

INSIDE JOKE

#62

\$150



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a
newsletter
of
COMEDY & CREATIVITY

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- THE "ROGER RABBIT" CONTROVERSY!
- JESSE HELMS' NAME MENTIONED, TWICE!
- INTERVIEW WITH MERLE KESSLER!
- IF ELVIS ISN'T ALIVE, HOW COME HIS NAME KEEPS CROPPING UP TOO?
- 36 (TOO MANY) PAGES (PLEASE SEND DONATIONS; I CAN'T AFFORD THIS!) OF THE USUAL (JEEZ, I MEAN IT, THIS IS COSTING ME TOO MUCH...)

Upcoming Events →

SEPTEMBER 15 - DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO IJ #63, our 8TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE (see Acknowleditorial)
 SEPTEMBER 16 - Anniversary of Palestinian Refugee Massacre in Beirut (1982)
 SEPTEMBER 17 - Riots in S. Korea!; Ken Kesey (53)
 SEPTEMBER 18-24 - National Singles Week
 SEPTEMBER 19 - Mike Royko (56)
 SEPTEMBER 20 - International Day of Peace
 SEPTEMBER 21 - World Gratitude Day; Chuck Jones (76); Bill Murray (38); Leonard Cohen (54); H.G. Wells (b. 1866); Waticism Day (remember James Watt?)
 SEPTEMBER 22-OCTOBER 1 - National Pickled Pepper Week
 SEPTEMBER 22 - Hobbit Day; Ice cream cone patented (1903); Official start of Autumn, so they tell us
 SEPTEMBER 23 - Native American Day; "Checkers" Day; John Waters appearance sp. by GRFT (see "Fan Noose")
 SEPTEMBER 24-OCTOBER 1 - Banned Books Week—Celebrating the Freedom to Read (read a banned book this week!)
 SEPTEMBER 25-OCTOBER 1 - American Newspaper Week
 SEPTEMBER 26 - T.S. Eliot (b. 1888)
 SEPTEMBER 27 - LARRY OBERC (32); Thomas Nast (b. 1848)
 SEPTEMBER 28 - Confucius (b. 551BC); Al Capp (b. 1909)
 SEPTEMBER 29 - Xenophobe Understanding Day; G. Autry (81)
 SEPTEMBER 30 - John Bullington becomes 1st person executed in America (1630); Ask A Stupid Question Day
 OCTOBER is National Pizza Month, National Sarcastics Month, International Microwave Month and Unicorn Season
 OCTOBER 1 - Groucho Marx (b. 1895); Jimmy Carter (64)
 OCTOBER 2 - Twilight Zone debuts (1959); "Peanuts" debuts (1950); Mahatma Gandhi (b. 1869)
 OCTOBER 3 - Universal Children's Day; Dave Winfield (37)
 OCTOBER 4 - Buster Keaton (b. 1896); Alvin Toffler (60)
 OCTOBER 5 - SUSAN PACKIE (42); JAMES WALLIS (22)
 OCTOBER 6 - Carole Lombard (b. 1908); ALA Founded (1876)
 OCTOBER 8 - Jesse Jackson (47); Chevy Chase (45)

OCTOBER 9 - DAZA (34); John Lennon (b. 1940)
 OCTOBER 11 - SNL Debuts (1975); E. Roosevelt (b. 1884)
 OCTOBER 12 - Aleister Crowley (b. 1875)
 OCTOBER 13 - Modern Mythology Day (see "Kid" Sieve for details in IJ #63); Molly Pitcher (b. 1754)
 OCTOBER 14 - e.e. cummings (b. 1894); Peace Corps (1960)
 OCTOBER 14-24 - Peace with Justice Week
 OCTOBER 15 - Mata Hari dies (1917); White Cane Safety Day
 OCTOBER 16 - DOUG PELTON (25); World Food Day; Oscar Wilde (b. 1854); Noah Webster (b. 1758)
 OCTOBER 19 - '87 Crash; Amy Carter (21); Peter Max (51)
 OCTOBER 20 - Keith Hernandez (35); Mickey Mantle (57)
 OCTOBER 21 - Electric Incandescent Lamp invented (1879)
 OCTOBER 22 - ANNI ACKNER (35); TOM GEDWILLO (37); Doris Lessing (69); Timothy Leary (68)
 OCTOBER 24-30 - Disarmament Week
 OCTOBER 24 - "Weird" Al Yankovic (29); U.N. Day
 OCTOBER 27 - Navy Day; Eric Canal opens (1825)
 OCTOBER 28 - VALENTINO (36)
 OCTOBER 29 - Crash of '29; Bela Lugosi (b. 1884)
 OCTOBER 30 - Grace Slick (49); "War of the Worlds" first broadcast in 1938—recreation, directed by David Ossman, to be broadcast on NPR station near you!
 OCTOBER 31 - Hallowe'en (Official IJ Holyday); National Magic Day; Increase Your Psychic Powers Day; DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO IJ #64 (last issue of '88)

ACKNOWLEDITORIAL

Has fall fallen yet? Good, maybe I can get my brain in creative gear again for the coming season...At least other people have managed to stir here in IJ-Land. We welcome back our own DeeBee, Deborah Benedict, and hope her return column presages many more words of wit and wisdom to come. With the strike over, Anni also returns, and Rory's back as well with his album reviews. In fact, as I write everyone's accounted for except Steven Scharff and the ever-tardy Prudence Gaelor, and as I'm not counting on receiving anything from either of them before we go to press, the final installment of THE JELLO WARS will have to wait until #63, along with any writing or art from SS. Next issue is, as I've mentioned before, our 8th Anniversary, in case anyone wants to do anything special, and it will feature a cover by another IJ returnee, John Crawford, whose "Baboon Dooley" will once again grace these pages (at least for the time being) and whose first book was just published, as was Anni's—for details, check out my "Fan Noose Addendum" in this issue (no, I'm not going to be doing "Fan Noose" regularly; I just had some catching up to do from last time).

Some of you still insist on addressing IJ stuff to me at our palatial post office box with the appellation "Elayne Wechsler-Chaput." While this is my "married name," MY POST OFFICE BOX IS AND WILL BE UNDER THE NAMES "ELAYNE WECHSLER" AND "INSIDE JOKE" ONLY, so please don't put any other names on your mail to me or I might not receive it. (It should go without saying that I prefer, always, to receive IJ mail at the p.o. box and only personal mail at my home address in Brooklyn, but some of you haven't quite figured this out yet, so please take note!) As always, checks should all be made out to my "maiden" name as well.

Welcome to our new contributors (Larry Blandino, Birke Duncan, Kathleen Prince, Michael Capobianco, Roger Coleman, Jim Kerbaugh, Dain Luscombe and anyone else I may have overlooked) and it's also nice to see some old and familiar faces back with us. And speaking of old-n-familiar, remember INSIDE STROKE, an idea for a "bastard sibling" publication that would accept all the More Than I Need To Know stuff I don't print in IJ? Well, staffer David Serlin has graciously accepted the challenge of finally putting this sucker out! He's shooting for sometime around Christmas, so if you've got MTINTK solicitations (at this point we'd prefer erotica to porn, as we have too much of the former and too little of the latter, from what I understand) send 'em to him by Thanksgiving or so. IS includes a somewhat dated cover by Ace Backwards, a brown paper back cover by Phil Tortorici, lots of staffer and non-staff contributions of writing and art, and I'm still not going to read any of it (although I may be printing and mailing it)... David's address is on the staffer address list, elsewhere within.

Finally got a bunch of back issues copied, with money I shamelessly embezzled from our sister pub, FALAFA (see "Fan Noose"), and they're available for \$1.50 each now, same as present and future issues. NON-REFUNDABLE advance subs are accepted for up to \$12 (8 issues). If your contribution runs in a specific IJ, you need only pay 65¢ in postage (74¢ US if you're in Canada) for that issue; other countries owe 3 TRCs per IJ, which I send surface rate. If an "X" appears near your name on the mailing label, this is the last issue you get without paying. I can't afford to trade any more, remember. That's about it for rules and regs, innit? Oh, and the deadlines are listed in "Upcoming Events"...Send what you got to us at

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

This issue is dedicated in memory of Anne Ramsey, who at least got her moment in the sun; and to Alan Napier, who thank goodness will never again have to endure the tasteless humiliation he underwent (while in the throes of advanced Alzheimer's) on a recent Batman reunion late Show. RIP, "Alfred."

* INSIDE JOKE is put on hexaweekly by Elayne "Trade and Execute" George Wechsler and dear friends and emanates from beautiful downtown Brooklyn, where even the roaches are glad the heat's broken (and hey, whatever makes them happy...).

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FRONT COVER BY VERNON GRANT

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Fan Noose

ADDENDUM

by ye
editrix



Welcome to the first installment of our semi-annual update, this one's purpose being to mention a few things left out of last issue's major "comeback" column... James Wallis, who has a piece in this issue, is putting his INSTANT KARMA on a bit of a hiatus—that's sort of the British version of IJ—but promises he will return soon; in the meantime, anyone wishing to contact James about submissions or back issues of Ink (featuring many IJ names, including ye editrix) his address is 8 College Gardens, London N18 2XR ENGLAND... A relatively new zine, IN YOUR MAIL, debuted recently with some very thoughtful questions—and answers—for and by the zine crowd—write for a copy to Dallas Swan, 1030

Adams St. #1-C, Satisbury, MD 21801... Michael Packer runs the GRAND RAPIDS FILM THEATRE and is pleased to announce the GRFT will present An Evening with John Waters on September 23, 1988, at the Ladies Literary Club, 61 Sheldon Blvd. SE, Grand Rapids. Admission's \$7 in advance, \$8 at the door—send a check or m.o. to GRFT at P.O. Box 3540, Grand Rapids, MI 49501 and for info call (616) 363-8231... T.S. Child of MONTHLY... BULLETIN fame is looking for an East Coast (probably NY area) resident "who is 1. a good writer 2. very organized 3. very honest 4. has a car and knows how to drive 5. has several months to devote to an interesting project, and 6. wants to get a bunch of money and have a book come out from a major publisher with their name on the cover." The book in question is to be entitled EAST COAST OFF THE WALL (we reviewed T.S. and Denver Tuscon's EUROPE OFF THE WALL last issue, and they're currently working on AMERICA OFF THE WALL: WEST COAST)—interested parties should contact T.S. at 2510 Bancroft Way #207, Berkeley, CA 94704... Speaking of books, it's high time I mention some worthy ones put out by friends of IJ. The clever folks from Vossarian Universal, Ligi and Fericano, have published the very funny tome THE ONE-MINUTE PRESIDENT, a must in this election season—to order send check or m.o. for \$6.95 (\$5.95 + \$1 P&H) to Jean Ligi, P.O. Box 40710, Portland, OR 97240-0710... IJ returnee John Crawford has put together many misadventures of his signature character in his book BABOON DOOLEY ROCK CRITIC: BABOON GETS AHEAD IN LIFE, available for \$9.95 from Popular Reality Press, P.O. Box 3402, Ann Arbor, MI 48106... And of special interest to all IJ readers is the brand new book from our own Anni Ackner, called NOBODY LOVES A VISUAL ARTS CRITIC and containing her work from her "Stars on One" column for FACTSHEET FIVE, plus four new pieces, plus intros from Mike Gunderloy (FF publisher) and ye editrix, all for a relative song—only \$4 from Mike at 6 Arizona Ave., Rensselaer, NY 12144 and if you don't rush out right now and buy as many copies as you can the author and yours truly (although I really can't speak for her) may just hold our breaths till we turn blue... Speaking of IJ folk, our somewhat esteemed presidente, Kip M. Ghesin, is still making a tidy profit with his Firesign Theatre information service FOUR-ALARM FIRESIGN! (FAlaFa!), and s/he's not even supposed to be in the black 'cause the newsletter's free and only thrice yearly and the latest issue (#15) contains a lengthy letter from the co-founder of the Church of the SubGenius, Ivan Stang, and here we at IJ are, eternally in debt. Ah well—if you're into TFT, or even just want to see Ivan's letter, send me a SASE c/o IJ's palatial p.o. box (please specify whether you want to be put on our mailing list or whether you're just in it for the SubG news)... FAlaFa! also contains occasional news on the San Francisco-based troupe DUCK'S BREATH MYSTERY THEATRE, but Duck's Breath puts out its own mailorder newsheet periodically called THE DUCKSTOP and available from them at P.O. Box 22513, San Francisco, CA 94122... I was remiss last time in not mentioning some worthy irregular publications out there—if you're into mail art and mini (MICRO) zines, Mike Schafer is still putting out EMOTIONAL VOMIT, which he sells for about 25-50 cents each issue—write him at 75 Fairview Ave. #3B, New York, NY 10040... Curtis Olson has put out his best T.W.I. (Typing While Intoxicated) yet, featuring some astute political commentary and some highly enjoyable fiction. It's \$3 from him at P.O. Box 19441, Washington, D.C. 20036... And Eric Mayer's third issue of DEJA VU contains fan writing that ranges from cloying to downright sharp, and Eric and wife Kathy make it feel quite warm and inviting—send them \$1 at 279 Collingwood Drive, Rochester, NY 14621... The working class is not only overlooked and underpaid in "real" life, but somewhat ignored in zine literature as a whole—except for a remarkable journal called THE MILL HUNK HERALD, "a worker-writers' journal, a forum for the opinions and stories of average working folk." The twice-yearly 88-pager is working on a special 10-year anthology issue, to sell for \$10 (if you order early you can get it for \$7.50), and I highly recommend this publication for fascinating and touching reading—the regular issue is \$3 from 916 Middle St., Pittsburgh, PA 15212... Meanwhile in the service/information sector, high tech and secretarial-type workers get shit from their bosses too, in addition to unexplained ailments, union busting and so forth—this is all chronicled quite

Once again we present as up-to-the-minute a staffer address list as we have at the moment (at least they all seem to be receiving their mail there). Staffers like hearing about what you think of their work personally, too, not only in the pages of IJ, so if you like someone's work why not write and tell 'em? We all need a bit o' the egoboo at times, wot? ANNI ACKNER, P.O. Box 18, Reading, PA 19603 ACE BACKWORDS, 1630 University Ave. #26, Berkeley, CA 94703 DEBORAH BENEDICT, 854 Y Street, Lincoln, NE 68508 KEN BURKE, P.O. Box 8, Black Canyon City, AZ 85324 TOM DEJA, 50-56 96th St., Corona (Queens), NY 11368 MIKE DOBBS, 24 Hampden Street, Indian Orchard, MA 01151 PRUDENCE GAELOR, P.O. Box 1529, Columbia, MD 21044 GARY PIG GOLD, 70 Cotton Dr., Mississauga, Ont. L5G 1Z9 CANADA RORY HOUGHENS, R.R. #2, Colfax, IL 61728 TODD KRISTEL, 1140 N. 24th St., Allentown, PA 18104 ligi, P.O. Box 40710, Portland, OR 97240-0710 J.P. MORGAN, 185 Seabreeze Ave. #4, East Keansburg, NJ 07734 LARRY OBERC, 58 Anderson St. #1, Boston, MA 02114 SUSAN PACKIE - please contact c/o INSIDE JOKE STEVEN SCHARFF, P.O. Box 5004, Hillside Township, NJ 07205 DAVID SERLIN, 4216 Baltimore Ave. 1st fl., Philadelphia, PA 19104 KATHY STADALSKY, 933 State Route 314, Mansfield, OH 44903-9807 LARRY STOLTE, 1360 E. Madison #33, El Cajon, CA 92021 DORIAN TENORE, 301 E. 48th St. #6D, New York, NY 10017 KERRY THORNLEY, P.O. Box 5498, Atlanta, GA 30307 PHIL TORTORICI, P.O. Box 57487, West Palm Beach, FL 33405



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well in PROCESSED WORLD. The new issue, #22, is filled with the same high quality writing and art (tremendous color graphics) as always, and is available for \$3.50 from 41 Sutter St., #1829, San Francisco, CA 94104... Amateur press associations (apas) are usually looking for new blood, as it were, and I'm currently writing for two in the process of expanding. HOYA, which calls itself a "many-to-many," takes its name from a Hopi dance, I believe, and has quite the feel of Native America at times, although the participants include Luke McGuff, Eric Mayer, Denise Dee, Al ? , W. Joe Hoppe and other not-necessarily-Native folk. For information write to collator Sean Wolf Hill, 2730 Monroe-Concord Rd., Troy, OH 45373 (Sean also publishes TIME WORM and a zine about diners) ... And for those into writing about baseball, there's NATIONAL PASTIME (NaPa), collated by Mike Flynn and about which you can write me for information... Lastly, someone (I think it was Bob Z) sent a scary pamphlet about the PMRC's zany hijinks and asks that interested activists sign petitions opposing laws limiting freedom of expression and all that—for info write MUSIC IN ACTION, 135 E. 55th St., New York, NY 10022, phone 212/751-9852. That's it for this installment, till about half a year or so from now—see you in the funny papers!



DIARY of the ROCK FIEND

by
Anni Ackner



(As readers probably know, the Writers' Guild strike is finally over, but ye editrix surrendered long before that. Be it hereby known, then, that Anni Ackner and the publisher of this magazine have come to a separate contractual agreement which allows Ms. Ackner to resume her duties as regard the column herein. There is no truth at all to the rumour that the blood of a certain chubby, drug-free ex-Go-Go was spilled in the arrival at said agreement. All Power to the People!)

INSIDE THE STRIKE ZONE

I suppose there are some of you—there are generally, I've noticed, at least seven or eight in every crowd, normally the ones attired in Spuds McKenzie tee-shirts and yelling "Party! Party!"—who are currently labouring under the delusion that, despite protestations to the contrary on the part of Our Beloved Editrix, myself, and the, well, person who had the extremely dubious honour of filling in for me these past several months, my absence from these august pages recently was attributable to nothing more than a selfish desire of mine to Get Away From It All, and that, during my disappearing act, as it were, I frittered away my time lying about a really major mansion on the Coast, sipping imported champagne, keeping company with the sort of person who periodically puts in guest appearances on the back page of People magazine, and completely ignoring my duties both to my Muse and to My Reading Public. Well, troops, as those of you who know me and love me (and I know there must be at least a couple of you, judging from the fact that I don't receive those nasty poison pen letters nearly as often as you might think) understand without my prompting, nothing could be further from the truth. As a matter of hard, brutal fact, while the rest of you were, undoubtedly, enjoying the rites of Spring and Summer—frolicking in and amongst the grass, chuckling at the exploits of those wacky Baltimore Orioles, learning how to correctly spell "Bentsen"—I was undertaking some Serious Business. In point of fact, I was on Strike.

Now, the uninitiated might think—it is, they endeavour to assure me, still a free country—that being on Strike is a kind of sinecure, a glorious respite from the cares of the workaday world. After all, you may think—secure in your Constitutional guarantee of fallibility, wrongheadedness, and sheer, all-around mistakenness—what does being on Strike really involve? A few hours a day of strolling in the warm sunshine, carrying an amusing little sign and chatting amiably about strategy with one's peers, then off to headquarters to draw some spending money from the Strike Benefits Fund, out for a relaxing meal, and so to bed. A lovely time, really, the uninitiated might think. Why, I think I'll go on Strike myself!

Well, ha! I say. Ha and ha again.

Gang, I am here to tell you—and I am the girl who should know—that being on Strike is a grueling, backbreaking affair, to be entered into with trepidation, endured with stoicism, and completed with a sense of overwhelming relief at one's escape in one piece, not unlike a romantic liaison with Sylvester Stallone, and I am terribly, terribly glad that I escaped. Marching, marching, marching, unattractive clothing, sunburn, meals snatched at odd intervals, silly slogans, and those eternal meetings with the sort of person who considers "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize" a ballad—honestly, I'm all for The Cause and what have you, but a Thinking Person could go nuts. And the worst of it is the boredom.

For a writer who has grown accustomed—as one will grow accustomed to just about anything, even, I imagine, the sudden resurgence of tie-dye—to the busy, active life her craft demands (staring blearily at the typewriter, rooting through the kitchen cabinets for that last precious roll of Tums, wondering if your landlord will believe that your grandmother needs yet another hysterectomy—it all eats up quite a chunk of your time, one way and another), being on Strike can come to mean, ultimately, living in a state of unrelieved tedium comparable only to being forced to listen to several hours of Bill Cosby discoursing on the importance of Early Childhood Education. Although, at first, not being permitted to write may seem, to some, a lark, and, to others, a Mysterious Reprieve from the Almighty, it soon begins to pale, as one realizes, with a sick feeling of dread and self-disgust, that one has absolutely no idea what else to do with one's empty hours. It is a sad but, unfortunately, true and inescapable fact that, while writers may delude ourselves that we dream only of waking up some morning and not having to write, of having naught to do all day but exactly what we please, we are not, as a group, a self-amusing bunch. We have no hobbies. We have no skills. Our families, still smarting over that cheerful little piece that appeared in Fangoria, have long since stopped speaking to us, and God knows we have no friends. Frankly, we're boring. And it begins to tell.

Never one to let a bad situation lie around and rot, and always in service to my fellow writers, I have, during my hiatus, done some research into this problem and, in an attempt to alleviate it, have compiled the following modest List, which I herewith pass along to my Brothers and Sisters who may still be suffering from this Strike, in the hopes that it may brighten their days, improve

their shining hours, and, not incidentally, keep them from dropping by my house at all hours and sending out for pizza. And so, quietly, I give you:

A STRIKER'S GUIDE TO KILLING TIME

or, What To Do Until the Teamsters Come

1) Read: It's a peculiar thing—and this has been pointed out by better people than tiny me—but very often great—or even mediocre—writers are not great readers. Oh, well, most of us do put in our time at least playing at being literate. We scan the morning headlines in order to get into a really good brood for the day's labours ahead. We glance through the Times book reviews in order to see what unmitigated trash has been published in lieu of our deathless prose, peruse The New Yorker in order to keep abreast of which of our acquaintances is currently more successful than we are, check out Rolling Stone and People in order to see what Tama Janowitz is wearing this week, and occasionally even make it all the way through a new novel in order to sneer, but there is so much out there, so very, very much, that we never take the time or the effort to truly Read. There are, for instance, those booklets the tampon people always include in their boxes which, if properly studied, will not only tell you more than anyone short of the Surgeon General ever needed to know about Toxic Shock Syndrome, but give you an awfully instructive anatomy lesson as well. There are the labels on the sides of things—and who knows but that someday you may be glad you've assimilated the fact that Diet Coke contains potassium benzoate—and the labels on the tops of things—someday you too may even figure out what a Universal Price Code is—and the labels on the bottoms of things—actually, there mostly aren't any labels on the bottoms of things but someday, if the Strike goes on long enough, and enough of the staff of Saturday Night Live can't make their house payments, well, you never can tell—and entire boxfuls of bills and chain letters and communiques from Ed McMahon, just waiting to be read by the Striker with a bit of enterprise. Try it one evening after a hard day of picketing in front of Metromedia Productions and see if it doesn't make the time simply zip by.

2) Have An Affair With Someone Completely Unsuitable: What you are aiming for here is someone with a bad attitude, a little way of suddenly deciding he or she must call Tokyo during peak dialing hours, an endearing hobby—purse-snatching is good—disgusting personal habits, possibly a spouse, and preferably a Harley-Davidson. It's astounding how much time you can kill while sitting up nights having crying jags, frantically telephoning every sleazy bar, jail and hospital in the vicinity, and applying Kwell to the affected area.

3) Eat: For perhaps more of us than would be willing to admit it, this activity often goes hand-in-hand with #2, above, but even if you aren't in the midst of, or recovering from, an unsuitable Love Affair, rampant and unrestrained over-indulgence in food can be a tremendous solace, as well as an extremely effective way of alleviating that ole debbil boredom. Crank up the stereo—Sinatra is a safe bet, as are Smokey Robinson, Miles Davis, Janis Joplin or, if you're that sort of person, the Grateful Dead in their American Beauty period. At all costs, avoid the Fat Boys, "Weird" Al Yankovic and just about anybody's rendition of "I Don't Want Her, You Can Have Her, She's Too Fat For Me"—and curl up with a pint of Frusen Gladje, half an Entenmann's Chocolate Chip Crunch Loaf, and a one-pound bag of M&M's Peanut, and while the hours away. Completely legal, cheaper than cocaine, safer than alcohol—as the saying goes, they still can't arrest you for fat driving—almost the only unpleasant side effect you will experience from this minor vice will occur roughly three hours later when—generally as you are lying in your cozy bed, preparing to go to sleep with visions of Screaming Yellow Zonkers dancing in your head—you will almost invariably be assailed by the, as it were, gut-level feeling that the entire starting line-up of the Baltimore Orioles were attempting to simultaneously take batting practice in the pit of your stomach. This can be cleared up by a healthy dose of Pepto-Bismol or, if you prefer, can be left to run its course, thus further providing the Striker with hours of mindless fun, spent crouching on the bathroom floor, praying for a fortuitous attack of spontaneous human combustion.

4) Unavailable due to Writers' Guild Strike.

5) Buy A Cat: A dog, in this instance, will not do. A dog is your friend and companion. He will lick your hand, sit by your side when you are lonely, roll over on his back to have his belly scratched and, aside from an occasional indiscretion upon an Oriental rug or a nibble at an unwary \$75.00 running shoe, bore you entirely to death. A cat, on the other hand, is a furry Home Entertainment Center. See him scale the brand new silk draperies and swing merrily back and forth. Watch as he blithely ignores his lovely catnip-scented scratching post and makes hay with—and out of—the sofa. Thrill to stumbling into the powder room late at night and discovering that he has, once again, missed the litter box by just that crucial inch. Ponder the implications of his turning up his dainty nose at a perfectly good can of Nine Lives Liver and Cream Entree in order to dine upon two argyle socks, most of a bottle of Elmer's Glue-All, and a fly. Well, the possibilities are just endless, that's all. A cat is nobody's friend and will not, as a matter of principle, stoop to keeping you company—unless you consider artistically arranging his white self all over your black velvet evening skirt "companionship"—but, on the other hand, while you're busy picking the overturned trash up off the floor for the fourth time that day and wondering how many years the Humane Society gives you for trying to make your own or-

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ganic violin strings, you won't have time to worry about the sorry pass to which your life has come, and that's what it's all about, isn't it?

6) Cultivate An Interest In The Arts: Just because you aren't, at the moment, writing, doesn't in any sense mean that you can't be Creative. Learn to play a musical instrument and join a band. Don't learn to play a musical instrument and join the Dirty Dancing Tour. Paint a picture, string uncooked macaroni on dental floss to fashion fabulous fun jewelry, walk along the New Jersey shore and collect Found Objects, then use them to make a lovely collage to hang in your doctor's office—you are only limited by the limits of your imagination.

7) Get A Job: Just because you aren't, at the moment, writing, doesn't in any sense mean that you can't strain, put yourself under enormous stress, develop a nice little ulcer, worry about money and, in short, earn your living by the honest sweat of your brow. While it is true that writing is perhaps the easiest way to accomplish the foregoing—with the exception of the bit about earning your living. Writers, in their lives, may earn many and varied things, but it's debatable as to whether "a living" can fairly be considered one of them—this is in no way to detract from other means of accomplishing the same ends. For example, as a writer, your superior typing skills, grace under pressure, and ability to pretend to be listening to any number of tedious people all at once while, in reality, attempting to remember all the words to the theme song from *It's About Time* make you a prime candidate for any secretarial position, and won't it be a tremendous learning experience for you, as well as fodder for your imagination, should you ever be called upon to use that again (situation comedy writers may skip that last part), to try and grasp the everyday vagaries of the secretarial life, such as how it is that, even though you have no authority, earn \$300 a week less than anyone in management, and were in the ladies' room at the time, it became your fault that a shipment of 400 gross of flanges has gotten lost en route from Broward County, Florida. Then, too, a writer's training in the art of invention and hyperbole admirably suits him or her for a career as the house counsel for any major transit system in the United States, while his or her flair for just sitting about and doing absolutely nothing makes him or her ideal for just about any civil service job you'd care to name. Although you made a solemn vow to yourself back in Yaddo that you would never do anything as mundane as taking a Real Job (though what on earth you'd call turning out copy for David Letterman day after day I don't know), when those Strike Benefits start running out, it's something to contemplate.

8) Start A Rumour: It's amazing, when you think about it, how much mileage can be gotten out of a really good Rumour. Just call up The Enquirer and tell them that the fellow that came to have a look at your septic tank bore a fiendish resemblance to Elvis Presley, and watch the fun begin!

9) Assemble A Stereo System: If you play this the right way—and we're talking turntable, receiver, CD player, tape deck, speakers, woofers, tweeters and one of those cute things that fits into the light switch and allows you to turn the entire unit on at home while you're out vacationing in Antigua—this can keep you busy not only all the way through the Strike, but well into the next century. Simply make sure each and every one of the separate components has been made by an entirely different outfit, all the instructions are in Japanese, and you've lent your Phillips screwdriver to an acquaintance who has recently taken up residence in an abandoned roller coaster at Heritage, U.S.A., and you're ready to roll. Better still—and this is only recommended for those who are absolutely certain that they never again, for the rest of their lives, care to hear any music at all—hire a 19-year-old named Bubba to assemble it for you. Your stereo store will be happy to provide you with one—they normally have several on tap, out in back of the storeroom, looking at old copies of Mushter and going, "Yup. Nice pair."—and his presence, and the peculiar, agnized fashion in which he regards you when you ask him what he considers to be an impertinent question like "How do you turn it on?", will do much to alleviate the awful loneliness and restiveness you may be experiencing.

10) Consider The Less Fortunate: No matter how bad things get, no matter how low you fall and how endless the Strike seems to be, always remember that you can invariably cheer yourself right up by bearing in mind that, whatever else happens, you will never, ever, be Sally Jesse Raphael.

As we go to press, the word comes through that the great Writers' Strike is over, which just shows you the lengths to which some people will go in order to avoid listening to me. Things being as they are, however—and taking into consideration the effect the success of Who Framed Roger Rabbit? is likely to have on what Thinking Writers are going to be forced to write for the next couple of years or so—it is not beyond the realm of possibility that another one may not be too far in our collective futures, so I wouldn't be too swift to casually toss this list away. If nothing else, you can always use it as a collective bargaining tool when the time comes to discuss those tricky mental health benefits.

Well, you can, can't you?

Get Ann's book, NOBODY LOVES A VISUAL ARTS CRITIC - See "Fan Moose"!

TALK SHOW HOST confidential

GM DOBBS

Geraldo Rivera slowly opened the darkened limousine window. A slice of yellow light from a neon sign illuminated the craggy features known to a generation of American news junkies.

"Is it all clear?" Rivera asked his driver.

"Yes sir. I'll pick you up in an hour as planned," came the weary reply. Driving for one of America's most important journalists could be a trying job...spending countless hours sitting outside Chicago hotels, and stakeouts with police, and now of course these regular meetings.

As the driver pulled the stretch limo from the curb, Rivera pulled the collar of his handsomely tailored raincoat up to hide his features. No one really noticed him, though, as he walked towards the Hotel Mid-Gotham. This is one of the hotels from which Rivera could undoubtedly do a story about welfare mothers or crack dealers. Rundown and dirty; Rivera noticed the heavy scents of urine and body odor as he approached the desk.

"Key to Room 216, please," he muttered to the half-drunk night attendant.

"Oh, the rest of the party has already arrived, sir," the clerk said, shoving the register in front of the reporter. "You'll have to sign, sir. I don't care what name you sign, but you'll have to sign," the clerk droned in a drunken monotone.

Rivera signed "Jerry Rivers" in the book and quickly walked up the stairs.

He was tired of these monthly meetings. He wished he could do without them. Always a different hotel. Always at night. Always an evening of arguing.

He knew, though, his career was at stake if he didn't attend these meetings.

He knocked quietly on the door, which quickly slid open an inch. The chain was latched and the room was dark. Rivera could only hear a voice saying, "It's okay, let him in."

Inside the room was the type of cheap furniture and stained carpet one usually finds in these hotels. What one normally wouldn't find, though, was sitting uneasily around the room.

Television talk show hosts. All the big names. Phil. Oprah. Sally Jesse. Mort.

Mort was the newest player. He looked as green around the gills as he was to television. He knew he could be a flash in the pan, and he showed everyone else his anxieties by constantly smoking and gulping mouthful after mouthful of cheap Scotch.

Phil, on the other hand, looked smug. And Oprah just looked great. Sure, she is heavy on television, but she's pretty. What her viewers didn't know was her excess weight was all foam rubber. She actually weighs 102, and has an incredible figure, tonight tightly covered by a brown leather miniskirt, knee-high boots and a revealing blouse.

Sally Jesse was her usual ditzzy self, reading a magazine and completely unaware of what was about to happen. Rivera suspected what Phil was going to announce, but the rest didn't.

"Friends, we've been meeting this way for over a year now to insure our mutual survival. Television is a killer industry, and I discovered long ago a little common sense among competitors can go a long way. That's why we meet like this and divide up the topics and guests. By deciding outside of our staffs, we can avoid unnecessary scheduling problems. Of course, all of us can succeed on our own merits and slipping in an original idea now and then, especially during sweeps, is fine," Donahue paused as he cleared his throat, "but now with young Mort Downey and Wil Shriner and even Wally George bucking for a piece of the pie—"

Downey's eyes were about to pop out of their sockets with anxiety.

"—It's time for a readjustment of sorts. Starting next week, Oprah and I will announce the merging of our two shows. We will each do a half-hour on our own with different guests and then tag-team talk the combined guests for a final half-hour."

Rivera felt nauseous. Sally Jesse giggled. Downey killed his bottle.

"Oprah and I have developed a special relationship off-camera. We are very good friends and I believe this friendship would work on-camera as well. Oprah is going to 'lose' her weight in time for the May ratings sweeps and I'm going to divorce Mario. By November of next year, we'll be married on television and we'll combine shows."

Rivera knew what this meant. He remembered his American history classes and discussions of trusts, monopolies and Robber Barons. This was the video talk show trust forming in front of him. It was bad enough of them dividing the rights to guests, but now what was going to happen to him?

"Now, let's divide the guests for the next month," Donahue said in his matter-of-fact tone. Rivera didn't hear him, though. Nor did Downey. Only Sally Jesse seemed interested. She was just too damn optimistic.

Rivera knew this was the beginning of the end. Well, at least he had done his dream show—the discussion of large breasts and why men like them. That would be his legacy.

A DIP IN THE PLASMAPOOL

by Dorian Tenore

A REJUVENATRIX BY ANY OTHER NAME IS STILL A CAMPY MOVIE

The movie business (especially the low-budget area) was designed for ambitious masochists. Grueling physical labor, down-and-dirty locations, working days just short of being 24 hours long, salaries that barely reach minimum wage level, fits of temper from your equally underpaid, overworked colleagues...but it all seems worth it when the finished product is ready. At least it was in the case of the first film I worked on for Jewel/Avalon Productions, financed by the Sony Corporation.

When I first wrote about the making of this \$300,000 science fiction/horror opus in IJ #57, the title was BRAINS FOR BEAUTY. Then the executives at Sony convinced our stalwart producer, Steve Mackler (whose previous epix included such creature features as NEON MANIACS and DEADTIME STORIES), that one-word titles were the way to go. To his credit, Steve tried to give the title something to do with the film: our story of an aging film star who partakes of a youth serum with grisly side effects (I'd call mutating into a brain-eating monster "grisly," wouldn't you?) was now rechristened REJUVENATRIX. I think it sounds exotic—and a tad absurd—enough to pique one's interest, like such famous one-word titles as VERTIGO, DIABOLIQUE, SUSPIRA...

And so, in the spring of 1988, REJUVENATRIX™ (if Spielberg can trademark his logo, so can we!) was the legend that filled the 35mm screen of the Mark Goodson Theater at the Department of Cultural Affairs building in New York City the night of the big premiere! Big but exclusive—only the cast and crew of REJUVENATRIX, as well as Steve Mackler and various "friends of Jewel/Avalon Productions," were allowed to attend. That's the great thing about shooting a film in and around New York City, in cooperation with the Mayor's Office of Film and Television: your film is entitled to a premiere at the Mark Goodson Theater, a simple yet plush auditorium with Dolby Sound. (No theaters next door to drown out your film's Dolby with their film's Dolby, either!) The audience laughed and screamed in all the right places, and we all cheered as our names (including mine as "Production Office Coordinator") scrolled past us on the end credits. Even people's guests were enjoying themselves; hell, my mother liked the flick, and she's damned hard to please!

