greece, Iran, China, you can accept the differences: The climate, cuisine, skin color and language are all so alien and you can imagine yourself the great human explorer on a different planet. But the midwest is like an alternate universe one or two quantum jumps to the left of reality. You go into a store and find out it's Barkley's Peppermint gum, not Wrigley's Spearmint. You come out of the store and find out catfish is seafood, sweet corn a delicacy. That's the first stone in the pond and the ripples make you dizzy.

- Luke McGuigg

partment of Getting There. It's simple once you use your imagination.

Using this way of thought, we can apply this method to other areas of the campaign. Take the fundraising dinner. It would be wiser to replace those stale \$100-a-plate dinners with stale \$100-a-plate Power Breakfasts. This is a sure vote-getter. Those idiot Reebokians will swear to you with this idea. They'll be fighting to contribute, flush with the anticipation of networking with a potential future President—who, of course, they will now be obligated to get into office. On top of that, ham, eggs and hash browns are eminently less expensive than sealed bags of chicken a la king and flat champagne. You could even cook them yourself, guaranteeing you a perfect photo opportunity.

Another thing to consider is the recent upgrading of Neat Stuff Technology. Campaigns throughout history have been cursed by dull buttons. Winning buttons have emerged from time to time and these winners usually belong to the winners. Remember "I Like Ike"?

The lesson is clear: Those that have the Neatest Stuff win. Take advantage of all this Neat Stuff technology. Imagine a Paul Simon button that, once the light hits it, turns into a Paul Simon button (a subtle, if obvious, joke). How about a holographic button of Michael Dukakis? A Pat Robertson button that plays "Semper Fidelis" when you pull the little ribbon? An Al Gore button in the shape of Tipper? A Mario Cuomo button that has an image that shows only in the presence of Democratic power brokers? The possibilities are endless.

And don't stop there. Neat Stuff Technology is now at a point where it can be manufactured quicker, easier and more shoddily than ever before. You might have to make this stuff in Korea, but don't tell anyone. Just hand them the stuff and smile. They'll be so grateful they won't ask questions.

You can pull yourself ahead in this Presidential race. You just have to think about it and you'll be assured of being in that White House next January. Just remember who got your brain working.

Know Them. Be Them. Live Them.

NEXT: What the Hep-Happenin' Guy Does Alone  
THE TOM DEJA "GIVE ELAYNE A REST" FOOTNOTELESS COLUMN  
Can't you read? There aren't any.



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## THE FIVE MAIN CLASSES OF ANTI-DRUGGIES

by Bjorn Fnord

- A: THE PROFESSIONAL, who sees an opportunity to profit from taking an anti-drug posture and emphasizing the negative aspects of drug abuse and drug misuse.
- B: THE WELL-INTENTIONED, who believe what the Class "A" tell them.
- C: THE BORN-AGAIN STRAIGHTS, who blame drugs for the results of their own excesses.
- D: THE JADED, who decided that it was drugs that were boring and not themselves.
- E: THE TRENDY, who consider that drugs make people stupid and boring who would otherwise be bright and witty.

There is a sub-class consisting of those who have been coerced into pretending to be anti-druggies, but they can't be considered a true class of anti-druggy since nothing that is forced is real.

### SPOT ILLOS NEEDED

to fill up blank space like this...

### BEYOND THE REACH OF OUR DREAMS

by Steven F. Scharff

The limits that we put on ourselves  
May bring our desires all down  
But the freedom to dream and imagine unbridled  
Can turn this small planet around

To escape the bind of convention  
To leave the everyday life  
To go, for a moment, within one's self  
To a place of unceasing light

Arise all your dreams and desires  
Give them the spirit of flight  
Rise from the stagnant restrictions around us  
And escape the stifling night

Sing from the soul of your oneness  
Let the spirit within you create  
Bring forth all your personal visions of wonder  
And never at all hesitate.

To unify all of our freedoms  
Exchange all our works of the soul  
And help this small race on this watery sphere  
To strive for a crystalline goal

We rise with the hope of the ages  
Our cold-hearted fears we defy  
With one common heart and one common love  
Off into the cosmos we fly

To reach the stars that surround us  
The ground we must first let go  
We glide from the daily restrictions of matter  
And learn what the cosmos does know

With wisdom and glory to guide us  
Together we go to the source  
Where all that knew life once started existence  
And was given its own driving force

The Godhead, Nirvana, many names  
Has humanity given its goal  
But to enter the realm that all do desire  
One must pay true life's working toll

To work for the good of all beings  
To learn with devotion and truth  
And bring from one's being all it can accomplish  
And live in a spirit of youth

We live in an everyday lifestyle  
Where we tire of the everyday scenes  
Yet our hopes and our visions bring us ever nearer  
Beyond the reach of our dreams.

## Cheaps Always Shows

by Susan Packie

"Yessiree, the key to the future lies in cheap advertising, and the key to cheap advertising lies in employees who are willing to do their part."

"Sir, I never said I wasn't willing to work hard for the company, but do you really expect me to do by grocery shopping in just a bra and a girdle?"

"This company happens to make women's undergarments. What better way could there possibly be to advertise?"

"But sir, I'm a man! Couldn't you persuade some of our female employees to do their grocery shopping dressed in our products?"

"I tried. They called me a male chauvanist. Now the company hires only men."

"Maybe we could write a jingle and air it over the radio."

"Too expensive. Besides, no one will touch an ad for unmentionables."

"Could we sponsor a tennis match or a golf tournament?"

"I think the players would feel awfully silly hopping and swinging around in such scanty attire."

"Then why would I feel comfortable doing my grocery shopping that way?"

"Because I pay you. At least, I used to pay you."

"On second thought, perhaps I wouldn't mind wearing an ecru-colored outfit."

"That's the spirit! Now, if anyone asks you about your attire, I'd like you to hand her or him, as the case may be, this circular listing styles and prices."

"Then I guess you'll want me to take orders."

"Exactly! You catch on quickly! I think your future with the company is assured."

"Would you like me to sing the jingle we're too cheap to air over the radio as I take orders?"

"Certainly. Right after you compose it."

"Why not just 'No man can keep his hands off Ma's Bras and Pants'?"

"That's catchy. I like it. Now work on the tune and it's a take. Go out and tell the world about our products!"

The underling turned to leave. On his back was a poster bearing a picture of the parting view of a bra and a girdle, and the words, "We've got you, coming and going. Ma knows all." He'd never even know the poster was there until he got home and his furious wife told him, the company president sniggered to himself.

The company president adjusted his stockings so the seams wouldn't show before leaving the office. If anyone asked, he'd say they were Ma's. That answer would really get him someplace!

### GRANDMA O'DONNELL 'SPLAINS IT ALL FOR YOU by Mark McDonald

(USELESS CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION: David is suffering from yet another Reality Crisis. His grandmother nods her encouragement as he pours out his soul, all the while keeping her eyes glued to the TV screen.)

DAVID: I mean, what the hell is going on, anyway?

GRANDMA: Well. You see, Dr. Beaker is being blackmailed by his ex-wife, the treacherous Joanie Randolph, now involved with the Senator who drinks. Charles betrayed her when he ran off to Rio with her long-lost son, Stephan, who has AIDS, though they don't know it yet. And the doctor's daughter was kidnapped by the reporter who, it turns out, was really working for the Mysterious Man with a Gun. And he blames himself. (Pause) But. A romance is brewing between Elizabeth, who lives with her crippled mother and works with retarded children, and the sharing and caring and ridiculously wealthy Andrew Roxworth, so there's hope. (Pause) But. John is plotting to betray him, though he's thought to be dead, though his long-lost daughter doesn't know it yet.



# A UP IN THE PLASMAFOOL

by Dorian Tenore

## IT'S NOT JUST A JOB, PART 2: THE MISADVENTURE CONTINUES

I've already regaled you with the trials and tribulations of working in a film production office. Now I've got the other side of the story for you: the sordid doings on the set!

The second of the three films Bob Zimmerman and I were set to do for Sony got underway in February. The title: BLOODSCAPE (isn't that just wonderfully exploitative?). The plot: 50 years into the future, after an "economic holocaust," people are forced to live in the streets or in crumbling ruins populated by the ragged, vicious Scavengers.

The Colt family are among the lucky ones—they've just gotten a living unit in Safehaven, a building that contains an entire city patrolled by Keepers under the Mayor's control. Little do they know that the Keepers are corrupt and the Mayor is their puppet. Anyone who gets in the Keepers' way gets arrested on trumped-up charges and subjected to public discipline—or execution!

Naturally, the hapless Colts run afoul of the head Keeper, Preacher (Roy MacArthur, a talented Englishman who also played a sinister character in our previous opus, now titled REJUVENATRIX). It's up to bookish, teenage Jeff Colt (John Wittenbauer, a young Christopher Reeve without benefit of Nautilus), with the help of rugged former Keeper Pierce (Rick Gieras, who can also be seen in the New York area as the handsome guy in the upper right-hand corner on a party line commercial), to save his family, vanquish the Keepers, and prove he's no wimp. This sets the stage for heaps of violence and general kicking of butt.

Now, I ask you, how could I relegate myself to the office with all that potential excitement on the set? Besides, I was starting to get cabin fever from being in a windowless office almost non-stop.

"Hey, Bob," I chirped to our stalwart line producer, trying to hide the Inspector Dreyfus-like tic my face was developing, "wouldn't I be an even better Production Office Coordinator if I had more on-set experience? Hmm? Hah?"

"But you're so good at it now!" he protested.

I decided to make him an offer he couldn't refuse. "I'll do Craft Services!"

After Bob picked up his jaw off the floor, he agreed that my doing Craft Services—"food" to you laypeople—would be a simply dandy idea. Considering the size and appetites of the staff on most such low-budget features, the ability to feed them all is regarded as an art form—hence the lanyard-evocative title, "Craft Services." My full title this time was "Production Assistant in Charge of Craft Services." It's not unlike feeding an army every day—imagine daily shopping, all by one's lonesome, for 40-50 ever-ravenous people. Imagine further having to keep two tables—one on the first floor, the other located anywhere from the fifth floor (we were filming at an old school, so there was no elevator) to two blocks away (for outdoor scenes). That's a lot of lifting, lugging, and schlepping, gang. Lots of muscle aches, too, especially to me, the once and future poster child for inactivity. Suddenly I began to appreciate the soothing powers of a nice warm bath before bed—especially since I usually came home dusty from head to toe (this joint gave new meaning to the word "grimy").

My mission was to provide breakfast—usually three dozen bagels and muffins and the occasional order of 30 hot egg sandwiches, with cereal, fruit and yogurt on the side—and snacks—usually chips, cookies, fresh fruit and veggies. "Veggies" was an expression our otherwise tolerant sound man, Pavel Mowczak, found worthy of scorn. "Veggies!" he'd snort in his thick Polish accent, as the more-gutter-bound among us snickered.

Most important, I had to make sure there was plenty of coffee, coffee, COFFEE (no decaf, puh-leeze!) and wrap beer. An hour before the projected wrap time each night (end of the days' shooting, for those not in the know), I had to put three cases of beer (Budweiser was the favorite) and a bag of ice into the beverage cooler, all the better for the crew to unwind after a tough day. The irony is, I don't drink or like coffee or beer, so I had no idea if the stuff was any good. "You ought to try 'em and see what all the excitement's about," suggested our Unit Manager, Phil Dolin.

Variety was the by-word; every so often I'd come up with something special, like strawberries and cream, kiwi fruit or my special spinach dip. Though most of the cast and crew were appreciative, there'd always be some rabble-rouser who wasn't quite satisfied. I could have five varieties of bagels and three types of rolls on the table, and some wise guy would say, "Ya got any Wonder Bread for a p.b. and j. sandwich?" And though I took great pains to put fresh produce among the munchies, the first thing to go was always the sweets! "We've gotta eat more healthy food!" people would wail as they stuffed their rosy little cheeks with M&Ms (the director's favorite), Double-Stuf Oreos (the overall favorite), or Entenmann's cakes (the only cake with frosting guaranteed to survive nuclear attack).

Fortunately for my sanity and petty cash supply, a caterer brought a hot lunch every day, and for late shoots, we're order out for pizza or Chinese food—one night, we even splurged for Polish food! (One of the advantages to filming in the East Village was the variety of exotic but inexpensive take-out cuisine.) Still, Craft Services is a pretty relentless job. In addition to all the running around between tables and supermarkets, you've

got to make absolutely sure you're not running out of anything (especially coffee, soda and utensils), and you learn to anticipate your future food needs. And don't think all this was easy on only \$100 per day, especially with Manhattan prices. Being able to shop for Monday's groceries in less-expensive Long Island with big, brawny Winnie to help relieved the financial and physical difficulties somewhat, though.

Forget Weight Watchers—if you want to understand why people place such importance on eating, perform Craft Services on a movie set. I'll bet you thought people ate because they were hungry—ha! They eat because a) it gives them something to do; b) like Mount Everest, the food's there; and finally, c) eating is fun. The folks most guilty of recreational eating are the actors and extras. They often have no choice but to sit around in the "Green Room" or in the location's production office for hours on end while waiting to do their scenes. I provided old magazines from home to give them something to do, but the siren call of the Craft Services table inevitably lured them. Now I know what Zero Mostel mean in the following scene from THE PRODUCERS (1967):

**MOSTEL:** Buy bullets! Kill the actors!

**GENE WILDER:** You can't kill the actors—they're people!

**MOSTEL:** Oh yeah? Have you ever eaten with one?

There was plenty of hard work, but there were many bright spots, too. If you do Craft Services well (and I think I did, if I do say so myself), you've got a certain amount of power. Faces light up when you enter a room—the reactions are almost Pavlovian. People court your favors in the hopes that you'll save them the last bottle of Orangina (a strangely refreshing French concoction of orange juice and club soda). You get to schmooze with the actors and, if it's an action picture like BLOODSCAPE, the special effects folks (more than once, someone left a bottle of fake blood on the food table. True, it mostly consists of corn syrup, but really...!).

I even got to be an extra one day! Lauri, the makeup artist, grimed me up even more (I spend ten minutes artfully dabbing concealer on the circles under my eyes, and Lauri undoes it all in two seconds with some brown goop) and, voila! Sworn teetotaler Tenore was a seedy patron at a sleazy bar. Pierce passes right by my table when he enters the bar, so you just might get to see me in this epic. When my sister Cara came to help me one day when we had 50 more extras (extra extras?), she got to be the 51st—she's one of the shocked citizens witnessing a public execution in the Arena. Barrymores and Carradines, eat yer hearts out!

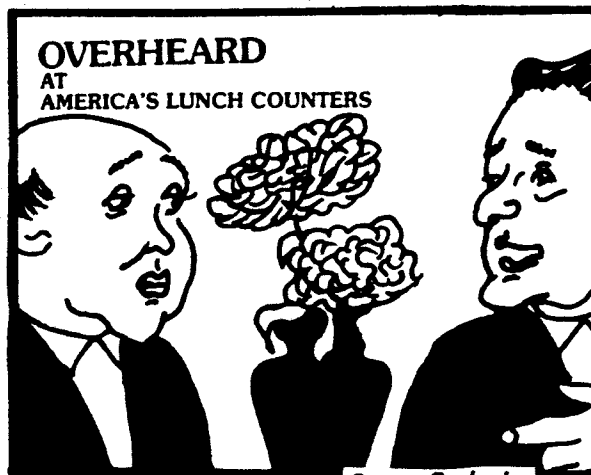
Am I glad I did this job? Oh, sure. Would I do it again? If they pay me enough to get the staff of Tavern on the Green to do it for me, yeah, why not? But hey, like we say at the Production Office, "Oh, no! Not another learning experience!" epitaph

Pinocchio with trained nose, twilit past,  
our well-oiled Pentagon's projectile of  
megalomania's mothering love,  
Ronald Reagan is dead at last.

Was a puppet ever his mother's son  
and his father's beloved enemy,  
a strength for his brother in rivalry  
and a dad for his kids, all men in one?

Did ever a puppet strive for neighbors  
and disdain to assist the bad, the cruel,  
those who would butcher the goose for  
its jewel  
and give children a pittance for labors?

We play with a dragon's talons on a string,  
yanked from the impotent and dead old thing.  
- David Castleman



"The future's gettin' closer every day. You never know when it's gonna be the future."

How to start your own.  
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Scathing Expose  
of the  
Cult Business!



# Is Homocide Preventible?

by Ali Bertrand Khamas

When Emilio Giardino left his home on June 21st, 1983, the furthest thing from his mind was joining the statistics at the National Institute for Health in Washington, D.C. But before the night was over, Giardino lay dead on the sidewalk in front of The Church of the Oven of Peace in a darkening pool of blood, his heart pierced by a lance fashioned from a length of wrought iron fencing.

Emilio Giardino had become Sunnyside's 3,267th stabbing victim of 1983. And the situation has continued to deteriorate.

Since the first of this year, more than 23,000 teenagers have been murdered at confraternity dances in the New York metropolitan area alone. Brutal bludgeonings at Vacation Bible Schools in the South, hangings and poisonings at Mormon Tabernacle Choir Glee Meets in the Midwest, and hit-and-run surfers on the Pacific Coast have combined to make this the bloodiest peacetime year for America's youth since The Gay Nineties.

Figures recently released by the Office of the Surgeon General indicate that homicide has become the second most deadly disease for pubescent males under the age of 18, with high-speed vehicular accidents slipping to a distant third, just ahead of a three-way tie for fourth between accidental drug overdose, toxic masturbation reaction, and East African Slim Disease (EASD). Suicide remains the number one killer of teenagers, claiming nearly one in four.

During the twenty years in which statistics have been kept, no other adolescent health problem has shown as dramatic an increase as homicide. Researchers are unable to explain the upsurge, and few of the victims have been willing or able to provide legal authorities and pathologists with complete details of the incidents leading to their sudden demise.

For the most part, the deceased have had few prior medical complaints. Many of them, in fact, were in peak condition at the moment of expiration. These facts make the grim reality of untimely termination that much harder to take for family members and acquaintances.

Anna Maria Alberghetti Giardino, 38, now living in Jackson Heights, has several photographs of her late son prominently displayed on the television console in her living room. These photos surround a single 8 x 10 hand-tinted portrait of a handsome young Marine in dress blues—Lance Corporal Attilio "Frank" Giardino, the hero-husband Maria lost in Vietnam shortly after the birth of their only son.

The elder Giardino was reported missing in action during intense fighting for the 800 Hills outside Khe Sanh in 1967, an action reminiscent of Korea's infamous Pork Chop Hill fiasco. During the spring of 1967, the Marines suffered more than 12,000 casualties in a futile effort to take an enemy minefield and artillery practice range. Frank Giardino's body was never found.

During a PBS radio interview earlier this year, Anna Marie expressed outrage at how little was being done to combat lethal violence on our nation's streets. She claimed her attempts to get the New York City Police Department to investigate her son's brutal slaying had been met with bureaucratic indifference.

"You know," she said, wiping her nose with the back of her hand, "Frank's I could understand, even now. That was war, and in war, you expect people to get killed. But Emilio—he was always so full of life. An honor student, an Eagle Scout, he wanted to grow up and be a doctor. He didn't have a bad bone in his body."

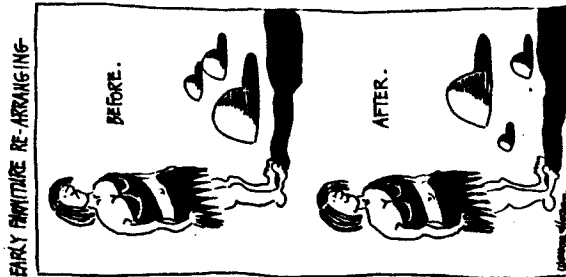
An autopsy by Queens County Coroner Benton Edden revealed, however, that young Giardino suffered from a congenital bone disorder which contributed greatly to his death.

"If Emilio's bones had been as good as you'd expect in a boy his age, the breast plate would have effectively shielded the heart from fatal injury. As it was, the ribcage simply collapsed," says Edden, who noted that more than half of the teenage homicides he has examined seem to suffer from the same disorder.

