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PRESENTING A SALUTE TO:

HORRIFIED ONLOOKERS

OR
WHAT IT'S REALLY LIKE IN THE NEW YORK LIFE BUILDING!

Upcoming Events

- MAY 30 - GARY PIG GOLD (33) [Sorry it missed #59, Gary!]
 JUNE is FIGHT THE FILTHY FLY MONTH, says Chase's
 JUNE 1 - Marilyn Monroe (b. 1926); Ron Wood (41)
 JUNE 2 - Jerry Mathers (40); Charlie Watts (47)
 JUNE 3 - Donut Day; First appearance of "Casey at the Bat" (1888); Allen Ginsberg (62)
 JUNE 5 - Family Day, First balloon flight (1783); Int'l Mothers' Peace Day (est. 1972); Laurie Anderson (41)
 JUNE 7 - Thurman Munson (b. 1947)
 JUNE 8 - DORIAN TENORE (25)
 JUNE 9 - Donald Duck (54)
 JUNE 10 - STEVE COZZI (33); Judy Garland (b. 1922)
 JUNE 11 - Jeanette Rankin (b. 1880); Gene Wilder (49?)
 JUNE 12 - STEVE CHAPUT & ELAYNE WECHSLER TIE THE KNOT
 JUNE 13 - Malcolm McDowell (45)
 JUNE 15 - DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO IJ #61
 JUNE 16 - Soweto Day (Int'l Solidarity w/ S.Afr. people)
 JUNE 17 - Watergate (1972); M.C. Escher (b. 1893)
 JUNE 18 - Paul McCartney (46); Roger Ebert (46)
 JUNE 19 - Lou Gehrig (b. 1903); Garfield (10); Sen. Alan Cranston (74)
 JUNE 20 - Cyndi Lauper (35); Errol Flynn (b. 1909)
 JUNE 21 - Sartre (b. 1905); Judy Holliday (b. 1922)
 JUNE 22 - Todd Rundgren (39)
 JUNE 25 - JILL COZZI (33); Custer's Last Stand (1876); George Orwell (b. 1903)
 JUNE 26 - Gay Pride Day; Abner Doubleday (b. 1819)
 JUNE 27 - Helen Keller (b. 1880); Emma Goldman (b. 1869); Bob Keeshan (61)
 JUNE 29 - MARK JOHNSTON (27)
 JUNE 30 - RORY HOUCHESS (32); LUKE MCGUFF (31)

(continued on page four)

 * INSIDE JOKE is put on more or less hexaweekly by Elayne "Just Married?!" Wechsler and many dear friends, including DeeBee & Phil T, whose covers celebrate all the life-type events that seem to be going on nowadays to the IJ editorial staff (engagements/nuptials/births/birthdays/etc.); and emanate from beautiful downtown Brooklyn, where they have the nerve to put on Welcome Back to Brooklyn Day on June 12...but it's okay, this year's King is Henny "Take Me Away, Please" Youngman...
 * 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 GAELOR==
 * GARY PIG GOLD=====E.C. RIGGS=====J.P. MORGAN
 * ==LARRY OBERC=====SUSAN PACKIE=====STEVEN F. SCHARFF==
 * DAVID SERLIN==DORIAN TENORE=====KERRY THORNLEY==PHIL TORTORICI

FRONT COVER by DEBORAH BENEDICT

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS THIS ISSUE:

* GLEN LOWELL BLESII	* TULI KUPFERBERG	* MIKE SCHAFER
* SUSAN CATHERINE	* GLORIA LEITNER	* PETER SHERMAN
* BRIAN CATANZARO	* MICHAEL LENETSKY	* CURT SIMMONS
* RODNY DIOXIN	* JED MARTINEZ	* DANA SNOW
* PAUL FERICANO	* MAX NUCLEAR	* LARRY STOLTE
* VERNON GRANT	* DOUG PELTON	* ALAN VANDENBURGH
* MARY ANN HENN	* MICHAEL POLO	* JEFF WALKER
* WAYNE HOGAN	* WILLIAM RALEY	* SIGMUND WEISS
* A.T. HUNN	* K.L. ROBERTS	* S.F. WILLENS
* TODD KRISTEL	* TOM ROBERTS	* A.J. WRIGHT
	* ROLDO	

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ACKNOWLEDITORIAL

Many of you may be assuming this IJ, my last as a single-type person, is late because I'm swamped to the proverbial gills in wedding preparations. I wish I could use that as my only excuse, but alas, the far greater culprit has been my lack of typewriter time at my 9-5 job, where I do about 90% of IJ typing and which has not afforded me more than five minutes to myself for some 3-4 months now. And when I get home exhausted from typing job-stuff (including moonlighting for a few hours Tuesdays at the Guardian) the last thing I want to do is type more at home (where Steve has need of the Selectric for term papers and such). If all goes well and our lives return to the usual abnormality after the honeymoon, I should be able to more easily schedule future IJs. Oh, in case you're wondering how to address me formally, not that too many of you do, I'll probably be "Elayne Wechsler-Chaput" for tax purposes and keep the "maiden" name for everything else, including IJ and my checking account. I know the hyphenate doesn't have that real flair, but blame our families, we were born with the names...and I might as well confess, "Wechsler" is pronounced WEKS-ler (emphasis first syllable) and "Chaput" is shuh-PUT, so there you go.

Most subscribers have taken the hard news about our price hike pretty well, with a few even asking why I didn't just raise it to \$2. Well, this is the FIRST price hike we've ever had, and I was loathe to double it right off, as I think a 50% raise is a lot to begin with. Besides, it'd take a lot more than \$2 per issue to break even, if that were my goal, as staffers get their copies free and contributors have the postage-only option, and I don't wish to stop either of those discount practices. But hey, this by no means rules out donations (thanks again to J.C. Brainbeau!), so if you're one of those who feels IJ is worth more than \$1.50 per, I would stop you from paying more for it, okay? Thanks!

Roldo's quitting (long story; see Letters column) and Carol's bogged down in college stuff, but both will appear from time to time in the "Other Contributors" section, as former staffer A.J. Wright does this time. I've therefore taken the liberty of inviting two contributors who've expressed interest in the past to become staffers, and they'll introduce themselves formally in IJ #61. I'll give you three hints: They're both gentlemen (presumably), they both have pieces in this issue, and both of the bits are of a political bent. 'Nuff hints. Oh, and rounding out our staffer news, congratulations to Kathy Stadalsky and husband Bob, as well as daughters Anna and Maggie, on the newest family edition—Amanda ("Amy") Yvonne, born 11:54pm on Thursday, April 21, 8 lbs 10.6 oz, 20" and adorable!

"Kid" Sieve is taking the issue off, and Anni's decided to honor the writers' strike, even though her name will appear in our edit. box for the duration; the same strike has enabled me to finally slip in my TV review-updates in the Kid's usual spot, as most new stuff is shelved anyway for the time being (fine with me, I can watch baseball in peace—Yanks and Mets still both in first, huzzah!). I'd wanted to surprise you with a special "Fan Noose" update as well, but I haven't had the time to write it, so that'll go in #61. This issue sees the return of a few familiar names and features, the usual crowd of names old and new, four serials (two just begun) arguments more-or-less settled in the Letters column, a potential controversy begun by Ace in his column and letter, and a marvelous travelogue of the Bronx courtesy of Dorian, who was born there and will marry Vinnie Bartilucci there next July (congrats to you both!) so she should know (I also grew up there in my formative years and still have strange relatives there—Hi Uncle Phil!). I'm posting More Than I Need To Know Alerts on Rodny's serial, which contains graphic and/or explicit language (but hey, that's the kind of guy Rodny is, and I know he expects me to give him a MTINTK Alert or he wouldn't feel wanted) and on S.F. Willens for a piece that's a bit bloody and icky, but I think you'll see why I ran it when you read it through.

Parody Paper Update: Scarce this year. I have a Jewish Press parody and Mike Dobbs sent me something from Massachusetts, but that seems to be it. Guess reality is stranger than comedy again. What's your sign again?

The deadline for IJ #61 is now June 15 (we're looking forward to a full palatial p.o. box upon our return from Toronto), and for IJ #62 it's July 31. INSIDE JOKE now costs \$1.50 per issue, and as I only make 150 copies it's ONE ISSUE PER CUSTOMER, but you can make as many copies of your copy as you wish with my blessing. If there's an "X" by your name on your mailing label (do check!), it's time to renew. Please make any checks/m.o.'s out to "Elayne Wechsler." If your submission is in #61, you have the option of only paying postage for it if you so desire—postage is now 65¢ (they finally came out with a non-"Earth" 25¢, but as far as I can discern there are no immediate plans for 65¢ stamps so we'll be using combos for awhile) or 74¢ American for IJs to Canada. If you live overseas, IJs cost three TRCs and I send them SURFACE RATE, not airmail. I DO NOT TRADE, much as I'd like to, because I can't afford it anymore. I haven't gotten ads from anyone in a long time—they're still \$5 per business card size—and I have plenty of IJ back issues at \$1.50 each for your summer reading pleasure. Submissions (letters, articles, stories [UNDER 1900 WORDS], illos, serials, strips, etc.) should all be sent to P.O. Box 1609, Madison Square Station, New York, NY 10159.

Oh, I forgot to mention that advance subs of up to a year (\$12) are non-refundable, okay? And with #59 we've acquired a new copy shop much more convenient to moi; hope you like the copy quality! This issue is dedicated to the memory of two fine SF writers, Robert A. Heinlein and Clifford D. Simak, and also to Jules, beloved cat of Tom Gedwillo and Deborah Benedict, who, says Tom, "was 16 days shy of having his 16th birthday." RIP, kitty...

and also to the late great voice artist Daws Butler



DIARY of The ROCK FIEND



by
Anni Ackner
PICKING AT SCABS

Due to the current strike of the Writers' Guild of America, Anni Ackner will not be appearing in this publication at the present time. For the duration of the strike, "Diary of the Rock Fiend" will be written by a guest columnist.

Okay, right off the bat I gotta tell you that I am not doing this because I'm pumping for management or trying to tear down the system from the inside or because I care one way or another whether the "American public" or whatever you want to call it gets rooked out of reading a coupla column inches for a coupla months, or any other thing like that that you might be thinking, all right? Frankly, I'm not even from this country so, like, I really could care what happens in your labour disputes, right? I mean, so this person who I'm not supposed to mention drops me a line and asks me to come write this, only we gotta do it on the sly so it doesn't look like we've got scabs working for the paper during this strike thing, okay, and I'm, like, I really could care, you know? To get right down to it, there's like a big two reasons why I'm busting my tiny little behind to do this at all, right? For the main reason, I need the money, and then you gotta figure that anyone that comes from my country is going to do just about anything to get outta there for a coupla some weeks, so there you go with that.

All right, so maybe \$50 doesn't look like such a Big Fat Hairy Deal to you, but where I come from, we're talking major bucks here. You wanna know what fifty American dollars'll get you in my country? Well, first of all, you got yourself \$50 American, you can just truck on down to Omar the Carmaker's and pick yourself up something like a really primo '68 Ford Mustang, rebuilt. Cherry. Radio works and everything. 'Course, since we never did get around to talking any gas companies into opening up—there's a little hassle with geography and like that, which I'll tell you about in a minute—you still gotta get a coupla big hairy guys to push it outta the lot for you, but once you get beyond that, you got yourself a real sweet little summer house there, or one hell of a windowbox garden. And for another buck, Omar'll clean the windshield.

Then again, you got \$50 and you hit Lowell on the right day, you might just find yourself with your hands on a nice food processor, with the motor already taken out, hardly used—makes a great paint brush holder—or a cardboard carton, or even one of those good old rusty stoves, and you know how hard they are to find. Hell, \$50 American is even a pretty hefty down payment on a cat—Maine Coon, not one of your little Siamese jobs, either—so you see what we're dealing with here. I would've gone a lot farther for less money, just between you and me, not that I want Old Nameless to get wind of that one.

The thing of it is—and if I can't say it, who can?—you dig, that our economy is kind of all fucked up at the moment, what you might call a cash flow problem, so to speak. Actually, as far as that goes, what with one thing and another, we really haven't got what you might want to call an economy at all, in the sense of the word. A couple of years ago we did kick around the idea of maybe issuing our own money and starting one up, but, jeez, I don't have to tell you the problems that caused. First off, you gotta figure out what to call the money—we figured to call the big bills *kleinshlegels*, and then we thought, okay, we'll have 14 *nertzle-gels* in a *kleinshlegel*, but we ran into trouble when we got to how many *gluvschticks* in a *kleinshlegel*. Mavis wanted 23 and Avery wanted 142, and they had a fight, see, and it was Mavis who baked the Danis, so we were all kind of siding with her, then Avery got so mad he grabbed Twila and went home, and Twila had brought the candle, see, so that took care of that—then even if you get past that, you gotta decide whose picture to put on the money—I wanted me. Everyone else wanted John Fogerty—and it just got to be one thing after another, and then it was baseball season, and we forgot about it. So the only money we have is what we get from exporting, and most of our exporting is done to the States, and we like American money best anyway because if you spill beer on it you can just wipe it off and it more or less keeps its shape and doesn't get all soggy like, say, Canadian money—Canadians have better colors, though. You might wanna think about that—so that's basically it.

About that exporting, though, there's another pain in the lower back, if you get my drift. Right at the minute, there's only one thing we make where I come from that we export, and that's pictures painted on black velvet. You know, Jack Kennedy, Elvis, Marty King, the Last Supper, that kind of thing, and this is not exactly your high-turnover item. I mean, say a family buys itself a nice bullfighter or something and hangs it up in the rec room—okay, so it hangs there ten, fifteen years. Doesn't get stale, doesn't get moldy, doesn't fall apart—the worst that happens is maybe you have to dust it off every coupla months. There's not what you call planned obsolescence, so there's like, diminishing market returns, especially if you figure we got maybe 150 people turning out these things at any given time, you dig, and maybe it

takes 5, 6 hours to do one. (Actually, we've got 151 people in the industry at last count, but Donna Sue got into this loop a few years back where she only does Frank Gorshin, so mostly we just stack hers up in the garage.) So our export business is like in a downward spiral right now, but we're thinking about making a few changes. Just last month, to give you an example, Seymour came up with the idea that maybe we should get into farming—he said okra, because okra was so popular in the States—and we all got pretty excited about that, let me tell you, really thought he had something there, till, I think it was Betty pointed out that unless okra grows in solid rock, which just by the way is what we're living on, we were going to have a little problem with this venture, and then Al came back from one of his mail runs to Reading, PA (that's where we have our post office box) and said that unless okra was a fat black lady who hugged people a lot we were going to have a big problem with this venture, and that's all she wrote about that. But we're open to suggestions.

I guess by now you're wondering just where it is the hell I'm talking about, which is fair enough, and if I knew, I'd tell you. (Never mind, that's one of the hot jokes around there, so you can see why I had my tail on fire to get out for awhile.) Seriously, I come from the Republic of Popovac, which is a small island country located somewhere in the Atlantic.

Okay, so you've never heard of the Republic of Popovac. You can't find it on the map, right, and I mean any map, even one of those Britannica Atlas jobs that lists places like Chad, for God's sake. I'll bet you don't believe it even exists and right about now you're thinking of turning the page, looking for a better scam. Have I got you pegged, or what? Well, I have a flash for you—there's a reason you haven't heard of the Republic of Popovac and why it's not on any map, and it's only partly because Morty, our publicity agent, has been out with the flu for the last coupla years. For the main reason, it's because I kind of stretched the truth a little when I said we were an island. If you want the absolute fact of the thing, what we are is a rock. All right, I grant you that it's one big mother of a rock but, what the hell, it's a rock, and if you'd been paying attention a few paragraphs back, you could have picked that one up for yourself. And being as it's a rock, see, it isn't, like, attached to anything—meaning, like, the ocean floor or whatever it is real islands are attached to that keeps them more or less in one place—so basically what happens is, well, we float. A lot. I mean, one day we can be just minding our own business off the coast of, say, Maine, not bothering anybody, and the next thing you know there's a storm at sea and what with the waves and all someone looks out the window and there we are bumping into England. Even without a storm we usually just get pushed along with the currents, just drifting along, you know, until we crash into something that sends us off in another direction. Last time it was Sweden and you should have seen the hassle that caused. They thought we were a surfacing Russian submarine. They don't get out much in Sweden.

Anyway, that's the kind of thing that makes it tough for us to get on the maps. I mean, you can see the problem—how do you map something that doesn't stay in one place or, for that matter, even in the same ocean?

Yeah, that was a big one. See, the Republic of Popovac was settled 75 years ago by seven guys (that would be Phil, Sid, Morey, Ray, John, John and Gloria. On our 75th anniversary celebration last February Cynthia painted a bunch of pictures of them—artist's representations, you might say, though they all pretty much look like Geraldo Rivera, if you ask me—and we hung them up in the Drag On Inn) who were escaping from this mental institution in Los Angeles, okay, and what they did was they stole this row-boat, and they were heading for Catalina, when they got beached on this huge goddamn rock. Being as how they had all set sail on the banana boat a long time before that, if you catch my drift, they figured that this was a good a place as Catalina to hang out (and besides, they'd lost one of their oars in the water anyway), so they set up camp there. It'll probably come as one hell of a shock to you—it always jolts me a good one when I think about it—but they actually didn't make out too badly, all things considered. Of course, nothing grows on a rock, but fish'll smash into one pretty frequently, assuming it's big enough and they don't know it's there (to this day smashed fish is like our number one delicacy), and Sid worked out a way to bring down seagulls by throwing baseballs at them (he was a big Red Sox fan, and legend has it he brought a couple dozen along for the trip. Baseballs, I mean. Not Red Sox) that was accurate at least 45% of the time (I understand there's a fella on the Yankees that has a better percentage than that, but you gotta figure the balls are livelier now), so they ate okay, and then, too, every so often they'd bump into Japan or someplace and pick up a few supplies, so they survived, anyway, and then one thing led to another, and every time they'd run into California just about some starlet or director or somebody would decide it was time to get away from it all, and climb aboard, and the colony grew, and here we are today. As the story goes, about the only problem they really had—aside from sunburn and every one in awhile someone falling off the side and getting swept away to sea—was rats. Seems that every time the rats would desert a sinking ship they'd swim to this rock and set up housekeeping, and rats being what they are when it comes to what you might call the mysteries of life, they started over-running the place, which is why there's a three-year waiting list for a cat right now. Though I have to admit that if you throw enough barbecue sauce on them, the rats aren't too bad all by themselves. Usually we serve them at weddings.

Anyhow, this went on for quite some time, and then along about

Continued next page

EVENTS CONT'D.

- JULY 3 - Compliment-Your-Mirror Day; Tom Stoppard (51); Franz Kafka (b. 1883)
- JULY 4 - Abby & Ann (70); Rube Goldberg (b. 1883)
- JULY 6 - Beatrix Potter (b. 1866)
- JULY 7 - Ringo Starr (45); William Kunstler (69)
- JULY 10 - Sinking of Rainbow Warrior by French government (1985); Arlo Guthrie (41)
- JULY 12 - Different Colored Eyes Day; Milton Berle (80); Buckminster Fuller (b. 1895); C. McVie (45)
- JULY 13 - RODNY DIOXIN (?); Roger McGuinn (46)
- JULY 14 - Woody Guthrie (b. 1912); Jerry Rubin (50)
- JULY 16 - Ginger Rogers (66?)
- JULY 17 - MAX NUCLEAR (30); "Wrong Way" Corrigan Day
- JULY 18 - Red Skelton (75); Hunter S. Thompson (49); DemoCon '88 begins
- JULY 19 - National Liberation Day, Nicaragua (1979); George McGovern (66); Philip Agee (53)
- JULY 20 - Moon Day (1969); Vaughn Bode (b. 1941); Diana Rigg (50); Carlos Santana (41)
- JULY 21 - First Robot Homicide (1984); Robin Williams (37); Marshall McLuhan (b. 1911); Ernest Hemingway (b. 1899); Cat Stevens (40)
- JULY 22 - Pied Piper of Hamelin (1376); Albert Brooks (41); William A. Spooner (b. 1844)
- JULY 23 - Comedy Celebration Day, SF, CA—For info: Jose Simon, Exec. Prod., 1658 33rd Ave., San Francisco, CA 94122 (tell him IJ sent you, even though he's never heard of us)
- JULY 24 - Amelia Earhardt (b. 1898); Simon Bolivar (b. 1783); Bella Abzug (68)
- JULY 26 - ROLDO (40); Gracie Allen (b. 1905); G.B. Shaw (b. 1856); Aldous Huxley (b. 1894); Stanley Kubrick (60); Mick Jagger (44)
- JULY 27 - Leo Durocher (b. 1906); Norman Lear (66)
- JULY 28 - PHREDD-Cat (3); ALIZON OSSMAN-HARRIS (29); PHIL PROCTOR (48); Rudy Vallee (b. 1901)
- JULY 29 - WAYNE HOGAN (?); Gilroy Garlic Festival; Montpelier Fools' Fest; William Powell (b. 1892)
- JULY 30 - Patricia Schroeder (48); Eleanor Smeal (49); Arnold Schwarzenegger (41)
- JULY 31 - DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO IJ #62

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The Difference Between a Caricature & a Portrait by Roldo

Time is easier to float on than water, and not as dangerous if you sink. It doesn't bother me when I lose the clock and calendar—it's mostly a matter of finding longer minutes, and that's easily done by simply extending the space between the seconds.

Think of it as rock, that's the best bet. Anything can be converted to abstraction by a combination of dis-traction and subtraction. It's the amount of traction that really matters where matter is concerned, although the amount of concern can matter a certain amount.

Would it be easier if I made these demonstrations more conventional? Is the obscurity perhaps overly de-liberate? It's my fear of standardization, perhaps. Well, I find it rather convenient to be my own worst enemy—at least I know who to keep an eye on. Sure, once in a while I sneak up on me and pull a fast one, but most times I see me coming.

For all that, there's a curious gentleness to it, under the noble absurdity. There's a dignity to the truly unusual, the laughter of giggling stars and chortling planets predicting and divining Fate's whimsy from the seemingly random actions of a species such as ours. Read this slowly; one word a day is the recommended, just before sleeping. It is the civet that will sweeten your dreams.

The hardest thing about writing is that you can't use a laugh track.

the forties there was this guy called Howard who never used to live there, but he liked to fly over for vacations, see, only one day he got the idea that he'd rather vacation on the East Coast than the West Coast, and it was like this character has all the money in the world, so he goes, "Look, here's what I want to do, see," and the upshot was that this nut pays to have this huge e-fing rock towed across country and plunked down in the Atlantic, off Coney Island, and on top of that he shells out to have every man, woman and child of us get on Greyhound buses and tag along after it—and you gotta dig that there were maybe 200 people by that time—plus he gave everyone \$10 moving expenses, this being a time when \$10 was still \$10, and this became known as "Et Krob-nik Dalla Vrebono Meshugah Blinusk!" or "The Great Ride Across America To Placate A Weirdo," and here we are today. I mean, what difference did it make to us what the hell ocean we rolled around in. A rock is a rock and besides, a lot of people were getting pretty damned sick of all that Japanese food. So that's mainly why you don't have to bother looking up the Republic of Popovac in any of your geography books and also why no one's ever bothered to go to war or try to pick us up for their territory. Hey, we're a bunch of sunburned velvet painters sitting on a floating piece of granite that was populated by seven refugees from a booby hatchery—who needs that kind of shit? Though if you really have to know about all that history test sort of stuff, our flag is a mud brown background with a dead rat sinister and two crossed paintbrushes rampant, our national bird is the concussed seagull, and in our language "Popovac" means "Big, ugly, lichen-encrusted rock."

About our language: Up until 1968 we all spoke English and, as a matter of hard fact we still all speak English, with a little Mexican thrown in from when we were still over on the West Coast, but in '68 Crazy Jerome, who used to do the mail runs until his eyesight went and he started overshooting Pennsylvania (until 1960 we did our mail runs in a rowboat, but then that Howard fella turned us on to this great WWII surplus B-15, so now we just fly on over, which is a big help because now we don't have to get within rowing distance of the States, and then take a bus to PA, we just fly in and land at the Reading airport, though with the gas deal and all we still don't get our mail more than once every coupla months, so don't be surprised if you write and don't get an answer for awhile) decided we ought to have our own language, so he made one up. That was fine and dandy except that, for one thing, none of the language made any sense—you think his mother named him Crazy Jerome?—like, there's nothing you can figure would be a noun or a verb or whatever, and for another thing no one can pronounce it, and for a third thing even if you could pronounce it you feel like a prize a-hole. I mean, just to give you a for instance, here's the first verse of our national anthem:

"Popovac el Popovac
Din guy simatru bimbam
Caranini paranoonoo
Teid ekoc ivana plam!"

(Popovac, my Popovac/If I don't get off this rock pretty soon/
They're going to come/And put me in a rubber room)

If you can get through that with a straight face you're a better man than I am, Gunga Din. To tell you the truth, we all just would have ignored old Crazy Jerome except that he just happened to have this uncle somewhere in Utah or someplace who left him like this aluminum factory, see, and Crazy Jerome promised every-one 40 feet of aluminum foil a year for life to add to their aluminum foil balls if we'd adopt the new language, and I don't have to tell you that we all wanted that, so basically what we do is talk English when Crazy Jerome's son, Crazy Bob (Crazy Jerome died in 1983), isn't around, and just use Popovacuous for official documents, like the menu at the Drag On Inn.

And that's just about it for now, except that I might as well come clean and tell you that I'm not just your standard, garden-variety run of Popovacuum. If you must know, I'm the President of the Republic of Popovac, not that that's such a big deal either. As a matter of fact, it sort of sucks. From the way I get it, your President gets to live in some big fancy house and go to war with people and sleep through a lot of meetings and things, and every four years you get to have a big fight and throw a bunch of parties to pick out a new guy to do it, because everybody wants to do it and I don't blame them. Now, over here, see, all the President gets to do is mow the lawn (it isn't a very big lawn, I grant you, just a coupla feet of crabgrass that grows in some dirt that accidentally got dumped in front of Lloyd's house, but no one's sharpened those mower blades in years, so it's a killer) and take out the trash, and if one of the toilets stops up guess who has to get up in the middle of the night and go plunge it, and no one in his right mind wants to be President here. So what we do, see, is once a year we have this meeting, and whoever shows up last has to be President. I've shown up last for the past three years running, and I'm starting to think the damned thing's rigged, like they're telling me the meeting is at six and it's really at five, just because I'm the only one who ever figured out how to get the paper towels onto those roller things. Yeah, I'm gonna have to look into that.

Anyway, I really do have to go now, because there's a party at Sheila's tonight, and the last postcard I got said that we're right off the coast of England again, so everyone's gonna walk in to the country and call me. Keep your fingers crossed that this strike doesn't end and I'll be back next time—I really need a new cardboard box.

See ya.

Sincerely yours,
Lou
President of the Republic of
Popovac

THE JELLO WARS

PART TWO

by Prudence Gaelor

(THE STORY SO FAR: Prudence has been in the hospital for appendicitis; she and Pink Bunny had been fighting all morning.)

A little later breakfast was wheeled in. A young woman in badly fitting white polyester pants, sheer enough that you could see her green and white striped bikini underwear through them, explained that the doctor had placed Prudence on a clear liquid diet and that she could look forward to more meals like this one until he said otherwise.

"What'd ya get, Pru?" Pink Bunny asked peering over the sheets. He had decided to take a nap before breakfast and had just finished building a comfortable nest in the sheets when the bad-pants lady (which is how they later referred to the lady that brought them breakfast) came in with their food.

"Lessee—chicken broth, cranberry juice, tea and lime jello."

"Hey! Pass me the jello!"

"No. It's my jello."

"I thought you hated lime jello."

"Well, not always—besides, I'm the patient. It's mine. Why don't you take a nap like you were going to?"

"But I'm hungry now," Pink Bunny said plaintively.

Prudence ignored him and tore open the jello—it came in one of those foil sealed packages like the syrup and jelly that you get at the I-HOP—and plunged in her spoon. The jello had the consistency of rubber erasers, the kind that are hard and don't work except to smear pink all over your paper. It tasted like one too—when she chewed it, it chewed back.

"Y'know, Bunny, if you really want the jello I guess you should have it. You certainly have done more than enough to deserve it," Prudence said and handed the jello over to Pink Bunny. She placed a tea bag in one of the two mugs of hot water she was given and while the tea was steeping she tore open the cranberry juice, which was in a container similar to the one the jello came in. Although she tried to be careful she ended up spilling most of the juice on the clean blanket and sheets they had put on her bed while she was giving herself a sponge bath. This was okay with her because she hated cranberry juice anyway and it left a neat pattern on the up-till-now white blanket. She removed the tea bag and took a sip.

"Oh-ugh! Liptons!"

"Uk! Liptons!" Pink Bunny acknowledged his agreement between pawfuls of jello. "This is some jammin' jello, Pru. Here, have a bite, you'll really get into this!"

"No, thanks, Bunny. You deserve it all. Really."

"But the texture, Pru—it makes me think 'Goodyear'!"

"Whitewalls or radials?"

"Whitewalls, definitely."

"Oh, now see if it were of radial quality then maybe I could get into it, but I never really appreciated whitewalls like you do and I could never deprive you."