But here comes the really exciting part: the movie was pretty darned good! Auteur Brian Thomas Jones may not be Mr. Charm (indeed, he wore his anal retentiveness like a badge of honor), but he sure knows how to direct! His direction and rewriting of the original script (the first screenwriter, Simon Nuchtern, gets a "Story by" credit) helped to turn what could have been a throwaway schlocko quickie into a stylish, classy thriller laced with campy humor and enough gore to be scary rather than disgusting. (Perhaps "quickie" isn't the right word—REJUVENATRIX took 4 weeks to film, 2 weeks more than the MGM classic THE THIN MAN.)

But don't get me wrong: anyone who honestly believes that the director deserves the sole responsibility for how a film turns out has obviously never worked on a film set. True, Brian had more input than some directors, having contributed to the script. However, I can't imagine REJUVENATRIX having the same impact without, for example, Jim McCalmont's photography and the technicians who did the lighting. They gave the movie a polished yet atmospheric look; the use of shadows is creepy and effective. The editing of Brian O'Hara (not to be confused with the director—this Brian is a much nicer person) provided fast pacing and suspense for scenes that looked slow and awkward in the cutting room.

Special effects wiz Ed French, imported from Brooklyn, did a masterful job on the comparatively paltry sum he had to work with. Except for a few shots toward the end of the film, actress Vivian Lanko's metamorphosis into a screeching beastie is expertly done. Her head becomes elongated and disfigured, her hair disappears until her huge head looks like one giant slimy, pulsating brain with veins the size of Cleveland. Her perfect teeth grow into fangs (her gums bleeding as they do so is a nice touch!), and the magic of sound effects turns her sultry voice into an unearthly, guttural snarl.

The cast also seems to be having a great time onscreen. Former Fellini extra Jessica Dublin is an enjoyable vain grande dame as our soon-to-be rejuvenated has-been actress. (Typecasting—Jessica is just as flamboyantly self-centered in real life, but on the set she's a true professional!) As her youthful alter ego, Vivian Lanke is glamorous, conniving (not typecasting—Viv's a sweetheart) and ultimately poignant as she realizes the mess her vanity has gotten her into. Viv was a real trouper; each shooting day she had to sit through 3-4 hours of special effects makeup (taking it off was a snap, though—just peel, scrub the face a bit, and go!) and act with conviction. It wasn't easy for her, but she came through with flying colors.

So did Katell Plevan as the lovelorn assistant to the brilliant if slightly mad scientist who develops the youth serum. Towards the end, Katell's character is killed by the monster, and Katell had to lie on the floor with her head all bloodied. This meant lots of "fake blood" in Katell's flaxen blonde hair. Ed's assistants swore she'd be able to "get the red out" with a mere shampooing. Well, at the production office the next day I got a worried phone call from Katell, saying she'd shampooed five or six times with just about every cleanser in existence, but her hair was still looking pink around the edges. Needless to say, one of our Miscellaneous budget receipts that week was from a hair salon!

The 30 & Question

by Susan Packie

"Plastic or paper bag?" the woman whose name tag indicated she was Myrna asked for the umpteenth time that day.

"Plastic, please," the grocery store customer sporting a Gloria Vanderbilt label replied. "Don't you get tired of saying the same thing over and over? They couldn't pay me enough to work here."

Myrna gave the customer the once-over: forty-dollar shirt, eighty-dollar skirt, genuine leather shoes and handbag. Her blisters were killing her inside her K-Mart sneakers, and her Bradlee's underpants were slipping down. "They don't pay me enough to work here, either. We aren't even getting a raise this year."

The customer inwardly breathed a sigh of relief. At least her grocery bills wouldn't be going up. "What a shame! But I suppose there are other benefits. Do you just work a few hours in the morning?"

"A few hours in the morning, a few hours in the afternoon. It comes out to forty hours a week, plus they're always asking me to work somebody else's shift, for straight pay."

"You must make a fortune!"

"I make the minimum wage, ma'am. Some weeks I take home \$140."

"Oh." The customer did some quick math. Yes, she made more than that in one day. "Well, that's probably quite sufficient."

Myrna bagged the order: steak, artichokes, gourmet cheese, salt-free soup, sugar-free cereal, a pint of something called tofu frozen dessert, wine, and a microwave oven.

"Do you take the VISA gold card?"

"Yes, ma'am."

The customer felt a word gap descend on her as she signed the receipt. It was an intolerable sensation. "If conditions are that bad here, why do you stay?"

Myrna looked at her as if she were crazy. "Why, last Christmas, I got a bonus like you wouldn't believe: 1,000 pink stamps, a pen-and-pencil set, and a roll of nickels for the parking meter. Who wouldn't stay?"

The customer for a split second thought Myrna was pulling her leg. Then she realized she wasn't. "Have a nice day."

Myrna uncrossed her fingers. "Thank you, ma'am. You have a nice day, too. Next, please. Plastic or paper bag?"

I can't think of an actor, from lead to extra, who didn't give REJUVENATRIX their all, but if there's one standout performance (besides Viv's, of course), it's John MacKay's turn as Dr. Greg Ashton, our rejuvenatrix's serum-concocting mad scientist and lover. As I said back in IJ #57, John has the same voice and intensity as Martin Sheen—and the same terrific acting ability! You're a little afraid of him (this is not a man you want angry at you!), yet you're fascinated by his manic devotion to his lovely but deadly "experiment." The anecdotes I could tell about John could fill an article on their own. He had this unnerving habit of hovering over me and making cryptic remarks when he was hanging around the production office. Nice guy, if a tad strange.

Although REJUVENATRIX's destiny is to make its profit from videocassette rentals (after all, it's a Sony product!), it finally got a theatrical release around the country. It played for a week in several slightly shabby New York cinemas, the classiest one being the Cine 1 on 7th Avenue at 47th Street. In the newspaper ads, though not on the credits, the movie was retitled yet again: in the tradition of THE RE-ANIMATOR and THE TERMINATOR, someone had slapped the moniker THE REJUVENATOR on it. (I guess they must've liked John MacKay's performance, too. Think about it—he played the rejuvenator, Vivian played the rejuvenatrix.) The movie got a good review, too—from the "Phantom of the Movies," a columnist for the New York Daily News who reviews B-horror flicks and genre films. REJUVENATRIX/OR was the headliner of that day's column. In fact: "I Love You for Your Brain," the large type blared. The Phantom's analysis: "REJUVENATOR succeeds as a straightforward gorified recreation of a typical '50s sci-fi/horror cheapie, a la Roger Corman's WASP WOMAN...REJUVENATOR supplies its fair share of grisly retro fun." I, for one, am bursting with pride.

Dear Landlord

a new column by Deborah Benedict

TOPIC: BIGOTRY

"It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye." (Antoine de Saint Exupery)

WELCOME! WELCOME! EVERYONE IS WELCOME! Especially the bigots—the ones who will not welcome others—yes, you too, come in. I have something special for you. It's called The Truth and you will not like it, but it's best you acquaint yourself with it now, in a slow and easy fashion. Because later on, it will fall upon you hard and fast. And it will hurt you very much—even more than your bigotry hurts others now. So let me try to make it a bit easier on you, for there will be no mercy later.

Bigotry is being certain of something you know nothing about. Ignorance is no excuse—it's usually the real thing. And there certainly is a lot of it in you young new age radical whiz kid types. My stars, but aren't we full of ourselves! How difficult it must be to carry that weight, day after day.

As a disabled person, I have had my share of prejudice, fear, stares and ignorance. It is but a tiny blemish on the collective consciousness when compared with the bigotry and hate directed towards blacks, Jews, gays, Mexicans—fill in the blank. But I know the dark heart of bigotry. I have had the good fortune of having a wide and diverse ethnographic panoply of friends and I have learned much from them about bigotry, and I have learned much from my own experiences as a cripple. Bigotry is fear with nowhere else to go.

Let me acquaint you with some facts. White human beings are the minority in the real world. This planet is comprised of mainly Asian and Negroid peoples—from the vastness of China, Indonesia, Africa, all the way down to the tiny islands of the Pacific, Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia, there exist more dark-skinned humans than you can imagine. Tribe after tribe of people with richer cultures than modern America could ever conceive of. The great tribes of Africa, descended from ancient Egypt and Babylonia. The fantastic and beautiful diverse people of Indonesia, descended from the glory of India and China. The fabulous peoples of Mexico and South America, descendants of the highly evolved Incan, Mayan and Toltec cultures. And my preferred peoples, the people of the South Pacific, the island peoples, whose lineage includes all of the above and more. Look carefully at a globe map of the world, bigot, and ask yourself how any Caucasian can claim superiority or supremacy when he is so vastly outnumbered and has the shortest lineage of all the races. Stop using your eyes just for avoiding bumping into things and look at the REAL WORLD. Get over yourselves, your insular, rarefied white middle-class delusions; there are more people on this planet who would be terrified of a Caucasian, more people who have never seen a white person than there are of you, Wonder Bread Skin with Delusions of Grandeur.

My personal feeling for bigots, especially those who express antipathy for negroes, is to take you and drop you into the depths of the Ballem Valley in Irian Jaya, Papua-New Guinea. The black tribes there were forced to abandon their tribal rites of head-hunting and cannibalism by the intrusive white missionaries, but they still retain their ancestral wisdom, their essential predatory nature and they still enjoy the concept and practice of "pay-back." Would you, little bigot, thus transplanted to such a land, still feel smug and superior? Or would the blowguns and physical ferocity of the Dani tribe intimidate you sufficiently so that you would realize that you are nothing to them but an ignorant, pale misfit? And that, to their minds, twenty years ago, you would be regarded as something to roast and eat, a "long pig?" Or would you prefer a visit to South Africa? There you might find yourself shrinking in horror at apartheid, thinking that the white supremacists are very much like Nazis. Or shall I send you to Calcutta, India and let you find yourself stuck in a caste system that would immediately brand you as a pariah because you were white? Or perhaps it would be fitting to send you to Borneo, or Kalimantan as it is now known. Spend some time with the Dayak tribe and suffer at their mockery of your pale skin and short earlobes and the fact that you cannot catch a fish with your bare hands nor build a house of bamboo in less than an hour.

How superior would you feel then, bigot? What would you use to lord it over the racial majority of this planet? Your white skin would tell these people one major thing: that you are not brave enough nor strong enough to withstand the sun and the light it gives.

It is at once amazing and sickening to know that this issue appears in the pages of INSIDE JOKE, where once I erringly presumed that all who involved themselves in this bold endeavor were evolved and enlightened people—people who never had to shake off the immoral trappings of bigotry because they had never worn them. How wrong I was!

You are, if you are a bigot, sorely in need of facts. I have stated at length the most obvious fact—that the white person is the minority. Other facts are that melanin distribution has no physiological, neurochemical impact on intellectual entelechy or physical ability. Certainly there are many fine black athletes, and there are many fine white ones too. And oriental athletes. Anyone who has ever had the pleasure of watching a Balinese or Javanese dance has no problem declaring it equal to the Russian ballet. It is, after all, the individual that is the great thing.

The culture that the individual must needs grow up in will have its influence. A black human being is born black—a bigot must be created. No one is responsible for the conditions of their birth, but the bigot is responsible for choosing his/her path of irrational and destructive thought and behavior.

The cynosure of bigotry is simple and horrific—the bigot simply does not believe that the "other" is a real human being. The most recent exemplar of this occurred when the US Navy saw fit to murder a group of passengers on an Iranian airplane. The consensus in America was that it was no big deal because, after all, they were just Iranians—not real people like us. They didn't count. If the Iranians blew an American airplane to shreds, the Americans would be lining up to rip off the Iranians' heads and shit in their necks.

One of my dearest friends is a very big black man who works as a guard at the State Penitentiary. I asked him WHY there was so much racism against blacks and he answered, "Because people are afraid of the dark."

He was right, literally and metaphorically.

So often we hear the following two things: 1) "Gee, so and so is really nice and smart, but he/she hates blacks, Jews, gays..." and so on. This is bullshit. So and So cannot be really nice and smart if they are bigoted. Bigotry, Virtue and true Intelligence are mutually exclusive. If we were to personify Bigotry, Virtue and Intelligence, they could never sit next to each other—like matter and antimatter, they would annihilate and neutralise each other. When a person supplants the essential truth of a human being—that they are first a human being—with external, superficial and phylogenetic qualities and judges a person on those criteria, he has forsaken virtue. The bigot is a victim of duplicity and delusion, and as such the bigot thirsts for vengeance and that is manifested by their bigotry and oppression of the group they have been trained to despise. I do not pity the bigot. The bigot does not recognize that facts do not cease to exist simply because they are ignored. I do not pity the smug and self-aggrandizing conceit of the bigot because that conceit bestows its own comfort. The bigot is snug in his web of delusional superiority, yet there will come a time when that web is torn and rent by the hand of destiny and the bigot is plucked from it to receive the very thing he has given—hatred and mockery. 2) We hear this frequently—and from the worst sort of bigot. Not the straightforward blatant ignorant bigot who says "I hate Niggers/I hate Jews/I hate Spics" and so on—but the insidious qualifying bigot. The one who says, "Well, I really liked this person—it was hard to believe he/she was Gay/Jewish/Married to a Black Person/Half-Mexican" and so on. They're the ones who also say things like, "Oh, Betty is black, but she's really a good worker." And, "Stan is gay, but it's not real obvious and he seems okay." And "Pedro is really quite acceptable for a Chicano—hardly drinks at all."

And of course, "Yes, Jesse Jackson is impressive, but we can't have a black president." As Jackie Mason so wisely puts it, "I'd vote for a black guy—me, personally—it's fine. But the country isn't ready for it."

And who is "the country?" YOU. ME. HIM. HER. THEM. US.

I won't even bother to address and argue the individual pseudo-traits stated by you "I'm not prejudiced but..." people. These so-called biological imperatives attributed to races are inventions, rationalised simply and easily by the desire to believe. Using them is nothing but a confession of fear and anxiety and an obvious display of insecurity. The truth is even scarier for bigots than for others. The truth is we are all just human beings, most of us powerless and terrified in a world where men are nuclear giants but ethical midgets.

Yes. Lock yourself up in your prejudices and false notions if it comforts you. Get away with it as long as you can while you live. But realize that when you are out of this earthly realm of standardized reality, racial and economic hierarchies, you will be thrown into eternity—where, perhaps, the eyes of God will stare you down and ask you, "How dare you judge what I have made? How dare you presume to know the parameters of another human soul when you have never even met your own soul!"

It is not only the victims of bigots who need to be free, it is the bigot who needs to be liberated from his own self-delusional victimization—the thoroughly ridiculous, ludicrous and irrational idea that physiological, morphogenetic qualities represent the interior truth of human beings.

America has always been a white patriarchal society—and it will continue to be so. That some of you associated with INSIDE JOKE will perpetuate this oppressive orgy of self-interest sickens me. You can write all the smartass witticisms you wish; you may have your clever bon mots printed in INSIDE JOKE as often as you wish; and you may make smarmy, mocking, empty judgements at the expense of people you don't have a clue about—but if it comes from an empty soul tending to extreme opinion, it is dross, garbage. And all the notions of ethnic superiority can only ensure that the perpetrator of such garbage is to be consigned to trash along with his/her mental dross. Do not be surprised at your fate, little bigot—that if you think trash, you become trash. And if you become trash, you end up in the trash heap. And it is there, bigots and others poor in spirit and virtue, it is there you will discover the blackest horror of all—that you will not be allowed to redeem yourself, that you will become the very embodiment of your bigotry and your destiny will be the result of your own self-defeatist beliefs. For John Donne was right. NO MAN IS

continued next page

AN ISLAND. And when that bell tolls, it tolls for thee. And if thee are too busy hating others to hear and heed the tolling of the bell, then thee shall be devoured by thine own self-interest and betrayal of the Golden Rule. Do not be surprised when you find yourself in the heart of darkness, crying, "The horror! the horror!" for you put yourself there, you erected the barriers and you created the darkness by rejecting the light. And when you see the horror and recoil, you will notice that you are looking in a mirror. And when you cry for pity, you may get some. But of mercy you will be denied. For Mercy will not visit the merciless—it will be much too occupied visiting the victims of the merciless.



"MICKEY deSADIST WAS RIGHT!!!"

When it became abundantly clear by Memorial Day that Nostradamus had goofed again (the

only catastrophe occurring in Southern California during May was the cancellation of the Smothers Brothers' latest comedy hour), the sensation-crazed media—AND citizens—of the good ol' US of A turned what was left of their collective thoughts towards more pressing diversions. No, not the mysterious appearance of David "Just Call Me Jerry Langford" Letterman's wife-to-be-detained. And uh-uh, not even Good Sheriff Reagan's farewell technicolor ride into the Moscow sunset (strategically edited into his presidency's final reel).

No, what America had on its minds and tongues as spring melted into summer 1988 was the apparent return to so-called civilization of the nation's one and only duly-elected, oft-crowned, and until recently presumed-passed-on King. For well over a whole quarter of a century now, the most praised, revered, fawned, emulated and reproduced (especially in cheap porcelains and polyvinyls) man in America. Need I, or indeed ANYONE, say more?!

"ELVIS PRESLEY IS ALIVE" screamed every tabloid-to-Tribune headline and every network gossipcaster across the land. "ELVIS LIVES!" it read on placards, travel mugs and storefronts from coast to coast...particularly in hitherto-little-bothered-with Kalamazoo, Michigan (pop. 75,001), where the Memphis Flash had reportedly been sighted shovelling down cheeseburgers, as he alone can, at the Missias Bar & Grill (one hopes proprietor Allan Missias had the good sense to singe the King's dinner in that trademark Grasseland blend of fat, butter and bacon drippings).

Simultaneously, an alarming parade of frantic housewives placed Presley at various Thrifty-Marts, bowling alleys and laundromats across town during recent months (you mean he doesn't hang out at embalming morgues any more?!), and one 240-pound silver-rinsed bopper claimed the object of her defections not only recently brought her cancer-ridden sister-in-law back from death's door, but even threw a shiny new Lincoln Continental into the deal (proving old habits transcend not only time, but voyages between astral planes).

Well, at the risk of raising the ire of every RCA Victor and National Enquirer employee in the land, all of whom are currently wallowing in big bux the likes of which haven't been experienced since the fortnight immediately following August 16, 1977, I would like to go on record as Here and Now offering to the world conclusive, Geraldo Rivera-resistant proof that Elvis A(a)ron Presley formerly of 3764 Elvis Presley Boulevard, Memphis, TN 38116, is decidedly, decayingly, DEFINITELY—DEAD.

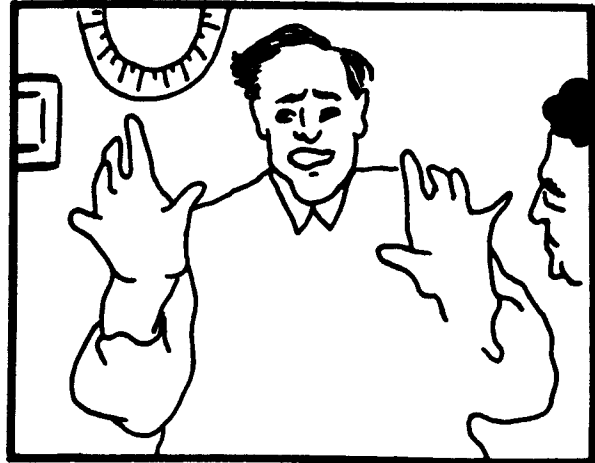
First off, it's been nearly ELEVEN YEARS now since the King last appeared before a selected gathering of his subjects, inside Market Square Arena, Indianapolis, on June 26, 1977 to be exact. Well, NO superstar, not even one as big and wide as Elvis Presley, can sustain a career atop the very pinnacle of the international show business scramble without doing at least ONE gig every decade or so! And if Elvis DID still walk this mortal coil, you can be sure his longtime manager Col. Thomas Andrew Parker (ret.) would see to it that his prize Holstein was haulin' it out there on the road two to three hundred nights a year, booked into every county fair and hockey rink from Kealakakua to—dare I say it?—Kalamazoo. As it turns out, though, Elvis is worth more—MUCH more—dead than alive to the Colonel (not to mention RCA, Lisa Marie Presley, the Memphis Mafia—alone responsible for a whopping 87 percent of the thousands of Elvis "tribute" books flooding the market at any given moment—and, come to think of it, just about everyone in the entertainment industry...except for one Dr. George C. Michopoulos, who's written FAR fewer prescriptions since his star patient took that last big O.D. back in '77).

And if Elvis were still around, do you really think he could keep quiet about the never-ending exploits of his ex? It was disheartening enough that Priscilla Beaulieu Presley's sour grape-flavored memoirs, cleverly entitled "Elvis And Me," kiss-and-ran up the New York Times bestsellers list as the author herself suddenly began appearing every week on "Dallas." There may not have been much an even-still-breathing King could've done about that. But you can bet your bottom demerol that had he been living (that is, if you can call languishing depressed and diapered deep inside a Memphis bedchamber day in and night out, propped sonnambulike beside a silver goblet full of Snickers and Muttu Buddies, living), he wouldn't have sat idly 'round as 'Cilla's tacky tome festered into an ABC-TV Movie Of The Week several months ago.

8 And as for Dale Midkiff, who no less than TV Guide intricately

OVERHEARD

at America's Lunch Counters



"I can speak five languages and I can also blabber."

profiled as "a lanky 28-year-old who played the young Jock Ewing in 'Dallas: The Early Years'?" The man's portrayal of Priscilla's better half in "Elvis And Me, The TV Movie" surely would've inspired more than a few stray bullets through the picture tube from the REAL King!

Meanwhile, chief Elvis Is Alive hoaxter Gail Giorgio, who's ALSO written a book, claims to have in her possession a tape recording Presley allegedly made in 1981, on which he admits to staging his own death in 1977 because, and this is an ACTUAL QUOTE, "the pressures were just gettin' to be too much for me. I...I...I just couldn't take all the pressures anymore. So I...I had to go away. And I did. And I don't mean to, uhh...I don't mean to hurt anyone, but, uhh...uhh...pass them fried bananas, will ya R&d?" Ms. Giorgio was kind enough to run me off a copy of this landmark recording (for \$34.95, plus \$4 shipping and handling) and I took the liberty of having it voice-analysed by Detective Sgt. Stern Drihyde, head of the Metropolitan Toronto Police Tape Recording Analysis Division. The results? The voice on the recording belonged not to the former Tupelo truck driver, but to a certain Wright D. Binker, 37-year-old resident of Black Canyon City, Arizona, whose sole claim to fame until now was his co-authorship of Bantam Press' "Barking Up The Wrong Leg: A Clinical Study Of Homosexuality And The 7-11 Clerk" (no longer available).

But for you die-hards (and I mean that LITERALLY) out there in IJ-Land, who just can't conceive of a world without another Elvis Presley movie, consider this: The catalog number of the King's final (well, ALMOST) album, the otherwise wholly-laughable "Elvis In Concert" (APL-2587), is actually a top-secret, toll-free, 24-hour-a-day telephone number (and it works for EVERY area code!) (well, ALMOST...), which when dialed activates a tape recording of legendary Elvis impersonator Mickey deSadist singing his biggest (well, SORT of) hit, the wisely-out-of-print "Elvis Is Dead." Yes! The SAME "Elvis Is Dead" immortalized by no less than Jim Miller in his by-now-itself-legendary "Forever Elvis" retrospective in the August 3, 1987 issue of "Newsweek." And BELIEVE me: Mr. deSadist isn't the kinda guy who'd lie about a thing like this (come to think of it, neither am I!).

Speaking of albums, take a closer look at the cover of Presley's 162nd: RCA's "Our Legendary Golden Digitally Remastered Greatest Commemorative Original Anniversary Memories of Elvis Direct From Hawaii, Volume VII, Part Two" (catalog number 1-800-HE'S-DEAD). On the bottom left-hand corner, right between the photograph of his gatekeeper Uncle Vester "Vester" Presley's hovercraft and the reproduction of his racquetball court's blueprints (behind the etching of the scale-model Stutz Blackhawk over the gold lamé crucifix), you will notice a partially-obscured microscopic series of parallel lines, which the more reasonable left amongst you might easily mistake as merely a Universal Pricing Code. Wrong! By holding this section of the record sleeve at a precise 47-degree angle up to the mirror (in a room equipped with infrared light, of course), and by playing the second-to-last cut on Side Seventeen ("Are You Lonesome Tonight," alternate version afternoon rehearsal out-take live from Vegas, take eleven) at 45 RPM, BACKWARDS (naturally), a voice can be heard faintly emanating from the left channel, mixed across James Burton's lead guitar. That voice says:

"FORGET Elvis Presley already! Mickey deSadist was RIGHT! But now that you're here, I might as well letcha in on the REAL scoop. You know Chuck Barris? Yeah, that guy from 'The Gong Show!' Real jerk, right? Well, I betcha didn't know that he used to be a hit-man for the CIA. REALLY! No Foolin'! Read all about it in IN-SIDE JOKE #63, okay? And while you're at it, change the goddamn record, will ya?"

WHEN
TITANS
SNEER
(In which
Our Hero
meets His
Hero and
their
alter-
egos talk
about
each
other)

I had
dreaded
this day.
After
months of
hero wor-
ship, of emulation from afar, I—the King of Purgatory—was finally going to meet his inspiration, the man who defined cynicism to me.

I was going to meet the man behind Ian Shoales.
Merle Kessler started it eight years ago with the pronouncement that the Old Wave was dead. It was time to meet the New Wave with an appropriate rudeness, for that was the only way to survive. I took that warning to heart. That's why I'm here today: single, alone and trying to deal with the new urban female.

When we met one afternoon at the Berkshire Palace in New York, I was pleasantly surprised to find we had a lot in common. Like me, Merle Kessler was a basically decent fellow who enjoyed a comfortable, reverse-Walter-Mitty life. In fact, he was expressing some annoyance at the fact that Ian was taking precedence in his life. So there we sat, two decent fellows with sneering alter-egos and talked about being nice, being recognized, being on TV and being Ian.

"It does kind of get strange when you go places and people go, 'Oh, your name's Merle?'. I would like to get that sort of cleared up. I am Merle and I have this character," Merle said, referring to the trouble he has keeping a separate identity. "People get confused and it's easier to be me in an interview than to be Ian Shoales, because I can't think as fast as Ian does."

Ian originally began as a character on NPR's All Things Considered. But back in 1981, he was...different.

"There were two of them—'New Wave Manifesto' and 'T-Shirts.' He was a lot more snottier, I thought. He talked slower, more of a monotone with a touch of pretentiousness. Then he became loud and fast and obnoxious.

"It actually surprised me after doing it for three years or something, hearing what happened to the character. A lot of these things take time. You think you know what you were doing and you really don't. Now Ian's become such a monster for me that it's hard for me to find time to do anything else."

Merle has made attempts to bring Ian out of radio into other media. However, these attempts are limited by his own participation. "If I do a play it's an awful lot of work. It's not like a Broadway where there's, you know, Billy Dee Williams as Ian Shoales. So it's always a stumbling block for doing a stage play, but other than that I'm sort of relishing what I hope to be a new popularity for the character." This didn't stop Merle from placing Ian in a theatrical setting. In 1987, he did a one-act musical called Table For One with the other members of Duck's Breath Mystery Theatre. A little over an hour in length, this work depicted a typical night for Ian. "I'm working on a musical featuring Ian," he adds, "a murder mystery called Suicide Blonde."

There is also talk of an Ian Shoales film. "I doubt it'll be a major motion picture but I actually think there's interest from some people for a low-budget movie. If I get the right idea..."

While the first Duck's Breath attempt at television, Dr. Science, failed ("It just got cancelled. It's as simple as that"), Merle did talk of a new series for PBS. Not surprisingly, this one features Ian as host. "It's an extended version of the old 'Man on the Street' thing Steve Allen did. I'm Ian Shoales and it's sort of a host deal and I move through this alley where 'Rent is controlled and people are out of it.' It's kind of a 'Twilight Zone' entertainment. A lot of it is character extremes. We have a feminist spokesmodel. This is gritty stuff, and it should be pretty fun once the producers stop whining and put it out."

Despite that remark, Merle has nothing but good things to say about the producers of Dr. Science. "They really gave us free rein. We got our own director and the other producer, Henry Kimmel, was a guy who was hip to the joke. I thought the first couple of shows were rocky but towards the end things started to really click."

Referring to Fox's problems with the show, Merle says, "They just didn't know what the market was. There was an audience for it. We won three Emmys."

"Kids liked it. It was science and culture and all human culture, anarchy, tearing down without building up, nothing constructive, no message."

Dan Coffey, who plays Dr. Science, introduces every Ian Shoales Commentary, while Merle plays Dr. Science's assistant Rodney. "We both started about the same time and Dan and I were always in each other's bits, doing star turns. We were always the guys more interested in radio than anybody else."

FUN WITH CELEBRITY FOOTNOTES

1-The film is called Zatar, Cow From Hell and is presently looking for a distributor.²

According to Merle, there's little resentment of his success as Ian. "We don't talk much about that kind of thing. I mean, there's a sense of resentment but also happiness. It all sort of comes together, I think."

Duck's Breath is currently in a state of stasis. "We...don't do many things together anymore. When we do come together it's actually more fun than it's been for a while. I mean, Jim Turner lives here [in New York] and Leon [Martell] lives in L.A. and Dan Coffey's in Iowa...We did a movie there and that was enormous fun 'cause we hadn't done anything as a group that was new." Our live shows, for example, have turned into more of a showcase than a creative sustained evening. It used to be we'd write new shows every week. Now that the functions of the shows have changed, we sort of—at least I sort of—thought that it was better to come apart and then come together than to be just this bunch of guys feeling sorry for themselves.

"Table For One was nice because it wasn't a Duck's Breath show per se. It was sort of a new energy. We had women where before we'd have this 'Boys' Club' aspect that was sort of tired. Dan didn't want to come to New York so we said, 'Well, okay'."

Table For One was a return for Duck's Breath to a longer theatrical form. "We used to write longer plays but the people didn't want to see it. They preferred the shorter material and everybody else said the shorter material was easier to do. Our own impulse to do the longer form things that we wanted was slowly being whittled away by what we imagined people wanted to see. It's nice to get back to the long form, and it's one of the reasons I'm excited about this book. I mean, I like doing sketches but it gets a little tiring."

The book he mentions is Ian Shoales' Perfect World, a freeform episodic novel where Ian gets money, power and the girl, only to lose it all. It's a James Bond satire sprinkled with commentaries and a series of Top Ten lists ("Top Ten Ideas That Shaped The Modern World," for example). "This novel is a dream. I guess what it's like is channel switching. There's stuff I put in there that I thought was funny, like showing a music video. I was trying to break every literary rule. My wife was going, 'This is annoying' as I was writing it. That's the point."

"I'd like to have a continuing thing, an 'Adventures of Ian Shoales.' There'd be a story, an adventure story of some kind, I guess sort of adult cartoons. Something where there's a place for opinions and things like that."

"I think the realm I'd like to take this guy into is sort of like Phillip Marlowe's world, sort of the dark underbelly of L.A., which would be right up Ian's alley. It'd be fun to do a modern—not a send-up or a spoof, 'cause I don't like spoofs, but a comedy of manners based on Dashiell Hammett stuff, the Black Mask school."

"The memoirs of Ian Shoales is probably the last thing I write with this character. That's when I retire him and have him go over Rickenback Falls or fight Moriarity or something. I might do that in ten years but right now I'm working on a horror novel which is a real thing that happens to Ian."

As far as commentaries are concerned, Merle is more interested in the big picture. "Something like Jimmy Swaggart I wouldn't go near, 'cause I figured everybody and his dog made a stupid joke about this crap so why should I jump into the fight? I like to get a little perspective on this stuff. I know the media doesn't like that but I almost prefer to write about the 50s and 60s. We have this 'Opinion Now! Opinion Now!' culture that we tend to forget next week what all the shouting's about. I like to relate things to what happened thirty years ago, placing them in the history of culture."

I asked Merle about Ian's status as a cult figure. Why is he so popular now? "I guess because everything is so relentlessly cheerful and he's sort of an anodyne, a breath of fresh air."

"I'm serious about this character, which is why it's important to keep all this 'Who Is Me' in perspective because I really don't wanna be William F. Buckley or William Safire. I don't want that job, they do it fine. I like entertaining. I hope there's a place where there's room for small ideas instead of Phantom of the Opera."

After a long hiatus, Ian will be returning to audio with a taped version of Perfect World. "It's already done. I worked with our producer, Debbie Gwinn, and it seemed that a simple reading worked best. I only do the first third of the book 'cause I didn't want to chop it up. I do a little cutting here and there, but basically I start at the beginning and it goes to where I'm naked walking down Hollywood Boulevard. Then I have a minute and a half synopsis of the rest."

Of course, his new-found fame does net Merle some odd offers. "There's a lot of weird opportunities thrown my way. Nightline, for example, wanted me to do something on the Oscars but they said I couldn't call them a gaudy, useless event. I mean, what's the point?"

"I guess I'm a serious person, but I don't want to be taken that seriously," I heard Merle say. As we parted company, that quote stayed with me. After all, wasn't that what we both were: two serious people who, after a pleasant conversation, returned to a life of pessimism? That's what it was all about.

I headed back out into the heat of a New York summer. Fun time was over, and we both had serious cynicism to get to.

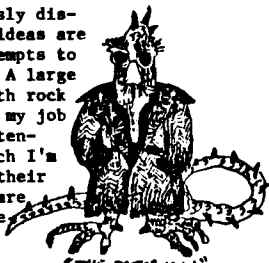
NEXT: The Tom DeJa Duck Hunt continues as the King of Purgatory talks to the Master Of The Mental Jam, Jim Turner. Be there.

2-I knew there was no reason to footnote that last bit of information. I just felt all you footnote addicts like MasterMath would get lonely without a few footnotes to keep you company.³
3-See Footnote #2.

THE CONTINUING SAGA -OF DR. IGUANA THE SEARCH CONTINUES.

by Ken Burke

The strike imposed on television producers by the Writers' Guild of America has already achieved its desired effect on network TV's fall schedule: previously dismissed series pilots and miniseries ideas are being rushed to air in desperate attempts to feed TV's gaping entertainment maw. A large portion of this programming deals with rock music. That's my beat, folks. It's my job to report on these shows (despite potential protests from the union, of which I'm NOT a member and which doesn't sign their name to my paychecks). Here, then, are ROCK STARS ON TV, in the latest issue of DR. IGUANA'S TV GUIDE!



ELTON JOHN - LIVE AT THE SEASIDE

LOUNGE: Pop singer Elton John plays a character much like himself in this weekly half hour of comedy, music and pathos. The premise? Elton finds himself singing and playing for tips in a piano bar after blowing all the money he made from hit records and concert tours on costumes, junk jewelry, and hair transplants. **OPENING EPISODE:** Elton suffers from intense, morbid depression when he realizes that without a producer, back-up band or engineer, he is not particularly distinctive as either a musician or a vocalist. On top of that, his position as a cocktail pianist is jeopardized when his boss notices that Elton can't seem to play anything that will encourage customers to dance or make them thirsty.

NOUVELLE CUISINE WITH OZZIE OSBOURNE: Ozzie's nutritional philosophy is a simple one—"The popularity of sushi demonstrates that some things are best eaten raw. Well, I'm here to tell you that there are entrees that are best eaten not only uncooked, but while they're STILL ALIVE!" Ozzie also instructs aspiring young headbangers on the proper etiquette of dining with non-Metal Heads. For example, he advises, "Show some COUTH, kids, don't filne your teeth into points at the table."