Mrs. Giardino bristled at suggestions that her son's calcium deficiency might in some way have been responsible for his terribly foreshortened life. "What pisses me off is how these sons of bitches—you'll have to excuse my language, but I get so mad sometimes when I read this stuff in the papers. It's been two years since my Emilio died, and they haven't questioned a single suspect for killing my son, not a one. And now they're trying to tell me his bones were bad because Frank was full of Agent Orange, and the reason these kids are killing each other is because of child abuse and wife beating. God," she said, "I don't know how much more of this run-around I can take."

Mrs. Giardino is not alone in her anger and frustration. Parents from across the nation gathered in Trenton, New Jersey, earlier this month to form Parents Outraged Over Patronizing Oafish Officials (POPOO), a watchdog organization that investigates alleged improper police response to reports of teenage murder. The organization maintains files on more than one quarter million unsolved adolescent homicides. Some of the more radical members of the movement suggest the United States government is engaged in a policy of systematic extermination of young males who refuse to take (or do poorly on) the PSAT and SAT exams.

These exams, which are constantly under attack from minority groups for built-in cultural bias, are administered to high school students throughout the country who hope to attend college.



White, middle-class female students majoring in home economics or social science have been known to score significantly better on these tests than any other identifiable group.

Government officials refuse to comment on the charges, except to say: "The charges are so outrageous as to not warrant response."

However, unnamed sources do admit that the Reagan administration has formed a task force to investigate the advantages of conducting a "war on youthful homicide."

There is, in fact, some evidence that such a war has already begun. Shortly before Margaret Heckler resigned from her position as Secretary of Health to accept a presititious demotion to Ambassador to Ireland as a result of revelations that French researchers have been able to develop treatments for AIDS more quickly than America can introduce mutations of that biological agent, Ms. Heckler was instructed to tell the American people that the Reagan administration had decided to remove murder and manslaughter from the realm of justice and place it ahead of cancer and immune system research as a priority Public Health issue.

In late October, Surgeon General C. Everett Koop further defined the direction that youthful homicide cure and prevention will take when he announced on the MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour that 98% of all teenage homicides could be traced to the four major infectious agents in America today: infant abuse, child sexual abuse, unnatural sex, and spouse abuse. "Studies show—and studies do not lie—that nearly all of America's health problems begin in the home," Koop reported, noting that the country's homeless rate only slightly exceeded the 8.5% national unemployment rate.

Parents of dead American children responded to Koop's statements with unprecedented fury. "That bearded dumbfuck!" shouted Rhoda Rome, as she sprayed the New York Stock Exchange with slugs from a 22 automatic pistol, wounding several agents and brokers. Rome's son was found on Union Square Station in December, 1984, with his crotch cut out with a post hole digger.

Mrs. Giardino did not buy the government's logic, either. "My husband," she said, "is still missing in action. I signed a paper, sure, to get benefits to raise Emilio, and keep a roof over our heads, but I still don't have a place to put flowers."

At Coroner Edden's urging, Mrs. Giardino filed for benefits under the Agent Orange contamination settlement negotiated three years ago to recover burial costs for her son. She was informed that her claim was not timely, and even if it had been, her husband would be required to undergo extensive tests to determine his degree of exposure to Agent Orange.

Moreover, the \$183 million fund set up to placate modern Vietnam War veterans is already encumbered with more than half a million claims. If each claimant were to receive an equal share of the money available for distribution, the average settlement would amount to slightly more than 50 cents.

Officials for the fund are now requesting that all parties to the original suit send self-addressed stamped envelopes to receive their share in postage stamps, since the cost of issuing a check for the estimated benefit would be in excess of 25 times the value of the benefit itself.

Some veterans and their survivors are reportedly incensed at this state of affairs, but few can offer suggested compromises which do not require additional funding from chemical manufacturers, who were cleared of all wrongdoing in the original agreement, or the government, which denies Agent Orange is now or ever was harmful, and if it really is and really was, the fault lies with the chemical manufacturers, who have already been cleared. Joseph Heller, an attorney for Mutated Youngsters Liability Assistance International (MYLAI) described the situation as "totally fucked up, a real 'Catch 22'."

Mrs. Giardino doesn't care who is at fault. She doesn't even care about benefits. In fact, Mrs. Giardino no longer cares about anything.

She was killed early last week while attempting to drive a sharpened Kirby vacuum cleaner extension through the head of an Independent Insurance Agent in front of Saint Vincent Jose Ferrer's Peristaltic Church of Guard Our Rice in Coscob, Connecticut.

Meanwhile, the drive to have teenage homicide listed as a health risk goes on. And many are hopeful this is a war that can be won.

According to at least one source, Surgeon General Koop is about to propose warning labels be etched into each newborn infant.

"Caution," these tattoos would read, "The Surgeon General has determined this child may be dangerous to its own health and the well-being of others. Handle at your own risk, and consult your attorney to learn about your rights and liabilities as a child-rearing parent."

# THE CONTINUING SAGA OF DR. IGUANA THE STORY SO FAR.

by Ken Burke

## SOMEONE'S IN THE KITCHEN WITH ARNIE

Jacko Klein spilled his drink on the rug. Cursing his own clumsiness, he went to the kitchen to find something to help him blot up the mess. While rolling a layer of paper towels around his hand, Jacko looked sideways at the huge refrigerator in the corner and he began singing softly to himself, "Fee-fi-fiddle-i-oh, fee-fi-fiddle-i-oh-oh-oh-oh, fee-fi-fiddle-i-oh..."

He continued singing through grinning lips and bent down to wipe up the spill in the living room when the Gibsons' phone rang. Leaving the paper towels on the puddle of cola, he rose to answer the call.

"Hel-lo," he offered cheerfully.

"Uh...is Arnie Gibson there?" came the tentative voice on the other end.

"No. Arnie's not here right now. Can I take a message?"

"Umm, yeah. Tell him that Jim called and wants to know if he can go to the lake with us on Saturday."

"Okay. I'll give him your message, Jim. Heh-heh."

"Uh, all right, thanks. Goodbye."

Jacko hung up the phone without saying goodbye, just like they do on TV, then he chuckled softly to himself and began singing once more, "Fee-fi-fiddle-i-oh, fee-fi-fiddle-i-oh-oh-oh-oh..."

On the mantel above the television rested a nice portrait of Arnie Gibson, wearing a suit for the first and only time in his life, and next to it was a silver trimmed frame containing a clipping from the local newspaper. The story told how Arnie Gibson and Dale Ronson were the state champions in the Strong Mind/Strong Body competition held last month. The article touted their similarities, noting that the two actually came from the same part of town and had much in common, despite the fact that they barely knew each other.

In fact, everybody made a big deal over the two boys. Strong Mind/Strong Body competition—what the hell was that supposed to prove? Jacko didn't take it seriously, but Arnie and Dale did, and that was the problem. Since the big competition, Arnie and Dale, thrown together by all the publicity, had become very close friends, and suddenly Jacko had become the odd-man-out. Jacko tried everything he could think of to stay in his old pal's good graces, even going so far as to corner his new rival and blurt, "Dammit, Arnie is my best friend! Why don't you just go back to where you came from?" but Dale merely stung Jacko's pride further by shoving him aside and laughing as he went to tell Arnie the latest news about Jacko.

It wasn't long after that Jacko was frozen out of all the activities that he used to share with Arnie. Jacko knew that he and Arnie still liked all the same things as before because he saw Arnie around all the same places, only now he was with Dale Ronson. Jacko didn't understand; he didn't want to understand. He just wanted things to be the way they used to be, but it was evident even to Jacko that Arnie's and Dale's friendship was picking up momentum and that fresh efforts towards rekindling his relationship with Arnie would only lead to further humiliation. After many uncomfortable days, Jacko had devised a way to relieve his gnawing embarrassment over being dumped by Arnie.

Jacko once heard that "A friend in need is a friend indeed," and that's what brought him to Arnie's house that day. Jacko had waited until Arnie's parents had left for their regular Saturday afternoon on-the-town before he walked up to the Gibsons' house and knocked on the door. When Arnie opened the door and saw Jacko, he was annoyed and asked, "What do you want?"

"Hi Arnie," he croaked, feigning weakness. "Uh, I hate to bother you, but I'm feeling a little dizzy here. Uh, I don't think that I can make it home. Can I stay here awhile until I feel a little better? I'd really appreciate it."

Dale Ronson popped in behind Arnie and asked, "What's up?"

"Jacko says he feels dizzy. He wants to stay here awhile and rest." Both Arnie and Dale shrugged their shoulders and motioned Jacko through the door. Jacko made his way into the living room and sat down heavily into the Gibsons' couch. He pretended to be winded so Arnie and Dale would continue to believe his ruse.

After asking a few perfunctory questions about Jacko's condition, Arnie ended with, "We're going down to the workshop to mess around. When you're feeling better you can let yourself out. Just make sure you lock the door behind you." Jacko nodded weakly, but inside, his thoughts were shuffling with rage.

"Arnie doesn't seem to care what's wrong with me. Doesn't he remember all the times that I looked out for him? The time Arnie fell through a window and I made a tourniquet from my own shirt to cut off the bleeding on his leg until we could get him to a doctor? I took a bad whipping from mom over the soiled shirt until she found out what the deal was. And now Arnie is so callous. What if I had really been seriously ill? And that Dale. This whole thing is all his fault. What have I ever done to him? They're both so cold. So goddamned cold." As he egged on his resentment, anger and self-pity, Jacko began feeling more justified than ever over the fate he had planned for Arnie and Dale.

Once he was certain that the others were downstairs and too involved in what they were doing to take notice of him, Jacko went into the kitchen and opened the huge sliding freezer section that was under the main refrigerator cabinet. He remembered when Arnie first showed it to him two years ago. It was big enough to hold a side of beef and a dozen ice-cube trays, and it even had collapsible compartments for frozen vegetables on the sides. It was the biggest freezer compartment on the market, and it had been the talk of the neighborhood when the Gibsons first got it. Jacko quietly took the contents out of the freezer and stacked them neatly next to the refrigerator until the space was entirely empty.

Next, Jacko went to Arnie's room and opened his closet. He smiled when he saw that Arnie still kept his sports equipment in the same place, organized in the same way. Jacko picked out the softball bat that he had given Arnie for Christmas, and then he walked softly back to the kitchen and called down the stairway to the basement.

"Arnie," whined Jacko, still sounding ill, "could you come up here for a minute, please? I think I'm going to pass out."

As he heard Arnie grumbling and climbing up the stairs, Jacko poised in the hallway to the kitchen with the softball bat ready to swing.

When he came through the door from the basement, Arnie called out quietly, "Jacko? Jacko, are you in here?" When he spotted Jacko with the bat in his hands, Arnie's expression changed from confused concern to snotty exasperation. Reaching out his hand, he snapped, "Give me that! You gave it to me!" Jacko faked a look of contrition and acted as though he were going to meekly hand the bat over to its owner. As Arnie lowered his gaze from Jacko's eyes to his hands, expecting to be handed the bat, Jacko swung the club under and over like a tomahawk, snapped it down, and hit Arnie squarely on the head. Arnie quickly put his hands on his head and moaned "Owww," and before he could say or do anything else, Jacko hit him again, harder and harder, changing the arcs of his swings so Arnie couldn't protect himself or grab the bat away from him. After several more blows to the head, Arnie was stricken and silent.

It took a couple of minutes for Jacko to catch his breath. This was greater exertion than he had planned on, but it felt so right, and thoroughly worth the extra effort involved. Once he had his breathing under control, Jacko walked over to the basement stairs and called out, "Dale! Come quick! Arnie wants to show you something." As Dale scrambled up the steps, Jacko positioned himself on the right-hand side of the doorway and spread his feet apart in the batting stance that he had copied from Dave Winfield. Jacko's timing was perfect. Dale Ronson leapt through the door like a pitched ball and Jacko smashed through it dead center. Dale fell forward as he grabbed his gut and said, "ooooogh!" Jacko wasted no time. He beat on Dale relentlessly with the bat, offering no explanation to the fallen bloody usurper of Arnie's friendship. Soon Dale too was silent, and a considerably less precise mess than Arnie.

Jacko needed all his remaining strength and considerable ingenuity to drag Arnie and Dale over to the freezer compartment, but that was nothing compared to the strain of getting the two lifeless bodies into the freezer and folding and positioning them so the compartment could easily slide open and shut. It took nearly an hour of constant struggle and manipulation of the limp arms and legs, but finally Jacko finished packing the boys away and could slide the freezer shut. Parched, he grabbed a can of soda from the top part of the fridge and sat in the living room awhile, drinking and resting.

That's when he had spilled the soda and had to answer the phone while he was cleaning it up. After the phone call, Jacko drained the last of the soda into his mouth and tossed the can, basketball style, into the trash barrel by the stove. "Two points!" he crowed triumphantly. Then he began to sing to himself again as he cleaned up the blood from the kitchen floor and walls, "Fee-fi-fiddle-i-oh, fee-fi-fiddle-i-oh-oh-oh-oh..."

When the kitchen was clean of blood, Jacko took the goods from the freezer and put them under the sink and in the drawers. He didn't want anyone to find Arnie and Dale too soon, or have an obvious reason to look in the freezer. He wanted the new "inseparable friends" to have time enough alone to freeze solidly together like cut-up chicken parts in the supermarket. Then, as an abstract thought entered Jacko's mind, he giggled, "Shake 'n Bake for Arnie and Dale. Ha-ha-ha-ha."

As Jacko was about to leave, he remembered the phone call he had received, went back to the refrigerator, pulled open the freezer, and grinned at the two dead boys as he said, "Hey Arnie, Jim called. He wants to know if you want to go to the lake on Saturday." He was about to close the freezer when he added whimsically, "Why don't you ask him if you can bring Dale along too? Nothing spoils a day at the lake faster than running out of ice. Ha-ha-ha-ha..." Then, with surprising viciousness, Jacko slammed the freezer shut.

As he left Arnie's house Jacko carefully locked the door behind him. There was no one on the streets. No one saw him enter or leave the Gibsons' house, but it didn't matter to Jacko if anyone saw him or not. Jacko knew full well that what he had done was wrong, and eventually he would tell the right people all about it. Jacko wasn't particularly worried about the consequences of his murderous rage. He knew no actual harm would befall him because of something he had heard on a TV show: They don't put eight-year-old boys in the electric chair.

Assured of his well-being and satisfied with a good day's work, Jacko Klein sang softly to himself all the way home, "Someone's in the kitchen with Arnie, someone's in the kitchen I know-oh-oh-oh, someone's in the kitchen with Arnie..."

## THE MAN IN THE PURPLE

MAVERICK *by Kathy Stadalsky*

Soon, the sun would be setting. Already the ground was starting to cool, and the scents of night were in the wind.

He smelled the dusk, and knew that the man in the purple Maverick would shortly come flying down the road.

He didn't want to be anywhere near the road when the man came, because he'd seen him run down a cat one evening and the man never even stopped.

He skipped joyfully about, relishing his last hour or so of freedom, before his mother would start her veritable howling at him to come home for dinner.

A movement caught his eye: a grasshopper! The chase was on, even though he knew the odds lay with the insect.

He didn't catch it, but then, he hadn't really wanted to, anyhow.

He lay down on the grass, remembering the time he'd caught a huge one.

The grasshopper had regarded him sagely, seemingly unafraid of his greater size and power. In the moment or so that they'd studied one another, it was almost as if they'd somehow managed to glimpse a bit of the linkage that bound them together in the chain of life.

He'd let it go, unwilling—in fact, unable—to even consider harming it.

There were the puppies again!

One of his greatest joys was to chase the new pups across the field. Their little legs were still wobbly, their paws too big for their bodies, and they were immensely clumsy.

They seemed to look forward to the game as much as he, knowing him to be their friend. He listened to their happy yips as they tumbled this way and that, heads over tails in their haste as they tried to elude him.

He saw them tiring, so he left them. They barked a happy farewell as they stumbled home, still dizzy from the exertion.

He noticed a bunch of daisies poking around the roots of the giant oak he'd once tried to climb (his mother had told him he was lucky he hadn't broken every bone in his body). He contemplated picking some of them for her, but decided he'd wait a few more weeks until they were bigger.

As he was contemplating the daisies, the Johnson boy walked by on his way home from his friend's house.

He tried to play with him, but the boy merely kicked at him and ran home. He watched him go, and decided he didn't like the boy all that much anyhow.

What to do?

He flopped on the ground again, and studied the sky.

He wondered what was really up there, up above the clouds. Did the sky just stop? Was the world a giant ball, as his father had told him? If so, was the sky a part of that ball, or did it just keep going forever?

Frustrated at his inability to answer his own questions, he scanned the clouds instead.

He spotted an elephant-cloud, and then a lion. That big one over there seemed to hold a man's face, almost like the beefy face of the man in the purple Maverick.

Munching on a piece of grass, he tried to think of something to do.

A gentle, sweet-smelling breeze wafted over him, and he stretched lazily, rolling about a bit in the tall grass.

Maybe he'd just go on home. His mother would most likely fall over at the shock, he thought, chuckling. She always complained about the number of times he had to be called home.

A tingle down there brought him to his feet. He looked around, but saw no one. Still on the lookout for observers, he crept behind the oak and relieved himself.

Just as he was finishing, a giant monarch butterfly flitted right in front of him.

Thoughts of going home early vanished as he chased the butterfly around the trees, then out into the middle of the field.

The butterfly appeared to enjoy the race as much as he: It stayed low to the ground, rising up only whenever he got near enough to actually capture it.

Enraptured, he followed the butterfly onto the gravelled road, wondering what he'd do if he caught it.

He never even saw the purple Maverick.

Without warning, he seemed to be pressed down, his body almost merging into the road surface. His breath escaped in a rush as the pressure stopped, only to come again.

The man in the purple Maverick must have heard his cry, because this time he pulled over to see what he'd hit.

He heard his mother calling him, and he tried to answer her, tell her he was hurt; but when he opened his mouth, something poured out and he couldn't speak.

His head was spinning, his body felt limp, as if all of his bones had melted away, leaving only his skin. He remembered the way the cat had looked, and he groaned in pain, wondering if he looked that way now.

There was something warm on his belly, and he was afraid to think about what it could be.

The night smells were gone, replaced by a foul, unnatural odor he couldn't recognize. God, he hurt!

The man was standing over him now, looking at him. He looked angry as he raised the beer can to his lips and swallowed some of the liquid down.



Why don't you do something? he asked the man silently. Help me, he begged, looking at the man desperately. Oh, please, help me!

Behind the man's head, the red glow of the sunset darkened into crimson, and the man simply stood there, coldly staring at him.

Please help me! Take me home to my mom! I want my mom! I didn't tell her I love her, he told the man, still unable to make a sound come out. You have to take me home—please. Just let me tell my mom...

The man finished the beer, and wiped the back of his hand across his mouth.

Tossing the can into the field, the man grunted and moved closer.

Oh, thank you, he thought, trying to raise his head to make it easier for the man to lift him. The movement caused an explosion inside his brain, and he cried out as he fell back to the road.

The man knelt beside him.

He looked directly into the man's angry eyes, pleading in silence.

The man looked at him a moment longer, then stood suddenly, frightening him.

Unable to fathom the man's thoughts, he watched as the man turned and headed back towards his purple Maverick.

Don't leave me!

The man leaned into the car, and took the keys from the ignition. Straightening, he rubbed a calloused palm across his stubbled chin, staring speculatively at the glass on the road. Lips pursed, eyes blazing rage, he went to the trunk.

He's getting a blanket, he told himself, relieved. He closed his eyes thankfully as the man opened the trunk of the purple Maverick. Thank God, the man was going to help him.

He felt, rather than heard, the man returning. He opened his eyes, trying to convey his gratitude.

NO!

He saw the shotgun as the man moved closer, his face harsh and grim.

NO! YOU CAN'T SHOOT ME!

Desperately, he tried to force his body into movement. He HAD to get away!

Come on, he begged his legs. Come ON!

This can't be happening, he thought. It's all a dream—that's it! A sick, sick dream...

The shotgun levelled.

It's just a dream, he repeated over and over in his mind, closing his eyes. Any minute now, I'm going to wake up, because it's just a dream...

He felt the pellets enter his head an instant before he even heard the sound. I never got to tell my mom I love her, he thought, and died.

The man remained still for a moment, staring disgustedly at the lifeless body by his feet.

"Damned dog," the man said, and kicked him.