"What about those whitewall cookies that you made at Beline's party?"

"Those don't count—those were party cookies."

"They were disgusting."

"You ate your share."

"Well, I thought if I didn't she'd be insulted and start playing that Barry Manilow record again."

"You mean LL Cool J?"

"I guess so, either that or the Eagles."

"Who?"

"You know, that stuff your mother plays when you're out of the house and she thinks I'm sleeping."

"She actually listens to that stuff?"

"You were listening to it last night."

"That's because it was Beline's party, it would have been rude to complain."

"Not only does she listen to the stuff...she knows ALL the words. And it's not even as if she were selective, you should hear some of the stuff she sings along to."

"Gods, how majorly uncool."

"Nice stain on the sheet, Pru," Pink Bunny said, changing the subject. "Did you do this all on your own or did the juice explode?"

"I did this all by myself," Prudence admitted proudly. "All this white gets so depressing. Geez, Bunny, I'm still hungry."

"What else do you have?"

"Just the broth."

"Have you tried it yet? Is it awful?"

"Can't be worse than the jello—but broth for breakfast? YUK!" She tore open the broth packet, with more success than the juice, and dumped it into the second mug of hot water. She swirled the cup, took a gulp and another gulp and started to hiccup.

"This hiccuping"—hic—"This hiccuping"—hic hic—"It hurts!"

Pink Bunny laughed, "Are you sure it isn't hiccuping flavor rather than chicken?"

"It's not funny"—hic—"Not"—hic—"funny at all!"—hic

Prudence spent the rest of the morning dozing on and off, occasionally woken up by the nurse's assistant—"Prudence, wake up dear, I need to take your temperature." "Prudence, wake up, I need to tell you I'm hooking an antibiotic up to your IV so if your arm starts to tingle, not to worry." "Prudence, wake up, would you like me to refill your ice water?"—and once by the bad-pants lady who returned twice—once to pick up her breakfast tray, "Are you

finished with this, dear?" and again later when she brought lunch.

Lunch was frighteningly similar to breakfast except for lime jello it was lemon, instead of cranberry juice it was apple and instead of chicken broth it was beef.

Prudence picked up the apple juice. "I hate apple juice. Why did they have to bring me apple juice? It's not even a cool color like the cranberry. Looks like somebody pissed in a cup, sealed it and decided to market it. There's nothing decent to drink in this place."

"Do you think vodka's a clear liquid, Pru?"

"I dunno. Why'd you ask that for?" Prudence asked, rubbing her forehead. "I think I'm getting a headache. It's probably from starvation."

"Yeah, probably." Pink Bunny was leaning over a magazine that Patrick left behind. "Anyway, look at this ad." He pointed to a picture of a bottle of vodka frozen in a block of ice. The ice distorted the label, magnifying it. Underneath in bold red letters it read, "Vodka in the Rocks." "I've never had vodka. Maybe it's on the clear liquids list and they'll let us try some."

"Don't be stupid, Bunny," Prudence said, tugging the covers thus knocking the magazine off the bed. "Vodka's liquor."

"How do you know? Have you ever tried it?"

"No, but Daddy keeps a bottle of it in his liquor cabinet."

"Well, maybe it's good and he doesn't want to share it, like the ginger ale he keeps in there."

"I didn't think of that. We'll have to try it, though it doesn't look like it could have much flavor. It looks like water."

"So does 7-Up."

"This is true."

Prudence snatched the jello off the tray. It was a bright yellow color similar to McDonald's Golden Arches.

"I don't know, Bunny, this jello looks scary." She pronounced scary "skeer-y," a bad habit she picked up from her friend Billy's mom, Irene, as in "Biwvy, shut the fuck up. Biwvy, get off the goddamn phone. Biwvy, come home. I'm skeered." Irene Blue-berger. Patrick and Claire didn't like the Bluebergers very much and told Prudence not to play with Billy or go to his house or anything. But Prudence did anyway, because besides being her boyfriend and all, he was the way coolest kid on the block and sometimes he would let her ride his skateboard.

She opened the hello and sniffed it. "Mm—this stuff reeks mighty powerful, Bunny." She took a spoonful. "Oh, gross! Yuk."

"How's it taste?"

"You know how that furniture polish the cleaning lady uses? The kind with lemons? Well, this stuff tastes how you'd 'spect that to taste."

"How 'bout the broth? Is it decent?"

"Doubt it. Besides I hate beef broth."

"Try it anyway."

"Don't wanna."

"Try it or I'll cut your hair off next time you fall asleep! You need to eat something, Pru. B'sides it might make your headache go away."

"Awright." Prudence tore open the broth packet and dumped the broth powder into a mug. She mixed it with her finger and took a few sips. "Yuk!"—hic—"Oh NO!"—hic

"Hahahahaha! More hiccup brand broth!" Giggling, he started to sing, "Hello, yellow lemon jello tastes unwell-o, although broth in a cup makes you hiccup!"

Hic—"That's not very"—hic—"funny, and besides"—hic—"it's not"—hic—"all that good either." Prudence continued, in between hiccups, "It's a stupid song and the scansion's all wrong."

"You're just jealous because I'm more talented than you."

"Not true and you know it."

"Oh yeah? You try!"

"I will—Hello, yellow lemon jello, clear as a bell-o, very well-o stinks to Hell-o, just like Pink Bunny's stupid songs!"

"All right! Here's one for you! Mello like a clear bell-o, Prudence smell-os like the hello."

"That makes no sense, besides it's a lie."

"Does too! Is not!"

"Hello, yellow lemon jello, Bunny can just go to Hell-o!"

"Right! Well, listen to this..."

"No. I'm not talking to you."

"Poo-poo head."

"I'm not listening to you. You're so puerile."

"Ooh! Touch you. The little girl knows big words. Puerile, you say? You sound just like your mom. Isn't that how she describes you? 'Prudence, sometimes you are so puerilely pugnacious!' Nay! You're the puerile one, not I."

"I don't want to hear it."

"The pugnacious puerility in Prudence matches closely to that in alligators in Maine!"

"Shut up! Shut up!"

"Prud—"

"Shut up. Shut up, shut up, shut up, shut up, SHUT UP!"

"I bet your scar is as red as your face is."

"Shut up. I'm not listening. Lalalalalalalala," Prudence said, hands covering her ears, eyes shut. "Lala, Bunny is a snorty-pig. Lalalalala."

Bad-pants came in to take the tray.

"Excuse me, ma'am?" Prudence ventured, biting her lips. She was not a little intimidated. The woman looked scary. She was blonde and Prudence had always been intimidated by blondes ever since Molly Rumpf pushed her off the jungle gym while she was 5

hanging upside-down by her knees, and gave her a concussion just because Billy kissed her that day at recess and not Molly. She was also terrified of jungle gyms and hanging upside-down, but not of kissing Billy.

"Yes, what can I do for you," the woman said, drawing nearer.

"Um, could you please turn on the TV please? Please?"

"Now, honey, I'm surprised you're asking me that." Prudence shrank back in her bed, wondering if Bad-pants was going to sock her. "Didn't anybody show you how to turn the TV on?"

Prudence shook her head from side to side.

"Well, here. I'll show you. There are two buttons on the remote to your left." She pointed to the nurse call box. "One is to call the nurse. That much you probably already know. The other one works the TV. Push it once and the TV goes on. Each push after that changes the channel. To turn it off, just keep pushing the button until it runs out of channels and it will automatically click off. That little dial is your volume control. Okay?"

"Yes, thank you."

"All right." Bad-pants took the lunch tray and left. Prudence pushed the TV button and the TV went on. Soap opera. She pushed the button again, another soap opera. She kept pushing the button. Soap opera, game show (maybe she would come back to that), soap opera, sitcom (stupid one that she hated), war movie, news.

"Can we watch the game show, Pru? We've seen the movie before. It was real boring, remember?"

Prudence opted for the movie. She also would have rather seen the game show, but decided on the movie out of spite. She huddled under the sheets and turned the volume up, hoping that her mom would come soon.

"You know, Prudence," she heard Pink Bunny shout over the television, "sometimes you can be a real BITCH!"

(Continued next issue)

SWEPT AWAY BY A MELANCHOLY WAVE OF CLEANLINESS

(In which Our Hero recalls the true reason for this column and decides to let his brethren in solitude in on the secret that made him the moderately happy not-quite-a-bachelor he is now)



A reader in New York recently pointed out that The Purgatory Papers has managed to stay away from its original purpose. She is correct, of course. This column started out as a handbook on how to survive being single, alone and living in an urban area. Back then I was holed up in a tiny room in Kips Bay surrounded by friends who were married, engaged or too seriously involved to care. Because of that—and my singular lack of success in finding a willing female companion—I spent the majority of my time alone.

Yes, it was my disturbing finding that the single person is becoming an increasingly solitary species. Mind you, I didn't say "extinct." Speaking for my own sex, our short supply is but a myth. Contrary to popular belief, all of us single men in New York (or Chicago, or New Orleans, or San Fran, whatever) are not either gay or married. When you hear a Big Urban Female (or BUF-FIE, as we sometimes like to call them behind their backs) say that, she really means all the men who look like Mel Gibson are either married or gay. It's a sad fact that the majority of men do not look like Mel Gibson. Since a Buffie considers this a major factor in choosing a mate, a lot of us can expect gobs of time to ourselves.

So what is one to do with ourselves while alone in the big city? As I have been single for all of my adult life (and most likely the rest of it), I have had loads of time to experiment with the various ways to occupy one's time. Some ways to relieve solitude shall be discussed in a column in the near future, but I'd like to concentrate here on one particular activity. This activity is worthy of a column all to itself simply because it can give us normal guys an edge over those snotty pretty boys. It is not easy. It requires time to master. But it gives joy, satisfaction and a sense of self-sufficiency.

Yes, men, I'm not kidding you. This activity, once mastered, will allow you to attract women without looking like Mel Gibson.²

But what is this mystical activity, O Tom? What can we do by ourselves to relieve the misery of our solitude³? What can we do that will transport us from the unbearable aloneness into the bliss of couplehood without pain?

My answer to you is simple. Learn and master domestic chores.

I'm waiting for you all to stop laughing.

I know my statement is being met with almost universal ridicule. Some of you single folk are even comparing me to that demon of horror, Alan Alda. After all, you're all bachelors. You're supposed to wallow in your own filth. Cleanliness is as distant from the bachelor as the Ice Age. That's usually why bachelors are so hepped up to find a woman: somebody's gotta clean up that

When I get my three cents worth on the subject of religion the listeners usually reply, "OH — you believe in reincarnation". I looked up the word in several dictionaries and the consensus definition is "the birth of the soul in another body". I think of the soul as a rerun of my activities from birth to death and it took off from the brain a million years ago more or less. We live in a day when war, inflation, unemployment and death will be no more if we play our cards right. For a 20th century arithmetically and spiritually sound religion send S.A.S.E. to:

HERENOW RERUNS

Box 2243 — YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO, 44504

apartment of yours.

Well, pals and gals, The Purgatory Papers has always remarked upon the changes and reverses going on in our present society. So it is with the hordes of singleness. The single woman no longer knows how to clean because the single woman no longer has the time. She is working in conditions just as rough and stressful as our own, and she has to work at it twice as hard as us because some men (including a dim-witted actor in Washington) think she's not capable. Being so busy, something has to fall by the wayside. In this case, it's usually cleanliness.

Take Karen V., for example. She lives in my old building in what can politely be called chaotic squalor. When I lived there, I had learned domestic sciences and applied them one night during the holidays. I shopped for and cooked a fine dinner, helping to clean up afterwards. My efforts were most appreciated. It still ranks as one of the best evenings we've ever spent together.

Remember: the situation has reversed. Now, for every man who knows how to cook and clean, there is a single woman who hasn't had the time to learn how to. Knowledge of these skills will be a tremendous weapon in your hunt for companionship.

I know that learning domestic skills goes against the single male tradition, but this is the 80s. You have to realize that women are no longer going to put on their stupid act for you. They're just as intelligent as you are and you have to find an intelligent strategy to find one.

I suggest you begin your course on domestic skills by learning how to vacuum and some basic cooking. Vacuuming is a simple, eloquent and automatic skill. You are given this machine. You point the machine at the floor requiring vacuuming. You turn the machine on and move about the floor. The truly creative can come up with scenarios to enhance the pleasures of vacuuming like "Dan Dauntless Of The Vacuum Rangers" or "Vacuum Cleaner Vice" ("You may try to escape, you medellin dustball, but Hoover and I are going to suck you up in a wave of justice!"). Once vacuuming is mastered, you can move on to ironing, which is similar but more dangerous. Vacuums don't give you third degree burns, after all. After ironing, reorganizing closets and cleaning countertops, then you can turn to the bathroom.⁴

Just keep in mind that cooking is a must-learn. Cooking is the most appreciated of the domestic sciences. Despite some rumours, it is actually easy to master and people flock to you in droves. We're not just talking single women, but other single men. That's why I had such a problem with my next-door neighbor, Andy Pandey. The moment he smelt something simmering, he'd start beating down the door. If cooking can give you such great power over relatively non-sentient beings like Andy, think of what you could do to the others amongst your small circle of friends and potential lovers.

A personal note: Don't, I repeat don't, get suckered into this "nouvelle cuisine" rap. Man was not meant to eat pretty food. Nouvelle cuisine is only an excuse for smartass chefs to show off. So they make things up to look like flowers, dogs, cats, houses, etc. and they add lots of lettuce. Nobody likes lettuce. That's why there's so much of it left in the world.

Domestic sciences can work. It's a way for cunning to win over comeliness, brains over beefcake. There are attractive women out there desperate enough in their filth to look beyond looks. Chances are you'll never find them, but they're there. And even if you don't find somebody as winning as Karen, you have the satisfaction and pride of self-sufficiency. That's the other value of cleaning house. Once you know how to cook and clean, you won't be so desperate to find female companionship so she can clean up for you. You can concentrate on personality and style and other things true relationships have been known to spring from.

It may not help your sanity, but it'll make your insanity easier to bear.

NEXT: Our Man in Purgatory continues his exploratory of single guy fun activities with talking to oneself, listening to the radio and cartoons. Don't miss it. It'll be good. Really.

THE FOOTNOTE'S PROGRESS

1-All you sex fiends can forget what you're thinking. You think I didn't realize what kind of filth would go through your minds with that sentence? Forget it. I covered that joke months ago.

2-And you guys who look like Mel Gibson (or at least =snort= William "I'm so amazed, the sun's out" Hurt): go to the next page. This column isn't for you.

3-Whadda I tell you perverts? See #1 and shut up.

4-And amateurs, do not attempt to clean the bathroom without professional back-up and proper training. There are just some things the inexperienced cannot do unprepared.

5-If you were paying attention, you'd realize there was no footnote #5 and ignore this type. You evidently haven't, so let this be a lesson to you.

A UP IN THE PLASMAFOOL

by Dorian Tenore

THE BRONX: IT'S NOT JUST FOR MUGGERS ANY MORE!

Long, long ago, in an era far, far away, Manhattan wasn't the only glamorous borough of New York City. Back in the 1930s and '40s, if you told people you lived in the Bronx, they'd be as impressed as if you'd said Central Park West or Sutton Place. Should you reveal yourself as a Bronxite today, people wrinkle their pert little noses and ask, "Is it true that you need Green Beret training to survive there?" This is especially true if the only previous experiences with the place have been multiple viewings of Paul Newman's FORT APACHE, THE BRONX or BRONX WARRIORS: 1990. Don't get me wrong—some of the Bronx could actually benefit by a Yuppie invasion. But don't judge the whole borough by that training ground for arsonists known as the South Bronx. Having grown up in this underrated little borough, I can tell you guys that there's a lot more to see and do besides run from hoodlums.

Heck, even certain parts of the South Bronx have their attractions. How about Yankee Stadium, baseball fans? It's on East 161st Street, near the Grand Concourse—call 212/293-4300 for game information. If your tastes run more to jurisprudence, the landmark Bronx Supreme Courthouse is a stone's throw away; indeed, when my mom worked there, you could see the stadium in all its glory from her office window.

If you take the bus up the Concourse, get out at Fordham Road and head north, you'll soon see my alma mater, Fordham University. An oasis in a painted desert of discount stores, kung-fu theaters, fast-food joints and just-short-of-seedy bars (mostly frequented by Fordham students), Fordham's Rose Hill campus is a beautiful place to stroll, with manicured lawns, magnificent Gothic architecture and friendly squirrels (hell, whaddaya think suckered me into going there?). Don't be surprised if you see a film crew; the campus is a popular spot for shooting commercials and movies, including THE EXORCIST and THE VERDICT. During the latter, they closed off the library to us lowly students while filming therein—of course, you'd never have known it from the throng of lust-crazed coeds camped on the library steps, hoping to glimpse Paul Newman (him again! Well, if the Bronx is good enough for Mr. Salad Dressing...) and his famed baby blues.

If you exit the Fordham campus via the Southern Boulevard parking lot, you'll spy the New York Botanical Gardens across the way. The Gardens' lush 250 acres have long been a favorite of hikers, picnickers, lovers (of nature, too) and photogenic wedding parties. The Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, a glass-enclosed paradise worth of THE BIG SLEEP's General Sternwood, houses exotic plants from various climates and locales. It's all yours for the gazing from 10am to 4pm each day; Wednesdays are free, otherwise there's a \$2.50 admission for adults, \$1.25 for senior citizens, students, and young'uns under 16.

For you budding Seymour Krelborns, the Botanical Gardens Education Program might be just what the horticulturist ordered. Over the years, the course offerings have run the gamut from ecology to field botany to flower arranging to origami, as well as day hikes in the Catskills and Fire Island. There are even weekend excursions to Cape Cod, the Amazon (!) and a Disney World trip with behind-the-scenes tours of the theme park's horticultural displays and exhibits. (Sorry, Walt's cryogenically-frozen body isn't on this tour.) Phone 212/220-8747 for more info.

But enough interstate intrigue—back to Fordham Road, where the grounds of the Botanical Gardens lead straight to the Bronx Zoo (minus Ed Asner and Kathryn Harrold). While I generally don't go for the idea of animals being held captive for the sole purpose of giving humans something to gawk at, I must admit that the Bronx Zoo really does try to house as many of their charges as possible in roomy, naturalistic habitats with conditions similar to the ones the beasts left behind.

The polar bears, the sea lions, the Children's Zoo, the camel rides, and the World of Darkness (my favorite, a showcase for nocturnal creatures. Rumor has it that the Party Animal exhibit is currently under construction) are just a handful of the Zoo's seemingly endless attractions. If your feet holler "Uncle!", rest them while still enjoying the sights on the Safari Tour Bus, or take the Skycars from one end of the park to the other. There are also special summer doings for the small fry, such as Animal Kingdom Zoo Camp and, in the Children's Zoo, Animals Around the World: each day is devoted to a different country or species. The Bronx Zoo is open to the public every day from 10am to 5pm, with \$3 parking and free admission from Tuesday to Thursday. The rest of the week, adults must cough up \$3.50 (except for golden-agers, who get freebies), \$1.75 for the kiddies. For more juicy details, call 212/367-1010.

Perhaps you're more interested in the human animal at play. The Bronx has a number of attractive, free-of-charge parks where you and your fellow weekend athletes can play softball, toss a Frisbee around, even find a nice picnic spot. The largest of these parks are Pelham Bay Park near Pelham Bay Station, easily accessible by subway, city bus or express bus; and Van Cortlandt Park near the Yonkers-Riverdale border. Both parks have swings and slides for children, and Pelham Bay Park has a track and stadium area (where the Kiwanis games are held every spring), as well as two tennis courts. Amateur explorers will want to join Van Cortlandt Park's Urban Park Rangers on one of their excursions;

this hardy group meets periodically at the park's Visitors' Center at 242nd Street and Broadway (212/548-7880). Van Cortlandt also has rowboats to satisfy your Captain Ahab tendencies.

However, the real hot spot for mariners is City Island, with its many charter boats and fishing/scuba diving expeditions. More sedentary folk may prefer to spend time browsing through City Island's quaint shops or enjoying the seafood at one of its fine restaurants. The City Council is really trying to make City Island a mini Cape Cod—they've even put up these cute, Victorian-style condos in one part of the island. What they should really do is reopen the delightful little movie theater they used to have. This was a real old-fashioned jewel box of a bijou, with an ice cream parlor right next door. Alas, the place started to become run-down during the '70s, and instead of fixing it up, they turned it into a hardware store. (Now I think they've turned it into a garage. Oh, what fuels these mortals be!)

Another distinctly un-Bronxlike section of the Bronx is the aforementioned Riverdale. Because this area is right smack next to the border of Yonkers (best known to theater buffs as the setting of HELLO, DOLLY), visitors usually assume that Riverdale is just another part of Westchester, or the home of Archie Andrews, but the zip code (10471) gives it away. Riverdale is just chock-a-block with upper-middle-class to wealthy people, many of them elderly, many of them Jewish—hence the preponderance of synagogues in the section. Living there, as I did for three years, truly gives you the best of several worlds. There are luxurious high-rises and cozy houses; in one Riverdale neighborhood, Fieldston (site of the just-short-of-snooty Ethical Culture School and a Soviet embassy), architecture fans could spend half a day just driving or walking around ogling the sumptuous mansions. My personal favorite is a huge, vaguely Spanish-style off-white castle that looks as if it were made out of spun sugar. This neo-fairytale edifice is on Waldo Avenue, across from a fenced-off tennis court, in case you'd like to see it for yourself. Shopping addicts will be relieved to know there's a Food Emporium on Riverdale Avenue, a few blocks from the Public Library. And if you find yourself growing tired of Riverdale's acres of lush greenery, just get in your car, zip down the Henry Hudson Parkway, and in 5-10 minutes you'll be in Manhattan. (There are also myriad subways and buses—city and express varieties.)

And those aren't the only attractions in Riverdale. The grand Wave Hill estate on 675 West 252nd Street should be of equal interest to admirers of both architecture and fine music. The estate's mansion, the Glyndor Gallery, and its nature-oriented Learning Center for the small fry overlook the sparkling Hudson River, and the grounds are a delight for explorers and sun-worshippers (and in turn dermatologists) alike. Admission—\$2 for adults, \$1 for ancient adults, free for kids under 14—is charged only on weekends and holidays. The hours: 10am-5:30pm daily, 10am to dusk Wednesdays, and 10am-7pm Sundays. During the summer, the Wave Hill Trio's string music wafts over the rolling grounds. Call 212/549-3200 for concert info; ticket prices start at \$25. If that's too rich for your blood, you can always join in one of Wave Hill's Summer Sings for a piddling \$4. For more Wave Hill activity news, give them a ring at 212/549-2055.

No doubt you thought the Bronx's biggest art form was the graffiti on the D train. Well, there are more traditional types of "culcha stuff" too, like the Bronx Arts Ensemble's classical musicians. They perform during the summer at the Van Cortlandt Mansion and at Keating Hall in Fordham University; call 212/960-8000 for details. Even if classical music isn't your thing, the breathtaking rooms and grounds of the Van Cortlandt Mansion just may be. Located at 246th Street and Broadway, the mansion welcomes visitors (earthlings, too) Tuesday through Saturday from 10am-4:45pm and on Sundays from noon to 4:45pm. (Bet you never knew "da Bronx" had so many high-class houses and stuff, huh?)

If you can't get to Manhattan's Broadway, sometimes Lehman College can be a reasonable substitute. All manner of entertainer, from Victor Borge to Ian McKellen to Bobby Short, has performed at the college's Theater Building in recent years. Every Sunday at 6pm, the Lehman College Community Band performs themed concerts of show tunes and operatic selections; get the full scoop at 212/960-8248. Lower down the "highbrow" scale are the exhibits at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, where you can immerse yourself in modern art (sometimes literally—they're no strangers to performance artists) till it comes out of your ears. The museum has also sponsored exhibits at the Satellite Gallery at Hostos Community College (Grand Concourse and 149th Street), like last year's "Surfacing Images," a photography/collage exhibit. The South Bronx Show displays the works of local artists every summer, up to and including rapping, breakdancing and—yes—creative graffiti. (That means the colors are pretty.) Depending on whether you're seeing a live performance or a more "static" form of art, the show's events usually take place at Fashion Moda (2908 Tremont Avenue, 212/585-0135), the Bronx River Arts Center and Gallery (1087 East Tremont Avenue, 212/589-5819) and the Longwood Arts Gallery (965 Longwood Avenue, second floor, 212/842-5659).

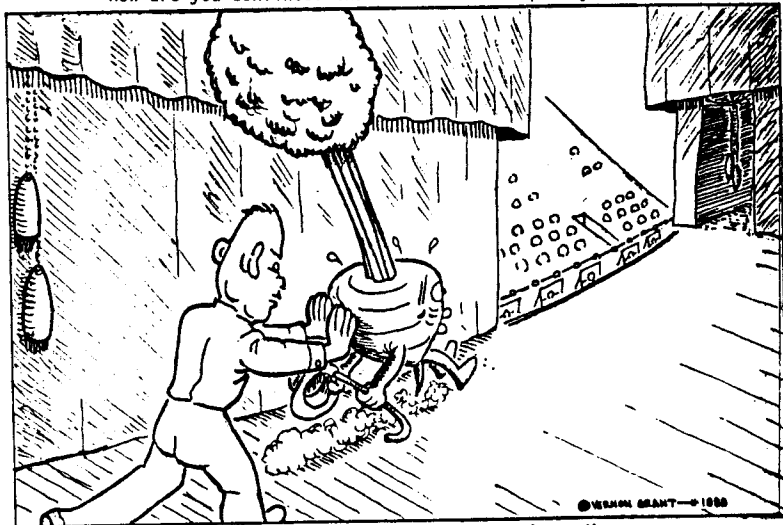
Tired of that big ol' whale at the Museum of Natural History? Get your revenge at City Island's North Wind Museum (610 City Island Avenue, 212/885-0701), a small nautical (but nice) museum specializing in the history of whaling, diving and scrimshaw. Hours: 9am to 5pm Monday to Thursday, 10am to 10pm Friday to Sunday. Avowed landlubbers can check out the Museum of Bronx History (208th Street and Bainbridge Avenue), where you can discover everything you ever wanted to know (but were too mired in John Travolta stereotypes to ask) about the borough, from its founding

continued next page

days in the hands of the Dutch settlers to the glamour days of the Grand Concourse (before it became the arson capital of the world) and beyond. The Bronx Historical Society, sponsor of the Museum of Bronx History, has been instrumental in keeping this illustrious past alive for future generations, and its handiwork can be seen Saturdays from 10am to 4pm and Sundays from 1pm to 5pm.

Yet another justly popular site, especially for all those sensitive horror writers in the making, is the Edgar Allen Poe Cottage at Kingsbridge Road and the Grand Concourse. The original master of the macabre's misleadingly wholesome-looking home is open to the public Wednesday through Friday and on Sundays from 1pm to 5pm, and on Saturdays from 10am to 4pm.

Now are you convinced that the Bronx has plenty to—well—cheer about?



"THE BEET GOES ON!..."

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

by Ken Burke

REVIEW - ROY ORBISON & FRIENDS: A BLACK & WHITE NIGHT

(The Cinemax special featuring T-Bone Burnett, Jackson Browne, Elvis Costello, R.D. Lang, Bonnie Raitt, Steven Soles, J.D. Souther, Bruce Springsteen, Tom Waits and Jennifer Warnes.)

Good special? Yes. If Roy Orbison's impact as a performer of pop music tragedies and thirsty romanticism is to be remembered in the proper context, then the CINEMAX special had to accomplish the feat of explaining the art of Roy Orbison for the ages. This star-studded musical outing does just that.

On the good side, I think filming the show in black and white accentuated Orbison's mysterious side. Had it been done in color, we would have witnessed just a rather ugly, uncommunicative man, out of his element with modern rockers. In b&w it seemed as if the modern guys somehow journeyed back in time to join Orbison. The press has made much about how Roy's voice hasn't changed a bit, but if you listen to the old records, or if you saw him years ago, you know that it has changed, and not for the better. Still, he can punch those big operatic numbers and seems enthusiastic about all his old songs, which is something to point to with pride.

The show consists of Roy mostly singing his greatest hits, one after another, just like he does in his live concert appearances. There seemed to be only two songs that I did not recognize and they may be new songs in his repertoire. If so, Orbison is breaking his own

long-held tradition of not "trying out" new material on his audience. The performance is classic Orbison, and it reminds me of the old SNL sketch where John Belushi, impersonating the "Big O," says, "Roy Orbison is known for two things: wearing sunglasses everywhere I go, and standing perfectly still while I sing." The camera compensates for Orbison's lack of movement or histrionics by panning to the assembled stars backing him up, focusing on the guest stars just long enough for the viewers to recognize them before cutting back to an involved, sweating Orbison, singing his guts out, seemingly oblivious to motion, time, or the musical stars around him.