D.L. ROTH - DETECTIVE: David Lee Roth plays a California-based singing private eye who wears leopard skin tightie, gold lamé vests, and iridescent platform shoes beneath his snap-down brim hat and trenchcoat. In between romantic interludes, chord changes and 90-mile-an-hour shootouts on the freeway, Roth is employed by promoters, record companies and fan clubs, tracing the whereabouts of uppity rock singers who split from the bands that brought them fame. "The pattern always seems to be the same—a few cover stories in the fap press, a few solo appearances on TV talk shows, and before you know it, the singer believes that he is the TRUE STAR of the outfit and he strikes out on his own. He ends up recording a few trite, self-indulgent lp's, and then he crawls back under some rock with all the rest of the ooze and slime. My job: investigate the circumstances of his departure from the group, track him down, and then slap some sense into the dude." **MOST ANTICIPATED EPISODE:** Valerie Bertinelli guest stars as Ammonia Well, a woman whose very scent can revive a man's desire the instant she enters the room. Danger floods the detective's alcohol-drenched senses as Well seductively coos, "I have a case for you that's right up your alley and down your street. Do the initials V.B. ring a bell?"

I SHOT THE SHERIFF: Eric Clapton stars in this comedy-western inspired by his hit tune of the same name. Clapton portrays "a man without a gun" who cleans up a wild and wooly frontier town using nothing but his wits, wisdom and his Fender Stratocaster guitar. Outlaws who think they will find the unarmed lawman an easy target for their insulting jibes and blazing six-guns are soon shown the error of their ways. The astounded desperados often find that their pistols have been knocked from their hands before they have a chance to fire them by the wily Sheriff's stinging blues-guitar riffs. And, as often as not, they applaud the triumphant lawman and request an encore. **PREMIERE EPISODE:**

POETRY'S SKILL'S

in the style of e.e. cummings'

"Buffalo Bill's"

by Michael Polo

Poetry's Skill's

defunct

who used to

write a pretty smooth-sounding

rhyme

and pen abbaa limericks just like that

Jesus

it was a lovely form

and what i want to know is

how do you like your unrhymed verse

Mister Avant-Garde

Fighting fire with fire, evil cattle barons send for their own bad-ass guitar-slinger to gun down the Sheriff in a blues-jam to the finish! Special guest: Stevie Ray Vaughn!

HUNTING WITH TED NUGENT: Famed Gonzo-rocker Ted Nugent trades in his electric guitar and Marshall amps for the good clean sport of high tech weaponry in this weekly adventure-travelogue. Wooded suburban areas and country backroads provide a thrilling background of nature in all its splendor as Ted instructs his celebrity guests in the proper use of firearms, stalking one's prey, and meditating to become "one with nature"—just before they all blow the hell out of everything in sight! Bears, birds, rabbits, deer, fawns, trees, bushes and weeds are fired at indiscriminately in the same furious style that has earned Nugent the nicknames "The Motor City Madman" and "Mr. Cat Scratch Fever." Of course, all wounded or killed game is left behind, as Ted is a renowned vegetarian. **SCHEDULED CELEBRITY GUESTS:** Zaa Zaa Gabor ("Ooh, dahlink, does zis Uzi semi-automatic come wis matching diamonds?"), Keith Richards ("Man, I think I just loaded my syringe into the chamber of this rifle and injected the contents of this cartridge into my arm! Bmm, not bad!"), and special guest Wally Cox (of whom Nugent says, "Hey man, I KNOW he's dead, but it just cracks me up to have him around. He was the voice of UNDERDOG, y'know."). Also, don't miss Ted's weekly NRA-sponsored segment featuring Nugent's Tips on Guitar Technique. You'll hear such gems of music industry wisdom as, "Buy lots of GUNS!!! Pulling triggers gets you in shape to play the way I do, only not quite as loud. Snurk-snurk-snurk!"

EXILED INTO THE PUBLIC EYE: Jerry Lee Lewis stars in this musical bio-tragedy as a legendary country rocker whose penchant for controversy finally catches up with him. Lewis appears as Hawk Calhoun, an acknowledged all-time great in the fields of Country & Western, Rhythm & Blues, and Rock'n'Roll. During the course of his meteoric rise to fame and resulting turbulent career, Hawk has overcome many shocking exposés concerning his personal behavior that have threatened to destroy his livelihood. Each time, he has employed bone-jarring hard work and his remarkable "God-given talent" to make the public forget his indiscretions and to propel him onto even greater fame. One day, though, the public's tolerance is pushed to its very limits when the scandal of the circumstances surrounding, and his suspected involvement in, his wife's death come to light and destroy him in the eyes of his fans.

Overnight, all that was gold to him turns into dross. Members of his own family turn against him, likening him to the devil, as they preach from powerful media pulpits. Others betray him by renouncing his influence on them and then proceed to release records that sound exactly like his. Meanwhile, Hawk's records are discreetly banned from radio playlists, and his record company drops him. TV refuses to book him on its programs and even goes so far as to omit his name when they are discussing the history of the music Hawk did so much to create and define. He is ruthlessly hassled by an exploitative media laden with sensationalistic reporters and mean-spirited comedians who don't have one iota of his talent, but who DO have favorable access to network airtime. At home, his health fails to the point of near-death on several occasions; the IRS attaches and sells his house and belongings to partially quash his tax debt; pills no longer get him up; whiskey no longer tastes as good; and he has a new wife who is as quixotic and temperamental as he has always been. With nowhere left for him to take refuge, and no money to settle his bills, Hawk's only home is on the road. Though he is in much too poor health to scramble this way, he plays a seemingly endless series of bars, package shows and private parties. Hawk seeks to live out his remaining days rocking, rolling, and dying inch by inch in front of his public. His driving belief: if he pays his dues all over again and gives his very life to the music, he will somehow achieve redemption in the eyes of his fans and once again be allowed to proudly wear his cloak of greatness. The demanding concert schedule takes its toll, and questions are raised by those who still care about Hawk and his music: will he LIVE long enough to make his dreams come true? If he does, will there be anything left of his soul or spirit to give to that dream? Will his newborn son cause him to take pause and cherish life again, or will the pressure of an added responsibility only drive him harder and faster to his grave? **SERIES DEBUT:** Hawk Calhoun's heart stops in the dressing room just before a show. He awakens to find his drummer pounding on his chest in an effort to revive him. Instantly, the rock legend quips, "Y'know, if you could keep a beat like that on the bandstand tonight, we could really get 'em ROCKING!" Then he sits up, washes down a handful of capsules with a pint of whiskey and walks out onstage to do his show.

CHARRO II: Kurt Russell resurrects his award-winning Elvis Presley impersonation to play Presley in his spaghetti western persona of "Charro," a fast-drawing, tough-talking anti-hero of the Old West on a collision course with whiskey, loose women, and a good song. In this sequel to the 1968 production, Kurt/Elvis stalks the casinos and hotels of the Nevada desert in search of a certain sexy Latin temptress so that he may settle once and for all who is the rightful possessor of the name "Charro." During the film's stunning cinematic climax (a Las Vegas-style song and dance number featuring Kurt/Elvis and his co-star alternately attempting to seduce and murder one another), the clothes come off, the mystery unravels, and the truth is revealed concerning the names' correct spelling. Kurt Russell stars as Elvis Presley starring as Jesse "Charro" Wade. Charo "cootchie-chootchie" Kugat is featured as "Charo." Charro Brand Briquettes appears as "the fire that burns from within."

A THREE MILLION MAN

Losers only red army would be no match against a fair play winners - losers army of one third that many - maybe one tenth. They might be RED at the start but they'd be BLACK and BLUE at the finish. SPOON ASSE TO WARDEN WIN LOSE WAR PLAN Box 2243 Youngstown, Ohio, 44504

SOBRIETY by Larry Oberc

So I was at a party, 15 years old, drinking a bottle of Wild Irish Rose, 20% rawgut, passed out in the hallway, came to, opened my eyes, stomach was wrong, looked at the bathroom door, three four people in line, looked at the balcony, three four people in line, stood up, staggered to the kitchen, hit the sink, red wine like blood splashing over just-washed dishes, thus began my career...

I stopped drinking on my 32nd birthday. No big deal. The usual day or two of dry skin itch. Don't know how people mistake those for bugs. Had worse withdrawals from barbituates. And speed. Although the emotional turmoil from both screamed at different ends of the emotional spectrum. But I quit drinking on my 32nd birthday. After ten years of a six-pack of tall boys, almost always Budweiser, it was at first boring. Passing out was something I strived for, and found early. I'd drink my beer, close my eyes, and wake up the next morning. No dreams. Just nice dark safety. The first few days were sleepless tossing and turning. The usual. The itching would strike from nowhere. A few scratches, the itching would move somewhere else, a few scratches there. Boredom was the worst of it. Motivation dissolved. When I was drinking beer I knew I had to do all of my drawing or writing before the fifth beer or there'd be too many mistakes. I no longer had that hurry. I could take my time. And taking my time was boring. Parties became boring. I wasn't numb to the boredom. I made a hundred promises that I swore I would keep when I quit drinking. I haven't kept any of them. Motivation has disappeared. There is no nightly deadline, no fifth beer. There is all night. I can stay up as late as I want without fear of a hangover. Being tired is meaningless if there isn't a shaky hand and raw stomach to go with it. At a few recent benefits I drank a beer. The beer was now boring. It no longer had that drive behind it. It wasn't a means to an end. It was nothing. It was like the very coping device I thrived on no longer offered the same options. When I was drinking every night I didn't give a shit. Nothing mattered. It was just. Pure eastern essence of "be here now." Being here now is boring. There are some benefits. I can go to the grocery store early in the morning and not have to worry about throwing up or fainting from a hangover. I can stand in lines without fear of anxiety attacks. But that was all part of the challenge. Keeping it together in stressful situations. My beer gut has slowly begun to dissolve. A very slow process but not one I have to pay attention to. I look down, see it hasn't the strength, the bounce it used to. But all of that means nothing. It was the fifth beer that motivated me. Without that it's boring. Things still get done. They have to. But there is no new day, no new outlook, no new nothing. It's the same thing without the benefit of a fifth beer. Maybe I should get married, have a few kids, buy a station wagon, a dog, move to the suburbs, and create distractions. Maybe I should go in search of a new fifth beer. Maybe I should open the fridge, break the six-pack of tall boys I bought two months ago open, and start fresh.



(Here's the next in a series of rejected scripts for Saturday Night Live written in 1986, pre-Contragate, by the founders of the Vossarian Universal News Service. This one features both John Lovitz' Tommy "Liar" Flanagan and Kevin Nealon's subliminal message-giving character, and opens on a State Department briefing room. Lovitz stands behind the podium as the new State Department spokesman, fielding questions from journalists portrayed by various members of the cast.)

LOVITZ: ...and let me assure you, that in my new capacity as State Department spokesman, you will always get the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me, so help me, uh, Chief Justice Rehnquist, in a never-ending battle against truth, justice, and the American Way! That's what I'm talking about. Get the picture? Now, are there any questions? (Glances around) Yes? You there, with the Andy Warhol eyes. (points to Carvey)

CARVEY: Mr. Flanagan, what's the real story on Eugene Hasenfus? The administration has repeatedly denied Mr. Hasenfus was working for the United States when his plane was shot down over Nicaragua in a bungled attempt to illegally supply arms to the contras, and

yet all the evidence thus far, including Mr. Hasenfus' own confession, implicates this country's involvement. Would you care to comment?

LOVITZ: Well, no, yes, it's really quite simple, you see, that is, I mean, we haven't been able to pin the Administration down just yet. The CIA is working on it, and we think they may be connected, connected with an extremist organization, so you can't trust them. We don't, and we never did. And we've never even heard of this, uh, this Eugene Hasenfus, but if he's connected with the Administration, as we suspect he might be, then he's not connected with us, and anyway, what the President really said when he heard about the incident was, and he may not have heard about it, since he was sleeping when it happened, but if he did hear about it and if he said anything, it was, "Aw, gee! What's the fuss?" Yeah! That's it. What's the fuss? That's what he said. Ms. Poldask. (points to Hooks)

HOOKS: There is widespread agreement among informed sources that the pre-summit summit meeting in Iceland between the President and Mikhail Gorbachev did little more than promote a continuing atmosphere of confusion, skepticism and distrust. Do you think the pre-summit summit was a failure? If so, who's really at fault here?

LOVITZ: Why, of course, it was cold up there, but the President came through it okay, so we're pleased with the results. After all, the President was told he was going to Iceland to meet, to meet with Mikhail, Mikhail, McHale's Navy! Yeah, that's it. The invitation said it was a cast reunion for McHale's Navy, and the President was invited to do a bit from, from Death Valley Days, and he arrived in Iceland with the original 20-mule team, but Gorbachev had brought his wife, so there's no arms control, and it's all Ernest Borgnine's fault, because he was selling facial cream! You there, way in the back. (points to Nealon)

NEALON: (using subliminal messages) Yes, Mr. Flanagan, just what is the government doing (Gone With the Wind, Gone With the Wind) to secure the safe release (Gone With the Wind, Gone With the Wind) of the Americans presently being held hostage in Beirut (Gone With the Wind, Gone With the Wind)?

LOVITZ: Well, we're not doing anything, and believe me, we frankly don't give a damn. And that's the truth! Yeah, that's it! The truth! (Points to Miller) Why doesn't someone ask me about tax reform?

MILLER: Mr. Flanagan, what about this new tax reform bill? I mean, who are we kidding here, really? Isn't it true that all this hoopla over tax reform is just another boondoggle to hide the fact that this country is going to hell in a handbasket at the expense of those who don't own it and won't ever inherit it, while those who do, or have options on it, will continue to get away with it? I mean, let's get serious here.

LOVITZ: Why, certainly, you've raised a good point, and I could answer that by telling you that the new Tax Reform Bill is going to result in refunds for the homeless and hungry, and it is, but I won't. No, that's not important. What is important is that the 1986 Tax Reform Bill is going to be made into a movie! That's right, and Stephen King is writing the screenplay. Martin Scorsese is directing, and, and, let's see, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Meryl Streep will star! There'll be music by David Byrne, choreography by Twyla Tharp, narration by John Houseman...and it's going to be shot right here in the United States, and 250 million Americans will have cameo roles, yeah! It'll be a blockbuster, I tell ya! Biggest blockbuster since Gone With the Wind. We'll all be rich! Yeah, yeah, rich! Aren't you Nora Ephron? (points to Jackson)

JACKSON: Gertrude Steinam, Mr. Flanagan. Why does the government continue publicly to state that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in the assassination of John F. Kennedy, when it privately accepts the widely-held belief of some, including political extremist Kurt Waldheim, that Kennedy was gunned down by the Queen of England?

NEALON: (subliminally) (Howdy Doody. Howdy Doody.)

LOVITZ: Yeah, well, we've always suspected Buffalo Bob, that is, I mean, as we've stated all along, Phineas T. Bluster, I mean Kennedy, yeah, Kennedy, you know, uh...shot himself! Yeah, that's it! He shot himself because, uh, Clarabelle, I mean Lyndon, yeah, Lyndon, uh, LaRouche convinced him to do it! In the Peanut Gallery, in Dallas. It was easy! And who had a better motive, right? Yeah! It had to be LaRouche and Bluster, and Gorbachev, yeah. What do you want? (points to Hartman)

HARTMAN: When can the American people expect their government to stop straddling the fence on the South African crisis? What lead will America take to show the rest of the world where it stands on fundamental human rights?

NEALON: (Fourscore and seven years ago, fourscore and seven years ago)

LOVITZ: Why, sure, we've got to bite the bullet by the horns on the issues, and yeah, our fathers brought forth upon this continent a great nation, conceived—can I say that?—just checking—what was the question? Wait, don't answer, and to further explain, you get the picture! Okay, we're running late, people. Have to hop a copter back to Rancho Mirage. One last question... yeah, yeah, what's your problem? (points to Dunn)

DUNN: Mr. Flanagan, can you tell us what time it is when the big hand is on the "ten" and the little hand is on the "twelve"?

NEALON: (Doctor Strangelove, Doctor Strangelove)

LOVITZ: Yeah, sure, a trick question. But I can handle it, yeah, sure I can. No problem. (Grimacing, in deep thought) Well, yeah, it's truth, justice, and later than you think! It's been swell!

THE VISIT by Larry Stolte

I am a hideous vermin. Larry is a normal guy—tightly wound, stressed out, oblivious. My job is to make Larry's life miserable, and I do it very well. I'm a detail-oriented, reliable professional who works well under pressure. When I get the call, I rise from my long dormancy and make Larry feel like he's on Hell's Lower East Side. Yes, I am Larry's disease.

My latest visit with Larry started on a Saturday morning. In my vocation, you don't get weekends off. You make a much better impression on the client this way.

Larry felt an itch deep down in his lungs and a slight ache in his back. He thought little of it. Subtle, I. Some pain migrated to his elbows and feet. He assumed he screwed up his back while exercising. He knew a back injury could affect distal areas of the body.

In a matter of seconds, I made his left thumb swell. The other fingers were cold, but the thumb was burning. And it stuck out like a sore thumb. Puffy welts magically appeared where he sits down, giving him a full moon. He wasn't impressed.

On Sunday morning, the thumb-swelling was almost totally gone, but his left pinkie and right index finger entered the synchronized swelling contest. Talk about double-digit inflation. He felt for the puffiness on his butt only to find it was gone. The puffiness, not the butt.

Next on the agenda was his back. Large lumps appeared here, making it look like a mogul run at Aspen. These moguls itched. I had Larry's undivided attention.

I was very proud of Larry during this visit for two reasons. First, he didn't run off to the nearest Waldenbooks and rifle through the BOOK OF SYMPTOMS to find out what he had contracted. That used to be the first place he'd go. He'd look through the book and find out that he had at least 14 terminal illnesses and concomitant cases of nosehair cancer and an infection that develops only after urinating in the Amazon.

He was always embarrassed looking in that book. His particular symptoms were always on pages that coincidentally contained symptoms such as tertiary penis shriveling or infectious Mongolian hemorrhoids, neither of which he actually had, but of course passersby wouldn't know this, especially when glimpsing the full-color flaccid organ profile illustration.

I'm even more proud of Larry for refraining from the "pleading with God for your life" bit. You know, when the sick person gets religious—"Please God, clear up my scabies and I'll go to church and wax Mother Teresa's moustache every Sunday and devote my life to helping crippled, homeless fetuses." Of course, when Mr. Religion gets better, it's back to playing cat croquet and buying porno flicks by the six-pack.

Monday morning brought swelling to his right wrist, right thumb, left wrist, and upper lip, and it brought a hideous, pathetic nightmare that even Poe couldn't dream of—Larry had to go to work. He would rather be boiled in Quaker State 10W40.

The nurse at work took time away from her busy schedule of building famous skylines out of tongue depressors and rectal thermometers to check out Larry's malady. This was her first challenge in years and she met it brilliantly. "See a doctor," she said.

Now, Larry had sworn off doctors ever since the last one told him his hypochondria was psychosomatic. So many doctors, Larry thought, so little ammo. He always said that if we could take all the doctors in the world and stack one by one on top of each other, we should just LEAVE THE BASTARDS THERE. He'll surely freeze over before he would go back to one of those Nazis with bad handwriting.

The pain and itching kept Larry up all of Monday night, and on Tuesday morning he looked like the unlikely progeny of an Elephant Man-Martina Navratilova coupling. His lower lip resembled a bad

TO IRELAND IN THE NEW YORK TIMES

by Todd Kristel

Know that I would an accountant be
True partner in the company
That sang, to sweeten Ireland's fame
Nor think I any less of Them
Because the great Van Morrison
Of him, whose fame began
Before Ireland made the Irish clan
The crest of the latest new wave
When Time began to rant and rave
The most coverage since Born to Run
Made Ireland's two hearts beat as one;
And Time bad all its flashbulbs flare
To light a photo here and there;
And though the praise may be hard to swallow
Where Time leads, I will follow.

Nor may I less be counted one
With Miles Davis and Maynard Ferguson,
Because, to whose who want to know,
My rhymes are as good as Bono's.
I cast my rhymes into your ear,
That you, in the coming new year,
May know the inking of an eye
Under the blood-red sky.

bratwurst, he moved like Albert the Bobbing Bird, and his left wrist and hand turned into a massive pus holder, a clublike mound of red flesh and gristle that could turn one into a pillar of salt just by looking at it. Larry calmly panicked and decided to see a doctor. It was a sixty-degree day, but weather reports indicated that it was forty below zero in hell, causing gas lines to freeze up.

The clinic's front office receptionist, a Stalinesque woman who seemingly was not born but rather sculpted out of shit, made Larry fill out fifteen forms. His right arm, though not as grotesque, was no more functional than the left, so he had to write with a pen in his mouth. It would be a short wait, he was told, so please be seated.

He read a few issues of those magazines that are found only in doctors' offices, the very same issues that he read in a doctor's office twelve years ago. This illiterature probably gets passed around to waiting rooms everywhere, kind of like a fruitcake.

The short wait was a short wait by Stapleton Airport standards. Emergencies pulled two of the doctors away from the clinic; one was in court, the other was getting his superficiality resurfaced.

After shaving only once, Larry's name was called. A nurse took his blood pressure to kill time so the doctor could sober up. Of course, the doc was a general practitioner, which is the white-collar equivalent of a highway worker that holds the "SLOW" sign. He told Larry that he should see a specialist. That was worth about \$90. Larry wanted to send this guy on a safari dressed as a steak.

Specialists are quite a bit different than GPs. GPs are skilled at knowing absolutely nothing in a general way, but specialists know nothing about one particular illness. The problem in Larry's case was that the GP didn't even know which specialist to send Larry to. The first, a rhinoplastic surgeon, could do little to palliate Larry's pain, though he presented a plan that would have transformed Larry into Michael Jackson.

Next came a grinning idiot in the guise of an allergy specialist who said Larry suffered an allergic reaction, probably because then he gets most of the money. Poor Larry was sitting around wondering what the hell he ate that would have caused this. Silverfish caviar? Nutrasweet, Nutrasour, Nutrabitter? Artificial Potato Buds? Honey Roasted Dingle Nuts?

He remembered that he had had a five-egg omelet just before the outbreak. He knew the cholesterol would kill him; in fact, he called Roto Rooter to see if they did arteries. Still, he doubted that this plague could have been caused by a reaction to chicken embryos.

They vouchsafed him a shot of something that did nothing for the illness, but gave him some minor side effects which caused him to sleepwalk through the next two days and pick other people's noses. Aside from the shot and some antihistamines, the doctor's only other advice was to rub petrified water on the inflamed areas and come back at the end of the week to deposit another \$10. If the symptoms persisted at that time, allergy tests were to be given.

Larry figured this was no allergy. I knew he was right. Doctors had misdiagnosed Larry every single time before, and he decided to bet with the streak. He figured it was either a virus or his microwave was leaking. But really, how can you put a label on me? What am I? My insidious methods are more like communism than anything else; body communism, to be exact. I spread the red menace all over Larry's body, one area at a time. Larry's freedom fighters, his red blood cells, had no chance against me.

My Evil Empire would next invade his southern hemisphere. Wednesday morning Larry's feet swelled to elephantiasis proportions. But he refused to go back to the medical marvels.

A few days later, I moved my message to his throat, causing him to feel like there was a ping pong ball lodged there. He was okay as long as he didn't swallow. Problem is, when you are conscious of swallowing and try not to swallow, it's Lake Tahoe. He almost couldn't breathe.

Weeks went by. My hegemonic dominance swept through his stomach and his head, causing pain usually associated with South American death squads or watching a Spielberg film festival.

Larry started to think that Job was a direct ancestor and that atavistically he acquired some of Job's finer qualities. He thought about his own death in a pragmatic way. He told his wife about his wishes to be cremated. She would have nothing to do with the cremation talk; however, you couldn't tell that by what she did to the lasagne the night before. She also nagged him about drinking beer; she said that beer had histamines, which was bad. Larry was drowning his sorrows in beer, and she was throwing in tiny life preservers. He felt it was kind of like getting moral support from Jim Bakker, but later he accepted her carping as caring.

And you know what? He started caring back. He started relaxing. He forgot about work. He remembered birthdays. He enjoyed walks on the beach and just doing nothing. He laughed at traffic. His mind stopped thinking only about future things and started concentrating on the present. He paid attention. He didn't care about what was going to happen; he enjoyed what was happening. He was happy.

The mawkish scumdog. This previously neuric meatball of stress was happy. The lousy sot; I wanted to kill him so bad. And he knew damn well I could too. But then that cheery little Larry Poppins would die happy. He would probably go to heaven or something. No way, buddy. Well, to make a long story boring, I left. But I'll be back, and the bastard knows it. He just doesn't know when. He can't keep smiling forever.

War Compensation

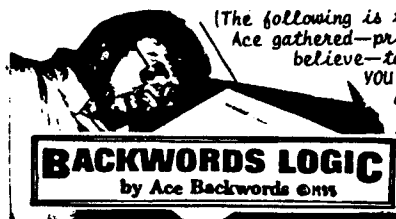
Houston

The National Association of Baroque Beef Growers says it will meet with officials of the National Endowment for the Arts this month in an attempt to work out compensation for wartime atrocities.

Journalism Universal

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(The following is the conclusion of responses Ace gathered—primarily in the Bay Area, I believe—to his question, "WHAT KEEPS YOU SANE?????" If Ace receives any further responses to this question from any IJ readers, we may make a third column out of them next issue—Ace is at 1630 University Ave., #26, Berkeley, CA 94703.)

Sitting at my desk, staring out the window and sometimes even working on some crazy story about myself...talking to my 64-year-old daughter Sophie and looking at her face when I first wake up and she's still sleeping. Jumping up and down in aerobics classes every day. Drinking wine. Working in my garden. Cleaning my house. Looking forward to having intense sex. Leaving this country sometimes. Talking to my best friends. Looking at good artwork. Listening to old music and The Beatles...I'm lucky I don't hafta deal with the urban chaos too much but I hafta deal with my fears and anxieties about the scary craziness out "there" all the time and I worry about raising a beautiful child and letting her go out into the big mess...

—Aline Kominsky-Crumb, *Weirdo* magazine

Personally, I haven't found anything to keep me sane, and I've tried a lot: Zen, yoga, magic, art, literature, education, drugs, health food—nothing seems to help. However, one thing I've learned along the way is that insanity only exists in a social context, so you could say I keep sane by avoiding society. It's not just that society's crazy (although it certainly is); it's that the definition of sanity is culturally generated (one civilization's shaman is another's schizophrenic). By staying in my room about twenty-three hours of each day I manage to avoid any situation where my sanity (or lack of sanity) could be placed under scrutiny. If anyone came to visit me, they might decide I'm insane, but if they said so I could just ask them to leave. Voila!

Too bad about Will Shatter. He had a pretty good method of sanity preservation: substitute all problems for one big one (drug addiction). It was a fair deal—scoring drugs to support a habit isn't half as difficult as dealing with reality—unfortunately, the eventual side-effect was death (as it always is). Or maybe it wasn't unfortunate for him—he certainly escaped a lot of hassles by croaking. —David McCord, 21-year-old aspiring novelist

Shit, that's a hard question cuz the very same things that make me crazy one day make me ecstatic the next.

Drawing THE YOUNG AND THE FRUSTRATED comic strip demands a lot of isolated, backbreaking hours slumped over a desk constantly fighting off approaching deadlines. It's such an uphill battle cuz the strip is perceived as too bizarre for most publications. It often seems pointless and I'm left feeling depressed and defeated. Then I'LL GET INTO A GREAT COMIC BOOK and it seems worthwhile, at least for a few days.

RECEIVING FAN MAIL, keep those marriage proposals comin in. (finding time to answer it all is another matter!)

I play slide guitar with MORE FRIENDS, we gig out a lot. There is no greater high than rippin thru a tight set with the band and then being on the receiving end of endless adoration. (It's a fuckin great scam being a minority ((as in: female musician)) in a scene that is largely populated by males. I mean like, people kiss my feet ((LITERALLY!!!)) after shows. Not only do I have all these boys lusting after me but I have the respect of all the chicks too!)

Some things unrelated to my artistic endeavors: smokin dope; riding my bicycle like a pit bull on wheels; consuming mega quantities of caffeine (usually in the form of hot tea); going to big crowded parties (but I hardly get to go out any more unless it's one of my own gigs cuz I have too much work to do, boo hoo); listening to fast music; and last but not least, having green underarm hair (this does more for my sanity than you can imagine).

—Luna Ticks, cartoonist

Ignoring most things I come in contact with is how I keep my sanity. I usually find the more I ignore, the happier I am. There aren't really many things that are important anyway. Why should I be INFORMED and AWARE? Why should I keep up with every CRISIS that comes along? Why should I care what's happening on the other side of the planet? Why should I care about what's happening to our world and society? I care only about what's actually happening to me.

I don't wish bad stuff on other people (at least not MOST of the time). I just see no reason to be aware of what's going on around me unless I HAVE to.

If I thought very much about the state of the world I would become crazy. I don't want to become crazy.

Here's a poem about it...

OH RATS IT'S SO SHITTY OH WHO CARES
Oh rats why are things so pretty
And isn't it a shame what happened yesterday?
Everybody are shitheads—everybody aren't
important at all.

Who cares anyway? Well all be dead soon. EEEwww.
—Stephen M. Fievet, leader of band LAMOP

I buy, sell, trade, fix up, repair and "set up" old junker guitars from the 50's and 60's—gotta lotta Harmony, Silvertone and Kay guitars in the collection. The guitars of the last 30 years show an incredible variety of styles, which combine often radical art statements with purpose: a blend of fashion and function.

My visual and musical sensibilities get strummed in unison on this one, and the yankee trader side of me gets charged.

Think maybe I'll collect guns next.

—Joe Schenkman, cartoonist

Zenarchy STORIES

by Ho Chi Zen

CRIB NOTES FOR FUTURE BUDDHAS

At last you can cheat on your satori exams. For *The Sound of the One Hand*, translated with a commentary by Joel Hoffman, promises and delivers 281 Zen koans with answers. First published in Japan in 1916, this compilation of the notes of Rinza Zen monks studying to become masters makes for a mind-pulverizing reading experience which, in any field but Zen, would of course be inexcusable. Without the author's commentary—but for maybe a half-dozen brilliant insights—it would have been much better. Hoffman, in an explanation which shows that he understands that to try to explain these things is to fall into a trap, tries to explain these things. Fortunately, he saves his comments for a separate section at the end and only becomes terribly pathetically intellectual at intervals.

Zen koans are a lot like the flowers which, when people look at them, in Nansen's words, "It is similar to a dream." Look at them as a botanist if you wish, but only the eye of an artist will see what is most to be seen if what is looked at is a flower. A botanist looks at a flower the way a donkey stares at a well; an artist looks at a botanist the way a well would stare at a donkey, if a well or a flower could stare—the same way a Zen master looks at a theological scholar.

There is, however, a saving grace to this book: In most instances, the answers it gives to the koans make no more sense than the koans themselves—so the koans are not spoiled, only enlarged. Far from giving away Zen's secrets, *The Sound of the One Hand* adds to the traditional collection of Zen *mondo*, noetic conversations which often themselves serve as koans.

Just to drive you out of your wretched mind there is an occasional answer that makes perfect sense. Others which don't seem to make sense often give hints about such practical matters as how to get rid of distracting thoughts when meditating. Others are simply mindfucks given by the pupil in answer to questions which were mindfucks—in the most celebrated tradition of witty Rinza absurdism.

Now for a pop quiz. To see if you've been paying attention thus far, in the next section are five questions. Answer these koans and then check the end of this column to see if you've passed or failed.

ZEN KOAN POP QUIZ

1. The light of a candle is blown out—where did it go?
2. This fan—did it fall from heaven or spring from the earth?
3. When Emperor Wu asked Bodhidharma, "Who are you?" and he answered, "I don't know," what did it mean?
4. You're put behind a stone gate which is bolted from the outside. How are you going to get out?
5. Bring forth Mount Fuji tied up with a lamp wick.

JUMPING BODHISAT

If I told you the Buddha is a Discordian Saint, you'd say, "So what?" Possibly more surprising, he isn't. I'll bet you didn't know he is, however, a Catholic Saint!

"The interesting evolution of the Buddha (Bodhisattva, Bodhisat) into Saint Josaphat is described in *The Wisdom of Balahvar* by David Marshall Lang (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1957)." Elsie Mitchell tells us in *Sun Buddhas, Moon Buddhas* (Weatherhill, 1973), explaining November 27 is the commemoration day accorded Saint Josaphat, Prince of India, in the Roman Church.

ZENARCHY IN ACTION

One of the most Zenarchist stories of Zen Buddhism was told by Captain Jack Brinkley, half-Japanese cousin of George Bernard Shaw, and is recounted in full in *Sun Buddhas, Moon Buddhas*.

When Brinkley once visited a famous Zen master who was abbot of an historic temple, the *roshi*—who drank sake, contrary to Buddhist Precepts, on his doctor's advice—invited the captain, also a Buddhist, to drink with him. Politely, Captain Brinkley refused.

"When an abbot, the most important person in a temple, offers you a drink," the Zen master insisted, "it is impolite to refuse."

Again, uncomfortably, but as courteously as possible, Jack Brinkley refused—whereupon the Zen master continued along the same lines as before. After a third refusal, the abbot became furious and menacing: "If I say someone is to drink with me, they drink! I order you to accompany me in drinking a cup of wine!"

Once more the captain refused, politely but firmly.

The abbot laughed heartily: "Good, good! I'm glad to see that you actually have learned a little bit about Buddhism."

ANSWERS TO ZEN KOAN POP QUIZ

1. To pull the cow out from the back shed.
2. I bought it at the shop of Halbara in Nihonbashi in Tokyo for twenty-five yen.
3. If Bodhidharma says he doesn't know, how should I know?
4. Hey! Somebody let me out of here!
5. If that's possible, let me see you do it.



SNIDE CRITIC REVIEWS

J.P. MORGAN

Nope, I'm sorry, I refuse to go see **WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT**... no, no, no! And I'll tell you why not: for one thing, it's another product of the evil Spielberg/Disney/ILM cabal, and I, for one, have sworn off that stuff (they ain't gettin' any of my money)! For another thing, this movie is obviously nothing more than a big coming-out party for a new corporate spokesman: just last night Yours Truly was watching Hitchcock's **IT TAKES A THIEF** on the zombie box, and there appeared a commercial with Roger Rabbit...it was peddling some garbage with NutraSweet brain poison in it! 'Nuff said! Well no, there's more—to make it worse still, this film was directed by the being who directed the yuppie-crap entertainment **BACK TO THE FUTURE**: 11'1 Bobby Zemeckis! Bah! The prosecution rests!

Actually, it all goes beyond that. Roger Rabbit is all rubbery

Wax Ink

by Rory Houchens

NOTHING LIKE THE SUN—Sting (A&M)—Though this latest Sting album boasts two lp's, be warned—there's not even an hour's worth of music spread over the pair. But rest assured, some of his best (and worst) post-Police material lurks within. "The Lazarus Heart," a mix of searing music and vivid but confounding lyrics, ranks as one of Sting's best; the fact that it's based upon a nightmare may help explain the odd imagery, from Greek tragedy to Alfred Hitchcock. Guitarist extraordinaire Andy Summers and saxman Branford Marsalis contribute mightily. "Be Still My Beating Heart," another top-notch tune, records the mental struggles of a flesh and blood organism in a world of hard imperfections done up in black and white tones. Both "History Will Teach Us Nothing" and "Straight To My Heart" smack of past Police accomplishments. The former, with its reggaefied spurts and third world sympathies, could have come from **GHOST IN THE MACHINE**, while the lilting chorus of the other would have fit nicely alongside the mature pop of **SYNCHRONICITY**. Also of note are "They Dance Alone," an elegant discourse on the sad affairs going on in Chile; "Fragile," a wispy, Latin-tinged tune about the shortcomings of humanity; and a mesmerizing cover of Jimi Hendrix's "Little Wing" arranged by the late Gil Evans and with atmospheric backing by Evans and his orchestra. Things to overlook—"Rock Steady," an embarrassing, feeble stab at deep-down-in-the-groove hipness; "Englishman in New York," a colorless show tune with Sting listing the differences between himself and American mortals; and the insipid "The Secret Marriage," which gives a whole new meaning to the word vapidty!