Shrugging, he returned to his purple Maverick and pulled away, tires spitting gravel.

## Multiple Choice: Identify

- a. C.D.
- b. P.D.
- c. I.R.A.



# THE JELLO WARS

PART ONE by Prudence Gaelor

She awoke to a bouquet of purple flowers over which Daddy's eyes anxiously peered. Aside from last night, it was the first time she'd seen him since he moved out, not that she missed him too much. Even though he only moved a few blocks away he might as well have moved to Jupiter. So she was surprised to see him when he walked into the room last night, Pink Bunny tucked under his arm.

It had been 2:13 in the A.M. when they wheeled Prudence out of surgery after having removed her appendix. She dimly remembered seeing the clock and asking for painkillers and not getting them, and Mummy telling her where her jammies were and also her hairbrush and her barrettes—and wishing that she'd stop, and still asking for painkillers and still not getting them after they transferred her from the journey to the bed.

"How long..." was all she managed to get out. Her throat was dry and her voice sandpapery.

"About twenty minutes, you okay? You gave us quite a scare." "Yeah, guess so." She turned to reach for her water pitcher but the rilly table was too far from her bed.

"Say 'yes,' not 'yeah'," Patrick corrected. She hated when he edited her speech. Besides, she wanted a drink of water and he was being no help.

"Water, please," Prudence whispered. "Would you like something to drink?" Prudence wondered how her father could be a college administrator and still be so dim. "Yes, please." Patrick got up and poured her a cup of water and stuck a straw in it. It was one of those bendy straws, like the kind they used to give you at Friendly's when you ordered a milkshake to go with your grilled cheese, but that they don't give you anymore even if you order the same thing. Prudence took a few sips and let her head fall back onto the pillow.

"Dad. Dad. I hurt, Daddy." "Do you want me to get a nurse?" "Y-yes...no...wait, I gotta button." Prudence pushed the nurse call button and asked to see the nurse. A short while later a nurse came in with a hypodermic needle, explaining that shots worked better than pills and asking her to roll over.

"Excuse me, Daddy." "You want me to leave?" "Please do," Prudence said, rolling over only after Patrick exited into the corridor. The nurse gave her the shot, left signalling to Patrick that he could reenter the room.

"I have to go to work in a few minutes, Pun'kin. I have a big meeting."

"Noticed you got your power tie on." "Your mother also has to attend this meeting, but she'll be here shortly thereafter, I'm sure. Although, if she decides to skip the meeting to catch up on sleep, she might be here sooner."

"Why would she do that?" "She's been here most of the night. I don't think she went home until about an hour or so ago."

"Why?" "Because she was worried—What do you mean, 'Why?'" "I don't know, I'm sure," Prudence shrugged. She didn't particularly feel like duking it out with her dad right now. "It's okay, Daddy. I'll be brave. Go on to your meeting—you'll be late."

"Okay, you want anything? Books or anything?" "Yeah, a red Porsche with a sunroof and a very loud tape deck." "Anything else?"

"Sure, could you have them hook up the TV. I'd really hate it if I missed Divorce Court, and I'd doubly hate it if I missed it today because it comes on twice on Tuesday." She saw her father wince at the word "divorce" but decided not to say anything.

"Sure thing, Pun'kin. I'll see you later." He leaned over and kissed her. At the door he called to her, "Have a good day. You behave."

"Yeah, right," Prudence said to Pink Bunny. "Get me out of this bed. I wanna bathe—I feel like such a grundle-kitty."

"Don't you think you should call the nurse?" Pink Bunny said. "Whatever for?"

"Well, that contraption they have shoved into your arm is plugged into the wall."

"No wonder my hair is so static-y—they've been electrifying me! Bunny, I'm electric!"

"Actually, Pru, static electricity occurs when there is a build-up of excess ions in the air. This is very common in the winter when the air is dry, and thusly should not be attributed to the fact that you're plugged into the wall."

"What's that s'posed to mean?"

"Bottom line? You need a humidifier."

"Oh."

"Although, you're still gonna have to unplug yourself if you're gonna take a shower."

Prudence turned to sit up on her own but was unable. "Ooh! Bunny! This HURTS!"

"Well, maybe this isn't such a hot idea."

"Bunny," Prudence said tersely, "I assure you I will not feel any better until I cease to resemble a grundle-kitty."

"Yeah! And I won't feel any better until you stop smelling like one," Pink Bunny retorted. "I'll go get the nurse. Gods! What a stench!"

"No, wait. Hand me the button-thingy that controls the bed up-and-downing." Pink Bunny grabbed the button-thingy and started pushing buttons, raising Prudence's back and legs so that she was bent into an awkward v-shape.

"Hah, now I've got you as I want you. You're my prisoner and you have to do as I command."

"Let me go! Let me go!" Prudence shrieked.

"Let's see...First..."

"I mean it, Bunny, this hurts. Cut it out."

"All right—First thing, you must call me 'Sir'—no, 'Lord!' That's even better, you must call me 'Lord.' And you must bring me sacrifice—a bowl of cereal every night before bed and first thing in the mor...oh, and it can't be any cereal. On nights when the moon is waxing it must be Lucky Charms. And on nights that the moon is waning it must be Mr. T cereal and on nights when the moon is full—" Pink Bunny's voice crescendoed, "COUNT CHOCULAI!"

"I mean it, Bunny! I'm really getting mad now. B'sides, they don't make Mr. T cereal anymore, You Stupid Rabbit."

"And first thing every morning you must kneel before me and say, 'O, Great Bunny, I shall spend this day and all of my days serving your great and powerful countenance. What is your pleasure, O wise Lord-Bunny?' Swear to it! Swear to it, I say, or I'll pounce on your stomach!"

"I swear..."

At that moment the nurse's assistant came in. Pink Bunny dove under the covers.

"Hi, I'm Jackie. Can I get you anything? Some more ice water? Oh, look at your all caught up in that bed. Not to worry, this happens all the time. Let me help you."

"Can you help me out, please?"

"I'm not so sure you should be getting out of bed. Did the doctor say you could?"

"I need to go to the bathroom," Prudence growled.

"Well, I guess in that case you can get up. Where's the switch?" She traced the cord to the blankets. She pulled the blankets back, uncovering Pink Bunny. "Oh!!! Look! Isn't he the most adorable little creature? Oh, aren't you sweet," she said to the pink rabbit. Prudence watched as Jackie picked him up and moved him to the window sill. "I'll just put him over here for now so he doesn't get smacked about as you're getting up."

Prudence thought Pink Bunny deserved to get smacked about. Yes, a good smacking about was certainly in order.

The nurse's assistant pushed a button and lowered Prudence's legs so that she was now sitting in an upright position. Very slowly, Prudence swung her legs over the side of the bed. This was quite difficult—more so than Prudence anticipated. She had no abdominal strength and found it difficult enough to sit up on her own, let alone swing her hips off the bed. She started to cry. Jackie said a few kind words and then hoisted her off the bed in one fell motion.

Passing Pink Bunny, Prudence hissed, "I swear all right. I swear I'll saw your ears off!"

After returning from the bathroom, Prudence persuaded the nurse's assistant to let her take a sponge bath and disconnect the IV long enough to put on a clean nightgown. Jackie then reconnected the IV and helped Prudence back to bed. While smoothing Prudence's hair back into a barrette she informed her that breakfast would be arriving shortly. Jackie then carried Pink Bunny back to the bed and left the room.

"Didja hear that? She thought I was cute!"

Silence.

"Hurts real bad, Pru?"

"Don't talk to me."

"Pru..."

"I don't wanna hear it, okay?"

There was a long pause.

"So it hurts real bad, Pru?"

"Oh, Bunny, it's horrible. Remember the time Ian's cat got at you and started dragging you around by your tummy-button?"

"Like that?"

"Yeah."

More silence.

"Pru, about earlier—I was only playing. I thought it would cheer you up some. You know, make you laugh."

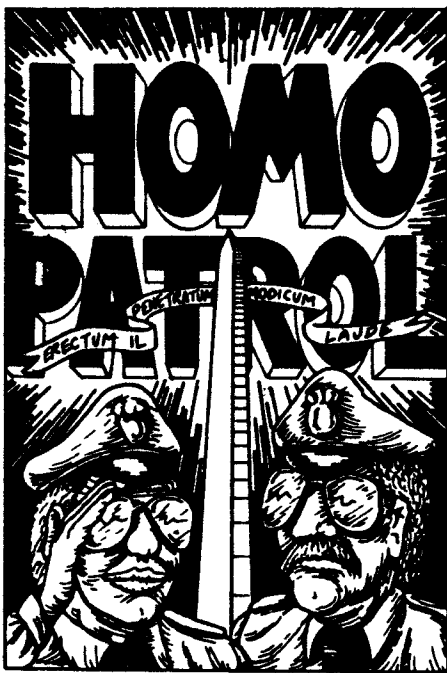
"Laughing hurts," Prudence replied. "Yeah, it's okay. I was kidding the same way when I said I'd saw your ears off."

"The exact same way?"

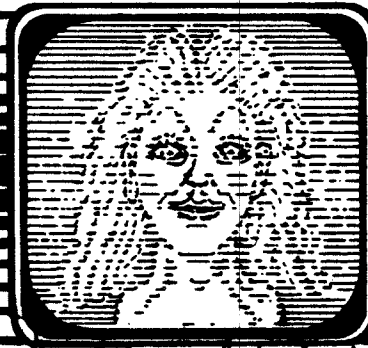
"The exact same way."

"Oh good—just checking."

(Continued next issue)



ORIGIN OF THE HOMO PATROL IT BEGAN ONE EVENING IN THE HOME OF BOB GOODE, WHEN HE AND HIS NEIGHBOR WARM BUNS WERE WATCHING TV...



...AND AIDS CASES ARE EXPECTED TO RISE DRAMATICALLY OVER THE NEXT 2 OR 3 YEARS. EXPERTS SAY A CURE MAY NOT BE FOUND FOR—



IF THE DAMN FAGS JUST LEARN TO KEEP IT IN THEIR PANTS, NONE A THIS'D BE HAPPENIN' NOW!!

TIME TO PRUNE THE POPULATION TREE, HUH?



A GUY AT MY WORK'S GOT IT! NOBODY'S SUPPOSED TO KNOW!

WAS HE DOIN' SOME BACK DOOR BOOGIEIN'?



WE GUESSED, BUT NOBODY KNOWS FOR SURE! HE CLAIMS IT WAS A DIRTY NEEDLE!

YEAH, I GUESS IT'S NOT JUST FAGS ANYMORE! DIDJA HEAR ABOUT THOSE THREE KIDS IN FLORIDA?



YEAH, IT'S EVERYWHERE NOW!! WE'RE HELPLESS! JUST WAITING FOR THE ASSASIN'S BULLET!

IF WE COULD JUST STOP THE SPREAD OF THIS THING! MY GOD, THEY JUST ARRESTED 17 GUYS FOR DOIN' IT IN THE PARK AND THEY KNOW IT'S DANGEROUS!! PEOPLE WON'T STOP UNTIL YOU MAKE 'EM!!



HEY-Y! THAT'S IT! MAYBE WE CAN MAKE THEM STOP! OR WARN THEM NOT TO OR MAKE 'EM TAKE TESTS—

QUARANTINE 'EM? PUT 'EM AWAY!! EXECUTE 'EM?!!



NO, BUT WE'RE NOT HELPLESS! LOOK WE BOTH KNOW A FEW PEOPLE DOWNTOWN. LET'S GET SOME KIND OF COMMITTEE TOGETHER. HOW 'BOUT IT?

MAYBE SOME PROFESSIONAL ADVICE! WE GOTTA BE CAREFUL!

YEAH!



LET'S MAKE SOME CALLS! WE CAN MEET HERE FOR BILL SESSIONS! LET'S SHOOT FOR, OH, NEXT WEEKEND?

OKEE DOKE!

NEXT: THE MEETING!  
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# Commercial McClue-In

## by "Kid" Sieve

Unabashed plugs first, then down to business: I got a lovely letter from Ellen Haure Weiss of the Museum of Modern Mythology at 693 Mission Street, Suite 900, San Francisco, CA 94105 (415/546-0202) along with their latest newsletter, a special double issue covering the 1987 Trademark Exposition, Spuds McKenzie, Couch Potatoes, the Museum's "100% Polyester" exhibit and more. Honestly, folks, this place is cooler than the Museum of Broadcasting, and well worth your support (only \$25 for annual membership, cheaper by almost half than the M of B) and, if you're in the Bay Area, your patronage (the office is on Mission off 3rd St.). And I see where Elayne's name is listed under "New Members"...

Also heard from STREETFARE JOURNAL—a form letter from "The Editor," which I'll detail here in part:

Streetfare Journal is a national non-profit poetry project which is sponsored by Winston Network, the media corporation which manages the interior bus advertising space in your city...[SJ] is published on a regular basis on 11" x 28" interior bus posters, and is not available in any other format. It is posted on over 12,400 buses in the following cities: New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, Baltimore, Atlanta, Minneapolis, Dallas, Miami and Phoenix...we're sorry to inform you that the only copies of the posters which are available are those on the buses. Streetfare Journal is not for sale, and there are no extra copies.

For those of you who have inquired about submitting your own poetry, please use the following guidelines: Send no more than three poems of ten lines or less, accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope, to the ...P.O. Box [880274, San Francisco, CA 94188-0274]...

As a friend of mine once observed, "Gee, the most creative things seem to all come out of San Francisco, don't they?" It is a tad unfortunate, however, that SJ is now concentrating only on poetry, as they've had some truly bizarre posters in the past (who could forget their "Famous Simians in History" series?). Shame, too, that we can't get a hold of them anymore...

I read where Dep Corp. is now changing the name of their appetite suppressant Ayds, for obvious reasons, to Aydslim, which apparently tested well in the UK. Trouble is, in many African countries AIDS is referred to as "slim" for, well, obvious reasons as well. Ina Bachrach of San Francisco's Namelab Inc., which researches product names (told you they were all kooky in San Fran—'s why Elayne & Steve are moving there in a few years), suggested, "I would try another word." How 'bout "Karposi?"

Gigantic profile article in the 3/13 Newsday Sunday mag on my fave name in advertising, Faith Popcorn (who looks like Ann Magnusen on diet pills), referred to as "Big business' Cassandra of social trends." Haven't read it yet, but it should do for a laugh next time I go to the bathroom...

Don't know why I give free plug space to Barbara "Too Important To Write To IJ" Lippert, except that her Adweek "Critiques" are still too witty. Good essays lately on "Fear and Loathing in the Boardroom" (2/15), which discusses AT&T's capitalization on the shakiness of capitalism (which "creates a sense of insecurity and dislocation...one only has to look at these spots to know that things might get worse before they get better"); and the "Jordache Bratpack" (3/7), which "Scales New Heights in Obnoxiousness" (I've not yet seen the one which mocks itself—"we've got this fabulously intricate cycle of mother/daughter passion and tension, and art imitating life while reinforcing that wonderful 'hate my mother' message. That's pretty remarkable stuff for 30 seconds. It's also pretty nervy, to call your own commercial 'trash.' The problem is that the mother, who has a point, is made to look like a raving lunatic, while the message to kids is that the only cool thing to do is love the commercial"—but after that review, I'm looking forward to gaping at it in disbelief at the breach of taste). As usual, first-rate analysis.

Also in the 3/7 Adweek is a marvelous analysis from Thomas Hine, author of Populuxe, a book about consumerism in the 50's, discussing the decline of what he terms the "My Decade," the reign of yuppies in advertising ("yuppie bashing...is a popular sport, because nobody actually admits to being a yuppie") and Reagan in politics. Quite insightful, and if anybody wants a copy let me know and I'll photocopy it for you.

Ketchum Advertising has come up with an interesting new ad for its Avia sneakers. Their last one juxtaposed the L.A. Raiders and the Joffrey Ballet, each "working out" to background music more appropriate to the other's background, and this one does pretty much the same thing, juxtaposing a jog through New York (grainy black & white footage, Hasidic rabbis and classical music in the background—lord knows why classical music is supposed to symbolize NY more than, say, rap music, but I suppose they're targeting their audience) and Los Angeles (brilliant color, surf/rock music and the like). Mucho efectivo.

And speaking of dichotomies, this article's main subject is the perpetuation of sexist stereotypes (what else is new?), specifically the false appearances one puts on while preparing to entertain members of the opposite sex in one's pad for the evening. Now entering the ring for the gentlemen we have Budweiser, a slick

YOU BETTER LOOSEN YOUR GIRDLE MARGARET

by Michael F. Maccarino

Baby Jennifer's crying and dog's barking too,  
My husband split with his secretary Sue.  
My world is shattered and my heart is broke,  
I need some ice cream and a Coke.

Oh no - the Welfare check is late again,  
Can't pay the rent 'til I don't know when,  
Maybe one day a rich man I'll meet -  
Oh look! "\$3.95 - All You Can Eat!"

At work they say, "Margaret, you putting on weight?"

And I've gone months without even one date.  
If my life keeps going like a sinking ship,  
I'll just drown myself in a chocolate chip.

Met him in the candy aisle and lost all that weight,

Loved me and left me and now it's too late.  
I got slim and trim in my aerobics class,  
But now I'll take my milkshake in a dirty glass!

**THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE**

For work (working class work) or rather there won't be after the work-sharing Even Age Work Force Plan concept a la Brainbeau catches on world-wide. Send S.A.S.E. to: EVEN AGE

Box 2243 Youngstown, Ohio, 44504



Little spot featuring two men preparing for their hot dates by converting their apartment from a bachelor hangout to a place more likely to subscribe to public television. "Male" things (dart boards, football on the telly, sports sections) are shoved away in corners as the place transforms into the height of sophistication and boredom (a chess set, ballet on tv, works of art suddenly hanging in the hallway). Frankly, a date with these guys looks like yawn city to me—bring back the football and dart boards, say I. But no, these gentlemen apparently feel the proper way to conduct themselves this evening is to totally deny who they really are and what they're really into in favor of what they think their hot babes will like. The apartment isn't cleaned, it's turned inside-out in the manner of the switcheroo Barbara Gordon pulls in her flat whilst changing into Batgirl. And naturally, we're to assume that if these beauties adore posier snobbery, they're going to love BUDWEISER. I mean, let's be real, if you're going to undergo a fake personality change to impress some lady, fellows, aren't you going to stash the Bud in favor of, at the very least, a beer with a little more pretentiousness in its favor?

And in this corner we have the Soft 'N Dri ladies, gearing up for their big night in. Do they (and there must be at least five of them—is the commercial implying they all live in this place together?) rush about picking up "female" things and switching the tv on to pro wrestling or some such? No, they CHANGE THEIR CLOTHING! And their hairstyles. And put on gobs of deodorant, naturally, as well as gobs of makeup. And change their clothes once more. And so on. All in a virtual fit of grown-up giggles. Oh yes, they're hyped, these little dynamos, they're getting theirs tonight. This, then is the lure: With scoring the implicit object of these metamorphoses, the men modify their environment; the women, their bodies. The sense of place in the Soft 'N Dri ad is almost nonexistent—you can't quite figure out where these gals are. At first, I thought it might be backstage at a modeling show or something, that's how nebulous it is. All pastels and open space, like a studio in hell. Or on television. Does this mean women supposedly judge men on ambience, while men judge women solely on personal appearance? And what does this say, even in the 80's (albeit the most reactionary decade we've had in awhile), about how far we haven't come (at least in television commercials) towards understanding each other yet? Don't ask me, I just work here and watch teevee. Stay tuned, folks!

# I Kid You Not

by Valerie Utton

Going out these days is such fun. I just love going into bars after spending hours trying to make myself fit that perfect profile of available, but not too available; not too young—but not too old; and let's not forget thin and beautiful. After the mirror assures me I have mastered that, I quickly flip through the article in one of my sophisticated women's magazines about AIDS to remind myself of why I am not going to just take someone home. Then it's time—into the masses. "Yea, though I walk through the valley..." and all that stuff. Deep breath, toll paid, I'm in.

Oh my god, has it been that long since I've been out? Oh please, not miniskirts again, I don't have the thighs for them. Well, at least the men still look the same—hungry. Come to think of it, so do the women.

"I'll have a light draft, please."