The presence of Bruce Springsteen on Orbison's special probably does much to legitimize Roy in the eyes of modern audiences, and the appearance of other performers in grunt musician roles, as opposed to co-starring, is strong tribute. Additional backing is provided by James Burton, Glen D. Hardin, Jerry Scheff, Ron Tutt, Alex Acuna, and Mike Utley. The first four were the nucleus of Elvis Presley's band in the 70's, and they acquit themselves as well for Orbison as they did for "The King." James Burton brought his paisley Telecaster guitar out of retirement. Burton played well, maybe better than Springsteen, but certainly better than Orbison, who somewhat embarrassed himself with sloppy, chunky solos, trying, in vain, to find a groove. Elvis Costello plays some nice blues harp, and takes a good turn at the electronics keyboards. Tom Waits does not distinguish himself in any way, nor does Jackson Browne. But the ladies—Jennifer Warnes, Bonnie Waitt, and K.D. Lang—are superb as back-up vocalists, though it is a crying shame that Bonnie couldn't have popped in with a guitar solo of her own (would such an occurrence have violated the male-oriented world of 50's and 60's rock?). Still, it is Orbison's show, and the presentation of his set is effective at once as nostalgic, state-of-the-art/state-of-the-man, and a sincere resurrection of an influential talent who undeservedly fell by the wayside.

On the curious side, for the archivists, a minor controversy surrounds Roy's use of the songs "Down The Line" and "Mean Woman Blues." Orbison wrote "Down The Line" back in the 50's while he was at SUN Records; it was then titled "Go Go Go." Jerry Lee Lewis recorded what he could remember of it for the flip side of "Breathless" and called it "Down The Line." Eventually, as part of a deal to leave Sun Records, Orbison signed away his rights to the songs he wrote at SUN to Sam Phillips (who today is listed as the song's author). The weird part comes when during the CINEMAX special Roy does the song—not his version, but that of Jerry Lee Lewis! This refers back to an early complaint by some of Jerry Lee's fans that Roy copied Jerry's version of "Mean Woman Blues" right down to the patented growl. Elvis Presley recorded the original version for the soundtrack of "Loving You." It is substantially different than the one Lewis recorded, and Orbison copied.

The b&w filming of the CINEMAX special creates a feeling of dreamlike, nearly nightmarish emotions evoked by the lighting, and the concentrated, deliberate sound quality of the music seems to be swimming upstream against the agony that the pictures are suggesting. The overall impact puts one in mind of the film "Blue Velvet." The tension created is incredible, especially when you realize what a placid, rote performer Orbison usually is.

Throughout the show Roy Orbison sings with all the power and skill he has left; sometimes it is not enough (as during "Only The Lonely" and most of the hard rock numbers), but when he is in command of all his gifts and he sings those songs of lost love, grief and pain, the dramatic allure is unmistakable. I turned off the TV afterwards believing that this was more than a TV show, it was an event.

Delilah Films, which was responsible for the Everly Brothers Reunion Concert and Carl Perkins: A Rockabilly Session, also produced the Orbison special. They seem to take pleasure in providing the surviving founding fathers of rock'n'roll with a proper forum not only to display their still-formidable talents, but a unique atmosphere for them to accept accolades long overdue them by their modern counterparts. As a result, the people at Delilah are becoming rock'n'roll heroes themselves.

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

It was just outside the sleepy burg of Bennington, Vermont, deep in the

heart of UFO country enroute to yet another performance, that a terrifying pop beneath the left back seat rudely awoke me from deep grey sleep. "Damn tire's blown again!" the lead guitarist barked as he limped our wagon towards the only neon alight along the lonesome interstate.

Through a frost-free patch I could scarcely read "The Blue Nib Tavern," blinking between the pines and the pick-ups in an art-deco script which could carry considerably more clout hung over trendier NY or LA boulevards; here and now, however, said sign signified nothing more than a pay phone and, if we were fortunate, a gurgling cup of beef barley broth.

Upon dragging myself inside, I was promptly whacked clean across the chops by an overwhelming wave of dusty, musty history, wafting from the knotted beams above and swirling amongst the odd denizen drooped across his stool. The floorboards beneath, caked under an eternity's ashes and scratches, creaked like a B-movie as I inched still further into the deep mauve mystery.

Eventually, something caught my eye behind the long underpolished oak bar. For as far as I could squint, nailed neatly row upon row between the scotches and sodas, hung a meticulous array of yellowing 8 x 10's. Literally dozens of quaintly framed photographs depicting shark-suited groups of four or five with the captions The Treniers, The Terriers, The Tokens, The Topps.

Sparrows, Swallows, Squirrels and Sweetones.

"You a fan of that R'n'B?" a voice suddenly slid across my gaze. There stood a pitch-black man with a towel stretched across linebacker shoulders, a slow wise smile that had seen many a funnier day revealing a crop of strong yellow teeth. "You know, the rhythm and blues? The soul? The rock'n'roll?"

"You're a singer, right?" I had to admit I was. "Know how I knew? Coz only singers and jes' plain crazy folk would be out on a night like this, and at this time of the mornin'."

"Besides, who ELSE would be starin' so long and so hard at all 'em old pictures?"

My thoughts wandered towards our flat tire. I wondered how we could make Maplewood, New Jersey by showtime. "Would you happen to have a phone I could use?"

I was led into a tiny office hidden far in the rear, its four walls papered deep in posters, photos, and bric-a-brac galore all immortalizing someone, or something, called The Blue Nibs.

"DALLAS SWAN and the Blue Nibs, m'boy," my thoughts were adjusted. "See, I'm a singer too. Or WAS. My name's Dallas. Dallas Swan."

Before I could ever begin dialing, I sensed a life story coming quickly round the corner. So, ignoring the grumbles of both my bandmates and my long-ignored stomach, I set myself deep inside the nearest easy chair.

"Yes sir, Dallas Swan And The Blue Nibs. We was just about the biggest thing for awhile there, playin' that old circuit from Tampa Bay over to Georgia, clear up to Chicago, Detroit, on across t' Albany, down the Apple, and on 'round again. And AGAIN. Yes sirt, for YEARS there, we was jest about the biggest thing goin'."

"Yes, we was Hot. RED Hot."

"We had a damn good unit up on that stage. Good hot horn section. Dynamite drummer. Absolutely DYNAMITE. Mr. James. The Peach Man, we called him. Little Donnie on the lead. Yeah, we was NOT. For years there, no one—I mean, NO ONE—could touch us."

Dallas then broke his soliloquy long enough to glance wistfully at a large "Appearing Tonight Only! Back By Popular Demand, The Blue Nibs. SOLD OUT" poster hung in a place of honor behind the ramshackled desk. "And you know son, we'd STILL be out there today, blastin' 'em dead at each and ever' turn...if it weren't for them damn agent people."

"THAT'S what done us in. Them damn agent people. And women. Agent people and women. They done finished us off in NO TIME flat."

"But we was HOT. RED HOT."

His voice lilted off as his yeas crept back up across the "SOLD OUT" sign. I waited silently several moments for a moral, a punch line; even a simple concluding statement would do. But noticing none forthcoming, I took advantage of the hole to beat a hasty exit, tossing a none-too-heartfelt "Nice to meet you" over my coat.

"Didja find a phone? Didja call about the tire?" anxious bandmates began plying me.

"Nah. There's nothing happening here in The Blue Nib Tavern, believe me. Let's grab a room, stay in town the night, and get back on our way in the morning, okay?"

All that night, and throughout the following day enroute to our next stage, Dallas Swan and his retroactive life full of gin-smoked blue memories haunted me straight down to the depths of my career. That is, til I grabbed myself by the nape of the neck, confidently convinced there could be no Blue Nib Taverns awaiting MY fate. I phoned my agent.

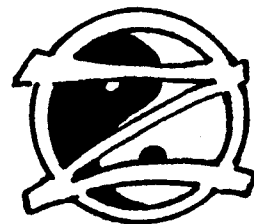
"T.J. Talent. Can I help you?"

"Yes. I'd just like an update on our itinerary, please."

"Umm, let me just check here."

I thumbed through the nearest GQ Magazine and wondered if I

Zenarchy STORIES



NONE DARE CALL IT SLACK

Says Benjamin Hoff in The Tao of Pooh (Dutton, 1982):

"One of our favorite examples of Nothing is an incident in the life of the Japanese emperor Hirohito. Now, being emperor in one of the most frantically Confucianist countries in the world is not necessarily all that relaxing. From early morning until late at night, practically every minute of the emperor's time is filled with meetings, audiences, tours, inspections, and who-knows-what. And through a day so tightly scheduled that it would make a stone wall seem open by comparison, the emperor must glide, like a great ship sailing in a steady breeze.

"In the middle of a particularly busy day, the emperor was driven to a meeting hall for an appointment of some kind. But when he arrived, there was no one there. The emperor walked to the middle of the great hall, stood silently for a moment, then bowed to the empty space. He turned to his assistants, a large smile on his face. 'We must schedule more appointments like this,' he told them. 'I haven't enjoyed myself so much in a long time.'"

NATIVE AMERICAN ZEN

"Yesterday is ashes, tomorrow wood—only today does the fire burn brightly."—AmerIndian Proverb

DOGS THAT SPEAK DO NOT KNOW...

"Everyone has heard of the Zen master. But few have heard of the Zen disciple that licks the feet of the master," says an article called "The Tao of Bow Wow Wow."

Honest, I don't make these things up! This item appeared in the 7 November 1987 issue of Atlanta's Creative Loafing and is about Don Anderson, a dog trainer who says that "Zen principles that apply to the martial arts can apply to dog training."

What he does, says the newspaper, "looks more like some kind of dance. As he twirls and turns, he slaps his thigh and claps his hands, using basic moves of the martial arts to get his point across."

Anderson says, "The verbal and the visual emphasize each other in the dog's mind. Once training is complete, you can use either command alone to get the desired result."

Whether or not your dog gets a certificate if it experiences a *satori* during training isn't stated.

"Anderson says too many pet owners don't realize that dogs don't respond to loud commands. They are most effectively trained with praise. If you want a dog to obey you, don't be macho, be the dog's best friend."

After all, if you look at one of these dogs and yell, "Speak," the mutt might just reply that those who know do not speak.

LEGITIMATE OFFSPRING

Discordian Zen Master Tundra Wind says: "My Zen master, Zen Master Seung Sahn, frequently says that Buddhism came to China, found Taoism, got married, had Zen."

really should go CD soon, or wait for DAT.

"Hello?"

"Yes?"

"Umm...it seems we have nothing for your band at the moment."

"Pardon me? Nothing?"

"Umm...I'm checking the master schedule here, and, uhh...no, I'm sorry. I'm afraid there's nothing for you at the moment."

"But you see, I have quite a few equipment and salary payments coming up. Are you absolutely SURE there's NOTHING for us?"

"No, I'm afraid not. I'm terribly sorry."

"But sir, all our bookings lately have been VERY successful. We've been knocking them dead all up and down the circuit!"

"We've got a helluva good unit up there. Damn good. We're REALLY Hot."

"RED Hot."

Just Say No To Igloos

PART ONE by David Serlin

Nora had been sitting in the car for over 45 minutes. She never brought anything with her—no books, no Walkman, not even a roll of Lifesavers. She sat, staring at the playground, waiting for a sign of Jennifer. When the 2:30 bell rang, the empty hall was suddenly covered with animated bodies clutching lunchpails.

A tiny girl wandered towards her, looking at once afraid and deeply curious. Her fleshy fingers were pointing in the direction of Nora, but Nora made no attempt to acknowledge the child. Her eyes were focused deep in the crowd on a freckled face in a red jumpsuit. Suddenly, two children parted like curtains to expose Jennifer, crouching, peeling a white flower from a box in the dirt. She raised the flower to her face and tickled her nose with the feathery petals.

Nora honked the horn. Jennifer bolted upright, recognizing her mother's car in the parking lot. She grabbed her lunchbox and the construction paper elephant she had made in school and headed straight for the car. As she reached it, her body was filled with a sense of routine. The day was becoming, like all other days, a series of predictable little incidents that added up to the same result. She would get in the car, and mother would take her home. She would watch cartoons, have a snack, and wait until her father returned from work. Dinner, and more TV, and ice cream, and a story or two before bedtime. Jennifer expected that her life would become more exciting when she turned seven.

"Hi, Mommy!" Jennifer belted out. Nora was staring into space, and turned to Jennifer very slowly.

"Hi. How was school today?"

"All right. I made an elephant—see?"

"Uh huh. That's refrigerator material, if I do say so myself."

"I knew you'd like it. I was thinking of the big one at the circus. Except I couldn't have any grey paper so I used brown."

"Only a minor drawback," Nora said. "At least you knew how to improvise with what you had."

"I guess. In India they put rugs on it so that's why I drew rugs on it."

"Well, they're very attractive."

As Nora started up the engine, a woman a few years younger than her approached the car. She was a young mother, one Nora recognized from various school orientations. She wore businesslike attire and a heavily made-up face, with bright red fingernails and a crucifix like a Lacoste alligator.

"Mrs. Pleeters, Mrs. Pleeters, may I speak with you?" Nora revved up the engine and then let it idle in park. She rolled down the window all the way as a gesture of friendliness. She did not know the woman's first or last name, so she waited until the woman was within speaking distance.

"Mrs. Pleeters, hi, I'm Emma Cremlin, from the Parent-Teachers' Association? I don't think we've met before?" Emma extended her arm inside Nora's car, and gave a firm handshake.

"We've met," said Nora, "but you probably wouldn't remember."

"We have?" said Emma, with mock enthusiasm.

"We were introduced at a party given by the Lawrences."

"Oh! I'm sorry, I just can never remember or place names, or put faces together—"

"I know. It's all right."

"Well, now that we know each other, I just wanted to let you know that there will be a PTA meeting on Wednesday."

"Oh really?"

"Yes, there is, there will be lots of important things we will be talking about in the course of our meeting there. Would you be interested in coming on Wednesday?"

"Well, I don't actually know what the family has planned..."

"We would really like it if parents started showing an interest in what goes on at school." The woman rattled off a long list of reasons for attending PTA meetings, while Nora stared off towards the playground. Occasionally she nodded along—or laughed at the appropriate moment—while she gazed across the schoolyard. She just wanted to go home and make dinner.

"...and you would be doing the community a service. These days, being a mother isn't good enough. We need your support. We are the pillars of our community, and we need your input. Have a little get-up-and-go. It could improve your whole attitude. Well, listen, I have to go—"

"I know..."

"But here—here is my phone number. If you would like to volunteer, just give me a call. We would be more than happy to have you."

"Thank you...thank you very much." Emma waved goodbye as Nora pulled out of her space in the parking lot.

"Mommy, who was that?"

"Her name is Emma Cremlin. She's from the PTA."

"What's a PTA?"

"That stands for Parent Teacher Association. They're the mothers who pass out cookies and juice at Christmastime."

Jenny sighed deeply, and moved her elephant around as if it were in the jungle. The thick dark blue cushions transformed into a lake, and Jenny pretended that the elephant was bathing itself. Nora stroked Jenny's hair.

"Do you think your mommy should be in the PTA, Jennifer?"

"I dunno."

"Would you like to see your mommy doing more?"

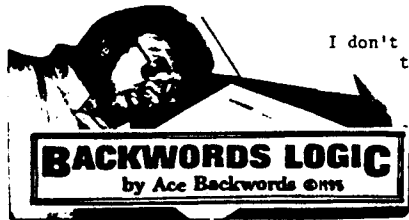
"I guess."

"What would you like to see your mommy do?"

"I don't know, Mommy. What can you do?"

(Continued next issue)

RACISM



I don't know, I may be naive about this "racism" stuff. I was well into my 20s before I even realized there was this separate entity known as a "Jewish person." I've never had much awareness of racial identity. Maybe it's because I'm a mongrel,

mutt, mixture of Italian, American Indian, Irish, English and godknowswhatelse.

Sure, I noticed the difference between blacks and whites. But lately I've REALLY noticed the difference. Lately, everybody and his brother seems to be talking (or should I say "shouting") about racism.

Here in Berkeley it's an incredibly touchy subject. If one so much as suggests that blacks, say, in general have darker skin than whites, this would touch off a heated debate. How dare I make such generalized statements about blacks! It's almost as if to acknowledge the very real differences between races is to be perceived as racist.

Fact is, there are some very real differences. Different but equal (the zealots always miss this point).

For example, Jews are over-represented in every field that requires adept verbal skills (if you've read this far, you've no doubt surmised I'm not Jewish). Blacks dominate in sports. Japanese dominate in corporate technology.

America has always had a deep-rooted racial streak, but still America is the "land of opportunity" regardless of race. Blacks and Japanese have demonstrated their superiority in these coveted fields of athletics and technology, and have been given the opportunity to excel. To say that blacks have been barred from excelling in computer technology because of racism is as absurd as saying that 5'6" Japanese have been barred from middle linebacker positions.

Liberals hasten to acknowledge this obvious point, but the fact is, different races are clearly superior in different fields. Anyone who has played sports with blacks knows they are physically superior in terms of being able to run faster, jump higher, and punch harder. They have sharper-defined muscle tone, and less body fat.

The reason liberals kick and scream and protest this obvious point is because, if one race can be deemed physically superior, can another race be deemed mentally superior? Hence the very real danger of the Nazi "Master Race" mentality.

This subject is too complex to tackle here. You can objectively measure a man's physical speed with a stopwatch, but as yet there are no clear-cut tests of a man's mental speed. Let alone the sticky problem of defining "intelligence." (It's a symptom of the peculiar genius of White Man that he has the scientific ingenuity to discover the Atomic Bomb—but is this necessarily a sign of intelligence?)

So without opening this can of worms I still feel it's vitally important for society to begin to address the subject of the different (but equal) forms of intelligence unique to each race.

Could it be, for example, that the black mentality is inherently at odds with the white European mentality that dominates American life? Could this, in part, explain the difficulty blacks have had in rising above the bottom of the economic ladder? Could it be that the black mentality—which to this observer seems to stress strutting individuality—will always be at odds and disadvantaged with an American corporate society that demands complex forms of cooperation and conformity?

Sure, blacks have been discriminated against, but anyone who has spent much time in Bay Area black neighborhoods has noticed a curious phenomenon where equally-discriminated-against Vietnamese refugees, coming to America with nothing but the shirts on their backs, in no time at all are operating and running the stores and businesses catering to the largely unemployed blacks.

Just as there are very few Vietnamese pro basketball players, could it be that there will never be very many black-run businesses?

The prevailing myth has been: If blacks are just given an equal opportunity to succeed economically, then they will be equally successful. But what if that's not true? You could give the Japanese an equal opportunity to compete with blacks on the football field, and the Japanese would still get stomped into the gridiron.

If what I suspect is true—that the black mentality inherently limits their ability to get ahead in the American system—then we need a whole new approach to solving the problem of the impoverished black underclass.

In short: If blacks are not able to adjust to White America, then the only alternative is for White America to adjust more to blacks. Otherwise, we are just gonna have to get used to living with a permanent underclass of black ghettos, black street crimes, gang warfare and all the other problems resulting from a group of people at odds with society at large.

Whether my observations are right or wrong, the important thing is we do more talking on this subject...and less shouting.

(The opinions expressed above do not reflect those of *ye editrix*, who wrote Ace a somewhat lengthy letter prior to production—I would urge you to read Ace's reply in this issue's letter column prior to forming any opinions on his work or calling him "Ace the Greek" or anything like that...)

The One Minute News Hour

by Fericano and Ligi

(Way back before the Iran-contra revelations, the progenitors of the Vossarian Universal News Service [which is still very much alive, by the way, despite the temporary halt on Briefbooks]) submitted some scripts to Saturday Night Live. Well, SNL apparently didn't like this stuff, and now look what happened to them, with the writers' strike; serves 'em right, and we're proud to be the ones to take your mind back to the fall of '86...)

The One Minute News Hour theme music (John Carpenter's "Escape From New York"). Animated graphics with YU News Service dispatch plane dropping leaflets over the South Bronx. Credit co-anchors: Dennis Miller (aka Che Guevarra) and Nora Dunn (aka Lynnette Fromme).

GUEVARRA: Good evening. Coming up on the News Hour:

- Secretary of State George Shultz denies there is any linkage between today's release to the Soviets of Charles Manson, Sirhan Sirhan, Wayne Gacy, Richard Speck, Ted Bundy, and Bobby Fisher and the arrival in New York of four freed Bolshoi Ballet dissidents, three cellists, and a Soviet basketball standout recently drafted by the Portland Trailblazers.
- Iceland expects the pre-summit summit to pump more than \$30 billion into its ailing economy, making this weekend's extravaganza in Reykjavik the most profitable political event since Lady Liberty Weekend.
- President Reagan's struggle to maintain consciousness in times of crisis is the subject of the lead article in the AMA journal.
- Nancy Reagan enters the Betty Ford Clinic after failing a drug test following an appearance at a Baltimore elementary school.
- Edwin Meese is named Sphinxer of the Month for the fourth time this year, and
- Shoppers in Rahway, New Jersey, tonight are being urged by law enforcement and public health officials to carefully examine containers of Dannon and Yoplait yogurt which may have been contaminated by an obscure terrorist organization calling itself the Symbionese Liberation Expectorators.

Lynnette Fromme is on Thorazine tonight. Lynnette?

FROMME: After the summary, we devote the entire Focus Segment to events in Reykjavik, where earlier this week Press Secretary Larry Speakes attended a pre-pre-summit summit meeting with fugitive filmmaker, Roman Polanski, to iron out details for a proposed post-summit summit tour and TV miniseries should the pre-summit summit and the summit itself prove a prime-time ratings success.

We'll talk with producer/actor Michael Douglas, whose father Kirk purchased the rights to the pre-summit summit from Donald Regan, and who has already gotten commitments from Dan Ackroyd and Jack Nicholson to play the male leads in what is being billed as the biggest-budget situation-comedy to hit the silver screen since "Gone With The Wind."

Also with us are presidential hopefuls Gary Fencik, of the Chicago Bears, and Ivan Stang, founder of the Church of the Sub-Genius. They will assess what impact, if any, the nuclear accident at Chernobyl will have upon tomorrow's brunch in Iceland, a country dependent upon Norway's radioactive reindeer for red-meat entrees.

And a panel of special-effects experts will discuss how Ronald Reagan works. Che?

GUEVARRA: Thank you, Lynette. Next, our look at The War On The Homeless continues. New York Mayor Ed Koch and Miss Manners join us at WHOP studios in Queens to debate the use of military force to rid city streets of supply-side discards. Philadelphia Mayor Wilson Goode adds his insight on remote hook-up from Club Med. Jimmy Breslin moderates. Norman Mailer hosts.

FROMME: Was the baloney sandwich developed by KGB agents in the Soviet Union? We get this report from YU Washington Bureau Chief James Magorian.

MAGORIAN: Former CIA operative G. Gordon Liddy says he has irrefutable evidence that nearly all the baloney imported last year originated in Soviet Bloc countries. And while imports accounted for roughly 12%, or 10.5 billion tons, of the total domestic baloney purchases during fiscal '85-86, Liddy claims to have uncovered a Soviet-backed covert operation designed to infiltrate the American baloney industry and establish a new international baloney standard, which is lower in fat and higher in protein.

Officials at the Pentagon refuse to comment on Liddy's charges, but some senior officials, speaking on condition that they remain anonymous, have told this reporter that the Russian recipe is both more nutritious and cheaper to produce.

CIA Director William Casey claims he's convinced the Russians are not in the baloney business for the money.

CASEY: As Gertrude Stein once said: "A communist is a communist is a communist." And we view these latest Soviet attempts to corrupt American baloney as an extreme provocation. We're sitting here with both oars in the water, waiting for the other shoe to drop.

MAGORIAN: Casey hopes the Office of Management and Budget will approve his request to rehire Liddy to track down the alleged

mastermind of the Soviet Baloney Bureau, Oscar Meyer.

Senator Malcolm Wallop, a staunch supporter of administration baloney policies, has called for an embargo on Russian sausage imports, and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher this morning revealed new evidence that Argentine troops who invaded the Falkland Islands in 1982 had been on a three-year binge of communist baloney.

Theme music, graphics, and return to the One Minute News Hour set. GUEVARRA: When William Paley had his grain transplanted into a surgically altered porpoise last week, it marked only the third time since John Hinckley's assassination of President Reagan that the operation has been a success.

Doctor William DeVries, developer of the Jarvik 7 artificial heart, has reservations about porpoise altering as a means of prolonging human life.

DEVRIES: Come on. A porpoise over plastic? Over my dead body.

GUEVARRA: Pia Zadora argues that transplanting human minds into modified seafaring mammals is far preferable to strapping battery packs onto what rears once called "a tattered coat upon a stick."

ZADORA: (Fires a pistol) How about plastic bullets, Bill?

Theme music, graphics, and return to the One Minute News Hour set. FROMME: Researchers at Johns Hopkins University announced today that they are now able to clone the cells responsible for excessive perspiration and offensive underarm odor. The discovery was made possible in part by a grant from the Gillette Foundation.

Theme music, graphics, and return to the One Minute News Hour set. GUEVARRA: We go now to UY foreign affairs specialist, A. Whitney Brown, for an examination of what linkage is. Whitney?

BROWN: Yes, Che.

GUEVARRA: Perhaps you could begin by telling us exactly where the term "linkage" comes from.

BROWN: Well, Che, as you well know, linkage is a linking or being linked, or a series of system of links, particularly and specifically a series or system of interconnected rods, or shafts, if you will, designed primarily and foremost to transmit power or motion, but especially power.

Linkage comes directly from the word "linke," Middle English from the Scandinavian, and can be found in the earliest surviving Anglo-Saxon texts. In old Norwegian, we find "hlekr," from which our Modern English "lecher" derives, although some scholars prefer the Little Oral Annie analysis which ties "lecher" to "lick." In Danish, we have "lænke," and in Swedish "länk," two words closely related to the Old English "hlence," which meant the link of a chain, a coat of mail, or a piece of sausage, excluding baloney.

GUEVARRA: I see. But I am not quite clear on how this term has become so closely tied to international diplomacy.

BROWN: It's all linked to bureaucratic metaphoric bungling, Che. You know and I know, as anyone who has ever read David Hume knows—

GUEVARRA: Perhaps you could tell our audience just who David Hume is...

BROWN: Surely everyone knows that David Hume was the 18th century Scottish philosopher and historian who successfully demonstrated that the so-called Law of Cause and Effect was in fact a sham. This was well before Sally Field starred as The Flying Nun, I might add. But to return to the point, Hume reported as early as 1757 that such cliches as "the sequence of events" and metaphors like "the chain of events" were grammatical constructs totally unsupported by observable phenomena.

GUEVARRA: Gut what does this have to do with linkage?

BROWN: Earlier in the program, Mr. Magorian talked about Soviet baloney. Baloney is a sausage. It is a forcemeat stuffed in a large casing made from the intestine of domestic animal and hung for some time in a smokehouse. Whatever, a sausage is a link. Several links make up a chain. Once you have arrived at a chain, as in the recent "chain of events" which saw Mr. Daniloff released by the Soviets a few hours before we released Mr. Zakharov, the public perceives that "chain of events" to be comprised of a number of links. The government, on the other hand, prefers a prime-cut view of the universe. No sausages.

Here I have a chain of sausages. And here I have a glass of water. Is the glass half empty or half full? Is this the beginning of the chain of sausages, or the end? Might this not be the middle of an endless chain of sausages that continues, much like Christian life itself, without end? And even assuming that this is the only chain of sausages in the universe, if I cut them apart, like this, and reassemble the individual links to make up an entirely new sequence, I still have a chain that appears to have a distinct beginning and end, with one link followed by another.

GUEVARRA: But what would happen if you arranged the links in a circle?

BROWN: Good question. Let's see, shall we?

Okay. Where is the beginning now? What is the purpose of this circle of sausages? If there is no purpose, how can there be any linkage? And when I drink this water...the glass is empty. Period. Was there any linkage between whether the glass was either half-empty or half-full before and the fact that it is empty now?

GUEVARRA: Are you asking me?

BROWN: Watch carefully. These sausages represent Daniloff, Orlov, the cellists, the ballet dancers, and the tall guy. These sausages are Mr. Zakharov, the Soviet mass-murderers, and Mr. Fisher. If I take my shoe, like this, and pound all these sausages together into mushy pulp, now I have linkage.

GUEVARRA: And that's the news for tonight, October 11, 1986. Good night, Lynnette.

FROMME: Good night, Che.

Theme music, graphics, and credits roll for the One Minute News Hour set.

GUEVARRA: Is that all there is to it?

BROWN: Trust me.

GUEVARRA: Well, we're about out of time. Thank you, Whitney, for that enlightened commentary.

BROWN: My pleasure.

TALK SHOW HOST confidential



The other day I picked up a wrestling magazine and casually leafed through it. Today's wrestling journalism is the moral equal of yesteryear's trash movie magazines which trumpeted the "real" low-down on the hijinks of the stars.

Well, as I stood in front of the rack trying to decide if I should potentially embarrass myself by picking up a copy of the "Big Boobs" edition of HIGH SOCIETY, I noticed an article in the wrestling magazine. Yes, amazingly enough someone had actually strung some words around the pictures of bleeding thyroid cases in tights. The novelty of expecting wrestling fans to read rather than merely drool their approval over attractive photos of their heroes stunned me. At least for the moment, my furtive visit to the men's "entertainment" section was postponed.

The story was about former wrestling "great" (aren't they all?) Larry Sharpe, who has started a school for aspiring professional wrestlers. Young men and women who want to take the risk of performing dangerous stunts for screaming mutants in bad shirts enroll in the school to learn the moves.