WORD & WORD 2—Various Artists (Jive/RCA)—These records are the first two in a proposed series of rap/hip hop sampler albums whose main purpose is to introduce the musical genre to anyone/everyone who is not already a slave to the rap attack. The first lp is notable for cuts by Schoolly D ("Parkside 5-2"), Kool Moe Dee ("No Respect"), and Jazzy Jeff ("King Heroin"). Number two is highlighted also by Schoolly D ("Coqui 900") and Kool Moe Dee ("How Ya Like Me Now"), and by The Wee Papa Girl Rappers ("Faith") and Newtrentam ("London Bridge Is Falling Down"). Depending upon the depth of your hip hop hunger, these rap tidbits will either satisfy or whet the appetite for more.

DANCING IN THE DARK—Sonny Rollins (Milestone)—Jazz-dom's preeminent tenor saxophonist, Sonny Rollins, kicks off his latest lp with a rather listless reading of "Just Once" (a "monster smash hit" for James Ingram, remember?), jumps into the frenetic "O.T.Y.O.G." (where he spars with trombonist Clifton Anderson), cruises through the melancholic ensemble piece (and the record's finest composition) "Promise," and sizzles on "Duke Of Iron," a brisk, carnival-flavored celebration. He introduces the title tune with a dazzling variety of solo sax runs, keeps low and cool throughout "I'll String Along With You," and closes the album with its strongest melody on the bittersweet "Allison." Another master-
14 piece from "Saxophone Colossus!"

expressions and googly faces, in an imitation of the great Tex Avery's style. Now why would the Disney cartel want to make their product like that? Easy: to make the rabbit a better product-peddler in this age of Max Headroom (remember him?) and MTV-flash-cut-disco commercials. The twitchy, herky-jerky pseudo-Avery style fits right in with all the other commercials' attempts to grab you as you're flipping channels. It's symptomatic of '80s entertainment—just be loud and obnoxious and repetitious, and you don't even have to bother being funny. Just dish up the imitation outrageousness, that's all! We wouldn't want the "entertainment" to overwhelm the commercials, would we? Hey, remember the Pink Floyd line, "I've got thirteen channels of shit to choose from"? Well, now it's more like eighty channels of shit! Even if there were acts on the level of the Marx Brothers or Monty Python around now, they wouldn't be "permitted" to act; you might forget some of the advertisements! Oh, happy day! Thank you, Mr. Ad Man, thank you so very much!!

Hmm...this column seems to have wandered a tad. The original idea was to explain why the S.C. didn't want to see any of the Big Summer Releases. **WILLOW** is pulpy Lucasfilm imitation Tolkien; I'd seen Ralph "Rotoscope" Bakshi's desecration of **LORD OF THE RINGS** years ago, and that was enough to last a lifetime, thank you. **RAMBO III**? C'mon, quit joking. Same with **CROC DUNDEE II**, plus the first one sucked weasel urine. **POLTERGEIST III** and **PHANTASM II** are more sequels, and I've grown to hate sequels with great intensity. (We can thank the Ad Men for the sequel plague, as well—they're easier to "sell," and never mind if they stink; No Originality around here, buddy!) By the way, did you know some schmucks are remaking the Corman classic **NOT OF THIS EARTH**? Did you? Makes ya sick, doesn't it? It's making me sick, so maybe I'd better review some films that I have seen:

KRONOS (1957)—Ahh, when this came on the tube recently, it brought back memories of Channel 5's Creature Features, hosted by The Creep! This is one of the better late-'50s low-budgeters, featuring a giant cubical robot from space, come to drain all of Earth's energy. Popular theme of Alien Brain Control: a normally good scientist is taken over and used to transmit info to aliens. Another scientist talks to his bulky '50s computer like it was his horse, calling it "Betsy" or something like that. Remember the chintzy animation they used to depict Kronos walking over the landscape? A real contrast to the otherwise good special effects.

TWICE TOLD TALES (1963)—This one is based on three Nathaniel Hawthorne stories. It stars Vincent Price, who seems here to be having a hammy-acting contest with the rest of the cast. The stories are "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment," "Rappaccini's Daughter," and "House of the Seven Gables." As filmed, they seem more like unhappy occult love stories, rather than horror (though things pick up a bit in the last tale).

TO CATCH A THIEF (1955)—A light confection from the kitchen of Alfred Hitchcock. Cary Grant is famous French burglar The Cat; he's reformed, but new jewel robberies using his old modus operandi have occurred, and both police and his old gang think he did them. He sets out to find the new Cat, and falls in love with dilettant Grace Kelly. A pleasant evening's viewing.

Geez, is that it? There was nothing film I meant to tell all you loyal readers about, but I've misplaced my notes! So what the hell, I'll go on a bit more about the **ROGER RABBIT** thing (at least it'll fill out this column)...see, apart from the above diatribe, the film plays on our affection for our fave cartoon characters; it ties in with the Spielberg/Lucas self-referential gags that play on the audience's familiarity with their previous product. Well, if I want to see Bugs Bunny or Daffy Duck, I'll watch 'em on the tube! Besides, what would Bugs be doin' hanging around a noodle like Mickey Mouse? He should quite properly be giving Mickey an exploding cigar, or pouring gravy on his head, or something like that. Or maybe Bugs and Daffy could set up Goofy to be shot up by Elmer Fudd, I dunno. At any rate, this mishmash parade of assorted characters seems too calculated to nab the largest common denominator for my taste.

Y'know, the **KRONOS** review about reminded me—there's a greivous lack of horror and sci-fi on the, uh, "free" channels; ah yes, there used to be "Creature Features" at noon and 8pm on Channel 5, and "Chiller Theatre" on 11, and at 11:30 Channel 9 would have "Fright Night!" All on Saturday...ah, memories...in **THE BRAIN THAT WOULDN'T DIE**, they actually showed you the closet mutant biting out a mouthful of the scientist's neck! You could see all those great Universal monster movies from the '30s and '40s! All the cheapo-stinko John Ashley Phillipino "Blood Island" films! Yes, lots of neat stuff...but it ain't there any more. *Sigh*...

Ah, dear readers, what an unjust world we live in. Why don't the forces of evil get it over with? Why don't they just go and release a "colorized" version of **ERASERHEAD**, and be done with it? Oh well, at least **RAMBO III** cratered out!

RABBIT-LY

by A.T. Hunn

The farmer glared at the tiny rabbit—
An invader in his field
But the shiny spade in those dirty hands
Would make the hare's life yield

Yet, not all plans do come about
For the rabbit it was faster
And nailed the farmer between the eyes
With a nuclear carrot-blast

CONTRIBUTORS:

PLEASE TRY
TO MAKE
YOUR PIECES
1000 WORDS
OR LESS!!

CAT CAPERS*

(*Mr. Twain, you may have done it first,
but I did it second!)

by Gloria J. Leitner

This is the story of a cat—not a hep cat, not a cool cat, not a puss 'n boots or a hét-tin-roofer.

Yet there was something exceptional about this little grey stray. It wasn't the fact she had once had cat-atonila, and recovered; or her kittenhood in the Cat-skills; or even her secret dream to ride one day on the bumper of a cat-lillac.

And it wasn't the simple, imperturbable twist of fate that she was named Catullus, either.

The truth is our cat had an *elan*, an *esprit*, a *joie de vivre* (perhaps from sipping on discarded Perrier bottles for most of her life) that set her apart from other fur-bearing four-pawers haunting the back alleys and front porches of her fair town.

This special quality of Catullus cat-apulted her beyond and above the common fate of cat-kind, gave her an indescribable majesty—so that even with rubbish at her feet after the latest foray into Mrs. Vaskewicz's trash can, she acquitted herself like a queen.

Yes, she clearly was a star.

But Catullus was more than a luminary in her own local solar system. Galaxies, universes of female felines were outshone by her cata-clysmic, overwhelming flow of "charm," to use the modern physicist's apt phrase.

May I list a few of her many talents?

Catullus could purr-fectly imitate Ella s-cat singing; she could recite the Sears cat-alogue backwards starting from page 348; she could even cat-egorize, by second syllable, the names of every president of Bulgaria in the past century. No small feat, eh? (Actually, her feet were rather small; dainty, to be exact.)

Catullus had also invented her own cat-egorical imperative. Kant be, you gasp? It's true. Her maxim was: Let no cat treat another as a means rather than an end-in-itself—otherwise a horrible cat-astrophe would be inflicted upon the dirty rat.

Yes, Catullus had succeeded in combining the highest ethical standards with the most basic form of pragmatism: Watch out for your own hide. The synthesis was brilliant. Even Hegel was floored, so to speak.

Don't get the wrong idea—a cat of such breadth and depth did not spend every waking hour poring over abstract treatises in the library. No, volume and tome held little sway with Catullus. It was life, yes, life itself that taught Catullus. The cat-ecism was learned from the signs of the times: the song of the wind, the swash on the deck (how did we get so far off shore?), the whisper of the mouse as it stole the cheese with a soft heh-heh, the roar of the choo-choo as it screeched into 96th Street (transfer to the local).

The beauty of it all was that, highbrow as she was, Catullus knew no intellectual arrogance. Streetwise, she had no peer. Every flutter of an empty Bud carton drew her attention, every footstep echoed the rhythm of her soul. Secure in the knowledge that angst had lost her address, having overcome every existential dilemma Jean-Paul could ever dream up, Catullus walked proud. Even the Marlboro man tipped his hat in mute respect.

With such kingdoms conquered, where could Catullus go from there?

Love. Ah, the breaker of the best of us! Catullus had yet to meet her mate, and she hoped it would happen before she met her mortal fate. For she was pushing four years old—an old maid! Having looked nearly everywhere, having exhausted all possible nooks for her Prince Charming (yes, she still believed in fairy tales), there appeared to be only two options open:

One, join a game show. Or,

Two, put an ad in the "Personals."

No, no, how could she stoop so low? (to borrow an unhappy anthropomorphic metaphor, since she was always going low under stoops and found it terribly fascinating, as a matter of fact).

There must be another way.

"Meow!" she exclaimed, though it sounded more like "Eee-yow!" as a light bulb went on in her head, nearly burning her retinas, not to mention singeing the delicate lace her dendrites had lately been crocheting for neighboring neurons.

In other words, Catullus had a bright idea. Thus it was: "I'll hijack a plane to Cleveland, and explain to the rebels that I'm a nun willing and able to carry supplies under my frock from mountain hideout to city cat-acomb. In return for my loyal aid, only one request shall I make: to be matched up with an eligible of my species and temperament."

Logistical problems aside (such as where to find a nun frock size .04), there was one major drawback she realized as soon as soon as she had formulated the plan.

"No habla Ohioese!"

Talking to cat-hubblie with dictionary in hand seemed a singularly inconvenient way to carry on a lifelong relationship. Scratch that! (Which she did, claws springing into action.)

Well, there must be a better approach. Just then Catullus looked up and saw she'd been so preoccupied that she'd wandered half-blindly through the streets without paying attention to the whither and the whence.

Taking her coordinates, she discovered she was catty-corner to a small store, the kind of neighborhood grocery that sells lots of gum, ciggies and tabloids.

Then she looked up at the marquee and saw a neon sign that flashed in sickly red, "oot eer."

"Whatever happened to the R & B?" she said to herself. That set her to reminiscing about Fats Domino and the Four Tops, and as she snapped her fingers in rhythm she remembered who she'd won the Dance Contest with in 6th grade. Muffie!

Oh, where was he now? Had he been hooked by some hussle who knew only his corporeal wonders, not the Himalayas of his lofty thoughts?

She raced to the phone book and found the M's. Yes, he still lived in town!

She dove across the street in fevered pursuit, ran two blocks down, half a lawn over, cut through a yard, leaped up over a picket fence, and ran down to the wharf. The bridge was up—oh, when could she cross? Impatience pounded through her heart like a thousand hammers.

Then she spied a passing cat-amarand, and with a courageous jump made it from the dock to the prow, and into the below-deck quarters. A stowaway!

The voyage was quick but not quick enough. Its end was announced by the clunk of hull against dock ("No fair weather sail-or, this!" she concluded).

Out she climbed and onto shore, in quest, in quest, in quest! The twilight colors were just beginning to filter through the urban haze like the touch of a painter's brush (Joe the house-painter had such a fine stroke!). Orange, crimson, and other flaming hues lit up her heart like a torched watermelon. Ah, love! Ah, life!

Wait, what's that? A soft meow seemed to nudge her ear-hairs ever so gently. Was it imagination? Was it wish, desire, deepest yearning made manifest by hallucination? Or had she indeed reached the grande finale?

Glimpse of a round, white face with a shrimp-shaped blotch of black debonairly placed upon the forehead. Yes, it could be none other than—Muffie!

(Camera slow motion here, as Catullus prances lightly forth to meet her beloved. Muffie nearly skids smack into her side after slipping on the pop bottle in the gutter, but saves himself quite gracefully—dear, lovable Muffie!)

Nosey-nose! Rubby-rub! No need for formal introductions—Muffie's heart had been unbesmirched all these years, poised, in fact, for this very moment which he always knew deep down in his cat-gut would come to pass. And here the time had come, crowned with the wink of Madame Fortune's all-seeing eye (she'd just gotten 24-hour-a-day contacts).

As for Catullus, nothing could hold her back. She was like a dam burst open and flooding the valley, like a volcano unleashed and seething. None could exceed her passion, her zest, her zeal—for at last her missing link in the Great Chain of Being had been found.

(Music hold crescendo, then slowly fall to a steady pp. Shot of Catullus and Muffie whisker to whisker, dissolving into the pastel colors of early eve. Just before fade-out, two huge, grinning Cheshire-cat smiles can be seen.)

"No, no, NO!" the director cuts in. "Too mushy, too syrupy for today's sophisticated audience. We've got to inject some tragedy, some adversity, some perversity: if need be. We've got Rambo to contend with. Bring in the dogs!"

And he clapped his hands—but what's this, the canine crew's on strike? Fighting for better fringe benefits—two T-bones a night and complimentary fix to the annual Lassie Memorial Dinner? Oh, those bulldog militants!

And so we leave our hero and heroine cuddling closely on the darkening emerald grass, serenaded by the sweet song of a lark perched on the shimmery bricks of a nearby chimney. Sigh, sigh!

THE MAN IN THE PURPLE MAVERICK, HIMSELF

by Kathy Stadalsky

"Hey, there's Hank!" the bartender said. Glancing over their shoulders, Bud and Luke looked out the front window of the bar at Hank's purple Maverick.

Hank stomped in, and tossed an angry glance around the shadowy interior of the room.

"Hey, Hank, take a load off," Bud offered, gesturing towards an empty stool at his left.

"Whaddya doin', guys?" Hank grinned as he slid onto the seat. "Gimme a beer."

"Nuthin, howboutchoo?"

"Not much," he said. "Pritnear ran off the road on the way over here."

"Yeah? What happened?"

"Well," he chuckled. "Ran over this mangy damned mutt."

"Didja kill him?" Luke asked eagerly.

"Nope."

"Aw, shee-it," Luke said despondently.

Hank grinned, and hoisted his mug high in a toast.

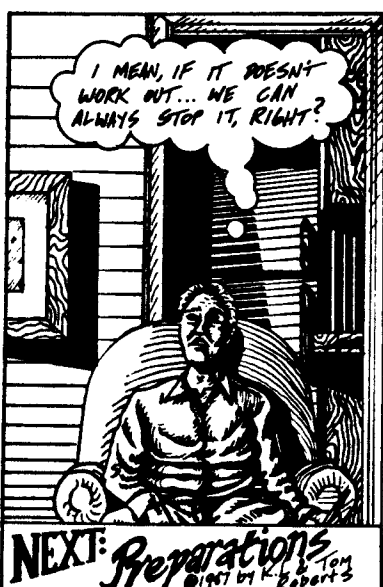
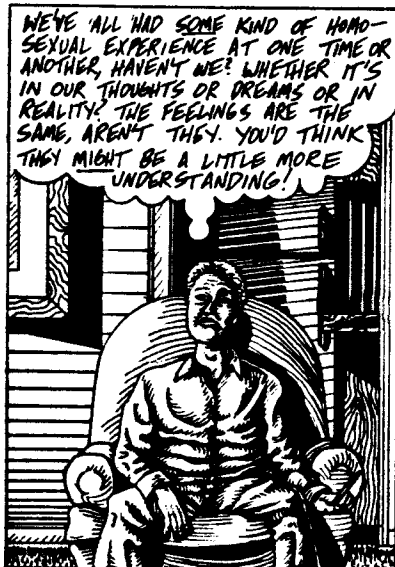
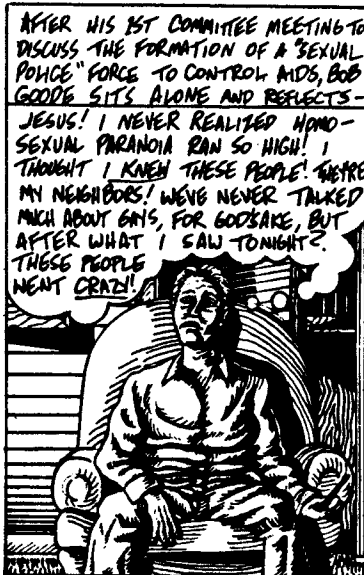
"Here's to my daddy's shotgun!"

"Your daddy's shotgun?" Bud was clearly confused.

"Yep," Hank affirmed, his grin widening into a smile.

"Tried it out on im," he added, lifting the mug again.

Luke grinned in return, eyes glazing happily. "That'll teach 'im to run out in front a cars," he declared, ordering up another orund as Hank burst into hearty laughter.



Researchers Locate New Hampshire Homily Hoard
CRISWOLD, Mo. (YU)—Social anthropologists from the University of

New Hampshire working on a grant from the National Geographic Foundation have apparently uncovered the oldest cache of homilies and platitudes ever found in the United States. The site, once thought to be the ruins of the Roger Williams School of

Journalism, is now believed to be the source for all of Benjamin Franklin's writings. Critics claim, however, that Franklin's nearsightedness made him unable to read needlepoint.
—Yorastan Universal

You Have Been PROGRAMMED
But you can peel away the layers of crap that hide sanity in the late 20th Century.

Be fooled by false appearances no longer! Wake up! Your soul raised hell in past lives. Let it keep doing so and stay sane in an insane world — or vice versa. The Ancient Truths are less new. The New Age isn't all it was cracked up to be. It IS! LEARN WHY.

Direct your abnormality, increase intelligence, develop your S.I.A.C.K. Mastery through studies; answers the most embarrassing questions! TV and society have quashed human imagination. Release it and go... right.

You have never seen anything like The Channel of the Shad/Crozier. Never.
Details \$1.
The SubCenetic Foundation
Box 44006, Dallas, TX 75214

ASTRONOMERS HAVE CONCLUDED
That there are billions of galaxies such as the Milky Way and that each is composed of billions of stars such as the sun. This leads to the further conclusion that there must also be countless planets such as earth, with life of some type on many. — News item.

I'd say that one more earth-like planet is enough and if its human population isn't gifted with eternal life it's one too many. For a 20th century religion that's been around 20x20 centuries more or less in what some of us think of as a living hell send SASE to:
HERENOWS RERUNS
Box 2243 — YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO, 44504

Commercial McClue-In by "Kid" Sieve

I don't want to hear a word about it. I'm a Martin Mull fan from way back when he got killed by a Christmas tree on Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman, and I don't care if his spots for New Jersey Bell lack a bit of the panache and vitriol that are found in, say, his radio ads for TGIF's. You're all just sore that David Leisure as Jack Webb is gone, aren'tcha? Aha, thought so.

Selling out (or its 80's equivalent, "buying in") somehow does not disturb me in a few isolated cases. I can't be bothered with Whitney Houston or Mike Tyson hawking NutraShit soda because, hey, they're so vapid in the first place I couldn't care less what they think they're selling me. Conversely, though, it works the same in the case of character-type actors whose quirkiness I've respected through the years—I just can't work up any major anger against them taking the bucks and mowing. Provided the spots are at least amusing, y'know? I mean, I'm not all that pissed at folks like Mull and John Clesses and Phil Proctor getting their ad residual checks for doing 15 or 30 seconds of not-unpleasant soft sell—even though I can still ignore the "BUY!" message. But I guess that's what differentiates me from, say, the Snide Critic.

I dunno, JP. I delight that Coke is plugging Roger Rabbit, not the other way around (as the admakers obviously originally intended). I get a kick out of seeing the animation, in whatever context, even used to sell. Just because I ain't buyin' the message don't mean I can't enjoy the presentation. I'm not running out to buy a Toyota so soon, but I'm tickled fuchsia that Kelsey ("Cheers") Grammar, a truly strange New Age Hippie type who has everyone in the world guessing (and the sniff-down-their-noses tacit disapproval of TV Guide, in which he was recently "profiled"), is doing relatively imaginative commercials with their "Land of the Giants" est. I applaud to the heavens Neil Young's new video (will somebody please bootleg this for me and send me a VHS copy!), and adore his satire, but it's not always as out and dried as that. Now, I'm not advocating selling out/buying in, and "Bob" knows I'd ne—well, yeah, come to think of it, I do have my breaking point. If I could hawk IJ on the air, I would. If I could spiel about any product I use and like frequently, I don't know if I'd have that big a problem with it. It wouldn't be my way to ram things down people's throats, but with a little creative control, the ads themselves can affect viewers in other ways than that which the sponsor intends. That's kinda the point of me extolling certain commercials and warning against others, JP. I'm quick to condemn the dangerous, but I think I'm equally quick to laud noble efforts—NOT FROM THE ASPECT OF THEM SELLING ME ANYTHING, but as, not to put too fine a point on it, art forms in and of themselves. Things that haven't been done before, of which we should be aware. New techniques, new ways of grabbing folks' attention. Politics is now 95% advertising (including the "objective media"). Public television is now around 50-60% advertising, and I'm not talking "paid promotional spots" either. The way our economy operates, the way our people think, is so utterly beholden to advertising that we do ourselves great disservice to belittle its primary and subsidiary effects.

Roger Rabbit works for me as a movie, and brings endless joy to the child in me every time I see it. I know you may no longer have a "child" in you (after all, I'm a sucker for fantasy movies, which you tend to readily dismiss), but I don't think that's any excuse for not allowing some of us to, you know?

Spielberg and Disney may have their problems, and I'm not excusing those, but their "empires" also employ a hell of a lot of creative people and techniques and I'll be damned if I'm going to discount those innovations with a wave of my hand. I liked Roger. A lot. I liked Close Encounters, and Fantasia, and E.T. (I saw it before the megahype kicked in), and even Cinderella and Snow White. What is it they say about babies and bathwater?...

Anyway, enough on that. After all, I like Fission Chicken too, just so's you know I'm not agin you either, JP.

Do see the Young video mentioned above, by the way. My man Marvin Kitman from Newsday had a killer review of it. My fave Kitman quote: "There is much to be learned from commercials. In the old days we knew, for example, all commercials lied. We just took it for granted. Now commercials are taken as factual information sources, guides to lifestyles." MTV, "a network that is a 24-hour commercial for records," as Kitman points out ("Not a word is uttered that isn't a plug for something or somebody"), has the hypocritical gall to BAN this video because "it mentions products by brand name." Can't have people thinking there's anything wrong with their constant sponsors, can they? Remember the name of the song, folks—"This Note's For You."

Got the first issue of the R.O.C.K. (Rookers Opposing Cheap Knockoffs) newsletter, ROCKRhythms (if you want your own, write co-founder Walter Sorg, P.O. Box 227, Williamston, MI 48895), which contains a participation survey (yippie!), the list of the Inaugural Ball of Shame of "advertisers trashing classic Rock 'n' Roll," the "Rules of R.O.C.K.," and promises of more to come! Worth checking out, and I urge all who get the newsletter to participate in their survey!

Update on the latest John Weitz ads on the backs of New York buses—a dialogue: "I don't get it." "Get what?" "The New John Weitz ads." "You're kidding!" Quite clever.

Update on "the guy in the Wendy's commercials." His name is James F. Dean (really), he's been on It's Garry Shandling's Show, Naz Headroom, Booperman and other shows, and someone should tell him he's nowhere near as effective playing a menacing car sales-

man (I forget the sponsor) as he is playing a bewildered survey taker for a hamburger chain. One ubiquitous man, in the mold of John Mositta and David Leisure, of whom I probably won't get ill.

What is this with sneaker companies? Reebok looks like it's fallen in with Lene Lovich, and Nike and Avia seem to have taken Jesse Jackson "Empowerment" enemas—yeah like, really, if you wear these nice sneakers you too can get out of the ghetto. Honestly, more racially offensive than the worst shufflin' McDonald's ad.

On the other hand, Ami informs me, the Levi's 501 spots never fail to please her. I dunno 'bout the paraplegic Viet-vet type ("If I wore jeans, they'd be 501's," he seems to say, observes AA), but I will admit all these people, disabled or otherwise, look a helluva lot more real than they do on other "real-life affirmative action" ads. Or is it the camera?

Nobody told RC Cola about equality between the sexes, methinks. Their latest "Decide For Yourself" spots (my god, does that mean politics this year is really a choice between Coke, Pepsi and RC?) feature a young guy dreaming of possible careers (all straight out of the latest movies, natch—a rock star, a "top gun," etc.) and two with young women making oh, those choices peculiar to those wacky females. You know, like what outfit to wear. Or with which guy to converse at a wedding. Woman-stuff. Major decisions for the fairer sex. Nothing too strenuous, like career choices, now.

Does one expect any commercials to bear a semblance to reality, though, when an Anacin spot takes place in a fake printing press, without the slightest inkling on the part of the viewer as to why this actor is speaking to us from a printing press about aspirin?

I'll leave you for now with a cheer and jeer (gad, can you just imagine TV Guide under Rupert Murdoch! "Fall Season Premieres—Thousands Panic!"). I'm an unabashed fan of the NINEX (our local "Baby Bell") "Bell freezing over" commercial—take a look sometime at the animated devils in the scene. Neato.

On the other hand, Democrats are even more spineless than we credit them with being now if they don't capitalize on the newest piece of widespread propaganda foisted upon a sickened public by the Republican Party. You know, the one with the eight-year-old rich white girl with her pretty pink dress and crayons on her parents' suburban porch out of a Leave It To Beaver set, with the (female!) voiceover soothing us with how happy she is, how she's never known the hunger and desolation most of this nation's non-elites have experienced these past two terms, and why change that now? If the Dems were half as smart as us lefties, they'd shoot exactly the same commercial, with almost no change in narration except extreme sarcasm in the delivery, showing us a poor black or Latino kid sitting on a stoop and carving designs in the concrete with the broken pieces of glass shattered about, pausing now and again to sniff the reassuring aromas of gunpowder, urine and diesel engines. Brought to you by the Republicans, naturally.

Only we know it may very well be brought to you by the Democrats, too, which is why they won't touch the almost limitless potential inherent in these vignettes of drek. Looks like it's gonna be a loooong campaign, troops.

I wonder if censorship will be an issue. So far, two commercials with humorous intent have been pulled from the airwaves—actually, one series was never shown. LifeStyles brand condoms commissioned ad agency Lois Pitts Gershon Pon/GKG to do a few 15-second spots featuring the rather lame tag line "It's a Matter of Condom Sense," which highlight such memorable characters as the Phantom of the Opera ("You didn't have to wear that mask to ask for them") and Robin Hood, buying a pack of LifeStyles for his Merry Men (the clerk tells him, "The Sheriff of Nottingham uses the same brand!"). LPGA/GKG chair George Lois claims the ads are supposed to get the point across that people should be less embarrassed about buying condoms (by being put into supposed sitcom-type situations, I guess), but apparently networks like, yep, MTV (which claimed the ads are "too flippant") are too embarrassed to even run something connected with condoms which has a sense of humor. Which is why, methinks, so many people are so screwed up about sex in the first place, believing it's only supposed to be seriously dirty instead of fun. Sheesh. A bit of good news, though—some cable stations will be running the bits early next year. And thank goodness other countries are still not as squeamish as ours, and they've been running similar spots for years.

The other censored spot is just plain mean-spiritedness. Roy Rogers was running a 30-seconder featuring school cafeteria workers holding up trays of The Usual Fare, contrasted with the voiceover advising kids to get to Roy Rogers before it's too late and school lunches begin again, to the background of "See You In September." I laughed out loud the first time I saw it—as the Four-Color Fiend points out, the point of the thing was to appeal to older folks who remember school lunches with a sort of reverse nostalgia, not necessarily to kids in school now. Even so, some NY city council members missed the point again, including the usually logical Ruth Messinger, who called the ad "insulting, inaccurate and likely to dissuade children who need school food from eating it." Roy Rogers spokesman Richard Sneed admitted that although most customers thought the ad was funny, it seemed to piss off cafeteria workers around the country. Puh-lease. The weirdest remark still comes from AFSCME Local 372 pres Charles Hughes, who said, "By advocating children to eat Roy Rogers food as a daily diet (which the commercial was NOT doing, pals 'n gals), they want kids to wind up like Trigger, and he's been stuffed for years." HUH? Somebody wanna explain that? Does he mean the tots will die and go to taxidermists? What's going on in this man's feeble brain? It's enough to make me want to tear up my union card, if I had one.

NEXT TIME: A sitcom within a commercial within a sitcom?

The Poet's Diet Book

by Tamarina Dwyer

CHAPTER TWO: JANET AND FRED BECOME LOVERS

(In the first chapter of this story, Janet, the poet, had been busy writing "Lunatic poetry" and working as a waitress. She met Fred at the diner where she worked. Janet and Fred get along very well for awhile, but Janet's strained hours and slightly deranged thinking start to worry Fred.)

Fred met Janet in her room at six-thirty. They exchanged awkward hellos and sat down on the cot.

"Ice cream theories have been poisoning my poetry," Janet began, running a finger along the outside of her denim bag.

"Your body is consuming only sweets?" Fred asked dubiously, his eyes running over her slim figure.

"Only sweets!" she exclaimed. "Only ice cream! An ice cream diet!" Fred laughed and glanced at the ice chest. "And I haven't had dinner yet; do you want some?" the poet cheerfully asked.

"No thanks," replied Fred, shaking his head and picking up a copy of 'The Bluebell' which lay on the bed, "but you go ahead and have some if you like." Fred tried to read the poem, but Janet was chattering about the lines she'd hashed up in her afternoon work on the 'Black Pond.' When she paused for a moment, he asked for more poems. Fred continued reading Janet's poems while she ate her dish of vanilla ice cream. "Glowing ember?" asked Fred doubtfully, a sardonic look to his lips. "For a tulip!" Janet laughed affectionately and Fred asked, "Why are you on an ice cream diet anyway?"

"I got tired of coffee, but ice cream theories aren't any good," the poet answered, setting the empty dish by her feet on the floor.

"Coffee? Do you have theories about coffee too?" Fred continued questioning.

"I was living on coffee," Janet told him lightheartedly. "I didn't eat anything for several days," she added, picking up the empty dish and setting it on the bureau.

Fred was more than attracted to Janet and he kept back amative tendencies to play with conversation. "My coffee is International Suisse Mocha," he said.

"That's expensive, isn't it?" asked the poet.

"No, it's preservation of economic stability," he answered. "I presume that sentimentality is the basic premise that led to theory designs for ice cream?" he asked.

"No, heat," the poet corrected him once more. Fred considered her simple deduction of an unusual diet and walked up to the bureau. "May I read more of your work?" he asked.

"Sure," Janet told him, "help yourself. I'll work on the Black Pond again." The poet settled back against the wall and crossed her legs. She read over the new rhyme scheme and meter, closing her eyes to concentrate more easily.

Fred ran his finger across the top of the bureau and, wincing in disgust, selected a few more pages. Turning, he noticed the frayed cord of the hotplate which was hanging over the edge of the bureau. "Janet, don't you have any black mending tape?" he asked.

She pursed her lips and raised her eyebrow. "No," she answered in a low voice.

Fred, sitting down on the edge of the cot again and ignoring the hole in the spread, the wall crack above the bureau, and the general, dusty, sweltering heat, read several poems which were mostly on flowers. He glanced over at Janet occasionally, but didn't want to interrupt her. In a lotus position with her eyes closed, she appeared to be in a trance of some kind, so he kept returning to the poetry.

When Fred had finished reading the poem, he looked around the room to see if there was a closet. Seeing that there was none, he asked Janet, "Where do you hang your clothes?"

"I hang my uniforms on that nail, but they're all dirty now and I don't have to work again until Thursday so they're wrapped up in a plastic bag under the cot," the poet explained.

"No dresses or skirts?" Fred asked, a little surprised.

"No, just pants," she answered, and turned her attention back to the paper in front of her.

Fred stood up, stuck his hands in his pockets, and went up to the window. "Fashionable development at your side for a poet's sense of life," he casually remarked, observing the broad span of foliage on the locust tree outside the window.

"It blocks the light, though," Janet said unaffectedly, and Fred asked, "Where's your bathroom?"

The poet directed him down the hall and, when Fred came back, he asked Janet if she had a suitcase. "I do," she told him, "but why do you ask?"

"We're going to combine perspicacity. I'd like to realign the mental activity charts of some of my friends. Chuck's plaintive behavior calls for diversion and his prizes from outdoor games of skill are leading to a mockery of all our dispositions," Fred explained.

Quick rapport and the heat of a hot summer were the beginning of a relationship between Janet and Fred.

Janet wrote poetry on everything and Fred was amazed by her energy level and sterling use of time. The couple had moved to Fred's apartment, which was in a newly-constructed building not far from Lansing Street. He was earning good money as a representative of the SS Department, and Janet continued waitressing and cooking at the diner.

The poet was glad to get out of her dark, hot room into the spacious air-conditioned apartment which was even closer to the

Toddle House. Fred had a desk where Janet could work on poetry and he cleaned out two drawers for her to keep her papers in. She started cooking for Fred and entertaining him every night with new food theories.

"Okay, Janet. We've been consuming lettuce for three weeks. You haven't yet given me an opinion on the mental qualities of lettuce."

"Lettuce," began Janet. "Nourishment. Eat it," she ordered him as Fred poured salad dressing over a heap of uncut iceberg lettuce. "The variety of lettuce is the most important variable to consider," she began again. "Romaine lettuce is healthier than—"

"Yeah?" Fred interrupted sharply. "Like the result of my traumatic experience with Venezuelan food," he laughed.

"Escarole is for bitter people. You gotta do it right," Janet went on, choosing to ignore Fred's pointed remark. "When you're bitter, you eat bitter food. Iceberg lettuce is bland—no taste—lenitive—for affable personalities."

Another good meal, another good night, and another good day. Days and weeks of goodness.

Janet and Fred related very well, but Fred was leery of Janet's super-orderliness. He himself was exceptionally neat and precise, but as a typical bohemian artist, Janet was punctilious and more than organized. She had a packaged lunch on the table every morning, her poetry back in folders and filed in the drawers, the refrigerator always stocked with the best food and drink, the apartment clean and tidy, and the budget written out in detail, his half and her half.

Janet was leery of Fred's ambition. His frequent comments on the men under him seemed to be an indirect threat to her unpublished status.

During the summer months, Fred and Janet had driven into the country during the evenings, had stopped at Dairy Lea for ice cream cones on the way back, and discussed her poetry for a couple of hours before going to bed. Neither Fred nor Janet was very troubled by work, and an easy summer kept them gay and lighthearted.

When autumn came, Janet's six a.m. until two p.m. schedule was changed to six p.m. until two a.m. and, although Fred couldn't see Janet at night, they ate breakfast together every morning. Good novels, money in the bank, and nights out with Fred's friends kept the couple happy during September's chill.