"Three bucks."

"Seriously?"

"Seriously."

"Prices have gone up in four years."

"Everything has gone up," he says while eyeing the miniskirt right behind me.

"Where've you been for four years?"

I turn to my right to see tall, dark and handsome smiling as he waits for an answer. Another deep breath. "Married."

"Oh, divorced, huh?"

I nod my head yes.

"Pretty much everybody else in here is too. Although you don't look much like the singles bar type. A little innocent, if I may be so bold."

My head drops slightly as I blush profusely. "I guess I just figured it was time for me to get back into the mainstream of life."

"Yea, I know how you feel. Just broke up myself. Nice girl, known her since B.A., but we just didn't click. Ya know what I mean? Tell me, did you know your husband B.A.?"

Puzzled: "B.A.? What's that?"

"Before AIDS."

"Oh." Profuse blush.

"Hey, you gotta think about that stuff these days, ya know? That's why I keep a supply of parachutes on me."

Puzzled: "Parachutes?"

"Yea, ya know, rubbers."

"Oh." Profuse blush.

"Hey, you really are innocent, aren't you?"

"Well, I'm not dumb."

"No no, I didn't mean that. It's just not that often that I meet someone who hasn't been around for a while. Ya know what I mean?" I shrug my shoulders. "So...would you like to save yourself some time and start with the cream of the crop?"

"No, no thank you." I try not to laugh in his face but it is almost a relief to know that guys are still using the same tired lines. Turning in the other direction, the girl with the miniskirt is next to me.

"Pretty sorry excuse for a guy, huh?"

"I'd have to agree with you there. Please don't tell me they're all like that in here. It's been a long time since I dared to try going out by myself and right now I'm not sure it was such a good idea."

"Well, they probably aren't all like that, but, well, aren't you kind of tired of this whole male thing anyway? I mean, I heard you say you're divorced. You should be expanding your horizons and trying new things. Don't you think?"

That puzzled look was creeping over my face again.

"Oh, come on, you know what I'm talking about. Let's be adventurous, together."

"Ah, no thank you."

"Okay, but you're missing out on a whole lotta fun."

Things have changed, things have definitely changed. Maybe if I just stand here and disappear, nobody will hassle me. Right now it's very hard for me to believe that I used to go out to places like this, although I don't remember them being this bad. I mean, the guys were always trying to put moves on you, but they were at least a bit more creative. Oh well, the beer is cold.

"Hi." Oh-oh, a voice from the right again. I'm almost afraid to look, so I peek out of the corner of my eye and see that it's not the same guy. Oh, what the hell.

"Hi." We smile at each other.

"Sometimes it's kind of weird in here. You almost feel like you want to disappear." He has a nice smile. I like a nice smile.

"That's very good, that's exactly what I was thinking."

"Well, I feel like that sometimes. Not here necessarily, I've only been here a couple of times, but sometimes I just like to listen to the music and look at the people."

"I can appreciate that. It's been a long time since I've been out in the bar scene and so far it hasn't been what you'd call a positive experience."

"Is that a cue for me to disappear?"

"Oh, no, I'm sorry. It's just that it would be nice if there weren't so many more things to think about. It's like I've got to learn to be single all over again. God, I'm practically telling you my life story."

"I have that kind of face. People just tell me things sometimes. Oh, I like this song. Would you like to dance?"

"Sure." I always hate this part. Whenever I dance with somebody I don't know very well my lip twitches. I'm pretty sure that nobody else can see it when it happens—sure enough, there it goes—but it sure does a lot to hamper one's perceptions of how good they look. He's a good dancer. Could it possibly be that there is a rose among the thorns? Well, I'd probably better reserve judgement on that for a while. "Thanks, that was one of my favorite songs. You're a very good dancer."

"You're very good yourself."

"So..." I hate starting sentences with that word, "what do you do for a living?"

"I'm a psychologist."

"Oh-oh, is my psyche in danger of being analyzed?"

"Good grief, no. I leave my work at the office."

This guy is scoring points on me left and right. Is this when I am supposed to start asking about his previous sex lives? Seems like I should probably wait awhile.

"What do you do for a living?"

"I work in advertising."

"That sounds very interesting."

"It is. It's very exciting too. Always a lot of adrenalin when there's a big push to get things done. That's what makes it so much fun." Oh please don't read into that.

"Yea, in my business people tend to be a little slower. Sometimes they just about put you to sleep."

"Yea, I bet they do." Silence. I hate this too. Silence, there's nothing I can think of to say!

"So, are you feeling a bit more relaxed about being here? You look comfortable, you're smiling. Must be good karma."

"Yea, my karma's pretty good, I guess. Don't really know much about that kinda stuff though."

"Well, karma is luck and fate and destiny kind of all rolled up into one."

"That's nice, I like the way that sounds." This guy is really nice.

"You know what my favorite part about karma is?" I shake my head no. "My favorite thing is how people move second by second through time touching the lives of others around them. In my line of work, I sometimes feel like a catalyst, someone who reconnects people with their karma, or who hooks people up together because I can sense that they share the same karma."

"That's quite a responsibility."

"I probably shouldn't make it sound quite so dramatic. It's more like 'hey Joe, I know someone that I think you would enjoy meeting. You have a lot in common, what do you say?' That's more the way it is."

"Do those people ever return the favor?"

"Sometimes, but usually it's me making my own interpretations of the people I meet. Like meeting you. You're very nice. My interpretation here is that I would like to get to know you better."

Here comes that blush response again. And I can't think of one thing to say. Searching, searching, searching...ah-ha. "Are you trying to karma-on to me? I'm sorry, I just couldn't resist."

"Very good, that was funny, two points. Seriously though, I would like to get to know you a little better. You know another thing about karma is that nothing happens by chance really. Like you and I meeting here, that is fate and what we do with it our choice."

Uh-oh, this is sounding a little weird. "It's nice meeting you too. Maybe we could go to a movie sometime or something."

"It's still pretty early, how about going someplace a little bit quieter, say my apartment? We can get to know each other a lot better there than we can in a quiet movie."

So much for my ability to judge the male character. "No, I wouldn't feel very comfortable doing that."

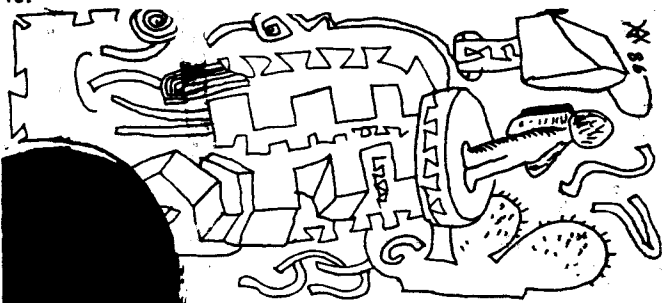
"Well now, you know what else they say about fate and karma, don't you?" I didn't answer. "You never really know the role that someone else is supposed to play in your life. I could be very important to you. If you don't take the chance you'll never know."

"Gee, thanks for the invite, but I've got an awful lot to do tomorrow and if I don't get enough sleep tonight—"

"Hey, you can stay the whole night." He drew close to my ear and whispered, "You know, if it's protection you're worried about I've got a whole airplane of parachutes back at my hangar."

I couldn't help but just stand there and look at this guy. What does today's woman do when she wants to make sure that the guy knows she thinks he's the scum of the earth? Does she slap him? Does she give him the ol' soprano kick? I wanted desperately to come up with something creative, but I was so stunned that I couldn't come up with anything.

I know—I'll stay single.



# The Pickup *by Peter Sherman*

It was the sound of her voice. Not the flat monotone I've been used to hearing, it rose and fell in a truly sensuous way. Now, I've heard a lot of chicks speak; there's that high piping kind that try to envelop you in their own brand of helplessness (a real nuisance, those); there's the bitchy types that sound like a clarinet with a busted reed (worst kind); also there's ones that sound like a fucking tuba—usually fat, beer-guzzling slobs. Christ! I could go on and on. But this one, man, she really got to me. She stood at the bar and ordered a sloe comfortable screw—you know, the drink chicks order just to make an impression and turn a few male heads (the kind with horns attached). And yet no one dared to move because her entire manner put off any attempt at some cheap hustle—she just liked the drink. Man, my heartstrings were unstrung on the spot.

Well, it took me awhile to regain my cool, but I dug her too much to just sit at my table and gawk—this babe was something special. I got up and ordered a double scotch with my left hand played out in front of her, and as she gave it a passing glance I looked her over with the casual efficiency of a guy who likes to appraise the merchandise he picks up (if he's lucky). I felt lucky.

I said, "Hi."

"Hello."

"What's your name?"

"Beverly Samuels." I was hooked.

"Mine's Rick."

"That's nice. Do you have a last name?"

"They call me 'Rick the Stick'—I blow sax."

"Oh...saxophone."

"Yeah, maybe you've heard of me."

"I'm afraid not, Rick. I don't listen to that much music."

That almost blew it for me, but I figured I should keep going. Damn it, this chick was music! "Well, I'm just getting started. I'm in a band called the Catatonic Five. We've got an album out and we're starting to get regular gigs."

"That's fine, Rick." Her voice started to fall and I could tell she was losing interest. I pulled the old standby.

"Can I buy you a drink?"

"If you'd like to."

So I bought her a sloe comfortable screw. She had definitely enjoyed the first one. My idea was to administer more in an increasing dosage—the bartender was a pal of mine. I had big plans alright. I started to feed her my pitch.

"You know, you got real class."

"Do I?"

"Yeah. I like your style."

She hesitated for a moment and said, "Oh?" in a way I can't describe in words; my insides slipped sideways. I was starting to blow it again by my hesitation, but my mind had gone blank. I got off a real corny line right off the top of my head.

"Do you come to this place often?" I felt like a real jerk, but she didn't seem to mind.

"Why no. Actually, I'm new to this city."

"Where'd you come from?"

"Southern Valley."

"Sounds like a dream."

"Well, it was, but I've decided to wake up now."

"Say, if you'd like to know what this burg is like you sure picked the right boy to show you around. I know all the hot spots in this town. Care to see some sights, dig some sounds?"

"Well, I don't know..."

"Sure you do. Come on, I'll show you some real action."

"Okay." A symphony in two syllables.

So we cruised. I showed her the local night clubs—Johnny J's, Bluesway, The Bop Shop, and The Licorice Stick (my favorite). She seemed to be enjoying herself. The music and the drinks were getting to her—she was hooked...I started to reel her in.

"Got a place to stay tonight, babe?"

"Why, no. I was thinking of putting up at a motel—I mean, a hotel."

"Listen, doll, you're in no condition to book yourself a room anywhere. Why don't you stay at my place?"

"Oh, I couldn't do that..."

"Hey, no sweat, kid. I can rack up on the couch."

"Well...no, I wouldn't want to inconvenience you."

"Me, inconvenienced? 'Rick the Stick' is always glad to help out someone in trouble. Especially someone as good-looking as you. I couldn't believe it—she actually blushed!

"Alright."

So I got her over to my apartment. She was weaving very slightly. Trying not to show it, but she was definitely bombed. When I put the key in the lock to my place she leaned against my shoulder. I took advantage of the situation, putting my arm around her shoulder while leading her into the bedroom. Somehow I'd neglected to turn on the lights. Funny how these things slip my mind.

I got her into bed, staying real close all the while. This was it! I was ready to put it to her.

I began to undress very slowly and casually. She looked up at me and her mouth began to move up and down but nothing came out. So I decided to do the talking.

"Say, babe, I never did get to show you my instrument..."

# Bibliographic Blitz *by R. Bain*

Hello all—this is the first weird book review in a hopefully continuing series. Today's books under review are:  
THE OFFICIAL DR. SCIENCE BIG BOOK OF SCIENCE (SIMPLIFIED)

and  
SCIENCE MADE STUPID (OR, HOW TO DISCOMPREHEND THE WORLD AROUND US)

These two books are both parodies of the type of textbook you had to suffer through back in sixth grade. You remember, the ones that were obviously part of a Communist plot to turn our nation's youth off science forever (judging from what my little brother says, I'd say it's working).

Most of you have probably heard of Dr. Science, or heard "Ask Dr. Science," or seen the television show. Well, the BIG BOOK OF SCIENCE is a collection of some of his "best" work in the field of "New Science," which basically seems to consist of whatever he can make up. The BIG BOOK OF SCIENCE is full of entertaining mis-explanations of things like why you mustn't clean self-cleaning ovens (it could bring about Armageddon!), why electricity is evil, and how to grow a synthetic life form in your own bathtub. It also contains lots of mislabeled photographs of Old Science activities, and "Thumbnail Sketches of The Great," in which the Doctor mangles history almost as thoroughly as he mangles science (Dr. Science is never wrong; the universe is).

DR. SCIENCE'S BIG BOOK OF SCIENCE covers evolution (but not very thoroughly), physics, biology, and a whole lot of ancient Greeks, among other things, all written in the smug, overblown style of a man who "knows more than you do." It costs \$6.95, and comes highly recommended to anyone with a sense of humor and a little knowledge of real science. (ED: You can order this book, along with tons more neat stuff from Dr. Science [aka Van Coffey] and Ian Shoales [aka Merle Kessler] and Rande of the Redwoods [aka Jim Turner] plus other weird folks c/o Duck's Breath Mystery Theatre, P.O. Box 22513, San Francisco, CA 94122.)

But enough about Dr. Science—he's got his own TV show and doesn't need any publicity from me. (ED: AGAIN: The show has once again shifted time slots in the NY area, and nobody seems to know when it's on now...stay tuned.) SCIENCE MADE STUPID is a good counterpart to DR. SCIENCE. The material they cover is almost mutually exclusive, so you won't mislearn the same things twice. This book vaguely resembles a "Popular Science" book, with lots of illustrations and tables, with very little print (perhaps that's a good thing). Dr. Science's book had a few serious bits, mostly the quotes on the back cover, but SCIENCE MADE STUPID manages to make fun of those too. If there is a single accurate fact in this book, the proofreader must have slipped up. Except for the section comparing creationism and evolution (which ought to be in real science textbooks!), this book is totally erroneous, from cover to cover. Even the ads in the back are silly ("Earn big bucks as a quantum mechanic!" "Clone yourself by mail!" etc.). Unlike DR. SCIENCE, which just mislabeled photos, this book has its own misleading drawings, most of which are really funny (a cutaway view of the Earth full of watermelon seeds? A mushroom cloud with a smiley-face? Sheesh...).

DR. SCIENCE usually got the names right; in SCIENCE MADE STUPID all the names have been changed to protect the innocent. The periodic table of elements has things like Drano, Kryptonite and Garlic listed; the three types of rock are called "Ignominous," "Sedentary" and "Metaphoric;" and the book misspells "Ceolacanth" three times, giving up and calling it "this ugly sucker here."

This book not only can't get the names right, it screws up the concepts, too. "An eclipse of the moon occurs when the sun passes between the Earth and the moon," for example. SCIENCE MADE STUPID also manages not to be able to tell Roger and Francis Bacon apart, reconstructs an animal from a tiny fragment, has several silly do-it-yourself projects, and a test to see if you are a Neanderthal or not. This book mainly covers paleontology, astronomy, physics, and even some anthropology. It has a handy erroneous set of tables (math, not furniture) in the back, and a bibliography for future reading. It also costs \$6.95, and is also highly recommended.

One last thing—the DR. SCIENCE BIG BOOK OF SCIENCE includes a do-it-yourself "Master of Science" home study course, with diploma from a major university which wishes to remain anonymous...

She began to panic. "What are you doing? Stop! I'll scream!" She tried to prop herself up in bed with her arms while attempting to swing her legs over the side. A pitiful effort at best.

"They all scream when I show 'em my sax, doll." I was down to my shorts and socks now.

Suddenly her expression changed to one of complete authority and assurance. "Well, you know what you can do with your sax, smartass?"

And then, BAM!

I've been doing a lot of reading since then—stuff on myths and legends and such. There's a lot of chicks in there who like to put the whammy on guys: witches, sirens, succubi...I could go on and on.

Well, she said she was from "Southern Valley."

I never saw her again...

I still play sax even now, but you wouldn't believe where the mouthpiece is located.



Well, we find ourselves in that mid-point between the push for Christmas and the glut of summer, so there really aren't a heck of a lot of things worth mentioning. The deadline for the CBG Awards was pushed back to the end of March so I can't pad out this column with that...I have a couple of quick reviews and a bit of N\*E\*W\*S that I just found out about only yesterday (March 21) and which came just in time for this issue: "BYRNE QUILTS DC!" So reads the headline on the latest issue (#750) of CBG. As usual, CBG does almost nothing besides rewriting the standard DC press release (as they did in the Shooter/Marvel story of a while ago). "Byrne declined comment."

I'm expecting to see a lot of fanboys running around with black armbands for months to come, and you can bet that the last few issues of the various SUPERMAN titles that Byrne will be doing will be "hot." According to the CBG story, all of the announced Byrne issues will be shipping late (some over a month), others will be staggered with fill-ins by others that had been sitting on the shelf, and the already announced ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN ANNUAL #2 has been postponed "indefinitely."

Byrne had already announced plans for the upcoming year (the "new" SUPERGIRL, Luthor losing his fortune and possibly his hand, and Supes developing a split personality) as the SUPERGIRL plotline has already been introduced (as had the possibility of Luthor losing his hand due to Kryptonite poisoning), and it will be interesting to see how things will turn out. The SUPERMAN title had also been scheduled to go biweekly with continuity flowing from both this title and the ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN book. Apparently it was through Byrne's insistence that Marv Wolfman was removed from the SUPERMAN books, allowing Byrne to completely take over all facets of the character's continuity. Things could get pretty damn interesting, and I'll keep you informed if I should hear anything through my "connections."

The one non-mainstream book I have to review is another issue of Morgan Lloyd's THE HEDONIST (#3); if you haven't taken my advice and sent away for the last issue yet, hold on and send for both (\$1.75 each, Mongo's View Ltd., 3232 185th St., Torrance, CA 90504). If it's possible, this issue is even more bizarre and new wave than the last. A nice change from the usual fare and the chance to help out a small press fellow-traveller. Give it a try!

THE TROUBLE WITH GIRLS (\$1.95 U.S./\$2.95 Canada) was originally from Malibu Comics, but now from Eternity. A few months ago, four or five companies merged under this one logo, thereby driving myself and thousands of comics fans completely mad in vain searches for new issues of dozens of books which simply disappeared in the shuffle, never to be seen again...Anyway, this book is written by Will Jacobs and Gerard Jones, whom some of you may recall from the book THE BEAVER PAPERS or their comics-related THE COMIC BOOK HEROES. Jones has also written for National Lampoon, The Realist and Amazing Heroes. Not known as comics writers (which, quite frankly, is probably one of the best things about the book), these two have not done a superhero book but a tongue-in-cheek James Bond-type satire dealing with one Lester Girls (hence one of the meanings of the title), who tired of a life of danger, bloodshed and beautiful women (similar to the reasons I had for leaving the service) and hopes to settle down to a quiet life in a small suburban house with a wife and a couple of kids where he can finally finish THE RED PONY in peace. No such luck!! Nicely done art by Tim Hamilton and Dave Garcia adds to the total package. I came in rather late (#7), and immediate-

## TELE-EROTICISM AND OTHER WEIRD FETISHES by Michael Lenetsky

Many people call this the nuclear age, others the modern age. I have yet another name for this era—the Bell Age.

Alexander Graham Bell's brainchild has affected us more than any other invention of this century. All of us have phones and we also use them frequently. Why write when you can call? Why visit friends when you can ring them up? Why make the effort to see when you can push a button and hear? The phone used to be quite harmless. It was used seldomly and by a small minority of people. Today, however, it's a new ballgame.

Phones bridge huge gaps of miles in seconds. They unite people separated by continents in minutes. Talk is cheaper than travel and easier than writing. The phone is the lazy person's delight.

When viewed from a distance, the telephone's familiarity is frightening. The phone allows a life of hermitage to become a thing of pleasure and relative comfort. Yes, through Ma Bell any person can be a hermit and still remain happy.

Through a colossal network of wires, a hermit can shop for food, clothes, jewelry and, yes, a new home. One phone shop offers great buys on 14-karat cubic zirconia rings. Other numbers allow you to buy sides of beer, uncut, at enormously reduced prices. Shopping, however, is not all that the phone offers.