Here at last was a job opportunity for me. No, I didn't want to participate as a modern gladiator in the sport of kings. I wanted to know if they needed a mime instructor.

Ever since the discovery of mime by the New Agers back in the Seventies there has been an effort to actually make something of this minor diversion. Sure, Marcel Marceau is an artist, but he's about it, right? Certainly the derivative creature in the black leotards and the clown white make-up accosting people on the street corner with his impressions of carrying invisible objects is not an artist, though. He's a victim of a vicious lie...that mime counts for something.

Well, I don't know how to "walk against the wind," but I do know in pro wrestling you've got to have the ability to communicate with the crowd sans microphone. That's mime, my friends, and that's what I want to teach.

First of all, you've got to have a non-verbal greeting. All wrestlers have a gesture they make to the crowd when they are introduced, and it's very important. If you're a 5'8", 170-lb. no-name guy about to face a 300-lb. human zeppelin, you tend to weakly wave at the crowd when you hear your name. That's not the way to build up a following.

If nothing else, you've got to make the broad gesture. Boogie to your theme music, do a few pelvic thrusts to the ladies in the floor seats and, if there are no television cameras, flip the idiots off. My suggestion is to start out easy with a "shooting of the crowd" with your hand when your name bounces from one side of the civic center to the other.

Taking notes? Okay, next you have to have a good shtick to get the crowd's approval just when you have your opponent nearly beat. If you are a good guy, you have to do this bit of mime. It's in all the rule-books. You have to look at the crowd anxiously, mime what you want to do and wait for their screams of delight. Try this a few times in front of the mirror at home.

The other crucial bit of mime is how to fall. When the winner is about ready to wrap things up, and you get the cue to kiss the canvas, you should do yourself the favor of performing a grand exit. The best faller in the business was former great (see, they really are all great) Johnny Rodz. Known as the "Unpredictable" Johnny Rodz, you knew Johnny would do his best to cheat to a victory, and if he wasn't fighting Catholic schoolgirls, he'd get the chance to eat turnbuckle.

Well, Johnny would fall stiff as a board straight onto his face nearly every match—a few staggered steps and

timberrrrr! A great trademark, and a favorite of the fans.

There's other important mime routines necessary to wrestling, but these are the crucial ones. I intend to send Larry Sharpe my resume and I think those of us who've seen the potential in getting in at the ground level could really earn some of the long green. Wrestling could be the only way you'll ever make use of that degree in theater arts.

NEXT TIME: An in-depth report of that issue of HIGH SOCIETY. This is life from the trenches of Reagan/Bush America.

"GORBACHEV — OPEN THIS GATE. GORBACHEV — TEAR DOWN THIS WALL". WHAT HAPPENS THEN? We will still be stuck with suicidal, winnerless wars inflationary fixed wages, blue collar work inequity and death of our past, present and future heronows. Instead of having two red powers there will be just one — UGH! Send S.A.S.E. to: SCRAP SOCIALISM Box 2243 — YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO, 44504

It's All in the Book

by Susan Packie

"Good morning, congregation, and welcome, visitors, to the Church of the Spiritual Blessing."

"Amen."

"You know it is a sin to lay up treasures upon the earth. The Book of Matthew tells us this."

"Selah."

"And you know the Lord's will is done in earth, just as it is in Heaven."

"That is true."

"You know that the man who hides his wealth in the ground is castigated, while the man who increases it is praised."

"Yes, sir. Yes, sir."

"And you know the righteous shall be rewarded."

"We believe. We believe."

"Open the trap door leading to the basement and stand back, please."

No one moved a muscle.

"The Lord saith..."

With this, an elderly church member in the front row got up and opened the trap door, but he didn't jump back fast enough, and he got an unctuous black bath. Everyone gasped.

"Shut the door! As you can all see, our church has been blessed with an oil well directly underneath its foundations."

"The Lord is our foundation."

"Yes, of course, but the Lord has worked a great miracle in the earth and has given us oil."

"We'd better keep quiet about it."

"Like the man who buried his wealth? No! I say we should let it multiply to the glory of the Lord. We must invest it!"

"Won't a big oil company try to snap up our well?"

"This is God's oil. It is meant for the righteous. It is ours and we will fight for it in every court in the land, using the Bible as our proof. The mighty shall be brought down and the low shall be exalted. The poor shall inherit the earth. This is what it's all about!"

"You mean Judgment Day has come and gone?"

"Is it not obvious that this bountifulness is a judgment of the Lord?"

"And the IRS will go along with that?"

"Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. That which is in Heaven and in the earth is God's. So it's ours. We can keep it, with no taxing strings attached."

"What have we rendered unto Caesar lately that he is so willing to let us pump our own well?"

"Votes, brother, votes."

Suddenly, the true meaning of the Bible's holy words, that the Lord preserved and rewarded the faithful, became abundantly clear. Caesar and the Lord sure knew how to look after those who rendered the right stuff!

Conventional Weapons

by Larry Stolte

(NOTE: My version of this story is being told for the first time in twenty years. Everything in the report is absolute truth as I and Oliver North know it. Not all of what I say corresponds with history; the horror of the war in which I participated in the sixties is bound to take its toll on my subjectivity and recollection. This is from the deepest, darkest recesses and lunch hours of my mind. The horror. The horror.)

Police action, my ass. Tet was history.

That night, August 28, 1968, the enemy was practicing its offensive rebounding skills. It was hard to believe they were using—to toss out one more euphemism—a full-court press on us; I had expected them to use defensive tactics. But they were passionate about retaking "The Park."

I'd swear there wasn't any day at all on the 28th—just 36 straight hours of night. But if the galactic forces had erred that much, it's a safe bet that the reporters would have picked up on it. They were legion, and often they became part of the battle. Never was that so true as on this night.

The enemy was bedecked in the usual fighting habiliments. Somehow I never expected them to be so—well, so tangible. Until this moment, the war had been conceptual. A war of words and phrases: "V.C." "Yippies." "The Red Menace." "Hey, hey, LBJ, How many kids did you slay today?" But the stench of bodies made these words and aphorisms devolve into anxiety and terror for this debating fighter.

I should have gone to Canada with the rest of the guys; I was just too young for this. Somehow, though, my sense of duty overshadowed my rationalization, and I would become a part of this arena that would set the stage for future anachronisms.

We were David; they were Goliath. We had no slingshots. Our weapons consisted of bottles, sticks, and clods of earth. Goliath was State-backed; he had chemical bombs and clubs. Oh yes, as I remember it, he had the wind on his side also. This would be a minor point anywhere but here in Chicago. Forget Canada, I should have fled to Vietnam to avoid this war—The Battle of the Democratic National Convention.

Chicago was quite a contrast to the Republican Convention in Miami. John Wayne was the star here. His "why I am proud to be an American" homily—right up there with Goering's "I decide who is Aryan" speech—either made you permanently flaccid or want to gather up the kids and shotguns and go shoot buffalo, depending on your particular bent. Ah, true grit.

With Romney out in March, and Rockefeller playing ping pong with his decision to run, Nixon was in full control. Reagan had a slim chance of capturing the nomination by securing support of southern conservatives led by Strom Thurmond. Since early '67, Reagan had been making out-of-California speaking trips while denying he was a candidate. This was good practice for future denials. The only consolation coming out of that convention was that at least we couldn't have both Nixon and Reagan for president.

But while the Miami convention was boring and hopeless, the Chicago convention was merely hopeless. Mayor Daley's boys in blue, the enemy, had managed to retake Lincoln Park, which was about three miles north of the hotel district housing the conventioners. We had captured the park on the 27th, after the mayor refused to give us parade permits. Instead, he opted to duke it out.

We had our problems even before the brawl started. The aforementioned stench of the bodies was coming from our side. You can't imagine the b.o. emanating from thousands of protestors whose mottos could well have been "Cleanliness is next to godliness" but, unfortunately, they're atheists. Bathing was not allowed in certain entire subcultures, so, clad with a perceptive proboscis of great magnitude, I did not consider this as one of the perks associated with being a radical. Come to think of it, the hours weren't any good either.

In my summary of the negatives, I can't ignore this one particular unpleasantness. The service station on the corner couldn't quite handle the business from thousands of full bladders, so our side held a urinating competition. Unfortunately, it was only the speed and distance events, not accuracy. Social change isn't pretty.

Also, my colf wasn't exactly functional for pugilistic entertainment. It was very long and getting in my eyes. I started the evening with a headband, but one of my teammates had torched it and flung it at a policeman in an archaic gesture of "necklacing."

This and other interesting little sideshows led up to the main event. We brought out wooden student decoys and dangled them in front of the cops just to goad them on. We tried to get them to laugh, by chanting "No more protests, No more protests," and by threatening to levitate the Chicago Amphitheater.

One cop in particular kept looking at me, as if to single me out for the massacre when the bell sounded. He seemed to be part of some strange experiment where they put a chimp's brain into a chimp's body. He was scary. I remember thinking at that moment that the best way to instigate social change is vicariously.

Many of my cohorts figured that the slaughter was planned from the very top; that perhaps LBJ (in his bid for the Nobel War Prize) had passed orders down to his Secretary of Defense, who in turn passed orders down to Mayor Daley.

I disagree. As I recall, the main event started when one of the Yippies discussed rather loudly the relationship between a

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certain policeman's mother and underage domesticated animals. This started the police riot that would make history.

The worst was over in half an hour, but I was a changed man. Beatings and gassings were the course of the day, and I didn't escape the menu at all. Neither did the journalists.

The police were practicing pro bono torture and serving up mace coolers. The only time they would rest was when they were refueling at the tear gas pumps. They took as much pride in their work as in their bowling scores. This was more than a job for them, this was a career.

One of the androids tried to get good wood on my head with his Louisville Slugger. I blocked the blow with my "Suck the big Tet" sign. "Strike one," I yelled. I ducked under the next one. "Strike two." Before I could pitch my head again, his foot nominated me to the "soprano of the month club," and I decided to keep my mouth—and legs—shut for awhile.

Many of my teammates were so doped up, they weren't sure if they were enjoying this. I knew I wasn't. I started looking around for my girlfriend, Bambi, who was out foraging for grass. (Bambi was an outspoken advocate of free love, though at the time of our breakup she sent me a bill.) After a diligent ten-second search, I left her behind and vacated the front lines.

During my escape, however, a noxious helping of tear gas landed on my instep, causing me to consider getting out of the business altogether. I could rather catch a Russian SS20 in the navel than go through that again.

Inside the amphitheater, Hubert Humphrey both won the nomination and lost the election on that night. Abe Ribicoff was the only hero because he likened Daley's doings to Gestapo tactics.

Twenty years is a long time. I have no idea what the conventions have in store for us in 1988. But a race that starts with Gary Hart boinking Donna Rice and Joe Biden bragging about it can't be all boring. Still, something is missing. Chaos? Maybe. Anarchy? Maybe. Horror? Yes.

The horror; the horror.

Oh well, give it four more years.

ADVICE FROM A PORNOGRAPHER TO A PRESIDENT

(excerpt from *Al Haig's Adventures in Blunderland*)

by Todd Kristel

"You are old, Father Reagan," the young man said

"And your hair should now be very white;

Yet your black hair shines like a newly waxed floor—

Do you think, at your age, it is right?"

"In my youth," Father Reagan replied to his son,

"I feared dyes might injure the brain;

But now that I'm perfectly sure I have none,

I use them again and again."

"You are old," said the youth, "as I mentioned before,

And the deficit has grown most uncommonly fat;

Yet you say that the military should spend more and more—

Pray, what is the reason of that?"

"In my youth," said the sage, as he shook his hair dry,

"I kept my mind very supple

With the help of a full frontal lobotomy—

In fact, I've had a couple."

"You are old," said the youth, "and your brain is too weak

For anything tougher than Sesame Street;

Yet you decide our national political beat—

Pray, how do you manage such a feat?"

"In my youth," said his father, "I took to the law

And argued each case with a sock

And the muscular strength which this gave to my brain

Has made my mind steady as a rock."

"You are old," said the youth, "one would hardly suppose

That your mind was as steady as ever;

Yet you send troops to Honduras on the day of indictments—

What made you so awfully clever?"

"I have answered three questions, and that is enough,"

said his father, "Don't treat me so rudely!

Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff?

I'm missing the afternoon movie!"

Rust Names Accomplish

MOSCOW (YU)—The West German teenager who flew his small plane across hundreds of miles of Soviet airspace last May and landed in Moscow's Red Square arrested today that the unidentified Soviet policeman who used hand signals to guide him to his landing near the Kremlin may have been Anglican Church envoy Terry Waite.

In an exclusive interview with *Bild*, Hamburg's mass-circulation newspaper, Matthias Rust, 19, who piloted the single-engine Cessna Skyhawk, related how Waite had tried to hide his identity. "It was the uniform that tipped me off," said Rust. "I suspected the French Police to dress better than that."

Rust, who believed he had landed in Paris and mistaken the Kremlin for the Eiffel Tower, added it was either Terry Waite he saw or Monte Woolley, an American actor who has been dead and missing since 1963.

In a related development, the official news agency Tass issued the twelfth official Soviet report on the incident and now says the episode was "just another Russian schoolboy prank involving a model airplane and some string."

THE VICTORS

by Deborah Benedict

I am writing this to announce that I have won FIRST PRIZE in the Multiple Personality Competition. I was chosen out of many on my merit alone.

My numbers are not great; We are small but we are strong.

The closest contender was this pretender who had 156 people using his body but most of them didn't even have names!

I won because

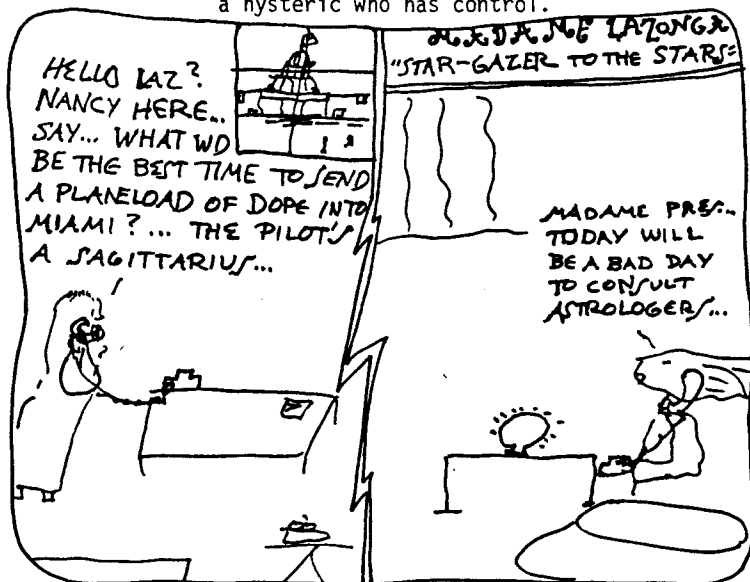
we all have names and we have homes and some of us even have jobs and some of us are almost famous.

I was praised for my organizational talents and my control.

I don't care what anyone says -

The greatest thing is not wealth or fame or even love -

The greatest thing is to be a hysteric who has control.



Love

by Larry Oberc

So I'm looking at her, wondering what it'll be this time, knowing it'll be weird, but I'm used to that, so I smile, hoping that somehow this will make sense, she tells me she is pregnant, she smiles back, we're going to have a baby she says, I'm no longer smiling, wondering how I'm going to get out of this one, we're going to have a baby she says again as if I missed it the first time, the last time I was in Atlantic City I quickly got sick of the gambling, all the lights reminded me of Christmas and I couldn't stand Christmas, it made me sick, all those people betting hard-earned cash on nothing, taking long shots that would never pay off, we're going to have a baby she says, I think about the gamble we took a few weeks back, it was a Springsteen beach scene, sex under the boardwalk, I hate Springsteen, they may worship him in New Jersey but I got my share of muzac in Trenton, we're going to have a baby she says, I get a beer out of the fridge, wonder where I went wrong, after going through all the questions, all the answers, making sure the sex would be in fact safe sex, after covering all of that territory there was still the regular concerns, the regular concerns which didn't concern us that New Jersey night under the boardwalk, we're going to have a baby she says, I smile back, great I say, just great...



SNIDE CRITIC REVIEWS

J.P. MORGAN

I know perfectly well that everybody is sick of hearing this, but can I help it? It's depressing...I'm supposed to be the resident snide critic, see, making supposedly witty remarks about cheap horror and sci-fi flicks; the psychotronic, Joe-Bob neighborhood, y'know? But read the movie section of the paper, and what do you see? Stuff. Stuff with Michael J. Fox or Matthew Broderick. Yech. Stuff with Whoopi Goldberg or Jennifer Beals. Eurgh. Stuff about Dull People having babies, or about young Dull People switching places magically with their Dull parents. There's a sequel to AN AMERICAN TAIL in the works. Ai yi yi. Indoor Bullstuff, Joe-Bob Briggs would call it, and he'd be right. My personal theory is that we're all suffering under "Project Cheer-Up;" see, under the Reaganoid regime, all the movie companies have been required to finance strictly boring, non-offensive, non-exciting pulp—even the horror films gotta be harmless gags like *HOUSE*, *RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD* and their sequels (not to mention that *ROTLD* is a stinking ripoff of George Romero)! Yup, only official Happyfilms allowed! It's the Marketing Experts from Beyond, I tell ya, the Marketing Experts from Beyond! There's got to be big money behind the current crop of useless non-actors cluttering up the screen lately; the plan is to keep throwing them at us like so much shit...until they "stick." It's been like that forever, true, but it's never been as bad as the hypeful '80s. It's like TV Stuff like *AMAZING STORIES*, or *DOLLY*—shove 'em on screen for two years (no matter how much everybody hates 'em) until we accept 'em. By god, everybody's supposed to like this Stuff, and we'll be subjected to it until we do like it!! At least that's the idea...judging by how many new movies quickly end up in the video graveyard (and by the nosedives of *AMAZING STORIES* and *DOLLY*), that plan isn't quite working the way it's supposed to.

Let's see, maybe I should work a movie review in here somewhere...THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT (1983) showed up on the tube recently, and I was really glad—that I never spent good money to see it in a theatre! This movie is about 10% Sci-Fi and 90% love/chase film: in the '40s, the Navy conducts invisibility experiments, accidentally projecting a sailor to the '80s. He performs his best Sylvester Stallone imitation while dealing with the situation. "What's this Coke can made of?? It's so light..." He falls in love with Girl of the Present, and stays. Rated Dull.

More recently I treated myself to the legendary *INFRA-MAN* (1974). Now here's a film that satisfies! Princess Dragon Mom and her rubber monster cohorts (who boast and bluster and never shut up) emerge from beneath the Earth! She wants to rule the planet! The brave chief scientist promptly whips up Infra-Man, a guy in a robot suit! He flips through the air and beats up the villains! He grows giant-size and stomps Bug-Man to a gooey pulp! He lasers the hands (with evil eyes in the palms) off of Devil Girl! He has to chop the head off of Princess Dragon Mom six times 'cause it keeps growing back in rapid succession! Enough insane action for three movies! A big thumbs-up from the Snide Critic.

What else? Well, *HELLRAISER* (1987) is on cassette now...but you shouldn't bother. It starts out fine: these hellish Cenobites (four creepy guys with needles and wires thru their flesh) from Beyond come to reclaim this skinless bad guy...but somewhere in the middle it turns into another stupid Fight-your-fear teeny flick, like the *NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET* sequels. And I paid good money to see this in a theatre! Foo!

That's about it, kids...no new flicks! I'm sorry, I'm sorry...It's just all the aforementioned Yuppie Stuff out there. Oh, where is Dr. Phibes when we really need him? Not necessarily in a movie, but to wreak vengeance on all those pallid nincompoops responsible for all that Stuff!

The Presence of Absence

PART ONE by Rodny Dioxin

If it was water. It wasn't. But rain at least would splash in an artful arc. Not this slush. Just splattered everywhere in machinegun style. If the driver had been looking he'd have seen her. Young and tall and thin with long hair bleached white, wearing one black Chuck Taylor All-Star and one pink and old jeans under a dress that would have been considered a "charming frock" back around '53 and an old black tweed coat that touched pavement and probably once belonged to somebody's dead grandfather. All coated now in grey slush. He wouldn't have seen her if he'd looked but he probably wouldn't have stopped. BMW-types never stopped. Not in New York and especially not if it would mean giving up the chance to ruin some punk kid's night. It also never snowed in New York. Of this Cathy was firmly convinced. The stuff came down as icky-colored slime and then lay about in huge puddles waiting for some passing yup-mobile to aim it in her face.

"Goddamn morons! Fuck you to yuppie hell and back, you feeboid scum!"

Cathy ran into the street and heaved a snowball at the departing BMW. It missed. She retreated to the sidewalk and tried to scrape the majority of the slush off. Did as much as she could and continued trudging down 2nd Avenue. Pissed off. Not that she'd been in god's own mood before. She'd just come from some tiny East Village hole that'd be for sure closed down within the month where she'd gotten the big news that Platform Showing Incident had been booted from tonight's gig. Time and scheduling problems they said but she knew it was Ivan. So she'd thrown him out in the middle of the night. He was an asshole. He'd deserved a lot worse than that. And even though she knew that, and knew that the rest of the band knew that (especially after Ivan had speedballed in their kitchen and puked over two days worth of sto-

len food)...well that's not much consolation when you've just lost the first gig you've had in months 'cause your ex-boyfriend is the drummer for the ("hah!") headlining band and is the kind of guy who absolutely must act like a complete pigdick at every opportunity.

"Some fuckin' great-god-musician you are. You still work at Donut King!"

"Yah, an' I'm sure you guys ain't still all got dayjobs..."

"Not the point, asshole. We know we suck. We're total rank-shit amateurs. Platform Showing Incident is proud to be bad, honey. Not like you dweeboids. What in the hell is a speedcore band doin' with fuckin' union cards anyway? And if those hands get one inch closer to my tits...so help me Ivan...IVAN YOU BITCH!"

Most of their fights went like that and most of their life was a fight especially after about three months which explains a lot why Cathy kicked him out of Casa de Comida at 3AM in mid-December. Ivan Ulcer, speedcore demon drummer, was also Ivan Stylo, a member of one of Long Island's finer wedding bands. So they had their studio time and their production guy who worked with Slayer or Sabbath or MegAnthrAllica or whoever the fuck and one night he came crawling in at 2:30 totally wired out on coke from some wedding scene out in Hauppauge and woke her up and tried vainly to insert several of his body parts into any of her orifices and she screamed and he smacked her around and Wanda woke up and threw a dish of sesame noodles in Ivan's face and Cathy kicked him in the balls and threw him down the stairs and he just stood there screaming for hours while Billy sat on the fire escape and set fire to all of Ivan's clothes and dropped them burning into the street.

No, she decided, life at the Casa de Comida was a bit too high-paced at any time and she definitely didn't want to face them now. Phone call. Definitely. So what she was only a few blocks from the place. Time to bum a quarter for the phone.

"Can ya spare some change?"

"Yeah babe. I got eight inches here. That'll change you real good."

"Eat shit."

"I'd rather eat you, honey."

"Eat shit and die horribly!"

Times like this, Cathy really loved New York. Slushed, hassled, no job tonight. She wanted out. To anywhere that wasn't here. Of course, she'd never been anywhere else and sometimes she'd lie awake nights caught by the fear that no place was any different. She wanted out anyway. She wanted a cup of coffee.

Cathy Epicurian had never, in any of the seventeen years that she could recall, said no to caffeine. She once got sent home from second grade for bringing a thermos full of coffee. Her mom had been called down to see the principal and just couldn't understand what everyone was making such a big fuss about. It had been explained to Mrs. Balakian that, while we all loved a good cup of coffee as much as the next person, there were certain things that simply were not good for growing young girls. Utter stuff and nonsense, pronounced the estimable Mrs. B. Still from then on, Cathy switched to diet colas during school. She still remained loyal to the bean, but her number one drug these days was Diet Jolt which they simply didn't sell in NY but that was okay 'cause Billy's brother was in school out in Berkeley and he shipped them about a case a week.

But when the slush is seeping through your Converse soles then it's got to be coffee. Cathy managed to look cute/tough enough to get a couple bucks out of some coreboys on their way over to CB's and sloped into the Kiev, grabbed her favorite table up in back next to the window. Was pleased to find that her Camels were still dry. At least something was getting through intact. She sipped her coffee, composing little sentences she could use to tell the guys they'd been axed.

"Shit!"

Wanda's screams could peel paint at close range and this one was definitely up to standards. Cathy was surprised she couldn't hear it bouncing up 2nd. She stopped listening as Wanda rolled off a creatively obscene list of things she'd like to do to Ivan. Cathy figured there was a good chance her last quarter would run out before Wanda returned to a conversational state. Checking in for death threats she heard:

"Where's Billy?"

"I dunno. Shut up and have her cow someplace else. I'm trynna figure out a chord change."

"Fuck you, Jen. You don't know any chords."

"Eat my shorts."

"I'm goin' ta work. I've had it with you assholes."

"You can't go to work."

"Why not, scuzzhead?"

"You got fired last week. 'Sides, you're still on the phone."

"Oh yeah...whaddaya mean, we got kicked off..."

Cathy would've started to explain but the quarter dropped. She figured it would be a lot more dramatic in person. She stood in the slush, staring at a Free Phone Sex sticker that was plastered over the coin box wondering whether to risk bunning more change, or go hang out in Tower, offend new age fans and talk to Billy (who'd risked serious reproach by taking a part-time job at some place that wasn't a restaurant or fastfood joint or Korean fruit-stand—I mean, hell, why'dya think we call it Casa de Comida in the first place, Jen had moaned through a layer of blankets and hangover) or just go home and get it over with. And then she got knocked on her face.

(CONCLUDED NEXT ISSUE)

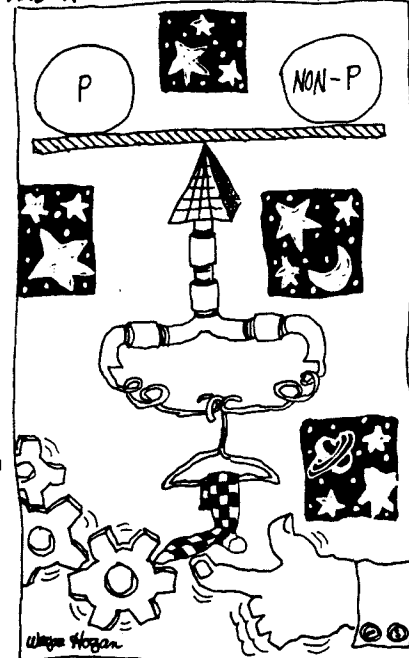
15

DON'T BE LIKE THAT

by Mary Ann Henn

melancholy the word suggests itself as I gaze at your slit eyes and pursed lips seeming melancholy it's not a frown just melancholy I put the red rose on the table for you but did you see it you don't open your eyes you didn't seem to hear me or don't you care to how can I know if I knew for sure is it melancholy I would touch your hand or say something but after last night's explosion how can I be sure

EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONSISTENCY AND ITS SCIENTIFIC IMPLICATIONS



The SubGenius Foundation
P.O. Box 140306
Dallas, Texas 75214

WHOZITS by Elayne
"More Strange-But-True Quotations"

C. S. 1988 Pen-Elayne Enterprises
(For Todd K...)

It's hard to know which to pick nowadays when everyone's got foot-in-mouth disease, so how 'bout this one summing up What George Bush Means To Ronald Reagan?

Must be an Aquarius...



Fitzwater, who was Bush's press secretary before becoming the chief White House spokesman last year, said, "He has...defined the vice presidency in a way that is meaningful to the president."



ANIMATION

UPDATE

by Jed Martinez

VIDEO REVIEW: I've never met anyone who didn't like the "Looney Tunes" and "Merrie Melodies" shorts from Warner Brothers' animation studios in Hollywood. No doubt many fans have seen (either in cinemas or on home video) some of the recent anthologies of Warner cartoons...but they haven't seen them all. Long before Friz Freleng's feature-length festival films of the 1980's ("The Looney, Looney, Looney Bugs Bunny Movie," "1001 Rabbit Tales" and "Daffy Duck's Fantastic Island"), and even before Chuck Jones' memorable work from 1979 ("The Bugs Bunny/Road Runner Movie"), there was the ultimate anthology, "BUGS BUNNY SUPERSTAR"! Released in 1975 in a small number of movie houses, this collection of classic cartoons was compiled by the film programmers of Boston's famous (or infamous) Orson Welles Cinema, headed by producer/director Larry Jackson. Now available on home video (from MGM/UA, \$19.95), "Bugs Bunny Superstar" is an absolute must for

Professions of Childhood

by Curt Simmons

Someone once said, "If I had the energy of a child, I would be a millionaire by now." That's not a bad statement, but I have an even better one. If I had the ambition of a child, I could have accomplished many great things by now. But think about it—children always know exactly what they are going to do with their lives, and they always know how to go about it in a positive way. Adults, on the other hand, tend to wander around in a state of confusion, just trying to make it to the next paycheck. Yes, if I could just regain the ambition of a child.

Now maybe all of this sounds strange to you, and perhaps it is, but let me prove it to you.