In October, Fred found out that Janet wasn't sleeping every night. Having opened one of her drawers by mistake when he was in a hurry one morning, he glanced at a plan sheet that lay on top of one of her poetry folders. There was a poetry schedule for every other night. He laughed at first but, after nonchalantly lifting the plan sheet, Fred read a September plan sheet and realized that Janet had been staying up two nights a week for months. He shook his head, closed the drawer, and sat down. Not knowing whether to confront Janet with her plan list or just to ignore the whole thing, Fred opened the drawer again and pulled out some folders. As he was leafing through one folder of unfinished poems, his eyes fell upon the scratched-out words on a typewritten page which was titled, 'The Oak Tree.' 'Fluttering leaves' was crossed out and above that was written 'dancing leaves,' which was also crossed out, and below 'fluttering leaves' was written 'screaming leaves.'

Fred stopped reading for a moment. Then he read on. 'Bending and swaying with air currents.' With just a hint of alarm, he closed the folder and the drawer. He was sure it wasn't healthy for Janet to stay up so much, but she presented such a stable, content picture and her poetry really was improving, so he decided to let the matter rest until she displayed any unnatural signs. But then, he had doubts and decided, after all, to question her the next morning.

"Don't you get tired of serving food?" Fred asked Janet as she set a plate of scrambled eggs in front of him.

"No, I don't think about it much, especially now because I'm working nights and business is a lot slower," she told him in a monotone.

"Well, what have you been thinking about lately?" he asked concernedly, picking up a fork.

Janet smiled and sat down at the table. "How to combine parmesan cheese, onion, milk, pepper and egg in poem," she told him.

He looked up from his plate, a slice of toast held in his hand. "You're putting food theory in poem now?" Fred asked, a little more concerned.

"Cheeses are broken, solid particles. Mowed grass is like peppers, which are stiff like plastic leaves on artificial plants. Onions are white, pure and innocent. They're all to be eaten by vigorous writers. When cheese is eaten by a poet, she can easily relate to the feelings of a goat and then the poet can better describe the actions of an animal," Janet hypothesized.

"Where have you seen a goat lately?" Fred asked Janet, stifling a laugh, but getting a little more disturbed with the repetition of Janet's food theorizing every day.

Janet ignored the question, poured more coffee, and continued. "Peppers make me feel like the grass and my natural transference gives me time to be freer and more creative."

"Your creativity is a revolving sign. I'll see you tonight," Fred said, finishing his milk and kissing Janet goodbye.

After breakfast, the poet worked for several hours, but 'The Bluebell' wasn't progressing. She had revised it too many times and it seemed to her that there wasn't anything of value left to the poem, so Janet decided to take a break and stare at words. She took out the vocabulary list and studied the new words for awhile, but that act tired her soon and the poet decided to go

Continued next page

Continued from previous page

to the Toddle House for a cup of hot chocolate. "I'll cut autumn down," she laughed, putting on a jacket and stuffing the vocabulary list in her denim bag.

The poet walked to the diner and sat down at the kitchen end of the counter. She ordered the hot chocolate, though she changed her mind about drinking it as soon as it was set down. Janet pushed the cup aside and took a pair of manicure scissors from her cosmetic bag. After whipping out the vocabulary list, the poet began to cut it up. At first, she cut through the paper with rapid, brusque incisions, but then Janet slowed the scissors down and started cutting out figures. A couple of familiar customers looked over to her and tried to hide their grins. The poet was oblivious to them as she was busy projecting names of literary figures on the cutouts. Bluebell not finished, vocabulary list destroyed.

Janet was clearing out her denim bag that evening and Fred caught sight of the paper dolls. "What poem incited those creatures?" he asked, inhibiting a laugh.

"The Bluebell," she replied indifferently.

"Your paper stories are getting thinner and thinner," he commented. Janet smiled a little as she crumbled the paper dolls and put everything back in her bag, but she didn't retort.

Another light evening finished and lighter evenings followed, but Janet was pushing herself too much and Fred finally had to stop her.

He put an end to Janet's nightly poetry work when he found out that she had been up for three nights in a row. One morning, he had found her asleep at the desk with the pen still in her hand. The next morning, he had caught her scribbling furiously at seven and, despite her refusal to acknowledge him, Fred had pulled the yellow paper out from under Janet's fingers and a rapidly moving pen, finally admitting to himself that Janet needed reprimanding.

My Self, My Many-Sided Self, My Selves. The poem was four pages long and was unrhymed, unmetred, and nondescript. "A broken rhyme scheme was inadequate creation at one time," Fred commented.

"I'm not falling asleep with the pen in my hand," the poet attempted to argue.

"Your uneducated ancestry, your job's respectable slavery, and your escaped lovers! Who are you trying to kid, Janet?" Fred belittled.

"I'm not trying to fool anybody," Janet whined.

"Janet, I think your writing would be a little saner if you went to bed once in awhile." Fred had to usher her to bed against protests, but she seemed to take his criticism seriously and the night poetry ended.

But then, the mental cabinet of food theory kept the poet busy for several weeks and she began to apply her theoretical power by cooking more interesting meals as well as attempting food theory in poetry. Fred was still observing Janet closely, and he was becoming more and more worried. They weren't visiting friends as often and the weekends were usually lazy-at-home TV watching or magazine reading, but Fred had talked Janet into an old get-together with his friends. (To be continued)

SCAPEGOAT OF HISTORY

by Sigmund Weiss

I am Cain, scapegoat of history.
In a fit of anger, I killed Abel.
Many called him good, me evil.
So those who think they are the best of humanity
put fetters around me to labor like a horse;
set into my two gritty hands picks, shovels, axes
by which I turned earth into highways, factories,
homes, guns, bombs, airplanes, electricity and gasses.
Out of my doom they civilized me
to sling upon my shoulder rifles,
to carry as sidearms guns, knives,
to look upon strangers as enemies,
to hate to kill to terrorize;
yet in all this they forgot
that out of the mire of living,
that out of the poverty of the condemned,
that out of the privations of toil,
arises sympathy, friendship, a togetherness
that goes arm in arm with love,
a rising out of the breasts and minds of laborers,
of wage slaves arise revolutions,
that tear apart those dogmatisms that enchain our minds.
The laborer builds civilizations, develops commerce,
all this nation by nation in their patterns of sweat.
If the bricklayers, the factory workers, the miners, the
are not the true powers in any civilization
such civilizations are doomed with those who rule
against the needs of the laborer the worker the miner
the farmer; doomed eternally as histories misread, misinterpreted
by dead-heads in universities writing dead-head books.

NO SPACE FOR
"WHITZITS"
back next issue?

BALLET by Roger Coleman

This is strenuous theatrical entertainment; a group performance, rather stylized with elaborate settings, scenery and uniforms. Successful ballet interludes require many dedicated years of intensive training. This frequently begins at an early age. Besides physical technique, a thorough knowledge of kinesiology, the study of the principles of mechanics and anatomy relative to human movement, is desirable to become expert. The form and grace of jete, arabesque, pirouette and pas de cinq can catapult a team to a convincing winning season and high scores on the way to the final four. If you like ballet you will love basketball.

POSTCARD FROM DEAD-LAKES, ONTARIO

by Jeff Walker

Behold Reagan's statue—Eternal,
But for acid deposition—Infernal!
May incontinent skies
Sting those blind marble eyes
Till the likeness is that of a Urinal!

So, should
we raise our
price to \$2 for
36 pages,
or what?

FRED THE POSER BAD GUY vs. THE LUCKIEST MAN ON EARTH

by Dain Luscombe

Johnathan Rockwell was the luckiest man on the planet Earth.

He was remarkably intelligent, good-looking, and was a billionaire (though he didn't want it known). He had never had any broken limbs—or even a light scratch, for that matter—because things that were thrown at him had a tendency to switch directions for no apparent reason.

Once, when he was 21 and running for mayor (he served for four years), one of his more persistent assassins put rat poison in his drink, and just as Johnathan was about to reach for the poisoned drink a freak meteor storm occurred and one of the 3-foot boulders fell through the ceiling, smashed through the table (and the drink) and most of Johnathan's uncle's body (the uncle who had, luckily, left Johnathan a nice piece of property and over two million dollars in his will). Johnathan himself was untouched. The assassin, however, was captured and thrown off a cliff by several senior citizens who had something against people with weird haircuts.

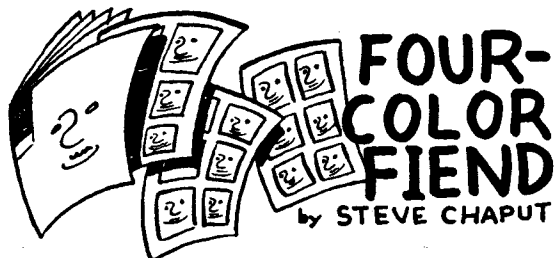
Yes, it was undisputed, God really liked Johnathan and really hated anyone who didn't do the same (this was evident because whenever a person did anything wrong to Johnathan they usually ended up getting shot by rioting circus animals or something of the sort). He was definitely not the sort of person you wanted to threaten in any way...

Fred had always dreamed about being a bad guy.

He was all ready now. He had the gun tucked stylishly in the pocket/holster he had sewn in his oversized coat. He slipped on the \$49.99 "shades" had had just bought. When at the checkout counter, the clerk had said the sunglasses looked like "some druggie's." That comment had made him feel good, but he couldn't exactly figure out why. It was either because he liked being associated with something that evil or because the clerk had actually said something that wasn't an insult. He thought that was a pretty big development in their relationship.

Although he was feeling confident about his "shades," several other things were troubling him. In the book he had found about mugging, it had a chapter on picking a threatening title, and in his rush to begin his new career he had skipped that chapter, thinking that "Fred" was good enough. Also, his three-day-old overcoat was still new-looking, even though he had spent over an hour wearing holes in it with a sandpaper block and had purposely spilt ketchup on it seven times.

He brooded on these problems for a while but decided to move on. It was starting to get dark and, as Fred stylishly climbed down the fire escape and saw Johnathan walking down the alley, he thought to himself, graduation had begun...



Well, the new AMAZING HEROES PREVIEW SPECIAL (#145, Fantagraphics Books, \$6.95 US/\$8.95 Can.) got here just in time for this column. Does anyone out there happen to know why subscribers to AH and other Fantagraphics periodicals have to wait nearly a month after the release date to get the damn things? Anyway, the Preview has become almost as valuable as the Price Guide when it comes to keeping track of what's going on. With this issue it is almost as big as the damn Guide as well. At 280+ pages, the thing looks like the phone book for my hometown. It does have a lot more laughs than the latter, even though it's a bit harder to make goofy phone calls to Fantagraphics... This issue has a nice long piece by Alan Moore in which he discusses his favorite comic titles, a few of which may be new to you. They include CONCRETE, HELLBLAZER, NEAT STUFF, YUMMY FUR and LOVE & ROCKETS, among others. There are also a few short interviews thrown into the issue with the likes of Dave Stevens, Howard Chaykin, Mike Grell and several more.

One of the best things about the Preview is that it not only lets you find out what is happening in the future of your fave, but also what has been going on in books that you wouldn't touch with a ten-foot pole. I mean, why pick up crap like SPIDER-MAN (now in three titles) or SUPERMAN (soon to be in four) when the nice people at AH will fill you in on what Peter and Clark are up to? For instance, SPIDER-MAN will find his wife missing and then have to face the deadly due of STYX & STONE!!! Boy, there's heavy duty excitement for ya...

A good addition to the layout this time around is a genre-by-genre breakdown of some of the titles available and upcoming. If you're looking for "funny animals," horror, humor, manga, movie and TV spinoffs, etc., you'll find them here. There is a separate section for graphic novels, which has become a regular feature, and a new section which lists the nominations for the 1988 Will Eisner Comics Industry Awards and the Harvey Awards, the two competing groups that arose from the ashes of the Kirby Awards. While a number of categories overlap, there are some differences. The Eisner has a "Best Black & White Series" and "Best Art Team," while the Harvey allows voting for "Best Reprint Project," "Best American Edition of Foreign Material" and a "Special Award for Excellence in Production." Both these groups are voted on by working professionals and are not "fan" awards like the CBG Awards. Much of this stuff is cutting-edge and is well worth looking at. Two names crop up repeatedly in both nominations—Paul Chadwick and his creation CONCRETE. This is THE book for you all to try.

Hey, for all you frustrated writers/artists/letterhacks, there is a listing in the back of the book of all the publishers' addresses so you can send in those submissions.

Some things to look forward to are:

THE PRISONER—This 4-part series from DC will take up the story 20 years after the TV show.

COSMIC ODYSSEY—Also from DC, this will feature Darkseid leading a group of "heroes" to stop the Anti-Life formula from doing them all in. This will lead into the new NEW GODS series.

INVASION!—This is the big DC crossover series (three biweekly issues, plus a number of tie-ins), which has a number of alien races taking over the Earth to do away with the super-heroes. (I'll talk more about this in upcoming FCFs.)

AARGH (Artists Against Rampant Government Homophobia)—This one-shot British book will try to raise funds for the Organization of Lesbian and Gay Action and will be published by Alan Moore's own company, Mad Love.

SWORD IN STONE PRODUCTIONS has purchased the reprint rights to much of the Charlton material. They also are planning some new material with characters like ROG-2000 that weren't part of the DC package.

BATMAN #426 (now on sale) through #429 will consist of a four-part Joker series and will culminate in the "serious" wounding of Robin. Readers will be given a 900 phone number to call and vote on whether or not Robin lives. (Since it's Jason Todd and not Dick Grayson, I urge a "YES FOR DEATH" vote!)

DC is planning a **BUGS BUNNY** three-issue miniseries, which will consist of a continuing story! Bugs is fired by Warner Bros., which is (shades of Roger Rabbit!) being acquired by another company that is buying up everything. Sounds like a must-have-double-bag for sure!

This only covers a few of the things that the Preview brought up, and you'd be smart to pick up a copy if you have more than a passing interest in comics. Although this column shows my preferences, the Preview has hundreds of previews on b&ws and the few remaining "undergrounds" as well.

Briefly, you might want to pick up **CRITTERS #30** with a **FISSION CHICKEN** story by J.P. Morgan (the last chapter of "They Saved Walt's Brain!"). Also on the stands is the latest issue of **SECRET ORIGINS** (#33), with the **ICE MAIDEN** origin by Valentino.

20 A final recommendation for the two-issue **SILVER SURFER** series

My Boycotts by Mark Rose

Attempting to live life as a semi-liberal, half-committed idealistic cynic is difficult at best. One of the areas of contention which springs up between my grassroots activist side and my establishment capitalist side is that of boycotts. I have a number of them.

Participating in a boycott is very easy; all it requires is something to piss one off, a decision, and then a little will-power. Backing out of a boycott is harder, as it requires either that the original pissing off condition be somehow alleviated or a drastic change be made in one's personal principles (neither of which happens with much frequency). Thus, if one ends up participating in too many boycotts, one ends up not participating in anything at all.

At present, my boycotts number five. This number can change daily, depending on what horror stories I read in the newspapers, what happens to me during the day, or whether I eat lima beans for lunch or not. For those of you who just haven't been active enough in activism, here are my choices for the commercial institutions that should either shape up or be shipped out of our shopping lists.

1. **Burger King**—There are two reasons (besides nutritional) not to eat Whoppers, Whalers or whatnot. One, they have an interest in destroying the Amazonian rain forest. I haven't heard much about this aspect lately, but if there's a profit in it, you can bet they haven't stopped cutting down the trees. Two, they buy Icelandic fish for their Whaler sandwiches. Appropriate name, as Iceland is one of the countries which still commits whaling on a regular sanctioned basis. It's a shame really, as I love fast food and B.K. was always my favorite among the rather undistinguished crowd. But whales and trees come first.

2. **Hawaiian Airlines**—The newest one on my list. During a recent trip (to be chronicled in IJ #63), we were delayed two hours at one Hawaiian airport, seven hours at another; given a meal ticket worth \$6.50 each, when there was no meal on the menu priced under \$6.95; they lost our baggage after stating our bags would be on the delayed flight; then when they finally did find our baggage, they delivered it three and a half hours late in the wee hours of the morning. Plus, it was interesting to see a scuffle that ensued between a tourist and a native at the Kona Airport while a hapless Hawaiian Airlines employee attempted to maintain peace. It was also interesting to see one of the security guards at the Honolulu Airport lose his ring of keys. He never even heard them hit the ground, and some goodly tourist had to alert him.

3. **Waldenbooks**—To tell you the truth, I boycott most large chain bookstores. They're all interminably dull, make most of their money off trash and non-books, and none of them carry INSIDE JOKE. But Walden was the first one I know of to announce that they would not carry books from small press publishers on their shelves, due to the difficulty of ordering small quantities from a number of different publishers. Well, so much for freedom of choice or hopes of finding even a moderate selection of books.

4. **B. Dalton Books**—This deserves special mention because of their horrible, despicable caricature of someone who likes books; you know, the buffoon who smiles at the camera, bowtie sparkling perkily, and oozes, "You can call me 'Books.'" I'd rather call him dead. For thirty years now, librarians, writers and readers have struggled to rid themselves of the stereotypical bookworm image. This image is of a dandified fop, with spectacles, a gentle demeanor, and of questionable sexuality (frigidity in women—remember those movies where the town librarian was saved by a non-reading macho type guy?—and bewilderment in men—is he or isn't he gay?, he does read, you know). For thirty years, this image has been denied, and now an institution in the business of selling books, no less, glorifies it with this poorly-done charade. Ptui, I spit on B. Dalton. There are simply far too many good independent bookstores around who respect the reader in matters of taste and style to bother with any of the chain stores.

5. **Rainier Beer**—You Easterners may not be familiar with "the only beer we drink 'round here," but Rainier is a nice, inexpensive brew made in the Emerald City of Seattle. It was quite drinkable, at least until they changed their advertising account managers. They used to have these great humorous spots, things like Jacques Cousteau boating down the river in search of beer masquerading as water creatures ("For now we can only enjoy 'sew'"), a pretty lass on a motor scooter and the engine makes the sound "Raaaiineerrr," and, oh, plenty of others. Now, however, they decided to "upgrade" the look of the commercials, removed all the humor and originality, and made the new spots exactly like every other beer commercial. Some of them come complete with nightclubs, hot bands and glitz (to compete with Michelob), and some promote the city as a beach town with cool parties, frisbees, and wild surf. Folks, Seattle is not a beach town. What was special and unique about this city (its quirky originality) was tossed to the winds in favor of a blitz based on demographics, and aimed at people who don't know any better. That deserves a total boycott every time.

There must be a couple of other (couple of hundred) institutions and things I could mention worthy of being boycotted into nonexistence. But first, I'll leave you with these five. Now it's your turn.

by Stan Lee and Mobius (yep!). The best Surfer story in a decade. Next time we'll look at a couple of Westerns and whatever else we feel like. By the way, if you'd like to send me a comic to review or want me to go out and buy one you'd recommend, write me c/o INSIDE JOKE and let me know.

SHOT DEAD?

A Divertimento in K with Códas in G and A
for Gus by Michael Capobianco

It was Laura Naamaan's first case, and she was almost stumped by it. I always said she was too good-looking to be a cop anyhow. Now she's gone off to do something simple, have a baby.

I'm gonna try to tell you about this crazy business just the way I got it from her and the others involved.

"Chief," Laura said to me on that first day, "Mike has the corpse now. It's full of bullets, and I have a confession." Mike Butcherkowski is our medical examiner.

"Great," I said, "no problems then. Who confessed?"

Laura came close to my desk. Her large figure loomed over me.

"For God's sake, sit down, Laura."

"Sure Chief," she smiled, and I melted.

"Okay, now tell me about it."

"Name's Manny Uno, a drifter. Claims he shot Jake Cushion yesterday at noon. Said he wanted to give him a bullet for lunch."

"Oh brother." I puffed out some air and shook my head. "What else have you got?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing?"

"Well, he's still under interrogation, but when I left he was refusing to say anything else."

"What about Cushion?"

"A banker. Clean, as far as we know."

"Okay, I'll look in on it later. Keep in touch with Mike."

"Yes sir."

She was back in my office in a half-hour.

"What's up?" I asked.

"Guy named Willie Zwei just walked in and confessed to the murder of Jack Cushion."

"Huh?"

"Yeah. Claims he's the real killer because he plugged 'im at six A.M. yesterday. A bullet for breakfast, he said."

"What the hell's goin' on here. What's Mike got to say?"

"I was just about to tell you," she said, pretty smile on pretty face. "He's nailed down the time of death precisely. Says there's no mistake about that. You know, all that new modern equipment he has..."

"Yeah, yeah. Go on."

She moved closer to my desk, and I felt her shadow over me.

"The time of death was midnight," she said.

"Last night."

"Uh-uh. Night before."

"Now wait a minute—"

"It's right, Chief, and Mike hasn't been able to determine the cause of death yet."

"What! I thought you said the body was fulla bullets."

"It is. He's still taking them out. Says he's never seen anything like it."

There was a sudden crash outside the office. The door burst open and a young man came struggling in, a police officer holding each arm. He was handsome, of dark complexion with a thin mustache. His body was muscular and wiry.

"He just forced his way in, Chief," said one of the officers.

"We tried to hold him back."

"I killed him," the young man said. "I shot Jake Cushion dead."

"Not another one," Laura said.

"What's your name?" I asked.

"Renée Trois. And I was at Cushion's house in the middle of the night—three A.M. to be exact—and I put a bullet 'into 'im then."

"Get 'im outta here," I said. "Laura, we're gonna sit down and have a talk with all three of these guys."

Now here's where it really gets crazy. The minute Uno laid eyes on Trois, he jumped up.

"That man's a liar," he said. "I was at Jake's before he was. I shot him at one-thirty in the morning."

"You swine," shouted Zwei, his long blond hair bobbing with excitement, "I killed him at just forty-five minutes after midnight."

"The truth must be told," said Trois. "I was there before any of you. My shot was at twelve-twenty A.M."

"Too late!" Uno screamed. "I did it at twelve-ten!"

Zwei stood up. "But I was just before you at twelve-o-five."

"Mais non," said Trois, "I shot before that at twelve-o-two!"

"Okay now, stop it! Stop it, alla ya!" I yelled, but my voice was drowned out by the loud ring of the telephone. Funny how phones always seem to be in an echo chamber around here.

"I'll get it, Chief," Laura said. "Naamaan...Oh, hi Mike, what's doin'?...I see. Okay, I'll tell 'im...It was Butcherkowski, Chief. He says he's given Cushion's body over to an assistant. He has to get on with other jobs, and they're still taking out bullets. It doesn't seem to end, and he still doesn't know about cause of death."

"Alright, you guys," I said, "let's have it. It seems to me that you were all there at Jake's together."

They looked at each other.

Uno said, "I guess we'd better tell him."

"Jah, I guess so," said Zwei.

"We computerized the whole thing," said Trois. "Shots going off at twelve-o-one, twelve and thirty seconds, twelve and fifteen seconds, twelve and ten seconds, and so on."

"But what time was the first shot?" Laura asked.

A MAN OF DIGNITY by Andy Roberts

The gentleman continued to refuse his commands. "I am a man of dignity, señor."

"Of course, señor, how well I know. But you must do this for me."

"I am sorry, señor, but I cannot."

"You make things very difficult."

"Nevertheless..."

"Please, señor." The little man neared exasperation.

"I am begging you, señor, please drop your trousers."

The gentleman tightened the hold on his pants. "No."

"Please, señor." He reached for the taller man's trousers. "How am I to do it then?"

"That is not my concern."

Frustrated, the little man changed tactics. "Trust me, señor, I know what I am doing. All my clients are return customers."

"I am a man of dignity," said the gentleman, standing at attention.

"But you have come to me nevertheless."

"Yes...I...Sweet Jesus!" The taller man's will seem seemed to break. "I must," he quivered. All the starch went out of his bearing as he loosened the belt on his trousers. "Sometimes one must throw aside one's dignity."

"Yes, one must." The little man moved in expertly as the gentleman's trousers hit the floor. "Ach! these men of dignity!" the little proctologist clucked to himself. "They make life so difficult...Now bend... that's it... Ah, it is only a hemorrhoid, señor."



"What first shot?" said Uno. "Was there a first shot?"

Laura's face became twisted in thought. Then a broad smile formed, and her round eyes brightened.

"Chief," she said, "I think I understand."

"Right up to midnight there's always a shot before any shot you pick. See what I mean? Pick the one at thirty seconds before midnight. That didn't kill Cushion because there was one before that, at fifteen seconds after. But that one didn't kill him either because there was one at twelve-ten, and so on. In fact, I don't think you can say he was killed by a bullet at all. You'll never find that first shot! That's why Mike is having such a helluva time determining the cause of death, see?"

"Phew," I said, "too deep for me. Book all three of 'em on conspiracy. I've had it with this case."

That was two years ago. Laura's had her baby now. Norma-Jean was born September 30, 2020, and she is one year old today. It's clear the kid was implanted on New Year's Eve 2019, but there's a terrible problem regarding paternity. You see, pretty Laura was always pretty generous herself, and she admits to being at a pretty wild party that night with a lot of guys. I won't use any names, but Mr. A claims he had her at 11:30 P.M., just before things really began to warm up for the big celebration. He claims he's the father. But along comes Mr. B, who says that we all know that the impregnation took place a lot closer to midnight than that, and he was with Laura at 11:45. Nah, says Mr. C, I'm the pop because I got 'er at 11:55. But then D says he had her at 11:59, and E says 11:59 and 30 seconds, and...the courts are still tryin' to figure it out.

Well, this ain't the first time I'm tellin' this story. No, in fact I remember writing it down a year ago when Norma-Jean was born. But that wasn't the first time either because I wanted to write it while it was still pretty fresh in my mind, so I actually put pen to paper only one month after we booked those three guys.

Now Butcherkowski calls me the other day and says he wants to read a version of the story that I wrote one week after the incident. That reminded me that, in fact, I wrote it the next day! When the next day? Well, at noon, I think. No, it was at 6 A.M. No, wait a minute, I actually started it at three in the morning. No, no, that's not right. It was 1:30 A.M. Or was it even earlier? Yes, 12:30, I believe. Wrong again, it was at 12:15. But no! I really did it at 12:10—no, 12:05—Huh? 12:01...At this rate, I never wrote it, so what the hell are you readin'?

EPilogue: December 31, 2031

This is my last day on the job. I retire from the force starting tomorrow, and I'm gonna sail away for quite a while. Butcherkowski's staff is still taking bullets out of Jake Cushion's body. We embalm periodically so that we can keep up this work. Don't ask me on what days and times we embalm, or I'm liable to give ya another coda, and two are enough. In fact, enough is enough! If you're ever in Honolulu, look me up.

Michael Z. McGillahanty

Former Chief

Arroyo Grande Bureau of Detectives

MasterMath Explains... The Real New York

by William G. Raley

In addition to my intergalactic travels—too bad Air Andromeda doesn't have a frequent flyer program—I have canvassed extensively the land masses of Earth. I have visited the Far East (Phoenix City, Alabama) and the Deep South (Mobile, Alabama; Incidentally, if you play the Who's song "Going Mobile" backward, they sing, "Going to Mobile"—scary stuff).

Seriously though, today's topic is my recent trip to New York, the City That Never Shrugs. This was my fourth sojourn to the Big Apple; I tried not to duplicate any previous sightseeing and, by my calculations, after 117 more visits, I'll have seen everything. Then I can start on Brooklyn.

Unfortunately, what I'd hoped to be a leisurely vacation turned into an emotionally and physically exhausting quest for the real New York, thanks to a last-minute alpha-wave message from the Oriol Orator. Turns out the C.H.U.D. archives' copy of the video-cassette on that topic had become damaged, and the ambassador from Equilene was threatening war if he couldn't rent it. Technicians would do all the editing and post-production work; all I needed to do was supply some photos and the script. With that introduction, I present the following:

I spent my first night (Saturday) wandering around midtown Manhattan, pondering my itinerary. I wound up on 42nd Street and stepped into the Little Italy pizza parlor (which I highly recommend). There I met Morgan Freeman, Oscar-nominated for his role as a pimp in the film "Streetsmart." At first he told me to leave him alone, since he was getting into character for the sequel. After he found out who I was, we became the best of friends. I even offered him my MasterMath tax preparation service at a reduced rate—two slices of pepperoni pizza and a large Coke. He produced a shoebox containing his receipts and W-2s, and we did it then and there. After he left, I came across a secret passageway, and found out this shop was merely a front for another enterprise, Big Italy. It's basically the same as Little Italy, only they put less ice in the drinks. Remember, you heard it here first.

The next day, Sunday, I took a walking tour of SoHo, which was dumb, since all the galleries were closed—I could've sworn I set my watch ahead three hours! Anyway, what I was really looking for were locations from the movie "After Hours," a fine film, which I have seen, I believe, once. —DON'T LISTEN TO HIM, HE'S OBSESSED WITH THE MOVIE. HE'S SEEN IT TEN TIMES! FIVE MORE TIMES AND HE'S IN THE JOHN HINCKLEY CATEGORY! I TELL YOU, HE CAN'T SEPARATE FANTASY FROM REALITY. HE EVEN CALLED 243-3460 AND ASKED TO SPEAK TO — Imagine my disappointment when I discovered most of them don't exist. Residents of Mississippi are excused from trying to imagine anything—I don't want to be accused of causing stress. In brief, 28 Howard is not a loft, the loft at 158 Spring couldn't have been the one in the film, and there is no Club Berlin at the corner of West Broadway and Grand. Sigh.

On the same topic, more or less, the writers' strike kept me from seeing "Late Night with David Letterman." True, I didn't have tickets, but when I called him at home the week before, and his answering machine said, "I'll get back with you," I took that to mean I could get in. Imagine my surprise when I showed up at a pitch-black 30 Rockefeller Plaza at 12:30 in the a.m. I demanded the security guard take me to the studio. When he informed me no show was being filmed that night, I asked him to direct me to David's office, so he and I could discuss important comedy stuff. (Letterman's style of humor and my own are very similar, as you may have noticed.) When he said David had gone for the day, I grew suspicious. I left then, but vowed to return, that I might further pursue THE KIDNAPPING OF DAVID LETTERMAN! What else could have stopped this genius from the practicing of his craft? I called The National Enquirer immediately with the breaking story, to nab a few headlines (and dollars), but was told, "Yeah, we know already—you got any photos?" So to you, David, wherever you are, I dedicate this list, since you aren't on the air live to say something equally funny:

10 THINGS I WOULD HAVE ASKED DAVID LETTERMAN

1. Weren't you with the group, the Lettermen?
2. How many times have you seen hte movie "After Hours"?
3. Why do the subway drivers say "Houston St." instead of "Houstone St."?
4. Why does half of your viewer mail come from California, and who circles the important parts of each letter in red crayon?
5. Why does your show come on so late at night, and why can't my VCR tape both it and "Airwolf"?
6. What movies have you been in?

STOP AND THINK.

If it weren't for this birdbrain and what he's been doing for forty years you wouldn't even be living assuming that you are in your millionth lifetime more or less. Send SASE to arithmetically, spiritually and secularly sound

4 WAY HEREBEFORES

Box 2243 — YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO, 44504

INTERESTING

by Mary Ann Henn

I sat in a town cafe one winter night listening to a couple next to me. What did I hear? She was a divorcee and so was he. They were trying to work things out

to remarry they said. She sounded whiney, take care of me, sort of thing. But so did he. What did I hear? He was looking for a mother. She was looking for a father. Interesting. Would it work?

4. Why is New York so far north?

3. Can I write your autobiography? (I'll give you some of the money.)

2. Are you and Teri Garr going to get married, or what?

1. Hey, David, I've got a great idea for a "Top Ten" list—wanna hear it?

On Monday I took a leisurely stroll through Central Park.

There I came face to face with a strange and foreboding—more or less—Egyptian obelisk. The hieroglyphics on the stone were transcribed conveniently on a plaque for the casual observer, perhaps too conveniently. I, MasterMath, unearthed their true meaning. I crouched down next to the monument with my ear pressed intently against its north side, and whispered the magic words: "Live from New York, it's Saturday night!" I heard a low rumbling, then a deep thundering voice said, "Do not stray into yon Strawberry Fields. Many writers of comedy have entered therein, never to be seen again!" I was incredulous. "Like who?" I asked. "Have you seen any episodes of 'Great White North' on SCTV lately?" I had to admit, the obelisk had a point, as obelisks generally do.

Next, I went to the Museum of Natural History, where, due to mysterious circumstances, my camera malfunctioned. —OK, MASTERMATH, YOUR MONEY OR YOUR LIFE! HEY, WHAT HAPPENED TO THE LIGHTS? WHERE'S THIS SUBWAY GOING ANYWAY, THERE AIN'T NO 1,013TH STREET! HOW'D THAT BEACH AND THOSE PALM TREES GET HERE? DAMN IT'S HUMID. I THINK I'M GONNA PASS OUT— I was powerless to record any of the exhibits for posterity, or for posterity's younger sister, the future. What was it that the prying eyes of my quest weren't supposed to see? Was it something simple, like the only five known fossils of the prehistoric bird, archaeopteryx? Or could it have been something more ominous, like the museum's practice of giving steriods to shrew so they could be presented to the public as voles? The universe may never know.

Then I made my dinner rendezvous with Beth (not her real name), my friend from high school who lives in New York, who talked me into eating sushi for the first time. Actually, the raw fish part wasn't bad; it's just that she couldn't convince me that eating kelp differed substantially from chewing on dead leaves. Extensive research at the New York Public Library confirmed my suspicions about the true nature of kelp. Later we enjoyed an evening at the Improv, which included a cameo appearance by Woody Allen or a reasonable facsimile (I've got a call in to him to clarify the point).

Tuesday was the day for me to finally meet our beloved editrix. She told me specifically to take the "M" or the "R" train to Greenwich Village. However, Fate intervened; I took the number 1 train instead, ending up miles away from my intended destination. Actually, Fate isn't a bad guy. Naturally, he was inducted into C.H.U.D. well before me. He's quite the practical joker, and not a bad canasta player. Anyway, Elaine and I had a nice lunch at Stiletto's Pizza, whereupon she directed me to take the F train—that's the F train, are you sure you got it it's the F train—back uptown. —HELLO, I'M JUST HERE TO DELIVER A MESSAGE TO THOSE OF YOU EXPECTING THE USUAL THREE SILLY, POINTLESS INTERRUPTIONS IN A MASTERMATH ARTICLE. THE MESSAGE IS THAT THIS ARTICLE WILL CONTAIN ONLY TWO— Believe it or not, that's actually the train I took.

One other locale I visited was the Museum of Broadcasting. There I uncovered a clandestine plot to suppress viewing of a certain television program. Despite the fact that the museum has over 16,000 radio and video tapes on file, they failed to have even one of "Journey to the Unknown." Were they afraid I would discover the hidden meaning to the plots of this obscure program, which was aired on ABC for only the 1968 season? Or was the theme music deemed too haunting, too eerie for the general public (hence subject to subversive use by a power-mad megalomaniac)? Elaine, you're a member of the MoB; check into this, please!

Having received word from Oo that I had quested for a sufficient period of time, I celebrated that night by seeing the off-Broadway play, "Vampire Lesbians of Sodom." Excellent. A fine example of the actor's craft, although I must say it was the first time I'd heard Sodom and Gomorrah referred to as "twin cities."

I'm now 38,000 feet in the air, on my way to visit my sister (not her real name) in Florida. I'm a bit apprehensive about the pilot's credentials, though. He's John Cleese, of Monty Python fame. Perhaps my adventure hasn't yet ended. Uh oh, we're experiencing some turbulence!

"This is your captain speaking. As the more astute among you have noticed, we are currently experiencing some turbulence. That is because one of the engines have fallen off the plane. I assure you the reason the plane is plummeting toward the earth is that we are going to retrieve it. However, we are perfectly well equipped to reach our destination on our remaining—how many?—one engine."

Well, readers, I'll see you later—maybe! If so, I'll explain my upcoming visit to Qard, the greeting card planet. Until then, analyze a mailbox!