The recluse can shop for anything but if he/she needs friends what can be done? The phone has solved that. There are dozens of numbers that offer anyone instant popularity. Eight people will instantly like, tolerate and know you in minutes, for a moderate price. Yes, for pennies any person can have several lifelong pals. Amazing, isn't it? The need for human relations is gone, and any disagreements can be solved by a mere click.

Other numbers promise more. These services offer a variety of sexual encounters. You name the perversion, there's a number for it. Goodbye AIDS, hello hands. No more one-night stands, no more disease, no more anything. Just dial seven numbers and you can be on your way to sexual nirvana.

By now you realize the services that Ma Bell offers: shopping, friends or sex. What more can there be? It seems impossible for the phone genie to offer us more. But there is one last wish left in this Pandora's Box of Bell's making.

"Hi Jane," croons a young pimply-faced girl, "I just met the greatest guy. We talked for hours. About everything."

"Really?" replies an equally poked teenybopper. "Where'd you meet him?"

"On the LOVE LINE."

Yes readers, the phone offers instantaneous, total, all-encompassing love. 976-LOVE will create the perfect binding love that you've always dreamed of. A type of love not found in this world for eons. Push seven buttons and any person can find their soul-mate.

Our lives are darkened by the cloud of the nuclear age, but its threat is distant. The push-button bandit is closer, and more silent in its threat. Food, sex, friends and love can all be gained through a piece of plastic. In a world of fear, the phone has appeared as the messiah of distance. The fears of disease, hatred, rejection or marital dissatisfaction can all be answered through the phone.

Well, it's been enjoyable but I still have to go dial some friends. My girlfriend and I are getting along great; we may even meet someday. Whoa, my phone's ringing. Maybe it's my mistress; for an extra ten dollars on my phone bill she calls me. Six times.

→ ly fell in love and have gone back to pick up all the  
→ other issues. Don't wait any longer!! "All the sex and  
→ twice the violence!" Yeah!!

Notary Sejac 2-

## PADRE PIO AND THE KIRKSVILLE STIGMATA PART TWO *by Joseph J. Benevento*

(Last issue: Some background on our protagonist's Catholic upbringing and subsequent straying from the fold; the story of Padre Pio; summertime alone in Kirksville, MO, whence our story resumes.) Perhaps the worst part of my first several weeks in Kirksville was going to sleep at night. Being all by myself was eerie, probably because it was so new. Invariably, before I turned out the light, my eyes would focus on the picture of Padre Pio. He seemed to look back at me with a combination of pity and remorse. I felt that he was watching over me; I also felt that it was crazy and silly to feel that way. Still, it seemed like it would be giving in to my superstitions to take the picture away, so I left it on the dresser, and I continued to view it each night.

It was the fifth week of our semester when several of my colleagues finally did invite me out for a drink after Friday classes. I was thankful because weekends had been an especially bad time. During the week I was too involved with students to worry about being alone. But from Friday afternoon until Monday morning the only human interaction I experienced, aside from talking with Maria by telephone, was the perfunctory conversations I had with the man behind the counter at the 7-11 where I bought my Sunday newspaper. I needed this chance to be out with others; needed it so much, in fact, that I was nervous about making a good enough impression so that I would be invited out again.

We went to one of the local bars, and after two or three beers I started to feel a little more comfortable with the five or six other colleagues at the table with me. Still, I didn't say much at first because, naturally, I was unfamiliar with most of their points of reference. Oddly enough, though, the conversation shifted eventually to Catholicism, partly because it turned out that three of us were renegade Catholics. We started with the normal tales of nuns and priests and rituals. Probably the beer was making me braver because I found myself not only contributing to the conversation, but also attempting to top every story that one of the other ex-Catholics would offer. Catholics love to share stories with each other, but they like a mixed group even more, so that the Catholics can nod agreement and lend support to each other, while the others look on and listen with a kind of appalled amusement. This session was something I felt comfortable with, even in Missouri, so I was not about to let it slip away unacknowledged.

When one of the other Catholics amused the group with her tale of a nun who hit students with a ruler, I offered my account of Sister Rita Elizabeth, who used to pull the hair out of children's heads and then gleefully open her hands to let us all watch in horror as the hair fell to the floor. When one of the non-Catholics asked if priests were ever known to forsake celibacy, I chimed in with my story of young Father Edward Donahue, who was a Richard Chamberlain look-alike in our parish years ago. Rumor had it that he was transferred because too many of the women of the parish were looking for physical examinations from "Dr. Kildare" instead of spiritual care. Then a few of the Protestants started to joke with us about all of our saints and statuary. One of my cohorts obliged with a story about a Saint Theresa of the Roses mass card, which, if focused on carefully enough for a period of time, would produce the image of Saint Theresa, even after one looked away. He remembered that his sister had once awakened his entire household with her screams; the cause of her alarm was that she was continuing to see the image of St. Theresa hours after she had put down the card, and even when she had closed her eyes to go to sleep. Though I admitted that that was a "good one," I felt that I could readily top it as well.

"Have any of you ever heard of Padre Pio?" I asked.

"No, who is he, some obscure saint?" one of them asked.

"No, he isn't a saint yet, but he's getting there. He was this priest in Italy who was supposed to have performed a bunch of miracles. Anyway, we had an aunt there who knew him, and since he was a saint-to-be, she would try to collect future relics, and then she'd send some of them to my mother."

"But how can you get relics from someone who's still alive?"

"Oh, my aunt was pretty damn resourceful. When Padre Pio would get a haircut or have his beard trimmed, she'd have the hairs collected. So every few months we'd get a packet or two of grey hair from Italy."

My remarks met with a good deal of laughter, but I had still more to tell:

"Well, hair wasn't all we got. See, Padre Pio was supposed to have had the stigmata, the wounds of Christ, so our aunt, whenever she could, would also gather up the old man's scabs. To this day my mother has some old, dead Italian priest's scabs in little plastic bags in her jewelry box! Hell, if he ever does become a saint, we'll probably get bids from churches that will want to house them, maybe a hundred bucks a scab!"

Of course my newfound friends found my last topper particularly funny; a few of them, in fact, laughed uncontrollably. I had clearly made a bit of a hit, but I realized, even through the beer and the laughter, that I wasn't entirely satisfied. I began to feel a bit of the cold sweat of betrayal. I'd just given a group of relative strangers a good laugh, but at whose expense? My mother is one of the nicest and sanest people I know, but these people didn't know that, and my sarcastic, out-of-context remarks probably made her seem like some sort of nut. I'd just wanted to have some fun and make some friends, but instead I began to feel ex-

tre mely guilty. Strangely enough, I did not feel my mother's sad eyes on me; instead, I felt the glassy stare of Padre Pio, as his eyes fixed upon me with a mixture of shame and rage that not even a half dozen more glasses of beer could diminish.

Eventually, our merry group broke up and I staggered to my car and made the short drive home. I had really had too much to drink, so I decided to go right to bed. Five weeks into the term it had finally begun to cool off in Kirksville, so much so that I had stopped using the air conditioner. I also decided on this particular night that it was cool enough to close the windows. After putting on my pajamas I proceeded to try to close them, but I found that one of the bedroom windows was stuck and could not be closed from the bottom. I could have just left it open, but even when sober I am fairly stubborn, so I took both hands and started to try to close the window by pushing down hard from the top of the frame. I pushed and I pushed, but the frame wouldn't budge. I was pushing even harder when suddenly the window slammed shut tight, so suddenly that I could not take my fingers off of the upper frame before the window closed shut. I stood in great amazement and even greater pain as I realized that my fingers were caught in the window, between the outer and inner frames, and I could not free them no matter how I pulled or jerked. All of my fingers were caught; there was no way for me to open the window with my hands.

I struggled, but I was afraid that if I pulled too hard I might do some permanent damage; I even feared leaving a few of my fingers in between the window frames. I remember crying out for help, at first in low moans, but finally at the top of my voice. Nobody responded to my pleas. I felt the ridiculous absurdity of my situation—one sure to get a laugh in a cartoon or situation comedy—but the reality of my pain also helped me to understand the true terror of being alone. If such an accident had occurred in Queens, it would have been a matter of seconds before someone would have saved me. Even back in Michigan, even if Maria had been working in her lab, within hours, at the most, I would have been rescued. Now, though, I was alone; no one was expecting to see me until Monday morning! By that time I could be dead, since I would be not only in great pain but also without food or water for all of that time. Since my downstairs neighbor was probably gone for the weekend, and since our house was not in shouting distance of any other, the possibility of dying, with my hands caught in a window, alone, in Kirksville, Missouri, was too real not to be taken seriously.

So I really began to panic. I thought of trying to kick the window open with my foot, but I was barefoot, and I was afraid that, in typical klutz fashion, I would cut open my foot without freeing my hands. I tried instead to position my head in such a way as to lift the window, but that didn't work either. More time passed and I was sure that I was losing my fingers, certain that the force of the frame was cutting off my circulation.

In my fear and my pain I almost didn't notice that I was beginning to wail, almost to chant, "Oh, God, oh God, help me God." Shortly after I noticed what I was saying I further noticed the picture of Padre Pio, which seemed to be witnessing my plight. I could almost believe that my fingers were caught as punishment for what I had said at the bar, and the idea of it so enraged me that I wanted to go and tear up the picture, but of course I was unable to do so. I tried to calm down and as I did I thought that perhaps his eyes looked upon me with a small portion of pity or an offer of redemption. Being so desperate and so alone I found myself praying. I said no words, aloud or even to myself, but I knew implicitly that I was asking Padre Pio to help me, to intercede.

A few more minutes passed, my fears seemed only to increase, but then suddenly, as if by revelation, I decided to try to push the window open by bending and twisting my body so that I could push up with my shoulder. On about the third or fourth upward thrust the window came open and my fingers were, all at once, freed.

The first thing I did was to look at my fingers. They were a colorful sight—or, better put, a discolored one, as they were badly swollen in various shades of black and blue and purple. But I was able to move them, and after several minutes I felt fairly confident that they were not broken. I first put them in ice water to reduce the swelling, but the ice made them feel numb, so I wrapped them in a towel and then just sat down on my bed. I decided that I didn't need to go to the hospital; in part I based that decision on how painful it would have been to drive, in part on the fact that I didn't really know how to get to the hospital. I looked around my room, with hatred at the window and with a kind of confused gratitude at the picture of Padre Pio. I eventually got up, turned off the light and went to bed, murmuring a few prayers of thanks as I slowly lost consciousness.

All of that happened about two weeks ago. My fingers are all still with me and I can move them freely. Except for a little stiffness, there is no pain. I have gone to church two Sundays in a row now, and I think I will continue to do so. I know that my being drunk and panicked had a lot to do with my not figuring out how to open the window sooner, and I know that someone with a Ph.D. should be able to figure out that it was just a coincidence that my fingers were released a few moments after my implicit apology and bargain with Padre Pio. I also know that it was shock and fear that made me think that I was losing my fingers, that I probably was not in nearly as much danger as I thought I was. There is probably nothing miraculous about my coming out of the accident with no permanent damage. Nothing really all that extra-

(continued next page)

ordinary happened.

Still, two things prevent me from just dismissing my experience as an absurd accident in an absurd world. One of them is the picture of Padre Pio himself, which still stares at me relentlessly, and seems to assure me that a Catholic's faith can never be forsaken. And the other matter is even more impressive because, unlike a picture, it cannot be removed. I have my fingers, they were not left to rot in an old window, and they suffered no real damage; I didn't even lose a nail. But on each of those fingers, between the knuckle and the nail, where they were most securely caught, are the deep impressions, the discolored indentations, that the wooden frames made. That's right, my wounds are higher up than the palms, but all the same, I've got my own personal Kirkville stigmata. I'm no Christ figure, no St. Francis, and I have even less in common with Padre Pio, but I have been marked just the same. I know it's crazy to even think that, but I can't help it. With all that's happened I almost have to take these marks as some sort of sign, though of what I'm still not sure.

Here, alone, in Kirkville, I sit wondering what it can all mean. I wonder if anyone will even believe this latest bit of Catholic folklore; I wonder if anyone will laugh. I'd be laughing myself, if it hadn't happened to me. Mostly I wonder if Padre Pio really is watching me—or, should I say, watching over me? It could be that even now, as he stares at me from my dresser, he is in fact trying to save me from my desperation, trying to convince me that I can never be alone.

## Jesus In Reverse

### PART TWO

by Patricia Flinn

(THE STORY SO FAR: Sarah Smilowitz has been waiting patiently for the death of her cat, Spooky, her dog, Tomorrow, and her mother, Faith. With none of their ends in sight, Sarah's friend Joan finally convinces her to see a psychic. The psychic advises Sarah not to interfere with the laws of Karma by asking too many questions. Sarah, determined to hasten her loved ones' end, advertises for a faith healer who will act as a Jesus in Reverse—in- stead of praying for a fast recovery, he will pray for a quick end.)

His name was Dave Orny Anderson, but he told Sarah she could call him D.O.A. for short.

"Best to keep things simple," he said, winking at Sarah as she sat down opposite him at her kitchen table. "Shoot your mouth off too much and you're apt to wind up behind the eight ball, right?"

"When's the last time you used your hands?" Sarah asked.

For a moment D.O.A. looked confused.

"My hands?"

"You know. For praying. Like we talked about on the telephone?"

"Oh," said D.O.A. "Now I get you. Well, let me think. The last time? Well, just recently I prayed for a man—a real big fellow—who happened to be suffering from a boil in his ear. Ugly old thing. Looked like a big old prune pit. Anyway, I did all I could—prayed my heart out—but nothing worked. In fact, the poor fellow was howling in pain by the time I left."

"Would you say your praying made him worse or do you think that was just a coincidence?"

"Oh, I'd definitely say it made him worse. No question about that."

"Could he have died, by any chance?"

"From a boil?"

"No, from your praying. I mean, if you kept at it."

"I suppose. He was in bad shape. Really bad shape."

"So he might have died, right?"

"Yes. I think that's a reasonable assumption. A couple more minutes and I would have finished him off. Yes. That's right."

"Now, one more thing," Sarah continued. "Have you any objections to working with animals? I mean, animals and mothers?"

"No, Ma'am. No problem there. I love animals and mothers. Have all my life."

"So you won't mind working with all three of them then?"

"Do you mean at the same time?" D.O.A. asked, scratching his

THE WRITER

(in the style of Edgar Allen Poe's 'The Raven')

by Michael Polo

One while typing, nearly yawning, suddenly there came a dawning. And the writer started typing, typing letters by the score. Like a sailor at land's sighting, furiously started writing. Started writing like a novice writer never wrote before. Started writing straight and sure.

Could this be the novel nouveau, movie rights and TV too, though He, the writer, never published written works from days of yore? After years of Ed. Attention, would his novel get a mention. Would he soon appear on talk shows and his fame and prestige soar? Would the world of fame and fortune soon become an open door? What had Destiny in store?

After three weeks in the Top Ten, called a conference for the

press, then

"Focus in for inspiration, draw from personal elation,

Do not worry if your literary efforts will endure,

For in practicing your art you must make Journalism your,"

Quoth the writer, "...Signature."

head.

"Oh, well, that would be entirely up to you," Sarah replied. "I wouldn't want to interfere with your usual method. I mean, you could pray over them separately or take them on all together. Whichever you prefer."

"I can't recall ever having done that," D.O.A. said. "But that's no problem 'cause I sure am willing to try. As far as I'm concerned, there ain't nothing like an exciting challenge."

Sarah had a rough time getting Tomorrow into the portable doggie carrier. Every time she touched one of his legs, bent and crippled with arthritic tumors, the animal would let out a frightful screech and begin clawing the air like some huge overturned cockroach.

"Maybe I should just wrap him in a blanket and carry him under my arm," Sarah said, looking up at Joan who was in the process of tucking Spooky into a box of kitty litter. "He might be less noticeable that way. In fact, the guard might think he's a baby or something."

"No," Joan said. "I wouldn't take any chances if I were you. Suppose you drop him?"

"Well, maybe, but trying to sneak a big doggie box like this one into that hospital is going to be pretty difficult."

"I know, but getting this cat past the front desk is not going to be a cinch either. What happens if she lets loose with some blood-curdling scream right as we're walking into the goddamn elevator?"

"She's too sick to scream. Look at her. She's half dead."

The cat, her legs splayed out like a dying squid, was lying face down and unconscious in a pile of Meow Mix Kitty Chow.

"Yeah, but she's been known to have bounced back, remember?"

"I know, I know. But let's try to think positive, okay?"

"And D.O.A.?" Joan asked. "What does he think?"

"He's pretty optimistic," Sarah replied. "He told me there's a one-in-three chance of one of them going."

Sarah was to the right of the bed, cradling Tomorrow; Joan was on the left, rocking Spooky. D.O.A. stood opposite the pillows, holding Faith's bone-grey hand high above her head.

"Ashes to ashes and dust to dust."

"What's he doing now?" Joan whispered.

"I dunno," Sarah replied.

"Going once, going twice, going..."

"Sounds to me like he's trying to auction your mother off."

"Could be."

"It doesn't seem to be working, though."

"No."

"She's still breathing."

"I know."

"They're all still breathing."

"Right."

"In fact, they all look pretty good."

"It's still early. Give him a chance."

"We've been here for over four hours."

"These things take time."

"My left leg's fallen asleep."

"Shake it."

"I'm shaking it. It's dead."

"Really? Then keep your fingers crossed. Maybe he's finally making some progress."

Nobody could believe it. Least of all Joan.

It all happened so fast. So unexpectedly.

One minute Sarah was fine and the next...

Naturally hospital officials wanted to know the whole story—how Joan and Sarah and D.O.A. had gotten past the guard on the first floor without obtaining passes; what the three of them had been doing around Mrs. Smilowitz' bed; why a dog and a cat were present in a critical care unit; if the deceased had ever been subject to sudden seizures, strokes, heart attacks...

Considering the nature of the circumstances, Joan was more than cooperative.

"Sarah was my best friend," she said, sobbing into a pink Kleenex outside the hospital's morgue. "My very best friend. There was nothing the matter with her health. Nothing. Who could have ever dreamed..."

"Now, now," the doctor said, trying to reassure her, "tragedies like this happen all the time in hospitals. There's just no telling when it comes to matters of the heart."

"But there was absolutely nothing wrong with her heart," Joan said. "She was in the prime of her life."

"Prime or no prime," the doctor replied, "when your number is up, your number is up."

"But it doesn't make sense. Sarah wasn't even sick."

"That's usually the case. Well, perhaps the autopsy will prove something."

"The autopsy?"

"To determine the exact cause of death and to rule out any foul play."

"But she died while praying! How could there be foul—"

"These days anything is possible."

"But—"

"Are there any surviving members besides the victim's mother?"

"Just her dog and cat."

"Excellent. Then we'll get started immediately. I mean, there's no sense delaying these things, right? As far as I'm concerned, there's nothing quite as painful to our loved ones as dragging out a damn burial."



## Out On A Limb by Larry Stolte

I have little respect for people who live vicariously; however, vicarious work is something I will always strive for. That can be said of death also. I sure do get profound on Monday morning.

As I open the mail in my twelfth story office, that matutinal thought hits me one more time: work—slow death. It's daydream time again. More bills and junk mail. More ads. Watermelon in a bottle. Aardvark repellent. Oh, it's time for my 11:30 tinkle. I walk down the hall but miss the turn to the bathroom. Just like every morning, I head to the window near the stairwell. The window is open this morning. I look out at the city—terse escapism. I say hello to the man on the ledge. He reciprocates.

I say, "Would you believe I've stared out this window almost every day for nine years and never knew this ledge was here? Guess I never looked straight down."

"Small world," he replies. This puzzles me.

"Are you going to jump?" I ask. He nods.

"Some days are like that," I say, making conversation. Then I turn an inside-out segue with, "Why are you standing with arms akimbo? You look like an umpire."

"How should a man stand just before he ceases to exist?" he asks rhetorically. He has a point there.

"You've got a point there. Are you thinking of changing your mind?"

"No. I'm going through with it. But I'm not bound to a schedule or anything. I don't need to make the morning paper's obituaries. So I'll just take my time."