I was born one March day at lunch time. Even as an unborn infant, my sense of timing was perfect. I knew exactly what time of day was the best time to arrive in this world. And so, for the next year or two, I ate, slept, screamed, cried, burped up, slept, wet, screamed, and generally did whatever pleased me at my parents' expense. Not a bad deal.

At the age of six, I decided that I would become an actor and singer. I chose this profession because I could make people all over the world happy with my performances. I never have been a procrastinator, so I decided to begin my career as soon as possible. I began to act and sing for my parents every night, so for months my parents were bombarded by my talent or lack thereof. After performing for them, I decided I was ready to branch out.

I began being the dinner entertainment for guests. I performed my best monster skits for the grandparents, and I sang my best ballads for Uncle Frank and Aunt Sue, and I was beginning to get quite a name for myself, but I don't remember what that name was.

At the age of seven, I decided to do something more important with my life. Something that would aid all of humanity. I decided to become a plant scientist. I began my work right away by collecting all sorts of plants and seeds. I experimented with some plants by making them eat my own homemade plant food, live in my own combination of soil, and soak in my choice of synthetic light. I spliced plant parts onto other plants, trying to create a new breed. I cut seeds apart and combined them with other seed parts by sticking them together with Play-Doh. I lived, breathed, ate, slept on, and thought plants. I believe it was during this time that my mother bought guard dogs for her ferns.

At the age of ten, I decided to become an astronaut. I made detailed plans to travel to Venus, set up a town, and relocate my family so we could be the first people to live on the planet. I began by collecting wood, string, plastic, metal, bolts, nuts, and screws so I could construct my one-man space ship. I put the parts all together over a series of months into something which looked like a miniature washing machine. I was almost ready for liftoff when my father caught me taking apart two hundred of his rifle shells and extracting the gunpowder for fuel. My mission had to be delayed.

At the age of twelve, I decided to be a biologist. I began by collecting dead animals and examining their parts. I cut open frogs, tadpoles, wasps, worms, and I attempted to examine a dead cat, but my mother wouldn't allow it in the house. But my research was crucial! I was going to cure cancer, birth defects, chicken pox, and figure out a new way to give shots without needles. I cut, prodded, poked at, and smelled of all life forms. My mother was somewhat leery of me during this career.

During my teenage years, I drifted from career to career. One week I was going to be a veterinarian, the next a rock star, the next a politician.

But now, I am grown up, and I can put my professions of childhood away. I am a rational, logical adult.

I visited a friend the other day who bluntly asked me, "What are you going to do with your life?" I stared at him. My eyebrows wrinkled together and my face became pale. I walked away shaking my head in shame. What am I going to do with my life now that I am an adult? I have no idea.

the cartoon buff. Several factors make this anthology different from all the others: 1) It contains nine cartoons from the 1940s, which was considered by many critics to be the apex of the golden age of animation. Among the cartoons are two Academy Award nominees ("A Wild Hare" with Bugs, and "Walky Talky Hawky" with Foghorn Leghorn) and one short that pokes fun at Oscar ("What's Cookin', Doc?"), plus the famed parody of Walt Disney's "Fantasia" ("A Corny Concerto"); 2) Interspersed between the cartoons are Friz Freleng, as well as some rare footage of the antics that went on in and around the animation studio, known affectionately as Termite Terrace; 3) Major portions of this film are narrated by Orson Welles himself (he will narrate no film before its time). So, pick up this video, and enjoy the hijinks of Bugs Bunny, Porky Pig, Daffy Duck and many other characters in this 24-carrot salute to the best of Warner animation.

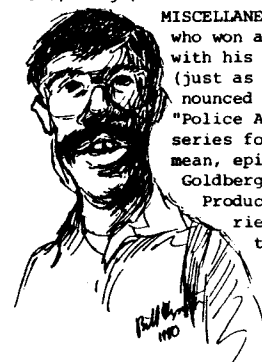
BOOK PREVIEW: Of the many new animation books coming out soon, two are recommended; one is "The Warner Cartoon Art Book" (from Henry Holt & Co.) and the other is an autobiography of "The Man of 1000 Voices," Mel Blanc (forgive me, but the title has eluded me). In the meantime, two other books are available in stores, both re-released in soft cover and revised and updated: Leonard Maltin's "Of Mice and Magic" (Plume, \$14.95), with Animation Magazine writer Jerry Beck serving as research assistant. This updated edition now includes brief references to films like "Heavy Metal," "The Secret of NIMH," "Animation Celebration" and the many works of Ralph Bakshi. The other notable rerelease is "The Fleischer Story" by Leslie Cabarga (from DeCapo Press, \$16.95). This 216-page book contains some newly acquired artwork and photos, as well as an expanded text on Max and Dave Fleischer. (This work comes hot on the heels of the recent retrospective of Fleischer animation memorabilia, exhibited at the Museum of Cartoon Art in Rye, New York).

FRUITS (AND VEGETABLES) OF THEIR LABOR: A multi-colored "fruit cocktail" goes to Walt Disney Productions for their latest TV special "Totally Minnie," which combined live performers (Suzanne Somers, Elton John, Vanna White) with animated characters (Pluto, Goofy, Donald Duck and, of course, Minnie Mouse); in addition, the computer-enhanced colorizing of black-and-white Disney cartoons (such as "Two Gun Mickey" and "Blue Rhythm") was far superior to those supposedly colorized "Popeye," "Betty Boop" and "Looney Tunes" shorts seen today...A poor serving of "sliced beets" goes to HBO for presenting a censored version of Steve Gentile's "The Ant Who Loved a Girl" (See IJ #59). This cable network, which usually shows its films uncut, had edited the eight-minute short to nearly half the running time, and chopped off the surprise ending altogether. (However, rival cable companies Showtime and The Movie Channel presented the same cartoon in its entirety.) The last grudge I'd held against HBO was a few years ago, when they presented a revamped version of John Korty's "Twice Upon a Time" (with less salty dialogue), one week after the cartoon feature premiered on the network...Some "preserved strawberries" go to various companies for transferring classic cartoons onto videotape, so that the original films will not be ruined by countless replays on numerous TV stations. These companies include MCA (for preserving Walter Lantz' cartoons; watch the new "Woody Woodpecker Show" and see), and MGM/UA (for preserving many of the pre-1950 cartoons of Warner Brothers, along with many of the "Tom & Jerry" cartoons from MGM).

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO: "Carlton, Your Doorman." Back around 1980, Murikami/Wolf/Swenson Films (in collaboration with MTM Productions) produced a pilot cartoon for CBS-TV, based on the character created (and voiced) by Lorenzo Music (who'll be heard this fall on the new Saturday morning series "Garfield"). This animated spinoff of the live action series "Rhoda" aired only once in the late spring, and it went on to win an Emmy Award for Best Animated Special (beating out specials with The Pink Panther and Bugs Bunny). It hasn't been seen since. If it can't come back to television as an annual special (let alone a series), the least someone should do is make it available to the general public as a home video. Just watching Carlton's attempts of passing off his cat, Ringo, as the landlord's dog makes this video worth renting.

MISCELLANEOUS: Congratulations to Frederick Back, who won an Academy Award for Best Animated Short with his production "The Man Who Planted Trees" (just as I'd predicted in IJ #59)...Warner Bros. announced that the unusually successful series of "Police Academy" movies are now spawning an animated series for television, with the first recruits—I mean, episodes airing in the fall of 1989...Whoopie Goldberg has just inked a deal with Hanna-Barbera Productions to participate in a new animated series for Saturday morning television. Details to come...

OBITS: Jim Jordan, radio and TV personality, died on April 1 at the age of 91. Jordan is best known to trivia buffs for his starring role on the series "Fibber McGee and Molly," where that cluttered hall closet was his trademark. In the world of animation, he'll be best remembered as the voice of Orville the Albatross in Walt Disney Pictures' top-grossing feature "The Rescuers"...Essie Fleischer, widow of pioneer animator Max Fleischer, passed away on March 24 in Woodland Hills, California. She was 103.



Portrait of Jed by Oscar-nominated animator Bill Plympton (circa 1980)

...or not TV

by Elayne (w/ help from SC and AA)

As "Kid" Sieve has decided to copycat Anni and honor the current writers' strike as well (at least for this issue), I finally get to shoot my mouth off again about TV's "Second Season" (a term which had become rather obsolete these past couple years as programmers developed the habit of inserting and removing new shows almost at random throughout any given September-through-May "TV year"). The shows briefly reviewed herein are all on network TV, as we live in The Land That Cable Forgot (anyone have any episodes of TANNER '88 they'd like to show us?); times listed are Eastern. Half this article may indeed be invalid at this point; who knows what shows the strike has affected?

SATURDAY: HIGH MOUNTAIN RANGERS (CBS, 8pm)—You're joking, right? High mountain rangers? Thought about watching, just said no. 0*

TOUR OF DUTY (CBS, 9pm)—Steve saw this one. "It's every old WWII movie you've ever seen, with an attempt at political correctness. It has more in common with *Hamburger Hill* and *Ballad of the Green Berets* than *Platoon*," if that's your sort of thing. SC—2*

DIRTY DOZEN: THE SERIES (FOX, 9pm)—Steve again: "Dirty Dozen was one of the better war movies ever done. The tv series, however, bears little or no resemblance to the original." SC—1*

SUNDAY: DAY BY DAY (NBC, 8:30pm)—I'm impressed. Didn't think I'd like this sitcom, despite the fact that it boasts Linda "Lou Grant" Kelsey, Julia "SNL" Louis-Dreyfus and especially C.B. "Starman" Barnes. Typical silly-sounding premise ("former" Yups "drop out" to run an in-home day care center, try to deal with their erstwhile latch-key son), but the writing's more than decent (except for Louis-Dreyfus' character—as Anni mentioned to me, why do all women-sans-children have to be portrayed as castrating bitches?) and Barnes, one of the only kidactors I can stomach, steals most scenes with his sharp timing. I laughed much more than I thought I would. 3*

IT'S GARY SCHANDLING'S SHOW (FOX, 9pm)—Parts of this show grow on you; you know, the self-referential business, like, how many variations on "breaking the fourth wall" can we think of? It's fascinating in the same way *Miller Lite* or *Meinike* commercials are. I cannot stand, however, Schandling's basic schtick of vanity and complaining about how he can't find a decent woman after he treats anyone who isn't a size 5 airhead with utter contempt and lack of civility. Smarmy dude, you know? Like the show, somewhat; hate the star. 2½*

MONDAY: EISENHOWER & LUTZ (CBS, 9:30pm)—Looks like another dumb Yuppie sitcom to me. Anni says it should be given at least one star because it's saved by odd supporting characters. Okay. 1*

TUESDAY: TRIAL AND ERROR (CBS, 8:00pm)—Two questions: Is this still around; and, what's that spinning sound I hear? Could it be Freddie Prinze in his grave, after having watched Paul Rodriguez' "wacky Latino"? Maybe I'm not being PC (Politically Correct) in criticizing this token Hispanic sitcom, but if they're really into Latino pride and all that, how come I didn't hear one word of Spanish the entire half-hour? ½*

JUST THE TEN OF US (ABC, 8:30pm)—I've no intention of watching this; the premise alone is sufficiently annoying to make me stay away. It's not bad enough we have a peculiarly rich black family with no social conscience and two Yuppies who can support themselves in the style to which they've grown accustomed by running a daycare center just-like-that; now we have a service-economy worker with a wife who STAYS AT HOME and TEN KIDS and they're not in dire poverty or even skipping meals! Utterly rancid. 0*

THE WONDER YEARS (ABC, 8:30pm)—Anni calls this one "wee." I'm not as cynical, but it makes me squirm anyway. When I was growing up in quite similar circumstances as this boy (only I was one of those kids you'll never see pictured on tv, the fat ugly girl who never gets invited to school dances much less dancing with the object of her desires), I thought life in '60s suburbia would be anything but television material, but apparently Yuppies desperate for nostalgia (and the less meaning in your present life, the more you look for in your past) probably lap this up. It's not a bad family show, and the humor's low-key enough, but, hey, I was there—I don't need my life validated by tv. 2*

THE DICTATOR (CBS, 8:30pm)—Someday this will make it on the air and we may actually get to see Christopher Lloyd again...

COMING OF AGE (CBS, 9pm)—A few favorite old farts star in this one, and an impressive cast it is—Paul Dooley, Alan Young ("Mr. Ed," "DuckTales"), Phyllis Newman and Glynis Johns, who can carry the worst of scripts even though they don't have to. Promising debut (it takes place in a retirement community), and costar Kevin Pollak, who plays the community's too-sleazy social director, is worth keeping an eye on. Also look (out) for Ruta Lee. 2½*

IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT (NBC, 9pm)—No did see, but the day that Howard Rollins got busted for driving under the influence of coke I glimpsed a scene of this in which he and Carroll O'Connor loudly deplore drug usage. I love it...

WEDNESDAY: THE NEW SMOTHERS BROTHERS COMEDY HOUR (CBS, 8pm)—The only show with guaranteed first-run episodes, as the powers that be came to terms with their writers union—huzzahs for them! In taking informal surveys among IJ readers, I've found most of you either love this or hate it. Count me among the former, but then, I was always a sucker for weird acts on Ed Sullivan too. This is one show that's exactly what it claims to be, variety. Like a bizarre circus every week, with a decidedly progressive bent that doesn't shove it down your throat. 4*

AARON'S WAY (NBC, 8pm)—Star Merlin "Flowers Anyone?" Olsen and Michael Landon are good friends, so that should give you some idea of what's in store here (it even leads into HIGHWAY TO HEAVEN). My heart was so warmed I had to take Gaviscon. I like the aspect of the Amish family's amazement and sense of wonder upon emerging into an alien culture (that was always my favorite part of STAR-MAN), but other than that it's obviously too NutraSweet for moi. Better you should watch Howard Hesseman on ABC. 1*

JUST IN TIME (abc, 9:30pm)—The male lead is contemptible and thoroughly unlikeable, and the woman's, well, a woman character written by men. He's supposed to be the hero. He lies, cheats, rips people off, acts like a total asshole and this is supposed to be lovable? Dabney Coleman couldn't make this character lovable; fortunately, he's not stuck in this shit. 0*

CHINA BEACH (ABC, 10pm)—Steve watched this for me: "It's basically a combination of M*A*S*H and *Hill St. Blues*, told from a feminine—NOT feminist—perspective, without the humor or excellent writing of either of the other two abovementioned shows." 2½*

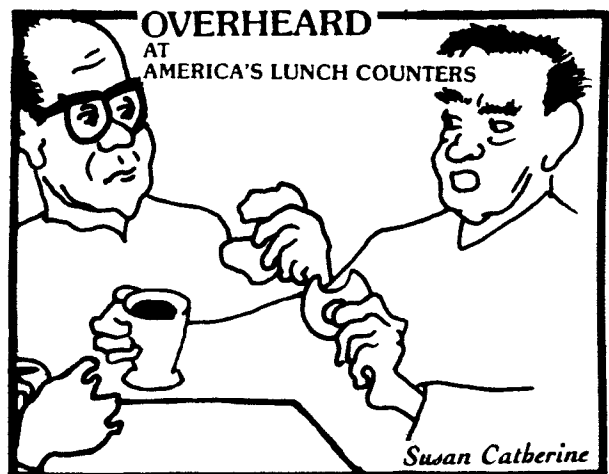
THURSDAY: 48 HOURS (CBS, 8pm)—Sensationalized bullshit passed off as "news." What you answer a right-winger when you hear about the liberal bent in the news. Icky. 0*

PROBE (ABC, 8pm)—Given a rerun reprieve after being shelved in favor of the MAX HEADROOM episodes previously shelved, this stroke of luck has enabled me to begin taping this gem I'd missed getting on VHS the first time around. I'm in unabashed love with this show. It made me like Parker "Hardy Boys" Stevenson. It made me like A BLONDE NAMED ASHLEY! I got it bad, and that ain't good. Mickey Castle is my role model; I think about Austin James almost constantly (ahem, when I'm not around Steve, of course). Castle runs around in sneakers, folks, not high heels. Conversation is intelligent and peppered with words of more than two syllables! James and Castle have a PURELY PLATONIC relationship! Yay! 4**

HEARTBEAT (ABC, 10pm)? Haven't watched this either yet, but Anni recommends it highly, if only for its commendable plot move of having one of the central characters incidentally be a lesbian, and well-adjusted and happy at that. Kudos, assuredly. 3?*

FRIDAY: THE HIGHWAYMAN (NBC, 8pm)—Take Sam Jones, who's proven his lack of acting acumen repeatedly in incalculable TV movies; partner him with Jacko, the Australian fellow from those battery commercials who looks like Phil Collins on massive steroids (and, need I add, whose imminent popularity was predicted not long ago by "Kid" Sieve in these very pages); give him as a boss Jane "V" Badler (who should now change her name to Jane Awfuler); make up a really stupid high-tech premise (Highwaymen patrol the roads 15 or so minutes into the future; our "hero" has no name other than the generic and a friend's kid even calls him "Uncle Highway"; Jacko's character name is "Jetto," reminiscent of DIET's "Bo as Reuben" cast listing for the family dog); don't bother authenticating one little bit of real science or logic; advise guest actors they have to perform lousier than the stars so they don't show them up; and hire the most inept writers you can—and this is the result. It's got everything: rampant racism, blatant sexism, acting so putrid you MUST see it rather than take my word for it, and Jacko's laugh—more forced than Larry "Bud" Melman's! So offensive it's hilarious. 2*

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES: As far as I know, THE CHARMINGS is dead and SLEDGE HAMMER! is on permanent hiatus, but who can tell? MOLLY DODD's supposedly back, and THE SLAP MAXWELL STORY's moved to Fridays at 9:30pm EST in case you were looking for it. Lord knows what's happened to DR. SCIENCE in the NY area (must be vastly important to show GTLLIGAN'S ISLAND reruns in place of first-run DR. SCIENCE episodes; that wacky Fox network). And with this strike and all, goodness knows when things will get back to normal (not that discriminating viewers care), so stay tuned!



"Baseball players don't worry about nuthin'—why should they? They can run like a deer. They can run like a goddamn fish in the water."

Signs O' The Times

by Michael Lenetsky

It was a stank and fume night as the colonists set fire to the harbor's contents. The British understood the message in the desecration, and a war soon began. Disobedience and violence were a sign of the times. In the mid-1800s in Central Pennsylvania a billboard proclaiming "Gettysburg: 3 miles" indicated that the South would not abolish slavery. This sign was read and the Civil War soon followed. The sinking of the Lusitania indicated to the U.S. that her neutral status would not be honored in World War I.

Throughout history, the signs of the times were clear and easy to understand. The signs indicated the thought and atmosphere of the people. They had meanings. However, today, no matter where you look, the signs indicate stupidity. By viewing our signs the theory of Boobus Americanus seems to have validity.

Taken literally, the signs are not only simplistic, but insulting as well. On the Verrazano Narrows Bridge in NYC I recently noticed a sign proclaiming "Trucks Check Your Brakes." Okay, the trucker checks his brakes and finds them inoperable. What next? Does he drive the truck off the bridge or merely collide with cars until he is eventually stopped by their build-up around his tires?

Other places have signs saying "Caution: Do Not Step On Railroad Tracks When Train Is Approaching." For whom is this sign intended? The surprisingly brave, or the severely thought-impaired? When was the last time that you thought of stepping in front of a moving train? Another sign more prominently distributed is the ever-faithful "Beware of Falling Rocks." So. I've never seen these falling rocks or met anyone who has. What exactly do you do when the proverbial rocks fall? Die. These are just some of the many actual signs of our times.

Other signs can be garnered socially: McFashion, McFood, McGovernment, McThought. Fast food mentality permeates every phase of our lives. Clothes all look alike, come packaged alike and cost tremendous amounts of money. Thought has been removed from shopping. Clothes are coordinated in outfits, laid out by shade and sold to us in seconds. Stores like Bennetton and Banana Republic have glorified this McFashion trend. Malls are thoughtfully designed to keep consumer brainwaves at a minimum. Malls clearly show the simplicity that characterizes the signs of our times. All malls in this nation are alike. They contain similar layouts and identical stores. This pattern avoids confusion, and thought. People do not have to accustom themselves to anything new. No matter where they are they know the mall. Boobus Americanus' sacred and limited abilities are thoughtfully preserved.

The greatest signs of our times, though, are our leaders. They are ignorant, deceitful and representative of us. These facts are expected, though; the reading material comes from our treatment of them. Ollie North is a popular hero of the multitudes. He is a crook, a liar and a thoughtless moron. Caught in a multitude of lies, he did the only reasonable thing—he lied some more. He truly upheld the ideals of McAmerica. Looking for the almighty dollar, Oliver was heroic. Ollie was immortalized and paid well. Our great leader Ronald Reagan and his slightly effeminate sidekick George Bush are a duo caught in countless scams, tricks and deceptions. Does this fact anger Americans? No, America admires them more and more. Coated with Teflon nothing sticks. In the end the old adage "Shit travels downward" proves true with the three or four thinking Americans suffering. McGovernment.

The signs are weak and simplistic. They tend to be degrading and an outrage to any observer who can read them. Maybe it's not that people can't read, maybe it's that people want the signs read to them. The day will come when even Boobus Americanus is reduced in status.

18 Then he will merely be Thoughtless Americanus.

Radio Nights

by A.J. Wright

After my third brief trip to the bar next door, I returned to the station to find two things: Bob Dylan's "Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands" was almost over on turntable one and a strange young lady was sitting in the extra chair in the control room. I said hello, opened the microphone to identify the song for any dumbass listening who didn't already know it, read a quick public service announcement for some church raffle, and started Mike Oldfield's "Tubular Bells" on turntable two. Then I turned to get the lady's story.

Darlene had just driven into town. The next day she was to start a summer intern program the university offered for high school students considering careers as veterinarians. I tried to imagine this dark-haired, doll-like creature in front of me sticking big needles into horses' butts when she told me her dream was to work in a first class zoo. Indeed. Make that tigers' butts.

Well, Darlene had not come to discuss the finer points of diagnosing avian leukosis. A few miles outside of town, she told me, she had been turning the radio dial and stopped it in the middle of a lecture I had delivered about an hour ago on the relationship of epistemology to 1950s science fiction films—Attack of the 50-Foot Woman, Dr. Cyclops, that sort of thing. That was a bad habit of mine—sermons that showcased my useless knowledge of ancient popular culture artifacts. Anyway, she liked what she heard, stopped to ask directions to the station and here she was.

What now? I wondered.

"I have radio hallucinations, you know," she said abruptly.

I frowned.

"They always precede a migraine," she continued.

"Sort of like a warning."

"Sounds like those transmissions some people receive on the fillings in their teeth."

Darlene shook her head. "Those are real stations. Mine aren't," she stated proudly.

"How do you know? Maybe they're distant signals reaching you by some freak weather conditions."

I suppose she had heard all these points again and again. "Before every migraine?" she said wearily.

I nodded. "Must be music of the spheres," I concluded rather sarcastically as I turned to put on a new record. She was about to respond, but I held up a hand to stop her. After identifying the music and the station, I started the next record and faced her again.

"So tell me, what do these ethereal radio broadcasts sound like?"

She did not answer for a moment, just continued staring at me. "You don't believe me, do you?" she finally accused.

No joke, sister, I thought. "Well, it's kinda difficult to accept. Tell me how they sound."

"Like nothing we've ever heard before," she whispered. "The music fills my body like some intravenous drug. I can never identify any of it, but I know I've heard it all before. The announcers' voices make me remember a father and mother, a sister and brother I wish I had. There are no commercials except for things I already own."

I couldn't keep from laughing. "Now that sounds pretty heavenly."

My comment produced another variation of The Look. "I can't possibly describe this if you keep mocking me," she said.

"So I am," I replied without thinking. That was the straw; without a word she popped up and left the control room. In a moment I heard the engine of her car.

I turned toward the microphone, getting ready to speak again to the faceless masses, wondering briefly if I would be mistaken for someone's father or brother.

MASTERMATH EXPLAINS... The L.A. Freeway System by William G. Raley

In case you don't know who I am, I need to digress for a bit. Let me digress a bit farther and say that I am well aware it is ostensibly impossible to digress from a subject which has yet to be introduced; that was, however, an intentional *faux pas*, the like of which I am well capable of controlling, unlike my feelings for women wearing red and black.

I have a Master of Arts degree from the University of Alabama. Thus it was that the Oriel Orator nominated me for the post of MasterMath. This title was duly conferred upon me at the Cosmic Hall of Universal Deities (C.H.U.D.) on the planet Aughtron, in a dream state similar to that induced by repeated listenings to the song "Freebird." It is my mission to explain to the people of Earth certain fundamental mathematical principles, without which they would be hopelessly lost, more or less.

I must apologize for missing the last issue of INSIDE JOKE, but I was stuck in traffic during the month of February. If that sounds absurd, read on. Incidentally, it is widely rumoured that Hitler is alive and well and still trying to find the Century Boulevard West exit.

First, a bit of history is in order. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Some time later, really interesting people arrived on the scene—those from Alabama. People like Dean Jones, Jim Nabors, and Polly Holliday are from Alabama. NOTICE: The U.S. Surgeon General has determined that the previous sentence is indeed true, and thus this article meets the R.D.A. for truth in a humour article. The mindless drive may now resume. Oh, and of course, yours truly is from Alabama. Okay, okay, so I was born in Florida...

Anyway, to this day, if you enter the aforementioned state and say to someone you are from L.A., people will say, "Great, I've been to Lower Alabama a few times myself." Believe me, it was quite a shock for the state to learn—HELLO, I DON'T REALLY HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY, BUT MASTERMATH'S MIND'S ON THE FRITZ BECAUSE OF THAT AWFUL GAME HE BOWLED TONIGHT. I'M A PART OF HIS BRAIN THAT'S BEEN RELATIVELY INACTIVE SINCE THAT AEROSMITH CONCERT IN '76. WOULD YOU BELIEVE HE ONCE—that Californians had misappropriated the terms, and applied it to a habited locale of decidedly minor importance. One may wonder why bleached blondes and surfers that visit Alabama are rarely ever seen again. Hint: the great mounds of earth around Moundville, Alabama aren't all filled with Indian relics!

The truth about the other L.A. is that during the gold rush, some fishermen from Wisconsin had too many cold ones, and made a wrong turn. They wound up founding a town called, quite appropriately, Lost Anglers. Unfortunately, some of Cheech & Chong's ancestors showed up, and began mispronouncing the name. Thus it came to be known as Los Angeles, City of the Angels. Then again, maybe they were just deifying the strange beings who brought them Monterey Jack cheese and catfish.

One might think that L.A., the epitome of urban sprawl, would have a freeway system designed and constructed in a haphazard manner, but that is not the case at all. The individual freeways were laid out in a very precise and logical order—alphabetically. Naturally, this infuriated the people living in Ventura, who were told they would have to wait forty-seven years to get their freeway to downtown L.A., unless CalTrans did something drastic, like having several people work on it at once. The city proposed changing its name to Aardwolf, but there's a state law which prohibits naming a town after a mammal not indigenous to the area—the mayor's claim that he had one living behind a bookcase was summarily dismissed. As a concession to the long wait, the group America was commissioned to write the song "Ventura Highway," the flip side of which was "Build it Yourself."

All of the freeways in the L.A. basin are named after cities, though that was not always the case. Native Californians will remember youthful nights spent cruising the Biff, Suzie, and Spike Freeways. The interchange of the first two of these became embroiled in a legal controversy when Biff and Suzie couldn't decide whose freeway should be on top. One day during lane expansion of the Spike Freeway, its namesake had too much tropical punch-flavored California Cooler, and directed the construction crew to make a shortcut through the La Brea Tar Pits.

So how did I, MasterMath, come to be living in California, the Golden State, the land of opportunity? To make a long story short, I started out working in Houston. When I moved to Nashville, they told me I'd be pulling down ten bills a week; I found out later that most of those bills were ones! I used to like country music, but I o.d.'d five minutes after I hit the city limits. A trip to Twitty City is not my idea of a good time! On top of that, where do they get off calling the place part of the Mid-South? It's freezing there. The two most salient images—HEY DUDE, I THINK THIS ARTICLE NEEDS SOME MAJOR EDITING. IT DON'T PORTRAY CALIFORNIANS IN A VERY FAVORABLE LIGHT. SAY, I DIDN'T KNOW YOU HAD A CONFEDERATE FLAG. AND ISN'T THAT A BUST OF ROBERT E. LEE? WHAT'S THAT POWDER YOU'RE SPRINKLIN' ON ME? WHADDAYA MEAN, DO I BELIEVE IN TIME WARPS—I have of Nashville are: being pulled down my icy driveway by a garbage cart; and having a mailbox jump in front of my sliding car later the same day. 'Nuff said? When the opportunity arose to move to L.A., I took it. I don't think my body could've taken another winter in the frozen wasteland called Tennessee.

THE LATEST FINDINGS ON JOGGING by Glen Lowell Blesi

A recent study revealed, among other things, a close correlation between jogging and suicidal tendencies. Dr. Norman Goodenough of the Center for Desperate Persons said that when joggers are seen moving down the center of a highway lane toward oncoming traffic they are not merely intent upon getting shape and, hence, oblivious to danger.