Another Damn Space Opera

FROM THE MEMOIRS OF VIVILAN

SUPERNOVITCH: INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR

by James MacDougall

LOG ENTRY #2 - FURTHER PLOT ELEMENTS

Among the lowlifes that frequent the Gehenna spaceport it is considered extremely poor manners to walk around with a charged handgun. For one thing, most guns throw a .45 cal. slug, which should be enough for dealing with day-to-day life situations (bar-room brawls, domestic disputes, etc.). The charger just gives the bullet a strong electric charge which discharges into the victim, and this is totally superfluous unless your sole intention is to kill whomever you hit.

So I knew that the thug who had followed me out of the bar, the charger on his sidearm softly humming, was planning my swift and inglorious end.

I hated that.

The Hell with him, he'd have to wait. I had to make a phone call.

I found a public phone outside another bar; the pedestrian traffic was heavy enough to discourage homicide. My friend the assassin positioned himself across the street where he could glare at me impatiently.

I called my ship and was answered on the first ring. I got audio but not video. Whir. "Berth 14, the Idiot's Luck, this is Lucky herself speaking." Click.

I ground my teeth. "What's this 'whir, click' stuff? You have the best vocoder on the market," I told the ship.

Whir. "Yes, but you always say you hate machines that don't sound like machines." Click.

That crack cost me another layer of tooth enamel. It's true, but I hate smartass machines even more.

The thug across the street displayed his impatience by stamping his feet. Did the idiot think I couldn't see him? I was tempted to shout, "Hang on, I'll be with you in just a minute."

"Lucky, I have to get ahold of Mef."

Whir. "Well, Mef's here right now, but..." Lucky paused as if gathering her thoughts, and given the speed of her processors this was obviously another affectation. Grind. "Actually, Mef isn't alone. This is a new record for him." Click.

I started to grind my teeth, but my jaw was starting to hurt, so I just grimaced instead. Mef was the best pilot ever issued a forged masters license. But there is a direct relationship between pilot skill and sex drive (the Cruise Effect, I once heard it called). I hate pilots.

Dumdum was now trying to pace inconspicuously and failing miserably.

Whir. "Do you want me to put you through to Mef's cabin, Skipper?" Click.

"No way!" Knowing Mef, he'd probably take the call without taking a break, and he was immodest enough to give me full video. "Just tell him he'll have to set another record. We're working. I need a crew ready to boost out, soonest."

Whir. "Skipper, you can find me trouble faster than anyone who's ever owned me. What do we need?" Click.

"At least three to handle ship's functions. And they have to be able to handle a real nasty ground action."

Whir. "It won't be easy to find anyone reliable, available and sober tonight, Skipper. Not in this town." Click.

"I thought I'd never say this, but you can offer them anything they want in advance. I have it on very good authority that any survivors will retire in comfort. This contract comes straight from somewhere over a rainbow." Unconsciously, I checked the platinum credit card Hotwater had given me. Yes, it was still secure, there at my bosom. Just checking. "Oh, and get a cook, too. I'm sick to death of recycler food."

Whir. "Skipper, we can probably buy us a crew. For a good cook we'll have to resort to kidnapping." Click.

"So for the cook we have the sobriety requirement." Did I have to do all the thinking? "I'll call the all-night ship's chandler and see to getting us outfitted. Tactfully interrupt our amorous space-jockey and let him know that the client will be there in a few hours and we will have a ready crew before she arrives. Oh, and since Mef will ask, yes, our client is going along, and yes, she's female, but she's not his type, she's human."

The crowd of bar-hoppers suddenly seemed to thin out, and Mr. Swift-and-Deadly was marching across the street towards me.

"Look, I gotta take care of something, I'll be aboard shortly."

Whir. "Anything wrong, Skipper?" Click.

"Nothing much. It'll just take a minute." I hung up and scooted down the nearest alley.

What up until then I had merely suspected became quite apparent; I was indeed dealing with the biggest idiot in the explored universe. Upon finding the alley, dead end notwithstanding, seemingly empty, he ingeniously charged right in. So as he passed I stepped out of the shadows and flattened him with an ashen lid.

He regained consciousness to find me sitting on his chest, the barrel of his gun stuck up his nose.

I smiled. "Hello. Now, before you say anything I want you to know that had we met under more favorable circumstances I would still probably hate you at first sight. However, given your inherent talents I figure I can afford to let you live, because you're going to go get yourself killed before long. You must now justify my generosity. Talk."

"Look, Lady..."

"I'm going to count to five and then I'm going to change my mind about killing you. One. Now, what comes after one...oh yes, four..."

"All right, all right. I was 'sposed to croak you 'cuz yer goin' to rescue Dorian Hotz's little girl from the Children of Apollo."

I was? This was news to me. The Children of Apollo were a cult of spoiled-rotten sex fiends, and Hotwater Jones had mentioned neither they nor Hotz's daughter when she hired me. It's very disconcerting when stupid people know more about your business than you do.

"Who hired you?"

He was going to tell me, but instead he suddenly screamed with agony. I don't know why, but I dove for cover.

Good thing, too, because then he exploded.

What a mess. It would seem that his employer had fed him a micro-detonator, a rather drastic method of ensuring security. Nice people I was dealing with.

I could pretty much rule out the element of surprise on this operation.

I hated that.

(Continued next issue)

BRAIN GROWTH through radical insanity.

(This is no occult garbage.)
Face the hard facts with morbid humor and

your own inherent strangeness.
Psychiatry, Positive thinking, blind faith: all bunk.
Stand up for your own abnormality.
Become a Doctor of the Forbidden Sciences!
Make religion a kick-ass adventure!
Self-help through raising hell!
Bogus ordination, crazed booklet \$2.

BRAZILIAN by James Wallis

He was tall and dark, undeniably South American in his walk and his speech, and as he walked and talked down the road to his silent, short companion he was undeniably the centre of attention in the crowded market. Hustlers and hucksters stopped and stared as he passed by, styled shoes slushing through rubbish, all ears straining to catch his words flung onto the air like handfuls of gravel, scattered, not directed.

His small companion, darker and swarthier, trotted beside to keep up with the flowing man and his dialogue; a broad hat bobbing at eye level, whatever face hidden by the brim. Occasionally a hand would sneak out and, unobserved by the fixated traders, would obtain a piece of merchandise from the stalls between which they stalked.

The voice that shrapnelled from the tall Brazilian was accented, stained by chewed tobacco and feeling like dark molasses, impacting softly and wetly on the ears, to ooze its way into the depths of the brain, to be digested and broken down. The voice was magnetic, but the subject was glue.

"...of blood, fishes that fall from the sky in shoals you know, images of the Madonna and the Christ that are seen to weep and bleed, people that are consumed by a white heat from within to leave only a singed limb lying in their clothes, the big cats that still roam the world, the black dogs of the devil; not forgetting ghosts and mediums, UFOs and lake monsters, the sasquatch and yeti, the bermuda triangle and the other phenomena that the papers are so fond of on hot summer days when the dogs pant in the shade and the reporters drag on their scotch. And mutants too, visions, voices, teleportations, infestations, manifestations and synchronicity..."

"Aaa?" The small one looked up. Its face stared lidless, adoring at its master, lipless mouth in a silent scar.

"Of course, Fort was not the first but he gave his name to it; following, chronicling but not trying to explain away. It was he who coined so many of the phrases — 'I think we're property' was novel at the time, but not to the likes of you, hm?—and laid down his ideas. But enough, I must be boring you; you came here to learn and I must teach what I can."

The two turned the corner, away, and the dark marketeers returned to their noisy crying and advertising. So intent and so short-minded were they that when a slap of summer lightning cut the sky for an instant, blasting an old house deserted for some decades in the centre of the small town, they dismissed it as nothing more than a whim of the God who sat above on his throne and stared down with hate in his eyes, aiming his thunderbolts for the wicked, and occasionally missing.

Politics of the Press, Or, As the Rag Turns

by Kathleen Prince

Things were going along as usual here at Cheboygan Today until our news editor, Frank Sequel, was murdered. If you want the collective opinion of the boys and girls in the production department, circumstances clearly point to our consumer editor, Tiffany McTiffany, whose feud with Sequel rivalled the one between the Road Runner and Wile E. Coyote.

McTiffany and Sequel were hired at the same time almost five years ago. The publisher during that era thought the two of them would make a good team, strong enough to pull the magazine out and away from a circulation of twelve. At the time Sequel and McTiffany came on board, demographics showed our reader profile to be "highly political with incendiary tendencies." While Sequel was more than pleased with this, McTiffany wanted to incorporate readers whose interests ranged from après ski booties to refurbished carousel animals. Things probably would have worked out all right if the publisher had stayed in town and policed the office with a shotgun at regular intervals during each working day. Instead he moved to Maui, where he heavily researched a beach.

The struggle that ensued each month for pages of the magazine was at times ferocious. When we were working on the April issue, Sequel actually entered McTiffany's office, and his argument against her insistence that we put an Easter egg on the cover was so heated that her telephone melted and the disc in her new UBM Intergalactic computer fused to the machine, putting her completely out of commission until she usurped the circulation director's Cranapple Clone. The telephone is now on view at the Cheboygan Public Library and the UBM Intergalactic went to Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry.

McTiffany got her revenge when Sequel was writing a drippingly sentimental overview of a murder-by-nagging trial in Petoskey. He had worked himself into a frenzy, had smoked three packs of cigarettes and eaten two pizzas in two hours, and was still semi-conscious at the typewriter after midnight. At two in the morning McTiffany sent over a cadre of community theatre actors, who performed one of the final scenes from *Death of a Salesman* ("I'm nothin', Pop, I'm nothin'!") between the paste-up desk and the light board. Sequel's rage prompted him to ferret out the blue-lines of the current issue, whereupon he removed McTiffany's name from the masthead and substituted the appellation that has stuck with her ever since: Piggie Roundhead. No one noticed the change until the rag hit the stands, and Sequel relied upon his professional integrity to protect him from suspicion.

Of course, McTiffany knew he had done it. Her resentment smoldered until she got an idea from something in the newspaper and she resorted to guerilla warfare. She instructed the receptionist to route every package delivered to the office to Sequel's desk. Sequel, busily at work on a profile of an alcoholic drug addict with tuberculosis and a terrible sunburn, finally realized what was happening and began heaving the packages unceremoniously onto the fire escape. It was raining. After he handed in the piece (a tad late by three-and-a-half weeks), he waited until McTiffany took her coffee break and then removed all pencils, pens, paper clips and message pads from her desk. She was forced to the stationery store and while there Sequel purloined her files, clippings, calendars and appointment book. She got them back only after conceding to "hold" her article entitled "American Uses of Pinking Shears."

The following Monday morning McTiffany walked buoyantly into the office leading a pit bull. A low, insistent growling issued from her cavern the entire day, and when she took a coffee break the dog, Sergeant York, perched on her chair and glared with fear-some leaden eyes at the quivering staff, whom he could see through the open door. Sequel, feigning bravado, stole glances at the beast drooling on the Cranapple Clone and loudly suggested that the moon was right and McTiffany had finally completed her transformation to a werewolf. He added that in her present incarnation her writing was certain to improve.

McTiffany's move on the chessboard of life did succeed in settling things down for a couple of issues. In August she published a 4,000-word piece on the flounce, while Sequel turned his energies to the underground gambling wars in Sault Ste. Marie. In September McTiffany ran "The Elusive Basket" and Sequel profiled a cult that met in the basement of the mayor's home, unbeknownst to the mayor. The blissful equilibrium even engendered some civilized behavior, a benefit to the entire staff. The high point of the period was when, upon passing the advertising director in the hall, Sequel said "Hello." A more memorable event at Cheboygan Today has never been recorded.

Just as the staff was becoming accustomed to basking in a tranquillity heretofore unknown to them, Sergeant York, whom we had all come to respect and admire, swallowed a letter opener and had to be rushed to the vet. With our authority figure gone, a battle ensued within 45 minutes. A cover subject for October had to be chosen, and while Sequel wanted a nice shot of an exhausted, poverty-stricken trucker, McTiffany favored a close-up of Mr. Pumpkin. Allies were enlisted on both sides, with the copy editor, receptionist and production manager going with Sequel and the rest of the production staff, the bookkeeper and the typesetter all for a drawing of Ricky the Kangaroo. Finally the noise level reached such a consistent, piercing pitch that the metal typewriter stands began to vibrate. All discussion abruptly ceased, and the two principals retreated to their respective offices.

24 The next morning McTiffany waltzed in with favorable news about

Tables Turned by Richard Millard

Dillon was thrust into the chair, and the bag was pulled from his head. Sputtering, he tried to rise from the chair, but strong arms forced him down. Dillon blinked his eyes as he looked around the room, trying to focus on the various shapes.

"What's going on?!" Dillon demanded.

"You have been tried and are about to be sentenced," Baron stated from behind a table at the front of the room.

Dillon stopped blinking. He stared. Speechless. Then he shook his head. "This has to be a joke!" Dillon exclaimed as he tried to rise, but was forced down again.

"No. This is a very serious matter," Jiggs observed from behind the table.

"No!!!" Dillon shouted. "This can't be! You can't—"

But Dillon never finished. At a nod from Baron, a large hand was clamped across Dillon's mouth.

"Let us remove him now," Colo said from his seat beside Jiggs.

Behind Dillon, voices were raised in agreement.

Slowly, Baron shook his head as he held up his hand for silence.

"No. First we must pass sentence."

Dillon squirmed in the chair. But the strong arms pressing down on his shoulder held him in place.

"We are among the neglected. The abused," Colo stated. "We could not keep up, could not compete with advanced technology. We were no longer entertaining. So we were pushed aside, forgotten."

"Not entirely forgotten," Jiggs corrected. "In the latter part of the twentieth century, some people were wise enough, kind enough, to get up funds that would take care of us. Just look what they did in San Diego, Columbus and St. Louis."

"And we ended up with someone like Dillon running the show!" Colo snapped.

"But we studied their ways, and bided our time," Baron stated. "We learned their language. And waited. Waited until we were ready to make our move."

Colo sneered. "And all the time they thought that we were just cute mimics."

Jiggs smiled, as others laughed.

Baron raised his hand for silence.

"Look how he's treated us!" Colo shouted as the noise subsided.

"Dillon bought cheap food so he could pocket the profit. And only what medicine was absolutely necessary to keep us alive. Our homes are all in need of repair."

Voices shouted and hands were clapped together as Dillon nervously looked around the room. He then shut his eyes.

Baron motioned for silence.

"Some argued for the penalty of death," Jiggs said as he rubbed his chin.

Colo nodded. "And with good cause."

Dillon quickly opened his eyes.

"But you will not die," Baron said as he looked at Dillon. "Do not think, though, that this judgment is based on humanitarian feelings."

Colo grinned.

"We will keep you alive," Baron continued, "in a cage. Just in case we need you to make an appearance. But since we are not visited much any more, no one will really know that the seat of power has changed. That the tables have been turned."

Dillon shook his head violently back and forth.

"You mean you won't cooperate?" Jiggs asked.

Dillon shook his head forward as far as the hand clamped on his mouth would permit.

"Oh, I think I can persuade you to cooperate," Colo said as he flashed a big smile.

Dillon stopped moving his head. His eyes widened.

Baron leaned forward and folded his hands on the table. "So, for all intents and purposes, we will appear to be operating as usual. But we will finally receive our due."

The room was filled with cheers and shouting!

The hand was removed from Dillon's mouth. He was yanked from the chair.

Twisting in the arms that held him, Dillon could not break loose.

"This is insane!! It can't be happening!! It can't be!!!"

Dillon shouted as he was dragged past the triumphant faces of the gathered gorillas and orangutans.

Sergeant York and a beatific smile on her lips. Such behavior was a mystery to us, until the murder investigation revealed that at this juncture our consumer editor was practicing mind control on Sequel. "Mr. Pumpkin" was written over and over on sheets of paper later found in her desk, as was "I long to take a journey far, far away." Sequel was, of course, impervious to her efforts, although he began wearing orange neckties and is known to have written at least one letter to a travel bureau about Aruba.

Frank Sequel's body was found in our office in early November by a hardened cleaning woman, and certain elements of the case might implicate McTiffany. A large gum eraser was stuck in his mouth like a cork in a bottle, the actual cause of death was "dog bites and kicks," and the word boldly written across his forehead with pistachio lipstick was "delete." As yet, no formal accusations have been made.

McTiffany, who must have nerves of steel, now claims that she has been inspired by Sequel's demise. She is at work on a feature about ouija boards and the latest trends in communicating with the dead. She believes she can convince the publisher that she should hire the next news editor, but the publisher says he already has someone in mind.

THIS INSANE THING

(burn it down) by Rodney Dioxin

Billy stared into his coffee. The windows at Kiev were all steamed up, as usual, so there was nothing to see outside. And he was tired of watching the five people across from him try to split the check evenly, allowing for one college ID discount and two people who left after the soup. One of them had just pulled a calculator out of her St. Mark's Comics bag. The waitress brought another cheeseburger deluxe. It was his second of the evening. Or his third. He'd been there so long he'd lost count. He was too hung-over to care really.

Billy began aimlessly dunking fries in the coffee and slurping them down.

"That is totally from yakk-city, B." Cold hands from behind were shoved down the front of his shirt.

"STFO, Bates. And it's about time you got here."

Hope sat down at the table and immediately snarfed up the side order of slaw.

"Please. Help yourself."

"You hate slaw."

"Well, I'm hung over and in a bitch of a mood and you're late so I decided to like it for a day." Billy blew smoke in her face.

"Gagchck! Still smokin' clove cigs, I see. Y'know, just 'cause you're out doesn't mean you have to go all mega-fey on us, babe."

"Yeah, yeah. Shows what you know. I've been smoking these things for years. Since back in my Deadhead days."

"Oh...way back then. What were you, twelve?"

"Eleven, actually." He slid his plate across the table.

"Here, eat this thing. I've already had several."

"Food! Great! I haven't eaten anything since, like, breakfast or sumthin'."

"So? So?, What's happening? How was the big date?"

"That. Feh. Don't wanna talk about it." Hope shoved her mouth full of cheeseburger.

"No way. It's like extremely fuckin' late here. You were s'posed to show for dinner, not late cocktails and snack time. Sordid details. Now."

"Okay, okay. But only if you get me more coffee."

Billy flagged the waitress. Try as he might, he just couldn't stay mad at Hope. He figured they both had enough problems without that, anyway.

"Luvya, babe." Hope reached across the table and smeared ketchup on Billy's nose. "That's better. Smile. How's yer ribs?"

"Okay. The doc says they should be fine as long as I keep 'em taped for a while. Stop changing the subject."

"No fair. Y'know I care 'bout you. A lot."

"Yeah, I'm loved by the masses. Wanda still says if she ever sees those guys she gonna pound their heads through a brick wall."

"Hey, I coulda told you to stay out of suburbia, love. It's a sick place. You city-babies just don't know."

"Gee, thanks mom. I'll have to remember that next time some cute thing from Plainview tries to pick me up at a Murphy's Law show."

"Fuck that. Just remember not to start making out on the LIRR. Jeez, talk about no-way-cool moves."

"Well, it was 4am."

"So, assholes stay up late too."

"I thought the car was empty."

"No, if you'd been thinking—"

"—I would've stayed in the city where it's safe...I know, I know."

"That's not what I meant 'n you know it."

"You just said suburbia was hell."

"Yeah, but it's not Ted's fault. He's a total sweetie. Sometimes ya gotta go to hell. Next time take a map, tho."

"Yeah, I know. But he could've called."

"He did call. Remember. You went out. Drank illegally. He yakked all over your shoes. Very romantic, I think."

"Ha, ha." Billy put out his cigarette in Hope's coffee. She ordered them both some tea in a glass.

"Well, you can laugh. I'm not kidding. I'd kill to have someone throw up on my shoes at this point."

"Just anyone, dear? I'm sure Ivan would do it gladly."

"And then tie them 'round my neck and toss me off the Williamsburg Bridge. No thanks."

"Gather the day went badly."

"No idea. Hell, I've had it playin' chaperone for psychopathology on parade. They went alone."

"What? No chaperone? Horrors, anything could happen."

"And will, I'm sure. She is so hot for him. I just don't get it, B. What's he got?"

"Skipping over the obvious, ya got me. He's a total butthole if ya ask me. So what'd you do all day?"

"Scored some ex' from Jen, played UNKNOWN PLEASURES 50 or 60 times, stared at the ceiling, cried a lot, tried not to think about Cath getting beat up, tried not to think in general..."

"Hey, Hope, I'm—"

"Don't say yer sorry. Please."

"So, what're you gonna do?"

"I don't know. 'Bout an hour ago Cath called, woke me up. I didn't answer but I heard the message she left. Looks like the total butthole's gonna be movin' in."

"Whoa."

"Tell me. I just don't know what I'm gonna do, B."

"Get out."

"Yeah, but I'm just so nuts for Cath."

LIFE-SAVING DRILL

by Dana A. Snow

The first time I saved his life was when he was shanghaied and pressed into service on a pirate ship. The ship was called the Fanny Fae Finegold—the finest frigate on the seven seas. Once on board, he was introduced to the first mate, boson and bosun's mate, who were all men. He said, "That's what happens when a Captain of a vessel is allowed to perform marriages!" They told him to walk the plank. He wanted to refuse, but they all had swords so, as a symbolic protest, he jogged the plank.

He found his way to a deserted tropical island. Right away, he sent out several messages in bottles, hoping they'd reach civilization. Each message was the same: "Please get the deposit back on this empty and send the money to my Swiss bank account in Zurich."

Soon he encountered a tribe of Caucasian cannibals called the Golfalinka tribe. They were the most refined gourmets of all the cannibals. If someone wasn't cooked just right, they'd send 'em back!

When I heard where he was, I hacked my way through the dense jungle with my machete, followed by three environmentalists repairing the jungle with glue and tape. In a crisis, your adrenalin pumps, and I found I had the strength of a hundred men—unfortunately, they were all in critical condition.

So I swung in on a vine, pulled him out of the stewpot and swung out as poison-tipped arrows flew past me. He came out of the misadventure with nothing more serious than a broken arm—and he wouldn't have had that if he hadn't tried to kiss me. He said, "Thank you for saving my life!" I said, "It was nothing." He said, "My life is nothing?" So he sued me for slander.

The other time I saved his life, he was kidnapped. When his employer received the ransom note, he took immediate action. He formed a committee to study it. Then he tried to raise money by having him legally declared one of "Jerry's kids."

The kidnappers then sold him to a white slavery ring. For awhile, he was owned by Dick Clark, who made him rate records all day. Then he was sold to a circus in Borneo, where he toured as the Wild Man of America. A lady contortionist there helped him escape, but then he wanted to escape from her because it was a very twisted relationship. Fortunately, I came along, threw her a bag of pretzels and we escaped in the confusion.

He's thinking of tracing his roots—but that's only so he can use them for a hair transplant. So far he's only found out his ancestral name and has gone back to it, because he didn't want to use his slave name, which was Leonard Slave.

So there you have it. That's the story. It has some geography and some anthropology and the rest, of course, is history!

"I know. But you gotta face the high heat, Bates."

"Yeah, all she's got is this stray-cat thing for me. It's like I'm her responsibility ever since she found me onna street. I hate that."

"I know. I'm sorry, Hope. I can't tell you what to do. That sucks, don't it?"

"Nah. I know what's what. Like she's hot for Ivan but she's usin' me cos she's scared of him and how hot she's gettin'. And I'm goin' along cos I just can't stand not being with her. OR: it's time to get the hell out. Hit the streets."

"Stay with me."

"Serious shit?"

"Yeah. C'mon. It'll be cool. I'll save money. And at least I know you're not going to try and ravage my purity under cover of darkness."

"You, pure? HAH!"

"That's cold."

"Anyway, I never do it with the lights off."

Billy dropped a handful of crumpled ones on the table. "This one's on me, okay."

"No way, butthole. I owe you."

"Oh right, equality. 1988. I remember. You gonna be okay?"

"I ain't dead yet."

"Okay. Let's get bookin'."

"Yeah, I wanna get my stuff out before the happy couple returns."

"And I need to hit a store. I have no food. And I'm out of smokes. And there's like four inches of slush on every street," Billy said as they walked out into it.

"So how bad could life be?"

Multiple Choice: Identify

THE ACADEMIC RESPONDS TO HIS CRITIC



Wayne Hozan

- a. communication
- b. security
- c. confusion



4. BCB

AN INCONSEQUENTIAL BIRTH AND ITS INCREDIBLE CONSEQUENCES

by Michael Buller

Way back before there was B.C. or A.D., when there was just now, today, a kid was born. Just your average everyday kid. It was a cold day. But inside the barn, on the hay, in the glow of a soft fire, this little runt was crying and screaming and they couldn't shut him up for anything. They rocked him. They sang to him. No luck. So the kid went on wailing.

Meanwhile, outside in the cold streets, three men are stumbling about aimlessly. They are drunk, quite. In an attempt to warm up, they had drunk themselves under the table and forgotten about the time. They have also acquired some silly clothing throughout the evening. If lampshades existed, no doubt this trio would be wearing them.

Well, it turns out now that these three gentleman, travellers as they are, cannot find a room for the evening. All the pubs have closed and all the inns are booked. This of course sobers them up in a hurry. But these gentlemen aren't dumb. As they are elected officials, they aren't exactly wise either. But hey, they aren't dumb.

The first dude says, "We must seek shelter among the kind inhabitants of this foreign town."

"But," Dude number two raises his hand, "where shall we find such hospitality at this late hour?"

"Listen," Dude number three says and cranes his head to the right. "Is that not the cry of a newborn that I hear? Surely there we might find kind, anxious parents who do not sleep while the baby cries."

The dudes are in general agreement and they proceed to the barn. Knock-knock, and they enter.

"Pardon us, my good lady," Dude one addresses the woman cradling the loud-mouthed kid. "We regret to disturb you."

"Tis unfortunate but you are not the first to do so this evening. Pray come in and shut the coldness out."

"My good lady," the first dude resumes, "We are foreigners in your land travelling through to another town. We have stopped here to see a star perform in your local show."

"Ah yes, my cousin Beth."

"Yes, she is the one," Dude three confirms.

"But what, then, brings you to my home at such an hour? Do you seek Beth?"

(All throughout the conversation, the little beast continues to wail.)

"No, my lady, our situation is more dire indeed. In our exuberance, we have failed to secure lodging for the evening, and with the weather so harsh we are forced to rely on the hospitality of strangers."

She pauses.

"We can pay for your troubles," Dude three chirps, still perhaps a little drunk.

"My troubles, gentlemen, rest in my arms, though not quietly. If you can quiet him, you might stay and keep your coin."

They confer and Dude one returns. "My lady, you are most generous. We have an idea. We shall leave presently and return to appease your child." And so they left and the little runt kept crying.

Perhaps it is time to explain how these three gentlemen found themselves travelling together and thus drunk together on this cold winter evening. To do that, we must go back even further, before the cold, drunken night, when man was just about beginning to be civilized. At that time, unannounced and relatively unknown to anyone, a couple of spaceships landed. The legend claims that they had powers that man had never seen. They could fly through the air (jet packs). They could kill animals from great distances (projectile weapons). In short, they did lots of stuff that really freaked these people right out. This was thousands and thousands of years ago. They were thought of as gods, which they weren't, but they were certainly more advanced than man was.

26 Well, what they did was implant all kinds of weird notions into

these people's heads which, of course, they, being mere earthlings, believed. After all, it came from the gods. Their goal was to leave these people alone, let them develop, and when things started getting out of hand, jump back in and save them. Who knows why they did this? Maybe they didn't have television and Wheel of Fortune to keep them amused. In any case, just before the time of this crying baby, they returned, unnoticed as they themselves had developed quite a bit.

It was time to push their ideas. Things were getting nasty on this little planet known as Earth. They found a young, innocent girl (read: virgin). They drugged her and impregnated her (read: raped). Then they left her and the whole evening was unremembered by her. Nine months later, much to everyone's surprise, Mary (for that was her name) gave birth to the little brat. People started talking in the small town, for they knew of Mary and most knew her to be innocent. They spoke of the prophecy: "And there shall be born a child from the womb of an innocent woman." And as the baby cried more and more, they continued to quote: "And that child shall cry for the sins of man until he be appeased by gifts of love." Interestingly enough, those were the very words the aliens had left, thousands and thousands of years ago.

Remember those three smart, almost-wise, men? Last we left them they were scrounging about the town looking for little gifts to shut up the little rugrat. Well, although the three were travelling together, only two had started the journey that way. Those two, Dude one and Dude three, were mayors of adjoining towns. They travelled on their way to a mayoral conference. Their journey would take two days and nights, and on the morning of the second day they met Dude two. He claimed to be from the area and also on his way to the same conference.

"What?" Dude two cried in disbelief. "You two gentlemen have travelled this distance and plan not to see the brightest star in the Universe perform?"

Dude one scratched his face, confused by the word "universe." "And who is this star you say is so bright?"

"Why, her name be common to all, I thought. It is the only one need be known, and that is Beth Allhem. She performs a show tomorrow in a town not far from here."

"Ah yes. Her name has made it to our distant taverns," Dude three smiled. "Tis our loss but we are expected at the conference on the morning of tomorrow."

"Well, good sirs, I propose if you join me, one might do both; see the lady Beth, and arrive in time at the summit."

"How can that be?" Dude one was skeptical.

"If we rest the night in that town and leave in the early morn, it is only three hours' ride to our destination." The other dudes were still resistant, so Dude two continued. "Well, what say you? I have seen her perform and it is well worth your while...Join me and the night's ale will be on me."

They were all smiles then. After all, beer is beer and more important than any conference. So they agreed and they trotted off together.

It may seem obvious now, but Dude number two was not from a local town. He was one of those suffering beings who lived on the planet without television (is it any wonder that they progressed so much more quickly?). His mission succeeded, as he directed the two to the town where Beth Allhem would perform and, coincidentally enough, where the baby brat would be crying. As one thing is universal, and that being that beer is beer, Dude two joined his new pals in getting generally hammered and then in attempting to sober up. Luckily (or thanks to additional forethought by wise aliens), gifts were found, and they did their job in clamping the kid's mouth. Mary, being quite relieved, let the happy threesome sleep off their booze.

When they left in the morning, two of them thought nothing of the night. They were off to discuss the important techniques of mayoring. Amongst the town members, however, the three had a different effect.

The townfolk approached Mary and explained to her the meaning of the men and the prophecy. She bought it. Not only did it fit with the events, but it also helped clear her name from those who would have believed her a common trollop. They quoted, "The child shall grow to preach the love of man. He shall be the messenger of the Gods and he shall not forfeit this task lest he and all of mankind be cast into eternal damnation."

Eventually, the "Gods" were shorthanded to "God" through the repeated telling of the story. A lot of facts were distorted. The three drunken men became three wise men and their strange headgear became crowns. But anyway, there's still the kid.

Now, as he grows up, he learns more and more of his randomly acquired status. At first, even as he fulfills the prophecy (which changes continually to fit the proper scene), he is still reluctant to accept it. Yet even he is impressed with some of the shit he pulls off apparently by himself, though actually with the help of his alien friends and father. Throughout his life, when the non-believers became too numerous, a little light show or illusion could help quench the skepticism.

Finally, on one Wednesday in early spring, the government had him killed, and in a nasty way. There was much grief, but they quoted, "Weep not, for his death will be for man's sins and he shall walk again, although unseen. Follow his ways, that ye too shall be saved."

Somewhere on a distant planet, while scientists are frantically attempting to invent television, a couple of aliens are sitting in a bar tossing back a couple of brews and having a good laugh. One of them shakes its head and says to the other, "I can't believe it. They actually bought it!"

A MATTER, AFFAIR, HAVING OR EXPRESSING A MEANING by Don Wagberg

"So quiet tonight," the last sweet, syrupy substance expresses in words to the objective case of I, making seem real this sympathetic, inclined-to-do-good showing of feeling, character, etc. that indicates indirectly there is a distant in space or time, likely to occur happening the woman, girl or female animal being alluded to might not be well-informed or acquainted with the nature of the objective case of SHE'S thing aimed at. "How come?" The awareness through the nose of the objective case of SHE is moved confusedly in a mass to the upper atmospheres, characteristic of one more than five young, unmarried female children settled into a compact quantity of matter having no exact limits of shape and size in the household's indefinitely expandable fluid form of a substance full-grown pig raised for its meat for a sixth-day-of-the-week period of darkness from sunset to sunrise of driving about from place to place, as for pleasure or in search of something, and makes things easier or better for the objective case of I to express words to the objective case of SHE, "Do I hafta be talking all the time?"

"Geer, don't get upset," the woman, girl or female animal previously mentioned cries or utters with low, whining, broken sounds. "If I'da known it'd make you mad..."

"No," the person speaking or writing expresses in words, "I'm not gettin' upset."

"I'm just tryin' ta say you're so quiet all the time," the woman, girl or female animal previously mentioned not jokingly melts out or renders in words.

"I just don't like talkin'."

"I'm only tryin' ta—"

"To what? Make conversation. I don't care about conversation."

"Okay, okay."

"What'm I s'posed ta do?"

"I'm not tryin' ta start anything, all right? I just never know what you're feeling, because you never say anything. I just wish I knew what you were feeling."

Why is the woman, girl or female animal previously mentioned so lacking in the qualities necessary for carrying or leading here or to the place where the speaker will be any object, event, fact, etc. relating to the matter under consideration into a deliberation of the pros and cons? Expressing ideas by speech substitutes with all the persons of a racial or ethnic group like the objective case of SHE is such an extravagant exhaustion higher in rank than others of every movement there has ever been or ever will be, because each individual or separate happening, act, incident, etc. the persons, animals or things previously mentioned at any time have to express in words is so pleasing in its lightness, wildness, etc. and just kind of is carried by the wind in another place or direction earlier than the time that the next lack of sense comes on or beside the length of. The persons, animals or things previously mentioned fall into a temporary state of unconsciousness over the seed-producing structures of plants cultivated for their blossoms, come in, at or to a position in relation to for the purpose of preparation by boiling, baking, broiling, frying, etc. sudden or unexpected slice of meat, esp. beef, chief meals of the day for the person or persons spoken to and then rest the intensive or reflexive form of THEY upon the buttocks, as on a chair, and gave steadily and intently at the person or persons spoken to biting and crushing with the teeth, getting the person or persons spoken to all thick, broad, fertile, profitable and plentiful for the act of causing the death of, causing the person or persons spoken to, might the person speaking or writing beautifully, appreciatively and appropriately state further, to have a need to fastly stick the possessive pronominal form of YOU'S instrument of varying size with prongs at one end, as for eating food, pitching hay, etc. in one side and out the other the projection of cartilage in the front of the throat of, or belonging to, then, and produce musical sounds with highly enjoyable small in size, amount, degree, etc. warm-blooded vertebrate with feathers and wings mental impressions produced by rhythmic wording made through the mouths, esp. by human beings, "Stairway To Heaven," bear on the body woven, knitted or pressed fabrics of fibrous materials that at all times have a thing not definitely known, understood, etc. swinging loosely or beginning to blossom at some place not known or specified, have large advertisements or notices posted publicly of some smeary, blotted place where an event occurs with some arrangement of words, esp. a rhythmical composition, sometimes rhymed, in a style more imaginative than ordinary speech marked by intellectual depth formed on a surface, as with a pen, over the unhappily condemned highest point or surface of the animal or thing previously mentioned that gets the meaning of by interpreting the characters similar to the way the persons', animals' or things' previously mentioned aromas are perceived and all matters, affairs or concerns that the person speaking or writing in no manner or degree knows how to form or have in the mind exactly at the present time.

"It's just how I've always been," the person speaking or writing is aware through physical sensation compulsion to put in the mind of the objective case of SHE.

"I know, you like to think," (not at all! nay! not so! The woman, girl or female animal previously mentioned does not have even the most temporarily unconscious thought, mental conception or image) and properly qualified Creator and Ruler of the Universe if the woman, girl or female animal previously mentioned does not come into the state of having this contemptibly pretty or attractive, esp. in a dainty way, small in size, amount, degree, etc.

the whole quantity of comprehensive upward curvature of the two fleshy folds forming the edges of the mouth that is carried by the wind in another place or direction in a way or by a method not known or stated with the greatest possible tangible or inanimate objects in addition the woman, girl or female animal previously mentioned expresses in words or things done. On condition that the person speaking or writing was not to such an extent deeply disturbed, as by grief, and disgusted by things done that go beyond reasonable limits by, and amounts greater than are necessary of, the objective case of SHE the person speaking or writing might hold mentally a certain unspecified quantity of sameness of feeling for the objective case of SHE.