"How can you even think about it? Aren't you even the least bit anxious?"

"Well, yes I am," he says. "The problem with death is that it is not final enough. With heaven, hell, transmigration, reincarnation—who knows where I'm going? Tomorrow, I may be a small bug eating sheep shit."

"Come on, you're not going to be a bug or anything like one. Don't you believe that because you're human, you have a soul—a soul that has an afterlife?"

He explains, "I do believe in afterbirth; not so sure about afterlife. The kind with God and all that. I know my soul is going to try like hell to get out of my body before it splats on the pavement."

This thought moves something deep inside me, and I realize I have to go to the bathroom. "I have to go to the bathroom. You won't go while I'm going, will you?"

"Nah, the wind is gusting," he says. "I don't want to end up in the deli across the street."

"I'll be right back," I say, and head toward the men's room. As I round the corner, however, the ledger yells, "Faster than the speed of smell. More powerful than Hitler's ego. Able to leap—"

"Wait!" I scream, and rush back to the window.

"Just kidding," he says.

"Look, next time I won't stop you," I say, wishing I hadn't after realizing just how stupid that sounds. I notice he has a small black leather case beside him on the ledge.

"What's in the case?" I ask.

"Binoculars," he replies. "I wanted to have a last look around."

"Well, I'm going to the can," I say. As I proceed, I can't help but think that this man will be no longer when I return. But when I return, he has removed the binoculars from the case and is scouting the city below.

"Make sure you dive when the surge comes in," I say. "Otherwise, you'll splat on the rocks. And you have to spring out fifteen feet to clear the ridge." He laughs. I should have been a psychologist.

Apparently, this strikes an epiphanic chord in him because he says, "Hey, that gives me an idea. Maybe I should see how many flips I can do before I land."

I play along. "In the tuck or pike position?"

"Pike."

"You must be in great shape."

"I take care of myself," he says. He has been looking through the binoculars since I came back from the bathroom. "That bumper sticker reads, 'Jesus Christ for Lord,'" he says. "Take a look." He hands me the binoculars. They are unbelievably powerful; quite functional for amoeba hunting.

"Which car? Oh, I got it. No, it says, 'Jesus Christ is Lord,'" I say.

"Figures. Don't know why I should see any sign of wit down there today."

"Or any day," I add, still scanning the street. "There's one that says 'U.S. out of El Paso.'"

"Nice try. You just made that up. I like it."

"I guess I'm trying to convince you by humoring you that this jump could shatter your ego, and maybe you should hang around for awhile. You know, the holocaust is due shortly. You wouldn't want to miss that."

"Please don't be so concerned, and don't take it so hard. I know I'm not," he says.

"Why this method of ending it? I mean, with the ledge and all."

"I already tried suicide once," he says, "by lying under a birthing sow. It resulted in nothing more than a piglet sucking on my earlobes. That left jumping off a building or posing as lion food while on safari. I chose the former. This time I'll make it or die trying."

I am in stitches for what seems like a minute. The giggles are

overtaken by reality, however, and for some odd reason I sense his sincerity completely for the first time. This terrifies me. I grasp for the antithetical. "What do you do for a living?"

He pulls out his wallet, the floating kind with the Velcro fasteners. Then he hands me a blue business card that says only "William Jenkins, Water Walker."

"That's a tad conceited, isn't it? I hope you walk on air too."

"I like your sense of humor," he says. "People generally are a humorless lot, nowadays. They laugh at stupid, redundant, stale jokes and take seriously any clever attempts at humor. If a sophisticated wants to get a smile out of hoi polloi nowadays by using an urbane witticism or fitting bon mot, he must include subtitles or an instruction cassette."

"You're killing yourself because you live in a world where people haven't got a sophisticated sense of humor?"

"Funny, isn't it?" he says. "You know what's funnier? I live in a world where a baseball player can make 500,000 percent more money than a Sri Lankan crippled thistle picker, where owning a car is more important than spelling it, where international terrorism is now the world's most popular participant sport, where children sell their mothers for drugs and drugs for their mothers, where the major form of communication and human interaction is through gunfire. Where the only difference between Rambo and a pail of fetid ferret feces is a couple hundred million gross, a brain cell, and the pail. I'm not against mindless relaxation, but it shouldn't be everyone's favorite hobby." He pauses for just a moment, then says, "Yep, this is a funny world. Laugh at this, too—I can't get a job."

"Why?" I ask.

"I have such a wide range of interests, and my background and education reflect this. Employers want lifers, and they know darn well I'm not one. Also, I tend to question things. They need people who will fit into slots, not people who can think. I can't get an unskilled job because I'm overqualified. It's assumed I'll leave at the first full moon. Everything else is so specialized. When you asked what I did for a living, you expected a single answer like accountant, engineer, or soft drink carbonator. I do many things very well, and I dislike being a title. If I must be titled, though, call me a learner. Unfortunately, there's no money in it. To make money today you have to have the damn letters—M.S., B.S., M.B.A., L.P.N. It doesn't matter if you're any good, just so you have the letters. I have a great example for you. This acquaintance of mine is a dentist. He has the letters. He brags an IQ of 160, but I think he omits a decimal point because the only time he can tie his shoes is in an IQ contest. And he's socially retarded. When he was thirty, he turned down a date with a beautiful sixteen-year-old girl solely because of her age. 'If only she had a younger sister,' he confided to me later. His foot is in his mouth so much he has to floss between his toes. But he has the letters; D.D.S.—Dull, Disgusting and Stupid. This is what we consider a professional person. Big deal. I don't have the letters, and I don't want them. Of course, that means I don't have a job either. True, I could get a sales job selling refried fish to retailers, on a commission basis. I'd sooner lick frozen beagle fur off a rusty fire hydrant."

He reaches up, gently takes the binoculars from me, and brings them to his eyes. I sense that he doesn't want to look me in the eye. Then he says, "Sorry for the howly. I didn't mean to ramble."

"It's okay," I admit. Hours pass in the next few seconds. As he focuses on something below, I focus in on him and see frustration personified. "You should see this woman down on Fifth," he says. "She'd even look good with rigor mortis."

"Let's see," I say, and he hands me the equipment. "Centerfold material. Why don't you jump her?"

"With my luck," he says, "I'd end up on the old harridan at the bus stop."

I change the subject. "Have you ever eaten at the French place down the corner?"

"Yes, good food."

"Very," I say, "but you get so much, and it's so rich. You need a doggie pallet every time. Do you speak French?"

He says something unmistakably French which he interprets for me, "I do not speak French."

"You sure can fake it."

"I dabble in it, but I don't even approach fluency. You know, language is a window on the human mind, but most people have stained glass in their ears."

We both run out of talk. Is this some kind of portentous sign? I hand him the binoculars, and he puts the black plastic covers over the lenses. Then he says, "Statistically, drunks are driving larger cars."

"I sure hope you don't get hit by one on the way down."

More silence. The pauses last forever. I ask, "Are you married?"

"Yes, to a marvelous woman. I wouldn't cheat on her if she were the last person on earth. She carries a rather significant *embonpoint*, though."

"Translate."

He digs for his wallet again. He pulls a photograph out and hands it to me. He says, "This is my wife."

The picture shows a naked, obese woman lying supine on a bear-skin rug. On her belly is a tattoo of a lamb and the words

"Sheep make better lovers."

I realize frightfully late into this that he is putting me on. I lapse into uncontrollable fits of laughter. It is a full minute before I can even consider talking. "She's lovely," I say while

(continued next page)

breaking into the paroxysms again. I regain composure and ask, "Where did you get the picture?"

"It came with the wallet," he says. I laugh again. Then, more silence. The Ice Age probably went by quicker than the next minute does. At last he speaks. "One good thing about my schizophrenia—I never drink alone."

But I am laughed out. "Is death just another joke to you?" I ask.

"Not really. But why can't death be funny? Life can be sad."

"But with life, you can wake up the next day and be happy. With death, you can't wake up the next day and be sad. I don't know what the hell I just said, but to answer your question—death can't be funny. I don't know why; it just can't."

That imminent moment of pure dread strikes. He says, "No need to play the diversionist any more. I'm going to hit the highway. Adieu, my friend of ample wit but no name. I know I am your memento mori, your reminder of death. Just remember to laugh when you think of me. And please count the number of flips I do."

"Wait! No! No! Don't! Please!"

"If you can give me one good reason to come in, I will. If not, I'm gone. Ironic that in high school I was voted 'Most likely to need a safety net.' Well, can you give me just one good reason?"

"Woody Allen is still making movies."

He looks at me and offers his hand. I pull him through the open window into the building.

## CHAIRS

by Sigmund Weiss

My daily companions are chairs.

They do not argue with me or confront my ignorance,

my vanities, my contradictions.

Chairs are the most reliable friends one can have.

When anyone sits on a chair that chair never remarks about one's behind or complains about its expulsion of gas, even when your mouth uses disgusting language.

But you should never mistreat a chair because if you do you may find a crack here & there

that can tear your pants, your dress and even cut into your flesh.

Still the chair without complaint accepts its punishment,

never criticizes or answers you back.

So please, handle your chairs carefully. Sit on them delicately

like you're sitting on someone's lap, and you can be certain that the chair you sit on

will be satisfied with you, and serve you a very long time.

## WHAT ARE PEOPLE THINKING?

by Steven J. Sweeney

When the results of the recent poll on presidential polls were published in *Exposé Today*, I listened up. I read that 73% of those polled favored them—polls, that is—finding them credible and useful decision-making tools.

I found myself in a discrete minority and so, of course, had to rethink my position. But not without help. I dialed up my deeply-placed, well-informed source in these matters, Graff LeBarre.

Graf, I said (I call him "Graf;" we go way back), "what's the scoop on this pollster business?"

"East or North? What age group we lookin' at? Evangelical factor?" he queried astutely. You can't hardly get Graff to draw a conclusion, much less jump to one. As with 84% of White House spokesmen of, surprisingly enough, any major party, he likes to test waters before taking any precipitous dives. After a while, he began to open up and gave me the straight poop.

"So what you're saying," I summed up after an hour, "is that polls are the New School advertising, that their function is to create opinion or, I guess, a substitute for opinion, rather than merely record it. Generally speaking."

"Can't say about 'generally,' Steve-o," says he. "Haven't seen any numbers on it."

"But 73% of those recently surveyed admitted being influenced strongly by poll results, though only 1% knew who did the poll, or how, or why."

"Well, but that's with a margin of error of plus or minus five."

"So it could be as few as 68%?"

"What it is, Steve-o, is an unprecedented opportunity to get yourself aligned with a majority right off, without a lot of head-scratchin'."

"Unprecedented?"

"Kinda makes you think, don't it?"

I'd no sooner hung up than a machine called me. One of those telephone surveys, you know? Randomly dials numbers, asks pre-recorded questions, and records the phonee's response? They're so offensively intrusive, I guess they're actually outlawed in many states.

I don't talk to machines.

That's not true. I had words with a cranky outboard motor last summer, early on. Oh, and there's the drive-in at McDonald's. Call me fickle. I draw the line, though, at talking to gasoline pumps. I don't care that a clerk is inside, impatiently waiting to hear what pump to turn on. Turn them all on, I say, this isn't a hair salon! I mean, suppose someone were to drive by, 2 a.m., and you standing there, shooting the breeze with the premium lead-free. Why, it'd be all over the papers next day, and you know it.

So, anyway, this machine calls me up. It wants to explore my buying habits. Well, why call me? The bankruptcy file is a public record. The first question is put to me, but at the tone, I cannot speak. No one has ever asked my opinion about deodorants before, and two perfectly adequate faux steaks are broiling themselves into leather across the kitchen. This goes on. I feel disenfranchised. I imagine the way it will come out tomorrow in the poll: "No opinion—3%."

Or take exit polls—please. Tell me why a voter (one of 37% of those eligible, I read) who for an hour after work stands in line, mute but with an I'm-about-to-affect-destiny look, a voter who walks into a booth, blank ballot played close to the vest, and pulls a red, white and blue curtain for absolute privacy (forgetting to look up for the camera), tell me why such a person would not lie through his or her respective teeth at least 62% of the time if thereafter accosted by a clipboarded, razor-cut inquisitor asking about the candidate du jour? And with the kid 15 minutes over at daycare and the Swansons and Sara Lee thawing out in the back seat to boot.

I see now where 4 or 7 out of 10 doctors asked—or was it 4 or 7 of the 10 doctors who responded (or does it matter?)—have a brand-name preference of aspirin for the first aid kit on a desert island. What percentage of you (just raise your hands) think you'd have any headaches at all on a desert isle in the Caribbean or South Pacific, with no doctors around, not to mention the IRS? 'Course, I'd still want my lawyer, in case I stubbed my toe on a papaya.

To cattle, being polled means having your horns cut off or cut back. Maybe therein lies the value of people polling, a sort of social animal husbandry, a disarming of mavericks for purposes of damage control in close quarters. No, I am thinking of something else.

A couple days before the Super Bowl, 43% of those polled said either that they didn't have any idea who was playing, or couldn't care less. You see? That's just what I'm talking about. Why, anyone who's awake knows that figure is way off.

You're asking yourselves a question, and I have an answer. I can't bounce this idea off Graff, who is at a statistics convention in Panama. So I am going to leap out over the abyss of the unknown, into the range of enquiring minds who want to know, with my own theory, albeit untested, as to why some people conduct polls and then trouble us with the findings in the form of, say, technicolor pie charts in the morning paper, and why others not only complacently take solace in those results but will sit, presumably dutifully stupefied, and answer the spoon-fed questions in the first place, without becoming hostile or ugly about it.

As to the first group: Way too much fiber in the diet. As to the latter: Not nearly enough.

WHY ZITS by Elaine - "DEWING LIKE FLIES"

Well, I guess everyone's seen this sucker by now.

But hey, it bears repeating, don't it?

10:32 AM P.E.E.

I thought we were still on strike.

And that's not all!

As reporters were escorted from the room, Reagan turned to Shamir and said in a whisper: "Oh boy just for that careless remark... they'll go wild about 'Reagan wants to lie to Congress' or something."

ErRor by Mary Ann Henn

We nevre shulod hev strated thsi: uyOu arne't wtha I thouhgt yOu weer; I'm not wtha yOu thoghut oto. Neithre of us was WHOLE to begni with—how cuold WHOLEenses sprign frm us? "Gril," yOu said... (Oh, I said intenslley. So that's ti, yOu want to eeeee? me oot. I'm tierd of yOr games, of takign yOur drit. It were a erRor alll thee wya.

WHY WORK? OUT YOUR JOE BLACK OFF!

# A SLICE OFF THE TOP

of M C Reed

My wife is going to have a baby.

(Hey, where I come from, that's a helluva lot better than 'My casual acquaintance is having a baby.' But then, I'm not from New York...)

I don't mind her being pregnant. As a matter of fact, I'm looking forward to the final product.

It's just the way she keeps reminding me of the fact...

"I'm bearing YOUR child!"

But dear—

"It's YOUR child!"

I'm not the only one—

"Your sole heir..."

Dear, this was the product of two—

"The entity who will carry on YOUR name..."

But, you wanted—

"...who will be YOUR legacy for eons to come!"

I seem to recall—

"Your name will not die out..."

But, I—

"...but will go on forever!"

You're right, it won't—

"Unless it's a girl."

What?

"Then we'll have to try again."

We'll what?

"Won't we, honey."

Err...

"Won't we, HONEY."

Ahhh...

"I am bearing YOUR child, HONEY!!"

Yes, dear.

"Now...get me a glass of water..."

Yes, dear.

"And stop writing mean things about me..."

...

"Did you hear me?"

...

"I'm bearing YOUR child!"

Yes, dear.



*(Sorry Mike S -  
I'll put both  
your illos in  
next time)*

## STUPID ANIMALS

by Max Nuclear

It is three in the morning. I was awake until midnight last night working on an editing project for Mr. Resnick, a local print shop owner who comes up with the most bizarre moneymaking schemes imaginable. This one is doing reel-to-reel transfers of 20-year-old country music to cassette tapes. Nothing is timed right to fit on the cassettes and whoever was in charge of the tape speeds was possessed by demons. It was a very difficult session, but I needed the money (I always do).

I was enjoying a very good sleep. I was in deep and it definitely was a religious experience. Then it hit. There was a thud on the waterbed right next to my head. Now, when I am awakened like that, I come close to heart-attack level. I have obviously seen one too many slasher films in my day, and I am imagining either Jason or Freddy standing over me. When I open my eyes, I realize that it is much worse—it's the cat.

There is the black furball, pushing her paws back and forth into my neck like she's still nursing. She has awakened my wife Donna also, and as usual stares in wide-eyed surprise when we both start cursing and throwing our socks at her as she darts out the door. The cat's name is Semolina, also known as Shilthead and Fuckwad when she pulls stunts like this (she actually answers to those names, too!). Needless to say, she is a cat of very little brains.

This is a signal that her bowl is empty, and regardless of what time it is, she wants food. Instead I get up and make sure the bedroom door is SECURELY closed and throw a few more healthy curses at her, letting her know that she might not see food for several weeks after that stunt. After a few minutes of howling and pawing at the door, she gets the squirt-gun treatment. This puts her on the other side of the house until morning. Thank God cats hate water.

About 7:00 we're all in the kitchen listening to Semolina howl as we make our breakfast. After about twenty minutes of "get out of here" and "You will never be fed!" we fill up her bowl. My wife pretends to hate her, and she is extremely irritated (as I am) at times by "cat stunts." Semolina still gets petted sometimes. Donna says that her only redeeming quality is that she's decorative, which she is. I got her from the pound, so she

doesn't have any papers, but she looks like a pure long-haired Persian. Almost all black, except for a small white patch on her belly, and huge yellow eyes. These eyes are always wide open, like she's just been scared sideways—that is, except when she's asleep in the chair that I was just about to use to do some work. Semolina has a telepathic sense of which chair, typewriter, drawing board or computer table I need at the time.

By "cat stunts," I refer to times such as jumping on the bed suddenly in the middle of the night, howling for food constantly, sleeping in my work chairs, or the worst of all cat sins, shitting on the carpet. Semolina does this whenever she wants attention or is pissed off. She figured out my extreme hatred of feces at an early stage. I had just brought her home from the pound and had to give her a flea bath. Now, I know they aren't wild about water, and I tried to be as gentle as possible, but as soon as she was dried off, she ran straight to the middle of the hall and, crapped on the carpet. I didn't see this, so when I rounded the corner...Now, I know she was litter-trained because I saw her use one at the pound, and I had shown her the one I had set up when I brought her home. I was extremely irritated. I HATE shit, especially when I step in it, so Semolina got introduced to primal scream swearing and a spanking. I then cleaned and vacuumed the carpet. Semolina now associates the vacuum cleaner with punishment. Sometimes all I have to do to get her to clear a room is make a sound like the vacuum, and she's gone. When we really vacuum the house, we sometimes don't see her for days.

Semolina has done this on other occasions for attention, as I mentioned earlier. These occasions were when Donna brought in her pet rabbits into the house when she moved in—which brings us to the secondary animal in the house...THE BUNNY!! The bunny's name was Blackavare, from the movie WATERSHIP DOWN, and it was, of course, because he was black. Now I thought that Semolina would attack this "poor" bunny if it ever got out of its cage. Wrong. I soon found out that Blackavare was a Bunny From Hell. Mean and nasty, and it bit me almost every chance it got. Only Donna and a friend of ours could safely handle him. I never thought in my life that I would be afraid of a rabbit, but I was terrified every time I had to pick him up to take him to his outside cage. I soon found out Semolina was scared too. She came up to the cage once and hissed, but after a few bunny thumps on the floor of his cage she split. Semolina then sat about for the next couple of days laying out piles like Rommel mining the beaches of Normandy. Each one was undetectable until the stray foot detonated it. It is at this point that the shower in the hallway became known as "solitary confinement" after we would tape the doors shut. Sometimes she even got a quick shower.

Semolina went on the rampage again. Donna had heard about a book called "Houserabbit Handbook" by Marinell Harriman, and she wanted to try it with Blackavare. So we went to the bookstore to pick up the book after giving the rabbit a carrot. When we got back Donna went up to the cage and said, "Hello bunny...HELLO BUNNY!...Bunny?...BUNNY!!!" You guessed it—dead as a doornail. A friend of ours explained that it was probably heartworms, which can bring on death real quickly, even to healthy-looking pets. So after much crying and a burial service under the birdbath in the back yard, we tried to go about having a normal day.