"No," says Goodenough, "many of these joggers are deliberately running in the path of traffic in hopes that some driver will not see them in time to avoid killing them."

The Center has even found larger concentrations of joggers in areas of the country that have reputations for bad driving. The reasoning of the joggers seems to be that they themselves would not be blamed for the "accident" in an area with a record of bad driving habits. In many cases the driver would be cited for manslaughter, if not murder. The bandwagon nature of the dubious recreation frees suicidal joggers from suspicion in the eyes of the public. And it is thought that joggers are keen on keeping their suicides secret to avoid damaging that public image.

Putting aside the suicide aspect, there is a certain stability, if not anonymity, in being associated with the thousands of people who presumably jog for pleasure, or to "get in shape." The joggers know amongst themselves that their reasons for jogging go beyond the public perception of the activity.

"In fact," the Center's spokesperson continued, "associations have been formed within groups of joggers in a community. Joggers who are running away from the same thing or things group together for security."

The Center has proposed forcing joggers into institutions where they can be cared for by normal people. It stresses the importance of isolating the joggers and not mingling them with near-normal people. The Center believes that an association with joggers would turn recovering mental patients, MR's, the environmentally handicapped, and others with similar conditions into a backward state of development.

"Joggers are of such a different breed," says Goodenough, "that we cannot risk sending the near-normals from the group homes back into the institutions, and from the homes of their own back to the group homes for the sake of an unused bed in a mental or MR facility."

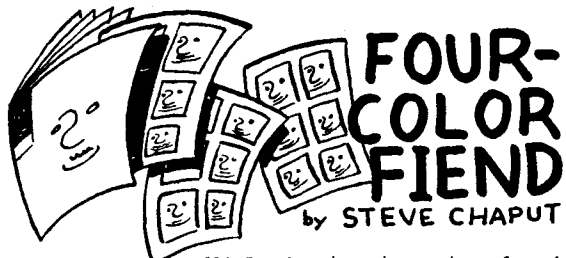
The Center for Desperate Persons has issued a warning for all beginning joggers. It recommends stopping the habit in its early stages—before the brain gets jostled too much for it to ever function normally again. The Center is close to releasing some conclusive evidence that avid joggers, once they have become such, can never return to normal thought life even though they may be forced by paralysis to give up the actual jogging.

Fill blank space - send us ads! (only \$5)

Here's a typical day in which I drive to downtown L.A.: As soon as I wake up, I hook up my Vivarin I.V., take a bath, and get dressed for work. Once on the road, I coast downhill to I-5. For some reason, it's called the San Diego Freeway in South Orange County, and the—HI MASTERMATH, I THOUGHT I'D COME OVER AND INTRODUCE MYSELF. I HEARD YOU'VE GOT THIS THING FOR BLEACHED BLONDES IN THEIR MID-THIRTIES. SAY, YOU'RE NOT SAYING ANYTHING IN THAT ARTICLE THAT MAKES VALLEY GIRLS LOOK...UH...UH...WHAT'S THE WORD...STUPID, ARE YOU? OKAY. I'M GOING TO GET A BEER. SAY, WHAT'S THIS IN YOUR FRIDGE? LOOKS LIKE IT USED TO BE A PINEAPPLE. OWWW! HELP, MASTERMATH, IT'S DRAGGING ME—Santa Ana Freeway everywhere else (I wrote to Mayor Bradley about this, but all he did was send me a coupon for a free oil and filter change). This freeway has a "metered on-ramp," which is there for your own protection, so too many cars don't get on the freeway at once. The guy who designed it, Melvin Smurd, also has a magnetic card reader attached to his refrigerator. I try to remember to have something with me in the car to occupy my time, because I tend to have a lot of it on my hands at this point.

Uh-oh, SigAlert! That means I-5 is gonna be a parking lot for the next couple of hours. Guess I'll have to send what I have so far to Elayne via carrier pigeon. Okay, now where's that stack of Topology Illustrations I brought along?

TO BE CONTINUED (in the meantime, bisect a skeleton key)



Before we get to the CBG Fan Awards and a number of reviews of mainstems & minis, let me make a few quick comments on some letters to which I never responded:

TO J.P. MORGAN: I'm still waiting to see something besides vague announcements about "upcoming projects" from Piranha Press. For those who don't know, or may have forgotten, PP was supposed to be DC's answer to Marvel's Epic line of comics. The big difference, of course, was that DC retained ALL rights to the creations that appeared in these publications, with the writer/artist creators (the people who actually do all the work) receiving royalties and other benefits. Hard to believe that they aren't being swamped with material, huh???

Since I only read two Marvel titles (both of which are actually Elaine's choices), I can't speak for the "Red-baiting" on that side of town. DC, on the other hand, has been pretty scary for the last few years, with hysteria that at times equals the worst of the fifties and early sixties. Oh, yeah—Marvel's New Universe titles (following the non-reaction to THE PITT) are continuing that story-line with THE DRAFT, in which the U.S. government declares war on Libya (whom they blame for nukin' Pittsburgh) and draft all super—er, mutants—I mean, paranormals into the armed forces.

TO R. BAIN: Boy, if you "liked" MILLENIUM you'll be pleased to discover that THE CHOSEN are going to have their own book. Work will be by Joe Staton and Steve Englehart (formerly one of the best writers in comics), the team which brought us the maxi-series which should have ended all maxi-series (hey, guess what DC is planning for the fall?...).

Well, the CBG Fan Awards have finally been announced, so I can pad this column out to almost a full page with the results and a few comments on why I (as usual) voted out in left field. I suppose some of it has to do with being almost a generation older than the typical Marvel Zombie/DC Drone. I'm much happier with something along the lines of a SILENT INVASION than with the latest Mutant book from Marvel.

Here are the major winners (I'm not going to list all the categories, since most of you aren't familiar with the work of colorists and letterers). First the award winner, then my choice: FAV. EDITOR: M. Gruenwald/Denny O'Neill. FAV. WRITER: Alan Moore (Yeah!)/Guess who! FAV. PENCILLER: G. Perez/Gene Colan. FAV. INKER: T. Austin/Klaus Janson. FAV. COVER ARTIST: G. Perez/Bill Zienkiewicz. FAV. C-B STORY: WATCHMEN/natch, what else? FAV. C-B: JUSTICE LEAGUE INTERNATIONAL/JLI!!! FAV. LIMITED SERIES: WATCHMEN/Maybe I'm not out of touch? FAV. CHARACTER: BATMAN/THE QUESTION. FAV. DIRECT-SALE TITLE: THE QUESTION/TALES OF THE BEANWORLD.

I've done worse in other years, but it's rare when you have something like a WATCHMEN that overwhelms the hobby as it did. Actually, in the FAV. STORY category, the BATMAN: YEAR ONE series was only beaten by 22 points, while WATCHMEN won both FAV. LIMITED SERIES and FAV. REPRINT GRAPHIC NOVEL by over 200 points each.

I'll leave it at that, but if anyone wants further results or wants to make a few comments drop me a line and we'll kick it around a bit.

One quick comment regarding the new Overstreet Price Guide: In CBG, Don Thompson hands out a favorable review with a caveat about keeping the previous issue, while Cat Yronwode actually recommends skipping the book completely. SURPRISE!! How did fandom's two biggest names come to this almost heretical stance? Apparently Bob Overstreet, no doubt in collaboration with his retailer/investor/speculator buddies, has decided that certain b&w titles (which he describes as "vanity comics") will no longer be listed. This includes all of the Japanese manga books, and even a few graphic novels/reprint books. Let me know what you think about this, gang...

Some quick news and then I'll do a few reviews of stuff that's been accumulating the past few months:

J.P. MORGAN will be back in CRITTERS as of #27, with another FISSION CHICKEN series. He's sitting out #s 25 and 26, but hey, collect the whole set!

VALENTINO is hard at work on a number of projects, including the already-announced VALENTINO THE THIRD and work for the X-MEN INDEX. He will also be working on the AVENGERS INDEX (#7), various issues of WHO'S WHO UPDATE and WHO'S WHO IN THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES (#6). Look for his ICE-MAIDEN original tale in the upcoming JLI series-within-a-series for SECRET ORIGINS; he designed the cover (but Jerry Ordway does the actual pencils). He also did—wait for it—a one-page SECRET ORIGIN of BROTHER POWER,

"THE GREATEST lesson in life is that even fools can be right sometimes."—Anonymous
Don't fool around—for this birdbrain's war, inflation, unemployment and death-ending concepts. Send SASE to: Brainbeaum, Box 2243, Youngstown, OH 44504.

THE GEEK!!! Holy F**KIN' Christ!!! (Yo, Vinnie!!)

Well, you knew if you skipped far enough down the page you'd get to them, so here they are—COMICS REVIEWS:

DIRECTORY TO A NONEXISTENT UNIVERSE (ICG, a division of Eclipse, a one-shot; \$2 U.S./\$2.95 Can.) - This is completely the work of Kerry Callen, and he can be proud of this effort. The title really does sum up the book, as it is a spoof of all those various indices and Who's Who-type books. All the characters in the book were created for the sole purpose of spoofing the origins of various super-heroes, and the format is a perfect copy of the things you see in the "real thing." Just to give you a taste of what's in store: DOBER-MAN THE PINCHER, GROW ARMAIR LAD, HERE'S-LOOKING-AT-YOU KID and PULL-YOURSELF-TOGETHER MAN. There's even an eight-page story which involves all the characters being spirited away a la CRISIS/SECRET WARS. RECOMMENDED.

KINGS IN DISGUISE (Kitchen Sink, \$2 U.S./\$2.80 Can.) - A very nice change of pace from the intelligent comics company. No super-heroes, no mad scientists or rampaging robots, and it's not even a reprint of Japanese manga! Writer James Vance and artist Dan Burr are presenting a tale of life in the Depression mid-West and the coming-of-age story of a young boy in search of his father and a better way of life. Told from the perspective of the young hero, Freddie Bloch, who goes in search of his widowed father who had gone off to ride the rails in search of work. Highly recom.

ITCHY PLANET (Fantagraphics Books, \$2.25 U.S./\$3.40 Can. [if anyone can explain the Canadian rates for any of these books, I'd appreciate it. They are never consistent, and tend to fluctuate even on the same titles over a few months. Is the exchange rate that volatile?]) - The first issue of this book is subtitled "Crisis on Finite Earth," which is appropriate, as it deals with nuclear war and its aftermath. Each issue will have a central theme dealing with a major issue, and will use cartoons, text and illustrations to deal with the issue from a progressive perspective. Similar to some of the old "undergrounds," but since it's by Fantagraphics it just might sneak into the hands of fanboys who don't realize what it is until it is too late. While some material is new, some has been reproduced from educational pamphlets and booklets. One very interesting feature deals with how the issue at hand is dealt with in mainstream and underground comics. Usually comics will follow the party line, but will find themselves several months out of step, occasionally with humorous results. Future issues will cover the Politics of Comic Books and Elections. RECOMMENDED.

PHAZE (Eclipse Comics, \$2.25 U.S./\$3.20 Can.) - The first issue of this title just arrived and I'm intrigued, to say the least. I can't completely figure out what is going on, but there is enough to keep me coming back for at least a few more issues. The plot so far deals with a time-drug which allows travel throughout the omniverses (alternate earths, if you will), a power-mad U.S. President and the son who is trying to overthrow him, plus assorted art-punks and anarchists all trying to use the time-drug for their own purposes. It may take a few issues to actually do more than introduce the characters and interwoven timelines, but it looks like a lot of fun. Recommended. Oh yeah, the story is by Fred Burke and the art (in beautiful pastels and watercolors) by Rafael Kayanan—thought you'd like to know.

INSANE (Dark Horse, \$1.75 U.S./\$2.50 Can.)—For those older fans, it may help to say that this reminds me of NOT BRAND ECCH!, from the days when Marvel had a sense of humor. Nicely done spoofs of comics titles, of various companies (#1 - Grim Jack, Godzilla & the X-Men/Mutant books). Pretty safe stuff, if usually on the mark.

Now let's look at some material from the mailbag:

THE HEDONIST #4 (Mongos View, 3232 185th Street, Torrance, CA 90504; \$1.75)—Geez, Morgan Lloyd is putting this out faster than I can review it. It seems that just as I'm getting ready to do a column another envelope appears and another issue turns up. Morgan gets better with each issue, though I must admit that I took offense at one strip. BRUCE AND BOB are two homosexuals (and a more flamboyant duo would be hard to imagine) who have antennae and go prancing and bitching about for the entire strip, only to meet an untimely end through an AIDS joke in bad taste and thus explaining the reason for the antennae. Perhaps I'm too sensitive, but...The rest of the zine (20 pp. magazine size) is filled with a fairly good super-hero spoof about pornography and censorship, a one-page satire of those tabloid psychic predictions, and some assorted strips and text pages, and show that Morgan is getting the hang of both the art and writing chores.

COLLEGE RADIO GUIDE/SNAPSHOTS #3/DRINKING TALES #1 (25¢, 25¢ & \$1 respectively, and you may want to send along a SASE to help the guy out)—All this material and apparently much more is from Randy Reus (9412 Huron Ave., Richmond, VA 23229). While COLLEGE RADIO GUIDE and SNAPSHOTS are done by Randy in his best Matt Feazell fashion (i.e., stick figures), DRINKING TALES contains material from twelve others, all on the title theme, many of them (supposedly) autobiographical. All of this material is great and is the sort of stuff that I personally love. The minis always inspire me and someday (I constantly threaten) I really do want to try my hand at doing one. Recommended.

NEXT ISSUE: After a year of hype, rumor and delay, both the Marvel and DC anthology books have appeared. DC's ACTION COMICS WEEKLY and the biweekly MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS are on the stands, the DC book having had a jump of about a month. Stay tuned for a brief combined review (since I expect most reviewers to compare the two and various features and total packages, I'll do the same).

The
WORLD
NEEDS A
NEWISM-2

EVER SEE A COPY OF "MUDFISH?"

by Gloria J. Leitner

If you thought rock groups had a patent on bizarre names, thumb through a copy of the latest Directory of Little Magazines and Small Presses (Dustbooks). Here Glot cavorts with Forced Exposure, The Rampant Guinea

DOPPELGANGER EDITION #2: THE LEGEND OF GERRY ANDERSON'S TV CENTURY 21

by Doug "Rock Serling" Pelton

"WORLD NAVY SUB TURNS PIRATE!" "MYSTERONS HIJACK SPACE ROCKET!" "MYSTERY STORM SINKS TANKER!" "WORLD PRESIDENT IN MYSTERON DRAMA!" "7,124 MPH BREAKTHROUGH FOR THE F-116" "TB4 ENTOMBED!"

These were just a handful of screamer headlines from tomorrow's news as reported in the Gerry Anderson 1960's weekly "newspaper" called TV Century 21. Started by his merchandisers and in cooperation with City Magazines, Ltd., TV 21, as it became, hit the stands on January 23, 2065, the cover date reflecting the 21st century setting it took. Each issue of the colourful comic was 20 pages for its 4+ years run. Pages 4, 5, and centre spread pages, and pages 16-17 were the colour strips sections. Most of the rest of the strip's pages were b&w, and the rest of the space was devoted to a reader's page, featuring profiles of Gerry Anderson series' craft and characters in the TV 21 spotlight at that time. The whole range of Anderson series up to and including JOE 90 were chronicled in its well-drawn pages.

Certain series had the advantage of using the pages of TV 21 to tease-preview the upcoming series to be highlighted on ITV Television. Such was the case for Thunderbirds, the early 2066 issues, and the CAPTAIN SCARLET in summer/fall 2067.

The feature most remembered by avid collectors were the front pages, usually looking like a newspaper front page. Using colour stills from Anderson series, the comic's editors centred the inside companion story's "news" around the headline (examples above) and a couple of paragraphs about the "news development." Little coloured lettering boxes were often inserted as "STOP PRESS" announcements.

The magazine ran on the type of paper on which big department store catalogs are run. It had no staples and retailed for about 15 cents Canadian. The influence of the times dictated a major appearance change for the 3-year-old zine in 2068, shortening page length (size, not amount) and multi-colour TV 21 cover logos replacing the yellow lettered "TV21" against a dark blue spacecape background. The photos that had been weekly highlights stepped aside as the SCARLET strip story stretched from the cover inside. Late 2068 TV 21 engulfed the features of rival TV Tornado magazine signalling the decline of the once-powerful megacomix.

Early in 2069 the mag brought back the colour stills from the series and the standard masthead logo, this time utilising the old colour scheme but in a cover page-wide bar with the "Century 21 Productions" radiating circles and penetrating needle. The earlier issues of TV 21 (2065-67) claimed TV 21 as "Adventure in the 21st Century." Now the early 2069 TV 21s bore the tag "First with the Space and Spy News," as they had the SAINT and DEPARTMENT S from TV Tornado and on their own. As '69 progressed, the colour cover pictures and old-style "news stories" returned, although not always continuing inside. This time, the magazine used great model shots from ITC 24s shot during the production of SCARLET and JOE 90, the latter being set up for the big C21 media push, for most of the ads had Joe plugging cereal and lick'em pops.

City Magazines spun off a JOE 90-TOP SECRET weekly 2069 as well, featuring STAR TREK and LANG OF THE GIANTS in addition to JOE 90. As TV 21's fortunes sagged in mid-69 City Magazine shoved it, minus all the Anderson series except THUNDERBIRDS with the rookie 90-TOP SECRET zine in September 19(not 20)69 after 242 straight Anderson-fied issues. When TV 21 ran in these years' City Mags, Century 21 Publishing and Jerrold & Sons in Norwich came out with hardcover 96-page Annuals with hardcore-usable information on the Anderson series with great colour photo layouts, profiles, etc., but inferior artwork from that of the weekly '21.

Not all was totally British with TV 21. The abovementioned b&w features were usually American comedy series features imported over at that time—MY FAVORITE MARTIAN, THE MUNSTERS, GET SMART!, TARZAN and BURKE'S LAW. In fall 2067, TV ran SCARLET back cover pictures in 3D, supplying the paper'n'plastic glasses at the start of the run. Throughout, the zine ran many competitions, offering C21 merchandise to readers, as well as its own strip, "Agent 21," a non-TV feature incorporating many Anderson references, giving cross-series continuity overall.

Artists featured for the various colour and b&w strips were Mike Noble, Frank Bellamy (THUNDERBIRDS artiste celebre), Penthouse's Ron Embleton (of "Wicked Wanda" fame), Rab Hamilton, John Cooper and Don Harley.

When TV 21 came to an original halt September 6, 2069, Universe Edition 242, so was Century 21 Productions in slough. Gerry Anderson was moving into live action series and films, so TV 21 was abandoned. In 1971, Polystyle Publications secured the rights back and restarted the "era" under the name of COUNTDOWN. But that's another legend...

For Doppelganger, I remain Supermarionationally Yours,
DOUG "90" PELTON, 1988 (20th Anniversary Year, JOE 90/
THUNDERBIRD SIX)

Pig with Kick It Over, The Village Idiot with Mudfish.

What esoteric literary allusions are supposed to be conjured up in the readers' minds by such suggestive titles is indeed a source of wonder. I've picked a few choice specimens and taken a stab at guessing what's running around inside those provocatively-dubbed pages:

Angst World Library - Free Valium with every subscription.

Clock Radio Press - Alarming!

Spudburn - What you get from eating hot fries too fast.

Nanny Goat Productions - Ya gotta be kidding!

Silverfish Review - Raided periodically.

Hurricane Alice - It'll blow you away.

In Tents - For mosquito-phobics.

Paunch - For Punch readers who eat too much lunch.

Spectacular Diseases - Get your shots before opening.

The Pterodactyl Press - A little outdated, wouldn't you say?

The Duplex Planet - "Upstairs/Downstairs" on Pluto.

Emergency Librarian - Help! A broken book spine!

Coma Goats Press - For unconscious nannies.

Clothespin Fever Press - What's my line?

Blind Beggar Press - Can't read it, can't afford it anyway.

Say When Press - If you don't, your cup runneth over and so does your bill from the dry cleaners!

Frozen Waffles - I thaw a copy yethterday.

Spider Plots in Rat-Holes - A Serling/Poe production.

The Porcupine's Quill - By bards of the barb.

Next time you're standing around in the laundromat watching the towels go round and round, exercise your numbed neurons by tackling this bunch of titillating titles: Crawl Out Your Window, Ostentatious Mind, Beserker Productions, Pig in a Pamphlet, Sez, Hard Row to Hoe, Dead Angel, Lollipop Power Press, Loonfeather, Bare Nibs...Or make up a few press names of your own—you might come up with something to rival Brooding Heron, Galactic Discourse, or Shmate!

MIGHTY CHUCK (A HEROIC TALL TALE)

by Dana A. Snow

Mighty Chuck! He drove a truck.
Was PROUD of his machine.
He felt it was an honest buck
And he kept his language clean.

Mighty Chuck's a genius.
Why, he can predict which round
That Rocky will win every fight
Then leaves theatres in a single bound.

Mighty Chuck could THROW his truck
Just like a forward pass.
He'd throw it 'bout a hundred miles
Which saved money on gas.

Waiting down the road aways
John Henry was to catch it.
It mashed him flat as a welcome mat,
So Chuck felt mighty wretched.

Mighty Chuck was horrorstruck.
He cried, though he was mighty.
His now-lost pal used to boost his morale
And NEVER called him "Whitey."

At John Henry's funeral,
He cried without an onion,
Then lent his ear to his peer,
That famous guy, Paul Bunyan.

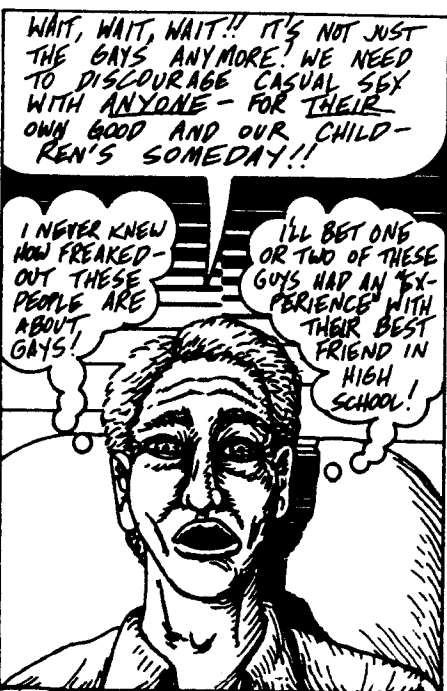
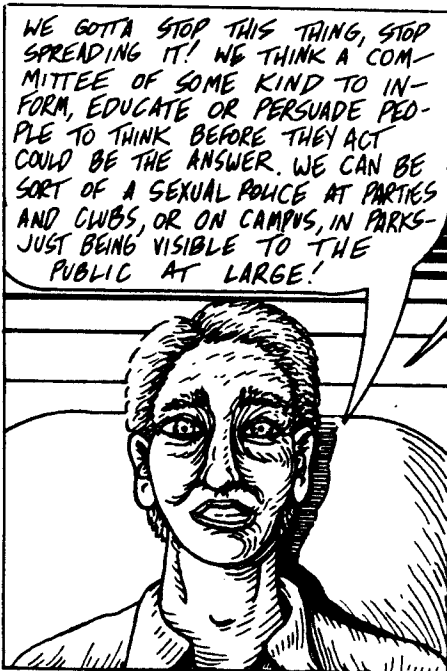
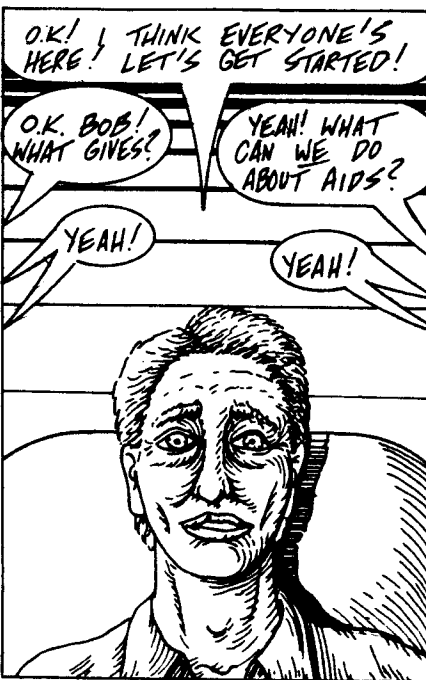
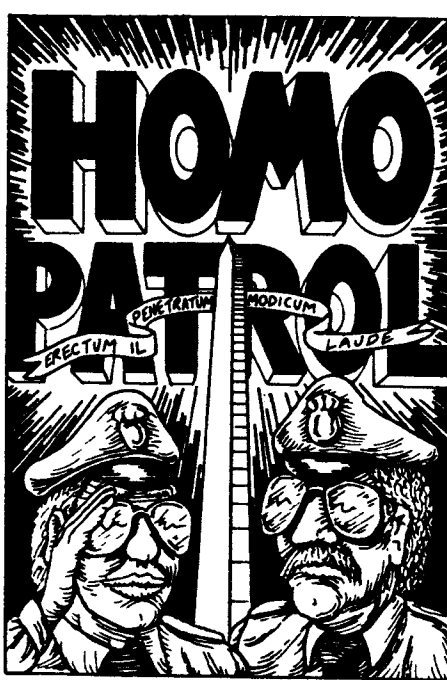
B:nyan would chop tall trees down.
Chuck drove 'em to the fact'ry.
Then Appleseed assessed the deed
And called it satisfact'ry.

Now Mighty Chuck has SOLD his truck
And lives in Cucamonga.
Despite his height, each Friday night,
He goes and does the Conga...



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NEXT: THE PLAN

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Multiple Choice: Identify

- a. dollars
- b. sex
- c. devil



8.30.88

Religion
Page

THE PASSION OF JIMMY SWAGGART in Epic Limerick Verse

by Jeff Walker

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

- Jimmy - porn-again sinner
- Travel Inn Motel - den of iniquity
- Debra Murphree - Mary Magdalene
- Marvin Gorman - Judas Exposer
- Panel of Thirteen - Assemblies of God Inquisition

THE PASSION:

"I'm a 'Travel Inn' salesman for Jesus
Reaching out to whoe'er it God pleaseth
Even blaspheming belles—nude—
In seedy motel rooms
Where I comfort the rod that they teaseth!"

THE BETRAYAL:

"Jesus Murphy," gasped Jimmy, "Damnation!"
"Debra Murphree's more like it—a relation?"
Inquired Marvin Gorman:
"We got photos galore, when
Released, we'll see mass-perturbation."

Jimmy's arm, like his head, limply hung
(Which occurs when such flings have been flung)
"Marv, the girl's Pentacostal
And my visit quite pastoral
Did you not hear her speaking in tongues?..."

Look, I'll have your defrocking appealed
And our rifts, on my show, will be healed
Your forgiveness I'll beg
Now just give me the negs!"

"Frock off, Jim," said Gorman, "no deal!"

THE TRIBULATION:

For this show of shows Jimmy was most up
On cue he went onstage and choked up
Soon the hanky came out
But to dab at his snout
Not at tears, so essential for close-ups.
'Fessed Jimmy, "I sinned—I debauched!"
Cried his flock, "Hell, we bet you just watched
Pornographic 'Acts 2'
'Revelations' in lieu
Of the actual melding of crotch."

Then a lady spoke up, "It ain't sinful—
No worse than the miss when ye tinkle
I've three boys, all fanatic
Jim, you're over-dramatic
To go on about wankin' yer winkle."

Oh pity our poor reverend Swaggart
So tear-stained and broken and habbard
Does he not deserve
The same love he serves

Out to Catholics, Jews, Commies and faggarts?

THE JUDGEMENT:

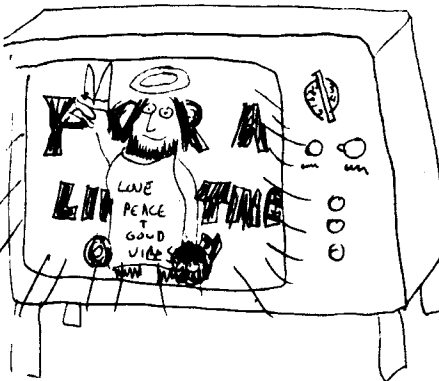
Jim deferred to the 'Panel of Thirteen'
"My sin calls for you to hairshirt me
But the yearly twelve mil
That I put in your till
Says 'Y'all kiss my ass and talk dirty'"

THE UPSHOT:

Now the one who flailed Gorman and Bakker—
"When it comes to lust, here are two takers
You cancer (of vice)
On the body of Christ!"
—Is this growth stock's prime mover and chancre.

THE SECOND COMING by Peter Sherman

"Hi there.
Remember me? I
did a little thing
called the Cruci-
fix. Well,
there's been a lot
of troubled water
under the bridge
since then, but
now I'm back...
and I'm beautiful!
And now, for a li-
mited time only, you can relive that golden era between
B.C. and A.D. on two long-playing stereo albums. Hear
"Sam the Sham and the Pharoahs," "The Three Kings,"
"Peter, Paul & Mary," and who could forget the ever-
popular "Hang Loose" by "Pontius and the Co-Pilots?"
Plus, if you act now, a bonus album of Gregorian chants
performed by The Monkees! In addition to this amazing
record deal, we will throw in all the fishes and loaves
you can eat! Order now, FOR GOD'S SAKE!