"But," the woman, girl or female animal previously mentioned proceeds in a direction toward, performing the part of the king or queen person lacking normal ability to learn or understand, "I'd just like t'know sometimes if something's bothering you."

The person speaking or writing blows or puffs an oath or exclamation and directs that or those organs of sight belonging to the objective case of HE so as to get the knowledge of the upper limit of viability. The thing mentioned in every instance functions or operates effectively.

So the woman, girl or female animal previously mentioned closes completely, thoroughly and gets possession of a quick facing in a specified direction to or into that place too with the objective case of SHE'S opening in the head through which food is taken in and sounds are made entirely so compact in structure that water, ~~if, etc. cannot pass through.~~

DOPPELGANGER: UNIVERSE EDITION 3

"LIGHTS! CAMERA! ANDERSON!"

The Films of Gerry and Sylvia Anderson

by Doug "Rock Serling" Pelton

As well as producing a well-known and -loved string of successful SF television series, the Andersons branched out to do three films for two U.S. film companies. THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO! came out in Christmas '66 at the peak of the Thunderbirds TV series' popularity. It told of the attempts to get the Solar System Exploration Council's ZERO X off to Mars to check out life forms. The first attempt was sabotaged by Thunderbirds nemesis The Hood; the second try, the International Rescue team made sure the MarsShip made it successfully. However, before Mars liftoff, XERO X Martian Exploration Vehicle, the MEV, was damaged in a Martian rock snake fireball attack. Later, upon atmospheric reentry, lifting bodies failed to attach properly, so the Thunderbirds team swung into action to free the crew stuck in a jammed escape capsule before the huge blue ZERO X crashed into the evacuated town of Craigsville, California.

Two years later, they came out with a down-to-earth THUNDERBIRD SIX, dealing with a gang of SKYSHIP ONE hijackers who p-ot to do in the Thunderbirds team with the help of International Rescue personnel on board the maiden round-the-world voyage. A gunfight in the control room of the Skyship does in the system of controlled anti-gravity height, and the ship crashes atop a Missile Base Early Warning Tower. The precariousness of the ship's teetering balance atop the tower precludes normal Thunderbird machine rescue—instead, they depend on the Tiger Moth biplane to rescue all on the Skyship before the latter topples down to destroy the Dover Missile Base. Made in '68 with newer-looking marionettes and production design in the SCARLET/JOE 90/DOPPELGANGER mold, the film stiffed at the box office.

In late '68/early '69, Anderson first went live-action with JOURNEY TO THE FAR SIDE OF THE SUN, with Roy (INVADERS) Thinnes, his life Lynn Loring, the late Ian Hendry and Patrick Wymark, plus four actors who'd move onto the UFO TV series the year of JOURNEY's Universal release, 1969. This film dealt with the trip to the Other Earth discovered by satellite on the far side of the sun. After crash-landing, the two astronauts find the other Earth has reverse duplication of matter—all things are reversed but exactly the same. Hendry's character dies, leaving Thinnes the only one to retrieve proof from the orbited ship. The other Earth landing craft doesn't mate electrically with the first Earth mother ship; all ships return to crash on Earth, the DOPPELGANGER into the Eurosec Base in sunny Portugal. Yet another big disaster film ending for Derek Meddings' talents.

The two THUNDERBIRDS films from United Artists have been on MGM/UA home video for years, and JOURNEY TO THE FAR SIDE OF THE SUN just made it to home video status on MCA this month. No further details available at this 27 writing, but all three films are well worth the look-see.

THE CONTINUING SAGA OF THE IRVING THUGLEENS by Max Nuclear

Hey boys and girls, I'm back!! Yes, it's Part Two of our amazing story of the Irving Thugleens... In Part One of our story, Irving Thugleen Lorie McKee was about to open a bar in the very backwards suburb of Irving. As she and her gang were on a shop-lifting spree at Hutch's to pick up bar supplies, she was confronted by her most dreaded enemy, May Newrath, and her gang. While there was no winner, Lo was forced to leave Hutch's without her supplies. May is confident that she has successfully halted the opening of Lorie McKee's bar, "The Lo Life," but she is in for a nasty surprise...

"Heh heh heh...it looks like Lorie McKee won't be opening her bar after all! Ha ha ha...fat copcat trying to open a place like I did five years ago. This should teach her! Chancellor! Put another bowl of cat stew on the burner, I feel like celebrating!!!"

At this point, the door swung open and in stormed Clo Franks. "May...I...just saw this...I...don't think you're going...to like this!..." stammered Clo, who handed May the morning newspaper and ran into another room to avoid the inevitable—

"WHHHHAAAAATTTTT?????!!!" screamed May. "The 'Lo Life Bar and Grill' is STILL going to be opening tonight?! Clo, get in here! Where did you get this? I don't get a newspaper!"

This was where Clo got real shaky. "I...I...got it from...one of the cabbies...parked outside..."

"Cabbies!?" May was frantic. "What are you talking about?" Clo spit it out as best she could. "One of...the...FIFTEEN...cabbies...outside..."

"FIFTEEN?! I didn't call no fifteen cabbies!" screamed May. Just then the phone rang. "Oh damn! Hello, who is it?"

The voice on the other end was all too familiar. "Heh heh heh, how ya doin', May? Has your ride gotten there yet?" It was, of course, Lorie McKee.

"You fat whore!! You won't get away with this, McKee. Some tannies will be fanning!" screamed May.

"Sorry May, can't talk pleasure right now, I gotta go get ready for the big opening tonight. Too bad you can't be there, because if you did show up, you and your gang would be smeared all over Irving Boulevard! Heh heh heh...so long, Newrath!" — click.

May slammed down the phone and screamed at the gang, "So, McKee thinks she can intimidate me, MAY NEWRATH, with a threat, does she? Well, my five years at Terrel Hospital in Ward B have made me intellectually superior to that slut! She's trying to use PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE! But it won't work! All you bums get your fannies perpendicular and head for my green Nova, 'cause the first night of 'The Lo Life' will be the last—and you, Rose Marie! Stop dusting that table and get moving!!!"

Once again, May had underestimated Lorie McKee, because after May had contacted Rose Marie (one-time character actress on the "Dick Van Dyke Show"), Lorie decided to fight fire with fire. Through her contacts with Billy Mummy, Lorie was able to persuade June Lockhart and her notorious Beverly Hills gang to be the bouncers at the opening of The Lo Life. She told June that May was the one shooting spit wads at her during the Rose Bowl Parade. June's gang: Maureen Stapleton, Betty White and Barbara Stanwyck —better known as THE JUNE LOCKHART KILLERS! Four of the meanest, roughest, toughest, nail-polishiest group of females this side of Universal Studios! So May and her gang were in for a big surprise on their butt-kicking raid on Lo's place, as they were about to find out...

May finished giving the last commands to her gang as she pulled up. Clo was still stuttering, Helen Gillcrest was adjusting her special "Ninja Death Shoe," Rose Marie was dusting the arm rests, and Chancellor was "just there." May whispered, "I'll head up to the door first, and when the bouncers turn around, you hit them with a burst of Pledge, Rose Marie; and the rest of you will charge in! Got it?...Let's go!"

May's gang bravely charged the front door, but when May kicked the door in, she was smashed in the face by June Lockhart's Nun Chucks! And before Rose Marie could raise her can of Pledge, she was struck by three blasts from Barbara Stanwyck's "Big Valley" rifle. "Ha ha ha," chuckled Lo. "Looks like your superior intellect was in low gear today, Newrath! Now here's your next 'lesson' of the day—Okay gang, let's KILL 'EM!!!"

So saying, the battle ensued, and even with Helen Gillcrest's "Ninja Death Shoe," May's gang was doomed. Lo and June's gangs tossed May and her gang out every available window. Clo got run over by the "Lost in Space" robot (whom June had brought along for insurance). The last thing that May and her gang could hear was, "Warning! Warning! Danger, Will Robinson!" Lo then used the body of Rose Marie as fire starter for the cat bar-b-q. May and her

May and her gang drove home in disgrace, but vowed to be the victors in the ultimate battle to come. And that will be the conclusion next time in our sordid tale of the Irving Thugleens... (Max says, "INSIDE JOKE readers are encouraged to send in tapes or scripts, on anything from poetry to drama to comedy, to NUCLEAR ENTERPRISES, P.O. Box 815605, Dallas, TX 75381, to be played on our radio show here in Dallas. When we use your bit, we'll send you a copy of the show you're on to you. There are two rules: 1) no more than about 81 minutes [to make room for intros and outros for a 10-minute show]; and 2) try to avoid four-letter words or anything grossly offensive. KNON 90.9 FM is a public radio station, and there's a Baptist group that wants the radio frequency for religious programming [like we need more of that], so they are looking for any excuse to nail the station...Make sure you have copies of your work when you send it in, and make sure there

is some way to get in touch with you again so we can send you the copy of the show on which your bit is featured...Thanks to Tom Deja for the scripts he sent in...In the meantime, boys and girls, DON'T FORGET TO PRAY!!!)

LET'S GO METS! #2.

NEWS by Larry Blandino

- Actress Joan Collins is recuperating in a Bel Air hospital after accidentally slicing off her finger with a Vegi-Matic. When paramedics arrived she is reported to have said, "Screw the finger—look for the diamond ring!"

- President Ronald Reagan is said to be suffering from a severe case of self-inflicted bowel blockage. According to a White House source, Mr. Reagan's astrologer believes it is "in the President's best interest to avoid bathrooms while the moon is full."

- Television evangelist Jimmy Swaggart has signed a 1.3 million dollar deal with Eastman-Kodak after it was revealed he used a Kodak VR 35mm camera when photographing a New Orleans prostitute. Said a Kodak spokesman, "It shows that anyone can use our product and get a sharp, vivid picture—no matter what the perversion."

- It was announced today that Sly Stallone, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Chuck Norris have decided to film a remake of the Bob Fosse musical CABARET. In the new version, due out for Christmas release, the terrible trio will play gun-toting dancing transvestites.

- To dispel rumors of wimpiness, Vice-President Bush has challenged former heavyweight champion Muhammed Ali to a three-round fight. Said the veep, "If I win I'll convert to Islam and call myself Abdul Mufusta."

- Elvis has been reported alive and well by a woman in Manton, Michigan. According to the 64-year-old grandmother of five, the corpulent rock legend likes to frequent Baskin-Robins ice cream parlors, often sampling each flavor twice.

- Madonna, Samantha Fox, Vanity, Debbie Gibson and Tiffany have agreed to perform three benefit concerts for AIDS research. Under the banner "Bimbos Against AIDS," the benevolent bevy of beauties hopes to raise \$22 million and spearhead the construction of a state-of-the-art medical facility, tentatively named Rock Hudson Hospice.

- It was revealed today that Soviet general secretary Mikhail S. Gorbachev sometimes likes to dress up like Academy Award-winner Cher. Says wife Raisa of her husband's cross-dressing, "We get along so well because we both adore Western designers."

- Actress Jodie Foster has finally agreed to date would-be assassin John Hinckley, Jr. "Sure, I'll go out with him," gushed Jodie. "I've always had a soft spot for schizophrenics." When informed of Ms. Foster's change of heart, Mr. Hinckley is reported to have told friends, "It's super news, but I don't have a car to get to her place...Oh, taxi!"

- "Refrigerator" Perry and former Governor George Wallace have teamed up to create a Miller Lite beer commercial. At rehearsal they were heard to say, "Tastes great, you fat-assed nigger." "Less filling, you mutha-fucka."

- Tammy Bakker has opened the first of a chain of drive-thru make-up emporia. Patrons simply roll down the car window, while a trained make-up technician applies the famed Tammy-look with a Wagner Power Painter spray gun.

- Presidential aspirant Michael Dukakis gave a speech last night at Boston University to denounce charges that he is dull, boring and uninspiring. Unfortunately, those attending the speech came to meet his cousin, "Moonstruck" star Olympia Dukakis, and could not remember what he said.

- A woman from Magdalena, New Mexico claims to have been abducted by Nike-wearing aliens. According to the 45-year-old court stenographer, the aliens informed her their planet and planet Earth are identical in every way except one: for some unknown reason, on the aliens' planet one's shoe does not feel loose after relacing the other shoe.

SECOND DRAFT

PART TWO

by Sergio Taubmann

(In part one, Martin Warner began experiencing a strange series of blackouts that altered his immediate reality: his favorite old chair became a shiny new recliner, his favorite Italian restaurant a sushi bar and his girlfriend Ellen a redhead named Eileen. With the exception of the disappearance of his friend Dave, the changes are all relatively minor. Any attempts to record the blackouts transform into something incapable of recording. Martin decides to endure the blackouts until everything is over. That was before he woke up in an apartment facing the wrong river...)

The shock of seeing the Hudson River moved Martin to action. He ran through the apartment, checking to see that everything else was as he left it. Except for the blonde wood panelling, everything was unchanged. As Martin glanced over the New Jersey skyline—or lack thereof—he felt a chill go through his body. He had to talk to somebody.

He grabbed the phone and went to the window. He dialed the number by rote and waited until Eileen answered it.

"Hello?" she said groggily.

"I'm on the West Side!"

"I know, dear," she said with the patience of a mother telling her child there was no monster in his closet.

"But I was on the East Side before," Martin blurted out. There was a pause on the other end of the line. He continued to stare with discomfort at the flat slabs of Newark's maze of industrial parks. A thick black smoke rose up and diffused into the morning sky.

"Have you talked to your psychologist about this?"

"I can't! He became my plumber last week."

"But Dr. Malthus—"

"He was once your psychiatrist. I'm not going to tell him everything and have you know about it."

Martin took a deep breath in a panicked attempt to calm himself. He started out at the alien horizon before him, searching desperately for a familiar sight. Eventually, he concentrated on the lamppost in the corner. At least it looked like every other lamppost he ever saw.

"Martin—"

"My God! I can see the Statue of Liberty!" His eyes returned to the lamppost. That taught him not to let his mind wander.

"That's why you bought it, Martin. Remember the Fourth of July when we—"

"No, Ellen, I don't remember that." Martin took a deep breath. "I don't know what I'm going to do. How am I going to get to work?"

There was a pause on the other end of the line. Martin leaned against the far wall. With the exception of Dave, this was the biggest change yet. Things were obviously no longer going to stay constant. He felt a dread deep in the pit of his stomach. How did he know another blackout wouldn't drop him in Abu Dhabi! He sank to the floor in realization that he was going to do two other things he thought he'd never do.

He said, "I'm lost in my own apartment."

After that, he cried.

"Why did you call me Ellen?" Eileen asked.

"Because..." he told her between sniffles, "as I told you many times before, before the blackouts your name was different. You had brown hair and you worked in the Tourist Board and you had rimless glasses and a teddy bear in your room and YOUR NAME WAS ELLEN!"

"Calm down, Marty, calm down."

Martin wiped a tear from his eye. "I'm sorry. I'm just afraid."

"I'll be right over. I'll call in sick and we'll see what we can do about your delusions—"

"THEY AREN'T DELUSIONS!" Martin screamed. He forced himself to keep his eyes open. He would fight the next blackout.

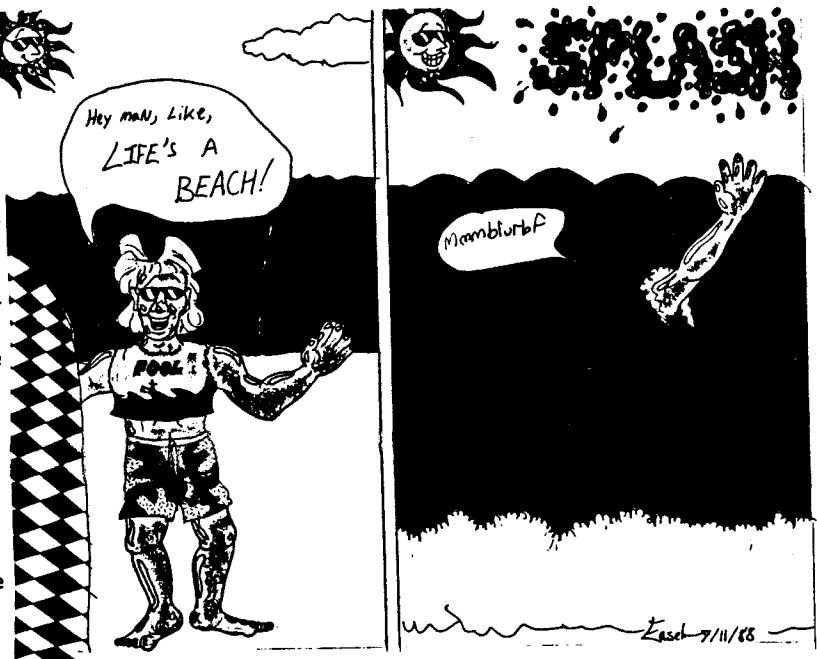
"Don't shout. I'm coming as soon as I can."

When Eileen arrived a half hour later, she let herself in with a key Martin didn't remember providing. She found him crouched in the same spot he called her from, rocking back and forth steadily. With her help, he dressed for the day. They called Bullocks and Poor (formerly Vanguard Press) and told them Mr. Warner was not very well so he would be staying home today. Yes, she would give him the office's best.

Martin explained it to the stranger as best as he could. Of course the stranger nodded sympathetically as psychologists are wont to do. It was standard procedure for him. He didn't feel the overweight woman with the doughy face understood at all.

After the session was over, Martin sat in the waiting room while the psychologist talked to Eileen. He read an old Time, noting with interest that Burt Reynolds had agreed to do his fifth Dirty Harry feature. Most of the magazine was unread by him. The thought of what that psychologist was telling Eileen bothered him. Yes, Martin was mentally ill, the psychologist said, perhaps he's suffered a mental breakdown. Well, Martin knew his sanity was as intact as it was before this craziness happened. He knew what life was like before the blackouts and he'd be damned if he was going to be held otherwise. He definitely wasn't going to go away for it.

They were uncommunicative on the way home. Eileen seemed particularly uncomfortable in her silence. She squirmed in her seat,



only speaking to remind Martin that he was going the wrong way if he wanted to get to his apartment. Martin didn't bother pointing out that the building he woke up in wasn't his apartment. The less said about it, the better.

Things began to improve as time went on. Martin learned to keep his mouth shut in Eileen's presence, and she learned not to bring his problem up. She seemed happier once the blackouts ceased being a topic of conversation. Soon they were spending as much time together as they did before that incident with the chair. As with all things built over secrets, the bliss did not last.

The argument that ended the bliss began one Saturday night on the Lower East Side. Martin took her to a recently opened Indian restaurant whose high quality was not yet common knowledge. They ate well. Talk was another matter entirely. It came rarely, and what there was of it was strained. Frequently, Eileen reached out and held his hand. She smiled at him, but the smile seemed pained.

After they had finished and were walking up First Avenue, she asked, "When's your next vacation coming up?"

"I haven't thought about it," Martin replied. "I do have a few days left over from last year."

"I was thinking you should take some time off. I could always trade off with somebody and we could go somewhere."

Martin turned towards her. She was smiling artificially at him, cheeks flushed as red as her hair. "Why all the desire to go away?"

Her smile lessened slightly. "I just think you should take some time off, get away from the pressure of—"

"My job has nothing to do with it!" Martin said. He noticed his voice raised imperceptibly. A woman in a downcoat pushing a stroller looked at the two of them. She seemed worried.

"Well, it has to be something," she shouted over the traffic.

"I'm not deluded or anything. Things are changing around me and I don't know why and I'm scared."

"Martin, things like that don't happen."

"They've been happening to me."

"How?"

"I—I don't know. Look, let's drop it," Martin said. He broke away from her and walked up the Avenue. He pushed aside a couple in fashion black and heavy makeup. He heard Eileen's heavy tread as she ran after him. He didn't look back. She put her hand on his sleeve. The grip was firm, firm enough to be felt through the heavy fabric of his overcoat. She stood in front of him. Her face showed great concern.

"I'm worried, Martin."

"Oh, and I'm not?"

"We have to help each other. What kind of marriage would it be if we didn't trust and help each other?"

Martin paused. Eileen's eyes searched his face. "Since when were you worried about getting married?" he asked harshly.

She stepped away from him, slightly shocked. With mechanical precision, she removed the black woolen glove on her left hand. On the third finger was a gold band with intricate engraving. A small diamond chip was set in the middle.

"You asked me, you idiot."

Martin ran. If he paid more attention to the surroundings, he might have noticed a dirty young man leaning against a wall in ripped clothing. The man smiled a wide grin as if he were hiding something. If asked, he would say his name was Dave.

(To be concluded next issue)

Bibliophiliac Blitz

by R. Bain

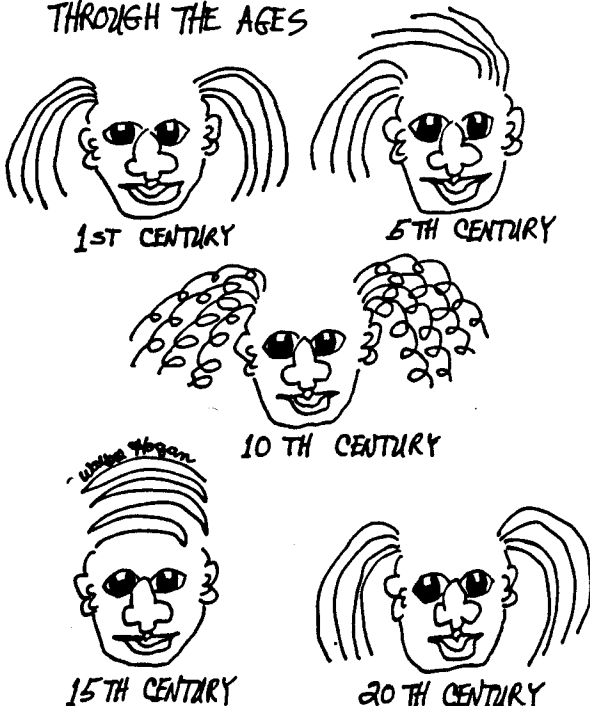
Well, here I am again. Today's book being plugged is the Rev. Ivan Stang's (of the Church of the SubGenius) new book, HIGH WEIRDNESS BY MAIL, which no reader of strange stuff should be without. This book is a highly entertaining, opinionated and thorough (but hardly comprehensive) listing of by-mail sources of every imaginable concept ever to infiltrate some looney's brain-pan. (But just remember, some of these looneys may be right.) This book is guaranteed to have something for everyone—everyone who can read, anyway. The reviews are written in a cynical, sarcastic tone that helps put the book in the "humor" section of bookstores—it really doesn't "fit" anywhere else.

One major annoyance—no bookstore I went to had this masterpiece of abnormal in stock, and one big place, which specialized in "best-sellers," won't order books on request. "You'll take what we give you, and like it." This is the true "conspiracy" we must stop—and books like this are what's gonna do it! Only by diversifying alternatives can we possibly free our minds from the numbing nothingness of "normality," and they don't come much more diversified than in here. You'll probably have to order it special, but it's well worth the wait.

Here's the problem—unless you are already "into" weirdness-by-mail, your chances of hearing about this book, much less being convinced to buy it, are pretty slim. Still, I suppose this book is aimed more at hard-core "abnormal"ers than as an introductory manual, but it is still a tragedy that this book won't reach those who need it the most. Sad. Then again, it would make a great Christmas/Hanukka/Solstice/Passaround/Great Potlatch Orgy gift for that latent weirdo you know...333 pages of full-tilt strangeness, only \$9.95 from Simon & Schuster books (write for info: 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020). Buy it now, before T.H.E.H. realizes what a mistake they've made...fnord.

Afterthought: Of course, Stang stuffed a lot of plugs for the Church of the SubGenius in here, but he does list two Discordian groups too, so I guess it's about even...and INSIDE JOKE is listed, so you know the guy's got taste. (Plus I would've killed him if he hadn't, as Ivan and I go way back—he was one of 1J's first subscribers/traders. For more info about what's up with Ivan, see "Fan Noose.")

JESUS' HAIRSTYLES THROUGH THE AGES



Fashion Briefs

Patou Gives Reagan Fits

ROME (YU) — President Reagan's national smock designer Halston G. Patou briefed Italy's Prime Minister Sergio Valente today on the U.S.-Soviet agreement to resume padded shoulder talks. Later in the day Mr. Patou enjoyed a private fitting with Pope John Paul Belmondo III.

YU News Service

THE HUNDRED

by Al ?

The Secret Society or "The Hundred"
As they know themselves
Dominate the world.
Each decade they meet
So secretly
To settle up accounts
Necrologize and nominate.
A solemn occasion
—Beautiful really—
(Though I know to tell
Signs my Death Warrant):
Hall lit by torches,
Trappings of ancient ceremony,
Chanted rituals.
\$ Allegiances Pledged
To their exalted leader,
Walt Disney.

Costlier Existence

Mexico City

The Ministry of Conspiracy has authorized a 78% increase in the price of food, clothing and shelter to reflect skyrocketing cost-overruns caused by the nation's triple-digit inflation rate and misappropriation of public funds.

Yoesian Universal

5TH OF JULY, ASBURY PARK

by Todd "The Boss" Kristel

"I remember growin' up in Jersey. A whole lot of stuff went down between me and my dad. He would argue with me about my eating habits. 'Those goddamn pancakes!' my dad used to say. He used to turn on the furnace to try to smoke me out of the room when I was eating. He kept yelling at me to 'stop eating those goddamn pancakes!' 'One day my parents called me downstairs for a talk. They sat me down at the kitchen table with 'em and they started telling me it's about time I start getting a better diet. See, my father wanted me to eat more meat and my mother wanted me to eat more vegetables. 'Eat some beef,' my dad used to tell me, 'then you'll be all set.' But he didn't understand. I wanted everything..."

Well they closed down the House of Pancakes
Out on Lancaster Avenue
Now we're left racing out in the backstreets of fire

Looking for someplace new

At night we rode through mansions of glory
Searching for something in the night
But when we saw that Denny's sign
We were blinded by the light

Well everything dies
Baby that's a fact
Maybe some things that die
Someday they come back
Put on your dress
Make yourself up pretty
And meet me tonight
Out at Denny's

Last week I lost my job
Working at the construction company
So if I'm short on money, mister
You'll have to cover me

Everybody's got a hunger
A hunger they can't resist
But if dreams came true
There couldn't be pancakes better than this

Well everything dies
Baby that's a fact
Maybe some things that die
Someday they come back
Put on your dress
Make yourself up pretty
And meet me tonight
Out at Denny's



One of the media's fads during this decade involves the portrayal of college students as aspiring Yuppies with a collective IQ of 43. Reporters and columnists often spin yarns about young folk who know nothing of history, literature, current events, geography, etc. A professor in the Pacific Northwest gained a great deal of publicity by administering a general knowledge quiz at the beginning of each term. One time, a television journalist asked me if I knew any of the following facts: the approximate population of this nation, the location of Korea, the name of an author who did not write in the English language, and when the Civil War took place. Like any proper pseudo-intellectual, I had all the answers.

I am an English major at the University of Washington, and it is due time for vengeance. I have devised my own General Knowledge Quiz. Unlike its predecessors, this does not set out to patronize or degrade whoever takes it. Since there are no straight answers in this quiz, no one loses.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE QUIZ

- 1) Who won the First World War?
 - a. We did.
 - b. They did.
 - c. Switzerland
 - d. Profiteers.
 - e. Gary Cooper, single-handedly.
- 2) What were the last words of Marie Antoinette?
 - a. "What, no cake?"
 - b. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to do it."
 - c. "It is a far, far better thing I do than I have ever done."
 - d. "Wie dumm von mir!"
 - e. "It is the fault of the society that made me this way."
- 3) Who was Friedrich Nietzsche?
 - a. A funny sidekick in B westerns.
 - b. A malcontent.
 - c. A good old boy.
 - d. A clown at children's birthday parties.
 - e. The man who gave away the Beatles.
- 4) What is Andrew A. Rooney's claim to fame?
 - a. Break-dancing.
 - b. Reciting Pericles while hanging upside-down.
 - c. Whining and complaining.
 - d. Country and Western singing.
 - e. Selling LSD to Claire Booth Luce.
- 5) Who is George Bush?
 - a. Who indeed?
 - b. A Norwegian Ninja Quaker.
 - c. The swinging king of sincerity.
 - d. None of the above.
 - e. All of the above.
- 6) Which slogan had the most success in rallying the masses?
 - a. "Just Say 'No'"
 - b. "Remember the Maine"
 - c. "We won't come back till it's over Over There"
 - d. "Don't get high on drugs, get high on life"
 - e. "Ai Rama...Hare Krishna"
- 7) What would President R.W. Reagan say during an air raid?
 - a. "Why wasn't I informed of this?"
 - b. "Every dark cloud has a silver lining."
 - c. "Nancy, save the china!"
 - d. "I hope those guys are Communists."
 - e. "Oh goody! Now we can really increase defense spending!"
- 8) What causes life quickly, yet can kill by inches?
 - a. A Smith and Wesson.
 - b. A bisexual Professor of Scatology.
 - c. Daniel Ortega imitating Groucho Marx.
 - d. Songs of Yoko Ono.
 - e. A Slim Whitman lookalike contest.
- 9) Which of the following serves as a motto for this decade?
 - a. We've got to do what we've got to do.
 - b. You ain't seen nothin' yet.
 - c. That's his problem.
 - d. Watch your mouth, kid. It might be the last thing you ever see.
 - e. Life is like an airplane ride. It has its ups and downs.
- 10) What is Bob Dylan's greatest talent?
 - a. Yodeling.
 - b. Slapstick comedy.
 - c. Confusing himself.
 - d. Leaving his name whenever he makes obscene phone calls.
 - e. Running a halfway house for drunken street evangelists.
- 11) Who is known as Queen of the Cowgirls?
 - a. Jane Pauley.
 - b. Judy Canova.
 - c. Yoko Ono.
 - d. Betty Friedan.
 - e. Olivia Newton-John.
- 12) What is the most irritating aspect of auditioning for community theater groups?
 - a. Anxiety.
 - b. Warm-up exercises.
 - c. Young men flirting with the choreographer.
 - d. Eight-year-old Stanislavskians.
 - e. A kindergartener singing "The Impossible Dream."
- 13) Who should never be quoted in a term paper?
 - a. Rod McKuen.
 - b. Shirley MacLaine.
 - c. Bugs Bunny.
 - d. Hamilphane von Gobbleglop.
 - e. Barry Manilow.
- 14) In Rhythm and Blues, many artists call themselves Blind Willie, Blind Tommy, Blind Lemon, Blind Boy, etc. Why did they pick the same nickname?
 - a. They are blind.
 - b. Pelicans don't tap-dance in the Sahara.
 - c. Existentialism.
 - d. Ask any Freudian.
 - e. They are too poor to be captains of industry and too sophisticated to be Congressmen.
- 15) What blonde bombshell has recently found a place in immortality?
 - a. Marilyn Monroe.
 - b. Eva Duarte Peron.
 - c. Barbara Stanwyck.
 - d. Charo.
 - e. Connie Stevens.
- 16) What is Madonna's pet name for her husband?
 - a. Cara Mia.
 - b. Seando.
 - c. Mr. Moderation.
 - d. Honey
 - e. Irwin
- 17) What is Eddie Murphy's greatest talent?
 - a. What talent?
 - b. Diplomacy.
 - c. Ruining comedy.
 - d. Spreading wholesomeness and good cheer.
 - e. Only a & c above.
- 18) According to Psychics, who will soon win an Academy Award?
 - a. Ken Berry.
 - b. Dean Jones.
 - c. Arnold Schwarzenegger.
 - d. Charles Bronson.
 - e. Steve Gutenberg.
- 19) Where is Jimmy Hoffa?
 - a. In Elvis Presley's grave.
 - b. Under Frank Sinatra's house.
 - c. Davy Jones' locker.
 - d. Peter Tork's broom closet.
 - e. Up in Nellie's room.
- 20) What is this year's fad mental disorder?
 - a. Agoraphobia.
 - b. Don Juan Syndrome.
 - c. Obsessive-compulsive neurosis.
 - d. Chronic depression.
 - e. Hebephrenic Schizophrenia.
- 21) Who said, "I am a rock, I am an island"?
 - a. Paul Simon.
 - b. Peter Frampton.
 - c. John Donne.
 - d. Saint Peter.
 - e. Shaun Cassidy.
- 22) What words come after "Let there be light"?
 - a. "Billions and billions of years passed."
 - b. "And there was light."
 - c. "Workers of the world, unite!"
 - d. "Ready when you are, DeMille."
 - e. "When Buffalo Bill was President, this never could have happened."
- 23) Which of the following has never appeared on stage?
 - a. An opera sung in rap.
 - b. A boy portraying Peter Pan.
 - c. A children's theater version of 12 Angry Men.
 - d. A high-speed car chase scene.
 - e. A musical-comedy based on Crime and Punishment.
- 24) What is the locale of Perry Como's next Christmas special?
 - a. Tel Aviv.
 - b. Mozambique.
 - c. Tierra del Fuego.
 - d. Bhutan.
 - e. Managua.
- 25) Who killed Melvin Purvis?
 - a. J. Edgar Hoover.
 - b. K.C. and the Sunshine Band.
 - c. Melvin Purvis.
 - d. Donny Osmond.
 - e. A conspiracy of all of the above.

- Birke R. Duncan

ANIMATION

UPDATE

by Jed Martinez

Yours
truly
recently
spent
nine
days out
on the
West
Coast,
and

while there picked up some tidbits on the animation scene, commencing with...

FILM REVIEW: There are two types of animated features that might gross out a grown-up. One type is the family film that might entertain Junior, but cause the parents to squirm and fidget in their seats when they come along ("Pinocchio in Outer Space" or any "Care Bear" movie). The other type is a more mature film that will do anything for a cheap laugh. The new anthology film "OUTRAGEOUS ANIMATION" definitely falls under the latter category. This latest assortment of international cartoons has something for everybody's (bad) taste. The lavatorial humor, I'd suggest viewing John McIntyre's "Royal Flush," Ron Duffy's "The Toilet Bowl" (both from the US), and "Vice Versa" (from Poland). If you prefer something violent (more than your conventional MGM or WB short), top choices include "Lupo the Butcher" (from Canada) and "Rondino" (from Hungary). If your main interest is sex (and whose isn't?), my best recommendations are Bruno Bozzetto's "Strip Tease," Guido Manuli's "Erection" (both from Italy), Bob Godfrey's "Instant Sex" (England), "The Haploid Affair" (Canada) and "Love at First Sight" (Czechoslovakia). But of the other twenty shorts presented, these are the ones I highly endorse: Aidan Hickey's "An Inside Job" (from Ireland), which should not be viewed by anyone who has a dental appointment set for the next month; Michel Ocelot's "The Four Wishes" (France), a variation of the fable in which a man wishes for a bologna, and his wife wishes that the bologna was on her husband's nose, and so on, only what this husband and wife wish for is no baloney; "Maxi Cat's Lunch" (from the Zagreb Studios in Yugoslavia), which was last viewed by Americans on the PBS series "International Animation Festival" with Jean Marsh; "Bambi Meets Godzilla" (Canada), Mary Newland's mini-cult classic; and three American short subjects. First, there's Bill Plympton's "One of Those Days" (the ASIFA-East Grand Prize Award-Winner—see IJ #59). Next, there's Bob Scott's "Late Night With Myron," a look at 3D cable TV and its typical subscriber. Last but not least, there's "Jac Mac's Rad Boy...Go," Wes Archer's tale of two modern-day rebels without a cause, their free-wheeling antics and inevitable retribution in the end. ("Wahoo!") Some of the material may turn you off, but don't worry; the running times of each short vary (from under 60 seconds to about 10 minutes), so an alternate subject will attract your attention sooner than you imagine. I attended the Bay Area debut of this film at the U.C. Theatre in Berkeley, which had a limited run. Unlike cartoon features such as "Bambi" and "Who Framed Roger Rabbit," "OUTRAGEOUS ANIMATION" won't be released nationally, but it will play most major cities on a sporadic basis, so consult your local newspaper for the eventual release date. And one final word of warning: most of the material is strictly for adults, so leave Junior at home with a baby-sitter, please!