Within four hours we got a call from Donna's sister-in-law and guess what? She had a friend with a bunny that they wanted to give away, and they were wondering if we wanted it. Too many weird coincidences happening around this place...I'm sure that Semolina was secretly wishing to go out and dance on the bunny's grave, and then we bring another one in right away. I'm sure she sometimes thinks we have a conspiracy against her...we do.

Well, we decided to housetrain this rabbit immediately. We set up a barrier to the kitchen so the rabbit couldn't crawl under anything or chew on electrical wires that are at ground level. Unfortunately, Semolina's food and litter box are in the kitchen/pantry area. Every time Semolina would jump over the barrier to get food or use her box, the rabbit would charge her and start to sniff her rear. Semolina was hungry so she would try to eat but to no avail. She hissed a few times, but it didn't faze the bunny. We kept wondering why Flossique kept charging the cat, so one time we held Semolina still for a moment and we found out why. We also found out that Flossique was a boy bunny, and quickly renamed him Fiver. Poor Semolina (who had been fixed as soon as I got her) had the most hopeless look of confusion on her face. I guess we had the next shit wave coming to us.

(Max Nuclear does a 10-minute radio show daily: "We accept scripts and tapes from local listeners and we're inviting INSIDE JOKE readers to the same offer! Just remember that we have an intro and outro for the show, so the bits should be nine minutes maximum. We accept poetry, comedy, drama, weird editing, music, and real-life stories...This is a public radio station, and the FCC has really been leaning on them about obscenities [there is a Baptist group with a lot of money that wants this radio frequency]. We can closely hint at stuff, but please, no out-and-out four-letter mother-fucking words. We do not edit anything without authors' consent, and we try not to edit at all. Make sure to include your address and phone number if possible. We use just about everything we get [as a matter of fact, we've used all contributions so far], so when we do use your bit, we'll let you know and you can send a cheap cassette to us and we'll make you a dub of the show. By the way, we make very sure to give complete credits." At least they do now; there was a mixup with stuff from Anni awhile back, but let it pass. Max's address is Nuclear Enterprises, P.O. Box 815605, Dallas, TX 75381-5605. And in the meantime, Max says, 25 "Don't Forget To Pray!")

# ANIMATION

## UPDATE

by Jed Martinez

I recently attended the 1988 ASIFA/EAST Animation Awards ceremony, held in midtown Manhattan. There, numerous individuals were honored for their achievements, such as Philadelphia's own Paul Fierlinger (best known for his animated segments on PBS shows like *SQUARE ONE TELEVISION*, *SESAME STREET* and 3-2-1 *CONTACT*, and on Nickelodeon's *TURKEY TELEVISION*), who picked up three awards (for "Doctor, Doctor" and "The Quitter" in the Directorial category, and "Nickelodeon-Cereal" in the Concept category). Among the luminaries present were Faith Hubley (who received second prize in the Best Design category for "Time of the Angels"), puppet animator Lou ("Alice in Wonderland") Bunin, and veteran animator Shamus Culhane (author of "Talking Animals and Other People"). Among the more interesting award-winning cartoons were "Cat and Rat" (which took first prize in the Student Film category), James Richardson's opus, whose principal characters undergo a change from simple line drawings to three dimensions in just moments; Hubley's "Time of the Angels," a beautifully visual piece, narrated in both English and Spanish; "Primiti Too Taa," Ed Ackerman and Colin Morton's bizarrely visual poem (comprised of nothing but typed words) that you'd have to see and hear to believe; and Gavrillo Gnatovich's "Lazar" (first prize winner for Animation), a film that reminds one of the animated segments from Pink Floyd's *THE WALL*. Insects played the lead roles in two student films—"Picnic at Bug Stump" by Patrick Volk and "The Ant Who Loved a Girl" by Steve Gentile. "Picnic" was mildly diverting and rather pleasant to watch; Patrick even went so far as to anthropomorphize the pollen carried by some of the bees. Steve's "Ant" is a line-drawn b&w bittersweet tale of romance that resembles (in some way) Bruno Bozzetto's colorful work "Baeus," the major difference being Bruno's bug gets the girl at the end of the picture, while Steve's ant meets with an unfortunate fate inflicted by his true love (which I won't give away). The Grand Prize for Best Film went to Bill Plympton for his latest pencil-sketches epic, "One of Those Days," where every kind of slapstick disaster known in animation happens to the film's hero. What makes this cartoon so unique is we see each impending catastrophe from his perspective (clever, eh?)! Kudos to all of the ASIFA/EAST Award winners.

Congratulations also go out to this year's recipients of Academy Award nominations for the Best Animated Short Subject. They are Frederic Back for "The Man Who Planted Trees" (from Canada), Eunice Macaulay for "George and Rosemary" (also from Canada) and Bill Plympton for "Your Face" (U.S.). Among the cartoons ousted from the field of Oscar contenders were Bruno Bozzetto's "Baeus," David Ehrlich's "Academy Leader Variations" and Greg Ford and Terry Lennon's "The Duxorciast" (Daffy Duck's return to the silver screen). It wouldn't be fair to predict the winner, since I haven't seen the two Canadian works, but I have heard about Back's "Man..." which runs nearly a half-hour long. In order for this film to earn an Oscar, it would have to be as entertaining as his last Academy Award winning short, "Crac." To my knowledge, there were only two 30-minute-long cartoons that won Oscars (Walt Disney Productions' "Winnie the Pooh and the Blustery Day" and Bob Godfrey's "Great"). On the other hand, "Your Face" is only three minutes in length, and may be too short as far as the running time is concerned—although the shortest short to win was Ted Petok's two-minute epic "The Crunch Bird" (also running that same length was one of last year's nominees, John Lasseter and William Reeves' "Luxo, Jr."). Since time is not really a major factor but artistic talent and imagination are, my Win/Place/Show prediction has "The Man Who Planted Trees" as the champ, with "Your Face" a close second. If the Academy chooses "George and Rosemary" (my dark horse) come April, it wouldn't surprise me, but I feel that any cartoon nominated for an Oscar should be readily available for the public to view, whether it wins or not. Certainly, in these days of \$7.00 admission to cinemas, a cartoon or two with the main feature wouldn't hurt.

**MAGAZINE UPDATE:** By the time you read this article a new publication should already be out on the stands (or at least at your local comic book store). *KORKIS & CAWLEY'S CARTOON QUARTERLY*, a Spotlight Publication, is devoted specifically to the animation buff, and has articles ranging from the past (such as a look back at Bob Clampett's "Beany & Cecil" and Hanna-Barbera's "The Flintstones") to the present (i.e., an episode guide of the new "Jonny Quest" series) and future (previews of new animated movies and TV shows). Besides co-editing the publication, Jim Korkis and John Cawley have acquired the services of other unique contributors, including Leonard Maltin (of "Entertainment Tonight"), Jim Davis (creator of "Garfield" and "U.S. Acres") and Jerry Beck ("Animation Magazine"), as well as Scott Shaw, Brett Koth and Will Pinn. Each 48-page issue will have a full-color cover and a b&w interior. Their address is P.O. Box 1643, Burbank, CA 91507...Other animation publications out recently include "The Hollywood Reporter's Third Annual Animation Issue" (Feb. 25); "Millimeter" (Feb. '88), with its 13th annual animation issue (featuring Lisa Vincenzi's look at "The Comeback Cartoons" and several articles on the current scene of computer graphics); "Comics Scene #2" (with

Daffy, Donald and Count Duckula); and the long-awaited second issue of "Animation Magazine" (a special double-issue, with articles on animators Bob Kurtz, Ralph Bakshi, Michael Sporn, many reviews and previews and much more), with Pee Wee Herman on the cover. Don't miss any of them!

**FILM REVIEW:** Expanded Entertainment, Inc. presents another compilation of shorts, this time utilizing high-tech graphics to their limit. "The Computer Animation Show" is a collection of incredible images used in commercials, network promos, music videos and other things we take for granted. The many artists contributing to this program have used the latest in state-of-the-art technology, thus providing the viewer with some of the most awesome sights ever to scan the big screen (even though these images were primarily designed for television). Among the best works are the Mick Jagger music video "Hard Woman" (from Digital Productions), two very humorous shorts, "Peppy" (Toyo Links) and "Fairplay" (Apollo Computer's Midnight Movie Group); and several showreels from Robert Abel & Associates, Digital Effects, Synthavision, and Pacific Data Images. Those who have missed previous anthologies from Expanded Entertainment will be pleased to know that several of the computer-generated shorts featured in past shows are included in this program—"Oilspot and Lipstick" (from Walt Disney Productions), "Luxo, Jr.," "Red's Dream" (both from Pixar), "Tuber's Two-Step," "A Comic Zoom," and "Tony De Peltre." Transferred onto 35mm film, "The Computer Animation Show" may not be to everybody's liking, but it's certainly a refreshing alternative to other animation festivals. It's simply a question of whether or not patrons will want to sit through 90 minutes of electronic imagery, and, if so, would they shell out \$6 or more to see it. Personally, I did this time, but in the near future I'll only pay that admission price if it's part of a double-feature...

**FILM PREVIEW:** Among animated features coming out in 1988 are "Light Years" (a collaboration of sf writer Isaac Asimov and "Fantastic Planet" director Rene Laloux), the Don Bluth/Steven Spielberg/George Lucas production "The Land Before Time Began," "The Fox and the Hound," "Bambi" (both rereleases from Disney), and the live-action/animated mystery/comedy "Who Framed Roger Rabbit?" with the combined efforts of Disney/Spielberg/Richard Williams. By 1989 Disney Studios hopes to be releasing their latest animated feature, "Oliver and Company," a musical version of the Dickens classic *Oliver Twist* with dogs and cats in the leads. Among the vocal talents in this film are Billy Joel and Bette Midler. Also on the back burner at Disney is a proposed sequel to "The Rescuers," which would make it the first follow-up animated feature in the studio's illustrious history...

**BOOK REVIEW:** Too Funny For Words: Disney's Greatest Sight Gags by Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston (from Abbeville Press, \$39.95) is an excellent follow-up book to their last coffee-table epic, Disney Animation: The Illusion of Life. Chock-full of illustrations in its 224 pages (including photos, cels, storyboard sketches, etc.), this book looks at a variety of visual gags, the characters who performed them, and the writers and artists responsible for each one. The gags described vary from running gags (i.e., Donald Duck's reproducing a piccolo every time Mickey Mouse breaks the last one in "The Band Concert" from 1935) to the gag-that-builds (the famous scene from "Pinocchio," 1940, when the puppet boy tells a lie) to inanimate object gags (such as those in "Through the Mirror," 1936, when Mickey runs across a variety of living household items while dreaming) and just plain old funny drawings (like those of Woolie Reitherman, depicting Captain Hook's ordeal with a crocodile in "Peter Pan," 1935). Many of the illustrations are in full color, including some on large fold-out pages. This salute to the sight gag by two of the so-called "nine old men" of the Disney studio (of which Thomas, Johnston and Ward Kimball are sole survivors) is an absolute must for anyone keen on cartoons. I guarantee you'll laugh out loud while reading it...

**FRUITS (AND VEGETABLES) OF THEIR LABOR:** The "Golden Apple" goes to Will Vinton Productions for "A Claymation Christmas," a superb change-of-pace from all of those other holiday cartoon specials we've seen for umpteen years. Most memorable scenes in it include an ice-skating sequence with walruses reminiscent of the "Dance of the Hours" segment from "Fantasia," a rendition of "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" by those suave singers, the California Raisins; and the continuing commentaries of dinosaur critics Herb and Rex, who extend their careers after the critical acclaim of their scenes from "The Festival of Claymation." And the "Roten Apple" goes to local NY station WCBS-TV for preempting the first eight minutes of the show for live coverage of the verdict in the Howard Beach trial (whatever happened to the use of scrolling teletype across the bottom of the screen when a bulletin comes in? I wouldn't have minded it if it preempted a regular prime-time show which would rerun several months later, but when a special is interrupted you have to wait a whole year to see the show in its entirety. Let's hope this doesn't happen again). The "Red Pepper" award (for the spicy, hot newcomer) goes to Murikami/Wolf/Svenson Films' latest TV effort, "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles." Presented as a post-Christmas offering, the five half-hour episodes lived up to (or close to) Eastman & Laird's style in this animated adaptation of their comic book (See Steve's review of same in "Four-Color Fiend" from 11 #57-ED.). Because of the overwhelming success of the 5-episode pilot, 13 new episodes are being produced for this fall; in the meantime, you can catch the pilot again in April in case you missed any episodes the first time (consult your TV listings for day, time and channel, and set up your VCR this time, will you?). A "Bunch of Sour Grapes" goes to any TV network (cable, syndicated or otherwise) that flashes its logo on the corner of the screen during the course of

*cont'd. from previous page*  
 a cartoon (among the networks are WWOR-TV and SuperStation WTBS for short subjects and Showtime during animated features). These networks must think we suffer from amnesia, so they constantly remind us what channel we're watching...The USA Network earns a "Red Radish" (for the most unusual comeback) for airing the rarely-seen "Loopy DeLoop" theatrical shorts from Hanna-Barbera (one look at these limited animation works and you'll know why they're rarely seen), featuring the voice of Daws Butler as the wolf with charm; many of these cartoons were written by the late Michael Maltese, after his departure from Warner Bros. Some "Razzberries" go to Filmmation for "Pinocchio and the Emperor of the Night," and Nelvana Ltd. for "The Care Bears' Adventures in Wonderland." You're treading on familiar literary turf. Either go original, or don't go at all. Some "Hot Potatoes Au Gratin" go to James Horner, Barry Mann (composers) and Cynthia Weil (lyricist) for the song "Somewhere Out There" from the Don Bluth/Steven Spielberg animated film "An American Tail," which earned two Grammy awards, one for "Best Song from a Motion Picture" and the other for "Song of the Year." I'd offer some vegetable to Cosgrove Hall Productions in England for their new hit TV series "Count Duckula" (currently seen in the states on Nickelodeon), but the Count would probably have it for lunch...

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...the missing sections of Bob Kurtz's animated short "Drawing on My Mind." This film is actually a compilation of the animated segments from the George Carlin concert, "Carlin on Campus," originally seen on HBO a few years ago. Two fragments of the "news" sequence are not included in the cartoon itself, one gag involving the demise of successful exorcist, and the other concerning a mathematician earning a Nobel Prize for discovering a new number, "bleen." If you want to see all the animation Bob Kurtz produced, even though it's presented in scattered order between some lengthy monologues, buy or rent the "Carlin on Campus" home video and see what you're missing...

ERRATA: I admit to two little faux pas from my last article—1) TMS is not the only company responsible for "DuckTales"—other studios that contributed to the series are Wang Film Productions Co., Ltd. and Cuckoos' Nest Studios...2) "The Simpsons," those animated snippets from THE TRACY ULLMAN SHOW, were written and designed by Matt Groening, but were directed by Gabor Csupo of Klasky/Csupo, Inc.

OBITS: Cartoon voice actress Marilyn Schraffler passed away on Jan. 7. She was best known as the voice of Olive Oyl on Hanna-Barbera's new "Popeye" cartoons, including the current show "Popeye and Son." And Joe Besser, best known in live-action films as one of the Three Stooges and as Stinky on THE ABBOTT & COSTELLO SHOW died on March 1, at the age of 80. In cartoons, he'd worked mostly for Hanna-Barbera, most notably as the voice of Junior Genie Babu ("Yapple Dapple!") on the "Jeannie" series and DePatie-Freling Productions (he was Puttypuss in "The Houndcats"), and his unmistakable sounds will surely be missed.

## The Case of the LITERARY LIFESAVER

by Gloria J. Leitner

"Aid for the Poemless," the sign on the tin cup said.

I looked up at the pathetic face, eyeballing me with painful hope. His tattered Brooklyn Dodgers jacket struck me like a spitball in the eye.

"That long?" I asked.

"Last rhyme in '57," he sighed.

"Burned out?"

"Not even plugged in."

I gulped.

"Been sleeping in Robert Bly's alley, hoping to scrounge some scraps from his trash," he admitted sheepishly.

"No!" I cried, shocked to the depths of my freshly pressed lapels.

And yet, I could relate to what he was saying. I had bemoaned a similar fate—when I was 17. But by 20, I was too busy with accounting courses by day and the Rolling Stones at night to care. Anyway, by that time Marianne didn't need any poetry to persuade her...

"Please, can you spare some change for a yellow pad?" he pleaded, jerking me back to his harsh reality.

"Gosh," said I (my midwestern boyhood poking through) "Gosh, there must be government programs for you guys. What about a halfway house?"

"They're only open to the folks who can still knock out the prose. I've tried, Lord knows I've tried..."

"Not even a hack story for UPI?"

"Last time I gave it a go, I was supposed to do a filler on the Wichita cornbread bake-off. I barely made it past the baking powder."

Being the political animal that I am, and an avid hummer of "We Are The World," a massive fundraiser came to mind.

### TWISTED IMAGE

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"What if we get all the famous poets to join in a huge poem-writing fest? We could attach all the poems together and stretch them across the land. Sort of a 'Stanzas Across America.' Trouble is, would we be able to find enough paper clips?"

"Look, I'm just one poor guy with a helluva writer's block," he interrupted my musings.

"And therapy?" I inquired delicately.

"They already tried shock therapy—read my third grade poems aloud in the same nasal whine I had before my adenoids were taken out. Horrible, it was horrible."

"But no cure?"

He looked at me like lost banana.

"Hey, let's start with something simple. How about a limerick?"

"Like?"

It took a few seconds for my neurons to start to dance, but this is the improv they came up with:

"There once was a lonesome poodle

That decided to make friends with a noodle.

The spaghetti was hot,

He got burned on the pot—

Now his fur curls around like a doodle!"

It fell flat as a week-old pancake.

"Look, even in my poetic stupor I can do better than that," he declared.

"Oh yeah?"

"Yeah!"

"Well, let's see!"

And he cleared his throat—and cleared it again. I feared my dare had hit the blank wall of his mind. But then these words came gushing forth:

"There once was a plant on the shelf,

That suddenly started to belch.

Could it be Jane's sweet daughter,

Who came not with water—

But a bottle of grape juice by Welch!"

"You've done it, you're no longer poemless!" I shouted, thumping him congratulatorily on the back.

"I'm not? You mean...I'm not one of the poor, pathetic poemless wandering the streets wordless any more?"

"Nope—one limerick and you've broken the vicious spin-cycle. Go home, my boy, and churn 'em out like butter!"

And he clicked his heels, smiled like a drunken cherub, and said, "I hereby take an oath: To swear off my addiction to 'Ozzie and Harriet' reruns, snorting the powder on Double Bubble wrappers, and other substitutes for the real thing. Oh, curses on those days/That I suffered without verse/I'm as happy as a lark/That's escaped the midnight shark!"

Eardrums of the world, forgive me! For I'd saved a soul from poemless penury, but inflicted another purvey-or of pure shlock upon the world! On the other hand, if he lends his talents to the advertising biz, he'll come out with jaundiced jingles to match anything around—and laugh his way to IRA-land.

Now how did that go? There once was a poemless shlep, Who stood on a streetcorner and wept...

*(Welcome once again to our annual Gerber, a round-robin story put together at the last 1J Party by, as far as I can tell [this is in alphabetical order rather than order of appearance], R. Bain, Vinnie Bartilucci, Daza, Tom Deja, Mike Lenetsky, Jed Martinez, David Serlin, Susan ?, and yours truly wrapping it all up again. Vinnie summarily decided my rule of NO ALIENS somehow didn't apply to creatures from Monster Island [take heed: next year, folks, no aliens AND no monsters], but the story's not that bad, even if it involves non-humans, and I thank everyone who participated. As usual, a change in typeface indicates a new writer.)*

## Less Than ZI-RO

"Hurry up, boys!" screamed the foreman to the crew. "We have a city to rebuild!" Shiro mopped his brow. It was a colossal responsibility, being in charge of the Tokyo Giant Monster Reclamation Project, but he was determined to have this city rebuilt in time for the filming of the new Spielberg film by next week. What was it about this city that attracted beasts from both hell and Hollywood?