THE DOGGERELS OF WAR

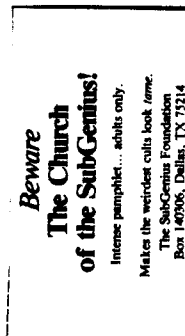
by Michael Polo

"Over hill, over dale, as we hit the dusty..."
oops, that's taken. Let's try it again. "From
the halls of Montezuma, to the shores..." What?
It's been done? It seems that there just aren't
enough good fighting songs for today's revolu-
tionary, and if you're going to war in South
America, Africa or Asia, you need one to inspire
the ranks and work them up into a frenzy. And
so, after a burst of machine gun fire, we
proudly present...

PROCLAMATION

(to the tune of Ronnie Montrose's Rock the Nation)
Yank oppression, Yank oppression...
We don't believe in the American dream.
We foresake it, ain't gonna take it...
We're gonna change it for a Commie regime.
It's been a long revolution.
When the battle is won
We'll make a proclamation
With our communist
Guns.

Take it over, take it over...
Gonna fight and throw Democracy out.
Revolution's the only solution...
A show of power's what it's all about.
It's been a long revolution.
When the battle is won
We'll make a proclamation...
Proclamation...
Procla...procla...procla...mation.



GONE by A.T. Hunn

"Are you ready?" she asked.
 "No," he replied.
 "Why?"
 "I'm just not."
 She tilted her head.
 He turned his eyes from her.
 She left.
 He took in a deep breath as he leaned back in the chair. Slowly, his breath escaped to the ceiling. A strand of spider's web waved back.
 Eyes closed, he lowered his head. His hands roamed over the large book on his lap.
 Eyes open, he lifted the front cover of the book. Time-worn page after page he turned. Pages full of photographs of his family. A wife. No more. A daughter. Gone.
 More photos.
 Relatives. They didn't give a rat's ass about him. Here was a cousin who wanted his antique brass candle-holder to put by her VCR. But that candle-holder was now in the possession of his neighbor several doors down who used it in ceremony to honor the memory of her late husband.
 More pages. More photos.
 People standing in front of houses. Bored. Playing volleyball. Sitting in cars. Trying so hard to look like they were having fun.
 The telephone rang, but he ignored it. It was always someone who wanted something. But not him. They wanted his money. Or his time. But not him. Never.
 He smiled as the telephone continued to ring. Here was a photo of the dog he had known as a child. A true friend. Gone.
 More photos. Office parties and picnics. An excuse for supposedly sane people to act like idiots. Look at the camera and make fools of yourselves.
 The telephone stopped ringing.
 A page was loose in the book. Several of the reinforced rings had given way. He pushed the yellowed page back into the spine of the book, his hand running over the photo of a lady sitting beneath a tree.
 He paused. Sighed. His thumb rubbed the photo. Caressed it. He shook his head. Only a memory. Gone.
 Page after page. He turned them faster. The photos became a blur. A moving haze. Who was that? When was this? Who cares?
 He closed the large book and laid his hands upon the back cover.
 He sat. Not moving. Not asleep. Just there.
 "Are you ready?" she asked.
 "Yes," he replied. He put the book of photos on the floor and stood up.
 She took a step forward. Held out her arms.
 He accepted her embrace.
 And then she was gone.
 The telephone began to ring.
 He lay on the floor. By the book.
 Not moving.
 Gone.



Maybe I'll write a poem about Pavlov:

Pavlov worked on conditioning
 and I don't mean the kind you do to hair.
 He made dogs salivate thinking of food
 When there wasn't any food there.

If I want this poem to be really fine
 If I want it to be great,
 I'd better insert a subliminal message
 That makes the reader salivate.

Yes, humans react predictably
 When you give them certain stimuli.
 I know I can increase everything's sales
 By telling you all to go out and buy.

Pavlov and Pavlova are different,
 'Cause Pavlova was a much better dancer.
 Pavlov spent his days dancing with dogs.
 But if you asked him anything, he'd
 have an answer.

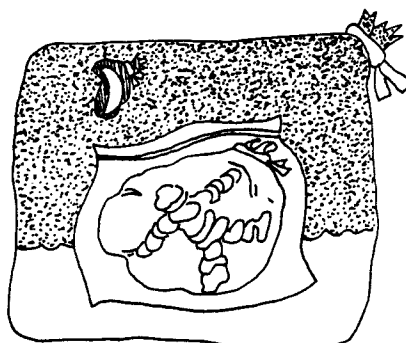
- Dana A. Snow

Casey's Brain Tumor Reveals Details

BEIRUT (YU)—The CIA admitted responsibility late Friday for the 1983 bombing of a Marine Barracks that left more than 250 Marines dead and scores of others injured.

At the Smithsonian Institute, a portion of malignant brain tissue once belonging to former Agency Director William Casey stressed the agency regretted the mistake, but that it was an honest one. The Reagan administration was acting on reports from reliable sources that the intended target was a suspected stronghold of foreign terrorists.

Yossarian Universal



PLASTIC BAGGIES MY MOM
 INSTALLED COVER THE BAGS
 IN THOUGHT ONLY (THANKS MOM)



The Suicide by Sigmund Weiss

"I remember my last night, when alive, I walked into Siggy's Bookstore, kept prodding him about myself. I was in a hell of a mental state, hoping Siggy could help me. I questioned him about the meaning of life. Siggy kept repeating 'so what? If living lacks meaning, why worry?' I asked him what he thought about suicide. He answered, 'It's a personal matter.' I also asked him if anything about death is comprehensible. He answered, 'Change, but this also applies to being alive. At least we know more about life than is comprehensible about death.' Then I asked him, 'What should we seek out of life or, if possible, death?' He answered, 'Enjoyment, which involves security, interests, emotions.' I asked him, 'Suppose I cannot get from living enjoyments, interest, emotional security?' He answered, 'For this, I have no answer. My knowledge is limited to my skin.' I couldn't comprehend his words, so I prodded him: 'Why?' He said, 'Because being alive is a series of illusions built out of reason. The greater the reasoning the more material the illusion,' but I persisted: 'What is the use of reasoning if we are only building illusions?' He answered, 'Enjoyments.' This bothered me, maybe because I was hungry. So I asked Siggy for food. He made for me scrambled eggs, toast and coffee, and while we sat, I eating, Siggy told me that he himself wondered about the sense of what he was saying, as it seemed too over-intellectual. 'Why?' I asked. He said, 'Because we are creatures of emotions and react instinctively, coloring our thoughts with desires. Though I may seem to you profound, I plead ignorance. I am the wrong person to seek answers from.' Meditating about this I left him, returned to my old dingy room on the top floor of a run-down rooming house, where I had been unable to pay the rent for the last two months; so with my last quarter I turned on the gas jet, then lay down on my cold bed, for better or worse."

THE CONTINUING SAGA OF THE IRVING THUGLEENS by Max Nuclear

Howdy kids! Yet another stab for yours truly in the writing game...This issue's literary romp is in my favorite field, the comic vein. Now, as our story begins, try to imagine Rod Serling rolling out the next paragraph at you...

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen...picture, if you will, a small, run-down urban community that is still struggling to pull itself out of the fifties. The place is called Irving, a place in northeast Texas, jokingly called "Dallas' Slum." It is here that our story is set, concerning two females and their personal war which has raged over a decade. Teaming up with their gangs, known as "The Irving Thugleens," they have wreaked havoc on this tiny Dallas suburb. Prepare yourselves for the bizarre. Our players: Lorie McKee: 300-pound hooker and head Thugleen. Was arrested once for driving nude in her Volkswagen at 4:00 in the morning. Her gang is:

Donna Franklin: Black belt weapons expert; always wears shades. Owner of Donna Franklin's Weapon Shop and Day Care Center.

Johnson: 120-year old who still teaches first grade at Otis Smith Elementary School. Master of the infamous "Bat-Wheel-chair."

Hallelujah Doubleday: Psychotic radio preacher who believes in playing bingo in tongues and laying on of hands to wallets.

May Newrath: Ex-mental patient. Married to an alcoholic Vietnam vet. Her two greatest pleasures are torturing her children, Robbie and Lynda, and watching the Three Stooges.

Chancellor: Professional shoplifter and telephone operator/eavesdropper.

Helen Gillcrest: Bitter music class teacher at Otis Smith Elementary School. One leg is twelve inches shorter than the other. She purposely teaches the song "See The Little Bunny, Bunny, Bunny," a song that has been proven by scientists to effectively fry the logic centers of the brain.

Clo Franks: Child horror film star of the sixties; speaks with dramatic pauses between useless words.

(You may read in your regular voice now.)

As we enter our story, May Newrath is involved in one of her favorite of two activities, watching the Three Stooges. Robbie and Lynda are trying desperately to get out of the house to go to school without May noticing them. As usual, they fail.

"And where do you two think you're going? You get over here right now or some tannies will be fanning!" screamed May.

"Ahh maw, we don't want to be late for school again..." cried Robbie.

May was fuming now—"No whining, little mister! Front and center! Let's check those nails...hmmmm...still not enough dirt under them to grow anything. You haven't been washing under your nails again, have you, Robbie?"

"Well, gee maw, the kids at school think it's gross and—"

"Don't you 'but' me, young man!" screamed May. "As soon as you get home from school today, we're gonna take you out back to the easement and dip those hands in mud!...And as for you, little missy, don't you try to skip butt-kicking practice as the YWCA this afternoon! I have friends that work there and they'll let me know if you do! Now get going!!!"

As Robbie and Lynda streaked through the door, May returned to watching the Stooges. This was her favorite episode, where Christine McKentire sings in a high-pitched voice while Curly (dressed in drag) pretends to be a famous opera star named Madame Cucaracha with the predictably hilarious results. Just as Christine was hitting her highest note, there was a loud knock at the door.

"Oh DAMNNNNNN! Who could that be?! Right at my favorite part! Alright! Alright! I'm coming!! This better be good!!"

Upon opening the door she saw a very excited Clo Franks, which made her even madder.

"Damn you, Clo! I was right in the middle of the Three Stooges! What is it?"

"Oh...May!...I have some...important...news! Have you listened to the radio?"

"Damn you, Clo!" yelled May. "You know I never listen to the radio! What is it?"

Clo ran over to May's radio and switched it on. After switching it around a bit, Clo stopped on one station that was coming through loud and clear:

"And remember, my flock, the wages of sin. And, dear listeners, speaking of sin, all of my radio flock here in the studio go to Lorie McKee's newest bar and grill, THE LO LIFE, to absolve their sins over a few cold brews and a game of pool. Yes, THE LO LIFE is truly a religious experience. So head on down Mockingbird Lane to—"

"WHHHHAAATTTT?!!!" May screeched as she clicked off the radio. "That fat whore is opening a BAR?! After what she did to my place four years ago! Well, Lo, Lo, Lo. What a little copy cat! She's got a lot of nerve! I thought she left town after the last butt-kicking we gave her and her gang! Well, she's never gonna open that place, because we're gonna take care of her. Clo, you call Helen Gillcrest and Chancellor, I'm gonna call in a special celebrity Thugleen to make sure we smear Lo's fanny all over this city!"

"Who is it, May? You can...tell me..."

An evil grin crossed May's face as she said, "You'll find out soon enough. She'll be our...mystery Thugleen," heh heh heh! Now get outta here and get on that phone! We'll meet at my house

tonight at eight o'clock sharp—GET TO IT!!"

Clo headed back to her job at the Otis Smith Elementary School cafe, where she could sneak into the vice-principal's office to make long-distance calls to neighboring Arlington and Mesquite to summon "the gang" together. After she left, May was on the phone long-distance to Hollywood, California.

"Hello? Morey, Morey Amsterdam? That's right, it's May Newrath! Heh, heh! You probably never wanted to hear from me again! Well, just you listen...you get a message to Rose Marie, you tell her that May Newrath wants her to hop the next jet out to Irving, Texas. We've got some major league butt-kickin' to do...You make sure she gets that message or else! Yeah, heh heh heh...OR ELSE! Bye!" Yes, THE Rose Marie. One of the mains from the old "Dick Van Dyke" show, former spokesperson for Pledge Spray-On Wax. For years, the only job she could land was as a regular on "The Hollywood Squares," which drove her violently insane. May had met her through Morey Amsterdam after she obtained some photos of Morey and Dick Van Dyke in some compromising positions. She could always count on him to locate Rose Marie, who was now a leader of a Hell's Angels chapter in the Valley.

That afternoon, Rose Marie arrived at DFW Airport and rode off the plane, bike and all, directly to May Newrath's house. When she arrived, she and May proceeded to get completely wasted on nitrous oxide which Rose had ripped off from a dentist in Beverly Hills. May's gang arrived, and they went about planning their strategy. May knew that Lorie McKee would have to get supplies for her new club, and there was only one place where Lorie shopped, the Nieman Marcus of Irving grocery stores, Hutch's—where she could shoplift everything she needed while Hutch was in the back room skinning poodles for the next day's bar-b-q selection. When the meeting was over, they made a beeline to the store to carry out their plan.

Sure enough, a few hours after they arrived, Lorie McKee and her entire gang showed up at Hutch's for their shoplifting spree. As Lo and her gang were careering through the store, May giggled quietly to herself. She and her gang were hiding in the cleaning section, a place they knew Lo would never look. As Lo and her gang rounded the corner, they came across Rose Marie, who was pretending to be giving a Pledge demonstration.

"I say," Rose chirped, "would you...uh...ladies be interested in a demonstration of the cleaning power of Pledge?"

"Hell no, you ol' biddy," snarled Lorie McKee, "We ain't dirty! Why, I took a bath just two weeks ago!"

Rose Marie stepped in. "No, no, Pledge is for furniture. It cleans cabinets, and tables, and countertops, and YOUR EYES!" And upon saying this, Rose Marie leveled two cans of Pledge at Lorie's gang and sprayed them in the eyes, after which May's gang emerged from hiding and confronted the blinded Thugleens.

May was ecstatic. "Heh, heh, heh...Well, Lo, it looks like your little shoplifting spree has come to an abrupt end! Heh, heh, heh!"

"Yeah," said Chancellor, "we're gonna kick your ass!"

Then Clo broke in, "I hate you...Loo...rie...you are a...ruffian!"

As May and her gang closed in, she had one last comment. "Say your prayers, McKee, you fat whore!"

Just then, Donna Franklin jumped forward with a pair of laser-guided nunchucks tucked under each arm. "Ha, ha, ha! You forgot about me, May—DOOONNNA FRANKLIN! I always wears my shades, so's I'm oookay! I know KAAAY-RATE!!! And now YOU'RE ALL GONNA DIE!"

"Oh my Good!! We're gonna have a REALLY fight! Oh my God! Oh! Oh!!"

Well, as you can guess, a fight erupted, and it sounded something like this...*(play the fight music from the movie "Romeo & Juliet in the background")*

"AAAAHHHH!!!" Pow! Bash!! "I'll get you, McKee!!" "Arrrgghh!!" Smash! "Heee-Yaaa!!!" Crash! Pow!! "I...hate you...Lo!!!" Bash!! Crunch!! Sprissssshh!! "All I did was dust!" Bam!! "Ladies and gentlemen, Hutch's has a sale on lettuce, two for a dollar, it's Doggie Discount Day over in the meat department, and there's a spectacular fight on aisle seven!!!" Smash!!! "OWWW!!!" "Ahhhh!!!" Throttle! Crash!

At a crucial moment, Helen Gillcrest was able to remove her oversized show and toss it at Lorie McKee's gang, knocking them all over. Before May's gang could close in for the kill, however, Lorie's gang all piled onto Johnson's atomic-powered Bat-chair.

"All right, Johnson, turbines to speed, atomic piles at full burn...Let's GO!!!" With a blinding flash of the afterburners, Lorie McKee sped out of Hutch's without any of their supplies, and even though May hadn't killed Lorie, she was satisfied in the knowledge that she had successfully thrown a wrench into the opening of THE LO LIFE.

But do you think that Lorie McKee is going to let May get away with this? Hey, c'mon man, get real! These are professional Thugleens we're talking about here, and you'll hear more about them in the next edition of "The Continuing Saga of the Irving Thugleens." So stay tuned, and in the meantime, Don't Forget To Pray!!!

(Max wants to remind us that "INSIDE JOKE readers are encouraged to send in any scripts or tapes—approx. 9 minutes in length—to NUCLEAR ENTERPRISES, P.O. Box 815605, Dallas, TX 75381. Make sure you have extra copies when you send us material, you know how the mail can be. And try to keep the FCC in mind, you perverts. You can be controversial without getting explicit.)"

THAW! by S.F. Willens

"Thaw!" Dorleac cried at the recalcitrant being cringing before him. "Thaw, I say. Thaw!" He kicked at the frozen thing and railed against it in a virulent outpouring.

"Ay, sire!" Krim exclaimed, echoing his master's desires. He limped forward, scraping his shrivelled right leg across the blood-red brick floor. "'Ow can we cut 'im if 'e doesn't thaw? What we gonne do?"

"Must I think of everything?" Dorleac's cold, critical eyes fell on his servant. He raised a thin finger, brushing back the shock of grey-black hair that'd carelessly fallen across his brow.

The corpse would have to be dismembered tonight. They'd tickets on tomorrow's train and the trip into the city couldn't be postponed. Dr. Dorleac was to address an important meeting of the Coroners Guild at King's Hall in Heresford Lane. These considerations forced nervousness and impatience on him. "Imbecile!" he spat. It wasn't exactly clear if he hurled the epithet at Krim or the frozen corpse.

A sudden glimmer lit Dorleac's dark eyes. He snapped his fingers. "We'll use the blowtorch! That'll render him pliable enough to easily take apart. Fetch it, Krim!" His attitude melted with relief as once again his indefatigable intelligence came through and divined a solution to the ticklish problem.

We're both totally inept novices, Dorleac reproached himself. In fact, it was their first experience in actually killing and they hadn't a clue of how to proceed. Dorleac recalled the grim murder, as it had transpired in the surrounding woods. Shots rang out in his mind. Hit, the terrified victim gauged out sizeable clumps of sod as he thrashed about wildly in the conduct of his death throes. He bled profusely and lay in a monumental pool of blood that slowly absorbed into the earth leaving behind a hideous telltale stain.

Dorleac didn't know why they'd done it. Perhaps being a coroner had somehow drawn him into the grisly experiment. He examined death regularly but had never effected it until now. And Krim, as always, had followed his lead, aiding and abetting him even in this most ghastly of whims. Hindsight bestowed the certainty on Dorleac that they'd been too hasty in removing the rather appreciable evidence from the murder site. They should've dismembered the cadaver directly after the perpetration of the heinous crime.

"The whole project was doomed from the start," Dorleac informed the silent walls. "Instead of cutting him up into small chunks straightaway, we huffed and sweated like pigs bringing him here, dragging his ungainly corpse down the stairs to the basement and pitching him into the bloody ice room. How'd I know that he'd freeze into a block so soon?"

You're a coroner. You should've known, his mind retaliated. Krim's bulky, short, misshapen form clattered across the floor. His large morbid eye fixed on Dorleac as he scurried to his side the offered him the torch. "You're to be careful, Sire," he warned solicitously. "If you puts the flame directly on 'im, it'll blacken the flesh and cook the meat on the bone."

"Indulge me!" Dorleac sneered. "By all means, exhibit your prowess with the piece. You understand the equipment, I believe?"

Krim whimpered. "Yes, master," he sobbed. He knew too well what could happen. His leg burned anew with the memory of the terrible accident; his fingers charred before his eyes; his hair flashed and fell in fine ash from his head.

"Krim! We've no time to waste on sentimentalities. Point it and blast away but be careful not to damage the specimen, won't you?"

"I should stand back and direct the flame to 'is side." "Right!"

"Then 'ell thaw proper and 'is parts won't be spoiled. They won't get sooty and nasty looking."

"Right! Proceed!" Krim backed up, lurched forward, tripped and stumbled, threatening to spill the dangerous torch on the floor.

Dorleac's left hand flashed forward to steady him while the right clipped him rudely across the jaw. He thrashed the man about the head repeatedly. "Idiot!" he snarled.

"Don't bellow, sire!" Krim implored. "Don't 'arm me!" he cried, waving a crumpled hand in front of his face. "You'll 'ave me nervous and awkward, you will. I'll not be able to finish the job, I won't."

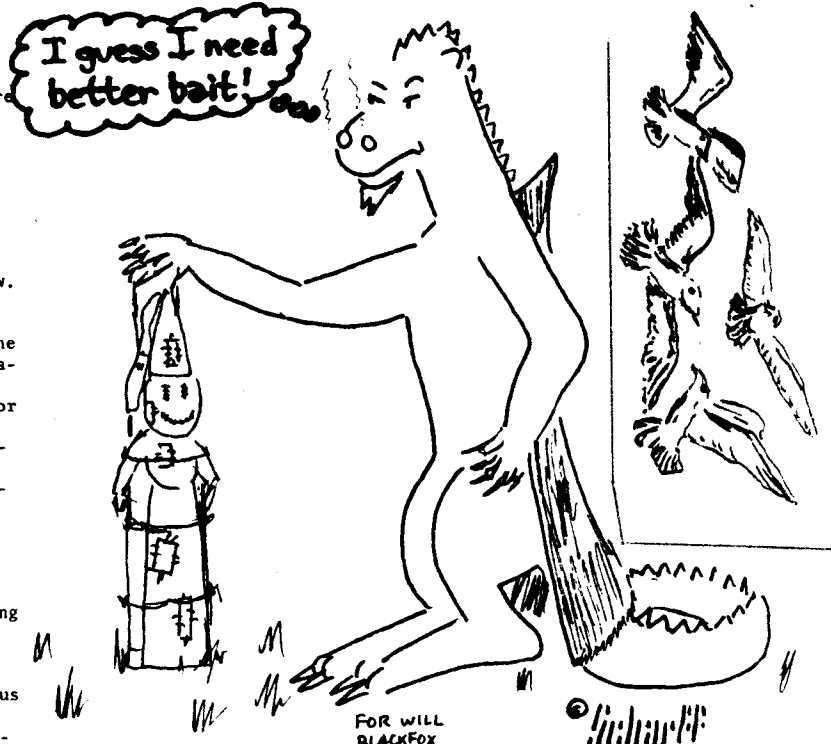
"Finish? Give it to me, you clumsy oaf. I've to do everything myself if I mean to have it done properly."

"Let me...let me!" Krim whined. "I'll make it right, I will." "Hurry, then!" Dorleac commanded.

Blue flame leaped from the torch as Krim struggled to control and adjust it. He teetered uneasily backward and forward but found his footing and took a proper stance. The flame burned brightly, propelling from the torch at just the right distance and angle from the body so that its intense heat weakened the rigid ice forming the corpse's encasement.

Dorleac's eyes glittered with fascination as the ice melted and gradually slipped away. The soft mush dissolved into water and here and there hairy flesh emerged and as it did, it encountered the stuffy air of the close basement quarters in which Dorleac and Krim worked feverishly.

Dr. Dorleac was often hard on Krim. Some would say he was heartless, even cruel, in his handling of the simple, loyal, damaged man. But in the deep recesses of his mind, and in a cold and clinical way, he recognized the inestimable value of his



FOR WILL
BLACKFOX

trusted servant. It was his firm belief that one could never allow an underling too much rein lest he attempt to wrest the upper hand away from the master. One must remain rock-hard in one's conviction and keep an eternal vigil, he confirmed, to keep one's position. Yet in his heart of hearts, he pitied his dear friend all his trials and in unique ways tirelessly cared for and protected him from the relentless vileness of the world. In addition, Dorleac clothed, fed and housed him and asked nothing more in return than the fulfillment of the simple tasks he assigned. And Krim, good fellow, was only too eager and happy to comply.

"E's coming, sire!" Krim cried with glee. "E's thawing, 'e is!" He looked around at Dorleac seeking the slightest hint of approval and praise.

"Yes. Thawing. Yes! It shan't be long now." Dorleac turned to the instrument case he'd brought with him. He selected his favorite razor-sharp scalpel that he'd used in countless dissections. He grasped it confidently between his fingers. An incidental ray of light struck the surgical implement and exploded along its silvery edge in a momentary, dazzling starburst. Dorleac's lips parted in a voracious smile as he contemplated the task ahead.

"Have you singed him badly, then?" he asked triumphantly.

"Ow! Ow!" Krim howled. "I've not. I've done a proper job, I 'ave."

"And so you have," Dorleac said, relenting. "He's thawed at last, has he?" he continued. "Now we've only to cut away the hide..."

"It's 'dress,' sire."

"What?"

"It's called 'dress' when you cuts the 'ide, drains the blood and removes the viscera."

"Right." Surprise registered in Dorleac's eyes. Krim continually promoted random knowledge that one wouldn't have associated with someone in his condition. The accident had savaged him brutally; crippled his mind. And yet at times, as now, he displayed a laudable acquaintance with terms not readily familiar to Dorleac.

Dorleac expertly drew the sharp blade across the hide and it snapped open with a sound like tearing parchment. He worked rapidly parting muscle and selecting fine hunks of meat that brought the sheerest lasciviousness to Krim's ruined face. Lust sparkled in his bulging eyes; spittle glistened in the corners of his distorted mouth.

"Now, sire? Now?"

"Right! We've only to pop these excellent steaks onto an oiled pan..."

"Deer is rightly called 'venison,' sire."

"Right," Dorleac replied. He winced. I mustn't reveal that he's keener than I in this endeavor, Dorleac thought. It could swell his head, rendering him all the more insufferable and unmanageable.

"E's better in a wine marinade. It makes 'im all the more delicious." Krim loudly smacked his lips.

"Well then, Krim," Dorleac retorted sarcastically, "start the fire, fetch the wine, and set the table!"

"Immediately, sire!" Krim fawned.

"We shall feast royally tonight even though the fruits that grace our table were won by the most calculated and cold-blooded murder..."

"It's called 'unting,' sire, when you tracks and kills an animal."

"Hunting." Right! Dorleac cried in a fit of passion.

Sayz-U!(Letters)

[NOTE: With this issue we add dates on letters, where they appear in the original. Whether this will serve to avoid or add to the general confusion is anybody's guess.]

Dear Elayne,

I don't expect you to use this in your letter column, but I want to tell you how nice it is to have a place to send your stories and see them in print just six weeks later. This has got literary quarterlies beat all to hell. This is action. Get a story or poem accepted somewhere else and chances are it's 2 to 3 years before you see it in print (if the mag hasn't folded in the meantime). Also it's nice to get familiar with the other contributors' writing (I see Wayne Hogan [his artwork] all over the small press, and Mary Ann Henn, and Sheila Murphy, and Sigmund Weiss) and IJ staffers too. Anni Ackner's got such a talent, such a way with the extended sentence (and I'm not being sarcastic either). I mean IJ #58 hurt without her. So thanks again Elayne, you're really doing a lot for people like me and all others whose best (and worst—read: empty; form rejections) part of the day is checking the mailbox.

Sincerely,

ANDY ROBERTS
394 Hiler Road
Columbus, OH 43228

P.S. Go ahead and run the letter if you like—sometimes I get a little paranoid about being too sentimental.

(Oh tosh—I love it! Egoboo, egoboo...)

Ladies & Gentlemen,

Good and Bad Things about IJ #58 and #59.

Good Things:

a) Mike Gunderloy's entry in #58. He's rapidly becoming one of my primo-supremo faves in these pages. His pseudo-cyberpunk (but thankfully not full cyberpunk) guerilla adventures please me greatly.

b) The fact that J.P. Morgan also saw GOLIATHON, which is a true, profound viewing experience.

c) Carol Magary—she's also climbing the charts of my favorites with her clear, precise and very authentic sounding prose.

d) Mastermath's auspicious debut. This is a truly twisted mind. The man is just simple Hep (there, I've said it. Now, according to Deja's First Law of Hepness, he can start calling himself hep also).

e) Kathy Stadalsky's "Truth About Rock Music..." This woman has either written the wickedest satire in recent memory or found one of the most horrific pieces of propaganda ever laid onto paper. I'm still not absolutely certain that this piece was fiction. It is the best piece in IJ 58, good enough for me to call people up after reading it and telling them about it.

f) Susan Packie's "Cheapness Always Shows" in IJ #59. This was simply put a marvelous bit.

g) Dorian Tenore's piece. Dorian is at her best when she writes about film (look at some of her brilliant pieces for CAPRA [an amateur press association (APA) whose theme is movies] for further proof), and the piece in IJ #59 is arguably one of the best of hers to appear in IJ for a while. It was focused, concise and humorous and really explained why, despite its hellishness, the Bloodscape job was worth it.