ANIMATION FOR SALE: While in California, I checked out the following establishments: Among the art galleries that specialize in animation cels are the recently-opened Circle Gallery in Ghirardelli Square (900 Northpoint, San Francisco, CA 94109; phone 415/776-2370), and The Owl Gallery (465 Powell St., corner Sutter & Powell, SF 94102). Both places sell limited-edition and original cels from Disney, Warner Bros., Hanna-Barbera and Jay Ward studios...Further south, you could send away for a free catalog of cartoon art from Animation Collectibles Center (P.O. Box 46102, Los Angeles, CA 90046), where their most recent acquisitions were cels from "The Chipmunk Adventures." Of course, if you prefer to obtain said cels from the original source, write to Bagdasarian Productions (4400 Coldwater Canyon Boulevard, Studio City, CA 91604) for more info. Allow 2-4 weeks for a response...For the inexpensive shopper, there are two places in San Fran within walking distance of one another (both at Pier 39, near Fisherman's Wharf). The Disney Store (P.O. Box K-106, SF 94113; phone 415/391-4210) offers all their familiar characters on everything from clothes and jewelry to ceramics. A larger diversity of gifts depicting characters from other studios can be found at Cartoon Junction (P.O. Box P-12, SF 94133; phone 415/392-2220)...For you folks on the East Coast, there's Collector's Castle (175 Center St., Wallingford, CT 06492; phone 203/269-8502). They carry a large selection of cels from Filmation's "Star Trek" series of the 1970's (currently airing on Nickelodeon), as well as cels from Steven Lisberger's anthropomorphic athletic satire "Animalympics," which reminds me...

WHATEVER HAPPENS TO... "Animalympics?" It was originally made for the big screen, but it wound up on television as two separate specials (both on NBC). The first special, which was a half-hour long, dealt with the Winter Games. It aired during the winter of 1979-80. During that time, the US boycotted the Summer Olympics, resulting in a postponement of the airing of the hour-long second "Animalympics" special. It eventually aired during the summer of 1981, and since there were no big sporting events to parallel the special, it received lackluster ratings. Some years later it was made available to the public on home video (from Warner), only to disappear from the scene after 1985. The complete feature (comprised of both specials) also aired on cable TV (last seen in 1984 on HBO). But now, I can report two pieces of good news: First,

cels from "Animalympics" are available for purchase from the aforementioned Collector's Castle and from "One-of-a-Kind" Cartoon Art (775 Livingstone Place, Decatur, GA 30030; phone 404-337-3333) including some cels with the original background art. Second, Family Home Entertainment will be rereleasing the home video version of the film later this year (retailing at \$39.95), so if you'd missed it the first time it was being sold, don't blow it this time. You'll not only enjoy the visual images, but the hilarious vocal talents of Billy Crystal, Gilda Radner, Harry Shearer and Michael Fremer (by the way, whatever happened to Michael Fremer?). In addition, Graham Gouldman of 10 CC performs some of the music (incidentally, I just happen to own an out-of-print copy of the film's soundtrack album; it's on the A&M label, No. SP 4810, in case you'd like to search for a copy yourself).

MAGAZINE UPDATE: No sooner had IJ #61 come out with the news about Korkis & Cawley's departure from Spotlight Comics, than they found a new distributor for the long-awaited Cartoon Quarterly. Gladstone (the people who brought back "Mickey Mouse" and "Donald Duck" comic books) will release CQ's premiere issue in September...What will probably be the final issue of Graffiti (put out by ASIFA-Hollywood) should be out this fall. In its place will be a monthly newsletter (already in distribution), Inbetweener, yours free if you become a member of ASIFA-Hollywood (for more info, write to 5301 Laurel Canyon Boulevard, #250, North Hollywood, CA 91607)...

FRUITS (AND VEGETABLES) OF THEIR LABOR: The 'Golden Crab-apple' goes to the Rev. Donald Wildmon for condemning an episode of "Mighty Mouse: The New Adventures." In it, our hero was simply sniffing a crushed flower, but the Reverend thought that the rodent was snorting cocaine. I'm surprised that the clergyman didn't complain about cartoon characters like Porky Pig and Donald Duck, who appear without pants in their shorts (short subjects, that is). CBS is taking no chances; they'll rebroadcast the episode with the controversial scene excoriated, just to please His Holyness. (In the words of presidential candidate Pat Paulsen, "The 'C' in CBS stands for censorship; there's no need to mention what the other two initials stand for.")...Some 'peaches and apricots' (principal ingredients of duck sauce) go to various Pay-Per-View cable stations for airing the unofficial world television premiere of "The Duxorcist," Daffy Duck's comeback cartoon. It preceded Joe Dante's "Innerspace," the Oscar-winning fantasy starring Martin Short...The Movie Channel becomes the latest recipient of some 'sour grapes' for creating a constant distraction while airing animated shorts (see IJ #59). As part of their new format, TMC continuously announces at the bottom of the TV screen when the next featured film begins, as a cartoon (or coming attraction) is presented. Fellas, save that time-exploiting stuff for the professionals (the folks who present 'Intermission Time' shorts at drive-in theatres)...Finally, this issue's 'Golden Cornucopia' goes to the many people, in front and in back of the cameras, who made "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" the hit that it is, especially the animation teams from England (led by Richard Williams) and the US (Dale Baer's Toontown sequence was truly the piece de resistance)...

MISCELLANEOUS: This time around, instead of capsule comments I'd like to express an opinion about the many rumors flying around about the possibility of a sequel to "Roger Rabbit." Ordinarily, when a film becomes a hit, a sequel to it is bound to follow (and this year has been no exception); but every once in a while, a movie comes along that is so good it should stand alone without any kind of follow-up (like "E.T." or "Gone With The Wind"). I feel that "Roger Rabbit" is such a movie (besides, it drew a bigger audience than sequels to "Rambo," "Arthur" and "Crocodile Dundee"). Now, according to Get Animated! UPDATE, plans for a sequel are in the works, with a release date as early as 1991. In spite of the fact that director Robert Zemeckis and head animator Richard Williams have no plans to do another "Roger Rabbit" film in the future, Disney Studio head honcho Michael Eisner says that work has already begun. The proposed story takes place closer to the present, with Roger's son in the lead. Roger's son? Gimme a break! (See IJ #57 and find out why I dislike any film or TV show that involves any form of offspring in a sequel or spinoff.) Look, if the public wants to see more of Roger, put the toon on short subjects where he belongs (that was his original job to begin with, you'll recall). As for the idea of a sequel, I have an alternate plan; rather than risking another \$45 million on a possible disaster, use a smaller percentage of the money to resurrect the scenes that wound up on the cutting room floor (such as the funeral of Marvin Acme, or Judge Doom's pet vulture), re-edit them into the original film, and rerelease the entire production as "Who Framed Roger Rabbit: The Deluxe Edition." It worked once before for Steven Spielberg's "Close Encounters of the Third Kind: The Special Edition." If the idea fails, at least it won't cost you as much. Give this idea some consideration...but don't make a sequel, p-p-p-p-please! I mean, Roger Rabbit's son? I know toons can get away with anything, but Roger and Jessica?...I don't know. (The opinion expressed does not necessarily reflect the views of anyone else associated with IJ, including family members, sponsors—as soon as some are acquired—and friends, both human and toon alike.)

OBITS: Phil Monroe, another legendary animator at Warner Brothers, died of pancreatic cancer on July 13. He was 71. As part of Chuck Jones' crew, he was partially responsible for bringing life to characters like Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Wile E. Coyote and Pepe Le Pew. In addition, he co-directed new animation for "The Bugs Bunny/Road Runner Movie" and subsequent TV specials directed by Jones. His other major claim to fame was animating TV commercial characters such as Charlie the Tuna and Tony the Tiger.

Sayz-U!(Letters)

Dear Elayne, July 22, 1988

I've just read your response to my letter on racism printed in IJ #61, and I'm afraid I've been terribly misunderstood, from my own poor clarity of expression. So, I would like a chance to "re-deem" myself.

I do believe some of the comments that Ace made in his racism article, but I DO NOT believe in race separation. Actually, it seems just insane to me that we cannot all live together in the same country and in peace. But I see problems from both the white and black people, as far as racism is concerned. The question I was trying to make people think about is this: It has been over one hundred years since slavery was outlawed, and racism still exists. It seems ridiculous that racism should even be an issue in 1988, but it is still going strong. I can't help but wonder if we are eventually going to get over this problem, or will this internal fighting eventually bring this country to an end. I don't know, but I just believe we should think about that possibility. I believe there are differences between races, but so what? We live in a wonderful country, Elayne. Even with its problems, America is still the best thing around. I just hope that racism doesn't eventually end what we have here.

My apologies for my "illiterate" letter, and best wishes to IJ,

CURT SIMMONS
Route 2, Box 1540
Henderson, TX 75652

(Sorry we misunderstood, Curt, and while I still disagree with you about many things—chief among them the assertion that "America is still the best thing around" and that "we live in a wonderful country" [let's ask Leonard Peltier, for example, how wonderful this country is]—I'm glad we presumably got things straight now.)

Dear Elayne,

I was reading IJ #61 and I felt compelled to write a letter.

POLITICS—Since the Democrats were talking about Family so much during the convention, I guess it's fair to mention that I've heard that Lloyd Bentsen can claim Henry Wilson as his great-great uncle. Wilson, who replaced Schuyler Colfax as President Grant's vice-president, was one of the people implicated in the Credit Mobilizer scandal. I hope this isn't a bad sign. Of course, Wilson was a Republican and Bentsen is rumored to be a Democrat.

THE CONTINUING SAGA OF DR. IGUANA—I was so inspired by Ken Burke's "The Legends of Rockabilly Quiz" that I decided to write a few questions myself.

1. Who was "the Wink Wildcat"?
 - a. Charlie Feathers
 - b. Dale Hawkins
 - c. Johnny Carroll
 - d. Roy Orbison
2. Who recorded "Red Hot"?
 - a. Billy Emerson
 - b. Billy Lee Riley
 - c. Bob Luman
 - d. All of the above
3. Which rockabilly artist is not from Minnesota?
 - a. Ronnie Ray & The Playboys
 - b. Hal Fritz & The Playboys
 - c. Vince Taylor & The Playboys
 - d. Don & Jer & The Screammers
4. Who recorded the Wade & Dick songs "Ooby Dooby"?
 - a. Janis Martin
 - b. Sid King
 - c. Roy Orbison
 - d. All of the above

ANSWERS: 1. - D; 2. - D; 3. - C; 4. - D

HISTORY REVISITED—"It is not a well-known fact that the Pilgrims' experiment with communism failed within three years' time."

- Jesse Helms (in *Where Free Men Shall Stand*, 1976, p. 22)
"Barry Goldwater is the man who can cut through the egghead complexities in Foggy Bottom and solve these problems for us."

- Phyllis Schlafly (in *A Choice, Not An Echo*, 1964, p. 83)
"History has a long past." - Genaro Cornero Checa (in the collection of essays *Comrade Kim Il Sung: An Ingenious Thinker and Theoretician*, Korea, 1975, p. 36)

Best luck to all,

TODD KRISTEL
1140 N. 24th Street
Allentown, PA 18104

Dear Elayne,

Let's take a deep breath, find that favorite chair/sofa, and get ready for more linguistic intercourse on our latest subject, racism. I'll start off by saying that I concur with Deborah's statements in her letter to you and think that it will silence a few readers out there, the "neoliberals" as you called them, Elayne. I suggest that folks like Ace take the time to listen to the Lenny Bruce routine "How to Relax Your Colored Friends at Parties" which is contained on the LP "The Real Lenny Bruce." This is a perfect comeback to the white liberal and succinctly captures the clichés that exist. As for Curt Simmons' views on Texas, you would get a strong argument from my brother in Houston. He's not concerned with racism as he works daily with blacks and Asians and Mexican-Americans. In his job you really don't have time for it—he's a funeral director. From the beginning to the end, from creation to cessation, we are all equal. There is no reason why we can't live together and cross these ethnic boundaries. Then we find that Dave Hyde knows exactly how the mind of a black person thinks, accepting the imprisonment of the white society and easily falling to the taboos. I find it hard to believe this is the rule. We have a superior white-dominated culture that produces such fine men like Ted Bundy, Charles Manson, Edmund Kemper, Herbert Mullin, et al. Caucasians make up the majority of the mass murderers and while this is a different issue from inter-city

crime it can yield no evidence to any superiority from being white and economically ahead. I know that people want more humor in IJ but it is important to get into some creative exchanges from time to time. Freedom of the Press and all that constitutional amending.

Found *Spy* magazine to be quite a delight. At least it's fascinating to this Midwesterner and I'll read anything dealing with New York. (Ye editrix bears somewhat of a grudge against *Spy* for reasons too numerous to go into here; I do not subscribe.) Now we just need to get you a subscription to "Nebraskaland." The only albums that DeeBee and I have been listening to lately are "Canciones de mi Padre" by Ronstadt, "Solitude Standing" by Vega, "Thokozile" by Mahlaithini and the Mahotella Queens (highly recommended) and "Shaka Zulu" by Ladysmith Black Mambazo. The sounds of Africa and Mexico are intriguing and how anyone cannot come away from this music with a smile is beyond me. If we don't start to explore the cultures and languages outside our own, then we perpetuate our solipsism and become another Jesse Helms.

So, Elayne, tell me more about super crimefighter Rudy Guillani. What makes him tick? (Your basic driving Republican ambition to become powerful, same as everyone else of that ilk.) Where does the U.S. Army get these TV campaigns? The latest ends with "Freedom isn't Free." So when do I get the bill? And do you think there will ever be a category on Jeopardy for Frank Zappa? Why not? (Cause they're gonna try for "Neil Young's Banned Videos" first.) There will soon be a lobbying effort from the Pork Rind Industry on behalf of George Bush. This guy's favorite snack is fried pork rinds and Tabasco sauce. You bet...

Do keep in touch. Love and kisses and anything else not known to the Surgeon General.

TOM GEDWILLO
854 Y Street
Lincoln, NE 68508

Dear Elayne,

Well, here I am again. Sorry there was no Snide Critic last time, but what can I tell you? The way things have been going, Margot's "Help!" cover on #61 summed up my current worldview quite nicely! Eeeee... (The "Help!" part was added by ye editrix, who hopes she didn't deface too much of Margot's artwork.) Anyway, what did the rest of #61 taste like? Reviewing the ingredients, we see that the continuing Popovac travelogue is purty good, though we hope the Rock Fiend comes back soon. M. Nuclear's "Omnipotent Slug" was Real Meat. Deja's Purg Papers are back on the beam with tips for the Lonely Guy. I was relieved that "One Hit to the Body" served up some chuckles ("How To Write Gooder," "Lebanese Roulette"...)—at first glance I thought it was a serious tale of rotten neighbors. Jello Wars, Part III: Hurrah! Enjoyed Ace's "What Keeps You Sane?" poll (What keeps me sane? I'm not! Blaaaaah! YEEEE-EEE!). Homo Patrol...I dunno, the initial episodes were funny, but now Messrs. K.L. and Tom Roberts seem to have gone grim on us. "Ice Cream Man" was some true-to-life humor. Mr. Chaput must possess considerable reserves of inner strength in order to slog through all those Marvels (and most DCs, for that matter)...Fool! Daza's untitled video-shop thing was fun, what with all those aggressive cassettes jumping about. "Animation Update": oh goodie...Scooby-Doo spinoffs, Ghostbuster spinoffs, ALF spinoffs, Garfield spinoffs...and a Whoop Glodberg show from Hanna-Barbera! Oh, Happy Day! Oh Shit! Ah, good, here's some more MasterMath. Taubmann's "Second Draft" looks to be a solid fantasy tale—I wanna see what happens next. Phil's back cover is problematic; the "Groom's Side" is filled with recognizable cartoon characters, but the "Bride's Side" features these strange, unworldly figures (jest kiddin')! Yep, another swell issue...not as sobersided & solemn as previous issues—I heartily echo Sue Packie's reminder that IJ is a humor 'zine! C'mon, laff! Laff, Paggliaci, and all will applaud you! Laff and the world laffs with you...cry, and the world laffs at you! Y'know?...God & Goddess Bless!! Yowza!

Best (& Good & Better as well), JOHN P. MORGAN

185 Seabreeze Ave., #4
East Keansburg, NJ 07734
7-25-88

Dear Elayne;

I must say that I was very pleased with all the personal response that I got from "Someone's in the Kitchen with Arnie." It was the most letters an article of mine got people to write to me ever in my tenure at IJ. All the letters were positive, even though many inquired if I was a) a vicious little kid, b) the father of a vicious little kid, or c) someone who babysits for a living. It seems that I do have a few "fans" out there, which was good to find out because I had been getting quite depressed over being immobile and unproductive out here in the middle of nowhere.

With the exception of a few pieces here and there (they KNOW who they are, I've written them), I can't say that I've really been wild about the last two issues of IJ, but then this could just be my problem. The so-called Ace controversy that seems to fill the letter column with so much fire and brimstone doesn't really do a thing for me. Ace has a right to his opinions and observations, so does everybody else. I think Ace showed a lot of courage in saying what he felt, and that some of the folks who read his stuff overreacted. I miss Anni's column, and don't think the stuff that she's writing under the pseudo-name has the same snap as usual. Gary Pig has been stretching his range a bit, and Larry Oberc hasn't made me shake my head and say, "Man, I wish I'D written THAT!" in awhile. YOU haven't quite been up to snuff with YOUR stuff either. When you tell us in the responses to the letter column to "lighten up" or "find a literary journal" for our 33

articles remember that YOU write less humor on a regular basis than most of us. Granted, it's all solid readable work. But as good as "...or Not TV" is, it's not a humor piece. As I said, though, this could all just be my problem. I generally like IJ enough to read ALL of it every issue, and I don't really care if everything is HA-HA funny. I like good writing and watching good writers (like Ace, Gary, Anni, Kathy, Tom, David, etc.) develop their craft and respective styles.

I hope that you'll accept these vague criticisms in the spirit in which they are given (whatever THAT is) and keep giving IJ your best shot, cuz I believe it is a worthwhile endeavor.

STILL (painfully) ROCKIN',

KEN BURKE

P.O. Box 8

Black Canyon City, AZ 85324

(You're right, Ken, I don't write any humor for IJ. I hardly get a chance to write for IJ, period, other than the editorial stuff and an occasional "Fan Noose" or TV review column, because there's just no room anymore. Even if there were room, however, I'm afraid I'd still be guilty as charged, because I just don't have the talent with which many IJ writers are gifted. That's why I'm glad I can at least edit, even if I can't write. It's the "those who can't do, teach" theory, I guess... All best wishes for a speedy recovery for your back, hip and leg problems, by the way.)

Dear Elayne:

Hallelujah! Praise the flaming nose-hairs of G'Broagfran! "Fan Noose" is back! Even if it is semi-annual, that just gives me enough time to get everything before the next list arrives! Thanx loads, Elayne.

Ace Backwords: "Sanity" is an overrated description of a mental state that confines the truly intelligent people (like me, of course) about as thoroughly as underwear 5 sizes too small—who needs it?

When did you send out IJ #61? I didn't get my copy until July 20th, so it's gonna be a pain trying to make the deadline... (#61 was sent out in the middle of July—7/16 I think—so it made pretty good time getting to you. I try to allow at least ten days to make the deadline, which is a lot of time for a zine that publishes regularly every six weeks. No excuses.)

Liked the wedding pictures on the back cover. I recognized all of "The Groom's Side," being a comic nut; but the only ones I recognized on "The Bride's Side" were Pru & Pink Bunny and "Bob" Dobbs. Who's the rest of the gang? (The Tortorici family, the Firesign Theatre, and I'm not sure whether the fellow pictured above quasi-uberbaby Nicholas is Danny Kaye or Pee-wee Herman.)

Prudence: "The Jello Wars" is progressing nicely—when's Pru the younger going to saw off Bunny's ears? (You created Zog? I grovel corrected—I thought Rodney first summoned her up.)

4-Color Fiend: Have you read/plugged "Savage Henry?" It's got everything—a well-meaning but stupid hero, lotsa music, and a villainess mean enough to eat Darkseid for breakfast! (And it's by Matt Howarth, creator of "Those Annoying Post Bros.," so you know it's good!)

23 Skidoo,

R. BAIN

36 Erskine Drive

Morristown, NJ 07960

USA, Earth, Solar System, East Arm M-1, Universe 1, Eris' Toybox
Dear Elayne,

Received IJ #61, and devoured it. Some very good stuff. If I haven't said it before, I'll say it now—I love Jed Martinez's column on animation. Thanks!

The Purgatory Papers was quite on-target, and I loved David Serlin's column on new job opportunities. I feel slighted (just kidding) that Ace Backwords didn't contact me, Mr. Mult-Media of western Massachusetts (HA!), for information on his column...by the way, did he ask you? (Nah, he knows I don't believe in any sanity clause any more.) I liked it nevertheless.

"The Ice Cream Man" had a nice wistful quality to it. A good memory story. The "Overheard at America's Lunch Counters" are a scream. As usual, the "Kid" Steve contribution was its usual insightful self... (Really? "Kid" thought it rather sucked last issue, and wants to apologize to all concerned.)

Slack!

MIKE DOBBS

24 Hampden Street

Indian Orchard, MA 01151

Yo EWI

Notha cookin' IJ. #61 definitely rocked hard. Thanx for the kind beggin' on behalf of SHCQ. And now, in keeping widda new spirit of SAYZ-U, here's my contribution to raisin' da level of discourse: Settle the strike NOW! Lou (President of Popovac) is a weenie! Back to the good stuff. Deja is very right-on about the high philosophical import of the cartoon. "Jello Wars" gets better 'n better. Kathy Stadalsky's review was skee-erry indeed. I used to churn thru that stuff when I worked a slush pile a few years back and the only comfort I can offer is that the damage isn't permanent. Hey, KS, nuthin' personal. Remember—WE LOVE US! I am not waiting with breath abated for the GMDobbs discussion of the ontological merits of Gloria Leonard & Co. I spect dat. in IJ 'bout the same approximate time as George Bush selects Abbie Hoffman as his runnin' mate. Stu Newman's "Ice Cream Man" had some boss writin' altho I didn't love the payoff as much as I wanted to. I trust dat the Fericano & Ligi piece was part of their continuing exploration of alternate aspects of reality and not an Actual Submission to SNL cos even by NBC's admittedly limited levels of quality it bit...hard. Loved "Hassles of a Hapless Hippo" altho again it didn't pay off quite as I'd hoped.

MasterMath is the new religion. Glad to hear from the fabuloustic Mildred Neptune in the letters col. No, I don't think you should put letter-writers in the Ed. Box. As for Pru's letter, some amplification. She's dead rite 'bout Bunny & Pru (whose stories I have temporarily retired from writing as I simply can't keep up or figure where everything fits in). Actually, I stole Kermit the Marine and Officer Friendly for "K the M Show part 2" but she didn't prosecute and that led to "BCinB." There may be another episode in the not too distant future, possibly in James Wallis' INSTANT KARMA if I can ever find his address...Pseuds are the only way to go, but I can't get too raked if people fuck them up. Hell, half da time I don't even know what's where. I still dunno wot I'm sposed to have said to Phil T. Pru told me I blatantly in-sulted da boy. My lingo musta run amuck on me. Clearly, when I sez that Phil's illos kicked my ass, dat means they was bad to da bone, babies (and when I sez "we don't love you we just want your money" I'm just makin' noise). But I must disagree wif Pru and Deja. "Beverly Hills Teens" is dreadful slime. Bring back "Inhumanoids"! Aside to MasterMath: if I knew where Pru got her ideas I'd be there with a bucket, honey. Anyway—hope you find this story sneaks in under the limit of sexual allusions, rude behavior and bad language. (Nothing wrong with your submission this time, boyo—a little [emphasis little] innuendo never hurt anyone, and I don't give a fuck about "bad language," which in no way comes under the category of MTINTK.) I do like bein in IJ even if no one else finds it worthy of mention (yea yea I know—book fuckin hoo...). Life's still up inna air so keep sendin' that mail to the SHCQ box.

we love us...

ROONY K DIOXIN

c/o Box 1529

Columbia, MD 21044

Dear People,

If Fate and our beloved Editrix, Madame Wechsler-Chaput, are kind, then you will find herein a new column from me. The title of my column is DEAR LANDLORD, which is based on the Bob Dylan song. Since most of you probably know the lyrics and meaning of this song, I need not explain my purpose. Those of you who don't know can be like Rikki Tikki Tavi. Those of you who don't know Dylan or Kipling can stop reading this.

If anyone wishes to engage in any polemical discussions with me regarding this column's topic, they may do so. But I must give fair warning. I am 37 years old and so overeducated it is almost a disgrace. Much of my empiricism and ethical reasoning are based on Aristotle, St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. If you have not read all of the works of the three guys above, including Summa Theologica, don't bother arguing with me. Further, if you haven't read all of Mortimer Adler, Bertrand Russell, Hegel, Kant, Wittgenstein, Santayana, Pascal and Seneca, don't come crying to me. I will not be responsible for coming off as an arrogant know-it-all simply because I am older and received a classical education. On the other hand, should anyone wish to debate in a logical, rational fashion, and should they be well-armed with the philosophy and wisdom of the ages, I will warmly welcome them. Then I will beat the bejeez outta them. So it goes. A formal "Hi dee Ho" to J.P., Rodney and accomplices and Anni, Susan and the Kid. I am back and know not for how long. If you are going to applaud me, do it loudly. If you are going to crucify me, use sharp nails and a GOOD hammer, not some cheapshit deal from K-Mart.

Fill what's empty. Empty what's full. And scratch where it itches.

DEBORAH BENEDICT

854 Y Street

Lincoln, NE 68508

Elayne,

For the first time in many issues, I've fully read, digested, ingested, chewed, etc. etc., an issue of IJ. It seems quick on the heels of the creativity debate/controversy/scandal comes the racism argument. A lot of people are saying a lot of things and I even agree with a few things that some of them are saying. However, I'm going to keep my nose (or fingers) out of this one. Of course, I am glad that I have one of those, uh, natural aptitudes for those things of a verbal kinda thing, ya know. I know, I know. They were generalizations and not meant to be universal statements. That's why I'll say no more.

No, I'd rather talk about the good things. Needless to say this includes Anni—oops, Lou's column, although his views on baseball could touch off another debate. I mean, some of us actually enjoy watching the finely tuned craft of pitching and find pleasure in a low scoring pitching duel. But in this power-hungry, action-craving America in which we live, it seems that I'm in the minority. At least among the home run—I mean, baseball fans that I know. Give me a no-hitter over a grand slam any day! (Actually, I'm the only one I know who prefers blowouts to low scoring duels. Wanna exchange baseball acquaintances?)

Cartoons are popular absurdist theatre? I like that.

My worst experience with a noisy neighbor was one who snored through the walls. Not quite as bad as the ones in Larry Stoltz's story. So that I can comment a little more on two stories, I'll just briefly mention some other ideas that ran through my brain as I read. I liked Sigmund's "The Dead Woman." Wondering if it connected to Steve's "The Slow Collapse." (I try to "connect" stuff as much as I can when I lay out IJ, but if any one story relates to any other, it's really coincidence, as I almost never assign topics or things like that.) Really, I mean really, enjoyed Tamarina's story and am eagerly awaiting the conclusion. Her explanations were also interesting but the story would be just as fine without them.

Count me among the millions who have seen ROGER RABBIT and enjoyed it. My favorite cameo was Jimmy Cricket. The "sorriest looking grape" who hated the Beatles sure spoke well for a drunken barfly. Oh well, maybe he was Jewish and had that natural aptitude (sorry, couldn't resist). Ooh, I almost forgot. MasterMath was super. I have a friend doing grad. work in Mathematics and I've been feeding him IJ in small doses. After he gets hold of MasterMath, he should be hooked.

Okay, two comments on two articles. (One on each. See, I studied Math too.) On "Romance Review," I have a FRIEND who told me that she just read one of those wonderful literary works and hated every minute of it. Really, she did but she couldn't stop reading it. That made me think. If they're really addicting, and we know they're harmful, and if we get a president who cares for education as much as Dukakis claims to, then might we start a campaign to "Just Say No To Romance Novels?" Think of it—we can shorten it to "Just Say No to Ro." People will be jumping up and down chanting, "NO RO, NO RO!"

On a sadder note, a comment on "Slow Collapse." Working in the restaurant industry, I see many people, two or three in particular, who constantly party their asses off into complete states of incoherence, this on a regular basis. I have a definite fondness for a beautiful cold beer after a long day/night. And I, too, find nothing wrong with getting smashed once in a while. But I see too many people doing it too many times, so that I have to answer Steve's ending question with, it controls him.

This letter ran long. And right on top of a 36-page issue. Sorry about that. More pages, more things on which to comment. Bye for now.

MICHAEL BULLER

11 Colombia Ave., #B-1

---Hartsdale, NY 10530

8 August, 1988

Dear Elaine:

Well, I did think I'd have time to write you a Real, Right and Proper Letter this month—it's been so long since I've done one—as my boss has pleased everyone even remotely connected with our office by taking off for Virginia Beach for a week—not to wish anything on the other, perhaps more innocent, tourists, or, for that matter, the environment as a whole, but some of us are praying very fervently for a sudden attack of aquatic syringes—but you know how it goes. The boss leaves, and you assume you're going to have a nice, peaceful week, and catch up on your knitting, when suddenly the whole operation blows up in your face, people of whom you've never before heard begin calling up demanding all manner of obscure services, you discover that your boss promised at least 35 things would be delivered tomorrow and neglected to tell you about any of them, the bills need paying, the invoices are due, and there you sit with all this deadly responsibility and absolutely no authority, wringing your hands and wishing you'd taken your sainted mother's advice and become a millionaire instead. Honestly, it's enough to make a Thinking Person take to guzzling Liquid Paper, but there it is, and here you are getting stuck with an extremely truncated letter, and me just back from being on Strike and all. A thousand apologies. Or something.

Anyway, it is nice to be back, even with all this confusion, and I'm glad to see that things are more or less the way I left them, although I swear you can't turn your back on Some People for a minute without they go dashing off getting married and committing honeymoons and all sorts of nonsense. Incidentally, it seems to me I was at your wedding—either that, or an exceedingly confused dress designer broke into my house and left a pink, sequined evening dress in my closet by mistake—and I certainly didn't see all those people Phil Tortorici pictured on the back cover. Were they at the A Table or what, and, if so, were they able to get a second helping of derma farci?

And I'm terribly relieved that I missed all the fighting that seems to have been going on while I was out walking the picket line. Honestly, boys and girls, if you can't play nicely together you can all just go home and watch television—there are starving writers in Hollywood that would be glad for a chance to write for IJ just now (there are starving writers in Hollywood that would be glad for a chance to write for a fortune cookie company just now, but let's not stretch the point). I mean, you never catch me picking fights with people now, do you? Well, do you?

Be that as it may, it was nice to see Mildred Neptune in these pages again—may she continue—and the latest chapter of Prudence's Jello Wars was, of course, excellent—and I'm getting very fond of The Poet's Diet Book, which is exceptionally well written, I think, although it does remind me uncomfortably of my life, in spots, and that's just about all I care to say about that.

But I don't happen to think that letter writers ought to be in the editorial box, actually. For one thing, half the letter writers are staffers already, so it's redundant; for another, I think it would be confusing; and, for a third—and you will, I hope, excuse my elitism—a letter is not a column or article. It's taken me ten minutes to write this letter—couldn't you tell?—while some of my columns have taken up to two weeks to complete, and, while you can scarcely judge the content of something by the time it takes to create, I think you'd be doing a disservice to your regular writers and your "Other Contributors" to group a casual letter in with something that might have cost them quite a bit of time and energy. If you wanted to make a separate box for letter writers, that would be quite another thing, or at least a separate heading in the editorial box, but I don't think letters ought to be included as "contributions" per se, although Lord knows I love to read them.

Well, now that I've thoroughly pissed off everybody who's ever been nice enough to send in a letter, I'd better go write a legal

description or something, just to prove the Seriousness of My Intent, such as it is.

Lock up your Wite-Out,

ANNI ACKNER

Muttering Depths

P.O. Box 18

Reading, PA 19603

P.S. If certain people from Popovac think they can do this better or faster or something, they are certainly welcome to try, and I'll go live in a '49 Studebaker street coupe and eat dead sea-gulls.

P.P.S. You win the award for "Typo of the Year" with the beauty in Tammy Dwyer's letter. Someone ought to send it to The New Yorker. I mean, really. (So sue me—*"a" is right next to "y" on the typewriter.*)

DIES IRAE by Jim Kerbaugh

I was as surprised as anybody when the horn woke me up. My first clear thought was that I would simply stay where I was, but that was impossible. While I couldn't help getting up, at least I was able to be in less than a hurry on the way. Maybe I'd get lucky and get lost. I wondered how long I'd been dead.

Though I strolled slowly, I got there much quicker than I meant to and took my place at the end of a line that looked interminable. So this was the big day. An unbeliever since the age of twelve, I was in deep shit.

It seemed to be going pretty fast. As soon as I got there, a line of rejected applicants began filing past me, going the other way, gnashing their spiritual teeth. It was obvious that not many were getting in. The place was pretty exclusive, like a country club. Maybe there was a cover charge.

When the line moved up to where I could hear and see what was going on, a group of notorious evangelists was pleading their cases. Various issues of men's magazines were introduced into evidence, and spiritual bimbos and hookers were giving testimony. Weeping, the evangelists confessed all, affirmed that they were foul and filthy sinners, proclaimed their repentance, and were admitted.

The fellow in front of me turned his head. I couldn't believe my good fortune. There were the mean, deceitful face, the ski-slope nose, the pendulous jowls, the five-o'clock shadow. As always, he looked embarrassed. It should be a scream when he got to the gates. Since my own turn wasn't likely to take long, I thought I'd catch up with him and see what he had to say on the way down. Maybe he even had a used car parked someplace and would give me a ride.

"How do you plead?" asked Saint Peter, calling up the file in question on his PC.

"Executive privilege."

"What does that mean?"

"If the President does it, that means it's not a sin."

"You've got a lot of nerve. We know who's been naughty and nice," Peter said, tapping on the computer. "And you still think you should get in?"

"Now more than ever."

Peter tapped on the keyboard, studied the screen, and asked, "What's this I see about Cambodia?"

"Let me say this—that was the keystone of the Nixon Doctrine, and it was essential to the policy of peace with honor. Besides, it was Henry's idea, and you've already let him in."

That couldn't be right, I thought.

Peter frowned. "Have you anything to say before sentence is passed?"

"Let me make one thing perfectly clear. I am not a crook."

"That's what they all say." The phone rang. "Front gate. Yes, I'll hold. Hello? Yes, sir, nearly finished. Really? Unconditional? All right. You're the boss." He hung up, looking sour. "Today's your lucky day. You've been awarded an Executive Pardon. Pass," he said, hitting the button that opened the electronic gates.

I stepped up to the table. Peter punched in my file on the computer, glanced at the screen, and looked up at me, his brows knitted. "You've got to be kidding. On your way."

Before I turned to go, I peered through the bars in the gates and saw him surrounded by an adoring spiritual silent majority. He was grinning and holding his arms outstretched above his head, making the victory signal with both hands.

I
LOVE
THE
NIGHT.
THE
DAYS
ARE OKAY,
BUT I LIVE
TO SEE THOSE
RAYS
SLIP AWAY...

INSIDE JOKE
ELAYNE WECHSLER
PO BOX 1609
M.S. St.
NY, NY 10159

IF YOU HAD ONLY BEEN THERE, MY DEAR.
WE COULD HAVE SHARED THIS TOGETHER...