Clear your head, Shiro. Idle thought will keep you from your goal. He shook his head to keep his mind empty, and his hardhat fell to the ground, stories below.

As the hat fell past his window, Jon Kendo turned from the phone, then returned to his conversation. "My apologies, illustrious one. I can assure that this city will be rebuilt for your son's...arrival," Jon hissed. "As long as my payment is in my bank as usual, I can assure he—sorry, IT, can destroy to his heart's content." He hung up the phone, and checked the telex. Ah, Trump sent another offer for the next rebuild job. Well, I'll let my New York agents deal with his pushiness. This is a Japanese business, damnit, and I won't let this American muscle in on this...

While the businessman Kendo tended to his greedy schemes, the object of one of them was getting cold feet, not to mention sore scales.

"Please, Mama-san, I don't want to be a movie star," young Godzuki whined as his mother's green, scaly paws roughly yet lovingly pummeled his jade-hued, armor-strong skin. "Besides—oof!—you massage too hard."

"All the better to increase your circulation and keep your skin glowing and healthy for the movie cameras," Mama-san chided him. "In any case, you cannot back out now, my son. Your honorable Papa-san would lose face."

"But why can't he make his own movie comeback? I'm no good at rampaging through cities and terrorizing citizens. I just want to be like the rest of the monsters."

"You know your father is too old to be convincing as King of the Monsters anymore. Not even the children of Tokyo were afraid when he last showed himself." Godzuki winced, partly from his mother's extra pounding at his ribs and partly from the memory of that bright spring day when Godzilla had raised his once-proud, fearsome, butt-ugly head from the sea in plain sight of a beach full of fourth graders on a field trip. The little Nips—er, nippers—had only laughed and pelted Papa-san with starfruits, ice-cream, waxy jello candies and Bakuli-Sweet drinks. It had taken all of Mama-san's persuading to convince the humiliated mutant reptile that *hara-kiri*, though traditional, was not the answer in this day and age. That was when they remembered the American film—it was named after some sort of hat, *BERET* or *FEDORA* or some such—that they had once passed at a drive-in on the way home from a rampage. It involved a young woman substituting for her movie-star mother, to make the older woman seem as if she had never aged. And then they had spared Kendo's miserable life when he agreed to use young Godzuki in the plan...

To hide the fact that the patrician of the Zilla clan had fallen into dishonor. After the failure of his last picture (they had insisted on using that overweight American actor too wrapped up in his TV fame to care one whit about Papa-san's depression and drinking), Papa-san Godzilla had lapsed into an orgy of gambling, drinking and illicit sex. Things had not been the same since that disgrace—even Dagora would have nothing to do with the hulk of dinosaurhood that was once the King of all Monsters.

So Godzuki would pull a Phantom and become his father, while Mama-san would pull her beloved husband out of the adamantium drunk tank (located on a plateau off Monster Island) with her love and understanding. Unfortunately, things never came off as simply as they should have...

"So, Mr. Ken-doo, you're not exactly keen on my idea of...helping you along to a better future," Mr. Trump said. He was smoking a cigarette, making the otherwise perfect office smell like something died.

"Well, begging your pardon, Mr. Trump, but Kendo City Reclamations is a family business. We've been working as the only City Reclaimers since ShivaZilla smashed the Chinese Wall."

"Yes, we have that in common. We're both in the family business. We with real estate, you with—whatever it is you do," Trump continued. He seemed totally oblivious to Jon's comment.

"But, Mr. Ken-doo, let me be honest. My interest in your job and business is of a more personal nature." Trump looked over at a framed photo. As Trump moved it around, John saw a brief flash of green scales...

Kendo broke out in a sweat as that peculiar shade of green echoed in his mind. He had seen the color before. Once, many friends were destroyed by a terror that appeared in that shade. As he thought, he remembered the specifics of this job. The city must look like Tokyo. The fear and memory of that carnal scene

echoed in his mind. A once-gone dream was now back in force.

Shifting his position nervously, he strove for a better view. As he struggled silently, his fears were justly silenced. The green was not the trademark of the terror he silently feared. It was the reflective properties of an odd jade necklace dangling on Trump's neck.

"You see..."

"Jack! Jack! Pay attention, you! This is for BIG BUCKS! If we don't win this contract from Mr. T, I'm going to can your butt and stick it on a popsicle stick!"

"Okay, Mr. Kendo, I'll do your lousy model to scale, I'll take scale wages, but for crying out loud, stop crying out loud!"

"Now what's this supposed to be? I asked for a layout of a plaza with luxury condos and you give us a skyscraper that looks like luxury condoms. Trump is a man with sophisticated tastes, and remember, his partner is a very sensitive man; in fact, he's a priest or a monk..."

"Monk or monkey, it doesn't cut gravy with me; I'm an artist, damnit, an artist! I'll walk and kick the popsicle sticks off the table if I think his ideas are crap and you know what? THIS IS CRAP!!! When I build a model that's supposed to be a model I'll build a model, you know, tall, sleek and slick, but this is art!"

"Okay, Jack, so you're an artist. Explain to the humble few gathered here together why and what this is."

"This is supposed to be a new multi-media center, where the films will not only be produced here, but released in our multi-cinema complex, just beneath the condos, all within the same building. In fact, that's why we asked Mr. Spielberg here. We expect him to promote the center by being the first director in the history of show biz to produce and direct his own film and have it released within a week in the same building. In addition, if this works out, we'll also open a home video store in the building where Mr. Spielberg's film will be available to the home market within a week after that..."

"Mr. Trump, this is beyond all reason, all logic, and besides that we already asked Spike Lee to produce the movie at a far lower budget. We thought it would be more interesting to have a black man direct a Japanese monster movie..."

"But Mama-san," whined Godzuki, "I don't WANNA attack Tokyo. Everybody attacks Tokyo. It's...passé!"

Mama-san (by now very tired of Godzuki's lame whinings) pulled herself up to her full 295 feet, placed her claws on her haunches, and said in a firm voice: "You're going to demolish Tokyo, AND YOU'RE GOING TO LIKE IT!" With this pronouncement, she stomped out of the room.

Godzuki muttered to himself, "I don't have to take this—I wanna do something new, different..."

Inspiration suddenly struck.

"I know!" Godzuki shouted triumphantly, "I'll do something nobody's ever done before! I'll go to America and demolish SAN FRANCISCO!"

"Are you sure about that, little monster?" said a voice from behind him. "I did that already with 1941, and the Academy still hasn't forgiven me for it."

Godzuki whirled around, knocking the elfin director unconscious with his tail as he squealed, "Mama-san! Mama-san, you didn't tell me Steven Spielberg was going to direct my movie!"

Mama-san re-entered the room, glancing cursorily at the supine Spielberg before beaming with motherly pride at her son's newfound enthusiasm. "Ahh, my son, it is true then, one catches more flies with honey factories than garbage trucks. I had hoped the appearance of the honorable Mr. Spielberg would turn you back to the importance of your duty to your father."

"Mama-san," whispered Godzuki reluctantly, "I—I am ashamed, Mama-san. And I will bring honor back to Zilla clan, and the name of my father will be cleared and feared once more!"

"That's a take," mumbled the still-flat Spielberg.

"My son, you have grown much," remarked Mama-san, grooming Godzuki once more. "And perhaps I have been too hard on you. This I now promise: if you restore dignity to this clan, you may go to America and demolish the city of your choice. Although," she added, baring her enormous teeth in a dinosaur grin, "I would rather it not be the honorable city of San Francisco, but perhaps instead Hollywood or Washington, D.C., neither of which will be as dearly missed. We are, after all, a noble family, and nobility is knowing what to preserve, as well as what to destroy. Now come, my son, there is much we must do."

The money was not in the bank, and Jon Kendo was beginning to panic. Things were falling apart again. Still no further word from the female monster on her son's whereabouts. And those damn Americans, Trump and Spielberg, bringing in temperamental, unbalanced architects like Jack to undermine Shiro and his loyal work crew—what was their connection to the mysterious so-called "Mrs. Godzilla?" For that matter, how could those enormous claws manage the delicate task of dialing a telephone to speak with him? He reasoned all the players in this haphazard drama must be in cahoots with one another behind his back, else Trump would not have blanced so at his mention of another director being considered for the monster "film." Plots within plots, betrayals within—wait, what was that sound?

Shiro, too, thought he heard thunder amid blue, cloudless sky, which distracted him from clandestinely viewing the American architect Jack and his boss, Mr. Trump, which was no matter because they too looked up and scanned the heavens and horizon. The roar

*continued next page*





# Sayz-U!(Letters)

Dear Elayne,

A gang of roving waitresses knocked me down face first and threw my laundry all over highway 7A this morning, spraying liberationist slogans on my car while slashing the tires. Brandishing a sword, one of them carved her initials on my chest, simultaneously severing every button from my coat, exposing me to the icy winds of February 14th. Another took my all-temperature detergent, and yet another waitress hurled abuse, accusing me of sincerity and deepness, declaring my car a macho machine with sexual undertones deserving of a chauvinist man who likes women. With peril surrounding me, I offered these beautiful and sensual women a gift which could only be secured by me, hiding in my Datsun 280ZX. From the glove box I removed and presented a can of spinach, something with waitresses at Park Bench Cafe had seldom eaten. Devouring it forthwith, they sped off, flexing their vocabulary, winking and blinking from their Volkswagen Rabbit.

A huge tender "M" cut across my chest; people gathered round amazed at the spectacle they had just witnessed. Old women ignored me and men grunted like apes. Children wiped their noses and pointed at my car, the object of so much bewildered rage.

Somewhere in the distance music was playing, but I couldn't hear it. All I heard was the pounding of my heart, the taunts echoing in my brain, the fan blowing hot, hot air from the laundromat. The crowd wandered off, back to Mrs. Murphy's Donut Store, back to the warm laundromat, into their cars and on their safe ways. Collecting my severed buttons and dirty clothes I staggered back to my apartment, wondering at the pain in my chest, and retired to my bed.

Awakening with a start, clutching my chest, I rolled over to see the time. It was 3:30 in the morning, and a hunger gnawed at me, the kind of hunger you know will only be filled by an easy, maleable, slippery mouthful of rich food.

From off the bedside table a newspaper fell in my pained face. "Mysterious Green Blob Streaks Across Vermont Skies." The headline made me laugh. "Sighted in several towns across southern Vermont by people in homes on the road and in one report by two State Police at approximately the same time on two consecutive nights, a Green Blob was witnessed hovering and streaking through the frosty February air. Officials report no explanation at this time, however suggest that it may have been a phenomenal display of the Aurora Borealis, or Northern Lights." Not as funny as it was familiar. I rolled to my feet, put on my coat and journeyed to the Grand Union in search of food.

A small form at 4am is diminished even more by the darkness, the hum of tourism silenced mercifully by the night. Even the Park Bench Cafe was closed, empty of patrons and waitresses, long since returned to their homes, motels and apartments. Recalling this place earlier yesterday reminded me of my aching heartburn. A clear night away from city lights uncovers the grandness of our solar system. The Milky Way. Associations with chocolate bars set me to considering my hunger, and entering the 24-hour-a-day supermarket I proceeded to the ice creams.

Leaning over a freezer was one of the waitresses from my assault the day before. Too late, she's seen me. It was the one who had carved her mark on my chest, and I felt naked, transfixed with excitable terror. She looked me in the eye, her blue blue eyes and long blonde hair framing a magnetic face, holding me on the spot.

Slowly, smiling, she raised her hand and a container of ice cream, gesturing for me to move closer. So doing, I saw the label. Haagen Dazs Vanilla Swiss Almond, my favorite. She made me pay for it.

Thus it was that I met my first extraterrestrial. In the parking lot, there it was, next to the garbage compactor and the Ford Escort—a car-sized Green Blob.

Perhaps I was under some kind of hypnotic beam, or mind control ray, but something made me trust her. Besides, she had the ice cream. I tried all the alien I knew, but "M" never spoke a word, just smiled that Mona Lisa smile.

Into the green blob we walked and sat on a raised surface, soft and warm. She opened the ice cream and produced two spoon-like things. I wondered what compounds they were made of, turning over mine only to read the words "TAIWAN" and "STAINLESS."

We ate the ice cream, gazing deep into each other's eyes. My chest began to pulsate. Were we moving? Was I being taken to another planet? The motion confused my senses, and I lost my sense of up or down, but not my sight of "M".

She put her spoon into a fold of her shirt, and reached slowly towards me. Was I drugged? My body would not respond and I lay down, sagging, helpless. She reached into my coat, placing her hand upon my chest. Collapsing consciousness folded in upon me, and all the lights went out. Dark, enveloped, warm.

I came to in my own bed, mid-day, February 15. My chest was perfectly healed; everything seemed fine. On my bedside table was the same newspaper, the same headline. Next to it was a small framed picture of "M", next to that same Haagen Dazs.

I don't know what to say, Elayne, to tell you how this story ends, because I haven't got any answers for what happened. I haven't got any questions either. But one thing is for certain. My laundry was done.

After I put this letter in the post I'm going down to the Park Bench Cafe for lunch. I don't know what will happen; maybe nothing. Maybe I'm still dreaming and maybe I'm not. But if no one

ever finds me, someone has to know the shocking truth about my last few days on earth.

DAZA

Box 106

Manchester Center, VT 05255

Dear Elayne,

In one of the Sayz-U! letter columns, someone wrote about a ZBS radio serial he had heard called "Ruby II." I am an avid radio buff (as you should know), and I have several (but not all) of the ZBS radio serials. One of the main characters in these stories is Jack Flanders, a sort of a bungling, mystic Sherlock Holmes. He's in The Fourth Tower of Inverness, Moon Over Morocco, The Incredible Adventures of Jack Flanders, and the newest one, Dreams of Rio. All of them are worth repeated listenings, but I especially recommend Moon Over Morocco. It is a ten-hour adventure. It's a little hard to keep track of the first time around, which is really what makes it so much fun. As many times as I've listened to it, I still keep catching new things. The author, Meatball Fulton, goes to every location to get the authentic sounds. So if the scene is set at the Festival in the Athens Mountains, that's the exact background sounds you hear. Another wonderful thing is all the Moroccan and Islamic sayings and proverbs thrown in. A real delight; I catch myself using them in regular conversations now. I also have Sticks by Steven King, The Bleeding Man, Aura, and the Stars and Stuff series. Stars and Stuff is a collection of unrelated short stories that are all really amusing. Highly recommended for first-timers to ZBS...

May all things be well with you, and until next time...Don't forget to pray!

Love,

MAX NUCLEAR

Emperor of Madness

P.O. Box 815605

Dallas, TX 75381

(The main problem I have with ZBS, besides the fact that they never bothered to answer any of IJ's inquiries for trades [I mean, they could've just said no], is the extremely prohibitive cost of their tapes, upwards of \$10-15 per cassette, which I feel is a bit steep no matter how good they may be. Max, incidentally, runs a cassette comedy troupe of sorts c/o the Dallas Artists' Co-op, and more information about Ridiculous, and ZBS for that matter, can be found in my—er, Kip H. Ghesin's "other" newsletter, "Four-Alarm FIRESIGNAL" [FalaFal], for friends and admirers of The Firesign Theatre, which is available for free from our palatial p.o. box!!)

Dear Elayne:

The Ten Best Reasons Why I Don't Have An IJ Letter This Month

- 1) I'm living in fear that Pat Robertson will discover the missing hostages having a stag party in my bathroom.
- 2) I've been struck speechless with admiration by the latest Pink Bunny story.
- 3) The cat threw up on it.
- 4) I'm going on strike until Phil Tortorici draws his interpretation of my column.
- 5) Too busy denying those vicious rumours about me and Jimmy Swaggart.
- 6) Struck dumb with guilt because I keep forgetting to tell "Kid" Sieve that:
  - a) NutraSweet is now using the theme song from The Natural as background music for all its commercials; and
  - b) The company that makes those tinted contact lenses has recently taken the black woman out of its commercials, the idea that it might just possibly be slightly racist to depict a person of colour longing to be a "different person," with blue eyes, apparently having only now become clear to them.
- 7) All wrapped up in preparing for my après-ski date with Eddie Edwards.
- 8) Laughed myself into a coma over YU News' political squibs.
- 9) Recurring lack of sleep causing disturbing hallucinations involving Joe Isuzu.
- 10) Frozen with terror that Eric Mayer will discover I'm the one writing that stuff in the library books.

Sorry about that, Chief,  
Apologetically,

ANNI ACKNER

P.O. Box 18

Reading, PA 19603

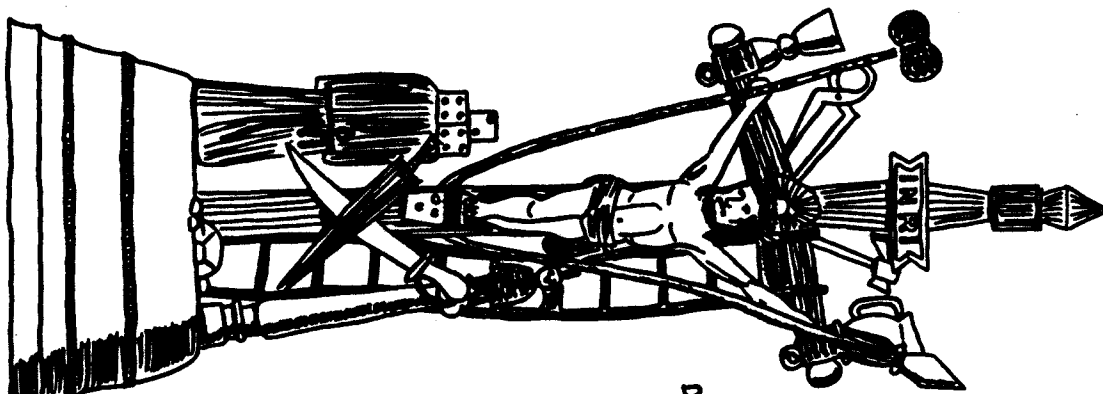
P.S. You missed John Sebastian (15 March), Phil Lesh (17 March) and Paul Kantner (also 17 March) in the Upcoming Events this time out. Consequently, Ed Begley, Jr. came to me while I was under anesthetic in the dentist's office and informed me that his birthday is 16 September, and advised that I remind you to act accordingly. I beg of you to please take this under consideration—my very sanity may be at stake.

(Thanks for the dates, Anni, and I've put them all on my calendar for the next go-round. See, the thing of it is, I simply don't follow all that many famous people, and generally have no idea whose birthdays IJ readers like to see commemorated in the Upcoming Events column, aside from their own. So it really is up to you folks to let me know if you want specific dates added, okay? The Kid says thanks, and assures me you did mention those facts to her but, in the usual delirium which accompanies her frenetic writing of her column, she forgot to bring those points up last time, and is grateful you have done so.)

Dear Elayne,

Well, once again, I'm knocking on the door at the edge of the deadline, but, better late than never, right? (Come on, you gotta cut me some slack...I only got six weeks to go here, my friend, and I'm a bit forgetful and shit—not to mention preoccupied...!)

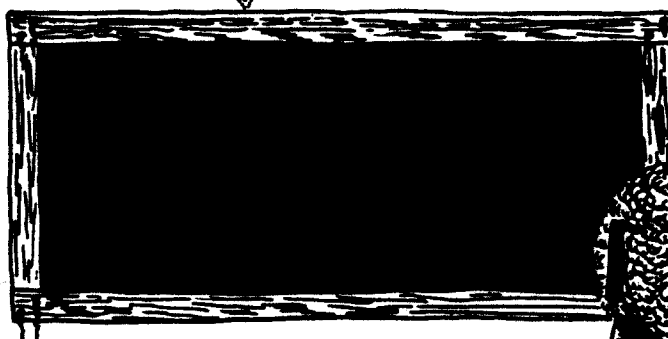
greetings from  
**Inside Joke!**



LIFE  
SIZE  
DRAWING  
OF  
REAL  
ICON  
FOUND  
DURING  
MAJOR  
CLEANING  
AT  
WYMAR-REN,  
JAN 88

WYMAR-REN,  
JAN 88

INSIDE JOKE  
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STATION  
NEW YORK, NY  
10159



You better watch out,  
There may be dogs about 



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