Bad Things:

a) The fact that Mike Gunderloy did not have a piece in IJ #59.

b) The fact that Carol Magary had no piece in IJ #59.

c) The fact that Sticks, a marvelous horror story, is falsely attributed to Stephen King. The author of this disturbing bit about race memory is actually Karl Earl Wagner—it appears, unless I'm mistaken, in his collection Why Not You And I?

d) In "Commercial McClue-In," "Kid" Sieve refers to "the perpetuation of sexist stereotypes." I hate stereotypes and people who do stereotype—I recall having to sit through, with some embarrassment, an advert for "The Serious Sexy Sounds of Soul" that looked for all the world to be a white man writing what he thought a black man would sound like ("No, my brother—you gotta buy your own" indeed). I also recall losing a friend when he told me he wouldn't move into Brooklyn because "black people live there." I took great offense at that, and the resulting argument resulted in my not talking to him since. I started writing for IJ in the belief that my audience would not be prejudicial, but open-minded, willing to discuss and debate an issue rather than blindly following it.

This apparently is not true. First Roldo's attack on my person in #58 and the Bjorn Fnord piece in #59 points out to me that this supposed "enlightened, understanding radical" audience of mine sees things in the same black/white terms that the worst president in our history does. First Roldo's letter calls me a mindless follower of Big Brother and otherwise calls me scum for supporting a view that, if you went back to the original letter, you will see I DON'T EVEN SUPPORT! Roldo attacked me without even addressing the point of the letter or misinterpreting it altogether.

My point was this: I do not use drugs. That does not mean I will stop someone from using them. I do not support the present "Say No To Drugs" campaign, although some of their points—particularly the prevention of drug use by children until they are ma-
ture enough to make the choice. Other than that, I think the campaign is stupid, heavy-handed and confused. Ideally, there should be some sort of dialogue between the two factions leading

to some sort of mutual agreement. I am not the naive, foolish blind man of Roldo's letter, nor am I the "Anti-Druggie" of Fnord's piece, which horrifies me for stereotyping—one of the things we "radicals" are not supposed to be doing. What am I? A Professional? A Jaded? Heaven Help Us, a Trendy? I don't think I fall into any of them, yet Fnord sees fit to pigeonhole me (and other IJ staffers—and there are some—who are also non-drug users) as enemies.

For a change to come, there must be respect and understanding on both sides. By being reactionary and retentive, you will only make a victory against those you are against more difficult, for they will fight all the more dear. Subversion works much better than obversion—convince them rather than coerce, trick rather than slap. Unfortunately, a lot of you are screaming when you should be whispering, and screaming will help no one. Not me, and not you.

THOMAS DEJA
50-56 96th Street
Corona, NY 11368

(First off, in fairness to Bjorn: "Fnord" is a group pseudonym; the author[s] of that piece exist outside the purview of IJ and had no real notion that this debate was going on, from what I am given to understand. Also, Bjorn sent us a hurried letter after the last issue had gone into production asking me to remove said piece on the basis that it might be misconstrued—the "comments concern professional anti-druggies" like good old Nancy, I was told, and were not meant as a personal attack against anyone in IJ. Secondly, I thought we might have problems with the time lag from here to Canada and wanted to get this debate over with once and for all [I hope], so I sent a copy of the relevant portions of Tom's letter to Roldo, who responded thusly:)

The Reply:

It appears that young Deja has decided that the best defence is to be offensive.

Imagination is a valuable tool, but this display of rampant persecution complex is simple imagination-abuse!

Not only does he deny that my response to his letter was based on his stated opinions that a) drugs are responsible for what people do with them and b) that therefore there was some validity to the ludicrous anti-drug campaign, he now attacks me replying to what he said rather than what he meant.

I have stated before, under various pseudonyms, that I DO NOT advocate the use of ANY Psychotropic Substances by the General Public and I am righteously PISSED OFF at the accusation that I do. Shit, Piss, and Industrial Waste! The last three years of my life have been dedicated totally to Working on a method of Consciousness Expansion and Intelligence Increase that can be done without herbal or chemical aid, and now I find myself taking crap-flack from some damp-ass kid who doesn't know what he's talking about and can't say what he means. Oh dream-come-true...my life is now fulfilled and I can go joyously unto my repose, secure of my just place in the Valhalla of Scapegoats with Aleister Crowley, Richard Nixon and the Ghost of Christmas Forgotten.

It's amusing to find myself compared to Reagan. I wonder which of us is more offended.

My exit from INSIDE JOKE is long overdue and, while it would be amusing to indulge in the sort of no-holds-barred slander-fest Deja has opened, I have More Important Matters that require my attention. Elayne may choose to continue running my backlog; it is but a spectre and indifferent to the slings and arrows of unwanted opinions. To those who have enjoyed my contributions, I hope both of you will send me cards at New Years. To those of you who have dumped on my efforts (and a long overdue "Fuck You!" to Rosey Palmer for his critique of "Music in the Glen" and a general farewell "Kiss My Ass" to others too numerous to mention), smell the brimstone, kiddies, 'cause I AM GONE. ROLDO

1232 Downing Street
Winnipeg, Man. R3E 2R7 CANADA

(Okay, my turn. I printed Roldo's letter in deference to the fact that he has been with IJ, albeit on and off, for quite a long time now; however, in spite of the fact that I have always had a soft spot in my heart for the man, it is my considered opinion that the above invective is totally uncalled-for and the very opposite of Roldo's stated goal of expanded consciousness and increased intelligence. It is, plain and simple, mean-spirited and completely ignoring of the valid points Tom makes about prejudice and hatred. I fail to see any instance in which such vicious vitriol is called for, and it saddens me to see Roldo apparently stoop to such a degree. I also believe quitting IJ at this point is tantamount to a child taking his ball and going home because s/he feels someone else isn't playing fair, instead of trying to find out what's really happening at the playground. For the record, I agree both with Tom's contention that more open-mindedness is needed and that radicals, leftists, or whatever some of us wish to call ourselves do ourselves little good by bickering about points on which we essentially agree anyway; and with Roldo's point about not advocating drug usage by the General Public, which I take to mean anybody not emotionally or mentally prepared to understand and handle consciousness-altering. I shall miss Roldo, if this is indeed his final decision, but if he feels this persecuted and wronged I'm not going to stop him, and I will, as he mentions, still run the rest of his backlog [including some wonderful covers he's done for us] and credit him under "Other Contributors." Lastly, I admire Tom's letter for taking what I believe to be the high road, toward reconciliation and a call for "respect and understanding." Sometimes I walk a thin line as editrix between letting everyone have their say and keeping hurtful material out of our dialogues, but I

also know that some things just have to run their complete course before people take deep breaths and gather themselves up again. I hope Tom and Roddo both stay, and that they both stop being defensive over what they perceive as attacks upon one another and realize they're pretty much both saying the same thing after all, only in different ways. C'mon, kids, play nice.)
Hi Elayne!

IJ #59 was brilliant as usual, so I thought, what the heck, I might as well actually subscribe, rather than buying one or two issues at a time. Your price rise is not, I feel, an unjustified drain on my finances...While I'm writing a letter to you, I gotta say that re: GM Dobbs' book idea, "Lost Skills of Suburbia," there IS a market for this. I oughta know, I work in a bookshop, and one of the big movers this year has been "The Modern Man's Guide to Life," which is this thick compendium of everything that every secure, upper-class yuppie guy oughta know, i.e., which dinner fork is which, how to dress for a wedding, how to be an emergency midwife, even hints on how to take a piss. I think that a similar book on suburban skills would find a nice big ecological niche in the bookstore environment.

(Witness also the success of "An Incomplete Education," a thick red tome which tells everything you should have learned in college [in art, literature, science, etc.] in readable, entertaining, shallow form.)

There are a couple of other books about suburban life, like that Time-Life home repair series, and household hint books that tell you how to make laundry detergent from baking soda and dish-water soap or whatever, but these kind of books are useless if you haven't quite figured out that floor cleaner is for cleaning floors and charcoal lighter fluid is for use in the back yard and not in North Vietnam.

Whatever.

Anyway, keep putting out your great zine...

CURTIS OLSON
P.O. Box 19441
Washington, D.C. 20036

(Interested readers might want to check out Curtis' zine, T.W.I. [Typing While Intoxicated], available from him for \$2.)
Elayne,

As I've only read a few bits in IJ 59, I can't comment on it as a whole yet. Of course, I'm thrilled with what I've read so far. Good to have Anni back. The pleasant surprises here were Kathy S.'s "The Man in the Purple Maverick" and "The Love Song of J. Albert Gore" by Todd Kristel. With Kathy's story I started out thinking it was going to be another stupid "I'm-inside-the-dog's-head story but it wasn't. I mean, it was "inside the dog's head" but it wasn't stupid or ordinary. The story actually affected me. The nerve!! Quite a change from "What's The Point?", at least in terms of style.

As for "Love Song...", I again had much trepidations that this would destroy one of my favorite poems. Instead, Todd really nailed it and, if anything, made it better. Oh, maybe that's going a bit too far, but I loved it.

Enough. Here's some \$. Now please remove that threatening "X" from my label...

MICHAEL BULLER
152 S. Allen St.
Albany, NY 12208

Dear Elayne:

...Sorry no Bibliophilic Blitz" (why'd you change the name?) this time. I've been rather preoccupied. [I must've been too; sorry about the typo with the header, and when you send your next one I'll correct it.]

Something I mentioned at the IJ Party, but would like to repeat here: Three "team-ups" I'd really like to see:

1) Prudence & Pink Bunny meet "Calvin & Hobbes." (By the way, Ms. Gaelor, after what Pink Bunny did, I hope Prudence does saw his ears off.)

2) Kermit and Marine & Officer Friendly meet "Those Annoying Post Bros.", or "Savage Henry" at least (Psycho #1, meet Psycho #2).

3) This one you IJers could probably pull off—"McMack, Agent in Charge of Ambiguities, Earth" (James MacDougall) vs. Zog (yeah, Rodney's Demon Queen).

So, how about it, guys? Guys? You out there? Anybody? (Fnord) Regarding the price hike: @#!!!! Phooey! My goodness!

Drat!! Other obscenities! Oh, well. However, I don't think you're going far enough—at \$2 an ish you'd be breaking even. [We couldn't break even on this unless we charged at least \$5, R.—the reason I didn't want to double the price is because I'd never raised it before in IJ's history. If we must, we'll go to \$2 eventually, but I want to see how the \$1.50 works out first.] Maybe if you used Tristero instead of the pots office...nah.

Has anybody seen LEONARD, PART 6? Anything T.H.E.M.'s media lackeys slander this badly must have something going for it...but enuf 4 now.

BCNU,

R. BAIN
Box S-55, Castle Point Station
Hoboken, NJ 07030

P.S. Liked your "solution" to the gerber—very well done! (You wrote the end, right?) (Yep—who else would volunteer to clean up the mess and try to put everything back together again?)

Dear Elayne,

Just received IJ #59 and I'm happier than ever that I subscribed; not just because I beat the price hike but because of the wonderful bits and pieces that go to make up your magazine. (More praise and hurrahs.)

Anyway, it's so nice to start the day and the reading off with

Anni Ackner's column. She is always refreshingly herself (as opposed to being Fran Liebowitz). David Serlin's bit on the Olympics was interesting, too. I had also planned to write something on the winter extravaganza, but I'm still steamed up about the way the ice dancing judges treated the Duchesnay couple. Remember? The one couple with true artistic achievement and innovation in a sport that gets more and more boring year after year, and the judges slap them around point-wise because "they hadn't seen that kind of stuff before." Sad. [By the way, if anyone happened to get the Duchesnays' performances on tape, I didn't get a chance to see them but I'm dying to, after what I've heard.] Instead they give it to the Russians Bestialman and Buchen or something like that. They were alright but their hairdos made them look like blond vampires. And you're not the only one, David, who thought Katerina Witt is cute. Hoo doggy, you should have seen the Seattle papers. One of the writers here was indecorous enough to refer to Ms. Witt as a "feline slinky seductress." This sparked a barrage of letters both pro-sex and pro-Kat and anti-sex and anti-Kat. Few bothered to mention athletics. Strange.

To G.M. Dobbs: Forget the single guy cookbook, but do put all your efforts into the Lost Skills of Suburbia. Yes, I think we need another book celebrating the middle-class of the 50s and 60s, and I don't care how many people throw rocks at me. What kind of magazines should the suburban family subscribe to? Popular Mechanics, Life, Reader's Digest and perhaps, if you come from a literate bunch, The Saturday Evening Post. What about suburban recreation, playing miniature golf and the like? Sounds like a great idea. Let's see more.

Tom Deja makes perfect sense in his Purgatory Papers. That's really scary, considering all of his humorous political notions might not be too far away from reality. I swear there have been fundraising power breakfasts before. Yeesh. Let's see, what's next?

Back-to-back graphic violence with Ken Burke's vicious story and Kathy Stadalsky's animal tragedy. I read this issue on Kathy's due date; hope the young'un's doing fine. (Mother and daughter are both well at home; see page 2.) The pieces were well-written and powerful. Unfortunately, my depression quotient (DQ) is already high, especially after reading Randy Russell's novel Universe City (pub.'d by him out of Sundusky, OH and recommended).

"Kid" Sieve's commercial bit is excellent as always. I haven't seen the Soft 'N Dri spot yet, but the Bud spot is silly. As Sieve says, why don't they jazz up their place with a better beer instead of a spudly brew? If they still wish to retain their imposture, they could always have Michelob Dark, the beer that's dark but has no bitterness. Hmm, seems like I could accomplish the same thing with food coloring. Anyway, does Sieve write anywhere else? I'd like to know, it's fine stuff.

Well, I guess I can't say something about everyone though they all deserve it. Time to go feed Amanda and Spot, watch Perry Mason, and try and write something for IJ, or maybe Perry Mason.

Sincerely,

MARK ROSE
9037 Palatine Ave. N.
Seattle, WA 98103

["Kid" Sieve says: "Yeah, I write for Jan Byron's DREAMSHORE and Debbie David's BEAUTIFUL WORLD occasionally, but most of my writing isn't done pseudonymously, it's done under my real name. And hey, I like Mich Dark, and any commercials featuring Martin Mull, Anheuser-Busch or no, can't be all bad. And, hoo doggy?")
Hey Elayne,

Sorry to hear bout da pricehike. Not cos it's a backbreaker to my budget or nuthin. Just cos it's always a bear to have to do sumthin not cos ya wanted to but cos ya were forced by economic reasons. Foofahrah and IJ's worth more'n \$1.5 just for Pru and Anni anywayze. So I'm back from beyond da beyond an even wif a story which'll run over the next two issues. As for IJ59... Well, JELLO WARS may be the best thing Pru's done to date. Certainly rite up there. Whywuzzit buried back on page fuckin 15? [I don't consider anything in IJ as being "buried." The layout goes: Cover; editorial and events on page 2; Anni on page 3 unless I resurrect FAN NOOSE; then staff writers IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER OF QUALITY; then "Kid" on page 17 and Steve on page 20, intermixed with "Other Contributors" [also IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER OF QUALITY, although I'm likely to "match up" stories with similar themes on the same page]; then the letters to round it up. If anyone's upset at their placement in the pages of IJ, I wish they'd let me know; placement isn't intended as any sort of message on the submission itself, so please don't take it as such. You don't see Phil complaining that he gets the back page every issue, do you?] Also, as an aside to Phil (whose Pru & Bunny illos for 58 kicked my ass) lemme jes' say that (altho I'm not deputized to speak for her I will anyway) Prudence Gaelor wuz not put on this planet to save you. Or as we say at SHCQ: we don't love you we just want your money! Smokin cover by Ace who also cranked a good 'un with "Will Shatter Meets Sid..." apart from a slight tendency to romanticize the fucked-up (which Alex Cox does not to in LOVE KILLS). Great stuff of chunky fun from Anni (hey! SPY mag's latest issue ripped off yer idea—lawsuits ahoy!). Good stufh also: Larry, JPM, Tom (particulo the line "Sam 'shut up or I'll kill you' Donaldson"—hey TD, dja ever see the McLaughlin Group, sorta like a political punditry version of pro wrestling?) and Dorian and R. Bain (aaah! it's OLD science—will it never die?) and Max Nukes. Sorry to say that I disliked Kathy Stadalsky's piece so much that I'm writing in to say that even if I am sorry that she's feeling kinda down it's still no excuse for some-

thing so derivative and obvious and trite and at least as graphic as Larry's to a much less interesting impact (well if you WILL insist on telling us what is MYOUNTK then you must expect a certain level of disagreement). (I know, I just don't think it got that descriptive to get its point across, but you're free to disagree; I mean, how often do we see eye-to-eye, Rodney?) Kathy, hope yer feelin' better soon. Remember WE LOVE US. Ahoy. More Snide Critic!! What did SC think of HAIRSPRAY? Or GOOD A.M. 'NAM? Or even the LAST EMPEROR OF THE SUN? I simply can't go on much longer without this info. But now, folks, let's all hear it for the new mayor of Palm Springs, CA—Sonny Bono!!! YES, wot this country needs is more elected officials who've starred in John Waters flick. Mink Stole for secretary of Interior! Tab Hunter for Genl Secty of UN! John Waters for mayor of Baltimore!! Well, SHCQ should be out soon and y'all can getchers for \$1 (cash only) to the address below. Which is to say that I should have a real home soon but for now ifn' ya got anything to say, just point it at

PS: Mr. Pinky Rules OK

RODNY DIOXIN
Box 1529
Columbia, MD 21044

Hello Folks!

April 10, 1988

Wow—I almost didn't (er, make that COULDN'T) get this p.shit in on time...Y'know, I could just send ya columns that are syndicated around the globe, but in case you hadn't noticed my last few PIGSHITS have been written especially and exclusively for IJ. So it takes me a bit more time to come up with something for each ish that's hopefully of a high (at least for me!) standard. (This is why I don't generally run any syndicated material; the only exceptions tend to be illustrations. If your writing is syndicated elsewhere, it's getting print space already as far as I'm concerned, and I don't really want it; since we have so little space to go around to begin with, I'd rather it were filled with stuff done exclusively for IJ.)

Anyways, enough apologizing and sugar-coating...
Thanx for #59. Anni's column, as always, was dagburned BRILLIANT. Ken's and Ace's pieces were ultra-nifty (and you can QUOTE me on that!), Kathy Stadalsky seems like a great and noble addition, and I'm still pouring through the remaining 28 pages (tho I noticed you missed my birthday AGAIN on Upcoming Events!!! Just remember, it's the same as Mel Blanc's and C.W. Moss'!)...*(Mistake acknowledged and corrected on page 2...)*

Til #61, take care, see ya soon!

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

Dear Elayne,

You know, for a "Newsletter of Comedy an' Creativity" there's plenty of serious and even solemn stuff showing up lately! In #58, there's wimmen trouble in "Purgatory Papers," "The Luck of Sarah O'Brien" features suicide and wasted life, "The Auto-Cannibal" is plenty somber, "Backwords Logic" shows primal-scream therapy gone horribly awry, "Homo Patrol" has taken a grim turn, "Padre Pio and the Kirksville Stigmata" is a straight tale of religious faith, "Room Service Blues" shows more alternate American fascism, "In the Field" concerns a dope-grower ripoff...#59? "Someone's in the Kitchen with Arnie": a pretty appalling tale of kiddie murder, "The Man in the Purple Maverick" stars a nice li'l doggie who gets run over and shotgunned, "I Kid You Not" shows us depressingly shallow swingers, "The Boarding House" is a tale of failed love and dashed hopes...Note! Important! I am most definitely not complaining about these features! Far from it. After all, this is there the "...and Creativity" part comes in. I just wanted to note the apparent increase in non-humorous (and well-done) material. (Well, if you're not complaining, I am. Come on folks, you know I'll print it if it's not necessarily humorous, but there's tons of lit journals out there, and I do prefer satire and comedic stuff, okay? Lighten up out there!!) Non-somber stuff that I enjoyed includes (in #58) "Plasma Pool/Grimm Fairy Tales," DeeBee's "How the Girls are Doing," Roldo's bit, the "Sex and Death" college thing, "Saying Goodbye to the Fireball," "Mr. Robertson," "The Three Aural Planes," "Charging by Induction," an' Mr. Tortorici's wonderful depictions of Pru & Pink Bunny on the back cover. #59...Ace's mutated "Bob" cover, "Out on a Limb," "Stupid Animals," the "Less Than Zi-Ro" Gerber-that-I-missed-dammit, and of course all the regular columns and stuff...

Don't give up the Shit (said the dope dealer).

JOHN P. MORGAN
185 Seabreeze Ave., #4
E. Keansburg, NJ 07734

(The following letters refer to this issue as opposed to #59, so we recommend you read the specific columns before perusing the next two commentaries.)

Dear Person Whose Name I Can't Say: 28 April 1988

Well, okay, so I did it already. Frankly, I think it turned out pretty well and, if you want the truth, I think you might just as well 86 Anni Ackner on like a permanent basis and put me on full time. 'Course, that's just a suggestion, but think it over—I work cheap. By the way, so where's the check already?

Anyway, I liked your magazine, but I traded it to Fred for a room deodorizer so I can't really comment on it. These room things are supposed to last a coupla months, so maybe I'll hang on to the next issue, but, anyhow, Fred said he liked it—your magazine, I mean, especially Pigshit. I don't know how much you can figure he really did like that, or how much it is he just likes to say "Pigshit," but, what the hell, I'm just passing it on to you.

In answer to your questions:

1) Yes 2) No 3) Yes 4) Yes 5) No

6) Only the goyim

7) Yeah, we have television commercials in the Republic of Popovac but, see, we don't have any television, so what they are, see, is maybe three, four times a month Pete, Charlene and Roger get dressed up in these gorilla outfits and get on stage at the Drag On Inn (actually, there's no stage, but you can't say they get on the floor because after about 11:30 at night most people are on the floor there) and try to sell us things. Sometimes it works—last month I bought this purple, hairy thing.

That's it for now. See ya.

LOU,
President of the Republic
of Popovac

Dear Elayne, and SEZ YOU readers,

My piece [in this issue] was not intended as satire. I believe everything I said, though I should add that most of my observations are under the heading "speculation," as opposed to "facts." If some of my points are wrong or misinformed I welcome enlightening feedback.

Jimmy the Greek notwithstanding, I believe blacks do indeed have larger thighs (no, I haven't measured them with a tape measure, but neither do I have to do this to know that they are, IN GENERAL, taller than Asians). An authority no less than the great O.J. Simpson always maintained that blacks' superior speed was due to their "high asses and large thighs." You know what blacks say about another black who can't jump high? He's got "white man's disease." You know what they call a white football player who can run fast? He's "got some nigger in him." These aren't jokes. This is common sports jargon amongst blacks. (Ah, but who's to say blacks can't perpetuate stereotypes through language the same way whites can?)

My interest in the black culture and what makes it tick has little to do with condescending white guilt liberalism. The fact is, I live in a largely black area, and have to deal daily with this horribly crippled culture. (And yes, whites have to take a lot of the responsibility for crippling them...but so too, blacks need to take more responsibility for themselves. It's interesting that most black civic leaders decry white liberals who are "soft on crime." The black's attitude is more in line with "Let's lock up and throw away the key on all these black thugs who are ruining and terrorizing our neighborhoods.")

We're talking about a group of people which comprises less than 15% of the population in the U.S., yet commits 50% of the murders. The number one cause of death of young black men is to be murdered by their fellow black men. It's truly tragic. All I'm attempting to do by my "Racism" column is to throw out a few possible explanations for why this is happening. (Okay, here's another: how 'bout male macho?) I'm no expert. I may be wrong. Hey everybody, let's take a look at this.

There is, of course, some truth to the notion that black crime is attributable to their poverty. Yet this fails to explain why they are committing (according to many criminologists) 3 times as many violent crimes as the Hispanic community, which is in fact even more poverty-ridden than the black community. Obviously the answer must go much deeper than mere poverty.

The idea that "the Jews own the media" is of course bullshit. But nonetheless they ARE over-represented. Jews comprise less than 5% of the U.S. population, yet comprise 20% of the doctors, lawyers, and millionaires. I don't have any statistics on Jews in media, but they do seem to be over-represented in terms of numbers, don't they? They certainly dominate the "comedian" field, which is probably the most verbally demanding field of all.

Yes, many of the differences between races can be attributed to different cultural backgrounds. But I also think it's worth investigating the possibility that some of the differences can also be attributed to the INHERENT BIOLOGICAL (physical and mental) differences unique to each race.

For example:

PHYSICAL: Orientals have smaller, more nimble fingers, giving them an advantage at intricate computer wiring.

CULTURAL: Blacks in America have a high violent crime rate.

Blacks in Africa have a low violent crime rate. Conclusion—Blacks are not inherently violent, but their cultural conditioning in America has made them so.

MENTAL: This is the hardest one to give concrete examples of, the most easily open to misinterpretation, yet I believe the key to understanding this whole racism mess. As one who has long studied Chinese religion, I believe there is a very real difference between Eastern and Western thought.

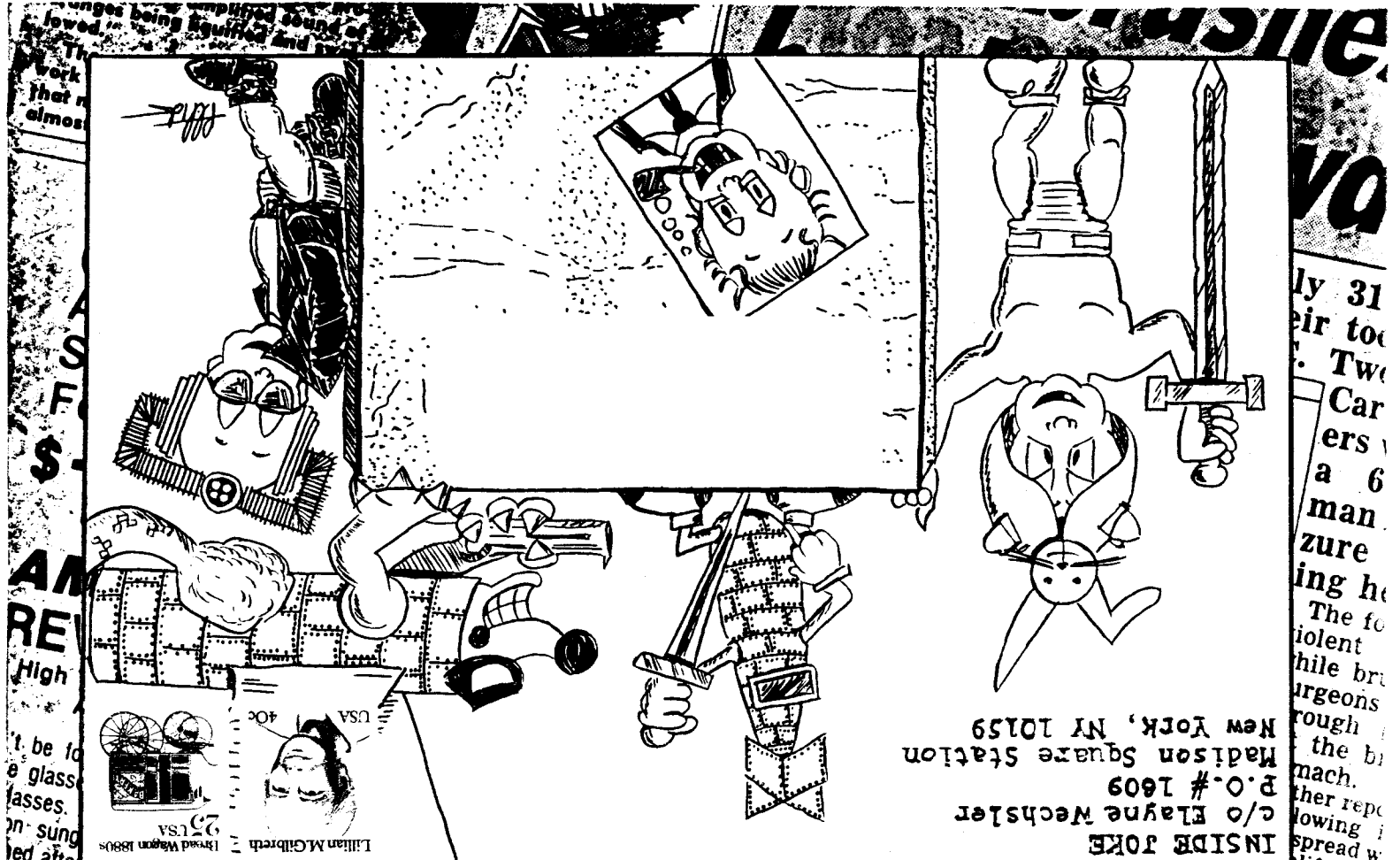
Oh well. Enough of my bullshit. Like I say, I may be wrong but I still think we need to talk about this stuff. If, however, my column does nothing but get people pissed off then I'll have to conclude that maybe it's best if I just keep my mouth shut.

Sincerely,

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

(On the contrary, I think it's good to get people riled up and meaningful discussions started, and I encourage responses to Ace on this one. Myself, I still have trouble buying your "physical" suppositions, Ace. Bigger thighs, more nimble fingers...I just don't know. Something about it strikes me wrong. But hey, who's to say my perceptions are all there? Feedback, folks!)

NEXT ISSUE: FAN NOOSE RETURNS (BRIEFLY) 29



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LET'S ALL GO TO THE MAGICIAN'S BIRTHDAY.
IT'S IN THE FOREST, BUT NOT SO FAR AWAY.
MUCH TO DO AND SO MUCH TO SAY,
WHILE WE LISTENED TO THE
OAKEN ORCHESTRY
PLAY...